For the second time in a little more than six months, Niagara-on-the-Lake town council showed it has no appetite for an accommodation or “hotel” tax.

Coun. Paolo Miele tried to drum up support on social media recently for taxing tourists who stay in local hotels — an issue that was thoroughly discussed and dropped in January.

It was made clear then that those in the industry were fearful of the negative impact an extra tax would have on accommodations providers and other tourism-related sectors.

Miele has used Facebook in recent weeks to hold a very basic and informal survey, asking residents whether they are in favour of a tax that could save them about $600,000 a year that is spent on tourism-related programs — money he said could be directed toward items such as local infrastructure or more parks and trees.

At Monday’s council meeting, he was promoting a provincial program that permits municipalities to collect an accommodation tax to split between the Town and a non-profit agency that would administer its portion of the revenue to market local tourism. He suggested $4 a night could be an appropriate amount as a test project.

But Janice Thomson, president of the NOTL Chamber of Commerce, and other industry representatives asked councillors not to burden visitors with a municipal accommodation tax ...

Continued on Page 3

Terry Fox became a Canadian hero at age 21. (Supplied)

Notl runs reach $600,000 milestone

Joan King took on the organization of the Terry Fox run in Niagara-on-the-Lake in 2007, to ensure the run continued locally.

This year marks the 38th anniversary of the Marathon of Hope, with the first run in town held in 1991. But in 2006 nobody stepped up to organize the event, so the next year King — a retired school teacher who lives in Queenston — decided to take it on.

“The Terry Fox run is not just raising money for cancer research but also hope, inspiration and determination. It’s about remembering those we lost, supporting those who still fight and honouring those who won the fight,” said King.

Last year, thanks to her efforts over the last decade and those who organized the event in its early years, a milestone was reached — the little town and its residents, with big hearts and generous pockets, had raised $600,000.

The run/walk takes place every year on the second Sunday after Labour Day, which this year falls on Sept. 16.

Registration begins at 9 a.m. at Simcoe Park, with the run beginning at 10 a.m.

Most people walk the five-kilometre route but the runners or cyclists can do it twice to make it a 10-kilometre event, said King.

And there is more to it than that — it’s become a great family and community event ...

Continued on Page 15
Town puts a temporary stop to new cannabis production facilities

Penry Coles

Staff

With changes in federal and provincial laws that will make growing marijuana legal in Canada this fall, Coun. Betty Disser suggested the Town of Niagara-on-the-Lake put a hold on approving marijuana operations until the possibility of extending it for a second year if necessary.

She asked planners and staff to look at land use planning policies to see whether they require amending — there could be issues of land use compatibility with current development.

Coun. Disser agreed that "we need to resolve the original agricultural zoning bylaw" written, she said.

"We're on the eve of legalization" for recreational marijuana, she said, and although there have been discussions about increased setbacks recommended by the town's agricultural committee at 1,500 metres, as it stands, with council dissolving in December, currently the setbacks stand at 70 metres for medical marijuana production, and no restrictions for anyone considering a new facility for the entire Niagara region.

Disser said she was worried about the Town being left with no control over such facilities, at least until the new council has time to look at policies early next year.

Increased setbacks, she added, may have to be approved and defendable if a business wants to locate in industrial areas, and "I think it would be wise for council to study that to see what other communities are doing.

Murray would like to see the Town limit marijuana facilities to industrial areas to keep the odor away from residents. She is also concerned over-field production could have significant negative impact on the tender fruit and grape industry.

"The approval of the interim control by-law was vital," said Murray. "The new council will have time to fully understand the ramifications of cannabis production in our area, and its potential to negatively impact our tender fruit, wine and tourist industries. Staff can give this important issue the attention it deserves."

Medical centre decision delayed

Penry Coles

Staff

Medical centre decision delayed

With looking like construction on a new medical centre in Niagara-on-the-Lake could be delayed by at least six months due to the property owner and developer Lloyd Redekopp holding off the hope the council meeting will be called to meet local doctors' desired timeline.

But before the project can continue to be doctors in the need for safety measures might be 20 to 30 new homes to solve." Customers to have a seat in January.

"I can sit down with Town and plan B," he said. "It's a question that remains unanswered, at least for now."

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A rendering of a proposed medical centre beside Crossroads Public School. (Supplied)
Village Hotel approved

Penny Coles
Staff

A compromise on height has allowed a boutique hotel and assembly hall to move forward along the entrance way to the Old Town. The Village Square, a commercial centre on the border of the Garrison Village residential neighbourhood, will include a four-storey hotel at the corner of Niagara Stone Road, as well as the Village Drive Annex, an intersection at an intersection on the border of the village Drive Annex, and a small roundabout.

Although the height increase was approved at the committee of the whole meeting of Aug. 13 without discussion, and many residents at previous meetings have said they supported it, a petition signed by 164 people was presented to councillors indicating opposition to the increase. The village Drive Annex, one of the two main buildings at the Village Square, has a height of 20.5 metres (67 feet). The bylaw, keeping the height of the two main buildings at just under 50 feet. She also added that a cap of 60 rooms for the hotel — Hawley was asking for permission to build up to 80 rooms.

But she said she really likes The Village concept, where people live and walk in their community. “This is what drew me to Niagara-on-the-Lake. I was thrilled so many people were walking, meeting their neighbours, getting to know their neighbours. That’s the best form of community safety.” She said she wishes Hawley luck with the next stage of his development. “I just hope it doesn’t take him another 20 years.” Her amendment passed with Councillor Paul Miele the only one opposed.

Cont’d: Tourism tax gets squashed again

Penny Coles
Staff

Tourism spending in NOTL supports $21.4 million in wages and other expenses, and $7.4 million in profits and capital investments and profits, Thomson said. An analysis of adding an accommodation tax on top of Bill 148, which increased the minimum wage, showed it could result in an annual reduction of $3.4 million in profits and capital investment for hotel properties, he said, depending on the overnight visitor market.

Currently, through parking meters, bus parking at Fort George and the provincial gas tax rebate, the Town receives more than $2 million each year, revenue that stays in town, Thomson reminded councillors.

Instead of levying an additional tourist tax on visitors and adding risk to local hotel and tourism operations, she said, council should focus on helping NOTL remain a competitive tourism destination.

“Please, council, do not put our competitive advantage at risk by implementing a tax on our visitors,” John Crescenzi, general manager of the Holiday Inn Express in NOTL, spoke of his experience in the industry in other locations where another layer of tax was added. He agreed with Miele that many tourists don’t see the extra charge on the bill, but added, “those who do are vehemently opposed to it. The value perception to the customer is gone.”

An added tax will be detrimental to all businesses, he said, impelling council not to agree to it. He suggested if councillors were even considering it, a discussion should involve the business community first. Carlo Robazza, also representing the hotel industry, said such a tax would be negative not only for hotels but for their staff and families, due to the layoffs that would ensue. That loss of livelihood would extend to industries serving hotels, he said, and to other local businesses that benefit from tourists who stay overnight, as opposed to the day-trippers.

Coun. John Wiens said he wouldn’t support an accommodation tax without hearing from residents and the business community, and that it wasn’t fair to bring up the issue before the dissolution of the current council. “I think we really need to move forward slowly if we want to go this way.”

Coun. Betty Disero said it’s too soon to know the impact from the minimum wage hike on the hotel industry and its employees, adding she would want more information before heading down the road of an accommodation tax. She suggested looking at other ways to increase revenue rather than adopting a tax that would harm the hospitality industry.

“Quite honestly,” summed up Coun. Jamie King, agreeing with Disero, “I thought we had a good discussion in January. I really regret whatever procedural process led us to having to talk about this again tonight. I fear we’ve wasted a lot of people’s time, brought a lot of people out in the summer, and raised a lot of concern right in advance of the election. I thought we sent a pretty clear message of council, I think the intent of council from January needs to be maintained.”

Miele said he believes businesses are adapting to the raise in minimum wage, and he disagreed a $4 tax would destroy the accommodation industry, citing plans for more hotels in NOTL. However, realizing from the discussions of councillors that there was no support for his motion to institute the tax or even continue a more thorough discussion, Miele took it off the table.

To the question of traffic concerns on Garrison Village Drive, at an intersection where residents are asking for improvements, she pointed out the town is working with Hawley on a solution which would likely involve a small roundabout.

“I don’t particularly care for the design of the building. I’m sure the urban design committee and residents will have some comment,” said Disero.

But she said she really likes The Village concept, where people live and walk in their community. “This is what drew me to Niagara-on-the-Lake. I was thrilled so many people were walking, meeting their neighbours, getting to know their neighbours. That’s the best form of community safety.” She said she wishes Hawley luck with the next stage of his development. “I just hope it doesn’t take him another 20 years.” Her amendment passed with Councillor Paul Miele the only one opposed.

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Letter to the editor: St. Davids pool

Penney Coles' article on the outdoor pool in St. Davids gives plenty of food for thought. She makes a strong case for having a pool in St. Davids and the whole area to have plenty to think about.

The good news is that the Town of Niagara-on-the-Lake is beginning consulta-
tion with St. Davids residents about what kind of municipal, recreational facility should be planned to replace the aging outdoor pool in a village that has grown 10 times faster in population than the rest of Niagara-on-the-Lake over the past seven years and looks set to double in size again in the next seven.

A realistic, equitable master recreational plan for Niagara-on-the-Lake would have to include such facilities for those communities that either have not facilities or are about to have none.

The bad news is that the pool will close shorty when it can no longer be main-
tained. There will be a gap between the pool closing and the opening of a new facility

| Letter to the editor: Where have all the flowers gone? |

Recently I’ve been noticing our beautiful roadways blooming with Queen Anne’s Lace, Chicory, Bird’s Foot Trefoil, several kinds of clover, wild asters, milkweed and many more lovely wild flowers that are so necessary to our pollinators - bees, butterflies and other flying insects. And then...and then... our town spends money sendin-g out workers to mow down all this beauty. Why???
This happened in past years as well. I had been cycling along the path along Niagara Stone Road and stopped frequently to photograph the different wildflowers bloom-ing. I took photos of at least 24 different species - and likely missed a number more. A few days later, to my surprise, they were all gone! Mowed down! Just became a few people who don’t understand the need for these plants in our environment and who call them “weeds”, the town mows them down. This must be stopped. It may be too late for this year, but if there are any roadsides left uncut, please... please... please... have you ever wondered why cereal companies have put packets of wild flower seeds into their cereal boxes? They’d like us to plant them so the few bees we have left have places to feed. These companies need honey for what they produce. Some farmers in Quebec and Vermont have even planted large fields of wild flowers for this purpose. Hopefully, we all understand the need to cultivate more diversity in our environment. We can do it!

Letter to the editor: Where kind of experience are we looking for?

As far as I can tell, for better or worse, most of the incumbents have more direct council experience than the candidates running — so we’re really looking for? And what kind?

Is it time spent on local council; a history of being chief executive officer of a big company; or having attended school here? Or is it integrity that really appeals to us?

Unfortunately, I don’t have an answer. I don’t think anybody does — but I can speculate.

I think if people were to vote solely based on time spent, whether it be on council, as a local, or anything else, we would just be cast-ing the same ballots every year — and what’s the point of an election then?

I think we’re both off to focus on what candidates bring to the table, and how they’re likely to act on coun-cil; they say history is the best teacher.

The same concept applies to voting for somebody who has experience on boards and committees, or who’s been CEO of a major company — it requires re-

searching those companies, what they did, how well they did it, and asking if the experience they bring to the table is truly relatable to running a town.

We should also vote for somebody that has the best interest of the town’s people at heart — but how do you figure that out? Research, ask hard questions, and follow the money. That’s a good start.

Just don’t get your infor-
mation from social media.

I think it’s important for us to research who is truly most likely to listen to residents. It seems most just want it to stay tourismi

...
Lake Report to open NOTL office

Richard Harley
Editor

It’s official — the Lake Report is setting up an office in Niagara-on-the-Lake.

It’s located on the corner of Mississauga and John streets on the way into historic Old Town and will have a storefront that’s open to the public, where anyone is welcome to stop by and chat, pick up current or past issues of the paper, purchase Lake Report merchandise on-site or just to chat about what’s going on in town.

As well, we’re planning to offer Lake Report merchandise such as t-shirts, mugs, pens and notebooks.

We’re planning to open the office by mid-September and have a small ribbon-cutting ceremony in October.

All members of the community will be welcome to attend the ribbon-cutting, where we will have coffee and light refreshments.

This is a huge step for the paper, and it is only happening because of the fantastic support local residents have shown us. Since launching, it’s been a whirlwind of late nights getting everything together, as most starting businesses usually are.

I want to personally thank everyone who has come up to staff to let them know how much they like the paper. It’s a great feeling to know what we’re doing is wanted and appreciated and it inspires us to keep growing faster than we ever imagined could happen.

As well, to those who have made financial contributions to the paper, and of course our advertisers, we owe a profound thank you.

It’s because of your support that we’ve been able to grow so quickly, and to get an office in a location we hope to stay for a long time.

It was in April when I officially took over Niagara Now Ltd. I spent every dime I had on it — and even borrowed a bit from my family.

At that time, Niagara Now was solely online, but I wanted this town to have its own newspaper, and had a feeling the residents here felt the same.

I had $1,36 in my bank account the day I went out to sell ads for the first issue.

With the help of a now good friend who was doing an internship from Niagara College, we hit the streets to ask people to commit to our first three editions. That way, we’d be able to start it all up.

Three days later, without a product to show clients, we had somehow managed to get the support we needed.

We launched our first paper in May, just 5,000 copies intended to be monthly to start getting.

We quickly realized residents wanted more, so we increased to bi-weekly the next month and went into Canada Post the next, delivering 4,000 copies — we didn’t even know what route to pick, we just decided we’d go back and forth.

Four months later, we’ve increased to 10,000 copies, 8,000 delivered, and we have our own office in NOTL.

It’s been amazing so far, and we hope to continue bringing the best local paper we can possibly produce for the residents of this town.

Thank you all again. Please, stop in and say hi.

We’ll likely have a pot of coffee on!

Richard Harley
Editor
Lake Report

The Lake Report's new office. (Richard Harley)

Letter to the editor: the destruction of NOTL

The destruction of Niagara-on-the-Lake grinds on at a slow but relentless pace, until, after 41 years of residency, my wife and I find ourselves forced to consider relocation.

Not that the exodus of long term residents is something new; we have all witnessed the departure of friends and acquaintances increasingly in recent years, but we took solace in living in Garrison Village, an enclave of homes off the beaten track and away from the tourist hordes, with spacious yards, ensuring peace, privacy, and gracious living.

Of course we were keenly aware of the undesirable changes taking place around us — large old town proper streets being snapped up and several traditional businesses driven out by huge rent increases; most hotels and restaurants being bought up by international companies; wine, beer, liquor and now pot being produced everywhere; wineries vying for customers with noisy concerts; bird bangers going off every day for six months each year; and almost impassable roads, given the constant stream of cars full of tourists heading for the giant emporium.

Still we hung in there, clinging to the serenity of our own quiet neighbourhood.

Then the Hawley family took over Bud Wright’s planned development of Phase Three of Garrison Village, and convinced a sleeping council that what the town needed was more, and it all started housing.

Up sprang “The Village,” crowding dwellings together, boosting the profits of the developers, and opening the door to even greater horrors.

Now the final straw: the Hawleys wish to build a hotel and an assembly hall at the corner of Niven Road and Regional Road 55, in short at the traditional entrance to Garrison Village.

It’s not enough that we have had to negotiate an overcrowded two-lane road (55) which Region should have widened to four lanes years ago, now we will have to contend with the traffic generated by a hotel, retail complex and assembly hall.

The profiteers who have descended upon this poor town over the past quarter century have utterly destroyed its standing up to undesirable development. Years ago little Queenston showed the way, successfully stifling (sic) development by pointing out the inadequacy of their sewage plant. We could have done likewise, at least ten years ago — even before we discovered that Region’s ineptitude has delayed the completion of our new sewage plant by three years and counting.

More than one civic leader has declared Niagara-on-the-Lake “open for business,” not “open for residence,” and the deplorable results of this one-sided approach are all too evident.

J. Tupman

Have an opinion you want heard?

Send a letter to the editor to editor@niagaranow.com
Multiple candidate meetings planned

Various groups to provide several opportunities to meet local candidates for the upcoming municipal election.

There will be a number of chances to find out about the candidates for the Oct. 22 Municipal Election. (Supplied)

A great deal of careful planning is going into organizing meetings for the unusually large number of Niagara-on-the-Lake candidates running in the Oct. 22 municipal election.

There are two scheduled all-candidates meetings in Niagara-on-the-Lake so far, one at the community centre and one in Queenston. A third in St. Davids is still in the planning stages.

The Chamber of Commerce has created a format that includes all 32 candidates — 25 people are seeking one of eight positions for town council, four are hoping to win the one seat at the regional council table, and there are three mayoral candidates. The chamber-organized meeting will be held at the community centre Oct. 4, from 6 p.m. to 8:30 p.m.

The format has been changed from past elections, when audience members could submit questions before the meeting that would be directed at the candidates. To be able to wrap up in a reasonable amount of time, each council candidate will be given three minutes to introduce themselves and answer the same question. There will be time at the end of the question period for a meet-and-greet.

All but two of the candidates are available to participate in the evening.

This year, due to limited capacity and the large number of people expected, members of the public were asked to order a complimentary ticket in advance on the chamber website, and the 280 available seats were taken quickly, with a waiting list if more seats can be added.

Nicole Cripps of the Chamber of Commerce said this week the meeting will be recorded by Cogeco, and organizers were also trying to have it livestreamed for people to watch at home.

The Queenston Ratepayers Association has also scheduled its meeting, and will follow a similar format to other years, but will tighten up the time allotted for the questions and answers, said QRA president Jim Armstrong.

Council candidates will have three minutes to speak initially; regional and mayoral candidates will have five minutes.

There will be questions from the audience as for previous elections, but they must be succinct and to the point, with no rambling, said Armstrong. Candidates will have a minute to respond, controlled by moderators Rob and Helena Copeland, and there will be no debate, he said.

The question period will be divided into 15 minutes each for the group of regional and mayoral candidates, and 30 minutes for the 25 council candidates. All questions must be directed at only one person — no blanket questions, no derogatory or inappropriate language or insinuations, he said, and no “back-and-forth” between questioner and candidate. “The question presented is the one that gets answered.”

The biggest change is a move from the Queenston Library, which only holds 60 people, to the Willowbank lower campus, formerly the Laura Secord school. The building is wheelchair accessible, and the plan is for about 150 seats for the audience, with some standing room allowed.

The switch in location also offers more parking, Armstrong said.

The association members briefly discussed holding two meetings, one for regional council and one for regional council and mayoral candidates. “It was suggested, but it was going to take twice the organizational time and two nights to bring people out,” said Armstrong. “Instead we decided to go for broke and get it all done in one night.”

It is likely to be “a long haul,” he said, with the expectation of wrapping up around 10:30 p.m., and there may be some candidates who get few or no questions.

“We can’t control that, and we don’t control the questions. What we can control is this is not a debate session — it’s an opportunity to ask questions, and nothing more or less. The one criteria is being polite.”

He and moderator Rob Copeland are prepared to shut down anybody who asks “inappropriate or impolite” questions, he said.

“We like to have an open forum, but we don’t tolerate nonsense. We consider badmouthing other candidates inappropriate. We expect they all come forward with an honest interest in the community, and you’ve got to hand it to anybody who does that. But to get into dirty politics is not appropriate for NOTL.”

The meeting will be held at 5 Walnut St. in Queenston Wednesday, Sept. 26, doors open at 6 p.m.

St. Davids Ratepayers Association president Gregory Bell says his board members are still working out the format for their meeting, as they try to figure out how to best accommodate the large number of candidates. Some suggested not holding a meeting, he said, and there was discussion about posting questions and answers from candidates on the association website, but he convinced the board the meeting is a long-standing tradition, and an important one, to address issues that are specific to St. Davids with the candidates. They are still considering spreading it over two nights, to avoid cutting back the time for each candidate to speak, Bell said.

As in previous years, they expect questions to focus on issues that have an impact on residents of St. Davids, such as the future of the community pool, heritage, and safety and traffic concerns.

Administrators of the Facebook page FocusNOTL are holding a series of meetings, with the focus on the 21 new candidates for town council. Only those who are not currently on council are being invited.

The Facebook post says with the unusually large number of new candidates, and the restricted amount of time they would be afforded at all-candidates meetings, the group wanted to provide a forum for candidates to meet voters, present their qualifications, platform and vision for NOTL, “in a more intimate setting.”

The meetings are not open to incumbent candidates, the Facebook post says, “as they are well-known to the electorate and will likely receive most of the ‘air’ time at the all-candidate meetings.”

Four sessions have been scheduled, Sept. 11, Sept. 19, Oct. 3 and Oct. 9, each with five to six candidates participating. The meetings will be held at the Royal Canadian Legion hall on King Street, from 7 p.m. to 9 p.m.

Norm Arsenault, Gary Burroughs, Terry Davis, Stuart McCormack and Sandra O’Connor will attend the Sept. 11 meeting.

Simon Bentall, Clare Cameron, Dennis Dick and Jordan Williams will speak Sept. 19. Allan Bisbach, Wendy Cheropita, Andrew Niven, Erwin Wiens and Anne Kurz-Just will be at the Oct. 3 meeting, and to wrap up the series, Crispin Bottomey, Mark Brown, Lauren Goettler, Bernhard Peters and Katherine Reid will be at the Legion hall Oct. 9.

Written questions are being requested from the public, and will be read to the candidates, each of whom will have an opportunity to answer. Questions can be submitted to notlelection2018cogeco.ca.

Each candidate will have 10 minutes to speak, followed by a 30 to 45 minute question and answer period, and time for a meet and greet at the end.

There has been some push-back on Facebook — a group called Focus-NOTL has been open about wanting change on council, and some see the exclusion of current councillors as undemocratic. Others see it as an opportunity to get to know the large number of new candidates.
Council puts off tree bylaw decision

Penny Coles
Staff

Although Niagara-on-the-Lake residents have said they overwhelmingly support a tree bylaw that would apply to private property in urban areas, a decision before council last week was deferred.

A consulting company hired to gauge residents’ interest in a tree bylaw reported results to council in July, saying 88.5 per cent of the 600 who answered a survey said the Town should have a bylaw to protect trees in urban communities.

After having talked about it for more than three years, council agreed at that meeting staff should have a draft tree bylaw prepared by August, with answers to questions such as fees, penalties, enforcement, and the need for a tree inventory with a goal of having a bylaw approved before the end of this term of council.

At the Aug. 14 committee meeting the draft bylaw drew a lengthy debate, with some councillors asking for some changes.

Coun. Jim Collard wasn’t happy with the draft bylaw set out before him — he was concerned about the rights of property owners, the cost of removing a tree, the penalty for not replanting a tree, the requirement of an arborist and the need to exempt some weed and problematic trees.

He described the draft bylaw as “brutally difficult” and a “hammer” that would hit residents hard.

Councillors debated whether to make amendments to improve the draft bylaw before it returned to council for final ratification, and in the end approved the report as it was written.

But when presented to council for ratification this week, it stalled. Collard was disturbed that he didn’t see any changes to the bylaw reflecting his concerns, and suggested the deferral until September’s committee of the whole meeting, which could still allow for approval of the bylaw at the last council meeting of this term.

“We can debate this ad nauseum tonight,” he said, “or defer to next month so we can sit with staff to talk about it. Would council be willing to set this aside for a little more time for some sober second thought?”

He suggested councilors who continue to want changes to the bylaw could meet individually with staff to voice their concerns.

Craig Larmour, director of planning, said it was going to be difficult to try to balance differing opinions of councilors. “I don’t know how I can possibly bring forward a bylaw that’s going to make any sense,” he said.

But with only three councillors asking to discuss changes to the draft bylaw, it was agreed it could come back to the next committee meeting in September.

Abandoned kayak prompts police search of Four Mile Creek

Richard Harley
Editor

Niagara Regional Police are still looking for answers after an abandoned yellow kayak and a pair of shoes prompted a search of Four Mile Creek in August.

Police were called to the area of Line 3 and Four Mile Creek roads after being notified Aug. 22, said NRP Const. Phil Gavin.

The area the items were found in is known for fishing, and as a “hang out” spot for youth, he said.

Police officers lowered the water levels of the creek to assist in a shoreline search of the area and camvased nearby homes, but so far have turned up nothing.

He said detectives have also reviewed the on-file missing persons cases and “none are consistent to this incident.” Members of the marine unit also conducted searches of the creek reservoir, and forensic detectives conducted airborne searches of the reservoir using an “unmanned aerial vehicle,” also with negative results.

Gavin said currently there is “nothing to suggest any foul play or that a drowning has or has not occurred, “ but anyone who can provide further information is asked to contact police at 905-688-4111 ext. 9318.
Hillstrom: YDTP production of Robin Hood “a little on the edge”

Richard Harley
Editor

A local production of Rob-in Hood will tell a slightly different tale of Sherwood Forest this winter, with a plot that might hit close to home for some locals.

The adaptation of the clas-sic story, to be written and presented by Yokota Door Theatre Project, depicts the infamous Sheriff of Notting-ham as a big bad develop-er who threatens to build a housing development in the middle of Sherwood Forest.

Naturally, Robin and his band of merry outlaws must find a way to thwart the plans of the Sheriff. Yellow Door’s version will show the traditional tale in that regard, said Lezlie Wade, the show’s playwright, though Hillstrom and Yellow Door’s artistic direc-tor Andorlie Hillstrom have added a few twists.

Wade’s story takes place “several hundred years or so in the not too distant future,” and as mandated by Hillstrom, Robin is a young orphan girl — her band is a group of orphan children that wind up shar-ing a similar fate when their parents are taken away for protesting their housing developments.

Without their parents around, Robin and the other orphan children — Tuck, Little, Tuck and Marian to name a few — have to work together to form a family and stop the sheriff from destroying their home.

Both Hillstrom and Wade said they adapted the story with a “train development” in mind.

The setting is almost near a “main stream of the community,” said Wade, which was the big thing for the author.

“Wade” has done some very funny things with it,” said Wade when she first found out what Andorlie was looking to do, she went back and started researching the origin of the tale, and real-ized fairly quickly there is no definitive source material for Robin Hood.

“You kind of can see it when you read the moves of it,” said Wade. “You have the man in rights version, and the Sean Connery version … and so that kind of right away let me know what I was working in terms of sticking in any particular time or place.”

“Really, it took me away from all of that is the ‘take from the rich, give to the poor’ is sort of the main theme, or one of the main themes, and then there’s the Sheriff of Nottingham and there’s Robin Hood and there’s a couple of these guys that we all know, which is Friar Tuck and Will Scarlett.”

“Changing the gender of Robin isn’t that difficult of a task, Wade said, though it did play a factor in decid-ing to set the play in modern times — Wade said she there may have been ob-stacles with a female lead in a medieval setting.

The plot has some humour to it, both Wade and Hill-strom said.

Wade’s version of Friar Tuck (just Tuck) is non-denominational religious, and “basically just rips on every religion anyone could have,” she said.

“But he’s the peace-keeper in the group. He wants to talk instead of fight … and then Robin is sort of the confrontational one.”

“And of course, there’s absolutely nothing redeeming about the Sheriff, which is really great fun,” said Hillstrom. “He’s just bad.”

“He revels in it,” Wade said. “He’s a Cruella De-Ville without the dalmatians. He comes from a long line of crooks. He’s Voidemort in Nottingham — every town probably has one of these,” she wrote to Andorlie in the drafts.

“I thought, who would build a housing development in the middle of this beautiful forest?” said Wade.

The Sheriff, “isn’t neces-sarily referred to as a devel-op er, but he supports them, and he is part of that whole segment of the society that has literally taken the children away because they were environmentalists and tree-huggers, etcetera,” said Hillstrom.

“I absolutely love the story,” said Wade.

“Almost like the op-posite of the Lord of Flies,” Wade said.

“‘The theme of the whole play is about family, loyalty, friendship and doing what’s right. (The kids) each have a role that they’re supposed to play, the main Marian situ-ation is a bit of a surprise which Hillstrom didn’t want to give away. The character is still female, and starts out under the wing of the Sheriff, before heading off to join Robin’s clan.

“She’s feisty, and she really doesn’t agree with what the Sheriff is doing,” Hillstrom said.

There is a minor love sub-plot between Marian and John Little.

“I still kind of wanted a little bit of a love interest in there,” Wade said.

“I love Andorlie,” said Hillstrom.

“Wade’s story takes place fairly quickly there is no really anything referred to as a development.”

“Over the past three years, what I’ve chosen to do with the kids is to do something that’s based on a classical children’s story, or literally is a classical children’s story … so this year I was looking for another classic story, and I don’t know why, I was just struck by Robin Hood.”

Hillstrom said the play may even have the potential to be picked up by another production company. “Andorlie is amazing,” said Wade.

“She has this reputa-tion in Canada of being this incredible force with children. Many of the people who have started out with Andorlie have gone on to have incredible careers,” said Wade. “What she brings the community, and with those kids — it’s fantastic. I wish she would have been there when I was a kid.”

“When asked if the Sher-iff’s version was meant to be Robinhood, Hillstrom said, it could be.”

“It’s never actually called that,” she said, with a chuckle.

“I guess there is something here to be said for it being ‘just a little on the edge,’” Hillstrom said.

“That’s what theatre does,” Wade said. “You draw your own conclusions.”

Corn roast gets rained out

Supplied photo.
Richard Harley
Editor

The annual Chautauqua corn roast was rained out this year due to a thunder storm that rolled in just about an hour before the event was supposed to get started.

Organizers from the Chau-tauqua Residents’ Associa-tion had already been setting up, but were keeping an eye on the weather in case, as rain was predicted.

According to John Gleddie of the residents’ association, this was only the second year the roast has been can-cellled due to weather issues.

The last time was about seven years ago.

Gleddie said there will be a rain date for the event, exact-ly two weeks later (Monday, Sept. 17) in the same location at Chautauqua Park.

All of the community is invited, even residents who don’t live in Chautauqua.

The annual event usually draws a large crowd of locals out, with the fire being lit to roast the corn early in the afternoon.

It was an early warning sign this year that the fire still hadn’t been lit by 3 p.m.

Gleddie said it was unfortu-nate, but the CRA didn’t want all of the food to go to waste if nobody came.

The weather seemed to be playing tricks. By 4 p.m., when things were supposed to start, the sky had let up.

Many nearby residents walked over despite the rain and dropped off donations for Newark Neighbours.

Donations will also be col-lected on the rain date.
NEWS

A week to remember the Legion

Al Howe, president of the NOTL Legion. (Richard Harley)

For most of the year we ask everyone to remember Veterans, both alive and dead, as we follow our mission: to serve veterans and their dependants, promote remembrance, and act in the service of Canada and the community. Once a year we ask you to remember us. Sept. 16 to 22 this year is Legion week across Canada, when we reach out to remind the community that we are here for you. You will notice that the flags marking our Veterans’ graves are new, and the markers are straighter. We welcome everyone to stop by and meet our members, and see what we are about. Our Poppy year is almost over and we are preparing for the next campaign. On Sunday, Sept. 16, at 2 p.m. there will be a parade at the Lakeshore cemetery. We invite all to join us in saluting the Veterans from The Town who came back after war and military operations and have now passed on. We call this “Decoration Day” because of the flags we use to decorate these graves. Many may not know some things we are doing to promote Remembrance this year. We have two projects ongoing and a new one we are just announcing.

The ongoing efforts are our memories project, and our memorial garden. I hope everyone has noticed the new flag pole at the front or our building. This was donated by Janace Dart Strang in memory of James M. Strang. She and her sister have also been the force behind the new garden and flowers on our berm. We are all working toward having a spot for picnics and rest and reflection all year for anyone passing by.

Our memories project is community-oriented. We are reaching out to everyone in Niagara-on-the-Lake who has had family members serve in the military as long ago as you can remember. We are looking for photos of service men and women in their uniform. We are upgrading our collection of veterans memories by putting about 90 hours of interviews into digital form and providing copies to the Niagara Historical Society & Museum for their website. We are looking for other places to post them, along with the 70 pictures we have already posted.

Through a new project announced nationally called the Honour Roll Initiative, we want to recognise all military, firefights, police and other civilians who served as a part of the many U.N. or other military operations since 1953. The goal is to list all those people on an honour roll placed at the town hall. This is our call out to all those eligible to contact us so we can get this project going.

This is our 90th year as a registered branch of the Royal Canadian Legion, 50 of those years at our present location. We need to upgrade our building to accommodate our aging veterans and their families. Our major fundraising goal is for an elevator. We all need a hand up — literally.

Much of our work is done in private, as it needs to be, but once a year we wave our flag for those who have served.

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Hear Better Niagara

St. Davids Heritage Day Festival September 15th 10:00am
Opening Ceremonies Fort George Fire and Drum Corps Politicians First Nations Opening
At 12:00pm to 12:30pm
Old Tyme Peddler Festival 11:00am to 6:30pm
Historic Walking Tour of St. Davids 3:00pm
Close of Silent Auction & Grand Prize Draw 6:30pm
Historic Demonstrations by Niagara Historical Society
No Charge for Admission

Did you know?
Niagara Now’s printer sources 100 per cent of its paper fibre from industry leading paper mills, which use quick-growth, sustainable, renewable plots of land, rather than clear-cutting forests. The ink is also vegetable based.
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<td>NOTL Ukesters Sunday Ukelele Workshop - 3 p.m. to 5 p.m. - NOTL Community Centre</td>
<td>Little Red Tail Hawks - 5 p.m. to 7 p.m. - Niagara Regional Native Centre</td>
<td>Community Pot Luck and Drumming Night - 5 p.m. to 8 p.m. - Niagara Regional Native Centre</td>
<td>Tentative Sign Committee Meeting - 9 a.m. - Council Chambers</td>
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<td>Community Pot Luck and Drumming Night - 5 p.m. to 8 p.m. - Niagara Regional Native Centre</td>
<td>Committee of the Whole - 6:30 p.m. - Council Chambers</td>
<td>Building with Brandon - 6 p.m. to 7 p.m. - Niagara Regional Native Centre</td>
<td>Info Health - Dementia, Clinical Trials and the Future - 1 p.m. to 2 p.m. - Public Library</td>
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<td>Famous &amp; Infamous: Fred BanKing - 2 p.m. to 5 p.m. - Niagara Historical Society &amp; Museum</td>
<td>NOTL Ukesters Sunday Ukelele Workshop - 3 p.m. to 5 p.m. - NOTL Community Centre</td>
<td>Boyne &amp; Wesley - 9 p.m. to 12:30 a.m. - NOTL Public Library</td>
<td>The SuperMarket 9 p.m. - Garrison Village</td>
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<td>Warren Mechanical Manitoba Plumbing Heating Air Conditioning Additions Home Renovations</td>
<td>Phil Bosley - 3 p.m. - Silversmith Brewing Co.</td>
<td>Fall Trivia League - 6:30 p.m. to 9 p.m. - The Exchange Brewery</td>
<td>Wine &amp; Words: Karma Brown - 7:30 p.m. to 9:30 p.m. - La des Charnes</td>
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<td>MJ’s OWN MUNCHIES Breakfast - Lunch - Dinner 405 Lakeshore Rd, NOTL (by the bridge)</td>
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<td>Community Pot Luck and Drumming Night - 5 p.m. to 8 p.m. - Niagara Regional Native Centre</td>
<td>Babies and Books - 11:30 a.m. - NOTL Public Library</td>
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<td>Town Council Meeting - 6:30 p.m. - Council Chambers</td>
<td>Minecraft Club - 4 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>Building with Brandon - 8 a.m. to 12 a.m. - NOTL Public Library</td>
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<td>Simply STEAM Story Time - 6:30 p.m. to 7 p.m. - NOTL Public Library</td>
<td>Akwe:go Afterschool - 4:40 p.m. to 6:30 p.m. - Regional Native Centre</td>
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<td>Boyne &amp; Wesley - 9 p.m. to 12:30 a.m. - NOTL Public Library</td>
<td>Community Social - 11 a.m. to 3 p.m. - Niagara Regional Native Centre</td>
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<td>Fall Trivia League - 6:30 p.m. to 9 p.m. - The Exchange Brewery</td>
<td>Committee of Adjutant Hearing - 7 p.m. - Council Chambers</td>
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<td>Birthday Bash w DJ Moose Mike - 9 p.m. to 12 a.m. - The Olde Angel Inn</td>
<td>Laurel Minnes - 7 p.m. - Silversmith Brewing</td>
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<td>Camp Kociszko - 7:30 p.m. to 10:30 p.m. - Historical Society &amp; Museum</td>
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**LOCAL CALENDAR**

**Tuesday**
- Theatrical Cemetery Tours - 4 p.m. - Niagara Historical Society & Museum/St. Andrew’s Church

**Wednesday**
- Minecraft Club - 4 p.m. to 5 p.m. - NOTL Public Library
- Rod & Mol - 7 p.m. - Silversmith Brewing Co.

**Thursday**
- Minecraft Club - 4 p.m. to 5 p.m. - NOTL Public Library
- Wayne Gates Office - 1:30 p.m. to 4 p.m. - NOTL Public Library

**Friday**
- Wayne Gates Office - 1:30 p.m. to 4 p.m. - NOTL Public Library
- Knit-a-Bit - 2 p.m. to 4 p.m. - NOTL Public Library
- Moonlight Picnic at the Pumphouse - 6 p.m. to 10 p.m. - Niagara Pumphouse Arts Centre
- The Old Winos with Fergus Hamblton & Julie Long - 9 p.m. to 12:30 a.m. - The Old Winery

**Saturday**
- The Farmers’ Market - 8 a.m. to 1 p.m. - Garrison Village
- The Farmers’ Market - 8 a.m. to 1 p.m. - Garrison Village
- St. David’s 9th Heritage Day - 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. - Lions Club Park

**Sunday**
- Community Social - 4:40 p.m. to 6:30 p.m. - Building with Brandon - NOTL Public Library
- Minecraft Club - 4 p.m. to 5 p.m. - NOTL Public Library
- Babies and Books - 11 a.m. to 12 p.m. - Wayne Gates Office - Château
- Challenge: Power Off & Play - 1:30 p.m. to 4:30 p.m. - Wayne Gates Office - Château

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Autumn is coming

Shoshana and they, like many won out. The same time. My curiosity night, standing alone I felt a words yet in the middle of the one of them call out to me. The haunting melody. I stood their voices creating a beauti-

were standing in the gazebo, alone. Closer I saw that I was not I found myself by the lake. Walking and before I knew it, I got redressed, thinking I would go for a short walk and I got myself clear my thoughts. I turned onto King Street and started walking, but found myself continuing to head north instead of turning. I kept telling myself that I should go around the next block and return home. Instead I kept walking and before I knew it, I found myself by the lake. On that moonlight night I could feel myself drawn to the shore, the call strong and undeniable. But as I got closer I saw that I was not alone. A small group of women were standing in the gazebo, holding hands and chanting, their voices creating a beautiful haunting melody. I stood watching them when I heard one of them call to me. “Join us,” she said. Simple words yet in the middle of the night, standing alone I felt a bit frightened but excited at the same time. My curiosity won out. She told me her name was Shoshana and they, like many peoples and cultures around the world, were celebrating the September equinox. The time when night and day are equal, marking the beginning of autumn. Some call it Ma-bon, for others it is the time of the Corn Dance, but for them it was Yom Kippur. For all, it is a symbolic turning point of the year. Shoshana and the others welcomed my many ques-
tions. For them it had been a day of fasting and feasting, a time to reflect, a time to journey into a dark place to remember who they truly are and who they want to be, and praying for the strength to change and to try to fulfill the tremendous potential within them to create goodness in their lives.

Shoshana explained that as in many cultures around the world it is a time for renewal and recommitment, and a time for contemplating the wonders of creation. It was the tenth day after celebrating Rosh Hoshana, Jewish New Year, followed by the days of atonement. According to Judaism, Rosh Hoshana is the anniversary of the day on which God created human-

and Adam and Eve are born on Rosh Hoshana, as is the Tree of Life in the Garden of Eden. On this tenth day when the moon is bright they remind themselves that it is possible to awaken ourselves, just as according to legend, Abraham first encountered the Divine on an autumn equinox, while looking at the stars, on the cusp of the dark half of the year that inspires dreams and visions, and a greater truth was revealed. It is a time to remind ourselves of our obligations to the earth and to each other. Our mere creation or existence is a miracle that should be con-
sidered sacred and requires our untreated power to overcome and be better. That night I followed Shoshana and her friends along the shoreline. We silently helped one another over rocks, I ease my digital camera and looked for spirit guides. One of them whispered quietly for us. We prayed for the strength to make our hopes and dreams come to fruition. We opened the doorway to autumn, into the new season. Then, aided by the spirits of all our ances-
tors who have tried to show us the way, we celebrated our connection to the earth, the web of life, and to each other. We started to sing and dance with abandon and I felt as if I was transported back in time to an ancient tribal moment, a deep and wild place where we all reconnected with the essence and potential of who we were.

Today that night seems like a dream. I never saw Shoshana or any of those women again. But now ever Yom Kippur I go out at midnight and raise a glass, send out a prayer of gratitude to the universe, and remind myself of the power I have to become an agent of positive change in the world.
Red Roof Wine Run returns September 30

Richard Harley Editor

The fourth annual Red Roof Wine Run returns in September, offering a change to flex their muscles and community spirit, and enjoy some wine and gourmet food in the process. The event, sponsored by Niagara Fitness and Rehabilitation and NOTL Chiropractic, will see participants run one of three routes for donation for Red Roof Retreat.

The longest (10-kilo metre) run starts at Pillitteri Estates Winery at 11 a.m. on September 30 and ends at Red Roof in the afternoon, where the party will continue with Pillitteri wine and lunch spread by Goodtime Catering. The shortest option will be five and two-kilometre runs, starting from points along the long route.

The club is a distinct group of its own within our greater community — and it would appear all paths in that group meet at or at least traverse that of Ed McIlroy. McIlroy has seen a few things, having worked in the offices and yards of the club since 1982 — when he filled in for someone one spring, and never left. Having current iteration as manager — a post he has held for 25 years — he says he oversees everything. “On any given day, when that gate opens, you don’t know what’s going to happen.”

For the most part it’s the predictable day-to-day. With 225 members, there’s the general bustle of boating. The Learn to Sail program has been running successfully for decades now, as generations of locals can attest. According to Donna Genge, Learn to Sail Director, this was a banner year. “We had five of the best sailing instructors you could ask for — all the kids were so happy and having so much fun!”

Two-hour sail on a large-keel boat. “They're given the opportunity to learn the basics of steering and tacking, and then they can decide whether or not they're interested in taking regular lessons. Oh, we have so much fun!”

You won't catch McIlroy out on a sail with Genge and her crew — or anyone else. The sailing club manager is a die-hard landlubber. “I don't sail and I don't boat,” says the lively and bearded redhead. “Sailed three times. The third was with my boss at the time. He said, 'I'm your boss — you have to come.' I dared him to sail close to the jetboat docks, and I jumped off. Haven't sailed since.”

Participants in last year's Red Roof Wine Run. (Supplied)

Jacyln Willms, owner of Niagara Fitness, said the event is one of the major fundraising efforts for Red Roof, a local organization that provides care to people, especially children, who have special needs. She also added that the event is a win-win for everyone.

“What’s going to happen.”

On any given day, when that gate opens, you don’t know what’s going to happen.

With 180 usable docks, we have less than five percent turnover per year. And I'm always surprised by who announces they’re leaving. These people just joined, painted their boat — and now they’re out. The other people are frail — and staying.”

There are shifts in the trends, notes McIlroy looking out of the window of his office onto the marina. “The race program is still doing well, although the numbers have shifted. In general there seems to be a vein toward larger boats, from racing to cruising.”

Having said that, he also observes with some real admiration, “There are some enthusiastic young people coming back into racing, buying Sharks. There’s a nice young group of competitive racers looking to host the World Championships here in 2021.”

McIlroy’s affable stories of the club often become the envy of non-members and visiting cruisers. “They had about 130 people on a Wednesday night — a race night. Smart of them to do it then.”

Club members are loyal, and attrition is minimal. “With 180 usable docks, we have less than five percent turnover per year. And I’m always surprised by who announces they’re leaving. These people just joined, painted their boat — and now they’re out. The other people are frail — and staying.”

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McIlroy’s affable stories and observations could go on, but, as Genge puts it, that’s the NOTL Sailing Club’s 2018 season “in a nutshell.”
A glimpse into NOTL’s Rezza Brothers

The Rezza Brothers have been known as formidable, cunning, and engaging, and they have families. Their four children (two each, all between the ages of five and twelve), answer the door at Lucas’ home in town. The two young families moved to NOTL from Toronto in 2014, following their parents’ move of 12 years prior.

“We just loved the pace, the small community — but with lots of arts and culture, very cosmopolitan. This felt like the place to raise our children,” Adrian said.

“One evening I posted on Instagram, ‘A great walk after a great night in NOTL. I could live here,’” said Lucas.

“Out of the blue, six weeks later, we put an offer on the house.”

When he saw the listing, he sold his wife Muy on the house. “We really were gladiators,” said Lucas. “Out of the blue, six weeks later, we put an offer on the house.”

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Ford’s buck-a-beer not really affecting local brewers

Robin Ridesic, Founder and CEO of The Exchange Brewery.

(Lauren O'Malley)

It’s no secret our local micro-breweries are an important part of our community and economy — so what is their perspective on the provincial government’s buck-a-beer challenge? Says Chris Pontsioen, co-founder of Silversmith Brewing. “What can I tell you about buck-a-beer? It’s kind of a complicated thing for us.”

Says Pontsioen optimistically this is an opportunity to open doors and create dialogue. “It would be interesting for the government to engage in a conversation about production taxes.”

Robin Ridesic, Founder and CEO of The Exchange Brewery, shares this perspective. “Microbreweries pay several different provincial taxes, including basic beer tax, environmental tax, and volume tax. Of course we also pay taxes on hydro and water, which are huge expenses for the brewing industry, and are also controlled by the province. Our other major expense is wages, which are also determined provincially. There are further taxes around draft or non-draft beer, industry standard bottles or alternatives, and regarding outlets and distribution.

“We would love to see the taxation process simplified,” says Ridesic. “One thing I hope comes from the buck-a-beer challenge is a conversation with the provincial government to work with us to get input costs down, so we can better control the final sale price.”

Overall, Ridesic believes the buck-a-beer idea has merit. “This program in concept is a great idea — lower prices are always good. But it’s not a realistic option for craft breweries because production is more expensive. I would have thought only super-huge multinationals would participate in something like this, like Coors, or Bud Light for example. I checked the prices of those last week just for reference, and a 6-pack of small cans of Bud Light was at a special sale price of $2 per can. I’m not sure which breweries this program is really for.”

Pontsioen has a slightly different perspective on the cheap beer philosophy. “I was surprised by the move in that one of the LCBO’s main pillars is social responsibility, and so many rules are in place to maintain this. This proposal seems to contradict that fundamental idea.”

Some Ontario microbreweries have turned the buck-a-beer idea on its foamy head, and introduced initiatives that donate one dollar per beer to social causes, such as support for refugees in Ottawa. Of this, Pontsioen says, “Buck-a-beer isn’t a social program. We don’t feel the need to counter it with a more productive social program.”

Ridesic sees the alternative initiatives a little differently. “It’s nice to see brewers step up, do something a bit tongue-in-cheek but fun and good for everyone.” The Exchange doesn’t have any immediate plans for similar offers.

“Buck-a-beer is a political platform,” says Pontsioen. “The hope was that breweries would go along with it and they don’t seem to have done so. It will be interesting to see what happens next.”

He continues, “Craft brewers make 7.8% of the product [in the province] and we have 75% of the jobs in the industry. It’s the fastest-growing industry in Ontario.” So it would seem there should be much motivation for the province to come to the table for a sip and a chat.

Cont’d: Terry Fox Run celebrating 600K milestone in NOTL

Peony Coles
Staff

There is a barbecue put on by the Niagara-on-the-Lake - Lewiston Rotary Club, says Chris Pontsioen, located from Sandtrap Pub and Grill and ice cream from Cows, all served up the day of the run in Simcoe Park.

At the run site, fruit is donated from Walkers and Tim Hortons donates coffee and goodies, water is provided from A1 Flooring and Valu-Mart. Shirts are sold the day of the run for $20 and all proceeds will go to support Terry Fox.

A Tunes for Terry trivia night will be held Friday, Sept. 7, at the Outlet Mall at Glendale. Food and wine will be served and all proceeds will go to support Terry Fox.

A Tunes for Terry trivia night will be held Friday, Sept. 14, and on Sept. 15, students who need volunteer hours will be out at the two Valu-marts and Aromadales in the Old Town and Virgil collecting money for the Terry Fox Foundation for cancer research, said King.

Individuals and businesses can form their teams and raise money as well. Joe and Mike Pillitteri have formed the team Pillisy and are perfect examples of what you can do to raise money, said King - they organize a car wash and bake sale, a lemonade stand, and a comedy and music night.

“Terry turned misfortune into a journey that brought a nation together. Terry brought out the best in us... compassion, togetherness and generosity. He inspired community, He passed the torch to us and his wish was to keep the Marathon of Hope alive,” said King.

“What he did was solely for the benefit of others. He represents the human values we most admire, courage and determination. He is a Canadian hero embraced by the whole world.”

Terry Fox. (Supplied)
The Lake Report is looking for puzzle makers who would like to help develop this page. We are seeking both standard and cryptic crossword writers. editor@niagaranow.com

Want the answers early? Scan the puzzles using HP Reveal. (Must be following Niagara Now’s channel.)

Across
9 Hair cleaner (7)
10 German measles (7)
11 Chatter (7)
12 Anxious (7)
13 Emphasize (9)
15 Astonish (5)
16 Decent (11)
20 First prime minister of India (5)
22 Chinese revolutionary leader (3,3-3)
24 Type of chair (7)
26 Poorly matched (7)
27 Demolish (7)
28 Cooking vessel (7)

Down
1 Sterile (7)
2 Largest desert (6)
3 On an upper floor (8)
4 Depression from lack of company (10)
5 Make beer or ale (4)
6 Spain and Portugal (6)
7 Last (8)
8 Walked like a duck (7)
14 Put out (10)
16 Practise (8)
17 Wrist band (8)
18 Indefinite person (7)
21 Yet to arrive (6)
23 Squalid (6)
25 Supporting ropes (4)

Last issue’s answers

Sudoku

Want the answers early? Scan the puzzles using HP Reveal. (Must be following Niagara Now’s channel.)
Nostalgia in our trees

Alison Stewart
Grow Niagara Featured

Nostalgia runs rampant at this time of year, as kids head back to school. We tend to remember the years of growth, struggle, challenge and reward we all faced growing up. And while it may not spring immediately to mind, the same is true of the trees. During the start to the fall season, the changing leaves have an impact on our memories and lives.

Who as a child didn’t attempt to climb a huge tree, only to look down and get that feeling in your stomach that maybe you’ve gone a little too far? Or smell the blossoms of a nearby fruit tree as the breeze moved its wondrous scent through the spring air? There is so much to be gained from trees that we simply take for granted. The trees hold our fondest memories, to our lives and our livelihoods. There are many who have planted trees in commemoration of a loved one, or indeed for the celebration of the birth of a child or the festivities of a wedding. Planting a tree in celebration of a wedding or the birth of a child allows individuals to watch as the tree develops and grows, much like the relationship or the child. Cherishing the changes, as it toughens, it spreads its roots and branches, reaching new heights and maturity, just like child or relationship. Looking back to our childhoods, swinging from a rope tied over a body of water, as you tried to build up the courage to let go, or perhaps you weren’t strong enough to hang on and simply dropped to the water below. The tire swing, or the wooden board tied on either side to make a seated swing, a rope with knots in it — trees are simply built into our psyche.

It’s not only recreational memories that are created, those who work on farms and sweat pick fruit, caring for their livelihoods. They have struggled through drought, flood, pestilence and frost. They have laboured to bring the best of their trees to our homes and to feed our families with sweetness and nutrition. Trees are these farmer’s everything.

Were it not for the trees we would not have the number of migrant workers who join us annually, coming to Canada to make money for their families in other countries. They work tirelessly in partnership with our local farmers to help maintain and collect our local fruits. So to our farmers and their workers, I say thank you.

So the next time you are driving into Niagara, Lake, or for that matter, out of it, take a look at all of the trees on your travels. What stories could they tell if they could talk? How many of them saw the War of 1812? Were they buried in the Great Blizzard of 1977? Are the trees to blame for our sustenance, or do they sway majestically in the breeze providing us with much needed shade? Are they ornamental in nature, providing us with a burst of colour and interest in our beautiful landscape here in NOTL? However the trees impact our vistas, take note of them, appreciate them and wonder at their splendor, their resilient and mature character. The silent impact they have on our everyday lives.
The Queen’s Royal Hotel

In the 1860s, the town of Niagara-on-the-Lake suffered an economic blow when the country decided to relocate all legal proceedings to the Courthouse in St. Catharines. The new courthouse laid empty, jobs were lost, shops closed and people moved away looking for better opportunities for their families.

However, with money from the government as compensation for the loss of the courthouse business, town council built a world class hotel — the Royal Niagara which opened in 1869 — at King and Front Streets on the shore of the Niagara River. It was recognized as one of the finest hotels in North America and later changed its name to The Queen’s Royal Hotel.

The hotel was first-class, becoming the destination of the very wealthy seeking the peace and tranquility of life in a small town. With it came the jobs the town’s people desperately needed. Young men were hired as bell boys, waiters, gardeners, dock workers, and kitchen workers, while young women became parlour maids, ladies maids and housekeepers.

The hotel also brought other work with it. The hotel’s laundry was sent out to Irish Streets on the shore of the Niagara River. It was recognised as one of the finest hotels in North America and later changed its name to The Queen’s Royal Hotel.

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The hotel also brought other work with it. The hotel’s laundry was sent out to Irish Town (near King and Parford Streets) to the laundry maids, farmers were hired with supplying fresh produce. Livery stables were bustling and small businesses in town once again flourished.

In 1893 for the hotel stated, “The rooms of the Queen’s Royal Hotel are high and well ventilated, the corridors, parlours and drawing-rooms are spacious (and) handsomely furnished. In the evening the whole is lit up by electricity.”

A flight of steps off the main veranda of the hotel lead down to the private dock, where one could find little pleasure steamers for hire. Also located just a short walk from the hotel was the anchorage of the Royal Canadian Yacht Club, the largest on fresh waters.

After 1900, visitors arriving by boat would have been very impressed when the hotel came into sight — a magnificent four-storey building, white with green shutters and trim, dominating the Niagara River bank. Wide verandas afforded the hotel guests with a lovely breezy afternoon as they sat in rocking chairs gazing upon the Niagara River flowing out into Lake Ontario.

The hotel was also host to the World Tennis Tournament. In 1907, the Toronto “Saturday Night” wrote, “The tennis prospects of 1907 look exceedingly bright. The year 1906 was one of the best Canada has ever enjoyed and has paved the way for a still brighter year to follow.”

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For five days, the hotel was host to the annual military encampment of over 10,000 soldiers was in full swing, the hotel hosted a succession of dances and balls in the casino. The presence of Sir John French, who was commander of the British forces in France during the first years of World War One and who later became the Earl of Ypres, was a great draw for the very affluent of society.

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All NOTL residents are welcome to submit photos and stories for consideration in this section. Send to editor@niagarawineresorts.com

Community

Ravine Vineyards named one of Top 50 family restaurants in Canada

Richard Harley
Editor

Based on 550,000 OpenTable reviews between June 1, 2017 and May 31, 2018, the company has named Ravine Vineyard Winery as one of the Top 50 kid-friendly dining places in Canada. OpenTable, which claims to be the world’s leading provider of online restaurant reservations, announced the list of restaurants Aug. 21 to help those heading out on last-minute summer vacations during the last few weeks of summer.

“Eating out with children exposes them to foods they may not otherwise get at home and helps families connect and socialize, but parents often don’t know where to go,” said Danielle Bims, a Toronto nutritionist who specializes in picky eating.

“It’s easy to fall into a routine of meals at home and for parents and kids to be distracted. Going out as a family allows families to focus while teaching kids how to be more flexible around what they eat.”

“We view restaurant dining as an opportunity for families to bond over delicious food in an engaging atmosphere,” said Caroline Poter, a chief officer at OpenTable.

“We are excited to connect people who enjoy going to restaurants that strive to accommodate all members of the family. All restaurants with a minimum ‘overall’ score and number of qualifying reviews were included for consideration. Qualifying restaurants were then sorted according to a score calculated from each restaurant’s average rating in the ‘kid friendly’ category.”

Lauren O’Malley
Staff

Maybe the War of the Worlds wasn’t the best theme to choose for the fifth annual Great Canadian Steampunk Exposition — it seems to have been predictive.

A kind of war broke out between dreams and realities. While the all-volunteer team planned an experience to remember to be held at Fort George on September 21 and 22, they couldn’t have anticipated the sudden and urgent needs that would be imposed on each of them by their families.

Susan Spencer, chair of the event, said “unfortunately over the last six months, one after another of our team has had major family issues arise and take us away from the project. We weren’t confident we could produce the level of quality our loyal followers have come to expect, and the last thing we wanted to do was give them a less than stellar experience.”

“At the last minute it was pedal to the metal on the family end. You just run out of feet,” said Spencer.

“Making the decision to postpone the event was truly gut-wrenching — but the steampunk community and the local community have all pulled together and said, ‘Hey, do what you need for your families and yourselves. We can wait.’”

Spencer hopes the war won’t be too long — the intention is to reinstate the Grand Canadian Steampunk Exposition at Fort George as soon as humanly possible.

“The site just has so much oomph to it, so much history and spectacle. And our patrons say, ‘The town of Niagara-on-the-Lake is the most steampunk place on Earth. You’ve got to keep the event here.’”

Steampunk is an artistic style that draws from the past, present and future. NOTL definitely fits the bill.

Previous versions of the occasion have brought more than 1,000 patrons to the fort, along with dozens of vendors, performers and specialty acts.

Spencer and her team had anticipated the majority of the artisans and entertainers for this year’s happening, and had great hopes to have them tell us about the postponement. The entertainment and vendors were the “hardiest people to tell” they needed to cancel the event. Spencer said.

“The site just has so much oomph to it. We put so much into preparing for this kind of thing.”

“I was one of those crazy people following recon- actors around, selling them period pieces. She once owned a shop called Spencer’s Mercantile that specialized in historical goods, 1812 costumes and other pieces which she had taken to Fort George a number of times. The shop had a teaching component to it too, featuring workshops and classes.

The steampunk part of the story was accidental, she said.

“I was researching World War I for my shop, and working out prototypes for pieces. But if they’re not absolutely perfect, reenactors won’t touch them. A friend said, ‘You know, steampunk people would love these imperfect pieces — they don’t care about historical accuracy, they’re just going to play with everything and make it their own anyway.’”

So, Toronto-based Spencer attended a steampunk convention in Arizona to do some research.

“...and then there were the skills they bring in artistry, engineering, steampunk, storytelling, creativity, and said, ‘These are our people.’ It’s not surprising, Spencer being a self-professed history geek from a family of engineers, chemists and scientists. ‘I love the community, the way they behave and treat each other. Steampunk is a very special community. Very gentlemanly, very courtly and respectful.’

“Typically, ‘her people’ would be so supportive and understanding regarding the postponement of one of the largest events of its kind in North America. ‘All without exception have said ‘family first.’”

The Grand Canadian Steampunk Exposition will return to “the most steampunk place on Earth” as soon as all of the players can make it happen. In the meantime Spencer says, “I would like to thank everyone for their support and understanding. It’s so heartwarming. I’m truly touched.”

Residents are encouraged to submit photos and videos to this section for consideration — it could be your garden, could be your pet, or a beautiful sky — or it could be something as simple and small as an ant trying to pull something ten times its size. Whatever it is, email it in for a chance to be featured. This week's feature was submitted by the Niagara-on-the-Lake sailing club.

The View is Absolutely Breathtaking
Waterfront dining & patio open to the public
905 468-3424 www.niagolaw.com 143 Front Street Niagara-on-the-Lake
Kim McQuhae with Echo the Bull. (Richard Harley)

Lauren O’Malley

Staff

At 16, Kim McQuhae left a note for her parents: “Skip-and-found the horse in the home from a business trip no further comment.”

“I don’t think so,” she just asked if it would bite her, and wasn’t too bothered. She her it’s a horse.

“I put him in the shed, and when McQuhae replied with, ‘I should have put the horse up in the air, and attempted a rescue.’

He and another friend brought the calf inside and warmed her with hairdryers until she revived.

“We named her Elsa — because she was frozen,” quips McQuhae, referring to a character in the Disney movie Frozen.

McQuhae close to raise and breed Highland cattle “because they’re so cute.”

She saw some of the long-horned, long-hocked shaggy beasts in a magazine, and fell for them, she said.

Shortly after that — dur-ing a visit with her parents in England — she saw the cattle everywhere. She took that as a sign.

On her return she did some research and found a breeder in Ontario. She visited the farm and fell for a white calf — who sadly wasn’t for sale.

On a return visit not long after, the farmers had changed their minds, and were selling the white cow — with whom McQuhae had been so smitten.

“When I told them I couldn’t afford to buy it at the moment, they said, ‘That’s okay, just pay us when you can.’”

That’s when she realized that cattle people are the coolest, best, most honest people in the world.

Incidentally that cow, named Faith, went on to give birth to Bucky, McQuhae’s prize-winning bull who is the model for the labels on all of her products.

McQuhae strides around the farm with a Sullivan comb in hand, grooming the cattle as she goes.

Each of the animals answers to their name when she calls them, and comes running for the attention and affection she offers.

While initially reluctant to compete in cattle shows, she now has a wall of ribbons and an almost unbeatable reputation. Her favourite bull, the aforementioned Bucky, took two championship titles in the two years he competed. Given her full-time job as a cable technician, and two part-time jobs as a server at local restaurants, her 30-acre farm is more of a hobby than a career she offers.

Like that horse, every animal that joins McQuhae at her farm has a story, one that she is happy to tell in her excited, engaging way.

For example, Elsa the Highland cow was born in an aquarium by a Highland cow and, as the calf, the baby wandered out into the snow.

Lucky for the calf, McQuhae’s friend Fred Seminole happened to drive by and see it freezing in the snow, legs up in the air, and attempted a rescue.

“I would have put the horse in the living room.”

That horse — Rusty — went on to be one of McQuhae’s greatest loves.

“We were each other’s world — I would just get up and ride him everywhere. I even rode him to NODSS to pick up my report card — he knocked on the window with his hoof while I was inside. He lived until he was 26. His nickname was Captain Chaos.”

Shortly after she acquired Rusty, McQuhae’s parents moved to Europe.

She stayed in Niagara to care for her steed.

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McQuhae chose to raise Highland cattle as she goes.

McQuhae close to raise and breed Highland cattle “because they’re so cute.”

She saw some of the long-horned, long-hocked shaggy beasts in a magazine, and fell for them, she said.

When my father came home from a business trip and found the horse in the shed, he just said, “Oh, that’s nice,” McQuhae said.

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