



Tom and Cathy Troke live near the Virgil sports park.

Most neighbours aren't bothered by noise from pickleball courts

Evan Saunders
Local Journalism Initiative
The Lake Report

Residents of Lamberts Walk, the small community bordering Virgil's Centennial Sports Park, are not particularly supportive of a court case that has shut the park's pickleball courts – although some agree the sport is loud.

"I think it's a bunch of bull---- from people who have nothing else to complain about," Cathy Troke said from her Lamberts Walk bungalow on Tuesday.

The Town of Niagara-on-the-Lake and the NOTL Pickleball Club are in the throes of a court proceeding with Lamberts Walk resident Oana Scafesi, who calls the sound of a plastic pickleball striking a racquet "torture."

"For the last three years I have been tortured by a high noise produced by the pickleball players," Scafesi testified in Welland court last Wednesday. Court was told her balcony is 62 feet from the pickleball courts.

Troke lives in one of the bungalows at the back of Lamberts Walk and said she can definitely appreciate that tenants of the apartments, such as Scafesi, are much closer to the court. But she doesn't believe the issue should be fought in the courts.

Troke said overall she finds living in Lamberts Walk to be very quiet. "It's almost too quiet for me," the 77-year-old said.

"I miss the sound of the pickleball courts," her hus-

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People need coyote education: Experts

Dealing with the animals is about knowing right approach – and not leaving food out



A coyote crosses John Street West in Niagara-on-the-Lake. After more than 100 coyote sightings and several confrontations with people and pets, the Town of NOTL is trying to educate the public on the best ways to deal with the wild animals. FILE PHOTO/RICHARD HARLEY

Evan Saunders
Local Journalism Initiative
The Lake Report

The messaging was very clear during a town-sponsored coyote information session on Wednesday night: the animals terrorizing residents of Old Town have been eating food from human sources and until those sources are addressed the problem will continue.

Representatives of the Lincoln County Humane Society, the Ontario natural resources ministry and Coyote Watch Canada all reiterated the importance of removing all outdoor food sources from residential neighbourhoods as the number one deterrent against brazen behaviour.

And Niagara-on-the-Lakers need to rally together and make it happen through

teamwork, said Coyote Watch executive director Lesley Sampson.

Even people who innocently feed birds or squirrels on their properties are contributing to the problem.

"We all love to see the wildlife but if you are feeding one, you are feeding them all," Sampson said during the session livestreamed on the Town of NOTL's website.

Food sources for coyotes can be broken down into two categories – direct and indirect.

Direct food sources are when a human puts out food specifically to feed coyotes. Sampson said this has been a problem before and ensuring it does not happen is essential to solving the issue in Old Town.

Indirect feeding can be things like bird feeders,

outdoor cat bowls, garbage left outside and any other manner of accessible food source a coyote can get at even though it is not intended for them.

Coyotes can be generalist eaters, which means they consume a wide variety of food for their diet, from bird seed and fruit to small animals, Sampson said.

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Video of coyote confrontation adds to concerns for safety of pets and residents



Richard Harley
The Lake Report

NOTL social media was abuzz this week after two videos circulated of a young woman and her

small dog being chased by a coyote on Sunday.

The woman, 30-year-old Isabella Pisano, was walking her dog Charlie near her family home on Gate Street when the coyote began to

stalk and then chase her.

In one of the videos, she begins to panic and run after she notices the coyote behind her.

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Embracing 180 years of Niagara-on-the-Lake heritage

Tim Taylor
The Lake Report

When acclaimed poet T. S. Eliot wrote "the end of all our exploring will be to arrive where we started and know the place for the first time," he may well have been describing the wanderings of Niagara-on-the-Lake native Brett Sherlock.

For over 20 years, Sher-

lock, now 57, lived and worked in the capitals of Europe and North America – Toronto, Hamburg, Paris, London, New York, Los Angeles – first as a fashion model and later as a senior executive in the international auction business.

But he couldn't stay away from home.

He and his partner, James Booty, returned to town in

2006, reviving Sherlock's deep and abiding love for family and heritage. The two were married in 2014, in their quiet, historic home, Hill House, at the corner of Ricardo and Wellington streets.

Sherlock is the seventh generation of his family to call Niagara-on-the-Lake

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After travelling and working the world, Brett Sherlock, left, and James Booty returned to Niagara-on-the-Lake 16 years ago, to rekindle Sherlock's abiding love of heritage and family. They are well on their way. SUPPLIED

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Town urged to **legalize** basement apartments to ease housing crunch

Evan Saunders
Local Journalism Initiative
The Lake Report

The idea of increased density and development is a contentious one in Niagara-on-the-Lake and new projects often can be met with significant backlash from residents who disagree with how a building may affect the character of a neighbourhood or the town at large.

But lifelong NOTLer Scott Robinson is looking to help the town increase its density and social diversity without changing its character through the introduction of secondary suites and accessory dwelling units, a move already mandated by the provincial government.

"It won't surprise you to learn that Niagara-on-the-Lake has the most expensive housing in the Niagara Region and it's one of the most expensive towns in Ontario," Robinson told town council on Monday.

The average home sale price in NOTL in the past three months has been more than \$1.2 million, about three times the national average, he said.

"The housing market is excluding people unless they make three times more than the average. Think of what that does to your demographic diversity," Robinson said.

Across Ontario, long-term rental units make up about 35 per cent of the average town's housing market. In NOTL, that number is only 11 per cent, he said, and rental units here are much more expensive than in most other towns.



Scott Robinson is encouraging the Town of NOTL to get up-to-speed on provincial requirements to allow secondary dwelling units in residential homes. He notes those units cannot legally be used as short-term rentals. EVAN SAUNDERS

"Think about who that's pricing out and excluding," he said.

He drew on a recent economic report for the town which said that a majority of people who work in town do not live in NOTL.

"That doesn't surprise me," said Robinson, who is development co-ordinator with John Hawley's Traditional Neighbourhood Developments Inc.

"I've known my whole life that most of the servers at the restaurants don't live in town. The workers at the wineries and the people at Vintage Inns, they can't live in town."

Robinson said the key to expanding the socio-economic diversity of NOTL's residents is by having "a diversity of housing," which can be accomplished by incorporating secondary suites and accessory dwell-

ing units into the town's official plan.

A secondary suite is essentially a separate apartment within a home, complete with all the amenities needed for an individual to live independently.

An accessory dwelling unit could be a detached dwelling on a property, such as a backyard loft or a loft over a detached garage.

By utilizing the space on a property more efficiently the town can provide for more housing for a multitude of individuals in NOTL while still maintaining the character of its neighbourhoods.

"It's an excellent compromise for those people who are anti-development and anti-change or who want to preserve the character of a neighbourhood. By building a secondary unit, you are using the existing structure."

Robinson addressed concerns that allowing such units could pave the path for more short-term rentals to open, saying the town's bylaw does not allow for them to operate in accessory dwelling structures or secondary suites.

Coun. Wendy Cheropita talked about recent interactions she has had with residents who have been pushed out of the community by short-term rental operations.

"It was a huge eyeopener for me and we spent hours together and each one of the residents had been bumped out of a minimum of four to six homes," Cheropita said.

"And each one of them had the same sort of similar story, where the owners of the homes decided to ask the renters to leave so they could shift the proper-

ties into short-term rentals because they made so much more money."

"I think this idea addresses a whole lot of stuff and also addresses a lot of residents' concerns where they don't want streetscapes to be changing. They don't want monster homes," she said.

"We want to limit the number of short-term rentals and look for opportunities to encourage long-term rentals."

Robinson wants the town to institute a change across the municipality to allow all residences to build and operate accessory dwelling units and secondary suites with no barriers – but council wasn't ready to commit to such a change.

There are only a few areas in town where secondary suites or accessory dwellings are permitted and even then it can cost more than \$8,000 to apply and that application can be denied, he said.

"That's a huge barrier."

Council unanimously voted to send Robinson's recommendations to staff for review and for the ideas to be considered as the town reviews its zoning bylaw.

Coun. Sandra O'Connor expressed strong support for the change but stressed that accessory dwelling units cannot be permissible on all properties due to limitations in setbacks and lot sizes.

She asked chief administrator Marnie Cluckie how this change would affect intensification in NOTL and Cluckie said she would need some time to investigate that concern.

Coun. John Wiens pressed

on the issue of short-term rentals, recommending staff include barriers to prevent homeowners from converting their secondary suites or accessory dwellings into short-term rentals after a few years of operating as a long-term.

"Maybe it should be a two- or five-year term that it has to remain as a secondary (dwelling)," Wiens suggested.

Robinson stressed that regardless of what bylaw changes come with this, it remains illegal for a short-term rental to operate in a secondary suite or accessory dwelling unit in NOTL.

He also reminded council that accessory dwelling units and secondary suites had been adopted by the Liberal party in 2015, the Progressive Conservatives in 2019 and are also included in the New Democratic Party's current provincial election platform.

"When (all three parties agree), you know you've got to do something," Robinson said.

The Region of Niagara also has a stipulation requiring all municipalities to allow the construction of such additional lodgings in its proposed official plan.

The plan says such units are intended to "support the development of affordable and attainable housing."

"So, this is going to happen and it has to happen and we want it to happen. So, let's make it happen," Robinson said.

Such dwellings are one of the only ways the town can reverse course as it continues to become more "old, white and rich."



A screenshot of the video shows a coyote lunging toward Isabella Pisano and her dog Charlie. SUPPLIED

Video of **coyote confrontation** adds to concern

Continued from Front Page

In the midst of her blood-curdling screams, NOTL resident Tim Balasiuk, who had been watching the incident from his truck and tried to cut the coyote off, got out of the vehicle and chased the animal away.

Isabella's mother Filomena said her daughter was in shock after the incident.

She said she sent the video to Lord Mayor Betty

Disero in hopes the town will do something to stop future incidents.

"(My daughter) doesn't even want the coyote hurt. She just wants the town to move him," Filomena said. "Get this beast off our streets."

The Town of NOTL has stated that provincial law prevents the town from simply moving a wild animal.

One kilometre is the maximum distance an

animal can be moved and it's expected that would not deter a coyote from returning.

Filomena Pisano praised Balasiuk for his efforts to protect her daughter and family pet.

"Tim saved our dog's life," she said.

She said she rewarded him with a bottle of Two Sisters wine.

Reached by phone, Balasiuk, who operates Paddle

Niagara, said he thinks the coyote needs to be removed.

"I know that its behaviour has been out of the ordinary, so obviously something needs to be done," he said.

He suspects it may be just one coyote using Two Mile Creek to travel between Garrison Village and John Street.

"Everyone's like, 'Coyotes are out of control' — like no. Wile E. Coyote is out of control."



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Coyote problem **will persist** if food isn't removed

Continued from Front Page

The danger of having a coyote able to access human food is that it causes food conditioning.

"We're creating animals that essentially beg for food and then there's risk of injury to humans and our pets as well," Sampson said.

This is known as demand behaviour and results in a coyote seeing a residential neighbourhood as its territory to get food, she said. It also considers all dogs in the area to be rivals for its food source and they will potentially attack them, she said.

The same situation occurred in 2019 in Garrison Village and Sampson said there was a robust team effort from the community to remove attractants from the neighbourhood – and the problem went away overnight.

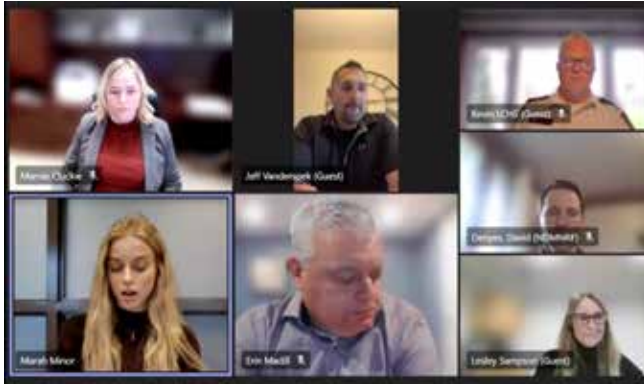
Residents need to police each other and ensure that food sources are removed because even if the coyote that is causing problems is killed, the food sources will simply attract more coyotes to take its place, she said.

Sampson urged any resident who sees food getting left outside to report it to the town.

"It doesn't mean that you're trying to tell on your neighbour but we really do need to work together to remove these food sources," she said.

"The coyote (in Old Town) is exhibiting behaviour that is a direct indication to accessing anthropogenic foods," Sampson said.

David Denyes from the ministry agreed, saying when coyotes become this



The town hosted an information session on coyotes Wednesday, with an expert panel. SOURCED

bold near humans it is nearly always because of access to food.

Kevin Strooband, executive director of the Lincoln County Humane Services, pointed out two food sources that many residents may not consider.

Any compost bin left in a backyard needs to be properly secured. If not, the compost will attract rats and other small mammals, which in turn will attract coyotes, he said.

The same thing goes for brush piles, which can become good places for rabbits to hide. Rabbits are prey for coyotes and will attract them to the neighbourhood.

Sampson also asked residents not to throw brush over their fences, as this creates a pile, which makes it easier for wild animals to get into their yards.

The next step after eliminating food resources for coyotes is teaching the animal it is crossing a dangerous boundary by coming into the neighbourhood.

This is called aversion conditioning and includes using a strong and firm voice and standing up to the animal to teach them they are not welcome, she said. She

stressed that screaming does not work as it is a confusing sound for a coyote to hear.

Yelling at a coyote from far away or from a car also is not effective, said Sampson.

She said whistles and horns can be helpful, but many coyotes have grown accustomed to similar sounds due to sirens from emergency vehicles or the noises from sports parks.

Residents also can throw projectiles at the animal but should never turn their back and run from a coyote because that initiates their prey drive and they will chase.

Popping an umbrella open and closed, and filling a garbage bag with air and popping it are also effective.

"We set the boundaries for these animals. They do not set them for us," Sampson said.

"Up until now, the messaging has not been clear to them and they've had a good — he or she — has had a good month-and-a-half to develop these inappropriate behaviours."

Coyotes are not considered vectors for rabies, she added.

Sampson addressed concerns that the coyote is fearless, saying there have been several accounts of the

coyote running away from people, which is positive.

She referred to a recent video posted on Facebook that showed Tim Balasiuk chasing a coyote away from a woman and her dog, a clear demonstration that the coyote is still scared of people and aversion conditioning will work on it.

"It's not that they're not really afraid of us, their proximity tolerance has increased and they are more willing to take risks to get those (food) rewards," she said.

Trapping and relocating a coyote is pointless as they cannot legally be moved more than one kilometre from where they are captured. As Strooband put it, the coyote can get back to where it was picked up before you do.

While it is not an effective long-term solution, as populations bounce back and transient coyotes take their place, Sampson and the ministry said it is within an individual's rights to trap and kill a coyote to protect their property.

"Lethal removal of this coyote is not going to solve the inherent issues," especially food sources in the community, Sampson said.

In order for residents to resume walking in their neighbourhood Sampson recommended people walk in groups to feel comfortable, bring an umbrella along and report any sightings to the town.

Sampson said she and the town are planning an in-person workshop to demonstrate proper aversion conditioning tactics for residents and will announce the date and location soon.

Town received **more than 100** coyote reports in three weeks

Evan Saunders
Local Journalism Initiative
The Lake Report

The Town of Niagara-on-the-Lake has received more than 100 reports of coyote sightings from residents in less than a month, according to its newly released canid management plan.

"It's intended as a dynamic document (and) we intend to make modifications as we move along," chief administrator Marnie Cluckie said

while introducing the plan to council on Monday.

The plan "is based on extensive research and experience and focuses on effective coexistence with canids," the document says.

The plan lays out ways for staff to address escalating situations between coyotes and humans, but notes "investigations involving reported wildlife behaviour is highly subjective."

"Each case involves numerous factors which

require appropriate investigation in order to inform staff's response. Staff are committed to confirming the details and validity of reports prior to pursuing escalated actions."

The plan updated the town's bylaw regarding the feeding of wildlife in order to give the municipality more flexibility in charging residents who are doing so. The offence carries a \$250 fine and may be increased in the future.

The document says coyotes may have to be removed in certain circumstances.

Cluckie said the plan was made in consultation with experts from several organizations and that the same strategy resulted in improvements in coyote and human relations in Niagara Falls and Thorold.

The plan can be found under the April 25 council meeting agenda on the town's website.

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Cameron **will not** seek re-election to NOTL town council

Evan Saunders
Local Journalism Initiative
The Lake Report

After one term on Niagara-on-the-Lake town council, Clare Cameron says she is not going to seek re-election this fall.

"It has been an absolute honour and privilege to represent the residents of Niagara-on-the-Lake as your municipal councillor and deputy lord mayor," Cameron told fellow councillors on Monday night, much to the surprise of some of her colleagues.

"I will leave this role with a very deep sense of gratitude to the thousands of people who put their trust in me to speak up for them, for their businesses and properties and families, for their fears and hopes for the

future of Niagara-on-the-Lake."

Cameron, mother of two young children and a manager for the City of Burlington, received more votes than any other candidate during the 2018 municipal vote.

On Monday night, she was lauded by her peers as a steady and rational voice in the NOTL council chamber.

She said she is most proud of her work on the draft official plan, the community centre and nursery expansion, and her advocacy for local heritage projects. She chairs the town's municipal heritage committee.

As in life, there have been bitter disappointments throughout the past four years, Cameron said, but urged residents to embrace NOTL as a growing

community and not to fear change.

"Niagara-on-the-Lake is a living, breathing and real community and that should be a fact to embrace and to work with rather than to fear. Change is hard, inevitable and healthy," she said.

She encouraged other residents to run for election so that more voices have the chance to shape NOTL, noting being a politician should not be a full-time gig.

"Politics is not a game, it is a calling and politics shouldn't be assumed as a career," she said.

Anyone who wishes they could be more involved with municipal affairs need only run for office, she said.

"Run. There is no perfect time to hold public office, yet it is such an important service. It requires commit-

ment, not eternity," she said.

"Run. Build your team and bring your new ideas. Run. Share your ideas for what Niagara-on-the-Lake can be and stick to those visions. Find your voice and use it."

When Cameron said she wanted to make a "personal announcement" during Monday's meeting, Lord Mayor Betty Disero said she worried it meant the deputy mayor would not be running again. "My fears were realized."

During loud and anxious meetings early in the term, Cameron was always able to keep her calm and guide others, Disero said.

Although they didn't agree on all issues, "I just saw you, Clare, as a star to this town and wholeheartedly supported and endorsed



Clare Cameron told council Monday that she will not seek re-election for the 2022-2026 term. SUPPLIED

your run for council," the mayor said.

"I still respect and admire your perfect orator skills

and your commitment and your thought that goes into how to make this town a better place."

Some residents say pickleball noise **can be loud**, but they don't mind

Continued from Front Page

band Tom Troke said.

"I don't think there's any noise at all. I've lived in other places where just the sound of the traffic and daily life was worse than what that is," he said.

"People need to exercise. What's the difference?"

Resident Janet Brookes said pickleball is indeed a noisy activity.

"I try to tune them out. It is very noisy," Brookes said outside her Lamberts Walk home on Tuesday.

She shared a sentiment with fellow resident Murray Turnberry, saying there is a noticeable difference in sound level depending on what equipment the players are using.

"There's good bats and there's bad bats," she said.

Brookes has been living at Lamberts Walk since 2008 and said she and her husband just go and sit in the back or close the windows if the noise from the park is a distraction.

"I know the woman who's complaining. She's a very nice lady and she's within her rights."

Turnberry, who lives closer to the courts than Scafesi does, said, "I guess the (noise of pickleball) affects one person more than most."



The pickleball courts back onto homes. Residents aren't concerned about noise, but admit it can be loud. EVAN SAUNDERS

He said choosing to live next to a sports park comes with the knowledge that there will be events and recreational activities going on.

"I chose to live next to a sports park recreational complex. People are going to use it and we should want people to use it," he said.

But he also agreed it can be loud. "I think most of the issue is that they're not using the ergonomic racquets."

Turnberry said the benefits of the park outweigh any potential negatives for his family.

"If it bothers one person bad enough it's unfortunate but for the sake of the kids and everyone else using the park ... We have kids and

our grandkids, they all use the park. We'd rather have them using the park than staying home and playing video games," he said.

"It's a give and take. You can't fault people for getting outside and enjoying the recreational activities that a facility like that is for."

Cathy Troke said she is surprised the town let the issue get to trial after Scafesi initiated her complaint a year ago.

She suggested the town should have helped find Scafesi another place to live instead of inconveniencing almost 300 pickleball players and spending taxpayer dollars fighting the charge.

"That, to me, is such a

total waste of time and money," Troke said.

It is an insignificant issue when compared with what people all over the world have been dealing with for the past few years, from the pandemic to the invasion of Ukraine, Troke added.

The couple, who talked about their mobility impairments and health issues at their late age in life, say they get immense joy out of seeing the park used.

"Just to see people out doing things and enjoying themselves makes us really happy," Cathy Troke said, noting she is an avid card player.

"We're both physically unable to do anything. We

used to golf, we used to do a lot of things that we are now unable to do."

"Now we envy those people. The last thing I would want is to make them stop because of the noise. Put headphones on. Put your TV up louder," she said.

"Turn on some music," her husband suggested.

Chris Doerwald, 27, lives in the same building as Scafesi and said he is unhappy the courts are closed.

"I'm just super frustrated by it," Doerwald said in an interview.

He and his girlfriend started playing pickleball last fall "and we were having a good time. We were very much looking forward to playing

it again as the weather got nicer now," he said.

Doerwald said some of his neighbours in Lamberts Walk have an affinity for complaining about things.

"That's all they do is just complain and that really bugs me too," he said.

He said he has no interest in playing the sport inside the arena as the outdoor courts were one of the game's main draws for him and his girlfriend.

As to whether the sound of people playing pickleball is invasive or annoying, Doerwald was adamant. "Absolutely not," he said, adding he only notices it if he is outside.

When his windows are closed, he hears no noise. "I don't think I've ever noticed it inside my building."

Turnberry and his wife "definitely don't mind" the racket from the racquets, he said.

"There's people who live by railway tracks, people who live by other activities — that's where you choose to live. We'd rather have a facility like this that the kids can benefit from than something else," he said.

But he still said there is room to respect the struggle Scafesi is facing.

"It's unfortunate. I feel for her, but what do you do?"

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Chamber president plans to address psychological strain of tourism on residents

Evan Saunders
Local Journalism Initiative
The Lake Report



Chamber president Minerva Ward. SUPPLIED

Chamber of Commerce president Minerva Ward is pledging to help create sustainable tourism for Niagara-on-the-Lake and to address the psychological effects of tourism on residents.

Ward formally introduced herself to town council on Monday and said one of her main focuses as president will be working with the town to develop a tourism strategy.

“I think that strategy is key in addressing a lot of conflicts that our tourism industry and our residents face,” she said.

“The reality is that Niagara-on-the-Lake is a living, breathing organism where you have tourism and residences and businesses occupying the same space, and it could be a very limited space and there are conflicts that arise as a result of that,” she said.

Ward focused her comments around the importance of striking a balance between resident and tourist interests.

“Tourism has to be sustainable, it has to address the carrying capacity of a destination,” she said.

“And not just the physical carrying capacity in terms of numbers but the psychological carrying capacity as well.”

“At what level do residents get psychologically tired of tourism?” Ward rhetorically asked councillors.

Such discussions are essential to create a sustain-

able model for a tourism strategy, she said. Cameron asked Ward how she would balance the “few vocal voices” complaining about tourism with the “broader public who may actually enjoy some of those events.”

Ward agreed, saying the most vocal voices are often not representative of the majority and said it is part of her job to “tell the story of tourism.”

“People need to understand that a lot of the amenities and businesses that exist in Niagara-on-the-Lake exist because it’s largely driven by tourism,” she said.

She emphasized the importance of NOTL’s character in simultaneously attracting tourists and residents to the area.

“And I don’t see that changing and I don’t think anybody wants it to change. What makes it great is what everyone wants to share in,” she said.

One of the best ways to mitigate these issues is to actively involve residents and businesses in the town’s approach to tourism.

“Residents need to see themselves as part of tourism,” she said.

“It’s our industry, it’s our product. We are the owners of tourism and there’s a level of pride we have to take in tourism in Niagara-on-the-Lake and understanding how everyone has a role in that.”

Ward said her conversations with NOTL business operators have left her with the impression that everyone is expecting a busy summer.

One issue the chamber is

facing is trying to help businesses find enough staff to handle the upcoming tourist season.

She pointed out the unemployment rate in Canada is 5.3 per cent now, “which basically means full-employment, which means everybody who wants a job can find a job.”

“It means we have to start going outside of Canada to source employees.”

She advocated for the federal government to change the temporary foreign worker program to make it easier for hotels to hire foreign workers for front and back of house positions.

Ward also pointed out that NOTL businesses struggle with labour shortages because, without a robust transit system, it is a generally inaccessible community and the only way for people to get to work is to own a car.

Having dedicated transit that could bring in people to work from St. Catharines or Niagara Falls is an essential way to address local labour shortages, she said.

She acknowledged an integrated regional transit system is in the works but pushed council to see if anything can be done sooner to improve public transit in the municipality, such as increasing the hours of operations for NRT OnDemand.

Part and parcel with staff shortages is the cost of housing in NOTL, Ward said.

“Two things have to be addressed: the affordability of housing and public transportation.”

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Town wins financial reporting award for 9th time

Staff
The Lake Report

The Town of Niagara-on-the-Lake has been honoured with an international accounting award for the ninth consecutive year.

The municipality received the Canadian Award for Financial Reporting from the Government Finance Officers Association

of the United States and Canada for its 2020 annual financial report.

The honour recognizes excellence in governmental accounting and financial reporting and represents a significant accomplishment by a local government and its management, the town said in a news release.

Lord Mayor Betty DiSero credited treasurer Kyle

Freeborn and the corporate services department “for their hard work in creating a financial report worthy of national recognition.”

Chief administrator Marnie Cluckie noted that despite fiscal challenges during the pandemic, “town staff remained committed to creating a comprehensive, professional and transparent financial report.”



Town treasurer Kyle Freeborn. SUPPLIED



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Canada The Local Journalism Initiative is funded by the Government of Canada.

COVID Tracker

NOTL active cases (last 28 days): 117
Region active cases: 1,971
Region deaths: 536
Region total cases: 39,325

**April 27 data per Niagara Region Public Health. Public health warns that "Due to the surge in COVID-19 cases, limited availability of testing, and changes to case and contact management practices, case counts shown (above) are an underestimate of the true number of individuals in Niagara with COVID-19. Data should be interpreted with caution." Case data for municipalities is also now being interpreted in 28-day cycles.*



Contributed by Patty Garriock
 "With each dream accomplished, bigger ones are put in their place." - Gina Rodriguez

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Back in the water again

NOTL photographer John DeLorenzi captured this glowing photo of a sailboat heading down the Niagara River on Sunday.

Calling all NOTL photographers: send us some of your interesting, evocative, quirky images of life around town and we'll consider them for this space on our editorial page. Email images (1 MB or more) to editor@niagaranow.com.



Eden High School students take part in a walkout for sexual assault awareness. SUPPLIED/MADDY GORDON

Guest Editorial

Sexual assault rally a chance to be heard

Maddy Gordon
 Special to The Lake Report

Most high school students today either have a story or know someone who has a story.

For years, students have been ignored, disregarded and ostracized for speaking up about their experiences with sexual assault. Despite being promised support, victims continuously have been silenced.

The District School Board of Niagara's curriculum includes nothing about consent and sexual assault — something that desperately needs to change.

Rape culture is scarily normalized in teenage culture and is only getting worse with the ongoing lack

of consent education. And although this has been a problem for decades, only in recent years has the traditionally taboo topic of sexual assault begun to be brought to light.

Taking part in one of the recent Niagara "Walk-out4C" protests allowed me to really understand how important this issue is.

As we calmly stood our ground together as a group to peacefully spread our message, some strangers drove by yelling obscenities at us.

One man, who appeared to be in his 30s or 40s, drove by and yelled something along the lines of "feminism sucks." About 10 minutes later he returned wearing a MAGA

hat and carrying a megaphone — and told us we looked "hot" in our school uniforms.

The protest only lasted about two hours but was very enlightening.

If anything, some of the responses we had from not only passersby but our own peers only further proved why consent education is needed — there is no valid reason for anyone to feel threatened by victims speaking up about their own experiences.

Thanks to the bravery and activism of students, particularly those of groups like "Project Breakaway," a student-led activist group fighting for consent education, conversations have been brought

to the table that have been long overdue. What is sexual assault? How can I recognize it? How am I contributing to the normalization of rape culture? What can I do to help?

It is crucial to expose students of all ages to these topics because without real consent education, we will continue to lack any real change in the matter at hand.

Talking about sexual assault is not an easy conversation for anyone to have, but is nonetheless incredibly necessary for growth — and change — to happen.

Maddy Gordon is a student at Eden High School and a reporting intern at The Lake Report.

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Stone Eagle winery plans include a cupola. SOURCED

Not everyone is opposed to Marotta family's design for Stone Eagle Winery

Dear editor:

Thank you to the Marotta family for bringing the beautiful new Stone Eagle Winery to Niagara-on-the-Lake.

The proposed winery, named after their amazing, stellar wine, will be situated on the drive into our beautiful town.

But as per usual, some must complain ... now it's "La Cupola" that's so upsetting.

A cupola is an architectural detail dating back to the eighth century and it became prevalent throughout New England in the 1800s.

Cupolas are a dome-like structure on a building's roof ridge which assist in defining the structure's centreline, while adding character to set a building apart.

A cupola provides both form and function. It brings natural light and at times air flow, acting as a natural ventilation system.

La cupola was a favoured ventilation technique for barns, allowing fresh air to circulate in and out through the rooftop while keeping the inside cool and dry.

There are many variations of la cupola throughout our beautiful town. Even on some old barns!

This cupola may be the largest and most predominant in the area. Perhaps that is what is so upsetting to others.

I found this comment in Chris Allen's April 14 letter ("Proposed winery design is overpowering,") most amusing: "There must be a lot

of male designers involved with this one. They just have to have the biggest and the tallest of whatever that 'cupola' thing on top is."

I just didn't understand this statement.

In fact, the design was driven by two beautiful women, Melissa and Angela Marotta, who were involved alongside their father, Benny Marotta, who is always supportive of his daughter's wineries — and, of course, their architect Bill Hicks.

Having had the privilege of walking through the tiny staircase climbing the cupola, designed for the cathedral of Florence by Brunelleschi, I can tell you it was an astounding experience.

Brunelleschi's dome over the crossing of the Duomo in Florence is an architectural and engineering masterpiece of the early 15th century.

To see this design for a new winery arrive here in Niagara-on-the-Lake is magnificent. It will set a new architectural precedent for future wineries. Stellar!

Driving into town to see the grandeur of La Cupola on the Stone Eagle Winery will serve to remind me of my travels through the beautiful landscape of Italy, while paying homage to their use in New England architecture in the 19th century.

Viva La Cupola! So poignantly beautiful.

Filomena Pisano
NOTL

Plan for Dairy Queen at Taylor's in Old Town has positives and negatives

Dear editor:

I had heard about the prospective Dairy Queen operation and read your story about it — with mixed emotions, ("Taylor's Bakery to reopen as Dairy Queen," The Lake Report, April 21).

The positive aspect is that someone had the faith in Niagara-on-the-Lake's business and tourism market to put a significant investment into the franchise.

According to the DQ website, the \$45,000 franchise fee is only the tip of the business iceberg.

The building was tired and the interior could have used freshening up. There is a certain charm about older retail properties — but not for everyone.

And if our old-line mer-

chants are being out-merchandised by more polished and sophisticated "outside" forces, that's cause for serious concern. The rosy prospects for aggressive business newcomers may be partly our own fault.

The negative aspect is that if our downtown becomes like every business street in Toronto, Oakville and Hamilton, there is little shopping reason for anyone to come to NOTL.

Prospective tourists might as well buy their DQ treats and their Starbucks coffee around the corner from their homes.

Life moves on. But sometimes it carries an important message for us.

John Sayers
NOTL

Neighbour should be worried about safety instead of noise

Dear editor:

I want to comment on the article regarding the pickleball court at the Virgil hockey arena ("Pickleball noise sparks legal challenge from neighbour," April 21).

The complainant in no way represents the majority of occupants at Lamberts Walk, where I also am a resident.

I enjoy the fact that there is healthy activity and fun being had by participants of that court, along with any other sport taking place on the fields of the arena property.

If there is a legitimate complaint, it would be over the use of the parking lot, after hours, by people speeding through the lot, squealing tires and pulling donuts (all of which has been reported to local police on multiple occasions with no reaction to prevent it).

Safety is the biggest concern for dog walkers, families riding their bicycles or walking and then the noise factor.

Let's put things in perspective.

Janice Young
Virgil

Lamberts Walk residents play and support pickleball fun

Dear editor:

I am a resident of Lamberts Walk in Virgil and am writing in response to the article about noise level complaints over the pickleball courts at Virgil Arena Sports Park, ("Pickleball noise sparks legal challenge from neighbour," April 21).

It's great to see people/families enjoying themselves in a healthy and safe manner given what we

have all been through with the pandemic.

In addition, it's a seasonal activity, a welcome sound of people having fun and enjoying life. What a novel idea.

Furthermore, a lot of residents of Lamberts Walk participate in this great sport. I have no issue with these wonderful sounds of summer.

Norma Boyd
Virgil

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Residents anticipate next phase of **heritage trail** reconstruction

Evan Saunders
Local Journalism Initiative
The Lake Report

It may be years away from reaching the literal end of the road, but residents are already anticipating the completion of the Upper Canada Heritage Trail's reconstruction.

"We live on Line 7. We walk this trail all the time," Rick Cairns said in an interview at a fundraising barbecue for the trail on Friday.

The improved accessibility of the trail is a boon for residents and visitors to Niagara-on-the-Lake as well as cyclists, he said.

"That's the other thing, you can get right on that trail and bike right into town," Cairns said.

It will be interesting for people to see the municipality from a new perspective once the entire trail has been revamped, he said.

"It's really quite interesting because you have no idea what's actually on this side of the trail," Cairns said, referring to its path along Concession 1 Road.

"It's surprising, because when you're going on York



Rick Coyne, Tony Chisolm and Rick Meloen were slinging burgers and knowledge at a heritage trail fundraising barbecue on April 22. EVAN SAUNDERS

Road you don't picture the farms and the barns and the size of these properties. I always thought those properties on York Road were maybe an acre or something like that," he said.

Reconstruction of the trail is now in Phase 2, the section from East and West

Line to Line 2 Road. There are two remaining phases after that – from Line 2 to Line 9 Road and the final section up to York Road.

The work costs about \$100 per metre, said heritage trail committee member and burger flipper Rick Meloen said.

At about 10 kilometres long, that equates to \$1 million to complete the entire reconstruction.

It has been estimated that Phase 3 might be completed in 2024.

"Realistically, I don't see it," Meloen said.

"We're hoping that the

second phase will be done by the end of next year. So, by the time we get here it will be quite some time," he said at Steffanie Bjorgan's Concession 1 home near the end of the trail.

Bjorgan is well known for her work with the Red Roof Retreat but NOTLers may not be aware she is also an active member of the heritage trail committee and volunteered to host the barbecue on her property.

Unfortunately, Bjorgan was isolated due to a case of COVID-19 but her husband Moe was on hand to oversee the fundraiser. He said Steffanie was doing alright.

"The trail's right here and it's not done yet so we gotta make sure we get the community out to ensure this doesn't stop at East and West Line and that it comes all the way down and up the hill," Moe said.

He and his wife and family have spent lots of time walking the trail and he said he is looking forward to seeing more people use it.

"We've got to get her used, get people out and get them healthy," he said.

Meloen saw the barbecue less as a fundrais-

ing event and more of a chance to educate people on the project and state of the trail.

"It was a good day to get information out. A number of people that came here today were not familiar with Phase 3 or Phase 4. So, this was good. This was a really good idea that Steffanie had," said Meloen.

He said the last section, which is the shortest stretch of the trail, will probably be the most expensive to rebuild.

"There's a number of washouts. If you walk along there there's a lot of (uneven) sections (of land)," he said.

"So we want to put some culverts in or maybe some bridges. Make it a bit level."

Meloen said the goal is to make the trail accessible for the greatest number of people and that a level surface is essential to making that happen.

Several properties encroach onto the trail, a subject that people at the barbecue were eager to hear about. Meloen said the town is working with the private property owners to address those issues.



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Couple on quest to **rekindle** the Sherlock family legacy

Continued from Front Page

home. Both sides of his family — Elliotts and Sherlocks — arrived circa 1840.

He tells a pleasing story of how his grandparents met. “The Elliotts were stonemasons,” says Sherlock, pride in his voice.

“My grandfather Elliott was building the Randwood wall. My soon-to-be-grandmother was the governess for General Nelles, when his family lived in what is now Riverbend. A private home. A fairly recent arrival from Scotland, my grandmother was pushing a pram with one or more of her charges down John Street, when he was building the wall. They met for the first time.”

The Sherlocks owned a dairy, a livery stable and several storefronts along Queen Street, alongside the Court House.

“My grandfather Sherlock had the ice plant — cutting blocks of ice from the marina and bringing them up for storage behind what is now the Christmas Store. They delivered the ice door-to-door by horse and buggy.”

His father’s service station and Datsun dealership was at the corner of Victoria and Queen, now the Shaw Café.

Sherlock grew up at Johnson and Nassau streets, in a house his parents proudly described as a “modern 1950s bungalow.” The house has long since been torn down.

When he describes where his mother, Heather, now lives, he falls into a characteristic quirk adopted by many longtime locals: “Butler Street,” he says. “You know, where Betty Mitchell used to live.” As if everyone will remember Betty Mitchell’s former house.

It seems most poignant that it was Sherlock’s mother who wrote the poem for the time capsule in the cornerstone at Parliament Oak Public School, for its 1948 opening.

Sherlock attended St. Vincent de Paul School, then St. Michael, then Niagara District and finished high school at Dennis Morris in St. Catharines.

He loved growing up in the early ‘70s.



Brett Sherlock’s grandfather, Harry, fresh from a typical shooting day, on the porch of the family house, where Harbour House now stands. SUPPLIED

“Bliss. We were the last generation of innocence. The town was our playground. There wasn’t a face you didn’t know.”

“OK, the ‘smokers’ hung out on Greaves’ corner, and we were told to avoid them.”

“I had a paper route when I was 11 and we all had odd jobs for pocket money. The greatest honour was being allowed to cut my grandfather Elliott’s lawn — where Niagara Realty now stands. He watched every row being cut.”

The arrival of the Shaw Festival opened the eyes of the small-town teen. “In my teens, it meant a huge amount to me, as a young gay man (whether I knew it fully or not), that we were the home of the Shaw Festival. I saw another normal.”

After a short-lived exploration of the Algonquin College interior design program, he was picked up by a modelling agency in Toronto and then off to the fashion mecca of Hamburg, Germany. He was in his early 20s.

“I had a bright, smiley face. I went to Europe for a year and stayed away for 22.”

And the auction business became his life’s work.

He joined Sotheby’s Auc-

tion House in London at age 24, first on a scholarship then in the silver department.

“I always wanted objects rather than flat art (paintings). I like to be able to pick something up. I finished my days there as senior director of the jewellery department.”

Sherlock moved to Christie’s in London, then followed opportunities around North America and finally back to Niagara.

Over his career, his list of clients became a personal who’s who. The Earl of Snowdon (for the sale of the collection owned by his mother, Princess Margaret), Barbra Streisand and the Princess Aga Khan, to name a few.

Sherlock continues his relationship with Christie’s as an international consultant. In his spare time, he is a member of the Gardiner Museum board of directors and a former director of both the Niagara Foundation and the Niagara Historical Society Museum.

When Sherlock moved to Niagara, James Booty came with him.

“I met Brett on his 40th birthday,” says Booty, who attended law school in France and was working —

he describes it as slaving — at a London law firm.

“I left the law practice when Brett moved to New York. I needed to take a breather to try to figure out what I wanted to do.”

Booty, 45, is no stranger to small, attractive villages.

He’s a native of Cheshire, in northwest England, less than an hour south of Manchester, current population 3,500, often voted the prettiest town in England.

His father retired as the director of a civil engineering company; his mother was a former teacher cum artist. They went on to live in the south of France.

Once in Canada, Booty entered educational publishing, rising to senior product manager at McGraw Hill in Toronto.

With his publishing experience, Booty helped the Niagara Foundation publish its commemorative edition of “Early Architecture of the Town & Township of Niagara.”

Seven years ago, he pivoted, becoming the executive director of a private family foundation. La Fondation Emmanuelle Gattuso typically distributes \$7 million to \$8 million annually, largely in the Greater Toronto Area.

“Since COVID, we are focusing on smaller organizations,” explains Booty, “where you can see the money going to the front lines and are often overlooked.”

“The last two years we have concentrated on food insecurity, street-involved communities and people who are falling through the cracks.”

The most satisfying donation in his recent efforts was supporting the organization helping stranded Afghans, who had supported the Canadian Armed Forces, get out of their country.

“They needed the money quickly and, as a private foundation, we can move quickly.”

The foundation, in partnership with the Slaight Family Foundation, recently announced a \$50 million gift to Princess Margaret Hospital in support of cancer discovery research.

Sherlock and Booty have gradually shifted their centre of gravity from a condo in Toronto to Old Town. “The pandemic sped the transition up,” says Booty. “We are now very comfortable spending most of our time here.”

The story of their accommodation wanderings since returning to town showcases a commitment to the town and its heritage. And, of course, family.

In some ways, it is like a heartfelt odyssey to find the perfect home.

“I’d always wanted a piece of property here,” says Sherlock. “If you grew up here, there is hope always to come back.”

After a brief sojourn at King’s Point, they purchased a property on Dorchester Street, near where young Sherlock grew up.

“It’s all about heritage — what I grew up with,” he emphasizes.

The Dorchester house — they called it “The Barn” — even has an outdoor fireplace “that my grandfather and great grandfather built.”

Their work on the Dorchester property earned the pair the Peter Stokes Award from Architecture Conservancy Ontario, rec-

ognizing exemplary restoration of a heritage structure.

Then, almost a decade ago, the couple stumbled on what for them was a perfect new property opportunity.

It was a challenge they believed would fulfil all their heritage and family aspirations.

The property was just along John Street from where Sherlock’s grandparents met all those years ago. With one foot in the vineyards and one foot in town. Just about perfect.

Their offer to purchase was accepted. Their Dorchester house sold.

And then came the disaster all home buyers fear: the John Street deal fell through.

Licking their wounds, Sherlock and Booty turned elsewhere, purchasing what the June 2017 edition of “House and Home” magazine called “the ultimate small town heritage estate at the corner of Ricardo and Wellington streets. Hill House, as they’ve named it, excels in that rarest mixture of warmth and polish.”

But they still coveted the John Street property.

Lo and behold, it came on the market again. They wasted no time locking up a deal, selling Hill House and starting immediately, in earnest, planning their dream home.

The exact timing of the new house is still a question. Approvals are pending. They are determined to use all local contractors.

“We enjoy the process together,” says Booty, and smiles. “We have diametrically opposed tastes, but we cross over enough and we kind of meet in the middle. It is stimulating for us.”

They are going to love living on the edge of town.

“It is totally a different life here,” says Sherlock, from a spot just about where his new living room will be.

“And it’s only three minutes to town. We are outside the urban boundary, and you feel it. I mean where else do you wake up in the middle of the night and look out the window and you’ve three stags curled up on your front lawn.”

They are nearing the end of their odyssey.



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Glendale Notes: Niagara on the Green **spring cleanup** a huge success

Steve Hardaker
Community Correspondent



Coun. Allan Bisback sits amid the trash collected, surrounded by, from left, Cindy Grant, Betty Disero, Chris Hatch, Jeannie Manning, Susan Vanzante, Stephanie Antonucci, Wendy Cheropita, Jolanta Janny and Linda Hardaker. STEVE HARDAKER

Under grey skies and the threat of showers, residents of Niagara on the Green gathered to celebrate Earth Week by holding a spring neighbourhood cleanup on Saturday.

After two years when the annual cleanup could not be held due to COVID-19 restrictions, this year's environmental blitz proved to be a huge success.

All in all, in just a couple of hours, more than 25 bags of garbage and debris were collected, much of it items that could have been recycled.

Residents were joined by members of the Niagara College Student Administrative Council and college students to scavenge the neighbourhood, looking for trash, recyclables and other leftover debris. At the same time, Niagara College held its own cleanup at the NOTL campus.

New this year was the addition of several Niagara-on-the-Lake Rotary Club members to help tidy up the neighbourhood.

"Members of the Rotary Club of Niagara-on-the-

Lake commemorated Earth Day by joining forces with our neighbours in Niagara on the Green, Niagara College and the town," Rotarian Jeanne Manning commented in an email.

"Many bags of garbage and debris were collected. We made new friends and celebrated with hot dogs and hamburgers compliments of fellow Rotarian and owner of PigOut, Anne Dickson."

Also among those participating were Lord Mayor Betty Disero and Couns. Norm Arsenault, Allan Bisback, Gary Burroughs, Wendy Cheropita and Sandra O'Connor.

In pre-cleanup remarks, Disero said, "Niagara on the Green is an amazing community that shares a strong bond and partnership with Niagara College. I am pleased to work alongside them, my council colleagues and the NOTL Rotary to clean up vital public spaces."

"Earth Day and the many activities taking place to show we care about our planet brings hope to everyone for a bright future."

One of the organizers was Lianne Gagnon, director of student services at Niagara College and also a resident of the neighbourhood.

Speaking to the group, Gagnon thanked the Student Administrative Council, college students and everyone else who helped out.

"This event has gained so much momentum and illustrates how we can all work towards a cleaner environment. It starts in our backyards and grows from there," she said.

The bags of garbage were collected afterward by staff from the Town of Niagara-on-the-Lake. The town also donated the garbage bags and protective rubber gloves.

Town workers remarked this was the largest amount of trash they had ever picked up after a group cleanup.

After the blitz was completed, fellow participant Linda Hardaker observed it was unfortunate that most of the debris and garbage collected was actually items that would have otherwise gone into the blue and grey bins for recycling.

Steve Hardaker has lived in Glendale for over 11 years and is active in many community organizations.

Lakeshore Road garbage collection coincides with **Earth Day** weekend

Richard Harley
The Lake Report

It was a couple of days after Earth Day, but that didn't stop Niagara-on-the-Lake resident John Bobrel from heading out with a recycling box and a trash grabber in hand to clean up the roadways near his house.

Bobrel lives with his wife Debbie in Garrison Village. Their property is about nine acres, mostly forest, that backs onto Lakeshore Road.

He was out cleaning up where Two Mile Creek crosses the road — some-

thing he does about four times a year.

This year it happened to coincide with Earth Day weekend.

"It is Earth Day, or we're celebrating it anyways," he said.

"Usually we get a lot of floodplain debris that comes in and floods our property, but it also carries a lot of garbage. So usually in the spring and the fall we go through and collect a few bins of stuff."

He finds things like bottles, paper cups and bits of plastic. Even tires can make their way up the creek.

He does it mainly to keep trash off his property, he confesses, but as a runner who uses the Niagara Parkway trail, he also sees more trash around than ever, and likes to help keep it "out of the environment."

"It's self-serving. We like to keep our property clean and stuff, and the roadside here. And it's unfortunate that so many people (litter)," noting he finds plenty of coffee cups and even water bottles.

"And then with the advent of COVID, and so many people not being able to eat at restaurants or whatever,

they're getting takeout. Well, unfortunately, a lot of takeout containers end up being thrown out the window."

Bobrel is recently retired from 43 seasons as head electrician at the Shaw Festival, and said now he's got a bit more time on his hands to get out and tidy up the planet.

His words of Earth Day wisdom?

"Ideally, people shouldn't be throwing stuff away," but "I think if people just stop and pick up a few things here and there, that would make all the difference."



John Bobrel picks up a plastic straw, just one of the pieces of trash he cleaned up on Saturday. RICHARD HARLEY



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For all your construction needs...

Today, Shalamar thrives as **Vine Ridge Resort**

Last in a series

Linda Fritz
The Lake Report

In 2013, Shalamar became Vine Ridge Resort.

It is now owned by Keith Turner, who also operates the Olde Angel Inn in Niagara-on-the-Lake's Old Town.

Instead of camping in tents or vans, the site now houses 240 plots of land for mobile homes. Each one is privately owned, although the owners can only stay at the resort for 90 consecutive days.

General manager Laura Beck says the resort is not intended for permanent residency. The Vine Ridge season runs from May 1 to Oct. 31.

Vine Ridge has been described as "a world away from everything" and although most owners live in the Greater Toronto Area, some come from the United States and other southwestern Ontario locations.

Indeed, there is a contingent of owners from the Niagara region, including Niagara-on-the-Lake itself.

Residents vary in age from infants to great-grandparents. While people come for all that Niagara has to offer, many stay close to the village during their stay. There are bicycles and movies to rent.

Besides the former Shalamar pool, the resort boasts a salt water swimming pool, a multipurpose court for games such as tennis and basketball, a children's play area and a volleyball court.

There is a small canteen that sells milk, eggs and other necessities as well as souvenir T-shirts and ball



Top: One of the vacation homes at NOTL's Vine Ridge Resort today. LINDA FRITZ Bottom left: A postcard photo of the Shalamar grounds. Bottom right: Large crowds enjoyed vacation time at the resort when it was open. SUPPLIED

caps. During the summer, local fruits and other produce is available.

The resort also holds talent nights and musical events. Last July 1, the Canada Day fireworks outdid those in Niagara Falls.

In the early days of Vine Ridge's existence there were issues for the village of Queenston.

At one point, sewage was being dumped into the local drainage system – and it smelled. That was resolved when a new system was installed. There was also concern in the village about

noise. In fact, this came to nothing. The riverside bar in Lewiston, N.Y., is far noisier and often goes late into the evening.

Vine Ridge Resort doesn't issue day passes. As a result, it stands somewhat apart from Queenston itself.

But Beck says plans include inviting Queenstonians to sample the treats in the resort's ice cream shop. Locals can also buy staples such as milk and bread at the convenience store.

For Cynthia Sheppard, whose family started Shalamar in the 1960s, the resort

may have changed over the decades, but a visit there last year brought back a flood of fond memories.

"We walked the property marvelling at the trees, recognizing all the brick buildings existing as they always have, nodding in the direction of the pool, touring through one of the fabulous mobile homes, and enjoying our ice cream cones as we took in the sights and smells of the Niagara escarpment on a beautiful summer evening. It doesn't get any better."

Read parts 1 and 2 of the series at niagaranow.com.



The person who makes me has no need of me. The person who buys me has no use for me. The person who uses me can neither see nor feel me. What am I?

Last issue: You can put me in a bucket to make it weigh less. What am I?

Answer: A hole/holes

Answered first by: Jane Morris

Also answered correctly (in order) by: Claudia Grimwood, Bert Dandy, Sylvia Wiens, Wade Durling, Margaret Garaughty, Rob Hutchison, Pam Dowling, Kevin Etherington, Mary Drost, Dennis Blake, Doug Bruce, Sheila Meloche, KC King, Margie Enns, Claire Cronier,

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Balzac's patio made from 72,000 plastic bags

Richard Harley
The Lake Report

It's one small step for coffee drinkers, one giant leap for sustainability.

Balzac's Coffee Roasters in Niagara-on-the-Lake has installed a new patio and driveway, made with the equivalent of 72,000 plastic bags.

The NOTL location is the first Balzac's to use the eco-friendly surface. The installation was completed on April 13.

The idea came from a need to replace the driveway and patio, combined with an effort to help the planet in the process.

Steve Janzen, general manager of Balzac's, said the initial effort "grew largely out of circumstance, as the parking lot needed to be permeable to allow for proper drainage. The owner of the building and home of our beautiful Niagara-on-the-Lake café, suggested Ecoraster as an option."

"The beauty was that it was environmentally friendly, something very important to Balzac's, as one of our founding values, from our start in 1993," Janzen said.

"It also allowed us to turn a section into a patio for our customers to



Steve Janzen, general manager of Balzac's, stands at the newly opened patio. SUPPLIED

savour a moment outdoors with others and a great cup of coffee."

The surface made of recycled plastic totals about 800 square feet, including the 400-square-foot driveway and similarly sized patio space.

The material, which costs about \$30 per square foot, was installed by Smithville company MC2 Contracting Inc., a Balzac's spokesperson said.

On top of being made

entirely from used plastics, the interlocking Ecoraster system also eliminates storm water runoff, "minimizing pollutants entering our natural water bodies and reduces the risk of flooding — mitigating that increased potential due to climate change."

The patio space contains traditional patio stone, held in place by the Ecoraster system.

"The permeable nature of the surface also helps us

greatly reduce the need for winter salt, again protecting our environment and ensuring that we do our part to keep the earth healthy," Janzen said.

He said the idea was one that fit with Balzac's core values.

"Sustainability has always been a cornerstone of Balzac's so this was an easy decision once we became aware of the many sustainable and environmental benefits of ecoraster."



Tim Balasiuk carries an oil drum he fished out of the lake in 2019. FILE/DARIYA BAIGUZHUYEVA

Lake cleanup planned for May 1

Staff
The Lake Report

Get ready to get out and help clean up the environment May 1, because local resident Tim Balasiuk is bringing back his popular lake cleanup at Queen's Royal Park.

The cleanup will be from 10 a.m. to noon, where volunteers will help pick up garbage from the lake and park.

Balasiuk, who operates Paddle Niagara and its popular Sup Kids Paddle Camp, has been cleaning up the lake for years. It's in his blood.

And this year he's hoping to get more people out to help than ever.

The last cleanup was in 2019 and saw about 60 people show up.

Environmental group A Greener Future will also be joining the cleanup on May 1 as part of its Love Your Lake cleanup, which sees volunteers clean 100 sites between NOTL and Kingston.

In 2019, 4,221 pieces of litter were collected in NOTL, with Balasiuk even using a boat to fish litter from the lake.

Anyone who wants to help out this year can show up at Queen's Royal Park for the event.

All participants will be given supplies and equipment to help protect themselves as they clean up.

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Hikers begin 900-kilometre Bruce Trail journey

Jill Troyer
The Lake Report

Weeks of planning came to an end, and the start of an adventure began in earnest on Monday for 20-year-old Zvena Gray and her friend Sima Fabricant, 19.

The pair took their first steps in a 900-kilometre quest to thru-hike the entire Bruce Trail, which starts in Niagara and winds its way north along the escarpment all the way to Tobermory on Georgian Bay.

Gray, an avid environmentalist and outdoors enthusiast, hopes to bring her love of nature to others in the BIPOC (Black, Indigenous, and people of colour) community through a series of workshops once her journey is complete.

"I want to encourage others in my community to get outside and discover the joy of nature and the sense of liberation it brings," she said.

She turned to the Bruce Trail Club for support when



Sima Fabricant, left, and Zvena Gray begin their hike at the cairn at Queenston, which marks the southern terminus of the Bruce Trail. SUPPLIED/MARGARET NORTHFIELD

she was planning her trek. "The Bruce Trail community is crucial. They're providing hot meals, laundry facilities and letting us camp in their backyards," she explained.

The Niagara Bruce Trail Club is helping Gray and Fabricant hike the Niagara section of the trail, which

stretches 83 kilometres, by providing accommodation at members' homes and driving the pair to and from the trail each day.

Club vice-president Janet Davies will greet the pair at the end of the Niagara section to present them with their badges before they embark on the next section of

the trail, which is Iroquoia. Davies applauded the endeavour, saying, "It's good to promote more youth and BIPOC trail users."

The trail is divided into nine sections and each has its own club. Most have provided a point person for Gray, said Davies.

Gray has completed wilderness training and is looking forward to camping along the trail.

"I got my base weight down to 12.7 pounds. I started at 22 pounds and we cut 10 pounds, I'm very proud!" she boasts. Base weight comprises things that won't change, such as her tent and sleeping bag.

"Add water, food, and fuel, and the total weight is 22 to 25 pounds," she said. Gray practised walking around with weight in her pack before the hike started.

Gray and her friend hope to hike an average of 21 kilometres each day, with infrequent days off. They hope to finish the journey on June 6.

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COMMENTARY

A chance to bring **more diversity** to NOTL Sports Wall of Fame



Ross's Ramblings

Ross Robinson
Columnist
The Lake Report

Not to worry, folks, it is not my intent to write a scholarly academic article discussing the rights and freedoms of all sporting residents of Niagara-on-the-Lake.

However, let me attempt to spur thought and discussion, in the hopes that more nominations will be received this spring for the NOTL Sports Wall of Fame.

We know there are many wonderful people among us who deserve to be included on the Sports Wall of Fame at the Meridian Arena in Virgil.

So many NOTLers have made a significant contribution to sports in our community. Especially during

the ongoing deadly global pandemic, we have been reminded that sports are an integral component of a healthy and diverse community.

Diverse! There's that word again. We have a hard-working and open-minded committee for diversity and inclusivity. To that end, I spoke to a member of the Sports Wall of Fame committee recently to voice my observation that there are currently 27 people honoured on our wall.

All deserving, but somewhat homogeneous. There are 24 older white men and only three women. Hardly seems representative of the local population, eh?

He advised me that during the past decade, several women had been invited to join the selection committee, but only one had agreed to get involved.

I was reminded of my mom's oft repeated response when I was complaining about something. This wise lady, from Cochrane, way up in northern Ontario, would calmly state, "You have exactly no right to complain if you don't get involved." Words to



Local legend Harry Steele was the "father" of NOTL softball, starting the league in the 1950s and coaching from the 1960s through the 1980s. EVAN SAUNDERS

remember, in today's whiny and critical society.

One can be inducted as an athlete or a builder. And yes, a few "Builders" have seemed a tad disappointed they weren't being inducted as an "athlete." Just funnin' ya ...

In 1982, the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms included the right to equality, including gender equality. Things change so fast now, with the various information sources available in our weird and wacky world.

Allow me to ramble a bit, and include a quick story from 1964 in St. Catharines, just to make a point about how fast our attitudes change. What was accepted then, just 58 years ago, seems ridiculous now.

For years, the Nicholson

and Flowers families were highly respected Niagrans, high-achieving athletes in many sports. They were respected, to a point. Times were different then.

On our St. Catharines Lions Club midget (15 year olds, not diminutive) all-star hockey team was a smooth skating, lanky right winger named Mike Nicholson. His long legs seemed to be able to go in various directions.

He was a great teammate and his nickname was "spaghetti legs." We were told his hockey future was limited, because "they" had weak ankles. Nicholson went on to star at Brock and in 1968 became the first Black captain of a Canadian university hockey team.

I'm just making a point, friends. Attitudes and thoughts change so fast. Happily.

Let's get some women nominated for our Sports Wall of Fame. Now. So many have brought honour to Niagara-on-the-Lake, both as athletes and builders.

Step up, ladies, and remember my mom's words. Get involved and make a difference.



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Willowbank celebrates its newest grads

Staff
The Lake Report

The Willowbank School of Restoration Arts marked the graduation of its latest group of students with a keynote speech by the executive director of the John Brown Homestead, the oldest house in St. Catharines.

In his address Andrew Humeniuk offered students sage advice, urging the grads to “Think big. Your time at Willowbank has almost certainly pushed you out of your comfort zone. Embrace that.”

As well, he congratulated 2022 grads Krys Dale, Bonnie Liu, Rick Pali, Holly Thompson and Chris Thorne on their achievement.

“You’ve already stepped off the beaten path by coming here. Those things that make you rare, your passion, your offbeat interests, your quirks, your perspective – they are needed. They are needed in heritage and in the world,” Humeniuk said.

Lord Mayor Betty Disero and Marie Bowering, Indigenous traditional knowledge keeper, were among those on hand to celebrate



From left, graduates Bonnie Liu, Rick Pali, Holly Thompson, Krys Dale, guest speaker Andrew Humeniuk and valedictorian Chris Thorne. SUPPLIED/MACKENZIE CAMPBELL

the graduating class at the Queenston school.

Caitlin Wooll, the school’s director of education, was proud of the new grads.

“This is a small graduating class, but despite two of their three years taking place during COVID, they all are in full-time employment in the field in the jobs they love,” she told The Lake Report.

Thorne, the class valedictorian, talked about how much he treasured his time at Willowbank and the close bonds he formed with his classmates and staff at the school.

He credited Wooll and his instructors for the students’ success in their three years

at Willowbank.

“I have absolutely no doubt that it is through the herculean efforts of director Caitlin Wooll that the school continues to be the beacon of learning that it is,” Thorne said.

Humeniuk noted that “as graduates of Willowbank, you are stewards of our cultural heritage at a challenging time when our community, our society and our country are looking for the right paths forward.”

The grads are all busy putting their skills to work in various endeavours.

Dale is working in project management and finish carpentry for Traditional Neighborhood Developments in

Niagara-on-the-Lake.

Liu is working with Traditional Glassworks as a conservator, restoring and documenting the windows of the Centre Block on Parliament Hill.

Pali is the heritage coordinator and site manager at the John Brown Homestead in St. Catharines.


Thompson is also at the Brown Homestead, doing carpentry and renovations on site.

And Thorne started his own restoration business, Atelier Heritage Restoration, and specializes in window restoration. He’s working on a heritage home in Niagara-on-the-Lake at the moment.

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Have some fun



Across

- 1. Frequently (5)
- 5. Divest (5)
- 8. Sag (5)
- 10. Spanish fleet (6)
- 11. Israeli currency (6)
- 12. Bring together (5)
- 13. Dwelling (6)
- 14. Kine (Arch.) (6)
- 15. Moor (5)
- 17. Contaminate (6)
- 18. Resist (6)
- 20. Minor actor in crowd scenes (5)
- 21. Sliding compartment of furniture (6)
- 23. Capital of the Bahamas (6)
- 25. World's largest democracy (5)
- 26. Regular customer (6)
- 28. Departs (6)
- 29. Rotten (5)
- 31. Capital of the Philippines (6)
- 32. Scandinavian kingdom (6)
- 33. In what place (5)
- 34. Tale (5)
- 35. Small salamanders (5)

Down

- 2. Alien (9)
- 3. Scrutinise (7)
- 4. Central Chinese desert (4)
- 6. Crown (7)
- 7. Standard of perfection (5)
- 8. Wife of your son (8-2-3)
- 9. What shrinks do (13)
- 16. Behaved (5)
- 19. Declaration (9)
- 22. Soldier (7)
- 24. Type of twin (7)
- 27. Behind (5)
- 30. Junkie (4)

Crossword Puzzle

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Last issue's answers

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	6			4	2	3							



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DR. BROWN

Dr. William Brown
Special to The Lake Report

Within a trillionth of a trillionth of a second, something very tiny, very dense and quantal in nature, inflated faster than the speed of light into something very much larger, jampacked with a dizzying array of elementary particles and forces, which we now recognize was the earliest universe.

Or at least that's what some of the best minds in physics believe happened 13.8 billion years ago in what famously became known as the Big Bang.

But imagining trillionths of a second, never mind a trillionth of a trillionth of a second, is well beyond my imagination and probably yours.

In my life, I'm aware of

hours and days, and because I've reached my early 80s, perhaps more aware of years, but not so much, seconds and certainly not thousandths of a second.

Yet in my days as a neurophysiologist, I regularly recorded electrical signals generated by single nerve and muscle fibres, each of which lasted only a few thousandths of a second.

And if that's not short enough for you, some physicists and engineers regularly work with times as brief as nanoseconds (billionths of a second) or less, events much briefer than anything we're aware of in daily life.

For most of us, time is a precise quantity which we observe by the movements of the second hand, and the long and short hands of traditional clocks – or these days by the passing of digital numbers on our watches or other digital devices.

And if we're runners or bikers, we can track our times to several decimal places. The underlying assumption, of course, is that time everywhere is the same – a second is a second – wherever we happen to be.

Records in sports are



Time is relative. SUPPLIED

based on that assumption, especially the 100-metre dash where the difference between the winner and second place may be measured in hundredths of a second or less.

Perceptions of time are another matter. Mountaineers who have fallen and survived to talk about it, sometimes report that what was a few seconds for the actual fall seemed slowed and stretched out enough to

see their life scroll through their mind – what some refer to as time dilation.

There's also stretched time. For example, once I dreaded an upcoming, thoroughly overbooked clinic full of challenges, many of which required plenty of time to deal with.

Yet, once into the clinic, instead of feeling overwhelmed, there seemed more than enough time for everyone and every problem despite what turned out to be the heaviest clinic of the year.

Or perhaps the opposite sensation occurs: time seems to speed up or "fly."

Time scales vary with what we're looking at. The time scale for the universe and geology is measured in billions and millions of years, human evolution by millions and thousands of years, and our lifetime by years.

For example, our sun was born roughly five billion years ago and is slated to go on for another seven to 10 billion years. In the case of tectonic plate movement, the distance between North America and Europe increases by a barely notice-

able inch a year.

However, looking back 100 million years, the two continents once touched and 200 million years ago, Earth looked much different. There was one giant land mass, a state to which Earth's land masses will eventually return, an example that illustrates how very slow changes played out over a long time lead to major changes.

When we look at the Niagara region, everything seems so permanent – Niagara Falls, the Niagara River and Lake Erie and Lake Ontario. Yet, all were created during and immediately following the last glacial period and will surely change once more when the current interglacial period merges into the next ice age.

When, not if, that happens, nothing will remain the same – not the lakes, rivers, lay of the land nor any human-made structures.

On the scales of the universe, geology and evolution, major changes usually take a long time – with some exceptions. Stars run out of hydrogen and if they are big enough, they end in supernova explosions.

And while it's true that some geological changes play out slowly over long periods, sometimes changes are explosive, such as volcanic eruptions, which if too many occur at the same time, as happened in Siberia over 200 million years ago, can lead to severe climate change and major extinction of species in the seas and on land.

Or out of the blue, a large meteorite might strike the Earth as happened 66 million years ago, after which the dinosaurs were gone (except for the ancestors of birds) and the evolutionary gates opened up for opportunistic animals such as lemur-sized primates and their descendants two million years ago, the earliest members of the "homo" genus in Africa.

Eventually, this led by chance and natural selection to modern humans.

Lots to think about when it comes to time.

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

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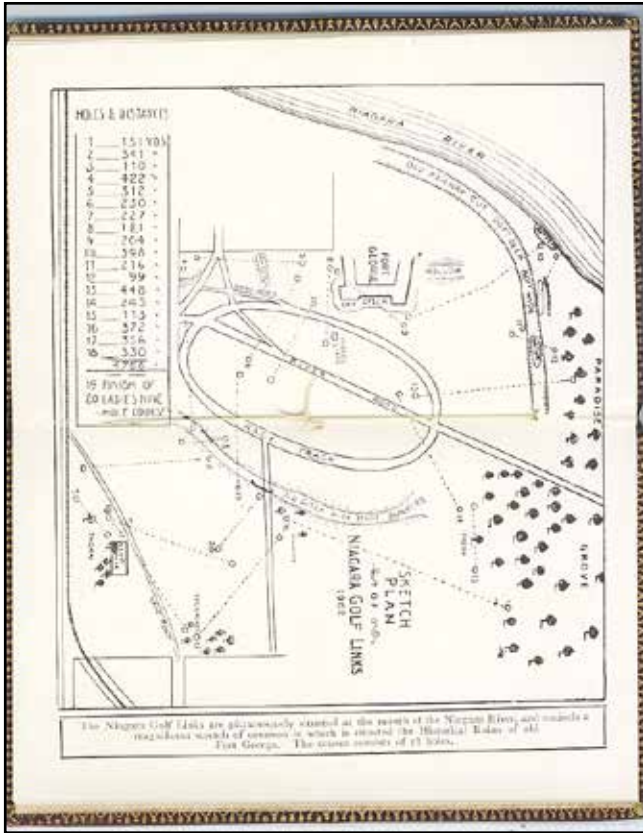
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Many of you are itching to get out on the golf course now if you haven't already. Here is a 1902 plan of the former Fort George golf course on the Niagara Commons. To orient yourself, note where the remnants of Fort George are drawn in. And the River Road cutting through the middle is now referred to as Queen's Parade. One of the former racetracks on the Commons is also shown on the plan. Golf began in Niagara-on-the-Lake in the mid-1870s and a few practice holes were laid out on the Fort George Commons by a returning officer of the British Army. The next year on the Mississauga Common, a nine-hole course was laid out. The Niagara Golf Club was organized in 1881 based only on the Mississauga nine-hole course. In the early 1890s, golf became a fashionable sport again and nine-hole course was added on the Fort George Commons. In 1895 the first international golf tournament was held in Niagara, nine holes were played first on the Mississauga course, followed by nine holes played on the Fort George course. The next year the Fort George layout was converted to an 18-hole course. From 1895 through to 1914 an annual golf tournament was held by the Niagara Golf Club on the Fort George course, until the eve of the Great War when the course was converted back into a military camp. The Fort George course never reopened. As an 18-hole course it was 4,755 yards long, a scorecard states that it is a bogey 82 (no mention of par). Some of the names of the holes were: Rifle Pit, Magazine, Half-Moon Battery, Fort George, Hawthorns, Oaks, Officer's Quarters, and Barracks. The longest hole was #13 at 448 yards, the shortest was #12 at 99 yards. The clubhouse was the former Junior Commissariat Officer's Quarters.

Fort George golf course, 1902



A sign of your future

Brian Marshall
Columnist

Over the last 50 years Niagara-on-the-Lake has charted a path to make the health of our town's economy dependent on tourism. This is not anything new as tourism has played a vital role in our history for at least the last 150 years. However, historically, a sizable proportion of the tourists would visit for a week or two, or spend the summer as residents. In fact, many of the older houses in town were built as cottages or vacation homes and the owners contributed to the town's social fabric. Unlike our modern milieu, day-trippers were the exception rather than the

rule. The "flying" visitor, who comes and spends an hour or two, was virtually unknown. Arguably, tourism has changed over the past five decades and it is that change which has begun to alter the face of Niagara-on-the-Lake's Old Town. Quite simply, the flying tourists are not going to take the time to explore local cuisine in one of our fine restaurants or cafes. On their short timeline they are much more likely to pop-in to a retailer whose name (and logo) they recognize and purchase something that is predictable. It is, after all, what has made franchise chains so successful. Which brings us to Evan Saunders' article in the April 20 edition of The Lake Report concerning Taylor's Bakery reopening as a Dairy Queen. Given the change in clientele, I completely understand owner Tom Stavropoulos' decision to shift his business model. And, despite lamenting the loss of Taylor Bakery's unique offerings, I must accept the inevitability of small business owners needing to leverage the power of franchise branding

to compete for the tourist dollars. That said, unless we are prepared to "throw the baby out with the bathwater" and allow Queen Street to become a smaller version of Clifton Hill in Niagara Falls, it is absolutely vital that the town's sign bylaw be revised to include a specific section for heritage buildings and the Queen-Picton district. These revisions must be both descriptive and proscriptive. In addition to the existing size and placement criteria of signage (which should be reviewed for context and present-day acceptability), this section of the bylaw should include, at a minimum, acceptable materials of construction and permitted colours. Moreover, where wall sign backboards are currently existing, they should be preserved and should a new wall sign be contemplated, it should be set or incorporated therein. In my opinion, the descriptors in the current bylaw related to scale, proportion and dimensions are inadequate and need to be tightened. Nor does the existing bylaw appear to

prohibit placement of signage that masks or obscures architectural features. Further, the bylaw needs a specific address to illumination. By this I mean the types, styles and placement of lighting fixtures meant to illuminate the signs and, by inference, the front of the building. Needless to say, this is not a complete list of considerations but rather just a few examples. And, a sign bylaw without a set of illustrative guidelines is a lame duck subject to interpretation, negotiation and bastardization. Writing guidelines of this type is not rocket science, nor should it require a significant investment. As I have stated numerous times in this column, guidelines make everybody's job easier – architects, graphic and lighting designers, business/property owners, town staff and advisory committee members, etc. On yet another front, we have the choice to be proactive and create success rather than be run over by an out-of-control freight train. And make no mistake, Clifton Hall is barreling toward Niagara-on-the-Lake.

Looking to the Stars



This weekend soul searching can bring unexpected rewards

Thursday, April 28: On April 27, Venus conjoined Neptune and three days later it joins Jupiter in Pisces for a few days of magic. Jupiter and Neptune are collective planets. Venus is a personal planet. If the influence of the Jupiter-Neptune conjunction has been somewhat abstract, this is our opportunity to understand what it means for each of us. With Jupiter's help, Venus will translate Neptune's foggy messages and make the intangible, tangible. This is not a Uranian lightbulb moment of clarity – this is a deep knowing of what's right, what makes you truly happy, what kind of person you want to be and what kind of life you want to live going forward. Happy birthday to the late Harper Lee, author of the controversial "To Kill A Mockingbird."
Friday, April 29: Today, Mercury leaves Taurus for Gemini. The goal now is to be as flexible and as agile as possible. In Gemini, we can reach our destination faster. Or we can stop. Or we can change destination altogether because we got a phone call and something more important popped up. Mercury in Gemini is a great transit for all of us – Mercury is in its home sign in Gemini. When Mercury is in Gemini, we can see things for what they are, without bias or misjudgment, and seize opportunities better. Our mind becomes more agile, our communication more fluent, and our conversations more enjoyable. Imagine that: Willie Nelson, 89, and Jerry Seinfeld, 68, were both born on April 29.
Saturday, April 30: A solar eclipse in Taurus is today's event. There are so many incredible astrological lineups at this eclipse that it's not

easy to know where to start: but this is a north node eclipse conjunct Uranus, and the ruler of the eclipse, Venus, is conjunct Jupiter. There's so much potential with this eclipse – the world is our oyster. More to come. Canadian actor Paul Gross celebrates birthday #63 today.
Sunday, May 1: Venus is transiting Pisces while Pluto is in Capricorn – and today, they are friends. It makes for a time when soul searching brings rewards. We get to see the best (and worst) of what motivates us – then pick which one to nourish. And happy birthday to Batman, who first appeared May 1, 1939, in Detective Comics.
Monday, May 2: In the noon hour, Venus leaves emotional Pisces and moves on into fiery Aries for a stay that lasts until May 28, when Venus moves on to Gemini. Dwayne "The Rock" Johnson spent his teen years on the east coast of Canada and today turns the big 5-0.
Tuesday, May 3: A lively, talkative Tuesday sees Jupiter and Pluto connect in a friendly way, which means good fortune pays tribute to our deepest passions. The late James Brown, the man known as "The Godfather of Soul," was born May 3, 1933.
Wednesday, May 4: May the fourth be with you! While the moon moves into her home sign of Cancer tonight, earlier today, Mars gets a bump from Uranus. Good news for some on the work or health front. It was May 4, 1959, that the first Grammy Awards were handed out. Ella Fitzgerald and Perry Como were the vocal winners.
Bill Auchterlonie's weekly Podcast, Looking Up to the Stars, is at www.lutts.ca.

Astrology is a form of entertainment, not a science.

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Care and feeding of your **springtime bulbs**



GROWING TOGETHER 

Joanne Young
Gardening Columnist

Spring bulbs are a welcome sight for the winter-weary soul.

Author Jean Hersey is quoted as saying, "I love planting bulbs. It is making promises with tomorrow, believing in the next year and the future."

After the winter we had, they have never been more beautiful. There is something about seeing those fresh, green leaves start to push through the ground, only to be followed by the brilliant shades of yellows, reds, pinks and purples.

As the soil begins to warm up in the spring, the bulbs begin to emerge. It's the smaller bulbs, such as snowdrops and crocuses, which are not planted as deep in the soil, that emerge first. As the soil warms deeper into the ground, the larger bulbs emerge.

When bulbs begin to grow in spring, it is a good time to feed them with an organic fertilizer that is high in phosphorus, such as bonemeal. The phosphorus helps to feed the roots and blooms.

After the bulb has finished flowering, make sure that you remove the seed head (including the flower stalk), but let the leaves remain there until they have completely turned yellow and have gone dormant.

It takes a lot of the bulbs energy to produce seed and that energy is better spent elsewhere.

At this stage, the leaves are processing sunlight, through photosynthesis, and turning the light into food for the bulb. This food is stored in the leaves for a time. If you cut off the leaves while they are still green, you are robbing the



Top: Striped crocus. Bottom: Crocuses. JOANNE YOUNG PHOTOS

bulb of much-needed food.

Once the plant starts going dormant and the leaves start turning yellow, this is the signal that the food is now making its way back down into the bulb. This also is when the flower buds and leaves are set in the bulb for the next season.

If the leaves are cut off prematurely it robs the bulb of the food it needs, resulting in smaller or no flowers for the next year. The more food that the bulb receives, the bigger the flowers will be.

A lot of hardy bulbs can be left in the same spot and will come up year after year, giving you low-maintenance, reliable flowers. But sometimes even bulbs need a little help. How often should you divide bulbs?

That really depends on the flower. As a rule, however, bulbs should be divided when they get

so overcrowded that you start to notice they are not producing as many flowers or they don't appear to be as vigorous.

As bulbs grow, they'll put out little offshoot bulbs (baby bulbs) that cluster around them. As these offshoots get bigger, the bulbs start to get too crowded and the flowers stop blooming as vigorously.

If a patch of flowering bulbs is still producing leaves but are producing fewer flowers than in the past, that means it's time to divide. This tends to happen every three to five years, especially with daffodils which are a bit more vigorous in nature.

When dividing bulb plants, it's important to wait until the foliage dies back naturally. The bulbs need the foliage to store up energy for next year's growth.

Once the leaves have died, carefully dig up the bulbs with a shovel. Each larger parent bulb should have several smaller bulbs growing off it. Gently pry off these bulbs with your fingers. Squeeze the parent bulb – if it's not squishy, it is still healthy and can be replanted.

Make sure you replenish your soil with compost or composted manure before replanting your bulbs. If you are unable to replant the bulbs right away, you can also store your new bulbs in a dark, cool, airy place until you're ready to plant them again.

Make sure you get out for a nice, long walk or drive and take time to enjoy the beauty of spring's bulbs.

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



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NOTL RETURN OF THE FESTIVALS



Virgil Stampede
May 24 | Centennial Sports Park



Strawberry Festival
June 18 | St. Andrew's Presbyterian Church



Cherry Festival
July 9 | St. Mark's Anglican Church



Peach Festival
Aug. 13 & 14 | Queen Street



Kinsmen Show n' Shine
Aug. 14 | The Commons



St. Davids Lions Carnival
July 20 to 23 | St. Davids Lions Club



Festival Market
Sept. 3 | Grace United Church

Did you know?

The Lake Report's printer sources 100 per cent of its paper fibre from industry-leading paper mills, which use quick-growth, sustainable, renewable plots of land, rather than clear-cutting forests.

The ink is also vegetable-based.



Pauline Reimer Gibson
Audiologist

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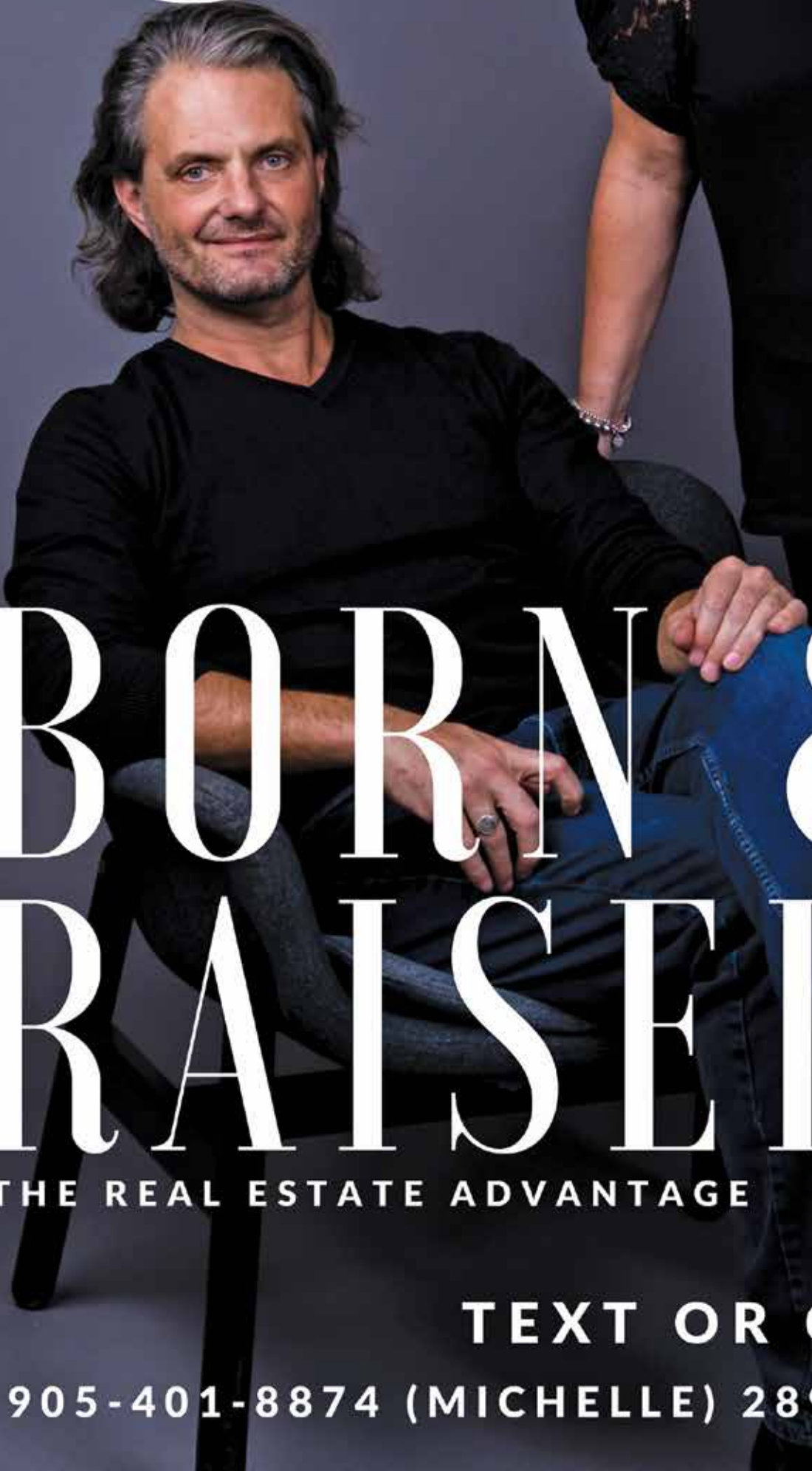
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