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NOTL women honoured | Page 9

Vol. 9, Issue 45 | Canada's most-awarded community newspaper | November 12, 2026



Frank Campion.

Frank Campion appointed as region's new chair

Paige Seburn
Local Journalism Initiative
The Lake Report

Incoming lord mayor Vaughn Goettler wants answers about new Niagara regional chair Frank Campion's position on amalgamation.

Campion, Welland's outgoing mayor, was announced on Tuesday as the new chair, as appointed by the province. This comes several months after reversing his support for a plan to replace Niagara's 12 municipalities with four larger cities.

In February, Campion called the four-city model "the right path forward," but by March, he was backing a proposal to keep all 12 municipalities intact while reducing the number of elected officials.

Unlike in the past, when regional councillors chose their chair, the province now makes the appointment. Campion was announced as the new chair along with

Continued on Page 2

What war leaves behind

Ceremonies in Old Town and Queenston honour those who fought for us

Julia Sacco
The Lake Report

Marlene Bridgman's father never went overseas during the Second World War, but his military service left him with hearing problems that lasted the rest of his life.

At the Queenston cenotaph Wednesday, she was among those remembering the sacrifices made by family, friends and neighbours — and the effects of war that endured long after the fighting stopped.

"He didn't make it overseas because he was colourblind, but he worked on planes out west and from that he was left with hearing issues," Bridgman said. "He dealt with that the rest of his life."

Residents and visitors gathered for Remembrance Day ceremonies in Queenston and Old Town, bringing their own connections to military service and a

Continued on Page 14



Stan Harrington, a member of Royal Canadian Legion Branch 124, raises the Canadian flag over Queen Street as piper Callum Sanderson plays Amazing Grace in the town's annual Remembrance Day ceremony on Wednesday, Nov. 11. **See our special Remembrance Day section on Pages 12-17.** DAVE VAN DE LAAR

Landscape of Nations ceremony honours Indigenous veterans

Andrew Hawlitzky
The Lake Report

Terri Monture was 12 when she asked her grandmother, a Six Nations nurse who served in France during the First World War, about the hardest part of war.

"Listening to them cry for their mothers at night," Edith Anderson Monture told her.

Terri Monture repeated her grandmother's words on Saturday at the Landscape of Nations Memorial in Queenston Heights Park, where she accepted a posthumous honour for her grandmother.

The Niagara Academy for Indigenous Relations honoured Monture and two other veterans at its eighth annual Valour and Victory ceremony. The memorial was unveiled 10 years ago to recognize the First Nations warriors who fought as allies of the British in the War of 1812.

Sam Smith, 81, a Seneca veteran from the Cattaraugus territory, was drafted into the U.S. Army and stationed in Hawaii in the mid-1960s, during the Vietnam War.

"One night at 11 o'clock, there was a battalion forma-

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Terri Monture greets dignitaries who attended the Valour and Victory ceremony. DAVE VAN DE LAAR


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Goettler hopeful governments can work together

Continued from Front Page

seven other chairs of regions and districts across Ontario, all appointed by Premier Doug Ford's government.

Campion will lead a smaller regional council made up of Niagara's 12 mayors and will have expanded powers over budgets, senior staffing and some council decisions.

While Goettler said his initial reaction to the appointment was positive, he remains concerned about what it could mean for Niagara-on-the-Lake.

"I think amalgamation for Niagara-on-the-Lake is a clear and ever-present danger and that hasn't changed," he told The Lake Report.

Asked whether he trusts Campion's commitment to preserving Niagara's municipalities, Goettler said he needs to speak with him first.

"I'm not in favour of amalgamation, so I would need to speak with Frank and understand better what his view is as to how amalgamation would impact Niagara-on-the-Lake," he said.

Goettler also expressed uncertainty about what the expanded powers granted to regional chairs could mean for NOTL.

In a statement Tuesday, Campion emphasized co-operation between the region's municipalities.

"Our residents expect governments to work together, and that's exactly how I intend to approach this role," he said.

Campion said he wants to explore ways that municipalities can work together to improve services, but did not directly address amalgamation.

Outgoing lord mayor Gary Zalepa, who also sought the regional chair position, welcomed Campion's appointment.

"I know Frank to be very competent and capable and he's a champion for Niagara," Zalepa said, noting the two worked together on regional council for eight years.

Zalepa said he wasn't disappointed about not being selected and plans to congratulate Campion and offer his support.



Newly elected lord mayor Vaughn Goettler, seen here with his granddaughters, says he's concerned what the new Niagara Region chair could mean for Niagara-on-the-Lake's future, calling amalgamation "a clear and ever-present danger." FILE/RICHARD HARLEY

Asked about Campion's previous stance on amalgamation, Zalepa said he wants to see the new chair's priorities before drawing conclusions.

Niagara Falls MPP Wayne Gates said his concerns go beyond Campion's previous support for amalgamation.

"It's not who they appointed. It's the process," he told The Lake Report.

Gates said regional chairs should be elected rather than appointed by the province, particularly when they have expanded powers.

He also raised concerns about what he described as reports that the province plans to issue mandate letters to regional chairs, potentially outlining priorities they would be expected to follow.

"The province shouldn't be running Niagara," he said.

Gates said he wants any mandate letter issued to Niagara's chair made public.

Asked whether Campion's reversal on amalgamation eased his concerns, Gates said the province's influence remains the bigger issue.

"The one thing they can do, that they can't do if you're elected, is they can unappoint you," he said. "That's my concern."

Goettler said he remains optimistic about working with Campion despite his concerns.

"I don't believe that somebody's gain has to be at somebody's total loss," he said.

"So I think if we can sit down and talk, we will wind up with a good outcome."

Campion did not respond to questions submitted by The Lake Report before press time. His office said he was out of town and unavailable for an interview.

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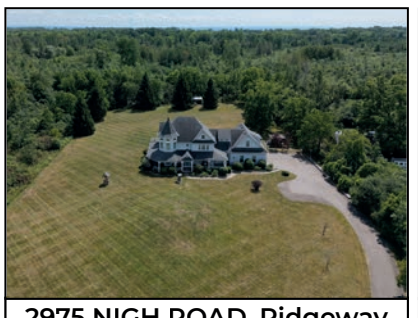
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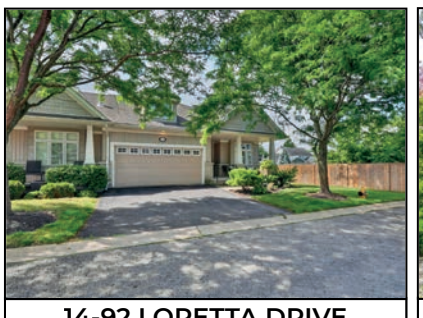
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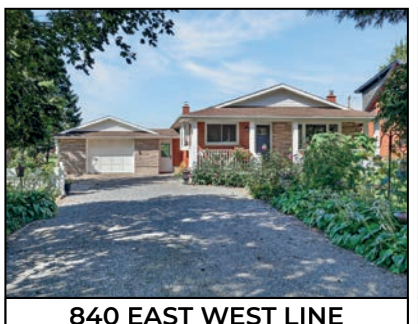
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From left, lord mayor-elect Vaughn Goettler and newly elected councillors Weston Miller and Steve McGuinness took different routes to the same destination: a seat at Niagara-on-the-Lake's council table. FILE

How newcomers turned door knocks and voter frustration into election wins

Paige Seburn
Local Journalism Initiative
The Lake Report

Weston Miller knocked on 5,056 doors.

Steve McGuinness challenged incumbents on their voting records.

Vaughn Goettler listened — and listened some more.

Different strategies, same result: all three won seats at Niagara-on-the-Lake's council table, a first for each candidate. But how did these newcomers get voters to take a chance on them?

For McGuinness, it was a mix of making his case to voters and tapping into frustration with the outgoing council.

"I would say half and half," he told The Lake Report.

He said development decisions, particularly the controversial Parliament Oak hotel approval, were a major source of voter dissatisfaction.

"I found there was a lot of appetite for change and people were very receptive," he said.

Some were so frustrated they told McGuinness they wouldn't vote for a single incumbent.

He pushed back, arguing council needed a balance of new and experienced voices.

As an openly gay candidate, McGuinness said he was pleased by the reception he received, particularly after reading about other Niagara candidates facing homophobia.

"So I was proud of our community in terms of being receptive and inclusive of diversity in terms of who they would vote for as a candidate," he said.

Unlike some candidates, McGuinness wasn't born or raised in NOTL.

He described himself as the "Johnny-come-lately or new-kid-on-the-block candidate," relying instead on his background in finance and accounting to earn voters' trust.

Earning that trust also meant hitting the pavement. He used social media and print advertising, too, but said face-to-face conversations on residents' doorsteps proved most effective.

Miller took a similar approach — knocking on 5,056 doors and earning 4,948 votes.

"Whether there's a direct correlation, I don't know," he said of the near-matching figures.

"In a local campaign like this, door-knocking just seems to be completely essential."

Miller's campaign had about 25 regular volunteers helping cover neighbourhoods three to five times a week for months.

And he made a point of being there himself.

"I never sent the team out without me when I was door-knocking," he said.

Despite growing up in town and being a prominent figure in the Chautauqua neighbourhood, Miller discovered many residents had no idea who he was.

But being unfamiliar came with an unexpected advantage.

"The winds of change were blowing," he said.

Some residents even mistook Miller for an incumbent and began airing their grievances — complaints he could quickly distance himself from.

Goettler, meanwhile, says his successful bid for lord mayor — his second attempt after an unsuccessful run in 2022 — came down to hearing what voters were saying.

"I actually listened and paid attention to what voters were telling me," he said in a message to The Lake Report.

Some questioned his lack of government experience, but Goettler said hundreds of conversations with voters helped him understand their expectations and make up for his lack of experience in municipal government.

"If you respect the voters and listen, you can't go wrong," he said.

"My advice to newcomers to the process would be to start early, get a great team and execute on everything — from door-knocking to meet and greets and events in general. And finally, listen, listen, listen."

Now, with the election behind them, the newcomers will have the opportunity to put their campaign promises into action.

McGuinness says if they fail to deliver, future challengers should hold them to the same standard he applied to outgoing councillors.

"Elections are the ultimate way of holding elected representatives accountable," he said. "If they ran the same kind of campaign against me that I ran against incumbents this time, that's entirely appropriate."

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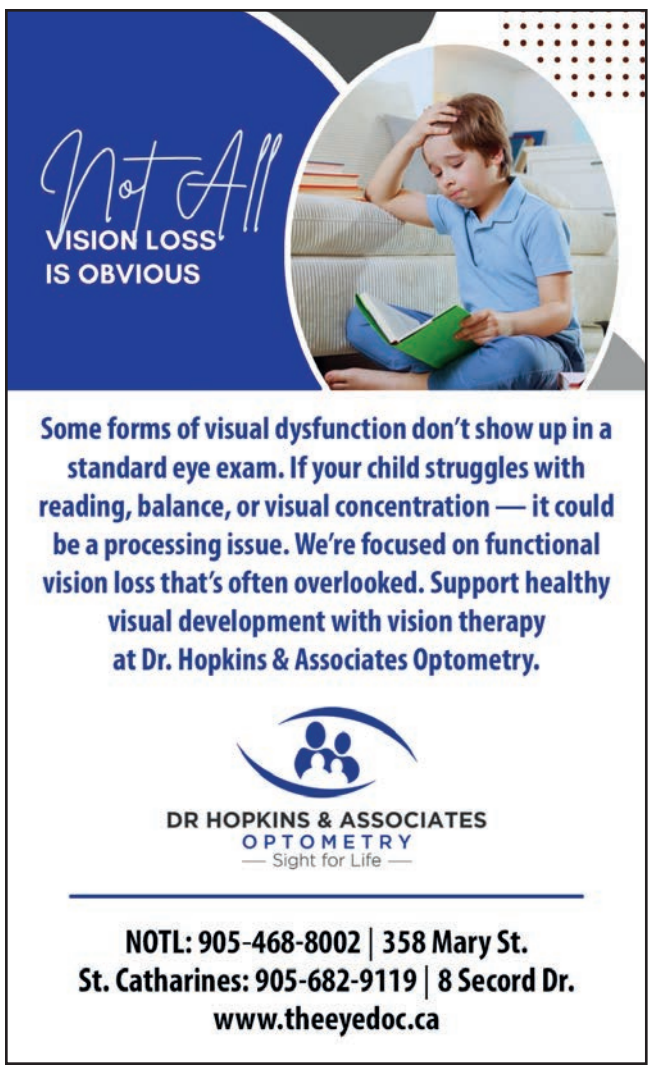
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Lionesses keep Christmas market alive

Andrew Hawlitzky
The Lake Report



Kathy Fowler, Janet Orr and Cheryl White lead the St. Davids Lioness Club's Nov. 7 Christmas market, which Orr expects to raise about $2,500 for local charities. ANDREW HAWLITZKY

Penny Trapnell's husband has been a Lion for nearly 20 years. When she retired, he told her she was a Lion now.

"I said, 'What do you mean?' and he said, 'I brought you a shirt, and there's no other Penny, so you've got to come,'" Trapnell said.

Trapnell has belonged to the St. Davids Lioness Club for at least a decade and calls joining "the best thing I ever did."

Family ties like hers help the club, which had 54 members at its peak and now has 10, stage the Christmas market it has held for 40 years.

Treasurer Janet Orr expects this year's market, on Nov. 7 at the St. Davids Lions Club hall, to raise about $2,500 for local charities, including Newark Neighbours. She did not have a final count of the funds raised by publication time.

Sandy Tee has belonged to the Lionesses since the club formed in 1979 and organizes the market's craft tables. Her husband is the longest-standing member of the St. Davids Lions Club.

"I love the market, and I've bought things here myself," Tee said.

Most of the market's 17 vendors return every year, and Orr said the new ones usually start out as shoppers.

"They were visitors before they were vendors, so they knew what they were getting into," she said.

This year, the Lionesses moved their market up a week so it would fall on the same day as the bazaar at St. Davids-Queenston United Church, across York Road.

"It makes life a little bit easier, and we hoped it would bring in more business," Orr said of the shared date.

Members pay dues to cover the club's costs, so every dollar the market raises goes back to the community.

Newark Neighbours and Project Share, which helps Niagara Falls residents living below the poverty line, receive donations from the club every year.

"If you send us a request from Toronto, we don't even look at it," said Orr. "They have enough clubs in Toronto to support themselves."

Funding guide dogs remain the club's main cause. Orr said the Lionesses have paid for 14 guide dogs over the years and raised the money for the latest one in less than a year.

In 2025, a single guide dog cost the club $10,000 in bingo money.

Orr said the 10 remaining Lionesses still volunteer first whenever the St. Davids Lions Club asks for help.

"We just keep plugging on," Tee said.

andrew@niagaranow.com



A tribute to the swimmers

Michael Pollanen, Attila Manyoki and Bryan Huffman's names are the latest additions to the Solo Swims Plaque at Queen's Royal Park, which recognizes those who've completed the daunting task of swimming across Lake Ontario, between Niagara and Toronto. They were honoured at an unveiling ceremony on Nov. 8. DAVE VAN DE LAAR

What does fewer women on council mean for representation and diversity in NOTL?

Julia Sacco
The Lake Report

Niagara-on-the-Lake's council is going from gender parity to just one woman among six councillors, prompting mixed reactions from women who served during the past term.

Coun. Sandra O'Connor was the only woman elected from four female council candidates and the only incumbent returning. Adriana Vizzari and Maria Mavridis lost their seats, while Wendy Cheropita did not run.

Andrea Kaiser, the town's regional councillor this past term, lost the mayoral race to Vaughn Goettler.

The outgoing council had four female and four male councillors, achieving gender parity for the first time this century.

While O'Connor and Cheropita expressed optimism about the incoming council, Kaiser, Vizzari and Mavridis raised concerns about their experiences during the campaign.

O'Connor supports diversity in gender, age and experience but said her new colleagues' platforms give her confidence.

"I think that I have the respect of my fellow council colleagues."

She would have welcomed more female voices but expects her male colleagues to speak up on social issues and family life.


Sandra O'Connor will be the only woman on NOTL's new council. FILE

With applications opening for eight municipal committees and boards, she hopes more women will participate.

Cheropita said she may apply for a committee and welcomed the new faces and range of ages elected.

"I do prefer a balance of experience, of age and gender. So for me, it's never just about gender. It's about all three of those," she said.

"I'm still a proponent of picking the best candidate."

Kaiser opposed reserving council seats for women, saying people should earn positions through merit and ability.

Her campaign left her disappointed.

"After this particular election, it would be difficult for me to as happily encourage women to get into politics," she said.

She said men repeatedly approached her, encouraging her to leave politics for other ventures.

"I found it a little patronizing," she said. "I wonder if I had been a male candidate, if my ability in terms of time and my business success would be scrutinized as a negative versus a positive."

Women should feel safe and welcome in politics, Kaiser said.

"That was not my experience."

Vizzari criticized The Lake Report's campaign coverage, following her Oct. 23 complaint about a front-page story on an Oct. 15 candidate forum.

At the forum, Steve McGuinness asked whether the two incumbents would "betray your trust again," citing their 2024 votes supporting the Parliament Oak hotel project.

The newspaper led with his comment under the Oct. 22 headline: "Candidates turn up the heat: 'Will they betray your trust again?'"

"I raised concerns about one-sided reporting, particularly a highly charged headline published in the final edition before voting day, which gave little opportunity for those targeted to respond," Vizzari wrote.

She said the coverage did not contribute to a fair environment for women seeking office.

Responding to her complaint, editor-in-chief Richard Harley disputed her characterization of the headline as evidence of partiality.

"That voting record was directly relevant to an election in which you were seeking another term," he wrote. "Residents were entitled to consider it, candidates were entitled to challenge it, and the newspaper had a legitimate reason to report that challenge."

Mavridis said the result was disappointing because of the perspectives and lived experiences that may be missing.

She said being an independent, outspoken woman who challenges the status quo is not always popular.

Citing a Facebook post by someone involved in McGuinness's campaign, she described a "pity party" reference that she believed concerned her decision to defend herself after being told to step aside because of her anxiety.

She wrote that another man said she should "keep her trap shut for the remainder of the campaign" and called her a pathological liar.

"Think about that. A woman speaks up for herself, and the response from men in our community is to belittle her and tell her to be quiet," she wrote.

juliasacco@niagaranow.com











Chime in on the future of Queen Street

Staff
The Lake Report


The public information session is Nov. 17 at 5 p.m.

The Town of Niagara-on-the-Lake is taking a close look at its main commercial, tourism and historical strip and how it should be improved — plus, what changes are needed, acceptable and unacceptable.

A public information session for the Queen Street secondary plan project is set for Tuesday, Nov. 17, from 5 to 7:30 p.m. at the NOTL Community Centre.

This long-term plan will guide how the town protects and enhances the Queen-Picton heritage district as it prepares for the area to grow and change. The goal, the town states, is to manage growth while respecting heritage, infrastructure capacity, the environment and community character.

At a minute level, the plan will look at other elements: improving pedestrian safety, walkability, accessibility, transportation options such as cycling; consider parking needs and potential alternative parking; review how streets, patios and other public spaces are used; fine-tune urban design and landscaping; and more.

"The secondary plan will provide valuable guidance for future investment and decision-making while helping the yown balance growth, accessibility, economic vitality and heritage conservation," said chief administrative officer Nick Ruller in a media release in September.

The Nov. 17 information session is meant to be the first of a few public engagement events, though the Town of NOTL hasn't shared when those next events will be.

This is part of the second phase of this project, which also includes concept development, where the town will prepare and evaluate three potential concepts for land use, building form, streetscapes, transportation, parking, servicing and future growth.

Following this phase, the town will draft the secondary plan, present it to council for consideration, revise, finalize, present it to residents in a statutory public meeting, then share the final documents with council for consideration before enacting it.

The secondary plan was discussed during a few council meetings this past year — it was invoked as a key factor that'll decide how permanent patios should operate downtown, following the end of the temporary patio program last year.

In April, council voted against a short-term plan that would've allowed a select few businesses to reopen their temporary patios. Coun. Maria Mavridis advocated for completing the Queen Street plan first before reviving patios.

"I think we just need to properly follow the process," she said at the time.

The public information session will be held in the community centre's Simpson Room. To stay up to date on developments in the project, visit jointheconversationnotl.org/queen-street-secondary-plan.

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To Our Niagara-on-the-Lake Community
Like many of you, my family and I have seen the impact of this week's heavy rainfall. It's been heartbreaking to see so many neighbours dealing with flooded basements and damaged homes.
We're doing our best to help as many families as we can.
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Passenger service to Toronto takes off at Niagara District Airport

Zahraa Hmood
The Lake Report



This is the view Charles Climenhage saw outside his window as he flew into Toronto: the flight with Aspen Air Charters took him from NOTL to downtown T.O. in 11 minutes.

A trip that would've normally taken Charles Climenhage an hour and a half — or two-plus hours, depending on traffic — took him 11 minutes last Wednesday.

The real estate broker was one of the first people to fly from Niagara District Airport to Billy Bishop Toronto City Airport with Aspen Air Charters, which is rolling out scheduled passenger flights this fall and winter that take travellers from Niagara to Toronto three times a week.

The Niagara-on-the-Lake airport's CEO says if all goes well, the airport plans to add more scheduled flights this spring, with flights coming and going five times a week.

In September, Climenhage, who's lived in NOTL the past two years, heard about these new flights the Niagara District Airport was launching soon — he continued to check in with the airport, awaiting the new service's launch.

On Nov. 2, when Aspen Air launched booking for its scheduled flights, he reserved a seat on the Nov. 4 flight at 7:40 a.m. — he wanted to attend an annual charity event hosted by the Toronto Maple Leafs that evening.

Right now, a one-way ticket to Billy Bishop airport from the Niagara airport (and vice versa) is $126. He bought one ticket, with plans to take the Go Train back home to Niagara.

The flying experience lasted 25 minutes, including 11 minutes up in the air in a Piper Navajo, a utility aircraft that seats eight people, piloted by Ethan Coates and co-piloted by Josh Hooper, co-founder of Aspen Air.

Everyone arrived early, so they were taking off by 7:38 a.m. and landing on Billy Bishop's runway by 7:49 a.m., the sun rising on another day in the city.

Climenhage had nothing but positive words to describe the experience.

"It's such a wonderful flight. They go straight out overland for a bit to get to a certain elevation, and then he turns the plane directly at the CN Tower," he said. "And I'm going, 'This is unbelievable.'"

The flight service will run three times a week, Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays, leaving from the NOTL airport twice a day at 7:40 a.m. and 4:40 p.m. The plane will fly from Toronto to Niagara twice a day at 8:50 a.m. and 5:50 p.m.

The airport's CEO, Dan Pilon, says people have been "clamoring for" the return of short-hop flights to and from Toronto since its partnership with FlyGTA, which flew people to and from Toronto starting in 2017, was grounded in 2022 due to rising fuel costs and a pilot shortage.

A year and a half ago, Pilon connected with Haskins and Hooper and floated the idea of a teamup. A year ago, the project began in earnest: they began organizing logistics, clearing the scheduled passenger service under regulatory and safety rules and making upgrades to airport infrastructure.

Pilon said the airport didn't have to spend much making those upgrades, and with this service being small-scale scheduled passenger flights rather than larger commercial flights, it "folds nicely" into the airport's current operations accommodating charter flights.

Both Pilon and Hooper said they're excited about the partnership and what it means for their respective organizations.

"We're really focused on trying to be significant to the members of our community," Pilon said. "Aspen's an integral part of that."

"Being able to serve the communities and start this little airline service is fantastic for us," said Hooper.

Climenhage said he hopes to fly with Aspen Air between Niagara and Toronto again, and could see himself flying with them once or twice a month within the next year, provided the ticket price remains in its current range.

"I really believe this is a major step forward for not just Niagara-on-the-Lake, but the Niagara region, and I'd go so far as to say southern Ontario," he said.

To view available flights, visit aspenaircharters.com/scheduled-flights.

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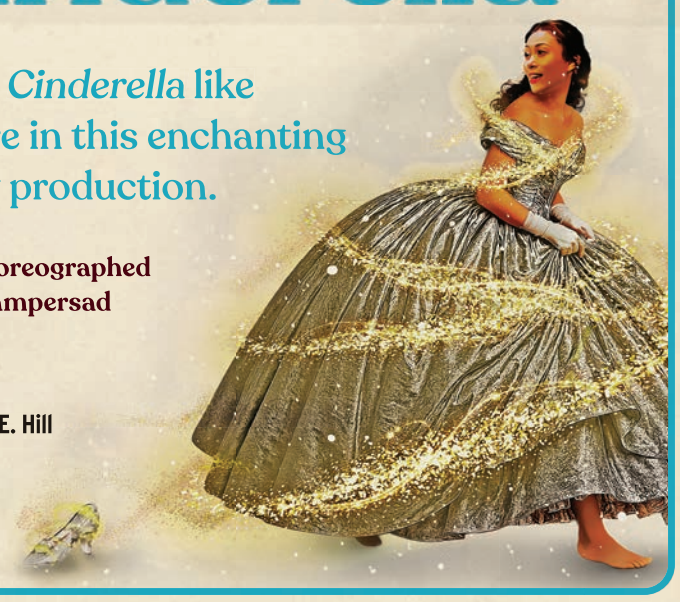
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Holiday House Tour returns next month

Staff
The Lake Report


Tickets for the tour are $65 per adult and support Rotary initiatives.

Tickets are selling out fast for this December's Niagara-on-the-Lake Holiday House Tour, which returns Friday, Dec. 4 and Saturday, Dec. 5 with six decorated homes, complimentary tastings and a new Christmas market at the McArthur Estate.

The annual tour, now in its 27th year, is the Rotary Club of Niagara-on-the-Lake's largest fundraiser. It draws hundreds from Niagara and beyond to admire a variety of homes in town, many of historical significance, all decked out for the holidays.

In 2025, it raised about $211,000 for charity, bringing the event's total contributions to more than $1.5 million.

General day tickets cost $54 for adults and include entry to the homes, admission to local historic and cultural sites and tastings from Peller Estates, Trius Winery & Restaurant, Wine Country Vintners and Wayne Gretzky Estates.

The tour runs from 9:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. both Friday and Saturday. Children 12 and under are admitted free with registration.

This year's tour features six homes:

The Lepp-LoForti Chateau, situated among NOTL's vineyards on Four Mile Creek Road

Ranger's Retreat, on Colonel Butler Crescent, featuring a vast collection of antiques, lithographs and artworks

"Twas the Night Before Christmas," built in 1977 and located on Simcoe Street

Old Ivy Walk, on Prideaux Street, a 19th-century Georgian home

The Kirby House, on Front Street, a designated historic site from 1818

Daisy's House, on Regent Street, an 1898 Victorian home with a classic wrap-around porch and white picket fence

Meanwhile, the evening tour at the historic McArthur Estate, Merry & Bright Christmas, will feature live music, holiday displays, Santa Claus, the Grinch and a Christmas market.

Tickets for some time slots of Merry & Bright Christmas are already sold out on both days, but time slots 6:30 and 7:30 p.m. on Friday and 7:30 p.m. on Saturday are still available. They cost $65 for adults.

Combined tickets for the day tour and evening event, at $105 per person, are also going fast, but some are still available for Friday and Saturday.

As an addition to the holiday festivities, on Dec. 4, Oaklands Restaurant at Riverbend Inn & Vineyard will host a four-course Christmas dinner with wine pairings from 6:30 to 9:30 p.m. Reservations are recommended at participating wineries.

To purchase tickets, visit holidayhousetournotl.ca.

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Chef, entrepreneur honoured at Women In Business Awards

Julia Sacco
The Lake Report





Top: Kimberly Legros, who was born and raised in St. Davids, is the owner of Brunch Beverages Inc., a brand of canned alcoholic beverages. She won the Entrepreneurship Award. DAVE VAN DE LAAR

Bottom: Rachel Schalk is head chef at Bricks & Barley in Virgil, where she's been working for the past five years. She won the Excellence in the Trades Award. SOURCED

Two women connected to Niagara-on-the-Lake are being recognized as leaders in the world of business, specifically in entrepreneurship and the trades, with big wins at this year's Women in Business Awards.

Kimberly Legros, owner of Brunch Beverages Inc. and NOTL resident, and Rachel Schalk, head chef at Bricks & Barley, were announced as the winners of two separate awards at the annual ceremony on Friday, Nov. 6, hosted by the Greater Niagara Chamber of Commerce.

Legros won the Entrepreneurship Award, while Schalk won the Excellence in the Trades Award.

They were two of five finalists in this year's awards connected to NOTL, alongside Alexa Spione, owner of Plumbing In Pink Solutions and a lifelong NOTLer, Antonia Mantonakis, another NOTLer and Brock University professor, and Katie Houghton, executive director of the Willowbank School of Restoration Arts.

Legros said she was excited to be up for the award and was not used to being recognized on such a big stage.

"It's been overwhelming," she said.

The born-and-raised resident of St. Davids has been part of the wine industry for 30 years, working at the LCBO and in sales for several Niagara wineries.

During her time in the industry, she recalls discussions with winemakers about what to do with Vidal grapes as icewine wanes in popularity.

Legros also noted a gap between the few and far between 20-year-old wine drinker and the 30-year-old wine drinker.

"How do we get younger people to drink wine where it's not so intimidating?" Legros asked herself.

During a trip to Costa Rica in 2016, Legros wanted to enjoy a mimosa but found herself thinking, "This is a pain," she said.

She thought about how much easier it would be to have a mimosa in a can. In 2020, she had the time to bring the idea to reality.

Brunch Beverages has evolved over the past six years and now offers six canned beverages at grocery stores across the region.

Flavours including strawberry, grapefruit and pineapple will be available at all Sobeys locations by the end of next year.

Regarding her win of the Entrepreneurship Award, she said her work in the region has helped her business thrive and that she is grateful for the community's support.

"It's been an amazing experience. I'm super happy with the brand," she said.

Over in Virgil, Schalk has worked at Bricks and Barley in NOTL for the past five years and has been in the culinary industry since graduating from Niagara College's culinary management program in 2014.

She says hearing her name called as the winner at the ceremony on Friday was a shock.

"It was really unexpected, but I'm super glad and proud that I won," she said.

"Being in that room, there were so many people for young girls and people entering the workforce to look up to, and to be included in that, especially in the trades and kitchens, where it's usually male-dominated, it's nice."

Looking ahead, Schalk hopes to teach culinary arts at the college or high school level.

"I also would like to be able to branch into community service, whether that's giving back, like a breakfast program at the school or some sort of volunteer type stuff," she said.

When Schalk began her culinary career, she was the only girl in the kitchen, she said. Today, the kitchen she runs at Bricks & Barley has a lot more fellow women and girls.

"It's really nice to see that there's all these women being nominated and there's so many more women in the cooking programs."

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All smiles with Saint Nick



Santa Claus paid an early visit to Niagara-on-the-Lake this past weekend to usher in the holiday season at Regal Florist & Garden Centre. The Sherlocks, Heather, Kathryn, Millie and Sarah, brought three-month-old to meet Kris Kringle himself on Saturday.
DAVE VAN DE LAAR

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‘It only took 40 years,’ golfer hits first ace

Kevin MacLean
The Lake Report

Stuart Young had a good start to his round of golf Sunday morning at the Niagara-on-the-Lake Golf Club.

With a par on #1, a birdie on #2 and a missed putt that led to a bogey on #3, he was even-par through three holes.

Then it got a whole lot better.

Stepping up to the short par-3 fourth hole, he grabbed a wedge.

Young opted to tee it high, figuring he’d need the extra loft to ensure the ball dropped softly onto the green.

Everything went according to plan as he struck it perfectly, Young told The Lake Report.

“The ball plopped on the green, trundled up the slope to the top shelf and carried on its merry way and dropped into the hole,” he recalled afterward.

“That’s worth a gold star,” he thought as his playing partners Brian McKillop, Patrick Craig and Tim Arnott roared with delight, perhaps, he suggested, at the prospect of a couple of free drinks in the clubhouse afterward.



Stuart Young holds the ball that earned him his first hole-in-one. He recorded the ace Sunday, Nov. 8 on the fourth hole at the NOTL Golf Club.
BRIAN MCKILLOP

Normally the hole plays to about 120 yards, but reconstruction of the tee box has shortened it to about 80 yards temporarily.

Still, it can be a tricky shot, with three bunkers guarding the green. And Lake Ontario a few yards over the back.

“It is my first ace and it only took 40 years. I wonder, just like buses, if two will come one after another,” Young joked.

It was memorable and helped him forget about the bogey he’d just recorded.

“Still miffed at missing the par putt on 3, I stepped onto the fourth tee with thoughts of what might have been had I parred 3,” he said. He had visions of a great round.

“Little did I know what was to happen next.” Such is the unpredictability of the game.

In the aftermath, photos were taken and the players shared a couple of snifters from a whisky flask as their round progressed.

Prior to all the jubilation, they had hit the links just grateful to still be playing well into November.

“Trying to get a round in before the winter hiatus, we embarked on the 8:09 tee time and trudged down the first fairway with thoughts of this might be the last Sunday round of the season,” Young said.

Besides his ace, he shot a “very credible” two-over 38 on the front nine.

But, “not wanting to undo a fantastic memory, the group decided to retire to the bar to take full advantage of my credit card and we kicked off the festivities at 10 a.m.”

“The rest, as they say, is a blur on the day and a great memory never to be forgotten — until the next one,” Young said.

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WE REMEMBER
REMEMBRANCE DAY

Fallen in Normandy: The story of Gunner Russell Cooper

John Dekhane
Special to The Lake Report

By July 1944, Normandy had become a landscape of relentless combat, where fire, steel and exhaustion defined every advance. Soldiers moved through a shattered French countryside under constant artillery bombardment. Smoke drifted over the ruins of villages, and danger could be hidden in even the smallest hedgerow.

Yet despite the devastation, thousands of young men kept pushing forward in their drive to liberate Europe. Gunner Russell Cooper was among them.

Born on July 1, 1915 in Niagara-on-the-Lake, Russell Cooper was the son of John and Carrie Cooper. He grew up in Brantford and was raised in a household shaped by strong values of integrity and responsibility.

He later lived at 51 Graham Ave., Brantford, enjoying a quiet, ordinary life. Known for his kind nature and warm character, he was a valued member of his community and brought happiness to those around him.

As war swept across the globe, Russell made a life-altering decision. Determined to play his part in the struggle for freedom, he enlisted in the Canadian Army on June 10, 1940 in Brantford.

He became a proud member of the 12th Field Regiment, Royal Regiment of Canadian Artillery, dedicating himself fully to the discipline and demands of military training. He later sailed to England, where he continued preparations for the decisive battle that lay ahead in Normandy.

Following the D-Day landings, Russell found himself in the midst of some of the fiercest fighting of the campaign. As the battle raged on, Canadian soldiers faced determined enemy resistance, artillery fire and constant danger.

He fought with remarkable courage and resolve, until he was struck by enemy fire. Despite efforts to save him, he died of his wounds on July 5, 1944. He was 29 years old.

Back in Ontario, news of his death sent shockwaves through the entire community, leaving family and friends devastated. The world moved on, but for those who knew and loved Russell, July 5, 1944 remained a day frozen in time — an unbearable marker of what the war had stolen.

Today, Russell lies at the Bayeux War Cemetery in Normandy among 4,144 Commonwealth heroes who also gave their lives for peace and liberty. Beneath open skies, the wind moves gently across a landscape once torn apart by war, where rows of graves now stand in quiet formation. Each one marks a name, a story, a life.

When his country called, Gunner Russell Cooper fulfilled his duty with pride and dignity. Now it is our responsibility to honour his memory and preserve his legacy, ensuring his sacrifice is never forgotten.

His story reflects those of countless fallen heroes from Ontario — young men who crossed oceans and gave their lives on foreign soil in the name of freedom. France will always remember the sons and daughters of Canada who came to its aid in its darkest hour and paid the ultimate price for its liberation.

John Dekhane is a writer from France. He has a deep interest in the Second World War and has researched and written many articles about the war's fallen soldiers, including those from Canada.



Gunner Russell Cooper, born in Niagara-on-the-Lake, died of his wounds during the Normandy campaign on July 5, 1944, just four days after his 29th birthday. SUPPLIED



















WE REMEMBER
REMEMBRANCE DAY

Indigenous veterans helped secure Canadian independence

Continued from Front Page

tion, and nobody has a formation at 11 o'clock at night, so we knew it was Vietnam," said Smith.

Smith's captain then told him that under treaty law, Indigenous soldiers couldn't be conscripted and had to sign up before they could be sent to fight. Smith had been drafted but had no orders to go to Vietnam, so he could have stayed behind.

But Smith told his captain: "These are my buddies. I've been with them for 10 months and I'm going to go to Vietnam with them."

Edith Anderson Monture graduated from nursing school in New Rochelle, N.Y., in 1914 and joined the U.S. Army Nurse Corps in 1917.

"At a time when especially Indigenous women didn't do that, she literally left home and there were no services to support her," Terri Monture said. "Sometimes it's really hard to think that my grandmother was there soothing these young boys as they die."

Terri Monture is a descendant of Chief Smoke Johnson, whose statue she stood beside while speaking at the Valour and Victory ceremony.

"My entire family is the result of these men, and the women who came with them, and wanted us to survive," she said.

For nearly two centuries, no major memorial recognized those warriors. Dr. Richard Merritt, who co-chaired the memorial project, said a small stone monument unveiled in the 1970s "went essentially unnoticed."

Tim Johnson, president of the Niagara Academy for Indigenous Relations, said the memorial was built to mark "contributions too often overlooked" and to pass that history on to new generations. He said it now holds "historical truths" that some would rather silence.



Ava Hill accepts medals for her great-uncle Peter Martin postumously. He was a U.S. Army veteran. DAVE VAN DE LAAR

"Freedom and truth must always be defended in order to advance the humanities and provide honourable and viable futures for the seventh generation," he said.

Merritt said the first attempt to honour the 1812 allies was abandoned because of the First World War. That attempt had been planned for the war's centennial in 1912.

Ava Hill, a former elected chief of Six Nations, accepted medals for her great-uncle, Peter Martin. Martin was a U.S. Army veteran who was held as a prisoner of war in Korea.

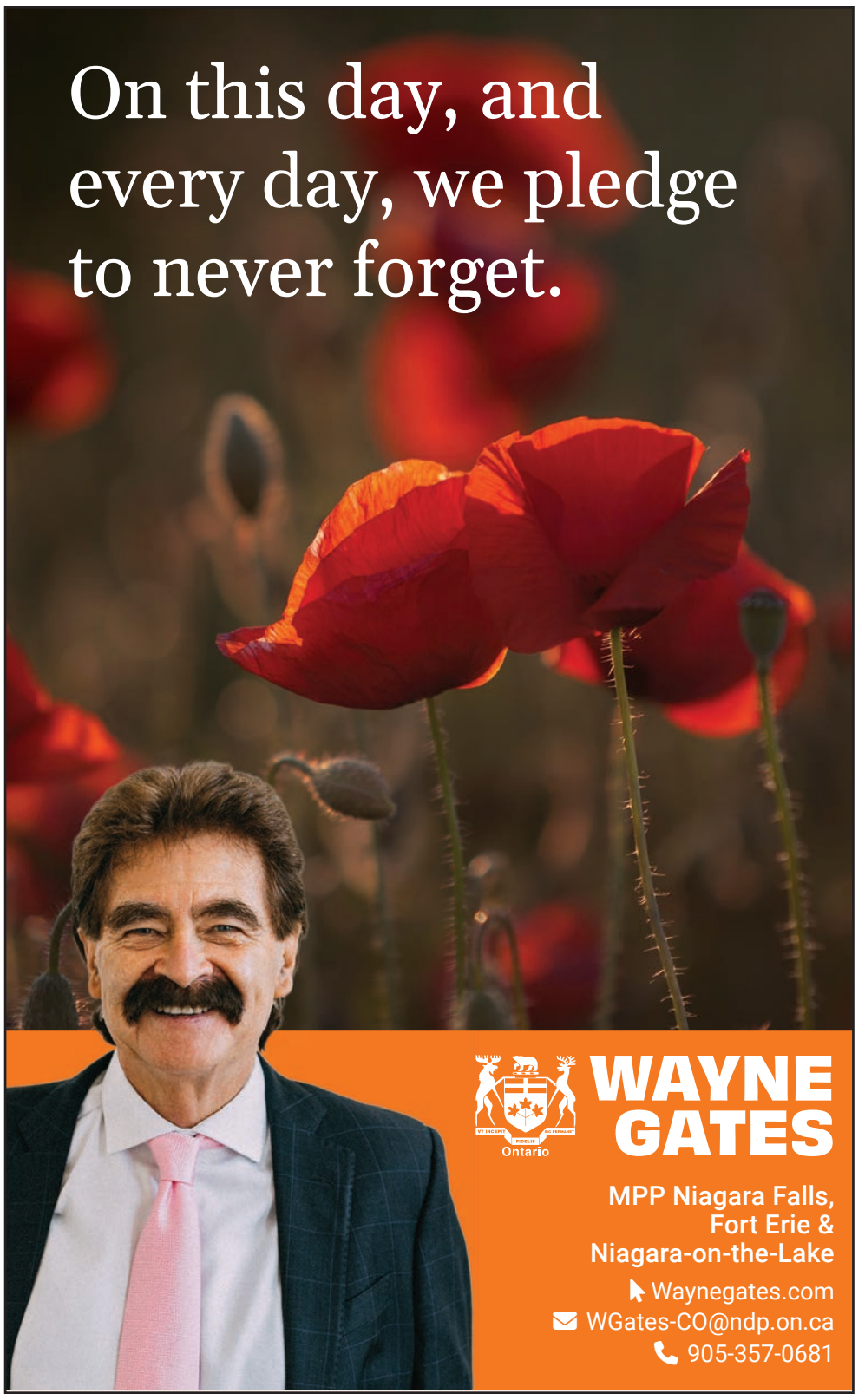
"He was kept in a hole in the ground for nine months, and when he came out of there he only weighed 90 pounds," Hill said.

Hill said she will place Martin's medals in the Six Nations Veterans Hall, beside an Ambassador for Peace medal that Korean officials presented in his name last year.

On Oct. 31, King Charles III put the importance of the 1764 Treaty of Niagara in writing for the first time, keynote speaker Nathan Tidridge said. The Canadian government has yet to officially acknowledge the treaty, which established a mutual alliance based on sovereignty and non-interference between First Nations and the Crown.

Tidridge said he hopes the memorial will push Canada to honour what the treaty set out to build: "Peace, friendship and respect forever."

andrew@niagaranow.com







WE REM

REMEMBRAN



The Queenston cenotaph.



The service in Queenston was smaller but quaint.



People place their poppies in the collection bin.



Crowds line Queen Street for the ceremony.



Cadets and a colour party march past the clock tower cenotaph as crowds line Queen Street for Wednesday's Remembra

Ceremonies in Old Town and Qu

Continued from Front Page

shared concern for keeping those memories alive.

For Ruth de Laat, those connections include two uncles who served during the Second World War. One of them, Uncle Bill, rarely spoke about it.

"He didn't talk about it much," she said. "He always said, 'I've lost too many friends.'"

Speaking after the Queenston ceremony, Marion Bottomley said remembrance must extend to everyone whose lives were changed by war.

"I think we need to remember the influence of war on everybody, on common people and families and their losses that are left behind."

Bridgman said she hopes future generations will continue to enjoy a free Canada, though she worries about what lies ahead.

"History is repeating itself somehow — and that's pretty scary."

During his address at the afternoon ceremony in Queenston, Lord Mayor Gary Zalepa spoke about the community's deep ties to those being remembered.

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In Old Town
opened with a

PHOTOGRAPHY BY DAVE VAN DE LAAR

EMBER
NCE DAY



ance Day ceremony in Old Town, honouring those who served and keeping their stories alive. DAVE VAN DE LAAR

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Nathan serves with
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acknowledgment from Zalepa, followed by a call to prayer from Rev. Sheldon Kofsky.

Teia Epp, a 16-year-old flight sergeant with the cadets, recited In Flanders Fields.

For Kathy Taylor, the presence of young people, including students from Crossroads Public School, was especially meaningful.

"I think it's great that the kids are here, those from Crossroads (Public) School. That really makes them aware of the number of people that are here," she said.

Debi Pratt said she hoped young people would understand the courage behind the decision to serve.

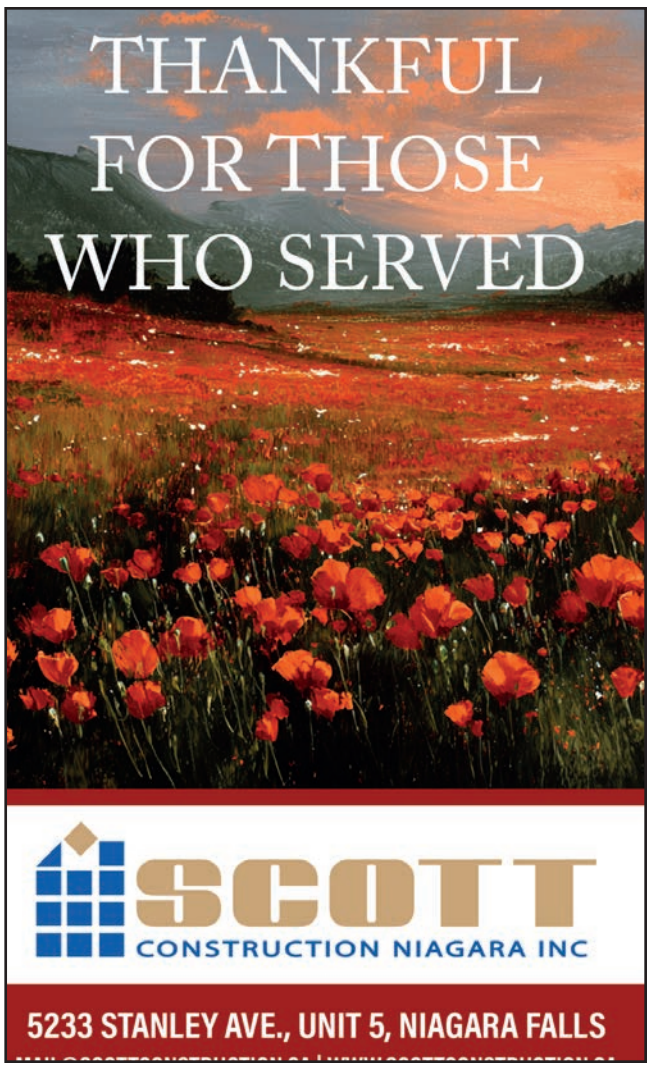
"They all signed up and it's that courage, not to be told that you should do something, but to volunteer to do it," she said. "That's pride in their country."

Keeping the impact of war alive in the minds of future generations means continuing to share those experiences, Pratt said.

"We keep telling these stories, we keep that message. It's a message that has to be passed on."

juliasacco@niagaranow.com







WE REMEMBER
REMEMBRANCE DAY

Moment of silence: First World War claimed more than 30 NOTLers

Chrystal Haverstock
Special to The Lake Report

At the 11th hour of the 11th day of the 11th month of 1918, the most gruelling of wars that included Canadian and Newfoundland soldiers came to an end. The Great War was over. The guns went silent.

The Armistice was signed in Allied Marshal Ferdinand Foch's private and requisitioned dining/railway car on the Orient Express. Généralissime Foch and senior British representative, Admiral of the Fleet Sir Rosslyn Wemyss, represented the Entente, along with German military officers and ambassadors representing Germany.

This war was modern by all standards. It was the first war that aircraft, submarines, tanks, and chemical weapons were put into play. With it came ingenious brutality.

Six-hundred-and-fifty-thousand soldiers from Canada and Newfoundland signed up to fight in the trenches of the Western Front in France, Belgium and Luxembourg, as well as the Ottoman Empire.

These soldiers endured the most horrific environments experienced by man at the time. In addition to bombs and bullets, these men, and their horses, were gassed with chlorine, phosgene and mustard gases that burned their eyes while choking their lungs out.

The brutality of it was such that these chemical weapons of war were banned from use around the world as part of the Geneva Protocol of 1925.

War is not romantic nor nostalgic. It's blood, guts, disease, starvation and cold.

It's acrid choking smoke, helplessly watching your friends die, rotting feet from standing in freezing cold filthy water for days and weeks at a time, being blinded by mustard gas, then dying and being buried in an unfamiliar country.

Those fortunate enough to return home came with baggage. A lot of it. These men and women wouldn't, or couldn't, talk about it. The atrocities that humans can commit on each other, cannot be unseen, unexperienced.

Now it is called PTSD, post-traumatic stress disorder. Then, it was being shell-shocked. There was no real treatment for that then. Many of these men just lived in hell for the rest of their lives.

Niagara-on-the-Lake sent approximately 500 men and women to Europe in the First World War. Twenty-seven of those soldiers were killed in action, or died of their wounds. Two men died from disease overseas. Five men died in Canada from disease contracted in Europe and Canada between January 1917 and November 1918.

These men are the reason we wear the poppy today.

We will remember them.

Chrystal Haverstock is a board member of the Royal Canadian Legion Branch 124 and chair of its annual poppy campaign.

Lt.	**Norman Nelles**	British Expeditionary Force (Northamptonshire Regt.)	Jan. 29, 1915	Killed in action · France
Pte.	**James Hatt**	4th Battalion	June 4, 1915	Died of wounds · France
Pte.	**Edmund Peters (Petrzywalski)**	Royal Canadian Regiment	April 16, 1916	Killed in action · France
L.-Cpl.	**Wright Lowrey**	4th Canadian Mounted Rifles	May 11, 1916	Died of wounds · Ypres
Pte.	**Lloyd Griffiths**	98th Battalion	Oct. 8, 1916	Killed in action · France
L.-Cpl.	**Ernest Houghton**	21st Battalion	July 7, 1917	Died of wounds · France
Gnr.	**Frederick Leggatt**	84th Battery	Nov. 3, 1917	Killed in action · Ypres
Pte.	**Adelburt Green**	75th Battalion	Jan. 23, 1918	Killed in action · France
Pte.	**James Rennie**	12th Battalion	Aug. 9, 1918	Killed in action · France
Gnr.	**Leslie Cudney**	5th Brigade, Canadian Field Artillery	Sept. 7, 1918	Died of wounds · France
Sgt.	**John Kelson**	2nd Battalion	May 3, 1917	Killed in action · France
Pte.	**James Wilmott**	British Expeditionary Force	May 12, 1915	Killed in action · Ypres
Pte.	**Charles McCoy**	Canadian Field Artillery	Oct. 25, 1918	Killed in action
Gnr.	**William Perry Currie**	13th Battalion	May 15, 1915	Died of wounds
Pte.	**Charles Thomas Thompson**	13th Battalion	July 16, 1916	Killed in action
Gnr.	**Herbert Longhurst**	Canadian Field Artillery	May 14, 1917	Died of wounds
Pte.	**Robert Charles Houghton**	15th Battalion	Aug. 15, 1917	Killed in action
Lt.	**Edwin Shepperd**	4th Canadian Mounted Rifles	Oct. 21, 1917	Killed in action
Pte.	**Reginald Thomas**	20th Battalion	Nov. 11, 1917	Killed in action
Pte.	**Tom Hadley Houghton**	4th Battalion	Oct. 1, 1918	Killed in action
L.-Cpl.	**Fred Fisher VC**	13th Battalion	April 23, 1915	Killed in action
Spr.	**George Brownlee**	Signals attached to the 27th Battalion	Sept. 15, 1916	Killed in action
Pte.	**Edward Rossiter**	19th Battalion	Sept. 16, 1916	Killed in action
Lt.	**LeRoy Whitside**	46th Battalion	Nov. 11, 1916	Killed in action
Lt.	**W.J. Wright**	19th Battalion	Aug. 26, 1917	Killed in action
Pte.	**William Dey**	3rd Battalion	Aug. 31, 1918	Died of wounds
Pte.	**Edward GM Fisher**	85th Battalion	Nov. 6, 1918	Killed in action
Sgt.	**John MacKay**	87th Battalion	Oct. 31, 1917	Died of TB · London, Ont.
Pte.	**John Henry Cowell**	8th Reserve Battalion	Nov. 5, 1918	Died of influenza · England
Pte.	**Albert Emerson Cowell**	Welland Canal Force	Oct. 12, 1918	Died of influenza · Queenston
Pte.	**Harold George Budd**	75th Battalion	Jan. 17, 1917	Died of disease · France
Pte.	**Walter Nisbet**	44th Regiment militia	May 23, 1915	Died of disease · Canada
Bglr.	**Gordon Ryan**	92nd Battalion	Jan. 31, 1916	Died of disease · Canada
Pte.	**Robert Follet Best**	92nd Battalion	Feb. 18, 1918	Died of disease · Canada







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The Lake Report

OPINION

TLR

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BKind Grateful

#101: Leave a kind message in sidewalk chalk where people will see it.

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

POSITIVE POWER +

Contributed by Patty Garriock

"A child of five could understand this.
Fetch me a child of five."
- Groucho Marx

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Evening of reflection

Members of the Royal Canadian Legion Branch 124 met the evening of Nov. 7 for the Legion's annual Remembrance Day dinner. Members enjoyed a dinner together and heard from veterans and their family members about their experiences and how they're reflecting on them, as Canada marks 122 years since the starts of the First World War, 87 years since the start of the Second World War and 75 years since the start of the Korean War. DAVE VAN DE LAAR

Comment

'A debt of gratitude we can never fully repay'



Kevin MacLean
Editor Emeritus



Rear-Admiral Rajender Singh, who served in the Indian navy for 38 years, attends Wednesday's ceremony as a Commonwealth veteran. DAVE VAN DE LAAR

This is a town that never forgets.

On Wednesday, residents again showed how much they care.

A dashing, white-haired gent, his green Canadian military beret angled just so, his right hand shaking as he salutes — again and again.

Parents with babes in strollers, preschool-aged children and others a few years older. Teenagers, young adults and numerous millennials.

Veterans in uniform, their medals proudly worn, some marching, others dotting the crowd, on hand to pay their respects.

And a battalion of seniors, many using walkers or canes, some dressed formally for the occasion. A generation of well-turned-out folk, in their late 80s or older, mere children during the war years 1939-45, but they can't forget the sights, sounds and fears of those days.

For these Canadians, Nov. 11 is a time to officially honour the selfless sacrifices made by so many.

All don poppies as they assemble on Queen Street on Wednesday morning because this is the day the people of Niagara-on-the-Lake remember even those they never knew.

Some arrive an hour or more beforehand, milling about, chatting, waiting patiently as they line a near-empty street that is usually abuzz with visitors. Soon, hundreds more join them.

At the appointed hour, 10:45 a.m. sharp, the ceremony begins. Under the command of NOTL Legion president Al Howse, legionnaires, cadets, veterans, RCMP, regional police and fire personnel along with Polish First World War re-enactors march in and take their place below the clock tower cenotaph.

This is a ceremony that is thankfully short on speeches but long on solemnity, as residents take an hour or two out of their lives to quietly commemorate those who died in two world wars and numerous conflicts since.

In keeping with that theme, Howse reads out the names of NOTL natives who gave their lives.

With cadets standing sentry at the cenotaph for hours before the service, the newest generation's contributions are among the day's highlights.

Air cadet Flight Sergeant Teia Epp reads "In Flanders Fields" and bagpiper Callum Sanderson, a Grade 7 student, plays a heart-warming rendition of "Amazing Grace."

And in a brief speech, Conservative MP Tony Baldinelli adds some perspective to the day.

"Some we lost long ago. Some are still here with us to share their stories. Others continue to live with and overcome the physical and emotional wounds of their service."

"Every one of them is owed a debt of gratitude that we can never fully repay."

"They sacrificed their tomorrows so that we could enjoy the peace, freedom and opportunities of today."

He pays tribute to the Royal Canadian Legion, which this year marks its 100th anniversary, and he urges the crowd to also honour the Canadian soldiers who died tragically last month in Wainwright, Alberta.

As family members and representatives of various organizations lay wreaths in recognition of relatives lost, in many cases, generations ago, those in the crowd of nearly 1,000 ringing the cenotaph stand silent in respectful acknowledgement.

When Howse calls the troops into formation for a final march past the cenotaph, few in the crowd have left.

The hundreds who remain break into spontaneous, sustained applause in a genuine show of respect and admiration.

People then deposit their poppies in a tall urn as suggested by Legion padre Sheldon Kofsky and the legionnaires head off to Queenston for NOTL's second Remembrance Day ceremony.

Downtown, by the time the bells chime at high noon, the road blockade has ended and cars are rolling along Queen Street again. The crowd has dispersed and the hum of life returns.

Customers start trickling into stores and restaurants. Commerce resumes, replacing the solemnity and gracious quiet that had blanketed the downtown core.

But those 60 or so minutes have left an indelible mark on the lives of those who gathered, no matter their reason for being there.

Because Niagara-on-the-Lake remembers those we lost.

This is a town that never forgets..

kevin@niagaranow.com



Two minutes of perfect silence in 1948

Dear editor:

It was Nov. 11. This was shortly after the war — the Second World War. I was not yet 10 years old.

"Come along," said my mother. So we took the train up to Charing Cross Station, from which it was only a short walk across Trafalgar Square and down Whitehall to the cenotaph.

There was hardly any traffic in those days. Very few people had cars and the streets that day were virtually empty. But as we came closer to the cenotaph there were more people, gathered quietly along the pavement.

We were early and waited with the others. They made room for us. Nobody was talking. It was a calm, grey day. It was five to 11 a.m. A bus was trundling along the mall. It pulled over to the curb and stopped.

The driver got out of his cab and the conductor down from the platform at the back. They took their caps off and stood with bowed heads.

From where we stood we could see Big Ben and the Parliament buildings down at the end of the street. A taxicab came along. He stopped too, and parked a little short of the monument, where the road widened. He also came out of his cab, took his cap off and stood to attention.

A hush seemed to descend upon the whole city, as we all waited. And Big Ben chimed 11 times. There was two minutes of perfect silence.

After the two minutes, people looked up. Stirred themselves, tentatively. Life went on.

I would not think that there was a single person in London, and indeed the whole country, who did not have a story of loss to reflect upon. Loss, bravery and sacrifice. And for some, memories of horror and fear.

Each person was to remember loved ones of family; friends; neighbours; far or near. Remembering people who had been killed or maimed by bombs or fire and were no longer with us. And some who had simply disappeared.

When the telegram boy had come down the street on his bicycle the women held their breath until he passed them by. The small children did not understand. For them, things had always been this way.

Let us never forget.

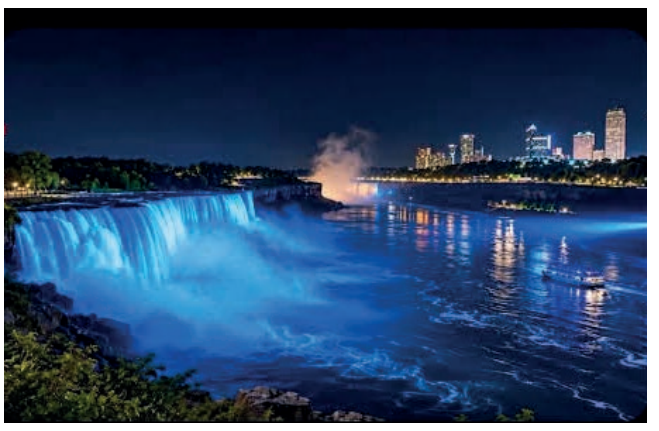
Andrew Henwood
NOTL

Will thumping Trump raise NOTL's spirits?



THE TURNER REPORT

Garth Turner
Columnist



Social media was flooded with images of a blue Niagara Falls claiming it was for the Democrats after their big wins in the U.S. midterm elections — except it wasn't.

Social media flipped out last week when Niagara Falls was bathed in blue light to celebrate Trump's defeat in the Democratic sweep of Congress.

But it was fake news.

Yes, the Dems won big. Yeah, the falls turned blue. But, no, the two were not connected, despite what you might have seen on your feed. It was "teal," not blue. And it was done to promote Alzheimer's Awareness Month.

Despite Trump, our two nations are joined at the hip economically, as well as at the Niagara River. What happens there matters here. Now more than ever, during the second MAGA presidency and the ridiculous trade war, the current White House started with us innocent beavers.

Trump has stressed Canadians out, caused the unemployment rate to rise, elevated our inflation rate, jumped the price of gas in NOTL, thrown local manufacturing in doubt, impacted vineyards and made the tourists on Queen Street ruefully apologetic.

Have you seen a "Make America Great Again" red ballcap recently? Me neither. He's done.

So with the massive defeat of the Republican Party on Nov. 3 — considered in political circles an "extinction event" — will people living on this side of the river feel more positive, confident and willing to, say, buy a house?

Let's face it: the local real estate market has been a swamp since Trump returned to office, immediately imposed tariffs, started babbling about the annexation of Canada and then decided to bomb Iran sending oil prices skyward.

Across the region, sales were down again last month. Prices are four per cent cheaper than this time last year (which was seven per cent lower than the year before) and with more than 2,800 listings, supply has overwhelmed demand. Some properties have been for sale longer than three years. The average sale in NOTL is $50,000, or almost six per cent, cheaper than a year ago.

So, did the blue wave change anything? Do realtors expect we might have a spring market once again when April rolls around?

"Anything that takes some of the uncertainty out of tariffs and the economy helps," says Jamie Szeibert of Remax Niagara. "A lot of buyers I talk to aren't short on interest. They're short on confidence. If the news over the winter feels steadier, I'd expect more of them to act in the spring rather than keep waiting."

The consensus is clear. Buyers are in control. Sellers are suffering.

"Moving past a major electoral event often clears away a layer of political hesitation," adds Laura Skene of Sotheby's. "Historically, once an election concludes, removing that immediate uncertainty provides a psychological baseline that can help restore decision making confidence heading into the new year."

Confidence — it's been the missing sauce for two years now. Prices are lower by a meaningful amount. There's less competition among buyers. Few, if any, bidding wars. Sellers are willing to accept conditions — on financing, home inspection or even the sale of another property.

There's a ton of listings to choose from. Owners are willing to dicker. And despite a small recent bump, mortgages are historically cheap in the four per cent range.

But wait. What if Trump gets more extreme in his final two years in office? Could things get worse? More tariffs? Will we ever get Ryan Reynolds back? Does it make sense for potential buyers to stay sitting on their hands?

"My advice to buyers worried that prices may be lower next year is, nobody can time the bottom," says Szeibert. "If you find the right home, can afford it comfortably and plan to stay five years or more, this is a good window."

People who want to buy and flip, or plan on moving in a couple of years, says Skene, could be crushed by this market.

"But for buyers with secure personal finances and a long-term plan, today's market offers genuine advantages: the breathing room to evaluate homes thoroughly, negotiate firmly, and secure necessary protections without the stress of competing against multiple bids."

So what are people buying who have the courage to make an offer?

Move-in ready digs, realtors agree. "Higher contractor, labour, and carrying costs have made casual fixer-uppers impractical for everyday owner occupiers," says Skene.

Tariffs, of course, have played a role in that. For example, anyone shopping for a "Made In USA" high-end stove has experienced sticker shock first-hand. The newly elected blue guys don't take control of Congress until January, and Trump retains his veto power and executive orders authority.

Things could be rocky for a while. He's nuts. Let's not poke him.

It was teal, Mr. President. Honest.

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

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RIDDLE ME THIS

This week's riddle is "Jeopardy!" style
Category: SPILL THE "T"

What a mess! I've spilled a bottle of this, used as a paint thinner and obtained from conifer resins.

Last issue category: PRODUCT PLACEMENT

Clue: That lawn ain't gonna cut itself, so hop on their X300 Select Series riding mower, Speedy.

Answer: What is John Deere?

Answered first by: Bob Wheatley

Also answered correctly (in order) by: Tuija Johansson, Jane Morris, Becky Creager, Emma Balsas, Lynda Collet, Jeff Lake, Nick D'Amore, Samantha Pockele, Hedy Wiebe, Esther VanGorder, Wade Durling, Sheila Meloche, Hugh Lundy, Claudia Grimwood, Donna Pearce, Angie Woods, Randie Topps, Jim Dandy, Katie Reimer

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

How does one fit a building's design into its location?



ARCHITEXT

Brian Marshall
Columnist

Last week we examined deconstructivism versus contextualism and as promised, I'd like to extend that thread by considering some of the design parameters of contextual architecture.

Let's begin by considering urban scale and massing which, in straightforward terms, is the alignment of the new building's height, footprint, setback, neighborhood rhythm, etc., with surrounding structures to maintain visual harmony.

There are two broadly used approaches that municipal planners use to address building height.

The first is to simply set a maximum height limit (often by geographic district) in the bylaws; that is, you cannot build anything taller than "X" metres. Now, this approach pretty much ignores placing any limitation associated with the heights of neighbouring buildings and, as a result, it is completely acceptable to construct a three-storey residential building in a streetscape comprised of single-storey homes.

The second option is to limit the new structure's height to the street average, something determined by measuring the heights of the neighbouring (two to five on either side) existing homes on the same side of the street and calculating the average.

Typically, a "contextual height limit" bylaw may allow for some discretionary evaluation by municipal planning staff vis-à-vis whether or not the application may exceed the calculated street average — generally within a predefined maximum amount (e.g. up to two metres) — but is strictly limited by the maximum measured height of any of the neighbouring buildings enfolded in the "average" calculation.

Under a bylaw of this type, staff must consider approval of the proposed height of an infill application within the context of the adjacent properties, and specifically the immediately shouldering buildings, thereby avoiding any new out-of-scale roofline that might disrupt the existing streetscape.



When contextual criteria like height, setbacks and materials are ignored, even what may be otherwise a beautiful building can be a blight on the streetscape.

Interestingly, Niagara-on-the-Lake had a contextual height limit bylaw — and a similar bylaw for contextual setbacks — in place prior to 2009 when it was replaced by the current 30-foot maximum height limit (and the standardized five-foot setbacks) with the intent of making it easier for people to apply for a permit.

"Easier" is somewhat questionable. Laser rangefinder technology, which can measure the height of a building in seconds, has been available and in regular use since the 1990s, though I suppose spending a few minutes to gather the data may be considered onerous by some.

And, of course, minor variances relative to height, setbacks and lot coverage granted by the committee of adjustment have only exacerbated the trend toward non-contextual design/building practices.

May I observe that since 2009, there has not been a single neighbourhood in NOTL that has escaped the incursion of one or more monster buildings disrupting the character of existing streetscapes?

The point here is that "urban scale" is defined by the existing buildings within a neighbourhood or specific streetscape and new buildings should comply with that scale in order to achieve a harmonious whole.

Let's shift gears here and poke into the question of massing.

In straightforward terms, massing can be defined as the visual perception of the general shape, form and size of a building.

For reference purposes, the mid-20th-century architectural style brutalism presents extreme massing by maximizing visual weight through the utilization of massive, monolithic blocks of raw, poured concrete, and comparatively small, deeply recessed windows. Google an image of the Boston City Hall in Massachusetts as an example.

And on the other end of the spectrum, Japanese contemporary minimalism designs establish the lightest visual massing through breaking up a single large building into smaller, staggered pavilions that are sometimes punctuated by open courtyards and ultra-slender structural columns combined with curved acrylic or glass panels to erase structural heaviness. The Cloud of Lustre Chapel in Japan is a great representation.

Thus, an unrelieved concrete (or stucco) cube will present the heaviest massing while a largely transparent glass form will present the lightest massing.

In reality, our streetscapes are comprised of a series of buildings with individual massing that fall somewhere in the middle ground. If a new building of either extreme were to be inserted within that tableau, it would stand out like a sore thumb.

However, this consideration is not limited to just the two extremes but rather must be judged on a relational spectrum based on evaluation of the existing streetscape to ensure the massing of any new building does not overpower or detract from the established neighbourhood rhythm, nor dominate the presentation of adjacent buildings.

Now, there are design techniques the architect can deploy to reduce the visual massing of a new building such as manipulating volume, form, shadow, and material to achieve a more approachable human scale — we'll look at these next week.

Still, the fact remains that embracing context is a vital component in the preservation of community character.

Something far too often forgotten in the pursuit of ego expression by owners, developers and architects alike.

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

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

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Elections are miracles in motion



ROSS'S RAMBLINGS

Ross Robinson
Columnist

I really have no real right to pass judgement on our recent municipal elections. But that rarely stops me from commenting, so please bear with me. I will attempt to be brief and straightforward. Not at all roundabout, as some locals might say.

"What a logistical miracle!" I recently rambled, heaping encomiums on the incredible folks who are in charge of the thousands and thousands of details involved in administering fair and honest elections when we are called to the polls.

It used to be complicated enough, and now we also have voting by mail and advance voting. What next? Perhaps verbal voting, or voice voting? Yes, my friends, the mind boggles. And I am not shy to proudly say I voted, on voting day, at an actual, old-fashioned polling station.

Across the province, so many lists of candidates, all listed alphabetically and spelled accurately.

We again showed up to vote in relatively high numbers. Somewhat over 50 per cent of us voted, so a hearty "way to go" to the Niagara-on-the-Lake populace. Still low, but high compared to other Ontarians. Yes, Ontarians, not Ontarions. (Trust me on this very obscure spelling fact.)

So here I am rambling near a subject near and dear to my heart. And earlier today, I did some research on term limits for elected officials. Talk about expanding one's horizons and knowledge base.

A country near us, Mexico, certainly provides interesting reading, and has such an interesting collection of term limit laws and regulations.

For example, the President of the United Mexican States serves a single six-year term, called a sexenio, and there is a strict constitutional ban on re-election. Different levels of government have different term limits and rules. This would be a fascinating ramblings on its own, but let's leave it for another day.

Now to Australia in the antipodes, and another democratic principle I have studied over the years: should it be mandatory to vote?

Since 1924, it has been compulsory for Australians over the age of 18 to vote. More accurately, they also have the option to submit a blank ballot, or mark "none of the above." But at least they have to give it some thought.

For their most recent federal election, they had a 91 per cent voter turnout. There is a fine of about 20 bucks if you don't at least register at a polling station.

Typically, elections are held on a Saturday, and sometimes they make it fun. Perhaps a bouncy castle, or pony rides. Who knew?

This is interesting thinking from Down Under. There is so much unique about Australia and New Zealand, including the history of the transportation system that certainly was a dominant influence on the settling of that part of the world.

Not that long ago, and so dramatically different than our history. But so many similarities in the histories of treatment of the people who were there when colonizers arrived. In Canada, too.

If you feel the need for some real bureaucratic reading, have a gander at our Canadian Charter of Rights, on the pages detailing voting. I tried my best several times, and would like to again express my absolute amazement at the efficiency of our recent municipal vote.



Niagara-on-the-Lake showed up in relatively high numbers to take part in the municipal elections. FILE

In so many places at the same time, and they don't get a series of practice days to "get it right."

And I really cannot understand how the election results can be tallied and reported so quickly. Really, my friends, give it some thought. Here in our wee geographic area we have several polling stations, and the aforementioned multiple voting choices. Somehow, by about 8 p.m. or 8:30, the results are being posted. The suspense is essentially over.

The only quicker scorekeeper in town is Adam Dodridge during a local Darts league Tuesday evening. He loves the job, and brings his own score calculator on top of his extremely broad shoulders. He tells me he is always right.

Back to the recent election. So democratically classic, with so many contributors.

Fair forums to evaluate the candidates, obeyance of the rules, and demonstrated fairness and respect.

One quick question: where did all the election signs go? Poof.

Rambling to a close this week, "If you lose, say little. If you win, say less."

rossrocket9@gmail.com

Niagara-on-the-Lake

Proposed Building Permit Fee Increase

Public Information Centre

The Town of Niagara-on-the-Lake is proposing a 3% increase to building permit fees for 2027.

Attend an in-person, drop-in Public Information Centre to learn more, ask questions and provide feedback.

Additional information can be made available upon request.

Public Information Centre Details

Date: December 3, 2026, from 4:30 to 6:00 p.m.

Location: Mori Room, Niagara-on-the-Lake Community Centre (14 Anderson Lane)



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In an era of world reordering, do we need a new leader?

Dear editor:

Change is not something that we can control but may be used to adapt. Few people have the authority and ability to comprehend the necessity of change to the benefit of all. There are four nations that seem to historically instill change in our world environment. Those nations are China, Russia, the United States and Great Britain.

A singular nation, Great Britain has stood by and watched the world change without taking advantage of its unique position in this world order. The British Commonwealth, an institution established by the British Empire, is uniquely positioned to influence the international frenzy of change currently being undertaken by the nations of Russia, China and the United States.

The Commonwealth, a collective of member and republic states or 56 nations, comprising a population of more than 2.3 billion individuals, has no legal or formal obligation to one another; they are held together by shared traditions, institutions and experiences as well as by economic self-interest administered through the Commonwealth secretariat, with King Charles as the head of the Commonwealth.

The world has the need of leadership reflecting the community needs for sustainable society. The Commonwealth can provide that leadership with the philosophy inspired by King Charles referred to as harmony through understanding the balance, order and relationships between nations and the natural world, thereby creating a more sustainable future.

Such a future will learn from other religious traditions, building bridges and fostering good relationships built on respect and understanding.

Each nation within the Commonwealth has something to offer the world. As a political tool, it exemplifies the various styles of governance that can cooperate in an undefined co-operative of nations.

The possibility exists of enhancing the Commonwealth's role in the world through further evolution of its political role and free trade among nation states would be an economic motivator.

Recent negotiations between Canada and the European Union exemplifies the feasibility of expanding an international role in such policy areas as digital trade, opportunities for nations to educate, travel and emigrate citizens to facilitate investment in resources and energy development, with an endgame to fight anti-competitive activity, or harmony.

The requirement to reach this goal would be empowered through leadership, best instilled by the King of England, as the head of the Commonwealth.

The king, as institutional head of the Commonwealth represented through the Commonwealth secretariat, has the authority to head a meeting to discuss the future of the Commonwealth.

As such, the appointment of the Prince of Wales to chair the meetings would ensure a long-term stability to the evolution of the end result to these meetings.

Where such a series of meetings would lead the Commonwealth and the world would be determined by the participants, an exclusive but oftentimes neglected group of nations in today's political environment.

Canada's prime minister has clearly shown leadership in expanding the need to divert the authority of China, Russia and the United States in the current world order. The potential expansion of the role of the Commonwealth as a member of this coming world order may complement such initiatives.

Is it feasible for the current prime minister of Canada to request a meeting of the Commonwealth secretariat chaired by the king to discuss the potential of expanding the political role of the Commonwealth itself to counter the growth of the expansion of the role of China, Russia and the United States?

Derek Insley
NOTL

Don't you wish you could let it all out?



Keith McNenly
Special to The Lake Report

The next few months will be uncertain; the years ahead, consequential. Political power has been wielded carelessly, alliances betrayed, and friendly borders turned into front lines. Propaganda and cruelty have become tools of ambition, hardening into tools of war.

Yet working Americans have rediscovered their electoral voice. The midterms brought a tidal wave repudiation — but whether the retreating water will cleanse what has been muddied, or merely expose the damage beneath, remains to be seen.

The future is impossible to predict. So rather than forecast political manoeuvring or global consequences, I want to tell a smaller story.

A couple of years ago, a man parked at a turnaround beside our property, beyond a screen of trees. He got out and began to scream. A short time later, several police vehicles and an ambulance arrived. Then after a time, the scene just as suddenly ended.

Perhaps he was at risk of harming himself or another person, but in the end, that must not have appeared the case, as he was eventually allowed to drive away. Perhaps he had simply found the nearest secluded place to release unbearable pressure — to scream from somewhere deep inside himself.

Places of solitude where a person can do that, without alarming someone or inviting intervention, have become rare. Even privacy has witnesses.

Somewhere along the way, a part of that man had been broken. He may have reached a point where screaming was the only port available in the storm of today's chaos, his mooring ropes to human connection and compassion frayed.

In a time when screens replace embracing hugs, and "likes" replace warm kisses, loneliness in a crowd is becoming normal. The comfort of personal connection is eroded by isolation, by social media, and by a public life deliberately divided for power and profit.

The political moment compounds those private burdens. A nation that was a dependable partner had become adversarial. The strong intimidate, trespass, even kill the less prepared, then blame their victim.

Public discourse devolves into conflict, contempt, and spectacle; the Canadian marketplace has become a field of calculation, where even buying salad greens can feel like a small act of war in defence of sovereignty.

I have struggled to understand how democracies permit their own undoing. I have watched the United States move into a politics of authoritarianism, grievance and cruelty, and I have



Keith McNenly imagines a refuge among the trees where people could release the grief, fear and frustration they carry.
CHATGPT

wondered how so many citizens accept it in their name. Elections matter. Accountability matters. Character matters even more.

In Canada, our land anchors us together, embraced by three coasts. The red maple leaf on our flag recalls the sweetness drawn up each spring from thawing earth and waking sun — sap freely shared, renewing its promise of life and reward after the darkest and coldest winters.

The blue-wave midterms may signal that Americans have begun to reclaim their democracy as young representatives and electors take centre stage. When American families gather at Thanksgiving, there is reason to hope they may rediscover fellowship and common purpose before their difficult winter still ahead.

We once had a beautiful, gentle beagle. She mostly spent her days lying nearby in the shade while my wife and I worked in the gardens.

One day she suddenly began screaming and crying with such terror that we ran to her. She had become tangled in loops of wire carelessly abandoned long ago at the tree line, hidden within long grass and weeds.

She was not physically hurt, but she could not understand what had seized her. To her, it was as if she had been captured by an invisible and scentless enemy.

We freed her, held her, and spoke softly until she calmed.

Her instinctive reaction was to scream and cry. That is the natural response of a creature caught in something it cannot escape alone. Human beings are born screaming and crying, perhaps shocked from the warmth and safety of the womb into a colder, stranger world.

I have heard the desperate cries of other animals, too. Perhaps in our vulnerability we are not as different from them as we like to believe.

In these dangerous times, I wish there were a place close enough for every person to reach: a remote forest of dense, towering trees. A place where the only eyes and ears are those of gentle animals, and the only voice is the wind rustling through leaves. A place where one could shout of love and loss, indifference and injustice; where one could empty the heart and gut of everything held too long inside.

I wish there was a screaming place.

Niagara-on-the-Lake resident Keith McNenly was the chief administrator of the Town of Mono for 41 years.

What are this paper's standards for decency?

Dear editor:

I wonder if the irony of two opinion letters appearing on the same page in the Nov. 5 edition struck others as it did me. Former councillor candidate Rick Mills' charming thanks for the experience and his invocation for kindness was on the same page as Peter Rusin's latest attack on the "Old Town elites," as he calls them.

Mr. Rusin regularly raises his opinions in this paper, which are not completely without some merit and could easily have been presented in a less aggressive manner. Many adjectives can be applied to his style and tone: churlish, rude, menacing, offensive, unsubstantiated and almost vulgar, just to name a few.

My reason for writing is not to challenge Mr. Rusin or how he was brought up, but to implore editor Richard Harley and the team to ensure the paper has some standards about what it prints, that maintain civility and in fact kindness. Mr. Harley's cartoon insert with Mr. Rusin's letter helped mitigate the opinion piece, but not enough to excuse it as written.

Daryl Novak
NOTL

Pumpkin sales raise $3K for children's care

Dear editor:

Thank you to everyone who bought pumpkins from our wagon on Concession 7. The pumpkins were very large this year due to all the rain we had.

Your kind generosity raised $3,000. All proceeds will be shared between McMaster Children's Hospital, Ronald McDonald House and, also this year, the new pediatric oncology department at the St. Catharines hospital.

Thank you for your support!

Reid and Gabrielle, Brook and Brandon, Steve and Peg Watson
NOTL



LETTER OF THE WEEK

Campion's name on the line, not Ford's

Dear editor:

As outgoing Welland Mayor Frank Campion steps into the role of Niagara Region chair, residents across our region are watching closely — not with celebration, but with deep concern about how we got here.



Frank Campion is Niagara Region's new chair.

Because this appointment came directly from Premier Doug Ford's government rather than the ballot box, the people of Niagara were denied any say in who leads us. To many residents across our 12 municipalities, an appointment from Queen's Park carries an unspoken expectation: that chair Campion was chosen to carry out the province's wishes rather than defend the people who actually live here.

Niagara-on-the-Lake, like every distinct town and city across this region, is not interchangeable with its neighbours. From our agricultural land and heritage to our local infrastructure and small-town character, each Niagara community has its own identity and priorities that deserve to be fiercely protected — not steamrolled by top-down provincial agendas.

At the end of the day, Premier Ford's name will not be attached to the decisions made at the regional table over the next term — Frank Campion's will. His reputation and his legacy in Niagara are now squarely on the line.

We urge chair Campion to prove the skeptics wrong and show he is his own leader. Listen to the residents of Niagara, respect the distinct voices of all 12 municipalities and stand up for the people you serve — even when that means saying no to Queen's Park.

Do not forget who truly counts. Do right by the people of Niagara.

Judith Barnes
NOTL

Our new mayor must defend NOTL from Ford's vision for new Niagara



David Israelson
Special to The Lake Report

With the 2026 municipal election behind us, it's already clear that one of the biggest challenges Niagara-on-the-Lake will face is the relentless effort by Premier Doug Ford to impose decisions on us. He's either doing this directly or through his handpicked cronies at regional government.

Lord mayor-elect Vaughn Goettler (full disclosure, I supported him) has already identified dealing with our new regional government as a priority, and he's right.

Before the election, Ford changed the structure of Niagara's regional government, along with other regions, to make the system less democratic and less accountable to the people who will actually be affected by regional decisions — us.

Under the new system, Niagara-on-the-Lake will have just one of 12 seats at the region: the lord mayor.

Worse, regional council votes will be weighted by population, so Niagara Falls and St. Catharines will count for more than we do.

Worse still, the new regional chair will be appointed directly by the Ford government, not elected.

Let's not pre-judge Ford's choice too much yet, but the premier does have a habit of picking underqualified flunkies or rejected old pols to do his bidding.

This is only where the complications begin.

The Ford government has bold, ambitious plans for Niagara Region to become Las Vegas North, an enhanced tourist magnet that will be anchored by more casinos. It's part of Ford's Destination Niagara strategy that seeks to add billions of dollars and tens of thousands of jobs to the local economy.

Some of this is good stuff. We could all get behind if it weren't for two things: signs of disturbing meddling by Ford and parts of the strategy that could bring irreparable change to Niagara-on-the-Lake.

Ford already tried to impose a new, giant Ferris wheel in stately Queen Victoria Park in Niagara Falls. He backed off after pressure by opposition MPP Wayne Gates and the public, and a promise by the owner of the Falls' existing wheel to build a new, bigger one, not on green space.

Another problem with the Ford government's Niagara regional vision is how heavily it relies on adding casinos.

Just after the Oct. 26 election, the province slashed the tax rate for gambling operators in Niagara as part of an effort to raise $3 billion in direct investment from the sector, along with another $600 million from the private sector over 20 years.

Everyone wants more investment and a strong, healthy Niagara tourism sector, including some casinos. But is adding more casinos a smart bet at a time when the existing ones see their customers switching to their smartphones to place wagers? I'd bet no.

The biggest problem in dealing with Ford and the new, less-democratic region will be protecting the history and heritage of Niagara-on-the-Lake.

One of the early flashpoints could be the province's push to turn Niagara District Airport into a regional gateway; the province has already handed the airport nearly $10 million to study how to make it bigger.

A bigger airport may be good for the region, but not necessarily for Niagara-on-the-Lake. It could mean gobbling up some of our town's precious farmland, paving wider, faster roads, having more planes buzzing over Virgil, adding more noise and pollution and potentially affecting drainage.

Voters in Niagara-on-the-Lake and elsewhere sent a message in the election.

They do not like the changes Ford has been making to weaken local decision-making and how the last council responded by making too many weak, unwise decisions. They want residents to come first.

That's what our new lord mayor will have to tell the region, and the premier.

David Israelson is a writer and non-practising lawyer who lives in Niagara-on-the-Lake.

Wartime photographs bring family memories home



Clifford Thomas and Bob Smith at Queen's Royal Park.

Dear editor:

The attached pictures are of my mother's brother when he was overseas. He sent these pictures home to his parents, who lived in the Whale Inn, or Elliott House, at the foot of King Street.

I have also included a picture showing my two uncles at the beach, with Fort Niagara across the river. My other uncle, Bob, was in the medical service.

On the back of the picture of my uncle Clifford Thomas sitting on a bomb, he wrote: "This one's for the fuhrer and we will deliver it to his front door free of charge."

After one sortie, their Halifax bomber was badly shot up and they barely made a landing.

Jim Smith
NOTL









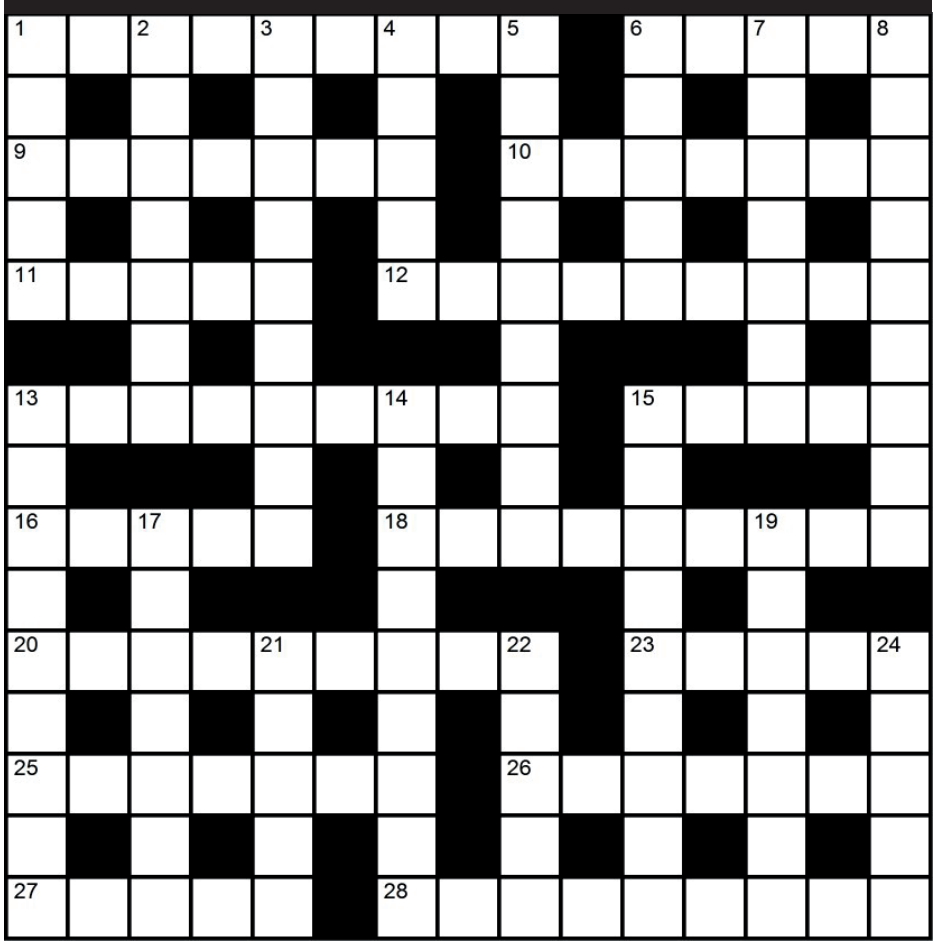
GAMES

Have some fun

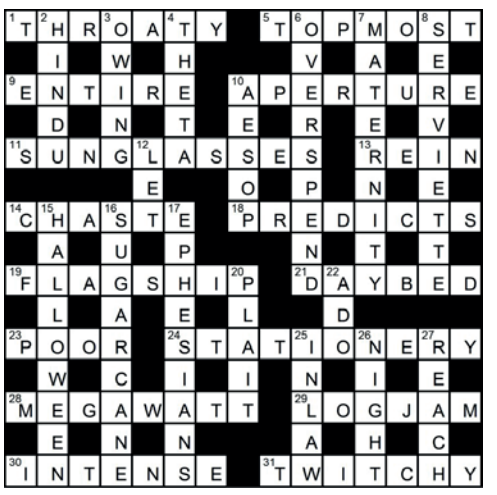
Across
1. E.g. a ketch (3-6)
6. Copper and zinc alloy (5)
9. Item (7)
10. Not friendly (7)
11. Nail-like fastener (5)
12. Carry (9)
13. Bony structures (9)
15. Burning gas (5)
16. Forbiddingly (5)
18. Environmental fouling agent (9)
20. Deadlock (9)
23. Lukewarm (5)
25. Arabian Nights hero (3,4)
26. Mythical creature (7)
27. Expel (5)
28. Northern Canadian island (9)

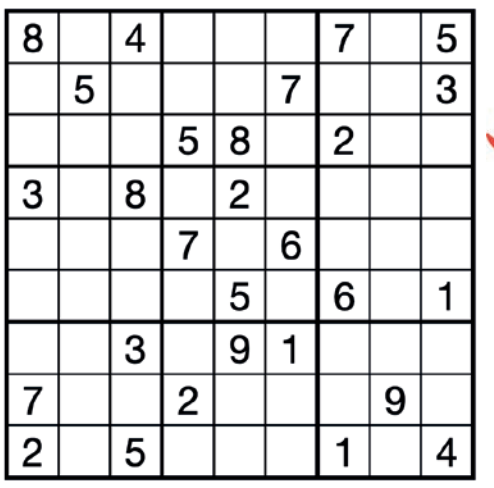
Down
1. Melts (5)
2. Exterior (7)
3. Satan (9)
4. Larceny (5)
5. Practice session (9)
6. Defeats (5)
7. Grand Canyon state (7)
8. Confection (9)
13. In good order (9)
14. Home for abandoned children (9)
15. Ornamental water jets (9)
17. Conceive (7)
19. Sanction (7)
21. Make law (5)
22. Peer (5)
24. Move rhythmically (5)

Crossword Puzzle



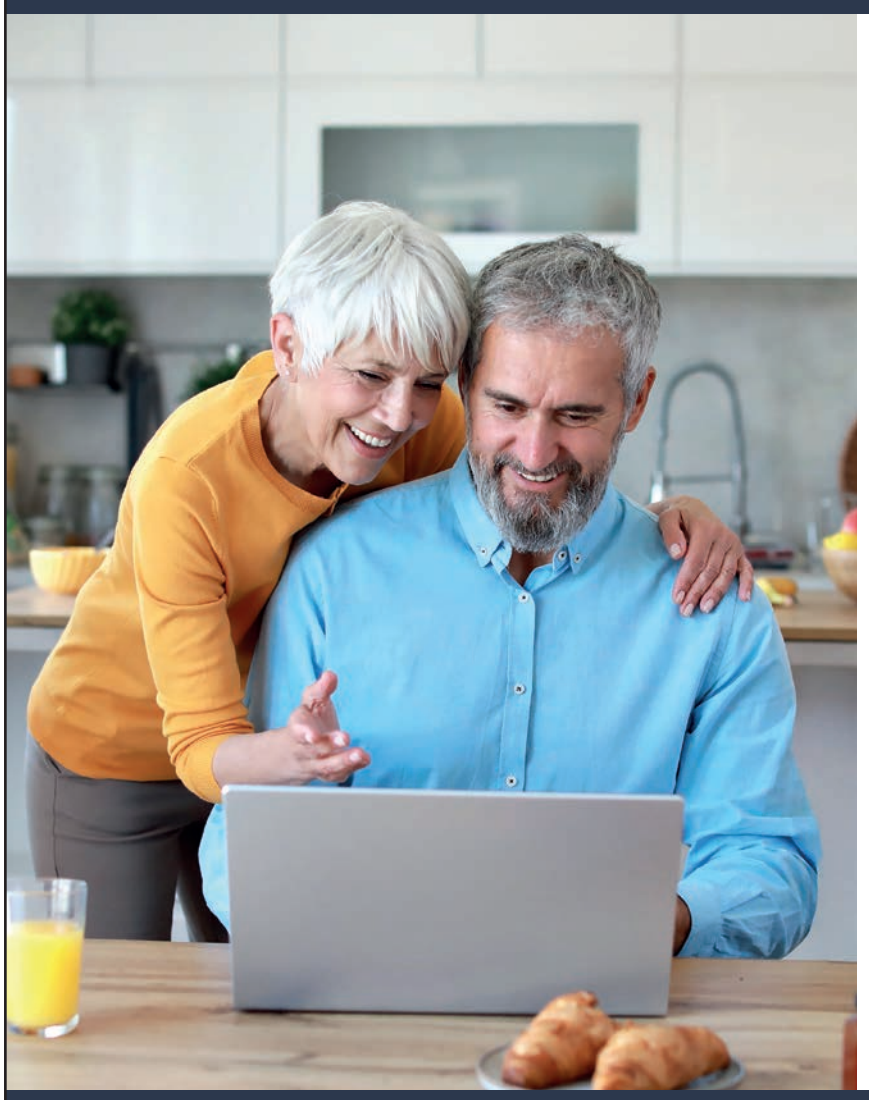
Last issue's answers





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EXPLORING HISTORY WITH NOTL MUSEUM

NIAGARA ON THE LAKE MUSEUM



Maj. Charles Edwin Shepherd

Charles Edwin Shepherd, known as Ted to his friends and family, was born and raised in Niagara-on-the-Lake, where he attended the local elementary and high schools. Like many young people, he eventually left home, settling in North Bay, where he married. When the First World War was declared, his decision to enlist came as little surprise to those who knew him, particularly as he had attended an officer's course in Toronto in the years before the war. On Oct. 26, 1917, amid mud, rain, cold and wind, Edwin led an attack and was killed. He is believed to have died during the Second Battle of Passchendaele. In a letter to his wife, one of the men who served under him wrote: "It will I know, be some consolation to you and your family to know that your husband died facing the enemy and showing that example of coolness and bravery which made the reputation of Canadians as fighting men what it is today." Letters from fellow officers shared similar accounts. They remembered his cheerful nature, courage and composure under fire, as well as his concern for the welfare of the men who served under him. Edwin was one of many Canadians who never returned from the fields of Flanders. His story brings to mind the lines of John McCrae's "In Flanders Fields," written just two years earlier: We lived, felt dawn, saw sunset glow, Loved and were loved, and now we lie, In Flanders fields.

What we now know about how our brains functions



DR. BROWN

Dr. William Brown
Columnist

The human brain is extraordinarily complex, what with 80 billion neurons or more, each often connected with thousands of other nerve cells.

Even so, much has been learned, especially in the last two centuries, about what parts of the brain do what, especially for the simpler components of the brain such as the sensory and motor systems.

Their stratified anatomy and physiology lend themselves to study much easier than cognitive functions, feelings and emotions or, for some scientists, solving the riddle of the nature of consciousness.

The last challenge bedevilled some of the best scientists in the 20th century, such as the physicist Francis Crick (Nobel Prize winner, 1962), who tried for several decades to make sense of consciousness. Even now, the study of consciousness is dogged by widely differing, competing hypotheses.

There was hope in those early days: Crick suggested that light might be the solution to deciphering the highly complex and fast electrical signaling characteristic of the mammalian brain.

This may be so, given recent developments in optogenetics studies, which were rewarded by this year's Nobel Prize in medicine or physiology to Karl Deisseroth, Peter Hegemann and Georg Nagel for their pioneering work in the field of optogenetics.

Early work on photosensitive single algae cells revealed that a light stimulus of the correct frequency could trigger an electrical signal in photosensitive receptors in the outer membranes of these cells.

Soon the genes responsible for those receptors were identified and later inserted into cultured frog nerve cells. This allowed investigators to stimulate nerve cells with light.

The next step was obvious: insert light-sensitive genes into nerve cells in the region of a rat's brain that control movement of the whiskers, then stimulate those cells with light signals using a fine light probe inserted into the selected region of the rat's brain. That too worked.

The approach was elegant because specific types of nerve cells in the brain could be stimulated or inhibited depending on the type of receptor and light employed. Since then, the method has been used to study memory engrams and emotions such as fear.



Together, what Nobel Prize-winning studies of the brain have shown is that mature cells retain all the genes of the embryonic stem cell and can differentiate into any cell in the right body, given the right redirecting molecular signals.

But elegant as the method is, it was never designed to understand the development of the brain. For that purpose, another method was needed.

John Gurdon (Nobel Prize winner, 2012) in the U.K. showed that nuclei from mature fully differentiated columnar cells in the tadpole gut could be transplanted into a frog embryonic cell whose nucleus had been destroyed and the embryonic cell would go on to develop into a tadpole — even an adult frog.

Shinya Yamanaka (Nobel Prize winner, 2012) working in Japan showed much the same: cultured adult mouse fibroblasts treated with four transcription factors developed into pluripotent cells capable of being redirected to develop into adult mice.

Together, what these studies showed is that mature cells retain all the genes of the embryonic stem cell and have the ability to differentiate into any cell in the body given the right redirecting molecular signals.

For example, embryonic stem cells could be redirected to create parts of the brain such as the neocortex and highlight in detail the exquisitely timed multiplication, differentiation, migration and contact patterns of normal embryonic development including when specific genes were turned on or off during development of embryonic layered neocortex.

Here is the perfect model for studying the earliest stages of normal in utero development or disorders such as autism or schizophrenia that might affect the early development of the brain.

There are, however, limitations.

Those several-millimetre "minibrains," as they are referred to, have no connections to other parts of the brain or other tissues, the absence of which could inhibit or disturb development of the brain and, with no blood supply, minibrains depend entirely on diffusion for food and oxygen and clearance of the waste products of development.

Still, it's quite an advance and could be linked with optogenetics to study communication between developing cells by seeing who's wired to what nerve cells to do what.

Going further, parts of the brain such as the pallidum, cerebellum, or even spinal cord can be developed in much the same way and, if brought together, form contacts with one another much as they might normally and form what some investigators call assembloids.

Development of the brain is busiest in the embryo and first few years of life when most connections are made and winnowing of connections not needed or otherwise faulty are cleared up without leaving a trace. By the third decade, development has mostly come to an end.

The combination of minibrains and optogenetic methods could shed light on many diseases, genetic or otherwise in early life by studying when the first molecular, physiological and pathological changes take place and whether intervention at the earliest stages might prevent some disorders from developing.

To study the development and maturation of the brain is to be reminded how vulnerable the developing child's brain could be to exposure of the mother to drugs or alcohol when development is so finely tuned and easily derailed.

The same is true during childhood, adolescent and even early adult years when the brain continues to develop and might be easily set back by malnutrition, harmful drugs or physical trauma, to say nothing of psychological trauma.

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

OBITUARIES

Joan Ann Busbridge



BUSBRIDGE, Joan Ann (nee Dawkins)

Joan Busbridge (nee Dawkins), 91, passed away peacefully after a brief illness on November 1, 2026 at NHS-St. Catharines Site.

Joan grew up in Toronto. A popular honours student and talented pianist, she married her high school sweetheart, Tom. After raising a family and a successful career in administration, Joan retired to Niagara-on-the-Lake where she became an avid bridge player.

Joan was predeceased by Tom Busbridge, her beloved husband of 71 years, her parents George and Ruby, and by her sisters Evelyn and Georgina. She is survived by her children Randy (Lorraine), Linda and Don, and by her grandchildren Geoffrey (Randy), Tom Dixon (Linda), Jennifer Stock (Linda) and James (Don), and by nine great-grandchildren.

There are no plans for a memorial service. Donations can be made to Covenant House Toronto

Joan will always be remembered for her fun-loving spirit and her luminous smile.

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

Considerate
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Gerald 'Gerry' Sibbald



SIBBALD, Gerald "Gerry"
January 18, 1942 – October 28, 2026

Gerald "Gerry" Sibbald passed away on October 28, 2026, leaving behind a lifetime of memories, friendships and accomplishments.

Born in Penetanguishene on January 18, 1942, Gerry was the son of Jack and Marjorie Sibbald. He shared 55 wonderful years of marriage with his beloved wife, Marlene, building a life filled with family, friendships, laughter and adventure.

Gerry was a successful businessman and entrepreneur. In 1981, he founded his own recruitment company, demonstrating the determination, vision and drive that would become such an important part of his life.

His commitment to his community was equally important to him. In 1981, Gerry received two Citizen of the Year awards, including Mississauga Citizen of the Year, in recognition of his outstanding community involvement and contributions to others.

Gerry had a particularly compassionate heart when it came to animals. He was involved with the CNIB Leader Dog program and believed in helping animals make a difference in people's lives. In keeping with his love and concern for animals, donations in his memory may be made to the Niagara Falls Humane Society.

One of Gerry's great passions was golf. His love of the game took him all over the world, providing wonderful opportunities to travel, meet people and enjoy the friendships that golf so often brings. He was also a proud member of the Niagara-on-the-Lake Golf Club, where he enjoyed the camaraderie and fellowship of fellow golf enthusiasts.

Gerry was also a devoted Toronto Blue Jays fan. He loved baseball and was a huge supporter of the team, enjoying the excitement of cheering on his Blue Jays.

Gerry will be lovingly remembered by his wife of 55 years, Marlene, and his surviving siblings Sharon, Deborah and Bruce.

He was predeceased by his beloved companion of 15 years, Sidney, and his siblings Arthur, Vera Anderson, Raymond, John, Patricia Dion and Jim.

Gerry's life was defined by his entrepreneurial spirit, generosity, love of family, passion for golf and baseball, and compassion for those in need.

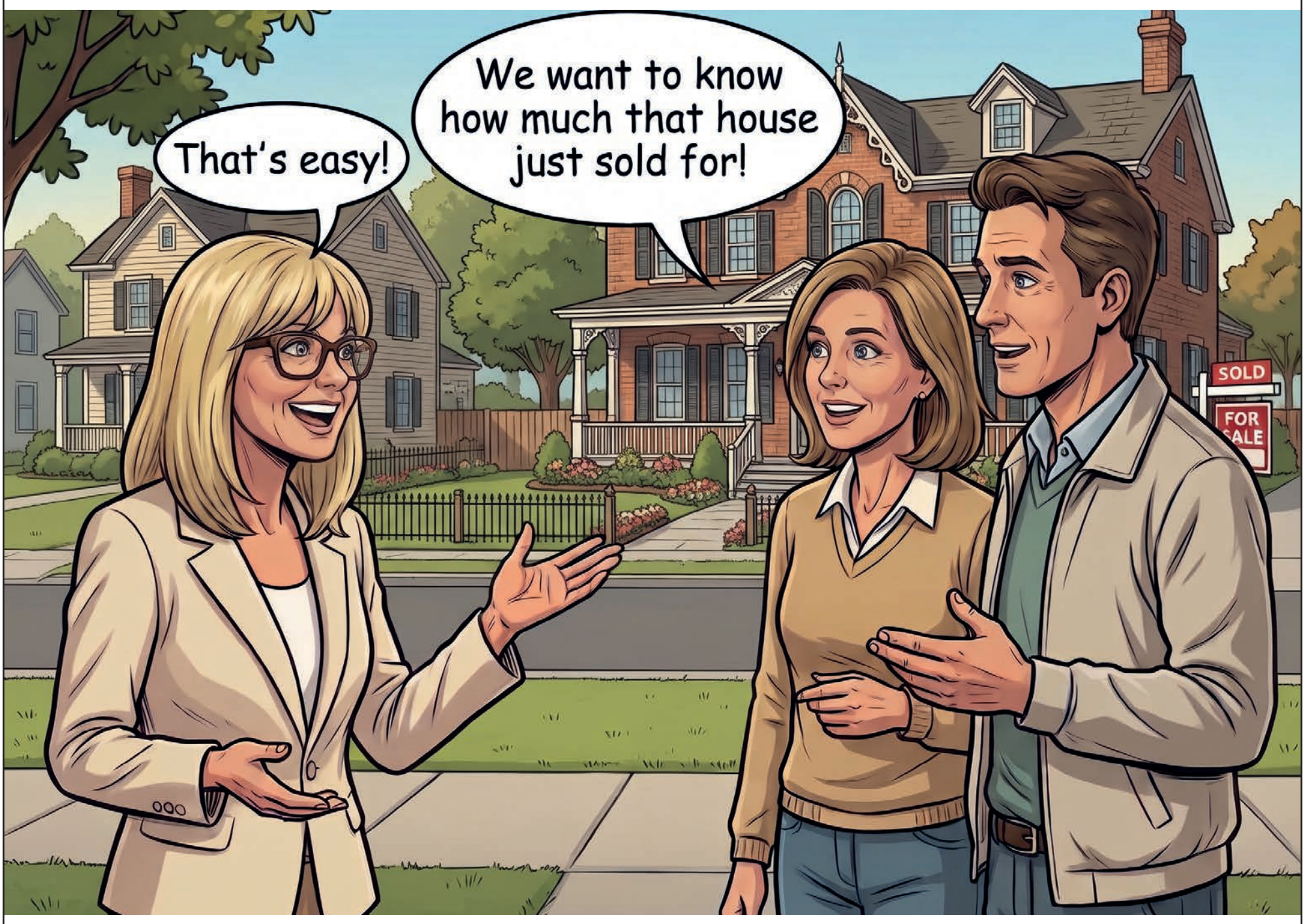
He leaves behind a legacy of kindness, community involvement and many cherished memories. He will be deeply missed by all who knew and loved him.

Cremation has taken place and Gerry's family will receive friends on Friday, November 20, 2026 from 12-1 o'clock at Morgan Funeral Home, 415 Regent Street, Niagara-on-the-Lake, followed by a celebration of his life commencing at 1 o'clock.

Memories, photos and condolences may be shared at www.morganfuneral.com



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