



Icewine fest kicks off | Pages 14, 15



Steven Soos.

Advocate pushes region to declare emergency on mental health, homelessness

Evan Loree
Local Journalism Initiative
The Lake Report

After four years of trying in vain, an advocate from Niagara is hoping to convince regional council to declare homelessness, mental health and addiction public emergencies.

"I think I'm gonna see a lot of changed hearts and a lot of changed minds," Steven Soos told The Lake Report.

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Native centre's former manager says he was silenced

Evan Loree
Local Journalism Initiative
The Lake Report

Turbulence and unrest continues to plague the Niagara Regional Native Centre in Niagara-on-the-Lake after multiple resignations turned its board of directors into a skeleton crew.

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41-unit apartment plan upsets residents

Height, character and traffic are among neighbours' concerns



Some Niagara-on-the-Lake residents aren't happy about a revised proposal for a four-storey apartment complex on Mary Street, near the corner of Mississagua Street. The applicant is requesting that the town bend its height restrictions to accommodate the plan. SOURCED

Evan Loree
Local Journalism Initiative
The Lake Report

Residents of a Niagara-on-the-Lake neighbourhood say they are alarmed to see a development proposal being reconsidered after it was last rejected by town council in 2016.

The owners of the lots at 223 and 227 Mary St. have submitted an application to rezone the properties and allow for a 41-unit, 18-metre tall apartment building.

Residents are worried about increased traffic, environmental impact and changes to the existing character of the neighbourhood.

"This is an enormous building for such a small piece of land and it will indeed tower over absolutely everything," said Alan Gordon, a member of the resident advocacy group Preserve Our Special Town (postofNOTL.com).

The group works primarily to raise awareness about development plans for the old Parliament Oak property.

The application requests exemption from the town's height restrictions, which limit developments to a height of 10 metres in Old Town, Queenston and St. Davids.

Gordon points out that the developers could put up a three-storey building that stayed within the town's height restrictions.

He said the only reason to build taller than that is to maximize the profitability of the building.

He was open to the idea of a

multi-residential unit that is consistent with those restrictions, but added the proposal is "way out of character" for the town.

Some residents are concerned the new application will be harder to refuse since the province passed new housing legislation in November that curtails municipal authority over urban design guidelines.

"I'd like to be as concerned as possible that somebody's going

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What's under the hood? A look at NOTL's new 'net zero' property

Evan Loree
Local Journalism Initiative
The Lake Report

Listed at \$4.6 million, the house on 28 Cottage St. in Niagara-on-the-Lake is not exactly a candidate for the pageant of Canada's most

affordable homes.

What it is, though, is a property that produces as much energy as it consumes.

It's called net zero – and as fossil fuels continue to drive up global temperatures, experts say it's a trend that's here to stay.

"We have no choice to reduce our greenhouse gas emissions," Dr. Liette Vas-seur, an expert from Brock University told The Lake Report.

"It should become like a regulation, that all buildings are net zero," she said.

She suggests developers might not have a say in the matter if the federal government is to reach its goal of reducing emissions by 40 to 45 per cent by 2030.

The home on Cottage Street was built by Niagara-on-the-Lake's Gatta Homes.

Many developers, including Kekoo Gatta, the company's founder and CEO, have been investing in sustainable energy solutions for about 30 years.

When R-2000 was con-

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Developer Kekoo Gatta has built a sustainable home on Cottage Street. SUPPLIED



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Residents get a glimpse of Glendale's future

Evan Loree
Local Journalism Initiative
The Lake Report

They say Rome wasn't built in a day. And Glendale won't be either.

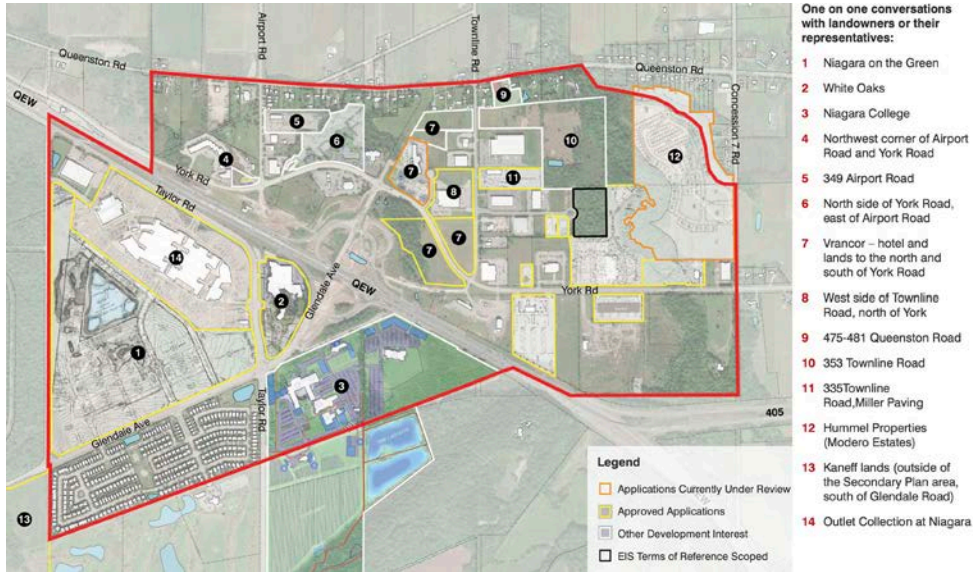
Residents of Glendale are still a long way from seeing a fully realized neighbourhood but after a team of planners presented to the town's committee of the whole planning meeting Jan. 17, they can get a better idea of what the specifics may look like.

The details are being handled by the Planning Partnership, a consultant hired to update the plan for Glendale and implement the vision of the Glendale District Plan, which was completed in September 2021.

The Planning Partnership has finished the first phase of the update, which covers some preliminary research into the neighbourhood's existing infrastructure, transportation needs, watershed, commercial and employment needs.

As more people move into the area, there will also be a higher demand for jobs.

The town will need to provide enough land to



A map of developments in the Glendale area shows areas in which projects are approved or under review, as well as areas where there is other development interest. SOURCED

provide between 60 and 100 jobs per hectare until 2051 in order to comply with Niagara Region's official plan, planner Donna Hinde told council.

Land use maps, which outline proposed uses for the district's land, show properties along York and Grantham roads will be used to provide employment opportunities.

Coun. Gary Burroughs was especially interested in seeing a grocery store built to serve the residents near Niagara College and the surrounding area.

While Coun. Maria Mavridis shared her colleague's desire, she tempered her optimism.

The challenge is that "it's all privately owned land" and that there's no guarantee developers will build a grocery store there, she said.

Consultant Aaron Farrell told councillors that much of the infrastructure already exists to accommodate new development, including water lines and wastewater treatment systems.

Those existing systems should be able to supply the area with water until 2041,

according to a footnote in Farrell's presentation.

At that time, the area may need to get water from Thorold and St. Catharines.

Stormwater management will have to be planned along the way, though, Farrell said.

Transportation infrastructure, on the other hand, will need some work.

Traffic concerns in Glendale predate the diverging diamond interchange that opened last fall at the Glendale exit from the QEW, Lord Mayor Gary Zalepa told The Lake Report.

"That's a common one. So, I think that's one to keep an eye on," he said.

"We need to make sure that this plan properly addresses how people and vehicles flow through the community and around the interchange."

According to the consultants' presentation, people can expect the traffic around the outlet mall to increase as it is a primary destination for both drivers and pedestrians.

But they warned the most dangerous intersection in the area is at Glendale Avenue and Taylor Road near Niagara College.

Plans to deal with these traffic concerns will be addressed as the plan progresses, but the planners said more sidewalks will be needed as well as more space between bike lanes and traffic lanes.

The planning team's study of the subwatershed is also an ongoing task.

A subwatershed is a network of rivers and creeks that drains into a larger body of water.

The purpose of studying it is to give "guidance for the planning of the lands adjacent to the natural

heritage features," said Farrell.

He said the lands adjacent to Six Mile Creek, the Welland Canal and Eight Mile Creek need protection from development.

The area around Six Mile Creek is already marked for environmental protection in the land use maps shared at the meeting.

They are also among the only green spaces on the map.

This did not escape the notice of Coun. Wendy Cheropita, who asked if the land around the river would be accessible to the public.

Hinde assured her they would plan for parks in the residential communities.

"Parkland is a critical part of a complete community."

At this point, the planning team is ready to start the second phase of the plan, which includes developing urban design guidelines and transportation networks.

They also need to assess the impact the new community will have on the town's revenue, including the money generated by property taxes.

The planning team will be consulting residents throughout the process, council was told.

Proposed Mary Street apartment has residents concerned

Continued from Front Page

to find a way around with this new legislation that we don't know about," Mary Street resident Keith Kennedy said about the effect of the new legislation on the latest proposal.

Residents can register for a virtual meeting this Thursday to discuss the proposed development.

There will also be a public meeting at the town hall in Virgil Feb. 14 to discuss the proposal.

The applicant's report to the town says the buildings on Mary Street "do not have a uniform character."

The property is across from the Avondale commercial strip plaza, and the surrounding houses were built "featuring a mix of gable and hip roofs, balconies and garages," the applicants say.



Left: Plans for the second and third floors of the 41-unit apartment building proposed for Mary Street. Right: NOTL resident Alan Gordon, standing in front of the property, worries the building isn't suitable for the town. EVAN LOREE

Some of Gordon's neighbours were more concerned about traffic.

According to the application by property owners Veronica and Mihai Balaj, they were not asked to provide a study on traffic impacts.

However, they argue that all the traffic to the proposed apartments will be directed along arterial roads.

Arterial roads are used by the town to move heavier traffic across longer distances. They're not as busy as highways but they are much busier than residential streets.

Mary and Mississagua streets are registered with the Region of Niagara as arterial roads.

Ramiz Baykara, who lives at 411 Simcoe St.,

thinks additional traffic is inevitable.

"I don't believe any of such reports that the traffic won't be affected," he said.

He also shared Gordon's concern about the height of the proposed building.

Kennedy, a retired expert in groundwater management, is worried about the impact of the proposed underground garage.



since there weren't many options for them in NOTL.

In 2016, the town rejected a similar application from the owners. It proposed a 76-unit apartment.

It was turned down over concerns similar to those voiced by residents today.

The town received about 100 written comments from residents when it was reviewing the 2016 application.

At that time, many expressed concern over the height of the structure,

"traffic impacts on abutting streets," impacts to groundwater "resulting from the proposed underground parking" and the compatibility of the design with the surrounding neighbourhood.

A spokesperson for the town told The Lake Report the original proposal was "not consistent with provincial and town planning policies."

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Thousands of seasonal agricultural workers arrive in Ontario, many for greenhouse work

Somer Slobodian
Local Journalism Initiative
The Lake Report

Migrant workers hired under the Seasonal Agricultural Workers Program have started to arrive from the Caribbean and Mexico to help Niagara farmers.

About 3,000 seasonal workers from Mexico and the Caribbean began arriving this month at greenhouses in Niagara, Leamington and other parts of Ontario, said Ken Forth, president of Foreign Agricultural Resource Management Services, better known as FARMS.

Thousands of workers come to Niagara-on-the-Lake through the eight-month program to help plant, pick and package fruits and vegetables.

The program has operated in Ontario for 56 years and



About 3,000 workers have started to arrive to help farmers across the province. FILE/RICHARD HARLEY

helps fill labour shortages at farms and greenhouses throughout the province. “We wouldn’t have the horticulture industry if we didn’t have these workers,” Forth told The Lake Report.

FARMS is a federally run operation that plays an administrative role in the

seasonal workers program.

Many of the workers arriving this month are doing greenhouse work. Come spring, they’ll be pruning orchards and vineyards, said Forth.

About 20,000 workers will be coming to Ontario this year, he said, a few

more than prior to the pandemic.

“What we’ve seen in the last few years, some people are changing over to the (agricultural) stream,” he said.

The agricultural stream is a one- to two-year program, whereas the seasonal program is only eight months.

“Some growers need people all year-round now and so some of them are slightly reducing their (seasonal) workers and bringing back (agricultural) stream workers,” he said.

He noted this could still be the same worker. Only the length of their contract will have changed.

“This program has kept the horticulture industry in place and has also given an opportunity to the workers to find a job that pays a lot more than they can make at home,” said Forth.

A happy birthday and a chance to help farmworkers

Julia Sacco
The Lake Report

For farmworker advocate Kit Andres, birthday #37 was the perfect opportunity to help out the seasonal workers now arriving in Niagara-on-the-Lake.

Andres stood outside Applewood Hollow Bed & Breakfast on Saturday from 3 to 5 p.m. to collect contributions from friends and strangers alike, all going toward welcome kits put together by Niagara Workers Welcome to support seasonal farmworkers.

“Today is a mutual aid community event and the reason we use the word mutual aid instead of donations is because this is not a charity thing. This is a neighbours helping neighbours thing,” said Andres.

“Our migrant farmworker neighbours sacrifice so much every year to come up here. Niagara as we know it would not exist without them and the work that they do.”

“This is part of us returning their generosity and their sacrifice.”

Many people stopped by to drop off things like toiletries and non-perishables,



Kit Andres celebrated their 37th birthday by helping out migrant farmworker neighbours with a roll-up event on Saturday. JULIA SACCO

pain relievers being one of the most popular items for the workers after a long day in the fields.

“We’re gathering stuff to get them started when they just arrive,” Andres said.

The drop-in event was a huge success, not only for collections but for spreading the word about getting involved, Andres said.

“A lot of the people who

have been coming today have been wanting to get involved but didn’t know where to plug in.”

Since Andres was turning 37, the first 37 visitors received a poster and a bag of seeds.

Andres said the number of people helping out couldn’t be quantified, because there is so much generosity in the commu-

nity that goes unnoticed.

“There are so many people who are just supporting their neighbours, relationship-building, which is totally transformative.”

Drop-off of items for the welcome kits will be accepted until the end of January at both Applewood Hollow and at Sweets & Swirls Cafe in the NOTL Community Centre.

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Left: After he was fatally wounded, James Rennie was taken to a casualty clearing station near Amiens. Right: Tanks like this one were involved in the fighting at the Battle of Amiens. IMPERIAL WAR MUSEUM/LIBRARIES AND ARCHIVES CANADA

THE MONUMENTS MEN

James Rennie was killed in Battle of Amiens

It's been a century since Niagara-on-the-Lake's iconic clock tower cenotaph was erected. Then, in 1926, the Township of Niagara unveiled its own memorial in Queenston. In recognition of those who fought and died in two world wars and beyond, NOTL historian Ron Dale has been researching the stories of the people – all men – whose names are engraved on the two cenotaphs. This is one in a series of stories documenting and remembering the sacrifices of those commemorated on the municipal memorial in Queenston.

Ron Dale
Special to The Lake Report

It is of interest to note that the Canadian Expeditionary Force in the First World War included a high percentage of new Canadians.

Sixty per cent of the volunteers joining the First Contingent of the Canadian Expeditionary Force were born in the British Isles.

Of the 20 names inscribed on the cenotaph in Queenston, 13 of the men were born in Britain and had only recently emigrated to Canada. Among them was James Rennie.

Born in Aberdeenshire, Scotland, on March 13, 1884, he was one of the 10 children of tailor Alexander

Rennie and his wife Ann Willox.

Just before James' 17th birthday, his mother died, leaving his father to look after the six children still living at home.

James Rennie did not follow in his father's footsteps as a tailor but worked at various jobs, including as a crew member on the Cunard Line passenger ship R.M.S. Saxonia, sailing between Liverpool and Boston.

Perhaps these trips to America encouraged him to emigrate after 1911. He settled in Niagara Township and worked as a labourer.

He also enlisted as a part-time militiaman in the 44th Lincoln and Welland Regiment, training for a couple of hours each week in the new armoury on Victoria Avenue in Niagara Falls, now home to the Niagara Military Museum.

Rennie was not a large man, standing at only a little over 5 foot 2 and was considered undersized for the First Contingent of the Canadian Expeditionary Force at the beginning of the First World War in 1914.

But he was accepted by the 98th Overseas Battalion when he enlisted in Welland on Oct. 29, 1915.

Private Rennie spent the next nine months training in Canada before finally being shipped overseas.

With his fellow soldiers

he sailed on the SS Lapland from Halifax on July 16, 1916, arriving in Liverpool on July 25.

He was sent on to the Canadian training camp at Shorncliffe the following day.

After several more weeks of training, he was transferred on Oct. 6 to the 12th Battalion, a reinforcement unit, before being assigned three weeks later to the 3rd Battalion, the "Toronto Regiment," which was already fighting in France.

Rennie arrived in France on Nov. 3 but remained in a holding camp near Le Havre until required as a reinforcement by his regiment at the front.

He finally joined the 3rd Battalion in the field on March 22, 1917. He was soon in action in the front-line trenches.

The 3rd Battalion fought throughout the bloody Battle of Arras from April 9 to May 16, 1917, including the Battle of Vimy Ridge, April 9 to 12, the Battle of Arleux, April 28 and 29, and the 3rd Battle of the Scarpe, May 3 and 4.

Four days after surviving this latter major battle, Rennie was wounded, receiving a gunshot wound in the right arm, severe enough to keep him out of action for more than a year.

He was still recovering from that wound when he

was stricken with influenza on June 30, 1918.

Rennie was one of the lucky ones.

He survived not only the fierce combat of the previous year but also the deadly strain of flu, a pandemic that would eventually kill 25 million people worldwide, three times more than those who were killed in action during the war.

On July 2, 1918, Private Rennie was discharged to duty, returning to his regiment at the front in time for another major battle.

On Aug. 8 the Allies launched the Battle of Amiens, the beginning of what was known as the "100 days" that would drive the Germans back and ultimately force their surrender.

On the second day of the Battle of Amiens, James Rennie finally met his fate.

According to the military's official report, "While taking part in the attack on Lemaire Wood, SE of Amiens, he was hit in the back by enemy machine-gun bullets. Stretcher-bearers rendered first aid and he was taken to a dressing station and evacuated to No. 5 Casualty Clearing Station where he died."

James Rennie was buried in the Crovy British Military Cemetery, 10 miles from Amiens and is commemorated on the municipal cenotaph in Queenston.

Native centre's former manager says he was silenced by board boss

Continued from Front Page

Karl Dockstader, who resigned as executive director last month, attended a drum circle Monday night in what he called an attempt to open a dialogue with concerned community members about what they want from the native centre for 2023.

He posted an invitation to Facebook last weekend saying he would be attending.

When he arrived, board president Lacey Lewis pulled him aside and asked that he not speak.

"Being greeted at the door by the senior leadership definitely sent the message that I'm not welcome," Dockstader told The Lake Report.

He said Lewis told him that with children present, she didn't think debating board politics was appropriate.

Lewis did not respond to interview requests before deadline.

The two could not see eye to eye so he decided to speak anyway after the drumming wrapped up, Dockstader said.

"I even announced that people that were not interested in hearing what I had

to say could leave," he said. "Almost no one left. The room was full."

He said Lewis told him to stop. Then, "things escalated and the dialogue broke down at that point."

The board is holding a special meeting Feb. 8 to assign new members and amend the centre's bylaws.

Dockstader has voiced concerns about the board, saying it has too few members to govern and therefore cannot change the centre's bylaws.

Three board members resigned in December, leaving only four active directors.

The full board includes nine members. Two other board positions were already vacant.

"There are unspoken conversations that really need to happen at that native centre," he said.

He said he has no confidence they will "get to where (they) need to be" by the special meeting.

He wouldn't elaborate on the nature of the message he wished to share.

"I have information that belongs to the membership, that I want to express directly to the membership and to our community."

Advocate sees lack of action as 'broken promise' to Indigenous

Continued from Front Page

Before the proposal can make it to council, it will first be reviewed by the region's public health committee Feb. 14, he said.

When his proposal last came to the region in fall 2021 it was dismissed, though it received endorsements from 11 of Niagara's 12 lower-tier municipalities.

The region formally acknowledged the issues raised by Soos, but stopped short of declaring a state of emergency.

Soos self-identifies as Metis and traces his ancestry back to his grandfather.

He sees the region's "watered-down response" to the triple threat crisis as another broken promise to Indigenous people.

According to Statistics Canada, 12 per cent of First Nations people living off

reserve have experienced homelessness.

Statistics Canada also estimates the rate of suicide in Indigenous groups is three times that of non-Indigenous groups.

The rate of alcohol-related deaths in Aboriginal communities is also twice that of the general population, according to research by the Aboriginal Healing Foundation.

Soos believes if council passes his motion, the region will be able to get a "co-ordinated response" from the province.

He said the region can drum up additional support and funding for the crisis by "using the same legislation" used to respond to COVID-19.

Long-term, he wants the federal government to conduct a national study on the emergency of mental health.



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FROM DIRT TO DESTINY

An Indigenous woman's journey to success

Evan Loree
Local Journalism Initiative
The Lake Report



Destiny Bailey works for the Niagara Regional Native Centre's Abbey House, supporting women who have lost or are at risk of losing their homes. EVAN LOREE

She calls it dirt, what she used to put in her body.

At the Niagara Regional Native Centre's annual Christmas party Destiny Bailey wore an undersized Santa hat with a taupe-coloured sweater dress and cracked wise with the volunteer cooks in the centre's kitchen.

At their Halloween party she wrote "blessed" over her left eye in marker and wore a black hoodie. She joked that she was dressed as a thug.

She spent much of that October night doing the "Monster Mash" with costumed kids.

You would never know by looking at her that she was 17 years clean of cocaine.

"I'm not afraid to tell my story because this is who I was. It's not who I am today," Bailey said.

Bailey was born to a multiracial family. Her father was part-Mexican, part-Indigenous. Her mother was German and Irish, and her grandmother on her dad's side was Blackfoot.

"I was a really good kid. I went to school, got straight As, finished Grade 12," she told The Lake Report in a phone interview.

Bailey grew up in Winnipeg and left when she was about 25. After that everything changed.

In Montreal, life took a turn and she began toiling as a sex worker. After six years she started smoking cocaine.

She smiles today, thankful that she never used needles and her arms are free of track marks.

She recalls being in and out of jail for minor offences and a stint for prostitution in 1999.

"I didn't know who to reach out to for help," she said.

Leaving Montreal behind, Bailey moved to Niagara and had a child with a new partner.

"He was very abusive to my child and myself," she said.

Wrestling with the two-

headed beast of addiction and abuse, Bailey made the choice to leave her child with her mother-in-law. At the time, it had been years since she had spoken with her own mother.

Bailey describes it as her lowest moment.

"My mom was my biggest supporter while I was locked up," Bailey said.

Bailey remembers when she was young her mother could be a bit strict. She didn't understand at the time why she was always the one doing the chores when her brother wasn't.

Looking back she says her mother "just wanted to make sure I could be an independent woman."

Bailey is thankful for the support of her mother-in-law and is happy to say she still has a relationship with her daughter.

"I got busted with a lot of drugs and did penitentiary time and that's when I woke up," she said.

After being arrested Bailey was sentenced to "two years plus a day," but was put up for parole after six months.

"I was like 'Yeah, I can't do this again.'"

The way out was hard, though.

"Nobody wants to hire you. You don't have an education for say 20-some odd years," she added.

Bailey ended up mov-

ing to Elliot Lake to take a job in a friend's restaurant. That's when she decided to go back to school.

Bailey got a diploma in native child and family services from Confederation College and decided to move back to Winnipeg. She worked a variety of jobs but the fit was never quite right.

Eventually work brought her back to Niagara, and in 2019, she landed at the native centre's Abbey House, a transitional home for indigenous women at risk of being homeless.

It's one of the many social support programs run out of the Niagara Regional Native Centre in NOTL.

"I really, at the age of 61 right now, I love my job so much,"

At Abbey House, Bailey works with vulnerable Indigenous women. Some are at risk of homelessness, many come from abusive households or are living with intergenerational trauma.

"They're traumatized from everything that they've been put through, whether it's been abuse, whether it's been shame," Bailey said.

Indigenous communities in Niagara are particularly vulnerable to the problems Bailey talks about. Many Indigenous families have inherited the traumatic experiences of parents and grandparents who were put

through Canada's residential school system.

Others were snatched from their families in the 1960s and adopted out, primarily to white families.

The '60s Scoop, as it is now called, is estimated to have separated 20,000 Indigenous children from their biological parents and cultural heritage.

"They took away their language, they took away their culture, they took away their beliefs. And they raised them to be in the white world. And they didn't listen," Bailey said.

She remembers that a lot of doors were closed to her because of her skin colour.

"I encourage the women not to give up. If one door's closed, one window will open," she said.

Bailey looks at the life she has now and feels blessed to be in a position to help.

"I still struggle with my boundaries, because I care about people so much," she said.

"If I don't have a solid clear boundary, I'm either enabling them to keep doing what they're doing, and I'm burning myself out, or not helping them."


It's a fine balance but she feels her time with the native centre has really helped her grow.

"I finally really, really deeply truly love myself."

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

COVID Tracker

NOTL active cases (last 28 days): 68

Region active cases: 673

Region deaths: 702

Region total cases: 50,667

**Jan. 25 data per Niagara Region Public Health.*

Public health warns that "Due to the surge in COVID-19 cases, limited availability of testing, and changes to case and contact management practices, case counts shown (above) are an underestimate of the true number of individuals in Niagara with COVID-19. Data should be interpreted with caution." Case data for municipalities is also now being interpreted in 28-day cycles.



Contributed by Patty Garriock

"Not everything that is faced can be changed.
But nothing can be changed until it is faced."

- James Baldwin

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Wintry wonderland, Monet-style



Lake Report photographer Dave Van de Laar captured this photo of snow covering the Pillar & Post's "Monet Gardens" on Sunday. The landscape, which is open to the public, has won an award for design excellence.

Editorial

Fine designs deserving of accolades

Kevin MacLean
Managing Editor

Good design is important.

Whether it's a building, landscaping or parkland, an artful public display – even how the news is presented on the printed or virtual page – engaging, thoughtful, impactful design makes a world of difference.

People recognize and appreciate that how something is designed and displayed can attract the eye, engage the senses, maybe even help tell a story.

As we reported last week on our front page, three Niagara-on-the-Lake projects were singled out for recognition by the region's Niagara Biennial Design Awards.

In all, 11 projects around the region were honoured and more than a quarter of the awards went to NOTL entries. That's quite a batting average.

In this case, though, it's not so much about competing as it is about recognizing excellence.

The Gardens at the Pillar & Post (the so-called "Monet Gardens" of NOTL) have been commended innumerable times by us and the wider community, and they



Congratulations to the NOTL winners of the Niagara Biennial Design Awards, like the NOTL Museum, which won an award for its Poppy Project. FILE/SOMER SLOBODIAN

received a much-deserved award in the landscape architecture category.

The Gardens, which are open to the public, are used for hotel events and receptions, of course, but include a winter skating rink, seating areas and places for contemplation and relaxation.

The foresight and vision of the Pillar & Post to create this oasis is exemplary.

Spirit in Niagara Distillery on Lakeshore Road was singled out for excellence in architecture.

As company president Arnie Lepp proudly pointed out, this labour of love

included not only inspiration from 1800s limestone homes of Queenston Road, it incorporated many sustainable practices, right down to recycled vintage furniture from Habitat for Humanity.

The third NOTL venture honoured was the museum's masterful Poppy Project, in the outdoor art category.

Organized by the museum and driven by the efforts of dozens of Poppy Brigade volunteers, the display featured thousands of knitted and crocheted poppies that were hung from outside the old Court

House and the museum on Castlereagh Street.

The flowing red flowers were a triumph of thoughtful and engaging design, aimed at marking Remembrance Day while ensuring that the community never forgets the sacrifices made by those who fought for our freedoms.

The poppy displays had a huge impact on the public consciousness.

These three projects brought honour and recognition to NOTL and to those who made them a reality.

We congratulate and thank them for a job well done. editor@niagaranow.com

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Electric cars **not the answer** for many people – or the environment

Dear editor:

Re: NOTL Hydro president Tim Curtis's guest column "The future is electric vehicles and NOTL Hydro is getting ready," (The Lake Report, Jan. 19), let's not fool ourselves.

Current electric cars are nowhere near the answer for the average person or for our environment.

They are far more expensive than internal combustion vehicles, even with huge government subsidies

for manufacturing and purchasing.

Installation of home electric charging stations is expensive. Trade-in value at the expiry of the lithium battery is next to nothing.

Battery mileage in our

climate is limited. We need heat in the winter and air-conditioning in the summer and this severely depletes battery charge.

Is it green? Lithium production is one of the most dirty and poisonous refining

methods in the world today.

I dread the first major pile-up on today's highway with multiple lithium-powered cars; it will take days to clean lithium spillage off our highways.

The manufacturing of

electric cars has the same CO2 footprint as the internal combustion vehicle.

The increased need for electricity will negate any CO2 reduction with EV vehicles.

**Greg Flis
Virgil**

Powering electric vehicles is **more complicated** than just plugging in

Dear editor:

After reading NOTL Hydro president Tim Curtis's guest column about how the utility is preparing for the future of electric cars, I was left with a feeling of amusement, ("The future is electric vehicles and NOTL Hydro is getting ready," Jan. 19).

I am not going to debate whether gas-powered vehicles are a thing of the past as stated in the article. I will address the article itself and statements made.

According to B.C. Hydro, a level 1 charger uses a standard 120-volt outlet and a one-hour charge is enough for a vehicle to travel about eight kilometres. It typically takes 12 to 20 hours to fully charge a battery.

A level 2 charger uses a



Reader Anthony Orsini says NOTL Hydro needs to focus on fixing existing problems before gearing up for a potential surge in demand spurred by electric vehicles. SOURCED

240-volt outlet (much like your home dryer) and a one-hour charge will power a vehicle for about 30 kilometres.

It takes six to 14 hours to fully charge a battery and this type of charger is most commonly found in homes.

The fastest level 2 charger I could find online is from

HWISEL and uses 80 amps and delivers 19.2 kw of power. This is far greater than the 7kw average of power quoted in the article.

As technology for charging advances the use of only 7kw of power will be like using dial-up service for an internet connection.

The article begins by stat-

ing NOTL Hydro is ready for electric vehicles and ends by commenting about when, or more specifically, what time of day, you will be able to charge your vehicle without penalty to keep up with demand will be the norm.

According to the time requirements, using a level

1 or 2 charger how are you going to be able to charge your vehicle in a specified time period and also be able to go to work, drive your kids to school or practice or games, and what happens if you work night shifts?

Most homes these days have two vehicles. How will they charge their vehicles?

Mr. Curtis makes no mention of how NOTL Hydro will provide enough power for local businesses such as hotels that add charging stations or any outside company that provides this service.

A level 3 charging station can cost up to \$100,000 each and require the power supply of a typical hotel.

There is no mention whether our brilliant government will mandate that farmers use electric tractors.

Where is all this power going to come from and at what cost – and at what environmental cost?

For the time being I believe NOTL Hydro should first fix existing problems.

As any longtime resident will agree, anytime we have a windy day we wonder if power will go out. As a result, many people in my neighbourhood in St. Davids have purchased natural gas back-up generators, especially since we are on grinder pumps for our sewage system.

After reading the article, if indeed we have no choice but to go to electric vehicles, buy yourself a natural gas generator to charge your vehicle.

**Anthony Orsini
St. Davids**

Sculpture at new downtown plaza has a **calming energy**



Dear editor:

After reading Christopher Allen's Jan. 12 letter ("Sculpture seems out of place at new retail plaza,") about the sculpture at the new retail development on Queen Street, I was intrigued.

My initial thoughts after looking at the picture of the piece were: 1. This is a First Nation artist and that's one big piece of soapstone, and

2. I see waves, like the lake.

Perhaps this piece represents Lake Ontario? I'd really like to learn more and think it's lovely.

Then I read the letter.

I tried to look at the development on Queen Street, but the construction barriers are still in place, so I can only judge from a distance.

Visually the new construction blends in seamlessly with the historic

stores. The colours look strong and vibrant.

I like that the art piece is white and has a calming energy.

It can be hard to have an overall view until we're standing in the space.

I'll see how I feel about it when the plaza opens. Until then, I'll continue to admire it from a distance.

**Lara Davidson
NOTL**

Just **'ask why,'** when debating property rights in NOTL

Dear editor:

This letter is in response to the Jan. 12 letter to the editor from Michael Eagen, "Development needs to respect NOTL's history and architecture,"

I recently rewatched the documentary, "Enron: The Smartest Guys in the Room" and his letter reminded me of Enron's tagline, "Ask why."

I would ask of Mr. Eagen,

"Why?"

"Why" does heritage negate individual rights?

"Why" does Niagara-on-the-Lake receive special treatment?

"Why" are houses of the 1800s protected over the contemporary?

I completely understand that people like Mr. Eagen cherish our history and architecture but that is no excuse for overriding our

most basic and fundamental individual rights – "being able to choose what we can do with our own property."

Property is sacrosanct because property rights are how we exercise all other rights.

NOTL, I'm not asking you to forget your history or to destroy the past.

What I'm trying to get you to acknowledge is an injustice.

We are no different than any other Canadian citizen, be they from Toronto, Vancouver or Montreal. The same laws should apply to all.

Look, I'm honest enough to believe that most likely readers of The Lake Report agree with Mr. Eagen over myself, but please just "Ask why."

**Alexander Evans
NOTL**



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for Niagara-on-the-Lake**

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Council must **expand heritage district** to protect history



Brian Marshall
Columnist

I have always found it odd that the boundaries of Old Town's national historic district are substantially different than those of the provincially registered Queen-Picton heritage conservation district.

The national historic district encompasses a primary block from Front Street up to both sides of Johnson, with a dog-leg that captures Mississagua to Simcoe up to William Street and stretches past King along Ricardo to Wellington up to Castlereagh.

The provincial heritage conservation district is a fraction of this size, running from the south side of Prideaux/Bryon Streets to the north side of Johnson/Platoff bordered by Gate Street on the east and Wel-

lington on the west.

Now, in 1986 when Old Town's heritage conservation district was a cutting-edge overture, I suspect that the implied controls associated with its original registration might have met with distinct public concern and some very heated debates in council.

And, as a result, the boundaries were drawn within a politically acceptable envelope, which subsequent councils have not had the will to expand.

Unfortunately, this brings us to 2023 and the Ford government's Bill 23 legislation that, though massively gutting the powers of local governments to protect important heritage landscapes, it did (to my reading of the legislation) leave exempt registered heritage conservation districts.

So, here is the really sad thing for Niagara-on-the-Lake.

The existent protection afforded by the Queen-Picton heritage district does not include the built and cultural heritage of St. Mark's Anglican Church and rectory nor the stellar example of early Greek Revival architecture represented by St. Andrew's Presbyterian Church (to say



Houses, like this Kerr-Wooll (Demeath) House, need to be preserved, says columnist Brian Marshall. He says town council must act now to protect them. BRIAN MARSHALL

nothing of the beautiful Regency St. Andrew's rectory on the other side of Simcoe).

Sorry folks, under Bill 23, unless a building outside a recognized heritage district is protected under individual Part IV designation, any one of these irreplaceable pieces of our built heritage can face the wrecking ball.

Let's illustrate this point further by taking a walk down Prideaux Street and looking at three historic houses.

Our first stop is at the corner of Prideaux and Regent at the Promenade House. Built for Elizabeth Thompson circa 1819-1820, this elegant three-bay Georgian with its decorative Flemish bond brick patterning was an

understated jewel.

Three short years later, the property was seized for unpaid taxes and by 1827 had been converted to a hotel with the dubious distinction of being a "place where gentlemen might seek the company of single and congenial women" (keeping in mind that the town at that time would have been busy with sailors and military men of all stripes).

In the 1870s it once again resumed its original residential purpose and today the interior retains many original details. Note the fine filigree contained in the main entry's transom window.

Then, a few doors down on the same side of the street,

is the Kerr-Wooll (Demeath) House. Although impressive as it stands, this circa 1816 house was built only on the core foundation of the original, much larger home (which had a facade 96 feet long) that had been destroyed in the War of 1812.

The irregular fenestration of the facade and the faint marks of another doorway in the centre bay of the group to the right suggest that this house may have been originally designed to accommodate a surgery for the original owner (Dr. Kerr).

Like the Promenade House, the brick is laid in a decorative Flemish bond and the front door surround shows a Neo-classical influence.

Just across the street at 78 Prideaux stands the Hiscott House. Here is a classic Niagara Loyalist Georgian, circa 1817. Its largely symmetrical five-bay facade virtually shouts the conservative socio-political position of Mr. William McLean, for whom it was built.

That said, once again the decorative Flemish bond has been employed in the brick field. Oddly, the facade is not quite symmetrical. In fact, the centre bay is slightly right of centre.

We'll never be sure if this was the builder's error or something answering to the dictates of Mr. McLean.

Three houses, all in excess of 200 years old, that have withstood the vicissitudes of time and are woven into the historic fabric of our town.

One, the Hiscott House, is within the heritage conservation district. A second, the Promenade House, is outside the district but individually designated under Part IV. Then we have the Kerr-Wooll (or Demeath) House, which is both outside the district and not individually designated.

Although Demeath is listed on the Municipal Register of Cultural Heritage Properties, Bill 23 requires it to be designated within 24 months or come off the list. This would effectively eliminate even the small protection afforded by the listing.

Given this state of affairs, I suggest council might wish to prioritize the long overdue expansion of the heritage conservation district or we face the threat of losing our history.

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

Will private roads lead to **gated communities** in our town?



Ross's Ramblings

Ross Robinson
Columnist

Many thoughts that get into my head lead me to ramble. Only a few encourage me to think deeply.

While walking around town last weekend, two signs told me I wasn't really welcome to walk on a few new streets.

"Royal Albion Place. You are entering a private residential community. Residents and invited guests only. Use road at your own risk." And nearby, "No trespassing. George Manor residents only. Private road."

My initial reaction was to chuckle at the word "royal." This makes something sound classy. I suspect the developers have never even exchanged a letter or tele-

phone call (or text or email) with the Royal Family in England.

Some 35 years ago, a pal and I were starting a croquet club in St. Catharines. We decided to call it the Royal St. Catharines Croquet Club, so when we travelled to the States, they would think we had a lot of class, eh?

And we did our best to play by the rules, show good manners and be polite to everyone. We fit in well and won more than our share of games in Palm Beach and Newport.

The Yanks assumed we had received royal assent for our club name.

The Royal Canadian Henley Regatta never received permission from the House of Windsor. They just grabbed the word — and at the same time a heap of credibility.

And how about the Royal Woodbine Golf Club near the airport in Toronto or the Royal Niagara Golf Club out by the Outlet Collection at Niagara? The word royal has been bastardized, my friends. We are so gullible and easily impressed, eh?

Now let me ramble back



Columnist Ross Robinson says private neighbourhoods are exclusionary and elitist. ROSS ROBINSON

to my issue with "private" streets here in Old Town. It has long been a fact that gated communities are a no-no in Canada.

Relatives of mine retired to Arbutus Ridge on Vancouver Island in 1985 and it was the next thing to a gated community: A fancy development aimed at senior citizens, with wonderful amenities.

It had golf, tennis, swimming, dining, an active recreation centre — well before pickleball swept the nation.

But no gates.

Canada has wonderful public education, universal health care, but we also like to share what our good lord gave us.

A friend of mine moved here from south Florida in

1996. It used to bother her when newly found Canadian friends would inquire why she would move north to Canada from the sunshine of Florida.

At a party one evening, she snapped. "What's with you Canadians? Don't you realize you live in one of the greatest countries in the world? Living in Florida is great, if you want to, and can afford to, send your kids to private school. And if you want to, and can afford to, live in a gated community."

I have never forgotten her wise and worldly words.

O Canada, our home and native land.

During a conversation with someone at the Town of NOTL, I learned that these "private roads" do not receive maintenance services from the town. No snow clearance, no pot hole repair, no salting after snowfalls. These roads are not owned by the town, I was told.

Hmm, I pondered, what if their privately contracted snow plow dude didn't get to their street on time and an emergency vehicle was unable to respond promptly?

Or if a driver, after being on clear roads on King and Cottage streets and then hit black ice on the still-snowy George Manor or Albion Place. The dreaded "L word" would quickly be part of the conversation.

Do these folk who want to enjoy private roads also want to enjoy our public education, universal health care, fire protection and police services?

How about sunsets and a glass of wine at Ryerson Park over in Chautauqua? Or pickleball or a swim at town facilities? Dog walking here and there?

I am doubtlessly overthinking this issue.

But let me ramble to a close by positing that we are all in this life together. We share space and help each other out. I just don't like feeling like an intruder on streets in our wonderful wee town.

It seems to be a slippery slope. Might private roads lead to gated communities?

Tell me today your road is private. What's the next logical step?

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Photo of Miriam Fernandes by Peter Andrew Luszyk

'Net zero' home uses solar, geothermal systems

Continued from Front Page

sidered the gold standard in home building, the company built its homes to that standard, Gatta said.

R-2000 certification is an optional energy efficiency certification that builders are eligible for after meeting a set of national standards, including efficient use of energy, improved indoor air quality and better environmental responsibility in the construction and operation of a house.

"We came up with better than R-2000 with all the building systems," Gatta explained and his company stopped pursuing the voluntary R-2000 certification. "Now we just implement them and get better and better every year."

Similarly, builders can be certified at the international level for Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design, or LEED.

"We used to pay a lot of money for certifications and really the client didn't get anything out of it," Gatta told The Lake Report.

Though the Cottage Street property has not been formally tested for efficiency, Gatta said the math works out, and the energy produced by the house should bring it to net zero.

So how does it all work? The Cottage Street house is powered by a combination of solar panels mounted on the roof and an underground geothermal system.

Gatta said the geothermal system provides heating for the home and its electricity is sourced mostly from over 40 rooftop solar panels.

In the event of a power failure, the house is backed



Clockwise from top left: Developer Kekoo Gatta shows off the machinery that makes his property run at net zero. He's standing beside a Tesla battery, which provides back-up power if the town's electricity fails. A structurally insulated panel — a six-inch layer of polystyrene insulation sandwiched between two layers of plywood. The technology is more efficient than traditional forms of insulation. The house's down pipes extract wasted heat from draining water and use it to keep the water consistently warmer, so it takes less energy to heat up. The home's heat pump harvests energy from the earth's crust to heat and cool the house. Copper pipes run throughout the house to heat the floors. EVAN LOREE

up by a battery-operated generator.

Its solar panels collect energy throughout the year and feed it back to the grid in exchange for electricity.

In the winter, 28 Cottage St. needs a little more from the grid, but in the summer it produces a surplus.

Roof-mounted solar panels help to reduce the amount of fossil fuels needed to power a home. The material cost of a solar panel is not zero, though.

"When you think about the lifecycle of a solar panel, for example, you still need to extract the material

to make it," Vasseur said.

While solar panels do not have zero impact on the environment, Vasseur was clear that they are useful tools we can use to reduce carbon emissions.

The Gatta house harnesses geothermal energy from the natural heat of the Earth's crust by running a system of water-filled pipes 200 feet into the ground under the house.

While the temperature above ground fluctuates throughout the year, the temperature underneath the house remains fairly constant and warm.

As water flows through the underground pipes, it generates heat which is then delivered to a geothermal pump that cycles it back into the house to keep the residence warm.

The same geothermal pipes are simultaneously used to heat the floors as the water passes through them, Gatta said.

"We also have what we call down pipes," he said.

These are basically specialized copper pipes that generate energy from the passage of hot water draining out of sinks and bathtubs.

It's kind of like capturing some of the heat released from a hot shower and sending it back to the water heater so it can use less energy to heat water for its next use.

The house only stays warm, though, if the building is properly sealed.

"The building envelope is basically if your home is a box, how sealed and how good is that box," Gatta said.

Or put another way, if a house is a bucket of water, the fewer holes in it, the less it leaks.

One way this house

reduces heat loss is with studless walls.

"In a typical two-by-six wall, every 16 inches there's a stud and that's where heat loss happens," Gatta said.

The solution at Gatta Homes is to use six-inch thick, structurally insulated panels, or SIPs as they are known in the industry.

These panels are basically factory-cut pieces of wall fit together on-site.

Gatta said the panels he uses are made with a six-inch layer of polystyrene insulation sandwiched in the middle of two wooden layers.


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Image Detail: Lauren Stewart Harris, Study for 'In the World I, City Paintings', 1918, Samuel E Weir Collection, RiverBrink Art Museum.

'Love Boat' cruise is still sailing the seas

Paul Jacot
Special to The Lake Report

Remember the popular 1970s television show "The Love Boat"?

Well, the Love Boat – in name at least – still sails the world's oceans today as the Regal Princess, which was the setting for a new reality TV series, "The Real Love Boat," in 2022.

My wife Dawn and I sailed the Atlantic on the newest version of the original fabled boat on a fall cruise that took us through the Mediterranean Sea to visit several ports.

We stopped in Genoa, Italy, (the birthplace of Christopher Columbus), Ajaccio, Corsica, (birthplace of Napoleon), Rome (birthplace of Julius Caesar) on to Gibraltar, then Tenerife in the Canary Islands and eventually across the Atlantic to Fort Lauderdale.

In Rome, I couldn't find Caesar's birthplace home (even though I took a few stabs at it). The Italian November temps were in the 20 C range and mostly sunny each day of the 16-day getaway.

While in Rome standing outside the Colosseum, I was stunned at the engineering greatness of the Roman Empire.

As I looked down on the front excavated wall of the formidable Roman arena, I shivered to view the ferocious lions –roaring to snack on biblical Daniel and other Christians.

In Genoa, the hometown of Christopher Columbus (1451-1506), his original home still stands today.

(I knocked on the front door and his mother told me he was not home. She said



NOTLers Dawn and Paul Jacot brought a copy of The Lake Report along on their "Love Boat" cruise. SUPPLIED

he was away discovering the new world).

Charming Genoa has been the site of many battles through the years, especially in the days when several cities tried to gain supremacy to rule all of Italy.

As well, it was a central city in the Christian and Muslim Crusades. The streets are narrow and it is easy to get lost in the centre of the city. Only small cars can navigate the laneways.

In French-controlled Ajaccio, we visited Napoleon's Grotto. History says Napoleon's mother had so many children that the future emperor didn't get much time with her.

That being so, he spent many hours in a grotto behind his house, alone with his thoughts. It is there that Napoleon reportedly said, "Dreams are only limited by one's imagination."

(Again, I knocked on the door of Napoleon's birthplace and his mother answered only to tell me he couldn't see me at right then

as he had his arm caught in his shirt.)

Stately Pisa and lively Livorno were also stops on the cruise. (In Pisa, I knocked on the door at Galileo's birthplace house. His father answered and said Galileo wasn't feeling well as he had hit his head on the door frame and was upstairs still seeing stars.)

In Rome, we visited the fabled Trevi Fountain (from the Latin "tre vie" or three roads, which converge at the site).

Its underground streams provide the gush of water to the gigantic finely carved marble structure, which is 26 metres high by 49 metres wide. Built in 1629, it is the largest Baroque fountain in the world and has been the backdrop of many classic films.

The history of tossing three coins into the fountain over your left shoulder goes back to Roman times, a symbol of wishing for good luck. The first coin is a wish for a romance. The second

is a wish to get married and the third coin is a wish to visit Rome again someday.

More than 3,000 coins are thrown into the fountain daily. That adds up to \$1.5 million U.S. annually, which is distributed to the poor at the end of each year.

Some people love cruises. One woman we encountered on the Regal Princess had 1,200 sea cruising days under her belt.

But back to the "Love Boat." It was a treat to sail on it.

The hit 1977-86 television series starred Gavin MacLeod as Capt. Merrill Stubing, Fred Grandy (Gopher, the chief purser), Ted Lange (Isaac, the bartender), Bernie Kopell (Doc, the ship's doctor), and Lauren Tewes (cruise director Julie).

Recently "The Real Love Boat" television sequel was made for Australian and U.S. viewers.

So, you might ask, "Where are the two original Love Boats, the Island Princess and the Pacific Princess?"

By 2010, the ships had become too old and costly to renovate.

When the owners couldn't sell them, they decided to sell them for scrap metal in 2012 to a Turkish company for about \$3 million. They were taken to Turkey the following year.

The Regal Princess has a jumbo screen on the top deck and we all lay back on chaise lounges with comfy blankets watching movies under the stars, making for some very memorable evenings.

Hometown Traveller features stories by Niagara-on-the-Lake residents about their adventures abroad. Send yours to editor@niagaranow.com.



This week's riddle is "Jeopardy!" style.
Category: FRY FRY AGAIN

This long Mexican fritter is deep-fried, cinnamon-coated and all-delicious.

Last issue:

Category: 4-LETTER BOOK TITLES

Clue: In Chapter One of this book, "a great fish" severs a woman's femoral artery, the blood now "a beacon... clear and true."

Answer: What is Jaws?

Answered first by: Claudia Grimwood

Also answered correctly (in order) by: Susan Hamilton, Jane Morris, Bob Wheatley, Pam Dowling, Sylvia Wiens, Margie Enns, Jim Dandy, Wade Durling, Bob Stevens, Margaret Garaughty, Sheila Meloche, Lisa Traficante, Danielle Gault, Howard Jones

*REMEMBER TO PUT "WHAT IS" FOR JEOPARDY QUESTIONS!

Email answers to editor@niagaranow.com, with your name, for a chance to win a \$20 Irish Harp Pub gift card every week. (Subject line: Riddle me this)

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'Free February' at NOTL Museum

Barbara Worthy
Special to The Lake Report

While February can sometimes be the coldest month of the year, the Niagara-on-the-Lake Museum is offering the warmest of welcomes with "Free February" – no admission the entire month for all Niagara residents.

This is the perfect opportunity to experience not only the beautiful heritage building at 43 Castlereagh St., but also to learn about Niagara's unique history.

Check out the current exhibit "All Along the Waterfront," which highlights the massive noisy, smelly and lucrative industries that dominated this town for more than 150 years.

Or find some hidden gems of local lore, Indigenous artifacts that date back more than 10,000 years, and, of course, the best War of 1812 museum collection in Canada.

Other exhibits in the museum detail the chronologi-



The NOTL Museum is free to visit this February.

cal history of the town.

Learn about NOTL's First Nations roots and its rise as the first capital of Upper Canada, to the introduction of John Graves Simcoe's anti-slavery legislation and the burning of the town by retreating Americans during the War of 1812, to its subsequent growth as a prime agricultural region and its status now as a major tourist destination.

As well, two new student exhibits are featured.

"A History of Cycling" looks at the quirky and adventurous history of moving on two wheels and

"Through All Eyes" examines a timeline of Indigenous artistry and culture in Niagara.

Besides Free February, the museum's popular virtual lectures series continues weekly, starting Wednesday, Feb. 1 at 11 a.m. and running until Wednesday, March 8.

Virtual lectures are free for everyone, with topics ranging from notorious criminals to local archeological finds.

Also, the monthly biography program, "Famous and Infamous" has returned and will be offered at the museum, also with no admission charge, from now till November.

Residents and guests meet once a month, on Mondays at 2 p.m. and discuss the life and times of historical characters from the vast world of human endeavour – whether they were good, bad, or even wickedly evil.

For more information on NOTL Museum programs, go to notlmuseum.ca.

'Reflections' exhibit to open at Niagara Pumphouse Arts Centre

Aimee Medina
Special to The Lake Report

A new art exhibit featuring the works of talented local artists will open at the Niagara Pumphouse Arts Centre on Wednesday, Feb. 1.

"Reflections" is a unique and thought-provoking display showcasing the diverse styles and perspectives of some members of the Niagara-on-the-Lake Arts Collective.

"The works on display are truly remarkable and we can't wait for the public to see them in person," said Pumphouse director Rima Boles.

An opening reception for "Reflections" will be held on Sunday, Feb. 5, from 2 to 4 p.m.

Artists will be in attendance to answer questions and discuss their work. The exhibit will be on display until March 25.

The exhibit will feature



Lynn Weiner's "Queen St., Niagara-on-the-Lake." SUPPLIED

a variety of media, including paintings, mixed media and sculptures, all of which explore the theme.

Among the works on display is a painting by Niagara-on-the-Lake artist Lynn Weiner.

"My painting 'Queen Street' depicts an early summer day in Old Town Niagara-on-the-Lake," said Weiner.

"Stores and restaurants are welcoming visitors and the sunny street's reflection is caught in the Stagecoach Restaurant's large window."

Well-known NOTL artist

Ronald Boaks also is participating.

About his collage "Duo LXXVII," he said, "After working on one theme for almost all of 2022, I realized in words, no less, the romantic modernist's dilemma: how to balance beauty and the sublime."

The mixed-media artwork that will be on display offers a glimpse of Boaks' current works.

The Pumphouse is at 247 Ricardo St. and is open Tuesday through Sunday from 11 a.m. to 4 p.m. Admission to the exhibit is free.



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Initial icewine weekend is a wintry wonderland

Julia Sacco
The Lake Report

Whether you come to the Niagara-on-the-Lake Icewine Festival for the drinks, the food, the history or the sights, the festival's first weekend had it all.

Guests had the opportunity to learn a bit about icewine, from its origins to how it can be used in recipes, or they could simply enjoy a sample in the scenic, snowy weather.

In her kickoff presentation Sundays about the history of icewine, Andrea Kaiser noted how lucky NOTL is to have "brought global attention with this unique product."

"We're very proud to have such an amazing product and we're happy to share it with you today."

Eighteen different NOTL wineries and 15 restaurants offered unique tastes of icewine and pairings for visitors to enjoy as they meandered along Queen Street.

Giulia Burattini, a wine consultant at Reif Estate Winery, offered a description of Reid's Cabernet icewine, one of the few reds



Left: Avenue Inn performs at the NOTL Icewine Festival. Right: Burlington residents Rita, Doug, Marie and Pierre enjoy the festival and its ice sculptures. Below: Visitors filled the closed street to get a taste of some of NOTL's best icewines. The festival continues this weekend. DAVE VAN DE LAAR



offered at the festival.

"Red icewines are a little more unique. Not every winery makes one but we were able to since we had a good crop that year," she said.

Niagara residents Eva Jones and Scott Falk appreciated the variety of offerings.

"It's always so fun," said Falk. "The Konzelmann is my favourite."

"The Cab Franc was really good," added Jones, noting its uniqueness.

Coming to NOTL from Vaughan, Ann Grech appre-

ciated the beautiful snowy weather, saying it made the day that much better.

"It made everything very picturesque."

Ryan Gilbert, a tasting server at Palatine Hills, was happy to be back at the festival again after its two-year hiatus from in-person festivities.

"It's been great to be amongst the energy here on the street now that we can have the Icewine Festival again. We're going to keep the dentist busy for sure," he laughed.

Aside from tastings, visi-

tors could take in "Icewine Cocktail Reimagined" and "Cooking With Icewine" presentations by Niagara College, as well as performances from George St. Kitts and Avenue Inn.

The festival concludes this Saturday and Sunday and features the Icewine Cocktail Competition on Saturday evening.

To buy packages for the festival or affiliated events, check out Niagara-on-the-Lake Tourism at niagara-onthelake.com. Tokens and festival packs can also be purchased on-site.




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Fireworks, wine and food celebrate return of Icewine Festival

Somer Slobodian
Local Journalism Initiative
The Lake Report

Body Sparkling, ice and everything nice.

Friday night's Sparkle & Ice Gala at the old Court House in Niagara-on-the-Lake kicked off the Icewine Festival in true NOTL fashion – some good food, delicious wine, dancing and fireworks.

After two years of pandemic restrictions, the Icewine Festival has returned for two weekends in January to celebrate all things icewine. The party continues this weekend.

"It's our first time in the old Court House and it's an absolutely beautiful building to come to," said Peter Chapman, who was at the gala with Raelene Stockmans from London, Ont.

In two separate rooms, tables were stacked with a variety of wine and culinary options for guests to enjoy. Sandy Vine and the Midnights band played a variety of tunes in the larger ballroom where guests sat around tables and mingled.

The smaller room had a quieter atmosphere, but guests could still hear the



Fireworks were at the end of the Sparkle & Ice Gala, but it was the beginning for the Icewine Festival. SOMER SLOBODIAN

band's melodies drifting in through the open doors.

"The food is excellent. The variety of cuisine is really nice," said NOTL resident Wendy Higgins, who was attending with her husband, Ben.

Their favourite wine was the sparkling Riesling from Reif Estate Winery.

Sixteen wineries and 10 restaurants were featured at the gala.

Lakeview Wine Co. shared a table with its sister company, Queenston Mile Vineyard. Many guests flocked to the table to taste Lakeview's sparkling Riesling from its Twenty Bees collection.

This Riesling has a more pronounced fruit flavour, with "more bubbles on the palate," said Caitlin Williams from Lakeview.

She said the wine pairs well with items like seafood and, surprisingly, popcorn.

Masaki Sushi was only a few tables down — and it was a hit among the guests.

"Anything sparkling is good for starting before you have dinner to cleanse your palate," Williams said.

About 175 people attended the gala, which is a comfortable number for the space, said Andrew Niven, chair of the Chamber of Commerce and Tourism NOTL.

After talking to other tourism businesses, Niven said there seems to be a "nice economic spin up."

Many of the hotels were full and restaurants were packed with dinner reservations, he said.

By 10:30 p.m., guests made their way outside to grab an ice cold glass to fill with some of Niagara-on-the-Lake's finest icewine to kick off the weekend's festivities.

By 11 p.m., fireworks lit up the sky over Simcoe Park.

"Oohs" and "Ahhs" greeted each bang that painted the night sky.

Catch the last two days of the festival this Saturday and Sunday, Jan. 28 and 29, including the Icewine Cocktail Competition on Jan. 28.

On Saturday, the Icewine Village will be open between 11 a.m. and 5 p.m., and on Sunday from noon to 5 p.m.

While entry to the village is free, guests can purchase individual tokens for \$6, an icewine glass for \$5 or a festival pack for \$35.

The cocktail competition will run from 7 to 10 p.m. Tickets are \$75 per person.




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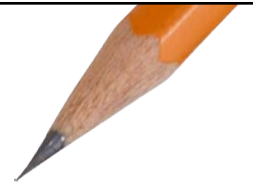
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- Across**
- 8. "You're fat," revised, is far more polite (5,3)
 - 9. Being professionally looked after (2,4)
 - 10. Blocked (10)
 - 11. Islamic cleric (4)
 - 12. Elegant and fashionable (6)
 - 14. Cause of summer sneezes (3,5)
 - 16. Well maintained (2,4,9)
 - 18. Gain control of oneself (3,1,4)
 - 19. Electrically-operated switches (6)
 - 20. Egyptian played by Liz (4)
 - 22. Anxiety (10)
 - 24. Wide street (6)
 - 25. Annoying (8)
- Down**
- 1. About to fall over (3,7)
 - 2. Undiluted (4)
 - 3. Sweet (6)
 - 4. "You couldn't be more wrong!" (4,3,8)
 - 5. Idealistic and unrealistic (4-4)
 - 6. Fortuitous (10)
 - 7. Operatic solo (4)
 - 13. Hunt for bargains (4,6)
 - 15. Coral reefs, for example (10)
 - 17. Thrown off course (8)
 - 19. Grand Prix participants (6)
 - 21. Zero, on court (4)
 - 23. Classic war game (4)

Crossword Puzzle

	1	2	3	4		5	6	7		
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18							19			
20	21			22					23	
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Last issue's answers

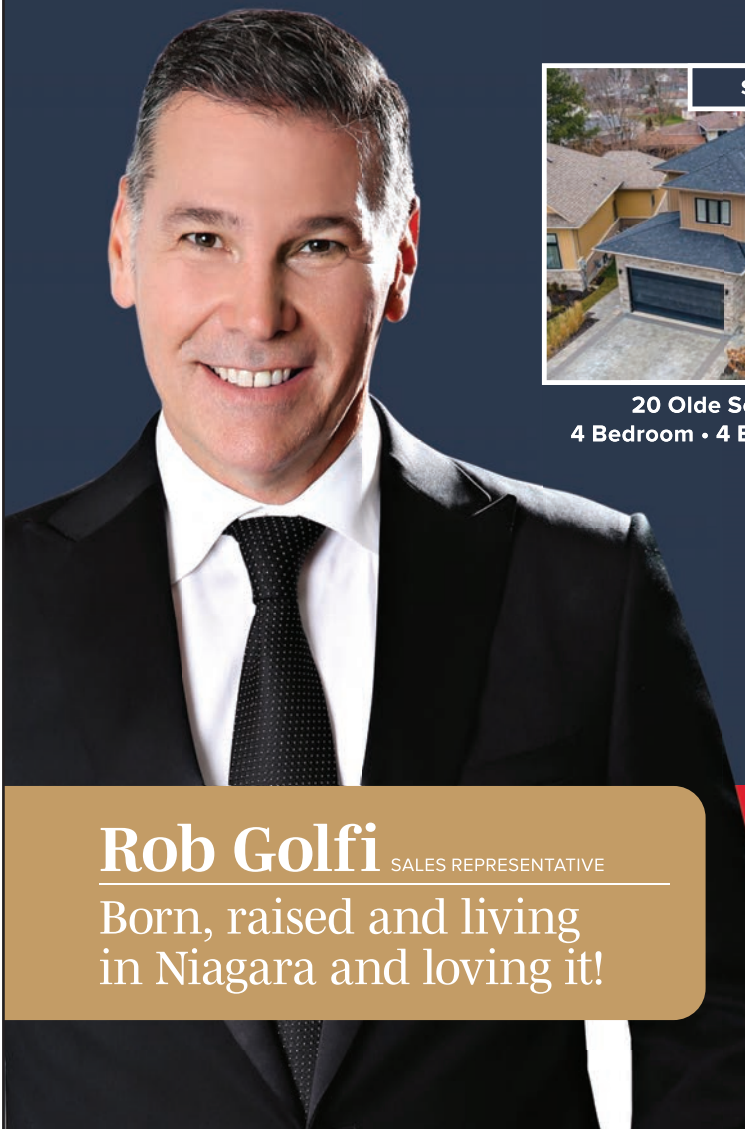
1	S	R	A	S	P	B	E	R	R	Y	D
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4	D	Y	N	A	M	O	T	P	E	L	L
5	O	L	D	A	Y	B	E	D	E	M	
6	B	U	R	E	A	U	N	S	N	I	P
7	A	R	P	L	U	G	S	I	U		
8	T	U	F	T	S	A	E	I	F	N	O
9	H	L	E	D	I	T	S	E			
10	T	R	I	O	N	S	A	B	L	E	
11	U	C	I	D	I	O	M	S	R	I	
12	B	A	K	U	E	P	A	S	T	E	S
13	M	S	U	M	A	T	R	A	O	S	
14	P	I	K	E	I	E	I	M	A	I	D
15	R	D	E	C	A	D	E	N	C	E	N

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Wily Predators chase Roadrunners but can't quite catch up

Kevan Dowd
The Lake Report

Like the infamous coyote, the Jr. A Niagara Predators chased the Durham Roadrunners all night but never quite managed to catch their fleet-footed opponents last Friday.

In their only game of the week, the Predators lost 6-3 to the now second-place Roadrunners – but, according to head coach Kevin Taylor, the effort was certainly there.

“I was disappointed in the outcome but happy with the performance,” said Taylor.

However, for everything they did right, Taylor felt the slip-ups were still enough to make the difference in Durham's favour.

“We're not good enough to make mistakes against a team like that. It's as simple as that,” he said.

“If you want to compete against the top teams, you have to be almost perfect. And that's what it comes down to, whatever team makes the fewest mistakes. And we made some mistakes that were costly.”

The chase was on early for the Predators, with



Niagara Predators goaltender Cameron Huff stretches to make a big save on a Durham Roadrunners' two-on-one. KEVAN DOWD

Durham getting their first goal three minutes in and earning another after 11. But with less than a minute to go in the first period, Nick Savoie scored on the power play, keeping things close.

Durham notched another pair in the first 11 minutes of the second period for a three-goal lead but Leo Savin tightened the gap with a tally at 11:26.

The Roadrunners made some space with their fifth

marker early in the final 20 minutes, only for Niagara's Alexander Andrews to net a third marker for his team with 14:23 left on the clock. But an empty-netter for Durham in the final minute sent the Predators home hungry.

While the chase may be entertaining for some, Taylor is certainly not a fan of his team having to spend the night playing catch-up.

“We can't be giving these teams three-goal leads,

four-goal leads and then decide we're going to come back and play. We don't have the team to do that,” he said. “We have to tidy up our mistakes.”

The match had a noticeably different atmosphere compared to the previous home game against Durham, with considerably less rowdiness from the Roadrunners both on the ice and in the stands. Taylor thinks there are a couple reasons their opponents were less

vocal, including the close the score compared to the last time around when Durham won 6-1.

“That's the difference I think. Maybe somebody said something to them about it last time but it wasn't a walkthrough like they thought,” he said.

“They're still a team we want to compete with and I think we did compete but we just didn't get the outcome we wanted.”

Despite the loss, the

Predators remain tied for fourth place with the St. George Ravens and Tottenham Thunder with 29 points apiece in the Greater Metro Hockey League's south division.

While Niagara has one fewer win than the Ravens and Thunder, they have games in hand and have played the fewest games of any team in the division.

But if they hope to finish the regular season in a favourable position, the Predators cannot afford many more losses.

Their next game is against Tottenham – against whom they have a perfect 4-0 record – and Taylor says his team will be preparing for the last stretch of the season.

“I think we're just going to regroup this week and have some good practices and work on the things you can't really prepare for with Tottenham or Windsor so you just work on the things you need to for the play-offs.”

The Predators host the Thunder this Friday, Jan. 27, at the Meridian Credit Union Arena. Puck drops at 7:30 p.m.

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DR. BROWN

Dr. William Brown
Special to The Lake Report

We take for granted our extraordinary ability to get about on two legs.

Whether walking, running, dancing, skiing or skating, we do it all, depending on our age, without much thought.

Bipedalism for species ancestral to ours, evolved more than three million years ago, evidence for which may be found in the bipedal tracks left behind in east Africa by Lucy's species, *australopithecus afarensis* and closely related species variants.

Tragically, some of us lose that ability in part or whole as the result of trauma involving the spine or, insidiously in later life, the result

of degenerative disease affecting the vertebra and discs. Strokes, amyotrophic lateral sclerosis or multiple sclerosis can also rob us of this ability.

The result is weakness in the legs, especially in the hip flexor, knee flexor and the muscles that control our feet. Sometimes the arms and hands are also affected.

In some cases, patients can lose control over their bowel and bladder and in males, the ability to develop an erection. Along with those motor and autonomic changes, patients may lose sensation at and below the levels of lesions.

Over the years, there have been many attempts to improve lost motor functions with medications to relieve spasticity (stiffness) in the affected muscles.

Physiotherapy can be helpful, especially in mild to moderate cases but for severe impairments of motor and sensory function, there's little choice but to use assist devices such as canes and walkers early on, and wheelchairs in severe cases.



That hasn't stopped surgeons from trying to relieve mechanical compressions from discs and bone on the spinal cord – or in the extreme, cutting out the most severely damaged part of the spinal cord and suturing what's left together.

Fortunately, the latter highly publicized option in the 1960s was stopped for lack of evidence that it helped.

Recently, there has been a flurry of studies, some involving implanting a multi-electrode on the surface of the brain's neocortex to record the electrical activity associated with intended movements and linking that activity with external devices such as a computer and prostheses to restore lost motor functions.

Unfortunately, the benefits were small as patients were tethered to cumbersome equipment for little gain in function. Those studies and closely related ones were "proof of concept studies" of little practical value to patients.

Then in 2018, scientists from the Swiss Federal Institute of Technology reported another approach for restoring walking in paraplegic patients who sustained trauma.

They stimulated the area of the spinal cord affected by the trauma using an electrode implanted in the epidural space. Combined with an aggressive program of physiotherapy, it led to significant improvements in some patients.

For example, some people who were completely paralyzed in their legs before-hand regained the ability to stand and walk, albeit for short distances and with support.

Later studies by the same Swiss group and others, confirmed the effectiveness of electrical stimulation in restoring function in partially or completely paraplegic patients.

Later studies in animals suggested the effect was mediated by interneurons – nerve cells interposed between the input sensory and output motor nerve cells in the spinal cord.

But whatever the techniques for restoring function to paralyzed legs, the challenge is the same: to restore lost or badly impaired functions of the brain or spinal cord by some sort of electrical boost or corralling preserved signals in the brain to bridge lesions further downstream between the brain and muscles.

Over recent years, I've highlighted several claims

for methods designed to restore meaningful speech, movement in paralyzed muscles caused by ALS and other paralyzing diseases, and most recently, boosting memory in patients with dementia.

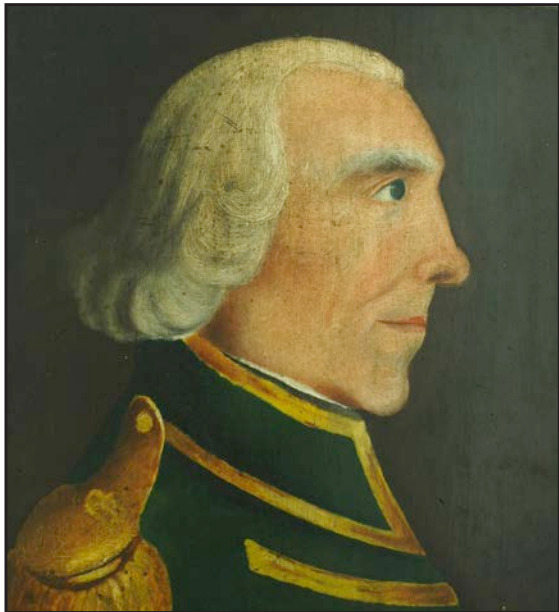
The experiments and trials are always complex, involve a lot of technical support and staff, and much time and effort on the part of patients and staff for meagre (so far) benefits.

Even so, I believe it's worth the effort given the severity of the disabilities in many cases and the steep learning curve for all concerned, to find out what works, what doesn't and overcome major technical and engineering hurdles.

If I may use an analogy, we are very much in the Orville and Wilbur stage of flight – full of promise, but a very long way to go.

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.

EXPLORING PHOTOS WITH NOTL MUSEUM



Colonel John Butler (1728-1796)

This 1834 oil painting is an original copy of a piece by Henry Oakley and is one of only five portraits of Col. John Butler known to exist. Butler was born in Connecticut and was brought up on the American frontier. He joined the British army and led Butler's Rangers and native allies during the American Revolution. Later, while stationed at Fort Niagara, he founded a new settlement across the Niagara River which is today known as Niagara-on-the-Lake. Here he lived, farmed and governed in our community. It is known that Butler also enslaved people to work in his household. The enslaved were bequeathed to family members upon his death in 1796 and later freed by the terms of the Act to Limit Slavery. Thanks to the research of former town historian Joy Ormsby, the Butler homestead ruins were saved from development and a monument was mounted at the site in 2008 in the St. Andrew's Glen neighbourhood.

Obituary

Annie Findlay



FINDLAY, Annie – Passed away peacefully in her sleep with her family at her side, on Wednesday, January 18, 2023 at Pleasant Manor, Niagara-on-the-Lake, at the age of 94.

Beloved wife of the late Alexander Findlay. Loving mother of Donna Rodgers (David) and the late Karen MacDonald (late Mark). Dear aunt of Lesley, Lynne, Lorraine, Gary and Brian.

Fondly remembered by her many friends. Predeceased by siblings Margaret, Betty, George and Archie.

A service to celebrate the life of Annie, will be held at St. Andrew's Presbyterian Church, 323 Simcoe St., Niagara-on-the-Lake, on Friday, February 24, 2023 at 11 a.m. Burial to take place in the church cemetery, with a reception to follow. Those who wish may make a memorial donation to the Salvation Army. Memories, photos and condolences may be shared at www.morganfuneral.com

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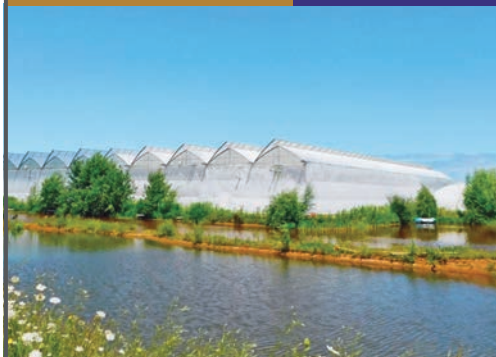
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