



ELECTION 2026

No softballs for council hopefuls at residents' debate

Paige Seburn
Local Journalism Initiative
The Lake Report

Karen Taylor-Jones called Friday's Niagara-on-the-Lake Residents' Association forum "the most horrifying night" of her life.

The crowd laughed. She said it had been worth it.

By then, she and five other NOTL council candidates had faced eight detailed questions at Crossroads Public School.

Candidates were asked whether developers should be allowed to stray from the town's official plan, what council should do about flooding and whether they would help a lord mayor override a council majority.

How firm is the official plan?

Andrew Niven gave a clear answer when candidates were asked about exceptions to the town's official plan.

"One amendment is too many for me," he said, arguing that council should follow the policies it has put in place and consider whether a proposal fits the community.

Sandra O'Connor said amendments have become the norm when they should be exceptional. Any departure from the plan should be "extraordinary," she said.

Maria Mavridis took a

Continued on Page 5

200 years of history

St. Vincent de Paul church celebrates bicentennial

Julia Sacco
The Lake Report

For two centuries, St. Vincent de Paul parish has been a place of Catholic worship and community in Niagara-on-the-Lake.

The parish, founded in 1826, celebrated its bicentennial Sunday, bringing together members of the congregation and the wider community to the church that's occupied a part of Picton Street in Old Town since the mid-1800s.

St. Vincent de Paul was established to serve the growing Catholic population of the Niagara Peninsula.

The church that stands today was built between 1832 and 1834 and consecrated in 1835. It is the oldest Catholic church in continuous use for worship in Ontario.

Looking back at the

Continued on Page 9



Beatrice and Kathleen Maloney hand out anniversary cookies to guests and parishioners. JULIA SACCO

Niagara mayors fight regional government changes



Lord Mayor Gary Zalepa is one of eight Niagara mayors asking the province to reconsider a weighted voting system. FILE

Zahraa Hmood
The Lake Report

Some Niagara political leaders are staring down the prospect of losing power at the regional level and have banded together to urge the province to reconsider proposed changes to how regional government operates.

Eight Niagara mayors, including Niagara-on-the-Lake

Lord Mayor Gary Zalepa, are asking the province to reconsider proposed changes that would give the chair of Niagara Region more power and introduce a weighted voting system at regional council.

In a letter to Rob Flack, Ontario Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing, the mayors call for limits on the proposed "strong chair" powers and

argue against weighted voting, which could give Niagara's largest municipalities greater influence at regional council.

The letter, which appears to be undated, was signed by the mayors of NOTL, Pelham, West Lincoln, Grimsby, Wainfleet, Thorold, Fort Erie and Port Colborne.

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Public park next to Glendale development may open in spring

Paige Seburn
Local Journalism Initiative
The Lake Report

A new public park in Glendale could be built as early as this spring. Niagara-on-the-Lake council unanimously backed a deal Sept. 15 allowing the developer behind Modero Estates to build the park sooner, rather than wait for the town to do so later.

Council also supported a separate request dealing with shared areas in a planned 128-townhouse section.

Modero Estates is a roughly 15-hectare mixed-use development west of Concession 7 Road between York and Queenston roads, planned to include detached homes, townhouses and commercial space.

Normally, the town would build the park. Under the deal, developer Marz Homes will design and build it, then receive a credit against development charges for parks and recreation.

Marz estimates the park could cost \$1.27 million, while staff expect the eligible credit to be about \$850,000 or less after



William Heikoop, a planner representing Marz Homes, pitches an early build for Modero's future public park at town hall Sept. 15. PAIGE SEBURN

reviewing the design and costs.

William Heikoop, a planner representing Marz, said the company hopes to begin construction next spring.

He said building the park earlier "helps the sales and marketing, but also serves the community by providing them those facilities early and upfront instead of having to wait several years after they move in before the park is there."

The final design still requires council approval.

Council candidate Nicholas Colaneri emailed councillors beforehand asking

what the town had planned and budgeted for the park, how staff arrived at the roughly \$850,000 estimate without a finalized design, and why council was being asked to advance the agreement before final costs were known.

"I sent the questions I would have asked if I had been in the room," Colaneri said. "To make sure all Ts were crossed and all Is were dotted."

He said he hoped the questions would be answered publicly before the vote.

"If they could not be

answered, then defer until they can be," he said.

Councillors also unanimously backed a separate Modero request involving 128 planned townhouses on Block 84.

The decision does not change the number of homes, heights or density already approved. It sets out ownership and maintenance of private roads, sidewalks, landscaping, visitor parking, utilities and other shared areas, which will be managed by a condominium corporation.

For Colaneri, the discussion raised questions about

consultation with the Mississaugas of the Credit First Nation.

"I was disappointed it moved forward like it did," he said.

In a March 16 response to the town, the First Nation said it had not been involved in Stage 2 archaeological fieldwork and could not verify the accuracy or completeness of the results.

It also said the project should not receive approval or proceed with ground-altering work until its concerns were satisfactorily addressed.

At the Sept. 15 meeting, planning director Aimee Alderman said the First Nation had "since reviewed that assessment — and don't have any concerns with the content of it."

"The Mississaugas of the Credit First Nation will continue to be consulted," she added.

Colaneri questioned whether the town had received written confirmation that those concerns were resolved.

"Has (the First Nation) confirmed, in writing, that its concerns are satisfactorily addressed? Do they

know that approvals and ground-altering activities have happened since their letter?" he asked.

The town told The Lake Report the First Nation later acknowledged there was limited opportunity to address its concern once the fieldwork was complete.

It said the First Nation did not expressly withdraw its earlier comments or confirm the development could proceed, but also did not identify further archaeological work or other steps required before the Block 84 application moved forward.

The First Nation told The Lake Report it has no further comments on the Block 84 application.

It said the most meaningful way to address its concerns would be earlier consultation on future development applications and opportunities to participate in and review archaeological assessments before approvals are issued.

The town said it supports earlier engagement and will continue consulting the First Nation as Modero Estates advances. Council adopted both items Sept. 22.

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NOTL gets \$10K of \$5M phragmites relief

Paige Seburn
Local Journalism Initiative
The Lake Report

A breakdown of how much Niagara-on-the-Lake will receive from the \$83,000 of provincial funding meant to aid the fight against invasive phragmites has been shared: \$10,000.

The Town of NOTL's share is part of funding allocated to Niagara partners through Ontario's \$5-million effort to combat the reeds, announced by Natural Resources Minister Mike Harris at Niagara College's NOTL campus on Sept. 23.

The municipality will use the \$10,000 to manage the



After much fanfare around a \$5 million investment from the province to fight invasive phragmites, Niagara-on-the-Lake will see \$10,000 of the total figure. DAVE VAN DE LAAR

invasive plant species along roadsides and drainage ditches, a new breakdown of provincial funding shows.

Niagara College will receive \$15,000 for work at its NOTL and Welland

campuses. Michael Wales, speaking for college president Sean Kennedy, said most of the work and funding supports the NOTL campus, but shared materials and resources make a precise campus-by-campus

dollar breakdown difficult.

Niagara Region will receive \$23,500 to map phragmites along regional roads and ditches, while Niagara Falls will receive \$19,000 for roadside and stormwater pond projects.

The Niagara Peninsula Conservation Authority is listed for \$15,500 for mapping and management at five conservation areas and a Bruce Trail Conservancy property.

Authority spokesperson Erika Navarro confirmed work to manage phragmites at Woodend Conservation Area in NOTL is now underway.

paigeseburn@niagaranow.com

Niagara mayors push back on province's proposed regional government changes

Continued from Front Page

Zalepa briefly addressed the letter during Niagara-on-the-Lake council's Sept. 22 meeting.

The Ford government plans to introduce "strong chair" powers for Niagara Region, giving the chair — who will be appointed by the Ontario premier — the ability to propose budgets, veto bylaws that conflict with provincial priorities, direct staff and hire or fire key senior bureaucrats.

The changes are part of a broader restructuring of regional government that will also eliminate Niagara's 19 elected regional representatives, reducing regional council to 12 mayors and the chair, from 32 members.

The new structure takes effect when regional council holds its first meeting in November, following the Oct. 26 municipal election.

In their letter, the eight mayors say that if strong chair powers are enacted, they want limitations "to ensure that Niagara continues to function democratically and that all municipalities can prosper."

The mayors propose limiting the chair's executive powers to four areas: decisions on the annual budget; hiring and firing senior staff; appointments to regional committees and



Part of the letter signed by Zalepa and seven other mayors asks the province to limit the regional chair's power to ensure Niagara continues to function democratically.

subcommittees; and voting only in the event of a tie.

Outside those areas, the chair would not have additional powers.

The mayors also object to the province's proposed weighted voting system. While the province has not confirmed how the system would work, the idea of adjusting each municipality's voting power based on population has been floated.

Under such a system, Niagara Falls, St. Catharines and Welland would have the greatest voting power at regional council, potentially reducing the influence of smaller municipalities such as Niagara-on-the-Lake.

Instead, the mayors recommend an alternative: the "double majority" model.

Under the proposed system, important measures

would require the support of at least half of Niagara's municipalities, representing at least half of the region's population.

"The elegance of this model considers that urban centres would have the population but not adequate community support, while smaller centres would have the community support but not enough overall population," the letter states. "This would compel both groups to continue to work together on all issues."

For what the mayors describe as "critical, major financial or legacy-type decisions," the double-majority system would apply. On other matters, each city and town would have one vote.

At the Sept. 22 council meeting, Zalepa said the letter came out of discussions

he had with the seven other mayors who signed it.

Coun. Sandra O'Connor, who brought the letter forward for discussion, said she was disappointed council had not been consulted on its contents.

She pointed to a sentence in the letter stating that the eight mayors "acknowledge that a strong chair may be helpful in the efficient delivery of regional services."

"I just don't see how efficiency can trump democracy by an appointed chair," she said.

Coun. Erwin Wiens asked Zalepa to confirm whether the eight mayors were the same coalition that formed to oppose the potential amalgamation of Niagara's municipalities into a single city after former regional chair Bob Gale raised the issue in February.

"They're a significant reason why we're still a municipality, I'll say that," Zalepa said.

Wiens then returned to the issue of democracy raised by O'Connor, saying it could be debated. However, he said the issue would become irrelevant if NOTL ceases to exist as an independent municipality.

"If we're the City of Niagara and not Niagara-on-the-Lake, then all points are moot."

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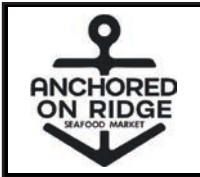




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Council backs heritage committee’s **Secord House** plan

Paige Seburn
Local Journalism Initiative
The Lake Report

The stone house at the end of Paxton Lane was one of a few to survive the fires set by American forces that destroyed much of St. Davids during the War of 1812. Now, the dilapidated house is getting a second chance, along with a few new additions to the property.

Niagara-on-the-Lake council greenlit the heritage committee’s recommendation last week to restore the historic David Secord House to its former glory, while also approving plans to build the three modern additions proposed for the property.

This approval came despite a warning from town staff that one of those additions could make the original building harder to see.

Town staff had recommended a different plan for the 226-year-old home,



A rendering shows the proposed restoration and additions to the David Secord house at 46 Paxton Lane. SOURCED

located at 46 Paxton Lane: approve the restoration and the south and west additions, but scale back the north addition before approving it, warning its size could diminish the house’s prominence when approached from Paxton Lane.

The plan would rebuild the damaged stone walls using original stone where possible, then add a bedroom wing to the south, a sunroom facing Four Mile Creek to the west and a garage with living space

above and below it to the north. Glass connections would link the new sections to the historic house.

The project to restore and make additions to the house is being spearheaded by Hummel Properties Inc. Its owner, Rainer Hummel, introduced the proposal to the town a year ago.

Workers have been taking apart damaged sections of the stone walls under an emergency heritage permit issued by planning director Aimee Alderman, after the project’s masonry contrac-

tor found loose stonework and burned timber embedded in them.

The Lake Report asked the town whether staff or an independent specialist also inspected the walls, who will check which original stones can be reused, and when and under what authority Alderman issued the permit. The town had not responded by publication time.

Coun. Tim Balasiuk, who sits on the heritage committee, said members supported the design while calling for period-appropriate windows in the restored house “so that the heritage attributes of the building would reflect the era of the home.”

The committee’s main concern, he said, was “the heritage attributes of the actual home, not necessarily the additions.” He described its approach as “giving one to get the other, trying to work with the applicant.”

Council candidate Nicholas Colaneri, who has

repeatedly spoken at town meetings about development at 46 Paxton Ln., urged council to restore the house but reject all three additions.

When asked afterward what residents would lose if the plan goes ahead, Colaneri said, “They lose our history. They lose the Secord House. They lose future protections for other historic buildings.”

He said the house could be made into a comfortable home within its original footprint: “I would have approved the real restoration of the house,” he said. “Zero additions.”

Colaneri also questioned why council considered the additions without a new heritage impact assessment, saying the 2020 assessment staff reviewed predates the proposed additions.

At the meeting, Coun. Sandra O’Connor asked staff: “Is there a heritage impact study that is still relevant for this?”

Alderman said staff

considered the earlier assessment alongside the applicant’s new plans and supporting documents, including a letter from August describing the additions and arguing they would preserve the house’s historic character.

O’Connor moved to set aside the heritage committee’s recommendation in favour of staff’s narrower plan. Coun. Gary Burroughs seconded her motion, but it failed. Council then approved the committee’s recommendation.

Coun. Erwin Wiens called the outcome “a huge victory for all the people involved,” saying it would restore the house and make it usable.

The David Secord House was built in 1799, according to the NOTL Museum. David Secord, who owned the property and lived in it until his death in 1844, was a military officer, merchant and politician in Upper Canada.

paigeseburn@niagaranow.com

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Explainer: Advance voting starts Oct. 5

Staff

The Lake Report

For those who’ve already made up their minds on who they want to represent Niagara-on-the-Lake in municipal government and at the school boards for the next four years, you’ll have a chance to cast your ballot early.

Advance voting in this year’s election opens next week, with internet voting available starting Monday, Oct. 5 at 10 a.m. and an in-person advance poll opening on Wednesday, Oct. 7.

Those interested in voting ahead of the official election day, Monday, Oct. 26, can head down to council chambers at NOTL Town Hall, 1593 Four Mile Creek Rd. in Virgil, where

an advance polling station will be open from 10 a.m. to 8 p.m.

This will be followed by a second opportunity for in-person voting the following week, on Saturday, Oct. 17. Another advance polling station will open from 10 a.m. to 6 p.m. at the Simpson Room in the NOTL Community Centre, at 14 Anderson Ln.

Meanwhile, online voting will remain open from Oct. 5 to the eve of election day, Oct. 25, closing at 8 p.m. that day.

Those who want to vote online will need the following: their voter identification letter; the voting information provided on their letter; a computer, tablet or mobile device; and, internet connection.

The Town of NOTL says voter identification letters are expected to arrive by mail starting the last week of September.

To vote online, voters will need to have their voter identification letter ready, visit the official internet advance voting website identified on the letter, follow the instructions provided to access the online voting system and follow on-screen instructions to complete and cast your ballot.

To watch a step-by-step guide to voting online from the Town of NOTL, visit notl.com/elections#internetvoting.

Anyone who didn’t receive a voter identification letter, who lost their letter or who needs to update

their voter information can contact the town for assistance at 905-468-3266 or clerks@notl.com.

Anyone who misses the window to take part in advance voting (or who needs more time to decide who they’re going to elect), election day will see five polling stations set up across town, in all five settlements areas, all open from 10 a.m. to 8 p.m.

The polling stations will be at the following locations: the NOTL Community Centre gymnasium (14 Anderson Ln.), the Holiday Inn’s Inspire Room (524 York Rd.), Crossroads Public School (1350 Niagara Stone Rd.), St. Davids Public School (1344 York Rd.) and the Laura Secord House (29 Queenston St.).



From left, candidates Sandra O'Connor (incumbent), Maria Mavridis (incumbent), Karen Taylor-Jones, Andrew Niven (incumbent), Rick Mills and Tim Balasiuk sit down to a debate hosted by the NOTL Residents' Association. PAIGE SEBURN

Floods, official plan among debate topics

Continued from Front Page

different approach. She said each application must be judged on its own merits, taking the official plan and provincial policies into account.

“I don’t have a straightforward answer. Every application is different,” she said.

Taylor-Jones said her disagreement with changes to the plan was a major reason she is running.

“I thought an official plan was official,” she said.

Rick Mills called for minimal exceptions, while Tim Balasiuk said he expects developers to follow the plan but council must assess each application individually on their own merits.

What happens after the floods?

The summer’s flooding made the question of infrastructure personal for Balasiuk. He said his basement took on four feet of water twice in five days.

His first priority would be to find out whether existing

drains and storm sewers are working properly and fix what is broken before spending money to upgrade the stormwater management system.

Niven said the town has been “somewhat reactive” and should make long-term flood projects a budget priority. Taylor-Jones also called for prevention, pointing to irrigation ditches she had seen filled with bulrushes.

O'Connor said council needs a closer look at stormwater capacity in new developments. She said those details are often dealt with at the site-plan stage, when plans do not come back to council for review.

Mavridis said the town has begun investing in infrastructure but is still catching up on work left undone. “Unfortunately, we are being reactive because there’s items that weren’t done previously,” she said.

Would they back strong mayor powers?

Candidates were asked whether they would join a lord mayor in using strong-mayor powers to override a council majority.

Niven, O'Connor and Mavridis said they oppose the powers. Mills said he does not support them either, though he would not commit a flat yes or no on whether he would ever vote to use them.

Balasiuk argued that a strong council could keep the powers in check. He also pointed to the budget process as a case in which they had been useful, saying the powers helped the town approve its budget sooner.

O'Connor disputed that explanation. She credited the town’s new chief administrative officer with bringing forward a more workable budget.

The candidates found common ground on a separate question about accountability: all six supported recording council votes so residents can see how each member voted. Several said the town should resume

using its electronic voting system.

Tourism — and a parking proposal

Balasiuk called for a cap on short-term rentals, suggesting a “one-in, one-out” system when a licence ends. Niven proposed looking at limits by neighbourhood, including fewer unhosted rentals in Old Town and Chautauqua.

Niven also said he was disappointed that none of the tourism strategy’s 22 action items had been completed. O'Connor said she wants some municipal accommodation tax revenue directed toward infrastructure affected by visitors.

O'Connor returned to the cost of tourism in her closing statement, offering a proposal she said she had missed during the budget question: expand paid parking in downtown Old Town, raise the rates significantly and give residents free passes.

The crowd applauded.

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School board candidates share aims and visions

Staff
The Lake Report

Alongside the dozens of Niagara residents who are running to become mayor or one of the councillors of their municipality, some are running, or re-running, for a role as one of a handful of trustees for the District School Board of Niagara and Niagara Catholic District School Board. Eleven trustees will be elected to District School Board of Niagara, while eight will be elected to the Catholic school board.

We asked the nominees what their top three priorities would be as a school board trustee, why they decided to run and what they would like to change or fix at the school board level.

We also asked for their perspectives on the ramifications of the Ontario government's Bill 101, which passed in May this year and gives the province more oversight of school boards, including what those changes mean for local students and families and how locally elected trustees can still make a meaningful difference.

Here's what they had to say.

Candidates for District School Board of Niagara:

Mike Brousseau

What would your top three priorities be as school board trustee?

Transparency, so that that families, students, and community can participate and hold the board accountable.

Fighting hate, so our students can learn and grow in a safe and inclusive space.

Supporting S.T.E.A.M. (science, technology, engineering, the arts and math) to prepare young people to experiment, build and explore in an uncertain world including support for hands-on learning, apprenticeships and work-integrated learning.

What made you choose to run for trustee?

A lack of transparent processes and confusing systems for families were my primary motivations to run. The DSBN's impact on our community is truly massive



Clockwise from top left: Mike Brousseau, Jennifer Ajandi, Larry Huibers, Natalia Benoit and Kate Baggott. Brousseau, Ajandi and Baggott are running in the District School Board of Niagara, while Huibers and Benoit are running in the Niagara Catholic District School Board.

as the DSBN is Niagara's largest employer, holds extensive property and has a larger annual budget than most cities in Niagara.

If the communities the DSBN serves don't understand what it does or how it works, then it's much harder to keep such a large system accountable. I also firmly believe that an involved and connected school community makes our whole system better for everyone (students, facilities, and community members).

What would you like to change or fix at the school board level?

I want to see more ways for families and community members to get involved at every level of the school board. Our students will be making decisions about our communities and our country long after we're gone so it's in everyone's best interest to support them every way we can.

I'm also thrilled to see the DSBN adding hands on teaching facilities to additional schools in 2026 and 2027, such as teaching kitchens, and will push to continue these investments.

What do changes imposed by Bill 101 mean for students and families, and how can locally elected trustees still make a meaningful difference?

Bill 101 gives the Minister of Education the

power to do a wide range of undemocratic things, like the unilateral hiring and firing of staff, appointing unqualified supervisors to run our schools and removing publicly elected trustees from office. It also removes locally elected trustees ability to approve the DSBN annual budget which limits local control of school board priorities and erodes our ability to deliver innovative built-in-Niagara solutions.

The minster has said this is about oversight, but it's really about control and weakening local governance. Regardless, these changes can't stop locally elected trustees from fighting to ensure the needs of students and families are met with our schools.

Jennifer Ajandi

What would your top three priorities be as school board trustee?

First, I want to know what your priorities are so that I can best represent you. However, based on my experience as a parent, educator and former school board trustee, right now I envision the following as my top priorities: safe and caring schools; academic excellence, inclusive education and mental wellness; and fiscal responsibility and system growth.

What made you choose to run for trustee?

I think this is one of the

most important times to put my name forward and to commit to representing the needs of Niagara-on-the-Lake and St. Catharines. I grew up in St. Catharines where I currently live and went to high school at Niagara District Secondary School in Niagara-on-the-Lake. I am running because I am deeply dedicated to giving back to the community I am a part of. Securing Niagara District Secondary School once more is also my priority.

What do changes imposed by Bill 101 mean for students and families, and how can locally elected trustees still make a meaningful difference?

There are many elements to Bill 101 that can make it difficult for community members to have important local representation on issues that affect them. There are changes now that we have to deal with. It tries to centralize power and decision-making into the hands of a few, as opposed to those who are elected by their communities for their passion for education and learning.

However, trustees still play a vital role in supporting students and families in the school system and now more than ever, as advocates to help navigate complex systems and structures that are set up to block effective and reciprocal communication.

Trustees matter because local voices matter. Resources must be provided to every child so that they can feel a sense of belonging and live up to their full potential.

No matter who the government is or who the board members are, I will continue to work collegially and collaboratively to represent your interests and support families and community members during my term.

Lauren Bubnic

What would your top three priorities be as school board trustee?

A. Supporting and raising awareness around sustainability, equity, and health and safety initiatives.

B. Helping parents navigate the system and connect with the right resources.

C. Be the person who actually answers. Rebuilding relationships with the parent community to assure them their cases will not go unheard.

What made you choose to run for trustee?

I'm a mom with three children actively in the school system and I believe that people like me should be represented at the decision makers table. I also feel that there needs to be more people questioning the status quo and make sure that the public meeting is a tool, not a formality.

What would you like to change or fix at the school board level?

With the school climate survey no longer required, the board should still do it voluntarily for data around bullying for example. Otherwise, it might be difficult to know which schools are struggling with this and we won't be able to help and the principal can continue to sweep it under the rug. Secondly, if we are supposed to be "putting student achievement first," the students furthest behind should be getting more, not the same as this just hurts all students in the classroom and affects their learning.

What do changes imposed by Bill 101 mean for students and families, and how can locally elected trustees still make a meaningful difference?

Although Bill 101 has reduced the scope of the role, we as trustees are still the voice of the parents, and any issues that arise, whether it is special education, accommodations, bullying, social media, etc. One of the few real powers we have left is that we are the ones to bring these concerns to meetings to be on public record and demand answers from staff.

As the voice of the parents, I welcome Bill 101, as it will allow us to focus on more important issues rather than on the day-to-day administrative tasks. I want parents to feel they have somewhere to go to make sure their concerns aren't ignored.

Kate Baggott

What would your top three priorities be as school board trustee?

Promoting community awareness, engagement and knowledge sharing.

Community information, involvement and consultation continues to have pain points. To date, we have addressed boundary change issues on a case by case basis, and individual parents reach out, often with a limited understanding of current conditions. Keeping entire communities informed of issues, provincial dictates and limited options given the NOTL strategic plan, current realities, and unplanned population/demographic changes remains

Continued on Page 7



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Councillor questions what’s ‘complete’ in town strategic plan

Paige Seburn
Local Journalism Initiative
The Lake Report

Niagara-on-the-Lake says more than 80 per cent of its strategic plan is complete or on track as the council term winds down, but one councillor questioned whether some of the work labelled finished is really done.

Chief administrative officer Nick Ruller delivered his end-of-term report to council Sept. 22, reviewing the town’s progress over the 2022-26 term and his first 14 months in the role.

As of the end of June, 80.3 per cent of the strategic plan’s 127 measures were complete or on target, including 73.2 per cent considered fully complete. Another 17.3 per cent were below target.

But Coun. Sandra O’Connor zeroed in on

some of the items the town had checked off.

“[The] concern for me is in the completed items you saved for the climate and environment. For me, I mean, I haven’t seen these completed,” she said. “If they’ve been done I’d love to see it.”

The town says 23 of 27 actions in its climate change adaptation plan are complete, while four longer-term initiatives remain underway.

Public works director Jordan Frost said some actions are considered complete because the town has put a new process in place, even though the work continues.

“It’s a continuous improvement process,” he said. “We have put the measures in place.”

O’Connor also questioned why the report listed implementation of rural road safety audit recommenda-



Coun. Sandra O’Connor, seen here at a debate in St. Davids, says the town hasn’t completed its goals on climate and the environment. FILE/PAIGE SEBURN

tions as complete when the town is instead going back to unfinished recommendations from its 2012 review.

“There’s some confusion here,” she said.

Ruller acknowledged the wording could have been clearer and said the town is reviewing what was completed in 2012 and working through the outstanding items.

Ruller’s report also highlighted the town’s new official plan, the Glendale secondary plan, the expansion of the Old Town heritage conservation district and a 10-year capital plan.

It also valued the town’s infrastructure at about \$1.07 billion and identified an estimated \$13.08-million annual funding gap.

“I’m proud of the progress we’ve made together while recognizing that considerable work remains,” Ruller told council.

Councillors also approved Ruller’s report card that night.

His performance evaluation, covering July 2025 to this past August, was presented in closed session and approved unanimously. Council deferred setting Ruller’s next objectives and development plan until the incoming 2026-30 council takes office.

paigeseburn@niagaranow.com

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St. Vincent de Paul parish celebrates 200 years of history

Continued from Front Page

parish's beginnings, Coun. Erwin Wiens, who attended Sunday's celebrated, noted it was formed at a time when Niagara-on-the-Lake, then the settlement of Niagara, was getting back on its feet after American forces burned down much of the community during the War of 1812.

"We would have been rebuilding," he said. He reflected on the experiences the parish must've had since its formation and today.

"What they would have seen over the last 200 years: the joys of baptisms and births and weddings and sorrows of funerals," he said.

MP Tony Baldinelli, also in attendance, spoke about the parish's interconnectedness with NOTL.

"This church has been much more than a building. It has been a spiritual home and a gathering place for generations of families and neighbors," he said.



Left: Grade 12 Holy Cross students Agnes Najjuuko and Neha Biju helped serve cookies and lemonade during the celebration. Right: Bishop Gerard Paul Bergie greets parishioners after the celebratory mass. JULIA SACCO



"We welcome our visitors. But we also form ourselves into a faith community. And we want to do better at it," he said.

As the church looks beyond its 200th anniversary, Rowe said one of its challenges will be maintaining a living faith community in the Old Town while reaching out to other communities.

"That faith will never disappear as long as the person of Jesus motivates people," he said.

For a parish that has endured for two centuries, Sunday's celebration offered an opportunity not only to look back but also to consider what will carry it forward.

Rowe said the example of the parish's namesake, a French Catholic priest who dedicated himself to serving the poor, continues to motivate people today.

"He lived a Jesus-like life," he said. "People seem very motivated by that."

juliasacco@niagaranow.com

"In many ways, the story of this parish is woven into the very story and fabric of Niagara-on-the-Lake itself."

Rev. Peter Rowe joined the parish in 2021, and serving the community has personal significance for him.

"Who would have dreamt, when I was coming down here to visit my cousins' house, that I would eventually be a parish priest here?" he said.

"I didn't plan that. I'm grateful every day for it." While NOTL is known

for its historic character and small-town charm, Rowe said St. Vincent de Paul remains an active parish with the same needs and expectations found in larger communities.

"We're not just a vacation land here," he said. "It's got

its uniqueness about it. But they all like the community aspect."

Rowe said hospitality is an important part of St. Vincent de Paul's identity, both in welcoming visitors and strengthening its own congregation.



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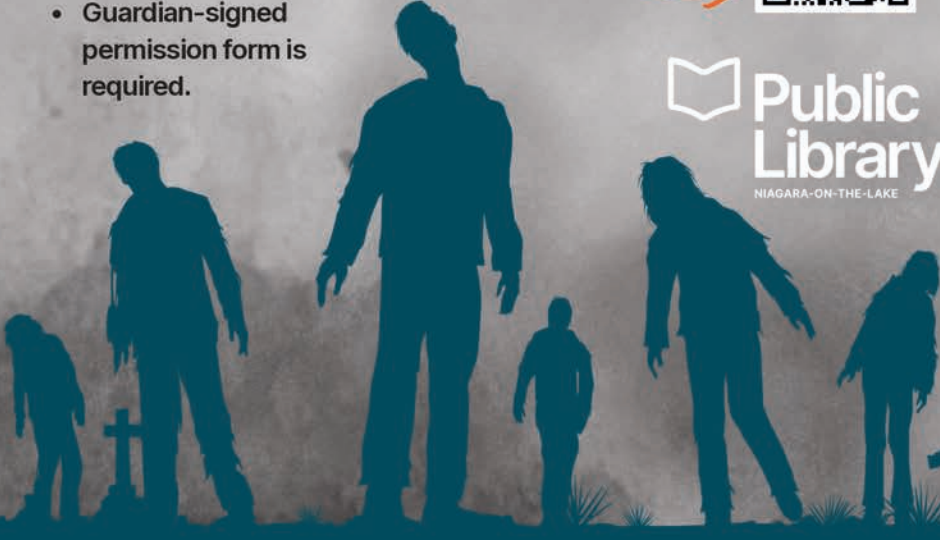
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Dressed in period uniforms, with Fort Mississauga in the background, Dan Laroche and Peter Mitchell from Fort George watch as Marie Ellison tees off on the eighth hole. DAVE VAN DE LAAR

Elbows up: Patriotic golfers celebrate **Canadiana**

Julia Sacco
The Lake Report

When the Niagara-on-the-Lake Golf Club celebrated its 151st year, it was elbows up as golfers teed it up for Canada.

The club hosted a Canadian Icons golf tournament Sept. 16, celebrating the nation's history and culture across nine themed holes.

Longtime club member Martha Cruikshank helped organize the event after a positive response to the historic club's 150th anniversary celebration last year.

In the era of Trump nastiness and trade wars, "It was just time to be Canadian," Cruikshank told The Lake Report.

Volunteers were assigned a hole along the golf course, with each themed around Canadian patriotism.

Dressed as the Blues Brothers, Larry Mantle and

Paul Jacot manned a music trivia station at the first tee.

Their trivia game featured a long list of Canadian artists, from Joni Mitchell to Justin Bieber, for a game of name that tune.

"I even had to add some songs I'm not a big fan of," Mantle told The Lake Report. "Like Shawn Mendes."

Don Cruikshank and Ginny Green helped out at the seventh hole, which celebrated Canadians in space.

Golfers were greeted with David Bowie's "Space Oddity" and posters of 11 space travellers.

Cruikshank, an engineer who had an interest in space from a young age, had fun with the creative decor.

"I grew up in the age of astronauts actually going to space," he said.

Harry Huizer manned #8, an homage to Canadian war veterans from the War of 1812.

The hole, located next to Fort Mississauga, was an ideal location, Huizer said.

"It fit in so that we could honour the veterans," he said.

Re-enactors were on hand in full uniform with muskets that would fire as each new group teed off.

At the ninth, golfers had the chance to use a 100-year-old hickory golf club.

Lorne Emery, director of the Golf Historical Society of Canada, has played around 700 rounds with the old clubs since 2018.

"People are absolutely surprised," he said. "Everyone thinks that old clubs are impossible to hit with. They're not."

He said the meticulous nature of the hickory clubs encourages a more precise golf swing. "They demand a bit more attention."

The second hole had

a cottage theme, great Canadian golfers were celebrated on #3, Frederick Banting on #4, Canadian comedians at the fifth and hockey icons at the sixth.

When all was said and done, winners were named and prizes were handed out.

Team Cannon Fodder, consisting of Marie and Bill Ellison and Greg and Karen Berti, finished in first place.

The Defenders, with Don and Sharon Allen and Debb Hodgkinson, was second, followed by Never 51, consisting of Tracey Peters, Carroll Baker, Mandy Renahan and Joe Oswald.

Organizers said a similar celebration of Canadiana likely will return next year.

In other golf action, the NOTL club won back the prized bell trophy in its two-day cross-border tourney with the Niagara Frontier Golf Club in Youngstown, N.Y.

NOTL's 14-member team consisted of Darren Smith, A.J. Harlond, Patrick Craig, Doug Hernder, Stephen Warboys, Morgan Jones, Dan Plomish, Mark Harris, Evan McCaughey, Nick Elia, Michael Sanders, Jared Mines, Tim Arnott and Kevin Jackson.

Down 12 points to 9 after one day of match play at Frontier, the NOTL team roared back with a big win at home to take the trophy 21.5 points to 20.5.

Points were allocated with one each for the front and back nine and one for the overall result in the best ball net scoring format.

Other results: Claire Forbes shot 43 on Monday to lead the final round of the business women's league.

Kim Breakspere had the longest drive on #1, Gayle Skene was closest to the

150 on #2 and Jill Davies sank the longest putt on #7.

Chris Yakamishen was closest to the pin on #4 and Nikki Jenkins was closest in two on #9.

In last Thursday men's league, Ricky Watson and Patrick Craig led all players with 1-over 37s. Charlie Rate and Stephen Fraser were net winners with 31.

Other winners: Jordan Wise (longest putt on #2), James Grigjanis-Meusel (longest drive on #8), while Brendan Meisener (#4) and Marty Nixon (#9) won closest to the pin prizes.

Gross skins worth \$20 each for birdies went to Watson (#5 and #7), Meisener (#3), Craig (#6) and Stuart Young (#9). Net skins of \$60 each were won by Michael Saunders (#1), Jim Garrett (#3) and Young (#9).

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A MESSAGE FROM THE NIAGARA FOUNDATION

Do we continue trading a 20-year vision for 20-minute decisions?

The 2022-2026 Council approved 72 Zoning By-Law and 21 Official Plan amendments.

That's a **93%** approval rate. **Why?**

The Official Plan (OP) sets out a framework to protect Niagara-on-the-Lake's heritage, streetscapes, and unique character.

Shouldn't the next Council...

- 1** Adhere to the OP and respect the planning framework already in place?
- 2** Move quickly on secondary plans that clearly define appropriate development in distinctive areas?
- 3** Instruct staff to regard the OP as the *intended* planning outcome?

Status Quo or Change?

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Photographer captures beauty of **Niagara Escarpment** in new book

Zahraa Hmood
The Lake Report

For photographer and author Mark Zelinski, the Niagara Escarpment has been a source of inspiration since childhood.

He grew up in the Greater Toronto Area, but said some of his earliest memories are of exploring waterfalls along the Escarpment and the Niagara Gorge in the late 1950s.

“The escarpment has always been a powerful influence, an ever-present personality, like a spine that connects life force,” he told The Lake Report in an email.

He will bring the story of that lifelong connection to the Niagara-on-the-Lake Museum on Friday, Oct. 2, for the launch of his latest book, “Niagara Escarpment: Land Between Waters.”

The event runs from 3 to 5 p.m. and will feature Zelinski along with a number of speakers whose work and expertise connect to the escarpment and Niagara region.

The book contains 320 pages and 600 photographs documenting the escarp-

ment’s landscape, natural life, history and communities.

He returned his attention to the region in 2012, after completing a 38-year journey across more than 80 countries as part of his “Books That Heal” initiative.

Through the initiative, Zelinski donated 9,000 photography books to 140 charities around the world.

The Niagara Escarpment provided him with inspiration in his creative endeavours before he became a photographer: his early work as a painter and filmmaker was influenced by the region’s trees, cliffs, potholes and waterfalls, he said.

His new book is a continuation of the inspiration the land provides him.

“The 320 pages and 600 photographs in this book present the enormous abundance of flora and fauna to be found on the escarpment, including one of the newest species that call it home: humans,” he said.

Zelinski also explores the Niagara Peninsula’s distinctive landscape and history.

He points to the escarp-



Mark Zelinski says some of his earliest memories are of exploring waterfalls along the Niagara Escarpment and the Niagara Gorge. The landscape and its history have been a source of inspiration in most of his creative endeavours. He’ll be discussing his latest photo book, “Niagara Escarpment: Land Between Waters,” at the NOTL Museum on Friday. SUPPLIED

ment’s microclimate, which allows tender fruit to be grown at a northern latitude, as well as the region’s Indigenous and colonial history, including the Treaties

of Niagara, the War of 1812 and more.

The museum talk will feature several guest speakers, including Chief Margaret Sault of the

Mississaugas of the Credit First Nation; Tim Johnson, president of the Niagara Academy for Indigenous Relations; Dr. Liette Vasseur, UNESCO chair on

Community Sustainability; and Dr. David Galbraith, director of science at the Royal Botanical Gardens Canada.

Other speakers will include Lord Mayor Gary Zalepa, Perry Hartwick, chair of Niagara Geopark, Gord Arbeau, vice-president of Niagara College, and Adam Christie of the Niagara Peninsula Conservation Authority.

“I’m honoured that the esteemed authors of five chapters of the book will be speaking at the NOTL Museum launch presentation,” Zelinski said. “Each one brings their experience, knowledge and perspective to the book and to this presentation.”

Those interested in attending are encouraged to register at notlmuseum.ca/whats-on/view/id/1520.

The book launch is one of several special events happening at the museum at the start of October for Ontario Culture Days. As part of the provincewide celebration of various cultural institutions, the museum is offering free admission and free historical walking tours from Oct. 2-4.

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- Improve transparency in decision-making
- Protect heritage and agricultural
- Prioritize climate resilience
- Invest in additional services for seniors, youth and families
- Create policy that protects the character of each village
- Manage growth responsibly
- Protect residents’ quality of life

REGIONALLY

- Fight any new threat of amalgamation
- Champion affordable and seniors housing
- Advocate for an additional longterm care home
- Expand youth and seniors’ services as well as transit.
- Work to bring back urgent care

Veteran stage actors reflect on their unpredictable and ephemeral world

ANECDOTES & STORIES FROM THE THEATRE
★★★★
(out of five)

Shaw Artists' Village.
Penny-Lynn Cookson
Special to The Lake Report

Confess. Don't we all lean forward in expectation of a good bit of gossip or a delectable story about theatre in our town?

It was very clever to bring Anthony Chase, the theatre critic, historian and NPR host of "Theatre Talk" up from Buffalo, N.Y. to interview three veteran Shaw actors, Sharry Flett, Patrick Galligan and Sanjay Talwar.

The relaxed and effervescent Mr. Chase had the audience and actors immediately at ease with expected questions: How and why did they become actors? What was the road to the Shaw? How long have they been at the Shaw? What have been their experiences?

Result? Fun banter, stories of stage disasters, directors and actors fondly remembered or not so fondly remembered, the value of mentoring, curiosity and constant learning. In short, they shared a love and total commitment to what they are doing.

This is Sharry Flett's 34th season. After obtaining a music degree from McGill University, she aspired to opera, attended a theatre school in London, had a stint in New York, roles at Stratford and elsewhere, and found home at the Shaw. She discovered that music could lead to theatre and in Canada, theatre could lead her back to music.

She has gone from Tolstoy's "War and Peace" in 1988, to Ibsen and Chekhov among others and happily on to recent musical productions of "Funny Girl," "Anything Goes," "My Fair Lady" and as the charming songster Rat in "The Wind in the Willows."

Patrick Galligan received an offer to join the Shaw when he was 40. He self-describes as a "newbie" after 23 seasons. He began with Theatre Plus in Toronto appearing with Seana McKenna in "Saint Joan," then apprenticing at Stratford.

At the Shaw in 1993, Neil Munro's direction of "Saint Joan" brought a contemporary, rapid-fire pace and a radical idea of Bernard Shaw. Munro's belief in getting a dialogue going "so we have a sense of who we are" led to Galligan questioning his own faith and relationship with God.

His first performances in 2003 were in "Widowers' Houses" and "The Plough and the Stars." He is currently starring in "Sleuth" and "One for the Pot."

Sanjay Talwar's focus was on mathematics until he joined the high school drama club and worked backstage. It was the moment of being an understudy and feeling the power of being on stage that have led to performances elsewhere and 12 seasons at the Shaw.

This season he appears as an actor in "One for the Pot" and "Heartbreak House" and in previous seasons directed "Wait Until Dark" and "Prince Caspian."

The question of "What can go wrong?" brought much laughter. Sharry Flett related the 2006 "High Society" near-fiasco.

Patty Jamieson, playing the maid, had recently delivered a baby, who was present. Jenny Wright was very pregnant at nine months. The lead, Camilla Scott as Tracy Lord, lost her voice. She lip-synced on stage while Jenny Wright read Scott's lines and sang from the wings. The director, Jackie Maxwell, was left holding the baby backstage.

When the curtain fell, the entire group, including baby, appeared on stage to thunderous applause.

Patrick Galligan reminisced about being unable to



Actor Sanjay Talwar in "Heartbreak House." DAVID COOPER

remember his opening line as Sir Wilfred in "Witness for the Prosecution." He stood in awkward silence with Kristopher Bowman waiting for him to speak. He quickly said he had to go to the loo, dashed off stage to the wing where the stage manager holding the script would be. No one was there.

He saw the script and quickly rifled through it to get his line. Meanwhile, the sound of thundering hooves was audible from backstage as help raced from the opposite wing to Galligan. He got the line. The play resumed. "Nobody died."

Lesson? "Never assume you know the play."

Sanjay Talwar's first play at the Shaw was as an understudy in "Come Back Little Sheba." He had to go on. At intermission, he went to the dressing room. On the return for Act 2, Sharry Flett whispered, "You're in the wrong costume."

He flew back to the dressing room, started throwing off his clothes, checked the script and discovered he had been wearing the right costume. He raced back to the stage. Did Sharry make mischief or make a mistake? No disclosure.

All agreed on the importance of mentors. Sanjay Talwar said that after six years at Stratford, he appreciated the ensemble generosity of the veterans at the Shaw. He learned nothing is taken for granted. He applauded the giving of space, the direct mentorship he received, the importance of learning and the realization of how he could help others.

Sharry Flett, arriving in 1988, learned from older actresses and Christopher Newton, how to find humanity in the characters. She continues to value the mutual mentoring of actors and the opportunity to

"observe young actors to see where the world is now."

"How they approach roles is different and we learn from them. Endless curiosity is important."

For Patrick Galligan, he has learned valuable lessons. For example, have no expectation that you will be back. Anticipating roles in the next season is a recipe for disappointment. Learn from the company. Tony van Bridge suggested, "Just try it this way." Douglas Campbell quietly told him, "Self-pity isn't a very good choice, dear boy."

He watched Jim Mezon take a villainous role and peel back layers to reveal the rich complexity of a conflicted character. To receive non-threatening welcomes from the company members, particularly Sharry Flett, was encouraging. Learning to fight with hacky sack games as well as learning the lines of others remains bonding.

All spoke of the importance of the audience referring to the intimacy and trust that is there during the performance. It's live theatre. It will never be the same again. There is no archive. There is joy at the beginning of the season and at the end, you go home. They did not speak of hobbies. Their days remain focused on their work, on roles, on teaching, on sharing their knowledge.

We were not in a theatre witnessing actors. We were in a space witnessing life. The audience, the host, the actors, the writer were all part of a unique event, never to be repeated, with a shared elation and insights that will be remembered.

Penny-Lynn Cookson is an arts and culture historian, writer and lecturer living in Niagara-on-the-Lake.



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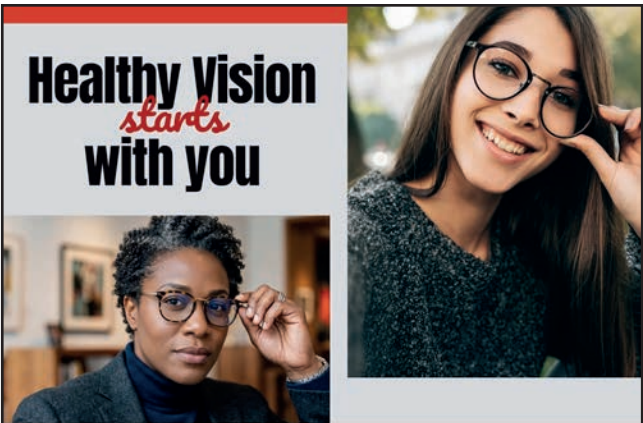


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Pumphouse exhibit focused on nature

Staff
The Lake Report

A solo exhibition exploring the natural world through painting opens Thursday at the Niagara Pumphouse Arts Centre. “Contemplation in Nature,” featuring the work of artist Sherry Park, runs Oct. 1 to 25 in the Joyner Gallery at the Niagara Pumphouse.

The exhibition features paintings inspired by Park’s observations and experiences in nature. Primarily a figurative painter, Park has increasingly incorporated landscape into her work, describing the process of translating what she sees onto canvas as meditative. “I enjoy the process of painting, from observation to putting on canvas,” said Park in a media release. “It is calming and meditative.” Born in Korea and raised in the Toronto area, Park studied drawing and painting at the Ontario College of Art, now OCAD Univer-



One of Sherry Park’s creations that will be featured in this latest Niagara Pumphouse exhibition, “Mossy Forest #2” is part of Cape Breton series of oil paintings. SUPPLIED

sity. During her final year, she studied off-campus in Florence, Italy. Park is an elected member of the Society of Canadian Artists, the Ontario Society of Artists and the Colour and Form Society. Her work has been featured in solo, group and juried exhibitions in Canada and

internationally, and she has received numerous awards and honours. “Sherry’s paintings capture a sense of quiet reflection,” said Rima Boles, Pumphouse director. “The works invite viewers to consider their own connection to the world around them.” The public can meet Park

at an opening reception Sunday, Oct. 4, from 2 to 4 p.m., with remarks at 2:30 p.m. The reception will include refreshments and an opportunity to connect with the artist and members of the local arts community. The Niagara Pumphouse Arts Centre is at 247 Ricardo St.

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Truth and Reconciliation Day is ‘not the work of one day’

Julia Sacco
The Lake Report

At a monument, in classrooms and among the stories held by a local museum, Niagara-on-the-Lake marked the National Day for Truth and Reconciliation by making space to listen, learn and reflect. For those leading the work, the hope is for the impact of what they’re doing to extend beyond a single day.

For some, this involved getting out of their usual environments and into the community to places where that reflection and education could take centre stage.

Royal Oak Community School’s students were taken to the Landscape of Nations Monument in Queenston Heights Park on Wednesday, to learn about how Haudenosaunee (Six Nations) Confederacy and Indigenous allies participated in the War of 1812.

They fought alongside the British Army and Loyalists to help those defending Up-



Town staff gathered alongside representatives from MPP Wayne Gates’ office and the Niagara-on-the-Lake museum to honour Truth and Reconciliation. DAVE VAN DE LAAR

per Canada from a takeover by American forces, which significantly outnumbered them.

Julia Murray, head of Royal Oak, says the students are taken on this walk every year for Truth and Reconciliation Day, also known as Orange Shirt Day.

At the monument, the students and their teachers discussed Indigenous historical figures and treaties. Students also learn about protocols such as the wampum belt, which records laws, treaties and history through woven patterns of

white and purple beads. “Teaching about Indigenous perspectives, culture, ways of knowing and history is not the work of one day,” Murray said. “It is embedded in curriculum at every level, and in our approach to outdoor education and learning about our community in Niagara-on-the-Lake.”

At St. Michael Catholic School, students from kindergarten to Grade 8 took part in activities throughout the week, principal Emma Fera-Massi said. They included hands-on crafts, a

Unity Walk and lessons for older students on the meaning of Orange Shirt Day.

“Our goal is to ensure that students understand that Orange Shirt Day is more than wearing an orange shirt,” she said. “It is an opportunity to learn, remember, listen, and reflect on how we can contribute to a community where every person is treated with dignity, kindness and respect.”

The Niagara Catholic District School Board recognizes that reconciliation requires listening to and learning from Indigenous communities, Fera-Massi said in an email. The board integrates that work into its schools and sites throughout the year, she said.

Students across the District School Board of Niagara also take part in age-appropriate learning and reflection, said public relations manager Milica Petkovic. Schools receive resources and guidance to support learning grounded in Indigenous perspectives,

though activities vary by classroom.

Education didn’t stop in the classroom. The NOTL Museum remained open Sept. 30 as a place for people to learn about Indigenous history relevant to the local area, said executive director Amy Klassen.

“People don’t know, really, how deep those stories are here in our community,” she said.

The museum has partnered with the Niagara Academy of Indigenous Relations and took part in the Niagara Roundtable on Sept. 19, where Indigenous and non-Indigenous speakers discussed reconciliation, treaties and the role museums can play, Klassen said.

Having Indigenous representation on the museum’s board has also been important, she said, pointing to board member Tim Johnson and the perspective he brings.

At the town’s Truth and Reconciliation flag-raising, chief administrative officer Nick Ruller spoke about

listening, learning and recognizing Indigenous communities’ experiences, cultures and strengths.

Coun. Erwin Wiens said the town has included reconciliation efforts in its strategic plan. Council gave staff Sept. 30 off to reflect and build cultural awareness, he said.

After a reflective walk around Virgil Sports Park, Wiens said town staff are committed to continuing the work. The town aims to make sure everyone is included in decision-making and that all voices are heard, he said.

“It’s more of changing hearts and minds so that everybody is involved, everybody feels included, everybody’s voice is heard, so that we can move the country ahead, and the town ahead, and the region ahead,” he said.

“That’s going to be the ultimate goal. It’s taking what’s on the page and putting it into people’s hearts.”

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BKind Grateful #95: Give someone space to change their mind without saying, "I told you so."

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Contributed by Patty Garriock
"Life is a great big canvas,
and you should throw all the paint on it you can."
- Danny Kaye

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Puppy portraits

It's a stunning likeness, is it not? Michelle Januszewski drew this portrait of Molly Robinson's dog, Phoebe, a three-year-old Leonberger, on Saturday afternoon at the Niagara Pumphouse Arts Centre, as part of its dog-themed art event: "Art, Community and Canines." It was held as part of Ontario Culture Days, a celebration of cultural institutions across the province, which kicked off Sept. 18 and runs until Oct. 4. DAVE VAN DE LAAR

Editorial

Don't just 'throw the bums out'

Kevin MacLean
Editor Emeritus

Niagara-on-the-Lake voters are one tough crowd. And, given the town's uneven electoral history, we're not sure the voters will ever be happy — or satisfied. For nearly 20 years now, when handed the opportunity to give the town's lord mayor a second consecutive term, the NOTL citizenry has instead chosen the "throw the bums out" strategy.

Once again this year, after the Oct. 26 election, we won't have an incumbent lording it over our little (but growing) town. And despite the fact we've continually decided to replace the incumbent with fresh blood (or at least a new lord mayor), the townsfolk appear thoroughly unhappy with their choices in short order.

Within a year or two, the peasants are revolting. A bit of history. Four years ago, in 2022, regional Coun. Gary Zalepa was the answer to all the development and other headaches people felt were plaguing NOTL.

So, it was out with Betty Disero, in a landslide, as Zalepa won by 3,724 votes to 2,586, earning almost 50 per cent of the ballots cast. Vaughn Goettler, whose baby blue "full-time lord mayor" signs have sprouted up all over town this year, was a distant third, with just over 1,200 votes.

Now, Zalepa is not on the ballot, though he's hoping to be appointed chair of Niagara Region.



From left, mayoral candidates Vaughn Goettler, Andrea Kaiser and Erwin Wiens. NOTL voters will decide on Oct. 26 which of these three will lead the town for the next four years. Goettler, a retired businessman and philanthropist. Kaiser is a wine industry veteran with a career in politics. She's currently a sitting regional councillor. Erwin Wiens is a retired police officer turned grape farmer with agricultural ties. He's a sitting councillor.



Way back in 2018, after one term as a councillor following a long career in Toronto politics, Disero was "the answer," defeating Pat Darte 4,169 votes to 2,743. But in 2014, Darte had been the man chosen to lead council, unseating Dave Eke 3,627 votes to 2,723. In 2010, Eke had beaten Darte 2,310 votes to 1,557, succeeding the town's last multi-term lord mayor, Gary Burroughs. Burroughs did the job from 2000 to 2010, then decided to run for the (now-defunct) position of regional councillor. He subsequently became regional chair, serving four years from 2010 to 2014.

Now over 80, Burroughs is again running for town council and won't be surprised if he tops the polls and becomes deputy lord mayor.

But since his long tenure in the top job, starting way back at the turn of this century, no one has been able to earn the voters' confidence for a second term as mayor.

Why is that?

Is there a problem with the candidates? Are the wrong sorts of folks offering themselves up for public service? Are the voters of NOTL simply impossible to satisfy? Or ...? Perhaps there are other reasons we keep tossing out the mayoral incumbent. Whatever the case, we urge everyone to learn more about each of those seeking to lead NOTL into the second quarter of this century. And dig beyond the rhetoric and promises — because given our electoral track record since 2010, every time we've bought what was being sold, buyer's remorse has set in pretty quickly. Besides Goettler, we have regional Coun. Andrea Kaiser on the ballot, along with Coun. Erwin Wiens, the deputy lord mayor this past term.

All three have upsides and downsides, and all three are greater than the sum of the headlines or rhetorical talking points that can dominate the discourse.

Between now and voting day, we'll have more to say about this election and the

candidates seeking your support. But, really, it is up to each individual to invest the time and energy and decide who might be the best choice to lead our town. Municipal politics is the most basic, grassroots level of governance yet, ironically, it is the one that in most communities attracts the lowest engagement and poorest voter turnout. NOTL is an outlier in that regard as our turnout is often double that of other municipalities. That's heartening. Now, let's get beyond the "throw the bums out" mentality and remember that, with the province unapologetically pushing all manner of development no matter what municipal leaders want, NOTL's powers are limited — despite the chatter you hear. That's not to suggest we throw in the towel but rather that we try to determine exactly who is the best person to shepherd us for the next four (or more) years. NOTL's future is worth it. kevin@niagaranow.com



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Opinion

Yankee invaders (no, not the tourists)



THE TURNER REPORT

Garth Turner
Columnist

The first time I fired a machine gun, the damn thing jerked me forward, burying the muzzle in the earth. Bullets flying. Scared the crap out of me.

I was a kid. A Royal Canadian Army Cadet. The gun was a Bren light machine weapon, left over from the Second World War. It used gas from exploding munitions to eject a spent cartridge and load another — and to pull an unexpected child soldier into the mud.

Lessons learned, in time I became a Cadet lieutenant-colonel, commanding 400 in a school where military training was compulsory. Then into the reserves, spending time as a summer pretend-commando defending the homeland from squirrels and raccoons with territorial ambitions.

Some memories came back as I heard Mark Carney say “an extreme tail risk” of Donald Trump’s aggression toward Canada was a military invasion. In fact, we heard our Canadian Armed Forces — modest as they may be — have modelled how to fight the most awesome military force the world has ever seen. Like our NOTL ancestors did when the Yanks last invaded.

It’s unthinkable for most of us that America would attack. Again. Especially now. Trump’s tanking in popularity. Far more Americans think kindly of Canada than they do of their own president. The midterm elections will probably spank the Republicans. People from Ohio and Michigan are apologetic on Queen Street. Maybe the worst of the orange guy is over.

But, then ... why would Carney mention this “tail



Fort Mississauga on our side. Fort Niagara on theirs. The PM just said a U.S. invasion is “an extreme tail risk.” But not zero. Could it happen again, as in 1812? GARTH TURNER

risk” to the New York Times gang days ago? Every word he speaks is measured and distilled. He just signalled to us, and the world, that the White House is delusional enough to have thought of assaulting its northern neighbour.

If it happened, would we be pooched?

Well, before Russia attacked Ukraine, it had a military force of 2.9 million active and reserve troops, hypersonic missiles and tactical nukes. The other side had a mere 200,000 soldiers. And yet, the Ruskies have been held at bay since February 2022.

Ditto in Iran. Since that war began six months ago, the U.S. has bombed 13,000 targets, spent almost \$40 billion and burned through a huge pile of gee-whiz munitions. The enemy has responded with glorified high-speed fishing boats, cheap drones and social media memes. America is clearly losing that war.

The point is that when big, dumb, strong powers attack small, nimble, adaptive ones, the outcome is far from certain. Might is not always right. Certainly not at a time when autonomous drones, asymmetrical warfare and digital weap-

ons are employed.

So how would Canada fight the guys across the river? And if it were to happen (which it won’t) what might you do to protect yourself and your assets?

Apparently we have a plan. Unable to compete on an open battlefield with a superior force, we’d take a page from the playbook of the ingenious Ukrainians and the decentralized Islamists.

Small, mobile, independent units would attack and harass invading forces. Our guys would be snipers, urban guerrillas and ambushers — not attempting direct confrontation. We would sabotage supply lines, attack command infrastructure, but be very careful not to hurt our new Gordie Howe International Bridge.

Already Canada is taking measures to protect itself, as Carney revealed. That means dumping reliance on the Musk Starlink satellite network. Walking back from the F-35 purchase. Getting subs from Germany. Satellite communications from South Korea. Fighter jets from Sweden.

And, of course, we’re working daily on new trade agreements, economic partnerships and global alli-

ances to lessen dependence on an untrustworthy and unreliable America. Like the EU thing.

It’s unthinkable. But, alas, they’re thinking about it.

And what would happen to our dollar, the stock market, your RRSP, your house valuation, your income, your pension or the economy if the Americans invaded?

Don’t go there. The risk of a complete loss of capital would be real. Moreover, an act of aggression by the U.S. against its closest trading partner and a NATO member would cause global chaos — economic and political.

In an extreme scenario, those who survive with their wealth intact would have gambled on moving it out of loonies, out of North America, and into physical assets, like precious metals, certain offshore equities or crypto — but all those could be equally compromised.

In short, there is no good outcome. That’s okay. Because it’s never happening. Even, ah, if our prime minister just said it out loud.

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

garth@garth.ca



This week’s riddle is “Jeopardy!” style
Category: ABOUT A BOY

Raised by wolves, a “man’s cub” named
Mowgli learns wisdom from wild animals in
this Rudyard Kipling story collection.

Last issue category: COUNTRY MUSIC

Clue: Dolly Parton sang this name, this name, this name, this naaaaaame, “I’m begging of you please don’t take my man.”

Answer: Who is Jolene?

Answered first by: Jane Morris

Also answered correctly (in order) by:
Margie Enns, Becky Creager, Jane Andersen, Jeff Lake, Esther VanGorder, Sue Rautenberg, Hugh Lundy, Susan Hamilton, Donna Taylor, Lynda Collet, Bob Wheatley, Campbellart, Sylvia Wiens, Emma Balsas, Nancy Rocca, Donna Pearce, Jim Dandy, Wade Durling, Susan Dewar, Claudia Grimwood, Margaret Garaughty, Marla Percy, Howard Jones, Ana Petrunic, Hedy Wiebe, Catherine Clarke, Katie Reimer, Sheila Meloche

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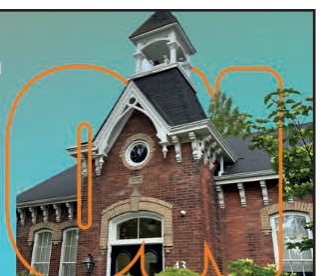
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Is keeping town facilities **off-limits** during elections right?



ARCHITEXT

Brian Marshall
Columnist

The fact that Niagara-on-the-Lake’s town council passed a bylaw back in March of this year to completely prohibit the use of municipally owned facilities in any election-related activities isn’t recent news. However, then as now, I remain somewhat at a loss to understand the rationale behind such a blanket prohibition.

At the time, this overtone was put forth as a requirement to comply with Section 88.18 of the Municipal Elections Act, which reads as follows: “Before May 1 in the year of a regular election, municipalities and local boards shall establish rules and procedures with respect to the use of municipal or board resources, as the case may be, during the election campaign period.”

Which, as far as this section goes, provides a

requirement that a municipality set the rules for any use of its “resources” six months in advance of the election.

Now, interpretation of the Act’s provisions and intent also underwrite criteria that collectively attempts to ensure that public infrastructure is never used to endorse, promote or oppose any specific candidate or political party thereby maintaining a completely non-partisan position in any democratic contest.

While it may admirable in intent, in practice, the provincial legislation down-loads the responsibility of defining the parameters and boundaries of any pursuant bylaw — and legal liability attached thereto — into the hands of municipal governance.

So, is it any surprise that several smaller Ontario municipalities, with limited budgets and much tighter staff constraints, might opt for a draconian “hard line in the sand” in their bylaws that denies access to any and all electoral activities?

After all, a hardline denial of all overtures is much easier to administrate with limited staff resources than one that requires adjudication.

As an aside, if the same logic was to be applied by direct extension, one must



With municipally owned facilities off-limits for use in this year’s election, the organizers of the mayoral candidate debate made use of Crossroads’ gymnasium instead. PAIGE SEBURN

question whether or not the livestreamed council meetings may not be a publicly funded infrastructure platform upon which the incumbent elected officials can advance their candidacy at the expense of their unelected opponents.

Should these council meetings — halting the business of the town — be suspended during the period leading up to the election or done in camera? Where is the line between public transparency and municipal non-partisanship to be drawn?

Moving on, we find a rubicon between the larger, richer municipalities like the Town of Oakville or the cities of Toronto and Vaughan, for example, which allow the use of

community-owned facilities for electoral undertakings, versus the smaller municipality hardliners such as Pelham, Haldimand County and Niagara-on-the-Lake.

There are pros and cons to every position, but perhaps there is a middle ground between the open-door municipalities and the closed doors of communities like Niagara-on-the-Lake.

Visit the two “smaller” municipalities of Norfolk County and the Township of Georgian Bay.

In the latter, their bylaw captures that while the township does not host debates, the clerk may authorize in writing the use of a municipal facility for an all-candidates event if all candidates are invited

and the facility is properly rented.

In Norfolk, town policy disallows specific candidate undertakings in municipally owned facilities but, debates may be held in those properties provided that standard rental procedures are followed and all eligible candidates or parties for an office are invited.

In my world, Norfolk County and the Township of Georgian Bay have crafted bylaws that reflect the correct balance between maintaining municipal non-partisanship in the electoral process while not impeding the residents’ democratic right to access the specifics of all electoral candidates platforms in an open forum conducted within a community owned property.

As mentioned off the top, NOTL opted for a complete ban and, as a result, the Niagara-on-the-Lake Residents Association was forced to look elsewhere for a facility large enough in town to host their candidate forums. The Crossroad school’s gymnasium was chosen and the association duly applied for the permits required to hold such events.

Initially however there was some talk by town administration that they would not issue said permits because town staff could not ensure the association would maintain neutrality in their treatment of all the candidates — despite the fact that NOTLRA as an organization had very carefully avoided endorsing any of the candidates.

Apparently, some wiser head in the town administration stepped in, made the decision to correct this egregious overreach by staff (they are not the keepers of the voters’ conscience) and the permits were issued.

But, the fact that the issue came up at all is demonstrative of what needs to change within the corridors of our town hall.

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



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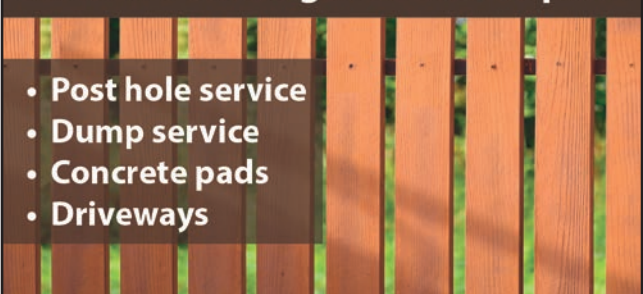
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ROSS'S RAMBLINGS

Ross Robinson
Columnist

A few fortunate friends of mine recently returned to Niagara-on-the-Lake after a four-day canoe trip in Algonquin Park. Everything had been great, except for a leaky tent one night that made for wet sleeping bags and a bad night's sleep. Or another night of fitful, uncomfortable sleep. And, being delayed for an afternoon while drying clothes on a rocky point on Burnt Island Lake. Thankfully, the sun and a breeze did the job. I learned many moons ago, "Canoe trips are great, until the weather goes south." Yes, it is quite a push to ramble about rain and water

here in Niagara, after what we have been through of late. But curiosity grabbed me, and I Googled "coureurs des bois." These legendary characters played an important role in the development of our great nation, exploring and trading and developing working relationships with our native peoples — even helping to start the Hudson's Bay Company, which went on to be Canada's oldest corporation, until officially closing last year. And I knew next to nothing about these mostly French Canadians who braved the most miserable weather elements as they travelled from Montreal to the interior of North America. Sometimes paddling and portaging along our own Niagara River as they passed the mighty Falls at Niagara. They had to be totally self-sufficient, carrying food, supplies and items to trade for beaver pelts. It seems the most active years for the coureurs des bois were during the second half of the 17th century. Shame on me, having ignored this important and fascinating part of our his-



François Mercier, a French Canadian traveler, in an engraving published in 1871, based on a photograph taken by William Notman. WIKIMEDIA

tory for so long. I cannot wait to learn more. Now seriously, may I respectfully challenge readers to take some time to learn about this unusual subject. The coureurs des bois had to be some of the toughest dudes in Canada. When it rained on them, it rained on them. Sometimes almost endlessly. Imagine being in a canoe with perhaps a dozen other paddlers, digging the paddle blades into one of the Great Lakes for one long monotonous day after another. Weeks on end, or more. Add in wind and waves, and someone snoring every night. And almost never in dry clothing. How did they prepare meals? It's challenging enough to cook over a wood fire when the wood is dry. And where did they sit while dining so unelegantly? Again, day after day after wet day.

How about if someone fell ill out in the wilderness? Medications and wound dressings? A qualified medical person with first aid experience? Just call 911 or Telehealth Ontario? I will ask again. Who were these tough chaps? I guess they were a good example of the expression, "Man got to do what man got to do." Just to survive, and see another day. Wikipedia taught me the coureurs des bois were "independent entrepreneurial French Canadian fur traders who traveled in New France and the interior of North America." They formed relationships, both business and personal, along the way. Some married, and some even went into business with the Indigenous peoples. And now, the indelicate question that must be asked: where did they go to the bathroom? I will quickly move on to rain and nutrition and health. Please join me in trying to imagine. Sometimes, rain for weeks on end. The same food and meals. Sometimes warm, and rarely hot. Usually cold.

Continually eating corn and bear fat for up to 18 months. Wet and damp clothing, without a comfort break. To emphasize, we cannot even begin to understand or empathize. Regularly, I remind myself, "Not that long ago." Really, not that long ago. Ten or 11 generations. This Ross's Ramblings has been from out in left field. Just a gentle and brief way to step out of my comfort zone. My issues pale by comparison, but are nevertheless my issues. Is it really true the Toronto Maple Leafs have outdone themselves by trading Matthew Knies just before the first game of this NHL season? Didn't they just return from a team bonding trip to Phoenix, his hometown? I hope fans who have purchased a Knies sweater will get a refund. Hey, it's a business. Have faith, Leaf Nation. Rogers and MLSE assure us Jordan's own John Chayka, and former captain Mats Sundin are savvy hockey experts. Please, just be patient. rossrocket9@gmail.com

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LETTER OF THE WEEK

Looking for change after this election? Beware of Goettler and Kaiser **split vote**

Dear editor:
As we look toward the upcoming Niagara-on-the-Lake municipal election on Oct. 26, it is crucial to understand how the mechanics of local voting will shape the next four years of our town.

There is an undeniable, growing concern among residents regarding the direction of our local governance. Many feel that our unique, historic small town is increasingly vulnerable, with aggressive developers rushing to capitalize on the very “goose that laid the golden egg.”

If we compromise our heritage, agriculture, and community character for short-term expansion, we risk breaking the fundamental reasons why we all choose to live here.

Protecting this town requires a cohesive strategy at the ballot box. In municipal politics, traditional and established voting blocks carry an immense amount of influence. Right now, candidate Erwin Wiens enters the race representing a platform of continuity and staying the course with the current council’s direction.



Letter writer Judith Barnes warns voters who want change that Andrea Kaiser and Vaughn Goettler could split that vote. She suggests standing together to pick one candidate for change, or one candidate should step down.

Because his base of support is highly unified and predictable, any voters looking for a genuine shift toward stricter development controls face a stark mathematical reality: a divided alternative vote splits the block, making it statistically very difficult to challenge the status quo.

Currently, the vote for change is split between Andrea Kaiser and Vaughn Goettler. When the alternative vote is divided down the middle, it inadvertently clears an easy path for the frontrunner — even if a



combined majority of residents actually want a new approach to managing town growth.

Our local history shows that candidates can make deeply collaborative decisions to prevent this exact issue. In the 2022 election cycle, regional candidate Barbara Worthy recognized that a multi-candidate race would fracture the alternative vote. Putting the town’s broader interests first, she chose to withdraw. Ironically, it was that exact decision that unified the vote and en-

abled Andrea Kaiser to get elected to regional council in the first place.

While candidate platforms offer distinct choices — such as Kaiser’s focus on managed growth or Goettler’s “residents first” approach, which includes a call to pause development until infrastructure capacity is fully studied — the structural reality of a three-way race remains unchanged.

Dividing the ticket unintentionally shields the current leadership from a true challenge, leaving the town exposed to the very development pressures residents fear.

For residents wanting a distinct shift in town governance to protect our community from predatory development, the choice comes down to simple math, not personal politics. A divided house cannot achieve a new direction.

If voters who favor change want to see a new path forward for Niagara-on-the-Lake, we must look forward, understand the numbers and consider how to stand together before election day.

**Judith Barnes
NOTL**

The **election issues** NOTL candidates need to speak on

Dear editor:
The upcoming elections have us all wondering how our town of NOTL will be managed over the next four years. Will we face disappointing decisions or will we be pleasantly surprised by our newly elected mayor and council?

Here is what I was hoping to hear and what I did not from the candidates.

Public safety: I did not hear how we will see improvements in our police, fire and emergency services.

Fiscal management and economic development: I did not hear how the new council will strive to maintain a sustainable tax rate, try to build up a reserve and how they will attract as well as retain local business. Additionally, I did not hear how much effort they will place in seeking and obtaining provincial and federal grants that will benefit the community.

Community services and urban planning: I did not hear how they will seek to enrich and offer additional public spaces in the form of parks, town squares, community spaces, walkable communities, zoning and land use and housing for special groups such as young families and the elderly. These decisions are essential to shaping the quality of our community.

Communications and transparency: I heard those two words repeated time and again, yet I did not hear how any of the candidates would ensure open communication and full transparency.

Based on the significant knowledge gap in my information gathering expedition, I am tempted to suggest that we are walking into an unknowable future.

It is up to each of us to hold up the four pillars of town management listed here in front of our new mayor and council on a regular basis.

Let us not get carried away on one particular issue that might irk us personally. The council must be accountable to us on all of the above and they must manage the operations of a town by assigning adequate time and attention to each of the areas listed.

Today in NOTL, time is of the essence. We are at an important juncture for our town. A thriving community of well-served residents attracts business; the historical and artistic significance of our town coupled with a thriving local community attracts visitors.

Will we (constituents and elected officials) rise up to meet the challenge?

**Lydia Madonia
NOTL**

Flooding, roads or taxes, **issues matter to all**

Dear editor:
Reading The Lake Report’s survey on Sept. 10 about what is on voters’ minds, I was struck less by the differences in people’s concerns than by how much they have in common (“NOTL voters lay out priorities”).

A farmer worried about drainage may appear to have little in common with an Old Town resident worried about traffic. A family in St. Davids concerned about flooding may seem far removed from someone in Virgil concerned about taxes, or a resident worried about development in Glendale.

But follow almost any of these problems far enough and the paths begin to cross.

A planning decision affects how much infrastructure we need. Infrastructure affects municipal spending. Spending affects taxes. More pavement changes stormwater runoff. Traffic affects rural roads as well as village streets. Development decisions affect housing, farmland, drainage and the



character of our communities.

The boundaries on our map don’t contain the consequences of our decisions.

That may be one of the most important things for us to remember as we think about Niagara-on-the-Lake’s future.

We sometimes talk as though there are competing constituencies here: farmers versus townspeople, Old Town versus the other communities, tourism businesses versus residents, newcomers versus longtime residents.

I think that framing gets

us into trouble.

Farmers need roads that work. Families need infrastructure that works. Businesses need a community people want to visit. We should continue to invite guests, but that doesn’t mean we have to invite more traffic.

Residents need a tax base capable of supporting the services we expect. And all of us depend on sensible planning decisions made with consequences measured in decades rather than council terms.

There will certainly be disagreements about individual projects and priorities. There should be. But perhaps we could judge our major municipal decisions against three fairly simple tests:

Are we getting good value for residents’ money?

Are we reducing unnecessary pressure on our roads and infrastructure rather than adding to it?

And are we strengthening the whole community rather than solving one area’s problem by creating another

area’s problem?

Those questions apply just as readily to a drainage project in the countryside as to development in Glendale, traffic in St. Davids or parking in Old Town.

That is also why this election should be about records as well as promises.

We should look carefully at the decisions the current council has made, compare them with what new candidates are proposing, and ask which approach is most likely to serve all of Niagara-on-the-Lake over the long run.

Do the research, then make your own choice.

These Lake Report interviews suggest that residents already understand many of these connections, even if we describe the problems differently.

Perhaps the challenge isn’t choosing whose concerns matter most.

It is recognizing that they all matter because, sooner or later, they become everyone’s concerns.

**Bruce Gitelman
NOTL**



We welcome your letters

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



Is this Parliament Oak tree **under threat**?

Dear editor:
I would like to make reference to the excellent letter submitted by Victor Tarnoy in the July 23 edition of The Lake Report entitled, "Basements, the water table and trees," referring to the gigantic hotel development on the former site of Parliament Oak Public School.

In his letter, Mr. Tarnoy goes on to say, "The excavation and compaction and the required lowering of the water table will guarantee the eventual death of most, if not all of the existing century old trees on the Parliament Oak block."

He adds that the impact of lowering the water table will be "dramatic, long-lasting and negative."

Sadly, the evidence of Mr. Tarnoy's prediction is already, clearly coming into focus.

One just has to take a look at the present condition of our iconic Parliament Oak

tree on that site. The protective barrier around this tree is truly laughable.

Concrete trucks are draining and washing their excess concrete within feet of this tree. I will predict that unless some major tree intervention measures are carried out soon, this historic and legendary representative of the original oak tree will succumb to its demise before the ribbon-cutting ceremony of this mega hotel development. It is probably already too late.

How sad that our present town council approved this very controversial development in the heart of our historic community — in the face of mounting opposition from the electorate, and in the name of progress and the almighty dollar.

I would encourage The Lake Report to republish Mr. Tarnoy's letter on an annual basis, to remind all



This mature oak tree at the former site of the Parliament Oak public school is not receiving adequate protection from construction work happening there, writes Buddy Andres.

of us and future town councils of the colossal planning blunder made when this

project was approved.

**Buddy Andres
NOTL**

Some of Willowbank's **wonderful history**

Dear editor:
Thank you for your article on Willowbank School of Restoration Arts in The Lake Report on Sept. 6 and welcoming all to the 20th anniversary open house on Sept. 19.

I would like to expand on the history of Willowbank in its 12.4 acres.

Alexander and Hannah Jarvis Hamilton contracted John Latshaw to build Willowbank in 1834 and they

moved into the property with six children in 1836 (five more children would join them later).

Laura Dodson — head of NOTL Conservancy — raised the alarm of possible demolition of the unsold property and interested Mary Bright Urban and Thomas Nelson Urban, who contributed \$1.3 million to add to the \$500,000 of the Dodsons to buy Willowbank in 2002.

Mary was the niece of John and Dorothy Bright who had bought Willowbank in 1934. The Bright Urbans wished Willowbank to be for public use. Laura Dodson wished to start a school for heritage preservation.

Architect Victor Tarnoy and others volunteered curriculum. Heritage architect Julian Smith expanded the school nationally and internationally.

We have full fire suppression since 2018.

What a wonderful success story in contrast to the targeted arson of Glencairn Hall on the parkway. Glencairn was built for John Hamilton (Alexander's youngest step-brother) in 1832 by John Latshaw, which inspired Alexander. I hope that police can bring the arsonists to justice.

**Elizabeth Oliver-Malone
NOTL**

Thank you for supporting NOTL Terry Fox Run

Dear editor:
Thank you for an incredible community Terry Fox Run on Sunday, Sept. 20. Over 300 people came together in hope and determination to carry on Terry's dream of a world without cancer.

Lord Mayor Gary Zalepa brought greetings on behalf of the town. Amber Dyck and her daughter Megan

were present and spoke of the impact of the research of immunotherapy through precision oncology from the Terry Fox Foundation. It has helped to extend the life of Megan who was able to celebrate her 17th birthday.

Amber's emotional poem "The Unrung Bell" was a heartfelt message that left many in tears.

As people participated,

they showed their generosity and compassion by donating close to \$90,000 for cancer research and a belief in better outcomes for cancer patients.

Thank you to all the volunteers, participants and our community businesses, Sandtrap Bar and Grill, Tim Hortons, Epp Family Farms, Quiet Acres, Walkers Country Market and

the Lewiston-Niagara-on-the-Lake Rotary Club for adding to the success of this worthwhile fundraiser.

"Even if I don't finish it, we need others to keep it going"

Let's continue it Sunday, Sept. 19, 2027.

**Joan King
Terry Fox Run NOTL
Organizer
NOTL**

Town needs to **clean up our drains** to avoid flooding

Dear editor:
To avoid flooding and water damage you just have to get the water less than 10 kilometers to Lake Ontario. More than 90 per cent of the land area of the municipality of Niagara-on-the-Lake (~30,000 acres) is drained by municipal drains. These fall under the Ontario Municipal

Drainage Act, R.S.O. 1990.

Under this Ontario law, municipalities have a legal obligation to repair and maintain these drains to their original specifications.

Section 79 of the act states that any municipality that fails to maintain the drains and it results in flooding and property dam-

ages then the municipality is financially liable to the property owner.

Have the drains been maintained and kept clear for water to drain? If you drive on Stone Road near the airport, you can see the green masses extending well above the banks. This is not natural vegetation. This is

invasive phragmites monoculture, which poisons natural vegetation and habitat. It chokes the flow of water.

Cleaning the silt and debris would facilitate the movement of rainwater to the lake would diminish the occurrence of flooding.

**Robert Bantor
NOTL**



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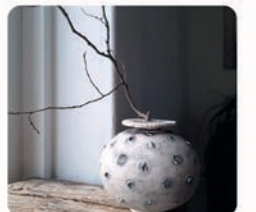
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The history we glorify and the history **we ignore**



Keith McNenly
Special to The Lake Report

Authoritarian leaders follow a familiar pattern. They blame vulnerable minorities, dismiss experts, attack institutions and demand loyalty over truth. They are vain, contemptuous of limits and convinced of their own superiority. They lie easily and govern as if public office were a vehicle for enrichment, revenge and personal domination. The danger grows greater when those traits are joined to profound ignorance.

Such leaders insist that they alone can save the nation. It is a clever inversion: the nation is said to need saving not from danger, but from its own democratic institutions and laws. What is presented as rescue is, in fact, wrecking. Military and intelligence professionals, judges, and civil servants become obstacles rather than assets. Advice is recast as disloyalty. Expertise

becomes suspect because it places limits on impulse and ego.

Today, the world's most economically and militarily powerful democracy is increasingly shaped by billionaires intent on bending government away from public purpose and toward private wealth and power. Entrenched oligarchy cannot coexist with a strong middle class, nor with genuine democracy. Elites protect themselves by shaping law, policy and public life to serve private interests while hollowing out the security of everyone else.

History offers no shortage of examples. Hitler and Stalin differed profoundly in ideology and in the systems they built, but both depended on fear, propaganda, repression and concentrated personal power. Stalin's regime brought terror and catastrophic suffering, including famine in Ukraine. Hitler's arrogance and refusal to accept reality brought destruction to Germany and horror to the world after unleashing war and industrialized genocide.

In both cases, millions died because power was concentrated in men who mistook arrogance for genius.



Thirteen years after its foundation, the National Socialist Germany Workers' Party completed the consolidation of its power, and in 1933, Nazi Germany was born. "Democracies rarely collapse in one dramatic moment," writes Keith McNenly. WIKIMEDIA

History is essential to democracy, yet it is often neglected when life feels stable. In times of peace and prosperity, citizens grow complacent. Civics and history are too often taught as dry, remote subjects rather than as practical instruction in how free societies endure. Only later do many realize that history is not merely a record of the past. It is a warning system.

Democracies rarely collapse in one dramatic moment. They are weakened gradually, through patterns that repeat across generations and nations.

Yet popular culture often

dwells on the final act while neglecting the opening one. Film and television return, understandably, to the heroism of battle: the landings, the sacrifice, the liberation. Those stories deserve reverence, but the spectacle of war can become a form of historical evasion when severed from the political decay that made war possible.

Audiences are invited to admire courage under fire without being taught to recognize the demagogues, propagandists and opportunists who lit the fuse.

That omission matters. If culture teaches citizens only

how evil was defeated, but not how it arose, it leaves them emotionally stirred but politically vulnerable. History becomes pageantry: uniforms, explosions, sacrifice, victory.

What should be shown with equal seriousness is the slower corruption that comes first: the normalization of lies, the scapegoating of minorities, the capture of institutions, the seduction of grievance and the gradual surrender of free people to spectacle.

Authoritarianism often has an initial appeal. It promises strength, speed and clarity in place of democratic compromise. But it comes at a cost: hollowed-out institutions, concentrated wealth, corruption and lasting structural damage. It is political fraud — immediate emotional gratification followed by institutional and economic decay.

Minorities, immigrants, dissidents and journalists are blamed for social and economic hardship. Scapegoating redirects anger away from corruption and failure and toward the vulnerable. It allows leaders and their allies to enrich themselves while posing as defenders of the nation.

Citizens do not need

scholarly expertise to recognize dishonesty, vanity, cruelty, corruption and contempt for the law. The warning signs are visible enough. The deeper problem is that democracies too rarely teach, clearly and repeatedly, that defects of character joined to unchecked power lead to disaster.

In the United States, Trump has treated the Justice Department as an instrument of personal grievance and political revenge. His use of pardons has conveyed a corrosive lesson: crimes committed on his behalf can be rewarded, even profitable.

Democracy depends on vigilance. History is self-defence: a continuing warning from generations past.

Authoritarians reshape the past into grievance in order to control the present and erase targeted people from the future. That pattern repeats.

The question is whether democracies and film culture will teach history seriously enough — and tell it honestly enough — to keep citizens from learning its lessons again the hard way.

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

Town relies on reports **no one will stamp**

Dear editor:

Continuing from my letter last week about flooding, finances and infrastructure in Niagara-on-the-Lake, and the meeting that was held June 16 between Coun. Erwin Wiens, Jordan Frost (the town's engineer and director of public works and infrastructure) and a number of St. Davids residents ...

It's a well-known fact that the town relies on consultant reports to substantiate its approvals. Concern regarding these consultant reports have been present for years, partly because these consultants are paid by the developers to advance their development proposals.

Mr. Frost was asked why he didn't put his engineering stamp on any of the consultant reports to confirm they "covered all the bases," and financially protected NOTL residents. Mr. Frost indicated that he didn't want to put his engineering stamp on any of these consultant reports because he would then become liable.

The obvious question that

came to mind was: why hasn't the town provided him with liability insurance in such an eventuality?

We also asked ourselves: why are NOTL taxpayers compensating a staff engineer if he's not willing to professionally place his engineering stamp behind his recommendations? Will the consultant reports place him in professional and financial dilemma? It appears so.

Erwin Wiens is aware that there is a heavy reliance on consultants' recommendations, which seem to often include exculpatory language. Exculpatory language can absolve the consultants from liabilities and lawsuits, leaving the residents of NOTL and the town without recourse for damages.

Mr. Wiens indicated that the town mitigated this risk by seeking external legal opinions regarding consultant's liabilities. The town is apparently in possession of legal opinions that state that the consultants' exculpatory language does not absolve

those consultants from liability.

Having read legal opinions in my previous business career, I asked Mr. Wiens for copies of these legal opinions to see how they were worded. Mr. Wiens did not provide them. When I followed up with a subsequent reminder, he had apparently forgotten all about my request.

I have to wonder: what do these legal opinions really say? What are the consultants' liabilities limited to, and why are they being sequestered? My imagination tells me there are gaping holes in them.

Mr. Wiens expressed concerns regarding Ron Simkus of the NOTL Residents Association, who has apparently continued to erroneously state that the consultant's exculpatory language absolved them from liabilities, even when he knew that contrary legal opinions existed. You have to wonder whether Mr. Simkus is correct.

When questioned about infrastructure issues, Mr.

Wiens admitted that he did not understand engineering (and he indicated that probably all of council was in that position). That is why town council is almost solely relying on the recommendations of town staff when approving/declining applications.

But it's town staff that won't put an engineering stamp on their recommendations. The rely on developer-paid consultant reports with exculpatory language. So, what kind of decision-making is taking place?

Although the expertise of town council with regards to financial matters, budgeting, etc., was not discussed, you could assume town staff makes recommendations on these matters as well, which are largely accepted by town council without a solid understanding.

It makes me wonder: why we don't elect town staff rather than town council?

To be continued next week ...

Gienek Ksiazkiewicz
St. Davids



A flooded yard after a July deluge. FILE/DAVE VAN DE LAAR

What's being done to **help** those devastated by floods?

Dear editor:

I am one of many residents that was devastated by the floods in our town and a lot of our farmers and residents are still waiting for financial help to get our basements, crops and businesses back to some kind of normalcy.

Why are we still waiting on an update from our town? Why did we not have a public meeting about what the town is doing and saying to the Ontario government?

It seems to me anyways

that we are being ignored, and yes, maybe at some point the financial help will come, but it will not go to farmers or residents — it will go to the town coffers to cover their cost.

Let's get Niagara-on-the-Lake and its elected officials get us the answers we need and push the Ontario government to help. We need answers and financial help sooner rather than later.

Thank you.

Paul Carey
NOTL

NOTL prestige: Revé earns a place on Michelin Guide's recommended list

Julia Sacco
The Lake Report

Another Niagara-on-the-Lake restaurant is putting the town on the global map for fine dining.

This year's Toronto Michelin Guide, which was released Sept. 22, added 11 restaurants from southern Ontario to its "Recommended" list, including one new local dining spot: Revé, which opened in Old Town last year.

This marks the second restaurant from NOTL to be featured on this list of recommended dining establishments from the internationally recognized guide, following Trius Winery and Restaurant's addition to the list in 2024.

Revé's chef and co-founder Adriano Cappuzzello began his journey in fine dining with Michelin — born in Sicily, he started working at a one-star Michelin restaurant at 14 years old, before going on to work at other establishments all over Europe, including other Michelin restaurants.

This latest recognition from the international guide is exciting, he says.

"I think it's every chef's dream to get recognized or get a star," he said. "We're happy because it



Revé's executive chef, Adriano Cappuzzello, started his career at 14 at a one-star Michelin restaurant. JULIA SACCO

means all the hard work that we put in this last year has paid off."

Revé, which celebrated its opening last August, offers fine dining from 5 p.m. to 9 p.m. at its location on Mary Street.

Shortly after opening, co-founder Nicole Pisarenko told The Lake Report the team wanted to put Niagara-on-the-Lake back on the map as a culinary destination.

"Our goal was to bring a different kind of hospitality and I feel like we've been doing it throughout the year," Cappuzzello said.

He said restaurant staff have made people "cry from happiness," a feat they are most proud of.

Him and co-founder Anna Katherine Kruusi described times staff went

above and beyond for customers, including when a pair of best friends stopped by the restaurant and mentioned a beverage debate.

"We've had a business partner just go and get Diet Coke," Kruusi said. "Their thing is a debate between Coke Zero and Diet Coke."

The two guests were then able to do a side-by-side taste test at their table.

"It created a memory for them," she said.

The Revé team calls instances like these "unreasonables," a term coined from the book "Unreasonable Hospitality: The Remarkable Power of Giving People More Than They Expect" by Will Guidara.

"It's when we go above and beyond," Kruusi said, adding that these moments are her favourite part of

working in the restaurant.

Kruusi and Cappuzzello opened Revé alongside Kevin Gillingham and Nicole Pisarenko, with all four co-founders under 32 years old.

"We don't come from a lot of wealth, it's just the four of us in our thirties trying to make our dream happen," Cappuzzello said.

"I feel like if we do it wrong, we might lose everything and that's what distinguishes us. That's why we want to make sure every day is perfect — perfect service, perfect food, and that's it."

Kruusi said the response from NOTLers has been great, with a strong clientele of regulars and visitors alike. Many people come to Revé for special occasions.

"We're trying to showcase the region," she said.

Kruusi said she hopes visitors leave knowing the team is not just serving food, but experiences, whether it be for a daughter who got engaged or a granddaughter who graduated.

"This is the place to do that."

Revé was also mentioned on Air Canada's top 30 new restaurants in Canada list. The top 10 will be revealed in November.

juliasacco@niagaranow.com

Trail missing from accessibility plan: O'Connor

Paige Seburn
Local Journalism Initiative
The Lake Report

Plans for an accessible trail were missing from Niagara-on-the-Lake's new five-year accessibility plan approved unanimously by council last week, and Coun. Sandra O'Connor wanted to know why.

The plan is required under provincial accessibility legislation and will guide the town's work through 2031. Projects requiring additional funding will still need to go through future budget and other approvals.

But the plan was not approved before O'Connor questioned why creating an accessible trail was not

among its goals.

"I don't see that being reflected in this five-year plan," she said, referring to a previous delegation that raised the need for trails usable by people with walkers and wheelchairs.

Coun. Wendy Cheropita pointed to paths along the Niagara Parkway, the Commons and portions of the Upper Canada Heritage Trail that are accessible to people using walkers and wheelchairs.

She and Lord Mayor Gary Zalepa suggested making residents more aware of those options.

Jay Plato, the town's fire chief and director of community and protective services, said he could take

O'Connor's suggestion back to the joint accessibility advisory committee, which helped develop the plan.

The plan sets out accessibility goals for town services and facilities ranging from sidewalks and washrooms to customer service and online information.

Among them, the town plans to survey sidewalks for barriers, study the need for braille and large-print signs, install adult change tables in facilities and improve accessible washrooms in the older portion of Centennial Arena.

It will also explore a fenced park intended to improve safety and accessibility for children with disabilities.

The town also wants to give people with disabilities a way to register for programs without using the internet, such as by phone, in person or through a designated staff member.

Coun. Gary Burroughs questioned how the five-year plan would carry over to the next council after this fall's election.

"How does that work for an incoming council?" he asked.

Chief administrative officer Nick Ruller said the document is meant to guide, rather than dictate, the next council's work.

"So the intent was to have this prepared, and the next incoming term can prioritize the work," he said.

paigeseburn@niagaranow.com



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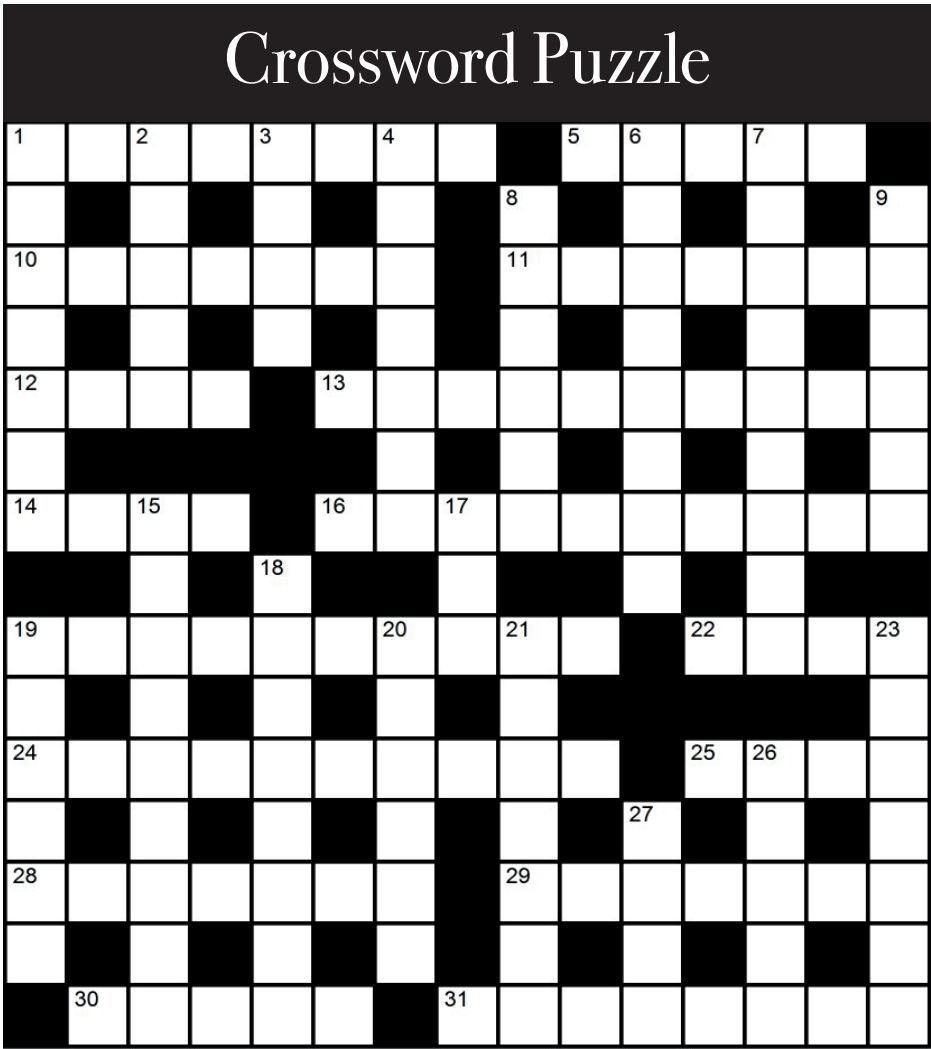


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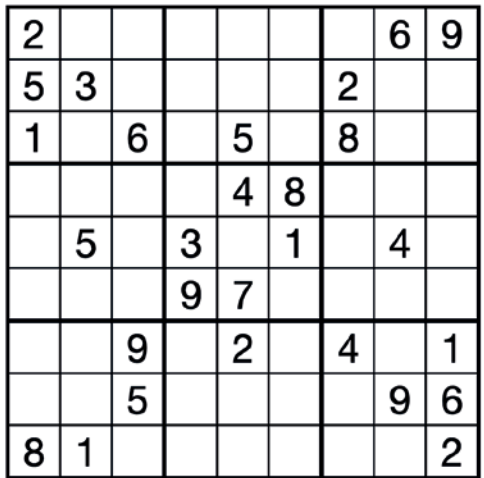
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- Across**
- 1. Beautiful (8)
 - 5. Moves through water (5)
 - 10. Unconventional (7)
 - 11. Pilot (7)
 - 12. Pollen gatherers (4)
 - 13. When the living is easy (10)
 - 14. Otherwise (4)
 - 16. Artificial sparkler (10)
 - 19. Corridor (10)
 - 22. Yorkshireman (4)
 - 24. Preceding wedlock (10)
 - 25. Precious stones (4)
 - 28. Shining (7)
 - 29. Hollowed inward (7)
 - 30. Bovine mammary gland (5)
 - 31. Austrian Alpine resident (8)
- Down**
- 1. Farewell (7)
 - 2. Plunder (5)
 - 3. Paradise (4)
 - 4. Lie (7)
 - 6. Restaurant worker (8)
 - 7. Marriage (9)
 - 8. Opera by Bizet (6)
 - 9. Current of air (6)
 - 15. Pendent (9)
 - 17. Large island in the Channel (1,1,1)
 - 18. Computer information store (8)
 - 19. Thin and translucent (6)
 - 20. Expels (6)
 - 21. Disorder (7)
 - 23. Oriental (7)
 - 26. Fill with high spirits (5)
 - 27. Untie (4)



Last issue's answers



Welcome to Wine Country!

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- 3 Bathrooms
- 4 Parking Spaces
- 1 Electric Fireplace
- Cooling: Central Air
- Heating: Forced Air, Gas



710 Concession 2 Road, NOTL • \$1,139,000

AT A GLANCE

- 2,381 sq. ft. Total Finished
- \$3,016.77 Taxes (2026)
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- 2 Bathrooms
- 10 Parking Spaces
- 1 Wood Fireplace
- Cooling: Central Air
- Heating: Forced Air, Gas



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EXPLORING HISTORY
WITH NOTL MUSEUM



Rosanne Fedorkow

Rosanne Fedorkow was a familiar figure in Queenston. She worked as a guide at Sir Adam Beck Number One Power Plant where she welcomed visitors, including royalty and international dignitaries. In 1953, she was the stand-in for Marilyn Monroe during the filming of “Niagara.”

Rosanne was also deeply committed to education and community life. She helped found the Niagara-on-the-Lake University Women’s Group and Newcomers Club. Her greatest local legacy, however, may be the Queenston Community Library. When library service to the village ended in the 1970s, Rosanne helped establish a new community library and volunteered as its librarian until 1995. Her dedication to Queenston earned her several honours, including certificates of merit from the Government of Canada. She remained an active and generous member of the community throughout her life. October is Women’s History Month in Canada, so this month our column will feature some remarkable women who helped to shape Niagara-on-the-Lake.

Finding our way to better balance in old age



DR. BROWN

Dr. William Brown
Columnist

Falls are common in the later decades of life. A 2020 study in the New England Journal of Medicine reported that 32 per cent of elderly residents living in a community dwelling reported at least one fall per year and, for 10 per cent of residents, two or more falls per year. Not surprisingly, fractures or dislocations related to the falls were common.

For which falls, there are plenty of reasons, most related to age-related changes in the brain and neuromuscular system. For example, imaging studies such as MRI and CT scans often reveal ischemic white matter changes and small strokes in 10 to 25 per cent of those in their 70s and double that or more for those in their 80s.

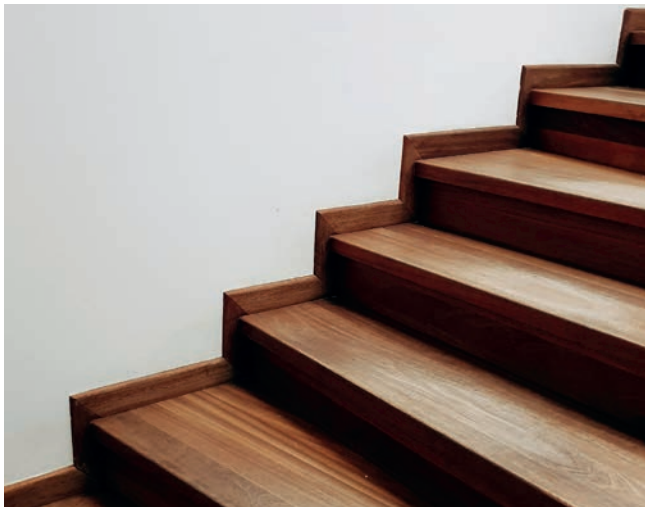
Those changes in the brain, and their related losses of nerve cells and

their connections, probably explain most age-related impairments in walking, balance, vision and cognition that are so common in the later decades of life.

Common age-related losses in muscle fibers and strength, coupled with losses of sensory receptors in muscles and the peripheral and central vestibular systems, only make matters worse.

The changes are obvious: the elderly move slower with less confidence and if they do trip up, are more likely to fall and injure themselves. In short, life is riskier for the elderly and one of several reasons why so many in later life elect to enter some form of long-term care facility in their 70s and 80s, where they can live in a safer and well-lit environment without the need to use stairs and live in close proximity to others of like age.

Life at home is often riskier because of the need in many homes to use stairs and poorly lit areas with cluttered, sometimes slippery floors. A big problem for many in their 70s and beyond are medications, such as antihypertensive drugs, sleeping medications and benzodiazepines, one or all of which, though well-



The trouble for us is that in later decades, risks such as falls, for whatever reason, strike out of the blue for someone used to using the same set of stairs every day, writes Dr. William Brown. UNSPLASH

tolerated in earlier decades, increase the risk of falling in later decades. Ditto for alcoholic beverages.

The risk for falls can be reduced with a continuing clinical assessments to see what the risks are for each person given their health, fitness and medications, and changing the environment to a lower risk setting by improving lighting, getting rid of risky carpets, using canes, or sometimes walkers as assists for navigating indoors and outdoors as necessary. They all help, but don’t reduce the risk of falling to zero.

Staying fit is very important, especially in later

decades, because of the risk of falling. My sister was very mobile socially and physically, until she climbed a ladder trying to fix an outdoor light, fell and broke her hip and weeks later had a fatal pulmonary embolus — all linked to falling off a ladder, which she probably used countless times before.

The trouble is that in the later decades, risks such as falls, for whatever reasons, strike out of the blue for someone used to the same stairs or ladder. One key to reducing the risk of falling is to maintain your physical fitness including exercises to improve core and limb strength, as well as balance.

Readers might want to look at an article titled “6 Exercises Physical Therapists Wish Everyone Did to Age Well” by Danielle Friedman in the Aug. 15 edition of the New York Times, where several exercise routines were highlighted that were designed to improve balance and intended to be coupled with core muscle training, known to be so important for general fitness and balance.

I’m 87 and, so far, reasonably fit, what with a lot of biking and core exercises, but I intend to incorporate several of those exercises described by the Times in my routine

What I haven’t been so good at is assessing my own sense of balance — I’m not alone in that. Most people my age don’t know how impaired their balance is.

For example, how long can you stand on one leg with your eyes open? If you are in your 70s or 80s, most can stand on one leg for at least 30 seconds before they have to put the other foot down. Or, try the same exercise with both eyes shut. With my eyes open, I can stand on one leg for 40 to 60 seconds with the odd wobble, but no better than 20 seconds or less with my eyes shut.

For comparison, my 17-year-old grandson can stand on one leg seemingly forever with his eyes open and one leg with both eyes shut for several minutes before he gets bored.

If you think those tests are irrelevant, consider initially standing on one leg while getting out of bed at night or walking to the bathroom with little light. Readers get the picture — our balance becomes more problematic especially in the later decades of life.

One of the most important must-dos is to assess the space in which you live for risks of falling — getting in and out of bathtubs and showers, climbing and especially descending stairs as well as hazards on floors that might trip you up, are all obvious ones.

Most people are well aware of the risk of falls associated with aging, but many aren’t as intentional as they need to be in reducing obvious risks for falling in their home and staying physically fit.

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

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David ‘Dave’ Driedger



DRIEDGER, David Henry “Dave” —
It is with profound sadness that the family of David Henry Driedger announces his passing on September 17, 2026, at Hotel Dieu Shaver Health and Rehabilitation Centre, at the age of 82.
Born and raised in Niagara-on-the-Lake, Dave spent his life in the community he called home. A hardworking and dedicated man, he enjoyed a long career with General Motors, where he worked for 44 years.
Dave had a lifelong love of cars. Whether admiring them or taking the time to make one shine through his meticulous detailing, cars were simply part of who he was. He also took great pride in his yard and enjoyed gardening, travelling, spending time with friends over coffee, and relaxing with a cold beer and good company. Dave also had a special love for Christmas and Christmas music, always enjoying the spirit of the season and the time it brought together with family.
Sports were another favourite pastime. Dave enjoyed playing baseball and basketball and was an avid hockey fan who faithfully cheered for his beloved Montreal Canadiens.
Above all else, Dave was a family man. His greatest source of pride was his two daughters and his grandchildren. He will be lovingly remembered by his

wife, Joyce Driedger; his daughters, Kimberly (Martin) and Keri (Scott); and his cherished grandchildren, Havanna, David, Amber, Kailey, and Gavin.
Dave will also be dearly missed by his brother, Don (Nikki) Driedger; his sister, Linda Gordon; and his many nieces, nephews, extended family members, and friends. He was predeceased by Jack Driedger, Jim (Brenda) Driedger, Wayne Gordon, and Debbie Driedger.
Those who knew Dave will remember a man who was funny, kind, helpful, and always willing to care for others. He was simply a good person who cared deeply about the people around him, and that kindness will remain an important part of the legacy he leaves behind.
The family would like to extend a very special thank you to Dr. Clark for the wonderful care provided to Dave, as well as the staff at Hotel Dieu Shaver Health and Rehabilitation Centre for their compassion, kindness, and the time they spent caring for him.
A Celebration of Dave’s Life will be announced by the family at a later date.
For those wishing to honour Dave’s memory, memorial donations may be made to Hotel Dieu Shaver Health and Rehabilitation Centre.
Dave will be deeply missed by those who loved him, but the kindness he showed, the laughter he shared, and the love he had for his family will continue to live on in the many memories they shared together.
Please share your memories, condolences and photos online at www.dartefuneralhome.com.





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

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

NOTICE OF PASSING OF BY-LAW
TAKE NOTICE that the Council of the Corporation
of the Town of Niagara-on-the-Lake has passed

By-law No. 2026-047

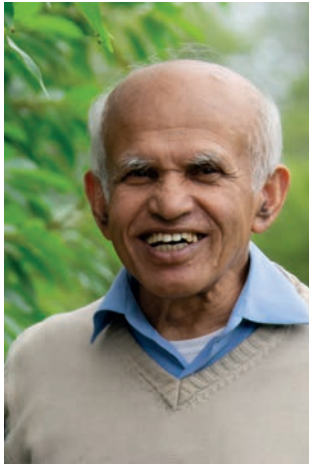
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under Part IV of the Ontario Heritage Act
R.S.O. 1990, Chapter 0.18

**Merriwood (De Puisaye House),
15506 Niagara River Parkway**

As per the Ontario Heritage Act, the Council’s decision may be
appealed within 30 days of the day the notice of Council’s
decision is published by giving notice of appeal to the Tribunal
and to the clerk of the municipality.

**Dated at the Town of Niagara-on-the-Lake
this 30th day of September, 2026
Grant Bivol, Town Clerk**

Dr. Norbert D’Souza



D’SOUZA, Dr. Norbert, June 6, 1940 – Sept. 27, 2026 —
It is with profound sadness that we announce the passing of Dr. Norbert D’Souza, beloved husband, father and grandfather, on September 27, 2026, at the age of 86.
Born in Mangalore, India, Norbert came to Canada to pursue his PhD in Engineering at McGill University in Montreal, where he met his beloved wife, Susanne. They shared more than 50 years of marriage, building a life and family grounded in love, commitment and strong values. Norbert had a remarkable career, including many years with SNC-Lavalin and work with NATO. His career took him around the world, and he was proud of all he accomplished as an engineer.
A devoted husband, Norbert, was an unwavering rock beside his wife, Susanne. As a father, he instilled in his children the importance of education, hard work and having the courage to pursue their dreams. He was deeply devoted to his children, their partners and his 12 grandchildren, taking immense pride in the lives they were building and the people they had become. Family was always his first priority, and he found his greatest joy in being there for them. Norbert was the solid foundation on which his family was built — steadfast, consistent and strong. His wisdom, guidance, quiet strength and unwavering love will be deeply missed by all who knew and loved him. His greatest legacy is the family he built and the values he leaves with the generations who follow.
He will be lovingly remembered by his wife, Susanne; children Natalie (Mariano), with Maliya, Lexiya, Naviya and Kaiya (2025); Mina (Rob), with Julian, Cameron and Annika; Neil (Anna), with Anderson, Kyla and Brooklyn; and Martin (Stephanie), with Samuel and Mathias.
A funeral service will be held on Saturday, Oct. 3, 2026, at 1 p.m. at St. Vincent de Paul Parish, 73 Picton St., Niagara-on-the-Lake, followed by a reception celebrating Norbert’s life. Memories, photos and condolences may be shared at www.morganfuneral.com



We welcome your letters

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

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