



The Lake Report

Vol. 1, Issue 14

November 29, 2018

Niagara-on-the-Lake

'We hate it'

Neighbours oppose Circle Street rezoning

Penny Coles
Staff

Chautauqua residents are up in arms over a proposal to rezone a Circle Street property and sever a lot for a large house they believe will endanger a mature tree and spoil the streetscape of their neighbourhood.

They are also concerned about the future of their unique community, with small cottage-style character homes being replaced by larger, out-of-place houses that will lead to Chautauqua looking like any other subdivision.

Susan Wheler, a planning consultant representing the owners of 6 Circle Street, was at a meeting Wednesday at the town hall to explain the proposal, but those in attendance quickly made it clear by their tone and comments they were there to strongly oppose the large two-storey home that is currently planned.

The property owners have applied for a division of a 9,100 square foot lot into two smaller ones, and also a zoning amendment for a reduced front yard setback from 7.5 metres to less than 2.5 metres. They want to build a large house with a height of 27 feet at the front of the newly created pie-shaped lot, the only place on the property it will fit.

The tree that is of concern, a 75-foot silver maple thought to be more than 100 years old, is on Town property, and will be about eight feet from the front of the house if the reduced setback is approved.

Wheler said the large property is well-suited to be divided for an infill lot, and the new house will comply with the zoning bylaw in every way except for the reduced setback. There are at least 10 other homes on Circle Street with reduced setbacks, she added.

The newly created lot would be similar to others in Chautauqua, she said, but several people in the audience disagreed, defying her to identify another that's the same shape.



A silver maple on Circle Street is not in good condition, and will likely need to be removed within 15 years, an arborist said. (Richard Harley)

"We object to you saying it's similar. It's not," said architect Victor Tarnoy, a Wilberforce resident.

"We hate it."
He also asked her not to refer to the 27-foot house as a two-storey.

"Your design is a two-and-a-half storey house. There is nothing like that in Chautauqua," said Tarnoy.

His concern, he added, is that once the severance is approved there will be no

opportunity for the public to comment or object to the design of the house, which "will loom over the street and is completely out of character for Chautauqua."

When Wheler said the house was of a similar scale and massing of others in the neighbourhood, another neighbour called that statement "foolish."

Wheler said she and the property owners had looked at other options for dividing

the property, but because of where a small house sits on the existing lot, the pie shape is necessary.

Tarnoy suggested that house is likely to be torn down and replaced by something much larger. "A lot of us feel you are shoving something down our throats. There is no way we're going to allow that lot."

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A black arm band.

RESIDENTS CALL FOR ACTION

Richard Harley
Editor

When a group of more than 150 people gathered in Niagara-on-the-Lake on Nov. 18 to mourn the loss of around 250 healthy trees, it was a statement to developer Benny Marotta, owner of Solmar Development Corp., who plans to build a subdivision at 588 Charlotte and 200 John Streets and a hotel on the properties of the Randwood Estate.

The message was clear: NOTL cares about heritage preservation of its greenbelt, expressed by many who wore black armbands in solidarity

for the loss of the acres of local Carolinian forest.

The rally was also a call to action to the Niagara Peninsula Conservation Authority and newly elected regional and town councillors to step up their game when it comes to environmental and heritage preservation in town.

The group assembled near the stone walls of the Randwood Estate and marched through the Commons, before stopping for a "wake" service which saw speeches from concerned residents and politicians from three levels of provincial government.

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Niagara sees unusually early icewine harvest



Icewine grapes harvested in November at Niagara College. (Richard Harley)

Richard Harley
Editor

Around Niagara, wine makers and grape growers were out in the fields on the morning of Nov. 22 for an early harvest of ice wine grapes.

The harvest being so early is extremely rare, said Niagara College wine professor Ron Giesbrecht, who was up at 4 a.m. to supervise his

students while they picked in -8 degree temperatures.

Typically, he said, the harvest happens in January or February — though it's normally more up to the winemaker's individual style preference when to harvest, as long as the temperature is right.

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Cameron gearing up for council

Balancing a family, a newborn and politics – Cameron does it all

Penny Coles
Staff

Clare Cameron might be the only person in town surprised she earned the title of deputy lord mayor in her first run at council.

On election day, she and her husband stayed home, listened and watched results coming in, before deciding to head to the community centre to join the crowd of people gathered to hear the news.

"I felt a big wash of relief, excitement and elation," she said about hearing the final numbers. "It was a very, very happy moment, along with a few tears. It was overwhelming, not just to see the results, but to be surrounded by people hugging, shaking hands, congratulating me — it was a very special moment."

Since then, in true Cameron fashion, she has been going over all the notes she has taken on many issues going back to 2014. She is preparing for the job ahead of her by reading up on the issues she expects will come up early in the term.

On Nov. 15, she delivered a baby girl, and even the arrival of her second child has not stopped her from getting ready for what's ahead at the council table.

There have been two orientation sessions organized by the Town, including one on how to handle conflicts of interest, which was a topic that came up during the election campaign. There will also be a workshop on the budget Dec. 5 at 9:30 a.m., open to the public.

Councillors were also given an opportunity to meet one-on-one with the directors of each department, to learn about their challenges, said Cameron, what's going "really well, and what the process looks like from the inside. We've heard a lot about residents' experience with the Town. This was an opportunity to look at it from the other side."

In addition to serving on several municipal advisory committees over the last decade, Cameron is a program manager for business intelligence with the City of Burlington. Her job is to improve access to data and analytics for effective decision-making, and as such, she is well-versed in data collection.

She ran for a council seat because, she said, she is ready to be a decision-maker.

She is determined to be an

effective councillor, supportive of staff, and wants to be sure if there is a "great idea" from a staff member she can bring it forward from the inside.

She also wants to keep her finger on the pulse of what residents want, and will keep up to date on what people are saying through social media and the local news. "It's important to feel in contact and to be connected with people," she said.

Cameron feels she has a good sense of the issues that will come up early in the term. "It's my nature to collect notes, read a lot, write a lot and try to find patterns in things. I don't just want to learn about the current year, but how it fits in to recent years and into the future."

She has been studying infrastructure issues such as roads, which make up some of the biggest expenditures, to prepare for the budget discussions. "They are often taken for granted, but are critical for getting people in and out of NOTL."

Cameron's approach to the budget will be to "start with what we have, and be fiscally responsible."

There is good data available, she said, and she has been seeking out any added information she can find. She is hoping for as much public input as possible throughout the process.

"I want to show we can do a good job. But that doesn't mean getting out a wrecking ball. I believe in incremental change, building a positive relationship with staff, and improving service to the public."

CLARE CAMERON

Customer service will be a priority, said Cameron. It was obvious from what candidates heard while knocking on doors that residents are not satisfied with the response they receive when contacting town hall. She plans to change that.

Staff should be given clear expectations and standards, she said, and the public also needs a clear under-

standing of what to expect from those providing the service.

Her rule of thumb for staff is "the second you feel like you've done enough, it's time to do more."

She wants to focus on the experience of customers being served, and looking at staff being "a little more empathetic."

Communication on both sides is essential, she said, with a variety of channels to share information.

"Our population has grown, and expectations are high. We have a very engaged population. Town staff however has not grown, and there are high demands placed on them. Customer service and public engagement are top priorities."

There has already been some good work done in that direction, she said, such as the Talent Bank and Join the Conversation on the Town's website, but there are ways to make the website "more intuitive and searchable. This is a beautiful historic town, but the website doesn't need to be quite so historic."

At the first committee meeting in December, Cameron expects one of the discussions to be about a tree bylaw. If it's not on the agenda, someone will likely raise the issue under new business, she said.

"Councillors seem interested in showing some movement on a tree bylaw, or some form of private tree management. Expectations are high. This will be the first opportunity to show some action, some momentum, and to get some traction on one of the issues in town."

What has played out in recent weeks with no controls in place, said Cameron, referring to the destruction of trees on John and Charlotte Street properties, "is the culmination of what was hundreds of people's worst fears," with clear-cutting on a large property slated for development before an application to build was submitted to the planning department.

"The Town will find a way to respond to that situation. From the bigger-picture perspective, I want to avoid a situation where residents' worst dreams have come true, when they have voiced their concerns and tried to remedy them through the democratic process."

If a tree bylaw is approved and proven to be too restric-



NOTL Coun. Clare Cameron. (Penny Coles)

tive, if it negatively impacts residents, said Cameron, "we need to be aware of that. It should be dynamic, not just passed and put away on the shelf. It's not written in stone."

She sees similar frustration from residents with the much-discussed and long-awaited revised Official Plan. There has been a lot of agonizing to get it right, she said, but the greater risk has been the delay that was created by the wish to make it perfect, with developers able to take advantage of the Town not having an updated OP.

A draft plan is expected to come to council early in 2019 with some significant changes, including policies that address the cultural landscape, preserving agricultural lands, controlling cannabis production, and a discussion about the community planning permit system.

After a period of consultation with the public, Cameron said, she expects council will be determined to see work on the updated OP completed so it can be sent to the Region and Province for approval.

"It will be far from instant,

but I will do everything I can to push it forward."

She intends to request that every council agenda include an update on the work of the Official Plan, to make sure the public knows progress is being made. "There should always be something to share," she said. "If there isn't, that's a concern."

The noise bylaw, short-term rentals, traffic and transportation, economic development and recreational facilities are also "hot buttons" that will likely come up early in the term, said Cameron, and the number of issues points to the importance of a strategic plan, outlining priorities for both councillors and staff.

"We've heard so much frustration on so many topics, it's important to set priorities, arrive at a consensus and stick to it. No one can do everything all at once. If priorities are changing on a daily basis, that's not a productive environment."

And while there is some concern about a shortage of staff to handle a heavy work load, "no matter how many Town staff there are, they can be aligned to the strategic

plan, and anything not on the strategic plan falls to a lower priority."

Cameron says she's feeling optimistic, privileged and honoured to be part of this council. "I want to show we can do a good job. But that doesn't mean getting out a wrecking ball. I believe in incremental change, building a positive relationship with staff, and improving service to the public. That takes empathy on both sides. I don't expect everybody will agree on everything, but I hope that if people don't agree, they will come forward, not just on social media but through official channels. There are opportunities to have their voices heard. I want to have every voice represented."

The inaugural meeting of council takes place Dec. 3 at the Shaw Festival Theatre. Doors open at 6:30, with the official swearing-in ceremony beginning at 7 p.m.

Council work begins at the first committee of the whole meeting Dec. 10 at 6:30 p.m. at the town hall council chamber, followed by a council meeting Dec. 17, same time and place.



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Neighbours oppose Circle Street rezoning

Continued from front page

The arborist report also came into question. Michael Burns, who has objected to the Town planning department about the reduced setback and the lack of a detailed tree protection plan, said the arborist was asked to prepare a report for a severance, not for the construction of a house just feet away from the silver maple. By using the report in the planning impact analysis for the rezoning application, he told Wheler, “you are trying to circumvent the process.”

Burns also had an issue with a page of the original arborist report being changed, but no mention of a revision, and previous to the meeting had asked for an explanation but received none. Wheler addressed that at the meeting, saying it had been revised, and the report met the requirements of the Town planning department.

Town planner Jesse Auspitz agreed he had reviewed the

report and determined it was complete.

“Determined it was complete for a severance,” Burns responded. “Nothing more.”

As time ran out on the scheduled half-hour time slot, residents called for a second open house on the issue before councillors debate the rezoning in a January meeting of the planning committee.

Tarnoy said there is a lot of work to be done before the Jan. 7 meeting, “or it will be a noisy mess. A lot of people are absolutely furious about this. This is serious for us. You either arrange another public meeting or the next one (in January) will be embarrassing.”

He suggested the lot configuration, the size of the house, the reduced setback and the tree protection plan all need to be resolved.

Lord Mayor-elect Betty Disero stepped in to say she would organize another open house to be held at the community centre before the issue comes to the planning

committee.

Arborist Robyn Pollard was not able to attend Wednesday’s meeting, but said there is a good explanation for the substituted page of her report — there was “nothing fishy” about the replacement, she said, which showed a new layout with the driveway in a different location.

“There was no ill intent. They changed the site plan, and asked me to relabel that document, which got put into the report.”

She agreed with Burns that her report should have been labeled to indicate it had been revised. She also said she would have included more detailed information about tree protection if she’d been asked to do a study for a planning impact analysis on the rezoning and the location of the house, but she wasn’t, nor was such a report requested by the Town.

She wouldn’t expect the applicant to “volunteer” a more detailed and more expensive

report, she said, and the Town doesn’t have the policies in place to require one.

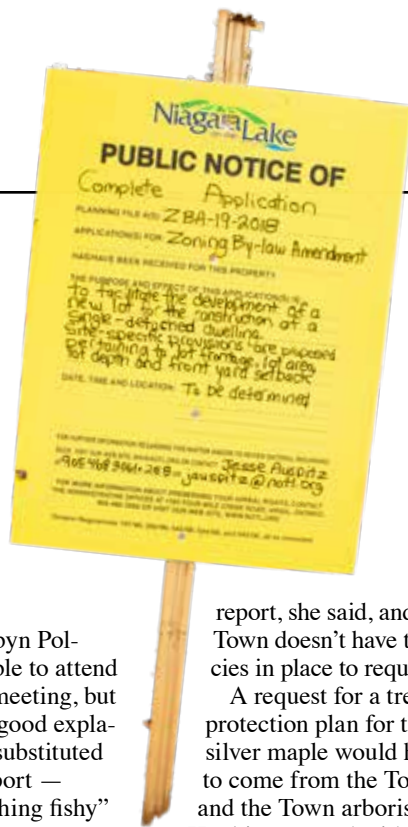
A request for a tree protection plan for the silver maple would have to come from the Town, and the Town arborist, J.B. Hopkins, agreed with her that the maple is not in good health. It will likely need to be removed within 15 years, regardless of development, she said, so shouldn’t prevent a project from going forward.

“If it was in good condition, I would fight tooth and nail to save it, but it’s not.”

She doesn’t do a lot of work in NOTL, she added, because there are no policies in place to require it.

Her report for the severance included a basic tree protection plan, suggesting hoarding around the silver maple, “but I put that in as added value.

I didn’t see where the new house was going. If the Town wants more protection of trees they need to put more policies in place.”



St. Davids has wish list for new council

Penny Coles
Staff

St. Davids residents are preparing their wish list for the new council, with safety at the top of it.

Greg Dell, president of the ratepayers’ association representing the village, says candidates made all kinds of promises leading up to the election, “and we’re not going to let them off the hook.”

They plan to take their requests to the first business meeting of new councillors, hoping some of their issues will become priorities, he said.

At the top of the list, he said, is asking for a community safety zone to protect pedestrians, cyclists and vehicles travelling through the village. It would allow for speeding fines to be doubled, thus providing strong motivation for motorists to slow down.

Betty Disero, now lord mayor-elect, made a motion as a councillor last year to approve the community safety zone, but was defeated.

Residents believe the signs notifying drivers of the fine-doubling zone will

raise awareness and increase safety for the community, he said, with research showing it works well in towns across Canada. It would also allow the village to have more policing for enforcement, he added.

“It’s very inexpensive and simple to do, with signs drivers will see as they get to the community. We want to make our community a safe place for our residents to live and to work.”

Heritage preservation is also on their list of asks. Villagers are hoping for a St. Davids Heritage District, which would put some restrictions on future development, limited to frontages on York Road and Four Mile Creek Road, within the urban boundary, said Dell. The ratepayers association put together a proposal, and last fall, council agreed to have the Municipal Heritage Committee look into it. “But after that, nothing happened. In my opinion, it was considered an expense.”

The MHC wanted to hire an expert to study it, but it was shelved because of the cost, he said.

The ratepayers association isn’t looking for designation under the heritage act, which puts strict controls on changes to existing buildings, he said. Residents just want any new development that occurs within that area “to complement what we already have. We want to protect our community heritage, and this is the way to do it.”

Although grinder pumps were mentioned during the election campaign — a concern and an expense only in St. Davids, as they were considered necessary for about 90 home owners as part of the sewer system installed about 15 years ago — Dell said the issue today is to ensure new developments don’t rely on them as part of any future sewer installations. “We would work with developers to instead put in a pumping station or a system that doesn’t require grinder pumps.”

Next on their list is a new pool. Last summer, residents were warned the St. Davids Pool, built by the Lions Club and donated to the Town decades ago, was failing and might not last the season. Council recommended

\$100,000 be put aside for a consultant to determine what villagers want to see on that property as a replacement. The message during the election campaign was loud and clear — residents want a new pool, and councillors all said they will have one.

“We want to remind them of that,” said Dell, “and we want to be partners.”

The ratepayers association wants to talk about a community centre that could provide activities for all ages, as part of an overall plan for the York Road property, and would also involve the St. Davids Lions Club in the discussion, he said.

St. Davids residents are also hoping the new council can push the Region to resolve increasing traffic that is creating logjams at the intersection of York and Four Mile Creek roads. There has been talk of a roundabout, but whatever the final solution is, Dell said, it needs to be moved along.

“We’re very excited about the new council. We’ve met with most of them, and they understandably want to get working. We’re optimistic things will begin to happen.”



LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Tree protection should be for new development

It was very interesting to note that once our election signs were removed from our roadsides, they were immediately replaced with signs stating the following: "My trees don't need a bylaw."

Frankly, as a member of the Niagara-on-the-Lake Tree Committee I was happy to see them. It illustrates to some degree that there is an appreciation for trees. But sadly I have seen too many cases where the appreciation for trees is completely ignored.

Let me cite some examples.

A developer purchased an older home, demolished it, and immediately severed this parcel of land into two lots. He then proceeded to remove the only two trees on the property — a century-

old oak, and a smaller spruce tree — both outside the footprint of the two new houses to be constructed.

Neighbours pleaded to save the trees. Once the houses were built, they were advertised "as being located on a quiet tree-lined street." The hypocrisy is stifling.

In another case, a new home owner to our town proceeded to remove the only two healthy trees in their backyard. When neighbours inquired about the reason for this destruction, they were rudely ushered off of the property.

In another situation, a developer removed all of the evergreen trees prior to construction, and then had the gall to name the development after the very same trees that

he destroyed.

And of course, the sad saga presently playing out at the Randwood Estate is truly discouraging.

I certainly understand the resistance to another by-law that would appear to intrude on the privacy of one's property. However, I would hope that this by-law would be tailored in such a way, as not to become too cumbersome.

For instance, I would certainly recommend an exemption for the agricultural community. Certain tree sizes and species could be exempt from the by-law, however, native trees and trees that have a distinct heritage value should be protected. Trees provide incalculable benefits for any community, and must

be protected at all costs.

Here is my challenge to our new council:

At the very least, develop a strong tree preservation policy that targets all new development. All present efforts at tree preservation with new development have been totally ineffective and inadequate. My recommendation would be that absolutely no activity be allowed on any future development lands without a comprehensive arborist's report.

In addition, every building permit application, no matter how large or small, should trigger an immediate investigation regarding the impact on existing trees. Let us all become better stewards of our fragile environment.

Buddy Andres



More letters

Destruction at Randwood Estate

Dear Lord Mayor-elect Betty Disero and council-elect, The Niagara Foundation is profoundly disappointed and frankly shocked to learn of damage to historical attributes of the Randwood Estate as well as the large-scale removal of trees on the property.

These actions, reportedly undertaken at the direction of the current owner and developer of the property, in our view, demonstrate wanton disregard for what makes Niagara-on-the-Lake a special place.

After what we understand were repeated and widespread requests for the Town to stop the developer's actions, we were relieved to see the Nov. 16 notice posted on the Join the Conversation website regarding an investigation by Town officials and heritage consultants.

The notice also confirmed "significant damage" to the Dunnington-Grubb landscape features as well as efforts to take "appropriate legal action available."

The Niagara Foundation urges the Town of Niagara-on-the-Lake to vigorously pursue all legal avenues to stop further destruction including seeking injunctive relief; require the owner to make good all damage to heritage attributes of the site; and seek maximum punitive damages available under the Heritage Act, including directors of the responsible companies associated with the owner.

We also encourage the Town of Niagara-on-the-Lake to investigate the role provincial bodies (e.g., the Niagara Peninsula Conservation Authority) could or should be taking with respect to the Rand Estate and other lands in Niagara-on-the-Lake. In this regard we applaud the question directed to the minister of municipal affairs and housing, by Niagara MPP Wayne Gates, as a positive step to engage multiple levels of government in dealing with out of control development and developers.

The Niagara Foundation looks forward to working with the incoming council and assisting you in finalizing a new Official Plan.

In the meantime we need to ensure development and actions by developers that are inconsistent with our community are opposed in the strongest possible way using whatever tools the Town may have at its disposal.

Michael Howe, president of the Niagara Foundation

Correction from TLR

The Lake Report would like to correct a story from last week's issue regarding Pleasant Manor. The story mistakenly stated Pleasant Manor was recently taken over by Revera Retirement Living and Long-term Care Services. In fact, Pleasant Manor is operated by Radiant Care and has not changed hands, but was rebranded. The Lake Report apologizes for the error and any inconvenience it may have caused, and to Dennis Dick, the Radiant Care board member who was mistakenly quoted.

One resident's ideas for the old hospital

The elections are over and we now have a new mayor and a number of new council members. During their campaigning I made a suggestion to a couple of prospective council members that I believed would be both beneficial and profitable for our town and its citizens.

The old hospital, which I believe the town now owns, should be put to good use to benefit our seniors and the town as a whole. Council should consider giving this building a face-lift keeping with the architecture of this beautiful town, and a complete restructuring that would enable it to have a number of one and two-bedroom condo units for our aging population.

Our aging population faces a major problem. We're reaching an age where we no longer can remain in our large homes, but wish to remain in our beautiful town. The big problem is the availability of senior's accommodations at this time. There just isn't a solution at this time to meet the growing need.

Having this new residence (similar to The Henley in St. Catharines) would be of great interest for these seniors.

There are two possibilities for the old building. One would be a rebuild and redesign of the existing building, the second would be to demolish the building and build a new three-floor larger building complete with dining facilities, a walk-in

clinic and a workout room. The dining room would be for residents, their guests and outsiders looking for a five-star restaurant without the exorbitant prices of a five-star restaurant. Parking would be under ground for the residents, with a pay section for people wishing to park for the day or for dining.

The sale of these units would be a profitable venture for our town, both in taxes and the profit from these one and two bedroom units. Our aging population are finding it difficult to look after a large house and garden. Having a residence right in town would enable our seniors to attend the Shaw Festival, walk to the stores, and dine occasionally at some of the local restaurants.

We should also look at our empty schools with their large properties, which would allow us to build additional housing for our seniors. These buildings could form a village within our village, complete with gardens and walkways for the residents.

As the mayor and council members begin the process of re-establishing the new town planning process, they will need to put in place a plan that includes multiple accommodations for our senior citizens. Now is the time to look at all possibilities. Thinking outside the box is a must if our town is to maintain its beauty and meet the needs of our seniors.

Tom Thornton

Canada Post

Clearly the dog and pony show over the past year which Canada Post calls bargaining is anything but.

The majority of the blame which got us to this strike situation falls squarely at the feet of the government.

You probably think I am radical union member, anything but.

I am a retired former Chief Executive and Business Owner with over 40 years international management experience in multi plant engineered product manufacturing. Accordingly I have, during my career, direct hands on union negotiating experience with various unions and feel qualified to comment on the current strike.

To claim that negotiations have been going on for the past year is a farce, except from the government point of view who, like typical politicians, have difficulties making decisions, and typically procrastinate and committee to death, the most simplistic of decisions. Better to kick the can down the road.

Common sense alone tells the public that you cannot conduct serious good faith contract negotiations for over a year.

Negotiations is like a successful marriage, there are lots of compromises along the way. Neither party walks away getting 100% of what they want, however both parties should walk away feeling good about the final agreement.

To achieve such a result you must first respect the

views and feelings of the opposite side. I strongly sense that Canada Post is void of this basic practice and in fact have no respect for their dedicated employees --- therein lies the stalemate which so regularly condemns these negotiations to failure from the outset.

What to do.

First, I would oust the labor minister and numerous members of Canada Post, they have demonstrated a lack of leadership in the past year and have proven to be totally incompetent and lack the skills to successfully conclude any future union contracts, in a timely manner. Hire experienced talent with an ear to listening and the ability to conclude a new agreement, long before the old contract expires. Yes they have to be tough negotiators, but not like Donald Trump, my way or the highway. The Canada Post team is like Trump, bully the opposition into submission -- a surefire recipe for failure and relations going forward.

This strike should never have happened. I have always found the unions tough but fair given you reciprocate and treat them fairly and with respect -- Reciprocity works.

Canada Post has purposely dragged out the negotiations for the government to intervene.

Now we have the government involved, god forbid, and the senate posturing like they are relevant.

What a mess.

Samuel A. Young

Letter to the editor from Benny Marotta

What is happening with your neighbourhood?

I feel for the concerns of some of the residents and I wish there was more communication between us. The problem that we are experiencing is that they have a one-track mind and have no intention of making things work unless it's their way.

As of today, from what I understand they prefer the beautiful Rand Estate to deteriorate to the ground rather than saving it to be enjoyed by all.

This group of people who call themselves "SORE" are trying to control the town as to what happens, when it happens and how it happens.

Based on the talk of people in town, I have learned stories of people who created a lot of problems for other new investors in town.

When McDonalds came to town, they made a big fuss ... as of today that same group of people line up at McDonalds to get their hamburgers.

When Vintage Inns came to town to invest millions to restore the Prince of Wales and the Pillar and Post, they wanted to throw them out too.

When a heroine of the town, Trisha Romance, wanted to change the zoning for a hotel at Rand, they fought her for years until she got fed up and sold it (but she managed to get the zoning).

When Two Sisters Properties bought it, they restricted us from meeting with the planning or design committees of the town for their proposal of the hotel. The meeting was held in public and looked more like a mob attack, where people attacked my family personally during

the actual open forum.

Two Sisters recognized that within the Rand Estate most of the trees needed attention, given many years of neglect.

An arborist was retained to give their advice and prepare a tree inventory. Based on their report, a contract was awarded to the same arborist (very well known in the area, Bill Buchanan, who is a master arborist) to proceed and do what was needed to save the trees in the estate.

All this work was done with the supervision of the Conservation Authority and the Town.

SORE created a nightmare for everyone involved to the point that I called a meeting through an invitation by letter to 40 of the immediate local residents around the Rand Estate to engage and listen to their concerns and perhaps clarify things, as there was so much misinformation.

A small group of neighbours went around the neighbourhood to have a petition signed to not attend the meeting, and only six ended up attending.

David Bell, one of the founders and organizers of SORE, attended but he behaved in a rude and arrogant manner, acting like he was the owner of the Rand Estate.

Within the Rand Estate there were 52 dead ash trees that the Conservation Authority asked us to cut down for safety reasons. This was done with the Conservation Authority's supervision.

This became another nightmare with the SORE group, where we were accused of destroying the Estate. (Before the work began, we delivered a letter to

all the neighbors affected and explained the reason for the tree removal). As of today, Two Sisters has planted 18 new mature trees within the Rand Estate.

At 200 John Street and 588 Charlotte, Solmar Development sent a letter to the Town and Conservation Authority notifying them of the clearing of the lands of trees and shrubs. They both responded that it was okay to proceed with the work. During the clearing, we had Conservation Authority and Town officials conduct site visits.

The lands in question are identified within the Regional and Town Official Plans for residential use.

Solmar Development will submit in the near future, a development application for a new community based on the current permitted land use. These lands have been zoned residential well before Solmar offered to purchase and take title. These lands were intended for residential development.

At no time was the Dunnington-Grubb landscape touched. It's fenced in and protected. All work has been done keeping a 100-foot distance from it.

As of today all business done by the companies Two Sisters Resorts and Solmar Development has applied and received consent from all the authorities from the Town of Niagara-on-the-Lake and the Region of Niagara. At no time have we undertaken any business without any approvals.

We have followed due process.

Based on the history of what has been happening,

the SORE group needs to stop bullying companies and family names that are here to invest and improve the future of NOTL.

The existing businesses that we have in NOTL, including Two Sisters Vineyards, have nothing to do on a business level with the Rand Estates, 200 John Street and 588 Charlotte Street.

It is unjustified that the Marotta family name and the good name of Two Sisters Vineyards are attacked through social media, threatening phone calls and the recent Nov. 18 demonstration.

We believe that this is an organized campaign with intent to damage our family name. At this point, we have come to the conclusion that it is no longer about the trees on the Rand properties but that there is an underlying motive that is very disturbing, and these bullying tactics are usually used by people intolerant of others.

We have given our defamation lawyers the names of a few people who we believe have crossed the line. I caution people not to get carried away by emotions and to consider the impacts of their actions on others.

I remind the new lord mayor and elected councillors that to be elected by the public is a privilege and they should work closely with their professional staff recommendations and potential new investors, and not to fall in the trap of being influenced or intimidated by certain groups that were not appointed by the public to make decisions in the best interest of the town of NOTL as a whole.

Pleasant Manor corrects the record

SUBMITTED

Pleasant Manor appreciates this opportunity to correct and clarify some of the statements made about us in the Nov. 15, 2018 issue of The Lake Report.

Pleasant Manor currently accommodates 41 long-term care residents. We know this is completely inadequate to address the current needs, let alone the future needs, of Niagara-on-the-Lake and the Region. Accordingly, in consultation with our health system and community partners we have developed a plan. We have achieved some notable successes already. In 2016, the Ontario government

authorized Pleasant Manor to redevelop our long-term care home with up to 160 beds. Earlier this year, the Ontario government officially allocated 81 licences to add to our existing 41. We are currently engaged with the Ontario government to obtain the full number of bed licences needed for our growing seniors populations.

Radiant Care, that operates Pleasant Manor in Niagara-on-the-Lake and Tabor Manor in St. Catharines, is a completely independent, not-for-profit organization. We are committed to maintain that status and independence. Radiant Care has never contemplated a sale to or merger

with Revera Retirement Living, or to or with any other organization and has no plans to do so.

The Ontario government allocates identical funding to not-for-profit and for-profit long-term care homes. Nonetheless, not-for-profit homes such as Pleasant Manor that are also registered charities receive substantial funding from community groups and individuals. We are able to use those donations to support our goal of furnishing our residents with more amenities and the highest quality of care.

The management of Radiant Care has always prided ourselves on our commitment

to the communities we serve and to seek advice from those communities. I assure The Lake Report's readers that any major initiative or change undertaken by Radiant Care would occur only after consultations and transparency with our residents, our employees, our partners in healthcare delivery and the communities we serve.

We appreciate this opportunity to clarify our situation and plans and to restate our commitment to support the seniors and families of the Niagara Region.

Yours sincerely,
Glen Unruh, President, Radiant Care Board of Directors

The Lake Report

The Lake Report strongly encourages readers to support the local businesses that advertise with us. When reading, we ask you to please remember that the businesses you see allow us to operate and keep the paper free and independent. When you're looking for a service or product, check the paper and try someone local first. There are a variety of great businesses inside to choose from – don't forget to mention you saw them in the paper!

The Lake Report would also like to acknowledge and thank those who have made financial contributions to the paper, whether through our donate button online or by mailing us a cheque. The paper encourages all residents to support the paper through a "voluntary subscription" annually.

For those interested in supporting us, we suggest \$1 per issue, per household, at 52 issues per year, which we strive to get to. That's only \$52 – less than most people spend on pizza and wings – and will help us grow to a weekly edition and ensure all households receive a copy.

Larger donations are also accepted and greatly appreciated. For transparency, donations of more than \$1,000 will be published in the paper (with a big thank you) and donors will receive an exclusive limited edition Lake Report mug (not the standard one), as well as a copy of the first edition of the paper signed by staff. (Limit of 20 special mugs)

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Tweed doubles-up cannabis production

Jill Troyer
Special to TLR

The brand new greenhouse at Tweed Farms in Niagara-on-the-Lake is filled with thousands of thriving new cannabis plants, and upgrades to the other two greenhouses have dramatically increased their production capacity.

The \$70 million expansion and infrastructure upgrade project has ushered in several types of growth in the operation.

According to regional general manager Alan Cooke, Tweed has almost tripled in size from 350,000 square feet to one million square feet in eight months, while staff number rose from 35 employees in August of 2017 to 200 staff members today, with 40 more to come.

Crops have also doubled from two per year four harvests annually due to supplemental lighting. Final renovations to one of the three greenhouses is still underway, and expected to be complete with in a couple of months. Cooke added that all the cannabis produced here in NOTL is licensed by Health Canada for medicinal use, and they follow strict regulations to guarantee top quality. The increase in production is in response to increase in demand. Tweed provided medicinal marijuana to 25,000 Canadian patients in 2017, and now that number is 84,000 and still growing. Cooke said legalization of recreational marijuana is reducing the stigma and fueling the growing appetite for medical uses.

The rapid expansion injected money into the local economy. "Of the \$70 million spent, 30 to 40 per cent went directly to local construction companies, and the larger companies we used also sub-contracted some work to local operations" according to Cooke. He pointed out that 85 per cent of the new hires were local, and the rest were from nearby communities such as Grimsby. Tweed's ongoing operational spending contributes to the local economy as well, whether through jobs, spending at local restaurants and wineries, and operating expenses. As an example, Cooke cited the cost of electricity, noting Tweed is NOTL Hydro's biggest customer. The company also contributes to the community through charity work, whether collecting 2,000 pounds of food at Thanksgiving for a food bank, a toy drive at Christmas, or helping paint a house for Community Care in St. Catharines. Cooke



Tweed Farms has increased production. (Supplied photo)



Weed growing at Tweed Farms.



Tweed Farms.

added he would welcome requests from NOTL groups who would like to partner with Tweed for a good cause, and suggested they contact him directly.

The pot producer has drawn complaints from nearby residents about foul smells in the past. The company has invested \$1 million in 14 odour cannons, which emit a mist to counter the smells that occur when the cannabis plants are in the flowering stage. More recently, Tweed installed carbon cannons at vents, to scrub the air before it leaves the greenhouses.

Cooke said those are very new, and it's too soon to assess how effective they will be. He added Tweed also has an engineering team actively pursuing additional solutions.

"When we do get a complaint, we investigate immediately, and adjust the cannons to the wind direction. Complaints come from a one-kilometre radius of the greenhouses, and most neighbours are great."

Cooke says the biggest challenge with all this rapid expansion, both in NOTL and at Tweed's other operations across the country, is people.

"We don't always get it right" when hiring, but "we do our best, and we treat our employees well". According to Cooke, employees are paid more than minimum wage, all are given shares in the company, and Tweed favours internal promotion.

Cooke said the partnership between Tweed and Niagara College is very helpful on the people front. Twenty co-op students worked at Tweed over the summer, and some have remained in part time jobs while they finish their studies. Vivian Kinnaird, Dean of Business,

Tourism and Environment at Niagara College said "we have a good, positive working relationship" with Tweed, and many NC students welcome the potential opportunity to work in an emerging industry right here at home. Kinnaird said "having good employment opportunities here is good for students."

The first 24 students in the new Commercial Cannabis Production program at NC are set to graduate in April 2019, with 24 more expected to finish the program in August.

As for the future, Cooke said he'd love to see a visitor centre and tours at the greenhouse, and if council decides to allow marijuana storefronts in NOTL, Tweed would be happy to have a shop in town. The company has already opened several storefronts in provinces where that's permitted, including Newfoundland and Manitoba. As for further expansion, Cooke said Tweed already has approval for plans that would allow them to expand a little, but nowhere near the scale of their recent project.

Glendale to take new look at old issues

Penny Coles
Staff

The Glendale Task Force has been disbanded, but will begin again with a new look at old issues once it is established by council.

Steven Hardaker has applied to be part of the group that will be chosen in the coming weeks to represent his neighbourhood. It will be made of several new faces — the two councillors who sat on the task force were not re-elected, and the former resident members are not re-applying. He has been working with outgoing members to establish a list of priorities for residents of Niagara-on-the-Green. Most of the problems that have come up have been ongoing for many years, although progress has been made on some issues, he said.

Following the October election, a Facebook page designed as a forum for the neighbourhood and open only to residents posted a survey, looking for the top five issues of concern. Printed flyers with the same survey were hand-delivered to 465 residents of the NOTG area.

Many of the responses listed concerns that were brought to council in August, along with some recommendations that were accepted to be forwarded to staff, with a report for the new council, Hardaker said. He hopes new councillors will move forward with those recommendations, although he noted not all Glendale residents agree.

The issue that caused the most discussion at council was regarding a bylaw to license long-term rentals, and that turned out to be one of the priorities that topped the survey.

While the majority of residents responding to an earlier Town survey indicated they support the licensing bylaw, it's not as popular an idea in the Old Town, which doesn't suffer from the same problems. The Town has indicated it could be a human rights violation to address such a bylaw only for Glendale, where issues arise from student rentals.

Hardaker says other municipalities have dealt with similar problems by referring to it as a bylaw to license rooming houses, which would eliminate any concern outside the Glendale area.

"We could roll it out across the town, but it wouldn't have any impact anywhere else," he said.

It's not something that all agree on, even in Glendale, he said — landlords would



File photo.

be impacted and are opposed, he said.

Other issues that arise from student rentals are absentee landlords who make it hard to get in touch with property owners if there are problems, and infractions of fire and other safety codes, said Hardaker. Licensing would require inspections, ensuring safe premises for students. Many NOTG residents remember a fire a few years ago, with kids in basement bedrooms endangered. "It was a perfect example of why we need a licensing bylaw."

Parking is also an issue, with a shortage of spaces at rentals leading to on-street parking. One of the recommendations of the previous task force was to have lines painted to control parking, and that came up in the survey as a priority. Also snow removal was mentioned, although it's not the service but parking on the street that causes problems, said Hardaker.

Increased bylaw presence and enforcement was another of the recommendations the task force made to council in August that popped up on the recent survey, with residents concerned noise and property standards bylaws are not being enforced. With an increased police presence since school resumed in the fall,

there haven't been issues with loud, out-of-control parties, he said.

Speeding continues to be a concern, especially as more families with children move into the area, said Hardaker, but the Niagara Regional Police set up marked and unmarked cars to catch speeders over a recent two-week period and found only two infractions. The police said further action on their part isn't warranted, but with kids playing in the neighbourhood, "two speeders are two too many. We're hoping for speed bumps or other calming traffic measures."

Although the work of the task force has centred on Niagara-on-the-Green, Hardaker hopes to include the Regional Glendale development plan currently in the works as part of its focus. The plan is intended to provide a vision for the future of what is considered one of Niagara's key growth areas, and past public participation has helped to create the vision, which looks at parks, open spaces, transportation and community services, along with residential and commercial development on 400 acres east of Homer Road.

The plan is to be finished in May, 2019, and the Region intends it to drive growth and

economic prosperity by creating a community that will attract investment and jobs. It could also include a new business district and a hotel.

Residents are hoping Niagara College will build more student housing on its property, "and we'd like to put pressure on council to look at that seriously," he said, to alleviate some of the problems caused by rentals in the neighbourhood.

"There are also plans for higher-rise buildings, and we want to make sure they don't hinder the view of the escarpment."

More public participation is anticipated, and Hardaker wants the task force to be part of the discussions. Residents are "generally pleased" by what they have seen of the plan so far, he said, as a result of their input, and hope to see more amenities as the neighbourhood grows, with a population of 4,000 people expected by the mid 2030s.

NOTG is a wonderful neighbourhood, said Hardaker, and residents want it to stay that way. "We like to refer to it as the new young hip area of town. It would be great to have a grocery store, and there's space for a school. We're going to see tremendous growth in the area, and we hope it's done properly."

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Grimwood elected to executive board for provincial fire chiefs



NOTL Fire Chief Rob Grimwood. (Austin Broad)

Austin Broad
Special to TLR

Niagara-on-the-Lake fire chief Rob Grimwood is set to become the first firefighter from NOTL to sit on the executive board of the Ontario Association of Fire Chiefs.

Grimwood was elected last week to join the 2019 executive committee of the OAFC as a vice president.

"This will be the first time somebody from NOTL has sat on the board, let alone the executive and I am the only executive member from the Niagara region," said Grimwood. "It provides me the opportunity to have a lot of government influence, where I can represent the region and the town."

As the first member from NOTL to serve in this capacity, Grimwood said he is honoured to serve the town in

such a high profile role.

"It's an absolute honour, the opportunity to serve all Chief Fire Officers from across the province is a privilege," said Grimwood. "It is especially an honour to represent the Town of Niagara-on-the-Lake and Niagara-on-the-Lake Fire & Emergency Services as the first member of this department to serve in this capacity."

Chief Grimwood has been with the NOTL fire department since 1996, and has worked his way through the ranks before ultimately becoming the town's fire chief last February.

"I started in NOTL in 1996 as a volunteer firefighter, I've been with the department since then progressing through from firefighter, to lieutenant, to captain, to assistant district chief and I got promoted to

fire chief in 2017."

From 2007-2017, while remaining a volunteer with the NOTL fire department, Grimwood served as the chief of Haldimand county and joined the OAFC as a zone representative for southern Ontario.

"I joined the association as a fire chief in 2007, and in late 2008 I took over as the position known as a zone representative," said Grimwood. "I represented the Niagara Region, Hamilton, Haldimand, Norfolk, Brant County and Brantford."

The steps of joining the OAFC board saw Grimwood go through two campaign processes. He had to be elected to the board, then elected to the executive board.

"The election to the board was an online vote from chief fire officers from across the province, you had to be

nominated by somebody else, accept the nomination and then you campaigned."

After being elected to the board, Grimwood was nominated for the role of vice president on the executive board.

"Those nominations were done on the floor by the membership that were in attendance," said Grimwood. "I was nominated for vice president, decided to stand, gave a short campaign speech and was lucky to be one of the vice presidents."

Grimwood, one of four vice presidents, felt that now was a crucial time for the fire service and joining the executive board was a way for him to make a significant impact on the future of fire services.

"I thought this was a really key time to be involved in the executive level of the association and become more politically active and really

advocate for the needs of the firefighters and fire chiefs."

The town is happy a local will be on executive board, and thinks Grimwood will do a great job representing the region and the town of NOTL.

"His extensive fire experience makes him a great addition to the board," Holly Dowd, Chief Administrative Officer said in a town press release. "It is wonderful that there will be a representative from the Niagara Region on the OAFC Board."

With his new role on the OAFC Grimwood will be transitioning away from some of the local committees that he is on to ensure that his workload won't increase with his new role.



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NOTL artisans offer local gift options

Lauren O'Malley
Staff

"Shopping local" can get hyper-local if you look for artisans who make and sell their creations within your community.

Taylor Wright started her knitwear company Infinitay three years ago. "I was stressed at school, and knitting helped because it was just mindless and repetitive enough that I could do it while watching TV or listening to podcasts," says the teacher's college student. "I was making so many things — I had too many hats," she says, laughing. She started making hats and infinity scarves for friends, and when she found herself making things for friends of friends, she realized she had a potential business in her hands — literally.

The 24-year-old tries to participate in one artisan show a month, and sells her hats and ear-warmers through four stores in Niagara: Grant's Gifts in Port Colborne, Shannon Passero in Thorold, Craft Arts Market in St. Catharines, and Cherry Lane in Lincoln.

She also sells her modern, colour-blocked and fur-pomped hats from her family's house near the library. "People often come to the house for pick-up," she says. "The easiest way to get product to people is via my front porch."

Wright loves working for herself — although she's also enjoying her current teaching placement in a kindergarten class. "I like controlling where the business goes, and I love the feeling you get when someone purchases something you made by hand," she says, honoured that people want to spend their money on something she created. "I get personal satisfaction, and I'm making people happy."

You can find Infinitay online at Etsy, via social media, and at events at Henry of Pelham (Dec. 2) and Mahtay Café in St. Catharines (Dec. 15 and 16).

Like Wright, Courtney Sendzik also stumbled into running her own creative business, Refined Linery. Sendzik studied graphic design and illustration, and also has an honours degree in visual arts, so it was natural that she would find drawing relaxing.

As a way of settling in for the evening Sendzik would ask her son Clark (now 5 years old) what to draw every night, and then she would go and create it. Ink on canvas,



Images from Courtney Sendzik, Refined Linery.



Taylor Wright of Infinitay. (Lauren O'Malley)

line drawings. "Most recently I've drawn a tractor trailer, plants, vehicles, musical instruments..." she says.

As an enthusiastic reader, Sendzik has always had a habit of collecting quotes. "Ever since I can remember when I read something poignant I'll write it down somewhere," she says. "I have been writing lists of quotes for years."

So she decided to merge two of her passions, and ascribe quotes to each illustration. "I would like to pass those pieces of wisdom on to my son, and this is a good way to do that," she says.

Some examples of her 8"x10" canvases are a sketch of an ambulance, with the quote "No act of kindness, however small, is ever wasted." (Aesop) A hot air balloon, with "Blessed are the curious, for they shall have adventures." (L. Drachman)

The 39-year-old artist has experimented with other ways of earning a living, including event and product photography and oil on canvas painting. The advent of young Clark put the oil paint on hold though — "He was a very busy toddler, and oil paint takes ages to dry. I didn't want paint everywhere," she says. She's also done a fair bit of furniture refinishing.

Sendzik and her family moved to Niagara-on-the-Lake in the spring. Her husband Lawrence Buhler is the winemaker at Henry



Cheryl Chiarelli, owner of Coconut Quartz (Supplied/Stephen Chiarelli)

of Pelham winery in St. Catharines, and his work has taken them all over Canada. They're happy to be back in Niagara, from where they both hail.

You can find Sendzik's charming pieces online at the Etsy website, as well as via social media. She will also be part of the Etsy pop-up at the Outlet Collection the two weekends right before Christmas, and at other events. Sendzik also does custom work.

Cheryl Chiarelli's business, Coconut Quartz, has its own origin story. "I have always loved glittering, sparkly things," she says. Which led to mining, naturally. "My husband Stephen and I climb into pits and caves and abandoned mines with our buckets and little chisels," she says, eyes alight. "We harvest big hunks of quartz, ammonite, feldspar and black tourmaline."

The 47-year-old creator then takes those crystals and creates jewelry around them, incorporating upcycled vintage elements. She started doing this for herself, as something that simply takes her to her "happy place" — and then "people started asking to purchase the jewelry right off my body, so I thought I'd try a couple of craft shows."

Coconut Quartz is now in its third year, and Chiarelli's works are sold at craft shows and shops all over Ontario — including Maison Apothec-

are, Lakeview Wine Co., and the Fruit Shack, which carries her all-natural lip balms.

Apparently Chiarelli is one of those unique people who can unfold time: When she's not climbing down mines, her full-time job as a civil servant somehow leaves her enough time to create her jewelry and study for her pilot's licence. Oh, and she's also a certified holistic nutritionist.

The Chiarellis moved to Niagara-on-the-Lake from St. Catharines 10 years ago, "because I wanted to expand, to garden, to grow. I just love the different feeling in this town," Chiarelli says. She also wanted to be near her mother, who lives in Upper Canada Lodge.

You can find Coconut Quartz's products online at her Etsy shop, and via social media. She also does custom work, and hosts "make-and-take" events, workshops and classes around beading and essential oils.

Tammy Cowan is living her childhood dream. Frocks on the Run is her retirement project, a far cry from her working life as a foster parent in Toronto.

"I can make anything," says the 52-year-old seamstress. "I inherited a Singer Featherweight sewing machine in 1977, took sewing in home ec, and became obsessed," she says. She's been sewing for over 40 years, and has taken courses for making theatre costumes, historical garments, millinery, and even cobblering. Just don't ask her to hem your pants — a request she says her Village neighbours often make.

"I decided I wanted to put my skills into what I love best — dresses," she explains. So she started Frocks on the Run, making one-of-a-kind farm-style frocks, a classic style from vintage fabrics, as well as little girls' dresses. "I make stuff people can afford, that people can actually wear," she says with pride.

Her husband fixed up a trailer for Cowan to take to shows. "It's a '79 Trillium Jubilee trailer, my husband did a stellar job on it. It's a childhood dreamy thing," she says. "Little kids get in it and don't want to come out — they want to have tea parties in there."

Similar to the other artisans, Cowan also does custom work, and her dresses can be found through Etsy, and via social media. "I love when locals come by — you can meet your community," she says.

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Niagara sees unusually early ice wine harvest

Continued from front page.

With temperatures being so low so early this year, in combination with the region's poor growing season, it was important to get out and harvest early.

Shorter hang time helps with the yield, he said, and with a growing season that left a lot of grapes with rot, it's "important to get out there and harvest as early as possible."

The longer the crops hang on the vine, the more susceptible they are to be lost to blizzards and high winds.

At the college, it was the earliest students have ever been out picking, though in Giesbrecht's 30-year career he can remember being out as early as Nov. 17.

"It's the perfect day for it," he said.

"You need -8 degrees and we've got -8 to -9, which is

just about perfect. And it's calm, so we're not getting blown around out here with winds and blizzards as we have in the past."

The time when winemakers decide to harvest their ice wine grapes is, in ideal years, largely due to stylistic differences.

"If you have repeated freeze-thaw cycles, the actual cellular structure inside the grape breaks down and you have enzymatic action, the same way that you do when you cut an apple and you get browning," Giesbrecht said.

His preference is for an earlier harvest, which leaves more of the grape characteristic in the wine. The characteristics of a grape left longer on the vine be more like a "caramel, creme brulee or dried fruit," he said, while an earlier harvest will have more of a clean, fresh-fruit taste.

An earlier-harvested grape

will also make for a longer-lasting wine, he said.

The students at the college were harvesting vidal grapes, one of the most common used in icewine production, Giesbrecht said.

The students, in their first and second years of the college's wine production program, didn't seem affected at all by the cold or early hours.

Second-year students Steve Kornic and Michael Smith said they came prepared, having been out picking in their first year of studies.

"We learned," they jested. Giesbrecht said the group knew to dress for the weather.

"Everybody has longies on, and winter coats, and they're in layers ... and we've got warm drinks and things for them inside, so hopefully we're keeping them warm and fuelled."



Larissa Lima harvests grapes at 4 a.m. on Nov. 22. (Richard Harley)

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NEWS

RESIDENTS CALL FOR ACTION

Continued from Front Page

Many local residents believe the trees were cut down in a rush to complete the job before the newly elected council is sworn in, according to Niagara Falls MPP Wayne Gates, who attended the rally.

He said NOTL is one of few in Canada to harbour such profound history with regards to the formation of our country, and that he believes all levels of government should be stepping in to ensure its heritage is preserved.

"There were a lot of elected representatives there, which I think was good," Gates said. "Because this is an issue that ... is about making sure you're working with all levels of government."

He said he thinks developers need to work with the community and should understand that in NOTL some things are a "no go," when it comes down to destroying heritage in the process.

"No matter what it is — whether it's the development part of it; whether it's trying to protect our heritage; whether it's trying to protect our beautiful history that we do have in NOTL — my whole issue is that you have to work with the community ... that's where I think this



Residents gathered in front of the Randwood Estate Nov. 18 to hold a "funeral" for trees that were cut down in the weeks prior. (Fred Mercnik/Special to TLR)

all stems together."

The rally was well-attended and "professionally done," he said.

"I commend the town for coming together and trying to protect what quite frankly is one of the most beautiful towns in Ontario, maybe all of Canada.

"You know, Niagara-on-the-Lake is not a town that's known for its rallies and its protests. So on a nice Sunday afternoon, to get, I would think 150, 200 people there ... residents are upset."

Gates said his show of support was not about being against development or the developer, but to advocate for "smart development."

"It's got to fall within the uniqueness, particularly in NOTL, of our culture, our heritage and our history.

Once we lose our heritage, it's gone forever," he said.

"What do you do if you lose the tourism, and nobody comes to NOTL anymore because it's not the most beautiful town in Ontario or in Canada? What does that do to the number of jobs that we currently have? ... I don't think we should be chopping down trees that are 150 years old, that have incredible history to them."

Gates said he thinks some of the "players in the game" aren't working together. "And I think that's causing some real friction."

One thing he knows for certain, he said, is that the town "doesn't want a six-story hotel."

"It doesn't take a rocket scientist," Gates said, recalling public meetings about Randwood where there was standing room only.

"I have no idea what Benny's done, as far as the

procedures he's followed," Gates said. "But I do know residents are upset. My reason for being there is to send a clear message to him that I believe he's got an obligation to sit down with the Lord Mayor and the council and go over the process that he feels he's done right," said Gates.

Also in attendance were Lord Mayor-elect Betty Disero and Regional Councilor-elect Gary Zalepa Jr.

Marotta, who was out of the country at the time of the protest, insists he's followed the proper planning procedures.

The Town of NOTL recently issued a statement alleging the November cutting disturbed a part of a heritage-protected Dunnington-Grubb landscape on the Randwood properties.

Marotta denies the allegations.

Construction begins along Niagara Parkway



Austin Broad
Special to TLR

There will be several construction projects beginning this month in Niagara Falls and Niagara-on-the-Lake as the Niagara Parks Commission begins its efforts to improve the Niagara River Parkway.

Starting on Nov. 19 construction work begins by the Queenston roundabout, near Queenston Heights, in the northbound lane.

Asphalt milling and paving work is also scheduled to begin near Service Road 52, continuing north to additional sections of the Niagara Parkway.

In addition, multi-year landscaping projects are set to begin around the Table Rock Centre as a part Niagara Parks' strategic plan and the Queen Victoria Park master plan. The paved areas will be removed and planting areas will be expanded under the Bridge of Flowers and north of Table Rock.

More construction projects began Nov. 26 that will affect the south end of the parkway.

Due to the construction and the other upcoming projects there will be temporary lane restrictions and possible traffic delays across all the impacted work areas beginning on Nov. 19.

Police looking to identify man who approached young girl



Austin Broad
Special to TLR

The Niagara Regional Police Service is seeking to identify a man who approached an 11-year-old girl in Virgil Thursday Nov. 22.

The man allegedly approached the girl and offered her a ride at around 8:45 a.m. while she was walking to school alone.

The car drove out of the area after the girl refused the ride.

The incident occurred near Andres Street and Line 2.

The man was described as white, in his 60s, bald with dark sunglasses and a scratchy voice. His car was described as an older model brown Honda CRV with tinted windows and a dark rear plate cover.

There was no physical contact made with the girl, and while there is no allegation of a criminal offence, police are seeking to identify the male and determine what his intentions were.

Anyone with information is encouraged to contact detectives at 905-688-4111.

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9	10	11	12
Fort George Garrison Christmas - Fort George St. Davids Lioness Breakfast with Santa - 9 a.m. to 11 a.m. - St. Davids Lions Club	Committee of the Whole - 6:30 p.m. - Town Hall	Makery Workshop: Tinkercad - 2 p.m. to 3 p.m. - NOTL Public Library	Simply STEAM Story Time - 10 a.m. to 12 p.m. - NOTL Community Centre InfoHealth - EMS: Certified Paramedic Program - 1 p.m. to 3 p.m. - NOTL Public Library

Know of a local event? Tell us. Submit it directly to www.niagara.ca



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Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
	29 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	30 30th Annual Candlelight Stroll - Queen Street Apple sauce make and taste - 8:30 a.m. to 12 p.m. - St. Michael Catholic Elementary School NOTL Newcomers Club - 9:30 a.m. - NOTL Community Centre Artful Treasures - 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. - Niagara Pumphouse Arts Centre	1 Raising Healthy Teens: Common Psychological Concerns - 9 a.m. to 11:30 a.m. - NOTL Public Library Queenston Bake and Christmas Sale - 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. - Queenston Library Christmas Craft Show - 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. - Royal Canadian Legion Branch 124 Festive Fare - 9 a.m. to 12 p.m. - St. Andrew's Presbyterian Kirk Hall Walter Dorn on Soldiering for Peace - 10 a.m. to 11:30 a.m. - St. Mark's Anglican Church Holiday Hors D'oeuvres - Niagara College
5 Family Time - 11 a.m. to 1 p.m. - NOTL Public Library Drop-in bridge - 1 p.m. to 4 p.m. - NOTL Community Centre Education at the Museum - 10:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. - Niagara Regional Native Centre	6 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 DNA Workshop - 3 p.m. to 5 p.m. - NOTL Public Library 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 Holiday Cocktails - Niagara College	7 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	8 Raising Healthy Teens: Alcohol and other Drugs - 9 a.m. to 11:30 a.m. - NOTL Public Library Fort George Garrison Christmas - Fort George NOTL Christmas Parade - 11 a.m. - Old Town Public Skating - 1:30 p.m. to 3 p.m. - Meridian Credit Union Arena Niagara Star Singers Christmas Showcase - 7:30 p.m. - Yellow Door Theatre
12 Family Time - 11 a.m. to 1 p.m. - NOTL Public Library Community - 1 p.m. to 2 p.m. - NOTL Public Library	13 Minecraft Club - 4 p.m. to 5 p.m. - NOTL Public Library Makery Workshops for Kids: DIY T-Shirts - 6:30 p.m. to 7:30 p.m. - NOTL Public Library Coast to Coast: Canada's Diverse Voices - 7 p.m. to 9 p.m. - Laura Secord Homestead	14 Healthy Kids Community Challenge: Power Off & Play - 11 a.m. to 12 p.m. - NOTL Public Library Wayne Gates Office - 1:30 p.m. to 4 p.m. - NOTL Public Library	15 Christmas by Candlelight - 7 p.m. - Niagara United Mennonite Church

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Local postmaster honours rescue workers



Queenston postmaster Mena Spadafora presents a plaque to workers with CARES Niagara. (Austin Broad)

Austin Broad
Special to TLR

Even though Canada Post employees are continuing to strike, one local depot manager wanted to deliver a bit of holiday spirit to Niagara's local rescue workers.

Civil Air Rescue and Emergency Services Niagara received a plaque from Canada Post to commemorate its services in the region on Friday.

Postmaster of the Queenston post office Mena Spadafora presented the plaque to the rescue workers at the Niagara District Airport during a special ceremony.

Spadafora attended ceremonies in Niagara Falls to hand out plaques to the Niagara Regional Police, the Niagara Parks Police and the RCMP. She also visited the

EMS headquarters in NOTL to give a plaque to paramedics, and Queenston for a final presentation made on Monday to local firefighters.

The ceremonies come after Canada Post unveiled a series of postage stamps honouring the country's first responders and rescue workers, something the members of CARES Niagara are very proud of.

"Canada Post wanted to honour all of you, today my colleague Doug Binning and I wanted to take it one step further," said Spadafora. "We wanted to take the opportunity to say thank you in person for all that you do."

"Through their life saving duties, search and rescue experts often find themselves in life threatening situations such as avalanches, extreme weather conditions or high seas," she said.

CARES Niagara is responsible for aviation safety in the region, as well as operating air search operations across south-central Ontario in a supporting role with the Canadian Military.

Terry Nord, CARES officer, said the postage stamp and the presentation of the plaque means a lot not only to the Niagara branch but to the whole CASARA organization and that it is a great honour to be recognized in this way.

"Were all volunteers and to be recognized, not just by our peers but by Canada Post it means a lot to us and is a great incentive for us and for our training."

CARES training officer, Randy Klaassen said that the plaque will be hung on a wall in their training room for everyone to see.

Nationals split two games over weekend

Austin Broad
Special to TLR

The Niagara-on-the-Lake Nationals came out of the weekend one win and one loss, putting them in fifth place in the South Division of the Greater Metro Junior Hockey League.

Friday was the Nationals kids' night and while the stands weren't full, there were some happy fans in the building after the Nationals defeated the Toronto Predators 5-3 on home ice.

Nationals forward Bailey Pritchard scored two goals and added an assist Friday, while St. Catharines native Caleb Mussat added a goal and assist to help the Nationals secure the victory.

Toronto outshot the Nationals 41-27 but Nationals goaltender Matthew Valletta played incredibly well, stopping 38 out of 41 shots en route to his third win of the season.

Saturday the Nationals travelled to London to take



Nationals player Harrison Exelby (#77) takes a hit from Predators captain Denzel Janes. (Austin Broad/Niagara Now)

on the Lakers, who sit in last place, but didn't come out on top, losing 4-3, despite outshooting the Lakers 65-45.

Lakers goaltender Naoki Onodera played an excellent game, stopping 62 shots to help his team secure the upset win over NOTL.

Pritchard continued his strong weekend against London, scoring his 11th goal in 12 games, while assistant captain Dallas Loiselle scored a goal and an assist.

With one win and one loss on the weekend, the Nationals now find themselves with 12 wins, 11 losses and one overtime loss on the season.

On Nov. 30, Nationals fans will get to see the battle of Niagara as the Nationals host regional rivals the Niagara Whalers.

The puck drops at 7 p.m. at the Meridian Credit Union arena in Virgil.

Fort George ice rink to open Dec. 1

Lauren O'Malley
Staff

"It's not just a rink — it's music, it's lights, it's fun," says Parks Canada's Lisa Curtis about the Vintage Hotels & Parks Canada ice rink at Fort George.

Heading into its third year, the rink represents a partnership between Parks Canada and Vintage Hotels. "Vintage Hotels wanted to give back to the community, and we're always looking for interesting ideas that we can partner on, because when you partner you can do so much more," says Curtis. And what better partners, she says, than two entities entirely focused on providing exceptional experiences.

This year the skating season is slated to start on Dec. 1 — weather permitting — and goes through to mid-March, depending on the temperatures. There are refrigerated chillers under the ice which are effective up to 15°C, but the sun is a factor too, drawn



Lisa Curtis. (Lauren O'Malley)

to the reflective surface and raising the temperature.

Parks Canada's mandate is to connect people with history, so their hope is that you'll take the family for a skate, and have a little stroll through the fort while you're there. To further that connection, this year they're adding fireside chats with historical interpreters inside the Agora Friday evenings at 7 p.m.

They're also hosting a Garrison Christmas inside the fort on Dec. 8 and 9. Also on the 8th — and the following two Saturdays — there will be smores and Santa in the Agora. On the 15th don your most garish attire for the Ugly Sweater Party and Contest, and on the 22nd bring non-perishable food or gifts for the Holiday Give Back.

Parks Canada and Vintage Hotels are conjuring up more happenings throughout the season to make a nice family skate under twinkling lights even more fun, like a visit from the Ice Dogs (March

12), and smores and children's activities on PA days and school holidays.

Skating is always free; skate and helmet rentals and concessions cost money. The rink can also be rented out for larger groups.

Skating is open to the public every day, but the rink isn't staffed Monday to Thursday, so there are no concessions, rentals or music and the ice cleaning is minimal. Skating is allowed between 10 a.m. and 5 p.m. on those days. The ice rink is staffed Fridays from 5 p.m. to 9 p.m., Saturdays from 10 a.m. to 9 p.m. and Sundays from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m., with breaks for ice cleaning between 1 p.m. and 2 p.m. on Saturday and Sunday, and again between 5 p.m. and 6 p.m. on Saturday.

For more details visit the fort's website, call the visitors' centre at 905-468-6614, or follow Fort George on social media.

Youth council to host holiday talent showcase for kids

Lauren O'Malley
Staff

For the second year in a row, the Lord Mayor's Youth Advisory Council will be bringing back its Youth Holiday Celebration, which gives local kids a chance to showcase their talent while celebrating the season.

The show hits the stage at the community centre on Saturday, Dec. 15 from 1 p.m. to 2:30 p.m.

According to Bethany Poltl, the LMYAC chair, last year's inaugural event featured 16 performances from 25 young people, including students from Maple Leaf Montessori.

"Last year we had dancers, singers, pianists, guitar, violin, and ukuleles," says Poltl.

Several young community members have already expressed interest in performing on this year's stage, including Poltl (a ballet dancer and classically-trained singer), the Handbell Choir, several other singers, and the students of local music and vocals teacher Cynthia Konopka.



Jasmine Griese will be one of the performers. (Lauren O'Malley)

Tiffany Leung, a member of the youth council, admits organizing the event is a bit stressful. "seeing a great number of people that showed and enjoyed themselves at the event was gratifying."

She continues, "It was an important event because the youth council was just newly established that year and to see such a great support from the community reflected that there is a need for a youth council in Niagara-on-the-Lake."

"It's a way for youth in Niagara to go outside of their studios (and living rooms) and share their talents with others," says Poltl.

She said the youth council has invited the local schools to send artwork for display, and that schools are welcome to contact the council if they would like a choir to perform.

"We have so much talent here in NOTL and this is just one way we are trying to bring us together and celebrate."

The event is entirely organized by members of the LMYAC. The group will be providing holiday decor, snacks for after the celebration and, "some fun interactive sing-a-longs as well," said Poltl.

Council members will be hosting and emceeding the celebration, which is open to everyone in the community.

Lord mayor-elect Betty Disero will be in attendance to give a speech.

"We are trying to showcase local Niagara talent in a festive way," says Poltl. "The celebration is free — come share in our holiday cheer!"

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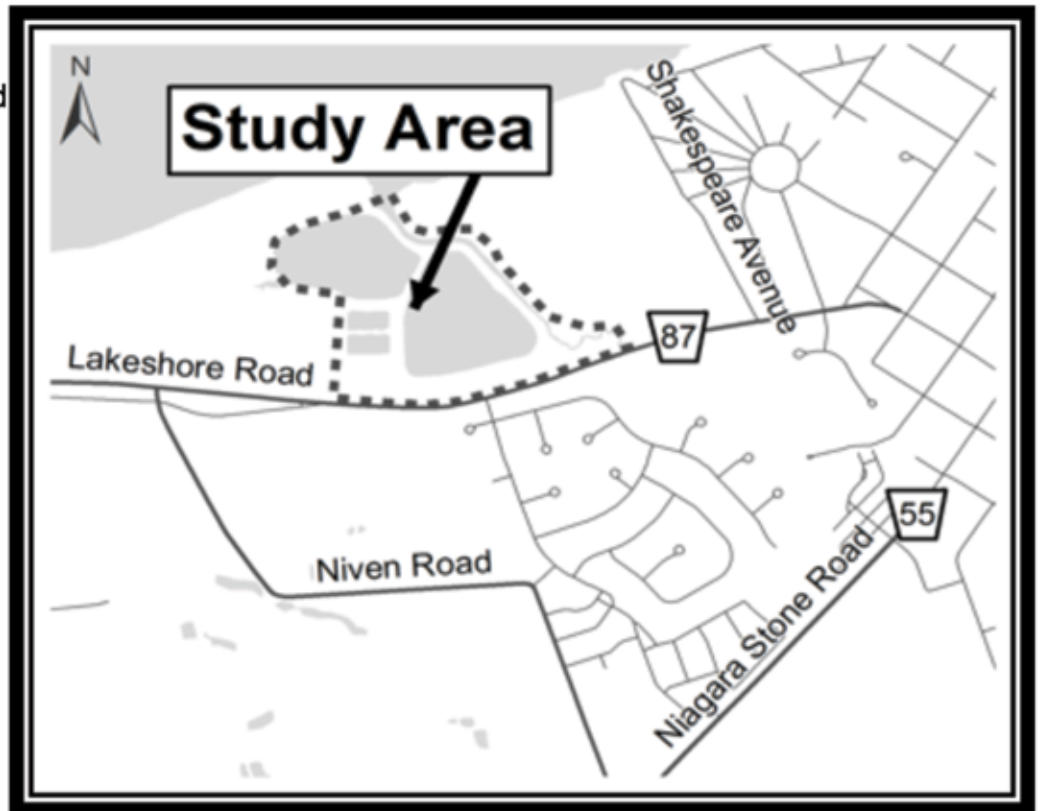
PUBLIC NOTICE

The Study

Niagara Region undertook a Coordinated Federal/Provincial Environmental Assessment (EA) to evaluate and recommend alternatives for the decommissioning of the existing Niagara-on-the-Lake (NOTL) Wastewater Treatment Plant (WWTP) including the lagoons located at 1738 Lakeshore Rd., in the Town of Niagara-on-the-Lake. It is proposed that the NOTL WWTP and lagoons at this site be fully decommissioned and the land restored to a wetland to facilitate transferring the land back to Parks Canada.

The Process

The project is being planned in accordance with Schedule B of the Municipal Class Environmental Assessment process (October 2000, as amended in 2007, 2011 and 2015). The Project File Report (PFR) has been prepared to document the planning and decision-making process for this study. By way of this Notice, the PFR is being placed on the public record for a thirty (30) calendar day review period from Nov. 21 to Dec. 21, 2018 at the following locations:



LOCATION	TELEPHONE	HOURS
Niagara Region Clerks Department 1815 Sir Isaac Brock Way, Thorold, ON L2V 4T7	905-980-6000	Monday – Friday: 8:30 a.m. – 4:30 p.m.
Town of Niagara-on-the-Lake Clerks Department 1593 Four Mile Creek Rd., Virgil, ON L0S 1T0	905-468-3266	Monday – Friday: 8:30 a.m. – 4:30 p.m.
Niagara-on-the-Lake Public Library 10 Anderson Lane, Niagara-on-the-Lake, ON L0S 1J0	905-468-2023	Monday: closed Tuesday – Thursday: 10 a.m. – 8 p.m. Friday: 10 a.m. – 6 p.m. Saturday: 10 a.m. – 5 p.m. Sunday: 1 - 5 p. m.

Interested persons should provide written comments within 30 calendar days from the date of this Notice. Comments should be directed to the following:

Mr. Tim Marotta,
Senior Project Manager
Niagara Region, Water and Wastewater Services
3501 Schmon Pkwy., P.O. Box 1042
Thorold, ON L2V 4Y6
905-980-6000 ext. 3645 TTY: 905-984-3613
Fax: 905-685-5205
tim.marotta@niagararegion.ca

Ms. Melissa Alexander,
Environmental Planner
Hatch
5035 South Service Rd., 6th Floor.
Burlington, ON L2L 6M9
Telephone: 519-489-4109
melissa.alexander@hatch.com

If concerns arise regarding the project, which cannot be resolved, you may request that the Minister of the Environment, Conservation and Parks elevate the level of study to comply with Part II of the Environmental Assessment Act. A standardized form is to be used by anyone who believes that the environmental assessment process was incomplete, incorrect or that it failed to follow the required process. The required form can be found on the Forms Repository website (<http://www.forms.ssb.gov.on.ca/>) by searching "Part II Order" or "012-2206E" (the form ID number). Once completed, the form is then to be sent to both the Minister and the Director of the Environmental Assessment and Permissions Branch noted below and Niagara Region's Project Manager. If no requests are received, and subject to the receipt of the necessary approvals, the Niagara Region intends to proceed to implementation of the Project, that is, detailed design and construction.

The Honourable Rod Phillips
Minister of the Environment,
Conservation and Parks
Floor 11, 77 Wellesley St. W
Toronto, ON M7A 2T5
minister.mecp@ontario.ca

**Director, Environmental Assessment and
Permissions Branch**
Ministry of the Environment, Conservation
and Parks
135 St. Clair Ave. W, 1st. Floor
Toronto, ON M4V 1P5
enviropemissions@ontario.ca

Personal information submitted in writing is collected under the authority of the Municipal Act, 2001, and will be used by members of Niagara Regional Council and Regional staff in their review of this matter. Any written submission including names and contact information will be made available to the public. Questions regarding use of personal information should be referred to Ann-Marie Norio, Regional Clerk, at 905-980-6000 ext. 3222 or 1-800-263-7215.

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Love. Beware. Always.

Lauren O'Malley
Staff

If you're looking for some drama and mystery to balance the onslaught of seasonal cheer, perhaps a wintry ghost tale is just the cup of mead you need.

Veteran actress Tara Rosling is bringing her version of "The Mistletoe Bride" back to Silversmith brewery, Southbrook winery, and — new this year — to Oast House brewery this December. Jeanette Winterson's somewhat gothic Christmas tale is full of darkness, shadows, and ambiguity.

Rosling, a Shaw alum of 11 years, met director Peter Hinton while working with him on "When the Rain Stops Falling" in 2011. "We fell in love with each other's work," says Rosling, "and this is our love child." Hinton chose the piece and the pair adapted it for performance. "We rehearsed it in crazy places, like a linen closet at the Shaw," laughs Rosling.

She approached Chris Pontsioen, owner of Silversmith Brewing, about doing a theatrical reading of the piece in the "church" — "I

loved the parallels with the story, which includes a convent where mead is made," Rosling says. "Chris said, 'Absolutely.' And then he asked what a theatrical reading is," she says, laughing again.

When the evening came for what was intended to be the first and only performance of the reading, Rosling looked over the full house at Silversmith and asked Pontsioen, "Do these people know they have to leave when the show starts?" He answered, "They're here for the show." In fact, the reading was so successful a second show had to be added later the same night for the people who had been turned away.

Silversmith has hosted the event every year since, with Southbrook joining along last year. This year Rosling has added Oast House's hayloft as a third venue for the readings.

From its inception, all proceeds have been donated to Gillian's Place, a women's shelter in St. Catharines. "I chose Gillian's Place because of the content of the story, which includes a woman's regenesi — overcoming real darkness in her life, coming

through to the light."

To further honour the darkness-into-light theme, the performance at Oast House is set for December 21st, the day of the winter solstice.

Performances are generally pay-what-you-can — with Rosling literally passing a hat at the end of the performance — and \$550 was raised the first year. Last year the actress donated \$1650 to the charity. "I hope to generate the largest donation yet," Rosling says of this, her fifth year of performing "The Mistletoe Bride."

The actress is heading into her twelfth year with the Shaw, so is no stranger to performing the same show many times. Of this particular piece she says, "The words are there inside me, but they live in a different place each time. As I evolve as a person the words mean something different." She adds, "I love the language, so deeply poetic — and I love the fact that the story is ambiguous."

Each location offers a different experience. "I love it in the 'church' at Silversmith," says Rosling. "They turn off all the fridges and any ambient sound, and the room is



Tara Rosling. (Lauren O'Malley)

lit with candles. It's a pretty thrilling experience." Silversmith performances take place on Dec. 17 and 18.

At Southbrook on Dec. 7 there is the option to partake in a meal prepared by AG Inspired Cuisine, or to simply attend the pay-what-you-can reading. "The kitchen will be

open at both breweries too, so come early and grab a bite," says Rosling — but please put your cutlery down while she's performing.

Those who can't attend the readings but want to make donations of support can drop them off in the care of any of the three hosts of the events,

or by sending an e-transfer to yogabyheart@gmail.com.

Details and reservations can be found on Eventbrite.ca <https://www.eventbrite.ca/>, and on each venue's website. Reservations are recommended — Silversmith reports there are few seats remaining.

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Illustration by local resident Krysia Zygmunt.



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Tai chi for life

Jill Troyer
Special to TLR

Their movements are elegant; slow, controlled, and symmetrical. The expression on their faces is calm and focussed. The room is in utter stillness. This is the scene at ten o'clock Wednesday morning at the Niagara-on-the-Lake community centre, where twelve women are gathered for the White Wing Tai Chi Group's twice-weekly practice.

You wouldn't guess it by watching the women in action, but their ages range from 70 to 94. Most of the women have been doing tai chi for years, many for decades. Tai chi is an ancient Chinese practice that incorporates a sequence of gentle, flowing movements, often called meditation in motion.

Diana Hepburn leads the tai chi sessions, and she's been practising for more than 25 years. "Some days I ask myself why am I here today, but I always feel really good when I leave," said Hepburn.

She is soon joined by Elisabeth Allen, who adds "it's amazing, even on days when I'm just watching I get energy from the group." Allen, now 90, is an active participant on most days. She started doing tai chi in 1984, and by 1989 she had become an instructor. Others in the group quickly chime in to the conversation, sharing an inventory of the benefits they feel from doing tai chi twice a week.



A tai chi group meets every Wednesday and Friday from 10 a.m. to 11:30 a.m. at the community centre on Anderson Lane. (Jill Troyer/Special to TLR)

"It helps with strength and balance and concentration," said one. "It helps my memory," said another.

"It gives you energy ... It's good for my joints, and good because it moves every muscle in my body. It's meditative as well as being good exercise ... It keeps me flexible," the group agreed.

The women are right about tai chi, and they feel the health benefits firsthand. Nurse Practitioner Christina Huntington knows the benefits from her work with geriatric outpatients at St. Catharines Hospital. "That kind of exercise maintains healthy bones, muscles, and joints. It's especially important as people age and muscles atrophy without regu-

lar activity," said Huntington. She added "keeping active can minimise symptoms of chronic conditions such as arthritis, and decrease blood pressure."

Many clinical studies have demonstrated the health benefits of tai chi. One recent study, cited by the Mayo Clinic, provided evidence that tai chi is effective in reducing falls among the elderly, which is significant because "falls are the most common cause of injury-related hospital admissions among those aged 65 years or older" according to the Canadian College of Family Physicians. Huntington added that any regular low impact exercise, including tai chi, has cognitive and psychological benefits

as well. "It improves mood, reduces anxiety and depression" and provides social connection too.

The group at the NOTL Community Centre know that well. They said there is a "camaraderie and positive energy when we do tai chi together," and when the silent practise is over, there is much discussion and sharing of experiences and practical tips, whether where to find a reliable handyman or what to expect when going to do their driving test after turning 80. Birthdays too are special social occasions, such as recently when Elisabeth Allen turned 90. There was cake and celebration, though tai chi, of course, came first.

Niagara College offering quick seasonally-themed courses during the holidays

Richard Harley
Editor

Niagara residents have a chance to up their entertaining game this holiday season, thanks to a roster of seasonally-themed workshops offered by the Canadian Food and Wine Institute at Niagara College.

Together with the school's part-time studies program, CFWI is offering quick courses on a variety of subjects such as holiday baking, making appetizers that can be frozen, and a newly introduced course on holiday cocktails, during which participants will learn the basics of what makes a great tasting cocktail, how it's prepared, and the history of the ingredients being used.

The cocktail workshop will be led by Andrea Fuzarc-

zuk, wine judge, writer, and graduate of the college's winery and viticulture technician program.

"We'll learn the origins of cocktails, the importance of the balance in each drink, and help you customize signature drinks and impress your guests while you celebrate with friends and family this holiday season," said Fuzarczuk.

The course will be held Thursday, Dec. 6, and is open to anyone 18 and older.

Craig Youdale, dean of CFWI, said the courses are "an opportunity for our community and region to experience what [NC] students experience each and every day."

Participants get to take home whatever they create, said Brianne Hawley, wine program student liaison.

She said the courses are a



Hors d'oeuvres. (Supplied photo)

great way for anyone to spend an afternoon with friends or family during the holiday season, and that it's not just a short course, it's an immersive experience.

"It's a full afternoon."

A full list of CFWI's part-time training courses is available at, www.canadianfoodandwineinstitute.ca/classes.

Jeff Steen, industry engagement and corporate training manager at CFWI, said it's a great way for the college to make use of its top-of-the-line facilities during the

times when students are away for the holiday break, and that it's a rare opportunity for the community to come learn and use the equipment.

Registration is also open for the NC Greenhouse's annual holiday workshop, where participants can enjoy fresh baked products and hot beverages prepared by Benchmark Restaurant, and learn to create a visually stunning display of holiday greens to adorn the house.

Four sessions are available from Nov. 18 to Dec. 8.



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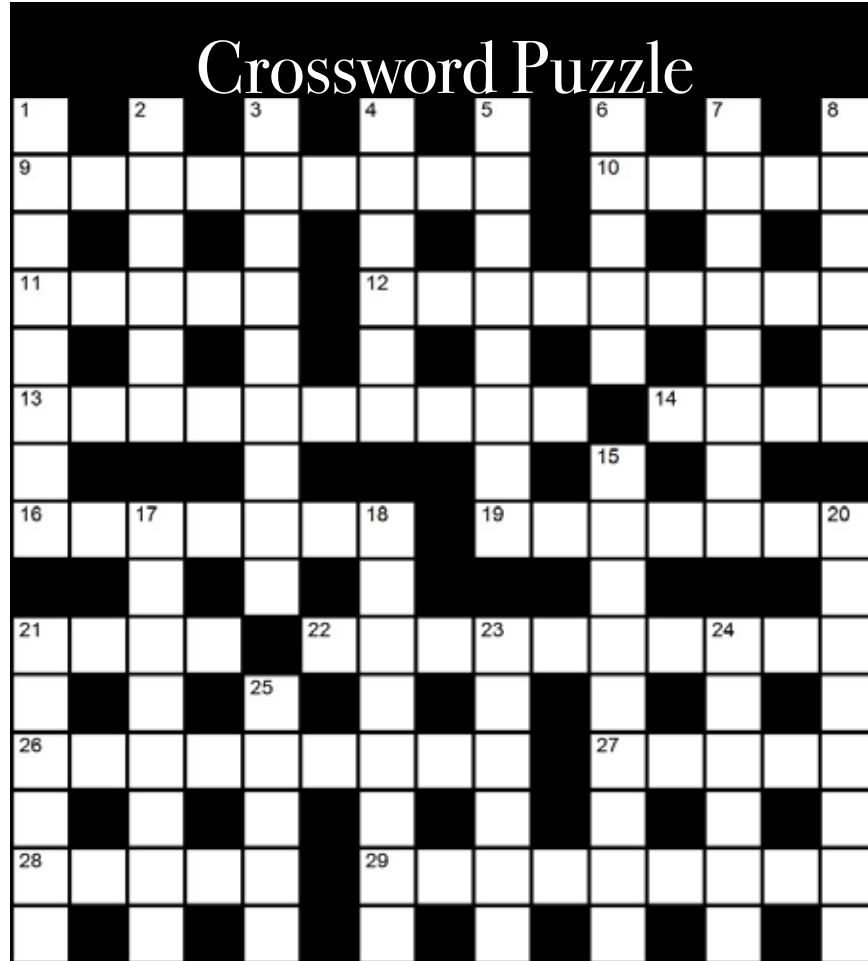
GAMES



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**
- 9. Radical (9)
 - 10. Accommodate (5)
 - 11. Find the answer (5)
 - 12. Holy Land (9)
 - 13. Increase in speed (10)
 - 14. Finishes (4)
 - 16. "The great grey-green, greasy --- River" (Kipling) (7)
 - 19. Scholar (7)
 - 21. Possesses (4)
 - 22. Quantifiable (10)
 - 26. Heaven or hell, maybe (9)
 - 27. Sort of line dance (5)
 - 28. Marijuana (5)
 - 29. Dear (9)
- Down**
- 1. Army dining room (4,4)
 - 2. Leaning letter (6)
 - 3. Armed resistance (9)
 - 4. Smoked herring (6)
 - 5. Sporting competitors (8)
 - 6. Silence! (5)
 - 7. Group of spectators (8)
 - 8. Makes over (6)
 - 15. Grease (9)
 - 17. Lack of variety (8)
 - 18. Unequal (3-5)
 - 20. Adolescent (8)
 - 21. E.g. Seville (6)
 - 23. Drowsy (6)
 - 24. Outlaw (6)
 - 25. Experiment (5)



Last issue's answers



Sudoku

5	7		6	4	8			
					2	3		
		7	9		5			
2		9			4			
5								3
	4			3				5
	9		6	7				
	2	6						
		5	4	2		3	6	

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



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FEATURES

An occasional glimpse into the life of the artistic director of the Shaw Festival

Tim Carroll
Special Feature

“So, things are quietening down for you now, I guess?” This is the time of year when I hear that line about ten times a day. I can see where it comes from — my second summer season has just finished, there is only one show on now instead of eleven. This, surely, is my chance to take a deep breath and think deep thoughts about life, art and the theatre. Right? Wrong. Time has a funny way of not stopping. The 2020 season may seem a long way off, but if I don’t start thinking about it now, I will soon be in a pickle. I start rehearsals for *The Ladykillers* in March, and once that happens I will be too busy to focus on 2020. This means that we have till the end of February not only to decide on the plays but to have a pretty good idea of who we want to be in them. Since casting alone takes up most of January and February — weeks and weeks of pencil and eraser work — the playbill for 2020 really needs to be in place by Christmas. That may seem very early, but in fact it’s almost too late — some of the directors I hope to hire need to be approached before then, or they will get snapped up by

someone else. Thus I am already having conversations that begin ‘Now, things are still a bit up in the air, so this isn’t a concrete offer yet...’ Of course, as I try to finalize the line-up of plays for 2020, I get expert input from many people to make sure the season has a good balance to it, that it can be played by a single company of actors, and above all that it will sell. How do we know something will sell? We don’t. But Val Taylor, our head of marketing, makes better guesses than the rest of us. Then, once we have a season that looks good, we have to see if we can afford it. Questions become “how many actors will we need, and for how many weeks? Will the shows have technical demands that might bankrupt us?” And so on. Meanwhile, if I get too caught up in planning for 2020, I might lose sight of where I am needed now — Judith Bowden is busy designing my first show next year, *The Ladykillers*, so we need to look at the set model and scratch our heads over little plastic figures making entrances and exits; Ravi Jain is in Rehearsal Hall 3, working with a wonderful group of actors on his adaptation of *The Mahabharata*, so I should drop in and see how they



Tim Carroll, artistic director of the Shaw Festival sits in the studio theatre. (Supplied photo/Shaw Festival)

are doing; and our amazing production of *Middletown* is opening at Crow’s Theatre in Toronto, so I had better get in the Shawmobile and be there. With all this and the day-to-day stuff (what you might call ‘moans and meetings’), when am I supposed to answer all the e-mails piling up in my inbox? I know: when things quieten down.

Editor’s note: Tim Carroll will be writing occasional column for the paper. We’re excited to have him on board. Check each issue to find a variety of features from local residents and some of the town’s most interesting professionals.

A fall of power

Bill Hamilton
Writer’s Circle



It was Thursday, June 7th, 1956, and like any boy at the age of eight I was playing, carefree with my friends in the field adjacent to our home. I often climbed up an old pear tree that sat in the middle and I would pretend it was a fort. I lived on Ontario Avenue, about a half a block up from the Niagara Gorge and River Road in Niagara Falls. I would often wander with my friends down to look at the river, after being immersed in our world of make believe, pretending to be cowboys in the old west. Oh how I wish I could still recreate those magic moments that came so spontaneously as a young boy. On that day, I knew I would soon be getting the call for supper, though it was always hard to pry myself away from that old tree. It was overcast

as I continued to play but, all of a sudden things changed. I felt a sudden tremor as the earth shook beneath me and my ears resonated with what sounded like three overpowering explosions, like bombs. The sound reverberated from the direction of the river. Standing there as if frozen, I looked at each of my friends in silence. They mirrored my concern, and I’m sure the same fear I was feeling at the time. Some of the neighbors came out on their porches and others hurried down towards River Road. Without a word I started in the same direction, as I saw my friends follow to see what had happened. It was only a few minutes before we descended the hill reaching River Road. In the distance white smoke rose from the depths below. I crossed the street with my

buddies and headed down to the stairway leading to the overlook along the gorge. Looking down, I could now see clearly the source of what had been heard. Across the gorge on the American side, the whole wall of the Schoellkopf Power Plant had come crashing down, crushing the power plant building below and leaving it a bed of twisted metal and rock. The Niagara River, churned below the wreckage and I could see people scrambling through the debris along the lower gorge seeking shelter. The scene was unbelievable. I had never experienced anything like this and the apprehension I saw in the eyes around me emphasized just how unnerving this event was. Standing there motionless and uncomfortably quiet, I watched as sirens loomed in the distance. The thought

crossed my mind that workers were in that plant and I wondered were they all able to escape? There was a sick feeling that hit the pit of my stomach at the thought. I felt my eyes start to well up and sadness filled my body viewing the tragedy below. As I stood there I looked around me, left then right to witness many of my neighbors that had silently joined this impromptu vigil to view the destruction below. I kept thinking please let everyone be OK. Sixty-two years later I still pass that spot along the gorge. On one occasion I pulled up one of the side streets and parked my car. I walked down and crossed to where I had viewed that tragedy. The entrance to the overlook was now blocked in. I stood, stared and saw that visible scar along the opposite side once again reliving that tragic event in my mind. What impressed me as I stood there deep in thought, was the transition that day from the innocent joy of imagination, to the harsh devastation of the real world. It really was a miracle, only one worker lost his life in that tragedy.



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ARCH I TEXT: with Brian Marshall History of glass: Part 2



A six-over-six window with early-cylinder glass pane. (Supplied photo)

For the British in the throes of the Industrial Revolution, it was unacceptable that the making of glass was an artisanal process. There was nothing that couldn’t be made better, faster and cheaper. The Chance brothers in England, having witnessed the new methods developed in France and Germany to the ancient cylinder glass technique, recognized this process, unlike crown glass, would lend itself to industrialization. In 1832, they began producing cylinder glass on a major scale. While still dependant on glassblowers, the technique was simpler; a tall narrow ‘bottle’ (ideally more than five feet high and one foot in diameter) was blown, then cooled prior to the top and bottom being removed and the resultant cylinder cut longitudinally. Thus prepared, it was reheated in an oven until it slumped into flat plates measuring over 18” wide by up to 60” long. While the resultant glass plates still had ripples and occlusions they were less pronounced than in crown glass, and could be cut into larger panes with minimal waste. During the remainder of the 19th century, more refinements further reduced the ripple effect (although still evident when viewed obliquely), while the cost of glass panes dropped substantially. State-of-the-art until the 20th century, cylinder glass supported the transition from the small paned Georgian windows through to the largely uninterrupted windows of the Queen Anne.

Brian Marshall



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Virgil figure skater headed to national championships

Austin Broad
Special to TLR

When Kyra Marotta set her sights on representing the Niagara-on-the-Lake Skating Club at a national level three years ago, she meant business.

Just three years later, at the age of 16, she's made her dream a reality.

The lifelong Virgil resident finished seventh place at the provincial championships in Oakville this year, booking her a spot at the 2019 Skate Canada Challenge, set to take place in at the Terwillegar Community Recreation Centre in Edmonton from Nov. 28 until Dec. 2.

"She's super, super excited about it," said NOTL Figure Skating Club coach Judi Boyle-Krzeczowski.

"She's been on this goal for about three years now, and her best buddy [Natalie Lee] did it four years ago."

Boyle-Krzeczowski remembers Marotta watching Lee when she had found out she qualified. "Kyra said she wanted to do that."

Marotta said she's "extremely excited" to have the chance to participate in a national competition at such a young age, and is eager to taking on a new challenge.

"I'm looking forward to the chance to get out there and skate with all new people from across the country, and skate in front of a new panel of judges and to just have fun," she said, during a celebration at the Meridian Credit Union Arena in Virgil on Wednesday.

Competing in the national

challenge will be another notch in the belt of the club, and in an already successful career for the young figure skater, who was also the first in the NOTL Skating Club to pass her gold level tests in free-skate, skills, and dance, all in the same season.

She has a strong support system, according to coach Boyle-Krzeczowski, including a dedicated family. "She's a super hard worker, she trains hard and her parents are totally committed — they put the package together."

Marotta's friends and family will be cheering her on as she competes. Anyone interested in joining them can watch the live stream of the competition at, <https://skatecanada.ca/2019-skatecanada-challenge/>.



Kyra Marotta and coach Judi Boyle-Krzeczowski.. (Austin Broad)

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Feb 2 Colette

Feb 9 Can You Ever Forgive Me? (TBC)

Feb 16 A Star is Born (TBC)

(TBC): Films still to be confirmed.

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Ghost stories of NOTL



Denise Ascenzo
Featured

It was a dark and stormy night ... the windows rattled ... a door slammed from the other side of the house ... a mournful howl from a dog could be heard ... time for some tales from beyond the grave.

With ghosts and goblins and things that go bump in the night, welcome to Niagara-on-the-Lake, a place that may just be one of the most haunted towns in Canada.

At the Shaw Festival theatre, workers talk of a few ghostly happenings and a lovely habit of theatres, a ghost light, which is brought out after the last performance of the night and placed downstage of centre.

The theatrical superstition is this light will appease any ghost that might come out and perform during the night, thereby discouraging them from sabotaging live performances.

In 2015, the Niagara Area Paranormal Society did an investigation of the Niagara historical museum.

NAPS investigator's report stated the museum felt very still, with little activity. There were some noises, a bump, a voice saying "hey" and a possible orb, but all in all very quiet.

Several present and past staff say they had not experienced anything. Very disappointing to say the least.

At Fort George, the ghost tours are run by Tyler Upton, who started them 25 years ago.

One story Upton tells is of his own personal experience. He claims to have seen a young girl while he was conducting part of the Fort George tour know as the "tunnel."

It was a warm summer night, he recalls, with thunder and lightning rumbling around NOTL, and though there was no rain, it felt like it wouldn't be long before the storm came.

He had a tour group heading into the tunnel just south of the ammunitions building. It was a small group, so he could see up the passage way to the door. Every time he looked up the tunnel he could see a small girl in the doorway watching.

At first he thought it was someone from the group who

was nervous about entering the tunnel, so he asked if everyone was accounted for, and they were. But the little girl was still there.

When the lightning lit up the sky outside of the tunnel, the little girl was not there, though Upton noticed something peculiar — he could see her shadow.

Upton is positive he was seeing Sarah Ann Tracy, who died in 1840 at the age of seven and was buried at St. Mark's Anglican Church.

Sarah Ann lived with her parents Hannah and Thomas Tracy. Thomas was the troop sergeant major of the king's dragoon guards. It was not unusual at that time for the fort children to live and play about the grounds.

No one knows how Sarah Ann died, but we do know that she is alone in St. Mark's graveyard. Maybe this is why she comes to the Fort, where she once lived, to enjoy the company of all the visitors.

Many visitors claim to have seen her playing inside the barracks or just outside the officers' quarters. She has also been seen skipping along side of tour guides in a white gown with curly hair, always cheerful with a big smile.

Of course, at the Angel Inn, there is the legend of Captain Swayze, and another popular tale is of the weeping lady at the gazebo, both souls mourning lost love. But there are a few others less known that are very much a part of NOTL history.

On a spring day in 1998, when the Niagara Apothecary was filled with tourists, one couple noticed a pleasant looking gentleman dressed in period costume, possibly from the 1860s. The gentleman was very interested in the display cases and would occasionally look up and smile at other visitors. One group of tourists took pictures of this gentleman thinking he was part of the museum display.

Of course this was at a time when you had to wait for pictures to be developed.

When the visitors finally looked through their photos, the couple claimed the gentleman was nowhere to be found. Only one picture gave a possible explanation of what they had seen — a vague misty shape.

Who might have been this ghostly visitor to the museum?

The Apothecary was the oldest continuously running drug store in Ontario, operating from 1865 until it was purchased by Henry Paffard in 1964. Prior to that, it was the customs house and also the office of a judge.

Staff and visitors also say



An illustration of the ghost of Sarah Ann by Conor MacNeil. (Supplied)

they've heard footsteps on the second floor or from the stairs, complained of cold spots in the building, flashing lights from the back of the store and reported an odour of belladonna — a poison sometimes called nightshade.

Several psychics have visited the apothecary and have always confirmed a presence, but one that is "warm and welcoming."

Just maybe this friendly spirit is Henry Paffard himself, or possibly the judge.

A very sad human tale emanates from the building that now hosts Corks restaurant. When it was a private home in the 1850s, it was the residence of Lloyd and Kate Burn. Kate had been a depressed young woman whose parents had died, leaving her a spinster with a brother — Philip — to care for.

Philip was a little unusual, and when Lloyd courted Kate, she agreed to marry the suitor on the condition her brother would be part of the package.

Lloyd knew Philip was not quite right and agreed with his own condition — Philip would be permitted to live with them but only in the basement of the home.

Although not quite the ideal arrangement, as the story goes the three managed to co-exist for many years. However the day came when Philip managed to free himself from the basement. In his frantic hurry to escape, he raced up the stairs only to collide with his sister Kate. She was knocked off balance and fell

down the basement stairs, breaking her neck.

Philip, in his agitated state of mind, felt his sister's fall was the fault of his brother-in-law, who was in the upstairs bedroom. He took a kitchen knife, went upstairs and killed Lloyd in a rage.

Philip then proceeded back down to the basement where he tried to help his sister. However by now she was dead.

Philip was so distraught and probably in a panicked state of mind, he buried his sister and brother-in-law in the basement. For two days, Philip sat by his sister's grave not knowing what to do. He was found there by the neighbours — dead from what some say was a broken heart.

To this day, people have heard noises of someone falling down the basement stairs, shadows lurking in hallways, music from upstairs, furniture moving, and staff being tripped by something unseen.

Could the spirit of Kate be lingering about for her lost family? Or it might be Philip still in a rage?

There have been several reported ghost sightings at the Pillar and Post. One is a young girl in a red dress who would like to enter the lovely Carriages and Cannery restaurant, but does not. She has most often been seen on the staircase, unwilling to venture into the room. The staff like this young girl and have given her the name Laura. Although the staff have said

that Laura is sweet she does likes to play tricks on them by pulling on their hair or aprons or knocking over a wine glass, some servers say.

Then in the adjacent lounge the portrait of Lieutenant-Colonel John Butler hangs above the fireplace. Staff have said they feel Butler's presence in the room, sitting in one of the chairs under the portrait. At times the staff have said Butler's eyes follow them around the room.

Butler was long gone before the building was ever built so why is he there? Perhaps the portrait of himself was one of his favourites and his spirit is attached to it. Perhaps not.

There are also two rooms at the Pillar and Post, in which staff and guests claim to have had sightings — some worse than others.

Room 222 is said to have quite the ghostly activity happening, and none of it pleasant. There seems to be a very ill-tempered guest in there that has refused to check out, figuratively and spiritually. According to the stories, he seems to dislike the invasion of mortals into his space, causing doors to slam, items to disappear, TVs and radios to turn on and off, and even waking sleeping guests. Not a pleasant ghost at all.

However in room 118 are apparently two wonderful women with English accents who enjoy having guests visit them, and will quite often turn on music for everyone's entertainment. One such radio with music playing was unplugged by a cleaning woman, who then took the radio to maintenance, all the while the music kept on playing.

It is said that staff, after cleaning room 118, tell the "ladies" they can play music until the guests arrive. Some say music plays from the room until the moment a guest opens the door.

Fort Mississauga is a place many visitors never manage to explore. Tucked away on the NOTL Golf Club, you can only access the fort using a path from the corner of Front and Simcoe Streets.

The fort has many good reasons to have some ghostly tales. It is on the site of the first lighthouse of the Great Lakes. It was also the encampment of the native allies for the British prior to the War of 1812.

After the war, the British decided to remove the lighthouse and build a fort on the land using materials from the lighthouse and from many buildings in town that had been destroyed on the retreat of the American forces in Decem-

ber of 1813. Some say many ghosts might be attached to the site.

One of the first sightings of a ghost was that of a young British soldier, stripped to the waist with blood covered pants. Some speculate he was a young man — so young that he wasn't even shaving yet — who had been conscripted into the British army.

They say during a battle, he had panicked and hid in a hole. As a punishment for being cowardly, his superior officer decided to make an example of him had him whipped. He was lashed so much that he died of blood loss. Some say they've seen the young man on top of the fort, looking out over the golf course.

There is also the story of a headless man walking around the grounds of the fort.

The story goes that a group of native allies was watching the cannon exchange between the Americans in Fort Niagara and the British in Fort George, amazed at the cannon power, when a cannon ball struck exactly where they were standing.

It's said that one unfortunate man had his head blown right off, and that his body walked around before finally falling to the ground.

It has been reported that the sounds of canon fire, musket shots and screams of wounded men can still be heard to this day around Fort Mississauga.

Maybe, like Lt. Col. Butler, these poor souls attached themselves to the very building materials that were used to build Fort Mississauga.

The town of NOTL is filled with tales of the paranormal, but who is to say whether there is any truth to it. I personally am quite happy to just write about the tales.

I would like to thank my friend Briar Collins for giving me a tour of the Festival Theatre, to Kyle Upton for his stories of Fort George, and a special thank you to Conor MacNeil for the use of his rendition of Sarah Ann.



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.

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

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COMMUNITY

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



Yep. Still cold.

Wallbangers hockey features close and clean games

Ross Robinson
(#9, Blue Team)
Submitted

Early each Sunday morning from October until late April, approximately 22 enthusiastic Niagara area hockey lovers show up for their Wallbangers Old Timers game.

Both dressing rooms are filled with good-natured banter, and inquiries about each other's injuries and medical issues. After getting suited up in Blue or Red sweaters, the two captains make last minute lineup adjustments, in the attempt to produce a close score at the end of the day.

Breakfast at Silk's Country Kitchen follows the game, and awesome servers Lisa, Jen and Michelle tell us the conversation around the table is much more civilized following high-scoring, penalty-free games. There are no referees at Wallbangers games, so all games are penalty free. On occasion, angry words may be exchanged after bumps along the boards or in the dirty zone in front of the net, but cooler heads always prevail.

Last Sunday at Blue Team's strategy session, winger and goaltender Sean Simpson went on at some length about focussing on speed and stretch passes. He had been to a recent Buffalo Sabres game. "There's of lot of advantage to stretching the ice, pulling defencemen back and creating gap challenges. Use the stretch guy, and take advantage of speed underneath."

It all seems a bit complicated for our level of hockey, but overall, this results in "an integrated approach to optimum Old Timers hockey."

Meanwhile, in the Red Team dressing room, smiling Marcel Lounsbury from Rectangle Auto Service and Supply, a third generation business and our trusted source for service, used auto parts and new cars on Cushman Road at Welland Avenue in St. Catharines, was going on about something he had learned at a recent Hockey Canada coaching seminar. "We want our wingers to say Go. Try the home run pass, and if it is not successful,



Almost all Wallbangers Old Timers met for breakfast at Silk's Country Kitchen for camaraderie after a disputed 6-6 tie early last Sunday at Meridian Arena. (Supplied photo)

check down and look for guys underneath." Several of his teammates looked up from taping on their shin pads and muttered, "Huh?"

This season has seen several new players join Wallbangers hockey. Joe Doria has convinced his high level golfing buddy Ricky Watson to set his alarm clock for 5:55 a.m. on Sundays, and this quick and slick forward has been a great addition to Blue Team. Ricky has already treated us to a few highlight reel goals, giving a lot a credit to his former kids hockey coach Al Janzen. "He stressed positioning. Don't go to where the puck is. Go to where the puck is going to be." Ricky is very patient with us older guys, and always has a positive comment as we change lines. We are all trying our best.

There was no talk about the new cannabis legislation, as our various levels of government have made a total gong show, to be polite, of the rollout. Confusion about growing methods, retail and online selling and distribution continues, with the ongoing strike at Canada Post further clouding the situation. Bill Dickson and the Wallbangers Competition Committee will meet sometime to draft a league policy regarding this new situation. Think medicine, not drugs, might guide their thinking.

Last Sunday's game ending in a 6-6 tie. Despite the high score, Blue Team's defence was stellar, led by rock solid veteran Dave Shantz.

A stay-at-home player, in the mould (mold) of legendary Montreal Canadiens Hall of Famer Doug Harvey, his style of play allows his son Mark (Blue Team captain), Mike Bruce and Josh Wiwcharyk to be aggressive, jumping into the rush and in some games they score more goals the Blue Team forwards.

After this fun and competitive contest, 18 of the 22 players showered up and made their way to Silk's Country Kitchen for a debrief. Team captains Carl Glauser and Mark Shantz eventually agreed that my first period lazer like shot to the top right corner over Rob Vanderperk's shoulder had indeed gone in. It was in and out so fast that play had not been stopped. Terry St. Amand, owner of the Welland Harvey's, described this play as "a bewdy-ful thing. A Big Harv." This former Merrittville Speedway Sportsmen's division champion was the only spectator at Meridian Arena, and said he could actually follow our "slow motion hockey."

But I digress... Wallbangers Commissioner Bill Dickson had already entered the score in the Official Score record, so to save any hassle, the league office agreed to leave it at 6-6. That way, almost all players are happy, and this is the overriding goal of Wallbangers hockey. A good fast?? game with great guys, no injuries, and lots of good-natured banter at Silk's later.

RESIDENT PHOTOS



Local resident Donald O'Connor's dog Ace enjoys the first snowy walk of the season. (Submitted)



A telephoto shot of Toronto from Brock's monument. (Frank McPhee/Facebook)



Betty & Jane: Plunger Patrol
Inspecting NOTL's bathrooms:
NOTL Public Golf Course

NOTL Public Golf Course is the oldest course in North America. The course boasts a beautiful lake view along its nine holes and is worth a visit. It offers a dining facility where we enjoyed lunch and the historic view. The restrooms are accessible for everyone and the facility offers a motorized lift up the stairs providing easy access. The busy facility boasts good hygiene and a full length mirror provides a last-glance opportunity to ensure one puts their best foot forward. The NOTL golf course received 3.5/5 Golden Plungers.

3.5/5 Golden Plungers



RIDDLE ME THIS:

Everybody has me,
but nobody can lose
me. What am I?

Last Week's answer: River, answered first by Tom Busbridge
Email answers to editor@niagaranow.com for a chance to win a prize.



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FEATURED
LOCAL STORY

Local pizza maker earns Naples seal



Left: Pieza Pizzeria owners Laryssa and Maurizio in front of their stone pizza oven which was imported from Naples, Italy. Right top: A handmade margherita pizza. Right middle: A pizza is carefully placed into the stone oven. Bottom right: Maurizio drizzles olive oil over a mushroom and truffle pizza with mozzarella and burrata cheeses. To the right sits the cooked margherita. (Photos by Richard Harley)

Richard Harley
Editor

Just off Queen Street in Old Town Niagara-on-the-Lake, two locals are preserving a little slice of Italian heritage.

Husband and wife Laryssa and Maurizio Cesta, owners of Pie'za Pizzeria, have worked hard for years to have the restaurant certified by the Verace Pizza Napoletana (VPN) Association.

This November, their hard work paid off.

"It's like the VQA of pizza," explains Laryssa, during an interview at the restaurant.

Maurizio, having been born and raised in Naples, brings authentic Neapolitan pizza-making experience to his kitchen, and has a unique respect for the history of one of the world's most popular foods.

When it comes to Neapolitan pizza, it's all about

traditional cooking methods, and traditional ingredients, he explains.

"Pizza used to not even have tomatoes."

The couple is serious about pizza — every aspect of it, including the type of tomatoes used in the sauce, how those tomatoes are shipped and packaged, and the soil the tomatoes are grown in — having flown to meet the family who farms them.

They use only the highest grade of Italian certified San Marzano tomatoes, grown in volcanic soil, and they are shipped in ceramic-lined cans, so they stay sweet and don't adopt a metallic taste, says Maurizio.

Then there's the flour that goes into the dough. It has to be a 00 (a classification for very finely ground flour) and it has to be made with the right type of wheat.

Like the tomatoes, they know exactly what mill it

comes from, having gone the extra mile to make sure it was up to Napoli standards.

"Wheat is like wine," Maurizio says. "There's different families, there's different seasons ... the key is the balance."

Everything must be just right, or it can't be considered authentic.

The 2,800 kg oven was flown in from Naples, custom-made to the size of the house where Pieza is located.

"One of the reasons why, until 30 years ago, they didn't have many pizzerias Neapolitanas around the world, was because of the oven. Most of the ovens were electric and gas," he said. Those ovens "cannot hold

the temperature that well. So the pizza used to come crispy."

"If you bake at 750 degrees, it's called a shock style ... so when they didn't have these types of ovens, it was impossible."

Maurizio could probably talk about pizza, dough, ovens and tomatoes for hours and hours — Laryssa too, but as she admits, she "doesn't touch the pizza."

Why would she? When your husband is an Italian-certified pizza chef, who is constantly learning new techniques and taking authentic pizza-making courses, it seems sort of understandable.

"The oven is between 60 and 70 per cent of the pizza ... 30 per cent are the ingredients ... I would say the pizza maker is about one per cent."

MAURIZIO

And while the main ingredients are as authentically Italian as one will find, Laryssa and Maurizio do step into the local market too, sourcing most of their cheese from Ontario producers.

"The oven is between 60 and 70 per cent of the pizza ... 30 per cent are the ingredients ... I would say the pizza maker is about one per cent," says Maurizio.

"It's all relative, cause you can have 99 per cent, and if you're missing that one per cent ..."

As Maurizio says, "pizza is the mother of the bread."

"The original pizza is the margherita — the one with tomatoes, mozzarella and basil," he said.

He recently got a letter from the VPN association that says it's mandatory that if margherita pizza is on the menu, it has to be called by its traditional name.

The pizzeria is just like

any you'd find in Naples, Maurizio says.

"We were just there and we went to one of the oldest pizzerias in Napoli — Matorzi — that has been there since 1833. The original name was 'two rooms,' because it started with one room and eventually they got to the second floor."

The simplicity in the name is reflective of the simplicity of these early pizzas, Maurizio says.

"They tried to stick to very simple and basic ingredients, and then they add."

In Canada, we "have a bit more freedom."

While most traditional pizza restaurants typically only have five or six kinds of pizza, Maurizio feels free to explore a bit.

One special he cooked up for the paper is his mushroom, truffle pizza with a large portion of mozzarella and burrata cheeses.



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