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Canada's most-decorated community newspaper

January 16, 2025

#### Town to look at affordable housing in Glendale

Julia Sacco Local Journalism Initiative The Lake Report

The day of Glendale secondary plan approval is finally here.

After deferring the decision during a planning meeting on Dec. 3, councillors voted to approve the new Glendale secondary plan on Tuesday.

The plan is to function as a roadmap for the future of the Glendale community in Niagara-on-the-Lake, including development, land use, transportation and more. It is estimated by 2051, Glendale's population will grow by 14,000 people and have 9,200 jobs available.

Before voting on the plan itself, councillors discussed a number of revisions and a motion to incorporate them was approved.

Coun. Sandra O'Connor raised the issue of housing affordability.

One of the options listed to help with the supply of affordable housing is land acquisition, O'Connor said.

"My concern is that we haven't really discussed the option of land acquisitions for affordable housing," she

Through the strategic plan, town staff will be doing a housing needs assessment, O'Connor added.

"I think as part of that housing needs assessment,

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# GONE TO THE BIRDS

Flocks of birds devour grapes at alarming rate, says grower



As Niagara-on-the-Lake's grape growers work to harvest this year's crop of icewine grapes, the formidable forces of nature are swooping in to grab what they can. Jamie Slingerland at Pillitteri Estates Winery sent in this photograph on Jan. 5 of more than 10,000 starlings feasting on frozen grapes in the vineyards — Slingerland said they can destroy up to two tons of grapes a day, making bird bangers a necessity as they complete the harvest. Can't get enough icewine? Check out this weekend's Icewine Village festival on Queen Street.

# Year in review: A summer of floods and political anger

Kevin MacLean The Lake Report

The last six months of 2024 in Niagara-on-the-Lake were marked by extreme weather upheaval and a volatile political climate.

Heavy rains caused serious flooding problems, damaging homes and properties in neighbourhoods around NOTL, high E. coli levels closed Queen's Royal Beach several times over the summer and more than

200 angry residents held a loud and emotional protest outside town hall, accosting councillors and expressing deep frustrations with their decisions.

As well, ongoing development plans for the Glendale

neighbourhood, the Rand Estate, lowrise condos in Old Town and residents' concerns about their future housing needs were just some of the top NOTL news stories in the second half of

July 4: In an 8-1 vote, council gives White Oaks' mammoth highrise plan the green light, provided federal agencies approve the building heights, which are in the flight path for the Niagara

District Airport.

The NOTL Museum buys the historic Carnochan house, which is located beside the museum property. Independence, health care

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www.stdavids-queenstonuc.ca Minister: Rev. YongSeok Baek Sunday Worship 10:30 a.m. Also online Visit our website

## Patio program will stay as is for now

Julia Sacco Local Journalism Initiative The Lake Report

Coun. Maria Mavridis is concerned about how fairly and equally businesses are treated in Niagara-on-the-Lake.

During Tuesday's committee of the whole planning meeting, the majority of councillors voted to extend the existing temporary patio program into December.

The extension will allow existing patios to remain in place until council can approve a new, permanent patio program.

Established in 2020, the patio plan was meant to support restaurants by allowing outdoor dining during the COVID-19 pandemic.

The current program only allows patios in the "urban area" of NOTL and no new permits were issued to businesses on Queen Street in 2024.

A vote to revisit the program and add amendments was defeated after it did not receive the required two-thirds majority vote.

A conversation about



Current patios can stay where they are thanks to an extension of the temporary patio program. JULIA SACCO

revisiting the plan was cut short after Coun. Erwin Wiens realized the vote to open discussion was miscounted.

Mavridis, however, expressed some concerns with how the town will move forward with the program — she said extending the program as is this year would give a leg up to "six or seven" businesses.

"To extend the patio program another year and say that other businesses still can't apply, we are giving an advantage to (some) businesses that was an advantage to all businesses during COVID," she said during the meeting.

Last term, Mavridis suggested sunsetting the temporary program until a permanent replacement is ready to be approved.

"I've already had two business owners on Queen Street— including my parents — ask 'why (other businesses) get to continue to use extra seating and we don't," Mavridis said.

Mavridis' father Bob owns Corks Wine Bar & Eatery on Queen Street.

Coun. Adriana Vizzari asked staff to clarify when a new patio program will be ready for councillors to approve.

Vizzari said she was willing to approve the extension to ensure patios don't have to be taken down, but would prefer flexibility in the coming months that would grant more businesses permits.

The current program in

place expires at the end of next month and if it is not renewed, an entire new process will need to pass, said Kirsten McCauley, director of community and development services.

Planners hope to have an updated, permanent seasonal patio program ready for council in the coming months, McCauley said.

The seasonal program will allow patios outside of the urban area along with new permit applications. The program would run between April and October annually.

"I would like to say we will have something before council in February or March," she said.

Council and staff will begin public engagement with businesses and the residents to get feedback on the upcoming permanent program, Lord Mayor Gary Zalepa said in an interview.

Before voting in favour of the extension, Zalepa said a vote in support is important to NOTL businesses.

"If we don't approve this, we're going to have people taking out their patios," Zalepa said.

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10 - 222 RICARDO STREET \$1,875,000 Weston Miller



14529 NIAGARA RIVER PARKWAY \$2,590,000

Thomas Elltoft & Weston Miller



23 VINCENT AVENUE \$1,158,000 Thomas Eltoft & Kim Elltoft



6 - 25 SORENSEN COURT \$1,049,000

Thomas Elltoft & Ricky Watson



UNIT D - 106 QUEEN STREET \$3,726.35/mth Patricia Atherton



129 VICTORIA STREET \$2,900,000 Viviane Elltoft



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# Carriage ride in the snow



Many took advantage of weekend snowfall to enjoy all that NOTL's winter wonderland has to offer. Visitors ride past the Old Bank House on Front Street in a horse and buggy ride on Sunday. DAVE VAN DE LAAR

# First of Zalepa's open houses sparks heated debate about controversial roundabout

Julia Sacco Local Journalism Initiative The Lake Report

Lord Mayor Gary Zalepa's first installment of the village open house series ended in dramatics with residents accusing Zalepa of poor leadership.

Toward the end of Thursday's session at the District 2 Fire Station in St. Davids, resident Cal Cochrane and some other people in the crowd urged Zalepa to rethink the St. Davids roundabout.

"The people of St. Davids do not want a roundabout," Cochrane said to Zalepa during a heated back-andforth.

Around 50 people were in attendance at the meeting, billed by the town as one of five "village visits" being held this winter. A small group of five raised their voices at the lord mayor.

A petition against the roundabout set at the intersection of York and Four Mile Creek roads organized by the St. Davids Ratepayers Association has amassed more than 1,200 signatures thus far.

During the Q&A feedback session at Zalepa's open house, some residents urged the lord mayor to hold a straw vote during the meeting to see who votes in favour of the roundabout.

Zalepa denied prods from



Cal Cochrane argues with Lord Mayor Gary Zalepa toward the end of Thursday's open house in St. Davids. JULIA SACCO

the audience and said the number of signatures on the petition does not represent everyone in Niagara-on-the-Lake.

When Cochrane asked the lord mayor why he was not listening to the residents, Zalepa said, "There's a lot of other people to listen to."

"I represent the 19,000 people that live in this town," Zalepa said.

Louanne Rudisuela is a member of the ratepayers association and helped acquire some of the physical signatures on the petition against the roundabout.

"All of Niagara-on-the-Lake has a population of 19,000, but St. Davids is much smaller than that, so 1,200 represents quite a few people," she told The Lake Report.

Rudisuela said the 1,200 signatures were not difficult to get and collecting them was done in a matter of months

The people of St. Davids feel they are not being listened to, she said.

Moving forward with contentious developments is no easy task, said Zalepa.

"It's the most challenging thing for council to decide — when a lot of people want one thing and a lot of people want another thing," he said

Explanations weren't sufficient for some residents in the crowd and Zalepa encouraged them to take matters into their own hands if they were not satisfied.

"If you want to do something differently, you can put your name on a ballot and go knock on a bunch of doors and get yourself elected," Zalepa said.

The next open houses are scheduled in Glendale on Jan. 16, Virgil on Feb. 3, Old Town on Feb. 18 and Queenston on Feb. 20. Each will take place from 6:30 to

8 p.m.

Along with a discussion on the roundabout, Zalepa and other town staff made a brief presentation at the start of the meeting, highlighting a number of items on the town's 2025 agenda.

Zalepa reviewed information on the town's strategic plan, gave a budget update, summarized the official plan and provided a spotlight on the community of St. Davids, before taking questions.

Input from these village open houses will help council make informed decisions throughout the year, he said.

"It's meetings like this where we are going to start talking about (issues) and then we will hear your thoughts and put it all together while we work," he said.

"If there is an idea and it has groundswell and good support then it's something we have to think about," Zalepa said.

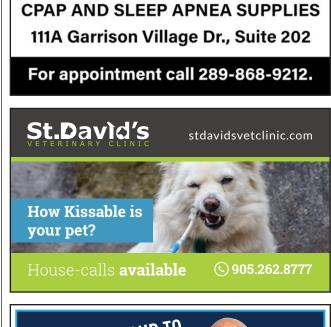
Rudisuela told The Lake Report she plans to find out the population breakdowns of each village in NOTL and get signatures from a more representative number of St. Davids residents.

"My argument is if we had 1,200 or 1,400 names out of 3,000 or 5,000, that's a lot of names," she said.

"I'm willing to go door to door."

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#### YEAR IN REVIEW

# Pride, E. coli, pickleball and pandering Poilievre

Continued from Front Page

and social relationships are among the top concerns expressed by NOTL seniors in a comprehensive survey about future housing needs. The survey is supervised by leading Canadian researchers Michael Ennamorato and Stephen Ferley.

The annual cake parade and fantastic fireworks highlight Canada Day festivities in NOTL.

Just in time for summer, The Lake Report's awardwinning tourism magazine, "NOTL: A Guide for Distinguished Explorers," hits the street.

July 11: Heavy rains and flooding raise some serious infrastructure concerns in St. Davids.

Virgil's Sheri Durksen fights intolerance after vandals targeted her Pride flags. Twice. She puts up more flags.

Billed as a summer celebration for the whole family, the 2024 edition of the St. Mark's Anglican Church Cherry Festival doesn't disappoint.

Red Roof's **Steffanie Bjorgan** is honoured by the Governor General with Canada's prestigious Meritorious Service Award.

July 18: Shaw Festival artistic director Tim Carroll and associate artistic director Kimberley Rampersad are selected to direct separate productions at the Royal Shakespeare Company in Stratford-upon-Avon in the U.K.

Former assistant golf pro Ricky Watson shoots a near-record 30 over nine holes at the NOTL Golf Club. His round includes a hole-in-one on #4.

A driver who survived an encounter with a notorious section of Lakeshore Road is alive because a tree that killed two motorists in the last 13 months at the exact location was removed, says an area resident. Not everyone is happy when Niagara Region takes down some trees at the site.

NOTL volunteers Betty Knight and Dave Hunter help organize a charity drive that sends 3,200 books to Jamaican schools.

A ceremony is held to commemorate the 150th anniversary of the sinking of the Foam, a tragedy in which seven men died.

July 25: Queen's Royal Beach reopens after high E. coli levels closed it for a week. It's one of several closings that will occur over the summer as high bacteria levels plague the lake.





Top: It was a record-breaking year for attendance at the annual Virgil Stampede, held on the Victoria Day long weekend. Here, Olivia and James Pozzebon go 'round and 'round on the fire truck ride. Bottom: A couple of hundred residents came out to protest outside NOTL town hall on July 30. Some followed their elected officials as they entered the municipal offices for a council meeting, including Lord Mayor Gary Zalepa. DAVE VAN DE LAAR

Two NOTL teams, the U9 and U13 Niagara Thunderhawks, battle back from deficits to capture their zone championships in an actionpacked tourney played at home in Virgil.

With his cognitive decline obvious, U.S. President Joe Biden made the right decision to step aside and not run for re-election, says columnist Dr. William Brown.

Pickleball is hugely popular and members of the NOTL Pickleball Club team up to donate \$2,000 raised at its spring tournament to three local charities: Red Roof Retreat, Newark Neighbours and Central Community Centre.

#### August

Aug. 1: In an unprecedented show of resident anger, about 200 people descend on town hall to protest council's approval of several major developments, including a hotel at Parliament Oak and highrises in Glendale.

With three councillors absent, a controversial severance plan for developer Rainer Hummel's historic Oueen Street property that was initially approved by the town's planning committee two weeks ago is defeated on a tie vote.

Two young **NOTL golf**ers (and St. Davids Public School classmates), Kaige Zhu, 11, and Eli Perng, 12, finish first and second in the Notah Begay Junior Canadian Golf Championships in Quebec.

Aug. 8: In the wake of an in-depth survey of NOTL residents' housing needs, Lord Mayor Gary Zalepa says he understands people's desire to have more options as they age.

Not enough business is cited as the reason behind the revelation that Virgil's Starbucks will close permanently in October.

Hot rods and cool wheels will be on display at three car shows in NOTL. Downtown on Queen Street there will be McLaren and Porsche supercars while vintage vehicles will be featured at the Kinsmen and St. Davids Lions shows.

Kennedy Bartel and rowing partner Isabella Issig win gold in the pairs under-17 2,000-metre race at the prestigious Royal Canadian Henley Regatta.

**Aug. 15:** Mostly blind for most of her life, NOTL's Jodey Porter launches a multi-part series exploring her disability and life now thanks to her new guide dog, Doc.

"Canada's immigration systems are a breeding ground for contemporary forms of slavery," a new **United Nations** report alleges, and the Migrant Workers Alliance for Change says farmworkers need to be granted permanent resident status.

The town's former hospital and high school properties might offer options for seniors housing, Lord Mayor Gary Zalepa says.

In a blistering editorial that garners reaction across the country, The Lake Report's Richard Harley criticizes Conservative leader Pierre Poilievre for presenting a litany of lies and misleading statements during a visit to NOTL.

Aug. 22: Farmers take exception to the UN report and call it "insulting" and inaccurate.

The late Wyland Groen, a much-admired and successful basketball coach in NOTL, and national lawn bowling champion Katherine Smith are inducted into the NOTL Sports Wall of

The Niagara Regional Native Centre's summer picnic celebrates with friendly fun and together-

After being closed for two years under a court-ordered ban, NOTL's outdoor pickleball courts finally reopen

Aug. 29: The Lake Report's **Summer of the** Flood series kicks off and outlines how torrential rains have led to flooding, concerns about infrastructure and questions about overdevelopment.

The Shaw Festival reveals that the Royal George Theatre will close in 2025.

In the spring, Niagara's tender fruit growers had serious worries about losing most of this year's crop due to weather problems. Turns out it's not a bumper crop, but they are happy with the

Considered one of the toughest competitions of the year, Janice and Jim Mc-Macken win the alternate shot Matrimonial Open at the NOTL Golf Club with a score of 5-under 67.

September Sept. 5: Respected NOTL home builder Kekoo Gatta

Niagara River. Migrant workers have unequal access to resources, the Migrant Workers Alliance for Change says in a

tragically drowns in the

letter to Premier Doug Ford. Long-awaited and muchneeded, restoration begins on **NOTL's cenotaph** on Queen Street.

Players from the **NOTL Tennis Club** bring home gold from the Canada Senior Games in Quebec. Among the many big winners were Fran Doran, Kim Laidlaw, Manny Umoquit,

Maria Dinga, George Nijbert, Gerry McIlhone and Hank Andrulis.

Sept. 12: Council approves a zoning change that will allow a controversial lowrise condo project on Mary Street to go ahead. Many residents are not pleased.

Jill Troyer's **Heartbeat of** the Harvest series launches, taking readers behind the scenes to learn about some of the key people who make it all happen.

On the 23rd anniversary of the 9/11 terror attacks, NOTL again commemorates the tragedy.

In the wake of **severe** flooding, The Lake Report revisits a 2021 town staff report that said the municipality's infrastructure is inadequate and continued development in St. Davids could lead to more flood damage.

Sept. 19: Coun. Nick Ruller, the town's former fire chief, is appointed chief of the Brampton Fire Department and he resigns from council.

A former NOTL daycare worker faces a number of charges including assault of a child related to alleged incidents at a centre in Niagara Falls.

The Lake Report is honoured with 16 more national awards, once again, the most of any publication in the country.

Most NOTL residents think tourism is important, according to a new Abacus Data survey presented to town councillors.

Sept. 26: The town and Konzelmann Estate Winery are sued by resident **Ed** Werner over special events, such as weddings, being permitted at wineries.

After about 200 people attended an earlier protest this summer, a second demonstration outside NOTL town hall, against the already approved Parliament Oak hotel development, attracted only eight people.

Alexis Dowsett is quadriplegic and since a new company took over Niagara **Transit** in July she has been unable to use the service, even if they try to book weeks in advance. The transit agency says it is working on solutions.

#### October

Oct. 3: Data from Niagara Region shows that NOTL has an adequate number of doctors, but Coun. Sandra O'Connor says that's only part of the story and the town still needs two more

Continued on Page 5



# Council resignation, tribunal denies Rand plans

Continued from Page 4

physicians.

NOTL's John Bobrel completes the Berlin Marathon on Sept. 29, the fifth race in his quest to conquer to world's top six marathons, a rare and enviable feat.

The NOTL Chamber of Commerce plans to celebrate autumn by hosting its first-ever Harvest Festival on Oct. 26. It will also serve as an opportunity to support the businesses, particularly farmers, operating in the community.

NOTLers and town staff take time to reflect on the past and educate themselves more on Indigenous culture and history on the 11th anniversary of Orange Shirt Day, now known across Canada as the National Day for Truth and Reconcilia-

Oct. 10: Lois McDonall, 85, is invested into the Order of Canada at a ceremony at Ottawa's Rideau Hall in recognition of her career as an international opera singer.

As town councillors begin immersing themselves in budget deliberations, Deputy Lord Mayor Erwin Wiens expresses concerns about escalating legal costs over development proposals.

A 19-year-old man wanted by police after a Sept. 15 gang rape in St. Catharines is arrested at a home on Line 6 Road in NOTL. Larry Smith faces more than a dozen charges.

Doors Open Niagaraon-the-Lake again invites people to celebrate the town's many heritage treasures with its annual tour of buildings, including the Exchange Brewery, Shaw Festival Theatre, Niagara Masonic Lodge and the NOTL Museum.

Oct. 17: In a major ruling, the **Ontario Land** Tribunal says plans for a 172-unit subdivision on the Rand Estate have to be reevaluated. It says developer Solmar's proposals "do not represent good planning in the public interest." Time will tell, but the decision is seen as a victory for the Town of NOTL, resident group Save Our Rand Estate and Blair and Brenda McArthur, who live near the development.

NOTL council fills the seat vacated by Nick Ruller and stuns many observers by not selecting the person who finished next on the ballot in 2022. So, instead of picking Allan Bisback, councillors choose Andrew Niven, chair of the Chamber of Commerce and NOTL Tourism.

Glendale is planned to be home to tens of thousands of new residents over the next few decades but proposals for highrises, hotels and other developments have residents concerned as updates to the Glendale secondary plan are considered.

Oct. 24: After criticism from some council colleagues and the public, Deputy Lord Mayor Erwin Wiens says the appointment of Andrew Niven to council is "completely democratic."

Despite a town lawyer labelling the **Rand Estate** ruling a "complete success," Coun. Erwin Wiens is more circumspect, suggesting the town is still spending way too much on legal fees to fight controversial developments.

Friends of Fort George president **Tony Chisholm** is named the Niagara Foundation's Living Landmark Award recipient for 2024.

After recovering from shoulder surgery during the summer, NOTL's Kaleb **Dietsch** makes his debut as a full-time member of the OHL's Ottawa 67's, facing off in St. Catharines before a crowd that includes a large contingent of family and friends.

Oct. 31: NOTL's newest councillor, Andrew Niven, steps down from his roles as chair of the Chamber of Commerce and Tourism NOTL. He also tells The Lake Report that he approached Lord Mayor Gary Zalepa about filling the position.

NOTL's perennial "Jam Queen" Kim McQuhae wins four more firsts at the Royal Agricultural Winter Fair, along with three second-place and four thirdplace prizes.

Councillors find another \$21,000 in the discretionary grants budget to contribute to the restoration of the **Upper Canada Heritage** Trail, to ensure another kilometre of the trail can be restored.

Animal advocates call on pet owners to make sure their cats are neutered and spayed after a number of kittens are dumped in a field near the Lakeshore Road water treatment plant in NOTL.

#### November

Nov. 7: As NOTL prepares to remember Canadian soldiers' sacrifices, the museum's massive Poppy **Project** expands to include



Top: In recognition of her contributions to the community through her passion for the arts, Trisha Romance was given the first-ever key to the town, which she accepted at a ceremony on Sept. 15. Right: Ahead of Remembrance Day on Nov. 11, Hilary Bellis and Liz Klose help set up a poppy display outside the NOTL Museum on Nov. 4. DAVE VAN DE LAAR

an installation at the River-Brink Art Museum.

The NOTL Public **Library**, which fired its chief librarian and paid an undisclosed severance last spring, asks the town for a \$66,000 grant to help cover a deficit of \$81,000. If it means raising taxes, board co-chair Wayne Scott says he's OK with that. It's not known how the severance payout affected the library's deficit.

The town goes back to the drawing board after being unable to come to terms with the person who was its preferred choice to fill the chief administrator's job.

Niagara Region plans to hold a public workshop to hear design opinions for a controversial roundabout at York and Four Mile Creek roads in St. Davids. Critics have called the roundabout idea a multimillion dollar waste of taxpayers' money.

**Nov. 14:** As debate gets heated over a 41-unit lowrise condo project on Mary Street, Coun. Gary Burroughs says challenging the **Ontario Land Tribunal** is about more than money, it's a matter of morality.

The new **grocery store** that will open in the Village development in NOTL in

late 2025 will be a Foodland franchise, one of the grocery brands operated by Sobeys.

As part of this year's Remembrance Day ceremonies, the grave of former NOTL resident and First World War hero Maj. Benjamin Geary at St. Mark's Cemetery is now adorned with a new monument to commemorate his life and valour.

Nov. 21: As NOTL gears up for the holidays, town volunteers are busy helping to decorate **Oueen Street** for the winter season.

The chair of the Niagara Foundation says a town report about the foundation's lease of the historic Foghorn House is "misleading," "unfair" and "lacks historical context."

The Niagara Regional Native Centre asks NOTL residents to extend the spirit of the giving season to the families who rely on it for help and contribute some much-needed food pantry

Nov. 28: The town's initial draft budget would require a tax hike of 14.4 per cent — but councillors say their deliberations are just beginning and the increase will be pared down.

Workers and volunteers

gear up for one of NOTL's newest seasonal attractions — the annual **Tractor** Parade in Virgil.

Thousands of Canada Post workers have been on strike since Nov. 15, but the labour dispute has not closed three of NOTL's postal outlets. The locations in Virgil, St. Davids and Queenston are offering limited services.

The NOTL Museum's Barbara Worthy and NEOB Lavender's Melissa **Achal** win big at the annual Women in Business Awards sponsored by the Greater Niagara Chamber of Com-

#### December

Dec. 5: The Town of NOTL is suing a local quarry company for costs related to the cleanup of the Cole Drain in 2022 following an environmental spill. In an Ontario Superior Court filing, the town says Arriscraft Canada Inc. is responsible for the sludgelike and putrid material in the drain, which the town cleaned up at a cost of \$1.2 million.

NOTL's long-awaited update to its official plan takes a big step forward as council receives an update, including a proposed work plan to guide the process for revisions and approval.

An early provincial election could be on the horizon and the NDP is nominating incumbent Wayne Gates to seek re-election in the Niagara Falls riding, which includes NOTL.

The Shaw Festival's "A Christmas Carol" returns to the Royal George Theatre and earns a stellar four-star review from Lake Report reviewer Penny-Lynn Cookson.

Dec. 12: In a quest to increase public transparency, the town makes detailed reports on the ongoing Parliament Oak hotel development available on the municipality's website. Previously some councillors balked at the idea, suggesting it was not necessary and the documents are too complicated.

The annual Candlelight Stroll brings out thousands who walk through Old Town and purchase candles to support the family of Asadullah and Mahdia Kazemi, who fled Afghanistan and the Taliban more than a year ago.

Premier Doug Ford makes an unannounced stop in NOTL for a private function at the home of prominent developer Rainer Hummel. He is joined by Lord Mayor Gary Zalepa and Coun. Erwin Wiens, Shaw Festival executive director Tim Jennings, and cabinet ministers Paul Calandra and Stan Cho.

The town is pausing the issuance of **short-term** rental licences including cottage rentals, country inns and vacation apartments, starting Dec. 10.

Dec. 19: Once again, Santa Claus rolls into town, delighting crowds who pack downtown for his annual official visit to NOTL.

To commemorate the season, The Lake Report produces a special Christmas wrap decorated with colourful artwork created by hundreds of students at Crossroads Public School.

Niagara Region's new budget means the regional portion of your **property** tax bill is set to rise almost 10 per cent.

Joan King's Stockings for Seniors project means nearly 150 seniors at NOTL's long-term care homes will not be left out. They're receiving stockings chock full of essential items and treats.

The Lake Report takes its **annual break** from publishing and returns early in the new year.

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- Christopher Bowron 35 years of leadership and commitment as our Broker/Owner
- **∜Vicki Bolduc** 35 years of dedicated service as a Sales Representative

Your passion, professionalism, and hard work have been integral to the success of Niagara on the Lake Realty. Congratulations on these incredible milestones! We look forward to many more years of success together.

On behalf of Chris, Vicki, Patricia, and the entire team at *Niagara on the Lake Realty*, we want to extend our deepest thanks to all of our wonderful clients, both past and present. It has been a true privilege to work with you in this beautiful town that we are fortunate to call home. Your trust and support mean the world to us, and we look forward to continuing our journey together in the years to come.

Here's to many more milestones and memories in the year ahead!



## Police seek suspects in LCBO theft

Paige Seburn
The Lake Report

Police are searching for suspects involved in a theft at the LCBO in Virgil over the weekend, who made off with at least one grocery cart full of booze.

Niagara regional officers responded to a call regarding a theft on Saturday, Jan. 11 at 11:36 a.m. from the LCBO located at 1591 Niagara Stone Rd. The suspects had already left by the time police showed up.

Police determined three suspects came into the store, picked out an array of alcoholic beverages, bypassed the checkout counters and left the store.

CCTV footage from the LCBO and other nearby businesses showed the suspects entering a white Ford Transit van after leaving the store.

They were last seen driving east on Niagara Stone Road in the van with stolen plates.

The estimated value of the



Suspects made off with about \$1,000 in stolen booze on Saturday morning from the Virgil LCBO. PAIGE SEBURN

stolen alcohol is \$993.35, police said.

No injuries were reported as a result of the incident.

Ants Rannala, a lifelong resident of Niagara-on-the-Lake, was just walking in the store as the theft was taking place.

"It was just so overwhelming when I walked in," he said. "I couldn't believe what I saw."

He said he witnessed an "intimidating" man with an alcohol bottle in each hand and another man with one or two full carts — which they pushed right past him and the LCBO workers and out of the store without paying for them.

"They looked at me, they looked at the girls [working at the LCBO]," he said. "Nothing was going to stop them."

He said he didn't see any other customers in the store at the time of the theft.

Rannala urges people and workers to prioritize their safety in moments like these. "You don't know what's going on in their mind, whether they had anything to protect themselves in case somebody jumped on them or something."

"In a case like that, just let them go, or you're getting yourself into trouble and then hurt," he said.

He said LCBO workers were taken aback by it, but they knew they couldn't do anything.

"They were probably informed when they took the job or something — don't get involved and let them go," he said.

LCBO declined to comment on the theft.

"Let's put it this way — I don't think I want to go through this again. I mean this is totally unbelievable, you know?" Rannala said. "We live in a civilized world. You go in, you buy something, you pay for it."

"You just don't fill up your cart and then just push it out on the way."

All three suspects are described as being

Middle-Eastern, with the first and second described as being 35 to 45 years old, while the third is described as 45 to 55 years old, police said.

The first suspect had a black beard and black moustache curled at the ends — due to the presence of a beard, police said they're operating under the assumption the suspect is a male. This suspect was seen wearing blue ripped jeans, a dark puffy coat, dark shoes, a grey toque with a pompom and a purple Rainforest Cafe hoodie.

The second suspect is described as a six-foot-tall male with a dark beard and moustache, seen wearing a dark coat, a dark hoodie pulled up over the head, dark pants and white and red sneakers.

The third suspect is described as a male with a black beard and moustache with grey hin hair, seen wearing dark clothing and a dark winter beanie.

Police said they have no description of the fourth suspect who was believed to be driving the vehicle since he was not captured or reported.

Anyone with information regarding the suspects' identity are asked by police to call the lead investigator at 905-688-4111, option 3, extension 1032200, referencing incident #25-3650.

People preferring to stay anonymous can contact Crime Stoppers of Niagara either online or by calling 1-800-222-8477.

#### Building heights a contentious issue

#### Continued from Front Page

we consider what our options are and discuss them more thoroughly," she said during the meeting.

O'Connor added that the inclusion of affordable housing is still reliant on future studies the town is doing on housing needs in Glendale.

"That's all I have to say out of an almost thousandpage report, which I think is very good," she said.

Coun. Gary Burroughs asked for clarification about what facilities the town will need to have.

Kirsten McCauley, the town's director of community and development services, said a location for a Glendale community centre has been located close to the outlet mall.

As well, discussions have been had with all school boards to gauge their needs,



The town is still in talks with Transport Canada and Nav Canada about suitable building heights in Glendale, as per airport zoning regulations. JULIA SACCO

McCauley said.

"We've identified two potential school sites within the Glendale area and have policy in there to continue those discussions along with a motion passed in December to continue these discussions," she said.

Burroughs also mentioned concerns surrounding Transport Canada and Nav Canada regarding when the report on suitable building heights will be available.

Part of Glendale is under federal airport zoning regulations for the nearby Niagara District Airport, which means restrictions on how tall buildings can be.

"We have continued to have some discussions," McCauley said.

The secondary plan, schedule two, shows the building heights are in line with the airport zoning regulations, she added.

Burroughs voiced concerns about the building heights interfering with flight paths at a committee of the whole meeting in June 2024.

juliasacco@niagaranow.com

#### Red Roof starts new year with purpose and healing

Paige Seburn The Lake Report

Natalia Love Angelou is starting her new year off with good energy — something she shared with the community at her retreat on Jan. 11 at Red Roof Retreat.

The Amplify Love Retreat, attended by 17 participants from as far as Manitoba, offered yoga, facials, dance parties and healing modalities led by expert practitioners, from 12 to 6 p.m.

It aimed to enhance selflove and community connection while raising funds for Red Roof Retreat, an organization providing respite, recreational and educational services to youth and young adults with special needs, along with their families.

"I figured, this would be a good way to start the new year with positive light, positive energy," said Angelou.

The six-hour retreat began with an opening circle, followed by a sound bath,



Attendees of the Amplify Love Retreat gather for a day of healing and self-discovery.

potluck lunch, and a choice of healing sessions. It concluded with a closing circle featuring a sound healing session.

"All of us are doing this as a donation," she said, with 100 per cent of proceeds going to Red Roof Retreat.

"I really believe in what they do, because they give families an opportunity to feel supported and have a safe space that their children with special needs can be taken care of," she said.

Angelou organized the retreat with a team of

healers — sound healer Tala Muhtadi said seeing participants transform was the most fulfilling part of the day.

"There's nothing more fulfilling than seeing someone reclaim a part of themselves that they've lost before. There's nothing more powerful than witnessing someone just let go of something that's been holding them back and fully embrace their power," she said.

It can be observed in their nonverbal communication too, like the way their eyes light up or the way their shoulders are held back, she said.

"It's something that truly fills my heart," said Muhtadi.

Angelou said the retreat marked the first step toward her long-term goal of creating a spiritual temple open to all.

While completing the steps to establish her church and charity, she asked herself, why wait? "Why do I have to wait to get the approval from the government — like a piece of paper — to do what I want to do?" she said. "Why don't I start different things like this to spread awareness?"

She hopes the retreat planted the first seed of her larger vision of having her own sacred space for all walks of life.

"We can focus on two things in life: We can focus on fear, or we can focus on love. And it's our job in the Amplified Love Sanctuary to focus on rising and amplifying the love in the community," said Angelou.

Participants paid \$60 with a discount code — which all attendees used — or \$90 without it, as Angelou worked to keep costs low. A potluck lunch was provided to avoid the financial burden of catered meals.

"If we wanted the retreat to offer food, we probably would have had to charge at least \$150 or \$200," she said.



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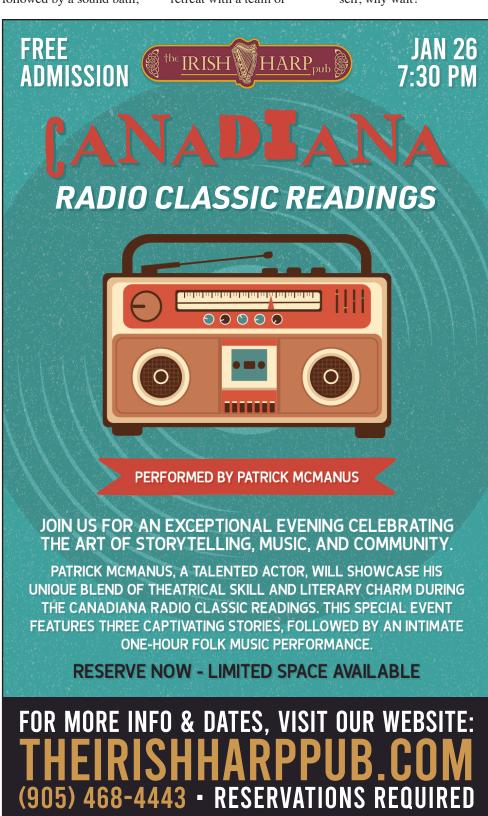
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# Have an opinion you want heard?

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JoAnne Longmoore (left), husband Brent and Jane Hutchings enjoy a fish fry dinner at Legion on Thursday. JULIA SACCO

### NOTLers fill house at first fish fry of 2025

Julia Sacco Local Journalism Initiative The Lake Report

Last Thursday marked the return of Legion Branch 124's weekly fish fry after a three-week holiday hiatus.

For the room full of NOTL residents who came out for the first fry of the year, this meant the return of the best fish and chips in town.

"We're happy that the three weeks they were gone are over. We're enjoying being back," JoAnne Longmoore told The Lake Report.

Her husband, Brent Longmoore, said the weekly dinner is a staple social outing in NOTL.

"It's a place where you

will always see someone you know," he said.

Brent Longmoore added it's nice to have dinner in a place so meaningful in the community.

"It's a touchback to family members who served. I lost an uncle at Vimy Ridge and every time I come in here I think of him," he said.

Longmoore said he hopes to see more young people

come out to Legion gatherings like the fish fry and continue to honour those who served.

Running from 4 p.m. to 7 p.m., fish and chips along with a side of coleslaw are available for the tax-free price of \$10.50 for one piece and \$16 for two pieces.

The tax-free prices are in effect every Thursday until Feb 13.





# Thank you

Words cannot express our gratitude to the NOTL Community and beyond. Committed individuals, businesses, service clubs, foundations and events collectively raised \$125,000 for our Gifts from the Heart Holiday Campaign. The success of this fundraising endeavor will help Red Roof Retreat continue to provide affordable, quality respite and recreation programs for children and young adults with special needs. Thank you for helping us start our 25th anniversary year with so much hope and optimism and LOVE.

"Love is All You Need."

On behalf of our families, staff, volunteers and board members, we thank you and wish you a wonderful 2025.

Steffanie Bjorgan, Founder/Executive Director Ward Simpson, Board Chairperson

## NEWS (%)

## Songs, dances and unity ring in 2025 at Native Centre

Paige Seburn The Lake Report

Being one of the kids who grew up through the Niagara Regional Native Centre's activities and programs, James Doxtador went into the new year with one major goal for the organization: Connecting with young people.

Doxtador, co-ordinator of the Wasa-Nabin selfdevelopment program for Indigenous kids ages 13 to 18, believes it's crucial to not only establish but also sustain a good relationship with children and adoles-

"I think it's super important just to build that connection with our youth," he said.

In contrast with his beginnings as a youngin' enjoying the festivities, Doxtador now oversees the centre's planning for events such as its New Year's celebration, held this year on Jan. 11, which featured a dinner and social with traditional songs and dances performed from 6 to 9 p.m.

Held at the centre at 382 Airport Rd., the social





Left: Children enjoy themselves at the Niagara Regional Native Centre's New Year's social. Right: Sean Vanderklis, president of the centre's board of directors, left, and James Doxtador work together to bring the community closer through things like the New Year's celebration. PAIGE SEBURN

began with a dinner served from 4 to 5 p.m.

The meal included turkey, roast beef, mashed potatoes, stuffing, vegetables, cranberries and bubbly. Free items for children were available as well, like clothes, toys and books.

Sean Vanderklis, president of the centre's board of directors, said a Haudenosaunee social is a specific gathering where two

benches are set up parallel in the middle of a room, and classic songs and dances are performed by members from the Haudenosaunee Confederacy.

"More commonly referred to down here as members from the Six Nations reserve," said Vanderklis. "So we're going to sing and engage in a traditional dance."

"Everything's done for

the community. The goal is to bring the community together," he said.

Though the Niagara Regional Native Centre operates as a social service agency today, it started as a community collective, a legacy Vanderklis said they are committed to preserving.

"We still want people to come in, and we still want them to see each other, see people who they may not

have seen in a while, and also enjoy a good meal," he

Going into the new year, Vanderklis has his focus on a particular word to inspire him: Unit.

"We want to bring our community back together," he said. "We want to improve."

The centre's community pantry plays a key role in supporting members in

need and relies on donations to provide essentials.

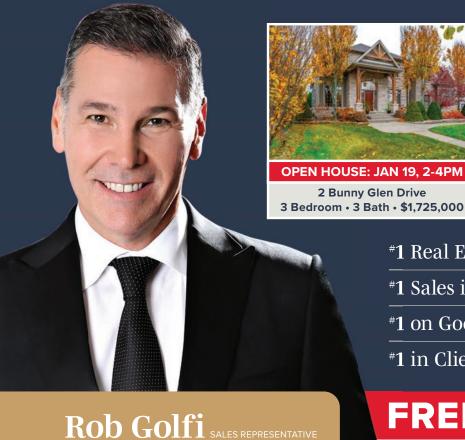
Most needed items are pasta sauce, soup, crackers, condiments, canned fruit and vegetables, juice boxes and school snacks, instant oatmeal and pancake mix and syrup.

Pantry donations can be dropped off at the location in town during business hours at 382 Airport Rd. Or, donate at nrnc.ca/donate.

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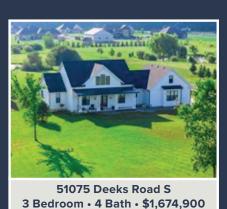
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This tiny column gives tips to help promote kindness in our lives and spread joy and happiness.



#### Contributed by Patty Garriock

"Vitality! That's the pursuit of life, isn't it?"
- Katharine Hepburn

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# Icy weather brings hockey to the great outdoors

David Dulas and 11-year-old Jordan Dulas hit the ice — the frozen waters of the Line 2 reservoir — on Sunday morning for a game of hockey. Friends and families in NOTL were out on the weekend, rejoicing in the winter season: Sledding and tobogganing, making snowmen and some even playing frisbee golf outside the community centre. DAVE VAN DE LAAR



#### Opinion

## Rebellion, panic and a slippery slope



THE TURNER REPORT

Garth Turner Columnist

The natives are restless. A rally outside town hall, complete with signs and slurs. Steamy letters to Mr. Editor. An act of civil disobedience at the honking big new Old Town hotel site. And now they're organizing. A swelling taxpayers movement met again yesterday (Jan. 15). Pitchforks and torches next?

Too much development, folks cry. Too many houses turned into motels. And what happened to the hospital? The public school? The high school up the road? And the kids? Why did families vanish from the core?

"How has the bicycle rentals, ice cream shops, shoulder-to-shoulder Queen Street foot traffic added to our NOTL residents' quality of life?" asks irascible Sam Young.

"The answer is obvious. We are on an irreversible slippery slope. One of your articles should broach the question: Why are so many long-term and recent-year residents selling and getting out of Dodge?"

Are we being hollowed out by a pro-business coun-



A rebellious act at the Parliament Oak hotel site. The word was removed, Garth Turner says, but the message lives on.

cil? Is that why — despite wails and moaning — the Parliament Oak hotel will rise amidst a residential 'hood? Is bowing to tourism why people are encouraged to buy houses, flip them into motels, shrinking the supply of homes and creating businesses that don't pay business taxes?

This Airbnb thing's a trigger. As reported here, there are a thousand "NOTL" listings on that one platform alone. The official word is about 5 per cent of our housing stock has been turned over to visitors.

But Norm Arsenault is challenging that. The Old Town, he insists, is becoming a residential disaster. All rich people (ugh) and folks from Toledo (gulp).

"Walk down King Street," says the ex-councillor.
"There are 19 short-term rentals. Nineteen! In one kilometre. The heritage

ys, but the message lives on.

district alone is almost half

short-term rentals. It's going

in a wrong direction."

Arsenault's been part of a committee trying to stem the tide. But of 31 recommendations, town staff tossed 18. Licensing and fines were improved, but the most important thing was ignored.

"Our main theme was hosted or unhosted rentals. There is no political appetite for it. But that's how it should be — to have rentals run by permanent residents who also live there. That would eliminate a huge number of the short-term rentals we now have. But council is not going to do it."

No? Other places are. In fact, most of them. Like, just down the QEW.

Burlington's new Airbnb rules are simple. If you don't live in a house, you can't host short-term paying guests. And nobody can rent for more than half the year, in total.

Toronto's doing similar. And Vancouver. Plus most places in Canada where short-term rentals are driving out long-term renters, gutting streets of permanent faces and goosing prices.

Burlington is applying for federal funding to finance enforcement of the bylaw — money apparently available to us, as well. If we comply.

Will NOTL staff come to that conclusion? Or is the current review a sham? Another sop to the pro-tourism cartel? Or a gift to serial real estate owners like Tara Abrams, who wrote to rip me a new one last week?

"While I live in Toronto, I am the owner of a licenced short-term rental in NOTL," she states in a letter. "My biggest concern about Mr. Turner's article is that it creates unnecessary panic through the spreading of misinformation."

She says Airbnb misleads by stating our town has a thousand listings when some are for bordering areas. And she's right. But the fact remains if Tara lived in NOTL and had a short-term rental house in Toronto, well, she wouldn't. That would be illegal, since unhosted short-term rentals are just sucking away housing.

The Big Smoke banned them. Maybe the little puff should do the same.

Garth Turner is a NOTL resident, journalist, author, wealth manager and former federal MP and minister.

garth@garth.ca



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#### LETTER OF THE WEEK

## Thanks for support of community in 2025

Dear editor:

On behalf of the General Nelles Branch 124 Royal Canadian Legion, entering into 2025, I would like to reflect on, and with the executive committee, thank the many people that made 2024 a very good year for our branch.

First of all, we thank all of those that visit us during the year to enjoy our fish and chips, or the music and the bar, Karaoke or open mic.

We saw lots of locals, and those who used to be, at the summer holiday parties or the NDSS reunion or the Ham and turkey rolls.

Our thanks go out to all of the businesses who donated gifts for penny sales, or allowed us to place a poppy box at their counter.

Our Poppy campaign was particularly good this year, raising about \$35,000 in dona-

tions. There was a good turnout for our Remembrance services.

The lord mayor, council and town staff have been very supportive throughout the year. We received a generous grant to replace our roof. The staff has been very responsive to requests and any other incidents that have come up — in particular to the few who needed to mock the tree at our cenotaph, representing a Christmas

truce in the trenches of the First World War.

I am most grateful that the town staff turned it into a positive. I regret that the attitudes of very few will force us to stop placing a tree at the cenotaph.

We at the General Nelles Branch 124 of the Royal Canadian Legion look forward to seeing you in 2025.

> Al Howse President Legion Branch 124

#### Take on Trump and tariffs — not an early election



Wayne Gates Special to The Lake Report

People across Ontario and all of Canada are now waiting for the inauguration of Donald Trump next Monday, Jan. 20.

With a new administration south of the border comes the threat of 25 per cent tariffs on Canadian

It almost goes without saying that these tariffs would have a devastating impact on our economy, with a 25 per cent tariff put-

ting as many as 1.5 million Canadian jobs at risk and leading to a recession.

Many sectors, including auto, forestry, energy, agriculture and manufacturing, would be devastated.

This is an existential threat to Ontario and Canada that requires an all-hands-on-deck, "Team Canada" approach.

I don't care if you're Conservative, Liberal, NDP, Green or Independent — we must work together across party lines to protect Ontarian and Canadian jobs, independence and sovereignty.

Residents of Niagara-onthe-Lake and my riding will know that I have serious disagreements with Premier Doug Ford. I believe the premier has damaged our health care system, mishandled the housing crisis and

hasn't done nearly enough to address the cost of living.

But right now, with the threat of Trump's tariffs looming over our economy, we need a Team Ontario approach, working together across party lines to stand up to Trump's tariffs. And what worries me is that Ford has refused to rule out an early, unnecessary, costly election in our province.

An early election would be about one thing and one thing only — a political gain for the premier.

We are not scheduled to have an election until June 2026. The premier claims he needs a "mandate" but the reality is, he has a majority government and all opposition parties are willing to work together to combat Trump's tariffs.

Not to mention, an early

provincial election would cost \$200 million of taxpayer dollars that we just can't afford right now.

In fact, the premier has recessed the legislature all the way until March 3, meaning we have only sat at Queen's Park for a total of seven weeks in seven months.

How about instead of calling an unnecessary election, Ford calls us back to work on Monday so we can work together on a strategy?

Ontario can't afford to take its eye off the ball right now.

I'm calling on the premier — let's work together, get back to Queen's Park, stand up to Trump's tariffs and go to the polls in June 2026, like the law says we should.

Wayne Gates is the NDP member for the provincial riding of Niagara Falls.

This week's riddle is "Jeopardy!" style. Category: PURE BREAD

This palindromic bread is all the rage when served with vindaloo or tikka masala.

Last issue: SO THAT'S WHAT THOSE LYRICS SAY!

Clue: "Got a long list of ex-lovers, they'll tell you I'm insane" is in "Blank Space" but her mom heard it as "got a lot of Starbucks

**Answer: Who is Taylor Swift?** 

Answered first by: Lynda Collet

Also answered correctly (in order) by: Jane Morris, Bob Wheatley, Sheila Meloche, Sue Rautenberg, Maria Janeiro, Katie Reimer, Karen Brown, Kristy Bareuther, Marla Percy, **Howard Jones, Lynda Hosty** 

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#### California wildfires raise fears about Two Mile Creek

Dear editor:

Watching the tragic destruction of the Los Angeles wildfires this week I am again reminded that in the forest of Two

Mile Creek, in the stretch that flows past the Butler Homestead and cemetery, there has now existed for several years a tinder box of dead trees and undergrowth, just waiting to be ignited by a strong wind and a little spark, random or malevolent.

As an adjacent homeowner, you will understand my concern, conveyed some years ago to no effect, to those responsible. Just saving.

Richard Baker **NOTL** 

#### Tourism should be 'perfectly paired' with residents' needs

Dear editor: Residents of NOTL understand that tourism is a contributing factor to life here and support a shared approach - however, tourism has to be well managed and that depends on the town council.

Traffic congestion and parking are the direct result of tourism. They need to be addressed. Perhaps the funding for all the infrastructure projects required because of tourism should be funded by tourism.

The pressure on the Old Town (and only the Old Town) for more accommodation is driven by tourism and the Chamber's desire for more growth in tourism.

This has led to the approval of more hotels specifically in the Old Town. We want more people to stay over. That means more accommodation. (We don't seem to like vacation rentals, so that means even more hotels.)

We now have six ice cream stores on the main

street and very little to attract residents anymore. Queen Street is geared toward tourists. Most residents do not shop there if they go there at all. It's a tourist street with tourist shops and tourist restaurants. It's make-believe for tourists. In the Old Town, we are

losing the few remaining community-frequented places like Bar Ruffino's and Willow Cakes & Pastries due to much higher rents in anticipation of

greater tourism. I guess they will be replaced with boring chains.

How about the town addressing the congestion on the "shared" path between NOTL and Queenston? Just an accident waiting to happen there. Even though there is an inconspicuous "no motorized vehicles" sign that everyone ignores.

Every time I see the ad "Perfectly Paired," I am reminded of these issues.

Jackie Bonic **NOTL** 

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# Property standards and demolition by neglect



#### ARCHITEXT

Brian Marshall Columnist

A few weeks ago, I received an email from an erudite individual who reads the Arch-i-text and wished to suggest a number of related items he felt would be worthwhile to expand upon in this column.

Now, normally at this point, I would write a few paragraphs outlining this reader's position and concerns, however, in this case, allow me to let his own eloquent words speak for themselves.

He wrote:

"The average citizen doesn't know the options available to municipal authorities for protecting heritage properties, nor are they aware of the vast disparities across jurisdictions in the penalties levied for not complying with these heritage bylaws. The

result is a context where heritage properties are allowed to deteriorate and undergo 'demolition by neglect,' and complicit councillors are not penalized in any way for enabling these destructive behaviours. Developers routinely abuse the responsibilities associated with heritage properties (and significant landscapes). Complicit elected officials conspire against introducing or enforcing meaningful legislation, so the abuses are perpetuated and are perceived as an acceptable way of doing business in the development community."

And continued, "Citizens feel helpless — which, effectively, we are, when the system gives so much discretionary power to uninformed, ethically compromised or willfully ignorant elected officials who can freely indulge their personal agendas, service their vested interests and await their patronage rewards and opportunities after their political terms are over, with no meaningful repercussions."

Going on he suggested, "All of this plays out against a backdrop of increasing cynicism amongst the electorate, who lack an authoritative and factual account of



Across NOTL historic houses, like this 19th century stone Gothic farmhouse on Concession 7 Road, are being allowed to crumble away, writes columnist Brian Marshall.

how the system works and of the options that actually exist. Instead, they are fed smug tropes about 'the inevitability of progress' or 'the foolishness' of investing in neglected or degraded buildings (regardless of their heritage significance). Worst of all are the pious bleatings about 'fiscal irresponsibility' by elected officials, whenever spending is required for acquisition, legal defense, or protection of significant properties, or costs related to restoration."

Concluding with, "At the same time, hugely expensive public infrastructure expenses which have significant cost implications at the local level (like unneces-

sary roundabouts in heritage communities, and overly complicated diverging diamond intersections that actually slow down traffic) are shooed through with no serious opposition, richly rewarding the construction companies and developers who fund the campaigns of the current government."

His statements are ones I have heard echoed many times by hundreds — if not thousands — of NOTL residents who are fundamentally concerned and dismayed over the erosion of the town's cultural heritage landscapes and unique community character.

Over the next few weeks, this columnist will attempt

to provide some insights into the options and issues related to addressing these concerns, beginning with the town's bylaw #5192-19 – "The Standards for the Maintenance and Occupancy of Property."

This thorough piece of legislation provides the criteria for maintenance of all properties located within the municipal boundaries of Niagara-on-the-Lake.

These properties include normal residential, heritage properties (including those vacant or damaged), vacant lands and buildings and non-residential properties.

Bluntly, everything from "soup to nuts" is defined within this bylaw — roof, foundation, exterior walls, windows, doors, stairs, porches, plumbing, electrical service, etc. — together with the basic criteria necessary to allow municipal bylaw enforcement personnel to ensure property owner compliance.

And, in cases where an owner is found not to be in compliance, a property standards order is issued — an official notice requiring specific work to be performed on the property within a prescribed period of time.

These orders may be appealed, in accordance with

provisions contained in Section 45 of the Planning Act, to the town's committee of adjustment and that committee's decision may also be appealed, to the Ontario Superior Court of Justice.

Once an order is final and binding, should the property owner still fail to comply, they are guilty of an offence under the Ontario Building Code Act and the fines are as follows:

For an individual, up to \$50,000 for a first offence and \$100,000 for a subsequent offence.

For a corporation, the fine is up to \$100,000 for a first offence and \$200,000 for a subsequent offence.

For a "person" — private or corporate — who fails to comply with an order made by a chief building official, in addition to the aforementioned penalties, is liable to a fine of up to \$10,000 per day for every day the offence continues after the time given for complying with the order has expired.

There's the process and clearly, there is teeth in it — provided it is enforced ... a topic for next week.

Brian Marshall is a NOTL realtor, author and expert consultant on architectural design, restoration and heritage.

#### COVID season and the weakness of current mRNA vaccines



Dr. William Brown Columnist

No surprise — ever since the COVID-19 pandemic began in the winter of 2019-2020, there have been seasonal outbreaks of COVID in long-term care facilities in the Niagara region.

I say no surprise because almost every year since the pandemic began, COVID cases spiked in long-term care facilities at a time when the community was busy with Christmas festivities and shopping.

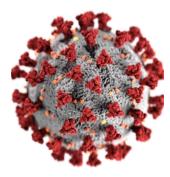
Seasonal outbreaks are common in long-term care, where vulnerable residents are in close contact with other residents for much of the day and visitors, and sometimes staff, unwittingly bring new mutant versions of the virus into vulnerable communities. This year, most residents received

an updated version of the Pfizer or Moderna vaccine in the fall.

The initial wave of CO-VID in 2019-2020 killed many millions worldwide and some developed long-lasting debilitating symptoms called long CO-VID. Social distancing and masking were very effective public health measures that helped corral the spread of the virus unit the first vaccines became available in late 2020.

Fortunately, the technology for developing messenger RNA (mRNA) vaccines such as Pfizer-BioNTech and Moderna had been developed well before the pandemic and tailored COVID vaccines were available in less than a year following the onset of the pandemic. That was amazing because, without that "off-the-shelf" technology, vaccine development would have taken several years.

There were other pluses too, such as the development of antiviral drugs such as Paxlovid, which reduced the initial severity of COVID but sometimes was as-



sociated with troublesome side effects or symptoms returned after the short five-day course (Paxlovid rebound).

Unfortunately, we soon learned that the effectiveness of mRNA vaccines was less than half a year and, in some instances, as short as three months. The reason for such a short effective period was that this virus mutates frequently and some mutant versions emerged every few months that were capable of evading previously effective vaccines.

This recurring cycle led to the current need for repeat vaccinations once or twice a year — each tailored to meet the challenges presented by new variants. In that respect, COVID vaccines are similar to flu vaccines, which have to be updated every year, but unlike many vaccines that work a lifetime.

But for most healthy young and middle-agers, COVID became a ho-hum affair that few paid much attention to except for seniors, those who are immunocompromised and others at higher risk for COVID.

Like the flu, COVID.

Like the flu, COVID is now embedded in the population. That means we can expect continuing mutant versions to emerge, including more lethal versions.

ing more lethal versions.

The weakness of current mRNA vaccines is that they target mutant versions of proteins in the spike, which, as the last four or more years have shown, continue to develop, some of which are capable of evading recently available vaccinees, thus perpetuating the recurring cycle of mutants and updated vaccines to deal with risky versions.

The answer is to develop a vaccine from the most conserved, least likely to mutate proteins in the COVID virus, not the everchanging

proteins of the spike.

Such a proposal for a durable vaccine was made to the National Institute of Health and viewed favourably but not funded before the pandemic and since then has been proposed once more, again with no support by the National Institute of Health

In recent years, some of the previously well-deserved shine on the National Institute of Health for past efforts has worn off, what with their on-again, off-again highly politized response to monoclonal antibody treatments for Alzheimer's disease and lack of leadership in developing a more effective vaccine for COVID.

COVID.

That's too bad, because a vaccine based on the most stable proteins in the COVID virus from all variants so far in humans and wild animals offers the best chance of developing an effective long-lasting vaccine — instead of the current practice of trying to keep up to date with new mutant versions of the virus.

Given the huge reservoir

of the virus in billions of human and wild animal hosts, updating vaccines may not be possible in the future given the strength of the anti-vaccination lobby and anti-vaxxers in the government in the United States beginning this month.

We were lucky with COVID this time around because of the off-the-shelf availability of the technology to create effective vaccines so quickly. But we might not be so fortunate the next time around.

And there's another issue with COVID – long COVID.

Many people developed chronic fatigue, cognitive impairment and other symptoms which can last for many weeks or even several years with no end in sight. Unfortunately, the cause(s) and effective management of long COVID remain challenges.

Dr. William Brown is a professor of neurology at McMaster University and co-founder of the InfoHealth series at the Niagara-on-the-Lake Public Library.



# The last sunrise before Trump's second reign



Special to The Lake Report

Everyone should get up and witness sunrise on Jan. 20.

That will be the last sunrise in the United States of America as we know it, for a time, so set your alarm clocks for that morning at 7:22 a.m. At noon Jan. 20 the president-election will take the presidential oath —

He may not give a speech as all presidents have done before him as it would be redundant to do so. He has already said what Americans can expect. Even he might see the irony of repeating his to-do list moments after swearing an oath to uphold the constitution.

He promised:

He will be a dictator.

He will round up and deport immigrants who in his and Hitler's words "poison the blood" of America.

He will purge significant numbers of the federal civil service who he considers disloyal to him personally.

He will enact revenge against his perceived enemies using the power of the Department of Justice.

He will eliminate the free press who criticize him.

These are just his greatest hits. Less clear is the execution of his wrath on the world's democracies.

As you watch the Jan. 20

sunrise, you might think of the American national anthem: "And the rocket's red glare, the bombs bursting in air ..."

Those words are a stirring but quaint anachronism of a time long past.

In the nuclear age, a global war waged with bombs is unlikely unless by accident or incompetence, because a "hot" war could mean annihilation.

Fascist world leaders are happy rich palace dwellers, not suicidal. Destruction of democracy is the goal, not destruction of the land. They want our democracies to join their authoritarian club. Birds of a feather!

Hot wars are not the answer. It didn't turn out well for Napoleon, nor for Hitler. Democracies have made Cold War so easy with the invention of the ultimate weapons, the internet, cable news and social media.

The ongoing "cold" war has been engaged by fascist adversaries against western democracies by weaponizing our own freedoms against us, proliferating lies and propaganda by unrestrained social media and

In the internet age of social media and cable "news," the power of propaganda and lies is supersized. It's a fascist's Happy Meal.

In a democracy, freedom of speech is the main course in the diet of our liberty. That is also our greatest weakness and it would be naive to think foreign and domestic opponents of freedom couldn't figure that

The president-elect has targeted Canada for 25



When the sun sets Jan. 20, the world will be a different place, writes Keith McNenly.

per cent tariffs on day one under the false pretext of drugs and illegals pouring across our border.

While factually untrue, he has "demanded" we "solve this long-simmering problem," and Canada will "pay a very big price." This is just the opening gambit of his attack on our sover-

A free and fair election is won by a competition of ideas and truth, not a smorgasbord of lies. By millions of citizens' contributions to campaigns, not a few men with hundreds of billions of dollars buying political

Most countries that have fallen to fascism have long histories of autocratic rulers, tsars, kings and emperors, and so have never really learned freedom.

If you are not born into it, it might be hard to figure out and is easily wrested from a citizenry that never knew liberty. Apparently the "oldest democracy" is

not immune from being tricked into putting an authoritarian felon in power.

Americans know freedom and hopefully, that's the monkey wrench in an adversary's plan, that they will never find peace trying to subjugate Americans.

The U.S. is a pseudo-democracy where the rules are preset to favour the authoritarian right-wing. Americans are complacent about this democratic imbalance.

In the 100-member Senate, a sham filibuster rule gives the win on a vote to the minority, 41 votes wins and 59 votes loses.

This is in addition to the constitutional requirement that California with close to 40 million residents gets two out of the 100 senators, while the two Dakotas with under two million residents get four senators. That's not democracy.

Partisan gerrymandering (remapping electoral districts to ensure minority right-wing candidates win

congressional seats) and unlimited corporate and billionaire campaign contributions are both allowed by the U.S. Republican Supreme Court.

Canada outlawed gerrymandering more than 60 years ago and has strict rules mandating rational campaign funding, ensuring citizens and not billionaires choose our representatives.

The U.S. Republican Supreme Court gave the president-elect the full power of a king to commit crimes without consequence of law. Canada already has a king, but only as a figurehead connection to history

— a king without power. Canada is a free country, making our own decisions as citizens and forging our own democratic path in the world. Exchange independence for two of 100 seats in an undemocratic U.S. Senate? The 51st state indeed.

Cold War never ends and so we must be eternally

vigilant. Social media and some cable "news" are just commercial products designed by rich, greedy oligarchs to get viewers hooked on conspiracies that numb us to reality.

Should the world's most economically and militarily powerful country truly shift away from democracy at this time of rapid technological change, and with humanity creating non-human artificial intelligence, the future will be unpredictable on an epic scale.

Both Canada and Ontario will hold elections in 2025.

Canadians can buck the global right-wing trend toward authoritarianism:

Reject politicians when they tell their first lie. Their lies take away our power to make informed decisions.

Reward truth-tellers with

Be skeptical and patient: Truth takes longer than 15 seconds to get its point across. If a point is just a slogan, it's pointless.

Get informed from mainstream regulated media, newspapers and network television news. Give social media the boot, especially during election campaigns.

It's a fool's errand to predict the mind of the voter so remain aware. Most scholarly pundits in the American election declared that Republicans would finally find that mythical place on the Serengeti where elephants go to die. Instead, we are treated to the despairing brae of the

Niagara-on-the-Lake resident Keith McNenly was the chief administrator of the Town of Mono for 41 years.

# Dynasties are dangerous

Dear editor:

While I sympathize with Garth Turner and believe he is correct that Canadians vote against, not for, I am ambivalent about the fate of Justin Trudeau.

I have always held that political dynasties are dangerous for democracy. The fault was definitely with the Liberal party for flattering Trudeau into believing he would be a good prime minister.

If he had not been Pierre Trudeau's son, he would never have been considered for that role. Now the party has wooed Marc Carney into running for party leader. Big mistake!

Even if he wins the lead-



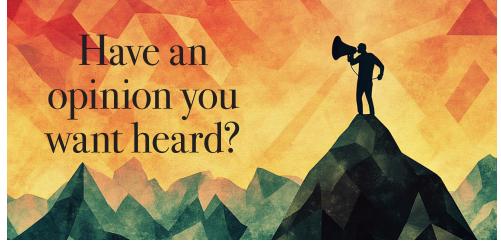
Letter writer Jackie Bonic says Trudeau wouldn't have been considered for prime minister if not for his father.

ership, he will still lose the election and so he will be starting his political career as a loser. He should be disassociating himself with the present Liberal party not running for it or he will suffer the same fate as Kamala Harris.

There is no way that the Liberals can win the next

election and nor should they after the way that party has let down Canadians. I doubt that Pierre Poilievre will do a much better job and we will kick the Conservatives out too later but only when there appears to be a better alternative.

Jackie Bonic **NOTL** 



#### We welcome your letters

The Lake Report welcomes your letters to the editor. Please, write early and often. Letters ideally should be under 400 words long. Occasionally, longer letters may be published. All letters may be edited for conciseness, accuracy, libel and defamation. Please include your full name, street address and a daytime telephone number so that authorship can be authenticated. Only names and general addresses (eg. Virgil, St. Davids, NOTL) will be published. Send your letters to editor@niagaranow. com or drop them by our office at 496 Mississagua St., NOTL.





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#### Icebreakers comedy fest returns Jan. 23 to 25

Julia Sacco Local Journalism Initiative The Lake Report

It's no big deal if you show up to the Icebreakers Comedy Festival in a track suit, says executive producer Jeff Paul.

Running from Jan. 23 to 25 in venues across Niagara-on-the-Lake, every comedian involved in the annual comedy show receives a custom velour tracksuit from Sweatcedo, but comics in sweats is not the only highlight.

For its 11th iteration, Icebreakers' opening night at Oast House will feature headliner Jeff McEnery and host Joe Pillitteri, followed by two more shows at Corks and a finale at the location known as the community centre by NOTLers.

"We don't like using that term, because it's the CBC Gala so we're at the Hall at Anderson Lane, trying to keep things classy here," Paul said.

Tickets for the shows are



Jeff Paul, executive producer of Icebreakers Comedy Festival, sports one of his many custom tracksuits during a set. The festival returns Jan. 23 to 25. SUPPLIED

available on the Icebreakers website except opening night, which is sold out.

"We sell just over 500 tickets over the three nights. Saturday night's the big show," Paul told The Lake Report.

Of the 18 comics coming out to the festival, many are from Toronto with a few travelling to NOTL from far and wide, Paul said.

"I think (guests) enjoy the variety of faces each year and seeing some familiar faces come back with new material," he said.

"It's a nice little event to break up the winter blues." For online tickets and a detailed list of comics, visit icebreakerscomedy.com/

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#### NOTL actress returns as Sister Rose in CBC's 'Son of a Critch'

Julia Sacco Local Journalism Initiative The Lake Report

For Niagara-on-the-Lake actress Nora McLellan, working with the tight-knit cast of "Son of a Critch" has been a career highlight.

In season four of the CBC Gem comedy series, which premiered last Tuesday, McLellan reprises her role of the authoritarian Sister Rose for the retelling of comedian Mark Critch's best-selling memoir.

Described as "the hilarious and very real story of 14-year-old Mark coming-of-age in St. John's Newfoundland," the series features McLellan's character, loosely based on several nuns present during Critch's upbringing.

When it comes to playing characters that reflect real life, McLellan said it's easy to do with quality writing.

"The thing for me is I just play what is in the script and have a wonderful time doing it," McLellan told The



Nora McLellan as Sister Rose in season four of "Son of a Critch" on CBC Gem. SUPPLIED

Lake Report.

The character of Sister Rose, the principal at Mark's school, is one that McLellan loves, she said.

"I would like to say that Sister Rose is married to Jesus, but not happily," McLellan said.

McLellan, known in

town for her years spent on stage at the Shaw Festival, said her role on "Son of a Critch" allows her to act just as she would in a stage

"You might do a little less because there's a camera instead of an audience in front of you, but on 'Son of

a Critch,' I don't do anything too much differently," she said.

"Often I'm speaking to large groups of people, terrorizing children. I think the entrance I made into season four says it all. Our director John Vatcher said, 'Just do Darth Vader."

As for honing her craft, it helps to be surrounded by talented actors all day, she

Throughout the filming of the show, McLellan has been able to watch the young cast members, Benjamin Evan Ainsworth, Sophia Powers and Mark Ezekiel Rivera, grow up, she

"They just keep getting better and they were so strong to begin with. I marvel at their work ethic," she said.

The fourth season features strong performances as the title character enters high school and comes of age as an adolescent.

"Mark Critch's world is getting bigger. He's discovering who he really is as an actor and comedian," McLellan said.

"The most implausible stories that happen on the series are things that actually happened. Mark has the receipts."

With the new season, McLellan is looking

forward to more people discovering all the great entertainment on CBC Gem, she said.

"If they haven't watched the show, get the CBC Gem app and watch the first three seasons," she said.

In season four, viewers will be able to see the growth and impact of people who came into Critch's life during this time, McLellan said.

There have been numerous guest stars across the four seasons that McLellan has loved working with, including Newfoundland writer and comedian Andy Jones and Mark McKinney of the beloved Kids in the Hall sketch comedy troupe.

In season four, viewers can look forward to an appearance from Canadian legend and comedian Rick Mercer.

"I'm always happy to see him," McLellan said.

All seasons of "Son of a Critch" are streaming now on CBC Gem.

juliasacco@niagaranow.com



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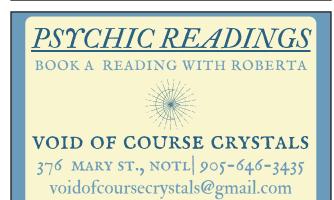
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# Have some fun

#### **Across**

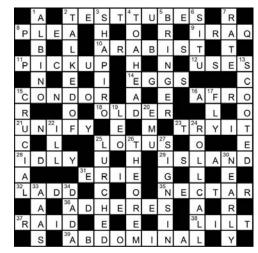
- 8. Smallest state down under (8)
- 9. You can't get out this way (2,4)
- 10. Sultanate in Borneo (6)
- 11. Kind of ale (3,5)
- 12. Switch positions (2,3,3)
- 13. Victorious WWII force at Midway (1,1,4)
- 14. Broad appeal (7,8)
- 18. Knight cap? (6)
- 20. Or go West, badly weakened (3,5)
- 23. Old Scratch (3,5)
- 24. Hanseatic port on the Weser (6)
- 25. They are acquired on marriage (2-4)
- 26. Author of "The Rivals" (8)

#### Down

- 1. Sterile (6)
- 2. Lofty place (8)
- 3. Dark blue powder (6)
- 4. An enlarger (10,5)
- 5. Coach (8)
- 6. Impulse transmitter (6)
- 7. Delivery professionals (8)
- 15. Type of seal (8)
- 16. Efforts to change society (8)
- 17. Appeared with Nyasaland on
- stamps, once (8) 19. Dividing line in a triangle (6)
- 21. Turn these to gain an advantage (6)
- 22. Oscillate (3-3)

# 

#### Last issue's answers



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## Lord mayor's open house was informative and entertaining



**Ross's Ramblings** 

Ross Robinson Columnist

We often forget that all five neighbourhood "pods" here in NOTL have so much in common. Our elected officials, our operating budgets and our futures are all joined at various hips.

Lord Mayor Gary Zalepa is doing his best this winter to reach out to the various wee population centres. Last Thursday evening at the St. Davids Firehall, a full house of NOTLers did a deep dive into the complexities of running a municipality.

Most every chair was sat in, and our Lord Mayor efficiently expanded upon a number of subjects that most of us mere citizens don't really understand. There were no snacks provided, as 6:30 p.m. is an awkward starting time.

And, even in our historic

town, not a formal chain of office to be seen. The venue was chock-a-block and the organizing team from the town did a great job planning the evening. They welcomed attendees with professionalism and genuine gemutlichkeit.

I do hope that the Mary Snider Room (Feb. 3) and the Simpson Room (Feb. 18, my birthday) and the Queenston Library (Feb. 20) will accommodate the attendees. Would it have been better to have this worthwhile get together tout ensemble (all together) at the Shaw's Festival Theatre? We'll never know, will we?

An Old Town location might conceivably encourage members of the rumoured NOTLAR to attend. OK, OK, I have only heard a rumour, third or fourth hand, of a new lobbying group in town, called the Niagara-on-the-Lake Association of Residents. Or is the name going to be the Old Town Residents Association? The more affinity groups, the better.

Stay tuned. As news of NOTLAR breaks, I will ramble in a timely fashion.

Still resisting Facebook groups and social media, I



Lord Mayor Gary Zalepa leads his first in a series of village open houses. JULIA SACCO

am regularly out of touch. Several friends, and my two children, attempt to drag me, kicking and screaming, into the third decade of the 21st century. Frankly, I probably couldn't abide some of the vitriolic, anonymous and occasionally cowardly postings, so perhaps it's best if I stay away, eh? I need my sleep.

Our hard working and process-driven lord mayor, who seems to be omnipresent, as well as ubiquitous and everywhere, in our historic and bucolic and pretty town, explained the official plan and the secondary plan. Then, the intricacies of the municipal budgeting process. Apparently we compare very favourably

with similar sized towns in Ontario

The delicate and ongoing balancing act between our high-profile tourism sector and our equally important agricultural interests create a challenging yin and yang. All ratepayers rightfully demand politician and town staff time and attention.

The long-range planning processes were explained, and I never thought I would learn so much about grinder pumps. This St. Davidscentric issue has become a cause celebre, a true dog's breakfast — and apparently there will be no efficient solution in the near future.

Standing at the back of the room in the St. Davids Fire Hall, from what I could understand, competing interests seem to be pointing fingers at each other. He said, she said.

said, she said.

After we had been overwhelmed by grinder pump minutae and angst, the elephant in the room reared its passionate head. A good old-fashioned small town bun fight started about the dreaded St. Davids roundabout.

A couple of wise and wound-up St. Davids residents took the gloves off. As their faces turned red and the veins in their necks bulged a bit, they aggressively disagreed with Zalepa.

Now, Zalepa didn't survive many seasons as a volunteer minor hockey referee, listening to parents telling him how to do his job better, without having a strong backbone and thick skin. He would have studied the rules of fair play in hockey and done his best to call every game to the best of his confident and considerable ability.

I attend the occasional kids hockey game at the arena and often wonder how some adults can behave the way they do. Especially in front of their children, who just want to have fun with their pals. To play their best.

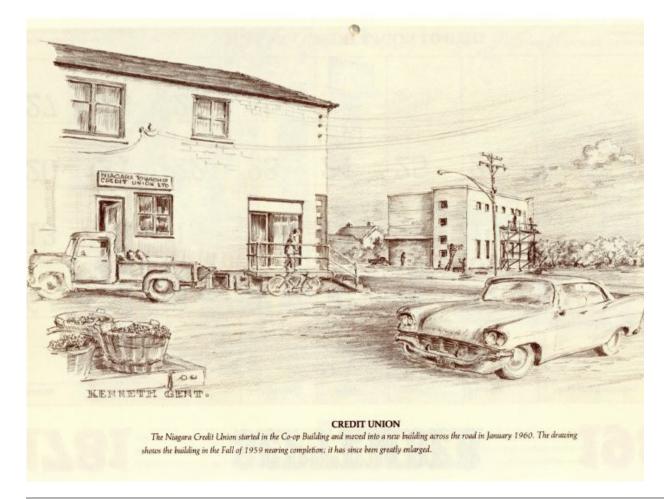
So, my takeaways from the first of five village open houses, a.k.a. meet the lord mayor were "Good on the lord mayor for putting himself out there," and "Good on the NOTL attendees who were there."

In a rambling conclusion, may I suggest you attend a village open house. You will see democracy in action and learn about the operations and issues in our chosen town.

And for a good laugh, watch "Canadian Bacon" again. Before Jan. 20. We are going to need a lot of laughs.

We are so fortunate to live in Canada. Our home and native land.

# EXPLORING HISTORY WITH NOTL MUSEUM



#### Niagara Township Credit Union, est. 1945

This year marks the 80th anniversary of the Meridian Credit Union, formerly the Niagara Township Credit Union. Formed in 1937, the Niagara Township Fruit Co-operative provided a central location for the buying and selling of farm equipment and products. As the organization expanded, it became apparent that banking services for its members were needed because it was a place to provide investment money for the growing community. Since no large banks wanted to establish themselves in the community, the Niagara Township Credit Union was created in 1945 with 18 members and total assets of \$24. The loans that the Credit Union provided were usually small and short-term. They provided the support many in the community needed to start businesses or just to get by. The union outgrew its first home by 1960 (shown here) and its name by 1970, when it was changed to the Niagara Credit Union. In 2005, the company merged with another credit union to become the Meridian Credit Union.



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# Turn your walkway into a more inviting path



GROWING TOGETHER

Joanne Young Columnist

Are you like me and make a list (at least mentally) of all the things that you that you want to tackle in the coming year?

If you are like me, then the list for this next year will look an awful lot like last year's list. The reason? Because I didn't get around to completing the items from the last year.

Winter is a great time to sit back and dream about the things you would like to see change, especially when it comes to your landscape.

Since we can't be out working our gardens, we can be curled up beside the fireplace, making plans for how to make it better.

When it comes to improving your home's curb appeal, the walkway that leads up to the front door, is one of the best places to spend some time and effort.

The front walkway is one of the main elements that will make your guests feel welcome. In the past, walkways typically went from the bottom of the porch steps straight across to the driveway.

Although this might have been the most direct path, it has its drawbacks.

People tend to take shortcuts from the driveway, across the lawn and towards the front door. Over time, you will have a worn path through the lawn area. Not very welcoming.

The walkway should



The front walkway is one of the main elements that will make your guests feel welcome — a good place to spend time and effort on improvements, says Joanne Young.

extend out and away from the house and greet you as you come up the driveway. Make sure your sidewalk is in balance with the size of your home.

The larger the home, the wider your walkway should be. Regardless of your

home's style and size, you want your front walkway to be a minimum of five feet wide.

This is so that a couple can approach your front door while walking hand-in-hand — how sweet.

You may want to flare out

the width of the walkway even wider by the driveway (even up to eight feet or wider).

Widening the walkway at the edge of the driveway allows for space to step out of a vehicle onto a solid surface and not on the lawn. Another important reason for replacing an older walkway is for safety. A cracked concrete sidewalk or a brick walkway where the bricks have sunk or have been heaved out from frost is an accident waiting to happen.

Many twisted ankles are the result of sidewalks in rough shape. Leaving a walkway in poor condition is not worth the risk of injury

If you find your driveway is too narrow, leaving little space to step out or walk past the vehicles, bring your walkway down alongside the driveway to provide more width.

Take some time this winter to start planning how you can update your front walkway, giving it more curb appeal, while making it safer for your guests.

Joanne Young is a Niagara-on-the-Lake garden expert and coach. See her website at joanneyoung.ca.

#### **Obituaries**

#### Karen Gansel



GANSEL, Karen Madene

It is with profound sadness that I announce the passing of my best friend, soulmate and my beloved wife, Karen Madene Gansel (Pratt), age 80 of Niagara-on-the-Lake, Ontario.

Karen passed away peacefully after a short illness at the

Greater Niagara General Hospital on Tuesday, Jan. 7, 2025. Survived by her husband of 30 years, Kenneth A. W. Gansel, her Sisters Joan Mauthe (Richard), Pat Antoniuk (Murray) and Linda Fletcher (David). Beloved Mother of Sherry Meehan (Charles), David Robinson (Connie) and

James Robinson (Donna). Grandchildren Pam Laginskie (Doug), Jason Robinson (Alanna), Stuart Robinson and Arabella Robinson. Plus, three Great Grandchildren: Cece, Chase, and Maya.

Her Sister Jackee Pratt (Martin Anstee) and Brother Len Pratt (Cathy) pre-deceased her. Born in Gladstone, MB, raised in Plumas, MB the daughter of Frank and Muriel Pratt. Graduated from Plumas Collegiate Institute. After high school she graduated from York University with a Bachelor of Arts degree in Political Science, and University of Toronto with a Master of Health Science, and a certificate in Dispute Resolution.

Karen had an extensive career in public service, starting with the Region of Peel in Social Housing, then as the executive director of Bellwoods Centres for Community Living in Toronto, then onto the Ministry of Health serving in senior executive roles as the director of the Assistive Devices Program, director of the Hamilton Psychiatric Hospital and finally as the executive director of Negotiations Management Branch. Karen was a skilled negotiator and represented the Ministry in contract negotiations with the Ontario Medical Association (OMA) for the last two years before retirement.

In retirement Karen was involved in politics as the riding president for the Ontario Provincial Liberal Party for eight years. She was co-chair of the Canadian Association of Authors and served as a board member prior to her passing. She was a prolific writer publishing three books: Differences Between Us, Celeste Unraveled and The Inheritance. [www.newfictionwriter.com]

She will be remembered for her adventurous spirit from canoeing in Algonquin Park or traveling throughout four continents with her husband.

Cremation has taken place. The family will receive family and friends at a Celebration of Life at St. Andrews Presbyterian Church (323 Simcoe St., Niagara-on-the-Lake) on April 24, 2025 at 11 a.m.

The family requests that in lieu of flowers, donations can be made in Karen's name to the Canadian Authors Association at https://www.canadahelps.org/en/dn/24602

 $Memories, photos\ and\ condolences\ may\ be\ shared\ at\ www.www.morganfuneral.com$ 



#### Tom Busbridge



BUSBRIDGE, Tom

Tom Busbridge, 90, died peacefully on Jan. 7, 2025 at NHS-St. Catharines Site.

Tom grew up in Toronto, where he married his high school sweetheart, Joan (nee Dawkins). After successful careers in sales and manufacturing, he established his own electroplating business, serving customers throughout the Toronto area, and retired to Niagara-on-the-Lake in 1993.

Tom will be remembered by his family as a devoted and loving husband, father and grandfather. He was

an avid golfer and his generous spirit led him to volunteer for numerous community endeavours throughout his life.

Tom was predeceased by his parents, John and Jenny, by his brother, John, and by his sister, Hilda. He is survived by his wife Joan, his children, Randy (Lorraine), Linda and Don, and by his grandchildren, Geoff (Randy), Tom Dixon (Linda), Jennifer Stock (Linda) and James (Don), and by nine great-grandchildren.

There are no plans for a memorial service. Donations can be made to The Kidney Foundation of Canada.

Arrangements entrusted to Considerate Cremation & Burial Services, 26 Nihan Dr., St. Catharines (between Lake Street & Scott Street), 289-362-1144.

Online condolences may be made at CCBSCares.ca

#### Lionel Usher



USHER, Lionel E.

It is with great sadness the family of Lionel Usher announces his passing on January 6th, 2025 at the age of 83. Lionel will forever be remembered by his spouse Julie, sisters Carol Scott (John) and Nancy Nichols (George predeceased), brother Arnold Usher and nieces Brenda Fellows, Debbie Enns (George) and their families. Lionel was the son of the late Elizabeth and Arnold Usher. Lionel was born in Niagara-on-the-Lake but he eventually moved to British Columbia where he continued to live life to the fullest. He was

an avid reader and enjoyed hobbies such as woodworking and making model airplanes and cars. A private burial will be held at a later date. Also special thanks for the staff at Havenhill retirement Centre for their care and compassion.

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2025-03-12	3%	65%	2.76%	35%
2025-04-16	3%	1%	2.75%	99%
2025-06-04	2.5%	20%	2.76%	80%
2025-07-30	2.5%	24%	2.75%	76%
2025-09-17	2.5%	36%	2.75%	64%
2025-10-29	2.5%	51%	2.75%	49%
2025-12-10	2.5%	62%	2.75%	38%

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Q4F	3.25	2.25	2.25

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