

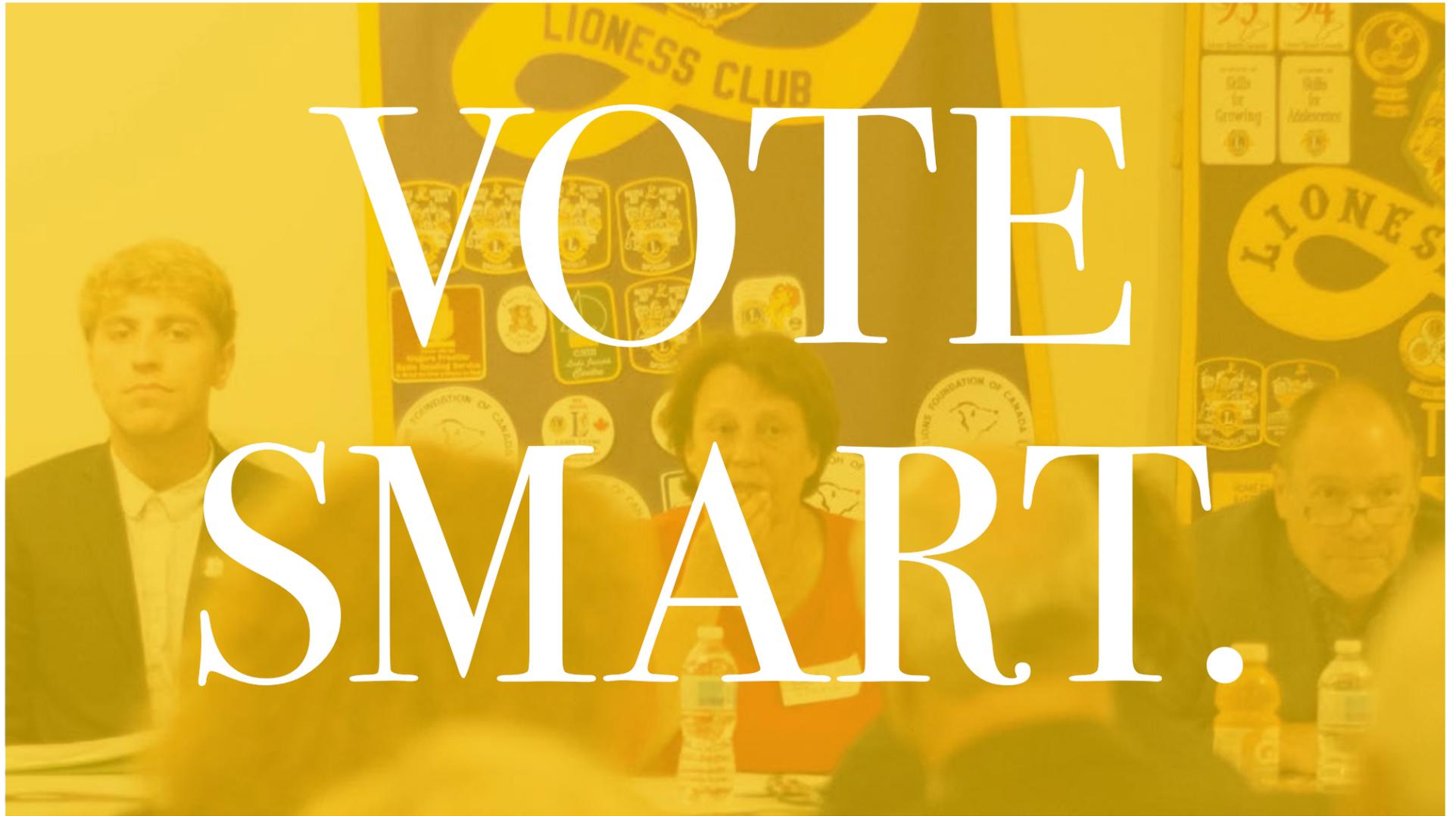


The Lake Report

Vol. 1, Issue 11

October 18, 2018

Niagara-on-the-Lake



What really matters to you?

Heritage? Infrastructure? Agriculture? Quality of living?

The Lake Report

With Monday's municipal election looming, we have had several good opportunities through many different organizations and outlets to find out about all the candidates running for this term of council. Now is the time to make sure you get out and vote, but before heading to the ballot box, remember to consider what is most important to you during this next term of council — the issues, how certain candidates will deal with them, their experience, and what you find most important when choosing someone to represent you and guide your municipality. Then you have to vote for those who tick your most important boxes, the candidates who are most likely to deliver what's important to you. The candidates have all told us their priorities — what are your priorities?

It's important to remember not all groups which have been providing information on candidates share the same values. Some are more business-focused, others are dedicated to heritage preservation or are experts on agriculture. They have all provided us with important information. But where

does their focus fit with yours? Are their issues on the top of your list? They should matter to all NOTL residents, but each candidate might have a different approach.

Now is the time for carefully considering all candidates and what they will bring to the table in the next four years.

As for candidates who were part of the previous council, we should bear in mind that all council members are responsible for the past four years of decisions, both the good and the bad, and that no one person can be held responsible for what is decided by a majority.

Many residents have expressed concerns about council not coming together to resolve issues that have been left unaddressed in Niagara-on-the-Lake.

It is the duty of all members of council to come together on important issues and make decisions, learn to work together and to foster an environment suitable to get work accomplished, and the ability to work together has been a common theme among candidates. Something else to consider.

While we may be quick to blame incumbents for a series of problems we've

seen — including generally not getting along, to the point where it appears that personality conflicts interfere with decision-making — each and every council member has the ability to decide to work as part of a team. We hope, when our new council meets, to see nothing but collaboration and respect for each other at the council table.

The job of a politician is one performed in public for the public, by diverse group of people chosen by the public, who bring various skills to the table.

We should not vote for a single-issue council that only kicks into gear when our heritage properties are threatened, or one that purports to stop unwanted development, but judging by what we've seen throughout this campaign, that's not likely to happen.

Ask someone who has served a term on council what is most frustrating about the job, and this is the scenario that you will likely hear: In business, or as part of a household, you can look at a problem, consider the solutions, make a decision and implement it, or delegate others to get it done. Sitting at the municipal council table you are presented with a problem that has many sides to

it, you carefully consider solutions that have to be guided by municipal, provincial and sometimes even federal legislation, there are several components to the process, such as studies that have to be done, staff that research and provide recommendations based on legislation, public meetings where residents can't agree on solutions, and then, when you think you have figured out the best option of those legislation allows, you need a majority vote to support it. It is not as quick or easy as residents sitting at home might think.

That said, perhaps one of the most important considerations is communication skills, and the willingness of councillors to explain the process to residents, so if they don't get what they want, they at least understand why.

That's a reason for carefully considering what candidates promise and what critics of government might say. It's also a reason for considering the experience of candidates and understanding what they realistically can accomplish.

One thing on which we can all agree: We need a council that won't wait until the next election to start working for residents.

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Mayoral candidates get down to business

Penny Coles
Staff

At the Niagara-on-the-Lake Chamber of Commerce candidates meeting Oct. 11, the three people hoping to lead the community during the next term of council were asked just one question, which they were given in advance — what would they do to support business.

“We recognize decisions made by council as they relate to land use, planning, bylaws and so many others all have an impact on business,” Paul MacIntyre, chair of the chamber and moderator of the evening, told a full house at the community centre. Council decisions have an impact on investors’ return, investors’ confidence, the future of the town’s economy, businesses big and small, the job market for youth and the overall “livability” of NOTL, he said.

Pat Darte, hoping for a second term as head of the council table, said he has two successful businesses in town, one an agri-business, and one in sports tourism. “I get it,” he said. “I’m the only mayoral candidate who can understand first-hand how important business is in this election.”

To correct some misconceptions amongst other candidates, he referred to the oft-repeated statement that the Town does not have an Official Plan. “We do, and it’s being updated,” he said, waving the document in the air. The review of it is not quite complete, but it’s on schedule to be finished next year.

The other issue he highlighted is the much-discussed tree bylaw. “We don’t have a tree bylaw passed yet,” he said, although multiple attempts have been made. “It will be done, but until I see a bylaw that doesn’t over-encroach on residents’ private property rights, I won’t support it.” In addition, the Town needs to look at planting more



Candidates wait for their turn to talk business at the Chamber of Commerce meeting held at the community centre Oct. 4.

trees to replace those lost to ash borer disease, he said.

As for business, Darte said he would continue to build on past success. During the last term, he established partnerships with global and Canadian businesses, inviting them to come to town to see the great opportunities it offers. In addition, the Town’s economic development committee is about to release a video that will help attract the kind of businesses the town wants, he said — businesses like Henry Schein in Glendale, which brought good jobs to town. “We need more Henry Scheins and I’m going to try to bring them here.”

Darte said the town needs to expand activities during the off-season with more events like the Shaw Festival’s Christmas Carol production, Vintage Hotels’ skating rink and the first-class Icewine Festival. “I’m going to try to bring them here. The Town, residents, businesses and the Chamber need to work together to make this happen.”

Darte said he runs a unique tourism business, organizing an annual hockey tournament that brings 6,000 new visitors to town. “If business experi-

ence is important to you in your Lord Mayor, I’m the only candidate you can choose.”

Four years ago, he said, voters asked him to grow business, protect public assets, bring educational options to town and drive local initiatives for youth and the elderly — and he says he’s done all that.

“I always say I’m not a politician,” he said. “I’m not a politician who talks and does nothing. I do what I say and if you give me four more years I can do even better.”

Betty Disero, hoping to win the right to lead the Town, said the next four years is about “finishing unfinished business.”

The community has to stand united, in the rural and urban areas, together as one voice to come up with a vision that includes the town’s strengths, such as farming and history, she said.

“As we do that, we look at who we are, where we’re going, and what the rules are.”

The Town needs to look at master plans for transportation, recreation, irrigation, culture and economic development, she said. She’s watched over the last four years as the

economic development committee was set up, “with two people from the public I know and respect a great deal,” who were surrounded by Town staff and politicians. When the project was finished, they had produced a \$5,000 video, but had no idea who to target, how to get those industries, or what criteria should be used to ensure the Town would see a return on its investment.

Disero said she would want those two members of the public working with young, successful entrepreneurs and those who have had a successful career, to create a master plan that would select desirable industries, talk about how to entice them to the community and look at ways to help businesses already located in the community succeed and prosper.

She suggested some short-term remedies, such as deferring development charges. The Town already does that for some, she said, “but if we’re going to do it then it has to be for everyone, not a select few.”

The Town should also look at its procurement processes, to see if, “all things being equal, we can buy our supplies in NOTL.”

The Town needs to promote local businesses to locals, and streamline red tape at town hall through a fast-track system for simple building permits, as is done in other municipalities, Disero said.

The Town should also be working with daycare providers and looking at expanding daycare facilities, said Disero, to help young working couples who require two jobs to be able to afford to live in NOTL. “If you are ready to lead, and to lead our future for what you want, I ask for your support Oct. 22.”

Dan Turner, also hoping to be mayor, has an honours economic degree from Brock University, where he has also worked as an economics teacher. He’s worked at Statistics Canada as an economic analyst, and at the Niagara Region planning department where he consulted with thousands of businesses across the region, he said. It was his experience at the Region that gave him an understanding of what businesses need from local government to thrive economically, he said. He has three priorities to help business in NOTL — attract more families to town, solve traffic problems and develop more service-based businesses.

One way to attract families, he said, would be to build a world-class aquatic centre. It could serve the 500,000 residents of the region, be operational in five years and would be a major boost for all businesses in NOTL. To those who don’t believe the Town can afford an aquatic centre, Turner said, “Henry Ford had this great saying, ‘whether you think you can or think you can’t, you’re right.’”

One of Turner’s supporters heading up this project talked to a senior bank executive to review a preliminary business plan for the aquatic centre, and was told it would be a great opportunity for the region and a profitable private business for NOTL, Turner

said. The executive, who has also worked for the Federation of Canadian Municipalities which funds such projects, knows how to tap into sources of funding “and has the executive experience to make this happen.” The Town hasn’t applied for funding from the Federation of Canadian Municipalities programs, “while other municipalities have been given millions. How many opportunities have been lost in the last four years? We’ve had absolutely no leadership and it has cost us.”

There are many ways to attract families, Turner said, including organizing more family-oriented events, such as a monster mash at Halloween, a Christmas festival in Simcoe Park, a St. Patrick’s Day parade or a weekend event to paint the “ugly electric utility boxes” in town, which is done in other municipalities. “They are an eyesore in the prettiest town in Canada. Why has this never been done?”

Turner said he would pursue more service businesses to locate near the airport, focusing on attracting businesses with 100 employees or more, which could be a catalyst to get more schools and more businesses in town.

He’d look outside of town for parking and traffic solutions, at other tourist destinations which have had similar problems and solved them with remedies such as underground or satellite parking, which would take vehicles off busy streets.

He said he would ensure an updated Official Plan would protect heritage and agriculture, and promised, if elected lord mayor, he would return council to being a civil and respectful government that would get results, would put an end to political games that get in the way of economic growth, and would deliver efficiency, accountability and transparency.

Former nursing residence to be used as a training facility by Niagara-on-the-Lake Fire and Emergency Services

Town of NOTL
Submitted

At the end of October, Niagara-on-the-Lake Fire & Emergency Services will begin to use the former nursing residence on Byron Street, Niagara-on-the-Lake, for training purposes.

The building will only be used as a training facility. Fire stations are not relocating and the Fire and Emergency Services offices remain

at Town Hall.

Theatrical smoke will be used to create fire-like conditions that will allow firefighters to practice searching for victims in a large and complex building with poor visibility.

The layout of the building will also allow them to practice advancing hose lines, removing victims from windows and accessing the roof using ladders.

“A well-trained fire de-



partment is imperative and this is an exciting addition to our existing training regiment,” said Fire Chief Rob Grimwood.

“This building will provide the Fire Department an

excellent opportunity to conduct realistic training.”

The training will typically take place in the evening, and occasionally on weekends and should not have any impact on the public.

The theatrical smoke that is used is safe and should be minimal.

Concerned residents can contact Fire Chief Rob Grimwood at 905-468-3266.

Simpson’s Pharmacy robbed

Richard Harley
Editor

The Pharmasave Simpson’s Apothecary in Old Town Niagara-on-the-Lake was robbed in early October.

A lone male entered the King Street pharmacy of the town’s tourist district shortly before 12:30 p.m. with a weapon and demanded narcotics.

The suspect, described as skinny, white and around six feet tall obtained a quantity of narcotics before fleeing out the back door to an awaiting

black GMC Terrain.

Police responded to the incident shortly after it occurred.

There were no injuries as a result of this incident.

The accompanied photo is of the vehicle used by the suspect.

Anyone with information is requested to contact police investigators at 905-688-4111, ext. 2200.




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Community still giving after fire destroys family's home

Lauren O'Malley
Staff

Mayors, neighbours, hockey players — just about everyone in town has joined in to help Rachel Spiewak and her family since they lost everything they owned to a devastating house fire in September.

Mayor Pat Darte says he was talking with his friend and neighbour retired NHL player Zenon Konopka about the fire, and they decided they needed to do something to mitigate such a terrible loss. They began planning a fundraiser, and reached out into the town for support.

Corks Winebar & Eatery was chosen as the venue.

"I was raised you always give," says Maria Mavridis, owner of the restaurant.

"We were more than happy to be involved."

Darte says less than an hour after posting about the event on Facebook he was swamped with locals begging to help.

"It's NOTL and this is what we do. We always come together as a community. Our businesses have been exceptionally generous. We have so much stuff for the silent auction," says Darte.

Silent auction items include a pig roast for 50 from Pig Out Roasters; two e-scooter rentals for one full day from eSkoot Niagara; a pair of Maui Jim sunglasses from Dr. Robertson-



The aftermath of the house fire (Supplied)

Woods & Associates, and a \$500 gift basket from Sephora, among many others.

"There's truly something for everyone," says Mavridis.

Both Darte and Mavridis say Spiewak is feeling the brunt of the loss these days, having recently also suffered the death of a close friend. "She's getting through as best she can. I told her this is an elephant she has to eat one bite at a time," says Darte.

There is some irony in that Spiewak herself is a known for giving a lot to the community, having won the Town's volunteer of the year award in 2012.

"Rachel is so used to giving that receiving is very difficult for her," Mavridis says.

In that spirit, Spiewak says she intends to use a portion of the proceeds from this event to purchase smoke detectors for anyone in town who

doesn't have enough of them.

She would specifically like to see everyone have one in their garage as well as several in their homes.

The fire that destroyed her house started in the garage, where there was no smoke detector. It is currently not mandated by Ontario law to have a smoke alarm in an attached garage.

"We had planned to hold the fundraiser at Corks but it quickly became obvious we were beyond our capacity," says Mavridis.

"Zenon called Dan at the community centre — the space was already booked, but Dan asked that event if they would mind moving for us, and they were happy to.

The people of this town are amazing and people moving to town feel this and know it," she says, emotionally.

Mavridis asked Janice

Thomson, executive director of the NOTL Chamber of Commerce, if the chamber would like to get involved.

"She says, 'Okay, let's do it!'" Thomson sent an e-blast out to all of the members of the chamber, who promptly responded, sparking a large reaction.

"We've had so much stuff dropped off," says Mavridis. "This is the Niagara-on-the-Lake I grew up in."

The fundraiser takes place on Oct. 19 at the Niagara-on-the-Lake community centre, from 8 p.m. to midnight. Spiewak's family will all be there — children are welcome.

All proceeds from the entry, bar and auction go to the family.

There will be a live band, and local DJ Trevor Legault will keep things hopping between sets. Corks will be supplying free snacks, and the cash bar will be running throughout.

Organizers are asking that anybody with pictures of the family bring them to share.

"They lost all of their family photos in the fire," explains Mavridis.

Tickets are available online through the chamber of commerce website, or in person at Corks or the chamber.

If you can't attend the event but would like to contribute, you can visit the family's page on gofundme.com.

Harvest Barn sale a rumour no more

Penny Coles
Staff

The chatter about town that Harvest Barn was for sale has been around for about a year, but it's chatter no more — two local families have confirmed their deal has closed on the popular market on Niagara Stone Road.

They have also purchased Rancourt Winery, on Concession 4 behind Harvest Barn.

Erwin Wiens and Fabian Reis have been working together for about four years. Wiens is a grape-grower, Reis a wine-maker, both with a love of the land in their veins.

They are also both passionate and determined — their wives nod in agreement at that description, although one allowed the word stubborn to creep into the conversation. To them, there is no other option than giving their all to whatever they do.

They didn't set out to buy a



Harvest Barn's new owners. (Penny Coles)

market, or a winery, for that matter. It just seemed like a natural progression from the partnership that has developed between the two, said Erwin.

Fabian was practically raised in a winery. His grandfather is Herbert Konzelmann, and his parents were both involved in the family

business. But he and his wife Stephanie, who calls Erwin uncle (she is the daughter of his second cousin), wanted to do their own thing.

Although Stephanie didn't grow up surrounded by vineyards as Fabian did, their families come from the same city in Germany, and they met at a Konzelmann open house.

Rather than working in the family business, they wanted to "spread their wings, create their own vision," said Fabian. And after doing some travelling and studying, they came back to Niagara-on-the-Lake, where he took on the management of a local vineyard.

"We wanted to make wine," said Stephanie, who has trained as a sommelier, and together they began a virtual winery.

The next step of the journey that brought the two couples to this point was an annual guys' snowmobiling weekend, where the two men met for the first time, and hit it off. They had a similar vision, said Fabian. It wasn't just about growing grapes or making wine, it was about "quality, quality, quality. Our visions are so similar. It's tough in life to find people who are on the same page."

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The Lake Report

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Editorial: "Our opinion"

Richard Harley
 Editor

The Lake Report would like to address an ad recently placed in the Metroland-owned Niagara Advance by local resident Joe Accardo.

The ad — a smear campaign against mayoral candidate and incumbent lord mayor Pat Darte — offers the following misleading statement:

"By his own admission failed to lead the updating of the Official Plan. In our opinion giving developers free reign to challenge council."

Underneath the statement there is an attribution to The Lake Report's recent special election edition.

To Mr. Accardo and the Niagara Advance: Considering the ad is signed by Accardo alone, what is meant by "our opinion?"

The phrasing is misleading, and could lead residents of Niagara-on-the-Lake to believe The Lake Report published such a statement. As is plain in the election

edition, the paper made no such claim, and is endorsing no particular candidate in the 2018 municipal election.

When contacted by the Lake Report, Accardo said the phrasing was not intended to mislead residents.

"The opinion, as you rightly point out is mine not that of the Lake Report," said Accardo. "The 'our' is akin to my royal 'we' and not meant to be attributed to the Lake Report."

We're not sure what that means. The misleading nature of the ad is based on the grammatical rules of person and predicate.

Regardless of Accardo's intentions, The Lake Report responded that we expect a public retraction of this statement, along with an explanation of who was meant to be implicated by the phrase "our opinion."

Accardo said he would be cooperative. The Niagara Advance did not respond.

The Lake Report, as always, holds itself to the highest standards of journalism, and will not tolerate



misleading or libellous statements directed towards itself, staff of members of our community.

In that regard, we must also state the paper does not support the type of ads Accardo is running, and ensures residents they will not see such petty politicking in this paper.

We must also point out that Accardo did not purchase a similar smear ad against Disero, a sitting member of council during the time the Official Plan was neglected.

All of council is responsible for the lack of an up-

to-date Official Plan.

It is our hope that nobody is fooled by these ads — which are both poor in taste and questionable in their accuracy — but will rather make their own decisions.

It brings some relief that many residents have contacted us to express they don't believe in this type of attack campaign in local politics, especially in our friendly little town.

For better or worse, Accardo has likely done the candidates he's smearing a favour with those residents.

editor@niagaranow.com



Letter to the editor:

My wife volunteers for a local NOTL group and wrote a welcome letter to all members.

Problem — not all addresses in her list from the organization's head office included post box numbers. We explained our dilemma to a post office staff member. Sorry...she could not give out that information nor could she provide a solution. If we sent the letters without the post office box numbers, they would be sent to the dead-letter site. Our only solution was to fill our gas tank and personally deliver the letters in Virgil, Niagara-on-the-Lake, St. David's, Glendale and St. Catharines. Mission accomplished!

Surprise — several days later, we received in our post office box a brochure from the provincial government about the upcoming election. It had our correct street address but no post office box number. Someone, perhaps a postal employee, had added our box number in pen on the envelope.

I find it odd and frustrating that personal mail is not deliverable without a box number but government mail is! There definitely appears to be a different set of rules for different senders.

- Bud Moulson

What am I even voting for?

Public School Board Trustee

School Board Trustees manage the public school board system, including the second-largest budget (\$400 million) in the Niagara Region, second only to Niagara Regional Police Services. While school board elections often get overshadowed by the runs for mayor, regional and town councillor, the school board election is an important part of our governing system for all, even those without children.

Regional Councillor

Regional Councillors (NOTL has two, one elected, and the lord mayor who automatically takes a seat at the Region) represent our municipality at regional council, which oversees the municipalities of the Niagara Region and governs the budget for organizations such as the DSNB, NRPS, NPCA. The Region is responsible for a large portion of infrastructure throughout NOTL and similar towns.

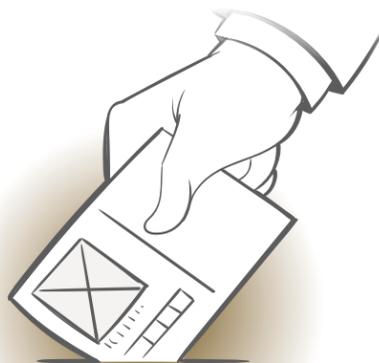
Town Council

Town council members (consisting of the lord mayor and eight councillors) govern bylaws, oversee planning projects and vote on decisions that affect the community. Council instructs Town staff how they should manage the corporation. Council members also make recommendations and form committees to get public opinions, do research, and in turn offer suggestions about how council should direct staff or act on various motions brought to the table.

The Lake Report

VOTE

OCTOBER 22



Letter to the editor:

Terry passed the torch to us and the Niagara-on-the-Lake community honoured his request.

Sincere thanks to all the participants, the students from St. Michael's Catholic Elementary school who collected funds at the Avondales, Hendriks Valu-mart and Shoppers Drug Mart. The students from Crossroads ME to WE who cheered on the participants. A huge thanks to the Lewiston-Niagara-on-the-Lake Rotary Club for providing the barbecue, Sandtrap for donating pizza, Cows for the ice cream, Tim Hortons, and Walkers fruit market for giving the participants nourishment before the run.

Special thanks to all the volunteers who gave of their time to help us honour our Canadian hero.

The Terry Fox run in NOTL continues to be successful through the efforts of Joe and Mike Pillitteri. They achieved their goal of raising over \$60,000 for cancer research. They made it fun yet meaningful while inspiring a whole community just like Terry Fox.

So grateful to each and everyone's support and continued belief in Terry's legacy.

- Joan King, organizer of the local Terry Fox Run

Correction from TLR

In our recently released special edition there have been a couple of errors spotted by readers. The number of private dwelling in Niagara-on-the-Lake was reported to increase by 7089 from 2011 to 2016. In fact, the reported number is the total number of households in NOTL as of 2016, calculated when the most recent Town survey was completed. The number of doctors in town was also questioned and we are looking into it. The information was not available by press time.

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Not much changed now that pot is legal

Names have been removed from this story as requested by the people interviewed.

Richard Harley
Editor

Cheers rang out like it was the first minute of January; parties were held like it was the first of July; and in quiet Niagara-on-the-Lake, residents across town were lighting one up as the clock tower struck midnight on Wednesday, officially marking the first day recreational cannabis is legal in Canada.

It wasn't just the Willy Wonka's Magic Wonder getting spirits high. For many pot smokers, a sense of victory was (and remains) the best buzz of all.

A local regular cannabis smoker who was convicted of a criminal offence for growing cannabis planted his first legal plant — this time knowing his door won't be busted down by the police again.

Another local who smokes daily — we'll call him Joe — said he's not entirely looking forward to anything quite yet.

"Ontario is rolling out the system poorly, which will prohibit me and others from getting it in a legal method. So I think the poor implementation in Ontario is why I'm not excited. As soon as I can go get it as easily as I can buy a beer in the LCBO, then sure I'll be excited," said Joe.



Oct. 17 saw the legalization of cannabis across Canada. (Richard Harley)

"I am excited it's now legal, it's a step in the right direction but am I going to go buy weed tomorrow? No."

Another self-proclaimed daily smoker said it's like a "winning the war," knowing they don't have to feel like a criminal every time they're smoking, and don't have to worry about going to the store "smelling like a joint."

For others, like a local self-proclaimed "veteran toker," the feeling of knowing it's legal "kind of takes the fun out of it."

While most smokers seem to be rejoicing that it's legal, many still aren't too sure how to handle the new laws yet.

Joe said he plans to keep

his smoking life private.

"For me, I'm going to treat it the same way I treat alcohol, or any drug use for that matter — I don't brag or broadcast my use of alcohol while I'm at work or in public settings."

"I believe there will be a continued stigma with marijuana use, but I believe that's been on the decline for the last few years now regardless ... I'm sure there will still be cases where it affects (jobs) because it does now ... I think that will let up. It shouldn't affect (your job), in the way that your employer can't ask you 'do you drink while you're off work.'"

"Theoretically, if you had a picture of you smoking a

joint on Facebook and your employer fired you because of that, couldn't you take them to court? I'm sure there's going to be a lot of issues with that."

It seems evidenced by the fact nobody wanted their name mentioned in a story about marijuana legalization that Joe may be right about a lingering stigma.

"The world isn't going to stop turning," Joe said. "If anyone has an issue, just point them in the direction of any one of the states or countries that has legalized it before."

While the celebrations stayed mainly private in NOTL, smokers across Canada held events to celebrate historic day.

Continued: Harvest Barn officially sold

Continued on Page 5.

Erwin agrees. "The reason our partnership works, the retail part of it is not for me. I want to grow grapes. I'm a farmer. We'll have separate responsibilities. Grapes are my gig. Fabian's gig's the wine."

"We want to blaze new trails, and we love the challenge," adds Fabian.

Erwin helped Fabian out in the vineyard, in addition to his own 160 acres he was tending when he wasn't working as a full-time police officer in Hamilton, and in 2015, Fabian made and bottled the first vintage of Ferox, which has become their brand. Ferox is Latin for fierce, says Stephanie. The logo is of a lion — she and Fabian are both Leos — but the word 'fierce' also symbolizes their dedication to their work and the quality they insist on for their wine, she said. She and Fabian picked the grapes for their first vintage by hand, Nov. 15,

2015. She remembers that it was 12 degrees Celsius, and the sun was shining.

"We live this and breath this," said Fabian. "It has to be quality. We want to be the best."

About a year ago, Erwin heard Rancourt and Harvest Barn were for sale. He was managing the Rancourt vineyards and had mentioned to the owner, Joe Enrich, that he might be interested in buying the winery.

But Enrich already had a buyer he was working with — Benny Marotta, of Two Sisters Vineyards, who was looking at both properties.

That was when the rumours started, and people in town thought Harvest Barn had already been sold.

Neither of the men know exactly what happened to that deal. Marotta had been talking to the Town, and without revealing what he planned to do with the property, he did say it would be something beautiful for one of the most important

intersections of NOTL. But the deal fell through, and Enrich reached out to Erwin, who then began working with Fabian to see if they could make it happen. Not being big developers, there was the matter of trying to finance the purchase, said Erwin, and then working out the myriad details that are involved in taking over a business, before the sale was finally completed last week. They didn't want investors, although it wouldn't have been hard to find them — they wanted to make it a family enterprise, said Erwin, and they did, with some help from his oldest brother.

"It took longer than we thought. Buying a business doesn't happen over night."

They are excited about the location, with good soil for growing grapes, and an older, established vineyard planted with mostly bordeaux. "Location is key," said Fabian.

The Wiens and Reis families feel this is a way of ensur-

ing Harvest Barn remains as the community landmark it has become, and they have heard from many friends and neighbours how grateful they are it will be locally owned.

"All of us are very proud of this," said Erwin. "Harvest Barn is going to remain as it is."

Well, maybe not quite. The women talk about expanding the role of the market. Kevin Baum, long-time manager since the days of Doug Dineley's ownership and the "heart and soul of the operation," will continue to run it, including going to the Ontario Food Terminal to buy the freshest produce and ensuring the best customer service. His decisions about stock will be unhindered, but the women are looking at planning family events on the property, working with locals ...

Continued on Page 6

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High hopes for grape harvest washed out

Jill Troyer
Special to TLR

Niagara's hot dry summer sowed the seeds of high hopes for a magnificent grape harvest in 2018 — then came September, bringing rain, warm temperatures, and humidity — a perfect storm of conditions to threaten grapes with mildew and sour rot.

That meant that "timing was crucial, we had to be very careful about when to spray, when to thin, when to pick" according to Jackson Triggs winemaker Marco Piccoli. His approach was to pick the thin skinned varieties (gewurtztraminer, sauvignon blanc, chardonnay, pinots) early, sacrificing sugar levels to get healthy grapes off the vines.

Gavin Robertson, Winemaker at Niagara College concurs.

"It's been a topsy turvy harvest season so far, trying to balance optimal ripeness against health of the fruit," Gavin said.

The scene has been similar at Vineland Estates, where winemaker Brian Schmidt said staff have been "scrambling to get as much in as possible as quickly as possible, working night and day." According to Environment



Canada, September was much wetter than usual, with rainfall for the month in the Niagara region more than 25 per cent above average.

With the harvest in for most white grapes and the lighter reds including pinot noir, the chair of Ontario Grape Growers Mattia Oppenlaender estimates the yield for 2018 will amount to just two thirds of the tonnage picked in 2017, lower than expected.

Last year was a bumper crop, in fact the largest ever, weighing 87,567 tonnes. This year the number is expected to come in at around 60,000 tonnes.

In one case, Robertson reports that a block of chardonnay vines that yielded four to 4.5 tonnes per acre last year produced less than half the harvest this year, due to "a combination of naturally lower yields after last year's bumper crop and the fruit we had to drop on the ground."

Still, winemakers are pleased with the quality of the harvest so far. Piccoli explains that "wines will be different each vintage, for example this year's sauvignon blanc might be have more of a grapefruit flavour, where other years could be more peachy; pinot noir is very fruity this year, with darker

colour than other years.

"Each vintage has a different personality from Mother Nature," said Piccoli.

Skilled winemakers in Niagara have different challenges each season. As Robertson put it, "it's disheartening, but it keeps it stimulating as a winemaker."

Everyone takes the season in stride, even if it does disappoint in some ways.

"This is my 28th year, I've seen extremes from every perspective. This is not the most difficult year we've had. The quality is amazing. Every year throws us curve balls we don't expect" said Schmidt.

There is still a considerable amount of grapes left to harvest. Merlot is coming in now, cabernets a little later.

Schmidt has some good news for cabernet lovers.

"Cabernets are beautiful, small supercharged berries, extraordinary quality" according to Schmidt. All the winemakers we talked to were of the same sentiment, and all have their fingers crossed for a good couple of weeks of hang time for the cabernet grapes, wishing for warm days, cool nights, morning breezes — and no rain.

Continued: Harvest Barn officially sold

Continued from Page 5

... to make it even more of a fixture in the community, "to enhance the local experience," said Dorothy. They will start with some 'welcome back, we appreciate your support' type of events, they plan to sell local products, and make it once again about loyal local customers.

"The grocery store business is not the easiest," said Fabian. "There are lots of big chains out there, lots of competition. We want to make sure this stays the same local Harvest Barn."

"We didn't expect to get into this business," added Stephanie. "We've become very passionate about it, and about enhancing that local, community feel."

The transition to the new owners will appear seamless for locals, but the winery has been closed for about a week, with a reopening likely this weekend. It needs a little sprucing up, said Dorothy. It has a bit of a neglected look about it, and they want to give it a little TLC. When they

open, they will be selling Rancourt wines for now. Their Ferox vintage is on the shelves of Reif Estate Winery, thanks to the support of Klaus Reif, and is available online and on the wine list of The Pie Plate in Virgi and a few other restaurants.

There will be an official opening of the winery in the future, but for now, the new owners are encouraging locals to stop in for a visit.

As for the wine they will sell once Ferox becomes the winery name and brand, "we've set the bar high," said Erwin.

"And we can honestly call it a family estate winery," said Dorothy.

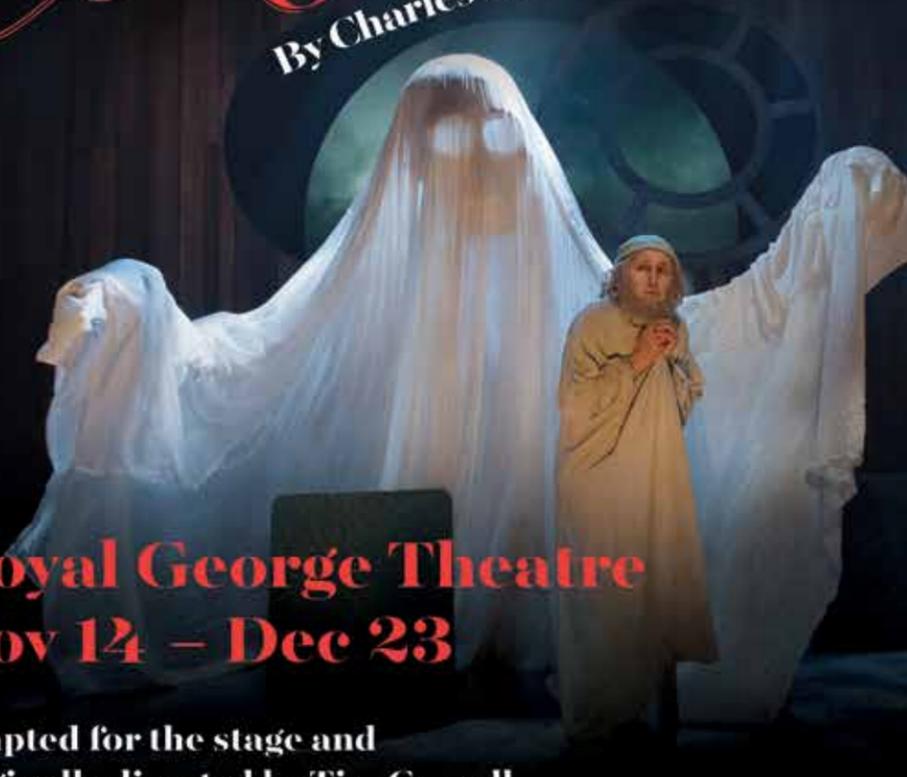
For Fabian, "this is part of the story now, our story."



Harvest Barn interior.

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Michael Thurnhaart as Scrooge in A Christmas Carol (2017). David Couper Photography.

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Big band benefit to support IPF patients

Richard Harley
Editor

When Terry Hardy was diagnosed with Terry Hardy was diagnosed with IPF (idiopathic pulmonary fibrosis) two years ago, he felt like he won the world's worst lottery.

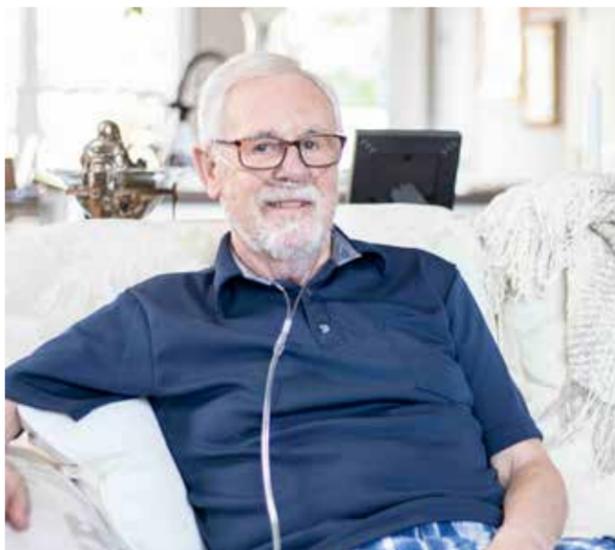
He was told by his doctor that his condition was extremely rare, which didn't exactly help lift his spirits. He felt isolated, and the nearest support group was in Hamilton, with classes that ran from 7 p.m. to 9 p.m. For an older man with a debilitating lung disease, the travel time and the hours made sure that wasn't an option.

But Hardy, with the support of his wife Susan, decided that wasn't good enough. The two organized a support group in town, open to IPF patients across the region.

Even though the disease was apparently so rare, Hardy says at the first meeting at the Niagara-on-the-Lake community centre, he was shocked to see 25 people arrive — all of whom were equally surprised.

"When they walked in they had no idea there were this many people in the Niagara Region. And this is just NOTL and St. Catharines. So it's not as rare as they say. It's becoming more and more common and I think the diagnostic techniques are improving and that generally speaking family physicians are starting to recognize the symptoms of the disease."

Now the group has a list



Terry Hardy. (Richard Harley)

of more than 40 people, said Hardy, during a chat at his home in Old Town.

"Now I'm not big on support groups. At least I'm not big on what I thought support groups were about."

The only cure for IPF is a lung transplant, "if you're lucky enough," said Hardy.

He wasn't, and he's on oxygen at all times now.

One thing doctors do recommend is exercise, which presented another challenge for Hardy — there weren't any dedicated exercise rooms with oxygen tanks available.

"Anybody who has advanced IPF is on oxygen ... I was astounded that in the whole of the Niagara Region there is only one place, and that is the hospital in St. Catharines. So I met with

them and said, 'look, you're the only people around that have anything. It needs to be expanded.'"

The hospital agreed. "I said to the hospital, 'well, if I was able to raise some funds, would you go ahead?' And they agreed."

Now Hardy, with support from the Niagara Jazz Festival, is organizing an event to help raise money towards his goal of benefitting IPF patients across Niagara.

"In conjunction with the support group, I wanted to have a fundraiser to increase awareness for this disease," said Hardy, while his oxygen tank hums in the background.

The fundraiser will be a night of big band music at the NOTL community centre, organized and presented by

the TD Jazz Festival.

Juliet Dunn, owner of the festival, is donating 50 per cent of the proceeds towards Hardy's cause.

Hardy, who came down with pneumonia when he was trying to organize his own fundraiser, ended up calling Juliet to let her know he was just too weak to continue.

"I said, 'as much as I would like to do this, I just don't have the energy to do it. We'll have to forget about it.'"

Dunn came to the rescue, taking the fundraising initiative on as part of the jazz festival's big band fundraiser.

The night will include live jazz, dancing, a free swing dance lesson with Niagara Lindy Hop, silent and live auction items, door prizes, cash bar and performances by Alex Pangman, The Jimmy Stahl Band, Juliet Dunn and Peter Shea.

Sweet and Savoury tapas will be provided by The Heat is On catering.

Hardy's IPF support group meets at the community centre at 11 a.m. on the third Thursday of every month.

"There are around 2,000 people living with IPF in the Niagara Region," Hardy said. "The only thing we can do is exercise."

An auction is also available online with proceeds supporting Hardy's initiative. Donations are also accepted.

To purchase a ticket, donate or make a bid in the auction, visit <https://niagarajazzfestival.com/big-band-fundraiser>.

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Laughing a path to a better wellbeing

Lauren O'Malley
Staff

How many times have you said, "I wish there was summer camp for adults?"

While it only lasts an hour per week, there's something very close.

Carolyn Shannon is the sunny and warm health professional who leads "Laugh Yourself Healthier" classes on Friday afternoons at the community centre. Some might find the idea of laughing for an hour a bit, well, laughable, but there is sound science in the physical health advantages of laughter. The Mayo Clinic website lists benefits including the stimulation of many organs, increased endorphins, improved immune system, pain relief and, of course, better mood.

Shannon also makes a point of waking up the lymph nodes and hitting acupressure points with a specific form of

hand-clapping throughout the class for further health gains.

So the "healthier" aspect is quite undeniable. The surprise side-effect is the joy that comes from feeling like a young uninhibited child again.

The class is held seated, and involves a series of gently physical exercises, most of them with a vocal component. There is genuine laughter, as well as the singing of popular songs using laughing sounds — "ho ho ho," "ha ha ha," and "hee hee hee" — and some repetitive, uplifting chants a bit like nursery rhymes.

Gloria Messenger Harman — who has been participating in these classes with Shannon for about eight years — says, "This gives us a new language, actually." There are many statements of positive reinforcement used throughout the class, which many of the women say they use throughout their day-to-

day lives.

Laughter as the foundation frees the students from their self-consciousness — much like young children. "If it's imperfect it's funny, and that's a good thing," says Shannon.

Shannon says further health benefits include mitigating or even preventing dementia. "I do versions of this program in assisted living facilities all over the region, and it's amazing to see how enthusiastic the residents are about the classes, and how much they just shine during our time together. It touches my heart," she says.

The weekly classes typically host between four and 10 participants, most of whom know each other from their years with the program. Angie Domenegato attends her second class, and finds herself yawning frequently throughout. "New students yawn a lot," says Shannon. Not because they're bored,

but as a result of the dramatic increase in oxygen in their systems.

"At first you feel silly, this is so childish," says Messenger Harman. "And then you give yourself permission to be childish — and you also feel like you get a good workout."

Shannon points out this program works well for people in NOTL because it can be done by those who are less able-bodied as well as those in their prime, and, "it's great for people who are recovering from all kinds of different things," she says. Messenger Harman says, "I had a pacemaker inserted — after that I really felt like my head actually woke up during the class."

As one of the faithful participants says, "Who doesn't need more laughter in their life?"

Laugh Yourself Healthier classes are \$20 for 5 sessions; the drop-in rate is \$10.



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New candidates say no to freezing development, maybe to privatizing services

Penny Coles
Staff

At the fourth and final meeting for new candidates hosted by FocusNOTL at the Royal Canadian Legion hall last Tuesday, Gus Koroneos, Crispin Bottomley, Mark Brown, Lauren Goettler and Katherine Reid answered questions that dealt with what they could deliver to council, and whether they would support freezing development or privatizing public services.

Reid introduced herself as a Queenston resident with a career in the wine industry, now winemaker for Joseph's Estates Winery.

She is the president of the Garden City Lions Club, has been on its board since 2000 and has served two terms as regional chair of the Niagara division. She volunteers to help with local youth dances the NOTL Lions Club holds at Crossroads Public School, and collects eye glasses to be sent to underdeveloped countries.

She is also a member of the Town's safety committee, which tackles road safety issues, bike tours, e-scooters, crosswalks, speed limits, and know-your-neighbours programs. The committee, which recently published a safety map for pedestrians and cyclists, does "great work" to help the community, including an annual event to improve bike safety for migrant farm workers.

As a member of the Town's agricultural committee, she's concerned about the changes she's seen in agriculture, she said. There have been several maps made for planning purposes that are not correct and don't match.

Her greatest concern is the town's planning department. Designing a new Official Plan requires a good town staff and a few councillors who understand the planning process. "I feel I have a good understanding of the Town planning department," said Reid.

She supports heritage and cultural preservation, which have been important to her since she was in school.

Town bylaws need to be consistent, Reid said, and all that NOTL has, including the Shaw Festival, the Icewine Festival, the Niagara River and Lake Ontario contribute to the many reasons visitors come here and have a good experience. She would like to see more done to promote agri-tourism, and to give

small producers more recognition, even if it's a Facebook page to share information.

She has run many conferences around Ontario with the Lions Club, has won an award for helping youth through her work with local Lions, and lives by the Lions motto: "to be careful with my criticism and liberal with my praise, to build up and not destroy."

Crispin Bottomley said he is running because he wants the very best for the town. The last 20 years of his life, he said, have been building up to this point of running for office.

He was youth citizen of the year in 1998, he's a graduate of Brock University with degrees in political science and education, a volunteer firefighter, president of the Queenston Fire Department Association, co-chair of the health and safety committee, associate instructor at the Ontario Firefighting College, and was vice-chair of the Town's parking committee.

The Official Plan needs to be completed with development and growth in mind, he said.

He would support heritage protection and the agricultural base, managing tourism, growth, and Glendale intensification.

"I want people in this town to be proud of it."

Increased traffic problems are not limited to Regional Rd. 55 — there are also problems in St. Davids, Queenston and Niagara-on-the-Green, he said. The Town needs to work with Niagara Falls and the Niagara Region to open up Concession 6 to Mewburn Road, and alternate routing using concessions and lines should be considered. As a pilot project he would like to see a police officer at the Queen and King Streets intersection, to control pedestrian and vehicular traffic.

Bottomley said he would like to see discussions with the Region to download RR 55 so the Town could regain control of a principle entrance to NOTL, as well as the resurrection of the Town's parking committee, a discussion about whether there is sufficient parking for businesses, employees, customers and Niagara College students, and whether there would be support for satellite parking lots.

Also on his list of priorities is looking at the sewage lagoons, the rifle range and DND property, the former Parliament Oak property, the town-owned land behind the



former high school, and the community centre property, and he would like to see the facilities and recreation master plan finalized early in the next term of council.

Age-friendly and accessibility issues also need to be examined, he said, with a Town committee to look at whether public facilities will meet Provincial accessibility requirements by 2025.

The Official Plan needs to be looked at with a vision for the next 20 years, said Bottomley.

"The town has changed since the current plan was completed in 1993. The Town hasn't kept up with the changes, and that's what we're seeing now."

Mark Brown, having lived in NOTL two and a half years, introduced himself as "the new kid on the block."

However he and his wife honeymooned in NOTL and have celebrated their anniversary in town for the last 39 years. "This was our happy place," he said, so when it came to retirement, NOTL was where they chose to live.

Brown spent two terms on the Oakville town council, he said, helped finalize the Oakville secondary plan, and served on "I don't know how many budget committees."

He also spent six years on the Oakville Chamber of Commerce board of directors and one year as board chair.

Over the past few weeks, knocking on doors and speaking to people, he's heard about a lot of issues — traffic, development, council not listening to residents and feel disenfranchised, "but I haven't spoken to anyone who disagrees this is the best place to live." That means the Town can still deal with

issues, that everyone is on the same page going forward, he said.

Getting the OP up-to-date will not be the end of the process, requiring Regional approval, and there will always be legacy projects grandfathered in that will pop up under old rules, he said.

Council needs to work on a strategic plan to set direction for staff and residents, he said, looking at where the Town should be in the next 10 years. It has to be clear, has to protect heritage and establish urban guidelines. Brown supports the community planning permit system, which will be different for each village. It must be put in place "to provide fence posts to move forward."

He would also like to see a master plan of parks and facilities for the future, to inform development charges. The pressure to build is coming, he said, because it's relatively cheap to build in NOTL in comparison to municipalities such as Oakville. The Town needs to have projects and goals in place to justify development charges.

Turning to taxation, Brown said he's very comfortable with a line-by-line look at the budget. He's familiar with discussions and debate over numbers, including looking at service levels such as consultants, which should be used when necessary.

He doesn't agree with the accommodation tax because it targets the visitors the town wants, the ones who come to stay. But there has to be something in the planning process about how many tourists the town wants, how to manage them, and the infrastructure required to

support tourism, he said.

Brown suggested undertaking a traffic study that would include tracing licence plates to track where visitors come from and how long they stay.

He said he feels "something is smoldering," with the Province likely looking at a regional review that could include police costs. But municipalities can also expect to be part of the review, he said, referring to the 1970s when several municipalities in Ontario "were wiped out overnight."

The ward system is a possibility for the next election, Brown said, "but we have to deal with disenfranchised residents now and not wait for that solution."

Cannabis legislation and retail outlets have to be considered; urban boundaries, the agricultural sector and tourism have to be protected; and the grape and wine industry "are integral for our quality of life," said Brown, who promised to be accessible to residents, "because that's what we're being paid to do."

Goettler said she moved to NOTL three years ago, loves the town, and has since she was married here years ago. She loves the people, history, architecture, wineries and culture, in addition to the proximity to water. "What's not to love?"

But recently the Town has been challenged with questionable applications for "demolition of some treasures," and the Town hasn't been able to make decisions to control unwanted growth.

She and her husband own eight businesses with 270 employees, so "I know how to run a business," she said. It

means making difficult decisions and prioritizing needs over wants.

Goettler says she feels she can help guide the town over the next four years in a positive direction, and since she isn't looking for a job, she will donate her salary to charity.

She would support a tree bylaw, and an accommodation tax to help preserve what is special about the town, she said.

Growth should be thoughtful and shouldn't compromise, she said. She believes a ward system could be considered in the future, but "right now the town needs to come together." A fresh face and new approach is needed on council, she said, promising to represent all stakeholders, not just special interest groups in town.

Koroneos is from the Niagara Region, and was raised on a poultry farm in Smithville. He has an honours science degree from University of Waterloo, and has opened hearing clinics in Niagara Falls and Virgil.

His two little girls are his inspiration for running for council, to help guide the town for the next generation.

The Town should be planning for what residents want it to look like 30 years from now, and work toward that, he said, quoting Buckminster Fuller, who said "the best way to predict the future is to design it."

He's not in favour of expanding urban boundaries, and would work with farmers to help them promote their product. Their farms need to be viable and successful so they can pass them on to the next generations. He's also not a fan of putting greenhouses on prime agricultural land.

He would push for a value-for-money audit, especially with what's happening at the Region, he said, since the Town is disproportionately taxed for the services it receives.

The Town needs to invest for the future in infrastructure, get help from the Region to improve Regional Rd. 55 and Four Mile Creek Road, needs to improve transit for seniors and those with disabilities, and needs a wheelchair transit service.

The Town also should develop the Niagara District Airport with more flights to more destinations.

Koroneos, who lives in St Davids with his family, said the Town doesn't

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NEWS

Cont'd: candidates say no to freezing development, maybe to privatizing services.

need to spend \$100,000 on consultants for the St. Davids Pool, as councillors agreed to recently, but rather should spend the \$100,000 toward a pool.

As for trees, he said, the best time to plant them was 20 years ago, "and the next best time is today."

He asked for support from voters "so we can all enjoy those beautiful, mature trees 20 years from now."

Reid was asked the first question of the evening, which was what the "single most important deliverable" was that she could bring to council. Her answer was assisting people in the community, by listening what they have to say and working for them. "I believe I listen well."

Bottomley said he would bring commitment, which he's shown previously through his actions and commitment to the community, he said.

Brown said he would listen to both sides of a debate before making the best decision possible for all residents, which is ultimately what councillors are elected to do.

Goettler, referring to a meeting that packed the community centre to talk about Randwood Estate last spring, said when you see that, as a councillor you should listen. As a new councillor, she said, "what I don't have in experience I will make up for in communication."

Koroneos said his most important deliverable after talking to people, would be controlling development with an equitable Official Plan. He is unbiased, he said, and looks at data to drive his conclusions. "That way I can defend my conclusions to residents."

The next question was whether council should freeze development until guidelines are in place, and all responded they would not.

Bottomley suggested slowing new development by ensuring a number of steps, including public consultation. "We would not be able to stop development, but we need to have our Official Plan and secondary plans in place the first year of the new term."

Brown said it would be "wonderful" if a town could stop development. Unfortunately it can't be done but



Top: From left, town council candidates Mark Brown, Crispin Bottomley and Kathy Reid.

Right: Town council candidates Al Bisback and Wendy Cheropita.

The five candidates answered questions from FocusNOTL and residents last Tuesday.



there are mechanisms to slow it, by controlling sewer and water allocations within the urban boundaries. "Don't agitate for more sewage capacity to be built," he said. "I believe we'll have a very co-operative council" who will work together to get the Official Plan done.

"I don't think we can stop it, but I'm not sure that we can't slow it down," said Goettler, suggesting the Town should arrive at a vision of what NOTL should look like before handing out building permits.

Koroneos agreed development can't be stopped, but can be controlled. Urban boundaries need to be preserved, and he would push for a mid-peninsula corridor that would curb local development as a "next-generation plan."

Reid agreed the Town can't stop all development but through infrastructure decisions could slow it down.

Asked if he would agree with privatization of public services, Brown said he would look at each service to see if it makes sense. Typically, he said, government looks after the services that are so expensive no one else can do it profitably. Snow plowing, he said, might be cheaper handled by the private sector. "If it makes sense, contract it out, if it doesn't, don't."

Goettler agreed if a service can be delivered cheaper by the private sector, privatize it - look at it and do whatever's best for tax dollars.

Koroneos said it would have to be looked at on a case-by-case basis, with a focus on value for money. Any privatized service would need careful scrutiny to ensure the Town isn't being short-changed.

Reid agreed privatization could be beneficial in some cases, but not always. She

pointed to hospital cleaning as an example of privatizing a service that might be cheaper but not better.

Bottomley said privatization is a possibility but public-private partnerships should also be considered, and the town staff would need to be ready to monitor privatized services.

Goettler, asked about the delivery of health care in NOTL, said she's not crazy about it. When you move to town you don't get a choice of doctor in the family health team, you have to take who is available, she said, and you're not able to switch within the same practice. She is in favour of having all the doctors and services in one building, she said, although she's not sure it's going to be in the best location.

"It's definitely a hassle" trying to get a new doctor, agreed Koroneos, and the Town needs to do a better job of attracting more doctors, both family physicians and specialists.

Reid also likes the idea of having all doctors and services under one roof, but she doesn't like the location they chose, because of safety concerns with its location beside a school.

Bottomley spoke of not having enough long-term care beds, given the expected closing of Upper Canada Lodge, although Pleasant Manor is getting more beds. He would also like to see more doctors encouraged to relocate to NOTL.

Brown says as the population grows, the Town needs to work with the Local Health Integration Network to attract new doctors and specialists. Although the Province says the town is adequately serviced, now is the time to recruit for the future, he said.

Asked about an urban tree bylaw and whether there should be one for the rural area as well, Koroneos said a tree bylaw should be incorporated in the Official Plan. While most property owners want mature trees on their property, the Town needs something in place to prevent people from doing something "radical." Anything dealing with rural areas would have to recognize that farmers have a responsibility to provide "good stewardship" on their land.

Koroneos said that a tree bylaw is needed but has to be more practical than what was proposed, and without requiring an arborist.

Bottomley agreed there should be two separate bylaws, that trees on private property need to be managed, and if a tree is causing a safety issue a property owner should be allowed to remove it.

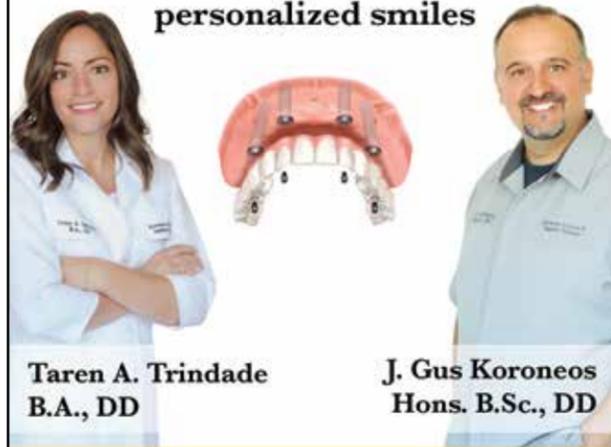
The tree bylaw the previous council was considering was an intrusion on people's property rights, said Brown. Most residents would be responsible, and the requirement for an arborist needs to be looked at. Root protection during construction is a concern, he said, "but I'd have a hard time telling someone they can't put a pool in their backyard because of a tree."

Goetter said she is "100 per cent" in favour of a tree bylaw, and she doesn't find the one proposed to council too intrusive. If you have a sick tree, she said, you get a permit to remove it. If you have a healthy tree, you have to have a good reason to take it down. And if you have a mature property and want to take trees down, "maybe it's not the property for you."

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A Q&A with Benny Marotta

Richard Harley
Editor

TLR: “Tell me what’s been up with you lately Benny — the good and the bad.”

MAROTTA: “On the positive side, I’m proud and excited that my daughters’ winery Two Sisters Vineyards was recently awarded the title of Best Performing Small Winery in Canada for 2018 by Wine Align (a company that hosts a national wine competition). This is a great accomplishment for my family, and for Niagara-on-the-Lake. When my daughters and I started Two Sisters, this was the quality we strove for. It’s great to see it being recognized from international and national wine experts. On the negative side, I’m disappointed that the town of Niagara-on-the-Lake is losing the charm it’s been known for. I’ve noticed that there’s a big change in the community, in that there’s an obvious split — and that should not have happened. The town should come together and try to — or make sure — that it doesn’t fall into the hands of people who are not considering what is best for the town now and for future generations.

TLR: What is your general opinion of Niagara-on-the-Lake? I know that’s vague, but I’m talking about development and the political landscape of the town.

M: “I think that probably 90 per cent of the people in NOTL are starting to understand what is happening (in politics). There’s a really small group of people who don’t want anyone else to come into this town. They don’t understand that progress is the future. I remember when I built the Cannery Park subdivision in St. Davids; the intent of that community was to give homes to the young generations in NOTL, and also to attract professionals and hard working people from other municipalities, and from the city. It is the future of the town — we have to understand that new generations are the future of society ... Cannery Park has given an opportunity to first time buyers and second time buyers, who could not have otherwise afford high-priced houses, stopping their chance of owning a home, raising children and being a part of a beautiful and safe community such as NOTL.



Benny Marotta, owner of Solmar Development Corp. (Supplied photo)

TLR: To clarify, you’re saying young people can’t afford to come here and live here if we don’t have affordable housing?

M: “No, it is impossible, homes in NOTL are based on the current market value. Prices of homes are over \$1 million, which makes home ownership unaffordable to many young families. So how do we find homes for young generations? if you don’t do that, then in 10, 20, 30 years, what happens?”

TLTLR: How much is the average house selling for at Cannery Park?

M: “Cannery Park, when we built it, were priced from \$300,000 to \$450,000. Today these same homes are now selling between \$500,000 and \$800,000. So to me, I’m very proud that I did that. It is very difficult today for the young generation to make money on homes. So anytime I drive by and see young families with children playing in the park, I am happy they have made some money on their homes. Maybe in the future they can sell it to buy a bigger home for their families or invest in new businesses to help NOTL flourish. This would help create jobs and overall growth.”

TLR: What types of people are you seeing move into Cannery Park? Are they mainly young families?

M: “Yes. Mainly young families. There are some retirees that cannot afford to buy a home over \$1 million

— some buyers are from the city of Toronto, Oakville, Milton, Mississauga and Niagara Region. Not everyone can afford to buy a house for over \$1 million — not only the younger generation but also the middle-aged buyer.”

TLR: Do you have an idea of what the average house is selling for in other municipalities like St. Catharines or Niagara Falls — new builds in subdivisions in those areas?

M: “They are less costly than NOTL. Niagara-on-the-Lake has a reputable name, created by the residents that have been here for generations. The community as a whole has succeeded in making NOTL a sought after tourism destination visited by millions of people a year, not only because of the vibrant wine and culinary attractions and its industry, but also because of its unique charm made possible by generations of local members of the community. If it was not for them, NOTL would not be NOTL.”

TLR: Moving on, what is your plan now with the Randwood Estate?

M: “Always as it has been, we are going to build a beautiful hotel that will be timeless and make this community proud. We are going to build something that will complement the surrounding natural (landscape), and add to the historical and sophisticated elegance of NOTL. There has been some resistance from a small group of

people, where they’re claiming that they own the Rand Estate — called SORE (Save Our Rand Estate). I didn’t know I had partners, but I guess people can just come out and claim ownership. Why they have proclaimed ownership and control, I have no idea, although I can understand why a politician would use this opportunity for their own agenda and a way to manipulate peoples’ perception. One thing that I’m disappointed about, is that some people have managed to distort the truth. This is common with politicians that have an agenda. At times there are politicians who are moved by personal agendas instead of the best interest of the community in which they represent. As a result these politicians often need someone they can use to become popular within their community. I guess the Rand Estate project and the Marotta family has given a perfect opportunity for a politician who wanted to use these types of tactics to act on.

TLR: In your opinion, how do you feel you’ve been painted to the public?

M: “As a family we are disappointed that the group SORE has personally attacked and bullied us on many levels, even after the efforts we have and continue to make to the greater Niagara region, in particularly NOTL. We have built an award winning winery, and also donated \$1 million towards a new agri-food innovation centre at Niagara College. As a family we are proud members of the community, raising our children in this beautiful town. We are hopeful that they too can prosper with the next generation that is now proud to call NOTL home. I question what members of the SORE group have contributed to NOTL as of today.”

TLR: There have been other hotel developments approved since your application. What are your thoughts on hotels like Hawley hotel in the Village?

M: “Well I think that anybody should have the right to do business in this town ... I have a high respect of the owner of the hotel, so I don’t have any problem with him getting the approval for that.”

TLR: Why do you think the Hawley hotel didn’t receive much fight back and was moved through fairly quickly?

M: “To fight a local at elec-

tion time is very damaging to a campaign.”

TLR: What happens to the Randwood properties if they’re not developed?

M: “Well the question that I have for all those people that are opposing the development of the Rand Estate is: What’s their plan? (The properties were) on the market for three years. No one had made efforts to purchase it. Everyone who is claiming to be part of SORE ... has ignored the opportunity to make efforts for rightful ownership. So what is their plan for the property — that in affect they have no interest or ownership of? I would have respected them if they had approached me in a civilized manner and worked together to discuss a common solution.”

TLR: So what happens to the Rand Estate if you don’t build on it?

M: “Well no one is going to do what I’m trying to do. No one is going to come into town on a business level and try to get involved with people of this nature. No one needs it and no one wants it. This is an embarrassment to the town.”

TLR: Do you have anyone interested in buying the property?

M: “I did have two groups interested in acquiring the whole property — encompassing the Rand Estate and also all the property behind, which I own — a total of 46 acres.”

TLR: “And who was this?”

M: “It’s to a religious group.”

TLR: “What religious group?”

M: “There’s two of them, and I put them on hold for now, depending on the election. If the town remains in the hands of reasonable, accountable and politicians who have the interest of the town at heart, I may not be interested in the option that is on the table. If politics change, I may consider it.”

TLR: “Hm. You don’t need to tell me the name of the group, but can you tell me the religion?”

M: “No.”

TLR: “That’s interesting. So both of them are religious groups?”

M: “Yes ... For them it’s perfect, so they can build their place of worship and a community for their members behind it.”

TLR: “Is there any part

of you that’s going to keep the property and just let it fall into the ground?”

M: “No. That would be a shame. I would never do that.”

TLR: “Tell me about your decision to appeal to project.”

M: “As far as the appeal, I never had the intention of appealing, I just wanted to sit, meet with staff and try to come up with a compromise. The problem I have is every project (I’ve) done in NOTL has always went through the proper process which involved heritage and the design committee, meaning our consultants met and worked with the design committee together in order to come up with a proper design — this was the same process used for Cannery Park and the homes down on the main street. The Rand Estate proposal has been sabotaged from the beginning. As of today, we’ve never had a meeting with the design committee. Unfortunately (local activists) managed to sabotage that, making it appear (Two Sisters) did not want to cooperate with the municipality. On the contrary, we have been following the process from day one with no success. When we had the first open meeting at the community centre, it was supposed to be the first meeting with the design committee, but instead that was sabotaged and we were thrown in front of 600 people even though the design wasn’t ready. During this particular open hearing, my wife, daughters and son-in-law attended. The direct insults, name calling and hurtful words directed at them from various members of the community was extremely disturbing and unforgettable. We are proud to call NOTL home and we have never experienced this behaviour from anyone before. The purpose of getting the people there was to say “look, look what is happening,” so what happened is they managed to push us in a situation where we have to appeal to the board. And then campaigning politicians can say “see, I told you, they don’t want to work with us and they went to the board.” I believe that was the time where the Rand Estate and my family became a trampoline for election campaigns.

TLR: “So, in a way having such strong resistance kind of did you a favour?”

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Cont'd: Marotta Q&A

M: "Well not really. It held (the development) up."

TLR: "But through the appeal board, you still should get the hotel height you want?"

M: "Yes, of course. The hotel, we have all the studies done that when it's built you won't even see it. It'll be behind a wall and trees that are 200-feet high, and it's only 60 feet ... the board is based on merits, and politics doesn't work at the board ... we did everything that the Town asked us to do, so when we're at the board I think we'll have no issues. The only thing I feel bad about, is it's going to cost the town a minimum of \$1 million in legal fees — to get exactly what we have. That's what politics does."

TLR: "So where are you in the appeal process?"

M: "Well we appealed it. One to argue that the homes that were designated are not heritage. We have the Town itself that said it's not heritage, and a consultant that said it's not heritage. We are going to win, because they're not heritage at all. The Town has to hire a lawyer to represent them. I hope we can sit down still and come to a solution, in order to not have the Town pay all those expenses,

which is not necessary."

TLR: "So what are your plans for the lands behind the Randwood Estate?"

M: "The lands behind are zoned for residential use. So we're going to build a residential community. I know there have been talks amongst politicians (who) want to down-zone it back to agriculture. That's going to be a huge mistake, because if (they) do that, they're exposing the Town to a huge liability."

TLR: "How?"

M: "Well the lands were bought based on the Town and Regional Official Plan. The town did it, the Town is responsible, and think about millions and millions (in lost value).

TLR: "What's your opinion of current council?"

M: With the exception of (one councillor), they are very responsible and caring of the best interest of our wonderful community. I think council has been embarrassed by this whole (Randwood) situation.

TLR: "Why do you think SORE members don't want the hotel?"

"I suspect many of the SORE members own bed and breakfasts and they don't

want any competition, which is very unfair ... The Town is losing income on the commercial uses of these homes — the town should rezone the land to commercial use to instill the appropriate taxes ... They should implement a hotel tax similar to what has been implemented in Niagara Falls. This would help support and sustain the economic viability of NOTL.

TLR: "So you're pretty confident that you'll be able to build the hotel you want?"

M: "Again, depending on the politics ... we are not interested in putting the efforts of operating a business within an unstable political landscape. However we have trust in the community who will make the right decisions in electing responsible council members who are part of the NOTL culture and who understand the best interests of the community as a whole. This is especially important in a town that is one of the most charming and historical towns in Canada.

TLR: "So, to end off on a positive note, what are some of the things you're proud of doing for the town?"

M: "The Innovation Complex at Niagara College is going to be named the Marotta Family Agri-Food Complex. We invested \$1 million. As I said before, we believe in young innovation. Niagara

College is a place where a lot of young talented students are graduating and entering into the workforce with various skills. We need to support the College so it can continue to provide students with the tools they need to succeed in their chosen fields and careers. As members of the community we should all contribute and support various endeavours that assist younger generations in following their dreams for a better and prosperous life, in the hopes that they will continue to contribute to this economy. The problem is, if things are going the way they're going — what's next? People are tired of the charades played in politics. You need people to come and invest money in every community."

TLR: Final thoughts?

B. "I caution and remind new and future residents in town, that we are guests of NOTL and should respect and contribute to this culture that has been in place for centuries. As well, to SORE members and the community, make your own choices when you are at the voting booth — for the benefit of the Town."

This interview has been edited for clarification due to a minor language barrier and to discard the names of any candidates running in the 2018 Municipal Election.



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- Ensure we are getting value for our tax dollars.
- Enhance transit for our seniors and people with disabilities, focus on NOTL traffic issues
- Responsible, suitable, measured development, preventing urban expansion into agricultural lands
- Meeting recreational needs for the growing population of NOTL
- Create a collegial atmosphere around the Council table, working together for our community

WHAT I WILL BRING TO COUNCIL

- Served on multiple boards and commissions over the last 15 years (beautification, healthcare, transportation, and agriculture)
- Past commissioner on Niagara Regional Airport
- A health sciences background, Hon BSc. University of Waterloo
- A strong business acumen having started several successful sole businesses from the ground up
- My agribusiness background gives me a broad understanding of the various items that will be brought forward to Council
- A passion for the community of NOTL, having lived in various areas within the Niagara region. St Davids is home for myself and my family

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28	29	30	31
<p>Harvest Breakfast - 8 a.m. to 1 p.m. - St Davids Lions Hall</p> <p>Teen Book Club - 1:30 to 2:30 - NOTL Public Library</p> <p>Public skating - 1:30 p.m. to 3 p.m. - Meridian Credit Union Arena</p> <p>Workshop: Creating Characters and Revising and Editing - 2 p.m. to 4 p.m. - NOTL Public Library</p> <p>NOTL Ukesters Sunday Ukelele Workshop - 3 p.m. to 5 p.m. - NOTL Community Centre</p> <p>Sunday Songs - 3 p.m. - Silversmith Brewing Co</p>	<p>Little Red Tail Hawks - 5 p.m. to 7 p.m. - Niagara Regional Native Centre</p> <p>Community Pot Luck and Drumming Night - 5 p.m. to 8 p.m. - Niagara Regional Native Centre</p>	<p>Table tennis - 10 a.m. to 12 p.m. - NOTL Community Centre</p> <p>Rotary Club of NOTL - 12 p.m. to 1:30 p.m. - NOTL Community Centre</p> <p>NOTL Golden Age Club - 12 p.m. to 5 p.m. - NOTL Community Centre</p> <p>NOTL Duplicate Bridge - 1 p.m. to 4 p.m. - NOTL Community Centre</p> <p>The Makeshift - 2 p.m. to 4 p.m. - NOTL Public Library</p>	<p>Simply STEAM Story Time - 10 a.m. to 12 p.m. - NOTL Public Library</p> <p>Drop-in painting - 3 p.m. to 5 p.m. - NOTL Community Centre</p> <p>Fall Trivia League - 7 p.m. to 9 p.m. - The Exchange</p>

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	18 Babies and Books - 11 a.m. to 11:30 a.m. - NOTL Public Library Drop-in bridge - 1 p.m. to 4 p.m. - NOTL Community Centre Minecraft Club - 4 p.m. to 5 p.m. - NOTL Public Library Community Fall Social - 5 p.m. to 8 p.m. - Niagara Regional Native Centre Committee of Adjustment Hearing - 7 p.m. - Council Chambers	19 Healthy Kids Community Challenge: Power Off & Play - 11 a.m. to 12 p.m. - NOTL Public Library NOTL Duplicate Bridge - 1 p.m. to 4 p.m. - NOTL Community Centre 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	20 Public skating - 1:30 p.m. to 3 p.m. - Meridian Credit Union Arena Niagara Rhythm Section with Dylan Wickens - 9 p.m. to 12:30 a.m. - The Old Winery
24 Family Time - 11 a.m. to 12 p.m. - NOTL Public Library Drop-in bridge - 1 p.m. to 4 p.m. - NOTL Community Centre Minecraft Club - 4 p.m. to 5 p.m. - NOTL Public Library Building with Brandon - 6 p.m. to 7 p.m. - NOTL Public Library Akwe:go Afterschool Program - 4:40 p.m. to 6:30 p.m. - Niagara Regional Native Centre	25 Babies and Books - 11 a.m. to 11:30 a.m. - NOTL Public Library Drop-in bridge - 1 p.m. to 4 p.m. - NOTL Community Centre Minecraft Club - 4 p.m. to 5 p.m. - NOTL Public Library Building with Brandon - 6 p.m. to 7 p.m. - NOTL Public Library Akwe:go Afterschool Program - 4:40 p.m. to 6:30 p.m. - Niagara Regional Native Centre	26 The Wild – Building a Shelter - 11 a.m. to 12 p.m. - NOTL Public Library NOTL Newcomers Club - 9:30 a.m. - NOTL Community Centre NOTL Duplicate Bridge - 1 p.m. to 4 p.m. - NOTL Community Centre 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	27 Family Harvest Party - 1 p.m. to 3 p.m. - 14 Anderson Ln Public skating - 1:30 p.m. to 3 p.m. - Meridian Credit Union Arena Niagara's Great War Remembered - 7:30 p.m. - St. Mark's Church
31 Family Time - 11 a.m. to 12 p.m. - NOTL Public Library Drop-in bridge - 1 p.m. to 4 p.m. - NOTL Community Centre Practical Genealogy - 1 p.m. to 3 p.m. - NOTL Public Library DNA Workshop - 3 p.m. to 5 p.m. - NOTL Public Library	1 NOTL Social Club - 10 a.m. - Sweets & Swirls Café Babies and Books - 11 a.m. to 11:30 a.m. - NOTL Public Library Drop-in bridge - 1 p.m. to 4 p.m. - NOTL Community Centre Practical Genealogy - 1 p.m. to 3 p.m. - NOTL Public Library DNA Workshop - 3 p.m. to 5 p.m. - NOTL Public Library	2 Healthy Kids Community Challenge: Power Off & Play - 11 a.m. to 12 p.m. - NOTL Public Library NOTL Duplicate Bridge - 1 p.m. to 4 p.m. - NOTL Community Centre 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 The Old Winos with Duane Rutter and Andrew Aldridge - 9 p.m. to 12:30 a.m. - The Old Winery	3 Fall Bazaar - 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. - St. Davids-Queenston United Church Public skating - 1:30 p.m. to 3 p.m. - Meridian Credit Union Arena Niagara Rhythm Section with Fraser Melvin and Andrew Moljgun - 9 p.m. to 12:30 a.m. - The Old Winery

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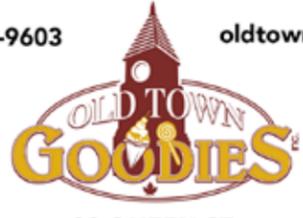


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LOCAL SPOTLIGHT: Eddie Dijon



World-famous magician and showman Eddie Dijon leans on a pear tree outside the Lake Report office. (Richard Harley)

Richard Harley
Editor

Eddie Dijon would tell you the common human flea is more intelligent than any other species of flea. And after he told you about his former flea circus, you may be left scratching your head.

In a past life, Dijon, now 85, retired, and living in Niagara-on-the-Lake, was a world-class entertainer, with acts that specialized in the strange and mysterious.

His most famous act was his flea circus, in which he had fleas perform various circus tricks such as chariot races, or having a flea pull 160,000 times their own weight.

If you're sceptical of it all, you wouldn't be the first to be, but that's half the allure of his show.

Dijon's flea act took him around the world, landing him on The David Letterman Show five consecutive times, a fact he's proud of, as well as being featured at the Canadian National Exhibition.

Dijon also performed a variety of other acts as which took him around the globe, earning him a name as successful magician, who still has a following today.

One of his other successful acts was as a tarot card reader, touring with a hypnotic show. In his career as a tarot reader he's read for some big names,

including JC Moore, several times for Madonna, Paul Anka, and for Jack Layton – yes, former head of the NDP.

He said he thinks he's done more than 50,000 performances.

Dijon, now retired, has given up some of the secrets to how he trained his fleas. The secret, he said, is to break their habit to jump.

To do this, he would put the fleas into a small sealed glass tube for a couple weeks. When the fleas jumped, they would bang into the top of the glass. Eventually, they stopped jumping.

Next Dijon has to carefully put a harness on the fleas – and these fleas were in style – Dijon made them out of gold. Gold was more malleable he said.

For some of his famous tricks, like having a flea named the Amazing Armando juggle a cork ball, Dijon would have to get creative. His secret? Dijon used to dip the cork ball in Listerine. The substance was repulsive to flea, so it would naturally kick the cork away.

"So I kept doing that until it learned how to juggle."

Dijon said he still has a small following to this day, and every once in a while somebody will ask him to do a performance, though his flea act has been retired for around 12 years. This weekend he will be in Hamilton for a psychic fair at the Crown Plaza Hotel.

The entertainer performed a real-life escape act of sorts in 2017, when he was pinned between a car and the inside railing of Silks Country Kitchen after an elderly woman drove through the window where he was sat eating breakfast.

Dijon told Lake Report (then Advance) reporter Penny Coles that he thought his neck may have been broken when the incident happened. Luckily, himself and another man at the table walked away without serious injuries.

"I was having a corned beef sandwich," And I was sitting beside the window, and this woman came crashing through the window."

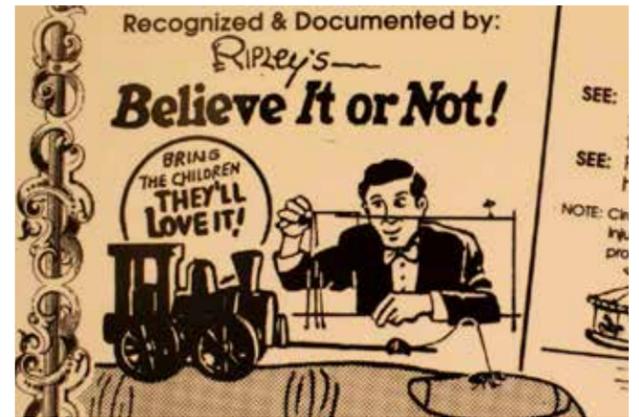
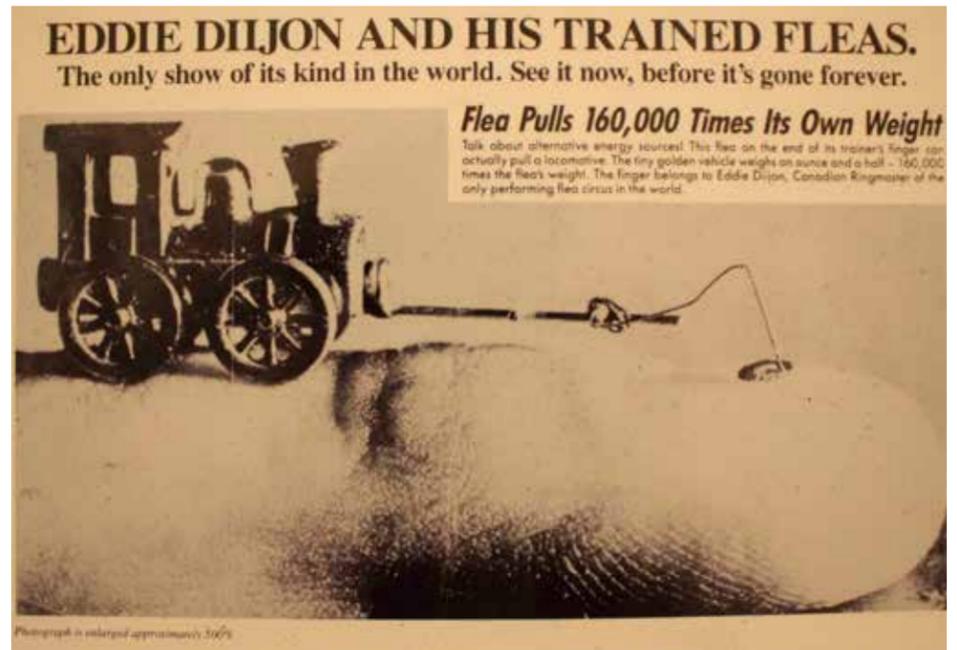
"But I still go back to Silks because I enjoy their corned beef sandwiches – but I don't sit near the window."

Dijon ended up in Niagara after moving to Toronto from Hong Kong. He used to take drives down into the country to explore.

"When I hit Niagara-on-the-Lake, right away I fell in love with it, and I thought 'this is the place I want to be.' And it was a good decision."

Dijon has lived in town for 18 years now. From stories of being attacked by the 14K Triads in Hong Kong and being rescued by Two Gerka soldiers, his flea circus, tarot reading and corned beef close encounters, Dijon has certainly earned himself a name as one of this town's unique locals.

Niagara-on-the-Lake isn't just home to world-class wineries. Some of its residents have also left distinguished marks on the globe in astounding ways. We're fortunate to live in a place that's so beautiful it attracts unique professionals from all walks of life. Local Spotlight will be a regular feature about some of our impressive locals, their careers, family lives and the paths that led them to one of the most beautiful places to live in the world – Niagara-on-the-Lake.



Right images courtesy of Eddie Dijon.


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FULL SERVICE SALON AND ESTHETICS

To harvest by machine, or by hand?

A talk with local winemakers to settle the age-old debate. Does picking by hand make wine fine?

Lauren O'Malley
Staff

The hardest-working comedian in NOTL is busy harvesting more than laughter these days. Joe Pillitteri — who in “real life” owns Lakeview Vineyard Equipment — has been busy harvesting grapes too.

Pillitteri was on high alert recently when September's vicious cycle of heat and rain finally let up and left vineyards full of ripe-to-bursting grapes.

“This weather causes the acceleration of the breakdown of the ripe grapes. That means rot,” explains Pillitteri.

Rot is the enemy of grape growers and winemakers, and avoiding it at GW Wiens Farms means a rush to harvest.

“Emergency picking creates pressure on every level of the process,” Pillitteri continues. “Someone is taking a pay cut just because of the weather.”

Gary Wiens, the farm owner, nods knowingly.

Wineries have specific criteria in terms of sugar levels and volatile acidity — the former determined by the ripeness of the fruit, the latter by the level of rot. Trimming the affected grapes helps to mediate the effect, but a prompt pick has been deemed necessary in the Wiens vineyards.

The atmosphere is all-systems-go, pedal-to-the-metal, with state-of-the-art equipment that gleams with newness and promise.

The name Gregoire GL8 (a heavy-duty grape picker) is said with awe and reverence by the men here. Four harvesters share the work over 20 acres, and the whole year's growth is picked in a matter of hours.

The Gregoire's website features a video with booming rock music and close-up dynamic shots of the behemoth's high technology. In the field, it is loud and wind-swept, and busy with moving parts. GPS integrates with yield-monitoring technology; catcher trays adapt to the base of each individual vine; auto-steering keeps it on track. The berries are picked by rods and fall onto conveyor belts while suction fans blow out debris like sticks, leaves and rotten berries. Distemper heads act like hands, removing berries from the stems, and the berries are taken through to tanks, having been



Above: Ann Sperling, winemaker at Southbrook Vineyards.

Below: Dean Stoyka, assistant winemaker at Stratus Vineyards

Photos by Lauren O'Malley



“Technology can keep improving, but humans will always be better.”

- DEAN STOYKA

cleaned three ways.

This is technological efficiency at its best. The roomy and comfortable cab is air-conditioned and has an excellent sound system. Digital screens indicate productivity. Buttons and levers are in use. Some of these harvesters even feature an espresso machine.

Welcome to the future.

According to Pillitteri, at “least 90 per cent” of the vineyards in Niagara-on-the-Lake use Gregoire harvesters in their vineyards.

“There is a world-wide labour shortage — no one wants to do this gruelling work by hand for any amount of money,” he said.

Dean Stoyka, the assistant winemaker at Stratus Vineyards, doesn't disagree — but nor does Stratus use the dramatic French technology.

“It's hard to make any argument against what Joe is offering with the Gregoire,” says Stoyka, who also teaches viticulture at Niagara College. But the machinery simply does not fit with Stratus' mandate to create high-end wine using traditional methods. As far as Stratus is concerned, “Premium winemaking is expensive,” he says, “and involves doing everything by hand.”

The winery uses their eight workers to harvest the grapes when the time is just right. Stratus' Syrah grapes are at least a week behind those at GW Wiens. Stoyka attributes this to the old-school methods of vineyard maintenance — in which patience is a large part of every step.

“Each cluster in this vineyard is touched individually by hand,” he says with pride.

“Technology can keep improving, but humans will always be better.”

He explains that the individual attention of a person dedicated to looking for everything that is right or wrong with a cluster of grapes will make all the difference. “A machine can't spot every

ladybug, a single rotten grape that's attracting fruit flies, or one vine that's producing more or less than others.”

“If we didn't have these guys doing the great work they're doing, we would be emergency picking,” says Stoyka. He agrees, though, that in the case of an urgent need to get berries off vines to prevent rot, machines are better.

The contrast between the two properties is vast.

The dynamic energy and noise and human bustle at GW Farms is all 21st century excitement. At Stratus the silence is broken only by bird-song. It's not idle or leisurely — Stoyka always answers his smartphone on the first ring and has his time mapped out down to the minute. He uses very modern and sophisticated terminology to describe the chemical processes of grape collection and wine-making. He also works for a winery that sells very little wine under \$40 a bottle.

These are the ends of the grape harvesting spectrum. Somewhere near the centre of that gamut sits Southbrook Vineyards. Explains winemaker Ann Sperling, “There's an argument for both sides.” She says, “In our case, organic grapes don't rot the same as conventional ones. When we went from dry to wet the conventional grapes became much more vulnerable to rot, whereas with organic fruit when the rains came the berries already had a lot more integrity to the skin so they weren't as vulnerable to rot.” This year there hasn't yet been a need to bring in the mighty machines. However, “Last year when we had the frost in early November we did use harvesters, recovering better quality fruit by getting it into the winery.”

The fruit brought in for Southbrook's wines from other farms is also largely harvested by machine. “Technology has improved a lot,” says Sperling. “With the new equipment, MOG (material other than grapes) is staying in the vineyard as the grapes are being harvested — nutrients are going right back into the soil. We have to do that ourselves otherwise.”

It's all farming, which, like any unpredictable or creative venture, has virtually no limits on its parameters. That's one of the many things that make living and learning in Niagara so worthwhile.

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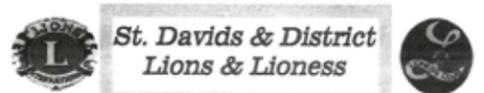
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Behind the “please drive slow” signs

Residents around NOTL are fed up with people speeding

Lauren O'Malley
Staff

Local lawns are well decorated with signs these days, but one of them isn't asking for a vote — it's urging motorists to “Please drive slow.”

“If the police would park in our driveway, they could buy a whole new stadium for the town with the money from the tickets they would be able to give out for driving infractions,” says frustrated Chautauqua resident Dave Lilly.

He and his partner Carla Kloosterhuis have a spectacular view of the junction of Circle and William streets — and of all of the driving

“People just want to boot it.”

shenanigans that go on there.

They also have two very young daughters, and are concerned for their family's safety at the chaotic corner.

“I contacted the Town,”

says Kloosterhuis, “and they recommended I start a petition and get concerned neighbours to sign it. I don't have time for that, so I just had signs made up.”

They had 10 of the green and white signs made, and have given almost all of them away.

“People come to the house and ask us for them,” says Kloosterhuis. “People from all over town,” says Lilly.

One of those people was Christina Patterson, a resident of Shakespeare Avenue.

“If I could, I would have 10 signs on my lawn,” she says, noting she had to “play detective” to find out where the signs came from. “And then we knocked on the door and asked for one.”

“People speed up and down our street day and night. I'm afraid to walk our dogs here,” Patterson says, indicating her two shaggy Golden Retrievers, “especially since there aren't any sidewalks to escape to. I feel like I'm taking my life in my hands.”

Patterson's frustration extends to what she sees as a

lack of policing in the neighbourhood, and poor signage.

“There aren't enough speed limit signs, and no one ever seems to get a ticket around here even though they're obviously speeding,” she says.

“People just want to boot it.” She believes it's as much a local issue as a tourist one: “Many of the speeders are people who live here rushing off to work in the morning.”

Candidate for council Allan Bisback was campaigning in the neighbourhood when Kloosterhuis and Lilly told him about their concerns.

“They said I should come one morning and see the danger for myself, especially when the school buses come to pick up kids.”

Bisback went back a few days later. “I sat at the curb at 7:15 a.m. with my Timmy's at William and Circle St. and watched. People were speeding around the circle and not stopping at the stop sign,” he says. “One person blew right through the stop sign with their phone in one hand and a mug of coffee in the other.”

Bisback knocked on a cou-

ple of doors and was urged to stay until the school buses arrived to see how dangerous a scenario it is. “I chatted with quite a few folks and they're concerned.” He says he did see more apparent speeding, and was made aware of a lot of blind spots on the circle, some of them due to trees and shrubs. He says of Kloosterhuis' signs, “It's an excellent local initiative.”

Kloosterhuis says, “It's small, but it's my own personal initiative to control speed in the neighbourhood — because there are kids here, and my own kids. I was almost taken out myself recently.” She points out that there are no sidewalks, “which is part of the charm of this little neighbourhood, but it makes it risky,” she says. “The neighbourhood is full of kids on their bikes and whatnot, and there have been some crazy drivers around here.”

Linda Ciszek, traffic administration support at Niagara Regional Police Services, says the most productive thing to do is register



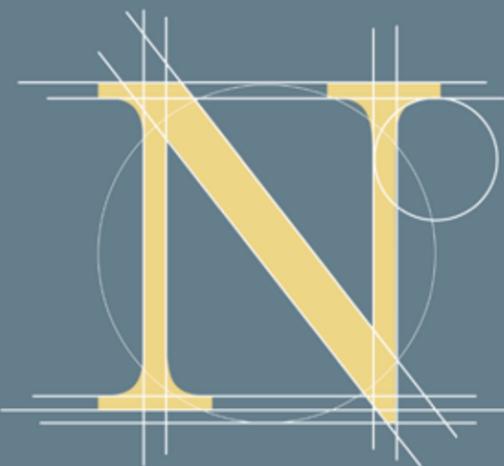
traffic complaints with the police. You can do so on the NRPS website at niagarapolice.ca, by emailing trafficcomplaints@niagarapolice.ca or by calling their traffic hotline: 905-688-4111, ext. 5555. The webpage actually says, “NRPS wants traffic complaints.”

Alleged speeding zones are flagged for local officers who can choose to observe the situation. If they do so, and see enough transgressions, they will inform their sergeant, who can in turn approach the Town's traffic management person regarding the possibility of making requisite changes.

An official statement regarding this issue from the

Town reads: “The Chautauqua area is being looked at as a whole, not just specific streets. Traffic speed and volume counts are pending which will provide the Town with empirical data to share with the Niagara Regional Police. Once that data is completed, remedial strategies will be reviewed. The Chautauqua area will be highlighted as an area of special concern in the Town's 2019 Master Transportation Plan. Niagara Regional Police enforce speeding laws and the Town recommends contacting the Niagara Regional Police with any speeding concerns.”

In the meantime, “please drive slow.”



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NEWS

NOTL launches Growing Mental Wellness initiative

Lauren O'Malley
Staff

Sometimes tragedy can motivate positive change. The recent high-profile deaths by suicide in St. Catharines have prompted a great deal of conversation around mental health. In Niagara-on-the-Lake, they were the final impetus Pat Darte needed to launch his new initiative.

"About a year ago, I started working on a plan to bring mental health services to the youth in town," says Darte. "I was just seeing too many lost kids, hearing too many sad stories, so I decided to do something about it." Darte says he began consultations with various leaders in the mental health industry, including Dr. Robin Williams, Ontario's Associate Chief Medical Officer of Health at the time.

In the spring of this year, Bethany Polt and the Lord Mayor Youth Advisory Council were coordinating the NOTL Grade 8 Mental Health and Wellness Conference, and found a glaring gap in local health services.

She sent an email to Darte regarding her disappointing search for mental health professionals in NOTL who could "address the needs of NOTL youth and their mental health." She had been told there was no such service in town. Darte responded by speaking at the conference, and promising to make changes to benefit the mental health of young people in town.

Over on Concession 2 Road, Steffanie Bjorgan was looking at the basement of her Red Roof Retreat facility and wondering how it could be better used, given that it isn't accessible to the



Michelle Madden, Red Roof Retreat Board member and social worker; Steffanie Bjorgan, Executive Director RRR; Karen Post, RRR staff and initiative coordinator; Pat Darte. (Supplied)

retreat's population. "It was gnawing at me," she says. She also had some ideas mental health support bubbling in the back of her mind.

"When Pat came to me and suggested we partner on a mental wellness initiative for youth, it just felt like a perfect partnership," says Bjorgan.

On Thanksgiving day, Darte was having a conversation about the recent suicides with Bob Mavridis and his daughter Maria Mavridis, owners of Corks Winebar & Eatery on Queen Street. Darte told them about his goal to launch a mental wellness initiative for youth in town. He asked them if they would be interested in being involved. "My dad and I just looked at each other, and we said, 'Yes,'" says Maria, who explains there is mental illness in their immediate family. "My dad said, 'Everyone knows someone who's suffering — what can we do to help,'" says Maria. "We made the donation to get the initiative started," she continues. "As the program evolves, we are committed to do the fundraising or whatever it takes to keep it growing and working."

Other partnerships are being secured with organizations and community

members for further financial investment and support.

The issue of better mental health care services for young people in NOTL has clearly been on a lot of minds.

Darte is currently announcing the "Growing Mental Wellness" initiative. A November date will soon be released for an information night with Darte, representatives from the Red Roof Retreat, and the Lord Mayor's Youth Advisory Council. The community will have the opportunity to learn more about the goals and objectives of this initiative, and learn ways to help make services available to those in need.

The Red Roof Retreat will provide the physical space for Growing Mental Wellness, and will handle the coordination and administration of services and programs. It will also be responsible for the clinical support for people in need of services. "We'll be providing crisis counselling, mental health counselling and more," says Bjorgan. "One of the first programs we're planning to offer is safeTALK suicide prevention training," she says. "The biggest part is we just have to start."

The initiative will be in full operation by spring 2019, and

there is a plan to have some counselling services available in the coming months.

"This is a community initiative," says Bjorgan. "We want to hear from anyone who wants to get involved in any way."

Polt is in support of this initiative. "I feel that NOTL youth need a safe and welcoming environment to address any mental health curiosities they might have," she says. "As we all can see from recent events close to home, we need to address mental health with actions, not just words. Action includes providing an accessible place for our youth where they feel they can go and are provided support free of judgment."

Speaking specifically of that judgment, Maria says, "We need to get rid of the taboos, have open discussions — people need to talk about it and remove the stigma. The best thing we can do is to talk about it."

Fortunately, those conversations have started to happen in NOTL.

If you would like to be involved in or support the initiative, you can contact Darte at dartepat@vaxxine.com or Bjorgan at steffanie@redroofretreat.com. A website with more information is in the works.

If you are in need of immediate mental health support, there are options available for you. Pathstone Mental Health has a 24-7 crisis hotline at 1-800-263-4944. The Pathstone website also has many resources.

Distress Centre Niagara phone lines are open 24/7: 905-688-3711.

Kid's Help Phone can be reached at 1-800-668-6868. or at kidshelpphone.ca.

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Duplicate bridge a big deal in NOTL

Lauren O'Malley
Staff

You pop over to the library of a Tuesday afternoon and you can't get a parking spot for the life of you. What is going on, you wonder. What huge event has brought so many people here?

Duplicate bridge. No kidding. The weekly game brings out 100 devoted followers of the complicated game.

Claude Tremblay is the genial head director of the Niagara-on-the-Lake Duplicate Bridge Centre. His charming wife, Muriel Tremblay, is the president. The pair are formidable players, usually ranking at the top of every game.

If you don't know how to play duplicate bridge, don't

bother showing your face at these friendly but serious games. "If you have no card sense, forget about it. Doesn't matter how hard you try to learn it, you just can't without that instinct," says Claude, laughing. However the group does offer lessons if you want to learn. The Tremblays provide private lessons, as does member Marlene Walther. There is also mentoring available for all levels.

If you're a beginner, you might be more comfortable starting at the Friday afternoon games, a smaller group also held at the community centre at 1 p.m.

The Tuesday afternoon crowd is chatty between games — there are 14 individual games within one complete game — but wholly focused

when the cards come out. The group's goal is to be "the friendliest game in town," and they have a zero-tolerance rule for any arguments or temper tantrums. "That rule is an important component, because some people tend to take this game too seriously and their nerves take over. We want it to be fun," says Claude.

These games are open to A-, B- and C-level players — levels are determined by your number of master points — and attract people from as far as Hamilton.

"The average age of our members is about 72. We are a seniors community," says Muriel. "It takes time to learn how to play, and three to four hours to play each game. How many working people have that kind of time?" She herself has made something of a career of dupli-

cate bridge in her retirement — no slouch, Muriel plays at least five games a week, and is the president of three clubs.

While the Tremblays are an anomaly as a married couple duplicates team — "It usually puts too much stress on a couple to play on the same team," Muriel says, laughing — romances are not unusual in this group. "It's a great social environment, a great way for people to connect," says Claude.

According to the Tremblays and medical research, playing duplicate bridge helps ward off dementia, and keeps the mind sharp, which bodes well for the centre's 140-strong membership. "It's not easy to learn and play — it's a challenge," says Muriel, "but it's worth it."

The NOTL Duplicate Bridge



Centre is a not-for-profit group, using annual fees and game fees to maintain supplies. "The money stays in the club. We also subsidize lessons to bring in new members, and hold two social events a year," says Claude. "All the money goes back to members. We want to make sure our members are getting the best they can get."

The Tremblays have made a lifestyle of the game, travelling the world on cruise ships in exchange for teaching duplicate bridge to fellow passengers. "We like to visit local clubs

when we're on vacation — it doesn't matter where we are, bridge is a universal language," says Muriel.

Experienced players are welcome to join on Tuesday or Friday afternoons. The game begins at 1 p.m., and registration is required, beginning at 12:45 p.m. If you find yourself without a partner one will be provided. The fee for each game is \$5 for members, \$7 for non-members, and the annual membership fee is \$20. Bring your best behaviour and a smile.

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MIKE JENA MULLSY JACLYN

GAMES



Have some fun

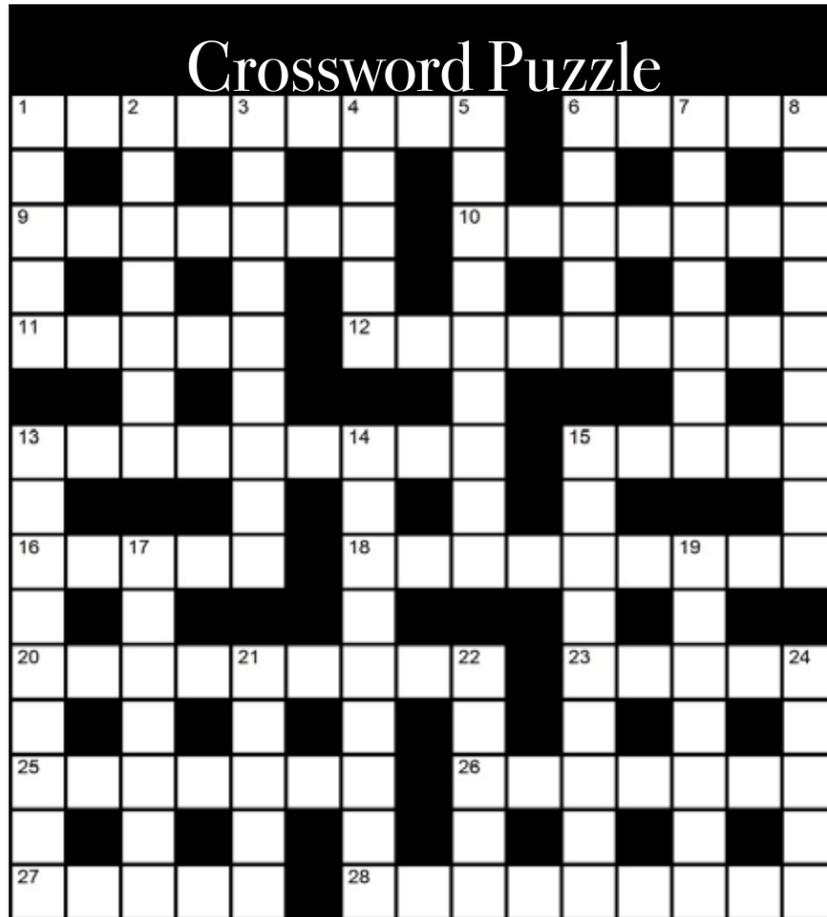
The Lake Report is looking for puzzle makers who would like to help develop this page. We are seeking both standard and cryptic crossword writers. editor@niagaranow.com

Across

- 1. E.g. a ketch (3-6)
- 6. Copper and zinc alloy (5)
- 9. Item (7)
- 10. Not friendly (7)
- 11. Nail-like fastener (5)
- 12. Carry (9)
- 13. Bony structures (9)
- 15. Burning gas (5)
- 16. Forbiddingly (5)
- 18. Environmental fouling agent (9)
- 20. Deadlock (9)
- 23. Lukewarm (5)
- 25. Arabian Nights hero (3,4)
- 26. Mythical creature (7)
- 27. Expel (5)
- 28. Northern Canadian island (9)

Down

- 1. Melts (5)
- 2. Exterior (7)
- 3. Satan (9)
- 4. Larceny (5)
- 5. Practice session (9)
- 6. Defeats (5)
- 7. Grand Canyon state (7)
- 8. Confection (9)
- 13. In good order (9)
- 14. Home for abandoned children (9)
- 15. Ornamental water jets (9)
- 17. Conceive (7)
- 19. Sanction (7)
- 21. Make law (5)
- 22. Peer (5)
- 24. Move rhythmically (5)



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



Last issue's answers



Sudoku



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<p>92 Loretta Drive #17, NOTL \$574,000</p> <p>MLS# 30684005 Helen Mosca* & Aaron Cherney*</p>	<p>92 Loretta Drive #20, NOTL \$525,000</p> <p>MLS# 30690328 Helen Mosca* & Aaron Cherney*</p>	<p>21 Loretta Drive #14, NOTL \$589,000</p> <p>MLS# 30659790 Michelle Reynolds** & Stefan Regier*</p>	<p>26 Vincent Avenue, NOTL \$759,000</p> <p>MLS# 30689535 Michelle Reynolds** & Stefan Regier*</p>
<p>92 Loretta Drive #9, NOTL \$525,000</p> <p>MLS# 30692300 Jo-Ann Cudmore*</p>	<p>2 Samuel Street, NOTL \$1,395,000</p> <p>MLS# 30691472 James O'Connor* & Margie van Gelder*</p>	<p>285 Wellington Street, NOTL \$1,425,000</p> <p>MLS# 30685854 James O'Connor* & Margie van Gelder*</p>	<p>213 John Street, NOTL \$979,000</p> <p>MLS# 30664876 James O'Connor* & Margie van Gelder*</p>
<p>19 Ridgeview Drive, St. Davids \$658,000 OPEN HOUSE SAT & SUN 2-4 PM</p> <p>MLS# 30666782 Dan Stefels*** & Katie Redekopp***</p>	<p>9 Autumn Place, NOTL \$699,000</p> <p>MLS# 30664090 Dan Stefels*** & Katie Redekopp***</p>	<p>21 St. Andrews Lane, NOTL \$749,900</p> <p>MLS# 30686565 Dan Stefels*** & Katie Redekopp***</p>	<p>2 Stoneridge Crescent, St. Davids \$1,125,000</p> <p>MLS# 30682089 Dan Stefels*** & Katie Redekopp***</p>

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 * Sales Representative ** Broker ***Broker - Royal LePage NRC Realty KRDS

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FEATURES

Wallbangers flummoxed by cannabis legislation

Ross Robinson
Special to TLR

As the 29th Wallbanger Hockey season officially opens this Sunday at 7 a.m. in the Meridian Credit Union arena in Virgil, a good number of Blue Team and Red Team players are totally unaware that Canada has new laws around a supposedly popular drug called cannabis.

"We have enough fun playing straight," said team commissioner Bill Dickson. "We have to maintain a certain competitive edge, and I have heard that stuff tends to relax you. I guess we will have to look at this issue sometime in the future."

As each season starts, a few new players are required to fill out the rosters. All ages are welcome, the only stipulation being that no former professional hockey players need apply. Wallbangers Hockey is a unique phenomenon, all players like to be able to keep up. Backchecking is encouraged and talked about, but not the top priority for either team.

The odd nifty seeing eye pass, or a goal deflecting in off a leg or skate, is more than enough excitement.

Regular goaltenders Mark Turasz and the newly punctual Rob Vanderperk dazzle with the occasional ten bell save, and the advice shouted from behind their effulgently painted masks helps to set up



Wallbangers Peter Vanderperk and nephew Robbie Vanderperk. (Supplied)

break out plays.

The game of hockey has changed so much during the past two decades. Gone are the brilliant, meandering end-to-end rushes by Bobby Hull and Bobby Orr, or the lightning break over the blue line by Yvon Cournoyer or Guy Lafleur. Now the game is built around quick, smart passes. Toe Blake was right way back in the 1950s, preaching that no player can skate with the puck as fast as the puck can slide over the ice. Firewagon hockey, head man the puck, stay spread out and patrol your wing were mantras that led to so many wonderful

Stanley Cup victories.

But I digress.

Still, no referees are required at Wallbangers hockey games. The games are self-policing, which guarantees no penalties, power plays, or going on the PK. Occasionally, angry words are exchanged, followed by sincere apologies over breakfast later at Silks Country Kitchen. Servers Lisa and Michelle shake their heads.

As for offsidings, whichever team yells loudest and fastest gets the call. The puck is dumped back in, and play continues.

Happily, this year has seen

the return to very early Sunday morning action by Dan Fournier, the pride of Wawa and the world's biggest goose. Rafael Aparico is back and quicker than ever after a summer of power skating lessons. Also, he has learned to release his shots from several points of his skating stride, which confuses the goaltenders.

Blue Team Captain Mark Shantz and Red Team Captain Carl Glauser have done a very fair job of selecting evenly matched teams. Pre-season scores have been high, but close. Attaboy, fellows, thank you for both taking some of the load off League Commissioner Bill Dickson. Incidentally, Bill and Cathy Dickson celebrated their 54th wedding anniversary on Oct. 17. Love to you both.

So, the pre-season schedule is over, and the official opening game is scheduled for Sunday, Oct. 21 at 7 a.m. No one will get ripped off by Stub Hub or Ticketmaster. Spectators are welcome, and the hot chocolate is very tasty. Get two seats for the price of one. \$0. Yes, free. Slow motion hockey at its best.

Plans are already being finalized for a luxury motorcoach road trip in June of 2019 to Toronto for the Stanley Cup Parade down Yonge Street. The street has been measured, and it is wide enough to accommodate many floats. The end of the 51-year drought is apparently nigh.

Don't come to my front door

MoriGardens
Design & Garden Centre
#GROWNiagara

Sharon Frayne
Writer's Circle
Featured

Don't come to my front door. I'm sorry, a nasty surprise awaits. Yes, I know it stinks. But better than you or me ...

Around ten o'clock one night I headed to the front door to turn out the lights before bed.

My husband was away, so it was just me and my dog for a few days. I noticed an evening visitor was just climbing the front steps. He was taking his sweet time, but very determined to make it to my door before bedtime.

It wasn't a counsellor candidate looking for my vote on election day. He (I hope it was a he) was dressed in a fine black and white striped fur coat.

Even though we'd never met before, I recognized him



immediately and froze on the spot. My front door is all glass, and I'm sure he had a nice look at my flannel pajamas and fuzzy slippers, but that didn't deter him.

Mr. Skunk — now that we are living in such close proximity, I'm going to call you by a first name and I've dubbed you Stewie.

Stewie waddled up to the door and stood about a foot away from me. Then he (or she) turned right and slunk behind the big cedar tree that guards my entrance way.

I was afraid to scare him away so we spent the night together.

I couldn't sleep wondering if he was thinking about me. I wanted to open my window as I love the fresh night air, but I had a horrible fear that he might scale the walls and climb inside my bedroom and join me.

My front door! He's hiding beside my front door! We're trapped inside the house.

What if it is a she, and she has babies? What if the rest of the family is arriving later and plan a party in my bushes? I did find an empty whisky bottle in the park behind my house the other night.

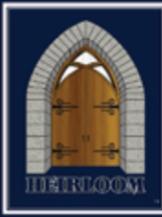
The nice people at Penner's Home Hardware gave me

some advice, and I left the store loaded for bear, or a certain polygynous mammal of the Mephitidae family, if you prefer the proper terminology.

Here's how to make sure such beasts don't feel welcome. Find its hole, but don't peek inside. Put a garden hose inside the hole and fill with water. (Stand back!) Spring pepper powder around the entrance and walkways. Fling mothballs inside the hole and all around the access points. Soak a rag with apple cider vinegar and throw in the hole. Leave a light on at night and play music.

I think Stewie has left me. I sprinkled flour along his pathways to check for his paw prints and have seen no sign for several days. Time is passing and soon Hallowe'en will be here. The ghosts and goblins are welcome to come to my front door. But will it be trick ... or treat?

Just please remember, don't dress in a skunk costume — I have the hose and mothballs ready.



Sharing in a Legacy...

Thinking of acquiring a home of architectural or historical distinction?

Considering passing the stewardship of your heritage or architectural home on to a new owner?

Curious to learn more about the architecture of your special home?

Let's chat...

Brian Marshall
Sales Representative

Author, *The Heirloom Guide to Architectural House Styles*

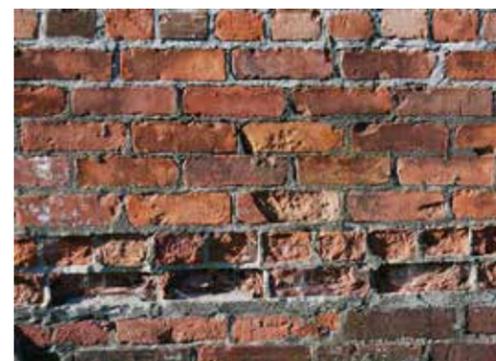


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ARCH I TEXT: with Brian Marshall Portland Brick



Portland brick damage. (Supplied photo)

Not Portland, Oregon, but Portland as in cement, stucco, mortar, and grout; a circa 1880 innovation which became commonly available here around the turn of the 20th century.

You see, Portland cement was stronger, dried faster, would set under water and was cheaper to mass produce than traditional lime mortar. The fact that its manufacture was environmentally nasty, it had no flexibility and was water-resistant (harder to repair), were not considered big issues. It was the 'perfect' product for a time when successful builders were rapidly moving toward the mass-produced house.

However, houses built prior to the advent of Portland cement had been specifically 'engineered' to lime mortar's qualities. These included flexibility, permeability, autogenous healing (moisture would activate lime mortar to self-repair most cracks), and after-cure malleability which allowed masons to seamlessly tie-in new mortar with old. So, this 'engineering' encompassed everything from the strength of an individual brick to the requirement that a house must 'breathe' moisture through the walls and into the self-healing mortar.

While each mortar type has its pros and cons, they are NOT compatible. Using Portland on a lime mortar house invariably results in damage (take a look at Fort Mississauga), and even structural failure. So, if your 'old' house needs a mason, hire one that is a qualified expert with both; it's worth the investment!

Brian Marshall



Ginger

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Serving Fresh Asian-Fusion Cuisine In a Cozy Atmosphere

Bringing back the soccer “ball”

Lauren O'Malley
Staff

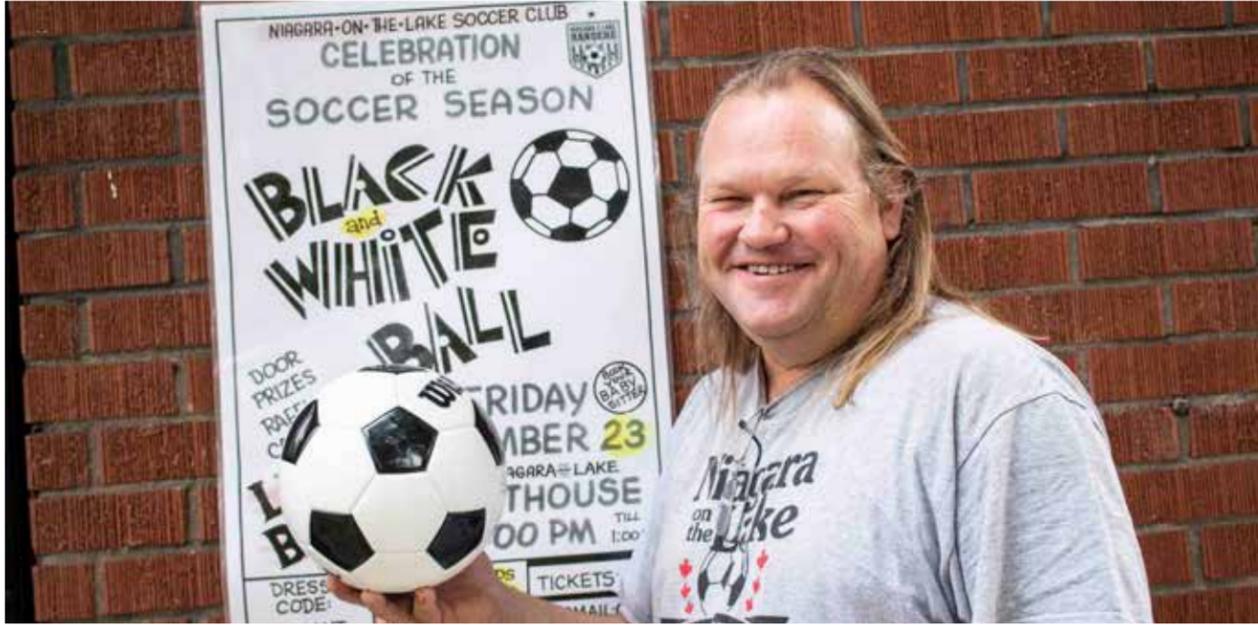
Now that you've packed away the kids' cleats, it's time to pull out your own formal wear.

Kurt Hamm, longtime coach and new board member of the NOTL Soccer Club, is very excited to be bringing back the soccer dances of yore. “We want to bring coaches and parents together for a really classy night to remember the season, and to have a great time.”

At a meeting of coaches and NOTL Soccer Club volunteers last year, there was talk of folding the club. Hamm asked, “Are we broke?” The answer was no. “Is attendance down?” Again, no. “But they said we didn't have enough volunteers. So we said, ‘There are 14 of us here right now — put us to work.’” That's how Hamm joined the board.

During one of his first meetings as a board member, when the chair asked the room if there was any new business, “I shot up my hand and said, ‘We have to bring back the soccer dances — they were legendary!’”

Among the highlights of



Kurt Hamm. (Lauren O'Malley)

the dances, says Hamm, were action photos of the kids, taped to the walls. “We'd gather around the pictures and talk about that game, that play, that day. That's what I want to bring back — a celebration of the whole soccer season,” he says.

The event is named for the traditional colours of a soccer ball, of course, and also for the formal attire people are

encouraged to wear. Keeping with the black and white theme, Hamm's friend and neighbour Roddy Heading designed and created a dramatic poster for the event. Says Heading, “Kurt's a good man, he's always got good projects. It's easy to say yes.” Heading also illustrated the tickets.

Book your babysitter now — if history can tell us any-

thing, the event will be very popular and sitters will be much in demand. Says Mary Lou Turner, chair of the original soccer dances, “We would sell out every year — we packed the place.”

The place — then and now — is the Grand Hall in the historic Court House on Queen St. On November 23 it will bounce with the sounds of an eight-piece band

and local DJs. Hamm tried to book local musicians but was stumped by scheduling conflicts, so he found a funky 8-piece band from Burlington — Mixed Liquor. He also hired local DJs the Rezza Brothers, who are promising great tunes and maybe even a surprise guest performance.

Of course the event is a fundraiser for the club — the \$20 tickets and earnings from

the raffles and cash bar will go to help pay for referees and other club expenses.

Robin Howe catering will provide warm hors d'oeuvres. “I'm a huge fan of that whole family,” says Hamm.

The NOTL Soccer Club has been around for over 40 years, and has teams for kids from four to 15 years old. “Soccer is a beautiful sport — all you need is a ball,” says Hamm. “It's a great way for kids to get to know each other outside of their schools and neighbourhoods. I still have friends from soccer — we met playing when we were seven or eight, and we still talk about those glory days.”

Turner remembers her experience running the soccer dances fondly, and is happy to see them return. “I think it's wonderful that Kurt has resurrected this great community event,” she says.

Tickets are available through Hamm at kurt-hamm@gmail.com, through the soccer club's email — niagasoccerclub@gmail.com — or by calling 905-658-4360. All members of the community — not just soccer parents and fans — are welcome.

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Pat Darte

"I will continue to work to preserve the heritage of our beautiful community of Niagara-on-the-Lake in order to maintain the lifestyles of our residents and future generations."

"Respect, Lead, and Listen"

Vision

✓ Airport

- We have the ability to expand our airport and possibly partner with the Region

✓ Trees and Nature

- A new tree bylaw needs to be put together first thing
- I have been working with a couple of groups (NPCA, Harmony Group, Owen Bjorgan) to put together a plan to plant 10,000 trees in 10 years

✓ Recreation and Leisure

- In order to attract/keep young families we must have recreational facilities that will encourage them to be actively involved in the community and build long lasting ties to Niagara-on-the-Lake

✓ Tourism

- Our tourism is one of the envies of the world and grows daily
- We need to make sure tourism mixes better with residential living
- We are on our way to making NOTL a winter wonderland, one our residents can enjoy

Achievements

✓ Fiscal responsibility:

Delivered 4 years of surplus budgets and established lowest hydro rates in the Niagara region.

✓ Smart Growth

Led development plan for Glendale area which includes commercial and residential development, residential and the creation of jobs.

✓ Education

1. Established Vineridge Academy secondary school, which provided our youth an option to continue their studies in the town.
2. Launched Youth Advisory Council.
3. Introduced Specialist High Skills Major in Aviation (with Ministry of Education). Classes will be taught at the Niagara District Airport.

✓ Economic Growth

1. Introduced expansion of Niagara District Airport services with the introduction of daily business flights to Toronto.
2. Developed a plan to entice prestige industrial firms to set up their businesses in Niagara-on-the-Lake.

✓ Support System From Charities

1. Founding member of the Niagara Community Foundation (in 2000) which has raised in excess of \$50 million for local projects to date.
2. Established Town Fund to assist local nonprofit organizations and have raised \$550,000 to date.

Vote Pat Darte For Mayor

Four notable women of NOTL: Part 2



Denise Ascenzo
Featured

Another formidable woman, Matilda Boulton, was born in 1857. She lived to be 94 years old, and in all those years she made sure people knew she meant business.

Boulton lived above a shop on Queen Street but she also owned property that ran down to Niagara River. There is a delightful tale of her suing the town of Niagara-on-the-Lake for stealing her property.

The town had given permission to dredge the river to remove the excess sediment so that the dock company could continue to operate their business, however Boulton claimed her property line extended 10 feet into the river. She had not given permission to the town to dredge her shoreline, therefore she believed they had stolen her property.

Boulton won her case.

Throughout her life she seemed to be in one battle after another with the town, evidenced by some letters Boulton sent to the town in 1903 about a property she owned.

She had rented the property to a widow, Mrs. A. Clement and her two children and apparently the widow was having great difficulty with paying the rent.

However, Boulton did not keep up the payment of taxes on this property which forced the town to go after the rent money directly to pay the tax debt. Letters from Boulton regarding the show of force by the two town's tax collectors (Reid and Burns), indicated how much she despised the two men. She wrote they should go after other properties that were in arrears and even suggesting they be removed from their positions.

In another letter from 1903, she references that Mayor James Aikens suggested she was not a lady nor a client of the town's. She wrote back, "thank God I am not a lady, but a woman who has tried to do good and carry on with her businesses."

Sounds like Boulton would fit right in with today's women and the marches being held across the continent.

Boulton, who dressed in



Elizabeth Ascher (to be included in Part 2). (Supplied photo)

harsh black outfits, became outraged over the different fashion styles that came through the decades. She was absolutely appalled when skirts became shorter, exposing ladies' ankles, and even more furious when women started wearing shorts. She was known to have struck many a young lady across their exposed ankles and then legs for such a blatant disregard of etiquette.

Then there was another new invention which she found intolerable — the roller skate. She was known to throw water onto to roller skaters who dare pass her home.

Boulton passed away May 7, 1951.

Some of the town's people might have been relieved at her passing, or maybe not, as quite a colourful character had left their lives.

Finally I shall tell you the story of Elizabeth Ascher — kind of heart, but with a backbone made of steel.

It was during World War One that Ascher saw the plight of the Polish soldiers that were training at a Niagara camp. The soldiers did not have proper kits for winter training with only two

wool blankets having been issued to keep them warm as they slept in canvas tents out on the commons.

Ascher was determined that these young Polish men should not be forced into such appalling conditions, especially knowing that many would die in the trenches overseas in Europe, so she set herself and the town's people to task to get every single one of those young men in proper beds. Schools, town offices, churches, warehouses, the cannery and private homes were made into temporary barracks.

If Ascher found out you had spare room, even if it was your dining room, she badgered you into taking in a couple of the Polish soldiers.

Ascher organized letter writing sessions for the young Polish men. Many were not literate so she would pair them with someone who could write for them. She even had the library bring in Polish books and arranged music concerts with a Polish repertoire.

In July 1918, Ascher had world-renowned pianist Jan Paderewski visit the camp. Paderewski later became Premier of a free Poland.

Ascher, in the summer months, set up dances in

the pavilion that once was located in Simcoe Park. The young men would buy a strip of tickets and then use a ticket to ask a young lady for a dance. There were plenty of matrons on the side lines to make sure that nothing inappropriate was going on — dancing too close was definitely frowned upon.

It was during the flu pandemic that swept through the world in 1918 and 1919 when 41 young Polish soldiers died here in NOTL. Some had family that could claim the bodies of their sons, but 24 were not as lucky. Ascher arranged for them to be buried together in the St. Vincent de Paul graveyard.

When World War One was over, Canada ceded the cemetery to Poland so that these brave young men could be officially buried in Poland, the country they were so willing to defend.

Even when the war was over, Ascher continued her support of Poland. She pushed through a campaign to raise money, as well as to send clothing and medical supplies over to Poland as it struggled to recover from the war.

Ascher received numerous awards for her dedication to helping the Polish soldiers in Niagara.

In October of 1922, she received one of the highest honours from the Polish government:

Commander Cross of the Order of Polonia Restituta (the equivalent of a Knighthood).

In November of 1923, she received the Hallar Medal; in May of 1926 the Order of Miecz Hallerowski; and in May 1934 she received the Cross of Merit.

Ascher was the first woman and non-Polish citizen to receive these honours.

She was also awarded the rank of Honorary Colonel of the Polish Army and was inducted as a life member in the Polish Army Veterans Association.

Ascher died in April of 1941 at the age of 62.

The Polish community continues to remember and honour her name.

Each year, on the first Sunday in June, Polish legions from Buffalo send representatives to NOTL to honour the young men who are buried in St. Vincent de Paul's Polish grave site.

The delegates then cross Byron Street and enter St. Mark's graveyard where they lay wreaths at Ascher's grave.

Note of interest: Elizabeth Ascher's last name is spelled

incorrectly on her grave marker. It is spelled Asher.

The Niagara Historical Society and Museum has a wonderful exhibition commemorating the 100th anniversary of Camp Kosciuszko, the Polish Army that trained at Niagara Camp.

From November of 1917 until the last camp closed in March 1919, over 22,000 Polish men trained in NOTL. Of those, 21,000 of the men were being shipped to France to serve in the Polish "Blue" Army. The World War One exhibition runs until November 2018.

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

The Niagara Historical Museum is located at 43 Castlereagh St. in Old Town, in Memorial Hall. Visit, or give them a call at 905-468-3912.

Denise is a regular Niagara Now contributor. Her full profile can be found at niagaranow.com.





COMMUNITY

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



Photo: Pinecone stash busted



Local resident Jennifer Gardener didn't do much barbecuing this summer, so a clever squirrel decided it would use it to store pinecones for the winter season. Unluckily for him, Gardener cleaned the barbecue out. (Submitted)

Betty Disero



Betty Disero will work with all sectors of Niagara on the Lake to finalize the Town's Official plan; one united voice, one united plan, one united vision, building on the foundation of a farming community and the town's historical significance. Betty Disero can lead Council to the completion of the Master Plans, (transportation, irrigation, culture, recreation and economic development) the guidelines to reach our vision. Our community deserves proven leadership that Betty Disero can bring to Council. Through running focused meetings and setting needed agendas, Council will be able to prioritize, motivate and direct staff in order to efficiently accomplish these goals. She listens to the concerns of the community, she does her research and comes forward with thoughtful solutions.

On October 22nd – Vote Betty Disero for Lord Mayor – Ready to Lead

For more information:
www.bettydisero.ca email: info@bettydisero.ca
Twitter: @bettydisero
Facebook.com/bettydisero

Paid for by the Betty Disero campaign.



Betty & Jane: Plunger Patrol
Inspecting NOTL's bathrooms:
Jackson-Triggs Winery

Jackson-Triggs Winery is on Niagara Stone Road as you drive into NOTL. The winery is a striking facility and a garden of fresh vegetables greet your senses at the front door even before you taste the award winning wines available at Jackson Triggs. The large restrooms have stunning stone trough sinks which add to the unique modern vibe of the winery and certainly control wet floors. There are no tricks at Triggs as their washrooms get a solid 4/5 plungers, making them Gold Plunger award winners.

4/5 Gold Plungers

RIDDLE ME THIS:

**When you need me,
you drop me. When
you don't need me,
you bring me back.**

What am I?

Last Week's answer: Corn on the cob.
Email answers to editor@niagaranow.com for a chance to win a prize.



Niagara-on-the-Lake
Rotary
Club



COMMUNITY DONATION PROJECT

Never got around to having that garage sale this summer?
Need to de-clutter or re-organize those closets & cupboards?
Been meaning to drop off your unused or unwanted items to Newark Neighbours?

We have a solution for you!

Newark Neighbours and the Rotary Club of Niagara-on-the-Lake have partnered to hold a one-day donation drive

teams are available to come to your house to pick up your donations
Saturday October 20th, 2018 10:00am - 3:00pm
Registration closes Wednesday October 17th, 2018

If you have any of the below items that you wish to donate

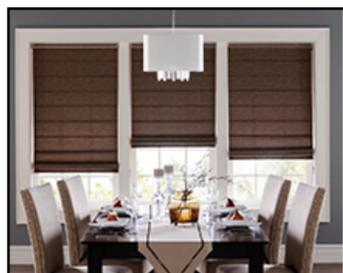
✓ Approved Items

- Cash Donations (cash, cheque or gift cards)
- Tax receipts issues for donations over \$10.00.
- Non-expired canned and dry food (non-perishable)
- New or gently used (clean) clothes for women, men and children, including belts and hats
- New or gently used shoes and boots for women, men and children
- Bedding (sheets, pillowcases, shams, duvet covers, blankets, quilts) – all sizes
- Towels (bath or kitchen)
- Dishes, Glassware and cutlery, in good condition
- Pots and Pans, bakeware
- Small appliances (coffee makers, toaster ovens, microwaves)
- Lamps and other small décor items
- Window coverings (drapes, curtains)
- Toiletries, paper products, cleaning supplies

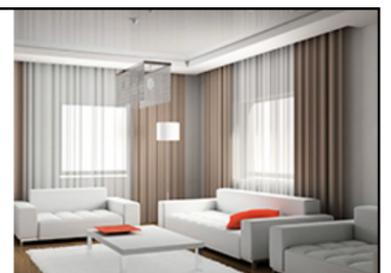
✗ Not Accepted

- Kitchen or bath cabinets or other fixtures
- Furniture, including computer
- Office equipment
- Large appliances,
- TV's and other electronics
- Books (any kind), VCR or cassette tapes
- Children's toys or car seats, child strollers
- Carpets
- Mattresses, box springs, baby cribs
- Building material, yard waste, paints
- Hardware & tools
- Sports equipment & helmets

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Lauren O'Malley
Staff

Dave Perkins is something of a Renaissance man, in that he has a tendency for rebirth. In the past, he's been a musician, nutritionist, chef, farmer of crops and livestock, and has worked for Niagara Regional Police Services.

His current passion though, was sparked entirely by his wife Nancy Thompson-Perkins.

Perkins and Thompson-Perkins rescue racehorses — mainly retired standardbreds, huge animals with a body-full of aches and pains — on their purpose-built farm on Concession 2 Road.

"They're athletes. When they come to us they're pretty beat up," says Thompson-Perkins. "They're sore, they have arthritis." They also have issues related to their sport, which involves pulling a cart carrying a person very quickly around an oval track. "They've had poles along their necks and things pulling on their jaws for most of their careers," says Perkins. "They're physically imbalanced."

Thompson-Perkins has also reinvented herself for this labour of love. "She came up poor in Wainfleet, never even mentioned she liked horses. I had no idea," says Perkins. Until one day she surprised him by bidding on — and winning — a small black stallion at an auction. "All of a sudden we had to figure out how to get him home — we hadn't come for a horse," laughs Perkins.

Both of them laugh a lot, and beam with radiant health. The light from within them comes from more than just physical wellbeing, though — they have clearly found their passion.

Asked if she had any experience with horses prior to acquiring Jet, the small stallion, Thompson-Perkins snorts with laughter. "No, I didn't. I didn't have any experience with horses at all," she says. "I learned everything on the fly."

Despite their whimsy, the pair are intelligent and studious — and they don't do things by halves. So when they decided to pursue becoming a horse stable, they both dove deeply into research and education. Perkins went the clinical route, and achieved a veterinary certificate from the University of Guelph and the Royal Veterinary College in Edinburgh. Thompson-Perkins, the gentler soul of the two, delved into animal biomechanics, herbal treatments, essential oils, animal acupuncture, infrared therapy and other alternative modalities.

As they pursued this new field of equine expertise, they decided their small horse needed a companion. They approached the Ontario Stan-



Nancy Thompson-Perkins and Buddy, a retired high-stakes standardbred. (Lauren O'Malley)

Save a horse, not a cowboy Rescuing racehorses at Wyndym

dardbred Adoption Society and found out about a famous racehorse named Carscot Harmony. He'd done well at the races, retired at eight years old, and needed a new home. This time they were ready.

Although it might be inappropriate to say one is ever completely ready to care for large-breed animals. As the couple has learned, there are always surprises. The wear and tear alone on these noble racing beasts can create unusual circumstances.

Another of their rescues, Buddy — another retired high-stakes standardbred — presented one evening with the symptoms of colic. Thompson-Perkins was at her shift-work job with the NRPS, so Perkins was on duty. "He wasn't eating, and that's usually a sign of colic, which can be fatal in a horse," says Perkins — who thoroughly enjoys telling stories. "Any other horse would have a leg dangling by a thread and say, 'Oh, I'm fine,' but Buddy-the-diva's colic was the end of the world. Drama, drama, drama."

He continues, "You can't leave a horse with colic, so I stayed with him all night, following traditional veterinary protocol. Nancy gets home from work in the morning, observes Buddy carefully for

a few minutes, and says, 'It's TMJ.'" Perkins went inside the house for a short break, "and when I came back out there's Nancy lying on the floor of the stall, pressing on his foreleg. 'I realigned his meridian,' she said. I said, 'What? I just spent 10 hours following the colic protocol with no results, and you just pressed on his leg — and now he's fine?' And he was."

"She's really good at watching their body movement and seeing the subtle cues," Perkins says of his cherished wife of 25 years.

The Perkins' currently have four horses in their care. Some they've had for many years, and one they just acquired in April. Reinet is two years old, half standardbred and half quarter horse. They followed her gestation on Facebook — particularly when her mother ruptured a pubic tendon during pregnancy. "We knew the owners of the mother," says Thompson-Perkins, "so we were watching with interest." It was a dramatic pregnancy which normally would have been terminated at that point, but the decision was made to experiment with revolutionary treatments. Baby and mother survived — and now "baby" is a terrible-two-year-old mare at Wyndym Farm.

"Having a two-year-old horse

is like having a giant toddler," says Thompson-Perkins. "Good we got her now — we couldn't have handled her before."

Fifteen years of learning about horses has prepared the couple for most of the large and small things that can go wrong while raising, training, riding and keeping horses. Even things like when a mutant amber-headed horsefly took a chunk out of Old Gunner's belly and it became infected immediately. Perkins applied the infrared pad on the spot, and Thompson-Perkins later applied her homemade salves to heal it almost instantly.

Wyndym Farm has a bit of a reputation in the horse world. "We get jokingly asked, 'So how are things at the spa,'" Perkins says. People poke fun at the relatively luxurious amenities, and the constant care and treatment the horses are given. But the community respects their work too. "I asked our ferrier what to do about the fly bites on a new horse's legs," says Perkins. "He said, 'You do the same thing with this horse as you do with all of your horses and when I come back he'll be fixed.'"

To Perkins' advantage, "Dave was my guinea pig with infrared treatments, fascia work, special body work based on the central nervous system,

traditional Chinese medicine (the oldest medicine there is), and TTouch (an integrative approach to handling, training and understanding animals)," says Thompson-Perkins. They practice what they preach — on themselves.

They also live simply: "We make it ourselves, build it ourselves, grow it ourselves, cook it ourselves, fix it ourselves," says Perkins. "We're pretty self-sufficient. That extends to the way we care for the horses." They only bring in the vet when things are dire. "And even then we usually find we can manage better without their treatments," says Perkins. "It's not that we think vets don't know what they're doing — far from it. We just find our own ways are better for our horses."

Their five-acre farm has been transformed into an equine paradise, all of it built by Perkins himself. There is a British-style three-season ring equipped with jumps, poles, barrels and toys. Every horse has its own paddock — a type called "sacrifice" paddocks, or dry paddocks. Thompson-Perkins also rides the horses in the Olympic-sized grass ring, also known as a long dressage grass ring. And there are three different pastures, all rotated with different types of grasses for different times of year.

"We also have a trail with a small hill with poles and obstacles for circuit training and sightseeing," says Thompson-Perkins. "Everything is about training here, good muscle work for us and for the horses," she says smiling and pretending to carry heavy buckets of food and water with perfect posture.

"Really, it's just about being here all the time, being with them, watching them," says Thompson-Perkins, who has been known to lose track of time while tending to the horses. "She'll say she's just going out to the barn for fifteen minutes, so I get the risotto going for supper," says Perkins — the former chef. "Two hours later I'll be scraping rice goo onto her plate," he says laughing and aping the gesture.

Thompson-Perkins seems to care more about the horses than her supper. "They come here, and that's it. Once they're here they don't have to go anywhere. We give them everything they need for an ideal life," she says. "It's really rewarding."

Perkins sees it scientifically as well: "The luxury of having just a few horses on your own property is a bit like lining in a research facility with everything on-site, monitoring everything they eat and do."

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