VINTAGE TO EXPAND PILLAR

Construction of conference centre and subdivision not planned until after 2019

Richard Harley
Editor

Vintage Hotels was given the green light to proceed with the development of a nearly a city block of land across from the Pillar & Post Monday night.

The company, owned by Lais Hotels Properties Limited, plans to build a one-and-a-half-storey, 9,350-square-foot conference centre and subdivision of a single-family homes on an adjacent property.

The proposal will be heard by council Monday night, and town staff has put forward a notice of intention to pass the changes.

According to an information package sent to councillors, LHPL still needs to wait for the new wastewater treatment plant to be up and running. Meanwhile, the company also plans to build a number of single-family homes on an adjacent property.

The project, to called the Boatworks Subdivision, is also held up by the opening of the treatment plant.

According to the information package, the plant is now supposed to be open by spring of 2019 — though no report confirming the same could be found on the Region’s website.

Completion of the wastewater treatment plant has seen significant delays, with the date of opening being continually pushed back in 2018.

In a letter to council, Vintage Hotels said it doesn’t intend to move forward with the project this year, but is requesting council approve the hospitality tent and an “event barn,” which would use same the sewage capacity as the future conference centre in the meantime.

The company said this would “ensure there is capacity to go forward.”

Bob Jackson, chief executive officer of Lais Hotel Properties Limited, sent a letter to council confirming the company doesn’t intend to develop the conference or administration centre until after 2019, and as such the sewage capacity could be “available to other endeavours.”

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The wastewater treatment plant in NOTL is set to open in March, says the Region. RICHARD HARLEY

Friday morning cold allows for icewine harvest

Icewine grapes freshly harvested. RICHARD HARLEY

Jill Troyer
Special

Mother Nature gave winemakers a window of weather cold enough to harvest some grapes for icewine very early this morning in Niagara.

Mattias Oppenlaender, chair of the Ontario Grape Growers said the temperature dropped low enough by about 4 a.m. and stayed there until 9 a.m., providing a few hours to harvest the more sensitive grapes, namely Cabernet Franc and Riesling.

Environment Canada reported temperatures between -8 C and -10 C during those hours.

According to Oppenlaender, “It was a good start, there might be a chance tonight and Sunday, and then we’re expecting a longer cold spell to start on Jan. 20.”

He added some of the temperatures at vineyards closer to Lake Ontario didn’t get cold enough, since the lake is a moderating force.

Peller Estates winemaker KatieDickieson shared the good news with staff today, writing “Early this morning we officially started the 2018 Icewine harvest! We had a relatively short window to harvest but managed to pick and press some Cabernet Franc. We are hopeful for another opportunity ... as the forecast looks favourable.

The 2019 Niagara Icewine Festival kicks off today so the timing is pretty perfect!”

Continued from Front Page

The contractor had numerous issues. They had issues with paying sub-contractors as well as just resourcing,” he said.

Coun. Gary Zalepa Jr. said the project is expected to be completed within the budget.

“Any costs and overruns caused by delays are covered under the contract, and the taxpayer is protected by that,”

The cost for the project came in the amount of $43.2 million. Funding was provided by Niagara Region, the federal government and the province, each of which contributed $14.4 million.

Tripp said the Region will present updates on the project during a town council meeting on Feb. 4.

TREATMENT PLANT FUNDING BROKEN DOWN

Niagara Region 33.3% Federal Government 33.3%

Provincial Government 33.3%
Changes to garbage pickup explored

Jill Troyer
Special to TLR

Every other week garbage pickup could be a reality as early as 2021.

Niagara Region Public Works Committee recently approved the inclusion of that option, as well as status quo, for pricing in the bidding process for a new waste collection contract, due to start in 2022. Consideration of recycling and green bin material would remain weekly.

"Every other week garbage collection increases diversion, especially of organics," said acting commissioner of Public Works Catherine Habermebl.

Niagara residents are great at recycling, she added, but roughly "half of the households in the Niagara Region are not using their green bins," so there's an opportunity to improve.

The staff report that went to the Public Works Committee noted other municipalities that switched to bi-weekly garbage collection experienced an increase in the amount of waste diverted to landfill.

According to the report, "It is a best practice in Ontario and the highest residential diversion rate primarily attributable to EOW (every other week) was in York Region (66 per cent in 2016)."

In addition to increasing the use of green bins, it is anticipated that every other week pickup of garbage would likely save more than $1 million annually, based on experience in comparable municipalities.

Niagara-on-the-Lake Regional Councillor Gary Zalepa said he "sees this as an exploration, to get the price both on weekly and every other week collection, so we can make the best choice." A recent survey on waste collection showed NOTL residents evenly split on the question of every other week pickup, with half saying they could manage it, and half saying they need it weekly.

Another option being considered is the mandatory use of clear garbage bags, a measure that has been shown to increase diversion in other municipalities. An audit of garbage in Niagara region found that 14 per cent of the contents of a typical garbage bag was recyclable material, according to Habermebl.

The idea garnered several negative comments from residents in the online survey, including "The world doesn't need to see my garbage," and "I'm not a fan of having my neighbours see what I purchase, eat or throw out."

There was more support for the use of clear bags in the telephone survey, at 33 per cent, than the online survey, at just 17 per cent. Zalepa said "clear garbage bags were clearly the biggest flashpoint ... in a fuller context maybe the answer would be different, if people understood the environmental benefits, so I'd like to explore that further. I like the idea of getting more recyclables out of the garbage."

Habermebl said recycling provides real benefits, "we're conserving our landfill space, there are huge environmental benefits, and recycling also creates jobs, for every thousand tons we recycle there are three jobs."

Revenue generated by the recycling program and external funding from manufacturers of recyclable material pay for the majority of the costs for collection and processing.

The proposals will go to local area municipalities for review and comments, and Zalepa noted there will also be further public consultation once the bids are received.
LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

To the lord mayor and council members

I wish life was as simple as said. $1 to each bus passenger, but it is not. Unfortunately, as beautiful as NOTL is, is not a primary stop for most of these tour operators. NOTL is a side trip from Niagara Falls, or en route to Toronto. I spent a decade in the industry and I can assure you this is the case for the majority (not all) of these operators. As most business owners know, you cannot pass every single dollar of cost increases along to the consumer, you will eventually price yourself out of business.

Many of these tour operators will just begin to bypass the Old Town if it becomes to costly and inconvenient, or just head to wineries on the outskirts. Rate increases like this can often result in a decline in business/visitors. Did we perform any real analysis to find out? A hotel accommodation tax is not the answer either. Again, this is looking to your golden goose to solve our internal problems. This is nothing but a new revenue stream, at the cost of combined taxes in the town, contribute an enormous amount of cost increases along to the taxpayers of NOTL elected the Town itself.

The result is a loss to the year round merchants that support our town. These merchants contribute an enormous amount of combined taxes in the town, and get very little support form the character of the town.

It is this basic for every dollar that would be spent in Simcoe Park, one dollar less will be spent in Queen Street.

The result is a loss to the year round merchants that support our town. These merchants contribute an enormous amount of combined taxes in the town, and get very little support form the character of the town.

Finally we have the idea of concessions and food trucks in Simcoe Park. The appeal of NOTL, arguably centers around Queen Street and its merchants. Almost all visitors to NOTL, walk this picturesque strip. These merchants sell food, clothing, arts, crafts and souvenirs, among other things. They are the lifeblood of this beautiful street.

Adding concessions/vendors or food trucks is a horrible idea. It would destroy what our guest have travelled to see and experience, by distracting from the character of the town.

The solution is simple. The taxpayers of NOTL elected the council, therefore they should bear the cost. Passing this cost on to the visitors who keep our town vibrant, prosperous and beautiful, is only shooting us in the foot in the long run.

Tourism is the not the reason our town is facing a shortfall — the prior council and staff are. Making rash, panicked decisions like a 180 per cent increase in bus parking, hotel taxes and food concessions in Simcoe Park will only lead to a long slow destructive path for your golden goose.

Correction

It was mistakenly reported Jan. 10 that local Alan Phat was at the scene of a hunting accident involving well-known gosse. In fact, Phat had only confirmed he spoke with others who claimed to have been there. As well, the humane society was called, but not by the hunters. The Lake Report apologizes for any inconvenience caused, and as always vows to promptly correct errors and hold itself accountable for mistakes.
A tree bylaw on private property? Disappointing!

I was quite disappointed to read in The Lake Report that a tree bylaw was passed by council on Dec. 5, 2018.

How is it that a topic of such controversy in the past — and with no immediate solution although discussed at several meetings by council in the past year — was magically surmised and a bylaw enacted at the very first meeting of the newly elected council, when so many questions remain unanswered?

Where is the master plan on urban design which included the management of trees? Where is the report on public consultation with respect to a tree bylaw? Were other options offered by residents? Where is the impact study on the environment? Where is the cost/benefit analysis of such a bylaw or other municipal initiatives?

What is the impact on stakeholders including taxpayers? Who was representing property owners and the intrusion of such a bylaw on property rights at this meeting?

Discussions on Dec. 5 failed to address the issues and options from a governance perspective. Talking about species of trees that will make it to the list of acceptable choices is not governance. Carrying out public consultation to discuss the implications of the bylaw and measuring its impact after it has been enacted is working backwards.

When I supported a change of leadership in last the election, I was aiming for higher standards — specifically, more rigorous and evidence-based approaches to decision making.

What is the problem? It has been said repeatedly that the need for a tree bylaw in NOTL was a response to developers and a flyswatter would do a much better job. And property owners have rights.

Tom DeWeese, an expert on private property rights, argues private property ownership is the single-most effective tool to eradicate poverty.

Yet for homeowners across the nation, property rights have been reduced to the obligation to pay taxes and a mortgage — while nearly every other decision about the use of the private property is made by some level of government.

“Without the right of use, property ownership becomes a burden right,” DeWeese adds.

A tree bylaw on private property in NOTL is of concern to me. It further erodes property owners’ rights and freedom to make willful decisions about the landscape on their private property.

Benefits and drawbacks of trees in urban design

Yes, trees offer many benefits. They create an ecosystem to provide habitat and food for birds and other animals. Trees absorb carbon dioxide and potentially harmful gasses, such as sulfur dioxide, carbon monoxide, from the air and release oxygen. No one argues that a canopy of trees may even provide physical and mental health benefits.

But some trees and overgrowth of trees can also physically and negatively alter the temperature, chemistry and biology of the soil. Here are a few examples:

Over-crowding can stress trees making them more susceptible to certain insects and diseases. Over-crowding can also lead to the disappearance of trees through the development process.

Joint advocacy efforts by like-minded municipalities directed at the provincial government is worth considering; clearly the issue is not limited to NOTL. There may be other solutions.

In my eyes, an over-broad municipal bylaw that infringes on the rights of private property owners is not the best course of action to stop “clear-cutting.”

It’s like trying to catch a fly with a baseball glove. A fly swatter would do a much better job. And property owners have rights.

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Thomson: increased parking fee could negatively affect bus traffic to NOTL

Dariya Baiguzhiyeva Staff

Town council voted to scale back the increase to local bus parking fees from $50 to $25 Monday night.

The increase still doubles the current bus parking fee of $25, bringing the total cost to $50, instead of the proposed $70, recommended in a staff report.

During a committee of the whole meeting Jan. 7, members of council heard the number of visitors coming to Niagara-on-the-Lake by bus dropped by about 6,000 people last year.

Janice Thomson, executive director of the local Chamber of Commerce said NOTL saw 273,436 bus passengers arrive at the motor coach parking lot in 2017. In 2018, the number dropped to 267,774.

She said the increased bus parking fee could potentially make the numbers of visitors decrease further.

In a presentation made to the committee-of-the-whole on Jan. 7, Thomson pointed to other municipalities that don’t charge any fees for tour bus parking, and warned increasing the price for NOTL could have negative consequences.

For example, the city of Toronto has 86 no-cost parking spaces for buses. Stratford, St. Jacobs and the Ontario Science Centre also do not charge for bus parking.

“If we have to take the CPI (Consumer Price Index) increase, that took us to $26 from $25. We can explain the CPI increase but not an arbitrary increase.”

Even an increase of one dollar per person can make an impact on people, Thomson told The Lake Report.

“The tour prices are already over $90, and that’s a voluntary increase, that took us to $90 from $85. We’ve already increased that.”

Adam Hyde expressed his concern over the potential increase.

“Based on over 40 years of experience, we anticipate that such a dramatic increase will dissuade tour buses from visiting NOTL, which will consequently compromise potential tourist dollars spent in the town,” Hyde wrote in the letter.

In a letter to the council, president of Theatre Vacations Adam Hyde expressed his concern over the potential increase.

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Based on over 40 years of experience, we anticipate that such a dramatic increase will dissuade tour buses from visiting NOTL, which will consequently compromise potential tourist dollars spent in the town,” Hyde wrote in the letter.

Thomson agreed with him.

“It’s exactly what we’re talking about. There could be a drop-off in business with such a fee increase.”

Business owners, Thomson said, are not supportive of the increase, “because there is no business reason for it.”

“It’s just an arbitrary tax on tourism. The council is looking for more money and they’re looking to take it from a source like tourism,” she said.

Judge's letter shared the same sentiment.

"Many of our clients spend two or three hours in Niagara-on-the-Lake and as a result are supporting the local economy through their purchases and it would be unfortunate if this potential revenue was lost," it said.

Overall, the town invested $79,767 to the chamber’s events and activities. The biggest contribution came in the amount of $40,000 that was spent on the Icewine Festival.

In regards to other events, the Town paid $6,000 and $2,000 to support Peche Celebration and Candlelight Stroll respectively.

“The Chamber strongly believes that this investment, our partnership and our operating relationship is generating a very positive return on investment that the town is realizing annually as well as supporting our members is certainly very much appreciated, and we believe that together we’re investing wisely, generating success for the Town of Niagara-on-the-Lake,” said Thomson.

Friends of Fort George honours longtime supporters

Dariya Baiguzhiyeva Staff

It’s not just a keen business sense that’s earned Doug Rempel one of the most well-known and respected names in real estate in Niagara-on-the-Lake – it’s also a sense of community.

That same sense recently garnered Rempel a personalized thanks from the Friends of Fort George.

On Jan. 2, FOFG presented Rempel with a plaque honouring a decade of support for the non-profit organization, which works in partnership with Parks Canada to preserve, promote and protect the heritage of Niagara National Historic Sites.

“It has been and will continue to be our privilege to support the Friends of Fort George in their community-centric events which foster education and the preservation of our heritage,” said Rempel in a media release.

Another real estate agency that has been acknowledged for its generous donations is NOTL Realty.

On Jan. 14, FOFG president Tony Chisholm presented a plaque to Thomas Elltoft and Christopher Bowron.

Kim Elltoft, who is in charge of donations at the agency, was away at the meeting at the time of the presentation.

NOTL Realty’s owner Thomas Elltoft said it was a really nice gesture from FOFG.

“That what makes us a special community. It’s what drives our tourism and drives a lot of things that most communities would wish to have this history,” he said. “That’s the nice thing about the history – you share it.”

Chisholm said it was very important for them to recognize their donors and sponsors.

“I think it’s one thing to come up and ask for money and walk away with it in your hand, but if you don’t go back and thank them, I think you haven’t done your job properly,” he said. “And besides, how can you come next time and ask?”

“A plaque like this is a reminder of their contributions and a pre-warning that I’m going to be coming back and asking for more,” Chisholm joked.

(With files from Richard Harley.)
Business Park businesses want visible signage

Dariya Baiguzhiyeva

Business owners in the Virgil Business Park want better signage.

Carol Hubert, who owns Peninsula Flooring with her husband Art, says there are people who have lived locally for years who have no idea there is even a flooring business in town, and believes part of that is a direct result of the lack of signage.

Currently there is only a sign advertising the Business Park itself, and doesn’t list any of the businesses inside.

The sign is also overgrown by a large evergreen bush.

Hubert says businesses sometimes call to ask where the Virgil Business Park is, with the sign being so out of view from Niagara Stone Road.

“Businesses that rely on foot traffic need more recognition,” said Hubert. “I think that should be a Virgil Business Park sign and then anybody who wants to have their business recognition — that’s in the Virgil Business Park.”

The Virgil Business Park sign.

Jenna Miles, owner of Sevincly, agrees.

“Having a sign at the end of Henegan Road, on Niagara Stone Road, would be greatly beneficial not only to the businesses but anyone looking for business located on Henegan. With the road located near residences, it is often easily missed when driving by,” she said, adding she would be willing to pay to have her logo under the Virgil Business Park sign.

“Virgil is quickly growing into a unique community and forcing the signage at the end of the road could provide a more progressive representation of the industrial business park,” Miles said.

Claudia Disante of Disante Electrical Mechanical echoed a similar sentiment, that clients often need a few directions to find them.

“Usually, the way we get them to notice that this is the business park we tell them, ‘We’re right before the lights, where the Gales gas station is, and then they picture that in their mind. We’re also using the roundabout as a point of reference, just to give them an idea otherwise they generally drive right by.”

Disante said she would also agree to pay and have her business name on the sign.

“I think that definitely better signage would probably get more people to drive through here and find us a little bit easier.”

Gould Automotive’s owner, Hugh Gould, also said people sometimes call them for directions.

“They phone and they ask where are we. We tell them to look for a big peach sign. Sometimes they don’t see it because it can’t be visible.”

Closset by Design owner Bob Fraser said having better signage is not “as essential” to them.

“Whether or not we have signage out on the street, I don’t think it’s an important to us personally.”

However, if other businesses were to put up their logos on the sign, he said he would consider investing because of the importance of the “ground awareness.”

St. Davids residents oppose York Road development

Dariya Baiguzhiyeva

A number of St. Davids residents expressed concerns over a rezoning application at 1490 York Rd. during Monday’s committee of the whole meeting in Niagara-on-the-Lake.

The proposed development would consist of three new family houses and one retained home on the north side of York Road, with all four houses belonging to one family.

Frank Ierfino of R & A Rusit & Associates Ltd. and Quartet Group planner Susan Smyth were at the meeting to represent the property owner Bernhard Peters. They told council the project conformed to local, regional and provincial policies.

The town planner Jesse Auspitz also said there were no objections inside the Town, though it’s possible fire hydrants or a turn-around on the street would be required for fire and

The Virgil Business Park sign.

While most residents didn’t attend Monday’s meeting, not everyone was happy about a construction proposal on York Road.

DARIYA BAIGUZHIYEEVA

emergency services.

When meeting chair Gary Burroughs asked if anyone was in opposition to the project, four residents took turns speaking out.

Some of the main issues raised by the public included the removal of trees, fire safety, drainage and environmental issues.

“St. Davids is being expropriated,” said Paul Fenwick who has lived in the village for about 15 years.

He mentioned the Tree Inventory and Preservation Plan Report which states there are 27 trees and two tree polygons on the property. In total, it makes up to 53 trees.

Out of 53 trees, only six would be preserved, he said. “Enough is enough.”

“There is no benefit to St. Davids as a whole. It is not what the community is about,” said resident, Jason Marchand.

“I would encourage to whoever is in charge of this project, to take their dog and walk along that thing and see. Spatially this does not make sense when you walk by it.”

Another St. Davids resident Bruno Creviller said he is concerned the approval could set a precedent for other residents who may ask to do the same thing on their properties.

St. Davids resident Blair Harber was the last one to speak, saying there are “a lot of unknowns” about the development.

“I refer to this as a ‘per-pendicular development.’ I don’t really think it’s a good way to build houses in a village such as St. Davids.”

After the meeting, Peters told The Lake Report the number of removed trees provided by the residents was “over-exaggerated.”

“The trees that are getting cut down are just pine trees. I plan on planting spruces up where I want privacy also,” he said. “So I’m going to be planting cedar to block the neighbours out myself.”

He also said there was only one neighbour who “really might lose some of her privacy but if I put a seeder hedge over there, it’ll be actually nicer than what she has now.”

Ierfino said the project will be built over a five- or a ten-year period and that it will “give vegetation time to establish itself, grow and be at a height that will provide the privacy.”

Smyth told the paper she would consider the comments and look at the tree reservation plan to reconfim the number of trees that will be affected.

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Dariya Baiguzhiyeva

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Feb 9 | Can You Ever Forgive Me?
Feb 16 | A Star is Born

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Page 7
January 17, 2019

NEWS
One winter day in 2015, local couple Terry and Lynn Weiner were walking their dog Riley in the Commons at Butler’s Barracks in Niagara-on-the-Lake, when they bumped into another couple cross-country skiing through the open field. It was the first time the pairs crossed paths, and at the time there was no telling just how close they would become.

Fast forward to 2019 — Terry, a retired manufacturing engineer who worked the aerospace industry in California, and Mark, having retired from a career in pulp and paper sales, are now close collaborators on a project called Bikes for Farmworkers, where the two restore bikes for local seasonal workers.

After meeting, the couples discovered they had something in common — they had both just moved to town. The Weiners had moved from Los Angeles, California, while skiers Mark and Monica Gaudet had recently relocated from Unionville, Ont.

The series of events blossomed into a friendship, and by that summer, both Terry and Mark got involved doing volunteer work to help local migrant workers, inspired by a notice posted at the local library by the Niagara Migrant Workers Interest Group. The group had been looking for people to help repair bikes.

Mark, himself an avid cyclist, and Terry, who had been volunteering to drive workers from Tregunno farms to Grace United Church every Sunday, both offered to help.

The two repaired 10 or 15 bikes for their first NMWIG event, and so Bikes for Farmworkers began. By the summer of 2016, Mark and Terry were busy fixing bikes.

“I had 75 bikes at one time in my garage,” says Terry. Both were working in their personal garages, with “supplies paid for out of our own pockets,” they noted. For the amount of bikes they were working on, they realized they needed both space, and some funding to support tools and supplies. By 2017, they had both.

Mark and Terry got access to space in the old Virgil Public School building on Four Mile Creek Road, and a grant from the Niagara Community Foundation. The grant allowed them to set up four full workstations with the tools needed, and it’s been expanding ever since.

Six volunteers now work with Terry and Mark to fix up the donated bicycles, which are sold for $20. Repairs are typically free.

In 2017, the group sold more than 300 bikes, and repaired another 92. In 2018, they sold 478 bikes, and repaired 321 more. As of January 2019, they already have well over a hundred bikes and counting, ready for the arrival of the farmworkers at the end of February.

The space is meticulously organized, and full of bikes — bikes ready for sale, bikes waiting to be repaired, bikes being stored for owners who will collect them in the spring.

Tools line the walls and carefully labelled bins hold various parts at the ready. The pair is humble about their success.

“We’re just retired guys with wrenches,” says Mark. They work every Tuesday and Thursday, all year. When asked why they devote so much time and effort to this endeavour, they look puzzled at the question.

“Because they’re our neighbours,” says Terry. “We want to make sure the workers have a safe bike,” adds Mark.

Then Terry points to a bulletin board, filled with pictures of farmworkers picking up their bikes, broad smiles on their faces.

“These guys just got a bike, they can ride around, get where they need to be, it’s freedom,” Mark says.

Mark and Terry think this year they could potentially handle as many as 800 bikes. They stressed the importance, and their appreciation of the generosity of the community in donating bicycles for them to fix up.

Bikes for Farmworkers accepts bicycle donations all year. Anyone wishing to donate a bike can call Terry at 905-321-8633, or Mark at 289-783-1684 to arrange for a pick-up or drop-off.
Protests planned for ice wine festival

Continued from Front Page

The event kicks off with the Sparkle and Ice Gala on Jan. 19, where contestants will feature a cocktail competition on Jan. 19, where contestants will feature a cocktail competition, which will be hosted by social media influencers. The event will also feature a cocktail competition on Jan. 19, where contestants will feature a cocktail competition, which will be hosted by social media influencers.

Andrew Niven is chair of Niagara-on-the-Lake’s Wineries and is the chair of the Icewine Village, as well, he said that they are expecting more than 10,000 visitors per weekend during the festival, and have seen people come from areas throughout Canada and the United States.

“This from literally the inception is something we celebrate throughout the month of January, not just with our tourists, but with our local culture and with her local community,” said Niven.

With a weekend full of wine comes with plenty of empty bottles. The Icewine Village donates their bottles to the local Air Cadets for their bottle drive. “Every single bottle that is poured at icewine is collected and donated to the cadets for the bottle drive,” explained Niven.

At War for Animal Niagara (AWFAN) is planning to protest during the Ice Wine Festival. The organization goal of this campaign is for the horse carriage rides in Niagara to change over to electric carriages, explained Adam Stitt, co-founder of AWFAN. “It really has nothing to do with the festival itself,” said Stitt. “Just as I’m sure the carriages will be out trying to profit off the festival, we’ll also be out increasing awareness about what we’re doing.” The protests have been going on for over a year now, and the organization chose this event to open up the conversation about the cause with the public.

“We’re going to concentrate on the festival and providing an experience for our guests,” said Niven. “On Jan. 25 the final event for the festival is the White on Ice winner, which starts with an outdoor reception on Queen Street and will end off in the Courthouse ballroom.”

Additional funding for Royal Oak denied by town council

Royal Oak Community School will not be receiving additional funding from the Town of Niagara-on-the-Lake — at least not while the money is proposed to come from the annual allowance for the Shaw Festival.

On Monday, town council rejected a motion which would have seen $5,000 taken from the Shaw’s annual allocation and put towards the non-profit school, which operates out of the old hospital building on Wellington Street.

Robin Ridesic of Royal Oak spoke in support of the motion before it was denied.

Despite the common perception of NOTL, Ridesic said there is an abundance of local youth in town, and not enough seats in local schools. Robin Ridesic of Royal Oak spoke in support of the motion before it was denied.

At the beginning of the school year, the organization and give it to another.

According to Ridesic, the school ran a PD Day camp on Easter Monday last year, which was open to all children in the community. Some Royal Oak students weren’t able to attend because the spaces were filled with students from other schools.

Money from the town would help to fund those types of programs, Ridesic said. “It’s a real need in the community. We felt like it was a great opportunity to expand this program and advertise it and resource it with the teachers we need.”

In 2018, the school received a grant of $9,500 from the Town, which was able to offset the rent of $15,000. In 2019, the grant amount was lowered to $5,000, while Ridesic said the rent increased almost $2,000.

The motion was brought forward by Coun. Clare Cameron, to take the $5,000 out of Shaw’s $30,000 allocation for 2019.

“I use this opportunity to implore the rest of council to do something for a young fledgling organization in our community,” she said.

Coun. Wendy Cheropita backed her up. “They believe they will be self-funded within a couple of years… The two programs they talked about are open to the community, I think this is really important we provide relevant funding or they won’t be able to do that,” said Cheropita.

But Coun. Gary Burroughs, along with the majority of council, didn’t think it was fair to take funding from one organization and give it to another. “I am very supportive of the school… I’m not supportive of taking money away from probably the biggest employer and certainly the biggest attraction that Niagara-on-the-Lake has. They are always scrambling for money,” said Burroughs.
### LOCAL CALENDAR

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sunday</th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Legion Fish Fry Every Thursday</strong></td>
<td><strong>NOTL Icewine Festival - Noon to 5 p.m.</strong></td>
<td><strong>Seniors Fitness: Healthy Strong &amp; Safe - 3:30 p.m. to 4:30 p.m.</strong></td>
<td><strong>Chair Yoga - 1 p.m. to 2 p.m.</strong></td>
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<td>World Religion Day - 3 p.m. - 11 Harmony Dr., NOTL</td>
<td><strong>Niagara Regional Native Centre: Community</strong></td>
<td><strong>Niagara Regional Native Centre: Community Drumming Night - 6 p.m. to 8 p.m.</strong></td>
<td><strong>Power Off and Play - 11 a.m. to noon</strong></td>
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<td><strong>Niagara Pumphouse: Family Friendly Drop in Art Studio</strong></td>
<td><strong>Niagara Historical Society &amp; Museum</strong></td>
<td><strong>Beer &amp; Books: Seven Fallen Feathers by Tanya Talaga - 7 p.m. to 9 p.m. - The Old Winery Restaurant &amp; Wine Bar</strong></td>
<td><strong>Seniors Fitness: Healthy Strong &amp; Safe - 2:30 p.m. to 3:30 p.m.</strong></td>
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<td>1 p.m. to 3 p.m. - Niagara Pumphouse Arts Centre</td>
<td><strong>Famous &amp; Infamous with Sheila Hill: Rex Whistler - 2 p.m.</strong></td>
<td><strong>Niagara Regional Native Centre: Community</strong></td>
<td><strong>Dance Niagara - 5:30 p.m. to 8:30 p.m.</strong></td>
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<td>Teen Literary Alliance - 1:30 p.m. to 2:30 p.m. - NOTL Public Library</td>
<td><strong>Niagara Regional Native Centre: Community</strong></td>
<td><strong>Drumming Night - 6 p.m. to 8 p.m. - Niagara Regional Native Centre</strong></td>
<td><strong>NOTL Community Centre</strong></td>
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<td>Niagara College: Seasonal Soups &amp; Stews - 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. - Niagara College (CFWI)</td>
<td><strong>Niagara Pumphouse: Family Friendly Drop in Art Studio</strong></td>
<td><strong>Niagara Regional Native Centre: Community</strong></td>
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<td>NOTL Icewine Festival - Noon to 5 p.m. - Queen Street Heritage District</td>
<td><strong>Niagara Historical Society &amp; Museum</strong></td>
<td><strong>Niagara Regional Native Centre: Community</strong></td>
<td><strong>Niagara Pumphouse: Family Friendly Drop in Art Studio</strong></td>
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Know of a local event? Tell us. Submit it directly to www.niagaranow.com or send us an email at events@niagaranow.com

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<th>Friday</th>
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<td><strong>NOTL Icewine Festival - Noon to 5 p.m.</strong></td>
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**Note:** Times and locations vary. Please check the website or call for details.
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**NOTL Icewine Festival**
- Noon to 3 p.m.
- Niagara College (CFWI)
- Noon to 3 p.m.
- Niagara College: Seasonal Library
- Noon to 2:30 p.m.
- NOTL Public Library
- 11 Harmony Dr., NOTL
- World Religion Day
- 3 p.m. to 5 p.m.
- Queen Street Heritage
- NOTL Icewine Festival
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- Queen Street Heritage
Days of Wine and Chocolate returns in February

Brittany Carter
Staff

Forget wine and cheese, this February the Wineries of Niagara-on-the-Lake are offering up a decadent twist on food and drink pairings with the Days of Wine and Chocolate.

Happening every weekend in February, each of the 26 participating NOTL wineries will opening its doors from 11 a.m. to 5 p.m. for a unique combination of VQA wine and carefully chosen chocolate infused dishes.

Andrew Niven, director of marketing for Konzelmann Estate Winery and chair of the Wineries of Niagara-on-the-Lake, said the month-long event is something they look forward to every year. “Everyone is ready to come out of holiday mode and approach something different.”

He said the wineries can get into friendly competition with each other when cooking up their newest chocolate inspired dishes. “We put in our A-games. As the quality of our offerings have improved the numbers continue to grow.”

The Wineries of NOTL have been hosting this event for the past eight years, and Niven said it gets better every year. “It’s a great way to get some traffic out to the wineries. We open our doors and showcase what we do best.”

Touring passes for the month-long event can be purchased online for $55. The pass is valid all month and grants access to each participating winery, allowing individuals to sample the wine and its paired chocolate dish. Responsible drinking and safe driving, designated driver passes can be purchased for $30, permitting the driver to indulge in the experience and taste food pairings without the wine.

Niven said organizers are strict about responsible drinking and want to encourage groups to bring a designated driver. “It wasn’t fair to charge people who wouldn’t be drinking,” Niven said.

He suggests visiting no more than eight wineries a day. The event lasts all month and individuals can return each weekend to sample the rest.

Those looking to plan ahead can check the event website for a list of each winery’s selected dish and wine pairing.

Groups of eight or more are advised to call ahead to each winery to allow for better service and experience.

Prime Minister Justin Trudeau visited Brock University on Tuesday to address students and Niagara residents.

PHOTOS BY ALEX LUPUL, THE LAKE REPORT

Open Daily Year-Round
Bring this ad in for a 10% Lunch Discount
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For more details and hours, visit our website or give us a call.
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Library recap 2018

Brittany Carter
Staff

The Niagara-on-the-Lake Public Library has seen a steady increase in visitors since renovations.

In 2017, the library underwent remodeling to better meet the needs of NOTL residents. According to the library in a presentation during the Jan. 14 council meeting, Ontario public libraries counted 12 million visits more than the NHL, NBA, and NFL combined across North America. With almost 300,000 visits in person and online, the NOTL library has increased usage since the renovation.

They added a maker-space, The Makery, equipped with a range of DIY machines, including a 3D printer, a carving machine and an embroidery machine.

Cathy Simpson, chief librarian and CEO of the NOTL Public Library, said the renovations have been well-received and usage has increased since completion.

“We’ve had a very positive response. We’ve seen use go up in terms of physical visits to the building as well as materials that are circulating. We’re using the space better. We didn’t increase the size, we’ve just using it smarter. We have multi-spaces which people are really appreciating.”

Cathy Simpson, chief librarian and CEO of NOTL Public Library. BRITTANY CARTER

Simpson said they’ve included a quiet study room, which was in high demand. She also said the new layout and shelving have had positive feedback.

“It’s a very different style shelving. People really love it now, we’ve got the wide aisles, there’s no dead ends or tight corners. They appreciate the improved accessibility.”

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Library recap 2018

By the numbers

Items borrowed and used in-house
82,699
Visits (in-person & online)
299,099
New users
674
Cardholders
4,145
Children in 201 programs
1,677
Adults in 124 programs
934

Content provided by:

Phone: 905.359.2270
Mail: NOTL Post Office, Ontario, PO Box 724

www.niagaranow.com / www.lakereport.ca

Advertising inquiries?
Email advertising@niagaranow.com
or call 905.246.4671
The Lake Report is looking for puzzle makers who would like to help develop this page. We are seeking both standard and cryptic crossword writers. editor@niagaranow.com

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

Across
1 Frequently (5) 5 Divest (5) 8 Sag (5) 10 Spanish fleet (6) 11 Israeli currency (6) 12 Bring together (5) 13 Dwelling (6) 14 Kine (Arch.) (6) 15 Moor (5) 17 Contaminate (6) 18 Resist (6) 20 Minor actor in crowd scenes (5) 21 Sliding compartment of furniture (6) 23 Capital of the Bahamas (6) 25 World’s largest democracy (5) 26 Regular customer (6) 28 Departs (6) 29 Rotten (5) 31 Capital of the Philippines (6) 32 Scandinavian kingdom (6) 33 In what place (5) 34 Tale (5) 35 Small salamanders (5)

Down
2 Alien (9) 3 Scrutinise (7) 4 Central Chinese desert (4) 6 Crown (7) 7 Standard of perfection (5) 8 Wife of your son (8-2-3) 9 What shrinks do (13) 16 Behaved (5) 19 Declaration (9) 22 Soldier (7) 24 Type of twin (7) 27 Behind (5) 30 Junkie (4)

Have some fun

Crossword Puzzle

Last issue’s answers

Sudoku

Yes
we can help
ease what
you spend on
electricity.
For good!

If the cost of energy-saving upgrades are out of reach, Ontario’s new AffordAbility Fund is here for you.

We’re here to help:
1 Reach out to us
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The Niagara Region is a pleasant place to live, surrounded by water, near two big cities and generally devoid of traffic congestion. One can easily spend an entire day without having to stop at a red light. Walking and cycling routes are unlimited, and the wineries and craft breweries keep us hydrated.

Recreational activities are plentiful, and perhaps most importantly, interesting citizens keep us intellectually fulfilled as we chat and solve the world’s least pressing problems. This winter has been a mild one, with nary a freezing cold morning to make us shiver as we go outdoors.

I spoke yesterday with Perry Johnson, a Winnipeg Hockey native. He grew from Winnipeg, much like Winnie-the-Pooh, He told us a unique export of the city, he is a unique export of the world, a pleasant place to live.

Enthusiastic rookie J. R. Lewis, who plays both ball and craft breweries keep us connected to the world.

The Wallbanger Moores Leafs Blue Team. He almost had a hat trick, but fanned on a breakaway chance late in the game.

And cost was (and is) another factor in the rarity of these tiles. While tinplate and wood shingles ‘ruled the roost’ during most of the 19th Century, both Slate tile and Clay tile had been traditional roofing materials in the UK for centuries. Until the latter part of the 19th Century, premium slate tile was principally produced from Welsh quarries and shipped to North America. These tiles produced (and still do) gorgeous styles. Although clay tiles have many pros, I suspect the fact that clay tile is subject to spalling during our freeze/thaw cycles and the expense of replacing winter damaged tiles were amongst the principal reasons for the historical scarcity of these tiles. Despite being fairly common in Europe, both S-shaped pantile and flat Clay tile were almost non-existent in Canada until the late 19th Century introduction of certain architectural styles. Although clay tiles have many pros, I suspect the fact that clay tile is subject to spalling during our freeze/thaw cycles and the expense of replacing winter damaged tiles were amongst the principal reasons for the historical scarcity of clay tiles. As the games go on, emotions go up and down like a toilet seat at a mixed party. Again, no serious injuries, no penalties, and no referees.

Some 23 players showed up last Sunday, causing a fair amount of confusion on the benches. The usual players who consider themselves to be clever strategists devised line combinations. By the halfway mark of the game, there had been 31 different forward lines. Two centres, three pairs of wingers. Two lines, and a floater? How about using three defencemen, and three forward lines. Josh can play up or back.

Man, was I confused. Even with help, several times I was a second or two late changing on the fly. Wallbangers hockey. As the games go on, emotions go up and down like a toilet seat at a mixed party. Again, no serious injuries, no penalties, and no referees.

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Enthusiastic rookie J. R. Lewis, who plays both ball and craft breweries keep us connected to the world.
Grape Escapes expanding for great success

Richard Harley
SPONSORED

When Richard Mell first moved to Canada from England, he brought with him a suitecase and degree in criminal psychology. It was the height of crime investigation shows, he recalls, and the industry was flooded with CSI fans. “So then I called my dad, who has been here since 2000, and said I’d be coming for an extended vacation.”

Eight years later, he’s not really putting his degree to use — but he’s having more fun, he thinks. Instead, Mell took a leading role in an industry he never really imagined himself in — operating local wine tours.

The young entrepreneur now co-owns Grape Escapes Wine Tours with his father and step-mother. In just a few years, he’s helped bring the business from his father’s kitchen to a spacious, newly-renovated facility on Niagara Stone Road.

He reminisces a bit about the beginning days, when four or five tour guides used to meet for coffee before starting the day. Now, four locations later, a summer day sees around 35 guides out touring, typically two to a group for safety.

“Needless to say we don’t invite staff anymore for coffee,” he jests. And with the tours becoming increasingly popular, Mell now plans to expand Grape Escapes in a unique way — one that he hopes will offer something beyond a tourist experience to the community, something for the soul and body.

Starting in late January, Mell will launch Wellness Escapes in the newly-renovated top floor of Grape Escapes, offering spin and fitness classes, yoga classes and meditation sessions.

“Mell talks about it with enthusiasm, as final preparation goes on in the background,” said McNair.

“When we moved in we had all this storage space, and were thinking of some way to tie more into the community,” Mell said.

“We wanted something locals as well could enjoy … To engage the local community, focusing on all aspects of wellness.”

Classes will run at different times of day, offering locals a place they can come to relax. He also plans for a small-lounge area, “similar to Pillar & Post,” which will serve herbal teas, seasonal fruit and other items more in the holistic vein.

The yoga classes will be run by Natalie Rogers, who also runs tours time to time, and RaeAnn Reimer will take the lead on the spin and fitness classes.

The meditation sessions will be run by Richard Wright, who also acts as office manager for Grape Escapes.

Mell says he will also have special guest teachers once in a while. The first few classes will be completely free, so people can come find out what it’s all about before signing up — and anyone who comes out will get a $20 discount on their first month of membership.

It’s not so much that Mell is stepping away from Grape Escapes, but that he feels he’s met a lot of his goals and wants to branch out, securing the top spot on TripAdvisor for wine tours.

“We’re reached where we want to be and continue to be with Grape Escapes, but now we want to diversify … apply that success for more offerings for community,” Mell officially became a Canadian citizen in May 2018, and hasn’t stopped there. He’s also gotten himself a real estate licence and is now a broker with Bosley Real Estate in town.

He said that’s been a big focus for him, and talks passionately about his future, growing himself as a realtor the same way he grew Grape Escapes to be in the top ranks.

It’s taken four locations, two countries, a family endeavour and eight years to build the business, and to further himself, but perhaps that’s where it all ties in for Mell. Meeting him and his dog junior, you realize he’s easy to talk to, loves what he does and works hard.

Complimentary Wellness Retreat classes will start in January. Anyone looking to attend, or to buy or list a house, can call Mell at 289-219-0304.

Simpson’s Pharmacy hosts four-legged friends

Jer Houghton
Staff

Simpson’s Pharmacy in Virgil kicked off its first Seniors’ Day event of the year on Jan. 16 by greeting their customers with four-legged volunteers, promoting the St. John Ambulance Therapy Dog Program.

“It gives the opportunity for our community to come in — not just to take of their pharmacy needs — but to learn about the different things that are available in the community,” said Paula MacDonna-Boland, home health and mobility coordinator at Simpson’s Pharmacy.

“So we like to make sure that we include various organizations from the community by bringing them in here so that they have the opportunity to get awareness out to the community with the different services that are available.”

January’s Seniors’ Day event was hosted by therapy dog coordinator Dana McNair of St. John Ambulance from the Niagara Falls branch. McNair was on-hand with therapy dog Quinn and handler Janice Patterson to meet with customers and talk about the program.

McNair said though the program mainly runs in hospitals, long-term care settings, schools and sometimes libraries, the therapy dogs can offer companionship to those that are sick or lonely, that may not have family close by to offer constant support.

“We want customers to know that if there is anyone in the community that feels they would benefit from the love a therapy dog, you can contact our office and we can set up a meeting for the person and the therapy dog,” said McNair.

The Seniors’ Day event occurs on the third Wednesday every month, an ongoing effort to promote organizations and services within the community and throughout the region since the pharmacy was founded.

“About 42 years ago, Ward Simpson started Simpson’s and he’s been very community minded and oriented,” said MacDonald-Boland.

“Off and on throughout the years, quite regularly he’s had different groups either come in, or we go out into the community and assist in promoting different services as much as we can — so it’s been ongoing ever since.”

Over the years, Simpson’s Pharmacy continues to work with the Alzheimer Society, Arthritis Society, Parkinson Canada, United Way and Red Roof Retreat, to name a few.

MacDonald-Boland said they are constantly working on events.

“As things pop up throughout the year, different events happening in the news or new organizations coming up, we kind of add them as we go,” she said.

To contact St. John Ambulance about their Therapy Dog Program, please call 905-356-7340.
Council passes motion to support modernized alcohol sales

On Jan. 15, Niagara-on-the-Lake council was presented with a resolution to support modernized alcohol sales which could benefit local wineries and grape growers.

In recent years, the provincial government has taken steps to modernize alcohol sale and consumption. Its goal is to expand the sale of beer and wine to corner stores, grocery stores and big-box stores based on market demand.

The government has also asked for public input through an online survey which will close on Feb. 1, 2019.

In his letter to the council Matthias Oppenlaender, Chair of Grape Growers of Ontario (GGO), asked the council to pass a resolution and show support of 100 per cent Ontario-grown grapes and wine by sending a letter to the provincial government and area MPPs.

“The GGO believes that this decision represents a significant opportunity for our municipalities and Ontario wine regions to grow a more robust grape and wine industry,” said Oppenlaender’s letter. “However, it’s important that we move forward, we support the agriculture,” said Coun. Wiens. “All we want to do is we want the Government of Ontario to recognize the fact how important the industry is and that their decision is going to impact us, and I’d like our town to support that.”

Coun. Choperita pointed out how the Niagara region’s wineries alone generate $2.2 billion which is 50 per cent of the total provincial revenue. “It’s that significant,” she said.

The resolution moved by Coun. Wiens stated, “this decision represents the significant opportunity to strengthen Niagara’s economy by growing Ontario’s wine and craft beer industries through increased customer access.”

The town will now submit the resolution to the provincial government and area MPPs as part of public consultation and it will be circulated to Niagara municipalities for consideration and support.

To take part in the survey, visit Ontario.ca.

Obituaries & Memorials

DAWSON, Helen Iles

Dawson, Helen Iles – Passed away peacefully in her sleep, on Thursday, December 27, 2018, at the Royal Henley Retirement Residence, St. Catharines, at the age of 97. Predeceased by her husband Harry Dawson (2001). She will be sadly missed by her children Delpha (James) Wake, Huntsville, Robert, St. Catharines, Gina (Paul) Smith, Mulmur, Donald (Judy), Niagara-on-the-Lake, Janine (Michael) Cherniuk, Jackson Township, Ohio and nine grandchildren; Greg (Molly), Jon and Lauren, Kailyn, Mark, Ben, Ksenia and Greg; Mathew, Alicia, Kyle, Campbell, Tate, Maia, Kinley, Zander and Sterling and sister Delpha Williams. Fondly remembered by many nieces, nephews, cousins and friends. Predeceased by her brother Watson (Ester) Young and brother-in-law George Williams.

A service to celebrate the life of Helen Dawson will be held at St. Andrews Presbyterian Church, 323 Simcoe St. Niagara-on-the-Lake, on Saturday, January 19, 2019 at 11 a.m., followed by burial in the church cemetery and a reception in the Kirk Hall next door to the church. Donations to the St. Andrews Presbyterian Church, would be greatly appreciated. Memories, photos and condolences may be shared at www.morgunfuneral.com

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Mating season causes frequent coyote sightings across town

Brittany Carter

It’s mating season and local coyotes are out in abundance.

Recently, more and more coyotes have been spotted around Niagara-on-the-Lake. While it’s not uncommon for residents to fear coyotes in their neighbourhood, Ken Reid, NOTL canine control officer, said it’s normal for them to be out during the day.

“It’s absolutely normal. They’re not nocturnal, that’s a myth,” Reid said.

“They’re out whenever they feel like it. Most of the time during the day they’re just wandering, or hunting. There’s nothing unusual about them being around in the daytime.”

He added that, due to the continuation of construction in the region, coyotes are more likely to wander into urban spaces.

“They’ve been dispersed. In a lot of areas in Niagara-on-the-Lake, with the developments, they’ve been dispersed out of their long-term homes. So now they’re moving around trying to find new ones.”

In a coyote information package published by the Ministry of Natural Resources, coyotes are said to be opportunistic feeders.

“Coyotes are territorial animals, with their territory ranging from a few square kilometres where food is abundant to more than 100 square kilometres where food is very scarce.”

In winter, their diet consists mainly of rabbits, hares and deer. In a small number of cases, they lose their fear of people and prey on livestock and small animals.

The information package said coyotes are normally afraid of humans and won’t bother them unless conditioned.

“Coyotes displaying no fear of humans or exhibiting aggressive behaviours have likely been habituated to people through direct or indirect feeding.”

If residents come across coyotes, Reid said they need to make themselves appear bigger and stay where they are. Even though coyotes are more likely to be afraid of humans, precautions should still be made to stay safe.

“Basically, just stand as tall as you can. Don’t turn your back on them. Make a quick move toward them. They’ll usually run off. Make yourself as big as you can, make as much noise as you can. Don’t turn your back and don’t walk away.”

Coyote mating season ranges from January to March in Southern Ontario. Reid said they are often seen more frequently during this time because they are looking for a mate.

Coyote Watch Canada (CWC), a community based non-profit wildlife organization, ask residents to report coyote sightings through their online form at www.coyotewatchcanada.com

Glasses rest on a table of ice at the Niagara-on-the-Lake Icewine Festival 2017. RICHARD HARLEY

Coyote on the move. PIROSKA BACSO/SPECIAL TO THE LAKE REPORT

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St. Davids in the 20th Century

Brock’s Monument in Queenston. SUPPLIED PHOTO

On the top of the Niagara Escarpment, on the site of the Battle of Queenston Heights from the War of 1812 stands a tall column, the final resting place of two men who were buried four times.

On Oct. 13, 1812, while leading the charge up the escarpment to fight the American Army, Major General Sir Isaac Brock was shot and killed. His Aide-de-Camp, John MacDonnell was also shot and killed.

Although the battle was a success for the British Army, Canadian Militia and Native Allies, two great men were lost that day. The first funeral for Brock and MacDonnell was a solemn affair with both bodies leaving Government House (now the parking lot behind the Courthouse) proceeding through the town of NOTL then into Fort George where they were buried in the north-east corner of the fort. A small stone was erected honouring the two men and this area of the fort took on the nick name “Brock’s Bastion”.

It was after the war of 1812 that Upper Canadians decided to honour Brock and MacDonnell with a more prominent grave marker. From 1823 to October of 1824, on the site of the Battle of Queenston Heights, a 135 foot (41.1m) Tuscan column, designed by Francis Hall, was constructed. There was a view platform at the top with a single set of stairs leading up and down.

On Oct. 13, 1824 (an- niversary of their deaths), Brock and MacDonnell were removed from Fort George and interred in the base of this new monument. The Tuscan column could be seen for miles. Many visitors came to pay their respects and to also get the most spectacular view of the Niagara River flowing north into Lake Ontario. The park like setting was a natural draw for picnickers as well.

But the peace of the area was soon to be disrupted. It was during the time of the Upper Canada Rebellion (1837) that Benjamin Lett became an ardent supporter of William Lyon Mackenzie. Although Lett had not been in the rebellion, he carried on the work of Mackenzie, with continued acts of treason against the British Crown.

Lett was known to have murdered one captain of a ship, as well as to have burned, bombed and stolen other ships. However the one act he is most famous for is the bombing of Brock’s monument. On April 17, 1840 a bomb was detonated in the stair well of Brock’s monument, severely damaging the monument. It was determined that Lett was behind this bombing. The people of Upper Canada were furious that this monument to Brock and MacDonnell had been destroyed. Discussions were held on whether to repair the monument or to build a new one. A new monument was approved.

Brock and MacDonnell’s remains were moved once again, this time to the Hamilton Family Burial Ground which is located at Dee Road and Niagara Parkway (in Queenston). The damaged tower was torn down and a new, grander monument was built. In 1852, the design submitted by William Thomas was accepted. Thomas is also known for several other very prominent buildings throughout Ontario. His designs include St. Paul’s Church in London Ontario, St. Michael’s Cathedral and Bishops Palace in Toronto, the St. Lawrence Hall in Toronto, the Don Jail in Toronto, the Courthouse in Niagara-on-the-Lake and Grace United Church in NOTL. Thomas’s crowning achievement was his design for Brock’s Monument.

From 1853 to 1859 work was done on this new monument using limestone quarried from the local Queenston Quarry. The new monument stands at 185 feet (56 m) in height, fifty feet taller than the first monument. At the top is a 16 foot (4.8m) statue of Brock looking out over the Niagara River. There is a circular staircase made of 235 stone blocks which lead up to an outdoor observation deck. At the base of the structure, sealed by granite slabs is the crypt. On its completion, Brock’s monument was the second tallest freestanding structure in the world and is the third oldest war memorial in Canada.

One final journey for Brock and MacDonnell, when on October 13, 1859, their remains, in new caskets, were interred in the crypt at the base of the new monument. It is said that over 8,000 people attended the ceremony.

Not to be left in peace, in 1929, lightning struck the statue of Brock, sending pieces crashing to the ground. In 2003 an engineering inspection revealed some major structural problems. The monument was closed to the public while repairs were made and reopened in May of 2009.

To learn more about the topic of this story you can visit the Niagara Historical Society & Museum website at, www.niagarahistoricalmuseum.org, 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 niagarahow.com.
COMMUNITY

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

Time for ice wine.

Niagara District Airport looks to generate sky high revenue

Christian Coulombe
Staff

The Niagara District Airport and nine other surrounding airports are getting ready to take on the excess capacity of Pearson airport.

Pearson is expected to reach capacity by 2032 and the Niagara District Airport is asking for an increase of funding to $23,915 help with its proposed projects.

“What is it we can do?” asked Robin Garrett, citizen representative.

She said there is a demand for private parking for planes, so they’d like to construct more hangars to help generate revenue.

“If we can get more hangar space we can get more tenants,” she said.

Garrett also says there is a shortage of pilots worldwide and the airport currently has a flight school on premises so they would like to take advantage of that.

“We have an aviation program we announced with the Niagara Catholic board that we’re starting in 2019,” said Dan Pilon, interim chief executive officer. “Also, the shortage of pilots leads us to thinking outside the norms of how we can get young folks into the industry.”

The airport has two aprons, three runways and four taxi-ways and it has 14 businesses that run out of the airport, according to Pilon.

There are some major opportunities the airport can do to generate more traffic and revenue for NOTL, said Garrett.

She said tourism is one of the worlds largest and fastest growing industries, growing at an average rate of four per cent per year.

Access and connectivity is a critical success factor and that partnerships and investments can help increase the regions power as a tourist hotspot.

The plan is to shift from a small municipally run airport to a larger regional airport that offers scheduled passenger and VIP services for its customers.

Currently, the airport only offers private and seasonal flights.

Niagara Region is the only tourist destination without a local airport to access it and by expanding the airports services, it would allow businesses and tourists to connect directly to the region.

To do this, the airport would like to maximize the size of their runway. However, the largest plane that could fit is a Q400 which is about 70 seats, said Garrett.

Last year, there was an increase in jet and passenger traffic which led to a 13 per cent increase in ancillary revenues, which come from aircraft parking, landing and terminal fees, said Pilon.

According to Pilon, the goal is to grow 15 per cent over the length of this strategy.

To do this, they’d like to add scheduled services, construct new hangars, offer VIP airside service and engage partners for promotion and strive for organizational excellence.

There has been a 32 per cent increase of jet traffic in 2018 as well as 30 per cent increase in passenger traffic for FlyGTA.

The airport is also requesting funding from Niagara Falls and St. Catharines.

The Niagara District Airport looks to generate sky high revenue.

RIDDLE ME THIS:

What can be opened, but never closed again?

Last Week’s answer: A stamp, first answered by Holly Anderson.

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

RESIDENT PHOTOS

Betty & Jane: Plunger Patrol

Inspecting NOTL’s bathrooms: Balzac’s

If you enjoy a “Cuppa Joe” you won’t want to miss a trip to Balzac’s Coffee Roasters to savour your favourite brew. You may also want to try a “delectable nibble” to nosh as you drink in the atmosphere of this historic NOTL establishment. The look of bright vintage French Cafe comes to mind with comfortable seating and room to visit with friends. As in some historic buildings the washrooms are downstairs. They provide a cozy experience with lots of hot water, a powerful flush, and a private stall.

3/5 Golden Plungers

The view from a flight to Toronto from the Niagara District Airport. RICHARD HARLEY

Illustration by Krysia Zygmunt

The Christmas colouring contest winner is seven-year-old Henry. Congratulations Henry from The Lake Report!

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Ben Bartel: Clearing the ice

Local retiree drives Olympia for Wayne Gretzky Estates Winery & Distillery

Brittany Carter

The story of how Ben Bartel acquired the position is built on layers, he says, as he peels those layers away one by one. It’s rooted in the land to the back of Bartel’s property on York Road. That land, which now belongs to the Gretzky winery, passed hands in sale from his father to Hillebrand Estates Winery and then to Hillebrand Estates. Bartel grew up on that land. He says, as a kid, he would jump at the opportunity to lace up his skates when the slopes in the field collected pools of water – it would flash-freeze to make his own personal ice rink.

“I put on my skates and I would skate in that field. I was skating right where that rink is now, in the dark, alone. Now I have 100 people there. There’s music and drinks and food.”

Before securing his seat atop the tractor pulling an Olympia ice resurfacer, Bartel caught word of plans to build the winery. Among his many hobbies, Bartel is a licenced pilot. Armed with his ultralight plane and a passion for aerial photography, he offered to take photos of the property. He continued to take them throughout construction.

In a casual partnership, he asked only for sponsorship for the “fox run” as compensation. He provided the winery with a photographic timeline of their construction. A working relationship between Bartel and the winery was formed.

Looming retirement encouraged his next move. He was actively on the lookout for something to keep him busy during the winter months, in warmer weather there were no shortage of hobbies to entice him. Whether bicycling down the parkway, flying over the town or kayaking through the river, he says he was always up to something physically. The colder months left him restless.

When Fort George opened a public ice rink, he spent most of that winter taking advantage. Sixteen times, he counted; he had written on the calendar.

Watching the men working maintenance in the booth, he says it occurred to him that was something he’d like to try. He had experience driving heavy machinery, having spent time on the neighbor’s tractor when he was young. His career working at GM didn’t hurt.

“I spent over 30 years at GM as a tool and die maker; I’m machinery oriented. In the maintenance department officially, so that stuff comes naturally.”

The cold doesn’t phase him either, he says. A true Canadian.

The Fort George employees informed him he needed to work for the Niagara Parks in order to secure a position with them.

“That sounded too much like full-time work,” he moved on, “he said.”

When the rink at the Gretzky Winery opened, he says an opportunity presented itself. Already having a working relationship with the company, he inquired about the rink. During a meeting one day, he says he asked about the hiring process for rink maintenance. They told him they would look into it and get back to him.

Bartel was persistent. He says he let them know he wanted the position. “I would be interested in helping out – and I will follow up on that.”

Follow up he did. He says he contacted them again and they called him back with an offer.

“No interview, no application, no resume. Someone just called me and said, ‘Do you want to come sign up?’ I said yea, sure. So, there I am.”

Now, every Saturday and Sunday he heads over to take care of the ice. “It’s a job he’s passionate about and has a lot of fun with, and he says, ‘it’s better than working at GM.’”

It’s a much better atmosphere because every one there is trained to be hospitable – not at GM. This is a good gig. It’s a fair bit of physical work so I actually get exercise while I’m working. The first year I lost weight over the winter, normally I gain weight.”

Bonnie Bartel, wife, says he’s appreciative of the position and of the people he works with. “He’s never bored, he just loves the job. That’s hard work, shoveling snow, driving the [Olympia] (similar to a Zamboni); he is suited for it, he really is. It’s perfect for him. He doesn’t take it for granted,” she said.

With so many people visiting the winery and taking advantage of the rink every weekend, Bartel says he feels like a bit of a celebrity when he pulls the tractor out of the shed. Skaters are asked to cut the rink while he circles it. “It’s tense because you have 100 people watching you. I always call it showtime – ‘It’s showtime!’”

“I’m kind of used to that though because I used to record wedding videos – for 20 years, just a self-made business on the side. You’re always working in a crowd and they’re always watching you, you’re practically the center of attention. I was cool with it, just do your job, forget about everybody else.”

Please with the time he spends at the rink, he wouldn’t think of a more fitting position for himself. “The neat thing about this is that I’m in my own backyard again, it gives me something to do for the winter, and I meet lots of nice people. It’s a skill, a talent, an art – to take care of the ice. So, I’m occupied, and I’m at home.”

He says he’ll keep it up for as long as he can. “I think I might keep it up till I’m 65, if I can manage it. Unless something better comes along for the winter – like working in a resort in the south.”

Growing up in NOTL in the middle of farmland, Bartel witnessed the advancement of the town. He says, while it’s not all bad, it can be too busy at times.

“I grew up on that property. We started off living in the boodocks, and then civilization moved in on us. I think it’s a little crowded now for, liking my bike. But who would have thought a facility like that, a world class facility, who would have thought that it would end up in my backyard.”

“We’re victims of our own success here now because it’s getting a little too crowded. People want to move in and convert farmland into subdivisions.”

“The greatness of this place comes from the agriculture and the history – not from overcrowding.”

Aside from the town building itself up too much, Bartel says the growth has provided him with new opportunities; now he can spend his weekends doing what he loves.

“I always tell people it’s not a dream come true, but it’s beyond my wildest dreams; I never dreamt that. I’m really tickled by the job. It’s a blast, it’s a gas – I’m blown away.”

Bartel jokes, “It occurred to me that I’m a professional skater. I waited late in my life to go pro.”