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Vol. 8, Issue 15

Canada's most-awarded community newspaper

April 17, 2025

O'Connor to fight 'strong mayor powers'

Julia Sacco Local Journalism Initiative The Lake Report

Coun. Sandra O'Connor plans to argue against Niagara-on-the-Lake's use of the newly announced "strong mayor powers" granted by the provincial government to a large swath of municipalities in Ontario.

During Tuesday night's committee of the whole meeting, O'Connor announced a notice of motion for town council to petition the province to rescind the powers granted to NOTL.

The motion will be discussed at length during the next council meeting on April 29.

The province announced last week that 169 municipalities would be granted strong mayor powers as of May 1, with NOTL included.

O'Connor told The Lake Report that strong powers allocated to Lord Mayor Gary Zalepa would jeopardize equal representation among councillors.

"Once the power is given to one of those (councillors), this being the lord mayor, who can make decisions unilaterally on certain

Continued on Page 6

Fire damages historic Glencairn

Advocates call it a massive loss for NOTL's hertiage, investigation is ongoing



NOTL firefighters battle a blaze at the historic Glencairn house on the Niagara Parkway early Wednesday morning. DOUG MUNKLEY

Julia Sacco | Local Journalism Initiative | The Lake Report

he historic Glencairn Estate at 14785 Niagara River Pkwy. was engulfed in flames Wednesday morning. The provincial fire marshal is looking into the cause of the blaze and assessing the extent of the damage to the 193-year-old home.

Around 6 a.m., Niagara-onthe-Lake Fire and Emergency Services responded to reports of fire coming from the three-storey home, built in 1832.

Neighbour Doug Munkley lives a few houses down the parkway and received a text around 4:45 a.m. alerting him that the estate was on fire.

"I immediately looked out the window and saw that my stepson — the volunteer firefighter's —

Continued on Page 5

The Lake Report named top newspaper in Ontario

Staff The Lake Report

The staff of The Lake Report headed home loaded down with armfuls of plaques after winning 19 awards at the Ontario Community Newspapers Association's annual journalism awards last Friday night.

Among the honours, NOTL's paper was named the top Ontario community newspaper overall in the largest circulation class. The association's Better Newspapers Competition awards dinner and convention was held in-person for the first time since 2019 and Niagara-on-the-Lake was chosen as the venue.

Reporters, photographers,

editors, publishers and advertising staff gathered at Queen's Landing last Friday and Saturday for two days of meetings, seminars and celebrations of excellence in community journalism.

The Lake Report, once

again won more accolades than any other publication in the province. With its 19 latest honours, the newspaper and its niagaranow. com website have earned

Continued on Page 4





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Councillors delay approving fire station swap

Julia Sacco Local Journalism Initiative The Lake Report

Council had a lot of questions and concerns for the town's fire chief after he came to town hall asking for support to relocate Niagara-on-the-Lake Fire & Emergency Services from Old Town to Virgil.

Fire Chief Jay Plato made a presentation during Tuesday evening's committee of the whole meeting, outlining the need to relocate staff from Old Town to Virgil.

After a lengthy discussion, instead of approving the move, council asked staff to look into the details of the proposal and come back to it with more information.

They wouldn't be approving the move necessarily, Plato said: They would be supporting the proposed project, assigning the \$175,000 to the project and directing staff to issue a request for proposal.

Plato said fire and emergency services' recommendation was not to begin construction, but rather to

be ready when the time comes to begin construction on a new building.

The relocation would create a more communityaccessible and efficient fire department, Plato said.

The proposal includes asking council to allocate \$175,000 of capital reserves to be used for architectural and construction drawings of the proposed relocation.

The funding would be reallocated from two capital projects, which came in significantly under budget, Plato said.

"\$200,000 is coming back into capital reserves. What we're hoping to do is reallocate \$175,000 of that."

Lord Mayor Gary Zalepa questioned why this presentation was not made during budget discussions two months ago.

Plato said he had hoped the town would have a new chief administrative officer by the time of the presentation.

"In all reality, this project has been on the table for about a year," he said.

"We were waiting for a new CAO to bring this project forward."

Plato said the hope for stability with someone in the permanent CAO role meant the fire department kept delaying the proposal.

Zalepa said he is not comfortable moving forward with the project after a lengthy council discussion.

"I think there are more questions than I feel comfortable moving forward with. There's some more work to be done here to move to a better place," he said.

Several councillors raised concerns and questions to Plato during his presentation.

Coun. Erwin Wiens was confused as to how the \$175,000 price tag was reached.

"It costs \$175,000 to go to an architect and say, 'Give me drawings?"" Wiens said.

Coun. Andrew Niven wanted to clarify just how accurate the new proposed response times of a station in Old Town would be.

Plato's presentation included two maps illustrating Old Town versus Virgil fire station six-minute response times — the

Virgil station was able to reach much more of the community faster than Old Town.

Niven asked Plato to confirm that he is confident in the drive time proposed.

"That's the only thing that really stands out to me," Niven said.

Plato confirmed he is happy with the data in the report.

Coun. Sandra O'Connor said she could not support the move to Virgil due to "several risk factors."

"Our community risk map shows several blocks in Old Town as high-risk," she said, referring to the likelihood of fires breaking out in the area.

Plato noted the fire department added more staff in Old Town, which has helped the station meet the needs of the community.

Three years ago, there were 14 firefighters assigned there. Today, there are 22 out of 25 staff spaces filled, Plato said.

No timeline was set to discuss the report again, with councillors urging staff to move quickly.

juliasacco@niagaranow.com



\$1,795,000 Thomas Elltoft & Kim Elltoft



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10-222 RICARDO STREET \$1,799,000 Weston Miller



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Page 3 April 17, 2025





A rendering of the future Clayfield hotel that will be at the centre of the Village development, set to open in 2026.

First look at Village hotel and retail spaces

Paige Seburn Local Journalism Initiative The Lake Report

A major commercial development is coming to the gateway entrance of Old Town Niagara-on-the-Lake, and now residents can know what it will look like.

The Village announced the Clayfield Commons, an eight-acre mixed-use project featuring retail, office space, a grocery store, restaurants and a hotel, at Stratus Vineyards last night, with illustrations of the design.

The development is set to be completed by May 2026.

"I don't think there's been any bigger investment in Niagara-on-the-Lake that I'm aware of — we've lived here for some time," said John Hawley, developer of the Village neighbourhood, which includes Clayfield Commons, in an interview with The Lake Report.

Hawley did not disclose the exact cost of the project.

But he says the development is expected to make millions of dollars annually and create at least 350 full-time jobs, along with hundreds of part-time positions.

"I think it will certainly be a tremendous asset for the future of Niagara-onthe-Lake," he said.



A rendering of the future two-storey Foodland grocery store coming to the Village.

Construction is already underway at 111 Garrison Village Dr., where a 102-room Clayfield Hotel is being built as part of the Unbound Collection by Hyatt. A new two-storey "next generation" Foodland is also in the works.

Hawley said the Village has full architectural control over the grocery store, which is why it is being called a "next generation" Foodland.

When complete, Clay-field Commons will offer 55,000 square feet of retail space with seven to eight new establishments and 28,000 square feet of office space. The site will include ample parking and

a central outdoor square for events.

"(We) plan to have scheduled events on the outdoor square on a regular basis," he said. "We really wanted to create a place that people love and will, you know, cherish."

The development will feature a café and up to three restaurants, with a focus on highlighting creators and entrepreneurs in the Niagara region, Hawley said.

"We really want to showcase that," he said.

The Clayfield Commons site already features a CIBC, Shoppers Drug Mart and The Village Medical Centre.

Hawley and his family are

developing the site with David Feldberg, owner of Stratus Vineyards and President and CEO of Teknion.

"John and I are determined that Clayfield Commons and The Clayfield Hotel, like Stratus, reflect an unparalleled commitment to quality and design," said Feldberg in a news release issued by the Village on April 16.

And despite the ongoing construction, the Farmers' Market @ the Village will continue this year, Hawley said.

"It is tougher with the construction, but we don't want to stop and (want) to carry on this year," he said. paigeseburn@niagaranow.com





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Three candidates reject chief administrator position

Julia Sacco Local Journalism Initiative The Lake Report

Nobody who has been offered the job wants to be Niagara-on-the-Lake's chief administrative officer.

More than a year after the town's former chief administrative officer Marnie Cluckie stepped down from the role, NOTL is still without a permanent staff member to fill the role.

Bruce Zvaniga still serves as interim CAO at this time.

In a media release Wednesday evening, staff confirmed job offers were extended to three different candidates.

"For various personal and professional reasons, these offers were declined," the release said.

The most recent rejection was earlier this month, the town noted.

Recruitment efforts are

said to continue over the coming months.

Lord Mayor Gary Zalepa said recruitment for such an important position can "take time."

"I am confident that we will find the right candidate to lead our town into the future," Zalepa said in the

Councillors requested an update on the process back in January, the recruitment company Phelps

Group provided one during Wednesday evening's council meeting.

Councillors, staff and the Phelps Group discussed the recruitment process during a more than 40-minute closed session.

Staff said next steps in the recruitment process will include "renewed market engagement and targeted outreach, followed by an expedited selection process."

juliasacco@niagaranow.com



Paper earns 19 accolades in provincial competition

Continued from Front Page

131 provincial and national awards since 2020.

In all, Niagara-on-the-Lake's newspaper was first in seven categories, second in four others, along with seven third-placings and one honourable mention.

In the general excellence category, in which one edition from each of May and September had to be submitted, The Lake Report was judged the best newspaper in Ontario in the largest circulation category, 8,000 and up.

The independent judges, all from outside Ontario, called the paper "a joy to read" and credited the staff for strong reporting, good design and "commitment to represent all facets of the community."

"Feature stories, of which both issues had great examples, make this newspaper a must-read for anyone living in the area, offering a unique product that can't be replicated by other sources of media."

NOTL native Dave Van de Laar was honoured as Ontario's Photographer of the Year for the second straight time.

He also took top honours for Best Feature Photo, for an image of six-year-old Jack Hill enjoying a quiet moment while dressed as a soldier for Maj.-Gen. Sir Isaac Brock's 254th birthday celebrations at Queenston Heights.

Van de Laar also earned a third-place award for Sports Photo, a page 1 image of Niagara Predators' junior hockey player Tyler Gearing consoling all-star goalie Zane Clausen after the team was knocked out of the 2024 league playoffs.

The work of former staff reporter Richard Wright was singled out in the Best Online Experience category for part one of his exhaustive "Summer of the Flood" series.

It documented the trials and tribulations of residents





Happy 254th birthday, Brock



Jack Hill, 6, in costume as a Canadian soldier during a celebration of Maj-Gen. Sir Isaac Brock's 254th birthday at Queenston Heights on Friday. The afternoon was filled with historical lectures and tours. DAVE VAN DE LAAR

whose homes and properties were flooded last summer after extreme rainstorms caused flash flooding in June and July.

Flooring Ltd.

The paper's Aug. 5, 2024, edition won the Best Editorial Page or Section award. It featured five pages of opinion, commentary and letters.

Former staffer Evan Loree's emotive image of Kat Forbes and Brandon Poirier enjoying the 2024 Candlelight Stroll was judged Most Creative Grip and Grin photo.

The newspaper's fivepage celebration of winning 27 provincial awards was selected Best In-house Promotion.

The work of former reporter Richard Hutton, retired managing editor Kevin MacLean and reporter Julia Sacco for stories related to the firing of NOTL chief librarian Cathy Simpson received an honourable mention in the Best Investigative News Story category.

The newspaper's 14-page package marking International Women's Day was honoured with a third-place award in the prestigious Community Service category.

The Lake Report's website, www.niagaranow.com, earned second in the Best Community Newspaper Website category.

Sacco finished second in the Arts & Entertainment category with her colourful feature on NOTL artist Ed-

ward Spera's expedition to

Canada's Arctic to capture

images of wildlife.

Above: The Lake Report

was awarded first place

for General Excellence

September 2024. Left:

Photographer Dave Van

one for this photo of a

Queenston Heights.

de Laar won three awards,

child taking a break during

Sir Issac Brock's birthday at

a celebration of Maj-Gen.

for two issues in May and

Sacco also took second in Health & Wellness for "Room to grow," an in-depth news feature in our ongoing Code Grey health series. The winning entry focused on the need in NOTL for more health and medical services for seniors.

She also was third in the Reporter of the Year contest, earning accolades for a selection of stories, notably her front-page account of Alexis Dowsett's frustrating problems in getting access to transit in NOTL after Niagara Region changed providers.

Wright's multi-part "Summer of the Flood" series was second in the Best Feature or News Series over 8,000 circulation. The entry included in-depth story packages from the Aug. 29 and Sept. 5, 12 and 19 editions.

Editor-in-chief Richard Harley's strongly worded full-page editorial castigating Conservative leader Pierre Poilievre for the lies, pandering and misleading comments he made during a visit to NOTL last summer was third in the Best Editorial (over 8,000) competition.

Judge Thom Barker of Black Press Media in B.C. called it "a comprehensive look at a very important subject," noting it was "well-argued and fully supported by the paper's own work."

Harley also took third in Feature Writing (over 8,000) for his deeply emotional front-page story about NOTL businessman Peter Earle's battle with ALS and plans to end his life on his own terms.

Community contributor
John DeLorenzi's drone
photo of workers and heavy
equipment are building a
500-metre breakwall and
walkway near Fort Mississauga and the NOTL Golf
Club was ranked third in the
Best News Photo competition

The eye-in-the-sky images gave readers a rare overhead perspective of the Lake Ontario shoreline and the massive rebuilding project.

MacLean and Harley also shared third place honours for Headline Writing.



Left: The Lake Report took home a whopping 19 provincial awards for journalism excellence. Right: Publisher Richard Harley accepts the General Excellence award from Ontario Community Newspapers Association president Colleen Green during an awards ceremony at the Queen's Landing hotel on Friday. MAY CHANG/DAVE VAN DE LAAR

NEWS (%)



Glencairn an important part of Queenston history: Museum

Continued from Front Page

car was gone," Munkley told The Lake Report.

"Then I looked in the other direction and I saw an orange glow above Glencairn."

By the time Munkley walked over to take a look, the home was fully engulfed, with flames coming out of both wings of the house.

Several firefighters were on site, with around five hoses attacking the flames, Munkley said.

Living nearby, Munkley had been in the home a number of times.

"We've got a few mementos of the house and lots of memories there," he said.

Munkley visited the home again, an hour later, around 6:30 and said the fire was suppressed but "obviously still a concern."

By his third visit a bit later, the fire was fully contained, but damage to the property was obvious.

"[I] looked at the damage from the back side and the front and it's pretty clearly a total loss," Munkley said.

In a media release Wednesday afternoon, NOTL town staff said the





Left: There is extensive damage all around the roof. DAVE VAN DE LAAR Right: A photo from the U.S. shows firefighters battling the blaze. SOURCED

heritage property "sustained extensive damage."

"The Office of the Fire Marshal has been engaged and will continue its investigation into the cause of the fire in the coming days," the release said.

In an interview, Fire Chief Jay Plato said the Ontario fire marshal is investigating the incident.

"They came down this afternoon and started. They're going to continue on into tomorrow," he said.

Plato said there isn't a whole lot to the investigation on Wednesday, as only the outside of the building was assessed.

Thursday, he said, is when "they really dive in and start to uncover or try to get to another layer of it."

Plato confirmed the cause of the fire is not known at this time and the investigation is still underway. He said an official report will likely take a couple of

Around 50 to 60 NOTL volunteer firefighters and trucks from all five fire stations responded to the structure fire.

Coun. Gary Burroughs, also a member of the municipal heritage committee, said it is really too early to comment on the damage from his perspective.

"Friends of ours on the U.S. side saw the flames and it was enormous," Burroughs said in an interview.

"But until the fire marshals have had a good look at it, there's no point in even guestimating whether it's a total tear-down."

There has been no discussion as of yet between the heritage committee, Burroughs said, but the home built in 1837 is undoubtedly of heritage value.

"It's definitely a heritage home. It was designated last year," he said.

The home received its heritage designation last April.

Around 11 a.m. Wednesday morning, Lord Mayor Gary Zalepa sent a text statement saying he would not comment until the scene was cleared.

At 5 p.m., Zalepa reached out to The Lake Report, saying the fire is "deeply upsetting for many in our community."

"Our thoughts and sincere condolences are with the property owner, and we are grateful for the swift response from our volunteer firefighters who worked diligently to bring the situation under control," wrote Zalepa.

Shawna Jarman, the Niagara-on-the-Lake Museum's assistant curator, said staff were "devastated" to hear about the loss of the property.

The property not only reflects the history of NOTL, but the history of Queenston due to its connections to the prominent Hamilton family, Jarman said.

"It is such a loss and really proves why heritage designation is so important for Niagara-on-the-Lake especially," she said.

The NOTL Museum also posted a statement on social media on the historic

"We are heartbroken to learn about the fire that has ravaged the historic Glencairn home this morning," the post said.

The post includes a graphic, detailing history about the classic Greek Revival home, which was built for boat builder and Upper Canada Legislative Assembly member John Hamilton.

The Niagara River Parkway remains closed near the site but is expected to reopen shortly, according to the town's media release.

juliasacco@niagaranow.com





Integrity commissioner rejects complaint, | Councillors to review says Wiens has no conflict with cousin

Andrew Hawlitzky The Lake Report

A complaint alleging a conflict of interest case involving NOTL Coun. Erwin Wiens and Premier Doug Ford was rejected by the town's integrity commissioner, prompting an appeal.

Virgil resident Steve McGuinness alleged Wiens violated conflict-of-interest rules through private meetings arranged at the property of Wiens' cousin Rainer Hummel and potential agricultural benefits from the provincial government.

Janice Atwood and Jeffrey A. Abrams of Principles Integrity, a partnership operating as NOTL's integrity commissioner, concluded on April 9 that Wiens did not breach municipal ethics guidelines.

The decision noted Wiens' relationship with Hummel, a prominent local developer, did not constitute an automatic conflict due to the distant familial link as cousins.

McGuinness plans to challenge the decision



The Town of NOTL's integrity commissioner says Coun. Erwin Wiens is not in a conflict of interest for voting on matters that directly affect his cousin. FILE

with provincial authorities, claiming the commissioner's findings were flawed and overlooked a broader pattern of potential ethical compromise.

"The integrity commissioner chooses to respond to each step in the complaint in isolation without considering the overall series of events that together may create a pattern creating the appearance of a potential conflict of interest," said McGuinness.

The complaint specifically targeted Wiens' arrangement of a private meeting with Premier Doug Ford

at Hummel's Queen Street estate in late 2024, where provincial funding for Shaw Festival improvements and agricultural irrigation issues were discussed.

During a February campaign stop at Niagara District Airport — another Wiens-arranged event -Ford announced a \$35-million funding commitment to the Shaw Festival.

During this visit, The Lake Report asked Ford about his meeting with Hummel at the campaign stop, to which the premier commented that it was a simple fundraiser.

"I don't ever discuss business at the homes of whoever. That's private business, and I'm very transparent. What I discuss, I discuss at the press conferences," said Ford.

McGuinness argues Wiens' active role in arranging these events, coupled with Ford's announcement, created the appearance of impropriety.

The commissioner, however, determined these events did not constitute evasion of disclosure requirements, nor did Wiens' agricultural interests amount to conflicts due to a "common interest" exception.

McGuinness says the ruling contradicts prior decisions made by former integrity commissioner Edward McDermott and raises concerns over why the town replaced McDermott with Principles Integrity.

"It begs the question: Was it a cost-control measure, or are they opinion shopping because they didn't like Mc-Dermott's stricter interpretations?" said McGuinness.

andrew@niagaranow.com

strong mayor powers

Continued from Front Page

things, then we no longer have the power the people have given us to represent them," O'Connor said.

Other councillors have raised concerns about the potential limit on "housing dollars" (financial assistance programs that improve housing affordability), she said.

She noted this information will come to council, but with new council procedures, O'Connor had to get the notice of motion in front of councillors long before the next meeting.

Her decision to bring forth the motion is not about individuals or who is in power, O'Connor said.

"It's about fair representation."

In an interview, Zalepa said he found the motion to be "somewhat premature."

"I would hope that council members would want to actually review the information before debating and proposing motions," he said.

Zalepa contacted members of council to let them know of the announcement

from the province, but council did not have all of the details yet because the regulation hadn't been approved, he said.

As of Wednesday, Zalepa said it is his understanding that the regulation is being published today.

"I've asked the CAO to review that in detail and provide guidance and input to council so they understand 'what does this actually mean," Zalepa said.

"We don't know exactly what this looks like," he said.

Coun. Maria Mavridis seconded O'Connor's notice of motion and agrees that she and council need more information.

"We're getting told one thing from someone and then something totally different from another person," she said.

Mavridis wants to better understand what strong mayor powers would do, not only for the present council but for the future, she said.

There has been no formal discussion on the strong mayor powers.

juliasacco@niagaranow.com

MONDAY, APRIL 28

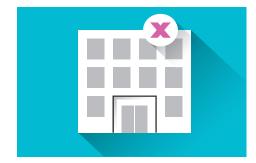


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BUSINESS (%)



Gales Gas Bars and convenience stores sold after 58 years

Paige Seburn Local Journalism Initiative The Lake Report

The Gale family may have sold their long-running business, Gales Gas Bars Limited and Bob's Fast & Fresh Convenience, but third-generation owner-operator Jessica (Gale) Friesen says community support for the gas station and convenience store company should continue.

"There are really good people working there and they deserve Niagara's support," said Friesen, in an interview with The Lake Report.

"My kids are getting older and my husband and I are wanting to travel and enjoy life a little bit more — and it just worked out."

Friesen said protecting her staff was a top priority in the sale, so she is proud to have negotiated a deal to ensure all employees kept their jobs, wages and benefits under the new owners - 1001175390 Ontario Ltd.

"They were as unaffected by this major change as possible," she said. "It has been very important to me, always, to take care of my employees."



Niagara-on-the-Lake resident John Floris pays at the pump at Gales Gas Bar in St. Davids. The family-owned business sold this month after 58 years of operation. FILE

She's now looking forward to a summer off to spend time with her two children, ages 16 and 17, before deciding on her next steps in the fall.

Friesen said her children weren't interested in taking over Gales — at least, not vet.

"I've never wanted to put pressure on either of them to take over something that they may not have wanted to and I wasn't going to wait another 10 or 15 years, just to find out that neither of them were interested -

when I had a deal like this," she said.

She said both the family she grew up in and the one she's raising now are deeply rooted in Niagara-on-the-Lake, where one of the Gales locations operates at 1487 Niagara Stone Rd.

"We are very heavily entrenched in the Niagaraon-the-Lake community," she said.

An on-and-off NOTL resident for 35 of the past 40 years, Friesen announced the sale on the company's Facebook page on April 10.

The post prompted more than 200 comments from residents - some supportive, others questioning her

"You're in business to make the right decisions," she said. "Sometimes, the right decision is to sell."

decision to step away.

"I've seen some things online about how I abandoned the company and individuals that have called me a coward and that's not the case at all," she said.

Friesen said she had hoped to remain involved during the transition to help

ensure a smooth handover, but the new owners did not wish to retain her, she said.

"I offered to stay on, but they were not interested," she said, adding that there was a pull to remain, as some of the staff were people she had worked with for 20 to 30 years.

As owner-operator, Friesen oversaw all aspects of the business, from major contracts to the workplace culture. She also managed dispatching, maintained fuel levels at sites and negotiated with suppliers.

While the idea of selling had surfaced before, Friesen said she never took it seriously because most of the interest was only in parts of the company.

"If something came by my desk, yeah, I'd look at it," she said. "It was all kind of piecemeal."

"But this was the first time where it was someone who wanted to take over everything," she said.

Friesen said she spoke with her father, Bob Gale — the second-generation owner — before finalizing the sale, out of respect, not obligation.

"I wanted to make sure

that we were both comfortable with this," she said, though she was the owneroperator for the last 11 years.

"My dad and I are very close and we've always had the conversation that, you know, I shouldn't hold on to it just because it's a family company," she said.

Gales was founded 58 years ago, when Bob Gale Sr. bought a single truck and gas station in 1967.

His son, Bob Gale Jr., took over in the 1980s and expanded operations: Adding more stations, building an oil terminal and launching Bob's Fast & Fresh Convenience in 2009.

Bob Gale Jr.'s daughter, Friesen, became the third-generation owner in 2014 and by 2017, Gales had grown to 11 gas station locations, four with convenience stores and a fleet of six fuel delivery trucks.

She said Niagara remains home for the Gales — even with the company changing hands.

"If anything, this gives us more opportunity to have the time to invest into the area that we love."

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Giant cake still a go for Canada Day

Paige Seburn Local Journalism Initiative The Lake Report

A \$5,000 grant from BCM Insurance and other financial support is keeping Niagara-on-the-Lake's signature Canada Day cake parade free — and yes, there will still be cake from Willow Cakes and Pastries, even though it's closed.

The Friends of Fort George, the non-profit group that organizes the July 1 festivities with Parks Canada, received the grant through BCM Insurance's annual community program, which supports local initiatives.

"For us, it means a lot," said Friends of Fort George executive director Amanda Gamble. "(Grants) allow us to do all of this for the community for free."

The \$5,000 will help cover the cost of items like plates, napkins, and forks for the cake parade, as well as marketing and summer



Willow Cakes and Pastries owner Catherine O'Donnell will still be the mastermind behind the Canada Day cake parade, which feeds thousands of people every year. FILE

student hires at Fort George and Brock's Monument. Gamble found the grant online, applied for it and was accepted.

The Friends also received \$10,000 from the town for fireworks and \$4,500 from the Niagara Falls Bridge Commission for entertainment, with additional support from the Department of Canadian Heritage.

"All those grants help," said Gamble.

This year's celebration marks 37 years of the organization running Canada Day in town, drawing thousands each summer, she said. About 3,000 people enjoyed a slice of cake in 2024.

And despite announcing the bakery's closure earlier this year, Willow Cakes and Pastries is still on board to design and donate the cake.

Owner Catherine O'Donnell reached out personally to confirm the bakery would still participate, Gamble said.

"We're really excited — and (O'Donnell) is great to work with," she said.

Lord Mayor Gary Zalepa said the cake parade has become a hallmark of community pride and it's significant when businesses in town encourage that.

"Another great example of businesses stepping up to assist the community," said Zalepa.

"It's this kind of support that we need," said Friends of Fort George president Tony Chisholm. "It's nice to see it coming from a new source."

Chisholm said they plan to apply again next year to help continue a unique tradition that keeps NOTL's Canada Day celebrations one of a kind.

"I mean, what other town's got a cake parade, right?" he said.

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'It's all about the youth': Native Centre conference tackles Indigenous intergenerational learning

Julia Sacco Local Journalism Initiative The Lake Report

The Niagara Regional Native Centre's second annual youth and elders conference was the perfect chance for people of all ages to share teachings and lessons about Indigenous history, knowledge, cultures and more.

Held from April 9 to 11 in Niagara-on-the-Lake, the three-day conference brought guest speakers from across the country to make presentations to the centre's Indigenous community.

Halley Irwin, the Native Centre's director of development and community engagement, told The Lake Report what an important opportunity the annual conference gives kids in the

"Intergenerational knowledge-sharing is very important and unfortunately, many of our kids don't



Gary Parker, left, performs alongside Harvey Dreaver, a well-known pow-wow singer and drummer, during the Niagara Regional Native Centre's second annual youth and elders conference. JULIA SACCO

have that opportunity on a daily basis," Irwin said.

On Friday, Ojibwe drummer Harvey Dreaver was a guest of honour.

"It's all about the youth, the next generation," Dreaver said in an interview.

Dreaver's presentation emphasized the importance of seeking education and history.

"They need to seek the life of culture, our tradition-

al roots, our language, we

need to educate ourselves,"

he said. Dreaver said learning is a lifelong journey.

"I'm 63 and I still need a reminder."

Sean Morriseau, known for his social media presence as NativePoolBoy on Tik-Tok, was Friday's emcee.

Along with amassing a social media following of more than 100,000 people, Morriseau is also a published author and musician.

Morriseau's youthful take on Indigenous education makes lessons more accessible for kids in the audience, Irwin told The Lake Report.

"I have a lot of relatable stories I could share and then the youth in the crowd could probably look at that and think 'you know what, I can do that when I'm older too!" he said.

Along with guest speakers, the free event featured live music and lunch for guests.

The Native Centre also provided transportation to those needing a lift to the conference.

"We are lucky to have a few vehicles that we own and our staff are happy to go pick up people in the community, since we don't have bus service here," Irwin said.

juliasacco@niagaranow.com



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Elise Kroeker, 12.



Giacomo Kauzlaric, 6.

Congratulations to our Easter colouring contest award winners! This year's winners are **Elise Kroeker**, age 12, from St. Davids Public School and **Giacomo Kauzlaric**, age 6, from St. Michael Catholic Elementary School.

A big thanks to all 27 contestants who submitted an entry. There were some very creative entries and it was a tough call! Special mention to **Scarlett Stones**, 11, for blending colours.

Winners will be contacted directly to pick up their prizes — a \$25 gift certificate to Olde Tyme Candy Shoppe in Old Town.



Scarlett Stones, 11.

27 contestants enter Easter colouring contest



Callum Sanderson, 9.



Delilah Colvin, 7.



Edward Sluga, 7.



Eleanor Oppenlaender, 4.



Fiona Sanderson, 5.



Trinity Dodd, 9.



Emilio Kauzlaric, 10.



Everleigh Salvatore, 4.



Francine Baskin, 10.



Frankie MaGee, 4.



Kazuhiro Versteegen, 8.



Leonardo Salvatore, 6.



Lia Booth, 6.



Liam Sanderson, 7.



Noah Saxton, 11.



Ryker Boutilier, 6.



Sasha Morrison, 4.



Scarlett Plut, 5.



Saskia Millard-Jovanovic, 4.



Serenity Bayne, 10.



Tabitha Reddecopp, 5.



Veronica Vidal, 6.



Violet Serniak, 10.



Ingrid Millard-Jovanovic, 9.

Group sends flowers to long-term care residents

Julia Sacco Local Journalism Initiative The Lake Report

The Niagara-on-the-Lake Horticultural Society is hoping to welcome in the sunshine for residents of Pleasant Manor Retirement Village and Chartwell Niagara Long Term Care Residence.

Horticultural society members Susan Dodd and Hilda Ellard met at June Floral & Garden at 9 a.m. on Tuesday morning to assemble plants for every care home residents.

"It's a little bit of brightness for the residents,"
Dodd told The Lake Report.

While placing cards into spring flowers for seniors, Dodd remarked on how long this past winter was.

"A lot of these people are shut in, they don't get outside much," Ellard said.

The Chartwell residence will receive 103 of the plants while Pleasant Manor will receive the rest.

Dodd said the joy of



Hilda Ellard places individual cards onto each spring plant. The horticultural society delivers plants to long-term care facilities in town once during spring and once over the holiday season to help spread joy to residents. JULIA SACCO

residents makes it well worth it.

"We usually get some positive comments back. People say they really look forward to it," she said.

The horticultural society also delivers flowers for seniors over the Christmas holidays.

With the 100-bed expansion coming to Niagara Long Term Care, Dodd said she expects volunteers will be eager to help out.

"There'll be another 100 plants for the new beds," she said.

The horticultural society may be looking for a few extra hands when the time comes, but Dodd says that won't be a problem.

"This is something that everybody likes to do. It's a nice get-together."

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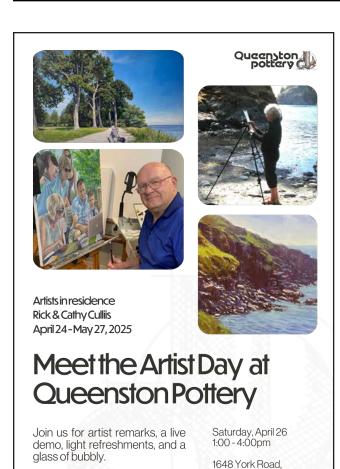
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Animal lovers support rescue pets

Andrew Hawlitzky
The Lake Report

Potted plants, sweet treats and a cause close to home drew crowds to a Niagaraon-the-Lake fundraiser on Saturday, supporting local animal rescues.

Tanya Rice's Community Initiative For Animal Rescue hosted its fifth annual spring event at 456 Line 2 Rd., featuring 87 handmade planters as well as a selection of baked goods prepared by local volunteers, including Chef Raymond Taylor from Root & Bone.

"The volunteers and our members, within three days, made 87 planters available for sale. The baking has been incredible," said Rice.

Proceeds from the event will be split evenly between Angel's Rest Dog Rescue and the Heart and Hope Lost and Found Pets of Niagara.

Angel's Rest provides care for adult and senior dogs

FIIC Dil ap

From left, Sonny Cheung, Erika Buchkowsky, Tanya Rice (behind), Carolyn Greenfield, Cheryl Chiarelli, Winnie Xiong fundraise for local dogs and cats in need on Saturday.

ANDREW HAWLITZKY

whose owners can no longer support them.

"Christine from Angel's Rest Dog Rescue accepts surrendered or medically challenged dogs to live a comfortable life in her shelter. She takes care of them medically, physically, emotionally, until they pass away," said Rice.

The Heart and Hope rescue group, based primar-

ily in Welland, handles lost, found and adoption efforts for cats and kittens, providing medical care and socialization.

"They do everything from rescuing to vetting, so animals like Moo, Tigger and Toby can get socialized and go into adoption programs," said Rice.

Rice said her experience fostering for more than

eight years with a local cat rescue led to the creation of her fundraising group, Community Initiative for Animal Rescue.

"After I finished fostering for NOTL Cats, I still wanted to do something, so we started just so we could raise the money and give it to rescue groups that fall short on their own fundraising efforts."

A silent auction fundraiser will mark the group's one-year anniversary, beginning on April 22 and ends May 10 at Husky Travel Centre.

Rice praised local sponsors for their continued support, including Kauzlaric Family Farm, Bellyacres Farm and Coconut Quartz.

Cheryl Chiarelli, the creator and curator of Coconut Quartz, was on-site volunteering and selling her custom "We Love Pets" bracelets, with a portion of sales going to the cause.

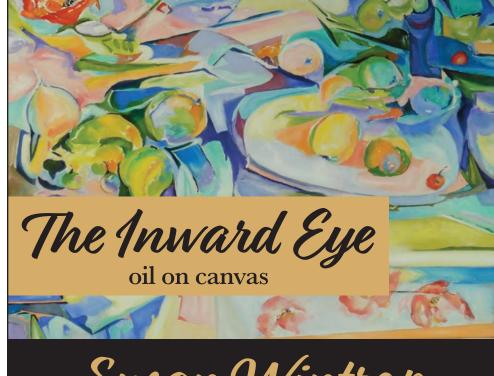
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Easter egg fundraiser raises \$5,000 for Ukrainian orphans



Participants painted Pysankas to help raise money for Ukrainian children. ANDREW HAWLITZKY

Andrew Hawlitzky The Lake Report

A colourful Easter egg workshop in Niagara-onthe-Lake raised over \$5,000 on Sunday to help Ukrainian children affected by war.

Local organizer Christyna Prokipchuk hosted 16 people at her Old Town home on April 13 for STEPPE UP for Ukraine to support the "Easter Gifts for the Children of Ukraine" campaign through Help Us Help.

The intimate event featured a masterclass in creating traditional Ukrainian Pysanky eggs, guided by professional artist Lydia Tkachuk.

Prokipchuk emphasized the importance of expanding community awareness about ongoing humanitarian needs in Ukraine.

"Obviously, the goal is to raise funds, but a close second goal is to keep the awareness up of what's going on and to grow the network of people who are interested," said Prokipchuk.

Help Us Help's campaign provides new toys and cultural workshops to orphaned Ukrainian children during Easter.

The campaign received around 850 toys donated through the "Unite With Ukraine" initiative, and funds raised locally help support additional educational and cultural activities.

"It's beautiful, relaxing, you sit around a table bonding with other people, and you learn about a culture," said Prokipchuk.

STEPPE UP for Ukraine,

active since 2022, has raised more than \$200,000 for humanitarian aid. Its flagship summer cycling event returns on Aug. 9.

"The first year we did the cycling event, we raised over \$100,000," said Prokipchuk.

She said she is open to hosting another Pysanka fundraiser this spring if there is enough community interest.

Prokipchuk expressed thankfulness to Atomic Heating & Cooling Ltd., whose sponsorship covered event supplies.

Interested community members are invited to participate or volunteer in future events by contacting steppeupforukrainel@gmail.com.

andrew@niagaranow.com





NOTL Golf Club celebrates 150 years



Darren Smith, left, and Owen Howells, golf operations managers at the Niagara-on-the-Lake Golf Club, are ready to celebrate the club's 150th anniversary this summer. The popular nine-hole course, which is now open for play, is the oldest one in North America and there are big plans to mark the anniversary this summer. For starters, the annual members reception will kick things into gear on April 30. DAVE VAN DE LAAR

'Allez, allez' — NOTL senior adds Paris Marathon to collection

Kevin MacLean The Lake Report

Most travellers who head to Paris go there to savour the sights, the food, wine and history. And the walking ... everywhere.

Niagara-on-the-Lake's Margot Devlin plans to enjoy all that, but before she walks, she had to run.

Not just an ordinary run, but a 42-kilometre marathon run.

The NOTL senior completed her first Paris Marathon on Sunday — and the 20th of her career. She also has run the New York City Marathon a dozen times, London's five and two in Niagara.

Devlin always is quick to emphasize she is slow but steady — and not in any hurry to finish the race. It works.

On Sunday, battling a cold, she struggled somewhat, but managed to finish.

"It was a difficult race,"



A rare sight, no traffic zooming around the Arc de Triomphe. NOTL's Margot Devlin poses with her T-shirt and medal after completing Sunday's Paris Marathon. SHAUN DEVLIN

she told The Lake Report. "The cobblestones chewed up my feet."

"Unfortunately, I caught a cold shortly before the marathon and had trouble breathing. But I got there in the end," she said.

The French spectators

were very supportive, yelling "Allez, allez, bravo and courage," she added.

Participants also ran through two major parks, the Bois de Boulogne and the Bois de Vincennes, great spots to enjoy Paris in the spring. "The flowering trees are all in bloom here. We went very close to the Louvre, but other well-known sites were in the distance."

They also went through the Pont de l'Alma tunnel where Princess Diana died in 1997. "Her picture was there."

Devlin's husband Shaun met her at the 40-kilometre mark and told her she had another four miles (six kilometres) to go.

"I almost died," she exclaimed.

Fortunately, he was wrong and she was just two kilometres from the finish.

Next up, she plans to head across the English Channel and will be in London on April 27 to run that city's marathon.

It will be her sixth time taking on the U.K. race.

Meanwhile, the couple will spend several days seeing the sights of Paris at a much more leisurely pace.

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NOTL skaters are super STARS



The NOTL Skating Club has been having an eventful season, with its roster of figure skaters taking part in STAR competitions and assessments across the province. Pictured here are the club's junior skaters, from left: Sharmaine Rudan, Stephanie Wassilko, Emily Jardine, Issie Thwaites, Jodi Mitchinson, Maddie Sotola, Brooklyn Thwaites, Rosaline Ma and Evie Abel. This spring, the Thwaites both received gold assessments in their STAR 2 events while fellow skaters Rudan, Wassilko, Jardine, Mitchinson and Abel received silver assessments in their STAR 2 events. Sotola received a silver in her STAR 3 event and Ma received a bronze in her STAR 2 event. JUDI BOYLE-KRZECZKOWSKI/SUPPLIED



The Lake Report

OPINION



Publisher: Richard Harley Editor-In-Chief: Richard Harley Managing Editor: Zahraa Hmood Editor Emeritus: Kevin MacLean Design & Layout: Richard Harley **Advertising:** Megan Vanderlee Contributors: Denise Ascenzo,

Dr. William Brown, Penny-Lynn Cookson, Linda Fritz, Patty Garriock, Steve Hardaker, Andrew Hawlitzky, Brian Marshall, NOTL Museum, Ross Robinson, Julia Sacco, Paige Seburn, Kyra Simone, Tim Taylor, Jill Troyer, Garth Turner, Dave Van de Laar, Janice White, Joanne Young and many more members of the community

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#24: Compliment an elderly woman you see out and about on her attire and let her know she looks beautiful inside and out.

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



Contributed by Patty Garriock

"If I had to characterize one quality as the genius of feminine thought, culture, and action, it would be connectivity." Robin Morgan

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We all scream for ice cream

Maya and Marjorie Andrade, 3 and 8, from St. Catharines, enjoy an ice cream on Queen Street during a warm April Sunday. DAVE VAN DE LAAR



Opinion

The Rebs and Super-Z set to clash in NOTL



THE TURNER REPORT

Garth Turner Columnist

The first meeting was, well, a bust. Four people in a big empty room.

Same space. Eight weeks later. Last Friday night. "It was over-subscribed this time," he says. "We actually had to bring in more chairs." It suggests a blowout event when the public at large is invited on May 14.

That's Stuart McCormack describing the weedy growth of the NOTL Residents Association, a grassroots gang dedicated to saving the bucolic existence of a unique place from the people elected to do exactly that. Development. Shortterm rentals. Heritage. Hotels. Tourists. Trees. Some days it seems only the horses are at peace.

And, now, the restless recruits of Stu's Rangers have a new worry. A rogue mayor.

"It could be an autocracy," says McCormack of the looming new powers the province wants for our lordly head of council.

In case you missed it, on May 1 the current mayor, Gary Zalepa — a career real estate guy who works part-time as our ruler —



Lord Mayor Gary Zalepa is one of the mayors who will receive "strong mayor powers" from the province.

could be vastly stronger by provincial decree.

NOTL's one of a clutch of towns and cities where "strong mayor" powers are being urged by the Doug Ford government, which wants a ton of new houses built. Pronto.

Super-Zalepa would be able to propose the town budget with a veto and override ability. Key staff, like the treasurer, chief admin officer and clerk can be personally appointed (or fired). He'll be able to create committees and appoint chairs, plus veto any bylaw "that could potentially interfere with provincial priorities." Yes, like build, baby, build.

"People are very concerned," says McCormack. "They were blindsided by this move. Every year it gets harder and harder to get folks to vote. So, how do you tell them democracy is functioning properly when

at the end of the day they get an autocracy?"

And the reb leader isn't buying a new motion now before council to block Ford's move.

"I find it very difficult not to draw an analogy between this and when Jean Chrétien opposed the GST and Brian Mulroney -'fight like hell against it in campaign and hope to hell it gets in.' In other words, it's a political ploy. The decision has been made."

If so, lots of folks are steaming at the thought. Super-Z is not going down well.

"Strong mayor powers needed to get more housing built? That doesn't seem to be the justification here!" says Niagara Foundation head Lyle Hall. "The problem I see is the government is changing rules (strong mayor) and all we're getting is more housing approved, not built."

"This is an unnecessary step that will not add anything to the democratic process," says Airbnb foe and former councillor Norm Arsenault.

"Quite the opposite really and will do nothing to increase housing starts, which appear to be the guise under which this is being pushed out. Several mayors in Ontario have already stated that they would not use these new powers for exactly that reason. They see it as undemocratic."

Former Chautauqua residents group head Brian Crow says, "already many residents are opposed to the direction the lord mayor has led council. It will be up to the lord mayor on how he uses these new powers whether his relationship with residents improves or declines more."

"This only legalizes the manner in which our lord mayor and his team of rogues have been practising during this council's term," fumes longtime NOTLer Sam Young. "And by that I mean a dictatorship! It sounds like that guy south of the border!"

But Super-Zalepa may swoop in soon. Faster than a speeding bullet. More powerful than a locomotive. Able to leap public opinion in a single bound.

Will the rebels stand a chance?

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

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OPINION (%)

How are YOU pushing back against Trump?



Amid on-again, off-again trade tariffs, MAGA disinformation about the Canada-U.S. relationship and threats of annexing our nation as the 51st state, millions of Canadians are pushing back against President Donald Trump's endless stream of craziness.

It's #elbowsup time in the Great White North.

We'd like to know what you are doing here in Niagara-on-the-Lake in response to Trump's threats and actions.

Are you proudly flying the flag at home and displaying your patriotism for all to see? Have your shopping habits changed? What about travel plans?

In what other ways has your "polite Canadian" behaviour changed? Or has it?

Many people find Trump's endless jibes at Canada tiresome and are fed up with his tirades. What is your take and how do you think this all will (or should) play out?

Email us your thoughts, send us your photos and we'll publish them in an upcoming edition of The Lake Report.

Send them to editor@niagaranow.com.

Let's vote for a better future for our planet

Dear editor:

In the April 10 edition of The Lake Report, Nicolas Petrick wrote of Mark Carney's economic policies, then pointed voters to back Pierre Poilievre, whom he feels "has a genuine commitment to serving Canadians" ("Letter: Carney's record spells trouble for Canadians").

What Petrick is missing or not considering, because he did not live through the era of Stephen Harper, the Conservative Party often removes rights of minorities, shrinks social service programs, and puts communication bans on scientific research. These are just a few of the issues that came out after PM Trudeau's election in 2015.

I would like to plant a seed by asking voters to seek a party that aligns with the social and environmental disasters we are facing, not just in this region, but nationally and globally.

Petrick is concerned only with "the future of my

country" from an economic stance. Sorry, Petrick, but it is our country.

There are more important issues, like clean drinking water, the loss of wildlife, native species, and habitats for non-human life, just within this region.

Not to mention the social issues of homelessness due to a lack of programs to support those who need them. All of these issues are not on the Conservative agenda, nor do they present them as issues.

Please, voters, think not of what is in your bank account, but the quality of life for everyone and future generations. We all deserve clean air, water, and food.

This is not a time to ignore the deep-rooted issues of the climate crisis we are in because of the "tariff wars," but a time to focus on cleaning our natural environment and securing a healthy society.

> Lynn Verheul NOTL



This week's riddle is "Jeopardy!" style. Category: ALL UP IN YOUR BUSINESS

It's the company that made the 717 for mass passengers as well as the F-22 Raptor for very, very specific passengers.

Last issue: FLAG TIME!

Clue: Scotland's flag has a white cross on a blue background. The colors are reversed for the flag of this Canadian province.

Answer: What is Nova Scotia?

Answered first by: Margie Enns

Also answered correctly (in order) by:
Sue Rautenberg, Jane Morris, Claudia Grimwood,
Susan Hamilton, Terry Nord, Mike Gander,
Randie Topps, Jane Andersen, Jeff Lake,
Howard Jones, Margaret Garaughty, Katie Reimer,
Marla Percy, Sylvia Wiens, Nancy Rocca, Jim Dandy,
Wade Durling, Daniel Smith, Esther VanGorder,
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Email answers to editor@niagaranow.com, with your name, for a chance to win a \$25 Irish Harp Pub gift card every week. (Subject line: Riddle me this)

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Joanne Young's mulch column was spot on

Dear editor:

I really enjoyed Joanne Young's column on mulch ("Growing Together: Much ado about mulch," April 10). While every peer-reviewed scientific study in North America that I am aware of shows that arborist mulch is the best mulch for your garden, Joanne's six points about why you should use mulch are spot on.

If you are able to stay away from dyed mulches and their unknown source of shredded wood, your garden will thank you.

Please keep in mind that you should not mulch your

entire garden, as it is always advantageous to leave some open soil for native bees.

Most native bees are solitary bees and ground nesters. They require access to bare or partly vegetated soil to excavate their nests and brood cells.

I would add to her point about "materials like gravel, stone, or rubber being longer lasting, but don't improve soil quality" by saying that they also compact your soil.

Compaction disturbs the microbiome in your soil and its gas exchange, and it is then more difficult

for your plant material to

If you use the chop and drop method, you can always put your mulch down on top of your trimmings and debris to add to the composting component of your garden.

Remember, compost looks like it is thoroughly broken down to our naked eye, but it actually is just getting started. You still have years of microbe activity happening!

Joanne touches on landscape fabric. Again, the science is absolutely against using landscape fabric in a garden. Landscape fabric reduces carbon dioxide movement between the soil and the atmosphere about 1,000 times more than wood chip mulches do.

Plastic mulch is the only thing worse than landscape fabric. Landscape fabric does not "smother" weeds either, because they will colonize the surface of the landscape fabric.

If you are interested in any more scientific breakdown or to read the studies, please Google gardenprofessors.com (see "Landscape fabric — a cautionary tale").

Betty Knight
NOTL



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Let's loop in some chiropractors on back pain

Dear editor:

I look forward to the weekly award-winning paper — thank you.

Re: this past week's article on back pain ... an enigma for many ("Dr. Brown: Degernative disease in the spine, part 1: Lumbosacral spine," March 27).

My inquiry is asking if Dr. Brown's respected comprehensive opinions could also include the complementary role of the conservative chiropractic profession.

In the 1980s and onward, orthopedic surgeons, medical physicians and chiropractic physicians have worked collaboratively for the benefit of suffering people (e.g. at the University of Saskatoon).

For a number of years, one of Toronto's Mount Sinai Hospital orthopedic departments has had as its chief a doctor of chiropractic.

For decades, esteemed orthopedic texts have included chapters on the role of chiropractic complementary care (Dr. Kirkaldy-Willis).

References to diagnostic and therapeutic "experts," "specialists," "skill sets," "perspectives," and "plausible strategies" should include the chiropractic profession.

Given that spinal conditions, such as degenerative ones, can be enigmatic even when all professions are involved, there should be an understanding and appreciation of each profession's potential relevant and collaborative contributions to mitigate suffering, while also "first doing no harm."

Dr. Ronald V. Fuller Virgil

HANDYMAN HANS CAN

Snow, junk, and bush removal, power washing (house, driveway, patio, polymeric sand, sealants, brick leveling, root removal), home installations (grab bars, railings, toilets, vents, TVs, etc.), wall hangings, furniture assembly, household cleaning and repairs (eavestroughs, windows, carpet, leaky taps), organizing, hoarding help, tree and bush cutting/trimming, weeding, planting, yard clean-up, painting, deck staining, car, truck, and boat detailing/polishing, loader and excavator services, and moving services.

905-246-1843



How zoning bylaws affect the design of our homes



ARCHITEXT

Brian Marshall Columnist

Have you visited the corner of Delater and Ball streets recently?

I must confess that, over the last couple of months, it had not been in my Old Town wanderings — not until a few days ago, when a few residents strongly suggested a "check it out" might be in order.

Shock might be the least of the emotions I experienced as a result of that visit.

Rising on that corner is a new infill development: A 21st-century modern design that dwarfs the shouldering cottage bungalows both down and opposite on Delater, while being completely out of context with the historic residential buildings on Ball Street.

Now, to be completely clear, I do not have any issues with the design itself — in fact, it's quite a nice expres-

sion of the 21st-century modern architectural style.

However, this building is almost a textbook case demonstrating that even good architecture, when built in the wrong place, diminishes both its own qualities and the neighbouring streetscapes.

This columnist has spoken to sympathetic design in past Lake Report articles (e.g. "Arch-i-text: Real-life examples of 'sympathetic design' in communities," April 13, 2023), that is, the importance of creating architecture contextually appropriate to the neighbourhood and streetscape based on character, scale, form, siting, materials, colours and detailing.

Good sympathetic design adds to the character of a neighbourhood, while contextually inappropriate architecture has the opposite effect.

For those who wonder, "How could permission have been granted to build something like this in that location?"

The answer is pretty straightforward. Niagara-on-the-Lake's zoning bylaws do not generally address design, except in the heritage conservation district or where the proposed design might adversely im-



Brian Marshall says this home is "good design in the wrong place." He recommends stronger bylaws to ensure sympathetic design in NOTL's neighbourhoods.

pact a designated heritage asset; therefore, the town has no legislative oversight or tools to prevent such an occurrence.

The single opportunity within the town's existing processes to provide some oversight vis-à-vis appropriate architecture would normally rest within the mandate of the urban design committee.

Unfortunately, that committee has been sidelined by the lord mayor, because, I assume, its invaluable recommendations slow down and/or interfere with the majority of this council's four-square support of all developer initiatives, no matter how inappropriate those may be and community character be damned.

To understand NOTL's existing processes better, let's consider zoning on a

general basis.

Although there are several different types of zoning, we will focus on the three that are most commonly used in North America.

Single-use zoning, also referred to as "Euclidean" zoning, is predicated on the idea that separate uses — residential, commercial, industrial, etc. — are mutually incompatible and a jurisdiction must segregate its development lands into single-use zones.

This type of zoning is the dominant system used in Canada and the United States and has led to the typical expression of most North American cities, which have a dense urban core surrounded by lower-density residential, commercial and industrial zones.

In the mid-20th century, the writings of Jane Jacobs

advocated for "mixed-use" urban development — the integration of different building types and uses, whether residential or commercial, old or new. This diversity of buildings, residences, businesses and other non-residential uses was necessary to create a vital community.

In short, the combination of residential, commercial, office and public uses into a single geographic area allows for mixed-use within a single building (typically a vertical tower or skyscraper), or across multiple geographically associated buildings.

Typically, both single-use and mixed-use zoning are supported by bylaws which focus entirely on regulations/proscriptions related to the specific use and the building(s) size, coverage, height, positioning, etc., on a given property.

Which brings us to the third and most recently developed type of zoning, "form-based," which revolves around the theory that long-term urban health of an area or municipality is dependent on ensuring buildings "fit into" their surroundings as opposed to the uses occupying the building.

The controls (or bylaws) applied in form-based

zoning will include: Building shapes and forms; the location of parking and building locations on the lot (i.e. in front or set back); the treatment of frontages particularly related to how the building meets the street, for example, a porch, stoop, or shopfront; building entryway locations and ground floor windows; and façade articulation or design to match or create a preferred character for the area.

Niagara-on-the-Lake's zoning bylaws contain virtually no elements of form-based zoning.

Perhaps one of the best recent practices related to municipal zoning is the "illustrated" bylaw. Essentially, this type of bylaw undertakes the extensive use of illustrations to remove ambiguity or uncertainty from the interpretation of bylaw provisions. A great innovation.

So, when all is said and done, let's get with the times NOTL and create a current, state-of-the-art zoning bylaw.

In the meantime, for goodness' sake, reinstate the urban design committee.

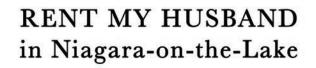
Brian Marshall is a NOTL realtor, author and expert consultant on architectural design, restoration and heritage.





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OPINION (%)



NDP supporters, it's time to vote red

Dear editor:

Hi, all: Polling data for the coming election indicates that this election is a two-party race.

NDP support nationally has tanked, and, in fact, even in its best electoral times, the NDP has never formed a federal govern-

In our new, smaller Niagara Falls-Niagaraon-the-Lake riding, the NDP has always run a fairly distant third, and the new riding no longer includes Fort Erie, where many NDP votes were concentrated. The NDP will not win this riding this time.

The NDP supported our recent Liberal minority government and successfully achieved major new policies/programmes advocated by the NDP.

In fact, historically, it has been Liberal governments that have actually enacted and implemented any NDPadvocated policies that have been legislated.

So, for NDP supporters, the Liberal Party is the best choice if the NDP is not going to win, which seems clearly the case this time.

Therefore, I suggest NDP supporters in our Niagara Falls-Niagara-on-the-Lake riding very seriously consider voting Liberal this time.

A strong national government is critical this time, given the Trump factor/ threat. I believe traditional NDP voters' (and independents and "third party" voters, like the Greens, as well) best bet this time is to vote Liberal.

> Rick Kirby **NOTL**

Poilievre or Carney? Let's discuss the facts

Dear editor:

A letter writer, in calling into question Mark Carney's reputation as a central banker and economist, provides a very partisan view of his performance ("Letter: Carney's record spells trouble for Canadians," April 10).

Unfortunately, as elections approach, such opinion pieces too often simply repeat party propaganda, rather than bother to undertake a little independent research themselves.

Had the letter writer looked just a little further, he would have discovered that, as the governor of the Bank of Canada during the 2008 financial crisis, Mr. Carney acted faster than most countries to cut interest rates to stimulate the economy, and, as a result, Canada weathered the storm better than most. He earned accolades from the Financial Times and Euromoney, amongst others, for his actions during this period.

Prime Minister Stephen Harper praised Mark Carney when he left the Bank of Canada to become governor of the Bank of England. He said that Mr. Carney had been a "valued partner" who had helped "steer Canada away from the worst impacts of the global economic recession."

Mr. Carney did not do this single-handedly, of course, and I don't doubt that in retrospect there were some things that Mr. Carney could have done better, but





Left: Conservative leader Pierre Poilievre. File Right: Prime Minister Mark Carney. Writer Michael Fox encourages people to stick to the facts. POLICY EXCHANGE/WIKIPEDIA

Stephen Harper's recent attempt at revisionist history to belittle Mr. Carney's role at that time was a partisan cheap shot that has been largely debunked.

In fact, Mr. Carney claims that Mr. Harper tried to recruit him as his government's finance minister in 2012, something Mr. Harper has not denied.

The letter writer is correct that the term "an unreliable boyfriend" was used by British MP Pat McFadden during Mark Carney's term as the governor of the Bank of England because of the unpredictable timing of interest rate changes. Mr. McFadden's actual words were: "It strikes me that the bank's behaving a bit like a sort of unreliable boyfriend."

However, Mr. Carney defended his actions on British interest rates by pointing out that economic conditions can change quite rapidly, requiring prompt

responses "driven by the data."

Mr. Carney was also criticized by some in the U.K. for what was considered to be political interference in the Brexit debate. He warned that a vote to separate from Europe would have serious economic implications for Britain. The Brexiteers prevailed and Mark Carney was proved correct.

Brexit is widely regarded as fuelling inflation in Britain by 1.7 per cent and contributed to the cost of living crisis in London as recently as 2023, according to the lord mayor's report.

The high inflation rate in Britain in 2022, cited by the letter writer as attributable to Mark Carney's interest rate strategy, was due in large part to the pandemic, which caused high inflation globally, and Brexit.

The letter writer also speculated, without any convincing evidence, that

Mr. Carney would be easy prey for the unpredictable Donald Trump in upcoming negotiations, and that global elites would benefit from his tenure. This is simply vague party propaganda.

And the letter writer provides no sense of how he considers Pierre Poilievre would better protect Canada from the disruption that Donald Trump could inflict

Furthermore, the claim that Mr. Poilievre has "a genuine commitment to serving Canadians" is something that can be convincingly applied to both Jagmeet Singh and Mark Carney.

So, is it Poilievre? Or is it Carney? Whomever we vote for should be driven by the most reliable information we can obtain, not by propaganda and bluster.

Calm, serious debate by adults is the preferred way forward.

> Michael Fox **NOTL**

I support Carney for PM

Dear editor:

As a Canadian, I stand with Carney and his action-oriented approach to deal with Trump and the U.S. that Trump is trying

Carney knows the levers of power and the fiscal levers and clearly also knows how to manipulate those levers and clearly also has the international contacts to effectively use

all possible leverage, in concert with many other similarly affected countries, to counter-act the sheer stupidity of a "Donald Trump" in possibly subjecting the whole world to a recession.

Unfortunately, the only thing a "Poilievre" seems able to do is run negative attack ads.

Kaspar Pold **NOTL**

The fallacy of the 51st state

Dear editor:

U.S. President Trump's continued tongue-in-cheek remarks on Canada being a 51st state have gotten tiresome. Those who pay attention to the American system know that the last thing a Republican would want is to grant statehood to Canada.

How so?

Canada has a population of about 40 million, approximately that of California. California has 52 seats in the House of Representatives, by far the most of any state in the union, with Texas the runner-up at 38.

If Canada were to become a state, it would be entitled to its own quota of seats similar to that of California — and like all states, it would acquire two Senators.

In the race for president, California has 54 electoral college votes — likewise, Canada would receive a similar number.

Compared to the U.S.,

Canada clearly leans to the left. For decades, surveys and polls have consistently shown a Canadian populace that has fawned over Democrat nominees and presidents: The Clintons, Obama even Sleepy Joe Biden. Most recently, polls showed that Canadians preferred Kamala Harris over Donald Trump by a margin of three

Imagine adding a state that would reliably deliver the vast majority of those 50 or so seats to the Democratic Party?

It would forever tip the House of Representatives in favour of Democrats - and likely add two Democrat senators as well. The electoral college and the president? Advantage Democrats again. It would be an utter disaster for Republicans.

So, settle down Canada: Governor Trudeau is gone! Don Mustill **NOTL**

Good to see youth support for Conservatives

Dear editor:

I would like to reference the letter by Nicolas Petrick, "Carney's record spells trouble for Canadians" (The Lake Report, April 10).

When I read this article I felt encouraged that at least the youth of our great country are starting to look through the choice of Mark Carney Liberals to lead.

While we live in a neighbourhood dominated by seniors, it was refreshing to read that a 25-year-old person does not want to be "protected" by the Liberal government.

Far from it, our youth want to flourish in an economy that gives them the incentive and opportunity to succeed, not propped up by endless handouts that we cannot afford. Canada can offer this to our youth if we make the right choice now.

Yes, we face the threat of tariffs from a delusional president, but do you really think Carney is the right man to "protect" us?

A man that has become somewhat of an expert in setting up tax havens in offshore countries to avoid paying Canadian taxes? A man who lead the board to move Brookfield from Canada to new premises in New York to provide a better environment for the company?

A man who is a selfconfessed climate zealot, a Greta Thunberg pin-up boy, who now says he will make Canada an "energy juggernaut"? It must hurt the very fibre of his soul to make these pro-energy speeches that Canada desperately wants.

A man that was virtually run out of the UK for printing way too much money? To get to his standing at Brookfield, he must have trodden on a lot of folks!

He seems level-headed, but we are unable to see the real Carney and the Liberal campaign handlers have him locked in shackles. Look at that farcical Liberal leadership convention carried out while our country was in the throes of a crisis The Liberal leadership debates were nothing short of a Liberal "love-in."

I have yet to see Carney in an environment where he is dancing on his feet. When he gets these tough questions, how is he going to react?

I look forward to the debates to see how he will react when the shackles are removed. I suspect we might see a somewhat "less cool" individual.

He has picked a cabinet full of the same group of individuals that were unable to confront Trudeau in his quest to put us at the bottom of the pile in terms of productivity.

The same group who constantly said they would bal-

ance the budget. A government that was economically consulted to by Carney. A consultant that wanted Trudeau to make Carbon taxes greater!

Carney even has MP Guilbeault in his cabinet: A like-minded climate zealot. Yet more proof that Carney may not carry through the energy agenda as promised.

I realize many of you have more or less made up your minds. Our youth may not get what they want this time around, but it will most certainly come in the future.

I know Poilievre is not everybody's "cup of tea," but he expresses a passion for Canada that will allow those who want it the opportunity to excel.

Governments can't solve everything for us. We need an environment that allows the people to solve it.

Simon Gardner *NOTL*



Dear editor:

So, let me get this straight. When a democratically elected representative of the government (Sam Oosterhoff), in the exercise of his office, supports an organization regardless of whether its views align with his own personal beliefs, he is to be vilified for being closedminded and hypocritical ("Editorial: Oosterhoff presence was an insult to Shaw's values," April 3, The Lake Report).

On the other hand, there is the editor of this newspaper who appears to require that only those people who conform to his own ideological and theological views should be considered openminded enough to freely conduct their duties.

It seems to me, at least, that Sam Oosterhoff is not the one who is guilty of being closed-minded and hypocritical.

> Thomas Korcok **NOTL**

The negative forces at play in our modern world

In the current global landscape, I believe there are two distinct forces at play.

The first is the relentless disintegration of concepts and institutions that no longer meet the pressing demands of a world yearning for its fundamental unity.

The second is the gradual, unassuming efforts of an increasing number of individuals who perceive the world as a unified homeland and all humanity as its citizens.

The disintegrative forces are pervasive and affect the very foundation of all world societies, particularly the family.

This is evident in the strain and breakdown of familial bonds, causing significant suffering among individuals, especially children.

Consequently, family members succumb to material distractions or personal gratification, becoming mere objects to be manipulated by those who promote their misguided and detrimental concepts.

Ideologies and identities incompatible with the ideals of global unity and peace vie for the support of individuals and seek superiority over one another.

Some of these movements sow the seeds of prejudice and fanaticism, ultimately leading to estrangement, conflict and contention among the world's peoples.

The forces associated with the disintegrative process impact different populations in varying ways.

I invite everyone to engage in self-reflection with their families, friends, and neighbours to comprehend the nature and impact of surrounding negative forces, and to agree upon and implement positive steps that will contribute significantly to the unification of the world and its peoples.

> Lawrence Clarke Virgil

Who's the hypocrite? | Poilievre knows how to get things done

Dear editor:

I am writing in response to the March 20 Letter of the Week, penned by Michael Fox of NOTL ("Letter: Carney is the best choice for Canadians").

Mr. Carney has indeed advised the Liberals on economic policy for a number of years. Unfortunately, Canada is now at the bottom of the G7 countries in terms of economic performance, after nine years of Liberal government.

While chairman of the billion-dollar corporation Brookfield, Mr. Carney approved of and facilitated their move from Canada to New York State, to benefit his corporation and shareholders.

Though born in Canada, Mr. Carney has not lived here for over a decade.

Interestingly, his performance as head of the Bank of England was assessed as mediocre by both the left and right-leaning U.K. media.



Conservative leader Pierre Poilievre, FILE

Mr. Carney has a cabinet consisting of 87 per cent Trudeau appointees from the former government. After years of economic decline in Canada, as well as record-low support for the Liberal party, Mr. Carney was brought in strictly to revive their failing political fortunes.

Meanwhile, after many weeks, in the face of U.S. provocation, Parliament is still prorogued, solely because of Liberal politics.

The fact that Mr. Poilievre has a lot of experience in government means that he knows how to get things done. After years of an underperforming economy, the Conservatives have a comprehensive plan to improve our economic competitiveness.

Mr. Fox speculates that a large minority of Conservative voters support Donald Trump and also support annexation by the U.S. On what does he base this assertion?

Mark Carney is a wealthy elite and a fan of the World Economic Forum. Though he laces up his skates and dons a hockey jersey for the cameras, he is not the regular guy that he wants voters

Interestingly, immediately upon being appointed prime minister, Mr. Carney helped himself to two Conservative ideas, in an effort to gain support.

The first was to temporarily cancel the consumer carbon tax (it requires an act of Parliament to make it permanent) and, suddenly, to take Arctic sovereignty seriously, after years of neglect.

Mr. Poilievre has a common-sense plan to help working Canadians and to turn our under-performing economy around.

Mr. Carney promises more of the same Liberal agenda.

Do you feel better off in 2025 than you did in 2015, before the Liberals were elected?

I agree with Mr. Fox that we should all make an informed decision.

> Phil Wilson **NOTL**

Do you know who your current MP is?

Dear editor:

Greetings! To readers, do you know who your current MP for the Niagara Falls-Niagara-on-the-Lake riding is? Or, where he is?

He has been in office since 2019, but I have rarely seen any media report about a public appearance, let alone any public statement/ report/comment/idea.

Often in the past, though not recently, in this local news source, I have seen a small square notice of his existence with the standard slogan along the line, "Proud to represent you in Ottawa."

Fine, but MP is not an honorary position: MPs are actually expected to do something in representing their constituents in Parlia-

The above suggests to me that our representative is more like a seat warmer backbencher and rote vote — however Pierre Poilievre tells him to.

Once every three to four months, I receive a onesheet flyer by mail from our MP with a large photo and usually the same slogan quoted above, together with a few rote, boilerplate CPC talking points/slogans, but no personal comments by our MP, and a couple of meaningless "survey questions."

So, his name is Tony Baldinelli, but, in light of the above, I wonder whether "Tory (rather than Tony) Invisibilitti" might not be a more appropriate appel-

He was elected Oct. 10, 2019. Six years of service in Parliament are required to qualify for a Parliamentary pension — so, apparently, he will not qualify if he is not re-elected in the current election.

I will leave to the readers the relevance of this point. But, I suggest all readers consider the record, or lack thereof, in deciding on your vote in the current election campaign.

> Rick Kirby **NOTL**

Don't let the darkness enveloping America spread to Canada



Ketih McNenly Special to The Lake Report

A great darkness has fallen over the United States. It is a darkness that will spread over our entire North American continent. If allowed, it will continue to spread and envelop the world, bringing mankind once again into a dark era.

As a country, the U.S. is quickly devolving into a new form, morphing into a mob family organization oligarchs who are sharing in the booty.

A corrupt Republican majority Supreme Court has given the president the power and immunity of a king.

The cowardly Republican Congress abets the devolution, completely abandoning its legislative role.

A violent, self-lobotomized MAGA supporting cult cheers every insanity that comes off the Resolute Desk of the president, in increasingly corrupt and lawless executive orders.

Every institution of American government is being eviscerated like cattle stampeded into a slaughterhouse, with the Justice Department becoming the

retribution.

Presidential bully power is being wielded against the country's most prominent lawyers and law firms who are lining up to beg for his mercy. They agree to pledge hundreds of millions of free lawyering to be used at the president's direction against the interests of the American people.

As of this moment, a billion dollars worth of free lawyering has been secured. All of this money will be used in favour of the president personally and against the interests of Americans.

Law enforcement is being wantonly deployed to sweep up individuals off

to a concentration camp in Central America. He has asked for more concentration camps to be erected in Central America for his deportations, with a promise to expand the deportations to include U.S. citizens.

Leaders of free nations are told to go to the White House to kiss the presidents ass, (his words), to avoid his crippling tariff war. The world is required to open itself up to personal real estate development projects by the president's family.

Americans fell for the age-old con of populist leaders. Failure to understand the consequences of electing cowards to Congress and fascists to the

supported by self-interested president's personal tool of the streets and deport them presidency has real consequences, and once fascism gains its foothold, it may not be reversed.

The ending of the United States has been a long time coming. The keystone in the takedown of the country was the corruption of the Supreme Court. Once that was accomplished, everything else fell smoothly into place.

When electoral corruption is legalized, as happened with the United States election financing laws, political parties become corrupt and politicians are up for outright purchase by the rich and powerful.

Now it's Canada's turn at the ballot. On May 28, Canadians can choose to put

ing, reject populist leadership, and elect a prime minister capable of leading Canada through these dark times. We must have a strong national leader who has never been in the thrall of the Trump cult and whose policies do not align with MAGA ideology.

This is a race between the Conservatives and the Liberals, between Poilievre and Carney. The NDP and the Greens aren't in the running for prime minister, so a vote for either of those parties in this one critical election is a thrown-away vote.

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

OPINION (%)



The Masters has defined sports and sportsmanship, again



Ross's Ramblings

Ross Robinson Columnist

Many millions of people watched superb athletes do battle in Augusta over the weekend. Yes, a sure statement that spring has sprung. How beautiful are the azaleas on the 18 holes of the meticulously groomed golf course in Georgia?

About a hundred of the top-ranked golfers in the world came together to walk on the fairways and the pine straw and over the famous bridges.

As NOTL's Bill Garriock said in the library the day after Rory McIlroy had finally completed his Career Grand Slam, "Everyone involved knows the rules and the expectations." And everyone

meets the expectations both players and spectators, who are all treated as guests of the Augusta National Golf Club.

Acceptable apparel, no mobile telephones, the players don't fight, and nobody argues with the rules officials. A common query among golf fans is, "Have you ever been to the Masters?" Every single time I have asked that question, I feel so fortunate, as I quietly reply, "Twice."

Last week was the 89th playing of the Masters. Has there ever been a final day with more drama, more class, and more great and bad shotmaking? Rare double bogeys were not so rare, and emotional swings became almost too much for both spectators on the course and those of us watching on television to handle.

McIlroy is now the first player in Masters history to win the tournament after carding four double bogeys. A few times, he appeared to be stumbling his way to victory. He had surrendered the solo lead by mismanaging a double bogey on the



Ross Robinson says it'd be easier for everyone if golfers had their names and numbers on their shirts. Like Happy Gilmore.

first hole of the fourth and final round.

One of the many reasons so many of us love to play and watch golf is that we can all do just what the professionals do.

Whether sinking a long and double-snaking 80" putt, or watching a pressure-packed easy wedge shot disappear into a water hazard, or watching a tee shot drop into the hole for a hole in one, each golfer just might do it.

We can't hit a 90-mile-

per-hour fastball or a major league curveball, or kick a 55-yard field goal, but we can make and miss shots just like the professional golfers.

So, we can get dressed up like real golfers and then live vicariously on carefully maintained golf courses around the world. Almost always with people who are polite and out for a pleasant few hours.

Now, rambling to last weekend's final round in Augusta. Even for a somewhat casual golf fan like me, there were such diverse personalities trying to withstand the pressure. A few are a bit cocky for my liking, and a few seem almost devoid of personality.

As an inveterate suggester of changing the traditions if a game can be improved, may I ask when professional golfers will start having their names or a number printed on the back of their golf shirts? Almost all other sports make it easier to watch by including names, so why not golf? I know, I know, tradition.

It was former Canadian prime minister Jean Chrétien who once said, after being accused of not respecting tradition, "I have such respect for tradition that I want to start a new one today."

Back suddenly to Justin Rose and Rory McIlroy at the Masters last week. Two superb and classy athletes from the United Kingdom, who have been on the same Ryder Cup teams several times. Not at all flashy, but both long-time denizens of leader boards around the golfing world. Their respect for each other on Sunday was palpable.

They both had the lead a few times, and they both lost the lead a few times. Only one of them was eventually going to win this excruciatingly exciting Masters. Both of them, with no coaches to turn to for encouragement or advice, stoic under the pressure.

They both made gaffes while playing the final round, but they also both made shots under levels of pressure that we mere mortals will thankfully never experience.

Watching the last couple of hours of the Masters last week made me glad to be a fan of the game of golf.

To my good fortune, I have played enough to appreciate the game. The raw and individual emotions, the loneliness, the need to emotionally navigate such lows and highs, all by yourself out there.

Could even one of the millions of people watching Rory McIlroy after his Masters win not have felt good about the outcome?

The Green Jacket looks good on him.





Have some fun

10

16

Crossword Puzzle

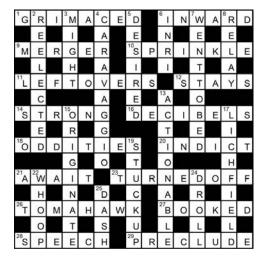
Across

- 1. Without exception (2,1,3)
- 5. Crossword with no clues (8)
- 9. Good for you (10)
- 10. Chancel wear (4)
- 11. Geological faults (5)
- 12. Impressive array (7)
- 15. Vulnerable (3,2,1,4)
- 16. Free from bias (4)
- 18. Corporate big wheels (1,1,2)
- 20. Stage illuminators (10)
- 22. Country on Lake Tanganyika (7)
- 24. Edge of a precipice (5)
- 27. Angler's decoy (4)
- 28. Firm which makes Up! (10)
- 29. Arrogant, presumptuous people (8)
- 30. Overnight flight (3-3)

Down

- 2. Hold on ... (3,6)
- 3. Good conductor, perhaps (7)
- 4. Diamond songwriter (4)
- 5. Flake (4)
- 6. Common currency in New York, for example (6,4)
- 7. Disappear slowly (4,3)
- 8. Insurgent (5)
- 13. Disregarded for promotion (6,4)
- 14. Largest of the Lesser Sunda Islands (5)
- 17. With great concentration (9)
- 19. Used TNT to blow up a scholar (7)
- 21. Floral wreath (7)
- 23. Wrongfully appropriate (5)
- 25. Looked up to in Switzerland (4)
- 26. Nicholas II was the last (4)

Last issue's answers

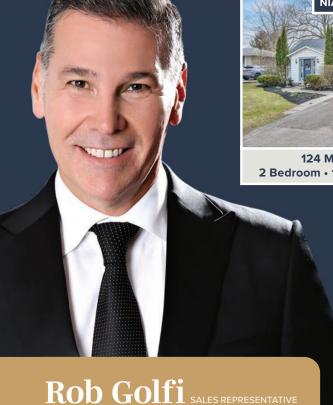


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MAXIMIZE EXPOSUR

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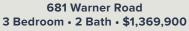


Born, raised and living

in Niagara and loving it!

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FEATURED |



Explore these native groundcover plants





Joanne Young Columnist

Growing native ground-covers in our gardens has become more and more important. Many of the groundcovers we have been growing for years, because of their dependability and ease of maintenance, are now included on the invasive species lists.

Perennials such as vinca (periwinkle), pachysandra (Japanese spurge), aegopodium (goutweed and hedera (English ivy) are creeping into our natural areas and taking over our native species.

Here are a few native groundcovers that you might consider planting in lieu of more invasive plant types

Wild Canadian ginger (Asarum canadense)

The large, velvety, kidney-shaped leaves of Canadian ginger create a lush groundcover that effectively suppresses weeds.

It sports unique burgundy-brown flowers that, due to their leaf size, are



Native groundcover plants like bunchberry dogwood can offer flowers and berries and grow well in shade.

somewhat hidden under the leaves. They bloom from April into May.

The plant spreads slowly by rhizomes, forming colonies over time. Canadian ginger prefers a site that is shadier and even a deeply shaded location under the canopies of trees, tolerating both moist and dry soils.

It typically grows up to eight inches high. Deer do not seem to like the taste of this plant and will usually avoid it.

Wild ginger makes a good groundcover for woodland gardens and shady wildlife gardens.

Bunchberry dogwood (Cornus canadensis)

Here is a totally different form of dogwood than what you typically think of when hearing the name dogwood.

A native of the forests in Ontario, bunchberry is a charming groundcover with multi-seasonal interest.

In late spring, flowers, surrounded by showy white bracts, open up, contrasting with the glossy green foliage. The flowers, bracts and leaves are similar to those of our native flowering dogwood tree (Cornus florida), but in smaller, low-

spreading form.

In late summer and early fall, bright red/orange berries begin to ripen, attracting birds. The display of berries doesn't stop until fall, when its dark green leaves start turning shades of red to purple.

Bunchberry grows to a maximum of eight inches high and spreads at a moderate pace by underground rhizomes. It does not withstand heavy foot traffic. Being native to our forests, it grows best in dappled shade.

Wintergreen (Gaulheria procumbens)

Wintergreen is a native plant that makes an attractive, low-maintenance, evergreen groundcover for shady locations. It grows about four to six inches high and spreads one to two feet across.

Wintergreen blooms in late spring/early summer with small white to light pink pendulous bell-like flowers. In late summer/early fall, waxy, edible scarlet red berries ripen and remain on the plant into winter.

The leaves also turn to a wine/red colour in the fall and remain that colour until spring, when they will turn green again. Bruised or lightly crushed stems and leaves give off a wintergreen fragrance.

Wintergreen prefers an organically rich, moist, slightly acidic soil. It performs best where the summers are a bit cooler.

The bright red berries and reddish-bronze leaves of wintergreen plants are a welcome sight in the winter months when there's little else to look at in the landscape.

Next time you are at the garden centre, looking for plants for groundcover, make sure that you check out these three native varieties.

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

The Niagara-on-the-Lake Horticultural Society is pleased to be hosting a series of Saturday morning gardening classes, available to the public. They will be facilitated by Joanne Young and will run until May 31. For all the details and to preregister for the classes, visit notlhortsociety.com/ classes.



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Outdoor service, please dress appropriately





EXPLORING HISTORY WITH NOTL MUSEUM



Happy Easter, circa 1888

In celebration of Easter, many residents of Niagara-on-the-Lake would send homemade greeting cards to their friends and family. This Easter card is a painting of a sweet pea that the artist, Amelia McFarland (nee Keefer, 1818-1899), created for her friend Augusta Wilson. Amelia was the wife of John McFarland III (1812-1857) and her family lived in the Township of Niagara-on-the-Lake. She was an accomplished painter in watercolours and oils, which you can see clearly see here. Her artwork may inspire us all to attempt our own homemade greeting cards this holiday. Nothing is more meaningful than a personal gesture from the heart. Happy Easter from the Niagara-on-the-Lake Museum!



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Obituaries

John Ratkovsky



RATKOVSKY, John —

John passed away peacefully after a brief illness, surrounded by family, in his 95th year.

John was born in Opasatika, Ontario (in the bush), to immigrant parents. John was always proud of his Slovak heritage. From there, they moved to Ormstown, Quebec (and moving via a lumber/dumptruck), settled in St. Catharines.

John attended Connaught, Maywood, and St. Catharines Collegiate where he was introduced to the love of his life of 79 years, Helen Paskywee. Helen and John soon moved to Toronto for a post-secondary education. Helen attended the Hospital for Sick Children, Nursing School and John attended Ryerson (TMU) University for Electrical Engineering, both graduated in 1953. John then accepted a position with English Electric (G.E) in St. Catharines.

John eventually followed his passion of owning and operating a hardwood lumber sawmill on Perry Street in St. Catharines. The sawmill produced Oak timbers for Port Weller Dry Docks and the St. Lawrence Seaway, and furniture-grade lumber for foreign and domestic markets. His dedication for the business was highlighted by fun terms of employment such as: Reuben sandwiches on Saturdays, timeliness, and always answering to "Hey"! no matter what.

John eventually married Helen and lived with their four sons in St. Catharines, moving to NOTL in 1974. John was a loving husband and father. He had many nicknames: "John, Johnny, Jocko, Ratsy, Malenki, Boss, Dad, and Grandpa. To John these were endearing terms of love and affection. The word "No" was not in his vocabulary. John was multi-lingual in English, Slovak, Polish, and French.

In retirement, John and Helen travelled, gardened, and spent as much time as they could with their grandchildren. They spent many hours volunteering (Grace United /Carleton United Churches) and John was a dedicated Kiwanian (5 years with perfect attendance).

John was predeceased by his wife Helen (2018), son Tim (2023), grand-daughter Andrea (2002) and best friend Stephen Bak (2021). John is survived by his sons Ted, Tom, and Terry, his 9 Grandchildren: Chris, Ryan, Jason, Andrew, Krystle, Nathan, Lorna, Emily, and Natalie. 8 Great-grandchildren: Lakelyn, Hudson, Paxton, Lila, Charlotte, Bronson, Tanner, and James.

A private interment is planned.

In lieu of flowers, please consider a donation to the Niagara Children's Centre Donations can be made online at helpkidsshine.ca. Memories, photos and condolences may be shared at www.morganfuneral.com

Mary Ann Novaco



NOVACO, Mary Ann -

Mary Ann Novaco of Niagara-on-the-Lake, Ontario passed away on April 9, 2025 after a short battle with pancreatic cancer.

Born in Toronto to Vincenzo and Evelyn Novaco, her father immigrated to the United States when she was young and the family followed a year later. After graduating from Danbury High School in Connecticut, she moved to New York City and graduated from the Fashion Institute of Technology.

She spent the next 40 years working in NYC first as a model then as a fashion designer. After retirement she moved back to Canada.

She leaves behind her devoted and loving sister Patricia Houser of Mystic Connecticut, who has been with her through her whole ordeal; her niece Kristin and her nephew Bob; numerous cousins in Canada and the United States and her two boys in France whom she called her sons after working as an au pair in Paris.

As per wishes cremation has taken place and her ashes will be spread in Paris by the family.

Special thanks to Dr. Vivier, Walker Family Cancer Centre Palliative Care and Ontario Health at Home for their empathy and compassion during this difficult time.

Donations can be made to Walker Family Cancer Centre or St. Jude's Children's Research Hospital.

Arrangements entrusted to Considerate Cremation & Burial Services, 26 Nihan Drive, St. Catharines (between Lake Street & Scott Street), 289-362-1144. Online condolences may be made at CCBSCares.ca

Helmut Hammerling



HAMMERLING, Helmut –

Helmut was born in Poland in the spring of 1944, the youngest of six children to Christoph and Linda Hammerling. The family soon fled to Germany as refugees. In 1953 the family immigrated to Canada settling in Winnipeg Manitoba. In 1962, Helmut and his parents, now with a younger brother, moved into a small, three-bedroom house on a fruit farm in St. Catharines. Helmut completed his schooling and joined the reserves in the Lincoln Welland Regiment. In the spring of 1963, while walking home from the Armouries, Helmut resplendent in his uniform, met Margaret "Maggie" Louise Arthur, wearing a beautiful dress, on her way home from choir practice. Love was in the air and it was love at first sight. High school sweethearts they remained.

After graduating high school, Maggie went into nursing and Helmut began his career at General Motors. They were married August 26, 1967 and after much saving they were able to buy their very own home in Niagara on the Lake. Here they raised their three children, Gerald, Sara and Eric. After 35 years of dedicated service to GM including time spent as supervisor of the tool & grind department, Helmut was able to retire from GM at the young age of 55. Helmut could now spend more time at home to help his sweetheart Maggie recover from a stroke and other health issues. As Maggie improved Helmut could now spend more time playing his favourite sport, tennis. Helmut also became involved in supporting community events & church fundraisers at St. Mark's. Helmut's talents had no end, and he would spend countless hours puttering in the back yard, gardening or being Mr. Handyman in his workshop in the garage. Helmut and Maggie were also fortunate enough to spend many winters in Florida and take several cruises and trips to explore this wonderful world.

He will be deeply missed by Maggie, his 3 children Gerald (Julia), Sara (Bernd), and Eric, his five grandchildren (Nathan, David, Aaron, Grace, Kate), his extended family, and many great friends.

Visitation will be held at Morgan's Funeral Home at 415 Regent St., Niagara-on-the-Lake, Ontario, on Friday, April 11, 2025 from 2 to 4 p.m. and 6 to 8 p.m.

Funeral will be held at St. Mark's Anglican Church in Niagara-on-the-Lake, Ontario at 2 p.m. on Saturday, April 12, 2025. Internment in the Church cemetery will occur directly after the funeral.

In lieu of flowers, those who wish may make a memorial donation to the Red Roof Retreat. Additional service information available at www.morganfuneral.com.



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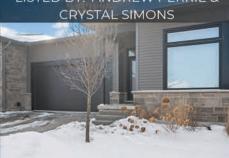
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