



Climate conundrum | Page 17

Advocate urges council to promote secondary suites

Evan Loree
Local Journalism Initiative
The Lake Report

For the second time in a year, a housing advocate is asking the Niagara-on-the-Lake council to embrace

secondary suites on existing residential properties.

"I (spoke) to the previous council, asking them to allow secondary suites and accessory dwelling units as a tool to help address housing affordability,"

Scott Robinson told council April 25.

Secondary suites are separate living spaces that can be built on one property to accommodate additional residents.

Almost exactly a year

ago, council gave the idea its support in principle but Robinson says there's been pushback to secondary suites from residents and that council appears to be discouraging them.

"I want the town to en-

thusiastically embrace this tool," he said.

Coun. Sandra O'Connor asked how the town was discouraging accessory dwelling units.



Continued on Page 2 Scott Robinson.



King Charles III.

NOTL ready to celebrate coronation of King Charles III

Somer Slobodian
Local Journalism Initiative
The Lake Report

Niagara-on-the-Lake is gearing up for the coronation of King Charles III.

Both the Scottish Loft and the Prince of Wales hotel are among those celebrating the royal occasion on Saturday.

"Being the first capital of Upper Canada here I think it's very, very important," said Simon Bentall, owner of the Scottish Loft on Queen Street.

His store has teamed up with VR Pro on Saturday for a 1K walk to Simcoe Park starting at 2 p.m. from

Continued on Page 16

Spring botanical bazaar returns

Great deals, expert advice at NOTL Horticultural Society's annual market



Sandy Bott will be bringing some perennials from her own garden to the NOTL Horticultural Society's plant sale on May 13. RICHARD HARLEY

Jo-Ann Fraser | Special to The Lake Report

Spring has sprung and the town's green thumbs are eagerly anticipating the 17th annual Niagara-on-the-Lake Horticultural Society's plant sale.

It will be held at the Meridian Credit Union Arena in Virgil on

Saturday, May 13, from 9 a.m. until noon, rain or shine. Purchases are cash only.

"We're almost ready for the sale," said Sandy Bott, who, along with Susan Dodd, has been coordinating the event since 2019.

"We're awaiting delivery of the Boston ferns, Martha Washington geraniums, herbs, heirloom tomatoes and much more from our five growers. Our members are also busy in their gardens splitting perennials to share at the sale."

One of the attractions of the sale is the variety of plants available.

"Some of my favourite purchases have been hellebore,

Continued on Page 22

Town forced to grant rental licence after zoning appeal

Evan Loree
Local Journalism Initiative
The Lake Report

The town has issued a short-term rental licence to the owners of a Virgil property, despite the home

having a history of violating the town's bylaws, says their next-door neighbour.

The house, on Line 2 Road, was added to the town's list of short-term rentals on April 18 and is described as a cottage

rental.

The owner requested a zoning change on the property in 2021 to permit it to be used as a short-term rental.

The town's committee of adjustment denied the ap-

plication on Aug. 19, 2021, but the owners appealed the decision to the Ontario Land Tribunal and won about five months later.

Neighbour Tanya Rice says the owners, who live in Mississauga, operated the

home as a short-term rental without a licence in 2021.

The town's short-term rental bylaw states that a licence can be refused if the applicant has "presented



Continued on Page 5 Fire Chief Jay Plato



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Mentor program for young girls starts this spring

Somer Slobodian
Local Journalism Initiative
The Lake Report

The NOTL Youth Collective is back for its spring session with a full schedule and a new partnership with Big Brothers Big Sisters of Niagara.

Volunteers from Big Brothers Big Sisters will run the "Go Girls! Healthy Bodies, Healthy Minds!" program for seven weeks starting Tuesday, May 9.

The program is for girls in grades 5 to 8.

"They do activities with them, so hands-on crafts, physical activities, while they're actually talking about some topics that these

girls need to start to think about that are age-appropriate," said Caroline Polgrabia, the Youth Collective's planning committee chair.

Registration is required for the program as there are limited spots.

They'll discuss topics like balanced eating, emotional well-being and how to lead a healthy lifestyle.

It's all about getting them engaged, socializing and helping them learn new skills," she added.

Big Brothers Big Sisters is a charitable organization

that has been mentoring and guiding youth across Canada since 1912.

The Youth Collective and Big Brothers Big Sisters plan to offer the "Game On! Eat Smart, Play Smart!" program to boys in the future, too. This will be similar to the girls' program.

This is just the beginning of the partnership with Big Brothers Big Sisters, Polgrabia said.

She said she hopes to work with the organization to provide one-on-one mentoring and to host a mentor information session.

"Anybody who's ever thought about maybe being a big brother or big sister in our community could come

out and learn a bit more," she said.

The collective's eight-week winter programming from January 16 to March 10 was a success with 112 youth registered by the end of week eight, said Polgrabia.

Once the winter session wrapped up, she said, volunteers had a lot of time to discuss how to move forward with the spring session.

She said one of the biggest changes was deciding to run the spring program from 4 to 6 p.m. from Tuesdays to Fridays, instead of starting at 3 p.m.

"It was challenging for volunteers, and the kids didn't get there till 3:30 p.m. or 4 p.m. anyway," she said.

The collective also decided to dedicate Mondays to older youth in grades 9 to 12. The hours will be from 7 to 9 p.m.

Some of the feedback from the older youth was that they liked coming to spend time with friends, but they didn't feel comfortable hanging out in the same space as the younger kids, Polgrabia said.

The collective also decided to create a senior youth lounge.

There will also be a new workshop led by Ben Higgins called the "Raspberry PI Microcontroller Workshop."

"Ben Higgins is going to take the kids right through

from having a microchip and eventually programming it into small robotics," Polgrabia said.

This workshop will run every Thursday for five weeks and can only accommodate eight kids at a time, so registration is required.

The collective was also able to obtain a section of land outside the church and dedicate it to a community garden that staff and youth will take care of.

"We create the space, the kids bring it to life," she said.

Many popular programs from the winter session will return like Cooking with Bobbi, Chess Night and Yoga with Rachel.

Under Bill 23, people can add up to three units to ease housing crunch

Continued from Front Page

Robinson referenced a letter town staff wrote to the province last year about the housing reforms included in Bill 23, the More Homes Built Faster Act, which is now law.

In it, staff listed secondary suites and accessory dwelling units among their top concerns.

"Allowing additional residential units 'as-of-right' in existing residential areas without examining the specific municipal implications could have adverse impacts," said the staff letter.

Further to that, council asked the province to "pause" the bill because it was concerned permitting secondary suites "as of right" would "not allow for local context, character or infrastructure capacity considerations."

As Robinson brought up the letter, he was interrupted by Lord Mayor Gary Zalepa who said "Let's not go too far into that. We got the answer, I think."

Later, Zalepa said he was trying to keep the meeting "on topic."

Robinson also referenced a council meeting where more than a dozen residents spoke against a resident's



Scott Robinson.

request for a zoning change that would allow for an above-garage living space.

"Council spent over an hour and a half debating one secondary suite," he said.

Coun. Gary Burroughs pointed out that Robinson's goal to get more secondary suites built is made easier by the passage of Bill 23 last November.

Robinson agreed, saying residents no longer need to rezone a property to build a secondary suite. They just need a building permit.

He said residents seem unaware they can build up to three separate living spaces on their properties thanks to the new legislation.

Chief administrative officer Marnie Cluckie said

the town is revising its plan to promote secondary units because, with Bill 23 now enacted, the town's plan is not aligned with the provincial legislation.

She added there was also confusion because secondary units can be used for both short- and long-term rentals.

"Accessory buildings for short-term rentals do have requirements," Cluckie said.

The town's bylaws permit secondary suites as short-term rental but requires they be used as a primary residence for four years first.

"Our goal is to keep people in the community, have youth here, have families and complete communities," she said.

Despite the municipality's desire to attract young people to live and work in NOTL, Robinson said the town is getting "older and richer and whiter."

"Wealthy people are coming in and pricing out long-time middle-class residents and workers," he added.

Youth, downsizing seniors and middle-class workers have nowhere to rent, he said.

Coun. Nick Ruller told council the "easy part" was supporting secondary units in principle.

But he was worried about "unintended consequences," which would be hard to address after the fact.

O'Connor pointed out that when the previous council supported Robinson, it did so reluctantly because of the potential impact on heritage.

Coun. Wendy Cheropita pointed out that short-term rentals appear to compete with long-term rentals because property owners can choose to rent a secondary suite for either purpose.

"My proposal would not increase the number of properties that are eligible to become short-term rentals," Robinson told The Lake Report in an email.

When it was pointed out that owners could build accessory units, move in to them, and rent the primary unit out for short-term use, Robinson said it was his opinion "that the current NOTL policies would allow this change."

"Eliminating short-term rentals would also increase the supply of rental housing, but that is not the tool that I am proposing at this time," he added.

Robinson argues that secondary suites could have a "transformational effect" on the town's lack of affordable housing.



The Marotta family is giving \$10 million to help fund the new 496-bed South Niagara Hospital. SUPPLIED

Marotta family donates \$10 million to South Niagara Hospital

Staff
The Lake Report

with "new and innovative equipment."

The Marotta family is pledging \$10 million to the South Niagara Hospital's construction, in what the Niagara Health Foundation says is the largest gift it's ever received.

The hospital's atrium will be named the Marotta Family Atrium in recognition of the donation, the foundation said in a news release.

"We are proud to support the new South Niagara Hospital as it plays a very important role in providing health care to those living in the Niagara region and its surrounding communities," said the Marotta family in a statement.

Lynn Guerriero, president and CEO of Niagara Health, said in a statement that the "generous gift" will allow the hospital to be outfitted

"Another important benefit from this gift is the role it will play in helping us to recruit and retain talented health care workers, who want to work in modern, state-of-the-art hospital settings," she added.

Plans to build the new hospital in Niagara Falls got off the ground in late February after the foundation and Infrastructure Ontario awarded a \$3.6 billion contract to EllisDon Infrastructure Healthcare.

So far, the foundation has received \$60 million in pledged donations to fund the project.

The new hospital, to be located at Montrose and Biggar roads, will have 469 beds, a full-service emergency department and intensive care unit, surgical care and more.



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Cindy Grant steps back from volunteer roles

Horticultural society's garden tour postponed to 2024

Richard Harley
The Lake Report

The Niagara-on-the-Lake Horticultural Society won't be hosting its popular garden tour this year.

Cindy Grant, president of the garden group, said there's not enough time to get the event together this year.

As president, coupled with her responsibilities as chair of Newark Neighbours and chair of the Niagara North Family Health Team, she said she's just become too busy to organize it.

That, along with problems finding volunteers, led to the decision to cancel the garden tour and bring it back next year.

"This post-COVID year is just kind of weird with a lot of groups. It's hard to get volunteers out and enthused and excited about doing stuff," Grant said in an interview last week.

"We haven't started securing gardens and it really should have been done last summer, last fall. And the current committee is just getting weary," she said.

"I, as chair of the current committee, am way over-committed right now, and I just don't have time to focus on getting a tour together.

So that's the honest reason," Grant said.

"That sounds to the public, to the general community, like an excuse, I know that — and I don't mean to be making excuses for myself or for the society."

She said the committee will focus on other priorities this year, like its spring plant sale, taking care of the community and pollinator gardens on Niven Road, and getting the garden at the corner of William and Nassau streets looking "really nice this year."

The tour has been operating for 30 years and Grant said it will continue.

"Last year was our 30th anniversary and we just decided we needed to take a break — and we need to find some new blood to come into the committee and resume next year with a bigger and better tour."

She added that even if a bunch of volunteers come forward now, it's too late to plan it for this summer. But extra help would be great for planning next year's tour.

As far as her other commitments, Grant said Newark Neighbours especially is taking a lot of her time.

The community thrift shop and food bank secured



Cindy Grant plans to give up some of her many volunteer roles over the next year. FILE/DARIYA BAIGUZHIEVA

a new location at 1534 Niagara Stone Rd. in Virgil and is in the process of moving from its old home at 310 John St. E., where it's been for 30 years.

Construction at the new location started last Monday, she said.

"I'm really excited to say that construction on the interior has started," Grant said, adding she thinks it will be done quickly.

"We're anticipating being able to move in June, probably the middle to the end of June."

Asked if she's considered lightening her load and taking a step back from her many roles in the community, Grant burst into a sort of maniacal laugh.

"Yes, I am," she said.

Newark Neighbours recently had its annual general meeting and she committed to stay on for another year, but "by spring next year, I'll be stepping back from Newark Neighbours'

board," Grant said.

Her time as chair of the Niagara North team is also finished in June. She said she'll be staying on as past-chair, but "that isn't as much work."

She also plans to step back from her role as president of the NOTL Horticultural Society in November.

"So, the short answer is yes," she said.

"I mean I'll always stay involved to some extent, because that's just what I do, and I get value and energy from from a lot of my volunteer work," she added.

"But a lot of the leadership volunteer leadership positions that I'm in, I am going to start to step back from by the end of this year."

Ultimately, though, she still plans to stay involved in the organizations in some capacity — just with a bit less responsibility.

"I'm not going anywhere," she said, with a chuckle.

Niagara College to observe Red Dress Day



A red dress representing a missing or murdered woman on display at the Daniel J. Patterson Campus. SUPPLIED

Evan Loree
Local Journalism Initiative
The Lake Report

Niagara College will be honouring missing and murdered Indigenous women and girls this Friday.

On May 5, the college will be lowering its flags to half-mast and hanging red dresses at its campuses in Welland and Niagara-on-the-Lake.

Red Dress Day is observed country-wide on this date every year to recog-

nize the legacy of violence against Indigenous women, girls, and members of the LGBTQ community across Canada.

According to a Statistics Canada report, Indigenous women and girls are consistently murdered at a rate four times that of their non-Indigenous peers.

"The red dresses offer a striking reminder of this national human rights issue, and we honour and remember the lives of our stolen sisters on this im-

portant day," Leah Hogan, Niagara College's associate director of indigenous education said in a press release.

The college asks people to wear red in recognition of the unique violence faced by Indigenous women, girls and two-spirit people.

It is also inviting people on a commemorative walk through downtown St. Catharines from St. Catharines City Hall at 5:30 p.m. to the Marilyn I. Walker School of Fine & Performing Arts.

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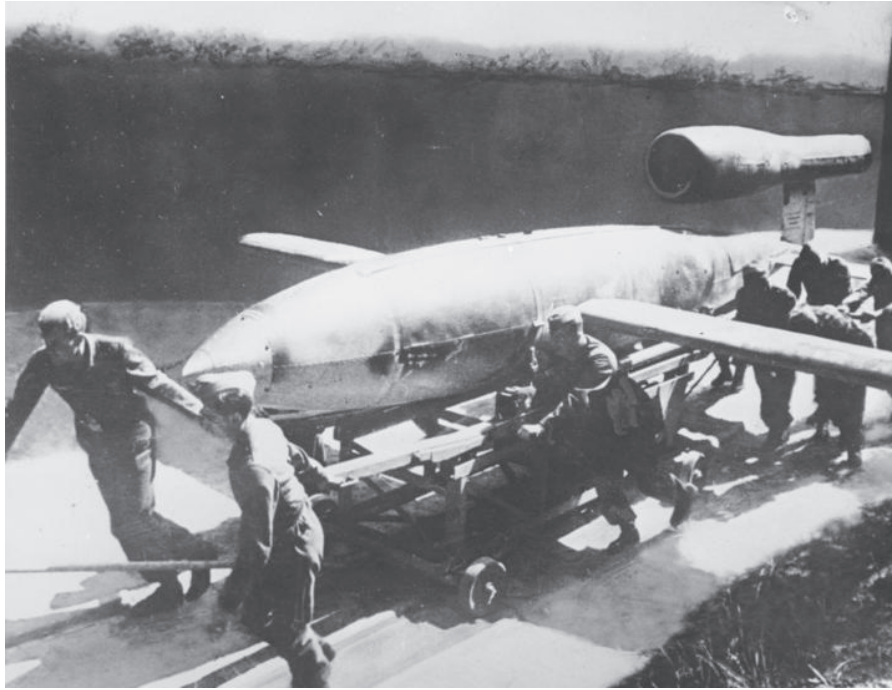
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Left: German soldiers prepare a V-1 rocket for launching. IMPERIAL WAR MUSEUM Right: The Crowborough Monument was erected near the spot where Robert Wing and other Canadian soldiers were killed.



Smile cookies support Pathstone Mental Health



Meridian Credit Union volunteers Luke Andres and Amber Gill were hard at work on Monday creating the perfect Smile Cookies at Tim Hortons in Virgil. The store will be baking more than 250 Smile Cookies every day until May 7. All of the proceeds from each cookie sold in Niagara-on-the-Lake, St. Catharines and Thorold will help support Pathstone Mental Health. The week-long Smile Cookie campaign runs at Tim Hortons locations across Canada. Group photo from left: Jane Patel, Nina Maniquis, Arshdeep Kaur, Luke Andres, Amber Gill and Andrew Paterson. SOMER SLOBODIAN

THE MONUMENTS MEN

‘For the cause of freedom’: Sgt.-Maj. Robert Wing

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

Ron Dale
Special to The Lake Report

Robert Edward Wing was born in Hagersville on May 27, 1908, the son of Alfred Wing and Minnie Saunders.

Alfred and Minnie had a second son, Arthur, born in Hagersville in 1909. Two years later the family moved to Hamilton and then again to St. Davids before 1916.

During the First World War, Alfred enlisted for overseas service on Feb. 19, 1916, leaving Minnie with the two young children.

He was sent to France as a private in the 3rd Battalion, Canadian Expeditionary Force. On Feb. 25, 1918, his unit was bombarded by

German gunners firing poison gas shells. The rest of his war was spent recovering from the effects.

He was finally shipped home to Canada a couple of months after the armistice was signed and discharged from the army on Jan. 21, 1919. In 1923, Minnie gave birth to a third son, Sydney.

Alfred must have instilled a military spirit in his sons. During the Second World War all three volunteered to fight.

Robert joined the Lincoln and Welland Regiment in 1923, right after turning 16, as soon as he met the age requirements for the Canadian Militia. Brother Arthur joined the following year.

On June 2, 1934, Robert married Beatrice Harriet Webb at St. John's Church in Stamford and lived in St Davids.

Robert was now a lathe operator working for the Carborundum factory in Niagara Falls. The couple had two children, Arthur Edward and Robert Earl, prior to the outbreak of the Second World War in 1939.

When the war began, Robert served from time to time on active service with the Welland Canal Defence Force.

On June 25, 1940, he and his brother Arthur volunteered for active overseas service with the Lincoln and

Welland Regiment. Their brother Sydney joined the RCAF when he became old enough to enlist.

The Lincoln and Welland Regiment, after service and training in Canada and Newfoundland, was shipped to Britain, disembarking at Gourock, on July 22, 1943.

The men immediately boarded a train and were taken to Fleet in Hampshire. After continuing their training in Hampshire, they were sent to New Hunstanton on the northern coast of Norfolk.

The Lincoln and Welland Regiment was now part of the 4th Canadian Armoured Division and their training intensified as they learned to operate alongside tanks and prepared for the eventual invasion of France.

In February 1944, the regiment trained at Inveraray in Scotland, practising all aspects of amphibious landings. The men knew an invasion could not be far off in their future. In late February, they returned to Crowborough.

Most men in the regiment were anxiously awaiting their turn to go into action. One veteran of the regiment stated that he was “keyed up like a fighter in a corner” and “just raring to get at them.”

The men learned of the D-Day invasion after it began

on June 6, 1944. For the next month, remaining in their camp at Crowborough, they followed the news as the Allies fought their way inland.

While the Allies were slowly driving the Germans out of France, the enemy began launching unmanned flying bombs, V-1 rockets, against London beginning on June 13.

For the next three months, until their launch sites were finally captured, 9,521 of these destructive “buzz-bombs” terrorized London and other targets.

Just after the evening meal on July 5, some of the men of the Lincoln and Welland Regiment were in or near the “B” Company cookhouse when it was struck by a V1 rocket.

Seven men were killed in the explosion and 16 were wounded, two mortally. The latter included Sgt.-Maj. Robert Wing, who died of his wounds that evening.

Robert was buried in the Brookwood Cemetery in Woking, Surrey.

In 1948, a monument was erected near the spot where the V-1 struck.

Engraved on it are the names of the victims and this statement: “This stone records our gratitude to them and their Canadian comrades for all they did for the cause of freedom.”

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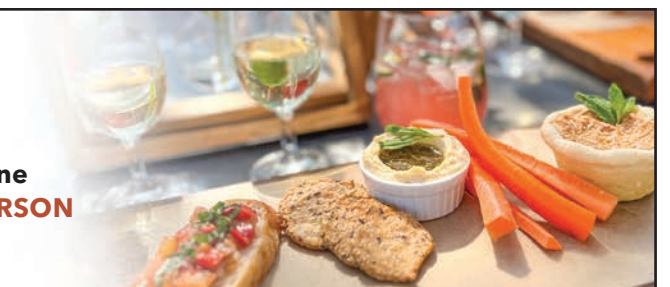
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Photographer Janice White captured this photo of owlets in the Niagara-on-the-Lake area.



Neighbour says home had history of short-term rental **bylaw violations**

Continued from Front Page

a history of contravention with this or other town bylaws.”

Rice, a former Niagara-on-the-Lake bylaw officer, told The Lake Report, “There’s no consistency when issuing a short-term rental licence.”

Fire Chief Jay Plato said the town wants to “engage and educate and enforce,” when enforcing compliance with the short-term rental bylaw.

“It’s not about showing up and issuing fines right off the hop,” he said.

Rice agreed the town “should educate people,” but the owners of the home on Line 2 rented their property at least four more times after being refused a licence.

She said she has been documenting potential municipal bylaw violations at the neighbouring property since the owners first started renting it in June 2021.

Rice said she remembers one weekend when guests were urinating on the backyard fences.

In another incident, she said, she woke up to find lewd pictures drawn in chalk in her neighbour’s driveway.

Plato pointed out the town’s bylaw officers do not work past 8 p.m. and cannot respond to late-night noise complaints.

He added, however, Granicus, a digital platform the town uses to manage its short-term rental complaints, does respond after hours to issues like Rice mentioned.

In her experience, Rice said the platform processes complaints slowly. She also worries the town isn’t doing enough to follow up on complaints.

If the town was conducting thorough inspections after complaints, she said, “some of these properties would already have their licence revoked.”

Plato said the town assesses every complaint but the first thing staff does is check whether the property is on the town’s list of short-



The owners of this house on Line 2 Road were granted a rental licence to the dismay of neighbour Tanya Rice. EVAN LOREE

term rentals.

If not, the town will send a letter informing the property owner of the offence and instructing them to apply for a licence if they wish to continue renting it for short-term use.

Plato said when contacted by the town, most people don’t even realize they’re violating bylaws.

As part of the short-term rental application process, hosts must sign a “good neighbour agreement” which states the licensee recognizes short-term rental operators “have a civic responsibility to address the conduct of their patrons.”

It also notes other municipal bylaws require “certain standards of conduct and maintenance.”

Rice points to the noise bylaw, which limits sound or vibration “likely to disturb the quiet, peace, rest” of residents.

“When you have people renting a short-term rental every weekend, you don’t have peace, harmony and tranquillity,” Rice said.

In 2021, when the owners went to the committee of adjustment with their request, Rice and several neighbours filed a petition with the town protesting the proposal.

The owner was denied the application by the committee of adjustment on Aug. 19, 2021.

By refusing to grant the request the committee acted against the recommendations of staff, which argued in its report “the proposed cottage rental meets all of the provisions for a cottage rental.”

An old real estate listing for the property advertises the property as having

four bedrooms, one more than what is permitted for cottage rentals under the town’s bylaw.

This fact was not missed by Rice, who points out that the bylaw describes a cottage rental as having “up to three bedrooms.”

The Ontario Land Tribunal, which settles land disputes, overturned the committee of adjustment’s decision on Jan. 19, 2022.

The tribunal, citing the testimony of town planner Mark Iamarino who processed the owner’s application, said that to be legally classified as bedrooms certain criteria must be met, including rules under the fire code.

“It is unclear if the room located on the lower level would meet such criteria,” Iamarino said in his testimony.

The Line 2 property is not the only one that might be one room too big for a cottage rental licence under NOTL’s bylaw.

A property on Line 7 Road is advertised on Airbnb as a four-bedroom “modern farmhouse” with enough beds for 12 guests when the pull-out sofa and bunk bed in the living room are accounted for.

In addition to advertising more rooms than is permissible for a cottage rental, the owner is promoting a higher capacity than is allowed under the town’s bylaws.

“The maximum number of occupants within a short-term rental shall not exceed a total number based upon two persons per bedroom plus an additional two persons,” the town’s bylaw says.

Even if owners are legally permitted to rent

four rooms, the bylaw only allows a maximum of 10 guests.

The owner also advertises three additional short-term rentals on Airbnb and says he has six years of experience.

Plato told The Lake Report he had never encountered a situation where an experienced owner was repeatedly committing the same offences and could not say how staff would handle the situation without having gone through it.

While cottage rentals like that on Line 7 are permitted to be unhosted, bed and breakfasts are not.

“The principal use of the dwelling unit shall be for residential purposes and the bed and breakfast establishment shall be an ancillary use to the main residential use,” the town’s bylaw says.

According to his Airbnb listing, the host of the Line 7 short-term rental lives in Oakville.

When the Lake Report cross-referenced his name with those in the town’s list of short-term rentals it found a home on Concession 4 Road that is licensed as a bed and breakfast.

“In the case of an emergency or short-term vacation, the licensee may appoint a representative to occupy the site on a full-time basis,” the bylaw says.

If the property is unhosted, the appropriate licence for the property is that of a cottage rental, not a bed and breakfast.

One house on Niagara Stone Road is being advertised on Airbnb as a “newly renovated two-bedroom cottage.”

The property is not on the town’s list of short-term rentals.

In cases like this, the town is likely to reach out and educate the owner before slapping them with penalties.

The town has one bylaw officer specifically dedicated to handling short-term rental offences.

Plato said he did not have enough data to determine if the one staff member was sufficient to manage the workload.



Royal Irish Tours

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Contributed by Patty Garriock

“If you don’t paddle your own canoe, you don’t move.”
- Katharine Hepburn

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Titanic-era ship cruises canal



Photographer Dave Van de Laar captured this photo of the S.S. Keewatin steamship entering Lock 3 on Friday. The ship is one of the last active Titanic-era passenger steamships. It carried passengers in the Great Lakes until 1965 and was converted into a maritime museum for 45 years.



Editorial

Simple solutions to make rental system fair

Richard Harley
Editor-In-Chief

Third in a series

In the previous two weeks, we have talked about how Niagara-on-the-Lake’s municipal accommodation tax should apply to all accommodation businesses, regardless of size, and how by not doing so, the town is creating a potentially litigious and unfair business environment.

But let’s not forget, short-term rentals are businesses operating inside homes that are meant, in all aspects of zoning, to be homes and not commercial ventures in the first place.

With that in mind, it’s important to reiterate that unhosted rentals (ones that don’t serve a function as a home first) aren’t even supposed to be legal, because of residential zoning bylaws.

So, no matter who you are, even if you’re Jeff Bezos, you can’t just convert a home into an Amazon warehouse, or a restaurant, or boutique store and avoid

commercial property taxes. Especially if you don’t even live in the house.

But that’s what council is doing when it allows many short-term rental owners to use homes as boutique hotels, without the burden of fair taxation.

Luckily, there’s an easy solution to make things more fair — temporarily rezone rental properties for commercial use (with a time limit) and apply the accommodation tax fairly to those commercial enterprises when they are being used for commercial purposes.

Let’s hope our new council does that.

Not only will it make things fair, it will provide a much-needed disincentive to people considering buying up houses to turn them into cash cows at the expense of real housing in our town.

We can’t be more clear: This is an industry that plunders our homes for profit, in the midst of a housing crisis. And these businesses should never have been allowed to operate without the

house serving its purpose as a long-term home to a voting resident. Whether that be a tenant, owner, or a niece or nephew staying there for free.

We’re not sure how other towns want to operate, but it should be a bare minimum standard in Niagara-on-the-Lake to protect our housing supply.

Right now that’s not happening.

We don’t understand how things got this way, but we trust it was an innocent oversight of past councils as new technology crept in — an oversight that should be corrected by our current council, and soon.

It would be a shame to see the town lose even more money fighting a lawsuit, all because it tried to appease a vocal minority of stakeholders from an industry that shouldn’t exist in our homes in the first place.

And if there is any argument to be made that some homes should not be rezoned temporarily, it should be based on whether that

home is serving its function as a home first. The number of rooms should not be part of the discussion and the rental should still have to collect the accommodation tax.

How the town reached a decision to base taxation on the number of rooms is mystifying — even with a stacked committee. It appears no one thought to ask how the number of rooms is relevant. Obviously, it isn’t.

All unhosted rentals should be forced to temporarily rezone for commercial use and should be made to collect the accommodation tax. The tax should apply to any room rented in NOTL. Period.

And any temporary rezoning of a house should come with stipulations, for example maybe a four-year time limit, after which the house must serve a residential function for a minimum of 10 years.

Next, we’ll take a look at the “honour system” method of collecting room tax payments.

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Councillor's social anxiety led to recess at special Randwood council meeting

This guest column originally appeared on Coun. Maria Mavridis' public blog. It is reprinted here with permission.

Coun. Maria Mavridis
Special to The Lake Report



Coun. Maria Mavridis. FILE/EVAN LOREE

As some of you may or may not know, although I have stood on stage and in front of large crowds for years, I have social anxiety.

I do not allow it to prevent me from doing so many great things in life, but the challenge is real.

Large crowds and the energy in them, throws me into seizures when it becomes too much.

Ahead of the special council meeting at the Niagara-on-the-Lake community centre on Monday, April 24, I asked all my fellow council members for their support in recessing when I needed to. As well, I let them know I would step out myself if required.

They all respected that and gave me encouragement.

Moving the meeting to such a large venue was already a trigger for me.

The first recess that Coun. Erwin Wiens called was because I asked for it.

The clapping was intimidating for me. Don't know why, but it's a trigger.

It was a very heavy decision we were asked to make and I wanted to be sure to get all the information and facts straight as a new councillor.

Coun. Wiens is a very sympathetic man, and very protective and respectful.

He was emotionally loaded as we all were from the pressures of the night.

Chairing that meeting was tough.

What is tougher for me, is to read all the comments and emails that we are receiving about the requests to recess, knowing that I was the one who requested it and Coun. Wiens was just respecting my request. Please be kind to all.

It is not an easy position to have. But we stepped up, put our names in, ran, got elected and now have the weight of this community on our shoulders. We accept that.

Someone told me a few weeks ago "People in this town have this idea that everyone and everything is friendly and has to be and should be and we

should all be comfortable. But that's not real life. You're a politician. You're gonna get nasty emails."

I'm not a politician. I am a resident, local business owner, mom and community leader who stepped up and wants to represent this community.

I am in a political seat, but as promised during the campaign, I will be honest and transparent.

This is me being honest. I, myself, asked for the recess. I do not apologize for doing so.

I am more than capable of this position and, as any other human in our community, have the right to do my job in an environment I am comfortable in.

Many of us on council agree, disagree and argue, but at the end of the day respect each other and don't allow "politics" to change us or the way we treat each other.

Thank you deputy lord mayor for your support and leadership.

One community.

Why doesn't town treat rentals like businesses?

Dear editor:

In your April 27 editorial ("Unfair taxation puts hotels at disadvantage"), you reported that the Town of Niagara-on-the-Lake is foregoing \$600,000 by not applying the municipal accommodation tax to all short-term rentals and you also noted that rentals don't pay commercial realty tax.

Based on an assumption that the commercial re-

alty tax rate can be two or three times that of the residential rate, the town could be losing \$1.5 million to \$3 million per year (based on a house with residential realty tax of \$5,000 and there being more than 320 short-term rentals).

Add this to the \$600,000 million not collected from the accommodation tax.

Does this not amount to a subsidy to non-owner occupied short-term rentals

that the rest of the taxpayers have to make up?

The town's recent budget discussions highlighted the need for more revenue yet council chose to instead make residents pay a tax increase of more than 8 per cent rather than tax commercial short-term rentals. And fairness.

Why should other small businesses in NOTL be forced to pay commercial rates for realty tax that

non-owner occupied short-term rentals don't have to pay?

The town strives to be seen as being fair, so why not treat non-owner operated rental businesses on the same basis as other tax-paying businesses?

Why would the town open itself up to potential legal action as noted in your editorial?

Brian Crow
NOTL

Lawyer's letter on cyclists was not justified

Dear editor:

The April letter from lawyer Ian Brisbin ("Lawyer disputes criticism of cyclists"), criticizing Susan Pohorly's earlier letter about cyclists is not justified.

I understand what Susan is saying about cyclists on the roads of Niagara-on-the-Lake, especially the Niagara Parkway.

I have seen it many times. My family owned a farm and operated a fruit stand on the Parkway for 55 years. We were neighbours of Susan.

We try to avoid the Niagara Parkway during the summer months. For those whose farms or homes exit onto the Parkway, that is not possible.

The Niagara Parkway and most of the town roads do not have proper bicycle lanes capable of safely handling the increased bicycle traffic we are seeing.

With the increase in bicycle, e-bike and now power scooter rentals, we see a lot of riders who are not experienced riders and many who do not know the

rules of the road.

For example, some ride two or three abreast, completely blocking lanes. Some have no bells or warning devices. Others do not signal turns. Many run stop signs.

As a lawyer, Mr. Brisbin, it would appear you did not do your homework.

Kip Voegel
NOTL



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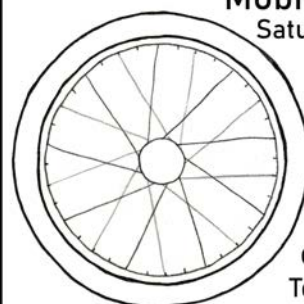


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The Provincial Service Officer will be visiting the Thorold Legion, Branch 17, on June 7, 8 and 9, 2023.

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Taking a page from the book of **Saugeen Shores**



Brian Marshall
Columnist

As a member of the Architectural Conservancy Ontario, I receive a monthly electronic newsletter.

While the pieces are often engaging, it's the section which highlights and provides links to articles published by various news media across the province that grabs me.

Commonly, I link through to these articles and, so it was this month, I found myself reading Sandy Lindsay's piece in the Saugeen Times, "St. Andrew's Church seeks designation under the Ontario Heritage Act."

Now, for those who are not aware, Saugeen Shores is located in Bruce County and contains the communities of Port Elgin and Southampton.

The town has, per 2021 census data, a population of 15,908 and a land area of 170.19 square kilometres – a population about 16 percent less than Niagara-on-the-Lake, whose town council manages lands roughly 22 percent larger.

Similar to NOTL, Saugeen Shores possesses significant 19th-century cultural heritage attributes and

the community is actively committed to the preservation of same.

This brings us back to Sandy Lindsay's reporting of the decision by St. Andrew's Presbyterian Church trustees and congregation to present a delegation to the town council seeking to designate the property under Part IV, Section 29, of the Ontario Heritage Act.

In a very thorough written document which accompanied the delegation, this Southampton church was described as:

"The subject property is the oldest actively used church building in Southampton. Clad in local buff brick, it is a fine example of Gothic Revival Style, featuring a rectangular form with a pitched roof and centre gable, paired lancet windows, and a large Gothic arch window on the façade.

The property is intricately linked to the pioneer settlement of Southampton and to the establishment of the Presbyterian Church in the immediate community, and within the County of Bruce.

Contextually, the building is integral to the heritage streetscape of predominantly 19th-century buildings on Albert Street North, stretching between the Saugeen River and High Street."

The presentation and documentation leave no question that this building qualifies for heritage designation, having well exceeded meeting the minimum threshold, two of nine, of provincially mandated criteria for such.

I do not doubt it will receive that designation.



St. Andrew's church is one of many buildings without heritage protection. BRIAN MARSHALL

That said, neither the delegation documentation nor the Saugeen Times article suggested what the church's trustees and congregation's motivation was for seeking to add their church to the meagre list of 500 designated places of worship in this province.

While pride in the built and cultural heritage of their church, and their larger community, may have played a part in their decision, I suspect the twin pressures of population growth and Premier Doug Ford's Bill 23 might have had an influence as well.

Between 2016 and 2021, Saugeen Shores' population grew by 16 per cent, well in excess of NOTL's nine per cent growth for the same period.

Such an influx of folks" from away" might well "play-hob" with the historic warp and weave of an established community.

While change is inevitable as a community grows, it might only be prudent to seek to protect 175 years of cultural heritage.

Particularly when the provincial government has discarded any semblance of supporting heritage in favour of rampant development.

In my opinion, the congregation's decision was a very wise one.

Interestingly, also contained within the text of the delegation's document was a reference to the town's design guidelines; a 33-page document put in place in 2012 "for the purpose of

providing project planning and design guidance to the community (including developers)."

Further, the text spoke to the 2021 passage of a bylaw to "designate all or part of an area covered by such an official plan as a Community Improvement Project area" with the stated intent to "establish a sense of place based on the noted strengths and identity of Southampton, to make the local community successful, and realize the economic and social benefits available within the Community Improvement Project area."

I find it fascinating the small town of Saugeen Shores had the foresight and will to institute both of these leading-edge practices

in maintaining the character and health of their community.

At the same time, I am saddened Niagara-on-the-Lake apparently lacks equal foresight and will in this regard.

Further, not one of our places of worship is designated under Part IV.

With the exception of Grace United, which happens to be located in the Part V designated heritage district, this leaves the buildings exposed to the threat of demolition should, as recently took place at Christ Church McNab, the congregation dwindle to the point of closing and deconsecrating the church.

Goodness, folks. None of these actions, amongst others, are difficult or onerous and they protect the heritage we've been blessed with.

On another topic, before closing this week, I must admit to being the world's worst multi-tasker. Knowing this, I focus sequentially on jobs and normally attempt to avoid distraction.

When writing last week's column I did not follow this dictum and took a call from a woman named Nancy.

Twenty minutes later I returned to writing but, apparently not all of my brain did, and Helen Slingerland became, you guessed it, Nancy Slingerland.

She has graciously forgiven my error, but I needed to repeat it in writing. Sorry, Helen!

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



Monuments Men series reminds us of **soldiers' sacrifices**

Dear editor:

I want to express my thanks for the time and effort Ron Dale has put in to The Monuments Men series of articles in The Lake Report about the men honoured on the two Niagara-on-the-Lake cenotaphs.

While I no longer live in NOTL, growing up there meant that I recognized many of the names you

have featured.

The most recent instalment, Part 45, "Luck ran out for Pilot Officer Albert Digby Cooper," (April 27), is especially meaningful as Digby Cooper was my mother's brother and therefore an uncle I never knew but have been aware of all my life.

Also of interest is the fact that Uncle Digby and Jack Hutchison (featured

on April 13) were good friends and attended Virgil Public School together.

I am completely awed by the dedication of so many young people and their commitment in serving their country during times of war.

As the only son of a farmer, I believe Uncle Digby had the option of remaining on the family farm but that was not his

desire. My own father, Andrew Lorne Patterson, was the same, and also elected to serve Canada during the Second World War.

And while my father seldom spoke of his time overseas I know it had a great impact on his life when he returned to Niagara.

Throughout the remainder of his life he continued to serve the people of

town as president and service officer of the Royal Canadian Legion Branch 124.

He also served as chair of the cemetery board that was instrumental in obtaining the land and developing the Lakeshore Cemetery. As well, he worked on fruit growing boards and committees in hopes of making things better in the fruit industry.

Thank you again for Ron Dale's wonderful series of articles.

When we stand at the clock tower or the Queenston cenotaph each Nov. 11 and read the names of the fallen, thank you for reminding us they were important citizens of Niagara and we owe them our thanks as well.

*Linda Patterson Dueck
Niagara Falls*



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Council should stand up for life as we know it

Dear editor:

My all-time favourite Christmas movie is "It's A Wonderful Life."

The lead character, George Bailey, lives in the beautifully quaint town of Bedford Falls.

George is the main bulwark against the dreaded Mr. Potter, a mean, miserly old man who wants to buy up everything in town.

Through a celestial intervention, George gets to see what would happen had he not intervened against Mr. Potter's intentions. Idyllic Bedford Falls would instead become a vile cesspool called Pottersville.

Why do I mention this?

Just like the movie, we live in one of the loveliest towns in all of Canada.

Just like the movie, there is a single man who has purchased much of our beloved village.

On his properties he intends to build large hotels, crowded subdivisions and California-style wineries.

Just like the movie, this



would drastically alter the charming, picturesque nature of our town.

But, unlike the movie, there will be no celestial intervention.

What we do have are a mayor and a town council who can stand up for the citizenry and the sweet, historic nature of our town.

We have a mayor and a town council who can oppose the selfish interests of a bully.

What is the future vision of our elected leaders: Niagara-on-the-Lake or Marottaville?

If they choose the latter, I fear that for the locals it will not be a "Wonderful Life."

Gus Calderone
NOTL

Marotta lost Randwood decision, for now

Dear editor:

Congratulations to the almost 300 people applauding council's violation of Benny Marotta's inalienable rights, ("Council rejects Solmar's demolition demands for Rand Estate," The Lake Report, April 27).

You won – for now.

Your group was successful at demanding a majority

of council violate his rights. Rights that are not God-given nor given by government, but inalienable rights Benny Marotta has as a human being – mainly, the right to his life, being exercised through his freedom to take the actions necessary to enjoy his life.

But, in our democratic system, your majority was

bigger than his, your mob was more powerful than his, and you have more votes than him – so, you got your way.

Luckily for Mr. Marotta he won't have to worry for long because a much bigger, meaner, more powerful majority will most likely be coming to his defence when he appeals council's

ruling to the Ontario Land Tribunal.

So, please remember this feeling, about a year from now, when Marotta's appeal goes through and Doug Ford's majority overturns council's decision – and that this is the principle you asked for, nay, applauded.

Alexander Evans
NOTL

A sensitive Rand development could happen

Dear editor:

At the special council meeting on April 24 to discuss Solmar's requests to demolish buildings on the Rand Estate, Deputy Lord Mayor Edwin Wiens said he thought Weatherstone Court, which was carved out of the original Rand Estate, was "the most beautiful court in town."

Ideally someone with a magic wand from the Ontario Heritage Trust would purchase the entire estate, renovate the buildings and garden, and charge

admission for people to enjoy and admire it all, but since no such magic wand exists, unfortunately development will occur.

As a resident of Weatherstone, I would agree with our deputy mayor's comment but the development of this court has been far different from that proposed by Solmar.

On Weatherstone, the original Rand Estate dairy building was in a neglected state when the development began. It was restored and is now a beautiful family home

and the cornerstone of the court.

The early development across the road from the dairy building was built to reflect this, including a turret on one of the houses.

Twenty-two houses were built on the court and all townhouses but only two are the same. The other houses are all different and there is an oval green in the centre with trees and grass where residents can meet and socialize.

The development that Solmar proposes is vastly

different, with the desire to demolish most of the buildings on the estate and erect a dense cookie-cutter style condominium subdivision.

With some vision and thoughtfulness, there is no reason a sensitive and culturally appropriate development could not be built.

This would take willingness and an appreciation of the importance of the estate to the town and to Ontario.

Barbara Waller
NOTL

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'We have to do better'

NOTL workers remembered during National Day of Mourning

Somer Slobodian
Local Journalism Initiative
The Lake Report

For 39 years, Joel Murray was a husband, father of two and hockey coach in Niagara-on-the-Lake.

Today, Murray's life is commemorated with a monument outside Centennial Arena, erected in 1988 after he was killed in an accident while working at General Motors of Canada.

A small crowd gathered outside this monument in Virgil Friday morning, for a ceremony on the National Day of Mourning.

Every year, on April 28, Canadians honour workers like Murray who died, were injured or became ill while on the job.

"Every worker should come home safely," LouAnn Binning from the Niagara Regional Labour Council told the crowd of about 25 people.

Murray's wife, Wendy Murray Nicholson, stood with Lord Mayor Gary Zalepa and MPP Wayne Gates during the service.

"This monument, although we're here to recognize workplace hazards and what's going on across the



On the National Day of Mourning, NOTL volunteer firefighters observe a moment of silence at the Virgil arenas in honour of workers killed and hurt on the job. EVAN LOREE

province, was put here to remember Joel," said Gates.

The Association of Workers' Compensation Boards of Canada reported 72,921 lost time claims and 449 fatalities in Ontario in 2021.

In 2020, there were 328 fatalities and 60,248 lost time claims.

After Murray's accident, General Motors was found guilty of violating workplace safety rules and was

fined \$350,000 by The Ontario Ministry of Labour for his death.

Gates said General Motors was just fined \$325,000 for the death of another St. Catharines worker named Daniel Sevcik who died in 2021.

The MPP worked at General Motors in the past, but he said he's not picking on the company in particular.

Rather, he said, it's a situation happening at work-

places across Ontario and the country.

"It's got to stop," he said.

"I owe a corporation a fair day's work for a fair day's pay. I do not owe my life."

Gates and farmworker advocate Kit Andres brought up the case of Jeleel Stewart, a former seasonal farmworker, and the practice of deeming.

"Deeming is one of the worst things that have ever

happened in the province of Ontario," said Gates.

According to Injured Workers Online, deeming is when the Workplace Safety and Insurance Board says an injured worker is able to do another job and then cuts all benefits.

Stewart was injured at Mori Nurseries in 2008 after a forklift crushed his left hand. He never received full compensation for his injury and to this day cannot work.

After receiving benefits between 2008 and 2010, WSIB wrote to Stewart and deemed him fit to work at a gas station in Niagara even though he lived in Jamaica.

The Lake Report has obtained a copy of the letter sent to Stewart.

"Jeleel is in the hospital right now. We don't know how long he has to live," said Andres.

"That's a result of his injury."

Andres said migrant workers travel to Canada each year to work "with no guarantee that they'll return at the end of the season."

In December, Gates reintroduced a bill in the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to combat deem-

ing, previously introduced in 2019.

The bill would amend the Workplace Safety and Insurance Act so the WSIB would not determine earnings based on employment a worker doesn't have.

The bill passed first reading in the legislature.

After learning about deeming and what happened to Joel Murray, Zalepa was speechless.

"I'm quite shocked to hear what I've heard today. So I'm trying to process that," he said.

He said he'll be raising more awareness about workplace safety with council.

Both CUPE Local 150 executive Ron Hughes and Binning said education is key.

Binning said it's important to get "the word out that we need safe workplaces and pushing for employers to make them safe for us."

Murray Nicholson said she was happy to see everyone at the service raising awareness.

"No worker should ever go to work and not return home to his family," said Gates.

"We have to do better."

Sip & Sizzle at 20 NOTL wineries

Somer Slobodian
Local Journalism Initiative
The Lake Report

Weekends in May just got a little bit tastier.

Wineries of Niagara-on-the-Lake is bringing back its Sip & Sizzle discovery pass program from Fridays to Sundays throughout the month.

The program pairs a variety of smoked or grilled dishes with select VQA wines from NOTL.

"This is probably one of our most popular events," said Andrew Niven, the marketing chair for Wineries of Niagara-on-the-Lake and the director of hospitality and marketing at Konzelmann Estate Winery.

With the warm weather on the horizon, people are looking for an excuse to get out of the house, he said.

"It's nice to go to the different properties and just see Niagara-on-the-Lake in full spring bloom," he said.

There are 20 wineries participating in Sip & Sizzle this spring.

Niven said the program



Konzelmann Estate Winery will pair its sparkling Riesling with grilled chicken shawarma on a pita topped with tzatziki and pickled red onions. SUPPLIED

has been running for about 15 years, offering creative food and wine pairings.

This year, Strewn Winery will pair its 2018 premium cabernet with grilled BLT

naan pizza, and Konzelmann Estate Winery will offer sparkling riesling with grilled chicken shawarma.

Like February's Chocolate and Cheese program, guests can buy a \$75 individual pass which allows them to experience 16 wineries, with a maximum of eight in one day.

Visitors can also purchase a couples' pass for \$75 which includes 16 tastings total or eight in one day.

Tastings can be stretched out throughout the course of the month.

A designated driver's pass is also available at a discounted rate.

When purchasing passes it is required to pick which wineries you want to visit and on which days.

Tastings will be available from 11 a.m. to 5 p.m. from Friday to Sunday throughout May. Reservations will close the day before.

Anyone interested can visit wineriesofniagaraon-thelake.com.

Niven said the program is a "nice kickoff to hopefully a strong, healthy season."

Spring concert warms St. Mark's

Staff
The Lake Report

The Edison Singers are returning to Niagara-on-the-Lake after a three-year pause.

Recognized as one of the finest chamber choirs in Canada, the Edison Singers are presenting "Sweet Expressions Folksongs and Spirituals," this Saturday, May 6, at 4 p.m., at St. Mark's Anglican Church on Byron Street.

The group was founded in 2019 by Noel Edison and has quickly become known for its rich, warm sound, versatility, and clarity of texture. Centred in Guelph/Elora, the choir regularly performs in Toronto and Niagara.

"There is a huge variety of Folksongs and Spirituals from across the globe," said Edison. "We're presenting just a smattering of the worldwide lexicon of choral arrangements of these two genres."

"They will be heartwarming and intimate, celebrating the long traditions of



The Edison Singers perform in 2019. FILE PHOTO

folk music and spirituals, with commentary about the songs by our singers."

"This repertoire can be quite challenging," Edison added. "It is just as demanding as Bach's works."

As a young musician, Edison founded the Elora Festival in 1979. He remained artistic director of

that festival until 2018. He also served as conductor and artistic director of the Toronto Mendelssohn Choir from 1997 to 2018.

"We have an outstanding ensemble of singers. Their energy, spirit and commitment to the Edison Singers is remarkable. They truly inspire me."

Tickets for the Saturday concert are \$45, including taxes, and \$25 under 18 years of age.

For more information or to purchase tickets, go to www.theedisonsingers.com or call 226-384-9300. Patrons are encouraged to purchase their tickets in advance, but a limited number will be available at the door.

Tastings will be available from 11 a.m. to 5 p.m. from Friday to Sunday throughout May. Reservations will close the day before.

Anyone interested can visit wineriesofniagaraon-thelake.com.

Niven said the program is a "nice kickoff to hopefully a strong, healthy season."

Hare Wine Co. is 'perfect match' for Twilight Jazz & Blue Series

Somer Slobodian
Local Journalism Initiative
The Lake Report

At the Twilight Jazz & Blues Series, it may be the musicians who play the tunes, but in a way, the star is the venue's grand piano.

"The show is all about the piano," TD Niagara Jazz Festival co-founder Juliet Dunn told The Lake Report.

Dunn's late husband Peter Shea inherited the piano from his father.

Shea co-founded the not-for-profit TD Niagara Jazz Festival with Dunn in 2014. He died last August after battling prostate cancer.

It costs about \$400 to move a grand piano, said Dunn, so they wanted to find a more permanent location and build a series around the instrument.

"Whichever venue we need to do the show at, they need to keep the piano," she said.

Since last fall, its home has been the Hare Wine Co. on Niagara Stone Road.

The Twilight Jazz & Blues Series, which runs on the first and third Monday of each month, will host its



Melissa Lauren Trio with Rob MacIntyre, left, on bass and Nathan Hiltz on guitar. SUPPLIED

final two shows in town on May 15 and June 5.

Once the Twilight Jazz & Blues Series wraps up in June, her focus will be on the TD Niagara Jazz Festival in July.

The summer festival will run from July 15 to 23.

To prepare, Dunn is holding a spring fundraiser at the Hare on Sunday, May 6 to raise money for the summer festival.

She picked the Hare to host the fundraiser not only because she enjoys the atmosphere, but also because Shea's grand piano is there.

The original Twilight Jazz Series started in 2011 at Mahtay Café and Lounge in St. Catharines and still runs once a month.

It wasn't until February 2022 that Dunn and Shea

introduced the Twilight Jazz & Blues Series to Niagara-on-the-Lake.

Dunn said she also likes to call the series Niagara's Jazz Club.

The NOTL series was held at Spirit of Niagara last spring before moving to the Hare, a "mutually beneficial" partnership, Dunn said.

"The Hare is a perfect match for us. They're very

engaged in what we do and that's what we need," said Dunn.

Moving the series gave people the opportunity to experience a new venue, Dunn said.

"The location of the Hare is excellent as well because we get people from Grimsby (and) Niagara Falls because it's just off the highway," she said.

Since January, there have been eight shows at the Hare. Many have sold out.

Dunn said each performance draws between 70 and 120 people.

She realizes jazz is often used as background music, but said that's not the case at the Hare.

The audience at the Hare, she said, is a "real listening crowd," engaging with and paying attention to the performers.

"Our crowd knows that they'll get shushed if they're talking too loud during the show because people are there to respect the art form," said Dunn.

"And that's super important for us," she added.

Dunn loves interacting with the performers and

getting to know them. She admires their talent and dedication to jazz.

Dunn said jazz musicians "put in at least 10,000 hours to get as good as they are."

"I don't know if people realize how talented jazz musicians are," she said.

The Hare has been hosting Soul Jazz in the Vineyard during TD Niagara's Jazz Festival every summer since 2016.

She said she values her partnership with the Hare, and has enjoyed working with the winery over the years.

"This is the first time ever that we've done stuff outside of the summer festival with them," she said.

The owner, John Hare, and the staff have been wonderful, she said, and she appreciates how invested the winery is in the success of her series.

She's hoping the contract with the Hare will get renewed for the fall.

"We have to renegotiate, like all contracts, but we're very happy there," she said.

The May 6 fundraiser runs from 7 to 10 p.m. and costs \$125 a ticket.

SRCvinyl is NOTL's hidden musical gem

Julia Sacco
The Lake Report

Tucked away inside Limited Distillery on Henegan Road, SRCvinyl is a somewhat unknown gem of Niagara-on-the-Lake.

Featuring a wide range of genres including soundtracks and pop stars like Taylor Swift, this record shop-distillery combo offers a unique and expertly curated shopping experience.

For Record Store Day on Saturday, April 22, Stephen Steers, the warehouse manager and vinyl collector, brought out what he said was the "best of the best" for the shop's loyal group of music lovers.

On Record Store Day, independents like SRC offer dozens of exclusive releases. "You're allowed to start selling Record Store Day stuff after 8 a.m. so we opened the doors at 7," said Steers.

The Virgil shop allowed customers, who started waiting outside as early as 3 a.m., to peruse non-Record Store Day items and enjoy breakfast refreshments including croissants and pastries, before re-entry at 8 a.m. to shop the exclusive drops.



Warehouse manager Stephen Steers shows off some of his favourite albums. JULIA SACCO

"My regular Record Store Day crew were all here in full force. The first people that showed up were here just after 3 a.m. and my regular crew just started kicking in after that around 4:15, 5 o'clock," Steers said.

He said many die-hard music fans were able to get what they came for.

"The big titles and the big names will always drive certain people and certain crowds. The Taylor Swift Record Store Day release is always a hot commodity. I had 10 copies and they were gone pretty quickly."

"There's always one or two soundtracks that people are excited about and you can never name

them because they're always changing, this year it was 'Summer Rental,' a John Candy movie from the '80s," said Steers.

Outside of Record Store Day, Steers still tries to keep what's in high demand available both in-store and online. With a loyal group of in-store shoppers and a client list of around 40,000 online, that's a tall order.

"I try to handpick and curate as much as possible," Steers said.

"We get a little bit of both (NOTLers and visitors). When people come in from out of town if they're into music they will always Google "record shop" and they're always surprised to

find one in Niagara-on-the-Lake. I constantly get the 'I can't believe how much cool stuff you have in here.'"

The shop, which opened at this location in 2016, has participated in Record Store Day for the last 10 years, with beginnings in its old Niagara Falls storefront.

The store now works in tandem with Limited Distillery under the same small, family ownership and lets shoppers hunker down with a mixed drink after grabbing their favourite album.

SRCvinyl is open 10 a.m. to 6 p.m. Sunday through Wednesday and 10 a.m. to 8 p.m. Friday and Saturday. You can find it at 14 Henegan Rd. or at srcvinyl.ca.

Concert series returns to Jackson-Triggs, extended to September

Staff
The Lake Report

The Jackson-Triggs Concert Series is back again this summer, with headliners such as Jann Arden, Serena Ryder, Charlotte Cardin and more coming to Niagara-on-the-Lake for 11 weekends of live music.

Tickets are on sale now for the outdoor concert series, which kicks off the weekend of June 9 and 10, running almost every weekend, and ends on Sept. 15.

Normally running until August, this year's series is the first to continue into September, part of marking Jackson-Triggs' 30th anniversary.

"We're thrilled to be hosting 18 of Canada's top artists and bands for what will be a remarkable year in concert series history," Sreejith Sasikumar, Jackson-Triggs' estate manager, said in a news release.

The series made its return last year at the Niagara Stone Road winery's

Niagara Estate Amphitheatre, after a two-year hiatus during the COVID-19 pandemic.

A handful of acts are returning to the stage from previous summers, including Serena Ryder, Jann Arden, Sam Roberts Band, who will play the opening weekend, and Dwayne Gretzky, playing the final weekend.

"Artists keep returning to this venue because it offers a performance like no other where they can genuinely engage with the audiences," said Sasikumar.

Other acts set to take the stage include Colin James, Donovan Woods, The Strumbellas, Randy Bachman and more.

All the concerts begin at 8 p.m.

Tickets range from \$125-175, and are available to purchase online via Jackson-Triggs' website, with a full list of the lineup.

Waitlists for tickets have begun for some shows, including the June 9 and 10 opening weekend.



The Queenston Women's Chorus performed classic and contemporary renditions of gospel songs during its 20th anniversary concert on Saturday. JULIA SACCO

Queenston Women's Chorus marks 20 years of music

Julia Sacco
The Lake Report

Celeste Brillon was always drawn by the world of women's choir, though it would've been difficult not to be.

Her mother, Lisa Brillon, is the director of the Queenston Women's Chorus. For two decades, she's grown up listening to them.

"I remember they all would come to our house for Christmas parties when I was little and I would sneak downstairs and grab all of the good snacks and go back up into my room," Celeste said, who joined the chorus in September.

"It's fun to be older now and be able to be a part of it," she added.

Since 2003, the Queenston Women's Chorus, then called the Queenston Ladies Choir, has been a fixture in Niagara-on-the-Lake, bringing music and merriment to the community.

Last Saturday, the group celebrated 20 years together with its first spring concert since 2019 at Trillium United Church in St. Catharines.

Members young and old shared familiar tunes, including classics like the "Chattanooga Choo Choo" and a rendition of La La Land's "Audition."

Among the choir was Linda Scott, the only remaining original member.

When looking back on her 20 years with the group, Scott has countless fine memories.

Her favourite "might be the dinner theatre that we did," a dining musical show.

"It was quite an event. That was probably one of the highlights of our 20 years together," she said.

Aside from big shows, Scott has stuck it out with the group for so long as a way of connecting with the community.

"I think just the social aspect is really nice, getting to see the girls every week," she said.

"The music is great too," she added, saying her favourite song to perform is probably "Ride the Chariot," which was performed during Saturday's concert.

Before joining the choir, former teacher Scott had

grown up honing her musical talents in piano, but never really venturing into vocal lessons.

"I grew up in Owen Sound so all my lessons and everything happened up there," she said.

That is, until meeting Lisa Brillon.

"I sang in our church choir back home, but when I came down here I was really glad Lisa did start up what was then the Queenston Ladies Choir," she said.

Scott and Lisa met for the first time in 1998, during a New Year's Eve party during which Lisa went into labour with her daughter Celeste.

"It's just something I've always wanted to be a part of because it's been around

my whole life growing up," Celeste said.

Celeste holds a bachelor of musical theatre degree from, Sheridan College, worked on Disney Cruise Lines and starred in numerous productions including Ballet Jorgen's "The Nutcracker."

"We're all there because we love to do it, (I love) the joy of music and everyone's passion for it," she said.

So far, Celeste's favourite memory with the group is the Christmas concert, since it falls during her favourite holiday.

Her favourite song to perform is "A Million Dreams," from the 2017 musical film "The Greatest Showman."

Despite her busy sched-

ule, Celeste said she hopes to stay in the chorus for as long as possible.

"I try to arrange my teaching schedule around it, because like my mom, I teach dance and musical theatre classes, so I really like to keep my schedule around being able to go every Tuesday night," she said.

As for advice for other young women hoping to join, Celeste said not to worry too much about having a musical background.

"Don't be afraid to join whether you can read sheet music or not, or if you don't think you can sing.

If you have a passion for music and singing and just a feeling of community, it's definitely an open space for anyone to join."


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Virgil resident turns his business idea into reality with MVP Uniforms

Somer Slobodian
Local Journalism Initiative
The Lake Report

After 15 years of working for his family's company, a longtime Virgil resident is expanding his horizons.

Alex Froese, general manager of his parents' company Mother-ease Cloth Diapers in St. Catharines, has launched his own business creating custom team jerseys.

MVP Uniforms set up shop in September, thanks to a process called dye sublimation printing, or dye-sub printing, which uses heat to transfer dye onto a surface.

Froese got the idea for the business after his parents purchased a dye sublimation printer last year.

He had also heard about rising shipping times for sports jerseys reported in 2021.

"I saw an opportunity to do other things with it," he said.

With this new technology, determination and the right staff, he had everything to make his goals a reality.

He now manages both Mother-ease and MVP Uniforms.

The 33-year-old father of two has lived in Virgil since he was born.

Froese said every jersey is made in-house from scratch with Canadian fabrics.

First, he starts by designing the artwork in Adobe Illustration.

"We essentially build the design (and) build the jersey on the computer," he said.

Once customers are satisfied with the digital design, it goes to the dye sublimation printer.



NOTL resident Alex Froese holds up a jersey he created using dye sublimation printing. He started his new business, MVP Uniforms, in September. SOMER SLOBODIAN

The printer takes the digital file and uses a heat press at 400 degrees to press the design onto a white, dry-fit polyester material.

This technology prints the dye into the fabric and not on top of the fabric.

"With dye sublimation, the jersey could be one colour or 15 colours. It's all the same to us," he said.

After it's transferred onto individual pieces of fabric, it's sent to the sewing department where workers will sew the fabric together.

"It's permanent, we're not sticking it on, it'll never crack, fade or peel or anything like that," he said.

He's currently working on a set of team jerseys that are black and neon green.

"Anything is possible," said Froese.

Though business has been a bit slow, Froese said, it picked up last month after posting about it in the NOTL 4 ALL Facebook group.

"That has definitely caused a lot more work, and a lot more opportunities, which has been exciting to see," he said.

Froese said being able to bring a customer's vision to life and see their faces when they touch their custom jerseys for the first time is extremely rewarding.

Long-term, he wants to not only be a supplier of sports apparel, jerseys and team gear but to eventually offer made-to-measure

athletic apparel.

"Made to measure would be you provide your body measurements and the garments will be fitted perfectly for you," he said.

He currently only makes team jerseys in quantities of 12 or more. He hopes to do individual jerseys in the future.

The team price would be about \$85 a jersey, he said.

He can't produce franchised jerseys, such as NHL's Toronto Maple Leafs, because he doesn't have the specific licensing yet.

That's something he eventually wants to offer his customers.

Customers can order jerseys at mvpuniforms.com.



This week's riddle is "Jeopardy!" style.
Category: OUR LEAD SINGER

Before Maroon 5, his high school band called Kara's Flowers appeared in an episode of "Beverly Hills 90210."

Last issue:

Category: THE ICKIEST OF THE "ICKY"

Clue: A fussy baby who cries excessively is often described this way.

Answer: Who is colicky?

Answered first by: Bill Hamilton

Also answered correctly (in order) by: Jane Morris, Margie Enns, Claudia Grimwood, Bob Wheatley, Becky Creager, Pam Dowling, Sylvia Wiens, Jim Dandy, KC King, Wade Durling, Sheila Meloche, Margaret Garaughty, Nancy Rocca, Alan Brockway, Pam Bennett, Marjory Walker, Patricia Fraser

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

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Massage therapy students will ease pickleball players' aches and pains

Stephen Ferley
Special to The Lake Report

Look behind the scenes at any successful sporting event and you'll see committed local community support.

That's exactly what's happening with the Niagara-on-the-Lake Pickleball Club's June tournament – the NOTL Classic. It is receiving considerable support from many quarters of the community.

Hugely visible, hands-on support will be provided by Niagara College's massage therapy program, a three-year diploma program with 43 students spread over the two years since its inception.

Olivia Hinks-Russell, field placement officer for the college's clinical outreach program, explains that it exposes students to a variety of working environments.

"The students have worked at community events such as the Chilly Half Marathon in Burlington, the Barrelman Triathlon in Niagara Falls and several local Dance Competitions. And they've also been helped with prac-



Mary Coleman, Olivia Hinks-Russell and Taran Kular are associated with Niagara College's massage therapy program. STEVE FERLEY

tice days for the Niagara IceDogs."

With more than 280 players from age 17 to over 70, both the players and the tournament's 100 or so volunteers will have access to massage therapy facilities.

"At the same time our students will be gaining valuable experience out

in the community," said Hinks-Russell.

"Partnering with the NOTL Classic tournament becomes a classic win-win situation."

The students will be supervised at the event by three registered massage therapists responsible for ensuring compliance with

the standards of practice of the College of Massage Therapists of Ontario.

Players will have options for pre-game and post-game sessions with the students. And supervisor input will help the students to assess the extent of sore muscle issues and suggest possible remedial work.

Tournament committee member Vince Serratore adds, "We'll have a huge number of volunteers working very long hours. It's terrific to know that the massage therapy support will be available to them as well as to the players."

Also under the heading of community involvement, Cogeco Your TV will be covering the professional pickleball competition from 7 p.m. on Friday, June 9, and matches at the tournament proper on the Saturday and Sunday, June 10 and 11.

Jack Custers, Your TV's manager of programming and community relations, says the broadcast will be shown across the province.

"Our coverage won't be only in the Niagara Region. We plan to extend the coverage to several communities across Ontario such as Guelph, Kingston, North Bay, Sarnia, Peterborough and Windsor."

Niagara businesses also have stepped up to sponsor the tournament in various ways.

The Lake Report is the prime print media sponsor of the event and the sponsorship list includes

Quinn Wealth Management, the Virgil Stampede, Eye Wellness, 124Q Hotel and Spa, Sandtrap Pub and Grill, Kymberley McKee of Sotheby's, One Earth, Audrey Wall Nursing Professional Corporation, Bella Terra Vineyards and Regal Floral and Garden Centre.

Life in The Lake recently was named the tournament's social media sponsor.

An undertaking such as this requires a lot of temporary equipment. Last but certainly not least in community support is the help received from the NOTL United Mennonite Church, which has kindly donated the 24 tables needed for the court-side scorers.

Maybe less glamorous, but equally important.

The weekend-long event begins with a professional pickleball prize-money exhibition featuring eight pros from across Ontario on Friday, June 9, at 7 p.m. in the Meridian arena complex in Virgil.

Tickets for the evening are \$10 per person. Children under 12 are free. Admission is payable by e-transfer to classic@notlpickleball.ca.



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Members of the Niagara-on-the-Lake Golf Club's 9 and 18 hole women's leagues kicked off the 2023 season Tuesday in style with a joint luncheon celebration. KEITH VANT

Men's and women's leagues tee off at NOTL Golf Club

Kevin MacLean
The Lake Report

The Niagara-on-the-Lake Golf Club's busy league season has begun.

The Thursday men's league teed off last week and the men's WOOFs league officially hit the links on Tuesday.

The women's 9 and 18 hole leagues were all set to tee it up on Tuesday morn-

ing when Mother Nature intervened.

With forecasts threatening rain all day, the women cancelled play – but didn't let that dampen their spirits.

The women's annual joint league luncheon went ahead as planned and about 50 golfers were on hand to socialize and enjoy a lavish buffet in the club dining room.

In men's league play, Devon Neudorf drew first blood,

winning low gross honours with an even-par 36.

Drew Porter's 22 modified Stableford points was tops in that category. Other winners were: Paul Jacot (closest to the 150 on #1), Todd Watson (longest putt made on #2), Brian McKillop (closest to the pin #4), James Grigjanis-Meusel (longest drive #5), Mike Mott (longest putt made #7) and John Sobil (closest to the pin #9).

Rangers beat Barrie in OT

Kevin MacLean
The Lake Report

The Niagara Rangers U19 men's basketball team faced some stiff competition at a weekend tournament in Barrie, but fought their way through it all to bring home the championship.

The Rangers, coached by Niagara-on-the-Lake's Jonathon Thorpe, relied on "defence by committee" to beat Collingwood 81-70 in overtime in the final.

On Saturday, Niagara lost 63-59 to Guelph, a team they had already beaten twice this season.

Top scorers in game 1 were point guard Chad Thorpe with 20 and Kai Schatz with nine.

In game 2 on Saturday against host Barrie, "the guys came out ready to get a win" after being disappointed in their morning performance, Thorpe said.

It worked. They won 73-55.

Chad Thorpe again contributed 20 points and Schatz added 15.



Chad Thorpe. FILE

On Sunday morning, the Rangers played undefeated Collingwood.

"We played well but they had two players that had huge games that we just couldn't stop," the coach said.

That led to an 82-72 defeat, with Thorpe again leading the team, scoring 21 points, while Josh Smith had 10.

The loss meant the Rangers had to await the outcome of the next game to see if they'd get to play in the final.

In the end the Rangers finished pool play in second and earned a rematch with Collingwood in the gold

medal game.

"We adjusted our defences significantly and their star player, who had scored 35 against us in the morning, was held to just seven points thanks to a team effort, but also some great individual defence from Carter Stoutenberg, Graham Midgley, Cole Woodruff and Dylan Durlov, who all took turns on him," coach Thorpe said.

Collingwood in turn adjusted its defence to try to slow down Niagara's top shooter, Chad Thorpe.

Several other players, in particular Luke Midgley and Ben Johnson, stepped up and contributed significant offensive numbers, their coach said. Thorpe had 17 points, while Midgley and Johnson added 16 and 14 respectively.

After being down as many as 20 points in the first half, Niagara tied the gold medal game with 10 seconds left.

"In overtime, we dominated the play with a couple of huge buckets from Kai Schatz to seal the deal and win 81-70," the coach said.

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St. Mark's bells to chime for King Charles

Julia Sacco
The Lake Report

For the first time in nearly five years, Bernadette Secco will get to showcase her bell chiming skills at St. Mark's Anglican Church to mark the coronation of King Charles III.

On Sunday, the day after the coronation, from 11:30 to noon all 19 bells at the Niagara-on-the-Lake church will ring out with coronation music and hymns of celebration in honour of the new king.

The chiming of the bells

is a rare treat for Niagara-on-the-Lake and provides visitors with a chance to hear a unique musical talent.

"I can't think of the last time I did (a bell ringing). I think it was four or five years ago when we inaugurated the new Brock bell and I chimed at Christ Church in Niagara Falls at a concert when Prince Louis was born," said Secco.

Originally from Niagara Falls, she has been chiming for the past 12 years and learned the bells as a

member of the St. Mark's congregation.

"I marry 'em and I bury 'em," she said.

"From my point of view, it's one of the most interesting musical instruments and right in Niagara-on-the-Lake (St. Mark's) is the only 19-bell chime stand that we have. In Niagara Falls there's only 11."

"Ours is a very special chime stand. Niagara-on-the-Lake is lucky to have it."

For Sunday's festivities Secco will be following a program that begins with

fanfare and includes hymns from England, Ireland, Scotland and Wales as well as Queen Elizabeth II's favourite hymn.

She said guests can bring a blanket and sit or stand to enjoy the chimes, though she suggests a specific spot for best enjoyment.

"Sit in front or south of the church because the big bells are on the north side and sometimes they can overwhelm the smaller bells. So standing in the front or on the other side, you get a really good balance of sound."



The bells at St. Mark's church will ring on Sunday for the coronation of King Charles III. SUPPLIED

Slingerland family celebrates ties to royal coronation in 1911

Staff
The Lake Report

The coronation of King Charles III is just a few days away, but one Niagara-on-the-Lake family has a historical connection to another coronation – more than 100 years ago.

Melburn and Catherine Slingerland of NOTL were visiting England when King George V was crowned on June 22, 1911.

And today their descendants still have some prized Royal Doulton commemorative plates from that coronation.

"During that period in time 102 years ago my great-grandparents, fifth-generation NOTL residents Melburn and Catherine Slingerland, were in London," says Jamie Slingerland.

He and other family members have researched the family's history and hope to formally document it.

Melburn was the farm manager for Larkin Farms, a large American-owned operation on the Niagara River Parkway. It had more than 1,000 acres in NOTL and an even larger farm across the river in Lewiston, N.Y.



Left: One of the Slingerland family's Royal Doulton plates commemorating the 1911 coronation of King George V. Middle: Melburn Slingerland. Right: Catherine Slingerland. SUPPLIED



Melburn travelled the world to purchase livestock for Larkin Farms at world fairs and other gatherings. He also bought some animals from the royal family.

"Due to Melburn's renowned knowledge of livestock, he would travel to purchase breeding stock across the world and according to my father he was a very stern man that few would bid against at auction," Slingerland recalled.

"His travels were mostly to state fairs in Buffalo, Syracuse and Chicago/St. Louis. More locally would be Toronto, Montreal

then to western Canada in 1912 to Portage La Prairie, Saskatoon, Winnipeg, Medicine Hat, Regina and Calgary."

According to his great niece, Madeline Muir (Slingerland), Melburn purchased livestock in Britain for Larkin Farms and was there during the coronation in 1911 with Catherine.

That is where they acquired the Royal Doulton dinner plates celebrating King George V's ascension to the throne, Jamie noted.

As well, the family has traced its history to 1650 in the Netherlands, from

an area called Slingeland, about a 45-minute drive south of Amsterdam. Jamie and his wife Connie visited the area in November 2018.

As world navy super powers, Britain and the Netherlands fought over the area on and off for many years.

"My ancestor, Teunis Cornelise Slingerland and his wife Engeltie Bradt, left the Netherlands during a brief period of peace in 1654 and settled in the Dutch settlements of upper New York," Jamie said.

"Shortly afterward, they purchased, twice from the

Bear clan, then the Turtle clan of the Mohawk nation, 10,000 acres of land in what today is part of Albany, N.Y."

Today a few original homes still exist in Slingerlands, N.Y., from prior to the American Revolution.

During the revolution, the family was split over which side to support. Most Slingerlands were land owners and they chose the losing side (the British).

In the years afterward, some family members fled to what is now Niagara-on-the-Lake. One of them, Teunis Anthony Slingerland, is buried at St. Mark's

Anglican Church cemetery, according to his will on file at NOTL Museum.

Over the subsequent decades, descendants, including Teunis's son Richard, received land grants in the area. Some were soldiers who fought in the War of 1812, and Richard served with Butler's Rangers and the Niagara Militia.

During the War of 1812, the Americans looted and burned most of the homes in the area, including those owned by the Slingerland families, forcing everyone to start fresh again.

Richard's son John farmed lot 13 on the north end of Concession 6 and was buried at Homer cemetery.

Today, Jamie's brother Ken Slingerland still farms lot 81, which has been part of the family's holdings for well over a century.

Jamie's great-grandfather Melburn Hiram Slingerland (Richard's son, born in 1860) married Catherine Ann Russell and farmed lot 80, which is where Between the Lines Winery is now located.

Melburn died early, at age 60, due to complications of diabetes.

Demand for British high tea doubles during King's coronation week



Simon Bentall is excited to host a walk to celebrate the coronation of King Charles III. SOMER SLOBODIAN

Continued from Front Page

the post office.

Lord Mayor Gary Zalepa and members of the Royal Canadian Legion will be joining in, Bentall said.

A coronation flag will be hung at the old Court House for the occasion.

VR Pro, a race and event management company, will be providing free tea, snacks and a stuffed Paddington bear to participants.

The Scottish Loft will

also be giving out free goodie bags at the end of the walk.

Bentall said the coronation is usually a "once in a lifetime" occurrence, "so it's something that we should all come together for."

The Prince of Wales will celebrate Charles' ascension to the throne with high tea throughout the day and an extravagant scotch-paired dinner at 7 p.m.

"Our afternoon tea is very unique to British culture,"

said Jeremy Harb, food and beverage manager at the hotel.

The demand for high tea this weekend has doubled due to the coronation because everybody wants to "experience a little bit of the tradition that goes around with the coronation experience," he said.

The five-course dinner in the evening is being planned by executive chef Chris Smythe.

"He was tasked with

putting together a menu for the coronation dinner that would pair well with different scotches," said Harb.

Throughout the evening guests will taste four different types of scotch.

"The scotch component is very interesting because scotch is synonymous with British culture," said Harb.

A type of scotch offered will be the Laphroaig 10-year single malt Islay scotch whisky, a favourite of King Charles, he said.

Smythe chose dishes that are popular in British culture, like a hot smoked Irish organic salmon and a Stilton cheese tart.

He also tried to incorporate some local ingredients into dishes, such as a baked bartlett pear.

Tickets are \$200 per person.

The coronation of King Charles III will be broadcast on major news platforms starting at 4 a.m. Saturday.

Expect **delays** on town's climate change plans

Evan Loree
Local Journalism Initiative
The Lake Report

With no one to steer the ship on the town's new program to tackle climate change, the municipality's chief administrator says it will be challenging to achieve its goals on schedule.

The town's climate change adaptation plan was supposed to be spearheaded by an in-house expert, but that position, called the climate change co-ordinator, was axed during council's budget talks in March.

"When you have a program that you want to put emphasis on, it just helps to have a champion and someone with the knowledge and expertise in the subject matter," said chief administrator Marnie Cluckie.

They help to keep plans from falling off the rails and they ensure everyone is "rowing in the same direction," she added.

Coun. Sandra O'Connor agrees, and said as council sorts out its strategic plan this year, it has become "quite clear" climate change isn't at the top of the list of concerns.

"I don't feel as if we share the same priorities at this point," she told The Lake Report.

She said she could not discuss specifics because the strategic plan is currently being discussed in closed sessions.

Despite no climate change co-ordinator lead-



Sandra O'Connor at Niagara Shores Park, which is slowly being eroded by the lake. EVAN LOREE

ing the town, Cluckie is optimistic about reaching the adaptation plan's goals.

Cluckie said the town plans to prioritize climate change initiatives and divide tasks "amongst various people in different departments."

She added staff assess everything they do through the "lens of environmental stewardship."

Cluckie acknowledged it was harder to apply this lens without the preliminary expertise.

However, she pointed

out the town has some environmental expertise in the operations department thanks to Darren MacKenzie, the manager of public works.

According to his LinkedIn profile, MacKenzie was employed with the Niagara Peninsula Conservation Authority as the director of watershed management before he joined the municipal staff team.

Cluckie said the town would also team up with its community partners and non-profit groups to help reach its goals.

She cited the region's conservation authority as one of those partners.

The conservation authority provides the town with expert guidance on development proposals impacting environmentally sensitive areas like creeks and wetlands.

This power was restricted to matters of flooding and erosion late in November with the passing of the province's housing legislation Bill 23.

"I don't think that the impact of Bill 23 on review- ing development applica-

tions has an impact on us continuing with our partnerships," Cluckie said.

Both staff and the conservation authority are still adapting to the changes of Bill 23, she added.

"We still need to work together," she said.

The climate change co-ordinator would also have supervised progress on the town's energy conservation plan, Cluckie said.

"We have historically been delayed in terms of updating our plan and making sure that there's progress on it," she said.

Delays could be a "challenge," she said, for the town's climate change adaptation plan just as it's been for its energy conservation plan.

"It'll go a little slower, but I'm confident we'll still make those strides," Cluckie said.

O'Connor thinks it needs to be said that "we're not doing good and we need to do better."

The Niagara Peninsula Conservation Authority released a report late in March that gave the region a "D" grade for its poor watershed health.

This report, the 2023 Watershed Report Card, tracks the overall health of Niagara's forests and watersheds.

"Since 2018, the grades of most watersheds remained consistent and scored a 'D' for poor water quality," a report from the Niagara Peninsula Conservation Authority said.

A map of the water quality by municipality shows the water in Niagara-on-the-Lake is rated 'F' for very poor wherever there is enough data to actually rate it.

The same report shows the region has 17 per cent tree coverage of its watershed land base. That's almost half of the conservation authority's recommended 30 per cent coverage.

Cluckie said the town probably won't be ready to provide an update on the adaptation plan until late fall or winter.

Carriage operator plans to open **third service** in NOTL

Evan Loree
Local Journalism Initiative
The Lake Report

A new horse-drawn carriage service could be riding onto the scene.

Niagara-on-the-Lake currently permits five carriages to operate and industry veteran Ronda Cave hopes to operate the town's sixth.

After appearing before council April 11 to ask for a license to operate her service on town property, council deferred the matter to staff for investigation.

Cave says she feels a little in limbo while she waits for the town to decide the matter.

The town's five carriages operate under Queens Royal Tours Inc. and Sentineal Carriages Inc. respectively.

If the town permits her to operate, Cave's will be the



Ronda Cave, with her carriage horse Johnny and puppie Milo. EVAN LOREE

third horse carriage company in town.

She told The Lake Report in an interview she wants to be "captain of my own ship."

Cave has been operating

horse drawn carriages with Queens Royal Tours since 2005.

She says she's been slowly acquiring her own equipment since first joining the industry as a part time

driver.

She said she was often providing her own equipment and horses while working with Queens Royal Tours.

In 2022, she decided it

was time to take the reins and start her own business.

Her company is still young though, having no official name or website.

"I might take a dramatic name," Cave said.

In her time with Queens Royal Tours, she learned there was a definite need for an additional carriage.

"There were days out there when five carriages - you know - could not provide all of the service required," she said.

Cave said operators need to consider the age and ability of the horses and take time between rides to rest them.

"It can't be a merry-go-round," she said.

Ideally, she says she'd like to be in Old Town with the other carriage services, but said there are opportunities to do something new too.

For example, she said she was interested in doing "specialized tours."

She suggested one such tour could explore the town's Black or Indigenous history.

Cave sees the horse-drawn carriage as a unique piece of heritage worth preserving.

"The nicest thing out there is working with the children who have never seen a horse. I have literally been asked how you turn it off," she said.

Cave says the job is a labour of love.

"I don't know anybody that just says I'm going out there to make money from tourism,"

Cave isn't sure how many carriages she'll be able to run.

That much depends on whether the town will permit her license.

EXPLORING PHOTOS
WITH NOTL MUSEUM



Randwood, circa 1905

This photograph of “Woodlawn,” now known as Randwood, is from a promotional booklet that was issued circa 1905. Our community at the time was experiencing an era of tourism growth with leisurely resorts and summer residents keeping the town buzzing throughout the warmer months. It was a welcomed relief from the decline the town experienced after the closing of its major economic driver, the Niagara Harbour and Dock Company, in 1871. This property has been a hot topic of debate in the community for several years. The town’s heritage is strongly intertwined with its identity and has been a crucial part of NOTL’s tourism economy for over a century. The cultural landscape is part of what draws people here and makes it a tourist destination. There are wineries and theatres and galleries in other communities, but our heritage and the preserved built heritage is what makes us unique.



Michael Audibert and Brian Stoner whip up some breakfast for hungry guests on Saturday. JULIA SACCO

St. Davids firefighters dish out **breakfast**

Julia Sacco
The Lake Report

On the last Saturday of each month, firefighters at St. Davids Firehall exchange their hoses for spatulas.

Last Saturday’s firefighter buffet welcomed about 150 people to enjoy all the breakfast classics.

“The association works to provide events for the community,” said Katie Graziano, vice president of the St. Davids Firefighters’ Association and a self-proclaimed homefry specialist.

Next month’s breakfast on Saturday, May 27, however, will be the last opportunity for NOTLers to contribute a donation before the association takes a pause

on monthly meals for the summer.

Four Niagara-on-the-Lake sports teams are among the beneficiaries of breakfast proceeds, as well as St. Davids Public School and Red Roof Retreat.

The association also welcomes sponsorships from area businesses.

“You can see on the placemats we have people put their business cards,” said Graziano.

Breakfast is served from 8 to 10 a.m. Admission is \$10 for adults and \$5 for children.

Those interested in sponsoring or receiving funding from the association can send an email to NOTLST2@gmail.com.



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Too many weeds, not enough flowers – and **brain clutter**



DR. BROWN

Dr. William Brown
Columnist

Leftovers of last year's weeds reminded me how much work it takes to control them.

So also it is with our minds – too many weedy distractions threaten to distract us, whether emails, text messages, browsing the latest continuously updated news from the Globe and Mail, the BBC, the New York Times, CNN or whatever our favourites might be.

All are instantly available 24/7 in our inboxes and all compete for our attention.

It wasn't a problem for my parents' generation when the news was one local daily paper and occasional broadcasts on the radio. Aside from local gossip and rumours, that was it.

This begs the question: do we need all that pressing instant information?

In his last years, Oliver Sachs let it be known that he no longer followed PBS's "Newshour."

Not because he had lost his passion for climate change and other important issues of the day, but because at 81, with metastatic melanoma filling his liver, he realized solutions for most of the issues of the day lay with younger generations.

Our brains are aware of only the tiniest bit of all the information it receives from billions of receptors in our body and subthreshold thoughts and feelings.

Were it not so, we would be overwhelmed with information intruding into our awareness.

Exceptions include those urgent, need-to-know signals, such as the sudden appearance of another car appearing in our peripheral visual fields signalling the car is on a collision course with our car, prompting us to act to avoid a collision.

For the most part, we pay attention to what's at hand, such as me writing this



column, with my cell phone on mute to avoid distracting pop-up offerings on my iPhone, enticing me to pick my phone up and cruise the screen.

In infancy and early childhood, paying attention to whatever's going on is how our brains learn about those around them, the languages they speak, their habits and ways – all with apparent ease.

In the case of language, the underlying neuronal networks are innate too, but which languages the child acquires depends on the ones to which they are exposed.

Tragically, deprived of the opportunity to learn language much past the first decade, children may be unable to learn to speak

despite the best efforts of language experts.

Such "learning windows" apply to vision as well. In cats, for example, covering one eye in such a developmental window leads to blindness in that eye and the appropriate neuronal networks fail to develop in the brain.

For much of a child's early years, learning new skills is prompted by watching others, repetition and refinement until they get it.

During the first few years, the brain makes many more neurons and connections than will be retained. Only those connections and neurons that make the best connections with their preferred neurons survive.

The others die, leaving no trace in a process aptly called "programmed cell death."

A similar overabundance occurs in the peripheral motor system where motor nerve cells compete to connect with muscle fibres. Only the strongest connections survive.

It's all very Darwinian – the fittest nerve fibres, and sometimes nerve cells, survive.

It's part of how the brain goes about the process of selecting the best connections and nerve cells.

Most of us choose what to spend our time and resources on and for us, those choices have consequences for the quality of life both for us and others associated with us.

What doesn't work is what I think of as "attention drift" – prisoners of whatever gets our attention in fleeting moments.

One version happens to many patients with dementia. They become prisoners of the present and lose their capacity to make decisions based on past experience and anticipation of the future.

At the other end of the age scale are the formidable challenges the young face in making good decisions about friends, drugs and social media.

When I look back on my life, the equivalent years were far less challenging.

Friends were found in schools, my neighbourhood was bounded by a few blocks close to my home, no drugs and no Facebook and

the like. We were lucky.

Sure, we got into trouble, but not the kind so many young people are faced with where the solution may tragically be suicide.

With so many compelling attractions, is it any wonder that some young people take so long to mature, sometimes into midlife and beyond?

The brain isn't a prisoner to its genes. It responds powerfully to its environment.

Some of those behavioural changes become wired in for life and may even be epigenetically passed on to later generations.

The relatively young field of epigenetics will be the subject of another essay because it's such a potentially strong influence on development across generations without the genome itself actually changing, just the ways those genes express themselves.

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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One of the most effective ways to keep your lawn full is to sow more seeds, says columnist Joanne Young.

Four tips for a healthy lawn



GROWING TOGETHER

Joanne Young
Columnist

Whenever there is a bare spot in your lawn, nature will fill it in with a weed, meaning the thicker the lawn, the less space there is for weeds to grow.

Applying a good quality seed, once in the spring and once in the early fall, will pay big dividends.

Before putting down new seeds, lightly rake over the area in order to loosen the packed soil. Then, apply a thin layer of topsoil or compost. Scatter the seed with a spreader, or even by hand if you wish and rake lightly to hide the seed from the birds. Keep evenly watered until the seed germinates, usually in seven to 14 days.

Grass seed is often sold in a mix of Kentucky bluegrass, perennial ryegrass, and fescue grass. This is done to create a lawn that can fight more diseases and is more tolerant of adverse conditions. If you would like to thicken up an existing lawn, choose a mix with a higher percentage of ryegrass. Fescue grass is finer texture than the other two kinds, but is more shade tolerant. If seeding a shadier area of lawn, choose a mix with more fescue.

Feed your lawn: It is always best to leave the grass clippings on the lawn when mowing, unless there is an excess of clippings that might cause yellowing.

As grass clippings decompose, they are a good source of nitrogen and moisture for the lawn. Most lawns need regular fertilizing to stay thick and healthy.

Before going out to purchase fertilizer, measure the square footage of your lawn, so you know how much to buy. Try to use organic-based products whenever possible. Most organic fertilizers have lower percentages of nitrogen, phosphorus and potassium, but provide a slower, longer feeding than chemical-based fertilizers.

Your first feeding in spring should be higher in nitrogen. Your summer feeding should be lower in nitrogen and higher in phosphorus and potassium. Allow at least six weeks between feedings.

Mow high: An essential part of keeping a lawn healthy is regular mowing. Mowing your lawn once a week will be sufficient.

If you are feeling energetic, mowing twice a week during the month of May will produce a markedly thicker lawn, which is the best way to fight weeds.

Keep the mower blades sharp, and cut at a height of two to two-and-a-half inches. In the hot and dry summer months, you want to leave the grass to grow taller, to three to four inches.

Mowing once every two weeks or less is not recommended. Infrequent mowing will cause your lawn to thin out—a lot. When it is extremely hot, do not mow in the middle of the day.

Water deeply: Water your lawn deeply, but not too often, to promote the growth of deep roots. Apply about one inch of water, only when needed: usually no more than once a week.

To measure how much water you have applied, place a small tuna or pet food can on the lawn. Stop watering when the can is full. Too much water starves the soil of oxygen and invites disease.

It is better to give your lawn one inch of water at one time than a quarter-inch four times a week. One inch of water penetrates the soil deeper and will remain longer. A bit of water at a time will quickly evaporate and does little good.

Along with these four tips, it is important to monitor your lawn on an ongoing basis.

The quicker you notice a problem and deal with it, the quicker your lawn will recover.

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

Plant deals, expert advice at NOTL Horticultural Society's botanical bazaar

Continued from Front Page

pulmonaria, baptisia, Solomon's seal and groundcover sedum," said Bott, who loves the idea of gardeners sharing plants and knowledge.

"But the true treasures are the perennials donated by our members. The plants come from local gardens, so you can be sure they will transplant well into your garden."

Many of the horticultural society's members are also lending a helping hand to set up for the sale.

"We are busy coaching volunteers to set up two new tents, arrange plants and help buyers cash out," Bott said.

"There will also be lots of hands available to help buyers take their plants to their cars. And, as usual, we'll be offering a tool-sharpening service at the sale."

Prices for the plants range from \$1 to \$15, with most prices between \$3 to \$8.

"Our membership includes master gardeners and professional landscapers, so there's always plant advisers on hand to help residents to add their plants to the right place in their gardens," added Bott, who retired from the Toronto District School Board and moved to NOTL 11 years ago with little knowledge of gardening.

It was when Bott joined the horticultural society that her knowledge of gardening blossomed.

"My neighbour convinced me to join the society and

I'm so glad I did. The group is a mix of people from all walks of life with one common interest – learning about gardening," she said.

"I started to attend the monthly meetings, enjoyed the speakers and learned a lot about bees, pollinator gardens and the proper pruning and care of trees and shrubs."

As a result of the group's efforts, members now know a lot about gardening – but it doesn't stop there.

The society also invests the money earned during the plant sale into a variety of sustainable projects.

"Last year, we raised \$6,000," said Bott. "We used that money to donate pollinator plants and pay for a water tap to be installed at the Newark Park Community Garden, donated to the heritage trail, bought and delivered potted plants to the residents of the three long-term care homes in NOTL and purchased plants for the William and Nassau gardens, that our members maintain."

Bott encourages both brown and green thumbs to visit the sale and join the horticultural society.

"Gardening is about more than pulling weeds. It's satisfying to watch things grow. And there's nothing better than wandering through my garden picking a little basil to complement my freshly picked tomatoes."

Visit notlHORTSOCIETY.COM to become a member and follow the group on Facebook.



Perennials like hostas, plus more, will be on sale during the botanical bonanza on May 13. RICHARD HARLEY

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