The Lake Report brings a new, trusted local newspaper back to Niagara-on-the-Lake.

In this first edition, launched May of 2018, you will find a variety of topics including local politics; entertainment; opinion and editorials; featured stories and columns; history, community events, and more. The Lake Report will publish articles specific to Niagara-on-the-Lake. As a local independent newspaper, we intend to support the community by being a voice for the people, as well as highlighting the issues that affect us all. On top of great local news, each edition will contain a calendar spread of local events, open for submissions from all residents. The Lake Report intends to quench the thirst for a print newspaper in NOTL. Part of that includes featuring stories about locals, both new and old. We encourage all residents of the town of Niagara-on-the-Lake to send their photos and community stories to us. We will do our best to include everybody in the community.

All are welcome to submit events, classified listings and obituaries to be included in upcoming editions free of charge, at the editor’s discretion. Each edition will be free and will be found at many local businesses and delivered to the door of many residences. The Lake Report and Niagara Now are committed to providing you with accurate non-partisan journalism with integrity. We pledge to report with truth and cover both sides of issues that are important to the community. When something is affecting NOTL, you will find it here. In the name of responsible reporting, the publication pledges to correct errors and to hold itself responsible for its reporting. All are welcome to submit letters to the paper. Please feel free to message us with any questions you may have. The Lake Report and Niagara Now retain the rights to edit all submissions and will publish based on the editor’s discretion. Please enjoy our content both in print and online. Visit lakereport.ca for our e-editions and Niagara Now to keep up with great regional news content.
Region debates deadly intersection

Region needs more traffic information, suggests interim four-way stop in the meantime

Richard Harley

The Region is considering options to improve safety at the intersection of Line 3 and Four Mile Creek roads in Niagara-on-the-Lake. A report suggests an all-way stop be implemented for a period of one year while information is gathered to find the best possible long-term solution.

The matter was pushed forward after April saw what some claimed to be the 29th collision at the intersection in five years.

The collision left two people in critical condition and proceeding, though it’s not entirely clear why. “It doesn’t make sense to me… I don’t know if they’re not paying attention, or if Google is telling them to go straight through and they’re not thinking. I don’t know.”

For some reason Line 3 seems to just be a bad road.” He said a four-way stop would help slow the flow of traffic so people aren’t speed-ing through.

“It is going to make it a little more inconvenient? Yes. But I would rather save lives than have somebody get to their destination a minute earlier.”

Richard Harley

Plane crash lands at District Airport

A two-engine Cessna plane crash landed short of the runway after experiencing engine failure, Richard Harley

Flynn: soft wet ground ‘saving grace’ for three passengers

Richard Harley

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Primary Jet Boats dock moving to Queenston

Richard Harley

After 25 years of using the docks in Niagara-on-the-Lake, Whitpool Jet Boat Tours is moving its primary operations to Queenston.

The company said it made “significant improvements” to its three docking locations during the winter, including a completely renovated New Orleans-style paddle wheeler boat — the Niagara Belle — which will be permanently parked at the Queenston dock and serve as a passenger centre.

The world-famous jet boats hit the rapids of the Niagara River for the 26th season on April 28, with the first departures beginning in Queenston. Departures from Niagara-on-the-Lake are set to begin June 23 and tours on the U.S. side of the river will begin May 11.

As well, later this season, Whitpool expects to introduce a new hybrid jet boat that includes indoor seating for passengers who want to stay dry and outdoor seats for those who want to “soak up the experience.”

“We’ve put a lot of thought and effort into making the passenger experience we offer even better,” says Whitpool Jet Boat Tours president J ohn Kinney.

“We can’t wait to get back out on the water for another great season. There’s nowhere else in the world you can experience this kind of adventure on such an amazing river.”

Whitpool opened its doors to the public in 1992 with a single boat and now has a fleet of eight 50-passenger jet boats.
Humboldt charity golf ball hunt raises $6,900

Hundreds of people came out to take part in a golf ball hunt fundraiser and sign their name on a flag in support of the Humboldt Broncos April 14.

A charity golf ball hunt in support of the Humboldt Broncos raised more than $6,900 in April.

The hunt was organized by NOTL resident Joe Pillitteri, who got the idea after hundreds of golf balls started surfacing on the property of the former site of Unison Golf System driving range on Lakeshore Rd.

Pillitteri, who recently purchased the property, said the former owner told him most of the golf balls had been cleaned up, though as winter went on, balls began emerging from the ground.

“As soon as the frost lifted, they started physically popping up to the point where I thought there might be a couple hundred here … there’s a couple of thousand here now,” he said, before the hunt.

Some golf balls were embedded as far as a foot into the ground. The former owner told him most of the golf balls had been cleaned up, though as winter went on, balls began emerging from the ground.

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Pillitteri then took to social media with the Broncos in mind.

“I was like, hold on a second … Maybe there’s something we could do that’s helpful to the people that need (golf balls).” His idea drew hundreds of people, raising the $4,775 in just an hour — plus some donations that came in beforehand.

In total the event raised $6,900.

Pillitteri’s original goal was a few hundred dollars, though he quickly realized it would be more after a social media post for the event was shared more than 100 times.

“We’re going to send every bit of (the money) from the town of Niagara-on-the-Lake, not just from the sporting community, but from our town to theirs,” he said.

“It’s one thing to be upset about something, but, you know, these families deserve everything they can get,” he said.

Pillitteri has coached hockey in some capacity since his son started playing more than seven years ago.

“The feeling of a team in hockey and what that means to kids, boys and girls all over Canada is one thing, but when I looked at picture of those boys, to me it was a lot more than just hockey.”

“They were loving the comradery, the brotherhood.”

“So far the Broncos GoFundMe page has raised more than $15 million.

A new full-sized LCBO location is set to open in Virgil in fall 2018. (Supplied)

Richard Harley Staff

Construction is underway for a retail space that will contain a new LCBO and Tim Hortons at 1561 Niagara Stone Rd. in Virgil.

The development, being completed by Colliers International, was officially announced in February and when completed will be the first full-size LCBO location in Niagara-on-the-Lake.

In addition to the LCBO and Tim Hortons, the development also includes a 3,560-square-foot building for lease, with the option to be sectioned into three 1,200-square-foot units; one 2,400-square-foot unit and one 1,200-square-foot unit; or one large 3,000-square-foot unit.

The next closest full-sized LCBO location is currently more than 20 minutes away in either Niagara Falls or St. Catharines.

A plaque for the Daffodil Garden of Hope.

Sheila Hirsch-Kalm stands in front of the Daffodil Garden of Hope at St. Davids Fire Station 2.

Niagara-on-the-Lake Garden of Hope inaugurates its eighth Daffodil Garden of Hope in April at St. Davids Fire Hall Station 2.

The Daffodil Garden of Hope initiative was started in 2004 by eight-year-old local resident Sheila Hirsch-Kalm to pay tribute to those affected by cancer.

Hirsch-Kalm, who was diagnosed with a rare form of cancer (myelofibrosis) in 2003, said the bright yellow daffodils bulbs are planted in each garden, Hirsch-Kalm said.

“Now you need to take care of them … or I’ll come find you,” she joked.

The project is supported by Communities in Bloom, the Niagara-on-the-Lake Horticultural Society, St. Davids firefighters, the Canadian Cancer Society and the local NOTL community.

More photos on page 11.

Gardens of Hope bloom for cancer awareness

Richard Harley Staff

Harrison Hopkins helps cut the ribbon to officially open the Daffodil Garden of Hope at the St. Davids Fire Station.

Niagara-on-the-Lake opened its eighth Daffodil Garden of Hope in April at St. Davids Fire Hall Station 2.

The Daffodil Garden of Hope initiative was started in 2004 by eight-year-old local resident Sheila Hirsch-Kalm to pay tribute to those affected by cancer.

Hirsch-Kalm, who was diagnosed with a rare form of cancer (myelofibrosis) in 2003, said the bright yellow gardens are meant to bring local awareness, remembrance of those we’ve lost, and remind people they can fight cancer every day in their own way.

Since 2004, with the help of volunteers, Hirsch-Kalm and Gardens of Hope have opened gardens at the Community Centre, Simcoe Park, the Old Hospital, Lowrey Park, Centennial Sports Park, the Old Town Fire Hall, Queenston Fire Hall and now St. Davids Fire Hall.

Around 4,000 to 6,000 daffodil bulbs are planted in each garden, Hirsch-Kalm said.

So far, through the collection of donations from local residents, Gardens of Hope has raised more than $100,000 for the Canadian Cancer Society.

Coincidentally, considering each bulb produces two or three flowers, there are now around 100,000 daffodils blooming around NOTL.

Hirsch-Kalm, who organizes everything from the donations to the purchasing, passed responsibility on to the Station 2 firefighters after unveiling a new plaque for the garden.

“You need to take care of them … or I’ll come find you,” she joked.

The project is supported by Communities in Bloom, the Niagara-on-the-Lake Horticultural Society, St. Davids firefighters, the Canadian Cancer Society and the local NOTL community.

More photos on page 11.

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NOTL U-turns on plan to reduce voting stations

Residents of Niagara-on-the-Lake are keeping their polling stations.

After municipal boundaries changed in 2014, the town of NOTL reduced the number of public locations from eight to five.

This April, the town suggested it was going to further reduce the number of voting stations to three, though based on feedback from residents town staff are now planning to stick with five.

The decision will not go before council said NOTL chief administrative officer Holly Dowd.

“The clerk doesn’t have to go to council and ask for how many polling stations they want ... we heard the public and council very clear that they want us to go back to five,” she said.

NOTL Town Clerk Peter Todd said he is working on finding the locations, and will submit an information report to council before the end of May.

“The deadline for selecting the locations would be when we’re putting it on (resident) voter cards, but I plan on giving council an update much sooner than that,” said Todd. He said May is not a set deadline, but more a practical date to ensure voter cards get out in a timely manner.

Before deciding to stick with five stations, Dowd said the town planned to combine Queenston, St. Davids and Glendale into a “mega poll” that would be stationed at Niagara College’s Niagara-on-the-Lake campus, while keeping its Old Town and Virgil locations.

She said the initial idea was that having stations in one place would make things easier for voters, and that rural residents wouldn’t be too strained by the distance because they’re used to driving to get to places.

“It’s a beautiful venue at Niagara College ... You could have had a mega poll and the students would have been on reading week,” she said.

Queenston Councilor Penny Coles, who disagrees with the idea of poll reductions in the first place, feels both Queenston and St. Davids were being “disconnected” from voting as a result and that the town shouldn’t have changed something that was working.

“If something has worked for so long, why change it?”

And why change it if in a way that would adversely affect your voter turnout? Voter turnout is the most important thing,” he said.

Copeland said her council colleagues are less accessible as far as I’m concerned.

Dowd said the town has used the Queenston Firehall as a polling station in past years, though town staff is looking into alternatives due to accessibility concerns.

“We have to have facilities that do not have any barriers for the voters,” she said.

Copeland said the parking lot, entrance and ground floor to the Queenston Firehall are accessible but admitted there were no devoted accessible washrooms.

Dowd said the parking lot was not up to accessibility standards.

“We have a senior population, and the fire hall is just not conducive for what we’re trying to use,” Dowd said.

She said town staff is currently looking at another location for the Queenston station and that the Laura Secord Homestead has been considered, though Todd has made his final decision.

Copeland said she thinks an alternative suggestions should have been brought forward in the first place, pointing out the Laura Secord Homestead has been used as a voting station for provincial and federal elections in the past.

Both Dowd and Todd said the goal is to make the voting experience both convenient and accessible for all communities in Niagara-on-the-Lake.

“We’re just as interested in finding locations that are convenient to the electors, but we also need to keep in mind those who have mobility issues,” said Todd.

Dowd said the effort to increase the accessibility of polling stations is a part of the town’s Vote Anywhere strategy, which has included upgrading voting technology to make voting easier.

“We don’t want to have any barriers for our voters,” added Dowd.

The municipal elections will be held Monday Oct. 22.
Pleasant Manor expansion gets green light

New 160-bed long-term care facility to be built in NOTL

Joe Pillitteri. (Supplied)

Interest donations to keep on giving

“Johnny is already imitating me,” Pillitteri said. “He’s always going for the laugh. There are worse things in the world than wanting to make people laugh. I’m proud of all my kids, but it looks like he’s leaning in that direction.”

Pillitteri’s comedy act also includes jokes about his Scottish mother and Italian father, including the accents he’s so good at, but he never forgets to mention the lessons they taught him and his sisters when they were growing up.

“My parents set a great example of hard work and selflessness,” he said.

Recognising them through the community fund, he said, “It’s a great opportunity to honour the people who brought us here.”

Pillitteri’s act for the show was a little edgier than usual, he said. “He chose to take the opportunity to reflect what he sees going on in NOTL these days, with some controversial issues being debated. It always feels good to get ‘legitimate laughs’ from people, he said, but this time he targeted the complaints about what he feels is a great community.”

“We have so much to be thankful for, with all we have in this town.”

Pillitteri thanked his family members and supporters who helped put on the show, and especially Ward Simpson in the audience for all he has done for others over the years. He also thanked those in attendance.

He said he loves performing and getting laughs in a room full of locals, “but on the nights where the room is filled with love and a desire to do better as a community — it feels like magic on stage.”

At the end of the evening, Pillitteri said: “If 50 per cent of your population is 50 years or older, with every passing year that really impacts the percentage of people 65 and older.”

He said in Ontario, between 25,000 and 30,000 people wait for long-term care, and noted that figure is expected to climb to around 48,000 in the next five years.

The opportunity for research and development at Radiant Care is somewhat unique because the organization offers multiple forms of assisted living, Siemens said.

“We’re different from other long-term care homes in the sense that we don’t have just a standalone long-term care home. It’s a continuum of care campus, so we have independent living, semi-independent living and long-term care.”

Radiant Care currently serves more than 600 residents and employs 361 people between its two locations in Niagara-on-the-Lake (Pleasant Manor) and St. Catharines (Taber Manor). The new development will create another 135 jobs, said Siemens.

The home will be bright and warm with spacious accommodation, comfort and amenities, all built to meet the latest LEED Silver standards that respect the environment and reduce the home’s carbon footprint.

Gertrude Klassens, a resident at Pleasant Manor, said she’s looking forward to the extra space in her room to welcome her family.

Radiant Care Pleasant Manor is located at 15 Eelden St. in Virgil.
Sunday 29

NOTL Library: Writers’ Lab - 2 p.m. to 4 p.m.

Public Meeting: 493-507 Line 2 Rd. (proposed new medical site) - 6:30 p.m. - Town Hall

Public Meeting: South Side Plantation Drive - 6:30 p.m. - Town Hall

Wordplay Creative Writing Classes for Kids - 6 p.m. to 7:30 p.m. - Yellow Door Theatre

Monday 30

NOTL Library: Accessing Medical Cannabis Tweed Farms - 6:30 to 7:30 p.m.

Tuesday 1

NOTL Library: Cyber Security Part 1 - Computer Health & Good Habits - 11 a.m. to noon

NOTL Library: Science Series - Evolution on the Fast Track: Epigenetics and Culture - 2 p.m. to 3 p.m.

Town Meeting: Municipal Heritage 7 p.m. - Town Hall

Wednesday 2

NOTL Library: Simply Steam Story Time - 11 a.m. to 11:45 a.m.

NOTL Library: Science Series - "Spring" Craft - 4 p.m.

NOTL Library: InfoHealth - The Opiate Crisis in Niagara - 1 p.m. to 2 p.m.

Town Meeting: Urban Design - 7 p.m. - Town Hall
## May 2018

### Wednesday

- **2**
  - Learn Jazz with Mike to 7:30 to 9 p.m.
  
- **9**
  - To a Town Hall Meeting - 7 p.m. - Town Hall
  - My Steam Story Time
  
- **16**
  - My Steam Story Time - 11 a.m. - Town Hall
  
- **23**
  - My Steam Story Time - 11 a.m.
  
- **30**
  - My Steam Story Time - 11 a.m.

### Thursday

- **3**
  - Foodies Tour - 1.30 p.m. - NOTL Library: Wine Club - 4 p.m. to 5 p.m.
  
- **10**
  - NOTL Library: Family Story Time - 11 to 11:30 a.m.
  
- **17**
  - NOTL Library: Family Story Time - 11 a.m.
  
- **24**
  - NOTL Library: Family Story Time - 11 a.m.

### Friday

- **4**
  - Sip & Sizzle - 11 a.m. to 5 p.m.
  
- **11**
  - Art Show and Sale - 11 a.m. to 5 p.m.
  
- **18**
  - Art Show and Sale - 11 a.m. to 5 p.m.
  
- **25**
  - NOTL Library: Knit a Bit - 2 p.m. to 4 p.m.

### Saturday

- **5**
  - St. Davids & District Lionesses Spring Bazaar - 9 a.m. to 2 p.m.
  
- **12**
  - Horticulture Society Plant Sale - 9 a.m. to 11 a.m.
  
- **19**
  - Virginia Stampede

### Sunday

- **6**
  - St. Mark's Cemetery Tours of St. Mark's Cemetery - 5 p.m. to 7 p.m.
  
- **9**
  - Walking Tours of Old Town: Camp Kosciuszko Lecture Series - 7:30 p.m. to 10:30 p.m.
  
- **16**
  - NOTL Library: Family Story Time - 11 a.m.
  
- **23**
  - NOTL Library: Family Story Time - 11 a.m.

### Monday

- **7**
  - Artists' Cafe - Local Artists' Drop-in - 7 p.m. to 9 p.m.
  
- **14**
  - Vermont's Heritage House at 329 Main Street - 1 p.m.
  
- **21**
  - Simply Steam Story Time

### Tuesday

- **8**
  - NOTL Library: Practical Genealogy, Register Class - 1 p.m. to 3 p.m.
  
- **15**
  - NOTL Library: Science Series - The Story of Human Origins - 2 p.m. to 3 p.m.
  
- **22**
  - NOTL Library: Science Series - The Basics - 11 a.m. to noon

### Local Events

- **9**
  -聞 of a Local Event? Tell us. Email editor@niagaranow.com

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**Notable Events:**

- **20**
  - Wine Tasting Event - 5 p.m. to 9 p.m.
  
- **27**
  - Drive - 6:30 p.m. - Town Hall

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**Contact Information:**

- **PETER ROTSARDET, DD DENTURIST**
  - 289-868-9374 - 1547 Niagara Stone Rd

- **GROOMING BOUTIQUE**
  - 1642 Four Mile Creek Rd. Virgil
  - Liz Chorney (905) 468-0075
  - (289)-868-9603

- **niagaranow.com**

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**EMAIL**

**EDITOR@NIAGARANOW.COM**
NNFHT doctors threaten to leave NOTL

Richard Harley

Niagara North Family Health Team has said if Niagara-on-the-Lake town council doesn’t support the land use amendments for a proposed new medical centre, doctors may be “forced to seek other options outside the community.”

The notice came in an April letter to NFFHT patients, which gives them to contact council members showing support for the new centre.

The desired location is at 49-507 Line 2 Rd. in Virgil, next to Crossroads Public School and which is "an area that receives a lot of green light," would see the two current NFFHT locations at the NOTL Hospital and Niagara Stone Rd. consolidated into the new centre.

It would be called the Crossroads Health Centre. The letter said “I want to ensure that your medical care remains in NOTL, our councillors need to hear from you.”

Mayor Paul Drouin was viewing the letter as a threat to resi dents in NOTL and NFFHT patients.

Town Councillor Martin Mazza said he thinks it is a clear at tempt at scaring residents into supporting the development.

“Doctors need to ensure that the most desirable option for the provision of high quality healthcare is the proposed centre’s proximity to a public school, potential traffic problems and the accessibility of the location,” Mazza also said he thinks the town needs to keep residents aware of potential residents with more young families to Niagara.

Dr. Karen Berti, owner of the NOTL Medical Centre at 3882 Niagara Stone Rd., said the doctors currently practice in his building are welcome to stay for “as long as they want.”

“This is a land use application. Not a vote to support the doctors in NOTL,” Annunziata said.

Residents of NOTL aren’t happy about the proposal either.

“niagara north family health team employees, and other ser vices currently located at two sites. It has capacity for additional and expanded services (lab, imaging, phar macy, specialist care) and additional practitioners. It is centrally located, accessible by public transit, closer to emergency medical services and the largest retirement/long-term care centre in the Town, and will offer free on-site parking.

The new centre is certain to have a very positive impact on healthcare in our Town, and we will continue to work diligently to make it available to our community. Sincerely, Drs. Adams, Ahmed, Bast, Berti, D'Anierry, Freund, O'Leary, Ricciardi, Smith and Viviers and Mary Keith, Executive Director, Family Health Team.”

Niagara North Family Health wants to open a new medical facility on Niagara Stone Road beside Crossroads Public School, (Art’s rendering)

The site developer is in the process of seeking a zoning change from the Town, which is required in order to proceed. Council will vote on the zoning amendment request following a public meeting on May 7th. We want to be clear with patients that if the project cannot proceed, we may be forced to seek other options outside of the community. If you want to ensure that your medical practitioners remain in Niagara-on-the-Lake, our councillors need to hear from you. Please consider sharing your perspective as a patient by emailing or phoning councillors via the contact information found on the Town of Niagara-on-the-Lake website at info@notl.org or council@notl.org.

Dan Patterson, president of Niagara College, and Mark Zekulin, president of Canopy Growth, said there is a recognition of high quality healthcare. -- a newly built, consolidated centre -- becomes a reality in Niagara-on-the-Lake.

Cannabis growing at Tweed Farms in Niagara-on-the-Lake, system, and particularly when we get to the processing part, it starts to look like real agricultural processing -- but again, with a lot more pharmaceutical standards applied upon it.”

Jeron Houghton

Niagara College and Canopy Growth recently announced an educational partnership at Tweed Farms in Niagara-on-the-Lake.

The partnership will create placement opportunities and applied research projects for Niagara College’s new commercial cannabis production program, which launches September 1.

The program is the first post-secondary cannabis production program in Canada.

Niagara College president Dan Patterson said the partnership will help the college “fine-tune” the program, so the college can support the growing workforce demand in the cannabis industry.

He said the college will receive $70,000 over three years, which can fund 20 cannabis producers to identify which was the best fit for the college.

“It’s a new program, our commercial cannabis production program, and we want to get it right,” he told The Lake Report, during a tour of Tweed Farms in Niagara-on-the-Lake April 12.

He said as a result of the partnership, students will be able to do internships and co-ops at Cannabis Growth Facility, not just Tweed Farms, but across Canada. “It can excite them not just for the college, but for the workforce of the future in this area and for our community,” said Patterson.

Tweed is also currently working on a 1-million-square-foot expansion and expects to increase in staff from 80 to more than 180 by completion in July.

The company is currently one of the largest commercial cannabis producers in North America, selling a gram of cannabis $6.99 and $10.59.

NOTL Mayor Paul Drouin said the partnership will mean "a new medical centre" for the town, bringing in more high-profile employees coming in from the college and staying in the area.

“It’s great for Niagara-on-the-Lake because we are trying to attract young families and young people,” said Drouin.

Niagara-on-the-Lake needs some rejuvenation and this is part of it,”

Patterson said the college built the new program on the strength of its “signature” greenhouse technician program.

Part of the reason Tweed was chosen is because of its proximity to a public school-like environment,” said Patterson.

At the heart of the agreement is a recognition that, in order for this sector to be successful, it has to make sure that it is a skilled workforce that understands the complexities of the health regulatory environment,” Patterson said.

Mark Zekulin, president of Canopy Growth, said there are a lot of “extra rules” imposed on cannabis because it can be smoked, ingested and vaporized as a medicine.

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“Very uncomfortable.”

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The new centre is certain to have a very positive impact on healthcare in our Town, and we will continue to work diligently to make it available to our community. Sincerely, Drs. Adams, Ahmed, Bast, Berti, D’Anierry, Freund, O’Leary, Ricciardi, Smith and Viviers and Mary Keith, Executive Director, Family Health Team.”

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activity still bustling at court house

The Old Court House in Niagara-on-the-Lake. (Jer Houghton)

Although the Shaw Festival will no longer be hosting official plays at the Old Court House, the building is still bustling with art and activity. Shaw will continue using the building as a rehearsal space, as well as a spot to host educational programming.

“This building itself has some issues and we would not have been able to live up to those accessibility requirements,” said Jennings. It is also a difficult location to set up and tear down sets, he said, adding that production crews need to crane the set pieces into the building.

He said the shows that would normally run at the Court House will move to the Studio Theatre.

“We started a few years ago, looking at Niagara-on-the-Lake, they will have a variety of diverse options, with this of course, being one of them.”

Chinese restaurant to replace rooster

The former Little Red Rooster. (Jer Houghton)

Little Red Rooster in Niagara-on-the-Lake is being converted into a Chinese restaurant, expected to open in June.

“It will be the third Asian-style restaurant rolled out by Vintage Hotels in the last three years, including Niagara’s Finest Thai and Manaski Sushi.

“Though it is still unnamed, the restaurant will specialize in dim sum and Szechuan dishes,” said Bob Jackson, chief executive officer of Vintage Hotels.

“We started a few years ago, looking at Niagara-on-the-Lake and looking at the dining options, and realizing to ourselves there’s not a lot of diversity in town,” he said.

“So we took it upon ourselves to say, let’s start doing things a little bit different.”

Silversmith expansion to double brewing capacity

Construction at Silversmith Brewing Company will double seating. (Richard Harley)

Silversmith Brewing Company will double its brewing capacity.

Silversmith president and CEO Chris Ponthoon said he began exploring expansion in 2016.

Brewery expansion in Niagara-on-the-Lake.

“People want to participate in the church environment, so we’re going to provide more room for that,” said Ponthoon.

“We really want to be able to reduce (wait times) and get people in so they can have their experience here without having to go through the trouble.”

He said the private event area will also allow the brewery to host events such as birthday parties, wedding receptions and corporate dinners.

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He said the private event area will also allow the expansion to be completed by fall 2018.
**St. Andrew’s Presbyterian Church**

Denise Ascenzo Featured.

One of the most striking buildings in Niagara-on-the-Lake is St. Andrew’s Presbyterian Church on Simcoe Street between Gage and Centre Streets.

It was the first church built NOTL, constructed in 1794 under the watchful eye of Rev. John Dun, a missionary from Albany, New York.

Typical of Presbyterian congregations setting into a new community, the church was built first, then the school and then the hospital.

The original church building was burned to the ground by the occupying American forces in August of 1813, three months before the entire town was razed.

The Americans had been very suspicious of the church steeple being used to send signals to the British Army, which had been forced to leave the town during the American invasion in May of 1813.

For the next 18 years, the Presbyterian congregation, which put great emphasis on equal education for all people, held services in a school house on the north corner of the property.

The school house, built in 1802, was a simple two-story wooden building. The upstairs room was used as a school for freed or runaway slave children for several decades, while the lower rooms were used as the main school rooms for the children of the congregation.

In later years the building became a meeting place known as the Kirk House and was for a time occupied by the church’s sexton (caretaker).

The school house was taken down in 1950 and only the stone foundation can be seen today.

An excerpt that can be found in the Special Collections room of the St. Catharines Centennial Library documents one woman’s account of her school days in the upstairs classroom.

“I went to a black man up stairs in the school house of the Scotch church. The room was full, full of children. The benches were slabs of the flat side up and the back of the trees down, with round sticks put in slanting for legs. The children all stood aod and the one that made the most noise was the head scholar in those days.”

The new church we see today was constructed in 1831, on the same site as the first church. It is a wonder- ful example of Greek revival architecture with the design based on the Temple of The- seus in Athens, Greece.

Facing onto Simcoe Street there are six Doric columns and a pediment (triangular gable over a portico) at the front of the church. Above the central door is the tympa- num (semicircular decorative wall surface) that has a gilt sun-burst design.

The steeple is octagonal and points to the skies over the church. Above the front of the church.

In the 1800s, there was a seven-foot weathervane of archangel Gabriel attached to the very top of the steeple — technically seven-foot-five tall and two feet wide.

On April 18, 1835 at 6:45 a.m., a ferocious hurricane struck the town and Gabriel flew away.

It was later found in a farmer’s field and lay hidden away in a barn for more than 40 years before it was do- nated to the NOTL Museum. You can see the weathervane today in the museum as it is part of the permanent display in the gallery.

Saint Andrew’s interior has been meticulously preserved. The records show the cost of the church itself can seat up to 600 people using the main floor and the colonial style gallery on three sides of the church.

In the early years of the church history pews were purchased by the families. The records show the high pulpit (one of the few in Canada) and three types of pews, box, slip and table.

On Communion Sundays the pew chairs have long pins placed before them and are covered with a fine linen cloth. The silver communion service in use today is the original one used from 1831.

The church itself can seat up to 600 people using the main floor and the colonial style gallery on three sides of the church.

In the early years of the church history pews were purchased by the families. The records show the cost of a pew in 1831 was from eight to 25 pounds plus an additional cost of two to three pounds for annual “ground rent.”

Ground rent was paid yearly to the church for ongoing costs of maintaining the property.

An unusual feature of St. Andrew’s is the location of the pulpit — most pulpits are at the front of the church opposite the entry doors which are at the back of the church, while the pulpit at St. Andrews is located at the back of the church with the entry doors on each side.

One can only imagine the embarrassment of being late — everyone would see you trying to sneak in.

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“The graveyard Shift” under the direction of Bar- bara Worthy will be telling the stories of the folks who once lived in NOTL and are now residing in St. Andrew’s graveyard.

More information can be obtained at the Museum.

To learn more about the topic of this story you can visit the Niagara Historical Society & Museum at niagara- historical-museum.com, or visit the museum for yourself.

The Niagara Historical Mu- seum is located at 43 Castler- ough Street, Niagara-on-the- Lake in Memorial Hall.

Give them a call at 905-468- 3912.

Find more of Denise’s work at niagarawrites.com.
COMMUNITY

All local residents are welcome to submit photos, job postings, classified ads and letters for consideration in this section.

Welcome back, spring! We’ve missed you.

PHOTOS: Daffodil Garden of Hope

Lord Mayor Pat Darte and Sheila Hirsch-Kalm speak during the opening of NOTL’s eighth Daffodil Garden of Hope.

Cole and Claire Turcotte making bubbles next to the blooming daffodils at St. Davids Fire Station.

Laurice Albert of the Niagara-on-the-Lake Horticulture Society brings out daffodils for all.

PHOTO: April showers bring May floods

Localized flooding affected areas of Niagara-on-the-Lake during April and into May. (Richard Harley)

NOTL garden tours to inspire landscaping ideas

Niagara-on-the-Lake enjoys the distinction of hosting two annual home garden tours in the summer — the Shaw Guild Garden Tour in June and the NOTL Horticulture Society Garden Tour in July.

Garden tours are a great way to appreciate quality perennial, specimen trees and shrubs, garden structures, water features and garden ornaments.

The tours can also provide ideas for creating privacy, colour, texture, scents and incorporating edible plants and vegetables into residential landscapes.

In 2018, both tours focus on gardens in the Old Town.

First up is the Shaw Guild Garden Tour from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. on June 9. This is Shaw’s 13th annual garden tour, including eight private gardens on properties dating from the 1930s to 2006.

Master Gardeners volunteer at each of the garden to provide horticultural info to curious visitors.

Tickets are $25 per person and are available at the Shaw Festival box office, Mori Gardens, the Chamber of Commerce or at any of the garden locations on tour day. Proceeds support the Shaw Guild Endowment Fund.

For a brochure and map, visit shawfest.com/gardentour.

A month later, the NOTL Horticultural Society (which itself is 100 years old) will host its 27th annual garden tour from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. on Saturday, July 7, showcasing 10 impressive residential gardens all located in historic NOTL with styles ranging from casual to formal.

Local musicians and visual artists will be in some gardens. Early-bird tickets are $12 each if purchased online before June 1. Regular tickets are $15 and will be available at Mori Gardens, Scowey Gardens and the NOTL Chamber of Commerce.

Proceeds support enhancing local public garden spaces, presenting monthly lectures of horticultural and environmental interest.

Each of the tours can attract 1,000 or more visitors on a pleasant summer day; usually a combination of locals as well as groups who come from cities across Ontario and New York state.

The tours are self-guided, which allows participants to start at any of the gardens and visit others of interest in the sequence and at a pace that suits them.

For a brochure and to purchase tickets, visit notlhortsociety.com.

SCENE OF THE MONTH

It’s no secret Niagara-on-the-Lake is a beautiful place to live year round, with stunning sunsets, blooming parks and gardens in summers, and frozen lakeside scenery in winters. Each edition of The Lake Report would like to showcase some of those spots.

Get out your cameras and start shooting.

Submit your photos to editor@niagaranow.com

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Voicing a dream of Broadway

Yellow Door’s Sydney Cornett has her sights set on the world of musical theatre

Richard Harley
Staff

Although there’s no denying she’s got the pipes for it, 15-year-old Sydney Cornett has no interest in becoming the next Taylor Swift.

The classically-trained singer, who has already scooped up more than 35 first-place awards in competitions, has her sights set somewhere else — Broadway.

“I’m hard-wired for classical,” said Sydney, during a chat with her and her mother Elisabeth in April.

Looking around their house, you might think a lineage of musicians lived here. There’s a piano in the front room, next to a guitar stand with an acoustic and a ukulele.

But as you would learn, it’s all Sydney’s.

As Sydney puts it — and her mother agrees — her musical talent is “an isolated incident” in the family. Neither of them are quite sure where her talent came from, though it didn’t take long for her parents to notice.

The first time Elisabeth “really knew something was going on musically” was when Sydney was just a baby and somebody got her a wind-up toy that played Brahms’ Lullaby.

“So I gave her this pink thing, wound it up and she just started doing this (baby voice) … I’m like what is she doing?”

That’s when she realized a mobile in Sydney’s crib also played Brahms’ Lullaby, and Sydney was trying to communicate that the crib and toy played the same song.

“I thought, is this normal?”

Sydney, who said she doesn’t remember all of that, has never really known a time where she wasn’t involved in music.

She started piano lessons at three-years-old and classical vocal training at nine, though she admits she truly found her passion in musical theatre two years ago, when she “fell in love” with the musical Hamilton and got involved with Yellow Door Theatre Project in Niagara-on-the-Lake.

“It was just a really amazing experience … you get to work with professional and people who have been in the industry and that obviously is a really good opportunity for young people.”

For Sydney, meeting all sorts of new people in a safe and encouraging environment was a big part of what made her fall in love with musical theatre.

Before catching the musical theatre bug, she admits even she didn’t have a lot of desire to add acting and dancing into the mix with her singing.

“She picked up that is really not a good thing to pursue a career in music,” Sydney said.

She said though her mother basically forced her into attending Yellow Door, she’s glad for it and hasn’t looked back since.

Now her sights are set on getting a bachelor of arts in vocal performance when she finishes high school.

Ideally she’d like to go to Curtis Institute of Music in Philadelphia, where she has already been accepted to a fairly exclusive summer program this year.

Getting into the school will require her to be in the top three per cent of applicants.

With her long list of accomplishments, including a first place at the 2018 Elite International Music Competition held at Carnegie Hall in New York City, she seems well on her way.

Sydney said she doesn’t know where singing might take her, though she said Broadway, or singing at the Metropolitan Opera, would be a “dream come true.”

Specifically, she’d love to be in the Phantom of the Opera.

Sydney performed at Yellow Door’s annual Spring Talent Show last month at Redeckorp Creative and Performing Arts Centre in Virgil.

If you get the chance to see her play, whether it’s a song from a musical she loves like Anastasia or by an indie artist like Dodie Clark, Sydney’s talent is sure to raise your arm hairs.

You can see a video of Sydney performing at niagaranow.com