



Election '21: All-candidates debate Sept. 7

Plus, read what your federal hopefuls consider the **most important issues**, on Pages 4 and 5

The Lake Report is hosting an all-candidates meeting on Tuesday, Sept. 7 at Ravine Vineyard Estate Winery in St. Davids.

Doors open at 6 p.m. and the outdoor event, under a large tent at the vineyard, will run from 6:30 to about 8 p.m.

The debate will feature federal candidates from the riding of Niagara Falls, which includes Niagara-on-the-Lake, Niagara Falls and Fort Erie.

The event will be moderated by Patrick Little, a highly respected Niagara lawyer and community volunteer who is chair

of the Willowbank School of Restoration Arts in Queenston and has been involved with Save Our Rand Estate (SORE) and the Music Niagara festival.

The debate format will include questions about local and national issues, provided by NOTL residents, community

organizations and editors of The Lake Report. The event also will be livestreamed on The Lake Report's Facebook page.

The meeting is an opportunity for residents to get to know their local candidates

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How the breakwater failed

Evan Saunders
Local Journalism Initiative
The Lake Report

The Balls Beach stone breakwater collapsed in March due to extreme weather caused by climate change and a design that wasn't prepared to deal with those problems, according to a presentation by town irrigation and drainage superintendent Brett Ruck.

Soundings of the river bed near the breakwater (called a groyne) had decreased by nearly seven metres from when it was installed last August to its partial collapse in March of this year, Jane Graham of Shoreplan Engineering told councillors.

Shoreplan Engineering designed the groyne, which was

intended to prevent shoreline erosion.

The "scouring" of the river bed is believed to have been caused by near record-breaking flow rates recorded from the Niagara River due to storm surges and high water levels in Lake Erie, she said.

The maximum flow rate of the river in a 100-year

Continued on Page 2



A newly built rock groyne at Balls Beach collapsed months after being built. Now the town is seeking answers about why the \$400,000 project failed. FILE/RICHARD HARLEY

FUTURE VISION: Part 1

Community rallied to build former hospital

Denise Ascenzo
Special to The Lake Report

From the very beginning, the town of Niagara-on-the-Lake has learned to survive, rebuild and its residents learned to look after each other.

The War of 1812 saw the town resurrect itself and forge forward. Then the First World War again brought the town's people pulling together again to help the war effort.

But it was after that war and the Spanish flu pandemic of 1918-1919 that the town folk realized a public hospital was needed.

Previously people were either treated by the military staff or had to go into St. Catharines for surgery. The patients, upon their return home, were given post-surgical care mainly in private homes.

The town decided it should have its own hospital



The former NOTL hospital was opened in 1954. JESSICA MAXWELL

and, after a great deal of fundraising, the home of Dr. Hedly Anderson was purchased.

The new hospital, at 175 Queen St., opened in 1920 with six small wards. On opening night, the first baby was born in the new hospital, an auspicious sign for success.

It was also in 1920 that the NOTL hospital auxiliary was formed – an ex-

tremely hard-working, very determined group of women who raised monies to assist with the running of the hospital on Queen Street.

This little Cottage Hospital, as it was known, did very well, but after the Second World War it became obvious that a bigger, more modern facility was essential.

That posted a major challenge: how would the town

afford it? Fundraising would be key, but it would not be a small undertaking as the estimated cost for a new hospital was tagged at about \$200,000.

Through monetary donations, fundraising events, equipment donations, municipal, provincial and federal grants, the hospital came to fruition.

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What do YOU want for old NOTL hospital?

The Town of Niagara-on-the-Lake is inviting expressions of interest about how the old NOTL Hospital site could be used.

Will it be knocked down, bulldozed, redeveloped for commercial or retail purposes? Converted into a community-use facility, turned into affordable housing, or a multi-tier garage to ease the age-old parking problems in Old Town? Perhaps a hybrid of all these ideas?

Or will someone come up with a unique, off-the-wall, innovative concept for how to breathe new life into this special space near the Shaw Festival's main theatre.

NOTL has a once-in-a-generation opportunity here to get it right with one of the more important, historic properties in Old Town. What ideas do you, as readers and residents, have for this site? How would you like to see the former hospital property changed or developed?

Let us know and we will publish a selection of your suggestions. Post on our Facebook page, email us at editor@niagaranow.com, drop it at our office at 496 Mississauga St. (at John Street), or write to The Lake Report, PO Box 724, Niagara-on-the-Lake, L0S1J0.

This week, with a historical retrospective of the hospital, we launch a series of stories about the former hospital and some suggestions about how it might be used in the future.



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NOTL wineries say new aid program is a big help

Operators will know soon if they receive up to \$200,000 in relief

Jill Troyer
The Lake Report

Wineries and cideries that qualify for a one-time grant from the provincial government to help offset financial impacts to their businesses because of COVID-19 could receive their money as early as September.

The Winery Agri-Tourism COVID-19 Relief Initiative will provide a \$10 million grant to eligible wineries and cideries with on-site stores. There is a cap of \$200,000 for any one business.

The grant "is to offset losses and costs for things like PPE and sanitation," said Avi Yufest, director of communications for the ministry of agriculture, food and rural affairs.

Relevant losses would be from decreased tourism, tours, events and tastings.

"The process was very tight. We've got a tight window, so we can get the funds out ASAP," said Yufest. "The goal is to have the funds out in September."

Applications were sent out to 259 businesses in Ontario and 198 operators completed the applications, including 73 from Niagara.

The Lake Report spoke to senior officials of several wineries and all expressed appreciation for the help, while noting it will only partially compensate for losses and increased expenses.

"Some people will use the money to pay down debts they've incurred, or to meet payroll. Our extra expenses were related to physical changes outdoors," said Greg Berti, vice-president of Andrew Peller Limited.

If Peller receives the full \$200,000 as it hopes, "We'll invest in preparing for the



Visitors enjoy an outdoor tasting patio at Peller Estates. SUPPLIED

future, to become more COVID resilient, especially on the digital side," he said.

"We want to streamline our e-commerce process so we can respond to any future demands and we also want to make it easy for customers to book online, and make itineraries, so we'll invest in software to simplify that consumer experience," Berti said.

The government program will "go a long way to help us prepare for the future. It means a lot to us."

In St. Davids, at Ravine Vineyard Estate Winery, co-proprietor Paul Harber said,

"We are seeing the light of day, but it's still far from normal."

"Events have taken the brunt of the impact, with smaller groups and capacity restrictions," so he was pleased that "the process to apply was simple and it's good they plan to get the money out as early as September."

At Ravine, the money would help recover funds spent to extend outdoor offerings, such as tents, and adapt to COVID restrictions. "If we get what we applied for, it will offset 30 per cent of the money we

spent to be able to open this season," Harber said.

Jamie Slingerland, director of viticulture for Pillitteri Estates Winery, said most wineries have had 85 per cent fewer visitors during COVID, which has reduced revenue dramatically.

Adding to the challenge is the fact he now has to have more staff to serve fewer people, given the restrictions on capacity. So the fund is welcome.

"We are very thankful that this grant money has become available as it is life-saving for many winer-

ies. At this point we are all trying to tread water," he said in an email.

Jane Langdon is responsible for onsite experiences at Strewn Winery. Her comments echo others, saying that "every little bit helps."

"We have continued to invest in our outdoor spaces to keep everything safe and keep ensuring it's the best it can be. So the money would be helpful to offset additional costs such as our leased tent," Langdon said.

However, "will it cover what we hope to build for a more permanent, extended season facility? No. But everything is helpful and we are thankful for the support," she said.

Richard Liu, owner of Ironwood Cider House, expressed a similar sentiment, saying, "Everything helps. We've been pretty heavily impacted by COVID, so any grant will help."

Businesses should know soon what they will receive from the fund.

Balls Beach groyne sparks legal concerns, discussion kept private

Continued from Front Page

average, as determined by Environment Canada's observational post at Fort Erie, is 9,800 cubic metres per second, Graham said.

On Nov. 15 and 16 last year, the flow rate reached 13,800 cubic metres per second, which coincided with a high water level recording of 3.04 metres in Lake Erie, just shy of the all-time high of 3.1 metres, according to data from the Canadian government.

"That's a very significant increase in any situation," GEI Consultants' Peter Ventin explained to council.

GEI Consultants is an environmental engineering consulting firm that deals with locations across the Great Lakes basin. Ventin said climate change-driven challenges such as the groyne's collapse are becoming the norm.

"We are absolutely inundated, please pardon the pun. There is no end to projects and issues that are occurring around the Great Lakes,"



Workers building the groyne in August 2020. FILE PHOTO

Ventin said.

"These are not issues that we were referring to five to 10 years ago, these are new issues. We are in uncharted territory."

Data for the river's flow rate from March 12 to 13, 2021, is unavailable due to issues with the recording device the government uses, but a similar storm surge was recorded on Fort Erie at about 2.5 metres, right around the time the groyne collapsed, Graham said.

The increased intensity of

these weather events is due to climate change and will continue at the current level or get worse, Ventin said.

"The conditions caused by climate change – changes in river levels, changes in water levels and changes in river flow are going to continue to create a very aggressive environment where the Niagara River hits Lake Ontario," he said.

And while all this data points to possible natural reasons for the breakwater's collapse, councillors wanted

to know why such events weren't planned for.

Coun. Sandra O'Connor asked whether the groyne was designed with climate change in mind.

O'Connor pointed to reports from the National Research Council and Civil Engineering Society that stated decreasing lake ice due to climate change would open up shoreline structures such as the groyne to adverse effects from storm surges.

"We do look at climate change while we're developing our designs. We consider the effects of storm surge and look at the data that's available," Graham said.

"It seems to me that we've been planning on the basis of past information and, with climate change, we have to plan for the future and not for the past," O'Connor said.

When asked if the groyne was knowingly built on sand, Ruck responded, "Yes."

Lord Mayor Betty Disero pushed the consultants to explain why the groyne was not anchored to the river bed and was instead built on sand

that could shift when extreme weather occurs.

"The criteria is to go down until you find harder material," Graham said.

The design dug into the sand until a firmer layer was found. The structure was then built on top of the firm layer and was surrounded by the loose sand.

A more costly construction involving the installation of steel piles drilled into the bedrock was passed over due to cost, Graham said.

The town set aside at least \$400,000 for the work done at Balls Beach, according to a staff report from July 2020. That cost doesn't include consulting and temporary work done to stabilize the site, Coun. Gary Burroughs told The Lake Report.

The breakwater was repaired at the end of June. Shoreplan Engineering reviewed the state of the groyne and gave a written report to the town stating the temporary repairs are safe for public access, Ruck said.

Legal issues relating to the groyne have been discussed

in closed sessions and councillors were not able to talk about it during the committee of the whole, with Coun. Allan Bisback warning fellow councillors to watch what they say.

But some councillors still pushed for answers.

"Who's at fault? And we can say nobody's at fault, that it was a 100-year storm event, but there's a lot of money involved in either fixing it or in what we've already put in, and I don't have that answer," Burroughs said.

"You've heard a lot of good information," replied the town's lawyer, Callum Shedden of Daniel & Partners LLP.

"I think you need to absorb some of that. My choice would be not to give you a legal opinion in open session. But, based on what I've heard, the opinion I gave you last time in closed session would still apply."

An information report recommending actions for council is expected next month, chief administrator Marnie Cluckie said.



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Election and COVID: Niagara's top doctor offers **safety advice** for voting, campaigning

Richard Harley
The Lake Report

Holding a federal election when cases of COVID-19 are rising presents a risk for infection, says Niagara's chief medical officer of health Dr. Mustafa Hirji.

The Lake Report asked Hirji how people and candidates can be as safe as possible during the upcoming election season.

Hirji said during elections campaigning can present a risk to voters. He advised all candidates to make sure they've been vaccinated too.

"When elections come, there's often some in-person campaigning and that, of course, creates the risk of social interaction and infection spreading," he said.

"Every candidate really should get vaccinated as well as their staff and volunteers. If they're going to be out and about campaigning, I think it's really important they've done what they can do to protect themselves, but of course, protect the people that are going to be interacting with their potential voters, so they're not spreading infection to their potential voters," he said.

Door-knocking can be done "relatively safely," he said, by knocking and standing back six feet.

"You knock on the door, you take a few steps back, you make sure (you're) two



Dr. Mustafa Hirji, acting chief medical officer of health for Niagara Region, during a media conference. SOURCED

metres apart, the conversation happens on the doorstep where it's outdoors, that's not really an issue," he said, noting he's more worried about campaign events where people gather together.

He advised trying to minimize those situations.

"A lot of events, particularly by national leaders, are maybe more about the media coverage, so maybe try to do events where you don't actually have the crowd there and you actually just have the media visuals," he suggested.

Locally, events will be smaller, he said, but urged that COVID-19 precautions be taken.

"(It's) really important to try and do everything to minimize the risk from those, so try and have those events outdoors," Hirji said.

lot from the province and send that in, so I'd actually first off recommend lots of people take advantage of that option," he said.

"That way you don't even need to go to the polling station, you don't have any of that interaction with others, and that makes it safest because you submit your ballot from home. You just need to make sure you've made a decision about a week before the election so you can mail that off in time."

For those looking to vote in-person, he suggests on top of taking normal COVID precautions, people should try to go when it's less busy and take advantage of advance voting days.

He recommends avoiding going first thing in the morning, which is typically a busy time.

While ensuring public safety at polling stations will be up to Elections Canada, he also recommends sanitizers at stations, keeping people six feet apart and limiting the number of people inside at one time.

"Hopefully Elections Canada can put out some advice on what are times of day where they've generally seen lower numbers of people coming in to vote and so maybe those are times that are better to go in to vote."

"We're fortunately still in the time of year when there's good weather, so hopefully that's doable. Space everybody two metres apart, get everybody to wear masks, take all those usual precautions (that will) limit the spread of infection. Hopefully if we do all of that we can see a pretty limited spread from this election," he said.

He noted some other provinces had elections last year, "and fortunately we didn't see a lot of spread of infections linked to them. Newfoundland had a little bit of a spike, but that was it."

When it comes to actually voting, Hirji said one suggestion is to mail in your ballot — an option that's been available in Canada for decades.

"You can request a bal-

Lake Report to host **all-candidates** meeting

Continued from Front Page

and find out how they plan to bring NOTL's voice to the table at the federal level.

COVID-19 safety guidelines will be in place, which means attendance is limited. Registration is a must. You can reserve a free spot at the event at www.eventbrite.ca/e/election-21-all-candidates-meeting-niagara-falls-riding-tickets-168111749769.

The event will go rain or shine beneath Ravine's event tent. Masks must be worn until you are seated.

Light snacks prepared by Sweets & Swirls Cafe will be provided during the event and wine, beer and cider will be available for purchase through Ravine.

Have a question you'd like to ask to the candidates? Send it to editor@niagaranow.com. Specific questions about NOTL issues are preferred. The Lake Report will select a variety of questions representative of the submissions received. Please reserve your spots as early as possible. Seating is at shared picnic tables with six people per table.




The Lake Report's all-candidates meeting and debate will be Tuesday, Sept. 7 at Ravine Winery. SOURCED IMAGE

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Tony Baldinelli
Conservative party (incumbent)



Melanie Holm
Green Party of Canada



Andrea Kaiser
Liberal Party of Canada



Brian Barker
New Democratic Party



Peter Taras
People's Party of Canada

Election '21: Candidates' views on top issues

The Lake Report interviewed all the candidates in the Niagara Falls riding for the Sept. 20 federal election. We asked them three identical questions to provide our readers with a sense of the candidates' views their stances on issues facing Niagara-on-the-Lake.

Story by Evan Saunders, Local Journalism Initiative, The Lake Report

What are the two biggest issues facing Niagara-on-the-Lake this campaign and how will you address them?

Tony Baldinelli
incumbent
Conservative party

With the wine industry a major economic driver in the region, one of Baldinelli's big concerns for Niagara-on-the-Lake is fighting the escalator clause on excise taxes for alcohol and wine.

Excise taxes are applied at the manufacturing level and the wine industry has been exempt from the tax since 2006 so long as they use 100 per cent Canadian grapes.

The exemption was the subject of a trade dispute through the World Trade Organization after Australia claimed the exemption was unfair to imported wines. Canada has agreed to end the exemption for wine by June 30, 2022. That means Ontario wines will cost more.

The Liberals also applied an escalator clause to the excise tax on alcohol in 2017. That means the excise levy will rise with the cost of inflation every April forever.

"We warned the government in 2017 not to implement an escalator clause on

the excise tax exemption, which our grape and wine industry had since 2006," Baldinelli said in an interview Monday.

In response, the Liberal government announced over \$100 million in financial support for Canadian wine-makers over the next two years.

"I'm hearing, from both our grape growers and our wineries, that that funding is insufficient for what is needed. They're still waiting for a permanent replacement program," Baldinelli said.

The federal government said a replacement program to help wineries through the financial changes would be implemented when the exemption ended.

The program is to be developed by Agriculture Canada but had not been completed when the election was called, Aaron Dobbin, president and chief executive officer of Wine Growers Ontario, said in an email.

Baldinelli said the government's changes will hurt the grape and wine sector.

"How does a (winery) make investments going forward unless they know what that program is going to be and how long the program is going to run? You can't treat businesses like that. So, that's disappointing," he said.

Support for Niagara's tourism industry is his sec-

ond priority.

"There's 40,000 workers in Niagara that rely on the tourism sector. The government committed a billion dollars to a tourism recovery plan," he said. But that isn't enough when compared to the amount of money tourism brings to Canada.

"Niagara Falls itself generates \$2.4 billion. The sector across the country is a \$105 billion industry," he said.

Baldinelli said the funding is not available to businesses that really need it.

"If you look at the criteria, it excludes restaurants, retail and hotels. So, who is it really for?"

Melanie Holm
Green Party of Canada

Recovering from the pandemic, particularly in regards to quality of life and tourism, is the most pressing issue for NOTL, says the Green party candidate.

"The pandemic has brought attention to our need for better care for seniors, affordable housing options for everyone, expanded mental health supports, and a guaranteed livable income," Holm said in an email response.

She sympathized with the struggles that local tourism has experienced but offered no suggestions for recovery.

With Niagara's ecologi-

cal importance, the region should become a leader in the fight against climate change, Holm said.

"Protecting our wetlands and re-establishing buffer zones around communities and agricultural areas will help protect us locally from the effects of extreme weather and development," she said.

Andrea Kaiser
Liberal Party of Canada

"Health is the number one priority. Ending the pandemic through vaccinations is the top priority for every community and that's no different in Niagara-on-the-Lake," the Liberal candidate said in an interview.

Kaiser said she is against a two-tiered health system after seeing how detrimental lack of health care access is during a pandemic.

"I am not in support of any kind of health care system that does not provide access for everybody, including the most vulnerable," she said.

The second most important issue facing NOTL is protecting its heritage districts and tourism industry, she said.

"I'd like to work with the municipality to find local solutions on a number of specific items like congestion, heritage and climate action. Congestion in the

Old Town and all through Niagara has been a challenge."

Kaiser said she would support the tourism industry in NOTL. "I've worked in tourism and hospitality my whole life. I did see first hand what the wage subsidy did to support small businesses," she said.

"I think the continuation of that is absolutely essential, as long as it's needed."

Brian Barker
New Democratic Party

Preservation of NOTL's heritage and community character is a critical issue, the NDP's Barker said in an interview.

"There are a lot of developers who see golden opportunities in the community," but he said what makes Niagara-on-the-Lake special is "the fact that we've been able to maintain its heritage."

"Any ventures that are looking to build or do something in NOTL, I think we have an obligation to the community to maintain and preserve our heritage. I mean, NOTL was the first capital (of Upper Canada)."

Barker said climate change also presents a threat to the municipality's agriculture and wine industries.

"Unpredictable patterns in the weather will wreak

havoc on our wine industry," he said.

"Addressing climate change will be imperative for our future in terms of protecting the different agricultural investments we have here."

Peter Taras
People's Party of Canada

Infringements on personal freedom are the biggest issue, facing NOTLers, Taras said.

"The lockdowns have been a colossal failure, the mask mandate has been a colossal failure. They've done absolutely nothing to unite our country. Compared to two years ago, I feel less secure," Taras said in an interview.

He offered the United Nations' worldwide death statistics from the past four years as evidence that masks and lockdowns have not worked.

"We should be focusing on hope and courage because fear limits our ability to reason," he said.

The second most important issue for NOTL is reopening the U.S. border, said Taras.

"(Border closures) had a massive deleterious effect on Niagara-on-the-Lake with really no backing that there was benefit to it."

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Taras is only **unvaccinated** candidate

People's Party of Canada candidate says he doesn't care if his campaign staff is inoculated and he is against vaccine passports

Continued from Page 4

Are you and your staff double-vaccinated? Why or why not? How will you approach issues surrounding vaccine mandates and a vaccine passport?

Tony Baldinelli

The Conservative said all leadership positions in his campaign are fully vaccinated but that volunteers either need to be vaccinated or submit to daily COVID rapid testing.

He doesn't directly support vaccination mandates but said that rapid testing could be mandated instead.

"Canadians have the right to make their own decisions. We firmly believe that rapid testing is needed for the unvaccinated to protect our most vulnerable Canadians," he said.

"We're going to require federal public servants who aren't vaccinated to pass a daily rapid test."

Baldinelli said decisions about restrictions against unvaccinated individuals should be left to individual businesses or the province.

"(Vaccine passports) are pretty well a provincial issue but businesses have the right to establish rules," he said.

Melanie Holm

The Green candidate said she and her staff are double-vaccinated, but she worries about protecting her own children from the spread of the virus. They are both under 12 and unable to receive a COVID vaccine.

She understands some people can't get vaccinated but said, "This isn't about any one person's right to choose. This is about the wider community."

"If people have concerns about the safety and efficacy of the vaccines they should be discussing this with their health care providers, not their politicians."

Andrea Kaiser

Kaiser said she is double-vaccinated and said she will

be asking all of her volunteers and Liberal campaign staff to have two doses of a COVID-19 vaccine.

"I am supporting mandatory vaccines, as in the workplace here, and I would ask that all other candidates do the same to make sure that we are having a safe election."

"(Vaccination) is the best way to end the pandemic and truly support local businesses because they can't afford another lockdown."

She said children have needed vaccine records to go to school for many years and noted the concept is not new.

Brian Barker

The candidate he and all his top campaign workers are double-vaccinated, Barker said.

"Not only am I doing it to protect my health and the health of my family, but more importantly, it's something I'm doing for the community," he said.

As a school teacher, he said he has dealt with immunization records and so-called "vaccine passports" his whole career. Barker has a degree in biotechnology and said he trusts the science behind vaccines.

"Vaccination has played an important role in the eradication of many diseases. It's more than likely that I never contracted polio, measles or diphtheria because of immunizations I was given as a child," he said.

He acknowledged that people can be medically exempt from vaccinations or invoke the Charter of Rights and Freedoms to refuse them but said it was important that people get vaccinated.

"We're all tired of lockdown and vaccination is a tool that will help make sure we can move forward in a positive way."

Peter Taras

When it comes to vaccines, Taras is quite straightforward.

"I am not vaccinated and I don't care if my campaign staff are vaccinated or not. If

they want to be, that's fine. If they don't want to be, that's also fine," he said.

Vaccine passports and mandates would be "opposed vehemently," he said.

"I think that bodily autonomy is a right. Our government has violated many Charter rights, so I'm not surprised they violate bodily autonomy as well."

He said he is against any employer creating vaccine mandates for employees and stressed it should be a purely individual decision.

What commitments will you make to support Indigenous Peoples living in Niagara?

Tony Baldinelli

The Conservative said he would defer to Indigenous leaders to target specific issues for Indigenous residents in Niagara.

"I look to them for advice and guidance on some of the issues that are of importance and what we can do."

He said he would pursue the mandates of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission and continue to provide funding for initiatives such as the Canada Summer Job Program.

Melanie Holm

The Green party is dedicated to implementing every action in the Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women, Girls and Two Spirit report, the Truth and Reconciliation Commission, and the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous People, she said.

"I am listening. Whether elected or not, I will follow the guidance and leadership of the Indigenous community and do whatever is needed to support them in healing the damages done by colonization and genocide."

Andrea Kaiser

Kaiser said she would work to continue Liberal programs for affordable housing and financial support.

"Historic investments

have been made, but there's so much more work to do – \$638 million has been allocated to support Indigenous Peoples living in urban areas outside of reserves," she said.

She touted the Liberal government's \$40-billion national housing strategy as a way to boost Indigenous home ownership and stressed that she would work with Indigenous leaders to tackle the problems they deem urgent.

"I'm a listener. I've been speaking with community leaders in the Indigenous Peoples communities and I'm very committed to continuing the conversation," Kaiser said.

Brian Barker

When it comes to working with Indigenous communities in Niagara, Barker is eager but cautious about claiming to know what's needed.

"I'm here to be their biggest ally, but I think we need to bring the communities together and give our friends at the friendship centres the opportunity to share their needs," said Barker.

"As a white man, I'm not going to profess to know the issues of the Indigenous community. We think of them as stakeholders. We need them to sit down and lead the conversation."

Peter Taras

The best role for the Canadian government in handling Indigenous issues is to back off, Taras said.

"If I was Indigenous affairs minister, my goal would be to make myself redundant in my first term," he said.

He would push to make homeownership easier for Indigenous residents in Niagara and criticized reserves as "socialist" systems where homeownership is impossible.

"There's no reason to have a patronizing Indian Act, which actually only enslaves Indigenous people rather than providing the circumstances for human flourishing," Taras said.

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



NOTL active cases: 3
Region active cases: 143
Region deaths: 420
Region total cases: 16,586
Region resolved cases: 16,023

**August 25 data per Niagara Region Public Health*



Contributed by Patty Garriock
 "Yesterday's the past, tomorrow's the future but today is a gift. That's why it is called the present." - Bill Keane

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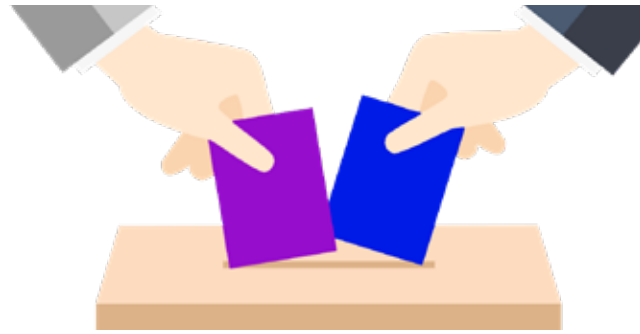
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Editorial

Riding is one to watch: It could be a **wild race**

Kevin MacLean
 Richard Harley
 Editors



Traditionally, Canada's left-of-centre vote is divided among the Liberals, the NDP and the Greens.

That's where the whole rhetoric comes from that a vote for Green or NDP is just taking a vote away from the Liberals.

And there's some truth to that.

If you're not a Conservative supporter, you might vote Liberal so as not to split the vote and ultimately, maybe, contribute to a Tory win.

But if you're a Conservative supporter, this year seems a different beast as now there's a somewhat established far-right party that could divide the right-of-centre votes, too.

In 2019, the People's Party of Canada took 968 votes but that total seems destined to grow. Another wild card in the mix is that Independent candidate Mike

Strange polled 4,997 votes in the last election.

Where will those votes go? His total is more than double Tony Baldinelli's plurality over runner-up Andrea Kaiser in 2019. That puts a lot of votes in play.

All this means the race in Niagara Falls riding (which includes Niagara-on-the-Lake and Fort Erie) really is one to watch.

There are lot of Tory blue signs across the riding, but there also are a growing number of people showing sign support for the People's Party of Canada (PPC) — an organization with an anti-mask, anti-vax leader who has been arrested for violating

COVID-19 safety protocols (which are literally in place to protect Canadians from a potentially deadly virus).

The party realistically has no hope of a win. In Niagara, 80.2 per cent of voting-age residents already have had two doses of vaccine, and 85.5 per cent have had at least a first dose. While few of them are likely to support the People's party platform, if lawn sign and social media sentiment translates into votes, the PPC could play a spoiler role and split the right-wing vote.

Every purple People's party sign you see could be a beacon of hope for the Liberals and a concern

for the Tories.

But where will the votes of the 19.8 per cent of Niagara adults who haven't yet been fully vaccinated end up? Tories, Greens, People's party? Elsewhere?

Based on past PPC rallies, its voter base seems largely composed of libertarian-leaning, sometimes poorly educated and often religious people. In the past, if they voted, many of those people probably would have supported the Conservatives. They still might.

But factor in the nearly 5,000 votes that went to Strange and this riding really could prove a tough one for the Tories to hold. Unless many of those independent-minded voters will go with Baldinelli. Then he could win handily.

Stay tuned, pay attention to what this riding's candidates have to say and make a sound, informed choice on Sept. 20, no matter what candidate you decide to support.

editor@niagaranow.com

Baha'is urge NOTL to be more **inclusive** and welcoming

Dear editor:

A fundamental belief in the equality of all people is a core principle of the Baha'i faith, as indeed it is in the faiths of all people.

It is for this reason that the Baha'is of Niagara-on-the-Lake strongly support the work of the town's in-

clusivity committee, which earlier this year carried out a survey designed to help the town council make our community a more inclusive and welcoming one.

But surely this is really the responsibility of the citizens of this place — the place where we all live and

which we all love.

We would like to join others in working to increase such a sense of inclusion with and for all, without waiting for the town council to assume this responsibility.

We want not just Niagara-on-the-Lake but all of Canada — indeed all of the

world — to leave behind suspicion and fear of the "other" and the "different," and to become a place of humble, helpful friendliness.

We welcome any opportunity to do so.

*Charlotte Letkemann
 Hugh Church
 NOTL*

Club website has photos from tennis' **golden age** in NOTL

Dear editor:

Kudos to Paul McHoull for last week's letter, ("Historic hotel deserves commemoration,") about the hotel that once stood at Queen's Royal Park and about the royal visit by King George V and Queen Mary, who stayed at the property in 1901.

Mr. McHoull wondered about the availability of photographs of Niagara-

on-the-Lake's grass courts, where some of the most prestigious tennis matches of the time were played.

I am pleased to say that you can find some interesting photos and stories about the golden age of international championship tennis in NOTL in the "History" section of the NOTL Tennis Club's website, niagaratennisclub.com.

*Larry Mantle
 NOTL*



Photos of NOTL's tennis history can be found at niagaratennisclub.com/Tadys-Photos-Historical.

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Get vaccinated – and vote wisely

Tom Thornton
Special to The Lake Report



Millions of people in our world have had two needles placed in their shoulders and a vaccine flowing from the syringe into their bodies.

It's a vaccine that has given millions the protection needed to prevent them from spending time in a hospital room with a ventilator keeping them alive. They are protected from a lie, "a simple flu bug," which is what a world leader called the disease that continues to take lives, from the very young to the very old.

This fourth wave didn't have to happen, in fact the third wave never had to happen if millions of people hadn't believed the words of a less-than-honest person whom the American people voted to be their leader.

These gullible people never for one moment thought about their relatives, neighbours, strangers on the street or anyone else for that matter by refusing to take the protection that millions of people have taken in the past eight months.

Their poor choices have caused hundreds of thousands of people to die, nurses and doctors to reach such levels of fatigue that they too became sick and died from this virus, which is like none other seen in our lifetimes.

What is it going to take for these people to realize that getting the shots will

save lives, maybe even their own? Is it selfishness or a complete lack of understanding as to what they are doing to the world economy, to the lives of families that are losing their breadwinners or their siblings, or are making life so horrific for millions of people?

The world has been turned upside down by this virus and it appears that until everyone gets vaccinated this pandemic is going to be with us for a very long time. If someone you know is hesitating, tell them how important they are at this time in history. If they get their shots they will realize they have been lied to and are not turning into aliens nor been injected with a chip that will enable their governments to control their lives.

Throughout this pandemic we have seen people fighting the need for vaccinations and the use of masks. Have they not learned from the statistics that both are important if we are to stamp out COVID. Listen up people, you need to follow the medical guidelines or you might just be a statistic on the list of COVID deaths.

Brilliant people are working tirelessly to provide you with the protection you need to stay alive. Years ago similar dedicated people worked diligently to provide us all with a similar vaccine to stamp out Polio, a disease that killed thousands, left people unable to function properly and affected the outcomes of people's lives.

Scientists told us that the time span between the first and second shots was between 20 and 28 days to be the most effective. What did our government do and how does it know if the antibodies have been as effective as they would have been had we been vaccinated when the scientists told us were the ideal times between the first and second shots?

Now it would appear that we will all require a third shot to maintain the efficacy to keep us protected, however our government seems to once again make the time span longer than scientists are recommending. I question whether our government knows how the delay between shots one and two has affected the efficacy of our immune backups.

Here we are with a new variant that is testing the theories of all the scientists working to save the lives of millions of people who are relying on them to get this pandemic under control.

And what is our prime minister doing? He's out campaigning in an early election. Should our officials be putting their efforts into an election instead of focusing their attention on the worst pandemic of our time and making certain that thousands of people's lives are not at stake?

These are two major situations that require 100 per cent of our government's attention. However, this prime minister has chosen to call an early election that he hopes will satisfy his needs and not those of thousands of Afghan people whose very lives are at stake and millions of Canadians whose lives are also in peril.

Despite these key issues, our government thinks an election is the most important issue at the moment. What do you think?

Your votes will tell us what you think is most important for our country. If we fail to bring our interpreters and their families out of the horrific situation they are facing I don't believe any country will ever assist us in the future.

We will have lost the respect of the Afghan people and many other countries around the world.

Tom Thornton lives in Niagara-on-the-Lake.

MP Tony Baldinelli's accusation of 'lying' is untrue

Dear editor:

In your issue of July 29, Andrea Kaiser, federal Liberal candidate for Niagara Falls riding, wrote an op-ed on the issue of climate change, ("Action on climate change crucial for Niagara – and the rest of the world.")

In your issue of Aug. 12, the federal Conservative incumbent for the riding, in a response, accused Ms. Kaiser of "blatantly lying."

Ms. Kaiser's op-ed highlighted two things: 1) that the Conservative party voted against recognizing

climate change as real at its 2021 national policy convention, and 2) that the Conservative party, including Tony Baldinelli, the Conservative MP for Niagara Falls, has opposed each of the Liberal government's initiatives directed at reducing greenhouse gas emissions and fighting climate change.

Both of these points are true and a matter of public record.

Ms. Kaiser highlighted Mr. Baldinelli's voting record in the House of Commons, as all Canadians are

entirely within their right to do with their representatives in Parliament. All MPs are accountable to their constituents.

I would also note it is against the rules of Parliament for any MP to accuse another of "lying" during debate in the House of Commons.

Anyone that does so is immediately asked by the Speaker of the House to withdraw their comments and if they refuse, is escorted out. Should that not apply to public debate as well?

Perhaps the Conserva-

tive candidate here has succumbed to what seems to me to be a regrettable, persistent Conservative party attachment to muckraking/mudslinging/namercalling, certainly under the last Conservative leader and which seems to have continued under the new leader.

Might this suggest a dearth of positive ideas on national priority issues for constructive debate? Or perhaps the Conservative candidate's pants simply caught fire, LOL ...

*Rick Kirby
NOTL*

Have an opinion you want heard?

Send a letter to the editor to
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van noort flower studio

Politicians continue to ignore us, we need a **seniors movement**

Dear editor:

As we head into another general election, there is an abundance of evidence there are two segments of our population that politicians of all stripes could care less about: seniors and Indigenous people.

The latter I will address in a later letter except to state that their issues have resulted in political lip service for decades with no tangible results.

The latest to drop off the radar is the residential school gravesite scandal. Just another 24- to 72-hour TV and media headliner that has already disappeared from the front pages and editorials – until the next bombshell hits.

Prime Minister Justin Trudeau, always the opportunist, took advantage of this recent scandal by appointing an Aboriginal person (well-deserved, I may add) as our new Governor General.

Ah, what this scandal-ridden prime minister and his party won't do for votes, plus, of course, the \$6 billion day care package for Quebec. Do I hear pandering? Nothing yet for seniors

during the first week of politicking, such as long-term care home solutions.

Addressing our seniors' age-old predicament, Trudeau has stiffed us again. During his 2019 election campaign he promised, and reneged twice on a 10 per cent boost to our Old Age Security (OAS) at age 75 and a 25 per cent increase in the Canada Pension Plan for widows.

It's 2021 and I'm still waiting. Now he pours oil on the fire. As grocery prices go through the roof and gas prices skyrocket, we are expected to be elated with his latest vote-getting insult, a one-time taxable payout of \$500.

That may buy you a couple of extra tanks of gas plus a coffee and doughnut at McDonald's but it sure as heck is not going to get my vote on top of the paltry \$300 one-time COVID-19 payout back in July 2020.

Seniors simply do not figure in our provincial or federal big-picture planning. We are a dispensable commodity. We bore witness to this during the pandemic when we saw the manner in which for years oversight

management of long-term care homes was non-existent. They were only institutional mass death centres for the elderly.

On March 3, 2020, Jeremy Warner in his U.K. Daily Telegraph article wrote: "COVID-19 might even prove mildly beneficial in the long term by disproportionately culling the elderly population."

Now we have gone from "Only the vulnerable will die" to "It's good the vulnerable will die." Others, worldwide, have expressed similar sentiments, noting, "It would ease the economic burden on our welfare system."

Concurrent with these events, in October 2020, Premier Doug Ford enacted a legislative bill that shields and protects these bad actor care home owners from lawsuits.

It is significantly harder for residents and families to hold long-term care home owners legally liable. We will now be forced to prove there was "gross negligence" on the part of the caregiver.

To my knowledge there has been no legal action (nor

is there likely to be) provincially or federally, taken against any care home owners. With thousands of deaths, they got off scot-free. Remember these facts during Trudeau's and Ford's re-election campaigns.

So here we stand today, individual voices are summarily dismissed and ignored when it comes to effecting change. Not so with an aggressive bulldog and dogmatic well-organized group.

This is evident here in NOTL with the results achieved by organized taxpayers in Garrison Village, Chautauqua plus the SORE group opposing the Rand Estate proposal. They have moved the dial and forced our council into some long overdue, positive decision-making.

Accordingly, I am proposing an aggressive, active and focal "Senior lives matter" movement, formed and founded by the siblings of the thousands of deceased parents who died in our long-term care death warehouses. Many were lost in conditions that will sear our memories forever contemptible and despicable on behalf

of our elected officials. Yet nothing will change.

Why would I propose such an action? Simply because our collective advocate groups have been ineffective and failed to move the needle with our elected officials on numerous sobering seniors' issues. Long-term care homes are but one.

Unless we advocate for a sea change via a strong movement, millions of our current seniors and their siblings are destined to suffer the same degrading ending to their lives.

Is this the ending you want to look forward to? Picture the scenes we witnessed on television – degrading and scandalous. Criminal for sure, but Doug Ford and others circled the wagons to protect the owners of care homes. We have to hold them accountable. Another George Floyd situation where only the Black Lives Matter movement pressed for justice and won.

Clearly the flavour of the day, to achieve our goals is a movement. Without one we are chasing our tails and subject to years and years of more political lip service.

Witness the overwhelming success of the following Black Lives Matter, #MeToo and LGBTQ. Movements are unquestionably powerful and get things done. Duplicate their strategies for change and watch our politicians squirm.

Finally, do we have any social media savvy siblings in NOTL (I think so) to spread the word nationally on this proposal? Or at least initiate a dialogue and hopefully form a movement that can initiate a sea change and subsequent paradigm shift in how seniors are treated, not only here in Canada, but worldwide.

Perhaps some correspondence with Lisa LaFlamme at CTV National News?

Will a leader emerge from NOTL or the Niagara region to champion this cause which I feel very passionate about. Get this proposal out to your friends here and in other provinces. There are thousands of grieving siblings to connect with who may wish to get involved.

Your thoughts and comments, for or against, would be greatly appreciated.

Samuel Young
NOTL

 **PEOPLE'S PARTY**
of CANADA

ELECT



Peter Taras,
Candidate

FREEDOM, FAIRNESS, RESPONSIBILITY, RESPECT

Dear Resident of Niagara Falls, Niagara-on-the-Lake or Fort Erie,

Every individual deserves respect and human dignity. The values of freedom, fairness, responsibility, and respect are the foundations for building a functional society that will give opportunity for success and happiness to every Canadian that wants to work hard. Government should create the conditions for human flourishing rather than to perpetuate dependency on government handouts. Smaller government is a way to increase our quality of life. Government should get out of the way of Canadian citizens as much as possible. Family and community are better at solving local problems than big government.

Returning to traditional values of family, community, and protection of the vulnerable will bring about more joy, peace, and unity in our country. I believe in the protection of human life from conception to natural death. As a father, the best thing I can do for my children is to love their mother. As a family man, the best thing I can do for my country is to raise children that are humble, just, courageous and grateful for the opportunities they have been granted, and to have a sense of service to their family, community and country.

As a political candidate, I will give straightforward responses to my constituents' concerns. I will always try to solve problems by going back to the first principles of charity towards neighbour, faith, hard work, and respect towards every individual. I believe the sole purpose of politics is to make life better for citizens. Government should try to empower the people rather than themselves.

At your service,
Peter

Authorized by the Financial Agent
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Get involved! Request a lawn sign, discuss our ideas, volunteer, donate or become a member of the PPC. We can be the change!

Learn more at: www.PeterTaras.ca

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Election '21 Notebook: Sign, sign everywhere a sign

Kevin MacLean
The Lake Report

It's election season and signs promoting various federal candidates are proliferating around Niagara-on-the-Lake.

However, it's a short season as the Town of NOTL requires all signs to be taken down within one week of the Sept. 20 voting day.

For a time, NOTL had a severely restrictive sign bylaw. Passed in 2012, the statute included a list of just 21 locations around town where election signs were permitted on public property.

In 2018, **Lord Mayor Pat Darte** and council repealed Schedule C of the bylaw, which outlined certain intersections and roadsides where election signs could be placed. Now, political signs are welcome almost everywhere.

On private property signs must be set back one metre from the property line and can be no larger than three square metres (about 32 square feet).



Election signs, mainly for Liberal and Conservative parties, are sprouting up around town. EVAN SAUNDERS



SPEAKING OF SIGNS: In any election, federal, provincial or municipal, the sign wars can make for interesting – if inconsequential – debate and conversation.

Who has the most, the biggest, the most prominent roadside placards promoting whatever candidate?

Truth is, the parties or candidates with the deepest pockets generally have the most and biggest signs. No surprise there. It costs a lot of money to put yourself out there.

Mere hours after **Prime Minister Justin Trudeau** visited the governor gen-

eral and pulled the plug on Parliament, one of the first signs seen up on an Old Town property was for Liberal candidate **Andrea Kaiser**.

But then **Tony Baldinelli's** team went to work.

Crews were busy over several days hammering in the Tory candidate's signs all over town in the past week. Same story in Niagara Falls.

By an unofficial and thoroughly unscientific assessment, it seems that incumbent Baldinelli is definitely the early leader in the sign race.

Kaiser, with sev-

eral large "**Team Trudeau**" signs, that include her photograph, is second while **Peter Taras** of the People's Party of Canada has several modest-sized signs in spots around town.

MISSING IN ACTION: Interestingly, perhaps, some of Taras' signs were conspicuously placed near the properties of a few Niagara-on-the-Lake houses of worship or buildings associated with religious organizations. Though one that was near a church late last week was gone by Monday. (Since its inception, the People's

Party has attracted a lot of interest from conservative religious groups.)

Some signs along Niagara Stone Road have also disappeared throughout the week.

Notably absent from the first week of the sign war skirmishes were any placards around NOTL proclaiming the merits of **Brian Barker** of the NDP or **Melanie Holm** of the Green party.

But it still is early days ...

HEY, WHO IS THE INCUMBENT: Usually when someone is running for re-election, the candidate's signs say so. Sometimes stickers are added to old

signs to make "Elect" read "Re-Elect."

But so far every true blue **Tony Baldinelli** sign spotted across the riding, which includes NOTL, the Falls and Fort Erie, just says, "Elect."

Conservative campaign official **Bart Maves** blamed the PM.

"A greedy lunge for power by Trudeau led us to an early call, so many returning MPs and candidates are simply using last election's campaign signs. To do otherwise would be wasteful and incur unnecessary expense," Maves told The Lake Report.

He said the Tory campaign is almost out of signs now and will order new ones soon.

Meanwhile, if the Conservatives decide to update their old signs with "Re-Elect" stickers, perhaps Progressive Conserva-

tive **Premier Doug Ford's** family-owned company, Deco Labels in Etobicoke, can help. Remember Ford's infamous anti-carbon tax gas pump stickers?

Residents raised \$196,000 to build hospital in 1950s

Continued from Front Page

The final construction price tag was \$193,988.26. What an amazing achievement. It was under budget.

However, what was even more surprising was the total amount of money raised for the project – \$196,839.32 – which exceeded the fund-raising goal.

A lovely description of the new hospital, located on Wellington Street, was published in a 1950 report with glowing descriptions of a red brick colonial structure whose entrance was up a set of stairs, past colonial pillars and through glass doors with a lovely fan-light, into a rotunda.

There were business offices to one side and a bright waiting room on the other side. It was noted that the wainscoting of the rotunda was of Italian marble.

There was an operating wing, which included one full operating theatre, X-ray



The old NOTL hospital. JESSICA MAXWELL

facilities, sterilizing rooms and even an emergency operating room.

It was noted in the report this area had a soft green tinted terrazzo flooring. The obstetrical wing included all the modern amenities for new mothers and babies, with private and semi-private labour and delivery rooms.

The rest of the hospital had private and semi-private rooms as well as brightly lit wards to aid with a patient's speedy recovery. Children's rooms

were decorated for the enjoyment of any young people who would be treated there.

The new hospital also boasted a fine kitchen, staff dining room, full laundry service, boardrooms and every piece of equipment that a modern-day hospital of its time required.

The new 27-bed, NOTL Hospital was officially opened on May 16, 1951. This wasn't the only building that was built on the hospital site. Right next to the hospital, the new 16-

bed, nurses residence was built and officially opened on May 9, 1954.

In 1964, barely a decade after its opening, it was determined the hospital needed to be expanded.

A parcel of land, about 3.6 acres, was acquired and the new chronic care wing was added. What appeared to be a prohibitive cost, \$160,000 was put to the town's people. As they did previously when challenged, they again came together to help raise the money needed. The new wing was opened on Sept. 29, 1968.

Throughout the years, thanks to the organizational talents of the hospital auxiliary, a combination of events, such as Harvest Balls, masquerades, anniversary celebrations, wine festivals and other fundraisers, were undertaken to help advance the hospital.

New equipment was purchased and a host of new programs and amenities

were made available. These included, gift carts used for bringing much-needed items to patients, the Candy Striper program, TVs and vending machines which all made a hospital stay more pleasant for patients.

The Niagara-on-the-Lake Hospital was successful and area residents relied upon it for their health care needs.

However, in the mid-1990s change was afoot, led by then-premier Mike Harris.

The province was looking at ways to streamline regional health care systems and small hospitals were a prime target.

Teams from the hospital board, local doctors, the hospital auxiliary, the Chamber of Commerce, private citizens and the town council all threw their support behind the preservation of the NOTL Hospital. They wanted to keep it open and active in the community.

Ideas were formulated and promoted, such as

transitional beds, chronic care beds and a special care service for the elderly.

The finances of the hospital were solid. In 1997, even with a major expenditure being taken into consideration, the NOTL Hospital had a surplus of close to \$600,000. This hospital was in good financial shape.

Unfortunately, it was decided that by April 2016 the Niagara-on-the-Lake Hospital would no longer be used to treat patients. The hospital was officially closed.

In 2018, the Town of Niagara-on-the-Lake negotiated a deal with the Niagara Health System to purchase the land and the old hospital. The town took possession of the property on Sept. 20, 2018.

And now, 70 years after the hospital was first conceptualized, the town is looking for ideas for what the next phase in the site's lifespan might look like.

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Shaw Guild prepares to host first fall garden tour

Gail Kendall
Special to The Lake Report

For the first time in 15 years, the Shaw Guild Garden Tour is stepping away from its regular early summer date in June, to now take place in September.

After lockdowns and COVID restrictions, the team, led by Jane Catcher and assisted by Cheryl Morris, unanimously decided that it be safer for all to reschedule to Sept. 11. Tours run from 10 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.

Tickets are available online at shawguild.ca/garden-tour and also will be available at each location on the day of the tour, for \$25 cash only.

They changed the date knowing that vaccines would be more readily available and many, if not all, volunteers and visitors would be double-vaccinated. As well, the weather would be a little more predictable with comfortable temperatures and the gardens would still be beautiful and thriving with an array of different seasonal plants and flowers.

Catcher said the fall gardens will look “magnificent. Envision burning bushes in full colour, waves of hydrangeas of varieties too many to name, sweet william and clematis that will be intoxicating both visually and aromatically.”

The garden tour is a fundraiser for the Shaw Festival and supports initiatives such as the production of “A Christmas Carol” playing at the Royal George Theatre and “Holiday Inn” at the Festival Theatre.

It relies on a team of volunteers who are pas-



The gardens at the home at 83 Gate St. in NOTL will be among the properties featured on the Shaw Guild Garden Tour on Sept. 11. It will be the first time the guild has held a garden tour in the fall. GAIL KENDALL PHOTOS

sionate about showcasing what NOTL neighbourhood homes have to offer.

Garden managers with volunteers in each of the eight gardens will be on hand to answer any questions about the gardens and, as a special treat this year, there will be fun and interesting activities in each of the gardens.

Guests will be supplied with a brochure and map that allows them to visit each garden at their leisure.

As with many events, this

could not take place without the generous donations of the wonderful sponsors who were quick to respond and happy to help out.

The platinum sponsors this year are: Tree Amigos Landscaping, Gatta Homes and Gauld landscaping, nursery and garden centre.

The gold sponsors are: Desjardins Insurance, Niagara-on-the-Lake Golf Club, Konzelman Estate Winery, Van Noort Flower Studio, Master Gardener and Simple White Interiors.

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Last but not least, what would a garden tour be

without the support of the homeowners, who so generously will be allowing hundreds of guests to enjoy the beauty of their gardens?

How are the gardens chosen for this event? Enter Peggy Bell, a longtime Shaw Guild member and experienced gardener.

Bell has toured many beautiful Niagara-on-the-Lake gardens over the years and is always searching for more.

“Fifteen years ago, I don't think anyone thought about

this as long-term fundraising,” said Bell.

“It's turned into the largest fundraiser for the Shaw Guild. It's very generous of people to allow their gardens to be part of the tour,” she said. “It's a huge commitment on their part.”

Bell seeks out gardens that, from her experienced eye, are deemed worthy of being on a tour and will then approach the homeowners about allowing the public to visit their property for the day.

She looks for the curb appeal of a home by way of its front garden. That will often indicate what the back will look like. Unusual plants, placement as well as the layout of outdoor rooms, such as dining and seating areas, all factor into her decision.

Ponds, pools and waterfalls in addition to any other elements that might make a garden unique make their way to the top of her list.

Bell visits the gardens during all seasons in case other opportunities arise where the use of a local garden is needed. This year due to COVID and the fact the Shaw Guild had to change to a fall event, her choice of gardens made for a perfect transition from spring to fall.

When Bell selects the gardens, she factors in their proximity to each other, parking and how the flow of the garden allows for the best experience for guests.

Five of the eight gardens are in Old Town, with two along the Parkway and another in Queenston. According to Bell, they are well worth the short drive to visit.

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Mike Shatkosky
Owner



Julian Trachsel wants to create a new community garden on one of the town's little used green spaces. EVAN SAUNDERS

NOTLer pushes for **community garden**

Evan Saunders
Local Journalism Initiative
The Lake Report

Council is considering creating a community garden on town-owned land after a presentation by resident Julian Trachsel.

Trachsel suggested the idea to council as a way to improve the sense of community in Niagara-on-the-Lake with a healthy project.

"It would be a feel good initiative at a time when there's a lot around that just doesn't feel all that positive," Trachsel told councillors Monday.

He wants the garden to be allotment-based, meaning that individuals rent out a specific plot to take care of rather than a group who grows everything themselves to share with the community, like the Communities in Bloom garden at the community centre.

Councillors had considered creating a community garden in the past but when B-Y's Honey Farm opened

one this year they decided to wait and see how residents responded.

Of the 45 plots that B-Y's has available, 40 are in use, said Trachsel, who has been renting one there.

"There's been some issues with supply of water, especially in the spring. Vehicle access is really difficult when it's wet. And they've got long weeds surrounding the garden so ticks are a concern," Trachsel said.

He was hoping a garden on municipal land could be more centrally located and have a simple parking solution as well as easy access to water.

Director of operations Sheldon Randall recommended Nassau Park at the corner of William and Nassau streets as a suitable location, since it is centrally located and fairly protected from the elements by surrounding trees and houses.

Trachsel said that the City of Toronto operates over 100 community gardens on city-owned property and

said St. Catharines has three.

With some smaller houses being built in the municipality a community garden would offer residents the option of having a garden despite living on a small residential lot, Trachsel said.

He said the garden would provide a good opportunity for education.

"Kids nowadays, and even a lot of adults, don't necessarily understand where their food comes from or what's involved in growing it," he said.

"It's great education for kids to learn hands-on and appreciate the effort that goes into bringing food to your table."

Trachsel stressed that the town needs to commit to the idea for the long term.

"If individuals know that they can be coming back every year they are going to invest in improving the soil, enhancements like raised beds and they'll take ownership in the project," he said.

Trachsel said the best situation would be a plot on municipal land that is managed by an independent group from whom residents can rent their plots.

He wants to gather public input to see how many people would be interested in the garden before determining the size and number of plots.

He was surprised that the plots in St. Catharines had no fences or boundaries around them to protect them from animals, but said the situation could be different in NOTL.

"Where we are is more likely to have tourism and people coming by. So, maybe a perimeter fence to keep out bunnies, coyotes and things like that," said Trachsel.

Council unanimously passed a motion supporting the idea and directed staff to report back on potential locations and what would be required from the town this winter.

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I belong to you, but your friends use me more.
What am I?

Last issue: I shave every day, but my beard stays the same. What am I?

Answer: A barber

Answered first by: Margie Enns

Also answered correctly (in order) by:

Bill Hamilton, Mary Drost, Josh Langendoen, Margaret Garaughty, Carol Durling, Maria Janeiro, Karunesh Makker, Robert Wilms, Elaine Landray, Sheila Meloche

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

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NIAGARA'S HISTORY UNVEILED

Queenston was a **bustling** inland port in late 1700s

This is the second in a four-part series based on a talk given as a part of the Niagara Historical Society's lecture series. Because of the pandemic, the series, "All along the Waterfront" was done via Zoom. All of the talks are available online through the Niagara-on-the-Lake Museum.

Linda Fritz
Special to The Lake Report



A depiction of the War of 1812. RIVERBRINK ART MUSEUM

Queenston was a busy inland port in the late 1700s.

Rosanne Fedorkow, a former Queenston historian, wrote that by 1795, "It was not uncommon that four vessels of sixty to one hundred tons each were unloading at the same time (at the Queenston dock). Sixty wagons were loaded in a day to take goods to the Upper Landing (Chippawa)"

By 1811, just before the War of 1812, there were 300 inhabitants living in 60 houses. There were six stores – and 13 taverns.

At the time, an American visitor described Queenston

as a "small but hands-on village, with most houses built of stone or brick, large and well-furnished. It is also a place of considerable trade and inhabited by a civil and rich people."

It's worth noting that there have been claims that many buildings in Queenston survived the War of 1812, but looking around the village today, these large stone and brick houses are simply not there.

In fact, some years later it was noted that an acre of land just after the war was selling for one-tenth of a

penny, although by the mid-19th century it had gone up to \$35 or \$40 per acre.

Industries included a nail factory, woollen mills, a tannery, distillery, iron foundry and steel maker. Stevedoring was also an important job, as was ferrying goods from Lewiston, N.Y.

Taken along with the horses and oxen that were carrying goods over the portage road, the smell must have been horrendous.

Much of this prosperity supposedly ended in 1829, with the opening of the first Welland Canal. A simple

list of the hotels that were active during the 19th century calls this into question.

The Hamilton House was founded in 1830, the Queenston Hotel in 1850, the Wadsworth Hotel in 1869, the Palmer Hotel in 1880 and the Seburn Hotel in 1886.

By 1959, however, only two buildings that had been hotels were still standing.

What began as the Wadsworth hotel is now South Landing. Although there has been a building on this site since 1801, the original building probably isn't the one that's there today.

Over the years, the hotel was known as Prospect House, Frontier House and River Landing. There were always rooms to rent, even in the 1950s when it also served as a craft centre.

The other hotel identified as still standing, is the Brown-Bassil house, which is now a private residence.

Besides renting rooms to travellers, the hotels were often used for other businesses, such as bootlegging.

From the days that Robert Hamilton's distillery was in production to the time of prohibition in the United States, liquor found its way to the American side of the river. The cellar under South Landing was particularly convenient for storage.

Of course, by the mid-20th century the liquor trade occasionally moved in the other direction.

When Ontario liquor laws prevented the purchasing of alcohol on a Sunday, Queenstonians would often walk across the bridge to Lewiston to enjoy a pint and a meal. Because it was cheaper in the States, they often brought liquid souvenirs back with them for later in the week.

In 1835, the Erie and Ontario Railway Company was incorporated to build a line between Queenston and Chippawa – the old portage route. Brothers Alexander and John Hamilton, who were Robert's sons, owned the company. It's worth noting they were also building their grand houses, Wil-

lowbank and Glencairn, at the time.

William Hamilton Merritt and his business partners were opposed to the railroad. As the owners of the Welland Canal, they were concerned about competition.

However, the entire railway consisted of horse-drawn carriages, which were not as useful as ships for transporting goods. The entire route of the E and O Railway was open by 1841.

In 1854, steam trains were introduced, making the transporting of goods more practical. As a result, lines were built to the already functioning Queenston Quarry.

Later, in 1892 the Niagara Falls Park and River Railway was incorporated. Like its horse-drawn predecessor, the E and O, it ran from Chippawa to Queenston, and used single cars.

The tourist trade was in full swing.

Next: Queenston's connection to the American side.



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NOTL councillors are **fully** vaccinated

But no decision yet if shot will be mandatory for NOTL municipal workers

Richard Harley
The Lake Report

Niagara-on-the-Lake councillors are all fully vaccinated, says Lord Mayor Betty Disero.

In response to questions from The Lake Report, Disero confirmed all members of council have told her they have had two doses of vaccine.

“I’m very pleased that all members of council have shown leadership in getting the vaccine,” she said.

Niagara’s chief medical officer, Dr. Mustafa Hirji, the province and the science advisory table and everyone speaking out about vaccines has said “vaccines are the only way to prevent serious illness or death from COVID,” Disero noted.

“And so, as leaders of the community, it’s important we show that leadership and set the example for everyone.”

While it might not convince everyone to get the vaccine just because nine members of NOTL council



Lord Mayor Betty Disero has long been double-vaccinated, getting her first shot in April. FILE/RICHARD HARLEY

did, it “could bring some positive reinforcement to those people that are hesitant,” she added.

Meanwhile, the Town of Niagara-on-the-Lake has not decided whether it will make vaccinations mandatory for staff members.

Some municipalities and major businesses across the province have made the job mandatory for workers.

“The town is currently discussing and evaluating

options pertaining to vaccination policies, including completing a risk analysis, monitoring what other jurisdictions are doing, and consulting with Niagara Region and local area municipalities to ensure our approach is appropriate and consistent,” town spokesperson Lauren Kruitbosch said in an email response to questions from The Lake Report.

“The town will continue

to take guidance from public health and the medical officer of health,”

Disero said Niagara Region chair Jim Bradley has suggested, and she agrees, that all municipalities in Niagara should have the same vaccine policy.

She expects the issue will be discussed at the next meeting of regional council and said she personally believes municipalities should follow the advice of the chief medical officer of health.

“We’re taking our lead from the region on this, and I strongly believe in a united front,” she said, adding she’s heard different stances from different regional councillors.

The town said it isn’t aware of other municipalities in Niagara that have made staff vaccinations mandatory yet.

“The CAOs and mayors of the local area municipalities are in regular consultation to help ensure an appropriate and consistent approach,” Kruitbosch said.



Quartetto Gelato will perform at the tango night. FILE

Music Niagara celebrates 100 years of **tango**

Staff
The Lake Report

Get out your tango shoes. In celebration of the 100th anniversary of modern tango artist Astor Piazzolla, as well as traditional tango, Music Niagara is hosting an evening of tango music.

The night of music and dance will be filmed Sept. 8 at 6 p.m. at Chateau des Charmes Winery.

The evening will feature performances by founders

of Payadora Tango Ensemble violinists Rebekah Volksteen and Drew Jurecka, Music Niagara director Atis Bankas on violin and Erica Goodman on harp, Quartetto Gelato and tango dancers.

The event will be filmed by Niagara College’s broadcasting team.

A limited amount of tickets can be purchased for \$40 at musicniagara.org.

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A moment of pure sportsmanship at NOTL tennis tourney

Ross Robinson
Special to The Lake Report

Two aging and wily high-level tennis players and two teenaged and upcoming athletes competed fiercely in the opening round of the NOTL Tennis Club Gentlemen's Doubles Tourney last week.

Some 48 players of various skill levels played, won and lost. All were winners – because we were there.

After each match ends players traditionally congratulate each other at the net.

Out of nowhere, lefty Scott Lewis and his tennis partner, John Pilling, said to first-year club members Jayden and Felix Jeong, "Great match. You both made some amazing shots. Good luck in the next round." And other platitudes.

Then, Scott added the magic words. "Do you wanna play some more? We have time and that was really fun."

The two brothers, Jayden, 17, and Felix, 15, surely thought they had died and



Scott Lewis and John Pilling, left, shake hands with Jayden and Felix Jeong. EVAN SAUNDERS

gone to Centre Court at Wimbledon.

They replied, approximately, "That would be awesome. Let's do it."

This was one of those magic moments which sometimes find their way into our lives.

Permit me to quote "Creed of the Amateur," by Richard Tufts, a champion amateur golfer from Pinehurst, N.C.

"An amateur is one who competes in a sport for

the joy of playing, for the companionship it affords, for health-giving exercise, and relaxation from more serious matters. As a part of this light-hearted approach to the game, he accepts cheerfully all adverse breaks, is considerate of his opponent, plays the game fairly and squarely in accordance with its rules, maintains self-control, and strives to do his best, not in order to win, but rather as a test of his own skill and

ability."

Yes, folks, this was a magnificent example of pure sportsmanship, right here in our wee village.

The weather had been perfect, naturally, the competition was relatively fierce, and the bleachers and lawn chairs were surprisingly occupied. Good-natured cheering and heckling filled the evening air.

Lewis and Pilling have been playing tennis around the Niagara region for

many years, and have won more than their fair share of tournaments. They play hard and play for the sake of the game.

Jayden and Felix are COVID-ly distanced students at Eden High School in St. Catharines. They were born in South Korea and arrived in Niagara in 2016, after a few years living in Egypt. The irrepressible Rosemary Goodwin met them at White Oaks and encouraged them to join the NOTL club.

The lads bring much youthful enthusiasm to our aging demographic, and they are determined to rise to a top level of tennis. They are classy young men, eager to play as much tennis as possible. Huzzah for young people.

After the first round matches were finished about 8:30 p.m., most players retired to the pavilion to enjoy a cup of tea and tell lies. Biscuits were shared. Soft drinks, Cheetos and peanuts were shared.

That's when I realized the court lights were still on.

The four players were exchanging forehands, backhands, volleys and lobs. Laughter, darts and congrats were heard for well over an hour.

I had surely witnessed a unique moment of sport.

What a country! Canada is certainly not perfect, but we are pretty darned good for such a young nation.

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Let's spread the love. We are so fortunate to live in Canada ... in 2021.

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Kendra Osa, A division finalist, prepares a ferocious backhand. EVAN SAUNDERS



Bill Devolin, B division champion, gets ready to return a shot. EVAN SAUNDERS



Felix Jeong, A consolation champion, serves his team into victory. EVAN SAUNDERS



Shirley Rednall, A consolation champion, hits a passionate return shot. EVAN SAUNDERS



Rob Lamond, B division finalist, swings for a hit during a Sunday men's match. EVAN SAUNDERS



Mary Lou Turner gets ready to serve. EVAN SAUNDERS



Ross Robinson returns a shot. DEB ROBERT



Sunni Cao, B division finalist, serves the ball. EVAN SAUNDERS

Hot tennis matches on scorching weekend

Lewis, Pilling and Doran, Schindeler claim wins

Evan Saunders
Local Journalism Initiative
The Lake Report

NOTL athletes were out in force over the course of a scorching hot weekend to participate in the Niagara-on-the-Lake Tennis Club's women's and men's doubles tournaments.

"It was a long game and it was so hot. So winning was a relief more than anything," said Sonja Schindeler, one half of the duo who won the women's A division final.

Schindeler and partner Fran Doran ended their hard-fought, extended match with a tiebreaker win over Kendra Osa and

Kathy Goodin.

"Kendra is amazing. She's got such a great future ahead of her. She made us feel our age," Schindeler said.

"Together, they were a formidable team."

The tournament displayed the wide age range of the club's members, from teenage players like Osa to octogenarians.

Tennis has been an important part of Niagara-on-the-Lakes summer, giving players a physical outlet from stay-at-home orders.

"Tennis has been my saving grace and I'm sure I speak for many tennis players when I say that," Doran said in an interview.

The club provides social connection as much as physical exercise for the pandemic-weary.

"It's an amazing club, very social and very friendly. It's kind of our friendship network," Doran said.

"The best part (of the club) is the people you meet over the years," said mixed doubles and men's doubles co-champion John Pilling.

"Couldn't ask for a better experience or club to play at."

The tourney wraps up club competitions for the season, except for the women's Grape & Wine Tournament in September.

Tournament results

MEN'S DOUBLES

A Division Champions:

A Division Finalists:

B Division Champions:

B Division Finalists:

A Consolation Champions:

A Consolation Finalists:

B Consolation Champions:

B Consolation Finalists:

WOMEN'S DOUBLES

A Division Champions:

A Division Finalists:

B Division Champions:

B Division Finalists:

A Consolation Champions:

A Consolation Finalists:

B Consolation Champions:

B Consolation Finalists:

Scott Lewis & John Pilling

Paul Plourde & Mark Waler

Jim O'Gorman & Bill Devolin

Rob Lamond & Doug Campbell

Jayden Jeong & Felix Jeong

Terry Francis & George Dell

Les McFarlane & Terry Ratkovsky

Cosmo Condino & Alec Papadimitriou

Fran Doran & Sonja Schindeler

Kathy Goodin & Kendra Osa

Amanda Thackray & Sarah Barnes

Sunni Cao & Christy Pennington

Anne Robinson & Shirley Rednall

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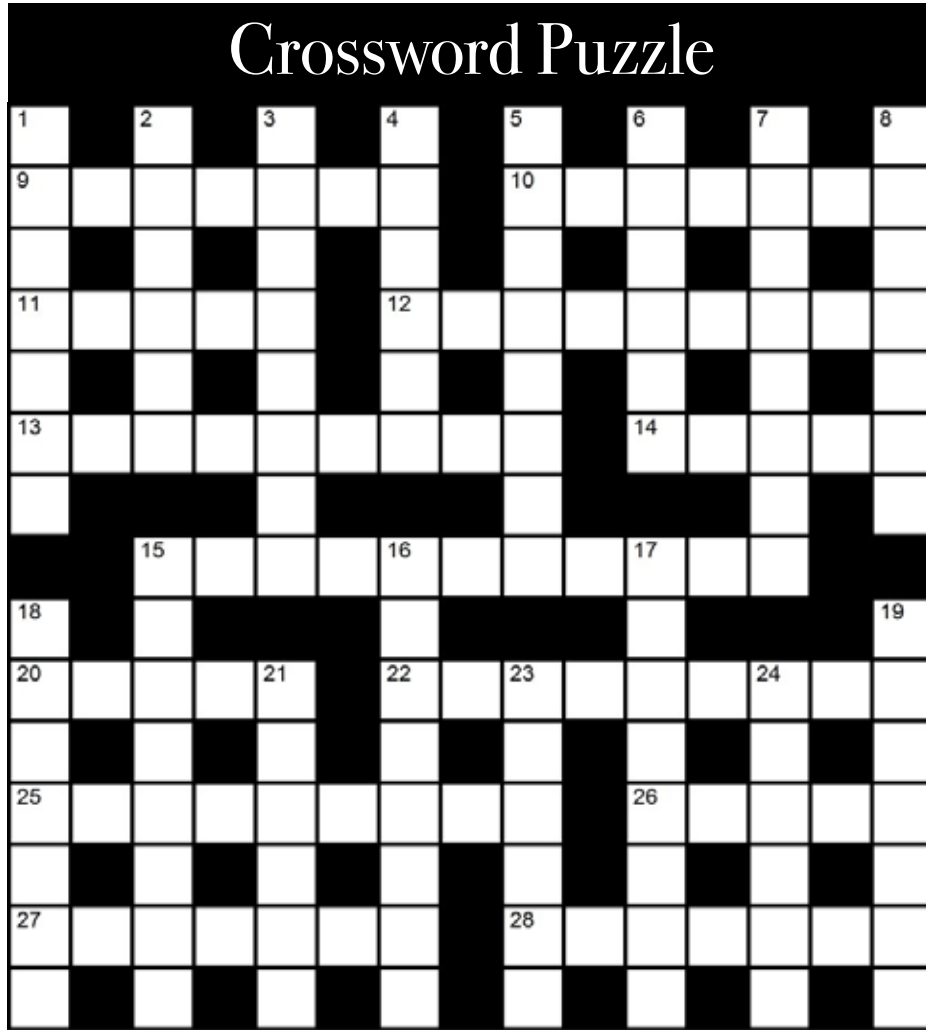
Have some fun

Across

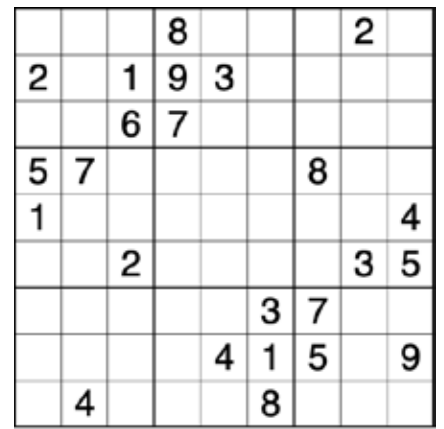
- 9. Roman sea-god (7)
- 10. Exhausted (3,4)
- 11. Mature (5)
- 12. Cheap book edition (9)
- 13. Inflammation of the lungs (9)
- 14. Snares (5)
- 15. Witches (11)
- 20. Have a cow (5)
- 22. Peculiar (9)
- 25. Lack of knowledge (9)
- 26. Greeting (5)
- 27. Fragment (7)
- 28. Loss of memory (7)

Down

- 1. Sad (7)
- 2. Natty (6)
- 3. Patron (8)
- 4. Make more intense (6)
- 5. Military aircraft (8)
- 6. Red Bordeaux (6)
- 7. Today (8)
- 8. Most feeble (7)
- 15. Magnificent (8)
- 16. Infinite time (8)
- 17. Fine weather (8)
- 18. Make dim by comparison (7)
- 19. Performer of gymnastic feats (7)
- 21. 2nd smallest continent (6)
- 23. Roman general (6)
- 24. Condiment (6)



Last issue's answers




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A big payday for Glen Murray

Kevin MacLean
The Lake Report

Glen Murray led a parade of four golfers who beat the heat and each shot 2-over 38 to take low gross honours in men's league play at the Niagara-on-the-Lake Golf Course last Thursday.

Murray was in some esteemed company as the other low shooters were men's club champion James Grigjanis-Meusel, A flight champ Jim McMacken and Joe Doria, another former club champ.

Murray also tied for second with Jeff Jacques under the modified Stableford scoring system, with 22 points, one behind winner Randy Busbridge's 23.

Bill Baitinger, Tom Goodbody, Johnson Hu, Ron Newman and Bill Smith were next with 21 points.

It really was Murray's day on the links, though, as he also won money in both the skins games. His birdie on the second hole was worth a \$20 gross skin and another bird on #8 won a \$65 net



Glen Murray, seen playing in the club championships earlier this month, had a hot day on the links last Thursday. RON PLANCHE PHOTO

skin and \$20 gross skin.

John Kozik's birdie on #1 also stood up, scooping both the gross and net skins. Paul Shelestowsky won a net skin on #8.

Other gross skin winners were: Larry Mantle (#3), Grigjanis-Meusel (#5 and #6) and Brodie Townley (#7).

Closest to the pin shooters were John Reynolds (#4) and Richard Cook (#9).

WOOFs League: Jim Meszaros shot a 38 to win low gross in Tuesday's WOOFs league competition. Ron Newman had a low net score of 33. Doug McCulloch won the hidden hole (#8) and John Reynolds was closest to the pin – again – on #4. Ted Wiens won \$41 in the 50/50 draw.

WOMEN'S RESULTS: Ginny Green and Susan Gagne shot 92 on Tuesday

morning to share low gross in 18 hole women's league play. Judy Mantle and Lisa Allen were next with 95.

Low net winners were: Marlene Sibbald (69), Gagne (72), Mantle (74) and Carolyn Porter (75).

Porter had a birdie on #2 while Margot Richardson had back-to-back birds on #3 and #4. Sally Miller was closest to the pin on #4.

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Young and old, St. Davids Lions cook for Haiti relief

Evan Saunders
Local Journalism Initiative
The Lake Report

On a hot Friday evening, the St. Davids Lions Club welcomed community members to their weekly barbecue. And, though it was a small and local affair, it raised money to help with critical aid for earthquake-ravaged Haiti, thousands of miles away.

Since 1963 the St. Davids Lions Club has been raising money for charitable causes locally and internationally. The international organization recently sent \$100,000 in relief funds to Haiti.

Haiti has been subjected to a cataclysmic one-two punch from Mother Nature. On Aug. 14, a 7.2 magnitude earthquake devastated the island nation. Over 2,200 people have been confirmed dead, with the numbers expected to rise.

Just days afterward, a hurricane struck.

"The Lions were the first



Leos Michaiah Ivri, Maya Dueck, Andrew Christie and Ezekiel Ivri handled the money while the older Lions cooked the grub at the St. Davids Lions barbecue Aug. 20. EVAN SAUNDERS

ones on the ground there," said Allen Snider, Lions Club international director of Canada.

"Everything that is donated to the Lions goes back out. We keep nothing for overhead. Our dues cover things like that."

Snider has been a St. Davids Lion for 41 years. He was recently promoted to the role of international director for Canada representing all the Lions clubs

across the country on the world stage.

"There's a learning curve, obviously. Lots of Zoom meetings and orientation," he said.

The pandemic has had a serious impact on the Lions' ability to work with the community, Snider said.

"It's been hard to do service work when you can't get people together. We can't go somewhere to work with the elderly and work

with kids. All that stuff didn't happen."

One of the club's main fundraising events is the annual carnival, but it has been cancelled for two summers straight.

"That takes a hit on our donations," the international director said.

To offset the losses as much as possible, the Lions have been hosting a weekly barbecue since June.

"This is working out

pretty well so far. We average a little over a grand in profit for each (barbecue)," Snider said.

The Lions also focus their fundraising initiatives on more localized concerns.

The St. Davids Lions recently helped Sick Kids Hospital in Toronto create an eye examination room for kids, said former president Bradd Anderson.

The collective Lions Clubs across Niagara also worked together to help the Niagara Health hospital site in Welland purchase expensive medical equipment for performing eye exams, he said.

"\$200,000 a piece. We did that," he said.

Anderson also touted the Leos program, which has been instrumental in recruiting kids from St. Davids Public School to volunteer with the club. At the barbecue the new and old generations of Lions were working side by side to raise money for charities.

A group of young Leos

were handling the finances while the older Lions cooked and prepared the food packages.

"We get to help the community every Friday," 15-year-old Leo Michaiah Ivri said.

"It's just great to be able to -"

"Serve people," her 13-year-old brother Ezekiel Ivri interrupted, drawing laughs from his fellow Leos.

"And to give back to your community," added 13-year-old Andrew Christie.

"It feels good to help people," chimed in Maya Dueck, 14.

Anderson said the club has 32 Leos helping out with all aspects of the club, from running the barbecue to participating in the Terry Fox Run this September.

The weekly barbecues will continue to run until Thanksgiving weekend, meaning many more area residents can head to St. Davids on Fridays between 4 and 7 p.m. to buy a burger for charity.

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EXPLORING PHOTOS

WITH NOTL MUSEUM



Chief Justice Robinson

This watercolour depicts the ship called the Chief Justice Robinson. It was built in 1842 as a wooden side-wheel steamboat by the Niagara Harbour and Dock Company and sailed the Toronto-Niagara River route. In August 1853, the local newspaper, The Niagara Mail, reported that the ship rescued Ben Hockley, a slave from Tennessee, after he was swept into Lake Ontario by the river's current. He was found on a gate, which he used as a raft to cross the river from Lewiston to Niagara.

ARCHITEXT

Fire and its history of destruction

Brian Marshall
Columnist



After the fire. SUPPLIED/BRIAN MARSHALL

Over the course of history, I suspect fire has destroyed more human-built structures than any other calamity. One would think, with the advances in building technology that our species may have focused more on this issue but, alas, such is not the case.

In reality, our building practices today may be even more susceptible to grievous damage by fire than many structures constructed in the 19th century.

Let's think about the structural brick and stone homes spotted across Niagara. The exterior walls of these buildings (and often the interior supporting walls) were completely fireproof.

To finish the interior of these masonry walls, plaster

was applied directly onto the brick (or stone). Wooden floor joists were set directly into the innermost course of masonry and effectively encapsulated by fireproof material. On many of these houses the original roofing material was tinplate, which was also fireproof. This left only the eaves and openings susceptible to an external fire threat.

Of course, these houses could be fully "gutted" by an interior fire, however when this occurred the home could normally be repaired because the structural context was still intact. Certainly a devastating event, but rarely a total loss.

Now let's jump forward to Niagara-on-the-Lake in the early summer of 2021.

A storage shed on a property at Simcoe and William bursts into flames and it sits only metres away from the just-completed, new neighbouring house. This house, in turn, is engulfed in fire and, by the time it is extinguished, declared a total loss.

So, why would a house, presumably constructed compliant to the Ontario Building Code, be consumed by a neighbouring fire?

To answer this, we have to consider the materials and construction methods often used in modern homes.

First, let's start with a home's exterior cladding in terms of fire resistance. Best in class is masonry, followed by aluminum siding, fibre cement siding, stucco, then

vinyl and wood. While we understand that wood is inherently combustible, it's often forgotten that vinyl siding is a petroleum product which, even when impregnated with fire retardants, burns hot and fast in the presence of sufficient heat and oxygen.

Next consider the eaves and soffits. Are they metal or gypsum? If not, this forms an ideal avenue for fire to penetrate the house.

What is under the cladding?

There is no requirement in the Ontario Building Code that the house be sheathed in a fire resistant shell such as joint-sealed gypsum board. On the contrary, beneath the house wrap on many homes is a layer of oriented strand board (OSB) comprised of wood flakes, resin and a petroleum-based wax; all of which are combustible. Worse yet, if there is a layer of flammable foam board insulation sandwiched between the OSB and the cladding, watch out!

I could go on, but by this point, I think you've gotten the picture. On a new home, it's buyer beware.

Looking to the Stars



Diplomatic days are on the horizon

Bill Auchterlonie
Special to The Lake Report

This week, Mercury moves from its home sign of Virgo into peaceful Libra on Monday the 30th. That's also the day of the third-quarter moon in Gemini.

Thursday, Aug. 26: With the moon in confident Aries, both Venus and Mercury play key roles today. Clever Mercury in Virgo gets a boost from our deepest spirits, while Venus in Libra works to overcome opposition from the past. On Aug. 26, 1971, Bobby Orr signed the first million-dollar contract in the history of the NHL – \$1 million over five years.

Friday, Aug. 27: The moon moves into steadfast Taurus early today. Big news again from Mercury, this time getting a bump from expansive, all-knowing Jupiter. New ideas put smiles on faces and warm hearts too. Disney's "Mary Poppins," starring Julie Andrews and Dick van Dyke, opened Aug. 27, 1964, in L.A. As Mary would say: "Chim, chim cheree."

Saturday, Aug. 28: Surprise! Both the moon and Venus make connections with forward-moving Uranus. The moon being in the same place in the sky brings a comforting surprise. With Venus there is stress, likely involving money. On Aug. 28, 1965, in Timmins, Ont., five-time Grammy Award winner Eileen Edwards, aka Shania Twain, was born.

Sunday, Aug. 29: While the moon moves from Taurus into lively Gemini in the noon hour, paradoxically, the busiest part of the day is in the morning. The afternoon is pleasant, in a laid-back way. Today is birthday

number 62 for Canadian crooning astronaut Chris Hadfield. The first Canadian to walk in space, he is also famous for his rendition of David Bowie's "Space Oddity" in 2015.

Monday, Aug. 30: Today, Mercury leaves Virgo and enters Libra. During this transit, we're more diplomatic and we find it easier to see other people's points of view. With Mercury in Libra, we are more likely to talk things through, get things straight and find a "win-win" solution. When we have clarity around where we're coming from, as well as where other people are coming from, we find that middle ground, that perfect balance between give and take, and this is when magic can happen. Today is also challenging, thanks to the third-quarter moon in Gemini. Mary Shelley, author of "Frankenstein," was born Aug. 30, 1797.

Tuesday, Aug. 31: A mixed bag of celestial activity is mildly stressful, mildly generous and mildly more charming. Maria Montessori, founder of the Montessori method of education, was born in Italy on Aug. 31, 1870.

Wednesday, Sept. 1: The moon moves into her home sign of Cancer early in the day and is 90 degrees from Mercury in Libra later on. This is likely to leave us with very sensitive feelings and frustrated by thinking when we can't seem to make up our mind. In what today would surely be a scandal, future Prime Minister John A. Macdonald, married his cousin, Isabella Clark on Sept. 1, 1843.

Next week, we see a new moon in discriminating Virgo.

Astrology is a form of entertainment, not a science.



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Martin Mazza, Kathy Whitmell-Brown, Stephanie Bjorgan, Blair Cowan and Daniel Turner stand outside Red Roof Retreat on Concession 6 after donating \$1,400 to the non-profit organization. All of the agency's programs are on hold due to COVID. SUPPLIED

Red Roof Retreat fundraiser brings community members together

Evan Saunders
Local Journalism Initiative
The Lake Report

The difficulty of fundraising during a pandemic has prompted four Niagara-on-the-Lake community members to work together to raise money for the Red Roof Retreat.

So far, they have donated more than \$1,400. Starting last October, Daniel Turner, Kathy Whitmell-Brown, Martin Mazza and Blair Cowan have been selling T-shirts promoting NOTL's well-known Facebook group, "NOTL 4 ALL."

"All the people involved have their heart in the right place. It's just such a nice gesture," executive director and founder of Red Roof Retreat Stephanie Bjorgan said in an interview.

Mazza has been selling the shirts out of his restaurant, Italian Pizza and Subs, and Whitmell-Brown has been selling them out of the Virgil Avondale. They have plenty left in stock.

"They're locals, they're taking on the work but it's the people from town who are buying the shirts. So, it's a pretty good relationship," Bjorgan said.

Red Roof opened more than 20 years ago. It provides an accessible NOTL getaway for youth and young adults with special needs and their families.

It has been closed since March 2020 due to the pandemic and the organization ceased its traditional fundraising events in part

due to safety concerns but also to help with COVID-19 relief.

"(We knew) there were other charities that we're going to need the funds," Bjorgan said.

But donations are still needed for some basic necessities.

"We still have to keep our lights on and pay our bills and keep the property organized," she said.

That's where Cowan and Turner stepped in.

The two approached Red Roof with the idea of selling "NOTL 4 ALL" T-shirts to help out the non-profit.

"We just wanted to do good things for the community," Cowan said.

"During COVID, everything's tough and everybody can use some money. (Red Roof) do good stuff for kids."

He and Turner are moderators and founders of the "NOTL 4 ALL" group. That group has grown to include more than 5,000 members.

Mazza, a frequent poster to the group, called it "Niagara-on-the-Lake's community Facebook page."

He said it is important to be using social media reach to help others.

"(Blair) has access to over 5,000 people from that page. Let's put them all in touch," he said.

"It's about using it for good instead of evil."

The shirts cost \$10 to make and they sell for \$20. But simply giving the charity half the money of every shirt sold wasn't enough for Turner.

Turner decided to match the \$10 raised by every shirt and has personally donated over \$700 to the cause.

"I'm lucky enough to continue being employed through this tough time. It's kind of my way of trying to help give back," Turner said in an interview.

Whitmell-Brown said using her store as a platform to help charitable causes is essential to who she is.

She has donation jars on the counter of the store for several different charities, including Red Roof. By the end of the year she said she can usually donate \$600 to the charity from the jar alone.

She said she raised \$3,000 for region food banks last year and had a hard time filling her shopping cart.

"I called them and said I had 750 pounds of food sitting in my living room and they came and got it. Then I donated 400 pounds to a church," Whitmell-Brown said.

She said she loves the tight-knit community of NOTL and believes that spirit has made local charities successful.

"It's because it's a small town. You can't do this in a city, the city's a whole different place. There's no city Facebook page on which you can do this."

T-shirts are still available at Italian Pizza and Subs, the Virgil Avondale or through contacting Cowan and Turner on Facebook.

Growing Together The colourful world of gorgeous hydrangeas



Joanne Young
Special to The Lake Report

At this time of year, you cannot walk or drive too far down any street without noticing a gorgeous display of hydrangeas. This is especially true in Niagara.

Although hydrangeas find their origins in Japan, the name itself leads back as far as 1739. A botanist by the name of Grovonius thought that the shape reminded him of an ancient water pitcher. In Latin, the name comes from a combination of two words "hydro" meaning water and "angeion" meaning pitcher or vessel.

Over the last few years, the world of hydrangeas has grown considerably. There are so many new series and varieties that are available for sale at the garden centres.

So why have they become so popular? There are several reasons. The first is, of course, the captivating displays of large, colourful panicles or globe-like clusters of beautiful flowers. There are no other shrubs that give you such large flower heads; they just demand your attention in the landscape. Hydrangeas come in shades of greenish/cream to white to light pink and purple/blues.

A second reason is their large, coarse, dark green leaves. The foliage alone will make your gardens lush looking. Thirdly, hydrangeas are one of the longest blooming of any of the flowering shrubs. Some varieties, especially the repeat blooming ones, will start to bloom in mid-June and will continue to flower well into September and even into October.

A fourth reason for their popularity is that they work well with different styles of gardens. Whether your style is formal English,



Annabelle hydrangea. JOANNE YOUNG PHOTO

contemporary, traditional or cottage, hydrangeas can fit your theme.

Lastly, if given the right growing conditions, they are also an easy-care shrub. Most hydrangeas prefer a site with light shade and evenly moist soil. Ideally, they do best with four to five hours of morning sun and afternoon shade. They can, though, tolerate a full sun location, but will require frequent watering, sometimes daily in the heat of the summer.

There are too many varieties available to list, but here is an overview of a couple of different species (families) of hydrangeas.

Hydrangea paniculata "Grandiflora," commonly called PG hydrangeas or panicle hydrangeas, are the ones that you see with the large, creamy white, cone-like clusters of flowers. All the different varieties of PG hydrangeas begin creamy white and as the flowers mature, they all turn to different shades of pink. Some varieties of PG hydrangeas can grow to be six or eight feet high and wide while other varieties will only grow to half that height. Some notable varieties are: Lime Light, Vanilla Strawberry, Quick Fire, Little Lime and Bobo.

Hydrangea macrophylla or Mophead Hydrangeas are your typical pink or blue (and some white) ball-like clusters of flowers. Most of the varieties of H. macrophylla will grow from about

1.5 feet to four feet tall. To keep the blue hydrangeas blue, you will need to keep the soil acidic. This can be done different ways such as using aluminum sulphate or mulching with pine needles or shredded oak leaves.

Some varieties of note are: the Endless Summer series (repeat blooming), the Cityline series and the Let's Dance series (long blooming).

Hydrangea arborescens are the plants that we commonly call snowball hydrangeas or Annabelle hydrangeas. They sport masses of large balls of white flowers that age to an apple green colour. Some newer varieties of Annabells worth looking at are: Incrediball, Invincibelle, Invincibelle Wee White and Invincibelle Limetta.

The first two grow up to five feet high and wide while the others will go to about three feet.

Hydrangea quercifolia or oakleaf hydrangeas are not as well known but are equally showy. They have large, leathery, oak-shaped leaves. The flower is similar to that of the PG hydrangeas, emerging a greenish, creamy colour, opening to a white panicle and fading to a rose pink in colour.

So, if your summer garden is needing some new life, hydrangeas may just be what you are looking for.

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



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