



The Lake Report

Vol. 1, Issue 15

December 13, 2018

Niagara-on-the-Lake

Old Town development axed for one year



Plans for subdivisions are on hold for at least one year.

Richard Harley
Editor

Shortly after approving a tree bylaw to protect all areas of Niagara-on-the-Lake, town council passed an interim control bylaw to remain in effect for a year while staff conducts a comprehensive study to identify appropriate development policies for in-filling.

“The intent of the bylaw is to give some regulation to the amount of development that has been occurring, and the concerns that have been expressed by both council and the public,” said Craig Larmour, director of community and development services for the Town, addressing council members Wednesday morning.

The bylaw applies to Old Town only and prohibits applications for plans of subdivisions and condominiums, as well as amendments to the Official Plan which would permit such applications.

It does not apply to existing condominium buildings which may still be converted into new condominiums.

The bylaw is aimed to allow staff and council to “take a pause” while they go through the Official Plan, said Lord Mayor Betty Disero.

It will allow staff to “not have to react all the time” to applications, but allow them to look forward and have time to make decisions.

Continued on Page 9.

Christmas Parade photo gallery



The annual Niagara-on-the-Lake Christmas Parade rode through town Dec. 8. The Lake Report put together a photo gallery of some of the people in the crowd on Page 15.

DISERO'S TURN

Richard Harley
Editor

A new council will now shape NOTL.

The group, consisting of seven new councillors and one returning member, led by the newly elected Lord Mayor Betty Disero, was sworn in Monday night during the inaugural council meeting held at the Shaw Festival's Jackie Maxwell Theatre.

Around 500 people in the community showed up for the occasion, offering enthusiastic rounds of applause to Disero, who gave her first comments as the leader of Niagara-on-the-Lake.

“On behalf of my colleagues and myself, I would like to thank family, friends, supporters and all of the people of NOTL for their participation in the municipal election,” Disero said.

“I am so excited to be here tonight, to mark this new beginning — a new chapter for NOTL. I say chapter, because of course we want to acknowledge our past. Today we stand at a crossroads of extraordinary opportunities. It is time to reflect seriously on the past, but also to look forward, to chart a positive course for the future.”

She said part of that course includes taking actions “to encourage, welcome and provide for a growing population of young families, because they are our future.”

During the past six months,

she said she's spoken with people from all across NOTL, and a “common theme kept coming up — What kind of town do we want NOTL to be?”

Disero said there are a number of issues facing the town that will shape our future, and addressed three during her speech.

The first was her belief in the importance of “sustaining a sense of community.”

Continued on Page 3.



New council sworn in at Shaw Festival Theatre



Coun. Clare Cameron



Coun. Al Bisback



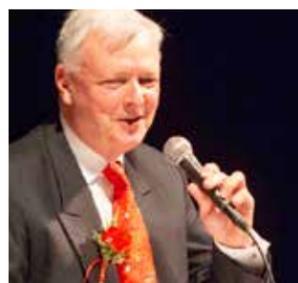
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Coun. Wendy Cheropita



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Coun. Stuart McCormack



Coun. Erwin Wiens



Coun. John Wiens

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Your ideas for NOTL

We asked, you answered.

The Lake Report has asked local residents which issues matter most to them, and how they'd like to see them solved. We provided a blank slate for residents to identify five specific areas of concern to them. We received a number of responses. Here are your ideas for Niagara-on-the-Lake.

Your Top 5

1. The Town's Master Plan

Issue: Lack of consistency on how planning and development decisions are made.

Fix: Completion of the town's master plan, to serve as a guide for future decisions.

2. Widening of Niagara Stone Road (Highway 55)

Issue: Widening of Niagara Stone Road through Virgil. Traffic congestion, especially in peak tourism season, creates regular delays through this part of NOTL. It is not safe for cyclists or pedestrians through this stretch at the best of times.

Fix: Town Council in conjunction with Regional Council and the Province need to make this a top priority before someone gets seriously hurt or even killed. Widening of Niagara Stone Road to 4 lanes or at least three with a dedicated middle lane for turns. Dedicated bike lanes to be installed at the same time as the road widening through this section of Virgil would be a major enhancement and would eliminate conflict with pedestrians already using narrow sidewalks through Virgil.

3. Resurfacing Roads

Issue: Roads are in deplorable condition with more patches than smooth surfaces. John and Anne Streets are being destroyed by the endless passage of heavy construction vehicles and equipment. Major streets like Mississauga Road and King Street need to be repaved as they are currently a poor welcome to the thousands of tourists who visit our Town.

Fix: Developers should be responsible for resurfacing streets that they destroy, and the Town and/or Region should budget for real-surfacing of major arterial streets.

4. Downtown Promenade

Issue: Close the NOTL Queen Street for viable promenade and beautify the street with plants' barrels, tables, chairs and benches, serving equally town residences and tourist alike.

Fix: Split the street into three lanes. The middle lane is one way, access for stock deliveries to the shops through weekdays. Both sides to be furnished with benches, tables, chairs and barrel plants for a beautiful promenade. This should be done from the post office up to the old hospital or present clinic. The side of Prince of Wales should be closed to traffic. This street should be a peacefully, magnificent square for relaxation, enjoying a coffee, an ice cream or a sandwich with a soft music in the background. I want to emphasize this is not a shopping mall ambiance but a creative relaxing area to enjoy seating outside the whole summer; similar to European plazas where people can really enjoy a moment in an inspiring environment.

5. Traffic Congestion

Issue: Congestion in Old Town during the tourist season.

Fix: Divert traffic off of Queen Street. Consider off-site parking on vacant land west of the core, with shuttle service to town. In conjunction with the off-site parking suggestion above, divert traffic along East West Line, around Old Town.

More ideas

- Event parking needs support. We had a near disaster in the summer of 2018. Lets not wait for a fatality to correct this.
- Parking in general is also frustrating. Keep summer traffic off of Niagara Stone Road and shuttle them in from the airport or another large lot.
- Queen Street should be pedestrian only during the summer months.
- St. Davids needs recreational trail from the Niagara Parkway extending west to Stanley Avenue and then down Town Line Road to connect with Creek Road.
- Grinder pump issue needs resolved.
- No tree bylaw to be applied to anyone besides developers.
- More planning and focus on the needs and subdivision development of the residents of St. Davids and Bevan Heights rather than constantly focusing on downtown and Randwood.
- Enforce bylaws or remove them. Town needs to be proactive in terms of bylaw enforcement instead of only responding to complaints made by a resident.
- Consideration should be given to have a fall pickup of leaves like other municipalities. No bagging.
- Lack of Official Plan.
- Niagara Stone Road traffic.
- Niagara Stone looks ugly.
- Bicycle traffic on roads, even if there is a bike lane to use like on the Niagara Parkway.
- Lack of public places on lake front.
- Congestion on Niagara Stone Road.
- Speeding and 70 kph speed limit on Niagara Stone Road between Virgil and Old Town.
- Lack of clarity around overnight

- parking ban. Residents without driveways have nowhere for overnight visitors to lawfully park.
- Need for additional retirement residences for seniors, both assisted living (e.g. Del Manor Retirement Residences) and long-term care facilities in NOTL.
- New recreation complex for NOTL to be based in St. Davids. A new multi-use centre, including an indoor and outdoor aquatic centre, would meet a major recreation and leisure need currently missing in NOTL. Other required components for the new complex should be a seniors activity centre, weight room, dance and yoga studio, a 6-court gymnasium, meeting rooms and an indoor walking track, outdoor sports fields.
- Poor driving in NOTL. Serious concerns about distracted drivers (possibly under the influences) "blowing through stop signs," leading to eventual serious accidents.
- Future development. Precedents have to be set now for all future development. No buildings over three floors, all homes to fit NOTL styles, no developments like the Cannery or detached homes replaced with rows of townhouses (Ann street) that look like Milton projects.
- Town paddling pool in main park. I understand new laws are forcing the town to employ lifeguards all summer at the paddling pool but I feel the cost is an unnecessary extravagance. I would like councillors to consider closing the paddling pool and instead employ lifeguards at the main pool so that it can be open all day during the summer months. Summer is short and the pool is only open for very limited hours.
- Post office. NOTL residents who have to pick up mail from main post office are discriminated against and I am hoping the new councillors can influence authorities to change the newly

- implemented rule of returning to sender all mail with no box number showing on the address. Many of us have been forced to pay penalties because mail has not been received. Locals, of course, advise utilities and people they are expecting mail from of the box numbers issued to them by the NOTL post office but it is impossible to know where all mail may come from, and the general population looking up addresses in telephone directories or on the internet will not be given individual box numbers issued by the post office. If the NOTL post office enforces this new rule maybe the answer is to install boxes on street corners where contractors can deliver our mail using our regular addresses just like the rest of the country.
- All four-way intersections should be four-way stops.
- Property owners in subdivisions should be allowed to cut down trees as needed or desired without a Town permit, arborist's report, etc.
- Town Official Plan, ASAP. Keep farm lands and large properties protected from developers.
- Oversized infilling houses in subdivisions. Better height restrictions.
- Over-development. Need to slow down so residence of town can still enjoy our 'small town' and slower pace charm we have enjoyed in the past.
- Traffic issues, especially on Highway 55. Need stoplight at Line 2, especially with school and new medical centre planned there.
- New fences built are all different styles, heights and colours.
- New housing density, Restriction on town houses, too many.
- Fireworks noise, which is increasing every year.
- Need more public places on lake front.

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New council sworn in



Wendy Cheropita, Clare Cameron, John Wiens, Al Bisback, Norm Arsenault, Gary Burroughs, Betty Disero, Stuart McCormack, Erwin Wiens celebrate their inauguration as the 2019-2023 council. (Richard Harley)

Continued from Front Page

“At the most basic level, people want to belong to something bigger than themselves, to feel the spirit of community that connects them to others,” she said. “As the town grows, we risk losing the personal connections that make this place so special. Most of us, both those of us who grew up here or who have moved here, cherish the friendliness of our neighbourhoods. We look forward to welcoming others, saying hello to people on the street, both those we know and those we don’t. We need to keep this spirit alive, by encouraging more people to get involved in building a stronger community. Otherwise we risk becoming just another bedroom suburb — we don’t know our neighbours, we just drive into garages and close the door.”

The second issue was development.

“We all know development has been a hot topic, not just during this election, but for the past 10 years or so. Some say it’s resistance to change. Some say growth is inevitable. Some close the door and don’t let any more people in. The councillors you see here tonight know that if we want to retain what makes NOTL special, we have to get organized. We have to complete the official plan. We need to make changes to our development processes. We need stronger design review policies. We need master plans. And most of all, throughout all this work, we need to balance the past with the future.”

The final issue she spoke about was the town’s financial situation.

“In this chapter, we are facing some tough decisions regarding our financial situation. Our reserves are being depleted; the 2018 budget is in deficit; and the old practice

of putting off to tomorrow has left us with a budget that is no longer sustainable,” she said.

“Good leadership is about making decisions and setting priorities. We cannot do everything, especially with our relatively small budget. We will need the courage to make those tough decisions. Some costs are fixed. Some costs are multi-year obligations that we must fulfil. But other costs can and should be carefully reviewed ... I believe that these financial challenges will make us a better council. We as a council know that a large portion of the town’s budget comes from you, the residents and businesses of NOTL, through your property taxes... we must spend these funds wisely and with accountability.”

“As your elected official, we welcome your input and feedback so that we can protect NOTL and ensure that it is on strong financial ground for the future.”

“I can see that change is possible. Some changes will come quickly, others won’t. And yes, sometimes change is not the answer.”

Disero also thanked all who have helped make the town what it is today. “But most of all, to you — all of the incredible people of NOTL, who through collective efforts have created the most unique, the most amazing, the most livable town in Canada.”

After her remarks, she invited Shambhu Sharma of The New Hope Seniors Association to the stage, who placed garlands around her neck.

The actual council meeting didn’t happen, with a motion by Coun. Norm Arsenault to adjourn the meeting being seconded by Coun. Stuart McCormack and unanimously approved.



Former Toronto mayor Barbara Hall and former Mississauga mayor Hazel McCallion were also in attendance to show support for Disero. (Richard Harley)



Town CAO Holly Dowd and Lord Mayor Betty Disero. (Richard Harley)

Instead, council members celebrated with an enthusiastic crowd after the ceremony.

Town CAO Holly Dowd said the inaugural event was one of the best-attended the town has ever seen, with the event typically being held at the historic Courthouse in Old Town and seeing attendance numbers in the 250 range.

The Shaw was a great location, she said, with the theatre being capable of holding so many people, as well as the lobby for a reception.

“It’s a good time for Niagara,” said Sheila Hirsch-Kalm, who helped Disero lead NOTL to a national award for its daffodil gardens around town as part of Communities In Bloom.

“It really does feel like change is in the air.”

Former Toronto mayor Barbara Hall and former Missis-

sauga mayor Hazel McCallion were also in attendance to show support for Disero, who was once a Toronto city councillor.

Disero said she can’t wait to get to work again, and that the past month felt much too slow for her usual pace.

She’s confident with the new council will come a new and positive era for the town of NOTL.

“Meeting the challenges ahead of course will require a collective effort — one that unites the town in ways we may have never seen before,” she said.

“We will decide our vision, so that when people come to NOTL they will know who we are, where we are going, and what the rules are.”

“Niagara-on-the-Lake, we hear you. We understand you. And we are up to the task.”



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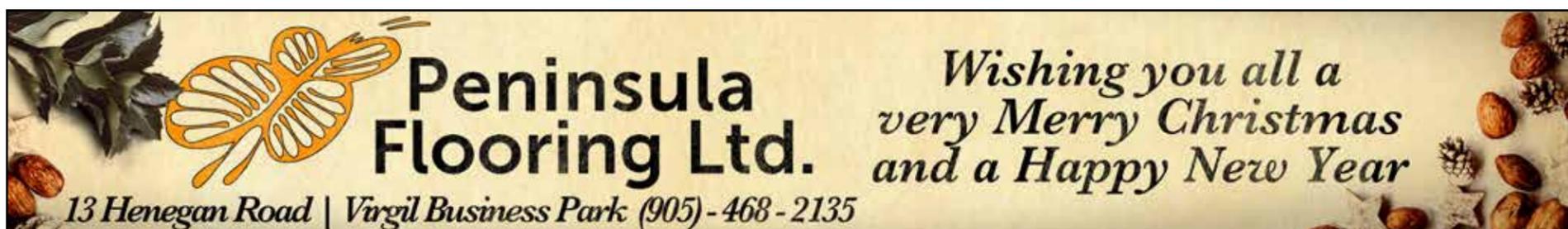


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Wishing you all a very Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year



The Lake Report

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Editorial: Lake Report to go weekly

Richard Harley
 Editor

The Lake Report, Niagara-on-the-Lake's community newspaper, is going weekly in the new year.

It was always The Lake Report's intention to jump to a weekly production as soon as possible, and the time has come, as the paper enters into its second volume.

Volume two will be the same paper you've come to know and cherish as your number one community source for trusted news.

It is the pleasure of the entire Lake Report team to consistently hear positive feedback about what we're doing.

For a young local like myself, whose dream it has been to be involved in the news industry and start my own publication, I couldn't find myself happier than I am to know that people truly enjoy what we've built, and to hear from old and new residents alike who read the paper cover to cover.

Many new residents have



told us we've given them a true sense of the community they've joined.

Some of our stories tackle the tougher more controversial issues, and many others are about our neighbours, who live their lives within our town.

We will always have this balance, to offer the most diverse reading experience possible for the residents of this town.

There is no million-dollar backer, no ties to current or former politicians, and all of our staff members live and vote in this town, making our news unique in that our reporters truly care, beyond just a job, about NOTL.

It's been a pleasure to work with some amazing residents who have submitted stories and ideas, and a myriad

of local organizations that are doing their best to keep our community vibrant and unique.

Based on feedback from a large number of residents, The Lake Report also intends to add a couple other features to our paper. In the new year, we'll be working to get obituaries in the paper, and welcome all submissions from local residents.

As well, we plan to offer further special editions which will allow local businesses to have a part in the paper, highlight special places to visit.

And lastly, perhaps most importantly, the paper intends to continue bridging a gap between longtime locals and newcomers. We are all a part of this town.

editor@niagaranow.com

Letter: The Lake Report is my paper

OPINION

I appreciate our local paper. What a comfort, in this age of fake news, to be able to read something and know the newspaper office is literally around the corner, and that the people who live around another corner are the editor and the writers.

The Lake Report has become our local paper.

I have contributed to the community page regularly since the beginning. I appreciate the support of the staff at the Lake Report. Except the two times we got bumped, first by a blackberry photo (not even a very popular fruit) and then by a humongous scene of the week photo.

Still, The Lake Report, has been a perfect match of interest with Niagara-on-the-Lake.

With the closure of the Town Crier and the regionalization of the Niagara Advance, The Lake Report was here publishing — everyone involved learning lots ... If you were planning your own newspaper this experience



would be invaluable.

To this end I would like to announce the launch of my own local newspaper. It will be called the Local Loyal Lake Report. My format is simple, a weekly paper focused on the bathrooms of Niagara and four pages dedicated to obituaries.

I expect a high level of support and participation by the community. I'll expect an annual subscription from everyone who lives in NOTL. Delivered weekly, to a puddle near you.

I heard a rumour the Scene of the Week guy is also launching a local, all photo format weekly. The readers may be able handle four local newspapers but the small businesses may fast exhaust fatiguing advertising budgets.

We are a vibrant community and as a reader I welcome any group taking the risk of publishing a local paper. I'd read them all. However, launching the Local Loyal Lake Report in the wake of participating in the successful launching of the Lake Report would appear disingenuous.

This is a quality suspect in a purveyor of legitimate news.

Please find enclosed partial payment for the first year editions of the Lake Report. Subscribing is a good way of showing support of this publication. I challenge readers to purchase past editions as a way of showing loyalty to our only current local newspaper.

Betty Clark



LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

OPINION

Hi Benny,

In response to your letter to the Editor in the November 29 edition of this paper, I have to agree that you probably have done everything completely legally in the work so far performed within the Rand Estate. If this is due to previous inaction by government bodies and other authorities then the blame must lie with them and not you.

However, I feel that you have not done everything completely morally in this case and I believe that this is why there has been such a community backlash against you.

My wife and I moved down here from Toronto 3 years ago. We stayed for a long weekend, fell in love with the town and decided to make the move. I still commute daily

to Toronto so this was not a completely rational decision, more of an emotional one, and I believe one that many people in this town have made; I don't think we are unique in this.

The main reason we moved was precisely because this was NOT like Toronto and we wanted to get away from the city and enjoy a different lifestyle. Your argument with building the hotel and subdivision on the Rand Estate is that you intend to "improve the future of NOTL". The issue I see is that your previous subdivisions like The Cannery are the cookie cutter type developments that we all moved here to get away from! They are not an improvement at all, rather a regression to the mean.

If I could suggest anything to you Benny, I think it would be a great idea for you to take the community's feelings

in this regard into account and revise how you intend to develop this land so it is more in keeping with the unique and historical character we have here in NOTL. I'm sure this would reduce the resistance you are currently getting from the community. I suggest taking a drive and looking at subdivisions and homes built by, in my mind, two of the finest builders in this area, Gatta Homes and Brooklite Homes. I am certain that neither of these companies receive the same kind of backlash and resistance that you do when they propose their developments. This is entirely due to the fact that they take the character of our wonderful area into account with everything they do and really care about the community that keeps them in business.

Shaun McDonald

Letter: Response to Benny Marotta

Dear Benny,
 How are you?

I am fine thanks, we are enjoying the start of the winter weather but are looking forward to getting away in January.

If you are having a winter holiday you might take the time to think this thing out.

You seem to be all over the place buying everything in sight. I know you have lots of money but should relax a bit and let somebody else buy something.

Like us you have discovered what a nice place Niagara on the Lake is but you are running the risk of people

being a bit upset the you are turning it into Bennyville.

My advice is to slow down, drink some of your two daughters wine and everybody will be happy.

We are looking forward to Christmas and hope you have a nice time with the family.

Don Laird

Letter: Response to Benny Marotta

OPINION

Re. Marotta letter. The Lake Report, Nov. 29. 2018.

It would seem to be a rather pointless effort to attempt a detailed response to all of the complaints, allegations and claims, whether true or false, made by Mr. Marotta in his letter to the editor. However, notwithstanding the ongoing and controversial issue of the trees and landscaping, a number of comments do raise questions and call for a targeted and direct response.

This response is based solely on my personal viewpoint.

1. "Some of the residents — they have a one track mind and have no intention of making things work unless it's their way."

This argument can be reversed and applied in exactly the same way to the Marotta Group.

2. "They prefer the beautiful Rand Estate to deteriorate to the ground rather than saving it to be enjoyed by all."

From what I have seen so far, it is my impression that Mr. Marotta intends to raze the beautiful Rand Estate to the ground just to accommodate his development plans. How this saves the Rand Estate to be enjoyed by all is difficult to see.

To my knowledge there is little if any opposition to developing the Rand Estate. Obviously it cannot remain unattended year after year.

The opposition is simply in response to the type of development that the Marotta Group proposes.

While I recognize Mr. Marotta's right of ownership of the property, anybody with a grain of common sense would agree that you should not design and build something that resembles a six storey Holiday Inn Express in the middle of the historic Rand Estate. It is totally out of character with the surrounding neighbourhood and no thought or consideration seems to have been given to the adjacent residents and it's impact on their lives and properties nor to the historic town of Niagara-on-the-Lake in general.

3. In reference to "some of the residents" made earlier. "This group of people who call themselves SORE are trying to control the town as to what happens, when it happens and to how it happens."

What a ridiculous and irresponsible statement to make.

To my knowledge SORE, who represents at least several hundred concerned residents, was created solely in response to the thoughtlessness and self-interest of the Marotta development proposal for the Rand Estate.

4. (In reference to SORE) "they restricted us from meeting with the planning or design committees of the town for their proposal of the hotel."

It is hard to give credibility to the accuracy of this rather pathetic and sad statement when SORE makes no claim of authority to interfere in the normal process of development approvals.

5. "The SORE group needs to stop bullying."

Again, this argument can be reversed and applied in exactly the same way to the Marotta Group. The SORE group was created by local concerned residents in response to the Marotta Group's untrustworthy behavior and attitude as the record now clearly shows.

6. The newly elected town council should not be "influenced or intimidated by certain groups that were not appointed by the public."

I agree with this statement which of course applies equally to the Marotta Group.

The town council was elected by the residents of NOTL to represent their interests and this includes the supporters of SORE. As stated in Mr. Marotta's own letter to the editor, council must "make decisions in the best interest of the town of NOTL as a whole."

These interests must therefore take precedence over the interests of Mr. Marotta and the commercial interests of his development group.

Derek Collins

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NEWS

Letter: Response to Benny Marotta

Response to Benny Marotta: After reading your 'woe is me' letter in the Nov. 29th The Lake Report, I just have to respond. First let me point out that I am not a member of SORE, nor have I attended any protest against you or your projects. I am writing this to point out why so many people do not like you. It is because of what you are doing to our beautiful town. When the model homes for Solmar's initial project in St. David's opened, we went with family who were looking to buy. That whole project was

unattractive and the interior finishing, i.e., counter tops, flooring and fixtures all cried 'cheaply built'. Then you started on Ann Street. To put it succinctly, what you are building there is ugly and inappropriate for Old Town Niagara-on-the-Lake. Those houses do not fit the character of this town. Look around at what is here; big lots with lovely gardens, large trees unique homes. Do you try to build in keeping with that? No, instead you are building identical row housing jammed in every

square foot you can find and, they will never have lovely gardens and large trees plus, they are certainly not unique. Additionally, all of this high density building will just mess with the services, traffic and parking in this town. Would you live in one of those ugly little houses? Your projects are a blight against everything that attracted my family, friends and neighbours to this town. Your homes belong in a low income area of Brampton, not here! That is why so many people are against you and

are afraid of the mess you want to create in and around the Rand Estate, Queen Street and anywhere else you own property. It seems profit is the *raison d'être* of your projects. Perhaps local opinion would change if you reduced a little of your expected profit and spent some of it to design and create beautiful well designed homes, on decent size lots to create projects that befit the quality and uniqueness of Niagara-on-the-Lake.

S. Moorhead

Friends of One Mile Creek, a local investigation

Michael Fox
OPINION

When we bought a house in Niagara-on-the-Lake in 1999, I appreciated its proximity to a small creek that flows through much of Old Town. We're not on the creek, but its flood plain skirts the back of our narrow, deep lot. Because the creek's course follows the natural contours of the land, it twists a lot and travels at an angle across our back view. Water in the creek nourishes trees, such as willows and chestnuts, along its banks, creating for us a splendid "borrowed view" as they say in garden design.



One Mile Creek along Centre Street between Gate and Victoria in March 2004. (Supplied photo)

This is One Mile Creek, named for its mouth into Lake Ontario about one mile (1.6 kilometres) from where the mighty Niagara River flows into the lake. There is One Mile Creek, Two Mile Creek, Four Mile Creek, Eight Mile Creek, as well as many more creeks such as Twenty Mile and Fifty Mile. When Europeans settled the area 200+ years ago, the main method of transportation was by water, so they numbered the creeks. It's sort of like the numbered street names in Calgary, Vancouver or Manhattan.

In our first decade here, I was aware of a local group called Friends of One Mile Creek (FOMC) that organized annual cleanups of the creek, planted native species to replace grass along the creek, and began initiatives to improve the creek's water quality. For instance, many houses directly connected their rain downspouts to the sewer systems, removing the benefit of allowing water to naturally percolate through soil, and overloading the creek with rain runoff more rapidly than necessary. As a result of FOMC efforts, the Town provided a subsidy to encourage residents to install rain barrels. I made sure the water off our roof travelled across our front and back gardens before heading to the creek, but otherwise I was busy with

my Toronto job, and didn't volunteer to help FOMC haul old tires out of the creek on a nice Saturday morning. You need to appreciate that One Mile Creek runs along many private properties. There's no way a government bureaucrat can tell people what to do. Instead, this group of volunteers who live here and worried about the creek, took action by organizing talks and displays to raise awareness about the situation. They worked closely with government agencies such as the Niagara Peninsula Conservation Authority (in the days when NPCA leadership cared about conservation rather than property development).

In the past year, we welcomed a new dog into our home, Herbie, who has short legs, and only two speeds — sniff and slow. Herbie's a sweet boy, but his leisurely pace means that I often am paused somewhere near the creek, standing patiently while Herbie sniffs everything in sight. Looking at the creek prompted me to wonder what had happened to that local group. There's not been any spring cleanup events in several years. And the pressures on the creek are, if anything, increasing as more woodlots are cut down to build another big new house that exceeds the recommended footprint for how much land should be built upon and how much ground should be left uncov-

ered so that rain can percolate into the soil.

I wondered what had happened to the local group. So, I did what most of us do these days, I searched Google for "one mile creek." Nothing. The next day, I'd try different search criteria. This wasn't a frantic search, but I'd be reminded each morning as Herbie did his sniffing. Finally, I came across a reference to the group that included names of people. One name, Katleya Young-Chin, popped up on the LinkedIn network (which focuses on people's careers). In May, I sent her a brief message, explaining I was curious about what had become of the group. She replied that she no longer lived in Niagara, but her mother, Klara Young-Chin, a founding member of FOMC, still lives in town.

After a few emails and phone calls, Katleya, Klara and I finally sat down to talk in late June. When we met, I was fascinated with how much the group had accomplished from 2003 to 2013. However, I also learned that the FOMC website, and all its content, had been lost in 2012. Because I know how to create websites, I offered to try to create a new one. They said there was no money, but I said that was fine because through other work I do I have multi-site licenses that allow me to host a new site with no incremental cost. I did pay the necessary \$20 to once again register

the domain name, which had lapsed. Meanwhile, they went through their files and sent me any documents and images they could find. In September, I began to create web pages and try to envision what a visitor to the new site might find useful.

Today, I think an important role for the FOMC website is to provide resources for people who want to do the right thing. As new people move into houses, they may think that it would be lovely if their back lawn ran right down to the edge of the creek. But, they also might appreciate knowing that having several feet of native plants along the bank is a much better idea, because the buffer improves water quality and helps support healthy aquatic wildlife.

The new website for Friends of One Mile Creek will also be able to gauge whether people still care about our natural heritage. If so, there is an email signup form to be a "Friend of the Creek."

Frankly, many other creeks need their own groups of friends. Perhaps the FOMC case study will provide some ideas.

Meanwhile, I've come to better appreciate why I feel so with-nature in Old Town. As many of us do, I grew up and we raised children, in houses that were built on land cleared of trees, and flattened for farming, hundreds of years ago. Any small creeks were buried in pipes underground or otherwise re-routed. Then, as populations grew, the farm fields were stripped of soil and planted with rows of houses. In contrast, here in Old Town, as far as I know, the creek still flows between gentle hillocks on the same course as it would have thousands of years ago when the only locals were First Nation people. They cared about the land and water. So did the people who founded FOMC. So should more of us.

Please take a look at FriendsofOneMileCreek.org.

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Inside Tweed Farms

Jill Troyer
Special to TLR

From the street view on Concession 5, the operation at Tweed Farms in Niagara-on-the-Lake is unassuming, set in an agricultural area, surrounded by security fences, a gravel road leading to a security gate, greenhouses in the distance, and construction trailers and parking lots scattered across the grounds. Yet the operation is part of a dramatically expanding industry, producing a high volume of medical marijuana, using modern and sophisticated technology, and all of it under strict Health Canada regulations and standards.

Jessica Gagne is the cultivation manager at Tweed Farms, and her passion for the work of nurturing the cannabis plants is evident. "It's all about the plants here ... plants are wise, they are capable of growing. We just have to give them the right conditions," Gagne, just 24 years old, has earned a rapid rise in her career since starting at Tweed in 2015 in an entry level job. She said the business has grown so quickly, "it's provided good opportunities to people who are committed to learning and working hard." She progressed from production assistant, to lead hand, to section grower, and most recently to her current role of cultivation manager, all in three short years.

Now she is responsible for the plants and the people, both of which are increas-

ing in number. People now number 200, and will grow to 240, and plants number in the tens of thousands. Another case in point of quick career growth is Nick Biamonte, who started at Tweed a few months after Gagne.

Biamonte grew up in NOTL and graduated from Niagara College. After working at Tweed in NOTL, Biamonte is now the cultivation manager at the new Tweed greenhouses in B.C.

The work day starts early at Tweed Farms, 6:30 or 7:30 a.m., according to Gagne. Teams assemble and review the priorities for the day, before heading to the large rooms where the marijuana plants grow in each greenhouse. Each person entering the greenhouse room must first wash their hands, don a white lab coat or blue coveralls, hairnet, booties, and gloves. Security cards are worn at all times, and everyone has to swipe in and out of each doorway entered or exited. The environment is more like a pharmaceutical laboratory than a farm, spotless, clutter free, and perfectly ordered. Hallways are high-ceilinged and spare, cannabis plants are precisely spaced and symmetrically lined up. There is nothing superfluous in the growing rooms, nothing but the essentials for caring for the plants is in the rooms.

Routine tasks include trimming the plants, scouting for pests or diseases, and monitoring water needs. The plants follow a cycle of



Tweed Farms in Niagara-on-the-Lake. (Don Reynolds)

growth, explained Gagne. She said it takes seven to ten days to root, three weeks in a propagation tray, then they get transplanted to a pot and go to a greenhouse room. Once in the greenhouse room, there's a four week vegetation stage, followed by seven to nine weeks flowering. Light is automatically adjusted according to relative daylight. Plants get 18 hours of light and 6 hours of dark during the vegetation stage, and 12 hours each of light and dark during flowering. The

plants need dark to "sleep", so the design of the light levels tries to mimic their own natural pattern. Once flowering is complete, there is a full bud produced on the plant, and it's the bud that is harvested, as it contains the active ingredients of medical marijuana. Working in the greenhouses is most difficult in the summer months, as the temperatures inside are consistently 10 degrees hotter than the outdoor temperature, without the humidex. When it's excessively hot, there are protocols for heat breaks, for

each half working inside the greenhouse, there's a break of half an hour, plus provision of water and frozen treats.

Once harvested, the buds go to a trim room to reduce the leaves and stems, then they are dried on large perforated trays for approximately a week. At that point the dried buds are packaged into heavy plastic bags and shipped to Tweed headquarters in Smith Falls for final production into capsules, extraction, or bottling. The rest of the plants are finely shredded and composted,

according to specific Canada Health regulations.

Gagne reflected on her time working at Tweed, saying, "When I started, we were one of the few places growing marijuana, and even my own family was concerned it would be sketchy to work here. Over time though, attitudes have become more positive, people are more interested and open to hearing about what we do here." She added, "We're really proud to produce medical marijuana and we want to produce the very best product we can."

Confirmed cases of rabies in NOTL lead to preventative measures

Lauren O'Malley
Staff

Two skunks found in Niagara-on-the-Lake have been discovered to have rabies. As a result, the Ministry of Natural Resources and Forestry has begun distributing additional oral rabies vaccine baits in the region. These baits are typically placed annually, and repeat drops are done in the instance of an outbreak such as this one.

"The baits are khaki green packets, coated with a vanilla attractant," says Rachel Gagnon of the MNRF. "They are labelled as a rabies vaccine and include MNRF contact information." The baits are dropped by helicopter in rural areas, and by ground crews in urban zones.

The rabies science transfer specialist continues, "The



Two skunks were recently tested positive with rabies in NOTL. (Supplied photo)

baits have been tested to ensure they are safe if accidentally consumed by domestic animals. In the past, some pets that have consumed multiple baits have experienced

some digestive discomfort due to the wax content of the baits."

While this is the first finding of terrestrial rabies in the area since 1997, there is no

reason to become alarmed. "Overall in southern Ontario we have seen approximately a 50% reduction in the number of positive cases when compared to the same time last year," says Gagnon. "MNRF staff continue to test diseased raccoons, skunks and foxes in southern Ontario (including Niagara-on-the-Lake) to monitor rabies outbreak areas and to determine where to focus baiting efforts."

However, precautions are recommended.

Peter Jekel of Niagara Region Public Health says logic will usually keep you safe. "I don't think you need to tell people to stay away from skunks," says the public health manager — but he reminds us that we need to also avoid raccoons. "First and foremost, stay away from wild and stray animals," he

says. "Especially if they appear friendly — it may mean they're infected."

The first skunk was found dead on Line 9. Typically people call Town offices, animal control, or the Niagara Falls Humane Society about a dead wild animal on their property. Those animals are subsequently reported to NRPH and the Ministry of Natural Resources and Forestry, and these services determine whether or not to test for rabies. "We determined this was an ideal candidate for testing," says Jekel.

The animal was found to have rabies.

"The second instance was an interaction between a dog and a skunk," says Jekel. "The person on the scene was able to subdue (kill) the skunk. We made an investigation and determined we

wanted to test." This animal also tested positive for the disease.

If a pet comes into contact with the saliva of a rabid animal, or if you suspect this has happened, call or see your veterinarian promptly. And make sure your pet's vaccinations are up to date.

"In a case of human exposure, contact your doctor, local health unit or emergency department immediately," says Gagnon. "Once symptoms of rabies show, it is almost always fatal."

The MNRF has a rabies information line at 1-888-574-6656. Gagnon suggests if you see a wild animal acting strangely, you should call local animal control at 905-658-8712, or the rabies line for information and advice.

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Council passes tree bylaw for all five urban areas of NOTL

Richard Harley
Editor

The new Niagara-on-the-Lake council didn't waste any time getting a new bylaw put in place to protect a long list of tree species in all five urban areas of Niagara-on-the-Lake.

The motion, moved by Coun. Norm Arsenaault and seconded by Coun. Al Bisback, went into effect immediately Wednesday afternoon and prevents private property owners from removing trees without a permit.

"I think, in listening to the solicitor, we want to make sure our bylaw has teeth," said CAO Holly Dowd, addressing council members. "So what I would like — or what I would put forward — is in order for us to get a bylaw approved today, let's go with the version in front of you. I'll give you until Friday, if that's enough time, if you

have any suggested changes that you'd like to provide to me."

She said she would compile the information and forward it to the Town's solicitor for him to review and send a version back. "Something that has teeth if this one doesn't — maybe it does."

She said she thinks the solicitor could be able to put forward a list of any required amendments before council by Dec. 17.

Arsenaault told Larmour he would like staff expertise on which trees should be included as weeds or nuisance trees.

Larmour said part of the problem with moving forward with the bylaw is the town doesn't have a dedicated arborist to provide such expertise, and without investment in such a service, it would come down to the individual case. For example, he said, a neighbour could

claim a tree is a problem tree because it is dropping walnuts on their vehicles, he said, and without an arborist on call, staff would need to make the decision.

"If council passes the bylaw without providing the additional resources, we're just going to have to go with whatever we can on the day that we get an application for a permit to remove a tree."

He suggested that moving forward staff could consult the Town's director of operations to find out which services the town uses when tree removal is needed on municipal property, and suggested council members make recommendations to the lists of problem trees.

The cost of hiring an arborist is unknown until staff looks at the services available, Larmour said.

The first amendment was put forward by Coun. Gary Burroughs, who said

he didn't agree with some species of trees listed as nuisance trees in the bylaw, such as the black walnut and black locust. The motion to remove the trees from the list was unanimously passed.

Arsenaault also motioned for a long list of tree species to be included in the bylaw as weed trees, including the Manitoba maple, tree of heaven, cottonwood, Norway maple, hawthorn, Russian olive, Siberian elm, salt cedar, chokecherry, common buckthorn, European or glossy buckthorn, black alder, autumn olive and white mulberry. He also motioned to add the female Ginkgo tree to the list of nuisance or weed trees.

The motion was also unanimously passed.

Coming full circle, Coun. Erwin Wiens motioned for the bylaw to include just the area of Old Town.

Coun. John Wiens then motioned to amend E. Wiens's motion, asking to limit the bylaw to Old Town, St. Davids, Virgil and Queenston. Council carried the amendment to Erwin's motion, but ended up opposing it, landing them back where they started, with the bylaw covering all five areas of NOTL.

E. Wiens asked if there would be a chance for public consultation about the bylaw and in which areas it should apply, noting concern for some areas like Glendale.

Disero said there would be a public review, and the CAO would decide the appropriate time.

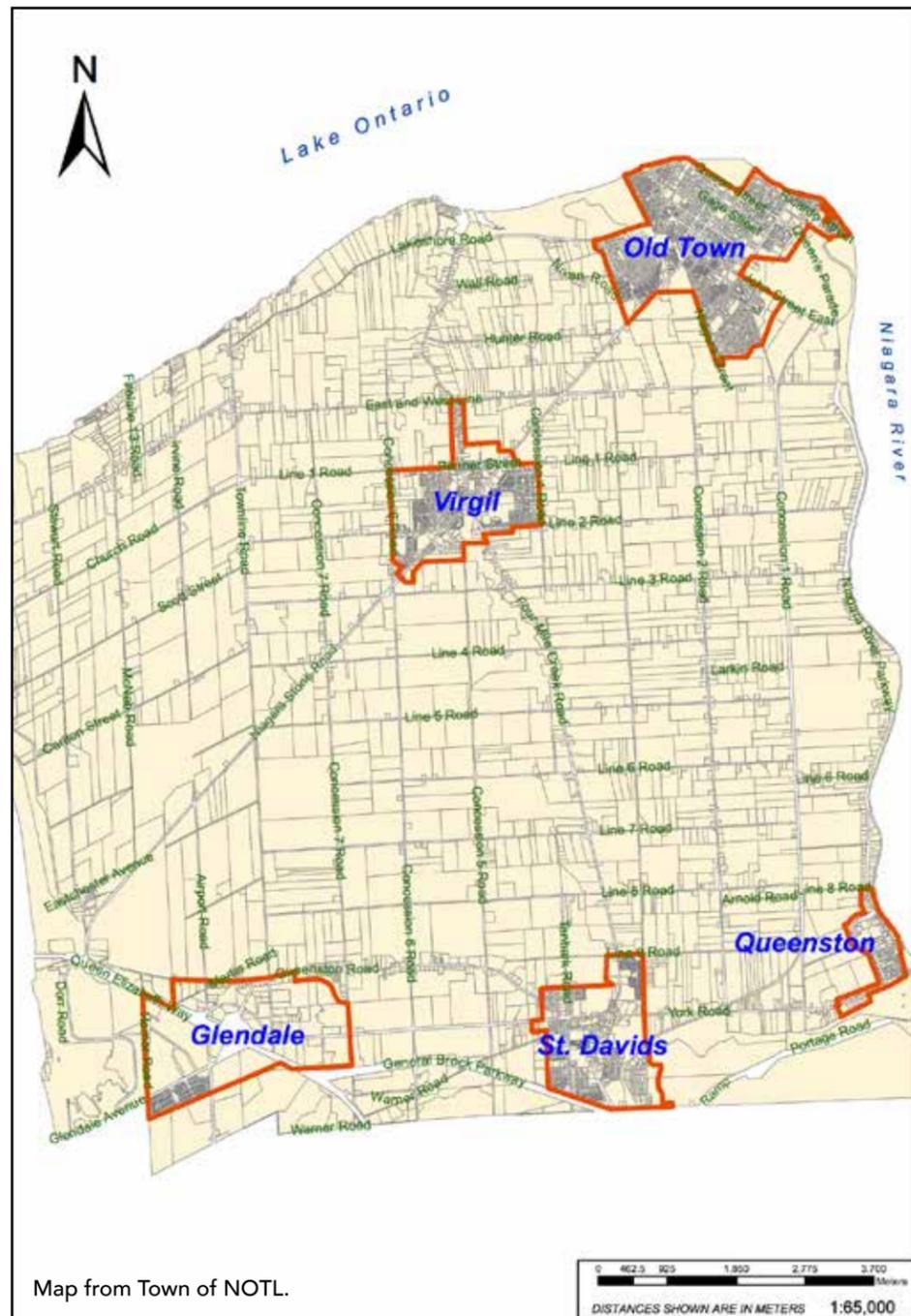
Coun. Clare Cameron motioned for a detailed map specifying the geographic areas in which the bylaw will apply, and for an additional schedule to identify preferred trees for replanting. Her motion was carried.

After all amendments were dealt with, council passed the bylaw, with two more motions being approved, to have staff look the bylaw and make recommendations, as well as to send it to a lawyer to see if any amendments need to be made.

"So the bylaw comes into effect immediately," Disero said. "Thank you to all for your hard work."

The town's urban area boundary is pictured left as shown in the updated bylaw.

This story has been edited from online to clarify that Coun. Arsenaault's amendment to add a number of trees to the list of "weed trees," not as protected trees.



Map from Town of NOTL.

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Dec 22	Juliet, Naked
Dec 29	Eighth Grade
Jan 5	The Wife
Jan 12	BlacKkKlansman
Jan 19	I Feel Pretty
Jan 26	Green Book (TBC)
Feb 2	Colette
Feb 9	Can You Ever Forgive Me?
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The Niagara-on-the-Lake Candlelight Stroll 2018. (Lauren O'Malley)

Thousands gather for traditional local stroll

Richard Harley
Staff

The Candlelight Stroll in Niagara-on-the-Lake typically attracts thousands of people to walk a decorated Queen Street and listen to carollers and choirs sing Christmas songs.

This year's 29th annual event was no different.

The stroll, organized by the Niagara-on-the-Lake Chamber of Commerce, collects donations in the form of candle purchases, and typically gives the money to a local child in need. This year, the focus was on mental health and inclusion, with funds going towards "buddy benches" at participating NOTL elementary schools.

The concept of buddy benches is to allow school kids to signal their need for peer support by sitting on the bench.

NOTL Chamber of Commerce chair Paul MacIntyre said the topic of mental

health is close to his heart, as he has watched a friend struggle through an undiagnosed psychological illness.

During the event, he made a point to thank Stan Harrington and generations of his family, who for decades have been helping with road closures, organization, and crowd management.

"We thought about young people in our community as a whole, and specifically about their mental health," said Janice Thomson, Chamber executive director, after the event.

"We felt there really needs to be inclusion and kindness regarding mental health issues ... We hope that the raising of awareness of the importance of both asking for a friend talk to, and of being a friend to others who reach out, will be beneficial to the young people in our town."

With files from Lauren O'Malley



(Lauren O'Malley)



(Richard Harley)



(Lauren O'Malley)



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FULL SERVICE SALON AND ESTHETICS

Old Town development axed for one year

Continued from Front Page

Cameron said she didn't want council to "hitch too much to one horse," regarding the interim bylaw, but to use it as a chance to develop a strong Official Plan.

"I think what we're all most interested in is seeing an effective Official Plan for our town that will incorporate all communities."

She said Old Town is in a unique situation right now, and she thinks it does make sense to try to put something forward to protect it at this moment, but to keep sight of the larger goal which is to protect all of NOTL's communities.

The boundary of the interim bylaw is based on the urban boundaries for Old Town defined in the current Official Plan.

According to the Ontario Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing, an interim control bylaw puts a temporary freeze on some land uses while a municipality is studying or reviewing its policies. The freeze can

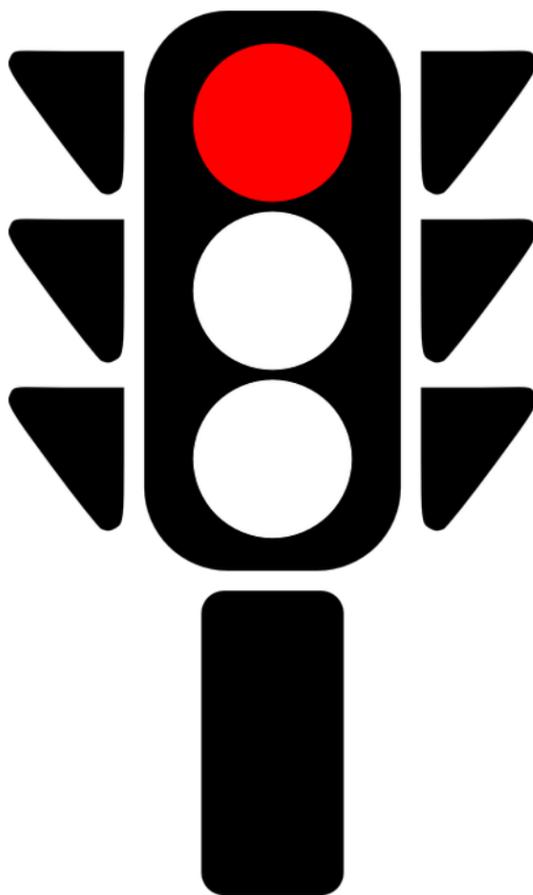
be imposed for only a year, with a maximum extension of another year.

There is no ability to appeal an interim control bylaw when it is first passed, however, an extension to a bylaw may be appealed.

According to the Planning Act, an interim control bylaw will remain in effect past the two-year period if the new zoning bylaw which replaces the interim control bylaw is appealed to the Local Planning Appeal Tribunal.

According to Praveen Senthinathan, media relations spokesperson for MMAH, notice requirements are different for interim control by-laws than zoning by-laws, which typically require a minimum of 20 days notice to residents and a public meeting.

"No notice or public meeting is required prior to the passing of an interim control by-law, however, public notice is required within 30 days of the passing of the interim control by-law," said Senthinathan, in an email to the paper Thursday.



Write for Rights marks Human Rights Day

Jer Houghton
Staff

The Niagara chapter of Amnesty International, alongside Lord Mayor Betty Disero and a group of supporters, was on hand Monday for the flag raising ceremony to mark Human Rights Day, Dec. 10, the day the international declaration of human rights was signed.

Remarkable as the biggest annual human rights event in the world, each chapter of Amnesty International played host to a Write for Rights event, in which residents sign petitions and write wish letters to help convince various governments throughout the world to release people who have been imprisoned for human activism.

"For many many people, their rights cannot be taken for granted, just getting together and doing something like this would be illegal in many countries, and so I think it is the responsibility of someone who lives in a place where you can have freedom of expression without fear of arrest to do what we can for others," said Elizabeth Bitzer, acting treasurer of the Niagara chapter.

Niagara's group was no different, drawing dozens of local supporters from Niagara-on-the-Lake and from around the region to the Meridian Centre Tuesday evening to support the release



Zipporah Ogoti, president of Amnesty International's Niagara chapter, helps residents Nora McLellan, Bill Talbot and Cynthia Rand prepare letters as part of their Human Rights Day event, Write for Rights, at Meridian Centre in Virgil on Tuesday. (Jer Houghton)

of 10 cases which focused on women, chosen by Amnesty International.

"They chose to pick all cases that focus on women just because women's rights is a huge issue everywhere around the world. But the cases are not specific to women's rights, it's that the women are either being defenders of their land or trying to escape violence, so there's different cases," said Bitzer.

"And so we're trying to write letters, they get sent to the governments of the countries where the women are, they get sent to the ambassadors or other folks, and they see that there's pressure from Canadians on behalf of these women."

Among the 10 cases of women was Burlington resident, Huseyn Celil, a father

someone's death, and it needs to be an urgent nature that we're sending lots of pressure from around the world to stop this."

Each group of Amnesty International focuses its letter-writing process on what's called urgent actions and Amnesty Canada responds to all of its urgent actions throughout each year.

"There's about one a day almost, over 300 a year. But as a country, with all the different groups, some groups will focus on all urgent actions and some will just do two a month," says Bitzer.

"The focus of this chapter, because we just started up again in September ... it's two-fold — one to do urgent actions at our monthly meetings as a group, so we at least know that some letters are being sent for whatever those urgent actions are, and also in joining with several other groups locally to support Huseyn Celil."

Last year, more than five million letters were sent worldwide on behalf of the 10 cases last year, with over 100 letters from the Niagara chapter.

Amnesty Canada runs urgent action email campaigns year-round in which the letter has been set up for you. To learn more about these cases, and write a letter in support of these women and others, visit amnesty.ca or writeathon.ca.

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Ukesters Make Merry

Jill Troyer
Special to TLR

Some brows are furrowed in concentration, toes are tapping, and fingers are strumming on Sunday afternoon at the Niagara-on-the-Lake Community Centre. The NOTL Ukesters, 90 strong, are gathered for their weekly fix of playing music and singing along together. Songs include some holiday favourites and various other popular tunes, from It Had to be You, to This Land is Our Land, or I'll Follow the Sun.

This merry band of music makers has been getting together to play their ukeles every Sunday since 2012. The group was co-founded by Alan Ash and Doug Widcombe. Ash, himself an accomplished jazz musician, leads the Sunday sessions. He said he loves being part of the Ukesters "because of the connection that we have as a group. No matter how we arrive, we always leave feeling lifted up, it's such a great vibe."

According to Ash, many

members were absolute beginners when they started, and he enjoys seeing them progress. There are workshops available for beginners through to more advanced levels to help boost abilities. Most members practice on their own, to be ready for the dozen or so songs they'll be playing each week.

Elaine Bryck joined the group a year and a half ago. "It's a wonderful way to share some music and friendship. I was new to NOTL when I started, and everyone was very welcoming, it was a great way to get to know people here," she said.

Now Bryck takes care of the Ukesters active Facebook page. "We get out once or twice a month to play at local seniors residences" added Bryck, "and we play at Monty's in St. Catharines once a month too."

Another member, Gary Evans, said it's fun "because everyone does what they can, the atmosphere is entirely non-judgemental."

When individuals step up to the front of the auditorium

to perform something solo as part of the open mike section of the day, all eyes and ears are tuned in. Shoulders sway to the sounds, heads are nodding, some quietly join in and sing along on the chorus. Warm smiles and enthusiastic applause greet the brave ones who do venture up on their own, rewarding their efforts.

NOTL Ukesters supports several local charities throughout the year, including Newark Neighbours, Hospice Niagara, and Niagara Workers Welcome. This year they made donations totalling \$4,500. The money comes from membership dues and the small honouraria they sometimes get when they perform in the community.

Notes from a recent members survey sum up what they like most about the Ukesters; "sense of community," "extremely happy and positive atmosphere," and, "I always leave with a smile, feeling uplifted."

What do they like least? According to at least one member, "the 6 days in between Sundays."



The NOTL Ukesters gather every Sunday at the community centre. (Jill Troyer)



The NOTL Ukesters. (Jill Troyer)



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Farm workers Welcome Kits

Lauren O'Malley
Staff

"If this is going to be a caring community, we have to care," says Jane Andres — known as "Aunty Jane" by many offshore workers in Niagara-on-the-Lake.

As the organizer of the Peach Pickers Picnic and other grassroots initiatives, Andres shows she cares in many ways. One of these gives us all an easy opportunity to do the same.

The Farmworkers Welcome Kits started formally last year, when Andres spoke about the issues and needs of offshore workers at a NOTL Newcomers Club meeting, and decided to find ways for people to get involved without too much commitment. Informally she and her friends had been baking and cooking and collecting in anticipation of the labourers' arrivals in NOTL for years.

Ever since making friends with some Jamaican workers from farms near her Creek Road bed and breakfast, Andres has been deeply concerned about their welfare. Knowing they've often been had long and gruelling travel time before they reach their living quarters, she's keen to make sure they feel acknowledged and welcome. "Mila has a 12-hour bus ride across Mexico, plus a half day at the airport, before her flight and drive to the farm where she arrives hungry and cold," says Andres.

She developed the kits to provide for basic needs, particularly on arrival. "I try to make it so the bags are



Jane Andres. (Lauren O'Malley)

waiting for them when they get here, so they can have a hot chocolate and a bowl of ramen after two days of travel time," she says. "It's all stuff they will need to buy but can't afford at the beginning."

Andres pays for the neon green reusable bags out of her own pocket — but will gladly accept donations to recoup the funds. "Last year I started with 100 and would have been happy to get 50 back. By the end of it all, we had ordered and filled 500 bags," she says with wonder and delight.

"The idea has latched on too because it's so easily adaptable to schools, book clubs — any groups or organizations," Andres says. "Throw a party, put on the Caribbean music, and fill 20 bags by the end of the night."

She also suggests filling the bags would be a good Christmas project, and a sim-

ple and meaningful activity for a family to do together. "Grab a bag, every week pick up one or two things, and in a month it's full," she says.

The initiative relies heavily on Andres: "There is no committee, it's just me," she says. "It's all very grassroots — it is definitely not organized," she laughs. "Some people just show up at my door with full bags. Sometimes people will drop off a box of soap that was on special at Costco, or a box of toothpaste," all of which is much appreciated.

Among the socks, toiletries, noodles and such, Andres encourages people to put a personal note in the bag: "Often the guys will stick it on their mirror to look at every day, as they miss their children and families so much," she says. If contact information is provided with the filled kit, Andres will do her best to send back a photo of the worker with

their bright green bag and big smile. (A touching slide show of these photos can be seen at <https://vimeo.com/263642582>.)

The ever-dedicated Andres would happily accept collaborators. "There are close to 1,000 farmworkers in the area — we need some logistical help in getting around," she says. "We're always happy for more volunteers and support." For example, she would love to hear from people in Queenston who might want to help support the workers on the nearby Tregunno fruit farms.

She's also looking for a place to store the filled kits.

Farmworkers Welcome Kit bags come with a list (which is also available online at <https://www.workerswelcomeinagara.com/>), and can be picked up after Dec. 18 at the library, Andres' B&B (Applewood Hollow) at 2230 Four Mile Creek Rd., and The Lake Report offices at 496 Mississagua St., Unit 2. Filled kits can be dropped off at the B&B. Farmworkers begin to arrive as early as January, so Andres is ready to receive these signs of our community's generosity any time.

If you can't wait until the 18th to start, or can't get your hands on a kit, Andres says, "Folks can also drop the items off in a grocery bag and we can decant them into the bags when they arrive."

"It's all about building awareness and relationships," says Andres. "I just want the farmworkers to feel like somebody knows they're here."

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23	24	25	26
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19 Budget m. - Council	20 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 Committee of Adjustment Hearing - 7 p.m. - Council Chambers	21 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 Knit-a-Bit - 2 p.m. to 4 p.m. - NOTL Public Library	22
26	27 Minecraft Club - 4 p.m. to 5 p.m. - NOTL Public Library	28 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 Knit-a-Bit - 2 p.m. to 4 p.m. - NOTL Public Library	29 Christmas by Candlelight - 7 p.m. - Niagara United Mennonite Church

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Chatting Robin Hood with Yellow Door Theatre Project's Andorlie Hillstrom

Jer Houghton
Staff

Yellow Door Theatre Project is inviting local residents to take time out this holiday season to see its Canadian musical Robin Hood, which runs Dec. 14 to 23 at FirstOntario Performing Arts Centre (PAC) in Robertson Theatre.

"This is a premier, it's a brand-new work," says Andorlie Hillstrom, artistic director of the show.

"This isn't a typical 'Oh, it's Robin Hood, so it must be medieval,' — it is not, it's contemporary."

Hillstrom and playwright Lezlie Wade have adapted and contemporized the classic Robin Hood legend to appeal to a wide audience, describing the play setting as, "somewhere close by, but perhaps no longer recognizable."

"We wanted material that is going to be appealing to a family, a broad spectrum of individuals — not just other kids, but to our adult members," says Hillstrom.

"And something that, you know, for instance, especially like this time of year at Christmas, people are going to think how this would be a great little afternoon or evening for a family."

Presented in modern times, an ensemble of 37 children makes up almost the entire cast, accompanied by Shaw Festival actors Jenny Wright and William Vickers.

The play also includes a new character by the name of Anwin, and three reporters that act as narrators.

The story follows the group of children who have been hiding in Sherwood Forest after losing their parents to the sheriff over his plans to build a new subdivision by way of clear-cutting trees.

The parents have been imprisoned for protesting the sheriff, played by William Vickers, and his associate, Anwin, played by Jenny L. Wright, both seasoned performers of the Shaw Festival.

"And so, there's a push-back — and I want everyone to know that there is no connection here between this show and what's happening in Niagara-on-the-Lake right now," says Hillstrom.

She says the writing and commissioning of the show started well before any of the recent development issues in Niagara-on-the-Lake began, but finds it interesting the storyline is running somewhat parallel to what's going on in town at the moment.



Andorlie Hillstrom. (Supplied photo)



Main cast of Robin Hood. (Supplied photo/Sarah Jamal)

In this rendition of Robin Hood, the Sheriff of Nottingham has proposed to develop Sherwood Forest.

"It has truly, you know from the kids' perspective, made them really think about their community, just environmentally how important their spaces are to them, the world and our care of it," Hillstrom says.

She says both Vickers and Wright are worth the price of admission, with Vickers making "a great bad guy" as the sheriff and Wright epitomizing a strong matriarchal role as the sheriff's crony who ends up having a significant impact on the outcome

of the play.

"Anwin (Wright) goes from being someone who is literally a 'yes person,' someone who is 'weak minded,' to an individual who is strong and powerful," Hillstrom says.

"It's pretty exciting to just watch the journey that particular character takes."

As for the casting of Robin Hood, Hillstrom decided to choose a female to perform the role, as opposed to the traditional renditions, in which Hood is male to keep, with the medieval feel.

"The whole idea of having a girl do the role of Robin also was just kind of intriguing," said Hillstrom.

"It was, 'Okay, so let's shake it up a little bit,' and it has made it far more interesting than just regurgitating a legend or story."

Naomi Shad, who's in her second season with the company, was chosen to play Robin Hood, and according to Hillstrom, she brings "everything to the table" with her "very gifted vocals."

"She's got the most amazing voice," she says.

"She's one of those singers that just touches your heart and there have been more than one instance where I've heard Naomi singing — whether it's in competition or

in concert — where she's had me in tears."

Maid Marion's character is played by award-winning singer Sydney Cornett, who Hillstrom believes will one day become a very strong musical presence in Canada, if not the world.

"So we have these just incredibly strong young women," explains Hillstrom.

Shad and Cornett are "very different," Hillstrom said.

"Physically they are very different, vocally very different, but they both bring something very unique and special to these particular roles."

Hillstrom says the music, composed by John-Luke Addison and directed by Patrick Bowman, is supported by strong driving rhythms.

"There is a kind of an overriding feeling throughout a lot of the music that is sung by the children of kind of Celtic [feel] — something older, something you might even think in terms of something that's ritualistic," she says.

"The harmonies the children sing are challenging — there's such depth to it, it's ethereal at points."

Hillstrom says the are also up-tempo points to compliment the sheriff and his scenes, which are much more comedic.

"I think that John-Luke has done such wonderful work on the show — I know he's really proud of it, he feels it's some of the best work he's ever written," she says.

"It isn't like anything I've heard before, people have to come and hear it."

The performance is set in Robertson Theatre, a black box in the PAC, which has allowed set designer Corwin Ferguson to create a series of platforms and backdrop areas to make it look like many different areas.

"You want pieces on stage that can become relevant for the sheriff's office, for instance, or now we're in the forest and we're in the layer where the children are living, or it could be any of a number of other types of scenes that it will be used for," says Hillstrom.

"There's lots of little hiding places for them as well, like there are a few doors that pop up and out and there are barrels that the kids are hiding in. And so, it just becomes quite fun as they begin to emerge from these spaces where they've been hiding."

Hillstrom says to expect some audience interaction as well.

While the children are moving in and out of the performance space, they get very close to the audience, though they do not "break the fourth wall," whereas the sheriff and his cronies, and the three reporters who play narrators, do break the fourth wall and engage the audience.

Special effects also occur in the show, with an emphasis on projection work, something the company is introducing for the first time.

"We have projection work happening behind the kids on stage which will just add another layer for the audience and I think it'll be great fun," Hillstrom says.

"We have a huge storm, I love storms on stage ... we have lightning and thunder, and the winds blowing, and so all of that's going to be great fun for the audience."

The company has been working on the show since the early Spring, with auditions that followed in June, and rehearsals that started in September.

"These are extremely talented young people, and some of them now have been with us for four years. That's how long the company has existed," says Hillstrom.

"And because we provide a strong mentoring and skill training program as well, I'm beginning to see the results of those efforts in the work that these children are doing and with what they provide just for the company in general."

The show is recommended for ages five and up.

"There's no reason for anyone to think that the show is dark, it isn't at all because we have all of these elements of comedy throughout the show," Hillstrom explains.

"I would just love to see it full for the kids. They've worked so hard for this, so deserving. And people need to come and see them and hear them."

This is Yellow Door Theatre Project's fourth annual fall production, which runs this year from Dec. 14 to 23. The production has been commissioned by both the company and the generous support of Niagara Investment and Culture, the third year the program has given grants to commission the company's shows.

The premiere is already sold out. Tickets can be purchased at firstontariopac.ca.

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Christmas Parade drives home the holiday spirit

Richard Harley
Staff

Though the morning looked grey, the sun was shining on the town of Niagara-on-the-Lake as the 54th annual Christmas Parade marched through Old Town Dec. 8, drawing thousands of locals and visitors to see the more than 100 entries, including many floats, animals, clowns and a number of local dignitaries and celebrities. The parade started at 11

a.m. at King and Centre streets near the former Parliament Oak School and weaved its way through town to join Queen Street at Simcoe before finishing at the Clock Tower Cenotaph.

The event is supported annually by local donations and button sales.

Bob Cheriton, media relations leader for the parade committee, said this year's button sales broke a record, with 1,800 being sold, raising about \$4,200 towards putting

the parade together. The artwork on the buttons was done by local artist Tanya Peterson.

The honorary grand marshal for this year's parade was the NOTL Rotary Club, in recognition of 25 years of service to the local community and beyond.

As always, representatives of Canada Post were on hand to accept letters for Santa.

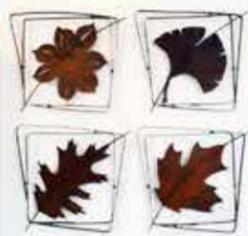
Photos in gallery by Richard Harley, taken from The Lake Report's parade entry.

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Holiday House Tour best-attended yet

Jill Troyer
Special to TLR

Lorna Penman, chair of the Niagara-on-the-Lake Rotary Club's annual Holiday House Tour, said this year's event was the best yet, with nearly 4,800 tickets having been sold in total.

It was the event's 20th anniversary, and Penman said feedback has been "fabulous," and that the diversity of the homes was great this year. "They were all completely different from each other," she said.

New this year were the VIP tours of the McArthur Home at the Romance Estate. Penman said the four time slots were sold out within a month. Each tour had 250 people on it, for a total of 1,000 tickets sold.

There were also 3,800 tickets sold for the main house tour, including six different homes. Penman said organizers stopped ticket sales once they reached that threshold, and they won't sell any more than that in future.

"Lineups were long, so we'll work on reducing that for next year," said Penman.

All in all, she said she thinks everyone who attended had a good time.

Total funds raised will include both ticket sales and sponsorships, and Penman said it's too soon for a final tally, but it will top all previous years. Half of the money raised will be used to support overseas charities, and the other half will be spent locally, including support for youth exchanges.



(Lauren O'Malley)



(Lauren O'Malley)



(Lauren O'Malley)



The Vintage-Parks Canada Ice Rink makes its return this winter operating from December 1 to March 31. The rink is located at Fort George National Historic Site and is free for all to enjoy!

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Christmas Break Fun

December 24:	10 a.m. - 1 p.m. 2 p.m. - 5 p.m.
December 25:	12 p.m. - 4 p.m.
December 26:	12 p.m. - 4 p.m.
December 27:	10 a.m. - 12 p.m. 1 p.m. - 4 p.m. 5 p.m. - 8 p.m.

Regular rink hours resume on Friday Dec 28

*Operating season and hours are subject to weather conditions. Please check website for more information.

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Jennings: Christmas Carol “A total hit”

Jill Troyer
Special to TLR

The magical spirit of the season comes to life in Shaw Festival’s production of *A Christmas Carol*, and the benefits extend well beyond each performance.

Back for a second season, the Christmas classic has been exceptionally popular. It sold out right away last year, and according to Shaw Festival executive director Tim Jennings, only a few tickets remain available for this season.

By the time the curtain falls on the final performance of 2018 on Dec. 23, Jennings said 13,000 to 14,000 people will have come to see the show.

Jennings said *A Christmas Carol* has become an introduction to the Shaw Festival for many people, and a very successful vehicle to bring new audiences to the summer season.

For example, “44 per cent of the people who came last year had never been to the Shaw before, and 80 per cent



A Christmas Carol joined the Christmas Parade Dec. 8. (Lauren O’Malley)

of those people came back to see something in the main season.”

This season, 25 per cent of attendees were new to the Shaw, and Jennings expects many of them will return.

The play also extends employment by two months for “cast, technical crews, and front-of-house,” Jennings

added, and “brings us closer to a 365 day program.”

Jennings said the play has had “a massive impact on downtown, as people who come to the play are also Christmas shopping, dining, and staying over in various accommodations.”

Janice Thomson, chair of the Niagara-on-the-Lake

Chamber of Commerce said the play has “changed December to one of the worst months for local shops and businesses to one of the best.”

Next year, with *A Christmas Carol* returning, and the addition of the musical *Holiday Inn* playing at the Festival Theatre, those benefits could be multiplied.

Chautauqua stroll spreads Christmas cheer



Carollers stroll Chautauqua singing songs to the neighbourhood. (Supplied photo/Tim Collier)

Richard Harley
Editor

Once a year, the sounds of Christmas carols fill the air for an evening in the small Niagara-on-the-Lake community of Chautauqua.

It’s like something out of a classic story book, as local residents take their annual stroll, singing to neighbours and spreading a bit of holiday joy to all who wish to listen — and probably a Scrooge or two who don’t.

Kids run around, and families singing beneath street lights, all led by a horse-drawn carriage and Santa Claus himself.

About 50 people showed up this year, meeting at Chautauqua Park.

Before things kicked off,

CRA president John Gledie encouraged the kids in attendance to shout “We love Santa!”

The big man in red heard their calls, and came down the street shortly after in a sleigh led by Sentineal Carriages’ locally-famous horse Obie.

The stroll finished up back at the park, where singers warmed up by the campfire, roasting marshmallows and sipping hot chocolate. Kids also got to take sleigh rides around Circle Street with Santa.

The evening also acts as a food drive for Newark Neighbours, a local charity which provides generously to families in need. A picnic table was covered in donations by the end of the night.

40 Winks for Red Roof Retreat



Supplied photo.

Lauren O’Malley
Staff

Niagara’s Finest Hotels is offering an opportunity to act like a tourist in our own town, with discounted rates on rooms at the Harbour House Hotel, The Charles Hotel, Shaw Club Hotel, and Colonel Butler Best Western on Thursday Feb. 7, 2019.

The deal is part of the annual 40 Winks event, with all funds raised going to Red Roof Retreat, a local charity for young people with special needs and their families.

This is the 11th year for the well-established and much anticipated happening, and Steffanie Bjorgan, the charitable institution’s executive director, can’t wait.

“I never miss it, actually,” she says. “A bunch of us mums who have kids with special needs go every year.

You can imagine how hard it is to find care so we can get away for one night. Some of the parents — this is the only time I see them.”

Of course Bjorgan’s just as happy to receive the funding, which last year added up to \$5,000 that went towards RRR’s operational costs.

“Vintage Hotels is an amazing organization,” she says. “They’ve been doing events for us from the very beginning. Once we settled on this one it was perfect — easy for them to organize and manage, and a great thing to offer the community.”

If you’re happier with forty winks in your own bed, you can invite friends and family to visit NOTL without having to tidy up the guest room.

Reservations for 40 Winks begin on Thursday Dec. 13 at 9 a.m., and must be booked by Dec. 23.



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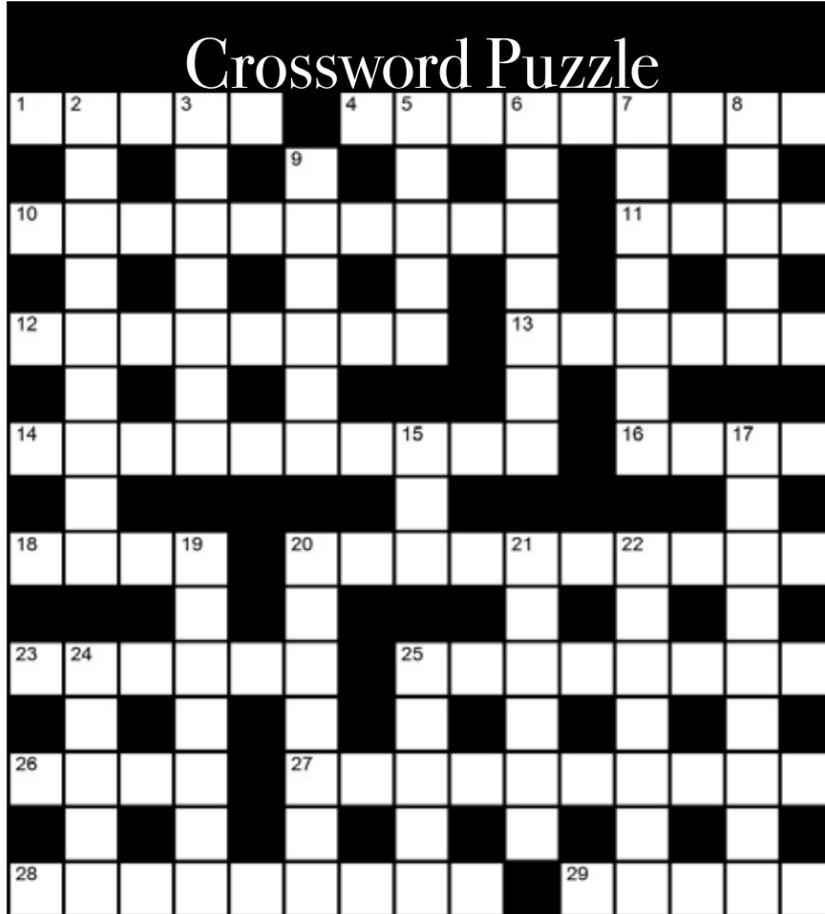


Have some fun

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

Across

- 1. Scent (5)
 - 4. Dutch canal city (9)
 - 10. Lively interest (10)
 - 11. Small margin (4)
 - 12. Serious warning (3,5)
 - 13. Animosity (6)
 - 14. Tropical fruit (10)
 - 16. Unspecified in number (4)
 - 18. Singles (4)
 - 20. Place to research (10)
 - 23. Throughout (6)
 - 25. E.g. Aldrin (8)
 - 26. Knave (4)
 - 27. Matrimonial lady-in-waiting (10)
 - 28. Gun dog (9)
 - 29. Customary (5)
- Down**
- 2. Weed (9)
 - 3. Lift up (7)
 - 5. Intended (5)
 - 6. Hardens metal (7)
 - 7. Christens again (7)
 - 8. Item with exchange value (5)
 - 9. Dozing (6)
 - 15. Tennis high ball (3)
 - 17. Salty cocktail (9)
 - 19. Slacker (7)
 - 20. Readable (7)
 - 21. Subscriber (6)
 - 22. Vacuum flask (7)
 - 24. Long-continued practice (5)
 - 25. Connected series of rooms (5)



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



Last issue's answers



Sudoku



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FEATURES

A carol to fight cancer

Jer Houghton
Staff

Carolling For Cancer enters its fifth annual holiday tradition with vocal quartets carolling door-to-door for donations to the Rankin Cancer Run over the three nights leading up to Christmas.

Expect classics like, Joy to the World and We Wish You a Merry Christmas this Friday, Dec. 21, Saturday, Dec. 22 and Sunday Dec. 23.

“When we knock on the doors, we get a lot of people who are honestly crying and so happy,” said Scott Robinson, the campaign’s founder, who started the initiative with three friends back in 2014.

“We’ll knock on Christmas parties and then the people have this really cool experience with carollers at their front door.”

When the annual campaign first started, Robinson was running a fundraising initiative for the Canadian Cancer Society called Kayak for the Cure Niagara, in which Robinson kayaked across Lake Ontario, from Niagara-on-the-Lake to Toronto.

“The goal was \$10,000 for the Canadian Cancer Society, and so we went carol-



Supplied photo.

ling as part of that to raise money for that goal,” said Robinson, in which he and his lone quartet raised more than \$1,200 over two nights of carolling.

“We were pretty amazed by – first of all – how magical the experience was, how happy we made people feel when we knocked on doors.”

Robinson said the feedback was so “magical” that some residents called the singing a “Christmas miracle,” motivating him to expand the tradition the following year with more volunteers.

“The next year we

thought, ‘Wow, that was so much fun last year for the four of us,’ and we raised so much money, and people were so happy, we really felt like we were doing a good thing just to create a Christmas memory for people,” he said.

“It was good for us, it was good for people’s memories, and we raised a lot of good money too.”

Since the project started, the campaign has raised over \$14,000 with more than 50 volunteers, 28 who sang last year.

“The first year we did it for

the Canadian Cancer Society, but then we moved it to the Rankin Cancer Run so that all the money stays within a Niagara,” said Robinson.

“With all the money raised, 100 per cent of donations go directly to the Rankin Cancer Run, which then goes directly to Niagara patient care and Niagara patient research.”

The groups of carollers are split up into vocal quartets made up of two men and two women ranging from 18 to 24 years of age. Many are Brock University students as well as graduates of Laura Secord Secondary School in St. Catharines.

“Everybody forms their own groups of friends, and then they split up and go to different neighborhoods,” said Robinson.

“Every year we’ve done mainly Niagara-on-the-Lake and St. Catharines, and a little bit of Niagara Falls. So that’ll be the plan again.”

Robinson is excited to share the “Christmas magic” with more people in Niagara-on-the-Lake.

“A lot of us ‘tout’ it now as one of our favourite few nights of the year.”

Community tree lit in Virgil

Lauren O’Malley
Staff

The nights are brighter in Virgil, thanks to a tree, a boy, and a giving community.

The enormous evergreen in front of our Town offices was decorated with colourful Christmas lights last week.

“It’s all my fault, actually,” says Phil Leboudec.

Last Christmas, Leboudec’s 10-year-old son asked his dad if there was a Christmas tree in town like in the movies, a tree for everyone to enjoy. The Virgil business owner thought about it and decided it was a good idea — and one he wanted to realize. It was too late to make it happen then, so he got started in plenty of time this year.

“I called up Kevin Turcotte [the manager of parks and recreation at the Town] and asked him how we could make this happen,” says Leboudec. “I always love working with the Town, they’re great on community stuff.”

He also presented the concept to the Virgil Business Association, “and they thought it was a great idea,” he says.

The result was a collaboration between the Town, the VBA, and the community. Erin and James Cadeau, owners of

Sweets & Swirls Cafe donated hot chocolate, hot apple cider and coffee to the approximately 80 people who braved the cold on Friday evening to enjoy “a neutral opportunity for everybody to just stop for a few minutes and come together,” says Leboudec.

Members of Gateway Community Church helped to serve the warm beverages and to hand out cookies from Leboudec’s store, Phil’s Valu-mart.

Santa Claus was in attendance, hearing Christmas wishes and providing photo opportunities for young and old. Leboudec’s 99-year-old grandmother even leaned in for a kiss.

Lord mayor Betty Disero and all members of our current council were also there to celebrate on the grounds of the town hall, and Disero made a brief speech before it was announced that Austin Leboudec, now 11, would plug in the lights on the commUNITY tree.

Phil Leboudec compares the people in our community to the lights on the tree. “Each light independently shines bright but when you put them all together it makes something beautiful,” he says. “We all have our different ideas or beliefs, but it’s our combined equal light that becomes beautiful.”



The Community tree in Virgil. (Lauren O’Malley)



The Community tree was lit in Virgil Dec. 7. (Lauren O’Malley)

GIVING MUSIC

Danny Lamb creates scholarship and donates guitar



Danny Lamb. (Lauren O'Malley)

Lauren O'Malley
Staff

Danny Lamb lives to give. The Niagara-on-the-Lake native has used his career as a musician to serve in any number of ways. This year he launched the Army of Love campaign, a fundraising tour. Lamb and various configurations of his band,

the Association, toured around Ontario and along the east coast to Halifax, raising money to send a young artist to leadership camp.

The 30-year-old philanthropist has spent time working with the social enterprise ME to WE, and wanted to maintain ties with what he sees as a meaningful and progressive organization. "I

was trying to find some arts and activities pieces, ways to develop young artists," Lamb says. "I had a conversation with the ME to WE camp crew and we came to this idea, to create a scholarship for a young artist to be able to attend the Leaders In Training camp."

The spring tour was a success, surpassing its goals —

and then came the challenging part: choosing a recipient for the scholarship.

"It was ridiculously hard — they should all go to camp," says Lamb. "But Indya Kennedy's application resonated with me. She stuck out as someone who's ready to do something at age 13 without support." The young visual artist

based in the GTA had such a powerful experience at the camp that she now has big plans of her own. "She wants to further female empowerment through a trip to India. I love that she's super-passionate about women's rights," says Lamb.

Lamb also facilitated the donation of a guitar — from Hydrocephalus Canada

and Lamb's organization A Song, A City — to Niagara Music Gives. The latter is an initiative through the Niagara Conservatory of Music which seeks to provide musical instruments for young people in the region. The guitar will be one of many donations made by Lamb and founder Greg Wierchol-ski on Dec. 18.

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Niagara's History Unveiled

St. Davids – The Early Years



Denise Ascenzo
Featured

Tucked under the Niagara escarpment and mostly overlooked by many, is a small village known as St. Davids. Founded in 1780, when United Empire Loyalists as well as soldiers from Butler's Rangers ventured across the Niagara River to settle in the new colony of Upper Canada.

Many families settled on land in Upper Canada, without a clear title to the land or a lease or any security of their farms. The terms for re-settlement were set out by the Governor of Lower Canada, (which included the Niagara region at that time) by General Haldimand (1778-1784) under the "Farming/Resettlement Program" for loyalist families.

Under the terms of this program, settlers would be granted land and provided with seed, ploughs and other farm implements. There would be no rent charged on the lands given, but it was made clear in the signed agreement that surplus produce would be sold to the British forces only and not to any other persons.

This was how St. Davids was settled in 1780. There were 16 families, Secords, Dolson, Stuart, Fields, Depue, Rowe, Phelps, Bender, Lutz, Showers, House, McMicking, Young, and van Every, 68 persons in total who saw a positive future and agreed to settle without clear title to the land.

The area allocated for these new settlers was where two busy trails intersected; a north/south trail (originally Paxton Lane) connecting Lakes Ontario and Erie and a trail that ran along the base of the escarpment (now York Road). As well this area had a great source of water that would provide power to grist mills and saw mills.

During the early days of this settlement, the village boasted several mills and people referred to it as Four Mile Mills (being situated on Four Mile Creek). By 1800, Richard Woodruff started referring to the town as Davidsville or Davidstown after his friend and superior officer, David Secord. At that time, men who showed great leadership were often referred to as "king" like a mayor of a settlement.

So how did this town become known as St. Davids. Speculation has it that David



Four Mile Creek Road in St. Davids circa 1920. (Supplied/St. Davids Ratepayers Association)

Secord, who was known as King David, maybe reminded people of David from the bible and with a twist of words, the village became known as St. Davids – no apostrophe!

The town of St. Davids was severely impacted by the War of 1812 (1812-1814). It was occupied by the American forces six times and by the British forces seven times. At one point it was the Capital of Upper Canada when both York (Toronto) and Newark (NOTL) were occupied by the Americans.

It was also the headquarters for the British Army for a time, where in Solomon Quick's Tavern on Paxton Lane, General Drummond and Colonel Murray (both British Army) planned for the capture of Fort Niagara (American side of the Niagara River) in retaliation for the burning of Newark (NOTL) on December 10, 1813. It was a very detailed plan put into action on December 19, 1813. A successful battle that saw Fort Niagara captured with no loss to British forces. The British flag was hoisted above its fort walls once again.

During that winter of 1814, the British forces did not stop with just the capture of Fort Niagara but continued down the east side of the Niagara River, destroying all settlements from Lewiston to Buffalo.

In July of 1814, American forces landed at Fort Erie (on the east side of the Niagara River) and took the fort. The Americans then continued north through Chippawa, Lundy's Lane and finally occupied the village of Queenston. Battles along this route between the British and Americans have been recorded as some of the fiercest throughout the War of 1812.

The Canadian Militia and residents of St. Davids defended their homes with such tenacity that the American forces became very frustrated. On July 19, 1814, the US Commanding Officer Colonel Stone gave the order to "burn" St. Davids to the ground with no mercy to be shown to soldier and civilians.

It was this final act of destruction by the American Army that provoked the British to march into Washington to

burn the Whitehouse.

After the destruction of St. Davids, with the leadership of David Secord and Richard Woodruff, the town's people were eager to rebuild their community.

In 1815 the first business to be established after the War of 1812 was the general store of Richard Woodruff. It was on the south/west corner of York Road and Four Mile Creek Road until 1961, when it was demolished to accommodate the widening of York Road.

In 1816 the first school was built on land donated by David Secord (on York Road and Paxton Lane). It was in operation until 1871 when the Lowry family donated land and a bell for a new school. This school can be still be seen at its current location on York Road.

In 1817 the first newspaper, Niagara Spectator, was opened. It later moved to Niagara (NOTL) where one of its publishers, Bartemas Ferguson was imprisoned for his political opinions. The paper thrived on this publicity and was successful for many years to follow.

1818 the very first steam gristmill in Ontario opened in St. Davids. It was built by Richard and William Woodruff. Later the Lowrey family purchased it for the use of a "fruit evaporator". Fruit evaporators dried fruit so that it could be packed in barrels and shipped great distances. This plant was located at 215 Four Mile Creek Road.

John Sleeman from Cornwall, England built the Stamford Spring Brewery and Distillery in 1836. It was located on the west side of Four Mile Creek south of Town Line Road. It operated as a brewery, under four different owners until 1900 when a Mrs. H. Dixon purchase the brewery and turned it into a water bottling plant. Fresh spring water from Four Mile Creek was a sought after commodity and the plant operated until the end of the First World War when the brewery/water plant was abandon after a century of prosperous commercial enterprise.

By the 1880's fruit farms replaced the general farm crops. David Jackson Lowrey is credited with planting the

first commercial peach trees and later the first commercial vineyards.

With the twentieth century dawning, St. Davids had four canning factories, a huge quarry, tannery, three black smiths, two general stores, four gristmills and their very own Bell telephone exchange.

St. Davids had become a thriving viable community. The first settlers would be very pleased if they could see what had become of their hard work in settling the land.

To learn more about the topic of this story you can visit the Niagara Historical Society & Museum website at, www.niagarahistorical.museum, 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.

Niagara Historical
SOCIETY MUSEUM



43 Castlereagh St.
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COMMUNITY

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



OBITUARY

From his children

“What dreames may come,
When we haue shuffel'd off
this mortall coile, Must giue
vs pawse.”

Indeed we know that
only wonderous dreams and
adventures will come to Nor-
man, our much loved father
and best friend now that, on
December 6, 2018, at the age
of 98, he has departed this
mortal realm.

Predeceased by the love of
his life, Margherita for whom
he was clearly the chief
encourager in her path to the
Order of Canada, and sur-
vived by his daughter Louise
and sons Michael, Peter and
Robin.

Decorated Royal Air Force
fighter pilot, jazz aficionado,
fabulous dresser, champion
tennis player, amateur water
colour artist, bird watcher
and skilled raconteur and
joke-teller. He also made a
very tasty chili and clam
chowder, and his blueberry
pancakes were first class.

It is next to impossible
to come up with any nega-
tives about Normie – except

Norman Charles Russell Howe



perhaps his penchant for
never getting rid of anything
that he acquired, ever, and
during his heyday making an
undrinkable, potent, purple,
unfiltered-for-fruit flies con-
coction that members of his
Niagara-on-the-Lake cabal
astonishingly termed “wine”.

He was intelligent, loving,
funny, engaging, generous,
witty, empathetic, creative
and self-sacrificing. He saw
the best in others and gave
the best he had.

He was just someone you
wanted to be around. We will
miss him terribly.

He lived the RAF motto –
per ardua ad astra.

As we look back over time
We find ourselves wonder-
ing

Did we remember to thank
you enough

For all you have done for
us?

For all the times you were
by our sides

To help and support us

To celebrate our successes

To understand our prob-
lems

And accept our defeats?
Or for teaching us by your
example,

The value of hard work,
good judgment,
Courage and integrity?
We wonder if we ever
thanked you

For the sacrifices you
made.

To let us have the very
best?

And for the simple things
Like laughter, smiles and
times we shared?

If we have forgotten to
show our

Gratitude enough for all the
things you did,

We're thanking you now
And we are hoping you
knew all along,

How much you meant to us.
(As We Look Back By an
Unknown Author)

There will be a private
family ceremony in the next
days. In the Spring the family
will host a Celebration of
Life with Jazz.

The family encourages
those that wish to make dona-
tions to the Lincoln County
Humane Society in Norm's
name.

Memories, photos and
condolences may be shared at
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RESIDENT PHOTO



Nash is loving his new home in Niagara-on-the-Lake with so much room to run free. But every now and then he stops for a quick photo op. Submitted by Carly, Taylor & Nash MaGee.



A flag was raised for Amnesty International in December.



Hotel Dieu Shaver Foundation accepts a generous donation from Al Howse, President of RCL Branch 124 for the purchase of patient care equipment at Hotel Dieu Shaver Health & Rehabilitation Centre. Funds will be directed toward the purchase of a Vital Signs Monitor for the inpatient unit. L-R: Rick Sherk, Foundation Board member, Al Howse, President, Kristina Manzi, Development Officer

Exploring photos with Jim Smith: The Brock Theatre



From the 1940s to the 1960s Mr. and Mrs. Dewy McCourt ran the Brock Theater. As seen in the picture painted by John Shaw, us kids lined up out side on a Saturday afternoon waiting to get in. Children paid ten cents, students fifteen and adults forty two cents. Build in 1913 by Mrs. Norris, she sold to George Reid in 1918 who re-named it the Royal George. After George Reid sold the theatre it was again given a new name, the Brock. In 1977 the Shaw Festival bought the theatre and reverted it's name back to the Royal George.

HAPPY
HOLIDAYS
FROM
THE LAKE
REPORT!



Betty & Jane: Plunger Patrol Inspecting NOTL's bathrooms: Strewn Winery

The trip to Strewn Winery was a winning experience in all categories. We visited the tasting room, Oliv restaurant, and noted the Strewn cooking school classes. The winery is known for their “bold red wines.” There are several large bathrooms to choose from and all are very spacious and private. One can't help be enamoured with the beautiful stone tiled mirrors and floors. The washrooms were clean and accessible to all patrons of this renowned winery! No “whining” here, just enjoy your visit!

4/5 Golden Plungers



RIDDLE ME THIS:

What has a bed but
never sleeps, and
a mouth but never
eats?

Last Week's answer: A shadow,
answered first by Louisa Swick. An-
other answer was birthday, found by
Brienne Hawley.

Email answers to editor@niagaranow.com for a chance to win a prize.



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FEATURED
LOCAL STORY

The Dogcatcher



Lauren O'Malley
Staff

In a small town like Niagara-on-the-Lake, there are certain jobs that bring with them a kind of fame. The “dogcatcher” is one of them.

“I don’t know everyone in town, but everyone knows me,” says Ken Reid. Ken is technically the animal care and control bylaw officer of Niagara-on-the-Lake, which means he’s the guy people call not only when they’ve lost or found a dog, but also when they have a skunk under their porch, or a dead racoon on their street. Or even, in a memorable instance, five ducklings in a storm drain.

“When I got to William and Dorchester,” says Ken, “there were several people trying to save the ducklings that were stuck under the wire mesh.” He pulled out a variety of tools and undid the two bolts holding the grate. Among his implements were a butterfly net and a bamboo pole, which he attached to

each other and used to fish out the baby ducks — who promptly returned to the safety of their nearby mother.

Reid’s former work as a roadside mechanic for the CAA in Vancouver taught him to be prepared for anything — hence the tools. In that job he would not only save distressed people from difficult situations, he would also let them know what to expect when they got to a mechanic, so they couldn’t be cheated.

He’s still helping people in unpleasant circumstances, and credits his work with the CAA and with the Vancouver police force for his skills. Reid and his wife Kea — who died suddenly in 2016 — were team leaders of a citizens crime watch program. They were involved in a road rage incident that resulted in an Uzi shooting. “Kea and I were always in the middle of something,” he says.

“We were all volunteers but got drivers’ training, and negotiation training,” says the

66-year-old. “I use all of that that in my current work.”

When the Reids decided to move back to Niagara-on-the-Lake twenty years ago, Ken applied for work with the CAA. While he was waiting to be signed on, he noticed an ad in the Advance for a canine control officer. Using his references from the CAA and the police, Ken applied. “They asked me a lot of questions about how I would handle this or that situation,” he says. He got a call saying he got the job, and the caller was disappointed by Ken’s rather sombre reaction. “My father had passed away two hours before, so I couldn’t get too excited about the job,” he says.

That job has now turned into a career that has spanned two decades. And it was a passion that Ken and Kea Reid shared for 18 of those years.

“Kea was psychic when it came to dogs,” says Ken in awe. “She would insist

we just try, just drive out to where the dog was last seen. Then she would tell me to turn right, then turn right again, and there it would be. I don’t have the same capabilities as Kea did.”

Ken’s partner of more than 47 years, Kea died of complications due to the misdiagnosis of a brain tumour. She had lost some control of her motor functions on one side of her body, so a stroke was thought to be the culprit. When blood thinners were given, a heart attack ensued. “She went into a coma and they sent her to Hamilton for a different type of dialysis,” says Ken. He was told there was no chance his wife would survive without life support, and had to make the decision whether or not to remove the equipment.

It took him days to decide. Knowing these were Kea’s own wishes, he decided to have the love of his life taken off life support. “She lived for 20 minutes after that,” he says. “She came out of the

coma long enough for me to tell her what was going on. That was hard. I told her what had happened, and asked her if she was sure she wanted me to let her go.”

“She couldn’t speak, but she closed her eyes tightly, twice, and I knew I had to say goodbye.” After Kea’s death, Ken suffered terribly. “I would go home and bam it’s dead air. Then my ears would start to ring,” he says. “I wasn’t sleeping, wasn’t eating. I was just smoking all the time.” He says he was “trying to catch up to Kea.”

Then, one night at the Olde Angel Inn, as he was trying to drown his sorrows, Lise Walton approached him. “She could see that I was failing, that I wasn’t going to make it,” Ken says. Walton’s husband had also died suddenly a few years prior, so she was very sympathetic to Ken’s situation. “Lise was a good counsellor, told me what to expect, made sure I was eating, sleeping,” he says. “She

pulled me out of a hole.” “It’s an unexpected relationship,” Ken says.

Another positive: the Town renewed his contract recently. “They put me on a salary and gave me holidays. Cut the job from 24-hour on-call to 12 hours,” he says with enormous relief. His hours are now 8 a.m. to 8 p.m., with the Niagara Falls Humane Society filling in the overnight hours. “Pat Darte said, ‘I didn’t realize how much stress we put on you,’” says Ken.

Last year, Walton pushed Ken to see a doctor about symptoms he’d been ignoring — odd pains in his legs. “I thought I just needed a hip replacement,” he says of the pain and occasional falls. In the first surgery he’s had since he had his appendix out at age 12, Ken had femoral artery surgery to clear substantial blockages. “She’s saved me in a few different ways,” he says of Walton.

Saving things seems to be a common interest in these two.

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