Part I: The Background

Richard Harley
Editor

It wouldn't be hard to write a book about the controversy behind the proposed development of Randwood Estate. There would be a long chapter about boxwood hedges, and at some point one of the characters would give a metaphorical soliloquy about stone walls.

It would be a decent mystery novel — a timeless one where people debate who the villain is, even in the end, with the overall plot centring on how one development could manage to cause a fissure in a small town so deep it will likely shape the future of the town's council. You'd have to find out what happens in the sequel though.

In 2017, when Two Sisters Resort officially announced it was moving forward with a proposal for a hotel on John Street, a line was drawn between those opposed to it and those who are either supporters of development on that property or who don't really understand what the fuss is all about.

In the last year, leading up to the municipal election, that line has grown thicker. In December 2017, a local grassroots activist group called Save Our Rand Estate (SORE) began urging town residents to fight a six-storey development at Randwood.

The group does not have a leader, said core members Lyle Hall and Duff Roman, during meetings earlier this month. Roman and Hall both said it started as a group of neighbours who found they share a common belief that the Randwood Estate should be preserved as a historical site.

But the main issue, Roman said, is that such a large hotel would be a juxtaposition to the historic Old Town. “Imagine how it would look, peeking above the tree line.” In other words, it would be aesthetically unpleasing.

SORE is currently not a legally registered entity, and although core members have been identified, to date nobody has come forward as the face of the SORE organization, and the incorporator, but said the group is not sure who will be its president.

The Randwood Estate was, as the title reflects, once home to the Rand family, who purchased it in 1908. Since then, at times it has been a school, a conference centre and an executive retreat.

The property eventually ended up in the hands of Trisha Romano, her husband Gary Peterson and a St. Catharines developer, with a proposal submitted to the town in 2011 for a three-storey hotel.

The property is considered by many to be a valuable heritage location in the town of Niagara-on-the-Lake for a number of reasons, including the former uses of the main estate house, a stone wall that surrounds the property, century-old trees and shrubs, and a protected stream that trickles through the property and into the nearby Commons.

In addition to the original estate house, there is also a coach house known as the Devo- nian. The property was sold to Benny Marotta of Two Sisters Resort in 2017. He is also the owner of Solmar Development, the company that developed the St. Davids subdivision called Cassery Park, and owns several other properties in town, including two which are neighbours of Randwood.

Continued on page 6.

The development divided town.

By neighbours, they are referring to those living in the vicinity of the property who started meeting to discuss a development that could end up in their backyards.

Roman, who lives on Weatherstone Court, said his property line borders Randwood, and if the estate were to be developed, it would be less than 10 metres away from his yard.

The group began gaining supporters for their movement by knocking on doors, said Hall, and publishing a website called Sorenotl.ca. On the website, the group claims to give people the “real facts” about the Randwood development, published through dozens of articles for which no one

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Continued on page 6.
Town to revisit noise bylaw

Penny Coles
Staff

Despite a noise bylaw that was approved after extensive consultation and debate six years ago, Niagara-on-the-Lake still has difficulty handling the large number of complaints from neighbours of outdoor events, town councillors heard in May.

And those who organize events have problems meeting the requirements of the bylaw and dealing with angry residents, they were told.

Coun. Betty Disero said she spoke to staff about how to solve the complicated problem after an increasing number of complaints from residents last season, and a meeting to discuss outdoor event permits which drew a crowd of people with noise concerns.

She was advised to make a motion at council asking for a review and report to help give bylaw staff the tools they need to deal with complaints.

She tried at a council meeting in May to pass a motion asking staff to review the bylaw and report on how noise from outdoor events could be regulated, enforced, and met some resistance.

Councillors hesitated to open a can of worms, some of them recalling the difficulties of getting the bylaw written and approved in 2012 and hesitating to put the extra work on staff who already have a full plate.

Lord Mayor Pat Darte told council, he will leave behind a gavel block to the town.

This one, Collard said, is not likely to split “in this millennium.”

“I made it to last,” he said, pointing to a beautiful piece of walnut he saved from a tree that had grown over his driveway which was cut down, and a piece of a wild sour cherry tree from his back yard, salvaged for the block.

Retiring from council has been in the back of his mind for a while now — he and his wife Patty want more time to do things together, to travel, and more time in Florida in winters, without feeling he has to come home for council meetings.

He has said most people know he’s crazy about golfing, but they don’t know that when he’s away, fishing is also a favourite past-time.

Looking back over his career, Collard said, “I can honestly say I enjoyed every moment of it, well, almost every moment.”

He has worked with some really good people, he said, even though they haven’t always agreed, and he has learned the important lesson of listening, and trying to find the middle ground.

As for new councillors who will come to the table when this term ends, he said his advice would be to heed the words of the Serenity Prayer, another lesson he had to learn and that one doesn’t always come easily in politics: “to change what I can, realize what I can’t, and humbly accept the difference.”

Jim Collard is leaving a gavel for council as a parting gift, and as a replacement for one he once broke during a meeting with an unruly resident. (Penny Coles)
Niagara's hopes of getting an indoor pool seem to have sunk.

Meeting allowed it to go forward for the future, despite reasoning that simply looking at the town's recreational facilities wouldn't cost a dime.

The report included recommendations that it be considered in next year's budget, although a four-three vote at the meeting did not support including it in next year's budget, with Coun. Paolo Miele saying it would have meant the large deficit the town is facing, it would not be fiscally responsible to pursue the concept of a pool.

Despite Miele's repeated assertion that the “report does not say we're building a pool, we're not spending a dime,” councilors voted five to four at not to include it in the town's facilities master plan.

“Maybe some people in NOTL some time in the future — not this council — might want to have a healthier lifestyle.”

In recent months, the pool discussion has been “drowned” by other issues of the community, such as heritage, Miele said.

Lord Mayor Pat Darte wanted to support a pool, but that’s not to say we’re building a pool, he added.

Collard made a motion that the report be shelved.

“It seems to me by continuing on the course we’re going, we’re leaving it for some future council to discuss. I wonder why we’re doing that,” he said.

Town staff looked at similar municipalities with indoor pools and reported they’re running at large deficits, he added.

An indoor pool could cost between $6 million and $12 million to build, with an estimated annual operating cost to the town of $500,000 to $800,000, and if you’re going to build a pool in Niagara-on-the-Lake, you have to build something special,” said Collard.

That means it’s not going to be the cheapest, and will add to everybody’s taxes, he said.

“As much as we would like it, we don’t need a pool, and we can’t afford a pool … It’s a nice idea, but it’s an idea whose time has not come.”

Collard said, suggested sending the report to the facilities study so the information will be there for the future.

There was a time, he said, when the decision might be based solely on population support to support a pool, but that’s no longer the case — demographics and geography are also factors.

And it’s also not a case of building bigger costs more, Flynn said, suggesting building better could cost less in operational costs.

“A lot of the work is already done, the foundation set, the information in place. I don’t feel we should just throw it on a shelf some place.”

He suggested forwarding it to the facilities committee to decide when it’s time to bring it back to the table.

To counter the concern over the expense of the pool, Miele said, “we’re not voting today on building a pool or spending money on a pool. We’re looking at making this report part of the facilities master plan.”

Swimming, he said, is part of a healthy lifestyle choice, and not just for three months of the year.

“Maybe some people in NOTL some time in the future — not this council — might want to have a healthier lifestyle.”

Niagara Foundation to purchase half-interest in “Wilderness”

Richard Harley

Editor

The Niagara Foundation is hoping to buy a half-interest in a historically designated property at 407 King St. in Niagara-on-the-Lake to protect it from further development.

The 5.5-acre area, known to many locals as the Wilderness, is historically significant to Canada and must be preserved, according to the Foundation.

Brad Nixon, vice-president of Niagara Foundation, said there is a signed agreement of purchase and sale, though the deal still needs to be approved by a court.

He said a final price tag won’t be certain until the court approval.

“It’s not only important buildings and history but it’s important land,” he said.

The creek connects to Lake Ontario near Ryerson Beach in Chautauqua and runs to John St. and through the property of Rainbow Estate.

Nixon said a conservation easement prevents the creek, the creek banks and the land around the creek from being altered without approval from the Niagara Peninsula Conservation Authority.

Michael Howe, Niagara Foundation president, said the area is “also important to Indigenous people and our region’s military and political history, as far back as the 18th century.”

The property was once home to William Claus, deputy superintendent of the Indian Department and one of the three trustees of the Six Nations, whose wife Nancy Johnson was originally given the land by the Six Nations “in token of her many deeds of kindness,” said a Niagara Foundation news release.

Nancy’s father Sir William Johnson was responsible for negotiating the Treaty of Niagara with 24 Indigenous nations in 1764, a treaty that would — according to the Foundation — form the basis for the original treaty relationship between Indigenous peoples and settlers in Eastern North America.

The “Wilderness” site also provided shelter for soldiers and a family in a root cellar during the War of 1812 after NOTL was razed by the fleeing American forces in 1813.

The property is the former jointly-owned estate of two NOTL sisters, Ruth Parker and Fran Mackay. Mackay’s interest was transferred to her daughter Kea Reid, who is also now deceased, so the other interest is owned by her estate.

Nixon said the Foundation will be purchasing Parker’s interest.

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The property, located across the road from the Royal Canadian Legion, was given historical designation by the Town of NOTL in 1994, including the heavily wooded area and the building structures such as a house built in 1816.

“If we can acquire it and clean it up, we can transform it into a really important urban park,” said Collard.

He said the forest is original Carolinian forest, with a protected creek that runs through it.

“It’s not only important buildings and history but it’s important land,” he said.

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Editorial: TLR goes bi-weekly

Richard Harley

Editor

It’s been a busy month. When Niagara Now received the first shipment of The Report on March 5 and our small crew set out to hand-deliver the first 5,000 copies around the community, we didn’t entirely know what to expect.

I had heard the word from people who told me they wanted a newspaper they felt was theirs again — something they could open up and see their friends, family and familiar faces, while finding out the truth about local issues; something hyper-local, not mixed with regional content.

Even though I hadn’t heard it, I couldn’t have predicted just how much support we’d receive in just a few short weeks.

I would like to share a bit of that with you, starting with a handwritten letter we received last month.

From Selina Appleby: “Our thanks for the newspaper. You have given us a gift — a newspaper that brings us the news in an elegant format. It says ‘read this, it is important. Welcome to our town. We need you.’

From all of us at The Lake Report, to all who sent emails or letters, thank you.

We wish we had room to print them all — though, as an office project, in the name of positive reinforcement, we’ve taken many and had them printed out and put up on the walls.

And it isn’t just the letters, it’s the people coming out of their houses, coming up to homes starting in July, giving back.

Welcome to our town. We need you.”

Letter to the editor: Public libraries

Over the years, we had two small staff, but we had talked about what we might do to commemorate the occasion — a cake, nothing fancy but enough to recognize it as a milestone.

And so many memories for anyone else but those who have them are shut down, taken away. As community hubs, public libraries provide safe, inclusive spaces where everyone is welcome to learn, work, connect, create and collaborate.

Public libraries are on the cutting edge of technology, offering online services and hope it will have a long life.

OPINION

Old ads are pieces of a community's history that are thrown away.

Penney Coles

In this age of turning to Google with any question you have, you expect an instant answer.

It can be pretty frustrating when you can’t.

That situation changed — Niagara-on-the-Lake is a wonderful place to live and it has grown up. I’m grateful for that, and for a chance to give back.

editor@niagarariver.com

We did that for the 80th anniversary, or so we thought. And now we’re looking for a hotel on the Randwood Estate.

As for me, I’m going to have a photo for us for that special edition of the paper, which I believe in the continuing relevance of the printed page.

As well, we’ll be delivering homes starting in July. As community hubs, public libraries should get back to the people coming out of their houses, coming up to us, to look for a hotel on the Randwood Estate, and it’s reassuring to know they have been preserved somewhere.

The Niagara-on-the-Lake Public Library is working to digitize their microfilm, and will send out their microfiche to have it done for them — they may be apparently two different digital processes, both are time-consuming and labor-intensive.

Interpret that to mean expensive. Government grants would be helpful, so hopefully when Niagara-on-the-Lake engaged the provincial government will believe in the continuing relevancy of the printed page and all they do to make information available to them if they have the resources they need to do it.

When the work is done back issues of the Advance as far back as the 40’s should be available online through a public library portal, and staff promise to update us on a public website during the second half of the year.

The Niagara Historical Museum staff say they get some requests for early newspapers, but they mostly have copies of special historic editions or newspapers that have been kept because of some important event in town, such as a centennial.

For anything else, they direct people to the library to search through microfilm.

And of course there are many books that have been written about the early days of Niagara-on-the-Lake, but they are important sources to turn to for the history of the town.

But you won’t find the kind of information that newspapers provide: the photographs and front pages of the week, the stories and photographs that have made a little history of the town.

The memories remain, but the newspaper is gone.

Other editors have thrown out or may exist in a basement somewhere, and the online news may be still be sitting in that great cloud of information.

Perhaps one day it will surface.

There is a site called arch- which shows that the Advance that were available available online in an e-edition, although there is no specific order and if you want to look something up, you’d have to know the date.

However looking at all those fronts from a bit was a little bit of a deja vu, and it’s reassuring to know they have been preserved somewhere.

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A rundown of the provincial debate in NOTL

Provincial candidates Wayne Gates (NDP), Chuck Mc Shane (PC) and Karen Fraser (Green Party). The upcoming provincial elections are June 7 (Penny Coles)

"If kids want to make a choice, as parents we have to listen to them."

"He said that was why the residents of Ontario are not coming in opposition."

"Gates said he would never run a business the way the Liberals run the government, allowing hydro bills to increase 300 per cent, and Mc Shane agreed that as a small business owner he would "certainly not run a business the way this government has."

"If elected, the PCs wouldn't spend money to try to buy it back, Mc Shane said."

"I don't know where the dollars can come from but it's something well worth looking at," Mc Shane drew some jeers from the audience when he asked, given the increase in technology, "are people still going to borrow books?"

"He also referenced NOTL's historic Randwood Estate, a wetlands, referring to a Niagara Falls development that would eliminate poverty."
Step Challenge to get feet moving in NOTL

Penny Coles

If you live or work in Niagara-on-the-Lake, it’s time to get moving.

The Town is once again offering rewards to those who participate in its Step Challenge, which is now open for registration.

The challenge runs from June 1 to June 30, and participants — who can register as individuals or as groups of up to six people — are asked to monitor their steps with an activity tracker, such as a Fitbit, Garmin or smart phone.

Coun. Jim Collard encouraged residents to get involved in the challenge at a May council meeting.

Participants need to track their steps on the challenge website or sync their smart phone or activity tracker. The Town’s challenge website will include a leaderboard so participants can check out the top teams and individuals with the highest average of steps.

The Town announced the opening of registration Tuesdays this year, and encouraged NOTL residents to take part.

He thanked Lord Mayor Pat Dero for pushing the program and challenged other councillors to form a team, as he has.

Several local businesses have also donated prizes, including Coun. John Wiens who is contributing NOTL Golf Club gift certificates. Niagara College and the Niagara Outlet Mall have also donated prizes, he said.

The team with the highest average of steps, and the top two individuals with the most steps throughout the challenge will win prizes.

Each of the four weeks a prize — an Ebike smart thermostat donated by Enbridge Gas Distribution — will be donated to the person with the most steps that week, said Collard.

The Town wants to see its residents — and their visitors, suggested Collard — to get walking, encouraging them to “be healthy.”

To register online go, attend an in-person or/and telephone step challenge.

In 2021, when the property was still owned by Romance and Petersen, a rezoning application for a hotel on the Randwood Estate, which was previously a hotel to the community went before town council and was approved. At that time, there was a similar heated debate about whether the allowing and what would be allowed with regards to development.

The Town agreed to amend its height bylaw to allow the back of the then proposed hotel to be four storeys, where the landscape sloped down. There was also to be a spa, a 106-room hotel, a waterfront restaurant. Shrubbery on the property — the boxwood hedge — were to be preserved.

The 2011 report said the new building should not dominate and overwhelm the existing buildings,” and could be designated under the Ontario Heritage Act, and the design and plans be subject to approval by the Municipal Heritage Committee.

To move forward with his proposal, Marotta needs a zoning amendment to allow for the height of his 145-room hotel. It’s currently capped at 57 feet, which is considered sufficient for five storeys, but it’s within a smaller footprint of the Romantic design, he said.

He believes he should be able to develop his own property and that it thinks of Randwood as a “one that needs to be preserved and restored, pointing out no one else has come forward with the money to do that.”

Marotta said he believes his stance is in the best interest of the town, and said he has the support of many in the community.

He said he paid arrears $87,000 last summer to maintain the gardens on the property so they would thrive, and to identify underused ashes infested with boomer beetles. He has also planted some trees on the property, which he said a professional and has extensive work done to preserve the trees, some which were planted as part of the original estate.

He acknowledged they only add to the value of his property and future hotel.

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The project, he said, was to wait until the site plan is completed and approved, the rezoning process is not under way, he agrees to a demolition, or a town-initiated designation, or the rezoning process is not under way, he agrees to a demolition, or a town-initiated designation, or the rezoning process.
GARDEN PROFILE: Linda Baines

Linda Baines in her Nassau Street garden. (Supplied)

Beckie Fox
Garden Making
Submitted

Designing a low-main-
tenance garden doesn’t mean sacrificing beauty. Linda Baines’ Nassau
Street garden proves that. Filled with the colourful
foliage of perennials and compact shrubs, it will be one of eight private
gardens open to the pub-
lic June 9 as part of the Shaw Guild’s 13th annual
Garden Tour. Baines said her garden is an easy one to care for, being filled with many
perennials and shrubs, which she’s artfully ar-
ranged to contrast each other.
“My busiest time is in
early spring, when I’m ti-
dying the beds,” she said.
After that, she enjoys the contrasting co-
lours — a mix of purple
chartreuse and the forest
foliage of ‘black lace’ ol-
derberries, next to bright
Japanese forest
maples.
Deep, sweeping beds are anchored by beautiful
specimen trees through-
out the relatively small
front yard, including a weeping
Japanese maple.
A gradually stepped-
down terrace at the back of the house ends with
raised planting beds filled with purple barberry,
white echeverias and creeping blue junipers.
As a life-long gardener, Baines has cared for
many large gardens in Muskoka and Toronto
over the years, but thought
downsize when she be-
gan planting this garden
in 2012. “It was a non-garden
when we started with just
the 90-year-old red pine
and a ginkgo tree in the back,” she says.
She said she focused on compact shrubs and pe-
nennials because “annuals are too much work.”
Baines is also a firm
believer in mulching.
“Mulching cuts down
maintenance because it helps discourage weeds
and conserves water.”

Shaw Guild Garden Tour

The 13th annual Shaw Garden Tour is
from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m.
on Saturday, June 9.
This year’s tour will fea-
ture eight private gardens on properties dating
from the 1930s to 2006.
Master Gardeners will also be volunteering at
each of the gardens to
provide horticultural info.
Gardens can be purchased at any of the garden locations.
Proceeds support the Shaw Guild Endowment
Fund.

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

MULCH & STONE Penner Home Home Home
Home Home Home

**OUR CUSTOMERS ARE ALWAYS ON GOOD GROUND WITH US**

MULCH - Shredded Pine - Classic Cedar

- Black - Brown - Composted Pine Bark

- Four Seasons Northwood

DECORATIVE STONE - Gold Stone - 1/2" Beauty-Drive

- Premium Topsoil - Topsoil - Triple Mix

GRAVEL - 1/2" Clear - 3/4" Clear - Traffic Binder

- Masonry Sand - Concrete Sand - Screening

**DELIVERIES AVAILABLE!**

905.468.3242

**LEARN TO BUILD A DRYSTONE WALL**

Friday June 22 and Saturday June 23
@ Red Roof Retreat

$250

**HAY FUN!**

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Did you know?
Niagara Now’s printer sources 100 per cent of its paper fibre from industry leading paper mills, which use quick-growth, sustainable, renewable
plots of land, rather than clear-cutting forests. The ink is also vegetable based.

Bringing style to small wok

Dreams of outdoor living

Flowers along Queen St. in Old Town. (Richard Harley)

Catharine Skinner
Submitted

I am not a seasoned
gardener.

In fact, after leaving city
life behind, I’m facing the
chore of creating a front
garden and backyard living
space in our two-year-old
home, where all we’ve got
been to plant flowers into
barrel containers.

Enter Joanne Young, Gar-
den Designer at Mori Gar-
dens, who kindly walked me
through the overwhelming
process of planning an outdoor space.

She honed the process into
a few easy steps that even a
city gal like me can manage.

Make a wish list.

Include every element you’d love in your oasis. Dream big, and see how your outdoor space can
evolve over time.

Consider budget.

Divide your list into
stages you can tackle each
time. Take into account the
economical use of your
resources. For example,
if you need brickwork for
a shed, a pathway, and
a ginkgo tree in the
yard, you might not
be able to afford all three
at once. It may make
more sense to hire someone for each job.

Hone your style.

Japanese, English Cot-
tage, Woodland…these
are terms I’d heard,
but was hard pressed to
define.

Pore through magazines,
Pinterest, and sites like
House.com. Collect im-
gages that appeal to you,
and you’ll notice common
themes emerge.

Use the five senses of

gardening.

Joanne’s key to beauti-
ful garden design in-
cludes: sense of entry
(something that invites you
to in to see more); a sense of
welcomeness (locate the space with a relaxing
atmosphere); enclosure
(defined space that cre-
ates shade and privacy);
place compliments the
architecture of your home), and a sense of flow (lines
direct the eye around
the garden).

Draw a bubble diagram.

This rough sketch of
your space is ideally drawn
to scale. Add existing
features!, your hardiness
areas (turn them into
interest eight private gardens
on properties dating from
the 1930s to 2006.
Master Gardeners will also be volunteering at
each of the gardens to
provide horticultural info.
Gardens can be purchased at any of the garden locations.
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plots of land, rather than clear-cutting forests. The ink is also vegetable based.
**Sunday**

- **27** Family Friendly Drop-In Art Studio - 1 p.m. to 3 p.m. - Niagara Pumphouse Arts Centre
- **27** Nikki Chossi and Tony Yike Yang - 7:30 to 11 p.m. - Stratus Vineyards
- **Positive Living Niagara, Migrant Workers Health Fair** - 3 p.m. to 7 p.m. - NOTL Community Centre
- **St. Davids Lions Club Charity Golf Tournament** - 11 a.m. to 7 p.m. - Eagle Valley
- **Walking Tours of Old Town** - 11 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. - Niagara Historical Society & Museum
- **Fundraiser for Amy Jaason** - 4 p.m. to 10 p.m. - Community Centre
- **Janet Caricano Day** - 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. - Niagara Historical Society & Museum
- **Cosmo Condina “Photographic Works of Sicily”** - 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. - Niagara Historical Society & Museum
- **Nuit Blanche** - 8:30 p.m. - Niagara Pumphouse Arts Centre

**Monday**

- **28** Nuit Blanche - 8:30 p.m. - Niagara Pumphouse Arts Centre
- **St. Mark’s Cemetery** - 5 p.m. to 6:30 p.m. - St. Mark’s Cemetery
- **Friends for Amy Jaason** - 4 p.m. to 10 p.m. - Community Centre

**Tuesday**

- **29** **The SupperMarket (Every Wednesday)** - 4:30 p.m. to 9 p.m. - Garrison Village

**Wednesday**

- **5** **Simply Steam Story Time** - 11:45 a.m. - NOTL Public Library
- **Senior Activities: Golden Age Club** - 9:30 a.m. to 5 p.m. - NOTL Community Centre
- **Author Reading: Alexis Kosting** - 5:30 to 7 p.m. - NOTL Library
- **Big Bike Event for Heart & Stroke** - Noon to 8 p.m. - Pillar & Post

**Thursday**

- **10** **Nuit Blanche** - 8:30 p.m. - Niagara Pumphouse Arts Centre
- **Town Council Meeting** - 6:30 p.m. - NOTL Public Library
- **Seniors Drop-In: Casual Bridge** - 1 p.m. to 4 p.m. - NOTL Community Centre
- **Minecraft Club** - 4 p.m. to 5 p.m. - NOTL Community Centre
- **Senior Drop-In: Casual Bridge** - 1 p.m. to 4 p.m. - NOTL Community Centre
- **Simply Steam Story Time** - 11:45 a.m. - NOTL Public Library

**Friday**

- **11** **Nuit Blanche** - 8:30 p.m. - Niagara Pumphouse Arts Centre
- **The Makeshift** - 2 p.m. to 4 p.m. - NOTL Public Library
- **Senior Activities: Golden Age Club** - 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. - NOTL Community Centre
- **The Makeshift** - 2 p.m. to 4 p.m. - NOTL Public Library
- **InfoHealth: Genomic Testing and Appreciation Picnic** - 11 a.m. to 1 p.m. - Creekside Senior Estates
- **Library & Museum** - Noon to 8 p.m. - Pillar & Post
- **Kinsmen Club: Spring Fever** - 6 p.m. to 11 p.m. - Upper Canada Drystone Festival - 8 a.m. to 4 p.m.
- **Niagara Homegrown Wine Festival** - 11 a.m. to 3 p.m. - Niagara Pumphouse Arts Centre
- **Minecraft Club** - 4 p.m. to 5 p.m. - NOTL Community Centre
- **Senior Drop-In: Casual Bridge** - 1 p.m. to 4 p.m. - NOTL Community Centre
- **Simply Steam Story Time** - 11:45 a.m. - NOTL Public Library
- **Nuit Blanche** - 8:30 p.m. - Niagara Pumphouse Arts Centre
- **Two Sisters Vineyards Movie in the Vineyard - Grease** - 8 p.m. to 11 p.m. - Trius Red Presents: Movie Night in the World - 2 p.m. to 4 p.m.
- **St. John Ambulance Babysitting Course** - 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. - NOTL Public Library
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- **Niagara Homegrown Wine Festival** - 11 a.m. to 3 p.m. - Niagara Pumphouse Arts Centre
- **Minecraft Club** - 4 p.m. to 5 p.m. - NOTL Community Centre
- **Senior Drop-In: Casual Bridge** - 1 p.m. to 4 p.m. - NOTL Community Centre
- **Simply Steam Story Time** - 11:45 a.m. - NOTL Public Library

**Saturday**

- **12** **Simply Steam Story Time** - 11:45 a.m. - NOTL Public Library
- **Senior Activities: Golden Age Club** - 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. - NOTL Community Centre
- **The Makeshift** - 2 p.m. to 4 p.m. - NOTL Public Library
- **InfoHealth: Genomic Testing and Appreciation Picnic** - 11 a.m. to 1 p.m. - Creekside Senior Estates
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- **Senior Drop-In: Casual Bridge** - 1 p.m. to 4 p.m. - NOTL Community Centre
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**Sunday**

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- **27** Nikki Chossi and Tony Yike Yang - 7:30 to 11 p.m. - Stratus Vineyards
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- **Nuit Blanche** - 8:30 p.m. - Niagara Pumphouse Arts Centre
- **Town Council Meeting** - 6:30 p.m. - Town Hall

**Monday**

- **28** **Family Friendly Drop-In Art Studio** - 1 p.m. to 3 p.m. - Niagara Pumphouse Arts Centre
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- **Town Council Meeting** - 6:30 p.m. - Town Hall
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Day</th>
<th>Thursday</th>
<th>Friday</th>
<th>Saturday</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>30</td>
<td>Legion Fish Fry (Every Thursday) - 4:30 p.m. - NOTL Legion</td>
<td>Knit a Bit - 2 p.m. to 4 p.m. - NOTL Public Library</td>
<td>Ragan Niagara 2018: Running Event - 7 a.m. to 4 p.m. - Niagara</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>31</td>
<td>Senior Drop-In: Casual Bridge - 1 p.m. to 4 p.m. - NOTL Community Centre</td>
<td>Jackson Triggs Summer Concert Series: Sam Roberts Band - 7 p.m. - Jackson Triggs Estate Winery</td>
<td>The Big Night 2018 - 5:30 p.m. - NOTL Community Centre</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Deck Area Shoreline Protection Public Consultation - 6:30 p.m. to 8:30 p.m. - Community Centre</td>
<td>Pin: Day! Make &amp; Play! - 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. - NOTL Public Library</td>
<td>Central Community Church. Volunteer Appreciation Picnic - 11 a.m. to 1 p.m. - Centennial Park Pavilion</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Jackson Triggs Summer Concert Series: Sam Roberts Band - 7 p.m. - Jackson Triggs Estate Winery</td>
<td>Knit a Bit - 2 p.m. to 4 p.m. - NOTL Public Library</td>
<td>The World of Perennials – Mori Gardens</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>The Makesake - 5:30 p.m. to 7 p.m. - NOTL Public Library</td>
<td>Jackson Triggs Summer Concert Series: Sam Roberts Band - 7 p.m. - Jackson Triggs Estate Winery</td>
<td>RiverBrink TALKS Series – Peter Mulcaster – A Railway History of Niagara-on-the-Lake, 1834-1959</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Provincial Election Voting - NOTL Community Centre</td>
<td>Neighborhood Walks: Deck Area - 6 p.m. to 9 p.m. - Niagara Historical Society &amp; Museum</td>
<td>Niagara Homegrown Wine Festival - 11 a.m. to 4 p.m. - Niagara</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Legion Fish Fry (Every Thursday) - 4:30 p.m. to 7:30 p.m. - NOTL Legion</td>
<td>Trius Red Presents. Movie Night in the Vineyard – Grease – 8 p.m. to 11 p.m. - Trius Winery &amp; Restaurant</td>
<td>The Make &amp; Take: 9 a.m. to 10 a.m. - NOTL Public Library</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| 14    | Practical Genealogy: Beginner Class & DNA Workshop - 11 a.m. to 1 p.m. - NOTL Public Library | Jacko
|       | Family Story Time - 11 a.m. to 11:30 a.m. - NOTL Public Library           | n Triggs Summer Concert Series: Whitehorse - 7 p.m. - Jackson Triggs Estate Winery | 13th Annual Shaw Guild Garden Tour – 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. – Shaw Festival  |
| 13    | The Antiscious, Electronic Autopsy - 4:30 p.m. to 8 p.m. - NOTL Public Library | Trius Red Presents. Movie Night in the Vineyard – Rocky Business – 8 p.m. to 11 p.m. - Trius Winery & Restaurant | Grand Bazaar at Niagara Pumphouse Arts Centre - 8 a.m. to 1 p.m. – Niagara Pumphouse Arts Centre – Jolly June Jam-Boree – 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. – Grace United Church |
|       | White Effect Dinner - 7 p.m. to 11 p.m. - Queenston Heights               | Tours of St. Mark’s Cemetery - 5 p.m. to 6:30 p.m. - St. Mark’s Cemetery | Napoleononic Weekend and Re-enactment at Fort George – 10 a.m. to 6 p.m. – Fort George Kinnemon Club: Spring Fever – 4 p.m. to 11 p.m. – Virgil Sports Park |
| 20    | Legion Fish Fry (Every Thursday) - 4:30 p.m. to 7:30 p.m. - NOTL Legion   | St. John Ambulance Babysitting Course - 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. - NOTL Public Library | Annual Yard Sale St. Davids - 8:30 a.m. to 2 p.m. – Creekside Senior Estates |
| 21    | Senior Drop-In: Casual Bridge - 1 p.m. to 4 p.m. - NOTL Community Centre  | Jackson Triggs Summer Concert Series: Whitehorse - 7 p.m. - Jackson Triggs Estate Winery | Trius Red Presents. Movie Night in the Vineyard – Pretty Woman – 8 p.m. to 11 p.m. - Trius Winery & Restaurant |
|       | Minecraft Club - 4 p.m. to 5 p.m. - NOTL Public Library                 | Jackson Triggs Summer Concert Series: Sam Roberts Band - 7 p.m. - Jackson Triggs Estate Winery | Two Sisters Vineyards Movie in the Vineyard – 7 p.m. to 11 p.m. – Two Sisters Vineyards |
| 22    | Legion Fish Fry (Every Thursday) - 4:30 p.m. to 7:30 p.m. - NOTL Legion   | Jackson Triggs Summer Concert Series: Serena Ryder – 7 p.m. - Jackson Triggs Estate Winery | Kanzelmann 30th Anniversary – 7 p.m. to 9 p.m. – Kanzelmann Estate Winery |
|       | Upper Canada Drystone Festival - 8 a.m. to 4 p.m. - Red Roof Retreat (Con. 6) | Trius Red Presents. Movie Night in the Vineyard – Pretty Woman - 7 p.m. to 11 p.m. – Trius Winery & Restaurant | Two Sisters Vineyards Movie in the Vineyard – 7 p.m. to 11 p.m. – Two Sisters Vineyards |
| 27    | Senior Drop-In: Casual Bridge - 1 p.m. to 4 p.m. - NOTL Community Centre  | Jackson Triggs Summer Concert Series: Serena Ryder – 7 p.m. - Jackson Triggs Estate Winery | Mori Gardens: Privacy Plants/ Living Walls – All Day – Mori Gardens |
|       | Minecraft Club - 4 p.m. to 5 p.m. - NOTL Public Library                 | Trius Red Presents. Movie Night in the Vineyard – Pretty Woman - 8 p.m. to 11 p.m. - Trius Winery & Restaurant | Mori Gardens: Privacy Plants/ Living Walls – All Day – Mori Gardens |
| 28    | Knit a Bit - 2 p.m. to 4 p.m. - NOTL Public Library                     | Upper Canada Drystone Festival – 8 a.m. to 4 p.m. - Red Roof Retreat (Con. 6) | Car Show @ Farmers’ Market – 8 a.m. to 1 p.m.                           |
| 29    | Artistry by the Lake - 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. - Queen’s Royal Park           | Trius Red Presents. Movie Night in the Vineyard – Pretty Woman - 8 p.m. to 11 p.m. - Trius Winery & Restaurant | Niagara Homegrown Wine Festival - 11 a.m. to 5 p.m.                     |
| 30    |                            |                                             | Art in the Vineyard – 11 a.m. to 6 p.m. – Fragogold Farm Winery         |
NOTL Farmers’ Market kicks off with a bang

Richard Harley
Editor

The first Niagara-on-the-Lake Farmers’ Market of the season saw a steady crowd when it kicked off in May.

The morning was filled with conversation, coffee and local vendors selling a variety of products like fresh veggies, plants, and gourmet butters and preserves, while Niagara musician Cory Cruise entertained the crowd with mellown tunes.

Market coordinator Sharon Brinsmead-Taylor said there are a bunch of new vendors this year, offering a wide selection of local products, as the market continues to grow.

“Market vendors this year are micro-veggies — mainly different types of sprouts, which she said are “packed with nutrients.’’ Bee Inspired Farms, started by NOTL residents Bill and Cherie McMillan last February, is one of the vendors selling micro-veggies.

All of the sprouts are grown in their home, in a dedicated “grow op’’ room Cherie said.

Some returning locals this year are Kim McQuaie, selling her award-winning Gypsyong Ridge gourmet jams and preserves, and Bartef Family Farms, a vendor Brinsmead-Taylor said has supported the market since day one.

Another returning vendor is Lindsay’s Gourmet Compound Butter, which makes a series of flavour-packed butters, such as blue cheese chive or Latin spice.

Daniela Kovacevic, a regular market-goer, said all the new vendors were “wonderful,” and that everybody seemed to jive perfectly.

Joyce and Mike Higgins, owners of Plants and More, first-time vendors at the market, said the traffic was steady throughout the day, unlike other markets which they said typically have spikes in attendance times.

They also said they were extremely impressed with the quality of the market, credit- ing Brinsmead-Taylor for running something truly local and unique.

Local resident Paul Staz, who was at the market with his son Graham, said he’s there every Saturday, and that it’s a perfect way to start off the weekend.

“I’ve got my coffee, music and people,’’ he said.

The market is every Saturday from 8 a.m. to 1 p.m. outside the Garrison House on Niagara Stone Rd.

Market-goers were able to sample Lindsay’s gourmet butters, including blue cheese chive, roasted garlic, lemon caper, Latin spiced and a variety of sweet butters.

This year, they chose St. Davids school after deciding that the students would benefit most from their donation.

NOTL Farmers’ Market kicks off with a bang

Richard Harley
Editor

Students from St. Davids Public School got a tech upgrade in May, courtesy of the St. Davids Firefighters Association.

The association purchased 10 additional Google Chromebooks for students to use.

The school’s budget only allowed for 20, which caused the need for partnering up and didn’t provide students with the full ability to use the computer to study, said SDFA president Derek Rooney, who heard about the school’s need from a parent on the school’s parent council.

Now, each student will have access to a Chromebook, Rooney said.

“We have had the opportunity to go to the school and work with some of the students who study with these computers, and it was fascinating to see how happy they are to be able to have access to their own computer to study.’’

He said he himself remembers being in grade school and having to share comput ers in the lab and wanted to make sure the students all had access to their own computers.

All in all the price tag of the Chromebooks, for all brand new, top-of-the-line models, was $2,629, he said.

The St. Davids Firefighters Association holds fundrais ing events throughout the year, including a community breakfast on the last Saturday of each month where the public can enjoy a home cooked buffet-style breakfast at the fire hall.

Other events include the annual turkey roll each December, where firefighters auction off turkeys and hold a prize draw, a tradition Rooney said members are very proud to keep alive.

“We have done boot drives in the past as well as other fundraising initiatives that provide our community with an opportunity to donate to local charities,” said Rooney.

SDFA donates to many local charities and minor sports leagues each year, including Red Roof Retreat, Epilepsy Niagara, the Canadian Cancer Society, NOTL Minor Lacrosse, NOTL Minor Baseball, NOTL Minor Soccer, NOTL Air Cadets, and Canadian Red Cross Disaster Relief.

This year, they chose St. Davids school after deciding the students would benefit most from their donation.

Members of St. Davids Public School student council show off their new Chromebooks, gifts from the St. Davids Firefighters Association. (Back) Mallory Doppenberg, Ayla Jamal, Maya Dueck and Xander Anderson. (Front) Sierra Kelly and Valerie Yaremchuk. (Richard Harley)
Local talent to flood provincials

The Ontario Music Festival Association holds its annual provincial music competition this June, Niagara-on-the-Lake will be making a splash.

Twelve Niagara singers involved in Niagara Musical Theatre & Voice Festival will head to the competition, which takes place from June 11 to 16 at various venues in Hamilton. The competitors, from 48 member festivals across Ontario, must be recommended by an adjudicator to attend, and only two competitors per discipline are recommended, said Lisa Brillont, director of NMTVF.

From Niagara-on-the-Lake are singers Gisao De Leonardiis, Ayla Jamal and Alexandre Brillon, Lisa’s son. De Leonardiis will be singing in the Junior Musical Theatre division, while Jamal will sing in the Elementary Musical Theatre Division and Alexandre will compete in both the Intermediate Musical Theatre Division and Nationalals qualifying divisions.

Alexandre is a past overall winner of the Junior Musical Theatre division as well as placing third for the past four consecutive years. From the region are Morgan Hilliker and Emily Draper for Senior Musical Theatre; Paige Hergott and Milo Boccinfuso for Intermediate Musical Theatre; Naomi Shad for Intermediate Musical Theatre and National Musical Theatre; Geena Prestia for Junior Musical Theatre; Maya Boccinfuso for Elementary Musical Theatre; Alexis Bowmann and Victoria Ferreira for Grade 6 voice; Carlo Rascigno and Milo Boccinfuso for Grade 7 voice; and Sydney Cornett and Madison Marino for Grade 9 voice. The Niagara Musical Theatre & Voice Festival has been running for five years, founded by Lisa Brillont.

This year the festival was held at the Yellow Door Theatre in Virgil in February. The festival provides more than $4,000 in scholarships by an adjudicator to attend, said Lisa Brillont.

The festival provides more than $4,000 in scholarships by an adjudicator to attend, said Lisa Brillont.

“Come in and see our pictures to go with the adventures,” said Howse. “There are many brave men and women from this area enlisted, and have stories and pictures of our local service men and women... to update and put all information we have in digital form for wider distribution,” said Howse. “We are going to build on our work to document the stories and pictures of our local service men and women... to update and put all information we have in digital form for wider distribution,” said Howse.

The book, Howse said, contains stories about local service men and women. “We are going to build on our work to document the stories and pictures of our local service men and women... to update and put all information we have in digital form for wider distribution,” said Howse.

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NOTL Legion celebrates 90 years of community service

Niagara-on-the-Lake

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Hear Better Niagara

Sparks were high and the smell of the grill was in the air as the Royal Canadian Legion Branch 124 in Niagara-on-the-Lake celebrated nine decades of community service anniversary with a barbecue in May. It was in 1918, after the November 11 anniversary of the First World War, when 600,000 Canadians returned home to their communities and civilian lives, “scars and all,” said Legion president Al Howse.

“Not long after that, veterans in the town of Niagara-on-the-Lake formed the Niagara Veterans Association, and along with other groups like the Independent Order of Daughters of the Empire, began the work of veterans support,” Howse said.

A decade later, the Association applied for a charter to the Canadian Legion of the British Service League and on May 38, 1928, the NOTL Legion Branch 124 was created, with the mission to support veterans, promote remembrance and serve the community. The torch has since been passed on to the veterans who fought for democracy in the Second World War, said Howse.

“We took the torch and stayed true to the cause, despite some struggles. Ninety years later we still hold the torch high,” Howse said. The Legion will also honour its 90th anniversary by refreshing the look of the building, with work mainly being done to the monument out front to make it more accessible.

“We want to keep our look welcoming to all,” said Howse, noting the monument out front is currently in the middle of the front lawn, with no pathway surrounding it. He said it would be nice for all members to be able to appreciate it. Also, Legion members will gather information to update book about the Legion that was published in 1988.

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June 2018

NEWS

THE VIRGIL STAMPEDE 2018

Penny Coles
Staff

It’s been 52 years since a neighbourhood fireworks display for locals grew to become the Virgil Stampede. It’s now a three-day festival that draws thousands of people to one of the most successful family events in the Niagara region.

Its enduring popularity is evident in the numbers, said Virgil Business Association president Richard Wall. And although the final numbers aren’t in for this year, he said it appeared to be one of the best-attended events yet.

The weather co-operated two of the three days, and even though Saturday’s forecast scared people away, Sunday and Monday the grounds were packed and the rides were busy.

He said judging by the sales at the food booth — which is always a good measure of the turnout — those two days made up for poor showing Saturday.

The decision to open Sundays about five or six years ago has proven to be a wise one with weekends like this year, said Wall.

With a three-day event, it’s possible to make up for a poor day.

And people seem to be getting used to the idea that Sunday is as good a day as any to come to the stampede, he said.

“I would say overall, based on the traffic Sunday and Monday, this year’s event would be up there with one of the best years ever.”

The outdoor market, new this year, was cancelled Saturday, but from those Wall spoke to the rest of the weekend, the feedback was mostly positive, unlike attempts at indoor markets in the arena in previous years, he said.

Saturday’s demolition derby managed to pack the bleachers despite the weather, and with more heats and more cars to watch than previous years.

“A lot of people were saying it was the best show yet,” said Wall.

“And because of the rain, there was mud flying into the stands, which apparently the kids thought was pretty cool!”

The organizers of Monday’s miniature horse show were also delighted with the turnout — more horses registered this year, allowing the show to continue throughout the day.

The food booth was so busy after the fireworks Monday night that there was just one bag of fries left — some onion rings.

“You can’t get much closer than that. And you couldn’t move through the crowd. It was a packed house, and a great show.”

Wall, whose father Dave was the president of the VBA in the early years of the stampede, said he’s noticed a continuity of three generations both helping out with and attending the stampede.

And after a skirmish last year on the grounds that made the VBA decide to have police on site, the event ran smoothly with “just a few minor issues that were dealt with,” he said.

In the decades since the first Stampede the VBA has raised more than $1.2 million to put back into the community.

This year money is being put aside to support the concept of a pump track for cyclists and skateboarders, which is still in the early stages of discussion as an addition to the park.

Adrian Poapat and Holly Neuhof ride the dragon roller coaster, one of the many popular rides at the annual Virgil Stampede.

The 52nd annual Virgil Stampede took over Centennial Sports Park during a Victoria Day Long Weekend filled with rides, games, barbecues and family fun. (Photos by Richard Harley)

The children’s derby kicked off the mud-fuelled frenzy on the Saturday of the Virgil Stampede.

Bridgette Dingman and Lauren Davidson get thrown around on the Scrambler, a Virgil Stampede classic.

The Panncia and Majka families enjoy some carnival snacks at the Virgil Stampede during the Victoria Day long weekend in May.

The rain provided the perfect terrain for cars to splash mud around during the derby.

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The Pannicia and Majka families enjoy some carnival snacks at the Virgil Stampede during the Victoria Day long weekend in May.

Adrian Poapat and Holly Neuhof ride the dragon roller coaster, one of the many popular rides at the annual Virgil Stampede.
Four-way stop now a go

The Niagara Region has put up a four-way stop at the intersection of Four Mile Creek and Line 3 roads. (Photos by Richard Harley)

Richard Harley
Editor

The Niagara Region has put up a four-way stop at the intersection of Four Mile Creek and Line 3 roads after what some claimed to have been the 29th collision at the corner in April caused a stir amongst town council. Coun. Miele went live with a Facebook video in April to show just how bad the accidents can be, and attended regional council with Lord Mayor Pat Darte to demand a solution to try to make sure nobody else gets hurt.

The Region agreed to the four-way stop, saying the intersection, which technically didn’t meet the standards for a four-way, is unique and warranted an immediate solution.

The four-way was officially unveiled a couple of days after being installed on Line 3.

The signs were bagged before that while the Region painted the proper road lines.

Darte and Miele, who were both out the day the first-day signs were uncovered to talk to neighbours and see how traffic was responding, said it’s about time something was done at the corner.

Passersby agreed — during the short time a reporter was on scene, a handful of people stopped to press their thanks to the lord mayor and Coun. Miele for getting the stop signs up.

Lydia Plett, a retired elementary school teacher who has lived on the corner of Line 3 and Creek Rd. for more than 35 years — 13 of them on the actual corner — said she is “extremely grateful.”

She said living so close, she’s “seen and heard” all of the accidents that have happened.

“You hope it’s not your kids,” Plett said.

“But it’s somebody’s,” Darte said, he hopes people will spread the word around that the four-way is now active, so traffic will start to get used to the signs.

Niagara Regional Police officers were on scene the first day to make sure traffic got the message.

Traffic Enforcement Sergeant Adam Carter said he issued more than two dozen warning tickets.

He said around one in 15 cars was ignoring the signs, but that it was likely just because it’s unknown.

The speed limit on Creek has also been lowered to 50 and 60 km/h coming from Niagara Stone Rd.

Coun. Terry Flynn agreed that the speed reduction would be a help in preventing accidents along Creek Rd.

Flynn, who doubles as superintendent of operations for Niagara EMS, said although it might impede the flow of traffic, he’d rather be slightly inconvenienced that have to get another call about an accident and wonder “who is it this time?”

He said the trouble the town originally had with the intersection was the road is controlled by the Region, not the town.

He said town council had battled with the Region for years about the intersection, having to fight tooth-and-nail to get a flashing light installed above the stop sign on Line 3, and to put up a sign warning traffic that a four-way stop on Four Mile Creek doesn’t stop.

None of that helped.

Plett thanked Miele for his Facebook video, which seemed to be the catalyst in finally seeing some solution.

Now, the struggle will be enforcement, said Carter, noting the intersection is still not the most ideal spot, and that even stopping, drivers have to see if the person headed down Line 3 is intending to stop.

He said there will be a bit of a learning curve for town residents.

“The whole staff of the NOTL Nationals,” Darte said, “is used to the signs.

“They are going to spread the word around that the four-way is now active, so traffic will start to get used to the signs.

The Niagara Region has put up a four-way stop at the intersection of Four Mile Creek and Line 3 roads. (Photos by Richard Harley)

Richard Harley
Editor

After nearly two years of negotiations, Niagara-on-the-Lake is officially getting its own Junior A hockey team.

The team, the NOTL Nationals, will call Virgil’s Meridian Credit Union Arena its home and will play games on Friday nights and Sunday afternoons, said team owner Spencer De Wolfe, who is a long-time hockey player and coach, himself.

“It’s not just going to be a hockey game, it’s going to be a family event,” De Wolfe said. “It’s entertainment for people to enjoy and look forward to on Friday nights.”

Players will be trained in development skill sessions by former NHL players Zenon Konopka and Dave Cowan and will be coached by former Hamilton Bulldogs coach John Grossi. Two other coaches, both from Toronto, will also be named in the coming weeks.

De Wolfe said NOTL was the “right fit” for the team, which he’s been wanting to start for some time.

“We thought Niagara-on-the-Lake is a fabulous town... It’s somewhat surprising how driven the community is, and it was important for us to find a town that was accepting.”

Putting a Junior A team together, he said, can get “quite expensive,” and although there isn’t an exact price tag yet, there is a lot to do — from setting up branding and franchising to renovating the arena and purchasing equipment.

He said the team and town have worked together to put the “best product on the ice.”

“The whole staff of the town has been awesome in negotiating and working things out.”

The team logo is currently being added to the arena’s changing rooms, ticket booth and coaches’ doors.

De Wolfe said painting the NOTL Nationals’ logo on the ice hasn’t been negotiated yet, but they’ve signed a three-year lease for the arena and intend to stay around.

The team will travel to play other Ontario Junior A teams, though De Wolfe said the furthest they would likely go is around two hours away.

NOTL Lord Mayor Pat Darte said he’s “enthusiastic about another opportunity that brings youth to the town.”

“I know my family will be establishing a new tradition of being at the arena on Friday nights to cheer on the NOTL Nationals,” Darte said.

Team tryouts were held at the end of May for players aged 16 to 20.

For information on other ways to get involved, go to, www.notlnationals.com

Town Coun. Paolo Miele, NRP traffic enforcement sergeant Adam Carter and Lord Mayor Pat Darte were out to see how traffic responded to the new stop signs creating a four-way stop on Four Mile Creek and Line 2 roads. (Photos by Richard Harley)
The old NOTL steam engine

Denise Ascenzo

Imagine hearing a bell ringing in the distance, but it isn’t from a bell tower. Imagine hearing a strange whistle blowing way off across the fields, and then feeling a rumble under your feet as a mighty monster comes into view. Imagine hearing a bell ringing in a friendly manner.

Miles Express.”

The train crew would then be sent to Halifax for repair.

Besides transporting people and cargo from Toronto to Buffalo, the train was also heavily used during the First and Second World Wars as a troop transport. The spur line (a secondary track for loading and unloading railcars without interfering with other railroad operations) for Camp Niagara turned off the main line at King St. and Mary St. and ran along John St. as far as Paradise Grove.

On this line you would see raw recruits step off the trains, and months later you would see well-trained soldiers board the troop trains to Toronto, where they would then be sent to Halifax for transport to Europe.

Remnants of this line and the loading platform are still visible as you walk along the path, through the Commons parallel to John St.

The railway line was extended to Fort Erie and across to Buffalo in 1863, and the daily train service was implemented in 1864, running from Buffalo to Niagara-on-the-Lake.

On April 8, 1960, a roadside along the Niagara Escarpment destroyed about 70 feet of the rail line, ending any possibility that rail service might come back to NOTL.

Niagara-on-the-Lake was also home to the train’s only conductor, George Patrick Miles (Paddy Miles) who worked on the train from 1863 to 1901 and made an impression on the people of the town.

Even though the railway changed names throughout the years as it passed between companies, most of the town’s people called it “the Paddy Miles Express.”

Miles became a familiar figure, standing at the docks in his blue suit, brass buttons and brass-trimmed blue cap, greeting all passengers boarding the train in a friendly manner.

Even after he retired he could be seen on the front porch of his home on King St. waiting for the train to pass by.

An illustration of the old train that once passed through downtown Niagara-on-the-Lake. (Supplied)

A photo of the old steam engine passing by what is now Simcoe Park. (Supplied)
Train Ticket

Richard West
Writer's Circle

In the summer of 1997 I found myself a long way from Niagara, standing in the crowded Kobe Railway Station lobby. Like all the people waiting patiently in the lobby, I needed to buy a ticket. My destination was Tokyo, travelling on one of the famous Skinkansen trains. These trains can reach 320 km/h (200 mph).

I had arrived in this part of Japan on one of these impressive trains and was looking forward to the return ride. Except on the way back I was travelling alone. That was why I had needed to buy a ticket to go home, with my newly signed contract. I am not overly tall but in the lobby I was amongst the tallest people. The crowd was slowly inching forward. Although I could not detect a proper queue, it seemed that due consideration was being afforded to those who deserved to reach the ticket office first. A small voice spoke to me from about my right shoulder. Turning, I found a smartly dressed woman of about twenty. She repeated her question, ‘Excuse. Do you need help?’ ‘Thank you. But I think I will manage,’ ‘Where do you go?’ ‘Tokyo.’ ‘Oh. Are you an American?’

By now I could see many of the gathered travellers were listening to our conversation. ‘No. I am Canadian.’ ‘Oh. May I tell these people what you said?’

‘Go ahead! The young woman spoke in a surprisingly loud high pitched voice. Our audience listened and nodded, while many broke out in broad smiles. ‘I was not sure if the smiles were because they thought it funny I was travelling alone or because they were pleased that I was Canadian. ‘Where do you come from?’ ‘I live near Toronto.’ She immediately announced this new wisdom to the ensemble. More nods and smiles. ‘Where near Toronto?’ ‘I come from a small village which I doubt you will have heard of, called Skinkansen Station.’

She immediately announced this new wisdom to the ensemble. More nods and smiles. ‘Where near Toronto?’ ‘I come from a small village which I doubt you will know. It is called Niagara on the Lake!’ ‘Oh. I have been there.’

She had taken home a positive impression of the Niagara region. As we host the visitors to Niagara we may be doing a little to foster understanding and goodwill across many divides.

Happy 50th Anniversary

Richard James Steele born in 1946, Susan Mary Doris Steele born in 1949 are celebrating their 50-year anniversary in 2018. Susan met Richard when she and her friend prank phone called Richard while they were babysitting. She was a high school freshman and he was a senior. They were inseparable after that and married in 1968 in the St. Mark’s Anglican church in Niagara-on-the-Lake. Their children Candace and Dylan wish them many more happy years.

Cleaning the lake

Volunteers gathered Saturday morning to show a little bit of love to Lake Ontario by cleaning up the waterfront. Tires, plastics, cans and other garbage was pulled out of the lake in just a short time. If everybody in the community spent one summer afternoon picking garbage out of our lakes, just think how much cleaner (and safer) our swimming spots would be, for us, and for wildlife.

Make a change. It doesn't take much.

Strawberry Season

Strawberry Festival 2018

There will be no shortage of strawberries at the annual Strawberry Festival in Niagara-on-the-Lake on June 16.

The 35th annual Strawberry Festival in Niagara-on-the-Lake returns to St. Andrew’s Presbyterian Church on June 16.

As is tradition, the event will include plenty of strawberry shortcake, crepes and ham and a barbecue. As well, the event will hold its annual strawberry sale, silent auction, bake table, used nickel sale, along with a children’s area, tours of the historic church constructed in 1833 and day-long entertainment.

THE 2018 RISING SPIRITS YOUTH WRITING CONTEST

What does leadership mean to you?

Young people between 11 and 18 who reside in the Niagara region are invited to submit short stories (fiction and non-fiction) and poetry by August 31, 2018.

*Great Prizes + Opportunity to be Published*

For details and application forms - www.nof Worcester circle.com

Scene of the week

This edition’s Scene of the Week is by Antonetta Tremonte, who took a drive through Niagara-on-the-Lake in May.

“At the time of the year, I love driving along the country roads of NOTL and marveling at how the blossoms and dandelions paint the orchards with the colours of spring.”

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Make a change. It doesn't take much.
Local girl helps save kitten’s sight

When eight-year-old Claire Vanderlee found out about a small kitten who was in pain, even at her young age, she knew she had to do something.

So she set out to raise money for Darcy by selling pipe-cleaner bracelets to friends and neighbours.

Since then, she’s raised more than $460 towards a life-altering surgery for the kitten, named Darcy.

Darcy, was born with entropion, a condition that resulted in his eyelids getting folded under, leaving them infected and making it too painful for him to open his eyes.

Claire first heard about Darcy from NOTL Cats, a local cat rescue group. He was one of six kittens rescued from underneath an above ground pool enclosure on East and West Line in January.

If his condition had gone untreated, vets said the infections would have continued until he lost his eyesight completely.

As Claire’s mother Megan puts it, Claire “knew she had to help.”

That’s when she started making the bracelets and selling them for donations, Megan said.

Claire even managed to get them for sale in Pet-Valu in Virgil, where she raised most of the money.

With Claire’s help, as of press time, NOTL Cats has raised more than $2,400 towards the surgery.

Darcy underwent the operation in May.

With the surgery, he is expected to live a normal life. He is currently healing up at his foster home in St. Catharines.

Cathy Spence, a cat “foster parent” who is currently taking care of Darcy, said he’s like a new cat, opening his eyes wider than ever.

She said she will miss him when he leaves, but that’s her job, and she’ll be doing it again for other cats in need, as she has for the past six years.

The group has kept the GoFundMe page active to help cover any additional costs — after check-ups, medication and potential complications are factored in, the price could vary widely.

NOTL Cats said anything left over will support other cats in need.

The GoFundMe can be found at, gofundme.com/darcys-eye-surgery.

Darcy has another visit to the surgeon in two weeks.

As far as where Darcy will find a home, NOTL Cats said they would love for Darcy to be adopted with his sister, Dagne.

“She is such a comfort to him, cuddling, washing him and sleeping with him. She seems to understand his struggle.”

If all goes according to plan, Claire will be adopting Darcy and Dagne.

Megan said after everything, it’s hard to imagine a more fitting home.