How will the Town handle marijuana grow operations in Niagara-on-the-Lake?
In the face of legalization will big companies win over residents?

Penny Coles
Staff

While the Town of Niagara-on-the-Lake attempts to further restrict potential marijuana production facilities by increasing the distance they can be located from homes, churches, playgrounds, schools and other sensitive areas, one local greenhouse operation is already gearing up to sell recreational marijuana.

Jordan Sinclair, vice-president of communications for Canopy Growth, the parent company of Tweed Farms in NOTL, said the regulations for growing recreational marijuana as set out by Health Canada are similar, but less stringent in some areas than those controlling medical marijuana operations. While controls on production, such as quality assurance, are the same, other regulations regarding items such as security and storage are less onerous, so facilities such as Tweed, with licences to produce and sell medical marijuana, would already meet regulations for recreational marijuana, said Sinclair.

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Canopy Growth has secured contracts to supply retail outlets in other provinces, but has nothing signed with the Ontario government, which Sinclair says will be the biggest market in the country.

“We’ve got teams of people working on that,” he said.

He said there hasn’t been a Health Canada licence issued yet in Canada, and the proposed timeline for the new recreational marijuana legislation.

The recent provincial election may mean some changes in the way recreational marijuana can be sold in Ontario — while the previous Liberal government planned to set up stand-alone outlets controlled by the LCBO, Premier Doug Ford said during his election campaign he would consult with municipalities to see if that was the best way to go, and hinted he might be amenable to privatization.

Sinclair said Canopy Growth would be working on that as well, but doesn’t expect an answer soon.

The federal government has said recreational marijuana will be available to consumers across the country by Oct. 17.

The size of commercial Operation is licensed based on square footage, not the number of plants, and Tweed already produces the world’s largest legal marijuana operation when it was growing crops under 350,000 feet of glass, was licensed to expand on Concessions 5 to one million square feet last April, and is ready to jump into the recreational market with product to sell.

Although the federal government has also legalized the large-scale growing of pot outdoors, and NOTL residents have expressed some concerns about odor issues from any future outdoor operations, Sinclair indicates Canopy Growth has done its research and isn’t interested in that type of expansion. Even without the expensive infrastructure of indoor production, it’s not as profitable, he said.

Growers would still have hurdles to clear and boxes to tick on extensive regulations and social control, and that would mean “substantial up-front costs,” he said.

“It would also mean we’d lose the ability to produce multiple crops a year.”

Tweed can harvest four to five crops a year, he said, which pushes the economics in favour of greenhouse production over outdoors.

The Town of NOTL, in considering new bylaws that would increase setbacks for marijuana operations from residential neighbourhoods, schools, churches and playgrounds, among other sensitive areas, is suggesting an even greater setback for outdoor operations.

According to the draft bylaws — which are subject to a public meeting at the committee of the whole meeting Monday — any operation without a filtration system to control odours would have to be 300 metres from an area with a sensitive land use. Residents at a recent open house suggested that be changed to 500 metres.

Setbacks of 70 metres to residential, institutional or open space, or closer than 150 metres to sensitive land uses, where there are filtration systems in place, have been recommended in the new bylaws, but residents at the open house recommended 70 metres to be increased to 150 metres and 150 metres increased to 300 metres.

Those bylaws apply to production of medical and recreational marijuana, in rural and urban areas.

Planning director Craig Larmour said while Tweed’s operation complies with the current requirements of the zoning bylaw, it would likely fail short of meeting setbacks in the new draft bylaw.

“Because Tweed was legally established, if they are unable to meet any new provisions, they would be considered to have legal non-conforming status,” Larmour said.

By: Penny Coles

NOTL could be the spot for pot one day

Richard Harley
Editor

With the legalization of marijuana in Canada, farming communities such as Niagara-on-the-Lake could face a number of challenges with regards to legal marijuana grown on open ground.

There are several potential problems residents and council members wish to address, such as the smell wafting from production facilities affecting neighbouring homes, the potential for loss of diversity in Niagara’s fruit farming land if more greenhouse facilities open up, and further complications if the provincial government allows for a private market.

Niagara-on-the-Lake has already seen many of its peach orchards replaced with grape vineyards, as wineries and distilleries become increasingly popular in the region, and some fear what cannabis legalization would do to the same problem.

The potential for Niagara-on-the-Lake to become a tourist spot for pot is a real one, said Coun. Betty Disero.

She said figuring out exactly what power municipalities will have to decide their own fate with regards to controlling production facilities will depend largely on provincial standards, which have to be determined in some cases, and are likely to evolve based on what works and what doesn’t.

Jordan Sinclair, vice-president of communications at Tweed Farms, which is currently gearing up for the recreational cannabis market, said he isn’t aware of any competitors coming into town just yet, but that it “wouldn’t surprise” him.

“There have been some areas in the country where you see one person open up shop and a second producer will follow in behind,” he said.

“One of the big hurdles you have to clear is to make sure you’ve got a community where there’s some buy-in — as it town council for example is already experienced with cannabis producers, not as a community and stigma and less likely to say no right out of the gate.”

He said the provincial election also makes things difficult for Tweed, with new potential for private retail in the province.

“Right now obviously the plan in Ontario is to have the Ontario cannabis corporation and there’s going to be 40 of them, but Premier Ford has said he’s open to consultation to maybe including the private sector,” Sinclair said.

He said if that were to happen, Tweed could be able to “sell from the production point,” similar to how craft breweries operate.

“I imagine a case where someone is doing a winery tour, and then one of the stops on that winery tour is also at a cannabis grow-op,” he said.

When asked how that could be bad for driving or bike tours, he joked that “maybe we’ll have to get them a bus.”

When Tweed first set up shop at NOTL, things were a bit different, Sinclair said.

“In 2014, the climate, and I’m talking the political climate, was not what it is now. A lot has changed in the last four years with regards to cannabis production and canndership producers.”

Part of the decision to come to Niagara-on-the-Lake was because Canopy Growth purchased a facility that was already here, which was in the midst of trying to acquire a licence and had yet to do so, he said.

“Part of it just came to pure availability of space, because the options were very limited at that time. There weren’t a lot of communities or a lot of facilities where you could even pursue this and have any type of social buy-in.”

Other factors, he said, were more “specific to the region itself.”

“And that was largely because the climate is so good down there. Obvi- ously people know (NOTL) as wine country, and for us, those conditions leaned themselves really well to cannabis production.”

When the first greenhouse opened, it didn’t have a mental light or shade cur- tains for climate control, “it was just pure greenhouse,” Sinclair said.

Now, he said the company could operate just about anywhere in the province. “We’ve got a level of climate control, and we’ve got a level of scale control and things that basically recreate nature for us.”

Disero said if operations can open anywhere in the province, she hopes they won’t come into Niagara-on-the-Lake just to open up a greenhouse in wine country.

With Tweed, which has developed a partnership with Niagara College, Sinclair said the company has “become part of the community now.”

“We’re a member of the Chamber of Commerce, we try to be involved as much as we can with other stakehold- ers, we’ve got a partnership with the local college down there (Niagara College), and that allowed us to feel the confidence to be able to expand a bunch.”

The company is currently expanding an indoor operation from about 350,000 square feet to one mil- lIon, and being in the middle of a “massive” expansion right now, doesn’t have anything planned with regards to an outdoor expansion.

There currently is no need for outdoor growing at Tweed, with the greenhouse having climate controls that allows for multiple crops per year.

“We’ll get through tripling, and then we’ll see if there’s any other phase of expansion after that,” he said. “But we’ve got a hub here now.”

Disero hopes to protect the town’s agriculture if she ends up winning the municipal election as lord mayor, as well as make sure operations aren’t interfering with resi- dents. Her main concern, she said, is the smell.
Residents say proposed restrictions on pot producers don’t go far enough

Penny Coles
Staff

As several residents made it clear to councillors Monday that the proposed setbacks for marijuana production facilities are too lenient, they learned there is at least one more potential marijuana producer seeking a commercial licence to operate in Niagara-on-the-Lake.

Most of those who spoke at an hour-long public meeting in a packed council chamber and lobby at town hall supported an increase to the existing setbacks from residential neighbourhoods, churches, schools, playgrounds and other “sensitive” areas where an operation would impact residents, but said the proposed bylaw, while more restrictive than the one currently on the books, does not go far enough.

The main concern with the possibility of growth of the marijuana industry, especially with legalized recreational use and increased demand for the product, is odor control and its impact on quality of life and property values to those who live nearby.

Councillors were asked to ensure any new bylaw “err on the side of caution,” with far greater setbacks than proposed.

A distance of 500 to 1,000 metres as a starting point was suggested by one resident who lives with odor problems from the Tweed Farms greenhouses on Concession 5, owned by Canopy Growth. A new Stewarts of St. Davids told councillors that although he is more than a kilometre away from one of Tweed’s large commercial marijuana facilities, he is impacted by the odorous smell from the greenhouses, especially during the day in time in spring and fall.

The proposed setbacks in the draft bylaw “fall short of what should be done,” he said.

The draft bylaws under discussion say no land, building or structure used to produce or process marijuana, if equipped with air treatment control, may be closer than 70 metres to residential, institutional or open space land, or closer than 150 metres to sensitive land uses.

The proposed bylaw deems air treatment control “Industrial grade multi-stage carbon filtration system, or similar technology, to reduce and/or treat the emission of pollen, dust and odours expelled from a facility and sized accordingly in comparison to the facility it serves as designed by a qualified person.”

Without air treatment control the setback to sensitive land uses must be 300 metres or more, according to the draft bylaw, and would apply to outdoor crops.

Current federal legislation allows for no escape of odour from marijuana facilities, said Stewart, but complaints to Canopy have not solved the problem, and the response from complaints to the Town indicate confusion about what can be done.

He urged councillors to consider the residents and businesses they currently represent, including grape growers, and protect their properties, asking if the Town would rather be known as a pot producer’s paradise “or a pot producer’s paradise.”

Larkin Road resident Sue Bates also asked for increased setbacks, citing a Pelham production facility that is causing issues with its residents. Even 1,000 metres would not be enough, she said – the lives of residents close to that facility “are forever changed.”

She also addressed a comment made about a shortage of supply of medical marijuana for those who need it, saying that is not the responsibility of the municipality – what is important, she said, “is what this town will look like in the future.”

The issue of sufficient supply was raised by land-use planning lawyer Laura Dean of Toronto, representing a client who has acquired property in town and is in the process of seeking a Health Canada licence to produce medical marijuana in NOTL, although she did not mention the specific location.

Her client is opposed to increased setbacks as “unnecessary restrictions” that will make it more difficult to meet the needs of clients who rely on medical marijuana. She said the Town report on the draft bylaw doesn’t provide “evidence or justification” for its proposal.

Town planner Craig Larmour was also asked how long it would take the draft bylaw to be completed and approved, given that any current applications would be processed under the existing setbacks. There have been a number of important issues raised, he said, and the bylaw shouldn’t be rushed, otherwise it couldn’t provide an exact timeline for a report and recommendation to council.

Two representatives of Canopy Growth, owner of Tweed Farms in NOTL, also opposed the draft bylaw, which would make Tweed non-compliant and could hinder any efforts of the company to undertake upgrades or modernization to the older greenhouses on their property, possibly preventing it from improving its odor control measures. In response to a question about what Tweed is doing to address odor control problem, councillors were told there are four to six kinds of air filtration and odor mitigation at work in different areas of the greenhouses, and further efforts are being made to improve the system.

While the gist of the presentations targeted odor control issues, Coun. Jim Collard asked Tweed’s director of compliance, Sean Wallace about the effect of the odor on other crops, such as peaches, pears and plums.

Wallace had no answer, saying staff haven’t asked what they’d considered, but Brian Lillis, an Old Town resident and medical marijuana user, had a response. He legally grows four plants in his home or back yard, he said, for relief of symptoms from Crohn’s disease.

“I blow my mind,” he said, that with today’s technology, odor from greenhouses can’t be controlled.

His answer to Collard’s question brought some comic relief at the end of the lengthy meeting.

“You just go eating a peach that smells like a doo-bie,” he said.

“Nobody’s going to.”

“I think it’s premature to expand setbacks,” he said, adding her client takes odor control “quite seriously” and is working with leading engineering firms and the newest technology to ensure the facility will be of the “highest quality.”

Town planner Craig Larmour, in response to a question from Coun. Paolo DeHaan said as far as he knows there is no application before the town at this point for a new marijuana facility - although town staff have received several enquiries, when it gets to the planning department council members are notified and the information is posted on the website.

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Best to be pro-active with pot

Penney Coles
Opinion

Niagara-on-the-Lake is on the precipice of what could be massive changes – likely unwelcome changes to the way our community lives, with little control over prevention of changes – whether he can afford the changes, and uncertain about whether he can afford the changes. Either are obvious changes for being approached by a potential marijuana producer. Even if they are allowed to make changes to the marijuana industry, they could be a problem.

Increased setbacks can eliminate some greenhouses and farms as potential medical production sites in rural farming and residential neighbourhoods, such as Larkin Road, where residents have organized to combat some of the issues they foresee, which is what the Town is focusing on now with its draft bylaw. But as several residents have said, those setbacks should be as small as possible, and in that case, that may be the only control in the area.

The real money, we’re told, is in the largest commercial operations that can grow several crops a year. They can be located in industrial areas – one of Canopy Growth’s facilities is a former Hensley chocolate factory in Smiths Falls. One, that was vacant, which seems like a good solution to repair pesky factories that are shut down and otherwise face demolition. We might not have those in NOTL, but we do have vacant industrial property. That would take the pressure off greenhouse and farm properties – although it doesn’t help those green house operators and farmers who are trying to retire. Twenty-five or more years ago, the Town introduced bylaws controlling wineries – they had to be located on agricultural properties, although they were 25 acres or more, and those acres not taken up by the winery had to be planted with grapes. The concept behind the bylaw was that while wineries would provide a welcome boost for grape growers and the agricultural industry, they shouldn’t be allowed to take too much farmland out of agricultural use. It seems similar to the situation with marijuana production, with the added pressure we’re learning about. Those odours that cause such operations don’t make for good neighbours.

We’ve seen the Town deal with resident complaints about odours from chicken farms, the noise from bldg-bangers, the health risks of spraying, and even the noise from winery events, as was discussed at the same committee meeting Monday night as the setbacks for marijuana operations so this situation has familiarity to it – but the past has not always been in a reactive sense, since the farmers were here first. The problem for the Town to be proactive, and to take a larger role in controlling within the jurisdiction of the municipality, it won’t, and shouldn’t, stop all marijuana facilities from finding appropriate sites, but it might help prevent NOTL from becoming, as one of the council members Monday night warned it might, a pot producer’s paradise.

The Sentinal Family

The Sentinal Family has a long tradition of having horses in the Old Town. In the 1970s Fred did weddings for friends and family. This was supported by the late Fred and Jackie, and his parents. In the late 1980s we continu- ed this tradition and added tours to our repertoire. We offered carriage rides in 1992 and took it on as a business.

The why of it is simple: Fred was always a natural with horses and we really enjoyed meeting so many wonderful people and having the opportunity to take all the special and unique occasions. It was a way to share our beautiful horses and carriage rides with visitors and locals alike.

We had a young family and we wanted to help them and raise them as a part of our family business, so Sentinal Carriages was created. It has not been easy. We take pride in what we have been able to bring to the town.

From the Niagara Foundation

We are writing with respect to the Two Sisters Resorts letter of June 25 to Council advising it that we would provide a welcome boost for grape growers and the agricultural industry, they shouldn’t be allowed to take too much farmland out of agricultural use. It seems similar to the situation with marijuana production, with the added pressure we’re learning about. Those odours that cause such operations don’t make for good neighbours.

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From the Sentinal Family

Our objective was to try and make x living doing what we loved with our family and horses. Our staff member and we have received our lives and our business with a sense of pride and dedication. We, as well as our be- loved horses are family to us. Now we find ourselves in the spotlight, being accused of all sorts of terrible abuse of our horses and being all about money. Fred, our staff and I are so thankful for all the support we have received from the community and beyond.

We plan on being here for as long as the demand for our family and carriage horses. We are so privileged to be able to live and work in such a wonderful community.

Sincerely,
Fred, our staff and I are so thankful for all the support we have received from the community and beyond.

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Volunteer Talent Bank a good way to engage in the community

Lauren O’Malley Staff

Those looking to get off the couch and volunteer in Niagara-on-the-Lake have a place to do it as of last summer.

The Town’s Volunteer Talent Bank was created in August of 2017 by the Community Engagement Committee “to continue to invest in the skills and talents within our key volunteer sector,” per one of Council’s Strategic Plan priorities.

Victoria Steele, community engagement coordinator at the Town of Niagara-on-the-Lake, explains the process: “Anyone wanting to participate can visit the Town’s website and fill out their contact information,” she said.

Organizations, community groups, companies, and committees can also go to the Town’s website and fill out a brief form to explain the volunteer opportunity. The Town acts as the go-between.

As volunteer opportunities are submitted, a staff member emails the details to everyone who has subscribed. Those on the mailing list receive all opportunities that are sent out but only have to respond if they’re interested and available.

Interested people contact the organizer directly to ask questions or to sign up.

People of all ages enlist, from high school students looking to fulfill their mandatory volunteer hours to college students and older adults looking for extracurricular activities. “It’s also a great way for new residents to get a sense of what takes place in the town and to meet new people,” she said.

Opportunities for volunteering come from all across the changing landscape of the committees looking for members and events looking in number of ways. The only thing that is required of volunteers is that the opportunity or event must take place in or service NOTL.

Steele says there has been an excellent reaction to the volunteer requests. “One group’s posting was emailed out and within 15 minutes the group called and asked for another email to be sent announcing the opportunity as closed because they had already received an overwhelming response,” she said.

A Community Engagement and Volunteer Talent Bank was held at the Community Centre in April of this year. Approximately 30 groups seeking volunteers attended, along with 120 people looking for volunteering opportunities. “The event was a great success and we hope to make it an annual event,” Steele said.

Coun. Betty Disero, a member of the subcommittee that created the talent bank, says, “Niagara-on-the-Lake is blessed to have an active community that cares so much about the town that one has to say ‘we need help’ and residents reach out to lend a hand.”

It is community engagement like this that keeps our town the best place to live.”

Chris Bowron launches second mystery

Chris Bowron, (Supplied)

Penney Coles Staff

Chris Bowron is well-known in Niagara-on-the-Lake as a lifelong resident, whose family roots go back four generations — and with a successful career in the real estate industry, he is also rapidly developing a reputation as an author of popular mystery novels set in a different world and culture, a long way from home.

Since his youth, Bowron’s family has divided time between NOTL and Fort Myers Beach, where he and his wife have a condo and where he knows the locale, which he portrays with a familiarity in the settings he creates.

He travels to Florida from NOTL every two months or so, usually staying a couple of weeks, where he says the salt water and humidity are good for his health, and the changing pace provides a break from the stress of everyday life.

He sets himself a goal of 300 words a day, which only takes a short time late at night or early morning, when he’s most productive. He’s a high-energy kind of guy who isn’t good at sitting, so that’s not a hardship in some of the sessions the words come quickly and he can write much more.

But much harder than writing a marketing plan for the story, he said.

Although some people still like to read their books in print — and those copies make a larger profit than their digital editions — distribution through Amazon, where Devil in the Grass became a best-seller, helps books to reach a larger market, and if enough are sold, helps build an author’s reputation and encourages readers to pick up their other books.

He’s “not ready to give up” his day job, although he is excited he has a new book finished. Although not yet published, this one is a non-fiction book titled Waiting for Morning Time, which he said is being looked at by one of the top-10 publishers in the US.

It’s about three men whose boat sank while they were fishing in the Gulf of Mexico, and spent 48 hours in shark-infested waters off the coast of Venice, Florida.

He’s also just signed a deal on a true story about a Hungarian chef who escaped during the Cold War after being shot in the head and eventually reached London, England where he secured a position working for the Queen Mother, before going to the US, where he ended up as a chef for John and Jackie Kennedy, and four more presidents — eventually working for the American government as a spy.

“I think it will be a ‘DataBase’ based on his true story,” he said.

He has already started a third Jack Walker book, but is taking a break from it while he works out some of the plot details, he said.

He’s finding his writing comes easier and quicker and his dialogue is getting much better — he’s learned with each book.

But now he’s taking a “crash course” in promoting his work, which is far more difficult.

“You have to get yourself in front of people — promoting is an art. If you can keep readers interested with each book you write, you can sell more books, and become sustainable as an author.”

The Palm Reader has received a great review in a very reputable reviewer — it’s “a Lesbian novel and the best book in the genre I have ever read,” said the Columbia Review, which is a feature in Bowron’s book and based well for his other books.

In a copy of his books or more about Bowron and his work, visit his website at www.christopherbowron.com.
Blaze tears through vehicles

Fire Chief: Parking cars in hay field “such a bad idea” that Fire station communicated to event organizer not to do it.

Fuel draws environmental concerns for nearby drains

Niagara-on-the-Lake volunteer firefighters battle a blaze that broke out in a hay field across from the Niagara Lavender Festival on July 8. (Richard Harley)

Richard Harley
Editor

A vicious blaze completely destroyed 39 vehicles and damaged another 15 that were parked just off Niagara Stone Road in Niagara-on-the-Lake on July 8.

Video footage of the fire clearly shows the cause, said NOTL Fire Chief Rob Grimwood told town councillors Monday evening.

He said a hot catalytic converter on the undercarriage of one car ignited dry hay on the ground and the blaze quickly spread to other vehicles.

Addressing the committee of the whole meeting, Grimwood said damage is estimated to be between $1.2 and $1.5 million.

One car, he said, was a brand new Tesla worth around $100,000.

Hare Winery next door to the field had to shut down its business mid-afternoon and evacuate customers in the midst of their wine-tasting, and will likely also make an insurance claim increasing the cost of the damages, he said.

Eleven fire trucks and 44 firefighters battled the blaze as they would a forest fire, keeping it contained to the area around the 34 cars, but despite the extent of the fire, it could have been significantly worse, Grimwood said.

“It could have been catastrophic in terms of injury and potential fatalities, which were all prevented.”

The fire started sometime around 3:50 p.m. across the street from the packed Niagara Lavender Festival, held at Neob Lavender Boutique.

Grimwood said parking vehicles in the field with the dry hay was “such a bad idea that (firefighters) communicated to the event organizer not to do it.”

“It’s some advice from the fire department that wasn’t followed,” he said, the cause of the fire being the “exact reason” the fire department advised against it, but with nowhere else to handle the number of cars, they went ahead and used it anyway.

“They accepted they went against our advice, but at this point that’s water under the bridge,” Grimwood said, although he added there has to be a larger discussion about the handling of on-site parking for large special events, including taking a look at any in the near future that might intend to use fields of dry hay or straw.

“It’s a dry season, there are several municipalities already with fire bans, because once you get fire into dry grass, hay or wheat like this, it travels very quickly.”

He said the problem with a parking lot like the one used is the fire will travel underneath the cars, start one car on fire and move to the next.

Nobody was injured in the incident that firefighters know of, but for firefighters, the threat of heat exhaustion and exertion is a real threat, Grimwood said.

“These firefighters are wearing an excess of 100 pounds,” he said, while he himself was standing the sweltering July heat.

He said firefighters on scene were rotating through a rehabilitation center to cool them off and check their vital signs, as heat exhaustion can set in fairly quickly.

Grimwood himself looked like he was cooking.

“And I’m doing the physical work,” he said, offering praise to his crew. “These firefighters are amazing. These guys are all volunteers who are out here on a Sunday afternoon in the summer. They’re doing an amazing job. This is the fire will travel under the bridge,” Grimwood said, acknowledging the fire department that wasn’t advised against it, but with nowhere else to handle the number of cars, they went ahead and used it anyway.

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“And I’m doing the coo...
**23-year-old joins lord mayor race**

Richard Harley
Editor

Twenty-three-year-old Dan Turner officially filed his nomination papers for Lord Mayor Thursday morning.

The nearly lifelong local resident filed in June when he announced his plans to seek the vacant position of lord mayor at such a young age, with no experience in a council room — though having lived in Niagara most of his life, Turner feels he’s got what it takes.

He has a lot of ideas of about change, he said, including increasing tourism revenues to lower taxes, find- ing out how the municipality can keep control of things that affect residents from the Re- gion, and ensuring potential provincial funding changes don’t affect public facilities like libraries.

"I don’t like." Turner said he’s learned one of the most important lessons in the Niagara Parks Com- mittee, he’s learned one of the most important lessons in the Niagara Parks Com- mittee, he’s learned one of the most important lessons in the Niagara Parks Com- mittee, he’s learned one of the most important lessons in the Niagara Parks Com- mittee, he’s learned one of the most important lessons in the Niagara Parks Com- mittee, he’s learned one of the most important lessons in the Niagara Parks Com- mittee, he’s learned one of the most important lessons in the Niagara Parks Com- mittee, he’s learned one of the most important lessons in the Niagara Parks Com- mittee, he’s learned one of the most important lessons in the Niagara Parks Com- mittee, he’s learned one of the most important lessons in the Niagara Parks Com- mittee, he’s learned one of the most important lessons in the Niagara Parks Com- mittee, he’s learned one of the most important lessons in the Niagara Parks Com- mittee, he’s learned one 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The Virgil Stamper. 2018. (Richard Harley)

Richard Harley
Editor

The Virgil Stamper has always had its ups and downs with regards to how some people choose to conduct themselves. This year was no different, according to Niagara Regional Police constable Mike Malachowski, who spoke at a Virgil Business Association meeting in June. The problem, he said, seems to be getting worse and worse, with the main instigators being teenagers from out of town. He said police broke up three fights during the stampede weekend, among them one between carnival workers and a group of teens. The teens decided to start harassing one of the carni- cal employees, he said, caus- ing the fight to break out. The fight was broken up rather quickly and several of the teens were arrested, but he said incidents like this could be more preventable. He suggested measures to help prevent trouble mak- ers from getting into the stampede, such as limiting the entrance to one section, lowering the age for free admission to 12, and doing backpack searches for ev- eryone who attends, similar to a airport setting. VBA members seemed to generally agree with the sug- gestion, noting that the location has the advantage of already being completely sold out, and that it wouldn’t be very hard to block off the entrance on Loretta Drive. Malachowski said another problem faces is teens bringing in alcohol and drugs.

"Comfort searches, he suggested, would be a good prevention method — one he thinks parents and young- er kids would appreciate. He said this year he confiscated alcohol from a child as young as 12, and older teens were reported doing "what they call blow" in the bathroom. The kids who bring in alcohol and drugs also tend not to contrib- ute to the stampede by spending money on food and rides, he said, adding he doesn’t think lowering the age limit and raising down on security should be considered unless he predicts it would have a minimal effect of profits. He said he has married a Virgil native, he said, to his wife Laura, and runs Sentineal Carriages with his wife Laura, and has said many of the claims by AWFA members, which are in all year seasons — are suffering. He also noted the activists aren’t there protesting "when the horses go to slaughter.

\[Image 21x471 to 264x649\] 

Jean St Onge.

St Onge: The man behind the scenes
Lauren O’Malley
Staff

At any given moment dur- ing every performance at the Shaw Festival there are doz- ens of people you can’t see working, so the ones you can see can keep you entertained. Behind the scenes, Jean St Onge is one of those invisible people, working as first spot operator from his perch high in the ceiling of the Festival Theatre. St Onge was given his 20 year pin by the Shaw last year, having worked in a variety of support positions, including deck electrician, flyman and rigger. "Spot operator is one of my new favorites," he said. "I’m directly involved in the show, I have to stay focused the whole time, and some people can really see if I’ve got a good or a bad show. Plus, I actually get to see the play."

Most of the people who work in the dark back- grounds of the theatre never actually get to see the performances. The musicians, dressers, electricians are all moving around invisibly, literally behind the scenes, follow- ing their own complex choreography. St Onge’s opportunity is a rare one — and one he cher- ishes all the more because one of the actors in the play he gets to watch this year is his wife, Jenny Wright. "I’m just in there by myself — really just taped lines marking my space — with a photo of my family taped on the air vent behind me, listening to the stage director on my headphones. I get to hear, Where’s Jenny Wright? when she’s taking too long a change, and I can make fun of her about it after the show."

St Onge sits in the back- yard of the family home, with the scenery being what — two kids, a dog, cats, a flock of hens and greenery everywhere. "He and Wright are getting the most out of the experience, ready for a very rare treat for two Shaw workers standing busy season — a day camping trip. "We haven’t both had two days off in a row at the same time since April," said St Onge. "This is such a luxury." Above his head is a double- level tree house he built himself, replete with wilderness from the dismantled set of a Shaw production. The view is sound, with professional caliber equipment. He clowned swinging swings and aerial silks hanging from it. "I like to make people and things fly," he said, referring to his work as a flyer, rig- ger and stage crew member — and this clearly applies at home, too. His daughter Josie is an accomplished aerialist and the Silks, and Wright is lu- cently certified to teach aerial acrobatics. When St Onge met Wright he was travelling with the Cirque du Soleil, and was looking for a chance to work with people and the travel associated with his former work, but he didn’t know St Onge was there to keep people safe — some- thing he has always loved.

He is in the minority of theatre workers who have CTTP (Entertainment Techni- nician Certification Program) certification — a demanding accomplish- ment, that requires constant training to earn credits for recertification every five years.

"His motto is "setting the stage for safety."

St Onge is also a man of many hobbies, including sports photography. "When kids see themselves in action shots it makes them better athletes because they see themselves at their best, and think, 'I look like a pro,'" St Onge said, also he recently added leatherwork to his collection of skills. "I saw a beautiful leather bag, but it was six hundred dollars, and there was nothing I was going to pay that for. So I went online and watched a couple of videos."

That little bit of self-teach- ing has led to an impressive array of technically comp- lexified and aesthetically dramatic bags, purses and toil- ler sets. St Onge does all the work by hand from start to fin- ish, dyeing and cutting the leather, matching the holes and stitching pieces together, as he does for a particular fan of the baseball stitch. He makes thick pieces of leather, gold colored shapes, and sources and at- taches the metal fasteners. His leather hobby is now turning into a small business with St Onge lined up for a few fans. Jean St Onge has found a way to not be invisible after all.

They “are not contributing nothing,” he said, noting the types of kids who are just there to cause trouble. "He said something needed to happen, as times are changing, and police have a tougher job than ever enforcing the law. One boy made a racist complaint against him, he said, adding he is no racist. "And parents don’t support us," he said. He said most times par- ents take the side of their child and think the police are in the wrong. VBA members agreed there is a lot to be done to increase security for future years, as times have changed.

No official decisions have been made yet, but VBA secretary Mariea Penner said that they will be something done to ramp up security for next year.

The stampede is not the only venue police have en- countered increased security. In the past year, for closed early one night, he said. Because no one was paying any money.

"They are changing, I’m not sure parents are still disciplining their kids or what."
The Niagara Pumphouse Arts Centre will showcase the paintings by Marilyn Cochrane at a solo exhibit of Cochrane’s paintings called Nature’s Jewels runs from July 3 to 31 at the Niagara Pumphouse Arts Centre.

Both the exhibit and the reception for Nature’s Jewels is free to attend. The Niagara Pumphouse Arts Centre is located at 247 Richardo St. in Old Town.

Visit niagarapumphouse.ca, for a complete list of programs offered at the Pumphouse.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Sunday</strong></th>
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<tr>
<td>Music Niagara: Great Romantics Series - Victoria Kong - 3 p.m. to 5 p.m. - St. Mark’s Church</td>
<td>Google Expeditions: Mission to Mars - 10 a.m. to 11 a.m. - NOTL Public Library</td>
<td>Club Code: Makey Makey Banana Monster Bot - 10 a.m. to 11 a.m. - NOTL Public Library</td>
<td>Music Niagara: Romance x Drink - 7:30 p.m. to 9:30 p.m. - NOTL Public Library</td>
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<td>Music Niagara: Sunday in the Park - The Retro-Ramblers - Noon to 2 p.m. - Simcoe Park</td>
<td>Music Niagara: The Great Debate - Battle of the Romantics - 7:30 p.m. to 9:30 p.m. - Court House Theatre</td>
<td>Music Niagara: Elmer Iseler Singers 40th Anniversary - 7:30 p.m. to 9:30 p.m. - Niagara United Mennonite Church</td>
<td>Simply Steam Story Time - noon - NOTL Public Library</td>
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<td>Music Niagara: Sunday in the Park - The SupperMarket - 4:30 p.m. to 9 p.m. -NOTL Public Library</td>
<td>Vynnytsky Duo - 7:30 p.m. to 9:30 p.m. - Niagara United Mennonite Church</td>
<td>The SupperMarket - 4:30 p.m. to 9 p.m. - Garrison Village</td>
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<td>Commons Market - Antique &amp; Vintage Fest - 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. - Fort George</td>
<td>Music Niagara: Breaking the Silence - Clarion Quartet - 7:30 p.m. to 9:30 p.m. - St. Mark’s Church</td>
<td>Music Niagara: Gesualdo Six - 7:30 p.m. to 9:30 p.m. - NOTL Public Library</td>
<td>Master Makers: Make a Mon - 2:30 p.m. - NOTL Public Library</td>
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<td>The MakeShift - 2 p.m. to 4 p.m. - NOTL Public Library</td>
<td>Music Niagara: Romantic Cello - Khomani &amp; David Braid - 7:30 p.m. to 9:30 p.m. - Royal Canadian Legion</td>
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<td>Music Niagara: Saturday in the Park - The SupperMarket - 4:30 p.m. to 9 p.m. - NOTL Public Library</td>
<td>Music Niagara: Future of Canadian Music - The SupperMarket - 4:30 p.m. to 9 p.m. - NOTL Public Library</td>
<td>Music Niagara: Carmen on Tap - Opera gone Wild - 7:30 p.m. to 10:30 p.m. - NOTL Public Library</td>
<td>Master Makers: Cupcake Battle - 2:30 p.m. - NOTL Public Library</td>
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**LOCAL CALENDAR**

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<td>18</td>
<td>Minecraft Club - 4 p.m. to 5 p.m. - NOTL Public Library</td>
<td>Canned Film Festival: Ratatouille - 1 p.m. to 3 p.m. - NOTL Public Library</td>
<td>Music Niagara: Carmen on Tap - Opera Gone Rogue! - 7:30 p.m. to 9:30 p.m. - Old Winery Cellar</td>
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<td>Mini Masterpieces: Motets by Palestrina - 10 a.m. to 11:30 a.m. - NOTL Public Library</td>
<td>Healthy Kids Community Challenge: Power Off &amp; Play - 10 a.m. to 11 a.m. - NOTL Public Library</td>
<td>Music Niagara: Wine and Music - Gould String Quartet - Noon - The Hare Wine Co.</td>
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<td>19</td>
<td>Mini Masterpieces: Metis Dot Painting - 10 a.m. to 11:30 a.m. - NOTL Public Library</td>
<td>Music Niagara: Elmer Iseler Singers - 40th Anniversary - 7:30 p.m. to 9:30 p.m. - Niagara United Mennonite Church</td>
<td>Southbrook Vineyards: Food Trucks in the Vineyard - 11 a.m. to 5 p.m. - Southbrook Vineyards</td>
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<td>Music Niagara: Future of Canadian Jazz - Harry Bartlett Trio - 7:30 p.m. - Niagara Pumphouse Arts Centre</td>
<td>Practical Genealogy: Beginner Class - 1 p.m. to 3 p.m. - NOTL Public Library</td>
<td>TO Niagara Jazz Festival: Dixieland Jazz on the River - 7 p.m. to 9:30 p.m. - Surprise Location</td>
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<td>20</td>
<td>Practical Genealogy: DNA Workshop - 3 p.m. to 5 p.m. - NOTL Public Library</td>
<td>Music Niagara: Gesualdo Six - 200th Anniversary - 7:30 p.m. to 9:30 p.m. - St. Mark’s Church</td>
<td>The Farmers’ Market - 8 a.m. to 1 p.m. - Garrison Village</td>
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<td>21</td>
<td>Minecraft Club - 4 p.m. to 5 p.m. - NOTL Public Library</td>
<td>Power Off &amp; Play - 10 a.m. to 11 a.m. - NOTL Public Library</td>
<td>Food Truck in the Vineyard Series: Southern Smoke Food Truck - 12 p.m. to 6 p.m. - Coyote’s Run Estate Winery</td>
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<td>22</td>
<td>Minecraft Club - 4 p.m. to 5 p.m. - NOTL Public Library</td>
<td>Canned Film Festival: The Incredibles - 1 p.m. to 3 p.m. - NOTL Public Library</td>
<td>Music Niagara: Jazz Masters - Phil Nimmons and David Braid - 7:30 p.m. to 9:30 p.m. - St. Mark’s Church</td>
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<td>23</td>
<td>Minecraft Club - 4 p.m. to 5 p.m. - NOTL Public Library</td>
<td>Healthy Kids Community Challenge: Power Off &amp; Play - 10 a.m. to 11 a.m. - NOTL Public Library</td>
<td>TO Niagara Jazz Festival: Soul Jazz in the Vineyard - 6 p.m. to 9:30 p.m. - The Hare Wine Co.</td>
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<td>24</td>
<td>Minecraft Club - 4 p.m. to 5 p.m. - NOTL Public Library</td>
<td>Canned Film Festival: Ratatouille - 1 p.m. to 3 p.m. - NOTL Public Library</td>
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<td>25</td>
<td>Minecraft Club - 4 p.m. to 5 p.m. - NOTL Public Library</td>
<td>Healthy Kids Community Challenge: Power Off &amp; Play - 10 a.m. to 11 a.m. - NOTL Public Library</td>
<td>Smoke Food Truck - 12 p.m. to 6 p.m. - The Hare Wine Co.</td>
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<td>Simply Steam Story Time - 11 a.m. to 2:30 p.m. - NOTL Public Library</td>
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<td>Vynnytsky Duo - 7:30 p.m. to 9:30 p.m. - St. Mark’s Church</td>
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<td>Canned Film Festival: Ratatouille - 1 p.m. to 3 p.m. - NOTL Public Library</td>
<td>Magic Niagara: Up All Night - Celtic Band - 7:30 p.m. to 9:30 p.m. - Royal Canadian Legion</td>
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<td>29</td>
<td>Minecraft Club - 4 p.m. to 5 p.m. - NOTL Public Library</td>
<td>Healthy Kids Community Challenge: Power Off &amp; Play - 10 a.m. to 11 a.m. - NOTL Public Library</td>
<td>Music Niagara: Young Virtuosos 2 - 3 p.m. to 5 p.m. - Royal Elite International Academy</td>
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<td>30</td>
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<td>Music Niagara: Future of Canadian Jazz - Harry Bartlett Trio - 7:30 p.m. - Niagara Pumphouse Arts Centre</td>
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**W R I T E R’ S C I R C L E**

**The same broom for 65 years**

McLelland’s grocery store.

Richard West

Writer’s Circle

Featured

Rhiannon and I moved to Butter St, in Niagara-on-the-Lake, to take a selfie, before... Like many others, we were drawn to this town with visitaciveness. Being close to Queen St we could easily walk to the hotel, the Victoria Gallery, shopping for essentials, particularly cheese, was an important priority.

During our first walk downtown, we discovered McClelland’s (or West End Store as it was originally known), at the corner of Queen and Victoria streets. The building is still there but the corner now occupy the original premises, Serendipity at home, The Little French Shoppe and Victoria Gallery. Built in 1835 as a general provision store it later became the guardian of the cheese.

At McClelland’s, change had made it into a fascinating dry goods and grocery store. With its bare wooden floors and Victorian finishes McClelland’s was a delight to explore.

That is how we discovered Bert Hall. He worked in the store in particular was the guardian of the cheese. Bert was a tall man, glasses, approaching eighty. He wore a tan coloured lab coat and badge of office. When we asked if he could we know he was anything but. We local. We explained how he had just moved into town. Hearing this, he told us he has some limited quantities of aging cheese left and he led us to a counter at the east side of the store. Bert produced all wide wheel of cheddar which was five years old. Impressed, we asked if he had any older cheddar. Somewhat furtively he showed us an uncured wheel of twelve year old cheddar. For a moment, he offered to cut a piece for me. We were delighted and promised to... be his admirers for ever. Bert explained that these were the last reserves from the traditional sources of cheddar wheels available.

A few months later we joined St Mark’s Church and who did we meet there but Bert and Marjorie Hall. We recognized our friend from McClellan’s but kept any conversation about cheese strictly for shopping expeditions. We learned Bert had been a member of St. Mark’s for many a year. He had been a Church Warden for six years, 1956 to 1961. After about a year of our attendance at St Mark’s, Bert got into conversation with us and we pressed him about his life story.

His mother had brought him to Canada from England in 1914, at the outbreak of World War One. She had apparently been afraid he would be put in the British Army. As he was only 13 at the time, the fear seemed a little misplaced but probably sensible in the long term. So, these things happened on Garth St. Once settled into their new home, his mother sent him out to find a job. Bert left the house, the walked the 50 yards to Queen Street, crossed the road and entered McClellan’s. He asked if there was any work he could do. The owner handed him a broom and said sweep up. He joked, he was still using the same broom 65 years later.

A few years later, Rhiannon informed me we have eaten all the cheese. Puzzled, I wondered why we can’t buy some more? What I had not realized was we, and others in town, had eaten all the 12 year old, 10 year old and 5 years old cheddar in McClelland’s stock. In our modern world the whole idea of such cheeses had changed and their availability was now almost non-existent. From now on our non-heady cheese binges would be less savoury events.

Bert worked at McClelland’s until the building was sold in the late 1980’s. Both he and Marjorie are now part of history, resting in St Mark’s cemetery.

He was a man who had one job for his entire life and was very good at it. A happy patient, gentle man.

I often wonder how many more Bert Hall’s there have been in town, or perhaps, are still with us?

**COLIN BRZECZEKI**

Writer’s Circle

Featured

"If you didn’t ‘insta’ the supreme event it didn’t happen!" This posting on Facebook by a young friend made me smile, and then pause.

What feeds our desire to film the events of our lives as if we’re chronicling history? Under all the selfies there is a need to confirm that we happened?

An acquaintance lined up at the Louvre for half an hour to watch the Mona Lisa and later told me that people paused in the front of the painting only long enough to take a mobile phone photo and moving on to the next thing.

I took out their photos and know that they, and the Mona Lisa, all unimportant for the camera, really happened.

Keep on sum.

I spent Supermoon Day at the annual peach festival in Lake in the Town in 1979. The main street was closed off and I was providing marque space for local shopkeepers to display their wares and free new stores to sell their peaches and their...ipeach pies, salsa, ice cream and frozen daiquiris. Living like locals through out the day. A big band jazz ensemble, a Celtic goup, a Scottish highland marching band, and a variety of other musical performers entertained the large crowd.

An acrobat, perched on an ironing board laid out, juggled flaming torches, even flipping them around his back as amazed onlookers cheered and applauded. Visitors of all ages strolled up and down the street, taking in the music, the fine weather and the peaches. Some had dressed stylishly for the many parades to follow in a town celebrated for its theatres. On the restaurant patios, server movers among the tables balancing dishes on their arms and pouring out glasses of the local wines. The first hard out of a sapphire sky, and a light breeze ruffled the maples and cherry trees, but like a cold wind. It was the kind of day that would entrain itself onto the minutes of young and old — a “that’s what summers were like back then” kind of day.

It was becoming one of those timeless moments you experience where you don’t really think you’re a kid again, but that really never were anything else. You still have the years like a win...ter coat. All the things that had happened that you seemed not to have happened yet, because this was exactly how things were supposed to be.

And, as if some marketing coup, the moon itself rose into the sky that evening like a giant peach. Then something brought me back to earth with a bump — a young couple straddling each other, holding a cell phone on a black carriage like a magic wand all the action as they made their way through. They powered-walked past everything like they had to be somewhere else that had to be filmed.

A moment later I saw a young woman walking purposefully through the crowd with a cell phone held up on a stick in front of her, like she was toasting a marshmallow, as she recorded herself — live in a moving selfie — lifting and...ting fame in her very own movie: Live From Niagara.

And I thought, yes, I’ve...have the same the same if the technol...ogy were available back then. I watched a harvest moon many years ago in the Yukon, where I worked a summer job on a railroad gang. We had finished our ten-hour shift and were back to camp for the night. Rounding a bend in the track, we saw a bright orange hot air balloon rise above the dark mountain as it rose to its place in the sky where it would have sufficed.

Everyone stared, open-mouthed as the August moon rising faster and more spectacularly than I thought possible. It was so gigantic, I remembered thinking that if I looked closely enough I might see the footprint of Neil Armstrong’s small step for a man, which he had taken only months earlier.

Mark’s, Bert got into conversation with us and we pressed him about his life story.

In the music, the fine weather and applauded.

FIG. 2: During the RSR youth writing contest, questions about the peninsula are included in the list of questions. (Photo: RSR)
The queen of the monarchs

Charlotte Letkemann. (Photos by Richard Harley)

Charlotte Letkemann Submitted

As long as I remember, I’ve always been intrigued by the wonders in nature.

Perhaps growing up on a farm helped. Then, as a parent and teacher, I encouraged children to keep their eyes open to the world around them.

Back in 1971, I found a pair of cecropia moths mating on one of our bushes. Not wanting to injure these beauties, I covered the bush with netting for the night.

The next morning the female had laid numerous eggs on the branches of the bush. I brought in the branches, set them into a large jar, and covered them with netting to keep them out of their natural environment too long, I pulled old nylon stockings over the ends of the leafy branches of the maple tree in our front yard and placed caterpillars inside each stocking.

Needless to say, many questions arose from our neighbours. When they had eaten all the leaves on that branch, I moved them to another. Finally they began to spin cocoons. Summer was coming to an end and I assumed the cocoons would protect them throughout the winter. I placed them into an uncovered jar, put it into our garage to allow them to go through the freezing and thawing of our winters as they would in nature. In spring, I brought the cocoons in, placing them between the screen and glass of our kitchen window. In late spring, they began to hatch and we watched these lovely moths climb up the screen. As they could not fly immediately, we took the young moths outside and put them onto a tree. Within hours I noticed another moth had found the first, and they were mating. Again, I gathered the branches with eggs on them and started the process again. Unfortunately, I’ve not seen them since. A number of years later I had my first experience

Monarch caterpillars on the back of a milkweed leaves.

The largest one seen had an only the size of a grain of rice.

I had my first experience

The monarch transformation

As it can’t fly immediately, I cocked it onto a stick and took it outdoors to transfer it to a flower. Picture-taking time. I’ve used some of the photos on the photo art cards I’ve produced and sold in Niagara-on-the-Lake and elsewhere over the past 23 years. Should anyone wish to see them, I’d be happy to give me a call. I’ll gladly share what I’ve learned.

The monarch transformation

Bimla Singh, Erin Sloan and Sherry Lawless enjoy some lavender ice cream during the Niagara Lavender Festival.

Lavender Festival Festival pics cont’d

Bimla Singh, Erin Sloan and Sherry Lawless enjoy some lavender ice cream during the Niagara Lavender Festival.

By Sarah Kaufman, curator of the NOTL Historical Museum.

Time Capsule

Monday July 9 was the 225th Anniversary of the passing of the Act to Limit Slavery in Upper Canada in 1793. This far pre-dated the abolishment of slavery in the rest of the British Empire (1833) and America (1865). The Act did not free existing slaves, however, it forbade the importation of new slaves, granted freedom to the children born from slaves upon twenty-five years of age and ensured the children of these newly freed slaves would also be free. It allowed for the gradual abolition of slavery and set the stage for the Underground Railroad. Niagara-on-the-Lake is the site where the first anti-slavery legislation was introduced in the British Empire. The passage of this act was motiviated by the Chloe Cooley incident that happened several months prior. On March 14, 1793, Queenston farmer William Vrooman bound and forcibly transported one of his young slaves, Chloe Cooley, across the Niagara River. A week after, Lieutenant Governor John Graves Simcoe and the Executive Council, heard eyewitness accounts which stated that Chloe was taken against her will and was violently screaming and resisting the transfer across the river. The shock and violence of Vrooman’s actions were seen by many as disgraceful, especially when it was learned that Vrooman had not broken the law. It motivated the legislative council to take immediate action to prevent other slave owners from doing the same. Chloe Cooley was never heard from again.
Merry for cherries

The annual Cherry Festival was a massive hit this year, selling out of fresh pies within an hour of opening. (Photos by Richard Harley)

Hermine Steinberg
Writer’s Circle

Featured

The St. Mark’s Cherry Festival was a big hit again this year, with church members selling out of fresh baked pies within an hour of opening on July 7.

It’s a sign that members of the church, who bake them homemade in advance to the festival, must know what they’re doing.

It’s not really a surprise though — they sell out every year, according to festival volunteers.

This year, around a hundred people were lined up down the street to get into the festival before it was even open.

The line started at around 8 a.m., and once people got inside, the grounds of the church were packed all day.

The afternoon included a silent auction, book sale and trinket sale, a performance by Newark Singers, a barbeque served up by church members, a bake sale, and of course a plethora of cherries. Cherry-themed items on the menu included cherry pie with ice cream, Cherry Coke floats, homemade cherry jam and locally grown cherries from MacSween Farms and Quiet Acres.

The cherries were delivered fresh before the festival started, just in time for people to dig in.

The bake sale, while not cherry-specific, had quite a selection of cookies, muffins, cakes, tarts and brownies, all made by church residents.

The preparation for the festival takes most of the year, said church members — this year together they baked more than 750 pies, so that’s the only way it’s really feasible.

Some of the pies were sold frozen, while others were sold fresh and sliced up to be served.

All in all, the afternoon offered a little something sweet for people of all ages.
The Niagara Historical Museum is hitting the road to bring its historic collections into the communities of Niagara-on-the-Lake and St. Catharines, starting with the St. Catharines exhibit, which is currently being featured at Ravine Vineyard Estate Winery.

The museum's St. Catharines exhibit will launch August 1 at the Laura Secord Homestead, followed by the VQA pop-up exhibit on September 1 at the Meridian Centre.

Two additional pop-up exhibitions can also be found at the Museum on display until the end of the year. The exhibits will be on display until the end of the year.

Library launches “Ultimate Summer Challenge” for kids
Lauren O’Malley

In recent discussions about a proposed six-storey hotel on the historic Randwood Estate, there has been considerable discussion about the status of an Official Plan amendment in 2011, and whether it was approved by council.
John Tavares bolts to blue team, Mark Turasz stays with Wallbangers red

Across
1. Relating to aircraft (4)
2. “The Hay Wain” artist (9)
3. Moving staircase (9)
4. Joanna (5)
5. Hopelessness (7)
6. Back of the neck (4)
7. Poisonous mushroom (9)
8. Custom (9)
9. Doing nothing (4)
10. Wide-awake (5)
11. Happen (5)
12. Rigid (5)
13. Small nails (5)
14. Investigate (8)
15. Rectory (9)
16. Speed contests (5)
17. Desire for food (8)
18. Rub vigorously (5)
19. Farthest from the centre (9)
20. Pear-shaped fruit (7)
21. Remove faults (8)
22. Small nails (5)
23. Irritate (4)
24. Narrow (9)
25. Observe with festivities (9)
26. Breakfast flatbread (7)
27. Speed contests (5)
28. Breakfast flatbread (7)
29. Pear-shaped fruit (7)
30. Narrow (9)
31. Irritate (4)

Down
1. Removing faults (8)
2. Step contests (5)
3. Farthest from the centre (9)
4. Rub vigorously (5)
5. Farthest from the centre (9)
6. Remove faults (8)
7. Desire for food (8)
8. Narrow (9)
9. Narrow (9)
10. Narrow (9)
11. Narrow (9)
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30. Narrow (9)
31. Narrow (9)

The Lake Report is seeking puzzle makers who would like to help develop this page. Currently we are seeking both standard and cryptic crossword writers.
A Tribute To The Maple Tree

The Sugar Maple Leaves.

How about that heat wave we just had? The hot and steamy days of a Niagara summer sweeten a nostalgic feeling out of me. I associate these days with mountain biking up on the Niagara Escarpment, camping in lush forests, and resting on the back patio.

Speaking of water — the dog days of summer also remind me of the unending chains of bikers, sipping and pedaling their way around NOTL’s countryside in search of delicious wines and some good laughs.

The wine route is — in my opinion — convenient, safe, and efficient for bikers and other visitors alike. Of course, leopard frogs, white-tailed deer, milk staks and coyotes don’t require world class beverages, but they do need their very own convenient, safe, and efficient route in town. Let’s draw some parallels between the wine route and the “wildlife route,” and which one could use an upgrade around here.

Let’s suppose there are six wineries you want to visit on the wine route — it’s a big day. After the first stop, you pile into your tour bus or hop on your bike, and you know your next stop can’t be far because we are lucky to have so many wineries in Niagara. Now imagine the few remaining chunks of natural space in NOTL, are “stopping points” for local wildlife. As a biological law of nature worldwide, habitat connectivity between these points has enormous benefits to an ecosystem.

Keeping habitats connected ensures that species don’t become isolated and bred, which keeps the genetics healthy, and additionally, segregated islands of habitat can become too crowded or poor in function like a healthy ecosystem.

Since 2005, NOTL has lost some of its last key habitat corridor areas. In one case, up until about a year ago, there was a figurative “ring of green” around the outskirts of our downtown town. When the area behind Two Sisters Winery was very suddenly clear-cut, we removed what I believe was a vital linkage of this green ring, where wildlife used these different parcels of habitat to move around the urban areas. I’ve heard the argument that this particular forest was removed because it was not an old-growth forest, and much of its composition was dead or dying ash trees.

When so little natural habitat remaining in NOTL, that spot still had value to wildlife for a variety of reasons. The example I just used isn’t meant to stir up a controversy of wine versus wildlife; because let it be made clear that I love both. I do however feel that our town has a responsibility to give back to nature when we can, and to mitigate further damages to our precious biodiversity. We do everything else so elegantly and calculated in NOTL, so let’s not forget about our other inhabitants with our decision making.

A massive snapping turtle and another fairly large painted turtle in the wetlands at Niagara Shores Park. (Richard Harley)

It’s emblazoned on the back of our sports team’s jerseys, and a much sought after specimen for many golfers.

And of course, many of us have taken our kids to a “sugar bush”, to watch Maple sap being tapped straight from the tree into those silver metal buckets, which hang on the sides, to then be made into our world famous nectar maple syrup.

Hardy stock, and with hundreds of cultivars, according to an Ontario Canada website some Maple trees can live upwards of 200 years, and reach heights of more than 30 meters tall. Regardless of variety, images of Canadian children climbing branches, throwing the ‘keys’ (seeds) into the air to make helicopters, and jumping into a rushing piles of fall leaves, are simply part of the Canadian psyche.

The cultural importance of the maple tree cannot be overstated, its historical reach extending as far back as the nineteenth century; according to The Canadian Encyclopedia, the image of the maple leaf was approved for use on the Ontario and Quebec coat of arms in 1868, and the Canadian coat of arms in 1921. It also took pride of place during both the First and Second World Wars on regimental badges and was confirmed as the official symbol of Canada in 1965.

Regardless of variety, ideal planting sites; sun exposure, soil, and climate, are key factors.

So this summer, when you’re getting ready for trips to the cottage, trips through beautiful Ontario or just a Sunday outing, take a look around at Canada’s very own version of ‘splendid display,’ and admire the beauty of your culture, your history and your very own national tree, the Canadian maple. Mori Garden’s, which has a collection of more than 60 different maple varieties, is celebrating summer by offering special prices on select maple trees, and an extra special something for clients who bring in this article.

If you see a beautiful Maple in your future, stop by and talk to one of our garden consultants. Just remember, these bad boys getbig, and you might want help choosing the right maple for your space, but there’s one for every garden.

Registration fills up quickly and we always have a waiting list of foursomes. This way we should be able to accommodate them. We really hope to capitalize on our 20th anniversary and see how many golfers we can get out.”

Sugar Maple Leaves. (Submitted)

A Tribute To The Maple Tree

Mori Gardens Design & Garden Centre

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20th annual NOTL Golf Classic Tournament moving to make room for participants

Penny Coles

This year’s event is also expected to have more prizes than ever.

The event will be held earlier in the season, instead of October, set to take place Thursday, Sept. 13.

“There were always some people who wanted to play but couldn’t because of the grape harvest. This way they can be included,” said Turcotte.

Registration will include 18 holes of golf with cart, a free sponsored lunch and a prime rib dinner at the community centre in NOTL.

For a gift each participating golfer will be provided by this year’s major sponsor, John Hawley of The Village Developments. All proceeds from the event are being directed to Voices of Freedom, a Regent Street park currently under construction to celebrate the town’s black history.

Online registration is available at, https://notl.compasscms.com/content/2018-golf-classic.

July 15, 2018 Page 17
The owner of this NOTL house, William Steward, signed a petition for the release of runaway slave Solomon Moseby. His wife Susannah might have been among the women blockading the carriage that Moseby was to be transported in, though no documentation exists to prove her participation. (Supplied)

The matter was sent to Sir Francis Bond Head, lieutenant governor of Upper Canada, who struggled with the decision that would affect Canada greatly.

Despite the opposition, Bond Head ignored these petitions and in September of 1837 declared that “this land weeps when she see inflicted mercy with a bleeding heart on her property.” The Christian Guards and the Niagara Heights Rifles would be employed to return the runaway slave. Bond Head’s decision should have earned him the derision of history. Instead, it gained him the enmity of those who owned the ferries that would be considerably more valuable if they had their property intact. McLeod faced an even more serious setback when a man named Castleman claimed the ferry was his property, ‘property’ more valuable than that it was not the theft of the horse.

A local preacher named Herbert Holmes led the protest. A date was eventually set, and new date was announced, but it seems Moseby’s extradition was destined to be fraught with problems. The day Moseby was taken from King Street courthouse jail in handcuffs and loaded into a carriage, the women in the crowd blocked a bridge the carriage needed to cross. A local preacher named Jacob Green pushed a fence into the spokes of the carriage wheels. The details get murky here, as eyewitness accounts vary from person to person, but the final result of the protest saw Holmes and Green killed and many of the women slashed and blinded by the soldier’s bayonets.

An illustration of Solomon Moseby. (Conor MacNeill)

Though, in the confusion, Moseby was able to slip his hand free and escape. The Niagara Reporter stated that Moseby should only be returned if accused of murder, arson or the rape of a white woman.

The Christian Guards and the Niagara Heights Rifles would be employed to return the runaway slave, Jesse Happy, accused of stealing a horse was presented to Bond Head for decision. On the advice of Bond Head’s executive council, he turned the matter over to the colonial secretary, Lord Glenelg.

Unlike Bond Head, Glenelg preferred flexibility and decided each case of a runaway slave being accused of a crime would be judged on its own merits. His suggestion was to consider what crime was committed when a slave was trying to escape to freedom. Glenelg’s policy guided all future claims to extradite fugitive criminals from the southern plantations kept petitioning the Canada government to extradite their slaves.

Seventeen black residents found out Moseby was living in Niagara-on-the-Lake and showed up with petitions and in September of 1837 demanded that a black man was regarded as property, therefore if he committed a crime he would be punished by his owner just like a horse would be. In other words, the runaway slave would never see the inside of a courtroom, so to have Moseby returned to Kentucky as a “horse thief” was a sham; property can’t steal property. Several months after another case against a runaway slave, Jesse Happy, accused of stealing a horse was presented to Bond Head for decision. On the advice of Bond Head’s executive council, he turned the matter over to the colonial secretary, Lord Glenelg.
Patriotism — and cake for all

Catherine O’Donnell of Willow Cakes & Pastries walks her Canada Day cake to Simcoe Park. (Richard Harley)

Want to see the video? Download the HP Reveal app on your phone or tablet and follow Niagara Now, then simply scan the photo using the app. Check around the paper for other fun augmented reality surprises. Just look for the HP Reveal logo — and maybe some other places too!

Richard Harley  
Editor

Though the party wasn’t quite as grand as last year, thousands of people showed up on Canada Day to help paint Old Town red and white for our country’s 151st birthday.

The annual celebration saw its usual enthusiasm from both locals and tourists alike, during a day that included a pancake and sausage breakfast, a barbecue with live entertainment, and of course a massive cake — as has become local tradition.

The cake, as usual, was made and donated for the celebration by Willow Cakes and Pastries, hand-crafted by head baker Catherine O’Donnell.

This year she put a bit of “Niagara flare” to her decorations, with a fondant clock tower and some other messages for the locals — a few of the characters seemed to be enjoying a glass or two of adult grape juice.

When the cake was in place, somebody in the crowd kicked things off by starting to sing O Canada, and it wasn’t long before the whole crowd joined in.

For a video, try out our augmented reality feature on the picture of the cake instructions above.

The day was one of the hottest of the year so far, with heat warnings across the Niagara region and decade-long temperature records being broken for the weekend, but it didn’t stop the bands from playing or the politicians from showing up to cut the cake — MP Rob Nicholson, MPP Wayne Gates and Lord Mayor Pat Darte all got their hands on the sword used to make the first slice.

Councillors Betty Disero and Jim Collard also helped match the cake down Queen Street and into the park.

Mandy, Graham and Isabella Shanks enjoy the afternoon. Isabella was visiting from England for her first Canada Day.

Volunteers from the Niagara Rotary Club help with the ticket booths and ice cream sales.

The band performs for the crowd in Simcoe Park on Canada Day. (Photos by Richard Harley)

Dozens of riders — members of the Wellington Waterloo Hunt — made their annual ride through Niagara-on-the-Lake on July 7, donned in their fox hunting gear. The group was led by Jeff Peller of Peller Estates, and made a stop by Frogpond Farm Organic Winery for some wine and cheese — and some non-alcoholic drinks and snacks. Local resident Kim McQuhae said “it’s pretty cool to see them on the road.” (Richard Harley)
Lauren O’Malley

“His voice is his current musical life-blood, he said. “It starts with nothing special, then it grows into something more. It’s fluid, you just lose yourself in the groove. This is becoming the most influential music in my life.”

He said his deepest influences come from his creative and supportive family. “My dad was always in chores and stuff. My brother Angus is a painter, my sister Aurora is an interior designer, and my mom is a carpenter,” he said.

His family members are also key members of his management team, helping him take his career to the next level.

Sometimes last year his mother and sister asked him if he’d like to join them in a meeting with My Son the Hurricane manager Danno O’Shea, after deciding it was time for Oscar to take his career to the next level.

They sought O’Shea’s advice on how to do that, which led to DRFTR’s recent June tour with the band.

Oscar is currently putting finishing touches on a new album, recorded with Joe Lapinski of WOW! Recording Studio in St Catharines. They sought O’Shea’s advice on how to do that, which led to DRFTR’s recent June tour with the band.

Lapinski, he said, has the ability to not only manifest what’s in his head, but to make it even better.

Putting it simply, Lapinski is “the real deal,” Oscar said. “I kept the feel, and took it to a whole new level.”

Lapinski said it’s been a “wonderful artistic experience” working with Oscar. “His music ranges from foot-stomping folk-rootsy styles, to more soul influenced grooves that’ll get your butt moving. But the first thing that always catches my ear with his music is his voice and the words he’s singing. His voice is like silk sheets on a pillow cloud, floating above tree tops and mountains and city-scapes. He sings from the heart every time, and draws the listener into his stories. There is no denying his talent — and he’s a nice guy on top of all that.”

Oscar’s new album will be a far cry from his recently produced EP, he said, which was more low-fi, featuring just himself and his guitar, packaged in a brown cardboard sleeve labelled “HELLO my name is DRFTR.”

The new album will feature original artwork by artist Sam Estrabillo, a full band with Oscar on vocals, acoustic guitar and harmonies; Lapinski on bass, pedal steel guitar, banjo, and percussion; Niagara’s Laurel Minnen on back-up vocals/harmonies; Dave Clark on drums; Eron Stroud on keyboards; and bassist Goertzen on cellos; and Danielle Macduff on violin.

He said with the help of his family and supporters, the sales and marketing efforts have taken a stratospheric leap in professionalism, which will hopefully lead to success.

As far as what he writes about, he said all of his songs are about overcoming something in life.

“I create the music first, then when I’m really angry or upset about something, the lyrics will just come out all at once. I’m just sharing these wildly personal songs. Like for the song Sisakoke, I had a hard time getting over a difficult break-up and then one day I verbal-clear-rheed out this very blunt song and I haven’t thought about the pain of the break-up since. Songwriting for me is a kind of therapy.”

When he’s not playing soulful tunes, Oscar spends his days working at Silver-smith Brewing Company and Macoby Café in St Catharines, where he said he loves being surrounded by so much creative energy. He is very conscious of the people surrounding him, especially as he carefully builds his team of people who will help him and his career evolve and grow.

He said he’s just now becoming more confident about asking to be paid what he feels is fair, which is an important step in a professional musician’s career.

“I spend a lot of time creating these songs. At first I would take any gig for any money. Not anymore. All the way I’ve put into my career, it’s worth being paid what I feel is fair.”

That attitude has helped him move further than ever, he said, landing him in dedicated venues, as opposed to bars and restaurants. “So people tend to listen more, to pay more attention.”

And pay attention they should, because it is DRFTR’s time.

You can check out a video of Oscar playing a song by trying out the paper’s augmented reality feature on Page 19.

Just look for the HP Reveal logo, and try out other features while you’re at it. Find instructions on how to use the app on Page 19.