



The Lake Report

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Niagara-on-the-Lake

Icy time for wine fest

ICEWINE VILLAGE
PHOTO GALLERY
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Jami Godin and Devon Duc serve up extra chilly ice wine during the first weekend of Niagara-on-the-Lake's Icewine Village. A snowstorm left tables covered with snow, making for a picturesque serving station. The two were representing local wineries Peller Estates, Trius and Wayne Gretzky Estates. EUNICE TANG/THE LAKE REPORT

Richard Harley
Editor

Saturday's flurry set a picturesque scene for this year's Icewine Village, though numbers for the festival were down from previous years.

The festival, which celebrates local icewine and gourmet cuisine in the centre of Old Town, kicked off on Friday night with a fireworks display in Simcoe Park, and continued over the weekend on Queen Street.

With a snow covered street and frost forming on cups, this year's event truly brought out the theme of ice — and the temperature stayed true to the message.

The frozen conditions and strong windchill made for a significant decline in attendance numbers.

The NOTL Winery Group which puts on the festival was expecting around 10,000, said Andrew Niven, who sits on the group board, but the turnout was closer to 2,000.

The weather is sort of a double-edged sword when it comes to the Icewine Village, Niven said.

Ideally, it should be cold enough that the ice sculptures don't melt. The winery group spends around \$35,000 on ice alone, he said, which can become "a pretty expensive puddle," if it's too warm. However if it's too cold, people tend to stay indoors.

Last year warm temperatures caused the sculptures

to melt fairly quickly. This year they're expected to last for the second weekend.

Those who did turn up may have gotten a little rosy-cheeked for more than one reason. This year's event is showcasing

wine from 18 local wineries, and icewine-themed recipes by five local Signature Kitchen chefs.

Some of the items on this year's menu include chorizo smokies with icewine mustard, chili mac-and-cheese, foie gras canolis, charcuterie samples, octopus ball soup, beef and lamb pies, and vegan Thai coconut soup.

A lot of the foods are designed to compliment the

wine and warm people up in the process.

"It's a simple recipe, but it's tasty," said Jayson Driedger, sous chef at Zees, who was serving up a steaming hot tomato and basil soup.

Saturday was a busier day, said Sandra Bigford, junior sous chef at Hobnob, but by Sunday afternoon she had only served food to seven customers.

Niven said this year's festival was a bit different, with the village portion remaining for both weekends. In previous years they only left one tent up for the second weekend.

Niven said he thinks it will work out nicer for people who miss the first week but hear of it after.

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Council to look at Queenston fire station reports

Richard Harley
Editor

Niagara-on-the-Lake town council is set to hear a cumulation of almost 40 years of reports regarding the Queenston fire station in February.

Fire Chief Rob Grimwood prepared the report, which council will use to plan its next steps in deciding the future of the building, which is reaching its age limit.

"I don't really know what's going on, in the sense that all that's happened is council made a motion asking me to prepare a report that provided them with all previous reports related to the fire hall."

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Council considering a crack down on illegal short-term rental units

Christian Coulombe
Special

Niagara-on-the-Lake town council is considering cracking down on illegal short-term rentals and making sure owners have proper licences.

Currently two properties in Garrison Village are being investigated by bylaw enforcement to ensure they have the proper licensing, council heard last Monday.

A motion was brought forward by Coun. Wendy Cheropita and seconded by Coun. Norm Arsenault to terminate the licenses of the two properties, which are registered as cottage rentals and not villa rentals.

Depending on the number of rooms being rented, the owners could be in violation of short-term rental bylaws.



A bed and breakfast sign in town. JER HOUGHTON

A short-term rental is like a bed-and-breakfast and is only allowed to have three rooms before it meets the definition of a country-inn or villa.

Any country-inn or villa must apply for a license prior to consideration as a permitted use in a residential zone, according to

town procedures.

Cheropita said illegal rentals are a growing problem locally, and neighbours are complaining about excessive and unwanted traffic.

She said residents in the area have contacted council, and have kept a log and a document to

show there are sometimes as many as 10 cars staying overnight.

Chief administration officer Holly Dowd said there is a process that must be followed before a short-term rental license can be revoked, and the two Garrison Village houses are currently being investigated.

Bylaw enforcement went out on Friday, she said.

“If there’s an issue we write a report to council to revoke the license.”

However Cheropita shared concerns from a previous inspection of the homes.

“I was aware that we sent an inspector to the homes in December, when the inspector went through there were only three bedrooms,” she said.

Arsenault requested a quick turnaround time on a decision. It’s “been

going on for substantive amount of time,” he said.

Dowd said the process is already underway, though it can’t be rushed and must be done according to proper procedures.

“We usually work with the people. They need to understand there are complaints, and if we can’t get anywhere then we bring them back here to revoke the license,” said Dowd.

An owner can’t appeal a revoked license, however after a report has been issued, the owner has the opportunity to speak to council about the report.

Coun. Gary Burroughs said he would prefer to see licences revoked upon violation of the bylaw, and asked for an amendment to the motion, which was carried.

Coun. Clare Cameron disagreed with the motion, saying she believes in

following and enforcing the procedures that are already in place.

“I’m very uncomfortable circumventing a process in regards to this ... we do have a process and I do not believe it’s the role of council to start embarking upon our own alternate bylaw enforcement process. I’d like to see the process in play,” she said.

Coun. Erwin Weins agreed with Cameron about making sure to follow policies already in place.

“Process is important and process is what our constitution is based on,” he said.

“It is a big issue with this and we have to have faith in our staff to do a proper report and report back to us.”

The cost of a short-term rental licence is \$112 per bedroom.

NOTL women gather for ‘first ever’ local march

Christina Manocchio
Staff

Women across the world marched in solidarity on Saturday, chanting change for women’s rights, LG-BTQ+ rights, and a wide range of issues that affect women in different parts of the globe.

Locally, a small group toughed out the cold at Simcoe Park for Niagara-on-the-Lake’s first ever Women’s March.

The group marched down King Street to avoid Queen Street, which was closed off for the Icewine Village festival.

The afternoon featured guest speakers Lord Mayor Betty Disero, YWCA Niagara Region executive director Elizabeth Zimmerman, Zambian immigrant Natasha Mumba, and YWCA



A group of women gathered in the cold for NOTL's first ever Women's March.

Montreal CEO Mel Thivierge, who covered a range of issues affecting women and basic equality both locally and abroad. Issues included the challenges in finding gender-neutral bathrooms, equal

wages for women, and the challenges of being a female immigrant.

Event co-organizer Jacqueline Thair said women in Niagara-on-the-Lake — especially migrant workers — also face a

number of gender issues, and there’s “some racism and some homophobia” locally too.

She hopes the march might bring some awareness to issues locals may not be aware of.



Maya Nority sings Rise Up. CHRISTINA MANOCCHIO

Lord Mayor Betty Disero spoke about the never ending battle for gender equality and about her experiences with sexism, while Mumba read a thank you letter to her mother for giving her

strength in making decisions for herself, and the powerful influence that had on her.

The event ended with a performance by Maya Nority, who sang Rise Up by Andra Day.



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Town to look at fire station reports dating back to 1971

Continued from front page

So there hasn't been any discussion, there's no staff report, there's no analysis, there's no recommendations," said Grimwood during an interview. "It's an older building and it's been talked about several times over the years — you know, 'what do we do with the building? Do we keep putting money into it? Do you build a new one? If so, where?'"

As far as he knows right now, council just wanted to see all the previous information. "It was a crazy report to write," Grimwood said. "I found the documents from 1971

were the oldest, so really all I did was I tried to put everything together that we had in archives, present it to them, let them read it as background ... I suspect if anybody wants to move forward with any sort of analysis or a recommendation on next steps, they'll ask for a staff report."

In the past council has talked about combining the fire halls in Queenston and St. Davids, whether it be closing both and build-

ing a new station, or closing Queenston and having trucks dispatch from St. Davids.

Grimwood said right now it's "way too early" to make a recommendation on what should happen.

The current Queenston fire hall, having been built around 1977, is nearing the end of its intended life cycle, he added.

"Fire stations are generally built to last about 50 years ... 42 years, it's getting there," Grimwood said.

As far as what might come of the report, Grimwood said it's "way too early" to speculate about what he thinks should happen.

"To provide council with a recommendation like that, there would be a lot of consultation and a lot of analysis. I would have to engage the Fire Marshal's office ... I would have all kinds of mapping exercises conducted. It would be an expensive amount of work for me to come back to council and provide one of those recommendations."

An important part of making any recommen-



An article from the Niagara Falls Review about the Queenston fire station. SUPPLIED PHOTO

dation on a future fire hall would be finding out about expected population increases, Grimwood added.

"The planning department would have to provide to me with what they believe the future growth is going to be over the next 50 years, and there would be a lot that went into that decision."

He said if asked by council, he's prepared to put together such an analysis.

Council will hear the report Feb. 4.

Lord Mayor Betty Disero said as far as she's aware, the motion for the report was not intended to worry volunteer firefighters.

"This was not intended to put fear into anyone, because I still firmly believe that all the fire halls we have need to be maintained and need to stay. So it would not be my intention to start reducing services within the fire department at all."

She said if there are going to be major repairs, the town will have to find the money somehow.

"We're now paying for a lot of decisions that weren't made — and I'm not saying just the last four years — over many years, so with people trying to keep taxes low, we are now paying the price for it. But I refuse to carry on that debt to people who will come after us. So we have to make that budget sustainable."

Grimwood said in the last four years "not much" has been spent on the fire hall upgrades and renovations.

editor@niagaranow.com



The Queenstone fire hall. JER HOUGHTON

"This was not intended to put fear into anyone, because I still firmly believe that all the fire halls we have need to be maintained and need to stay."

BETTY DISERO
LORD MAYOR



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Editorial: Enough horsing around

Richard Harley
Staff

It's ironic — these out-of-town protesters are starting to get pretty down with what's going on locally. I'm not sure whether they're protesting anymore, or just like spending time in town. Perhaps both.

Regardless, the idea that jamming up a well-respected local business is a good way to get a message across is laughable, and the Town of Niagara-on-the-Lake should step in.

Sure, it's a right to protest, and it's a right to be outrageous in your beliefs — but it isn't a right to impede the business of another citizen who also has a right to operate peacefully without the feeling of being threatened by cameras and defamation.

The Sentineals treat their

horses better than most humans treat themselves. I've seen it first hand, talked with Fred and Laura at their farm, and known carriage operators my whole life.

Most, if not all of them, were animal people who would have been holding a protest sign themselves had anything or anyone been harming the horses.

It says a lot when Sentineal employees are jumping to defend their bosses.

That doesn't happen often, and when it does, short of there being some mass conspiracy, you'd best bet those business owners deserve the loyalty.

It saddens me that nothing has been done about this, and that our former lord mayor decided to give these protesters as much credence as he did. There's a difference between respecting

people's rights to protest and catering to people who you're not actually representing, but that's beside the point.

Solutions? Well, as we know these protesters love to throw the Charter of Rights back at anyone who dares infringe on their rights to ugly up Old Town, so, we're going to have to come up with solutions.

I've got a good one — a one-year contract with Sentineal Carriages, granting them ownership of the entire sidewalk for that time, during which time they'd be allowed to operate the carriage business as usual, but will have the ability to remove anyone obstruction they please from the premises.

Take away their main spot, and have them head to

the park. It'll get old pretty fast. And if that's not good enough, find something that works, and find it before May hits. I don't think anyone wants to see that for another summer. The Sentineals deserve a break.

Lord Mayor Betty Disero and members of council: Please get these protesters out of our town.

editor@niagaranow.com



Doublethink: Education and democracy

Hermine Steinberg
OPINION

Disruption doesn't necessarily mean progress, and reform doesn't always equal improvement. What these terms do mean is change, and the next big disruption on the horizon will be in education.

Much of the political and corporate messaging regarding automation and AI is that it will transform society but, as in the past, new jobs will emerge. No reason to worry.

And that will be true for some.

Meanwhile the political landscape is shifting right.

We are moving away from a philosophy that supports improving the quality of life for all its citizens to being 'open for business' and investing in strategies that improve our global competitiveness. But who is really benefiting from this global race for wealth and power?

The data clearly show the income gap is dramatically widening, the middle class is shrinking, and it's more difficult for people at the bottom to move up.

Education is now under attack. Higher education as a good investment for individu-

als, taxpayers, or corporations is being questioned. Communication, and critical thinking skills are valued less than specific technical skills and aptitudes that align with automated or AI platforms and systems.

It has been estimated that in Ontario 450,000 unskilled workers won't find jobs and do not have the skills necessary to fill the one million jobs that exist.

Politicians tell us we need to fill the gap and traditional education — at all levels — is failing us. These facts may be true but do not tell the whole story, blurring the larger problem that is facing us.

Digital literacy is seen as a basic requirement for the new economy. But Stats Can revealed that 47.7 per cent of Canadians score either at level one or two on the five-level prose literacy scale. According to Literacy Link Niagara, almost half of us can't work well with words and numbers, and ten percent of Canadians have learning disabilities.

This means many adults and young people have difficulty doing basic tasks such as filling out job applications. Bottom line - they

don't have the literacy and essential skills to effectively participate in the current economy, not to mention the emerging 'gig' economy. This is not merely a failure of the education system. It's a reflection of many socio-economic realities that we have not properly addressed.

What has also become apparent is that the new generation of digital natives will not symbiotically integrate themselves into this new economy. Most use their electronic devices in traditional ways — word processing, email, social media, and web browsing. A minority create multimedia content or are able to determine fact from opinion or context. When we couple this with the fact that 30 percent of students didn't pass the 2017-18 Ontario Secondary School Literacy Test, we need to think about what the future holds for these people, and for the rest of us.

AI experts have stated that this mismatch of skills that is being touted as an opportunity gap to be filled will be temporary. It's merely a short-term anomaly that will disappear once the economy

is transformed to its next stage of evolution when many of these transitional jobs will disappear. Our youth are being told they must be more mobile, flexible, and continually learn new skills to compete. This doublespeak means less job security, fewer full-time jobs, less benefits, and social upheaval.

Those who aren't motivated or don't have the resources or capability to learn new skills at an ever-quickening pace of change will be left behind. It's no wonder anxiety and depression among young people is pandemic.

An effort to disinvest in public education and promote online self-education, home-based schooling and more specialized training offered by private companies is growing. It will definitely benefit some, but for most, it will be disastrous.

Cutbacks rarely translate into efficiencies that improve academic or essential skills. A disruption in education can only be justified if it improves the quality of life for the majority of citizens. And an economic system that diminishes the value of human contribution should be seen as an enemy of the people.



More letters

Dear editor, I respectfully suggest that the Town of Niagara-on-the-Lake make an effort to purchase some much needed snow removal equipment.

Surely with the higher fees being charged for parking in the downtown some money could be allocated to snow removal equipment. Many people travel into the town for work or business, tourists come to the town year round, and surely the town's people themselves must drive in the town in snowy weather.

The town has an obligation to provide the best service it can to all those folks who work and live and do business within its boundaries. Step up to the plate and do the right thing.

Thank you.

Suzanne Kavanaugh

Increased parking fees welcome

Concerns expressed by the NOTL Chamber of Commerce regarding a parking fee increase for tour buses using the lot at Fort George fail to consider three key issues: the economic benefits bus visitors generate in the town versus those provided by longer-term visitors, and the impact of rampant tourism on residents as well as town infrastructure.

On Jan. 13, CBC's Sunday Edition aired a program on "overtourism", which looked at the issue mostly in relation to tourist hotspots in Europe. Some of the comments made during the program could also apply to NOTL and Old Town in particular: "As a growing, global middle class gains increasing access to low-cost travel, residents in tourism hotspots say they are overrun. Housing costs are skyrocketing, driving out residents. Infrastructure is overburdened. The environment is suffering and so is local culture."

Stephen Burgen who writes for the Guardian and lives in Barcelona said that certain areas in the city, like the famous La Rambla pedestrian boulevard, are clogged with tourists. "(La Rambla) is now really a no-go area for residents for about nine months of the year, because it's just so full of tourists." In those neighbourhoods, Burgen says, businesses that formerly served local residents, such as dry-cleaners, are being driven out due to high rent and replaced by tourists-oriented services like bicycle-rental shops and tapas bars. He says short-term, apartment-rental agencies like Airbnb are driving up housing costs, meaning many locals can't afford to live in the city any longer.

Of course Old Town is not Barcelona. None the less, perhaps there is a real need to manage tourism here. CBC's program discussed tour buses and cruise ships and their role in depositing large groups of tourists in towns for short stop-overs and some panelists questioned the value of this type of tourism to the host towns.

There were varied opinions on the panel — but there was unanimity on one point "the way tourism is managed in much of the world needs to change, fast."

The Chamber of Commerce's mandate is to promote business, including tourism. The job of managing tourism must fall to the Town of NOTL. An increase in the cost of bus permits is likely a good start.

Sandra Davis

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The Lake Report

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We'd love it if you could include pictures of the food where possible, and of the family member who might have passed the recipe down. If there is any family folklore associated with the recipe, we'd love to hear that too. Maybe there's a certain occasion when it's always made, perhaps there's a funny or sad story to tell that relates to that particular recipe,



Family favourites? Share your recipes with us by emailing editor@niagaranow.com.

or certain traditions that accompany it.

We will publish selected recipes regularly, and at the end of the year we'll compile all the recipes together as a book of NOTL family favourites. Any proceeds

from the sale of the book will be donated to a local charity.

Please send your recipes, pictures and stories to: recipes@niagaranow.com

The top recipes will be published in an annual

paperback book which will be available (in limited supply) to residents of Niagara-on-the-Lake at The Lake Report office. This year's book (title uncertain!) will be released in the coming months!

OPINION

Site plan approval process flawed

If the garden project being built opposite the Pillar & Post is anything to go by, NOTL's approach to urban planning is seriously flawed.

At the public meeting held in advance of the project being approved by Council, residents raised three major concerns: noise (from the outdoor entertainment tents) affecting the quality of life of neighbouring residents; increased on-street parking by hotel guests; and the removal of mature trees from the site. In response, Vintage Hotels indicated that the property would be surrounded by a nine-foot berm to help contain the noise, that nearly all trees (with the exception of scrub trees) would be preserved and that the construction of a below-ground multi-level parking lot would increase the number of parking spaces available at the hotel sufficiently to handle

the expected increase in the number vehicles being parked at the hotel. Council approved the project shortly after this meeting, presumably in the anticipation that the proposed mitigation measures would be implemented.

It is true that participants at the public meeting were warned that it would be their last opportunity to comment on the site plan for the project and that it could be amended as the planning process was completed. However, I doubt that anyone who attended the meeting anticipated the extent to which the plan they were shown at the time would be revised.

Rather than preserving existing trees, Vintage Hotels has virtually clear-cut the site. Even healthy municipal trees have been cut down.

In addition, instead of a below-ground multi-level parking lot, it appears that

the plan now incorporates a presumably smaller surface-level lot, and that the nine-foot berm has been eliminated from the plan entirely. In other words, it seems that most of the mitigation measures proposed by Vintage Hotels to gain Council and public support for the garden project will not be implemented. Nearby residents will be forced to live with the noise and parking issues that the garden project will generate when it is completed. It's too late to save the trees – they're already gone.

The planning process currently in use in NOTL has allowed the developer, town staff and Council to essentially ignore the concerns expressed by the public prior to Vintage Hotels' garden project being approved. That's wrong. In a democratic society, if the site plan for a project with as much poten-

tial to affect the wellbeing of town residents has undergone such significant revisions, surely the public should be given additional opportunities to comment on the plan prior to its implementation.

In this case, when the Vintage Hotels' garden project has the potential to set a precedent for other outdoor entertainment areas, and all the issues they bring with them, to be created in proximity to residential neighbourhoods – think of the Two Sisters' hotel development on the Randwood Estate site, the hotel development at The Village and the outdoor wedding venue being created at Vintage's Queens' Landing property – the need for further public consultation on the garden project is particularly clear.

Terry Davis

The Lake Report

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There are a variety of great businesses inside to choose from – don't forget to mention you saw them in the paper! The Lake Report would also like to acknowledge and thank those who have made financial contributions to the paper, whether through our donate button online or by mailing us a cheque.

The paper encourages all residents to support the paper through a "voluntary subscription" annually. For those interested in supporting us, we suggest \$1 per issue, per household, at 52 issues per year. That's only \$52 – less than most people spend on pizza and wings. Larger donations are also greatly appreciated. For transparency, donations of more than \$1,000 will be published in the paper (with a big thank you) and donors will receive an exclusive limited edition Lake Report mug, as well as a copy of the first edition of the paper signed by staff. (Limit of 20 special mugs) To support The Lake Report, mail cheques to the Niagara-on-the-Lake Post Office, L0S1J0, PO Box 724. Please make cheques to Niagara Now Ltd. and note it as a donation.

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Bringing skilled employment to Niagara-on-the-Lake

Since May 2018, The Lake Report has created six new jobs for talented young people in town

Brittany Carter
Staff

Keeping print alive, The Lake Report celebrated its official office opening last Thursday.

Coinciding with the second weekly edition of the year, it was a symbolic new start for the paper and staff.

The ribbon-cutting ceremony, held at the newly renovated office on Mississauga Street, had more than 60 people in attendance; it was a resounding success.

Richard Harley, editor-in-chief, stood by the new sign at the front of the building.

With onlookers braving the cold, he commented on the growth of the paper and the steps it has taken to get to this point.

It wasn't an easy endeavour, but he said he's proud of how far it has come.

After speeches by Lord Mayor Betty Disero and MPP Wayne Gates, the ribbon was cut; a new beginning for The Lake Report.

Gates congratulated Harley and staff on previous editions and spoke of the need for local, unbiased reporting.

"You need to know what's going on in your community, you need to know what's going on in your city council. It creates that debate, and it creates a healthy community."

Commenting on the turnout, Gates said the importance of a local paper is evident.

"You can tell how important a local community paper is by the number of people that show up to an opening, in the middle of the week, at 10:30 in the morning, at wintertime."

Gates encouraged every-



Councillors Allan Bisback, Gary Burroughs, Clare Cameron and Norm Arsenault, Lord Mayor Betty Disero, Lake Report staff members Brittany Carter, Richard Harley, Dariya Baiguzhiyeva, Rob Lamond, MPP Wayne Gates, Lake Report staff members Christina Manocchio, Jer Houghton and Coun. Wendy Cheropita. LAUREN DAVIDSON/SPECIAL

one to support the paper, adding that he will do the same by advertising within for as long as his budget allows.

Though Disero jested she and Harley have had their "ups and downs" over the years, she spoke of how far he has come, commending his efforts to create a genuine local newspaper.

She said part of what makes a good community is its economic development. The Lake Report is joining that community and contributing to it.

"From a very small idea and a big dream from one person, we now have a new business in Niagara-on-the-Lake. It is flourishing, blossoming and bring-

ing the news, both in the traditional manner, through newspapers, to the new millennial experience, online and through social media.

I'm thrilled to be here to open this new business."

Disero commented on the future of NOTL and bringing the youth here through employment. She said, particularly important to her, the second reason she was thrilled to be there was to encourage youth employment in NOTL. It is an issue she said she is focused on,

wanting youth to live, stay and prosper here.

"Look at this group of [young] people here that are running this paper; they are our future."

Disero offered her encouragement and support, "Just know that I respect everything you do and the work that your colleagues put into this newspaper for the residents of Niagara-on-the-Lake."

Light refreshments were served while those in attendance came out of the cold to mingle. Supporters stayed for the

afternoon, getting to know each other and discussing the future of the paper.

The event paralleled what The Lake Report aims to accomplish; community coming together. The support and appreciation were palpable.

Neighbours and councillors standing alongside writers, both on staff and by submission, gathered to celebrate the official opening of the new office.

In his speech, Harley said he always had a passion for journalism and for print.

"I think a lot of people love holding a real newspaper in their hands. One that's relevant to them, informative, they can trust to be honest and unbiased."

It makes me proud to put together every single issue, knowing it's for this community. It's here that I am fortunate enough to be able to follow my passion."

It started as the pipe-dream of a young local resident. The paper began in Harley's house with one Niagara College intern, and it has since grown to a weekly edition employing six full-time staff.

He said he created The Lake Report for several reasons, one of them being his love for NOTL.

"I love this town. I've been raised here my entire life and have fond memories here. The first time I ever learned what a bylaw officer is, was when they chased me down Queen Street as a youngster, because I had been playing guitar on the street — and making a decent buck doing it."

In what many people may call a dying industry, The Lake Report aims to keep print alive. With over 10,000 copies in circulation it's well on its way.

"When the Niagara Advance closed — the closest thing we had to a community paper — being how I am, I couldn't sit back and watch NOTL be left out. Our community is unique, diverse, full of news to write about, and an all-around great place to live. We deserve a paper, I thought."

New jobs have been created, bringing full-time staff to Niagara-on-the-Lake.

Watching the day unfold, Harley said he couldn't have asked for a better turnout.

"As this chapter of Niagara-on-the-Lake unfolds, the paper will be here to document it, fairly and truthfully."

“Look at this group of [young] people here that are running this paper. They are our future.”

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Residents can help make recycling better in Niagara

Jill Troyer
Special

New statistics for 2018 show Niagara residents put out 38,000 metric-tonnes of recycling material in their blue and grey boxes last year, including many types of paper and plastic products and packaging.

According to Niagara Recycling CEO Norman Kraft, Niagara's recycling program is "one of the more comprehensive" in Ontario, and even across Canada.

"We certainly have gone beyond what most municipalities do for recycling," he said.

Niagara accepts more material than many municipalities, such as black plastic food takeout trays and flower flats, empty aerosol cans, and empty paint cans.

Acting commissioner of public works Catherine Habermehl says one measure of the effectiveness of the program is the recycling plant on Montrose Avenue in Niagara Falls. "Only four to five per cent goes out as garbage," compared to as much as "24 per cent in Toronto."

Habermehl also notes that Niagara Recycling produces "a product from recycled glass that sells for \$100 per metric tonne, where others have to pay to get rid of their glass."

Yet there is still room for improvement.

If Niagara residents could grant Kraft three wishes to make recycling work even better in 2019, they would all start with the letter P — plastic film, pet food bags, and propane cylinders.

"The biggest issue is plastic film, which includes bread bags, paper towel wrapping, plastic wrap, grocery bags — anything that stretches. We ask people to stuff it all in a plastic bag, tie the bag, and toss it into the grey box, but it's not happening," says Kraft.

There's a large volume of loose bits of stretchy plastic



Norman Kraft holds correctly packed plastic film in right hand, loose film in left. DON REYNOLDS/SPECIAL

in the grey and blue bins, "so that requires manual sorting, it jams up equipment, and some ends up going to the garbage instead of being recycled," she explains. "It also ends up contaminating other material we sell, such as cans."

There is so much loose plastic film, staff can't keep up with all of it as it goes by on the conveyor belts, so some of it ends up going into sorting equipment.

"We get hundreds of propane cylinders. If they go through a baling machine they could explode."

NORMAN KRAFT
NIAGARA RECYCLING CEO

In other cases, he says, the stretchy plastic "wraps around shafts and damages equipment."

Kraft adds, "We have a very good market for plastic, it goes to EFS Plastics in Listowel, where it is turned into pellets used to make new products," such as "plastic totes, crates, black garbage bags. In 2018 we recycled 1,700 metric-tonnes of plastic film, and we could increase that by another 200 tons if it



Niagara Recycling employee Kevin Upper (right) sorts materials. DON REYNOLDS/SPECIAL

were recycled properly."

People are aware that stretchy plastic can be recycled, but at least half are not packing it as requested, she said. If more people would follow the instructions to stuff, tie, and toss, "it would be a game changer for us."

Pet food bags are another peeve of Kraft's. He says when it comes to items put in the blue bins that are actually garbage, "the biggest culprit is multi-laminated packaging material, especially pet food bags."

"They're laminated on the outside and waxed on the inside, so they're garbage, they can't be recycled."

Yet many do make their way into blue boxes and have to be manually removed from the stream of recyclable materials.

Other things found in blue boxes are not only not recyclable, but actually a threat to worker safety.

"We get hundreds of propane cylinders. If they go through a baling machine they could explode."

Kraft said staff have to spot and remove the cylinders as they come through on the conveyor belts.

Propane cylinders should be taken to Household Hazardous Waste depots, not be placed in recycling or garbage bins, Kraft said.

Depot locations can be found on the Region's website, niagararegion.ca

New recycling guidelines for 2019 have been distributed to all households in Niagara recently, and Kraft is hoping residents will take heed to pack up stretchy plastics properly, place laminated pet food bags in the garbage, and take propane cylinders to hazardous waste depots.

Those three actions would make recycling in Niagara far more effective for 2019.



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LOCAL SPOTLIGHT:

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

Niagara resident receives 2019 Walt Grealis Special Achievement Award for lifetime dedication to Canadian music industry

Tim Taylor
Special

Duff Roman is a music industry pioneer. For the past sixty years, he has led, pushed and prodded the blossoming Canadian music scene into the vibrant industry it is today.

In mid-March that industry will say a heartfelt thank you, by presenting the Walt Grealis Special Achievement Award to the 80-year-old former broadcaster and entertainment entrepreneur. Roman will receive the award, presented by the Canadian Academy of Recording Arts and Sciences, at the 48th Annual Juno Gala, on March 16, in London, Ont.

The Juno award, presented annually, recognizes individuals whose work has significantly impacted the growth and development of the Canadian music industry.

There isn't much in the music industry that Roman hasn't tackled—radio announcer, industry executive, music and concert producer, after-hours club owner, music technology entrepreneur, association executive and

industry advocate.

According to the Juno citation: "Duff has been a consummate figure in Canadian broadcasting, with industry insight and a dedication that knows no bounds; his lifelong work exemplifies the true spirit of this award".

It will be Roman's second Juno Award.

Roman arrived in Toronto in 1959, at the tender age of 21. He'd had a telephone call, to his home in Swift Current, Saskatchewan, from Jack Kent Cooke, the budding international music entrepreneur, to be part of his radio team at CKEY in Toronto.

"I'd worked on air at a number of western stations from the age of 16," says Roman, from his Niagara-on-the-Lake home.

"I'd wanted to be on radio from the age of ten, long before I really knew what it was. It was my dream."

After four years, he moved to CHUM, later becoming program director and ultimately head of the CHUM radio network.

Along the way, Roman and his brother started Roman Records, producing and

launching such groups as Little Caesar and the Consuls, Levon and the Hawks, The Paupers and Canadian Music Hall of Fame inductee, David Clayton-Thomas.

In the 1980's, Roman led the industry's creation of the Foundation to Assist Canadian Talent on Recordings (FACTOR), an organization that injects some \$20 million a year into the recording industry.

Roman and his wife, Sandra (also a former broadcast executive), moved to Niagara-on-the-Lake two-and-a-half years ago. Sandra now volunteers for the Shaw Festival.

"We felt it was time to leave Oakville and NOTL is really something that touches you", says Roman. "We love the local music scene, too. It is wonderful that you can still today hear live music without a cover charge."

And don't think Roman has slowed down in retirement. He and a partner have developed a new FM-based technology that he thinks has great potential for communicating with a variety of existing household devices.



Duff Roman, in the den of his Niagara on the Lake home, shows off his wall of fame, including his first Juno Award. TIM TAYLOR/SPECIAL



A personalized poster, created by the Rolling Stones, to celebrate their Duff Roman-produced concert at the El Mocambo in 1977. TIM TAYLOR/SPECIAL

The Rolling Stones at El Mocambo

It was early 1977 and the Rolling Stones were sick of stadium concerts — they wanted a small controlled venue for a special event in Toronto.

So the band's management team got in touch with Duff Roman, then program director at CHUM in Toronto, to make it happen.

Through a CHUM listener contest, Roman assembled busloads of Stones' fans, for a private concert at the El Mocambo. The event was completely underground. The 350 fans had no idea who was performing or where.

The result was fan pandemonium — another success for Duff Roman.

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From the horse's mouth

Various animal rights organizations have different takes on horse carriages – the Ontario Society for Prevention of Cruelty to Animals refuses to talk about the issue



Fred Sentineal with his horse Obie in summer of 2018. RICHARD HARLEY

Dariya Baiguzhiyeva
Staff

To ride or not to ride: that is the question.

For about a year, a local activist group has been protesting the use of horse-drawn carriages in Niagara-on-the-Lake.

The carriage rides, run by Sentineal Carriages, have operated locally for decades. The activist group, At War For Animals Niagara, would like to see an end to that, and believes human use of animals for any means is "speciesism," and would like to see an end to human ownership of all animals.

Protesters have been standing beside the carriage loading area, in an attempt to hinder the company's business and spread their message.

The Sentineals have seen an influx of local support since the protesters began, while AWFAN members have not given up. They say they plan to keep protesting unless the company switches to electric carriages.

When it comes to the law,

animal cruelty prevention agencies across the country have differing opinions on the subject.

Ontario doesn't have specific regulations for the use of carriage horses, however the Ontario Society for Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Act states animals shouldn't be put in distress and must be provided with adequate care, food, shelter and treatment. Otherwise, the owner could be guilty of an offence within both the Criminal Code and the OSPCA Act, and inspectors and agents could issue orders and lay charges.

In Montreal horse-drawn carriages – also called caleche – will be banned starting Dec. 31, 2019, while in downtown Toronto the rides have been prohibited since 1998.

The SPCA in Victoria, B.C. recommended banning horse-drawn carriages after two horses slipped and fell on May 4, 2018, while carrying a trolley with passengers.

Victoria Carriage Tours provided a statement in response to the recommendation, pointing out their safety policies and noting,

"one incident cannot reflect the whole, not with horses."

Tally-Ho Carriage Tours, another horse-and-carriage company in Victoria, also responded to the recommendation with a statement saying it "follows strict procedures and precautions" to maximize the safety of its "horses, staff and the general public."

The Ottawa Humane Society says it recognizes many animals are used for work activities, and believes animals should be provided with proper care, while owners should be responsive to the five freedoms of animal welfare.

The Five Freedoms is a standard in animal welfare which was first developed in the UK government report in 1965. This core concept includes freedom from hunger and thirst; discomfort; pain, injury or disease; fear and distress; and freedom to express normal behaviour.

The OSPCA did not have much to say about the hot topic.

"We always expect standards of care are being met for animals, no matter what working job

they have," said Melissa Kosowan, the associate director of communications at OSPCA, in an email to The Lake Report. "We are in the process of reviewing our position statements and, as such, our statement will be provided at a future time."

A Fort Erie SPCA spokesperson wouldn't comment, but said the organization complies with current Ontario and OSPCA legislation.

Humane societies in Niagara Falls and Welland, as well as SPCA branches in Barrie and Orangeville, didn't provide any comments on the issue.

AWFAN has criticized Sentineal Carriages, claiming the horses are subject to poor working conditions, while local residents and staff members of the carriage company have consistently fought the allegation, saying the horses are well-cared-for and enjoy the work and socialization.

For many NOTL locals and tourists, a horse-drawn carriage ride is a part of history, and something that adds character to the community.

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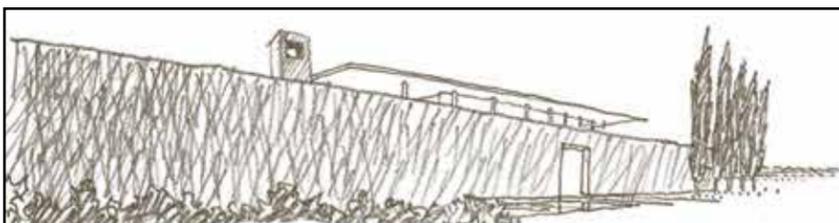
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	31 Bridge Seniors Casual Drop In: Bridge - 1 p.m. to 4 p.m. - NOTL Community Centre Seniors Fitness: Healthy Safe & Strong - 2 p.m. to 3 p.m. / 3:30 p.m. to 4:30 p.m. - NOTL Community Centre Council: Open House - 4 p.m. - NOTL Community Centre Minecraft Club - 4 p.m. to 5 p.m. - NOTL Public Library Fish Fry at the Legion - 4:30 p.m. to 7:30 p.m. - Royal Canadian Legion Tinker Thinker Thursdays - 6 p.m. to 7 p.m. - NOTL Public Library	1 Yoga with Jenny - 10 a.m. to 11 a.m. - NOTL Public Library Wayne Gates Office - 1:30 p.m. to 4 p.m. - NOTL Public Library Pumphouse Instructors' Exhibition - 11 a.m. - Niagara Pumphouse Arts Centre Knit a Bit - 2 p.m. to 4 p.m. - NOTL Public Library Days of Wine & Chocolate - 11 a.m. to 5 p.m. - Wineries of NOTL St. Davids and District Lions Club: Friday Fish Fry - 4:30 p.m. to 7 p.m. - St. Davids and District Lions Club	2 Days of Wine & Chocolate - 11 a.m. to 5 p.m. - Wineries of NOTL
6 Seniors Fitness: Healthy Safe & Strong - 2 p.m. to 3 p.m. / 3:30 p.m. to 4:30 p.m. - NOTL Community Centre Minecraft Club - 4 p.m. to 5 p.m. - NOTL Public Library Fish Fry at the Legion - 4:30 p.m. to 7:30 p.m. - Royal Canadian Legion Tinker Thinker Thursdays - 6 p.m. to 7 p.m. - NOTL Public Library Niagara College: Cider with Gavin Robertson - 6:30 p.m. to 10:30 p.m. - Canadian Food and Wine Institute, NOTL Campus	7 Seniors Fitness: Healthy Safe & Strong - 2 p.m. to 3 p.m. / 3:30 p.m. to 4:30 p.m. - NOTL Community Centre Minecraft Club - 4 p.m. to 5 p.m. - NOTL Public Library Fish Fry at the Legion - 4:30 p.m. to 7:30 p.m. - Royal Canadian Legion Tinker Thinker Thursdays - 6 p.m. to 7 p.m. - NOTL Public Library	8 Wayne Gates Office - 1:30 p.m. to 4 p.m. - NOTL Public Library Yoga with Jenny - 10 a.m. to 11 a.m. - NOTL Public Library Days of Wine & Chocolate - 11 a.m. to 5 p.m. - Wineries of NOTL Knit a Bit - 2 p.m. to 4 p.m. - NOTL Public Library	9 Days of Wine & Chocolate - 11 a.m. to 5 p.m. - Wineries of NOTL George Krissa in Concert - 7:30 p.m. to 10 p.m. - Corks' Playhouse Theatre Niagara College: Bake with Expert - 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. - Canadian Food and Wine Institute, NOTL Campus

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Anthony Ho and Ben MacDonald serve up a vegan coconut soup from Niagara's Finest Thai.
PHOTOS BY RICHARD HARLEY



Ben Burland of The Ben show performs a juggling display for Pamela Brand and Kate McMaster.



Jason Driedger, sous chef at Zees, serves up hot tomato and basil soup with an icewine sauce drizzle.



Jeff Weird, Kennedy Farr and Sarah White pour icewine for Lakeview Cellars and Reif Estate wineries.

Icewine festival a sweet treat



Lincoln Westman and Megan Sentineal look through ice sculpture at Queen Street's Icewine Village on Sunday. EUNICE TANG/STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER

Continued from front page

The event is a one-of-a-kind chance to showcase the town's diverse icewine culture, Niven said, and that's why organizers keep alcohol sales to just icewine, while other festivals have started to include beer and regular wine.

Keeping it to just icewine helps to not "dilute the

experience," Niven said, and makes the festival — the first one in Niagara — stand out among the rest.

The event also sees live music, famously performed by NOTL's Icewine Festival Band, and street performances by The Ben Show, as well as grand ice sculptures, which the festival has become well-known for.

The whole experience, as Niven said, is "just truly Niagara-on-the-Lake."

Locals Lincoln Westman and Megan Sentineal were out Sunday afternoon for a tour through the village. Neither seemed bothered by the cold.

The second weekend festival will run Saturday from 11 a.m. to 5 p.m. and

Sunday from 12 p.m. to 5 p.m. The event is part of the Niagara Icewine Festival, which runs from Jan. 11 to 27.

A full list of events can be found at:

niagarawinefestival.com
For a full photo gallery check out The Lake Report's Facebook page or visit niagaranow.com.

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George Krissa to perform one-night concert before Shaw debut

Brittany Carter
Staff

Making waves in the local theatre scene, George Krissa is coming to Niagara-on-the-Lake.

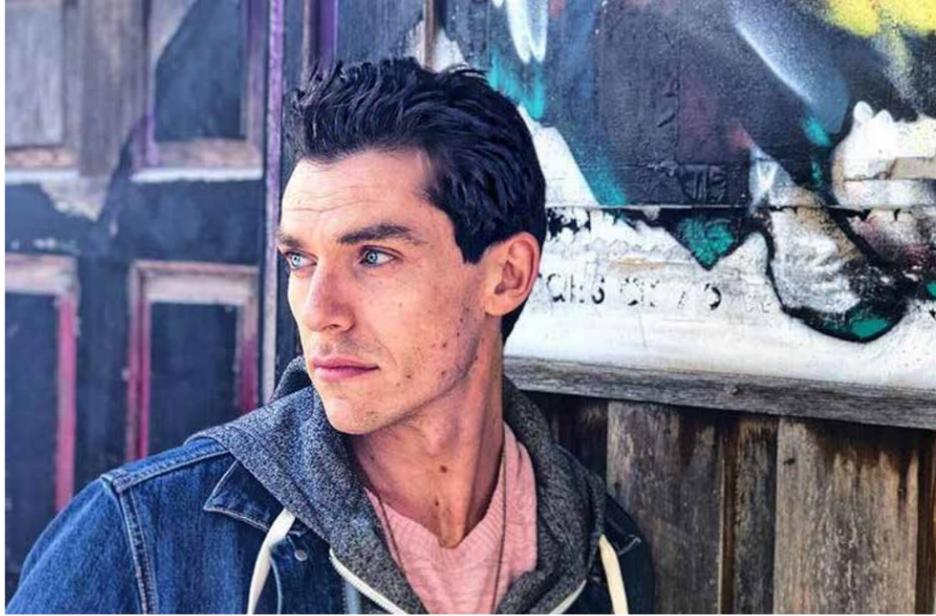
Most recently known for his portrayal of Rocky in the Rocky Horror Picture Show at Stratford Festival, he will be playing Tommy Albright, the lead in the Shaw Festival's showing of Brigadoon.

Rob Burke, producer and co-founder of Something-Productions, booked him for a one-night concert event at Corks Theatre Playhouse on Feb. 9. The show will feature Krissa and a few special guests performing an eclectic range of songs.

"There's not really a story-line. It's a collection of songs that I really love and that I think people will enjoy. There's a little bit of everything - there's traditional and contemporary musical theatre, there's a few duets. I'm doing country and funk and soul. It's eclectic but cohesive," Krissa said.

He will be giving the audience a sneak peek into his role in Brigadoon, which he said has been a favourite of his for a long time.

"Honestly, I think it's the music. It has these incredible songs and soaring melodies that are just so beautiful," he said, adding that it's a show people can relate to. "Any of those old, golden age musicals, it's



George Krissa will perform an eclectic range of songs of Feb. 9. SUPPLIED PHOTO

surprising how relevant they still are."

They will be performing the revised version of Brigadoon, which Krissa said is a little more current.

"They go deeper into some of the characters and they punch up the funny a little bit. I think people are going to be really interested in seeing that as well. I'm very excited to be one of the people who get to introduce it to the Shaw audience."

Hearing about past performances, Burke said he was eager to get him in town for a show.

"I just kept seeing how incredible Rocky Horror was through the reviews and reading about the people in it. His name kept popping up. I looked him up and I found out through his agent that he was go-

ing to be doing something big in the Niagara region. Soon after it was being announced that he was going to be the lead in Brigadoon at the Shaw Festival."

Burke said he was fortunate Krissa was scheduled to appear at Shaw or he might not have been able to book him.

"I was already thinking of having him come in and do a concert. The next thing you know I was talking to his agent." Burke said he felt like it was meant to be.

"It's kind of cool to take someone with so much experience like that and bring them in to perform for everyone. I think it would be great for Niagara, especially NOTL, featuring artists that could possibly be going to the Shaw festival; it's right here in our backyard."

Krissa has the same enthusiasm in coming to NOTL and performing Brigadoon at Shaw.

"Being at the Shaw festival has been a goal of mine since before I even moved to Toronto. To actually get to perform there is a bit of a dream come true."

He said he thought it was a good idea to fit a one-night show in leading up to the Shaw opening.

"It's kind of a great way to introduce myself to the people in the area and sing some songs that I never get to sing. And to entertain some people, because that's what I really love to do."

Brigadoon will run from May to October of this year. Krissa will also be performing in Shaw's rendition of The Horse and His Boy, which will run from April to July.



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Time Capsule:
Irish immigration of 1840



According to a History of NOTL report, Irish immigrants came to Niagara in the 1840s. They were fleeing Irish Potato Famine in hopes to find jobs constructing the Welland Canal. They later found work on the railroad. The area along Rye Street, near the site of the second Court House, is still known as Irishtown.



Thank you from The Lake Report to everyone who attended our ribbon-cutting event last Thursday.

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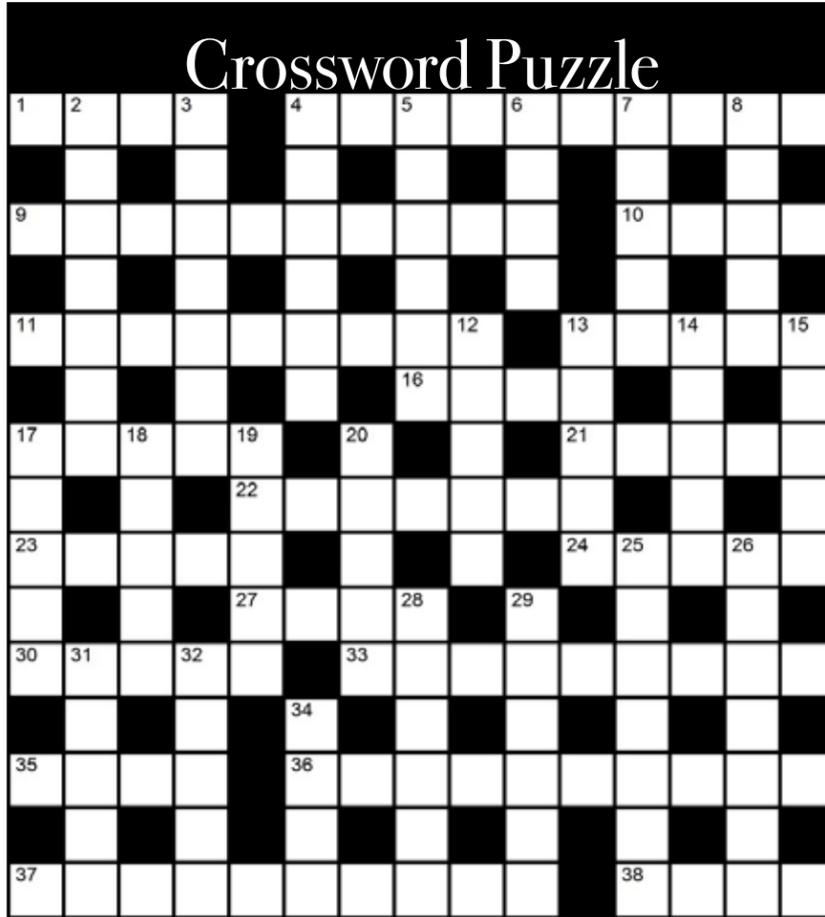
The Lake Report is looking for puzzle makers who would like to help develop this page. We are seeking both standard and cryptic crossword writers. editor@niagaranow.com

Across

- 1. Egg-shaped (4)
- 4. Occurring after one's death (10)
- 9. Kind of engineer (10)
- 10. First son of Adam and Eve (4)
- 11. Six (4-5)
- 13. Also-ran (5)
- 16. Garment of ancient Rome (4)
- 17. Nobles (5)
- 21. Accustom (5)
- 22. Sailor (7)
- 23. Caterpillar (5)
- 24. Paces (5)
- 27. Harmonize (4)
- 30. Plot of ground (5)
- 33. Monarch (9)
- 35. Old Peruvian (4)
- 36. Immeasurably deep (10)
- 37. Overstate (10)
- 38. Indifferent (2-2)

Down

- 2. Small community (7)
- 3. Satan (7)
- 4. Portion of time (6)
- 5. Small bag (6)
- 6. Consecrated (4)
- 7. Former Portuguese territory in S China (5)
- 8. Join (5)
- 12. Name of a thing (5)
- 13. Dens (5)
- 14. Gravy (5)
- 15. Staggers (5)
- 17. Coral builder (5)
- 18. White heron (5)
- 19. Shatter (5)
- 20. Golf clubs (5)
- 25. Lattice (7)
- 26. Winged horse (7)
- 28. Against (6)
- 29. Previously (6)
- 31. Addition (5)
- 32. Loud, resonant sound (5)
- 34. Showing unusual talent (4)



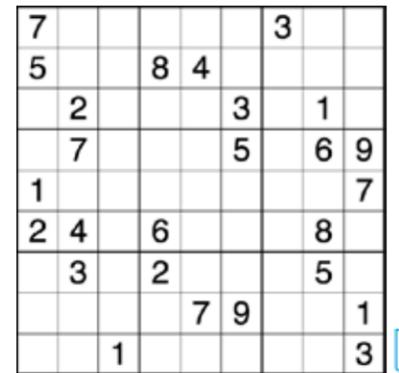
Want the answers early? Scan the puzzles using HP Reveal. (Must be following Niagara Now's channel.)



Last issue's answers



Sudoku



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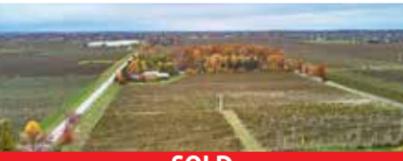
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Exploring Photos: with Jim Smith

COMMONS RINK

The town's outdoor skating rink in the 1920's and earlier was on the Common's. Today war time houses occupy the land seen here on Castlereagh street with the Niagara Historical Society building in the background.

SUPPLIED/JIM SMITH

New drinking and driving enforcement shouldn't affect NOTL bars

Brittany Carter
Staff

Local bars in Niagara-on-the-Lake are unaffected by new drinking and driving enforcement laws.

Sergeant Josh Klop of the Niagara Regional Police said officers can demand any lawfully-stopped driver provide a breath sample to test for alcohol without reasonable suspicion. To perform that check without reasonable cause, however, they need to have the device on hand.

Klop said it's been rumoured that police can go into bars or restaurants and test anyone they believe to have driven under the influence.

"It's been said that they can test their sobriety, and if they're over the legal limit they're going to get arrested for impaired driving," Klop said, adding that the information has been misrepresented. "That's what they've said but that's completely wrong."

Police still require reasonable cause to demand a breath sample within two hours of driving.

Klop said officers can't just show up and request a sample of breath without cause after the driver has arrived at their destination.

"Police can't just show up and say I need a sample of your breath. They need to have some kind of a reasonable expectation that they would have to provide a sample. A lot of times that's going to be related to an accident.

"If someone's on their



Dawn (Jovie) Joki, owner of the Irish Harp Pub.
JER HOUGHTON

way home and they're in an accident and continue to take off, then let's say they end up in a restaurant. Police can track that driver to the restaurant. Then yes, they can go in and say I believe that you were in an accident and you left the scene. They can demand a sample of their breath," Klop said, adding that they won't randomly check patron's sobriety for no reason.

"They're not just going to walk into any bar and grab people."

Geoff Mangan, general manager of The Irish Harp Pub in NOTL, said the updated law won't have an impact on the way they conduct business. While he said he isn't sure police can come into the restaurant to enforce drinking and driving, it's always been their policy to keep safety in the forefront.

"I don't know the legality of that. It's like saying they can prosecute someone for shoplifting before leaving the store. I do know myself

and our establishment always promote responsible drinking.

"We've always operated under the policy of responsible consumption and preventative service."

Mangan said that supporting measures increasing public safety should be the stand of all local bars and restaurants.

"To only focus on profitability of the business would be a disservice," he said, adding that protecting the safety of patrons is important. Service staff need to remain vigilant in utilizing their Smart Serve training.

"We have a big responsibility that way. We try to train the heck out of our service staff to be able to be aware of that. We want them to be able to come back, we don't want to endanger them that way."

Monique Landry, owner of the Old Winery Restaurant, said police have posted outside in the past, making customers uneasy.

"People are very unclear about how much they can

drink and still drive. It all depends on your weight and how much you've had to eat. It's difficult for the average person to be sure."

As a venue that hosts many weddings, she said they take measures to make sure guests are within their limits and encourage alternate transportation home for those exceeding them.

Landry said there are always five or six cars in the parking lot Sunday morning. She encourages staff to make sure, if they are serving someone more than two drinks, that they're not driving.

As for the new enforcement laws, she said that it's not the worst thing that's happened this year. It will slow down how much patrons are consuming, she said.

"You can't really get around Niagara-on-the-Lake without a car."

For bars and restaurants in the NOTL city centre, walking is an option, but for those situated further out it's not as viable.

Customers walk over to The Old Winery Restaurant from Garrison Village in the summer, but without sidewalks she said it can be dangerous at night. Coming from downtown is a hike, especially in the winter.

Residents and visitors of NOTL looking to enjoy a few drinks and still make it home safely, without the fear of being stopped under the new enforcement laws, can take advantage of cab services in the area. Having a designated driver is always recommended.

The Lake Report

The Lake Report strongly encourages readers to support the local businesses that advertise with us.

When reading, we ask you to remember the businesses you see allow us to operate and keep the paper free and independent.

When you're looking for a service or product, check the paper and try someone local first.

There are a variety of great businesses inside to choose from - don't forget to mention you saw them in the paper!

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

The paper encourages all residents to support the paper through a "voluntary subscription" annually.

For those interested in supporting us, we suggest \$1 per issue, per household, at 52 issues per year. That's only \$52 - less than most people spend on pizza and wings.

Larger donations are also greatly appreciated. For transparency, donations of more than \$1,000 will be published in the paper (with a big thank you) and donors will receive an exclusive limited edition Lake Report mug, as well as a copy of the first edition of the paper signed by staff. (Limit of 20 special mugs)

To support The Lake Report, mail cheques to the Niagara-on-the-Lake Post Office, L0S1J0, PO Box 724. Please make cheques to Niagara Now Ltd. and note it as a donation.

Thank you.



with Brian Marshall

Keeping the rain out: III



Slate and clay tile. (Supplied)

First this fact: Shoddy installation is the single biggest reason (by a long stretch) for premature failure of any type of roofing. References should include roofs installed more than 10 years ago! Now for some modern roofing choices.

The ubiquitous asphalt shingle is generally the lowest cost option. With a typical lifespan of 10 to 20 years (although some higher-priced laminated products add a decade or more to that), it's the builders' go-to. Not recyclable.

Premium wood shingles with a preservative and fire retardant applied will, assuming good maintenance, will last 30 to 50 years. Compostable.

Modern glazing makes clay tile resistant to spalling in our freeze/thaw cycles and with proper maintenance last 50 to 75 years. Roof structure must be engineered. Recyclable.

Coated metal, either standing-seam panels or shingles, makes for a light-weight, quickly installed roof with superior snow shed qualities. Life expectancy of 40 to 50 years. Recyclable.

Rubber, plastic & polymer comprise the majority of synthetic composite tile types. Mimicking slate or wood, the tile provides a nearly maintenance free roof for 40 to 50 years. Recyclable.

In terms of lifespan (centuries) and aesthetics, slate remains the premier roofing material. Very expensive!

Up-and-coming? Glass/composite tile which integrate solar cells. Installed in Europe for over a decade (sorry Tesla you're late outta the box), a Class II (durability/weather resistance) roof that can fully power your house. 25 to 30 year warranty on solar performance. How very elegant!

Brian Marshall



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In memoriam: Zuhair “Kash” Kashmeri

Bill Hamilton
Writer's Circle

On Dec. 21, I was stunned to hear the news that one of our respected citizens and friends had died.

I first met Kash in 2013 as a tour guide with Taste the Town Tours. One of our stops was the business he owned with his lovely wife Carlotta - Gelato di Carlotta - on Queen Street. Over the years our relationship developed from business associate to personal friend. I'm sure I speak on behalf of anyone who ever had the privilege of meeting Kash when I say that you quickly came to think of him as a friend.

When you entered the shop, his open demeanor and pure passion for meeting the public was an experience you would never forget. He was soft spoken and I relished each conversation we had, listening to him expound on a variety of topics with such enthusiasm and wit, I could not help but admire him.

After learning about his illustrious career as a journalist, I coaxed him to

come and join the Niagara-on-the-Lake Writers' Circle. Needless to say, I was ecstatic when I attended one of our meetings and saw Kash sitting across the table from me ready to participate and that he did.

At the University of Western Ontario Kash studied Law, Business and Economics. At the Siddhartha College in Bombay he received a diploma in Journalism & Public Relations. He attended the London School of Journalism in England and received another diploma for Journalism and Public Relations. As an instructor he taught Diversity Reporting at Ryerson University in Toronto.

Kash initially worked with The Indian Express in Bombay. As a freelance reporter for the Associated Press of America, he made the issues of the day come to life. He later came to Canada and started work at The Daily Times in Brampton, Ontario. He then moved on to the Globe and Mail where for thirteen years he researched and wrote on a variety of topics, including the Middle East. He was a

well-respected journalist who was known for writing articles that were terse and controversial, and always ended his commentary with “think about it.” As part of the Globe series “Inside the PLO”, he conducted the first major interview in North America with Yasser Arafat and his commanders. In 1985 he took the helm to lead news media coverage of the Air India bombing. He wrote a book chronicling this disaster, titled *Soft Target*. He also wrote a book on the Gulf War called *The Gulf Within*. His reporting covered human rights, diversity, business and finance, international trade, and conducting many special investigations. His articles were published in major newspapers throughout North America.

He enjoyed a successful career as did his father and brother. His father, Agha Jani Kashmiri, wrote screenplays in Bollywood from the 1920s to the 1960s. Kash honored his father's by producing a documentary called *The Golden Pen*, along with Howard Bern-



Zuhair “Kash” Kashmeri. SUPPLIED PHOTO

stein of CBC for the OMNI-TV network.

Kash's brother, Sarwar Kashmeri, is a professor at Norwich University. He too is a journalist, current affairs commentator, and author, well known on both sides of the Atlantic for his expertise in United States-European relations.

I remember constantly running into Kash downtown. He was either walking

the dog with his familiar headphones on, or pedaling along on his bicycle. He always made time to stop and talk. The last time I saw him, he appeared to be the picture of health, upbeat and sharp as ever. The news of his passing was so very hard to comprehend and accept.

His wife Carlotta, a beautiful spirit who always exuded joie de vivre, now laments the loss of her

soulmate. Our hearts go out to Carlotta and her family for their profound loss. I'm sure all who have met Kash cherish a special memory of him and also feel the loss of this exceptional man in our community.

His sudden passing reminds us how precious this gift of life is, and how we should live each and every day like it was the last... “think about it.”

Lightning People

Richard West
Writer's Circle

Backstory

The following is a version of the original short story that eventually morphed into a 150-page book - The Lightning People. This piece blossomed into Chapter 1 of the book, which tells about the discovery of a group of people with special skills, who lived amongst the population of Britain in the early 1900s. Perhaps they live amongst us even now.

Lightning People

In 1903, I was a construction manager working on a new highway in Wiltshire, when late one Friday evening I was hit by lightning.

I woke up in the field the next morning, with charred clothing, and surrounded by scorched grass. Standing was difficult, but I managed to stagger to my feet and wander back to my bicycle, feeling really odd but not that unwell. Rather than being terribly burned, I was light-headed and seemed to have a temperature.

To my surprise, any small burns and scraps healed rapidly and so, by Sunday evening, I felt well enough to go to the pub for a meal.

Once in the village, I was shocked that all the people I saw seemed to have an aura of colour about them. Hues of reds, blues, yellows and greens. Mostly subtle colours, but some were more

intense. During the pub meal, I started to realize that the emotions and states of health of the individuals influenced the colours and intensities of their auras.

A strange experience to sit through a meal, watching people you know through a new set of eyes. Eyes capable of assessing the people from a completely different viewpoint.

I quickly learned to use the new skill to help make decisions about tasks that were to be done. The hues of my colleagues and others gave away people's weak positions or uncertainties so providing me with useful levers to guide others. This soon resulted in advancement and the other benefits.

After a medical in London in 1919, the doctor's summation was, ‘You are in wonderful condition for a man of forty.’ A man of forty? I had already turned 56!

Before taking the train back home, I dallied on a footbridge in Paddington Station and watched the milling crowds, while I pondered the meaning and implications of the doctor's conclusion. It was fascinating to watch the mass of people with their hues of reds, blues, greens, and yellows. I quietly smiled at how this has become so normal and what a beautiful vision they made.

Suddenly, I just stared at one man. There, in the midst of the rainbow crowd, was a man with no colour at all! A man who looked just like people used to look before my rendezvous with

lightning.

The man was staring straight back at me! Suddenly, I felt afraid and confused.

After so long, something normal had happened to punctuate the sea of unusual experiences I had lived with for so long. Then the man waved, and started to walk against the flow of humanity towards the stairs that lead up to the footbridge where I stood. Run? What? But I just quietly stood my ground and waited for this unknown person.

He was short, and seemed to have pot marks on his face from some skin problem. Without any hesitation, he put out his hand and greeted me in a voice with a strong accent, which was not familiar. Possibly Welsh, but yet not Welsh.

‘My name is Creighton’.
‘I am Kenneth.’

‘When did it happen to you?’ Creighton asked, just as if we were talking about missing a train.

‘What happen?’ I replied, hoping to get time to think.

‘The lightning strike’ responded Creighton a little abruptly, as if speaking more to a child than a man more than ten years his senior.

Chided by the openness of this new person in my life, I responded.

‘Sixteen years ago.’

Then I asked, ‘And when did it happen to you?’

Creighton gazed out over the sea of colourful commuters below. He then stared straight at me before saying, ‘In the year of our Lord, 1472!’

The full novel can be purchased on Amazon, or by visiting richardpwest.ca.

Pauline Reimer Gibson is an Audiologist with over 20 years of experience who loves helping people of all ages in the community. Julia Dick is the Front Office Coordinator and a longtime resident of Virgil. Call Julia today to book a free hearing test!



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Shaw Film Series: A cinematic town hall

Tim Taylor
Special

Most wintery Saturday afternoons for the past 13 years, hundreds of local film buffs have found their way to the Shaw Festival main stage theatre to see a film they would not likely see elsewhere.

They arrive early, save their seats with a scarf or jacket, then venture back to the theatre lobby for a light lunch, all-the-while discussing what they've read about the film on Google or Rotten Tomatoes.

The film series is the brainchild of Steven Levy, a 20-year resident of Niagara-on-the-Lake. A native of Toronto, 80-year-old Levy imagined a winter film series that would bring a broad cross-section of interesting, engaging and sometimes provocative films—both independent and blockbuster—to the Shaw theatre.

That was 15 years ago.

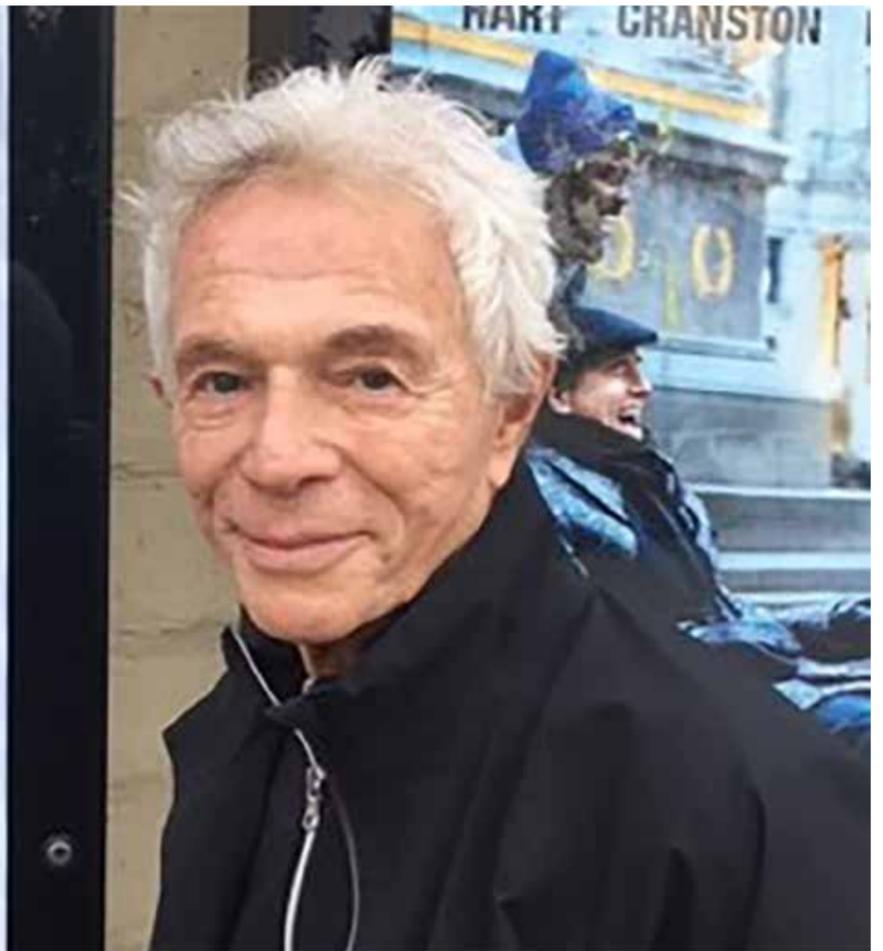
He was convinced his toughest job would be getting permission to show the films, but his 20-plus year acting career in Europe, Toronto and Los Angeles, opened the right doors. Perhaps you've seen him in the original versions of *Hawaii 5-0*, *Magnum: PI* and *Murder She Wrote*, not to mention dozens of movies.

In fact, the timing was just right. Levy had produced a film that earned wide acclaim during the early years of the Toronto International Film Festival. The film was called *The Silent Partner*, with Elliot Gould and Christopher Plummer. It won 14 Genie awards.

That gave him the opportunity to ask TIFF if they would collaborate in presenting selected films in Niagara. They jumped on board right away.

The Shaw Festival didn't jump quite as quickly. It took a couple of years for Shaw leadership to agree to the use of the main theatre. Levy had originally wanted to use the Royal George theatre, the oldest movie house in North America, but winter heating issues forced a rethink.

"I asked a couple of times", says Levy. "And they



Former actor and entrepreneur, Stephen Levy, views hundreds of films each year to find content for the Shaw Film Series. He stands here in front of a poster for next week's film: *If Beale Street Could Talk*. TIM TAYLOR/SPECIAL

finally said OK, if you raise \$70,000 or so for the screen and projection equipment".

Enter Carol Walker. Levy remembers being told: "Find Carol Walker. She loves movies too and knows everyone". The daughter of a movie projectionist and dedicated cinephile, Walker didn't hesitate. While Levy trolled for suitable films, Walker organized and raised the money to make it all happen.

Even today, at every Saturday movie, Walker and her group of volunteers hold a raffle that sends an average of \$450 a week, directly to the Shaw Festival.

Walker describes the series as a real partnership. "We used to complain the only movies you could see locally were Bruce Willis and Walt Disney", says Walker. "Now Stephen and I just love a full house."

"Without Carol, we would never have got this thing done", added Levy.

Over the years, the number of films has varied from eight to 12 a season (there were also a few seasons of Friday evening documentaries). Levy, and his wife Ria,



Film Series co-founder, Carol Walker, (right) and her team: Shirley Rednall (left) and Chris Walker, sell raffle tickets each Saturday afternoon, to win dinner gift certificates to local restaurants. All proceeds go to the Shaw Festival. TIM TAYLOR/SPECIAL

spend most of the year curating the upcoming series, stalking the movie scene, and searching for the best-made films of the year.

"They're usually a little quirky and most often lesser-known films", acknowledges Levy. "But we choose them, first and foremost, because they are well-made and have something to say".

The Film Series was an incredible success from the first frame.

"In those early days, we filled every seat—almost 850. It has changed a bit now, people are getting their films in so many more places—Netflix and so on", says Levy.

"But there is something really special about seeing

a movie in such a wonderful hall. There is a certain reverence. It really is so much more satisfying than the distractions at home on the small screen".

Tim Jennings, Shaw's executive director, agrees. "There are still a large group of people that want to sit down, in a real theatre with popcorn and their friends,

and watch movies. "The series about breaks even", he added. "But we don't do it for the money. We like doing this kind of thing as a community project because we know the community enjoys it."

Levy and Walker don't do it for the money, either.

Tickets can be purchased at shawfest.com.



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When the river stopped flowing



Denise Ascenzo
Featured

The temperatures have dropped to below seasonal, the winds are blowing and the snow is falling. With the arctic blasts of icy air and a polar vortex descending, the familiar chill in our bones announces, "winter has arrived."

Niagara Falls (Horseshoe Falls) and the Niagara River never freeze over. Lake Erie does which has caused some major ice jams that have been noted through a century and a half of recording weather conditions in this region.

The first recorded ice jam was on March 29, 1848.

South/west winds blowing across Lake Erie pushed thousands of tons of ice flows into the mouth of the Niagara River creating an ice dam. For the next three days, Niagara Falls slowed to a trickle.

Locals awakened on the 29th of March to a deafening silence, no longer hearing the roar of the water falls. The residents of many towns, on both sides of the river, thought it was the beginning of the end. On March 30th special church services were held to pray for deliverance of this horrible evil that was descending upon them.

Many of the mills along the river ground to a halt. Thomas Clark Street who owned the Bridgewater Mills (near Navy Island) was awakened by employees at five in the morning exclaiming there was no water in the mill race (the trough that moves the water through to the great mill wheels).

Tourist season was over; however local papers reported that on the morning of March 31st more than five thousand people from both Canada and the United States came to see what had happened.

As the Niagara River dried up below the falls, people scrambled to the river bed to collect souvenirs that had



The collapse of Honeymoon Bridge in 1938. SUPPLIED PHOTO

been hidden for hundreds of years. Artifacts from the War of 1812 such as bayonets, muskets and tomahawks were found.

Fish floundered in the little trickles of water while turtles tried to find winter shelter elsewhere.

People walked, rode horses and even rode in carriages along the river bed. This was an historical event that has never been repeated. It was even noted that a squad of the U.S. Army Cavalry provided a military exhibition with their horses on the river bed.

While the mills were temporarily shut down, the owners of the Maid of the Mist (the historic river boat rides that started in 1848) kept their employees busy working. The workers of the company went down into the river bed and using dynamite blew up huge boulders that had been a navigational hazard to their boats.

Then through the night of March 31, when the temperature had risen to 16C, the winds blowing over Lake Erie shifted. There could be heard loud, deep rumblings coming from the mouth of the river. The ice dam was breaking up. A surge of water finally broke through the ice and once more water cascaded over the falls and through the canyons of the Niagara River.

In later years, massive ice



Photo caption: "She wouldn't start." SUPPLIED PHOTO

chunks were seen flowing down the river and over the falls. These chunks as well as the mist from the water itself created ice bridges beneath the falls. Water was still flowing under the ice but not on top.

In the winter of 1912, an ice bridge was formed joining Canada and the United States. People from both sides of the river took advantage of this unique bridge,

venturing onto the ice formations for impromptu parties. Not the safest or smartest adventure and proven so when on Feb. 4, 1912, the ice bridge broke apart and three people died.

In January 1930 ice once more filled the gorge below the falls. By January 27th the buildup of ice was so great that it pushed the Upper Steel Arch Bridge (Honeymoon Bridge) completely over. The

bridge remained on the ice for the next three months until the spring thaw helped it to sink to the bottom of the river.

Many people here in this town will remember the ice jam of 1955 when catastrophic damage occurred. This ice jam has been recorded as one of the worst, with massive ice floes coming down the river, destroying commercial docks, homes, churches, yachts in the marinas and all storage facilities on both sides of the river from Queenston/Lewiston (USA) right through to Youngstown (USA) and Niagara-on-the-Lake.

The tourists came out once again by the thousands to see this massive ice dam. The Ontario Provincial Police called in reinforcements just to keep people from walking out onto the ice. On the American side the Niagara county Sheriff's office brought in extra officers to also handle the rush of curiosity seekers.

There was talk of bombing or using dynamite to blow the ice jam apart but it was considered useless. The ice jam by now was 30 to 40 feet thick. Even if depth charges were used, it was estimated that a million dollars of damage would be sustained and the ice would still be there.

Colonel L. Olmstead of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Buffalo in conjunction with Canadian engineers came to the conclusion that nothing could be done to alleviate the ice jam. Only warmer weather would fix the problem.

One family that was greatly imperilled by the ice jam was the George Cowie family. Their home was near the Queenston docks. Mr. Cowie, a crane operator, saw his 60 foot crane, standing 15 feet above the ground, disappear under 45 feet of ice.

Cowie was shocked to see how quickly the water was rising along the river. At first it was just puddles on the floor of his family home and then the family was standing in a foot of water. As Mrs. Cowie scrambled about to save whatever she could, there was a loud bang and a

rush of water burst past the house lifting it off of its foundations. The Cowie family made a run for their car. They backed up the drive at a great speed all the while watching their home disappear into the dark, icy waters of the Niagara River.

The last great ice jam was in January of 1963, which threatened both the American and Canadian hydro generating stations.

Icebreakers from Canada and the United States were used to break up the ice. At times both countries, jointly blasted the ice that was damming the river. A 40-tonne icebreaker actually got stuck on one of the ice floes and a crane was used to lift it off. The ice breaker was loaded onto a flatbed truck and reinstalled downstream to battle the ice at the stations intake system.

By 1964 it was decided to put a "boom" at the mouth of the Niagara River. Twenty-two spans of floating timbers were installed onto steel pontoons anchored in Erie's lake bed.

These booms have stopped the flow of ice into the river and over the falls making the management of ice jams minimal. Each year the booms are installed by Dec. 15 or earlier should Lake Erie's temperature drop to 4C. The booms are removed by April 1, unless there is an area of ice greater than 402 square kilometres on Lake Erie. The earliest date for removal was Feb. 8, 2012, while the latest date of removal was May 3, 1971.

The severe ice jams of the past are now over.

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

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

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

Niagara Historical
SOCIETY MUSEUM



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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.



Resident photos

Highland dancing



The McMaster Highland Dance Studio danced at a Robbie Burns dinner in Niagara Falls this past Saturday. SUBMITTED BY LESLEY BARTEL

'Oh deer'



The Lake Report received multiple pictures of deer in people's backyards this week. These two photos both happen to include a bird feeder. TOP PHOTO SUBMITTED BY LESLEY BARTEL
BOTTOM PHOTO SUBMITTED BY 'ANONYMOUS'

The Lake Report



Our latest colouring contest winner stopped by this week to pick up his prize — a \$25 gift certificate to Maple Leaf Fudge on Queen Street. Congratulations Henry! SUPPLIED PHOTO



Betty & Jane: Plunger Patrol Inspecting NOTL's bathrooms: Butler's Sports Bar & Grill

To live in Niagara on the Lake, is to have spent, at some phase in your life, time at the Sports Bar. They've really cleaned the place up including the bathrooms. The latest renovations revealed an old Simpsons advertisement, in the walls of the building and now it hangs with distinction in the washroom area. The bathrooms were new and bright but showcased some of its history. Kinda like our little community. The bathrooms at Butlers Sports Bar and Grill earned them a Gold Plunger.

4/5 Golden Plungers



RIDDLE ME THIS:

What can be broken without being physically touched?

Last Week's answer: An egg, answered first by Sabrina Hymus. Email answers to editor@niagaranow.com for a chance to win a prize.

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FEATURED LOCAL STORY

Rayburn Blake: Life through music

Living through the eras, from rhythm and blues to rock and roll

Brittany Carter
Staff

For decades, Rayburn Blake has had a hand in the creation of music.

More than that, music has been at his core his entire life. Surrounding himself in the process he's always been a part of it, whether playing in one of many bands or working on the technical side.

His passion was ignited during time spent with his father, Rayburn Cooke. Blake says he was a drummer of some note, playing big band six nights a week. He performed with names like Tony Bennet and Duke Ellington.

"He would bring me down every Saturday for the matinee. I knew if I behaved myself, I could sit down in the orchestra pit. I was exposed to it."

He received his first guitar when he was five. Blake didn't spend much time playing until high school, when a friend brought one in and inspired him.

"I was entranced. I got my old guitar, fixed it up and started learning."

He's been playing ever since.

The first band he played in right out of high school, the Phantoms, comprised of a group of boys from Montreal playing music inspired by Johnny Cash and Buddy Holly. Shortly after he transitioned into rhythm and blues.

In 1965, a 15-year-old Stevie Wonder came to a sports bar in Montreal.

"With a 14-piece band, they were used to picking up rhythm and blues guitar players in the States, but I was one of two guys who was playing anything near authentic. I got the call and I was thrown on stage. He was playing a lot of standard stuff, he didn't have a large repertoire at that time.

"Up comes a tune called *Without a Song*. I confused it with a thing the jazz guys were playing called *The Song is You*. They're two different animals almost, and I launched into it with great confidence. Well I hit a real, as we say in the biz, clam."

He says he was shaken up but waited and caught up when he could. With a 14-piece band he was sure the gaffe went unnoticed.

"After the set the band director asked if I wanted to meet Stevie. Grasping my



Rayburn Blake jamming at home. BRITTANY CARTER/THE LAKE REPORT

hand and looking up at me, he said, 'Oh this must be the guitar player who can't read the chart.'

"I was thinking, stick a fork in me, I'm done," he says, adding that it all worked out. "I ended up playing the rest of the week with him."

He started playing with Trevor Payne and his Soul Brothers after that. Most of the members of that band moved on to become Mashmakhan. That's when things started to take off.

A kid from Montreal who previously hadn't been more than 100 miles from home was suddenly playing in Bermuda and Japan. He says it was surreal. With over 65,000 records sold in Japan, their hit single, *As the Years Go By*, is still on karaoke machines over there, he says.

He says one highlight he looks back on was being a part of Festival Express, a Canadian rock festival train tour. The five-day, cross-country trip was brought to

light in a 2003 documentary of the same name.

Great bands of the time jammed together, travelling across Canada. Mashmakhan squeezed in with The Grateful Dead, Janis Joplin, The Band and more, building a friendship of like-minded musicians. Strictly in retrospect, Blake says it was a one-of-a-kind experience.

"I don't know if I could sum it up, it was a great experience. There was a real camaraderie on that train. We all knew it was something that was going to be unique for each of us. Even if you were a big star, it was something none of us had experienced. Rolling across the prairies, in two cars on the train, jamming away for 24 hours. We'd go to sleep for a few hours and wake up and keep jamming. It's like one of the guys said in the film, you'd catch a few hours sleep and you'd get up because you were afraid you might miss something."

While speaking about the

technical facets of music production, he lights up. It's something he's clearly passionate about. Blake can speak for hours about the process of perfecting a sound sample and the equipment used. His studio, in the basement of the NOTL home he shares with partner Charmian Entine, is an ode to the creation of music.

A dozen instruments lean against the wall while his computer and soundboards take up the better half of the room. Old equipment, which he says still work, stand like relics in the corner.

Blake attributes much of what he's learned to time spent with Phil Ramone, recording engineer.

"Rayburn, if you walk away from these sessions with anything, let it be this: if you don't have vocals, you don't have a tune." Blake says Ramone passed words of wisdom to him during recording sessions.

"He was absolutely right, whether in the studio or live,

if you have a vocal sounding big and gigantic, not to be confused with loud, if you have a vocal sounding good everything else just falls into place.

"They're so concerned with their kickdrums, the vocals diminish and then nothing ever sounds encompassing and huge. A big lesson I learned there."

Dedicated to the craft he's also taken up teaching guitar locally. Students ranging from youth to adults, he says he gets people playing quickly.

Terry Kozachenko, singer/songwriter, was a student of Blake's. He says at retirement he came to NOTL, not sure what he was looking for. Stumbling across ads for guitar lessons he says he recognized Blake's name from Mashmakhan. Taking a few guitar lessons from him, Kozachenko says he played some of his original songs for Blake, who says he was able to work with them.

"We had a little chat and we started putting this project together. He's been amazing. His CV as far as sound engineering and producing was something that I was sort of fortunate to run into. I never expected to find that level, I expected maybe a basement hobbyist. He brought something completely different."

Putting the finishing touches on his first album, Kozachenko says he would like to keep working with Blake.

"The first album that he's worked on is sort of ready for imminent release, it's just waiting on some touch-ups and to be mastered and we'll take it from there. There's a second project that we'll probably go ahead with as well, so we'll hopefully be working together for the next couple years. He brings a lot, it's hard to put it into words what he brings to the table."

Entine says she wasn't involved with Blake at the height of his music career, but it's evident he lives for it.

"I know that he loves playing and giving lessons, helping people come along in their guitar expertise," she says, adding that there's more to him than the music. "He's got the most marvelous sense of humour. He's social issues oriented, he really cares about animals and the environment."

Living in the middle ground, as a personal philosophy, Blake can't say whether he prefers the technical aspect or playing music himself; it's a little bit of both.

"It may seem boring, but the middle way is sometimes best, like the Buddhists say. Right now, we're living in extremes, compared to what life could be. I was disillusioned by most western religion at a fairly young age. I studied some Eastern religions, but I don't practice much, except the idea of do unto others."

"They had this thing about the middle way, where the highs aren't as high, but the lows aren't nearly as low. Trying to avoid extremes in circumstance."

It's no secret that he's lived quite a life. At 75, he's not yet ready to call it quits.

He will be performing at The Old Winery Restaurant on Feb. 2 with Paul Martin and the Niagara Rhythm section.

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