



Asparagus rush! | Page 14

Marotta unveils 191-home subdivision plan for Rand Estate

Richard Harley
The Lake Report

Developer Benny Marotta has submitted new plans for his controversial development project on the historic Rand Estate.

His company, Solmar (Niagara 2) Inc., wants to build 191 units on the 26-acre property, comprising 125 single-family dwellings and 66 semi-detached homes.

Marotta said he is hopeful the town will agree to his

proposal, noting there are no townhouses included in his draft plan.

Compared to some other developments in town, notably one on the main entrance to Niagara-on-the-Lake, he said he feels

the number of homes is appropriate.

A resident group that's been vocal in opposing Marotta's plans for the Rand Estate at every step, Save Our Rand Estate (SORE), takes issue with the latest

plan, saying it is "completely inappropriate."

Lyle Hall, a spokesperson for the group, called it a "high-density development that would leave almost every square inch of the back half of this iconic property

covered with houses."

SORE considers the Rand Estate to be "the most important heritage estate property in NOTL," he said in response to questions

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'Idiotic' parking bylaw frustrates Niagara on the Green resident



Daniel St-Jean stands outside of his Niagara on the Green home, where he and his wife have both received tickets for parking on the street. He says they only have one driveway spot and the area is far from amenities. RICHARD HARLEY

Richard Harley
The Lake Report

Glendale resident Daniel St-Jean and his wife Laurel aren't happy they have received two tickets for park-

ing their vehicle on the street outside their home for more than 12 hours.

St-Jean said he thinks the bylaw that allows cars to be ticketed for parking on the road unjustly affects some

residents of Niagara on the Green, where he lives on Keith Crescent.

"It's not really a matter of whether I should have gotten a ticket or not. The bylaws are there. The problem is that

they are idiotic, stupid by-laws," he said in an interview at his home.

The parking bylaw is not always enforced and he

Continued on Page 2



AstraZeneca vaccine. FILE/JESSICA MAXWELL

Pharmacies run out of vaccine, with no promise of more to come

Kevin MacLean
The Lake Report

And then there was none.

Pharmacies in Niagara-on-the-Lake that had been busy inoculating patients against COVID-19 have been forced to stop.

They have all run out of vaccine, with no promises yet from the provincial health ministry about when the supply might be replenished. Or if it will be replenished.

However, Niagara Region public health plans two more clinics at the NOTL Community Centre, on May 15 and 16.

Sean Simpson said his Apothecary in Old Town ran out Saturday and the phar-

macy in Old Town delivered its final shots on Monday.

In all, Simpson's Pharmacy distributed about 1,500 doses since April 5, he said.

"We don't anticipate getting any more" right away, he said, and it's been suggested it could be two or three weeks. Or not at all.

Fortunately, his pharmacy only booked enough appointments for which it had vaccine, so no one's shot got cancelled. But that still leaves more than 2,000 names on the Simpson's waiting list, he said Tuesday.

Julie Dyck, owner of Stone Road Pharmacy in Virgil, also ran out of vaccine after administering about 300

Continued on Page 3

Neighbours fight Queenston Mile's bid for zoning change

Evan Saunders
The Lake Report

Queenston Mile Vineyards argued its case for a town zoning bylaw amendment Monday to allow the winery to install commercial cooking equipment it

says will be used for wine tastings.

But a group of nearby residents and vineyard owners is fighting the request, accusing the vineyard of trying to covertly operate as an events space and saying it is not producing wine on

the grounds.

The issue was debated at Monday's committee of the whole planning meeting and council will make a decision on the application at a later date.

"This is not an easy subject," Lord Mayor Betty

Disero said in an interview Tuesday. "There was a lot of information provided last night."

Angry residents presented a unified front against Queenston Mile's proposal,

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An industrial-size kitchen at Queenston Mile. FILE/2019

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NOTL to host tennis, sailing for 2022 Summer Games

Richard Harley
The Lake Report

Niagara-on-the-Lake is taking a spot on the national stage next year, hosting tennis and sailing for the 2022 Canada Summer Games.

"It's a wonderful opportunity for the town," said NOTL Tennis Club president Hugh Dow. "It's a very high-profile event. It's the biggest sporting event in Canada for Canadian athletes."

The tennis portion will be hosted at Memorial Park, which has four courts and two more soon to be completed.

The venue is one of several in Niagara to host the games, including swimming at Brock University and sailing at the NOTL Sailing Club.

Welland also will be the site of some tennis matches.

"We'll have six very good, hard courts available.



NOTL Tennis Club president Hugh Dow in front of the Memorial courts. RICHARD HARLEY

And we will be hosting it in conjunction with Welland," said Dow.

Tennis is scheduled for the first week of the games, between Aug. 6 and 13, 2022.

Dow said the games are "a big deal" for NOTL and will bring about 5,000 athletes and 4,000 volunteers to town.

Final approval for the

event is now in the hands of the town.

He said it's both a sporting event and a "cultural" event, which he hopes the Town of NOTL gets behind.

"It will be something that most people will only experience once in their lifetimes. It's never been in Niagara before. Last time around, in 2017, it

was in Winnipeg. And this is obviously a wonderful opportunity to see some of Canada's top athletes, many of whom are Olympic hopefuls and will be participating in the Olympics, so it's really a showcase for Canada's top athletes and I think certainly the club and the town will be very happy to be part of that."

He said the club and

games organizers remain hopeful that the competition will be able to move forward and the global COVID-19 pandemic will have subsided.

"Everyone is trying to be optimistic as possible," Dow said, noting the games were originally scheduled for 2021.

"They decided, obviously because of COVID, to delay that for another year but everything seems to be in place, and there's a combination of obviously full-time staff and volunteers involved on behalf of the games. So, we are set to go for August of '22."

He said the 2022 date gives "some good breathing space between now and then to get things ready and get things into place for it."

The town will be looking at what infrastructure improvements need to be made, Dow said, but he's hopeful the municipality will be supportive of any

necessary improvements.

"We've had very encouraging responses so far from the lord mayor, Betty Disero, and also Marnie Cluckie as well has been involved in initial discussions with this and they've been very supportive and very enthusiastic and I think recognize the opportunity this provides for the town," he said.

"And I can't think of a better way to really get things back on, certainly the tourist track, with something as high-profile as this, because it is an enormous sporting event, and undoubtedly will attract a lot of regional and national interest."

Disero said she was "delighted" the two NOTL sporting clubs were chosen. "I know they will make our community proud when they host the 2022 Canada Summer Games and show the world how special our town is."

Bylaw unfairly targets Niagara on the Green, resident says

Continued from Front Page

said even a bylaw officer told him, "Yeah, the bylaws are there but we're not really enforcing them."

"Well, I've been living here for seven years and they never enforced the no overnight parking, but this week they did. So why all of a sudden?"

Benjamin Hopkins, NOTL's supervisor of enforcement services, said the intent of the 12-hour parking restriction is to "keep streets clear for regular maintenance, winter snow control and discourage long-term parking."

St-Jean emailed councillors last week to let them know of his concerns. He also takes issue with a newly established \$26 fee for challenging parking tickets.

"First, you take advantage of the fact that because of COVID and the numerous lockdowns, people are home way more than before March 2020. And how do you take advantage of that situation? By having your officers issue tons of tickets for 'illegal' parking. Thank you NOTL," he wrote.

"And then, because the



Daniel St-Jean says some neighbours have two parking spots, but his side of the street only has one. RICHARD HARLEY

courts are not hearing cases of people appealing your idiotic tickets, you give them a chance to appeal by phone screening. And I'm guessing you are getting a ton of these ... so to discourage people from doing that and just pay their fine and keep their mouth shut, you've now added a charge of \$26 for applying for a screening."

While St-Jean's tickets were for parking more than 12 hours (not overnight parking), he said the parking bylaw unfairly discriminates against people on his side of the road, where a sidewalk prevents his home from having two parking spaces.

On the other side of the street, houses can easily fit two cars. His driveway only

fits just one.

He suggested the town should have demanded the developer create equal parking for both sides of the street.

In January he took a drive around all of Niagara on the Green and counted 211 cars parked on the street, he said.

As well, his neighbourhood is close to Niagara College, making it a popular area for student rentals.

"Students, not all of them have vehicles, but a lot of them will. So by the nature of things there will be more vehicles in this area than in some other areas because of the college," he said.

Because of Niagara on the Green's location (near the outlet mall), many people rely on cars as there are no amenities

or shops nearby geared to the community, he added.

"Where do you think I have to go for a quart of milk?" he said, noting the nearest location is the Husky gas station and the next closest is over the canal in St. Catharines.

"You can't just walk somewhere here. In winter you can't bike somewhere, so people need vehicles," he said.

Normally he is on the road for business about 10 or 12 days of the month, so it's not practical to just have one vehicle either.

"If I go away with the vehicle for 12 days, and there's nothing around, either my wife has to call a taxi, or we get a second vehicle," he said.

He noted the bus service is also "a joke."

"No convenience, student rental, and no adequate bus service — so all of that means people have more vehicles probably per household than you would see somewhere else."

He said there's also a form of "discrimination" he's having a lawyer look into.

"Am I paying the same tax as those people across the

street? Presumably. Now if I pay the same tax, am I supposed to get the same service? I would assume so. I have access to the library, the arena, everything else, so do they. Garbage collection? Exactly the same," he said.

"Except parking — all the people on that side of the street have two parking spots. On this side I have one. Why? Because the city put a sidewalk here, taking my other parking spot."

He said while he understands the need for a sidewalk, there are "many municipalities" that won't approve a sidewalk on one side unless the developer leaves room for equal driveway space on both sides of the street.

He said he understands why the bylaw might be necessary on some busier streets, but doesn't see the need in Niagara on the Green.

The reason both cars were on the street when he was ticketed, during the day, is he had a contractor working on his home, St-Jean said.

He said he would like to see the parking bylaw changed to reflect different neighbourhoods, or only be enforced in

places where it may be necessary, like Queen Street.

"Just because it's a bylaw does not mean you have to enforce it. I've been here seven years, they just started to do that," he said.

While some people might say if you're unhappy, just move, that wouldn't solve the underlying problem, he said.

"Who's gonna come here? A guy with two cars, who's gonna get one of these and is gonna call the city and be pissed off. The problem is not with me living here, or the 211 other people with their car in the street. If we all move tomorrow and leave the community half empty, how's that going to solve the problem? Because as soon as somebody else moves in with two cars, it's the same problem," he said.

He encourages anybody in Niagara on the Green who has received a ticket to call councillors and voice their concerns.

"If they get 200, 300, 500 calls in a week or two weeks of people protesting these idiotic bylaws, they'll be thinking about doing something because those are taxpayers."

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Ryerson Park group says concerns about safety and street access, **not exclusivity**

Richard Harley
The Lake Report



Two motorcycles parked illegally in a clearly-marked no parking zone. Similar situations occur all summer as visitors ignore signs and little is done to enforce the laws. FILE

The Friends of Ryerson Park say proposed solutions to neighbourhood traffic and parking problems were never about excluding people from using the park.

Last week, Coun. Erwin Wiens made an emotional speech to council saying some recent delegations about park use have come across as promoting “exclusive” attitudes by some “wealthy, white” people who are trying to stop others from using parks close to their homes.

However, Brian Crow, a representative of the Friends of Ryerson Park, said that isn’t the case, noting it’s about legitimate safety concerns.

In recent years, Ryerson Park’s popularity has soared, sometimes with scores of people gathering in the small lakeside park, especially around sunset.

Crow said the number of visitors, and the park having only five legal parking spots, leads to traffic congestion and cars parked up and down the neighbourhood’s narrow streets.

With so many cars descending on the area, the group is concerned fire trucks and ambulances wouldn’t be able to get down the street in an emer-

gency.

The lack of safe access for emergency vehicles could put lives in jeopardy, the group says.

Lord Mayor Betty Disero said she couldn’t comment on liability, but that “there should be a free and clear path for any and all emergency vehicles. We would want to provide that for everyone in NOTL.”

Another issue at the forefront of debate is overuse of the park.

The small park — which Friends of Ryerson Park has said is really a “parkette” — has no washrooms or public amenities, but attracts many beachgoers to its small sandy shoreline for a day of swimming.

The group says with many people staying all day, they’ve had visitors approach homes to ask to use washrooms — once someone even opened a door without permission.

Others, are relieving

themselves in bushes and the lake, neighbours say.

A recent suggestion by the Town of Niagara-on-the-Lake to install a temporary portable washroom was met with strong opposition from the group and the idea was stopped in its tracks.

Some solutions suggested by Friends of Ryerson Park are to implement a permit parking system for Chautauqua’s narrow streets, to keep streets clear.

Crow also noted the town would need to enforce parking regulations.

Limited parking could also curb use of the park, the group says.

Disero said permit systems are common in many municipalities, such as Toronto, where nobody can park on the street without a permit.

“There is public parking available in front of the park,” Disero said. “Even if the rest was by permit only, it isn’t exclusive.”

However, she said permit parking alone wouldn’t address all of the group’s concerns, another one being traffic through the neighbourhood and high speeds by some drivers.

To address traffic in Chautauqua, the group is asking the town to install signage at the corner of Queen and Mississagua streets, to guide traffic back toward the QEW.

On a summer day, traffic often flows into the residential neighbourhood via Queen Street, which turns into Niagara Boulevard and then Shakespeare Avenue.

On any given day standing outside on Shakespeare, several cars stop to ask residents directions back to the highway, residents say.

Disero said the town has decided it will install new signs at Queen and Mississagua and said those plans will be coming to council this month.

NOTL pharmacies **out of vaccines** ... for now

Continued from Front Page

doses over two weeks.

Her outlet’s evening clinics last week were “a hit” and fully booked, she said.

“I have no idea when we will get more,” she told The Lake Report, “but I am prepared with ancillary supplies (alcohol swabs, syringes and Band-Aids) for as soon as the delivery guy knocks on the door.”

Simpson said people should still get the first vaccine available to them — despite an announcement Monday by the National Advisory Committee on Immunization (NACI) that the mRNA vaccines made by Pfizer and Moderna are

“preferred” to viral vector vaccines of AstraZeneca and Johnson & Johnson.

That statement was not “consistent with what most of us on the front lines would have liked to have heard,” Simpson said.

Even Prime Minister Justin Trudeau weighed in, urging people to get the first vaccine that is available to them.

Simpson also reiterated those sentiments. “We’re not over the hump as far as even getting half of the country vaccinated and we know that there’s a number of people right now that do want to get vaccinated, but I’d be concerned about how (NACI’s) messaging is being received by people that might be on

the fence right now,” he said.

“We’ve seen and heard of instances where people have chosen to avoid getting a certain vaccine in the hopes of waiting for another one and then they’ve ended up in an ICU on a ventilator,” he added.

“So I hate for guidance to come from a body like that to cause people undue hardship and illness.”

New vaccine timelines

- Week of May 10: Adults over the age of 40, those with health conditions deemed “at risk,” and more individuals who cannot work from home.
- Week of May 17: All those over the age of 30.
- Week of May 24: All those over the age of 18.

How to book the shot

Appointments online: Those wishing to book online can do so at Ontario.ca/bookvaccine

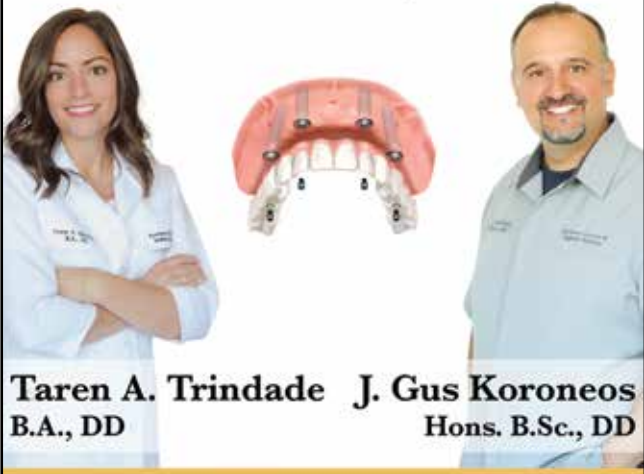
When booking an appointment, individuals will be asked for information from their green Ontario health card, birth date, postal code and email address and/or phone number. At the time of booking, eligible individuals will schedule their first and second vaccination appointments.

Appointments by phone: Individuals who still have a red and white health card, or who require assistance with booking, can call the provincial vaccine information line number at 1-888-999-6488.

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NOTL active cases: 51
Region active cases: 2,055
Region deaths: 395
Region total cases: 14,367
Region resolved cases: 11,917

*May 5 data per Niagara Region Public Health



Contributed by Patty Garriock

"A mediocre idea that generates enthusiasm will go further than a great idea that inspires no one." - Mary Kay Ash

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Editorial: Rand Estate deserves better

Kevin MacLean
 Managing Editor

It seems like forever, people and communities have had a love-hate relationship with developers and development.

Whether it was the burgeoning GTA starting in the late 1970s or downtown Toronto where highrise condos grow like weeds, established communities historically abhor rampant development. And people fight to ensure the "right" kind of "responsible growth" happens in the neighbourhoods they call home.

For the past 15 years or so, Niagara-on-the-Lake's growth has been on a steady upward trajectory, but the last five years in particular have seen a surge in new construction, with new subdivisions popping up in all corners of town. And those houses become homes to families who choose this area because – it's beautiful, quaint, historic, fascinating, scenic ... pick your preferred descriptor.

Like taxes, change and development in southern Ontario are inevitable. As well, it seems, development of the historic Rand Estate also appears inevitable.

Even the Save Our Rand Estate (SORE) folks, heroes to many but vilified in some parts of town for their potent opposition to Benny Marotta's various plans for the Rand, seem to agree that eventually, homes and maybe even a hotel are destined for the property.

The question is what will it all look like and how much is enough development on those 26 acres.

The Rand property is special, even developer Benny Marotta has acknowledged that. We are neither urban planners nor architects, but looking at Mr. Marotta's latest proposal for this heritage property, it seems to be an attempt to cram as many houses as permissible onto six or seven pleasantly suburban streets, with no regard for the history or importance this area holds

in the wider community.

Given the power and sway the development industry has in Doug Ford's Ontario, some iteration of this plan might even eventually get approved – likely after much litigation and many appeals.

But is it really appropriate to turn the Rand property into a cookie-cutter urban-style subdivision? Even if the facades are attractive and faintly echo the town's historic past, it's still just another 905 subdivision.

This might be one of the last sizeable properties in Old Town to be developed and out of respect for the Rand's past and looking to the future, we urge Mr. Marotta to do what might be anathema to a developer: make it special, different. Make it a legacy project that his grandchildren and ours years from now can visit and proudly say, "This is what he built." Not just another subdivision, but a community that pays homage to the historic past and celebrates the property's cultural

and historic significance. Greater minds than ours surely can come up with outside-the-box ways to make this a reality. If there is a will to do so.

Yes, developers are business people who aim to make a profit. But, really, how much is enough? Wouldn't it be better for Mr. Marotta to be remembered someday as the guy who built this special place on the Rand Estate, not some guy who built yet another subdivision?

Barely a kilometre away, another development, the Monet-inspired park across from the Pillar and Post is a modern example of this concept. Yes, it will be used as an event venue, but in thinking big, Vintage Hotels came up with a beautiful and memorable public garden that has won the company accolades for an inspiring approach to community-building.

It's a memorable win for the company and for the community. We challenge Mr. Marotta's company to follow a similar path.

editor@niagaranow.com



Baldinelli column was a blatant political advert

Dear editor:

I am writing regarding our MP Tony Baldinelli's guest column, "Liberal budget shortchanges tourism sector," published April 29.

I object to this blatant po-

litical advertisement on the opinion page of our newspaper. This is the second one that has been recently placed in this prominent position. Please don't do this kind of thing.

It really does look like the editorial board or the publisher is deliberately pushing a political agenda.

If there are budget short-comings we should be able to point them out without

using political party badging.

We are a complex readership; don't shortchange our opinions with political promotion.

Brian Emes
 NOTL

Kudos for a quick and thoughtful explanation

Dear editor:

I commend The Lake Report, and specifically Kevin MacLean, for reaching out to me directly and quickly after I expressed concern about political bias being displayed in a recent front-page opinion piece, ("Our leaders have failed us too often in this pandemic," April 15).

MacLean offered me reassurance about the paper's approach to coverage as well as the placement of its opinion pieces. He also mentioned some of the challenges inherent in publishing a local weekly, which I truly can appreciate.

I was very impressed with this thoughtful and timely response. Kudos!

If I may be indulged for one moment, I would like to also comment on the response of one reader to my original letter, ("Keep opinions in the opinion section," April 22). Unfortunately, he lost the plot. Completely. I was looking for balanced coverage, not one-sided coverage. Sigh.

Moreover, for the record, I prefer CTV's news

coverage to that of the CBC, and every morning I read the Globe & Mail, the Ottawa Citizen, the National Post and, yes, the Toronto Star.

For the best coverage of my beloved Maple Leafs, I read the Star's sports section. I am a lifelong Leafs fan. For my sins.

Alan Young
 NOTL



OPINION

Baldinelli omitted **key** budget details



Andrea Kaiser
Special to The Lake Report

Conservative MP Tony Baldinelli's op-ed column last week, ("Liberal budget shortchanges tourism sector"), omitted key facts about the federal government's support for tourism and hospitality workers and small businesses.

I understand that part of his role as a member of the official opposition involves criticizing the government's policies, but I do not believe that it is appropriate to leave out key details.

There is no doubt the tourism and hospitality sectors have been among the hardest hit by the economic impacts of the pandemic. The federal government has supported these sectors through critical programs like the Canada Emergency Wage Subsidy (CEWS), which has helped keep more than 5.3 million Canadians – including many in hospitality and

tourism – employed during the pandemic.

The CEWS program was originally set to expire in June 2021, but the budget extended the program through the summer to September 2021 to help hospitality and tourism businesses get through the summer. Baldinelli criticized this extension in his column as inadequate, but then stood up in the House of Commons to vote against extending it at all.

His column also failed to mention the budget clearly committed to further extending the program until Nov. 20, 2021, "should the economic and public health situation require it." The government has consistently demonstrated it is willing to do what it takes to support workers and businesses during this difficult time and any suggestion to the contrary is simply not accurate.

Unfortunately, our Conservative MP hasn't shown the same commitment to bridging us through the pandemic. In the past, he and his party have called for the cancellation of the CERB program, criticizing it as a "big, fat government program." In reality, the program kept food on the table for thousands of families

who lost their livelihoods due to this once-in-a-generation pandemic.

The next omission from Baldinelli's column was his failure to mention the new Canada Recovery Hiring Program (CRHP), announced in the budget. The proposed subsidy will cover a portion of the extra costs employers take on as they reopen, either by increasing wages or hours worked or hiring more staff.

The aim is to make it as easy as possible for businesses to hire new workers as the economy reopens. The CRHP will be a critical payroll support program for small businesses in the tourism and hospitality program, and will provide incentives for them to hire more people as soon as it is safe to do so. Unfortunately, our MP voted against this program just last week.

Perhaps the most curious of omissions by Baldinelli was any mention of the tourism sector-specific aid programs included in the budget. It provides more than \$1 billion in specific support for the tourism and hospitality sectors.

The Tourism Relief Fund "will support investments by local tourism businesses in adapting their products

and services to public health measures and other investments that will help them recover from the pandemic and position themselves for future growth."

Similarly, the budget includes \$400 million in financial support for festivals, artistic and cultural events, theatre performances, heritage celebrations and local museums, all of which form part of our tourism sector.

Why did our MP exclude these programs from his column? Perhaps it's because he emphasized his personal political objectives over factual communication with his constituents. This type of purely partisan communication is exactly what makes so many Canadians cynical about politics.

This federal government is not perfect, but it has been helping Canadians with one of the most comprehensive COVID-19 support packages among developed countries. Moreover, the government's record ought to be evaluated by the opposition on the basis of facts, not misleading columns that exclude critical details.

Andrea Kaiser is the federal Liberal candidate for Niagara Falls riding, which includes Niagara-on-the-Lake and Fort Erie.

Plenty of alternatives. Make Ryerson Park **'locals only'**

Dear editor:

We often walk to Ryerson Park and notice drivers looking for parking. They can hardly find any.

The residents living in the area surrounding Ryerson Park have to put up with the inconvenience of noise, obstructive parking, traffic and large families, and out-of-town visitors enjoying but overcrowding the relatively small park.

Our suggestion, Ryerson Park should be fenced and

a notice posted "for use by locals only."

On the other hand the adjacent area just to the west, which used to be the Defence Department's practice range (and at one time was suggested as the site for a music festival), is available.

It should be developed as a larger park that would provide much more enjoyment to visitors. This new park should include ample parking, kids entertainment,

restroom facilities and access to the lake beach.

All Canadians, families living in apartments, condos and with no gardens should have access to the lake. Lucky people with expensive properties on the lake should learn to share the natural beauty of the lake with less-privileged people who need fresh air and the freedom to let their children run freely, and dip their bodies in the lake.

Along the Niagara Parkway there are beautiful parks but no access to the river. All Canadian visitors, or any other visitors, should have access to the lake regardless of where they come from.

The province, Niagara Parks and the federal government should jointly look into this option of developing a park with access to the lake for all.

*Edgar and Maria Morriss
NOTL*

Yes, parks need to be inclusive, but **no BBQs** in small parks

Dear editor:

With regards to Niagara-on-the-Lake's public parks needing to be inclusive to "everyone," I agree with Coun. Erwin Wiens.

Where I differ with his opinion is the use of

barbecues in the smaller parks.

If several people bring barbecues to the park it means they intend on staying for several hours. The fact that the smaller parks have limited space,

(overcrowding is possible), means the people who bring barbecues and plan on staying for several hours can easily monopolize them.

By limiting the use of barbecues and tents in

the smaller parks, people will stay for shorter times, allowing more people to use the park space, thus making it more inclusive to "everyone."

*Kevin Etherington
NOTL*

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Saddened by councillor's 'white, privileged, wealthy' remarks

Dear editor:

In the April 29 article in The Lake Report, "NOTL seeks feedback on Ryerson Park," Coun. Erwin Wiens took the opportunity to make many remarks about the residents who live in Niagara-on-the-Lake, near or next to local parks.

He maintained that those who live in these places are white, privileged, wealthy and exclusive, a point he made many times in the article.

Since I have never met Mr. Wiens in the many years that I have lived in Niagara-on-the-Lake, I was saddened to see these remarks. It was hard not to take them personally, as I live right next to one of these parks, Ryerson Park.

First, let me clear up a few of the more inaccurate comments. Many of the people in my neighbourhood live in small, modest cottages. They are retired teachers, small business owners, architects, lawyers, philanthropists, town employees and artists.

Some were business executives like me. Many have fought to see diversity, equal rights for women, inclusion and social justice through

their work, their art or through their generosity.

In my case, I have been the architect of innumerable policies and practices over the past 30 years that have changed workplaces, boards and communities to enshrine diversity and inclusion.

As a philanthropist, our family supports women's and children's programs in this community and in Peel Region. Clearly, more must be done and I am dedicated to continuing to work on these issues.

I love to see people enjoying themselves in the park next to me. The sound of children and families playing and swimming is terrific to hear. I love the diversity embodied by those who visit. I enjoy all the dog walkers, cyclists and couples sitting watching the sunset.

I enjoy seeing kayakers and canoers take off from the little beach below, and the swimmers who bob up and down at the end of my property. I would never want this park to be "just for us white privileged folks," as you imply.

I would miss all of the conversations I have had with interesting people from around Canada and the world who have visited here over the years.

However, I am saddened by how inconsiderate some visitors can be. Parking in our driveway, parking on the grass, double-parking on the street at sunset, throwing garbage out the windows, speeding down the streets, using the park after hours, often at 1 or 2 in the morning, and the many other concerns mentioned in the Friends of Ryerson Park report.

This is not about excluding people, this is about asking people to respect each other, and respect the neighbourhood park and the people who live around it, and to make sure that everyone can use the neighbourhood safely.

The more we try to divide ourselves up into "sides" and call each other names, the more difficult it will be for us to reach solutions that can satisfy and include everyone who wants to enjoy this little part of NOTL.

Michele Darling
NOTL

Please, just stop using bird cannons

Dear editor:

Don Cameron's response ("Perhaps U.K. visitor should reconsider plans," April 8) to my April 1 letter ("For U.K. visitor and son with autism, bird cannon noise is unbearable") questions why I would keep returning to this area when I find the explosions of the bird cannons unbearable. He actually suggests I go elsewhere.

My letter was about the impact the physical explosions have on us, not about our personal situations, which whether I lived there or just visited should not be relevant. However, I now elaborate.

I question why should cannon users govern what kind of people can comfortably visit the area, ie. those who are affected by the cannons and those who are not. What right do they have to exclude any of us. Who are they to dictate when and if we can visit?

I go to the mainly residential area of St. Davids. It had never been like a firing range at a gun club.

Now, over recent years, the introduction and proliferation of cannons has,

as in my letter, "materially changed our experience."

The year before last I was disturbed far more than previously. What will the situation be like after COVID prevented a visit last year and probably this year, too. After two years what will the experience then be with the probability of even more explosions which already produce distress? Hence the trepidation and hesitation.

As Canadians, living in England over 30 years, "coming home" is very important, as you can imagine. Why should coming home be so painful? As you can see, going "elsewhere" is not an option.

Mr. Cameron questioned why I would bring my autistic son here. All his life it has been a most beautiful and familiar place for him.

He has grown up with the

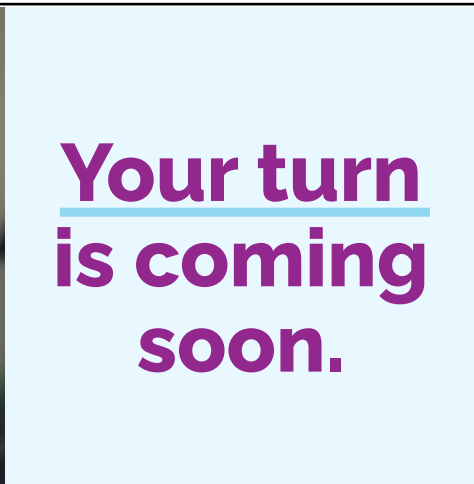
area in his heart, a relationship that grew with him from childhood. It was his home away from home. As seen in my earlier letter, the area is now a no-go area, so I have not been subjecting my son to harm.

Those with autism have difficulty with change and loss, among other things. At this stage in his life, losing this integral part of him is devastating. He will never build a relationship in another area of his home country. This loss seriously impacted on him.

Mr. Cameron writes, "Something must be done, lest the next Expedia survey declares NOTL 'the town most hazardous to a visitor's health.'"

I agree. And that something is to ban the cannons.

Diana Westwood
Stourbridge, England



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Marotta says subdivision is 'low-density'

Continued from Front Page

from The Lake Report.
“It’s far worse than Mr. Marotta’s original subdivision plan that he showed the community at the public meeting in early 2018. By our count he’s added approximately 30 more houses. He made a big deal out of claiming that he was misunderstood and just wanted to make NOTL even more beautiful. This is a bizarre way of showing that.”

However, Marotta said SORE is “misinformed” and that the plan is in fact considered low-density based on the number of units per acre. He believes the plan is more appropriate than several other townhouse developments being built around town, noting his project calls mainly for single-family houses.

“It really doesn’t matter what someone proposes in Niagara-on-the-Lake. SORE will object to everything,” Marotta said, adding the initial proposal to the town had 20 more units.

He said the province’s mandate for these types of developments is to offer more housing and is encouraging townhouse-style homes, which are more affordable for buyers. He said he purposely didn’t include townhouses in the development because it wouldn’t complement the Old Town.

“At this point, I’m hoping that the politicians will work with the town staff, who are experts ... to take their advice and make sure that the proper planning is done, and I will work with them on the best solution for the development,” Marotta said.

Hall said the plans are “even more dense than the Cannery Park development in St. Davids” and said the issue is not about single-detached homes versus townhouses.

“Regardless of whether Mr. Marotta is now proposing semi-detached houses or townhomes, the issue we are focused on is whether his proposal represents good planning in the context of the surrounding neighbourhoods, adjoining land uses and the cultural heritage significance of the Rand Estate.”

He did not say what the group considers to be an



A superimposed image of Marotta’s plans on a map of the area by SORE. SUPPLIED

appropriate land use, but noted the group isn’t opposed to housing on the land — which is zoned residential.

“We’ve never said ‘no houses.’ We never said ‘no hotel’ either. But in both cases we’ve said the development undertaken must be respectful of the heritage pedigree of the site, the protected cultural heritage assets located throughout the site and the surrounding land uses, including other heritage properties, as well as established neighbourhoods,” Hall said.

Marotta maintains the development is more suited to NOTL than other recent developments.

“It’s a hell of a lot better than what has been developed in the last few years within the town of Niagara-on-the-Lake, whereas they’re mainly townhouses.”

“It’s a lot more suitable for the quality of Niagara-on-the-Lake than what’s been built in the last few years within the town. Because we could have built 300 townhouses in there.”

Hall said Marotta should engage with the town planners and SORE to address their concerns.

“If Mr. Marotta had made even the slightest good faith effort to address these concerns the discussion might be different. Mr. Marotta has made almost no effort to engage SORE or, from what we know, the town for most of the last three years. Instead, he has attempted to bully his way through tribunal and courtroom to get his way, and so far lost at every turn. SORE will be ready as

required to present its vision in the appropriate forum at the appropriate time.”

Asked what SORE thinks are the chances the development will be approved as is, he said “none.”

“Mr. Marotta has served up a proposal so egregious he has widened support for SORE in our defence of the Rand Estate and responsible development in NOTL. We are being flooded with messages of encouragement and support by NOTL residents.”

The group would not comment on how Marotta’s plan is different than the many tightly packed developments popping up elsewhere in Niagara-on-the-Lake.

Hall said there is no real mission to advocate for responsible development in all of NOTL, only specifically the Rand Estate — which borders on the properties of some SORE members.

“SORE’s corporate mandate is the responsible care, maintenance and use of the Rand Estate,” Hall said.

“It’s outside of SORE’s corporate mandate/purpose as set out in our incorporating documents to tackle development issues elsewhere.”

Asked if he would consider adding more green space and making the project more of a legacy project, Marotta said he thinks there is already a lot of green space around the area.

“The front is set within green space. On the north side we have the Rand (Estate). That’s 14 acres all green. On the east side it’s all vineyards and empty land now that we’re going to be planting for vines, so it’s within a green space

setting.”

He said he’s open to suggestions from the town, “if it makes sense on a planning level.”

Hall said the next step for SORE is to continue monitoring the situation and attending legal matters surrounding the estate.

“The next step is the Conservation Review Board in July. Mr. Marotta’s companies are challenging the notices of intent to designate 200 John St. and 588 Charlotte St. issued by the town under the direction of the previous council in August of 2018. That challenge is finally going to the (Conservation Review Board) in July and SORE is a party to that hearing and will be presenting evidence,” he said.

“From there, the heritage designation question will go back to council for a final decision. After that, the Marotta companies need an official plan amendment, a zoning bylaw amendment and approval of a subdivision plan to proceed with this proposal.”

He said SORE has no plans to back down in its attempt to stop what it believes to be an inappropriate proposal for the site.

“SORE will continue to defend the integrity of the Rand Estate and of Old Town NOTL. We’ll be only too happy to see Mr. Marotta at the Conservation Review Board, the Local Planning Appeal Tribunal and in the courts, if needed. We know what we’re doing, we have lined up and continue to use a team of leading experts to assist us ... and we haven’t lost a court or tribunal challenge yet to Mr. Marotta. Mr. Marotta should know we are not going away.”

Lord Mayor Betty Disero said she could not comment on the subdivision plans before a public meeting is held.

A virtual open house regarding the project is set for June 15 and an online public meeting has been scheduled for July 14. Full details of the project, including conceptual drawings, subdivision layout and a heritage impact study are on the town’s website at <https://www.notl.org/content/public-notices-under-planning-act>.



NOTL Community Centre set up for vaccines. FILE

Two more NOTL vaccine clinic dates available

Staff
The Lake Report

Niagara Region public health has announced two more dates for Niagara-on-the-Lake COVID-19 vaccine clinics.

The clinics will be held May 15 and 16 at the NOTL Community Centre.

Bookings are now open to anyone 55 years old or older, and can be booked in any municipality.

Other clinic dates are:

May 9 and 10 – Fort Erie, Leisureplex

May 16 to 22 – Pelham, Meridian Community Centre

May 23, 26 and 27 – Port Colborne, Vale Health and Wellness Centre

May 24, 25 and 28 – West Lincoln, West Lincoln Community Centre

May 29 – Niagara Falls, MacBain Community

Centre

Anyone 45 or older in 2021 with a postal code starting with “L2G” can also book an appointment through the portal. Pregnant individuals, as well as highest-risk individuals with health conditions, plus an essential caregiver can also book an appointment by calling the provincial booking system.

As of Monday, about 32 per cent of Niagara residents have received their first doze of vaccine.

Vaccine portals are expected to be open to anyone over 18 by late May, said Niagara’s chief medical officer of health, Dr. Mustafa Hirji.

Appointments can be booked online through the provincial portal at ontario.ca/bookvaccine or by calling the provincial booking system at 1-833-943-3900.

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As of May, it’s been three years since The Lake Report began printing its hyperlocal paper for residents of Niagara-on-the-Lake. We began by filling a gap in local news coverage for our town, and are thrilled to continue offering NOTL’s best local news week in and week out. Thank you to our readers, advertisers and sponsors for supporting us. We could not have done it without you.

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COVID protocols keep workers **safe**, farmers say

But migrant worker advocates worry about power imbalance and job security

Bernard Lansbergen
The Lake Report

With a new farming season well under way, so has the yearly influx of seasonal migrant workers. This is a complicated operation in any year, requiring meticulous co-ordination between governments and farmers, made even more difficult by COVID-19. Although farmers say things have become a little easier more than 12 months into the pandemic.

“We already had last summer as a starting point on how to move forward this year,” says Erwin Wiens, a Niagara-on-the-Lake grape grower and town council member. “So all the protocols were already in place.”

Kevin Buis, owner of Glenlake Orchards and Vineyards on Lakeshore Road, said, “I’m very fortunate in vineyards because the rows are eight feet apart,” noting that social distancing is easily enforceable.

In some ways protocols were enhanced this year



A seasonal farm worker prunes grape vines at Wiens' farm. FILE PHOTO

to guarantee even more safety, Wiens noted. “Last year they weren’t doing testing. Now they’re being tested in their country of origin, when they arrive in Toronto” and again after a 14-day quarantine.

While the provincial and federal governments instituted safety protocols, the municipal government is available to answer any questions farmers might have. “The town has been

helping us by offering education and assistance if we need it,” said Wiens. “If anybody has any questions, they have the answers.”

Some wish that health and safety inspections and protocols would be a little more centralized. “There’s been a fair bit of government oversight,” said Buis. “My biggest complaint would be that there’s three levels of government looking at this. I just wish they could all get

together in one room and do it at once, instead of making us do it three times.”

Meanwhile, Kit Andres, Niagara organizer for the Migrant Workers Alliance for Change, says the power relationship between farmer and migrant worker has become even more unbalanced due to COVID-19.

“You can have all the inspections in the world, but none of these rules that are being created address

the fundamental problem, which is the workers’ lack of ability to assert their rights,” she said.

Andres points out that the unbalanced power relationship between farmer and migrant worker makes it hard for seasonal staff to speak up when they’re put in harmful situations. “With the way that the program works they’re tied to one single employer. So if that employer doesn’t request them back the next year, they’re off the program.”

Two weeks ago, Niagara’s public health department sent out a call to local farmers to get their workers vaccinated at the Seymour-Hannah Centre in St. Catharines, in an effort to minimize COVID spread among farm workers.

Buis said his migrant workers, all of whom hail from Jamaica, chose to get vaccinated, but among his local, Canadian workers there were some who declined. “I don’t know what it is. It’s personal liberty on their behalf. I offered it to

them and they chose not to.” Wiens said he didn’t see any hesitation among his workers “because, of course, folks want to get it.”

But there are concerns farmers don’t really give migrant workers the option of choosing if they want the vaccine, said Andres.

“I’m hearing from a number of farm workers, including in Niagara, that they are feeling like they’re not given a choice. Some workers are being told that if they don’t get a vaccine, they won’t have a job or they won’t be called back on the program next year. Because of the power imbalance due to their status, it makes it a coercive experience for them.”

Wiens said the region made sure all migrant workers consented to the vaccination.

“They had interpreters there for everybody so every worker that got vaccinated was clear on what was happening, what their rights were, that this was their decision, so it worked out very well.”

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Shaw goes **al fresco** with July performances

Kevin MacLean
The Lake Report

When the Shaw Festival is able to finally launch its 2021 season in July it will feature al fresco performances on a new outdoor stage.

That's the plan as of now, with early performances of "Charley's Aunt" and the full run of "The Devil's Disciple" will take place on the stage in front of the Jackie Maxwell Studio Theatre.

"The Devil's Disciple" debuts July 6 and beginning July 7 audiences can enjoy "Charley's Aunt" under a canopied stage set amid the Shaw's gardens.

"A Short History of Niagara," a commissioned puppetry piece originally set at Fort George, moves to the festival grounds with shows starting on July 29.

"The opportunity to present these shows amid the beauty and magic of Niagara's outdoors – in the light of day or under the



Shaw Festival's artistic director Tim Carroll. DAVID COOPER

early evening stars – allows us all to experience them in an entirely new and special way," artistic director Tim Carroll said in a media statement.

"Theatre is about connection – human connection – and our outdoor performances are one way that more of us can come together safely and experience live theatre again," he said.

Shaw executive director Tim Jennings said he hopes the increase in vaccina-

tion rates and continued adherence to public health guidelines bring COVID-19 case numbers down over the summer.

"We continue to remain optimistic that our American patrons will also be allowed to join us at the Shaw and in Niagara-on-the-Lake before the end of summer," he added.

If restrictions permit, the Shaw plans reduced-capacity indoor performances of "Flush" at the Royal George Theatre, start-

ing July 8, and "Sherlock Holmes and The Raven's Curse" at the Festival Theatre, beginning July 23.

"Charley's Aunt" will move back to the Royal George Theatre's stage in August.

After directing "Serving Elizabeth" at the Stratford Festival, the Shaw's associate artistic director Kimberley Rampersad returns to take over the directorial duties of "Desire Under the Elms."

Performances of the Eugene O'Neill masterpiece were to start in July but have been delayed until Oct. 15. It will run concurrently with "A Christmas Carol" and Irving Berlin's "Holiday Inn."

The 2021 season, now set for July 6 to Dec. 23, also features "Trouble in Mind," "A Short History of Niagara," and a yet-to-be announced series of outdoor concerts and activities.

For show dates and tickets, visit shawfest.com.

Death of **homeless woman** part of library's May series

Staff
The Lake Report

The Niagara-on-the-Lake Public Library has a full slate of online activities planned throughout May.

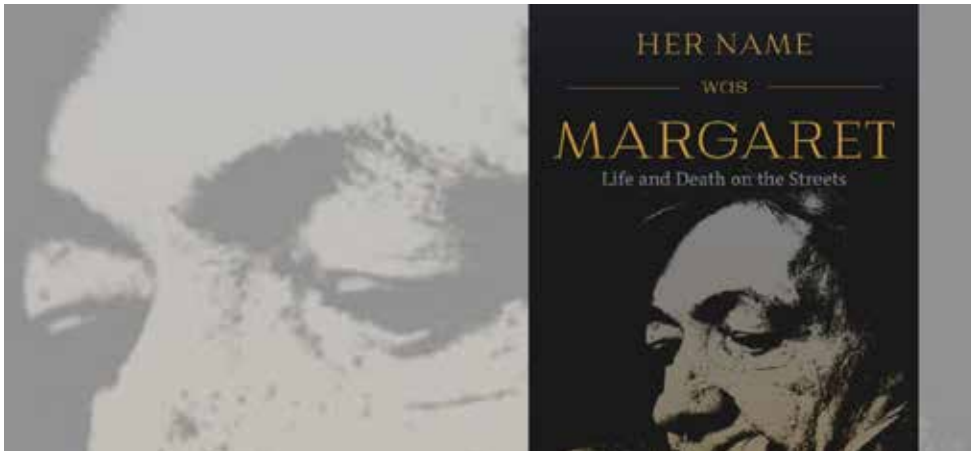
Register for all events at notpubliclibrary.org.

HOMELESS TRAGEDY

On May 10 at 7 p.m., as part of the Author Talk series, Denise Davy speaks about her book, "Her Name Was Margaret," a heart-breaking illustration of what can happen to our most vulnerable in society.

Chief librarian Cathy Simpson notes, "This book is a thoroughly researched and compassionate look at the life of a woman abandoned by society and offers hope with details of programs that have successfully reduced homelessness in several cities."

Davy analyzed more than 800 pages of medical records and conducted interviews with Margaret's friends and family to write the story looking at how one woman became homeless.



Author Denise Davy talks about her book on May 10. SUPPLIED

It's also the story of how thousands of others became homeless and should serve as a wake-up call to politicians and leaders in cities across Canada, the library says.

Davy, an award-winning journalist, worked at the Hamilton Spectator for 26 years. Attendance for her free Zoom presentation is limited so register early.

BEING HONEST

The Fireside Reads Book Club will discuss "To Be Honest," a memoir by Michael Leviton, on Wednesday, May 19 from 5 to 6 p.m.

Simpson notes that Leviton, a New York City-based photographer, writer and musician, was raised by his parents to never tell a lie. The discussion of the "family's tragic love affair with truth-telling" will look at how it all turned out.

PAINTING WORKSHOP

You can learn fun painting techniques, with a focus on NOTL's blossoming fruit trees during the adults-only Cocktails & Creativity session on Tuesday, May 25, from 7:30 to 8 p.m.

The workshop is free but the library welcomes

donations to support future program offerings. You can donate at <https://www.canadahelps.org/en/charities/niagara-on-the-lake-public-library/>

AUTHOR TALK

National Magazine Award-winning writer and editor Andrea Bennett will speak about her book, "Like a Boy but Not a Boy," on Wednesday, May 26, from 7 to 8 p.m.

Simpson says Bennett will discuss her collection of "insightful and sometimes humorous essays that delve into themes of mortality, creativity, mental health, class and bike mechanics."



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Queenston Mile has installed an industrial-sized kitchen larger than some restaurants, despite claims that it only intends to serve light wine pairings. RICHARD HARLEY PHOTOS/FILE

Queenston Mile advertising private functions of up

Continued from Front Page

arguing the facility is not operating as an estate winery, that it does not have suitable parking for events and that it is attempting to hold large-scale special events in violation of zoning regulations.

The lands are designated prime agricultural under the Niagara-on-the-Lake official plan, and as specialty crop lands, which are a focus of protection under the plan. The town allows wineries to have a hospitality room where wine and food are prepared for serving, so long as the production is secondary to the main use of the vineyard, according to Town of Niagara-on-the-Lake planner Jesse Auspitz.

Mary Lou Tanner, representing the winery, argued the cooking equipment would be purely “ancillary” to the winery, meaning a secondary use that helps support the main use of the building. Queenston Mile says food pairing supports the agricultural side of the vineyard by aiding it economically.

Under the winery’s designation, it also is not allowed to have any outdoor special events.

“There will be no tents, there will be no outdoor special events. Other wineries have requested this ... we do not request any change to that provision,” Tanner told council.

And thus, the most contentious aspect of the presentation arose: the lack of cohesion between Queenston Mile’s proposal to host wine pairings and its posted advertisements for holding large weddings and corporate events, which Auspitz considered to be special events.

Coun. Norm Arsenault pressed Tanner about the claimed intention to use the cooking equipment for wine pairings.

“You go to great lengths to identify that what you’re looking for is cooking equipment for food pairings and wine. As a matter of fact, it shows up on 22 different occasions (in the submission), so clearly that’s the intent,” he said.

Arsenault then asked Tanner if weddings would be considered special events. Tanner disagreed that weddings should be considered special events, meaning the vineyard would be allowed to host weddings as they will not infringe on the bylaw.

“It is a special event,” Arsenault said in an interview. “Weddings are all special events.”

“I thought it was just food pairings they were going to do – but clearly on their website they’re advertising weddings, they’re advertising providing meals for 150 people, they’re looking at receptions for 350 people – which clearly they can’t have because the septic system can’t handle that. They’re also advertising corporate events where cooking classes are being offered. I see some real strange items here,” Arsenault told councillors.

“I’m pretty astounded that they’re actually advertising weddings and advertising corporate events when they don’t even have a permit to do so,” he told The Lake Report.

The website also promotes wedding packages consisting of three-course meals with mains such as chicken supreme, pork loin and trout nicoise.

Paul Harber, owner of Ravine Vineyards, asked council: “Is an eight-ounce Angus burger really a pairing for a six-

ounce glass of Merlot?”

According to Arsenault, the facility has a septic system capable of handling up to 275 guests. Queenston Mile Vineyards has advertisements on its website offering receptions for up to 350 people and a charge of \$15 per person over that total, with no stated cap.

The mayor also addressed this issue, inquiring whether it was the town who was being misled by the vineyard, or the public.

“Weddingwire, I guess kind of like Expedia for weddings, had advertised Queenston Mile anywhere between 10 and 400 guests. There was a little tab there to request pricing. Was that a mistake, or? That number 400. Did somebody make an error?”
“I’ll have to get back to you on that,” Tanner responded.

**NORM ARSENAULT
TOWN COUNCILLOR
NIAGARA-ON-THE-LAKE**

One of the more serious allegations levied at the vineyard was that it was not producing its wine on-site and thus was deceiving the town in its designation as an estate winery.

Harber, who was a vocal opponent of Queenston Mile receiving a designation as an estate winery in 2019, noted NOTL bylaws concerning estate wine production on-site states “they have to crush all the wine on-site and ferment all the wine on-site.”

He said that is not being done and pointed out Queenston Mile’s proposed site plan would have its production area doubling as a hospitality area.

“I’m pretty astounded that they’re actually advertising weddings and advertising corporate events when they don’t even have a permit to do so.”

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Answer: A remark

Also accepted: Virus, cold, cough, your breath

Answered first by: Susan Hamilton

Also answered correctly (in order) by: Maria Janeiro, Bill Kolupanowicz, Margaret Garaughty, Pam Dowling, Sara Harder, Brenda Bartley, Sylvia Wiens, Sam Wiens, Wade Durling, Katie Reimer, Roger Marcos, John Venables, Mary Drost, Bob Stevens, Kurt Von Pasecky, Elaine Landray, Margie Enns, Tee Bucci,

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

to 400 people, council hears

"I would probably be choked by my winemaker if I was going to put up their production space to be an event space... I will challenge the decision if this application is approved."

Private sewage system inspector Caitlyn Wood stated that "wine production cannot occur on-site as the sewage system is not designed to accommodate the industrial wastewater," The Lake Report noted in a 2019 story.

"They're saying 'Oh yeah, we crush everything here, we ferment everything here,' but I'm not seeing the space. When I asked them about the wastewater they said, 'We're carrying that away. We're taking the wastewater somewhere else.' I'm not sure where," Arsenaault said on Tuesday.

In response, Tanner said: "This is an estate winery. Wine is produced on-site. One of the things we've heard in the past is questions about this, and one of our neighbours has indicated this more recently. So, to confirm, this is a winery that produces wine."

Lawyer Tom Richardson, who was hired by residents, including Harber, to challenge the zoning amendment said the Alcohol and Gaming Commission of Ontario has been informed about the vineyard failing to function under the bylaws for estate wineries. He asked the town to undertake a formal investigation into the matter.

Complaints of nearby residents included the lack of suitable parking for the advertised receptions of 350 or more people. When asked how the winery would accommodate the extra cars needed for such events, Tanner said people can park on the grass around the winery.

"But nothing that's actually an official parking space?" Arsenaault inquired.

Tanner replied that, in addition to the 30 spaces on the property, the winery would use "overflow parking," a direct concern of resident Marianne Hasselbrook, who worried that large events would cause parking overflow onto her property and others nearby.

"And after listening to Miss Tanner discussing overflow parking, that is a very, very serious concern," Hasselbrook said to council.

Hasselbrook also questioned whether the vineyard is withholding the list of cooking equipment it wants to install because it could reveal that it entails much more equipment than would be needed to accommodate wine tastings and food pairings.

In 2019, when Queenston Vineyard originally applied to use commercial cooking equipment, The Lake Report was invited into the facility and was able to photograph the equipment that had already been purchased. The pictures depict an industrial-sized kitchen fully equipped and ready to operate.

Tanner confirmed: "The equipment is on-site. It is not hooked up. There is no gas line to it and it will only be hooked up if this amendment is approved."

Arsenaault said Tuesday, "If their intent is just to have wine pairings, food pairings – you don't need a whole commercial kitchen to do pairings. You can have wine and cheese, crackers, various different types of food that don't require a full kitchen with a gas hook-up, a fan, all those sorts of things."

"I'm not buying the argument that this is a wine pairing issue. What I'm seeing right now, and I could be corrected, is that they're looking for a full-on wedding venue," he said.

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Keeping it Green 

'Buy Nothing' project a sustainable hit for NOTL



Kyra Simone is a NOTL-born nature lover with a master's degree in biology. In her spare time, she advocates for sustainable change, picks up garbage, makes recycled jewelry, and transforms furniture bound for the landfill.

Kyra Simone
Special to The Lake Report

A Facebook group that focuses on free gifting has significant environmental and community benefits. In Buy Nothing Niagara-on-the-Lake, forgotten items find homes, waste becomes treasure and neighbours become friends.

THE BUY NOTHING PROJECT: What began in 2013 as a hyper-local "gift economy" group, led by two women in Washington, has expanded into a global movement. Now, more than



Erica draws a recipient's name (Angie Van Berkel photo). Gifted rainbow swiss chard plants (Lauren O'Malley photo). Re-caning chairs with gifted supplies (Frieda Krugel photo). Youngsters Gavin and EJ love their new wheels! (photos By Cathy van der Zalm, Charlotte Jeffries Tutu).



three million people belong to Buy Nothing groups in 44 countries.

Beyond running across the street to ask a neighbour for an egg, these groups take sharing to the next level. Members post gifts of all forms for others to express interest and everyone is welcome to post requests for anything they'd like to borrow or receive.

We have all come across an item at home and thought, "Why do I have this?" We might immediately put it back in a drawer

and forget about it.

Buy Nothing connects people seeking these miscellaneous items with those who no longer need them.

It's not a community bulletin: store recommendations, sales and offers to trade or barter are not welcome.

A first-come, first-served mentality is also frowned upon in the group. Members try to "let it simmer" and leave posts open for at least a day so that everyone interested can add their name.

Due to stay-home-orders,

shopping lines are long and many donation centres are closed. Buy Nothing follows all COVID-19 restrictions and enables safe sharing of items by operating through porch pickups.

THE COMMUNITY:

Our local group has almost 1,500 members, including residents from all five communities of NOTL. As an administrator, I volunteer to keep the group as inclusive and welcoming as possible.

Ultimately, Buy Nothing isn't about the free stuff. "It's not about the gift, it's

about building community and getting to know and share with our neighbours," says Frieda Krugel.

When Krugel was gifted an instructional book and caning supplies, she learned the technique to restore several chairs from her childhood.

Besides physical items, members also share "gifts of self." They lend time to help weed a driveway, or sewing skills to repair a torn seam.

Gratitude posts are abundant. Recipients share heartfelt thanks and images of gifts being put to good use.

Though COVID-19 makes getting to know neighbours tricky, you can truly feel the love in this group. We look forward to a day soon when we can share a cup of tea with these generous new friends.

Sometimes folks leave little thank-yous or notes when they pick up gifts. One woman often leaves chocolates!

SUSTAINABILITY: Although Buy Nothing's focus is community-building, many of its fundamental values are environmental.

Through the group, unwanted goods are kept out of the landfill and members avoid making unnecessary purchases.

Local pickups produce fewer emissions than shipping online purchases or driving to stores.

As more residents hear about the group, they refrain from putting stuff out on garbage day and instead give neighbours a chance to repurpose it. Objects that need repair are not considered trash and are matched with eager tinkerers!

Some of the most unique gifts include toilet paper tubes for an owl sanctuary, hair dye, backsplash tile (to kids making mosaics), handmade Halloween costumes and a lock-keying kit!

Certain items are regifted many times: puzzles, novels, DVDs for quarantine entertainment. On a frantic moving day, one group member was kind enough to deliver boxes to my front porch!

So, if the urge to spring clean strikes, this community is the perfect way to "give where you live," reduce waste and forge new relationships!

Ross' Ramblings: Vaccines, vaccinations and a **brief** history lesson

Ross Robinson
Special to The Lake Report

As we meander along the roads and trails of the Niagara region, please smile behind your masks and offer others a welcoming wave. So much angst, so much sadness, so many kerfuffles.

Let's take a light-hearted look at the etymology of the words vaccine and vaccination. So interesting, especially right now.

I am not a scholar and do not purport to present academic, peer-reviewed research. We appreciate the regular pedagogy of Dr. Bill Brown, Penny-Lynn Cookson and Samuel Young, in their diverse specialties. My preference is to tell a story, which hopefully provides an interesting tidbit or two. It's great to hear readers say, "Why didn't I think of that?"



At a local vaccination centre, an enthusiastic, well-trained, empathetic and helpful greeter initiated the process. SUPPLIED

Never would I dip my toe in your bathtubs, advising you how to live your life.

Last weekend, my peripatetic son Scott and his pal Hugh Hunt stopped by for a Saturday evening visit. Hugh is a graduate student at Brock University, enthusiastically earning his master's degree in English literature.

He really enjoys word play and the often head-scratching origins of

various words that we use to communicate. During this deadly global pandemic, the noun vaccine and the verb vaccinate are in the news every day.

He explained to me, in very general terms, the story of milkmaids in Berkeley, Gloucestershire, about 150 kilometres west of London. A community doctor, Edward Jenner, had observed that the local milkmaids all had clear and beautiful skin, unscarred by smallpox.

Milkmaids were young ladies employed to milk the cows, using the milk to produce cream, butter and cheese. They regularly contracted cowpox while working with the cows. The milkmaids made the product, and the milkmen delivered the milk and ancillary items. Voila!

In 1796, the inquisitive doctor asked a milkmaid

named Sarah Nelmes to come to his clinic if she contracted a case of cowpox. Soon after, she got cowpox from a cow named Blossom.

As I understand the legend, he withdrew some of the liquid pus from a cowpox blister and scratched it under the skin of eight-year-old James Phipps, the son of his gardener. A small blister appeared, then the young lad had a very mild, brief case of smallpox.

Thereafter, he never suffered smallpox. Dr. Jenner conducted rigorous scientific clinical trials over the next few years. His hunch proved scientifically accurate.

The good doctor's goal was to provide vaccinations at no charge. "The jabs" would be free and available to everyone, regardless of where they were from, or whether they were able

to pay. What a wonderful man, eh?

Yes, yes, I tend to ramble a bit. Indulge me, if you will.

Hugh's story intrigued me, perhaps because as a young lad in the late 1950s, our family would spend a week or so visiting farming relatives on the Fingal Line, just west of St. Thomas. Milking cows was the annual highlight. Forking hay, riding shotgun on the tractor with uncle Jabel, and playing tag in the corn fields with our country cousins was such fun.

So, where are we going with this story? From cowpox to the smallpox vaccine. The 18th-century Latin adjective "vaccus" means "of or from the cow," because of the early use of the cowpox virus against smallpox. The cowpox virus contains some 186,000 base pairs on DNA, which contains information about 187

genes. Now, I am way out of my league. Over to you, my pal Dr. Bill Brown.

And, we segue naturally to the French word for cow, "la vache."

So, from a casual conversation with Hugh Hunt, while enjoying a cold Polish Lech beer, we continue to learn a timely piece of etymology.

As we wind up, let me detail a coincidence. Dr. Edward Jenner started his research in 1796. Just last Monday, my inquisitive tennis pal George Dell and I were on a cemetery tour. Our first stop was the little known Hamilton Family Graveyard in Queenston, established by brothers Robert and Alexander. Also, in 1796. Interesting, eh?

There is always something to learn, if we continue to be curious.

Learn on, lucky NOT-Lers.



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Girl Guides celebrate Mother's Day with **virtual tea party**

Leslie Moulson
Special to The Lake Report

While everyone has been disappointed this past year by the cancellation of activities, the Sparks, the five- and six-year-old Girl Guides, continued to gather in the safest possible way while meeting or, in many cases, exceeding provincial public health guidelines.

Last fall, we were able to meet outside with social distancing (hula hoops), Spark-made "sit upons" and masks. The restrictions didn't dampen the spirits of these incredibly outgoing, cheerful and resilient girls.

Having fun and participating in updated yet traditional Guiding activities is important but the Sparks are also proud of their community contributions.

In November, 19 veterans were thanked for their service when the Sparks mailed hand-written and decorated postcards to men and women identified by the Legion. It was definitely dark and nippy when we



Guider Ann Deuerlein and Spark Eve. SUPPLIED



Mom Heather Whitson and Spark Taylor. SUPPLIED

met outside to decorate grocery bags for Newark Neighbours' Christmas clients, but that didn't deter us. Accessorizing anything is what we do best!

Virtual meetings started and the girls heard from Spark Mom Emma Thwaites, whose family farm hires migrant workers. Then they created draw-



Mom Emma and Kayla Thwaites. SUPPLIED

ings to go into the welcome packages that are given to our migrant workers on their arrival in NOTL.

Creating virtual meetings that are engaging for

young ones is a challenge. In February, when the Mars rover landed, Guider Ann Deuerlein used that as her theme. After talking about this amazing feat, the

Sparks used Play-Doh to create aliens.

On Monday, May 3, we celebrated moms with a virtual tea party and fancy hats, many of them hand-decorated. Our thanks to Erinn Lockard and James Cadeau from Sweets and Swirls Café, who catered the event by baking yummy cookies, selecting special teas for moms and daughters, and delivering the goodies to all of our homes in beautifully decorated boxes.

Sparks introduced their guests and we heard heartwarming stories about each Spark from her mom. We ended the meeting by reading two books, Curious George's "Mother's Day Surprise" and "Winnie the Pooh: I Love You, Mama."

We will continue with virtual meetings for the remainder of the school year. Like everyone else, we hope that in-person meetings will resume in the fall. Registration for the 2021/2022 year will open soon on the Girl Guide website <https://register.girlguides.ca/>



Kaitlyn Eymann holding Luca Mirabella, Walker Meleskie, Delilah Colvin, Olive Cooper, Dawson Paget and McKenna Tissen. SUPPLIED

Anonymous donor matching Nursery School donations up to **\$10,000**

Staff
The Lake Report

An anonymous donor is encouraging people to donate to Niagara Nursery School by matching donations up to \$10,000.

The funding will go toward the \$2 million nursery school expansion at the Niagara-on-the-Lake Community Centre.

"We have had a community member come forward and offer to match all donations up to \$10,000 in support of

the expansion of Niagara Nursery School," said Candice Penny, executive director of the school.

"All donations will help us prepare to welcome infants, toddlers, and pre-school friends to our new school space in September 2021."

There are currently over 150 children on the waiting list for Niagara Nursery School, and this expansion is essential in supporting the young families moving into the

Niagara area, Penny said.

So far the school has raised \$30,000 of its \$100,000 goal since launching the campaign in November 2020.

"We have been astounded by the community support we have received," Penny said.

She added the town is "doing a fantastic job overseeing the expansion and everything is running on time."

The school hopes to be in the new building at the community centre by fall.

Kendall's Corner



Peach blossoms bloom in NOTL. GAIL KENDALL




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Luella Iseppon and Linda Slee are some of the first in town to get fresh asparagus from Thwaites Farms on Wednesday morning. Right: A line of people wait for asparagus, just 15 minutes after the stand opened for the season. Bundles of asparagus were flying off the shelves. RICHARD HARLEY PHOTOS

Asparagus rush! Steady lines for first crop of season

Richard Harley
The Lake Report

Within 15 minutes of opening for the season on Wednesday morning, Thwaites Farms had dozens of people lined up to get some of the first asparagus batch of the year.

Many people were walk-

ing out with several bundles of fresh asparagus, often picking up extra for friends to save a trip during the on-going pandemic lockdowns.

The Lakeshore Road farm operation is a popular destination for lovers of the green vegetable, which is usually available until late June.

“We’ve been anxiously awaiting the first day of asparagus,” said Barb Cherevaty, who was picking some up for two of her neighbours.

“We love the fresh asparagus. I love it on the barbecue and, yeah, I’m getting it for two of my neighbours and combined one-stop shopping here.”

Luella Iseppon said she was checking the Thwaites online posts in anticipation of the first crop and was “delighted” to hear it had arrived.

“I’m here opening (day). I can’t wait. There was precious little to be excited about this spring. Good, fresh, local food is some-

thing that’s beyond what I can tell you, exciting to me,” she said.

“We’ve all been anticipating this. It’s healthy and it’s wonderful and it’s local, and what can be wrong with this?”

Liz Klose said she could “hardly wait” for the first crop.

“I’ve been waiting all winter for asparagus to arrive. It always sort of heralds spring and the beginning of the vegetable season,” she said.

Thwaites has “great quality” asparagus, she said, adding she was picking up about 30 pounds for herself and neighbours — some for dinners and some for freezing.

Angel online events connect with community

Jessica Maxwell
The Lake Report

If you have ever been to the Olde Angel Inn, you know that as soon as you walk through the door and see the low ceilings with exposed beams and brick fireplaces you can feel the history of the building.

You even may have heard a story about some of the ghostly inhabitants of the oldest operating inn in Canada. Many times, the storyteller is general manager Graham Carter.

Now for the first time, you can listen to those stories from home live on “Ghost Stories with Graham” at 8 p.m. every Friday.

Angel events will be featured online every Monday, Wednesday and Friday night via Facebook and Instagram livestreams. These new events are a way for the Olde Angel Inn to virtually open the pub doors during the lockdown, said social media and events manager Tiffany Stevenson.

“(People) can virtually come in to hang out with us, hang out with your favourite bartenders and just hang out with our energy, our atmosphere. That’s what



Graham Carter hosts “Ghost Stories with Graham” for the Olde Angel Inn. JESSICA MAXWELL

this place has always been,” Stevenson said.

All of the online events are free and can be accessed through the Olde Angel Inn Facebook page or @the-oldeangelinn on Instagram.

“We are all stuck at home,” said owner Kelly Turner. “These events give the community a chance to come together for some fun and excitement.”

Monday nights are “Trivia with Tiff” for all ages starting at 7 p.m. with prizes to be won each week. Cocktail creations stream at 8 p.m. on Wednesday nights, where local bartenders will be live teaching you how to craft some pub-worthy drinks at home.

Cocktail kits can be purchased from the pub. The kits include all the ingredients you need to craft your own drinks with the livestream host. Each kit will include enough materials to pour at least four cocktails, with options including glassware, ranging from \$50 to \$70.

“Our community has always been there for us,” Stevenson said. “In a time where people need something to bring them a little bit of joy, even if it just brings a smile to their face, we are doing our jobs as workers in the service industry.”

She said one of the main objectives of the service in-

dustry is to bring happiness and enjoyment to the people who support the restaurant and walk through the doors.

The online events began last week and went well, she said.


“We didn’t expect for it to get that much traction and this much hype right away,” she said.

Carter, the ghost stories host, said these gatherings are a new and fun way to connect with the community and support locals.

“It’s nice to be able to do little things like this because it’s fun and it’s new for me, keeps me a bit younger and gives me a laugh,” he said.

“We’ve always had a great local backing here at the Angel and they’ve kept us going all these years,” Carter said. “We haven’t just focused on the in and out of tourists. We’re a local pub that has tourists.”

“Ghost Stories with Graham” on Friday nights will feature staff and guest accounts of eerie encounters at the Angel, but people also are encouraged to share their stories to be read on the livestream by sending a message to the inn’s on Facebook or Instagram.



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The Lake Report wants to help recognize NOTL's Pandemic Heroes — people who have made a difference, big or small, in a positive way. You can help us recognize someone in the community by sending a bit about the person and why they're a Pandemic Hero. Please send your nominations early to editor@niagaranow.com. A special thanks to Ravine Vineyard Estate Winery for providing a bottle of sparkling wine to each of our pandemic heroes. That's the spirit!

Heidi at Willow Cakes & Pastries



Heidi Johnson with Willow Cakes & Pastries co-owner Sean O'Donnell. RICHARD HARLEY

One of our Pandemic Heroes nominations came from Cynthia Rand, who nominated Heidi Johnson from Willow Cakes & Pastries.

"She is always there when I go, with a smile and a greeting by

name," Rand said in a note to The Lake Report.

Johnson said it "made her day" to find out she was nominated — and to receive a bottle of sparkling wine from Ravine Vineyard Estate Winery.

Willow co-owner Sean O'Donnell said Johnson has become a "staple and a face of the business."

"Being a longtime local and a past business owner, she knows almost all the local clientele that comes in and has a rapport with

them that is closer to that of a neighbour and friend than someone serving you pastries and fine goods," he said.

"We honestly don't know what we'd do without Heidi. She's the reason you'll see new product on

the shelves, fresh coffee in your cup and why you walk away with a smile, feeling like you just saw an old friend who baked you up something incredible."

The award is "much deserved," O'Donnell said.

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GAMES



Have some fun

Across

- 1. Insurers cover them (5)
- 4. Avert scam, abusing studio kit (2,7)
- 9. Manic-depressive (7)
- 10. River mouth (7)
- 11. Die (5,4)
- 12. Food poisoning bacteria (1,4)
- 13. Recast (7)
- 15. Fortification sounds like a horn, maybe (7)
- 17. Vigorous (7)
- 19. Distended (7)
- 21. Instruct (5)
- 23. Lifted out (7,2)
- 25. Hackneyed (7)
- 26. Provocations (7)
- 27. Ayrshire golf course owned by Donald Trump (9)
- 28. Book preceding Philemon (5)

Down

- 1. Only Hitchcock film to get a Best Picture Oscar (7)
- 2. Not a leading player (10,5)
- 3. Top briefs (5)
- 4. Prospered (7)
- 5. Less cloudy (7)
- 6. Corner joint (5)
- 7. Grounds for acquittal (10,5)
- 8. Top cutter? (7)
- 14. Deck speed measure (1,1,1)
- 16. Long March leader (3)
- 17. Motown (7)
- 18. "Waterworld" star (7)
- 19. Drops in (5,2)
- 20. They're often changed on little ones (7)
- 22. Big banger? (1-4)
- 24. "— Your Wagon", Frederick Loewe musical (5)

Crossword Puzzle

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Last issue's answers

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29 CIRCLE STREET, NIAGARA-ON-THE-LAKE - \$1,150,000



121 REGENT STREET, NIAGARA-ON-THE-LAKE - \$1,990,000



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Feeling distressed?

Penny-Lynn Cookson
Special to The Lake Report

Had enough of changing restrictions and lockdown? Looking in the mirror occasionally and feeling like letting it rip with a good shriek?

There's nothing like a good artist's self-portrait and quotes to give us insight into his or her character in the social context of their time. Hands down, this self-portrait by Gustave Courbet is one of the best in the history of art.

Why should this fraught young man, suggesting one of Byron's lost romantic heroes, be in such despair? Courbet left Ornans at 20 to study law in Paris. He quickly changed his mind and studied art in small studios and spent much

time in the Louvre copying technical elements of the compositions of Old Master paintings especially those of Caravaggio, Ribera, Zurbaran and Rembrandt.

As he was striving to build his reputation, and in transition from Romanticism to Realism, his early paintings were continually disparaged and rejected by the salons and art establishment. He was disillusioned and frustrated but also self-described as arrogant, proud and determined to succeed.

In this self-portrait, we are confronted with a man in acute distress with an expression close to madness. All distance between Courbet and the viewer has been eliminated. We are the mirror. Tremendous tension emerges.

The face is pale, cheeks flushed, eyes wide, nostrils

dilated, mouth parted, throat muscles bulge, arms are outstretched, wrist tendons apparent, hands grasp and tear at his hair. The composition is tight, light comes from the left and the play of light and shadow, chiaroscuro, creates contrasts on his white shirt and blue smock.

The style of representation is revolutionary for the time and for another reason: Courbet chooses a horizontal and rectangular landscape format rather than the traditional vertical portrait format. The work is an exploration of inner turmoil, emotion, anxiety and thought expressed with an intensity seldom seen, let alone achieved so dramatically, in the history of art.

Courbet did achieve success after a decade of great uncertainty and financial insecurity. He created large realistic canvases, completely unidealized, depicting the hard life of the French rural working class.

He described his realism approach as follows:



Gustave Courbet, "Desperation," completed 1845, oil on canvas, Private Collection of BNP Paribas. SUPPLIED

"To be in a position to translate the customs, the ideas, the appearance of my time, according to my own estimation; to be not only a painter, but a man as well. In short, to create living art – this is my goal." By challenging academic conventions, idealism and romanticism, he not only succeeded, he sowed the seeds of modernism at the end of the 19th century.

Always a Republican, Courbet was an activist in the Paris Commune and the short-lived revolutionary socialist government that followed the overthrow of the monarchy after the Franco/Prussian War of 1870/71. When the Communards were overthrown and the monarchy restored, Courbet was arrested and sentenced to six months in prison. He self-exiled to Swit-

zerland and died four years later, this self-portrait in his possession until the end.

Penny-Lynn Cookson is an art historian who taught at the University of Toronto for 10 years. She also was head of extension services at the Art Gallery of Ontario. Watch for her upcoming lecture series at the Pumphouse Arts Centre and at RiverBrink Art Museum.

Dr. Brown: COVID could lead to generic vaccines for future

Dr. William Brown
Special to The Lake Report

After more than a year of turmoil, suffering and death, there's been one shining light in this pandemic – the rapid design of several highly effective vaccines.

Troubles associated with the rollout of the vaccines have been another matter, what with manufacturing challenges, shortages and the unwillingness of many to take the vaccine, thus imperiling hope of achieving herd immunity.

But there's a race going on with this virus – can we vaccinate enough people worldwide quickly enough to prevent the emergence of variants that outwit the present vaccines?

All viruses undergo mutations and, as viruses go, this one mutates relatively slowly. Most mutations are neutral: they don't affect the ease with which the virus spreads or the severity of the infection.

But when, as in this case, the virus finds so many hosts around the world, sooner or later some of those mutations will prove to be dangerous because



Dr. William Brown. SUPPLIED

they make it easier for the virus to spread, make the virus more lethal or help the virus to escape naturally or vaccine acquired immunity or combinations of those three options.

That's precisely what's happened with this virus. Within a few months, several variants appeared that proved to be highly transmissible. In the cases of the U.K., South African and Brazilian variants, they were more virulent. The appearance of the U.K. variant in particular was probably the reason for the rapid spike in cases initially in the U.K. and soon thereafter

in Europe, the U.S., Canada and now India.

Most variants involve a combination of two or more mutations, which affect the virus' spike proteins and hence the ease with which the spikes lock onto the host cell's ACE-2 receptors and open the cell's interior to the virus.

Once there, the virus RNA hijacks the cell's machinery to make thousands of copies of the virus, before finally bursting the cell and releasing those copies into the circulation.

So far, the mutations and variants have failed to significantly reduce the

clinical effectiveness of the current crop of vaccines – that is, the risk of hospitalization or a serious case of COVID. But clearly that's possible in the future and the reason why manufacturers and public health laboratories monitor the changing genomic face of this virus looking for novel, potentially much more dangerous mutations and variants, and possibly incorporate modifications to their vaccines to maintain their effectiveness.

That's one way to go about solving the problem of variants. Other scientists early on in this pandemic suggested another path: Why not develop vaccines that target well-conserved regions of the virus' genome, which are far less susceptible to mutations?

And going much further, why not develop vaccines against all coronaviruses that have targeted humans such as SARS-CoV-2 (the current COVID-19 virus), SARS-CoV (the original SARS), MERS-CoV and others known to cause the common cold? Why not, indeed.

That approach that was suggested to the National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases (NIAID) early on in this pandemic, a proposal that reviewers considered an "outstanding" idea, just not then when most vaccine developers wanted to urgently develop vaccines for this specific virus, never imagining the virus would become the menace it became and continues to be.

But now that vaccine developers have the upper hand, it's time to return to a more generic proposal designed to deal with future variants by combining into one vaccine highly conserved, unlikely to change, antigenic components from all coronaviruses that attack humans.

Catching up with variants on the fly by modifying current vaccines as new variants erupt is expensive and probably not a viable solution for what has become a worldwide problem that's going to be with us for the foreseeable future.

A generic vaccine would make a marvellous booster vaccine once the pandemic settles down, as a barrier to

future budding pandemics. As it turns out, many scientists involved with designing flu vaccines are looking at a similar approach – combine antigenic components from as many flu variants as possible into one vaccine.

For both the coronavirus and influenza virus, the idea is to attach those representative antigenic protein components to some form of nanoparticle lattice – so constructed – that every antigenic protein has an equal opportunity to stimulate the immune system. It's a clever idea that perhaps has found its time.

A similar solution for two families of viruses makes sense to me. And none of us will miss the common cold should such a generic coronavirus vaccine turn out to work. Indeed, has anyone had a cold or flu this season? So far, it's been a "no flu" season.

That's a blessing in the carnage of COVID-19.

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



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House fires prevalent in 1800s

In Upper Canada during the early 19th century, metal plaques were provided by fire insurance companies to homeowners who had purchased insurance coverage. This plaque is oval and depicts two hands shaking above the date 1836, followed by the words “Niagara District Mutual Fire Insurance Co.” Open fires were an essential part of living in those days, used for heating in winter and cooking throughout the year. But with many fires left unattended, and many houses made almost entirely of wood, serious house fires were quite common and often devastating. The intention was that the homeowner displayed the plaque on the outside of their house so when firefighters arrived they would see the plaque and know they would be paid by the insurance company upon successful completion of their job. It is said that fire brigades would sometimes refuse to put out a fire if there was no immediate evidence of fire insurance on the property. Indeed, fire was so ever-present and potentially catastrophic at the time that it became common for many insurance companies to own and operate their own fire brigades until that responsibility was passed over to local government in 1866. A special thank you to the firefighters of today who always are there to help those in need in our community. We appreciate your bravery and dedication to your job.



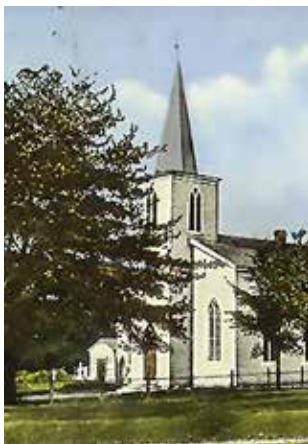
Before and after

Brian Marshall
Columnist

No examination of church architecture in Niagara-on-the-Lake would be complete without including St. Vincent de Paul, which has been identified as “the oldest surviving Catholic church still used for regular worship in the province of Ontario.”

Reflecting the pattern of settlement in Upper Canada, the portion of Niagara’s population identifying as Catholic lagged behind that of Protestants. In fact, it took until the latter part of the 1820s before there were sufficient congregants to justify the construction of a church.

Built in 1834, the new church followed the typical



St. Vincent de Paul, before and after. SUPPLIED

rectangular-with-centred-steeple form of the period. It’s exterior, certainly more modest than neighbouring St. Mark’s, would have been sheathed in clapboard (which was later stuccoed over), with tall, pointed arch gothic-style windows on either side of the entrance at the base of the steeple and marching down both sidewalls.

Still, while the exterior may have been simple, the interior boasted tall, carved pilasters from the tops of which rose arching vaults reminiscent of those found



in gothic cathedrals. These vaults were a testament to the skilled craftsmen who created in wood what would have been stone and plaster in a grander building.

So, it stood serving its congregation until the early 1960s when fundraising and a single large donation combined to underwrite an expansion. Peter Stokes, fresh from a restoration of St. Mark’s, was commissioned to lead this project.

Stokes chose to preserve the original footprint of the church in its entirety,

removing only the steeple to allow for a new addition on the front of the building. Fascinatingly, he decided on a dodecagon for his design, which, while an uncommon form in North America, can be found here and there across Europe. This 12-sided polygon was a form often used in churches built by the Templars to create a circular interior, which their tradition held was the shape of Solomon’s Temple.

Above the main entry doors were placed three banded windows and centred in each of the exposed sides a single full-height window – all modern renditions of the classic pointed arch gothic style featured on the original structure. Seamless white stucco ties both new and old together while raised banding creates a three-arch repetition of the banded windows on each of the other sides of the polygon.

In all, respecting both old and new.



Terry Mactaggart walks the Bruce Trail. SUPPLIED

Time to gear up for annual NOTL Town Step Challenge

Brittney Cutler
Special to The Lake Report

It’s almost time again for Niagara-on-the-Lake residents to get out their sneakers for the annual Town Step Challenge, which starts June 1.

Terry Mactaggart is ready to get stepping and will be going above and beyond trying to beat her steps during the month-long event.

“I like a challenge. I walk five days a week and it was my own personal challenge to see how far I walked each day,” the Niagara-on-the-Lake resident says of past step challenges. “I’m a walker anyways and a hiker, so it was very easy to do.”

When she participated two years ago, her daily goal was 10,000 steps or more. She looks forward to getting out and trying to accomplish her personal best and test her own limits.

Her advice for those who are starting out or are first time participants is to start slowly and take it easy.

“Do as much as you can. Start off small, do a short distance first if you haven’t done this before and work your way up. Hopefully by the end of the month

you’ll feel more comfortable and enjoy the experience,” Mactaggart says.

Mactaggart says she thinks it’s an important thing to do this year because of COVID.

“People need to get out and get some fresh air and exercise and I applaud the town for bringing the challenge back,” Mactaggart says.

Lord Mayor Betty Disero says she will be taking part as well.

She encourages people to social distance if they are going to be participating this year, but notes this is a great opportunity to get together and get some exercise.

“Remember to keep your distance from others as you’re out there walking. Stay safe, follow all the protocols and let’s get to it,” Disero says.

If you are planning to participate in the Town Step Challenge this year, you can register on the town’s website (notl.com/stepchallenge) either as an individual or in a team of four. The challenge will run from June 1 to 30 and is open to anyone who lives or works in Niagara-on-the-Lake.



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