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Vol. 9, Issue 46 | Canada's most-awarded community newspaper | November 19, 2026



Less traffic among desires for Queen St.

Julia Sacco
The Lake Report

A sticky note on a photo of Niagara-on-the-Lake's historic downtown core carried a simple request: "Make it European."

During Tuesday evening's information session at the community centre about a secondary plan for Queen Street, residents shared their thoughts and priorities for enhancing the Queen-Picton heritage district.

This long-term plan will guide how the town protects and enhances the district as it prepares for the area to grow and change. The goal, the town states, is to manage this growth while respecting heritage, infrastructure capacity, the environment and community character.

The plan will look at these specific elements: improving pedestrian safety, walkability, accessibility, transportation options such as cycling; consider parking needs and potential alternative parking; review how

Continued on Page 5

Wolves win gold in Silver Stick

NOTL's U15B team goes undefeated in three-day hockey tournament



The NOTL U15 B Wolves led the pack this past weekend in Wasaga Beach at the Silver Stick Regional Championship, where they emerged undefeated throughout the tournament, finishing with four wins and a single tie. Top, from left: Coach Craig Slack, coach Caeden Minda, Michael Collins, Connor Spitzig, Jake Van Spronsen, Sam Kallio, Ayden Neufeld, Conor Bailey, Ike Good, Easton Van Berkel, Vedder Matkowski, Lucas Woods, Coach Pete Flynn and coach Glen Davis. Bottom: Jesiah Paul, Miller Davis, Logan Stewart, Tenny Powell and Nathan Reid. Front (goalies): Kyle Shellhorne and Mason Nichols. **Read the story on Page 13 or online at niagaranow.com.** STEPHANIE WOODS

Four months post-flood, government has no relief answers

Paige Seburn
Local Journalism Initiative
The Lake Report

The floodwaters have receded. The financial fallout hasn't.

Nearly four months after summer flooding battered Niagara-on-the-Lake, residents are still facing thousands of dollars in losses, with no clear answer on whether the province will help cover the costs.

Madis Tambre still goes next door to his mother's house for water and to use the bathroom. Line 4 farmer Brent Asselin estimates his losses at $70,000, with only a fraction potentially recoverable through crop insurance.

None of the flood victims interviewed by The Lake Report said they had received provincial disaster relief.

Niagara Falls MPP Wayne Gates said he has been pressing ministers for assistance since August and has yet to receive formal confirmation of a decision.

Province to assess losses

In a recovery report released Tuesday, the town said it had met with provincial officials and shared information

Continued on Page 3



NOTL was full of flooded front yards after heavy summer rain in July and August. JANET O'BRIEN


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$176.9M for wine, but what about flood victims?



St. Catharines MP Chris Bittle speaks at Jackson-Triggs Niagara Estate on Nov. 13, where he faced questions about flood relief during a celebration of $176.9 million in federal wine funding. PAIGE SEBURN

Paige Seburn
Local Journalism Initiative
The Lake Report

Ottawa raised a glass to $176.9 million in wine funding Friday in Niagara-on-the-Lake. But the celebration raised another question: where's the relief for Niagara's flood victims?

Federal officials, grape growers and winery representatives gathered at Jackson-Triggs Niagara Estate on Nov. 13 to celebrate the renewal of the Wine Sector Support Program, which helps Canadian wineries cover costs and support grape growers.

But when The Lake Report raised the lack of disaster relief for Niagara residents and businesses affected by this summer's flooding during a question period, St. Catharines MP Chris Bittle pointed to Queen's Park.

"It was disappointing to see the province of Ontario not step up."

Bittle said Ontario must request federal disaster assistance under the existing agreements, leaving questions about the lack of relief to the premier.

"That's a question more for Doug Ford."

He said St. Catharines Mayor Mat Siscoe met with federal officials about speeding up infrastructure requests following the flooding.

"I haven't had those same requests from other municipalities," Bittle added. "But, I know the federal infrastructure minister is expediting infrastructure requests to ensure that we can do better the next time."

Asked why Ottawa couldn't provide flood relief directly, as it does for the wine industry, rather than leaving assistance up to the province, Bittle said the two funding programs were separate.

He argued the wine industry would return almost the entire investment, while the support would help wineries grow and create jobs.

"The industry is going to pay that money directly back, pretty much in its entirety, with respect to excise taxes that they're going to be paying," Bittle said.

The federal budget proposes $176.9 million over three years to renew the wine industry support program, starting in the 2027-28 fiscal year.

Del Rollo, vice-president of corporate affairs at Arterra Wines Canada, which owns Jackson-Triggs, expects Niagara to receive a substantial share of the renewed funding, though he could not provide an exact amount because this year's grape harvest was still underway.

Under the existing program, funding is based on how much eligible wine they produce. The wine must be fermented in Canada, but the grapes can come from Canada or abroad. Wineries don't have to repay the money.

To qualify, wineries must hold a federal wine licence and have at least $50,000 in annual sales of wine packaged in Canada.

Rollo said the funding helps wineries manage rising costs, severe weather and uncertainty surrounding international trade.

"This renewed investment provides much-needed stability and confidence, helping wineries invest in their operations, purchase more Canadian-grown grapes, support jobs and plan for future growth."

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NOTLers still in limbo after floods

Continued from Front Page

about residents' losses. It did not confirm whether assistance had been approved.

Lord mayor-elect Vaughn Goettler said provincial officials plan to contact several affected property owners to assess their losses. He said he would work with town staff and provincial representatives to pursue outstanding assistance requests and clearer timelines.

The town did not say whether it had formally applied for reimbursement of its cleanup and infrastructure repair costs. It also did not say when funding decisions could be expected.

Current lord mayor Gary Zalepa said he was out of town and referred questions about flood recovery and provincial assistance to the town's chief administrative officer.

At Friday's wine funding announcement in NOTL, St. Catharines MP Chris Bittle said Ontario must request federal disaster funding before Ottawa can provide it. He expressed disappointment that the province had not stepped up to help residents.

Ontario has separate assistance programs for uninsured losses suffered by residents, small businesses and farms, and for municipal cleanup and infrastructure repairs. Farmers may also qualify for existing Agricorp programs.

Ontario does not need federal approval to activate its own programs.

NOTL is not listed among areas where Ontario has activated its Disaster Recovery Assistance for Ontarians program. Assistance has been activated for parts of Ottawa affected by July 1 flooding.

Responding to a question about St. Catharines flooding in the legislature Oct. 27, Municipal Affairs and Housing Minister Rob Flack said assistance had not been activated because the province considered it sewer backup flooding.

"(Disaster Recovery Assistance for Ontarians) was not activated because it was not overland water; it was sewer backups," he said, according to the official transcript.

Gates could not say whether Ontario had requested federal funding. Despite speaking with Sam Oosterhoff on Monday, he had not raised the question.

"I never thought to raise the federal issue with him," Gates said, adding he would ask.



Floodwater surrounds a crossing over the Harrison Drain that farmer Brent Asselin cites as an example of corners being cut. He says the farmer's previous crossing, just downstream, had become unusable. SUPPLIED

Oosterhoff did not respond to The Lake Report's question about federal assistance by deadline.

Gates said Flack never responded in writing to his August request for disaster assistance, although they had discussed it in person. Gates declined to detail those conversations, saying he did not want to misquote Flack.

> "The harsh reality is the scope of what the province covers is not good enough to help families impacted."
>
> WAYNE GATES
> MEMBER OF PROVINCIAL PARLIAMENT
> NIAGARA FALLS RIDING

He suggested meeting with Bittle and Oosterhoff to discuss assistance.

"The harsh reality is the scope of what the province covers is not good enough to help families impacted," Gates said.

The Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing forwarded questions about farmers to the Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Agribusiness but did not answer broader questions about disaster relief.

Agriculture ministry press secretary Spencer Fair encouraged farmers to contact Agricorp about existing Business Risk Management programs. He said provincial officials had been in contact with the town and affected farmers, but identified no new funding specifically approved for Niagara farmers.

Residents still rebuilding

Tambre has electricity in parts of his home, but his water system remains out of service. He uses a wood stove for heat.

His insurer paid his $30,000 coverage maximum, but assessed losses exceeded $32,000. He has also been billed roughly $15,000 for emergency cleanup and removal of damaged belongings and is trying to determine how those charges will be paid.

He said unclear instructions from his insurer complicated repairs.

Tambre also raised concerns about what he described as overgrown vegetation in Cole Drain near Line 7 Road, an issue he highlighted in an Aug. 12 letter to The Lake Report. He said the town told him the drain is maintained on a schedule, but believes it should be cleared whenever vegetation becomes excessive.

Asselin's estimated $70,000 loss includes $30,000 to $40,000 in lost crop earnings and roughly $30,000 in damaged equipment, materials and losses involving his honeybee colonies.

He may recover $5,000 to $10,000 through crop insurance but said he has received no direct government assistance.

"Despite promises of financial assistance, no programs were made available provincially or federally. I've reached out to all levels of government," he said.

Asselin completed the town's flood recovery survey but said he received no follow-up about his submission. A town employee has remained in contact but has limited authority to address his concerns, he said.

Charlotte Tutu bought her Line 7 hobby farm in 2003 and went 20 years without flooding. Since 2023, she has experienced six floods.

August's flood caused an estimated $15,000 in uninsured losses, including $6,000 worth of hay. Her 13-year-old son watches for heavy rain and becomes anxious when flooding threatens their home.

Tutu filled more than 60 garbage bags with damaged belongings but had no trailer to reach the town's temporary collection site. She said the waste sat roadside for roughly three weeks before the town arranged pickup.

Town engineer Jordan Frost recently visited to discuss drainage improvements.

"I felt heard," she said.

But Tutu said Frost indicated improvements could take roughly three years.

"It's just a matter of getting through from now until then," she said.

In Chautauqua, Richard Begley finished rebuilding his basement last week after months of delays and tens of thousands of dollars in damage. Insurance covered roughly half.

Begley has not applied for government assistance and would rather see public money spent preventing future flooding.

"Restoring confidence in the town's infrastructure is worth far more to us than recovering the cost of old belongings."

Sue-Ann Ramsden's repairs have stretched on for months, though her insurer is expected to cover her losses. Her flood coverage was reduced by a "drastic" amount at renewal. She expects it to return to normal after installing a sump pump or water monitor as required.

She completed the town's survey but said she received no follow-up or government assistance.

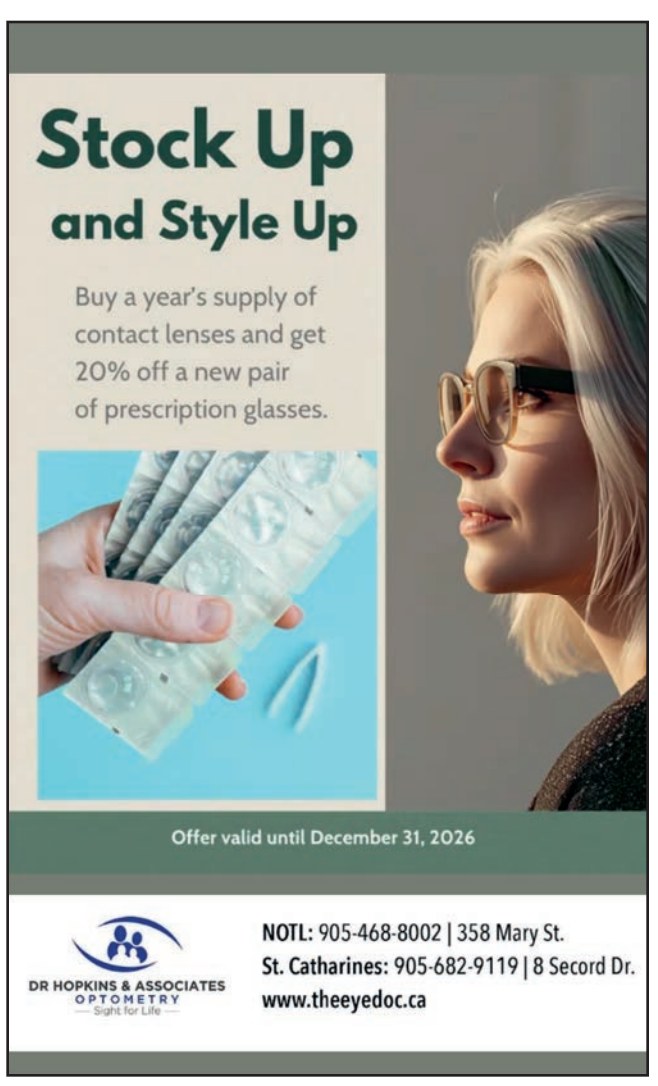
Ralph Rickard's insurer covered nearly $100,000 in estimated damage, waived his deductible and contributed $1,000 toward a $2,500 backflow valve.

Nearly four months later, his basement restoration remains unfinished. The uncertainty has meant "being on edge a lot," he said. He and his wife postponed summer and fall holidays to remain available during repairs.

For residents still rebuilding, the question is whether help will arrive before the next storm.

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A picturesque fall at Wilderness

As autumn gives way to winter, leaves collect on the roof and grounds surrounding the historic carriage house at The Wilderness. Dating to about 1840, the building once served the estate as a carriage and coach house and remains a prominent reminder of the property's rich heritage. DAVE VAN DE LAAR





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Inaugural council meeting is Nov. 24

Staff
The Lake Report

Niagara-on-the-Lake's new lord mayor, along with six councillors, will be sworn in as the municipal government's leaders for the next four years at the new council's inaugural meeting on Tuesday, Nov. 24.

The formal swearing-in and meeting will take place at Niagara College's NOTL campus in the Yerich Auditorium. Doors will open at 6:30 p.m. and the meeting will begin 7 p.m.

The meeting will include ceremonial proceedings that will usher in the beginning of the new term.

Vaughn Goettler will be sworn in as NOTL's new lord mayor, succeeding Gary Zalepa, who was lord mayor for the past four years. Goettler will be joined by incumbent councillors Gary Burroughs (deputy lord mayor), Sandra O'Connor, Andrew Niven and Tim Balasiuk, and new first-time councillors Weston Miller and Steve McGuinness.

The next council will have two fewer councillors, after this term's council voted in March this year to reduce its size to six seats from eight, a move that was written into provincial law in late May.

This came following regionwide politicial discussions about making governments more efficient by reducing the number of elected officials.

Alongside serving as NOTL's mayor, Goettler will be the town's representative at Niagara Region's council, which will also have fewer seats at the table when its next term officially begins on Thursday, Nov. 26.

That new regional council, to be led by chair Frank Campion, the Ford government's pick for the role announced on Nov. 10, will be made up of 12 representatives, one for each municipality in Niagara, down from 32 regional councillors.

Following the inaugural meeting of the new NOTL council, the lord mayor and councillors will gather for their first two meetings in council chambers: a committee of the whole planning meeting on Dec. 8 and a regular council meeting on Dec. 15.

Niagara College's Daniel J. Patterson campus is located at 135 Taylor Rd.

Less traffic, more walkability among desires for future of Queen Street

streets, patios and other public spaces are used; fine-tune urban design and landscaping; and more.

Stations featured posters outlining different aspects of the secondary plan, with space for residents to leave feedback on sticky notes.

Frances Stocker liked the European suggestion.

Stocker attended the session representing Seniors for Climate in Niagara, focusing on securing a shuttle bus that would run from Glendale to Old Town.

"It's important that the shuttle becomes beyond being on the radar and becomes an active project for the town in order for the Queen Street plan to be developed for the future," she said.

"From a climate point of view, to get rid of all those fuels, but it has so many other benefits as well."

One benefit would be less traffic congestion in Old Town and progress toward more pedestrian-friendly streets.

Stocker recalled growing up in the U.K., where her hometown of Portsmouth had been pedestrianized, along with many other towns she visited on day trips.

"I don't understand why North America is so slow on pedestrianisation," she said. "It's so important for the town because it will give the visitors a sense of relaxation."

Stocker also mentioned recent trips to Europe, where streets were pedestrian-friendly and businesses could still receive deliveries through various accommodations.

"Whether it's having a demarcated space going down the middle of a road where delivery vehicles can come, or another solution," she said.


Randie Keeping-Topps, sitting next to Shaw executive director Tim Jennings, was happy to give feedback about how she navigates Queen Street. JULIA SACCO

The poster asking what types of buildings residents would like to see on Queen Street was covered in sticky notes. Under the sections asking for feedback on multi-storey buildings, one note read "2.5 (storeys) OK," while another read "NO MORE THAN 2 STOREY."

Old Town resident Tish Vigna agreed with a two-storey limit.

"Otherwise you lose the look and feel of the town," she said.

Vigna said she remained concerned about the lack of mention of Royal Oak School and the old hospital. The school is located inside the building of the former hospital on Wellington Street, which is set to be redeveloped after years of mostly idle.

"The school should be coupled with housing for seniors, upscale housing," she said.

Heather Campagnola said keeping Royal Oak school in Old Town was imperative.

"It's the only school that's left here for young kids," she said. "We need to somehow bring the youth back to Old Town."

Randie Keeping-Topps visited the session's mobility station, where residents could describe to staff how they get around Queen Street.

"It was very useful, because I have mobility issues," she said.

Keeping-Topps described how traffic congestion on Queen Street can make navigating the area difficult.

"I don't come on summer weekends," she said. "People are walking like a wall of people coming at you."

The first public information centre featured seven stations where residents could leave feedback and ask questions of staff members and consultants involved in the plan.

Coun. Gary Burroughs said the session was more than organized.

"The turnout is excellent," he said.

The outcome of it, he said, would depend on how consultants interpret the feedback.

"There's equal sides to almost every issue here. So that'll be the challenge," he said.

Burroughs also noticed several business owners at the session, whose opinions can differ greatly from those of residents, he said.

"People are certainly involved."

Newly elected councillor Weston Miller said the volume of feedback could reflect recent changes in town.

"People are feeling like their voice has more weight in these decisions," he said.

Fiona Main, senior policy planner and the plan's team lead, said it was encouraging to see people interacting and using the sticky notes.

"People have a lot to say, and it can be a very serious topic," she said.

Main said her priority was to encourage people to speak about their priorities.

"That's the point of the engagement. I'm always happy to listen."

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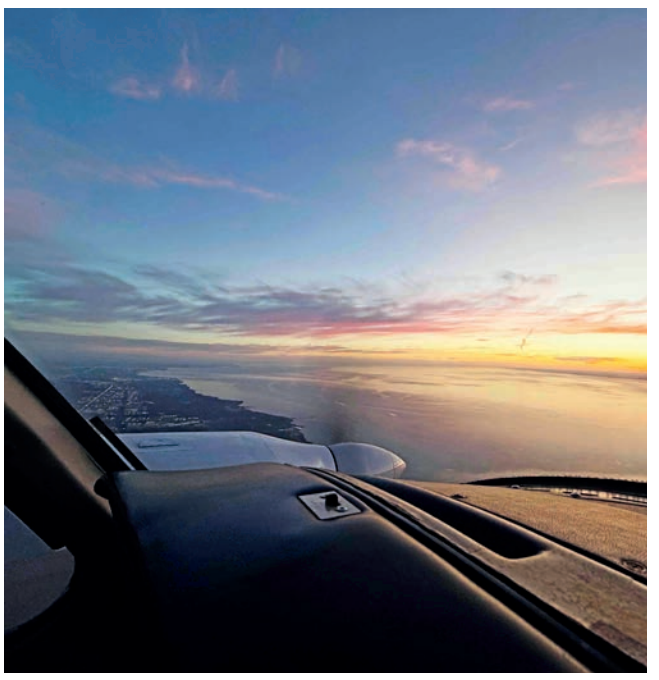
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NOTL-Toronto flights now five days a week to meet demand

Zahraa Hmood
The Lake Report





Left: The view across Lake Ontario when leaving NOTL. RIght: Ethan Coates (captain), passenger Charles Climenhage and Josh Hooper (first officer). The Aspen Air passenger flight service has expanded from three to five days per week due to surprising demand, officials say. SUPPLIED/FILE

Two weeks after passenger flights between Niagara District Airport and Toronto's downtown airport took off for the first time since the pandemic, the Niagara-based airport is sharing that it's immediately adding more flights to its weekly schedule.

The service, run by Aspen Air Charters, is expanding to five days a week from three days in response to strong early demand, the Niagara District Airport shared in a media release on Nov. 18.

From Monday to Friday, travellers can choose between flights running twice a day between the airport in Niagara-on-the-Lake and Billy Bishop Toronto City Airport, taking off from NOTL 7:40 a.m. and 4:40 p.m. each day.

The 11-minute flight costs $126 per person for one way (including taxes and fees). Those who want to fly to NOTL from Billy Bishop airport can catch one of two flights, leaving 8:50 a.m. and 5:50 p.m.

This flight service launched on Nov. 2, bringing scheduled passenger flights back to the Niagara District Airport after the discontinuation of FlyGTA's NOTL-to-Toronto flight service, which ran 2017 to 2022.

Initially, Niagara airport CEO Dan Pilon said, the plan was to add two more days of flights in the spring, following a few months of the flight service's "soft launch" this fall and winter.

Josh Hooper, pilot and co-founder of Aspen Air, said in the release that the demand from travellers has been "overwhelming," with more than 1,000 inquiries in two weeks.

"We never imagined this increase would come so soon, but we'd like to thank the Niagara community for your incredible support, keeping us on track to launch daily flights this spring," he said.

The flight service includes free parking at Niagara District Airport and a free shuttle service connecting travellers to Union Statoin.

In December, more flights from Niagara District Airport are set to be launched, connecting passengers to Kitchener-Waterloo's Region of Waterloo International Airport — a 20-minute flight, currently priced at $195 per person.

To book a flight with Aspen Air, visit aspenaircharters.com/scheduled-flights.

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Meridian helps pack 400 welcome bags for farmworkers

Paige Seburn
Local Journalism Initiative
The Lake Report



Four hundred welcome bags are ready for farmworkers returning to NOTL, thanks to a helping hand from Meridian Credit Union. From left, Meridian's Marissa Wright, Aiden Palujanskas, Erin Pickering and Amber Gill, Gill's son, and the Farmworker Hub's Annette Whitley and Dinie Muste. SUPPLIED

Four hundred bags are packed and ready. Another 800 are still needed.

As seasonal farmworkers prepare to return to Niagara-on-the-Lake, the Farmworker Hub is working toward its goal of putting together 1,200 bags of everyday essentials to welcome them back in the new year.

Thanks to Meridian Credit Union's Virgil branch, it's already one-third of the way there.

Through the bank's partnership with Kits for a Cause, the branch funded 400 wellness bags, with employees visiting the hub to pack them alongside volunteers.

Each bag contains toothpaste, a toothbrush, soap, deodorant, shampoo, lip balm, tissues and a comb.

"The wellness bags are meant as a warm welcome to our friends," said Brittney Kranz, lead co-ordinator of the Farmworker Hub. "It's a way, as a community, to show them our appreciation for the work they do here."

But reaching everyone isn't easy.

Last year, the hub distributed 800 bags, rotating recipients because it would take 1,200 or more to give one to every worker it serves.

The partnership grew out of the credit union's earlier support for fundraising efforts for the family of Sinhue Garcia, a farmworker who was struck and killed in a hit-and-run in June. A driver was later charged with impaired driving in connection with his death.

Through that connection, Meridian staff learned more about the hub's programs and expressed interest in helping with the wellness bags.

Now, the hub is turning to the wider community for help reaching its goal.

Workers begin arriving in mid-January, with others following through June. The hub works with local farm owners to arrange deliveries, sometimes through employers picking up bags and other times through volunteers visiting farms to welcome workers in person.

Residents can help by donating deodorant, toothpaste, lip balm or lotion. Travel-sized products are especially welcome, and supplies can also be purchased through the hub's Amazon wish list.

Local businesses can also help by organizing wellness bag packing events.

"We would be grateful and could certainly connect them with Kits for a Cause," Kranz said.

And for those who can't donate supplies, there's another way to help: write a note of welcome or encouragement to tuck inside a bag.

For Kranz, the support is another reminder of the community behind the hub's work and what makes welcoming workers back each year so special.

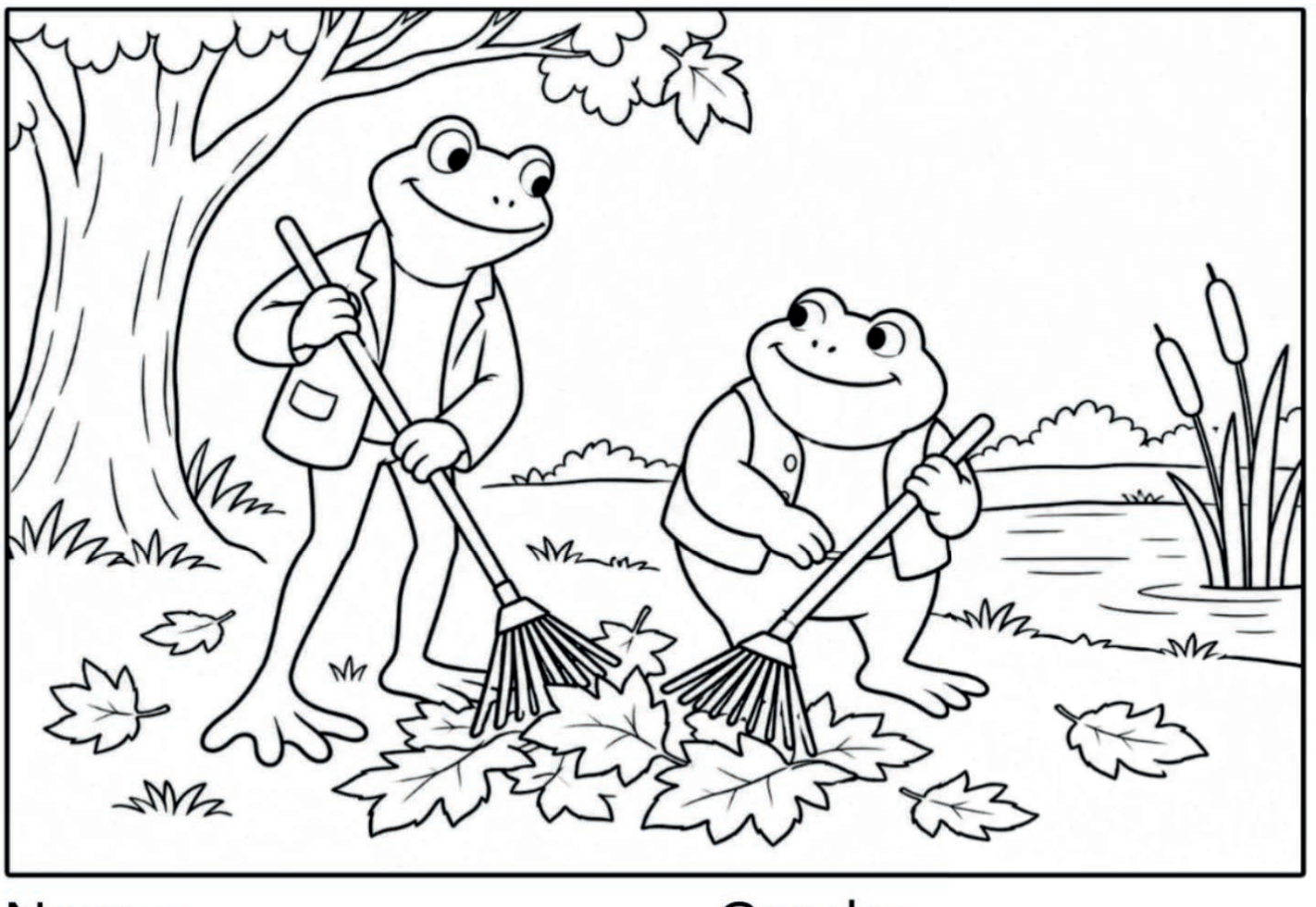
"We feel incredibly lucky to live in a community with such kind, caring, generous neighbours," she said.

"It's always a joyous time to see our friends again."

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SHAW 2026 FESTIVAL 26 X The Lake Report Colouring contest

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Enter the Shaw Festival and The Lake Report's holiday colouring contest for a chance to win a pair of tickets to see *A Year with Frog and Toad*!

Contest open to students in grades 1 - 6. Email your entries to megan@niagaranow.com by Tuesday, Nov. 24th.

Two winners will be selected to win a pair of tickets each. Winners will be notified by email on Nov. 25th.

Watch for next week's colouring contest to win tickets to the Shaw's *Cinderella*!

Let the holiday magic begin!

Name:_____ Grade:_____

Sewer work kicks off $6.2M Mississagua Street makeover

Paige Seburn
Local Journalism Initiative
The Lake Report



Signs of change on Mississagua Street — construction barrels, sewer pipes and heavy equipment have moved in as the town kicks off a $6.22-million overhaul, with months of roadwork ahead. The full road closure between William and Gage streets is expected to last six weeks. PAIGE SEBURN

Work is now underway on Mississagua Street's long-planned reconstruction, with crews tackling a deteriorating sewer system before moving on to road improvements expected to continue into next spring.

Construction began Nov. 9 with the installation of a temporary sewer bypass system to keep services running while crews replace aging underground infrastructure.

The first major task: replacing a sanitary sewer buried seven metres beneath the road between William and Gage streets.

A full closure of that stretch began Nov. 16 and is expected to last about six weeks, depending on weather and construction progress.

Residents within the work area will still have driveway access, while emergency access will also be maintained.

The town says the project remains on schedule and should be done in the spring.

"The town and contractor will continue to monitor weather conditions and construction progress throughout the winter and will provide updates should project timelines change," said town spokesperson Quinton Ascah.

Ascah said construction may continue through parts of the winter where conditions permit, although some activities are expected to pause between January and March.

The larger reconstruction covers Mississagua Street from Mary to Queen streets and includes new pavement, storm sewer improvements, decorative streetlights, a sidewalk on the west side and dedicated bike lanes with painted buffers.

The town also plans to extend the existing watermain from Johnson to Queen streets.

Once the sanitary sewer replacement is complete, crews will move on to the remaining storm sewer and road reconstruction work.

"Completing the underground infrastructure first is necessary to avoid future disruption to newly reconstructed road surfaces and to ensure the long-term reliability of underground municipal services," Ascah said.

The construction contract was awarded to Provincial Construction following a competitive bidding process.

The project's current budget is approximately $6.22 million, with no further increases since council approved an additional $1.25 million in June to replace the deteriorating sewer.

During public consultations in March, residents raised concerns about traffic disruptions, property access, tree removals and construction timing.

The town said it informed residents about proposed tree removals, including the reasons for them, potential replacement plantings and measures to minimize impacts. It said residents' feedback was considered during project planning.

Public notices have already been issued, Ascah said, with further construction updates to be shared through the town's website, social media and direct notifications to affected residents when appropriate.

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Local chapter of charity group thanks NOTL for 19 years of fundraising

Julia Sacco
The Lake Report



After 19 years of fundraising, the Nyanyas of Niagara have made the difficult decision to pause fundraising efforts. At its peak, membership was at 160 people. FILE

More than 19 years ago, Sandra Hardy read a story in The Globe and Mail that left a deep impression on her — it was about grandmothers in Africa taking care of their grandchildren, after their parents died from HIV or AIDS.

The article highlighted the need for bereavement counselling and support. Hardy said the Stephen Lewis Foundation responded to that need.

Lewis and his daughter, Ilana, founded the Grandmothers to Grandmothers Campaign. Lewis, former leader of the Ontario New Democratic Party and Canadian ambassador to the United Nations, died this March at the age of 88.

The campaign sparked the creation of groups in Canada, the U.K., Australia and the U.S., who have rallied in response to the crisis faced by grandmothers in Africa as they struggled to raise millions of children orphaned by AIDS.

"My background being grief and loss as a therapist, this was pretty astounding because probably the hardest loss is to lose your children."

After reading the article, Hardy started an organization in Collingwood to support the foundation. When she moved to Niagara-on-the-Lake in 2007, she partnered with Terry Mactaggart to establish the Nyanyas of Niagara.

"So we called together a bunch of people and had a coffee and asked people to get involved. And there was a lot of interest," Hardy said.

The grandmothers in Africa never gave up, she said. The idea behind the Nyanyas and grandmother groups across Canada was to give them the support they need to keep going.

"They will be able to survive because we as grandmothers are helping them," she said.

Through fundraising initiatives involving blessing jars, bracelets, book sales and other efforts, the NOTL chapter has donated more than $130,000 to the grandmothers campaign through the Stephen Lewis Foundation.

This fall, after 19 years, the chapter's steering committee decided to pause its fundraising efforts.

"It's a different time. People's money is going to a different place, and certainly AIDS and HIV in Africa is not the kind of topic that it was 19 years ago," Hardy said.

Cindy Grant, a steering group member, said changing times have made people less likely to donate to the cause.

"This has always been true, but particularly now, there's so much draw on people's charitable money that they have got available," she said.

Hardy hopes those involved feel a sense of peace knowing they helped create a movement that will continue to support women and children living with HIV and AIDS in Africa.

"We came into this at an ending because people were dying. And now it's our own ending."

Since 2003, the Stephen Lewis Foundation has raised more than $200 million in support of grassroots organizations responding to HIV in Africa.

Over the past two decades, new HIV infections and HIV-related deaths worldwide have been declining, due in part to the proliferation of antiretroviral treatment: in July, UNAIDS reported that new HIV infections in sub-Saharan Africa were down by 59 per cent since 2010.

The epidemic, however, is still active in the continent: roughly half of last year's new infections of HIV occured in sub-Saharan Africa (around 600,000 people), while 350,000 people there died of AIDS-related illnesses.

Those who wish to donate to the Grandmothers to Grandmothers Campaign through the Stephen Lewis Foundation can still do so online at grandmotherscampaign.org.

During the chapter's years of operation, Betty Locke wrote a handbook titled "I Love You Granny," which Stephen Locke gave the Nyanyas to sell.

The book is available to read at the library, and copies are available for $10 through the Nyanyas, with all proceeds going to the Stephen Lewis Foundation.

The Nyanyas also have a small supply of blessing jars available.

"That was our very first fundraiser," Grant said.

The jars are intended for personal use. When someone experiences a blessing or feels particularly grateful for something in their life, they can put a bit of money in the jar. The money is then donated to the Grandmothers Campaign.

Those interested in a jar can email Hardy at skhardynotl@gmail.com

juliasacco@niagaranow.com

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Borscht draws a crowd for missions fund

Julia Sacco
The Lake Report

Steve Goertz is no stranger to borscht, but when it comes to what's served at Bethany Mennonite Church's annual luncheon, he says his homemade borscht doesn't compare.

"This is the real borscht," he said.

Dozens gathered in the church hall outside Virgil on Saturday for the luncheon held once a year to support charitable efforts in the area and abroad.

The soup, often associated with a beet-red colour, is a staple in several cultures, including Ukrainian, Polish, Lithuanian, Russian, Belarusian and Moldovan communities.

But the Mennonite-style borscht served at the luncheon doesn't have that beet-red colour — it contains no beets.

"Cabbage is the main ingredient," Linda Van Bergen told The Lake Report.

Van Bergen, one of the luncheon's co-ordinators, said she and other church members prepare the borscht at home and in the church kitchen ahead of the event.

Church member Gayle Neufeld said the final product reflects everyone's efforts.

"Everybody makes it a little bit different," she said.

Van Bergen said the church has been running its annual borscht luncheon for as long as she can remember. The recipe has been a staple for her family.



Families gather at Bethany Mennonite Church's annual borscht luncheon in Virgil, sharing a meal while supporting local and international missions. Guests could also take home baked bread, preserves, desserts and borscht. JULIA SACCO

"We have a saying, 'cheap like borscht,' but it's not cheap anymore," she said.

Using cabbage as the soup's main ingredient would have made it an economical meal during tough times, she added.

On Saturday, a hearty bowl of borscht and fresh homemade bread cost $15, with proceeds supporting local and international missions.

Volunteers said the luncheon supports five or six missions, with funds raised going home and abroad.

Attendees could also purchase preserves, freshly baked bread, desserts and jars of borscht to take home.

The church hall was full when the luncheon began at 11 a.m., volunteer Linda Weibe said.

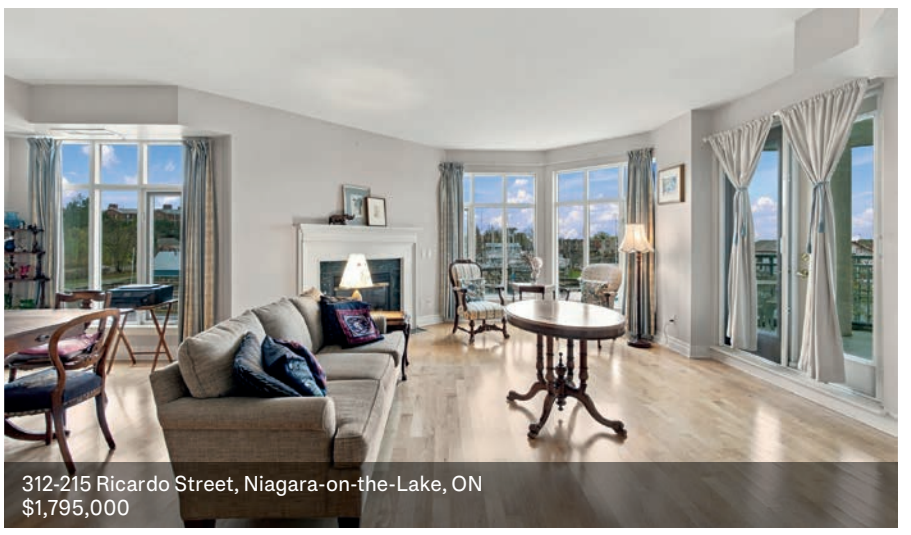
"We've even had people having to wait," she said.

The wait was worth it for families who spent the afternoon eating and enjoying each other's company.

Don Legere sat with Goertz and family. He said his reason for attending was simple: "Delicious food, the borscht and the desserts."

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Jam Queen Kim McQuhae maintains her reign

Julia Sacco
The Lake Report



The Gryphon Ridge Highlands' championship booth. NOTL's "Jam Queen" Kim McQuhae sold out of some of her most coveted jam and jelly flavours and earned another 22 awards, each of them a Top 5 placement. SUPPLIED

Nineteen years ago, Kim McQuhae had an especially sweet dream. It was about a jam flavour she had never tried before.

"It was (a) lime, ginger, water chestnut marmalade," she said.

McQuhae wrote the idea down when she woke up, without thinking much of it.

A few months later, she entered the jam in the Royal Agricultural Winter Fair..

"It was my very first championship," she said.

Since then, Niagara-on-the-Lake's "jam queen" has taken home countless awards at the annual fair, including the title of premier exhibitor, which she won again this year.

The premier exhibitor title is reserved for those who earn the most points in their division.

McQuhae's jams and jellies were among more than 300 submissions.

At the fair, which ran from Nov. 6 to 15, McQuhae's jam and jelly company, Gryphon Ridge Highlands, took home several awards, with 22 of the 26 jams entered placing in the top five of their categories.

Some may find it challenging to come up with new flavours to debut each year, but McQuhae sees it as an opportunity to get creative.

"There's so many flavours of fruits and things out there that basically, if you do the math, the possibilities are endless," she said.

"I try to do things I don't think anybody else will do."

This year, McQuhae's personal favourite was a chocolate elderberry jelly.

McQuhae said making the jelly involves picking elderberries at their most prolific time for harvest, freezing them and then shaking the berries off their tiny stems.

"Then you make a sort of elderberry tea and I combine it with, of course, some sugar, chocolate liqueur, things like that," she said.

The jelly placed first in the Fruit Jelly Single or Mixed Tree/Vine Fruit/Berry category, an achievement of which McQuhae was proud.

At her championship booth, she offered tastings of her jams and jellies and sold out of the chocolate elderberry jelly on both days the booth was running.

"I said, 'Well now you have to come to Niagara-on-the-Lake,.'"

After years of success, McQuhae is grateful her hard work continues to be rewarded.

"I spend a lot of time making different jams and things," she said. "When you win, you're like, 'Oh my god.' It's a year's culmination of work."

Gryphon Ridge Highlands products are available at the farm. McQuhae can be contacted on Facebook to make an appointment to visit.

juliasacco@niagaranow.com



Welcoming the world's cyclists to NOTL

Julia Sacco
The Lake Report

Avid cyclist Graham McMillan has always dreamed of hitting the open road on two wheels, but logistics tend to get in the way.

"I'm no great packer," he said. "That's probably what deters me from these long-distance things."

While daydreaming about cycling journeys, McMillan came across WarmShowers, a community of cyclists who open their homes to fellow long-distance riders looking for a safe place to rest.

The network facilitates reciprocal hospitality, with no money exchanged — just experiences and, occasionally, a warm meal.

The service was a perfect match for McMillan, who enjoys hearing about other travellers' experiences.

"Of course, I had to convince my wife these people weren't axe murderers that we were inviting into our home," he said.

Last August, McMillan hosted his first couple through WarmShowers, welcoming visitors from New Zealand into his home.

"They turned out to be just super nice people," he said.

By opening up his home to guests, he's been able to be a small part of their journeys, he said, which has been its own reward and an inspiration to him.

Since then, McMillan has hosted about eight groups through the network over the past year.

"There were a number of people from Quebec, including a young lad who was 16 years old," he said.

The teenager was completing a 3,400-kilometre charity ride around Ontario.

"He got here on a Saturday and looked like a wet dish rag because it had rained all day in Toronto," he said.

The boy's mother was travelling from Quebec City with all his supplies and had planned to sleep in her car.

McMillan said "that won't do," so she stayed in the house, too.

What he most enjoys about hosting cyclists, he said, are the conversations and hearing about life on the road.

"And the fact that they appreciate a home-cooked meal when they're on the road."

Other memorable guests have included an older woman making her annual cycling trip around the Great Lakes.

"What really struck us about her was she was like 85 pounds and had a 90-pound bicycle," McMillan said.

A couple from the United Kingdom also stayed with McMillan while taking a year off to travel the world.

McMillan, who cycles about 2,500 kilometres a year, enjoyed hearing about their extensive travels.

The couple described cycling from Britain to Istanbul, flying to Mumbai and riding across India into Nepal, then travelling to Vietnam to cycle through Laos, Cambodia and Thailand.

They then cycled the length of New Zealand, flew to Australia and cycled from Melbourne to Brisbane before flying to Japan. From there, they flew to Vancouver and cycled across Canada, arriving at McMillan's doorstep in NOTL — McMillan's definition of "an epic adventure."

"They've all got interesting stories from the road and they're just interesting people to start with, that they would do something like that," he said. "It seems to me that cyclists seem to be pretty decent, salt-of-the-earth kind of people."

Some guests have kept in touch, McMillan said.

"Just a few weeks ago, I went to the mailbox, and here was a postcard from the New Zealand couple."

The couple invited McMillan to cycle with them in Queensland, Australia.

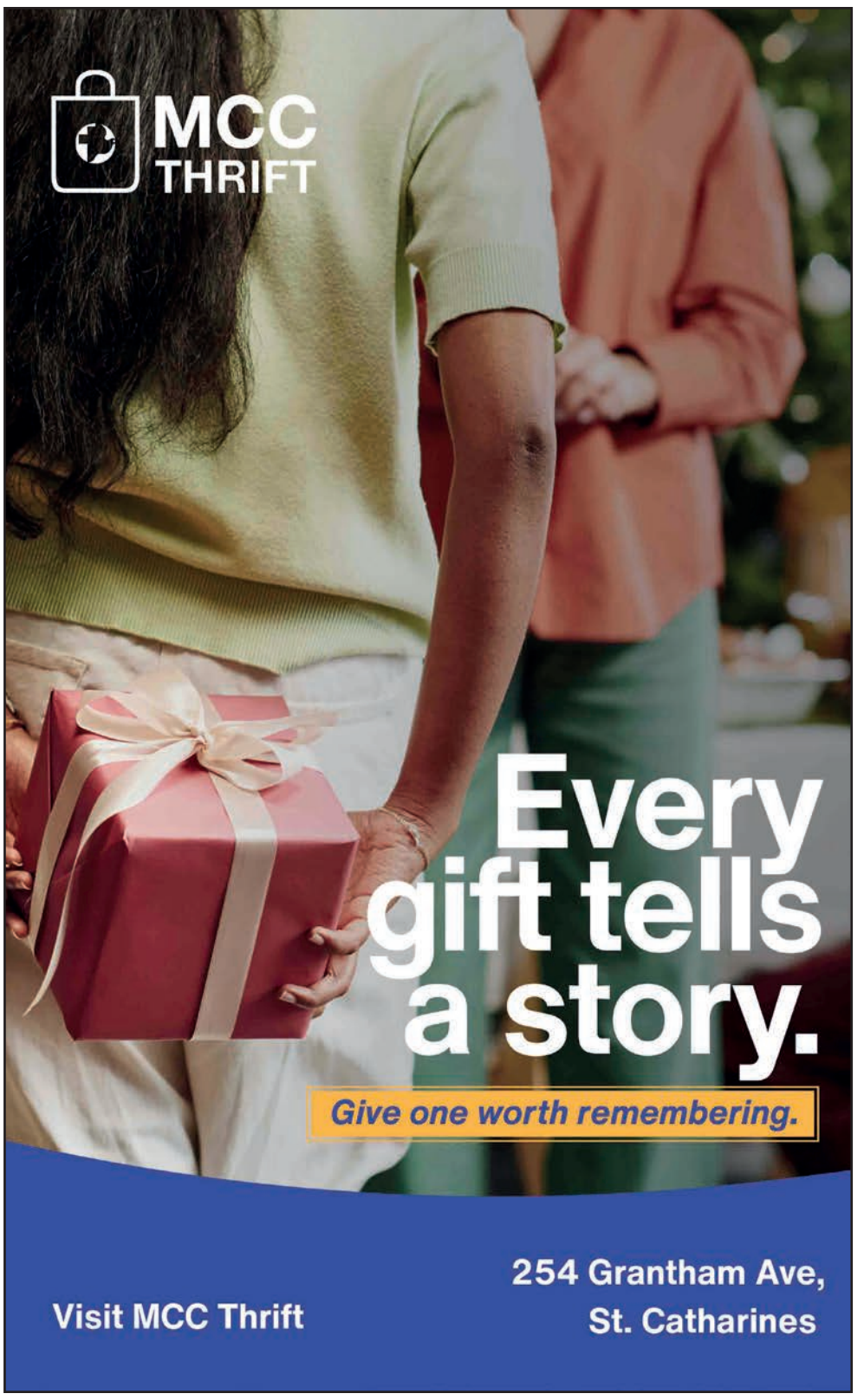
"I may take them up on that."

juliasacco@niagaranow.com



Graham McMillan, left, welcomes British cyclists Daisy and Charlie through WarmShowers. The couple shared stories from their travels around the world. SUPPLIED





Wolves go undefeated in Wasaga

Tammy Van Berkel
Special to The Lake Report



U15 B Wolves Michael Collins, Ike Good, Jake Van Spronsen and Easton Van Berkel celebrate the team's four wins and one tie in the Silver Stick tournament. STEPHANIE WOODS

The Niagara-on-the-Lake Wolves U15B hockey team delivered an unforgettable performance this past weekend, capturing the Wasaga Beach Silver Stick Regional Championship and proving that teamwork, determination and heart can accomplish incredible things.

The Wolves went undefeated throughout the Nov. 13–15 tournament, finishing with four wins and one tie, scoring an impressive 18 goals while allowing just two.

Their championship run included a 6–1 victory over Orillia, a 2–0 shutout against Collingwood and a hard-fought 1–1 tie against host Wasaga Beach.

The Wolves then elevated their game when it mattered most, defeating Wasaga Beach 6–0 in the semifinal before delivering a remarkable 3–0 shutout victory over Sturgeon Lake, currently ranked third in Ontario, to claim the championship.

Perhaps the most exciting part of the weekend was the impression this team left on the tournament.

Coaches and representatives from opposing teams repeatedly commented that the NOTL Wolves had seemingly "come out of nowhere," quickly establishing themselves as a team to watch.

But those who know this group understand that their success is no accident. Built on an exceptional coaching staff, relentless work ethic, hustle and genuine team unity, these boys have embraced what it means to play for one another.

Every player contributes, every shift matters and their greatest strength is their commitment to the team above themselves.

Congratulations to the NOTL Wolves U15B players and coaching staff on an extraordinary achievement. You've made your association and community incredibly proud.

Next stop: the Silver Stick International Finals, Jan. 8–10, in Forest, Ont.

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NOTL philanthropists honoured for community work

Staff
The Lake Report

Four Niagara-on-the-Lake philanthropists have been honoured for their generosity in giving back to the community.

At a ceremony in Hamilton on Friday, Nov. 13, the Association of Fundraising Professionals' Golden Horseshoe chapter singled out developer Benny Marotta, Michele Darling and her husband Michael Eagen, and Ginny Medland Green for their work in aiding others.

The presentations were made at a luncheon celebrating National Philanthropy Day.

Marotta, one of Niagara Region's most prominent — and, in some circles, controversial — land developers, received the Outstanding Philanthropist in Health Care award for donating millions to area hospitals and health organizations.

The association highlighted Marotta's $15-million gift to the St. Catharines hospital, $10 million donated to the South Niagara Hospital, which is now under construction, and $1.5 million pledged to Gillian's Place, a St. Catharines shelter for women and children.

In honouring Darling and Eagen with the Outstanding Philanthropist in Community award, the association noted the couple has worked with civic groups for more than 30 years and been instrumental in putting the Niagara Symphony on a solid financial footing.

Darling is chair of the orchestra's board.

The couple also helped create the Young Canadian Talent Fund in conjunction with the symphony and has been deeply involved in Milton's Darling Home for Kids, a facility for children with complex medical needs.

As well, they support community programs focused on food security, child literacy and reducing poverty, the association said. They also have been major supporters of Trillium hospital in Mississauga.





Left: Developer Benny Marotta, with his wife Louise, was honoured by the Association of Fundraising Professionals for donating millions of dollars to hospital and health organizations in Niagara. Right: Volunteer Ginny Medland Green, left, was honoured for her many years of helping community organizations. Michele Darling, right, was recognized for her community philanthropy efforts. KATE HOLMES

Medland Green was named Outstanding Volunteer Fundraiser in recognition of her 35-year professional career in fundraising and a decade as a volunteer helping community non-profits.

Her volunteer efforts began in her youth and today much of her work is focused on Pathstone Mental Health, an agency that serves children in Niagara.

With its "Clear the Path" campaign, chaired by Medland Green, Pathstone aims to raise more than $1 million by next year to pay off the mortgage on its headquarters and free up millions of dollars to treat kids at the grassroots level.

That goal is close to being reached.





Embrace the winter at Pillar's Christmas market this weekend

Staff
The Lake Report

Downtown Niagara-on-the-Lake's known for being pretty as a postcard during the holiday season — especially when covered with a blanket of snow.

This weekend, Vintage Hotels is inviting residents and visitors to bring their Christmas spirit down to Pillar and Post and its other locations in Niagara-on-the-Lake for its Christmas Market, from Friday, Nov. 20 to Sunday, Nov. 22.

The main event is the Christmas Market in the Gardens, set for Saturday and Sunday, 11 a.m. to 5 p.m.

This free event will let attendees wander a woodland Christmas village in the Pillar and Post's Gardens, filled with artisan booths selling everything from jewerly, fashion, home decor, bath and body essentials, gourmet treats and handcrafted gifts.



Guests can also enjoy festive food and drinks, including mulled wine, cider, pretzels, crepes and bratwurst, along with live music from St. Michael's Choir, which will be performing all throughout the day.

Several other events and activities are set for this weekend's Christmas celebration: on Friday, from 5 to 9 p.m., the Pillar and Post will host an exclusive Sip & Savour event, featuring live music, festive shopping, food and beverage tastings.

Tickets are $59 per person, plus tax, and give attendees access to the Gardens at Pillar and Post, four food vouchers and four beverage vouchers that can be mixed and matched for each guest to curate their own culinary experience.

More events are set for Saturday and Sunday, though some are already sold out.

Those that aren't on Saturday include the Christmas wreath workshop from 3 to 4:30 p.m. and the chocolate advent calendar workshop with pastry chef Zoë Ellis from 1 to 3 p.m.

As for events on Sunday that haven't sold out, there's the holiday centrepiece workshop from 12 to 1:30 p.m., then the vintage holiday tea, which will be held at the hotel's Garden Barn, with a sparkling reception set for 2 p.m., followed by afternoon tea from 2:30 to 4 p.m. Tickets are $85 per person plus tax and gratuity.

To purchase tickets for one or more of this weekend's Christmas Market events, visit vintage-hotels.com/events/christmas-market.

Fill a grape bin for a good cause

Julia Sacco
The Lake Report



Help Huebel Grape Estates fill a four-tonne grape bin with donations of non-perishable food for Project SHARE.

For Craig Parker and Huebel Grape Estates, Christmas is a time to give back.

Two years ago, Parker helped raise $15,000 for the Terry Fox Foundation. Last year, he and his wife raised $10,000 for the CIBC Cancer Run.

This year, Parker chose Project SHARE because his wife worked there and his children have volunteered with the organization.

On Nov. 28, from noon to 5 p.m., attendees at Huebel Grape Estates can help Parker reach his goal of filling a four-tonne grape bin with non-perishable food items.

"We want to help families in need for Christmas this year 'cause just how tough it is out there," Parker said.

Parker, who works in sales for Huebel Grape Estates, thought a large event would help bring people together while raising funds and collecting donations.

"It kind of blossomed from there to, 'Hey, let's have a charity barbecue event where you donate a non-perishable food item, you get free barbecue.'"

The fundraising event will also feature a Santa meet-and-greet, an ornament-decorating craft table sponsored by Michaels, free hot chocolate sponsored by Starbucks and a large prize table.

"There's a lot of stuff for everyone," Parker said.

All funds raised through ticket sales will also go to Project SHARE.

"To buy diapers for kids and clothing and whatnot, whatever they need," he said. "We just hope to raise as much non-perishable food items as well as money for them."

juliasacco@niagaranow.com





Big dig for new digs at NOTL Museum



Over on Castlereagh Street, crews are hard at work on the next phase of the Niagara-on-the-Lake Museum's major expansion: they're building the foundation for a new addition to the main building, shared the museum staff in its Nov. 5 newsletter. Next, a new front entrance will be created to connect the addition to the Janet Carnochan house, which will come to house the museum's research and archives centre. Following this, crews will start to build the structure of the new addition. Construction will continue throughout the winter months, the museum says. DAVE VAN DE LAAR

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Benefit night to help Legion rebuild after flood damage

Zahraa Hmood
The Lake Report



Aug. 2 was a difficult day for Legion Branch 124: a major storm caused heavy flooding, damaging the ground level. Fundraiser organizer Maria Mavridis hopes to raise $20,000 to help the Legion restore its main floor. FILE

The Royal Canadian Legion branch in Niagara-on-the-Lake is making progress on restoring the main floor of its home on King Street, following this summer's massive flood, but it'll be a while before building is back on its feet.

To give Branch 124 a much-needed boost, Anchor Niagara is putting on a benefit concert on Friday, Nov. 27 at the NOTL Community Centre to help it raise funds for renovations to its first floor and the installation of an elevator, allowing everyone to access the second floor more easily.

It'll be a night of live music with free admission — all proceeds from food and drink sales, silent auctions, raffles and 50/50 draws will go to the Legion. Attendees can also make direct donations.

Music starts at 6 p.m. with Trophy Husbands featuring Ashleigh, followed by Brandon Agnew and the Night Shadows at 7 p.m., Marty Hopkins and the Honky Tonk Heroes at 8 p.m., then a live jam until 10 p.m.

Maria Mavridis, founder of Anchor Niagara, says this event's been in the works since August, after the Legion was hit by a major flood on Aug. 2.

The morning of the flood, Mavridis met up with fellow former councillor Erwin Wiens and chief administrator Nick Ruller, all heading over to the Legion at 6 a.m. They arrived to find water rising around the branch building, and a handful of "devastated" looking members.

"That day I said, 'I'll figure something out for you guys,'" she said.

More than a foot of water entered the Legion, damaging the ground level. As of this month, the main floor has been emptied of debris and damaged furniture, its flooring taken out and its bar gone, leaving an empty shell.

The Legion doesn't yet have an evaluation from its insurer as to the extent of the damage and how much it will cost. It needs that evaluation in order to begin restoration work.

Mavridis is hoping to help the Legion raise $20,000 to fund the ground floor's restoration, as well as the installation of a new elevator — right now, the Legion is hosting most of its events on the second floor, only accessible by a flight of stairs.

Since concluding her election campaign on Oct. 26, planning for the benefit concert has gone into full swing: for the silent auctions, she's received more than 100 items donated by local businesses, wineries and companies like Disney, Netflix and Sephora, including many gift baskets — one basket she received on Wednesday from Greaves Jams and Marmalades is valued at $200.

As for the food, dinner options will include beef on a bun from Antipastos, pizza and pasta marinara with garlic bread.

For Mavridis, the local Legion is a significant part of the community in NOTL — with people she's known most of her life as a born-and-raised NOTLer.

"Stan Harrington at the Legion has known me since I was a kid, 12 years old, when he had a shop on Queen Street. I have every bit of respect for that man and every veteran," she said.

There's been a lot of generosity from others offering what they can to put on the event: the musicians will be playing for free; the staff at Corks Wine Bar & Eatery, where she's events manager, are volunteering to serve attendees; and the number of donations she's gotten for the silent auction is "amazing," she said.

"This is community. This is Niagara-on-the-Lake. I love it."

Anyone interested in volunteering to help out the night of the event Step Up for the Legion, can email events@anchorniagara.com.



The Lake Report

OPINION

TLR

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BKind Grateful

#102: If someone is ignored in a group conversation, make eye contact and include them.

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

POSITIVE POWER +

Contributed by Patty Garriock
"The future belongs to those who believe in the beauty of the dream."
— Eleanor Roosevelt

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In Frank we trust? Not so far



THE TURNER REPORT

Garth Turner
Columnist



A sign of the times: Visitors streaming into Old Town will be told "Mississauga Road" is closed when they're actually on Mississagua Street. So much for being unique.

Before they quit work last Friday, in twilight, the guys dumped detour signs flat on the shoulder of the road.

It's happening. The main drag into Old Town is being torn up, widened, gentrified and expanded with fancy bike lanes, replica lights and a new walkway. Seventeen trees will make the ultimate sacrifice. Canopy and character will be lost. To progress.

The sign says it all: the closure is of "Mississauga Road," it reads (that soulless six-lane artery to the east), and not our quirky "Mississagua Street" (note the spelling).

Yes, welcome to Mississauga, NOTL version. This bit of carelessness fits the legacy of the political leadership we all just tossed — when building and developing beats out preserving.

Will the sign be corrected? Dunno. But the challenge this bucolic little enclave faces is even larger now after the latest provincial action. And the face of that challenge is Frank.

Premier Doug Ford, whose Destination Niagara Strategy focuses on hotels, casinos, a sexed-up airport and double the number of tourists, has just named Frank Campion as regional chair. Actually, he's more like a monarch.

His "strong" powers will let him set a budget, control staff or overturn a bylaw the yokels on regional council might pass that conflicts with provincial goals. He's unelected and accountable to Queen's Park — in other words, not voters.

Doug's even giving Frank a "mandate letter." That says it all.

Moreover, no longer is there an elected regional rep raising our voice at the region. Now, 12 mayors sit on the board. Our guy, Vaughn Goettler, is but one.

And "weighted voting" means we get zoomed 10 times out of 10 by the Falls or the Kitty. More population equals more clout. Frank, meanwhile, can pretty much orchestrate everything. So, he matters — more than those we just elected.

"I am simply concerned by what I see happening in the region," says Goettler. "Our brand as a top tourist destination here in NOTL is not the brand of Niagara Falls. In fact, if we look at what brings people here, it is that we are not Niagara Falls, or Mississauga, or Toronto for that matter."

Our feisty lord mayor has his job cut out for him. Ford wants to amalgamate us into the Niagara regional soup. And Campion has campaigned in the past not only for the premier, but also eliminating our local government.

Who is this guy?

He's 69. The former mayor (for 12 years) of Welland. Born there. Owns a marketing company. Teaches. Ran to be a Progressive Conservative party member of the provincial legislature (and lost big to the NDP). Married to Liz for four decades. He's tight with the Ontario Home Builders outfit, aligned with Ontario's "build more faster" mandate.

Campion's a bigtime Tory supporter. He used his mayor's office to promote Ford during the 2025 election campaign — an unusual move that raised eyebrows and may have broken ethics rules. Mayors represent everybody. Not parties.

Yet Campion released a statement saying, "Having Doug Ford's strong, stable leadership when it comes to negotiating with Donald Trump is critical to ensuring Ontario's continued economic success."

So how do our local poohbahs feel about Frank? Will they stand up to the premier's surrogate?

Maybe. A few have fight in their eyes.

"I fundamentally disagree with the appointment of a regional chair," says Weston Miller. "The position should be elected and directly accountable to Niagara residents. In my view, greater authority should come with greater democratic accountability, not less. I also disagree with Mr. Campion's previously expressed support for municipal amalgamation."

Steve McGuinness, meanwhile, is out for bear.

"I have grave concerns about Frank Campion in that regional chair role," he says. "In the last regional council term, he was outspokenly pro-amalgamation and is likely to owe his first allegiance to the premier that appointed him and for whom he previously ran, under the Ontario PC banner."

McGuinness also argues that weighted voting and the chair's expanded powers will marginalize NOTL's voice.

And Goettler?

"It may be the story of the goose and the golden egg," he says. "We have the goose and we are benefiting with a golden egg. Let's not destroy the goose. I will advocate, non-stop for Niagara-on-the-Lake to retain its unique heritage and identity."

Good. There's a sign in a ditch you can start with.

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

garth@garth.ca





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The Nobel Prize's shocking snub of Albert Einstein's greatest work



DR. BROWN

Dr. William Brown
Columnist

In 1921, Albert Einstein won his only Nobel Prize for his 1905 theoretical study of the quantal nature of light in the photoelectric effect.

In 1900, Max Planck reluctantly adopted the notion that energy was quantal in nature, because only when he did so did his equations describing the radiation emitted by a heated black box make any sense.

Planck was 20 years older and far more cautious than Einstein, but together, they became the founding fathers of the brand new field of quantum physics, which reached maturity in 1925-26, with the work of Werner Heisenberg and Erwin Schrdinger, in a period I've called the Camelot period in physics.

By 21st-century times and standards, it was a small group of roughly 30 pioneers who mostly got along and respected one another even if they disagreed about their theories. Except for Ernest Rutherford and his Cambridge group, and Marie Skodowska-Curie, they were all theoretical physicists.

Einstein's work on the photoelectric effect was only one of four brilliant contributions in 1905. In the same year, he described the equivalence of energy and mass in a surprisingly powerful but simple equation, E = mc2, where E is energy, m is mass and c is the speed of light.

If that was not enough, he explained Brownian motion, the random motion of particles on the surface of water and used it to estimate the size of water molecules and even the atom.

Last, but certainly not least, was Einstein's special relativity paper, in which he overturned the prevailing view that time was constant everywhere, the speed of light varied, and space was filled with a mythical substance called ether.

Einstein simply ignored "ether" and through clever thought experiments, showed that the speed of light was constant and time varied with speed. It was an astonishing year for a 26-year-old patent office clerk with no PhD and no university appointment.

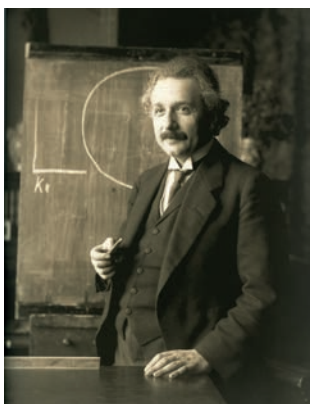
Those four papers were published in one issue of one of the most influential journals of its day, three of which — special relativity, the photoelectric effect, and the equivalence of energy and mass — deserved a Nobel prize.

Not content with what he knew was an incomplete theory (special relativity), Einstein moved on to develop his masterpiece, general relativity, which combined mass and space-time and clearly showed that mass bent light. It took him 11 years to complete, with many challenges, including mastering equations for curvatures for which he sought help from others.

Newtonian physics had ruled the roost of cosmology for 250 years ever since 23 year-old Isaac Newton created his laws of motion. But with the birth of Einstein's general relativity, gravity took on a whole dimension.

Four-dimensional space-time told mass where to go and mass shaped space-time — strictly speaking, there was no attractive gravity as Newton had imagined.

Einstein's general relativity led to several discoveries: large enough masses could collapse space-time into what was called by Schwarzschild, a singularity or later a black hole; mass could bend light enough to act as stellar lens to see galaxies otherwise hidden from view by intervening galaxies or groups of galaxies; and collisions of masses could create gravitational waves in space-time.



Albert Einstein won the 1921 Nobel Prize in physics for his work on the photoelectric effect, but never received the honour for his groundbreaking theory of general relativity.

All three have since been proven to be true and each warranted a Nobel Prize, as did general relativity itself. Only two were awarded a Nobel Prize — the 2017 prize for gravitational waves and the 2020 prize for black holes, both of which were awarded well after Einstein's death.

It's shocking to look back and realize that Einstein, who arguably created the finest work in physics in the 20th century, general relativity, was not awarded a Nobel Prize for his best effort.

Einstein died in 1955, far too early to be included in the prizes for gravitational wave and black holes, but there's no excuse for the Nobel committee's earlier omission of general relativity — none. It was not a simple oversight.

We may never know what the opinions of contributing members of the Nobel committee were to the debate about the merits of general relatively at the time. My guess is that their opinions varied widely between admiration and enthusiasm for what some members judged to be a masterpiece and other more conservative members who couldn't accept such a radical hypothesis without sufficient evidence.

Unfortunately, the latter group won the day, but later abundant evidence would prove Einstein's theory to be correct every time it was tested.

Einstein could be stubborn. For example, he didn't initially appreciate, as others such as Lemaitre pointed out to him, that his equations for general relativity were consistent with an expanding universe, not the constant universe Newton imagined and Einstein adamantly hung onto.

However, once he saw astronomer Edwin Hubble's evidence in the late 1920s that galaxies were racing away from one another, he relented. So, stubborn, but persuadable by evidence.

On the whole, Einstein supported quantum mechanics. However in two areas he was at odds with the field. For example, Einstein was never comfortable with Heisenberg's uncertainty principal which for example, suggested you could know the position of a particle but not its angular velocity or the reverse. But what really troubled Einstein, was the absence of "causality" in quantum physics.

He spent the last 30 years of his life trying to develop a "field" theory that would reconcile general relativity and the quantum universe. He failed.

However, recent surveys of physicists suggest that many believe he was right — even so those modern-day physicists weren't interested in committing their time and effort to resolving Einstein's questions, which still bedevil quantum physics.

Einstein's life was rich: he achieved much in physics, was the face of physics to the world for a century and never lost his fascination with the universe. His thought experiments and achievements were stunning.

He also had a sense of humour and was perhaps the most famous scientist of the 20th century and remains the father of much of the best in physics and, in a populist way, philosophy.

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

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RIDDLE ME THIS

This week's riddle is "Jeopardy!" style
Category: That's gotta be a myth

This shoe company named for a Greek goddess is valued at ... $100 billion?
You have gotta be kidding!

Last issue category: Spill the "t"
Clue: What a mess! I've spilled a bottle of this, used as a paint thinner and obtained from conifer resins.
Answer: What is turpentine?
First correct answer: Jane Morris.
Also answered correctly: Lynda Collet, Bob Wheatley, Sue Rautenberg, James Wells, Claudia Grimwood, Susan Hamilton, Emma Balsas, Margie Enns, Katie Reimer, Hugh Lundy, Wade Durling, Howard Jones, Margaret Garaughty, Nancy Rocca, Jim Dandy, Dawn Walker-Krahn, Jeff Lake, KC King, Donna Pearce, Sheila Meloche, Paula Quinn, Tuija Johansson, Esther VanGorder, Catherine Clarke, Ken Enns, Samantha Pockele and Gary Davis.
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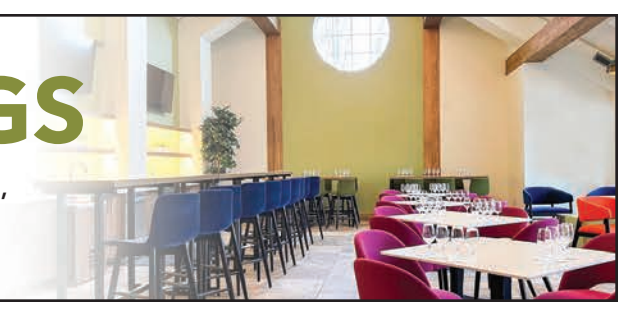
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OPINION

Hiding buildings not as effective as designing them well



ARCHITEXT

Brian Marshall
Columnist

What techniques does an architect employ during the design of a new building when attempting to reduce its visual massing to be more in-keeping with the existing streetscape?

Moreover, how well does each work?

Typically, the first go-to is referred to as volumetric articulation or, the fragmentation of form and surface in order to break a large, uninteresting or oppressive mass into more human-sized components.

Dividing a single large building volume into a collection of smaller, linked or staggered forms that will read as separate buildings is one of these options.

Another is to add smaller modules or wings (additive massing) generally onto a larger central core volume, which contributes to a visual complexity that can be perceived as an amalgam of physically distinct components (rather than a massive single block).

One can also deploy the subtractive massing technique to carve courtyards, terraces and deep loggias out of the principal volume of a single large building form.

And then, in the case of taller structures, upper floors can be successively stepped back from the street-level facade in an attempt to reduce the building's apparent height and massing from the pedestrian's perspective.

Of course, the success of any of these options (or all, if used in combination) is heavily dependent upon the talent and expertise of the architect to use them correctly, in the right place and with sensitivity.

Otherwise, a collection of connected smaller forms will become a chaotic jumble; additive massing can appear as a complex confusion of parts; subtractive techniques can produce a Jenga structure that largely retains its original oppressive massing; and, the step-backs will be ineffective in reducing the building's massing when viewed from any other position on the street other than the optimum position(s) that underwrote the original design calculations.



Even with architectural interventions, the proposed Parliament Oak Hotel is a monolithic massing that will stand out like a sore thumb within the existing residential streetscape. It's just too big to hide. FILE

But what else can an architect do?

Well, the other addresses are — if the basic building form design is not correctly done — akin to putting lipstick on a pig.

The designer can introduce façade and plane variation on the building. That is, they can push and pull sections of the façade forward and backward to create active depth and physical shadow lines that break up flat, continuous, monolithic wall surfaces.

Features like repeated bays, structural columns and the like, can establish vertical divisions while horizontal bands at floor lines, mid-level cornices or overhangs can be utilized in an attempt to match the scale of neighboring structures.

Varied roof forms that emphasize vertical proportions punctuated by gables, hips and dormers — possibly inspired by local existing architecture — can be deployed to interrupt the horizontal line of any continuous, flat horizontal parapets or heavy long roofs.

As well, or alternatively, the architect can choose to use materials, masonry, brick, wood and stucco across different volumetric blocks so the eye registers variety rather than bulk.

Ideally, the materials might be selected to "speak to" those used along the existent streetscape, however the primary architectural directive here is not necessarily to draw from a "contextual" relationship with the streetscape, but rather to avoid the visual weight of a single monolithic exterior finish.

Finally, there might be the consideration of ground-plane and transition design parameters.

Quite simply, this protocol suggests that the design should enfold a distinct ground floor (using human-scaled storefronts, arcades, pergolas or well-defined recessed entries) so the building's façade makes a softer transition at the street level rather than looming over the neighbourhood, streetscape and pedestrian experience.

Where appropriate, deeper roof overhangs, trellises, cantilevered balconies or large shade-casting elements can be used to help mitigate any hard edges of a building against the sky and ground.

And, of course, the design of sensitive landscape elements are another vital tool in blurring and softening the visual perception of the building and its massing.

However, despite all these techniques, if that fundamental building massing is incompatible with the existing streetscape, no amount of even expert jiggery-pokery will make it fit in.

Consider the published renderings of the Parliament Oak hotel currently under construction on King Street, which illustrate the fact that several of these techniques have be introduced into the design.

They've used façade and plane variation, given it a mansard roof, varied their material finishes, and so on, but three of its four façades still retain the oppressive visual massing of a single large block.

Despite the partial mitigating impact of the "ghost façade," the new Royal George Theatre design has also failed to adequately deal with the massing issue within the context of its streetscape.

Unfortunately, I fear that both, when completed, will be seen as a massive, out-of-place pile that will cause residents and visitors alike to shake their collective heads and wonder why it was allowed to be built there in the first place.

I would assert that neither design would have been greenlit had contextual by-laws contained in a community planning permit system been the order of the day.

We'll look at that system in greater depth next week.

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

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OPINION

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR



We welcome your letters

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

Does Old Town overrepresent our council?

Dear editor:

Your Nov. 5 and Nov. 12 editions had lots of reporting on the recent municipal election in Niagara-on-the-Lake. As someone who has now experienced seven municipal elections in NOTL (starting with the 2003 election) and been a candidate in three of them, I hope I'm qualified to offer a couple of observations on the recent election. And perhaps a challenge to the NOTL Residents Association to examine another objective in the future.

So what did this election give us? Two fewer councillors, for a start.

For the seventh consecutive time, zero members were elected in 2026 to council from Glendale, zero voices from Queenston, the rural area lost its voice with the departure of Mr. Wiens, St. Davids' voices dropped to one from two, Virgil's remained at one and five members — or 70 per cent of town council — were elected from in and around Old Town. The lord mayors have been residents of Old Town for five of the last seven council mandates.

The higher concentration of representation on town council by councillors from Old Town has generally been consistent throughout the seven elections I have observed. Given the distribution of the town population from 2003-2010, the higher percentage representation on council from Old Town most likely made sense.

My hypothesis is that from 2010 onwards, the locus of the NOTL population began really changing as the residential build out of Glendale was completed, Virgil grew and the population of St. Davids more than tripled.

This change in the population distribution of NOTL residents is not finished, particularly if the Queenston Quarry townhouse condominium project and any of the White Oaks projects in Glendale are realized. The focus of major projects in Old Town seems to be on hotels and theatres, not residential development.

It would be interesting to know if town council or the NOTL Residents Association think that asymmetric representation is a problem.

Kenn Moody
NOTL

Women who lost election weren't effective leaders

Dear editor:

Julia Sacco's article from Nov. 12, "What does fewer women on council mean for representation and diversity in NOTL?" calls for the following response.

To those defeated female council members and mayoral contender Andrea Kaiser: it had nothing to do with your gender — our votes were based on your lack of performance and respect for your constituents' concerns while in office.

The thousands of letters to this newspaper during your tenure addressing the residents' frustrations with your dictatorial and tone-deaf attitude speaks volumes supporting your loss.

This includes rubber-stamp Wendy Cheropita, who would have met the same fate had she run, and Andrea Kaiser who was never a serious contender. At best, Ms. Kaiser was a potential spoiler candidate.

The real female star was councillor Sandra O'Connor, who not only was re-elected but fell just short of evergreen councillor Gary Burroughs for deputy lord mayor. She is a leader, not a follower.

Deflecting blame to DEI is a weak pretext and cop-out to your tenure underperformance, whereby the former lord mayor and council had the lowest performance ratings in decades.

You left behind a legacy of unmet benchmarks. To mention one: the old hospital usage decision. Former lord mayor Disero passed this decision along to the next council. Four years later, no decision and no timeline to make one. This in the face of numerous third-party consultant and resident proposals — procrastination on steroids.

In summation, within the body of the above referenced article, editor Richard Harley was simply performing the task expressed in your pre-election stump speeches, which you all ignored once elected: transparency.

Advising the community of the facts — the final nail in your coffins.

Samuel Young
NOTL

Unfortunately for us, America's crisis doesn't stop at its borders



Keith McNenly
Special to The Lake Report

America is broken, and Americans cannot fix it alone.

The problem is no longer simply that the United States has elected an authoritarian president, or that its politics have become ugly and dysfunctional. The problem is that American foreign policy is now driven by contempt for democratic allies and admiration for strongmen.

Meanwhile, the institutions meant to restrain presidential power in the United States have repeatedly proved inadequate. Voters get their chance every four years. But a corrupt presidency can do enormous damage between elections: alliances weakened, trade relationships wrecked, military commitments broken, and international institutions undermined.

Americans have now delivered their verdict. After two years of this Trump presidency and Republican rule, they rejected his course in a sweeping mid-term rebuke.

Yet Trump remains in office for two more years, with the full machinery of foreign policy and executive power still available to him. This is the brutal flaw in the assumption that elections alone can correct democratic collapse. An election can repudiate a president without removing him.

Congress can impeach him, but it does not. The Republican Party has repeatedly put loyalty, fear, or self-interest above constitutional duty. Impeachment exists on paper; in practice, it is not available when the country needs it most.

Any country that has relied on American steadiness should absorb that fact. Ukraine is a clear warning.

For years, Ukraine has been treated as though its



survival were a bargaining chip in American politics. It has faced delays, threats and, now, retraction of the support it needs. That results in lethal human costs for Ukrainian civilians — since Russia's invasion in February 2022, almost 18,000 have been killed, and almost 58,000 injured.

The world should look long and hard at Ukraine and imagine a similar future for its own cities, families and freedoms. Ukrainians are fighting because defeat would mean the loss of national independence and even greater loss of life.

The world has an obligation it has avoided for too long. Free nations should not merely wait for America's next election. They should unite — politically, economically, militarily, and technologically — as an international freedom force.

Not against Americans, but in support of the American majority that has now demonstrably rejected the president's destructive performance, yet lacks the constitutional means to stop it.

Isolating the American presidency means recognizing that civic majority as an ally. To isolate the presidency is to support the clear democratic direction Americans have expressed, but on a larger international stage.

Free nations should not normalize Trump and his representatives. A president who has lost the confidence of the American majority through his corruption and authoritarianism, should not receive the credibility, cer-

emony, access and deference that come with international engagement.

Allies are subjected to humiliation, threats and tariffs while authoritarian leaders are treated with a warmth and deference that should alarm everyone who believes in democratic government. Let authoritarian regimes embrace him. Democracies should not.

Canada has spoken clearly about the need for democracies to stand together and resist an undependable United States president. Canada should not have to stand alone in recognizing what is happening. Europe, Asia, and every democratic government that depends on a rules-based international order should be building alternatives now.

That means strengthening collective defence. It means expanding the production of weapons and ammunition for Ukraine, even if it requires short term sacrifice. It means securing independent military and domestic satellite networks, energy and supply-chain capacity. It means building trade relationships among democracies that cannot be held hostage by an American president using economic power as a weapon.

Many Americans are fighting courageously against the destructive forces in Washington, D.C. But they are constrained by a political system corrupted to protect presidential power.

This is the moment for democratic nations to finally accept that their security rests on recognizing the growing danger and then acting on it. America is its people, just as every democracy is its people — they have said Trump does not represent them. Trump represents only one person: himself.

Ukraine is fighting for its life on the front line. The rest of us must decide whether we are prepared to defend the world it is fighting for.

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



From left, Niagara Motors general sales manager Troy Milinkovich, business manager Dorothy Miller and owner Dave Dick celebrate the Virgil dealership's 80th anniversary and its longstanding ties to the NOTL community. SUPPLIED

Still in the family, still in Virgil: Niagara Motors marks 80 years

Paige Seburn
Local Journalism Initiative
The Lake Report

The cars have changed, the industry has changed and generations of customers have come and gone. But 80 years after opening in Virgil, Niagara Motors is still doing business in the community where it all began.

The Niagara-on-the-Lake dealership was founded by Frank Willms in 1946. David Dick Sr. purchased it in 1961, about four years after he started working there.

The business has remained in the Dick family ever since. Around 1976, his son, Dave Dick, took over day-to-day operations.

After marking its 80th anniversary on Nov. 6 with a community celebration at its Niagara Stone Road location, longtime staff are reflecting on the dealership's history and the people who have shaped it.

For Dick, now the dealership's owner and dealer principal, some of his earliest life lessons came at Niagara Motors, where he started working at just nine years old.

"I learned how to use a broom," he said.

Now, looking back on those early years, he said it's hard to believe how quickly time has passed.

"I was in my 20s, working 12, 14 hours a day. Now I'm a pensioner," he said with a laugh. "It goes by in a snap."

And Dick isn't alone in having spent much of his life at Niagara Motors — business manager Dorothy Miller has spent 40 years helping customers through its doors and into their next vehicles.

She started as a receptionist and worked her way through several positions before taking on her current role.

Asked what's kept her there for this long, Miller didn't hesitate to credit the Dick family and the customers she's come to know.

"You just get to know your customers, and just have many, many moments that you appreciate and are thankful for," she said.

And after spending half of Niagara Motors' 80-year history there, the anniversary means something personal.

"It's a milestone for the family," she said. "And I've been blessed to be here for half of that."

General sales manager Troy Milinkovich has spent 25 years at Niagara Motors, where David Dick Sr. played an important role in his career.

"He was like a mentor to me," he said.

During that time, Milinkovich has witnessed customer preferences shift, online shopping grow and the challenges of the COVID-19 pandemic.

"The market keeps morphing on us, changes all the time," he said.

Milinkovich said social media has helped the dealership attract customers from outside Niagara, while longtime relationships continue to bring others back.

He recalled selling between 30 and 40 vehicles over the years to the same circle of family, friends and acquaintances.

"A lot of loyal customers," Milinkovich said. "We're truly blessed."

And for Dick, the people working behind the scenes deserve just as much recognition.

He described one technician who had parts spread from one end of a service bay to the other.

"I said, if you could put this thing together, you could be a brain surgeon," he said.

The technician did just that, without a single nut or bolt left over.

"The talent we have here is scary," Dick said.

But competition is never far away, he said.

"Maybe we're the only new car dealership in Virgil, but people can go to 100 other dealers within an hour drive," Dick said, adding that the rising cost of vehicles also presents challenges.

"As they get more expensive, will people be able to afford some of the future products?"

He said the dealership's used-vehicle business offers customers more affordable options, helping it navigate what he described as the challenges that come with changing times.

Dick said the support of the NOTL community has remained constant.

"We know so many of our customers on a first-name basis," he said.

"The atmosphere we have in town, like in the Niagara-on-the-Lake area, it's so different."

"It's trusting," he said. "The people support us."

Asked about a standout memory from his years at Niagara Motors, Dick said being able to give back to the community that had supported the dealership for so long was especially meaningful.

He pointed to his 29 years as chairman of the Virgil Stampede, where he worked alongside longtime secretary Mary Snider.

"The community's been so good to us," he said. "My highlight is giving back to the community."

As for what comes next, Dick said he hopes Niagara Motors can leave "even a better legacy than we had the last 80 years," emphasizing the importance of continually training staff and learning new skills.

"You can't take things for granted in business today," he said. "You always have to learn new things."

paigeseburn@niagaranow.com







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GAMES

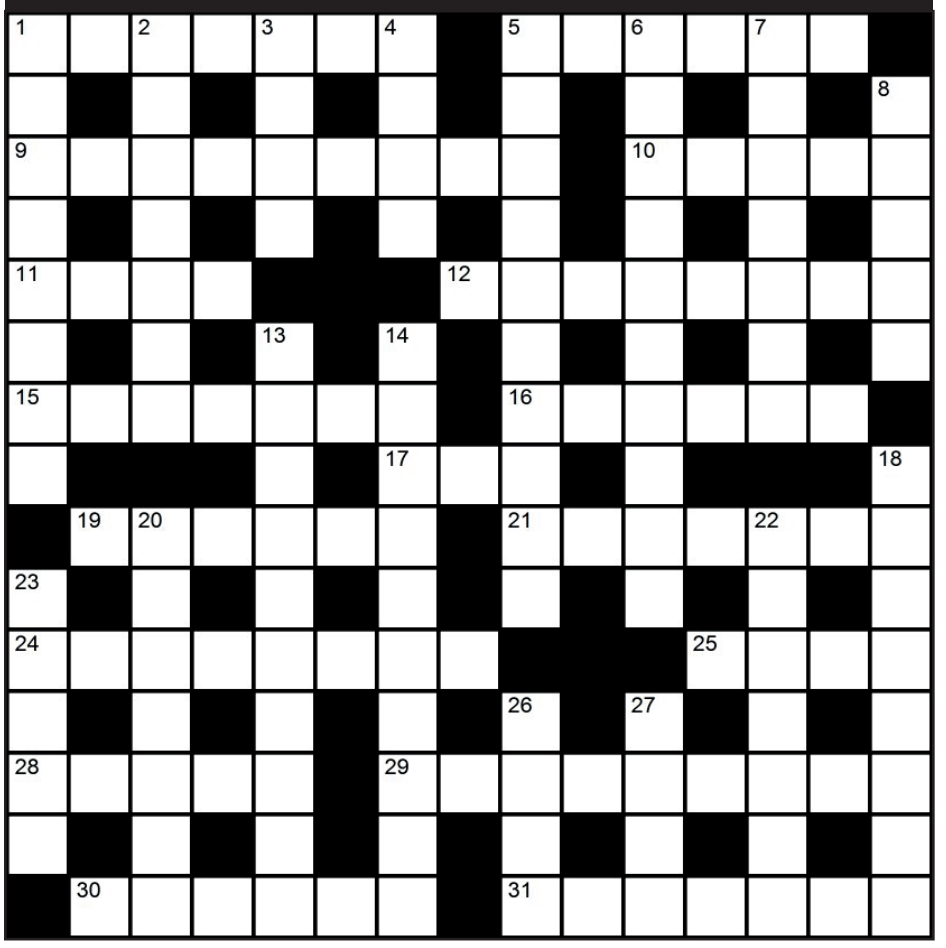


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Crossword Puzzle



Across
1. Clap (7)
5. Priest (6)
9. Benefit (9)
10. Unwarranted (5)
11. Floor coverings (4)
12. Rounded mass of steamed dough (8)
15. Seedless raisin (7)
16. East Mediterranean democracy (6)
17. Involuntary muscular contraction (3)
19. Dusky (6)
21. Least difficult (7)
24. Knockout punch (8)
25. Sicilian volcano (4)
28. Compel (5)
29. Dutch master (9)
30. Work over (4,2)
31. Soon (7)

Down
1. Scaremonger (8)
2. Crucial (7)
3. "Black Beauty" author --- Sewell (4)
4. Faculty head (4)
5. Biased (10)
6. Statue-maker (10)
7. Bygone (3-4)
8. Prevail (5)
13. Legislative assembly (10)
14. Rickety vehicle (10)
18. Furtive (8)
20. Edge of the road (7)
22. Permanently inactive (7)
23. Fly-by-night (5)
26. Yuletide (4)
27. Group of three (4)

Last issue's answers

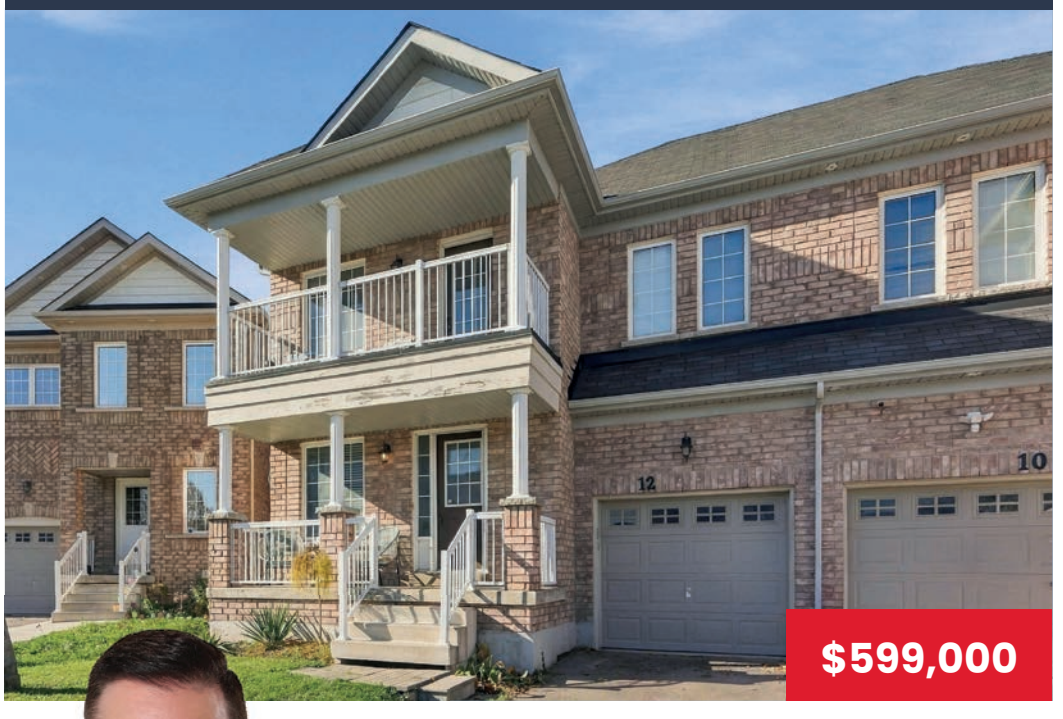


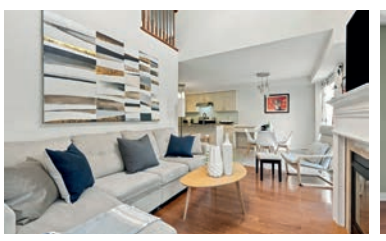
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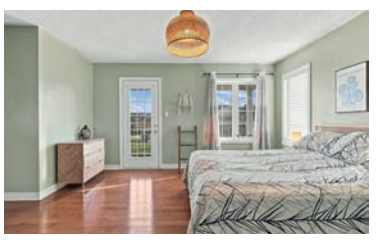
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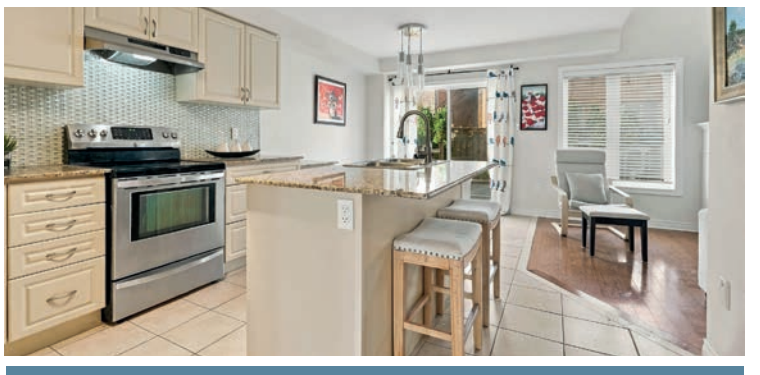
Elevated Living in Niagara

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Total Finished: 1,630 sq. ft.
Taxes (2026) $4,104.46
Bedrooms: 3
Bathrooms: 2+1
Parking Spaces: 3
Cooling: Central Air
Heating: Forced Air, Gas

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EXPLORING HISTORY WITH NOTL MUSEUM

NIAGARA ON THE LAKE MUSEUM



Town of Niagara Fire Department, c. 1911

In 1911, the Town of Niagara's Fire Department moved its fire hall from the Market Room in the Court House on Queen Street to the building at 10 Queen St. This photograph was likely taken around that time. In those days, larger firefighting equipment had to be pulled by horses. Two stalls were built at the back of the fire hall for the horses. But getting out the door quickly was the trick. The firefighters had a clever system rigged up inside. When a call came in, the horses were brought in from their stalls and positioned beneath a set of waiting harnesses. With the pull of a mechanism, the harnesses could be lowered right onto the horses and secured quickly. As motorized fire trucks became more common, the need for horses disappeared. The hayloft on the second floor was converted into a meeting and games room for firefighters. In 1964, when the fire hall was due for updates, the Fire Department moved its headquarters to 233 King St., now the location of Aura on the Lake. Niagara-on-the-Lake's Fire Department is believed to be one of the oldest, if not the oldest, fire department in the province. Dating back to around 1817, it has been protecting our community for more than 200 years.

Join us and celebrate

NOTL Anonymous

1

Monday, November 23, 2026
7:00pm
222 Davy Street, Niagara on the Lake

Come and enjoy pizza and cake as we celebrate our meeting's 1st year in the Niagara Area of Narcotics Anonymous

DIED: Hon. **WILLIAM JOHNSON CLAUS** at his home on King Street, Niagara, on 11 November 1826 after a long and painful illness, aged 61 years. Member of the Executive Council of Upper Canada; Deputy Superintendent General of Indian Affairs for Upper Canada, Trustee for the Six Nations, Captain 60th Regiment of Foot, Lieutenant of the County of Oxford, Colonel of the 1st Lincoln Militia, Justice of the Peace, trustee of the Niagara public school and member of the Agricultural Society. Beloved son of Col. Christian Daniel Claus and Ann (Nancy) Johnson. Survived by his wife Catherine Jordan, and children: Catherine Gaele, Julia Caroline, John Johnson, and Warren; predeceased by sons: Lieutenant Daniel Claus (Crysler's Farm, 1813) and Lieutenant William Claus (India, 1824) and daughters: Augusta and Annabella. Also survived by his uncle Sir John Johnson, Bart. and many grandchildren, nieces and nephews. Burial in the family crypt in Butler's Burying Ground.

200 YEARS
1826 - 2026

The homestead of William Claus at 407 King St. — now known as The Wilderness — remains a vital part of Niagara-on-the-Lake's story, thanks to ongoing community support.

THE NIAGARA FOUNDATION
theniagarafoundation.com



William Claus

OBITUARIES

Flora Turner



TURNER, Flora — It is with deep sadness that we announce the passing of Flora Catherine Turner on Nov. 12, 2026, in her home surrounded by loved ones. Flo was the cherished wife of Charles Turner for 37 beautiful years and the loving mother of Victoria (Andrew) and John (Ashley). She adored her grandsons William and Everett and was excitedly awaiting her first granddaughter, due in February 2027. A wonderful sister to her twin Dora (Chuck), she was predeceased by her parents, Irene and Lloyd Willard.

Like a warm breeze on a cool day, Flo's energy and warmth always made you feel at home. Her joie de vivre never waned through her decade-long fight with cancer, and she shared her infectious smile with friends and family into her very final days. Flo was always one to care for others, often staying late at work to ensure patients could get home to their families with the care they needed. In her retirement, Flo didn't slow down. She jumped two feet into volunteering with Community Crew and CityServe through Central Community Church, all while continuing chemotherapy and radiation treatments.

Flo was a force to be reckoned with, reminding us often that she wanted to live her life to the fullest. Despite her diagnosis and gruelling treatment schedules, she travelled around the world, enjoyed cruising with her husband and friends, and loved every minute of sunshine with her Boca Ciega community in Florida, especially bingo nights. She also loved her time at Central Community Church among kind and generous people who shared her faith.

There are so many wonderfully funny, uplifting and bright memories that Flo leaves behind. Family and friends are warmly invited to George Darte Funeral Home, 585 Carlton St., on Thursday, Nov. 26, from 2 to 4 and 6 to 8 p.m. for visitation. The funeral will take place Friday, Nov. 27, at 11 a.m. at Central Community Church, 680 York Rd., Niagara-on-the-Lake. A reception at White Oaks will follow immediately.

In keeping with Flora's wishes, donations may be made to Community Crew, CityServe or the Canadian Cancer Society in her honour.

Garry Van de Laar



VAN DE LAAR, Garry John — It is with great sadness we announce Garry's peaceful passing at the age of 58. He left us quietly in the early morning hours of Nov. 12, 2026, in the presence of his wife, Tracy, while in the care of West Lincoln Memorial Hospital.

At the heart of Garry's life was his family. Tracy was the love of his life for 30 years. He was a devoted father to Emily (Derek) and Matthew, never hesitating to do anything for them.

Garry was predeceased by his parents, Ted and Donna Vandelaar. He was the beloved brother of Katherine (Walter), Kevin (Claudia), Colleen (Gregg) and Amy (Sean). A fun-loving uncle, he will be missed by his many nieces and nephews: Ryan (Sarah), Danielle (Matt), Hailey (Andrew), Diego, Jesse, Lucas (Beth), Rhiannon, Connor and Sabrina, and his great-nieces Lucy, Addie and Nova. He will be remembered by his loving mother- and father-in-law, Frank and Hannelore, his dear brother-in-law Karl, his road trip warrior, and his fun-spirited sister-in-law Sandy (Antony).

Born and raised in Niagara-on-the-Lake, Garry was very proud of his hometown. As a child, he enjoyed adventures on the family farm with his siblings and helping his uncles pick cherries. He was easily spotted by his bright red hair while riding his bicycle into Old Town. It wasn't until his tree-planting days that he somehow earned the nickname "Red Dawg," which stayed with him for the rest of his life.

Garry had a strong work ethic and celebrated almost 39 years at Telcon Datvox as a project manager. He was happiest working on the family farm, later taking over its operation for many years when his parents could no longer do so.

He embraced life, teaching us all the value of strong family bonds and the importance of lifelong friendships. He had a soft spot for all of his furry animal friends. In his youth, he raised an abandoned baby coyote and would always sneak the family dog or barn cats into his bedroom for warmth during the winter months. In adulthood, he rescued stray kittens and truly loved all of his family pets. More recently, he found comfort and enjoyment in raising chickens.

He enjoyed travelling to many places, whether it was a weekend road trip in Ontario or longer trips to Florida, New York City, Boston, Maine, Massachusetts, Nashville or New Orleans, to name a few. He looked forward to annual trips to the Caribbean, where he could celebrate his birthday in the warmth. More recently, he discovered his love of cruising, visiting Italy, Croatia and Alaska. As much as he looked forward to these adventures, he also enjoyed simple time with his family, whether over dinner, watching a movie or attending a sporting event.

He was a proud Buffalo Sabres season-ticket holder and was fortunate to watch the Blue Jays play in the World Series last year with his family. At the end of a long day, you would often find Garry in his favourite spot at the patio table. He enjoyed sharing stories, listening to music and laughing with family and friends. His friends will remember their many escapades together, his party spirit and, most importantly, his willingness to be there at the drop of a dime to lend a hand.

Garry was a testament to living life to the fullest even with cancer. He continued to do the things he loved, even attending a Buffalo Bills game at the new Highmark Stadium on Sunday, Nov. 1. We find great comfort knowing he spent that day with his two children doing one of the things he loved most.

So many people were involved in Garry's care over the past few years. Our special thanks go to the team at Mount Sinai, especially Dr. Govindarajan and Dr. Salawu. More recently, Garry received compassionate care at home from nurses Paul and Helen and Dr. Berti, who was a true angel to us all. In his final days, the team at West Lincoln Memorial Hospital cared for him with dignity and compassion. We are especially grateful to Dr. Flanagan and nurses Christie, Carol Ann, Mirinella, Rebecca, Sandeep and Denise.

In lieu of flowers, we would be deeply honoured if donations could be made to the Colorectal Cancer Resource and Advocacy Network, an organization instrumental in supporting us on this journey and ensuring that Garry had access to the best care. The donation form allows donations in memoriam. Visit ccran.org/donate.

Cremation has taken place. Garry's family will receive friends at Morgan Funeral Home, 415 Regent St., Niagara-on-the-Lake, on Thursday, Nov. 19, 2026, from 2 to 4 and 6 to 8 p.m. Vigil prayers will be held at 3 p.m. Funeral mass will be celebrated at St. Vincent de Paul Church on Friday, Nov. 20, 2026, at 11 a.m. Interment with rite of committal will follow at Niagara Lakeshore Cemetery.

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

The Lake Report

We welcome your letters

The Lake Report welcomes your letters to the editor.
Please, write early and often.

To the Editor,

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.

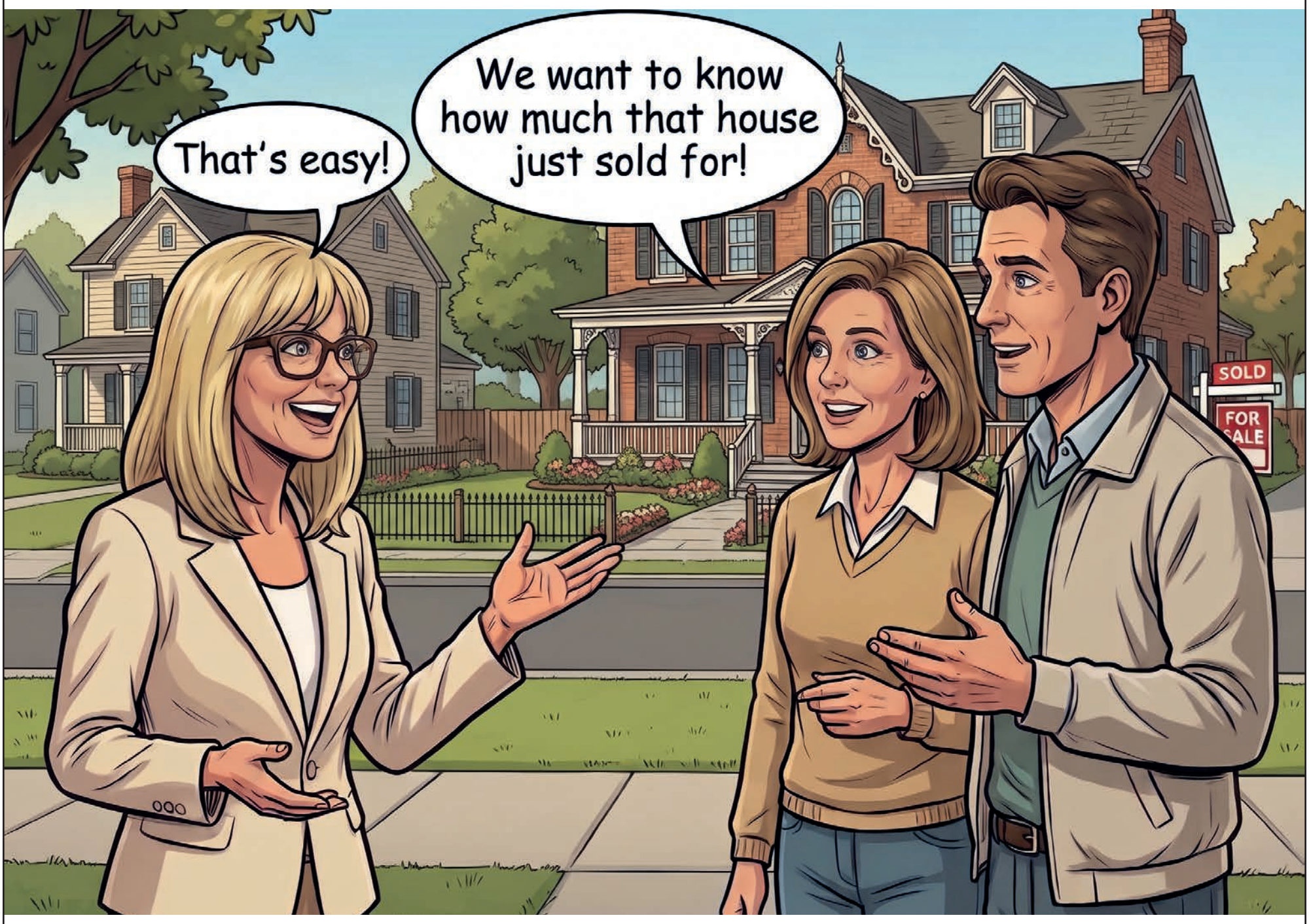
Please include your full name, street address and a daytime telephone number so that authorship can be authenticated.

Only names and general addresses (eg. Virgil, St. Davids, NOTL) will be published.

Send your letters to editor@niagaranow.com.

Your voice matters. We look forward to hearing from you.

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