

ELECTION 2026



Candidates turn up heat: 'Will they betray your trust again?'

Paige Seburn
Local Journalism Initiative
The Lake Report

The gloves came off on stage Thursday night when one Niagara-on-the-Lake council candidate accused two fellow candidates, both incumbents, of betraying residents over the Parliament Oak development, questioning whether voters could trust them with another four years in office.

"There are two incumbents here tonight who voted for Parliament Oak," Steve McGuinness told the audience. "Will they betray your trust again?"

He was referring to Couns. Maria Mavridis and Adriana Cater Vizzari, who voted in favour of the 129-room hotel on King Street when council approved the project in a narrow 5-4 vote in June 2024.

The accusation came during the closing remarks at a NOTL Chamber of Commerce council candidate forum, held at Vineridge Academy on Niagara Stone Road on Oct. 15.

It was a pointed end to an evening that saw all 11

Continued on Page 3

Marching off to war

Re-enactment sends militia on a 22-km journey to Queenston and back



War of 1812 re-enactors walk along a wooded trail on Sunday during a round-trip march from Fort George to Queenston Heights. The outing follows the 214th anniversary of the Battle of Queenston Heights on Oct. 13, 1812. DAVE VAN DE LAAR

Chamber **mayoral debate** talks tourism, development

Paige Seburn
Local Journalism Initiative
The Lake Report

Vaughn Goettler doesn't just want Niagara-on-the-Lake to hire him — he wants them to let him give away the paycheck.

"I'm putting my money where my mouth is," the

lord mayor candidate said at the Chamber of Commerce's Oct. 14 debate at Vineridge Academy, pledging to donate his salary to children's recreational programs and charities.

The business operator offered voters a different bargain: judge him by his experience running busi-

nesses rather than holding office.

But his promise to run NOTL like a business drew pushback from rivals Andrea Kaiser and Erwin Wiens, who argued a municipality's first job is to provide services.



A yes, a no and no card raised: Andrea Kaiser, centre, supports completing the St. Davids roundabout, Vaughn Goettler, right, opposes it and Erwin Wiens seeks more information during the Oct. 14 debate. PAIGE SEBURN

Continued on Page 6



Serving Niagara Since 1977

SIMPSON'S

PHARMASAVE

Pharmacy: 905-468-2121

Apothecary: 905-468-8400

www.simpsonspharmacy.ca

Join us for monthly Customer Appreciation Days:

Every 3rd Wednesday of the Month

Customers 60+: Every last Thursday of the Month

Voters at last advance poll focused on development, patios

Julia Sacco
The Lake Report

Early voting gave some Niagara-on-the-Lake residents peace of mind, while others saw it as an opportunity to make their voices heard ahead of election day.

During the town's second advance voting session Saturday, crowds lined up at the NOTL Community Centre to vote, with development, planning and change among their top concerns.

Town staff haven't reported official turnout numbers at this polling station, but one staff member described the day as very busy.

Dawn Jacot of Old Town described herself as a keener when it comes to voting.

Jacot said she is eager for change in Niagara-on-the-Lake.

"I think we're locked in, a little clogged up," she said. "Moving forward is essential. I spent some time in Toronto, so I picked up some tips there."

Jacot said she has signs supporting Vaughn Goettler on her lawn.

Gayle and Doug Wood, also of Old Town, had environmental concerns at

Left: Dawn Jacot is eager for change in Niagara-on-the-Lake. Council is "clogged up," she says. Right: Joanne and Doug McCallum hope the next council can find a solution to bring restaurant patios back to Queen Street. JULIA SACCO

the forefront when they cast their ballots.

"Responsible development is probably the largest concern we have and protection of the environment," Gayle Wood said.

"That includes the heritage environment that makes this town particularly special."

Gayle Wood said she felt confident in her choices after researching the candidates.

"We read the portfolios in the special section of The Lake Report. We carefully went over every candidate, and there's some really good candidates," she said.

"We made our selection, and hopefully made our

selection responsibly, by reading their bios and what their key priorities are for."

Joanne and Doug McCallum of Old Town opted for advance voting to avoid the rush, but found crowds at the polling station anyway.

"There is a rush in there," Doug McCallum said.

Joanne McCallum said the

couple has always voted early.

"It's really just in case we can't get to it. It's really important for us to vote."

The McCallums have owned a restaurant in Brampton for 34 years, making patio restrictions an issue they can relate to personally.

In April, council voted against allowing temporary patios on Queen Street during the summer months.

"We actually have a lot of friends and neighbors that come and visit, friends that come and visit us and they don't want to sit inside," Joanne said.

She added that the couple owns a condominium in British Columbia, where streets are closed to allow restaurants to extend their patios.

"They have a lot of things that would generate revenue, without impacting," she said.

Doug McCallum said these solutions would not have to be permanent and could be limited to the summer months.

"There are so many other options."

Tracy Dalglish was smiling as she left the polling station.

"I love this, this is civics.

This is what we all need to do," she said.

Dalglish thanked town staff and volunteers for giving up their time to facilitate advance voting.

"I think that's amazing, and democracy at work."

Barbara Bedell, however, had a less positive experience.

She said her husband was turned away and could not vote because he did not have a voter card.

"They told him, 'Put your name on the voter's list.'"

"He's voted in the past, no problem."

Sue Broden of St. Davids voted in advance because her daughter had not received a voter card in the mail.

Broden was able to vote in person without any issues. Planning was her top concern.

"Planning for the future and infrastructure," she said.

Broden said she had difficulty choosing a school board trustee because little information was available about the candidates.

"There was a lot more information available about the councillors and the people running for the [council]."

juliasacco@niagaranow.com

Niagara on-the-Lake Realty

1994 Limited Real Estate Brokerage

Your Local Real Estate Experts

Family Owned & Operated for Over 50 Years

NEW LISTING



129 VICTORIA STREET
\$2,700,000
Viviane Elltoft & Jane Elltoft

Our name is in your search.

NOTLREALTY.COM

NEW LISTING



235 SIMCOE STREET
\$1,949,000
Thomas Elltoft

NEW PRICE



14-21 LORETTA DRIVE
\$679,000
Christopher Bowron & Nicole Vanderperk



14-92 LORETTA DRIVE
\$839,000
Christopher Bowron & Nicole Vanderperk

OPEN HOUSE SUNDAY 2-4PM



840 EAST WEST LINE
\$849,000
Christopher Bowron & Nicole Vanderperk



222 FOUR MILE CREEK ROAD
\$1,125,000
Cheryl Carmichael



14-1 LAKESIDE DRIVE
\$749,000
Patricia Atherton



541 EMPIRE ROAD, Sherston
\$799,000
Randall Armstrong



396 WELLINGTON STREET, Port Colborne
\$475,000
Randall Armstrong



1 SHAWS LANE
\$1,025,000
Thomas Elltoft & Kim Elltoft

109 QUEEN STREET, NIAGARA-ON-THE-LAKE | 905-468-3205

246 FOUR MILE CREEK ROAD, ST. DAVIDS | 905-262-6996

Christopher Bowron ***
905-327-6704

Randall Armstrong**
905-651-2977

Thomas Elltoft*
905-380-8012

Ricky Watson*
905-246-3387

Patricia Atherton*
905-933-4983

Socratis Kosmidis*
289-668-9324

Kim Elltoft**
905-380-8011

Jane Elltoft**
905-988-8776

Cheryl Carmichael*
905-941-0276

Nicole Vanderperk*
905-941-4585

Weston Miller*
289-213-8681

Viviane Elltoft*
905-988-7497

*** BROKER OF RECORD ** BROKER * SALES REPRESENTATIVE

Development, tourism among topics

Continued from Front Page

candidates answer eight questions, with just 45 seconds each to respond, before a lightning round where they held up green or red cards to signal whether they agreed or disagreed with a series of statements.

How many exceptions are too many?

The divide between candidates became clear when they were asked whether developers should be allowed to seek exceptions to the town's official plan, which guides where and how development happens.

For Nicholas Colaneri, the answer was easy.

"Coming with an amendment is laughing at that official plan," he said, arguing that none should ever be allowed.

Mavridis presented a contrasting argument. She called the official plan "a guiding document" and argued some projects need changes to the rules in order to move forward.

"It's not legislation," she said.

"So, to say zero amendments is literally impossible to do," she added, offering a hypothetical example of a grocery store in Glendale that might need an amendment for loading docks.

Coun. Sandra O'Connor would make exceptions only in extraordinary circumstances — for example, if a hospital wanted to build in town.

"I would consider amending the official plan for something like that," she said. "But apart from that, I think we should stick to what we have."

Weston Miller said he would generally vote against developments that don't follow the plan unless there is a clear public benefit.

According to Miller, council approved 72 zoning bylaw amendments and 21 official plan amendments over the past four years.

"That's not the exception anymore, that's the standard operating model," he said. "That needs to change."

Coun. Gary Burroughs said the next council must "be very strict" with what he called a "living document," noting that it's also up to developers to "fol-



Eleven candidates. Eight questions. Just 45 seconds per answer. NOTL council candidates took the stage at Vineridge Academy on Oct. 15 for a Chamber of Commerce forum where development, tourism and taxpayer dollars were up for debate. PAIGE SEBURN

low the rules." Meanwhile, Coun. Tim Balasiuk said he could support amendments that benefit residents.

Tourism: Too much of a good thing?

Has NOTL reached its limit when it comes to visitors? Possibly, said McGuinness.

"We may have reached the tipping point," he said.

McGuinness criticized the province's Destination Niagara strategy for calling for a doubling of visitor numbers across the region.

"I want to put residents first. That means before developers. That means before tourists. We need to protect the jobs in the industry, but we can't have a doubling of tourism," he said. "It's not responsible."

Coun. Andrew Niven disagreed with that diagnosis.

"I don't think we have a tourism problem. I think we have a tourism management problem," he said. "I feel we should really focus on not necessarily growing the tourism economy, also just managing the tourism economy."

For Rick Mills, the question was also about who foots the bill.

"The tourists visit us. It does cost to attract them, but it must cost the tourists more — more than us," he said.

Karen Taylor-Jones, listed on the ballot as Karen Jones-Taylor, warned against losing the distinctive character that draws visitors to town.

"We shouldn't sacrifice those things in the process of attracting more visitors," she said.

Cater Vizzari pointed to the other side of the equation: tourism brings in money that can help fund local amenities. She cited municipal accommodation tax revenue used to support the NOTL Museum expansion.

McGuinness, an accountant, argued that developers and tourists should shoulder more of the cost of maintaining the town's infrastructure and services. He called for higher development charges and greater contributions from visitors to ease the burden on property taxpayers.

Promises and a warning

Asked what they would do in their first year to make NOTL a better place to run a business, Colaneri promised to restore resident advisory committees, arguing that residents had lost their voice.

"They've lost their ability to shape their future themselves," he said.

Mavridis, again, offered a pointed contrast.

"Committees are great, but committees consist of six to 10 people," she said, defending the broader business roundtables held during the current council's term and arguing councilors should get out of town hall and speak directly with the people affected by their decisions.

Balasiuk also pointed to existing business roundtables and said the town should continue supporting entrepreneurs, though it cannot guarantee their success.

O'Connor said her first priority would be rebuilding trust with the business community through regular meetings and meaningful discussions.

Cater Vizzari suggested bringing municipal officials into Business After Five networking events to hear directly from local business owners.

Miller proposed working with local businesses, Niagara College and employers to address workforce needs and barriers to business growth.

When it came time to make their final pitches, Taylor-Jones rejected the idea of making a long list of campaign promises.

"I'm not a professional politician," she said. "I'm not going to pretend to know everything."

"But I will listen to you."

"I'll ask the questions that need asking and I'll do my homework — and stand up for what I believe is right, even when it's not popular," she added.

Niven defended his approach to his previous council decisions.

"I've asked the questions. I do the homework," he said, noting proposals should not automatically receive a "yes" or "no" vote without considering their effects on residents, infrastructure and the town's future.

"I was given the opportunity to serve on council, and now, I'm asking residents for the opportunity to continue that work," Niven said.

McGuinness, meanwhile, called for a shakeup at the council table, warning that re-electing the same councillors could mean repeating the mistakes of the past.

For Mills, it's not about having every solution. In fact, he said he has "more questions than answers."

"I'm here to work together," he said. "I'm here to be hopeful."

And Burroughs, a former lord mayor and regional chair, delivered a warning to residents.

"In all the years I've served this community, I've never been more concerned about its future."

"The decisions ahead are critical — and so is your vote," Burroughs said.

The candidates have had the microphone.

Voters will have the last word on Oct. 26.

paigeseburn@niagaranow.com

THE FARMHOUSE Cafe


Open For Lunch Daily
Reservations strongly suggested
Online booking available! Or give us a call to book
905-468-8814

Bring this ad in for 10% off lunch on any Monday, Tuesday or Wednesday in October!

CAROLINE CELLARS WINERY



WINE BOUTIQUE & TASTING BAR
Open 7 days a week
Wine tastings offered daily
Walk-ins Welcome for Wine Tasting! Reservations available for group bookings
1010 Line 2, NOTL, 905.468.8814 www.CarolineCellars.com

St. Davids Lions
1462 York Rd, St. Davids

HARVEST BREAKFAST Buffet

SUNDAY, OCT. 25
8 AM to 1 PM

Adults \$18
Child 6-12 - \$10
Children Under 5 Free



Scrambled Eggs – Sausage
Bacon - Back Bacon
Home Fries - Pancakes
Waffles - Biscuits & Gravy
Fruit – Tea – Coffee – Juices



St. Davids-Queenston United Church

1453 York Rd., St. Davids
www.stdavids-queenstonuc.ca
Minister: Rev. YongSeok Baek
Rental inquiries: 905-262-5242

Sunday Worship
10:30 a.m.
Also online, visit our website.

Advertising inquiries?
Email advertising@niagaranow.com

VOTE


VAUGHN GOETTLER
FULLTIME LORD MAYOR

Leadership You Can Trust.
vaughngoettlerforlordmayor.com
Authorized by the Vaughn Goettler for Lord Mayor Campaign © 2026



Vision Awareness Month is the perfect time to check in on your eye health. Even if your vision feels fine, regular eye exams are important for detecting changes that may not have obvious symptoms right away. Whether you wear glasses, contacts, or have not had an exam in a while, October is a great reminder to schedule your next visit with us.



NOTL: 905-468-8002 | 358 Mary St.
St. Catharines: 905-682-9119 | 8 Secord Dr.
www.theeyedoc.ca

Thank you fellow residents for voting.
Voting for the well-being of our town.
We seem to live in a world that isn't happy unless it's miserable.
I've personally tried hard not to blame and complain through these past two months of campaigning.
The older I become, the better I become.

As a town, who are we becoming?
There isn't any of us candidates who have "the" answer.
We're asking to be a part of the answer.
I intend to work together.
At serving all residents.
And I say this unapologetically, I have more questions than answers.
What is it we are doing, and why?
What can we keep doing, improving upon?
What can we stop doing, and do differently?

Honestly, I'll be so glad when we're all done talking about ourselves, less of 'I's, 'me's and 'my's.
When we've all voted and begin the process of going forward.

Onward.



RICK MILLS
FOR TOWN COUNCIL

Have an opinion
you want heard?
Email us.



Mark Matchem, left, and M. Areeb Aijaz are candidates for District School Board of Niagara.

School board candidates, Part II

Paige Seburn
Local Journalism Initiative
The Lake Report

In the Oct. 1 edition of The Lake Report, we shared the thoughts of some of the Niagara residents who are running, or re-running, for a role as one of a handful of trustees for the District School Board of Niagara and the Niagara Catholic District School Board. Eleven trustees will be elected to District School Board of Niagara, while eight will be elected to the Catholic school board.

We asked the nominees what their top three priorities would be as a school board trustee, why they decided to run and what they would like to change or fix at the school board level.

We also asked for their perspectives on the ramifications of the Ontario government's Bill 101, which passed in May this year and gives the province more oversight of school boards, including what those changes mean for local students and families and how locally elected trustees can still make a meaningful difference.

Now, we're sharing responses from a few more candidates, including one candidate re-running for trustee for the Conseil scolaire Viamonde, the French-language public school board for much of southern Ontario. That board has 12 trustees, including one from the Nigara region.

Here's what they had to say.

Candidates for District School Board of Niagara:

Mark Matchem

What would your top three priorities be as school board trustee?

My first priority is simple: no kid should be forgotten. Every student deserves to be valued, challenged and given the tools they need to succeed on the path ahead of them.

Second, I want parents to be treated as real partners in their children's education, with good communication and opportunities to be heard.

Third, I want to make sure we're using our resources responsibly. Every dollar we spend is money entrusted to us by the public, and we need to make sure it's actually helping students and supporting the people working with them every day.

What made you choose to run for trustee?

I'm a husband, a dad of three and a longtime volunteer with children and youth. I've also spent most of my career in public service, including many years in higher education. I've seen the difference it makes when someone recognizes a child's potential, challenges them and refuses to let them fall through the cracks.

That's a big part of why I'm running. I'm a problem-solver by nature. I like listening, asking questions, figuring out what isn't working and finding practical ways to make it better. I think I can bring that approach to the school board.

What would you like to change or fix at the school board level?

One thing I'd really like to improve is communication with parents and the community. People shouldn't feel like they're finding out about decisions after they've already been made. I want us to listen earlier and do a better job explaining not just what we're doing, but why. I'd also like to look carefully at where our resources are going and whether what we're doing is actually working.

I don't come into this assuming I have all the answers. I want to listen, ask questions, look at the evidence and work respectfully with people, even when we don't agree.

What do changes imposed by Bill 101 mean for students and families, and how can locally elected trustees still make a meaningful difference?

The role of a trustee may look different under Bill 101, but I don't believe that makes the local voice any less important. Families still need someone who will listen when something isn't working, bring their concerns forward and ask questions about how decisions affect students in our communities. Trustees can still advocate, communicate and make sure local experiences are part of the conversation. There is still room to make a meaningful difference. Some of the focus may have changed, but the goal hasn't: representing our community and doing what

we can to help students succeed.

M. Areeb Aijaz

What would your top three priorities be as school board trustee?

Priority 1: Mental health is one of the greatest challenges facing our children today. The relentless increase in screen time is contributing to unhealthy levels of stress, anxiety, loneliness and shorter attention span. I am committed to being a strong advocate for programs/workshops like mindfulness and mental health exercises for kids, resources, and policies that support the mental well-being of every child.

Priority 2: In [the] digital age, we need to create more opportunities for young people to connect, learn, and grow face-to-face. I will advocate for increased access to programs that help children develop essential life skills such as public speaking, teamwork, leadership, debate, volunteering and community engagement. These experiences help young people build self-confidence, strengthen social connections and develop the communication skills they need to succeed in school, work and life.

Priority 3: I will advocate for greater engagement with parents, students and community members, while ensuring that visible minority communities have a strong voice and meaningful representation on the board. Diverse representation leads to better decisions,

Continued on Page 4



Let's respect residents
and welcome visitors.
In that order.

WESTON MILLER
COUNCILLOR
FOR OUR COMMUNITY

Authorized by the campaign
to elect Weston Miller, 2026.

Mental health, spending top of mind

Continued from Page 4

stronger trust, and policies that address the needs of all students.

What made you choose to run for trustee?

As a parent of five children ranging in age from four to 12, I am deeply invested in the future of our schools and our community. Every day, I see both the opportunities and challenges that today's students face, from increasing screen time and mental-health concerns to the need for stronger community engagement and representation.

I decided to run for trustee because I want to be a strong voice for students, parents and families. I believe our children deserve a school system that not only focuses on academic success but also supports their mental wellbeing, builds confidence through real-life experiences and ensures every family feels heard and represented.

What would you like to change or fix at the school board level?

Currently, we do not have enough diversity represented on the DSBN board. I would work to ensure that the voices of visible minority communities are also heard, valued and reflected in decision-making. Our board should better represent the students and families it serves, bringing a wider range of perspectives and experiences to the table.

Greater representation leads to better outcomes, stronger trust within the community and more inclusive policies for all students.

What do changes imposed by Bill 101 mean for students and families, and how can locally elected trustees still make a meaningful difference?

Bill 101 has increased the responsibility of trustees to serve as strong advocates for students, families and communities. While the province now has greater oversight of school board operations, locally elected trustees continue to play a very critical role as the connection between families and the board. They are responsible for listening to parents, students, educators



Catholic candidate Alex McKee and Conseil scolaire Viamonde candidate Marcel Tikeng.

and community members, bringing local concerns forward, and ensuring that community voices are reflected in board discussions and decisions.

Candidates for Niagara Catholic District School Board:

Alex McKee

What would your top three priorities be as school board trustee?

They are your children, you have the ultimate authority by natural law, and it's your money. We must and we can, easily and cheaply, go back to core curriculum.

Publicly funded education has become extremely bloated: 85 per cent of budget is wages and salaries. Average salaries are \$120,000-plus. Too many homes are having a hard time making ends meet. Parent-controlled education is half of that.

As a trustee, I will strive to revolutionize our system with tax paying parents becoming more hands-on. We can actually get back some of our school taxes.

What made you choose to run for trustee?

As a fifth-generation educator and ex-teacher I know first-hand what teachers actually talk about in their staff rooms. They love their students, they love to teach, but are handcuffed by the system. I have accumulated the needed managerial talent to begin to effect (sic) the above.

What would you like to change or fix at the school board level?

The great Broadway play "Up the Down Staircase" celebrated and forecast the erosion of our system. For the sake of our nation, for

the sake of our children, the system must be revolutionized. It's what we all want — no more Band-Aids. Join the parents' revolution.

What do changes imposed by Bill 101 mean for students and families, and how can locally elected trustees still make a meaningful difference?

No response provided.

Candidates for Conseil scolaire Viamonde:

Marcel Tikeng

What would your top three priorities be as school board trustee?

First, space: too many francophone students learn in portables or ride buses for an hour because our schools haven't kept pace with growth. I'll keep fighting for new schools and fair capital funding.

Second, people: the French-language teacher shortage is real, and I'll champion recruitment, retention and support for staff so every class has a qualified teacher.

Third, student success and well-being: strong literacy and numeracy, mental health supports, and real inclusion for newcomer and special-needs students, so families choose French education from kindergarten to Grade 12, and stay.

What made you choose to run for trustee?

Education is a constitutional right, but a right only matters if it's delivered. During my first term, I saw how decisions at the board table shape a child's daily life: whether there's a school nearby, a teacher in the classroom, support when they struggle.

My background in finance, management and social services lets me read a budget



critically while keeping students at the centre. I'm running again to finish what we started and to protect what francophone families fought so hard to win.

What would you like to change or fix at the school board level?

The gap between our growth and our resources. Francophone enrolment keeps rising, especially with newcomer families, yet we wait too long for new schools and lose too many teens to English-language high schools.

I'll push for faster capital approvals, stronger secondary programs in trades, STEM and the arts that keep students in French, and provide clearer budgets and communication so parents can follow and influence decisions. Every dollar should be traceable to classroom impact.

What do changes imposed by Bill 101 mean for students and families, and how can locally elected trustees still make a meaningful difference?

For French-language boards, Bill 101 largely respects our governance: Section 23 of the Charter guarantees our right to manage our own schools, so we keep our elected trustees and no provincially imposed CEO. But families will still feel changes such as: standardized learning resources, new exam and attendance requirements, and tighter spending limits.

That's exactly why trustees matter. We ensure provincial rules are applied in ways that respect francophone language and culture, we defend our constitutional rights, and we carry parents' voices to Queen's Park.

paigeseburn@niagaranow.com



MM LALANDE LAW
PROFESSIONAL CORPORATION



Only one week left before my seminar on Wills! There's only just a few spots remaining, so don't wait to register. Whether you've never had a Will before, or you need to make an update, or you just want to learn more to stay informed, I'd love to see you there!

FREE PARKING & WHEELCHAIR ACCESSIBLE

WILLS & ESTATES SEMINAR - Oct. 28, 6:00-6:45pm

"Will Planning 101"

Call or email to register!

Located in beautiful Niagara-on-the-Lake!

(289) 868-9687 mmlaw.ca

mml@mmlaw.ca

PROUD TO BE YOUR VOICE IN OTTAWA



TONY BALDINELLI
MP | NIAGARA FALLS

NIAGARA FALLS/NOTL OFFICE: tony.baldinelli@parl.gc.ca
905-353-9590
FORT ERIE OFFICE: tonybaldinelli.mp.ca
905-871-9991
facebook.com/tonybaldinelli.mp

Proud to support local news!



WAYNE GATES

MPP Niagara Falls proudly representing Niagara-on-the-Lake

905-357-0681

HANDYMAN HANS CAN

Power Washing (Houses, Driveways, Patios, Polymeric Sand, Sealants and Brick-Leveling), Black Top, Deck Staining and Cleaning, Junk, Furniture, Bush and Vehicle Removal, Yard Clean-up, Weeding, Tree and Bush Trimming and Cutting, Home Installations (Grab Bars, Railings, Toilets, Sinks, Door Bells, Doors, Lights, Vents, TVs, Blinds and Hinges), Wall Mounting, Furniture Assembly, Painting, Caulking, Household and Window Cleaning, Organizing and Hoarding Help, Eavestroughs, Drywall, Clogged Sinks and Toilets, Windows, Screens, Taps, Demolition and Moving Services.

905-246-1843

Advertising inquiries?
Emailadvertising@niagaranow.com

GARY BURROUGHS
COUNCILLOR

www.burroughs2026.ca



Paid for by Gary Burroughs Campaign

STRONG EXPERIENCED
LEADERSHIP

Three mayoral candidates all reject amalgamation

Continued from Front Page

A town run like a business?

Goettler argued his business background offered something his opponents' political experience did not.

"Both Andrea and Erwin have campaigned on their political experience," he said. "I bring my own experience. Demonstrated experience, real-world experience, bottom-line experience."

He said the town must control its spending to deliver the services residents need.

"If you don't run your household correctly — if you spend more than you make — you lose your house," said Goettler. "If you do that in business, you lose your business."

Wiens challenged the comparison.

"Businesses have one guy at the top and they make the decisions. In a municipality, there's six councillors moving forward, and a mayor, and 19,000 residents that need to be listened to, and they all matter," he said.

Kaiser pushed back as well. "Because a business, in my mind, is primarily about making money."

"For me, running a town is about the residents, the people, the services, the things they need," said Kaiser, as she pointed to youth programs, seniors' needs and social services.

Goettler maintained financial discipline was how the town could afford those responsibilities.

He promised to remove town fees for recreational activities and community centres for one year while seeking a lasting solution, saying administrative savings would pay for the change.

A pause on development

The next council faces a costly problem: the town's infrastructure review identified an annual funding gap of about \$13.1 million. NOTL needs roughly \$22.3 million a year to maintain its infrastructure but has about \$9.2 million in sustainable funding.

Goettler proposed to stop new development until an



A row of red cards symbolize the mayoral candidates' positions on amalgamation: no. They were less unified on other issues. PAIGE SEBURN

infrastructure plan is ready.

"It's time for a big pause," he said, adding that he would restore resident committees and complete an infrastructure plan within his first 100 days.

"In those 100 days, we will have accomplished an infrastructure plan that we will know we can move forward with," Goettler promised.

"We will be able to turn the light on to development as soon as we have that."

Wiens argued the current council had already laid the groundwork through increased capital spending and a plan to assess, maintain and replace municipal infrastructure.

"We're doing all of that through an asset management plan," he said, noting he'll "continue to do that."

Kaiser said NOTL can grow responsibly while protecting farmland, heritage, the environment, village character and residents' quality of

life — but making climate resilience a priority would be essential to achieving that balance.

She called for climate resilience to guide every infrastructure project, with rain gardens, permeable surfaces, green space and trees helping keep water out of overloaded systems.

Keep strong mayor powers or reject them?

The candidates disagreed over the authority they would use to carry out their plans.

Goettler rejected strong-mayor powers outright.

"The more I am learning about what's going on in our province, the more opposed I am to them," he added.

Kaiser would retain them, pointing to the value of a mayor-prepared draft budget that councillors could propose changing.

"I'd just like to assure you that it would be in collaboration with all of council

and that they would have the ability to amend," she told the audience.

Wiens also defended the powers as useful tools, particularly for budgeting, while pledging restraint.

"I have no intention of pushing anything through that the rest of the council does not want to have, or the population doesn't want to have," he said.

Who can protect NOTL?

All three candidates opposed amalgamation, each arguing they could help stop it.

Wiens warned that losing NOTL's independence would put every other promise at risk: "All bets are off."

He argued relationships built during eight years on council and work with a coalition of eight municipalities made him uniquely qualified to resist amalgamation.

"I am the only candidate that can successfully hold off amalgamation forces

over the next four years," Wiens said.

Goettler argued the current council's approach had not removed the threat of amalgamation and pledged to build alliances with smaller municipalities to protect NOTL's interests.

"We are already well into amalgamation whether we like it or not, because we haven't done anything in the last eight years to avoid that," he said.

"What we've been doing doesn't work, or it wouldn't be on the table."

Kaiser emphasized being the only candidate with regional council experience, arguing those relationships could both help resist amalgamation and secure more services for NOTL.

"The lord mayor will be Niagara-on-the-Lake's only elected representative at regional council, so my experience at the region, at this time, at this juncture, is particularly important," she said.

Three different answers on roundabout

The debate included a lightning round, with candidates raising green cards for agreement or red cards for opposition, then briefly explaining their positions.

Asked whether the St. Davids roundabout should be completed, the three candidates gave different answers.

Goettler opposed completing it, calling the work a waste of time and money.

Kaiser supported continuing because of the investment and detailed design already completed.

Wiens declined to choose a clear side, saying he needed more information from the region about the project's benefit to NOTL.

Whether it's a roundabout, a development proposal or the town's budget, voters have less than a week to decide whose judgment they trust.

paigeseburn@niagaranow.com



RE - ELECT — COUNCILLOR

TIM BALASIUK

COMMUNITY MINDED AT THE ROOTS



VOTE

MONDAY

OCTOBER 26

Let's turn the page...

Restrictions lifted, candidates allowed at long-term care home

Julia Sacco
The Lake Report

Niagara-on-the-Lake council candidate Steve McGuinness wants to canvass residents in long-term care and condominium buildings ahead of Monday’s municipal election, but he says access restrictions have made it difficult.

As of Wednesday, Oct. 21, candidates had been granted permission to canvass at Radiant Care Pleasant Manor on Friday from 10:45 a.m. to 12:45 p.m., following inquiries by The Lake Report. A candidate meet-and-greet will follow from 1 to 2 p.m.

McGuinness said he was previously denied access to Pleasant Manor and King’s Point condominiums.

The issue began when a Pleasant Manor resident emailed him asking for more information about his campaign.

“I wanted to help her out, so I went into Pleasant Manor.”

McGuinness said front-desk staff told him he could not enter before they spoke with CEO Tim Siemens. Another staff member later called on Siemens’ behalf.

“The quote was that they’re not letting any candidates in because they don’t want their residents to be disturbed,” McGuinness said.

He took issue with the decision, thinking of his late mother.

“I would not want some administrator in a retirement community making a decision on behalf of my mom and everyone.”

In response to The Lake Report, Siemens said there is no blanket ban on candidates entering or canvassing.

“We at Radiant Care recognize the importance of candidates having the opportunity to speak with voters, and we try our best to balance that with our respect for residents’ dignity, privacy, safety, and choices,” he said.

Campaign visits must be scheduled in advance and residents must expressly agree to interact with candidates, Siemens said.

After receiving a similar response Tuesday, McGuinness requested a meet-the-candidate session open to interested residents and all candidates.



Steve McGuinness could not canvass at King’s Point without calling in advance. SUPPLIED

Town communications co-ordinator Quinton Ascah said the Municipal Elections Act prohibits those controlling apartment buildings, condominiums, non-profit housing co-operatives and gated communities

from preventing candidates or their representatives from campaigning at residents’ doors between 9 a.m. and 9 p.m.

Candidates denied access should bring the legislation to property management’s

attention and request reasonable access, he said.

Coun. Gary Burroughs, who has canvassed at condominiums and Pleasant Manor previously, said some restrictions are commonplace.

“There’s a process. You can’t just show up at the door,” said Burroughs, who did not attempt to canvass at Pleasant Manor this year.

Mayoral candidate Vaughn Goettler was also denied entry to Pleasant Manor and Niagara Long-Term Care Facility, but said he understands staff concerns.

“I don’t think people are being difficult. I think they’re trying to protect the residents, be they seniors or just condo owners. And I think they’re trying to manage the process,” he said.

Goettler confirmed Wednesday that he had been told canvassing would be permitted at Pleasant Manor on Friday. He also canvassed inside King’s Point with advance notice.

McGuinness said King’s Point admitted him without advance notice in 2025 but turned him away this year, saying his request needed

board approval.

“By the time they next meet, the election could be over,” he said.

Candidate Weston Miller canvassed at King’s Point after contacting its property manager, but said Pleasant Manor staff denied both canvassing and a proposed common-area meet-and-greet.

“We don’t understand how you can have a polling station but not allow your residents the opportunity to hear directly from candidates.”

Mayoral candidate Andrea Kaiser left campaign materials at Pleasant Manor for distribution, as staff suggested.

McGuinness said he also faced restrictions at Simcoe Apartments on Davy Street.

Council candidate Karen Taylor-Jones, who lives there, said visitors need someone to let them in.

“We’re not allowed to let a stranger in,” she said.

McGuinness said Taylor-Jones told him at an all-candidates debate that outside candidates cannot enter because it is a public housing building.

juliasacco@niagaranow.com

Former M.P., Aldermen and Grape Kings endorse Erwin Wiens for Lord Mayor of Niagara-on-the-Lake



“Erwin understands how important the farming community is to Niagara-on-the-Lake. He doesn’t have to learn that. I trust Erwin to be the best Lord Mayor to deal with issues facing the farming community of Niagara-on-the-Lake.”

Jamie Slingerland
2015 Grape King
NOTL Alderman 1991-2003

Erwin Wiens
Deputy Lord Mayor 2022-2026
2023 Grape King
NOTL Alderman 2018-2022

“Amalgamation is the biggest issue facing Niagara-on-the-Lake. Erwin Wiens is the right person at the right time to stop it. If anyone thinks that amalgamation is off Premier Ford’s radar, then you’re in for an unpleasant surprise.”

Gary Pillitteri
Niagara Member of Parliament 1993-2004
1981 Grape King
NOTL Alderman 1985-1988

WESTON
MILLER
COUNCILLOR
FOR OUR COMMUNITY

St.David's
VETERINARY CLINIC

stdavidsvetclinic.com

Accepting new patients



House-calls available

📞 905.262.8777





CPAP AND SLEEP APNEA SUPPLIES

111A Garrison Village Dr., Suite 202

For appointment call 289-868-9212.

Remembrance Day Wreaths

Now available to order for our Nov. 11th Old Town and Queenston ceremonies.

We will remember them.

Please call 905-468-2353 between 11am - 4 pm or email legion124@gmail.com.





The Provincial Service Officer will be visiting the Welland Legion, Branch 4 from November 18 - 20

Any Veteran wishing an appointment should contact the NOTL Legion, Branch 124 by October 30.

905-468-2353 | legion124@gmail.com

FIREARMS WANTED FOR OUR 2026 AUCTION PROGRAM

Rifles, Shotguns, Handguns, Antiques, Militaria, Collections, Estates, Single Items For Auction or Possible Purchase

CONTACT: SWITZER'S AUCTION

Toll-Free: 1-800-694-2609

Or email us: sales@switzersauction.com

VISIT US @ www.switzersauction.com for Auction Dates & Details

Have an opinion you want heard?

Email us.



Flight service to connect Niagara District Airport to Toronto Island's Billy Bishop

Zahraa Hmood
The Lake Report

This Monday will mark a milestone for the Niagara District Airport: new flights connecting passengers from Niagara-on-the-Lake to the heart of Toronto.

Aspen Air Charters is launching scheduled passenger flights taking travellers between the NOTL airport and Billy Bishop Toronto City Airport, with the first batch of flights taking off on Oct. 26.

Going forward, two departures are scheduled every Monday, Wednesday and Friday from Niagara District Airport, leaving 7:30 a.m. and 4:30 p.m. each day. Each flight is 20 minutes and costs \$126 per person.

Flights are also leaving from the downtown Toronto airport at 8:30 a.m. and 5:30 p.m. those days. All flights are one-way.

Right now, those interested cannot immediately buy a ticket with Aspen Air — they'll have to request to book a ticket, with online payment taken, before the booking is finalized by a member of Aspen Air's team, who'll reach out directly to interested buyers. They can request tickets



Aspen Air's fleet aircraft, the Piper PA-31 Navajo. SOURCED

for up to six passengers per purchase.

Coun. Erwin Wiens, a board member on the Niagara District Airport Commission, says this plan to connect Niagara District Airport with the Billy Bishop airport has been in the works for a little more than six months.

"(I'm) super excited that this new venture is taking off," he told The Lake Report. "This will be a great addition to the Air Canada landline, which has just

been expanded to five routes to Pearson."

This launch comes a week after Air Canada and Landline Company announced it'll be adding two more arrival times to its motor-coach service that takes flyers between the NOTL airport and Toronto Pearson International Airport. The bus service started running in mid-June.

Founded two years ago, Aspen Air is a private aviation and charter plane service operating across Ontario,

Quebec and the northeastern United States. This is the first time it's offering scheduled flights for passengers.

Along with flights between Niagara and Toronto, it'll be launching scheduled flights between Sarnia Chris Hadfield Airport and the Billy Bishop airport on Tuesdays and Thursdays, beginning Oct. 27.

To get started on booking a flight to or from Toronto, visit aspenaircharters.com/scheduled-flights.

zahraa@niagaranow.com

Concession 7 Road closed for construction

Staff
The Lake Report

Part of Concession 7 Road is closed until mid-November as work gets underway on the new Modero housing development in Glendale.

The closure, which started Monday, is for a portion of Concession 7 Road between York and Queenston roads. For five weeks, no traffic will be allowed through this part of the road except for emergency vehicles, says the Town of Niagara-on-the-Lake.

A traffic management and detour plan is in place for drivers to navigate around the construction area. The town encourages everyone to follow posted construction signs and allow for



Traffic's closed on this portion of Concession 7 Road until mid-November for construction work part of the Modero Estates development project. SOURCED

extra travel time.

The town says this closure is meant to facilitate servicing and road construction work part of the yet-to-be-completed Modero Estates development, approved in 2024. The developer's

contractor, Trenchline & Roads, is carrying out this fall's work.

The town notes the schedule for this construction work may be adjusted due to weather conditions, site

requirements or other unexpected circumstances, and that it will update residents on its website and through social media on any major changes to the timeline, traffic management measures or road access arrangements.

Modero Estates is set to be a mixed-use development, roughly 15 hectares large, with 389 homes, including 55 single-family units, 128 on-street townhouses, 178 block townhouses and 28 units above commercial spaces.

While the developer, Marz Homes, hasn't shared when the project will be complete, it's working on building a new public park for the development, for which construction may start in spring next year.

RE-ELECT

Adriana Cater Vizzari

Community. Vision. Experience.

voteadriana.com



**CONTROL
DEVELOPMENT**

**RESIDENTS
FIRST**

**RECORDED
VOTES**

**VOTE
VAUGHN
GOETTTLER
FULLTIME LORD MAYOR**

**NO
STRONG
MAYOR
POWERS**

**FREE
RECREATION
PROGRAMS**

**RESTORE
RESIDENT
COMMITTEES**

vaughngoettlerforlordmayor.com

Authorized by the Campaign to Elect Vaughn Goettler © 2026

History familiar and new on display across NOTL at Doors Open

Julia Sacco
The Lake Report

For Ginger Haine, stepping into the Mackenzie Printery and Newspaper Museum Saturday was a homecoming.

During Niagara-on-the-Lake's Doors Open event, she returned to the building where she lived from 1944 to 1954 — this time with her great-granddaughter, Amelia.

Built in 1824, the Georgian-style building was once home to publisher, rebellion leader and Toronto's first mayor William Lyon Mackenzie. Today, it houses artifacts tracing Canada's printing history, including the Louis Roy Press, the country's oldest printing press.

Haine, then known as Ginger Reid, moved in with her grandparents and sister through her grandfather's work with the Niagara Parks Commission, which has owned the property since 1924.

Danielle Lamoureaux, assistant manager at North End Heritage, said employees commonly lived where they worked in the first half of the 20th century, before cars became widespread.

"If you wanted your staff to get to work on time, it was often most functional to have them living on the property," she said.

Haine's grandmother opened the museum and welcomed visitors to its military displays, which included cannonballs and uniforms.

Much of the building remains familiar.

"The walls are the same. They've got different stuff in different rooms," said Haine, who had twice returned with her children and grandchildren.

Susan Carter also revisited family history during Doors Open, at the Niagara Apothecary on Queen Street.

After her mother, Miriam, died last year, Carter donated her pharmacy blazer



The immense sound of this pipe organ, built by C. Franklin Legge nearly a century ago, fills Grace United Church as it's being played by David Greaves. DAVE VAN DE LAAR

and graduation photo to the museum. Miriam graduated from the University of Toronto's pharmacy school in 1947.

"It makes you proud," Carter said. "I'm happy that the things got to where they'll be seen and appreciated."

Built in 1818, the building housed a pharmacy from the late 1860s until 1964. It was restored and reopened as a museum in 1971.

Carter drove from Lis-

towel to see her mother's belongings on display, joined by her brother Gary and niece Jennifer.

Before studying pharmacy, her mother was a farmerette.

"She did that, which is also historically significant to this area."

For others, Doors Open offered a chance to discover the town through free access to 16 historic sites.

Diane Bond and Darren Smith, who have lived in

Chautauqua for four years, took the opportunity to learn more about their community.

"We both really liked Navy Hall," Bond said during a stop at the Old Court House.

At Navy Hall, Dan Laroche guided visitors through the building's history, pointing out features dating back 211 years.

Inscriptions on the doors date to the 1830s, when the building served

as a barracks.

"You've got here number one room, 28 men," he said, pointing to one inscription. Another identified a second room for 28 men.

"These doors are original to the original building."

Bond and Smith were also glad to discover RiverBrink Art Museum, having never visited the town's art galleries.

"We'd seen it and we're familiar, but I had no idea there was that quality of art in there, and yeah, that was fascinating."

Niagara-on-the-Lake Ambassador Laurie Harley volunteered at the Old Court House, where she expected about 2,000 visitors throughout the day.

By noon, she had met people from Zimbabwe, Australia, Russia and elsewhere.

"It opens up so much of the town — 16 locations, all of which have some historical significance," she said. "It's great."

juliasacco@niagaranow.com

NOTL'S Best Mornings Start Here!



Ravine Bakery & Café
is open Thursday to Monday, 8am-11am

Croissants, pain au chocolat, Boston cream, and our famous strawberry lavender rhubarb Berliner. Fresh bread daily + espresso by Propeller Coffee.

Niagara On The Lake's new favourite morning stop.

Easy parking. Exceptional flavour. No rush – just great mornings.
Pre-order available for pickup in 48 hours during opening hours. Please scan the QR code above for all details and pre-order.

1366 YORK ROAD | ST. DAVIDS, ON | 905.262.8463 | RAVINEVINEYARD.COM

Erwin Wiens

FOR LORD MAYOR

Leadership knows Leadership.



Art Viola

Lord Mayor of Niagara-on-the-Lake (1994-2010)

"I endorse Deputy Lord Mayor Erwin Wiens for the office of Lord Mayor. He is a friend, a fellow Lion and a tireless volunteer. He possesses patience, integrity, industry, sincerity, and of course ability. He would bring to the office competence, fairness, accountability, and an understanding heart. With these attributes, he will serve our people and our community well"



Janice Thomson

Former Executive Director of the Niagara-on-the-Lake Chamber of Commerce, and former Chair of the Niagara Parks Commission

"I am confident that Erwin Wiens has the experience, character, and commitment needed to lead Niagara-on-the-Lake with honesty and vision. With years of experience in public service outside of Niagara-on-the-Lake, he understands the importance of listening to input and implementing workable local solutions that incorporate support from higher levels of government and neighbouring communities. His working knowledge of agriculture and business development make him a strong choice to lead Council. He has my full support for Lord Mayor"



Joe Pillitteri

Co-owner, Lakeview Vineyard Equipment

"I've known Erwin for many years—whether he's supporting local charities, helping neighbours, or standing up for the interests of Niagara-on-the-Lake, Erwin leads with integrity, common sense, and a genuine commitment to people. He understands the importance of protecting our agricultural heritage while ensuring our community remains strong and prosperous for future generations. I'm proud to support Erwin Wiens for Lord Mayor because I know he will put community first and provide the thoughtful, steady leadership our town deserves."

Strong Roots.

wiensformayor.ca

Authorized by the Erwin Wiens for Lord Mayor campaign.

St. Davids florist **expands** with shop at Clayfield Commons

Andrew Hawlitzky
The Lake Report

Kalin Falconer started Bloom & Co. in her basement in 2014, arranging flowers for events, and a shop was never part of her plan.

“I sort of swore I would never open a retail flower shop, so it’s kind of hilarious that I now have two,” she told The Lake Report.

Bloom & Co. opened its second location this fall at Clayfield Commons in the Village, an area Falconer said she has heard people call “uptown Niagara-on-the-Lake.” The development’s Clayfield hotel welcomed its first guests Sept. 18, but the parking situation has had neighbours worried since a 164-name petition opposed to the hotel began circulating in 2018.

Falconer’s first storefront, at the corner of Four Mile Creek and York roads in St. Davids, opened in 2017 as a home decor boutique. She once shared it with photog-

rapher Nataschia Wielink, who has since left to focus on photography.

The Clayfield location is much smaller and has no back room or workspace. Falconer said she left out a work area so the shop could hold as much stock as possible.

“Clayfield feels sort of like the little sister to our St. Davids location,” she said.

Steady sales from event work and loyal regulars gave her the confidence to expand, she said. Before the second shop opened, she estimated about 85 per cent of her customers were local.

“With the direction Clayfield is heading, with other retail and some food locations going in there, it felt like a community we wanted to be a part of,” she said.

Bloom & Co. now makes arrangements for hotel guests and the hotel’s restaurant. The shop also picks up customers from the Market at the Village, the farmers’ market that moved

beside the hotel this year for its 20th season.

Falconer said she has heard no complaints about parking or traffic, apart from recent road construction nearby. Some customers have told her the new shop is easier to reach.

“I think there’s more parking challenges in St. Davids sometimes than there are here,” she said.

She expects more parking once crews finish the final phase of construction at the front of the development.

Developer John Hawley has said the Commons has 448 parking spaces, including spaces for the hotel.

Falconer did not need to hire anyone new to staff the second shop.

“I have such a spectacular group of very competent, intelligent women working with me, so I credit a lot of the ease in this transition to them,” she said.

The shop opened in time for the last two Sunday farmers’ markets of the season at the Commons.



Bloom & Co.’s new shop at Clayfield Commons is the second storefront for the business Kalin Falconer started in her basement in 2014. ANDREW HAWLITZKY

Falconer said foot traffic slowed noticeably on the first Sunday after the market ended.

As the year winds down and NOTL looks ahead to 2027, she hopes business picks up for the Icewine

Festival in January and expects more tourists at Clayfield by spring.
andrew@niagaranow.com

Steve McGuinness

FOR TOWN COUNCILLOR

“Likely to be elected.”

“He knows more about the town budget, infrastructure, admin and challenges facing us than the people running the place. He is a good egg, a nerdy guy, stickler for policy details and likely to be elected.”

Garth Turner, Columnist, The Lake Report
Sources: The Turner Report, The Lake Report, Sept. 17 & Oct. 15 Issues



SUPPORT FROM ACROSS NIAGARA-ON-THE-LAKE

“A strong commitment to work on addressing the key issues.”

LB Lou Ann Binning
President, Niagara Regional Labour Council

“Steve sees agriculture as an important part of the fabric of NOTL

KW Kai Wiens
Chair NOTL Agricultural Committee

“Willing to stand up for what so many residents want.”

DM Dawn McIsaac
Chautauqua, Old Town; Leader, NOTL Indoor Pool Group

“Will protect NOTL taxpayers and preserve our community’s commitment to eco-tourism.”

PB Phil Bergen
Virgil; Residents Coalition on NDA Expansion

“Objective and critical. We need Steve’s abilities on our NOTL Council.”

DE Donald Evans
St Davids; Investor

“A force of nature numbers guy.”

CR Carla Rienzo
St. Davids

Let's open the books.

Vote by Monday, Oct. 26 Online voting is open now

votestevemcguinness.ca



Authorized by the Campaign to Elect Steve McGuinness.

80 YEARS IN THE MAKING YOU'RE INVITED!

From our family to yours, thank you for being part of our journey. As Niagara Motors Ltd. celebrates 80 years in business, we invite you to join us in celebrating the community that made it possible. Whether you bought your first car here or recently joined the Niagara Motors family, we'd love to celebrate this milestone with you.

NOVEMBER

FRIDAY 6 2026

4:00pm - 7:00pm



RSVP by October 31, 2026 to
pam@niagaramotors.com

Niagara Motors
1537 Niagara Stone Rd., Virgil ON

NIAGARA MOTORS
BUICK GMC

NOTL
STUDIO
TOUR

JUNE 5-6, 2027

CALL FOR ARTISTS

Reach new audiences, connect with local art lovers, and help shape our growing creative community.

Open to visual artists and artisans with working studios in Niagara-on-the-Lake. Guest artist spaces available.

Deadline: November 1, 2026

notlstudiotour.com/apply

Application Fee: \$20
Questions? info@notlstudiotour.com

Have an opinion
you want heard?
Email us.

Shaw takes ‘A Christmas Carol’ to Toronto

Staff
The Lake Report

“A Christmas Carol” will be missing from Niagara-on-the-Lake’s holiday theatre lineup this year, as the Shaw Festival moves its long-running production to Toronto before bringing it home to a larger stage in 2027.

First staged at the Royal George Theatre in 1917, the Dickens classic became a holiday tradition for local audiences. With that theatre closed for rebuilding, this year’s production will run at The Fleck at Harbourfront Centre Theatre in Toronto from Nov. 12 to Dec. 23.

Niagara-on-the-Lake audiences will instead have two other holiday shows to choose from: A Year with Frog and Toad, opening Nov. 5 at the Court House Theatre, and Rodgers + Hammerstein’s Cinderella, opening Nov. 8 at the Festival Theatre.

“Since we first adapted A Christmas Carol for The Shaw, we have been over the moon to see so many families make our production an annual tradition,” artistic director Tim Carroll said.



While the Shaw Festival won’t be hosting a production of “A Christmas Carol” in Niagara-on-the-Lake this holiday season, it will be putting on the play at the Harbourfront Centre Theatre in Toronto, Nov. 12 to Dec. 23. SHAW FESTIVAL

“Finding a home for A Christmas Carol while we rebuild the Royal George Theatre was one of the original ideas behind our artistic residency with Harbourfront Centre.”

The production will return to Niagara-on-the-Lake in 2027, marking its 10th anniversary with its first run on Shaw’s largest stage, the Festival Theatre, from Nov. 19 to Dec. 23.

A separate version will also be presented at Harbourfront Centre, with each production adapted to its venue.

“The demand for this year’s performances at Harbourfront has already been extraordinary, and next year we will share the joy and magic of this story with even more people – on two very different and very special stages,” Carroll said.

Shaw’s adaptation of Charles Dickens’ story features puppetry and an audience singalong. Carroll said the move to different stages will bring changes to the production.

“The heart of the show will remain the same, but each theatre gives us a

wonderfully unique playground.”

The 2027 holiday season will also include a new cabaret directed by associate artistic director Kimberley Rampersad. Running at the Jackie Maxwell Studio Theatre from Nov. 20 to Dec. 23, it will feature Shaw ensemble members performing classic holiday songs.

Tickets for the 2027 season go on sale Nov. 7 for Friends of The Shaw and Dec. 8 for the public.

Tickets for this year’s Niagara-on-the-Lake holiday shows are available at shawfest.com.

SPONSORED

Bringing a little more happy to Niagara-on-the-Lake

SPONSORED
The Lake Report

After more than 30 years in senior finance and accounting roles, Judy Ogrodnik knows a thing or two about numbers, spreadsheets and attention to detail. But today, she prefers creating smiles rather than financial statements.

While she valued her career, Ogrodnik knew she was ready for something different.

“I wanted to do something creative that brought people joy, and what creates more happiness than a beautifully wrapped gift?”

And thus, her company, Wrapping Happy, was born. It may seem like an unexpected career change, but there’s a common thread: attention to detail.

Today, Ogrodnik and her team of gift wrappers wrap for companies giving gifts to their clients or employees, for marketing firms doing product launches, influencer gifting or retail in-store activations, for gift displays or photo shoots, for events and occasions and much more. Whether it is a handful of gifts or hundreds of gifts, she brings the same philosophy to each gift: that a beautifully presented gift creates joy and memorable moments.

And she herself has been having so much fun. She’s wrapped gifts that have gone to dignitaries, gifts for major brand names and gifts of all different sizes and shapes, including a fishing pole. And she loves it all.

After eight years in business, Ogrodnik has

recently brought her brand of happiness to Niagara-on-the-Lake. Since Wrapping Happy is a mobile service, her team serves the Niagara region through to Toronto.

“... but I wanted my home base to be in NOTL. It’s a small but mighty community where people support local businesses, celebrate one another and genuinely care about the community. I’m looking forward to getting to know local businesses and finding ways that we can collaborate and create memorable gifting experiences.”

A gift without wrapping is akin to a cake without icing! So if you have any gifts that need to be dressed up, she would love to assist. If you don’t need wrapping assistance, she’d love to just meet more NOTLers.



In 2017, Judy Ogrodnik left her career in senior finance and accounting roles to start her own gift-wrapping company, Wrapping Happy. Whether it’s a handful of gifts or hundreds, she believes beautifully presented gifts create joy and memorable moments. Curious? Visit wrappinghappy.ca to check out pricing, based on an honest hourly rate and specialized supplies. All quotes are worked out in advance so there are no surprises. SUPPLIED

Judy Ogrodnik
Gift Wrapping Expert
judy@wrappinghappy.ca
416-885-3640

www.wrappinghappy.ca

Your vote. Your choice.

Let's not have a split. *Vote strategically*

2022 lord mayor results

Gary Zalepa 3,724 votes • Elected	49.19%
Betty Disero 2,586 votes	34.13%
Vaughn Goettler 1,268 votes	16.73%
Disero + Goettler 3,854 votes	50.86%

Change is possible, working together.

Vote in 2026

Online

Until Oct. 25 at 8 p.m.

Use the instructions in your voter information letter.

In person

Oct. 26, 10 a.m. to 8 p.m.

Vote at any town polling location, with ID and address.

Locations and voting help: notl.com/elections
905-468-3266

The
Lake Report

lakereport.ca | niagaranow.com

NOTL teen to represent Canada in Youth Olympics

Julia Sacco
The Lake Report

Seventeen-year-old Nolan Grealy dreams of representing Canada at the Rugby World Cup. His selection for the 2026 Youth Olympics is another step toward that goal.

The Niagara-on-the-Lake teenager will represent Canada at the Youth Olympics in Dakar, Senegal, beginning Oct. 31.

Grealy has travelled to New York, Florida, Vancouver and Argentina to play rugby and recently returned from playing in Melrose, Scotland.

His mother, Heather Grealy, said she is excited about every opportunity he gets to play.

“He literally lives, dreams, eats rugby, so if he’s not playing and training, he’s watching it,” she said.

“He’s made sacrifices and missed out on certain things with his friends to



Nolan Grealy has been playing rugby for a decade and is honoured to represent Canada on a global stage at the 2026 Youth Olympics in Dakar, Senegal. SUPPLIED

follow, like, his dream for the sport.”

Nolan and all his siblings grew up playing rugby. Since taking up the sport 10 years ago, he has captained several teams. This year, he

was selected as one of 30 players from across Canada to represent the Canadian Howlers as a U18 player in Argentina.

Growing up, Heather drove her children to and from

Burlington, Ont., for practices because Niagara has a smaller rugby community.

“It’s been a lot of traveling, we spend a lot of time in the car as a family,” she said. “One time I’d been to

Ottawa and back in a day for him to play.”

Nolan follows a strict daily routine, he told The Lake Report in an email from Scotland.

“I usually wake up at 6 a.m., get dressed, have a snack, stretch and go for a run,” he said.

After breakfast, he starts work at 7:15 a.m. and works until 3 p.m. He goes to the gym at 5 p.m., followed by team training or an individual skills session in the evening. He eats dinner around 9 p.m. and goes to bed by 11 p.m.

“It’s a busy routine, but I enjoy the structure and the opportunity to keep improving as a player,” he said.

Heather said meal planning is an important part of managing Nolan’s busy schedule.

“He eats an awful lot,” she said. “You wouldn’t think it, looking at him”

Nolan said the friendships and team environment have kept him involved in rugby for the past decade.

“Rugby brings people together, and the bonds you build with your teammates are something special.”

The opportunity to travel is another highlight of the sport.

Grealy said he is looking forward to representing Canada at the Youth Olympics and is proud to wear the Canadian jersey on an international stage.

“Finding out I had been selected to represent Canada was incredibly rewarding. It felt like all the hard work, commitment and sacrifices over the years had paid off,” he said.

As he works toward his ultimate goal of playing in the Rugby World Cup, Grealy hopes to continue developing as a player.

After returning from Scotland, Grealy has begun Olympic training with the Canadian youth rugby team in Orangeville before heading to a training camp in Africa.

juliasacco@niagaranow.com

TRANSFORM YOUR HOME

WITH OLDE TOWNE BUILDING CO.

We are remodeling experts!

Whether it’s a stunning **kitchen**, a spa-like **bathroom**, or a functional, stylish **basement**, we will bring your vision to life.

Quality craftsmanship, modern designs, and a hassle-free experience. Let us make your dream space a reality!

CALL US FOR A FREE CONSULTATION

Brandon Noel
905 - 325 - 2766
www.oldetownebuildingcompany.com

Olde Towne
Building
Company

Relationships that deliver. For Niagara-on-the-Lake.

“I build relationships with officials from the upper levels of government for the good of Niagara-on-the-Lake.”

Positive working relationships have helped secure:

- **\$35 million** from the province for the Shaw
- **\$15 million** from the federal government for the Shaw
- **\$41 million** from the province for irrigation infrastructure
- **6.1%** tax on VQA wine removed
- **\$175,000** from the federal government for tree canopy

As Lord Mayor, these positive working relationships, built on mutual respect and frank discussion, will be critical in staving off amalgamation in Niagara and ensuring the survival of Niagara-on-the-Lake for generations to come.

Hon. Rob Flack, Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing/
Deputy Lord Mayor Erwin Wiens

Deputy Lord Mayor Erwin Wiens/
Hon. Steven Guilbeault, Minister of Canadian Identity and Culture

Erwin Wiens
FOR LORD MAYOR

Authorized by the Erwin Wiens for Lord Mayor campaign.

wiensformayor.ca
erwin@wiensformayor.ca

We love it here. We're just wondering what comes next.

For many homeowners, the decision to move isn't about leaving Niagara-on-the-Lake. It's about finding a home that better suits the way you want to live today.

Whether that means staying in Old Town, choosing a different style of home, or exploring a convenient location just beyond it, I'd love to help you discover the possibilities.



THREE HOMES. THREE POSSIBILITIES. OPEN HOUSES THIS WEEKEND



63 BROCK STREET NIAGARA-ON-THE-LAKE

A charming, character-filled home in an unbeatable location. Enjoy the shops, restaurants and walkable lifestyle of The Village.

OFFERED AT \$959,000



OPEN HOUSE
SATURDAY, OCTOBER 24
11:00 AM - 1:00 PM



96 GARRISON VILLAGE DRIVE NIAGARA-ON-THE-LAKE

A beautifully maintained freehold townhouse in the heart of The Village. Comfortable, low-maintenance living in an established neighbourhood.

OFFERED AT \$959,000



OPEN HOUSE
SATURDAY, OCTOBER 24
2:00 PM - 4:00 PM



37 PEACH TREE COMMON ST. CATHARINES

Contemporary Rinaldi-built bungalow town in a desirable community just minutes from Niagara-on-the-Lake, the QEW and everyday conveniences.

OFFERED AT \$1,399,000



OPEN HOUSE
SUNDAY, OCTOBER 25
2:00 PM - 4:00 PM



DEBI CHEWERDA
REAL ESTATE



905-321-9997



dchewerda@remaxniagara.ca



DebiSellsNiagara.ca

Cheers to Niagara

REMAX NIAGARA
REALTY LTD., BROKERAGE
INDEPENDENTLY OWNED & OPERATED

Your Guide to Your Next Chapter

Real estate is about so much more than buying or selling a home. It's about making important decisions with the right information, thoughtful guidance and someone you trust in your corner.

With years of experience helping people navigate the Niagara market, I'm here to make your next move feel a little less overwhelming and a lot more exciting. **Let's connect.**



Thoughtful. Experienced. Local. Trusted.

Men’s league ends with a bang – and one big boom

Kevin MacLean
The Lake Report

The popular Niagara-on-the-Lake men’s league wrapped up its 2026 season last Thursday in style — with a bang and a boom.

Joe Interisano supplied the bang, thanks to a hole-in-one, and young gun Jared Mines brought the boom, winning the open division of the long-drive contest with a blast that measured some 325 yards.

On the 120-yard fourth hole, with playing partners Jeff Brookhouser, Larry Blight and John Bistani watching, Interisano stepped up and hit a nine iron into a strong wind.

“The pin was positioned just behind the front bunker,” Interisano said later.

He told one of his playing partners he’d try to hit his shot low, avoid the front bunker and keep the ball on the green.

“The ball flew low and straight toward the pin,” In-



Above: The NOTL Golf Club’s men’s match play winners for 2026/ Dan Regan, (Carmichael Cup), Joe Doria and Rob Reimer (Goldup pairs), Ricky Watson (President’s Cup), Patrick Craig (Jim Brown Cup) and Mike Clarke (Wetlauffer Cup). SUPPLIED

Right: Joe Interisano collects his ball from the cup on the fourth hole after notching an ace. SUPPLIED



terisano said.

“It struck the sand near the back of the bunker, bounced up and out, and disappeared onto the green.”

As they approached the green, his ball was nowhere to be seen. On that hole it often means your shot has scooted over the green.

Brookhouser said, “I bet

it’s in the hole!” He walked over to the pin, looked down and there it was.

“After years of playing golf, it was an incredible feeling to finally accomplish

something I had always dreamed of,” Interisano said.

Having his regular golfing buddies there made it even more special, “a golfing memory I’ll treasure forever.”

Mines’ long drive was equally dramatic.

After Dan Regan had won the age 70-plus contest with a tee shot measuring 258 yards and Dan Vukovich took the 55-plus category with a 256-yarder, it was Mines’ turn.

The best of his three drives off the first tee sailed straight up the fairway and toward the stratosphere, coming back down to Earth about 325 yards later, ending up on the back fringe of the green.

It was probably “the best drive I’ve seen all year,” pro shop manager Darren Smith said.

In the closest to the pin competition, Brandon Meisner nailed his shot to about eight feet from 103 yards away.

The big cash winner on the day was Quinton Spagnol.

After notching his own hole-in-one earlier this season en route to carding some stellar rounds, Spagnol stepped up for the winner-take-all putting contest.

With a large crowd anticipating a chance at a big payday, Spagnol was the third man to putt. He drained the 35-footer and took home nearly \$1,200 for his effort.

During the post-festivities banquet, the winners of the club’s annual match play tournament were honoured.

The 2026 champs were: Regan (Carmichael Cup for the second straight year), lefty Mike Clarke (Wetlauffer Cup), Patrick Craig (Jim Brown Cup), Ricky Watson (President’s Cup) while Joe Doria and Rob Reimer teamed up to win the Goldup pairs competition.

kevin@niagaranow.com



NIAGARA’S FINEST INDIAN DINING EXPERIENCE

Where the warmth of Indian cuisine & hospitality meets Niagara wines.

An unforgettable dining experience crafted with passion, tradition, and the finest local ingredients.

NIAGARA’S FINEST, IN YOUR GLASS

An exclusive selection of local VQA wines celebrating Niagara's world-class wine region, alongside craft beers and handcrafted cocktails.

THE PERFECT SETTING FOR EVERY OCCASION

DATE NIGHT

WINE COUNTRY VISIT

FAMILY GATHERING

PATIO NOW OPEN | RESERVATIONS RECOMMENDED

Sunday - Friday : 12 pm - 9 pm ; Saturday : 12 pm - 10 pm

233 KING STREET | NIAGARA - ON - THE - LAKE
905.468.7222 | AURAONTHELAKE.CA

To Our
Niagara-on-the-Lake
Community

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

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

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

Water damage repairs

Basement restoration

Waterproofing improvements

Basement renovations once everything is dry

We’re also happy to provide detailed estimates for your insurance company and work directly with your adjuster to help make the process as straightforward as possible.

If you’re unsure where to start, give me a call. Even if it’s just for advice, I’m always happy to help.



NOTL
CONSTRUCTION & RENOVATIONS
EST. 1999
Local. Family. Trusted.

289-690-0660
Niall Broughton
NOTL Construction & Renovations

LOCAL FAMILY BUSINESS
Father & Son Team

PROUDLY SERVING
NIAGARA-ON-THE-LAKE
SINCE 1999

WE WORK WITH YOUR
INSURANCE COMPANY
AND ADJUSTER

We’re here to help our neighbours get back on their feet. ❤️



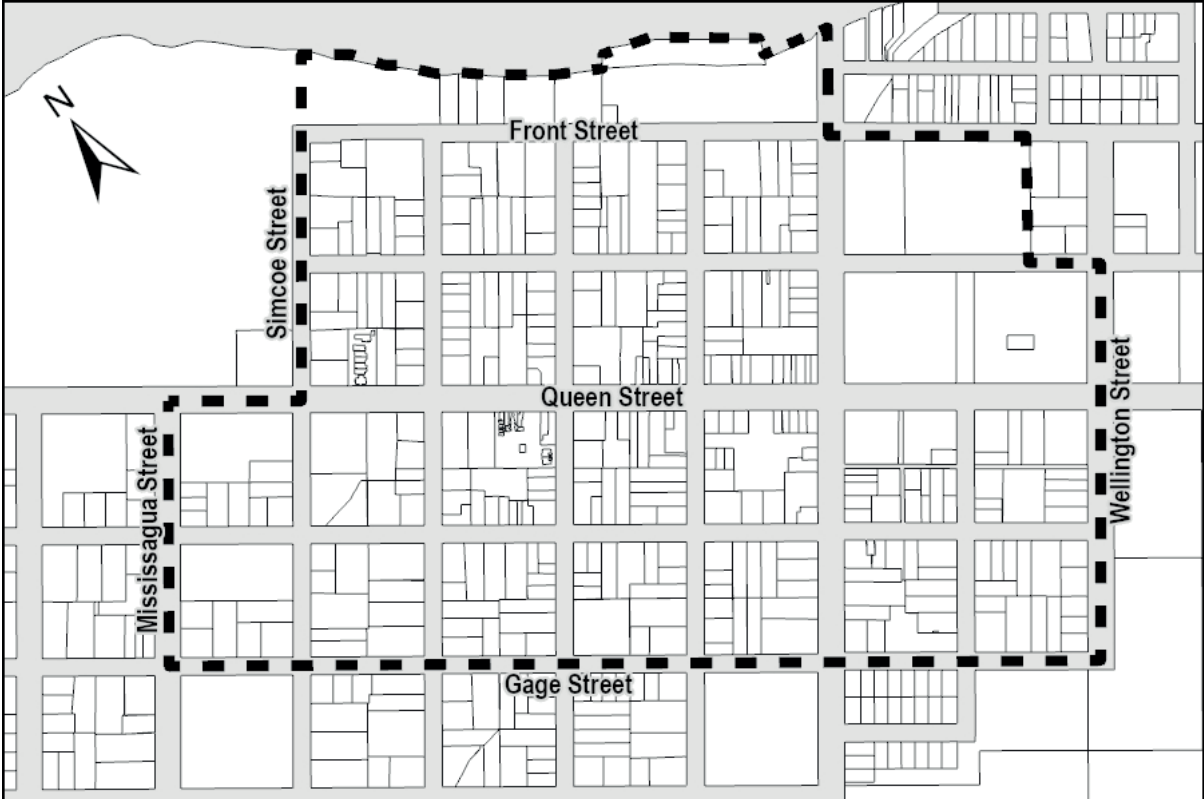
NOTICE OF PUBLIC INFORMATION CENTRE #1 (OPEN HOUSE)

- What:** Notice of **Public Information Centre #1 (Open House)** for an **Official Plan Amendment** for the Queen Street Secondary Plan
Under Section 22 of the Planning Act, R.S.O. 1990, c. P.13, as amended
- When:** **Tuesday, November 17, 2026 | Time: 5:00 pm – 7:30 p.m.**
Early Access Quiet Half-Hour: 4:30 p.m. – 5:00 p.m. A quieter, lower stimulus environment opportunity will be provided to view the PIC materials from 4:30 p.m. – 5:00 p.m. This period will have reduced lighting to support community members who require a low-stimulus environment to comfortably participate.
Who is this for? If you require a low-stimulus environment to comfortably participate in the upcoming Public Information Centre, this space is for you. **If you do not experience sensory processing challenges or a need for pre-meeting decompression, please plan to arrive when general doors open at 5:00 p.m.**
- Where:** Simpson Room, Niagara-on-the-Lake Community Centre, 14 Anderson Lane, Niagara-on-the-Lake, ON, L0S 1J0.
No registration is required, and attendees are welcome to drop in at any time during the event.

What is the proposal?

The Town of Niagara-on-the-Lake is proposing to amend the Town’s Official Plan to prepare a Queen Street Secondary Plan. The Queen Street Secondary Plan study area applies to the area as shown on the map (outlined in a bold dashed line).

The Town has retained The Biglieri Group Ltd. to lead the preparation of a Queen Street Secondary Plan. The project will create a vision for the future and explore how new development and growth can be integrated while respecting the area’s historic character, cultural and built heritage, scale and public spaces. The outcome of the project will be an amendment to the Town of Niagara-on-the Lake’s Official Plan that will contain detailed policies and guidelines for future development of the Secondary Plan Area.



Where can I find more information?

Project information, additional opportunities for feedback, and notice details are available on the [Town’s Public Planning Notices webpage](#) or through the Planning, Building and Development Services Department at Town Hall. Additional or updated information may be posted on the Town’s website as it becomes available. Please check the website for updates.

For more information on the project, as well as additional opportunities to get involved, please visit <https://www.notl.com/business-development/projects-initiatives/queen-street-secondary-plan> or <https://www.jointheconversationnotl.org/queen-street-secondary-plan>.

Alternatively, please contact: **Fiona Main, Senior Policy Planner**, at 905-468-3266 ext. 331 or via email at fiona.main@notl.com if additional information is required.

How can I get involved?

You are invited to attend the in-person Public Information Centre to gather information, provide input regarding this matter, and understand the work completed to date, as well as next steps. This will be the first of multiple opportunities to engage with the Town and consulting team regarding this project. The Public Information Centre will also be an opportunity for you to ask questions about the project, and to identify opportunities or issues that should be considered as the project moves forward.

To stay informed, please visit please visit <https://www.notl.com/business-development/projects-initiatives/queen-street-secondary-plan> or <https://www.jointheconversationnotl.org/queen-street-secondary-plan>.

How can I be notified of future updates and decisions on this proposal?

If you wish to be notified of the future decision with respect to the applications, you must submit a written request to the Town Clerk including your name and the address to which such notice should be sent.

Additional project information is available on the Town’s project webpage at <https://www.notl.com/business-development/projects-initiatives/queen-street-secondary-plan>, where you can also sign up to receive notifications about project updates and upcoming engagement opportunities.

NOTL phenoms reflect on a season of progress on links

Kevin MacLean
The Lake Report

At barely 14, they’ve already competed in tournaments far more intense and demanding than most recreational golfers will ever experience.

Niagara-on-the-Lake’s Kaige Zhu and Eli Perng have proven themselves to be among the most gifted boys in their age group. And beyond.

But they’re just getting started, really, with hopes for bigger and better things as they work at perfecting their performances in a game that can be cruel and unusually punishing.

Yes, golf can be a lot of fun, but the golf gods also taketh as easily as they giveth.

None of that really bothers the St. Davids teenagers because they try to approach play with strong mental attitudes designed to complement their prodigious physical skills.

This past season has been one of progress and passion for the duo who have grown up as good friends, neighbours and classmates.

But now, in Grade 9,



Left: Eli Perng is only 14 but has been playing in tournaments since age 7. CORINNE BOSCH Right: Dad Mike coaches Kaige Zhu, 14, on putting on the practice green at Royal Niagara Golf Club in Glendale. DAVE VAN DE LAAR



they attend different high schools, where they’ve already established themselves as the top talents on the school golf teams. They both led their teams to berths in the Southern Ontario Secondary School Association championships earlier this month.

For Zhu, who is also a gifted tennis player, the golf season is wrapped up. He’ll practice golf all winter but will also be hitting the hard court.

He played in a three-star

regional tennis tournament in Vineland Oct. 17 and 18, losing in the singles semifinal to the eventual champion.

For Perng, there are still a couple of major tournaments to come in the United States. In November, he’ll compete at the Notah Begay National Championship in Louisiana and the MJT National Championship in Florida.

And for both, the winter ahead means more time practising and working on

getting even better at the game they love.

Looking back at 2026, both are happy with how their golf game has improved.

“At the start of the year, I would be shooting three to four over par on my average around,” says Zhu. “Now, I’ve lowered it to even-par or better, and on a bad day one or two over.”

Perng battled a wrist injury from hockey through much of the season but was also focused on trying to

shoot close to par.

He’s a big proponent of developing the mental side of the game.

When adversity inevitably strikes, “I just really try to keep myself positive” and focus on having a “next-shot mentality. It doesn’t matter if you hit a really bad shot, you’ve just got to focus on hitting the next shot well.”

In early October, he and Zhu were among 33 players invited to the annual Ontario Super Camp for players 18 and under.

It was played at Bond Head in Beeton, a links-style course that stretched to around 7,000 yards, close to the distance pro players often face.

“It was the longest distance I’ve ever played,” says Perng.

Zhu says the competition was intense and “very serious,” with most of the players a few years older than the Niagara-on-the-Lake boys.

While Zhu performed well, finishing ninth at plus-4 for 54 holes, Perng says his putting let him down on the lightning-fast greens.

He says he focused on keeping his drives in the fairway “and then really

dialling in on my long irons and taking advantage of times when I had short irons and wedges into the greens.”

He finished back in the pack but used the opportunity to learn from some of the older players.

Over the summer, Zhu finished near the top of the leaderboard in several events, including fifth at both the Ontario U15 and U17 tourneys.

Among Perng’s top accomplishments this season was making his third trip to the Future Masters tourney in Alabama, placing third at an American Junior Golf Association all-star qualifier in Pennsylvania and playing in the U.S. Kids World Teen Championships in Pinehurst, N.C.

He also participated in the Ontario Summer Games, provincial U15 and U17 championships, U15 national tourney and finished second in the Notah Begay Canadian Western final in Saskatoon.

Come next spring both look forward to a new season of making their mark on the course.

kevin@niagaranow.com



EVAN
MCCAUGHEY
REAL ESTATE
LOCAL EXPERT. PROVEN RESULTS.



RE/MAX
NIAGARA LTD.
BROKERAGE



THE
SYKES
real estate
TEAM



NOTL & NIAGARA REGION

BUYING OR SELLING?

LET'S MAKE YOUR NEXT MOVE *Your* BEST MOVE.

 **289.968.8128**



130 JOHN STREET

NIAGARA-ON-THE-LAKE

A spectacular end-unit freehold townhome featuring 4 bedrooms, 4.5 bathrooms, an attached garage, a private fenced yard and professional landscaping. Just steps to the lake, shops, restaurants and world-renowned wineries.

 **4**
Bedrooms

 **4.5**
Bathrooms

 **1**
Car Garage

A MESSAGE FROM THE NIAGARA FOUNDATION

Heritage protection is more than designating historic homes.

It's safeguarding the streetscapes, agricultural lands, architecture, culture, traditions, and identity of Niagara-on-the-Lake that have been under threat.

**So, what should we expect from our elected officials?
Here's our **DO** & **DON'T** list.**

1

By-laws aren't suggestions

DO

Uphold protections already in place

DON'T

Make residents fight developer-friendly zoning amendments

2

Commercial uses don't belong everywhere

DO

Protect neighbourhoods and farmlands from inappropriate development

DON'T

Allow hotels or other large-scale commercial complexes in these areas

3

Our villages have a distinct sense of place

DO

Preserve their character and quality of life

DON'T

Let more protections in Old Town mean less in Virgil, Glendale, St. Davids and Queenston

4

Institutional lands are irreplaceable assets

DO

Retain them for community use

DON'T

Turn them into visitor parking lots

5

Resident quality-of-life comes first

DO

Defend quiet, clean, liveable neighbourhoods

DON'T

Expand commercial aircraft noise and emissions over Virgil, Old Town, and rural NOTL

Status Quo or Change?

MAKE YOUR VOTE COUNT ON OCTOBER 26



The Niagara Foundation—a charitable organization with a volunteer Board—has helped to champion and safeguard the Town's architectural, cultural and environmental integrity since 1962.

theniagarafoundation.com



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

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



Your Lake Report is the proud winner of 192 national and provincial awards for journalism and advertising excellence.

BKind Grateful #98: Help a neighbour bring in their garbage or recycling bins on a windy day.

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



Contributed by Patty Garriock
“The true aim of everyone who aspires to be a teacher should be, not to impart his/her own opinion, but to kindle minds.” - F. W. Robertson

HOW TO GET IN TOUCH

Email:
Letters: editor@niagaranow.com
Story Ideas: editor@niagaranow.com
Advertising: advertising@niagaranow.com
Phone
Newsroom: 905-359-2270
Advertising Department: 905-932-5646
Mailing Address
PO Box 724, Niagara-on-the-Lake, L0S1J0

Have a lead on a story?

Call 905.359.2270 or send an email to editor@niagaranow.com



Capturing Canada

Veteran photojournalist Ron Planche has been all over the country and photographed all kinds of people, from Pierre Trudeau to Robert F. Kennedy and more. On Oct. 15, he held the opening reception for his latest exhibition, on now at the Niagara Pumphouse Arts Centre until Oct. 29. Here, he talks about the story behind this photograph of a winter calèche ride in Quebec from 1970.
DAVE VAN DE LAAR

Editorial

Please vote, but let’s cool the nastiness

Kevin MacLean
Editor Emeritus

If you live here in Niagara-on-the-Lake and want to have a say in how it is governed over the next four years, now is your chance. But the only way of making that opportunity count is if you take the time to learn about the candidates — and to vote.

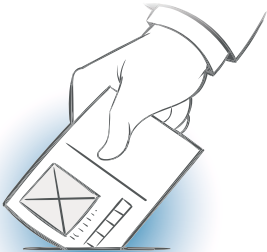
As we’ve noted before, NOTL residents are generally more engaged in municipal politics than most other towns and cities in Ontario — and certainly more than any other Niagara municipality. That’s good and that’s healthy.

It doesn’t matter whether you want to re-elect incumbents who have served for the past four or more years. Or if you’re feeling dissatisfied and want wholesale change across the board. Or if you fall somewhere in between.

You have to make the effort to exercise your franchise and cast a ballot.

In NOTL, unlike many other areas across the province, the town staff (and by extension, the outgoing council) have made voting easier than it has ever been.

Besides the old-fashioned “mark your X on a paper ballot” method, in this year’s election for the first time



Make sure you get out and vote on Oct. 26.

residents can vote online. It’s a process that literally takes minutes and it likely will make tabulating the results faster and easier.

According to the Town of NOTL, there are 17,503 eligible electors in our fair town and as of this week more than 3,600 people, almost one-quarter of those eligible, have already made their choices.

That number represents about half of the 7,644 who voted in 2022 when about 48 per cent of the electorate turned out.

Given that voting day tends to have the heaviest outpouring of voters, there’s a good chance the turnout in 2026 will exceed that of four years ago.

Let’s hope so. Democracy wins when people vote.

Meanwhile, this has been another interesting election

campaign, which, in the age of social media and instant communication, has allowed people to express their preferences loudly and often.

If you’re a bystander watching the rhetorical conversations play out online, one of the major takeaways has been the proliferation of often-vitriolic commentary directed at candidates and their supporters.

To be clear, not everyone is guilty of such behaviour but it is happening everywhere, not just in NOTL. All that said, there remains plenty of measured and mature back and forth.

But the sheer volume of nasty negativity online stands out and tends to poison the entire public forum.

In NOTL and elsewhere, it’s been most visible via Facebook groups where some people comment legitimately under their own names while many others often hide behind pseudonyms.

The end result often is that the anonymous outliners have upped the ante and turned political debate on its proverbial head.

The age of polite interaction seems to have passed.

It’s sad to see and we won’t be surprised if this editorial attracts attacks from some of those naysayers who view online forums as a free-for-all space

where anything goes. That’s their prerogative. But it is regrettable to see grown adults stooping to such lows over decisions made (or not made) by incumbents, or promises offered up by those seeking to replace them, or people questioning motivations and throwing stones with little or no evidence.

The personal attacks are disconcerting. Just because the online sphere is rife with misinformation, half-truths, rumours and speculation doesn’t mean we need to play that game.

While Canada’s right to free expression allows such vigorous debate, we often wish people would pause and rethink their musings before they post publicly.

Ask yourself if what you’re doing best serves the community or simply lets you vent and unleash vitriol — because you can.

If we want to attract good and capable people to serve in municipal politics (where they certainly are not in it for the money), then let’s curb the maliciousness and embrace a culture that encourages measured and mature debate.

Use your vote — and your voice — at the local level to build up rather than tear down the community our predecessors established.

kevin@niagaranow.com

CORRECTION: In the Oct. 1, 2026 edition of The Lake Report, an opinion article written by columnist Brian Marshall (“Is keeping town facilities off-limits during elections right?”) stated that the Niagara-on-the-Lake Residents Association applied for permits to host three election candidate forums at Crossroads Public School during the campaign period, but that the Town of Niagara-on-the-Lake initially indicated it would not issue said permits before reversing its decision. In fact, it was the District School Board of Niagara, not the municipality, that elected to suspend issuing the permits, before reversing its decision. The Town of Niagara-on-the-Lake was not involved in the issuance of event permits for the three candidate forums at the public school.



Interiors by
Better Shade
FURNITURE AND WINDOW COVERINGS
469 GLENDALE AVE
ST. CATHARINES

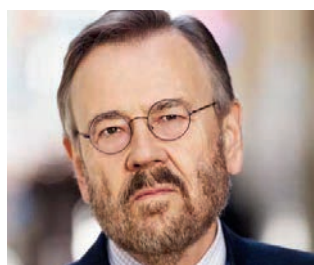


SCARY BIG SAVINGS
SAVE UP TO 70%
ON FURNITURE

55% OFF
SHUTTERS, ZEBRA BLINDS & ROLLER BLINDS
CALL TODAY
905-227-4555
BOOK YOUR FREE
IN-HOME DESIGN CONSULTATION



When the **cranes** came to town



THE TURNER REPORT

Garth Turner
Columnist

There was an audible little gasp from the clutch of on-lookers as the beast arose.

Lifted off a flatbed rig by an enormous mobile crane, the control cab began its ascent to the top of the tall, white latticed steel structure. Minutes later, the tower crane was taking shape. Minutes more and the cement counterweights and boom arm were attached.

And then it was, well, overbearing. Looking down Queen Street above the low heritage buildings, this structure dominates. As our magnificent trees shed their leaves, the heart of the little town by the lake is now bookended by two of these industrial creatures.

One is building a massive hotel in the heart of a residential 'hood. The other will construct a 53,000-square-foot, six-storey-high commercial complex where four antique structures once stood.

This is the legacy of the political leadership that will be renewed, renovated or trashed come Monday. So, what happens then?

The Royal George rebuild is a monumental mistake that will become apparent as the steel skeleton is hoisted into place by the beast. The finished complex will be three times the mass of the courthouse down the street — currently the largest edifice in town.

There will be almost 40,000 square feet above grade and another 15,000 below. Seventy per cent of the space once occupied by a theatre, a heritage barber shop and two homes on Victoria Street will be occupied by the complex. There'll be loading docks adjacent to residential homes, and a rear erection on Victoria more than 64 feet in height.



The tower crane now perched over the Royal George site looms over Queen Street as work intensifies on the massive project.
GARTH TURNER

Yes, taller than a six-storey building. The main four-storey box will connect that tower to a fake façade facing Queen that's 30 feet high. A rehearsal hall around the corner, on Victoria, will also be three stories in height.

In Mississauga or downtown St. Catharines, you'd hardly notice a big, new, boxy structure like this or be struck by a soaring "fly tower." But this is NOTL. We're supposed to be quaint and, above all, authentic. It's why visitors flock here in such numbers.

Interesting is the fact no modelling of this complex was done. In fact, our elected people were never given detailed architectural drawings. Staffers got them. The public was blind.

It's like that detailed construction mitigation report outlining how this monster will be built in the middle

of our precious heritage area — with a dump truck every minute. That report was supposed to be public but was never posted. If you want a peak, you must be supervised and in a closed room at town hall. (Trust me, I know — "The Turner Report: Hey NOTL, hope you like trucks," Jan. 21, The Lake Report.)

By the way, what's the plan for all those trucks to get in and out of town once Mississauga Street is closed for reconstruction? Will they rumble through another residential 'hood?

I think we all get that the mouldy 110-year-old George needed to be rebuilt or replaced. But few expected Shaw Inc — the real-estate development company that used to just put on plays — would propose something of this magnitude. Or that it would be so speedily ap-

proved. Or be six storeys high. Or eat up half a residential street. Or cost \$90 million.

By the way, most of that money — more than \$60 million — is coming from you. Tax revenues. The rest is ponied up by donors, like Tim and Frances Price (\$10 million). Of course, because the Shaw is a charity, donors can write off their largesse against taxes payable. So we all have a stake in that, too.

Well, can anything be done to coral this thing? Is there any option to prevent an oversized, warehouse-sized box with a fussy false fake front from disfiguring the crown jewel of NOTL?

Nope. But you might wish to remember that when you vote on Monday.

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

garth@garth.ca



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

**The tender ballad
"Not While I'm Around"
is from this musical about
a murderous barber.**

Last issue category: LEFTIES

Clue: This Supreme Court justice and equal rights advocate used her left hand to make her mark in lead opinions like U.S. v. Virginia.

Answer: Who is Ruth Bader Ginsburg?

Answered first by: Sue Rautenberg

Also answered correctly (in order) by:
Bob Wheatley, Jane Morris, Lynda Collet,
Emma Balsas, Marla Percy, Jim Dandy,
Wade Durling, Sheila Meloche, Howard Jones,
Margaret Garaughty

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

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

**Love games? Join us for fun events every
week at the Irish Harp Pub.
Details at theirishharppub.com**

VETERANS DINNER
TICKETS NOW AVAILABLE - \$30PP
COMPLIMENTARY FOR VETERANS AND GUEST
RESERVE NOW!

SAT. NOV 7 AT 5:30 P.M.

UPPER HALL - RCL BRANCH 124
410 KING ST. NOTL 905-468-2353

COCKTAILS AT 5:30PM
DINNER AT 6PM

RSVP TO
LEGION124@GMAIL.COM
FOR ALL TICKETS

Legion
Branch 124
Niagara-on-the-Lake



VOTE ANDREW NIVEN

FOR NIAGARA-ON-THE-LAKE TOWN COUNCIL · VOTENIVEN.COM

Paid for by the Andrew Niven Campaign

Every vote matters. Here’s how to make yours informed



Brian Marshall
Columnist

Voting is a right, responsibility and privilege conferred upon all citizens of a democracy.

Sadly, far too many of us choose to opt out of visiting the polling box and exercising our hard-won voting franchise by voicing excuses like: “How can my single vote matter?” or, “How can I trust the candidates to actually fulfil their promises?” or, “I’m simply too busy to take the time to stand in a long voting line.”

So, allow me to address these objections.

How can your “single vote” matter?

Political parties have long understood the importance of making sure every vote is counted when significant bills are brought before the legislature — so much so, they appoint a “party whip” one of whose primary responsibilities is to ensure

members of the legislature attend and vote in accordance with the party line.

In terms of a general election, you don’t have to look far to find examples where a very small number of individual votes made a decisive difference.

Consider the federal riding of Windsor—Tecumseh—Lakeshore in Ontario which was won during the 2025 federal election by a mere four votes. Or, the Ontario provincial riding of Mississauga-Erin Mills with a population of just over 120,000 voters that was won by a meagre 0.02 per cent of ballots cast (only 23 votes) in 2025.

Similarly, “special” interest groups have been able to galvanize votes — where every vote matters.

The “every vote counts” overture by the Working Families Coalition has been widely credited with securing the election for the McGuinty Liberal elections in 2003, 2007 and 2011.

Historically, amongst other examples, the 1893 alliance between the Patrons of Industry (odd name for an agricultural advocacy group) and the religious based Protestant Protective Association was able to galvanize enough voters to fundamentally alter the province’s established two-



There’s no excuse not to vote, writes Brian Marshall — our democracy depends on us electing representatives who will serve their constituents. PAIGE SEBURN

party electoral framework.

Does your single vote matter?

If history is any reliable indicator, you can bet the town’s future on it.

Now, addressing the issue of how you can trust the candidates to fulfil their promises after elected — the short answer: you cannot.

There is no modern democracy that actually allows citizens to participate directly in the voting process relative to legislation in a similar form to the original Grecian model or fully as in the participatory democracy of the Haudeno-

saunee (Iroquois) Confederacy.

In Canada, and in other currently existent “democracies,” we vest trust in elected representatives of the people to vote in accordance to the common opinion. And, if each elected representative were truly independent and voted according to the will of their constituents, this system would be just fine.

However, when political parties (or mutually aligned groups of politicians voting in support of special interests) gain ascendancy, then the voice of the citizens and true representative democracy is lost in the chambers of government.

Such is the state of affairs at every level of government in this country, hence it falls back on us, the citizens, to exercise every effort to choose representatives that are committed to ongoing public consultation, adhering to the direction of their constituents and steadfastly fulfilling the promises they made during the election.

For incumbents, that is a relatively easy — although time-consuming — process of comparing their promises to the way they placed their votes during time spent in government.

Back in June/July 2024, about halfway through the

council’s four-year term, this columnist did just that (“Arch-i-text: Wiens, Cheropita and past campaign promises,” June 27, and “Arch-i-text: Parliament Oak hotel is a pie-in-the-sky idea,” July 4) and found several of the councillors woefully out of step with their election commitments to the voters.

For first-timers running for election, it’s a bit more challenging since they have no track record of accountability in office vis-à-vis past platforms. That said, one can examine their history of community engagement and contribution. Get answers to questions such as:

Have they consistently, over time, advocated for the good of the community and the rights of the residents?

Have the positions they put forward during this advocacy been logical, properly researched and well-thought-out?

Have they maintained the integrity of their arguments and been steadfast in their undertakings?

Bluntly, if you cannot find answers to these questions — amongst others you may raise — that demonstrate community activist efforts over time, then you could be right in wondering if you can vest trust in their

promises.

As to the investment of time to actually vote, you can skip voting in person at the polling stations and do it online in minutes from the comfort of your own home. There is no excuse for not exercising your franchise.

Based on my personal research into all the candidates and having heard each one speak in the organized public forums, it’s my position that Niagara-on-the-Lake needs the financial acumen and focus of someone like McGuinness, the development/planning knowledge and fundamental integrity of someone like Colaneri, the experience and adherence to her promises of someone like O’Connor and the “elder statesman” representation of someone like Burroughs.

Moreover, we need a lord mayor who is demonstrably free from the spectre of influence by special interests, is prepared to chart a new course and has the proven leadership ability to forge a team that will actually put the residents first in all their decisions.

Who you and I vote for is a personal choice. That said, vote.

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



Darcy Price CPA
Professional Corporation

1627 Niagara Stone Rd., Unit B2, Virgil

905-468-5300

Monday to Friday, 9 a.m. to 5 p.m.

*Accounting *Canadian-U.S. Taxation *Business Services



Warren
RENOVATIONS

905.468.2127

PLUMBING, HEATING & AIR CONDITIONING



J&S Performance

SALES & SERVICE

**HUSTLER**

905-468-9735

901 East/West Line, NOTL





REGIONAL SIGNAL INC

YOUR LOCAL TRUSTED SECURITY COMPANY.

✓ Security Alarm Systems
✓ Smart Home Integration
✓ Video Surveillance Systems
✓ Residential and Commercial

Contact us today!
(905) 346-2933
Sales@regionalsignal.com

360 York Rd., Unit C3, Niagara-on-the-Lake, ON L0S 1J0
www.regionalsignal.com



YOUR AD HERE!

Contact us today at
advertising@niagaranow.com



Custom built spaces for
AGING IN PLACE.

Your Home. Your Comfort. *Your Independence.*

Contact Us to Book an Assessment
905-692-5690
info@diamond-contracting.ca
www.diamond-contracting.ca

**DIAMOND CONTRACTING**



THE MAPLE LEAF MAN
FALL GARDEN AND LEAF CLEAN-UP
RELIABLE SERVICE
CALL JOE
905-325-5704

D-Handyman Services

Painting, wall and ceiling repair and much more!

289-929-hanD (4263)
d.handyman.denis@gmail.com
PO Box 1088
Virgil, Ontario





Denis Curtis
Proprietor
http://dencurtis.wix.com/d-handyman



GRACE UNITED CHURCH
NIAGARA-ON-THE-LAKE, ONTARIO
222 VICTORIA ST. 905-468-4044

Sundays at 10:30 a.m.
www.graceunitedchurch.com
Our 203rd anniversary | 1823-2026

NOTL must **lead the league** in election signs



ROSS'S RAMBLINGS

Ross Robinson
Columnist

An astounding 59 per cent of NOTLers voted in the hotly contested 2018 municipal election, a much higher percentage engagement rate than in any of the municipalities that surround us. Our 2022 turnout was also strong. Let's stay involved, and help to shape the future of our special area of Canada. Please vote.

I am out and about a lot, and have again been overwhelmed by the number of electioneering lawn signs that have sprouted up as

this campaign has evolved. Mostly smaller sized signs, even at key strategic corners. And the attention to geometric detail has again been admirable. Almost every sign has been installed at a right angle to the lot line — for maximum viewing exposure and effect.

Blue-and-green signs, red-and-white signs, signs of many colours, printed in basic fonts for ease of reading. Quick, passing-by reading.

Great, but I feel a bit sorry for local realtors, landscapers, painters and other folks who traditionally use lawn signs to market their services. They get almost totally blocked out by the election signs. I guess they just have to grin and bear it for a few weeks every four years.

A few years ago, I actually read our local NOTL signage bylaws. Like most public sector documents, it was not easy to understand. And many pages long. My main interest was to learn how many days ahead of



Expect at least another week of election signs here, there and everywhere in Niagara-on-the-Lake. GARTH TURNER

the actual election day lawn signs were permitted to be installed.

Since then, I have set a personal limit of two weeks. No, this is not fair, but that's just too bad.

A few weeks ago, I was able to attend one of the well-organized and very well-attended candidate

forums, and hats off to the NOTLRA for their efforts. Although I have to ask again, "Why weren't the forums held at our magnificent NOTL Community Centre?"

Obviously, I am missing something. (It's not the first time.)

Rambling off now in a

different direction, please allow me to formally ask: when the acronym NOTL joined our local lexicon? GOLF NOTL and NOTL BOTL may be catchy and cool and save ink and space, but are these acronyms widely recognized?

We must resist the temptation to take things to the lowest common denominator, but just this morning after guiding some visitors around town, a well-travelled and quite posh gentleman from England asked, "It's probably obvious, but what does the NOTL on your cap mean?"

I was courteous and patient as I responded, but for many years I have sort of struggled with NOTL versus Niagara-on-the-Lake. Around our world, including the words lake or sea provides a certain je ne sais quoi.

Sorry about this seemingly silly discussion, and I know that "on-the-Lake" was added to Niagara sev-

eral decades ago to lessen postal system confusion with Niagara Falls.

Am I the only one in town who even thinks about this?

Back to political lawn signs as we finish up for the week, and a quick and clever story from my Grade 9 year at Royal York Secondary School in Etobicoke. 1960, I think. A very cool Grade 11 student named Digby Sale was running to be student council president.

He started his big speech to about 600 of us by saying, "First of all I would like to thank all the local real-estate agents for putting up lawn signs to support me. Get it? 'For Sale.'"

Isn't it weird the things you can remember after 66 years?

Now please, get out and vote. As my wise mom from Cochrane said so often, "If you don't get involved, you will have exactly no right to complain."

Be kind.

rossrocket9@gmail.com



2 FOR 1

WINE TASTINGS

1696 NIAGARA STONE RD, NIAGARA-ON-THE-LAKE

WE'RE OPEN

EVEN DURING ROAD WORK





NO, NO...
DONT CALL **MATT** FIRST,

Call ME FIRST!



WILL MILLER | BROKER

DIRECT **289.687.WILL** (9455)

SERVICING NOTL & NIAGARA AREA



NRC Realty, Brokerage
Independently owned and operated
NRCrealty.ca

www.millergroupproperties.com

Mayor Zalepa found in conflict, but was never held to account

Kathryn Podrebarac
Special to The Lake Report

In February 2025, at an open house in Old Town, a resident asked Lord Mayor Gary Zalepa what residents can do when a councillor fails to declare a conflict of interest.

His answer: “If anybody feels that it is improperly declared you have full recourse through a complaint to the integrity commissioner which the town has.”

I took him at his word. I live near the Rand Estate and filed the complaint described here. This is what happened.

The town’s code of conduct says members “shall avoid conflicts of interest.” If they are uncertain, they can ask the town’s integrity commissioner for advice, at the town’s expense. If they have a conflict, they are supposed to declare it at the meeting and step aside.

The lord mayor lives close to the Rand Estate, about 200 feet (61 metres) according to him. In December 2022, he asked the town’s then integrity commissioner whether that created a conflict. He was advised: “It would be prudent for you to declare a conflict of interest and withdraw.”

He followed that advice. In April 2023, before hundreds of residents at the Community Centre, he declared a conflict “due to the proximity of my primary residence to the subject properties,” and left the meeting. He declared twice more after that.

“It would be irresponsible not to follow their advice,” he told The NOTL Local in January 2024. To act against it “would jeopardize the town.”

In October 2024, after the Ontario Land Tribunal’s decision on the Rand Estate



NOTL’s integrity commissioner says the lord mayor went against its advice to declare a conflict of interest when the Rand Estate issue came before council in June. FILE

development, the lord mayor also sought advice from the new commissioner.

That advice, not previously reported, was clear: if his property is within 120 metres of the subject properties (the notice area under the Planning Act), he should declare a conflict and step aside. His December 2023 and January 2024 declarations had already said he “lives within the notification area.”

That is the town’s norm. Town records show that in the seven years before June 2 this year, members of council declared a conflict 26 times because their home or property was in the notice area or in proximity.

On June 2, new Rand Estate applications came before council’s planning committee. His home had not moved. He did not declare a conflict or step aside.

Afterward, I asked him in writing to declare a conflict and step aside. He declined. On July 8, I filed a complaint saying he was in a conflict

because he lives within the 120 metre notice area.

On Aug. 10, the new commissioner sent me its decision.

It found: “The lord mayor did not follow our advice as it applied to the June 2026 meeting,” and that “by remaining in the committee meeting on June 2, 2026, he was in a conflict of interest.”

According to the commissioner, the lord mayor believed his earlier conflict arose from a proposed access onto Charlotte Street, since dropped. The commissioner’s account of its own advice said nothing about access.

The commissioner went on to find that his “decision to participate resulted in a contravention that was based on an error in judgment made in good faith.” Next time, he should declare a conflict and step aside, it said.

The outcome? “We will be concluding this matter without further action and will be closing our file.”

The next day, I wrote to the commissioner quoting

the town’s protocol. It requires it to report its finding of a code contravention to council, who alone decides if a penalty should follow. Time was short: provincial law bars commissioners from reporting to council between nomination day and election day. Nomination day was 10 days away.

On Aug. 18, it replied: “The matter is at an end.” Because, in its view, the error was made in good faith, “no public report was warranted.” It later told this newspaper the complaint had not been sustained. Yet its decision found the very conflict I complained of, and called it a contravention.

The lord mayor received advice at the town’s expense to declare a conflict. He did not. The commissioner was required to report the code contravention to council. It did not. Without a report, the findings stayed off the public record, and council never had the chance to decide whether the lord mayor should answer for his breach.

What is left is a “should.” The lord mayor should declare next time. Asked by this newspaper in August whether he will, he would not say (“Integrity commissioner says mayor in conflict on Rand Estate,” Aug. 20). The finding is public today only because I released it.

If that is “full recourse,” I am not sure what no recourse would look like.

The town has the right rules. They work only if the people bound by them follow them, and if council insists that they do. Ask the candidates seeking your vote whether they will.

Kathryn Podrebarac is a Niagara-on-the-Lake resident, lawyer and commercial mediator.

Remember, tourism makes NOTL thrive

Dear editor:
Anyone running for office in Niagara-on-the-Lake should consider what the town would be like without the people who visit it. Residents value its restaurants, cultural experiences and remarkable range of things to do. Tourism helps make that possible. The visitors who fill a theatre or book a weekend away help sustain amenities that residents enjoy long after those visitors have gone home.

That connection came through clearly in research Abacus Data conducted for the NOTL Tourism Group in July 2024. We surveyed 302 residents and found that 89 per cent described their quality of life as excellent or good. Eighty-two per cent believed Niagara-on-the-Lake could attract a lot of tourists and remain a great place to live.

Residents also recognized what tourism contributes to their own lives. Ninety per cent considered it important to the range and quality of things to do in a town of its size. And 65 per cent agreed that tourism provides infrastructure and amenities that improve residents’ quality of life. That is a substantial majority seeing a benefit that extends beyond the businesses serving visitors.

The economics are straightforward. Restaurants, shops and cultural institutions need customers. Visitors expand the market well beyond the people who live nearby, helping support a range of experiences that a community this size would struggle to sustain on its own.

Take away that demand and we should expect fewer choices. I doubt Niagara-on-the-Lake would be as desirable a place to raise a family or retire without the amenities those visitors help support.

That does not make every concern about tourism unreasonable. Parking and traffic affect people’s daily lives, and residents raised both in our research. Candidates should take those pressures seriously and explain how they would address them. Good



management is essential to preserving the relationship between a successful visitor economy and a community people love living in.

There is another lesson here for anyone seeking office. The people who call, write and attend public meetings deserve to be heard. But the volume of those contacts cannot tell us how widely a view is shared. A person who sends 10 emails still has one opinion. Someone who never contacts council has an equal stake in the town’s future.

As a pollster, I spend my working life trying to understand that broader picture. Our research was designed to hear from a cross-section of residents, including people unlikely to organize around an issue or appear before council. Their quieter participation in community life should never mean their views count for less.

Those running for office should keep the findings of our 2024 research in mind as they listen to residents today. Ask broadly. Test assumptions. Make room for people who need to be invited into the conversation, including the businesses and workers who depend on the visitor economy in the community.

Niagara-on-the-Lake’s appeal as a place to live is connected to its success as a place to visit. Protecting the quality of life residents cherish requires understanding what helps make it possible.

David Coletto
Founder and CEO
Abacus Data
Ottawa

Excellent work on special election edition

Dear editor:
Am avidly perusing the latest Lake Report issue (Oct. 15, 2026) preparatory to voting — will be doing so online

for the first time this year, as at my age, my driving licence has been suspended due to eyesight problems.

And I must say this issue

of The Lake Report is extremely comprehensive and informative for all residents who are making up their minds about whom

to vote for.
Well done, editor and team of The Lake Report.
Kaspar Pold
NOTL



GREENVIEW
LANDSCAPE
WHEN SNOW FALLS,
WE ANSWER THE CALL!

WINTER PROPERTY MAINTENANCE SERVICES

Snow removal & ice management: Reliable, professional snow removal services for residential and commercial properties throughout Niagara-on-the-Lake.

GET IN TOUCH TODAY:
Niagara-on-the-Lake
289-407-6635
greenviewlandscape.ca
isaac@greenviewlandscape.ca

Change is needed

The NOTLRA did a survey last year and comments included, amongst other things, criticism of the mayor and councillors for perceived conflicts of interest (especially concerning development applications), calls for oversight of council and a “desire for greater transparency”. The community feels that something is amiss, and nothing in this council’s term has seemingly soothed resident’s concerns.

Usually when proposals come before council, councillors are asked if they have any conflicts of interest. Sometimes the name of the individual(s) appear(s) on the applications, and sometimes they do not. Sometimes it’s merely a numbered company on the application, which is not unusual. And, the ultimate name of the underlying owners of those numbered companies are not entered into the minutes of council meetings. As well, the names of individuals that form the known development consortium (land owners, developers, subcontractors, real estate agents) are also not revealed. Tawny Ridge in St. Davids is one example and there are probably many others.

This lack of transparency creates a plethora of questions. How do councillors know (and more importantly how can residents know, identify, or question) whether they have a conflict of interest if they do not know who exactly the applicants are? Or if they know, perhaps they don’t want to divulge those details into the public domain — why?

How could a conflict-of-interest audit (performed by say the ethics/integrity commissioner, or requested by a private citizen) be conducted to see if there were undeclared interests when there are unknown entities and no public record of them? You wouldn’t be able to identify whether any of the undisclosed individuals in any numbered company development provided direct or indirect donations for a councillor’s election campaign. Without full disclosure you cannot easily determine if there is a conflict of interest. Town council’s existing handling of this issue presents itself as a lack of transparency, intentional poor record keeping, and quite poor policies and procedures.

For the sake of transparency and for compliance with the Municipal Conflict of Interest Act it was historically recommended to town councillors/staff that councillors, staff, etc. somehow incorporate the names of the underlying owners into the minutes of the meetings so as to avoid any misunderstandings regarding conflicts of interest. It was also suggested that perhaps everyone in the decision-making chain sign a declaration that they all have no conflict of interest, rather than a show of hands which may not always be video recorded. As far as I am aware, town staff do not have to declare any conflicts of interest — why not?

The CAO at the time responded that “staff is currently investigating and will respond as soon as possible.” Seven months later (guess the investigation was taking a lot longer than “as soon as possible”), another communication was sent to members of town council requesting the town publicly divulge the ownership for transparency purposes, and to specifically and publicly confirm conflict of interest declarations. Sandra O’Connor did respond indicating that she had no conflict of interest. The rest of the email recipients were silent.

And then, Gary Burroughs responded with the following email: “Thank you for your email — I don’t believe that there was an adequate response.

You raised a valid question, and currently, several on council do not declare. As you know, it is the responsibility of the councillor to declare, and several don’t take it seriously.”

A scandalous admission and an extremely disappointing and disheartening perspective on our existing Town Council. If one Councillor knows you would think others know as well. Mayor Zalepa and deputy mayor Wiens are the leaders of this town council. They share the responsibility for ensuring rules and regulations are adhered to and enforced.

No councillor or mayor was identified but obviously Mr. Burroughs had insider knowledge as to who was implicated. Perhaps nobody? Perhaps a process problem rather than something more sinister?

And, what are the implications for all of the developments that were approved without the appropriate declarations of conflicts of interest? Should all of them be revisited? Are they invalid?

You might think that Bill 9, Municipal Accountability Act, 2025, (potentially to come into force in stages), would provide stringent legislation on councillors that have conflicts of interest, with the ability to oust/penalize a member of council. We’re supposed to be protected by legislation and the rule of law. But it’s not that simple and straightforward.

According to the highly respected Toronto law firm Aird Berlis, Bill 9’s investigative process initially begins with a complaint to the local integrity commissioner. If the local integrity commissioner feels the allegations have merit, it’s referred to the integrity commissioner of Ontario where an inquiry must be conducted. The criteria that determine whether an allegation has merit for both commissioners have significant possible interpretations because of how ambiguous the legislative language is constructed. Interpretations that would easily exonerate the individual(s) in question.

The criteria for the local integrity commissioner include:

- whether there has been a contravention of the code of conduct;
- whether the contravention is of a serious nature;
- whether it resulted in harm to the health, safety or well being of any person;
- whether statutory penalties are insufficient to address the contravention or ensure the contravention is not repeated;

While the integrity commissioner of Ontario must also consider, “amongst other things”:

- whether the contravention negatively impacts both public confidence in the ability of the member to discharge their duties;
- and public confidence in the ability of municipal council or the local board to fulfil its role, including by meeting its statutory obligations.

Incredibly all of the aforementioned criteria must be met before the investigative process can move forward through each commissioner stage. It’s an exhausting process and time-consuming process, but it’s not finished there.

If the integrity commissioner of Ontario feels all the criteria are met he/she will refer the matter back to the local municipal council. The councillor/mayor being investigated is permitted to make submissions, and

can attempt to influence voting on the matter. Council’s vote to remove the member must be unanimous.

If council’s vote is unanimous, the member’s seat is declared vacant, and the member is also disqualified from holding local office for a four-year period commencing when the seat is declared vacant. However, if the council does not vote to remove the member from office, the municipality and the local board cannot impose any statutory penalties such as those you would find in Section 122 of the Criminal Code of Canada. Section 122 is legislation that seeks to protect the public from the misconduct of government officials including breaches of trust, “which can occur when an official fails to uphold their fiduciary duties or misuses their position of authority for personal gain.”

Anyone reading this brief synopsis will quickly determine that the process is excruciatingly arduous and time consuming. The wording of the criteria is undefined and subject to significant interpretation that would probably favor the defending councillor/ mayor. To actually “convict” someone of a conflict of interest and have them “expelled” from council would be almost like winning the lottery. Expelling a mayor or councillor does not necessarily mean they will be prosecuted under the Criminal Code for breach of trust either.

So, what are residents left to do, given the existing process lends itself to what some might say encourages conflict of interest in municipal governments with impunity? What can we do when a long-standing councillor and chartered professional accountant says some on our town council do not declare conflicts of interest and don’t take it seriously?

We don’t have to wait for decisions made by integrity commissioners, town staff or town council. Once every four years we can express our displeasure and actually not elect councillors or a mayor that we feel doesn’t serve the best interests of the community and its residents. We can circumvent the integrity commissioners.

In the upcoming municipal election, we have a real tangible opportunity to express our lack of appetite for more of the same. We need to vote for individuals that are independent of local business connections and interests, will work full-time to deliver well thought out decisions, advocate for real estate developments that better reflect the historical value of NOTL’s neighbourhoods, better manage the financial resources related to systemic infrastructure deficiencies, will be transparent, and will actually listen to, work with, and be sympathetic to resident’s concerns. The incumbents have lost our trust and our belief that they possess the ability to govern NOTL in a satisfactory manner.

Let’s bring back transparency. Let’s demand our town staff provide their engineering expertise and engineering stamps onto the developer paid consultant reports to ensure that all the risks have been identified and mitigated. Let’s fix the infrastructure. Let’s keep our historical town intact so that businesses can keep attracting people. Let’s elect the council members that are worthy of running for mayor and council. And, you don’t have to vote for six councillors – you can vote for say three that are worthy and forget the unworthy rest.

It’s time to clear the decks. It’s our last chance until the next four years.



Say no to new region governance model

Dear editor:

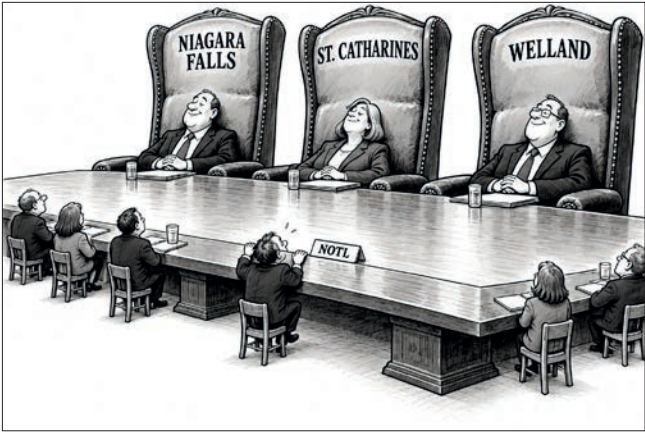
The focus candidates running for municipal office in Niagara-on-the-Lake have given to amalgamation in their election campaigns is surprising. Amalgamation will exist in all but name following the 2026 municipal vote, given the new governance model that the Ford government will impose on Niagara following the October elections.

Ford's model will result in a regional structure similar to the world's current political reality. Together, two strong municipal powers, Niagara Falls and St. Catharines, and a somewhat less strong power, Welland, will have the political clout to dominate the region provided the big man in his fancy house agrees with the direction they take when it comes to provincial priorities.

While the remaining municipalities in Niagara Region can act as a formidable middle power if they band together and work collaboratively (they'd be stronger politically than any one of the other three municipalities acting on their own), they could not overcome the combined strength of the big three.

The middle-power approach could work for Niagara-on-the-Lake, Fort Erie, Thorold and Port Colborne to some extent, if they can agree on shared priorities and joint actions. However, the inherent differences between the communities, plus the power Ford will vest in his soon-to-be-appointed regional council chair, would make the alliance difficult to sustain over the long term.

Not that the big three won't find it challenging



An uneven seat at the table: Niagara's smaller municipalities risk losing their voice under weighted regional voting, Terry Davis writes. CHATGPT

to collaborate, at times. Niagara Falls has a tourism-based economy, buoyed by its world-famous falls and to some extent its casinos, while St. Catharines and Welland do not.

While the Falls' hotel strip, restaurants and Clifton Hill attractions seem to be thriving, the downtown cores of both St. Catharines and Welland are in decline, and both cities are trying to address challenges related to employment, homelessness and drug addiction. The priorities of the three cities are different.

It won't surprise me if the new weighted-vote system of governance being implemented by the Ford government bogs down completely, with the big three municipalities failing to achieve consensus as more and more Destination Niagara funding is channelled into the new theme parks and casinos planned for the Falls.

But maybe that is the intent. By establishing a system of regional governance that seems likely to fail, perhaps Ford's real goal is simply to pave the way for future amalgamation. Sort of like how he's

letting healthcare collapse to the point where private, for-profit clinics and hospitals will eventually seem like the only cure to what's ailing it.

In the meantime, Niagara Falls, with the support of the provincial government, will likely have the political clout to push ahead with the expansion of the regional airport in Niagara-on-the-Lake, despite its negative impacts on quality of life and farmland in our town. Expect an increase in tourism, more casinos and more putting residents' needs on the back-burner.

Whoever is elected lord mayor of Niagara-on-the-Lake on Oct. 26 will obviously have a say in shaping the future of our town. However, with the changes to the regional governance model, he or she won't be able to stop the Destination Niagara steamroller from fundamentally changing our town's look and character in the next few years.

The best hope appears to be for Niagara-on-the-Lake and the other small municipalities in the region to say "no more." To step away from the region, and refuse to transfer tax dollars to

the regional government in payment for shared services such as policing, waste collection, road maintenance, etc. They could then look at the pros and cons of contracting for those services separately or as a group buyer.

In Niagara-on-the-Lake, at least, given the assessment-based funding formula used by the region to calculate our bill for police services, such a move could actually reduce the costs to taxpayers while increasing service levels.

Obviously, a careful cost-benefit analysis would need to be undertaken before the town and the other municipalities took that step, but just putting it on the table would send a strong message to the region and the premier that enough is enough. That we refuse to stand by and see our democratic rights eroded, the characters of our towns fundamentally altered as the Niagara region becomes a cash cow for the province and the quality of our lives sacrificed on the altar of mass tourism.

The premier should rethink the new governance model he is imposing on Niagara Region, call a vote to elect the council chair, take back the strong chair powers he has bestowed on the position, put an end to strong-mayor powers and eliminate weighted voting at the regional council table.

If he doesn't, when the history of these turbulent times is written, Premier Ford may well be viewed as being more of an adherent of U.S. President Donald Trump than as the Captain Canada leader he purports to be.

Terry Davis
Old Town



Lack of flood relief from province comes down to political strategy

Dear editor:

Back in in 2019, the Ford government began tampering with funding for autism in Ontario. The effect of this "restructuring" was to make government funding close to negligible for those most affected by autism. As of March 2026, there were 67,500 children across the province waiting to access funding for core clinical services through the Ontario Autism Program.

What does this have to do with provincial funding for flood victims in Niagara? Well, probably quite a lot. It relates to how Ontario distributes public funding.

The first priority appears to be to those who have funded the Doug Ford party during the last election and other politically useful occasions. The second priority includes the funding for the next election. (Attack ads don't come cheap.) The third priority is to prime the pump both for government revenues and corporate revenues. Fortunately, public funds can be used to highlight a lot of things somehow related to the Ford government.

How are these decisions made? Well, first of all, there is the question of how much money autism associations have contributed to the Ford party. Secondly, how likely is it that those personally concerned with autism funding will impact the outcome of the next election? Thirdly, if we contribute money to autism, what exactly are we priming the pump for, and what will we reap in terms of dollars and cents?

The result is that, in just about every category, autism falls short of being a good investment for the province.

So, let's keep the funding at the usual starvation level.

Well, how does this apply to Niagara flood relief? Let's do a quick check.

In the past, Niagara has not been a leading supporter of the Ford party in terms of the popular vote. On the other hand, some of Niagara's mayors are (or at least were) rabid supporters of Ford and his policies. Nonetheless, it seems likely that most of these mayors will continue on, as leading players in Niagara, even without flood relief. And so, what to do?

First, in spite of initial coverage in the Toronto media, the flood issue has long since vanished from sight in the GTA. Secondly, private insurance has covered a fair bit of the flood damage in Niagara, so that there are now fewer voices calling for help. Thirdly, the Ford party continues to look fairly good in the polls; so buying votes in Niagara is not a priority. (This might possibly be reconsidered, if the Ford party begins to slip rather badly.)

Generally speaking, Ford party money (that is, public funds) could be spent more beneficially elsewhere, although not in the area of autism.

Right now, the smart money leans towards the idea that, where private insurance falls short, homeowners and other flood victims are out of luck. As Premier Ford might say: "I got my photo-ops, and now I don't owe ya nothin."

It would take a considerable investment in the Doug Ford hope chest to change the dynamics of this situation.

Kevin McCabe
St. Catharines

NOTL to get \$20.5M in irrigation funding

Dear editor:

In August 2025, the provincial government announced \$41 million in funding for irrigation projects in the Niagara fruitlands. The money is for improving the NOTL irrigation system and designing and implementing a new irrigation scheme in the St. Catharines-Lincoln area.

The Niagara-on-the-Lake irrigation committee has been actively involved with a design team since November 2025. A public information session was held in NOTL on June 10. The irrigation committee received a project update on July 8.

It was decided by grower members of the Niagara Irrigation Initiative Project to split the funding 50-50 between Niagara-on-the-Lake and St. Catharines-Lincoln.

I would like to thank the irrigation vice chairman Erwin Wiens for his help in advocating for irrigation for all the Niagara fruitlands as well as input in securing the 50-50 split.

Growers can look forward to an improved irrigation system in the near future.

Kevin Buis
Chair of NOTL irrigation committee
NOTL

Some councillors have done little to boost their approval ratings

Dear editor:

Two years ago, The Lake Report published the results of a survey carried out indicating a mid-term approval rating of the existing council ("Mid-term approval rate for NOTL council is extremely low, survey finds," June 27, 2024).

Some of the rates are embarrassingly low and it cannot be claimed by the mayor or certain councillors as being an endorsement by the residents of

NOTL that they are supposed to represent.

To my knowledge, the low-rated councillors, in particular Gary Zalepa, Erwin Wiens, Maria Mavridis and Adriana Vizzari have done little or nothing since to improve their individual approval ratings above what the survey indicates.

In my opinion, this should be considered and taken into account at election time.

Derek Collins
NOTL

Get ready for higher taxes

Dear editor:

When all the hoopla of the municipal elections settle down, and we have a new lord mayor and council in place, I predict we will see a double-digit increase in our property taxes in 2027.

Clearly the table was set when our outgoing elected officials, with their

re-election aspirations in mind, passed a 2.19 per cent property tax increase for 2026.

Clearly as informed residents, we are not all so naive and immediately recognized their pathetic sleight-of-hand shell game.

Samuel A. Young
NOTL



Only problem with NOTL is complainers

Dear editor:

The Chicken Littles want everyone to believe that there will be more hotels, more density and more development in Old Town. But the reality is there really is nothing left to redevelop, so what is the problem?

The only properties that need to be demolished are all the old houses that are functionally obsolete and bad for the environment. If the new elbows-up council, which would be largely made up of left-wingers, was looking for a fight, there is none to have. The fights are over in Old Town.

Now its time to go to Glendale, which nobody cares about. There is no rabid group assigned to protect Glendale from the evil-doers, because nobody cares about Glendale. Elites do not live in Glendale — it is below them.

There are three brand-new hotels in Old Town: one just opened and is gorgeous, the other two will be open shortly and will be even



Peter Rusin says NOTL is full of too many complainers, when there isn't much left to develop in Old Town anyway.

more appealing.

As I drive around all of the areas that comprise NOTL in my convertible, I have to strain to find something that offends me; I can't find anything I don't like — nothing. I love everything, it is paradise.

Everything in NOTL is great and joyous except for one thing: the gang of a few hundred (probably no more than that) Chicken Littles and genuinely grumpy people that continue to sour the complex environment of a truly wonderful municipality.

If we could only find a place for this gang, perhaps providing them with housing at the barracks at the Commons, because that would make them happy, since they all want time to stand still and live inside old stuff, then maybe the

NOTL everyone is seeking could become a reality.

We could feed them, clothe them and maybe even study them, to see if we can fix them, so that life in NOTL could be free of all the doomayers.

The human brain is wired in favour of frequent and chronic complainers, and all of the psychology behind the SORE and NOTLRA type groups is not helpful to a prosperous and happy future for this beautiful little town.

Imagine a NOTL without whiners, complainers and all the Chicken Littles — what a wonderful place this could truly be.

But part of the fun is also guessing to see what delusion this gang of cluckers will create to be the next scary thing that will destroy the very NOTL most of us find awesome.

I can't think of anything negative in NOTL, only this one strange thing.

Peter Rusin
St. Davids

NARCOTICS ANONYMOUS MEETING

NOTL Anonymous

Closest meeting to you
222 Davy Street
Niagara-on-the-Lake
Mondays at 7 PM
All are welcome — No dues or fees
Newcomers encouraged

niagarana.com 1-888-811-3887

Advertising inquiries?
Email advertising@niagaranow.com

Rediscover all the emotions of sound

Pauline Reimer Gibson
Audiologist

Julia Dick
Hearing Instrument Specialist & Client Care Coordinator

Book a **FREE** hearing test

905-468-9176

504 Line 2 Rd, Virgil, ON L0S 1T0

amplifon
Hearing Care Experts

amplifon.ca

BOSLEY
REAL ESTATE
EST 1928

YOUR NIAGARA-ON-THE-LAKE BROKERAGE

Leading REAL ESTATE COMPANIES IN THE WORLD

1320 Niagara Stone Road
VIRGIL
\$749,000 3 2

This sprawling ranch bungalow, set on a park-like .29 acre lot is waiting for its second debut. Here is an opportunity for you to create your dream home.

Doug Rempel
REALTOR®
C: 289-407-9380

155 Loretta Drive
NIAGARA-ON-THE-LAKE
\$1,099,000 3 2.5

Beautifully renovated throughout. Custom kitchen. Inviting living spaces. Private backyard. All in the heart of Virgil just minutes to Old Town.

Patrick Burke
BROKER
C: 905-380-6459

TRUSTED THROUGH THE YEARS

35 Years In Real Estate
And Still Here For You.

Gary Snider
BROKER
C: 905-988-2205

My commitment to helping people find their perfect home, sell their property, and navigate the real estate market remains as strong as ever. Experience matters and personal service and trust never goes out of style.

BOSLEY REAL ESTATE OFFICE IN OLD TOWN

Where A Century Of Passion Meets Innovation.

Helping Canadians buy and sell with confidence since 1928.

LIKE A BOS PODCAST

O: 905-468-8600

BOSLEYREALESTATE.COM

Bosley Real Estate Ltd., Brokerage Local | Global

Elected officials **didn't act** in our best interest on Parliament Oak

Dear editor:

Looking back over the last four years, more than half of the current council members decided that they didn't have to vote in compliance with the town's bylaws and that they could vote against the existing zoning of land in the Old Town.

The Parliament Oak school site was zoned institutional or Greenbelt, or could be zoned the same as the surrounding properties, which are single-detached family residential on all four sides.

More than half of the current council members decided to approve a hotel building that is much higher than the zoning bylaws allow, about twice as high as the surrounding houses and which is located on improperly zoned land. This was done without any justification, as there were many



The current council allowed this to happen in the middle of a residential neighbourhood, warns Wayne Murray. If elected again, what else is coming down the pipe?

hotels already approved on properly zoned land.

These elected people are voted into office with the clear obligation to make decisions in the best interest of the residents who they represent. Judging from the three years of turmoil and of the residents arguing against council's approval of the hotel, obviously they made decisions against the public interest and contrary to the municipal bylaws.

The current council members, if elected, will probably continue to make decisions which will benefit private commercial interests instead of the community's best interests or the best use of the land, which is defined, as it should be, in the town's zoning bylaws.

Wayne Murray
NOTL

Is Turner **influencing** the **NOTL** election?

Dear editor:

Does an opinion really matter?

If I may, I would like to take umbrage with Mr. Turner's most recent piece in last week's paper ("The Turner Report: This is how I'm voting").

The endorsement of political candidates by a correspondent could be perceived as interference in the electoral process. How is this different than a foreign country interfering in the Alberta separation question, or that of the Quebec sovereignty debate?

It could further, by extension, imply the approval of the publication of this piece is an endorsement by the editor and paper itself.

It is one thing to have the editorial publication endorse candidates in an editorial piece and that of a correspondent writing and the paper publishing the opinions of the correspondent at the expense of other candidates.

In the event the candidates endorsed by the correspondent lose their election, are we to anticipate the correspondent will maintain an aggressive, negative and opinionated articles against the winner that he did not support?

It could further be argued that the correspondent's piece is advertising in promoting his chosen candidates, but this is an issue for the chief electoral officer to determine and pursue and the other candidates may pursue such a request.

We are a small community in which the longtime residents fully understand the ramifications of development in accordance with the planning laws of the community.

Why cannot everyone understand such a simple thing without an aggressive opinionated response in an effort to influence the community?

Derek Insley
NOTL





Good dishware doesn't retire. It just finds a new table.

Good things still have more to give

Visit MCC Thrift

254 Grantham Ave,
St. Catharines



RELAX. RECOVER. MOVE BETTER.

Massage therapy and fascial stretch therapy to help you feel better, move better and live better.



MUSCLE TENSION



SPORTS INJURIES



FASCIAL STRETCH THERAPY



NECK & SHOULDER PAIN



STRESS RELIEF



MOBILITY & FLEXIBILITY

Kristina Tzvetkova, RMT
REGISTERED MASSAGE THERAPIST & FASCIAL STRETCH PRACTITIONER

Kristina provides personalized, therapeutic treatments to help **reduce pain, improve mobility and restore function**. She combines massage therapy, fascial stretch therapy and movement-based techniques to address the root cause of dysfunction — helping you feel better, move better and reach your health and wellness goals.



SUPPORTING YOUR HEALTH & WELLNESS GOALS.



Personalized care tailored to your needs.



Improved mobility, flexibility and function.



Reduced pain, less stress, and a better quality of life.



BOOK YOUR MASSAGE THERAPY APPOINTMENT TODAY.
Feel better. Move better. Live better.



CHIROPRACTIC | PHYSIOTHERAPY | MASSAGE | NATUROPATHY | OSTEOPATHY

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



905-468-0614



Share the credit, but stand up for NOTL



Wayne Gates
Special to The Lake Report

Local communities across Niagara have pushed back against Doug Ford’s government proposals for municipal amalgamation. It was a dangerous scheme that risked increased taxes and fewer services.

But now we should also be equally wary of rubber-stamping Doug Ford’s plan for weighted voting at the Niagara Region that may erode unique and culturally significant municipalities like Niagara-on-the-Lake of their local decision-making power.

While Premier Ford and his supporters have framed governance reform as a way to reduce the number of local elected officials, we’ve already seen that amalgamation isn’t necessary to achieve that goal. Niagara-on-the-Lake voted to reduce

the size of its own town council from eight councillors to six.

It was a victory for communities in Niagara to stop forced amalgamation. Niagara’s biggest victories happen when we work together.

While we do sometimes see individuals taking credit for local accomplishments of other levels of government, in my experience, the credit always belongs to the many that worked together.

I firmly believe that our job as elected officials is to work with anyone willing to help our community, but it is equally important if you want to celebrate the good initiatives, you also have to be a strong voice when it comes to standing up against the bad ones.

Take the elimination of the 6.1 per cent tax on Ontario VQA wines. Starting in 2018, I introduced legislation four separate times to eliminate this unfair tax on our local wineries, and my first bill passed second reading with Liberal and Conservative support. We kept working alongside local grape growers, winery owners and municipal lead-



MPP Wayne Gates says Doug Ford’s plan for weighted voting at the Niagara Region may erode the unique character of NOTL, by stripping away its power to make decisions.

ers until the government removed the tax in 2024.

The same is true of the \$35 million provincial investment in the Shaw Festival’s Royal George Theatre. We raised the Shaw’s funding needs in committee in January 2024, and we urged the minister to support the project again and again. The Shaw, local businesses, donors and municipal representatives were making the case too.

Nevertheless, working with the provincial government to secure investments

for Niagara-on-the-Lake can not mean supporting every proposal. In previous Ontario amalgamations, municipalities experienced significant tax increases despite the empty promise of cost savings

Now, more than ever, the fight to protect local decision-making is far from over. Bill 100 opens the door to appointed chairs and weighted voting that may be unfair. I don’t support it, and Niagara-on-the-Lake needs elected leaders who oppose provincial top-down amalgamation schemes designed to erode local decision-making authority, increase property taxes, and compromise services.

There is nothing wrong with sharing credit for local successes by working with all levels of government, but it must also mean showing independence to stand up when provincial policy threatens to respect our community and its unique character. Protecting local decision-making requires both.

Wayne Gates is the member of provincial parliament for the Niagara Falls riding.

NOTL STUDIO TOUR



JUNE 5–6, 2027

CALL FOR ARTISTS

Reach new audiences, connect with local art lovers, and help shape our growing creative community.

Open to visual artists and artisans with working studios in Niagara-on-the-Lake. Guest artist spaces available.

Deadline: November 1, 2026

notlstudiotour.com/apply
Application Fee: \$20
Questions? info@notlstudiotour.com



Have an opinion
you want heard?
Email us.





Explore the World. Discover Yourself.

Through Rotary Youth Programs, you'll gain independence, explore new cultures, volunteer, and grow as a leader. From weekend leadership camps to international exchanges, these experiences open doors—to the world and to yourself.

Rotary is where neighbours, friends, & problem-solvers share ideas, join leaders, & take action to create lasting change. Through Rotary clubs, people from all continents & cultures form friendships & professional connections while making a difference in their backyards & around the world.



Rotary

Club of Niagara-on-the-Lake



Find out more at:
niagaraonthelakerotary.ca | info@niagaraonthelakerotary.ca

Have some fun

- Across**
- 1. Rapid nuclear reactor shut-down (5)
 - 4. Helper (9)
 - 10. Dressing (10)
 - 11. Atop (4)
 - 12. Ministers (9)
 - 13. Bender (5)
 - 15. Sets of equipment (4)
 - 17. Female big cat (10)
 - 19. Herefordshire town (10)
 - 21. Type of heating fuel (4)
 - 22. Reprimand (5)
 - 24. Contented (9)
 - 27. Waist band (4)
 - 28. Volume for preliminary artistic studies (10)
 - 29. Steam locomotive (4,5)
 - 30. One of these means almost cloudless (5)
- Down**
- 2. Truce (5-4)
 - 3. Isolated (5)
 - 5. Snow vehicle (7)
 - 6. Notion (4)
 - 7. Fabricated (7-2)
 - 8. Hangman's knot (5)
 - 9. Emphasize (9)
 - 14. Wig (9)
 - 16. Ignorant person (9)
 - 18. Whipping boy (9)
 - 20. Makes journeys (7)
 - 23. Gaiety (5)
 - 25. Legend (5)
 - 26. Capital of Norway (4)

Crossword Puzzle

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

Last issue's answers

1	A	S	U	L	5	B	I	U	W						
9	S	H	A	M	P	O	O	10	R	U	B	E	L	L	A
	E	H	S	N					E	E	T	S	D		
11	P	R	A	T	T	L	E	12	W	O	R	R	I	E	D
	T	R	A	L					I	M	L				
13	I	T	A	L	I	C	I	Z	14	E	15	A	M	A	Z
	C		R	N	X				T						
			16	R	E	S	P	E	C	T	A	B	L	E	
16	A	E				S	I	R						19	A
20	N	E	H	R	U			22	S	U	N	Y	A	T	S
	Y	E	N						G	C	L	G			
24	B	E	A	N	B	A	G		26	U	N	E	Q	U	A
	O	R	O	U					I	L	M	E			
27	D	E	S	T	R	O	Y		28	S	T	E	A	M	E
	Y	E	N	S					H	T	Y	S			

4				6			9	
		7	2	3		1		
		1		5	8	3	2	
	4		8					
	5			4			7	
					1		3	
	1	5	3	9		7		
		6		1	2	9		
	9			8				3



Welcome to Wine Country!

19 Oakley Drive, Niagara-on-the-Lake



\$1,149,900



Total Finished: 1,651 sq. ft.

Taxes (2025) \$6,880.00

Bedrooms: 2

Bathrooms: 3

Parking Spaces: 4

Cooling: Central Air

Heating: Forced Air, Gas



Rob Golfi
SALES REPRESENTATIVE

GOLFI®
REAL ESTATE

RE/MAX

SCAN FOR A
FREE HOME
EVALUATION



Call the brand that gets your home **NOTICED!**

Ask about our Golfi Home Warranty. Full protection for one year.†

905-641-0308 • Sold@GolfiTeam.com • www.GolfiTeam.com



†Conditions apply. RE/MAX Escarpment Golfi Realty Inc., Brokerage. Independently owned and operated.



Catherine ‘Kate’ Crooks

Born in Niagara-on-the-Lake in 1833, Kate Crooks was a pioneering botanist whose work reached far beyond Niagara. In 1861, she joined the Botanical Society of Canada, which welcomed women as equal members. She collected roughly 500 botanical specimens from southwestern Ontario and her collection was exhibited at the 1862 International Exhibition in London, England. Today, only one specimen attributed to Kate is known to survive: a cutting of rosepink, a plant now considered locally extinct in Ontario. Kate’s legacy also extends to women’s rights. After her death in 1871, a dispute over her will helped expose the limits of married women’s property rights. Her cousin, Adam Crooks, helped bring about Ontario’s Married Women’s Real Estate Act, passed in 1873, which expanded married women’s control over their own property. Though much of her work has been forgotten, Kate left a lasting mark on both the scientific history of Niagara and the fight for women’s rights.

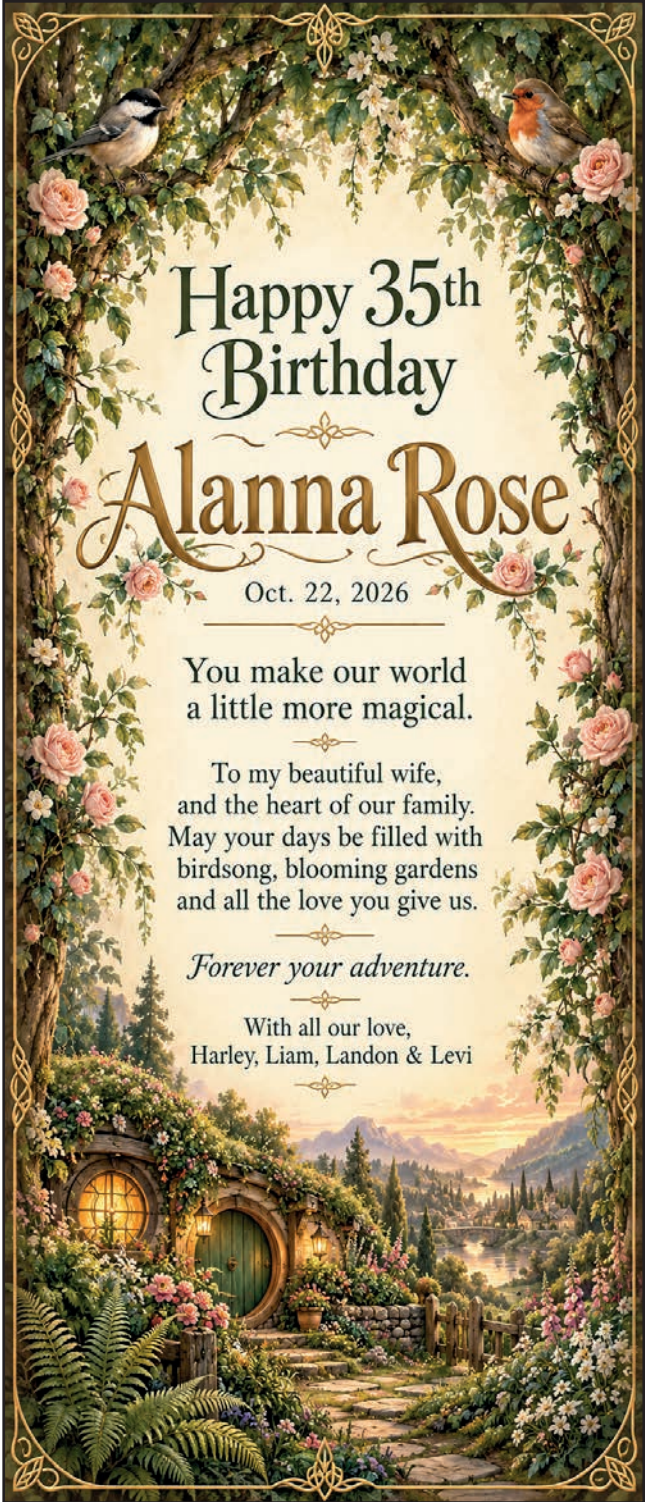
Obituary

Donald Combe



COMBE, Donald Lloyd, UE —
Passed away in palliative care at The Royal Henley Retirement Community on Saturday, Oct. 17, 2026, at the age of 95. Born on Aug. 22, 1931, in Niagara Falls, he was the eldest child of William Thomas Combe, pharmacist, and Mabel Frances Stewart, a bookkeeper. He attended schools there and graduated from Stamford Collegiate in 1952. He is survived by his sister, Winnifred Frances Kalagian — whom he affectionately called “Bea” — niece, Vanessa (Lance) Hamrick and nephew, Merritt (Mary Kay) Kalagian. He was predeceased by his parents and sister, Norma Joyce Combe. Donald’s path led him to England where he studied and graduated from the Royal Academy of Dramatic Arts in 1955. For eight years, he taught speech and drama with the Toronto School Board and travelled extensively with The Company of Pilgrims performing in many locations in Ontario and New York state. He returned to Niagara Falls in 1965 and from 1966 to 1990 was an English as a second language teacher at Niagara College. He attended St. Mark’s

Church as a child, when his family summered in Niagara-on-the-Lake, and in 1977 he fulfilled a dream and moved to Johnson Street where he resided until very recently. On retirement in 1990, Fred Habermehl and he began an Ontario Genealogical Society project of transcribing the stones in St. Andrew’s and St. Vincent de Paul cemeteries. This led to the publication of “Stones, Saints and Sinners” for the Niagara Historical Society. In retirement, the two friends published 24 books and wrote numerous brochures and newspaper articles. He became a member of historic St. Mark’s and his deep interest in history led to his becoming a founding member of St. Mark’s Archives Committee. He was appointed sexton and cared for the oldest cemetery in Ontario. In 1996, Donald, with Percy Webb, began a program that organized the planting of nearly 100 mature trees in the ancient cemetery. As a historian too, he believed that everyone had a story which needs to be remembered and retold. A true storyteller, he said the lives of the people interred in cemeteries interested him and their stories needed to be remembered. His deep interest in local history sprang in part from his love of family history. He was proud that seven of his ancestors were United Empire Loyalists and he published four books of family genealogy. For many years he contributed to The Advance and The Local with stories about the town and film reviews. He was a life member of the Niagara Pumphouse Visual Arts Centre, associated with its founding and served many years on its board. He was also a life member of the Niagara Historical Society. A great joy in his life was the time he shared with his Scottish terriers, a breed close to his heart and nature. They listened and understood when others didn’t and brought joy when it seemed there was none. Donald was awarded the Order of Niagara and was a Paul Harris Fellow for his work in the preservation of cemeteries. At Donald’s request, cremation has taken place, and his ashes will be interred in the St. Mark’s Anglican Church Cemetery. In honour of Dia de los Muertos celebrations and the 131st anniversary of his father’s birth, a memorial service in celebration of his life will be held on Saturday, Oct. 31, 2026, at 11 a.m. at St. Mark’s Anglican Church (41 Byron St., Niagara-on-the-Lake). If you wish to honour Donald’s memory, he asks that you “move forward with your life being just that extra bit kinder to everyone you meet.” Those who wish to make a financial contribution in lieu of flowers are requested to consider the Shaw Festival, the Niagara Pumphouse Arts Centre or St. Mark’s Anglican Church (cemetery committee). Memories, photos and condolences may be shared at www.morganfuneral.com.





New! **SEATED TASTINGS**

Enjoy our refreshed seated tasting experience in our brand new tasting hall, with flexible ways to enjoy our wines. **ONLY \$15/PERSON**

Visit konzelmann.ca for details.



Hope Bradley



BRADLEY, Hope Isabelle (nee Elliott) — March 11, 1927 - Oct. 7, 2026
With deep love and gratitude for a long life beautifully lived, the family of

Hope Isabelle Bradley announces her peaceful passing at home in Niagara-on-the-Lake on Oct. 7, 2026, in her 100th year.

Born in Niagara-on-the-Lake on March 11, 1927, Hope was the cherished daughter of the late “Daisy” Isabel Smith and James Elliott.

Hope is now reunited with her beloved husband, Allen William Bradley; her children, Bruce Bradley and Lynn Bradley; her grandson, Bradley Klassen; her siblings, Betty Elliott, Barbara Lake, and John Elliott; and her in-laws, Gary Lake, Bruce Sherlock, and Joan Elliott. Hope is survived by her loving siblings Heather Sherlock and Donald Elliott (Virginia).

Hope was the proud and loving matriarch of a large extended family. She was the devoted mother of Robert (Shelagh), Jim (Kathy), Mary (Alvin) Klassen, Bruce (Mary), Lynn (Carmen), Allison (Henry) Hildebrandt, and Paul (Ann-Marie). She was adored by her grandchildren: Leah, Stephane, Zoe, Courtney, Erica, Cameron, Michael, Tyler, Abby, and Allenah. She will be deeply missed by her many great-grandchildren, nieces, nephews, cousins, neighbours, and friends.

As the keeper of the family lore, Hope possessed an enviable, prodigious memory that remained sharp until the very end. A lifelong resident of NOTL, her stories and memories were recorded and preserved by the NOTL Historical Museum for future generations to enjoy.

Hope’s life was defined by service, community, and a tireless work ethic. She was a lifelong member and former Elder at St. Andrew’s Presbyterian Church. In 1949, she became a founding member of the NOTL chapter of the Canadian Cancer Society. Deeply involved with the Shaw Festival from its inception, she lent her time and support to the budding theatre in its earliest days, eventually serving as the Festival’s receptionist from 1970 to 1986.

Her diverse career over the decades reflected her energetic spirit. During World War II and until 1955 (when it was destroyed by Hurricane Hazel), she worked at the Elliott family’s dance hall in Simcoe Park. She also worked as a Bell Telephone operator in NOTL, a factory worker for Sheaffer Pens in Toronto, a school bus driver, a fruit picker, a recreational director at Chateau Gardens, and in various retail roles across NOTL and St. Catharines.

Hope left an indelible mark on her hometown and on the hearts of everyone who knew her. Her legacy of warmth, community dedication, and family devotion will live on forever.

The family extends their heartfelt gratitude to Dr. Karen Berti and the innumerable PSWs, in particular Ivy James, who looked after Hope with such profound care and kindness.

A church service will be held at St. Andrew’s Presbyterian Church (323 Simcoe St., Niagara-on-the-Lake) on Friday, Oct. 23, 2026, at 1 p.m. A celebration of life will follow at Caroline Cellars (1010 Line 2 Rd., Niagara-on-the-Lake) at 2 p.m.

In lieu of flowers, the family asks that donations be made to the Niagara Historical Society and Museum.

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

David Cashin



CASHIN, David —
A man of Irish wit, generosity of spirit, strong principles, courage and grace passed away quietly, after a long illness, at the R. H. Lawson Eventide Home on Saturday, Sept. 26, 2026 at the age of 93. Beloved husband of Rev. Janet Cashin (nee Wagner) and the late Brigid ‘Bridie’ (nee Fitzpatrick, 1975). Cherished father of Mark (Sudan), the late Dane (1967) and loving grandfather

of Kyle and Shane. He will be fondly remembered by his brother Tony, as well as many nieces, nephews, extended family and friends. David was born in Dublin, Ireland into a large and boisterous Irish family and emigrated to Canada in 1957. He married Brigid ‘Bridie’ Fitzpatrick in Toronto in 1958, and together they welcomed sons Dane in 1960 and Mark in 1965. He worked for many years with CIBC, until his retirement in 1990. David coached junior hockey teams (even though he could not skate), as well as boys and girls soccer teams at all levels from the youngest to corporate levels. He refereed soccer at all levels — sometimes at danger to his life! Tragedy struck David’s life twice when his son Dane died of cancer in 1967, as did his wife Bridie in 1975. David and Mark, supported by a large group of fellow Irish, carried on with courage and Irish stoicism. In 1978, David married Janet Wagner. David and Janet “retired” to Niagara-on-the-Lake in 1993, where David became heavily involved in politics at the municipal, provincial and federal levels. He ran for election to town council twice (he lost) and lord mayor once (he lost) — but loved every minute of it! David played golf periodically with the WOOFs of the Niagara-on-the-Lake Golf Club. His last years were difficult for David, as he battled the ravages of dementia. The family wishes to thank all those who supported David in the last years, most notably PSW Sue who laughed with David at home and all the staff at Salvation Army Eventide Home in Niagara Falls who did their best to make his last years comfortable, family friend Tim who visited regularly, and others too numerous to mention who kept David in their hearts. “Dearest David, may God hold you in the palm of His hand.” Cremation has taken place. Friends are invited to join the family at St. Saviour’s Church (12 Princess St., Queenston), visiting Saturday, Oct. 24, 2026 from 11 a.m. to 12 p.m. A Funeral Service in celebration of his life will be held at 12 p.m. A time of fellowship and refreshments will follow. In memory of David, memorial contributions may be made to the Alzheimer Society Niagara or R.H. Lawson Eventide Home, and would be appreciated. Memories, photos and condolences may be shared at www.morseandson.com.

Susan McCulloch



MCCULLOCH, Susan —
April 20, 1943 - Oct. 14, 2026
Susan G. McCulloch (nee Reynolds) passed away peacefully on Oct. 14, with her family surrounding her. She leaves behind her husband and best friend Doug McCulloch, son Greg (Eve) and daughter Heather (Rob). Susan will be greatly missed by her five grandchildren Anna, Zak, Gabriel, Daniel and Evan.

She will be missed by her sister, Eleanor Reynolds LeFave and her nephews John (Annie) and Simon (Bea), as well as great-niece Camila. Susan’s parents John and Edith were both from Elora, Ontario.

Susan taught primary school until her children arrived. As they grew, her lifetime love of reading and teaching led her to working with school libraries and eventually, establishing the beloved Toronto bookstore Mabel’s Fables with her sister Eleanor.

She loved reading, gardening, knitting, sewing, cooking, baking and hosting get-togethers for family and friends.

When she and Doug retired to Muskoka, they loved to explore and were always on a quest to find the perfect breakfast diner. Later, Sue and Doug moved to Niagara-on-the-Lake, where Doug could play golf and she could enjoy the Shaw Festival, garden centres and fresh produce. Family would love to come for “Jam Sessions” with her when the peaches were at their prime.

She will be missed by cousins and many friends and all the acquaintances in her lifetime who enjoyed a good chat.

Sue and Doug enjoyed many wonderful trips together. In particular, they loved their drives to Sarasota with their beloved Brittany Spaniel dogs in the backseat. Sue enjoyed volunteering in the community with her beloved Ceilidh, visiting retirement homes and working with children. With deepest thanks to the caregivers from ParaMed, respite caregiver Evelyn and our wonderful nurse Maria who patiently cared for her. Thank you to the Marotta Family Hospital for the recent care we received. Celebration of life to follow at a later date.

In lieu of flowers please consider a donation to the Heart & Stroke Foundation of Canada.

Anneliese Pankratz



PANKRATZ, Anneliese —
Passed away peacefully, with family by her side, in her home at Pleasant Manor, on Oct. 11, 2026, at the age of 93.
Anneliese was born on April 22, 1933 in Stolz Plateau, Brazil. With 2 older brothers, she was the

youngest child & only daughter of David & Marie Enns. She was a happy & energetic child, but sadly, was orphaned at age 11 & immigrated to Canada, alone, at age 18 to find work & make a new life for herself. She married Henry Pankratz on September 10th, 1955 & settled in St. Catharines & then moved with their 4 children, to Creek Road in Niagara-on-the-Lake in 1971.

Anneliese’s life revolved around her family, her church & her community. Her servant heart was always at work. The early years were filled with either cooking & baking & hosting family & friends or helping with the apple orchard on the hobby farm. She & Henry enjoyed family camping & road trips out west & to Florida.

At church she was active in the Women in Service & Girls Club & was always willing to do whatever needed to be done. As a school bus driver of over 40 years, she helped generations of students get around Niagara Peninsula safely.

Anneliese made a career of volunteering with MCC at the Christian Benefit Shop in St. Catharines. She was always thrilled to find “perfectly good” items at her store & spent many, many hours serving others in that capacity. She even set up her own “store” in the workshop on Creek Road, so that her friends, the migrant workers could come & get what they needed.

Always a hard worker, leisure for Anneliese & Henry came after the family was grown, with trips to Hawaii, the Caribbean & Brazil & then solo trips with friends after being widowed in 2005. Following those came more road trips out west & camping with grandkids, which continued well into her mid-seventies.

Anneliese loved gardens & gardening. Both at home & later at Pleasant Manor, she found great satisfaction in working in, talking about & showing you around her “happy place”. She was never short on stories or instructions when it came to flowers & vegetables.

But hers was not an easy life. She suffered much & had many losses. Amazingly her bright light never dimmed. Her spirit of positivity ran deep & she relied fully on her God to get her through all things. Thankfully she remained healthy for most of her 93 years & was only in decline for the last 6 months, which she faced with the same determination as always.

Anneliese is predeceased by her husband Henry in 2005, her son Robert “Bob” in 1991 and her youngest grandson Darin in 2016. She is lovingly remembered by Elsie & Chuck, Teri & Dave & Michael. She will always be cherished by grandchildren Jesse, Pamela & Jason, David & Jamelie & Kiera, Jay, Seana & Antoine, Colin & Jackie, Leah & Connor, Ruby, Sophie & Oscar. She was a very special Omi to Bryson, Deaglan, Charlise & Lucas, Lily & Noah, Bennett, Adalyn & Weston.

Very special thanks to the supportive housing team at Pleasant Manor, especially PSW Andrea & chaplain Stephen Mason, who cared so lovingly for mom until the very end of her earthly life. We are forever grateful.

A celebration of Anneliese’s life will take place on Monday, Oct. 19 at 11 a.m. at Niagara Untied Mennonite Church. A reception will follow the service and then interment will take place at Niagara Lakeshore Cemetery.

In lieu of flowers, donations to MCC are appreciated by the family & what Anneliese would have wanted.

The funeral service will be live streamed. Please visit the online obituary for the link to the livestream. The broadcast will remain available for seven days following the service

Online condolences at www.tallmanfuneralhomes.ca.

CALL ANGELIKA = **SOLD!**™

CALL OR TEXT (289) 214-4394

★ FREE HOME EVALUATION ★



496 MISSISSAUGA ST, NIAGARA-ON-THE-LAKE
NIAGARA-ON-THE-LAKE TEAM
Bringing GTA Buyers to Niagara-On-The-Lake
#1 BROKERAGE IN THE GTA FOR 10 YEARS**

Angelika & ASSOCIATES
LUXURY REAL ESTATE



*Based on reviews from Rate-My-Agent.com, a triple verified review platform **TRREB Jan. 1, 2013 to Dec. 31, 2022, combined units sold.
FREE GIFT OF 10 HOURS OF PACKING AND DECLUTTERING SERVICES - excludes tenanted areas *Based on closed transactions in the Burlington / Niagara Right At Home Realty Office, 2022, 2023, 2024

We chose Greg
because we hated
him the least.

- Review - John & Tracy, NOTL

GREG SYKES
SALESPERSON



RE/MAX NIAGARA
REALTY LTD., BROKERAGE
Independently owned & operated



FREE HOME EVALUATION

CALL OR TEXT **GREG**
DIRECT **905.329.3484**