



Living wage proposal a divisive issue for council

Evan Saunders
Local Journalism Initiative
The Lake Report

The idea of even considering implementing a living wage of \$18.90 for municipal employees proved divisive for Niagara-on-the-Lake councillors, though a plan to look into the proposal narrowly passed.

A motion presented last week by Coun. Norm Arseneault sought to have the town look into committing to pay all of its employees a living wage as calculated by the Ontario Living Wage Network. It's

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Devon Botbyl in the spotlight for Candlelight Stroll

Evan Saunders
Local Journalism Initiative
The Lake Report

Devon Botbyl is the kind of role model that Niagara-on-the-Lake deserves.

At his Virgil home on Monday, Devon was outside with his father Scott shooting pucks on the hockey net.

"Of course I'm looking forward to the Candlelight Stroll," Devon exclaimed when the topic was brought up.

Devon is no slouch with a stick and puck. Of the 30 or

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GROWING PAINS

Short-term rentals prompt global concerns



The short-term rental crisis is a global problem affecting towns and cities everywhere, including Ontario's northern cottage communities, cities like Toronto and tourism destinations like Barcelona, Venice and Niagara-on-the-Lake. PHOTO ILLUSTRATION BY RICHARD HARLEY

This is the first in a series of in-depth stories about how tourism is changing worldwide and how some destinations are dealing with concerns about overtourism, unprecedented growth in short-term rentals, skyrocketing housing prices and, ultimately, how these factors can affect communities.

Evan Saunders
Local Journalism Initiative
The Lake Report

The proliferation of short-term rentals is not a phenomenon limited to Niagara-on-the-Lake, but is a worldwide issue sparking debate and action in places as diverse as Venice, Barcelona and Ontario's cottage country.

"Venice, in order to survive, must preserve a residential urban identity that is not linked only to mass tourism, which wears it out, consumes and progressively empties its vital soul. You have to aim for tourism of quality, attentive and respectful of a city's fragility, as well as accompanied by a

dimension of balanced and sustainable economy."

So bookends the decalogo, or "Ten Commandments," a document jointly published by the Italian cities of Venice and Florence. The decalogo was released this year as a plea to Italy's federal government to help the cities combat

the explosive growth of the short-term rental industry in the last decade.

Large cities like Barcelona, Paris, Venice, New York and Toronto, as well as small Ontario municipalities like Seguin, Oro-Medonte, Fort Erie and Lincoln are dealing with the rise of the short-term rental industry and what Venetian officials

referred to as the emptying of their "vital souls."

Municipalities like Seguin, Oro-Medonte, and even Wasaga have implemented a total ban on short-term rentals operating on residential properties, insisting they be deemed commercial businesses and

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Lake Report brings back popular special visitors guide for winter

Richard Harley
The Lake Report

Winter is almost here and with it comes another special visitors guide published by The Lake Report.

The 64-page glossy magazine, "NOTL: A Guide for Distinguished Explorers," will hit the streets on Friday, in time for the Candlelight Stroll. It will be available at Niagara-on-the-Lake businesses, shops, hotels, B&B and other attractions.

Pick up a souvenir copy around town or view it online at lakereport.ca, the website where we archive

all our published editions.

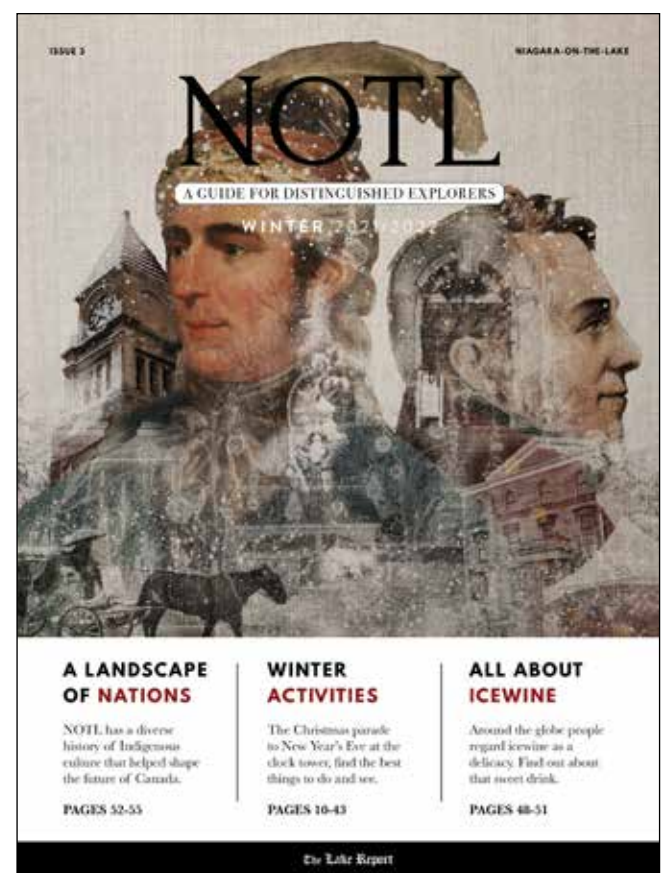
This year's issue of features loads of things to do in NOTL this winter, while promoting local businesses and attractions.

The magazine also includes a front page and feature section highlighting the Landscape of Nations memorial at Queenston Heights.

The front page, created by designer Luke Archibald, depicts Maj. John Norton, a Mohawk chief who was integral to the British victory in the Battle of Queenston Heights, alongside Maj.-Gen. Sir Isaac Brock.

The contributions of Indigenous allies like Norton and his warriors have until the last few years gone unrecognized for the crucial role they played in the War of 1812 — a war that if not won, might have meant Canada would not be the country it is today. As a tribute to our Indigenous allies, we wanted to highlight Norton and the Landscape of Nations memorial that recognizes the importance of the roles of those allies, as well as the importance of Truth and Reconciliation with our Indigenous neighbours.

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Tourism destinations worldwide coping with growth in rentals

Continued from Front Page

acquire the appropriate zoning.

More municipalities, such as Prince Edward County, have implemented a municipal accommodations tax, which Niagara-on-the-Lake passed at the end of August.

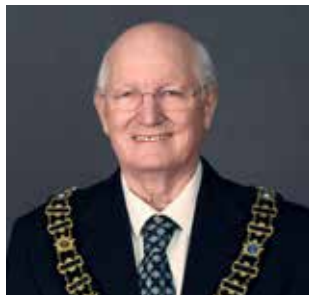
Unlike NOTL, many municipalities charge the tax on all types of short-term accommodations, whereas the plan passed by NOTL council gives a pass to any rental operator who has fewer than five rooms available. That means only 12 of the town's 255 legal, licensed short-term rentals will have to collect the tax.

A 2019 analysis by the independent Economic Policy Institute in the United States argues the cost of the expansion of short-term rentals and Airbnbs outweighs the benefits for local jurisdictions and long-term residents.

Among the Institute's findings is that short-term rentals, by gobbling up possible properties for long-term renters or owners, raise the cost of housing for potential long-term residents.

The study quotes research done by economists Keren Horn and Mark Merante in Boston which determined that for every 12 new Airbnb units in a census tract, rental costs rose by 0.4 per cent. Another study found that a 10 per cent increase in Airbnb listings resulted in a 0.76 per cent increase in housing prices. A quick count on Airbnb this fall found roughly 150 rentals advertised just in Old Town, north of the community centre. Based on the research by Horn and Merrante, just those 150 Airbnbs could equal a 5 per cent increase in long-term rental costs for prospective NOTL residents due to a lack of available housing.

Another study from 2017, "The Effect of Home-Sharing on House Prices and Rents," by economists Kyle Barron, Edward Kung and David Prosperio, found an annual increase of \$1,800 in housing prices caused by short-term rentals, accounting for one-seventh of actual price growth per year.



Top left: This home at 54 Platoff St. is one of four short-term rentals listed on Airbnb that occupy every corner of the intersection of Davy and Platoff streets. Top right: The Davy House is a short-term rental on Davy Street that was recently the subject of a ban for operating without a licence. Bottom row: Simone Venturini, Venice city councillor, Oro-Medonte mayor Harry Hughes and Seguin mayor Ann MacDiarmid. SUPPLIED

The Economic Policy Institute's analysis disputes the notion that increased housing prices are worth it because of the decreased cost short-term rentals offer in an area – which could be argued will draw more tourists.

This was a point made by members of NOTL's tourism industry when council approved the municipal accommodations tax.

Short-term rental accommodations accounted for roughly 1 per cent of a family's yearly budget in 2016, whereas housing averaged 15.8 per cent, according to the study.

"Housing costs eat up far more of the average household's budget and rising housing prices mean that long-term housing has grown more as a share of family budgets than short-term travel accommodations," writes Josh Bivens, the institute's director of research.

"This seems like a bad trade-off. This rising cost of housing has become a major economic stress for many American households. Anything that threatens to exacerbate this stress should face close scrutiny."

Compounding this are the results of a survey conducted with 800 Airbnb users. The survey found that

only two per cent of travelers would not have gone on their trip if they had to use more traditional forms of accommodation, according to the institute.

These rising housing costs in historic centres, such as NOTL, could drive away potential long-term homeowners – like young families – vital to the long-term health of a municipality.

It's a problem Venice knows all too well.

"The economic exploitation of real estate for tourism purposes helps to keep residents away from the Ancient City and is a phenomenon that must absolutely be contained," said Simone Venturini, a Venice city councillor and deputy mayor for tourism.

Venice has published calls for social housing accommodations in its historic centre to draw young families. The city has also begun giving grants to young residents to move to the city centre and open up a local shop, "thus guaranteeing services that go beyond the tourism industry," Venturini said in an email to The Lake Report.

Closer to home, in Oro-Medonte, just north of Barrie, councillors voted to ban short-term rentals on residential properties last year.

don't go anywhere else in the municipality to buy things, they don't pay any rent — they don't do anything. They're just there."

Hughes said backlash regarding the municipality's decision has been mostly limited to online complaining. "We've had more of a situation where people on social media are trying to use this as an alternative to discredit (what we are doing)," he said.

Hughes said a unique combination of factors has helped the municipality reduce the problem of late.

One of those was skyrocketing property values due to COVID.

Since the rental bylaw is now in effect, anybody who buys a residential property in the municipality cannot operate a short-term rental. Thanks to rising property values, people who had bought properties for the sole purpose of running them as commercial businesses saw they could make even more by reselling the properties to actual long-term residents, Hughes said.

But that reselling would not have happened if not for the ban on short-term rentals on residential properties.

Seguin Township, south of Parry Sound, also has a long-standing ban on short-term rentals on residential properties because it classifies them as commercial activities. The bylaw has been in effect for decades but the town never had any issues with rentals until recently.

Short-term rental accommodations "are commercial. There is no question about that," Mayor Ann MacDiarmid said.

MacDiarmid took issue with arguments that the current state of rentals is no different than it was two decades ago and that municipalities are overreacting.

"Proponents will say putting (a property) on Airbnb is the same as 20 years ago when you would put a piece of paper on the bulletin board at the general store," she said.

"That piece of paper didn't have international reach."

MacDiarmid said short-term rentals on residential

properties were unfair to enterprises such as hotels and resorts.

"It's not fair to the people who are zoned commercial, who do pay commercial taxes and have the septic and everything else in place to be a commercial enterprise," she said.

"Whatever we do to regulate has to be on a cost-recovery basis because we don't want the non-renting taxpayer paying for the regulation of the rental industry."

MacDiarmid said the exorbitant prices some short-term rentals charge while avoiding commercial taxes hurts the municipality.

"There are cottages on Lake Rousseau and Joseph that rent for \$20,000 to \$30,000 a week. A couple of \$100 fines mean nothing to them," she said.

"There's somewhere in the middle that there's some money for the township to regulate them."

And that could be in a number of ways, from having the rentals pay commercial taxes, using a municipal accommodation tax or implementing a licensing regime. NOTL has already approved the municipal accommodations tax and has a licensing system.

But licences do nothing to combat some of the other issues that arise from short-term rentals, such as the potential hollowing out of neighbourhoods and communities, a topic that will be explored in the next series.

Regarding higher property prices, MacDiarmid said Seguin had seen a negative yet different result from the increase in short-term rentals than other places have.

On some of the smaller lakes in the area, more than 50 per cent of properties are being used as short-term rentals and that has led to a drop in neighbouring property values.

"Nobody wants (those properties). A lot of the realtors won't even touch them," she said.

"I can tell you that people on some of those smaller lakes are really hurting."

Next: The argument over the hollowing out of communities and economic fallout concerns.

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Top: Sebastian Rezza gets his first dose of the Pfizer-BioNTech vaccine on Tuesday. His sister Vanessa (left) got hers right after while their dad Lucas waited patiently. Bottom: Ella, Micah and Sienna deSouza show off their bandages while waiting 15 minutes after their shots. RICHARD HARLEY PHOTOS

Kids get vaccines at Simpson's Apothecary

Evan Saunders
Local Journalism Initiative
The Lake Report

Children under 12 years old have no protection against COVID-19 and that's why getting them vaccinated first will better protect the entire population, Niagara-on-the-Lake pharmacist Sean Simpson says.

Booster shots for adults are important but Simpson noted the virus spreads easier in unvaccinated individuals, like children under 12.

If we get more kids vaccinated then we have a better net protection for all of society, Simpson said in an interview.

And the more vaccinations administered, the sooner we can return to some form of normalcy, he added.

As of Wednesday, Simpson's Pharmacy in Virgil had vaccinated 20 kids in the five to 11 age group since receiving the Pfizer-BioNTech vaccination for youth last week.

He noted that everyone has some anxiety about getting a needle in the arm, but for the most part the kids he's inoculated have been ready and willing.



Simpson said kids, especially in the younger age group, are well aware of what's been going on in the world and are anxious to do their part to help protect their communities and their loved ones – like Grandma and Grandpa.

But it's been a fine balancing act over at the pharmacy. Simpson's is also distributing COVID booster shots, COVID child shots and flu shots.

He said it's been difficult ensuring the process remains efficient and no vaccines are wasted.

That is why the pharmacy has limited itself to 10 shots

for kids per day. Each Pfizer vial contains 10 doses and Simpson doesn't want to overbook and have to open a new vial just to vaccinate one child, potentially wasting the other nine doses.

But, he said if there are groups of 10 who would like to get the vaccine together they should call the pharmacy and he'll help organize it.

Not only is getting our unvaccinated young population the best way to protect the rest of us and return to normalcy, it's extremely safe, Simpson said.

There have been hundreds of millions, if not billions, of vaccines administered

worldwide and there have been few side effects, he said.

And people who are vaccinated and who do get COVID have milder symptoms and an extremely rare chance of being hospitalized.

Simpson also encouraged people not to be picky about which mRNA vaccine they get for their booster shots.

He said there is evidence that suggests getting a mixture of Pfizer and Moderna actually offers better protection from COVID than sticking to one and that there is no risk involved when mixing the vaccines.

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Chautauqua parking debate causes councillor confrontation

Evan Saunders
Local Journalism Initiative
The Lake Report

A suggestion to reduce the number of months that parking is restricted in the Chautauqua neighbourhood led to some heated moments between councillors at last week's Niagara-on-the-Lake council meeting.

Coun. Clare Cameron presented a motion that aimed to remove parking bans on certain streets in Chautauqua between October and April so that residents could have an easier time parking during the quieter, snowy months and the holidays.

Residents reached out to her to express their dismay at the idea, she said.

"We've received some very valuable feedback and I need to apologize if this motion and attempt to bring something forward into public debate has caused undue concern for the Chautauqua Residents Association in particular," Cameron said.

"I completely acknowledge their extraordinarily strong feelings and very impressive vocabularies related to this topic," she said.

Earlier this year, coun-



Signs were installed throughout Chautauqua earlier this year prohibiting parking along certain stretches of the neighbourhood's laneways. FILE/RICHARD HARLEY

cil implemented parking restrictions on most streets in Chautauqua in response to residents' concerns that the narrow laneways were being overburdened by out-of-neighbourhood traffic, prompting safety worries and making access difficult for locals.

Fines in the area can be \$150 or more.

Cameron said she had

recently spoken with a small group of residents of Chautauqua who were not active members of the association and had concerns about the parking rules being too restrictive during the tourist off-season.

She redacted the crux of her motion and changed it during the meeting so that, in future reports, instead of removing the parking

restrictions town staff could consider "prohibiting parking on applicable streets during May 15 to Nov 15 only, or another period."

The updated motion also directed staff to get public comments on the topic.

Cameron later said, "I think there may be some reluctance right now for people to come forward because they're afraid to express an opinion that doesn't go along with the what the majority believes to be the case for everybody."

Cameron also apologized for causing a "crisis."

But the conversation didn't stop there.

Coun. Norm Arsenault asked chief administrator Marnie Cluckie whether there had been any movement on a request of his for town staff to look at the implementation of parking permits across town.

Cameron jumped in, after previously noting residents told her they were concerned about the possibility of paid parking permits in Chautauqua, and wanted Arsenault to clarify that this was not a "tax grab" but an idea for free visitors passes.

Arsenault responded the passes could be free or carry a fee.

During council meetings, councillors are not supposed to speak out of turn. Cameron's interjection elicited a caution from Lord Mayor Betty Disero, who said, "I realize it's late, and we may be getting a little silly, but you know we're not supposed to (talk out of turn)."

A few minutes later, Coun. Wendy Cheropita asked that the motion include a line about consulting with the Friends of Ryerson Park and the Chautauqua Residents Association.

Disero and Cameron disagreed with the addition, saying the two groups would be consulted along with the public.

This prompted Coun. Gary Burroughs and Cameron to speak out of turn.

"Councillor Burroughs, Councillor Cameron, wait," Disero said.

"We need to act like adults and follow the rules. You can't just be blurting out comments and then covering your mouth, 'Oh, I'm sorry,' because that's a smart-aleck move that's not necessary."

"Thank you Lord Mayor for that reprimand. It's over and above what was required for that," Burroughs responded.

"You know, councillor Burroughs, all evening you've been at me, making comments and saying 'do this, do that.' So, I'd just like you to stop," Disero said.

"Well, since we're in this debate, I have written down every single item that I said tonight and I don't recall ever being critical of you. But anyway, I'll take that as advice," Burroughs said.

After this brief tangent, Cluckie assured Cheropita that both community groups would be consulted.

Coun. Allan Bisback had the last word and questioned the need for a heated argument on the topic.

"There's no action being taken here other than asking staff to make these considerations in a future report. So, I think the tempers need to come down a little bit on this one."

Arsenault and Cheropita voted against the motion while Disero, Cameron, Bisback, Burroughs and O'Connor were in favour.

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Gates chosen again to defend provincial seat

Staff
The Lake Report

Incumbent Wayne Gates has been chosen by the New Democrats to run for re-election as MPP for Niagara-on-the-Lake, Fort Erie and Niagara Falls.

First elected in a 2014 by-election, he won two more elections, including a record-breaking win in 2018 when he scored the highest percentage of support (50.7 per cent) of any candidate ever in Niagara Falls riding.

That win also drew record support from Niagara-on-the-Lake, surpassing almost every New Democrat who had ever run before him.

Gates said the nomination meeting, held Thursday, Nov. 25, was particularly special because he was nominated by Burd Sisler, a 106-year-old, Second World War veteran from Fort Erie.

"We want to see if Wayne Gates can keep working like he's working. He's really pushing that Doug Ford fellow. I hope he keeps at it," said Sisler, who was born in



MPP Wayne Gates.

1915.

"I like Wayne because he's dedicated to his job. I think if Wayne promises you something, you're gonna get it."

In his nomination speech, Gates emphasized his connection to the communities that make up NOTL.

"I think Niagara-on-the-Lake is a community that wants their voice to be someone who understands their local concerns – who brings those concerns to Queen's Park, and doesn't just repeat whatever the

party line is while never actually spending time in the community," he said.

"This is a lesson I learned first-hand when we worked with the community to try and stop the Liberals from closing Parliament Oak (school) and it's a lesson I haven't forgotten," said Gates.

Gates said a big reason he's running is because of the difference between him and his opponents on natural and cultural heritage issues.

"Three times we saw this government try to rip up the Greenbelt and three times it was this community that said no. I don't believe we should be paving over our environmentally sensitive lands or destroying our cultural heritage for a quick payout. These wonderful pieces of our town must be protected for future generations," said Gates.

"This community is a wonderful place but it's changing quickly and if we don't tell the province we have something special here that requires a local approach

then we could lose it and I refuse to let that happen."

Gates also said his local plan would focus on seniors issues.

"It's no secret our community has a high percentage of seniors and they should be given the respect they've earned. That means having health care made more available to them, being supported to stay in their homes and when they need to move, knowing there's safe and respectable long-term care for them."

NDP leader Andrea Horwath attended the nomination meeting along with a wide array of people from across the riding which represents the three communities along the Niagara River.

Niagara Falls Regional Coun. Bob Gale is running for the Progressive Conservatives and the Liberals will hold a nomination meeting on Dec. 11.

The election is scheduled for June 2, with the campaign period expected to stretch over the month of May.

NOTL Gives Back donation drive returns Dec. 10

Staff
The Lake Report

You best get to loading your non-perishable food and gently used clothing items into your car because Niagara-on-the-Lake is giving back.

The town is once again hosting its NOTL Gives Back program to collect

donations to be distributed across the region through Newark Neighbours, Community Care and the Mobile Closet.

"I am so excited for the return of this wonderful event that benefits so many in our community," Lord Mayor Betty Disero said in a news release.

"I encourage everyone

to consider making a donation, no matter how big or small. These items make all the difference for individuals and families in need."

Items can be donated in a drive-thru format at Newark Neighbours on John Street on Dec. 10, between 11 a.m. and 1 p.m. Anyone who is unable

to donate during that time can bring items in advance to the NOTL Community Centre on Anderson Lane. Donation bins are already set up outside.

Requested items include non-perishable food, new and gently used clothing, warm winter coats, scarves, mittens, or toys, the news release said.

Winter magazine highlights importance of reconciliation

Continued from Front Page

And, of course, we're excited for the winter season, too.

Some people see the winter as cold, wet and dark. But if you look around, it's not hard to lift the veil. We see the brightness of Christmas lights. We feel the warmth of holiday spirits.

We sit back and enjoy a dry cider or glass of wine, and we know — there's no better time to let all of your worries fall into the back-

ground, to put your feet up in front of a hot fireplace and sip a mug of warm cocoa; or to cuddle up in a blanket with a loved one.

With this special Winter Edition, we welcome visitors to our town to experience what we're so fortunate to take for granted. This is our home.

But it's not just ours and we're happy to show it off, because Niagara-on-the-Lake is simply one of the finest places on the planet to immerse yourself in the winter season.



The 2019 front page by Luke Archibald depicted Niagara-on-the-Lake in the centre of a snow globe. FILE

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

COVID Tracker

NOTL active cases: 14

Region active cases: 190

Region deaths: 440

Region total cases: 18,895

Region resolved cases: 18,265

**Dec. 1 data per Niagara Region Public Health*



Contributed by Patty Garriock

“Life seems to go on without effort, when I am filled with music.”

- George Eliot.

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The gazebo at Queen’s Royal Park, photographed Sunday, just after the first snow of the season. DAVE VAN DE LAAR

Editorial

Make patio program permanent

Kevin MacLean
Managing Editor

With last weekend’s first snowfall, it seems that patio season is definitely over in Niagara-on-the-Lake.

But just five more months and we’ll be back in the swing, able to dine or enjoy a beverage al fresco again.

It was encouraging to see NOTL council unanimously vote last month to extend its special patio program – which expedited approvals and even allowed a few patios to be extended into the street in front of some NOTL restaurants.

Having the assurance that red tape will be curbed

and patios will again be welcomed in unconventional spaces in 2022, was encouraging for NOTL restaurants that have been fighting for survival through nearly two years of this global pandemic.

We have enjoyed breakfast on the streetside patio at the Sunset Grill in Old Town, lunch in the expansive beer garden behind the Old Angel Inn, a pint on the asphalt at the Irish Harp and a beer in the rain under an umbrella at Silversmith.

The beer garden at Butler’s, the patio under the “tent” at the Sand Trap and the large outdoor space at Ruffino’s are just some of

the many establishments around town that have innovated and brought a new look and different ambiance to the dining experience.

Kudos to these operators for pivoting during COVID and to the town for helping them make it all a reality.

The patios have been a valuable addition to our town, for visitors and locals alike.

Lord Mayor Betty Disero summed it up well when she spoke about the positive change patios have brought to the town, particularly Queen Street.

“They bring more busyness and a sense of people wanting to be down on

Queen just to sit and watch people walk by,” she said.

And she is right. They bring a new vibe and liveliness to staid Niagara-on-the-Lake. And that should be welcome.

But the town’s work is not done. We urge council to make this change permanent, a positive legacy of COVID. And to find a way to make it work, even to allow a few downtown patios to extend onto the street as they have for the past two summers.

Yes, it’s a big change. But a good change and one we need to find a way to make permanent.

editor@niagaranow.com



NOTL inclusivity committee shares diversity award

Dear editor:

I’d like to say that I am extremely honoured to have received the Lord Mayor’s Volunteer Award for diversity, equity and inclusion, a sentiment that unfortunately did not come through in the article “NOTL volunteers

honoured by town,” (The Lake Report, Nov. 25).

I’m embarrassed to be singled out, as I’m only one part of the inclusivity committee, a whole group of dedicated and inspiring individuals I’m fortunate to work alongside: Jamie

Knight, Kiera Sangster, Richard Mell, George Webber, Bex McKnight, Sandra Gruosso and John Wiens.

I gratefully and wholeheartedly share the award with each of them.

I am thankful to Lord

Mayor Betty Disero and council not only for this honour, but also for creating a committee dedicated to inclusivity and for giving me an opportunity to be part of it.

Niki Walker
NOTL

HEY NOTL! WHAT DO YOU WANT FOR DINNER?

← Italian Pizza Pasta or Spanish Tapas →

NAPLES-ON-THE-LAKE OR CATALONIA-ON-THE-LAKE





NOTL Thunderhawks lacrosse club forced to fold

Dear editor:

In 1969 the Niagara Warriors lacrosse club started playing in the Ontario Junior B lacrosse league.

Historic Warriors lacrosse names such as Conradi, Ignatczyk, Engemann, Hope, Skubel, McCready (coach), Bissell, Henry and French, to name only a few, led the Warriors in 1973 and 1981 to two Canadian championships for Junior B lacrosse, The Founders' Cup.

In 1984, due to reduced player population the Warriors were turned over to the St. Catharines Spartans lacrosse club to be rebranded the Niagara Spartan Warriors and playing out of the Centennial Arena in Niagara-on-the-Lake. The Spartans moved back to St. Catharines and won a Founders' Cup in 1996, leaving no Jr. B team in NOTL until 2003.

It was at this time that Mike Jones and numerous other volunteers brought lacrosse back to NOTL and rebranded it as the NOTL Thunderhawks. The team was made up of players from the NOTL minor lacrosse system, including



players from both NOTL and Tuscarora Reservation, located 10 minutes from Queenston-Lewiston Bridge in New York State.

The Thunderhawks weren't immediately competitive but did develop a culture of respect for the game, their opponents and especially their teammates. Their persistence, unfortunately, didn't lead to any Founders' Cups, but it did develop players who were recognized by teams at the Jr. A and professional levels as future stars.

The new core of Thunderhawks, like Devin Sartor, Corey Fowler and Bryan Neufeld moved to the professional level in the CLAX (Canadian Lacrosse League) while their teammate Jay Thorimbert moved on to the NLL (National Lacrosse League), achieving success as a prominent faceoff specialist till this day.

More recently we saw the Wagner brothers (Ryan and John) achieving success while in the recent NLL drafts, Chris Weier (2020-Toronto), Hunter Lemieux (2021-Philadelphia) and Aidan Buis (2021-San Diego) all achieve a lifelong goal of playing in the NLL.

The years of success couldn't hold back the hands of time. The Thunderhawks executive recognized, after the 2018 season that NOTL's growth in the demographic of lacrosse players had reduced and the number of kids graduating to Jr. B was limited.

Knowing this scenario, a one-time leave of absence from the league was requested to hopefully build the numbers during the 2019 season. However, limited players and the two-year COVID-19 shutdown of sports eliminated the opportunity for players to participate, causing a detrimental effect on all aspects of the Jr. B Thunderhawks.

During COVID, most of the members of the team executives have stepped down, core players are too old to

play junior, players lost developmental years for their opportunities to move to Jr. A, minor players lost exposure to Jr. B and a general movement to opportunities outside of lacrosse due to the lockdowns has brought the team to a unfortunate situation.

Sadly, after several pushes to promote and bolster a roster, the number and commitment of players is just not enough to run a team in NOTL.

Opportunity for players who wish to continue is still available if they travel to St. Catharines, but the family-like atmosphere, the opportunity to play with their school friends and teammates throughout minor lacrosse, and, finally, being part of a local legacy has been lost.

We would like to thank all the sponsors, fans, volunteers, parents and especially players for the years of experiences and memories that helped build a community and connection among lacrosse enthusiasts which will last a lifetime.

Andy Boldt
NOTL

Argument for Old Town rainbow crosswalk is flawed

Dear editor:

As a taxpayer and resident of Niagara-on-the-Lake, I would like to comment on a controversial issue that has been a subject of local discussion for some time.

This is the suggested installation of a permanent rainbow crosswalk on public property, made without public approval, in NOTL's heritage district.

This has been advocated by a representative of OUTniagara and it is argued that a permanent crosswalk is necessary in NOTL to promote a more positive society and to increase economic prosperity through greater LGBTQ tourism. No thought appears to have been given to gauge local majority opinion.

Setting aside all of the unproven and arguable claims made by OUTniagara in support of the case, the argument is reduced to just two basic issues.

1. Taken as a first step, with others yet to follow, it

is suggested that in order to be progressive, a permanent and highly visible rainbow crosswalk should be painted on public property, without public approval or acceptance, so as to be seen as a public endorsement and celebration of a minority lifestyle, and that it is necessary to increase prosperity through LGBTQ tourism.

Without the benefit of any reliable survey of public opinion, this is a simple case of arrogance and may not be acceptable to the majority of residents. It is also quite a different issue from common acceptance of the lifestyle which already exists.

2. It is also claimed that there are material benefits to branding NOTL as a community that endorses the LGBTQ lifestyle and this is used to support the argument.

These alleged benefits do not appear to be based on any credible or recognized local economic analysis that I see as being necessary in

what is a unique and historical location and destination.

Again, this may not be the opinion of the majority of residents, most of whom are residents of NOTL for reasons other than the possible economic benefits of increased LGBTQ tourism and are probably not interested in the U.S. surveys or studies that are referred to.

In my opinion, unless it can be shown otherwise, NOTL is just as welcoming and inclusive a community as any other, without the additional need for symbols and this is another attempt to have NOTL endorse and embrace a lifestyle that the majority of residents, while accepting of the reality, are not necessarily willing to endorse.

This is not an assault on the lifestyle of the LGBTQ community but it is a criticism of the dishonesty that seems to me to be inherent in a minority argument that ignores the importance of majority opinion.

It is a simple matter of principle and is the basis of my argument, that the acceptance or otherwise of a permanent crosswalk on public property should be determined only by the majority of taxpaying residents.

Derek Collins
NOTL

Editor's Note: As articulated in previous editorials, this view does not represent the views of *The Lake Report* or its staff. We see a rainbow crosswalk as a simple, affordable way to show appreciation and inclusion to NOTL's LGBTQ+ community. Mr. Collins uses a lack of reliable data to support his argument, but also suggests the push for a crosswalk is a minority point of view. There is no data to suggest the crosswalk idea is a minority opinion. As for intolerance in NOTL, some could construe these arguments as evidence of such attitudes.

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NOTL covered in soft blanket of snow

Riverbend Winery sits under a blanket of freshly fallen snow on Sunday morning. DAVE VAN DE LAAR PHOTO

Holiday season **comes to life** as December kicks off



Left: Santa Claus spotted hanging out near Just Christmas on Queen Street on Sunday. The Big Man had a message for all little boys and girls who made the nice list this year: "Be in bed nice and early on Christmas Eve, four o'clock in the afternoon is not too early. Ho ho ho!" Right: The McArthur Estate is lit up for the Christmas season. It will be part of the sold-out holiday house tour on Friday and Saturday. RICHARD HARLEY PHOTOS

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Icewine Festival slated to return **Jan. 21**

Evan Saunders
Local Journalism Initiative
The Lake Report



NOTL's popular icewine festival returns Jan. 21. FILE

Niagara-on-the-Lake's Icewine Festival will make its triumphant return on Jan. 21, 2022.

Like so many popular winter activities, the Icewine Festival was cancelled in 2021 due to COVID-19.

But thanks to NOTL's Chamber of Commerce, which also resurrected this Friday's Candlelight Stroll, the festival will be returning for two weekends at the end of January.

So get the new year started off right by attending the Sparkle and Ice gala in the old Court House on Queen Street. The event kicks off the Icewine Festival on Friday, Jan. 21 at 7 p.m.

It will be in the Grand Hall in the Court House and will feature local icewine makers serving up their favourite VQA wines with well-paired dishes created by some of NOTL's master chefs.

Tickets can be purchased through the Chamber of Commerce for \$95. A maximum of 170 tickets will be sold.

On Saturday, Jan. 22, prepare for the first day of the Icewine Village on Queen Street. The roadway will be transformed into a winter wonderland featuring NOTL wineries and food from Signature Kitchens and other restaurants around town.

Queen Street will be adorned with tents, ice sculptures and wineries showcasing Canada's finest icewines. The village operates for the whole weekend, starting at 11 a.m. on Saturday and noon on Sunday. It will operate during the same hours on Jan. 29 and 30.

ID and proof of vaccination will be required to enter the Icewine Village.

This year restaurants in addition to those from the Signature Kitchen group will be participating in the festival.

"We're going to have more local restaurants participating this year. That, I think, is a good thing and something that we have been pushing for," chamber president Eduardo Lafforgue said.

At 8 p.m. on Jan. 23, the Icewine Cocktail Competition will be held in the village. This event offers winemakers the chance to present their most inspired icewine cocktails for the

enjoyment of attendees and the judgment of panellists.

On Friday, Jan. 28, the progressive dinner returns. For \$150, you can attend a reception in the Grand Hall of the Court House with appetizers before travelling in small groups to some of the best restaurants around NOTL.

Tickets can be purchased through the Chamber of Commerce and are limited to 120.

The progressive dinner will be a marvel of organization. Shuttles will take participants to a different restaurant in town for each course of their meal.

"All groups will have different culinary experiences. We will have the fish course in one place, the meat course in another place," Lafforgue said.

"It is a wonderful night." After dinner, everyone gathers in the Icewine Village for a specially made dessert and the chance to clink their glasses together and raise a toast. There also will be fireworks.

More information on the festival can be found at www.niagaraonthelake.com.



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At left, a plan by SORE for part of the Rand Estate includes 71 homes. At right, the latest plan from Solmar for the site. It includes 191 homes. SUPPLIED

SORE designs **housing plan** for Rand Estate

Group's proposal includes 71 homes and preserves heritage features on historic property

Kevin MacLean
The Lake Report

There's a new proposal for a subdivision on part of the historic Rand Estate, but it's not from the developer Solmar (Niagara 2) Inc.

Save Our Rand Estate, the grassroots Niagara-on-the-Lake group known as SORE, has come up with a plan that has only about one-third the number of homes proposed by developer Benny Marotta's company.

Using the same footprint as Solmar's latest proposal for 191 homes, planners hired by SORE designed a plan with 71 homes,

The SORE proposal has 20 townhouses on 30-foot lots, 37 single-family homes on 50- and 60-foot lots, and another 14 on larger, irregular-shaped properties, said Lyle Hall, a spokesperson for the

group.

The SORE plan is for the subdivision on the properties known as 200 John St. E. and 588 Charlotte St. It does not include the land near the northern portion of the estate, on which a hotel was previously proposed.

Hall noted that SORE supports the much-earlier Trisha Romance hotel proposal on that site, not the large, multi-storey hotel Solmar suggested.

SORE is often accused of being against any development of the Rand property and Hall said one goal of coming up with the new subdivision plan was to show that is not the case.

"Our focus was making sure that we put something out there so that we weren't perceived as being a no-development-at-all-cost group," he said in an interview.

"And I think if you'd

asked a number of us if we thought we'd be putting a plan on the table that had 70 lots on it two years ago, we would have all blanched, but I think we've all come to realize that communities evolve and we've tried to evolve along with the community," Hall said.

"I think we've tried to put something on the table that is reasonable."

Hall said his organization has not received any feedback from Solmar on its proposal.

"Far from being anti-development, as Mr. Marotta and his social media trolls have claimed for the past three-plus years, SORE has produced a credible, defensible subdivision plan that recognizes the many heritage assets on this site, is consistent with applicable planning policies and zoning, and that is compatible with the surrounding

neighbourhoods," Hall told The Lake Report.

In a detailed post on its website, SORE notes the Solmar plan calls for "191 densely packed residences and a re-engineering of the site's natural drainage. The result is a grade elevation of up to 10 feet, obliterating the heritage landscape on the site as well as much of the built cultural heritage landscape features of Randwood."

That grade change, which would have required "hundreds and hundreds" of loads of fill to be trucked in, and an expensive storm water system are not needed under SORE's plan, Hall said.

That change saves the developer a substantial amount, while reducing the number of homes on the site, he said.

SORE's experts designed a plan that the group says will ensure:

*All built heritage attributes on the site are saved.

*Most of the remaining designed cultural heritage landscape and mature trees are retained.

*Public pedestrian access to view the heritage attributes of Randwood is provided at 200 John St. E. and 588 Charlotte St.

*The "Whistle Stop" on the Upper Canada Heritage Trail, including the "memorial garden" that was a central feature of the designed landscape at Randwood, is "preserved and enhanced for public and resident enjoyment."

*Primary access to the site is provided using a historic access route between 144 and 176 John St.

Town councillors were sent copies of the SORE concept last month, Hall said.

He admitted he doesn't know what costs Solmar has incurred in its plans

for the property so far, but with land values escalating and housing prices increasing steadily, Hall said he hopes the developer could make SORE's plan work.

He noted he checked the realtor.ca website last week "and there were 37 properties for sale in Niagara-on-the-Lake, including five building lots, the cheapest of which was \$899,000."

"While it's not our job to run the numbers for Mr. Marotta's development projects, it seems pretty likely there's a profit to be made here somewhere."

He added Marotta is a "very experienced developer that knew full well when he bought this property that it was festooned with heritage assets and that it is severely access-constrained."

"It's not our job to maximize Mr. Marotta's profits," he said. "How much profit is enough?"

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Kristi Frank with the cast of Holiday Inn (2019).

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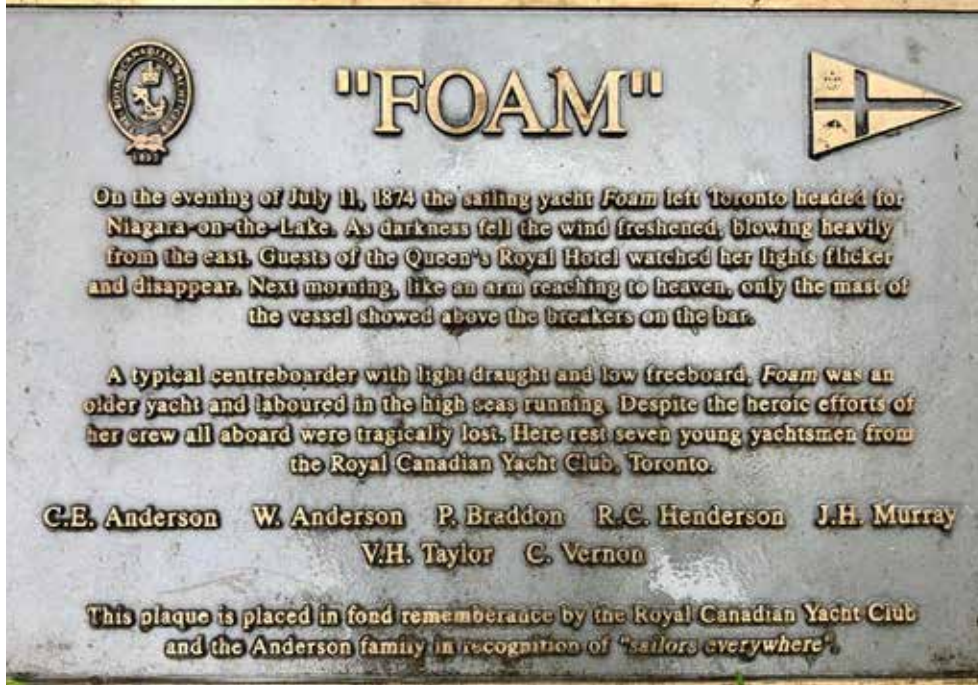


FEATURED

SINKING OF THE FOAM

NOTL author recounts haunting story of the loss of all aboard

Intrigued with the story of the sinking of the Foam, noted Niagara-on-the-Lake author Jean Baker researched and wrote a short vignette capturing the drama of the tragic events on that warm summer night, July 11, 1874, at the mouth of Niagara River and the controversy that surrounded the loss of seven lives. Here's the story Baker discovered. She published her tale in the St. Mark's church newsletter in July 2000 and later a St. Catharines community newspaper.



Left: When the original monument to the Foam became unreadable through erosion on the stone, the Royal Canadian Yacht Club, the home harbour for the Foam in 1874, and owner of the gravesite, added a bronze plaque. Right: A sloop similar to the Foam. SUPPLIED

Jean Baker
Special to The Lake Report

From a fine vantage point on the spacious veranda of the fashionable Queen's Royal Hotel, the Chittenden sisters, Elizabeth and Dee Dee, teenage daughters of a Southern plantation owner who had moved to Niagara-on-the-Lake after the American Civil War, awaited the arrival of suitable dance partners.

They were enjoying a panoramic view of Fort Niagara, directly across the Niagara River on the American shore, and observing guests making their way by steamer and carriage to the hotel, now in a flutter of preparations for the weekly Saturday night dance, a fitting finale on this warm evening of July 11, 1874.

The sisters' dance cards may have included a waltz with one of the young military officers from the

encampment on the Commons nearby, or possibly a vigorous Scottish schottische with a partner from the yacht "Foam," now heading into a freshening easterly wind as she sailed Lake Ontario from her mooring at the Royal Canadian Yacht Club in Toronto.

The Foam, formerly the John Powers, and described as a 30-foot centreboard sloop with low freeboard and long bowsprit, was owned by Robert Henderson and Charles Anderson. Her seven-man crew on that fateful night were all from prominent Toronto commercial and banking families.

Under darkening skies and failing light, heavy winds pounded the yacht as she approached the treacherous shoal, about three miles offshore where the strong current of the Niagara River merged with lake waters in a roiling maelstrom.

Sudden turbulence gripped the vessel, causing her to shudder on the bar as a rogue wave from the stern engulfed the cabin and cockpit, sinking the Foam, her four tons of iron ballast pulling her down to a watery grave.

From the hotel veranda, some of the dancers pausing for rest and refreshment reported having heard the bell of the warning buoy tolling eerily across the heaving waters. They casually remarked how chilly it was for an evening in mid-summer and were attracted by two flickering red and green lights "leaping and plunging in the darkness of the wind-whipped lake."

None of the newspaper accounts of the time gave any indication of the competence of the Foam's crew, praised on a memorial plaque in St. Mark's cemetery as having made "heroic efforts to save her."

But prior to the sinking, other yachtsmen expressed misgivings, considering the craft a "skimming dish," subject to "swamping and unsafe for open lake navigation."

The Globe report of July 1874 suggested this was no time for moralizing, but it would appear that the boat's owners were made aware of the potential weakness in the Foam's design.

News of the Foam's disappearance was telegraphed to ports around the lake. Search-and-rescue vessels included the chartered tug Young Lion and the yachts Oriole, Lady Stanley and Ripple. The doomed Foam was eventually located and raised by Captain Wyatt of the Young Lion and towed to Toronto.

However, an intriguing mystery surrounds the deaths of the seven young men. Were some of them

found in their cabins "fast in their eternal sleep," as suggested by one account, or were all the bodies washed ashore?

The mast of the Foam was not discovered until the morning of July 13, sighted by the captain of the Toronto steamer ... and yet the plaque indicates that hotel guests spotted the mast above the breakers on the bar, pointing to the skies the morning after the tragedy, July 12.

Again, why was St. Mark's chosen as the final resting place?

Burial took place later in July and August and a new inscription on the recently installed bronze plaque identifies the yachtsmen as C.E. Anderson, W. Anderson, P. Braddon, R.C. Henderson, J.H. Murray, V.H. Taylor and C. Vernon.

The handsome white granite headstone, surmounted by a Celtic cross, has suffered the ravages of

time, the original inscription now illegible, but the whole site marked by a low iron railing is a poignant reminder of what the Niagara Advance described in 1936 as "one of the greatest tragedies which has ever befallen the sport of yachting on Lake Ontario."

And what of the Chittenden sisters? By strange twist of fate, they also have a final resting place in St. Mark's cemetery.

Who could have foretold what the future might have held for the young people if they had met together at the dance as planned?

Next: Almost everyone who wanders past the monument to the seven souls from the Foam, nestled in St. Mark's quiet churchyard, has their own recollection about how the story captured their imagination.

Our series continues with the musings of three of those locals and what they did about it.

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The town is soliciting proposals for possible redevelopment of the former NOTL hospital site. FILE

FUTURE VISION: Mandatory accessibility demands that old hospital plan be modern, innovative

We asked readers for their suggestions regarding what should happen to the old Niagara-on-the-Lake hospital site. With its prime location and history in town, the municipality is going to consider formal plans for its possible redevelopment. Here is another idea from a reader.

Dave Antaya
Special to The Lake Report

By 2026, our town and all its public and retail spaces must conform to rigid design protocols that address accessibility issues.

The challenge is both complex and costly. And coming faster than anyone is really prepared for.

As a representative of the town's joint accessibility advisory committee, I believe the old Niagara-on-the-Lake hospital site can be part of our accessibility solution and give us a wonderful opportunity to grow into a next-generation tourism destination.

The hospital has been a

fixture in NOTL since the mid 1950s. It likely is not a strong qualifier for any form of heritage preservation status. The town has declared that its plan to offer the site for sale or disposition to other suitable uses.

An ideal vision is to demolish the hospital building and replace it with a carefully designed multi-level parking facility that is built to accommodate the needs of the entire Heritage District.

This facility must feature full accessibility measures but also be designed with a facade/appearance in keeping with the height regulations and heritage characteristics of this district.

Additionally it should include some retail and service features that prevent it from being just an ugly parking place.

The big benefit then becomes the fantastic opportunity to allow the Queen Street heritage area to become an open piazza that can feature more permanent installations that include retail locations,

cafes and expansion areas for existing businesses.

Creative imagination can expand to greater opportunities and solutions. Capacity and enhanced services become the mainstay of a thriving and growing tourist experience.

These considerations become poignant in 2025 when all retail and service operations will be required by law to be fully accessible.

Physically the service requirements can be managed by a single lane access with load and unload positions strategically placed with timed access to minimize congestion and maximize efficiency.

It is impossible to ignore or diminish the implications of infrastructure and the related costs.

A specific solution related to the parking garage is likely best served by a public-private participation (3P) model that addresses the bigger overall project vision. From the revenues accrued by the public partner,

funding can be directed to enabling and entrenching the piazza vision.

Having visited numerous European regions large and small, resident and business access to more restricted areas is easily managed by the implementation barriers that retract into the road surface to allow egress and regress via pass cards. It works!

There are a whole host of reasons to argue why "it can't be done" and maybe we should look at "Why can't we do it?"

Way back in the history of NOTL there existed a tollgate to enter the town. So with some two to three million visitors a year crossing into our town maybe an electronic tollgate at "a buck a car" (not a beer) could be considered.

How to do this? Ask the operators of the Highway 407ETR to suggest a solution as an electronic partner.

Dave Antaya is a member of NOTL's joint accessibility advisory committee.

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What pass through cities and fields, but never move.
What am I?

Last issue: I'm a word, six letters I contain, remove one letter and 12 remains. What am I?

Answer: The word "Dozens."

Answered first by: Margie Enns

Also answered correctly (in order) by: Eva Rasciauskas, Samantha Endesfelder, Terry Nord, Howard Jones, Rob Hutchison, Terry Grout, Mary Drost, Irene Wewers, Doug Bruce, Pam Dowling, May Cheong, Wade Durling, Wesley Turner, Sheila Meloche, Maria Janeiro, Victor Zilinskas, Robert Wilms

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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Devon Botbyl *in the spotlight* for Candlelight Stroll

Continued from Front Page

so shots he took on me, all but one made it into the net.

The 18-year-old has faced a myriad of hardships in life. He has a rare chromosome condition that causes global delays and autistic tendencies, has been through orthopedic surgery and recently a cancer diagnosis.

His mother Dani says he has taught her how to face life's challenges with infectious positivity.

"No matter what punches come your way, in Devon's eyes life is good," Dani said in an interview.

"We've gotten through this all, the cancer, day-to-day life, by taking cues from him, by taking all the positive cues from him."

Now cancer-free, Devon will be the recipient of the money raised through this year's Candlelight Stroll on Friday night.

Despite all the challenges, Devon is able to see the good in everything and everyone, his mom said.

"If we go to downtown Toronto — my kids like it there and we've spent a lot

of time there in 18 years — it doesn't matter if you're wearing a suit on (Bay) Street or if you're a homeless guy sitting on a grate with a cup beside you," she said.

"Devon will exchange a smile with you. He'll say hello and engage you in a conversation. That's the type of person he is."

Her son's resilience in the face of hardship has been a source of strength for others, Dani said.

"We've had so many people say that Devon is a bright light and, you know, it doesn't matter who you are, everyone needs a bright light," she said.

"Devon's touched the lives of a lot of people. That's his way of giving back."

"It doesn't matter if it's a cancer diagnosis or surgery, he just teaches you to see the good in everything."

The optimistic youth has had a big impact on his family.

"It's just, you have to react and adjust when things come your way. But, for Devon, he just has this perspective and he just rolls with the punches. You have



Devon Botbyl plays hockey at home in Virgil. EVAN SAUNDERS

to react and adjust but go on living your really good life," she said she has learned from her son.

Dani said Devon's positivity and love for people is a constant. Devon can teach us that, no matter how challenging life gets, loving your neighbour should never be difficult.

"When he came home from eight hours at the hospital and 12 hours of chemo transfusions he just wanted to get on his bike and go talk to his friends and neighbours."

There will be much to celebrate at the Candlelight Stroll this year. After months of intensive chemo-

therapy treatments, Devon is cancer-free, Dani said.

Of all the things that bring him joy, what Devon loves most is his hometown of Niagara-on-the-Lake and the village of Virgil.

"He loves his neighbourhood, he loves the town, he really loves the people, the tourists. He loves to sit down on Queen Street when the who's who bring their fancy cars out and they're revving up and down the street," she said.

"He watches this all happen and he waves to people and he talks to people."

Dani said her son doesn't like watching television, he doesn't enjoy video games

and he doesn't have a large group of friends he plays with.

That's why being the focus of the Candlelight Stroll in the town he holds dear will probably be "the happiest he's ever been," she said.

The Candlelight Stroll will be a lasting memory that Devon will hold onto his whole life, she said.

"For him to have this honour and the kindness that everyone is showing him, on behalf of us all, thank you to everyone for giving Devon this incredible moment," she said.

Dani said there couldn't be a better Candlelight Stroll to be a part of than the first one since the pandemic.

"To share this with the community, kind of on the other side of the pandemic, just makes it that much more special," she said.

The financial aid from the stroll also comes at the perfect time, as the family was worried they may have to leave their home of 25 years due to accessibility issues.

The proceeds from the stroll will go to helping the Botbys install an elevator in

their home.

"We're working with Edward Designs Inc. in town and we're looking at putting in an elevator and then making a big accessible wash-room upstairs by Devon's bedroom."

More than anything else, Devon said he is excited to ride in a horse-drawn carriage on Friday night.

"Before COVID, we used to just go and sit at the Prince (of Wales) by the horses and he would talk up the drivers and ask what the horses' names are. He probably knows all the horses by name," she said.

Devon said two of his favourite horses in town are Wonder and Cinderella, who was recently in The Lake Report as part of our Remembrance Day edition.

The gesture from the Chamber of Commerce and the community is greatly appreciated.

"On behalf of Dev, myself, Scott and Elise, his dad and sister, we just want everyone to know how grateful we are for their support," Dani said.

"We just want to see Devon happy."

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It's all about the money: Living wage proposal a divisive issue for some councillors

Continued from Front Page

estimated the plan would affect fewer than two dozen town workers.

Arsenault said the minimum wage is too low. He acknowledged the Ford government's plan to boost it to \$15 per hour in January but insisted that is still below where it needs to be.

Approving the living wage concept would be an opportunity for the town to demonstrate leadership to the rest of the community, he said.

Couns. Clare Cameron, Gary Burroughs and Wendy Cheropita voted against the proposal, but it passed with Lord Mayor Betty Disero and Couns. Allan Bisback, Sandra O'Connor and Arsenault all in favour. Couns. Erwin Wiens and John Wiens were not in attendance.

Town staff were directed to bring a report back to council in February or March of next year on the impact of implementing a living wage at the town.

Cameron said paying \$18.90 an hour would cause the municipality to compete with businesses in town that are struggling to find labour.

"I feel uncomfortable with the thought that we might jump ahead and somehow also be competing with local businesses for potential talent," she told council.

"I think it's our job to try and get out of the way."

Cameron said the town could show leadership by asking local businesses how it could support them in paying a living wage while rejecting the idea of the town paying a living wage itself.

Treasurer Kyle Freeborn noted the vast majority of town employees and contractors already make more than \$18.90. He said there were probably 15 to 20 employees who make less than that.

Cameron said the idea that paying people better wages to attract more labour was too simple



NOTL councillors discuss a "living wage" for municipal employees on Monday. SOURCED

a solution to a complex problem.

"I wish that it was easy enough to fix the labour market and to fix people's economic struggles by simply bumping up wages. I do not believe that the solution to those issues is that simple," she said.

While wages are an important factor for people in where and how they work, having room for advancement and a good team dynamic are equally important, she said.

"So, I find this an overly simplistic attempt. Very well-intentioned, but it's too simple."

Cameron was also concerned that the idea of a "living wage" was too undefined. She said it could increase exponentially based on factors out of the town's control and the town could be forced to pay if it signs on to the Living Wage Network.

The estimated cost for increasing all employees' pay to the living wage was cited as upward of \$36,000 per year. Arsenault noted the figure in relation to the town's \$14 million operating budget.

Cameron emphasized that this price tag was nearly identical to the town's discretionary grants for community organizations and didn't want the living wage to interfere with its ability to support local organizations.

Disero supported the motion and used an example from her time as a Toronto city councillor to explain why.

She said Toronto once declared it would require anyone doing business

with the city pay a "fair wage" to their employees.

"All of those people against it said, 'Oh no, the world is going to come to an end. People aren't going to be able to bid on things.' And that didn't happen. It was a different time, I realize, but that just didn't happen."

Disero stressed that the motion only asked for a staff report on the impact of the policy and was not a motion to implement it.

Cheropita cited an example from earlier this year for rejecting the idea.

She said she was trying to find someone to be an event manager for the summer and was offering \$20 per hour.

"I could not find anybody to work for \$20 an hour because students were sitting at home and collecting (Canada Emergency Response Benefits)," she said.

"So, it's not always about a motivation for money and I really did try very, very hard."

Cheropita said if there were any full-time staff who weren't making \$18.90 then she would have supported the motion.

"But, when it's students, most students live at home, at least in this area, and the sort of money that we're paying, I understand it to be between \$14.75 and \$17 an hour. That's a pretty good part-time job for the summer and most kids are really happy to work for that," she said.

Burroughs argued there should be a difference between a living wage for a full-time worker and what a student or part-time

worker makes.

Craig Pickthorne, who spoke to council on behalf of the Living Wage Network, said it would be difficult for the organization to determine different wages based on whether someone lived with their parents or on their own.

He said calculating the wage on the cost of living in an area was the proper solution, adding that, for students, tuition is a big cost and can rival the cost of living independently.

"First of all, your example of how expensive it is to go to university — it's not that expensive relative to the cost of putting on a university," Burroughs responded which prompted a look of bewilderment from O'Connor.

It makes no difference if they are "a student living at home looking down the barrel of a \$30,000 student debt or they have a family of four supporting two small children. If you need the work done, then you should pay a living wage," Pickthorne responded.

He said only 18 per cent of minimum wage earners are students or people under 20.

He pointed to Gales Gas Bar as a Niagara and NOTL business that is part of the Living Wage Network and noted it is one of the group's "champion" businesses.

Bisback supported the motion and cited some personal research as to why.

"There's a lot of complaints about restaurants specifically not getting staffed," he said.

"And what I found out was that most restaurants (in Toronto) that made the decision during the pandemic to pay over and above the minimum wage had no issue getting staff."

Bisback brought up the cost of living versus the minimum wage.

"Unfortunately, people need to take two, three, four jobs just to pay the bills and I think this is a move in the right direction and I think it sets leadership," he said.

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NOTL actress Tara Rosling prepares for 'The Mistletoe Bride' at Silversmith

Richard Harley
The Lake Report

NOTL actress and environmental enthusiast Tara Rosling is gearing up for this year's performance of "The Mistletoe Bride" — an event she says has become a Niagara-on-the-Lake tradition since its inception in 2014.

Dubbed the "almost seventh annual" presentation due to COVID stopping it for a year, "The Mistletoe Bride" will return to Silversmith Brewery in Virgil on Dec. 20 and 21 at 7 p.m.

Rosling, who also operates the environmentally focused Little Green Shop, said the show is "a ghost story, a solstice story, a Christmas story, a right of passage story and a tale of folklore."

"It is relevant, poignant, deeply mysterious and compelling, and the scene is set superbly by Silversmith as they dim the lights and stop serving for the duration of the reading."

Rosling said the event was "born out of an artistic



Tara Rosling. RICHARD HARLEY

love affair" between herself and well-known Canadian director Peter Hinton.

In 2012, the two had worked together for the first time on a play called "When the Rain Stops Falling" at the Shaw Festival.

"We had a mutual respect and admiration for each other's work," Rosling said.

"In 2014, we decided to collaborate on a project simply because we wanted to work together. Peter sent me some scripts, one of

which was 'The Mistletoe Bride,' a short story written by Jeanette Winterson. I loved it. So we rehearsed together when we could find time and space, and decided to share the piece with those who were interested in attending."

The whole show is about 20 minutes long, she said, and is not appropriate for children.

She said Silversmith is "the perfect venue" for the production.

It is a "pay what you can" event and all proceeds will be donated to Gillian's Place women's shelter — a decision that was inspired by themes within the play, Rosling said. A donation box will be passed around after the reading.

Rosling said Gillian's Place is an "incredibly important organization" to her.

"(It's) a shelter for women as well as mothers and children who are trying to leave abusive domestic situations, and as upsetting as it is, domestic abuse has risen during the pandemic. So they need all the help that we can give."

She said the show has proven popular in town and to date has raised more than \$6,000 to help women.

Tickets to the show are available at eventbrite.ca.

Anyone who wishes to attend is encouraged to arrive early and grab a pint of local ale and a bite to eat before the show.

Seats will only be available to fully vaccinated individuals.

Poppy display being stored at museum for use next year

Evan Saunders
Local Journalism Initiative
The Lake Report

The Niagara-on-the-Lake Museum's poppy display, featuring 3,500 hand-crocheted poppies, has been taken down, dried and will be stored in the museum until it can be reinstalled next year.

"Mission accomplished. I refer to everything here in military terms," members services assistant Barbara Worthy said in an interview.

Crews from Davy Tree Expert Company had the display down within minutes, she said.

The poppy display was taken over to the Royal Canadian Legion Branch 124 hall where it was hung out to dry before being carefully folded and stored in the museum's basement, she said.

But that's far from the end of the poppy display. Worthy said it will definitely be back up next year — and will be even bigger.

"We want an expanded design for next year and people have already started

to knit," she said.

"We're encouraging people to keep knitting because then we will be ready."

More than 20 volunteers knitted for nearly two months to create the poppies needed for the display.

"They were in a bit of a mad, mad rush as we had to do it in such a compressed amount of time this year," Worthy said.

She said there are worries some of the poppies may get damaged in storage but that's all the more reason for the Poppy Brigade to keep knitting away.

Worthy hopes for the display to have the names of NOTL veterans displayed along with the poppies next year.

"I think we'll invite people to contribute a name of a veteran or a family member's name. I think that would be very lovely."

The display was the talk of the town for the few weeks it was up.

"So much love and a sense of honour. As much as it was a piece of art, it was an art of remembrance," Worthy said.



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NOTLers **prep for winter**, stroll and pick up Christmas trees

Lake Report photographer Eunice Tang captured these moments around Niagara-on-the-Lake on Saturday. Left, Erika Wheeler and Rob Thiessen rake leaves on Ricardo Street. Middle: Sisters Peri and Chloe Evert take a stroll downtown to do some window shopping during a visit from Toronto to see their mother. Right: Lions Club member Victoria Skubel helps Andrew Perrie find a Christmas tree during the Lions sale at Cornerstone Community Church in Virgil.



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Ross's Ramblings: NOTL tennis players on **cutting edge** of new game

Ross Robinson
Special to The Lake Report

Canadian physical education teacher and sports innovator James Naismith invented basketball in 1891 as an alternative to the injury-prone game of football. He was in Springfield, Mass., which enjoys cold winters and this new game could be played indoors.

Here in our active lifestyle community, eight enthusiastic athletes gathered at our Niagara-on-the-Lake Community Centre last Thursday evening to try an innovative new game called Spec Tennis.

Rosemary Goodwin is introducing this game to Canada, under the long-distance guidance of Nate Gross from California.

We had experimented last winter in Virgil, on the perfectly sized driveway of Zeny and Manny Umoquit on Concession 4 Road. Snow? Cold? Wear warmer clothes. We had a ball. We must not be constrained by the weather.

Enthusiastic athlete and



Manny Umoquit goes airborne with an overhead for a point during a trial game of Spec Tennis last week in NOTL. ROSS ROBINSON

early adaptor Trish Spagnol has labelled Spec Tennis a "busier game," with much less time waiting for errant Penn 4s to be retrieved.

A slightly softer, foam-type ball is used, taking some speed off shots, and there is only one serve. The serve is meant to get the point under way, not to see how much noise the ball can make when it hits the net or the screen beyond

the baseline.

It is such fun to be involved from Day One of a new sport. We play a lot of tennis during the warmer months on the nine excellent courts here in our little corner of the sporting world, but this game just might join pickleball as another fun way to pass the winter. And to make new pals.

Percentage wise, Spec Tennis can optimistically

claim to be the fastest-growing sport in Canada. From zero players two weeks ago to eight last week – and 14 are signed up for this week. Huzzah.

Just think of the fun and challenge of having a relatively open slate when developing the rules of a game. It is too easy to fall in love with the rule book of a game and forget that the rules have developed,

as some players got "too good for the rules."

For example, the three-point line and the 24-second clock in basketball are relatively recent changes, necessary to make the game move faster, and to give non giant-sized people a chance to participate. Brilliant, eh?

Should the intent of a rules committee be to maintain the status quo or to intelligently guide the evolution of a game? You decide.

Can "Canada's game" of ice hockey be made less violent and expensive? It's a great game, but so few young people are playing now. What ever happened to house leagues for different age groups, with all star teams then being chosen to travel to neighbouring towns?

Cricket is an international favourite and visionary leaders have made dramatic changes to the sport to make it relevant to our fast-moving society. Big games used to last five days, including breaks for tea and lunch.

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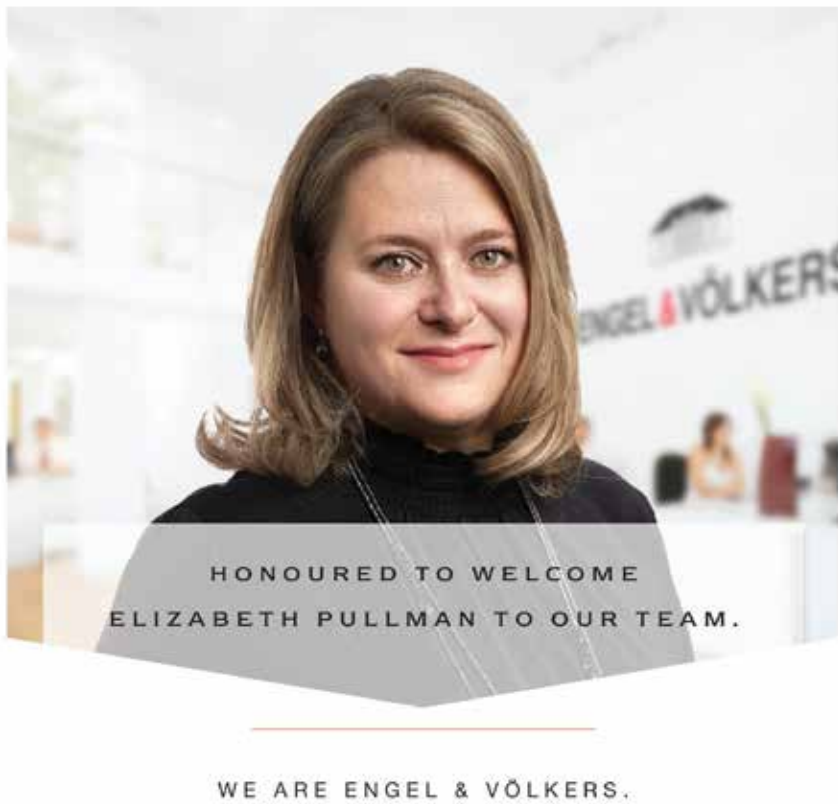
Baseball is trying to speed things up, to reduce the time taken to play a game. While they are at it, why not get rid of the intentional walk. It is the most fraudulent strategy in all of professional sport.

A family pays good money for tickets to a major league game to see their hero. He comes to bat in the ninth inning with the score tied, the catcher stands up to receive four lobs from the pitcher, out of the strike zone and the obscenely wealthy star player jogs boringly down to first base.

There's gotta be a better way. How about sending him all the way to second base, in scoring position?

Now, rambling back to Spec Tennis. It is athletic, social, weather proof and does not demand long sprints to the baseline or the net.

There's lots to love about this new sport. Stay tuned.



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Welcome Liz, we're excited to watch you grow with our team!

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Jr. A Predators aim to keep 5-game winning streak alive

Kevan Dowd
Special to The Lake Report

Niagara Predators general manager Johan Eriksson is hoping for nothing but wins from now until Christmas break and, as the team rides a five-game win streak, it might just happen.

The Predators picked up two more Greater Metro Jr. A. Hockey League wins last weekend, including a 6-3 victory over The St. George Ravens and 6-1 win over the Plattsville Lakers. Niagara, which has only lost four games so far this season, is now 2-2 versus the Ravens and in third place.

“They are our biggest rivals. We’ve lost both games on the road but have beaten them both times at home,” said Eriksson.

While Eriksson chalks up the win to his team providing better support for goaltender Iain Riordon than in previous games and keeping a cool head against rough opponents, the Predators tried a new tactic Friday night.

The team started with their Zitella-Massi-Caperchione line in order to



NOTL predators are fighting to build on their five-game winning streak. RICHARD HARLEY

match St. George’s strongest line, a move that Eriksson thinks paid off.

“They scored five of our goals Friday night and played a great game from start to finish,” he said.

Dante Massi opened the scoring halfway through the first period but a pair of goals for St. George gave them a 2-1 lead after 20 minutes. Mario Zitella tied it one minute into the second period but a third goal for St. George came at 10:29.

Then back-to-back goals by Noah Caperchione

allowed Niagara to take the lead, which they never relinquished.

Predators newcomer Georgy Kholmovsky netted his team’s fifth tally with less than five minutes left in the game and Massi put his second of the night past St. George goaltender Christian Lynch to finish things off.

“We stayed really calm and let them make the dumb mistakes,” said Eriksson. “Our attitude is far superior. Against Plattsville, we followed up with a great game and just great, great hockey.”

Massi, Zitella and Caperchione all made the score sheet the following night with Massi once again getting his team’s first tally as well as their fourth with less than 30 seconds left in the second period.

Zitella managed a short-handed goal midway through the second period and Caperchione earned his team’s sixth 12 minutes into the third. Singles from Alexander Insulander and Jesper Eriksson and just one goal for Plattsville by Malcolm Campbell early in the third period made for a 6-1 final.

Early in the season the Predators struggled with a short bench but with four full lines and seven defencemen, Eriksson says his team is fully loaded.

With newer recruits like Caperchione, Kholmovsky, Maxwell Bredin and Pontus Madsen earning goals and assists on the regular he said he “100 per cent” thinks the new additions are a game changer, using Kholmovsky – recently signed from Russia – as an example.

“Kholmovsky is a younger guy but wow is he smart.

He knows where the puck is, he’s a good skater. He’s what I’d call a well-schooled player. He doesn’t speak the language but if you draw something up for him he knows what to do. Hockey is his language.”

But just as the bench was starting to fill up, the team has lost one of its best players – starting goaltender Oskar Spinnars Nordin.

He has been recruited to play in North Dakota for the Bismarck Bobcats of the North American Hockey League, a USA Hockey-sanctioned Tier II junior league.

“Because he is just so good I didn’t expect to keep him all season. When you play like he does, opportunities are going to come up to go to a higher league,” said Eriksson.

“I’m happy for him but I’m not going to find another Spinnars Nordin this late in the season. He’s getting a fantastic chance there.”

Spinnars Nordin had been a standout on the team since the season started. In 10 games in net, the 19-year-old Swede managed three shutouts and allowed just 19

goals. But Eriksson thinks his absence last weekend may have been beneficial in a way.

“Actually, I think we played so well because we didn’t have Oskar back there. We know now that we have to help our goalies and not allow them to take all the shots.”

The team now faces three games in three days starting in Virgil this Friday against the Windsor Aces. Back-to-back games against the Northumberland Stars will follow, starting with a road game Saturday before coming back home for a 3 p.m. Sunday afternoon game.

Eriksson is confident his team can keep the winning streak going, saying Windsor is one of the league’s weaker teams, in particular because their overage starting line do not play in road games.

“We just have to continue playing our game our way, keep our heads calm and if we can do that, we’ll win all three games.”

The weekend’s action starts against Windsor at the Meridian Credit Union this Friday, Dec. 3 at 7:30 p.m.

THE *foster* FESTIVAL

Widow Wonderland

BY NORM FOSTER

Starring



DEC 5	DEC 7 & 10
 Sharry Flett	 Anthony Bekenn
 Melanie Janzen	 Jamie Williams
DEC 8, 11, 12	DEC 9
 Donna Belleville	 Ric Reid
 Jenny L. Wright	 Juan Carlos Velis
DEC 14	DEC 15 & 16
 Karen Wood	 Shawn Wright
 Chick Reid	 Tom McCamus

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Norm Foster has fashioned a cheerful one act Christmas play that throws a widow and a widower together at their apartment building’s Christmas dinner for those who are alone during the holiday season. Michael and Sharon wind up at a table for two during this December 23’rd dinner and what follows is an evening of getting to know one another with all of the awkwardness and politeness and silliness that a first meeting often includes.

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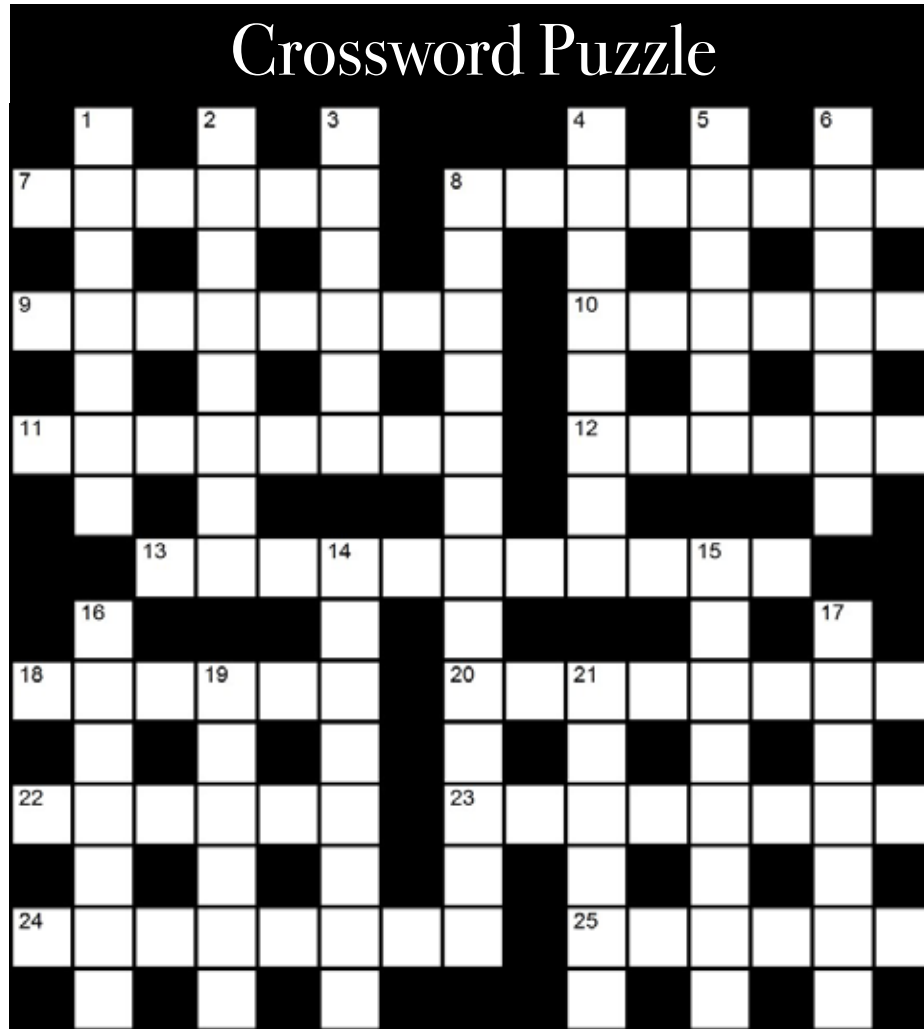
Have some fun

Across

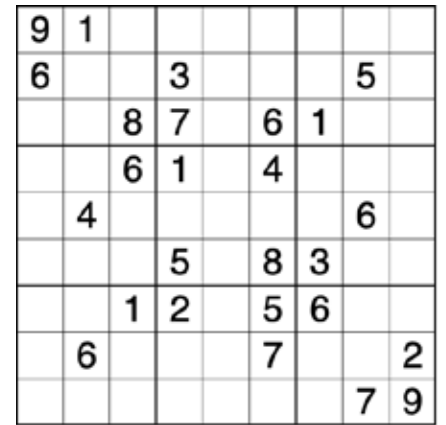
- 7 Missing (6)
- 8 Enormous (8)
- 9 Type of lights (8)
- 10 Shrink back (6)
- 11 Saviour (8)
- 12 Man (6)
- 13 Moving to and fro (11)
- 18 Austrian composer (6)
- 20 Inspector (8)
- 22 Light-hearted TV show (6)
- 23 Person practising deception under an assumed name (8)
- 24 Forced high notes (8)
- 25 Tooth covering (6)

Down

- 1 Belly (7)
- 2 Uneasy (8)
- 3 Flowing water (6)
- 4 Yes (3,5)
- 5 Tapered frozen mass (6)
- 6 Circumscribed (7)
- 8 Supreme commander (13)
- 14 Cosy (8)
- 15 Abroad (8)
- 16 Of local interest (7)
- 17 Regimental commander (7)
- 19 Charge (6)
- 21 Small sword (6)



Last issue's answers



MEDIUM

Christmas trees in support of Newark Neighbours!

Christmas is just around the bend, and The Lake Report wants to pay it forward this year by **helping families in need.**

You can help us by purchasing a card with your name on it, to be published in our Dec. 16 issue.

50% of the proceeds will be donated to Newark Neighbours. The rest will support NOTL's favourite newspaper, The Lake Report.

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'The Ambassadors'

Penny-Lynn Cookson
Special to The Lake Report

Throughout history, turbulent times of wars, revolutions, pandemics, disease, famine, economic upheaval and climate change have affected hundreds of millions of lives.

We are presently living through one of those unstable times at very personal levels. For many, the times are terrifying. Less visible are the diplomats engaged in essential negotiations to ensure that the relationships between countries remain as harmonious as possible under exceedingly difficult circumstances.

In 1533, the King of France, Francis I, sent his erudite, trusted ambassador, Jean de Dinteville, to carry messages and report on the dramatic events taking place at the English Tudor court of Henry VIII.

It was a tumultuous time of religious strife between

secular and religious authorities and between Lutheran Reformers and the Catholic Church which threatened the stability of the church, kings, courts, countries and citizens of Europe.

In 1532, Henry VIII, desperate for an heir, wanted to divorce Catherine of Aragon and marry Anne Boleyn, who was well-connected to the French court. Pope Clement VII refused.

Henry broke with Rome, became Supreme Head of the Church of England, divorced Catherine, married Anne who did deliver a child, the future Elizabeth I.

Ambassador de Dinteville, wrote of being weary, ill and longing to be home in sunny France. Perhaps to lift his spirits, he commissioned Hans Holbein to create a double portrait of himself with his friend Georges de Selve, bishop of Lavaur, a man actively



Hans Holbein the Younger, "The Ambassadors," 1533, oil on oak, National Gallery, London. SUPPLIED PHOTO

engaged in trying to keep unity within the church.

Hans Holbein the Younger, born c.1497, left Augsburg, Germany, to work in Basel, Switzerland, as a printmaker and painter of religious scenes and portraits.

His portrait of the renowned humanist, Erasmus of Rotterdam, was his calling card to Sir Thomas More, important clients in England and fame as king's painter to Henry VIII. He became the greatest

portrait artist of the 16th century and his reputation has never waned.

What makes "The Ambassadors" extraordinary is Holbein's technical skill and how he links subjects to symbolic objects representing mostly secular ideas.

On the left, Jean de Dinteville, Seigneur of Polisy, is resplendent in pink silk and a puffed-sleeve black robe lined with deep textured lynx. An enormous blue tassel is finely detailed

with pure gold leaf.

His cap bears gold badges including a skull badge. He holds a gold dagger inscribed with his age as 29. On the right, Georges de Selve wears a sumptuous clerical robe of deep brown silk damask lined with fur. His elbow rests on a book that shows his age as 25.

The painting represents three levels: the heavens, the living world and death, signified by a distorted skull. The upper shelf displays a celestial globe, a cylindrical dial, a polyhedral dial, quadrant and an astronomer's torquetum, all being instruments for locating heavenly bodies for navigation and to measure time and dates.

The Anatolian carpet is a luxury trade item. The lower shelf holds a terrestrial globe with an upside-down Africa, Europe, England, Ireland and France including "Polisy."

Next to de Selve, an open Lutheran psalmbook's facing pages reveal the hymns "Ten Commandments" and "Come Holy Spirit," a reference to the plea for unity. The foreshortened lute has one broken string, the case

of flutes has one missing, both representing lack of harmony.

The arithmetic book is open at a page on division, suggesting the division in Christendom. The floor is that of Westminster Abbey with its circles of divine order and the place where the kings and queens of England are crowned.

The foreground distorted skull is a memento mori, a vanitas, a reminder that all this will pass and death awaits us all. Far to the upper left, almost obscured by the green damask curtain, is a silver crucifix with its hope of salvation and ultimate resurrection.

Holbein died in London in 1543, leaving a legacy of superb portraits that continue to intrigue and inform.

Penny-Lynn Cookson is an art historian who taught at the University of Toronto for 10 years. She also was head of extension services at the Art Gallery of Ontario. Her next lecture series will be "Concepts of Beauty: Artists, Muses, Models" for the Niagara Pumphouse Arts Centre, on Zoom, Thursdays from Jan. 6 to 27, 2022.

Dr. Brown: James Webb telescope an **Advent tale** of creation and hope

Dr. William Brown
Special to The Lake Report

If all goes well, the most powerful, capable, expensive and complex star-gazing satellite telescope yet – the James Webb telescope – is slated for launch aboard an Ariane 5 rocket later this month.

It's been a quarter-century in the making and like most such projects, was over budget several times and threatened with cancellation more than once by U.S. congressional committees.

Heir to the amazing 26-year-old Hubble telescope, the James Webb telescope is bigger and much better equipped to explore the early universe, and much closer to hand, expand the search for potential life-friendly planets within our galaxy and beyond.

The budding early universe was a dense, highly ionized, plasmic soup of hydrogen and helium nuclei and free electrons – and



The fully assembled James Webb Space Telescope. NASA PHOTO

much too hot for stable atoms to form – with the result that photons of light were trapped, unable to escape.

Then, 325,000 years following the Big Bang, the universe had cooled enough for stable atoms to form and allow those photons of light to escape. Some of that first light in the universe was within the bandwidth of visible light.

However, it wasn't long before continued expansion of the universe stretched the signal's bandwidth into the infrared and later radio range, through the Doppler effect, and darkness once more fell on the universe.

The detection of the latter weak signal in the radio range, called the Cosmic Background Radiation, won a Nobel prize for Arno Penzias and Robert Wilson.

Then one to two million years later, hydrogen and some helium were gravitationally shaped by dark matter, and possibly giant black holes, into what would become the first stars.

The latter were giants – hundreds if not thousands of times the mass of our sun – each creating more than enough gravitational force and high enough temperatures to fuse hydrogen nuclei into helium nuclei in the star's core and release enormous amounts of energy, much in the form of photons, which reaching the star's surface, lit up the universe with light.

Or at least that's what most astrophysicists think may have happened. Now with the launch of the Webb telescope, scientists hope to fill in gaps in our under-

standing about the evolution of the early universe by employing ultrasensitive sensors to detect infrared and radio signals that were invisible to Hubble.

Because those cosmic signals left over from the early universe are so weak, scientists and engineers took extraordinary steps to shield the primary mirror from unwanted sources of infrared and other radiation. For that reason, the telescope will be sent to a spot roughly one million miles from Earth to where the gravitational forces of the sun, Earth and moon cancel one another out, leaving the telescope fixed in space and facing away from all three radiant sources.

From conception to creation, this telescope is an amazing testament to human ingenuity, science and engineering but unlike its famous predecessor Hubble, will be on its own, beyond reach of any repair as Hubble famously

needed, because of the great distance involved.

Hopefully, the Webb telescope will shed light on that most enigmatic of matter – dark matter, said to account for 85 per cent of all the matter in the universe – and dark energy, held to be responsible for the expansion of the universe.

For now, the big question is whether the Webb telescope will make it to its appointed station in space with all its parts deployed and working. As Jonathan Lunine put it in a recent review in Nature, the whole sequence from launch, "to unpacking solar arrays, antennas, booms, radiators, mirrors and the sunshield itself" is a "heart-stoppingly complex sequence."

Let's hope it works, because there's no fix in reach, now or in the future.

Several years ago, I listened to a BBC series on creation stories from ancient times to the most recent – the scientific story. All

speak to beginnings, interims, endings and sometimes recreations. That's what has happened with the universe: stars have beginnings, lives and endings, and those endings are not the "end." Our sun, for example, is the third edition in our neighbourhood.

The theme of creation, life, death and recreation is found in several of the world's major religions and reason enough to see religious and science accounts as marvellous attempts to explain and seek meaning in the universe and life around us. It's Advent season, a time of expectation and hope, both shared by religion and science.

Next, we turn to the question of life elsewhere in the universe.

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



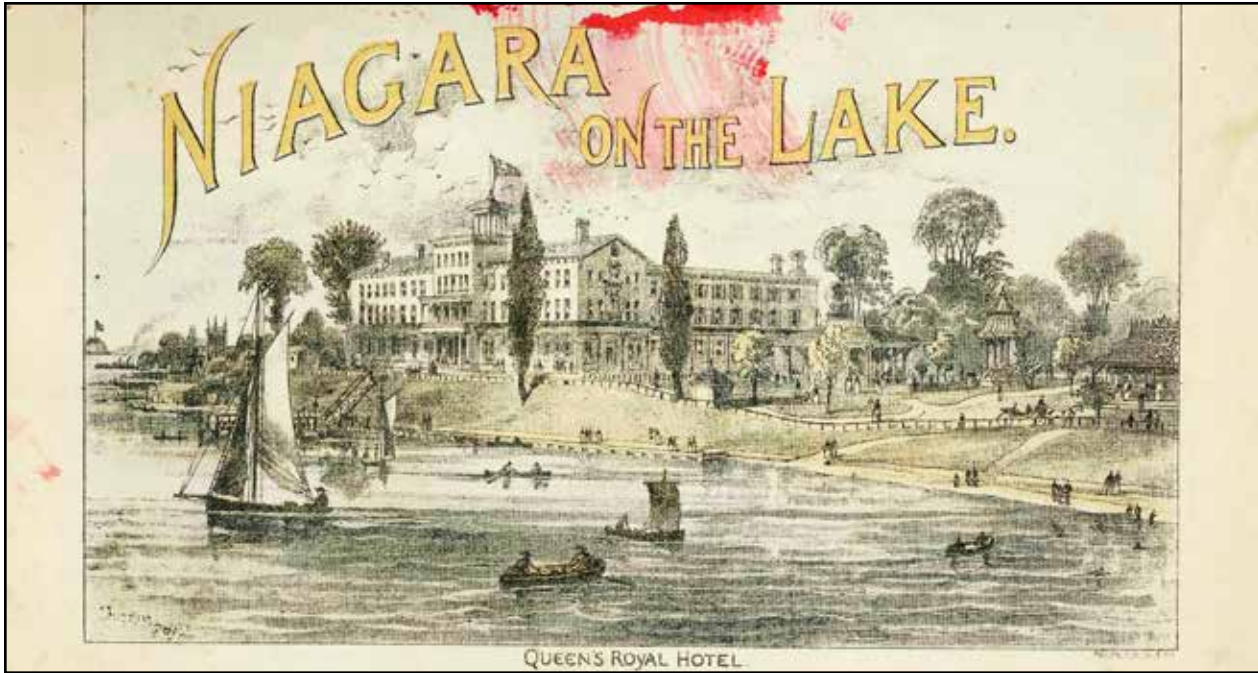
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EXPLORING PHOTOS

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Queen's Royal Hotel

Opening in 1869, the Royal Niagara, as it was first called, was built with money received from the county after the relocation of the courthouse to St. Catharines. This first-class hotel became the destination of choice for those who wanted to escape the confines of the city and enjoy a peaceful time by the lake. It was one of the finest hotels in North America. Sadly, this wonderful hotel became the victim of a rollercoaster economy based on tourism. Advancements in roads and cars led to the demise of the Queen's Royal in 1927. The building was demolished in 1930. There were many activities available at the hotel, including the tennis tournaments mentioned last week. Other activities available were boating, lawn bowling and golf.

ARCHITEXT

The case for rehabilitation

Brian Marshall
Columnist



Brian Marshall.

In the built-heritage field the term “rehabilitation” is generally a reference to work performed on a historic house which returns the dwelling to a useful state by means of repair, modification or alteration.

Distinctly different from “restoration,” wherein the focus is to preserve and restore historical elements, rehabilitation is typically a modernization of a building in part or whole.

In many ways, old houses are both economically and socially incompatible with our 21st-century expectations and lifestyle.

Aside from the issues of energy inefficiency, most have interiors that are functionally segmented in a fashion that reflects the

prevalent social mores at the time the dwelling was built. Consider the fact that until the last few decades a kitchen was usually small and definitively separated from public spaces such as the living and dining rooms.

So, returning a dwelling to a “useful state” can, and often does, entail substantial redesign and remodelling of the home.

Provided there is no loss of historically important architecture and the rehabilitation is well (sympathetically) designed, compatible with the existing streetscape and properly executed, this is really not a bad thing.

While on the one hand I must profess to being something of a purist when it comes to architecture, on

the other hand I am also the first to admit when something has simply ceased to work.

Bluntly, I'd rather see a house rehabilitated than left to deteriorate because it no longer suits the needs of a modern family. And, for the majority of homeowners, there are a plethora of 19th- and 20th-century houses that have distinctly impaired usefulness when measured against their current needs.

Similar to my arguments supporting adaptive reuse of old buildings, rehabilitation of older homes is significantly preferred over demolition, which is all too often the option exercised.

“Just tear it down and start again” is certainly the most common decision made concerning these old houses. Fact is, these older homes were often much better built than their modern counterparts, to say nothing of the environmental benefits to saving and reusing as much of the structure as possible.

What can be done?

One of my neighbours

lives in a stone farmhouse built in the 1870s and it appears, at first glance, to be as-built. Looking a little closer, one can see the windows are actually modern thermopane units custom-made to fit the arch-topped openings.

But inside, the house has been remodelled with an open-plan design that has been treated in a completely sympathetic fashion to the original dwelling. It feels like it could have been original to the house.

Another local example began as a nondescript mid-20th century white frame storey-and-a-half home onto which the owner built a side addition and two-car garage. Once the additions were complete, they removed the roof of the original dwelling and unified the whole by use of consistent cladding materials and window design. Now nearing completion, the rehabbed home presents stylistically as a 21st-century modern.

If you can imagine it, with skilled design and talented craftsmen, it can be done.

Looking to the Stars



New moon in Sagittarius and total eclipse on horizon

This week we see the new moon in Sagittarius with a total solar eclipse in the early morning of Saturday, Dec. 4.

Thursday, Dec. 2: The moon in Scorpio is friendly to both Venus in Capricorn and also to Mars in Scorpio, which should help calm the waters after a disturbing surprise. Britney Spears was born on Wednesday, Dec. 2, 1981. in McComb, Miss. Her birth chart reveals a brilliant talent doomed to a difficult life courtesy of an on-again, off-again retrograde Mercury. Her chart reminds me of Warren Beatty's. Great promise with years of not much happening and then a huge comeback.

Friday, Dec. 3: A stressful connection between the sun and Uranus likely puts many of us in a corner regarding our long-term goals. Be open to change and hold on for tomorrow's new moon. Spotify says Drake is now the most successful recording artist with 28 billion downloads of his songs.

Saturday, Dec. 4: Today's new moon in Sagittarius, eclipsed, promises a rare moment for stepping back and getting a feel for what the cosmos has to offer and for what we want to contribute to that. It's a great time to take a few days to look at the big picture. With Mercury, the sun and the moon all together, there is cleverness and intuition helping open doors and making the future clear. It was Dec. 4, 1840, that the great Oglala Dakota Chief, Crazy Horse, was born. He went on to defeat Gen. George Custer at the

Battle of the Little Big Horn.

Sunday, Dec. 5: With the moon in Sagittarius and Jupiter in Aquarius, heavenly gifts are likely today. Walt Disney was born Dec. 5, 1901. His father had been very involved in the great Chicago World's Fair and even though Walt saw himself as an artist, he was also a developer with grandiose ideas for entertaining lots of people.

Monday, Dec. 6: A serious start to the week offers lots of willpower to make life healthier and to make work better as well. It was Dec. 6, 1768, that the Encyclopedia Britannica was first published. In Scotland.

Tuesday, Dec. 7: Lofty ideas and big imagination are in a showdown today. The winner is the one you are most committed to living in the future. It was Dec. 7, 1979, that “Star Trek” became a movie. It starred William Shatner and Leonard Nimoy, and was directed by Robert Wise.

Wednesday, Dec. 8: Good news on the health front, on the work front and with travel plans. Perhaps even a return to school. Canada's 13th Prime Minister, John Diefenbaker, wed Olive Palmer at Park Road Baptist Church on Dec. 8, 1953. He was 58. She was 51.

Next week we see the first quarter moon in Pisces. And more.

Please check out the new website www.lutts.ca as in Looking Up to the Stars. And you can get my \$29.95 horoscope with interpretation emailed to you. Either way, a unique Christmas gift.

Astrology is a form of entertainment, not a science.

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Food & Toy donations support Newark Neighbours and are in great need. Extra toy donations will support Gillian's Place and Project Share. Drop off location:

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HYDRO

Obituaries

Stephen "Steve" Kaple

Oct. 27, 1946 - Nov. 24, 2021

Unexpectedly passed away on Wednesday, Nov. 24, 2021 at St. Mary's General Hospital in Kitchener, Ontario at the age of 75.

Dear Dad of Dave (Crystal), Jamie and Adam. He'll also be remembered by his grandchildren. Survived by his brothers Jim (Anne) and Jerome (Anay) and their families. Predeceased by his parents Edward and Margaret Kaple.

Cremation has taken place. A memorial service will be held at a later date in Kitchener, Ontario. More details to follow. If desired, memorial donations made to your local Humane Society would be appreciated by the family.

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Did you know?

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

The ink is also vegetable-based.



Robert White

Robert (Bob) George White passed away on November 22, 2021 in St. Catharines, Ontario. Bob was 84 years old. Bob was born in Niagara Falls in 1937 and met the love of his life Jacquie on a school trip to Ottawa in 1954. Bob and Jacquie married in 1957 and celebrated 64 years of marriage in September.

Bob and Jacquie resided in St Catharines until 1967 when they moved to Mississauga to raise their family. Bob worked initially for Anthes and then at the University of Toronto for 32 years where he ended his working career as Chief Financial Officer. Bob was also a Trustee for the John Edgar McAllister Foundation, working to support engineering students at the University of Toronto and The Michigan Technological University (MTU). Bob was given an Honorary Doctorate of Philosophy by MTU in 2017. Bob retired in 2001 and moved back to his roots in Niagara-on-the-Lake. Bob was very active in his local community, volunteering significant time and effort to the Niagara District Airport and St. Mark's Anglican Church.

Bob is survived by his wife Jacquie, (nee McGeachie), his son Mark (Tracy), daughter Sharon Dimand (Dave, predeceased), and son Brian. Bob was a loving grandfather to 6 grandchildren, Matthew (Katherine), Laura (Alex), Mackenzie (Nathan), Zach (Britt), Carson (Bri), Kaleigh and 2 great grandchildren, Austin and Owen. Bob was passionate about staying connected with family all over North America and Europe.

Bob worked hard all his life but also lived life to the fullest. He loved the family cottage on Chandos Lake and spent significant time there. Bob and Jacquie travelled all over Canada and much of the world throughout their life together.

Bob was respected by all who knew him and he will be very much missed.

Timely tips for picking the perfect **fresh-cut** Christmas tree



GROWING TOGETHER 

Joanne Young
Garden Columnist

It is hard to believe, but it is getting that time to go out and purchase a fresh-cut Christmas tree.

In fact, some tree vendors are already selling out.

Your tree is your canvas, so it's important to select a good one — gorgeous ornaments can do only so much for a scraggly tree.

Some people prefer the look and smell of a real pine or fir tree, while others like the

reliability of a fake one.

Here are some tips for selecting the perfect fresh-cut Christmas tree:

Determine where the Christmas tree will be going. This seems like a basic first step, but knowing exactly where the tree will be placed allows you to determine what size of tree will fit in that space.

Do not be afraid of using a measuring tape! Even though we think we can visualize the space and guess on measurements, it never hurts to take actual height and width measurements to know what size of tree will work for your room.

When out shopping for your tree, take along your measuring tape to double check. Make sure you take into consideration that you need space for a tree topper as well as a tree stand.

Get a well-shaped tree. If you want a real tree, make sure you see it out of its netting. Many tree lots keep their



Searching for that perfect tree can be a challenge, but Joanne Young offers some tips. JOANNE YOUNG PHOTO

trees wrapped up to conserve space, but it is impossible to know what the branches of the tree will look like until it is opened up.

Look for full, evenly spaced branches and a sym-

metrical shape that tapers toward the top. Remember that you do not want a tree where the branches are so dense that it makes hanging ornaments difficult.

Buy a tree that isn't drop-

ping a lot of needles. It is normal for an evergreen tree to drop some of its oldest inside needles. Run a branch or two through your hands to see if a lot of needles (especially toward the tips) are dropping.

This is a sign that the tree is already starting to dry out. You should be able to feel if the needles are dry as opposed to fresh. A fresh tree will have a pleasant fragrance, not a musty smell.

A freshly cut tree will last indoors for about two to three weeks before drying and starting to drop a lot of needles. You may want to buy your tree early to make sure you get what you want, but if you are doing that it would be best to keep the tree outside in the cold temperatures until you are ready to set it up a few weeks before Christmas.

The most common varieties of evergreens that are

sold as Christmas trees are: Balsam Fir, Noble Fir, Fraser Fir, Douglas Fir and Scots Pine (sometimes mistakenly called Scotch Pine). Balsam and Noble Fir hang on to their needles the longest.

Wait to make a fresh cut on the base of the tree until you are ready to move it inside for set up. A fresh cut will allow the tree to draw up water.

Once you have made that fresh cut, set it up in a suitable-sized tree stand that has a deep water reservoir. The first day you can expect the tree to draw up about one gallon of water and one or more quarts of water every day after that.

Make sure that there is water sitting in the stand at all times.

Happy Christmas tree shopping!

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



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