

Gearing up for the holidays

Town volunteers busy helping to decorate Queen Street for the winter season



Brenda McArthur and her team of volunteers adorn the outside of the Court House with holly and other Christmas greenery and decorations. DAVE VAN DE LAAR

Town's report on Foghorn house called **misleading, disrespectful**

Richard Wright
Local Journalism Initiative
The Lake Report

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

The report, released by Town of Niagara-on-the-Lake staff last week, highlights financial losses

incurred by the town on the property since 2022, totalling \$20,223.04.

In the report, staff recommended not renewing the lease any further — something the Niagara Foundation hadn't actually asked for, said chair Lyle Hall.

Hall is disappointed with the way town staff characterized what he calls a positive 38-year relationship between the

two parties.

In 1986 the foundation signed the original lease to take over day-to-day operations of the house and brought it back from the brink of death with major renovations and upkeep.

The recent losses are the result of the town's agreement in 2022 to waive property tax payments, largely due to losses due to the COVID pandemic.

But Hall says focusing

on a revenue shortfall of \$4,756.60 to municipal coffers for 2024 and a combined loss of \$20,223.04 over the course of the lease's most recent extension signed in 2022 doesn't tell the whole story.

Not only has the foundation protected the historic home per its mandate, he said they've also given the town \$271,645 (\$91,580 in rental fees and \$180,065 in

property taxes).

"The most irksome thing is that after paying the town some \$270,000 compared with the net \$65,000 or so we earned (after expenses) — and handing them back a building valued at probably 10 times what it was worth when we took over — you'd think a basic thank you might be in order," he told The Lake Report.

The foundation, run by volunteers, was formed

in 1962 with the goal of preserving the town's history.

"Instead we are made out to look like bandits — not the way to deal with a group of resident volunteers," he added.

The town purchased the dilapidated home for \$20,000 in 1982.

After taking it over four years later, the foundation

Continued on Page 2



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Foundation restored home and paid town \$270K

Continued from Front Page

completely refurbished it and set it up as a residential rental unit.

The foundation's lease was renewed in 2022 for three years with an extension clause allowing the foundation to extend for an additional year ending January 31, 2026.

The foundation, which has used the home as both long-term and short-term rentals since it took over the property, also pays the town 15 per cent of its revenues.

On top of the revenue generated for the town from the revenue share, Hall estimates the foundation has spent more than \$200,000 on the restoration and upkeep of the property since 1986, though some of those numbers had to be estimated.

The municipality is responsible for all capital costs to maintain the building.

The total amount of taxes deferred from 2022 to 2024 is \$20,806.50.

In a written recommendation to town council on Nov. 19 to not



The Niagara Foundation has restored and protected the historic Foghorn House, says its chair Lyle Hall. FILE

extend the lease beyond January 31, 2026, NOTL manager of parks and recreation Kevin Turcotte said it wasn't cost effective to continue the relationship with the foundation.

"The revenue provided by the lease is insufficient to offset the town, regional and school board taxes," he wrote.

"This shift in financial burden has resulted in an annual revenue shortfall for the town of approximately \$4,500," he added.

Hall doesn't believe that characterization is fair when taking into account the work done to the house since 1986, the appreciation of the home over the course

of that period and the cultural importance that has now been preserved for the community.

"Let me state that cherry-picking three years from 38 is more than unfair," he said.

"(The Niagara Foundation has) undertaken preservation and restoration activities on a number of buildings and landscapes across NOTL, including the Foghorn House. The motivations for such actions have been consistent with our mandate to promote the history, traditions and culture of the Niagara area," Hall said.

"We have neither sought nor realized a profit from

any of these projects. To the extent a surplus has been achieved on any project, such surplus has been invested into subsequent projects," he added.

"We believe we have added value to the streetscapes of NOTL with projects such as the Apothecary, Gollop House (OLIV and Budapest Bakeshop) and William Steward house."

In a 2021 memo to the town, Hall described the work the foundation has completed since 1986.

He said in the first year of the lease, \$10,000 was put towards shoreline improvements and between 1986 and 1990 that an additional \$100,000 was spent to repair and renovate the building for habitation.

"In the early 2010's an additional \$90,000 was spent on furnishings and minor upgrades to use the building for the purpose of nightly rentals," the memo continued.

In an interview with The Lake Report in October, Hall said the foundation also paid to connect the home to the town's sewage

system, had electrical and plumbing refits done, put on a new roof, added new partitions inside the structure, put in a new kitchen and updated the bathrooms.

With everything the foundation has done, he said the organization actually suffered a loss.

"Over the past five years, the foundation earned \$36,377 from operation of the Foghorn House before depreciation," he said.

"After depreciating our capital investment, the foundation's loss stands at just over \$15,000 for the period 2016 to 2020."

"During this same period, the town received \$29,933 in rental commissions (15 per cent of total revenue) and an additional \$40,247 in property taxes," the memo continues.

The lease stipulates that other costs related to the property are to be shared by the town and the foundation.

The amended lease says the town is responsible "for routine maintenance of the building" and "for any costs associated with maintenance of the

shoreline protection of the property."

It says the foundation will "pay all heat, light, and other utility costs for the property" as well as "any capital costs with respect to the maintenance of the building" and "shall maintain the grounds of the property in a clean and trimmed condition."

Based on Turcotte's recommendation, NOTL town council voted unanimously at its Nov. 19 committee of the whole to not extend the lease past January 31, 2026.

Hall was not looking for an extension past 2026, but he said being portrayed as a non-beneficial partner, with no mention of the value the foundation's efforts added to the town, is hard to swallow.

"We are disappointed with the staff report's misleading conclusion and lack of historical context," said Hall.

"My fellow directors and I are proud of what the foundation has achieved, not only with the Foghorn but with several other properties in Niagara-on-the-Lake."

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Slew of St. Davids residents eager to have a say on contentious roundabout

Richard Wright
Local Journalism Initiative
The Lake Report

And around and around we go. The next step in what is already proving to be a contentious process to construct the St. Davids roundabout is in the books.

The Niagara Region's public works department held an open house at White Oaks Resort & Spa in NOTL on Nov. 13 seeking public input on visual designs and aesthetics for the project.

Region staff hoped for a minimum of 40 people to offer feedback on the new infrastructure to be located at the corner of Four Mile Creek and York roads in the heart of St. Davids.

In the end, double that number of people registered for the workshop, held from 5 to 7 p.m.

"Interest was high," said Stephanie Huppunen, the region's manager of capital projects and transportation, adding she had to turn down some requests for seats, citing space and staffing limitations.

She was, however, pleased to see many people engaging with the process.

"It just shows the investment in the community, that they're interested and they want to be heard. I think that will definitely help focus how we move our design going forward."

While the mood was light and the atmosphere almost bubbly at the meeting, the roundabout comes with a number of concerns from within the community.

A petition against the St. Davids roundabout was started just over a year ago



Gerry Berry is in favour of the St. Davids roundabout and says when it comes to its design features, he hopes it will reflect the community's history. RICHARD WRIGHT

by the St. Davids Ratepayers Association.

It has accumulated 870 signatures so far.

The cost, safety and access to area businesses are the big concerns.

But not for everyone. St. Davids resident Gerry Berry, who attended to give his feedback, called it a "great idea."

"I happen to agree with the roundabout," he said.

"The reality is the traffic dictates the need for something more than a four-way stop. It's the best alternative."

He is hoping that it will be a grand design and was eager to share his opinions on the features he feels it needs to possess.

"I just don't want it to be a plain Jane kind of roundabout," he said.

"I think there's a lot of history in the little community that we live in and it would be a good opportunity to represent (that history)," he added.

Rachel Pearson isn't as enamoured with the proj-

ect as Berry, but wanted to take part in the consultations to get a first-hand look at what the roundabout could look like.

She works at the post office just metres away from the corner where it will be located.

"I'm not for it," she said, taking the opportunity to counter claims from proponents of the project that it will improve safety for drivers and pedestrians.

"I think there's actually nothing really wrong with the way things are. I work right there. I don't see accidents," she said.

"As a pedestrian, I walk to work often and I walk my dogs (in the area) and I see all the older people who come to the post office every day. It's like their outing," she added.

"I think the roundabout will deter them from walking there, and then they're gonna get their cars and it's just gonna create more traffic."

Huppunen and staff didn't address the criticisms of the

project during the meeting. "The purpose of this is for the engagement of what the design will look like and what place-making space they want to see," she said.

"As far as the contentious items, I'm perfectly happy to have one-on-one conversations with people outside of this event tonight."

She added there is a page on the region's website for the St. Davids roundabout project that includes her contact information, stephanie.huppunen@niagaregion.ca.

As for questions about when the public will see the results of the meeting's input, Huppunen said it will take a couple of months to bring all the pieces together.

"It's a matter of taking everyone's design and digitizing them," she said.

Following this, the region will post the results online and ask the public to vote on which idea for the roundabout they feel best represents the community.

wright@niagaranow.com



Ground breaks for Foodland

Ground was broken Tuesday morning for the incoming Foodland grocery store in Garrison Village. Many residents are excited to participate and shop in the new business, Lord Mayor Gary Zalepa said. Construction is set to begin before the end of the year, with the 14,300 sq. ft. store opening in late 2025. JULIA SACCO

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Puppies left for dead are **on the mend**

Richard Wright
Local Journalism Initiative
The Lake Report

Four emaciated puppies found abandoned in Niagara-on-the-Lake Tuesday afternoon are recovering at the Greater Niagara Humane Society in St. Catharines.

As of Wednesday, the puppies are doing OK, said executive director Cortni Welychka.

“They are pretty malnourished and they are full of parasites. They’re in isolation currently, but they are under constant care,” she said.

Around 1 p.m. on Tuesday, a woman arrived at the humane society with the puppies she said were found in a tote at Niagara-on-the-Green Park in Glendale just a short time earlier.

Welychka said they appear to be about 10 weeks old and to be a mastiff/shepherd cross.

The smallest was only about two kilograms in weight when they arrived at the humane society, she added.

“It’s hard to say if they



These puppies dumped at Niagara-on-the-Green Park in Glendale are currently being nursed back to health at the Greater Niagara Humane Society. RICHARD WRIGHT

were actively with a mom or bottle fed or not, but they definitely should be significantly larger than what they are, especially for 10-week-old puppies and that type of breed.”

Despite what they have been through, she said they are very lovable and open to human contact.

“They love attention and being held, and they’re actively getting busier as they start to feel better, but they are pretty dumpy still.”

“As they kind of get more food regularly and things like that, they’ll definitely perk up. But they’re loving. They definitely want to be

loved,” she added.

While adoption is the end goal, there will be no rush to their recovery.

“Our focus is purely on them,” said Welychka.

“Once we get them stable enough, we will likely put them in a foster home.”

“That way they can get all the attention that they deserve. And then from there, we will place them up for adoption.”

Bad year for pets

When it comes to animal abandonment and surrenders at the humane society, 2024 has been a bad year, says Welychka.

“Usually we’re not as full,

but the shelter is absolutely full of animals.”

“This year has probably been our highest intake of puppies,” she said, speaking of the post-COVID years.

This is the second case of animal abandonment in NOTL in the past month.

In late October, a group of friends were walking near the water treatment plant on Lakeshore when they discovered three kittens.

That anyone would dump a pet rather than bring it into a shelter is beyond Welychka’s understanding.

She says internal discussions at the humane society about increasing public awareness have already begun to let people know that surrendering is always a better option.

“We were talking with staff today about ‘Why does this keep happening? What else can we do?’”

“I’m going to kind of sit down with our team today and this week to kind of see how we can kind of push out to make you know our presence in the community known and explain why we are here.”

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Native Centre seeks donations to help out families this season

Julia Sacco
Local Journalism Initiative
The Lake Report

The Niagara Regional Native Centre is on a fundraising roll this holiday season — and hopes those in the area will extend the spirit of the giving season its way.

The centre is calling out to Niagara-on-the-Lake residents for food pantry donations and is accepting a long list of items.

“Stuff like pasta sauce, soup, crackers, condiments, canned fruit and vegetables, juice boxes and school snacks, things like instant oatmeal, pancake mix and syrup are great,” said Halley Irwin, the centre’s director of community engagement.

School snacks are quite high on the list since the centre serves several families with small children, Irwin said.

“We have almost none right now,” she said.

Donations can be dropped off at the centre at 382 Airport Rd. on Monday to Friday between 9 a.m. and 5 p.m.



Stephanie Buck plates pasta during the night of the Toonie Auction. JULIA SACCO

The St. Catharines office is also accepting donations of essential winter items such as tents, thermal sleeping bags, blankets, tarps, coats of any size and Tim Horton’s gift cards at 140 Welland Ave. in St. Catharines.

Drop-off times can be scheduled by calling or texting 905 658-5496.

The centre is also gearing up for its annual children’s Christmas party, set for Dec. 7.

Last Thursday, the community came together for a pasta dinner and toonie auction to raise money for the celebration.

Every toonie went toward the party and more than \$5,000 was raised by the

close to 200 people in attendance, Irwin said.

“It’s an annual Christmas party that we have hosted for decades, every child that attends we provide them with a wrapped gift.”

A full list of food pantry donations the Native Centre is accepting is available on its website, nrnc.ca.

juliasacco@niagaranow.com

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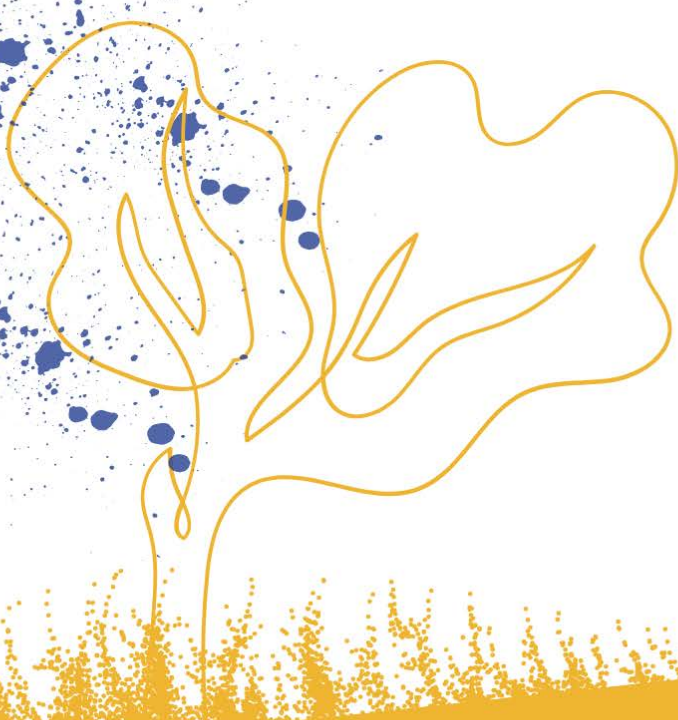
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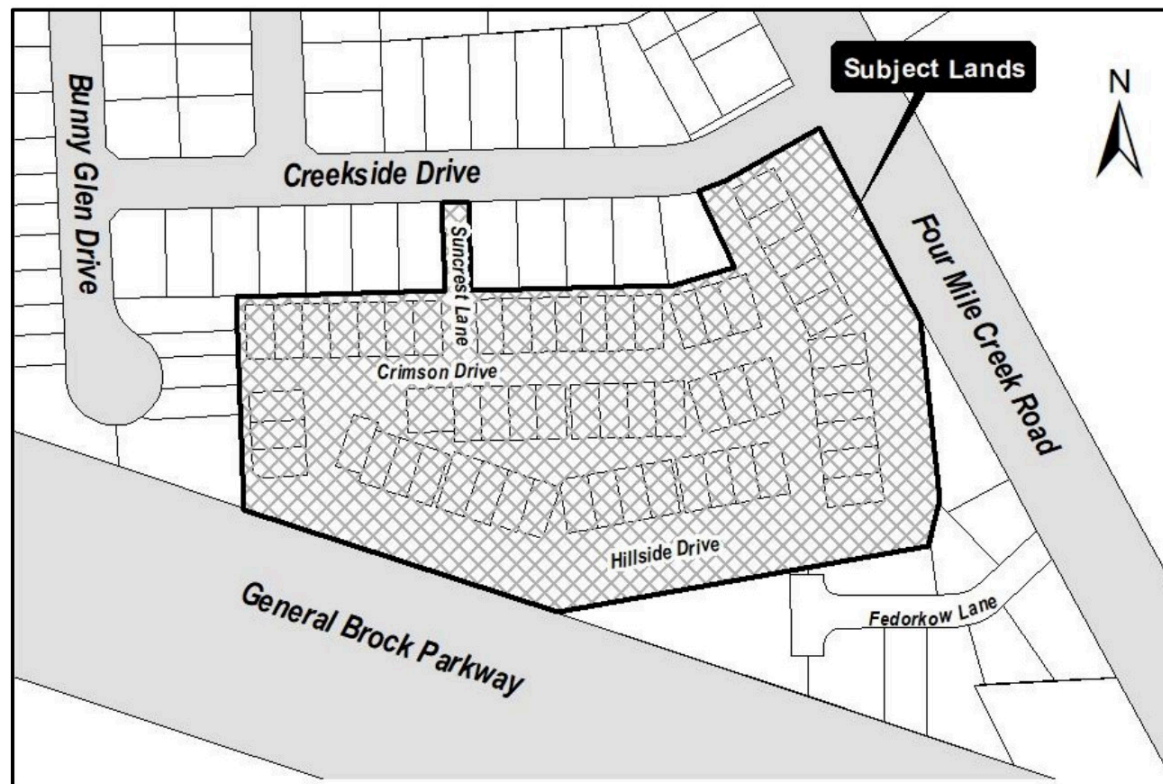
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NOTICE OF COMPLETE APPLICATION AND OPEN HOUSE

- What:** Notice of **Complete Application** and **Open House** for a **Modification to an Approved Draft Plan of Condominium** (under Section 51 of the Planning Act, R.S.O. 1990, c. P.13, as amended).
- When:** **Open House on Monday, December 2, 2024 at 5:00 p.m.**
- Where:** Electronically via the directions below
- What is this:** An application has been received for a Modification to an approved Draft Plan of Condominium on the subject lands (see location map). The application requests to remove a condition of approval relating to the construction of a required noise barrier on the southeast corner of the subject lands



Dialogue is encouraged:

You are invited to attend the Open House to gather information and provide input regarding this matter.

The Open House will continue to be held electronically at this time.

If you wish to participate electronically at the Open House, you must register in advance with the Town Staff noted below. You will receive an email on the date of the meeting with instructions to connect to the Open House on your computer, tablet or telephone.

- **Open House** – Victoria Nikoltcheva (victoria.nikoltcheva@notl.com or 905-468-6451) (register as soon as possible but prior to 12 noon on Monday, December 2, 2024)

If you wish to view the Open House for information purposes, registration is not required. The meeting will be recorded and available for viewing after the meeting on the Town’s website at <https://www.notl.com/council-government/mayor-council/meetings-agendas-minutes>

Please Note: Written comments on the application are encouraged and must be submitted to the Town Clerk, at 1593 Four Mile Creek Road, P.O. Box 100, Virgil, ON L0S 1T0 or via email at clerks@notl.com referencing the above file number. Unless indicated otherwise, all submissions, including personal information, will become part of the public record.

For more information:

A copy of the application and supporting documents for the proposal may be obtained on the Town’s website at <https://www.notl.com/business-development/public-planning-notices>, or at the Community and Development Services Department within Town Hall.

Please contact Victoria Nikoltcheva, Senior Planner, at 905-468-6451 or via email at victoria.nikoltcheva@notl.com if additional information is required.

If you wish to be notified of the future decision with respect to the application, you must submit a written request to the Town Clerk including your name and the address to which such notice should be sent.

If a person or public body would otherwise have an ability to appeal the decision of the Town of Niagara-on-the-Lake to the Ontario Land Tribunal but the person or public body does not make oral submissions at a public meeting or make written submissions to the Town of Niagara-on-the-Lake before the by-law is passed, the person or public body is not entitled to appeal the decision.

If a person or public body does not make oral submissions at a public meeting, or make written submissions to the Town of Niagara-on-the-Lake before the by-law is passed, the person or public body may not be added as a party to the hearing of an appeal before the Ontario Land Tribunal unless, in the opinion of the Tribunal, there are reasonable grounds to do so.

Please note that third party appeals are restricted for this application as per Bill 185, Cutting Red Tape to Build More Homes Act, 2024. Planning Act appeals may be filed by the applicant, the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing, a “specified person” (as defined by the Planning Act 1(1)), and any “public body” (as defined by the Planning Act 1(1)).

Dated at the Town of Niagara-on-the-Lake, November 19, 2024

Grant Bivol, Town Clerk

NOTL Swifties tackle Eras Tour in Toronto

Julia Sacco
Local Journalism Initiative
The Lake Report

The biggest artist in the world is hosting six sold-out shows less than two hours away from Niagara-on-the-Lake.

Taylor Swift has already played three of her six shows at the Rogers Centre in Toronto, as part of her worldwide Eras Tour. The next three shows are coming up on Nov. 21, 22 and 23.

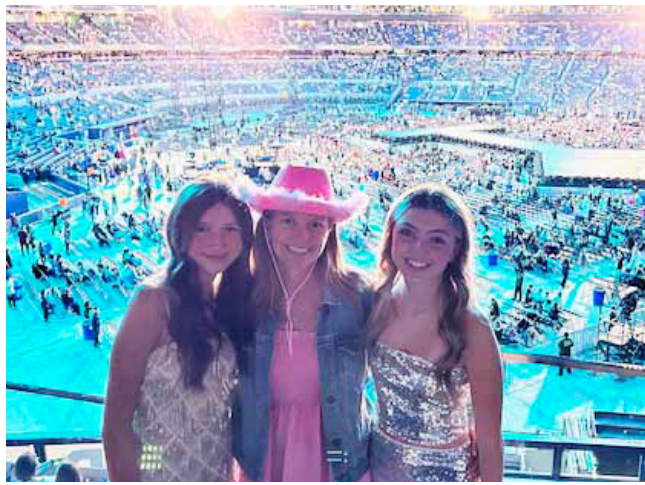
Out of the nearly 300,000 tickets sold for the Eras Tour in Toronto, some are held by lucky NOTL residents.

Leslie Hoadley

The Hoadley family from Queenston had all hands on deck when it came to securing their tickets for night one of the Eras Tour.

"Everybody in the family submitted their emails to try and get the (presale) code and it was actually my husband who ended up getting it," Hoadley told The Lake Report.

Everyone was holding their phones in anticipation when Hoadley's husband, Jamie, said he got some sort of code in his inbox.



The Beccario family, left, and Leslie and Paige Hoadley made it to Eras Tour to see Taylor Swift on night one. SUPPLIED

"We screamed and went, 'You have a code?'" Hoadley said.

When it came to actually getting the tickets, Hoadley came prepared with a guide in front of her outlining where she was interested in buying tickets, keeping budget in mind.

When the sale opened, she was in the Ticketmaster queue with 3,600 people ahead of her, but it went by quickly, she said.

Hoadley was able to secure three face-value tickets in the 500 section of the stadium for herself, her daughter and her best friend.

"My daughter works for the horse carriage company, so I printed the tickets off and stood outside til she drove by (holding) a sign that just said 'We're Going,'" Hoadley said.

And from there, Hoadley, her daughter Paige and her best friend Alyssa Griese went on to have a great concert experience last Thursday.

"We had a perfect night, it couldn't have gone better," she said.

Abby Duc

Sixteen-year-old Abby Duc didn't think she would be going to the Eras Tour until around a week before



the shows were set to start. "When the tour was officially announced we didn't really put in our names to get tickets," Duc told The Lake Report.

But after a summer of working and listening to Taylor Swift's music, Duc and her friend Dylan Kroeker were determined to go.

"We entered a bunch of radio and Instagram competitions and we had no luck. We had kind of come to terms with the fact that we weren't going to be able to go," she said.

It wasn't until Kroeker's dad made a last-ditch effort for tickets while getting his

hair cut that the tickets were finally secured.

"Because he was on the waitlist from before he was able to get into the queue and he made a mad dash for the tickets and— we got tickets," Duc said.

Duc and Kroeker made it for night three in Toronto.

"It was a really good night, we had a lot of fun and it was definitely worth everything that we paid for it," Duc said.

Mary Beccario

Mary Beccario's teenaged daughters Isabella and Luci are Taylor Swift superfans, so they got their Eras Tour tickets as soon as they could last summer.

Even with a presale code, it was a battle to get tickets, 17-year-old Isabella told The Lake Report.

"It was a process, I wouldn't really want to do that again," Beccario joked.

But it was all worth it for the three girls, who got to see Taylor Swift on night one of the Toronto residency.

Beccario dressed as Swift's "Lover" era, Isabella as "Mirrorball" and 15-year-old Luci as "Fearless."

"Both girls, Isabella and Luci, know every single word to every single song and I kind of knew that, but it was amazing for me to watch them dance and sing to every song," Beccario said.

Seated in section 205, Isabella said you could feel the happy, loving energy throughout the entire stadium.

"There were probably two or three times during the show where she just kind of stopped and took out her ear pieces and listened to the crowd cheer for her," Isabella said.

juliasacco@niagaranow.com

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The Waiting Game

Observations from a long night spent in a Niagara hospital emergency room

Kevin MacLean
The Lake Report

Ontario's health care system is in dire shape. People can wait months for appointments or tests or surgery.

A visit to any of Ontario's clogged emergency rooms is an adventure, not always in a good way.

But that's not new. It's been ever thus, it seems, despite billions spent and promises made by successive provincial governments.

The situation has been widely debated by politicians and incessantly documented. The fact is, ERs are a sort of black hole, sucking in resources while leaving patients fearful of joining the never-ending queues of people awaiting treatment.

We likely all have heard stories about people who gave up waiting for ER treatment or opted to not even go, deterred by the long waits.

The doctors, nurses, technicians and other staff are not to blame. Typically, they are run off their feet, doing what they can in an underfunded and increasingly overwhelmed system.

And more and more, The System appears to be broken and in need of resuscitation.

This essay is inspired by two unrelated visits to the emergency room at Niagara Health's St. Catharines hospital in the past two months.

Our problems were unrelated to the computer system meltdown that plagued the region's hospitals earlier this month.

Despite some critical observations, this story is simply intended to document what happened — and maybe start a conversation about how Niagara's system can be fixed.

Other people's experiences may differ, but in our two ER visits, we spent roughly nine hours in the ER, from start to finish.

That is far above the statistics for the St. Catharines ER for August and September that have been posted on the Health Quality Ontario website.

For August, they show an average wait of 2.7 hours to see a doctor and total length of stay between 4.2 and 5.7 hours.

For September, when our first nine-hour visit occurred, the stats show an average wait of three hours and total length of stay of



CODE GREY

"Code Grey" is one in a series of stories in The Lake Report about health care in Niagara Region. In hospital parlance, "Code Grey" means loss of essential service.

4.4 to 5.7 hours.

That was not our experience and it makes one wonder how those statistics were arrived at.

It seems that enduring six, eight or 12 hours in the ER for medical treatment is now commonplace. Surely, we can do better.

In the main ER waiting area, people stare at a few video screens silently playing CP24 news, commercials promoting various extended health services and one that updates the total number of patients in the ER, broken down into how many are being treated and how many are waiting.

It's a tiresome waiting game in which the winners are those whose name is called so they can move to the next level.

Deep inside the ER, it's a different world. Doctors, nurses and other staff walk briskly past, en route to someone who is lucky enough to have made it to the top of the queue for treatment.

Most make no eye contact with the denizens seated, waiting, hoping to hear their name called.

Humanity feels absent from the equation except for the brief few minutes of direct interaction with a nurse or doctor that occur along the way. There are just too many sick or hurting people for The System to cope.

To get to this point in the queue, patients have already been waiting four or five hours and been

through check-in, triage and registration.

And at every stage, we wait.

There has to be a better way.

I don't know the answer to improving patient flow or reducing the bottlenecks that inevitably happen any time day or night, but there must be a way to ensure universal ER health care in Niagara can be delivered ... universally.

Braving the ER experience is a waiting game, literally.

At St. Catharines, depending on the initial queue, once you arrive, you wait to check in at the window marked "Start here."

Then you wait for the call to see what's behind Door #1, 2 or 3 — the triage area where you're initially assessed by a nurse.

He or she is inevitably empathetic and professional — and in some cases they tell you they'll try to expedite your case.

But that just inspires a false sense of hope, because you're stuck in The System.

Once you've been triaged, it's back to the main waiting area. To wait. Maybe an hour. Maybe three hours. Your goal is to be called into the inner sanctum of the ER.

Of course, the sickest and most urgent cases are seen first, as they should be.

When your turn comes, you are directed to "follow the yellow line to B1, 2 or 4 and take a seat."

And wait some more.



Long waits for emergency room medical care are common at Niagara Health's St. Catharines site — and at most hospitals across Ontario. KEVIN MACLEAN

You wait until a nurse calls your name, not to treat you or assess your problem, but to check your blood pressure and other vitals, ask a few questions, update your chart as needed.

Then back to "B1, 2 or 4" to wait some more.

Each step along the way puts you closer to your goal of getting help. Having the occasional intercession by a staff member seems designed to ease the burden of waiting and make you feel like you're making progress.

But don't bother asking a nurse where you are in queue or how long it might be or ... they don't know because they're just running to try to keep up and they're focused on delivery care.

It's a treadmill that never stops.

On this evening there is a steady stream of infants in arms, seniors like ourselves, people bent over in obvious pain, patients arriving by ambulance — and many others — all seeking help.

The video screen in the main ER lobby says the wait time to see a doctor or nurse practitioner is five hours-plus. There are between 55 and 60 people registered in the ER, the screen says. About two dozen or so are being treated and the rest are ... waiting.

The hospital's website has the same information just a click away. You can also see what the wait time is in Niagara Falls or Welland.

If you're lucky, after your vitals are taken, within an hour you'll be called to take a spot in one of the ER unit's "rooms" — curtained areas with three walls and a wide opening, a stall reminiscent of a garage. But it's your space until the doc, nurse practitioner or maybe just another nurse can stop by to check on you. Or treat you.

Until then, you wait.

On this day, we make it to the "garage" around 11 p.m., just under five hours after arriving at the hospital.

We started this adventure just after 6 p.m. The

doctor appears at our stall at 11:39 p.m.

He clearly has got a lot on the go and in six minutes he'll be gone. No name or introduction, but based on his observations, apparently he has read the chart.

The patient has had a serious reaction to an antibiotic prescribed for a stubborn sinus infection.

On the face of it, pretty minor. But it results in a terrible, inflamed full-body rash, skin on fire. For more than 36 hours, nothing provides relief. Clothing on skin causes painful spasms.

It's really bad, the doctor acknowledges. One of the worst she's seen, a nurse said earlier.

In his seeming haste to diagnose, treat and move on, the physician offers a prescription of a powerful steroid (but it's almost midnight so it can't be filled till the next day). But he has no real suggestions for relief or treatment.

Even if given a pill now, "You'll probably have another uncomfortable night" until you can fill the Rx, he says.

Our own research told us that an immediate intravenous infusion of a powerful steroid is the best initial course.

As the doctor hands over the orange paper with the Rx scrawled out and turns to move on, I ask, "What about an IV right now?"

"Sure, she can have an IV," he says. "I'll see you in a bit." He leaves to make the arrangements.

But if we had not pushed and advocated for the patient, it wouldn't have happened.

The lesson for patients: Speak up. Ask questions. Be prepared.

The lesson for doctors: Take the time to make sure your patient gets what they need immediately and don't sentence them to "another uncomfortable night" when there are obvious alternatives.

Twenty minutes later, a highly professional, very empathetic nurse painlessly slips an IV into a vein, starting the patient on the road to a quicker recovery. She is

attentive, unhurried and answers all our many questions.

About two hours later, just after 2 a.m., the doctor swings by again.

To make room for someone else, the patient has been moved from the stall to a blue recliner in a hallway. Zero privacy. We found a chair that still reclines. Many of the others seem broken.

This time the doc is neither rushed nor dismissive, thankfully. His bedside manner is improved, though he's not overly attentive.

But with others waiting, he doesn't ask if we have any questions and is gone before I can get more than one out.

However, we got the juice the patient needs to start on what turns out to be a more than two-week recovery.

Looking back, there are a lot of practical takeaways based on our experience on this visit and an unrelated one two months ago.

For patients: Obviously, know you're going to have to wait. Be patient. Some people are sicker than you. Check the Niagara Health website for wait times at its three ER sites.

Come prepared. Do some research about your condition, if it's appropriate. And speak up, advocate for yourself or a loved one.

Maybe pack a lunch. If you're there after-hours, other than some items in vending machines, you're out of luck if you get hungry.

If you're there really late, fast-food places are a short drive away, but it means you'll have to pay your \$8 parking fee and then get a new parking ticket when you return.

Perhaps even bring a pillow, again depending on your situation. It's difficult to get comfortable in any of the chairs you'll be waiting in.

For doctors and medical staff: Catch your breath, take some time. A patient who has waited hours to see you shouldn't feel they're getting short shrift.

For hospital management, administrators and political leaders: Is this the best we can do? Are five-hour or far longer waits really justifiable?

What have other jurisdictions done successfully to improve ER wait times and delivery of care? What alternatives are worth exploring? How can Niagara Health improve? Ontario?

Is there a better way? There must be.

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‘Twisted Bar’ brings a slice of Mexico to the heart of Virgil’s business district

Richard Wright
Local Journalism Initiative
The Lake Report

Close your eyes and put yourself in Mexico — on Cancun’s “Hotel Zone” or in the middle of Playa Del Carmen’s famed Fifth Avenue.

Now walk into Niagara-on-the-Lake’s newest Mexican eatery, Twisted Bar and try the same blind test.

The establishment’s management hopes you’ll be transported to those same places.

“It’s a taste of Mexico,” said manager Laurie Lougheed.

“You come in, you get the feel, you see all the themed paintings that we have inside. It’s authentic.”

The new restaurant opened in early November on Virgil’s main strip — as of now, it’s the only sit-down Mexican food establishment operating in NOTL.

Items that have to be prepped from scratch, such as the nachos, salsa verde and ceviche, are all made in-house.



Bartender Armando Vasquez mixes up a cocktail at the newly opened Twisted Bar in Virgil. RICHARD WRIGHT

Spices such as cilantro, achiote and chilli powder are, of course, part of the location’s food chain, as is staple Mexican main fare such as authentic soft-shell tacos, burritos and tortilla soups.

The restaurant’s interior is full of lush green fauna and Latin-themed artwork that features bright and warm pastel colours synonymous with Mexican culture.

There is seating for 72 guests at 20 tables and a bar that features craft beers, local wines, plentiful cocktail options and, of course, tequila — 10 different brands

of the liquor well-associated with Mexico (Patrón, Don Julio, Jose Cuervo, whatever your poison).

This is the third Mexican cuisine venture that owner Elizabeth Valencia has undertaken.

She and her husband, Raul Ojeda, own Chile & Agave Mexican Grill in St. Catharines and, for the past two summers, have operated the Nacho Business food truck in St. Davids, which Valencia said was well-received by those who grabbed a bite to eat from there.

Niagara-on-the-Lake has always been on the couple’s

radar for a permanent restaurant, Valencia said, so when the opportunity arose to take over the space in Virgil that used to house Twisted Vine restaurant, they jumped at the chance.

So far, that decision looks like it was a good one for them.

“We just opened the doors and it’s been really busy,” said Valencia.

“It was supposed to be like a quiet week,” she added.

It was anything but.

“Prior to the week opening, we had to lock the door because people would come in,” said Lougheed.

“They would see the sign and get all excited about it.”

Valencia notes that while the early interest is encouraging, the real measure of success will come after Christmas.

“In three months if we are still busy, then yes, it is a success.”

Twisted Bar is located at 1502 Niagara Stone Rd. For more information including business hours, check out their Instagram page, @twistedbarnotl.

wright@niagaranow.com

Simpson’s Pharmacy back in NOTL hands

Julia Sacco
Local Journalism Initiative
The Lake Report

With two of Niagara-on-the-Lake’s pharmacies back under local ownership, its former owner — now a partial owner — hopes it can get back to providing exceptional customer service.

Both Simpson’s Pharmacy in Virgil and Pharmasave Simpson’s Apothecary in Old Town were sold on Oct. 18, with partial ownership returning to Sean Simpson.

After initially selling the stores to SRx Health Solutions, a Toronto-based pharmaceutical company, in 2023 for an undisclosed amount, Simpson approached the Boggio Family of Pharmacies, a Niagara-based pharmaceutical business, to buy the stores back together.

Aaron and Kyle Boggio were happy to join in on the venture.

The Boggios are now two of six major shareholders of the company, including Sean and Stephanie Simpson and Connor and Morgan Gates, both with the Boggio Family of Pharmacies.



From left, Aaron Boggio, Kyle Boggio and Sean Simpson are now three of six Simpson’s shareholders. JULIA SACCO

Before talking to the Boggios, Simpson approached SRx about buying the stores back. With permission, he then approached the Boggios.

Simpson would not share the percentage of his stake in the company, nor that of the other shareholders. He also did not disclose how much he and the Boggios paid to buy back the pharmacies.

The Boggio Family of Pharmacies, in operation since 1983, has several locations across the Niagara region — now including the two in NOTL.

“I’ve known the Simpsons for many years. I actually did an internship with them back when I was coming out of pharmacy school,” said Aaron Boggio.

“I know their values align with our values at Boggio Family Pharmacies and they are strong supporters of the community.”

Despite giving up ownership of Simpson’s Pharmacy, Simpson never really left the company, assuming the title of pharmacy liaison after the sale.

However, he wanted to increase his share in the company after noticing a decline in the quality of customer service at the pharmacies and supply issues after the new owners took over, he said.

“It got to a point where it became very apparent to me that the business was going to suffer if something wasn’t done,” Simpson said.

From there, Simpson asked permission to buy back the company and reached out to the Boggios to go into business together.

“I’m very confident now with the group, especially our local roots and local presence, that I think is going to help us get back to the

service standard that we are known for and what people expect from us,” he said.

Boggio said the former owners didn’t necessarily have the level of care small-community customers expect.

“That’s something that we look forward to bringing back to Niagara-on-the-Lake,” he said. “We are a local owner and we treat our customers like family.”

With the swap, Boggio said customers shouldn’t expect too much of a change aside from increased levels of customer service.

“Because we have so many stores locally there’s an opportunity for us to better service our patients, our pharmacies work as a family so we can share stock and do whatever it takes to get the product to the patient who needs it,” he said.

Simpson said there is no limit to the level of customer service those visiting the pharmacy can expect.

“I’m really looking forward to the next few years and really trying to not only get back to where we were but to exceed that level and raise the standard even higher,” he said.

juliasacco@niagaranow.com

Rosling's 'The Mistletoe Bride' returns

Julia Sacco
Local Journalism Initiative
The Lake Report

Tara Rosling's annual Christmas performance is celebrating its 10th iteration, with a doubly special performance this year.

This year's theatrical rendition of Jeanette Winter-son's "The Mistletoe Bride," done by TV and stage actress Rosling, will have two separate dinner seatings on Dec. 23.

Set at Silversmith Brewing Company in Virgil, the reading will follow a three-course meal seasonal menu.

Formerly a pay-what-you-can event, this year's reading will have tickets available for \$100, with \$80 of each sale going to support Gillian's Place in St. Catharines.

Gillian's Place provides safe refuge for survivors of abuse and violence and their children.

"For the 10th anniversary, we're trying to raise as much awareness and money



Tara Rosling did her first reading of "The Mistletoe Bride" in 2014 at Silversmith Brewery, where she will return on Dec. 23 for this year's event. FILE

as possible for women and children in need," Rosling told The Lake Report.

Silversmith is making no profit from the evening this year, Rosling said.

"They're definitely part of the fundraising this year."

The first seating will begin at 5 p.m. with a reading at 6:30. The second will begin at 7:30 p.m. with a reading at 9 p.m.

"The Mistletoe Bride" short story, the tale of a bride who becomes trapped in a chest while playing hide and seek with her groom on her wedding night, is many things, said Rosling.

"It's a Christmas story, it's a solstice story, it's a rite-of-passage story. It's a highly poetic, really interesting piece and the whole event was born around the Me

Too movement," she said.

Tickets for dinner and Rosling's reading of "The Mistletoe Bride" will be available on the Silversmith website as of Nov. 26.

For those who are unable to attend the event but still wish to donate, visit the GoFundMe page, "The 10th Anniversary MB Fundraiser Extravaganza."

juliasacco@niagaranow.com

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Christmas tree sale returns to Cornerstone

Paige Seburn
The Lake Report

The smell of fresh pine filled the air as customers gathered at Cornerstone Community Church in Virgil this weekend to pick out their perfect Christmas tree.

For Stephanie Domanico, a local resident, the tradition of buying her tree here dates back to childhood.

"We pass by the sale every year. It's nice to buy locally," said Domanico. "I've been coming here all my life, and now I bring my family here, too."

This year's sale, organized by the Niagara Lions Club, kicked off when their trees were delivered on Friday, Nov. 15. It will run until all the trees are sold.

Taking place in the church's parking lot, the sale is a staple of the holiday season, with all proceeds going back into the community.

Tree prices range anywhere from less than



Stephanie Domanico (left) and her wife Julieanne Enns pose with the tree they just purchased, continuing a beloved holiday tradition. PAIGE SEBURN

a hundred to a couple hundred dollars.

As she searched for the perfect tree, Domanico said she's looking for an ever-green that, to her, embodies the feel of Christmas.

"I want something with good colour, height, and Christmas spirit," she said. "This year, we're decorating with traditional decorations passed down from my

wife's oma. We're doing a traditional, warm, kind of 'Home Alone' vibe."

Steve MacSween, a member of the club for 10 years, highlighted the quality of the trees as the reason why customers return year after year.

"If I was buying a Christmas tree, I would come here, because there are no bad trees," he said.

With plenty of trees to choose from, he and fellow member Victoria Skubel advised customers to come by get their trees before they sell out — because they go fast.

A special tree from the sale always ends up in Skubel's home.

"I've brought my son since he was born — he's going to be 19 this year. It's the family event that starts our Christmas," said Skubel, who has volunteered with the club for 25 years.

Her tip: Remember to measure the area the tree is set to be in before coming to shop for your tree.

"People often forget to measure, and then they have to come back for a different size," she said.

The Niagara Lions Club's Christmas tree sale is open Monday through Friday from 10:30 a.m. to 7 p.m., and Saturday and Sunday from 9 a.m. to 7 p.m.

The sale will continue at Cornerstone Community Church until all trees are sold.



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**IN THE MATTER OF
THE ONTARIO HERITAGE ACT
R.S.O. 1990, CHAPTER 0.18**

AND IN THE MATTER OF THE LAND AND PREMISES AT THE FOLLOWING MUNICIPAL ADDRESSES IN THE TOWN OF NIAGARA-ON-THE-LAKE IN THE PROVINCE OF ONTARIO

NOTICE OF PASSING OF BY-LAW

TAKE NOTICE that the Council of the Corporation of the Town of Niagara-on-the-Lake has passed

By-law No. 2024-063

Designating the following property as being of cultural heritage value or interest under Part IV of the Ontario Heritage Act R.S.O. 1990, Chapter 0.18

Corus Farm, 1823 Niagara Stone Road

**Dated at the Town of Niagara-on-the-Lake
this 20th day of November, 2024
Grant Bivol, Town Clerk**



NOTICE OF INTENTION TO DESIGNATE

IN THE MATTER OF THE ONTARIO HERITAGE ACT, R.S.O. 1990, CHAPTER 0.18 AND IN THE MATTER OF THE LANDS AT THE FOLLOWING LOCATION IN THE PROVINCE OF ONTARIO

TAKE NOTICE that the Council of the Corporation of the Town of Niagara-on-the-Lake intends to designate the property at **18 WILBERFORCE AVENUE (PLAN 73A LOT 186)** as a property of cultural heritage value or interest under Part IV of the Ontario Heritage Act, R.S.O. 1990, Chapter 0.18.

Description of Property

The subject property is located at 18 Wilberforce Avenue. It is located in the Old Town urban area. The subject property is located within the area that was designed and developed as the Canadian Chautauqua. The design consists of a spoke and wheel pattern with streets radiating from a central point. The residence has a moderate setback from the road.

Statement of Cultural Heritage Value or Interest

The property known at 18 Wilberforce Avenue has cultural heritage value or interest for its design and physical values, its historical and associative values and its contextual values.

The residence at 18 Wilberforce Avenue is a representative example of the Queen Anne Revival style and was constructed in 1894. The two-storey residential building comprises of a rectangular plan, featuring an asymmetrical façade and irregular elevations with a two-storey rectangular bay window projection on the façade and a polygonal bay window at the rear. The structure is clad in wooden shiplap and a variety of decorative wooden shingles that includes fish scale pattern, straight edge squared shingles and staggered squared shingles. The Queen Anne Revival structure also features a complex roofline comprising of a combination of gable, hip and polygonal roof and multiple types of dormers, including triangular, gable, shed and polygonal dormer. The window openings in the subject property range from rectangular vertical openings to rectangular bay windows with flat moulded wooden trims on the outside of the wooden frame and wooden sill and apron details. The rectangular bay windows feature wooden panelled trims with round and segmentally arched openings. The other wooden architectural details include moulded cornice, moulded brackets and moulded fascia in the overhanging eaves. 18 Wilberforce Avenue also displays a high degree of artistic value through the use of unique materials including wooden shiplap and decorative shingles. The various types of decorative shingles used throughout the residence blend seamlessly with the design of the residence. The usage of multiple types of shingles is unique and playful to the residence and the context.

18 Wilberforce Avenue has historical value as being associated with Crookston that belonged to William and James Crooks. The brothers worked as merchants, farmers and also built ships. The subject property is also associated with the formation of the Canadian Chautauqua in Niagara by Robert Warren, who was a postmaster for Niagara, a business owner, a volunteer firefighter, a noted fruit grower, and a proud member of the Methodist church. The property has the potential to yield information that contributes to the understanding of the Chautauqua movement. It also has the potential to yield information about the design principles that went into designing the Chautauqua neighbourhood and the lifestyle and leisure activities of the people during that time period.

18 Wilberforce Avenue has contextual value because it is important in maintaining the character of the area. The playful Queen Anne Revival style of the subject property reflects the impact of the Chautauqua movement on the design of the cottages in the region. This is also reflected through the other dramatic residence styles found on Wilberforce Avenue. The subject property acts as a character supporting resource for the diminishing structures reflective of the Chautauqua. 18 Wilberforce Avenue has contextual value because it is physically linked to its surroundings. Physically, the property at 18 Wilberforce Avenue is located on Lot 186 in the Chautauqua neighbourhood. It maintains the original demarcation of the Lot and is a part of the radial design of the neighbourhood.

Description of Key Heritage Attributes

Key exterior attributes that embody the heritage value of 18 Wilberforce Avenue in Niagara-on-the-Lake include its:

- Two storey Queen Anne Revival style residence
- Central projection on façade with gable roof and pediment
- Fish-scale, straight edge and squared staggered shingle cladding
- Overhanging eaves with moulded fascia
- Entrance portico with a pediment
- Two-storey rectangular bay window on façade with a hip roof
- Wooden sill and apron detail
- Location of 18 Wilberforce Avenue within Chautauqua neighbourhood
- Pivoted storm windows
- Wooden shiplap cladding
- Complex roofline with gable, hip and polygonal roof
- Triangular, gable and shed dormer
- Rectangular window openings
- Flat moulded wooden trims outside wooden frames
- Wooden panelled trims around bay windows.
- Cornice and moulded brackets

Objections

Any objection to this designation must be filed no later than 30 days after the date of publication of the Notice of Intent to Designate. Objections should be directed to the Town Clerk, 1593 Four Mile Creek Road, Niagara-on-the-Lake, L0S 1T0. The last date to file a notice of objection is **December 20th 2024**.

Queries

Any further queries should be directed to Sumra Zia, Heritage Planner at (905) 468-3266 ext. 327 or through email at sumra.zia@notl.com.

Dated at the Town of Niagara-on-the-Lake this 20th day of November 2024
GRANT BIVOL, CLERK

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Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday
<h2>The Lake Report</h2> <p>COMMUNITY FAVOURITES:</p> <p>Legion Fish Fry every Thursday 4 to 7 p.m.</p> <p>Duplicate Bridge at the Community Centre Tuesdays and Fridays at 1 p.m.</p> <p>Legion Progressive Euchre 2 to 5 p.m. 1st and 3rd Sunday of the month</p>			
<p>24</p> <p>LET US KNOW OF YOUR UPCOMING EVENTS</p>	<p>25</p> <p>Famous & Infamous - 2 p.m. to 3:30 p.m. - NOTL Museum</p>	<p>26</p> <p>Drop-In Life Drawing - 6 p.m. to 8 p.m. - Niagara Pumphouse Arts Centre</p>	<p>LET US KNOW OF YOUR UPCOMING EVENTS</p>
<p>1</p> <p>Floral Festivities: Ornaments & Ales - 12 p.m. to 2 p.m. - Silversmith Brewery</p> <p>A Sacred Christmas with The Undercovers - 7 p.m. to 9 p.m. - Ravine Vineyard Estate Winery</p> <p>Holiday Open House - 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. - Caroline Cellars</p>	<p>2</p> <p>LET US KNOW OF YOUR UPCOMING EVENTS</p>	<p>3</p> <p>LET US KNOW OF YOUR UPCOMING EVENTS</p>	<p>Charity Bingo for Retirement - 7 p.m. to 9 p.m. - Harp Pub</p>

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Report

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RIDDLE ME THIS

This week's riddle is "Jeopardy!" style.
 Category: CHINESE FOOD

A popular ingredient in stir fry recipes, its name means "white vegetable" in Cantonese.

Last issue:
 Category: THE HAND THAT FEEDS YOU
 Clue: Finely chop raw, lean meat, add salt, pepper and herbs, top with a raw egg yolk and you're on your way to a dish of beef this.
 Answer: What is tartare?
 Answered first by: Margie Enns
 Also answered correctly (in order) by: Jane Morris, Claudia Grimwood, Lynda Collet, Sue Rautenberg, Bob Wheatley, Mike Gander, Jim Dandy, Rob Hutchison, Nancy Rocca, Wade Durling, Gail Benjafield, Catherine Clarke, Lynda Hosty, Howard Jones, Tuija Johansson, Marla Percy, Katie Reimer, Edna Groff, David Spencer, Sheila Meloche, Daniel Smith

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)
 *REMEMBER TO PUT "WHAT IS" FOR JEOPARDY QUESTIONS!

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Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
	21 Open Session Art Workshop - 1 p.m. to 4 p.m. - Niagara Pumphouse Arts Centre	22 A Cozy Christmas Market - 5 p.m. to 11 p.m. - Central Community Church	23 Community Initiative for Animal Rescue - 9 a.m. to 2 p.m. - 456 Line 2 Rd. Christmas Market - 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. - Grace United Church Coffee with the Curator - 1 p.m. to 2 p.m. - RiverBrink Art Museum A Cozy Christmas Market - 5 p.m. to 11 p.m. - Central Community Church Jazz Crawl - 11 a.m. to 9 p.m. - Various locations Brigitte's Fabulous Pop Up Sale - 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. - 13 Luther Ave.
	27 Open Session Art Workshop - 1 p.m. to 4 p.m. - Niagara Pumphouse Arts Centre Wine and Words with Terry Fallis - 7 p.m. to 9 p.m. - Caroline Cellars	28 Tea with Teddy - 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. - St. Mark's Church Paint Like the Group of Seven - 10:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. - RiverBrink Art Museum Holiday Open House - 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. - Caroline Cellars	29 Buffet Breakfast - 8 a.m. to 10 a.m. - St. Davids Firehall Community Initiative for Animal Rescue - 9 a.m. to 2 p.m. - 456 Line 2 Rd. Holiday Open House - 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. - Clare's Harley Davidson Niagara Christmas Craft Show - 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. - Legion Branch 124 Tea with Teddy - 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. - St. Mark's Church Paint Like the Group of Seven - 10:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. - RiverBrink Art Museum Christmas Toy Drive - 11 a.m. to 1 p.m. - Revel Realty
4 Red Roof 9 p.m. - Irish	5 LET US KNOW OF YOUR UPCOMING EVENTS	6 Holiday Market - 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. - Niagara Pumphouse Arts Centre Candlelight Stroll - 6 to 9 p.m. - Downtown NOTL St. Davids Firefighters Association annual Turkey Roll - 7 to 9 p.m.	7 Holiday Market - 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. - Niagara Pumphouse Arts Centre Festive Fare - 9 a.m. to 12 p.m. - St. Andrews Church Rotary Holiday House Tour - SOLD OUT Reif's Holiday Market - 11 a.m. to 5 p.m. - Reif Estate Winery A Merry & Bright Christmas - 12:30 to 6:30 p.m. - McArthur Estate, 210 John St. East The Great Taste of Canada Experience - 4:30 to 8:30 p.m. - Fort George (Navy Hall)

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Managing Editor: Zahraa Hmood
Editor Emeritus: Kevin MacLean
Design & Layout: Richard Harley
Advertising: Megan Vanderlee, Lisa Jeffrey
Contributors: Denise Ascenzo, Dr. William Brown, Penny-Lynn Cookson, Kevan Dowd, Linda Fritz, Patty Garriock, Steve Hardaker, Brian Marshall, NOTL Museum, Ross Robinson, Julia Sacco, Paige Seburn, Kyra Simone, Tim Taylor, Jill Troyer, Garth Turner, Dave Van de Laar, Janice White, Richard Wright, Joanne Young and many more members of the community

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Contributed by Patty Garriock

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 - Alice Morse Earle

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Painting party at Konzelmann



Keisha McIntosh shows off her finished tote bag after a painting and wine event at Konzelmann winery on Nov. 16.

Editorial

'Round and 'round we go

Kevin MacLean
 Editor Emeritus

Niagara Region has come up with a plan to fix the traffic gridlock that is plaguing "downtown" St. Davids.

For several years now, the region has been working on a proposal to rebuild the Four Corners intersection in the village of St. Davids and replace it with a more efficient traffic management feature — a roundabout.

This will ensure the exceedingly long lines of cars and trucks that are constantly backed up at the existing four-way stop at York Road and Four Mile Creek Road can roar smoothly and quickly through the quiet hamlet and get on their way to Old Town or Queenston or Niagara Falls, etc.

Great idea. Except: there are no exceedingly long lines of cars and trucks regularly backed up at the intersection. Nor is there an outcry from residents to do something about the traffic "headaches" that are plaguing St. Davids. Sure, sometimes, there

can be a minute or so wait for vehicles to get through the four-way stop. But, really, that's it.

There is no compelling need we can see that merits spending \$10 million — or more — of taxpayers' money to fix a problem that does not exist.

The enormous cost of expropriating land and then installing a roundabout simply cannot be justified in this case, in this location.

St. Davids is a quaint little one-traffic-stop village and with a handful of local businesses, mostly near the epicentre of the proposed roundabout.

And many of those businesses could be adversely affected — losing land to this roundabout boondoggle and losing customers as drivers have trouble entering or exiting their enterprises.

Pedestrians — especially young students from nearby St. Davids Public School — will face challenges in trying to cross the roundabout as drivers zoom north, south, east and west.

Crossing the road here is already a problem for

people on foot.

Even now, when cars must come to a complete stop, pedestrians are caught in a game of chicken as they duel with drivers in a hurry to get where they're going.

The region claims the roundabout will improve pedestrian access, but if one of the region's goals is to move more traffic — and, yes, a roundabout will do that — then people on foot are going to impede that efficiency.

With Premier Doug Ford and other right-leaning politicians, we hear a lot about improving government efficiency and ensuring value for money when spending people's tax dollars.

By dropping some \$10 million or more on this roundabout, Niagara Region is showing us all that value for money is not a concern.

We have seen no evidence that a roundabout is the best way to deal with the St. Davids traffic situation or that it is the most cost-effective. It simply seems to be a solution in search of a problem.

And we say that not because we hate roundabouts.

In fact, we love the concept. We've driven them in Niagara, many other parts of Canada, the U.K. and Europe.

They are an efficient way to keep large volumes of traffic moving. That's why the roundabout on Niagara Stone Road in Virgil is effective.

However, when it comes to St. Davids, we think conventional traffic lights and improved pedestrian access would be a wiser, cheaper and safer solution.

We hope our friends at Niagara Region reverse course. By doing so, they would show that they are willing to listen and adapt.

Pushing ahead with the St. Davids roundabout would give the public yet another reason to insist that regional government is a wasteful anachronism that should be reined in.

Unfortunately, our regional leaders have shown no inclination to change direction and instead seem hellbent on imposing this foolishly expensive and unnecessary choice.

editor@niagaranow.com



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LETTER OF THE WEEK

The fox in charge of the hen house



Dear editor:
There have been many recent letters and discussions on the advisability of allowing the Ontario Land Tribunal the opportunity to decide the fate of a proposed development.

There is no doubt that when the staff makes a positive recommendation for development and then council refuses the requested official plan or zoning bylaw amendment, the odds of council winning in front of the Ontario Land Tribunal are minimal.

Why is that and what can be done about it?

Who is in charge of the proceedings before the tribunal? As a lawyer with many years of experience in front of courts and tribunals, I can assert that the positive co-operation of the client is a crucial requirement for success.

The client provides the lawyer with the essential facts. The client can and often does instruct the lawyer on what facts should or should not be raised in front of the tribunal.

One of the very few requirements imposed by law on the Ontario Land Tribu-

nal is that the proceedings and the decision be "fair." What is fair can only be decided if the relevant facts are before the tribunal.

In February, I sat through three days of hearing before the tribunal on the 723 King St. project. Council had received many submissions objecting to the project but most of the objections were not raised before the tribunal.

These included (among others) the fact that among the amendments to the official plan requested by the developer from the Ontario Land Tribunal, there were three crucial amendments which had not previously been requested of the council, and thus, had never been the subject of a public meet-

ing as specifically required by the Ontario Planning Act.

We will never know whether any of these facts would have made a difference in the decision. There is certainly an argument to be made that by not raising any of these facts, the tribunal had a rather one-sided picture of the situation.

The lawyer for the town is selected and instructed by staff. The discussions between the lawyer and the town are through the staff. The person on the staff who has the most information is the planner who made the recommendation to accept the project.

Is this not an evident conflict?

In the case of the project at 723 King St., the developer called the town planner as a witness and nothing this witness said was contradicted by the town lawyer.

Further, the town lawyer accepted that the town planner be declared an independent expert and that the report prepared by staff for council be filed as an expert's report.

Clearly, the staff member (who had proposed the

acceptance of the project to council) has at least a bias to defend that staff report before the Ontario Land Tribunal, even though council had not followed the recommendation.

So, who actually represented the council, who gave the "relevant facts" and instructions to the town lawyer?

The current setup of council is such that no one member has a specific responsibility for overseeing the performance of staff.

If the responsibility for the success of the proceeding in front of the Ontario Land Tribunal remains in the hands of the person who had made the recommendation which was rejected by council, the town has very little chance of ever winning in front of the OLT (unless huge funds and time are expended by organizations like SORE).

Instead of just giving up fighting for our official plan, maybe council should devote some time to consider how best to defend the town's interests before the tribunal.

Endre Mécs
Old Town

Frivolous legal challenges a waste of tax money

Dear editor:
Council has in the past wasted far too much money losing appeals and other legal challenges brought against the advice of legal experts, and it is one of the reasons why our property taxes have escalated so much.

Those who are elected to public office have a duty

to the citizens that they are supposed to represent to be good stewards of the trust placed in them.

This means making sensible choices based on sound judgment, which does not include throwing away taxpayers' dollars on frivolous legal challenges where there is close to a zero chance of success.

Coun. Burroughs claims it is a moral issue, a matter of right and wrong (The Lake Report, Nov. 14, "Moving forward with OLT is a matter of 'right and wrong,' Burroughs says"). But I would suggest that it is neither right nor moral to spend scarce financial resources simply to make a point. It is irresponsible.

It is tantamount to pouring money down the drain and we the taxpayers would once again pay the price.

Fortunately this time, a majority of council chose to make a decision based on facts, common sense and pragmatism. I hope this continues.

Jonathan Household
Old Town

Late baker's life was a 'tapestry of love, kindness'

Dear editor:
We were deeply saddened to hear of the passing of Dušanka Alimpić, a remarkable woman whose warmth and generosity touched everyone fortunate enough to know her.

Dušanka was not just the heart and soul of her family but also a guiding light for so many others in her community, who found comfort in her boundless love and wisdom.

Her gift was extraordinary — she saw the beauty and potential in everyone she met. Whether she was sharing a kind word, offering sage advice, or simply greeting you with her

radiant smile, Dušanka had a way of making you feel truly seen and cared for.

Dušanka's courage and grace during her battle with cancer were a testament to her strength. Even in her hardest moments, her thoughts were of others, focusing on bringing joy to those around her.

She shared this same warmth and generosity with everyone who visited her beloved shop, Fritters on the Lake, in Niagara-on-the-Lake. Her fritters, made with love and shared freely, became a symbol of her spirit: warm, comforting, and joyfully given.

Those moments at her shop, where she greeted customers like old friends and shared stories over fresh fritters, will be remembered fondly by all who experienced them.

On a personal note, Dušanka became like a second mother to me. I'll always cherish the conversations we shared as we stood by the fryer — her guidance, her laughter, and her steadfast belief in the goodness of people.

Her generosity extended beyond food and stories; it was woven into the way she lived her life.

To her family — Zoran, Zorana, Yusuf, Nolé, and

Emina — we offer our deepest condolences.

Please know that your wife, mother, and grandmother left an indelible mark on all of us. The love and joy she poured into her family, her community, and her shop will continue to inspire and uplift us.

Dušanka's life was a beautiful tapestry of love, kindness, and unwavering strength. She will be missed beyond words but remembered with immense gratitude and affection.

Her legacy lives on in the countless lives she touched.

Stewart Istvan
NOTL

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A bit about our **property taxes**



ARCHITEXT

Brian Marshall
Columnist

A couple of weeks ago I was asked whether heritage-designated houses — either individually designated under Part IV or captured within a Part V heritage conservation district — suffered under a higher property tax assessment.

My immediate response was that designation, in and of itself, does not trigger an increase in the assessment.

However, after the individual posing the question cited a couple of examples which seemed to suggest the contrary, I realized my initial answer was based on opinion and not facts.

As a result, I promised to look into the matter and, over the past few days, have spent some time looking into the arcane theatre of property tax.

So, in Ontario and, operating under the authority of the Municipal Property Assessment Corporation Act, we have a not-for-profit corporation funded by all Ontario municipalities.

This organization, the Municipal Property Assessment Corporation is responsible for assessing and classifying all Ontario properties (more than 5.6 million) in compliance with the Assessment Act and various other regulations established by the provincial government.

The corporation reports to the province, municipalities and property taxpayers of Ontario through a board of directors. The members of which are appointed by the finance minister and include provincial, municipal and taxpayer representatives.

In addition to the Municipal Property Assessment Corporation, there are three other players in the property assessment system.

First, the provincial government, which sets the assessment and taxation laws and determines education tax rates.

Second, the municipalities, which, through their annual budgets, establish revenue requirements, set municipal tax rates and collect property taxes.

And finally, you and I, property owners, who get the “privilege” of paying the tax.

Returning to the Municipal Property Assessment Corporation, once every four years on a legislated date, the organization is charged with completing an Assessment Update in which the individual value of each property in the province is identified.

Interestingly, the last time this province-wide assessment update occurred was in 2016. Due to COVID, the scheduled 2020 legislated date was postponed and in 2021, the Ford government decided to postpone the assessment update again.

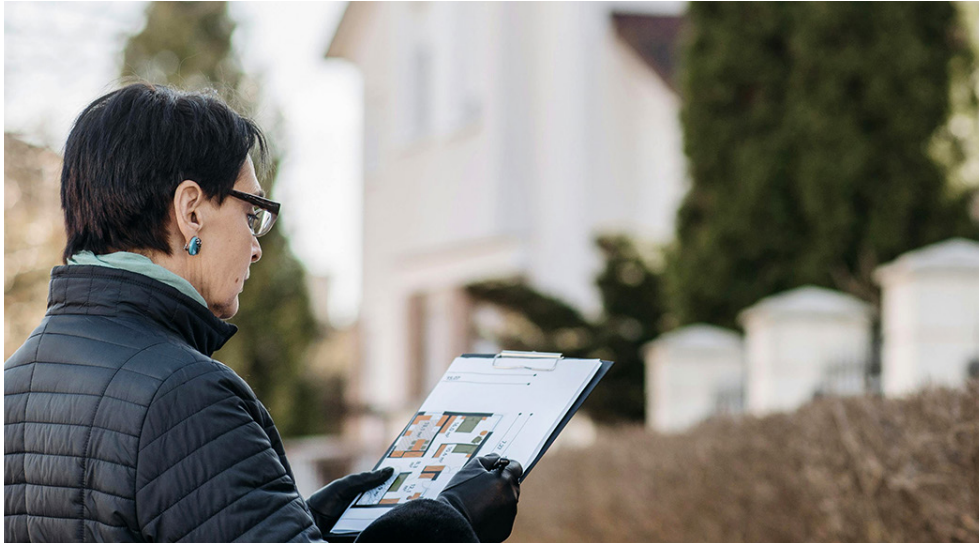
And so, our current property assessments remain based on Jan. 1, 2016 assessed values.

At some point, this situation will be corrected and I can only imagine the level of shock and chagrin that will sweep across this province when a more than eight-year correction is applied to property values.

In any case, while the property assessment corporation suggests there are over 200 separate criteria considered in determining the assessed value, they go on to stress that there are only five major factors that generally are applied in the identification of “comparables” (similar properties which have been sold in proximity to the subject property), data that will be reflected in a property’s new assessed value.

These “major” factors include the age of the building, or buildings, total above-ground interior space in square feet, the location of the property, the size of the lot and the quality of building construction.

Let’s take a somewhat closer look at each of these “factors” in order, beginning with age.



The Municipal Property Assessment Corporation’s process for assessing a property’s value can and sometimes does include an on-site inspection. PAVEL DANILYUK

Interestingly, the age of a building may change.

Let’s say that your house was built in 1980 and, in 2015, you completed a major renovation that included an addition.

It is possible in this case that 1980 becomes the “actual” age and 2015 becomes the “effective” age — the latter likely increasing its assessed value.

Next, the Municipal Property Assessment Corporation uses the exterior measurements of your home in order to calculate the total area of the interior above-ground space of the building — which does not include the basement, any decks, porches and attached garages.

Using the example above, because you constructed an addition, the interior living space has been increased and will, therefore, add to its assessed value.

Moving on, the corporation considers the location of a property in determining what others would be willing to pay for it if you sold it.

In a broad sense, the market area is defined and then, within that area, the location of the neighbourhood is considered in terms of desirability.

Then the “sub” or “homogeneous” neighbourhood — specific neighbourhoods within the general location — specific neighbourhoods within the general location — the Municipal Property Assessment Corporation maps by identifying things like natural boundaries, similarity of housing stock (e.g. quality, size, age, type of housing),

types of municipal services, historic significance (such as a heritage conservation district), amongst others — is weighed.

Finally, the corporation regularly reviews and updates its data to reflect changes that impact the neighbourhood — either positively or negatively — considering such items as municipal zoning changes and emerging incompatible uses or development.

In a very real sense, a similar consideration process as a competent professional realtor employs when recommending a market price for a particular property.

Then comes the size of your lot. For a regularly shaped lot (i.e. same length of front/rear boundaries and side depth boundaries) it is a simple calculation of multiplying the frontage by the depth to arrive at total square feet.

Should the lot be irregularly shaped (differing front/rear and/or sidelines), the corporation averages the length of front and rear lines to arrive at “effective” frontage, then performs a similar calculation on the sidelines to define “effective” depth.

The total square footage of the lot is determined by multiplying the effective frontage by the effective depth.

Generally speaking, the more square footage contained by the lot boundaries means a higher assessed value assigned to this factor.

The quality of construction, that is to say, the

quality of the materials, architecture and workmanship used and/or evident in the building of the house, is the fifth “major” factor in determining a property’s assessed value.

The Municipal Property Assessment Corporation uses 10 categories (classes) to assign the level of construction quality with class one being the lowest and class ten being the epitome of quality.

In addition, there are seven “half classes” that allow an inspector from the property assessment corporation to recognize a house which generally is in one quality class but contains elements that meet the standards of a higher level.

Once again, the higher the classification of building quality, the more it weighs in calculating the final assessed value.

Keep in mind, other things can affect a property’s assessed value: Secondary structures such as an accessory dwelling unit, a detached garage or an in-ground swimming pool; proximity to a highway, railroad or event facility; and features within the house, such as the number of bathrooms for example, all may have a bearing on the final valuation.

And, let’s be very clear, the Municipal Property Assessment Corporation does not calculate your annual property tax bill — that job falls to the local municipal government.

It simply provides the property assessment information to both the owner

and the municipality and this data then forms the basis for the municipal tax calculation.

Moreover, should a property owner receive an assessment from the corporation that they do not agree with, it can be objected to by first filing a request for reconsideration (accessible on its website).

Further, should this route not provide satisfaction, the owner may then file an appeal of its assessment with the assessment review board. This board is an independent tribunal (decision-making body) of the Ontario Ministry of the Attorney General.

Now, let’s return to the original question we opened with, that is, does heritage designation or historic building located within a heritage conservation district increase a property’s assessed value?

Over the last three decades, all of the studies that have examined the actual sale prices fetched by both Part IV and Part V designated houses have conclusively shown that, to a significant degree, these properties depreciate less in a real estate bear market, appreciate faster when that market turns up and attain higher “sold” prices than other comparable properties which lack heritage protection.

So, yes, it may, under certain circumstances, add a little to the Municipal Property Assessment Corporation’s assessed value calculation. However, I might observe that the financial return on investment, which the property owner will derive from designation, far outstrips that potential cost.

As a final note, one only has to compare the average “sold” price of a residential property in Niagara-on-the-Lake versus any other municipality in Niagara to understand the corporation’s “desirability” criteria is already factored into the property assessment information for our small town.

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



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THE TURNER REPORT

Garth Turner
Columnist

I stood in the dark as Cody (my dog) whizzed on a euonymus. Then came the realization: This bush must be worth a lot. Thousands. He was peeing on the shrubbery of a house just listed for (gulp) \$11.9 million.

Seriously. Here. Nice, but not a castle. Big, but no estate. The listing agent, Tom Elltoft, tells me the pool alone is worth a couple of million. It took 120 piles driven into the Lake Ontario shoreline to support it. And there are change rooms buried beneath it.

Notable Americans own this pile near the golf course. “They deal in U.S. dollars,” Tom explains,

“and that’s how we got this price.” Well, it’s open for offers (I wiped off the bush).

Up the street, one of the ancient places just changed hands privately. Not grand. Maybe grandish. Folks from the Big Smoke paid \$3.8 million. “They just sold in Toronto for \$6 million,” my knows-everything neighbour says, “so what’s \$4 million?”

Sure. It’s NOTL. We grow money. At least in the Old Town.

Well, it’s clearly time for a real estate update, especially now that we understand where Donald Trump is headed. Expect surprises in the next year or two regarding mortgage rates. More in a moment.

First, wassup with Niagara? Realtors have been making happy noises about sales levels, which took a dramatic turn higher (up 43 per cent) in October.

“It’s a good indicator that things are trending in the right direction and buyers are definitely coming off the sidelines,” says Nathan Morrisette, head wizard of the regional real estate board.



This home on Front Street owned by an American couple is currently being listed for \$11.9 million. GARTH TURNER

“Buyers are gaining confidence in the market with the Bank of Canada announcement reducing the policy interest rate by 0.5 per cent a few weeks ago and some mortgage rule changes coming in December.”

But not so fast. It’s still taking sellers almost 80 days to find a buyer. In NOTL there’s a supply of unsold homes that will last until next October at this pace, and we’re measuring sales against a very low bar. “Yes, October of 2024

was a stronger month,” cautions Bosley broker Patrick Burke, “but October ‘23 was the worst October in modern times for the number of homes sold in Niagara.”

Burke points out sales are still 10 per cent below the long-term average, while inventory has bloated like a deceased squirrel, at 60 per cent above the 10-year trendline.

“We shall see how many of the active sellers fold up their tents as we get into the winter.”

Prices? Meh. Not much to mention. They’re holding — the average house in all of NOTL still commands about a million. Because most people don’t have seven figures in their savings account, or equity in their home (which is still hard to sell), mortgage rates are critical.

This brings us to the Orange Guy.

Before the U.S. election’s historic outcome, our central bank merrily chopped rates, leading the world in reducing financing costs (as our economy slows).

Then along came Trump,

with his avowed policies of trade tariffs, corporate and personal tax cuts, mass deportations and America-first protectionism. Economists have one word for all this change (which has already pushed stocks skyward): It’s “inflation.”

Trump’s win pushed bond yields higher, as traders bet on inflation rekindling. The U.S. Fed boss is rethinking any more rate cuts in the States. The American dollar romped, pushing ours down to 70 cents.

Now, CIBC analysts figure rates are going to level off soon, and possibly rise as Ottawa defends the dollar while price pressures bubble.

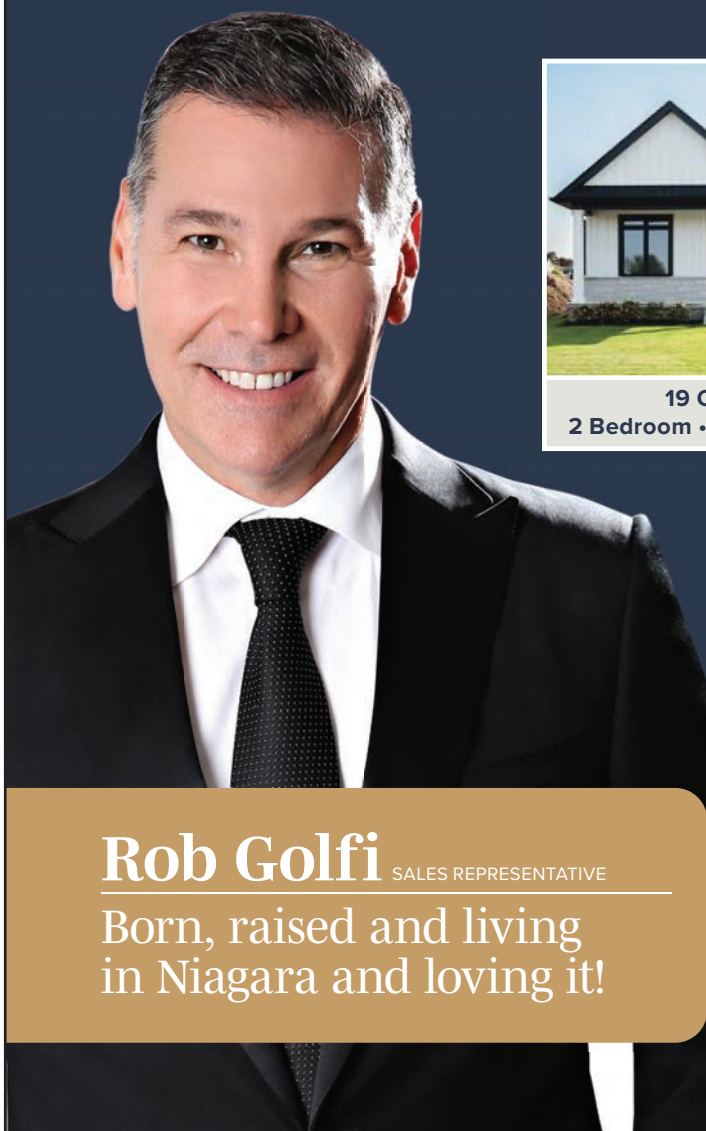
What happens if home loans go back to six per cent while we’re swimming in inventory? Plop.

Of course, the elite will still flip houses. You just don’t care about market conditions when you’re rich. Or a dog.

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

garth@garth.ca

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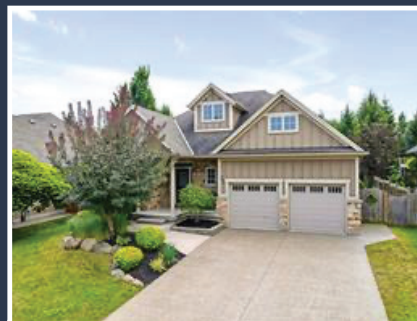


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**Based on unit sales and \$ volume of closed transactions in RAHB Jan 1, 2020 - Dec 31, 2023. **Source: Google Trends and Google Reviews †Source: RE/MAX LLC rankings for Large Team Residential, 2023. ††Source: REDATUM Agents by units - listing and selling combined performance in TRREB Jan 1 - June 30, 2024. RE/MAX Escarpment Golf Realty Inc., Brokerage. Independently owned and operated.



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Stop flying down lines and concessions

Dear editor:
A stop sign has eight sides, is bright red and has the word "stop" on it. You see them on every line as you travel down Concession 2 (and so many other intersections).

On Nov. 7, a white sedan was travelling along Line 9 at 2:45 in the afternoon and ran the stop sign. It was definitely speeding and did not even slow down at the intersection.

It put one car into the ditch and thankfully my husband was driving a car with an outstanding response time. He figured he was less than a foot away from being T-boned at a high speed.

This community must do better. There is nothing in your life so important that you should endanger the lives of others.
Betty Knight
NOTL

Old Hospital needs to be housing for seniors

Dear editor:
I'm writing in support of the recent letter in your paper from Cindy Grant, a local resident ("Letter: Town should step up to find best use for old hospital," Nov. 7). This is the second letter I have written on the same topic of what to do with the property where the old hospital was located.

Both my husband and I have lived in Old Town for the past 40 years during our retirement.

I have noticed more frequently that many people our age are selling their

houses and leaving since there is such a limited supply of housing in our town for seniors who are aging as well as limited in-home support care available.

The city of St. Catharines next door is building and selling residential houses for seniors as fast as they can build them. I can't understand why our town is ignoring this population while they own the old hospital property which would be ideal.

We need a response from our town councillors.

Karen Gansel
NOTL



There's a groundswell push for the old hospital to be converted into housing for seniors. FILE

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NOTICE OF INTENTION TO DESIGNATE

IN THE MATTER OF THE ONTARIO HERITAGE ACT, R.S.O. 1990, CHAPTER 0.18 AND IN THE MATTER OF THE LANDS AT THE FOLLOWING LOCATION IN THE PROVINCE OF ONTARIO

TAKE NOTICE that the Council of the Corporation of the Town of Niagara-on-the-Lake intends to designate the property at **716 KING STREET, ALEXANDER HOUSE (PLAN 86 RP 30R2061 PART 1)** as a property of cultural heritage value or interest under Part IV of the Ontario Heritage Act, R.S.O. 1990, Chapter 0.18.

Description of Property

The subject property is located at 716 King Street. The subject property is located on the south side of King Street near the intersection of King Street and Cottage Street. It is located within the urban boundary of Old Town. The property is known as Alexander House and was constructed in 1982.

Statement of Cultural Heritage Value or Interest

The property known as the Alexander House at 716 King Street has cultural heritage value or interest for its design and physical values, its historical and associative values and its contextual values.

Architecturally, the house is described as a New Traditional style interpretation of an 18th Century Dutch Colonial form; its broken gambrel roof, massive central fireplace chimney, symmetrical 5 bay facade being typical of this form during the 1700's. Despite its traditional presentation, the circa 1981 to 1982 dwelling at 716 King Street represents an arche-typical example of a construction method. Built prior to Natural Resources Canada publishing the formal R2000 guidelines in 1982, it none the less met and exceeded that standard; a standard which directly impacted the evolution of building codes across Canada and continues to do so today. The dwelling is the first R2000 house built in Niagara and based on extensive research, appears to be the first private home built to these standards in Canada. Moreover, many of the materials used in the building represent sustainable construction. "Reclaim, reuse and repurpose" was a core methodology in the dwelling's construction. The exterior half-timbering and circa 1817 handmade brick cladding are examples of reclamation and repurposing from historic provincial sources as are the interior fir turnings and the white oak panels, flooring and cabinetry. Both artistry and craftsmanship are evidenced throughout the house design and its elements. The exterior presentation employs strategic use of half-timber framing to bracket and define the facade, the openings and the brick herringbone panels, while the introduction of three courses of fish scale shingles in the cedar shingle roofing combined with the broken gambrel roof stepdown lightens the weight of the roof. The combination of art and craft is exemplified on the interior with the use of stained-glass art, created by Erika Alexander, which is imbedded as the centre pane unit in many windows openings

Since the 1970's, the Alexanders, as a couple, have had a fundamental impact on the preservation and evolution of Niagara-on-the-Lake's social, cultural and built heritage. Anchored from this King Street home, they have individually and in partnership, made significant contributions to the local community, heritage education and preservation. They founded 'The Friends of Niagara National Historic Sites, Inc.' (The Friends of Fort George), a non-profit organization that works in partnership with Parks Canada to preserve and promote the heritage of Niagara National Historic Sites. Jim Alexander was the co-founder of Willowbank School of Restoration Arts, served as the Vice-Chair on the school's Board of Directors and was a long serving member of the faculty. In addition, Jim Alexander has contributed to the preservation of provincially important built heritage which includes the Lennox House (Lenwil) in Toronto, the Salem Chapel (British Methodist Episcopal Church) in St. Catharines, Port Colborne's Reformed Mennonite Meeting House, the Riverbrink Art Museum in Queenston and the circa 1832 Queenston Baptist Church (later the Women's Institute). Further, his work in the creation of didactic display for Parks Canada across Ontario underwrote broad public education in our cultural heritage landscapes.

Contextually, the Alexander House's building form, style, and presentation creates a visually important transition on the streetscape between the heritage designated ca. 1817 Neo-Classical Cameron-Farrell House at 708 King Street, the circa 1940 traditional farmhouse with gambrel roofed outbuilding at 725 King Street and the New Traditional 1920's styled Colonial Revival dwelling at 720 King Street. The building's scale, form, massing and composition are consistent with, and visually linked to, its surroundings and streetscape. Moreover, the reclaimed and traditional materials which create the building's overall presentation establish an unequivocal historical linkage to the local neighbourhood history and the overall heritage context of Niagara-on-the-Lake.

Description of Key Heritage Attributes

Key exterior attributes that embody the heritage value of 716 King Street in Niagara-on-the-Lake include its:

- New Traditional style 18th Century Dutch Colonial form
- Broken gambrel roof
- Cedar shingles with three rows of fish scale shingles on roof
- Massive central chimney
- Symmetrical 5-bay façade
- Half-timber framing
- Brick herringbone panels
- Front door
- Hand-made bricks reclaimed from the 1817 Niagara Courthouse buildings
- Side door with stained glass window
- White Oak and fir used in construction
- Reused and repurposed historic building materials

Key interior attributes that embody the heritage value of 716 King Street include its:

- Stained glass window panels both in flowering vine and flowering cluster patterns
- Flooring, mortise-tendon-pegged cabinetry, trim, panelling, joinery, mantelpieces and interior doors all using reclaimed and repurposed historic white oak from aforementioned wineries
- Reclaimed and repurposed old growth fir newels, turned balusters, newel caps and rails on central staircase
- Central fireplace constructed from ca. 1817 brick and mantels of reclaimed white oak
- Rear oriel window space including the entire reclaimed oak banquette seating, half columns, panelling, handmade exterior doors, stained glass windows, reclaimed fir upper framing, expressed as slender Tudor colonnette/mullions contiguous with open spandrel rib-vault/rafters that meet at a boss & pendant finial/post

Objections

Any objection to this designation must be filed no later than 30 days after the date of publication of the Notice of Intent to Designate. Objections should be directed to the Town Clerk, 1593 Four Mile Creek Road, Niagara-on-the-Lake, L0S 1T0. The last date to file a notice of objection is **December 20th 2024**.

Queries

Any further queries should be directed to Sumra Zia, Heritage Planner at (905) 468-3266 ext. 327 or through email at sumra.zia@notl.com.

Dated at the Town of Niagara-on-the-Lake this 20th day of November 2024
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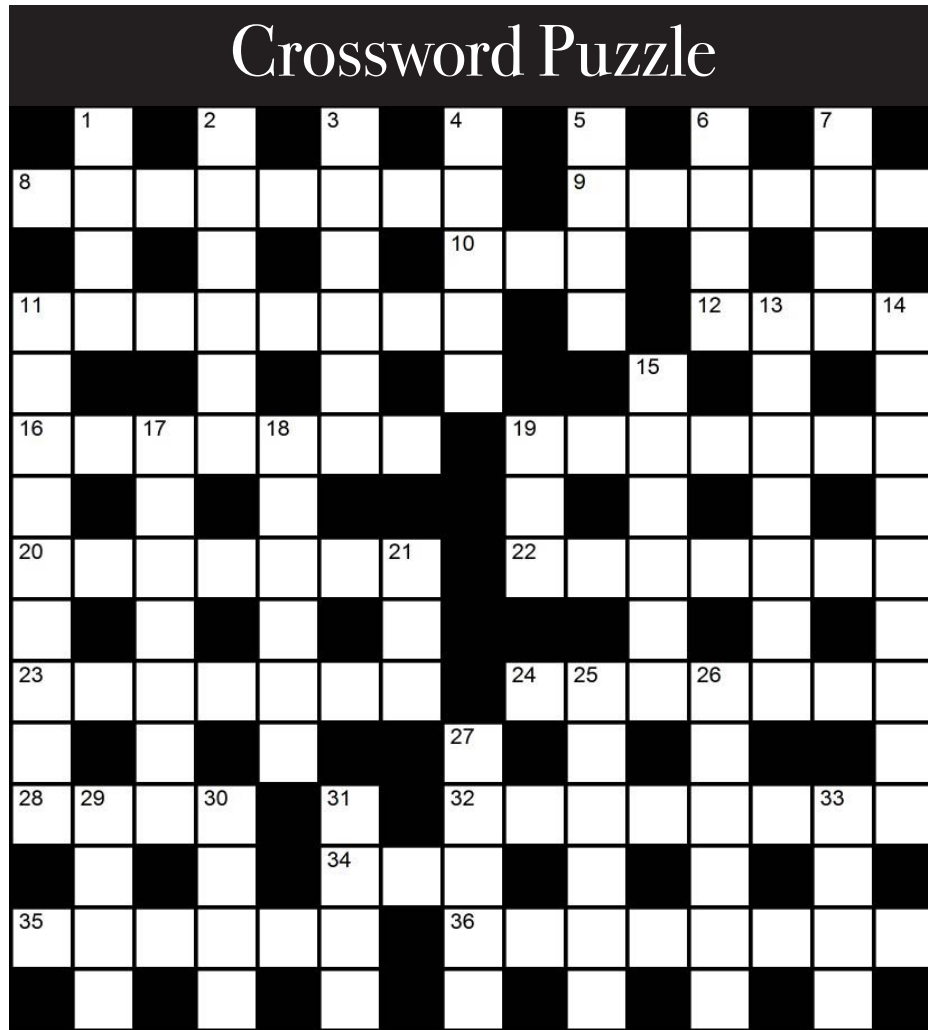


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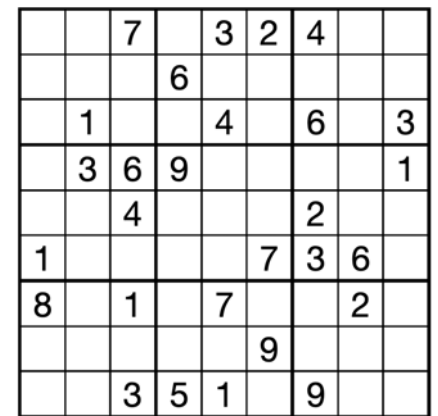
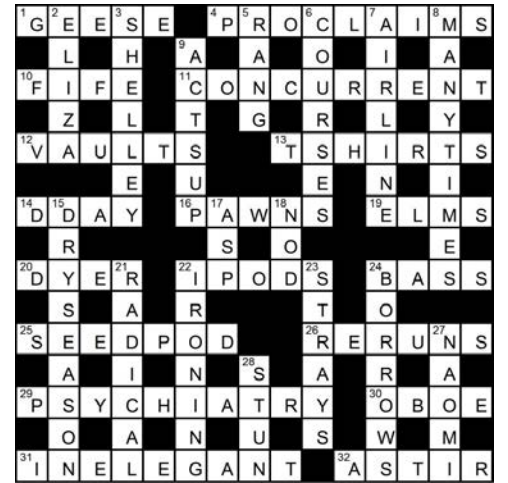
- 8. Bucharest resident, for example (8)
- 9. To an excessive degree (6)
- 10. Company known as "Big Blue" (1,1,1)
- 11. Hearty Sunday lunch (3,5)
- 12. Fan blade (4)
- 16. Mobs (7)
- 19. Close-cropped hair style (4,3)
- 20. Solvent (7)
- 22. Before sunrise (7)
- 23. Piled carelessly (2,1,4)
- 24. As good as it gets (7)
- 28. Scotch partner (4)
- 32. Flattened (8)
- 34. Hard, durable wood (3)
- 35. Seller (6)
- 36. Science of heredity (8)

Down

- 1. Game played on horseback (4)
- 2. Capital of Croatia (6)
- 3. He asked "What is truth?" (6)
- 4. One (5)
- 5. Knock (4)
- 6. Very detailed picture receiver (1-1,2)
- 7. Scheme (4)
- 11. Pictures of people (9)
- 13. Applaud (7)
- 14. Twisted into a confusing mass (9)
- 15. Command (6)
- 17. Pepper (7)
- 18. Morning assemblies (6)
- 19. Drinking vessel (3)
- 21. Salesperson (3)
- 25. Nosedive (6)
- 26. Cracked (6)
- 27. Wonky (5)
- 29. Singles (4)
- 30. Assistant (4)
- 31. Tender (4)
- 33. Apiece (4)



Last issue's answers





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Einstein: What he got right and wrong



DR. BROWN

Dr. William Brown
Columnist

We all make mistakes but sometimes they have colossal implications. In science too, mistakes happen a few of which were thought to be minor but turned out to be momentous for which there's no better example than mistakes made by Albert Einstein.

On the positive side of the ledger, his achievements were considerable. Counter to prevailing thought in the early 1900s, he showed that the speed of light was fixed but time was not — time varied with mass and speed.

He also established the fundamental relationship between energy and mass expressed in his most famous equation. Energy (E) is equal to mass (m) multiplied by the speed of light squared (c²) or $E = mc^2$.

Such a simple equation to express the equivalence of energy and mass: Each can be converted into the other and a tiny bit of mass, can create an enormous amount of energy (the c^2). The relationship has been tested many times and, even at the quantum level, holds true.

He showed that light was quantal in nature. And by inference, so also was all energy quantal in nature.

It was an insight his more reluctant colleague Max Planck was forced to adopt as the only practical solution to his study of nature of black box energy — a concept the bolder and more creative Einstein had no hesitation imagining and adopting.

Other triumphs for Einstein included the theoretical possibilities that collisions of massive stellar objects could create ripples in space-time and that the mass of galaxies could bend light, forming stellar lenses, with which otherwise hidden galaxies could be seen.

Both were products of his masterpiece theory of general relativity, and in more recent times were shown to not only be true,

but useful tools for studying the universe.

Einstein may have won his one Nobel Prize for his study of the quantal nature of light, but it was his theory of general relativity which related mass to space-time — most simply expressed as mass bends space-time and space-time tells mass where to go — that was his greatest triumph.

This magnum opus was 10 years in the making but worth the wait because of the implications of its equations, which surprised and stunned Einstein as much as others who studied general relativity.

The most important implication of this was identified by Belgian priest Georges Lemaitre and a physicist who, after analyzing Einstein's equations, realized they pointed to an expanding universe — not the static universe without an apparent beginning or ending imagined by Isaac Newton and Einstein.

Einstein not only told Lemaitre that he was wrong but introduced his infamous cosmological constant into his equations to restore stability to the universe.

He thus compounded his mistake by not accepting Lemaitre's analysis and adding what he considered a convenient fix.

Einstein would lament both mistakes when Edwin Hubble's observatory studies revealed that galaxies were moving away from one another and the farther away they were, the faster they were moving.

This was solid evidence Einstein could not ignore and he relented publicly and withdrew his constant.

Einstein's theory of general relativity and Hubble's observations led directly to the Big Bang hypothesis for the origin of the universe — now a well-established model even if the timing and course of events need work and clarification of the elusive nature of dark matter.

Adding a wrinkle to the story is the fact that the cosmological constant describes the very force (dark energy) responsible for the universe's expansion, which makes sense given that the constant was created to equal what Einstein needed to correct the expansion predicted by his equations.

Thus, was made the third

mistake: Failing to realize that his constant described what later became known as dark energy, the force expanding the universe.

To complete the litany of mistakes by Einstein was the realization by Karl Schwarzschild, a master mathematician and physicist, who pointed out to Einstein that his equations suggested that large enough masses might collapse space-time into what he called a singularity. Einstein agreed but thought the prospect unlikely.

Unfortunately for Einstein, Schwarzschild's insight later became the basis for black holes or, on the scale of the universe, could have produced the tiny singularity of incredibly dense energy that gave birth to the universe 13.8 billion years ago.

But for his stubborn nature wedded to his notion of a constant universe, Einstein might have become the father of both black holes and the Big Bang hypothesis.

Einstein was also relentless in his assault on quantum physics because of its lack of causality and the uncertainty, which

philosophically, he was so opposed to.

The long debate between Niels Bohr and Einstein came to a head when Einstein argued that particles at great distances could not behave as one (entangled) as quantum rules allowed.

The great debate went on beyond Einstein's and Bohr's lifetimes but was finally solved by experiments that supported entanglement at a distance — the subject of a Nobel Prize in 2022.

Einstein was a brilliant theorist, bold in his thinking, relentless and determined when he thought he was right and gracious when he was shown to be wrong.

But he could be stubborn to the point of failing to recognize inconvenient facts derived from his own studies.

He was human and for that and his many virtues and accomplishments, he remains my favourite physicist.

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.

This Swiftie says it's never too late to enjoy music history

Ross's Ramblings

Ross Robinson
Columnist

I missed Elvis in Toronto in 1957. Tickets sold for \$1.25 and \$3.50, and were gone in 48 hours. This was before Ticketmaster and online sales and scams. Remember cheques and box offices?

I missed the Beatles in 1964, at \$5.50 a ticket. Beatlemania had swept the world, and young Canadian girls screamed their lungs out in Maple Leaf Gardens.

But I did see Gordon Lightfoot in 1966 in the Sudbury Arena. He was a ruggedly talented 28 and sang "In the Early Morning Rain" twice.

And as I rambled a few years ago, I missed Woodstock in 1969. Prices for the generational hippy happening on Max Yasgur's bucolic dairy farm were \$18 in advance, but due to organizational difficulties, the gates were eventually opened and admission was free.

Jimi Hendrix was the highest-paid singer at \$18,000 and he played the

final song of the four-day event ("The Star Spangled Banner").

Yes, I know Rod Stewart sang for three and a half million people on Copacabana Beach in 1994, but he was a relative flash in the pan.

This is a long introduction to the fact that I was not going to miss the Eras Tour in Toronto.

Until my 24-year-old daughter Carrie recently provided her précis version of Taylor Swift's life and contributions to society, I hadn't really paid much attention to the Swifteworld.

I now believe she is bigger than Elvis and the Beatles. With us for almost two decades now, she released her first country song way back in 2006.

She is a giant and has helped a lot of people through a lot of life.

An iconic influencer for a long time, Taylor Swift has had such a positive effect on so many lives.

Relationship challenges and life changes have been made survivable by the lyrics and lessons of her songs. Her guitar player



Ross Robinson and daughter Carrie at Taylor Swift's Eras Tour in Toronto. SUPPLIED

and vocalist Paul Sidoti has been with her since 2007, and her backup dancers almost as long.

She is a genuinely good person and always treats people with kindness and respect.

As the Eras Tour is proving in its own unique way, my wonderful and wise father was right when he taught me, "Price is what you pay. Value is what you get."

A few months ago, my London, England studying daughter and two of her former Parliament Oak classmates went to Taylor Swift's Eras Tour concert in Lisbon, Portugal.

Everything included, including great merch, it was cheaper than buying a ticket for an Eras Tour night in Toronto.

It was definitely expensive, but "the greatest night of her life." Remember, value is what you get.

Rambling a bit awkwardly out West to the Canadian Rockies, I compare this comment to what every passenger on the Rocky Mountaineer Railtour trip says after the iconic train ride.

No one says, "It was great, but a tad expensive." Everyone says, "Everything about this vacation was perfect, and I can't wait to get home and tell Marjorie and Frank to do it."

Luxurious and Canadian, indeed.

Back east now to the Eras Tour in Toronto last weekend. On the GO train in from Burlington, so many happy, polite, dressed up and enthusiastic Swifties. Two or three of them offered me their seat. On principle, I declined their kind and elder-respecting offers.

"Thanks, I think."

Everyone was in their best mood. Expectant, emotional, a bit giddy, going to the show. I was a thrifty Swiftie, just along for the ride. A voyeur, as it were.

My lifetime favourite Swiftie has been Bill Swift, founding partner and mean dude up at Algonquin Outfitters, renter of fine canoes and camping gear on Oxtongue Lake. My dad took me on my first Algonquin Park canoe trip in 1962, when they had only six canoes to rent.

This American Swiftie was a great Canadian, and his children are now the biggest employers in Muskoka.

Rambling back now to oft-maligned Toronto. Say what you want, but last weekend, the city worked. Clean, safe and big events in several locations. Lots of extra people working the crowds, and everyone positive and polite.

Exiting Union Station, a good number of Leaf fans, many wearing sweaters (not jerseys) with "Matthews 34" printed expensively on the back, were going in one

direction, looking hopeful but somehow resigned to another frustrating season suffering under the Shama-plan (No, that's not a typo).

Going in the other direction, to enjoy the nights of their lives with Taylor Swift and the Eras Tour, were thousands of dressed up, psyched up and tuned up Canadian females. Happy, getting great value for money. Multigenerational.

I was just a fly on the wall, but it was wonderful to be a tangential part of such a positive phenomenon. Not that I noticed, but not one drunk or otherwise impaired Swiftie. And, no foul language or cussing.

For this rambler, once in a lifetime.

By the way, nobody was scalping really cheap tickets, so my daughter and I had a nice and reasonably priced dinner at Jason George on Front Street.

Her new local. Blackened haddock for me, and then we watched the Eras Tour video on Disney Plus in her very conveniently located apartment.

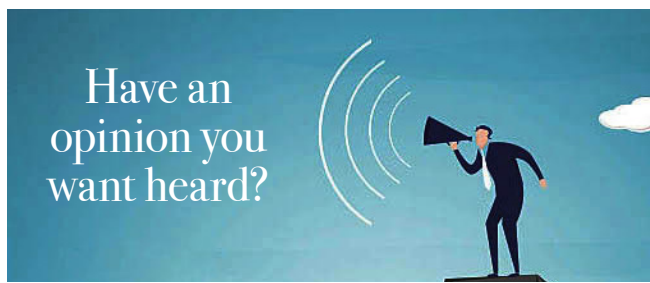
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Burning of Fire Hose Tower, 1953

The local fire department used to dry its hoses in a 65-foot wooden tower located at the back of the Queen Street Courthouse. This perspective shows the tower from King Street. On July 26, 1953, the local fire hose tower burned down. It is not clear what started the fire. The courthouse was being renovated and there was paint and other materials being stored in the hose tower. Many local firemen were actually close by as the cornerstone for the hospital building on Wellington Street was being laid and there was a ceremony happening at the same time. Accounts state that the fire moved quickly through the tower and firefighters were trying to protect the courthouse from catching fire. They climbed onto the courthouse roof and Noel Haines took up the hose, followed by Alan Bradley and Harold Clement. When the water was turned on, Haines was thrown off balance and was saved from a terrible fall by Bradley. Thanks to the hard work of the firefighters, the flames did not move to the courthouse, although some of the shingles did melt and the walls were blackened.



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

Creating a Christmas planter



GROWING TOGETHER 

Joanne Young
Columnist

In last week's article, I wrote about using freshly cut evergreen boughs for outdoor Christmas decorations.

After years of putting together Christmas planters of all shapes and sizes, I have learned that some simple techniques can help you get off to a good start and hopefully take some of the frustration out of this task.

In this article, I would like to give you some instructions on assembling your own planter by providing step-by-step directions.

Step one:

Know your space

Look at the space where you are planning to place your planter. How much room do you have? Will the planter be sitting up against a wall or will it be sitting out into the open more?

Where space is more limited or where the planter will only be viewed from one side, you may want to consider doing a flat-sided planter, meaning that there is a backside with stems taller than the height of the container. These arrangements are meant to be viewed from one direction only.

If you are planning on placing it where it will be viewed from more than one direction, you may want to consider a round-shaped arrangement.

Knowing your space will also help you determine the height and width of the planter.

Step two:

Collect your materials

To make your Christmas planter look interesting, you'll need a variety of materials.

How you decorate an outdoor planter is a



Building a Christmas planter is a labour of love, but with persistence, you can create something stunning by following these five steps from gardening expert Joanne Young.

personal preference but it's best to use materials that have different heights, textures and colours.

For most Christmas urns, I use at least three types of boughs for the base of the planter (usually cedar, white pine and Douglas fir), and a minimum of two accent greeneries such as evergreen magnolia leaves and variegated boxwood.

You also need to consider if you want branching such as birch logs, dogwood branching or willow branches. Do you want to include any extras like cones, berries, colour balls or sparkly sprays?

Step three:

Getting started

If you are planning on using birch poles, place them in the empty container before filling your pot with topsoil. Fill up with topsoil to just below the rim of the pot.

There are three components of any arrangement regardless of their shape and they are the thrill, the spill and the fill.

The thrill refers to the height, the spill is the skirting or the branches that droop over the rim of the container and the fill is the area between the thrill and the spill.

I always start with establishing the height first. For a flat-backed arrangement, this means placing some upright taller stems at the back of the container. If doing a round arrangement, you will be placing the upright stems in the centre of the pot. Make sure that you choose stems that stand up well and do not droop when held upright.

Once you have established the desired height, the next step is setting the width with the spill (or skirting). I find that cedar and white pine work best for the spill part. To get the boughs to cascade over the rim, lay the stem on the rim of the pot and push the bough on a slight angle so that the stem is at least three to four inches into the soil.

Once you have the first layer of skirting done, you can start with the next layer of skirting that will be slightly shorter in length than the first layer. Push these stems into the soil at a slightly greater angle than the first row.

Step four:

The finishing touches

The third component is the fill. Previously, you established the height and width of the arrangement. Now is the time to start filling in the centre area.

If you were to draw an invisible line between the tallest point and the widest point of the arrangement, no filler branch or decoration should extend beyond this invisible line.

Now is the time you determine if you are want to add in any bling or decorations to your planter. Do you like to add a bit of sparkle? Do you prefer something more natural-looking?

This is your chance to add your style and personality to your planter. Be creative — the only limitation is your imagination.

The last thing is to do any more filling in with greens where you are lacking.

Step five:

Maintenance

Keep watering your planter about every four to five days until the soil is frozen. Once frozen, you can stop watering.

Most of the evergreen boughs will stay green until March.

If the above steps have left you frustrated or bewildered, visit your local garden centre for a workshop or to purchase a prepared planter.

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



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Thank you!



Obituaries

Jacqueline Boyce

BOYCE, Jacqueline Joan (Jackie) —

In the company of her family, Jackie passed away peacefully on November 18, 2024 at Pioneer Elder Care in St. Catharines, Ontario following a lengthy illness. For over 62 years Jackie was the adored wife of John Randal (Randy) Boyce. She is already missed by Randy and her four sons, Mark (Lorna Boyd), Peter (Tara Reyes-Boyce), Christopher (April) and Robert, as well as her six grandchildren (James-Evan, Fiona, Aidan, Carter, Riley and Hayden) and April's daughters Shannon and Aimee. Jackie will also be missed by her brother Dr. Joseph Williams and his wife Donna of Winnipeg, Manitoba.

Jackie was born in Winnipeg on April 30, 1941. Her family moved to Toronto in the early 1950s, where she graduated from Loretto Abbey and St. Michael's College at the University of Toronto. She and Randy married in 1962 and moved to beautiful Niagara-on-the-Lake in 1968, where they raised their family and enjoyed a wonderful life together. Jackie was a devoted mother to her sons and Nana to her adoring grandchildren, as well as an active member of the St. Vincent de Paul Parish community and a dedicated volunteer with the Canadian Cancer Society for many years. Jackie was also loved by the many children who were under her care during the time she led a YMCA-sponsored day care centre. Jackie's brilliant smile will be greatly missed by her sons, daughters-in-law and grandchildren as well as her many friends and neighbours in the Niagara-on-the-Lake community.

Jackie's family would like to extend their sincere thanks to the staff at Pioneer Elder Care's Lakeshore Road facility in St. Catharines, where Jackie spent the final months of her life. The care Jackie received during her time at Pioneer provided great comfort to both Jackie and her family.

Visitation will take place at Morgan Funeral Home, 415 Regent Street, Niagara-on-the-Lake from 2:00 to 4:00 p.m. and 6:00 to 8:00 p.m. on Friday, November 22. Funeral Mass will be celebrated at St. Vincent de Paul Parish, 73 Picton Street, Niagara-on-the-Lake at 9:30 a.m. on Saturday, November 23.

In lieu of flowers, Jackie's family respectfully requests donations be made in her honour to the Canadian Cancer Society or the Catholic Women's League.

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

Thomas Gray



GRAY, Thomas (Tom)
John —
1937-2024

Passed away peacefully at Linhaven, St. Catharines, Ontario, surrounded by his family on Monday, November 11, 2024, in his 87th year. Predeceased by his wife Margo. Loving father to Rick (Teresa),

Holly Dowd (Rob), caring grandfather of Taylor Green (Ryan), Ryan Gray (Morgan), Heather Ducker (Brandon), Kevan Dowd (Krista), Bryan Dowd (Claire). Cherished great papa of Zoey Ducker. Survived by sister-in-law Joyce Gray and many nephews and nieces. Predeceased by siblings Keith (Betty) and Dan.

Tom was a long-time employee with Bell Canada, where he made a significant impact on helping establish the original 911 system with Niagara Regional Police dispatch. Tom loved to spend many hours working on his hobby farm, gardening and always repairing whatever needed to be repaired. Whenever asked, Tom was always there to lend a helping hand to friends and family members. Tom loved traveling with Margo, they went to many places in their Airstream trailer. Tom really looked forward to his Tim Hortons outing every week with his friend Dave.

Thank you to Dr. Duorcher for his many years of looking after Tom and a special thanks to Linhaven and Upper Canada Staff.

Visitation will take place at Morgan Funeral Home, 415 Regent St., Niagara-on-the-Lake, ON, on Saturday, November 23, 2024, from 11 a.m. to 1 p.m., service to follow at 1 p.m. A private interment is to take place, at a later time in Niagara Lakeshore Cemetery. Memorial donations made to either Diabetes Canada or to Heart and Stroke Foundation of Ontario. Memories, photos and condolences may be shared at www.morganfuneral.com



*For obituary and memorial inquiries,
please contact editor@niagaranow.com.*

Patricia 'Pat' Fryer



Patricia (Pat) Fryer of Niagara-on-the-Lake, passed away peacefully on November 16, 2024 in the presence of her family in Hamilton General Hospital. She would have been 79 on May 5th.

Patricia was predeceased by her husband John Fryer and her parents Robert and

Mabel Martin of Port Credit. She is survived by her devoted children Lisa (Andriy), Stephen (Kaite), and her adored grandchildren, Ella and Henry Fryer. Her feline fur-baby, DARTH will miss her every day and night. She is fondly remembered by friends and family of both the Niagara and Mississauga communities.

Patricia grew up in Port Credit and met her beloved husband John at Port Credit Secondary School. John's career had them living in several cities including Ottawa, London, Milton, before returning to their roots in Port Credit. John and Pat were fortunate in retirement to move to Niagara-on-the-Lake and enjoy all that it has to offer: Bacchus, Tapas, Golf, Pool, Shaw Theatre, and of course the wine. They cruised extensively visiting much of Europe, the Caribbean, Russia and the Mediterranean; among their favourites were the transatlantic and river cruises. Patricia especially cherished the cottage on Sparrow Lake in Muskoka; her fond memories included boating with her family, swimming, campfires and just relaxing on the dock in the sun.

Patricia loved Niagara-on-the-Lake, both the place and its people. And strived to make it even better! Over the years she volunteered with the Shaw Guild, Sparks (Girl Guides) and Newark Neighbours Thrift Shop and Food Bank, where she served as a Board Member and volunteer on the shop floor. She had an active social life and was a well-known patron to many local establishments like The Garrison House, Ginger and Sandtrap.

She had a long career in healthcare as a registered nurse, occ health expert and risk manager, spending many years advancing the Centre for Addiction and Mental Health and the great work they do. She worked with many hospitals and health organizations around Ontario contributing to making them safer and achieving Accreditation. Patricia spent her life serving others and will be dearly missed by friends, family, healthcare colleagues and patients alike.

In lieu of flowers, the family asks that memorial donations be made in Patricia's name to Newark Neighbours in Niagara-on-the-Lake.

*"So new to us, life's like a toy
And dreams may go astray
Though all to us may not bring joy
We'll walk together all the way"*

Written by Patricia just before she married John.
... and so They shall.



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