

## Judge **rejects** Hummel Properties lawsuit against town

Richard Harley  
The Lake Report

The Town of Niagara-on-the-Lake and council acted legally in instituting a 2018 development freeze and 2019 extension of the freeze, a Superior Court justice has found.

After two days of hearings last week, Justice James Ramsay ruled the town did nothing wrong

and rejected a lawsuit by Hummel Properties Inc. Developer Rainer Hummel said he plans to appeal the decision.

The NOTL businessman alleged bad faith on behalf of the mayor and council in enacting a development freeze in Old Town by passing an interim control bylaw.

The judge disagreed. "On the whole of the evidence

the case for bad faith strikes me as contrived," Ramsay said in his ruling.

"I think that council wanted to preserve the Old Town's heritage and that it considered the matter urgent. They wanted to fulfil the mandate that they thought they had been given by the public. They froze the status quo, considered studies and public input, amended the official plan

and then repealed the interim control bylaw. That is essentially what they were supposed to do. I just do not see any bad faith."

Ramsay dismissed the application in its entirety and said because there is no finding of bad faith, the town is not liable for any damages caused to Hummel Properties as a result of the

*Continued on Page 10*



Rainer Hummel with Lord Mayor Betty Disero in 2018, when Hummel received a citizen of the year award. FILE

## Bylaw officers **harassed** for enforcing restrictions



NOTL visitors breaking lockdown regulations swore and insulted a town staff member for asking the kids to stay off the gazebo, which was officially closed under provincial COVID-19 safety regulations. The parents then verbally attacked a reporter for taking pictures and laughed as their children imitated slapping a photographer. RICHARD HARLEY

Town employees were cursed, yelled at and even spit at over COVID-19 regulations

Richard Harley  
The Lake Report

Niagara-on-the-Lake bylaw officers are getting slammed by people who are fed up with COVID-19 restrictions, town officials say.

People were swearing, yelling "and even spitting" at bylaw officers during the weekend as they tried to enforce COVID-19 safety regulations, said chief administrative officer Marnie Cluckie during Monday's committee of the whole meeting.

Lord Mayor Betty Disero said it was an "unusual weekend" that saw many people frustrated and confused, largely due to COVID fatigue and a tweet

Saturday by Premier Doug Ford.

On Sunday, a reporter witnessed a group of parents with their children within earshot tell a bylaw officer he was an "idiot" and to mind his own business for trying to do his job at Queen's Royal Park.

The bylaw officer had told the group of children to stay off the gazebo, which was closed off per provincial regulations.

On Saturday, Ford tweeted that the province would be reversing its decision to close municipal structures and playgrounds. But that decision wasn't finalized by the province until Tuesday.

The bylaw officer on

*Continued on Page 2*

## Opinion: **Imagine isolation** in care homes, especially for those with dementia

Drs. William Brown  
Martha Truncale  
Timothy Brown  
Special to The Lake Report

With this the third surge, Ontario enters yet another lockdown to contain the spread of a far more formidable viral foe – the highly transmissible U.K. variant.

And to no one's surprise,

because of this variant and delays locking down, daily infection rates are climbing steeply, and ICUs and health care staff are stretched to the limit. And for want of vaccines, some vaccination clinics have often been cancelled. All in all, it's the perfect viral storm and isolation in some form for many.

The second surge, which followed the Christmas period, forced many long-term care facilities in the region to isolate their residents for several weeks.

Throughout this period meals were delivered to their rooms, but residents were confined with little to do and none of the usual social contacts except for

occasional meetings with family members using social media.

Isolation was mandated "out of an abundance of caution" as the phrase goes, to protect residents from becoming infected. Unfortunately, many staff members and residents be-



Jan Brown is one of many care home residents feeling the effects of isolation, compounded by dementia. SUPPLIED

*Continued on Page 17*



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# Town issued three COVID enforcement tickets in April

Richard Harley  
The Lake Report

The Town of Niagara-on-the-Lake has given out three COVID-related tickets in April, the “busiest month” since last spring for enforcement, says the town’s chief administrative officer Marnie Cluckie.

During a COVID-19 update at council’s committee of the whole Monday, she said so far in April the town has received 214 inquiries related to COVID and non-compliance, with 48 inspections that were based on complaints.

She said the town has also had “118 opportunities for education.”

The increase in enforcement is something the town “often” sees when the province amends COVID



A police officer parked on Queen Street Sunday. RICHARD HARLEY

regulations, she said.

Last weekend, “there was some frustration in the community. Enforcement staff are understanding of

this and they’re doing their very best to do the same as what the police said, which is ‘engage, explain, educate and enforce.’”

She didn’t say what the tickets were issued for, but that the town has “seen some isolated issues with some short-term rental

operators.”

The bylaw department is “addressing that as well, making sure that they’re compliant with the regulations.”

Research by The Lake Report on April 12 found that many Airbnb rentals in Niagara were still accepting reservations during lockdown.

Out of 10 hosts contacted regarding availability from April 16 to 18, two hosts, who together run five properties in town, said they would accept bookings.

One of the hosts, Jessie, who runs three properties, including a home at 475 Victoria St., suggested that while it’s illegal, there “shouldn’t be any issue” as long as neighbours don’t complain.

“If you guys could

keep quiet outside, then it shouldn’t be any issue,” she said. “Staying inside the house will be no problem.”

She still offered the rental after saying there would be visitors during the day.

Another host, who operates two properties, said it’s “up to the renter” if they fit the criteria of needing housing. The regulations for short-term rentals only allow them for people with a legitimate housing need — not a vacation.

However, the host still said in a message the house was available after being told it was not a legitimate housing need.

“It is up to the renter if they fit the criteria. I can’t answer that for you. If you do then you’re welcome to book.”

# Town staff, bylaw officers bearing brunt of visitors’ anger

Continued from Front Page

Sunday explained to the family that it wouldn’t be long before town staff removed the closed signs, but until then they needed to keep off.

The family also berated a reporter for taking pictures of the incident in a public park.

They accused a reporter of acting illegally by taking pictures of them in the public park, claiming a “consent form” is needed. However, no consent is needed to take pictures in a public space.

The family said they believe the province’s lockdown orders are “not laws.” However, provincial regulations on gathering actually are enforceable laws.

In another incident, a town bylaw officer phoned Niagara Regional Police after Niagara resident Robert Munger started cutting away the closed signage at a public park.

Munger, who owns Olde Tyme Candy Shoppe in Niagara-on-the-Lake, was not charged, but said an officer visited his store about the incident and attempted to arrest him for failing to provide his identification.

Munger said he asked the officer to leave his private



Town staff faced harassment over the weekend. RICHARD HARLEY

property and the officer complied.

The Lake Report spoke to the officer on the scene, after receiving a call about the incident.

“I get people want to play at the parks. I agree they should be allowed to play at the parks, but it doesn’t entitle people to go and cut the town’s property,” the officer said.

Disero said Ford’s tweet was not an official amendment to the regulations, so the town was forced to wait to open playgrounds.

Cluckie said parks were “very busy” during the weekend.

“While out-of-town visitors were few based on our Bell Media data and our traffic data, social gatherings in parks was actually quite high, so efforts were focused in these areas,” she said.

“It was particularly concerning in Old Town. People who were social gathering would see the bylaw officers coming, split up and run away. So, I think people have an awareness, but they’re not always following the regulations, so it’s good that we have people out reminding.”

According to Bell Media data, about 63,000 mobile devices entered into NOTL

on the weekend. About 72 per cent of those people were from Niagara Region, 12 per cent from GTA and six per cent from Hamilton.

Of those, about 23,000 devices entered Old Town, with about 75 per cent being from Niagara Region, 11 per cent from GTA and five per cent from Hamilton. About 500 devices also went to the outlet mall, of which 100 per cent from Niagara Region.

Traffic counters indicated about 5,500 vehicles entered Old Town, suggesting that vehicles were filled with multiple people.

Despite the number of visitors still coming, the town has laid just three enforcement tickets for COVID-19 related infractions.

Cluckie thanked bylaw officers and staff for handling the situations with dignity.

“They’re really doing an amazing job responding and helping people to be safe. What you might not realize is just how tough a job this can be,” she told councillors.

“Many people are frustrated now with the regulations and restrictions, and sometimes they direct that frustration at those folks that are trying to help and do their jobs,” she said.

“I really commend them for keeping their cool and doing their job to keep the community safe, even in light of those kinds of situations.”

Disero said people need to be respectful of town bylaw and police officers, despite the extremely challenging times.

Coun. Norm Arsenault also took to social media to remind residents to be patient with town staff and bylaw officers as they too adapt to “constant changes” that can be “confusing and frustrating.”

“There have been some resident concerns raised regarding the closure of outdoor recreational amenities in NOTL,” he said, noting the tweet from Ford “caused some excitement for young children and families within the community.”

“However, the amended regulations have not yet been amended and issued, so NOTL continues to follow the current regulations as announced Friday. Re-opening efforts will begin as soon as the regulations are officially changed by the provincial government as current regulations do not allow for the use of outdoor recreational amenities.”

“As you can imagine, we

can’t change direction based on a single tweet,” Arsenault said.

Cluckie echoed those sentiments during Monday’s meeting.

“Some municipalities opted to follow the tweets, but historically Niagara-on-the-Lake has been very cautious and really putting safety first. It’s been our utmost priority,” she said.

“So we opted instead to wait (for) the regulation and the formal announcement. As soon as that was made this morning through an update to their provinces website we sent our staff out to make that change.”

Disero said the formal announcement didn’t actually come until Tuesday, but a change on the province’s website gave enough assurance for the town to act on Monday.

The defiance of provincial COVID-19 laws and aggression toward bylaw officers comes on the heels of two Niagara protests which saw hundreds of people gather to voice their opposition to lockdowns, with many of the speakers spreading false claims about vaccines, masks and conspiracy theories about COVID-19 being a government scheme to control people.

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# NOTL survey highlights concerns about racism, **lack of diversity**

Fatima Baig  
Special to The Lake Report

Niagara-on-the-Lake's inclusivity committee says it has heard concerns from residents about racism, ageism and the lack of universal washrooms in town.

The committee has formed focus groups to follow up an online survey conducted earlier this year. Out of 173 survey respondents, 97.6 per cent indicated NOTL would benefit from more inclusion and diversity, the committee said.

According to the survey, 24 per cent of respondents said they feel unwelcome as customers or employees or have heard about or witnessed discrimination in NOTL businesses.

As well, committee members identified issues about tensions between newly arrived and long-term residents, "out-of-townism," NIMBYism, lack of female representation on town advisory committees, and recognition and inclusion of the Indigenous community in NOTL. However, the inclusivity committee hasn't received direct comments about these issues from residents, said co-chair Niki Walker.

"Discussions within the committee have been raised as a result of reading local newspapers, checking in on local Facebook groups, sitting on the region's Coalition of Inclusive Municipalities committee, and our members' direct and indirect personal experience," said Walker.

The inclusivity committee also received a letter from resident Kaspar Pold about racist incidents at NOTL businesses.

"His concerns centered around what people can do or where they can go to address incidents of racism at local businesses and whether any inclusivity training has been offered to people working in the tourism sector," said Walker.

Pold's points were raised to the Chamber of Commerce and will be discussed in focus groups, she said.



A Black Lives Matter march in NOTL in 2020. FILE

The inclusivity committee also held a Zoom session with employees of the Shaw Festival and was told about instances of racism and homophobia the staff members have experienced.

Participants in the survey were asked to describe any inclusivity issues they would like to be addressed.

One person responded: "It is particularly troubling to see the way field workers, Shaw's artists, hotel workers and our other more diverse local workers are treated by some locals and how they assume they are not residents or are lesser as renters, despite directly driving the economy of the town with their work."

The person, who said they are a member of the Shaw's board and equity task force, also cited "rampant" homophobia and transphobia, noting, "There is an urgent need to educate (especially older) residents about LGBTQ2+ issues."

The NOTL survey results also highlighted concerns about marginalization and discriminatory treatment of farm workers and lack of accessibility for individuals who use mobile aid devices or are visually impaired.

Walker said the committee informed the town of one complaint about universal washrooms and was told the municipality is looking into converting two washrooms in the community centre into universal washrooms.

"The committee supports the creation/conversion of universal washrooms

wherever feasible and has offered to assist in any way we can," said Walker.

Much to the displeasure of many residents, systemic change in NOTL will not happen overnight, said Kiera Sangster, another member of the inclusivity committee.

"The concerns and feedback collected from our survey will be addressed with thoughtful care, education and respect for all," she said.

Lack of women's representation on town advisory committees is also an issue, according to Coun. Sandra O'Connor.

A 2020 report published by a Brock University think tank showed Niagara-on-the-Lake doesn't have enough women on town committees. That prompted O'Connor to ask council to push for more female representation. Councillors passed a motion to that effect in March.

One way to tackle this issue is to encourage more women to apply for committee positions, O'Connor said.

When the town puts out the call seeking volunteers for committees, it could make it clear "we would like to encourage diversity on this committee so we are asking people of diverse backgrounds to apply," she said.

The inclusivity committee is also working on the municipality's Join the Conversation page so residents can engage and bring up any problems they encoun-

ter and the committee can offer suggestions.

"One thing we want to ensure is that the committee is taking its direction from the community itself. We want to hear from and amplify voices rather than creating the conversation," said Walker.

At the moment, you do not need to self-identify as a particular gender or minority group to be on a committee. That raises the question about how the committee will make sure membership is more diverse if people don't need to self-identify.

O'Connor said this requires changes to forms or procedures and consultation with the inclusivity committees.

"In the past, we have not asked for any identifiers. We have the opportunity to revisit the application to see if that's what needs to be done," she said.

Walker said the inclusivity committee can offer advice and input to the council about policies or procedures.

"To that end, we are currently working on finalizing our input on employment and hiring policies, which we asked to review. Asking or requiring people to identify can be questionable from a legal standpoint," she said.

Walker stated the committee includes many marginalized and racialized individuals but is also looking for feedback from other minorities in NOTL.

Other suggested improvements in the diversity and inclusivity survey results include educating residents, business owners and others about the importance of diversity and inclusion, improving accessibility for individuals in wheelchairs and those who are visually impaired, implementing more integrated transit such as regional bus service access to GO and Via Rail, increasing resources for young families and youth, and making council, staff and volunteer groups more diverse.



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**NOTL active cases: 51**  
**Region active cases: 2,020**  
**Region deaths: 385**  
**Region total cases: 12,482**  
**Region resolved cases: 10,077**  
**Region variant cases: 1,664**

\*April 21 data per Niagara Region Public Health



**Contributed by Patty Garriock**  
 "When you focus on the good,  
 the good get better."  
 - Patty Garriock

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## Editorial

### Bumbling and stumbling through the pandemic

Kevin MacLean  
 Managing Editor

What a difference a year makes. Sort of.

A year ago at this time, Premier Doug Ford was getting positive reviews in many quarters for his almost daily news briefings and apparent leadership in guiding Ontario through an unprecedented pandemic. (Well, there was his unfortunate "enjoy March Break" comment, but ...)

Of course, there also were many people critical of him at the time for previous attempts to reduce public health funding, among other small-c conservative moves.

Fast-forward 12 months and the gang who couldn't shoot straight is scrambling to try to stumble its way through the third wave of the same pandemic.

We suppose we could give Ford credit for quickly responding to the huge public

ouctry after last Friday's ill-conceived, back-of-a-napkin plan to give police unconstitutional new powers to stop and question people without cause.

Like he had a choice in backing down.

Credit police services across the province, including Niagara's, for forcing his hand by having the good sense to say they would not go along with the Ford idea.

Sometimes ideology and public health do not mix well. Especially when it forces people to choose between their health and feeding their families.

Rather than follow the advice of everyone from his own health, science and policy experts to social advocates and institute paid sick days for workers caught in the COVID maelstrom, it was more important to criminalize legal behaviour in the midst of the pandemic.

And shut down play-

grounds. And golf courses (yes, we play the game, but Ontario seems to be the only jurisdiction in North America that has decided non-contact, physically distanced, outdoor recreation in a parkland setting is a really bad idea).

Taking a page from a former U.S. president, Ford used Twitter on Saturday to backtrack on the closing of playgrounds and other outdoor structures. Governance by social media is not yet a thing, however, and the Town of Niagara-on-the-Lake held off reopening facilities until officials were sure the government would follow through.

The result here in NOTL was lots of confusion and our bylaw enforcement officers, simply trying to do the job we ask of them, were harassed and ridiculed by "adult" visitors who should know better.

We are a small business

that relies on small business for our livelihood. We don't like these revolving lockdowns either, but they beat the alternative, despite what last weekend's protesters in Niagara Falls and elsewhere would have you believe.

The bottom line in Ford's case is that had he implemented proper lockdowns previously when all the science experts urged him to do so, we very likely would not be in the mess we are in now.

We hope the premier finally has the good sense, as has been hinted at this week, to finally restore, and expand, paid sick days in Ontario so those essential worker "heroes" he is so happy to praise aren't forced to choose between their health and going to work.

And, for goodness sake, stop politicizing public health and pay more than lip service to the science and medical experts.

editor@niagaranow.com



### Short walk in Old Town generated a bag full of litter

Dear editor:

I am writing in response to Kyra Simone's Keeping it Green column ("Celebrate nature's essential services this Earth Day," April 15) about cleaning up garbage around town.

I just finished a 45-minute walk down King Street and the Parliament Oak area and I ended up with a full

bag of trash.

Here is an inventory of what I collected:

- \* Six dirty masks.
- \* A multitude of candy wrappers and granola bar packages.
- \* Four aluminum cans.
- \* Seven sanitizer wipes.
- \* Two plastic water bottles.
- \* I lost track of the bits of

plastic I picked up.

\* And the worst offender was discarded dog waste bags – knotted and tossed in the bushes.

Thanks for the article and the idea to get out and cleanup. The environmental column is a great part of the paper.

Mary-Clare Lamon  
 NOTL



SUPPLIED

### Thanks to the special souls who volunteer in our community

Dear editor:

This year's National Volunteer Week theme is "The value of one, the power of many" and it never rang truer.

All volunteers are such special souls. At this time in particular, I wanted to express my gratitude and my admiration to our community's volunteers for the

selfless hours dedicated not only to those we serve, but also to each other.

I have witnessed you all rising above the mere call to just "show-up" at meetings, perform tasks requested of you and give of yourself and your time.

At a time where a choice may have been to turn "inward," you have all turned

outward. Seeking to give – more time, more attention, more input at meetings, more of yourselves in every way, from client care to admin throughout this pandemic.

You are all so appreciated. At a time where you, as a volunteer, could in fact shut down just waiting for the next COVID colour zone

announcement or stay-at-home order, you have all stepped up. The clients we serve have remained a priority and you have made that known.

Thank you all. Truly you are the backbone of the organization.

Bonnie Bagnulo  
 Executive director  
 NOTL Palliative Care



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# OPINION

## Anti-lockdown folks **won't talk** about it

Richard Harley  
The Lake Report



A sign at 770 Lakeshore Rd.  
RICHARD HARLEY

Amid protests in some communities, in mainly rural areas in Niagara-on-the-Lake, a small minority of people have been putting up signs challenging the province's COVID-19 lockdowns.

The signs contain messages like "No more lockdowns" and "#Justsayno."

However, among several people we contacted who posted signs at the roadside, none were willing to go on the record to talk about their

stance. Others didn't answer the door when a reporter stopped by.

One example is a home at 770 Lakeshore Rd.

The owner of the property said she had "no interest" in speaking about why she felt

lockdowns are not necessary. Instead, she encouraged The Lake Report to publish an "unedited and anonymous" article.

The Lake Report does not publish anonymous letters as the paper's editorial policy is that if people believe what they're saying, then they should put their name behind it.

Another Lakeshore Road resident at 1037 Lakeshore Rd., who said his name is Trevor, also wouldn't speak on the record about his anti-lockdown sign, say-

ing he preferred to "let the sign speak for itself."

It seems these folks don't have much conviction, or maybe they are embarrassed with themselves. One can only speculate.

**Editor's note:** *We are not promoting the idea of no more lockdowns but if you are someone who is against the ongoing shutdowns and restrictions – and are not afraid to put your name behind your opinion – send an email to editor@niagaranow.com. Tell us why you feel that way.*

## U.K. and Ford **undeserving** of praise for pandemic response

Dear editor:

I read with interest Dr. William Brown's April 15 column, "Our leaders have failed us too often in this pandemic."

While I agree with some of his remarks, his praise for Boris Johnson and Premier Doug Ford is entirely misplaced.

Johnson was pitifully slow to lockdown the U.K.,

which resulted in the country in January 2021 having the highest per capita death rate in the world.

Since then, of course, it has been overtaken by countries that also have "populist" leaders, such as Brazil – and India is catching up.

To date the per million death rate in the U.K. is 1,900 while in Canada it

is 628. Their case fatality rate, i.e. the chance of dying if you catch COVID, is double that of Canada's. So much for their two-tier private versus public National Health Service.

The huge number of cases in the U.K. also provided the perfect milieu for the development of variants, which has been their most successful export of

all time – and is now ravaging Ontario.

Doug Ford is floundering with his confused, almost daily, contradictions and refusal to listen to his medical advisers.

Why doesn't he simply let the equivalent of Bonnie Henry in B.C. do the talking and shut up?

**Dr. Richard James NOTL**

## Enns family is **dedicated** to customer service

Dear editor:

While most people write to newspapers to complain about someone doing something wrong, when someone does something right, they also deserve to be recognized.

So I would like to thank you for Tim Taylor's story, Enns Battery & Tire is a three-generation family dynasty," (April 15).

Having dealt with Rudy and Dorothy Enns for almost 15 years, it's been

a pleasure to observe a company dedicated to its customers and to the concept of service. In fact, I quickly came to regard Enns as one of the perks of Niagara soon after our move to Niagara-on-the-Lake.

For instance, I remember limping in to their tire shop on a flat, far too long after closing, to find Rudy there alone, tidying up.

However, he immediately pulled off his jacket and

took off my wheel and fixed it himself.

Also, since we drive an older car begging to retire each year, a reluctance to invest in new snow tires led to Rudy finding us what he fondly terms "gently used tires."

And, over the years, I experienced many other services until I came to realize that my tire and battery problems were quickly embraced by Enns's as their tire and

battery problems. Indeed, it would be difficult today to go to an impersonal big box store where my needs were dumped into the well with thousands of other customers.

So, if the newbies moving down here want to take full advantage of Niagara perks, try Enns Battery & Tire service. As I found, it's really hard to beat their personal service.

**J. Richard Wright NOTL**

## Anne Street raceway needs **stop signs** installed

Dear editor:

When Richard West expressed his views about unnecessary sidewalks on Anne Street in the April 15 issue of The Lake Report, ("Is new sidewalk essential or 'nice to have'?" ), I couldn't help but surmise, "They are installing sidewalks instead of stop signs."

My wife and I brought this to the attention of Lord Mayor Betty Disero a couple of years ago

when Anne Street became a raceway between Mississauga and King streets. It still is, evermore so.

Although four-way stops exist on other streets surrounding the area, there are none on Anne Street in spite of children, dog walkers, walkers without dogs, joggers, and bicyclists, not to mention the occasional skunk, possum, fox, coyote, etc.

We were told a traffic

study was being done, although our suggestion of just walking on Anne Street and observing, thus saving the inspection money and time, was evidentially poo-pooed, because nothing ever happened to my knowledge.

I still want stop signs erected before someone or something gets killed – remember the dogs and wildlife.

I am not against sidewalks – they keep you out

of the street, but sidewalks AND stop signs would be a win-win.

I understand the point Mr. West is making, but this is a major problem area awaiting a disaster, especially with the Anne Street population being at an all time high due to all the newly built and now-inhabited townhomes on both sides of the street.

**Mark Thellmann Charlene Thellmann NOTL**

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# Canada **not** taking lockdown measures seriously enough

Dear editor:

Consider the events of the past two weeks and it's becoming crystal clear that we are far from our final lockdowns here in Canada.

There is a total breakdown and blatant disregard for the provincial shutdown guidelines, as is evident with the anti-mask and anti-vaxxer protest events across the country, including St. Catharines, Niagara Falls, Peterborough, etc.

The people in this COVID spreader crowd are among the most vocal against the lockdowns. A few, but not all, participants were ticketed. But let's close the golf courses instead.

Furthermore, the ski crowd at Whistler is credited with the highest concentration of the Brazilian variant outside of Brazil itself. How long before it hits Ontario?

There is no downside to ignoring the guidelines, you have the police on your side. Thirty Ontario police departments declared they would not enforce the new guidelines, which Doug



Visitors take photos during the lockdown order. FILE

Ford quickly rescinded.

International flights continue to bring the virus into the country. The international arrivals at Pearson International Airport speaks volumes about the crisis.

Canada is just not serious about solving the outbreak. We are all talk, no hardball directives with consequences. It could be an election year, so all decisions are political. The inmates are in control of the prison.

Canada is seen as a joke worldwide. Recent newspaper reports in the U.K. and Australia say as much. Federal Procurement Minister Anita Anand should have been fired.

An article in the Washington Post details why Doug Ford was, and is, unfit to be premier of Ontario.

Locally, we have tourists riding bicycles and pushing baby buggies over the first green at the golf course. Cars driving on the grass right up to the barbecue tables around the McFarland House, plus parking on the grass beside the pedestrian and bike paths along the Parkway.

No need to use the paid parking – and again no ticketing the bad actors. It's open season.

It's a sad state of affairs as people flout the rules with impunity while caseloads growing exponentially and keep us in a constant state of revolving lockdowns.

On the brighter and more humorous side however – "Just three more lockdowns to Christmas."

**Samuel Young**  
NOTL

# Keep opinions in the **opinion** section

Dear editor:

I have thoroughly enjoyed reading The Lake Report since it began publishing a few years ago. Coverage of our town council meetings, our business community, developments affecting our all-important agricultural community and stories about local people and events has had me eagerly awaiting the next edition in my mailbox every Thursday.

I have particularly enjoyed the learned and informative articles written by Dr. William Brown, a man of science and medicine.

Of late, however, I am becoming increasingly concerned that this wonderful local paper of ours might turn into a political rag, a polemical tabloid.

To wit, the front page opinion piece by Dr. Brown in the April 15 edition that "Our leaders have failed us too often in this pandemic." I could not help noticing only one leader's picture appeared along with this piece.

Hmmm, I began wondering, are The Lake Report and Dr. Brown exhibiting their political bias? Perhaps it was an oversight that only



one leader's photo appeared on the front page, above the fold, rather than it being a deliberate editorial decision. I hoped that was the case.

Reading on, however, it became abundantly clear in the closing paragraphs that, indeed, political bias was being demonstrated. This was disappointing, especially coming from my favourite local paper and from someone whose thoughts on medical and scientific matters I'd come to respect.

If The Lake Report prefers to descend into the realm of a political rag sheet, please declare your political bias up front, leaving it to the paper's dedicated readers, like me, to decide whether to continue

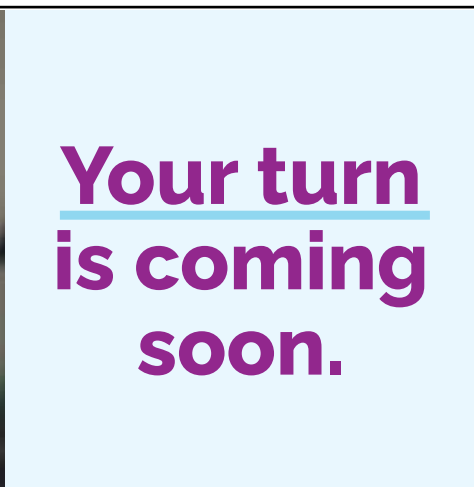
viewing it as the "go-to" weekly newspaper for the best, most reliable coverage of our town.

Moreover, perhaps the editor and Dr. Brown would like a "do over" given some of the decisions coming out of Queen's Park in recent days, together with the photo of another leader.

Better yet, and my personal preference, it would be wonderful if The Lake Report published its opinion pieces in the opinion section, rather than on the front page, and stuck with its strongest suit, bringing us the stories about local events and the people who make NOTL tick.

**Alan Young**  
NOTL

*Editor's note: The letter writer's opinion is most appreciated. The Lake Report has no particular political agenda and, as is the practice at most newspapers, publishes opinion pieces on Page 1 on occasion when the subject matter merits such prominent display. Our sole interest is presenting the most important, compelling and interesting mix of news, features and opinion every week for our readers.*



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# Town extends Queen Street patio program

Evan Saunders  
The Lake Report

After deliberating the pros and cons of having enlarged patios pushing out onto Queen Street, town council has extended the popular program until Jan. 1, 2022.

The program will be reviewed in December 2021 to determine whether it is still needed as COVID recovery could take until 2026, a federal agency says.

“When (restaurants) are allowed to open, the extra outdoor space helps immensely,” Lord Mayor Betty Disero said in an interview Tuesday.

“It gives them extra space to make up a little bit of what they’re losing. I think it will really help the restaurants. We want to help them as best as we can to try and recover.”

Speaking at Monday’s virtual committee of the whole meeting, Eduardo Lafforgue, president of the Niagara-on-the-Lake Chamber of Commerce, called the program an essential tool to aid the recovery of the tourism and service sector in NOTL.

“We need a clear plan by the Town of NOTL for restaurants to be ready for patios to reopen,” he said. “And we need to avoid additional costs that will delay the recovery.”

Restaurants have incurred large costs and debt throughout the pandemic by updating their work environments and staff on new protocols, providing PPE in various forms, and investing in upgraded patios just to be



Lord Mayor Betty Disero said expanded patios can’t stay forever, but that the town should consider its vision for Queen Street 10 to 15 years from now. FILE/RICHARD HARLEY

told they need to close their doors again.

Lafforgue framed the lack of a cohesive response and plan for businesses as a cycle of “open, spend, close, repeat.”

He noted the federal tourism agency, Destination Canada, published data determining the time frame of economic recovery for the country’s tourism industry. Canada is on track for the worst scenario of three presented by the agency, with the border set to reopen in October 2021, causing the tourism sector to earn only 40 per cent of the revenues that it saw in 2019.

And even if the border opens in the next eight months, the return to normal will be much further away, Destination Canada predicts. In that case, a return to 2019 revenue levels might not be seen until 2026.

In lieu of a strong international tourism sector, towns like NOTL will rely on support from Canadians looking for a place to escape as COVID restrictions

continue. And it is in due part to this potential for domestic travel that Lafforgue was more optimistic about NOTL’s prospects.

“For Niagara-on-the-Lake, we are lucky to be close to a major city and we are lucky to be a short-haul destination. So, we are hoping for us that (the recovery) is going to be in 2024 or at the beginning of 2025.”

A short-haul destination is a vacation area that a large majority of people can access through a short drive. NOTL’s proximity to the GTA (and to Buffalo, once the border reopens) may end up being one of its strongest assets in recovery as other tourist destinations struggle to welcome international travellers.

The mayor shared Lafforgue’s optimism, but stressed that health and safety come first.

“Niagara-on-the-Lake is positioned as a great destination for people within our province. But they should come when it is appropriate to do so, and allow us at this

time to work on recovery and getting over the COVID pandemic,” Disero said.

“As the province starts to open a little later on this year, that’s when we will welcome them back with open arms,” she told The Lake Report.

The mayor also emphasized that this is not a long-term decision and that patio owners shouldn’t expect to have extended patios in perpetuity, particularly along Queen Street.

“I don’t think that’s what we want Queen Street to look like long-term,” she said.

“With recovery, we really want to look at what will lead us through the next 20 years, in terms of infrastructure improvements. We’re doing that with Virgil, with Glendale. So, let’s look at Queen Street.”

But, until at least next December when the program is reviewed, NOTL residents and visitors can expect a bustling patio season for the town once the province allows restaurants to reopen.

# Councillors claim few expenses for 2020

Niagara-on-the-Lake councillors claimed few expenses in 2020.

Almost no councillors claimed expenses for conferences and events, except for Coun. Erwin Wiens who billed the town for \$1,742.67 and Lord Mayor Betty Disero, who claimed \$648, according to a town report.

In total, mileage expenses were \$86.06, with Coun.

Sandra O’Connor claiming nothing, Coun. Clare Cameron claiming \$1.59 and the highest claim being Erwin Wiens with only \$14.88.

Most committee members also claimed few or no expenses.

A full list of expenses can be found on the town’s website in an information package attached to the committee’s April 19 meeting agenda.

# Fire service boosts rural water training

The Niagara-on-the-Lake Fire Department will use its \$8,900 portion of a \$5-million provincial COVID-19 relief grant for training on rural water operations.

The fire department is revising its rural water supply operations and equipment, and will hold two training courses in spring or early summer. A total of 60 members

will be trained over the two weekends, says a report to town council.

The training wage for a volunteer firefighter is \$21.93 per hour.

With 15 members attending each eight-hour day, training will cost \$10,526. The \$8,900 from the province will subsidize that expense, with the remaining balance of \$1,626 coming from the operating budget.

# Town upgrades heritage planner position

The Town of NOTL has upgraded a planning position to a senior planner for heritage issues.

The current position that is proposed to be converted is a planner II job, which pays \$74,256 plus benefits. The recommended change would bring the position to the senior planner level,

with a starting salary of \$87,160.

The town says “by taking an existing position and repurposing it, there will be a minimal impact to the operating budget” with a change of \$12,904 to the operations budget.

The position will be advertised both internally and externally.

# ‘Shine a light, spread kindness’ campaign aimed at lifting spirits

Staff  
The Lake Report

The Town of Niagara-on-the-Lake has kicked off a new project to try to spread some joy during increasingly more challenging lockdowns due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

The “shine a light, spread kindness” campaign asks residents to commit to one act of kindness every day. It could be something simple

like sending a friendly text to a friend, giving compliments to people you live with, or even doing a silly dance to brighten someone’s day.

“This kindness campaign provides a beautiful opportunity to remember and celebrate who we are as a community. Even as we go through this difficult time together, let’s continue to shine our light and spread kindness out to the world.

Everyone desires kindness and respect,” Lord Mayor Betty Disero said in a news release.

Chief administrative officer Marnie Cluckie echoed her sentiments.

“I always marvel at the way a simple smile or kind word can brighten my day,” she said.

“Kindness is truly powerful and now, more than ever, kindness really matters. Many people are

hurting, frustrated, confused, lonely, anxious, sad, and the list goes on. While we are all in this pandemic together, we are all experiencing the effects of it differently. It is essential that despite the frustrations we’re experiencing, that we choose to be kind to ourselves, and kind to each other.”

To see how to participate, visit [notl.com/kindnesscampaign](http://notl.com/kindnesscampaign).

Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday
<b>KINDNESS THROUGH WORDS</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Send a kind text.</li> <li>Post something positive on social media.</li> <li>Give someone a compliment.</li> <li>Say “thank you” for an act of service you take for granted.</li> </ul>	<b>KINDNESS THROUGH CREATIVITY</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Make and display a Kindness Sign in your front window or lawn. (Challenge your neighbours to do the same.)</li> <li>Create kindness messages on sidewalks and driveways in chalk.</li> <li>Write a poem about kindness.</li> <li>Find and listen to a song about kindness.</li> </ul>	<b>KINDNESS THROUGH GIVING</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Donate to a cause that is important to you.</li> <li>Play for the order of the vehicle behind you in line.</li> <li>Gather your gently used items and sell them aside to donate.</li> <li>Have dinner delivered to a loved one you know is struggling.</li> </ul>	<b>KINDNESS THROUGH STEWARDSHIP “EARTH DAY”</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Order a reusable coffee mug and/or water bottle.</li> <li>Plant a garden.</li> <li>Conserve water.</li> <li>Avoid travel by vehicle.</li> <li>Visit <a href="http://notl.com/earthday">notl.com/earthday</a> for more information.</li> </ul>
Friday	Saturday	Sunday	
<b>KINDNESS THROUGH ACTION</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Call a loved one.</li> <li>Support a local business by leaving a positive online review.</li> <li>Smile (with your eyes above your mask) and say hello from a safe distance to someone.</li> <li>Let a car merge into traffic with a wave and a smile.</li> </ul>	<b>KINDNESS THROUGH SELF CARE</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Eat a healthy snack.</li> <li>Go for a walk.</li> <li>Complete a task you’ve been putting off.</li> </ul>	<b>KINDNESS THROUGH THOUGHT</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Replace a negative thought with a positive one.</li> <li>Write a list of things you are grateful for.</li> <li>Reflect on your day and find the good.</li> <li>Reflect on the kind of person you want to be. Could you be kinder?</li> </ul>	



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# Virgil woman **honoured** by Niagara Bruce Trail Club

Jill Troyer  
The Lake Report

Margaret Northfield has been named Volunteer of the Year by the Niagara Bruce Trail Club, but her passion for the trail and her efforts to support the club date back much further.

“Margaret’s contributions go above and beyond, and not only in the last year,” according to club president Lisa Etienne. “She just does everything. It’s amazing what she gets done.”

The list is as impressive as it is long.

As media relations director, Northfield takes care of the club website and social media platforms, she initiated and runs training for new hike leaders and she created “Hiking 101” orientation for new members.

Then there are special events around the annual Bruce Trail Day and promotional presence at area fairs and festivals to promote the club. Northfield is also active as a hike leader herself. And the list can’t really capture everything she does.

“She is the face of our club and she is so welcom-

ing to new members,” said Etienne, adding, “Margaret is the most amazing promoter of our club.”

Membership has increased significantly under Northfield’s guidance, with 1,200 members today.

Northfield’s hiking journey started 14 years ago when she was visiting her sister in Owen Sound and hiked an event with some friends. She says something clicked with her and she knew this was something she had to do.

“I had always enjoyed walking, but hiking made me feel at home, like part of me that had been missing was restored. I felt at peace with myself on the trail, I felt happier,” she explains.

Back home in Niagara, Northfield joined the club here and gradually completed her first end-to-end of the trail, which stretches almost 900 kilometres from Niagara to Tobermory.

She didn’t plan to do it again, “but people had been really good to me when I did it the first time, so I started doing it for other people, to help them. I’ve

done it three times, and now I’m working on my fourth and fifth.”

Northfield doesn’t limit her hikes to the Bruce Trail.

“Hiking opened up my world. I heard about hiking holidays and fell in love with mountain hiking.”

So far, Northfield has hiked the famed Camino trail, which is 800 kilometres across Spain; The Tour de Mont Blanc, 200 kilometres through mountains in France, Italy and Switzerland; and the Wainwright Trail through villages in England.

A planned trip to hike the French and Swiss Alps in 2020 was postponed due to COVID and it’s uncertain when it can be safely rescheduled.

But wherever she’s hiking, Northfield loves the benefits of it. “It relieves stress, it’s physically refreshing and it keeps me balanced. It’s meditative.”

The hiking program for all ages and levels has been paused since the lockdown that started in December, but it will resume when restrictions allow. The trail itself remains open.



Margaret Northfield, Niagara Bruce Trail Club volunteer of the year. SUPPLIED/RICK WATERS

For more information on the Niagara Bruce Trail Club, visit the website at [niagarabruceclub.com/wp/](http://niagarabruceclub.com/wp/)

**OTHERS RECOGNIZED:** Trudy Senesi

is recipient of the club’s Lifetime Achievement award for her many years of dedication and contribution to the organization. Lou and Judy Gaudier received

the Unsung Hero award for their many years of promoting and supporting the club. Read more at [niagarabruceclub.com/wp/volunteer-awards/](http://niagarabruceclub.com/wp/volunteer-awards/)

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An NRT OnDemand vehicle at the NOTL Community Centre. FILE PHOTO

# On-demand transit use **increasing**, but slow to catch on, report shows

Fatima Baig  
Special to The Lake Report

Ridership on Niagara-on-the-Lake's new transit system appears to be on the rise but the on-demand service has not been hugely popular to date.

In its four months of operation, NRT OnDemand has given 348 rides. However, an information report to council says March ridership saw a 109 per cent increase compared to its first month operating last December and a 40 per cent increase over February.

Lord Mayor Betty Disero attributes the slow growth in ridership to the COVID-19 pandemic.

"We're in a pandemic. People are being encouraged to stay at home and only go out when they absolutely need to. So I think people are cautious and are following the recommendation from the province," said Disero.

However, with the warmer weather approaching and the availability of vaccines, she suspects there will be an increase in ridership.

Robert Salewytch, transit services program manager for the Region of Niagara, said residents have requested changes to the service, such as expanding the route, which currently only services parts of Glendale, Virgil and Old Town, and doesn't connect with other regional transit systems.

Disero also said she's heard similar concerns.

"One of the comments I've heard is that they

would like it to be expanded so they could go from Old Town to Queenston or from St. Davids down to Virgil."

According to Disero, the system wanted to continue with the original route until officials could assess how well it was working.

"We weren't prepared to do that until we found it was going to work," Disero said, adding expansion will be considered in the fall when budget discussions are held.

Treasurer Kyle Freeborn said the town is paying \$708,000 for NRT OnDemand transit and \$175,000 for the heritage shuttle.

To expand the service to Queenston and St. Davids would cost an additional \$235,000 to cover two additional vehicles, he said.

In 2020, the cost of the previous transit service was \$500,000 and \$175,000 for the heritage shuttle.

Disero said the response from NOTL residents about the new service has been mostly positive, with people saying they like the service and find it convenient.

"We have had a couple of calls from people who have a couple of concerns. I think they were dropped off in locations not exactly where they want to go but on the corner," she said.

Rosemary Maryschak has used the NRT OnDemand transit system "six or seven times" and is one of the many riders who would like NRT drivers to pick and drop her off in the exact location instead of at the corner.

In December, Maryschak said she requested a ride to Valu-mart in Virgil and wasn't able to be dropped off in the parking lot, or picked up with her groceries. Instead, she was dropped off next door at the LCBO.

She said she called the driver to tell him she had "10 bags" of groceries, "but he would not come to the parking lot in Valu-mart."

On another trip, Maryschak said the driver wasn't wearing a mask. She said her daughter emailed NRT about the incident and didn't receive a response.

Salewytch said that while passengers must wear masks, the transit system's policy does not require drivers to wear one while operating an NRT OnDemand vehicle. There is a partition between the driver and the passengers to protect both.

Catherine Starrs said she first used NRT OnDemand last December and found herself stranded in Old Town.

"I was stranded down at Court House and used the app to have the bus pick me up. Two hours later I was still waiting on my ride and the GPS was down. Also, my phone went down trying to figure out where the bus was," said Starrs.

She was able to contact her daughter to pick her up.

The average wait time for a ride was 12 minutes and 39 seconds, according to a town report.

Starrs said she preferred the original transit system, which connected to other regional transit systems.

"The old system you could plan your day and were guaranteed your connection for the regional buses. I was a regular user of our local bus and regional bus. When the council took away the regular system, they have taken away our independence and social contact with other people," she said.

Whether the NRT OnDemand pilot project will continue past one year or become permanent is yet to be determined.


"We will have those discussions in the future when we go through our budget deliberation to see what impact it's been to the community, the cost to the community and the usage, but we are not at the point yet," said Disero.

She said she will watch for "an upward trend in usage as we go through this slow reopening."

About 38 per cent of riders paid for trips through the mobile application or by calling in, while another 34 per cent of riders used passes purchased at the community centre or town hall.

"The remainder of rides was composed of promotional rides, transfers from outside the municipality and the Brock University U-Pass system," the report said.

A total of 109 users rated their experience, with 99 per cent of those users giving a five out of five rating, the report says.



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Pauline Reimer Gibson  
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# Developer plans to **appeal** court decision

Continued from Front Page

interim control bylaw. He ordered both sides to submit documents regarding how costs should be apportioned.

Lawyers for the town and Hummel spent last Tuesday and Wednesday arguing their sides. Hummel claimed the development freeze was illegal and that the town violated the planning or municipal acts when implementing the interim control bylaw.

He also alleged the town acted in bad faith by violating its own procedural bylaws to plan a rushed and secretive meeting to plan and implement the bylaw.

The town passed the bylaw in a special meeting called at 8:30 a.m. — an unusual time for a meeting — just 37 hours after councillors had been sworn in after the 2018 election.

Hummel said the town also did not give notice of the meeting until the day before, despite knowing of the meeting plans almost two weeks in advance and despite town's procedural bylaw requiring notice of meetings the Thursday prior to the meeting.

The town argued it was procedurally allowed to call the special meeting, as it was an emergency and the town's bylaws are vague on what constitutes an emergency.

On the first day of arguments last week Ramsay called into question many of the developer's statements in his claim.

Ultimately, he ruled that none of them mattered.

Ramsay's written ruling said the town did not act in bad faith and it com-



Former chief administrative officer Holly Dowd and Lord Mayor Betty Disero during inauguration in 2018. FILE PHOTO

plied with municipal and provincial legislation when it enacted the bylaw for the development freeze.

"Niagara-on-the-Lake is a gem," Ramsay wrote. "Our historic capital, its history of European settlement goes back to the Loyalists. Set on the shore of Lake Ontario, surrounded by vineyards, it is a hub of history, culture and tourism."

"In the 2018 municipal election, development of the old town was much debated. A focus of the debate was one particular developer (not the applicant) who provoked discussion by cutting down old trees on his estate."

He said despite short notice for the Dec. 5 meeting to enact the bylaw, "it was permitted for an emergency meeting."

Ramsay said Hummel "attacks the validity"

of the interim control bylaw and its extension it on three main points: That the Dec. 5, 2018, meeting of council did not meet the requirements of the Municipal Act, that the interim control bylaw did not meet the requirements of the Planning Act and that the bylaw was enacted and extended in bad faith.

"I consider the first two heads of complaint to be moot, because the bylaw has been repealed. The applicant submits that the first two heads of relief are not moot, because a finding of illegality would be a basis for liability for the torts (wrongful acts) that it alleges. I disagree," Ramsay wrote.

He said Hummel's argument hinged on whether the town acted in bad faith.

He ruled that because the town held its meeting in

public and the town's procedural bylaw allows the town to call a meeting with short notice in an emergency, then the town did not act in bad faith.

"(Lord Mayor Betty Disero) was entitled by the town's procedural bylaws to call an emergency meeting for Dec. 5. Nothing in those bylaws precluded her from considering the subject matter to be an emergency, allowing shorter notice. Interim control is by its nature urgent," Ramsay wrote.

He said also that despite a sworn affidavit by town planner Craig Larmour, in which Larmour said he didn't recommend an interim control bylaw, nor understand the true need for it, council is not beholden to act on the advice of staff, but also can take into account the wishes of the public.

"The director of planning was not aware of an emergency, but that does not matter. It is evident that the lord mayor considered the matters on the agenda to be urgent," Ramsay ruled.

Hummel claimed that under the Planning Act, the town wasn't able to enact two interim control bylaws at one time. The town at the time of implementing the bylaw to freeze development had already had one interim control bylaw in place limiting cannabis production.

However, Ramsay said that portion of the act is not intended to mean the town can't enact two interim control bylaws on two different issues.

"Enacting two interim control bylaws for completely different purposes does not contravene the section," he ruled.

Hummel claimed the town acted illegally by not directing a study directly related to the bylaw. However, Ramsay ruled the town's review of its official plan constituted a study.

Ramsay also disputed the accusations of bad faith, saying the town acted legally.

"The meeting complied with the procedural bylaw. Council made the bylaw in a public meeting and published the bylaw after it was passed. It is not fair to say that anything was hidden from the public. Given the extensive public participation engendered by council after the bylaw was passed, the notion that a hidden agenda existed is far-fetched, to say the least," Ramsay wrote.

He said despite not all aspects of the bylaw being dealt with in public, "a newly elected official is entitled to move quickly with her agenda. Private and other discussions always precede legislation. The interim control bylaw was enacted after being discussed in a public meeting."

He also did not agree with Hummel's claim that the agenda of the Dec. 5 meeting was "cryptic."

"The agenda was not cryptic. It set out the text of the proposed bylaw, substantially although not exactly in the same terms as the text that was adopted."

Ramsay ruled the town did not act illegally in extending the interim control bylaw either, saying it "was justified by the delay before the amendment to the official plan would come into force."

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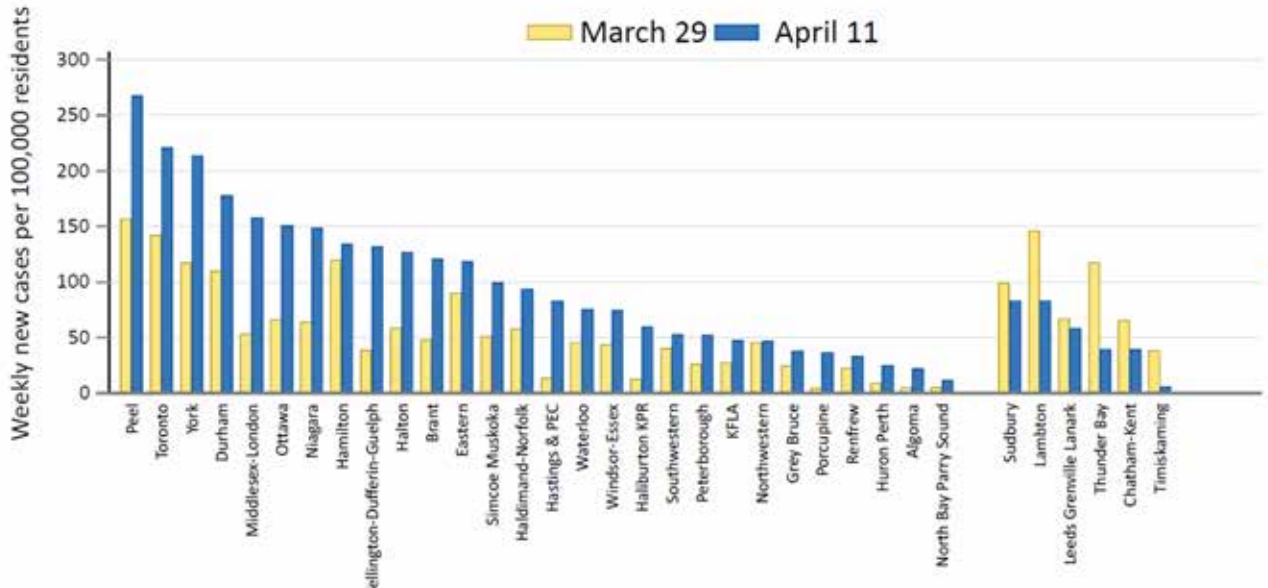
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**Mike Shatkosky**  
 Owner



Data source: CCM  
Data note: Data for the most recent day have been censored to account for reporting delays  
Update on COVID-19 Projections - Ontario COVID-19 Science Advisory Table (covid19-science-table.ca), April 16, 2021

Cases of COVID-19 are rising rapidly in Ontario. SOURCED

# Vaccines could be diverted from Niagara to COVID hotspots in GTA, Hirji says

Richard Harley  
The Lake Report

Some of Niagara's vaccine supply could be diverted to other regions considered to be COVID hotspots, warns Niagara's chief medical officer Dr. Mustafa Hirji.

Modelling predicts that shifting vaccine distribution to focus more on hotspots could prevent one case of COVID-19 for every 34 shots administered, as well as prevent deaths and hospitalizations, Hirji told a news conference Monday.

"So I'm expecting in the next few weeks we may see a shift of vaccines, away from places like Niagara, and more strongly to places like Toronto and Peel where they have the hotspots."

He said he expects Niagara's vaccine pace will slow down if the vaccines are redirected, however he isn't certain how much vaccine might be affected.

"I would imagine there

will still be some vaccine coming to us. It just might be a smaller amount so that might mean we're running smaller clinics, as opposed to necessarily completely shuttering our clinics, but that is me speculating," Hirji said.

As of Monday, about 26 per cent of Niagara residents had been vaccinated, he said.

Niagara, along with the rest of Ontario, has seen COVID-19 case numbers spike drastically in the last two weeks.

He said it's past the point where we can really start to see cases come down significantly, unless something "additional" is done.

"Without stronger system level measures, immediate support for essential workers — which hasn't been done — and support for high-risk communities, high cases will persist through the summer," Hirji said, based on data provided by

the Ontario Science Table. "Obviously, the reason we care about cases, is because a fraction of cases will go on to having severe illness and be hospitalized. A fraction of those will be very severely ill and will need ICU care."

On Monday he said 700 patients were in ICU across the province, and that predictions show ICU admissions could reach 1,500 by the beginning of May before they start to come down.

"That's significant. The province of previous specified 150 people in ICU from COVID-19 was their danger threshold. So we're now looking at 1,500, so about 10 times above that."

Like other countries that opened up when cases were still high, such as the U.K., he said Ontario could experience a similar trend.

"Hopefully, we'll learn that lesson and extend our stay-at-home order past just the six weeks, because

I think it's probably going to need to be longer than that to bring cases to a low enough point, to get to a point where vaccines are high enough that we'll be able to safely reopen."

He suggested the stay-at-home order would likely need to be extended until late June to be effective.

There is a potential we won't need to lockdown for months, but it depends on people's decisions, he said.

"To get cases under control the key thing is that we need this lockdown to actually stop people from socially interacting with others," Hirji said.

"Unfortunately, when you look at our mobility data, thus far, we haven't really seen that kind of reaction with this latest lockdown."

One saving grace is with nicer weather, people can get outside, but they need to do so with members of their households only, he added.

## RIDDLE ME THIS

I have 13 hearts, but no other organs? What am I?

Last issue: I can wave my hands at you, but I never say goodbye. You are always cool when with me, even more so when I am high! What am I?

Answer: A fan

Answered first by: Susan Hamilton

Also answered correctly (in order) by: Howard Jones, Wade Durling, Carol Durling, Sheila Meloche, Pam Dowling, Patricia DiFilippo, Mary Drost, Mary Harder, Tee Bucci, Maria Janeiro, Elaine Landray, Brenda Bartley, Mary Spaan, Margie Enns

Email answers, with your name, to editor@niagaranow.com for a chance to win a prize. (Subject line: Riddle me this)

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# Queenston youngster sets sights on riding for Canada

Linda Fritz  
The Lake Report

Queenston is a village with a long history. Its best known residents lived in the past. This, however, is a story about the future.

Last weekend, I was standing at my front door speaking to friends. A neighbour, Bernd Christmas, and his daughter were riding their bikes by us when the little girl leapt from her bike and ran across the road to greet two dogs who had their humans out for a walk. My friends commented on her athleticism.

That's Ansale'wit Christmas. She's four and lives with her parents and three-year-old brother. An older half brother attends the University of Memphis on a soccer scholarship.

Ansale'wit (pronounced Ann sa LAY wit) is Mi'Kmaq on her father's side and Cree on her mother's. She is a member of the Membertou First Nation in Nova Scotia.



Ansale'wit Christmas with pony Pip. Right: Ansale'wit and mom Tracee Smith. SUPPLIED

Her passion in life is horses. Her mother, Tracee Smith, says she has been enamoured with stories of unicorns and horses from the time she could pick up picture books. She has been riding since she was two.

The pony she uses today is named Pip and is stabled at Linden Ridge in Burlington. She learned to ride on Gizmo, a mini pony the size of a large dog.

Ansale'wit's family and

coaches recognized her courage and commitment to horses when Gizmo nipped at her in the arena during lead classes. She carried on. When she falls from Pip, she brushes herself off and remounts.

As it became clear that Ansale'wit was serious about riding, her parents contacted an old friend, Nancy Southern, whose family owns Spruce Meadows in Calgary. She advised them to help Ansale'wit



move forward so her talent should be nurtured.

Show jumping is Ansale'wit's activity of choice. She says she likes to go fast and jump high. She also enjoys the more domestic side of riding and is happy to help brush her horse and clean up his stall.

She shows great intuition with the animals and has never been afraid to walk into a barn.

Smith says her daughter recently stopped at a

stall, where, she said, she wanted to check the horse's front hoof. She lifted his leg and told the adults with her that the horse was hurt.

"She has great horse intuition and has never been afraid to walk into a barn," says Smith. "Recently, she stopped at a stall, where, she said, she wanted to check the horse's front hoof. She lifted his leg and told the adults with her that the horse was hurt." A veterinarian was called in the next day.

Kim Kirton, one of the most successful junior riders in Canadian history, has watched Ansale'wit. Kirton began winning competitions when she was 13 and after her riding career ended, she became a coach with an interest in junior riders.

Speaking about Ansale'wit, Kirton said, "She's got everything it takes as far as attitude, and the willingness and natural talent." She sees a great future for the young rider.

Although horses are her major interest, Ansale'wit

would like to be a ballerina as well. This, she inherits from her mother, who has a bachelor in fine arts in dance from York University.

Besides horses and dancing, Ansale'wit also skate boards and is learning to play tennis. When she joins other Queenston children in the local park for the inevitable racing, she makes it clear that she canters while the others run.

Occasionally, people who like to stroll around the village will find fences set up over the sidewalk in front of the Christmas family's home so that they, too, can practise their skills. Ansale'wit is more than happy to join them and to offer advice on technique.

Ansale'wit's goal is to ride at the Royal Winter Fair and in the Olympics. Those who know her recognize her determination and grit. Look out Eric, Ian, Tiffany, Jill and Mac!

Queenstonians, needless to say, will be watching this future star with pride.

## Adopt An Art Work program is a fundraiser for RiverBrink

Debra Antoncic  
Special to The Lake Report

There are many activities and experiences we have missed over the past year, such as the simple joys of getting together with friends and family, to say nothing of the more difficult impact of loss.

Visiting an art museum has always been one of my favourite things to do, for reasons that are both personal and professional, and thus it is one of the things I have missed most in the last year.

The way I find myself looking with fresh eyes at the world after spending time in an art museum, the way that art challenges me – this has been a difficult adjustment.

Luckily my job at RiverBrink Art Museum enables me to spend considerable time with works of art, many of which I know well and think of as "old friends" whenever I see them on display or in the vault. The museum is quiet



Marie Laurencin, self-portrait. SUPPLIED

for now, but the art works on exhibition carry a strong presence in the stillness of the empty rooms.

Works of art have the power to take us to different places, to the past and into the future. It always amazes me that viewers will see different things, that the same painting will

have a different impact, conjure different memories or thoughts for different viewers.

The variety of associations that prompted friends of RiverBrink to adopt specific artworks from the collection provides a compelling example of this.

For instance, Robert Sears adopted a favourite among RiverBrink staff, William Henry Barnard's "Niagara Falls" – "because I love artwork that depicts the power, beauty and mood of the falls." And Barnard's career in the British military also spoke to Robert's personal history.

Of all the (many, many!) paintings of the falls in the collection, this one is indeed striking. It has an almost contemporary feel, bringing the viewer to the brink of the falls and into a vast, existential void.

Barnard's subsequent fate – an officer in the British military who spent time in the Canadas in the 1830s and produced a series of watercolours of his trav-

els, who died of cholera in Bengal in 1858 after his regiment was sent to India to quell the Indian Rebellion against the East India Company – connects works in the collection to a wider history of conquest.

A fascination with art that depicts Niagara Falls also prompted Allan Magnacca to adopt "Niagara Falls in Winter" (n.d.) by Fredrick Marled Bell-Smith. In the painting, visitors are shown strolling on the ice below the falls, enjoying a sunny winter day.

The scene carries no hint of the perils of the fast-moving river current, perils that would result in tragedy in 1912 when the bridge of ice across the Niagara River collapsed and swept several to their death.

While the subject of a work is often a strong reason for a personal connection, others are prompted by admiration for a particular artist. Long experience with the work of Tom Thomson prompted Geoffrey Joyner to adopt "Sketch for the

Jack Pine" (1916), a decision he links to his professional career.

In his words, "as someone who spent five decades in the art world, I believe strongly in supporting cultural institutions like RiverBrink. My choice of adopting one of the most iconic works by Tom Thomson was a natural for me as I have handled numerous paintings by him."

Similarly, Colin Brzezicki's response to "Self-Portrait" (1927) by Marie Laurencin was shaped by his experience as a teacher and author. Drawing on his knowledge of Shakespeare, Colin references a line from Anthony and Cleopatra, "Age cannot wither her, nor custom stale her infinite variety" to convey his response to the youthful visage.

As Colin describes, "Mona Lisa isn't beautiful in a classical or Hollywood sense. Neither is this woman, but like the Mona Lisa her eyes are captivating."

Laurencin's self-portraits

are notable for the expression of independence and self-representation the artist claimed, not an easy task in the Parisian avant-garde of the early 20th century. As Colin notes, although the subject appears physically slight and almost ethereal, it is the impression of the eyes that linger.

Friends of RiverBrink have selected many different art works to adopt and have their own reasons. In so doing, they are supporting a unique fundraiser and contributing to an important cultural resource in the community of Niagara-on-the-Lake during difficult times.

There are many works still available, so if you would like to participate, please check out the Adopt an Artwork page on our website: <http://www.riverbrink.org/adoptanartwork.html>

And we hope to see you all in person very soon.

Debra Antoncic is director/curator of the RiverBrink Art Museum in Queenston.



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## Kendall's Corner



Lake Report photographer Gail Kendall captured these photos of the April 21 snowfall around the Queenston area. Some spring flowers were covered. GAIL KENDALL

## The Third Wave: Explained by the Authorities

David Israelson  
Special to The Lake Report

Welcome to the third wave.

Of course, this may or may not be the third wave. As a leading authority in this jurisdiction, I personally consider it to be the third wave. All the signs are there.

My colleagues disagree. They say it is certainly not the third wave. Some of them think it might be the end of the second wave, or some sort of wave sneak preview if you will.

Anyway, as a leading government authority, I'm pleased to report that our sign-up system is now up and running.

By "up and running," I don't mean to suggest that you can now sign up for a vaccine. That will definitely be possible at some point. We're working to determine when that will be and we will advise everyone then.

By "everyone," we don't necessarily mean you. If you are over 80, have constant access to high-speed internet and a smartphone, you will be able to stay up to the minute on what your next steps should be.

When we say "then," let's be clear. Vaccinations are really important. We know they're important to you and that's important to us. So stay tuned, as our high-level team of experts meets to determine exactly what we mean when we say that "we will advise everyone then" what your next steps



SOURCED IMAGE

should be.

Let's also be clear about those "next steps." You should go to your state-of-the-art smartphone right now, and using your high-speed broadband internet, sign up right away.

By "sign up," we're talking about our pre-registration list. After a short delay of up to 20 minutes — which would be a still modest two-hour wait if you try by phone — you can register on our pre-list.

This gives you the opportunity to be notified at a future date about the exact moment when you can access your pre-registration data. Then, using your state-of-the-art technology, you can seek to register for a future opportunity to acquire a date for a vaccination.

When will this happen? "Then," of course.

It's important to remember that we are enabling you to pre-sign based on a priority system. If you are

more than 80 years old, you should not be reading this — you should be on your state-of-the-art technology right now, pre-registering. Come back in 20 minutes — about two hours if you try by phone — and you can finish reading what we have to say here.

What we have to say here is important now that we're in the third wave. Unless we're not in the third wave — our team of authorities will determine this, unless we disagree.

Meanwhile, it's important to follow the guidelines and rules closely. First, stay home — unless you go out.

If you go out, go home when you're done.

What about public gatherings? This depends on a number of factors. In some regions, by "public" we mean a large number of people; in others, not so much. Before you go to that party, check to see if it's OK in your area to visit a shut-in

at a long-term care facility.

Then check what is allowed in the region next to you. It may be perfectly OK, for example, to book a manicure, but don't let this fool you into thinking you can visit your grandmother face-to-face.

When will vaccinations be available to more people? As we said, we know that getting vaccinated is important to you. And knowing that you know that we know this is important.

So ... if you were born in certain years — no, wait a second!

By this we mean certain months in certain years — no, wait!

We do mean certain years after all ... anyway, if you can figure out whether you were born at the right time, you can probably walk into a drugstore and they will take you right away.

Unless, of course, it's a drugstore in an area that doesn't have any vaccines.

In that case, why not visit an older person and help them with their state-of-the-art technology to pre-sign up on the advanced pre-sign up list?

Check first to see if it's OK to visit that old person in your particular area.

Otherwise, maybe get your nails done.

*David Israelson is a non-practising lawyer, writer and consultant based in Niagara-on-the-Lake. A version of this article appeared in The Lawyer's Daily.*

## From Niagara Health to the community

*The following open letter from Niagara Health leaders was addressed to Niagara residents. It is co-signed and supported by more than 70 other leaders across the region, including politicians, civil servants, doctors and community service organizations.*

Dear editor:

Now more than ever we are #InItTogether and need to support one another as we fight through the third wave of this dreadful pandemic.

We've vaccinated more than 24 per cent of Ni-

agara's residents, beginning with those in the highest risk populations. More than 125,000 doses have been administered in our community and the number of COVID-19 vaccinations increases each day by the thousands.

At the same time, however, there is reason for concern. Niagara Health is experiencing unprecedented pressures and is asking for your help to protect capacity for life-saving critical care and other patient services.

This is also the case for hospitals across the province

and beyond.

Let's remember the more than 380 people who contracted COVID-19 and died, along with their loved ones who are grieving these terrible losses. There are now 2,000 active cases in our community, a number that's been growing at a concerning rate over the past number of weeks.

There have been so many challenges thrown our way over the past 14 months. We know people are hurting and we know you are frustrated.

Now more than ever we

need to support one another. Follow public health guidelines — masking, physical distancing, handwashing and keeping contact with members of your household only. Support local businesses — stores, restaurants, wineries and other merchants. And be kind.

We are #InItTogether.  
**Bunny Alexander,**  
*chair, board of directors*  
**Lynn Guerriero,**  
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**Dr. Johan Viljoen,**  
*chief of staff*  
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## April snows



NOTL resident Jamie Slingerland sent in this photo of blossoms, bees and snow.



Downtown NOTL covered in snow. TONY CHISHOLM



Betsy Masson captured these photos that show blossoms on April 16 vs. April 21. TONY CHISHOLM

## Obituary & In memoriam

### My big sister – Pauline Shervill

Pauline was the first born in February 1936 to Frank and Phyllis Wright, who lived in Catford, South London. One year later she was joined by a new baby sister Gwen.

The four of them lived together in a two-bedroom flat, facing the threats of the Second World War. Going to school and visiting family in the Lewisham, South London area.

In 1949, another member of the family popped up namely me, Susan, so that made Pauline and Gwen young teenagers when I arrived. "What a shock for them." But from what I remember they both made a fuss of me, being the baby of the family.

Pauline loved her clothes and had a great fashion sense. When she left school she went onto doing an apprenticeship in wig making and I hear made some good ones for some well-known people. I can remember Pauline also working

in an office on a switch-board and one day she took me with her to work. I guess I was around five years old at the time. "Great fun."

Pauline started to get an eye for the boys and, of course, in particular Derek Shervill. They started courting and in 1955 they got married. By this time my parents moved from their flat into a small house in Bellingham, South London. This is where Pauline and Derek came to live with us sharing the rooms, etc.

We were together for two years. I have happy memories of the time sneaking into their living room to be made a fuss of once they got home from work. They often took me out with them and their friends, visiting the seaside Brighton and seeing the lights at Southend-on-Sea. What a little pain I must have been. Ha ha!

So when 1957 arrived, Pauline and Derek decided to take off to Toronto,

Canada, for a new and exciting life. It was very sad for me and my family. I loved the time we had together and loved the time they gave me as a little girl of age six or seven.

Our family was very happy to know they had settled in Canada and started to put down roots, and made a family of their own. First came their daughter Kim, followed by their son Drew who later married Jane.

Over the years our family made quite a few visits to see them in Canada, each time going to different houses and places.

As time went on they were both blessed with grandchildren, two girls Natalie (who married Cameron) and Tatum, and a grandson Liam.

They finally settled in a lovely house at Niagara-on-the-Lake. What a beautiful place! Just like something out of Anne of Green Gables. Whilst there Pauline made lots of great friends



and social scenes, including the lawn bowling club, fish and chips at the Legion, dance nights and, of course, summer events down at the lake at the bottom of their street. Pauline was so happy sitting in her lovely garden watching and feeding the birds, and making a fuss of their beloved dog Bicky.

Then in November 2019, she was blessed with a beautiful great-grandson Azaryah, who made her story complete. Dear Pauline is greatly missed and always in our hearts.

### George Warren

A Life well lived! Rejoice for George Warren, he has joined his beloved late wife Ruth Warren (Walker).

George passed away peacefully in his sleep at the Niagara Falls General Hospital on April 17 2021. Born in Niagara-on-the-Lake, on Nov. 8, 1926 to the late Frederick and Dora Warren. Cherished brother of the late Fred, late Aylmer (Patricia), and survived by sister Jane Grenke.

Dear father of, George (Barb) Warren, Robin (Scott Bratton), Carolynne (Walter Stilphen), Kathleen (Jeffrey Drew), Robert (Kate) Warren, William Warren, John (Karen) Warren.

Loving Grandchildren, Theresa (Arthur Rock), Michael (Lisa) Wiebe, Rebecca (Scott Moncur),

Alexandra (Jeffrey Aler-ta), Carly Stilphen, Cody (Taylor) Warren, Christy Stilphen, Jessica (Jesse Moreau) Warren, Matthew (Kelly) Drew, Jacob (Kaitlin) Warren, Nick (Allie) Penteluke, Jon Warren, Emily Warren, George Warren III and Ben Warren.

Loving great-grandchildren, Charlie and Jack Warren, Madison Moncur, Harper and Spencer Rock, Andrew and Emma Moncur.

Survived by sister-in-law Mary Williams (and family), sister-in-law Sue Walker (and family), family friend Florence Mearns and many other loving family members.

George was a member of Niagara-on-the-Lake Anglican Church for 65 years. For those whom George

touched, the boss was a man full of love for his community, family and people. George's character will live on in the lessons he left his family and friends. For over 50 years he was owner of Warren Heating and Plumbing. The late-night service calls to help the people of Niagara-on-the-Lake are retold today. George was a member of the Masonic order (1954), the Shriners (1981), the Royal Canadian Legion (75 years), and a part of the Golden Age Club (10 years) where he played cards and socialized with many friends.

As we grieve the loss of George Warren, we are mindful that we must celebrate the life of a good man, a life well lived, a role model for family, and a



loving father. He was a hero to his daughters and a best friend to his sons. He will be forever missed. Due to Covid-19 a celebration of life will be held at a later date.



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The Lake Report wants to help recognize NOTL's Pandemic Heroes — people who have made a difference, big or small, in a positive way. You can help us recognize someone in the community by sending a bit about the person and why they're a Pandemic Hero. Please send your nominations early to [editor@niagaranow.com](mailto:editor@niagaranow.com). A special thanks to Ravine Vineyard Estate Winery for providing a bottle of sparkling wine to each of our pandemic heroes. That's the spirit!

# NOTL's volunteer ambassadors



Some of NOTL's mask ambassadors with a complimentary bottle of wine from Konzelmann for their volunteer efforts. SUPPLIED PHOTO

Niagara-on-the-Lake's Ambassador Program is recognized as a group of volunteers who are truly Pandemic Heroes in our town.

Nothing could stop these com-

munity members from stepping up to help visitors understand our town's pandemic safety measures.

Town councillors Gary Boroughs, Wendy Cheropita and the

Shaw Guild came together to put some friendly, informative faces on our streets in the form of these town ambassadors.

"The term hero is very appropriate for the Shaw Guild

volunteers who became our town ambassadors," Cheropita said.

"The big thing is that the program brought a friendly face, somebody that is there to answer questions people have. They help

to remind people of the rules in a friendly way," she said.

The town councillor says there is ongoing discussion about the program and whether it will be able to continue in 2021.

Proud of our NOTL Pandemic Heroes

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A heartfelt thank you from all of us at Ravine Vineyard to all of the NOTL Pandemic Heroes. We are all very fortunate to have you in our community

Thanks to all our hometown heroes!

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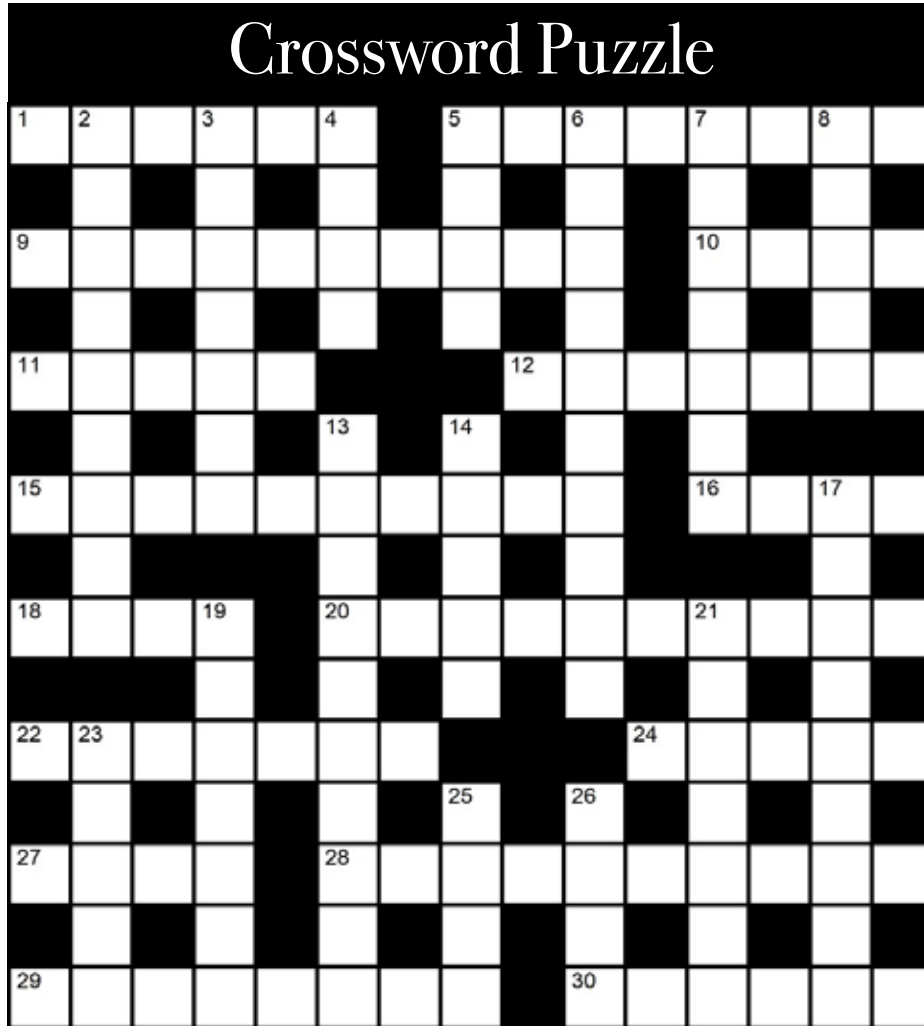
*Have some fun*

**Across**

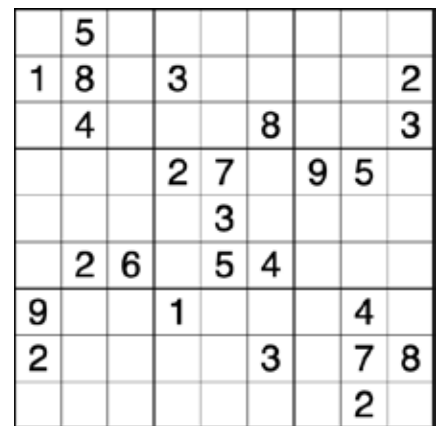
- 1. Without exception (2,1,3)
- 5. Crossword with no clues (8)
- 9. Good for you (10)
- 10. Chancel wear (4)
- 11. Geological faults (5)
- 12. Impressive array (7)
- 15. Vulnerable (3,2,1,4)
- 16. Free from bias (4)
- 18. Corporate big wheels (1,1,2)
- 20. Stage illuminators (10)
- 22. Country on Lake Tanganyika (7)
- 24. Edge of a precipice (5)
- 27. Angler's decoy (4)
- 28. Firm which makes Up! (10)
- 29. Arrogant, presumptuous people (8)
- 30. Overnight flight (3-3)

**Down**

- 2. Hold on ... (3,6)
- 3. Good conductor, perhaps (7)
- 4. Diamond songwriter (4)
- 5. Flake (4)
- 6. Common currency in New York, for example (6,4)
- 7. Disappear slowly (4,3)
- 8. Insurgent (5)
- 13. Disregarded for promotion (6,4)
- 14. Largest of the Lesser Sunda Islands (5)
- 17. With great concentration (9)
- 19. Used TNT to blow up a scholar (7)
- 21. Floral wreath (7)
- 23. Wrongfully appropriate (5)
- 25. Looked up to in Switzerland (4)
- 26. Nicholas II was the last (4)



Last issue's answers



**Choose  
Kindness.**

**During these challenging times,  
let's remember to keep calm and be kind to all.  
Kindness involves doing what it takes to protect  
your neighbours by following health guidelines.**





Edgar Degas, L'Absinthe, 1876, Oil on canvas, Musée d'Orsay, Paris. SUPPLIED



## Absinthe and isolation

Penny-Lynn Cookson  
Special to The Lake Report

In this time of lockdowns and isolation and bans on social gatherings in restaurants and pubs, sales of wine and spirits have increased with quiet, at home imbibing.

In "L'Absinthe" of Degas, the subject matter of this solitary detached couple drinking in a café became all too subjective in the harsh disapproval of critics who saw it as a shocking moral tale of the dangers of absinthe. This ultimately led to the banishment of its sale and contributed to the rise of the temperance movement. That certainly was not the intention of Degas when he painted it.

Degas, like many of his

artist colleagues, lived in the bohemian Montmartre area of Paris, and frequented many of its cafés, including the Café de la Nouvelle-Athenes, the location for "L'Absinthe."

Although schooled and successful in the academic tradition of history paintings and a participant in Impressionist exhibitions, Degas was a modernist interested in the lives of ordinary people, usually women working as laundresses or milliners or the young dancers of the ballet.

What he conveys here with his ever-inquisitive and investigative mind is a realistic scene combining memory and innovation. Two acquaintances were used as models, the actress Ellen Andrée and the engraver Marcellin

Desboutsins.

Rather than being in a boozy haze, they were undoubtedly exhibiting the fatigue of long hours holding their positions in his studio. Unexpectedly, the painting was highly detrimental to the careers of both as they were erroneously described as degenerates and Degas had to publicly defend them as not being alcoholics.

In "L'Absinthe," the couple sit side by side but apart, non-communicative, lost in their own worlds. The woman gazes down into space, her glass of absinthe untouched, the carafe of water empty. A glass of cold coffee, sits in front of the man, who surveys something to his left, his pipe, arm, hand and toe cropped as they might be in a photograph.

Degas was a keen follower of the new art form, photography, and this composition with its rising right oblique angle is no longer the perspective of a

single view. He is also fascinated by Japanese prints and his asymmetrical use of the three marble tables jutting into the foreground space and across the woman reflects this.

A rolled newspaper serves as a bridge between two tables and a matches container and a drawing sheet with the artist's signature on it add further detail to a radical viewpoint.

Degas saw the world in a different way technically and morally. He aimed to show things as they actually were not as they might be. The result was striking.

*Penny-Lynn Cookson is an art historian who taught at the University of Toronto for 10 years. She also was head of extension services at the Art Gallery of Ontario. See her lecture series "Art and Revolution, From Cave Art to the Future" Thursdays on Zoom until April 29 at RiverBrink Art Museum in Queenston.*

# Opinion: Isolation takes a toll on residents in long-term care homes

Continued from Front Page

came infected with COVID and some residents died as a result.

Isolation has been and remains a challenge for many during this pandemic. For patients in ICUs, at the point of the crisis, to be truly alone is frightening and final. For their families waiting for news, wishing they could offer their presence and a friendly hand to hold, it must be wrenching.

Some units try their best to maintain some sort of electronic contact but in the same room, holding hands contact is usually strictly verboten. Not so well-known and appreciated was the isolation of residents out of sight in nursing homes, where much of the dying took place early on in this pandemic.

Imagine for a moment what it would be like to be shut in one room for weeks on end with little social interaction except for meals, the comings and goings of staff, with no opportunity to walk the corridors, visit common spaces or perhaps even get outside for a walk in a fenced space.



Top: Dr. William Brown. Bottom: Brown's children Dr. Martha Truncale and Dr. Timothy Brown. SUPPLIED

For those of sound mind, isolation might be tolerable, if only because they might understand the reasons for their confinement.

Imagine then what the impact of isolation might be for those who live in the moment, unable to remember much of the past and

struggle to make sense of who's who and the intentions of others from one minute to the next.

Repeated reminders to stay in their rooms would be promptly forgotten and well beyond the capacity of their brains to grasp what's going on. That's what hap-

pens with most dementias, especially of the Alzheimer type. Many, like my wife, have no idea what's going on around them.

Jan was one of the many residents who developed COVID-19 following the post-Christmas surge and that, coupled with the disorienting effect of a long period of isolation, took its toll on her awareness and understanding of the mini-world she inhabits.

Not surprisingly, when for understandable reasons she was moved to another room, she kept returning to her "old" room, sometimes to lie down on what she thought was her bed or use what she thought was her bathroom.

That's how disorienting dementia, isolation and changing routines can be for those without the cognitive wherewithal to make sense of the space and people that surround them and remember mistakes made hours or even minutes before.

That's what also may lead to misunderstandings with other residents and yet one more reason why isolation – unless there's a very sound health care reason

to impose it – is such a bad idea for those whose social and situational awareness are tenuous at best.

Yet that's precisely what happened recently, after a staff member tested positive for COVID-19, when again "out of an abundance of caution," in-room lockdown and hence isolation, was imposed on residents.

But why isolate residents once more? In the NOTL long-term care facility where Jan lives – as I understand matters – she and most residents are now fully vaccinated.

To be fully vaccinated does not mean you can't become infected. You can, but vaccinated residents are at very low risk of developing clinically significant COVID-19. And balanced against the risk of infection must be the risk of creating even more havoc and confusion for those patients with dementia.

We must examine the balance between how we protect residents from COVID-19 and the harm we create with isolation.

In varying degrees this year, we have all experienced isolation. But the

worst impact of isolation has fallen on patients in intensive care units and in long-term care facilities, especially those suffering with dementia.

Isolation may have helped to stem the spread of COVID during the second surge before vaccination was possible but makes little sense once most are fully vaccinated because of the cost in quality of life especially for the cognitively impaired.

This is a discussion that those who shape health care policies need to have in conjunction with the community and concerned families to reach the wisest decisions.

Here, the usual "out of an abundance of caution" no longer makes sense. Life is not just the "breath of life" but the quality of life.

*Dr. William Brown is a professor of neurology at McMaster University and co-founder of the Infohealth series at the Niagara-on-the-Lake Public Library. His daughter, Dr. Martha Truncale, is an orthodontist in Alaska and his son, Dr. Timothy Brown is an ear, nose and throat surgeon in Halifax.*



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## EXPLORING PHOTOS

WITH NOTL MUSEUM



## April ice jam of 1909

We are all patiently waiting for the tasty fruit season to begin in Niagara. We know our unique geography makes this area one of the most important in Canada for the production of tender fruits. Back in the day, some farmers relied heavily on the Niagara River and Lake Ontario to water their crops. Unfortunately, some farmland that was more inland did not have that luxury. So, in the early 20th century, a municipal irrigation system was developed with a series of drains and ditches that zigzag across the rural community of Niagara-on-the-Lake. The system uses the natural northerly slope of the land to provide water to the farmland that was unable to draw from our natural waterways. This photograph shows local men working on one of the first ditches, known as the Harrison ditch, in the early 1900s. The main Harrison ditch starts on Line 9 and at Line 7 it runs directly north as the road ditch for Concession 3. If you are out for a drive this spring, take a look and see if you can find part of this irrigation system, which is still used today.

## ARCHITEXT

### The centre of community

Brian Marshall  
Columnist

At the heart of every community was its church. Whether your community was in a city, town, village or rural, a church was a place of faith, a centre for social interaction and spot for a brief respite from your daily toil.

As you drive around Niagara-on-the-Lake, it might appear that even the number of surviving old churches (many have been demolished) seems very high but the reality was quite different. Understanding that the average walking speed of a horse is about four mph (seven km/h) and that horses or walking were your choices to travel anywhere,



1853 Christ Church. SUPPLIED

churches were actually in short supply and it wasn't uncommon that services might be held by itinerant ministers in parishioner homes.

However, it was the goal of every congregation to erect a house of worship and many of these buildings followed a similar plan.

Perhaps the most common building form can be seen at Christ Church on McNab Road.

Completed in 1853, the footprint is generally rectangular. Sitting on a raised stone foundation, structural brick walls rise to the eaves and support a gable roof.

On the interior, the ceiling is vaulted and the sanctuary structurally undivided, resulting in outward

force on the supporting walls that necessitate the incorporation of exterior buttresses. At the head of the church, the chancel projects outward from the main footprint, serving as a focal point for traditional worship practices conducted inside while reinforcing that gable wall.

At the foot of the church and centred in the front elevation rises the bell tower, buttressing the wall and serving to call the faithful to worship.

St. Mark's in Old Town was rebuilt after the War of 1812 on an original 1809 footprint very similar to that of Christ Church. During the 1840s the church underwent a renovation to create an expanded footprint that conformed in its

particulars to a traditional Gothic cross layout.

Two additions were built on the side walls to house transepts within the "arms" of the cross and a chancel was added to the head of the church.

This new configuration was inherently more stable than the original, which without buttresses would likely have suffered structural issues over time. It is interesting to note that at some later point buttresses were constructed on the corners of the bell tower and front/side wall junctions.

In 1873, St. Saviour's was completed in Queenston. The bell tower on this "modern" interpretation was corner set and the church sidewalls shorter with a higher roof pitch eliminating the need for buttressing the main sanctuary but they still appear on the tower.

If you watch for them, there are old churches of this form sprinkled across Niagara.



Daffodils peaking and hockey Leafs leaking. A physically distanced walk along our Niagara Parkway trail reminds us of two sure signs of spring. PHOTO BY RICHARD WILKINSON

## Ross' Ramblings: Get out and enjoy the daffodils

Ross Robinson  
Special to The Lake Report

William Wordsworth wrote:  
*I wandered lonely as a cloud, That floats on high o'er vales and hills, When all at once I saw a crowd, A host of golden daffodils.*

Let's all hope that our health care workers can find some time to enjoy a walk on our precious Parkway trail. They are working through a "crisis, a disaster, an overwhelming and long term situation." Thank them somehow. A thoughtful gift?

I have too much spare time during the COVID-19 lockdown, so I wrote:

*The Leafs and Habs played hockey last night,*

*I tried to watch, but they skate too fast.*

*Current standings have the Leafs in first,*

*Sadly we know, their bubble will burst.*

Now, an awkward segue, and a bit of a stretch, but the letters "C" and "H" have played big parts in my life. For many years, I was a diehard fan of the Montreal Canadiens. The Flying Frenchmen, the Habs, Les Glorieux, the Rocket.

Now to the present. The CH of CHautauqua is such a part of my life. CHQ is to be loved. Such an eclectic neighbourhood, with so many people walkin' their dogs and strollin' the streets to and from Ryerson Park and Lake Ontario./Toronto skyline views. CH is everywhere, if you look. Lotsa' CHit Chat. Let's have some fun with our vocabulary.

Try to stay with me, as I ramble with CHs. Now, about the new NOTL park bylaws. Do the powers that be think we are CHildren? Two young men playing CHess under a

big tree. A CHestnut? CHECK-mate!

CHeryl CHambers preparing hot dogs on her little hibaCHI-style barbecue. Be sure to clean up after the picnic and don't leave any hot CHARcoal in the park. CHarlotte Elliott's tiny little, yappy CHihauhou might burn his paws. Just once, eh?

I wouldn't want to be the bylaw officer CHap or lady who tells me to leave Ryerson Park on a nice evening at 10 p.m. (By the way, why is curfew at Queen's Royal Park not until midnight?) Not to be CHurlish, but don't tell me a sunrise swim before 7 a.m. is illegal. There might be an awkward and embarrassing sit-in demonstration. Don't make us CHautauquans angry.

Just copy the rules for Knightsbridge Park up river in CHippawa. Let adults and CHildren have FUN!

Our CHautauqua Residents Association prez, kyropractor John Gleddie, might organize a CHallenge to these silly rules. Let's get the parking problem solved and spread the love in NOTL. Our town parks are so bucolic, so well-maintained. When we travel in Canada or abroad, we try to find wee parks to enjoy. Maybe even get lucky and meet a few of the welcoming local folk.

Was that a CHipmunk? In CHQ, if the birds ain't CHirping at 7 a.m., there is no noise. Precious ...

So, CHapeau to Niagara-on-the-Lake. Let's work with our tireless public health professionals to defeat the global pandemic. I will be inviting lots of them down to Ryerson Park to toast a sunset after the fight is finished.

Feel fortunate to live here.



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