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THE TURNER REPORT

Rockin' in a 'woke' world

Garth Turner
Columnist

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Shoulder-to-shoulder shuffling humanity. Given the division, angst and political anger across the border, this must be the

Continued on Page 13

Run, walk, bike — for a cure

Hundreds of people hit the streets for NOTL’s annual Terry Fox Run



And they’re off. Whether it was on foot, riding a bike or in roller blades, hundreds kicked off the Niagara-on-the-Lake Terry Fox Run on Sunday, Sept. 14, hitting the streets of Old Town for the annual marathon to support the fight against cancer. DAVE VAN DE LAAR

Andrew Hawlitzky | The Lake Report

The 45th annual Terry Fox Run set off from Simcoe Park in Old Town on Sept. 14, with teams of local businesses, cancer survivors and families joining a community push to finish what Terry Fox started.

Organized by longtime volunteer Joan King, the event raised money for the Terry Fox Foundation, which funds research that participants said is helping Niagara residents live longer.

“He couldn’t, but we can. We can do it for Terry, for our

friends, for our family,” said King to a crowd of hundreds ready to run, walk and roll for the cure.

“We’re so grateful and humbled by the support from this generous community, raising a remarkable 1.8 million since 1991.”

Local employers, including Ralph Lauren at the Outlet Collection and the Wind Group from St. Catharines, brought their staff to take part, joining dozens of other Niagara

Continued on Page 3

Town pays \$225K settlement to former property owner over ‘misuse of power’

Dan Smeenk
Local Journalism Initiative
The Lake Report

The Town of Niagara-on-the-Lake has settled a six-year legal battle with former resident John Black, who

accused the municipality of abuse of process, bad faith and misuse of power surrounding a home he purchased and his planned addition to the home.

The town announced publicly Tuesday in a news

release that it will pay Black \$225,000 to resolve the dispute. Black, a Canadian-U.S. citizen, had been seeking \$750,000.

Black launched the lawsuit in 2019, claiming the town added his property

at 27 Prideaux St. to its heritage roster without his knowledge. He alleged then-lord mayor Betty Disero placed his home on the council agenda for designation and acted quickly to prevent him

from completing planned renovations.

The suit further alleged Disero acted at the request of Tom Elltoft, a local real estate agent and Black’s neighbour, who was opposed to the construction

of a garage on Black’s property.

“I think it could have been a lot worse ... considering the allegations, the facts and all the circumstances of

Continued on Page 2



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Realtor named in suit says town's decision **puzzling**

Continued from Front Page

the case,” said Lord Mayor Gary Zalepa.

Black also filed a separate case against Elltoft, which was later dropped.

Elltoft said he was not involved in the designation in any way and told The Lake Report that Black’s claim was initially wrong and claimed he was the real estate agent who sold the home to Black. Elltoft owns the company, but property sale records show he was not the realtor.

He added that as a result of the designation of Black’s property, his own property, along with another neighbour’s, was also listed for heritage designation.

He denied having a close relationship with Disero beyond supporting her politically.

“I know Gary Zalepa a lot more than I know Betty Disero,” Elltoft said, adding he never asked Disero to designate Black’s property.

“It was already (on the heritage priority list),” he said.

Elltoft added the Real Estate Council of Ontario

“was fully aware of the action and recognized the agents involved were not at fault. The lawyers were supplied by the board.”

He notes that Black also had a condition on the purchase of the property, which allowed him two weeks to do his own “due diligence” on the property and what could be built or altered on it.

“I’m not sure why the town settled. I don’t know what they saw as a losing case for themselves going forward,” Elltoft said. “I have no idea if all the facts were ever presented.”

Elltoft acknowledged opposing one element of Black’s plans: a garage he described as “ugly.”

“I did present at the demolition request as a neighbour but not about heritage. It was about the streetscape and not making garages the focal point in front of homes across from the heritage district.”

Elltoft added the property was already on a list for designation before the summer of 2019, which is not the responsibility of a realtor to disclose.



John Black and the Town of Niagara-on-the-Lake settled a six-year-long lawsuit relating to abuse of process claims filed by the then-resident of 27 Prideaux St. FILE

Zalepa suggested the fault lies with the previous council, specifically Disero, who is named in the lawsuit.

“(The statement of claim) contains statements such as members of council are conducting themselves in bad faith, conducting themselves in inappropriate and misleading manners,” he said. “As

soon as you hear language like that around an organization ... you’re really in trouble legally.”

Elltoft also questioned the town’s announcement of the settlement.

“I thought it was odd,” he said, criticizing the town’s public statement, which only linked to Black’s statement of claim.

“Zero evidence. Zero comment as to why they felt they should settle. No minutes to the settlement or the statements of defence.”

Elltoft shared a July 2024 text message from Zalepa, in which the lord mayor wrote: “Where can I send you the bill for your share of the Black lawsuit?”

He said he found the

comment strange and inappropriate coming from an elected official, especially given the legal action against him had already been dropped.

He also pointed out Black later sold the property for a \$200,000 profit and argues the heritage listing did not harm him financially.

Public reaction online was mixed, with some residents criticizing the town.

“We paid \$225,000,” said Blair Cowan in a post on the NOTL 4 All Facebook group.

In a reply, Jennifer Elliott wrote: “He deserves every penny at the very least. This guy was put through hell. It’s embarrassing to read.”

Rainer Hummel commented: “In this particular case, the evidence of bad faith was so high that the town’s insurance company refused to even provide legal representation.”

Disero told The Lake Report she did not have a particular reaction to the settlement.

Attempts to reach Black were unsuccessful before press time.

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- Culture Days set to bring arts and history alive in Niagara-on-the-Lake
- Proposed Tanbark Road townhouses raise stormwater concerns in St. Davids
 - Letter: Never taking no for an answer
- Letter: Municipal heritage committee missed the mark
 - Letter: Charlotte Street needs a three-way stop

PLUS dozens more original NOTL news stories. Also subscribe to our free newsletter.

\$632K road paving project underway

Dan Smeenk
Local Journalism Initiative
The Lake Report

Lakeshore Road in Niagara-on-the-Lake's Old Town is getting a big facelift from Niagara Region — to the tune of \$632,000.

Niagara Region began paving a 1.4-kilometre stretch of the roads on Sept. 11, with some disruption expected for drivers.

The work is expected to continue until Sept. 30, to be funded by the region's 2025 annual road strengthening and resurfacing program.

"The purpose of this project is to remove (mill) 50 millimetres of top asphalt off the surface of the road," said Michael Kowalczyk,



Construction will continue on Lakeshore Road and Mary Street until Sept. 30. DAN SMEENK

a project manager with Niagara Region.

Kowalczyk said the region's roads are inspected every year.

"This stretch of Regional Road 87 was first identified as a candidate for resurfacing in 2019 and was scheduled for work this year."

The construction area runs along Lakeshore Road/Mary Street, from Garrison Village Drive to Mississauga Street.

daniel@niagaranow.com

NOTL helps carry on **Terry Fox's legacy**

Continued from Front Page

businesses backing the cause.

Also taking part were Megan Dyck, 16, and her mother, Amber, who shared how the run represents hope for families living with cancer.

Megan has been in treatment for two years, and Amber said new research made possible through the Terry Fox Foundation has given her daughter and many like her hope to one day see a cure for cancer.

"Thanks to the research that is being done and the advances of immunotherapy, it is giving us more time than they even imagined," said Amber Dyck.

Amber read from her poem "The Unrung Bell," describing the traditional celebration when cancer treatment is completed and the silence families face when it's not.

"Keep fighting the battle, keep raising the funds. Until the silence is broken by every bell rung," said Dyck.



Megan Dyck, 16, with her mother Amber and fundraiser Joe Pillitteri, speak about hope and the importance of continuing Terry Fox's legacy. DAVE VAN DE LAAR

King said the goal this year is \$120,000 total, with online donations already more than halfway there before race time. Volunteers will tally final figures in the days ahead.

"If you're supporting this, you're supporting cancer research. You're saving lives," said King.

MacSween Farms and Walker's Country Market

donated fresh fruit, while Phil's and Hendrick's Independent Grocers supplied water. The Terry Fox T-shirt table was sold out before the run started, with all proceeds going to support the Terry Fox Foundation.

King, a retired teacher, has led the NOTL run for 18 years and called Terry Fox a lesson in character

for every generation.

Local fundraising fixture Joe Pillitteri was also at the run. He has raised more than \$1 million for the Terry Fox Foundation over the years and given steady support to Megan, whom he calls an inspiration.

Donations can still be made at terryfox.org.

andrew@niagaranow.com



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After five years, accessibility upgrades slowly coming to NOTL facilities

Dan Smeenck
Local Journalism Initiative
The Lake Report

Five years ago, Donna Herrington and her consulting firm, the Herrington Group, conducted an accessibility audit of five public facilities in Niagara-on-the-Lake.

Commissioned by the town, the audit became the basis for what is now known as the Herrington report.

“We wanted to give (the town) a more accurate snapshot of what things looked like in terms of disability,” said Herrington.

Five years later, the town says the most urgent upgrades have been addressed — at least, partially. But it is much harder to get the fixes done which address fixes to a building that make it truly accessible.

The facilities reviewed included Centennial Arena, fire stations 2 and 4, Queenston Library and St. Davids Pool. The report prioritized recommendations in three tiers, with an estimated total cost of \$938,010 to complete all upgrades.

Centennial Arena’s priority fixes done

Priority one included urgent fixes related to life safety — such as access to defibrillators, fire alarm pull stations and visible strobe lights. These issues were identified at the two fire stations and Centennial Arena, with a combined cost of \$10,080.

Kevin Turcotte, the town’s parks and recreation manager, who held the same position in 2020, said these urgent items have been at least partially addressed.

“All the priority one items that were identified for the Centennial Arena for the visual strobes (for fire alarms) have been completed,” Turcotte said.

As for the two fire stations, Turcotte did not have information about the status of the fixes, as those locations “aren’t fully public, accessible facilities.”

A request for follow-up information on their status was sent to the town on Wednesday afternoon, to which they did not respond before the print deadline.

In December 2020, staff brought a recommendation to council to consolidate fire stations two and four by 2030. One of the reasons for the recommendation was



Donna Herrington and her accessibility consultant firm audited five council buildings in 2020. Five years later, some of those changes have been made. DAN SMEENCK

the potential for increased accessibility based on the Herrington report. It was approved in principle by council.

“St. David’s Pool, like Niagara Pool, is wildly inaccessible and can’t possibly be to code anymore with plaster chipping off the side of the pool.”

LAUREN BUBNIC
NOTL RESIDENT

Lower-priority improvements still pending

Priority two addressed provincial accessibility regulations and included upgrades like accessible parking, entrances, automatic doors and ramps. Priority three covered nice-to-have features, such as elevators, that would improve accessibility.

Turcotte said it’s hard to say how many of the lower-priority recommendations are done.

“Some of these we don’t really do until there’s a full renovation,” he said, noting that funding remains a significant barrier for the town in general.

Because of this, he said there is no exact timeline for implementing the rest of the Herrington report’s recommendations.

Age of buildings a major challenge

Turcotte said the buildings were selected partly due to their age. Fire station 2 was built in 1984, fire sta-

tion 4 in 1974, Centennial Arena in 1967, St. Davids Pool in 1969 and the Queenston Library in 1842.

“We’re trying to get all of our buildings reviewed,” he said. “The fire ones were selected by the fire department ... Centennial Arena was selected due to the age of the facility, and the Queenston Library was obviously selected due to the age of the facility.”

Older buildings pose the biggest challenge, he said, as they often fall far short of current accessibility standards.

“We know that some of the spaces are older, and we knew that they didn’t conform to current accessibility standards,” Turcotte said. “There were no standards at the time it was built.”

Herrington also noted that each facility has different needs depending on its function.

“Libraries are very public places,” she said, as an example, “so they have higher needs in terms of path of travel, in terms of clear space, washroom accessibility, that kind of thing.”

She compared libraries to fire stations, which aren’t public spaces but still “need to be available” during emergencies. That, she said, changes the accessibility requirements.

Mixed experiences in 2025

Despite some improvements, accessibility advocates say the experience for people with disabilities remains inconsistent.

Lauren Bubnic, a member of the Niagara Region’s joint accessibil-

ity advisory committee, said her recent visits to Centennial Arena and St. Davids Pool were disappointing.

“I can only say in my personal experience that the Centennial Arena washrooms are not accessible — neither are the change rooms for the skating rink,” she said.

“St. David’s Pool, like Niagara Pool, is wildly inaccessible and can’t possibly be to code anymore with plaster chipping off the side of the pool.”

Town highlights other successes

Turcotte pointed to several recent successes in the town’s broader accessibility efforts, including the StopGap ramp program, accessible picnic tables and swings in parks, and an accessibility award for the NOTL Community Centre from the joint accessibility advisory committee.

“I think we do a good job overall in providing an acceptable experience when people visit our parks spaces at NOTL,” he said.

Still, he acknowledged the core issue remains: aging infrastructure that wasn’t built to meet today’s standards.

“A lot of our buildings have aging infrastructure,” Turcotte said. “So that’s probably a challenge in retrofitting any space and getting those dollars to do that.”

You can see the Herrington report’s executive summary and audit on the web version of this story at niagaranow.com

daniel@niagaranow.com

Artists Circle rolls in



There’s no shortage of artistic talent in the Niagara Peninsula, and on Sept. 11, members of the public got to view creations from some of their friends and neighbours at the NOTL Community Centre in a free exhibition. From left, Ann Watson, Chris Phibbs, Christine Famula, Myrna Haynes, Anne Blackwell and Laura Jeffrey, members of the Artists Circle painting group proudly display their works. DAVE VAN DE LAAR

Town updates rules for additional dwellings

Dan Smeenk
Local Journalism Initiative
The Lake Report

Secondary suites have become a growing priority for the town, moving from basement-level concerns to above-ground policy discussions over the past month.

Council’s planning committee of the whole received an information report that details how the town plans to refine the rules around the building of secondary suites, also known as accessory dwelling units.

The meeting followed an open house held in August focused on possible changes to definitions and zoning rules related to accessory dwelling units. The discussions are part of a broader update to the town’s official plan.

“With respect to the official plan amendment, this amendment would provide updates to various definitions, including the inclusion of a new definition for additional dwelling units,” said Victoria Nicoltcheva, a senior planner for the town.

The town’s current official plan, adopted in 2019, refers to “secondary housing units.”

As part of the ongoing update, the town is working to align its policies and definitions with provincial priorities, including an updated definition for secondary suites.

The zoning bylaw amendments would create specific zoning designations to permit additional housing units.

For urban and rural land, the changes would introduce rules and regulations



The town’s new official plan will have new definitions for what an accessory dwelling unit is, while zoning bylaw amendments will refine the space these units can take up.

around “general provisions” for accessory buildings “in accordance” with established rules and provincial directives.

Under the draft changes, a detached accessory building shall not take up more than 50 per cent of the main dwelling’s footprint, won’t stand more than 4.5 metres tall, shall be a minimum of three metres from other buildings on the same lot, have a minimum rear and interior side yard setback of 1.5 and won’t be allowed in the front yard.

The draft also details requirements regarding parking spots, including a maximum of two extra parking spaces allowed (alongside spaces already required on the property), subject to setback and sizing requirements.

During the open house, Nicoltcheva noted that the province first referenced additional dwelling units in legislation in 2019, making local regulation of them a relatively recent development.

During the committee meeting, councillors raised questions about how the up-

dated rules would apply in different housing arrangements. Lord Mayor Gary Zalepa asked about the implications for townhouses.

“What happens in the condominium tenure?” he asked. “Does the zoning trump the condominium? I’m just not clear what would happen in the condominium tenure or townhouse.”

Nicoltcheva said single-detached dwellings would be eligible for a secondary suite, provided they comply with all applicable bylaws.

Coun. Sandra O’Connor expressed concern about the town’s infrastructure and its capacity to handle new dwellings.

“We don’t know how many applications we’re going to get, maybe a few, maybe a lot,” said O’Connor. “But we have to make sure our infrastructure can accommodate them.”

Nicoltcheva said each unit would be subject to the building permit process, during which issues such as grading and drainage are reviewed.

She added that the town’s

fire department emphasized a minimum one-metre setback between the additional dwelling unit and a public street, which is an Ontario Building Code rule.

She also outlined different rules for urban and rural properties. Urban lots with single-detached, semi-detached or townhouse dwellings may have up to two additional dwelling units. Duplexes may have one, with a total of three units allowed on a single property.

Rural properties within the Greenbelt may have one additional dwelling unit, and a second if the property is located outside Ontario’s natural heritage system, for a total of two.

In all cases, one parking space is required per additional dwelling unit.

Secondary suites are self-contained residential units located on the same property as a primary dwelling.

They include living facilities such as a washroom, kitchen and sleeping area, and may be located in basements, converted garages or detached backyard structures.

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Addiction survivor brings Narcotics Anonymous to NOTL

Dan Smeenk
Local Journalism Initiative
The Lake Report

For years, Rachel S. of Niagara-on-the-Lake spent her life in a battle against drug addiction — in her own words, “living to use and using to live.”

“If you can name it, I’ve done it,” she said about her years of addiction.

Now, nearly two years sober, she’s bringing Narcotics Anonymous meetings to NOTL in hopes of helping others find the same path to recovery. She credits the program with saving her life.

Although Narcotics Anonymous groups exist throughout the Niagara region, Rachel, whose last name is being withheld in accordance with the organization’s anonymity policy, said she’s lived in NOTL her whole life and wanted to offer something local.

“I wanted to bring something like this to our



Part of Narcotics Anonymous policy is that no one person may represent the organization, so members are encouraged not to show their faces or use full names. Rachel S., pictured here, is bringing a chapter to NOTL.

community,” she said. “No town, no matter how pretty it is, does not have addicts suffering.”

For Rachel, the initiative is personal.

She first attended a Narcotics Anonymous meeting in 2023, where she introduced herself by saying, “I’m Rachel and I’m an addict.” It was the first time she had ever admitted it — even to herself.

“I never believed I was an addict until (I went to a

meeting),” she said. “I knew I was in a bad position and I knew I was not going anywhere. But until I went to a meeting and people admitted it, it was the first time I admitted it to myself.”

A professional photographer, Rachel said her drug use escalated after a fire destroyed her home and photography studio in 2018.

She had experimented with drugs in college and

was an occasional user, but after the fire, her mental health deteriorated and substance use became a way to escape.

“I hit rock bottom and had nothing at the end,” she said.

An overdose — and being revived with Narcan by her then-partner — became a turning point. She reached out to her friend Belinda M., who was in recovery through NA and became her sponsor. Belinda brought Rachel to her first meeting.

Belinda has now been sober for five years.

Rachel has remained clean since Nov. 28, 2023, and hopes to give back by creating access to meetings in NOTL for others who may be struggling.

“By the time I was one year clean, I knew that we needed to have meetings in NOTL,” she said, adding there’s clear demand for it.

A post about the group on the Niagara 411 Facebook page received 287 likes and 97 shares as of Wednesday.

Currently, Rachel drives a “carload” of people to NA meetings in Niagara Falls. She said there’s already strong interest in attending meetings closer to home.

“Some people don’t drive, we don’t have the best bus transport system,” she said. “It’s important that we have something here.”

She also noted that visiting tourists who are in recovery often ask where they can find a local meeting to support their sobriety while away from home.

Hosting meetings in NOTL is also part of Rachel’s own healing journey. She now has the Narcotics Anonymous logo and her sobriety date tattooed on her forearm and collects milestone tags marking her clean time.

“Just to see the things that have changed in my life, like my living situation, my financial situation, my work situation,” she said.

“Everything’s changed. I look back to two years ago

and think, ‘I don’t recognize that person anymore. I don’t know who that girl was.’”

Belinda is proud of how far Rachel has come.

“She’s done all the work from there,” she said.

Rachel hopes others will have the same transformative experience.

“You never know what ‘aha’ moment you’re going to have in a meeting,” she said.

The new Narcotics Anonymous meetings in NOTL will begin Nov. 17 at 7 p.m. at 222 Davy St., in the St. Vincent de Paul Parish Hall. Meetings will continue weekly on Mondays. They are free and open to anyone seeking recovery.

Founded in 1953, Narcotics Anonymous offers a 12-step program to support individuals recovering from drug addiction. Meetings often include shared experiences and readings focused on maintaining sobriety.

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COMMUNITY DONATION PROJECT PORCH PICK-UP FOOD DRIVE

Newark Neighbours, together with our partners from the NOTL Rotary, NOTL Kinsmen and St. David’s Lions Clubs, are holding a porch pick-up food drive. On **Saturday, Sept. 27, 2025**, teams are available to pick up your food donations anytime between 10 a.m. and 4 p.m.

If you wish to donate in support of our food bank, please call 905-468-7498 or email us at newarkneighbours1@gmail.com to register your address and phone for pick-up. **Email is preferred.**

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ITEMS REQUIRED ON AN ONGOING BASIS:

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NOTL remembers 9/11 with ceremony at Queen’s Royal Park

Dan Smeenk
Local Journalism Initiative
The Lake Report

Almost everyone alive on Sept. 11, 2001, remembers where they were when the planes struck, Kathy Weiss, president of the Niagara-on-the-Lake Chamber of Commerce, told a crowd gathered Thursday at Queen’s Royal Park.

Twenty-four years later, the town continues to mark the anniversary of the terrorist attacks that killed 2,976 people, including 24 Canadians.

This was the second year the commemoration was held at the park, overlooking Fort Niagara in New York. It had previously taken place at the cenotaph on Queen Street.

Coun. Gary Burroughs, who was lord mayor in 2001, said the new location carries weight.

“This is actually a better place because you can see the U.S.,” he said.

A community remembers

The 20-minute ceremony featured remarks from Weiss, Lord Mayor Gary Zalepa, Niagara Falls MP Tony Baldinelli and Niagara



NOTL fire chief Jay Plato lowers the U.S. flag during the 9/11 ceremony last Thursday at Queen’s Royal Park. DANIEL SMEENK

Falls MPP Wayne Gates. “Canadians supported our American friends that day, and in the many days that followed,” said Zalepa, who also thanked local first responders for their daily work.

Gates noted the town’s unique role. “This is the only community in Niagara that is honouring 9/11,” he said. “We never, ever should forget what happened that day.”

Fire Chief Jay Plato lowered the flag while “Amazing Grace” played,

joined by 17 firefighters in formation. The service concluded with both national anthems, a moment of silence and closing remarks from Weiss.

First responders reflect

The attacks remain deeply personal for emergency workers: 441 first responders — including 343 firefighters and 71 police officers — were among the dead.

Niagara-on-the-Lake’s chief administrative officer, Nick Ruller, and deputy lord mayor, Erwin Wiens, were

both working in emergency services on 9/11.

Wiens, then a Hamilton police officer with the tactical unit, was at the hospital with his wife, Dorothy, who was in surgery, when he was called to John C. Munro Hamilton International Airport. Authorities feared it could be a target.

The situation was “changing by the minute,” he recalled. “Because you don’t know what’s happening. Any planes in the area? How are we going to react?”

His team screened every passenger from arriving flights.

Wiens also had a personal connection. His brother-in-law worked in World Trade Center 7, which collapsed later that day. Though the building’s fall caused no casualties, his family anxiously waited for word.

“He lives within walking distance of the trade centres,” Wiens said. “Dorothy was worried.”

With his wife in surgery, concern for her brother in New York, and his own deployment, Wiens said she showed strength: “Dorothy was a trooper.”

Ruller, just two years into

his career as a Toronto fire-fighter, was in training when the towers were hit.

“We were all advised to report to the classroom at the training centre,” he said. “I remember us going up and they kind of shared what was transpiring ... All non-essential activities kind of halted.”

Watching the towers fall, he was stunned by the scale of loss.

While he didn’t know anyone at the sites, he said solidarity among firefighters made the devastation personal.

“You hear these accounts ... recognizing that it was bad,” Ruller said. “You have these committed individuals that — truly selfless in nature — recognized that they were going into a situation that was likely to have a very poor outcome for themselves. But their commitment was to continue that service. I think that’s admirable.”

Wiens added that first responders, including himself, “wouldn’t have flinched” to help.

Bonds across borders

Weiss highlighted Canada’s key role in

sheltering diverted aircraft and passengers.

And while U.S.-Canada relations may face strain today, Plato, Ruller and Wiens said the shared experience of 9/11 remains unchanged.

Speaking before the ceremony, Ruller said the aftermath reinforced his decision to remain a firefighter.

“It reaffirmed that that career was the right choice for me,” he said.

Wiens said the memory of the first responders’ bravery “still chokes me up now.”

The day that changed the world

The attacks began at 8:46 a.m., when American Airlines Flight 11 struck the North Tower of the World Trade Center. United Airlines Flight 175 hit the South Tower 17 minutes later.

At 9:37 a.m., American Airlines Flight 77 crashed into the Pentagon. At 10:03 a.m., United Airlines Flight 93 went down in a Pennsylvania field after passengers fought back — preventing it from reaching Washington.

The South Tower fell at 9:58 a.m., followed by the North Tower at 10:28 a.m.

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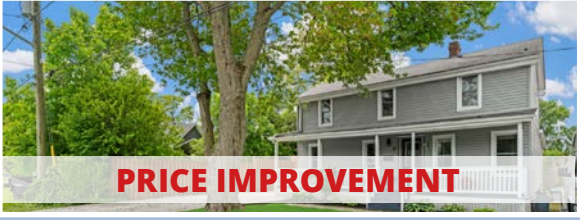
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Niagara College support staff join provincewide strike

Dan Smeenk
Local Journalism Initiative
The Lake Report

As the strike by Niagara College’s support staff enters its second week, the College Employer Council says negotiations remain stalled and the two sides are far apart.

“There’s been no negotiations (since the strike started),” said Graham Lloyd, CEO of the council — the non-profit corporation negotiating with the union, as mandated by the Ontario government.

Roughly 10,000 support staff at Ontario’s 24 public colleges walked off the job last Thursday, including about 400 from Niagara College. They are represented by the Ontario Public Service Employees Union, or OPSEU.

At the Daniel J. Patterson campus in Niagara-on-the-Lake, picketers have been walking in two shifts: 8 a.m. to noon and noon to 4



From left, support staff Paul Kelly, Sai Muppana, Charu Charu, Michelle Silk, and Bindu Gautam picket outside Daniel J. Robinson campus in NOTL. DANIEL SMEENK

p.m. They’ve been carrying signs, directing traffic and playing music to keep spirits high.

As of Monday, the third day of the strike, picketers told The Lake Report spirits remained strong.

Brandon Friesen, a programming analyst in Niagara College’s information technology department for 18 years, has been playing music on the picket line to help lift morale.

Staff like him serve in a variety of roles across campus that don’t involve teaching, such as disabil-

ity services, facilities and trades, co-op placement co-ordination, the registrar’s office and food services.

“It is a bit shocking,” he said of the strike’s midnight start. “I was on strike back in 2011, when there was a support staff strike. So, I’ve been through it before. Not a lot of people have that are here. It feels a bit different this time.”

Friesen said this year’s strike feels more tense.

“It feels like the management is pushing a little bit harder this time,” he said. “Whereas back in 2011, I

think the wording and the messaging was a bit lighter. It was more supportive, I think, compared to what it is now.”

While he’s generally satisfied with the current contract, Friesen said proposed changes threaten key worker protections.

“They want to take away a lot of our protections,” he said. “They want to take away our ability to bump,” he added, referring to the process that lets laid-off employees move into a lower-paid role rather than lose their jobs.

He also pointed to a proposal that would allow layoffs without a position being declared redundant.

“There are some people for whom these protections are very important,” he said, noting that as a long-time employee, he feels relatively secure.

Bob Holder, president of the union’s Local 243 — which represents full and part-time support staff at

Niagara College — is also on the union’s provincial bargaining team.

He said there are about 150 different support staff roles across the system, all essential to daily operations. On the picket line, The Lake Report spoke with staff working in IT, international student services, nursing and administration.

“We are everything from in the classroom, in the labs with the students, to non-academic areas like our facility services that maintain the building or doing the financial side of things,” Holder said.

Support staff also help with student recruitment, guide students throughout their time at college, and assist them in finding employment after graduation, he added.

Holder said job security is the primary issue at the bargaining table, though different contracts apply to full- and part-time staff.

“We have qualified sup-

port staff that have the necessary credentials to do their jobs and there’s a lot of times that we’re finding management is also doing some of the support staff work,” he said. “That takes away from actually having to have support staff do the work that we do.”

He said many members are precariously employed — in casual, temporary or part-time roles — and often struggle financially.

“They need other jobs in order to survive,” he said.

Lloyd said the union’s demands are unreasonable and highlighted four: a freeze on all staff reductions for at least three years, regardless of the reason; no campus closures or mergers for at least three years; a ban on contracting out any support staff work; and a requirement that only support staff perform support staff duties.

“It’s conditions like these that bog down systems,” Lloyd said.

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‘She just made you smile’

NOTL remembers gardener, teacher and columnist Joanne Young

Paige Seburn
Local Journalism Initiative
The Lake Report

Joanne Young could make a room full of gardeners laugh just as easily as she could teach them how to properly prune a shrub.

Friends and fellow gardeners are remembering Young for her vast knowledge in all things horticulture and her lighthearted disposition, which they say was as central to her lessons as the plants she loved and drew people to her workshops, columns and community projects.

Young died suddenly on Thursday, Sept. 11 at the age of 56, at her home in St. Catharines.

As a member and past-president of the Niagara-on-the-Lake Horticultural Society, she helped spearhead notable community projects, from pollinator gardens to the labyrinth behind the NOTL Public Library.

Current president Cindy Grant said Young was “the go-to person” in the horticultural society for “all gardening knowledge.”

“Not only that, for her humour and her wit,” she added. “She just made you smile.”

The society will mark her legacy at upcoming meetings, with a tribute set for Sept. 23 and a broader celebration of life on Oct. 28, open to family, friends, colleagues and the community.

Wendy Cadman, another member of the society board, said the September meeting will be unlike any other — “a coming together



Joanne Young was part of the heartbeat of the gardening community in Niagara-on-the-Lake. Her projects range from the William Street parkette garden, to the community centre garden and so many more. She also wrote a weekly gardening column for The Lake Report and taught classes where she taught her skills to others. SUPPLIED

of our society.”

Young’s completed more than 2,000 landscape plans for commercial and residential properties in her career and worked at Mori Gardens for more than 30 years.

“There’s literally hundreds of people in town that she designed gardens for over that period of time (at Mori),” said Grant.

She later started running her own business as a garden coach business — a “huge success,” Grant said, which the society was “so very thrilled” to witness.

Sharing her expertise with readers of The Lake Report, she wrote weekly columns that blended practical advice with playful turns of phrase — inspiring both novice and seasoned gardeners to

find joy and possibility in their own yards.

She began working at Sykes Landscaping in 2022 as the horticultural specialist and “was literally our plant guru,” said lead landscape designer Pippa de Leonardis.

“She was incredibly generous with her knowledge.”

Their friendship grew out of years of collaboration in the garden design world — de Leonardis began working with her after starting at Mori Gardens in 2012.

Young leaves behind her mother, Verna Young, siblings Sandra Farrow, Bill Young, Darlene Kosonic, Yvonne Yarker and Carol Young, her grandparents Charles and Ruby Young and John and Dorothy Krugel, and several nieces, nephews and cousins.

Her loss leaves a gap that will be hard to fill, Grant said.

She was always the first to answer a call for help, leading cleanups, planning plantings and guiding the society’s work on community gardens.

“There’s lots of other good gardeners,” Grant said, “but in this case, I honestly don’t know how we’re going to replace Joanne.”

What set her apart was the way she taught.

“She had such a sense of humour and such a wonderful way of teaching,” said Cadman.

Young could take a dry lesson on plant placement and turn it into a joke.

For example, she coined the term “plunk-itis,” Cadman said, to describe the

impulse gardeners feel when they fall in love with a big, flashy plant and plunk it into the ground without thinking about how it fits into the overall design.

And when nothing seemed to work in a garden, Young would laugh and say, “Just plant a rock,” she said.

“Those are two of my favourites.”

Fellow board member Gee Rende said Young “was a masterful gardener.”

“She painted a canvas with a garden.”

Rende said Young loved all plants, but had a special fondness for those with texture.

“Flowers were wonderful, but she loved the grasses and the vines and the shrubs,” she added.

Her fall classes were set to continue this week — news of her passing has been met with grief and an outpouring of sadness from her students, said Rende.

“She was so loved,” she said. “Her impact just resonated.”

Young was “very humble” and frequently poked fun at herself.

“She is, or was, a very kind person and she’ll be terribly missed,” she said. “It still feels very unreal to, I think, everybody.”

Grant felt the suddenness of Young’s death: “It came right out of the blue,” she said. Young had just given a workshop on Saturday, Sept. 6.

That same day, Grant had her last encounter when she saw Young in high spirits at Silks Country Kitchen in Virgil.

Young had been out with

her sister and a friend, picking up peaches and grapes and enjoying the day.

“Life was good,” Grant said. “She was in great form.”

Young’s touch can be seen in gardens across town, from the regional housing community on Davy Street to the library and William Nassau Park.

The society is considering more ways to honour her, including renaming the William Nassau Park gardens she helped design or installing a permanent memorial such as a bench, plaque or garden.

Sykes Landscaping staff got a Shademaster tree in her honour and plan to plant it within the next week.

The tree, de Leonardis said, is “tough in all conditions — which Joanne was — (and) offers a beautiful dappled shade — which Joanne would have always appreciated.”

Cadman said Young’s influence will live on.

“Everyone will be thinking about her and will probably think about the things that she’s taught us — and be sure to go out and do them.”

The final column Young wrote for The Lake Report, published Sept. 11, offered readers advice on adding water features to their gardens.

She signed off with a simple question: “Where can you place a water feature in your yard?”

Words that now read like a farewell, encouraging readers to keep creating beauty and joy in the spaces they tend.

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Group sparks old memories with 50th high school reunion

Andrew Hawlitzky
The Lake Report

People filled the Legion’s patio on Saturday to reconnect with classmates and neighbours during the ninth Classic Niagara-on-the-Lake gathering and the 50th reunion for Niagara District Secondary School’s 1975 and 1976 grads.

The annual event, built around the Classic Niagara-on-the-Lake Facebook group, brings together senior residents from NOTL.

Organizers say it has grown into an important way for locals and former

classmates to share stories and hold onto the town’s small-community spirit.

Oraine DeRosa, a member of the class of 1975, said her the alumni of NDSS joined the larger Classic NOTL event three years ago to celebrate milestone reunions.

“A lot of people graduated, moved away for jobs, but now they’ve come back to the area,” said DeRosa. “They love Niagara-on-the-Lake and it’s nice to see classmates again and reminisce.”

Yearbooks from 1975 and 1976 were laid out on the tables for everyone to flip

through.

Lead organizer Diane Shrive said Classic Niagara started nine years ago and has grown steadily into a community with more than 3,000 members.

“It’s all about growing up in Niagara-on-the-Lake and the surrounding areas,” said Shrive.

She said this year’s attendance was the largest yet, with roughly 200 people in attendance.

For Shrive, the reunion is about more than nostalgia.

“We’ve lost so many. At our age, that’s what happens, and that’s why this

is important. It’s one day where we can all see each other again,” she said.

The event connected many old friends who had once grown up together and since moved away. Shrive said there was one old classmate she hadn’t seen in fifty-three years.

“We couldn’t do this without the Legion; they make everything possible,” said Shrive.

Shrive and DeRosa expect the Classic NOTL event and reunions to continue as long as people are willing to make the trip back home.

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Eras of NOTLers mingle at the Legion for a 50th Niagara District Secondary School reunion. ANDREW HAWLITZKY

Light bites by day, fine dining by night: **Revé** opens in NOTL

Paige Seburn
Local Journalism Initiative
The Lake Report

A new Niagara-on-the-Lake restaurant is cutting soups and salads from the menu in favour of dishes its owners say you can't make at home.

Revé, which opened Aug. 28 at 242 Mary St., is the dream of four hospitality workers: Nicole Pisarenko and her husband Adriano Cappuzzello, along with Anna Kruusi and her husband Kevin Gillingham.

Together, the two couples have built a two-part concept: by day, it's Aperitivo by Revé, a bistro and bottega open from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m.

By night, the space shifts to its intimate fine-dining restaurant from 5 to 9 p.m., where chef Cappuzzello delivers a constantly changing "farm to fire" menu.

Since acquiring the building keys on May 9, the group has promised to bring something different to NOTL: "Something really elevated, refined and unique," said Pisarenko. "Yet, familiar."

"We want to put Niagara-on-the-Lake back on the map for a culinary destination," she said. "We've let ourselves go with that name in the last, maybe, 20 years."

Too many restaurants in town have grown comfortable catering to tourists, Pisarenko said — letting quality slip "because the tourists are not going to always come back to that same location."

Not just another stop for visitors, Revé hopes to



Left: From left, Revé partners Kevin Gillingham, Anna Kruusi, Nicole Pisarenko and Adriano Cappuzzello stand outside the restaurant, which officially opened Aug. 28. Right: A dish at Revé, made with local ingredients. SUPPLIED



receive steady, year-round support, she said, with the real focus being NOTL and surrounding areas.

First wary of the town being seen only as a tourist destination, the group "realized Niagara-on-the-Lake is where we belong for many reasons," said Pisarenko. "We're surrounded by the most amazing ingredients."

And with many wineries closing early or not serving food, Pisarenko said Aperitivo fills a gap in NOTL and allows guests to open international wine bottles on-site and enjoy them with snacks or meals.

The couples have roots in Niagara: Pisarenko and Cappuzzello, based in Niagara Falls, said their pop-up at Ferox Winery also helped build a following in NOTL. Kruusi and Gillingham are from

St. Catharines and bring demand from their own community.

"We were just an extension of Ferox," said Pisarenko. "There is no tie to them at the moment, but it was just a great place for us to start."

The couple wanted to establish their own brand name, "but at the time, it made more sense to just be part of one (at Ferox's)," she added.

The two couples met through a consulting job a few years ago and decided to partner, drawn together by shared values and a common vision.

One day, they hope to be considered for international recognition, such as the Michelin Guide.

Cappuzzello, who is from Sicily and has worked in Michelin Guide-recognized restaurants, said

"we work with nature, not against" to deliver seasonal dishes.

"The menu is a bit on the Italian side, but it's not just fully Italian. It's inspired, first of all, from all the farmers," he said.

His goal is simple: keep the restaurant busy and keep the dream alive. "I just want to make sure we have a level of hospitality that is not common for the area," said Cappuzzello.

Kruusi described it as "bringing back traditional hospitality in a modern way."

Dishes such as soups and salads are left out of the equation, because "we don't believe that those are items that you're going to miss," said Pisarenko.

"We're back to the origins of what a restaurant is," she added, "items that you truly cannot make at home."

The partners "fell in love" with the location after seeing its design perfectly reflect their vision, with each space tied to the elements, Kruusi said. "Immediately, the vision grew."

The live-fire kitchen represents fire, the dining room was built with earth tones and the bistro and bottega were inspired by water and air.

Diners can watch bread, focaccia and pasta made fresh in the open kitchen, while a harvest table near the entrance offers space to linger over coffee or work during the day.

Cappuzzello called it "kind of like a social table."

Aperitivo is an "elevated grab and go," said Pisarenko, adding it also offers imported Italian products for purchase, such as truffle oils, Sicilian olive oils and wines.

"Our daytime experience," Kruusi said.

Alcohol service begins at 11 a.m., with Aperol spritzes served with a classic Italian pairing: olives and chips.

From 2 to 4 p.m., the restaurant runs a daily spritz special, pairing Aperol, limoncello or non-alcoholic spritzes with chef's snacks, plus the olives and chips. "It's kind of like a pre-dinner tradition," said Kruusi.

It's inspired by aperitivo hour in Italy and helps "slow down your day," said Cappuzzello.

"You can relax and have an Aperol spritz," added Kruusi. "Something that we all love to do, so we brought that here."

Kruusi said the fine-dining side "is a little bit more moody" and offers both à la carte and tasting menus.

She described the approach as "farm to fire," with every protein touching the live fire at some point in the evening. "Everything is sourced as close as possible to the address."

She added that the restaurant plans to build careers in hospitality and create a one-of-a-kind workplace where staff feel valued. That vision, she said, is reflected in the name "Revé," from the French word rêve for dream.

"When you look at the main entrance for the fine dining, it says welcome to the dream, because it's truly our dream," said Kruusi.

"The four of us have been working our whole lives to make this happen."

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Surveillance camera 'in place,' region says, but speed camera missing

Paige Seburn
Local Journalism Initiative
The Lake Report

Niagara Region says a closed-circuit television surveillance camera is watching the vandalized speed camera site on Niagara Stone Road.

But the speed camera itself is nowhere to be seen.

The region confirmed Wednesday that surveillance is "in place" at the site, which

saw repeated vandalism from May through August, while the speed camera was active.

It has not been active or replaced since the unit was chopped down and flowers were placed at the site, following its disappearance last month.

Regional spokesperson Jason Misner said in an emailed response that more information about the surveillance unit will be provided "when we are able."

The region did not respond to questions about when the surveillance camera was installed, who owns it, whether it has been operational, or if it has recorded any incidents of vandalism by press time.

Officials also did not provide details, in time, on costs, whether the system is monitored, or if similar cameras will be used at other speed camera sites.

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Niagara Region has installed a camera to monitor the speed camera that keeps getting cut down, but there's no timeline for when the speed camera will return. PAIGE SEBURN



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Hydro boxes get a Canadian makeover

Staff
The Lake Report

What was once dull, green utility equipment will soon become vibrant landmarks in Niagara-on-the-Lake, after three local artists were named winners of this year's hydro box beautification contest.

The two jury award winners are Janet Horne Cozens, for her piece "Forever," and Nancy Wardle, for "Niagara Hands, Canadian Heart." The people's choice award went to Gail Kerr for "NOTL Golf – 150 Years Strong."

Now in its seventh year, the program has transformed 20 hydro boxes in Niagara-on-the-Lake into public art, with three more to be unveiled later this year. The Niagara Pump-house Arts Centre organizes the competition.

The new installations will appear in front of Meridian Credit Union on Niagara Stone Road/Highway 55, at the intersection of Niagara



This artwork by Nancy Wardle, titled "Niagara Hands, Canadian Heart," is one of three paintings selected for the Pumphouse's hydro box beautification contest. SUPPLIED

Stone and Niven roads, and outside the Gateway Centre on York Road.

This year's theme, "Canada," invited artists to reflect on national identity, landscapes and shared heritage. A total of 26 designs were submitted and are on display at the Pumphouse's Walker Room

Gallery until Oct. 12. "We're proud to support this program that not only brightens our community but also celebrates the talent of local artists," said Tim Curtis, president of NOTL Hydro, in a media release.

Pumphouse's director Rima Boles said every artist who submitted work

deserves to be celebrated: "Public art has the power to bring people together, and this initiative continues to enrich Niagara-on-the-Lake's cultural landscape."

The Niagara Pumphouse Arts Centre's competition is organized with support from NOTL Hydro and Communities in Bloom.

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With Bradley Hamilton
#45: Create an alumni group where colleagues share stories of kindness and its impact, inspiring others to pay it forward and continue the cycle of good will.

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



Contributed by Patty Garriock
“How we spend our days is, of course, how we spend our lives.”
- Annie Dillard

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St. Davids brings out the cool cars

Hot rods of all kinds were outside the St. Davids Lions Club Park on Sunday, Sept. 14 for its annual car show, which raised money for Food 4 Kids Niagara. This particular ride has been around for nearly a century: it's a 1932 Chevrolet Roadster, owned by Jake Redikop and restored by Bill Goetz. DAVE VAN DE LAAR

Editorial

NOTLers pay way too much for policing

Kevin MacLean
Editor Emeritus

Most Niagara-on-the-Lake residents likely would agree that spending more than \$16 million annually on police protection that provides just two patrol cars to cover the entire town is a steep price to pay.

And they'd be right. That's the bad news.

The good news is that, as outlined in an in-depth look at policing costs published last month by The Lake Report, NOTL is a low-crime area. While petty crime and minor incidents do occur, major crimes are few and far between.

So, two patrol cars is usually sufficient to keep NOTL safe and protected.

But, as our analysis also made clear, because Niagara Region uses property assessment values to determine how much each of its 12 member municipalities contributes, NOTL residents are being slapped with an egregiously high bill.

In fact, our costs are roughly double what they might be if each Niagara city and town paid based on how many homes it has, rather than how much those homes are worth.

Budget and tax calculations can be complicated, but with about 196,000 households in Niagara, according to the 2021 census, and just 7,800 households in NOTL, the town's total contribution could be as little as \$7.5



million, The Lake Report concluded. That's a far cry from the current \$16 million total. As former Niagara Regional Police Services board chair Ken Gansel noted in our August story, he'd like to see policing costs "driveway-based, not assessment-based."

The so-called "driveway" model is already how the costs for Niagara Region's garbage, recycling and transit services are split — and our regional officials owe it to all Niagara taxpayers to make its taxation practices more fair. The total tax bill for policing in all municipalities should be based on the number of households and businesses that require police protection. We expect that would mean higher population (and higher crime) areas — like the big three cities of St. Catharines, Niagara Falls and Welland — could

pay substantially more. Well, NOTL and others have been carrying the extra burden for years, but now it's time to shift that burden. As a political decision, it will be difficult to achieve because councillors representing the big three cities would no doubt take some heat for their residents' higher tax bills. In this case, we need councillors to do the right thing.

Policing is the single largest item in the region's budget and it rises substantially every year — because everyone wants the police to be available when they need them.

We haven't heard a lot from NOTL Regional Coun. Andrea Kaiser since she was elected in 2022, but in June she scored a victory of sorts by convincing her council colleagues to order a staff report on how the region handles the cost of policing.

The report is expected to

go before regional council in November.

We don't know what it will say or perhaps recommend, but the status quo is certainly not a fair way to be divvying up policing costs.

Just because real estate in NOTL is more expensive than, say, Welland, does not mean town residents should be paying double or more than other Niagara municipalities.

When the matter was before the region in June, St. Catharines Regional Coun. Laura Ip, who is a member of the police board, warned moving away from an assessment-based model "will help residents in Niagara-on-the-Lake but harm the rest of the region."

She insisted the cost allocation used by the region "isn't inequitable at all" and reflects "socioeconomic differences between municipalities."

In other words, NOTLers can afford it, so suck it up.

That's a common and misguided refrain. Yes, some NOTL residents might be able to afford those hefty policing costs, but a great many cannot.

And if taxation is to be equitable, Niagara Region needs to adopt a new model that does not penalize residents who happen to live in a low-crime community where their home has appreciated in value over the past decade or two.

That is simply not fair. Or right.

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Editorial

Postal union attacks small businesses by using them as a bargaining tool

Richard Harley
Editor-in-Chief

The Canadian Union of Postal Workers' decision to weaponize Canada Post's Neighbourhood Mail program as a bargaining chip is nothing short of shameful and destructive. By refusing to deliver products under this program, CUPW is not only putting pressure on Canada Post — it is crushing small businesses, free-circulation community newspapers, and countless working Canadians whose livelihoods depend on this service.

Neighbourhood Mail has long been the lifeline that allows free community newspapers to reach

households affordably and reliably. Without it, thousands of publishers across Canada lose their ability to deliver critical information to readers — information that holds politicians accountable, connects communities, and supports the very fabric of local democracy.

This reckless move will devastate advertising revenues, making it impossible for papers to survive. Advertisers, robbed of a dependable way to reach households, will pull their business. The domino effect is catastrophic: community newspapers fold, small businesses lose their ability to reach customers, and real people lose jobs,

incomes, and the ability to pay rent or put food on the table.

The union cannot justify using other businesses and human beings as bargaining tools. It is disgusting, it is irresponsible, and it should be illegal. CUPW's actions are tantamount to economic sabotage. If this decision stands, CUPW may well find itself at the centre of a nationwide class action lawsuit for the losses inflicted on small businesses, newspapers, and working Canadians.

The stakes could not be higher. This is not only about jobs and revenue — it is about the survival of free journalism in Canada. Without newspapers in

mailboxes, readers lose access to vital, independent reporting. Communities lose their watchdog. Democracy itself is weakened.

We call on Canadians everywhere to speak out. Write to your member of parliament today. Demand that the federal government step in immediately to force CUPW to resume delivery of Neighbourhood Mail. Tell them to protect journalism, protect small businesses, and protect the rights of Canadians to receive information in their own homes.

CUPW's conduct is shameful. The government must act now to put an end to this reckless attack on Canadian communities.

Rockin' in a 'woke' world

Continued from Front Page

promised land. We're immune from all that polarization. And better, right?

Well, not so fast.

Days ago a bunch of dudes with muscles and white masks marched on Brock's Monument and managed to make national news. These are the Second Sons Canada, a quasi-militia bunch with chapters across Canada, who chose our little lovenest in which to have their national shindig.

It's a man-only organization dedicated to "patriotism," which is the new catch-all buzzword for white, Christian, conservative and angry.

They like General Brock because he beat back the Yanks in the 1812 war, but also because they celebrate 19th-century values. You know, like when women were women and men were men (only better).

Local leaders (like our lordly mayor) condemned the Sons for being racist and were appalled they had chosen this hallowed ground on which to march, chant, drill and scare the tourists.

But it's worth noting there is a deep vein of right-wing sentiment in this community, and the Sons are just the latest visual made-for-TikTok version of it. Recall that the monumental Freedom Convoy, which shut down Ottawa for three weeks



Freedom Convoy head, convicted felon and rocker Tamara Lich performs at a 2023 sold-out concert in NOTL at Central Community Church in Glendale. TIKTOK

in an anti-vax, trash-government rage, had a major rallying point here.

Then there's Tamara Lich. This charismatic fire-cracker of a woman, now a felon, was a leader of that trucker mayhem — recently convicted and soon to be imprisoned for her actions. Her sentencing hearing is Oct. 7.

The woman has a history of feeding far-right causes, including a separatist movement in Western Canada. Oh, and she's a rocker, too. No surprise her marquee 2023 concert happened on York Road — to a packed audience — as she belted out "Rockin' in the Free World."

The Central Community Church in town was one of the few locations agreeing to screen the controversial pro-trucker film, "Unacceptable," and drew a capacity audience a year after the feds had used emergency powers to defeat the convoy.

No judgment here. Just the facts. NOTL has a big mess of people you might call maple MAGAs. They're predisposed to the politics of Trump, irritated at immigration and link economic injustice plus loss of influence to the creep of "wokeness," "gender confusion," over-population, DEI policies or leftyism. This, they say, is patriotism.

Canada first.

As we all know, the last few days have been ones of anguish, grief and pure anger for American conservatives. The assassination of Trump confidant and youth activist Charlie Kirk on a Utah campus is consuming that country.

The guy was lionized by supporters, which included the president. He awarded Kirk the highest civilian honour, posthumously, while his casket was picked up by the vice-president and flown home on a presidential aircraft.

This was a man known for anti-Muslim, anti-trans, anti-gay and unabashedly pro-Jesus comments. His influence was legion, in person and on social media. He promoted free speech while seeking to have opponents silenced. Tragically, that happened to him. And now America is a lit fuse.

So why am I writing this?

Because, clearly, the same sentiments exist here in this bucolic garden of a place. No sweeping them away. What's motivating the Second Sons and the Tamaras needs to be learned. Dissing them as lowlifes and bigots doesn't work.

Not if we hope to keep the bullets on the other side of the river.

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

garth@garth.ca



This week's riddle is "Jeopardy!" style.
Category: BEAR WITH US

A 2021 study showed black bears shut down genes involved in the breakdown of bone during this period.

Last issue category: BOOKS FOR KIDS

Clue: In a classic by Natalie Babbitt, this title family is "Everlasting."

Answer: What is Tuck?

Answered first by: Sue Rautenberg

Also answered correctly (in order) by: Tuija Johansson, Bob Wheatley, Jane Morris, Lynda Collet, Bill Hamilton, Jeff Lake, Wade Durling, Esther VanGorder, Jim Dandy, Kimberly Amaral, Marla Percy, Catherine Clarke, Claudia Grimwood, Edna Groff, David Spencer, Katie Reimer

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Old Town’s historic streetscape, the Shaw and other things



ARCHITEXT

Brian Marshall
Columnist

Regular readers of this column and those of you who may have attended my talks, lectures or walking tours may have noticed a tendency for me to refer to the Niagara-on-the-Lake streetscapes as “gentle.”

While this adjective is commonly applied to a landscape — referring to one characterized by mild, soft, and soothing features, lacking harshness or abruptness — it is rarely used in association with streetscapes.

Why? The answer is fairly straightforward.

As streetscapes evolve, not only do the uses of the existing buildings change, but they are modified, altered and, all too often, demolished to be replaced with new structures that are incongruous with both the rhythm of the streetscape and out of context with the

surrounding buildings. Moreover, in old downtown commercial areas, these new structures tend to “eat” into the adjacent historic residential neighbourhoods, visually overshadowing them and creating severe transitions between commercial and residential properties.

In turn, this often leads to the devaluation of surrounding traditional residential properties — unless one is a confirmed urbanite, few want to live next to or back onto a multi-storey brick or concrete wall — thus causing the exodus of single-family owners out of the area, which results in a general deterioration of the downtown area.

This is a pattern which has been repeated again and again across North America.

In fact, I would argue that the unmanaged evolution of the old commercial cores in our towns is one of the principal factors responsible for the growth of suburbia and the hollowing out of traditional main streets.

Malls and big-box stores are not the cause of the problem; they are simply a reflection of decades upon decades of failed or absent urban design oversight.

Somewhat miraculously, due largely to the strict



The Royal George Theatre 2.0, as seen from Victoria Street, based on artistic renderings. SUPPLIED

preservation of the Queen-Picton heritage district and long-term strict adherence to by-laws controlling both new and infill development, Niagara-on-the-Lake has avoided the fate of most Canadian towns.

However, it must be observed that during the recent past, this has and is changing.

Rezoning of properties to permit the expansion of commercial development opportunities, site-specific exemptions to bylaws, and minor variances on properties are becoming the rule rather than the exception.

All without urban design oversight — you may recall that the current council deep-sixed that committee.

Which brings us back to the Shaw’s Royal George redevelopment proposal.

This column has visited the issues of its proposed massing, sheer size, out-of-context commercial design, and “ghost” façade, so we

won’t beat that drum again (“Arch-i-text: The Shaw’s Royal George 2.0 misses the mark,” Sept. 11).

Instead, let’s turn to the Victoria streetscape, which currently enjoys a gentle transition from the low, two-storey Bank of Montreal building on Queen to the historic residential building form of 188 Victoria followed by the gabled and dormered garage attached by a breezeway to the Gothic Revival styled home at 178 Victoria, the Dutch colonial revival house at 164 Victoria and the Georgian on the corner of Victoria & Prideaux.

The opposite side of the street is similarly punctuated by traditional residential houses, none over two storeys.

With only one exception, these buildings are clad in clapboard, producing a pleasing continuity of materiality on the street’s various building forms.

The Shaw proposes to demolish the buildings at 178 and 188 Victoria and replace them with a blatantly commercial style street façade that includes a side gabled barn-like projection — taller than the bank building — clad in masonry and metal consistent with the rest of the facade and replete with a bank of tall ribbon windows.

Now, some attempt has been made to soften the starkness of the modern windows by introducing a linear wood decorative element over the top quarter, but this in no way mitigates the severe lines and presentation of the proposed building’s design.

In short, the Shaw wishes to tear down two contextually appropriate, compatible residential heritage buildings and replace them with a jarringly unsympathetic, massive and out-of-context modern façade, which will completely disrupt the historic streetscape(s) while eating into the residential neighbourhood and visually encroaching on the neighbours.

This is exactly the type of development proposal described earlier in this article.

Bluntly, the solutions here are many and varied — all a matter of sympathetic

architectural design with delicate treatment of form, massing, scale and materiality, focused on blending in versus standing out.

And, for those who are assuaged by the suggestion that this building will be a one-off and zoned so that it can only ever be used as a theatre, think again. A future change in zoning simply requires an application passed by council.

Speaking of developments granted a change in zoning to proceed, what is going on with the excavation work being performed on the Parliament Oak site?

As far as I am aware (echoed by correspondence received from many concerned residents), the hydrological study, peer review of the application documentation, etc., on this site have not been completed or, if completed, have not been published as per council direction.

Why are town staff permitting this work to move ahead?

It’s either go or no go — to my knowledge, provincial legislation has no provisions for wink-and-nod half measures.

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



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A happy **surprise gem** on Terry Fox Run in NOTL



ROSS'S RAMBLINGS

Ross Robinson
Columnist

Every year, Joan King and her team of Terry Fox Day volunteers manage to make their big September day better, each year with several changes to make the event bigger and more wonderfully successful. And take it from someone who has organized big and bulky events in the past, it's not easy. Murphy's Law lurks, ready to jump into the fray and throw a wrench in the works. So many components, and it takes only one to go off the rails. As Nancy Quinn once said after a very profitable season at Whirlpool Jetboats many years ago, "Great weather makes the marketing department look smart." And this 2025 Terry Fox Day was an absolute

beauty, weatherwise and otherwise. The participants came in all ages, in all shapes and sizes and all wanting this to be yet another triumph as millions of people synergize to fight cancer. To "Finish It," as this year's marketing campaign implored on posters, T-shirts and everything in between. I finally arrived at Simcoe Park during the event after finishing my real job, as participants were finishing at their own pace. Music was blaring from the bandshell and local Rotarians were serving up BBQ from under their very festive and professional-looking red event tent. Lotsa familiar faces, all happy to be working hard doing their thing to help "Finish It." I ordered my burger from a young man, no doubt the grandson of a local Rotary Club member. He was appropriately garbed, enthusiastic, and knew exactly how to best accomplish his assigned task. My food and drink were ready quickly, the condiments easy to access and the sliced tomatoes were oversized and tasty. Mega yum.



Joyful Janzen admires Tommy Gerbasi's hot dog cap at Terry Fox day. ROSS ROBINSON

And then the hit of the day arrived, catching me totally off guard. A smiling, youngish senior citizen, wearing a dark blue T-shirt reading Queenston Lewiston Rotary in gold letters. Or was it Lewiston Queenston Rotary? It doesn't matter, does it? Hands across the border, and all that. Right now, we grab on to any positive multinational possibility, don't we? On the back of his blue top, in big letters, it read, "Rotarian at work." This had been crossed out and changed to "Rotarian

having fun." This about said it all, and the banter began. I found an available seat at a picnic table, with joyful and triumphant Joy Janzen, her often volunteering husband Steve and their fabulous dog Fitz. At least five members of the ever-involved Hopkins family were with us. Locals helping out, in the truest sense of the phrase. Life in our small town was great, and the Terry Fox participants and volunteers were sharing the love. Raising the money to "Finish It." To think similar

scenes were being played out across Canada and around the world. Two years ago, my daughter Carrie was with several thousand Terry Fox supporters in Battersea Park in London (England). It really is a great Canadian story, year after year, for over forty years now, for all the right reasons. Primarily volunteer-driven, meticulously organized by the professional fundraisers at the Terry Fox Foundation's national office. Rambling back now to my new friend wearing his clever "Rotarian having fun" T-shirt. Polite prying by this amateur scribbler from The Lake Report revealed a few facts. His name was Tommy Gerbasi, from Lewiston, who helps out at NOTL Rotary events whenever possible. He is a retired pediatrician, a baby doctor originally from Rochester. He has had quite the life, and now takes great pleasure in volunteering when he can be helpful. Terry Fox Day is special to him, as he has seen evidence of the good work done internationally, made

possible by the funds raised by our very Canadian Terry Fox Foundation. Dr. Tommy Gerbasi is full of energetic fun, and shared one of his life mantras. "Very few people die wishing they had had less fun." Oh, did I mention that our new friend from Lewiston was wearing a very unique custom-made hat? Was that redundant? His headgear was humorous, and I have seen lots of lids around the world. It was a large hot dog, with a large fabric bun holding a mustard-garnished jumbo wiener. Indeed, a former Lewiston pediatrician volunteering in Niagara-on-the-Lake on our 2025 Terry Fox Day. As he said, "Having way too much fun," doing what he can to help out in the Terry Fox fight against cancer. It couldn't be much better, sitting with a bunch of positive-thinking volunteers at Joan King's local and annual Terry Fox Day in Simcoe Park. And with a new American friend, having fun with a hot-dog-themed hat. Tommy Gerbasi and I agreed that corduroy pillow cases make headlines..

If developers are going to build, they should **fund needed infrastructure**

Dear editor:
I read Erwin Wiens letter to the editor in last week's Lake Report ("Letter: Setting the record straight on planning in Niagara-on-the-Lake," Sept. 11). It's rather a sad article that's defensive, an attempt to justify the litany of council-approved real estate applications, and places the blame on previous administrations. Kind of reminds me of something Trump is doing down south. The deputy lord mayor has confirmed that there is an infrastructure deficit, which translates into the acknowledgement that the town's infrastructure doesn't have the capacity to handle additional real estate developments. The school board has confirmed this for St. Davids. The Niagara Region has confirmed this for their sewage treatment plant in Niagara Falls. The sewage pumping stations in St. Davids are reportedly over capacity. What else is broken that we don't know about/discovered? Will

town council tell us? This town council has continued to approve real estate developments knowing that the infrastructure is inadequate. You would think that the lack of infrastructure capabilities would provide an adequate rationale to decline relevant real estate applications (even at the Ontario Land Tribunal), or at least invoke a moratorium pending the infrastructure being brought up to a current level and beyond, as forecasted in some sort of a five or 10-year plan going forward. Contrary to what Wiens has stated, NOTL has no growth targets mandated by the province, unlike other municipalities. Hence, no legal requirement to approved developments willy nilly. I think a considerable number of council's constituents would vehemently disagree that applications have protected heritage sites or the scale of buildings.

Rather, precedents are being set for a continued deterioration of heritage and an increase in taller buildings. People are asking themselves why didn't revenue sources from development fees, etc. create financial reserves to fix our "infrastructure deficit"? Why is NOTL paying the region a disproportionate amount of money for policing and transportation, amongst other things? Couldn't the estimated \$10 to \$12 million for the St. Davids roundabout (considered unnecessary) be redirected by the region towards this infrastructure deficit? Why hasn't that been broached? This council has exacerbated a situation where the residents of NOTL are probably going to experience significant property tax increases in future years to fund infrastructure improvements. Improvements that should have been funded by the developers because

they have profited from their developments, but instead have placed the cost of improving our infrastructure on NOTL taxpayers. The Town of Niagara-on-the-Lake has an asset management plan, which serves to guide the long-term, sustainable and cost-effective management of its crucial infrastructure and assets, such as roads, water systems, parks and buildings. What happened? Did town council not follow it? I suspect the existing asset management plan didn't focus on the capacity of the infrastructure to match the increased population growth. Rather, it focused on asset deterioration curves. A significant screwup. You would think town staff would be fully knowledgeable of the constraints of the town's infrastructure and be obliged to advise council that the infrastructure could not support more development? **Gienek Ksiazkiewicz**
St. Davids

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In response to the deputy lord mayor’s record-straightening

Dear editor:

Maybe our esteemed deputy lord mayor should get his facts clarified before wading into the weeds defending his administration and planning staff (“Letter: Setting the record straight on planning in Niagara-on-the-Lake,” Sept. 11).

First of all, over a year ago, on June 6, 2024, Bill 185, the Cutting Red Tape To Build More Homes Act, removed the authority to require, by bylaw, mandatory pre-application consultation prior to the submission of a planning application.

Which, perhaps, explains the idiocy of having the recent public meeting and open house held on Solmar’s application for access, boundary and zoning issues with respect to 200 John St. E.

If there was “pre-consultation,” do you not think



Letter writer Bob Bader criticizes Coun. Erwin Wiens’ Sept. 11 letter in defence of town planning decisions. FILE

staff would have explained to Solmar the issues had already been thoroughly and irrevocably decided by the Ontario Land Tribunal last year, instead of determining the application was “complete,” necessitating the needless expense of conducting yet another public meeting and open house?

Our deputy lord mayor goes on to state that ap-

provals don’t automatically favour developers and that numerous applications are negotiated to protect heritage, reduce building scale or incorporate sustainability measures.

One presumes one such negotiation involved the parking at the “Parliament Oaks Hotel,” for which deputy lord mayor Erwin Wiens subsequently made

the motion to show town support for the reduction of the total of development charges by close to \$1 million to be paid to the region for the extra level of underground parking.

That’s a million dollars more in taxes being paid by Niagara Region taxpayers.

And then he has the nerve to complain about the money spent defending the town against developer-initiated land tribunal and legal challenges and has the temerity to suggest the town has lost every single one?

During the four-year period mentioned Mr. Marotta’s companies filed and withdrew applications to the Ontario Land Tribunal, the conservation review board and lost a Superior Court challenge to the heritage designation of the Rand Estate for which the town was compensated over \$100,000

in legal fees.

Speaking of transparency, how is it that our town’s website in September 2025 still doesn’t have the financial statement for 2024 available for public scrutiny? Especially since council is now starting on budgeting for 2026.

The only telling information about the town’s current finances was the information report to council regarding the final approval of 2025 budget on March 18, which, amongst other things, contained a comparison of municipalities in the region with NOTL having a 7.92 per cent increase in 2025, fully 3 per cent higher than any other municipality in the region.

That and the interesting historical chart that shows approved tax levy dollar impact on the average household, which totalled \$208.44

during the four years of the previous council’s term and \$321.97 during only the first three years of this deputy lord mayor’s term.

It’s one thing to throw slings and arrows about the failings of a previous administration when ignoring the accomplishments of that administration: the municipal accommodation tax, which has approximately \$1.9 million in town capital reserves and has removed the need for funding many tourism related events, the 2019 official plan, which forms the blueprint for the current draft official plan and a comprehensive tackling of community issues in a respectful forum of ideas and communication without having to ever shut down a public meeting.

Bob Bader
NOTL

Alarming planning activities abound in Niagara-on-the-Lake



BOTTOM LINE

Steve McGuinness
Columnist

My recent column explaining how government actions are accelerating the residential real estate market decline (“Bottom Line: How governments are harming the housing market,” Aug. 28) provoked significant online comment, including from our lord mayor.

He hailed my “talent for creating confusion and distrust by providing incomplete information,” calling it “alarming.”

At the risk of sounding more alarms, allow me to complete my observations:

Let’s focus on Benny Marotta. Earlier this council term, the prominent developer handed a large cash gift to a councillor during a meeting at his winery, requiring police

and integrity commissioner investigations (The Lake Report, “No charges laid after developer gave NOTL councillor \$10,000 in cash,” April 20, 2023).

Recently, excavation began for the underground garage below Mr. Marotta’s Two Sisters resort hotel at Parliament Oak.

In a split decision, the town council approved a motion imploring the region to waive a portion of the development fee on that parkade. The lord mayor was absent for that vote. Why this request was not routed directly to the region remains unexplained. (The Lake Report, “Council backs developer’s fight against regional fees — with dissent,” July 24)

Next, consider Marotta’s townhouse development on the former Rand Estate.

This proposal was rejected by the town and successfully defended on appeal up to the Ontario Land Tribunal, which imposed conditions for the development to proceed (The Lake Report, “Tribunal sends Rand Estate plan ‘back to drawing board,’” Oct. 17, 2024).

These were rejected by the developer despite the



Analyzing the merger of the Glencairn Hall property with next-door lands owned by Benny Marotta, Steve McGuinness highlights that the identities of the Glencairn owner’s shareholders are still unknown.

town expending significant unbudgeted and unreimbursed legal costs supporting the appeal.

SORE (Save Our Rand Estate) recently sought a zoning change on that Randwood property. The lord mayor previously declared a conflict of interest (because he resides close to Rand), on the advice of the town’s prior integrity commissioner.

The mayor is now apparently awaiting a new ruling from the replacement integrity commissioner, although no facts or rules have changed.

This did not prevent him from supporting a staff

decision (based on an external legal opinion) ruling the SORE application incomplete without a land owner’s signature. Further, he called for documents identifying the SORE principals.

Let’s contrast this zeal for revealing an applicant’s complete identity to another recent land request involving Mr Marotta.

This one involved his acquisition of a severed lakefront land fragment to merge with a property he owns next to the lot where the Glencairn Estate was destroyed by a potential act of arson (a crime still unsolved) back in April.

That application was submitted to our committee of adjustment by the director of a numbered Ontario corporation, which acquired title to Glencairn in a 2024 transfer.

Yet, echoing the lord mayor’s identity confusion about SORE, we also do not know the identity of the numbered corporation’s shareholder(s), who are the beneficial owners of the Glencairn property.

Ontario corporate transparency legislation (designed to combat illicit activities like money laundering) requires directors to provide the names of significant shareholders to certain parties.

This share register should be maintained at the registered place of business, which in the case of the Glencairn holding company is a commercial unit in Humber Bay Shores, Etobicoke. It is currently operating as a cannabis dispensary called Pluto Plants.

Nevertheless, our committee of adjustment approved the merger of the Glencairn property with Mr. Marotta’s in a 4-1 decision.

In response to queries from the dissenting com-

mittee member, the applicant’s representative and our town planner suggested there were two distinct landowners, although they were not privy to the private agreement between them.

We require more applicant identity clarity to assess whether the neighbours are truly acting at arms’ length.

Two of the parties eligible to obtain the identity of a numbered corporation’s shareholder(s) are a regulatory agency and the police.

I asked our town CAO, Nick Ruller, whether our planning department qualifies as a regulator entitled to this information. That query remains unanswered as at our publication deadline.

Likewise, the editor-in-chief of this paper contacted the Niagara Regional Police about this and its reply is also outstanding.

Steve McGuinness was a senior adviser to major financial institutions during his Bay Street career and is now retired in Niagara-on-the-Lake. Send your personal finance questions to him at smcgfinplan@gmail.com.



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Laura Secord's 250th birthday celebrated in Queenston

Andrew Hawlitzky
The Lake Report

Queenston marked Laura Secord's 250th on Saturday with speeches, a cake crafted by Niagara College and a pointed reminder that local history links to today's cross-border economy.

Residents and visitors filled the backyard of the Laura Secord Homestead historical site to celebrate her contributions to shaping Canada and the course of the War of 1812.

Caroline McCormick, president of the Friends of Laura Secord, told the crowd that Secord's act was one of courage at a time when women's voices were often dismissed.

"Laura Secord was an ordinary person who did something extraordinary because it was important."

Born in 1775, Secord is remembered for her 30-kilometre walk through enemy lines during the War of 1812 to warn British troops of an American



Cathy Thomas serves the first slice of Laura Secord's 250th birthday cake. ANDREW HAWLITZKY

attack. McCormick noted that the relevance of Secord's bravery extends beyond history.

Niagara Falls MPP Wayne Gates connected the celebration to present-day trade tensions between

Canada and the United States.

"We're going through a tough time right now with how they're treating our country," said Gates.

"At the end of the day, they're still going to be our

neighbours; four years from now, they're still going to be our friends."

Gates also emphasized the importance of preserving Niagara's heritage.

"We have to do

everything we can to preserve it. Not only for ourselves, quite frankly, but for our kids and our grandkids, because there's nothing more important than our history," he said.

Melissa Bottomley,

manager of the Laura Secord Homestead, told the audience that Secord's story continues to inspire ordinary people to act with bravery.

"Her story endures as a powerful reminder that bravery can come from the most unexpected places," said Bottomley.

After speeches, the crowd shared slices of the elaborate cake prepared by Niagara College's School of Culinary Arts.

The Laura Secord Homestead, operated by Niagara Parks, is one of the most visited historic sites in Niagara-on-the-Lake, drawing thousands each year.

Organizers said the 250th birthday was not only a chance to look back, but a reminder to protect the region's history for future generations.

The homestead remains open to visitors this fall with guided tours and programs exploring Secord's life and the War of 1812.

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BRODHAGEN Mon., Sept. 15th Hoegy's Farm Supply Ltd. 6777 Perth Line 44	HARRISTON Wed., Sept. 24th Midwest Co-operative Services Inc. 56 Margaret St. S	SCOTLAND Wed., Sept. 24th Scotland Agromart Ltd. 218 Oakland Rd., RR 1	WALKERTON Tues., Sept. 23rd Midwest Co-operative Services Inc. 1291 Bruce Rd. 3
COLBORNE Mon., Sept. 15th TCO Agromart Ltd. 12944 Telephone Rd.	HARROW Wed., Sept. 24th Hensall Co-op 5050 County Rd. 15 (Marsh Rd.)	SIMCOE Thurs., Sept. 18th Central Ontario FS Delhi 1161 Fertilizer Rd., RR 7	WELLANDPORT Tues., Sept. 23rd Clark Agri Service 4891 Canborough Rd.
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Queenston comes together for first annual **Heritage Day** in years

Andrew Hawlitzky
The Lake Report

The “forgotten little vil-
lage” hasn’t forgotten the
value of community.
Queenston residents
gathered at the Queenston
Firehall on Saturday for its
first Heritage Day in more
than 20 years.

Organized primarily by
Queenston Residents Asso-
ciation members with help
from volunteer firefighters
and local heritage partners,
the event unfolded Sept.
13 for music, tours and a
firefighters’ breakfast.

The celebration also
kicked off a fundraising
drive for a new playground at
Queenston Common Park.

“Queenston Heritage
Day is all about building
community, and it’s been
amazing,” said Elisabeth
Graham, one of the organiz-
ing members, along with
Karin Haslam and Mike
Edwards.

The day used to be a regu-
lar highlight of late summer,
but the annual event ceased

“roughly” 20 years ago,
Graham said.
Now, after the Saturday
event, the community is in-
terested in bringing it back.
“The vibe we’re getting is
that people are really enjoy-
ing it and saying, ‘Yes, this
should be something that
continues,’” said Graham.

The goal of the fundraiser
is \$40,000 to afford a
new swing set and other
equipment for Queenston
Common Park.

Graham is hopeful that
the town council will help
close the funding gap
after seeing how many
Queenston residents support
expanding the current park
amenities.

“We’re really hoping to
raise money for new equip-
ment. We already have an
idea of what we want, and
we’re gathering signatures
to show that the commu-
nity truly supports it,” said
Graham.

Volunteer firefighters
served up breakfast and
lunch. Retired members
returned to keep the busy



Mike Edwards, Elisabeth Graham and Karin Haslam pose with the photo booth for Queenston Heritage Day. It was the first event in 20 years. ANDREW HAWLITZKY

line moving. Volunteer
firefighter Peter Cox led the
food service and was happy
to see people’s reactions to
Heritage Day.

“It’s just an event that
hasn’t been run for so many
years. To see the commu-
nity still eager to get out
and be a part of it, that’s

reassuring,” said Cox.
Several nearby heri-
tage sites took part in the
event by offering tours to
those interested, including

the Mackenzie Printery,
Laura Secord Homestead
(where Laura Secord’s
250th birthday was being
celebrated), Willowbank,
the Queenston library and
St. Saviour.

RiverBrink Art Museum
held an activity table outside
the firehall for visitors,
Friends of Fort George set up
a photo station where people
could wear replica uniforms
from the War of 1812, and
the band Old School Rewind
performed to the crowd.

“It’s been really smooth,
and I think it’s just
because it was so wanted,”
said Graham

Planning the event took
months; the date allowed
many volunteers to pitch
in before Sunday’s Terry
Fox Run.

Residents who want to
support the playground can
watch for the association’s
petition and donation
opportunities in Queenston.
Graham is hopeful for a
return of Heritage Day next
year.

andrew@niagaranow.com

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Award-winning painting celebrates NOTL Golf Club's 150th anniversary

Kevin MacLean
The Lake Report

North America's oldest golf club is 150 years old now, and golfers and history buffs are being given a chance to own a print of an award-winning painting celebrating that milestone.

The Niagara-on-the-Lake Golf Club, founded on its current location in 1875, has been marking its birthday all season — and on Sept. 26 it will hold a commemorative tournament and reception to celebrate in style with some 180 golfers hitting the links.

As well, NOTL artist Gail Kerr, a retired interior designer, has created a dynamic collage that incorporates renderings of the club's entire nine-hole layout, the clubhouse, nearby fort and historic imagery from days gone by.

Kerr, a social member of the club, entered her painting, "Niagara-on-the-Lake Golf — 150 Years Strong," in the Niagara PumpHouse Arts Centre's 2025 hydro box beautification competition, where it won the People's Choice Award.

"That was really extra nice to win," Kerr said in an interview.

Her painting eventually will be displayed on a hydro box at Niven and Niagara Stone roads, near the Village plaza, where the new grocery store, hotel and other amenities are being built.

But long before the award was even announced last



Golfer Ted Carmichael and artist Gail Kerr hold the original of her award-winning painting celebrating the 150th anniversary of the NOTL Golf Club. DAVE VAN DE LAAR

week, the original work was sold as it was hanging in the PumpHouse gallery.

Avid NOTL golfer Ted Carmichael and his wife Kim saw it, loved it and scooped it.

Then Carmichael suggested the painting could be tied in to the upcoming 150th birthday celebrations at the club.

The result is that the original 24-by-24-inch unframed canvas will be

on display on Sept. 26 at the golf club along with an example of a giclée print that can be ordered.

The 17-by-17-inch giclée version will be available at cost, for \$160.

"The idea is to make it affordable for people who are interested and think, 'Oh, I'd like to have a little bit of that history. I've been golfing there for years,' or even if they've only played it a couple times, but they

love it," said Kerr.

People embrace the course's history and location, right on the water, "so we just want to give them an opportunity to have a piece of it" through a print of the painting, she said.

"There's all these things related to wine and theatre and, in my opinion, the golf course is a real gem on the water there, and it often gets missed in the representation of the town."

Sunny skies inspire low golf scores

Kevin MacLean
The Lake Report

Tuesday's sunny skies led to some excellent scoring by players in the women's 18-hole league at the Niagara-on-the-Lake Golf Club.

Reigning club champion Louise Robitaille was atop the leaderboard thanks to her 82. Yolanda Henry (87), May Chang (92) and Margot Richardson (93) were next in line.

Gayle Tanner won low net with 67, followed by Chang (67), Richardson (70) and Henry (72). Robitaille recorded birdies on holes 7 and 17, and Sue Sherk had one on #13. Diana Dimmer was closest to the pin on #4.

Henry had the fewest putt (30), followed by Robitaille (32) and Judy Mantle and Chang (33).

The women's nine-hole league added a unique twist to the proceedings Tuesday with the Orange Ball Game.

In each group, one golfer plays with an orange ball on one hole then passes it to the next player to do the same on the next hole.

For the team, only the score for the orange ball counts — and no drivers were allowed.

The team of Peggy Larder, Deborah Williams and Susan Horne led with a score of 55, followed by two teams at 56: Lyn Sanders, Shelley Sansom and Ellen Smith; and Helen McCallum,

Bonnie Lamourie and Carole Matheson.

Robin Ridesic was the top shooter in the Monday business women's league, carding a 45.

Other winners were: Wendy Edwards (longest drive on #1), Eleanor Reed (closest to the 150 on #2), Karen Klus (closest to the pin on #4), Karin Nitsch (sank the longest putt on #7) and Bridget Bassie (closest to the pin in two on #9).

After being rained out for two weeks in a row, the Thursday men's league finally got back on track — and some big prize money was handed out as a result.

Tom Elltoft was a big winner on the day. He and Devon Neudorf led all

shooters with gross scores of 1-over 37.

In turn, Elltoft won low net with 28, followed by Matt Mines (31), all good for \$10 prizes.

But Elltoft cashed in big time thanks to a net eagle on the par-5 third hole. That earned him \$285.

Grant Williams also won \$285, with a net eagle on the par-3 fourth hole.

Gross skin winners, worth \$165, were birdie shooters Steven Jenkins (#6) and Dan Plomish (#7).

Brian McKillop sank the longest putt on #2, Ricky Watson had the longest drive on #3, Dean McCann was closest to the pin on #4 and Jim Panetta was closest on #9.

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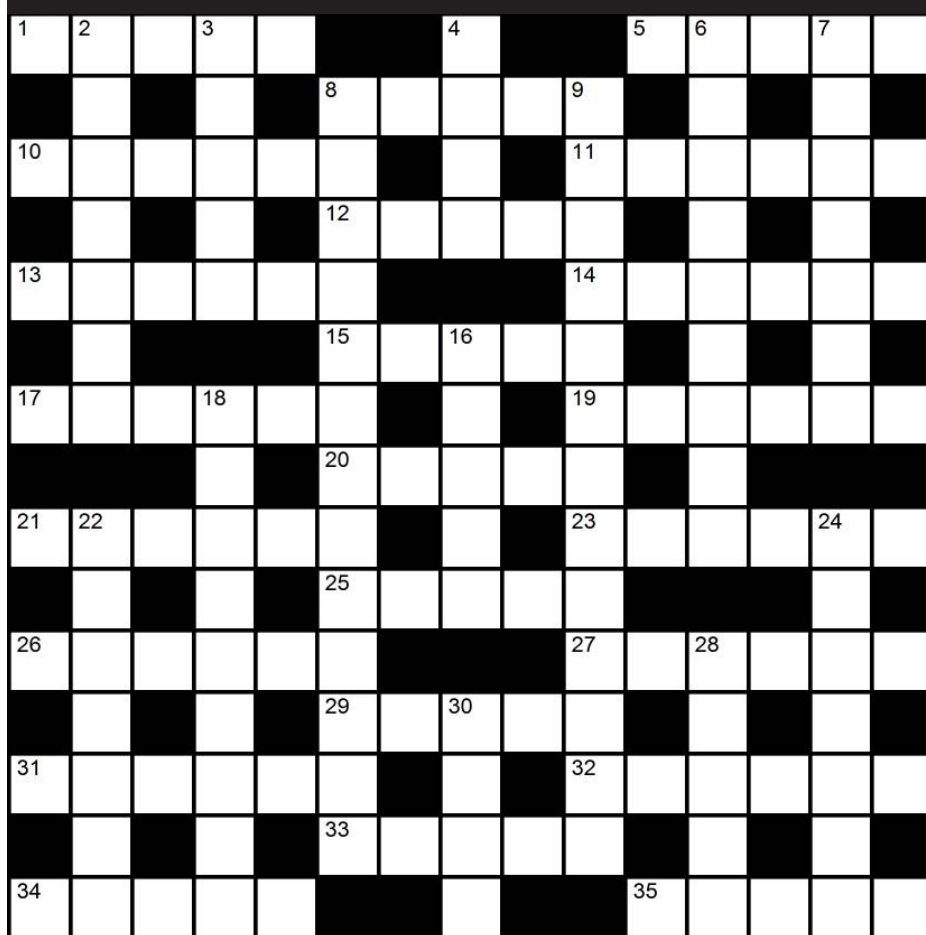


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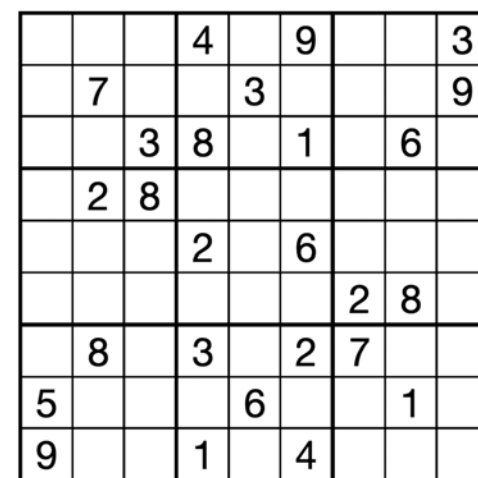
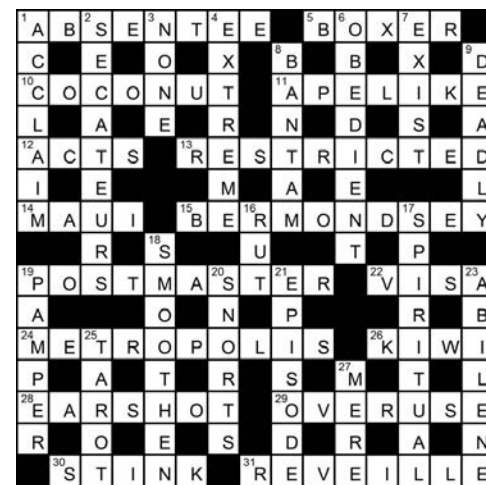
1. Shrink (5)
5. Iberian monarchy (5)
8. Second planet (5)
10. Atoll used for nuclear tests (6)
11. Foolish (6)
12. Brittle (5)
13. Open up (6)
14. Mistakes (6)
15. Tender (5)
17. Penniless person (6)
19. Applauds (6)
20. U S state famous for potatoes (5)
21. Greek goddess of wisdom (6)
23. Brawn (6)
25. Crawl (5)
26. Short cannon (6)
27. False (6)
29. Beginning (5)
31. Spongelike (6)
32. Adequate (6)
33. Throwing weapon (5)
34. Appears (5)
35. Inheritors (5)

2. Systematically arranged body of facts (7)
3. Capital of Egypt (5)
4. Against (4)
6. Incapable (9)
7. Underwriter (7)
8. Highest military decoration (8,5)
9. Powerful number cruncher (13)
16. Scale (5)
18. Sleeping accommodation which is only occasionally used (5,4)
22. Couple (7)
24. Recliner (7)
28. That group (5)
30. W W II sub-machine gun (4)

Crossword Puzzle



Last issue's answers



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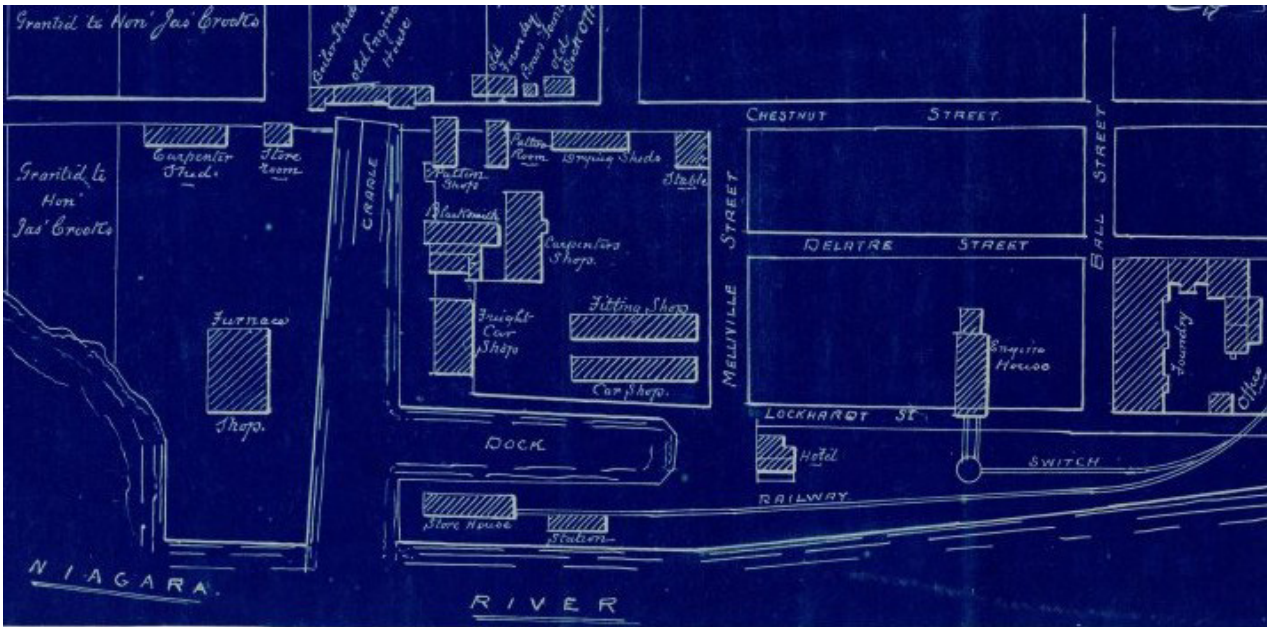
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EXPLORING HISTORY
WITH NOTL MUSEUM



The dock area, circa 1862

Here is a blueprint plan of the dock area in the Old Town area of Niagara-on-the-Lake that was created by the Bank of Upper Canada. Blueprints are fun because they provide details on the business and street names from that time period. The section of the blueprint we are focusing on here is the area where the Niagara Harbour and Dock Company buildings and the businesses that supported them were located. We see the storehouse, railcar shop, carpenter and blacksmith shops, foundries, drying sheds and more. Archives like this can help us to understand how this area of town was a hub of economic activity for the town before the dock company disbanded. Most of these buildings no longer exist, but some of the homes of the workers do, as well as the remnants of the train engine turntable.



HARPER TREE CARE

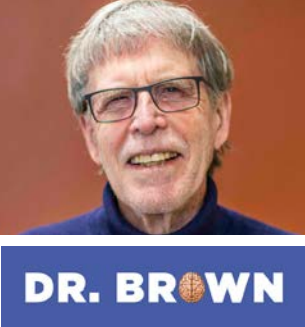
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Ahead of Nobel Prize ceremony, let’s look back at **past wins**



Dr. William Brown
Columnist

Ever since their inauguration in 1901, Nobel prizes have set the standard for high quality in their nomination and review process — at least in the sciences.

But as with human endeavours in general, and especially committees, huge mistakes can happen and have since the inauguration of the Nobel prizes in science.

The most egregious of which was the failure to award a Nobel prize to Albert Einstein for his singular magisterial work — general relativity — probably the most outstanding achievement in modern physics, if not all science in the 20th century, and by an individual.

Relativity’s only competition was the standard model for subatomic physics, a collective endeavour, which, although very useful and highly predictive, remains,

unlike general relativity, incomplete and fails to explain dark matter, said to account for almost one-third of the universe.

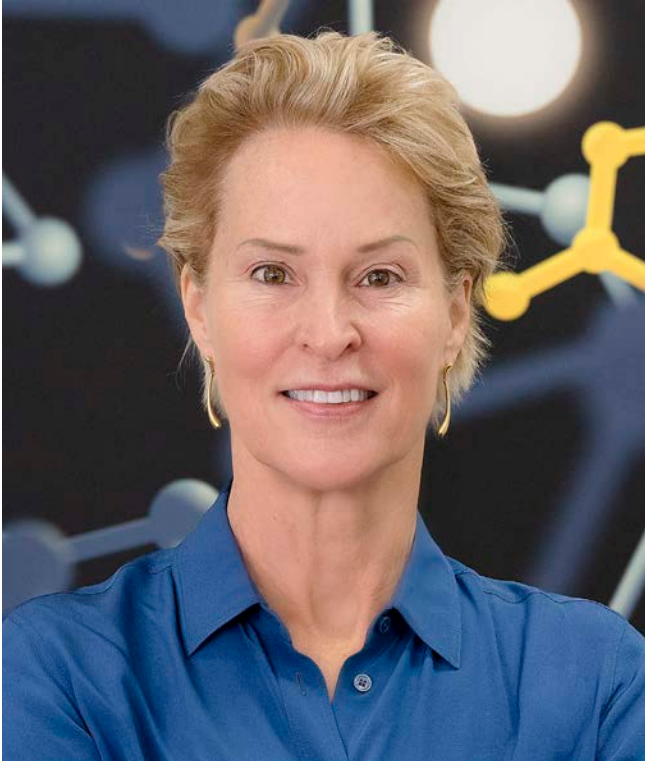
That’s a huge hole in our understanding of the universe which has stubbornly stymied every attempt to solve since its existence was postulated in the latter half of the twentieth century.

By comparison, general relativity has withstood every test so far including the prediction of gravitational waves, confirmation of which won a Nobel Prize in 2017, and the 2020 Nobel Prize in physics, half of which was awarded to Roger Penrose “for the discovery that black hole formation is a robust prediction of the general theory of relativity.”

In my opinion, those two awards were back-handed ways of finally acknowledging the importance of Einstein’s general relativity.

Some prizes in the sciences in the last eight years stand out. For example, the 2017 prize in physics was awarded for detecting gravitational waves in the universe created by two black holes colliding with one another or in other instances, collisions between two neutron stars.

The waves were found



American chemical engineer Frances Arnold who won the 2018 Nobel Prize in chemistry. SOURCED

using supersensitive detectors on Earth and their origin was located by triangulating data from two widely separate sites in the U.S. And, with more sensitivity, they might be capable of tracing the origin of the universe almost to its inception following the Big Bang.

That was the hope, but 30 years of bipartisan congressional support was just halved leaving them unable to locate the source of future waves. Crazy!

Other Nobel Prizes in physics stand out: detecting the first exoplanet in 2019, discovering the giant black hole at the center of the milky way in 2020, the 2024 prize for developing machine learning based on artificial neural networks, and finally, my favorite, the 2023 prize that conclusively proved that particles could behave as one at enormous distances as suggested by quantum physics but thought impossible by Einstein.

The standouts in the chemistry prizes began with what the 2018 prize for Frances Arnold’s use of

evolution to develop novel proteins, the 2019 prize for developing the lithium ion battery, the amazing 2020 award which highlighted the development of an elegant method called CRISPR for editing genomes, the 2022 prized for developing a way of “clicking” proteins together and last years 2024 prize for the development of a computer program to decipher the shape of proteins quickly using AlphaFold2.

In medicine and or physiology, the standouts included elegant discoveries of the genetic basis of receptors for touch and temperature in 2022, the 2023 prize for mRNA vaccines, which saved the lives of millions during COVID, and the 2024 prize for the discovery that tiny bits of special RNA can regulate the impact of genes without acting directly on the genes, figured out in a tiny worm, *C. elegans*.

Those were the standouts for me in the last eight years and writing about them now as well as the other prizes I’ve left out, remind me again and again, at how important, innovation, determination and persistence are to the success of science’s leading edge.

Some laureates succeeded against all odds — never more so than Katalin Karikó, who played a key

role in the development or mRNA vaccines but met opposition constantly from colleagues and institutions along the way. What a triumph for her and science.

The spectrum of Nobel Prizes in the sciences is truly amazing and while there is no prize specifically for engineering and mathematics, both are repeatedly rewarded in the physics and chemistry prizes.

Increasingly, awards are evolving and while the Nobel Prizes remain at the top for now, the number of high-calibre competing awards by other institutions is increasing, one example of which are the Lasker Prizes, which are often followed by a Nobel Prize for the same work within a year or so.

That’s to be expected, as might be a Chinese equivalent family of prizes, given the very high level of science across the spectrum in China these days. And to think that China was but a peasant country at the time of the Korean war, albeit with a proud history of intellectual achievement in their deeper past.

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.



A picture of Joanne Young, left, working with Sykes Landscaping staff on a project. From left, Braeden Bell, Julio Viveros Hernandez, Edan Morris and Steven Novak. PIPPA DE LEONARDIS

The true beauty of a garden

The following column was written by the late Joanne Young, garden expert and coach, and was originally published in the June 6, 2024 edition of The Lake Report. The paper will be publishing some of the highlights of her column over the next few weeks to celebrate her and her love of gardening, which she shared with the whole community.



Joanne Young
Columnist

You may have picked up on it over the last few years of writing this column, but I just love to garden.

I love every part of it (though, maybe not so much the weeds).

Every aspect from the planning of a garden, to working the soil, to planting and tending to its needs.

To me it is more than a job or a hobby — it is a way of life.

I grew up on a farm, where my family of eight had a very large vegetable garden that would feed us through to the following spring, when the whole process would start over again.

From as young as I can remember, I could be found out playing in the dirt — sorry, soil ... dirt is what you sweep up or what is found under your nails. Even uncovering an earthworm was like an adventure.

I seemed to gravitate to gardening at an early age, and that love has never left me.

I love to observe the minute details, whether it is in an intricate flower or watching the way an unassuming insect travels from plant to plant.

There is a whole different

way of life happening right under our noses.

I can easily get lost in thought when I am in the garden.

One of my favourite garden quotes is by H. Fred Dale, author of “Fred Dale’s Garden Book”: “My green thumb came only as a result of the mistakes I made while learning to see things from the plant’s point of view.”

As much as I know about gardening, I find that the plants are always there reminding me that there is so much more to learn.

You may have one idea of what is best for the plant, but the plant knows better and isn’t shy to show you who’s boss. Most of the things I have learned have been through trial and error.

Even though the garden can be a frustrating place at times and seems like an overwhelming amount of work, hopefully you can take some time this summer to take in the beauty that surrounds you.

Whether your garden consists of a couple pots on a balcony or an acre of property, you need to take time to soak in its beauty.

That may involve looking closer at a flower and leaning into its perfume. It may be watching a bee as it hovers at each flower along its travels or watching a large yellow and black swallowtail butterfly float effortlessly through the blue skies.

There is always something to observe in a garden.

Audrey Hepburn, who, alongside being an actress and humanitarian, was a lover of gardens and nature, once said, “To plant a garden is to dream of tomorrow.” It really is.

There is something about a garden that gives you

hope. It makes you look forward to tomorrow and to going out for a stroll first thing in the morning to see what has changed from the day before.

Gardens have a way of growing your patience. Nothing in a garden happens overnight and there are no instant results.

It takes time for a garden to start to mature and become what you once dreamed it would be. But that is the beauty of a garden; its not always about the end result, but about the process of arriving at that destination.

Here is another quote, this time from garden writer David Hobson: “I grow plants for many reasons: to please my eye or to please my soul, to challenge the elements or to challenge my patience, for novelty or for nostalgia, but mostly for the joy in seeing them grow.”

I love to capture a garden’s beauty on with my camera. Sometimes the photos show even more details than my eyes took in and once again I am amazed by nature.

Even though the flowers in our gardens are usually planted there for our enjoyment, they all serve different purposes in nature.

Each flower is formed in different ways to attract different insects or birds. Everything in the garden works in harmony with nature, whether we are aware of it or not.

The garden is so much more than just a collection of plants. It is truly a place of wonderment.

In the words of poet Alfred Austin: “The glory of gardening: hands in the dirt, head in the sun, heart with nature. To nurture a garden is to feed not just the body, but the soul.”

Obituaries

Joanne Young



YOUNG, Joanne —
Joanne Young, 56, passed away suddenly at her home in St. Catherines on Sept. 11, 2025.

Dear daughter of the late Alfred Young and Verna (Krugel) Young. Cherished sister of Sandra Farrow (Vic), Bill Young (Cheryl), Darlene Kosonic, Yvonne Yarker, and Carol Young (Donna). Loving niece of Rose Wright and Helen Young. She also will be dearly missed by nieces, nephews, cousins, and many friends. Besides her father, Joanne is predeceased by her grandparents Charles and Ruby Young and John and Dorothy Krugel, uncles Ron Wright, Gordon Young, and John Krugel, and aunt Marion Krugel.

Joanne grew up on a farm outside of Monkton, Ontario where she developed her love of gardening and nature. After graduating from Niagara College as a horticulturist, Joanne worked as a garden designer and consultant for over 35 years at various garden centres and landscaping businesses in the Niagara area. During this time, she created thousands of landscape designs for both commercial and residential properties. In 2020, Joanne started her own business as a garden coach. She loved talking to people about their gardens and helping them make their dream gardens become a reality. Over the years, Joanne volunteered her time creating and maintaining community gardens in the Niagara area, writing the gardening column “Growing Together” for The Lake Report, and decorating houses for the Rotary Club of Niagara-on-the-Lake Holiday House Tour. Joanne was a life member and past president of the Niagara-on-the-Lake Horticultural Society. She greatly enjoyed sharing her horticultural knowledge and expertise through her classes, workshops, and presentations, inspiring both experienced and novice gardeners. When not gardening, Joanne could be found in nature with a camera capturing the beauty of God’s creation.

Joanne lived a life rooted in faith, devoted to Christ, and guided by the teachings of the Bible. An active member of The Gate Alliance Church in Niagara Falls, her unwavering faith and service were especially evident at Bible studies, during coffee and church dinners, in the church’s prayer garden, and through the many seasonal displays she created in and around the church. Joanne taught everyone around her, by example, how to live a life with kindness, strength, laughter, humility, forgiveness, and grace. She reflected God’s love in everything she did and we are better because we knew her.

Friends will be received at the Lockhart Funeral Home, 109 Montreal St., Mitchell on Wednesday, Sept. 17, 2025 from 2:30 to 4 and 6 to 8 p.m. where the funeral service will be held on Thursday, Sept. 18 at 11:00 a.m. Interment in Woodland Cemetery. A reception will follow the funeral service at the Lockhart Reception Centre. Memorial donations to The Gate Alliance Church, the Niagara-on-the-Lake Horticultural Society, or one’s choice may be made at LockhartFuneralHome.com.

Henry Winter



WINTER, Henry, 1937 – 2025 —
Heinrich (Henry) Winter was born on June 13, 1937 to Heinrich and Helene Winter in Einlage, Ukraine. In 1941, his father was killed and with his mother and siblings (Gerhardt, Gretel and Mary) he fled to Germany and then moved to Paraguay. They lived there for seven years and experienced many hardships but also adventures.

In 1955, they moved to St Catharines, Ontario and finally felt they could settle in. Dad met a lovely, godly woman through church youth events and he married her, Hedy Neufeld, in 1959. Five daughters followed (and eventually five sons-in-law) and after several moves, we ended up on a small farm in Niagara-on-the-Lake.

Dad worked mostly at GM and enjoyed that time and the friendships he made.

With the girls married, Mom and Dad moved into a smaller bungalow on Niagara Stone Rd and then to Pleasant Manor when Mom was diagnosed with dementia. Dad looked after her so well until her death in June 2016.

We noticed that dad also had dementia and after having wonderful care at home, especially from Lily and Larry, he moved into Garden City Manor. He also received such compassion, and excellent care there from all the staff. We’re so thankful!

In February, 2023, Lily passed into immortality and ran into Jesus’ arms before dad.

Dad accepted Jesus as his personal Saviour at the age of 12 and that was the thread that ran through his entire life, allowing him to be the wonderful son, brother, husband, father, worker, friend, Opa and Great Opa that he was. God has been so faithful!

Dad went to be with Jesus face to face on Sept. 10, 2025. His faith has been made sight!

Predeceased by Hedy, Lily, his brother and in-laws, Ulrich and Anneliese. He is survived by his daughters Rose (Ken) Bartel, Judy (Forrest) Miller, Lisa (Dave) Schellenberg, Heidi (Jason) Willms and son-in-law Larry Falk as well as their children and grandchildren. Also survived by his sisters, Gretel Matis and Mary (Ray) Kolochuk.

Celebration of Life service will be held at Tallman Funeral Home, 3277 King St., Vineland on Monday, Sept. 15 at 11:30 a.m. (doors open at 10:30) with a reception to follow. The service will be live streamed through Tallman Funeral Homes.

Memorial donations may be made to The Gideons International.

Online condolences at www.tallmanfuneralhomes.ca





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