



The Lake Report

Issue 3

June 15

Niagara-on-the-Lake

RANDWOOD Pt. 2

Stone walls

Randwood Pt. 2:
Stone Walls
Richard Harley
Editor

The Randwood Estate story gets even more complex when the timeline is considered — Two Sisters Resort Corp. has a development application waiting for Town approval before it can proceed, and the Town is trying to get property heritage designation in place to help protect it before dealing with that approval.

Both sides of the coin — SORE (Save our Rand Estate), opposing the development as inappropriate on the historic property, and Two Sisters — have been frustrated, feeling they have been stone-walled.

The clock began ticking in June 2017, when property owner Benny Marotta said he'd designate the estate himself — until Monday, when council made a decision to take over the designation process and have it completed before approving a zoning amendment for a six-storey hotel.

The town designation could cause further delay to the approval process, while Marotta said he would have liked to have a shovel in the ground this spring.

In some ways, he already did. Shortly after revealing an initial design plan to town council, he began preparing the Randwood property for development.

The Town's decision to initiate designation should halt any work being done.

Many residents opposed to the development have brought up the 2011 Romance Inn report, which mentioned conservation of the property, specifically a boxwood hedge buffer adjacent to the coach house and the Christopher

Street properties.

Marotta admits nine boxwoods have been cut down, but said they were identified by a paid arborist as diseased and maintains any work he's done has been to the specifications of the 2011 plan.

Some of the rules and recommendations for the property listed in the 2011 report were that:

· "Sufficient landscaping, buffers, and setbacks shall be provided to minimize the impact on abutting residential uses."

· "No terraces or balconies above the second storey shall be oriented toward abutting properties. Any terraces or balconies shall be oriented toward the interior of the property ... It is also expected the building will provide some noise attenuation between the Inn and the residential area."

· "A tree preservation plan prepared by a qualified professional and subject to review by the NPCA shall be submitted with a site plan application."

· "The boxwood hedge shall remain and be properly protected and preserved to ensure its continued growth."

SORE believes Marotta should not have been allowed to start work on the hedge without having a designated town heritage planner approve the report from the arborist.

But a Town report recently released says the official plan protection of the hedge was never implemented, and short of heritage designation of the landscape, or an approved

landscape plan contained in a registered site plan agreement, the policies of the official plan offer no effective protection of the boxwood hedge, or recourse in the event of its removal.

The hedge is deemed historically significant because it is part of a Dunington-Grubb landscape planted more than 100 years ago. The property also includes a garden pond designed by Dunington-Grubb, who was a notable female Canadian landscape artist.

Marotta has also planted trees on his property, which are included in his new proposal, even though it has not received approval.

If Marotta were to build the same hotel that was approved for the Romance Inn, he wouldn't need to seek any further permission from the town before putting a shovel in the ground, as it is already zoned commercial.

The property is currently approved for a development of 57 feet. For context, the current mansion has a maximum height of 42.65 feet, according to a report prepared by Quartek Group Inc. for the Two Sisters application.

On the other hand, if he is preparing for the development he is proposing, he would be bound to hold off from starting the project until the plan received full approval.

There is a grey area allowing Marotta to start preparing the property, as he could build the Romance Inn proposal himself if he wanted.

Marotta is requesting a zoning amendment for six storeys, which would generally be around 60 feet, though he plans to make the first floor the equivalent of two storeys according to design plans, bringing the amount he needs to around 23 additional feet.

SORE members have said it's obvious Marotta is preparing the land for the Two Sisters development, partially because of the nature of the work being done, including moving the boxwood hedge back 10 metres.

Marotta said he will be building a hotel either way, it's just a matter of how tall it will be, and whether he builds "up or out."

Other concerns of SORE members and residents opposed to the development are an underground garage, the traffic impact resulting from a large conference centre, and the privacy and living comfort of neighbouring residents.

With regards to additional traffic, the 2011 report suggested the current roads could the increased volume, "even with addition of the proposed development."

The whole Randwood issue has caused many SORE members to be frustrated with some members of council, especially ones they feel to be in support of the development, or allowing it to happen for some other reason — namely councillors Martin Mazza, Paolo Miele, Maria Bau-Coote, and Lord Mayor Pat Darte.

SORE members said it's clear town residents are not supportive of the currently proposed development and believe designation is one way to potentially preserve the property and ensure whatever is built suits NOTL.

Continued on Page 5.

Council: who's in, who's out for municipal elections

Penny Coles
Staff

Terry Flynn has never made a secret of wanting to one day be called Lord Mayor of Niagara-on-the-Lake.

After 35 years working for the Niagara Region's EMS, he plans to retire as superintendent of operations four years from now, and hopes to earn that title in the 2022 municipal election. He will also be retired from his 35-year volunteer position with the NOTL Fire Department, and will finally have the time to take on the full-time job.

But first, after spending more than 20 years as a town councillor, he has a decision to make about the next term — is he in or out?

"I'm 85 to 90 per cent sure I'm going to run again," he said.

"I really want to.

Every election I have to sit down and ask myself:

Am I still interested? Do I have something left to

give? And what is my special project?"

Although there are issues every councillor faces, he likes to have one particular goal to work toward. In the past it's been the new library and then the community centre, and this term, he's focused on the Niagara District Airport as chairman of the airport commission.

For the next four years, it

could be the future of Parliament Oak School — although it's now in private hands, it could still be used for something that would benefit the community.

He's also concerned about the Niagara Historical Museum — without more money for operations and renovations, its future is uncertain, Flynn said.

But first, he has to make the decision to run.

He has some doubts about whether he wants to face the coming election campaign, which he expects to be unlike any since he ran the first time in 1997 and earned the role as deputy lord mayor and the youngest on council.

"I think there's going to be a lot of negativity

around development.

There have been nasty remarks and nasty innuendoes, and I don't have a nasty bone in my body. I can't go after other councillors or the lord mayor — that's not in me."

There are a lot of retired newcomers who have a lot to contribute to the town, he said, and who have high expectations about council.

Continued on Page 6

Flynn



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Council moves to designate Randwood



144 John St., one of the properties of the Randwood Estate. (Richard Harley)

Penny Coles
Staff

The Town of Niagara-on-the-Lake will initiate heritage designation of the historic Randwood Estate, despite a warning that adopting an “intrusive” and “punitive” approach would be at a cost to taxpayers and could take longer than allowing the property owner to continue a process that is already well underway.

Maurizio Rogato, speaking for Benny Marotta of Two Sisters Resort, told councillors Monday he had to ask himself why council would refuse Marotta’s co-operative approach and his “firm, written personal commitment” to designate the John Street properties which are now the site of a rezoning application to build a six-storey hotel.

The conclusion he came to, he said, is that it is driven by “continued and documented falsehoods,” such as that a year has gone by with no process started, and that council is now playing catch-up.

Such statements, he said, are “simply fear-driven and aren’t true.”

He told councillors heritage planner Leah Wallace, formerly employed by the Town and now a consultant for Marotta, has been working “with an urgent sense of importance” to catalogue both the interior and land-

scape attributes in support of designation.

He said it’s detailed work and has taken time, but he sees an end in sight sometime later this month.

“The lands are going to be designated — that’s a fact,” Rogato said.

“I urge you to stay the course and adhere to the proper public process.”

Abandoning that approach, he said, would be unnecessary, unproductive and would delay the process, as work already completed would have to be duplicated, and would cost taxpayers thousands of dollars.

It would also, he said, “drive a wedge” in the community, of which Two Sisters Resort is a member.

“Do not allow the politics of fear to intrude into your decision-making,” he implored council.

Councillors at Monday’s council meeting were dealing with recommendations of the Municipal Heritage Committee to begin the designation process under the Ontario Heritage Act by announcing the Town’s intention to designate three John Street properties and one on Charlotte Street, as well as have three members of the Town’s planning staff and an outside heritage expert visit and inspect the sites to investigate what should be included in the designation.

They had approved the recommendations at last week’s planning committee meeting, and residents opposing the hotel development as inappropriate for a historic property were anxious to hear whether that vote would be ratified by council.

Paul Shepherd of the Niagara Foundation, which focuses on heritage preservation, encouraged councillors to move to designate the four properties of the Randwood Estate, saying all four addresses are significant cultural assets that are important locally and nationally.

“If the town can’t manage to designate one of the signature estate properties in NOTL it is failing its responsibility to protect our heritage resources,” he said, adding he thinks it’s “time for the town to step up” before entertaining any application for development of the property.

St. Catharines lawyer Patrick Little, representing SORE (Save our Rand Estate), also reminded council of its responsibility to protect heritage resources, a process which exists separate from any development application, he said.

“It’s a town process — you’re just doing your job.”

He asked how the Town could deal with a site plan application without knowing what has to be protected on the site.

“It is clear, logical and necessary for the Town to proceed with designation now,” said Little.

Trust between the council and the community has broken down over the handling of the Randwood proposal, he added, “and finishing what you started last week (moving forward with designation) will go a long way toward the process of repairing that trust.”

As at last week’s meeting, Coun. Maria Bau-Coote was the only dissenting vote, saying she’s against any town-initiated designation.

This week, she questioned why the town would spend money to duplicate the work that is underway by the developer, estimated at a cost of \$10,000, which would not include the expense of an appeal by the property owner if that occurs.

She asked town planning director Craig Larmour if he could confirm whether Rigato’s statement about the work underway is true, and he said he believes it is.

Larmour said while allowing the developer to proceed with designation might be a more co-operative approach, with the need for a peer review and a possible appeal, he’s not sure if the Town would gain any time.

Bau-Coote said she couldn’t support having the town take over the process “when someone’s already going ahead with this.”

Coun. Betty Disero asked if everybody — her fellow councillors, the public, the Municipal Heritage Committee, Town staff and even the property owner — are in favour of designation, “why wouldn’t we go ahead with this?”

The difference in whether the Town or Two Sisters undertakes the designation, she said, is a matter of control.

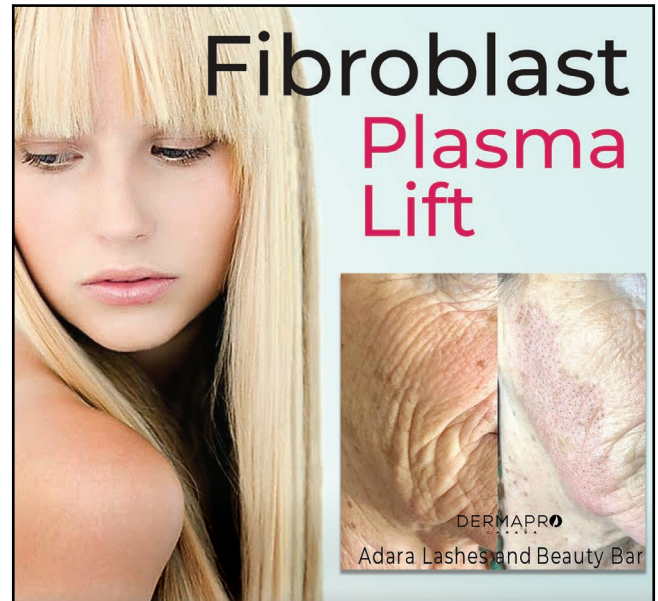
Once the Town gives notice of its intention to designate, the developer can’t move ahead with any work on the property, said Disero.

Without that, the developer can bypass input from the Municipal Heritage Committee, and “we lose control.”

“The issue of control is fundamental,” agreed Coun. Jamie King.

Although there is a cost to the Town, “this is something residents want us to open the piggy bank for and in good faith we should be supporting the residents.”

Coun. Terry Flynn, who was not at last week’s meeting to vote, said council shouldn’t put “all of its eggs in one basket” based on the



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applicant’s good faith.

The property was recommended for designation in 2011 when it was the site of an application for the Romance Inn, and it was flipped before that occurred, he reminded council.

Putting controls on the property now means that if that happens in the future, anyone considering buying the property would know

what controls are in place ahead of time.

All councillors were present at the meeting, including Lord Mayor Pat Darte, and all except Bau-Coote voted in favour of the town announcing its intention to designate the property, which the exception of Jim Collard and John Wiens, who declared a conflict of interest and did not take part in the discussion.

St. Davids residents aren’t ready to give up their pool



St. Davids Pool could be replaced with a splash pad in the future. (Richard Harley)

Penny Coles
Staff

St. Davids residents want to ensure there is some discussion about the future of the village swimming pool be-

fore it’s closed and replaced with a splash pad.

Kenn Moody, representing the St. Davids Ratepayers Association, said discussion amongst board members has led to some concern about the

future of the pool.

During a discussion at council about an indoor pool, the St. Davids pool was briefly mentioned as being at the end of its lifespan, would require expensive repairs,

and could be replaced by a splash pad.

Moody said the ratepayers association “is not unhappy” about a pool discussion, but is opposed to closing it and offering a splash pad in its place without consultation.

“That’s putting the cart before the horse,” he said. “There has been no discussion and we weren’t expecting this.”

Viewed through the eyes of somebody living in St. Davids, he said, it looks like closing the St. Davids Pool to save money for the Old Town pool “is giving us second prize. There has been no debate about whether a splash pad is appropriate for St. Davids.”

The people who use the pool in St. Davids, especially

the seniors, “find it a fitness procedure. I don’t think a splash pad is a fitting replacement.”

The pool and the two tennis courts provide the only recreational facilities in St. Davids, and there is nothing at all in the winter, and no public transportation to get to what is available in Niagara-on-the-Lake.


He said he’s also concerned that to some “it looks like St. Davids residents are to blame for the current condition of the St. Davids pool. Sorry, but we’re not accepting any responsibility for that. That’s a maintenance issue that needs to be discussed with town staff.”

St. Davids has tripled its size since 2011, and with other opportunities for growth

could double that again. “We have needs that were probably not forecast at the time and I don’t see anything town staff and council have produced to show you have any real plan for the future recreational needs of a growing community.”

He suggested a “community centre light” would be appropriate, not as elaborate as the Old Town centre, but some recreational facility with meeting rooms that would meet the needs of the future population of St. Davids.

Councillors agreed that the recreation master plan, about a year away, would be the way to consider a recreational facility for St. Davids, with public consultation.



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Wastewater treatment plant to open in August following construction delays



The new wastewater treatment plant on Lakeshore Road is expected to open in August. (Richard Harley)

Penny Coles
Staff

A \$43.2 million wastewater treatment plant on Lakeshore Road in Niagara-on-the-Lake is expected to be operational in August.

There have been two official launches of the regional project — first when politicians gathered on the site in 2012 to celebrate the funding for it, and then again in 2014 when construction began.

But there hasn't been much to celebrate since then, with the completion date delayed several times due mostly to construction problems, including leaking tanks and cement peeling from the

interior of the tanks, said NOTL's Regional Coun. Gary Burroughs.

The original date of completion was December 2016, which was then changed to December 2017.

"I told people in Garrison Village that they would wake up last Christmas morning and be able to flush their toilets into the new treatment plant," said Burroughs. "That didn't happen."

The project completion date was delayed until June, and now the most recent report from the Region is predicting August, he said.

"There are still leakage issues with the tanks, which obviously can't happen."

The Region is blaming the problems on the workmanship of Varcon Construction from Concord, though the company claims it is not its fault.

Angelo Riccio, owner of Varcon, said there were consultants on the site daily.

"It has nothing to do with the workmanship," he said.

"How can it be workmanship?"

The two sides are meeting regularly to resolve the debate of who is responsible and to ensure work continues, said Burroughs.

"There's more than enough blame to go around," he added.

With the \$4 million

contingency fund and a \$500,000 overage, the project should still come in under budget, said Burroughs.

"We're holding back that \$4 million until it's resolved."

The plant will replace the existing Lakeshore Road facility 800 metres west of it, which has been operating at capacity for years, with overflows causing odour problems for neighbours.

A regional report said the new plant is expected to increase treatment capacity by 40 per cent.

The cost, shared by the federal, provincial and regional governments, includes upgrades to three pumping stations, and that part of it has been completed, said Burroughs.

"The pumping stations are working and in good shape."

The project also includes a pipe to the two lagoons at the current facility, so they remain full and working until they are removed, which will keep the odour down for neighbours and also make removal of easier, he said.

There have been several reports and meetings on a preferred alternative for decommissioning the existing plant, said Burroughs — one that satisfies Parks Canada, which owns the land, the Region and NOTL residents.

The Region has planned for \$10 million in its 2019 capital budget for the work to be completed.

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Lepp Distillery proposes solution for tonnes of fruit waste



Around 3,000 tonnes of fruit mash is wasted every year in NOTL. (Supplied photo)

Richard Harley
Editor

Since CanGro canning factory in St. Davids closed in 2008, a significant amount of fruit mash and soft fruit has been tossed back into the orchards — around 3,000 tonnes of it.

A proposed small scale craft distillery could change that, by doing what Niagara has become known for — turning it into liquor.

"It'll take waste product and turn it into something that can be sold, used, mar-

keted, and a benefit to many area growers," said Arnie Lepp, president of Lepp Orchards.

The distillery, proposed by local company A.J. Lepp Orchards Ltd., would be a one-storey farm-style building located on the north side of Lakeshore Road near Irvine Road and Firelane 13.

A proposal went before a town committee of the whole meeting in June, which outlined the main operations of the business.

Lepp Orchards, which owns more than 200 acres of

land in NOTL, would deliver soft fruit and mash from its farms, as well as fruit from other farms — about 500 acres worth — to the distillery where it would be refrigerated before fermentation.

The distillery would be the second in NOTL, after Gretskey Winery.

Heather Sewell, of Niagara Planning Group — an urban development company out of Niagara Falls — told council the project would be on 3.4 hectares of land that is currently being used as a peach orchard.

The land is surrounded by residential houses, though the proposal said events would be limited to weekends and would be held indoors.

The proposal did not request zoning for outdoor events. A.J. Lepp representatives said there would only be indoor events, so neighbours would not be bothered by the noise.

A small patio is to face Firelane 13, which was said would not be a noise problem.

The project has support from the Agriculture Committee, said Sewell, noting it would add value to the farm-

ing industry, allowing fruit growers to once again make back some of the money from unsellable product.

As well, she said the project would add to the "authenticity" of the experience for those visiting NOTL.

And while the idea seemed to get a positive response from councillors, there were some initial concerns.

The facility is to use a nearby drainage pipe, and Coun. Mazza asked what preventative measures the distillery would use to make sure nothing untoward got in, noting the same pipe has experienced issues in the past, when some sort of "milky white substance" got into it.

Coun. John Wiens also voiced concerns about the smell of 3,000 tonnes of rotting fruit, though Lepp assured councillors the smell will not be an issue because of the process he intends to use.

The main concern about the proposal was traffic safety on Lakeshore Road, brought up by Coun. Paolo Miele and spoken to by Lakeshore Road resident John

Woolley, who said he was representing 19 other home owners in the area.

Woolley had a long list of accidents that have occurred on the part of Lakeshore Road where the proposed driveway to the Lepp Distillery would be, noting several fatalities.

He said part of the problem is people try to pass transport trucks that are slowing down, and end up driving into incoming traffic.

Having trucks delivering fruit mash from more than 700 acres to the distillery would cause a significant safety risk, Woolley said.

He said the only option he can see for the distillery to work and simultaneously keep an already dangerous part of the road safe is "to move it."

Miele and Woolley both noted the speed limit in that part of the road is still 80km/h and the road only has two lanes.

Coun. Betty Disero, who liked the idea, asked Lepp to consider building a lay-by for trucks to pull off to the side of the road before turning so drivers would be less tempted

to try and pass in such a dangerous zone.

Part of the problem council will have in approving the zoning is distilleries are not defined in the town's Official Plan.

It was discussed whether it would be best to base the recommendations off of the Gretskey distillery, which was approved without an Official Plan amendment, though council members seemed to unanimously agree there were plenty of other similar projects to use as examples, such as wineries.

The problem Lepp faces is his proposal does not meet the 10-acre requirement to be approved under the guidelines of a winery.

The proposed Lepp Distillery property falls slightly short of that, between eight and nine acres, said Sewell.

Lepp pointed out the project is not entirely a one location operation, and would benefit more than 700 acres of farm land in the town when other farms were considered.

"It's not just one 9-acre farm. It's a fairly significant operation in NOTL."



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Editorial: Protecting NOTL's threatened cliffside swallows



Cliffside swallows fly above Lake Ontario at Niagara Shores.

Richard Harley
Editor

Just off the corner of Lakeshore Road in Old Town, there is a paradise many locals know about called Niagara Shores Park.

The area, now closed off to the public for driving access because hoodlums were tearing up the grass with trucks, has been a staple of NOTL for ages, and anybody who is a regular visitor knows just how valuable it is to protect.

The property, once owned by National Defence, now

owned by Parks Canada, is one of the last forested hiking areas left in Old Town.

It has two thriving ponds which are home to a variety of wildlife, such as turtles and fish, and the forest is home to deer, squirrels, groundhogs and insects like butterflies and bees.

The area is also prime Carolinian forest, home to wild strawberries, raspberries, Ontario trilliums and century old trees.

It's a photographer's dream, and to top it off, the whole area is designated as a pro-



Trees have fallen over due to coastal erosion. (Photos by Richard Harley)

tected bird sanctuary, with a number of protected species — some threatened — which migrate to the park each year.

One of those species is the cliffside swallow, a bird which nests along the banks of lakeside cliffs, burrowing into the soft clay to create a home to raise its young.

Watching them frolic is one of my favourite pastimes.

The tiny birds are aerial insectivores, which means they mainly eat insects during flight, which makes for an acrobatic show above the shoreline.

At almost any given time in the summer, you can visit Niagara Shores and see these birds flying in and out of their cliffside hole homes.

If you listen closely, you can almost hear David Attenborough narrating as the chicks poke their heads out past the shadows of the caves to peer over Lake Ontario.

But over the years, as I've been watching, I've noticed the numbers of swallows has been in decline, largely due to eroding cliffside.

Across the globe, other factors like lakefront develop-



A cliffside swallow flies into its nest at Niagara Shores.

ments are causing the populations of cliffside bird species to dwindle.

Cliffside swallows are officially one of Ontario's threatened bird species, due in large to the disappearance of their natural habitats.

It's not entirely the fault of humans, as crashing waves play a large role in coastal erosion, as it has here in our small town.

As the waves roll in — filled with rocks, sand and debris — and crash against the cliffside, the wall erodes back further and further.

In the past few years, the cliff at North Shores has eroded so far back it's caused many of the trees on the bank to topple over into the lake.

But there is something hu-

mans can do to protect these habitats, so we don't lose these natural bird habitats.

Aside from protecting the land, which there is a good chance of now that it is owned by Canada Parks, there are a number of ways in which technology can minimize the effects of wave erosion.

Some techniques are: breakwaters, which can be used to minimize erosion and help naturally rejuvenate beaches, and beach nourishment, which is adding sand to artificially widen a beach.

There are a number of options, and while I wouldn't suggest which is best, or if it's even realistic, it seems something worth exploring.

After all, Niagara-on-the-Lake's heritage properties are shared by more life than just us, and we owe it to the future to protect the area for wildlife too.

If all is well and good, I would like to take my future grandchildren to watch the swallows dance at Niagara Shores, like my grandfather did for me.

editor@niagaranow.com

Dog park would be healthy option for NOTL



Betty Knight and her dog Lizzy. (Richard Harley)

Penny Coles
Staff

In this day of municipalities recognizing the importance of healthy lifestyles, a dog park could be considered an option to encourage residents to become more active.

Particularly in Niagara-on-the-Lake, with its large population of seniors and dogs, says Betty Knight, a dog owner who would love to be able to let Lizzy, her Australian shepherd run free in a safe environment.

A house is not a home without a dog, says Knight, and her eight-year-old rescue dog requires a lot of exercise.

"She loves to get out and run free. A tired dog is a happy dog, and happy dog, happy family."

Lizzy is living a retirement life, which includes walking on a leash, "but she would love to run and play and interact with other dogs."

Knight says socializing is as important as exercise, both for dogs and owners, especially seniors.

"Both would help promote

health and safety, for dogs and their owners."

Knight has found a popular location where dog owners take their pets to run free, but it's not an officially sanctioned off-leash site and has to be visited early, before the "the rest of the world wakes up."

While Parks Canada has provided an area on the Common for dogs to run off-leash, it's not fenced, and the space is shared by pedestrians and cyclists, including families with kids, which is not the best situation for the safety of all who use it, she says.

"It's not the dogs or the kids' fault, but it's a situation that is set up for failure. I'd like to see something set up for success."

A fenced-off area, she says, is necessary for the safety of all.

Volunteers would likely be involved in helping to maintain the property, and dog owners are pretty responsible when it comes to cleaning up after their pets, she says.

As for location, that's for the Town to decide, Knight says, but she would encourage the

topic of a dog park to be added to the Town's website's Join the Conversation, allowing residents the opportunity to weigh in on where they would like to see it located.

"We have to trust our elected officials to make a sound, prudent judgement, taking into account the needs of the community, including accessibility for seniors."

But she hopes the Town will embrace the idea of a dog park, to benefit not only canine members of the municipality but the dog owners.

"In this day and age we tend to spend a lot of times indoors in front of screens, instead of outdoors in nature. I think this is a wonderful opportunity for man and beast alike to be more active and spend more time in the fresh air. The more we can provide opportunities for people to do that the healthier we'll be as a society."

She is supporting Coun. Betty Disero's efforts to investigate a dog park, believing it would be a valuable addition to the municipality.

Disero said she has had several requests from residents in the last two to three years, but when she's approached Town staff, "they weren't keen on the idea."

She made a motion at the recent council meeting to have it considered in the recreation master plan, which is expected to be looked at next year.

She told councillors a dog park in a confined area would eliminate safety issues for children who use the recreational paths for cycling, and may be frightened by dogs.

"Some municipalities provide dog parks that are clean

and provide an opportunity for separation and socialization of canines."

She said a dog park would also help neighbours who complain about dog owners letting dogs "go on their front lawns."

Coun. Terry Flynn said he'd like to see Glendale, an area that has lots of dogs, be considered for a test project for a dog park.

While some residents have suggested the Virgil sports park as the preferred location, Disero left that for staff to sort out, with public consultation.

Coun. Maria Bau-Coote recalled a previous discussion with an earlier council and asked for a review of that discussion.

"This is a new term, a new era — it's time to get new information," said Lord Mayor Pat Darte, who then agreed the information from the 2011 staff report could be reviewed.

At that time, the 2011 report shows, a resident asked for a portion of the Virgil sports park, the area referred to as the corral, to be fenced for dogs.

Council endorsed the staff recommendation against a dog park at that time.

Coun. Martin Mazza, who was on council during the earlier discussion, said "it was a different term of council, different staff, different CAO and different philosophies. There is nothing wrong with having another look at it, to see if anything has changed."

Council unanimously supported Disero's motion to have a dog park considered in the town's recreation master plan as a research item, including looking at potential locations.

Correction, clarification and note from the editor

Richard Harley
Editor

Following our Randwood Pt. 1 story last week, The Lake Report would like to make some clarifications.

It is the firm stance of paper that all citizens should feel welcome to seek advice from their elected politicians.

The paper encourages all residents to be active in municipal politics and to get to know their local politicians on a personal level.

Transparency, especially in the world of politics, is something each of us should advocate for.

The Lake Report would further like to acknowledge a letter of response published by members of SORE on the group's website.

While the paper disputes many claims about its reporting — including that the story painted SORE members in as a "cloak and dagger operation" — TLR would like to clarify that SORE members have also denied Disero is running the group in any way.

The Lake Report confirmed Disero met with core SORE members before the forming of the group, and asked for any correspondence between the two to help see if the group had in fact come to her for advice.

SORE agreed to send correspondence, if Disero also agreed, but Disero would not before the last edition was published.

Since then, Disero has sent various email correspondence between herself and SORE members, and information

will be published in a story at a later date.

The Lake Report has filed a freedom of information request for the communications of all members of council with many involved parties.

A correction the paper would like to make is SORE does not advocate for a historical site, but rather historical preservation on the site.

Further clarifying, to date, no *single person* has come forward as the face of SORE.

Group members have identified themselves, however, articles — such as a response to this story — continue to be published without an author name.

SORE has told The Lake Report numerous times it wishes to be transparent.

In turn, The Lake Report has communicated its belief that in order to be transparent — and given that members have said incorporation is underway — articles should be published with author names and a firm leader should be identified.

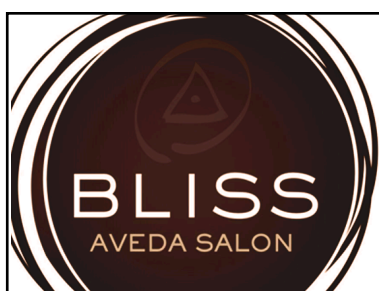
In the original version of SORE's response, the group also failed to mention the story is the first part of a multi-part series. The group changed the story to reflect that on June 12.

The Lake Report strives to operate on the highest standards of truth and balance and holds its journalistic integrity in high regard.

Whenever mistakes are made, they will be corrected.

The Lake Report stands by its journalism with regards to the Randwood series.

editor@niagaranow.com



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Cont'd: Randwood Pt. 2

Continued from Page 1

SORE has said certain councillors and the lord mayor appeared to be delaying the designation process, but apart from Bau-Coote, they all voted in favour of it Monday.

The group maintains that if people don't want the currently proposed hotel — and if the developer and the Municipal Heritage Committee both agree the properties should be designated — council should have acted faster on approving a motion for designation.

The problem now is how long it has taken.

Marotta could take the decision for the height amendment restriction to the Local Planning Appeal Tribunal — which has replaced the Ontario Municipal Board to hear planning decision appeals — since there is little likelihood he will have his decision within the specified time.

LPAT is in place to ensure developers have a fair trial when proposing developments, while respecting provincial legislation and municipal decisions.

All developers are allowed to appeal their plans after 120 days without progress.

Marotta said he's still considering whether he will take the project to the appeals tribunal, but that he feels he has little other choice.

He said he views the people from SORE as "bullies."

SORE members, who said they aren't trying to prevent development entirely, but would like it to be sensitive to the town and its neighbours, also believe if the town approves the bylaw for six-storeys for Randwood, it could set a precedent that would allow every other developer to build six storeys.

Marotta said he doesn't think the property can be used as a precedent, because the amendment request is based on many factors that are unique to the Randwood property, including the stone wall that surrounds the property, a provincially conserved creek, rare old trees and historical buildings.

Town planning committee staff told the The Lake Report all planning applications are considered objectively, based on their merits, and that every site and context is unique.

The site plan for the proposed hotel also shows a plan for a future subdivision behind the John Street hotel, which would expand on the area behind Christopher Street and Weatherstone Court.

SORE members have raised concerns about the subdivision, though it is not approved as the land is currently zoned for low-density residential development.

Subdivisions are defined as medium to high-density, so a separate amendment would need to go before council. The Town has said it has no application for the subdivision.

A division on council has

trickled down into a division of residents, sparking various political efforts, including a social media group called FocusNOTL which advocates for a "new council."

While many of SORE's talking points have been used by FocusNOTL, SORE core member Lyle Hall said he wanted to make it clear the group is not affiliated with FocusNOTL in any way, and that SORE is not advocating for a clean sweep of council.

The advocacy for a clean sweep by unregistered political groups has caused a further division among residents, as well as between residents and councillors.

Some residents support a new council, while many question if that is a good idea, calling into question the motives to run, particularly if it's on a single issue.

Councillors themselves have noted the job of a councillor is a lot of work — more than just making zoning amendments.

Other contrasting groups have since formed in response, such as NOTL 4 All, intensifying the divide, as it seems some groups are actively pitted against each other on social media sites.

Some council members have also gotten involved.

Some social media comments accuse some councillors to be in the pockets of developers, and accusations have even reached councillors' families via social media.

All councillors spoken to have denied the allegations, and at times family members of councillors have also come to their defence.

Paolo Miele is one councillor who sometimes gets involved in Facebook debates.

Miele, who runs two successful businesses, said any

ties of heritage significance, including 289 Ricardo St., which also contains a Dunington-Grubb landscape.

So far, designation of the Randwood Estate has been a slow moving process.

Marotta agreed to initiate designation of the property himself, and as a result council did not force immediate designation on the property.

Marotta, who said he still agrees on designation, would prefer to wait until the proposal is approved before designating the site.

Many residents and members of SORE have expressed concerns about why Marotta did not make the motion to designate the property right away and have accused Marotta of wanting to tear down buildings on the property, saying the reason he doesn't want to designate is that it would prevent him from being able to do so if he changes his mind.

Marotta has been consistent in saying he plans on developing the site with heritage in mind, however, SORE members have asked why — if the case is he is going to do everything in his power to preserve the heritage features of the property — he hasn't designated already.

He said regardless of his intention to preserve the property, some changes will need to be made, but they will be ones that are appropriate to the feel of the Old Town.

He said he feels he's been attacked with regard to his development, and worries how much longer it will take to get started.

Marotta has given a number of reasons why he wanted to control designation, including that he does not want to be further limited with regards to what he can do, since there

Gates sweeps Falls riding



Niagara Falls MPP Wayne Gates. (Richard Harley)

Penny Coles
Staff

NDP MPP Wayne Gates will be back at Queen's Park representing Niagara Falls, Niagara-on-the-Lake and Fort Erie for another term, this time as a member of the official opposition.

He won the riding in the provincial elections June 7 with more than 50 per cent of the vote, the largest number in the history of the riding, with PC Chuck McShane behind him with 35 per cent.

After a busy morning picking up election signs, he said he was elated by the support shown in the polls, but not surprised.

"I'm never surprised. I'm always very consistent, using every ounce of energy working for my constituents."

He said the vote reflects that people recognize how hard he worked, and realize his sincerity and his passion for their community.

"Every four years, you go back to the residents of the community, and they let you know whether you've done your job. The residents sent a

clear message — keep up the same hard work you've done in the past. That makes me feel good."

But he admits to being a little surprised at the strength of their support, especially in Niagara-on-the-Lake.

He was at the Supper Market on Niven Road Wednesday evening, and many people were letting him know he had their vote, he said.

That was reflected in the numbers at the polls.

"We did very well in Niagara-on-the-Lake, especially in the Old Town, where we got over 1,000 votes," said Gates. "That was the icing on the cake."

When the NOTL results were shown on the screen at the Marriott on the Falls hotel Thursday evening, "a big cheer went up," said Gates.

He said he's proud of the clean campaign he ran, and of the results, but it wouldn't have happened without a great team behind him.

"I'm very proud of all of them, but especially the young people. We had a lot of young people out working hard for us, and they were having fun

doing it. It's great to see — they're our future."

Throughout his election campaign, Gates, former president of Unifor 199, said he is happy to work with with people of all political parties for the betterment of the community, and would continue to do so.

As a member of the opposition under a Doug Ford government, he will continue to work for what's important to his riding, he said.

"I'm a little long in the tooth. I've been working with people all my life, it doesn't matter who they are. I will continue to make sure our issues are heard at Queen's Park and to speak out about what's important to this riding. I was happy to hear Doug Ford promise he'll bring the GO Train to Niagara and build our new hospital. He's the one who made the promises. We'll have to see what he does."

Gates' job will be to continue to push for more hospital beds and staff, to eliminate hallway medicine, to make sure development doesn't occur on the greenbelt and to protect the natural heritage of Niagara, he said. He's also concerned about the future of museums and libraries in the riding, he said, which would be devastated by cuts to funding, and will work hard to ensure they receive the support they need.

The unofficial totals from election night showed Gates with 30,161 votes, PC Chuck McShane with 21,126, Dean DeDimizio of the Liberal Party with 5,554 votes, 2,057 for Karen Fraser of the Green Party, Libertarian Shaun Somers with 314 votes and Goran Zubic of the Ontario Moderate Party with 169 votes.



The view from the backyard of a home on Christopher Street which borders Randwood. (Richard Harley)

accusations of being in somebody's pocket are insulting and that he just wants to see council follow procedure.

Further confusing the matter is the use of the term "third party designation."

The designation, which was approved by the town Monday, is not outlined in procedure as "third-party designation."

The (unofficial) term has been used to clarify a process in which a municipality decides a property warrants designation, usually with an unwilling property owner.

In the past, the Town has forced designation on proper-

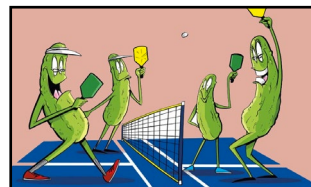
ties already an approval which outlines building guidelines.

But a representative of his told councillors a detailed inventory of the property, buildings and landscape, has been almost completed, which is the first step toward designation.

Editor's note: The paper has filed a freedom of information request for all email correspondence through town emails from all members of council (from June 2017 to June 2018) to Benny Marotta; Solmar Development Corp; Two Sisters and its lawyers; as well as core SORE members.

Part 3 comes out in July.

Pickleball courts headed to Virgil



Supplied photo.

Penny Coles
Staff

Despite a request to retain the Virgil courts for tennis, Niagara-on-the-Lake town council has decided to reconstruct them to provide six pickleball courts.

Representing the growing membership of the local pickleball club now using the badminton courts at the community centre, Case Bassie was at council Monday to ask councillors to approve staff recommendations to convert the tennis courts in the Virgil sports park for pickleball players.

At last week's committee-of-the-whole meeting, Sonja Schindeler of the NOTL Tennis Club requested the Virgil courts not be re-purposed for

pickleball and suggested that both groups share the courts, which was one of the options town staff investigated. She said the tennis club is already short of court time to accommodate membership, and although there are two new new courts approved in town, losing the Virgil courts would only leave members where they are today.

But Bassie said pickleball has different lines and players would need to lower the nets each time the club uses the courts. He asked council to uphold their decision as committee-of-the-whole to dedicate the Virgil courts to pickleball.

The club regularly has eight hours a week at the community centre, he said, although on courts designed and marked for badminton, and their time is often reduced due to other events.

Some of their players have moved from tennis, racquetball and squash, and turned to pickleball in their senior years, so the sport "is not competing with the tennis community but

complementing it with a different option," Bassie said.

New outdoor courts would bring in new members, he said, and allow for special leagues for juniors, women, men and mixed doubles, as well as beginners' sessions and tournaments that would attract players from outside NOTL.

Town staff recommended dedicated pickleball courts rather than sharing between the two sports, citing confusion from two sets of lines for both sets of players. The two Virgil tennis courts could be converted to six pickleball courts within the current footprint, the town staff report says, and the courts will also help develop strategies of active living in the senior population, the report says. The \$85,000 budgeted for the tennis courts will cover the conversion costs.

Council agreed, and construction is expected to begin in the fall - doing the work during the summer would jeopardize the safety of those using nearby baseball diamonds, the staff report said.



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Municipal Election: Who's in, who's out?

Photos by Richard Harley, except for Bau-Coote and King.

Current council

Penny Coles
Staff

Continued from page 1

"They are demanding about their expectations, but I can't commit to being a full-time councillor. That makes it challenging. I feel like I'm letting them down."

As a fifth generation NOTL resident, Flynn said he'd like to sit down with some of them and talk about the history of the town, including its growth. "We have to understand there will be development, and we have to have sensible development, sensible growth." But that takes time, which he finds it hard to find in addition to his job and council demands.

He is also struggling with the responsibility of being the most senior member of council after Coun. Jim Collard, who has already announced his retirement.

While it's important to have new blood on council, it's important to have some veteran members bringing experience and continuity to the table - and he fits that bill. "I still have a lot to give. I'm vulnerable to those who want change, but I'm good with that. I just don't have it in me to fight. I'm not accustomed to that kind of election."

Flynn said he's used to a bit of name-calling and heckling, but not the kind of booing and hissing councillors have been receiving recently.

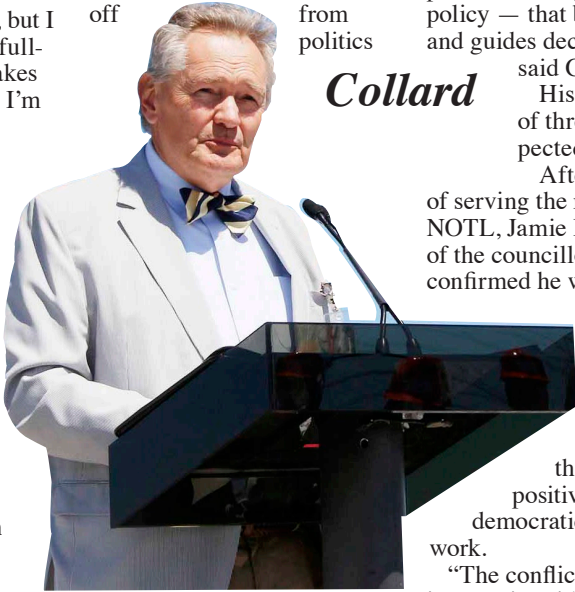
He would like to be able to continue campaigning as he has in the past, without a large team behind him, just going door-to-door to talk to people, putting up a few signs, going to all-candidates meetings and not having to spend a lot of cash, but that might not be enough this time round.

He's also considering his health - at 54, he's dealing with high blood pressure and diabetes, and trying to balance a high-stress job with family and politics.

"Being honest with myself, I know my heart and soul is with NOTL, but I want to make sure I can give 100 per cent. Am I in the right frame of mind to go into an election that will be a lot different from others, just giv-

ing what I can to a low-key campaign?"

With a goal of running for mayor four years from now, he said it might be good to take some time off from politics



Collard

great staff. They all really care about what they do."

Town staff will be on top of issues and ready to work with a new council, with policy in place — mostly provincial policy — that backs them up and guides decision-making, said Collard.

His seat is one of three or four expected to be vacant.

After two terms of serving the residents of NOTL, Jamie King, another of the councillors who has confirmed he will not be

returning, is referring to this as a "watershed election."

He sees that as the positive result of the democratic process at work.

"The conflict we're seeing in town is evident that people want to see change. The community is committed to seeking what they need."

Betty Disero, with just one term behind her, has already announced she's running for mayor.

Bau-Coote

John Wiens, Paolo Miele, Maria Bau-Coote and Martin Mazza said they have yet to decide.

King's decision is related to the time pressures of work — he no longer feels he has the time the job of councillor requires to do it responsibly, and he's been "consistent" on that for the last year.

His job as general manager of the Sheridan Student Union, providing ancillary services to 25,000 students and chairing the student board, takes him out of town every day, which has made it challenging to keep up with council work — especially daytime obligations — he said.

"Stepping aside is the responsible thing to do."

Between family and school obligations, there hasn't

been much time left for council-related work.

"It's the biggest part-time job I know," said King.

"Being trusted by residents has been an honour, and something I didn't take lightly. It's been a privilege to have had the opportunity to do that for the citizens of NOTL."

After more than a decade of being involved in one way or another in the community, he said he plans to remain active, and he's not necessarily stepping away permanently — he is interested in school board issues, and might take

a run at that in the future, he said.

"I've started to develop a broad perspective on education. And once you've been bitten by the bug, you want to make a difference."

King is pursuing a master's degree in education.

King said he thinks it was important to be clear about his decision not to run early

in the nomination process, so others who are considering throwing their hats in the ring will know who they're up against.

"This is a good opportunity for some folks who have been active in different forums to get involved. It's a good opportunity for change."

Miele was on Facebook recently asking people if he should run again.

"I'm not there yet," he said of his consideration whether to tackle another term.

He has growing children, a father with serious health problems, several businesses to run — and most of all, a wife who has to be supportive of his decision.

"I still have a passion for this town and the

job, and I want to see things get done."

Completing a tree bylaw and working to preserve heritage are both issues that are important to him, despite some of the criticism from residents directed at him and others over the development of the Randwood Estate, the subject of a development proposal for a six-storey hotel.

"All of council supports heritage, and all of council has the same concerns," he said.

Those are issues he'd like to stick around for to see resolved, as is the final approval of a new official plan.

"But family has to be the priority."

The decision is one that's on his mind



King

he's "pretty confident" he wants to seek another term

"My heart is telling me to run again, but there are a few more conversations I have to have. It's a joint decision."

Mazza is still "100 per cent" undecided.

His decision will be made partly on who else is running, he said, noting he hopes he can see a council that will move forward "in a positive manner."

He also said he needs to be sure he's prepared for the four-year commitment.

"I'm not ready for that yet. I need a little more time."

John Wiens is another councillor who has not made a decision, citing the busy Niagara-on-the-Lake Golf Club, of which he is an owner and operator, as the main factor.

He's enjoyed his time on council, and is accustomed to being involved in the public sector, but when he takes on a job, he likes to be sure he can give it the attention it deserves.

He's concerned work may not allow that.

He said the best part of being on council has been helping to move the town forward in

a positive direction, and to make decisions that are best for the community.

"The quality of life we have here in NOTL is very, very good."

He hopes it stays that way, and part of that is managing budgets efficiently and keeping tax increases to the cost of living.

He'd also like to stick around to see the revised official plan nailed down, hopefully in the next term of council.

"I feel I haven't finished my job, and it's important to me. There are a lot of unhappy people in town, and a lot of different issues."

But as general manager of the golf club, he's struggling with the time commitment as the club gets busier and increases its membership, which is now at almost 600, he said.

He has support from his family, but he wants a better handle on how much time he can devote to council.

As for rumours that he might run for mayor, that isn't going to happen, he said.

"That would be more than a full-time job. That wouldn't be in the cards at this time."

Betty Disero, who hopes to lead a council with some newcomers, said she thinks it will be good to have new, fresh ideas on council, but that she also hopes some of the current councillors will put their names in to run to provide some continuity.

As for a large turnover on council, Lord Mayor Pat Darte said he doesn't see it being a problem "as long as everybody runs for the good of the town and not for their own agenda, not for one or two main issues — as long as they're making the best decision for everyone."

He said although he would hate to lose the continuity returning councillors can bring to the table, "there is nothing we can do about that. We'll just have to work with what we've got."

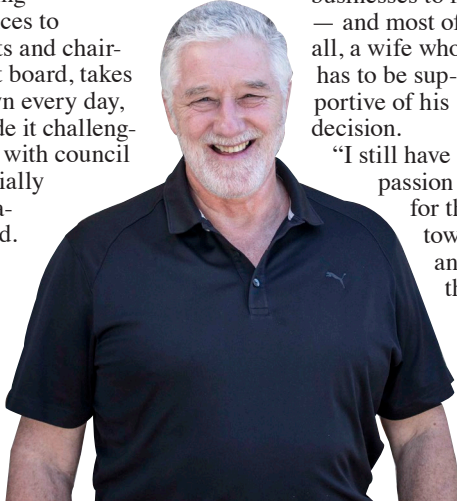
Miele



Council changes over time, he said, sometimes with a larger turnover, and all new councillors have a learning curve.

"But we have a

Wiens



Mazza



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 GARDENING

Garden Profile: The Camerons



Doug and Maureen Cameron in their Wellington St. garden (Submitted/Gary Hall)

Beckie Fox
Garden Making
Featured

After tending the garden at Carnochan House (circa 1883) on Wellington St. for just over a year, Doug and Maureen Cameron have divvied up the tasks in a somewhat equitable manner. "I do most of the planting and upkeep, and Maureen organizes the parties," Doug says with a smile, "but we do pick out the plants together." The Cameron garden is one of 10 private gardens on the Niagara-on-the-Lake 27th Annual Garden Tour, July 7,

10 a.m. to 4 p.m.

Although this is a new garden for the Camerons, the couple have gardened at other locations for nearly 35 years, most recently in Mississauga. "The biggest challenge in this garden is that plants grow so well here—I've noticed things getting big very quickly," he says. Although some people might find gardening on a corner a challenge, Doug says that the above-ground-level terrace at the side of the house provides a wonderful view, while well-placed shrubs and trees offer just enough privacy. He's

looking forward to watching three recently planted 'Samaritan' variegated dogwoods grow alongside the raised terrace to provide even more visual interest.

Some of Doug's favourite plants in the garden, which is located on a slight slope, are Japanese maples, a diverse collection of hydrangeas and Japanese kerrias. "Japanese kerria is an overlooked and underused shrub," he says. "It has bright yellow blooms almost all summer."

The front garden features white New Guinea impatiens, white alyssum and other white blooms to contrast with the green foliage of hostas, yews and cedars. The back garden is more colourful with a rich tapestry of purple, red and blue perennials set off by shrubs and trees with purple and gold foliage. A mature Chinese elm grows in the centre.

An interesting focal point in the lower level of the back garden is a large metal "pinecone" the Cameron's purchased at an art gallery in Jordan Village.

The hinged sculpture opens to reveal a firepit and is surrounded by a circle of colourful chairs, making it the perfect spot for gatherings on cool summer evenings.

NOTL Horticultural Society Tour July 7

The 27th annual NOTL Horticultural Society Tour is 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. on Saturday, July 7.

Other gardens on the tour include a mature estate lot with pond; a large garden with a diverse collection of trees, shrubs and perennials, many grown from cuttings or seed by the owner; and a home with many specimen trees in the front and a spectacular view of Lake Ontario from a modern, glass-walled deck at the back. Experts from the Niagara Peninsula Conservation Authority and Niagara College Pollinator Project will be on hand to provide information, too.

Proceeds from the tour help support charitable horticultural projects and scholarships in the community.

Tickets are \$15 each and available at Mori Gardens and through the society's website (notlhortociety.com).

Tickets can also be purchased the day of the tour at any one of the 10 gardens.

To suggest a garden to be profiled in future issues, send an email to editor@garden-making.com.

Planting a healing herb garden



Mint. (Supplied photo)

Catharine Skinner
Grow Niagara
Featured

There's an egg-shaped barbecue on a tiny, thrown-together deck in my backyard and nothing else but the sod the developers laid down last summer.

I know I should look out there and see possibility, but that green postage stamp feels like it's crushing me right now.

Maybe it's the fact that I'm newly separated with three kids. Maybe it's the fact that my ex is the only person who knows how to manage the egg-shaped barbecue that stares at me like an angry green droid.

I love eating barbecue, and I love lazy summer dinners with family and friends, and so in a moment of pure determination (or perhaps insanity), I decided I was going to learn how use that egg, and plant a healing

herb garden with my kids.

I've got these two rectangular planters that I've carted with me over several moves.

With just a bit of elbow grease and a few of those plastic ratchet ties, I secure them to the railing of my mini-deck. At each home I've lived in for the last six years, they've been overflowing with herbs.

One planter for savory herbs used for cooking, and the other for medicinal herbs for tea and tinctures.

I left them untouched when we moved to this house last summer — now, I'm going to head to Mori Gardens in search of some soil and plants.

I won't plant a thing until the morning when the kids are off school for the holiday weekend — I'll enlist them so that this healing herb garden will be ours to nurture together. It's the perfect time for planting herbs

and veggies. If we get started now, they'll thrive through the summer and be ready to harvest all the way into the early fall.

Maybe I'll even get some tomato plants. All my kids love tomatoes.

With this huge change in our lives, it's unlikely that I'll get that patio installed this summer, but we can still enjoy dinner with the windows thrown open and a warm breeze blowing through the house, or a picnic on a blanket in the grass.

When I close my eyes, I picture myself managing that barbecue like a boss, snipping tarragon by the fistful to sprinkle liberally over perfectly-cooked chicken thighs, perhaps with a cream sauce? I imagine sipping mojitos with freshly crushed mint in the company of dear friends, or my daughters and I creating homemade face masks with fresh lavender, enjoying a stay-at-home spa while we binge-watch our favourite Netflix shows.

I imagine healing, good food, and family in a whole new configuration.

My five-year-old son will use his tiny red watering can to give our herbs a drink every day.

I'll catch him sneaking basil leaves because he loves to pluck them right off the plant and eat them. My middle daughter will try too hard to help him, and they'll fight and make up over the joy of crushing fresh rose-

mary and smelling its fragrant oils. Next summer, when this transition is a distant memory, we'll create the outdoor living oasis we've dreamed of with a huge harvest table and canopy filled with twinkling lights, and maybe a raised vegetable plot that we can tend.

I'm starting to think I should just sit down with Mori Garden Designer Joanne Young and come up with a plan to work towards.

It feels good to dream — to imagine this vast, empty space full of lush plants and happy kids.

I recommend a healing herb garden to anybody feeling down. It will be a nice distraction for my family. We'll grow, we'll thrive and we'll grill.

Healing Herb Garden Wish List:

SAVORY:

- Thyme
- Tarragon
- Basil
- Dill
- Oregano
- Rosemary
- Parsley

MEDICINAL:

- Mojito Mint
- Lavender
- Chamomile
- Lemon Balm

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- Black - Brown - Composted Pine Bark
- Four Seasons Northwood

DECORATIVE STONE

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- Silica Pebbles - 1" Terra Stone - River Rock

SOIL

- Premium Topsoil - Topsoil - Triple Mix

GRAVEL

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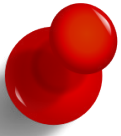
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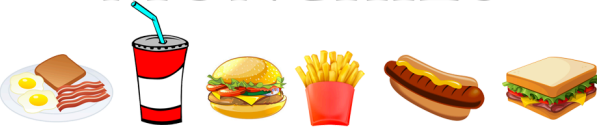
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<p>Father's Day 17</p> <p>NOTL Writers' Circle: Writers' Lab - 2 p.m. to 4 p.m. - NOTL Public Library</p> <p>Famous & Infamous: Richard Feynman - 2 p.m. to 5 p.m. - Niagara Historical Society & Museum</p> <p>Niagara Homegrown Wine Festival - 11 a.m. to 5 p.m.</p>	<p>18</p> <p>NOTL Seniors Strawberry Social - 11:30 a.m. to 1 p.m. - Community Centre</p>	<p>19</p> <p>Senior Activities: Golden Age Club - 1 p.m. to 5 p.m. - NOTL Community Centre</p> <p>The Makeshift - 2 p.m. to 4 p.m. - NOTL Public Library</p> <p>NOTL Chamber of Commerce Golf Tournament - 11:30 a.m. - Royal Niagara Golf Club</p>	<p>Open House: Queenston Community Centre Playground Public Consultation - 6:30 p.m. to 8:30 p.m. - Queenston Library</p>
<p>24</p> <p>Family Friendly Drop-In Art Studio - 1 p.m. to 3 p.m. - Niagara Pump House Arts Centre</p> <p>NOTL Writers' Circle: Writers' Lab - 2 p.m. to 4 p.m. - NOTL Public Library</p> <p>Family Croquet Tournament in memory of Kevan O'Connor - 12 p.m. to 3 p.m. - Red Roof Retreat (Con. 6)</p>	<p>25</p>	<p>26</p> <p>Senior Activities: Golden Age Club - 1 p.m. to 5 p.m. - NOTL Community Centre</p> <p>The Makeshift - 2 p.m. to 4 p.m. - NOTL Public Library</p> <p>Bahá'í community of NOTL: Parenting & Grandparenting - 7:30 p.m. - NOTL Community Centre (Simpson Room)</p>	<p>Wheel & Anchor: Niagara Wheel and Travel Evening - 5 p.m. to 8 p.m. - Pondview Estate Winery</p>

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Day	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
		<p>15</p> <p>Jackson Triggs Summer Concert Series: Whitehorse - 7 p.m. - Jackson Triggs Estate Winery</p> <p>Trius Red Presents: Movie Night in the Vineyard - Risky Business - 8 p.m. to 11 p.m. - Trius Winery & Restaurant</p> <p>Tours of St. Mark's Cemetery - 5 p.m. to 6:30 p.m. - St. Mark's Cemetery</p>	<p>16</p> <p>St. John Ambulance Babysitting Course - 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. - NOTL Public Library</p> <p>Jackson Triggs Summer Concert Series: Broken Social Scene - 7 p.m. - Jackson Triggs Estate Winery</p> <p>35th Annual Strawberry Festival - 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. - St. Andrew's Presbyterian Church</p> <p>Konzelmann 30th Anniversary - 7 p.m. to 9 p.m. - Konzelmann Estate Winery</p> <p>Two Sisters Vineyards Movie in the Vineyard - 7 p.m. to 11 p.m. - Two Sisters Vineyards</p> <p>MORI GARDENS: Privacy Plants/ Living Walls - All day - Mori Gardens</p> <p>Car Show @ Farmers' Market - 8 a.m. to 1 p.m.</p>
<p>20</p> <p>Common ation</p>	<p>21</p> <p>Senior Drop-In: Casual Bridge - 1 p.m. to 4 p.m. - NOTL Community Centre</p> <p>Minecraft Club - 4 p.m. to 5 p.m. - NOTL Public Library</p> <p>Legion Fish Fry (every Thursday) - 4:30 p.m. to 7:30 p.m. - NOTL Legion</p> <p>Upper Canada Drystone Festival - 8 a.m. to 4 p.m. - Red Roof Retreat (Con. 6)</p> <p>Summer Solstice Drumming Down the Sun - 7 p.m. to 10 p.m. - Ryerson Park</p>	<p>22</p> <p>Jackson Triggs Summer Concert Series: Serena Ryder - 7 p.m. - Jackson Triggs Estate Winery</p> <p>Trius Red Presents: Movie Night in the Vineyard - Pretty Woman - 8 p.m. to 11 p.m. - Trius Winery & Restaurant</p> <p>Upper Canada Drystone Festival - 8 a.m. to 4 p.m. - Red Roof Retreat (Con. 6)</p>	<p>23</p> <p>MORI GARDENS: Xeriscaping - All day - Mori Gardens</p> <p>The Makery: Summer Kickoff and Birthday Bash - All Day - NOTL Public Library</p> <p>Laura Secord Walk 2018 - 9 a.m. - Secord Homestead</p> <p>Niagara Homegrown Wine Festival - 11 a.m. to 5 p.m.</p> <p>Art in the Vineyard - 11 a.m. to 6 p.m. - Frogpond Farm Winery</p>
<p>27</p> <p>ine to 7 ery</p>	<p>28</p> <p>Senior Drop-In: Casual Bridge - 1 p.m. to 4 p.m. - NOTL Community Centre</p> <p>Minecraft Club - 4 p.m. to 5 p.m. - NOTL Public Library</p> <p>Clare's Bike Night - 6 p.m. to 9 p.m. - Clare's Harley Davidson of Niagara</p>	<p>29</p> <p>Knit a Bit - 2 p.m. to 4 p.m. - NOTL Public Library</p> <p>Trius Red Presents: Movie Night in the Vineyard - Forrest Gump - 8 p.m. to 11 p.m. - Trius Winery & Restaurant</p>	<p>30</p> <p>Artistry by the Lake - 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. - Queen's Royal Park</p>



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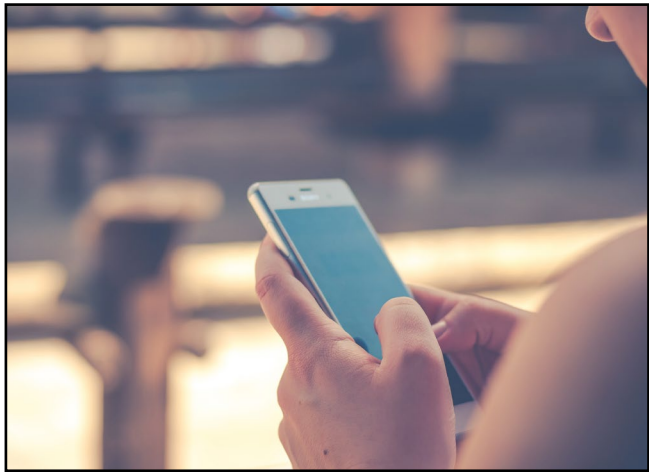
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Growing up in the Age of Anxiety



Supplied photo.

Hermine Steinberg
Writer's Circle
Opinion

As the school year winds down, it is important to reflect on the fact we are facing one of the biggest threats to the future happiness and success of our youth — mental illness is an epidemic.

As a former educator and counsellor, I know mental health struggles have increased dramatically in the past decade.

And 70 per cent of mental health problems begin in childhood or adolescence.

Our youth are more likely to experience mental illness or substance use disorders than any other age group.

More than one-third of Ontario high school students report some form of psychological distress, and anxiety and depression are rampant.

In 2012, suicide accounted for 15 per cent of deaths among youth aged 10 to 14, and 29 per cent among youth aged 15 to 19.

Second to car accidents, suicide is the second leading cause of death for people aged 15 to 24.

According to Children's Mental Health Ontario (CMHO), Canada's youth suicide rate is the third highest in the industrialized world.

These are the facts, but they don't tell the whole story.

No matter where I go these days or who I meet, the issue of how to address mental health challenges among young people comes up.

These are not theoretical discussions or sharing of something heard in the news — although those horrific stories seem to have become daily occurrences — but profoundly personal experiences with family members or close friends.

Mental health problems have touched almost every family I know.

Identification, access to treatment, and stigma are all important factors in addressing mental health in our communities but the bigger question of what is causing this dramatic increase in anxiety and depression among our youth must be confronted.

The mere fact so many young people are affected is a clear indication the causes must be more systemic than individually rooted.

Recent research indicates cultural or lifestyle factors such as social media may create fertile ground for mental health problems to grow and thrive.

This time of year can be particularly challenging for young people, as they face end of year assignment deadlines, exams,

look for summer jobs, and wait for responses from university and college applications.

All these pressures are now compounded by relentless hyper-connectedness with their peers, as well as their online 'friends' who are constantly poking, prodding, documenting and reminding them that they are being tracked, compared and criticized.

If they make a mistake or stumble, it will be put out there for all to see, forever.

It is easy to crumble under the weight of over-exposure, combined with a lack of time to give our brains the essential downtime to process our lives.

Adding to these growing levels of anxiety about real-time pressures, our youth are concerned about their futures.

They are now confronted with the reality of living a life with no job security.

By 2027, six in 10 people are expected to be independent workers in a new eat-what-you-kill 'gig economy.'

At the same time, people will be more dependent on technology and less able to live independent lives in urban centers, where the cost of living is sky-rocketing.

Climate change, bullying, sexism, racism, and a long list of other overwhelming issues are being experienced by our youth every day, while their leaders and institutions fail them.

Large corporations — which run the world and infiltrate every aspect of their lives — seem to be more interested in exploiting them than providing hopeful vision or solutions.

Life feels more unpredictable and family life less structured or even dependable.

I remember how surprised I was already years ago when I polled one of my classes to find out how many of them sat down and ate dinner with their parents or families.

The vast majority ate alone in their rooms in front of their

computers. They stay up late connecting to their online communities, but actually spend many hours each day by themselves, trying to figure out how to deal with their feelings of confusion, doubt, insecurity, and often isolation.

Many of them turn to self-medication; alcohol, drugs (prescribed and illegal), cutting, and other forms of high risk behaviour just to cope or be distracted.

There is no simple solution to address youth anxiety and depression but prioritizing young people — not just after health, academic or physical issues have been identified — as important members of our communities is critical.

We must teach our youth that happiness is not a life without stress, challenges, or setbacks.

Working hard, overcoming obstacles, and making positive contributions to the lives of others are worthy goals that they must believe are genuinely valued and recognized.

Celebrity status and accumulating material wealth cannot be seen as the end goal because ultimately it can't bring them the sense of community and personal connection they crave.

Reconnecting young people in a meaningful way to their families and communities, to real people who can mentor them, listen to them, and spend time with them, away from online pressures and unrealistic expectations, and separate from their 'workplace' which is their school, is vital.

Like all of us, they need to feel respected, wanted, and capable of making a difference in their own lives as well as the world around them.

In short, they need not only to be raised but empowered by their villages.

Epidemics can only successfully be treated through systematic inoculation, building up of the immune system and it is up to us to provide that injection of stability and hope.



Niagara Region is developing a new Council strategic plan for 2019-2022. Visit niagararegion.ca/shapeniagara or plan to attend one of our community engagement sessions:

June 18, 2018 ST. CATHARINES Seymour Hannah 5 - 7 p.m.	June 19, 2018 PORT COLBORNE Lions Centre 5 - 7 p.m.	June 21, 2018 BEAMSVILLE Fleming Centre 5 - 7 p.m.
June 25, 2018 WELLAND Civic Square 5:30 - 7:30 p.m.	June 26, 2018 NIAGARA FALLS Gale Centre - 5 - 7 p.m.	

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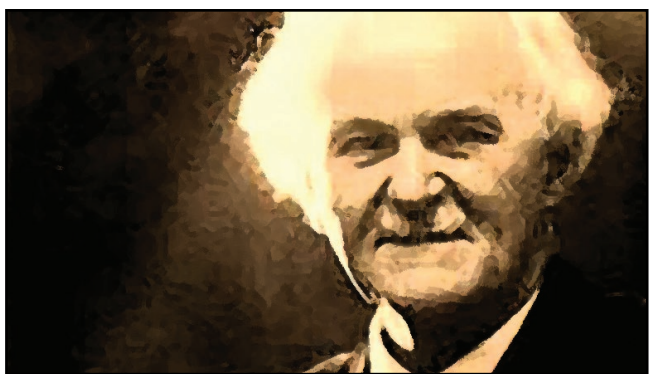


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Owen Staples – the artist who loved Niagara-on-the-Lake



Owen Staples. (Supplied)

Sharon Frayne
Writer's Circle
Featured

I couldn't believe my luck. I'd been searching the archives at the Historical Museum, scrounging for material about NOTL's long lost

second Courthouse and Jail.

Old black-and-white photos, early architectural renderings and floor plans had given me a basic image of an important building that disappeared from our town in the early 1920s.

A watercolour painting

tinted in light-rose and gold tones suddenly turned up.

It was signed by Owen Staples and dated 1911.

Staples was a Canadian artist who rubbed shoulders with the best of the time; Horatio Walker and George Reid were his Canadian teachers, and in Philadelphia he studied under Thomas Eakins.

He was also a sketching companion of Tom Thompson and friend to members of the Group of Seven.

He spent a lot of time painting homes and landscape in Niagara-on-the-Lake in the early 1900s.

His carefully rendered sketches and watercolours bring to life images of an era more than one hundred years ago.

He painted St. Mark's Church, St. Andrew's, The Wilderness, Navy Hall and the forts on both sides of the Niagara River.

Queenston Heights, the dockyards, the Printery, the homes of the rich and famous and everyday life in our community were also topics for his careful studies.

The picture I discovered was a print, and the original painting is stored in a special private room in the Archives section of the Toronto Library.

I travelled there, signed in and was given a pair of white gloves to wear to examine the fine watercolour rendering Staples had created.

It was titled 'Our Western Home.'

After the NOTL Court-

house and Jail closed, it was converted to a training and placement home for orphaned girls from Great Britain.

The painting glows with life and says, "look at me. I am real."

The gate is open, as if someone has just stepped inside and willows and foliage soften the elegant brick exterior.

Staples must have stood at the corner of Niagara and Rye to capture the scene. He passed away in 1949, and many of his works have been forgotten.

Why don't we know more about Staples?

After all, besides being a celebrated painter of Ontario scenes, he was a founding member of the Toronto Mendelssohn Choir, the Canadian

Society of Watercolours, the Arts and Letters Club and Board Member of the Ontario College of Art.

Staples was aware of the importance of recording history before it disappeared and made many trips to Niagara. His work — including the Niagara pieces — have been exhibited around the world.

We've recently become aware of the importance of preserving our rich historical past before it disappears beneath the relentless bulldozer of time.

Owen Staples, the lesser known painter of Canada deserves special attention here in Niagara.

He celebrated and preserved our town's beauty so we could understand the importance of protecting it.



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For lord mayor?

Pat Darte

Lord Mayor Pat Darte said he's still undecided whether he will run again as lord mayor. During previous talks with The Lake Report, Darte said he was also considering running for a spot on regional council but that he would need time to decide.

"I want to get a couple of ducks in a row first."

He admits he wants to know who else is running, and said he'll be sorry if he doesn't run, but he also has other businesses that have to be a consideration, and four grandchildren with whom he loves spending time.

"I've been thinking about this decision for three-and-a-half years, but there are still a few elements to consider."

He has loved his job as lord mayor, he said, helping people and organizations "do a better job of what they do," proudly pointing to a surplus of more than \$800,000 in last year's budget. And with six months still to go in the term, "there's more to do."

"My focus going forward will be to get some of this stuff done," he said, pointing to health care, education and economic development."

Darte has proven he it takes to become lord mayor during a past successful campaign.

Whether he runs for lord mayor or not, it is expected Darte will remain in the political realm in some fashion. Darte was out in May to spend a few hours by the new four-way stop on Creek Road and was also out shaking hands with firefighters during a small fire that broke out in the building next to the Angel Inn in June.



By: Penny Coles, Richard Harley



Betty Disero

Betty Disero is officially running for Lord Mayor after just one term on Niagara-on-the-Lake council. She brings with her 18 years of experience as a Toronto city councillor and is a full-time politician. Since moving to NOTL, she has since spent much of her time out learning the community. One of her goals is bringing councillors together to make decisions, something she said they are not currently doing.

Some of Disero's other main concerns are encouraging future development in Niagara-on-the-Lake because of its vicinity to the QEW and public transportation; potential infrastructure upgrades in Virgil and finding alternative routes to prevent traffic congestion on Highway 55; making the hospital, Upper Canada Lodge and Parliament Oak sites useful for Old Town; and working with the agricultural community to complete irrigation and mapping. To many residents, Disero represents a 'new council,' one which promises to be more sensitive to the heritage of Niagara-on-the-Lake. She said although some comments on social media sites speak of a slate of councillors, and appear to support Disero for mayor, she's not part of those groups, although there are a couple of people she thinks would be a "great addition to council."

Dan Turner

Dan Turner is a long-time local, having attended Colonel John Butler elementary school before its closure. This will be Turner's first attempt at politics and he's jumping in head first at just 23 years old. He has spent time working for Statistics Canada and as an employment inventory data student for the Niagara Region, and holds a four-year honours degree in economics from Brock University — where he is proud to say he graduated with a first-class standing. Having grown up in Niagara-on-the-Lake, Turner said he feels he has a good idea what issues are important to the town and the direction residents would like to see it go. He plans to file his nomination papers by July and said in coming weeks he'll be going door to door to find out exactly what's on people's minds. Some of Turner's passions are making sure the town does what it takes to keep its libraries open and properly funded during a time when they are threatened at the provincial level. He also said he has ideas to modernize the town's tourism industry to increase revenues for the town and lower taxes. Turner said he doesn't truly follow any political party, but rather good policy and would like to be the "peoples' person." Turner will be the rookie politician, but as Niagara has shown in its provincial politics, young blood can often stir the pot. Niagara West's conservative MPP Sam Oosterhoff is just 20, representing the region at Queen's Park.



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Taren Trindade
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Laura Secord Walk to promote history



Portrait of Laura Secord from page 1 of George Bryce's *Laura Secord: A Study in Canadian Patriotism* (1907) (Wikimedia Commons)

Richard Harley
Editor

For those looking to get some miles in for NOTL's Step Challenge, there will be a great opportunity June 23, when the Laura Secord Walk returns to raise awareness about one of the region's most celebrated women.

There will be two route options, the first being the entire distance Laura Secord walked on June 22, 1813 from her home in Queenston to the DeCew House in Thorold, where she delivered her fateful message in the defence of Canada.

This year marks the 205th

anniversary of her journey.

The route will stop along the way at various way-stations where people can learn a bit about Laura Secord and the history of the area.

The second walk, for those who prefer a shorter distance, will still provide a Laura Secord experience, though participants can choose how much they'd like to walk. A shuttle bus will stop at the various stations several times a day so that people can hop on and skip a section or get a ride back to their cars in Queenston.

Caroline McCormick, president of Friends of Laura Secord, said it's the perfect

way to rack up some steps for the Town's Step Challenge, which runs until the end of June and sees prizes awarded to those with the most steps.

As well, those who complete either walk will receive a badge of honour.

There will be various things to do along the way. At Laura Secord Homestead there will be historic cooking (and samples), musket demos and live music by folk singer Jim Dyer.

Walker Family Farms is providing delicious local strawberries, Niagara College will provide a free wine tasting to the walkers, and the Starbuck's at the Outlet Mall will provide hot coffee in the morning, and cold coffee for walkers at the half way point.

Registration is \$25 per person and supports Friends of Laura Secord, which aims to promote awareness and keep her name in the minds of Canadians.

Caroline McCormick said with all the costs for the walk — medals, insurance, portable washrooms along 32 km and shuttle bussing throughout the day — the group doesn't really make money.

"We just do it for Laura Secord enthusiasts who come from all over Ontario to 'walk into history' with us every year."

McCormick thanked locals Mike and Judy Fox, along with John Convoy and Pamela Ward of NOTL Niagara Nomads, who walk the trail every year to help get it ready for participants.

To register, visit, friendso-

flaurasecond.com

For those interested, average walking time for the full route is six to eight hours.

Event runners advise to pack a lunch, bring water and a cell phone in case of emergencies. Washrooms will be available at some waypoints but will be limited.

If you start the walk and get tired, head to the nearest way-station and wait for the shuttle, which will run 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. and stop at stations approximately every hour. The shuttle is not permitted to pick walkers up on the street.

Parking is available on the street in Queenston, and will be marked with signs. Participants are asked not to park at the Laura Secord Homestead.

The event is rain or shine. Participants are asked to meet at the Laura Secord Homestead at 7 a.m., especially those planning on walking the full route.

Here's a step guide, provided by Friends of Laura Secord:

Laura Secord Homestead to DeCew House Park (32 km): 43,500 steps

Laura Secord Homestead to Firemens Park: 9,600 steps

Firemens Park to Niagara College: 8,800 steps

Niagara College to Rodman Hall: 13,000 steps

Rodman Hall to Rotary Park: 5,900 steps

Rotary Park to DeCew House Park: 6,200 steps

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'Serve Big' benefits Red Roof Retreat



Back row: Bonnie, Isabelle, Kendra, Stefanie, Lauren. Front row: Emma, Lauren, Amelia, Megan. (Supplied)

Richard Harley
Editor

A group of local girls recently raised \$300 to benefit Red Roof Retreat.

Calling themselves 'Serve Big,' the group — part of the youth group at Bethany Mennonite Church in Virgil — raised the money by holding a community bake sale.

The Red Roof donation was one of Serve Big's biggest project yet, having only formed recently this year, said youth group co-leader Lauren Galenkamp.

She said Serve Big started out as a part of youth group's "TAG Team — Talents and Gifts Team, which does its best to give back to the community in various ways.

The group quickly grew to around nine members, all girls, who set out to do a different project every week.

The Red Roof fundraiser was one of their projects.

She said one of the girls, Isabelle, was inspired by Red Roof to want to work with kids with disabilities when she's older.

"Because she's so passion-

ate about that, we wanted enable her to give back to that program."

That's when the girls set out to get the job done.

They baked everything themselves, Galenkamp said, including cupcakes, cookies and Rice Krispie squares.

"They did a ton of baking," Galenkamp said.

Apparently they will need to make more next time, because she said the sale sold out completely.

The girls presented the donation to Red Roof founder Steffanie Bjorgan at the beginning of June.

Bjorgan, who got in touch with The Lake Report to let us know, said she thinks it's wonderful to see young people in the community helping others out.

Red Roof Retreat provides quality respite and recreational programs children, where youth and young adults with special needs can learn and grow in a safe, nurturing and fun environment.

For those interested in making their own donation to Red Roof, visit redroofretreat.com or go directly to canadahelps.org/en/dn/11854.

Summer Solstice to rock Ryerson Park



Sunset at Niagara Shores Park in NOTL. (Richard Harley)

Richard Harley
Editor

Around the world, societies throughout the ages have celebrated the Summer Solstice in different ways.

In the last few years, it's become a tradition for many Niagara residents to celebrate the longest day of the year by heading to the beach to 'drum down the sun.'

This year will be no different, despite some locations being changed.

Three Drumming Down the Sun events will be held this year on June 21 — at Ryerson Park in Niagara-on-the-Lake; at Lakeside Park in

St. Catharines; and at Charles Daley Park in Jordan.

In NOTL, the event will celebrate its fifth year, having been launched in 2014, when local resident Loretta Pietrobon got together with event founder Carla Carlson.

Pietrobon said she wanted to do her part to make the event larger, so she took the reigns to bring it to Ryerson Park, where it has been growing each year.

Around 60 people came out to celebrate last year, she said, noting she hopes to see an even larger crowd this time around.

Pietrobon encourages residents of all ages to come out

and help make some noise.

"It's a family event, everybody is welcome — kids, pets, whatever," she said.

As far as what to bring for a drum, she said "anything that makes noise" is welcome — even a pot and spoon.

"A proper drum, a tambourine, rattles, maracas — anything that you can keep a beat on."

The drum session in NOTL will be led by Kevin Hotte, owner of Circular Motion Canada, who has also led the event for the last three years.

The events will also feature a yoga session at 7 p.m.

In NOTL, yoga will be led by Fox Den Yoga.

There is no cost to the event, but optional donations will be collected to cover event costs, such as city park permit fees.

A portion will also go to the Niagara Land Trust, which believes in preserving natural heritage in the Niagara Peninsula.

The sunset drum session will start around 8 p.m.

Ryerson Park is located on Niagara Blvd. in Chautauqua Don't forget something to bang on.

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Local entrepreneur could have next Trivial Pursuit



Al Huberts, creator of Build-iT with Bryan Step By Step.

Richard Harley
Sponsored

Sitting down with Al Huberts, you quickly realize he could entertain you for hours with stories of things he's invented, books he's written and companies he started and sold, including fashion companies Leeds International and Kolte Ltd.

He's an entrepreneurial bloodhound, one that has been sniffing out the scent of big projects his whole life, having once held exclusive printing rights to Disney, Looney Tunes, Hanna-Barbera, Elvis, James Dean and Marilyn Monroe.

Initially people told him he was crazy to make ties with cartoon characters on them — Disney even tried talking him out of the idea at the

time, but he pressed on and ultimately paid them millions in royalties due to the success of licensed products.

Fast forward to 2018. Huberts now lives in Niagara-on-the-Lake, having sold his fashion business, but not quite settled down.

Along with his daughter, Huberts now runs a couple of businesses including Nature's Aid, a natural health products company that sells to health and wellness retailers across Canada, including Simpson's Pharmacy here in NOTL.

Huberts doesn't think he will ever retire, as there are always new projects he wants to undertake.

And with his creative mind still turning, combined with an ability to entertain and educate, it shouldn't surprise anyone he's now tackling

one of the most challenging industries out there — the board game industry.

Recognizing the level of interest in all things house related — as reflected in the number of shows on networks such as HGTV — Huberts saw an opportunity to design a new board game, one that would bring the excitement and challenges of house building to a format that family and friends would enjoy.

He has since teamed up with HGTV host Bryan Baeumler, who — along with his wife Sarah — is featured on HGTV's Bryan Inc.

The two will be working together to launch the game, now called Build-iT With Bryan Step By Step.

The game plays similarly to Monopoly or Life in that it is a gathering game that relies on a combination of luck and strategy. The goal is to purchase the job pieces needed to complete a house, while encountering the challenges all home builders face. However, unlike those other games, builders (players) can choose to roll one, two or three dice to move around the board, with the option to cut through the centre of the board.

With the combination of those options, Huberts said he's managed to get the play-

time down to an hour to an hour-and-a-half.

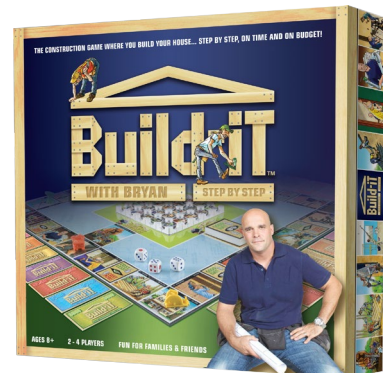
That is one of the key differences of Build-iT compared to other games, he said, which is important because in today's world, nobody wants to play a game for hours on end, but quality family time playing a board game is something people still want — reflected in recent studies that show a surge in board game sales.

The educational elements of the game also teach players about the house building process and the importance of budgeting, since 'builders' have to follow real life procedures to get their project complete, while not going bankrupt.

Having Bryan on board adds an element of credibility to the game, which Huberts believes will be appreciated by those who play.

Huberts and Bryan will launch a Kickstarter campaign on July 2, where backers will have the opportunity to secure a copy of the game or a limited edition version.

Huberts is hoping to have a big first day and would love to have the support of anybody in town that would like a new and exciting family-



friendly game.

For those interested in supporting his endeavour, head over to www.builditstepbystep.com to view the game in more detail and to sign up to be notified of the July 2 Kickstarter launch.

If Huberts is successful, it wouldn't be the first time a board game associated with Niagara took off.

Trivial Pursuit, another

Niagara success story, took North America by storm when it was first released in 1981, selling more than 20 million games in 1984, and 88 million to date.

Build-iT With Bryan Step By Step offers family and friends the opportunity to set aside their personal devices and spend some important quality time with those they love and care about.



Build-iT with Bryan Step By Step. Secure yours in July by signing up at builditstepbystep.com. (Photos by Richard Harley)

Voices of Freedom Park to open in September



Construction being done at the future Voices of Freedom Park on Regent Street. (Richard Harley)

Penny Coles
Staff

During the many occasions when the public was asked about the future of the former lawn bowling greenspace on Regent Street, one concept was repeatedly mentioned was that it should honour and celebrate the town's black history — and that's what it will do.

In September, the Voices of Freedom Park will officially open to recognize Niagara-on-the-Lake's early black settlers and their contribution to the history, not just of this community, but of our country.

It's not only a celebration of the past, said Coun. Betty Disero, chair of the Regent Street Park committee working on the project, the park will also have an educational component intended to help guide the future.

The design encompasses the entire park, with a path at the entrance that winds its way through to a communal circle.

Along the way a downloaded app will tell the stories of four black people who helped shape the town of Niagara-on-the-Lake, said Disero.

One of the voices is that of Cloe Cooley, a slave who was

brought across the river in 1793 by her owner, who intended to sell her. Her resistance was witnessed by an outraged community, leading to the introduction of legislation forbidding the importation of new slaves and the eventual abolition of slavery, as well as opening the doors to the Underground Railroad coming to Canada.

Also heard will be the stories of Richard Pierpoint, his establishment of a corps of black soldiers, and its influence on the outcome of the War of 1812, and Solomon Moseby, who escaped

slavery in Kentucky to come to Niagara, and was tried and found guilty of stealing his master's horse.

He was set to be extradited while being kept prisoner in the Niagara Court House. A riot broke out when black men and women blocked the jailhouse, and he escaped.

He was eventually able to live in freedom in Niagara.

The Waters family of settlers who established roots in the community in 1794 provide the fourth voice. Members of the family received land grants, fought in the War of 1812, rebuilt houses and farms after the war, and were members of St. Mark's Church. John Waters was a Town councillor for six years.

The park has been designed by Raymond Tung, an urban design specialist working for the Town planning department, and the installation that provides the experience, called the Rite of Passage, which helps tell the story, is by Tom Ridout, a Toronto artist who was worked on the Queenston Heights memorial that recognizes the contributions of the Aboriginals who fought in the War of 1812.

The property has been in public hands since 1803, when it was acquired by the government of Upper Canadian, and

was the site where General Sir Isaac Brock and Colonel John MacDonnell lay in state after being killed in the War of 1812.

It has been the property of the Town since the 1850s, and was rezoned by the previous council for residential development after the site was no longer required by the town's lawn bowling club. The current council stepped in to retain it for public use, and from there, the concept of the Voices of Freedom Park was developed.

Coun. John Wiens and committee co-chair John Hawley were charged with raising \$670,000 to finance it, and have done so, thanks to a generous grant from the federal government and the public opening their wallets, said Disero.

The land remains a Town park and maintenance will be the responsibility of the parks and recreation department.

"We have all the money we need and we're moving right ahead," said Disero, although there is an additional amount being raised from the public to cover the educational component, which is being managed by the Niagara Historical Museum.

Black historian Wilma Morrison is also a committee

member and honorary chair.

"We've had a lot of fantastic people on our committee," said Disero, "and they've done some great work. It will be a fantastic park."

The park and the committee working on it came about as legacy projects of the Communities in Bloom committee, which Disero also chairs.

The future of the Regent Street property was one of the first initiatives the Communities in Bloom committee looked at, in addition to creating a pedestrian-friendly four corners area of St. Davids, and a garden at Navy Hall in partnership with Parks Canada. The committee remains active, and has a list of projects to continue working on which can earn the town Communities in Bloom recognition while showcasing what's best about NOTL, including volunteerism and winter life, Disero said.

"We're keeping our foot in the door, recognizing the best qualities of our town. We can do that with the Regent Street park as well," said Disero.

"I strongly believe these projects help us to come together as one community, with everyone working to help everyone in different areas, united for the betterment of the community."



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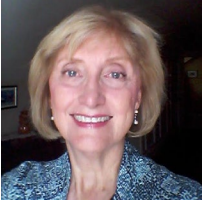
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The John Breakenridge Homes



Denise Ascenzo
Featured

John Breakenridge, once thought to be a traitor to Upper Canada and to have buried six slaves on his property.

Just who was this man?

In this article, I plan to dispel several rumours about Breakenridge and explore his connection to three wonderful heritage homes in Niagara-on-the-Lake, one of which is purported to have the most photographed doorway in town.

Breakenridge was born on a family farm outside of Prescott Ontario in 1789 and worked hard his entire but short life.

He was the son of David Breakenridge, an United Empire Loyalist who fled the upper New York State area after the American Revolution (1775-1783) and settled on land granted to him by King George III of England.

David was an educated man and a staunch Tory who was appointed to several important government positions such as the Justice of the Peace by the Government of Lower Canada (Quebec) and then by the Government of Upper Canada (Ontario).

His children were afforded a good education and a strict Presbyterian upbringing.

Little is known of John Breakenridge's early life but it is expected he attended grammar school in Cornwall, run by Bishop Strachan (later the first Bishop of the Anglican Church in Toronto) from 1803-1811.

After grammar school, he studied law and was on the Law Society of Upper Canada register in 1812.

A formal approval of a candidate was conducted by the "Benchers of the Law Society of Upper Canada" to ensure that a candidate had an acceptable background which included education and family history.

With a father who was an Empire Loyalist and with his schooling under Bishop Strachan, Breakenridge was a successful candidate.

By 1815, Breakenridge was reading law (internship) at a law office in York under the direction of his future brother-in-law, William Warren Baldwin.

Breakenridge was called before the Upper Canada Kings Bench in 1817 as a barrister.

Often the terms barrister and lawyer (attorney) are confused to be one and the same, however there is a significant difference.



210 Centre St. in Old Town. (Richard Harley)

A lawyer was permitted to only practice law limited in non-litigious matters while a barrister could do what a lawyer did plus appear in court to plead or argue criminal or civil cases.

The Lawyer from Virginia Rumour:

This rumour actually is just a confusion of facts.

After the American Civil war (1861-1865), a lawyer from Virginia sought refuge in NOTL waiting to receive amnesty, from President Johnson of the United States, for his part in the confederacy.

The lawyer's name was John C. Breckenridge (1821-1875). Note the different spelling.

The Traitor Rumour: In 1823, the name John Breakenridge appeared with 330 other names as a traitor to the Crown during the war of 1812.

Breakenridge was charged with leaving the province and not supporting the Crown during the war years.

Why his name is on the traitors list is a mystery because at the time of the war, Breakenridge was studying law in York and is clearly registered with the Law Society of Upper Canada.

No reasons were ever found for his name to be on the list. He was not sent to trial and none of his properties were seized.

Breakenridge was not a traitor to Upper Canada.

Marriage:

In 1816, Breakenridge married Mary Warren Baldwin, the sister of William Warren Baldwin (whose firm Breakenridge did his internship with) a barrister and also Treasurer of the Law Society of Upper Canada.

In 1817, Breakenridge decided to practice law in Niagara (NOTL) and moved his family into their first home that he had built on Simcoe Street.

363 Simcoe Street:

The first Breakenridge house was a one-and-a-half-storey

clapboard building built on a half-acre of land at 363 Simcoe St.

An interesting construction design was the placement of the bricks.

After the war of 1812, bricks were in short supply so most homes were built of wood. However, this house has a single layer of bricks, which were inserted between the outside clapboard and inside walls.

This was to stop any musket balls that might be fired into the home should there be another war.

The original house was designed with a centre doorway and two windows on each side of the door.

The house had a formal living room, two fireplaces, an informal sitting room, a formal dining room and a "keeping room" adjacent to the kitchen where family would gather but would be out of the way of the cook and staff.

392 Mississauga Street: By 1818 Breakenridge was looking for a larger property to build an even grander home.

He purchased a property on Mississauga St. for 27 pounds and 10 shillings from a Captain in Butler's Rangers Lot 227, named Arendt Bradt.

There is thought to have been nothing but a log cabin on the property at the time.

The Slave Burial Plot Rumour:

Bradt, who came from the Mohawk Valley after the American Revolution is said to have brought his slaves with him.

They would not have been freed when Governor John Graves Simcoe put through the act to abolish slavery in Upper Canada (1793).

Rumour has it six slaves were buried on the Bradt property.

Records state that upon Bradt's arrival in Niagara, amongst his possessions, he came with "one Negro and wench."

We have no actual count of

how many slaves he owned and there is no record of their deaths.

It is speculated that one of the owners in later years started this rumour to create an interest (or mystique) about the property.

The new home Breakenridge built was a magnificent colonial Greek Revival house.

The kitchen was located in a separate building away from the house but in 1840 an addition was added to the back of the home to accommodate a huge kitchen with its own fireplace and baking ovens.

In 1954, the house was purchased by the Hawley family who made the commitment to restore the home to as much of its origins as possible.

With the help of Peter Stokes, a famous Canadian restoration expert, and over a period of 12 years, the renovations were completed.

The Hawley family moved into their masterpiece in 1967.

Many interesting items were uncovered during the renovations.

There is no basement under the house, just two foot support walls made of stone (burnt limestone) with binder made from water, lake sand and eggs.

The front windows were originally from England so during the Hawley restoration, a factory was sourced from England to have the correct replacement windows installed.

Upon renovating the stairs, on the back of a riser the name "G.S. Kemsley, Newark, 1816" was discovered.

1816 was a year before Breakenridge took title of the property, so it is unknown if Kemsley was the builder of the house or just the stairs.

The date does not fit with the building time line, so it is another mystery that cannot be solved.

Upstairs, off of the master bedroom was the "wig room." During the period Breakenridge was practicing law he would have worn wigs into the

The rooms on the main floor would have included a living room, sitting room, dining room and library. The upper floor was for all the bedrooms.

There was no plumbing.

John Breakenridge died in 1828 at the age of 39, with many debts and his wife Mary and their five children experienced severe hardships.

With five children to raise, Mary, in 1829, opened the "Seminary for Young Ladies" in her home to have a source of income.

Through the sale of other properties her late husband had owned, and the income from the school, Mary was able to stay at 240 Centre Street until the mid 1850's.

This particular house has one more story to tell:

Many locals know it as the abandoned, boarded up house at the corner of Centre and Mississauga Street. No one lives there now and it doesn't seem to have had anyone live there for years.

In 1978, Robert and Dorothy Ure purchased the home for \$30,000.

Their plan was to restore the house similarly to how the Hawley family had with the house on Mississauga.

Mrs. Ure oversaw every detail of the renovations.

When all construction was completed, the furniture — a bequest from family in Scotland — was moved in.

However before the Ure family could move in there was a horrible incident.

The home was broken into and vandalized and the furniture was stolen.

Mrs. Ure was so distraught that the house was boarded up and has remained so to this day.

With Breakenridge's ambitious plans to build grand home for his family and with the foresight of home owners after him, we are able to enjoy three wonderful heritage buildings in our town.

I wish to thank Doug Phibbs for the detailed research he has done on these homes and on the life of John Breakenridge.

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

The Niagara Historical Museum is located at 43 Castlereagh Street, Niagara-on-the-Lake in Memorial Hall.

Visit, or give them a call at 905-468-3912.

Denise's profile can be found here, niagaranow.com/profile.phtml/13

courtroom.

A Victorian porch on the front of the house was removed which exposed the exquisite front door we see today — said to be the most photographed doorway in town.

The window above the door is a spectacular fanlight of intricate design made of hand blown glass in an embroidered design of ornamental cast lead with rosettes used at the joints. There is a story about this property that has circulated for many years.

It is said that the Prince of Wales (future King Edward VII), while being entertained in the home in 1876, used his diamond ring to etch his initials on to a pane of glass which was part of a china cupboard during his visit to NOTL.

However, this is not possible because in 1876 the Prince of Wales was touring India.

In fact, in 1876 the home was owned by William Thomas Avery (from 1872-1899) a retired Confederate army officer from Virginia.

Avery was also a Grand master of the Ku Klux Klan. No royalty would have accepted an invitation should it have been offered; the story is a hoax.

During the time that the Breakenridge family lived in the house, they had three children.

With more on the way, it was time to move once more.

The house was sold for 425 Pounds.

240 Centre Street: In 1825, Breakenridge purchased Lot 202 (now 240 Centre St.) for 75 pounds.

A house was constructed and the family moved in, adding two more children.

The building is a pink brick, regular centre hall plan Georgian house.

The house was built raised so the kitchen and servant's quarters (the Breakenridge's had two indentured servants) could be in the basement.





COMMUNITY

All local residents are welcome to submit photos and letters for consideration in this section.



Photo from Canada Day 2017. (Supplied)

Richard Harley
Editor

It isn't easy to follow a ses-
quicentennial birthday party and
bring the same boom.

But that's exactly what the
Rotary Club of Niagara-on-
the-Lake and Friends of Fort
George plan on doing this
Canada Day in NOTL.

The two groups will once
again be taking care of
the Canada Day festivities
throughout the day, both
at Simcoe Park and Fort
George Historic Site.

The day begins at Simcoe
Park with a pancake and sau-
sage breakfast served from 8
a.m. to 10:30 a.m.

After that a will be a barbe-
cue lunch serving up burgers
from Great Canadian Burger,
peameal bacon, hot dogs,
buttered corn on the cob,
freezies, cotton candy and
popcorn.

For families, there will be
face painting, caricatures,
balloon artist, magician and
more – all free of charge.

The event will also feature
a free concert by artists Flat-
broke and Shea D Duo from
11 a.m. to 3:30 p.m., as well
as antique cars and many
displays.

Of course, as has become
a beloved NOTL tradition,
the event will be capped off
with a cake walk at 3 p.m.
which will finish in the center
of Simcoe Park near the
bandshell.

The cake, which tends
to be massive, will be cut
up and handed out to be

enjoyed by all on hand.

The night will end off with
fireworks at Fort George at
10 p.m.

"Coming off an incredible
150th anniversary, we knew
we had to do more than ever
to celebrate such a signifi-
cant day. This will be our best
Canada Day event yet at
Simcoe Park with something
for everyone — good music,
great food, great atmo-
sphere and lots for the kids
to enjoy," said local resident
Paul Lalonde, who helps
coordinate the event.

He said the group is excit-
ed to welcome back musical
guests Flatbroke and Shea D
Duo this year.

"It's such a special park
with the wading pool and
play structure that when you
add on tons of activities for
the kids to enjoy all for free,
you can't help but have an
amazing day," said Lalonde.

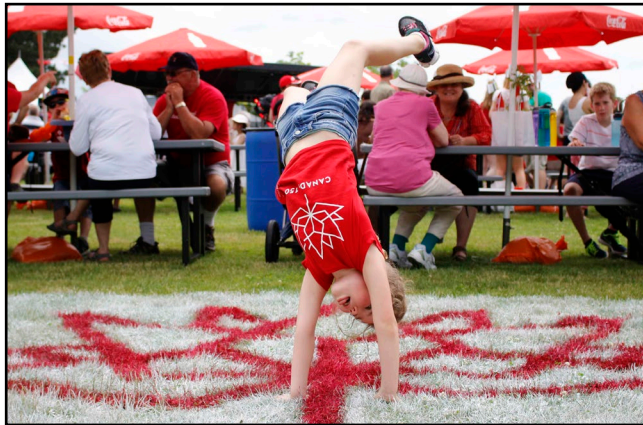
"We want something that
the locals and tourists can all
take advantage of and enjoy"

The evening will conclude
with a fireworks display at
Fort George Historical Site.

"Niagara-on-the-Lake is re-
ally the best place to enjoy a
full Canada Day experience,"
Lalonde said.

"I encourage people to
make NOTL your Canada
Day destination this year and
find out why the event keeps
getting more and more
popular."

The event, which is also a
fundraiser, helps the Rotary
Club invest in important local
and international projects.



Canada Day 2017. (Richard Harley)

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Featured Local Story

Thomas' ninth birthday



Thomas takes a birthday nap while people outside celebrate with a barbecue and free samples to take home for their own pets. (Photos by Richard Harley)

Richard Harley
Editor

It was a day of high spirits — and high wind — for all, and not just the humans, during Thomas' birthday party at Pet Valu in Virgil.

Thomas, the store cat, turned nine — approximately.

The day included a free barbecue, free raffle and a silent auction in support of local cat rescue group NOTL Cats.

Laura Gmaz, store manager at Pet Valu said the day was "very successful," and traffic was steady with people coming to celebrate with Thomas and staff.

The whole event started as a fun idea for a summer barbecue to give back to customers, Gmaz said, but the reception was been so good they decided to do it

every year.

She said customers often come into the store asking when Thomas' next party is.

Now, the store typically plans for a couple hundred guests, who also can take home either a cat or dog goodie bag, which comes with a fair amount of product samples.

As well, product reps from Pet Valu retailers were on scene handing out a variety of goodies — though the wind gave a few of them some trouble, blowing over one of the booths.

The event doubled as a silent auction fundraiser for NOTL Cats, a non-profit organization of volunteers that provides food, shelter, foster homes and veterinary care for cats in need and advocates for the proper care

of cats, including spaying and neutering to prevent overpopulation.

NOTL Cats was the group that rescued Thomas, who was found roaming in a local subdivision.

Nobody in the area claimed him, so he was taken in and eventually adopted by the owner of Pet Valu.

He's been the store cat for several years now.

During that time he's had a pretty comfortable life, with cat toys, premium foods, fancy litters and boxes, and treats in abundance.

If there were a standard for cat royalty, Thomas would no doubt meet it.

During his birthday, he decided a nap in shop front window was more suited to his liking.

His loyal subjects didn't

seem to mind though.

Cats will be cats.

As far as the date of Thomas' birthday, staff said they picked it.

They said in truth, "only Thomas knows" how old he is. For those interested in supporting NOTL Cats, a donation box is set up at all times at Pet Valu in Virgil.

All funds go directly to helping cats in need and helping them find homes.

The group is actively seeking foster volunteers who can take in cats for a period of time until a permanent home is found.

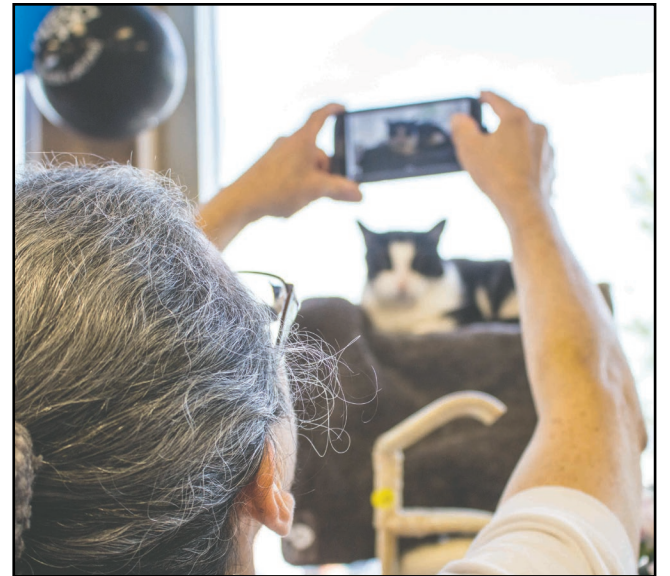
The group reminds all cat owners to be responsible and ensure their cats are spayed or neutered to prevent overpopulation, which leads to cats being placed in shelters or abandoned.



Erika Buchkowsky (right) serves up some burgers to Wendy Steel and Chris Owen.



Kit Cat was on scene handing out free treat samples to customers to celebrate Thomas' birthday. Pet Valu store manager Laura Gmaz joins for a photo.



No shortage of photos of Thomas were taken during the event. Not that he seemed bothered. After all, he is a celebrity, as Pet Valu staff say.



NOTL Cats volunteers Carol Sheremetta and Marian check out some of the silent auction items during the event.



Sally Jane Wilson gives Thomas some birthday love.



Jen Hustenowich of Pet Valu grabs a burger during Thomas' birthday barbecue, wearing a Thomas shirt.

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