



Town puts \$95K in leftover grant money in coffers

Paige Seburn
Local Journalism Initiative
The Lake Report

Niagara-on-the-Lake council rejected a plan Tuesday to spend \$95,029 in leftover community and youth grant money, leaving the full amount with the town for now.

Staff had recommended using some of the money to support four one-time requests that either fell outside the grant program's rules or were not submitted through the regular application process.

Those requests included \$8,000 for Friends of Fort George's Canada Day cake funding, \$13,200 for Red Roof Retreat's unbudgeted project costs, \$2,500 for the Niagara Regional Science Fair's sponsorship request and \$2,043.95 for Niagara-on-the-Lake Pickleball Club tournament fees.

Staff also recommended spending about \$20,000 on free public swims for the rest of 2026 and up to another \$1,000 on targeted senior and youth drop-in recreation programming.

The remaining money, up to \$48,285 under staff's plan, would have stayed in the town's general revenues.

Instead, council rejected the spending proposals, leaving the full \$95,029 in the town's general revenues until council decides whether to redirect it elsewhere.

The decision came after council deferred staff's original recommendation May 12, when some councillors pushed back on using the leftover funds for eligible town recreation programs and wanted the option broadened to other

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The battle begins again

Residents pack open house with questions about Ritz-Carlton plan for Rand Estate



The latest proposal for the historic Rand Estate lands includes five three-storey residential buildings with up to 270 units as well as a five-storey hotel. The developer says the units would be under the Ritz-Carlton banner, though opponents of the project are skeptical. SOURCED

Paige Seburn | Local Journalism Initiative | The Lake Report

Is the Ritz-Carlton deal real? Can the land handle the water? And will one of Niagara-on-the-Lake's most historic properties stay closed to the public?

Those questions drove the majority of discussions at a packed virtual open house Monday night, as residents got their first public look at Benny Marotta's latest plan to redevelop the Rand Estate.

Resident concerns ranged from doubting the merits of the Ritz-Carlton Hotel Company deal, questioning why the NOTL community would have no access to the site, its impact on the history of the estate and potential issues with stormwater drainage and sewage.

What's on the table is not small in scale. It is a full remake of the former Rand Estate, the historic property at 144, 176 and 200 John St. E. and 588 Charlotte St., associated with the Rand family from 1910 until 2016.

The new application comes after the Ontario Land Tribunal refused key parts of an earlier plan for parcels 200 John and 588 Charlotte, where access through the narrow "panhandle" became one of the most contested parts of the file. The tribunal raised concerns about whether the route could safely serve the rear lands without harming mature trees and the estate's cultural heritage landscape.

The latest application brings all four Rand Estate parcels into one plan.

The biggest buildings in the plan would be new additions to the estate, while key heritage buildings would be kept and repurposed.

The new construction would include a five-storey, 111-room hotel with banquet and conference space and five three-storey residential buildings with up to 270 units. Existing buildings would house a spa in the Rand main residence, a second restaurant in the Devonian House and a bridal shop in the Coach House.

The proposal includes 514 parking spaces across the site,

with 222 spaces for the hotel and related commercial uses and 292 for the residential component. Most would be underground, including 217 hotel spaces and 264 residential spaces.

The town deemed the applications submitted by Marotta-connected companies Solmar (Niagara 2) Inc. and Two Sisters Resorts Corp. complete on May 1.

The May 25 open house drew a large turnout compared to other municipal open houses, with the participant count visible on screen climbing to 89.

A formal public meeting is set for June 2, in front of NOTL council.

Continued on Page 4

Council kills St. Davids farm storage proposal – again

Paige Seburn
Local Journalism Initiative
The Lake Report

A controversial plan for a large agricultural storage and market hub on protected farmland in St. Davids is once again dead.

Lord Mayor Gary Zalepa attempted to use his provincially given "strong mayor powers" to save it,

but failed when council voted against the project for a second time.

The proposal would have allowed a 4,000-square-metre building for agricultural equipment storage, farm produce storage and an agricultural market at 263 Concession 6 Rd. in Niagara-on-the-Lake. Council rejected the application 7-1 at committee

April 21, before formally refusing the bylaw at council April 28.

The unfamiliar use of strong mayor powers put the bylaw back on the council table Tuesday night. It needed four votes to pass under the strong mayor process, but failed 8-1. Zalepa was the only member of council

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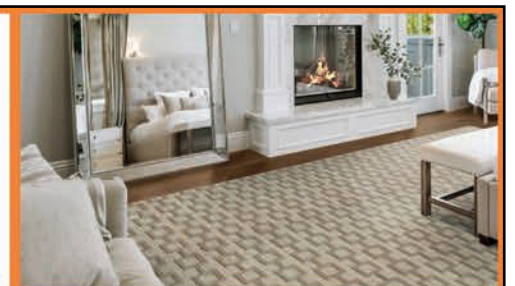
Despite Lord Mayor Gary Zalepa using provincially granted strong mayor powers to bring the application back before council, a majority of councillors stood by their earlier decision to reject the project. SOURCED/TOWN OF NOTL



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Town reserves \$69K in grants

Continued from Front Page

community and youth programs. Several councillors raised concerns about finding new ways to spend the money after the grant process had already wrapped up.

Coun. Maria Mavridis said leftover money should not be spent just because it exists.

“The discretionary grant program is set up for a reason,” she said.

Mavridis said the remaining money should be “put towards next year’s budget,” rather than redirected outside the program’s usual rules.

“My concern is we fund a swim program this year for \$20,000 and then next year, the kids come and say, ‘They got it free last year, what about this year?’” Mavridis said.

“I feel like it’s on the fly, so while I appreciate that councilors have requested the staff come back with something like this, and I appreciate that you came back this fast, I can’t support this,” she said.

Coun. Erwin Wiens agreed,



The Town of NOTL decided against spending \$20,000 in leftover grant money to offer kids free public swims. FILE

saying council deferred the item earlier so it would not be decided too quickly.

“I’d like to see the money go back towards the budget for next year,” he said.

But Coun. Andrew Niven said he preferred keeping the money tied to community and youth needs, rather than sending it into a broader town account.

“(If we) allocate those funds specifically for community and youth needs in the future, as opposed to just a random bucket, I think it’s still aligned with what we, as council, wanted the funds to go towards, and it may be useful in the future,” he said.

Coun. Sandra O’Connor said the town has more urgent priorities.

“I would rather see the remaining funds go to something that is a priority, such as perhaps defending decisions this council makes at the (Ontario Land Tribunal),” she said.

Coun. Gary Burroughs asked for the outside requests and recreation spending to be voted on separately, but council ultimately rejected all the spending proposals and left the money with the town.

paigeseburn@niagaranow.com
paigeseburn@niagaranow.com

Reduction of NOTL council to seven members written into provincial law

Zahraa Hmood
The Lake Report

It’s official: get ready for two fewer seats at the table of Niagara-on-the-Lake council by the end of this year.

The Ontario government’s plan to shrink the municipal councils of Niagara-on-the-Lake, Thorold and Port Colborne is now enshrined in provincial law, with a handful of amendments added to the Municipal Act this month.

This means, starting with the 2026 municipal election slated for this fall, NOTL council will be made up of six councillors and the lord mayor, down from eight councillors — this year’s election will see two less people join council.

The change came through the province’s Bill 100, which became law on May 7. It gives the province the ability to change the size of councils in NOTL, Thorold and Port Colborne.

“This legislative change represents an important step toward implementing a council structure that

supports effective governance while continuing to serve the needs of our community,” said Lord Mayor Gary Zalepa in a May 26 media release.

In March, NOTL council approved a move to voluntarily shrink the size of its council down to seven members from nine, as part of ongoing political discussions about making regional and municipal governments in parts of Ontario more efficient by reducing the number of elected officials.

The town forwarded its plan to cut down its council to Municipal Affairs Minister Rob Flack, but in April, town officials were told it would not proceed for the 2026 election, indicating the request had likely come too late under election timing rules.

Now, the amendment to the Municipal Act will allow the change to go forward.

In the media release, Zalepa re-iterated the intention of this move that he has expressed in the past, which is to stave off

the possibility of Niagara-on-the-Lake being amalgamated into a larger city, either with one or two other municipalities in the region, such as Niagara Falls, or with every city and town in Niagara.

The amalgamation idea arose in February this year as part of a conversation started by former Niagara Region chair Bob Gale, who expressed concerns about governance in Niagara becoming expensive and inefficient. Gale floated it to the Municipal Affairs Ministry in a letter sent that month, igniting regionwide debate, including pushback from NOTL council.

“We appreciate the province’s collaboration on this matter and will continue working through the next steps required to implement the changes for the 2026 election,” Zalepa said.

Chief administrative officer Nick Ruller says the town intends to keep residents up-to-date on the process as it transitions toward a seven-person council.

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Use of strong mayor powers inappropriate because project not related to housing goal: O'Connor

Continued from Front Page

in favour.

It also turned a fight over one property into a bigger question about how farmland is protected in NOTL and how far the mayor's special powers can go.

On May 15, two days after the applicants and property owners, Parth Patel and Sejal Patel, filed an appeal of council's refusal to the Ontario Land Tribunal, Zalepa issued a mayoral direction under Ontario's strong mayor legislation to bring the bylaw back to council for reconsideration.

Zalepa said he used the powers after staff advised the proposal followed the planning rules governing the property and warned that defending the appeal could cost the town about \$50,000 for a one- to two-day hearing.

But councillors were not convinced.

"This is a commercial inflation of our specialty crop soil, where other alternative locations would be better suited for it," Coun. Sandra O'Connor said.

She said the province's planning rules are broad, but NOTL has the ability to use stricter wording to protect specialty crop areas.

"This is what we need to do in this particular initiative."

O'Connor said councillors do not see final site plan conditions so must address concerns now, before a site plan is approved.

"We, as councillors, have three main roles: one is financial responsibility, one is policy-making and one is representing the people," she said.

In this case, she said, the public was clear.

"We've heard a resounding, 'This is not the right initiative in the right location,'" she said.

Coun. Wendy Cheropita called the proposal "almost an abuse of agricultural land."

"This is an oversized commercial development, commercial enterprise."

Cheropita said councillors have a duty to protect the countryside and specialty crop land and questioned whether the farming community actually needs



Council again shot down a plan for a large-scale farm produce storage building and agricultural market at 263 Concession 6 Rd.

what's proposed.

"I have not found any farmers that are in need of those uses," she said.

"I think that's important, because these are people that live here, work the land and protect it," Cheropita said. "So, I'm very much opposed to this project."

"This power is being used for an agricultural area for equipment storage, or display for purposes of sale or hire. Therefore, I don't feel that the strong mayor powers can be applied to this particular initiative.."

COUN. SANDRA O'CONNOR

Coun. Andrew Niven pushed back against the idea that opposition to the project was mostly about how the building would look.

"In the letter that you had sent out," Niven told Zalepa, "it seemed to be a lot of public concern based around the aesthetics of the building."

"It was way more than that," Niven said.

He said the application had gone through several committees and that councillors raised a long list of concerns leading up to this point.

"Sure, somebody did mention the aesthetic side of it. But what wasn't mentioned was all the other references that us as council

and other committees made," Niven said.

O'Connor questioned the use of strong mayor powers.

She said her understanding was that the powers were supposed to be used to support Ontario's goal of building 1.5 million new residential units or the infrastructure needed to support that housing.

"This power is being used for an agricultural area for equipment storage, or display for purposes of sale or hire," O'Connor said.

"Therefore, I don't feel that the strong mayor powers can be applied to this particular initiative."

Town clerk Grant Bivol told council the directive could not be amended and that refusing to receive the information report with Zalepa's direction would not invalidate the directive itself. He also confirmed councillors were not required to vote differently than they had before and remained entitled to use their own judgment.

Zalepa defended bringing the matter back, saying "the best way you defend the land use in our town is by better policy."

He said if councillors wanted stronger rules around agricultural-related uses, those policies should have been brought forward earlier.

"Your policy drives what is put in the site plan," he said. "If there were concerns about agriculture-related uses in certain parts of town, or on certain types of lands, that would be a very good conversation and a policy to bring forward."

A policy like that could strengthen the town's of-

ficial plan and help it "actually, maybe, go win a day at the Ontario Land Tribunal," Zalepa said.

But those changes would come too late, he said, to help the town fight this appeal.

"Not having the policy is not going to help any of us in the next four months as we go to a hearing," said Zalepa.

Coun. Tim Balasiuk said he respected Zalepa's position on policy, but called the situation unfortunate.

"This is one of those situations where, I feel like, it sort of slipped through the fingers," said Balasiuk.

In the end, council agreed with the decision it had already made and is bracing for a fight at the tribunal.

Paul-Andre Bosc, who runs Paul Bosc Estate Vineyard, attended the Tuesday meeting because of what he described as a "lively" discussion with the lord mayor last week, in which the subject of his plan to use the strong mayor powers to bring the proposal back to life came up.

"I suggested that he should reconsider his actions because I strongly doubted that paving over and destroying prime farmland in favour of a large commercial development constituted a 'designated provincial priority' for Ontario," he said via private message.

"Last night's even more lopsided 8-1 vote against the mayor showed me, and I'm sure others who witnessed it, that the ill-advised use of the strong mayors act revealed that Niagara-on-the-Lake doesn't have a strong mayor right now."

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The new plan for the Rand Estate would preserve the main house structure and include a hotel and three condo buildings under the Ritz-Carlton umbrella. Critics have questioned whether the deal is real or a hope. SOURCED

Sewage, drainage and parking are concerns

Continued from Front Page

Residents press for proof of Ritz-Carlton deal

Much of the meeting's sharpest questioning centred on whether the project is truly locked in as a Ritz-Carlton development.

"My understanding is that Ritz-Carlton does not want to put their name on a project until all approvals from the various municipal and provincial authorities have been granted," said Daniel Kelly, a Weatherstone Court resident.

Paul Lowes, principal at SGL Planning & Design Inc., said "Ritz-Carlton has agreed that this would be a Ritz-Carlton hotel."

That answer did not satisfy Stewart Hall, who asked whether the contract was "a done deal" or still in negotiations.

"Is this kind of a speculation thing that you guys are hoping will happen?" he asked.

Lowes said he hadn't seen an agreement, but was assured one exists, as told to him by Solmar's CEO, Marotta.

"They have been working with Ritz-Carlton and my understanding is there's a full agreement by Ritz-Carlton to operate this hotel once it's constructed," he said.

Lyle Hall, chair of the Niagara Foundation and a SORE member, also challenged the size of the residential component, noting that Ritz-Carlton has four residence projects with more than 230 units: Waikiki Beach at 550, Boston at 300, Kuala Lumpur at 288 and Philadelphia at 270.

The next-largest Ritz-Carlton residence projects are in Bangkok, Los Angeles and Miami, with

between 200 and 225 residences each, he said.

"Can Solmar speak to why you believe Niagara-on-the-Lake and the Rand Estate, specifically, can accommodate a project of up to 270 residences, which would make it the fifth-largest Ritz-Carlton residence project in the world?" Hall asked.

Hall pressed Solmar for market data supporting a project of that scale and Lowes said he would take the request back to the ownership team.

Lowes said the residential units would not be owned by Ritz-Carlton, but would be rented through its program when owners are away.

Private access to historic estate draws questions

Terry Mactaggart said the plan misses what makes the land important.

"I've been here longer than most of you," he said.

"I was the person that put together those properties, bought the Rand property, bought the Sheets property, assembled the 13 acres and ran the Niagara Institute for 14 years. So, I get this property fundamentally."

Mactaggart said the proposal does not show "appreciation of the historic importance of this site," representing an "enormous oversight."

The applicant's team said the estate would remain private, with access limited to future condo residents, hotel guests, restaurant guests, spa users and others connected to the property — "a gated residential community," Lowes said.

Residents, experts raise drainage and sewage concerns

Ron Scheckenberger, a

drainage engineer retained by SORE, said he testified before the Ontario Land Tribunal in 2024 and had reviewed the new servicing material.

"It is apparent that the drainage that flows from the east has still not been fully considered," he said. "The drainage criteria have essentially been isolated to the site itself."

He also said a water feature running south to north through the site behind Weatherstone Court appears to be buffered, but not restored.

"It would be expected as part of this development, since this water course does move municipal drainage from the subdivision to the south and across the site, that it would be fully restored in a natural channel form," he said.

Scheckenberger said the stormwater plan controls peak flows, but not runoff volumes.

"Runoff volumes are shown to go up by 20 to 30 per cent and this is because there's an inability to adequately infiltrate the water on the site," he said.

"The flooding on John Street is going to be worsened and currently, there's no plan to address that."

Scheckenberger said the applicant's consultants have also identified high groundwater levels on the property, raising questions about how underground parking would affect groundwater management.

Lowes said those comments would be addressed, with some matters to be dealt with through site plan approval and a future hydrogeological study.

In an email to The Lake Report, lord mayor candidate

Vaughn Goettler questioned why the town is considering another Rand Estate application after council and the tribunal previously raised concerns about key parts of the proposal.

"Why is the developer again asking for essentially the same things?"

Goettler said the new application ignores years of debate, including council's earlier support for a constraint-based approach informed by a report from former town heritage planner Denise Horne.

The applicant's materials say the plan would retain, restore or reuse many heritage features, but also acknowledge some elements would be removed, relocated or altered.

Other speakers at the open house raised concerns about trees, traffic counts, emergency access, short-term accommodation and whether the new proposal is truly different from the development plan previously before the tribunal.

Judy McLeod put it bluntly.

"Last year, the (tribunal) sent this developer back to the drawing board and now, here we are again, pretending that we're back in 2017 and none of this has happened," she said.

"So my comment is simply to the staff and our council, I hope you'll make short work with this application and turn it down."

Residents can review the full application package on the town's public planning notices and planning application materials webpage, under "144, 176, 200 John Street East & 588 Charlotte Street - OPA-02-2026 & ZBA-04-2026."

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NOTL man charged after police shut down online cannabis service

Staff
The Lake Report

A Niagara-on-the-Lake man is among three people charged after an Ontario Provincial Police investigation into an alleged illegal online cannabis dispensary led to the seizure of more than \$1.1 million in cannabis products.

The OPP-led Provincial Joint Forces Cannabis Enforcement Team launched Project DIAGONAL in 2024, targeting an online cannabis service operating under the names “Harmonized Hemp” and “Canna-Trust.”

Police allege the operation offered same-day cannabis delivery throughout Niagara Region and shipped products through courier services across Canada.

Search warrants were executed May 5 and 6 at six locations in Niagara Region and Hamilton, as well as on five vehicles, with assistance from several police agencies, including Niagara Regional Police, Hamilton



Police seized more than \$1.1 million in cannabis and cannabis products. OPP

Police and the RCMP.

Investigators seized more than \$1.1 million worth of illegal cannabis and cannabis products, 770 grams of psilocybin and about \$13,000 in cash, police said.

Jason Muscat-Tyler, 32, of Niagara-on-the-Lake, was charged with possession of property obtained by crime, possession of illicit cannabis, possession for the purpose of distributing and possession for the purpose of selling.

Sean Paul-Farr, 31, of Hamilton, faces the same

cannabis-related charges, along with possession for the purpose of trafficking psilocybin.

Michelle Dolbeck, 37, of St. Catharines, was also charged with possession for the purpose of trafficking psilocybin, in addition to the cannabis-related offences.

All three accused were released from custody and are scheduled to appear in Ontario Court of Justice in St. Catharines on June 8.

In a statement, OPP Chief Supt. Mike Stoddart said illegal online cannabis sales

remain a priority for investigators.

“Unregulated products pose risks to public safety, and the profits generated are often used to fund other criminal activities, including drug trafficking, firearms offences and human trafficking,” Stoddart said.

Legal cannabis sales in Ontario are regulated and must be conducted through authorized retailers approved by the Alcohol and Gaming Commission of Ontario or through the Ontario Cannabis Store.

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Death, Dali and the Doctrine



Reid Whybrow portrays "Death," with makeup by Natalie Ward, during "The Art Thing – A Surrealist Garden Party" at RiverBrink Art Museum. Behind him, Kala Krawchuk appears in a Salvador Dalí-inspired costume created by Page Honor, while Michelle Jankowski embodies "The Doctrine of Decorum," designed by her sister and makeup artist Jennifer Jankowski.
DAVE VAN DE LAAR

Worker rescued from hole at Parliament Oak

Paige Seburn
Local Journalism Initiative
The Lake Report

A worker was rushed to the hospital Friday with a serious injury after falling into a hole at the construction site of the future Parliament Oak hotel.

Niagara-on-the-Lake Fire & Emergency Services responded at 10:39 a.m. to what was initially reported as a medical call involving a 55-year-old man at 325 King St.

Niagara EMS said paramedics found the man suffering from a serious lower-body injury and transported him to hospital as a CTAS 1 patient — the highest level on the Canadian Triage and Acuity Scale, used for patients requiring immediate assessment and intervention.

The worker's current condition remains unknown. Niagara EMS said once a patient is transferred into hospital care, the service does not receive ongoing updates regarding their condition or status.

Due to the "nature and complexity" of the situation, the initial medical call was upgraded to a "confined space rescue," prompting Niagara Falls Fire Department to send specialized personnel and equipment to assist, communications for NOTL said.

The worker was inside



Firefighters and paramedics respond to a rescue call for a 55-year-old man who fell into an excavation site. A witness says she watched them carry out the rescue mission for around 45 minutes. The extent of the injuries is still unknown. SUPPLIED

an excavation area at the construction site.

Town officials said Niagara EMS paramedics were already treating the man when firefighters arrived on scene.

Once crews safely reached the man, firefighters secured him in a rescue basket and carried him out of the hole using vehicle access pathways at the site, the town said.

The worker was then transferred back into EMS care and transported by ambulance to hospital for further assessment and treatment.

Niagara Regional Police classified the incident as a workplace rescue call and

said it doesn't suspect any criminal activity took place.

Police said the Ministry of Labour would be the investigating agency if required, but the ministry told The Lake Report it had not been notified of the incident.

Officials did not explain why or how the fall took place.

Witness Yvonne Bredow said she watched the emergency response unfold for roughly 45 minutes.

"I heard firemen say, 'We need to build a ramp to get him out,'" she told The Lake Report.

Town chief administrative officer Nick Ruller said questions around fall

restraints and worker safety requirements would fall outside the fire department's scope and would instead fall to those in charge of the construction site.

"There obviously are requirements within the industry, depending on the type of work that's being performed," he said. "It's kind of outside our scope as to what their requirements are for fall restraints."

Minor said no road closures were required during the response.

By early afternoon, emergency crews had cleared the scene and construction activity appeared to resume at the site

paigeseburn@niagaranow.com



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NOTL searches for **neighbourhood of year**

Staff
The Lake Report

Have you ever sat on your porch outside in the summertime, looking out at your neighbourhood — the homes surrounding you, the trees and gardens, kids playing outside, people walking their dogs — and thought, “There’s no place I’d rather be than right here”?

Or, have you ever found yourself in a jam after a serious snowstorm, unable to dig your way out of the driveway, only for a neighbour to show up with a snow blower or a shovel, ready to help out?

The Town of Niagara-on-the-Lake would love to hear all about what makes where you live the best.

The town is inviting residents to showcase their community spirit through the launch of NOTL’s Neighbourhood of the Year contest in celebration of Neighbour Day on Saturday, June 20.

In a media release, the



Think your neighbourhood is the best in town? Nominate it for a chance to win a town-sponsored neighbourhood celebration on June 20. The contest is open until June 9. FILE

town shared that this initiative is designed to foster community pride, increase resident engagement and celebrate the unique character of neighbourhoods across NOTL.

Residents are encouraged to nominate their neighbourhood for a chance to win a town-sponsored neighbourhood celebration on June 20. The contest is open from now until June 9.

Anyone interested can submit nominations through an online form available on the town’s website sharing what makes where they live special.

Participants are also

encouraged to upload photos or a short video highlighting their neighbourhood’s spirit and sense of connection.

Submissions will be evaluated based on community spirit, creativity, storytelling and alignment with NOTL’s values of belonging and connection, the town said.

The winning neighbourhood will receive a town-supported neighbourhood party hosted at their nearby municipal park. The celebration will feature the town’s “Play in the Park” trailer, light refreshments and snacks, decorations and co-ordination support from parks and recreation staff

as part of June’s Parks and Recreation Month programs.

“The Neighbourhood of the Year contest is a fun and meaningful way to celebrate the people and places that make Niagara-on-the-Lake such a special community,” said Lord Mayor Gary Zalepa.

“We know there is incredible pride across our neighbourhoods, and we’re excited to recognize the connections, stories and community spirit that residents create every day.”

The online form for nominations is available at notl.com/form/neighbourhood-of-the-year.



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Savvy scholars

Kayla Thwaites and Zach Neufeld, two of Crossroads Public School's passionate pupils, shared some of what they've learned for their Heritage Fair projects with council on Tuesday. The Heritage Fair, organized by the District School Board of Niagara, sees students grades 4 to 8 spend months researching topics related to history, heritage and personal interests. All four school finalists, including Kayla and Zach, placed with the top 25 from across the school board. Kayla presented her project on the impact of Canadian farmers, while Zach talked about the history of the town's Servos family. PAIGE SEBURN

New used book store supports farmworkers

Staff
The Lake Report

Book lovers in Niagara-on-the-Lake will soon have a new place to browse for bargain reads while giving back to the community at the same time.

Virgil's Book Nook will officially celebrate its opening June 13 at Cornerstone Community Church, with proceeds going to the Farmworker Hub, which helps out seasonal agricultural workers in Niagara-on-the-Lake.

The bookstore idea grew out of an annual used book sale, now expanded into a permanent thrift-style shop focused on literacy, affordability and sustainability while raising funds for the hub.

Proceeds from the bookstore will support the hub's work providing farmworkers with free clothing, hygiene products and other essentials.

Organizers say the shop is built around the message "Good Books. Strong

Community." and aims to create a welcoming gathering space for residents and visitors.

Opening day festivities will run from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. and include the chance to browse affordable used books, games and puzzles, enjoy coffee and tea, bookmark-making activities for children and opportunities to learn more about the Farmworker Hub's work in the community.

The bookstore will be run by volunteers and will oper-

ate Tuesdays from 9:30 a.m. to 2:30 p.m., Thursdays from 4 p.m. to 8 p.m. and Saturdays from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m.


Organizers are also accepting donations of gently used or new books, puzzles, games and DVDs. Donations can be dropped off in a collection bin at the back of the church.

Textbooks, encyclopedias and magazines are not being accepted.


Cornerstone Community Church is located at 1570 Niagara Stone Rd. in Virgil.

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Independent's Tony Hendriks named Citizen of the Year

Zahraa Hmood
The Lake Report

Tony Hendriks is marking 36 years since he began working at only grocery store that lives in Niagara-on-the-Lake's busy downtown core — and his longtime efforts have not gone unnoticed.

At the Niagara-on-the-Lake Chamber of Commerce's latest Business Achievement Awards, Hendriks was declared Citizen of the Year for 2026, in recognition of his more than three decades running the show at Hendriks Independent Grocer on Queen Street.

Hendriks says his win came as a big shock.

"I did not expect to win," he told The Lake Report. "I've just considered myself always just a local grocer and doing what I can for the town and getting involved with different activities, supporting different, great organizations and groups."

The Lord Mayor's Award

of Excellence for Citizen of the Year, among several other awards, was presented at the Business Achievement Awards ceremony on May 20, where the lord mayor himself, Gary Zalepa, announced the winner and congratulated Hendriks.

"It took a few moments to have it register in my brain that they called my name," Hendriks said. "It was a very surreal moment to hear your name called for that prestigious an honor."

He was up against two other finalists in his category, including artist Trisha Romance and Shaw Festival executive director Tim Jennings.

"Tricia is quintessential Niagara-on-the-Lake. She's really the heart and soul of our town," he said. "And Tim, the Shaw Festival is the driving force behind the town and has been for decades. I think highly of all the work that he's done for the Shaw and the town."

The owner of Hendriks Independent Grocer started

working at the grocery store in 1990 as store manager, back when it was De Laet Valu-mart, owned by his uncle, Adrian de Laet. In 1999, he purchased the franchise with his wife and was known as Hendriks Valu-mart. In 2022, the store rebranded to Independent Grocer.

"We do consider ourselves the local grocers of the old town and it is a privilege to have our business be considered kind of the meeting place for locals," Hendriks said. "It's really a hub of communications and interactions between residents. And we're a part of it."

In total, eight awards with given out last Wednesday evening at the ceremony, held at Ravine Vineyard Estate Winery.

Kathy Weiss, the Chamber's CEO, told the attendees that the evening's award recipients and finalists represent "the very best of Niagara-on-the-Lake."

"Their passion, innovation, resilience and dedica-



Tony Hendriks accepts his award for Citizen of the Year during the Business Achievement Awards gala.

tion to community are what make this town so exceptional."

The Business of the Year Award went to Niagara College Research & Innovation, which collaborates with small and medium-sized businesses to help them grow and improve through applied research, including developing and testing new ideas.

It went up against four other businesses, including the Niagara District Airport, the Irish Harp pub, Andrew Peller Ltd. and 2x4 Jam Co.

The Dan Patterson Award for Entrepreneurial Spirit was given to Erinn Lockard, who owns Sweets & Swirls Cafe in the NOTL Community Centre.

Sumie Yamakawa, estate manager of the Inniskillin winery, was awarded the Celia Lieu Award for Excellence in Hospitality and Tourism.

The Christopher Newton Award for Arts and Culture went to Debra Antoncic, the director and curator at RiverBrink Art Museum.

Michelle Miller, committee chair of the NOTL In Bloom Festival, which was celebrated three weeks ago in town for the second time ever, received the Peter Ling Award for Business Leadership.

The Outstanding Achievement in Agriculture Award, meanwhile, was won by

Paul Kent, the owner and operator of the family-run business Kent Heritage Farms.

At the start of the ceremony, the Chamber bestowed Janice Thomson with the honour of this year's Chamber of Commerce Award, announced before the ceremony on May 20. Thomson spent 18 years as the head of the Chamber and has occupied several leadership roles in the Niagara region.

David Levesque, the Chamber's chair, shared on stage with the attendees that the annual awards may be his favourite out of all the events the Chamber hosts each year.

"This one is about us celebrating the incredible community we are," he said. "It's about bringing us all together for a night, toasting to our successes, honouring our own and showcasing what it truly means to live according to the 'Niagara-on-the-Lake spirit.'"

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NOTICE OF ADOPTION

- What:** **Notice of Adoption** for the Town of Niagara-on-the-Lake Official Plan
(under Section 17 of the Planning Act, R.S.O. 1990, c. P.13, as amended)
- When:** The new Town of Niagara-on-the-Lake Official Plan was adopted by By-law No. 2026-30 passed by Council on **Tuesday, May 26, 2026**
- Regarding:** Town of Niagara-on-the-Lake Official Plan Update

What is this?

On May 26, 2026, Town Council for Niagara-on-the-Lake adopted the new Town of Niagara-on-the-Lake Official Plan.

The Official Plan establishes the Town's long-term vision for land use, growth, and development, guiding decisions related to housing, employment, infrastructure, parks, and environmental protection. It also provides the policy framework for zoning by-laws and other planning tools in accordance with Provincial policy and applicable Provincial plans.

The adopted Town of Niagara-on-the-Lake Official Plan supports a complete and resilient community by directing growth to appropriate areas, protecting agricultural lands, and enhancing environmental systems, while balancing responsible growth management with the protection of the Town's unique cultural and environmental heritage.

A key component of the review process was a comprehensive conformity assessment to ensure alignment with updated Provincial legislation, including the Provincial Planning Statement, Greenbelt Plan, Niagara Escarpment Plan, and Niagara Official Plan, in accordance with the Planning Act.

Once the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing approves the adopted Official Plan, it will come into force and effect.

For more information:

The adopted Town of Niagara-on-the-Lake Official Plan is available for review on the Town's website at <https://www.notl.com/official-plan-review>, the project webpage at <https://www.jointheconversationnotl.org/officialplan>, or at the Planning, Building & Development Services Department within Town Hall, which is located at 1593 Four Mile Creek Road, Virgil, and is open on weekdays from 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.

Please contact Planning, Building and Development Services, at 905-468-3266 or via email at planning@notl.com if additional information is required.

All statutory written and oral submissions made on the Official Plan have been reviewed and suggestions incorporated, where appropriate. Further information on the public consultation process, the written and oral submissions received, and how those submissions were incorporated into the Official Plan can be found on the Town's website or the project webpage, at the links above.

What is the next step?

Pursuant to Section 17 of the Planning Act, the adopted Town of Niagara-on-the-Lake Official Plan will be forwarded to the Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing, as the approval authority, for a decision. Once received and processed, the Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing will publish the Official Plan on the Environmental Registry of Ontario (ERO) for additional review and comment. The Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing has 120 days to approve, modify and approve as modified, or refuse to approve the Official Plan.

The decision of Council to adopt the new Official Plan is not subject to appeal pursuant to subsections 17 (36.5) and (38.1) of the Planning Act, R.S.O. 1990, c. P.13, as amended.

Any person or public body that makes a written request to the approval authority to be notified of the decision of the approval authority will be entitled to receive notice of the decision when it is made. Requests to be notified of the decision must include the name, address, fax number or email address of the requesting person or public body and be submitted to:

Regional Director, Central Region
Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing
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Fax: 416-585-6882

Dated at the Town of Niagara-on-the-Lake, May 28, 2026
Grant Bivol, Town Clerk

Reimer's 39 leads NOTL club men's league

Kevin MacLean
The Lake Report

Rob Reimer, a former men's club champion and always a steady presence on the links, was the man to beat in the Thursday men's league at the Niagara-on-the-Lake Golf Club last week.

Reimer carded a 3-over 39 to take low gross honours, one shot ahead of Steve Millward.

Top net scores were recorded by Keith Dexter (30) and Ted Baker (32).

Other prize winners included Brendan Meisner, who boomed the longest drive on #3, and Matt Coffey, who sank the longest putt on #8.

Closest to the pin winners were Tony Sanfelice (#4) and Craig Tunnicliff (#9).

Five players shared the gross skins money pot thanks to birdies. Sharpshooting winners earned \$20 each: Ted Carmichael (#1), Bill Daly (#2), Brodie Townley (#4), Meisner (#7) and Patrick Craig (#8).

Net skins, valued at \$60 each, were scooped up by Carmichael, Townley and Dexter.



Rob Reimer, shown competing in last year's NOTL Golf Club championship tourney, was top shooter in men's league play last week. FILE/DAVE VAN DE LAAR

In Tuesday's Woofs league, Kevin Jackson led everyone with a 4-over 40. Harry Huizer took low net (35) and Bill Daly birdied #8 to win the hidden hole prize.

Ernie Jensen was closest to the pin on #4 and carded a birdie.

Heavy rains washed out the Monday business women's league competitions but on Tuesday the women's nine-hole league was able to resume play.

Sally Miller took top spot with 49, followed by Sue Sherk (also 49). Carolyn Cochrane and Suzanne Watson were right behind at 50.

Watson also won the "closest to the flower" contest on #8, while Deborah Williams was closest to the pin on #4.

The players in the 18-hole women's league on Tuesday battled thick rough and wet fairways, which produced some higher than normal scores.

Three players — Louise Robitaille, Carroll Baker and Yolanda Henry — shared individual low gross honours with scores of 93.

Martha Cruikshank and Tracey Peters were close behind at 95.

Peters also had low net with 73 and added a birdie 3 on #17. Other top low net shooters were Henry and Baker (76) and Cruikshank and Barbara Hastings (77).

Hastings was closest to the pin on #4 and fewest putts were recorded by Robitaille and Henry (32), Baker and Cruikshank (34), and Val Chubey and Peters (37).

The league also incorporated a "blind partners" game, in which partners were randomly paired up and their net scores combined.

Gayle Tanner and Chubey won with a combined score of 159, just one shot ahead of Lisa Allen and Margot Richardson.

With nothing but warm temperatures and sunshine in the forecast for the next few weeks, players are looking forward to better scoring.

kevin@niagaranow.com

NOTL Pickleball Club celebrates 10 years with members' tournament

Staff
The Lake Report

The game that was once the lesser-known cousin of tennis and badminton has become one of the fastest-growing sports in North America, finding a home in communities all over the U.S. and Canada — including Niagara-on-the-Lake.

The Niagara-on-the-Lake Pickleball Club, the town's passionate cohort of pickleball players, is celebrating the 10th anniversary of its formation this year with a special tournament set for Saturday, June 6.

The Tin Cup Pickleball Tournament will take place at the Meridian Credit Union Arena from 9 a.m. to 4:30 p.m., open to members only. It will feature women's, men's and mixed divisions across multiple skill levels: 3.0 and below, 3.25-3.5 and 4.0.

The event aims to bring together club members for a day of friendly competi-

tion, community spirit and celebration. It's open for all to attend and watch.

"If you've never experienced pickleball before, come watch a game and discover why the sport has become such an important part of our community, and why we're proud to celebrate 10 years in NOTL," said club chair Dragana Simao in a media release.

Since its launch in 2016, the town's pickleball club, which started out playing on a handful of courts at the Community Centre, has been steadily growing. As of July last year, it had 570 members, a portion of whom live outside NOTL.

New outdoor pickleball courts opened at the Virgil Sports Park in June 2019. Four years later, in October 2023, the Central Community Centre on York Road opened six indoor courts, in order to meet demand. The club also hosted its first major tournament in the summer of that year.



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MOVING ROADS FORWARD

Notice of Study Commencement and Public Information Centre #1 Niagara Region Transportation Plan 2051 Transportation Master Plan Study

The Study

Niagara Region is developing a comprehensive Transportation Master Plan that sets a long-term vision for transportation to 2051 and beyond. The plan will build on the Region's previous Transportation Master Plan approved in 2017 and reflect updated growth forecasts and transportation needs. It will address connectivity, active transportation, transit, goods movement, and supporting infrastructure and services. The plan will also guide improvements to the Region's transportation system to ensure it is safe, affordable, accessible, efficient, sustainable and able to support future growth.

The Process

The study is being completed in accordance with the Municipal Class Environmental Assessment (MCEA) process. It will complete Phases One and Two of this process, which focus on identifying transportation needs and evaluating alternative solutions. The Transportation Master Plan will follow Approach #1 for Master Plans under the Municipal Class Environmental Assessment process.

Public Information Centre #1

St. Catharines

Tuesday, June 9, 2026

5:30 p.m. - 7:30 p.m.

Seymour-Hannah Sports and Entertainment Centre, Meridian Room

240 St. Paul Street West, L2S 2E7

Welland

Wednesday, June 10, 2026

5:30 p.m. - 7:30 p.m.

Welland Community Centre, Activity Room
145 Lincoln Street, L3B 6E1

Get Involved

Public input is encouraged. You can attend Public Information Centre #1 in-person, or review the materials online starting June 9, 2026, and submit comments at niagararegion.ca/projects/transportation-master-plan-update. Comments on Public Information Centre #1 materials will be accepted until June 30, 2026. Additional Public Information Centres will be held later in the study. To receive updates, join the study mailing list by emailing tmp@niagararegion.ca.

If you have questions or comments, or if you wish to be added to the email list, contact:

Amy Shanks, MCIP, RPP

Project Manager, Transportation Planning

Niagara Region

905-980-6000 ext. 3532

ttmp@niagararegion.ca

Personal information collected or submitted in writing at public meetings will be collected, used, and disclosed by members of Regional Council and Regional staff in accordance with the Municipal Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act. The written submissions, including names, contact information, and reports of the public meeting, will be made available. Questions should be referred to the **Privacy Office** at 905-980-6000 ext. 3779 or FOI@niagararegion.ca.

If you require any accommodations for a disability in order to attend and participate in meetings or events, please let us know in advance so that arrangements can be made in a timely manner. Please contact the **Accessibility Advisory Coordinator** at 905-980-6000 ext. 3252 or accessibility@niagararegion.ca

Notice first issued on May 27, 2025.



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Editor-In-Chief: Richard Harley
Managing Editor: Zahraa Hmood
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Design & Layout: Richard Harley
Advertising: Megan Vanderlee
Contributors: Dr. William Brown, Penny-Lynn Cookson, Patty Garriock, Maddy Gordon, Steve Hardaker, Andrew Hawlitzky, Brian Marshall, NOTL Museum, Ross Robinson, Julia Sacco, Paige Seburn, Kyra Simone, Tim Taylor, Jill Troyer, Garth Turner, Dave Van de Laar, and many more members of the NOTL community.



Peonies pop off

Tony Giorbabo stands beside his Sakura Jishidi Japanese tree peony on his Church Road property, where he tends to these striking blooms each spring. DAVE VAN DE LAAR

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



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BKind Grateful #77: When someone teaches you something, tell them later that it stuck with you.

This tiny column gives tips to help promote kindness in our lives and spread joy and happiness.



Contributed by Patty Garriock

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 - L.M. Montgomery.

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THE TURNER REPORT

Garth Turner
 Columnist

As luck would have it, this column was about to mention Rainer Hummel. You know, the guy with the biggest house in town (cleared to be a hotel), the seven-figure antique car collection, the property development company and oh, so many opinions.

The plan was to question why he trashed the nascent residents' association as they launched a get-ready-for-the-coming election info website. After all, it's good to get people engaged in this democracy thing. No other level of government affects folks as profoundly as the local one.

So, when Mr. Hummel on Facebook accused the NOTLRA of being a cabal of Toronto elitists who published “nonsense” and “peddled snake oil,” plus secretly having a slate of rad candidates to unleash on the town, it was noteworthy.

Hummel matters. He hosted the premier of the province at his estate — the same guy who just creamed

regional council and nipped local democracy. He and the current deputy lord mayor (who will probably be running for the top banana soon) are family.

He's wealthy. He's powerful. He's a patron and philanthropist. He's establishment. He's never shy — like people in Atlantic Canada — about separating heritage residents and those who are CFA: Come From Away. Like me. Two classes.

But wait. There are suddenly more reasons to talk about Mr. Hummel as he uses social media this week to eviscerate your reporter. Ad hominem arguments are always exciting. He does it well.

My most recent crime? Writing about mayoralty candidate Andrea Kaiser, whom I interviewed and concluded is not up to the job. As a successful businesswoman, she's reluctant to run the town and be our voice to senior government on a full-time basis. She's busy. The job doesn't pay enough. So she'd do it part-time. But it would look sweet on a full and impressive resume.

It was a short trip from expressing that view to Mr. Hummel's romp and his clutch of cheerful anti-Garth online warriors accusing me of being trashy, unserious and full of machismo (although I do have nice abs).

“He often writes as



NOTL native, developer and social media warrior Rainer Hummel, owner of this landmark estate, has columnist Garth Turner in his crosshairs.

though he's above this town and the people in it,” Mr. H says of me. “It's as though Niagara-on-the-Lake is a curiosity for him to critique rather than a community he genuinely respects. He's quick to point out faults, motives and shortcomings in others, but rarely offers much constructive thought himself. Sadly, we have far too many people who've landed in our town with a similar contempt for the people who grew up in it.”

See what I mean. It's a timeless trope. Us vs. them. Well, back to the election. Mr. Hummel calls the new NOTLRA election site, “a forum for propaganda” and “more Toronto BS.”

Zing. As we know, Toronto is full of lefties, losers, DEI types and people who rent. Not our tribe.

But the rebel group (now

with 800 members) is pushing back. “I checked with our board members (always nice to get your facts straight) and what I see is no one moved here from Toronto,” counters group founder Stuart McCormack.

“One or two of our group have worked in Toronto for a period of time, although they never sat on council. What I learned is we have a group of people on the board who are well-travelled both in Canada and throughout the world, yet when all is said and done, decided that Niagara-on-the-Lake is the place they wanted to live,” he says.

“Isn't it wonderful that this town attracts such thoughtful people who care about this community and are willing to volunteer so much of their time to try and make things better?”

The site (NOTLElection.ca) is non-partisan, and try as I might to convince them otherwise, the group is steadfastly refusing to endorse anyone or offer a slate of candidates. Instead, they're telling you who's running, what they stand for, and how to get involved.

It remains for trashy opinion columnists to offer an opinion. As much as the powerful might wish otherwise.

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

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Turner has more sneer than substance

The following column was shared on the Facebook group NOTL 4 All on May 24 by Rainer Hummel. The Lake Report requested permission to republish it.

I read Garth Turner's May 14 column in The Lake Report on Andrea Kaiser and honestly found it disappointing.

I'm not writing this as a supporter of hers, as we have different political viewpoints. But the piece was clearly less about informing readers and more about mocking someone who has put herself forward for public office.

It was nothing more than a passive aggressive attempt to diminish a woman for having ambition, and the courage to put her name forward for public office.

The tone throughout was dripping with sarcasm and condescension. The repeated "lord mayor" comments, the digs about branding, tourism and wine, the insinuation that she's motivated by ego or image. It all seemed petty and personal rather than thoughtful political commentary.

People in this town are

already hesitant to run for office because public discourse has become so toxic. Columns like this make it worse.

It's one thing to challenge a candidate on policy or qualifications. That's fair game. But this read more like an attempt to make readers roll their eyes at her before she's even had a chance to present a platform.

What also struck me was the hypocrisy of it all. Garth Turner has spent decades building his own public profile through politics, media, publishing and self-promotion. Yet somehow Andrea's accomplishments and visibility are framed as something suspicious or vain.

Apparently, ambition is fine when it belongs to him. There's also something increasingly tiring about the tone Mr. Turner brings to local issues in general. He often writes as though he's above this town and the people in it. It's as though Niagara-on-the-Lake is a curiosity for him to critique rather than a community he genuinely respects.



Rainer Hummel writes that all candidates in the election deserve to be treated fairly after Lake Report opinion writer Garth Turner wrote a column questioning if she is suited for the role of mayor.

He's quick to point out faults, motives and shortcomings in others, but rarely offers much constructive thought himself.

Sadly, we have far too many people who've landed in our town with a similar contempt for the people who grew up in it. Ninety per cent of the folks who come here from a city are wonderful contributors.

They join clubs and vol-

unteer and make a sincere effort to assimilate and be part of our community.

But there are that 10 per cent that make them all seem horrible.

They find some locals mired in their own jealousies and insecurities and become an angry group of keyboard warriors. How can you possibly be that unhappy?

Whether people support Andrea or not, she deserves to be treated fairly. Anyone willing to put their name on a ballot in this climate deserves at least that much.

Voters are capable of making up their own minds without being nudged toward cynicism by a columnist who seems far more interested in sneering at candidates than engaging honestly with them.

My own recommendation to anyone seeking office is to refuse to interview with Turner. He is far to enamoured with his own greatness, and his column is nothing more than a smug character sketch masquerading as political commentary.

Rainer Hummel
NOTL

Kaiser's focus is community, not her resume

Dear editor:

I am writing in response to the article written by Garth Turner in the May 14 edition ("The Turner Report: The next ambition of Andrea Kaiser"). I have personally worked on election campaigns over the last few years with Andrea. My experience is that her intentions in running for any office are genuine and selfless.

Andrea is a business person with over 30 years of experience in leading and

owning small businesses in our community. As well, Andrea has 15 years' experience in regional and municipal politics.

She has won all four elections that she ran in locally. She has lived and worked in this community her entire life.

Mr. Turner suggested that while others run for a cause or a crusade, Andrea is running because she craves power and wants to raise her public profile. This could not be further from

the truth.

What does Mr. Turner base this on? Not the good work she has done previously as a town councillor or more recently as a regional councillor.

It is evident that he did not go to Andrea's website or take from his interview with her that she is running because she cares deeply about this community — past, present and future.

Mr. Turner is concerned that she will be a part-time mayor. That is actually the

job but if she is elected, I am certain that she will give it her all, whether she is being paid for it or not.

I realize that Mr. Turner's article is an opinion piece and I hope that people take it this way. One man's opinion of a woman he had a 45-minute interview.

He made assumptions about Andrea's intentions based on his own perception of her and not her own words and track record.

Cindy P'Anson
NOTL

TASC Tulip Farm has been a good neighbour

Dear editor:

A year ago, on the opening day of the TASC Tulip Pick Farm on Line 3 Road, in NOTL, heavy rain and mud forced the owners to close their parking lot.

The result was a traffic jam from Concession 2 down to Four Mile Creek.

An unfortunate beginning for owners Frank Boendermaker and Jill McCourt.

We, and our neighbours on Line 3 and Concession 2, weren't happy. Frank and Jill readily agreed to a meeting, listened to our concerns, and implemented immediate improvements.

This resulted in this year's Tulip Festival coming off, from our vantage, without a hitch.

We want to offer our support because Frank and Jill did a great job communicating with us, last year and this year, making changes to improve the traffic flow and

eliminate congestion.

In short, they have made every effort to be good neighbours. Further, a business like this, bringing in a host of new visitors, has to be beneficial for the surrounding businesses.

Bruce and Regina Robb
NOTL



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

Founded in 1971, this bath, body & hair care chain named for two 17th century Brits began as a small shop called The Soap Box.

Last issue category: "J" STORE

Clue: Juice Club was the original name of this smoothie shop founded in San Luis Obispo.

Answer: What is Jamba Juice?

Answered first by: Emma Balsam

Also answered correctly (in order) by:
Jane Morris, Bob Wheatley, Sue Rautenberg, Lynda Collet, Tuija Johansson, Nancy Rocca, Claudia Grimwood, Jeff Lake, Donna Pearce, Esther VanGorder, Sylvia Wiens, Nick D'Amore, Catherine Clarke, Wade Durling, Hedy Wiebe, Marla Percy, Katie Reimer, Jim Dandy, Sheila Meloche

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

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OPINION

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The Provincial Service Officer will be visiting the Thorold Legion, Branch 17 on

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‘NIMBYism’ vs. protecting our heritage

Dear editor:
After reading Peter Rusin’s letter last week about the hotel being proposed on the Rand Estate, it is not surprising that a Benny Marotta development and anti-SORE supporter has expressed the worthiness of a celebration when yet another development proposal by developer Marotta for the Rand Estate is also being reviewed by council (“Letter: Rand Estate hotel is just desserts for SORE,” May 21, The Lake Report).
To begin with, his use of the phrase “NIMBY” is dishonest, especially when used by those personally unaffected by a particular

development (see also my letter “NIMBYism isn’t always a bad idea, is misunderstood,” in The Lake Report from May 20, 2021). This is something the anti-NIMBY friends referred to by the writer seem not to understand and shows only a complete lack of common sense.
NIMBYism, as I understand it in this case, is not anti-development, as some would like to claim, and it appears to this writer that Save Our Rand Estate is basically trying to preserve the historical and heritage assets that have been determined by experts to be located at the site, for the benefit of current and

future generations. It is not against development of the Rand Estate.
The Ontario Land Tribunal in its findings against the Marotta proposal obviously agreed. Unfortunately, SORE and NOTL are, in my opinion, facing a developer who wants no other way but his own, regardless of what local residents or anyone else may think or what amendments may be required and is reported to be difficult to deal with.
This apparent stubbornness has over time led to high litigation costs for those concerned. This of course is well-illustrated by the recent withdrawal of its appeal of the tribunal

decision and hardly supports the evolution of a reasonable subdivision plan as claimed.
The Rand Estate is an iconic and valuable property that is held in high regard by most people and dear to others. But not all, of course. Even so, it is also a property that is special in nature and any development should take this honestly into account, as well as the surrounding neighbourhood who will have to live with it.
Making rude, anti-SORE and NIMBY comments achieves nothing and in fact shows little credibility.
Derek Collins
NOTL

Ideas to make parking lot fit better in town

The following letter was sent to Lord Mayor Gary Zalepa and members of town council. A copy was forwarded to The Lake Report for publication.
If we are considering a major construction project on the old hospital on Wellington Street, it would be pertinent to look at restructuring that end of Queen Street (Picton).
It would be much better to build a 450-car parking garage on King Street just

above Byron Street, taking part of Simcoe Park. A three-storey with one storey underground and with a similar facade to the current 1812 look of the town — basically, to hide the “look” of the garage.
Simcoe Park could be remodelled to bring some of the statues and monuments forward closer to Queen (Picton) Street. People visiting Old Town, in my opinion, would not walk the extra distance from a parking

garage at Wellington Street.
If a garage was built on Wellington Street, it typically would be used as overflow from the Shaw Festival theatre patrons.
As a further enhancement to Old Town, we could extend 1812-style stores along Picton Street opposite the Prince of Wales Hotel to extend to the St Vincent de Paul Church.
Simcoe Park would have access from the four corners at Queen and King and the

north side. This would enable discussion on the old Wellington Street hospital to centre around other uses along with some overflow parking from Shaw.
This would give the town more parking related revenue, reduce on street parking behind Queen Street and effectively reduce overall congestion. But these are just my thoughts for possible discussion.
Malcolm Newton
NOTL

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Librarians are on **frontlines** in war on intellectual freedom

Susan Elliott
Dr. Robin Williams Foster
Special to The Lake Report

People may still think of libraries as quiet places, but they are under constant threat from well-organized efforts to ban books and stifle free speech, according to a hard-hitting documentary screened here recently.

"The Librarians," shown at the St. Catharines Performing Arts Centre on April 30, documents the struggles that libraries and their staffs face in the United States from individuals and groups that seek to restrict citizens' access to information in school and public libraries.

Screening of the 2025 film, executive produced by well-known actor Sarah Jessica Parker and directed by Kim A. Snyder, was sponsored by the Niagara-on-the-Lake Public Library to build awareness and understanding of the vital importance of libraries in our communities. The near-capacity audience included many regional librarians from all parts of Niagara and Brock University.

Following the experiences of U.S. librarians who have come under direct attack for

simply keeping books on the shelves, the film depicts a deep assault against librarians, funded by nationally coordinated campaigns with deep pockets and murky agendas.

Through the librarians' personal stories and their testimony at intense public meetings, the film shows how those who work in what used to be a quiet profession have become frontline defenders of intellectual freedom and the right to read.

"The film reminds us of how important it is to protect the long-standing role of public libraries," says Wayne Scott, co-chair of the NOTL Library board.

"Libraries provide access to ideas and information from many different points of view and they remain open and free for everyone, even when some materials may be seen as offensive or upsetting to some people," he said.

Daryl Novak, co-chair of the NOTL Library board, says the library sponsored the film to make people aware that restrictions to freedom of speech can spread easily and quickly unless people are aware of the threats.



NOTL Public Library board members Susan Elliott and Dr. Robin Williams Foster say the battle going on between librarians in the United States and those who want to restrict people's access to certain information is finding its way onto this side of the border. FILE

"The only way to make sure that what 'can't happen here' actually does not happen here is to be aware of the threats in other places. The film shows this clearly," Novak said.

While the film focuses on the U.S. efforts to ban books and even prosecute librarians for simply keeping books on shelves, libraries in some parts of Canada have also come under threat.

On May 13, Alberta Premier Danielle Smith's

United Conservative Party government passed Bill 28, legislation that gives the provincial cabinet direct power over how local libraries operate. This is a significant change to that province's Libraries Act.

The new law lets politicians demand that librarians restrict some books from being accessed by children under 15. The politician now gets to decide which books should be withheld, not the local

librarian or local families. Alberta's Coalition of Public Libraries has decried the government's move as "addressing a problem that doesn't exist."

Novak adds that, "The library can be faced with similar and other complex issues. While defending the right of individuals to express opinions of their own as their own, the library itself must also guard against the promotion of any opinion that

might appear to represent an organizational position at odds with library policy."

"At our library, collection development and programming are guided by board-approved policies and professional library principles supported by organizations such as the Ontario Library Association," says Laura Tait, the NOTL Library's chief executive officer and chief librarian.

The Ontario Library Association's stated policy is that this province's libraries "have the important responsibility to facilitate expressions of knowledge, creativity, ideas and opinion, even when viewed as unconventional or unpopular."

The Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms supports freedom of thought, belief, opinion and expression. Canadians have the right to access diverse ideas, literature and viewpoints without censorship, allowing libraries, schools, bookstores and readers to explore both popular and controversial works.

Susan Elliott and Dr. Robin Williams Foster are members of the Niagara-on-the-Lake Public Library's board.

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ROSS'S RAMBLINGS

Ross Robinson
Columnist

It was a rainy weekend as May stumbled to its finish line. Sometimes a drizzle, sometimes steady rain and occasionally “intense precipitation.”

While downtown waiting to rendezvous with my free walking tour walkers last Saturday, I pondered and I thought. Reminiscenced, and recollected. Sort of an auto individual wandering ramble.

For some reason, I found myself thinking back to our lives about 60 years ago. The renowned 1960s, and the 1950s. And even further

back than that, when our grandparents were making their way in what was then an even newer Canada.

Yes, we have it easy now. What progress, in so many aspects of our lives. We have rain-resistant, rain-repellant and rain-proof garments. Back then, I guess people just stayed inside, out of the rain, or they just had to put up with being wet. Damp a lot.

Now, we have special outerwear that we wear to stay dry. And hasn't it been fun to see so many of our local pooch neighbours getting walked in the rain? I still remember my mother reminding me in Winnipeg to “take Rocky out, and give him time to do his business.” But I digress as I ramble. Try to bear with me.

When we returned to our cozy and warm home, I dried Rocky off, and sometimes stood under a hot shower. Until relatively recently, such luxuries were not in the cards. Seriously,

how did we dry our clothes?

The Underground Railroad and the War of 1812 were not that long ago, as I regularly remind people on my tours of NOTL. Yes, it's our history, but in global comparison, what we consider our history is in actuality really quite recent.

Life was tough and a never-ending challenge. Travelling on foot or on horseback or in wagons. Am I the only one who never thinks about this stuff? It was a long way to the West Coast, wasn't it?

Now, we jump in the car to get to work, school or church. How about then, not even a century ago? And what if it was raining, or snowing, or just darned cold?

Let's transport ourselves back, in a ramble to the country. A good number of my ancestors, the first to come to Canada, settled on the land in Saskatchewan and Ontario. Let me ask a very basic question that I



When early Canadians settled, chopping down trees was done by hand with saws and axes. Ross Robinson says we've got it made today. AI

have never really pondered: how did they clear the forests to create farmland?

Please, they could not have chopped down the trees one by one with their axes. Or did they fell them with saws? Impossible. Pray tell me, how did they do it?

And just imagine living

in a homestead that you somehow built on the very windy and very cold Canadian prairies? Adults and children crowded into a very basic structure that kept out at least some of the wind and rain.

Day after day, week after week, and quite a short spring, summer and fall? With insects, blowing dust, and no organized health-care systems.

Let's remember Tommy Douglas from Saskatchewan, the little Prairie giant. He has been voted “our greatest Canadian,” for his selfless work that in some ways defines our country. Universal medical.

Canada is such a great place to live our lives. But what did they use to do to pass the time? Before electricity and Nikola Tesla. I will repeat, not that long ago.

Betcha' didn't know this: Tesla was born in 1856, in Croatia. He was

an engineer, futurist and inventor, known for his contributions to the design of the modern alternating current electrical supply system. Please understand I have no idea at all what all this means.

But just imagine our lives without hydroelectric power. Pray tell, what would we do?

I will now try to conclude this week's Ross's Ramblings with a few queries. An awkward conclusion, but nevertheless, a conclusion.

Life without lightbulbs and television. Life without computers and the internet. Live without air conditioning and home heating. Heated steering wheels in some automobiles. Toasters.

My goodness, I have rambled this week. Let's all take some time to think about the lives of our ancestors.

Not that long ago.

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To preserve NOTL pickleball, players need an indoor court

Dear editor:

I sincerely hope that before the town moves forward with discussions regarding a suitable outdoor location for pickleball in Niagara-on-the-Lake, council first revisits the partnership proposal presented at its July 15, 2025 meeting by the Niagara-on-the-Lake Pickleball Club, which is proudly celebrating its 10th anniversary this year.

The proposal outlined a vision to develop a dedicated indoor pickleball facility for the community.

While I greatly appreciate the town exploring the idea of expanding pickleball opportunities through new outdoor courts, I believe a dedicated indoor facility would represent a far more beneficial and sustainable long-term investment for our community.

In a Canadian climate, outdoor courts can only provide a seasonal solution. Play is limited to a relatively short portion of the year and is frequently interrupted by rain, wind, excessive heat and cold temperatures.

In addition, harsh winters inevitably contribute to the deterioration of outdoor court surfaces, resulting in ongoing maintenance and resurfacing costs.

Recognizing these reali-



The Virgil arena was converted into pickleball courts for a NOTL Pickleball Classic tournament in 2023. FILE

ties, municipalities across Canada that are committed to supporting the health, well-being, and social connection of their residents are increasingly partnering with local pickleball organizations to develop dedicated indoor facilities.

These communities understand that indoor pickleball represents the future growth and sustainability of the sport and offers significantly greater long-term value.

This is an important moment for council. The decision before them is not simply whether to build additional outdoor courts and where, but whether to demonstrate leadership and vision by working collaboratively with the Niagara-on-the-Lake Pickleball Club and community partners to

create a permanent indoor pickleball facility that would serve residents for generations to come.

Such a facility would be far more than a recreational space. It would be a lasting investment in the physical health, mental well-being and social connectivity of people of all ages and abilities throughout our community.

If council does revisit the Niagara-on-the-Lake Pickleball Club's indoor facility proposal, I am confident they will do so with the future needs of the community firmly in mind.

To all present and future pickleball players reading this, I simply say: “Keep the faith.”

Ron Pychel
Virgil

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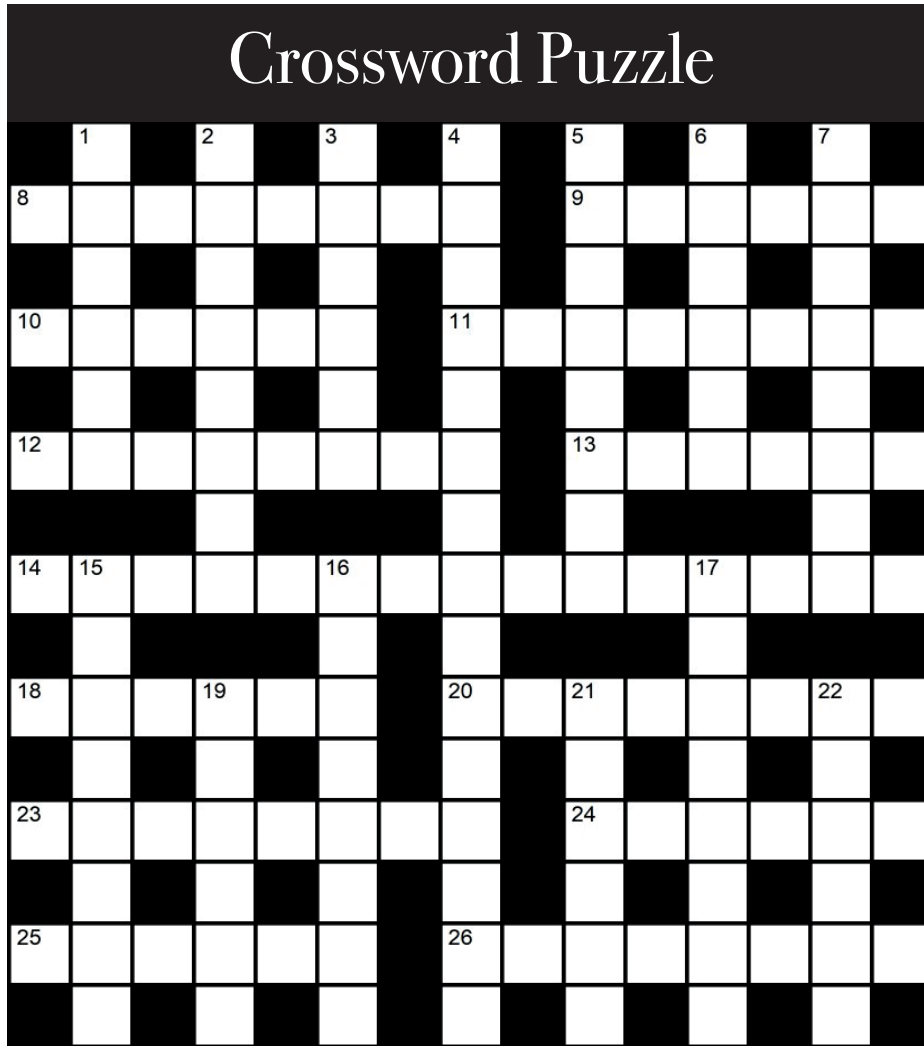
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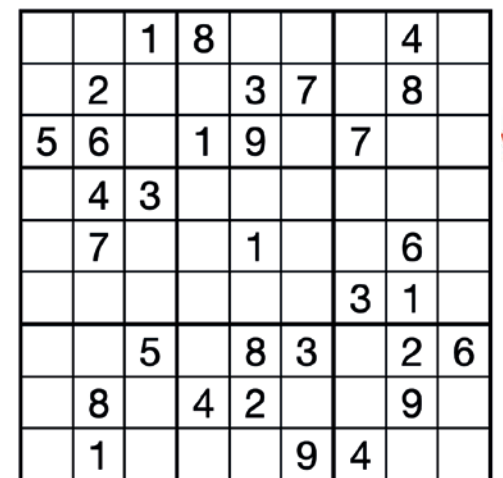
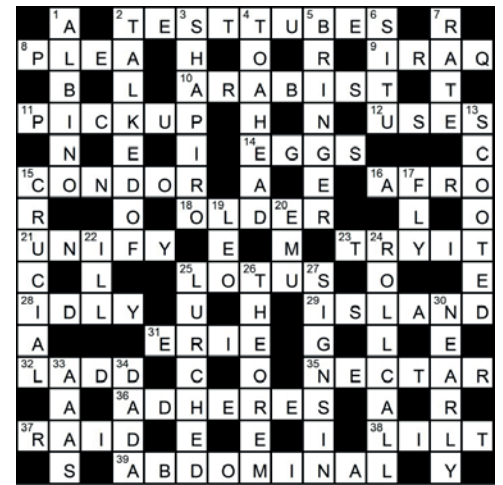
Have some fun



- Across**
- 8. Smallest state down under (8)
 - 9. You can't get out this way (2,4)
 - 10. Sultanate in Borneo (6)
 - 11. Kind of ale (3,5)
 - 12. Switch positions (2,3,3)
 - 13. Victorious WWII force at Midway (1,1,4)
 - 14. Broad appeal (7,8)
 - 18. Knight cap? (6)
 - 20. Or go West, badly weakened (3,5)
 - 23. Old Scratch (3,5)
 - 24. Hanseatic port on the Weser (6)
 - 25. They are acquired on marriage (2-4)
 - 26. Author of "The Rivals" (8)
- Down**
- 1. Sterile (6)
 - 2. Lofty place (8)
 - 3. Dark blue powder (6)
 - 4. An enlarger (10,5)
 - 5. Coach (8)
 - 6. Impulse transmitter (6)
 - 7. Delivery professionals (8)
 - 15. Type of seal (8)
 - 16. Efforts to change society (8)
 - 17. Appeared with Nyasaland on stamps, once (8)
 - 19. Dividing line in a triangle (6)
 - 21. Turn these to gain an advantage (6)
 - 22. Oscillate (3-3)



Last issue's answers



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*Source: RE/MAX LLC rankings for Large Team Residential, 2024. *Conditions apply. RE/MAX Escarpment Golfi Realty Inc., Brokerage. Independently owned and operated.

EXPLORING HISTORY
WITH NOTL MUSEUM

The Old Mill Inn, c. 1980



This building in St. Davids looks very different today than it did when this photograph was taken. Constructed around 1782 as a grist mill, it was one of the first “King’s Mills” in what would later become Upper Canada. The mill was originally operated by Peter Secord and his brother James, and was later run by David Secord, for whom the community of St. Davids is named. Over the years, the mill was operated by several women. But it was Hannah Secord’s defiance, and perhaps the musket she threatened the Americans with, that spared the mill from being destroyed during the burning of St. Davids in July 1814. Eventually, this building was transformed into the Old Mill Inn and hosted notable guests, including Joe DiMaggio and Marilyn Monroe, who dined there while filming “Niagara” in the 1950s. By the late 1980s, the building had fallen into disrepair and faced possible demolition. Rather than lose a structure that had simply outlived its original purpose, it was renovated and transformed into a private home.

A LOCAL STORY

Home is where the heart is.



Moving to Garrison Village in 2025, Christine & Mike knew they were home. Niagara-on-the-Lake not only held their hearts, but it presented an opportunity to give back. They turned to [Niagara Community Foundation](#) to do just that.

Opening the **Christine & Michael Watt Family Fund** gave the couple a chance to invest in the next generation, supporting local students at Brock University & Niagara College.

“You can’t take [your money] with you,” Mike says, “It’s much more fun to see people enjoying the fruits of your labour while you’re still around.”

To read Christine & Mike’s full story visit:

www.niagaracommunityfoundation.org/site/annual-report

NCF is supported by many volunteers including the **NOTL Fund Committee**; a group of residents working to empower local charities.

Committee members include: Mike Berlis (Chair), Nancy Bailey, Pat Darte, Andrew Niven, and Debi Pratt



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All diseases are spread by living organisms – except these



DR. BROWN

Dr. William Brown
Columnist

The recent COVID-19 pandemic reminded us how catchable and dangerous some viral diseases can be for the vulnerable — especially those with weak immune systems and the old. But it was also a lesson in how novel effective off-the-shelf technology for mRNA vaccines could be in preventing serious infections.

Without prior work on mRNA vaccines by scientists in Europe and the United States, the pandemic would have been much worse, as it turned out to be the case in regions of the world where there were no vaccines available to stem the COVID tide.

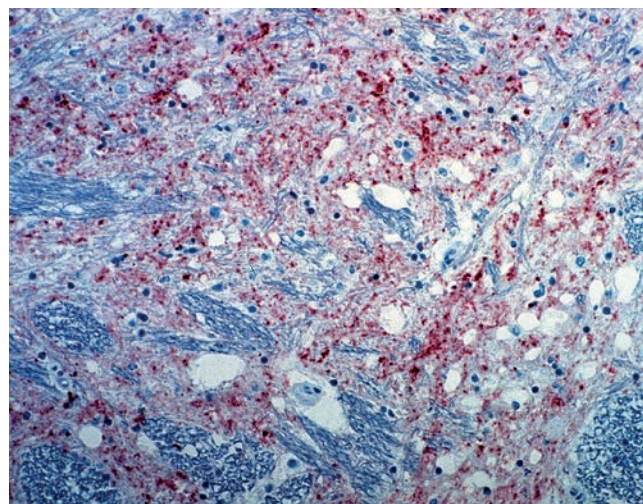
The pandemic reminded us that infections ranging from viruses to bacteria and fungi depend on RNA or DNA. Indeed prior to the

1970s, all infections were considered to be caused by transmissible and pathogenic versions of RNA or DNA.

That assumption was shown to be wrong by strange diseases in such as kuru disease, Creutzfeldt-Jakob disease, variant Creutzfeldt-Jakob disease, Gerstmann-Straussler-Scheinker disease and fatal familial insomnia in humans, and in animals, scrapie in sheep, which later spread to mink, deer, mice, and in cows caused bovine spongiform encephalopathy, better known as mad cow disease, which can be transmitted to humans.

All were later shown to be transmitted by mutant versions of proteins (prions) capable of inducing similar pathological changes in normal versions of the same protein — thus spreading within the nervous system and to other tissues — without DNA or RNA playing roles.

The modern story of these diseases began with the work of Carleton Gajdusek on kuru among the Fore people in New Guinea, who were shown to transmit a fatal neurological disease by cannibalistic rituals in which the brain, or other tissues of diseased members



A section of brain from a cow infected with mad cow disease, which can be transmitted to humans. WIKIMEDIA

of the tribe with the disease, were handled or eaten. The incubation period from contact with infected tissues was several years to the first symptoms, after which the disease progressed to death within two to six years.

Gajdusek showed that the disease was transmissible to chimpanzees — thus was infectious but there was no evidence of conventional infectious agents. For his work, Gajdusek was awarded a Nobel Prize in 1976.

In 1972, Stanley Prusiner began his work on one of his dementia patients who died with Creutzfeldt-Jakob disease. Others had shown that extracts of diseased brains in Creutzfeldt-Jakob

disease, kuru and scrapie could transmit these diseases, but what was the infectious agent?

Ten years later, he revealed that the infectious agent was a protein; a prion, an acronym derived from “proteinaceous infectious particle” — not an RNA- or DNA based organism. His claim immediately provoked skepticism, even hostility, from other scientists.

Despite resistance to his claims by others, Prusiner and colleagues went on to isolate a gene responsible for creating the normal prion protein — destruction of which gene produced animals resistant to any prion disease, and reintro-

duction of which gene made experimental animals again susceptible to infection with pathological versions of the prion protein.

His findings raised a fundamental question: how could the same gene and prion cause several distinct brain diseases?

The answer was the discovery by Prusiner and colleagues that the prion protein came in two forms, one normally shaped and in prion diseases, other versions of the prion in misfolded shapes, each variant of which was specific for each prion disease, and capable of behaving like an infectious agent.

Mutations in the prion gene are responsible for producing some prion diseases. For example, Creutzfeldt-Jakob disease affects about one person in a million. In 85 to 90 per cent of the cases, the disease occurs spontaneously. However, 10 to 15 per cent of Creutzfeldt-Jakob disease cases are caused by a mutation in the prion gene.

Taken together, this was compelling enough evidence for the Nobel committee in medicine or physiology to award Prusiner a Nobel Prize in 1997 for his discovery of prions — “a

new biological principle of infection.”

Despite winning a Nobel Prize, and before that the Lasker Prize for his work on prions, hostility from other scientists persisted.

One vexing problem with prion diseases is that the transmissible prion is extremely stable and very hard to destroy with chemical disinfectants or heat — far more so than for the case of viruses and bacteria.

This makes cleaning surgical instruments or anything that’s been in contact with infected tissues very challenging.

Finally, Venki Ramakrishnan, a Nobel laureate in chemistry, suggests in his 2024 book, “Why We Die,” that abnormally folded prions may play a role in the spread of beta amyloid in Alzheimer’s disease or other neurodegenerative diseases, although there’s no evidence that these diseases are transmissible to other humans.

We’ll see on that suggestion: even Nobel laureates can be wrong.

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.

Mary Eileen Counsell



COUNSELL, Mary Eileen (nee Hunter)
May 29, 1934 - May 23, 2026
With deep sadness, we announce the passing of Eileen Counsell, on Saturday May 23, 2026, at the Marotta Family Hospital in St. Catharines. Eileen will be reunited with her husband of 67 years Allan Counsell, she will be greatly missed by her daughter Jill and husband Jim Lynch, grandchildren Nicole (Jon), Joseph (Sarah), and Sydney Preston. Also, great grandmother to Briar and Anna Preston. Eileen also leaves behind cherished sister Willo (Steve) McMillan and sister-in law Ruth

Hunter. Predeceased by her sister Virginia Haines and brother Bob Hunter. Eileen was born and raised on Hunter Road in Niagara-on-the-Lake and worked alongside her husband Allan on their farm on Queenston Road. She was a long-time member of the Grantham Curling Club and current member of St. Andrews Presbyterian Church. Eileen was an avid golfer and member of the NOTL Golf Club. Eileen and Allan enjoyed many years travelling to Barbados and loved to entertain friends at home around their pool. Most of all, Eileen loved spending time with her family and was very proud of the legacy she created.

Special thanks to Dr. Birdie for her fabulous palliative care, as well as Dr. Yellamanchili of Niagara Health - Marotta Family Hospital.

According to her wishes, cremation has taken place and arrangements have been entrusted to Morgan Funeral Home, in Niagara on the Lake. A celebration of life will take place Wednesday, June 3, 2026, at 11:00 am, St. Andrews Presbyterian Church-33 Simcoe St., Niagara on the Lake, with a lunch to follow. Memories, photos and condolences may be shared at www.morganfuneral.com.



Rodney John Hobbs



Rodney John Hobbs
January 31, 1931 – February 14, 2026
We've lost one of the great ones.

With broken hearts and so much love, we announce the passing of our Patriarch, Rodney John Hobbs. At 95 years of age, Rod passed peacefully at Hospice Niagara, surrounded by his loving and devoted family. He leaves behind Judy, his wife of 57 years, and his children Ray+Lois, Brenda+Larry(Hoffleith), Kent and Scott. Predeceased by his beloved son Brett. Rod was Papa to 8 grandchildren, 8 great grandchildren and 2 great great grandchildren. Special

Daddy to his beloved dog Molly and all the little critters that came before her.

Born and raised in Toronto, the youngest of 4 siblings, Rod lost his mother at the age of 2 1/2, an event which created the strong and independent man he became. Being too young to enlist alongside his 2 brothers and sister, Rod joined the 48th Highlanders Reserves with hopes of learning to play the bag pipes. After a couple of weeks of earnest practice, the band leader approached him and said, "Rod, how about a drum?"! Well, Dad sure looked great in his kilt and beret! As a youth and teenager he often sailed to Port Dalhousie for picnics with his church and Niagara-on-the-Lake for marching drills with the 48th Highlanders.

With Grade 8 education and a strong entrepreneurial drive Rod began his path to become an electrical contractor when he was just 16. Beginning in Fort Erie as a fireman on the railway, he later returned to Toronto to complete his electrical apprenticeship by attending trade school at night. Rod had a successful career with Kudlak-Baird Electrical Contractors for many years until a chance visit to Niagara-on-the-Lake in 1972 saw him and Judy purchase a lot in Garrison Village and subsequently build their first NOTL home. Soon to follow was the opening of R.J. Hobbs Electrical Contractors Ltd. As an entrepreneur contractor Rod enjoyed the friendship and earned the acclaim of many of Niagara's top business men and fellow contractors. Rod treated everyone with kindness and respect and received the same in return. While the electrical business thrived he opened Alliance Security Alarm Systems Niagara. Both businesses were passed to two of his sons and are still in operation today.

Dad was a man of few words and even fewer expectations. He taught his family so many valuable life lessons that have made each of us who we are today. His high moral standards, strong belief systems and sense of humour live on in us, and for this we are so very grateful.

Dad, we will always miss you.

In eternal love, your family.

Cremation has taken place. A graveside service will be held on Saturday, June 6 at 11:30 a.m., Niagara Lakeshore Cemetery, Niagara-on-the-Lake. A gathering of friends will follow at the Kinsmen Hall, King Street, NOTL.

We hope you can join us.

Have an opinion
you want heard?
Email us.



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Notice of Public Information Centre

Pre-Construction Contract No. 2025-T-223

Capacity Improvements of Regional Road 55 (Niagara Stone Rd.) from Line 1 Rd. to East West Line

Niagara Region is undertaking a road reconstruction and capacity improvement project on Regional Road 55 (Niagara Stone Rd.), from Line 1 Rd. to East and West Line.

To ensure residents, businesses, and road users have an opportunity to learn more about the upcoming construction activities, Niagara Region is hosting a Pre-Construction Public Information Centre. The session is intended to provide information on the construction schedule, traffic impacts, staging, and overall project scope, and to allow the public to ask questions and provide input.

The Public Information Centre is scheduled for:

Date: June 3, 2026

Time: 6:00 p.m. to 8:00 p.m.

Location: Niagara-on-the-Lake Community Centre
4 Anderson Lane, Niagara-on-the-Lake, ON
L0S 1J0

The Public Information Centre will follow an informal drop-in format with information pertaining to the study on display and members of the project team on hand to discuss the study.

If you require any accommodations for a disability in order to attend and participate in meetings or events, please let us know in advance so that arrangements can be made in a timely manner. Please contact the **Accessibility Advisory Coordinator** at 905-980-6000 ext. 3252 or accessibility@niagararegion.ca.

In the meantime, you are encouraged to forward any comments or concerns you may have, in writing, to:

Alex Villella, C.E.T.

Project Manager (Niagara Region)
alex.villella@niagararegion.ca



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enormous privilege to be part of such an important chapter in
people's lives.*

*Especially over the last seven years since moving right into the
heart of town, Niagara-on-the-Lake has become so much more
than just the place I work it's become home. And truthfully, this
community has quite literally changed my life.*

*On a lighter note many of you have been politely (and not so
politely) telling me for a while that it might be time for a new
headshot.*

So I listened.

*While this isn't quite the photo you'll eventually see on my signs
around, I figured it was at least a step in the right direction.*

*Thank you for your trust, your support, your referrals, and all the
kind chats around town over the years.*

Have a wonderful week everyone — and I'll see you around town.

Greg

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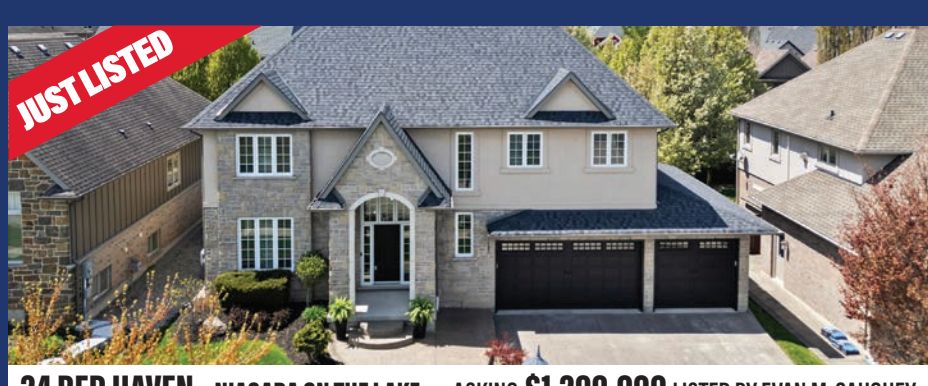
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