



**SINKING OF THE FOAM**



**Part 3: Maritime tragedy still captures local imagination**

Tim Taylor  
The Lake Report

On Saturday, July 11, 1874, the sloop Foam, with seven sailors aboard, sailing out of the Royal Canadian Yacht Club in Toronto, foundered on the Niagara Bar, within sight of its destination, the Queen's Royal Hotel, on the western bank of the river, at Niagara-on-the-Lake.

All seven souls aboard were lost. All are buried in a small, respectful plot in the St. Mark's church cemetery, still owned by the Royal Canadian Yacht Club.

The incident is shrouded

*Continued on Page 20*



**Three NOTL staff on unpaid leave for failure to comply with vaccine policy**

Evan Saunders  
Local Journalism Initiative  
The Lake Report

The Town of Niagara-on-the-Lake's vaccination policy came into effect on Dec. 1. Three staff members are currently on unpaid leave for failing to comply with the policy, human resources generalist Sarah Stevens said in an email to The Lake Report.

Stevens noted that 97.7

*Continued on Page 5*

## Ashley Simpson finally returning home

Missing woman's remains discovered in B.C., ex-boyfriend charged with murder



John Simpson had been searching for his daughter since she disappeared in 2016. EVAN SAUNDERS Right: Ashley Simpson FACEBOOK



Evan Saunders  
Local Journalism Initiative  
The Lake Report

More than five years after Niagara-on-the-Lake's Ashley Simpson disappeared in a remote area of British Columbia, her remains have been found and her boyfriend is facing a charge of second-degree murder. A traumatic chapter is

finally over for her family and they will soon be able to formally say goodbye – but their fight is far from over, says Ashley's father John Simpson.

"We'll bring her home and we want justice. We'll get it," John said in an interview at the home he and his wife Cindy share in NOTL.

"We, the family, our unit, will not give up — never.

We want to see justice and we will find some way to get down there and be in his face if he's in court."

The murder charge against Derek Favell came as no surprise to John Simpson, who has suspected Favell since his daughter first disappeared on April 27, 2016.

He had heard stories about Favell.

"He got kicked out of Pink Mountain, where my daughter worked, twice for being drunk and disorderly and abusive," he said.

Ashley, who was 32, had also sent pictures to her family of bruises along her arm purportedly from Favell hitting her, John said.

After Ashley disappeared, Favell called the family to ask if they had seen her,

saying he last saw her walk away from his trailer with a pink suitcase after they had a fight, intending to hitchhike home, a nearly 4,000-kilometre journey from Yankee Flats to NOTL.

John never bought it.

My family "and I thought right from the beginning it was a ruse because we know

*Continued on Page 10*

## GROWING PAINS: PART 2

### Economic burdens and the hollowing out of communities

*This is the second 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

Arguing for sustainable and efficient tourism does not mean politicians are anti-tourist, the deputy mayor of Venice says.

"Venice is an open and welcoming city, and anyone can visit in the future," Simone Venturini told The Lake Report.

The Venetian councillor says his city is trying to promote the repopulation of the historic centre while using the pandemic as an opportunity to rethink how the city manages tourist flow, tourist



This house at 43 Platoff St., at the intersection of Platoff and Davy streets, is one of four short-term rentals that exist on each corner of the intersection. EVAN SAUNDERS

rentals and employment.

It is one of the main points laid out in the decalogo, a document released by the Italian cities of

Venice and Florence earlier

this year, that seeks to draw attention to the unique problems tourist cities are facing thanks to the growth of the short-term rental market.

"We must aim for quality

tourism, attentive, respectful of a city's fragility, as well as accompanied by a balanced and sustainable economic dimension," it reads.

Finding this balance means taking a critical approach to the economic ramifications of tourism on particular tourist destinations, such as Niagara-on-the-Lake.

Among the main concerns of short-term rental accommodations are the indirect factors that affect the economy of a town and the resident taxpayers. These are referred to as "externalities" by economists.

"In the case of neighbours on a street with short-term rentals, externalities include noise and stress on neighbourhood infrastructure like trash pick-up," Josh Bivens, the director of research at the Economic Policy Institute, writes in his 2019 study "The Economic Costs and Benefits of Airbnb."

"The potential for such externalities has been broadly recognized for a long time and was a consideration leading to the prevalence of zoning laws that ban short-term travel accommodations in residen-

*Continued on Page 2*

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This home on 244 Davy St. is one of four short-term rentals that occupy the corners at the intersection of Davy and Platoff streets. EVAN SAUNDERS

## GROWING PAINS: PART 2

# Economic burdens and the hollowing out of communities

*Continued from Front Page*

tial neighbourhoods.”

Niagara-on-the-Lake Lord Mayor Betty Disero sought to address some of these external pressures when she successfully fought for the implementation of a municipal accommodations tax.

“The local taxpayers of 18,000 cannot continue to carry the burden for tourism infrastructure for upwards of 2,000,000 tourists annually,” Disero’s motion to pass the accommodations tax read.

The proliferation of short-term rentals into residential neighbourhoods is the main cause of these externalities and a reason why traditional hotels can be better for residents, Bivens says.

“These externalities are why hotels are clustered away from residential areas,” he writes.

“There is the strong possibility that (short-term rentals) are indeed posing large costs on neighbours.”

Bivens notes the single greatest cost for residents due to short-term rentals is the increased price of housing, a topic explored in the previous instalment of this

series. But he argues the myriad possible externalities, though more difficult to quantify, can be just as important to consider.

As Bivens notes, hotels are clustered away from residential neighbourhoods so they do not bring undue stress on residential infrastructure like plumbing, trash collection and roadways.

In NOTL, there is a further dimension.

The town allows short-term rentals to occur on residential properties whereas Ontario municipalities like Seguin, Oro-Medonte and Wasaga consider the businesses strictly commercial and make it illegal for them to operate on a residentially zoned area.

By retaining their residential zoning, it also means short-term rentals are avoiding paying significantly higher commercial tax in NOTL.

For Bivens, this is one of the main negative economic effects home-sharing short-term rentals have on municipalities.

Not only are short-term rentals causing external financial stress on residential

neighbourhoods – unlike hotels – they also don’t pay an equivalent share in helping municipalities maintain neighbourhood infrastructure, Bivens says.

“Many cities impose relatively steep taxes on short-term rental lodging, hoping to obtain revenue from out-of-town travellers to spend on local residents,” he writes.

**“I bought my lakeside home to be part of a neighbourhood and I want to know my neighbours, And I want them to care for the lake as much as I do. To care for my neighbours, my lake, my forest and everything else.”**

ANN MACDIARMID  
MAYOR OF SEGUIN

He argues that short-term rentals are undoubtedly direct competition with local hotels.

NOTL’s planned municipal accommodation tax applies only to properties renting out five or more rooms. That means fewer than five per cent of the town’s short-term rentals (just 12 of 255 as of September 2021) will be collecting the levy.

And the more often people choose a short-term rental over a hotel in NOTL, the less revenue the municipality can generate to offset external pressures of tourism.

This is certainly happening all over the world, as the main attraction of short-term rentals versus hotels is lower prices. That is a problem, Bivens says.

staying in them benefit the municipality by spending money in shops and restaurants.

But this argument fails “to account for the fact that much of this spending would have been done anyway by travellers staying in hotels or other alternative accommodations,” he writes.

As was noted in the previous instalment of this series, only two to four per cent of 800 guests who use Airbnb said they would not have stayed in a hotel if Airbnb was not available.

Quality of employment in a tourist town can also be affected by short-term rentals out-competing traditional hotels.

Bivens writes that third-party cleaning services are less likely to offer good wages for their employees.

A 2017 study by German economists Deborah Goldschmidt & Johannes F. Schmieder found that when hotels outsourced their labour to third-party sources there were “large negative wage effects.”

Short-term rentals generally rely on third-party cleaners or they do not hire

cleaners at all, Bivens notes.

Oro-Medonte Mayor Harry Hughes noted external pressures on municipalities can also include increased staff hours to regulate short-term rentals, handle licensing and deal with bylaw-related matters.

Since Oro-Medonte is charged by police on a “call for service” basis, he said his town loses more money dealing with disrespectful tourists when the police have to get involved – such as renters having fires when it is against the law.

As short-term rentals eat up available living space for long-term residents they can also remove the long-term benefits of having people work where they live.

As was noted in part 1 of this series, short-term rentals can have a direct effect on increasing home and rental costs wherever they appear.

This can be seen as a good thing for residents who already live in an area. Their home’s value is increasing thanks to the growth of short-term rentals.

*Continued on Page 3*



Angelika Zammit - Local Expert  
Niagara-on-the-Lake Luxury Realty Team  
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Left: Lord Mayor Betty Disero has said short-term rentals are a top-priority issue for NOTL town council. FILE  
Right: Seguin mayor Ann MacDiarmid is enforcing a ban on short-term rentals in residential areas. EVAN SAUNDERS

## Some Ontario towns **taking action** against problems caused by short-term rentals

Continued from Page 2

But in increasing housing and rental prices and moving valuable long-term living space into the short-term rental market, there are concerns about communities being hollowed out because new residents cannot move in. Bivens refers to this problem as the conversion of long-term housing to the short-term rental market.

"In the lagoon city there is an evident imbalance between the number of visitors and the number of inhabitants," Venice's and Florence's decalogo reads. "We ask that not only the immense artistic heritage (of Venice and Florence) be preserved, but also the city life that gives soul to stones and paintings."

The decalogo notes that as residents are pushed out of the city, their valuable commercial activities which "embody the wealth and tradition" of the city are continuously replaced by "worthless junk shops."

Venice is also working with Italy's federal government to create new legislation to entice long-term residents to the historic city and rectify the imbalance between tourists and residents, Venturini said.

One of these ways is enacting legislation that helps young, first-time home owners looking for residences in the city centre, he said.

Venice has also launched programs that encourage

students to live long-term in the city and therefore "enrich the local community with their skills."

He said Venice is asking the government for "special powers for a special city" to manage the flow of tourists into the city and to help "encourage cultural, experiential and quality tourism and longer stays of guests."

The hollowing out of communities also exacerbates negative externalities, Bivens writes.

"Long-term renters really do have some incentive to care about the neighbourhood's long-run comity and infrastructure, whereas short-term renters may have little to no such incentive," he says.

"That's exactly the problem," Hughes told The Lake Report.

Oro-Medonte has had issues with short-term rental clients disrespecting the town's waterfront, fire regulations and noise bylaws, he said.

"In a normal hotel you have management there to control the guests. In these situations you do not," he said.

Hughes said there is a concern in his town that the entire waterfront property of Oro-Medonte, some 18 kilometres of shoreline along Lake Simcoe, could all be converted to short-term rentals.

In Seguin, this has become a very real problem.

Mayor Ann MacDiarmid said the hollowing out of Seguin's community is her

main gripe with short-term rentals.

"I bought my lakeside home to be part of a neighbourhood and I want to know my neighbours," she said.

"And I want them to care for the lake as much as I do. To care for my neighbours, my lake, my forest and everything else."

On some lakes in the municipality, more than 50 per cent of the cottages are being used as short-term rentals, she said. And that is hurting "the enjoyment (of long-term residents)."

"We've got to try and protect, as the township, protect what people bought and the lifestyle they wanted, which is tranquillity, access to the lake, cleanliness, peace," MacDiarmid said.

"You know, everybody has the odd party, but if it's a party every night next door, that's not what people want."

She said the township routinely deals with short-term renters who abuse the environment, the property, practise unsafe boating, have illegal fires and break noise bylaws.

"The people that misbehave with noise or fire regulations tend to be renting for three or four days and tend to be putting way too many people into the allowable space," she said.

MacDiarmid said she is not anti-tourist and believes the township can find a happy medium with tourism.

But, at this point, "I don't know what that could look

like," she said.

She noted some Florida communities mandate rentals cannot be less than a month, thus prohibiting what Venturini referred to as "hit-and-run" tourists.

MacDiarmid also said renters who have been renting the same cottage for many years from close friends can be seen as part of the community, with incentive to respect the area.

She said the township has prosecuted people who own five or six cottages that solely are used for short-term rentals.

In their 2017 study "The Effects of Home Sharing on Housing Prices and Rents," economists Kyle Barron, Edward Kung and Davide Proserpio write "recent research suggests that the sharing economy is increasing societal inequality and financial hardship, and lowering city liveability."

Municipalities should "seek to limit the reallocation of housing stock from long-term rentals to short-term rentals without discouraging the use of home-sharing by owner-occupiers."

As the growth of short-term rentals is a seeming inevitability, a balanced approach to managing them, distinct to each municipality, seems essential.

Next: A look at what approaches some municipalities and planning lawyers are taking to ensure a balance between long-term residents and short-term rentals.



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Dorothy and Erwin with their tractor. EVAN SAUNDERS

## Virgil tractor parade scheduled for Dec. 16

Staff  
The Lake Report

Dorothy Soo-Wiens is organizing a tractor parade in Virgil for Dec. 16 and unbeknownst to her, she was reviving a tradition that hasn't taken place in NOTL for decades.

Wilbert Dick, who was lord mayor in the late 1970s, used to host tractor parades on the May long weekend, Dick's daughter-in-law Eleanor told her.

Soo-Wiens wanted to organize something fun and festive for the agricultural community.

"This is Christmas and we are a farming community. This is a way that our

farming community can give back to Niagara-on-the-Lake," she said.

The parade will start at the Virgil arena at 6 p.m., then head down Four Mile Creek Road to Radiant Care Pleasant Manor.

From Pleasant Manor the tractors will head to Line 1 Road and cut across to Concession 4 before turning onto Line 2 Road to head back to the arena.

Soo-Wiens said 20 growers have offered their time and tractors for the parade.

The St. Davids Lions Club will be sponsoring the event and providing refreshments to the participants after the procession, she said.

## In-person council meetings return Dec. 20, public and media still to attend virtually

Evan Saunders  
Local Journalism Initiative  
The Lake Report

The first in-person Niagara-on-the-Lake council meeting in almost two years will take place on Dec. 20.

Council unanimously voted to hold its next council meeting in council chambers after a report from chief administrator Marnie Cluckie presented the option.

"Yay!" Lord Mayor Betty Disero exclaimed in an interview on Tuesday.

"We'll try it, see how it works and see how many members of council come in," she said.

Councillors will be able to start attending council and committee of the whole meetings on Dec. 20 in the chamber but town staff, media, delegates and residents will still only be able to attend virtually.

That is in order to observe provincial government COVID-19 safety measures that are still in place, Disero said.



Councillors will return to the chamber for meetings on Dec. 20. FILE PHOTO

"It's government regulations as well as how the staff can manage the numbers. If we get a crowd of 30 it's going to be impossible to let them all in at the same time and still maintain social distancing," she said.

"We've got to figure out how we can do it in a safe way."

Councillors will be sitting two metres apart in the chamber in order to maintain social distancing and allow them to speak and attend without wearing

a mask all the time.

They will be required to mask up if they stand, move or speak to anyone without being able to maintain a two-metre distance.

Disero said every councillor has received two doses of a COVID-19 vaccine.

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# Town hall employees **back to office** in January

Evan Saunders  
Local Journalism Initiative  
The Lake Report



Town hall services are planned to resume in January. FILE

The Town of Niagara-on-the-Lake is hoping to welcome people back into municipal headquarters in January.

“I’m really looking forward to the doors being open for the public during business hours,” Lord Mayor Betty Disero said in an interview.

Disero said staff are planning for a partial opening at the beginning of January but she hopes the town hall and other municipal buildings will be fully open by the middle of January.

Administrators are working to implement safety measures inside municipal buildings, including install-

ing safety barriers, stickers on the floor to guide foot traffic and hiring a COVID-19 screening officer for town hall, spokesperson Lauren Kruitbosch said.

The screening officer will be paid for out of COVID-19 aid funds the town has received, chief administrator Marnie Cluckie said.

Some services will require different forms of communication for residents to use them.

For example, payments can be made online, in a dropbox or by walking into town hall, while permit applications can be done online, via a dropbox or through a

scheduled in-person appointment.

A full list of the various services and the way residents can access them will be provided on the town’s website in the coming weeks, Kruitbosch said.

The town will maintain its virtual service options for people who don’t feel comfortable going to town hall yet.

As well, a curbside pick up option will be implemented for items such as dog tags and parking permits, Kruitbosch said.

Of course, all opening decisions are subject to the evolving COVID-19 situation in Ontario, Disero said.

“This is all dependent on what happens with the provincial government,” she said.

# Niagara police make vaccines **mandatory** for all staff

## Unvaccinated employees will have to take rapid COVID tests or face suspension

Staff  
The Lake Report

With COVID-19 cases rising again and worries about new variants, the Niagara Regional Police Service is implementing a vaccination policy for members, as Jan. 4, 2022.

Any members who choose to not disclose their vaccination status or do not receive the vaccine by Jan. 4 will have to show proof of negative results from a rapid-antigen test.

As of the new year, any unvaccinated member or

anyone who won’t disclose their vaccination status and who refuses to be tested will be placed on non-disciplinary unpaid leave.

“A vaccination policy will ensure the on-going health and safety of our members, along with the community that we serve,” acting police Chief Brett Flynn said in a news release.

“This policy is one piece of the puzzle to reassure our members as well as members of the public.”

Police employees will be required to provide proof of vaccination status by Dec.

17, though the force said if any member is unable to be vaccinated under provincial rules, they will be accommodated.

In September, a group calling itself Niagara Regional Police United for Human Rights emailed civilian and uniformed members of the force objecting to any plans to make vaccines a condition of employment.

In an email to The Lake Report at that time, the group said it is composed of members of the force who “have rallied together and are taking a stand for

human rights and upholding the constitution of Canada.”

The group was upset that senior commanding officers ordered the email removed from members’ inboxes within hours. A spokesperson for the Niagara force said the email system is reserved solely for police business.

It is not known how the United for Human Rights group feels about the service’s plan to make rapid COVID tests mandatory. Its organizers did not respond to requests for comment this week.

# Town of NOTL says three staff members on unpaid leave for **failure to comply** with vaccine policy

Continued from Front Page

per cent of staff are fully vaccinated and 100 per cent of councillors.

During a closed session on Monday night, councillors discussed the town’s new vaccine requirement in relation to an unspecified employee.

Monday’s committee of the whole agenda noted that in a private session councillors would discuss “personal matters about an identifi-

able individual, including municipal or local board employees, specifically regarding vaccination policy update.”

In a message to The Lake Report, Lord Mayor Betty Disero said the issue was discussed in a closed session for privacy concerns for the three individuals affected by the town’s policy.

She said she is under a legal obligation not to discuss details of what transpires during a closed session.




“What I will say is I’m very proud of the number of people that have gone for their vaccines,” Disero said during an interview on Tuesday.

The plan for implementation of vaccine rules for

staff and councillors was set in September, but the town held off on bringing the requirement into effect until now so staff could have time to get both doses of a COVID-19 vaccine, Disero said.

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

## COVID Tracker

**NOTL active cases: 12**

**Region active cases: 285**

**Region deaths: 441**

**Region total cases: 19,111**

**Region resolved cases: 18,385**

\*Dec. 8 data per Niagara Region Public Health



**Contributed by Patty Garriock**

“Your success and happiness lies in you. Resolve to keep happy, and your joy and you shall form an invincible host against difficulties.” - Helen Keller

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Crowds packed Queen Street on Friday for the Candlelight Stroll. Most people wore masks. RICHARD HARLEY

## Editorial

# This one's for you

Richard Harley  
Editor-In-Chief

It's not often you get to write an editorial about yourself. But we'll take this opportunity to do a bit of boasting.

As part of Meridian Credit Union's small business contest, The Lake Report was recognized on Wednesday for two special projects we published during the height of the COVID-19 pandemic.

The contest was meant to award businesses that demonstrated resilience and community spirit during the pandemic.

We were humbled to find out we were selected as one of the nine finalists for the awards. While we didn't place in the Top 3, Meridian expanded the contest to award us a prize anyway, based on our work.



We were nominated for our 10-week "Shop Local" promotion, which featured free profiles of 40 NOTL businesses and for our 15-week "Pandemic Heroes" campaign, which highlighted NOTL individuals and groups who went above and beyond during the pandemic.

We didn't do it for prizes or glory. That was never part of the equation.

We did it because we felt it was the right thing to do and was a creative way we could use the tools at our disposal to help this

wonderful community — use our platform as a news publication to connect area businesses with the community and to draw attention to the good deeds of Pandemic Heroes who might otherwise be forgotten.

It was also a bit of paying back and paying it forward. Very early in the pandemic, as many small businesses were forced to close and therefore curb their advertising spending, The Lake Report was struggling financially.

Independent of us, chef Ryan Crawford, who has

been a strong supporter and believer in what we do from the outset, organized a GoFundMe campaign to help our publication when it needed it most. We have since weathered that storm and continue to grow.

But in reality, this award is really for the residents of Niagara-on-the-Lake — you — our readers and our advertisers. You let us in to your lives every week, to tell your stories and to keep you informed about what is happening in your community.

Without any and all of you, none of what we do would matter, nor would it be possible.

So, while this editorial is a bit of a humble brag, the truth is Meridian's award ultimately recognizes what a unique and special community Niagara-on-the-Lake is. This one's for you.

editor@niagaranow.com



## Gateway bump out is going to **cause** accidents

Dear editor:

Highway safety engineers typically avoid dangerous curves and intersections, wherever possible, to mitigate serious or fatal traffic accidents. Not so in NOTL, where we have created an accident waiting to happen at the gateway project.

The bump out intended to direct traffic toward the QEW from Queen Street,

and away from the Chautauqua community, is a trainwreck and by design merges oncoming traffic into a potential head-on collision.

My golf partners from St. Catharines witnessed a near-miss when a high-speed sports car travelling from Chautauqua slammed on the brakes at just this location. In this case it was to avoid

T-boning a car entering from Mississagua Street. Blaring of horns has become commonplace as three cars attempt to negotiate this now freakish intersection.

Considering the inevitable, a serious injury or fatal accident, the personal injury lawyers will have a field day.

In addition to the drivers, should the town, the

Chautauqua residents who wanted traffic rerouted and Gerry Kowalchuk, who is ponying up \$250,000 to fund the gateway project, be concerned about a possible big bucks lawsuit if something terrible happens?

Have they considered this eventuality and reviewed their insurance policy exposures?

Samuel Young  
NOTL

HEY NOTL! WHAT DO YOU WANT FOR DINNER?

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





## Unanimous consent on conversion therapy bill was a **special moment** in Parliament

Tony Baldinelli  
Special to The Lake Report

On Wednesday, Dec. 1, something very special happened in the House of Commons.

Following Question Period, the Conservative shadow minister for justice, Rob Moore, rose from his seat, to declare a unanimous consent motion on government Bill C-4.

This bill would make it a crime to cause another person to undergo conversion therapy and make it a criminal offence to promote or profit from providing the practice.

During this process of calling a unanimous consent motion, all it takes is one dissenter to voice “nay” to nullify the effort and void the motion.

Once Moore concluded, the Speaker of the House twice asked members of Parliament for dissenters to voice their dissent. For a few, short suspenseful seconds, silence engulfed the chamber, before an eruption of applause and cheering broke out from members of



Tony Baldinelli.

all parties present.

It was a jubilant moment, all too rare to witness, and a moment I am very proud to be a part of as your MP for Niagara Falls riding.

A big reason why C-4 was able to be passed through this unanimous consent motion was because a similar bill, codified as Bill C-6, was considered and debated in the previous Parliament. Essentially, a lot of Parliament’s work had already been done at that time.

C-6 had been debated, studied at committee and voted on. It had passed through all stages of the House of Commons. In fact, it was awaiting the final stages of debate in the Senate, when it died suddenly, after Prime Minister Justin Trudeau decided to call a risky and unnecessary

pandemic election.

Another reason why C-4 passed so quickly in this Parliament was because little changed in the House of Commons following the election held in September.

Both major parties hold nearly the same number of seats now as they had before the election, and the leadership figures relevant to this file remain the same as well.

Essentially, the conditions of continuity between elections were a major reason why this legislation passed through so quickly, through a unanimous consent motion this time.

I, and my Conservative colleagues, believe conversion therapy is wrong and it should be banned.

Simply put, no Canadian should ever be forced to change who they are.

Everyone deserves to be treated with dignity and respect, and that is why Canada’s Conservatives ran on a commitment to ban conversion therapy and attempts to forcibly change a person’s sexual identity.

Last week’s unanimous consent motion essentially

sent the legislation back to the Senate for the review process it was precluded from having when the Trudeau government killed its own legislative agenda by calling the September election. And on Dec. 7, the Senate approved Bill C-4.

Far too often, the Trudeau government has delayed important projects, legislation, and in fact the return of Parliament, unless it is beneficial to the Liberals. Bill C-6, for example, had concluded its committee review in December 2020, yet was not called forward by the government and debated in the House of Commons for its final third reading debate until May 2021. By the time the legislation was sent to the Senate that time, it was too late, as the election took place.

Under the leadership of Erin O’Toole, Canada’s Conservatives were pleased to ensure C-4 was passed expediently.

*Tony Baldinelli is Conservative MP for Niagara Falls riding, which includes Niagara-on-the-Lake and Fort Erie.*

## Not impressed with debate on Chautauqua parking

Dear editor:

I just read Evan Saunders’ article on council’s Chautauqua parking debate (“Chautauqua parking debate causes councillor confrontation,” Dec. 2) and all I can say is that councillors Cameron, Burroughs and Cheropita continue to demonstrate that they are unworthy to represent the ratepayers of NOTL.

Coun. Clare Cameron puts forward a motion on her own misguided idea of what parking rules should apply to a neighbourhood that is inundated with illegal tourist parking without consulting the group that fought so hard to get some relief.

She causes an unnecessary “crisis” (her word), while acting like a petulant child when challenged and then disrespects other councillors by at least twice speaking out of turn to interrupt others.



Lord Mayor Betty Disero and Coun. Gary Burroughs frequently spar at council. FILE

Coun. Wendy Cheropita, then for no worthwhile reason, offered to amend the motion to include “consulting with Friends of Ryerson Park and the Chautauqua Residents Association.”

If she had been paying attention for the past four years, she should know that all residents are consulted before any action is taken and that the definition of “resident” includes the

two groups she wanted to add to the motion.

That takes us to Coun. Gary Burroughs, who continues to act like a boor, ignoring the basic rules of decorum and is a disrupting, unproductive force at council. Even when reprimanded, he shows contempt for the lord mayor and the other councillors.

As the 2022 election season approaches let’s hope

that these councillors are held to account and are not re-elected. Rather, let’s elect adults who respect each other, can work together, do not put forward motions on a whim or just to hear themselves, speak when they have something meaningful to say, and will act on behalf of all ratepayers, not their own special interests.

*Joe Accardo  
NOTL*

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## How does majority feel about **Pride** crosswalk?

Dear editor:  
Thank you for publishing my letter, "Argument for rainbow crosswalk is flawed," Dec. 2.  
Although we disagree on this issue, it is appreciated. However, since your editor's note attached to my letter goes beyond the simple disclaimer clause, I do have a few comments to make.  
The issue of setting aside various items was actually suggested by the OUT-niagara writer who was probably not serious at the time but I took it as being literal so as to simplify the argument and reduce it to

the two important and basic issues. This fact was omitted from the letter.  
We now know the position of The Lake Report's staff, but we still do not know with any certainty the position of majority public opinion, which is far more important but seems to be conveniently ignored.  
To suggest that the idea of the crosswalk is anything other than part of a minority agenda is really unconvincing and cannot be taken seriously.  
As you suggest, it is possible that some could construe the mere question-



The Town of NOTL is considering a Pride crosswalk. FILE

ing of LGBTQ motives and agenda and the important need for majority input as evidence of intolerance, but this would seem to me to be just another way of curtailing any undesirable and inconvenient debate.

It will also be noted that, as far as I am aware, not once has public majority opinion on this issue been considered or mentioned in the local media.  
**Derek Collins**  
NOTL

## Put crosswalk to **vote**

Dear editor:  
The debate over having a rainbow crosswalk can be settled easily. Put it on the ballot in the upcoming municipal election: Do

you support the installation of a rainbow crosswalk in NOTL?  
Yes or No ?  
**Sue and Kip Voegel**  
NOTL

## Objection to simple crosswalk **speaks volumes**

Dear editor:  
In objecting to a rainbow crosswalk in Niagara-on-the-Lake ("Argument for rainbow crosswalk is flawed," letter, Dec. 2), Derek Collins shows his true colours.  
He refers to LGBTQ as a "lifestyle," which it obviously is not. A lifestyle is a choice; a sexual orientation is not.

Otherwise, Mr. Collins could choose to be attracted to members of his own sex for awhile, to try out this "lifestyle."  
I invite him to give it a go, and report back to The Lake Report about how it went.  
As for the alleged lack of democratic consultation about the proposed crosswalk paint job, I believe this initiative is backed

by our elected municipal representatives.  
We consult our citizens through elections, among other means. Mr. Collins should run for office if he believes he speaks for a majority in NOTL.  
On one point, I agree with him – the pro-tourism argument is trivial. Until quite recently, LGBTQ folks were legally oppressed in

Canada, and are still subject to legally sanctioned harassment, imprisonment and even execution in much of the world.  
To show support for this historically abused minority by slapping down some rainbow paint is the least that our compassionate community of NOTL can do.  
**Leonard George**  
NOTL

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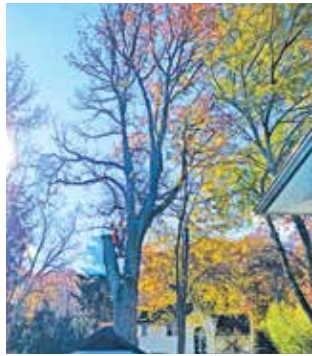
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## Magnificent oak tree was a **hazard** and had to be cut down

Dear editor:  
The magnificent oak is said to be a symbol of strength, morale, resistance and within its massive trunk rings the wisdom of age on which to reflect.  
It is with utmost respect, yet a feeling of sadness to feel a need to write in response to a Nov. 18 letter headlined, "Magnificent oak tree cut down by Chautauqua owner."



The oak tree.

First, this response is not at all meant to devalue the importance of advocacy and conservation groups who work to maintain the area's beauty and special ecosystem that has enhanced each resident, past, present or future who build, vacation or purchase a home in Chautauqua.  
On the contrary, such groups or individuals are much appreciated for their public education and passion to preserve living species, like the oak tree,

and uphold the historical significance of this valued piece of land and community in Niagara.  
Most know each other not only in the gentle waves of its lake but also the neighbourly wave of a hand, be it one of hello among longtime residents, goodbye to those moving on or that of welcome to a visitor or new neighbour moving in. A community filled with all forms of life that mark its own footprint on the land, and yes, included in its character, stands the


magnificent oak tree.  
The dangers, however, in advocacy of a particular cause or point of view arise when assumptions are made and inaccurate statements are put in public print that, maybe without intention, but inadvertently bring down the spirit of a community or one of its residents in the course of such a campaign.  
This lends itself to a larger scar than that on the tree in question. Stating in this context that "some people do not feel empathy for trees" or value them is utterly wrong and a misleading read of this particular oak tree put forth without much thought to its ripple effects.  
It demoralizes the feel of community belonging, the integrity of professional workers involved and undermined NOTL's bylaw process for tree removal – which the owner responsibly upheld.

The letter disrespected the truthful intentions of a resident forced to unexpectedly redirect hard-worked earnings to address an identified issue with this particular oak tree. To report it was "cut down without specific reason" is completely untrue.  
This leaves one wondering how the author of that letter arrived at this conclusion. In fact, the history of this tree's status was not disclosed at the time of purchase and nor was it the owner's desire to cut it down as the letter implied.  
This particular oak tree was assessed by right-ful due process through NOTL's regulatory process of inspection by the assessment report of professional certified tree arborists, reviewed and deemed to meet the bylaw's specific criteria for permit exemption, state of disease and hazardous, to legally and rightfully be


removed from the property – unfortunately at the new owner's unexpected expense.  
Yes, this magnificent oak tree served and sheltered surrounding residents under its vast canopy for many years. Agree, climate change is very real and stronger than in the past. Storms, age and added disease do weaken limbs and trunk, even for a magnificent oak tree.  
I do ask with respect of thought to consider the alternative view. How would it look or read in print, if this owner had chosen to ignore this unexpected task assessed by higher authority and a limb of this oak or, even worse, a crack of its trunk by the next strong wind or ice storm injured or worse took the life of a neighbour, young or old caught in the perimeter below it.  
Would such community

grief be worth that one more trunk ring to boast this particular tree's age to 201 years? Wouldn't its wood repurposed or designated for other good service be a much better way, viewpoint and value to consider in a case such as this?  
Yes, agree, let's open our eyes, but do so with kindness to find the way. And in the age-old wisdom of past elders' advice: "Listen first, then speak." Perch from another tree branch to gain a bird's-eye view of the larger picture, the full circle, the truths, and yes the value in every life and circumstance that may stand before us.  
Live in harmony, not strife, with both nature and mankind, in respect of all who live and share the land. Now that would truly reflect the kind, peaceful spirit of Chautauqua's neighbourly wave of its hand.  
**Penny Marrone**  
St. Catharines

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# ‘The Smithy’ relocated to Queen Street

Richard Harley  
The Lake Report

Niagara-on-the-Lake’s historic “Smithy” has been moved to its new and “final” resting place.

The building, weighing more than 60,000 pounds, was relocated from its temporary home on Gate Street by a crane on Nov. 26, and will now be a part of the new expansion of 124 on Queen Hotel & Spa.

The building, which was once William Gollop’s blacksmith shop, dates back as far as the 1920s and has seen many uses in the past, including housing Canada’s first museum of the paranormal, a front desk reception area for the hotel, luxury guestrooms and an executive meeting space.

The building was originally located in the laneway behind Gollop’s family home at 118 Queen St. (which now houses the Budapest Bakery and Oliv Tasting Room) and has been a part of the 124 on Queen Hotel & Spa property in recent years.

It has been carefully moved several times within the block of Victoria, Queen



“The Smithy” was moved by crane on Nov. 26 to its new home on Queen Street. SUPPLIED

and Gate streets while the property and surrounding areas expanded, said Amanda Hansen, director of sales for 124 on Queen.

Hansen said 124 on Queen recognizes “the importance of having been entrusted with a number of historical buildings both as a part of the 124 on Queen property and of the Niagara-on-the-Lake guest experience and we carefully consider how to best maximize their usage while preserving the important

historical features and stories of the buildings themselves.”

She said the building was “carefully moved by a team of experts to its final resting place, where it can continue to be cherished with the other historical buildings comprising 124 on Queen Hotel & Spa.”

Plans are for the building to be incorporated into the extension of the hotel property and “nestled into the back gardens of the 124 on Queen grounds,” Hansen said.

“The inside will be refreshed and the surrounding will be landscaped so that the original building fits in seamlessly with the expansion of the property and the gardens that will be located onsite.”

She said 124 on Queen is “continually appreciative of the support of the Niagara-on-the-Lake residents in the expansion of the property and look forward to sharing many new exciting areas for guests and locals to enjoy.”



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# Details of case unclear until trial shines more light

Continued from Front Page

our daughter. She could pick up the phone and call numerous people and have an (airplane) ticket (home)."

The presence of a pink suitcase was widely reported by the media, to John's frustration.

"It's not like Ashley to pick up a stupid pink suitcase, which she never had — that was sort of a ploy — that she would take that suitcase and hitchhike home would never happen," John said.

"It was a stupid, God awful story that never would have happened, but they had everyone believing. There's no pink suitcase, never was."

The entire process of dealing with Favell and his family was difficult from the onset, he said.

"(Police) weren't allowed on the property and the landlord wouldn't let the search and rescue on the property. They needed a warrant," he said.

To make matters worse, John's youngest daughter Amanda was one of the first people to fly out to Yankee Flats and inquire about her sister's disappearance.

"Derek's mother threatened to cut her throat," John said.

He said the entire community in Yankee Flats seemed against him.

After Ashley vanished, John travelled to B.C. annually for three years to personally search the woods and mountains in the area for any trace of his daughter.

"Nobody, nobody from the area helped," he said.

Five women have been reported missing in that area, north of Dawson Creek, in the last five years, he said.

"Caitlyn Potts was the first one to go missing in that area. Nobody searched for her till after I left and we had a search party for Ashley. Can you imagine? Nothing in the community, nobody. It was just up to the parents to try and trace (their child's whereabouts)," he said.

"The RCMP said, 'People don't come out here to be found. They come out here to disappear.'"



John Simpson says a beam of light shone through the clouds, illuminating the spot where Ashley's remains were discovered. FACEBOOK

The isolated community was even antagonistic.

"The people I talked to in the shanties and in weird places, (said), 'We don't want you here. We don't want you bringing in the police and the media.' People get shot out there for little or nothing," John said.

"We'd go off down logging roads and there'd be people out there with guns. In some capacity, they were leading us astray."

Ashley "was new and (Favell) had been there a while. That was his community."

The other aspect of the Simpson family's continuing fight is in aiding and increasing awareness of the plight of missing persons and their families.

After three years of organizing search parties, John couldn't bear the mental anguish of always returning having found nothing.

"It was so hard to come back empty-handed. It just tore the soul right out of you," he said.

"My first year I did it myself with my kids and their friends from work. I'm rappelling down creek beds."

In his second year of searches, John met Jody Leon from the Missing and Murdered Indigenous Drone Search Team and started fundraising for the organization.

But even with allies,

John needed to be directly involved in the search for his daughter.

"My goal was to have boots on the ground and drones in the air. So, I caught up with Shane Michaels," he said.

Together with Michaels, John founded Wings for Mercy, which relies on volunteers across the country and around the world to fly drones over remote areas and send pictures and video footage back to Michaels to try to locate missing men, women and children.

John is on the organization's board of directors now and plans to stay involved long after Ashley is brought home.

"We need pictures back on mailboxes, we need faces out there so people can see them," he said.

He said the advent and proliferation of drones is a great tool in the search for missing persons.

"You can cover so much land so much quicker with one drone than with 20 guys on the ground," he said.

"We're just going headstrong."

Helping other families who are suffering the same way the Simpsons have is the single positive John can generate out of the pain of losing his daughter.

"One bad thing happened and one good thing happened out of that and we'll

be going on forever," he said.

As Ashley's case is an active criminal investigation, even the Simpson family is still in the dark on the details surrounding the discovery of Ashley's remains.

John does know that she was found a little over a week ago and RCMP officers visited the family in NOTL last Friday to inform them.

"They had a strong idea of where she was. They went there and there was too much snow so they had to come back in a couple of days," he said.

"It was a cloudy day and the only light was a beam of light coming out of the sky and it shone right on her, shining right on Ashley's body," he said.

"It was uncanny. (The officer) said it was just like in the movies. No light around, just this beam of light shining right on Ashley."

John said the police have told him the body was found "close" to Yankee Flats.

"I don't know what that means," he said.

John can only speculate on the details of why his daughter was killed.

"Was it a domestic dispute gone wrong? We don't know because he never came forward, never did anything," he said.

"Was it premeditated, knowing that she was going

to leave? The last picture we ever got of her was up above Margaret Falls and, to me, she looked scared."

Finally knowing has brought the family some level of closure, John says.

But the finality of the discovery has been very painful as well.

"My youngest daughter (Amanda) is a complete mess. She's just, she's trying to get better," he said.

It's been difficult for Amanda's four kids, his grandchildren. Ashley was their favourite aunt, he said.

"When they found out she was coming home, they thought she was coming home alive. So, they've got to deal with the death," he said.

John said he has a good grasp on death as a natural part of life, but the way his daughter was taken from him is different.

"When something's taken from you suddenly, you can't really prepare for that shit. It's just impossible."

The secrecy of Favell and not knowing what happened to Ashley only made the years more difficult.

"You think every day, 'Well, where is she? Am I going to see her walking up the street? Am I going to see her on the streets of Saudi Arabia? Will somebody say they just saw her in a crack house on the streets of Vancouver?'" he said.

"You just don't know. Everybody tells you something and yet nobody's telling you anything."

Every time the family got a tip or heard a story the cycle of pain began all over again. John said the family received many psychic predictions about their daughter.

"(Amanda) would just jump on a plane when she got one and just go, and I'm saying, 'You can't do that.' I did it for three years. It was always nothing. It's the worst, worst feeling," he said.

John said his oldest granddaughter has been having a very tough time.

"I actually took her the third year with me, we actually had a big session with the Indigenous women, just to show her what we were doing, that we weren't just

looking through pictures. We were actually plodding through land," he said.

"But I think coming home empty-handed took a big toll on her."

John said he has remained strong for his family through the last five years but is still unprepared for actually having his daughter's remains brought home.

"That day is when it's really gonna finally hit home. I've been pretty strong, trying to hide, cry at night or go somewhere, to be strong because I don't want my kids to see me break down," he said.

"But when I have to get up there and give my spiel about her (at the funeral), I think that's gonna affect me most. That's when they're going to have to take me away."

John remembers his daughter as a bubbly and adventurous woman.

"Everybody who met Ashley loved her. She had this ability to draw children to her, she was the best auntie, all my nieces loved her. My oldest grandson, he's got her car and he's still driving it."

But Ashley was more than just a child for John, she actually worked with him as well.

"She was my protegee. Anywhere I worked, Ashley would follow me," he said.

John has worked his whole life as a cook, working aboard container ships and in remote work camps all over Canada and on the world's oceans.

"If I needed somebody that I could depend on, she would come. I didn't just lose a child, I lost a co-worker, the person who was gonna take over for me in my shoes. I don't have that anymore. Everybody else is too busy. That's a hard one for me."

"When I finally have to (say goodbye), that's when I'm gonna lose it," John said, his eyes filling with tears.

*The Simpson family faced extreme financial hardship trying to find Ashley. Donations can be made at [gofund.me/45150a5f](https://gofund.me/45150a5f) to help the family attend court cases in B.C. and bring Ashley home.*



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# Hundreds of artworks find **new homes** at Pumphouse sale

Evan Saunders  
Local Journalism Initiative  
The Lake Report

More than 250 pieces of art have found new homes thanks to the Niagara Pumphouse Arts Centre's art sale.

"We've had an amazing four days because we had the members show on Dec. 1 and then on Thursday and Friday and today, it's just been crazy," Pumphouse board chair Lise Andreana said in an interview Saturday.

It was the first time the Pumphouse has held an art sale, let alone one featuring more than 300 works of art.

"We've just had an amazing crew of volunteers helping out," Andreana said.

The 300 works were donated by artists and from people's private collections.

Andreana said this means the Pumphouse will have to skip the sale next year and just focus on its Treasure Sale.

"I suspect we'll do it every second year. The donors need time to accumulate some inventory," she said with a laugh.

"We have artists that are hoping (the Treasure Sale) comes back and our patrons like it too."

Some of Andreana's art was on display as well.

"This is the foil so people buy other stuff," Andreana joked about her own work.

The art sale coincided with the Rotary Club's Holiday House Tour this year.

People "are used to coming here this weekend because of the house tour," said Judy Thornton, who volunteers with the Pumphouse.

Thornton said people had been showing up at the Pumphouse all day Friday and Saturday because of the house tour only to be greeted with the pleasant surprise of an art sale.

One couple who had no idea the art sale was going on until they showed up for the house tour was Liz and George Bouwmeester from Hamilton.

"It was perfect because we love art," Liz said.

George said the couple had come down to NOTL on Friday and were just wrapping up a lovely weekend in town by visiting the Pumphouse.

Architect Paul Gordon was perusing the artwork on Saturday and said he feels like he has a kinship with visual artists through his line of work.

"I love art and I'm in the art line myself. I'm not an



Liz and George Bouwmeester admire some of the art on display at the Pumphouse on Saturday. EVAN SAUNDERS

artist, I'm an architect, so I appreciate things like this," Gordon said as he looked at a Raymond Martin painting.

"I saw the ad in The Lake Report and I always come down here when there's a new exhibit," Gordon said.

The featured artist for the sale was Martin, a Toronto-born painter who lived many years in the Niagara region.

Martin died in 2015 and used to teach at the Pumphouse, artist Gail Kerr said

in an interview.

Martin drew inspiration from his favourite artists, the Group of Seven. His style does not emulate them but rather his choice of subjects, his website biography says.

# Crawford aims to **smash** last year's Newark Neighbours fundraising goal

Staff  
The Lake Report

Niagara-on-the-Lake chef Ryan Crawford is once again donating 25 per cent of the proceeds of Ruffino's holiday gift cards to Newark Neighbours to help food-insecure families.

Last year he raised \$5,000 for the charity and this year he's hoping he can double the amount.

Crawford said he believes food security should be a basic human right.

"Access to healthy, delicious, nutritious food is a right for everyone. But with rising food costs it's unattainable for almost nine per cent of Canadians. Food insecurity is a problem," he said.

"We have broken social networks that need to be fixed. Basic necessities of

life should be available to all. We feel we have an obligation to help provide this to everyone. Even this Sunday we're headed to St. Catharines to help serve over 150 meals to the homeless with Out of the Cold," Crawford said.

"Food brings us together, gives us warmth and we want everyone to enjoy healthy nutritious food this holiday season."

# Lake Report's 'Pandemic Heroes' and 'Shop Local' projects win **\$1,000** in Meridian business contest

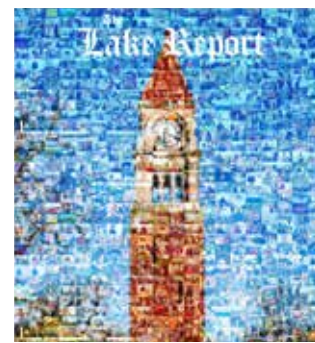
Staff  
The Lake Report

It's not every day newspapers are recognized for the hard work they do to keep a community informed, provide stories about local people and contribute to documenting the history of their communities.

But this week, The Lake Report was honoured with a special prize for two of its special initiatives during the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic.

The Lake Report was one of nine finalists in Meridian Credit Union's small business contest. The contest nominees had to show "resilience, innovation and community spirit" in the face of the pandemic.

Through the pandemic, The Lake Report embarked on two particular projects to help our community through the pandemic — a 15-week series of full-page advertising features that profiled NOTL's "Pandemic Heroes" and a 10-week, full-page feature called "Shop Local," which highlighted four NOTL small businesses each week to encourage people to shop



locally.

Both projects also included advertising support from community businesses that co-sponsored the pages.

"The inspiration, gratitude and pride we felt reading all the nominations is truly immeasurable," said Joel Ayotte, a senior campaign strategist for Meridian.

The Lake Report's team would like to acknowledge that our success was really a reflection of the community spirit in NOTL, said owner and editor Richard Harley.

"When NOTL businesses started shutting down due to COVID, we saw firsthand the effect it was having on them, and us through association as our business relies directly on advertising," Harley said.

"So in true NOTL fashion, we did what we thought any of those businesses would do for us. We used our platform to make a call to residents to shop locally, and offered free business advertorials to any interested businesses. The result was a series that featured 40 of NOTL's fantastic businesses. So while it feels great to be recognized for our efforts, we must also thank our readers, our advertisers and all of NOTL's pandemic heroes, too."

As a finalist, the newspaper receives a \$1,000 cash prize from Meridian. As well, a short write-up about The Lake Report's submission has been posted on Meridian's website at meridiancu.ca/business-banking/meet-the-small-business-contest-finalists.

It says: "Over 50 local papers across Canada have closed since the pandemic began. Their reliance on advertising from local businesses has decimated their revenue, leaving many communities without a reliable source for local news. When it seemed like all news was bad news, though, The Lake Report created its own good news."



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# Rezza Brothers top 1 million annual Spotify streams

Evan Saunders  
Local Journalism Initiative  
The Lake Report



Adrian Rezza and Lucas Rezza talk about the importance of execution for artists. EVAN SAUNDERS

Niagara-on-the-Lake musicians the Rezza Brothers are bracing themselves for a new album drop while their music gets featured on the “Real Housewives of Miami.”

After a 10-year hiatus, the “Real Housewives of Miami” is returning for a fourth season and will have more music from NOTL’s Adrian and Lucas Rezza.

“They’re using another song we did with one of the housewives back in 2015,” Lucas Rezza said in an interview Wednesday.

In 2015, under their group name 80 Empire, the Rezza Brothers recorded a track with reality TV star Adriana de Moura. That track is now being used as the music for the reality show’s fourth-season trailer.

The duo originally produced the theme song for the show back in 2010 and it will return as the main theme for the new season.

The musicians have kept themselves busy. They released an album, “Legacy”,

in January 2021. Its fifth track, “Take It Back,” has already surpassed 1 million streams on Spotify.

And they are bracing themselves for another record release on Dec. 10. “Anthems and Icons” has been in production for just under a year and sees the duo working with hip-hop artists across North America, including bona fide music and hip-hop legend Darryl Matthews McDaniels, the DMC from Run-DMC, known for their genre crossing hit “Rock This Way” recorded with Aerosmith.

DMC heard one of the

group’s tracks earlier this year and reached out to them.

“He said, ‘Hey man, when I heard the track it was like good news, finally some good stuff coming out of hip-hop again,’” Lucas said.

Lucas is honoured to be working with the certified legend.

“That guy paved the way for every single rap group in the history of rap and broke barriers, colour-wise. Those were the first guys of colour to be on MTV.”

“To have a guy like that bless us and say that it’s an honour for him to be work-

ing with us. It’s like, I’m done. I’m good,” Lucas said with a laugh.

The album also features contributions from KXNG Crooked, MC Eiht, Kurupt and Swifty McVay from D12, among many others.

Lucas and his brother are real hip-hop and music lovers and that has always inspired their desire for collaboration with other talent.

“We wanted to include the MCs that we grew up with and a lot of younger up-and-coming artists as well,” he said.

The album goes through many emotions that reflect the state of life in 2021, Lucas said.

“It’s kind of a whirlwind of what’s been going on in the world and everything we’ve kind of been through with COVID,” he said.

“It’s a cool kind of amalgamation of what everybody’s been going through. Sometimes you want to punch somebody in the head, sometimes you want to break down and cry and sometimes you just want to get up and dance.”

The group had a listening party at Spirit in Niagara

distillery a few weeks ago where they went through the album track by track with good friends and peers.

“It was great to have some sort of normalcy for three hours. Everyone was double-vaccinated, everybody was in our mindset,” Lucas said.

Recording during a pandemic meant that artists’ contributions needed to be recorded in disparate locations across the continent, he said.

Someone like Swifty McVay, who usually records in a studio, bought recording equipment because of the pandemic, which made it easy for him to collaborate.

“If I call him now and say, ‘Hey, Swift man, I need a verse,’ he’s like, ‘I got you.’ And then that night or the next day he sends something over.”

Being under lockdown also caused the brothers to start actively reaching out to artists outside of their usual circle.

“We really took it upon ourselves to connect with people we maybe wouldn’t have before,” he said.

Lucas said, though he’s

become good friends with most of them, he’s never met in person roughly half the musicians he is working with right now.

He stressed that the Rezza Brothers don’t just create beats and have artists rap or sing over them.


“This is a real curated project. Every song is meticulous, every song was really made with purpose,” he said.

“We knew who we were picking. It wasn’t like, ‘This guy doesn’t fit the track,’ or, ‘He’s not feeling it.’ It was all like, ‘I’m on it. Done. Give me a couple days or give me two weeks,’ and then boom, it’s done.”

The artists are independent and run their own studio, Gladiator Records, in NOTL. They don’t get government grants and they believe in the value of the hustle.

“It’s all blood, sweat and tears. This is Adrian and I, and our partner Will, just hustling,” he said.

“It’s us working every avenue and beating the pavement and never taking no for an answer and that’s why we’re kind of where we are right now.”



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Vanessa Sears with the cast of *Holiday Inn* (2021). Photo by David Cooper. Shane Carty (*Damn Yankees*), Julie Lumsden (*Gaslight*). Photos by Peter Andrew Luszyk.

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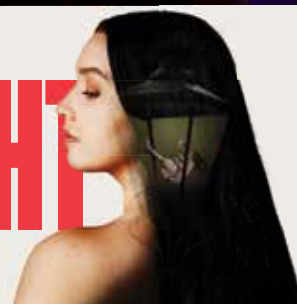
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# FEATURED



Niagara-on-the-Lake's downtown is all dressed up with Christmas decorations lining the shops and street. From left: Wine Country Vintners, BeauChapeau's workshop and Budapest Bakeshop

# It's beginning to look a lot like Christmas

Evan Saunders  
Local Journalism Initiative  
The Lake Report

One highlight of the season in Niagara-on-the-Lake is walking down Queen Street during the holidays and soaking in the spirit of Christmas and winter.

That's why this week we wanted to feature some of the well-decorated storefronts that line the historic quarter and show our appreciation for the hard work those businesses do to make it feel like the holidays when December comes around.

From the bright splendour of BeauChapeau Hat Shop to the well-done trees in windows at places like the Shaw Box

Office and Wine Country Vintners, there are lights and colours galore.

"It lightens everyone's spirits and just makes everyone really happy," said Meghan Harrison, a hatter at BeauChapeau.

Like many NOTL retailers, BeauChapeau decorates its windows every year.

"The owner was in the other day and he was doing all of the garlands and everything," Harrison said.

BeauChapeau has two sets of windows at the front of the store and each presents a picturesque view of holiday decor.

"We do it at night, after the store's closed and everything. It usually takes a couple of hours of hard

work and a lot of planning," she said.

"Every year we do different Christmas windows. Last year, when everything was shut down one of our windows had a 'shop local' kind of thing."

Other dazzling displays can be found at Just Christmas (of course), Rocky Mountain Chocolate Factory, Budapest Bakeshop, Greaves, Victoria Gallery to name just a few.

Unfortunately, we couldn't fit every store in, but we encourage all of our readers to head to Queen Street late in the day to enjoy the extravagant holiday displays that can be seen in stores from Picton to Simcoe streets.



Left: Just Christmas is aptly decorated for the season. Right: Through the window a worker at R

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...p. Amid the cold nights, some life can still be spotted through the windows as staff members work. EVAN SAUNDERS PHOTOS

# mas in downtown NOTL



Rocky Mountain Chocolate Factory can be seen in action. EVAN SAUNDERS/RICHARD HARLEY

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 Also answered correctly (in order) by: Terry Nord, Pam Dowling, Wendy Bosela, Margie Enns, Maria Janeiro, Wade Durling, Wesley Turner, Doug Bruce, Sheila Meloche, Rob Hutchison

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Proud winners of NOTL's Choice Awards 2020



Musical theatre students from the Yellow Door Theatre Project perform holiday favourites and Disney songs out front of the McArthur Estate. EVAN SAUNDERS

# Rotary's Holiday House Tour raises **\$120,000** for charity

Evan Saunders  
Local Journalism Initiative  
The Lake Report

Fundraising may be returning to normal as more than 3,100 people bought tickets for the Rotary Club's Holiday House Tour over the weekend.

"It should make, all for charity, about \$120,000," said Niagara-on-the-Lake Rotary Club member Jamie Knight.

Pre-COVID, in 2019, the tour raised \$130,000.

Hitting \$120,000 this year is a sign that fundraising and life for Rotarians is getting closer to normal, Knight said.

"We're getting back into the swing of things. This is an annual event and it's the cornerstone of what Rotary does here in Niagara-on-the-Lake," he said.

All in, the holiday tour is the single biggest fundraising event the club hosts throughout the year, Lord Mayor Betty Disero said as she worked the front gate at the McArthur estate on John Street East, the last destination for many enjoying the



Left: Some of Santa's reindeer were hanging out in the garage at the McArthur estate. MAY CHANG



Right: Dozens of people were lined up to see some of the houses on the Holiday House Tour. EVAN SAUNDERS

tour.

The event was organized last year but pandemic restrictions forced its cancellation less than five days before it was scheduled to happen, said Fran Boot, one of the organizers.

"It was really painful. I almost had to go for therapy after," Boot joked.

"It's not just a fundraiser for me. It's all about the community getting together," she said.

More than 140 volunteers were manning seven homes across NOTL, ensuring the lines didn't get too long and

that everyone was sure to wear a mask and take off their shoes when entering a home, Boot said.

Boot thanked Brenda and Blair McArthur for making their home the centrepiece of the Holiday House Tour for the last several years.

Touring the McArthur estate is a little more intimate than the rest of the homes on the tour, Boot said.

Intimacy "wouldn't be possible at one of the seven houses because they have 3,000 people coming through in two days," she said.

Touring the seven houses around NOTL was a free-for-all, with ticket holders showing up anytime between 9 a.m. and 5 p.m. at any of the homes.

Tours of the McArthur property required a separate ticket and people had to book a specific time slot in advance.

"Because we're limited with COVID, maximum 100 people on the property and 25 in the house, we had to do it this way," Boot said.

The staggered starts for the McArthur estate proved popular as they

enabled people to stay on the property for a little longer and not feel rushed by a large line of people behind them.

In fact, it might be the new norm for the tour, she said.

After being led through a guided tour of the estates grounds, everyone stopped outside of the house to see a special performance by kids from the Yellow Door Theatre Project. Other groups, including the Bethany Mennonite Church bell choir, also entertained.

With Yellow Door, some

12 little thespians performed Christmas classics and Disney songs, treating people to energetic renditions of "Hakuna Matata," "Winter Wonderland," "Fathoms Below" from "The Little Mermaid" and others.

For \$40 for adults and \$10 for children, families were able to spend this past Friday and Saturday visiting homes expertly decorated for the holidays.

"We've come down to appreciate the lovely decorations and enjoy the house tour," Toronto resident Heather McVeigh said outside a home on Simcoe Street.

McVeigh and her family got into NOTL on Saturday morning to soak up some holiday spirit.

While excited for a weekend of wineries and holiday cheer, McVeigh said she was disappointed she missed the Candlelight Stroll on Friday night.

"It's noted for next year," she said. "This is our first time down in Niagara-on-the-Lake for the holidays."



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Willow Cakes & Pastries donates an edible Christmas spread every year to the Rotary Club's Holiday House Tour. This year some of the features were a large chocolate Santa, a gingerbread log cabin, various Christmas ornaments, and a spread of their finest freshly baked breads for a homey feel. SUPPLIED PHOTOS

## NOTL bakery **decorates** Holiday House Tour

Richard Harley  
The Lake Report

Each year, the Niagara-on-the-Lake Rotary Club's Holiday House Tour has a special, sweet addition, thanks to the generosity of Willow Cakes & Pastries bakery.

This year was no exception, as the bakery donated another Christmas display. This time it was featured at 282 Nassau St.

The display contained a two-foot chocolate Santa, a gingerbread log cabin, cakes and pies and chocolate Christmas bulbs. It was a wintry display that showcases some of the fine work the bakery does, says Willow co-owner Sean O'Donnell.

The whole display took some 140 kilograms of chocolate to produce, with about six employees spending a combined 60 hours to make the magic happen.

"When we do our displays we like to showcase the holiday feel ... mainly that's in cookies and gingerbread and chocolate works," O'Donnell said.

"When you go into the houses that we decorate, Nassau for example, it's a lot of chocolate work.

You're seeing high-calibre chocolate that's been tempered and poured into a mould, and it's been painted, whether it be by hand or with an airbrush."

Some of the decorations, like the giant Santa, are yearly decorations, while others are new, creative ideas from the bakery.

"(Santa) is a hollow shell of chocolate but he's hand-painted and painstakingly poured so that everything is smooth and that it's thick enough to stand, but not heavy," O'Donnell said.

One of the new features he was proud of was a unique spin on a gingerbread house.

"We had a gingerbread log cabin that was in the display this year, which was really fun," he said.

"Your average gingerbread house is very flat and has just flat sides, flat roof — this shows texture and technique. And we always make it look wintry, like it's out in the woods or something."

"So we use icing to create icicles and icing sugars create a snow effect and we bring in some non-edible products like rolled cotton to create big snowscapes across the tables. So it's

a mixture. It's like 98 per cent handcrafted with maybe two per cent outside materials."

Willow also sculpted a scale-model gingerbread house of the McArthur estate on John Street East as part of that home's display. It was created mainly by returning pastry chef Ryan Mallin.

The whole display would normally cost "thousands" of dollars, but O'Donnell says the bakery is happy to do it to help the Rotary Club — and to showcase the skills of the bakery to the people taking the tour.

"We get exposure," he said.

Most of the ideas for the wintry displays come from Catherine O'Donnell, Sean's mother who has a history of designing creative displays, such as the famous Canada Day cakes.

O'Donnell says while 140 kilos of chocolate may seem like a lot, when you look at the display, it's largely because the chocolate has to be poured and tempered to make sure the displays last.

"It has to have sustainability and longevity. So, it's not that we're pouring it thick, but you have to pour

it perfect, and constantly keeping it on temper and on point," he said.

For perspective, he noted, the Santa alone contains about six pounds of chocolate.

However, the display wasn't just chocolate. It also included an arrangement of breads and pastries.

"While we try to represent a theme, we always try to represent the kitchen culture that we have, and that it's not just pastry and it's not just chocolate. We had our head bread baker make some of her most beautiful breads. And we put those as a little display because we were trying to create not just a winterscape but also a homey atmosphere."

He said the bakery team enjoyed putting things together in its small kitchen for the house tour.

"They keep the smile on their face and they're having fun and at the same time they're learning because Chef Catherine just has that creative mindset and she's always willing to teach the staff new things. So they're learning while executing and perfecting all at the same time and that's what's really cool."



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# Writers' Circle fosters collaboration and inspiration

Evan Saunders  
Local Journalism Initiative  
The Lake Report

Through extensive collaboration, the Niagara-on-the-Lake Writers' Circle has provided the inspiration for many residents to become authors.

"People who think that writing is a solitary thing are wrong. They need to join a group," NOTL author Marie Kelly said outside of the Books in a Barn event the group held on Dec. 4 in Old Town.

Kelly was selling her book "Secretary for the Billionaire."

Being part of a group, writers "get the support and they get the editing help, they get everything they need. We all help each other," she said.

Kelly started writing in 2010 and became an iTunes bestseller.

"So, I was good at it, the stories anyway," she said. "But the writing itself, I struggled with the editing and everything. Finally, I joined the writers' group."

Kelly said asking people close to you to help edit



The NOTL Writers' Circle at their Books in a Barn event. EVAN SAUNDERS

your work is not always the best choice.

"Your friends or family will never give the book the eye it needs," she said.

Writers' Circle members are always willing to aid each other with editing and give constructive feedback to how a story might improve or grow.

After Patricia Nicholls-

Papernick's mother died, she decided to write a book about her and her struggle with Alzheimer's. The Writers' Circle recommended she expand the story and bring in other members of her family, specifically her father.

"And that's how 'Annie and Fred' got made," Papernick said about her

first book.

Papernick wrote and published two books this year, the aforementioned "Annie and Fred" and "Season of Miracles."

She had never written a book before joining the Writers' Circle.

"One of the questions I asked after being at the first meeting was, 'Is everyone

here an author?' And they were like, 'Relatively, ya,'" Papernick said.

"If I had known I might not have joined. And then, here (my first book) is. I'm now one of them!" she exclaimed.

Paul Masson worked as an economist and published many non-fiction articles. But switching to creative and fictional writing proved challenging, Masson said.

Masson, who hosted the book sale, was showcasing his anthology "The ABC Files: A Collection of Three Novels."

Richard West is one of the most seasoned writers in the group. He began writing in 1993 and wrote on and off for 20 years.

"I didn't start writing seriously until I joined the Writers' Circle six years ago," West said.

He's published four books in the last five years. Two of them belong to a series titled "Lightning People."

"I'm very proud that I did it. I've really done it for me but hopefully some other people might like reading it. Sometimes they do," he joked.

"I do!" Papernick chimed in.

West has also turned his work into audiobooks for those who enjoy that form of digesting literature.

The veteran writer among the group is Sharon Frayne, who worked as a reporter for the St. Catharines Standard when she was still in high school.

She got a degree in journalism from Western University and then worked as an English teacher.

Now retired, she is happy to be writing full-time, Frayne said.

Her 2016 book, "Caught Between The Walls," is a historical novel that tells the story of British orphans who were shipped to NOTL and sold into indentured servitude out of the old NOTL jail, she said.

The old jail was located where Rye Park now sits. "Four thousand orphans came to Niagara-on-the-Lake," she said.

Information on members of NOTL's Writers' Circle and links to their books can be found on the group's website, notlwriterscircle.com



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The Botbyl family led the stroll on a horse and carriage. EVAN SAUNDERS

## Thousands flock to Candlelight Stroll

Evan Saunders  
Local Journalism Initiative  
The Lake Report

Niagara-on-the-Lakers and people from across the province came out to celebrate the return of the Candlelight Stroll on Friday night.

More than a thousand people gathered outside of the Old Town courthouse to participate in one of NOTL's definitive events and one of the finest holiday celebrations Canada has to offer.

"We come here almost every year and, honestly, it's fabulous," Richmond Hill resident Bruno Mariani said.

Mariani and his wife Ann have been driving down to NOTL for more than a decade just to take part in the annual stroll.

Bruno said the weather on Friday night made it the best event in years.

"It's like summer out here compared to what we've been through here with snow and rain, for years it was like that," he said.

"The first year we were here, now we're talking maybe ten years ago, it was so cold, minus nine or minus 10. We said there was no way we were going to make it through this stroll."

"We went straight to a pub and 15 minutes later it was packed."

But on Friday night the weather was mild, the sky was clear and there was hardly a brush of wind.

Being able to participate in such a wonderful event at what is hopefully the tail end of the pandemic made it all the more special, Ann said.

"It's truly like a celebration," she said.

"We're happy just to get back to a little bit of normality."

"I think we appreciate it more," Bruno said.

The couple said they would definitely be back for next year's stroll.

At the centre of the stage on Friday night was Virgil resident Devon Botbyl, an 18-year-old who has a rare chromosome disorder that causes global delays and autistic tendencies.

He also just beat a cancer diagnosis.

His enthusiasm as he waited inside the courthouse to greet the crowd was palpable.

"That's the most beautiful thing," MPP Wayne Gates said as he watched Devon elbow bump everyone he could and exclaim how excited he was.

"Words can't even express how grateful we are," Dani Botbyl, Devon's mother, said.

"From the bottom of our

hearts, thank you to the whole community."

Lord Mayor Betty Disero was on hand to celebrate the night with Devon.

She said when she first arrived at the courthouse there was no one outside and she was worried there was going to be a bad turnout for the event.

But when 6:45 p.m. struck and Devon and his family walked out of the front doors of the courthouse they were greeted by a veritable throng of more than a thousand people, many were chanting Devon's name and holding up candles.

Devon, with the help of his family, got out of his wheelchair and walked down the steps of the courthouse to heartily wish everyone a "Merry Christmas."

He was then taken to the back of the Court House to lead the stroll in a horse-drawn carriage. Last week, Devon mentioned to The Lake Report that one of his favourite horses who works in town is Cinderella.

Cinderella is exactly the horse that gently pulled Devon and his family through town that night.

"I'm just happy for Devon," his younger sister Elise said.

"I'm thrilled, I'm thrilled that Devon is the recipient for the fundraising this year.

He's such a special boy, he's very loving," Disero said.

"Hopefully next year we'll get to do it again."

Not only was the turnout great, but events co-ordinator for the chamber Nicole Cripps was enthused that thousands of people were respecting COVID-19 safety guidelines.

"I love that the sea of people were all wearing their masks. That makes me feel so much better," Cripps said.

There were a few less bands and choirs than during a usual year but music could be heard up and down Queen Street and around the neighbouring blocks.

There is no tally yet for the money raised through candle sales for the Botbyls, but chamber president Eduardo Lafforgue noted that "we sold a lot of candles."

Lafforgue was happy that what he sees as one of NOTL's most definitive events was able to happen this year.

"This is the most important thing. And even until last week there were people telling us that maybe we could not do it. So, we were scared," he said.


But this year's Candlelight Stroll will surely go down as one of the best in NOTL's history, Lafforgue said.



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## SINKING OF THE FOAM

# Maritime tragedy still captures local imagination

*Continued from Front Page*

in mystery and many fundamental questions remain impossible to answer ...

The cemetery at St. Mark's Anglican Church is considered the oldest in the province, recording its first burials in 1782.

It is nestled on a gently rolling, well-treed plot, just behind the church founded by Robert Addison a decade later. It has remained largely unchanged for almost 240 years.

The gravestones tell poignant stories of the life and times of the first capital of Upper Canada and all the decades since.

The cemetery is peaceful, almost bucolic, an oasis of calm amid small-town bustle.

It's not surprising that Helen Ferley and her black cockapoo, Ambrose, are among a small legion of locals and tourists who wander the cemetery, looking for both history and serenity.

Ferley found the small fenced grave site of the Foam just this past spring while on her regular morning walk about town.

The gravesite, erected in 1874 or thereabouts, is some 36 feet by 25 feet, surrounded by a low wrought-iron fence, one whole section long-since removed. The central six-foot tall limestone monolith is cracked and largely unreadable, yet still reminiscent of its former grandeur.

Seven small headstones, each named for one of the Foam's lost sailors, are placed in front of the monument, seemingly standing at attention, a place of prominence.

In the middle of the small site, a more-modern bronze plaque provides the scant details of the tragedy.

"Sometimes, I walk here just for the peace and quiet," says Ferley, a native of Ireland, a pleasing back-home lilt still in her voice after almost 50 years in Canada.

"So beautiful. It's manicured enough but not overly so. Nature has been left to do what it does so beauti-



Barbara Worthy and her dog, Louie, often walk by the Foam gravesite at St. Mark's Church. Worthy is a Visitor and Member Services Assistant at the Niagara-on-the-Lake Museum. She has created scripts and songs depicting the mysterious story of the Foam. SUPPLIED

fully. It's magical."

In her mid-seventies, Ferley and her husband Stephen, came to Canada in 1974 "for two years," she says with a smile. They moved to town about a decade ago.

She trained as an RN in Belfast and still works locally in diabetic education and palliative care nursing.

"I walk Ambrose twice a day. Sometimes something in the cemetery raises my interest."

That was the case when Ferley discovered the gravesite of the Foam.

"First, I thought: 'Where is the missing rail?'"

As she looked closer, the depth of the tragedy etched on the gravestones, pulled her in.

"I always find tragic, unexpected, sometimes avoidable deaths, very sad. Not just for the people who suffered, but for their family and friends. They probably thought they had

the world at their feet."

"And why were they buried in Niagara-on-the-Lake instead of Toronto?"

One of the official archivists for St. Mark's has some of the same questions about the Foam.

Donald Combe just turned 90. He's been a St. Mark's parishioner for almost 55 years and actively involved in cemetery matters since 1985.

He's written or co-written 16 books about St. Mark's, including "Stones, Saints and Sinners," the stories of 70 residents of the cemetery. He can recite the background for hundreds of gravestones.

"I probably know about this better than anybody," he says, his small smile highlighting the understatement.

Combe recounts the story of how the Foam monument was misidentified for many years. It seems, during an inventory of the cemetery's



Donald Combe is a cemetery veteran, dedicating himself to the care and heritage of the St. Mark's churchyard for over 35 years. He can relate the stories behind many of the estimated 2,500 gravesites, in Ontario's oldest graveyard.. SUPPLIED

headstones, the decaying lettering was misread, making the date of the tragedy 1814 instead of 1874. In a town with so much War of 1812 history, it was probably not surprising.

During a storm in the winter of 2004 the finely carved Celtic cross atop the original monument was broken off and badly damaged.

Combe remembers the repairs were very difficult: "The monument was carved from one piece of stone. But the Royal Canadian Yacht Club (the home port of the Foam) owns the site. They paid for the repairs."

The tombstone is still largely unreadable, but a large bronze plaque now attempts to set the record straight:

On the evening of July 11, 1874, the sailing yacht Foam left Toronto headed for Niagara-on-the-Lake. As darkness fell the wind freshened, blowing heavily from the east. Guests at the Queen's Royal Hotel watched her lights flicker and disappear. Next morning, like an arm reaching to heaven, only the mast of

the vessel showed above the breakers on the bar.

A typical centreboarder with light draught and low freeboard. Foam was an older yacht and laboured in the high seas running. Despite the heroic efforts of all her crew all aboard were tragically lost. Here rest seven young yachtsmen from the Royal Canadian Yacht Club, Toronto.

Combe grew up in Niagara Falls, becoming an English teacher. As a young boy, he frequently visited, with his grandmother, a huge cemetery near his home. She awakened his interest in history and cemeteries. "Grandmother weaved together family stories on the relatives buried there."

"Part of the reason I love this cemetery is the aesthetic," he gestures over the quiet landscape. "This is the original lay of the land. Nobody levelled it off. When Addison arrived in 1792, this is the way he found it."

Combe can't help a moment of promotion. He has a dogged determination to make sure the cemetery survives. All the financial

and operational burden of the heritage gravesite falls on the church's cemetery committee.

"I hope stories like this will get more people interested. I hope people will give us some money to keep it up. We're fast running out."

Today, Combe regularly leads tours of the cemetery. He always stops at the Foam gravesite.

"There's got to be a story here somewhere," he says. "They were all Toronto boys, why are they buried here?"

Barbara Worthy loves the mystery attached to the story of the Foam, too.

Worthy is a writer, director, producer and performer who came to town in 1985 to join the Shaw Festival. A former community journalist in western Canada, she has built an eclectic career including stints with the CBC, the Stratford Festival, and numerous other theatrical and production gigs around Ontario.

More recently, and among other things, she works part-time at the Niagara-on-the-Lake Museum. In addition to her administrative role, she has created numerous cemetery stories — both the writing and performing.

"I walk in the graveyard almost every day," says Worthy. "I live just down the street."

Like Ferley and Ambrose, she was captivated by the Foam story.

"How can you not be moved by (the story)?" she asks. "I spent a lot of time on it. I was very drawn to it. I went there, looked at the stones, wept over them. Found it all very moving."

"I just imagined that those girls were standing waiting. And those boys never showed up. The people were having this wonderful gay time and looking out, tinkling laughter, watching these pretty lights bobbing. They were actually watching the boat go down, without understanding."

Worthy was so moved by the story, she created and

*Continued on Page 21*



Pauline Reimer Gibson  
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Helen Ferley, and her cockapoo Armstrong, wander St. Mark's cemetery grounds daily, often wondering about the stories behind the monuments. Here she ponders the mystery of the loss of the Foam and all seven souls aboard, now buried in the 240-year-old cemetery. SUPPLIED

## NOTL residents think on Sinking of the Foam

*Continued from Page 20*

produced a live cemetery tour with costumed actors, about the Foam. Then she turned it into a somewhat fantasized YouTube depiction, called "The Reporter." Find it at [youtube.com/watch?v=kSpkrPVegio](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kSpkrPVegio).

As part of Canada's 150 Celebration, Worthy also wrote and produced a song,

"The Bankers Boys," as part of "The Great Canadian Songbook." It's available at <https://anchor.fm/canadian-songbook/episodes/Episode-7-Bankers-Boys-e04ssf>. It was performed around Niagara during the celebrations.

Worthy lists just some of the mysteries that remain:

"There were so many varying reports. What

was the time it happened? Where were the bodies found? Was there something wrong with the boat?"

You can tell the discussion has piqued her creative interests anew. She seems to know there is still a future for this heritage tale.

"There's a movie in there. There's a Netflix show."

**Next:** Although the Foam is part of the sailing

lore of the Royal Canadian Yacht Club in Toronto, the club's archives shed little light on what happened that fateful July day in 1874. The final part of The Lake Report's saga of The Sinking of the Foam explores what is known and discovers a fledgling plan to commemorate the 150th anniversary of the sinking of the sloop.

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## Archeologists unearth possible 1800s hospital site on Commons

Richard Harley  
The Lake Report

Parks Canada has been digging up some long-lost history in Niagara-on-the-Lake.

During a field visit from Nov. 22 to Dec. 3, teams of Parks Canada archeologists dug test pits at several NOTL locations, including the site of the British Indian Department Council House and the military hospital, Butler's Barracks, Navy Hall and the Niagara-on-the-Lake Golf Course.

Elizabeth LeBlanc, a communications officer for Parks Canada's south-western Ontario field unit, said they may have found a section of an old military hospital at the Commons, near the Indian Council House memorial stone, "up the path (Otter Trail) from Queen's Parade."

"During their explorations, the archeologists found what they were expecting would be present at these sites where people have lived for extended periods of time: a really



Rachel Brooks, Parks Canada archaeologist, exploring the earth on the Commons at Butler's Barracks National Historic Site. PARKS CANADA PHOTO

small amount of material from the 1830s onward, including a couple broken clay pipes, a chin scale from a British army shako, and construction debris – broken bricks and foundation stone," she said.

"They may have found a section of the military hospital's foundation but that will have to be confirmed through additional archeology and comparisons with original plans and drawings of the sites," LeBlanc told The Lake Report in an email.

She said Parks Canada is aware that a second British Indian Department Council House was converted into a military hospital after the British Indian Department functioned most of its operations to Burlington.

The archeologists "will very likely be back on site in the spring to continue their explorations once the weather is better."

Diving into why they were doing this assessment, LeBlanc said archeology and the care

of cultural resources is a "fundamental" part of Parks Canada's mandate.

"It's an important and regular part of the work that we do, either in advance of a project or just to try and gather more information for the future," she said.

"From a practical perspective, it helps us gain a better understanding of these special places and their uses throughout history so that we can work with our visitor experience teams at the sites to interpret these stories in the future."

As far as NOTL historic sites go, Parks Canada is "fairly familiar with how the British Army used this land but we are always looking to learn more about how the people who were here before the 1800s used and connected with the landscape."

"In Canada, and even here in Niagara, we have an incredible amount of archeological and cultural resources, and they reflect the diversity of people and communities that moved through or occupied the land over thousands of years," she said.

"Through archeological investigations, research and analysis, archeologists work somewhat like detectives to uncover clues that allow them to understand the people who once inhabited the land," LeBlanc added.

She said Parks Canada's historic sites are important spaces that allow people to learn more about history in Canada, including the diverse cultural communities who

make up the country, and the histories and cultures of Indigenous Peoples.

"They may be sacred spaces, archeological sites, battlefields, heritage houses, historic districts, landscapes, and much more," she noted.

"The British Indian Department Council House on the Commons between Butler's Barracks and Fort George played an important role in consultations between the British Indian Department and their Indigenous allies," she added.

It later became a hospital and the area where it once stood now includes interpretation panels and benches "to encourage visitors to sit and reflect."

She said the site of the Council House has "special significance for Indigenous people" and that hopefully the archeological research can continue to shed light on "the depth and breadth of cultures and histories in the Niagara Region," which will help Parks Canada to share these stories in the future.



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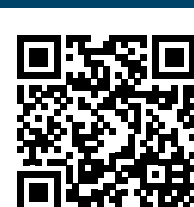
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# With holidays on horizon, Jr. A Predators extend win streak

Kevan Dowd  
The Lake Report

It's shaping up to be a very happy holidays for the Niagara Predators with three straight wins last weekend, but some of their opponents may have made Santa's naughty list.

Further solidifying their third-place spot in the southern division of the Greater Metro Jr. A Hockey League, the Predators put down the Windsor Aces 10-3 on Friday night.

Meanwhile, back-to-back wins against the Northumberland Stars the next two days ended in scores of 6-4 and 9-2 – and nearly two hours in penalty minutes for the Stars.

It all started with a rough road game Saturday and ended with a home game Sunday that Predators general manager Johan Eriksson called "violent."

"Saturday, that was very interesting," he said. "That was what I would call a more dirty game. The refs allowed almost everything. We suffered three injuries and if there's an upside, it's that it was only three. It was



Predators goalie Iain Riordon stretches to make a save in Friday's home game versus Windsor. Niagara won 10-3. KEVAN DOWD

one of the most dangerous games I've ever seen."

Northumberland's Matthew Bazarin and Nicolas Collins were given 10-minutes each for unsportsman-like conduct right after the puck first dropped, and a game disqualification for Liam Boyle came after 14 minutes. Collins and Predator Reese Bisci each served 10 for misconduct at the 17:34 mark of the second period and a fight broke out between Bazarin and Niagara's Maxwell Bredin in the final minute of the game.

As for goals, Pontus Madsen was the only

Predator on the scoresheet after 32 minutes – earning a hat trick in that time – but combined with a power-play goal from Jesper Eriksson late in the second period, Niagara led the Stars 4-1.

Northumberland rallied, netting three goals in barely three minutes to tie the game, but a second from Eriksson and a single from Henry-Pierre Jayet sealed the deal for Niagara's 6-4 victory.

A much wider margin at home the next day saw a slew of goals from Niagara with singles for Madsen, Brendan Morin, Dante

Massi and younger brother Alessandro, Mario Zitella and Georgy Kholmovsky and three for Eriksson who had six goals over the weekend.

The first five goals of the game – all in the first period and for Niagara – came on power plays thanks to another rough night against the Stars. Northumberland earned 32 penalty minutes in the first period alone and Bazarin being ejected after 13 minutes.

The team earned a further 30 minutes of time in the box over the last two periods, with their coach facing

a possible fine, all before the entire team cleared the bench and walked out with five minutes left in the game.

"They earned a bunch of suspensions after the game. I've never seen anything like it. I think they weren't really here to play hockey."

In a much more reserved game, Niagara dominated the short-benched Aces Friday night at the Meridian Credit Union Arena in Virgil with six goals to Windsor's one in the first period including one from Zitella, newcomer Alessandro Massi, Jayet, Noah Caperchione and a pair from Alexander Insulander.

A slower second period saw a goal from each team, with Eriksson and Windsor's Evan Ferguson bringing the score to 7-1. A second tally from Ferguson came in the third but Niagara ran away with the game thanks to an early goal from Madsen, a second for Zitella and third for Insulander.

Despite the seven-goal difference, Predators owner and current coach Robert Turnbull was modest about

his team's performance.

"I said to the guys in there, when they leave the rink tonight they need to forget about this game. The score's the score, the Aces were short," Turnbull said.

"Now we made a lot of phenomenal plays out there, the guys worked hard and there was three or four guys who worked extra hard. But to be a good team, everybody has to play to potential because there was a couple too many chances on defence and we got caught," he added.

Seeing an opportunity, Turnbull capitalized on his team's early lead to give some of his team's secondary lines some much-needed game experience.

"If we're going to develop players, they have to play. It was nice to see the guys who don't get as much time as the guys on the power play or the penalty kill step up and get a couple goals."

The Predators will face Windsor for a second time at the Meridian arena this Friday, Dec 10 at 7:30 p.m. The team has four games left before taking a two-week break over Christmas.

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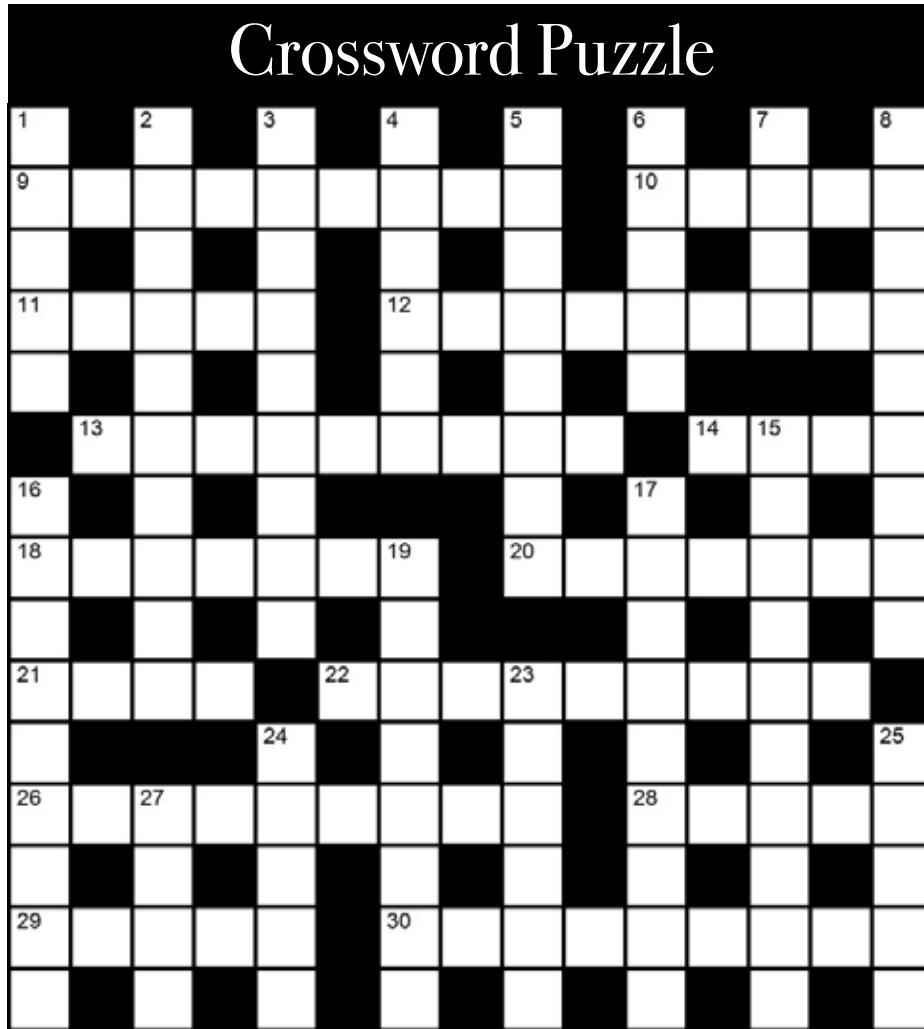
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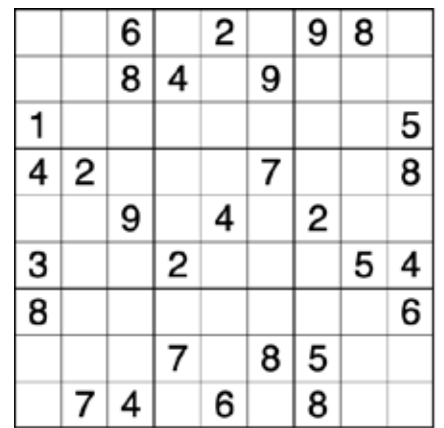
- 9. Cliff face (9)
- 10. South American ruminant (5)
- 11. One who shapes metal (5)
- 12. Rhizome (9)
- 13. Telegraph messages (9)
- 14. Government supremo in a specified policy area (4)
- 18. See (7)
- 20. Uproarious (7)
- 21. Vex (4)
- 22. Caused by overexposure on a hot day (9)
- 26. Musical note (9)
- 28. Inexpensive (5)
- 29. Type of male (5)
- 30. Cut off (9)

**Down**

- 1. Sudden convulsion (5)
- 2. Type of military flag (10)
- 3. Made more restrictive (9)
- 4. Reflecting surface (6)
- 5. Progressive (8)
- 6. Utter joy (5)
- 7. Western pact (1,1,1,1)
- 8. Cold weather personified (4,5)
- 15. Retailer (10)
- 16. Fencer (9)
- 17. Eighty (9)
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- 23. Perspiring (6)
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Last issue's answers



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## Wonders of the World

Penny-Lynn Cookson  
Special to The Lake Report

We're on the cusp of winter. There's a chill in the air. Gusts of wind have stripped the last leaves of autumn, revealing what has been hidden by spring and summer's leafy abundance.

Perhaps we are seeing things we didn't notice before? Was it because we didn't really look? After all, we only see what we choose to look at.

So, how many wonders of the world do we miss? An Italian 16th-century artist named Giuseppe Arcimboldo chose to create the most scientifically accurate and psychologically fascinating still life portraits of all time from the wonders of the natural world.

To some, his portraits were considered jokes, caprices, whimsies, to others weird, bizarre, riddles or something sinister or demonic.

Perhaps the artist was mentally disturbed? Not

so. Way ahead of his time, Arcimboldo completely altered the perception of what portraits should be, from traditional to wildly innovative and complex, and he had the good fortune to have patrons who were enchanted by and completely supportive of his vision.

Giuseppe Arcimboldo (1526-1593) was born in Milan. His early years as an artist were spent as a designer of stained glass and frescoes at the Duomo of Milan.

At 36, he left Italy to become court painter for 25 years to the Habsburg Holy Roman Emperors, Maximilian II in Vienna and Rudolf II in Prague. It was an ideal match.

Maximilian was fascinated by the natural world and his court was a centre for intellectuals, scientists and philosophers. Both he and his heir Rudolf, had a "kunstkammer," a "cabinet of curiosities," the forerunner of modern museums.

Arcimboldo's works were



Giuseppe Arcimboldo, "Vertumnus," 1591, oil on wood, Skokloster Castle, Sweden. SUPPLIED PHOTO

displayed there as decoration and as an encyclopedia of the botanical, animal and other holdings of the emperor. He would design tapestries, theatre costumes, festivals and pageants but most importantly Arcimboldo would create allegorical composite portraits.

His first project for Maximilian was "The Seasons" – spring, summer, autumn, winter, represented by four profile portraits of heads formed by an assemblage of fruits, vegetables and plants specific to those seasons and symbolic of the metamorphosis of nature, the

living cycle of life.

His second project was "The Elements" – air, fire, earth, water, four profile portraits featuring clustered birds, forged metals and flames, European and exotic animals, and sea creatures and fauna: fish, shellfish, pearls, coral, shells and even a baby sea otter.

Next, he created in three-quarter view court officials such as the "Librarian," composed of a pyramid of books, and the "Jurist," with his poultry, frog and fish face.

He created the first reversible works called palindromes, that when turned upside down the still life becomes a face.

The famous "Vertumnus," name of the ancient Etruscan god of vegetation, and The Seasons, is a frontal portrait of Rudolf II gazing intensely at us. His face is formed of a gourd forehead, wheat chaff eyebrows, peapod eyelids, dark berry eyes, rosy apple cheeks, a pear nose, a corn stalk ear with a fig earring, a bean moustache, tomato lips, pomegranate seed teeth, and a horse chestnut and yellow raspberry beard.

Black grapes represent his hair topped by a crown of golden ears of wheat, green

grapes, plums, pears, red currants and cherries. Zucchini and green onions form his neck, a squash his chest, cabbage leaves his shoulders and his regal flower sash includes roses, lilies and tulips.

The learned at court would recognize corn, squash, tomatoes and beans as from the Americas and other foods from Turkey, Egypt and India, all indicative of far-reaching trade, exploration and colonization. The portrait honours Rudolf II as symbolic of a Golden Age of culture, nature and prosperity.

Arcimboldo returned to Milan as Count of Palatine. He and his work fell into oblivion until rediscovered by 20th-century Surrealists such as Dali and Ernst, and included in a 1937 exhibition at the Museum of Modern Art in New York. He is now considered a modern icon.

Penny-Lynn Cookson is an art historian who taught at the University of Toronto for 10 years and was head of extension services at the Art Gallery of Ontario. Her upcoming Zoom lecture series "Concepts of Beauty – Artists, Models, Muses" is at the Niagara Pumphouse, Jan. 6 to 27, 2022.

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## EXPLORING PHOTOS

WITH NOTL MUSEUM



## Queenston Heights engraving

This engraving of Queenston Heights was completed by J.C. Armitage from an 1838 W. H. Bartlett sketch. It is a beautiful view of Queenston Heights, looking south from the Hamilton estate, which we all know as Willowbank. Bartlett (1809-1854) was a British landscape artist noted for the illustrations contained in travel volumes issued in the 19th century, *American Scenery* and *Canadian Scenery Illustrated*. Note that the Brock Monument in the background is the first one that was built and was later bombed in 1840.

## ARCHITEXT

### Following a new vision

Brian Marshall  
Columnist



Creative expression in 21st-century Modern design.

Good architecture is the expression of an artistic vision.

And similar to art, from hyper-realism to expressional abstract, the field of creative expression in architecture is evolutionary and its success or failure devolves upon the common and repeat endorsement (through purchase) of the public.

So, love them or hate them, let's focus on two 20th- and 21st-century architectural schools that moved the bar in a new direction.

Coming out of Europe in the 1920s was a design movement based on new technologies (e.g. structural steel) that provided previously unheard of flexibility.

Their design objective was a "building-organism" that, stripped of all superfluous decoration, cleanly displayed common elements that would resonate with people around the world. In other

words, creating an international appeal.

This style emphasized interior design that enhanced livability. On early examples (1930 to 1960) and those built in the last two decades, the exterior was usually unrelieved white stucco.

Typically, metal-framed ribbon windows were installed and placed flush with the wall in locations based on interior design rather than exterior composition. Between 1960 and 1980, linear wood accents, normally in colours sympathetic to the stucco, occurred on many homes of this style.

Now let's move forward to the late 20th century.

Architects, leveraging off the International school, began to experiment with designs that would reflect the rising levels of open social interaction occurring within interior dynamic

spaces. In addition, their new designs would deliver exterior treatments intended to relieve the somewhat stark stucco and glass presentation of the International form.

Working off the ever-increasing sophistication of computer programs like CAD and CAM, the latest generation of architects can create a conceptual design, "see" it in 3D, make rapid modifications and even test the engineering parameters.

Using these tools allowed a style of experimentation to develop: 21st-century Modern.

Even though this style's defining elements may be subject-to-change while architects continue to explore creative possibilities, it might be suggested that most designs are rooted in the International style with consistent divergent elements that include: walls or

roofs that may be curved or canted; exterior claddings of two or more materials; three-dimensional patterning on the facades and more.

If we look at the photo above, stone laid both vertically and horizontally forms the primary cladding. Breaking this large stone field and effectively warming the path to the main entrance, wood has been installed on the underside of the cantilevered overhang spanning the garage and main entry.

Despite the canted roof over the garage and the curved portion of the right facade, the success of this design rests heavily upon the tension created by juxtaposing the natural stone cladding against the industrial-styled metal framed windows and, to a lesser extent, the ribbon-windowed metal-clad second storey corner.

While use of bent glass windows on the curved portion might have smoothly completed its radius, the angle-set windows used by the designer are more consistent with the industrial windows used elsewhere on the facade.

Success in any style is about the quality of the design.

## Looking to the Stars

### Conjunctin of Venus and Pluto could make for a wild ride

This week we see a rare connection between charming Venus and transforming Pluto – a time of deep changes in how we feel.

**Thursday, Dec. 9:** While fate may shine on all today, we are likely not too willing to return the favour. Jupiter brings gifts but we may be too self-centered to take them. The longest-running TV soap opera, "Coronation Street," celebrates 61 years today. It first aired in Britain on Dec. 9, 1960.

**Friday, Dec. 10:** The first quarter moon in Pisces is 90 degrees to the sun in Sagittarius and in the same place in the sky as Neptune. Challenges are met with tons of imagination and good fortune. On Dec. 10, 2016, Bob Dylan was awarded the Nobel Prize in literature.

**Saturday, Dec. 11:** Today Venus is conjunct Pluto. Not only will Venus and Pluto be holding hands pretty much the whole month of December but since Venus will be retrograding this month, we have a record of three exact Venus-Pluto conjunctions, the last one happening in March 2022.

Venus and Pluto conjunctions are really intense, even when they last for only three days like they normally do. We are now about to have a three-month long conjunction. Venus is our feelings, our subjective experience of life – and that includes our values, likes and dislikes, the kinds of things and people we are attracted to.

When Venus is conjunct Pluto, some dark Venus truths come to light. Some uncomfortable, unprocessed feelings ask for release. Pluto demands to get real about what we want – and there's always something brutal about Pluto's revelations, no matter how much shadow work we have done in the past, or how spiritually enlightened (we think) we are.

What we really want, what we value, the source, the underlying reason for everything, is something so primal, so rooted in our identity, that it is directing our life in a way that leaves us powerless – until we become aware of the dynamic. Marconi first demonstrated his

invention, 'the radio' on Dec. 11, 1896, with a short broadcast from Cornwall, England, to St. John's, N.L. – a distance of more than 1,700 miles.

**Sunday, Dec. 12:** Every day, Neptune has a new role to play. At least this week that is so. A 90-degree square from Neptune to the sun may bring wonderful gifts. Or not. Or, as sometimes becomes Neptune, we get both the good and the bad. Music fans get to celebrate Frank Sinatra, born Dec. 12, 1915.

**Monday, Dec. 13:** The north node of the moon engages in a few connections today. Our ideas focus on long-term plans, our spiritual goals and not just our thoughts, but our actions are there to support this as well. Improved health comes with increased faith. Christopher Plummer was born Dec. 13, 1929, in Toronto. While he is best remembered for his role in "The Sound of Music," he also won praise for his role in "The Girl with the Dragon Tattoo."

**Tuesday, Dec. 14:** As the moon moves into surefooted Taurus, Saturn in Aquarius is there to say, "No, not so sure about this." We need to determine what the problem is in order to move forward. Happy birthday #518 to Michel de Nostradamus, French apothecary and astrologer whose rhyming predictions include Hitler and the Second World War.

**Wednesday, Dec. 15:** While Uranus has been lazily moving through Taurus since 2019, rarely do we see the gas giant in action like we will today. Be prepared for a major surprise, if possible. Gustave Eiffel was born Dec. 15, 1832, in Dijon, France. In addition to the Eiffel Tower, he also designed the support for the Statue of Liberty.

Next week, we see the full moon in Gemini and the start of Capricorn.

**Please check out the new website [www.lutts.ca](http://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.*



## Fall Virtual Lecture Series

Oct. 6 - Dec. 15

Every other Wednesday at 11 a.m. on Zoom

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## Obituaries

### Dolores Careless



**MOFFATT-CARELESS,** Dolores- With sadness we announce the passing of Dolores Moffatt-Careless of Niagara on the Lake, formerly of Saint Lambert Quebec. Beloved wife of Richard C. Careless and beloved mother of Michael, Danny, Richard, and Linda Gintowt, from her first marriage. Dolores was an exceptional nurse (graduate of St. Mary's Hospital School of Nursing), health

educator, and author. Dolores lived a long life, was always helping others and was a champion for women. She was blessed with a tremendous sense of humour and sharp mind until the end. She was a loving grandmother, great grandmother and sister. She is dearly missed.

Acknowledgements can be sent to Morgan Funeral Home, Niagara on the Lake. Family will hold a private memorial.

Charitable contributions may be sent to The Salvation Army. Memories, photos and condolences may be shared at [www.morganfuneral.com](http://www.morganfuneral.com).



### Jeanne Lys-Rafferty



**JEANNE MADELEINE MARY LYS-RAFFERTY**

With great sadness the Lys-Tedesco-Tribe clan said Goodbye to Jeanne (Jenni) of Ottawa on Nov. 30, 2021.

Eldest daughter of Mary Tedesco-Tribe (Marilou) of Niagara-on-the-Lake, and the late Andre Adrien Lys.

Predeceased by sister Jacqueline and brother

Sean, Jeanne is survived by devoted siblings Christianne, Marc, Danielle and Stephanie; dear husband Raymond Rafferty and beloved daughters Madeleine and Lindsay.

Too, she will be greatly missed by a large extended family and many friends in Canada, UK and France.

A life cut short but lived with passion ... from photographer, flute player, distance swimmer, marathon runner, pursuer of all things music, fine arts and theatre ... to so much more. Forever a nomad, Jeanne embarked on this, her latest adventure accompanied by Dmitri Shostakovich Piano Concert #2 (opus 102), Le Trio Jacques Loussier, and Jazz icon the celestial Molly Johnson.

*Au revoir, notre chère, et  
Bon Voyage  
Requiescat in Pacem*

All arrangements private

Jeanne will take her rest in Prince Edward Island

Condolences: Box 1777, NOTL, 289-257-6279 (Text only)



## NOTL Dart League Standings

### WEEK 3

Silks Jini	44
Silks Guzzlers	41
Sandtrap 220	32
Butler's Guyz	29
Butler's Corkscrews	27
Silks Shooters	21
Silks Dartbags	16
Sandtrap Shavians	13

### WEEK 2

Silks Jini	34
Silks Guzzlers	31
Sandtrap 220	25
Butler's Guyz	19
Butler's Corkscrews	19
Silks Shooters	14
Silks Dartbags	9
Sandtrap Shavians	3

### WEEK 1

Silks Jini	20
Silks Guzzlers	19
Sandtrap 220	15
Butler's Guyz	14
Butler's Corkscrews	8
Silks Shooters	7
Silks Dartbags	3
Sandtrap Shavians	0

## Gardening is great for the mind, body and soul. Here's how



**GROWING TOGETHER** 

Joanne Young  
Garden Columnist

With another year coming to an end, it is always a time to reflect on the activities and lessons learned throughout the year.

I think it is safe to say that it has been a very challenging year for everyone as we went through the pandemic together.

This week, I was talking with someone who said she was so thankful she had her garden to keep her

busy and to keep her mind occupied while we were going through the different lockdowns.

I have heard this time and time again when speaking to different gardeners. A common phrase I heard was, "At least we have our gardens." Even the Ontario government deemed gardening to be an essential service during the pandemic.

I got thinking about what role gardening played in our lives especially during these trying times. It is well-known that gardening is good for the mind, body and spirit. Everyone can garden, in some form or another, regardless of ability.

Let's first explore ways in which gardening benefits the mind. Have you ever spent time in a garden and found a sense of calm come over you? Just being in a garden can give you a feeling of well-being.

Gardening, or relaxing in a garden, greatly reduces

stress levels. During the pandemic, we have become acutely aware of COVID's negative effects on our minds. Researchers have documented that people who interact with plants recover more quickly from everyday stress and mental fatigue than those who are not surrounded by plants.

One study reported that people working on computers in an office with plants were 12 per cent more productive and less stressed than people in the same job in an office without plants.

Gardening also keeps you mentally stimulated. In a garden, there is always something different to see, always something to be tended to, and always something new to learn. So, spending time in the garden can be very beneficial to the mind.

Gardening, done properly of course, is also very good for the body. It is the second most popular form of exercise in Canada, attracting 48

per cent of Canadian adults. It is a very balanced form of exercise, boosting endurance, flexibility and strength. The combination of these activities could help to reduce the risk of heart disease, high blood pressure, osteoporosis, stroke, depression and even some forms of cancers.

Regular gardening activities burns an average of 300 to 350 calories per hour and up to 600 calories or more per hour with heavier work. Studies show that gardeners (especially those who grow vegetables) eat a wider variety of vegetables, which are richer in disease-fighting antioxidants and phytochemicals.

They will also eat more organically grown vegetables and therefore consume fewer pesticides. Another physical benefit of gardening is being out in the fresh air and sunlight. A few minutes a day will provide you with all the Vitamin D

you need to ensure healthy bones. These are just a few of the benefits gardening has on the body.

Gardening is also beneficial to one's spirit. It appeals to all the senses: sight, taste, touch, sound and smell, so it does encompass your whole being. Gardening provides a creative outlet. It also offers a personal link to nature.

Gardeners are usually patient people because there are no instant results. It sometimes takes a whole season or several seasons before you will see your creativity come to full fruition. Gardeners always believe that things will be better next year: the flowers will be more plentiful and the tomatoes will be larger.

Once you do see the results of all your sweat and tears, you get a tremendous feeling of satisfaction and accomplishment. Gardening activities help to develop individuals, strengthen families and build communities.

When families garden together it teaches the children valuable work skills as well as teamwork. Gardening is a universal language that brings communities together. It melts away the differences between ages and ethnic groups and unites neighbourhoods.

Gardening also gives you a sense of belonging and a sense of having given back to the world.

So, it's no wonder why gardeners are always happy and optimistic. It is an all-encompassing activity that engages the body, mind and soul. Regardless of your gardening knowledge and ability, whether you have a green thumb or not, you will find that gardening is a very rewarding endeavour.

Just remember – he who plants a garden, plants happiness!

Joanne Young is a Niagara-on-the-Lake garden expert and coach. See her website at [joanneyoung.ca](http://joanneyoung.ca).



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