

# The Lake Report

Vol. 2, Issue 14

Niagara-on-the-Lake's first independent newspaper

April 11, 2019

## SORE WINS RIGHT TO JOIN LEGAL BATTLES

### Superior Court rules activists should be involved in legal proceedings over development of Randwood Estate

Richard Harley  
Editor

Save Our Rand Estate, a NOTL group advocating for the preservation of the historic Randwood property, was awarded full party status Thursday, allowing the group to be part of the legal action between the town and developer Benny

Marotta.

The victory means SORE will be allowed to present arguments and cross-examine witnesses in the court battle between the Town of Niagara-on-the-Lake, Two Sisters Resorts Corp. and Solmar Niagara 2 Inc. — commonly known as Solmar Development Corp. The activist group was

also awarded costs for the legal proceedings. More than 60 SORE supporters packed the courthouse in St. Catharines last Wednesday to show their support for the group.

“Well, I must admit, I’m certainly encouraged,” said SORE’s lawyer Patrick Little.

“Now we’re two for two



A portion of the stone wall surrounding the Randwood Estate. RICHARD HARLEY

in being able to participate as SORE, as a representative of a significant portion of the community.”

Justice Meredith Donahue delivered her handwritten ruling last Thursday.

Two Sisters wants to build a six-storey hotel and 160-unit subdivision on the Randwood Estate

and nearby properties. The developer has launched a legal challenge to a plan by the town to designate the property a historic site.

SORE represents local residents, many of whom live close to the Rand site. They are concerned about the size and scope of the development, loss of historic features on the estate and

the impact on their homes and enjoyment of life.

“I think (the ruling) is a concise review of the arguments and then a clear determination based on the appropriate criteria that SORE has an interest and would benefit the tribunal, in this case the Superior

*Continued on Page 3*

## What constitutes a restaurant?

### Allowing a restaurant on an agriculturally zoned property could set a precedent that would negatively affect restaurants in town, some business owners fear

Richard Harley  
Editor

What makes a restaurant a restaurant? When does it become a snack bar? Or a cafe?

Whatever the answer, town council might soon have to make a decision as to exactly what constitutes a restaurant, and some local business

owners fear a precedent could be set if the Town of Niagara-on-the-Lake allows restaurants on agriculturally zoned properties.

The issue stems from controversy surrounding the newly-opened Queenston Mile Winery on Queenston Road. The owners of the winery plan to serve food during the day, which some

local business owners feel is unfair.

The debate comes down to the semantics of what is and isn’t a restaurant. Queenston Mile claims it isn’t planning a restaurant, but simply wants to offer light food options to its customers while they’re enjoying a glass of

*Continued on Page 2*



Queenston Mile built a full-service kitchen, though it hasn’t been set up. RICHARD HARLEY

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# People struggling with 'definition of restaurant,' says Queenston Mile general manager

*Continued from Front Page*

wine, while others like Paul Harber, owner of Ravine Winery and Restaurant, say if you're serving food that's cooked in an on-site kitchen, then it has the capability to be a restaurant.

"If the food is processed, from received, prepared and served – that's a restaurant. What they've built and what they're asking for in zoning and licencing is for a restaurant, or would at least have the capability to be a restaurant operating seven days a week, 11 a.m. to two in the morning serving alcohol."

Queenston Mile has already built and stocked a kitchen, dish washing station and prep room. Still, co-owner and president Andrew Howard says he doesn't feel it constitutes a restaurant.

"We're not going to have a separate restaurant. We don't plan to do dinner service. We would like people to be able to come in and have a food and wine experience," Howard said, adding that from a technical planning aspect, the winery won't be applying for restaurant status.

"I don't want people to misconstrue what we're trying to do," he said. "We want to do light food and wine pairings."

"The application we have in I think calls it like a cafe or something," he added.

He said he would like customers to be able to have a "food and wine experience."

"So we do want to do food service. In the technical planning aspect, we haven't asked for restaurant status."

Alison Zalepa, general manager of Queenston Mile, says they won't be the first agriculturally zoned winery to offer light food options.

Harber, who operates Ravine on a commercially zoned property, says it will be the first agriculturally zoned restaurant he's aware of, and believes it isn't fair

to business owners who have abided by town bylaws and made efforts to be good neighbours for years.

"I hope that they are able to produce a winery on the site. I'm just worried as a resident: can this happen in my backyard? As a winery owner, can anybody who has a winery estate licence right now apply for it and get it? Everyone with (proper) acreage of property can have a farm winery but not everybody should have the privilege of popping up an event facility or restaurant anywhere in the rural parts of the municipality of Niagara-on-the-Lake."

Harber said to him it's about protecting Niagara-on-the-Lake's rural lands.

"It's protecting not just now, but the future of rural residential land, agricultural practices that need to be respected as well."

He said he thinks the precedent set by Queenston Mile could disrupt the wine and restaurant industry in Niagara-on-the-Lake entirely, noting if anyone can apply for an estate winery licence on just 10 or 20 acres of land — which is proposed by council — then NOTL could end up with an oversaturation of wineries and restaurants.

If that happens, he thinks it could affect business right down to the tourist district on Queen Street, noting there would be little reason for business owners to pay hefty rent fees if they could just go buy rural land and open up shop, or latch into an estate winery.

"I don't think anybody really grasps it. If you like living in Niagara-on-the-Lake because you're out on a concession or a line, and you're in farm country, just know that if you don't own the farm that is beside you, it could be flipped to an event facility if this goes through — it's possible."

He said if wineries are allowed estate licences on 20 acres or more, and if those wineries are allowed to operate restaurants, there's "a lot of parcels of land that could then be converted into (restaurants).

"Do all the residents know that they could be living beside a restaurant or event facility in the near future if this does go through?"

He said he's been asked about what it could mean for the town's future.

"The questions that I'm being asked are, 'can any farm have this now if this goes through?' That scares me."

Queenston Mile management feels differently about how their plans could affect agriculture in the area.

Howard and Zalepa say they think allowing wineries to make an additional source of income is beneficial to the agricultural community.

"The Provincial Policy Statement and the greenbelt plan basically say farmers need to find ways to thrive from a business perspective. We need to start being fiscally responsible as businesses and acting like businesses, so that's what we're trying to do," Zalepa said.

"So (we are in alignment with) all of the provincial and regional plans. We're an agricultural business that's trying to be smart and think like a business and be profitable."

He said there is a "misperception" the winery opened without the proper permits.

"There was an email sent to a neighbour that actually had the wrong date on it," he said.

The town confirmed it made a clerical error on the date for the original permit and that Queenston Mile did nothing wrong.

The winery got its approval to open in early November.

"So a lot of our neighbours think we opened without



Although owners say they don't plan a restaurant, Queenston Mile has a fully functioning dish washing station capable of handling restaurant capacity. RICHARD HARLEY

permits, but we had the approvals ... we wouldn't have opened without our permits."

He admitted the winery did build a kitchen, but said it "worked with the (town) of Niagara-on-the-Lake and the building inspectors right through the whole process."

"We responded every time (the town) wanted us to do anything. We worked with the head of inspections really closely during the process."

He said the kitchen was built with foresight to the future.

"Rather than building it twice, we put the kitchen in place," Howard said "We could have pulled the kitchen equipment out of there if (the inspector) needed us to. The kitchen equipment essentially is stored in place because it's not functional ... we couldn't run the kitchen right now."

He says the town inspector told the winery not to hook up the exhaust fan.

"I don't want to deceive anyone. 'Cause we're not applying for restaurant status, but we do want to serve food. We don't plan to have like a 'dining room'. We want to have food and wine experiences. We absolutely want to serve food. We've built a beautiful kitchen, once we're allowed to actually have a kitchen and install it and hook it up."

Harber also wonders if the kitchen and winery meet all the necessary planning criteria.

Howard said a lot of wineries do their food service as an "after thought" and wind up trying to retro-fit their place to safely and efficiently serve food. "So we've

installed a walk-in freezer and a walk-in fridge."

Zalepa said they "learned the hard way" at Creekside, a partner winery to Queenston Mile.

"We're constantly retrofitting and redoing what we (already) did," said Howard.

He said right now the winery is a "farmgate on its way to having an estate licence."

"We don't have the rights to do a full restaurant," he said. "If we wanted to we'd have to go back to council for a new set of permits."

Howard couldn't say what kind of food is going to be on the menu, or when they plan to start serving.

"If I thought that this process was a logical process, then I'd say we would have done it a year ago. So I've stopped trying to guess."

He said he isn't sure how many tables there will be either.

"You won't know until (the fire department) and everyone else gets involved in what your capacity is. We think we could have a private event for 100 to 150 people. But we're not actually asking for outdoor events ... It's hard to decide when and what we could do until we have the permits."

A winery is currently automatically allowed 24 outdoor events per year according to town bylaws.

Howard says it took the winery a year just to get a farm gate licence, which allows the winery to retail wine.

"I feel like it shouldn't be quite so hard. It's been a difficult, expensive process."

He said the winery plans to increase production to 5,000 cases based on what they're making there already.

"We're a big farm, we're a big chunk of land, and we have a lot of acres," said Howard.

He said he thinks Prince Edward County is a "good example" of how industries are changing.

The agriculture business, he said.

"The notion of helping farmers be competitive and viable."

The kitchen is all restaurant-grade stainless steel.

They've also spent \$80,000 on a septic system.

Currently the winery is serving a small charcuterie platter.

He said everything is there with the hope of the winery acquiring an estate licence.

Zalepa said the winery isn't intending to do a lunch service either.

"It's the definition of a restaurant that people are struggling with," said Zalepa.

She said she doesn't think allowing light food at the winery would negatively affect other restaurants.

"We're better as an industry when we all are working at a really high level ... So I encourage other wineries and restaurants to deliver at a level that I can be proud of."

"Restricting competition is the worst thing you can do," said Zalepa. "There's no quick buck in the wine industry."

The property is 50 acres in total and shares grapes with Creekside.

Wine has been made for Creekside in the building for "eight or 10 years," Howard said.

"We're not going to have a separate restaurant. We don't plan to do dinner service."





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# SORE 'pleased' with outcome

Continued from Front Page

Court, by providing a perspective that deserves to be heard," said Little.

He said he thinks SORE has come together to reflect a view that, while not at odds with the town's perspective, emphasizes what residents see as "part of an important segment of the profile that the community has in what Randwood represents."

He noted that the high turnout at public meetings pertaining to Randwood show that NOTL has a "significant group of people who support SORE."

"Another 420 people have gone onto the SORE website and said, 'Please email me all the stuff about it' ... So it's not as if it's a band of four people — anarchists — who are trying to sway the public mood," Little said.

Little said SORE is a "groundswell of people" who are generally concerned that Two Sisters is going to destroy heritage attributes of an iconic property which "could very well be preserved" if they stuck to plans that were approved in 2011.

"The idea is to provide a forum, to provide a voice for that segment of the community," Little said. "So, why is there a need for there to be a six-storey hotel? Why is there a need to be a 160-unit subdivision stuck at the back? I think SORE provides representation for those people who agree that NOTL has a unique profile and that the Randwood Estate is part of that," he said.

"Certainly, redevelopment of it makes sense. It's no longer a viable resort or country home for summer purposes. But there certainly has to be some value ascribed to what is there presently, both in house and landscaping terms, that seems to be being run roughshod over by the Two Sisters proposal."

Lyle Hall, one of SORE's core members, said the group is feeling good about the win.

"Clearly, we're quite

happy," Hall said.

"I think we're still a little perplexed on why we're even having this battle. I think SORE has demonstrated we have a position and an interest, and a unique position and interest in what's happening on the Rand Estate. And we don't quite understand why Marotta and his team are continually fighting us."

**"Just to reiterate, we are not anti-development. We are anti-bad development,"**

LYLE HALL  
CORE MEMBER OF SORE

"But we're here to see this through. We're not going away and I guess if he wants to continue doing this, we'll continue as well. I think we're certainly heartened to see the judge side with us, and not just side with us on allowing us to be a party but side with us on costs as well."

Little said next step for SORE is asking to be a part of the matters at the Local Planning Appeals Tribunal, so that they may have a say during the tribunal for an application to quash heritage designation of the Randwood Estate.

"And SORE I think provides a very good opportunity to coordinate and to coalesce the community positions with quite frankly, in my opinion, superior expert evidence," Little said.

"I mean there are five expert reports that were prepared and filed in December by SORE. They were retained by SORE, paid by SORE. And so rather than just relying on a neighbour saying 'Oh yeah, it's too big, it's too much traffic,' without having a professional opinion that can be backed up by qualifications, SORE has retained people to speak on transportation, on environmental concerns, on design, on heritage features, so that (the group) is in a position to make a contri-

but ion to these authoritative tribunals that each have their focus — as well as being able to represent a significant component of the community at town council, to assist staff, to assist councillors, to arrive at a decision that would be reflective in political terms of what the community would like," he said.

Little said SORE has proven its commitment to being involved in the process by spending money to obtain expert opinions and letting residents' voices be heard.

Hall said he, too, feels SORE has a unique position regarding the estate.

"We do have new information to bring and we have consultants we have engaged, but I think the test, if I understand the legality of it, is that we have a different position than the town, in that the Town of Niagara-on-the-Lake represents all the residents of NOTL, and for a whole host of situations and issues beyond just the Rand Estate. We, as SORE, have a unique and very narrow focus, and that focus is unique or different from the town's focus."

"Our next challenge is LPAT, and we will continue to advocate to have SORE's voice at the table. And our hope would be that perhaps at some stage Mr. Marotta realizes our legitimacy and we can have this battle in court over the merits and not whether Mr. Marotta thinks we're eligible or not."

In 2011, town council approved plans for a four-storey hotel on the properties of the Randwood Estate. "The Romance Inn was approved (narrowly) by council in 2011. Benny Marotta bought the property knowing what was approved for this important property. If he didn't want to do that, he shouldn't have bought the property," Hall said.

"Just to reiterate, we are not anti-development. We are anti-bad development," he added.

SORE posted the following letter on its website Friday:

"SORE is pleased to report that it has received the decision of Madame Justice Donahue of the Ontario Superior Court following yesterday's proceeding in St. Catharines.

SORE has been granted full party status to intervene in the court challenge brought by Benny Marotta's companies of your elected Council's decision to designate the Rand Estate under the Heritage Act. The Marotta group lawyers fought very hard, for reasons they never fully explained to the court, to keep SORE out of the case.

Madame Justice Donahue concluded in her decision that:

SORE would be adversely affected should the Marotta group be successful in quashing council's designation decision, and she was satisfied that SORE would make a useful contribution to the case.

Costs will be awarded to SORE from the Marotta group for its successful result in this motion.

The Marotta group's application to overturn Council's decision will be heard in the last week of June in St. Catharines. We will be looking to pack the courtroom again.

This is now the second legal proceeding launched by the Marotta group where SORE has sought, and received, party status over the objections of Benny Marotta's lawyers. The next one will be their appeal to the LPAT of Council's non-decision on their zoning by-law application for the proposed convention centre/hotel. That will be heard May 9, 2019, at the NOTL Community Centre. SORE will be looking for full attendance at that pre-hearing conference. And a reminder if you have not yet done so to write to the LPAT case coordinator to advise of your support for SORE and its application for party status before LPAT (see our web posting and last email for more information).

Thank you for your continued support."



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# Editorial: Welcoming Arjun Saroy

The Lake Report

The Lake Report would like to welcome Niagara College student Arjun Saroy to our team for the month of April.

Saroy is completing his school placement in order to learn the ins and outs of working in a news room.

Hailing all the way from

Pune, India, Saroy was recently awarded “the most star-worthy” student of his graduating class and aspires to take his journalism experience into other fields someday.

A positive, keen storyteller — and former model — Saroy has a deep appreciation for people and the role community news plays in

keeping everyone informed about what’s happening in their communities.

Known for his photography and interview skills, Saroy is already developing what’s needed as a professional multi-media journalist.

The Lake Report thanks Saroy for his energy and creative input and encour-

ages community members to say hello if you see him out reporting.

From all of us on The Lake Report team, we wish Arjun the best in future endeavours — whether its writing stories, taking photos, or being the one in front of the camera.

[editor@niagaranow.com](mailto:editor@niagaranow.com)



Arjun Saroy



## LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

### Re: Anti-immigration posters

Dear Editor,

As a Christian leader in NOTL, representing a large faith community that lives, works and worships in this region, I would like to say to the people who have felt themselves targeted by the anti-immigration posters that have been placed around town: the opinions and attitudes presented in those posters do not reflect who we are or what we believe.

The congregation I am involved with, where I grew up, was formed by people who came to Canada thanks to immigration policies that welcomed newcomers who were looking for a safe place to raise families, and work for a better future; people who had experienced the trauma of war and oppression, and the distress of

poverty. I myself came to Canada as an immigrant, and am so thankful that this country, this community, made room for me to be at home.

What we have been so richly blessed to receive, we will most certainly not deny anyone else solely on the basis of their skin colour, clothing style, or religious beliefs. We welcome as our neighbours anyone who seeks a place of peace, security and friendship. It is our congregation’s desire and mission to share peace and love in our community, just as others shared with our people when we were in need. You are welcome here!

**Renate Klaassen**  
(Associate Pastor)  
Niagara United  
Mennonite Church

### To the horse and carriage protesters

Dear Editor,

When Adam Stirr, spokesperson for At War For Animals Niagara, holds an “End speciesism” sign, I pray his empathy and viewpoint reach out to Chippettes and greyhounds racing at dog tracks, to tortoises who compete to a finish line at the speed of molasses, and to cockroaches who meander in a straight line against each other in many countries. Other species are placed in this position for human pleasure and/or as a mode of gambling.

I assume that AWFAN abides by the equal rights (and due consideration) clause with respect to creature size, number of appendages, appearance and gender.

Perhaps a protest group whose name begins with At War does not prescribe to Gandhi’s peaceful philoso-

phy of passive resistance. Locals For Carriages have witnessed harassing behaviour, i.e. following carriages and shouting comments to carriage drivers.

Speciesism is also against the use of service and police dogs. Do the advocates actually believe the disabled, deaf and blind aided by service dogs and police forces whose canines are “sergeants at arms” would treat these dogs with less than high admiration, respect and love?

I know precisely how my brethren Shriners, who in Toto subsidize 22 North American hospitals dedicated to burnt and handicapped children would feel on this issue.

How shameful and cold-hearted ... the tears are falling on my words.

**Stephen Oprici**

### ‘We like to work’



A Sentineal Carriages horse goes through the drive-thru at Tim Hortons. SUPPLIED PHOTO

## The Lake Report

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7:30 pm, Stratus Vineyards

# Run, trout, run!



Steelhead trout, or *oncorhynchus mykiss*, swim up-stream at Four Mile Creek on Sunday. Often confused for salmon, Steelhead trout also return to the rivers in which they were born to spawn. They will not always die after spawning, however, unlike salmon. Steelhead spawning occurs in the spring, with the peak of spawning occurring in mid-April. EUNICE TANG

## Council to revisit idea of hotel tax

Dariya Baiguzhiyeva  
The Lake Report

NOTL council is again exploring imposing a tax on all hotel rooms and bed and breakfast rentals.

The idea of instituting a municipal accommodation tax made a comeback at Niagara-on-the-Lake council's meeting on Monday night.

Council voted to form a subcommittee consisting of councillors Norm Arsenault, Wendy Cheropita and Allan Bisback.

The three councillors and town staff will review information about the municipal accommodation tax and speak to business owners and industry leaders. The subcommittee will then return to council with recommendations on whether to implement the tax.

Provincial legislation allows municipalities to collect an accommodation tax and share a minimum of 50 per cent of the revenue with a not-for-profit tourism agency. The tax revenue is to be mostly used for tourism growth and promotion.

The tax would apply to all transient accommodation such as resorts, hotels, motels, bed and breakfasts that provide rentals for less than 30 days.

"I think we're all looking



Town's newly formed subcommittee will review information on how to best implement the municipal accommodation tax. DARIYA BAIGUZHIEVA

to reopen the conversation," said Coun. Norm Arsenault, who put forward the motion to form a subcommittee.

"The previous council tried to implement it back in 2017-18. Bill 148 came in and put in a 21 per cent hike in minimum wage so the time was just awful. Everybody was against it."

Coun. Wendy Cheropita pointed out the subcommittee was formed to make sure everyone – the hotel industry, the Chamber of Commerce and other key stakeholders – is part of the conversation.

"And to look at both sides of the coin and how we should proceed from this point forward," said Cheropita.

In response to Coun. Gary Burroughs' question about whether places like Airbnb

rentals would be a part of the conversation, town clerk Peter Todd said such accommodations would be subject to the tax, but it would be up to the municipality to decide whether to exempt them.

The debate around the municipal accommodation tax has been going on for a number of years.

The NOTL Chamber of Commerce and tourism accommodation operators have fought loud and hard against a hotel tax every time the idea has been discussed.

In January 2018, the town's corporate services advisory committee recommended that council levy a municipal accommodation tax of four per cent on all transient accommodations and to

discuss with industry stakeholders how to implement and administer it.

In February 2018, council voted to receive the report on a hotel tax and not to take any further action.

The motion to adopt the tax was introduced again at a council meeting on Aug. 27, 2018, but councillors didn't pursue it.

A number of Ontario municipalities have imposed an accommodation tax.

Niagara Falls passed a bylaw effective Jan. 1, 2019, implementing a \$2 tax for each day or part of a day stay.

In Kingston, a hotel tax started in August 2018. According to a city staff's report in March 2018, the tax revenue from the hotels, motels, and bed and breakfast rentals would be up to \$3,280,640 per year.

Mississauga implemented a hotel tax on April 1, 2018. According to a City of Toronto staff report, with 7,500 hotel rooms, an average occupancy rate of 64 per cent and average daily rate of \$140, the 4 per cent tax would generate \$9.8 million in Mississauga annually.

Ottawa, Toronto and Windsor also instituted a municipal accommodation tax in 2018.



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# Irrigation committee to broadcast open meetings from boardroom

Dariya Baiguzhiyeva  
The Lake Report

Niagara-on-the-Lake council will allow the town's irrigation committee to meet in the operations boardroom, but its meetings will be broadcast to the public.

Last week, committee of the whole rejected the irrigation committee's request to hold its meetings "off-camera" and in the operations boardroom instead of the council chambers.

Some committee of the whole members, including Coun. Stuart McCormack and Coun. Clare Cameron, spoke out against private meetings referring to the Municipal Act, which states all public meetings should be open to the public.

At the council meeting Monday, Coun. John Wiens made a motion to let the committee hold open meetings in the operations



Town's irrigation committee has always held its meetings in the boardroom instead of council chambers, said Coun. John Wiens. DARIYA BAIGUZHIYEVA

boardroom.

"The major reason they want to go there is because of the maps and the organization of that room," said Wiens.

Town Clerk Peter Todd has talked to the irrigation committee on its obligations in regard to the Municipal Act, said Wiens, and the committee is "in full understanding" of it.

Cameron asked if the committee's chair was

willing to move into closed sessions when appropriate.

"The reason why they want to move over there is because they have maps. All the maps are in that room there and they have the ability to discuss all the maps there," said Wiens, adding the committee will move to closed, in-camera sessions when appropriate but, besides that, all the meetings will still be open and broadcast to the public.

# Town CAO's contract extended one year

Dariya Baiguzhiyeva  
The Lake Report

Holly Dowd's contract as Niagara-on-the-Lake's chief administrative officer has been extended for one year.

Following a closed session where personnel matters were discussed, town council voted to extend Dowd's contract during a council meeting Monday.

The CAO's contract expired on Jan. 31, 2019, said Lord Mayor Betty Disero in an interview with the reporters, but council decided to extend it until Dec. 31, 2019.

Dowd did not attend Monday's council meeting.

She previously served as town clerk and director of corporate services and has been working with the town for 37 years.



Following a closed session Monday, town council voted to extend CAO's contract until the end of 2019. DARIYA BAIGUZHIYEVA

She was first appointed as an interim chief administrative officer in 2016 and was permanently named CAO by council on Jan. 16, 2017.

Since then, Dowd has been serving as town's chief administrative officer. She earned \$166,784.86 in 2018, according to the Ontario public sector salary disclosure list.

Disero said the appointment was probably "positive" for Dowd. "She knows she'll be in position."

Dowd didn't comment about whether she would like to extend her contract after her current term is over, but in an email response to The Lake Report she said she is "fine with this decision."

# MP Rob Nicholson to retire

Dariya Baiguzhiyeva  
The Lake Report

Rob Nicholson, Conservative MP in the Niagara Falls riding, will not run in the next federal election.

As the longest-serving Conservative MP, a 66-year-old Nicholson has worked under three Conservative prime ministers: Brian Mulroney, Kim Campbell and Stephen Harper. He was first elected to Parliament in 1984 and was re-elected six more times.

"It has been an honour to represent the riding of Niagara Falls in the House of Commons and I am incredibly grateful to the people of Niagara Falls, Fort Erie and Niagara-on-the-Lake who put their trust in me to serve as their Member of Parliament," Nicholson said in a statement. "I am confident that under the leadership of



MP Rob Nicholson won't be running again for the position. SUPPLIED PHOTO

Andrew Scheer, a Conservative Government will be elected this October and I look forward to lending my support to the campaign."

Before entering politics, Nicholson was a practicing lawyer and he was also a Niagara Region councillor for six years.

"I have been truly blessed to have fulfilled my dream job of serving as a Member of Parliament," Nicholson said in a statement. "I am looking forward to spending time with my wife Arlene and our family, who have been so supportive throughout my political career."

# Town to restrict heavy vehicles in Heritage District

Dariya Baiguzhiyeva  
The Lake Report

Despite rejecting a staff report last week, Niagara-on-the-Lake's council approved two recommendations regarding heavy vehicles coming into the Heritage District.

At their meeting Monday, councillors passed two staff recommendations. One directs town staff to prepare a heavy vehicle bylaw based on a maximum registered gross weight and the other calls for installation of signs warning about the weight restriction.

A third recommendation, allowing staff to monitor the Front-Simcoe intersection to determine if parking spaces on that corner need to be removed, was defeated by council.

Residents' complaints about an increasing incursion of tour buses and the negative impact of buses on the environment prompted town staff to look for the solutions for how to



Front-Simcoe intersection sees lots of traffic but doesn't have any heavy vehicle restrictions right now. DARIYA BAIGUZHIYEVA

deal with a flow of heavy vehicles coming into the Heritage District.

At the council meeting, Coun. Gary Burroughs expressed hopes that, if passed, the bylaw would be applicable to Queenston as well.

He said one street in Queenston saw 84 buses in one day last year.

"Our roads in Queenston

are not built to take that kind of traffic," he said. "So, if the weight issue goes through, I hope it's also applied to Queenston."

Sheldon Randall, the town's director of operations, said the staff report is only dealing with the Old Town at this time.

"If we approve it as is, we will report back and then we can add to the report and we can let you know about any other areas of concern within the town," he said.

In response to Coun. Wendy Cheropita's question regarding buses coming down Front and Simcoe streets, Randall said delivery trucks, buses coming into town with a specific point of business or buses dropping people off will still be allowed regardless of the restriction.

"It's just buses that are just willy-nilly, floating around town. That's what we're trying to prevent from happening," Randall told council.

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# Niagara College students raise more than \$27,000 for Community Care

Brittany Carter  
The Lake Report

Niagara College students “put a cap on homelessness,” raising \$27,419 for Community Care of St. Catharines and Thorold as part of the Raising the Roof’s toque campaign.

The business department at the Niagara-on-the-Lake campus saw students acting on recently learned selling skills, raising money for a local community organization.

More than 1,500 hats were sold by students in the Professional Selling Level 1 class. Each student received \$100 worth of baseball caps and toques to sell, many going above and beyond, returning for more head-gear to sell.

Monique Finley, a professor in the School of Business and Management Studies, said in an interview that a total of nine classes in the business department of NC participated in the professional selling course. A partnership was formed between the college and Community Care to sell hats and ballcaps, with all of



Niagara College’s Sales and Marketing program top sellers of the Toque Campaign, Alexandra Lacivita from Ridgeway and Emily Battaglia from Brampton. SUPPLIED PHOTO

the funds going back to the Raising the Roof campaign, which Community Care St. Catharines organizes on an annual basis.

“We believe it’s been going on for the better part of a decade. I’ve been involved for the last four years. It was Derek Spence, (professor in marketing at NC), who I believe initiated this entire partnership,” Finley said.

Top sellers were first-year students Alexandra Lacivita from Ridgeway and Emily Battaglia from Brampton.

Finley said in a media

release that selling hats is a valuable experiential learning opportunity for students that also provide support for the community.

“What they’ve accomplished is incredible. I’m truly proud,” Finley said.

Lacivita said in the media release that she saw an opportunity to sell more hats at a Super Bowl party.

“I want to go into sales and selling hats prepared me for that,” said Lacivita. “I used some of the strategies of selling we learned in class, like picking the right moment to sell and evaluat-

ing people’s behaviours.”

Finley said it wasn’t necessarily an exercise in raising money for charity, it was an exercise in selling - where the proceeds went to charity.

“I know it’s a subtle difference, but not in the business of fundraising. It was just a wonderful off-shoot of a selling experience.”

Raising the Roof is a nationwide organization that provides long-term solutions for homelessness. The toque campaign is one of many initiatives the organization supports.

# NOTL Hydro backs province’s electricity reforms

Dariya Baiguzhiyeva  
The Lake Report

Niagara-on-the-Lake residents won’t be affected much by the proposed provincial electricity changes, says NOTL Hydro’s president.

On March 21, Energy Minister Greg Rickford announced a series of plans to lower electricity costs for customers.

Some of these reforms will be implemented through Bill 97, also known as the Fixing the Hydro Mess Act, 2019.

If passed, the government says some of the changes would reform the governance of the Ontario Energy Board, make electricity bills and any rebates more transparent, start consultations on reducing electricity costs



Some provincial electricity changes won’t affect NOTL customers much, says NOTL Hydro president Tim Curtis. DARIYA BAIGUZHIEVA

for businesses and deliver conservation programs through a centralized Independent Electricity System Operator as opposed to local distribution companies.

By centralizing and refocusing the delivery of conservation programs, the government is hoping

to save up to \$442 million over the next three years.

Tim Curtis, NOTL Hydro’s president, said the local utility has been concerned with increasing electricity costs and government policies for a long time.

“This announcement is doing what a lot of our

recommendations were calling for,” Curtis told The Lake Report.

The reforms’ effect on NOTL residents will be minor, he said.

“The main savings are from doing away with a lot of conservation programs,” he said. “Most people won’t even see the impact. There will be a small reduction in the electricity charge ... And there will be some businesses affected by these programs no longer available but Niagara-on-the-Lake businesses, we worked closely with, they’ve been able to take advantage of these opportunities,” said Curtis.

“So the fact that the conservation is going away now, most of Niagara businesses have already taken advantage of the programs.”

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## Calling all chefs!

Local recipe book planned for 2019

The Lake Report is calling on all cooks, chefs, bakers and food enthusiasts in Niagara-on-the-Lake. We want your favourite family recipes, and the stories that go with them, to share with the community. Whether it’s a special stew, soup, or salad; the best bread or muffins; or a decadent dessert, we’d like to hear from you!

We’d love it if you could include pictures of the food where possible, and of the family member who might have passed the recipe down. If there is any family folklore associated with the recipe, we’d love to hear that too. Maybe there’s a certain occasion when it’s always made, perhaps there’s a funny or sad story to tell that relates to that particular recipe, or certain traditions that accompany it.

We will publish selected recipes regularly, and at the end of the year we’ll compile all the recipes together as a book of NOTL family favourites. Proceeds from the sale of the book will be donated to a local charity.

**Please send your recipes, pictures and stories to: [recipes@niagaranow.com](mailto:recipes@niagaranow.com)**

The top recipes will be published in an annual paperback book which will be available (in limited supply) to residents of Niagara-on-the-Lake at The Lake Report office. This year’s book (title uncertain!) will be released in the coming months!



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Tim Taylor  
The Lake Report

Through the weeks leading up to Easter, Niagara's four old town churches gather together each Friday, for an ecumenical (meaning: representing the whole body of churches) Lenten service and light lunch.

The five special weekly services acknowledge the common aspirations of the four faith communities and create opportunities for stronger community action on a number of fronts.

These collegial spiritual celebrations are not new in Niagara, but three of the four old town churches have recently arrived clergy, bringing a renewed enthusiasm for collaboration.

The series culminates in a single Good Friday service, for all four parishes, this year at St. Andrew's Presbyterian Church, on Friday April 19 at 11 a.m.

Father Randy Gallant is the longest serving of the four ministers, arriving at St. Vincent de Paul Catholic Church in 2012, from nine years at a parish in Fort Erie.

Gallant and his parishioners are pleased the longstanding tradition of ecumenical Lenten services has been restarted. "We're getting fifty or more people each week and more than 20 come from St. Vincent de Paul," Gallant notes with evident pride.

Gallant says that while there are differences in theology, the combined congregations all worship from the same scripture. "The faith component is our top priority. But anytime people can come together you are also building community."

Because Niagara-on-the-Lake is a small town, Gallant believes the task of building common interests is easier. "With just the four churches it is easier to connect, compared say, to larger cities."

Virginia Head is the rector of St. Andrew's Presbyterian Church. She and her husband Gregory arrived in Niagara a year ago from Peterborough to lead one of Niagara's oldest churches.

The first St. Andrew's built in 1794, burned during the War of 1812 and was rebuilt in its largely current form by the 1840's.

This year Head success-



The ministers of the four old town churches have revived the tradition of holding ecumenical services for Lent and Good Friday. From left: Randy Gallant, St. Vincent de Paul Catholic Church; Maureen Ellison, Grace United Church; William Roberts, St. Mark's Anglican Church and Virginia Head, St. Andrew's Presbyterian Church. TIM TAYLOR

fully urged the four parishes to broaden the ecumenical initiative beyond one single Good Friday service, to the five Fridays of Lent.

And the combined parishes are considering further collaboration. "We're talking about getting together and laying a Remembrance Day wreath," she says. "We're going to build it forward from here. Through unity we present a stronger voice."

"We're in the incubation

*“Communities are healthier when we work together. We have an opportunity to show leadership.”*

WILLIAM ROBERTS  
RECTOR  
ST. MARK'S ANGLICAN CHURCH

stages of starting to get this off the ground. I hope over time that we could work together to support causes of common interest."

Maureen Ellison, minister of Grace United Church,

accepted her new charge in Niagara, just five months ago.

Ellison jokes that coming from Prince Edward County, she's just ventured from one wine country to another. "I'm really not just chasing good wine," she says with a smile.

For her, the ecumenical effort has an extra more personal value. "It's helping me to get to know people in town very quickly. We're all walking the same road. It's just that we're coming from different places."

Ellison agrees that there may well be strength in numbers. She's looking for opportunities to work with her parishioners and her local church colleagues to have a greater collective impact.

"The United Church has historically not been shy about engaging community issues," she says. "And we still do."

Father William Roberts came to St. Mark's Anglican Church just over two years ago. St. Mark's is the province's oldest parish, dating back to 1792, having just celebrated its 225th An-

niversary in 2017.

Roberts has been associated with parishes across Canada, including positions in British Columbia, Alberta and Ontario.

Roberts acknowledges the spiritual value of the ecumenical services. But he also emphasizes the powerful opportunities for four parishes working together in the community interest.

"Churches working together is a sign to the rest of the community—in our challenging times—about what it is to collaborate in achieving important things," Roberts says. "Communities are healthier when we work together. We have an opportunity to show leadership."

Roberts lists some of the things that might be addressed by the four parishes: the challenges of the area's Caribbean workers; affordable housing, environmental issues, palliative care needs and so on.

"We want to go beyond sharing the fruit festivals," he laughs. "We could even meet with Town Council and offer support for addressing appropriate local



St. Andrew's Presbyterian Church. TIM TAYLOR

issues. We're exploring all the opportunities."

Each of the four faith leaders express their aspirations a little differently. But it is clear, it will be their similar interests that will drive their future ecumenical activities.

*The final Friday Lenten service and lunch takes place at St. Mark's on Friday, April 12 at noon. The Good Friday service for all old town parishes will be held at St. Andrew's on Friday, April 19 at 11 a.m.*

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# Peller Estate's Ten Below Icewine Lounge redesigned and reopened

Brittany Carter  
The Lake Report

While icewine can be found all over the region, only Peller Estates Winery and Restaurant offer tastings all year in the same freezing temperatures the grapes are harvested at -10 C.

Peller Estates built its Ten Below Icewine Lounge in 2015 to offer that unique experience to visitors. On March 30 the lounge was quietly re-opened after it was closed for less than a week for a complete overhaul and redesign, which happens every two years. The grand opening will take place May 4 for the winery's wine club members, but tours can be booked any time and run every day.

Ray Johnston, retail and experience manager of Peller Estates, said the room was built to provide an experience as unique as icewine itself.

"The idea of the room, the whole reason why we built it, was we want people to experience the crazy temperatures that we harvest icewine at."

The room, which is actually a giant freezer, has evolved since it was first constructed four years ago. Initially, the space was an L shape with what was

essentially a staging area at the entrance. Johnston said the area was included in the design because at the time, it was thought that the ice would melt if it wasn't sectioned off properly. When it was time to rebuild and redesign the room two years later, he said the team discovered that wasn't the case. The room was expanded to approximately 14 by 24 feet and can accommodate up to 25 people at a time. He said exact dimensions of the room vary depending on the thickness of the ice and how it is formed.

"It looks like an igloo on the outside, we have it all dolled up. But you go in and you're surrounded by 30,000 pounds of ice."

The bar is now made of ice, sculpted to look like a barrel with a wooden top. An ice-sculpted couch was also added, with the name Peller Estates carved into it, for a photo opportunity for visitors.

The room was built by Ice Culture, a company from Hensall, Ontario, which supplies ice and creates sculptures and displays all over the world.

Ice Culture returns to Peller Estates to maintain the room when needed, Johnston said, usually every six



Peller Estates Icewine is stored in compartments carved into the ice in the Ten Below Icewine Lounge.  
BRITTANY CARTER

months. He said the room is completely re-done every two years.

The lounge was built when the winery decided it would begin hosting the Greatest Winery Tour. Johnston said the tour lives up to its name, adding that the marketing team at the winery informed him Peller Estates is the most visited winery in North America.

Visitors make their way through the estate tasting a variety of seasonal wines. The tour moves guests through the winery, starting outside in the celebration lounge with a glass of sparkling wine. Moving to the vines to taste a white wine while hearing about technical aspects of wine-making, the tour then continues to a barrel cellar surrounded by active barrels in different stages of aging for a tasting of red wine.

The finale of the tour is the Ten Below Icewine Lounge. Guests, draped in parkas, are invited to experience what Johnston calls the world's best icewine in the temperature the grapes were harvested. It's much more comfortable than you might think though, Johnston said, adding that the conditions are not the exact same. Harvesters experience wind and humidity along with the below freezing temperatures, often working at night.

Proud of the room, the only one of its kind in North American wineries, Johnston said he gives visitors a quick run-down of icewine and the tasting room, before sending them in for their sample.

"Once they get inside they're caught up in taking pictures and looking at the room."

# Bravo Niagara springs into music



Bravo Niagara transforms the Stratus Vineyards Press Alley into a one-of-a-kind concert space for its annual Spring into Music series. The Press Alley is Stratus' production space - they use it for everything from sorting the grapes to bottling. Fermentation happens in the large oak and steel tanks that overlook the concert space. SUPPLIED PHOTO

Brittany Carter  
The Lake Report

Bravo Niagara kicks off its sixth annual Spring into Music Series on April 12. Stratus Vineyards in Niagara-on-the-Lake will host the Cheng2Duo at 7:30 p.m.

The brother/sister duo was named one of CBC Music's 30 hot Canadian classical musicians under 30.

Bryan Cheng, 20-year-

old cellist will play the 1696 Bonjour Stradivarius cello, with sister Silvie Cheng, classical and contemporary pianist.

The Spring into Music Series will also feature James Parker and the New Gen on May 12 at Stratus Vineyards, and Piano Six on May 25 at St. Mark's Anglican Church.

Tickets can be purchased through Bravo Niagara!'s website, [www.bravoniagara.org](http://www.bravoniagara.org).

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<b>14</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>17</b>
<p><b>Donuts or Doughnuts - 9 a.m. to 1 p.m.</b> - Canadian Food and Wine Institute, NOTL Campus</p> <p><b>Battle of the Brains: Beer Bingo Trivia - The Exchange Brewery</b></p> <p><b>Dig our Roots: Brunch and Bubbly - Konzelmann Estate Winery</b></p> <p><b>Willowbank Open House - 9 a.m. to 2 p.m.</b> - Willowbank, Queenston</p>	<p><b>Lawn Bowling - 1:45 p.m.</b> - Mori Room, NOTL Community Centre</p> <p><b>Monday Night Teen Hang Out - 6 p.m. to 7:15 p.m.</b> - NOTL Public Library</p> <p><b>Niagara Regional Native Centre: Community Drumming Night - 6 p.m. to 8 p.m.</b> - Niagara Regional Native Centre</p> <p><b>Beer &amp; Books: The Best Kind of People by Zoe Whittall - 7 p.m. to 9 p.m.</b> - The Old Winery Restaurant &amp; Wine Bar</p>	<p><b>NOTL Rotary Club - Noon</b> - NOTL Community Centre</p> <p><b>Mini Garden - 5 p.m. to 6 p.m.</b> - NOTL Public Library</p> <p><b>Easter Floral Workshop with Van Noort Florists - 6:30 p.m.</b> - Caroline Cellars Winery</p> <p><b>Paint Nite - 7 p.m.</b> - The Exchange Brewery</p>	<p><b>Simpson's Seniors' a.m. to 8 p.m.</b> - Simpson's Seniors' Centre</p> <p><b>Lawn Bowling - 1:45 p.m.</b> - Mori Room, NOTL Community Centre</p> <p><b>Trivia Night: Exchange Brewery (Spring League Week) - 7 p.m.</b> - The Exchange Brewery</p> <p><b>NOTL Toastmasters - 8:30 p.m.</b> - Niagara Regional Native Centre Campus</p> <p><b>Wine &amp; Words: Joanne - 7:30 p.m. to 9:30 p.m.</b> - NOTL Public Library</p>
<b>21</b>	<b>22</b>	<b>23</b>	<b>24</b>
<p><b>Easter Sunday</b></p>	<p><b>Famous &amp; Infamous with Betsy Masson: Hannah Peters Jarvis - 2 p.m.</b> - Niagara Historical Society &amp; Museum</p> <p><b>Niagara Regional Native Centre: Little Red Tail Hawks - 5 p.m. to 7 p.m.</b> - Niagara Regional Native Centre</p> <p><b>Niagara Regional Native Centre: Community Drumming Night - 6 p.m. to 8 p.m.</b> - Niagara Regional Native Centre</p> <p><b>Monday Night Teen Hang Out - 6 p.m. to 7:15 p.m.</b> - NOTL Public Library</p>	<p><b>Tumble Tots - 10 a.m. to noon</b> - NOTL Public Library</p> <p><b>NOTL Horticultural Society: Monthly Meeting - 6:30 p.m. to 9 p.m.</b> - NOTL Community Centre</p> <p><b>Paint Nite - 7 p.m.</b> - The Exchange Brewery</p> <p><b>NOTL Rotary Club - Noon</b> - NOTL Community Centre</p>	<p><b>Conspiracy of Hope About Breast Cancer - 2 p.m. to 4 p.m.</b> - NOTL Public Library</p> <p><b>Trivia Night: Exchange Brewery (Spring League Week) - 7 p.m.</b> - The Exchange Brewery</p> <p><b>NOTL Toastmasters - 8:30 p.m.</b> - Niagara Regional Native Centre Campus</p>

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Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
	<b>11</b> <b>Babies and Books</b> - 11 a.m. to 11:30 a.m. - NOTL Public Library <b>Niagara Golden Age Club: Cribbage for Seniors</b> - 1 p.m. - NOTL Community Centre <b>Minecraft Club</b> - 4 p.m. to 5 p.m. - NOTL Public Library <b>Tinker Thinker Thursdays</b> - 6 p.m. to 7 p.m. - NOTL Public Library	<b>12</b> <b>Yoga with Jenny</b> - 10 a.m. to 11 a.m. - NOTL Public Library <b>Mahjong Game Drop In</b> - 1 p.m. to 4 p.m. - NOTL Community Centre <b>Bravo Niagara! Presents Cheng Duo</b> - 7:30 p.m. - Stratus Vineyards <b>Humour &amp; HOPS Anniversary Show</b> - 9 p.m. - The Exchange Brewery	<b>13</b> <b>Mori Gardens Seminar Series: Spring Garden Essentials</b> - 10 a.m. - Mori Gardens <b>Bravo Niagara! Presents Nat Cole: A King's Centennial</b> - 7:30 p.m. - Stratus Vineyards <b>Lawn Bowling</b> - 1:30 p.m. - Mori Room, NOTL Community Centre
<b>17</b> <b>Day</b> - 8:30 son's Pharmacy 5 p.m. - Mori nity Centre <b>enge Brewery</b> ek 4) - 6:30 Brewery - 7 p.m. to College, NOTL <b>anna Goodman</b> m. - NOTL	<b>18</b> <b>Cribbage for Seniors</b> - 1 p.m. - NOTL Community Centre <b>Spring Opening Reception at RiverBrink Art Museum</b> - 5 p.m. to 7 p.m. - RiverBrink Art Museum <b>Niagara Regional Native Centre: Community Social</b> - 5 p.m. to 8 p.m. - Niagara Regional Native Centre <b>Art &amp; Fashion Lecture Series: Back to the Future-the Museum and Deaccessioning</b> - 7:30 p.m. - Niagara Historical Society & Museum <b>Seminar Workshop: Liz Jansen</b> - 6 p.m. to 8:30 p.m. - Clare's Harley-Davidson of Niagara	<b>19</b> <b>Good Friday</b> <b>Good Friday Dinner at Caroline Cellars</b> - 5 p.m. to 8 p.m. - Caroline Cellars Winery	<b>20</b> <b>Niagara Nursery School Annual Bunny Trail</b> - 9 a.m. to 11:30 a.m. - NOTL Community Centre <b>Mori Gardens Seminar Series: Discovering Herbs</b> - 10 a.m. - Mori Gardens <b>Daddy &amp; Me</b> - 10 a.m. to noon - NOTL Public Library <b>Lawn Bowling</b> - 1:30 p.m. - Mori Room, NOTL Community Centre <b>Easter Junk Food Pairing at Konzelmann</b> - Konzelmann Estate Winery
<b>24</b> <b>: The Truth</b> <b>er Screening</b> OTL Public <b>enge Brewery</b> ek 5) - 6:30 Brewery - 7 p.m. to College, NOTL	<b>25</b> <b>Niagara Golden Age Club: Cribbage for Seniors</b> - 1 p.m. - NOTL Community Centre <b>Open House: Tree By-law</b> - 4 p.m. to 6 p.m. - Town Municipal Offices <b>Minecraft Club</b> - 4 p.m. to 5 p.m. - NOTL Public Library <b>Tinker Thinker Thursdays</b> - 6 p.m. to 7 p.m. - NOTL Public Library	<b>26</b> <b>Mahjong Game Drop In</b> - 1 p.m. to 4 p.m. - NOTL Community Centre <b>Wayne Gates Office</b> - 1:30 p.m. to 4 p.m. - NOTL Public Library <b>Knit a Bit</b> - 2 p.m. to 4 p.m. - NOTL Public Library	<b>27</b> <b>Mori Gardens Seminar Series: Quick Garden Design Fixes</b> - 10 a.m. - Mori Gardens <b>Daddy &amp; Me</b> - 10 a.m. to noon - NOTL Public Library <b>Artist Workshop: Distant Edges with Lenore Walker</b> - 10:30 a.m. - RiverBrink Art Museum <b>Etsy: Made in Canada Spring Market</b> - 11 a.m. to 5 p.m. - The Hare Wine Co.

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# Niagara Travels: Berlin, Germany

Mike Keenan  
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Recently, you read about the sudden demise of Iceland's no-frills carrier, WOW Airlines that stranded many Canadians when they pulled the plug. A good reason to employ a reputable travel agent and to consider insurance!

I wanted to use my Air Canada accumulated points to fly to Berlin, but thought that their surcharge was excessive, so I shopped around for a cheaper flight. I discovered WOW Airlines in Iceland, a country I fondly remembered on a previous trip, so I gave it a try.

From Reykjavik, we changed planes and flew to Berlin. One bag made it; one didn't, and we had only that day in Berlin to check out the capital. More importantly, we would soon be on an AmaWaterways cruise through Germany, me with-

out clothes. And I had booked us via Eurail to Frankfurt the next day. We waited two hours at the airport to no avail. We took a train into the lovely Hotel Novotel Berlin Mitte, we later learned that they found my bag, but we had to return to the airport to pick it up. More wasted time. A lesson learned when dealing with no-frills airlines.

Earlier, we trudged to the nearby and incredible Mall of Berlin to purchase a set of clothes for me. Bottom line – we had time to see only one item while in Berlin. What would it be?

Germany's capital on the River Spree has much to offer, home to renowned universities, research institutes, orchestras, museums, and host to myriad sporting events. The city is well known for its festivals, diverse architecture, nightlife, contemporary arts, public transportation networks and

a high quality of living. Think Shaw's production of Cabaret.

Famous architecture includes the Reichstag, Germany's 1894 Neo-Renaissance Parliament building, the majestic Brandenburg Gate, a triumphal arch for Prussian King Frederick William II, heavily damaged in World War II, rebuilt in 1956, the Tiergarten, Berlin's central park, three major opera houses, 153 museums, the group on Museum Island (near our hotel), a UNESCO World Heritage Site.

Tom Hanks (Bridge of Spies) would be proud of us. We decided on the Berlin Wall and Checkpoint Charlie, featured in his movie. The wall was erected when Communist authorities drew a line in concrete between East and West Berlin in 1961, cutting off West Berlin from surrounding East Germany and from

East Berlin.

Before its erection, 3.5 million East Germans defected from the German Democratic Republic Between 1961-89, approximately 5,000 people attempted escape over the wall, death toll estimates between 100-200.

On November 9, 1989, the East German government announced that all GDR citizens could visit West Germany and West Berlin, and East German crowds climbed onto the wall, joined by West Germans in celebration. Over the next few weeks, the elated public and souvenir hunters chipped away parts of the wall. The governments later used industrial equipment to remove most of the rest. The fall of the Berlin Wall paved the way for German reunification, formally concluded on October 3, 1990.

We walked along the historic area, most of the



Mall of Berlin. MIKE KEENAN

structure gone, with haunting remnants and touristy kitsch at Checkpoint Charlie, including a KFC located on one side and McDonald's on the other side of the best-known crossing point during the Cold War. Viewed from the former American sector, there's a reproduction of the original guard house, and tourists can get their pictures taken standing beside uniformed soldiers from opposing camps. There's an informative display area that retraces the site's history as well as a museum.

Next morning, happy to have all of our luggage, and after a wonderful breakfast at the hotel, we caught a train at the impressive and huge Hauptbahnhof railroad station, a treat in itself. Off to Frankfurt and our cruise.

Niagara Travels is sponsored monthly by Upper Canada Travel, a full service travel agency located at 333 Mary St., Niagara-on-the-Lake, serving the public for over 50 years. Upper Canada Travel assists you with all of your travel needs. Call the helpful ladies at 905-468-4201.

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# A trip to Old Fort Niagara, Youngstown, NY

Tony Chisholm  
Special to The Lake Report

The Friends of Fort George offered a bus tour across the river to Fort Niagara On March 29, 2019.

The trip to the fort that can be seen across the river proved to be very popular and was sold out in days, though there were a limited number of people due to the size of the bus and how many people could be fed lunch at the fort.

A delay at the border meant the bus arrived at the fort an hour late but the group was met by patient guides in brilliant sunshine.

The Old Fort Niagara Association arranged for the group to see some extra buildings and sites the public doesn't normally have access to. These included the entrance to a special building, artifacts and a lot of interesting archeological items not normally on display.

They explained OFN undergoes an archeological dig every other year and that one is slated for this summer.

The group was allowed into the adjacent lighthouse, from which one can see across the river to Niagara-on-the-Lake; this was a highlight for the group because the lighthouse, built in the 1870s, won't be open to the public until June, when the view across the river would be obscured by the trees.

There was a great view from the top of the lighthouse 90-feet above the river. By the way — there is a high-definition webcam atop the lighthouse which can be viewed on the Old Fort Niagara website.

You can take a look at [www.oldfortniagara.org](http://www.oldfortniagara.org).

Three nations have held the fort during the last 300 years. The first French settlement on the site was Fort Conti in 1679, followed by Fort Denonville. But both were equally short lived.

Then in 1726, the "French Castle" was built out of



Friends of Fort George visited Old Fort Niagara March 29. SUPPLIED/TONY CHISHOLM



The view of Niagara-on-the-Lake from the lighthouse adjacent to Fort Niagara. SUPPLIED/TONY CHISHOLM

stone. It still stands today as the oldest building on the Great Lakes. It is still a magnificent structure saved by restoration work that took place in the 1920s.

The group learned from our guide that the French Castle was slated for demolition several times in the 1800s, but those plans fortunately never took place for a variety of reasons.

All agreed it would have been a terrible loss, as we toured this lovely, historic structure.

The French were followed by the British, who laid siege to the fort for 19 days in the summer of 1759 during the French and Indian War. It remained in British hands during the American revolution, until 1796 when Jays Treaty established our present border and it fell under American rule.

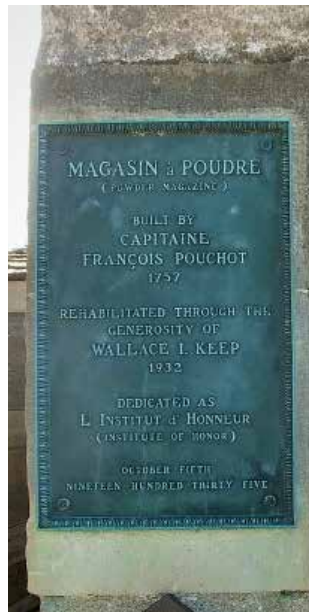
It was seized from American control in December of 1813 (by the British after

the burning of Niagara) but returned again to the Americans a second time in 1815. Its rich history has had a huge effect on the history of our town. For instance, the British commander during the siege in 1759 was John Prideaux who is immortalized today with a street of that name here in NOTL. Furthermore, when Prideaux was killed, Sir William Johnson, Superintendent General of the British Indian Department, became sole commander of the siege of Niagara and Johnson Street in NOTL is named after him.

The fort was used during the US Civil War and as a training site for soldiers during the two World Wars.

It was finally decommissioned, and the last army units departed in 1963. The US Coast Guard station remains the only military presence.

As well as a tour of the



Friends of Fort George visited Old Fort Niagara March 29. SUPPLIED/TONY CHISHOLM

fort, the special artifact shop and the lighthouse, we enjoyed a terrific 1812 luncheon inside the fort.

The "Friends" are considering making this an annual trip and maybe adding other tours to Buffalo, and/or Fort Erie.

The tour was a successful fundraising event for the Friends of Fort George, which works with Parks Canada to hire summer students to work at Fort George.

Keep up-to-date on our site at: [www.friendsoffortgeorge.ca](http://www.friendsoffortgeorge.ca).

Tony Chisholm is president of Friends of Fort George.



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Tom Bosley, President of Bosley Real Estate is pleased to welcome Wendy Midgley, to our Niagara-on-the-Lake office. Wendy, her husband Ross, and their family are 20 year plus residents of Niagara and are well known for their community involvement. Wendy's passion for excellence fits perfectly with Bosley Real Estate's goal of ensuring that every customer experience is exceptional embracing the best of real estate practices. Wendy, we wish you all the very best and on your behalf invite your friends and associates to call for timely and market focused answers to your real estate questions.

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- Across**
- E.g. a ketch (3-6)
  - Copper and zinc alloy (5)
  - Item (7)
  - Not friendly (7)
  - Nail-like fastener (5)
  - Carry (9)
  - Bony structures (9)
  - Burning gas (5)
  - Forbiddingly (5)
  - Environmental fouling agent (9)
  - Deadlock (9)
  - Lukewarm (5)
  - Arabian Nights hero (3,4)
  - Mythical creature (7)
  - Expel (5)
  - Northern Canadian island (9)
- Down**
- Melts (5)
  - Exterior (7)
  - Satan (9)
  - Larceny (5)
  - Practice session (9)
  - Defeats (5)
  - Grand Canyon state (7)
  - Confection (9)
  - In good order (9)
  - Home for abandoned children (9)
  - Ornamental water jets (9)
  - Conceive (7)
  - Sanction (7)
  - Make law (5)
  - Peer (5)
  - Move rhythmically (5)

*Have some fun*

The Lake Report is looking for puzzle makers who would like to help develop this page. We are seeking both standard and cryptic crossword writers. [editor@niagaranow.com](mailto:editor@niagaranow.com)

## Crossword Puzzle

1		2		3		4		5		6		7		8
9								10						
11						12								
13						14				15				
16		17				18						19		
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### Last issue's answers

1	T	H	R	O	A	T	Y	5	T	O	P	M	O	S	T	
2	I	W	H					10	A	P	E	R	T	U	R	E
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6	C	H	A	S	T	E		15	P	R	E	D	I	C	T	
7	A	U	P					16	N	T	T					
8	F	L	A	G	S	H	I	P		21	D	A	Y	B	E	
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13	E	N	N							27	A	H	C			
14	I	N	T	E	N	S	E		31	T	W	I	T	C	H	
15																

### Sudoku

	7			3				
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3			7	2				5
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			9	4	8		1	7
		1				8	9	
				5			2	





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Alexcia Gutknecht, Janessa Redekop and Chloe Gutknecht sell flowers outside of Penner Building Centre to raise a little extra spending money. RICHARD HARLEY



Dante Bell, Sierra Carbone (back), Jonathan Rolph and Ethan Lett had a busy Saturday afternoon raising money for the Air Cadets. Photo outside Penner Building Centre. RICHARD HARLEY



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# Corporal West's Adventures

By: Richard West

Corporal Dick West served in the British Army, Royal Artillery during the Second World War, while his wife Winnifred (Winn) struggled with the war in London, England. They were my parents. These short stories are derived from them telling me what it was like in those times. All the characters except for Corporal West and his wife Winn, are fictitious.

Dick was first called up in 1938 during the Munich crisis. He returned to civilian life in 1939 only to be called up again in late summer as the Second World War broke out. He was finally de-mobbed early in 1946. These stories are in chronological order.

*Editor's note: This story will be published as a series of 10 short stories. This is part four. Check the paper weekly to keep up with the series.*

## CHURCH PARADE

There were worse places to be posted. Sussex is a pleasant county and when Dick got a few days leave, it was just a short train ride back to South London.

At least the spring has settled in. The winter was terrible but now flowers are coming out and leaves are on the trees. Mind it's raining more than I'd like.

"Rise and shine," he bellowed at the row of tents. Grunts and grumbles leaked out from under the canvases.

"Get a move on. Breakfast and then Church Parade. On the double."

The tents rocked and bumped as the lads stumbled to get dressed.

"Wash, shave and make yourselves spick and span."

Being Corporal in charge of the searchlight team has its drawbacks. Like, I have to be up early and push these men to get organized. Hard on a Sunday. Especially for a ruddy Church Parade.

After breakfast they gathered at the searchlight for a smoke. Other groups were doing the same. The gunners were grouped around one of the three-inch anti-aircraft guns, the infantry guard around a three ton lorry, near the gate to the field.

Everyone was checking themselves out before the brass arrived for an inspection.

"Gawd. You'd never know there was a war on. This is the most excitement we've seen yet."

"I dunno. Finding our way back from the pub in the black-out got pretty exciting."

"Well, Stinky if you will go around opening a gate to the wrong field."

"It was an honest mistake."

"When those heifers started to push their way out of the gate, didn't you figure out it was the wrong field?"

"Sandy, they spooked me. So quiet and yet their eyes had a mean glint, even in the pitch dark."

"We weren't popular after that. Ain't that right, Corp?"

"You're right, Sandy."

"Look out, here comes the Captain."

They were lined up and the Captain made his inspection and reminded them the Colonel is "old school". He believes in a perfect turn out and Church Parades.

Considering that most of his lads, and himself, never set foot in Church, the Parade went fairly well.

They joined the village congregation in their ancient building, occupying the back pews. Mostly

they had no idea when to sit or stand but Dick watched the Captain like a hawk and did whatever he did. The lads followed him.

They bellowed their best during the hymns. In fact, they rather enjoyed those.

After thanks from the vicar they formed up and marched in perfect formation towards the village.

About half way between the Church and the village green Dick heard a low drone. The noise grew louder.

"You hear that, Sandy?"

"Yes, Corp. It's getting closer."

They looked around as they marched but couldn't see an aeroplane. Suddenly the noise grew much louder and they saw a Heinkel coming over the distant trees at about five hundred feet.

"Its bomb doors are open, Corp."

Dick stared at the rapidly approaching plane and saw black blobs dropping from its belly.

"Take cover." He yelled, as he dove for the ditch. His lads followed him into the mud at the bottom.

Dick looked up just as the aircraft flashed above him. Then the booms of exploding bombs shook the ditch. Six explosions, each louder than the one before. Then just the drone of the departing German plane.

Dick stood up and ordered his men to re-assemble on the road. They were covered in mud and slime with wet green stains splattered across their uniforms. Then he noticed they were all staring over his shoulder. He turned to find the Colonel standing in the middle of the road.

"Quite finished Corporal?"

"Yes, Sir."

"Scared by a single bomber jettisoning its bomb load into a field, are you?"

"It came close, Sir."

"Well at least you have learned the noise that an exploding bomb makes."

Suddenly the Colonel laughed.

"You all look terrible. But we had a huge laugh watching you all jump into the ditch."

Dick looked at the other squads of soldiers, all still lined up along the road and blushed. They were all grinning at them.

"Squad, Attention."

His lads did their very best to look like soldiers but Dick thought they looked like a vaudeville act.

The Colonel winked at him, and said, "Cheer up Corporal. You've been introduced to action with no blood spilled. Be grateful."

So now we really are at war.

# Local snaps



Marguerite Stewart, volunteer, Betty and Cedric Gaudet, NOTL residents at the Pumphouse 25th celebration. BRITTANY CARTER



Marilyn Cochrane, artist, Mallory Antonello, with Niagara Casinos, presenting sponsor of the 25th celebration, Victoria Wisdom, marketing chair on Pumphouse board, Ron Ferguson, treasurer. BRITTANY CARTER



Dr. Stephanie Hall, Roc Mastromatteo, Emily Parisee, Alyssa Casucci and Kaitlyn Hubbell at St. David's Vet Clinic Saturday. BRITTANY CARTER



Roc Mastromatteo, Emily Parisee, Alyssa Casucci and Kaitlyn Hubbell, operating on stuffed bear Paddington at St. David's Vet Clinic. BRITTANY CARTER



The children with their stuffed animal patients at the St. David's Veterinary Clinic's Kid's Day. BRITTANY CARTER

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# Exploring Photos: with Jim Smith

Exclusive to The Lake Report

## OLD HARDWARE STORE



The Old Town post office was the site of a large lumber yard and hardware store from the early 1900s up to the 1970s. It was owned by William Harrison who had three son's — Don, Allen and Jack — who all helped run the business. The Niagara advance at one time was published in this building and received its name while there by Mr. Harrison. A similar store today would be Penner Building Centre.

SUPPLIED PHOTO/JIM SMITH

### ARCHITEXT

## Hidden history

Brian Marshall  
Featured

Spotted here and there across Niagara are 19th century homes that contain a surprise, for hidden within are older, more modest structures that were enfolded as the fortunes of the families grew and allowed for expansion of the house. Usually so well concealed within the larger home, the history and even existence of the originals have often been forgotten.

During the early years of settlement, Land Grants were commonplace. As part of the process, recipients were usually given 1 year in which they had to clear 5 acres of land and build a dwelling of at least 320



Regent cottage and timber. SUPPLIED PHOTO/BRIAN MARSHALL

square feet thereon. This was no small order. A quick visit to Paradise Grove in Niagara-on-the-Lake will give you a sense of the challenge these folks faced axe in-hand in terms of simply clearing the land. Successful settlers were a tough bunch!

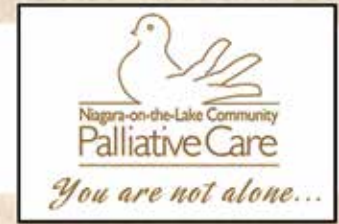
Since Carolinian forest is largely hardwood, many of Niagara's 'settler's dwellings' were timber-framed rather than the log cabin found where softwood forest prevailed. Indeed, it was

the Niagara settlers' timber-frame process which has left us the evidence of what 'came before'; for unlike a log cabin, a timber-frame lends itself to being incorporated within the context of a larger structure.

Take the Regent Street Vernacular Georgian cottage shown above. When the current owners purchased the property it had been suggested that it was a mid-19th Century build with a 1920s cross gable addition

to the rear. But, what we found during my investigation was very different; the 1840s portion of the house had actually been built off the front of an older building whose hand-squared timber-frame definitively pre-dated 1820 and showed every indication of being contemporise with the Land Grant (1794/95). The history of the house had been rewritten!

So what's hiding in your old walls?



### SHOUT OUT TO NIAGARA ON THE LAKE COMMUNITY PALLIATIVE CARE VOLUNTEERS

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**NATIONAL VOLUNTEER WEEK IS  
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Thanks to all of the VOLUNTEERS AT NOTL CPCS!  
WELL DONE!

### The Niagara on the Lake Writers' Circle presents...

## How to Build Your Story

**What?** Plotting novels & Writing short stories

**Where?** NOTL Public Library, 10 Anderson Lane

**When?** Saturday, May 25, 10 a.m. – 3:30 p.m.  
(Doors open at 9:30 a.m. for registration & coffee)

This workshop will show you how writers plot a novel and will give you the best tips on writing short stories. We'll also look at where to get your stories published and how to win contests. Best yet, you'll see how to apply the story-building techniques you've learned to your own writing.

General admission: \$49 advance or \$53 at the door.

NOTL Writer's Circle members: \$44 advance or \$53 at the door.

To reserve a spot now, email:  
[brianhenry@sympatico.ca](mailto:brianhenry@sympatico.ca)

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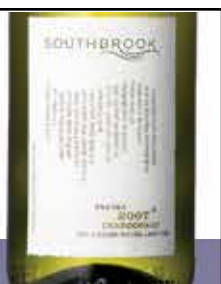
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# Niagara-on-the-Lake Golf Club

Denise Ascenzo

Niagara's History Unveiled  
Exclusive/The Lake Report

It is a beautiful morning, a bit of a breeze but nothing too chilling as you approach the T-box for the first swing of the day. Taking the swing, you hear the perfect "ping" as your driver connects with the ball exactly like you always pray for. You lift your gaze up to watch where your ball goes when you notice a mist coming in over the course from Lake Ontario.

In that moment your breath is caught as you see a wounded soldier, in a red coat, lying on the ground, being tended to by a woman. Then the image just disappears and you locate your ball.

You are playing on the oldest continuously operating golf course in North America, the Niagara-on-the-Lake Golf Course, founded in 1875, located at 143 Front Street in Niagara-on-the-Lake.

It is a small course, just nine holes with some unique challenges such as huge doglegs that go around century-old trees and greens that are tucked away.

Interesting though is the history of the land, once referred to as Fort Mississauga Commons.

Prior to the War of 1812 the land, at the point where the Niagara River flows into Lake Ontario, was home to the very first lighthouse on the Great Lakes. Built in 1804 the tower was 45 feet in height. The first lighthouse keeper was Dominic Henry, a retired soldier from the British garrison posted at Fort George.

Dominic Henry was the only lighthouse keeper. He along with his wife, Mary Madden Henry and their children lived in a small log cabin beside the lighthouse.

In May of 1813 (during the War of 1812) the American forces from Fort Niagara and from ships on Lake Ontario, bombarded the town of Newark (NOTL). Then the American forces landed from Lake Ontario just north of the town near



The Niagara-on-the-Lake Golf Club. BRITTANY CARTER

the lighthouse.

During this battle, Mary Madden Henry was seen by many soldiers to be scabbling over the grounds around the lighthouse, tending to any wounded soldier she came upon. Many soldiers later related how she seemed to appear through the smoke like an angel with wings.

It was after the War of 1812 that the lighthouse was torn down to be replaced by a military base, Fort Mississauga.

Fort Mississauga was built in 1814 using bricks from the lighthouse and salvaged bricks from the town after it had been razed by fire from the retreating American forces (December 1813) The fort was built on Point Mississauga, across from the American Fort Niagara. It was to replace Fort George that had been destroyed.

Fort Mississauga saw very limited use and by 1858 the British had abandoned it completely. Later during the American Civil War (1861-65) and the Finnian



The Niagara-on-the-Lake Golf Club Restaurant. BRITTANY CARTER

Raids (1866-71) the fort was occupied by the Volunteer Canadian Militia.

Once again Fort Mississauga was abandoned until it was put to use during training camps of World War 1 (1914-18) and World War 11 (1939-45).

Today, only the central tower, the star-shaped earthworks and sally

ports remain of the fort. Sally ports were ingenious entrances into a stronghold that had either a wall to move around to gain entrance or two doors that had to be opened. Sally ports are used even in modern times; entrances where one door must be closed before the second one opens. They are used in prisons and even

some jewellery stores.

It was in 1875, when Fort Mississauga was abandoned that the golf course was constructed. When you play on the course today, the eighth hole is the only hole untouched from the first original course.

In 1895, the Niagara Golf Club hosted the first International Golf Tournament

in North America (Sept. 5 to 7, 1895). However to host the tournament, you had to have an 18 hole golf course. There were but nine on the original course, however a gentleman by the name of John G. Dickson had started a small course of three holes across the street from his home, on the Fort George Commons. This course was expanded to nine holes and the tournament was held.

Players played nine holes on the Fort George Commons course and then were shuttled to the Fort Mississauga Commons to play the second nine holes. The winner of the tournament was Charles B. MacDonald of the Chicago Golf Club. He also won the longest drive in the tournament.

After the tournament, the Fort George Commons course was expanded to 18 holes. Several of the holes actually were played through the ruins of Fort George itself. The golf course on the Fort Mississauga commons became the ladies course.

After World War 1, the Fort George golf course was not reopened. The Fort Mississauga course was however opened, and under the control of the Queens Royal Hotel. But as tourism waned in the 1920s the hotel went bankrupt. Not to lose such a wonderful golf course close to the town, the National Golf Course was incorporated in 1926. The Mississauga Commons, in the 1960s was declared a National Historic Park and the golf course continues to operate to this day.

The Niagara-on-the-Lake Golf Course has been ranked in the top ten, nine hole golf courses in the world. The restaurant is the only one in town with a view of Lake Ontario. It is a public course, open for all to enjoy the history of the land as you play. Water hazards are amazing!

*More Niagara's History Unveiled articles about the past of Niagara-on-the-Lake are available at: [www.niagaranow.com](http://www.niagaranow.com)*





# COMMUNITY

We invite you to submit photos and stories for consideration in this section. Send your submissions to [editor@niagaranow.com](mailto:editor@niagaranow.com) for a chance to be featured.



## Artifact of the Week:

**Judge's Bench from  
Town of Niagara Courthouse, 1817**



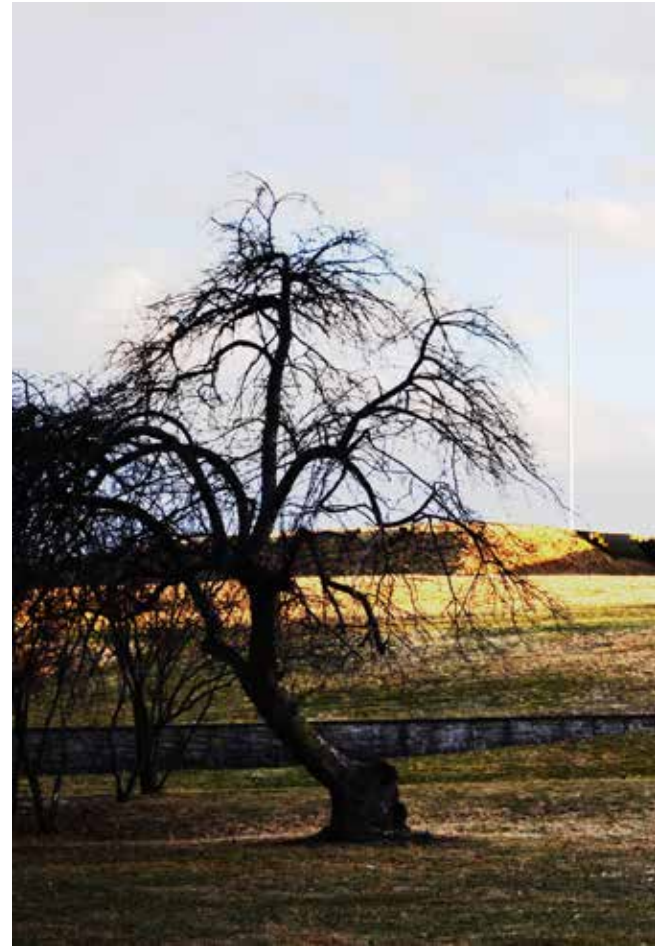
**Answer:** Last week's artifact was a fashionable cape owned by Mrs. McWood in the mid 1800s. This Victorian era marked the beginning of the dress reform as dome skirts continued to expand by means of tiered ruffles and the introduction of steel cage crinoline. In 1850, cape-like jackets, such as this one, were worn over the flounced skirts and were often accented with heavily trimmed bonnets. This short, black cape is made of silk and is adorned with ruffled edges, black ribbons and a front tassel, which suggests that Mrs. McWood was in tune with the changing trends of fashion.

**The Artifact of the Week column is submitted by the Niagara Historical Society & Museum, exclusive to The Lake Report.**



Can you guess next week's artifact? >

**Clue: Have you seen my room?**



The sun sets over the hill at Fort George. SUBMITTED BY JORDYN MOTTOLA.



**Betty & Jane: Plunger Patrol  
Inspecting NOTL's bathrooms:**

**Bricks and Barley**

Some go for the wood fired pizza, some the craft beer, some are drawn by their use of local ingredients and live music. Plunger Patrol was there for the restrooms. The whole place is new and the bathrooms have some very unique lighting. The mirrors have interesting touch screen light control. Betty however became convinced the red and blue lights somehow controlled the water temperature. Kept her in there for a long time flashing the mirror lights at seizure inducing speeds. The bathrooms were clean, accessible, and on trend. You'll want to check this one out yourself.

**4.5/5 Gold Plungers**



### RIDDLE ME THIS:

**I have a head and tail, but no arms and legs. What am I?**

Last Week's answer: A hole.  
Answered first by Harry Ledwez.  
Email answers to [editor@niagaranow.com](mailto:editor@niagaranow.com) for a chance to win a prize.

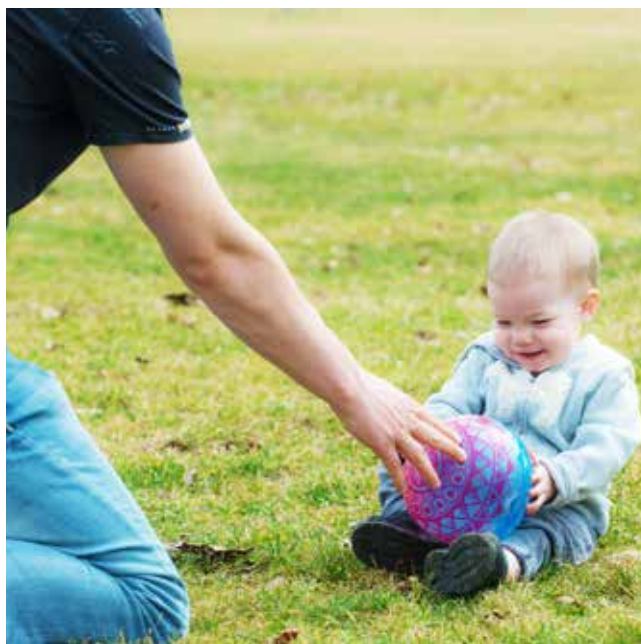
## Remembering Denise Lundy



LUNDY, Denise –  
Gone to her heavenly home, on Monday, April 1, 2019, in Virgil, at the age of 58. Beloved wife and best

friend of Tony for 37 years. Loving mother of James and Michael (Jennifer). Fondly remembered by many nieces, nephews, cousins and friends.

A service to celebrate the life of Denise was held at St. Andrew's Presbyterian Church, 323 Simcoe St., Niagara-on-the-Lake, on Monday, April 8, 2019 at 11 a.m. Those who wish may make a memorial donation to St. Andrew's Presbyterian Church. Memories, photos and condolences may be shared at: [www.morganfuneral.com](http://www.morganfuneral.com)



Calvin Arsenault and Liam Arsenault passing ball back and forth at Memorial Park on Sunday. EUNICE TANG

April 20<sup>th</sup>

## Earth Day Celebration

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Brittany Carter  
The Lake Report

Hermine Steinberg, a part-time Niagara-on-the-Lake resident and founder of the NOTL Writer's Circle, uses her words to inspire and effect change. She has been writing for as long as she can remember, unable to recall a time when the craft failed to evoke joy.

Whether it was submitting stories and articles to newspapers and magazines, writing newsletters as a volunteer for organizations, or creating short stories to inspire and educate her children, writing has been present in every phase of Steinberg's life.

She always manages to infuse writing in her work, she says, even throughout more than a decade in the financial industry, where she became vice-president of corporate development for a commodities firm.

After having her first child she decided to slow down, making the career switch to childhood education. She says she's grateful she did.

"I love working with young people and they inspired me every day, and hopefully I inspired them a bit."

Her love of writing is evident through her passion for the NOTL Writer's Circle, which she founded in 2013 to connect with the community and to provide a forum to workshop her own and other's writing.

With her husband, Barry, she bought a house in NOTL 10 years ago, planning to spend vacations and holidays in town. Residing in Toronto, she travels back and forth for family obligations. She says she considers this town her home, noting the contrast between life in Toronto and time spent in NOTL.

It wasn't until the Writer's Circle was formed that Steinberg truly understood the wealth of knowledge and artistic talent NOTL residents possess.

"There are so many creative people in this town and so many people are



Hermine Steinberg, founder of the NOTL Writer's Circle. BRITTANY CARTER

Featured local story

## HERMINE STEINBERG

### NOVELIST AND FOUNDER OF NOTL WRITER'S CIRCLE SPREADS JOY OF WRITING

connected to the arts. So many of our members are talented in so many different ways," Steinberg says, recalling the various forms of artistic expression she's witnessed.

"They do visual arts, they write. Some act and other things. They teach. It was quite a surprise to me, though, and we've been growing ever since (the group began)."

Steinberg, wanting to acknowledge all the organizations supporting and making the Writer's Circle a possibility, and the exceptional members who make the group what it is, had to stop listing them off — or she would have to name them all, she says.

With 64 members now, she says the group takes an active role in the community.

"We have participated annually in the Strawberry Festival and were active during the (Canada) 150."

With one novel under her belt, *The Co-Walkers: Awakening*, a story published in 2011 geared toward mid-grade children in the 10 to 14 age range, Steinberg is working on two more manuscripts simultaneously, both of which are nearing completion, she says.

The first is a sequel to *Co-Walkers*. The second is geared toward the older young adult genre, with some more mature themes.

*Co-walkers* started as a short story that grew into a novel. She says she slowly kept adding to the story until she realized it had grown into something she could publish. The book is dedicated to her four children.

"At the time three of them were with us — Ashley, Brian and Matthew — which the characters are named after. When I wrote the first version of the short story, they were 11, nine and seven respectively. It is dedicated

to all our kids — including Jillian, our eldest."

She wants to inspire kids with her writing. Through the Writer's Circle annual contest, Rising Spirits, one aspect of which focuses on youth writing, she also wants to encourage them to demonstrate their own unique talents by giving them a voice through creative writing. She says that's something kids are lacking these days — they don't have an effective outlet to be heard.

"I think kids really need a place to express themselves beyond a couple hundred words. I think fiction is also a great place where they can express themselves safely."

The contest has been running annually since the Writer's Circle's second year. This year, Steinberg says the group is changing the timetable of the contest to better align with the school schedule.

"We will be launching/ announcing a bit later in the year and the deadline for submissions will be at the beginning of December. The celebration will be in early 2020."

Long ago, Steinberg says she discovered it was important to hone personal uniqueness and allow herself the ability to be herself. Writing has helped her achieve that, she says. It has given her an outlet to work through anything that has come up throughout her life. Concerned about the state of the world and focused on educating herself on the latest issues, she frequents seminars and conferences. Eager for constant education, she is never short of opinions of how society can improve and how we can leave a better world for the next generation.

In spending so much time writing, it's difficult to conceal her thoughts and feel-

ings, she says. Family keeps her grounded, though. No matter what happens around her, she says she can always come back to family. Her three grandkids rejuvenate her, she says. "I call them my crack," noting that she feels invigorated and restored after spending time with them.

The Writer's Circle meets twice a month in the Rotary Room of the NOTL Public Library from 2 to 4 p.m. For dates of meetings and events, or to join the group, visit the NOTL Writer's Circle website.

A public reading will be held on April 28 during the scheduled meeting. On May 25, a workshop will be facilitated by editor/writer/creative writing instructor Brian Henry.

Steinberg's novel, *The Co-Walkers*, can be found in the NOTL Public Library. It is also available for purchase through her website and Amazon.

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