

The Lake Report

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Niagara-on-the-Lake's most respected newspaper

January 16, 2020

Marotta 'likely' to appeal court decision on Randwood

Opposition group says it will continue to challenge hotel plans



Developer Benny Marotta says the town is acting out of malice to stop his development of the Rand Estate. RICHARD HARLEY

Richard Harley
Editor

The town and SORE were victorious in court last week, but developer Benny Marotta says it's "likely" his companies will appeal the judge's decision.

Superior Court Justice Linda Walters ruled to dismiss an application by Solmar Development Corp. and Two Sisters Resorts to quash the Town of Niagara-on-the-Lake's notice of intention to designate all four Rand

Estate properties under the Ontario Heritage Act.

"We have to make a decision in the next few days on whether we move forward with an appeal or let it go," Marotta said in an interview. "We are very passionate about this project, so appealing the decision is a very real possibility."

Walters gave the parties 30 days to determine the legal costs and Solmar/Two Sisters is expected to cover the winners' legal fees, said Lyle Hall, a

member of SORE (Save Our Rand Estate).

"The principal in civil litigation is that 'costs follow the cause.' That means that the loser pays the winner's costs," Hall said in a statement to The Lake Report. "In this case, that means Two Sisters pays the costs of both the town and SORE."

Walters heard two days of arguments from both sides.

In her written judgment, Walters outlined four issues to determine: If the town's application was premature,

if the town failed to comply with the Ontario Heritage Act, are the notices vague and uncertain, and did the notice of intention comply with the town's official plan.

Walters declined to rule on prematurity, but said the application would still be dismissed based on the other three arguments.

On whether the town complied with the heritage act, Walters also declined to make a ruling. She wrote

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Town approves 4% hotel tax – in principle

Dariya Baiguzhiyeva
The Lake Report

Niagara-on-the-Lake councillors have approved in principle a plan to charge visitors a hotel tax.

In a 7 to 2 vote Monday, council's committee of the whole approved the idea of levying a municipal accommodation tax of no more than four per cent.

Couns. Stuart McCormack and Wendy Cheropita voted against it.

If formally approved by council, the tax could be effective starting June 1.

Provincial legislation, which came into effect in December 2017, allows municipalities to levy a mandatory accommodation tax on hotels and short-term rentals and then share the

tax revenue with a not-for-profit tourism agency.

The NOTL Chamber of Commerce is currently considering the town's destination marketing organization, according to a staff report.

The previous town council considered implementing a tax but didn't take any action.

In September 2019, council established a municipal

accommodation committee comprised of accommodation and tourism industry leaders and two councillors, Allan Bisback and Norm Arsenault, to revisit the hotel tax idea.

"We spent considerable time scouring, trying to find out documented evidence of both pros and

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Protesters threaten weekend 'spectacle' at Icewine Village



Protesters of the local horse and carriages say they will be at the Icewine Village in Old Town this weekend to roll out a new campaign. DARIYA BAIGUZHUYEVA/FILE PHOTO

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Niagara fan gets signed stick from World Juniors



Niagara resident Calvin Goodman gets his World Juniors hockey stick signed by Akil Thomas, who scored the winning gold medal goal for Canada. DARIYA BAIGUZHUYEVA

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NOTL is the perfect place for Harry and Meghan



If Prince Harry and Meghan Markle are moving to Canada, they should consider NOTL. MARK JONES/WIKIMEDIA

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SORE will continue to fight for 'responsible development'

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that decisions about the appropriateness of the notice should be determined by the Conservation Review Board.

To the vagueness issue, Walters argued she didn't see how Solmar and Two Sisters could not understand their obligations under the heritage act. She said further disagreements on the issue should also be addressed by the review board.

To whether or not the town complied with its own official plan, she wrote that she cannot find a contravention of the planning act.

Hall said he's not surprised the court ruled in favour of the town.

"We're clearly thrilled that the outcome of the decision was the way it was," he said. "We never thought the application of the Marotta companies had any merit, so we're happy but we're not surprised the town won."

He said SORE will continue to fight for "the responsible development of the Rand property."

"We don't expect that this one legal decision is going to resolve anything or everything," said Hall.

"We haven't won anything except one battle, so we continue on. We continue to be watchful."

The battle is still far from over, Hall said. For now, SORE is trying to respond to all of the legal matters it can.

"SORE isn't in a position where we can be proactive with any of this," he said. "There's a number of things that are happening at the same time and SORE is reacting to them. We're waiting for the (Conservation Review Board) to continue its process. We're waiting for the prosecution of the Two Sisters company to continue and then we're waiting to see where Two Sisters re-application to LPAT takes them — and we will respond accordingly in each of those cases."

Hall said SORE will be keeping an eye on the upcoming Conservation Review Board pre-settlement conference, which will determine whether the town's intention to designate the properties is warranted.

"We hope that the town will continue its effort to prosecute Two Sisters for the destruction they caused on the site with the clear-

cutting last November," Hall said.

"I think SORE believes that we're doing the right thing. So far we have been validated, both in getting standing on these various judicial procedures, as well as the ones where there's been an outcome, we have been successful all along. We continue to put ourselves in a position where we believe we can continue win and continue to fight for the responsible development of the property."

Marotta said he feels the town's decision to combine all four properties in its designation application is an attempt to stall progress by his company.

"The town combined the property behind with Rand Estate and designated everything as heritage," said Marotta. "The two properties are separate. We do not have any applications on that property. The decision to designate it all as heritage was designed to stop us from moving forward."

He said right now his companies are "looking at the whole situation" to decide what the next steps will be.



SORE members and supporters fill the community centre gymnasium during a public meeting regarding the Rand Estate in 2019. RICHARD HARLEY/FILE PHOTO

Should Marotta and his legal team choose to appeal, he said he would like the case to be decided in Toronto instead of a local court.

He said he believes the town is acting out of malice toward him as a developer and believes only two of the properties, those of the actual hotel, have heritage value. He said he agrees with the town and stands by the decision to designate Rand Estate and the Dunnington-Grubb features, which are in front of the Rand house, as heritage.

"This was always the plan. The 2011 bylaw designated the Rand Estate as heritage and we agreed. It

wasn't until we applied for the siteline was the motion passed to have the lands in the back of the property (toward John Street) designated. As of today, it's unclear which structures or land should be designated. The onus has been put upon us to prove that the properties are not heritage instead of the reverse."

"These tactics only buy time to fulfill an election promise made to a small, vocal group of people, vowing to stop us from completing the property," Marotta added.

Marotta said he wants to build a hotel "that adds value to the community."

"As a resident of NOTL and a company, we feel

badly about the cost of these legal proceedings to taxpayers," he said. "At the end of the day, if the town goes through with all of the court cases they have — and not all of them are with Solmar — they are going to be spending about three to five million dollars of taxpayer money."

Lord Mayor Betty Disero issued a statement saying council is "pleased" with the ruling and "is waiting to hear from (the town's) legal team on appropriate next steps."

"Our legal team will report back to council once they have had an opportunity to fully review the decision," Disero said.

Short-term rental operators unhappy with licensing fees

Dariya Baiguzhiyeva
The Lake Report

Short-term rental operators in Niagara-on-the-Lake are disappointed with the increased licensing fees and the proposed draft changes to the short-term rental bylaw, a representative from the Niagara-on-the-Lake Bed and Breakfast Association told town councillors Monday night.

Greg Dell spoke on behalf of more than 320 licensed establishments whose operators expressed "dismay and anger" when they found out their licensing fees have been increased without "a dialogue or discussion," Dell said.

During a special budget meeting in December, the 2020 licensing fees were

raised to \$325 per room each year from the \$115 fee charged in 2019.

The appeal fee, which is paid by the operator if the town refuses or revokes a licence, was also increased slightly, to \$263 from \$257, while the fee for signs — vacant/no vacancy or a B&B sign — has increased by a dollar to \$22 and \$32 respectively.

The town says the higher fees are needed to hire more enforcement officers to crack down on illegal short-term rentals.

"Why are you penalizing the legal licensed operators in order to recover and prosecute unlicensed operators?" Dell asked councillors.

The association members, several of whom filled the council's chambers Mon-

day night, want the town to reduce the per-room fee to \$150 annually or that the operators pay \$325 for a two-year term instead of one, Dell said.

He added there are currently about 93 establishments operating without a licence, noting the association should have been consulted during a discussion period as association members can help the town identify unlicensed operators.

"We are not part of the problem, but we can and will assist the town and staff with a solution," Dell said.

"A lot of them are other owners or operators that are subleasing from the owners of the property. So, how do you address that with the penalties of the ownership that's part of the bylaw?"



Greg Dell spoke at the council meeting Monday on behalf of the NOTL B&B Association. DARIYA BAIGUZHIEVA/FILE

He said one of the solutions could be advertising and educating visitors coming into town by making sure they stay in licensed establishments.

Coun. Allan Bisback said there was no malicious intent to take on the B&B association, noting the fee hike could help hire two enforcement officers on contract to enforce the short-term rental bylaw.

"We do need to add two enforcement officers. That's where the calculations came from," Bisback said about the licensing fee. "It wasn't

pulled out of the sky. It wasn't created willy-nilly."

Coun. Norm Arsenault agreed with Bisback, saying the discussions regarding the changes were during public meetings which were open to anyone to attend. He also stressed the proposed bylaw changes are not set in stone and it is just a list of ideas for town staff to consider.

Lord Mayor Betty Disero said the council could review reducing the fee or extending the licence approval in the future but for right now she asked the association to co-operate with the town

as it cracks down on illegal short-term rentals.

"Work with us on this for now because we've got a major problem. If we don't deal with those illegals, they will continue to grow exponentially and they will start to take your business away and undercut you," she said.

"And once we no longer have to provide as much bylaw enforcement on that particular issue, yes, let's review this every year to ensure that we're only charging the short-term rentals what it is and what it costs us to actually service them."

"I'm hopeful they will trust us enough to review this at the end of the season to see if maybe we can go two-year or we can give a reduction next year," Disero said.

"But right now, if we don't get a handle on this now, our neighbourhoods will start to break down. And our operators are going to start being undercut."



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Hotel tax approved in principle

Continued from Front Page

cons,” Bisback said. “I think because this tax is so new to the province of Ontario, we couldn’t find any direct evidence that said there’s a huge negative impact on implementing the tax.”

In their report, town staff listed 32 municipalities across Ontario, such as Niagara Falls, Toronto, Mississauga, Vaughan, Windsor, Cambridge, Barrie, London, Kingston, Orillia, Thunder Bay, Peterborough and others, that have approved or are in the process of implementing a hotel levy.

“We’re a town of 18,000 people that are now being asked to pay for almost three million tourists in terms of investments on capital, continued operating expenses,” Lord Mayor Betty Disero said Monday. “But 18,000 people cannot afford long-term to continue to pay for infrastructure that’s necessary and the on-going operating maintenance to provide for them.”

The accommodation committee has met three times and couldn’t come to a consensus as to whether the tax is the best way to enhance tourism marketing, according to the staff report. (Coun. Erwin Wiens was added to the accommodation committee during Monday’s meeting.)

“Tourism is a significant employment and economic driver in Niagara-on-the-Lake and reinvestment in its promotion and development is critical to continue to grow this sector,” town staff reported. “The (levy) would



Coun. Wendy Cheropita voted against the municipal accommodation tax. DARIYA BAIGUZHIYEVA

enable the town to be able to increase investment without any additional contribution from local taxpayers.”

The revenue from the tax must be spent on promoting and growing tourism. Among other things, that can include projects such as repairing bike, hiking and walking trails, adding and maintaining public spaces, washrooms and water fountains, improving sidewalks, repairing and resurfacing roads, providing funding for special events and for programs that preserve heritage assets.

The accommodation tax would be applied to transient accommodations such as bed and breakfast establishments, villas, country inns, hotels, cottage rentals and vacation apartments.

The revenue from the levy could vary each year, but based on an assumption of a 50 per cent occupancy rate and an average room rate of \$175 per night, the revenue is predicted to be \$2 million to \$3 million annually before administrative fees and disbursements to a tourism organization.

“The 50 per cent rate is

an estimate. We assume the occupancy rate is higher but with the mix of B&Bs, some may only operate on certain weekends,” said Kyle Freeborn, the town’s director of corporate services.

“This is just an estimate to represent a fair occupancy rate for those type of establishments,” he said. “The \$175 appears to be an average in the area but we could see as low as \$120 per night and high as \$400.”

Arsenault told councillors the accommodation committee will work out all the details.

The majority of the accommodation committee members raised concerns about the tax, according to the staff report.

One of the concerns was being placed at a competitive disadvantage. If the tax goes ahead, staff recommended providing exemptions to larger corporate bookings.

NOTL doesn’t have an issue with marketing the area as a tourism destination, and the tax implementation may affect the provincial net funding provided to the town’s tourism promoter.

Another comment was that implementing the tax should be based on the needs of the tourism industry and not used as a “budget crutch” to solve “budget constraints.”

Some of the options proposed to council by staff included charging a flat rate, providing exemptions for short-term rentals and providing funds to a number of tourism entities, not just the chamber. Councillors could also review who will act as the destination marketing organization, staff reported.

McCormack said he’s not committed to approving the recommendations at this time as there are too many variables.

“I don’t like committing to something in principle without knowing what the substance of it is going to be,” he told councillors.

“To me, not knowing what the number is, not knowing how it’s going to be spent ... (I’m) being concerned that it will be a (budget) crutch,” McCormack said, referring to the concern expressed by one accommodation committee member.

“And that crutch will be used to leverage down tax rates and we will become dependent upon it. Our foremost duty is to try to rein our expenses in before we start introducing new taxes.”

Cheropita said she’s not against or in favour of implementing the levy as she’s still open-minded to having a discussion on how “the industry can bear an additional tax.”

NOTL man wins cool \$1 million

Dariya Baiguzhiyeva
The Lake Report

A lucky Niagara-on-the-Lake resident celebrated Christmas with an extra special gift — \$1 million dollars.


Local musician Thomas (Randy) Busbridge won the

small fortune in the Dec. 25 Lotto 6/49 draw. The ticket was bought at the Avondale store in Virgil.


Busbridge, aka Buzz Hummer, hosts monthly open mics at the Royal Canadian Legion Branch 124. He declined to comment on his win.



Thomas (Randy) Busbridge won \$1 million in the Dec. 25 Lotto 6/49 draw. SUPPLIED/OLG



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Contributed by Norm Arsenault:

Reduce your home energy consumption by following these simple tips: Turn off unused lights or add dimmers. Turn down your water heater from standard 140 degrees to a more reasonable 120 degrees. Take shorter showers. Use cold water for washes. Most new soaps work better with cold water and your clothes will come out just as clean.



Contributed by Patty Garriock

Success means we go to sleep at night knowing that our talents and abilities were used in a way that served others.
 – Marianne Williamson.

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Editorial

Rand Estate battle is far from over

Richard Harley
 Editor

Our editorial last week about a particularly poor argument from the town's lawyer in the court case over the Rand Estate caused a few readers to question The Lake Report's motivation.

We would like to clarify that the point was made because it was the town's lawyer who made the assertion that there was no evidence that council would ignore a potential ruling by the Conservation Review Board. It is imperative that we all hold our town's elected officials and representatives to a high standard.

What could have been included last week is that some of Solmar Development Corp.'s arguments also lacked credibility — but to us that's to be expected from lawyers who specialize in development advocacy.

The point was, and remains: to make a bold statement knowing it is wrong in a court of law is shameful, and we shouldn't, regardless of our personal stances on any one issue, allow the town to weaken itself by making arguments that aren't grounded in

fact or reality.

It only makes the town, and the lawyer who said it, look disingenuous.

Having listened to all the courtroom arguments over two days last week, it's not a surprise the court ruled in favour of the town and SORE (Save Our Rand Estate).

But it's also a battle that is far from over.

Costs still need to be determined in this case, and there are other cases involving the town and SORE that are yet to be determined.

And further to that, the court conceded many of these issues in last week's case are judgments best left to the Conservation Review Board, which can now start the process of decision-making.

The true issue at hand is whether our town council is capable of operating in good faith. If council receives expert recommendations that there in fact is limited historic value to much of the Rand Estate, will it accept that advice?

We know there is resident pressure from a vocal group to preserve heritage attributes on the property. We know the current council was elected

mainly on that issue.

The thing we don't know is: Does our council understand its role is not to target individual developers, but bad plans?

If the Conservation Review Board declares there is no historic value to most of the property, there will be a serious need to question the validity of statements from SORE, as well as the group's underlying motive. Is it solely heritage preservation, or is it partly NIMBYism and concern for neighbouring property values? After all, most members of SORE live in close proximity to the proposed development. Would council ask those questions?

On the other hand, given the way the legal decisions have gone thus far, if the conservation board agrees with SORE's position, after all the acrimony, will the town and the developer be able to find a middle ground that satisfies everyone's concerns? No one wants to see these buildings or that property become an abandoned eyesore.

How will this all play out? Time will tell.

editor@niagaranow.com



NOTL mayor and council are poor fiscal managers of the public purse

Dear editor:

Some advice to Lord Mayor Betty Disero and councillors: Accept the things that cannot change, have the courage to change the things that can and the wisdom to know the difference.

With unprecedented and mounting legal costs the lord mayor and councillors need to rethink their strategy of fighting every planning issue, with many ending up in court or at the Local Planning Appeal Tribunal.

They also need to rethink hiring lawyers from outside Niagara Region lawyers at double the cost of their own legal team on retainer and considered one of the top municipal law firms in the region, representing three municipalities.

Shopping for a planner or lawyer who will tell councillors what they

want to hear is not a winnable strategy in court or at LPAT. It leads to excessive cost and a losing battle in the end. NOTL needs to enter into dialogue and negotiate solutions.

This council is unsustainable when its budget for legal fees for the upcoming year is \$1.2 million or 10 per cent of the municipal operating levy of \$12 million.

There are three principles of sustainability: people, planet and profit (financial). NOTL cannot claim to be sustainable with the largest percentage of any municipal budget in provincial history dedicated to legal costs. The present emptying of municipal reserves and cutting of infrastructure is definitely not sustainable.

With one of the biggest court challenges finished last week it is hard to fathom that 10 per cent of the mu-

nicipal budget starting April 1, 2020, would be needed for legal fees. Was not the promised new official plan passed last year supposed to have resolved all future planning problems?

As a former chair of finance for NOTL, and a councillor of four terms, this forecast level of legal spending is not only unprecedented and unnecessary, but is also a historic first for the province. Not the kind of history to be proud of or a need to repeat every year.

I am not running for any office so the mayor or council need not feel this is politically motivated or personal. I care about my community. I gave the same advice to this council's unsustainable spending during the official plan update nearly a year ago and it went unheeded.

Jamie Slingerland
 NOTL

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OPINION

Fighting for better health care, education

Wayne Gates
Special to The Lake Report

As my team prepares to return to the legislature, we have a number of initiatives we will be driving forward.

As always in politics, I believe the job of an elected official is to support good laws that benefit our community and oppose those that I think are not to our benefit.

In February, when the legislature resumes for 2020, I suspect we will have our fair share of both.

I look forward to continuing to work constructively with the minister of health to get Niagara's new hospital built so we can provide much-needed relief in our communities.

However, as you have seen – the Doug Ford government has moved us from bad to worse in many areas.

I continue to fundamentally oppose the cuts to our health care system. While I agree that the previous Liberal government all but abandoned Niagara's health needs, cutting these services even further is a disastrous path.

This summer Niagara topped the charts when it came to hospital wait-times. We have an aging population that is coming to rely on accessible and timely hospital services, access to home care and proper attention in long-term care.

Even more concerning was the recent auditor general report which showed that deaths and injuries inside hospitals are skyrocketing.



Wayne Gates is MPP for the riding of Niagara Falls.
RICHARD HARLEY/FILE PHOTO

ing. (See page 109 of the report.)

The auditor found that since 2016, nearly 800 patients were denied transfers because no beds were available. These patients urgently needed care and 10 died while waiting for that care.

Our seniors have earned these benefits through a life of work for our community. Instead of addressing the hallway health care crisis that the previous Liberal government created, the Ford government is cutting \$2.7 billion from health care, according to the province's financial accountability officer.

This government's callous cuts do not stop at health care—the Tories also are looking to alter the education system in Ontario.

I will continue to be part of a broad coalition consisting of the official opposition, teachers and parents determined to fight for our

children's education.

As many of you know, I came from a background of collective bargaining and I know for a fact that 98 per cent of collective bargaining meetings get a deal – so why is Education Minister Stephen Lecce among the 2 per cent that can't?

The answer is simple – Lecce either doesn't want to, or doesn't know how to negotiate.

Parents have already seen the effects of cuts to education: Cuts that mean overcrowded classrooms, less access to resources and far fewer adults in the buildings where our kids learn.

On top of that, they have implemented an Alabama-style learning plan that transitions kids out of classrooms and into online courses without any regard to learning ability, quality of instruction or even reliable access to the internet.

In our highly complex and technologically driven

world, our children need the best education possible to succeed. They simply cannot be expected to perform at their best when they're fighting for a teacher's attention in classes of 35 kids without enough textbooks. These kids deserve a fighting chance at the best future possible.

As the official opposition in Queen's Park, it is the New Democrats' duty not only to critique but also to provide solutions. We know that when we push back on government decisions by bringing the concerns of our communities right to the halls of the legislature, we can get results.

This past year we had serious concerns about the potential amalgamation of distinct Niagara communities, like Niagara-on-the-Lake. Fortunately, the government heard us loud and clear and backed down on their amalgamation plans, which would have stripped Niagara-on-the-Lake of its voice at the municipal level.

With health care, education and so much more, we have offered numerous plans that continue to provide services to residents in a fiscally responsible way.

I'd like to thank everyone in our community for their advice, kind words and encouragement. In 2020, we plan to continue representing this riding at Queen's Park and ensuring that Niagara-on-the-Lake, Niagara Falls and Fort Erie have a strong advocate in the halls of the legislature.

We welcome your letters

The Lake Report welcomes your letters to the editor. Please, write early and often.

Letters ideally should be under 400 words long. Occasionally, longer letters may be published. All letters may be edited for conciseness, accuracy, libel and defamation.

Please include your full name, street address and a daytime

telephone number so that authorship can be authenticated.

Only names and general addresses (eg. Virgil, St. Davids, NOTL) will be published.

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The Lake Report welcomes your letters to the editor. Please, write early and often. Letters ideally should be under 400 words long. Occasionally, longer letters may be published. All letters may be edited for conciseness, accuracy, libel and defamation. Please include your full name, street address and a daytime telephone number so that authorship can be authenticated. Only names and general addresses (eg. Virgil, St. Davids, NOTL) will be published. Send your letters to editor@niagaranow.com or drop them by our office at 724 Mississauga St., NOTL.

The Lake Report

Reflections on Meghan and Prince Harry



Dear editor:

On the lighter and less serious side of my following article, let me suggest how Meghan and Harry could find gainful employment in Canada.

Harry would make an excellent sightseeing helicopter pilot in Niagara Falls and would be a tourist boost for the taxpayers.

Megan could publish her memoirs and the book could be titled "The Autobiography of a Gold Digger: How I destroyed the Royal Family, brought it to its knees and forced the Queen to acquiesce to my demands."

I have observed and studied the traits of EVERY gold digger. They follow a predictable pattern.

Meghan exhibits all the quintessential traits of a skilled and consummate gold digger. She is on a mission, has a plan and a timeline. She never intended to reside in the UK. Her endgame is to finish up in Hollywood.

Follow my predictions going forward. Her game plan is a typical gold digger's playbook.

Step 1: Drive a wedge between your significant others family, specifically the siblings. Mission Accomplished.

Step 2: Distance yourself from daily or regular family contact. How about 4,000 kilometres away in Canada.

Step 3: Find another lame excuse to move from Canada. How does Hollywood sound? In a year at most.

Step 4: Using the royal leverage, land a leading role in a Hollywood-produced film. Two-bit soap opera actors with her new connections would find this a walk in the park. The other wingnuts in Hollywood would swoon over her royal status.

Step 5: Again using the royal leverage, her end game is to get nominated for an Academy Award. She is no Grace Kelly, with an emphasis on "no grace" and, by the way, "no class."

Step 6: Her final curtain call – dump Harry.

I firmly believe in these events coming to pass. My spouse and I predicted Steps 1, 2 and 3 shortly after she met Harry.

Steps 4, 5 and 6 would be a safe bet, in my humble opinion.

*Samuel Young
NOTL*

Let's have more transparency on municipal expenses

Dear editor:

Our lord mayor and council continue to express to the residents of NOTL the need for more transparency.

Best budget practices start with "cost control guidelines" and subsequent "stringent monitoring," supported by regularly scheduled budget performance review meetings.

Therefore will our council be willing to release, in the interest of transparency, via our community's print media, the following 2020 budget information?

The top 10 expense items and year-over-year changes (increases or decreases) stated as a percentage change.

The top five discretionary expense items also stated as per the above.

Let's see how transparency works in practice.

The residents are entitled to know how we are controlling our expense costs, not just seeking avenues or vehicles to increase revenues, typically via increased taxes.

*Samuel Young
NOTL*

Science made some truly spectacular revelations in 2019

This is the first in an exclusive new regular column by NOTL's Dr. William Brown. A graduate of the University of Western Ontario school of medicine, Brown trained as a clinical neurologist in Toronto and later as a scientist at the University of Toronto and then Oxford University before returning to London, Ont., as a clinical neurologist and neurophysiologist. His primary interest was in nerve and muscle diseases. Later, he moved to Tufts University Medical Center in Boston, before finally returning to Canada and McMaster. His interests remain in clinical neurology but in recent years expanded to include the subjects of evolution, especially the story of human origins. Brown has published five books and is now completing two more. In Niagara-on-the-Lake, he and others founded the Infohealth series 14 years ago. It now runs in conjunction with McMaster's School of Medicine in Niagara.

Dr. William Brown
Special to The Lake Report

It's that time of year, when once again news outlets from CNN to the BBC as well as local forecasters, review the best and worst of the year past and hopes for the coming year.

Top science journals, such as Nature and Science, do the same, by highlighting the best of science in the last year and or in this case, the last decade (2010-2020) or if you're Nature and it's your 150th anniversary, the best in Science for a century and a half.

We just finished our second annual review of the Nobel prizes in physics, medicine (physiology), chemistry, economics, peace and literature at the NOTL library in November and December of 2019. While the peace and literature prizes tend to award contemporary work, prizes in science often award work carried out several decades earlier, probably because of the innate caution of Nobel committees, which want to see how a body of work plays out in spawning other meaningful work and holds together in the face of later challenges.

That was certainly the case for this year's science prizes where

the relevant work was carried out toward the end of the 20th century. Sometimes however, an achievement is so startling that a Nobel is awarded for work within a few years of the award.

This was the case for the detection of gravitational waves – ripples in space-time created by the collision of a pair of black holes – which were first detected in 2015 and the discovery rewarded with a Nobel two years later in 2017, by which time there had been several similar discoveries and one spectacular collision of a pair of neutron stars producing in its wake, a kilonova explosion.

This year the editors of Science and Nature mostly agreed on their choices for studies with the most impact and relevance in science in 2019. Topping the charts was the discovery of a gargantuan black hole – the size of our entire solar system – whose circular shape matched predictions by Albert Einstein's theories about general relativity and gravity.

Accomplishing this herculean task involved negotiating time on radio telescopes scattered around the globe and synchronized together using atomic clocks, to create a giant virtual Earth-wide telescope capable of detecting wavelengths in the millimetre range created by radiation spilling about the event horizon rimming the black hole.

Another choice was the impact of the giant asteroid that struck the Yucatan peninsula region of present-day Mexico 66 million years ago, wiping out the dinosaurs and roughly 70 per cent of the world's species. Two complementary studies, one an 835-metre core drilled through the crater, revealed in startling minute-to-minute detail the chain of events, beginning with molten rock and a giant tsunami, which within that first day, washed massive amounts of debris into the crater, and events yet to come over the following thousands and millions of years.

Thousands of miles away from the impact site, a second study in North Dakota, revealed that within an hour of the collision, seismic activity triggered by the collision, created powerful waves of water, which surged up long ago ancient rivers.

Among other impacts, this left glass particles loaded with iridium from the impact site embedded in the gills of ancient fish. Some asteroid, some impact!

Life recovered surprisingly quickly for plants and animals, although mammals were rat-sized affairs to begin with. Within 100,000 years, their sizes began to increase, especially so after legume-bearing plants appeared some 700,000 years later. However, it took a million years for most marine life to recover. This study, like so many these days, was international in scope, involved many disciplines and, like the black hole study above, illustrates the power of big science to solve mysteries while creating new mysteries in their wake.

Other worthy studies in 2019 include:

* The revealing picture of a Denisovan, a cousin species to Neanderthals and modern humans, whose facial appearance was based on the pattern of methylation of bases in the DNA of a Denisovan girl who lived 160,000 years ago.

* Claims by Google that quantum computers harnessing the power of particle physics can handle far more challenging problems, in much less time, compared to conventional supercomputers.

* Recent evidence that recovery of severely malnourished children, depends on creating a mature microbiome in the gut of the children, as well as proper food.

* The development of several lifesaving drugs for the killer virus Ebola.

* Yet more evidence that artificial intelligence has become the master of even the most expert humans in games such as Go and, most recently, six-hand poker.

* Growing evidence of the "canary in the mine" warning posed by 30 per cent loss of bird species across the board in North America as a result of pollution, climate change and severe losses of habitat.

* And most encouraging, evidence that Americans are finally waking up to the threat of global climate change created by humans.

None too soon for our southern neighbours, as well as Canada!



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Opinion: NOTL is perfect home for Prince Harry and Meghan in Canada

David Israelson
Special to The Lake Report

If Prince Harry and Meghan Markle really want to move to Canada, they should consider Niagara-on-the-Lake.

Think about it. For a duke and duchess considering how to step back from the Royal Family and pull off a comfortable but useful semi-exile, NOTL has much to offer.

There's a lot that a step-away royal couple will find familiar in Niagara-on-the-Lake. The town is run by a Lord — okay, she is technically a Lord Mayor, and she was elected, but isn't that close enough for royals who want to keep their distance from the Firm?

Also, there are a lot of colonial-era trappings in and around Niagara-on-the-Lake to make the couple feel that, if they want to, they could come here and party like it's 1899. Or even 1799.

Prince Harry could stop in for a drink at the Prince of Wales Hotel, for example. He and the duchess could even pull up to the door in a horse-drawn carriage. True, they may have to dodge protesters who believe that people should be pulling the horses and not the other way around, but perhaps the royal couple could set things straight.

Maybe Harry could endear himself by going up to the front desk at the Prince of Wales and asking if "dad"



Where in Canada is the best place for Prince Harry and Meghan Markle to live? Niagara-on-the-Lake is the ideal spot, says writer David Israelson.

WIKIMEDIA COMMONS/MARK JONES

is in the house. Imagine the laughs! He could crack 'em up with jokes about King Street, Queen Street and Queenston too, perhaps.

Speaking of houses, the royal couple would have choices. Perhaps they could purchase the Randwood estate.

They could replace the century-old hedges that were ripped out, replant hundreds of trees that were hacked down on nearby property and restore the heritage-designated building. It's a fixer-upper, but this might prevent the construction plans for what many residents believe will look like a glorified Super 8 motel if it's ever built.

Those good deeds would easily earn them a place of honour in the Canada Day Cake Parade.

The couple could also visit Niagara-on-the-Lake's own royal institutions. They could start with Royal Oak Community School.

Royal Oak has bravely filled the gap created when the District School Board of Niagara decided that families in Old Town don't deserve a public school for their kids. Harry and Meghan are anxious to support good causes, and what's better than education? The school board and the Ford government, which is fighting with teachers, don't seem to know.

The royals will be able to guard their privacy in Niagara-on-the-Lake from intrusive visitors from Toronto, for a while at least. It's true that all-day GO service is promised for the region eventually, but right

now there's a train at the crack of dawn and another at the end of the day, and that's it. Most of the time, taking public transportation from the centre of Toronto to Old Town takes half a day or so, door to door.

There's opportunity in town for the Duchess of Sussex, too. The Shaw Festival may not have openings right away for Meghan, but apparently there are a lot of romantic comedies filmed in beautiful Niagara-on-the-Lake.

The plots are always similar — a likeable but maybe headstrong woman meets a handsome young man, whose job is a bit of a mystery. Sparks fly. At first, she thinks, he's not exactly a prince. But then, wait! You know how the rest of the story goes.

Like many new Canadians, the Sussexes will also want to retain some old country pride even as they embrace their new home. Niagara-on-the-Lake is perfect for this, as a centrepiece of the War of 1812.

Both Prince Harry, born and educated in Britain, and Meghan Markle, American-born and taught, will have learned the same answer in school on their history quizzes: Who won the War of 1812?

The answer on both sides of the river, and across the pond?

We did, of course.
David Israelson is a writer and podcaster based in Niagara-on-the-Lake.

Pumphouse begins biggest renovation project in 25 years

Brittany Carter
The Lake Report

The Pumphouse Arts Centre has begun its biggest renovation project in 25 years to provide improved accessibility and enhanced art programs for a wider and more diverse audience.

The \$143,500 grant from Ontario Trillium Foundation made the renovation project possible, marketing co-ordinator Cheryl Morris said.

The centre closed this week for construction and is expected to remain closed until completion in March.

And though the art hub will remain out of commission for a couple months, some art programs and classes will be available at the old NOTL Hospital at 176 Wellington St. in the meantime.

The capital grant from the foundation will fund building improvements, such as a new HVAC system as well as automatic door upgrades

for more accessibility and new floors, cabinets and improved studios spaces throughout the building.

Improved accessibility was a driving factor in seeking out the grant, Morris said.

The Pumphouse plans to offer a wider spectrum of programming in the new year, and this renovation will ensure people of all ages and physical conditions can participate, a media release from the Pumphouse said.



A Pumphouse sink before renovations. SUPPLIED



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Niagara fan gets a signed stick from World Juniors golden boy **Akil Thomas**

Dariya Baiguzhiyeva
The Lake Report

Niagara hockey fan Calvin Goodman scored the gift of a lifetime last Thursday.

Just days after returning home from watching Canada win gold in the World Juniors in the Czech Republic, and having already received a stick from winning goal scorer Akil Thomas, the 24-year-old Goodman had a personal rendezvous with Canada's golden boy, who signed the stick he gave Goodman after the championship game.

It was a hectic day as the Icedogs faced off with the Hamilton Bulldogs. Thomas, the IceDogs captain, had just been traded to the Peterborough Petes for a player and four draft picks and wasn't in the lineup against Hamilton.

He was honoured during a short pregame ceremony. Goodman and his father Paul were watching and Paul went on a mission to find Thomas in the arena.

Calvin, an avid hockey fan who regularly attends IceDogs games, was hoping to ask Thomas to

sign the prized World Junior stick.

As Calvin watched the game, his dad spent most of the evening trying to connect with Thomas.

The much-anticipated meeting occurred close to the end of the game when Paul took his son to one of the suites where Thomas was watching his former teammates play. The IceDogs lost 7-1 to the Bulldogs that night.

The trio warmly welcomed each other and exchanged greetings before Thomas signed the stick and posed for a photo.

The Goodmans received the stick while they were on a 10-day bus tour in Europe with friends and family. They attended four World Junior games: the two semi-finals, the bronze medal match and the gold medal game.

"It was the best trip ever. We all were strangers when we started but after 10 days, we were a huge family," Paul told The Lake Report. "It was a fantastic time. Calvin became to everybody like a mascot, an MVP."

He recalled how after Thomas had scored the decisive goal in the final,

everyone who came with them on the bus tour started cheering and shouting, "Let's go, IceDogs."

As Team Canada was celebrating the victory on ice, Paul managed to get Thomas' attention. Thomas grabbed a hockey stick from the bench, stopped for a quick interview with the media and then came over and handed the stick to the Goodmans.

It wasn't the "golden goal" stick, which will be displayed at the Hockey Hall of Fame in Toronto, but it was still a touching gesture.

"When Akil scored, I legit cried," Calvin said in an interview Thursday. "It was pretty awesome ... He's a good player and I've always cheered for the IceDogs."

"He probably recognized us from being in the IceDogs crowd before," Paul added. "It was very nice to see my son be so happy at such a big moment for Canada. And it's very nice of Akil to do that, too."

The Goodmans met Thomas along with other junior players once again when they were all flying back home to Canada. Paul said they were pleasantly surprised to see the



Calvin Goodman with his father Paul Goodman and Akil Thomas at the Niagara IceDogs game on Jan. 9. DARIYA BAIGUZHIYEVA

junior players on the same flight. They spoke with Thomas a little more and thanked him for the gift.

Calvin and his twin brother Daniel both have cerebral palsy. Paul said whenever he sees an opportunity to make Calvin happy, he goes for it. Just like when he attracted Thomas' attention at the final game, he decided to do the same during Thursday's game.

Thomas' trade, just days after Canada's win, upset many local fans, including Calvin.

"I'm sad. Akil has done so much good for the IceDogs and I wish him all the best in Peterborough," Calvin said Thursday. "I only met him (a couple of) days ago and I can tell he's a world-class individual and I'll miss him."



Calvin Goodman's hockey stick signed by Akil Thomas. DARIYA BAIGUZHIYEVA

Icebreakers Comedy Festival **returns** Friday

Brittany Carter
The Lake Report

The Icebreakers Comedy Festival has grown steadily since its first weekend seven years ago – now the annual comedy series has reached five dates spread over two weekends alongside the Icewine Festival in Niagara-on-the-Lake.

Local comedian and organizer of the event Jeff Paul said he's excited to host The Meltdown again this year – he recorded his live comedy album, called "Delightfully Dark" during last year's Meltdown. The album was just released on Friday.

The after-hours mature comedy show features a lineup of "degenerates" such as Patrick Hakeem, Laura Leibow and Alex Pavone – and offers a foul-mouthed, no-holds-barred performance to "offend the masses," he said.

The comedy festival will kick off on Friday, Jan. 17 with a sold-out Opening Night show at Oast House Brewers, which will be headlined by comedian Frank Spadone.

The Celebrity Gala on Saturday, Jan. 18 at White Oaks Resort and Spa is the "biggest show we've ever put on," Paul said.

As well as featuring big

names in comedy such as K Trevor Wilson from Letterkenny and Shaun Majumder from This Hour has 22 Minutes – the Celebrity Gala will be a benefit for Pathstones Mental Health's Hear and Now clinic.

And while the festival will be bringing big names and nationally recognized comedians to town, Paul said it will still feature local talent like Joe Pillitteri, who will be one of several comedians performing during the Thursday, Jan. 23 Industry Night at Jackson Triggs.

Friday, Jan. 24 will see the Best of Yuk Yuk's at Cork's Winebar and Eatery,

showcasing Canadian comics Juliana Rodrigues, Kyle Brownrigg and Keith Pedro with Tim Rabnett hosting the night.

Paul said the CBC Radio Gala, which will close out the festival on Saturday, Jan. 25, has been held at the Old Courthouse on Queen Street in previous years. The festival has since "outgrown that venue," he said. This year it will take place at Ravine Vineyard Estate Winery's new event space.

Many shows are already sold out, or selling fast, Paul said. Tickets and availability can be found online at the Icebreakers Comedy Festival website.



Jeff Paul will host The Meltdown again this year during the Icebreakers Comedy Festival, which kicks off Friday. SUPPLIED/KYRA WILLIAMS


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Kennedy named **new president** of Niagara College

Dariya Baiguzhiyeva
The Lake Report

The new head of Niagara College says he will carry forward the legacy of outgoing president Dan Patterson.

Sean Kennedy, 51, who has been with the college's senior management team since 2006, will begin his new duties on Feb. 24.

It's a "real sense of responsibility," Kennedy said, and he's excited to take over the position of a well-respected and long-serving president. Patterson announced his retirement in May 2019 after a 25-year tenure.

"I've had the pleasure of learning from him for the last 13 years, working closely with him, so I want to take that torch and take the college in some new direction but continue the

momentum and continue all of the success we've built on that foundation," Kennedy said in an interview Friday afternoon.

"Dan and I have a shared set of values and we've worked so close together. Those shared values are a commitment to students and students' success and putting students front and centre."

The announcement of the college's sixth president was made on Friday, Jan. 10, at the Welland Campus.

Kennedy said his love for people of Niagara College and the region made him apply for the position, which he secured after being chosen from among two other final candidates.

He moved to Fonthill from Alberta with his wife Kerry and two sons, Aidan and Neil, in 2006. It was

a leap of faith, he said, as the family didn't know anyone or anything about Niagara before moving to the area.

"Even then, the reputation of the college was high. I'd met Dan and had a good feeling about this place," Kennedy told The Lake Report. "And I've never looked back. It's been a tremendous 13 years and I look forward to the next decade being this exciting."

Before starting his career at Niagara College, Kennedy worked at Red Deer College for six years as dean of students and associate vice-president of student services and international education.

He was also a professional cross-country skier who coached three different athletes who later became Olympians.



The new president of Niagara College Sean Kennedy has been a part of the college's senior management team since 2006. DARIYA BAIGUZHIEVA

Kennedy started working at the Niagara College as vice-president of student and external relations and CEO of the Niagara College Foundation.

For the 2011-2012 aca-

demical year, Kennedy served as interim vice-president of academics. In 2014, he started working as senior vice-president for the college's international department.

Kennedy listed three areas he'd like to focus on when he starts his new role.

The first goal is to continue focusing on the student experience and providing the best facilities and services so the college continues to be among the top schools in student satisfaction, he said.

Unleashing creativity and academic innovation as well as thinking of new ways of delivering programs is another area of focus, Kennedy added.

The third area will be continuing to build strong partnerships with other educational institutions and municipal governments, as well as industry organizations and leaders.

"I bleed Niagara College blue and I couldn't be more excited to be the next president," Kennedy said..

Wealthy benefactor offers up **\$250,000** to Town of NOTL for new gateway to community

Dariya Baiguzhiyeva
The Lake Report

A Niagara-on-the-Lake resident is willing to donate up to \$250,000 to the Town of NOTL for a charitable project that could see a redone entrance into Old Town on Queen and Mississauga streets.

Gerry Kowalchuk has offered to provide the money, which would come from the Gerry Kowalchuk Family Fund through the Niagara Community Foundation.

At a Communities in Bloom committee meeting last month, Kowalchuk said for the last year he's been considering doing a project that would be beneficial to the community and came up with the idea of redoing the entrance about five months ago.

"That's probably the highest volume of traffic on that turn coming into town, especially on long weekends," Kowalchuk said. "I think it's an important focal point and I'd be very happy

to have my name associated with it."

The entrance should complement the surroundings, such as residential homes, the NOTL Golf Course and the Charles Hotel, Kowalchuk said.

Some of the proposed designs included a "more aesthetically pleasing" bulletin board, a digital sign, an evening lighting, a rotational heritage sign, a design reflecting community heritage or a relationship to the War of 1812 and a donor plaque at the site recognizing contribution by the Gerald Kowalchuk Family Fund.

"There are many possibilities," Kowalchuk said at the December meeting, noting that these are just concepts and nothing has been confirmed yet. "I'm sure a lot of positive aspects would come out of this."

At the same meeting, the town's manager of parks and recreation Kevin Turcotte said the town has accepted donations for sponsorships in the past,



The Old Town entrance located at the Queen and Mississauga streets. DARIYA BAIGUZHIEVA

such as for splash pads or arenas.

Kowalchuk also proposed to form a subcommittee named The Queen/Mississauga Project. Originally, the subcommittee's membership, approved by the Communities In Bloom, included Nicole Cripps, Janice Johnston, Janet Trogdon, Alex Topps and Kowalchuk himself.

At the committee of the whole general meeting Monday, Jan. 13, Lord Mayor Betty Disero said she received an email from Kowalchuk asking to replace Cripps with Bill Clark and also adding a town councillor to the board.

Town's committee of the whole approved the new membership which now includes Kowalchuk, Janice Johnston, Janet Trogdon, Alex Topps, Bill Clark and Couns. John Wiens and Wendy Cheropita.

The members of the subcommittee would also work with Parks Canada, the Town, the NOTL Golf Course and the town's municipal heritage committee on the project.

It is an "exciting development," Coun. Clare Cameron said Monday, expressing hope that if the project is successful, the town could have other benefactors willing to put their efforts into enhancing other "geographic gateways" into town, some of which are located at the Garden City Skyway Bridge, along Niagara River Parkway or on Four Mile Creek Road.

The subcommittee will report to Communities In Bloom which will also report back to council.

Councillors will make a formal decision on approving the subcommittee at the next council meeting on Jan. 20.



Women **lead the way** for New Year's golf outing

Kevin MacLean
Managing Editor

There's a tradition at the Niagara-on-the-Lake Golf Club that every New Year's Day some golf-crazed souls venture out onto the first tee and smack a ball up the fairway into the snow drifts covering the course.

Actually, some years the snow cover is light or non-existent, so a few hearty folks actually play a few holes.

The greens are not in play, but temporary pins are placed in front of the greens to give the golfers the illusion of a midsummer day's dream.

This year, early on Jan. 1, five women were the first of a few dozen players to brave the elements. It was cold and breezy, but there was no snow to speak of.

The group, Robin Foster, Lisa Allen, Ginny Green, Pim Earl and Chris Earl, played six holes before retiring for the first sitting of the club's famous New Year's Day brunch.

Allen only lasted three holes ("my fingers froze"), but the others soldiered on, noting she was with them in spirit.

"The course was in good condition," Green reported. "However, when the golf balls occasionally landed on patches of ice they veered off in weird directions.

Nobody kept score, we each carried only a few clubs. It was more important to laugh a lot and stay warm."

As they ventured out well before any of the gentlemen hit the links, they lured Hugh Hutton outside to take a photo for The Lake Report.

He was sipping coffee with friends in the warm clubhouse, but Green said he happily snapped their picture, doing so "with skill and enthusiasm."

The NOTL course is closed until spring but if any area players need a golf fix, the St. Davids Golf Club operates year-round and plans to be open all this week, weather permitting.



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Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday
<h2>The Lake Report</h2> <p>COMMUNITY FAVOURITES: Legion Fish Fry every Thursday 4:30 p.m. to 7:30 p.m. Duplicate Bridge at the Community Centre Tuesdays and Fridays at 1 p.m.</p>			
19	20	21	22
Icewine Festival Ukulele Workshop - 3 p.m. to 5 p.m. - NOTL Community Centre Drum Making Workshop - 9 a.m. - Hilton Garden Inn NOTL Yoga Fest - 1 p.m. - Ravine Vineyard Estate Winery	Council - 6 p.m. - Council Chambers Fun Duplicate Bridge - 9 a.m. to noon - NOTL Community Centre Babies and Books - 11 a.m. - NOTL Public Library Beer and Books: The Orphan Master's Son - 7 p.m. - Old Winery Restaurant	Duplicate Bridge (ACBL Sanctioned) - 1 p.m. to 4 p.m. - NOTL Community Centre NOTL Rotary Club - Noon - NOTL Community Centre Niagara Golden Age Club: Seniors Euchre - 1 p.m. - NOTL Community Centre	NOTL Toastmasters - Niagara College Danforth Campus Branch 124 General Meeting - 7 p.m. - Le Room Branch 124 STEAM Story Time - 11:45 a.m. - NOTL Pu German Conversati - 9:45 a.m. to 11:20 a.m. - Community Centre Chess Club - 5 p.m. - Library Yoga with Melaina Tree - 9 a.m. - NOTL C Centre
26	27	28	29
Icewine Festival Death Chats: Safe, Open Conversations on Death and Dying - 2 p.m. to 4 p.m. - NOTL Community Centre Ukulele Workshop - 3 p.m. to 5 p.m. - NOTL Community Centre Willowbank Sunday Salon Series: ft. Denielle Bassels - 2 p.m. to 4 p.m. - Willowbank Teen Literary Alliance - 1:30 p.m. - NOTL Public Library	Fun Duplicate Bridge - 9 a.m. to noon - NOTL Community Centre Babies and Books - 11 a.m. - NOTL Public Library Famous and Infamous: Louis Armstrong by David Sydor - 2 p.m. - NOTL Museum	NOTL Horticultural Society January Meeting - 6:30 p.m. to 9 p.m. - NOTL Community Centre Urban Design Committee - 5 p.m. - Council Chambers Duplicate Bridge (ACBL Sanctioned) - 1 p.m. to 4 p.m. - NOTL Community Centre NOTL Rotary Club - Noon - NOTL Community Centre Niagara Golden Age Club: Seniors Euchre - 1 p.m. - NOTL Community Centre Heritage Trail Committee - 2 p.m. - Council Chambers Family Movie: The Lion King - 5 p.m. - NOTL Public Library	Lord Mayor's Economic Advisory Committee - Committee Room 1 NOTL Toastmasters - Niagara College Danforth Campus German Conversati - 9:45 a.m. to 11:20 a.m. - Community Centre Yoga with Melaina Tree - 9 a.m. - NOTL C Centre

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Report CALENDAR

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Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
	16 NLH Workshop: Learning to Improve - 7:30 p.m. - NOTL Community Centre Seniors Drop in: Casual Bridge - 1 p.m. to 4 p.m. - NOTL Community Centre Homeschooler Drop in - 9:30 a.m. to 11 a.m. - NOTL Public Library Open House for Gate Street Road Reconstruction Project - 4 p.m. - Operations Boardroom, 3 Lorraine St. Customer Experience and Technology Committee - 4 p.m. - Council Chambers	17 Icewine Festival PA Day Fun at the Rink and Fort George - 12 p.m. to 4 p.m. - Fort George Duplicate Bridge (ACBL Sanctioned) - 1 p.m. to 4 p.m. - NOTL Community Centre Knit a Bit - 2 p.m. - NOTL Public Library PA Day Flix: Mulan - 2 p.m. - NOTL Public Library	18 Icewine Festival Shaw Festival Film Series: Woman at War - 3 p.m. - Shaw Festival Theatre Talk: The Decline of Bees and Pollinators - 2 p.m. - RiverBrink Art Museum Great Winter Warm up: Celebrate MCC 100 Anniversary - 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. - Bethany Mennonite Church Niagara Dinner Dance Club - 6 p.m. - Royal Niagara Golf Club
22 - 7 p.m. - el J Patterson Membership Region Club 11 a.m. to blic Library ion Group a.m. - NOTL - NOTL Public from Salt to Community	23 Agricultural Committee - 2 p.m. - Council Chambers Seniors Drop in: Casual Bridge - 1 p.m. to 4 p.m. - NOTL Community Centre Homeschooler Drop in - 9:30 a.m. to 11 a.m. - NOTL Public Library NLH Workshop: Playing with Rhythm - 7:30 p.m. - NOTL Community Centre	24 Icewine Festival Duplicate Bridge (ACBL Sanctioned) - 1 p.m. to 4 p.m. - NOTL Community Centre Knit a Bit - 2 p.m. - NOTL Public Library January 2020 Red Tent Event - 6:30 p.m. to 9:30 p.m. - Red Roof Retreat Homeschool: Technology Petting Zoo - 11 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. - NOTL Public Library	25 Icewine Festival Shaw Festival Film Series: Rocketman - 3 p.m. - Shaw Festival Rocking for the Homeless - 3 p.m. - Club 55
29 omic ee - 7:30 a.m. - - 7 p.m. - el J Patterson ion Group a.m. - NOTL from Salt to Community	30 Beards on Ice - 11 a.m. - Wayne Gretzky Estates Winery and Distillery Audit Committee - 9:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. - Council Chambers Seniors Drop in: Casual Bridge - 1 p.m. to 4 p.m. - NOTL Community Centre Homeschooler Drop in - 9:30 a.m. to 11 a.m. - NOTL Public Library	31 Duplicate Bridge (ACBL Sanctioned) - 1 p.m. to 4 p.m. - NOTL Community Centre Knit a Bit - 2 p.m. - NOTL Public Library	1 Repair Cafe - 11 a.m. to 1 p.m. - NOTL Public Library Shaw Festival Film Series: The Biggest Little Farm - 3 p.m. - Shaw Festival Theatre

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Hometown Traveller

Centuries of history and the welcoming people of Iran



Pam Cannon surrounded by school girls wanting their photo taken. NICK CANNON

The news has been full of tragedy and war-mongering in Iran lately. This story from NOTL residents Pam and Nick Cannon's trip to Iran in April 2018 shows that people the world over are the same. The Cannons have escorted groups of seniors all over the world through Toronto's Craig Travel. They have visited over 90 countries – and counting.

Pam Cannon
Special to The Lake Report

This quote sums up our feelings for Iran since our return from a wonderful tour of this country in April 2018.

"You can shake the sand from your shoes, but it will never leave your soul."

In light of all the news these past weeks I felt that it may be appropriate to recap our travel there.

The scenery is stunning, from the snow-

capped mountains to the UNESCO gardens in the middle of the desert, but it is the people who are the "soul" of Iran.

In every village, town and city, we were greeted with hugs, handshakes, smiles and requests for photographs. From young children on school trips, to senior citizens sitting on the sidewalk, the welcome was "Thank you for visiting us" and "We are happy to see you" – always delivered with a smile. From the younger generation we were usually asked "Where are you from?", "What is your name?" and "How old are you?"

Every meal was a delight. Our guide found the most interesting locations and the food was wonderful. We ate in an old Armenian bath house and in a "caravanserai," a roadside inn where travellers can rest and recover from

"Perhaps travel cannot prevent bigotry, but by demonstrating that all peoples cry, laugh, eat, worry, and die, it can introduce the idea that if we try and understand each other, we may even become friends."

MAYA ANGELOU
AMERICAN POET, ACTIVIST

the day's journey, especially along the Silk Road.

I cannot describe the feelings as we gazed at artifacts that were 5,000 years old, or heard the history of this country. The mosques, palaces, historic houses defy description.

An unexpected link to Canada occurred when we visited the Tabait Bridge. It was designed by Leila Araghian. She has a master of architecture degree from the University of British Columbia, where she won the UBC Architecture Alumni Henry Elder Prize.

We had an excellent visit to the Tower of Silence.

Until 40 years ago corpses could still be found on top of the Tower of Silence in Yazd, slowly disintegrating and being picked apart by the desert vultures in Zoroastrian tradition. What an interesting way to dispose the bodies of the dead.

A visit to the Fire Temple also in Yazd again emphasizes the long history of this country. The flame is behind a glass wall and has been burning for 1,100 years. A priest is always on duty to keep it lit.

On arrival at the Abbasi Hotel in Isfahan there was a huge crowd around the main entrance and barriers holding people back. We thought it was all for us! They did cheer as we got off the bus, but they were waiting for the Iranian soccer team to arrive.

This building is a 300-year-old palace that was converted to a hotel 80 years ago. It is a living museum, built around courtyards with fountains and gardens.

After dinner, a surprise: We went by bus to a sacred place" – Zoorkhaneh (House of Strength), a round room with seats looking down on a ring where men performed push-ups, juggling with huge weights and exercises. The entire presentation is accompanied by a man with a drum and singing religious songs to exhort them to greater effort.

We were amazed at

the length of time each activity went on, and the strength shown by these participants. There is no competition and no one is allowed to pay to see this. It is strictly prohibited as it is considered a holy exercise.

Throughout the tour we were overwhelmed by the welcoming of the Iranian people wherever we went. In one of the mosques we met two lovely young women who were students at the time. We have kept in touch with them – one of them is now married and the other is an engineer.

I am constantly reminded of the marvellous Maya Angelou quote: "Perhaps travel cannot prevent bigotry, but by demonstrating that all peoples cry, laugh, eat, worry, and die, it can introduce the idea that if we try and understand each other, we may even become friends."



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Protesters threaten ‘spectacle’ at Icewine Village this weekend

Brittany Carter
 The Lake Report

Animal rights activists are threatening to launch a new campaign, called “Operation Embargo,” at Niagara-on-the-Lake’s Icewine Village this weekend in continued protest against the town’s horse-drawn carriages.

The group calling itself At War For Animals Niagara has planned a “spectacle” around 3:30 p.m. on Saturday to announce the start of the campaign, co-founder Adam Stirr said.

And though he wouldn’t describe what the “spectacle” might entail, he assured it would be legal.

“I can just suggest that you come down and see for yourself on Saturday,” he said.

Eduardo Lafforgue, president of the NOTL Chamber of Commerce, said all organizations involved with the

Icewine Festival have been made aware of the protesters’ threatened action.

“The town, Niagara Regional Police, the Chamber of Commerce and Tourism NOTL and our own private hired security are aware of the potential campaign launch. We all hope those involved remain civil,” he said in an email to The Lake Report.

Konzelmann Estate Winery’s director of marketing, Andrew Niven, said the threat of protest shouldn’t have any effect on the festival.

“We’ll, of course, continue to celebrate icewine over the next two weekends, placing guest experience first – regardless of any outside distractions,” he said.

The new protest strategy is a way for the animal rights group to “apply pressure” to town staff and

residents to ban horse-drawn carriages in NOTL, Stirr said.

The group is adopting protest tactics that have been successful for anti-fur campaigns and other activist groups around the world, he said.

That includes having a significant presence at major NOTL tourist, wine and town events and festivals, “hijacking” hashtags on social media and an “organized global call for a total boycott of all travel to and purchase of any NOTL products,” until the town bans horse-drawn carriages, said a media statement issued by the group.

Stirr said the targeted protests at events and festivals, such as the Icewine Village, will broaden the activists’ reach.

“Everyone in town has a say in this. There is a great



Protesters hold signs to advocating for the ban of horse-drawn carriages in NOTL. BRITTANY CARTER

number of people in the town who don’t agree and would like to see the end of the carriages,” Stirr said. “And this may be a way to reach those people on the fence.”

While he said he believes the ongoing protests near Sentineal Carriages’ posting at King and Queen streets “would work in time,” he thinks this new approach could be more effective.

“We’d like to see it move forward. We’d like to sit with the town and the carriage operators and put everything

on the table and find another option,” Stirr added.

As for “hijacking hashtags,” he said it’s a method to push the group’s message into the news feeds and onto social media platforms of people who may not know about the “anti-speciesism” philosophy the group members say they stand for.

“There’s hashtags that are used on social media. What is often done by activists is that they will use those same hashtags, so that way when

people search that hashtag, they get both sides of the story.”

An email response from municipal staff said the town is aware of the protest and has taken measures to ensure public safety.

“Lord Mayor (Betty) Disero has requested police presence at the Niagara-on-the-Lake Icewine Village at 3:30 p.m. on Jan. 18, the reported launch date of AW-FAN’s campaign, to remind those involved to remain civil,” the town said.

WINE COUNTRY WITH VICTORIA GILBERT

With icewine and food, opposites attract

Victoria Gilbert
 Special to The Lake Report

Three Niagara-on-the-Lake producers were asked about their favourite icewine and food combos and although their icewines were as different as the individuals themselves, the consensus is icewine is a cheese and chocolate darling.

Reif Estate Riesling Grand Reserve Icewine 2015

Klaus Reif, CEO, Reif Estate Winery

“I like the Riesling icewine with food; it is less concentrated and less sweet than Vidal icewine but more elegant,” says Reif who has been producing icewines since the eighties. “Riesling icewine has higher acidity and is a touch drier, which goes well with food.”

Flavour profile: “You get both dry apricot and the fresh apricot. The reason

is because of the botrytis effect,” explains Reif. “The skin on a Riesling is so much more fragile in comparison to the Vidal, so the skin breaks down, it gets botrytis and you get this extra dry apricot flavour. It is lighter and yet more complex in flavour.” Botrytis is a grey fungus which occurs during September and October and which alters the taste of the wine, often in a positive way, which is why the French dubbed it “noble rot.”

Best pair: “I would pair a blue cheese, a Roquefort. It’s funny because I don’t like blue cheese; I will take it out of a salad and put it to the side; I only eat blue cheese with icewine. The sweetness of the icewine and the saltiness of the blue cheese, it is the perfect match.”

Jackson-Triggs 2016 Gewürztraminer Icewine
Levi deLoryn, winemaker, Jackson-Triggs

“It’s bloody cold, I’m not used to it at all, but it was fun and an incredible learning process,” says the Australia-born deLoryn of his first icewine harvest.

“We have a number of different icewines, but I think this Gewürztraminer is unique. We make it every other year. We pick years when it is going to be a particularly vibrant year.”

Flavour profile: “What I love about this wine, is what you get on the nose is exactly what you get on the palate: I think Turkish delight and lychees.”

Best pair: “A blue cheese or something spicy like a chili-infused chocolate.”

“With food pairings, you’re not looking at one food to outweigh the other; you don’t want the wine to shine and the food to be dull, or you don’t want the food to shine and the wine play out, you want them to

highlight each other and in that respect that’s what this pairing is.”

Ferox Dornfelder 2017 icewine

Stephani Reis, sommelier and sales at Ferox Winery

“It may be the only Dornfelder icewine being made in Canada right now,” says Reis of the black-red icewine made from a rare German varietal. “We can’t find anyone else doing this,” she says as the unusually dark liquid slips into the glass before her.

Flavour profile: “This is black forest cake in a glass. Dark cocoa, black cherry, a little bit of cinnamon, a little smokiness. It is so different.”

Best pair: “We have this paired with a cocoa and cinnamon French macaron at the Icewine Festival, but you could pair it with a blue cheese or a Camembert with a cherry compote on top.”



Levi deLoryn, winemaker at Jackson-Triggs says a sweet icewine is best paired with something not so sweet, like bitter chocolate or a potent blue cheese. SUPPLIED



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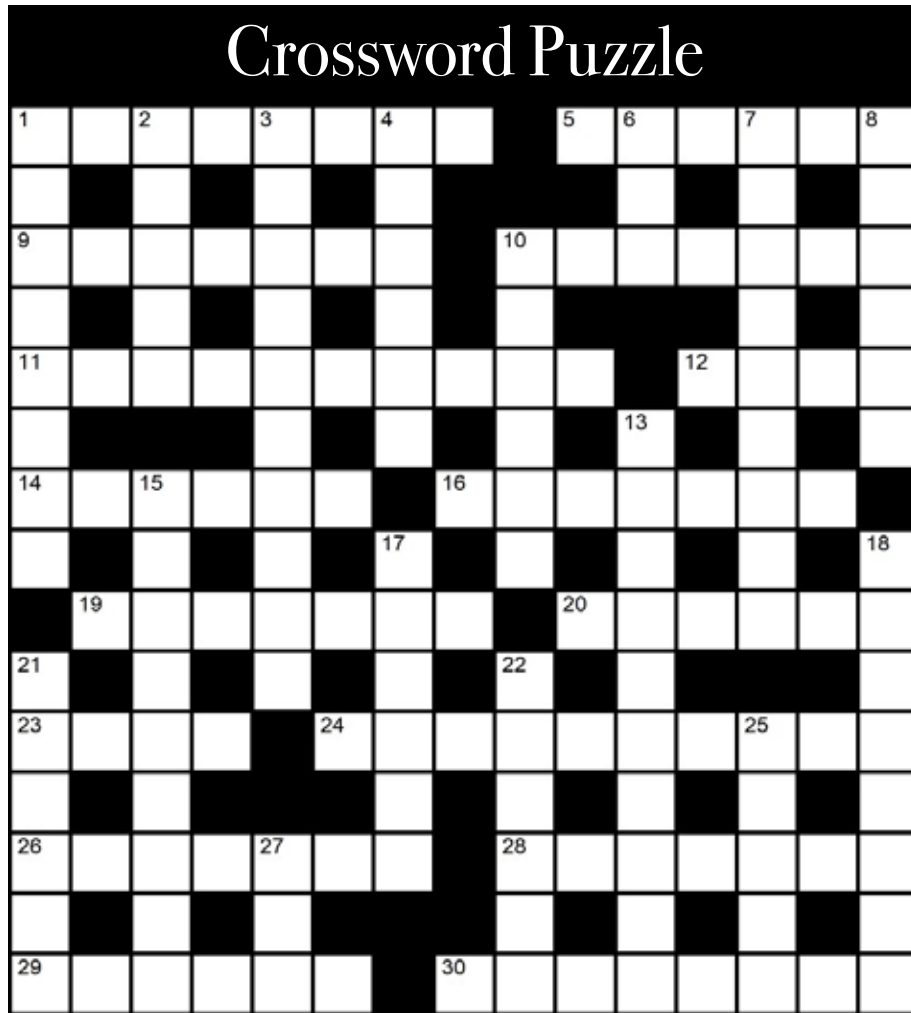
The Lake Report is looking for puzzle makers who would like to help develop this page. We are seeking both standard and cryptic crossword writers. editor@niagaranow.com

Across

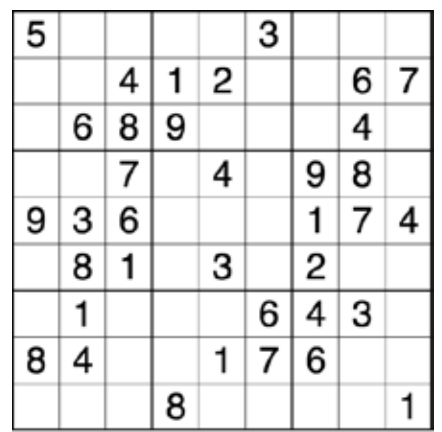
- 1. Summer sky sights (8)
- 5. Desisted (6)
- 9. Made suitable (7)
- 10. Put in writing (3,4)
- 11. Grasp (10)
- 12. PIN points? (1,1,2)
- 14. Up till now (2,4)
- 16. Faith-based fight (4,3)
- 19. --- Oak ("Far from the Madding Crowd") (7)
- 20. Grieve (6)
- 23. Portal (4)
- 24. So careless about some hot dishes (10)
- 26. Declines (7)
- 28. Hibernia (7)
- 29. Spotting (6)
- 30. Becomes rigid (8)

Down

- 1. Dearth (8)
- 2. Sleep stopper (5)
- 3. The written classics (10)
- 4. Side-to-side measurements (6)
- 6. Corrode (3)
- 7. Cat breed (9)
- 8. Coffee accompaniment (6)
- 10. Elder (6)
- 13. Without assistance (2,8)
- 15. Large flying insect (9)
- 17. Flower attractions (6)
- 18. Every story has them (3,5)
- 21. Puts on a pedestal (6)
- 22. Holiday memento (1-5)
- 25. Depart (5)
- 27. Transgression (3)



Last issue's answers



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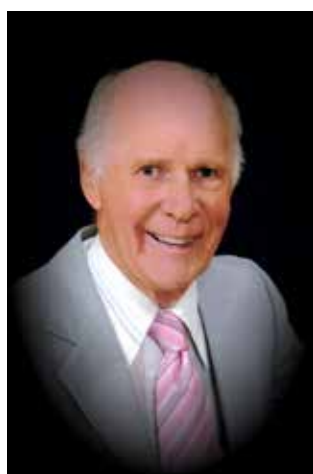


GIBBS, Margaret Veronica – of Niagara-on-the Lake Ontario passed away peacefully at the Niagara General Hospital on Wednesday, Jan. 8. This was the end of a long journey following the onset of auto-immune neuromuscular disease in Alberta in 2012 which kept her in hospital for five months and left her with one functioning lung. She had a further period of three months in hospital in St. Catharines in 2017 and after this, struggled hard with an increasing burden of health problems. In spite of this, she kept a bright outlook on life and made every effort to enjoy her life as much as possible. Margaret unceasingly considered the welfare of others as more important than her own. Margaret was born in Putney, London, England in 1942 and after working as a nurse for a few years took up accountancy. In 1963, she married Graham who has been her lifelong companion for more than 60 years. Margaret and Graham came to Canada in 1966, living in Quebec for 19 years and in Alberta for 29 years before moving to Niagara-on-the-Lake in 2014. They added a son, Christopher in 1966. Her husband says that “it was a privilege” to have been chosen to spend his life with Margaret. She will be deeply missed by her family and fondly remembered by all who met her and especially by her brothers and their wives,

nephews and nieces and their children, and by her many friends scattered around the world. The funeral was held at 11 a.m. on Tuesday Jan. 14, 2020 at St. Vincent de Paul Church in Niagara-on-the-Lake. Please send donations in lieu of flowers to Niagara-on-the-Lake Community Palliative Care accessed through the CanadaHelps website www.canadahelps.org/en/

Memories, photos and condolences may be shared at www.morganfuneral.com

Peter Baker



BAKER, Peter Morris – March 31 1932 – Jan. 12, 2020 - The family mourns the sudden loss of a devoted husband and father. Peter’s passing has deeply saddened his wife Jean and children Adrian, Helen and Richard. Jean has many happy memories of a married life spanning 62 years. Peter had a distinguished career with the federal government, first as an engineer, and later co-authoring reports on lung cancer as a statistician, Peter was educated at two universities in the U.K. obtaining his B.Sc. and M.Sc. He will be sorely missed by his family. The family will receive friends at MORGAN FUNERAL HOME, 415 Regent St., Niagara-on-the-Lake, on Friday, Jan. 17 from 2-4 p.m. A service to commemorate the life of Peter, will be held at St. Mark’s Anglican Church on Saturday, Jan. 18 at 11 a.m. Burial to follow at Niagara Lakeshore Cemetery. In lieu of flowers a memorial donation to Amnesty International or charity of your choice would be appreciated by the family. Memories, photos and condolences may be shared at www.morganfuneral.com

Cheryl Phillips



PHILLIPS, Cheryl Ann- With family by her side, on Dec. 4, 2019, lost her battle with pancreatic cancer at the age of 65. Beloved wife of the late Jim (2014). Loving mother of Michael (Sarah), Bobby (Erin) and Christopher. Proud Gramma of Adrianna, Madelynn, Eric and Evie. Dear sister of Carol (Bert) and aunt of Brent (Andrea) and the late Adrienne. Caring niece of Irene.

Cheryl happily retired to Niagara-on-the-Lake a year ago and became an active member of the community. She will be missed by many friends.

At her request, cremation has taken place and a celebration of her life will be held on Saturday, Jan. 18, 2020 at Queen’s Landing, Imperial Ballroom, 155 Byron Street, Niagara-on-the-Lake from 1-4 p.m. For those who wish to stay in NOTL, rooms have been reserved at a discounted rate. Please contact Queen’s Landing directly and mention the Phillips group. An open house drop-in will be held afterwards. Inquiries may be sent to Michael, Bobby, or Chris at Chris@PhillipsContracting.ca

For those who wish, memorial donations may be made to the Canadian Cancer Society. Memories, photos and condolences may be shared at www.morganfuneral.com.

For obituary and memorial inquiries, please contact editor@niagaranow.com.

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NOTL Writers' Circle

Dids' story: Learning to read

This is the first of three parts.

Richard West
NOTL Writers' Circle

When the Chief Stoker first met me, he bellowed, "What do you mean, Dids, you can't read? I promise you, we'll soon change that!"

He then added reading and writing lessons to my daily routines and, sure enough, I learned to read, while our destroyer sailed through the freezing northern seas. Prob-

ably the most valuable thing I could have acquired, during my stint in the Royal Navy.

I had been known as Dids, from a very young age. My real name is Arthur, but nobody ever uses it. Being blessed with a broad smile, and a laugh, which chuckles through my speech, people see me a jolly type, even when I might be worried or frightened. The Chief Stoker would often say, "Keep smiling Dids, it helps us all see the sunnier side of things." I felt part of the crew

and tried hard to do my bit.

After I completed my training in the early summer of 1943, I was posted to a new destroyer, HMS Virago. To be honest, I had misgivings about being a seaman, because I can't swim! My job was in the engine room, assisting the stokers and engineers, tending the boilers and turbines. Essentially, I was a grease monkey.

We went through trials and shake down exercises, on HMS Virago. Then she was put to work on Arctic

convoys, to Murmansk in northern Russia.

These Arctic convoys took place in the winter, when the sun hardly appears at all, for months on end. Most of us, who took part in these convoys, spent a good deal of time either nearly frozen or terrified.

It was physically arduous, due to the intense cold, terrible seas and danger of attack. Other dangers were icebergs, or capsizing from ice build up on the superstructure.

Chipping ice off the ships

guns, masts and decks, was not a cheery past time. No one wants to be on deck, or worse, up on the higher parts of the ship, when the wind is howling and spray continuously soaks you.

But no one wants the ship to suddenly roll over and sink. So you chip away at the ice and try to be brave through your watch. Then you get to go below and find a steam pipe to cuddle up to.

In addition to the natural hazards, the convoys were attacked by aircraft stationed in

northern Norway, as well as submarines and, sometimes, powerful surface vessels. The ever-present worry of torpedoes plays the devil with your nerves. And the scream and crash of bombs falling around the ship, can freeze your blood to ice, so you cannot move.

My only consolation was, I stayed warmer than most of the crew, most of the time. The engine room is by definition warm, being full of hot machinery.

To be continued.

COOKING WITH COLLIN

An earthy soup with a hint of sweetness



Collin Goodine
Special to The Lake Report

Truth be told, I am someone who really likes and would prefer warmer weather all year round. But as a Canadian, cold weather is something I cannot avoid and it is a season I loved as a child. As an adult I find love for many different things when the snow starts to fly ... Christmas, the icewine festival, hot chocolate, skating outdoors, fresh-baked bread and the desire to make soups and stews.

This is a creamy, pureed soup that has a great mouth feel and earthy flavour, with a hint of sweetness.

Potato, Leek and Pear Soup

Ingredients:

- | | |
|--------------------------|--|
| 1/2 cup butter | Half bunch thyme |
| 50 mL olive oil | 6-8 pears (washed and cored) |
| 3 onions (diced) | 8 litres vegetable stock |
| 10-12 leeks (white part) | 1 tbsp apple butter (from recipe published in December 2019) |
| 5 cloves garlic (pureed) | 2 litres 35% cream |
| 15 potatoes (diced) | |

Directions:

Heat butter and oil in a soup pot on medium-high. Add the diced onions, white parts of the leek and saute for five minutes until tender, stirring occasionally. Add pureed garlic, diced potatoes, chopped thyme and pears. Saute for an additional 2 minutes.

Add vegetable stock, apple butter and heavy cream. Bring to a boil, cover with a lid set a little off to allow steam to escape. Reduce heat to medium-low and simmer for 15-20 minutes, or until the potatoes are fork tender.

Use an immersion blender to puree the soup. Or transfer to a blender in small batches and pulse until pureed.

Season generously. Garnish with blue cheese, croutons or creme fraiche.

STAY FIT NOTL



Danielle Lepp and Jaclyn Willms lift weights. STAY FIT NOTL

Total body workout

Jaclyn Willms
Special to The Lake Report

Fight the winter blues with this at-home total body workout! With only 1 set of dumbbells you can burn your entire body.

These cold winter months can be difficult to keep motivated on our fitness but the old saying goes summer bodies are made in the winter. The cold trek out to the gym

can be daunting so here is a workout you can fit in anywhere, anytime.

Remember - a little bit of movement every day is key, it is what we do daily that is important.

5 exercises in 5 minutes

Perform each exercise for 30 seconds then take a 30 second break before moving on to the next exercise.

Start at the next exercise

on the next minute mark.

Do this series 1-3x depending how much time you have and what your fitness level is.

1. Squat into Shoulder Press
2. Side Lunge into Lateral Raise
3. Single Leg Deadlift
4. Renegade Row
5. V-Sit

Visit our Instagram @niagarafit for videos of the exercises.

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EXPLORING PHOTOS

WITH JIM SMITH



Magder Family Store

Magder's Family Store was located on the west corner of Queen and Regent streets as seen in this picture. The 1960 Chevrolet Corvair parked in front gives an indication of the year the picture was taken. Next door to Magder's was Florence LeDoux's antique shop, which had previously been the Eaton's Order Office. Florence and her husband Trellie owned this building and lived upstairs, where they raised their two children Bonnie and T.J. or Trellie Junior.

SUPPLIED PHOTO/JIM SMITH

The Lake Report

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When you're looking for a service or product, check The Lake Report and support someone who lives in your hometown. There are plenty of great businesses inside to choose from — **don't forget to mention you saw them in The Lake Report!**

The Lake Report would also like to acknowledge and thank those who have made financial contributions to the paper. **Your donations and contributions help support young, local journalists, as well as student interns, local charities, and so much more.**

We encourage all residents to support The Lake Report through an annual "voluntary" subscription. We suggest just \$50/year (less than \$1 per issue) per household. **That's less than most people spend on coffee.**

Larger donations are also greatly appreciated.

Donations can be made online at www.lakereport.ca, or cheques can be mailed to the NOTL Post Office, L0S1J0, PO Box 724.

Please make cheques payable to The Lake Report.

- Richard Harley

The Lake Report

FACTS

The Lake Report recently conducted a readership survey, and sent information on how to participate to every farm, residence and apartment in Niagara-on-the-Lake.

More than 80% of people surveyed chose The Lake Report as their preferred choice for local news and information.

SOURCE: TLR Readership Survey; October 2019

ARCHITEXT

Niagara English Arts and Crafts

Brian Marshall
Featured



English Cottage by Nicholson & MacBeth. SUPPLIED

When an Arts & Crafts house is mentioned in North America one thinks of Craftsman or Prairie designs, but these expressions were late-comers to a tradition founded in England decades earlier.

While John Ruskin may have penned the basic philosophy that underwrote the Arts & Crafts movement, it was William Morris who was a principal driving force in establishing fine hand-wrought craftsmanship as the central tenet of the movement. It was he who established the medieval styled guilds to produce extremely successful furniture, stained glass, wall paper and textiles (often from

his own designs). And it was Morris who commissioned architect Phillip Webb to develop a residential house design based on these same Arts & Crafts principles; a stylistic statement which was broadly and rapidly embraced.

Even though Arts & Crafts architects drew upon inspiration from the same general historical period as did the Gothic Revival school, the designs of the two groups were distinctly different. In designing Morris' house, Webb focussed on informal non-classical elements from

medieval English vernacular architecture using brick cladding, small-paned casement windows and local materials with an emphasis on hand crafting. Then, as the style evolved, touches of Japanese craft were introduced and architects pursued expressions on which actual historical forms were largely absent while still evoking a sense of the medieval. Edwin Luytens integrated many of his designs with an idealized English Cottage Garden landscape developed by Gertrude Jekyll; a concept Charles Voysey refined to its essence

in expressions that came to be known as the English Cottage.

Here in Niagara, the region was blessed by the extraordinary partnership of Arthur Nicholson and Robert MacBeth. Judging by the surviving buildings of each architect when working independently, neither of these men produced designs of particular note. That said, during the decade of their collaboration (ca. 1921 to 1931) the team developed a signature English Arts & Crafts style which often resulted in homes that can only be described as brilliant.

Consider the example shown above; a home in which both design and execution have resulted in one of the finest English Cottage compositions I have had the privilege to see. Its form, balance, elements and materials, right down to the clinker brick laid in uneven mortar, lend an ageless sense of handcrafted permanence; a hallmark of the very best Arts & Crafts homes.

Did you know?

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

The ink is also vegetable-based.



St. Davids-Queenston United Church

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Minister: Rev. Rick Hawley

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Queenston house is 200 years old



Linda Fritz
Exclusive/The Lake Report

The town of Niagara-on-the-Lake is awash in new housing developments. Old Town, Virgil, Glendale and St. Davids all have newly created subdivisions. Even Queenston is witnessing the building of new homes. But an older and very interesting housing stock still exists.

Queenston is home to several historically designated buildings, including Willowbank. One of the village's more modest homes celebrates its 200th birthday in 2020. It was one of the first five privately owned properties in Niagara-on-the-Lake to be designated as having historical value. Indeed, it even has its own bylaw.

A fragment of a mortgage document indicates that there was a building on the site occupied by the house as early as 1803. Unfortunately, further information relating to Queenston was kept at the Court House in Niagara-on-the-Lake and was destroyed along with much of the town during the fire of 1813.

The present structure on Queenston Street was known to be built for John Johnson Brown in 1820. The house was described as a "two-storey, four-bay house of rectangular plan with a longitudinal gable roof and two chimneys in the body. To the east is an 'ell' whose lean-to shed roof continues the pitch of the gable roof. It is clapboard framed on a rubble foundation. The main entrance is in the southernmost bay. It has a 'saltbox' shape associated

with New England. There is a low basement under the west part of the house only. A fireplace foundation is next to the north wall."

Inside, there were a few features worth noting. In the bedroom, the original wooden mouldings remain underneath each window. They are described as "diamond fielded panels connected by chair rails." These mouldings were copied during a recent renovation in the living room.

The house was purchased for 250 pounds by Brown from Thomas Helmer, a United Empire Loyalist who fought in the American Revolutionary War. There was no formal documentation of ownership until 1848 when Brown's widow wanted to sell the property. Among the signatures on the land transfer deed are those of a Vrooman, a Secord and a Hamilton. Mrs. Brown sold the house to a member of the Wray family. Other early owners were Gorings, Robertsons, even a Lailey.

In its early days, this building was not just a family home.

By 1850, rules for the inspection and licensing of hotels were passed. The owners of such enterprises "must provide a comfortable dwelling with not less than four rooms (lounge, parlour etc.) other than the bar or kitchen and not less than four beds other than those necessary for the use of the family, also a good shed open to the road with enough room for six horses; that said he, she or they is a person or persons of sober habits and good moral character, a subject or subjects of Her Majesty by birth or naturalization."

There were also limits on the number of hotels. Queenston could have six hotels, St. Davids two and the road between Queenston and Niagara-on-the-Lake was allowed just one. This being said, there are records of 13



The Queenston house. FROM 2013 VIDEO, "BURNING OF NIAGARA," COURTESY TONY CHISHOLM

taverns in Queenston.

According to former village historian Rosanne Fedorkow, by the late-20th century, there were only two former inns still standing. One, originally called the Riverview Hotel, is now the South Landing Inn, and the other is the Brown House.

The evidence of the house's earlier incarnation is still visible. The architectural description of the door being in the south bay of the house is the first clue. At the time the house was built, the Georgian/Palladian style was the more popular style. By placing the door at one end of the house rather than in the middle, a large room could be set aside as a lounge or parlour. The bar could be located close by in one of the warren of rooms in the previously described lean-to.

The rules stated there must be room for four beds – not four bedrooms. The room above the parlour

is large enough to accommodate at least four people. Both the parlour and the bedroom have large fireplaces built on the foundation in the basement that would have kept the customers warm. Finally, there is evidence that a stable block was situated close to the house on the south side.

As time passed, the house became something of a wreck. It ceased to be occupied by its owners. At one stage, it became a boarding house, with the large parlour and upstairs room divided into smaller ones.

By the mid-20th century, the house had fallen into even further disrepair. It was saved by a group of local residents who had created a company called Quatre Tech. The group also helped to preserve the former Baptist Church, which now serves Queenston as a community centre.

The rescue took place in the mid-1970s and by 1979 it received its historical

designation. The present owners act as caretakers, but caretaking has led to a number of issues.

A good example of this was the discussion with the local historical committee about the chair rails. They were deemed to be original. In the 19th and early 20th century, they had been painted with lead paint. The remediation process was lengthy and expensive. If all of the layers of paint were removed, there would be next to no wood left. In the end, they were replaced.

The windows proved to be another issue. In 1984, in order to receive a grant to replace them, there were a number of restrictions. "Grants may be applied to the repair, conservation, or reconstruction of wooden storm or screen windows if the historical evidence of the use of storm windows is documented. The storm or screen windows must be a replica of the original in both style and mate-

rial." Storm windows using materials such as plexiglass or aluminum could not be used as replacements.

The owners at the time chose to replace the older windows and fix them so that they didn't open. With windows on every side of the house, this meant that air conditioning became a necessity in the summer. The present owners had the windows opened, and storms and screens added. Because they were unable to use modern materials and methods, it means that heating bills can add up.

In spite of the restrictions, the house remains a charming, rambling property. It is old, and in need of constant work to maintain it for 21st-century occupants; however, there's no question it's worth the effort. Future generations are bound to love it.

More Niagara's History Unveiled articles about the past of Niagara-on-the-Lake are available at: www.niagaranow.com



COMMUNITY



We invite you to submit photos and stories for consideration in this section. Send your submissions to editor@niagaranow.com for a chance to be featured.



Is it spring yet?

Community photos



NOTL Wolves Peewee AE face off with the Garden City Falcons at the Meridian Credit Union Arena on Saturday, Jan. 11. The Wolves lost to Falcons with a 13-5 score. DARIYA BAIGUZHIEVA



Juliet Dunn Trio performed on the opening day of Jazz and Brunch at Strewn Winery on Sunday, Jan. 12. Vocals provided by Juliet Dunn, Peter Shea at the piano and Rob McBride plays bass. DARIYA BAIGUZHIEVA



THE GOLDEN PLUNGER

With Betty and Jane

Oban Inn



Christine Colbey accepts the award for the Oban Inn. THE GOLDEN PLUNGER

Tucked away from the busy historic town of NOTL we came upon the boutique hotel called the Oban Inn (Gaelic for "Little Bay"), with a "swimmingly" great view of the lake. The Inn was first opened in 1824 and definitely reflects a historic charm all its own. Today this Inn offers various suites, and a Spa. We sampled a delightful lunch at the Oban restaurant while enjoying the "refection and warmth" of the view. The "privy" continued the Inn's unique architecture from the geometric tiled floors, private stalls, and single porcelain sinks. Hand towels were provided and added a personal touch. The Oban Inn certainly earned 4\5 Golden Plungers.



The Black Tie Purple Ribbon Gala for epilepsy was a resounding success at the courthouse in NOTL. RICHARD HARLEY

NOTL DART LEAGUE

Each week, dart teams face off at local restaurants and pubs. Find scores here weekly, exclusive to The Lake Report.

Silks Jini	116
Legion Guzzlers	105
Close Shavians	99
Legion Guyz	98
Legion Airs	91
SandTrap	80
Silks Legends	79
Legion Dartbags	44



Tarot of the week

Lisa Tache/Special

DATE: Jan. 16, 2020

The Three of Cups is reminding you it's time to get out there and make more of an effort and be open to the social influences

life is presenting to you. When the Three of Cups appears in a Tarot reading, you are encouraged to gather with your closest friends and have a good time together, talking, laughing, sharing and creating. You must consciously take time out to liven up your social life. See it as your opportunity to let loose and forget about your day-to-day commitments for a bit. Instead, spend quality time with friends and family and enjoy yourself! This is a great card for parties. If you are being invited to events and social gatherings, be sure to accept all invitations. If you haven't got anything planned, then this card may suggest you should start planning.

ASK YOURSELF THIS

How am I making the effort to celebrate my friendships?

4/5 Golden Plungers



RIDDLE ME THIS

I'm a common English verb. I become my own past tense by rearranging my letters. What am I?

Last Week: I have many hearts, but no other organs. What am I?

Answer: A deck of cards

Answered first by: Lynne Stewart

Also answered correctly by: David Steele, Katie Reimer, Amanda Nickason, Margie Enns, Howard Jones, Wesley Turner, Elizabeth Oliver-Malone, Britney Turasz, Amanda Blue, Gary Davis, Karen Davis, Diane MacLeod, Natalie Early, Dan Kulchar, Pam Dowling, Chuck Jackson, Bert Ediger, Sheila Meloche, Nancy Mouget, Sadie Willms, Rod Falk, Hilda Kroeker,

Email answers to editor@niagaranow.com for a chance to win a prize.



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FEATURED LOCAL STORY

Niagara College students brave cold at annual winter grape harvest

Temperature was not quite low enough for icewine, but plenty good enough for sweet late harvest varieties

Dariya Baiguzhiyeva
The Lake Report

More than 50 people braved the sub-zero temperature in the wee hours of Thursday morning for what was expected to be an icewine harvest.

Grapes must be harvested when a temperature drops to -8 Celsius or lower to be legally considered icewine, explained winemaker and college professor Ron Giesbrecht.

The weather on Thursday, Jan. 9, was about -7 degrees Celsius or warmer, Giesbrecht said.

"There are several designations below icewine," Giesbrecht told The Lake Report. "Of course, icewine is the cachet, it's the one that everybody recognizes. But just below icewine is special select late harvest, so we're hoping for that."

Bundled up in layers, students from the Niagara College's Wine and Viticulture Technician and Wine Business Management program as well as faculty and staff gathered at the Niagara College Teaching Winery for a short briefing and warm-up before heading to the 40-acre vineyard located on campus.

With the help of headlights coming from several vehicles parked in front of the vineyard, pickers were moving from row to row quite rapidly, picking grapes by hand. Some people were also wearing headlamps.

When the college's Vidal grapes are netted in the fall, the college staff and faculty don't know yet whether the grapes will be used for an icewine or another type of dessert wine, such as special select late harvest wine, Giesbrecht said.

Giesbrecht said he expected to have about less than two and a half tonnes of grapes collected at this time of the year.

Once the grapes are harvested, they will be pressed in a basket with wooden staves and a hydraulic plate that comes down pushing the grapes and squeezing the juice through the staves. This process is "age-old," Giesbrecht said, adding the college does have modern presses, but those presses are designed to be gentle, which isn't good for the icewine process.

"Because the grapes are frozen, gentle doesn't work," he explained. "So, you have to really press. We need something a little stronger, so we have to put them into an old-style press."

The wine is made on-campus and then sold at the college's wine store.

Students don't get any class credits for the harvest, which makes it's amazing so many were willing to get out so early, Giesbrecht said.

Some returning students noted the weather this time around was a lot warmer than last time.

"It's easier than what you expect," said Glen Fraser, a second-year wine and viticulture technician program student. "Once you get working, you warm up a little bit."

"The grapes break off easy which speeds things a lot," said another second-year student Eamonn Donnelly. "And the amount of people is more this year."

First-year student Catriona McConnell said she's been excited to have a hands-on experience.

"I didn't know what to expect but this is fun. Al-

though navigating the nets is tricky."

Another first-year student Kennan McEachern said he didn't get much sleep the night before harvest.

"It's pretty cool," he said. "Most of the grapes fall off and you pick them up with your hands. The hardest part is opening the netting."

Wine professor Tom Schulz said he brought his dog Spotty with him to put students in a good mood. Spotty, who's been coming to the icewine harvest since 2007, was running around the vines with a collar with a tiny flashlight hanging from her neck.

Schulz commended the college for being the only school that allows students to make icewine.

"It's also the month of the Icewine Festival. Fits perfectly with today's event," he told The Lake Report.

In his 36th year of doing winter harvest, Giesbrecht recalled the earliest harvest that occurred in November 2018 when the temperature was -10 or -11. That year's yield was also "fantastic" because not many grapes had been lost yet to weather and birds after the regular fall harvest.

Many local growers and wineries opt for mechanized harvesting but it can turn into a more "industrial and commercial" job, taking away the fun aspect that comes with hand picking, he said.

"This is a lot more collegial and celebratory."

"The smiles on everybody's faces, it's great that way. You get a group of people together doing something like this, that's a little bit unique. And everybody's dressed in winter clothes, it's fun."



First-year wine and viticulture technician student Catriona McConnell said she's been excited to do winter grape harvest for a long time. DARIYA BAIGUZHIEVA



Wine program co-ordinator and professor Peter Rod harvests grapes as the sun begins to rise. DARIYA BAIGUZHIEVA



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