



Experts, farmers divided over pesticide risk

Paige Seburn
Local Journalism Initiative
The Lake Report

How big a health risk do pesticide sprays pose in Niagara-on-the-Lake? It depends on a few key factors — and, maybe, who you ask.

While some in Ontario, such as the Ministry of Environment, Conservation and Parks, maintain that pesticides, when used properly, are safe, others are concerned about the potential risks, including a phenomenon called spray drift, which one public health expert flagged to NOTL's council — with a mixed response.

The Government of Canada defines pesticide spray drift as what happens when

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Mighty oak is four centuries old

Ontario's 2025 heritage tree pageant winner survived thanks to Epp family



The Epp family stands beside the centuries-old oak they protected for decades on their Lakeshore Road farm. From left: Andrew Epp, Scott Epp, Dan Epp, Liam Epp, Wren Epp-McGinnis, Jennifer Epp, Maeve Epp-McGinnis, Abe Epp, Idy Epp. ANDREW HAWLITZKY

Andrew Hawlitzky | The Lake Report

In 1625, Samuel de Champlain had already “discovered” what would become Canada, William Shakespeare had been dead for nine years, having created some of history’s most profound prose, and the War of 1812 was still almost 200 years away.

But along what is today Lakeshore Road, a mighty oak that now towers over the street was beginning its journey from a sapling to a centuries-old fixture in Niagara-on-the-Lake.

The towering, 400-year-old oak on the Epp family farm was

chosen for a provincial award from 80 nominations across Ontario for its age, history and connection to the 1781 Niagara land treaty.

Locals gathered to honour the late Eleanore Epp, who fiercely protected the tree, and to cel-

ebate the provincewide recognition as Ontario’s 2025 heritage tree pageant winner.

Tree Trust Ontario, which supports the preservation of mature trees across the province,

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WILD WEST OF WINE: Ferox winery’s request for estate winery status back for review

Paige Seburn
Local Journalism Initiative
The Lake Report

Niagara-on-the-Lake council pressed pause Tuesday on Ferox by Fabian Reis’s request to change its zoning

from farm winery to estate winery, voting to refer staff’s recommendation to approve the status back to staff and the agricultural committee for further review.

Ferox is 10.55 acres large, while estate wineries are

typically required to have 20 acres. Council said it wants a clearer reasoning for allowing estate-winery permissions on a smaller parcel than usual and wants growers to weigh in before any shift.

Meeting chair Coun.

Sandra O’Connor told The Lake Report that staff will likely bring the application back soon, as timelines under the Planning Act prevent major delays.

“But, I don’t know the exact date,” she added.

Coun. Erwin Wiens made the motion to refer the recommendation, saying council should hear from the committee and weigh the ongoing official plan review against Ferox’s requested acreage change.

“Some of this might be a little premature,” said Wiens at the meeting. “I just want to make sure we get it right as we move forward.”

O’Connor said council

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400-year-old tree celebrated by province

Continued from Front Page

held the ceremony on Oct. 4. The day included music, a ribbon-wrapping around the trunk and tributes from federal, provincial and municipal representatives.

Vince Mayne, Port Dalhousie chapter manager for Tree Trust Ontario, told attendees about how Eleanore Epp used to guard the 400-year-old tree.

“When the utility companies came to prune it, she would stand out here and keep them away,” said Mayne.

The tree is now protected by the Heritage Act of Ontario, which means it cannot be cut down without special permission.

“The richness of the old trees like this far outweighs the benefit of planting little saplings,” said Mayne. “It takes about 200 saplings to consume the amount of carbon that this big old tree will consume.”

The white oak, located just off Lakeshore Road, once served as a boundary marker between the Mississauga and Chippewa Nations and the English Crown.



A crowd gathers under the canopy of Niagara-on-the-Lake’s 400-year-old white oak during Saturday’s Ontario Tree Pageant celebration, recognizing the tree as the province’s 2025 heritage winner. ANDREW HAWLITZKY

It has stood through wars, storms and the growth of modern NOTL, remaining healthy thanks to decades of care from the Epp family and local arborists.

“These trees are a legacy,” said Mayne. “They were given to us, and it’s our role, when we’re no longer here, to pass that legacy along to the next generation.”

Toni Ellis, director of Tree Trust Ontario, said this year’s nominations showed the deep bond many Ontarians feel with their local trees.

CBC gardening expert and Niagara College instructor Paul Zammit, who served as one of the Tree Pageant judges, said selecting a single winner was difficult because every entry reflected extraordinary care and connection.

Each tree, he said, told a story of human effort and environmental resilience. Still, the NOTL oak stood apart for its rich history and the devotion of the Epp family, who safeguarded it.

Zammit described oaks as crucial to the natural balance of our ecosystem,

supporting hundreds of species and regulating water and carbon cycles.

“Oaks hold a real significance in supporting biodiversity,” he said.

Town leaders, including Lord Mayor Gary Zalepa and MPP Wayne Gates, thanked the Epp family for preserving the tree and its surrounding farmland.

Both spoke about the importance of environmental stewardship and ensuring Niagara’s landscape remains healthy for future generations.

During the ceremony, Abe Epp, husband of Eleanore, accepted a certificate of recognition from Sue Mingle, who presented it on behalf of MP Tony Baldinelli, who was at the late regional councillor Jim Bradley’s funeral, honouring the family’s long commitment to protecting the historic oak.

Zalepa and Gates also left soon after the ceremony to attend the funeral.

“This is really a piece of history,” said Mayne. “It’s worth stopping by and just recognizing this tree. Slowly drive along the road and enjoy it.”

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A new home away from home

Farmer Paul-André Bosc builds three-level residence for seasonal workers

Paige Seburn
Local Journalism Initiative
The Lake Report

After selling Château des Charmes winery, Niagara-on-the-Lake winemaker Paul-André Bosc is turning his attention to his family's vineyard — and the people who keep it running.

Across York Road from the winery, Bosc has built two new structures on the Paul Bosc Estate Vineyard: a multipurpose barn and a residence with space for up to 16 migrant agricultural workers, including the six who tend his vines.

"The quality of the building itself, this is not like brick veneer," Bosc said. "This was laid by masons, brick by brick."

Construction began last August and is still being finished. Bosc hired T.R. Hinan Contractors, a family business from Fonthill, to build the structures from the ground up.

"I got an affinity for family businesses," said Bosc, whose father, Paul Bosc Sr., founded Château des Charmes and helped establish Niagara's modern wine industry — a legacy explored in the new book "The Winemaker's Gamble" by NOTL author Jill Troyer, which Bosc Jr. helped oversee.

When Bosc sold Château des Charmes, one of the conditions was a 10-year grape purchase agreement with the winery.

Under the agreement, all grapes from the Paul Bosc Estate Vineyard must be sold to the winery, though Bosc keeps a small amount each year for his brother's homemade wine.

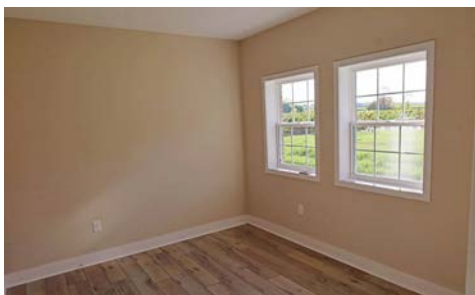
This is the second year of the deal, leaving eight years remaining.

One acre of vineyard was removed to make room for the new buildings, which sit so far back from the road that running services such as hydro and septic posed a challenge — something that added cost but, in Bosc's view, was worth doing properly.

Built with steel beams and designed to last "150, 200 years," the residence spans two floors and a basement, with four bedrooms, a large open-concept kitchen and shared washrooms on each floor.

"It's got that university dorm kind of feel," he said.

The upper floor — identical to the main level but not yet occupied — will eventu-



Top: From left, Daniel Regalado, farmworker, Paul-André Bosc, vineyard owner and José Alberto Rodriguez, farmworker, in front of the new residence for farmworkers at Paul Bosc Estate Vineyard on York Road. Inside the new house are two floors and a basement, four bedrooms, an open-concept kitchen and shared washrooms. PAIGE SEBURN

ally be rented to another farmer needing housing for six to eight workers. Bosc said he plans to lease it as a full unit, not by the room, and has not yet decided on a farmer or price.

Each worker has a deep personal closet and views of the farm and escarpment. The shared kitchen includes two stoves, two fridges, a microwave and a dishwasher. Each floor has its own air-conditioning unit.

The basement includes a laundry and wash-up area so workers can clean up before going upstairs.

"During the day, if somebody needs to go to the washroom, quite frankly, you don't have to go in the field," Bosc said. "The house is right there."

Daniel Regalado, who has worked on the farm for 13 years, said it's nice to have a proper place to wash up before entering the residence. He described the new residence as "very new and very nice," and said that every season Bosc provides "good conditions."

"We are very happy with him," Regalado added.

Bosc said comfort and routine are key to keeping

his six-day-a-week team strong. He encourages them to relax and socialize on the property and said guests are welcome to stay overnight if anyone has been drinking.

Beside the residence, the workers maintain a garden planted with fruits and vegetables. Bosc said the produce belongs to them, a deal he made when they arrived in the spring.

With the square footage, Bosc said, the space could fit four men per room, but he keeps it at a maximum of two in each. Bosc has six men living in the residence, although there's room for two more, because he doesn't want to disrupt the team dynamic.

"Cause guys are a team, right?" he said.

Many of his workers have been with the family for decades.

"José Alberto is second generation," Bosc said. "His dad, Augustine, still works, so I have a father-son team here. And Augustine's been 22, 23 years."

"It's very important to maintain that consistency," he said.

The property, purchased by his parents in 1982, still

has vines from the early 1980s. "That whole block right in front here, that's original block Chardonnay," Bosc said.

"There are very, very few vineyards in the Niagara region that can brag about that — and what it's showing is that my dad's philosophy about sustainable agriculture paid off."

José Alberto Rodriguez, who has worked on the farm for 10 years, said, "Everything here is really good."

"We are a good team, working together like friends," he added.

Regalado agreed. "Like family, you know?"

The six workers will head home in about a month but plan to return next year. Bosc, who now lives on a neighbouring property on Queenston Road, said he and his son plan to move back into his late parents' home once it's renovated.

"Once me and Alex (Bosc's son) are living in the main house, then this is like a true way of life," he said. "Not only does the farm owner live on the property, but all the workers live on the property."

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Mapping out history



Niagara-on-the-Lake's become a veritable hub for creatives this fall, as the town plays host to Ontario Culture Days from Sept. 19 to Oct. 12. Over at the Niagara Pumphouse Arts Centre, artist Oluseye is hosting a collaborative community installation, "Crown Act." It's a picture of a man's braided hairstyle, inspired by escape maps hidden in the braids of enslaved African Americans. Here, Oluseye works on the installation with assistant Joshua Rille. DAVE VAN DE LAAR

Farmers' market to triple in size next year

Andrew Hawlitzky
The Lake Report

The Garrison Village market wrapped up its summer season Saturday, marking its final day in the small parking lot it's occupied for several years before it relocates to a new, larger home next year — in front of the future Clayfield Hotel.

The weekly market on Garrison Village Drive ran 20 weeks this year with about 15 vendors, all from the Niagara region.

Organizer Sandra Neufeld said the market will expand to host up to 40 vendors next year once construction in the Village development is finished, a move she says will give both shoppers and sellers more room and visibility.

"We're definitely in transition right now because of the construction, but it's gone well," said Neufeld. "We've had a great sense of community here."

The market has operated in several temporary spots during ongoing development at Clayfield Commons, an eight-acre mixed-use project, anchored by the future 102-room Clayfield Hotel.



Brenna Udovic, owner of the Raven's Wealth, says she plans on returning for next year's market, when it grows to host up to 40 vendors. ANDREW HAWLITZKY

The new space is expected to open by next season, giving the market a new home, closer to the main road — the hotel's parking lot.

All vendors at the market are Niagara-based, which Neufeld said makes it unique among other vendor markets in the area.

"Here, every farmer is truly local and that's something people appreciate."

Vendors said attendance was slower this year in part due to the construction and poor visibility from Niagara Stone Road, but credited the community atmosphere for keeping spirits up.

The market has been around in Niagara-on-the-Lake for roughly 20 years, founded as part of the Village development to

connect local growers with residents.

Rose Bartel, one of its longtime vendors, retired last year after 18 seasons but still occasionally contributes flowers through other sellers at the market.

"It's been slow this year, but the people around here all get along," said Bill Schultz of Niagara Green.

Schultz said he hopes better road signage next season will help draw more visitors from traffic on Niagara Stone Road.

First-time vendor Brenna Udovic of the Raven's Wealth said she was grateful for strong customer support despite construction challenges.

"It's been lovely. The organization's amazing

and there have been a lot of happy faces this season," said Udovic.

Udovic, who sells honey and home décor, said she plans to return next year, considering the amount of returning customers she has gotten to her new business.

Other longtime vendors reflected on how the market has changed over the years.

"Every year is a little bit different," said Kim McQuhae of Gryphon Ridge Highlands, who has been attending this market for more than 10 years.

"We used to have people come, sit and have breakfast while the flower vendors sold out by 10. It felt like a community gathering, and I think that's what we need to rebuild."

McQuhae said she remains optimistic the larger site will help bring back that spirit.

Neufeld said next year's market will begin again at the end of May, as usual.

"I just appreciate the community supporting this group of people that are here to serve their community," she said.

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Pellet gun causes \$2K damage to car, police say

Paige Seburn
Local Journalism Initiative
The Lake Report

A car sustained about \$2,000 in damage after being struck by what police believe was a pellet gun in Niagara-on-the-Lake.

Niagara Regional Police said officers were called to East and West Line between Grantham Townline Road and Concession 6 Road on Friday, Oct. 3, after the damage to a white 2015



A Facebook photo shows damage to the vehicle.

Volkswagen Jetta was discovered and reported later on.

No one was hurt and the incident is not being called a shooting, "as a firearm was not involved," said Stephanie Sabourin, spokesperson for the Niagara Regional Police Service.

She said police do not believe the car was targeted and that there is no ongoing threat to public safety.

"The circumstances remain under investigation," said Sabourin. "This appears to have been an isolated incident."

No suspects have been identified. Police are asking anyone who lives nearby or was driving in the area that night to check their security or dash camera footage for anything suspicious.

Anyone with information can contact police or leave an anonymous tip with Crime Stoppers of Niagara online or at 1-800-222-8477. Crime Stoppers offers cash rewards for tips that lead to an arrest.

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Experts say **pesticide drift** poses serious threat, while farmers question the science

Continued from Front Page

a pesticide stays in the air long enough to drift off the area it's being sprayed and onto other areas by accident.

Donald Cole is a public health medicine consultant and professor emeritus at the University of Toronto. He describes pesticide spray drift as "the aerial movement and unintentional deposit of pesticide outside the target area."

He said studies from Canada and the United States have found that people living near vineyards and orchards can be exposed to pesticide residues.

"Drift depends on many things, like weather conditions and the type of spray equipment being used. Because spray drifts downwind from the place being treated, the farther away you are from the area being sprayed, the less drift there is," the government states on its website.

There are two types of pesticide drift, Cole said: particle drift and vapour drift.

Particle drift happens when spray droplets or dust move beyond the area being treated. Vapour drift occurs when pesticides evaporate and move as invisible gases, sometimes long after spraying.

Cole was invited by Ed Werner of Brox Company Limited to address these concerns in front of NOTL council during the town's committee of the whole planning meeting in September.

Werner is in a legal dispute with Konzelmann Winery and the town over planning and enforcement.

He asked Cole to outline potential health risks from pesticide drift while discussing conflicts between farming operations and nearby residents.

He told council the studies he references show people living near vineyards and orchards can experience pesticide spray drift, though he said there are no studies on vineyard guests.

"What are the potential health effects of exposure to pesticides? There are immediate poisoning (such as) headaches, skin rashes, breathing problems. Skin rashes were particularly noted among children in a school next to a spraying operation in vineyards in France," he added.

His presentation warned that other potential health risks of exposure to pes-



Pesticide spray drift depends on multiple factors, like weather conditions and the type of spray equipment being used, the Government of Canada says. FACEBOOK

“What are the potential health effects of exposure to pesticides? There are immediate poisoning, headaches, skin rashes, breathing problems. Skin rashes were particularly noted among children in a school next to a spraying operation in vineyards in France.”

DONALD COLE
PUBLIC HEALTH CONSULTANT

ticides also include birth defects, spontaneous abortions and different types of cancer.

That's when Coun. Erwin Wiens asked to stop the clock: "We're dealing with a site-specific plan here and this is a planning study. I'm trying to understand the correlation."

Wiens, also a local farmer, questioned Cole's remarks, as he brought no evidence of improper spraying or harm in town.

"To make that allegation that that's going to happen — it just wasn't right. It wasn't fair. It was meant to further a personal agenda as opposed to using proper science," he said in an interview.

As housing, business and tourism expand into agricultural areas, Cole said farmers now carry more responsibility to keep bystanders safe.

Wiens said farmers are licensed and trained to use pesticides safely and complaints are looked into when reported: "We want to make sure we investigate that."

In Ontario, only "appropriately trained individuals," including certified farmers, can use commercial pesticides, said the ministry in an email.

It said pesticide drift is not a concern when products are used according to federal label directions — a requirement for certified farmers.

Label precautions include: requiring the use of certain types of equipment, spraying only at certain times of the day, specifying the amount that may be used for a given area and establishing untreated areas, called buffer zones, to protect

nearby areas, said the ministry.

Other label requirements include avoiding spray-drift-causing weather conditions and spraying near others.

Wiens argued there is no need for concern if rules are followed. He noted his own farm borders a school and said he has never sprayed during class hours.

"I would never do that. We go out at night," he said.

At Southbrook Winery, proprietor Bill Redelmeier says he's taking no chances.

He says he stopped using agricultural chemicals two decades ago out of concern for his workers.

"I didn't think it was right for me to ask my workers to do something that I wasn't willing to do," he said.

Southbrook, which became Canada's first winery certified both organic and biodynamic in 2008, has built its philosophy around sustainable viticulture and "light-on-the-land" wine-making, principles Redelmeier said reflect his commitment to quality, worker safety and the environment.

"What we're using is way less toxic than the conventional," he said, acknowledging organic methods are not risk-free, but pose "way less of a concern."

Wiens argued the difference is overstated.

"Whether it's organic or conventional, they are all restricted pesticides that have to be applied with a licence," he said. "The risk still exists."

Canada's Pest Management Regulatory Agency approves or denies pesticide use, assessing health and environmental risks from spray drift before allowing use, the ministry said.

Regardless of the type, pesticides are essential for keeping crops alive, said Wiens.

"I don't know of anywhere where they're not using pesticides in the globe," he said, adding sprays prevent rot, mildew and leaf curl — which can devastate orchards.

Wiens said conventional fruit looks cleaner and shows less rot than organic fruit, but added that Southbrook is "filling a niche."

Redelmeier, who focuses on quality over price, said the trade-off is worth it — accepting lower yields and less uniform fruit to prioritize quality and safer working conditions.

"If we stop competing on price, then we can start making big changes," Redelmeier said.

How often vineyards are sprayed depends on pest pressure, grape variety and weather, with most applications from late spring through summer.

The ministry encourages farmers to manage pests in smarter ways — such as preventative pruning and regular monitoring — so they can spray less.

Using prevention-first methods not only helps to reduce drift, Cole said, it "can also reduce farm production costs, benefitting the farm operation and reducing exposure to pesticides."

Modern equipment, safer sprays, waiting the proper time before farmers return, keeping a safe distance between crops and guests and avoiding windy or unstable weather also reduce risk, he said.

The general public should "recognize and adopt a precautionary approach to toxics use in their own activities," Cole added.

Although legally not required, "the ministry encourages growers to communicate with their neighbours regarding the use of pesticides, such as voluntarily notifying adjacent properties of the application," it said.

If residents suspect pesticide spray drift exposure, they can report it to the ministry through its public reporting hotline or Spills Action Centre toll-free, 24/7 at 1-866-MOE-TIPS (1-866-663-8477) or 1-800-268-6060. Or, online at report-pollution.ene.gov.on.ca.

Or, Health Canada at canada.ca/en/health-canada/services/about-pesticides/are-pesticides-safe.

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Town takes another crack at official plan

Dan Smeen
Local Journalism Initiative
The Lake Report

The second draft of Niagara-on-the-Lake's new official plan is out now and available to view — a 405-page document that has, so far, received limited public feedback.

Kirsten McCauley, the town's director of community and development services and one of the plan's key architects, told The Lake Report on Monday that the town received "a few comments," but added, "Obviously, it was just released on (Oct. 1)."

McCauley said staff reviewed comments on the first draft and tried to incorporate them where it could into this second version.

She noted the town received valuable feedback on the first draft from the agricultural community and the environmental advisory committee, and held discussions with local wineries.

However, many people have not yet had time to read the updated draft.

"The second draft of the official plan is a substantial document, and I'm still reviewing it in detail," said



Glendale resident Steve Hardaker says the draft official plan looks good, but he's worried about the town adhering to secondary plans. SUPPLIED

Coun. Adriana Vizzari.

Lidija Biro, head of Seniors for Climate in Niagara, shared a similar sentiment, saying that neither herself nor fellow organizer Frances Stoker has had a chance to look at the document.

One person who has reviewed the new draft is Steve Hardaker, a director with the Niagara-on-the-Lake Residents Association. Hardaker, who lives in Glendale, said he is generally supportive of the updated plan.

"I think generally I'm very supportive of it," he said. "Of course, the details are in the secondary plans ... The secondary plans get

down into the weeds."

Glendale has had a secondary plan in place since 2010. The current draft of the town's official plan indicates it will update that plan "as quickly as possible."

However, McCauley said the Glendale secondary plan is currently under appeal.

According to the second draft, Glendale is expected to be the fastest-growing neighbourhood in Niagara-on-the-Lake over the next 25 years, in both population and employment.

The plan identifies the area as a "designated growth area development" and a "strategic growth area," where highrise development may be permitted under the policies of the Glendale secondary plan.

Hardaker supports growth in Glendale, a largely undeveloped area, but says he's against highrise buildings.

"The general concern is building heights," he said. "What people in Glendale feel is that we support development because it brings amenities."

He said residents welcome additions such as a grocery store and schools, but prefer low-density development.

Hardaker said the plan will affect every neighbourhood in Niagara-on-the-Lake, including Glendale. He cautioned that while the plan may look good on paper, "the devil can be in the details."

"There's a little concern that council will approve development that's outside of the secondary plan," he said, pointing to approvals of a 10-storey building north of the Queen Elizabeth Way.

The second draft aims to align the town's current 2019 official plan with the 2022 Niagara Region official plan and the 2024 provincial planning statement. The first draft was released in July.

The town will host open houses on the plan on Oct. 15 and 16.

On Oct. 15, sessions will take place at the NOTL Community Centre in Old Town from 4 to 5:30 p.m. and again from 6:30 to 8 p.m., with a presentation at 7 p.m.

On Oct. 16, the open house will be held at the Mary Snider Room in Centennial Arena in Virgil at the same times, with a presentation also beginning at 7 p.m.

daniel@niagaranow.com



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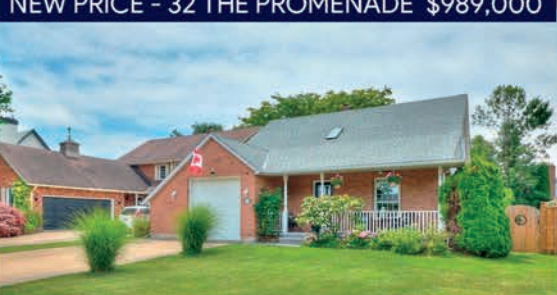
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Chautauqua wants secondary plan commitment

Dan Smeenck
Local Journalism Initiative
The Lake Report

The Chautauqua Residents Association says it remains unsatisfied with what it sees as the town’s ongoing lack of commitment to preserving the neighbourhood’s historic character, just days after the release of the second draft of the town’s official plan.

The new draft, released last Wednesday, states the town “will prepare secondary plans or other appropriate studies” for Chautauqua, Queen-Picton and Virgil. But the association says that wording still falls short.

Since the first draft was released in July, the group has questioned what it sees as the town’s shift away from a firm commitment made in the 2019 official plan.

At that time, the town pledged to develop a secondary plan for Chautauqua — a process the association sees as key to protecting the area’s heritage.

Instead, the July draft said a secondary plan would be “considered.” Now, while the second draft includes



Chautauqua Residents Association president Weston Miller says the area deserves a secondary plan.
DAN SMEENCK

stronger wording, it leaves room for alternatives, which has not eased the association’s concerns.

“It seems favourable,” said Weston Miller, president of the Chautauqua Residents Association, referring to the mention of a secondary plan in the latest version.

“Although it does state a secondary plan or other appropriate studies will be developed for Chautauqua, it’s the ‘or other appropriate studies.’”

Town planner Kirsten McCauley said other planning tools could be used to preserve heritage areas like Chautauqua. That flexibility is why the current language was chosen, she said.

“Some of those could be

like a character study ... very specific policies for that specific area in the absence of a full secondary plan.”

She said later that “cultural heritage landscape policies, or other site specific policies with direction for a specific area” should also be considered.

McCauley added that secondary plans are “pretty intensive processes” and pointed to the ongoing heritage conservation district study in Queen-Picton as an example of another preservation tool.

Following the release of the second draft, the residents’ association sent a letter to the town expressing concern over the wording. The group emphasized the legal weight of a secondary plan under the Ontario Planning Act.

“A secondary plan is a statutory instrument under the Planning Act,” the letter reads. “Once adopted, it forms part of the official plan, establishes enforceable policies and carries substantial weight at the Ontario Land Tribunal.

“In contrast, ‘other studies’ ... do not have the same legal status.”

Miller said no formal alternative to a secondary plan has been proposed to the association. He noted that while several ideas have been floated, none have been confirmed.

“We want something meaningful,” he said.

In response to the letter, Lord Mayor Gary Zalepa said: “We appreciate the engagement and feedback, and all submissions will be reviewed and comments will form part of the next report to council.”

The second draft comes about a month before the town is set to submit the official plan to the province on Nov. 1.

Two open houses are scheduled for resident feedback: Oct. 15 at the NOTL Community Centre and Oct. 16 in the Mary Snider Room at Centennial Arena. Each location will host two sessions from 4 to 5:30 p.m. and 6:30 to 8 p.m., with a presentation at 7 p.m.

Chautauqua is known for its historic architecture and unique “hub and spoke” layout. The neighbourhood’s origins date back to the late 19th century.

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Open houses for old hospital and official plan

Dan Smeenk
Local Journalism Initiative
The Lake Report

Niagara-on-the-Lake is holding two sets of open houses on Oct. 15 and 16 to gather public feedback on two long-standing issues: the town's new official plan and the future of the former hospital site.

"Residents will have opportunities to learn more and share feedback on both the official plan and the former hospital site project," the town said in a news release.

"While the official plan sets the long-term vision for how the town will grow and develop, the former hospital site is a key property that represents a significant opportunity for community use and redevelopment."

The new official plan updates the town's 2019 version to align with regional and provincial regulations, including the 2022 Niagara official plan and the 2024 provincial planning statement.



Town open houses for the old hospital are Oct. 15 and 16.

Covering a wide range of responsibilities, the official plan guides town policies for five years and makes projections 25 years into the future, including expectations for how NOTL's population will grow. The town released the second draft of the plan last Wednesday.

The former hospital site, located at 176 Wellington St., once housed a medical centre that included a hospital. The town acquired 2.32 acres of the property from Niagara

Health Services in 2018.

Today, the site includes a Niagara Region EMS centre, an ambulance station, a registered massage therapist's office, a telecommunications tower and the Royal Oak Community School.

The town is now seeking public input on how to use the remaining land. The official plan designates the area for open space and community facilities, while the zoning bylaw lists it as institutional. However, the town said changes could be

considered "based on community feedback."

Suggestions for the site include a wellness centre and a community arts hub.

"We're looking forward to getting additional feedback through those open houses," said Kirsten McCauley, the town's director of community and development services.

All sessions will take place at local community facilities:

Oct. 15 – Niagara-on-the-Lake Community Centre
Former hospital site: 10 a.m. to 1 p.m. (Simpson Room), and 4 p.m. to 5:30 p.m. (Auditorium)

Official plan: 4 p.m. to 5:30 p.m. and 6:30 p.m. to 8 p.m., with a presentation at 7 p.m.

Oct. 16 – Mary Snider Room, Centennial Arena, Virgil

Official plan: 4 p.m. to 5:30 p.m. and 6:30 p.m. to 8 p.m., with a presentation at 7 p.m.

Former hospital site: 6 p.m. to 8 p.m.

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Auditorium (14 Anderson Lane)**

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RSVP and question submissions are encouraged. Scan the QR code or visit www.notl.com/recreation-events/community-initiatives-events

SCAN





The Niagara Apothecary is one Doors Open location.

Explore these 13 local spots for Doors Open on Oct. 18

Staff
The Lake Report

More than a dozen spots across Niagara-on-the-Lake will be opening up their doors to the public for a day of discovery, history and architecture.

Doors Open Ontario will be hosted in town on Saturday, Oct. 18, with 13 local sites offering free admission to guests to come inside and hear from knowledgeable guides about the living and built heritage of these places.

Here is the list of sites, most of which will be open from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m.:

- The Exchange Brewery** (opens 11 a.m.), 7 Queen St.
- Niagara-on-the-Lake Museum**, 43 Castlereagh St.
- McFarland House**, 15927 Niagara Pkwy.
- Niagara Apothecary**, 5 Queen St.
- Niagara District Court House**, 26 Queen St.
- Niagara Lodge No. 2**, 153 King St.
- Niagara Pumphouse Arts Centre**, 247 Ricardo St.
- Lawn Bowling Club**, 14 Anderson Ln.
- Ravine Vineyard Estate Winery**, 1366 York Rd.
- RiverBrink Art Museum**, 116 Queenston St.
- Shaw Festival Theatre**, 10 Queen's Parade
- St. Andrew's Presbyterian Church**, 323 Simcoe St.
- Willowbank**, 14487 Niagara River Pkwy.

Harp 'willing to pay' for permanent patio

Dan Smeenk
Local Journalism Initiative
The Lake Report

The owner of a well-known pub in Niagara-on-the-Lake is asking the town for permission to make its COVID-era patio a permanent fixture.

Jovie Joki, owner of the Irish Harp, and planner Dan Ramanko brought the request to the town's general committee of the whole in September.

They're proposing a cash-in-lieu payment to offset the parking revenue the town would lose from the three parking spots the patio currently sits on, plus three extra spots they want for the business.

In exchange, the town wants \$436,000 from the Irish Harp.

The patio was first introduced in 2020 under the town's new temporary patio program, created to help restaurants and bars survive provincial restrictions on indoor dining during the pandemic.



The Irish Harp went to council last week to request that their rear patio be permanent. It was installed during COVID as a temporary measure. DAN SMEENK

Ramanko, a planner with Better Neighbourhoods Inc. said under the Irish Harp's proposal, it would convert the parking stalls at the back of the property to a permanent patio.

With the temporary patio program set to end in December, Ramanko said now is the right time to formalize the patio's status.

NOTL council voted to shut down the temporary patio program earlier this year.

Many of these temporary patios were set up on parking spaces in Old Town, making them the subject of conversations around

lost parking revenue for the town, as well as concerns about how fair the program was for NOTL's business owners.

On top of the three spots that would be replaced with the rear patio, the Irish Harp also wants three extra parking spots, which would remain parking spots but be used by those staying in short-term rentals on the Irish Harp property.

The town quoted the pub a cash-in-lieu agreement of \$436,000 to offset the lost revenue of six parking spots.

Joki told The Lake Report the pub has been "trying to

work with the town for the last five years" to make the patio permanent and was originally quoted at around \$300,000 for the six spots.

She said the cost of payments per parking spot has risen by \$25,000 since then.

"It has gone up significantly," she said, but added, "We are willing to pay to have permanent status."

Joki told The Lake Report on Tuesday that the pub has applied for the cash-in-lieu parking spots but hasn't heard back from the town. She added she's unsure whether the quoted amount is negotiable.

During the September meeting with council, Ramanko said the temporary patio has run "without any negative impacts" since its introduction — no one has complained about the noise, lack of parking, or other issues, he said.

He argued it brings both business and social benefits, serving as a pet-friendly space that adds vibrancy to the Old Town.

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Left: Low net winners Joe Interisano, left, and John Reynolds, right, flank Woofs Cup champion Jim Meszaros and league organizer Bill Katrynuk. Middle: Woofs Champion Ted Carmichael. Right: Ted Wiens was crowned the Woofs league's Golden Dog, for players over 80. The club wraps up its 150th season with Thursday men's league this week. SUPPLIED



Golf leagues wrap up club's 150th season

Kevin MacLean
The Lake Report

You can't tell from the balmy weather earlier this week, but another golf season is coming to a close.

Most of the leagues at the Niagara-on-the-Lake Golf Club have wrapped up and already held their year-end banquets, with only the Thursday men's league still to come.

This week marks the traditional "Magwood's Revenge" outing, wherein course superintendent Mike Magwood and his merry band of greens-keepers take great joy in

adding tough twists and some nearly impossible hole positions to challenge the gents.

Next week is the men's banquet finale, which will include long-drive, putting and closest to the pin from 100 yards contests, plus a prize table.

Meanwhile, last Thursday in the final day of the men's league during the club's 150th anniversary season, club champion James Grigjanis-Meusel and seniors champ Stephen Warboys were in fine form, each carding even-par 36 to earn low gross honours.

Ken Willms (29) and

Jack Hanna (30) were low net winners.

Jim Garrett sank the longest putt on #2 and Willms outdrove everyone else on #3. Stephen Fraser was closest to the pin on #4 and Mike Henry was closest on #9.

Three players scooped \$35 gross skins, led by Grigjanis-Meusel who had an eagle 3 on the par-5 third hole. Mike Eagen birdied #6 and Paul Dickson had one on #7 to round out the skins winners.

Net skins worth \$45 went to Ward Simpson (#1), Nick Miller (#5), Matt Coffee (#7) and Henry on #9.

Last week, the Tuesday Woofs league honoured some of its seasonal winners.

Ray Lauge won the Legends Cup, a low net competition and Eagen won the prize for low gross.

Sharp-shooting Jim Meszaros, who dominated the Woofs league leaderboard for much of the season, was the Woofs Cup winner. John Reynolds and Joe Interisano were low net winners.

Other winners were Ted Carmichael (Top Dog) and Ted Wiens (Golden Dog, for players over age 80), singled out for contributions to the league and season-long participation.



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Estate winery request sparks concerns

Continued from Front Page

needs more detail.

“I think that it’s good that staff comes up with some more robust justification for why the acreage is almost half of what the generally accepted criteria is for an estate winery,” said O’Connor.

She also flagged risks. “Some of the council’s main concerns is the potential fragmentation of our agricultural land. If we reduce it so that estate wineries can have such smaller acreages, what is that going to do overall to our agricultural land capability?” she said.

Coun. Gary Burroughs, who seconded the motion, said he’s “very pleased” with the referral and respects “whatever it is” the committee has to say. “Because they’re the ones that are growers.”

“If it’s suddenly reduced so the package size only has to be 10 acres instead of 20, there could be estate wineries popping up everywhere,” he said in an interview.

He said growers should be involved in these sorts of decisions. “They know the effect these kinds of changes



would have on their properties.”

All but one councillor, Coun. Wendy Cheropita, voted to support the referral.

The next day, Cheropita told The Lake Report she now thinks it’s “probably not a bad idea, now that I’ve given it some thought.”

“I think the council felt there was some work that needed to be done,” she said. “To make sure that the estate application met the standards of the official plan.”

Cheropita noted the owners, Fabian and Stephanie Reis, have more vineyard land overall, but only part is linked to the Ferox site.

She said the committee might argue that more acres could be tied to the property, like the vineyards it owns at the former Harvest Barn property across the street.

“What I don’t understand is why the additional acres

have not already been sort of attached to the Ferox property, so this could have gone through,” she said.

Staff’s recommendation report said the winery would use its meeting room for “a maximum total occupancy of 20 patrons” at any one time, 25 persons less than the initial request.

“Hospitality for 20 people only — that’s probably the lowest request we’ve ever had,” said Cheropita.

But O’Connor said that limit may not last.

“If they redo it — which it does need redoing — would that allow for more people?”

“How does that impact everything?” she questioned.

The Lake Report previously investigated Ferox’s bylaw record, confirming earlier this year that in 2022 and 2023, the winery appeared to be operating akin to an estate winery, outside its approved zoning.

When asked whether council is concerned Ferox’s 20-person limit may not last, given the winery’s past complaints regarding abiding by bylaws, O’Connor said that uncertainty is part of council’s concern.

“And why we want to have more justification from staff on this,” she added. “There may be offside discussions, as well, with planning staff.”

Cheropita said council can’t assume anything and “we have to accept every application that comes forward.”

Ferox’s owners “have been actually a good partner through this application process,” she added.

“Maybe both parties have, you know, learned some things along the way.”

Cheropita said the owners have agreed to follow the rules and limit the winery’s hospitality area to 20 people: “I won’t judge them on what happened in the past because we’ve gone beyond that, now we’re looking forward.”

Business in small towns like NOTL once ran on handshakes and trust, she said, but the town has since evolved to follow a process with clearer rules and planning regulations.

“We make sure that our businesses adhere to it,” she said.

The owners did not respond to a request for comment by press time.

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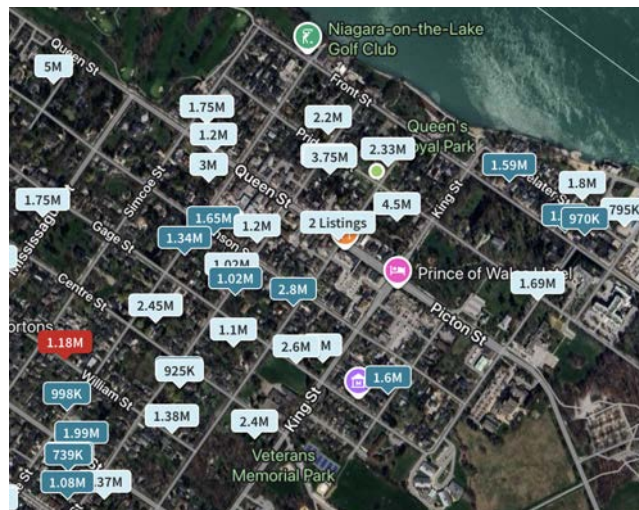
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Kyra Simone, Tim Taylor, Jill Troyer,
Garth Turner, Dave Van de Laar, Joanne Young
and many more members of the community.



Love it or list it, NOTL



garth@garth.ca



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Kudos for saving the David Secord House

Dear editor:

At a time when so much of our past is quietly disappearing, it is heartening to see that Rainer Hummel of Hummel Properties Inc. has stepped forward to preserve one of Niagara's most important heritage sites — the David Secord House on Paxton Lane.

Built in the late 18th century, the Secord House is a rare survivor of early Georgian architecture, with metre-thick fieldstone walls and ties to some of the most dramatic chapters of our history.

Local tradition holds that Laura Secord herself stopped here during her legendary 1813 trek, and that it



The David Secord House in St. Davids. DAN SMEENK

was used as headquarters by high-ranking British officers Francis De Rottenburg and Gordon Drummond during the War of 1812.

But this house is more than stone and mortar — it is a touchstone of community memory. It anchors the historic character of St. Davids, linking us to the areas earliest settlement and reminding us of the resilience of the Secord family, whose roots run deep in this region.

Yet, its current state is a textbook case of demolition by neglect. Too many of Niagara's historic homes have fallen this way — allowed to decay until demolition is the only option left. This cycle erodes not just our built environment but our collective identity.

Preservation is not nostalgia. It is an act of respect — for the people who came before us, and for the generations who will follow.

The David Secord House deserves to stand, not as a ruin, but as a living testament to the history that shaped us.

*Friends of Laura Secord
NOTL*

Deliberate actions of council led to lawsuits

Dear editor:

There has been some online chatter in regards to our town council resolving the two recent lawsuits.

But the real issue here is not the settlements. It is how we got here — and who is responsible.

In 2018, voters elected a council that promised to take actions directed at one individual, my friend Benny Marotta. From the outset, this was a dangerous path.

Municipal Councils are supposed to govern fairly, for the benefit of the entire community. They are not empowered to weaponize bylaws or council decisions to pursue political vendettas.

Yet isn't that what happened? The former council's actions not only struck me as politically motivated, but a precursor to what courts might recognize as acting in "bad faith." You cannot vote for people who engage in such conduct and then complain when taxpayers bear the financial consequences of their actions.

Taxpayers aren't just innocent bystanders here — you

elected them.

What makes it worse is that this wasn't an entirely rookie council fumbling in the dark. Mayor Betty Disero had 26 years on Toronto city council and even ran for mayor there. Gary Burroughs spent a decade as lord mayor and another 14 years as a regional councillor, including four as regional chair.

And then there was lawyer Stuart McCormack, who put together early drafts of the resolution in support of the interim control by-law that was the centre of our case, despite, to my knowledge, having no municipal law experience. Nevertheless, they pressed ahead with the interim control bylaw anyway without seeking proper legal advice in advance.

With such backgrounds, the argument that "they didn't know better" simply doesn't hold water with me.

In my opinion, these were not rookies making innocent mistakes; these were seasoned officials making deliberate choices.

Leadership is about setting the course, and as far as I'm concerned, the leadership on that council steered the town down the path that resulted in the settlements reached last month.

Clear examples of problematic conduct occurred on Dec. 5, 2018, during what was billed as an "emergency" meeting. That night three items were passed:

1. An interim control by-law, which Ontario's highest court has since struck down as unlawful.
2. A tree bylaw, not crafted for environmental purposes, but to initially target a single resident. Ironically, this bylaw reduced our tree canopy because the town stopped planting trees and diverted funds to prosecuting private property owners, who now don't plant trees, so they don't have issues later.
3. A resolution to partner with SORE to oppose Benny, an action that has cost taxpayers millions.

In my view, each of these measures was ill-advised. Taken together, they exposed the town to significant legal and financial risk.

For context, only a handful of municipalities in Ontario have ever been hit with bad-faith lawsuits. Niagara-on-the-Lake has had two, emerging from actions taken during one council session.

And yet, some of the same people are back, organizing a residents' association and advocating to elect another slate of councillors that could end up like the former batch. If voters let that happen, then they should have their eyes wide open to the potential risks that lie ahead.

At the end of the day, accountability rests with voters. If you choose candidates who promise quick fixes or politically motivated crusades, don't be surprised when the law catches up and the bill arrives at your doorstep.

Governance requires responsibility, transparency and respect for the law. Niagara-on-the-Lake deserves leaders who understand that — and voters who demand it.

*Rainer Hummel
NOTL*



This week's riddle is "Jeopardy!" style.
Category: THE COMMON DEFENCE

This traditional excuse for why you don't have your homework is in the original "Saved by the Bell" theme song.

Last issue category: "HAVING FUN"

Clue: A startup may turn to this, a general term for financing by smaller dollar amounts from many people.

Answer: What is crowdfunding?

Answered first by: Sue Rautenberg

Also answered correctly (in order) by: Kimberly Amaral, Bob Wheatley, Lynda Collet, Catherine Clarke, Jane Morris, Jeff Lake, Howard Jones, Wade Durling, Randie Topps, Esther VanGorder, Jim Dandy, Claudia Grimwood, Edna Groff, David Spencer, Tuija Johansson

Email answers to editor@niagaranow.com, with your name, for a chance to win a \$25 Irish Harp Pub gift card every week. (Subject line: Riddle me this)

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New Royal George threatens NOTL’s architectural identity



Brian Marshall
Columnist

“Niagara-on-the-Fake” was a descriptor that the late Peter Stokes would acerbically apply to certain architectural designs and buildings in this town.

But, honest to goodness, if I have to hear one more person who lacks the expertise that this eminent restoration architect possessed — while simultaneously implying they know where and when Stokes would have applied the label — it is apt to make the top of my head explode.

Peter John Stokes (not “John Peter” as has been recently suggested by the Shaw’s architects) had a deep understanding of good architectural design, complemented by a profound knowledge of heritage conservation.

It was the mastery of his chosen disciplines that underwrote Peter’s condemnation of specific historical

replica building designs while, at the same time, allowing him to draw the New Traditional neoclassical façade of the Royal George.

To those lacking his professional acumen, this could be interpreted as contradictory — “do as I say not as I do” — but, that is not the case.

During the second decade of the 20th century, while scholarly folks were still wrestling with its definition, Stokes was implementing how understanding “place identity” should inform design — particularly as it related to the precepts of heritage conservation in an urban setting.

In my reading, perhaps the most concise scholarly definition of place identity can be found in Harriet Wennberg’s 2015 “In Place: A Study of Building and Identity,” wherein she writes: “In the architectural sense, place identity is the sum of specific material components and features, which provoke non-material symbolic meanings for collective groups of inhabitants and users. The existence and essential role of these material components and features mean that the generally agreed upon distinct identity of a place can be literally perceived and defined.”



Brian Marshall warns of disruption to Queen Street’s streetscape.

A “place” may occasionally be a single building, sometimes a landscape but, most often, a cluster of buildings that comprise a streetscape which is bound together and realized as “distinctive” by material components people can easily recognize — such as shape, form, size, texture, materials, colours and details.

Moreover, there is a relationship that develops over time between those who live and associate with a distinctive “place” and the place itself — something that engenders a communal sense of belonging and purpose.

It is what Wennberg describes as, “Place identity in the built environment arises from both continuity and distinctive characteristics, and concerns the meaning and significance

of places for their inhabitants and users.”

Thus we can understand why Stokes might feel comfortable designing a theatre facade after the neoclassical tradition — particularly given that its shape, form, size, texture, materials, colours and details echo and complement those distinctive components which engender Queen Street’s place identity while adding to the established relationship between people and the “place.”

While, in the case of a historical replica design — should the reproduction be so accurate as to render it virtually indistinguishable from an actual heritage build and/or if it was incongruous within an existing neighbourhood or streetscape thereby using isolation to suggest an historical building which pre-dated the surrounding buildings — he might feel completely justified labelling it fakery (a deliberate attempt to deceive).

Now, there are many, many other considerations which an architectural expert would draw upon; space constraints in this column do not allow us to outline.

So, leave us proceed by accepting that, in my opinion, Peter Stokes would

be aghast by the insertion of the proposed design of the Royal George redevelopment into the Queen-Picton heritage district.

Setting aside the sacrifice through demolition of several historic buildings, in no way does the proposed design respect the “place identity” of either Queen or Victoria streets.

Imagine the Shaw Festival Theatre building, coloured concrete grey, raised to three storeys — absent the ameliorating slide roofs (which soften the festival building’s height) — inserted into the Queen/Victoria streetscapes.

Literally, this is the minimum of what is being proposed (and arguably, at 46,000 square feet above grade, the new Royal George might be larger and more imposing than the Festival Theatre).

The argument that, 50 years into the future, the “new” Royal George might be considered a part of our heritage district’s reimagined fabric is pure sophistry — predicated on completely junking the existing place identity in favour of a sadly deficient modern reinterpretation.

Bluntly, people, should this overture go forward, the heritage district you know and love will be assigned

to the “dustbin” of history to facilitate the Shaw’s ego project.

Ego project, you ask?

The Shaw’s past annual financial statements have reported, on average, a failure to break even from ticket sales income, with that shortfall offset by income from charitable benefactors.

So, one is forced to ask from a strictly business perspective, how can the ticket sales from a mere +/- 15 new seats offset the increased annual operating expenses associated with an additional 35,000 square feet?

The short answer is, subject to correction from a fully supported business plan, this overture is a white elephant completely dependent on charitable donations.

In other words, an ego project.

We are being asked to accept the partial destruction of the Queen-Picton heritage district’s place identity on the very questionable altar of a cultural institution’s ask.

Is this reasonable or supportable?

I’d think not.

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



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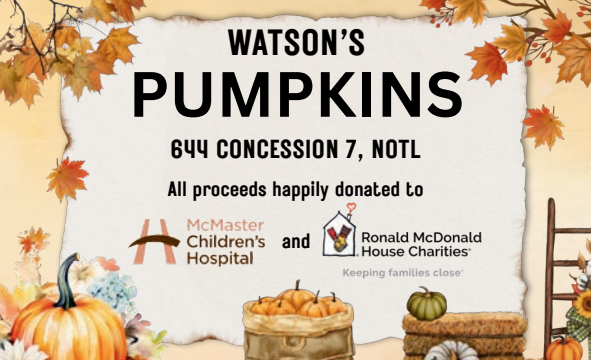
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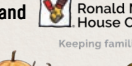
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ROSS'S RAMBLINGS

Ross Robinson
Columnist

How many hundreds of times have I driven past the modest log cabin church on Niagara Stone Road? Trinity Lutheran Church, next to Oast House, is always so well kept up and landscaped. Finally, last Saturday I had a reason to go in, to attend the memorial service for Maria Timm.

She was the matriarch of a family that included several of my friends. My daughter and I went to support the families, and it was easy to feel the love. Everyone there was somehow connected

to this lady, who had experienced so much during her almost 100 years on our earth.

Rev. Larry Ritter is the pastor at Trinity Lutheran, and it was obvious that he runs a tight ship. So many family members were there, and so many friends had made the effort to offer support and extend condolences.

Over the years, several friends have mentioned that I seem to attend a lot of funerals. Many years ago, I took the overnight train to Montreal to say “au revoir” to Rocket Richard. He had been my childhood idol.

I walked three miles along Rue Ste. Catherine and Rue St. Denis with the funeral cortege, wearing my replica Habs sweater. Hundreds of us felt the love of thousands of mourners. So much emotion. The Rocket was the most idolized Canadian ever.

And over to Toronto a few times, for the life celebrations of Carl Brewer,



It meant a lot to columnist Ross Robinson to learn about the late Maria Timm.

Leonard Red Kelly, Johnny Bower and Allan Stanley. Again, my childhood idols, but so much more. I have been fortunate to know them during my adult life and have made a real effort to be with them for their last applause.

Sure, they all had tremendous skills on the ice, excelling at what we Canadians still claim is “our

game.” But at their funerals, I learned so much about the personal histories of these hockey stars. Yes, they skated, shot and checked with the best of the best, but they were not just hockey legends.

During the funerals and later at the receptions, people spoke about the real lives of my idols. Yes, they were great Canadians who had enjoyed well-documented triumphs. But they had also known more than their fair share of challenges and sadnesses. I have learned so much at funerals. My childhood idols were real people.

Now, I will ramble awkwardly to my thoughts during the memorial service for Timm. What a brave, determined, strong life. Born in a storybook village in Heidendorf, Romania, some 97 years ago. And I knew so few details about her life until just last Saturday.

When only 16, Maria fled her homeland in 1944 to

Germany, sometimes riding with all their belongings in a horse-drawn carriage. A tough life happened during and after the Second World War — how ironic, to end up in Niagara-on-the-Lake, once again hearing clips and claps.

A major, overriding reason many immigrants did what they did was because they were hungry.

We were told that Maria considered the low point in her life was working on a sugar beet farm near Lethbridge, Alta., living in a very basic house that had no real heating, even during the prairie winters. Not to press the point, but think about the mosquitoes.

Such indescribable hardships — and not that long ago. Today in Canada, we cannot be expected to understand. Sure, people came to Canada to escape religious and political persecution. But also, they were hungry.

She finally found peace again in Winnipeg, where

she married and raised her family. Loving stories were shared during and after the service. Reverend Ritter spoke at some length about this incredible lady. “Her sufferings did not overcome her. She overcame her sufferings. With faithful endurance.”

So much happened during her long lifetime. How have so many history-altering occurrences occurred? Let me ramble to a close by cherry-picking just a few.

North America settled. The Holocaust. Civil rights. Mass transit in the air. The Internet.

Think about it. No, don’t think about it. It’s all so overwhelming.

My daughter and I, and so many others, were so lucky to know Maria Timm. I didn’t know she was such a fabulous cook and baker. Her donuts were legendary. I never enjoyed an original Timm donut.

So many people were so fortunate. So many people loved Maria Timm.



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Have some fun

- Across
- 1. Cavalry soldier (7)
 - 5. Sawbones (7)
 - 9. Middle Eastern bread (5)
 - 10. Game show player (9)
 - 11. How bidding goes in bridge (9)
 - 12. Topic (5)
 - 13. Unintended discharge of a fluid (7)
 - 15. Green-eyed (7)
 - 17. Live together (7)
 - 19. Offensive (7)
 - 21. Money bag (5)
 - 23. Where dolly mixture can be bought (5,4)
 - 25. E.g. the DUKW (9)
 - 26. Harvests (5)
 - 27. Convent (7)
 - 28. Packed (7)
- Down
- 1. Average (7)
 - 2. Bone manipulator (9)
 - 3. Long flat piece of timber (5)
 - 4. Contemptible person (7)
 - 5. Genuine (7)
 - 6. Kinsfolk (9)
 - 7. Best of a group (5)
 - 8. Chats (7)
 - 14. Lake Windermere town (9)
 - 16. Picked up accidentally (9)
 - 17. Skipper (7)
 - 18. Bear witness (7)
 - 19. Maritime (7)
 - 20. Laid open to view (7)
 - 22. Mature (5)
 - 24. Trunk of the human body (5)

Crossword Puzzle

1		2		3		4		5		6		7		8
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11										12				
13				14				15				16		
17							18		19					20
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25										26				
27									28					

Last issue's answers

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19	P	R	O	P	E	R	T	Y		20	Y							
23	R	E	M	O	R	A			24	C	O	U	N	T	E	S	S	
28	A	C	C	I	D	E	N	T		29	T	A	R	Z	A	N		
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EXPLORING HISTORY
WITH NOTL MUSEUM



Fairview Fruit Farm, Queenston

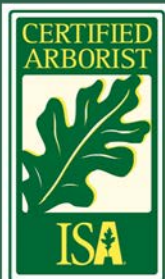
As we celebrate the harvest and give thanks for all that we have, we share an image of the former Fairview Fruit Farm that was located near the southern boundary of the village of Queenston. Matthew Charles Lowrey bought the original 42 acres in 1888 and established a successful fruit-growing operation on this land. Fruit farming became profitable in the 1880s, largely because railways opened up new markets for farmers. At the lower left corner, you can actually see a portion of the railway line that ran along the escarpment. Tax records show that his 12-acre orchard in 1891 grew to 42 acres in 1899. The farm remained in the family until 1969. This property is historically important as part of the Queenston Heights battlefield and is also close to the place where Brock fell. In Niagara-on-the-Lake, we are so fortunate to be surrounded by agriculture. We can run out and grab fresh fruit, vegetables, wine, cider or beer straight from the grower/producer themselves. Thank you to all of Niagara-on-the-Lake's farmers for making sure we have fresh food to enjoy every year. Happy Thanksgiving from the NOTL Museum!



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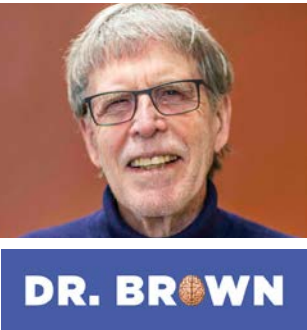
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Stone to tech: How collaboration drives human progress



Dr. William Brown
Columnist

Assessing the relative cognitive capacities of long-gone species such as neanderthals, denisovans and early modern humans is tricky.

So much of what we take as evidence of intelligence and inferred cognitive capacities is a product of an accrual of skills and learning acquired over many, many thousands of years in the case of modern humans and one to two million years in the case of more ancient hominins.

But such cultural and technical measures can be very misleading, because they depend on opportunity.

A good example of which were the many tribes living deep in the interior of Papua New Guinea, who, until the early 20th century, were out of touch with the rest of the world and lived what some explorers characterized as Stone Age existences.

Yet, with the opening up of the country following the

Second World War, those same people soon showed that they were as adept as you and I at mastering any skill and language as we were. The problem was not the brain, which proved as to be as capable as ours, but absent or very limited opportunities to learn what we take for granted.

Among paleoanthropologists, there has long been an assumption that the finesse with which left-behind stone artifacts were fashioned could be taken as a measure of the cognitive capacity of the brain to create them — the cruder the tools, the cruder and less developed the brain that created them.

Or to turn it around, it's all too easy to look at the extraordinary power of technology and science these days and somehow attribute those achievements to a single company, a single scientist or engineer or even a few of them, when the truth is that most of the stunning advances of the late 20 and early 21 centuries depended on collaborative incremental contributions from many scientists and engineers all building on solid dependable foundational studies from those who preceded them.

Single scientists, working largely alone, such as Albert Einstein, were uncommon in his time and more so now. It takes villages,



Neolithic Stone arrowheads. Paleoanthropologists have long assumed that the cruder the tools left behind, the cruder and less developed the brain that created them. But that may not give us the full picture of evolution. WIKIMEDIA

towns and cities of scientists working together, whether directly or simply by sharing insights and data, to make most science work in our time.

True, there are large projects such as the James Webb Space Telescope or any other major astronomical project that I'm aware need key leaders, but those leaders usually depend on a much broader base of expertise.

The current exponential growth in science and engineering is a product of the development of many more excellent institutions and scientists entering more and more fields in biology,

and engineering and the many millions of new contributors throughout the world, including high-tech companies and institutes, which is fuelling the current escalating developments in basic and applied sciences.

The point is that achievements at this pace and quality are very much a product of numbers and breadth in expertise of those involved, but probably not any evolutionary improvements in the brains of individual contributors.

Although theoretically that's possible, some esteemed scientists, such as Steven Weinberg, a Nobel Laureate in physics, believed that the human brain has cognitive limits that might limit what can be solved.

Maybe, but working together, the collective cognitive limits of groups of scientists working together are surely much higher than for any individual.

Finally, to return to the conundrum of inferring the cognitive abilities of early humans and other hominins is tricky.

But given their small numbers — an estimated total world population of pre-humans of 100,000, roughly a million years ago and scattered as they were over vast territories in small groups vulnerable to extinc-

tion — it's not surprising that it took so long for them to develop whatever refinements in tools they managed over such long time periods.

It's possible that later versions might have possessed brains not so different than our own. But how would we know, until the explosion of cave art 40 to 50,000 years ago?

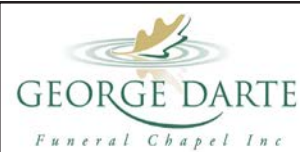
We'll never know, but it's possible, even if not likely that they were as bright as those Stone Age residents of Papua New Guinea were in the mid-last century.

With an eye to the near future, AI will almost certainly acquire broad intelligence surpassing any human soon and go well beyond that point.

That will really change science and much of human life in the next quarter century, as witnessed by the flood of applications of AI to solving some of the most intractable questions in science and engineering these days.

Just look at some of the best articles and best journals these days and you will soon get my point. I can't keep up — and I intentionally look.

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.



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Obituaries

Hans-Juergen ‘John’ Wiens



WIENS, Hans-Juergen (John) —
Died at home in Niagara-on-the-Lake on Friday, Oct. 3, 2025. Born in Rothof, West Prussia (Germany) on Oct. 7, 1934, he came to Canada in 1952. He is survived by his children, Greta, Peter (Karen), Betty, Martin (Gerda), Linda Prickett (Gary), Esther Tiedtke (Heiko), eleven grandchildren and eight great grandchildren. He is also survived by his sister Dorothea (Rudy) Enns, sister-in-law Ingrid Wiens, and brother-in-law Armin (Ulla) Hinz. Predeceased by his wife Barbara, son Victor, and grandson Daniel, as well as his siblings, Hartmut (Ursula), Fred (Martha), Egbert, Linde, and Reini Hinz.

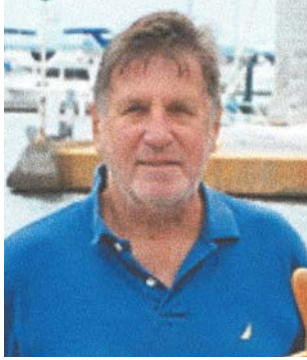
H.J. Wiens was a farmer (Greenlawn Farms Ltd.) and business owner (Lincoln Feed and Farm Supply), a director of the Niagara Credit Union, Niagara Federation of Agriculture, Niagara Pork Producers, Pleasant Manor in Virgil, and a member of the Virgil Business Association. After his retirement he started a new business cooking and selling jam.

The family will receive friends at Niagara United Mennonite Church, 1775 Niagara Stone Rd. (Hwy. 55), Niagara-on-the-Lake on Wednesday, Oct. 8 from 4 to 7 p.m. Interment at Niagara Lake Shore Cemetery on Thursday, Oct. 9 at 9:30 a.m., followed by the funeral service at the church at 11 a.m. If desired, memorial donations may be made to Radiant Care Pleasant Manor, Mennonite Economic Development Associates (MEDA), or Mennonite Central Committee (MCC).

Online condolences at www.tallmanfuneralhomes.ca



Donald ‘Donnie’ Burger



BURGER, Donald “Donnie” —
It is with heavy hearts that we announce the passing of Donnie at the age of 87. He leaves behind his wife Bev after 52 years of marriage.
Predeceased by his parents, Dorothy and Cecil, his brother, Edward (Loreen), and his nephew Eddy Michael. He leaves behind his brother Ronald (Norma) and many nieces, nephews, and extended family.
Donnie was employed at Franklin Metal Works and Seneca Manufacturing for over 40 years.

Visitation will take place Thursday, Oct. 30 from 10 to 11 a.m., followed by interment and reception at Pleasantview Funeral Home. In lieu of flowers, donations can be made in Donnie’s memory to the Canadian Cancer Foundation, the Heart & Stroke Foundation, the Humane Society of Greater Niagara or a charity of your choice.

Please share your memories, photos and condolences online at pleasantviewcemetery.ca.

Barbara Lowrey

LOWREY, Barbara —
The family of Barbara Lowrey are saddened to announce her peaceful passing following a short illness, with her children and grandchildren at her side, on Sept. 13, 2025. She was in her 89th year and died as she lived, with dignity, humor, and a concern for others. Barbara was the wife of the late Jack Lowrey (2024), and was also predeceased by her parents, the late James Allan and Pearl (Davis) Blank of St. Catharines. She is survived by her children Debbie (Dennis) and Tim, and grandchildren Leigh (Stuart), Ian and Andrew, and a circle of loyal friends who enriched her life so much over the years. She will be remembered for her sense of fun, and her many talents, including quilting, gardening, home decor, and her exceptional needlework. The family would like to thank the doctors and nurses of the Marotta Family Hospital, particularly Dr. Hameed, and Nurse Lindsay of the ICU, for the compassionate care Barbara received and for their kindness to our family. A private family service has already taken place.

Have an opinion you want heard?
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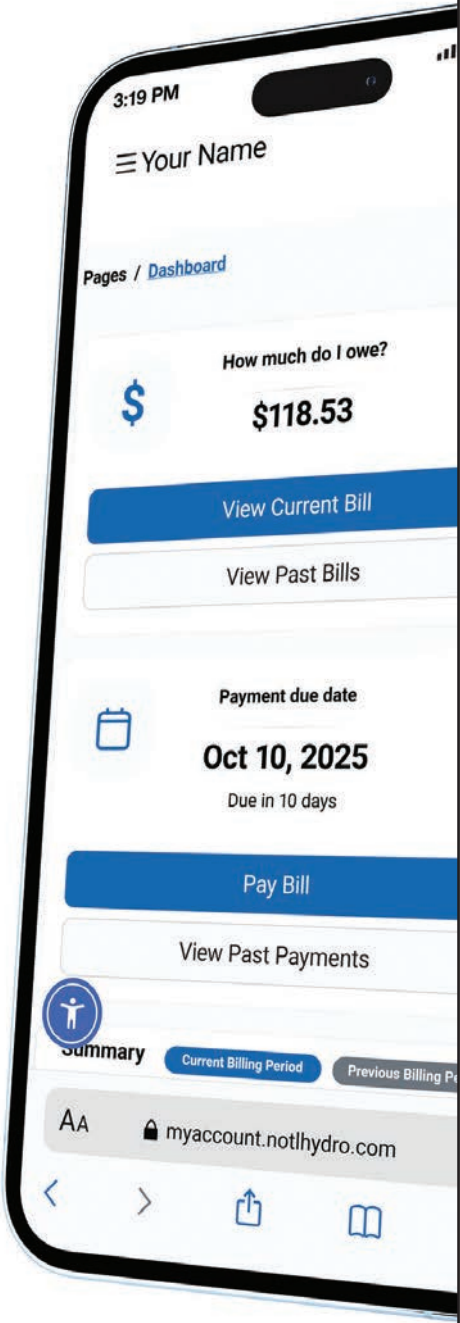
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Some bits of fall gardening **folklore**

The following column was written by the late Joanne Young, garden expert and coach, and was originally published in the October 5, 2023 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.



GROWING TOGETHER 

Joanne Young
Columnist

Being a lover of all things to do with nature, I love all the folklore focused on weather, trees, leaves, fruit and seeds.

Way before science-based weather forecasting was a thing (and we all know how accurate that is), people looked for certain indicators around them in nature to predict the coming weather.

I know that there are some of you that will say

that much of these tales are nonsense, but many of them can also be explained with the use of science.

So, maybe there is more fact in them than what you first think.

Just remember that behind any wise garden proverb is a wise gardener.

Here are several bits of gardening folklore concerning fall:

1. The earlier that the fall colours peak, the milder that winter will be.
2. The brighter the leaf colours are in fall, the colder and snowier the winter will be.
3. Leaves dropping early in the season predicts a mild winter.
4. Leaves clinging to their trees later into autumn fore-shadows a severe winter.
5. When spring-blooming plants have a second bloom in fall, expect a cold winter.
6. When a persimmon seed is cut open, the white



According to legend, the earlier the fall colours peak, the milder the winter will be. FILE

7. An unusually thick shell on a hickory nut promises an unusually cold winter.
8. Here is one of my favourite folklores that my dad always used: If you take notice of the height of the corn cobs on their stalks at harvest time, that is the same height the snow will get to be the next winter.
9. The fall folklore that I try to get all my family and friends on board with is one involving a small, fuzzy insect called the “woolly bear caterpillar.” This is the rusty orange and black striped caterpillar that you only notice in the fall.

The caterpillar has 13 distinct segments made up of bristly tufts of either rusty brown or black hairs. It is black on both ends with rust-coloured segments in the middle.

Sometimes they can be mostly black or mostly rust. If you see a caterpillar that is completely rust coloured or completely black in colour, they are not a woolly bear.

According to the legend, the wider the rusty brown section is, the milder the coming winter will be. The wider the black sections are, the more severe the winter will be.

No matter what folklore you use to predict the coming winter or whether you actually trust the professionals, the fact remains that winter will come and winter will go just as it has since the beginning of time.

Until then, let’s enjoy this beautiful fall season.

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