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Final-hour filings shake up NOTL's election race

Paige Seburn
Local Journalism Initiative
The Lake Report

Niagara-on-the-Lake's council race kept growing right up to Friday's 2 p.m. nomination deadline — and for at least one of the three final-day entries, that was the plan.

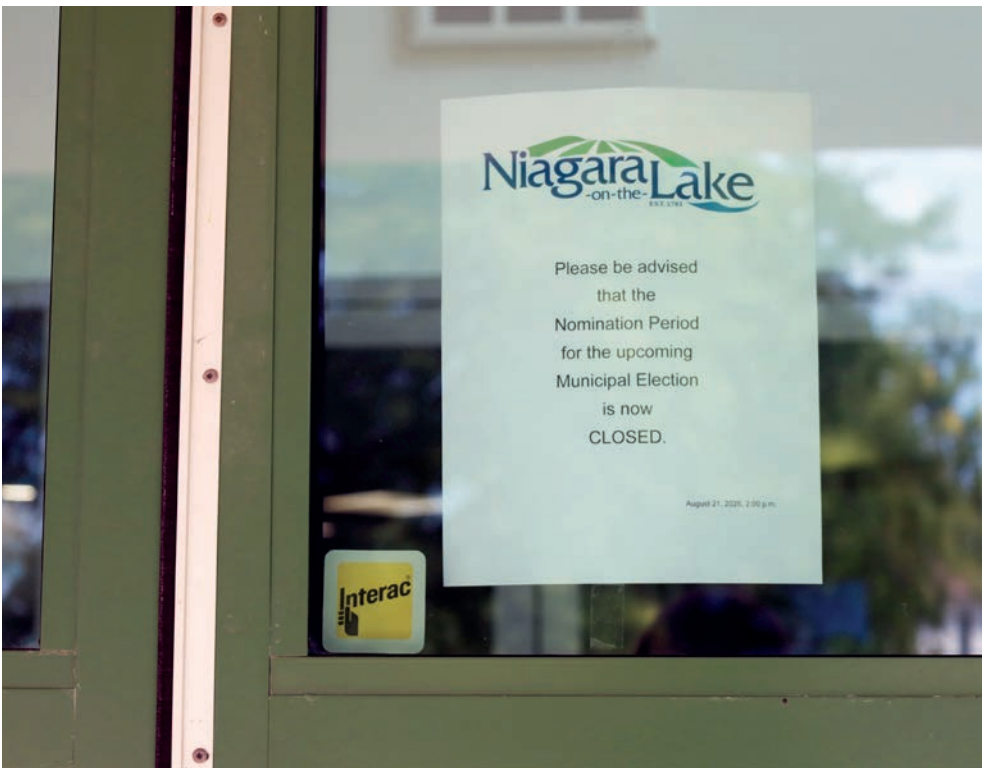
Nicholas Colaneri arrived at town hall around 1 p.m. to submit his nomination papers, about an hour before the 2 p.m. cutoff.

Rick Mills followed at about 1:40 p.m.

Karen Jones-Taylor also registered Friday, rounding out the final-day additions and bringing the field to 11 candidates, each seeking one of six council seats.

Incumbent councillors Tim Balasiuk, Adriana Cater-Vizzari, Gary Burroughs, Sandra O'Connor, Maria Mavridis and Andrew Niven are seeking re-election, while Colaneri, Mills and Jones-Taylor join Weston Miller and Steve McGuinness as challengers.

Coun. Wendy Cheropita is the only sitting councillor not seeking a spot on the next council, while Coun.



The door has closed on nominations for this fall's municipal election, but 14 candidates are hoping voters will open another one for them at town hall this fall. PAIGE SEBURN

Erwin Wiens, also the deputy lord mayor, is giving up his council seat to run for lord mayor.

NOTL residents are also guaranteed a new lord mayor. Incumbent Gary Zalepa is not seeking re-election, leaving Andrea Kaiser, Vaughn Goettler and Wiens in the race to replace him.

Zalepa has instead thrown his hat in the ring to become Niagara Region's next chair, a position the provincial government plans to appoint a person for immediately after the Oct. 26 municipal election.

The final candidate list also means the current council appears to have

avoided Ontario's so-called "lame-duck" restrictions for now, which would have limited some of its powers ahead of the election.

The test happens again after the Oct. 26 election. If fewer than six members of the current council are elected to the next council, the restrictions would kick

in until the new council is sworn in Nov. 24.

Council approved a backup plan last month for that possibility. If the restrictions come into effect, some of council's hiring and firing, property sale and spending powers would temporarily shift to chief administrative officer Nick Ruller.

While the filings came down to the wire, Colaneri said his decision didn't.

"I'll be honest about my submission timing. It was deliberate," he told The Lake Report Friday.

"There are people in this town who are very comfortable with how things have operated and who'd rather this race stay quiet and predictable than have someone at the table who's already shown he'll ask hard questions."

Colaneri said he wanted his candidacy secured before people opposed to his run had time to react.

"I wanted my decision locked in before it could be picked apart, second-guessed or worked around by anyone who didn't want me in this race," he said.

He also criticized what he sees as a broader pattern in how decisions are made in NOTL.

"I've spent the last while fighting the same pattern in different fights," Colaneri said.

He pointed to closed-door decisions, residents being told to trust a process he says hasn't earned their trust and rules that he says bend for "those with money and connections."

Election day is Oct. 26, with voting from 10 a.m. to 8 p.m. Official results will be declared the following day.

As part of the election campaign, the NOTL Residents Association is hosting a series of candidate forums in September and October at Crossroads Elementary School.

The forum for lord mayor candidates is set for Monday, Sept. 14, 5 to 9 p.m., while two forums will be held for councillor candidates — with the 11 candidates divided into two groups — on Friday, Sept. 25 and Friday, Oct. 2, both from 5 to 9 p.m.

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Andrew Niven seeks second council term

Paige Seburn
Local Journalism Initiative
The Lake Report

Incumbent Coun. Andrew Niven says Niagara-on-the-Lake needs to protect what makes it different as it grows — and after almost two years helping make those decisions on council, he's ready to put his record before voters.

Seeking his first elected term after being appointed to council in October 2024 (following former councillor Nick Ruller's resignation), Niven says he knew from the beginning he would have to prove himself and earn residents' trust.

"Ultimately, I hope residents look at my performance over the past two years — my participation, my voting record and, just as importantly, my willingness to be available and responsive to residents — and make their decision from there."

Part of that record is his approach to development, which Niven boils down simply.

"My position has been pretty consistent over the past two years: if a development fits, I'm prepared to support it. If it doesn't fit, I'm not."

Niven says that test — whether development fits — is ultimately about protecting what makes NOTL unique.

"There are very few communities that combine heritage, agriculture, world-class wineries, natural beauty and vibrant villages in the way Niagara-on-the-Lake does," he said.

"The biggest threat is losing sight of what makes us special. Whether we're talking about growth, planning, infrastructure or economic development, we need to



Andrew Niven.

make sure we're making decisions that enhance our community rather than slowly eroding the qualities that residents value most."

One major proposal Niven didn't support was the Royal George Theatre rebuild.

He voted against the proposal that came before council, despite saying he "absolutely" supports the Shaw Festival and recognizes its importance to NOTL's culture and tourism economy.

"My concerns were primarily around the scale (and) massing of the proposed building. I also had questions around the cash-in-lieu of parking component," Niven said.

"I think it's important that we can support an institution like the Shaw while still asking tough questions about how a project fits within our community."

Niven takes a similarly measured position on the Rand Estate.

He is open to "appropriate redevelopment," but says it needs to respect the property's heritage value, follow the town's planning framework and make sense for the surrounding community.

"To me, it's a perfect example of where thoughtful planning matters more than simply saying yes or no."

But Niven doesn't see NOTL's development

debates as a simple fight between builders and the people who already live here.

"I don't think it should be framed as developers versus residents," he said.

Developers can bring investment and new opportunities, he said, while residents deserve to know their concerns are being heard and genuinely considered.

"My job as a councillor isn't to automatically take one side or the other. It's to look at the application, understand the planning policies, consider the community impact and decide what is in the best interest of Niagara-on-the-Lake."

Asked what should happen if a developer repeatedly operates without regard for town rules or approvals, Niven said developers shouldn't be treated differently from anyone else.

"The rules have to apply equally to everyone. Residents, businesses and developers all have an obligation to follow the bylaws, approvals and regulations that are in place."

If those requirements are repeatedly ignored, he said the town should use the enforcement tools available to make sure they are followed.

"People need to have confidence that the rules apply fairly and that no one gets special treatment."

Niven is also urging patience on another major decision facing the town: what to do with the old hospital on Wellington Street.

He called it one of NOTL's most significant properties and said whatever happens there will affect the community for generations.

"I supported taking the time to fully understand the opportunities, the constraints and what the com-

munity needs before rushing into a decision," he said.

"For me, the focus should be on finding a future use that provides a real, long-term benefit to the community, while also being financially responsible and appropriate for the surrounding area."

Niven also weighed in on the town's approach to dealing with the media. Earlier this year, chief administrative officer Nick Ruller directed staff not to respond to what the town considers opinion-based media requests, instead focusing on factual and policy-related questions.

Niven said transparency is "fundamental to good local government," while acknowledging the town has responsibilities around accuracy and may sometimes have legal or other considerations to take into account.

But he said residents benefit when reporters can directly seek answers.

"Residents are best served when the media can ask questions, seek clarification and report accurately."

Niven says the next council shouldn't treat a new term as a reset.

He wants continued attention on roads, connectivity, wastewater and stormwater infrastructure and responsible growth, along with progress on parks and recreation, short-term rentals and Queen Street planning.

And with the next council shrinking to seven members from nine, he says every person — and every vote — will matter more.

"There may be fewer people around the table, but the responsibility is exactly the same: representing residents and making decisions that are in the best interest of the community."

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SUNDAY: Nothing submitted this week. But that doesn't mean there aren't any. Happy hunting!

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How **line dancing** became a part of St. Saviour’s social tapestry

Linda Fritz
Special to The Lake Report

For centuries, the church has been the centre of the community. As religion released its hold on the population, the church needed to look for another role. St. Saviour, the Brock Memorial Church in Queenston has begun that search.

While the congregation is small, it is very active. St. Saviour is becoming the village community centre. It offers teas, dinners, barbecues and music during the year. The church has many friends who participate in these activities.

Last winter, something new arrived: line dancing.

Anita and Gavin Menezes moved to Queenston from Mississauga in 2020, in time for the pandemic lockdown. While in Mississauga, Gavin became interested in ballroom dancing. Anita said she wasn’t the least bit interested, but went along anyway. She loved it.

From there, it was an



It’s been a busy year for St. Saviour, the Brock Memorial Church in Queenston. To end off the summer season, it’s hosting a musical event, **“Classic Hits on the Lawn,”** on Aug. 30. Come fall, its line dancing classes will be back. SUPPLIED

easy move to line dancing. The local Girl Guide group wanted to earn a dancing badge. With no one to teach them, Anita Menezes took on the role.

She lists the advantages to line dancing: you don’t need for a partner, you can dance for yourself alone and no one expects anything from you. Menezes has taught classes where participants

ranged in age from six to 82.

And now for the music. Many think of line dancing as something performed to country music. Among Menezess musical choices are Irish, Greek, Filipino, French and South American (and, of course, Shania Twain). The steps can be waltzes, cha cha, the shuffle or even the fox trot. Foot-

wear includes high heels, boots, sandals and running shoes.

One new dance is learned in each class. Menezes makes sure everyone is thoroughly familiar with the music and the steps before the more formal session begins. She moves to each quadrant of the room so everyone can follow the moves. She calls out the

steps as she goes.

One of the questions that remains: why St. Saviour? Menezes said that as she became better acquainted with the village, she met two parishioners from the church, Vicki Lowenberger and Elaine Bartolini. Line dancing came up in the conversation.

Menezes said that within two weeks of the conversa-

tion, there were posters in the village post office and the library as well as around the wider community.

Dancers came from Jordan and Niagara Falls. In the fall 2025 session, well over 30 people participated.

Sessions will continue this fall. The sessions begins at St. Saviour in Queenston on Oct. 1 and continues to Dec. 3. The cost is \$40 for the session.

Meanwhile, on Sunday, Aug. 30, St. Saviour is planning a musical event called “Classic Hits on the Lawn.” A group of local musicians will be playing the hits of Elton John, Blue Rodeo, the Eagles, Van Morrison and many more. The event was postponed from Aug. 23 due to weather.

You are invited to bring a lawn chair and a picnic. But keep in mind that line dancing will definitely be a part of the show. The festivities begin at 6 p.m.

Come September, the regular line dancing classes will resume.



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A story to pass down

Andres family celebrates 100 years since coming to Canada

Maddy Gordon
The Lake Report

This August marks 100 years since Elizabeth Andres, mother to Buddy Andres and his 11 siblings, arrived in Canada from South Russia, present-day Ukraine. A century later, Andres honoured his parents' sacrifice with a gathering of 140 family members.

The first of the Andres family came to Canada in 1926. Eight years later, they settled on Niven Road in Niagara-on-the-Lake and grew up running the farm, skating on the pond and making memories Andres says he remembers fondly.

"We have grown up in a family of 12 on a farm. The memories we have of growing up on Niven Road ... just incredible," he said.

The pressure to immigrate came not long after the Russian Revolution in 1917, which overthrew the Russian monarchy and gave rise to communism.

But the family's decision to leave did not come easily.

Although Andres' mother and grandmother, Maria, were able to immigrate in 1926, his father could not because he was in the military, making the move all the more difficult.

"Grandmother wanted to keep going, and (my mother) wanted to go back, and she had made up her mind that she was going to go back," Margie Enns, another child of Elizabeth and William Andres, said. "When the officials came and told her, 'You're ready to travel,' she said, 'Where to?' and he said, 'Canada.'"

Luckily for the family, William Andres Sr. arrived in Canada four years later in 1930.

"It was that close that she could have gone back, and we wouldn't have seen this," Enns said, while pointing to 139 relatives enjoying a picnic, laughing and exchanging stories.

Andres says the family's Mennonite roots instilled an honest, hardworking farming lifestyle that was brought over to Niagara-on-the-Lake.

"My dad was a tough taskmaster, kind of like me. My mom, oh my goodness ... there's 12 in our family and we all had different appetites. My mom would make 12 different dishes," he said.

But a generational knack for farming didn't mean he



Above: Getting around town looked a little different in 1939 Niagara-on-the-Lake: Buddy Andres shows off a photograph of the Andres children taking the "bus" to Sunday school. The Andres family moved to town in 1934.

Left: These pieces of old memorabilia detail the Andres family's history, including their life in Canada after they immigrated to the country from South Russia, present-day Ukraine.

MADDY GORDON

and his siblings wouldn't have a fun-filled childhood.

"Our place was kind of the hub because everybody's friends would come there," Enns said. "My dad built a great big pond on Niven Road ... there wasn't a (skating) arena, so everybody came there."

When summer rolled around, Enns, Andres and their siblings helped on the farm, apart from the occasional trip to Crystal Beach to cool off. Meanwhile, Saturdays were for baking zwieback buns to eat at Sunday dinner, pronounced zwee-back in English.

"On Sundays, first of all the older people would eat, then the next generation and then the kids," she explained.

More than anything, though, Elizabeth and William's children were raised with the belief that family comes first.

That message lives on through their descendants, including 13-year-old Tayla Andres, Elizabeth and William's great-great-granddaughter. She chose to recount her ancestors' immigration story for a Grade 7 school project.

"I thought it would be something cool to learn about my family history," she said. "Most people learned about something that they weren't really a part of and it doesn't really matter to them, but this is actually important to me."

Tayla conducted her research by speaking to her dad and grandparents. She says she was particularly interested in how her great-great-grandparents arrived in Canada and why they left Russia.

"It's really important (to) learn where you came from and what generations before you did to help you get to where you are now," she said.

Last weekend's gathering at Virgil Sports Park did just that: Remember the sacrifices made so generations today can tell the story.

Through heirlooms — documents, dolls, photographs and dishes — and shared stories, Elizabeth and William's journey was honoured at the celebration.

"We feel very blessed that they came here to a place like Canada. There's

a lot more stories I know of people who didn't come and what happened to them, it's horrific," Enns said.

Six of Elizabeth and William's 12 children, including Buddy and Margie, are alive and living in NOTL, a hundred years after the family arrived in town.

Other family members travelled from Ottawa, Saskatchewan and Alberta. Buddy joked the only excuse for missing the 100th anniversary of the family's arrival to Canada is death.

"When my mom and dad were still alive, we would get together for Christmas, all of us. Usually in our home, but then in the church gymnasium," he said. "Ever since then the family's been getting too big, but we're all still very closely connected."

Seeing the large group of relatives gathered together, Enns says her parents would be impressed to see what their journey ultimately led to.

"We thought this was important for the next generation to know the story about our parents coming here," she said. "The story needs to be passed down."

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Building the estate

Gary Pillitteri talks building estate winery from the ground up, life in politics and family

Where to start? Orazio (Gary) Vincenzo Pillitteri is a nonagenarian — he just turned 90 this spring. Seventy-eight years ago, he arrived in Niagara with his father to escape political persecution in his native Sicily. To say he has prospered is like saying Vladimir Guerrero Jr. plays house league. He and four generations of his family are passionate about wine-making. Their Pillitteri Estates Winery is one of Canada’s most prolific wineries, selling wines throughout the country and around the world. He is, first and foremost, a farmer. Along the way he worked at General Motors for 18 years as a tool- and die-maker. He pioneered pizza in the Maritimes in the 1960s. He even had his own television cooking show. He served as a Niagara-on-the-Lake alderman for a term and then in the House of Commons as a member of parliament for Niagara for three parliaments, including as vice-chair of the country’s finance committee. He says he was born a Liberal and virtually all Liberal leaders for the past four decades have sought his counsel. He has personally and professionally won hundreds of awards and citations for his work, his community contribution and his wines. He spoke to The Lake Report on a quiet, sunny afternoon, over a glass of wine at the winery’s BarrelHead Restaurant. He walks gently, with a cane to support his step. He carries his head high, and greets everyone, staff and visitors alike. He loves his life and his world.



Orazio (Gary) Vincenzo Pillitteri’s story in Canada begins in 1948, when he came to this country with his family at the age of 12 from Sicily. In 1953, the family bought a small farm on Lakeshore Road. “You had to become English really fast. I changed my name to Gary to sound English,” he says. **TIM TAYLOR** Above: Pillitteri Estates Winery is a family affair, which is perfect for Gary — his family, pictured here, is the biggest love of his life, along with politics and agriculture, he says: “Seeing them as part of my lifelong dream is wonderful.” **SUPPLIED**

Tim Taylor
The Lake Report

You came to Canada in 1948, at the age of 12, with your father and ahead of the rest of your family. What was your life like in Sicily, just after the Second World War?

Sicily was mostly spared from the war. But we were a little scared as a community. We huddled families into bigger houses. We had a bigger house in the country. And we huddled two, three, four, five families — as many as we could get — sleeping on the floor, all over. We thought that in larger groups we would be spared the war. And we were. Mostly.

Why did your family emigrate?

My father was a viticulturist. He had a big interest in what was happening in his own community, so he finally started running in politics. I will always remember at the kitchen table, from the time I was seven or eight years old, it was politics, politics, politics.

And politics are played rough over there. They couldn’t get to my father because he was so outspoken. They started failing us — his children — at school. A friend warned my father that his opponents could ruin his children’s future if he stayed.

He brought me with him to Canada, because I was

the first to be attacked by the school. My mother and the rest of the family came to Canada over the next few years. By 1952.

What was Canada like for a new immigrant, in the aftermath of the war? Were you welcomed with open arms?

We arrived in St. Catharines, but there was nowhere my father could mix into the community. We moved to Hamilton. That was 1949, ’50 and ’51. We came back when the rest of my family came to Canada, by ’52. In ’53, we bought a small farm on Lakeshore Road.

It was hard for a boy. You had to become English really fast. I changed my name to Gary to sound English. My real name is Orazio. Can you imagine? They would have called me “horse.”

Nowadays, I choose to have a little accent so I can sell wine better.

You lived and worked for a few years in Nova Scotia, a part owner of a restaurant, with your own TV cooking show. That’s a far cry from your farming background. Why?

I’ve never been complacent, accepting what was in front of me. I wanted to see what was out there in Canada. Lena and I got married in 1960. I was working at General Motors at the time. I quit. We went to Halifax to help my brother introduce pizza in the Atlantic prov-

inces. We did that. I came back to Niagara and bought this farm in 1965. Fifteen acres. Mostly fruit trees. And I worked at GM again.

In 1974, you opened Gary’s Farm Market here on Niagara Stone Road. How did you discover you wanted to make wine?

Once we opened the farm market, I quit GM again. I was a tool- and die-maker for almost 18 years. On and off. The market gave me an opportunity to be more self-independent. It gave me income and helped us pay for the farm. We had some Labrusca grapes. We had another small property on East & West Line. We started planting some French hybrid and other vinifera grapes. I was making my own wines all that time. It was in my blood.

Then one year, my son-in-law Jamie Slingerland entered one of my amateur icewines in a competition. He came to me and said: “Daddy, you won the competition.” It was the beginning.

Then in 1988, when I first was running in the federal election, my friends asked me what I would do if I lost (I did lose that election). So, that fall, we left some Vidal grapes with the netting. And that’s when I started with icewine.

In the 1980s, you served locally as a town alderman and later for over a decade as a member of parlia-

ment. What made you want to jump into politics?

I was good friends with Wilbert Dick. When he entered politics here in town, running first for regional council and later mayor, he asked me to join him. I told him I was way too busy with family and business. But the next election, he entered my name without even telling me. We won. But I had lots of opposition. I was just too progressive.

During all that time, I was an active Liberal. A Liberal at heart. I was an advisor. And an organizer. Even Pierre Trudeau asked me when I was going to run for the party. I lost that first election but was successful in the next three elections.

You served many years on the finance committee of parliament. What were the big issues you wanted Canadians to address during your tenure?

Free trade was a big issue at that time. I believe in free trade. I thought we had to understand that we lived under the same umbrella as the United States. But they owned the umbrella.

And here we are again. I admire the kills of this government of Carney. We have the right man and he’s doing the right thing. We’re buying some of the jobs. But we have to protect them.

It’s clear that your family has been a cornerstone of your winery’s success. You have four generations

working with you. But the Pillitteri family is scattered gainfully all around the Niagara region. It must be very satisfying to have everyone around you. Tell us about your wife Lena and your family team.

My wife Lena has been devoted to me and all my whims. I was 24 and she was 17, from the old country. She followed me along every road and every alley. I’m from an old culture. I married my wife because I love family. My three loves are family, politics and agriculture.

Nine of my family work here at the winery, four generations. My great-grandson is a busboy at the restaurant. But we have doctors and lawyers and teachers too, all around Niagara. Except one. He’s playing hockey in Germany, but he’ll be back.

In fact, I really don’t do anything now. I live right next-door to the winery. I stay up late and watch CPAC. Get up late. And spend my days supporting everyone here at the winery. And I know everything. Don’t forget I have keys for everything ... and I know everyone.

What’s your favourite wine?

They are all my children. It is the Exclamation series, our top wines. I don’t drink much anymore. If you don’t drink a lot, you might as well drink the best.

Now the hard part — what is the highlight of your illustrious career?

As an immigrant, I wanted to be equal among equals. And having been elected as a member of parliament, that was a highlight. I still find it hard to believe I did it.

Meeting the Pope was a highlight. Having Pierre Elliott Trudeau personally urging me to run.

But my real highlight is my family. I am blessed. Seeing them as part of my lifelong dream is wonderful.

If you were a politician again, what issues would you want to address in NOTL? In Canada?

Simple. Don’t favour development and don’t favour the status quo. Get the zoning right and then keep it. Work for the community, not just your interests. And make room for the children. Leave room for them to make mistakes too.

I have been involved in this community for 78 years. Don’t tell me you are an expert now or tell me what I need. We made it what it is.

I understand you still enjoy golf.

I play every Saturday morning with my friends. Then we come back to BarrelHead for a few beers and pizza. What could be better?

The Lake Report’s conversation with Gary Pillitteri has been edited for length and clarity.

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Sunday transit coming to NOTL

Paige Seburn
Local Journalism Initiative
The Lake Report

Getting around Niagara-on-the-Lake without a car is about to get easier on Sundays.

Starting Sept. 6, NOTL's Niagara Transit Plus microtransit service will run on Sundays and statutory holidays from 10 a.m. to 6 p.m., bringing service to days when it previously wasn't available.

The change will also extend Sunday and holiday service to regional bus routes for Niagara College's NOTL campus and the Outlet Collection at Niagara.

"The new Sunday and holiday service beginning Sept. 6 will include Niagara-on-the-Lake's (Niagara Transit) Plus microtransit service," Niagara Transit spokesperson Ashley Archer-Gooden told The Lake Report.

"Additionally, the new Sunday and holiday service



Seven-day transit is coming to Niagara-on-the-Lake, with Sunday and holiday service launching Sept. 6 for local microtransit and regional routes. FILE/PAIGE SEBURN

will apply to the regional routes serving both the Niagara College NOTL campus and the Outlet Collection at Niagara."

Service will run on Sundays and statutory holidays, with the exception of Christmas Day and New Year's Day.

The NOTL expansion is part of a wider move by Niagara Transit to offer service seven days a week across the region.

The transit agency says Sunday service has been one of the most common re-

quests from riders and will give people more flexibility to get to work, visit family and friends or travel around Niagara.

Sunday and holiday schedules and frequencies may differ from weekday and Saturday service, so Niagara Transit is encouraging riders to check their route and schedule before travelling.

Complete schedules for all routes are expected to be available online in September.

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Discover **hidden gems** off the beaten track of NOTL wines

Continued from Front Page

operating for six years now, and the wines have enjoyed significant success. Altogether, Collab produces 4,000 cases per year.

Each brand has its own personality and focus, but all are committed to high quality and respect for the vineyards where they source their grapes.

The winemakers have a range of backgrounds, but they are united in their spirit of innovation and entrepreneurial energy. Many of the brands will be releasing new vintages this fall, mostly from 2024 and 2025.

They are all interesting wines to discover, though you won't come across them on store shelves. Consumers can purchase the wines online, at [drinkcollab.ca](#), or by direct request at Marynissen winery. Many are also available at select restaurants.

Following Aug. 23's event, the next pop-up tasting will be on the first Saturday in December, so mark your calendars.

Here's an introduction to two of the wine labels that were poured at the pop-up.



The barrel cellar at Marynissen Estates Winery plays host to a tasting of artisanal wines on Aug. 23. DON REYNOLDS

Liebling Wines is absolutely a labour of love. Liebling, a German term of endearment, literally means "darling." Founders Alison and Jessica Oppenlaender chose that name as homage to both their opa, and their dad, Matthias Oppenlaender. Oppenlaender came to Niagara from Germany when he was 22 years old, and has built an impressive grape growing career over the 40 years since then.

Jessica works with the Collab team to make Li-

ebeling wines. "It's cool, as a grape grower, to try different things," she says. "For me, the winemaking happens in the vineyard," she explains.

She experiments with different harvest dates, picking early for aromatics and later for roundness. In the vineyard, different approaches to leaf thinning also contribute to ripeness and the ultimate expression in the glasses.

Liebling's wines are fresh, fruit forward, and well balanced. They are crafted

to be enjoyed around the family dinner table or with friends on a patio.

Here are tasting notes for three of their wines, although there are many more, which you can view at [lieblingwines.ca](#).

2023 Liebling

Sauvignon Blanc \$22

Made with grapes picked exclusively from Andrews Vineyard, in the Four Mile Creek sub-appellation. This wine has characteristic grassy, grapefruit and lemon drop flavours, with a zippy acidity and some round creamy peachiness on the finish. 90 pts.

2023 Gamay Noir \$26

Grapes were picked from the Creek Road Vineyard, planted in 1996. Medium ruby in colour, with aromatic cherry and raspberry on the nose. Fruit-forward with velvet tannins, good depth and structure, and well-integrated oak. 90 pts.

2023 Cabernet Franc \$32

From the Oppenlaender Vineyard in the Four Mile Creek sub appellation, the grapes were picked Nov. 16. Notes of red currant and dark cherry mingle with white pepper and vanilla. Ripe tannins provide struc-

ture, and acidity is well balanced. 91 pts.

If Liebling is a family passion project, Divergence is intent on making its mark in the industry in a big way, and it's succeeding.

Winemaker Jeff Moote is on a roll. He was awarded the Paul Pender Memorial Rising Star Award at the Lieutenant Governor's Awards this year, and many of his wines captured medals at the National Wine Awards of Canada this summer.

His wines also garnered some high scores from the well respected international competition, the Decanter Awards.

Moote's wines are both expressions of the vineyards where he carefully chooses to source his grapes, and his own style as a winemaker. Here are notes on two of his wines — you can see the rest at [divergencewines.ca](#).

2022 Divergence

Chardonnay Brut \$39.95

Lovely toasty leesy notes on the nose. Fresh citrus notes play with apple and pear drop. Bright acidity keeps it refreshing, and a great finish rounds it out. 91 pts.

2022 Divergence Semillon

Sauvignon Blanc \$35
Aromatics are lovely, with creamy brioche paired with lean minerality.

This Semillon/Sauvignon blend is 53 per cent Semillon, giving it pleasant weight and a full bodied, waxy mouth feel. Rich flavours of well-extracted lemon curd, ripe pear, and apple are supported by a chalky minerality. A luxurious wine to savour. 92 pts.

2023 Divergence

Cabernet \$38

A blend of 75 per cent Cabernet Sauvignon, 15 per cent Cabernet Franc, and 10 per cent Petit Verdot. Bright fruit on the nose and the palate, with plum, blackberry and red currant. Ripe tannins and balanced acidity. 89 pts.

And, a personal favourite of mine, 2023 Divergence

MRV \$33

MRV is a blend of Marsanne, Roussanne and Viognier. Honeysuckle and peach greet your nose, and on the palate stone fruit lingers along with honeyed lemon and pear. A richly textured mouthfeel invites you to savour this intriguing blend. 92 pts.



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Men’s Ryder Cup team narrowly reclaims Pro’s Cup from women

Kevin MacLean
The Lake Report

The Niagara-on-the-Lake Golf Club’s men’s Ryder Cup team managed to wrangle the Pro’s Cup championship from their female competitors last Friday.

The defending champion, the women’s Solheim team, was without several regulars due to illness but still came close to repeating, falling 23 points to 19.

On the links, it was “another perfect day for golf” that brought together 14 men and 14 women golfers to play seven matches, said victorious men’s captain Harry Huizer.

The women kicked off the tournament with “a team huddle by the first tee led by their captain Martha Cruikshank and they in unison had quite a chant before play began,” Huizer commented.

“Maybe they were trying to shake up the men’s team,” he said, but noted the men were mentally ready and “no chant or strategy would affect their goal of playing their best.”

The 18-hole better-ball matches were each worth six points.



NOTL Golf Club pro shop manager Darren Smith presents the Pro’s Cup to men’s team captain Harry Huizer, left. The men won the cup Friday in a close-fought battle. SUPPLIED

In better ball, the lowest score for each team is counted, with strokes given based on handicaps.

The men were at the top of their game, with Jim McMacken (1-under 71) and Stephen Warboys (even-par 72) leading the way.

Despite those impressive scores, the two teams were neck and neck all day.

With five of the seven matches completed, the teams were tied at 15 points apiece, Cruikshank told The Lake Report.

Key points for the men were provided by Glen Murray in that fifth match.

He and fellow lefty John Reynolds were paired against Lisa Allen and Sue Sherk.

When Reynolds fell ill and couldn’t play the back nine, Murray had to finish solo.

The groups ended tied 3-3. If any of the men’s points had gone the other way the Pro’s Cup could have rested with the women.

But the sixth grouping was the clincher for the men, Cruikshank said.

That match, featuring Jim Panetta and Scot Baran versus Tracey Peters and Cathy Taylor, was decided on the last hole of both nines, leading the men to a narrow victory, Huizer said.

The tourney was so close, the result could easily have been different, he admitted.

Despite winning the last match 4-2, with May Chang and Diana Dimmer defeating Peter Falconer and Ted Carmichael, the women couldn’t make up the difference, Cruikshank said.

However, “revenge will be ours in 2027. That’s the plan,” she said.

Huizer noted, “The team spirit, sportsmanship and friendliness was clearly evident throughout the day.”

At a post-tourney lunch he was presented with the winner’s trophy by pro shop manager Darren Smith.

League results: In Tuesday’s 18-hole women’s league, Louise Robitaille was tops with 84, while Yolanda Henry, Cruikshank and Dimmer all tied at 95. Peters was third with 96. Closest to the pin winners were Carroll Baker (#4) and Barb Hastings (#9).

In nine-hole women’s play, Sharron Marlow was first with 48, with Sue Sherk and Peggy Larder tied at 51. Four players were tied at 53: Sandie Boyer, Deborah Williams, Carolyn Cochrane and Suzanne Watson.

Williams sank the longest putt on #5, Sherk hit the longest drive on #6 and Marlow was closest to the pin in two on #7.

In Thursday’s men’s league, Ricky Watson and Jim Meszaros were the top guns, firing even-par 36s. Marty Nixon (31) and Charles Swanepoel (32) had the best net scores.

Other sharpshooters: Gord Paget (longest putt #3), Watson (closest to pin on #4), Ron Planche (longest drive #5) and Robert Yamamoto (closest to pin on #9).

Skins winners abounded, with \$15 gross skins for birds or better going to: Kurt Hamm (#1), Al Kavanagh (eagle #2, birdie #3), McMacken (#4), John Vander Hoeven (#8) and Yamamoto (#9).

Net skins worth \$95 went to: Hamm (#1), Kavanagh (#2), Nick Miller (#3) and Swanepoel (#5).

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Coaches Kurt Hamm and Gary Friesen enter NOTL Sports Wall of Fame

Continued from Front Page

said during the ceremony that she estimates he has coached about 4,000 children over the decades.

Hamm, teary-eyed, told the audience what has guided him through four decades of coaching.

“We focus on the kids. It’s all about them, the kids. Nothing else, nothing else matters. No one else matters but the children,” he said.

He also asked residents to follow him into coaching, and urged anyone frustrated by a difficult parent, player or board member to stay.

“Don’t let that one person ruin it for you,” he said.

“Don’t be discouraged. Just keep on going.”

Friesen grew up playing hockey with the NOTL Wolves and lacrosse in town. He was named Niagara Falls Minor Hockey Association MVP in 2002-03, and the Oshawa Generals took him in the OHL Priority Selection.

In 2003, he helped Niagara



Left: Kurt Hamm becomes emotional while speaking about what his motivation has been through four decades of coaching: the kids. Right: Gary Friesen played four OHL seasons with Oshawa and the Sudbury Wolves, then finished his hockey career with the Brock University Badgers. He now coaches minor hockey and lacrosse in town. “Some of the best memories of my sporting life happened right here,” he says. DAVE VAN DE LAAR



District Secondary School win an OFSAA field lacrosse championship. The next season, he won gold with Team Ontario at the U17 World Hockey Challenge.

Friesen played four OHL seasons with Oshawa and the Sudbury Wolves, then finished his hockey career with the Brock University Badgers. He also played Junior B

lacrosse with the Niagara-on-the-Lake Thunderhawks.

He now coaches minor hockey and lacrosse in town.

“Some of the best memories of my sporting life happened right here in Niagara-on-the-Lake. The camaraderie of being on a team and making so many friends over the years,” Friesen said.

“Today I have the opportunity to coach kids in the same community where I grew up. I hope I can give some of these same experiences that I had to the next generation.”

Joe Pillitteri, Friesen’s cousin and nominator, brought laughs to the Virgil arena when recounting Friesen’s playing days before

turning serious about what came after them.

“We are celebrating Gary Friesen as an athlete tonight, but I’d like to say that we’re celebrating Gary and Kurt, above all, as human beings,” Pillitteri said.

Niagara Falls MP Tony Baldinelli, MPP Wayne Gates and Lord Mayor Gary Zalepa presented certificates

to the inductees.

Ken Rive, chair of the Sports Wall of Fame committee, said the annual ceremony runs on donations and asked attendees to help keep it going.

“Sport matters,” Rive said. “Games end, but the impact of sport lasts a lifetime.”

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Yellow Door brings Broadway’s ‘Hadestown’ to NOTL stage

Andrew Hawlitzky
The Lake Report

A Broadway musical that swept the Tony Awards and set a new record at the box office this summer is coming to Niagara-on-the-Lake this week, performed entirely by local teenagers.

The Yellow Door Theatre Project opens “Hadestown: Teen Edition” on Aug. 28 at the non-profit’s studio in Virgil, where 20 senior students will perform six shows over three days after four weeks of intensive rehearsals.

The musical by singer-songwriter Anaïs Mitchell won eight Tony Awards in 2019, including Best Musical, and this summer, its filmed stage version became the highest-grossing film capture of a live theatre production, surpassing “Hamilton.”

Yellow Door founder and creative director Andorlie Hillstrom pursued the production after seeing it in New York in 2022 and



Catherine Dubois, Wren Evans and Liam Marriott step into the underworld as Persephone, Hermes and Hades in Yellow Door Theatre Project’s “Hadestown: Teen Edition,” opening Aug. 28 in Virgil. Tickets on sale now. ANDREW HAWLITZKY

obtained the teen-edition licence when it became available about a year and a half ago.

“Hadestown” retells the Greek myth of Orpheus, a poor, young singer who journeys into the under-

world to bring back the woman he loves, Eurydice, no matter how the odds are stacked against him.

Hillstrom said that message of trying again is why the show connects with audiences — especially young people.

“We can always hope that if we go back to the beginning, it will be different the next time, so let’s keep trying,” she said. “In the world we live in today, I think that’s why ‘Hadestown’ has touched so many young people.”

For some of the cast, the story of trying again after disappointment hits close to home.

Liam Marriott, who plays Hades, received an offer from the University of Windsor’s drama program but turned it down to stay closer to his family.

“About a year after, they had completely cut their drama program,” he said.

Ontario colleges and universities have suspended about 600 programs, including theatre and performing arts programs, since the federal government announced in 2024 it would issue roughly 300,000 fewer international student permits over three years.

This funding change cut the tuition revenue schools had used to offset a long-standing domestic tuition freeze and years of provincial underfunding.

Marriott now studies at George Brown Theatre School in Toronto and hopes to work in film and television.

Wren Evans, who plays Hermes, considered St. Lawrence College after

working with instructors connected to its musical theatre program. Then that program disappeared too.

“It takes persistence, but it still sucks,” said Evans. “It’s just getting taken away because they don’t see the funding in it or the importance in it.”

Catherine Dubois, who plays Persephone, said the closure of post-secondary theatre programs makes it harder for young performers to stay confident about a future in the arts.

“It’s hard to feel hopeful when things like that program shut down,” she said. “I had friends who applied and really wanted to go, and then it was like, well, now you can’t, because it’s not a thing anymore.”

Dubois joined Yellow Door at about eight years old and is now approaching 19. She studies in Hamilton and plans to pursue law, but came back for the show because theatre remains an important creative outlet for her.

“Seeing younger people tell these stories of hope and trying again and again, I think will be hopeful for the audience,” she said.

Evans first performed with Yellow Door at about six years old — or almost did.

“The first show I ever did here, I didn’t perform on the day,” he said. “I practiced all the way up until then, and then I sat on a crash mat backstage and refused to go on.”

He now plans to pursue musical theatre professionally. Hillstrom has watched that change happen up close, having taught Evans, Dubois and Marriott since they were children, and said the production is proof of what years of arts training can build in young people.

“If I were their age and I was now beginning to move out into the world as we know it, I would want to know that there’s hope,” she said.

The production’s look comes from Vincent van Gogh’s sunflower paintings and Gustav Klimt’s “The Kiss,” with warm yellows and florals for the world above and a darker, industrial underworld below.

Scenic designer Meredith Wolting is helping convert the teaching studio into a theatre seating about 100.

“Not only are we designing the set and lights and costumes as we normally would, we’re also kind of designing a theatre,” said Wolting.

Hillstrom said Yellow Door, a registered charity, lost considerable momentum during COVID-19 and has spent roughly four years rebuilding its programming.

“I don’t ever want this to be lost,” she said. “I don’t ever want this to be something that becomes just a frill, a little side hobby that we have, because there’s so much more to it.”

Performances run Aug. 28 to 30 at 2 p.m. and 7 p.m. each day at the Redekopp Creative & Performing Arts Centre, 504 Line 2 Rd.

The show runs about two hours and 15 minutes and is recommended for ages 10 and up. Tickets are available through Yellow Door’s website.

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Contributed by Patty Garriock
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Opinion

The pipes, the hotel and the hypocrisy



THE TURNER REPORT
Garth Turner
Columnist

While the folks back home sucked slop from their basements, the mayor, councillors and senior staff were at a conference in Ottawa. Taking a course on flood mitigation.

The Association of Municipalities of Ontario gabfest also featured a session on protecting local democracy. A panelist was Gary Zalepa, our supreme leader, who this spring oversaw a vote in NOTL to reduce elected people and impair democracy.

Well, fallout from the Big Soak continues. This goes to the heart of governance issues. If we can't trust our reps to deal with stuff like flooding or police the voracious developers in our midst, maybe it's time to get some new ones.

Let's talk about dewatering and that cute little creek meandering through Old Town. It's called "One Mile" because that's the exact distance between its mouth and that of the Niagara River.

It wanders drunkenly, sometimes looking benign and bucolic, sometimes fierce. It sure did a number on the Legion after the storms, pretty much trashing the place when it spilled over its banks.

Well, the creek may be a far bigger story in the future, once 56,500 gallons a day (214 cubic meters) pour into it from the Parliament Oak hotel site.



Homemade sandbags are one homeowner's attempt to stem drainage from the Parliament Oak hotel site. The dewatering that's coming could turn a wee Old Town creek into a beast. GARTH TURNER

During construction, that water is being pumped 24/7 into our sewer system. During an epic rain event, all that rainwater joins it — the equivalent of 13 Olympic-sized pools — maybe explaining why your basement flooded. The pipes can't handle it.

So pity the poor creek once the big hole is a parking garage for Mr. Marotta's black Land Rover (and 200 other cars). This baby waterway could roar.

Water is already an issue. It's a problem. Dewatering a town that sits on the shores of Lake Ontario and the banks of the Niagara, with a shallow water table, is an engineering challenge. And the responsibility of the people we elect.

It looks like they failed the test, says career engineer Ron Simkus. He's discovered that while developers are granted permits to dump water into our sewers, nobody is monitoring it, policing it, enforcing the limits.

"It is astounding that neither the developer nor the region are showing any interest in monitoring compliance at a time when severe rainfalls curiously are causing residents sewers to back up," says the director of the local residents' association.

"The town will have to spend significant dollars to pay for monitoring, but it is necessary in order to gather real-time data about stormwater volumes and also unravel the mystery of whether the developer has intercepted an underground stream adjacent to One Mile Creek."

We have issues now when the skies open up and the pipes are clogged (as well as neighbours dealing with construction runoff, as the picture shows), but that may be but a taste of the torrent to come.

"The homes along One Mile Creek will see all of this accumulated volume of water eventually report to their backyards when

the batch discharge permit runs out upon completion of construction some time in 2028. The town will have to grapple with this eventuality and answer to the homeowners along One Mile Creek, 94 homes in total."

Nobody on council seems bothered by this. There is no plan. There are no flow gauges in place. And the locals have found their government won't even release documents allowing us all to understand what's been approved. And, what's coming.

It took a freedom of information request and several months before Niagara Region agreed to make the Parliament Oak dewatering permit public. Meanwhile, NOTL staff had a copy — but wouldn't hand it over. And the master dewatering plan for the four-acre Parliament Oak hotel complex, tabled last November, has never seen the light of day.

Imagine: public documents required for political approval by elected people of a major development in the heart of the community that we can't see. All presided over by a lord mayor who just lectured others on "protecting local democracy." Seriously.

"This pumping into the sanitary sewer issue is going to continue for at least two more years," says Simkus. "When the hotel opens and injects sewage from 129 guest rooms, restaurants, banquet halls and cleaning, the batch injection of groundwater and stormwater has to stop."

If there was flow data available, we'd know what was coming.

But all we know for sure is the election date.

Garth Turner is a NOTL resident, journalist, author, wealth manager and former federal MP and minister.

garth@garth.ca

We welcome your letters

The Lake Report welcomes your letters to the editor. Please, write early and often. Letters ideally should be under 400 words long. Occasionally, longer letters may be published. All letters may be edited for conciseness, accuracy, libel and defamation. Please include your full name, street address and a daytime telephone number so that authorship can be authenticated. Only names and general addresses (eg. Virgil, St. Davids, NOTL) will be published. Send your letters to editor@niagaranow.com or drop them by our office at 496 Mississagua St., NOTL.

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Strategic voting might best serve NOTL

Dear editor:

As Niagara-on-the-Lake voters prepare for the 2026 municipal election, many residents will face an important question: should they cast all six of their votes for council, or vote strategically for fewer candidates?

Under Ontario's municipal voting system, electors may vote for up to six councillors in Niagara-on-the-Lake. However, "up to six" does not mean voters must use all six votes.

In fact, there are circumstances where voting for only four candidates can be a rational and effective strategy.

Over the past council term, several issues have repeatedly divided residents and council members. Among the most significant have been growth and development, tourism management, fiscal responsibility



Former NOTL councillor Al Bisback says residents should consider only voting for the candidates they support, not filling the whole ballot. SOURCED

and tax increases, and the balance between protecting neighbourhood character and encouraging economic activity.

Many voters have strong views on these issues and may believe that some candidates are clearly more aligned with their priorities than others.

If a voter supports four candidates who consistently reflect their views but is uncertain about the remaining

choices, casting votes for additional candidates may unintentionally help elect individuals whose positions differ significantly from their own.

Strategic voting is not about manipulating the system. It is simply recognizing that every vote has value. By concentrating support on the candidate(s) a voter most strongly believes will represent resident interests, that voter avoids diluting the impact of their ballot.

This approach becomes particularly relevant in at-large elections such as Niagara-on-the-Lake's, where the difference between the sixth-place and seventh-place candidate can be relatively small. A concentrated vote can sometimes have greater influence than spreading votes across a larger number of candidates.

Of course, there are also

valid reasons to use all six votes. Voters who find six candidates they genuinely support should not hesitate to vote for all six. The key point is that electors should understand they are not required to fill every available space on the ballot.

Municipal elections are often decided by very small margins, and local government has a direct impact on taxes, infrastructure, planning decisions, tourism management, and quality of life.

Residents should carefully evaluate candidates based on the issues that matter most to them personally and then decide whether supporting four, five, or six candidates best reflects their priorities.

An informed vote is always more important than a full ballot.

*Al Bisback
NOTL*

Are the town's seniors losing places to live?

Dear editor:

The "new space" has taken over the long-term care home. There was an old persons' home on Byron that was closed.

What its present use is I do not know.

Two buildings for old persons' care have been lost — are the old people being driven out of NOTL?

Maybe this latest casting-off should make us reconsider the use of

the old hospital?

It has been considered for a creativity centre — now we have one with Shaw, and we have another at the Pumphouse.

It is proposed as a community centre — we have

a very active one already.

Maybe we should go back to considering an old persons' residence?

It seems the very best choice.

*Cynthia Rand
NOTL*

How do we measure what makes a good leader?

Dear editor:

As our local election draws closer, I (and no doubt many others) am asking what candidates am I prepared to vote for. What characteristics should my choices demonstrate? How would they likely behave as lord mayor or councillor?

Is it possible to draw up a template that could be applied to each candidate to see how they rate and how they might function once elected?

A bit of research about public service led to a profile. Six characteristics were identified:

Is the candidate capable of strategic thinking? Does he/she have the skill to mobilize people? Promote innovation and guide change? Collaborate with other stakeholders? Achieve

results? And, is he/she likely to behave with integrity, transparency and respect overall and given various issues and viewpoints that arise?

Answering such questions is easier for rating those seeking re-election. Each has a track record to apply as a measure. Each made commitments before the last election which they either kept or ignored.

Even that's tricky, however, for a particular action may depend on the circumstance. In those cases, we should know why the promise was compromised. Sometimes that question once asked simply goes unanswered.

With new candidates, careful evaluation and judgement calls need to be made. Campaign materi-

als can be read, debates attended, specific questions asked and the opinions of others solicited.

That's a lot to take on but take on we should for this is a critical election. I'm not alone in believing we are presently overextended and a course correction is needed.

I sense, even now, I know who I'll vote for, but applying a template could serve for confirmation. Typically, a 1-to-5 scale might be used in the evaluation process. That could look something like this:

Taking one candidate, candidate A, and putting them up next to another, candidate B, then giving each candidate a score from 1 to 5 based on how strongly they possess the following characteristics, with 1

being the weakest score and 5 the strongest: Strategic thinker; mobilizer; innovative; collaborative; achieve results; and, integrity.

For the total rating, a numeric value could then be calculated for each candidate, some leading, some lagging. After that, it's a gut/judgement call.

These six characteristics of public leadership are used frequently as evaluation tools federally and can equality apply for our local coming critical council election.

The key point is to consider this election seriously, recognizing the stakes at play and cast your votes accordingly. And by all means, let's make sure we all turn out to vote.

*Terry Mactaggart
NOTL*



This week's riddle is "Jeopardy!" style
Category: PLAIN

The massive European Plain stretches from the Urals all the way west to this other range on the Spanish-French border.

Last issue category: THAT ADDS UP

Clue: Jerome Horwitz, Moses Horwitz and Samuel Horwitz went by other names nyukking it up as members of this troupe.

Answer: What is the Three Stooges?

Answered first by: Susan Hamilton

Also answered correctly (in order) by:

Sue Rautenberg, Bob Wheatley, Gary Davis, Jane Morris, Emma Balsas, Jesse Agnew, Lynda Collet, Jane Andersen, Claudia Grimwood, Jeff Lake, Jim Dandy, Nick D'Amore, Esther VanGorder, Marla Percy, Howard Jones, Catherine Clarke, Donna Pearce, Victor Zilinskas, Sam Poe, Stuart McCulloch, Hugh Lundy, Rob Hutchison, Nancy Rocca, Katie Reimer, Margaret Garaughty

Email answers to editor@niagaranow.com, with your name, for a chance to win a \$25 Irish Harp Pub gift card every week. (Subject line: Riddle me this)

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We need to **rethink** how we prevent major flooding



Brian Marshall
Columnist

While walking our dog early Sunday morning a Kubota utility vehicle emerged from between the rows in the vineyard across the road. My neighbours, father and son, pulled up to chat.

We exchanged greetings and, as might be expected given we had received another two inches (51 millimeters) of rain overnight, the conversation turned to the weather and how their crop was coping.

Unfortunately, mildew has started appearing in some of their blocks as a result of the extreme rainfall events on July 28 and Aug. 2; something that can only be addressed by their spraying program and praying that the weather improves over the weeks between now and harvest.

That said, he reflected that

his vineyards did not suffer the dangerous flooding that some others experienced which, in some cases, saw the roots of grape vines submerged in standing water for up to two weeks — a situation that will likely permanently damage or kill the vines.

These flooding issues extend to our tender fruit growers as well; some seeing their plum, pear and peach trees turning yellow, or suffering tree loss due to uprooting.

This is not something that is a short-term issue. If a vineyard is forced to replant a block or blocks, aside from the substantial cost, it will take between four to five years before the plants will produce meaningful and dependable commercial production yields.

In the case of tender fruit, even if the impacted trees survive, experts suggest that it will require up to seven years before they return to full production.

Is it any wonder that our neighbours commercially growing grape and tender fruit are calling on the province to bolster the vine and tree mortality crop insurance to help address emergency losses and support replanting efforts? (“NOTL crop growers await action



This summer’s floods might permanently damage or kill plantings in some vineyards.

after province tours flooded farms,” Aug. 20, The Lake Report.)

And further, amongst other items, undertake a joint federal/provincial AgriRecovery initiative to assess and subsequently design joint financial initiatives that would help these growers recover from this natural disaster.

We visited some of the town’s stormwater infrastructure issues in previous Arch-i-text columns (“Addressing stormwater infrastructure issues,” Aug. 6, “More thoughts on stormwater management,” Aug. 13), however, cleaning up those problems is only a part (albeit very important) of planning for the inevi-

table occurrence of future storm events.

Let’s take a moment to wrap our arms around a couple of other considerations.

A medium-sized maple tree with a trunk diameter of 60 inches (152 centimeters) takes up approximately 86 gallons of water from the soil every day.

A similarly sized oak tree may lift up to 100 gallons per day, a black walnut about 50 to 60 gallons, a sycamore about the same as a maple at 86 gallons, a white pine in the 90 to 100 gallon range while a hickory can suck up roughly 125 gallons.

So, every single tree acts as a natural address toward managing a healthy water saturation level in the soil and will help to mitigate the aftermath of extreme rain events.

According to the region’s Feb. 7, 2024 “Tree and Forest Canopy Project” report, Niagara-on-the-Lake has the lowest level of tree canopy (including tender fruit trees) in Niagara at about 18 per cent — well below the region’s minimum target of 30 per cent.

Yet, we continue to allow developers and others (in the case of Mississauga Street, the town itself) to cut

down these vitally important water sinks.

To put this in perspective, early in 2025, a developer was green-lit to clear-cut 800 pine trees in Virgil. Each of these trees had a diameter of approximately 30 inches (76 centimeters) and a water uptake of about 43 gallons per day; equating to daily water consumption of 34,400 gallons for the entire stand.

Now that the trees are no longer there, the soil becomes super saturated (unable to absorb more water) in turn forcing any additional rainfall to flow overland and into lower lying basins, streams and fields — directly adding to flooding.

Then we must consider another factor: permeable versus impermeable surfaces.

In short, a permeable surface is one that allows rainwater to pass through and into the soil while an impermeable surface is just the opposite — a solid, non-porous surface that completely blocks rainwater from soaking into the ground.

Impermeable surfaces would include concrete or asphalt pavement, roads, driveways, sidewalks, paved front/rear patios, building

roofs and etcetera.

It is estimated that in a modern Ontario townhouse development, approximately 60 to 75 per cent of the surfaces are impermeable. In other words, the water can’t go down, so it has to run across.

Typically, the storm sewer system is expected to handle this flow with properly planned retention/detention ponds and drainage infrastructure — however, as was previously pointed out, NOTL’s infrastructure is sorely impaired.

Perhaps a fundamental rethink is required.

Plant more trees and declare an actual moratorium on cutting down healthy mature trees.

In new developments, require that the roads, sidewalks, parking lots and patios be constructed of permeable surfaces rather than concrete or asphalt.

And enforce, without exception, the current lot coverage and setback bylaws to minimize roof coverage.

We have to do more than put a Band-Aid on a broken system — otherwise, flooding will become the new norm.

Brian Marshall is a NOTL realtor, author and expert consultant on design, restoration and heritage.



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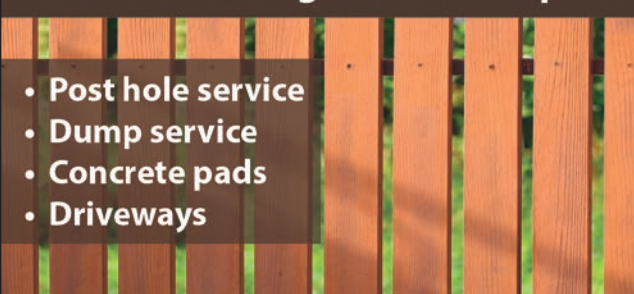
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Who will really govern our town after this fall's election?

Ron Simkus
Special to The Lake Report

Many Niagara-on-the-Lake residents may be unaware that this year's municipal election could fundamentally change how decisions are made in their community.

As a result of Ontario's strong mayor legislation and the recent reduction in the size of town council, decisions with long-lasting consequences for growth, development, spending, infrastructure and municipal administration could be driven by the lord mayor with the support of only two councillors.

Concerned residents are sounding the alarm, arguing that these changes represent one of the most significant shifts in local governance in the town's history.

"This is not simply another municipal election," said organizers of the public awareness campaign.

"The decisions voters make this fall could determine whether Niagara-on-the-Lake is governed through broad consensus and debate, or whether authority becomes con-



Strong mayor powers threaten our democracy. SUPPLIED

centrated in the hands of a small number of elected officials."

The campaign, accompanied by a striking political cartoon, seeks to educate residents about powers that many people do not realize have already been granted to the office of lord mayor.

These authorities include the ability to propose municipal budgets, veto certain council decisions, direct municipal administration and advance bylaws tied to provincial housing priorities with reduced council support.

Advocates fear that many residents remain unaware of the magnitude of these changes and the potential impact they could have on the character, growth, and

governance of Niagara-on-the-Lake for years to come.

"The future of our town is too important for voters to discover these changes after the election," organizers said. "Every resident deserves to understand what is at stake before casting a ballot."

Residents are encouraged to review the information below, learn how strong-mayor powers may affect local decision-making, and participate fully in the democratic process this October:

Did you know that, following the Oct. 26 municipal election in Niagara-on-the-Lake, the lord mayor will only need the support of two amenable councillors to make decisions that could have serious impacts

on our town and residents for decades?

The combination of strong mayor powers and the reduction in the number of councillors contesting the 2026 election can result in three people having the legal authority to override the will of the majority of council members that we elect this fall.

Two Government of Ontario decisions are responsible for this erosion of democracy.

First, Ontario's Strong Mayors, Building Homes Act, 2022 legislation became law on Sept. 8, 2022. NOTL's lord mayor was designated as a "strong mayor" by provincial regulation filed on May 1, 2025.

Second, earlier this year, the provincial government made a regulation reducing the number of NOTL's councillors to six from eight, making official what the current council decided without due notice to the public at its meeting on March 24 this year.

Ontario's strong mayor system provides NOTL's lord mayor with centralized executive powers to act unilaterally in several areas.

Among other things, it will allow our newly elected lord mayor to propose future municipal budgets and veto council amendments to budgets with the support of only two council members.

Our lord mayor can also appoint or dismiss the chief administrative officer and certain other department heads, direct town staff and reorganize the town's departments. This authority raises the troubling prospect of politicizing our town staff.

Moreover, the new lord mayor will have the authority to propose bylaws related to the provincial priorities set out below and pass those bylaws with the support of two council members.

Provincial priorities set out in the strong mayor legislation are: Building 1.5 million new homes by December 31, 2031 and constructing and maintaining infrastructure to support housing, including: transit; roads; utilities; and servicing.

If the lord mayor is of the opinion that all or part of a bylaw proposed by a council member would interfere with one of these provincial priorities, he or she could veto it.

This veto power could be overridden if two-thirds of council members vote to do so. Shockingly, the lord mayor's vote counts as a vote on the veto. Thus, the lord mayor, together with two council members, could defeat a veto supported by a majority of council members.

Strong mayor powers erode democracy, diminish residents' voices and blur lines of accountability and transparency.

Concerned residents are encouraged to write council@notl.com and urge councillors to advocate for removing strong mayor powers from Ontario's laws and regulations.

This year's municipal election is unlike any other in the history of Niagara-on-the-Lake.

Your vote could determine what our town looks like in the years ahead.

Be informed before you vote this fall. Vote wisely.

Ron Simkus is vice-chair of the Niagara-on-the-Lake Residents Association, an organization of residents from Niagara-on-the-Lake involved in municipal and regional affairs.

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Thwarting the mad king’s dictum in this latest trade war

J. Richard Wright
Special to The Lake Report

Tariffs are the last thing Canada should be considering in response to Donald Trump’s deliberate and schizophrenic harpooning of the Canada-U.S.-Mexico Agreement talks in Washington. Consider how the U.S. exempted materials they need such as potash, energy and critical minerals from their tariff schedules.

It is time for Canada to have the courage to take control of the Mad King’s prerogatives by simply — without drama — increasing the price on all these resources the U.S. obviously wants and needs.

After all, immediate price increases are the easiest and quickest way to send a message south. If gas prices can go up and down at the drop of a hat, surely a pot of potash or a wheel barrel of lithium can be similarly revalued.

How to get around contracted prices, you ask?



Writer J. Richard Wright says Canada should hit back with higher prices on natural resources instead of hitting back with steep tariffs. RICHARD HARLEY/CHATGPT

Contracts, trade agreements, established business norms seem to matter little to the Trump organization, so why should Canada not develop new export costs it must pass on to its customers in the U.S.? Sorry America.

Follow this by the imposition of an export tax on the price of electricity, aluminum and any other Canadian product the U.S. deems necessary for its well-being.

For instance, since Can-

ada is the largest exporter of aluminum to the U.S., failure to buy from Canada means it won’t be long before automotive, aircraft and weapons manufacturing plants (among many others) either pay up or have to close down.

For those that would argue the U.S. would buy their aluminum somewhere else? It’s really not that simple to replace 2.8 million tons of aluminum imports via South America,

Europe or Asia, when other countries already have customers for their products.

And, it is reported that to support the amount of aluminum the U.S. needs, it would require them to build the equivalent of five Hoover dams to produce enough electric power to run their new smelters. Not to mention efficient shipping means and corridors already in place, and the realities of just-in-time supply and inventory.

Interruptions in manufacturing lines are not only costly but also destabilizing. And manufacturers who do not deliver on time to their customers are often subject to financial penalties.

In fact, these interruptions may be so severe that some CEOs might be so inclined to call the White House and demand to know what they are smoking in there, because it’s obviously not smoke from our Canadian wildfires.

Meanwhile, Canadian manufacturers and retailers are not financially penalized nor restricted in any way by self-imposed tariffs.

If Canadians think back to Ontario Premier Doug Ford’s brief flirtation with courage at the beginning of this tariff war in March 2025, his surcharge of 25 per cent on electricity exported to US states Michigan, New York and Minnesota quickly got the attention of U.S. Commerce Secretary Howard Lutnick. Ford was immediately

summoned to Washington, D.C. where, sadly, (if predictably) he lost his nerve, collapsed and reversed the surcharge expeditiously.

We have seen the lack of courage in the U.S. Congress and Senate to control the administration so many times it hurts. So, it falls to Canada to check Trump’s bizarre behaviour towards what used to be their closest friend and ally.

After all, as we have seen demonstrated, time and again under Donald Trump, the U.S. likes to dish it out, but is reluctant to accept financial pain itself.

And once Trump gets back on his meds, perhaps we can all sit down and enjoy a cup of tea by Lake Canada.

J. Richard Wright is a local TV and radio drama writer and novelist with three novels — *The Plan*, *Torngat* and *Final Approach Menihék* — available for sale on Amazon or for loan at the Niagara-on-the-Lake Public Library.

To Our Niagara-on-the-Lake Community

Like many of you, my family and I have seen the impact of this week’s heavy rainfall. It’s been heartbreaking to see so many neighbours dealing with flooded basements and damaged homes.

We’re doing our best to help as many families as we can.

If your basement has been affected, we’re here to help with:

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Niagara Trailers owner John Petrie honoured as Ontario's top RV dealer

Staff
The Lake Report

A St. Davids RV dealer is being recognized as a premier business owner in his industry by a provincewide organization.

John Petrie, owner of Niagara Trailers, has been named this year's RV Dealer of the Year by the Ontario RV Dealers Association.

The award is the association's highest honour for an Ontario-based RV dealer and recognizes leadership, industry contributions, community involvement and a commitment to customers and employees.

Petrie was selected from four nominees put forward by members of the RV dealers group. The other nominees were Kymberlely Clark of Globetrotter RV, Edward Raymond of Leisure Trailer Sales and Ben Hettrick of Smith's RV Centre.

In presenting the award, Natalie Conway, executive vice-president of Ontario RV Dealers Association, highlighted Petrie's



John Petrie of Niagara Trailers in St. Davids, this year's recipient of the RV Dealer of the Year Award. SUPPLIED

decades of leadership and service to the RV industry and Niagara community.

"This year's recipient reminds us that great leadership isn't always the loudest voice in the room. Sometimes it's the person who quietly shows up year after year," she said. "The person who leads with integrity, earns trust through action, and never loses sight of the people who made their success possible."

Petrie has served for many years on the RV dealers association board, including as treasurer, and has contributed to the association's show committee.

He continues to serve on the membership committee.

He also has supported community organizations including the St. Davids Lions Club, Red Roof Retreat and Project SHARE, as well as charitable organizations and youth initiatives across Niagara.

Under Petrie's leadership, Niagara Trailers has been named Canada's No. 1 KZ dealer for 10 consecutive years and has been North America's No. 1 KZ dealer three times in the past decade.

The family business was founded more than 50 years ago by Doug and Anna Petrie. John later assumed leadership, continuing the family's

focus on hard work, honesty and family values while expanding the dealership.

Niagara Trailers will celebrate its 55th anniversary next year.

Petrie credited his team for the award.

"It is quite an honour to receive this award on behalf of our team at Niagara Trailers — they are the ones who really deserve this award. They are the ones who stand behind our customers and our products and look after the people on a day-to-day basis."

He also thanked the Ontario RV Dealers Association and fellow dealers.

"I really do appreciate the award very much and I thank our team at Niagara Trailers for their dedication to the dealership, our customers, and RV lifestyle."

In her presentation of the award, Conway said Petrie has never sought recognition.

"He has simply gone about his work with humility, integrity and a genuine commitment to serving both his customers and our industry," she said.



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**MOVING
ROADS
FORWARD**

Notice of Construction

Niagara Stone Road (Regional Road 55) from Line 1 Road to East West Line

Town of Niagara-on-the-Lake

Project Description

Niagara Region will be reconstructing Niagara Stone Road (Regional Road 55) from Line 1 Road to East West Line in the Town of Niagara-on-the-Lake.

The project includes full road reconstruction, widening the roadway to three lanes, construction of paved shoulders, installation of storm sewers and catch basins, and new traffic signals at East West Line to improve safety, drainage and traffic operations. Construction will be completed on behalf of Niagara Region by Walkers Construction Limited.

When

Working hours will typically fall between 7 a.m. and 5 p.m., Monday to Friday. Construction is expected to begin in the coming weeks and the road reconstruction, including base asphalt, is anticipated to be completed by December 31, 2026, weather permitting. The final surface course of asphalt will be completed in spring 2027. We appreciate your cooperation and patience during this time.

What to Expect

During construction, residents can expect periodic noise, dust and increased construction activity within the project limits. Every effort will be made to maintain access to homes and businesses, but temporary disruptions to driveway access and single lane closures will be required. Advance notice will be provided whenever possible.

The key tasks to be completed are:

- Full reconstruction and widening of Niagara Stone Road (Regional Road 55) to three lanes
- Installation of paved shoulders, storm sewers and catch basins
- Construction of new traffic signals at East West Line
- Placement of base asphalt in 2026, with the final surface asphalt to follow in spring 2027

Safety

This work involves heavy equipment, excavation and restricted work zones. Please obey all posted signage and barriers and keep a safe distance from the construction area.

For comments, questions or for more information, please contact the project team:

Robert Friscioni
Contract Administrator
robert.friscioni@chisholmfleming.com

Alex Villella
Project Manager, Niagara Region
alex.villella@niagararegion.com

This notice was first issued on August 20, 2026.

- Across**
- 9. Al fresco (4-3)
 - 10. Deadly intestinal ailment (7)
 - 11. What Rapunzel grew (5)
 - 12. Collection point for passage fees (9)
 - 13. Retained (4)
 - 14. It might be proscribed or proscribed (4)
 - 15. Winger sliced bread (5)
 - 19. Furrowed (6)
 - 20. Face hardship bravely (4,2)
 - 23. Despise (5)
 - 24. Sullen (4)
 - 25. Yield (4)
 - 27. Community tunes and songs (4,5)
 - 29. Rock bottom (5)
 - 30. Entourage (7)
 - 31. John ---, tempestuous court star (7)
- Down**
- 1. On one side of a notorious DM Z (5,5)
 - 2. High level of excitement (5,5)
 - 3. Your personal "equator"? (5)
 - 4. Rhetorical skill (7)
 - 5. Greenery? (7)
 - 6. Out (9)
 - 7. Turn down (4)
 - 8. Unwise (4)
 - 16. They can mix zombies (10)
 - 17. Sources of Dabinetts, for example (5,5)
 - 18. Gaiety (9)
 - 21. Eventful trip (7)
 - 22. Give in (7)
 - 26. Lay to rest (5)
 - 27. Grange (4)
 - 28. Mandolin-like instrument (4)

Have some fun



Crossword Puzzle

1		2		3		4		5		6		7		8
9								10						
11						12								
13						14				15		16		17
						18								
19										20				
								21		22				
23						24						25		
										26				
27		28								29				
30										31				

Last issue's answers

1	T	O	A	M	A	N		5	C	O	D	E	W	O	R	D
	N	A	E		H	O										
9	B	E	N	E	F	I	C	I	A	L		10	A	L	B	S
	M	S		L	P		L									
11	R	I	F	T	S			12	P	A	N	O	P	L	Y	
	N	R				13	P		14	T	R		F			
15	O	U	T	O	N	A	L	I	M	B		16	F	A	I	R
	T							S	M	I						
18	C	E	O	S			20	S	P	O	T	L	I	G	H	T
								T	E	R		L	A	E		
22	B	U	R	U	N	D	I					24	B	R	I	N
	S	D					25	O	A	T						
27	L	U	R	E			28	V	O	L	K	S	W	A	G	E
								R	N	E	P	A	N	E	L	
29	U	P	S	T	A	R	T	S			30	R	E	D	E	E

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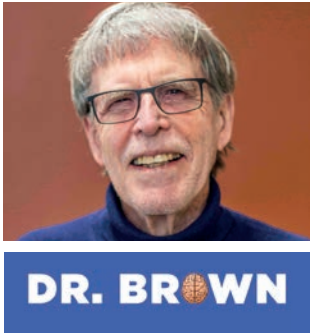


Reconstruction of Fort George



Fort George in Niagara-on-the-Lake was originally built by the British between 1796 and 1799 and played an important role during the War of 1812. After being badly damaged during the war, the fort was eventually abandoned and sat largely in ruins for more than a century. That changed in the 1930s, when Fort George was selected for reconstruction as part of Depression-era public works programs and a growing interest in heritage tourism. Work began in 1937, using historic plans and a bit of interpretation and educated guesswork when there were gaps in the records. Rebuilding the fort required a lot of timber. To keep things authentic, experienced workers hand-hewed and pit-sawed the wood using methods familiar to early-19th-century builders. In this photograph, one of the workers is shown working on the blockhouse. So, while most of what we see at Fort George today is reconstructed rather than original, it still gives us a pretty good idea of what a British military fort would have looked around 1812.

First chess, now table tennis: Is AI coming for our sports?



Dr. William Brown
Columnist

That AI can beat humans in chess, GO, Jeopardy and even diagnostic skills for physicians is old news. What about flying or sports? Surely humans are more skilled than AI, except perhaps for autonomous self-driving cars and flying airplanes, although few passengers on commercial aircraft are ready for a robotic pilot and co-pilot without a human in the loop, just in case — at least not yet. Enter Garmin, a well-known, award-winning company in the avionics business for private and corporate aircraft, which introduced what they call Autoland. This device monitors pilot performance and, should Autoland sense the pilot has lost control of the aircraft, is capable of taking control of the aircraft, selecting the optimal airport to land based on available fuel,

enroute weather and terrain, runway-length, winds, available approaches, communicating with air traffic control, carrying out the chosen approach, and landing the aircraft to a full stop on the selected runway, all while keeping passengers informed about its intentions and updating arrival times. The system is very impressive and from tests, performs in the real world as well or better than the most highly experienced pilots on type-specific aircraft on which the Autoland system is installed. That's amazing and so impressive that future versions might be capable of taking over the whole flight from flight planning, to start up, taxing, take-off and climb, enroute cruise, approach, landing and taxiing to a designated site on the destination airport — all with continuous communication with air traffic control, along with updates as weather and other factors require. But what about sports? Are we likely to see robotic golfers, quarterbacks, tennis players, gymnasts, sprinters or marathoners or even mountain bikers? Hopefully none of the above — still, as an exercise in what modern robotic



Chess was one of the first arenas where artificial intelligence proved it could outthink humans. Now, AI is moving beyond the board, taking on challenges that require speed, movement and split-second decision-making in the physical world. SOURCED

engineering and AI might be capable of, why not have some fun seeing whether robots can keep up with and even beat the best human players? That's precisely what Peter Dürer and his colleagues recently reported in the journal Nature for table tennis ("Outplaying elite table tennis players with an autonomous robot," April 22). Watching experts and pros play table tennis, it's obvious the game requires lightning-fast reads of your opponent's serve and shots, including sizing up any spin on the ball and hence

change in trajectory of the ball and, within a split second, reacting to return the ball with a winning shot or one that catches your opponent out of position and possibly too off balance to make a winning return shot. What about a robot as a player? The speed of the game requires multiple cameras designed to see the whole court from different perspectives, transfer of the camera data to an AI module where the speed, spin and thus trajectory of the ball is calculated and a near instantaneous decision is made to direct

the robotic arm with eight independently controlled joints, to hold the racket and strike the ball in such a way to provide the best possible return. That's a lot of sensing, analysis, decision-making and directions in less than a second. That's what it takes to beat some elite table tennis players, but not so far, professional players. The system trains by playing elite table-tennis players and learning the best ways to deal with different types of serves and shots in much the way humans learn. The point of the exercise was to test the limits of AI systems, especially those controlling a robotic limb at speeds equal to or possibly exceeding human speeds and in this special case engineers and computer scientists made it happen by tweaking what had been learned with computer programs and AI designed for other purposes. Recently, robots have been designed that are capable of walking and even running, which is some achievement considering how complex the human nervous system is for controlling the same functions. It took apes several million years to figure out how to walk bipedally and, more

demanding, run on uneven ground. That process required repurposing existing genes to reshape the pelvis, especially the illum, hip, knee and ankle joints and feet, as well as the lumbosacral and cervical spines and base of the skull. That's a lot of change but as much as we gained, we also lost the ability to scamper up and down trees. What's not always appreciated is how much our upper limbs changed over the same period, especially the degree of control and speed with which we can control out fingers and thumbs to write, paint, manipulate fine things and play musical instruments with our brains and hands. My guess is that it will take a long time for engineers to create a robot capable of playing a musical instrument, but I may be wrong given the trajectory of change in mechanical and computer engineering. Just don't expect a robot to play tennis anytime soon. Jannik Sinner and Carlos Alcaraz are safe on that score — for now. 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.

OBITUARIES

John Goerz

GOERZ, John Ernie —
Sept. 5, 1952 – Aug. 21, 2026

It is with deep sadness that the family of John Ernie Goerz announces his passing on Aug. 21, 2026. John was the beloved husband of Elvira Goerz (Warkentin), devoted father and Opa to Erin and Rodney Enns, and their children Carson, Elyse, and Everett; Jared and Rachel Goerz (Slingerland), and their children Leonardo and Angelina; and Kailen Goerz-Pepin and Pierre Marc Pepin, and their children Isabelle and Henri.

John was a dear brother to Aggie (deceased) and Dave Martens, Lisa and Ed Shroeder, Marlene Howell (deceased), Monica and James (deceased) Froese, Peter (deceased), and Ted. He was predeceased by his parents-in-law, George and Mary Warkentin, and was loved by Alf and Hilda (deceased), Trudy and Art (deceased) Hildebrand, and George (deceased), as well as many nieces, nephews, and extended family.

John will be remembered especially for the time and attention he gave to his family. A lifelong resident of Niagara-on-the-Lake, his working life included home construction, C&C Yachts, banking, and ultimately a long career as a teacher. He will be remembered for his patience, humour, and open mindedness. He enjoyed cars, sailing, woodworking, and travel. John’s relationship with Jesus was deeply personal, and he finished his life at peace with God.

The full obituary is available at tallmanfuneralhomes.ca.

Faith Jago



1944-2026

Faith Jago passed away peacefully on Saturday, Aug. 22, 2026 at the age of 82 leaving behind a lifetime of treasured memories and a family who will forever carry her love in their hearts.

Following Mom’s wishes, she will be cremated before the memorial service.

The service will be held on Thursday Sept. 3, 2026 at St. Georges Anglican Church, St. Catharines at 11:30 a.m.

Thank you to all the doctors, nurses and the staff at Hotel Dieu Shaver for keeping our Mom so comfortable and understanding her wishes these past few weeks.

In lieu of flowers, please consider donations to Hotel Dieu Shaver Health and Rehabilitation Centre or St. Georges Anglican Church both in St. Catharines, Ontario.

Online condolences can be made at dartefuneralhome.com.

Brian Emes



EMES, Brian Leonard —
Born Feb. 13, 1940 in Toronto, Ontario.

Teacher for the Toronto District School Board for 35 years, head of mathematics, Agincourt Collegiate Institute, 1984-1998. Resident of Niagara-on-the-Lake, 1998 to 2026.

Son of Theodore Emes and Beatrice May Emes (née MacEachern). Brother of Nancy Jean Bedford (née Emes). Spouse of Mary Coughlan Emes. Father to Edward Michael Emes (Ted) of North Vancouver, B.C. Grandfather to Chloe Emes and Finn Emes.

*Young and Old
Once, I could climb,
I could run and jump,
I could swim and bike,
I could read and write,
I could play, and I could fight,
I could love, and I was loved,
I was once a fearless boy.
When children were our pride and worry,
We would read to them, most every night,
As we had been read to, with care we thought,
Our safe warm arms, close and comfy, our voices tender,
We shared our great need to be noticed, to have mattered,
We laughed, and tickled, and hoped they would remember,
As we could, although we knew it was not forever,
We knew they'd leave, for their own story.
Older now, I wash dishes slowly by hand,
Water warm, for the calmness of my mind,
A song plays, smiling at me as I ponder,
Through my dreaming window, a sky of wonder,
The leaves lift, the trees breathe, and I remember.*

- Brian Emes, May, 2024

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

Anita Brookes



BROOKES, Anita —
March 20, 1948 – August 12, 2026

It is with great sadness that the family announce the tragic passing of their beloved Anita Janet Brookes. Family has asked for privacy as they take time to process this loss.

Barbara Moffat

MOFFAT, Barbara Evelyn — 1936-2026

Our friend Barbara has passed away after a long life very well lived.

Born in Weston, Barbara also lived in Montreal, in Toronto, and since the late 1970s part-time, and then full-time, in Niagara on the Lake. Her beloved architect-designed ivy-strewn cottage in Chautauqua was home for many years followed by a short stint in a charming townhouse on Simcoe and finally a move to Seasons Retirement Residence in downtown St. Catharines.

An arts grad of Victoria College at U of T, then a career woman from the early 1960s onward (Consumers Gas, Province of Ontario, Etobicoke and Brampton Public Libraries, Niagara Institute, York University), Barbara mixed her accomplished professional life with a robust personal life: two marriages, a late-in-life companion, numerous hobbies at which she excelled (golf, dance, painting, drawing, jewelry-making, weaving, origami, sewing, and teddy-bear making, to name a few) and regular volunteering in the town she adored (including at the Pumphouse Arts Center, the Niagara Museum, Niagara-on-the-Lake Community Palliative Care Services and on the Chautauqua Residents Association).

A generous host, Barbara treated her friends like family. Bryn, Margret, Maureen, Peter, Rand, and Richard — although sad today — happily recall the numerous winery and craft fair visits in the Peninsula, Martin House and Albright Knox tours in Buffalo, road trips in California, Sunday afternoon glasses of wine at home, Christmas dinners in Toronto, Shaw festival outings and many, many more meaningful times spent in her company.

Appreciative thanks to Tracy, her long-time housekeeper and friend for always keeping things in tidy order, and the staff at Seasons in St Catharines and at Hotel-Dieu Shaver for taking thoughtful and loving care of Barbara during her challenging recent illness.

Barbara will be laid to rest with her parents in Etobicoke.

The Lake Report

We welcome your letters

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



Letters ideally should be under 400 words long. Occasionally, longer letters may be published.



All letters may be edited for conciseness, accuracy, libel and defamation.



Please include your full name, street address and a daytime telephone number so that authorship can be authenticated.



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



Send your letters to editor@niagaranow.com.



Your voice matters. We look forward to hearing from you.

91ST PRINCE OF WALLES STAKES

LABOUR DAY | MONDAY, SEPTEMBER 7




FORT ERIE
RACE TRACK

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because we hated
him the least.

- Review - John & Tracy, NOTL

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