



Paige Seburn
Local Journalism Initiative
The Lake Report

The Town of Niagara-on-the-Lake has parted ways with its longtime treasurer and handed the town's top financial job to his deputy.

Council appointed Nick Alaimo as treasurer Tuesday, replacing Kyle Freeborn, who was fired after more than 14 years with the municipality. Alaimo's appointment takes effect immediately.

Freeborn's portfolio also included corporate services. A town official said Lauren Kruitbosch, the director of organizational performance, strategy and transformation, will fill that position temporarily.

Alaimo, who like Freeborn is an accountant, had been manager of finance and deputy treasurer since 2017, according to his LinkedIn profile.

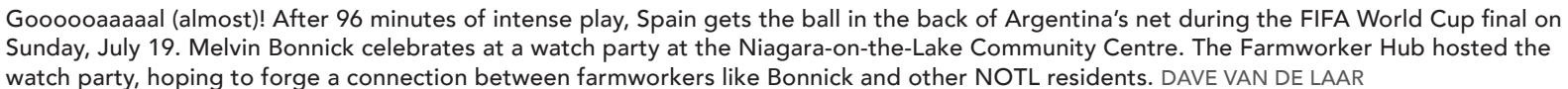
He worked for the Town of Pelham as an accountant from 2013 to 2017 and held junior positions with Niagara Region from 2010 to 2013.

A source told The Lake Report that Freeborn was let go without cause.

The move is the first major change in the town bureaucracy since Nick Rul-

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World Cup watch party brings NOTL communities together



Maddy Gordon | The Lake Report

World Cup mania reached a fever pitch on Sunday afternoon as soccer fans came out to the Niagara-on-the-Lake Community Centre to witness the final match of this year's FIFA World Cup.

With the Farmworker Hub co-hosting the viewing party, inviting dozens of seasonal agricultural

workers to watch the final together, the event was not just a celebration of soccer — it was a chance to bridge the gaps between different communities in town.

The match between Argentina and Spain drew a split crowd of fans from both sides, with around 100 viewers at the watch party in the auditorium.

Friends and strangers sat together at tables and enjoyed snacks while watching the final game of this year's World Cup, held in New Jersey's MetLife Stadium, unfold.

After 120 minutes of intense play, Spain came out on top, defeating Argentina, the 2022 champions, 1-0. It's the second time Spain has won the World Cup

since its victory 16 years ago in South Africa.

At the start of the watch party, Brittney Kranz, lead co-ordinator at the Farmworker Hub, said she hopes the event helps welcome migrant workers to the Community Centre (a place some of them

Continued on Page 8

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Commercial flights to and from Niagara-on-the-Lake are one step closer to reality, after the Niagara District Airport secured \$9.7 million from the province for the

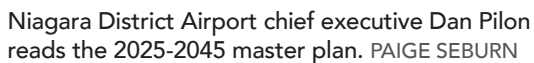
project.

With this funding acquired, the airport will now start laying out what its major expansion will look like. The design work will take about a year and a half (18 to 20 months) and will help nail down how much the airport's full upgrade, currently

estimated at \$200 million, will actually cost before the airport seeks further investment for construction.

“None of it will fund any construction,” airport chief executive officer Dan Pilon told The Lake Report.

Continued on Page 2



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Airport expansion aims for commercial flights in NOTL

Continued from Front Page

“All of it will fund design work that’s necessary for us.”

The work will begin by bringing on the necessary partners to design projects outlined in the airport’s 2025-2045 master plan, including a proposed runway extension of 2,500 feet, terminal upgrades, taxiways, roads and a new building for airport operations and emergency services.

It will also include environmental work, land surveys and planning for water, wastewater and noise.

The airport, located in NOTL and jointly owned by the town and the cities of St. Catharines and Niagara Falls, is pursuing a 20-year plan to transform the small facility into a regional airport offering scheduled passenger flights.

Pilon said the new design work is meant to replace the full redevelopment’s broad \$200-million estimate with a more dependable price tag by narrowing its margin of error.

“We have to have what I would call an investment



Soon this departures screen at the Niagara District Airport could be showing more than bus trips, after a \$9.7 million boost from the province to expand operations. FILE

number,” he said. “We need to have a number that we have the ability to have that and go, ‘We’ve done a significant amount of work, and here’s what we think it’s going to cost.’”

Only then can the airport approach organizations such as the Canada Infrastructure Bank and Building Ontario Fund, along with other public or private partners, for the money needed to build it.

That means construction will not necessarily start

as soon as the design work ends. The airport may still need to secure more investment and must hire contractors before work can begin.

“We did a vision, and now we’re going to design what that vision looks like,” Pilon said. “Then, go look at building.”

The plan looks at extending the airport’s main runway by 2,500 feet, taking it to 7,500 feet from 5,000. Pilon said that remains part of the airport’s vision and is not being recon-

sidered through the new design process.

The airport will also need to acquire some extra land, although Pilon said it would not require a “massive amount.”

Despite the size of the project, the goal is not to build another Pearson International Airport in rural NOTL.

“We’re not talking about a 12-gate or 15-gate airport. We’re talking about a four-to six-gate airport,” Pilon said.

No scheduled passenger flights currently depart from the airport, and offering them will take time. Pilon said the master plan lays out a five- to seven-year process to design and build the gates, security screening areas and other facilities necessary to make that happen.

That also means the airport is not yet in a position to negotiate flights and routes with airlines.

“If we had someone come to us and said, ‘I want to do this starting tomorrow,’ we couldn’t,” Pilon said. “We don’t have the facilities to do it.”

The airport has previously identified possible Canadian, American and warm-weather destinations, but no routes have been confirmed either.

For now, the airport’s only direct connection to a commercial airline is the Air Canada Landline service, which allows Air Canada passengers to check in there before travelling by motorcoach to Toronto Pearson.

The province announced the airport investment as

part of its Destination Niagara Strategy, which aims to attract 25 million visitors annually and add \$3 billion to Ontario’s economy.

Pilon attributed the investment to years of planning, public presentations and meetings with municipal, provincial and federal officials about the airport’s future.

The provincial support, he said, shows the expansion is gaining credibility.

“This is a very real and very tangible investment that says, ‘Yeah, we agree with you, and we think it’s a necessary step forward for Niagara as well,’” Pilon said.

“For me, it means, ‘Hey, let’s get back to work because we have a lot to do.’ But it certainly is an interim validation of the hard work that a lot of people have done.”

Pilon said the airport plans to hold more public information sessions as the designs take shape and residents will have further opportunities to learn about the project and ask questions

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NOTL projects leave \$2.35M unspent

Paige Seburn
Local Journalism Initiative
The Lake Report

Niagara-on-the-Lake ended 2025 with about \$2.35 million unspent after some town projects cost less than expected and others did not go ahead.

The money will either return to its original funding source or help pay for related work, including protective equipment for firefighters, guide rail improvements, crack sealing, roof repairs and water meter replacements.

Committee of the whole supported the plan July 14 and council is expected to make the final decision July 21.

About \$1.44 million came from completed work that finished under budget and roughly \$907,000 had been set aside for projects that were later cancelled.

The largest saving came from rebuilding Concession 6 between Warner and



Lord Mayor Gary Zalepa credited early budget approval with helping the town save more than \$200K on projects. FILE

York roads. The \$1.9-million project cost roughly \$515,500 less than budgeted because of favourable market conditions.

The town also saved roughly \$97,700 resurfacing Queen's Parade, \$68,800 resurfacing Elden Street and \$61,400 on engineering work for Line 2 culverts.

Repairs to the Station 1 fire hall parking lot came in roughly \$31,300 under budget, while the Cherry Street sidewalk project cost about

\$16,000 less than expected.

Lord Mayor Gary Zalepa credited more than \$200,000 in savings to approving the budget early, which he said allowed town staff to seek bids for projects before other municipalities.

"There's over \$200,000 in savings as a result of our work to get our budget done early," Zalepa said.

"So kudos to council for their hard work on the budget last year. It paid

off."

But not every project stayed within budget.

Problems caused by lake levels pushed work on the Melville Street storm sewer roughly \$110,500 over budget. A pollution-control project cost roughly \$49,100 more than expected because the town had to monitor water flows longer than planned.

Coun. Wendy Cheropita also questioned the \$12,000 budget for a new refrigerator at the community centre.

"I saw a purchase that I just thought was worth raising concern," she said. "A refrigerator at the community center. It was budgeted for \$12,000. That's a pretty high-end unit."

Chief administrative officer Nick Ruller said he believed it was a commercial-grade walk-in refrigerator for the auditorium's commercial kitchen. The town ultimately paid roughly \$6,200 for it.

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Fired treasurer spent 14 years working for town

Continued from Front Page

ler, a former councillor and town fire chief, took over as chief administrator last year.

Given the circumstances and his long tenure with the town, Freeborn is expected to receive a hefty severance. According to the Ontario "sunshine list," he was paid just over \$157,000 in 2025.

Another source said council was informed ahead of Tuesday's meeting that Freeborn was "no longer with us."

The town has not publicly explained his departure, citing confidentiality regarding personnel issues. Several town officials contacted by The Lake Report declined to speak on the record about the firing.

Freeborn joined the town as deputy treasurer in January 2012, according to his LinkedIn profile.

In 2017 he was named manager of finance and treasurer. He had been director of corporate services and treasurer since October 2019.

He was still authorizing reports and publicly addressing council as treasurer in mid-June, including on a bid for \$3 million in provincial infrastructure funding and the town's \$13-million annual infrastructure gap.

One councillor said Freeborn commuted to NOTL from Mississauga and was well-liked at town hall, while describing Alaimo as a strong fit for the job who knows the town well.

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Nick Alaimo was appointed as the town's new treasurer. PAIGE SEBURN



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LOCATOR

The Lake Report will run a weekly garage/yard sale listing weekly until the end of September. **Thinking of having a yard sale? Send the details to editor@niagaranow.com by Wednesday and we'll publish them here for FREE.**

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Weston McKeown checks out a racecar up close at Niagara Motors during a community fundraiser. The dealership showcased a lineup of racecars alongside a BBQ to help raise money for Newark Neighbours. PHOTO BY DAVE VAN DE LAAR

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House once marked for flames now protected as NOTL heritage

Paige Seburn
Local Journalism Initiative
The Lake Report

More than two centuries after surviving the burning of Newark during the War of 1812, one of Niagara-on-the-Lake's oldest homes narrowly escaped destruction by fire again.

The 230-year-old home at 15506 Niagara River Pkwy., known as Merriwood, was among nine designated properties honoured July 15 at the Niagara-on-the-Lake Museum.

Couns. Tim Balasiuk and Gary Burroughs presented heritage plaques alongside heritage committee members Rita Trudeau and John Morley.

Built around 1793 or 1794, Merriwood is one of the town's few surviving buildings from before the War of 1812 and served as a British military hospital.

Owner Richard Merritt said the house had fallen into poor condition by 1965 and was given to the Queenston fire department to be burned during a training exercise.

"Fortunately, the historical society got wind of it and they stopped that plan," he said.

The building was moved to Niagara Parks property near McFarland House before being sold and relocated to its current site at Line 3 and the Niagara River Parkway.

Merritt and his wife bought the property 45 years ago and later built an addition using woodwork salvaged from another



Owners and representatives of nine designated heritage properties gather with their plaques at the Niagara-on-the-Lake Museum on July 15. The town recognized their efforts to preserve the buildings and the stories behind them. DAVE VAN DE LAAR

demolished home. Both sections are recognized as heritage features.

He said the couple considered designation for years before deciding it was the best way to protect the property from changes by future owners.

"If you don't want someone else to come in later and tear off a wing or make major changes, this way there's some protection," he said.

The home was built by Walter Butler Sheehan, a nephew of Col. John Butler, and sold in 1798 to French military officer Joseph-Geneviève de Puisaye.

Merritt said Elizabeth Simcoe, wife of Upper Canada's first lieutenant-governor, John Graves Simcoe, and attorney general John White were among those who visited.

The name Merriwood combines the Merritt family name with the woodwork additions and the trees surrounding the home.

"It's more than the bricks and mortar. It's the people that live there and their stories," Merritt said.

Burroughs praised Merritt's efforts to preserve the property.

"The presentation tonight doesn't do justice to what Richard has done," he said. "It's amazing."

The town also honoured properties at 1791 Concession 2 Rd., 18 Wilberforce Ave., 716 King St., 263 Regent St., 167 and 1665 Four Mile Creek Rd., 115 Delater St. and 238 Four Mile Creek Rd.

Aimee Alderman, the town's director of planning, building and development services, said Niagara-on-the-Lake has designated 21 properties since beginning its priority designation work in 2023.

The town's heritage register includes 430 properties. Of those, 95 are individually designated, 152 are within the existing heritage conservation district

and seven fall under both categories. Another 176 are listed but not formally designated.

Under provincial rules, municipalities have until Jan. 1 to designate listed properties. Those not designated by then will be removed from heritage registers, making redevelopment or demolition easier.

Coun. Erwin Wiens said the town plans to ask the province at the Association of Municipalities of Ontario conference in August to extend the deadline to 2030. About 150 properties remain to be addressed.

Lord Mayor Gary Zalepa credited property owners for protecting the town's heritage and said Niagara-on-the-Lake would continue pressing the province for more time.

"We're going to keep pushing the province to understand that Niagara-on-the-Lake is an exception," he said.

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Shaw clears final hurdle for George rebuild

Paige Seburn
Local Journalism Initiative
The Lake Report

The Royal George Theatre redevelopment cleared its final heritage hurdle at town hall Tuesday, despite opposition from three councillors.

Niagara-on-the-Lake council voted 6-3 to grant the heritage permit for 85 Queen St., part of a wider redevelopment that has already received official plan, zoning and site plan approvals.

Lord Mayor Gary Zalepa and Couns. Tim Balasiuk, Wendy Cheropita, Maria Mavridis, Adriana Vizzari and Erwin Wiens sup-



Shaw can now begin construction on its new Royal George Theatre.

ported the permit.

Couns. Gary Burroughs, Andrew Niven and Sandra O'Connor opposed it.

The permit requires the project to be carried out "substantially in accordance with" the submitted application and supporting documents.

Staff said the earlier official plan, zoning and site plan approvals dealt with the building's size, architecture, landscaping, streetscape and fit within the Queen-Picton heritage conservation district.

Town staff described the heritage permit as the final heritage approval required before construction.

The existing buildings will be demolished, an impact staff described as unavoidable. Plans to address that impact include archival photographs, heritage interpretation, commemoration and the salvage and reuse of significant architectural materials where possible.

Staff said those mea-

sures would soften the heritage loss while allowing the property to continue its long-standing use as a theatre.

The new building will use a contemporary design intended to respect the scale, rhythm and character of Queen Street without copying historic architecture.

The town's municipal heritage committee endorsed the permit July 8 after hearing from Shaw representatives Tim Jennings and Meika McCunn.

Council's decision remains subject to a 30-day appeal period. If nobody appeals, the approval becomes final.

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Restored Brock’s Monument **reopens**

Staff
The Lake Report

Visitors can once again climb Brock’s Monument after Parks Canada completed the main phase of a restoration project to preserve one of Niagara’s best-known historic landmarks.

The nearly 200-year-old monument at Queenston Heights reopened July 13 following months of conservation work focused on repairing weather-related deterioration and preventing future damage.

Landscaping around the site is continuing and is expected to wrap up this fall, said Maia AQUI, spokesperson for Parks Canada, in a written statement.

The federal government has invested \$2.2 million in the rehabilitation project, including planning, design and assessments, along with about \$1.1 million in restoration work announced last October. The final cost will be determined once the remaining work is complete, she said.



The \$2.2 million restoration of Brock’s Monument is done.

The project centred on repairing the monument’s aging masonry, affected by decades of weather exposure and water infiltration.

Restoration work began at the site in mid-October last year. Workers repointed mortar joints throughout the structure, replaced deteriorated stone and installed a new lead membrane roofing system designed to keep water from penetrating the masonry.

Five damaged limestone blocks were replaced with stone sourced from the Queenston Quarry to

match the monument’s original material.

The most noticeable change for visitors is a narrow lip near the monument’s lion sculptures. It is part of the new waterproofing system and is designed to direct rain and melting snow away from the stone-work, reducing the risk of future deterioration.

To complete the work, crews erected a 56-metre scaffold that reached the top of the monument’s spire, allowing conservators to access every section of the structure safely.

The restoration was carried out primarily during the winter to reduce disruptions for visitors. AQUI said the workers needed suitable weather conditions to complete specialized masonry work, so there were minor delays.

She said inspections carried out during the project confirmed expected deterioration caused by the monument’s age and exposure to the elements, but found no significant structural concerns.

Brock’s Monument is regularly inspected and maintained through Parks Canada’s conservation program, AQUI said. Major rehabilitation projects have taken place about every 12 years since 1971, with the last major restoration completed in 2009 and 2010.

The current monument was built between 1853 and 1856 through public subscriptions after the original monument, completed in 1827, was destroyed in 1840.

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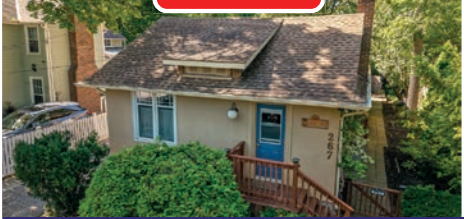
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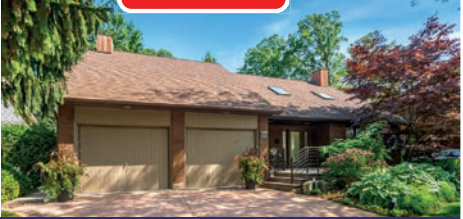
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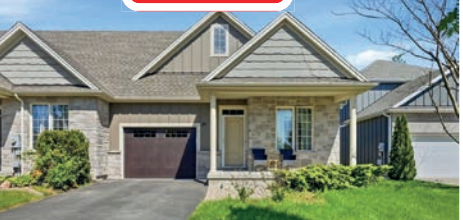
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World Cup watch party brings NOTL residents together

Continued from Front Page

have never been before) and fosters a sense of friendship between them others in town who don't live and work on one of NOTL's many farms.

"I'm really excited for our friends on the farm to be here and experience the community," she said. "Hopefully they'll wander around the building and see what other areas they have access to while they're living here in Niagara-on-the-Lake."

The Farmworker Hub offers resources for NOTL's seasonal agricultural workers, a community that is vital to the regional economy but may be unaware of accessible services in town, said Steven Pitkanen, a volunteer with the hub.

The Community Centre, for instance, is a free resource the hub hopes agricultural workers will take advantage of.

"Seasonal workers are imperative to our region, and they live and work in Niagara-on-the-Lake for up to eight months to a year," Pitkanen said.

Farmworker Lawson

Brown, who was rooting for Argentina, called the event a "beautiful thing" and said he enjoys connecting with his coworkers and community.

"It's nice to come and socialize amongst different people and build unity amongst your fellow coworkers," he said. "It's a nice thing to know they are doing something for the farmworkers."

Brown, who hails from Jamaica, has spent five seasons working in NOTL, but the watch party was his first time at the Community Centre.

"It's very nice here," he said, "I wouldn't give up Niagara for anything."

This year, 48 teams took part in the World Cup, a step up from 32 last year. This saw several teams make it to the World Cup that either had never qualified before or had not qualified in decades.

Jamaica, however, was not one of those teams: it failed to qualify this year. The last time the nation's team made it to the men's World Cup was 1998.

Brown said he would still root for Argentina — three-



Farmworker Constantino Gonzalez shows off the bike he won during the World Cup viewing event at the NOTL Community Centre on Sunday. DAVE VAN DE LAAR

time World Cup champions — even if his home country qualified. Soccer is his second-favourite sport, as he coached track and field in Jamaica.

"[Soccer is] a beautiful game; it helps people to unite together and bring good vibes," he said.

Brown noted this World Cup is likely to be the last one for Lionel Messi, Argentinian soccer star and, for many, one of the sport's all-time greats. Messi will be 43 in 2030, the year of the next World Cup — by

most standards, too old to compete in the tournament.

"I want to send him off with a grand finale," Brown said around the half-time mark.

Unfortunately for Messi, his team and his fans, Argentina was unable to pull through, and the player was seen sitting dejectedly on the pitch, tears in his eyes, after the final whistle blew.

As for Jamaica, in order for the nation's team to make the next World Cup, Brown said the country needs more infrastructure to support players moving

from the high-school level to the club level.

Donald Case and Hughroy Howell, also from Jamaica, cheered for Spain, which managed to clinch the match after scoring the winning goal in the 106th minute of extra time.

Unlike Brown, the friends said they would be cheering "all the way" for Jamaica if it qualified.

Sat around a table with fellow agricultural workers and friends, the pair said they appreciate the chance to relax and enjoy the game.

"We work on the farm ... we like getting a break to come meet different people," Case said.

"[Niagara] is a nice place," Howell added, who has been working in NOTL for 27 years.

The Farmworker Hub organized the event in collaboration with the Town of NOTL. Town spokesperson Marah Minor said she was happy with the turnout.

"Our agriculture community is one of our biggest factors in Niagara-on-the-Lake, so I think it's just always important to have events for different audiences," she said. "Our hope is that people come out, have a good time and connect with one another."

The watch party included a raffle, with prizes like gift cards, FIFA gear and bicycles specifically for migrant workers.

"They're leaving their families for up to eight months to a year; that means missing every birthday, every anniversary, every Mother's Day, every Father's Day," Kranz said. "I want that to become the norm here: Get to know your neighbours."



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NOTL celebrates the world with Invitational tourney

Kevin MacLean
The Lake Report

They came to NOTL from around Niagara, across Ontario and around the world to mark the bi-annual Women's Invitational Golf tourney last week.

Fittingly, the theme was Around the World and members of the organizing committee were decked out in airline flight attendants' gear while golfers sported attire from various countries and cultures across the globe.

Months of preparation and planning go in to organizing the popular tournament, held Tuesday at the Niagara-on-the-Lake Golf Club.

Participants were quick to congratulate the organizing committee of Carolyn Porter, Judy Mantle, Cathy Murray, Tracey Peters, Gayle Tanner and Cathy Taylor for all their hard work.

Despite dire heat warnings, the weather co-operated, supplying just enough of a breeze to keep conditions comfortable.



The flight crew who helped organize this year's NOTL Women's Invitational tournament included/ seated Carolyn Porter and Tracey Peters, and standing, Judy Mantle, Yolanda Henry, Cathy Murray, Cathy Taylor and Gayle Tanner. ERIN PIAZZA

But on the links, the competition was heated as Shelley Lothian (Peninsula Lakes) and Jayne Chalmers (Hamilton) combined to win the low gross championship by a single shot.

Their score of 4-over 76 edged out the duo of Louise Robitaille (NOTL) and Betty Divok (Bridgewater), who shot 77.

The Sawmill team of Carolyn May and Karen Sabzali placed third with a score of 84.

Players also competed in three flights for best low net score (gross score minus handicaps).

In flight 1, NOTL's Lisa Allen teamed with Pam Kilmer (Rattlesnake Point) for a net of 66 to finish

ahead of Rockway's Carol Cort and Lisa Petro (68). May and Sabzali were third (69).

In flight 2, Pierrette Crawford and Suzanne Cousineau of Rolling Meadows were tops with 67. Barbara Hastings (NOTL) and Kristen Murphy (Rose-dale) were second with 69, while Rockway's Phyllis

Bennett and Marianne Boman finished third at 71.

NOTL's Judy Mantle and Janice McMacken combined for 67 and came out on top in flight 3 via retrogression.

Next were Shelby Leeder (NOTL) and Cathy Backman (Midland), also with 67, and Gayle Tanner (NOTL) and Kim Ward (Port Perry) with 69.

While the weather co-operated for the Invitational, most of the NOTL club's weekly leagues weren't so lucky.

Smoky skies from Canadian wildfires cancelled last Thursday's men's league yet again. That makes five consecutive weeks that weather problems have intervened.

And this past Tuesday's rains washed out the women's nine- and 18-hole leagues, as well as the men's Woofs league.

Monday's business women's league was more fortunate.

Cheryl Yamamoto was tops with a gross score of 44. Other winners were: Petra Browning (longest drive on #1), Gulshan Lalani (closest to the 150 marker on #2), Tracey Peters (longest putt on #7).

Cynthia Parks was closest to the pin on #4 and Suzanne Watson was closest to the pin in two shots on #9.

See niagaranow.com for more photos from the NOTL Women's Invitational.

McIlhone, Rhind claim A Division title in first tennis tournament of season



Top: A Division champions Gerry McIlhone and Karen Rhind, left, and finalists Don Pozojevic and Leslie Gottschalk, right. Bottom: B Division champs Scott McGregor and Dorothy Booth, left, and finalists Trish Spagnol and Steve Moore, right. Tournament director Adam Wodz is centre in both images. SUPPLIED/NOTL TENNIS CLUB

Staff
The Lake Report

The Niagara-on-the-Lake Tennis Club opened its 2026 tournament season with 22 doubles teams competing in two divisions on June 26 and 27.

The championship matches were held June 27 at the Memorial Park courts, where club members gathered to watch the finalists compete.

In the A Division final, Gerry McIlhone and Karen Rhind defeated Don Pozojevic and Leslie Gottschalk 6-2, 6-4.

McIlhone and Rhind controlled the match with aggressive net play, timely poaching and consistent shot-making.

The B Division championship required a match tiebreaker, with Scott McGregor and Dorothy Booth

defeating Trish Spagnol and Steve Moore 3-6, 6-4, 10-7.

After dropping the opening set, McGregor and Booth battled back to win the second before taking the deciding tiebreaker. Long rallies and strong defensive play kept the match close until McGregor's serving and Booth's determination helped secure the victory.

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ON STAGE

Gordon Lightfoot's nephew brings his **uncle's songs** to St. Mark's

Andrew Hawlitzky
The Lake Report

More than three years after Gordon Lightfoot's death, his music filled St. Mark's Anglican Church in Niagara-on-the-Lake as a sold-out audience gathered to celebrate the Canadian icon through the voices and instruments of musicians who knew him — and, in one case, shared his family name.

Classic Lightfoot Live brought the music of the late Canadian singer-songwriter to fans who packed the pews of St. Mark's on Saturday for the seven-piece tribute band's performance.

The set includes hits such as "If You Could Read My Mind" and "The Wreck of the Edmund Fitzgerald" along with songs that never made the radio.

Touring Ontario since 2014, the band features members of Lightfoot's family and musicians connected to his longtime band.



Classic Lightfoot Live performs Gordon Lightfoot's songs at St. Mark's Anglican Church on July 18, led by Lightfoot's family and band members. ANDREW HAWLITZKY

Their work has taken on a deep significance since Lightfoot's death. He died in May 2023 at the age of 84.

Bassist Steve Evers is the son of Beverly Lightfoot

Evers of Orillia, Gordon Lightfoot's sister, who managed her brother for a period in the 1970s.

Lead guitarist Eric Kidd, a music teacher from Barrie, studied with Red Shea,

Lightfoot's original lead guitarist.

Lead vocalist John Stinson lived next door to Shea and to Terry Clements, Lightfoot's other longtime guitarist, while raising his

family in Aurora. Stinson has been staging a full Lightfoot theatre show since 2011.

The band's musical director, Bob Doidge, produced Lightfoot records at Grant Avenue Studio in Hamilton, including "A Painter Passing Through" and "Harmony."

Stinson told the audience "Rainy Day People" was the last song Lightfoot sang in front of a crowd, in October 2022.

Stinson also introduced a song he said Lightfoot wrote in the late 1960s for the film "Cool Hand Luke." The song went unused, he said, and sat unreleased until it appeared on a 1999 collection of older material.

Lightfoot saw the band himself in 2016, when he watched Stinson sing at Lake Country Grill in Orillia during Lightfoot Days. After the set ended, Lightfoot shook Stinson's hand.

Kathy Chamberlin, 71, of Niagara-on-the-Lake, has listened to the singer-songwriter's work for decades.

"Gordon Lightfoot is Canada to me," she said. "The way he wrote about the country, the lakes, the trains, he really understood it in a way it feels like he's your next-door neighbour."

Bill Weidemann, 76, of St. Catharines, said he grew up listening to mostly American radio stations, but Lightfoot felt closer to home.

"We had plenty of American music coming from the stations over the border — then there was Lightfoot singing about places we knew," he said.

Weidemann said that history is why he thinks the late songwriter's records still need to be played.

"We don't just back down," he said. "There's value in the music, and we're gonna keep listening and playing it even after he's gone."

Classic Lightfoot Live plays next at the Gibson Centre in Alliston on Aug. 27.

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Savour the **vigorous comedy** of ‘One for the Pot’

ONE FOR THE POT

(out of five)

*Festival Theatre, 2 hours,
5 minutes, one intermis-
sion. Ends Oct. 11. By Ray
Cooney and Tony Hilton.
Directed by Chris Abraham.*

Penny-Lynn Cookson
Special to The Lake Report

For all loose-leaf tea drinkers, boiling water and one more spoonful for the teapot is the norm.

In this “One for the Pot” bubbling British farce by Ray Cooney and Tony Hilton, more than one more will serve up a strong brew for those who love the robust flavour of this genre.

After all, it’s been good for us since the herbalist Emperor Shen Wong undoubtedly laughed when he discovered the healing properties of tea as a medicinal remedy in circa 2737 BCE.

Farce provoking laughter has been around since the fifth-century BCE Greek comedies of Aristophanes. The Roman Emperor Tiberius might have been a tad thin-skinned when he banned such comedic levity in 300 BCE. T

The French embraced “une farce” improvisations “stuffed” as jokes into serious medieval religious plays and over 200 survive today from the 14th and 15th century.

The acknowledged master of farce remains the Frenchman Georges Feydeau, whose translated farces, such as “A Flea in Her Ear,” influenced the British tradition of bawdiness combined with complicated plots.

Some may sniff at what they perceive as absurd low comedy for the masses, but farce is meant to amuse, not encourage deep thought. It’s all about action, doors slamming, mistaken identities, characters who must pretend to be who and what they are not, cross-dressing, cross-talking and leaping to erroneous assumptions.

Ray Cooney and Tony Hilton were young actors in the theatre company of the English actor-manager Brian Rix considered to be the British master of farce. Rix’s long-running West End productions at



Sanjay Talwar, Peter Fernandes and Martin Happer in “One for the Pot.” MICHAEL COOPER

the Whitehall Theatre from 1950 to 1966 included what became known as the Whitehall farces.

Cooney appeared in many of these farces and went on to create his own Theatre of Comedy Company with 17 of his plays performed in the West End. To the French, Cooney is “Le Feydeau Anglais” and many of his plays continue to be revived in Paris.

Cooney laid out his thoughts on farce: The characters must be believable and recognizable. They are ordinary people, out of their depth, in situations and predicaments that are not ordinary and are out of their control.

The plots are more akin to tragedy with much at stake. The actors must have technique, stamina, precision, dexterity and, most importantly, teamwork to pull off the split-second timing required during continuous action.

Farces are performed, not read. The audience is the missing ingredient and the intelligence of that audience is never to be underestimated.

The Shaw’s first production of “One for the Pot” was in 1985 with Heath Lamberts in the starring role of Hickory Wood.

The 2026 production sets the time and mood of 1935 with the opening music of

Irving Berlin’s “Cheek to Cheek” written for Fred Astaire in “Top Hat.” The Great Depression was over and audiences were ready for Hollywood romantic screwball comedies and slapstick stage farces.

The curtain rises on the spacious wood-panelled drawing room of a country mansion, well-designed by Michael Gianfrancesco. It remains unchanged through both acts, with multiple doors and original props used to great effect for all the manic hiding, whiskey swilling and dashing in and out physical action.

Patrick Galligan is the wealthy industrialist Jonathan Hardcastle, who suffering from gout and guilt is pushed about in a wheelchair. Galligan attacks the role with a gruff and agitated voice, which varies from working-class Manchester to something else, perhaps more befitting to his raised wealth status?

He is testy and demanding as he wishes to quickly find and give 10,000 British pounds to Billy Hickory Wood, son of his former business partner, who died before profiting from their successful milling operation. The catch is Billy must be the only surviving relative of his father in order to be the beneficiary.

Peter Fernandes as the rather thick Hickory Wood

is easily manipulated by his fake solicitor Charlie Barnet, played by Martin Happer. Barnet must devise plots to get the money as other Hickory Woods appear. Jugg, the eavesdropping, duplicitous, always on the take butler, is played by Sanjay Talwar.

All three actors are excellent and the teamwork between them is outstanding.

Fernandes is by turns the Cockney Billy, the refined Estuary Rupert and the Belfast Michael continually tumbling into surprising twists, turns and tangos.

Neil Barclay is Hardcastle’s short-sighted barrister who has the hots for Amy, the easily flustered sister of Hardcastle played ably by Fiona Byrne. Camille Eanga-Selenge as the daughter, Cynthia Hardcastle, is the benign romantic interest of Kelly Wong’s smarmy art dealer. Jade Repeta as Winnie, Billy’s Cockney wife, is too exaggerated and shrill — her lines are often unintelligible.

Chris Abraham’s direction of the ensemble actors, including the maids and party guests, solidifies the action into a satisfying balance. Go and enjoy this pot with a mug who will laugh with you.

Penny-Lynn Cookson is an arts and culture historian, writer and lecturer living in Niagara-on-the-Lake.

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BKind Grateful #85: Messed up? Give a sincere apology without excuses. Taking accountability is the first step to forgiveness.

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Contributed by Patty Garriock

“Age is something that doesn’t matter, unless you are cheese.”
- Billie Burke

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A century of service



Sgt. Mabel James has the honours of cutting the ceremonial cake during a celebration marking the Royal Canadian Legion’s 100th birthday at Branch 124. The milestone event featured presentations of commemorative certificates to branch president Al Howse by Coun. Erwin Wiens and MP Tony Baldinelli, while Stan Harrington shared a reading on the Legion’s 100-year history. Attendees also enjoyed a roasted pork, coleslaw and cake. DAVE VAN DE LAAR

Who can save NOTL from political grift?



Garth Turner
Columnist

“You really should run for the mayoral position this fall,” a reader suggests. “I think you would win in a landslide.”
A few messages like this have hit the inbox lately. Before committing, let me share a little background.
In business, my career’s been OK. In politics, a fail. Of two bitter nomination fights and four hot federal elections, I won four and lost two. Mulroney liked me. Kim Campbell put me in her cabinet. Harper hated being in the same room with me.
Because I blogged. I chummed around with MPs from other parties. I used online tools to involve constituents in votes in the House of Commons. I polled Canadians, then suggested the government create tax-free savings accounts (eventually, it did). And I opposed plans for zero-downpayment, 40-year mortgages because that would inflate a housing bubble (Harper did it anyway and you know what happened).
So, I’m a lousy politician. The prime minister sat me in his fancy office one evening and made it crystal.



A gutted council and a mayor with new powers could mean controversial developments like the Rand Ritz-Carlton or the Parliament Oak hotel glide to approval despite majority opposition. The most important election ever is coming, say some. GARTH TURNER

“You’re a journalist and we all know journalists make bad politicians,” Mr. Harper said. “Politicians know how to stick to a message. That’s how they are successful. Journalists think they always have to tell the truth.”
The PM told me if I shut up, stopped speaking openly and behaved myself, he’d give me a plum job. If not, there’d be trouble.
And trouble there was. I was kicked out of the government caucus and the party. The finance minister stood before party members and told them, “Garth Turner is not running an alternative government.” My fate in the next election was sealed. As expected, my political career went poof.
I returned to making money before achieving immortality years later as a Lake Report columnist.
So, yes, I suck at politics. Success requires fluid beliefs, malleable morals and an appetite for compromise. Leaders want subservience. Voters want independence. People always wonder why every vote in Parliament isn’t a free one. But the con-

cept of MPs who think for themselves terrifies parties.
Of course, local politics is different, right?
Nope. Worse.
There are no political parties represented on NOTL council. Although this level of government has the greatest impact on citizens’ daily lives, it is weak, ineffectual, rudderless and dominated by special interests.
That’s what happens when there’s no structure to vet candidates, marginal public interest plus senior governments that just don’t care.
Lately, council’s been tilted towards tourism, wineries and real-estate development. No wonder. Look at the backgrounds, passions and investments of the people there.
The result has been controversial hotel mega-developments, heritage destruction and genuflection to an insane Ontario plan to make us part of Vegas North.
And now, the greatest challenge.
Without asking citizens, councillors voted to reduce their numbers. So, less representative government. Meanwhile we lost a rep

at the regional level and the lord mayor was given “strong” powers.
After this coming election, he/she can override any decision or approve the next hotel with the support of only two others. So fewer reps. Less influence at the region (where 65 per cent of your property taxes go). And decisions the majority may not support.
Democracy is slipping from your hands.
“The upcoming 2026 municipal election this October will have to go down as the biggest political grift ever. The over-use of the word ‘governance’ has allowed politicians and even the press to ‘sane-wash’ the changes we’re seeing before our eyes without realizing the damage that is being inflicted to our democratic processes,” the new NOTL Residents Association is warning.
“There is absolutely nothing that the local, regional and provincial politicians have inflicted this last term on our public governance structure that benefits citizens.”
Regular addicts will know I have profiled the three mayoral candidates — Vaughn Goettler, Andrea Kaiser and Erwin Wiens. A retired HVAC czar. A career winery personality. A veteran cop and grape farmer.
Will there be more choices? Maybe. But not me.
Harper was right.
Garth Turner is a NOTL resident, journalist, author, wealth manager and former federal MP and minister. garth@garth.ca

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LETTER OF THE WEEK



The hole where Parliament Oak stood will have a devastating effect on water table, writes Victor Tarnoy. RICHARD CONNELLY

Basements, the water table and trees

Dear editor:
It is easy to look at the original houses and cottages built in our neighbourhoods and see why trees and buildings could coexist.

Heritage structures have shallow cellars and crawl-spaces beneath the ground floor and, when there were few basements, the water table in Niagara-on-the-Lake was always close to the surface.

This created the charming and rare situation of an established residential and urban area built within a spectacular and mature forest.

Today, we take for granted that every building has a full basement. Our con-

temporary "dry" basement structures require constant mechanical pumping to lower the water table surrounding the building.

Rain, which replenishes the water table, is diverted away, and the surrounding groundwater is pumped into storm sewers, until the ground is dry to the depth of the basement.

The impact of this is dramatic, long-lasting and negative — even on a small scale.

We are now witnessing the construction of a deep and enormous underground parking garage at the Parliament Oaklands, in the middle of the old town of

Niagara-on-the-Lake. This may be a hole we will not be able to climb out of.

Excavation and compaction, and the required lowering of the water table on such a vast scale, will guarantee the eventual death of most, if not all the existing century trees on the Parliament Oak block and predictably and negatively impact trees on surrounding properties.

Now it's too late. Tall trees will not grow here again.

Sadly, it's time to say goodbye to these irreplaceable old oaks, maples, sycamores and lindens that protected us, inspired us

and helped make Niagara-on-the-Lake so pretty, special, unique and worthy of preservation.

Architects, planners, engineers, landscape and heritage architects — all professionals in their respective fields are responsible for the design of this hotel and the underground parking garage.

Our town staff, also authorities in their respective professions, as well as our elected officials, examined the proposal to build this hotel and underground parking garage and approved it.

Victor Tarnoy
NOTL

When does the paper intervene with letters?

Dear editor:
It apparently was Daniel Patrick Moynihan who first said, "You are entitled to your opinion but you are not entitled to your own facts."

It was precisely on these grounds that Judy McLeod took Peter Rusin to task for his attack on SORE and its activities in trying to protect the Rand Estate.

His comments published in The Lake Report (July 2) were "full of falsehoods,"

which Ms. McLeod comprehensively lists.

That this letter from Mr. Rusin was accepted for publication started me wondering what standards of accuracy the editorial board of The Lake Report applies to letters it receives. Does it accept "little lies" but not "big lies?"

Let me suggest an example: some months ago, there were several articles and correspondence in The Lake Report relating to the con-

flict in Gaza. What if a letter was received stating that, "Netanyahu's justification for the carnage in Gaza was because of the shared Jewish trauma of the Holocaust, but it was now accepted that the Holocaust was a hoax?"

Would this have been published in the assumption that this falsehood would have been challenged by readers? Comments?

Richard James
NOTL

Editor's note:

Hi Richard, thanks for your letter. We fact-check objective claims where possible, but don't have the resources to fully verify every letter. We aim to balance free expression with preventing harmful misinformation, and we do not publish hate speech or Holocaust denial. Most letters are subjective opinions and should be read as such. We also welcome responses.



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

**Japan's tallest mountain,
it's actually a volcano
that hasn't erupted since 1707.**

Last issue category: THE TENTH

Clue: In 2023 this girls' name was the 10th-most popular in the U.S. — dad Xenophilus Lovegood was ahead of his time.

Answer: What is Luna?

Answered first by: Sue Rautenberg

Also answered correctly (in order) by:
Bob Wheatley, Lynda Collet, Hugh Lundy,
Jeff Lake, Esther VanGorder, Nick D'Amore,
Donna Pearce, Emma Balsas, Jim Dandy,
Wade Durling, Marla Percy, Catherine Clarke,
Margie Enns, Sheila Meloche, Nancy Rocca

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(Subject line: Riddle me this)

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Greatest architect **believed in nature,** not money



Brian Marshall
Columnist

I was too young to have developed any interest in architecture when Mike Wallace interviewed Frank Lloyd Wright in 1957. However, when I read the transcript of that discussion in the early 1970s, there were several takeaways that have informed my work ever since. Recently, when conducting some online research, the search page delivered a link to the original interview and I couldn't help taking the time to fully engage. This two-part interview, conducted less than two years before his death in 1959, covers a tremendous amount of ground speaking to a broad range of Wright's beliefs and opinions. And, if you can spare 50 minutes, is well worth taking the time to watch (Youtube: "Frank

Lloyd Wright interview"). That said, herein we'll focus principally around some of the positions Wright took relative to architecture and cities in this interview. But, before moving forward, let's understand that by 1957, Wright was completely embedded in the belief that the human spirit required a direct connection to nature and that architecture (supported by aligned urban planning) was one of, if not the principal pillar, required to make that connection. From the interview, Wright reflects, "My church, I put a capital N on nature and go there ... You spell god with a capital G, do not you? I spell nature with a capital N." Although Mike Wallace posed New York City as the example, based on Wright's writings and other interviews, his response can be generalized to be applied to any — perhaps all — existing metropolitan cities in North America. Wright stated, "It was never planned, it is all a race for rent and it is a great monument, I think, to the power of money and greed trying to substitute money for ideas. I don't see an idea in the whole thing anywhere. Where's the idea in



In 1959, the world said so long to American architect Frank Lloyd Wright, who defined modern architecture and championed a style of building that existed in harmony with nature — not in opposition to it. WIKIMEDIA

it? What's the idea?" Historically, he said, "There was a justification for that. When there was no other means of communication than by personal contact. That's when this city ... originated, it originated back there in the middle ages when the only way you could have a culture, the only way you could get social distinction or any education from it, was by ganging up. But, if our modern improvements are advantageous, we can't get it here in the city anymore." Wright believed that cities needed to be fundamentally rethought to allow for the concentration of properly designed organic highrise dwellings integrated with natural plantings within the residential zone that would promote the opportunity for everyone to experience and receive the benefits of his "church" and that all service ("commodity") zones should be at least a kilometer from the residential district. Now, in 1957, Wright had no access to the recent studies that have identified highrise buildings as creating social isolation. That said, his original organic

concept criteria should still be the basic platform for urban design overtures. Let's move on to Wright's position on architectural design. He stated, "It is not their [the American people] job to build, it's mine. And I think they should have a right to look to their architects for what they should build and how they should build it." Responding to Wallace's question of how he would like to change the way we live, Wright replied, "I wouldn't like to change, so much, the way we live as what we live in, and how we live in it. We are shifting in what we live in now; we don't really live in it. We don't really understand what it is to live in an organic building with organic character." "I would like to make it appropriate to the Declaration of Independence, to the centre line of our freedom," he continued. "I'd like to have a free architecture. I'd like to have architecture that belonged where you see it standing and as a grace to the landscape instead of a disgrace." And perhaps most powerful is Wright's qualification that architecture should be a "grace to the landscape." And, here in NOTL, how many of the recent development applications can be said to fulfil that criteria? Finally, speaking to the "common man" or collectively grouped as the "mob," Wright stated, "I believe that what you call the common man is what I call the common man who believes in nothing he can't see, and he can't see anything he can't put his hands on. He is a block to progress." "I don't think the mob knows anything of architecture, cares anything about it ... I don't think architecture is for the mob; it certainly isn't for education. Education knows nothing of it. And very few architects in the world know anything about it." "For 500 years, what we call architecture has been phony ... In the sense it was not innate, it wasn't organic and it didn't have the character of nature." "Humanity to me is not a mob. The mob is a degeneration of humanity. The mob is humanity going the wrong way," he concluded. Nuff said. Brian Marshall is a NOTL realtor, author and expert consultant on architectural design, restoration and heritage.



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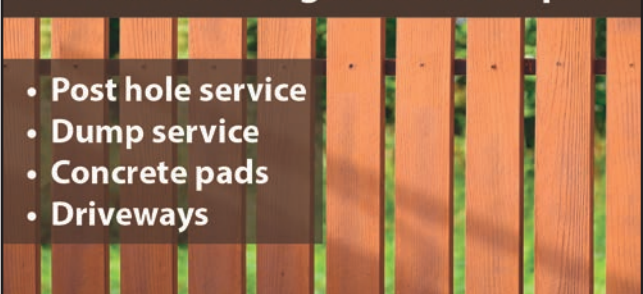
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We didn't choose English — we just got lucky



ROSS'S RAMBLINGS

Ross Robinson
Columnist

Rule Britannia and all that patriotic stuff. Lucky us, eh?

Having English as our mother tongue was not a conscious choice, or a wise decision. While biding time in our mother's womb, we weren't given a sheet and the opportunity to select a preferred language.

Not a coincidence. Just plain old dumb luck. And yes, perhaps I am overthinking this.

Not a combination of circumstances, and not wise thinking. We are so lucky that English kind of rules.

Think about how much easier our lives are because our mother tongue has

become the internationally accepted "go-to" means of communication. Not Esperanto, not Spanish, not Mandarin, not Russian and not Arabic.

As a pretentious British boss of mine said many years ago when I asked him if I should learn German while working in Germany, "Ross, I have found that around the world, one can get on with two languages: English, and loud English."

What a snobby attitude, perhaps harking back to the long-ago days of colonizing by a few countries.

Happily, we don't have masculine and feminine, like in French and Spanish (and other languages).

Of course, there are countless English dialects and accents around the world. How does a Scotsman understand a Texan or an Aussie? The miracle of miracles. Really, and when two people get conversationally wound up after a couple of alcoholic beverages in the pub, the accents really take on lives of their own.

But in airports, in



The works of William Shakespeare helped shape the English language we speak today. SOURCED

academia, and in the world of medicine, English has for some reason become the dominant and default language.

Speaking of medical matters, it is indeed a challenge even for first language English speakers to navigate the system. I am a bit hard of hearing, and even that presents challenges when keeping the appointment schedule up to date, and during hospital and clinic visits. How do our wonderful newer Canadians manage?

Even the Olympic Games are traditionally signed in

three languages. French, English and the host country tongue. I know, some years it is more complicated than that.

Permit me to relate a real life vignette that effectively says what I am trying to say. In our seven person apartment in the Olympic Village in Munich in 1972, we hailed from seven different countries. Some of us had worked together a lot, and played together a lot

in the Hofbrauhaus near Marienplatz.

As I bid "Auf wiedersehen" to Hans Peter Reber from Ostermundigen, I said, "It's been a great three months, but I wish we had spoken more German, and not English most of the time. I really wanted to learn German." He replied, "Herr Robinson, you wanted to learn German. I have to learn English." Sort of says it all.

Laughter has no foreign accent, and all that.

Rambling off course now, one of my favourite childhood stories comes from a Quebec City vacation in 1955.

I was just a wee lad, and the Robinson family were enjoying the mandatory caleche ride with an absolutely authentic quebecois carriage driver. We were probably not understanding more than a few words of his thickly accented French.

After a few minutes, we

stopped to give the horse a break. On the nearby sidewalk, a lady called out to her dog (chien). She called him, "Viens ici, Pierre." The dog came to her, wagging his tail. Robinson family legend has it I turned to my dad (mon pere) and said, "Wow, even the dogs in Quebec speak French, too."

True or not, it's been a great family story over the years.

Canada is such a unique and great country, for so many reasons. Methinks the bilingual aspect, and our ability to somehow get along, is fabulous.

Downtown this summer, when someone speaks to you in a foreign language, perhaps asking where the public washrooms are, initiate your response with a friendly smile.

Yes, we are so lucky to have English as our mother tongue.

Be kind. Soit gentil.

rossrocket9@gmail.com

Rural roads are dangerous — cyclists, please be very careful

Dear editor:

I read Mr. Hayes' letter last week ("Letter: Why do car drivers control our roads?" The Lake Report), and then headed to the local hardware store on Line 1. I took Line 1 from the Niagara Parkway to the store and returned the same direction.

At the four-way stop at Concession 4 and Line 1, I encountered two other vehicles at the other intersection points and a group of cyclists, eight or nine in number, turning left off Concession 4 and onto Line 1.



Cyclists also need to respect the rules of the road, writes John McCallum. Far too often they don't, he says.

Two of the cyclists collided and had to dismount while the other members of the party manoeuvred slowly and unsteadily around the pair. I'm not sure if alcohol was involved, but several members of the group did a Shaw-worthy impression of operating a bike under the influence.

The intersection eventually cleared, no horns were honked, no insults hurled from car windows. I don't know what the other drivers thought — I just sat there in disbelief.

Most of the line and con-

cession roads are very dangerous, in my view. They are very narrow and have no soft shoulders, paved or otherwise.

Too often I have encountered cyclists riding two or three abreast, chatting and oblivious to what is going on. Electric vehicles are very silent, so these individuals do not know what is approaching.

Intelligent cyclists, of whom there are many, know that in situations where the roads are dangerous and where 80 per cent of the local population is over 75

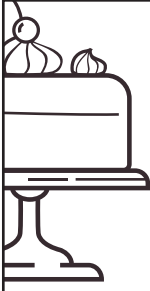
years old and with failing faculties, care and attention is required when cycling.

Perhaps the town could assist by adding paved shoulders to some of the Line and Concession roads and trying to direct cyclists to these safer routes.

Bike touring companies could assist by promoting safe cycling, i.e. single file, and little or no alcohol and, of course, drivers should stay within speed limits.

Blaming one group, drivers, really isn't helpful.

John McCallum
NOTL



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- Across
3. Very evil (7)

8. Feeling of guilt (6)

9. Norway's "Tiger City" (4)

10. Statute (3)

11. Like a shirt or guitar (8)

12. A long way off (4)

16. Save a bit (3,4)

19. Rectify sin so as to expose a former President's wife (7)

20. Outs partner (3)

21. American ornithologist and artist (7)

23. Spicy Spanish banger (7)

24. Civil aeronautics overseer (1,1,1)

25. Unsettled (2,5)

26. Governments in power (7)

30. World-beating writer who was also a WW2 fighter pilot (4)

34. Old records (8)

36. Type of raid (3)

37. Neck and neck (4)

38. Calculate (6)

39. Indignity (7)
- Down
1. Global women's empowerment organization (1,1,1,1)

2. How some suspects are released (2,4)

3. Refuses to admit (6)

4. Financial wherewithal (5)

5. Military partnership (1,1,1,1)

6. Fizzy drink (4)

7. Napoleon escaped from here (4)

11. All over the shop (9)

13. Totalitarian type of government (7)

14. Presses on in chaos to get answers (9)

15. Pudding sounds like a way to start something (4)

17. European Jewish vernacular (7)

18. Because (5)

19. Richard's "Sound of Music" collaborator (5)

22. Defeat (4)

27. An accompanist, perhaps? (6)

28. Foolishness (6)

29. Cuban dance (5)

31. Ugandan despot (4)

32. "--- and the Swan" (Greek mythology) (4)

33. Faculty senior, in short (4)

35. Cupid (4)

Have some fun



Crossword Puzzle

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Last issue's answers

1. S T C M K D H

2. A C C U R A C Y I C E B O X

3. A R R S E W C O

4. I N U N D A T E I K O F I

5. N I T L T V N

6. S I E N A O F F C A M E R A

7. T X U V R U R N

8. I N T E R N A T I O N A L L Y

9. N R O R E T A C

10. C L E A R E Y E D S E P I A

11. T M A L A V S

12. S E E S P D I S L O D G E

13. A A L E E K L E

14. S T U C C O S H E L V I N G

15. S K T T D E E

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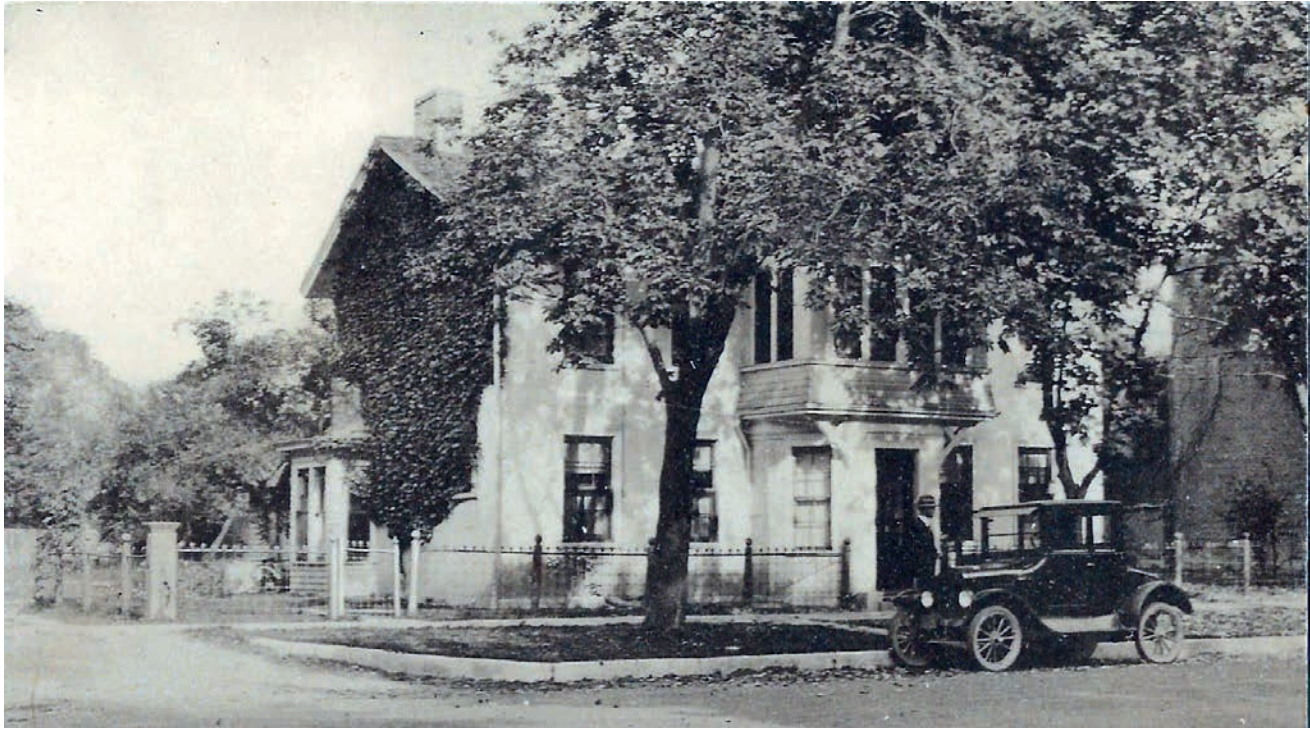
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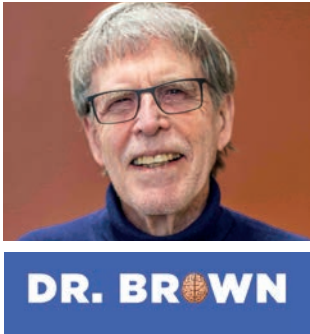
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How neanderthals survived with extinction on heels



Dr. William Brown
Columnist

Ever since the first fossilized skeleton of a neanderthal was discovered in 1856 in the Neander Valley of Germany, controversy followed them.

Were they as dumb as their heavy-boned skeletons and facial features suggested to some, or were they as clever as modern humans, or even close?

Why did they disappear from the record 30,000 years ago, leaving some of their DNA in ours to this day?

Was the rise of our species the reason their lineage died out much as many other large species seemed to have done on almost every continent in the wake of the coming of modern humans?

All questions, some of which can be answered and some which cannot.

A March 2026 article in

Science by Andrew Curry (“Neanderthals survived on a knife’s edge for 350,000 years”) suggests that “neanderthals survived on a knife’s edge for 350,000 years.”

Despite having much of Eurasia to themselves before the arrival of modern humans 45,000 years ago, genetic evidence suggests there weren’t many of them — no more than several thousand, scattered over much of Eurasia in small, vulnerable groups.

Scattering may have fostered genetic diversity between groups, but inbreeding within groups led to an accumulation of harmful mutations — a risk which was the fate of other now-extinct species such as the woolly mammoth, or perhaps some of our predecessor species in the hominin ancestral tree.

Their low numbers put them at risk for extinction in the face of the changes in climate such as the ice age, which gripped Europe between 75,000 and 65,000 years ago that was associated with a decline in their numbers, from which genetic evidence suggests only one genetic line survived to expand again when the ice age receded, only to crash once more after modern



A reconstruction of a Neanderthal, one of humanity’s closest extinct relatives. SOURCED

humans moved into Europe 45,000 years ago.

Crashes and extinctions were probably common among our vulnerable predecessor species, the most striking of which was the crash of early humans from an estimated total population of close to a million total in Africa and beyond nearly 900,000 years ago to less than 4,000, where it remained for well over 100,000 years before beginning to recover.

That crash, had it been total, would have meant no you and me. Like the near-extinction of neanderthals in Eurasia 75,000 to 65,000 years ago, it was caused by severe climate change.

Despite all the foregoing talk about extinction, neanderthals were highly successful hunters of small- to medium-sized animals, as well as very large animals such as mammoths and

straight-tusked elephants, the latter two of which they made good use of for food, building materials for shelters, and to create clothing, flutes and other useful finely crafted instruments and tools.

Success hunting large animals with well-designed thrusting spears must have required considerable planning, co-ordination and co-operation of the group to distract an animal as large and dangerous as a straight-tusked elephant, as well as knowing precisely where the thrust should be made to do the job effectively with the least risk to the hunters.

Remains at the same site in Germany point to hunting other animals such bears, beaver and aurochs.

The movie movie “Dances With Wolves” is one of my favourites for many reasons: one was its illustration of how Plains Indians orchestrated hunts for buffalo and the division of labour and skills required to herd and kill the animals and process them at scale.

Hunting one elephant, such as the one documented 125,000 years ago in Germany, would have required similar co-operation and suggests that some neanderthal groups were larger than genetic evidence suggests

or that several smaller overnight groups may have come together to hunt.

Why neanderthals went extinct isn’t clear. Was it because of an accumulation of disastrous mutations, which might have affected fertility or potency? Or were their numbers simply too small to survive bad seasons for plants and animals to hunt?

What’s obvious in the fossil and genetic records is that humans are the last hominin standing. Several times in our evolution, there were two or more hominin relatives living at the same time.

For example, as recently as 100,000 years ago, there were six homo species (denisovans, neanderthals, floresiensis, Luzonensis, a late version of H erectus, and us) of which, as anthropologist Chris Stringer reminds us, we are the lone survivor.

The more I learn about our cousin species, the neanderthals, the more I admire them. As a defined species, they lasted for approximately 400,000 years (as did their close cousin species, the denisovans).

In that time, they created cave art, flutes, tools and weapons with great skill and did so long before humans reached Western Europe, and as early as

400,000 years ago, were able to create at will and control fire.

But it is the picture of their footprints left on what was a beach in southern Spain 110,000 years ago that I find most endearing. The footprints tell a story of 20 or so adults walking close to one another. Ahead of them are prints left by children jumping back and forth.

Most of us have done something similar at some point in our life and, because the adults were close together and apparently walking at leisurely pace, they must have been talking to one another much as we might have done in our summers. So I hope and so, imagine.

They were clever and survived many challenges but, in the end, there was an end. As there will be for us, whether through continued evolution or, as current wars remind us, we might become the authors of our own extinction. That’s the choice as John Gurche reminded us in his 2013 book, “Shaping Humanity.”

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

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Obituary

Graham John Hall



HALL, Graham John
It is with great sadness that we announce the passing of Graham John Hall, who passed away peacefully on 14th July 2026, following complications associated with Parkinson's disease.

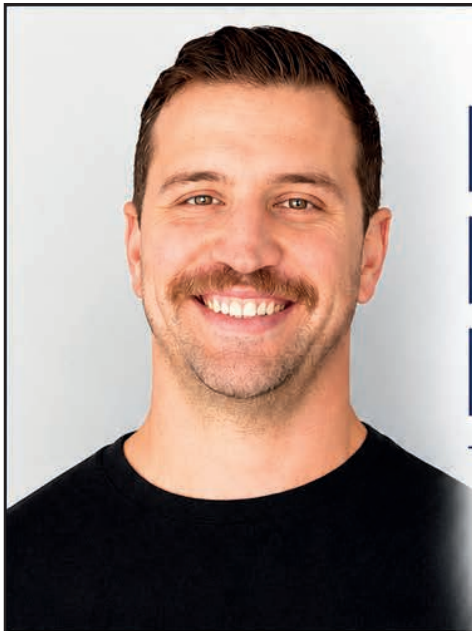
Graham was the beloved husband and life partner of Aldo for 46 wonderful years. He will be deeply missed by Aldo, his family, friends, and all who had the privilege of knowing him.

Known for his extraordinary gift for bringing people together, Graham was a wonderful storyteller whose warmth, wit and infectious sense of humour could light up any room. Time spent with him was never dull, and the laughter and memories he created will be cherished forever.

In accordance with Graham's wishes, a direct cremation will take place with no funeral service. In lieu of flowers, donations in his memory to Parkinson Canada would be greatly appreciated.

Graham and Aldo shared a life built on love, laughter and unwavering devotion, inspiring everyone who knew them with the strength of their partnership. Though Graham is no longer by his side, the love they shared will remain forever in Aldo's heart. Rest peacefully, Graham.

Arrangements entrusted to Considerate Cremation & Burial Services, 26 Nihan Drive, St. Catharines (between Lake Street & Scott Street), 289-362-1144. Online condolences may be made at CCBSCares.ca



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HELPING NIAGARA-ON-THE-LAKE MOVE BETTER SINCE 2014.
Personalized chiropractic care for the whole family.



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CHIROPRACTIC | PHYSIOTHERAPY | MASSAGE | NATUROPATHY | OSTEOPATHY

NotlHealthAndWellness.com
443 Butler Street, Niagara-on-the-Lake
(corner of Mary and Butler)

 **905-468-0614**



2026 Municipal Tax Reminder Notice

Final First Installment due July 31, 2026
Tax Rates as per Final By-Law No. 2026-019

Payment options

- By mail to the Town of Niagara-on-the-Lake (1593 Four Mile Creek Road, P.O. Box 100, Virgil, ON, L0S 1T0)
- In-person or via front or side entrance drop box at Town Hall (1593 Four Mile Creek Road, Virgil)
- Electronically from a bank account using your 19-digit roll number

Please allow up to 10 business days for bank payments to process.

Payments must be received by July 31, 2026, to avoid penalties. A 1.25% monthly penalty applies to overdue balances.

Didn't receive your bill?
Call 905-468-3266 ext. 0 to update your mailing information. We are happy to help!



Pay your property taxes the easy way

- Set up pre-authorized payments, pay online, or use telephone banking.
- Sign up for eSend to receive bills by email.
- Visit www.notl.com/council-government/property-taxes or scan the QR code to learn more.



Notice of Online Public Consultation

Transportation Master Plan Amendment

The Town of Niagara-on-the-Lake is amending its draft Transportation Master Plan (TMP), which was originally released for public comment in the summer of 2022. This amendment will reflect new policy direction, updated traffic conditions, and the latest growth projections for the community.

The amendment will review both current and future transportation needs across the Town, including roads, cycling, walking, and transit, and will update the recommended improvements to help people move safely and efficiently throughout Niagara-on-the-Lake up to the year 2041.

How is this Study being undertaken?

This study is being undertaken in accordance with Approach #1 of the Master Planning Process, as outlined in the Municipal Class Environmental Assessment (MCEA) document (2024). The amended TMP will generally address Phases 1 and 2 of the MCEA process and will form the basis for the Schedule B and C projects identified within it (if any).

Online Public Consultation Opportunity:

Public consultation is a key part of this process, and your participation is encouraged. An Online Public Consultation Opportunity has been scheduled by the Town of Niagara-on-the-Lake, led by Stantec, to present and gather your feedback on study background information, existing and future traffic conditions, potential solutions, preliminary recommendations, implementation plan and next steps in the study. A pre-recorded virtual presentation will be available as part of this feedback opportunity, as well as an online survey, from July 23 to August 24, 2026, on the Town's project webpage available at www.jointheconversationnotl.org/TransportationMasterPlan or by scanning the QR code below:



Continued opportunities to share feedback will be available throughout the study.

Contact us:

If you wish to have your name added to the study mailing list and/or would like more information about this study, please contact:

Mike Komljenovic

Engineering Supervisor, Town of Niagara-on-the-Lake
Tel: (905) 468-3266
Email: Mike.Komljenovic@notl.com

Bob Williams

Senior Transportation Planner Stantec Consulting Ltd.
Tel: (519) 585-7477
Email: Bob.Williams@stantec.com

All information will be collected in accordance with the Municipal Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act (2009). With the exception of personal information, all comments will become part of the public record.

This notice was issued July 23, 2026, and is available in alternate formats upon request.

HOW I **SOLD** MY OWN HOME - IN **3 DAYS!**

I recently sold my own home at 354 Johnson Street, at the corner of Johnson and Dorchester here in town, and in doing so, I was reminded in a very real way what so many of my wonderful clients go through when they trust me to help them sell their home and move on to their next chapter.

This is something I have the incredible privilege of being part of every day in this beautiful town.

My only job has always been simple: to sell your home in the least amount of time for the most amount of money.

But selling my own home gave me a fresh reminder of the emotional side of what my clients experience.

The second-guessing.

*Did we price it right?
Are these the best photos?
Should the video feel more cinematic...or more emotional?
Does this room need paint?
Do we replace that...or sell it as-is?
Should the pool chairs be angled...or perfectly straight?*

And while those decisions may seem small, when it's your home, they don't feel small at all.

Because a home is never just a property.

It's where life happened.

*Where your grandkids ran through the backyard.
Where birthdays were celebrated.
Where difficult conversations were had.
Where dreams were built.
Where chapters of your life unfolded.*

Even after helping so many families through this process, I was reminded how vulnerable it can

feel to let go of a home that holds so much of your story.

And yes, even in one of the most challenging real estate markets in Canadian history, I was grateful to generate a flurry of interest and sell our home above asking in just a few short days.

But what stayed with me most wasn't the result.

It was the reminder that every time someone calls me to list their home, they are not simply hiring a Realtor.

*They are trusting me with memories.
With uncertainty.
With hope.
With a major life transition—and with the property they poured time, love, and resources into.*

And that trust is something I will never take lightly.

If you're thinking about selling in Old Town or anywhere in Niagara-on-the-Lake, I want you to know this:

I understand in a fresh way what this journey feels like.

And I promise to care deeply about both the strategy and emotion that come with selling a home.

After nearly 20 years and more than 1,000 homes sold, I can tell you with certainty: results matter—but so do people.

And both deserve someone who truly cares.

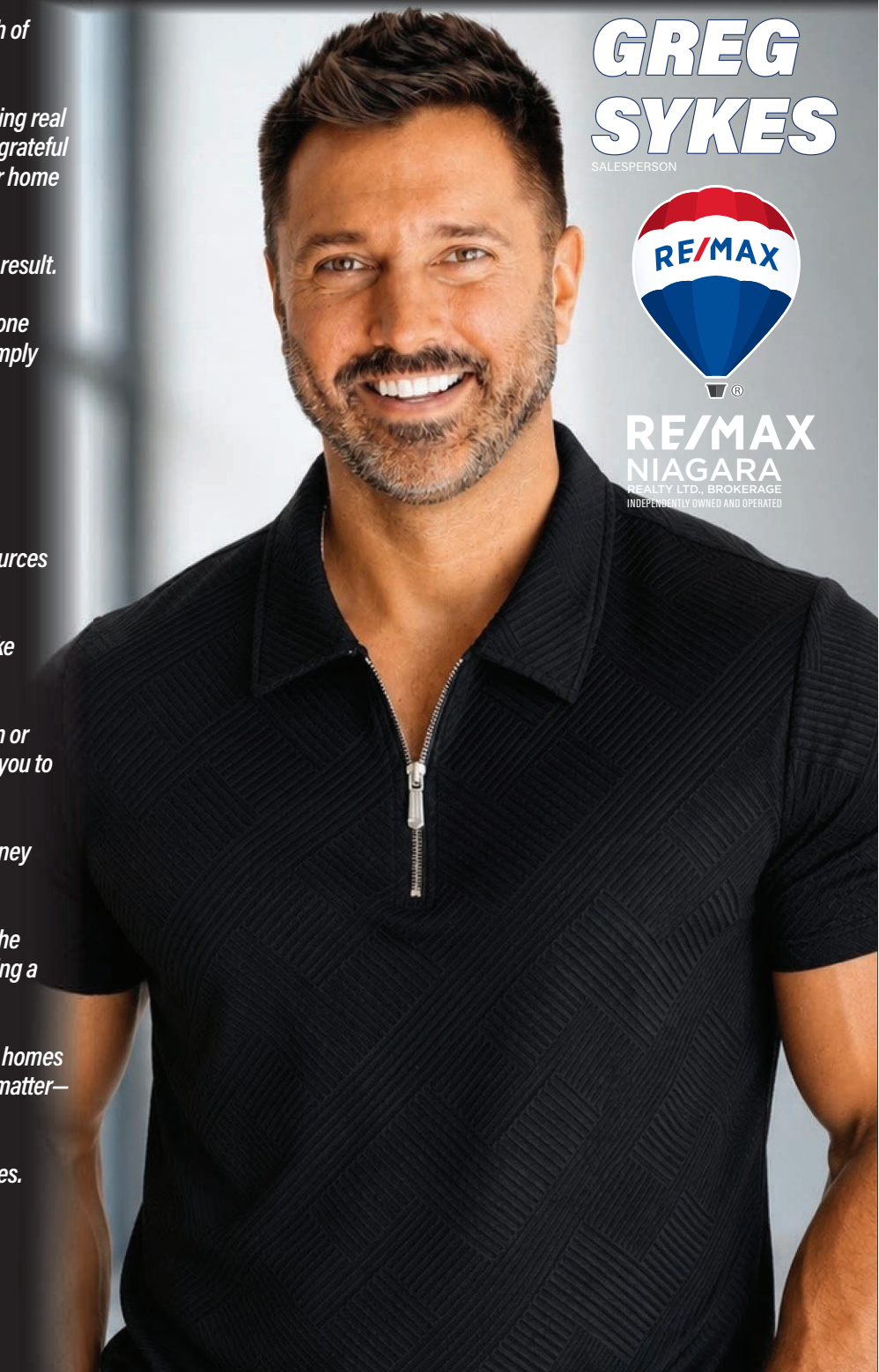
**With gratitude,
Greg Sykes**

**GREG
SYKES**

SALESPERSON



**RE/MAX
NIAGARA**
REALTY LTD., BROKERAGE
INDEPENDENTLY OWNED AND OPERATED



354 JOHNSON ST, NIAGARA ON THE LAKE - ASKING \$3,500,000

FREE HOME EVALUATION

CALL OR TEXT **GREG
DIRECT**

905.329.3484