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COLOURING CONTEST | Page 10

Vol. 8, Issue 14

Canada's most-awarded community newspaper

April 10, 2025

Election 2025

Advance polls open April 18, mayor urges people to vote

Paige Seburn Local Journalism Initiative The Lake Report

The countdown to the federal election is on — Niagara-on-the-Lake residents can make their voices heard starting as early as next week.

The candidates running for office are incumbent Conservative Tony Baldinelli, Liberal Andrea Kaiser, New Democrat Shannon Mitchell, Green Party Celia Taylor, Libertarian Daniel Shakhmundes, People's Party Dinah Althorpe and Centrist Yawar Anwar.

Residents vote on election day, Monday, April 28.

But advance voting starts Friday, April 18 and goes until April 21: Voters can cast their ballots at their assigned polling station on any of those days from 9 a.m. to 9 p.m.

Since it's a federal election, residents can only vote at their assigned polling station on advance polling days, unlike some provincial elections, where they can vote anywhere in the province.

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Wilderness gets a beard trim

Restoration underway to transform property into Old Town's urban oasis



Arborist Andrew Bergsma ascends a Norway maple in the Wilderness to prune dead limbs as part of restoration efforts. DON REYNOLDS

Jill Troyer | The Lake Report

Passersby walking along Regent Street past the Wilderness over the last couple of weeks have been stopping to crane their necks and look up, spotting arborists in bright visibility vests dangling from tree tops, lopping off dead branches.

When their gaze drops to ground level, peering through the forest, they see others hauling

dead trees and dragging brush to the onsite wood chipper.

Work is underway in earnest at the landmark property to begin the process of eventually turning the Wilderness into an urban oasis, where the public will be able to stroll through the natural surroundings and learn about the storied history of the site, which

Continued on Page 7



Lord Mayor Gary Zalepa

Julia Sacco Local Journalism Initiative The Lake Report

Ontario is proposing to expand its "strong mayor powers" to heads of council in 169 municipalities across the province — and Niagara-on-the-Lake is one of those places on the new list.

The proposal, announced in a media release Wednesday morning, will take effect on May 1.

Lord Mayor Gary Zalepa confirmed with The Lake Report that he received the official letter around 11 a.m. Wednesday morning.

NOTL on list for provincial expansion of strong mayor powers

"I was surprised, I didn't have any word of it or anything," Zalepa said in an interview.

Zalepa plans to have town chief administrative officer Bruce Zvaniga look over the proposal and piece together what it means before sending a memo to town council, he said.

"We're going to review it and have a better idea soon," Zalepa said.

This expansion of power will help deliver on the provincial government's

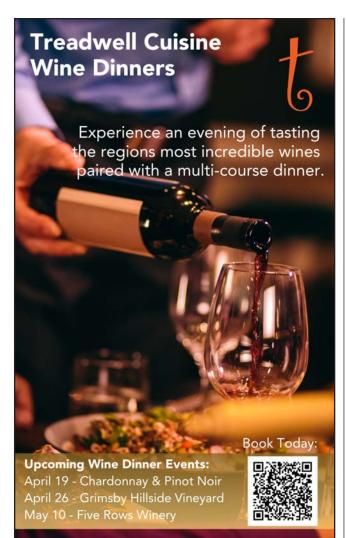
Continued on Page 18



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Tourism NOTL sets aside \$400K for marketing

Julia Sacco Local Journalism Initiative The Lake Report

Tourism Niagara-on-the-Lake is projecting that it'll make up to \$2.2 million this year, with big spending planned for marketing campaigns to attract visitors to town.

During council's last meeting, held March 25, staff with Tourism NOTL and the Chamber of Commerce presented an update on its operations and the 2025 budget.

Tourism NOTL's revenue is going up 41 per cent this year, coming from 2024 carry-over revenue, outstanding receivables from the third and fourth quarters of 2024 and the projected income for this year.

Tourism NOTL receives half of the town's municipal accommodation tax funding.

The other half remains with the town to be used as prescribed by the municipal accommodation tax committee, focusing on tourismrelated infrastructure and support.

Lord Mayor Gary Zalepa said a report from the committee on the town's use of



Tourism NOTL director Kathy Weiss says the organization is building a "foundation for sustainable growth." JULIA SACCO

the funds is expected in the next month.

During the budget portion of the presentation, finance chair Bo Wang-Frape said the municipal accommodation tax revenue alone is expected to reach \$1.25 million in 2025 and will remain a co-funding source.

The organization plans to reinvest heavily in marketing, Wang-Frape said.

More than \$400,000 has been allocated for marketing campaigns, including \$100,000 for influencer partnerships and \$60,000 for media trips. Additional funds will support promotions and collaborative events.

"We are committed to increasing our visibility and enhancing visitor engagement through targeted

marketing and strategic partnerships," Wang-Frape said.

The revenue increase comes with an overall new look for NOTL tourism. with the Chamber of Commerce separating from Tourism NOTL after council decided this in 2023.

The two organizations now have separate boards and budgets, despite operating out of the same office

Kathy Weiss, who assumed the role of interim executive director of the chamber last May, said the organization is working to build a "foundation for sustainable growth."

"We now have clear leadership, a strong financial outlook, and a commitment to promoting Niagara-on-

the-Lake as a world-class destination," she said.

With the change in operation, council members had a few questions for Weiss.

Coun. Gary Burroughs asked about discretionary grants, particularly whether or not Tourism NOTL had a policy for 100 per cent or partial grants.

"We have not got there yet," Weiss said.

Coun. Wendy Cheropita said grants for tourism activities are available through the Tourism Partnership of Niagara.

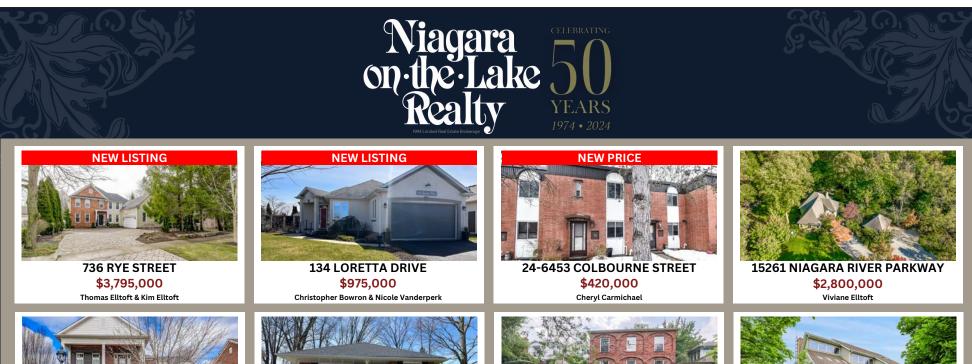
Weiss said the organization successfully received a \$6,000 grant through the partnership and will "absolutely continue to do that."

Coun. Andrew Niven, former chair of the Chamber of Commerce, congratulated Weiss and her team on the successful rebrand.

"This is a big moment," Niven said.

"The evolution of this over the past 15, 20 years, going from a place that was very bad and scary at many points, to a point that we sit in front of this community. We should all give ourselves some credit."

juliasacco@niagaranow.com









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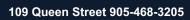
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THE WILD WEST OF WINE

These stories are part of a series about NOTL's "Wild West" of wineries, examining zoning bylaws, restrictions, how some wineries are ignoring those bylaws and restrictions and operating as they please, and how the Town of Niagara-on-the-Lake doesn't appear to be enforcing its own bylaws. And we look at whether the solution is to change the rules to ease restrictions or crack down on those who aren't following the existing rules.

Neighbour, town and winery head to court

Paige Seburn Local Journalism Initiative The Lake Report

A Niagara-on-the-Lake resident is taking a local winery and the Town of Niagara-on-the-Lake to court, alleging that unpermitted events have been allowed at the winery despite zoning rules.

The case, which will be heard in the Superior Court the week of April 14, is by Ed Werner and his grape growing company, Brox Company Limited, against Konzelmann Estate Winery and the town.

Werner, who lives next door to the winery, has asked the court for an order to stop the two parties from using the Konzelmann property for anything that is not permitted under town zoning rules.

The case largely centres around special events held at the winery.

"Since at least 2016, Konzelmann has engaged and continues to engage in the unlawful use of the subject lands in contravention of the zoning bylaw, a registered site plan agreement and a license issued by the AGCO," the court application states.

"Konzelmann has not applied for, nor has it received approval to use the subject lands for such regular outdoor special events," it continues.

Using the property regularly for outdoor events has turned it into a commercial



A neighbour is suing Konzelmann Estate Winery and the Town of Niagara-on-the-Lake for what he says is a lack of enforcement of its own bylaws pertaining to noise and special events permits on agricultural land. PAIGE SEBURN

space in an agricultural area, the application argues, with loud music from weddings, guests walking near the vineyards, and parking in areas not approved by the site plan.

"The commercial-like use of the subject lands for regular outdoor special events is incompatible with the permitted uses in the agricultural area," Werner argues.

The town comes into the equation because it has granted special events permits to the winery. Though the property was not originally zoned for this kind of use, the town has given Konzelmann special event permits, like one in 2023 that covered 21 events, including 16 weddings.

Werner met with senior staff and the town's solicitor several times in 2023 and 2024, but the town did not take any action to cease events at Konzelmann, the application states.

"By allowing a regular use of an agricultural property for outdoor special events, which is inherently commercial in nature, the town is ignoring its own zoning bylaw and is facilitating the breach of such zoning bylaw," the court filing states.

The three parties involved could be called to court any time next week, on short notice, as it depends on court and judge availability, says Werner's lawyer, Patrick Maloney, from Sullivan Mahoney.

"Regardless of the Judge's decision, there are impacts on our community that are cause for concern and will have long-term consequences," Werner told The Lake Report in a written interview.

When town administrators or councillors override or ignore its own laws, Werner argues that it creates chaos — residents lose quiet enjoyment and property value, farms face safety risks from trespassing crowds, Niagara's tourism reputation suffers when farming disrupts weddings, and legal businesses are forced to compete with illegal ones.

"Once the lawsuit is completed, there will be more information to share about the impact of the town's failure to protect those who follow the rules and laws that exist," he told The Lake Report.

Konzelmann did not respond to inquiries by press time. The Town of Niagaraon-the-Lake said it wouldn't comment on an ongoing legal matter.

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Town takes no action on winery's violations

Paige Seburn Local Journalism Initiative The Lake Report

Despite a Lake Report investigation that showed a NOTL winery appears to be violating municipal bylaws by operating its agricultural business as a commercial venture, the Town of Niagara-on-the-Lake has no plans to look into the matter.

The winery, Ferox by Fabian Reis, appears to be operating like an estate winery without proper zoning or paying the proper taxes.

Advertisements and social media post show the winery is serving food, hosting



The Town of NOTL has no plans to enforce its own bylaws on a winery that appears to be ignoring them. PAIGE SEBURN

events, running a patio and seems to be using off-site grapes — all of which is contrary to the permitted use of the property.

But a published article is not a filed complaint, says the town's communications co-ordinator, Marah Minor.

The town enforces bylaws only when complaints are made, a system that has drawn criticism and concerns about a lack of consequences for rule violators. "The town has not received a formal complaint about Ferox Winery. The town's bylaw division operates on an educate, engage and then enforce manner, working toward a resolution," said Minor.

Minor said the town is still working with Ferox on its zoning application.

"Staff have been actively engaging with Ferox as they complete the proper process of seeking planning approval to amend its zoning," she said.

Reis could not be reached for comment by press time and has not responded to several inquiries from this newspaper.

paigeseburn@niagaranow.com



EarlyON space in NOTL moving locations, parents concerned

Paige Seburn Local Journalism Initiative The Lake Report

The provider for EarlyON services at St. Michael's in Niagara-on-the-Lake is changing, but families can expect uninterrupted service, says Satinder Klair, Niagara Region's director of children's services.

The Niagara Catholic District School Board runs three EarlyON locations, two in Niagara Falls and one in Niagara-on-the-Lake, at St. Michael Catholic Elementary School.

The Catholic school board, however, is "getting out of the business," said Klair.

Klair said the change is happening due to increased demand for child care, the need to make services more accessible and a push to use school spaces more effectively.

"Services are not leaving the community," he said. "I truly do believe that services will probably be enhanced."

The region hasn't said where the new EarlyON locations will be, nor what organization will serve as the new provider.

Funded by the provincial government, EarlyON child and family centres offer free drop-in programs for kids up to six years old and their



Parents in Niagara-on-the-Lake are concerned about EarlyON services at St. Michael Catholic Elementary School switching to a new service provider. PAIGE SEBURN

parents with activities available indoors, outdoors and online — it is not, however, a daycare, he said.

"The parents have to be with a child," he said. "You cannot leave your child at EarlyON and then go to work. It's not licensed child care."

"It's a space for families to come and engage in interactive play with their child," he said, adding that it does still, however, require adequate staffing of registered early childhood educators.

The goal is zero disruption — just a clean, planned switch from one service provider to another, Klair said.

Current service contracts expire Aug. 31 for year-

round programs, marking the day of the switch.

The EarlyON program should more or less stay the same, but future providers might offer some differences, he said.

"I wouldn't be able to say 100 per cent it would be the exact services, but the mandatory component, which is the free drop-in program resources for parents, ability to interact with educators

— all those good things

— will continue to exist,"

Lauren Bubnič, a NOTL parent, says the problem is that some child care providers, such as Port Cares or the YMCA, often hire staff who aren't as qualified or well-paid as teachers

Klair said.

from the Catholic school board, in an email she sent to The Lake Report.

"It won't be the same standard," she wrote, adding that she's visited many EarlyON centres across the region and many lack basic activities.

"They just stand around and don't engage."

The region is working to make sure the change is easy and goes well, Klair said.

"We are very confident that we will be able to work towards that September timeline to, at the very least, announce where the EarlyON locations will be and who the provider will be," he said.

"If it doesn't happen, we are committed to ensuring that services continue," he said, adding how that could mean pop-up services until a more long-term solution becomes available.

"We're working really hard to have a permanent option," Klair said. "I am fairly confident we will have the providers and the locations announced before August 31."

"The fact they don't have a location secured yet is very irresponsible on the region's part," wrote Bubnič.

And due to the cost of rent in NOTL, she said, "There will be a delay in service for sure." "Rent is so high in NOTL, I really don't see them (the region) finding a suitable space easily," said Bubnič, adding that residents pay a higher education levy, yet have less service in their municipality.

"NOTL families already have to travel out of town for just about everything," said Bubnič.

Bubnič said the EarlyON service she's fighting to keep isn't even as strong as what's offered in other municipalities.

"Every other city gets full-time EarlyOn and child care options," she said. "We have been getting two half days for at least eight years since I've lived here. It's unacceptable."

St. Michael's will close on June 27, since it operates from September to June. It should reopen in September, in a new location, if all goes as planned, Klair said.

"Renovation of a building, etcetera, may take a little bit longer to operationalize it, but this is part of the reason that we have announced this now and not just a month before it's going to close," he said.

"We can start working on that process of getting a new service provider in."

Klair said many residents have misunderstood the situation and called the region with concerns that services are ending.

The region informed educators of the switch and sent letters to families, but communication during a service change can be tricky, he said.

"Could we have done a better job of communicating all parties? Absolutely, but this is something we'll reflect on and ensure that we can be more proactive in our approach," he said.

"I'm always happy to take any feedback from families around how we could communicate better."

Families are understandably worried about losing services in their community and the stir on social media has only further misrepresented the switch, he said.

"It's like changing a family doctor and changing a building," he said. "I didn't directly make any decisions related to the closure, it was a collaborative discussion with the school board."

The Odrohyageweh "Clear Skies" EarlyON Centre, located at the Niagara Regional Native Centre on Airport Road, continues to offer programming Monday to Friday from 9 a.m. to noon and 1 p.m. to 4 p.m., with outdoor programming available weekly.

Those interested can check its website, nrnc.ca/program-guide, for details. paigeseburn@niagaranow.com

Shaw returns to Court House during Royal George renovation

Paige Seburn Local Journalism Initiative The Lake Report

The Shaw Festival has found a solution to keep the curtain rising while its beloved Royal George Theatre gets a much-needed rebuild.

The Shaw leased the Court House on Queen Street to host some of the Shaw's performances over the next two to three years, while the theatre, built during the First World War and damaged by water and structural issues, is rebuilt with the help of Ontario's \$35 million in funding.

"We will be performing in that space, but in a much smaller way," the Shaw's executive director and CEO Tim Jennings told The Lake Report.

The Shaw hopes to open doors to the updated Royal George theatre by the holiday season of 2028, but it will definitely be open by the 2029 season, he said.

"Depends on how the construction process goes," he said. "Theatres, architecturally, are as complicated as hospitals, so it's a very complicated process."

The rebuild, which Jennings said will cost between \$75-85 million, comes as the Royal George Theatre is set to close at the end of the year with no other option due to the deteriorating condition of the building.

"We lose dozens of shows every year to rain. It just runs through the walls and makes it a dangerous place to work," Jennings said.

But performances at the Court House, located just down the street from the Royal George, are nothing new for Shaw.

"We were founded (in 1962) in the Court House. It's our original theatre," he

But in 2017, the Court House could no longer support the scale of performances the Shaw wanted to hold there, so it stopped using the space — which was also not very accessible, said Jennings.

The Shaw has now created a new model for the next couple of years: A "relatively" accessible theatre in the Court House, which will be about 20 per

cent smaller than the Royal George, Jennings said.

That way the company doesn't "lose a whole theatre," he said.

Working with the Town of Niagara-on-the-Lake to rebuild the theatre after its planned closure was announced August 2024, the Shaw asked if it could lease the Court House year-round during the reconstruction, aiming to partner with parks and recreation to make it happen.

The Court House is not typically available to the Shaw year-round, Jennings said.

It was presented to council as a two-year plan with an option for a third year if construction took longer.

"Council approved that



The Shaw Festival will return to the Court House while it renovates the historic Royal George Theatre. FILE

at a public meeting back in the fall," he said. "Both last council and this council have been very supportive of that process."

Last week, the project received \$35 million from the Ontario government to help with the rebuild.

"If we hadn't received this funding, (the theatre) would

have closed and we don't know how it would reopen," he said.

The Shaw is currently figuring out what exactly it can do, now that it knows the funding amount, Jennings said.

"We're moving forward very quickly on rebuilding." paigeseburn@niagaranow.com



THE WAR OF 1812 COLLECTION

Thursday, April 17 | 7:30 - 8:30 p.m.

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Mayor urges people to vote | Green Party's Celia Taylor fights

Continued from Front Page

To find the right polling station, residents can check their voter information card (received in the mail) or use the voter information service available on the Elections Canada website.

Registered residents should receive a voter information card by April 11.

If residents are unable to attend their assigned polling station on election day or during advance voting, they can vote at any of the (roughly) 500 Elections Canada offices before April 22 at 6 p.m. Polls will be open for 12 hours.

Elections Canada offices are open seven days a week: Monday to Friday from 9 a.m. to 9 p.m., Saturday from 9 a.m. to 6 p.m. and Sunday from noon to 4 p.m.

However, the Elections Canada website does not confirm if voting at these offices is allowed on advance voting days — April 18 to 21 - so it's bestto check with Elections Canada directly.

Voting by mail is also an option if residents apply by April 22 at 6 p.m. The application form is on the



Signs for Liberal Andrea Kaiser and Conservative Tony Baldinelli stand on neighbouring properties. PAIGE SEBURN

Elections Canada website under "Ways to vote."

Residents who aren't voting at their assigned station or who are voting by mail will vote using "the special ballot process" and must apply for it by April 22 and return their completed ballot by April 28.

Lord Mayor Gary Zalepa is not endorsing any candidate and never does; he still urges residents to participate in this election.

"(I) encourage residents to do their homework and learn about all the options and make sure that they exercise their right to vote," he said.

To vote, residents have three ways to prove their identity and address.

First, residents can show one piece of government-issued ID that has their photo, name and current address, such as a driver's licence.

If that is not available, residents can show two pieces of ID — both must have their name and at least one must show their current address.

If residents do not have any ID, they can still vote if someone who knows them and is assigned to their polling station vouches for them. The person vouching must be able to prove their own identity and address and can only vouch for one resident, unless they are in a long-term care facility.

paigeseburn@niagaranow.com

for a more eco-friendly economy

Local Journalism Initiative The Lake Report

Celia Taylor, the Green Party's candidate for the upcoming federal election, is pushing for green-economy policies that tackle climate change and make the community's well-being better, according to her candidate profile on the Green Party's website.

Just this past February, Taylor ran for the Green Party in the provincial election, competing for the member of provincial parliament seat.

"A lifelong Niagara resident, she is passionate about affordable housing, climate action, fair taxation, more healthcare, a green economy, peace and security, caring for Canadians, a strong democracy, disability justice, Indigenous reconciliation and emergency preparedness," the website states.

With a background in law, she says she is passionate about community advocacy and environmentalism.

Taylor began her career



Celia Taylor, the Green Party candidate for NOTL's riding for the federal election on April 28. SOURCED

after earning a law clerk diploma from Niagara College in 2016, working with a litigation lawyer in Niagara Falls.

She later obtained a Bachelor of Arts in political science from Brock University in 2018 and a paralegal diploma from Mohawk College in 2021.

Her education has focused on governance, policy analysis and social justice.

According to the site, Taylor recognized a gap in public legal knowledge and

is now the owner of PDH Legal Information, a service providing accessible legal information across all areas of law to the public.

As a Green Party candidate with legal experience, Taylor hopes to contribute to a riding focused on environmental protection, fair access to justice and sustainable development, it states on the site.

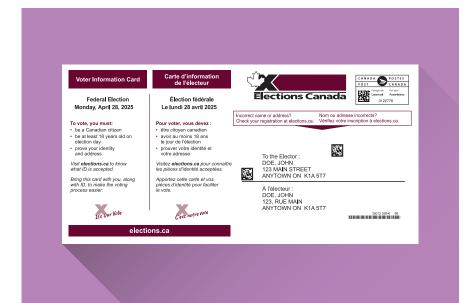
To see the full candidate profile, visit greenparty.ca/ en/candidate/celia-taylor.

paigeseburn@niagaranow.com

MONDAY, APRIL 28



Did you receive your voter information card?



It tells you where and when you can vote.

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Contact Elections Canada if your voter information card

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- hasn't arrived by April 11







NOTL grape growers are cautiously optimistic for a good harvest

Julia Sacco Local Journalism Initiative The Lake Report

Niagara-on-the-Lake grape growers are cautiously optimistic about a fruitful season, as warmer temperatures approach.

Jim Willwerth, an assistant professor of biological science at Brock University, published findings back in March that found grapevines survived the winter season well and are well-positioned for a plentiful harvest season.

With warm weather coming and going over the last month, growers have been keeping a close eye on rapid temperature changes, which could cause harm to budding grapes.

In an expert advisory published by Brock University, staff highlighted Willw-



Brock University biological science professor Jim Willwerth says even though temperatures have been inconsistent this spring, grape buds are still doing well. FILE

erth's findings that while consistently cold winters benefit the vines, unseasonably warm daytime temperatures in early spring can be harmful, triggering vines to bud prematurely.

Willwerth gave The Lake Report the most recent update, saying things are still looking good — for now.

"The vines have had a

nice, steady, pretty consistent winter and not a lot of huge fluctuations," Willwerth said in an interview.

"They're looking really good in terms of bud numbers."

When growers would begin to get concerned is if temperatures this spring hit below -10 C, Willwerth said.

"We always have to be hesitant until we get past the danger of frost."

A rapid change in the other direction isn't ideal either, he said.

"If it warms up really quickly, those vines are going to lose their hardiness really quickly as well," Willwerth said.

Debbie Zimmerman, CEO of the Ontario Grape Growers, shared similar feelings, saying this year looks set for a "normal" harvest season. "This year, to this point, without a major weather event, things look pretty normal," she said.

There is, however, always the possibility of a spring frost, of which Zimmerman is cautious.

"And then, whatever Mother Nature throws at us for the rest of spring and summer and fall," she said.

Compared to this time last year, Zimmerman said vines are looking more stable since they suffered from a wet spring and a cold snap during the 2024 season.

"I'll put it this way, it's very comparable to a normal year at this point," she said.

The Ontario Grape Growers are also doing regular bud testing to forecast the survivability of the grapes and numbers look good, Zimmerman said.

"The numbers [from bud testing] are usually pretty good, very accurate and something that most of the researchers count on."

Matthias Oppenlaender, chair of the Ontario Grape Growers and a grape grower himself, said winter was steady and he too is cautious looking forward.

"We still have spring to concern about, but with this cool weather we should be alright," he said.

"But who knows, it all depends."

Oppenlaender said there may have been a night or two with extremely low temperatures.

"Some areas are saying there could be a little bit of damage, but overall we should be alright," he said.

"We can't really predict until we actually harvest." juliasacco@niagaranow.com

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Collaboration creates unique 'virtual' wines

Jill Troyer
The Lake Report

Wine lovers in Niagaraon-the-Lake will have a chance to taste small batch wines from several "virtual" wine brands at two popups at Marynissen Estates Winery in April.

The wines are all passion projects, products of collaboration among a group of people who work in the wine industry in various roles, but come together with a shared drive to create their own wines to showcase various unique expressions of Niagara's grape harvest.

The collective is called Collab Wine & Beverage and it has 10 separate brands. It allows individuals to make their own wines without the usual barriers to entry

"If you're building a winery, there's the capital expenditure of the land, the building and production facilities, then there's licensing and it's a three-year journey just to be able to sell, and then a minimum of five years before you could expect to even break even. So this gives people a foot in the door to start making wine and marketing it," explains Collab co-founder Mitchell McCurdy.

People pay to rent space and equipment to create their wines at Marynissen Winery, under its manufacturing licence, then sales are through the online store, drinkcollab.ca.

The operating costs for the website are shared between the individual brands.



Julie Enns and Mitchell McCurdy with a few of the Collab wines produced at Marynissen winery. DON REYNOLDS

McCurdy is the head winemaker at Marynissen, but he also has his own brand of wine, Ev's Eclectics, he makes through Collab. He also makes perry, which is like a cider, but made with pears instead of apples.

"I get a lot of fulfillment in making the things I want to make and then testing them in the real world scenario to see if they sell,"

According to McCurdy, the result of this model is that "you get very true wines. The expression of art is doing the things that you want to do, and people will like it or they won't. And these wines are all things that people truly want to do. And there's not really any middle ground. It's very much a creative pursuit. So you get very interesting wines."

People in the collective define their individual brands and contribute according to their skills. Some have sales and marketing skills, some have winemaking expertise, others are growers. So they all help each other.

One of the brands, Liebling, is a family endeavour. It was created by two of Matthias Oppenlaender's daughters, Jessica and Alison, in homage to his efforts and success as a grape grower for more than 40 years in Niagara. The wines are a collaboration between Jessica and the winemakers at Collab, featuring fruit carefully tended and chosen from single vineyards.

Julie Enns was inspired to create her own brand, Battersea, by her love of Chardonnay. Enns is the brand manager at Marynissen and crossed paths with the Collab crew when she started there in 2021. By 2022 she had produced her first 50 cases.

"I don't claim to be a winemaker," Enns says, "I put the Collab winemaker's name on the back label of my bottles, but I'm tasting and selecting barrels with them, and I can say, more of this, less of that."

Enns was aiming for what she calls a "guilty pleasure" Chardonnay, with some toasty oak and balanced acidity. So the winemakers make the wine, but she sets the direction and participates in the decision making throughout the process.

McCurdy is one of four original founding members who launched Collab in March of 2020, following models they knew about elsewhere.

"This isn't the first time a crush pad has existed. There is one out in the Okanagan in B.C. and down in Oregon. I use the analogy of one of those co-working spaces, where you rent space, and you don't have to pay for the full facility, and you can do your own thing inside that space," McCurdy explains.

"That's kind of the idea of all those crush pads. And then it's exciting for consumers, because they get a little bit more of the funky things, like unusual grapes, such as Marsanne, or creative winemaking styles or harvesting techniques."

When they started Collab, there wasn't anything like it in the area, then Custom Crush Studio opened in 2022, in Vineland. Eleven independent wineries craft and sell their small batch wines there, sharing the production facility and tasting room. Consumers can visit and try wines from all 11 boutique wineries under one roof.

Collab hosts pop-up tastings at various times throughout the year at Marynissen. The next date is April 12, from 12 to 4 p.m.

McCurdy says the wines are unique, and "the people behind them are the exciting part."

NEWS 🕞

Removing hazards first step in five-acre Wilderness restoration

Continued from Front Page

reaches back hundreds of years and touches military tales, Indigenous traditions and nature's wonders.

That's the vision the Niagara Foundation has for the Wilderness, which it acquired in December. It will take both time and fundraising to bring that vision to life, the foundation says.

The work will unfold incrementally. It's a complex endeavour, and even as Niagara Foundation chair Lyle Hall grapples with big questions, he exudes an energy and passion that speak to his commitment to conservation and public service.

"Right now, let's look at the grounds. How can we provide some limited public access? How can we remediate the creek bed and do some of the things we need to do from a natural point of view?" says Hall.

"And then the next phase, which we really haven't developed yet, is to deter-



Arborist Tim Werkman removes an invasive Norway maple sapling in the Wilderness. DON REYNOLDS

mine what we do with the building."

All of these areas are being considered in consultation with various experts and agencies as appropriate, whether arborists, conservationists, historians or archeologists.

The current focus is on the grounds, which com-

prise almost five acres. Hall delineates the immediate priorities.

"First things first, we need to remove any hazards, of which there were many, such as dead trees and limbs. Secondly, we're dealing with invasive species, of which there are a lot, from knotweed to euonymus

to Norway maples. And thirdly, we need to prepare the grounds for use and for replanting local species."

The forestry work is being done by Arborwood Tree Services. Arborwood owner Andrew Hordyk explains, "We're not taking down mature Norway maples, some are 50 or 60 years old. We're just taking out the saplings, so all the trees that are left can grow into more spreading shade trees. All the mature trees on the property are being preserved."

Hordyk also notes that "some trees are being choked by large euonymus vines, so they will be removed to allow those trees to thrive."

The work is targeting the south side of the property to begin with.

"We want to get that cleaned up, and then move to the other side with guidance from the Niagara (Peninsula) Conservation Authority, because that's where One Mile Creek runs through," Hall says.

Concurrently, the foundation "will go into the second phase of fundraising efforts as well, because we need to, frankly, raise much more money to be able to do what we want to do," Hall says.

In addition to funds, the foundation will need partners going forward.

"We're volunteers. We don't have any full-time staff, so whatever we do, we're going to have to do with a partner," he adds.

Anyone interested in learning more about the Wilderness can visit the Niagara Foundation's website, theniagarafoundation.com. Those interested in progress updates can sign up for its newsletter.

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Lineup revealed for this summer's Jackson-Triggs concerts

Staff
The Lake Report

Canada is known for its wealth of talented and dynamic musicians and singer-songwriters, who've offered their country and the world an abundance of songs that have inspired, excited and moved music lovers for generations.

During these times of swelling national pride, Jackson-Triggs Niagara Estate has announced the return of its annual Summer Concert Series and a lineup of returning favourite performers and new artists joining the stage at the Niagara-on-the-Lake winery.

Held from June 20 to Sept. 13 at the winery's outdoor amphitheatre, located next to its expansive vineyard, pre-sale tickets for wine club members are now on sale, with general public tickets going on sale Friday, April 11.

"We're proud of the role this series has played in



Jim Cuddy returns to Jackson-Triggs amphitheatre on Sept. 5. FILE/RICHARD HARLEY

supporting Canadian artists and showcasing the best of Niagara wine country," said Stacey Vukovics, estate manager, in a media release.

"This summer, we're excited to carry that tradition forward with new acts joining the vineyard stage."

Artists set to take the stage in the concert series for the first time include Winnipeg-based folk and country artist William Prince, alternative-rock-meets-electronica duo USS, actor, musician and soundtrack artist Noah Reid, country singer Tenille Townes from Alberta, longtime classic rock band Trooper, Canadian-American rock band Big Wreck, singer-songwriter Tim Baker from St. John's and Classic Albums Live, which will be performing the Beatles' classic record,

"Abbey Road."

Returning to the stage at the amphitheatre are Sam Roberts Band, which will continue its tradition of opening up the summer festival on Friday, June 20 and Saturday, June 21, the Trews, Donovan Woods, Stars, the Strumbellas, Chantal Kreviazuk and more.

Tickets will go on sale via tixr.com.

Here's a list of the full lineup:

Sam Roberts Band — June 20 & 21

The Strumbellas — June 27

Stars — July 4

William Prince — July 5

Colin James — July 11

Chantal Kreviazuk — July 12

Matt Andersen with guest Terra Lightfoot — July 18

Tim Baker with guest Georgia Harmer — July 19

The Trews Electric — July 25

The Trews Acoustic — July 26

Classic Albums Live: The Beatles: Abbey Road — Aug. 8

Trooper — Aug. 15

Donovan Woods — Aug. 16

Tenille Townes — Aug. 21

Big Wreck — Aug. 22

Noah Reid — Aug. 23

Jim Cuddy - Sept. 5

USS — Sept. 6

Dwayne Gretzky — Sept. 12 ('70s) & Sept. 13 ('80s)

COMMUNITY NOTICE



ANNUAL VEGETATION MANAGEMENT PROGRAM

Each year, CN is required to manage vegetation on its right-of-way. Managing this vegetation contributes to mitigating fire risks and enhances the efficiency of inspection of track infrastructure. The spray program is not being done for aesthetic reasons.

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- Garlon RTU (Triclopyr 144g/L, Corteva)
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- Gateway adjuvant (Paraffinic Oil 586g/L, Alkoxylated alcohol 242g/L, Corteva)
- Hasten NT adjuvant (Methyl & ethyl oleate 75.2%, Norac)
- Milestone NXT (Aminopyralid 60%, Florpyrauxifen 4.77%, Corteva)
- Navius Flex (Metsulfuron-methyl 12.6%, Aminocyclopyrachlor 39.5%, Envu)
- Overdrive (Diflufenzopyr 205, Dicamba 50%, BASF)
- Roundup WeatherPro (Glyphosate 540g/L, Bayer)
- Telar XP (Chlorsulfuron 75%, Envu)
- Torpedo EZ (Flumioxazin 160g/L, Pyroxasulfone 203g/L, Valent)
- Vision Max (Glyphosate 540g/L, Bayer)

CN only uses herbicides that have been approved for use in Canada and in the province within which they are applied. The program is expected to take place from April to October 2025.

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Niagara artist Geoff Farnsworth depicts Canada-U.S. tensions in new exhibition

Andrew Hawlitzky
The Lake Report

Political undercurrents found their way into the local art gallery on Sunday, as artist Geoff Farnsworth unveiled his newest abstract paintings at the Niagara Pumphouse Arts Centre while sharing some of his techniques and inspirations.

The exhibition, running until April 27, spotlights Farnsworth's blend of abstract expressionism and figurative surrealism.

His painting "Woman with Cat" is one of his newest pieces and was partially inspired, said Farnsworth, as a reaction to frustration over online polarization and Trump-era policies impacting Niagara's border communities.

"It wasn't specifically about that initially, but it grew into this," said Farnsworth.



One of Geoff Farnsworth's newest paintings "Woman with Cat" (pictured) was partly inspired by tense Canada-U.S. political discourse. ANDREW HAWLITZKY

The abstract painting shows the eponymous woman and cat standing before a depiction of the Niagara River, the woman pointing toward the water.

"I just felt strongly about having this piece in the show. I wanted it to show — with the middle fingers blaring and the cat showing its displeasure — towards what's happening, not towards Americans themselves but at this re-

gime of hatred growing."

The exhibition blends abstract and figurative styles, a technique Farnsworth developed studying under mentors like Franco Kane and William Sharp at New York's Art Students League.

Farnsworth, who has lived near Montebello Park in St. Catharines for 12 years, said Niagara's "mystical" landscape and tight-knit arts community often influence his work. Yet recent global shifts have pushed him toward more overt themes.

"I've never been very political, but now with all this growing vitriol, I'm wondering where we're headed," said Farnsworth.

The exhibition also features recurring motifs like his daughter as a frequent subject and experiments with vibrant, earthy colours.

Farnsworth avoids rigid planning, preferring to "listen to the painting" as it evolves.

"Woman with Cat" remains the standout for its uncharacteristic defiance.

"Part of me feels art should engage with the moment. Maybe it's just years of paying attention catching up," said Farnsworth.

The Niagara Pumphouse Arts Centre is open from Tuesday to Sunday at 247 Ricardo St.

andrew@niagaranow.com

Lake Report

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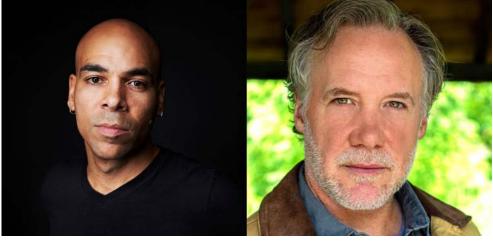
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Beau Dixon, left, and Patrick McManus perform May 11 at Oast House in Virgil.

NOTL musicians reunite for Mother's Day gig at Oast House

Julia Sacco Local Journalism Initiative The Lake Report

Musicians Patrick Mc-Manus and Beau Dixon are reuniting for a special Mother's Day gig at Oast House in Niagara-on-the-

Running from 3 to 6 p.m. on May 11, the show will feature a fusion of genres and fun for everyone — with no cover charge.

"I bring the soul and the funk and the reggae and (McManus) brings the folk. Together we just rock out," Dixon told The Lake Report.

The two musicians met at the Shaw Festival back in 2012 where McManus was a regular actor and Dixon worked as an apprentice musical director. "After the shows we'd have a barbecue, share songs and just play music together — that's where our friendship really blossomed," Dixon said.

Dixon now lives in Peterborough but tries to play with McManus whenever he is around NOTL.

"I jump at any opportunity because he's a very in demand musician," McManus said.

McManus is returning to live music in Niagara since pre-COVID days, with his first few gigs being at the Irish Harp Pub just before Christmas.

"The show at the Harp kind of reignited the spark," he said

"I decided to sort of keep

my foot in the door again."
Together, McManus
and Dixon will deliver a

setlist blending Canadian singer-songwriters like Fred Eaglesmith, Willie P. Bennett and Ron Sexsmith with soulful classics from artists such as Sam Cooke, Curtis Mayfield, and Stevie Wonder.

"Bring your kids, bring your mom, or bring your kid's mom," McManus said.

There may be a few surprise musical guests as well, he added.

"We're keeping that top secret for now, just be just because we got to line up people's schedules and all sorts of stuff, but we're hoping to have some friends join us," McManus said.

With weather permitting, the show will be held on the Harvest Stage, and in case of rain, will be in the Hay Loft.

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What better way to celebrate Easter than with a good old fashioned colouring contest? This year we're offering a chance to win two \$25 gift certificates to Olde Tyme Candy Shoppe in NOTL. And we hear they have an extensive selection of Easter candies this year, on top of all sorts of candy from around the world.

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Simply colour the page, take a photo of your artwork with a smart phone and email it to **editor@niagaranow.com.** Physical submissions may also be dropped off at our office at 496 Mississagua St. in Old Town. Make sure to include your full name (first and last), your age and which NOTL school you attend! Please also include a phone number or email contact with any physical submissions so we can reach you if you're one of our winners.

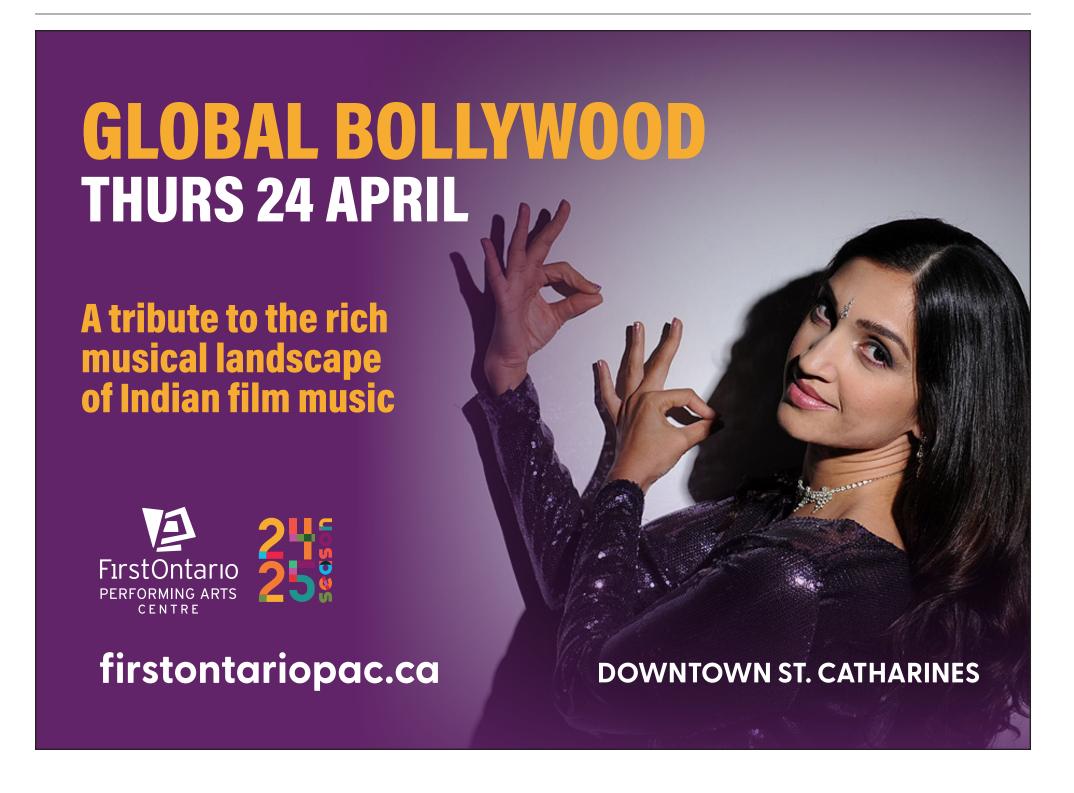
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The contest is open to children ages 4-12. There will be two age brackets for judging, ages 4-8 and ages 9-12. Please make sure to include your age for our judges!

How to pick up your prize:

The Lake Report will contact each winner individually. Prizes will be available for pickup at our office.

Happy colouring and good luck!





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Bunny Trail target is \$15K for nursery school

Julia Sacco Local Journalism Initiative The Lake Report

The Niagara Nursery School and Child Care Centre is looking to raise \$15,000 from this year's Bunny Trail event during Easter weekend.

Run by the school and the Niagara-on-the-Lake Kinsmen, this year's egg hunt kicks off at the NOTL Community Centre on April 19 at 10 a.m.

Along with the hunt, families can enjoy games, a colouring station, a bake sale, touch-a-truck, a petting zoo and more, with admission at \$5 per child or \$15 for three or more kids.

Laura Townsend, the nursery school's president, said there will be a handful of new community sponsors this year, including Robo-Think, which will set up a Lego station, and the private Montessori school Penfield Academy, which will host a beading station.

"I think it's a really great



The popular annual Easter egg hunt will take place April 19 at 10 a.m. at the NOTL Community Centre, followed by Bunny Trail activities and games. FILE/RICHARD HARLEY

way to engage with attendees," Townsend said in an interview.

Funds raised this year will go directly to supporting programs and educational resources at the nursery.

"The money will go toward outdoor equipment — the students spend a significant amount of time outside. It will also go toward improving our technologies, our iPads and things that

teachers are using every day in class," Townsend said.

"The nursery school it's a not-for-profit organization, so we rely heavily on funding outside of what we receive from the region."

The Fine Estates team is one of the Bunny Trail's lead sponsors, providing the colouring station.

In a media release, realtor Andrew Perrie said supporting the day is an "honour," as the nursery school provides essential educational resources.

Townsend thanks all the town sponsors for their efforts.

"This is such a community-focused event, and we're really grateful to be aligned with the Niagara-on-the-Lake Kinsmen, the Niagara-on-the-Lake Community Centre and our local community sponsors who always donate so graciously."

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Front row: Quinten Davis, Glen Davis, Justin York, Calo Zambito, Eddie Friesen, Dylan Price, Noah Whyte, Adam Whyte, Ryan Parsons, Nick Sattarzadeh. Back row: Sheldon Walker, Jacob Cook, Logan Rossi, Billy Pilitteri-Smith, Devin Hunter, Nate Ditto, Josh Dulas, Easton Andres, Mitch Olsen, Ethan Dulas, Jacob Dulas. DAVE VAN DE LAAR

Wolves U18s edged out in OMHA tourney

Kevin MacLean The Lake Report

In a championship hockey tournament, with teams evenly matched, competition intense and a provincial title up for grabs, one goal here or there can make all the difference.

The Niagara-on-the-Lake Wolves U18 rep team were the unfortunate victims of that reality on Saturday at the Ontario Minor Hockey Association tier 1 championships in Georgetown.

After a stellar season in which the Wolves were a dominant force, winning 40 games and only losing twice, they were crowned Niagara District champs two weeks ago and earned a spot in the provincial finals.

But in the round-robin of last weekend's OMHA finals, single goals by two opposing teams — a power-play marker halfway through the third period in game 2 and "a seeing-eye shot" that found the net with under two minutes to play in game 3 — brought the Wolves' season to a heart-breaking end.

They had hoped for more, though as head coach Adam Whyte noted in an interview later, "If, at the beginning of the year, you told me we would have this type of record and win two tourna-

ments, I would have been all for it."

"But I'm heartbroken for these kids and just sad that we didn't get a chance to get into the semifinals, because this team usually gets better as tournaments go on," he said. "They work so hard."

It was tough on everyone, he said, especially because for most players on the team, it also was the finale of their minor hockey careers.

"A lot of the kids were upset, but only one team wins," he said. "There's a lot of other teams that are upset as well."

Things started off really well as NOTL took game 1 last Friday, walloping the Mitchell Meteors 9-2.

But "a couple of bad bounces and flukey goals really cost us" in subsequent games, Whyte said.

A power-play goal by the Napanee Stars midway through the third period led to a 1-1 tie in game 2 and then penalty trouble hurt NOTL in game 3 versus the Mooretown Jr. Flags, he said.

The Wolves were behind on the scoreboard for most of that game and played a lot of it shorthanded, but they fought back to tie it at 2-2 in the third period.

Then, with just over a minute to play, a shot off a faceoff in the NOTL end

found a hole and the back of the Wolves' net, giving Mooretown a 3-2 victory.

A tie with Mooretown likely would have been sufficient for the Wolves to advance to Sunday morning's semifinal.

Despite the bitter disappointment of losing, remarkably, NOTL still had one more slim chance at advancing.

The game immediately after that loss pitted Napanee against Mitchell and if the 0-2 Meteors could win or even tie, then NOTL could move on.

With several Wolves players watching from behind the glass, it was all over quickly.

Napanee unloaded on its opponents, scoring five times in the first period and skating to a 6-1 win.

The next morning both Napanee and Mooretown lost their semifinals, so Kawartha and Elmvale, the top two teams on the other side of the draw, played for the championship.

Kawartha won it 2-1 in overtime.

For many of the Wolves, this was their second year in a row playing in the U18 OMHA championships. In 2024, they also just missed making it to the semifinals.

For 12 of the 16 players on this year's team, the

championship run marks the end of their minor hockey careers, Whyte said.

NOTL doesn't ice any teams after U18 and most of the players will be moving on to study at college or university.

It's a bittersweet ending for Whyte as well. He's probably going to take a break from coaching next year, though he might help out with his daughter's team at some point.

He has no regrets about this year, though. "We had quite a run."

With an enviable overall record after the OMHA tourney of 41-3-7, the U18 Wolves season was a huge success by any measure.

And they'll wrap it up with a team party and player awards as team members prepare to move on to the next phase of their lives.

The U18 rep team is comprised of Ethan Dulas, Nate Ditto, Eddie Friesen, Logan Rossi, Sheldon Walker, Devin Hunter, Dylan Price, Jacob Dulas, Mitch Olsen, Noah Whyte, Easton Andres, Calo Zambito, Josh Dulas, Billy Pillitteri-Smith, Jacob Cook, plus goaltenders Quinten Davis and Nick Sattarzadeh.

Whyte's coaching staff includes assistants Ryan Parsons and Justin York, and trainer Glen Davis.

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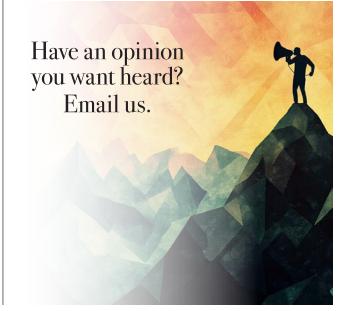


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The Lake Report

OPINION



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#23: Offer help with directions to someone who seems lost and is studying a map or phone.

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



Contributed by Patty Garriock

"There are times when life surprises one, and anything may happen, even what one had hoped for." - Ellen Glasglow

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The vultures are out

No, we're not talking about politicians and lobbyists out in full force during a federal election. We're talking about actual vultures. Turkey vultures, to be specific. These ones were spotted hanging out around Locust Grove. by photographer Dave Van de Laar.



Opinion

Well, at least the Americans are sorry



THE TURNER REPORT

Garth Turner Columnist

"I walk my dog through Old Town on Wednesdays," says local ambassador Lin. "This week there was a car with Ohio licence plates. On the rear window was a taped sign. 'We did not vote for Trump'. It will be an interesting summer."

You betcha. Already it's a memorable spring.

At one of the most successful (and upscale) shops last weekend the owner told me U.S. visitor traffic has tanked 40 per cent since you-know-who did youknow-what.

"Nine out of 10 of them come in and apologize," he added. "And then there's the one out of 10 who's never been to Canada before and tells me they decided to come here to see what their new backyard will look like."

Well, it's a mess. The world, that is.

Tariff Man has turned things on their head and the disruption seems to have only begun. As you probably heard, the stock market had a cow, then laid an egg, and fainted.

Canada, like other allies,



NOTL resident and investment guru Murray Weaver.

was hit with brutal American import taxes. Russia wasn't. Not only is Trump distorting the post-war global order and mocking friends, he's also mucking with the NOTL economy.

"We have to be nice to them," says a veteran on Queen. "What choice do we have? It's open arms since we need those dollars." That is exactly the Chamber of Commerce approach, says manager Kathy Weiss.

An interesting twist is that since Trump's Rose Garden Obliteration Day made-for-TV show last week the U.S. dollar has tumbled.

Investors now think America will teeter into both recession and more inflation as a result of the president's weird strategy, plus push interest rates lower.

So they've been dumping dollars and fleeing to bonds. As a result, the loonie actually got stronger during a week when we learned our car business has been stabbed, and Canadian lumber was tariffed.

Now Wall Streeters have a buffet of stuff to worry about. Lower corporate profits. A global trade war as China hits back. A recession. Rekindling inflation. A weaker currency. Falling oil prices. Trashed Teslas. Everything but locusts and pestilence.

At least Trump has stopped trolling Canada. Maybe because he's afraid of Mélanie Joly. (Who isn't?)

Well, this column gave a little advice the other day. If you're worried about the value of your RRSP or house-buying fund, chill. It's too late to bail out.

Besides, never sell into a storm. Don't turn paper losses into real ones, unless you really, really need the money — right now.

Volatility is the new normal. Rising markets can fall in an instant, or reverse as they did Tuesday. In any case, this tempest will pass.

Murray Weaver holds the same view. He's a NOTL local and the veteran founder

of a wealth management practice based in Burlington. I asked him what words of comfort he might give to a vexing business owner watching the markets churn and customers thin.

"Orange hair is the most powerful man on earth," says Weaver. "The only thing more powerful is the stock market. It has endured wars, financial crises, COVID-19 and many more. Cracks are already beginning to appear in this man-made crisis. Ted Cruz, Mitch McConnell, and many more members of Don's party are speaking out against him. The market will come back, I promise you."

"In the meantime, if you have some extra cash floating around, buy some quality stocks. However, remember this ... you don't find out how deep the water is by jumping in with both feet. Keep the faith, baby! PS ... I'm buying this coming week. Please join me."

If you don't buy, guys like Weaver say, at least don't panic. This volatility could go on for weeks, or months. Perhaps until the U.S. midterms in 2026. Only then might Tariff Man be corralled.

In the meantime we have a federal election boiling. Choose the next prime minister with care. And give thanks you are not him.

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

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SHEDS



DECKS

OPINION 8



LETTER OF THE WEEK

Double standards for homeowners vs. wealthy business owners

Dear editor:

Our town government appears to maintain a two-tier system when it comes to administering our property tax and land use planning approval processes, depending on whether one is an ordinary homeowner or a wealthy landowner operating a business.

If you are an average homeowner, you are coping with a residential property tax increase of 7.92 per cent

this year, far in excess of the rate of general inflation and the average increase in surrounding municipalities.

On the other hand, if you are a business operator born into well-connected families, you can get a tax break by operating under the farm winery category while offering all the same services that only a larger estate winery is allowed to offer.

Our bylaw enforcement

officers turn a blind eye to this flagrant bylaw noncompliance over a prolonged period.

But if you are an average Joe homeowner who wants to build a simple Costco awning structure in a kit over your rear deck, and it exceeds a prescribed size, you're forced to pay a \$150 application fee and your request will be denied if you can't produce blueprint drawings.

This uneven playing field is unfair and must change.

Businesses must pay their fair share of commercial taxes to reduce the reliance on residential ratepayers and our bylaw enforcement officers must enforce the bylaws as written for everyone, not focus on harassing homeowners looking to create a little shade in their backyards.

> Steve McGuinness Virgil

Carney's record spells trouble for Canadians. Vote Poilievre

Dear editor:

As a 25-year-old young professional deeply invested in the future of my country, I felt compelled to share my concerns about Mark Carney's suitability as prime minister after reading the opinion piece claiming "Carney is the best choice for Canadians."

Carney's high-profile roles, such as his tenures with the Bank of Canada and the Bank of England, make him seem fit to lead us through economic turbulence and challenges with the Trump administration, compared to lifelong politician Pierre Poilievre.

However, his record sug-

gests otherwise. His inconsistent interest rate policies earned him the nickname "the unreliable boyfriend," and his low interest rates contributed to housing crises and laid the groundwork for inflation that peaked at 11.1 per cent in the UK in 2022, due to the delayed impact of excessive spending.

Carney's association with Justin Trudeau's Liberals is equally concerning. As an economic advisor to Trudeau in 2020 during the COV-ID-19 pandemic, Carney supported policies aligned with a decade of declining quality of life under Trudeau.

Canada's per capita GDP growth was abysmal at 0.5

per cent over the past 10 years, the lowest among developed nations, and housing costs doubled. Electing a Liberal government for a fourth term, with much of the same leadership and policies, is like Albert Einstein's definition of insanity: Doing the same thing over and over and expecting different results.

Worse, Carney's globalist ties make him a target for U.S. President Donald Trump, who has said he prefers the Liberals to win, likely seeing Carney as someone he can "make a deal with" at Canada's expense, given Trump's history of favouring negotiable leaders.

Carney has often supported business ventures abroad that enrich his interests while proposing the opposite in Canada, such as energy investments in the Middle East while advocating the elimination of fossil fuels here.

While Poilievre lacks Carney's international experience, he possesses the most important quality for our next prime minister: A genuine commitment to serving Canadians, not global elites.

I urge voters to choose Poilievre, a leader who puts Canada first, to navigate these turbulent times.

> Nicolas Petrick **NOTL**

Shaw 'heritage and economic backbone' of NOTL



Wayne Gates Special to The Lake Report

I was thrilled to see the recent announcement of \$35 million in provincial funding over three years for the Shaw Festival's Royal George Theatre in Niagaraon-the-Lake. This investment is a vote of confidence in our region, our people, and our future.

This is an issue we have been working on together as a community for well over a year. I've had the privilege of working closely with the Shaw Festival, local businesses, and community leaders to advocate for this critical funding.

Today, I'm proud to say that the hard work has paid off. This funding ensures that the Royal George Theatre, one of the crown jewels of our arts and culture

sector, will not only survive but thrive for generations to

The Royal George has an impact that echoes across our region and our province. Built over a century ago as a temporary structure, its clay foundation has been dissolving for decades, causing regular flooding and putting the theatre's future at risk.

Without immediate support, the Royal George would have been forced to close its doors at the end of this year — a devastating loss to the local economy and our cultural identity.

That's why I've been so vocal in my support of the Shaw's "All Together Now" campaign. In February 2024, I wrote to then-minister of tourism Neil Lumsden urging the province to make this critical investment.

I highlighted not only the artistic value of the Shaw, but its enormous economic impact: The Shaw is the second-largest theatre company in North America and the single biggest economic driver for arts and culture in Ontario. Each year, it directly supports over 2,500

local jobs and contributes over \$238 million to the province's GDP.

But the Shaw's impact doesn't stop at the stage. For every dollar spent on a Shaw ticket, over \$7 is spent at local businesses from restaurants and wineries to hotels and shops. The Royal George Theatre alone attracts more than 100,000 annual attendees and brings over \$70 million in revenue to the surrounding businesses.

Independent analysis from PwC shows that a successful investment could create 850 new jobs and generate \$80 million in additional annual GDP, with a legacy economic impact of over \$630 million by 2035.

This is why this funding matters so deeply. This isn't just about supporting the arts — it's about investing in jobs, tourism, small businesses and the unique character of Niagara-on-the-Lake.

It's about making sure that our children and grandchildren can continue to experience world-class theatre in one of the most beautiful towns in the country. It's

about protecting the heritage and economic backbone of our community.

I want to take this opportunity to thank everyone who played a role in making this happen: The Shaw Festival's dedicated leadership team, particularly executive director Tim Jennings, who kept all 600 staff employed through the pandemic thanks to innovative and forward-thinking planning; the community members and donors who stepped up to raise \$40 million; and of course, the provincial government for recognizing the value of this institution.

I will always be a champion for Niagara-on-the-Lake and our incredible arts and tourism sector. This announcement is proof that when we work together across all levels of government and community — we can achieve big things.

Let's celebrate this milestone and keep building a strong, vibrant, and resilient future for Niagara.

New Democrat Wayne Gates is the member of provincial parliament for the Niagara Falls riding.



This week's riddle is "Jeopardy!" style. Category: FLAG TIME!

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

Last issue: FILM COMPOSERS

Clue: This "Jurassic Park" composer was a studio pianist on such films as "West Side Story" and "To Kill a Mockingbird."

Answer: Who is John Williams? Answered first by: Bill Hamilton

Also answered correctly (in order) by: Sue Rautenberg, Margie Enns, Jane Morris, Mike Gander, Bob Wheatley, Lynda Collet, Wade Durling, Esther VanGorder, Jim Dandy, Nancy Rocca, Catherine Clarke, Howard Jones, Alysha Van Egmond, Hedy Wiebe, Katie Reimer, Lynda Hosty, Edna Groff, Marla Percy, Karen Brown, **David Spencer, Sheila Meloche**

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

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

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HANDYMAN HANS CAN

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

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The town's next heritage conservation district plan



ARCHITEXT

Brian Marshall Columnist

Niagara-on-the-Lake's Old Town is currently the subject of a heritage conservation district study, replete with an associated by-law which we looked at last week ("Arch-i-text: Examining the latest study on the heritage conservation district, " April 3), but what has been done so far and what is coming?

Initially, the consultants, Cultural Spaces, defined the broad geographic boundaries within which the first phase of the study would be conducted.

From there, they analyzed the properties located within those boundaries to determine which were "contributing" and which were "non-contributing."

Just for clarification, a contributing property has buildings, structures, features and/or a visual context which reflects and relates to the history and unique character of a defined district.

On the other hand, a noncontributing property is one that does not support the district's unique character.

Once this analysis was completed and the results mapped, the folks at Cultural Spaces redrew the original geographic boundaries of the study area to reflect the data they had gathered.

This defined an area in which the contributing properties (nearly 50 per cent of the total properties) produced streetscapes that reflected the unique character of Old Town's historical evolution and the new boundary identifies the recommended borders of the potential heritage conservation district.

The consultants are now busy producing the report on the study results and formalizing their recommendations. It is anticipated that this report will be presented to the municipal heritage committee for review in early May and, following that, it will come before council.

Provided council votes to accept the report's recommendations — including the boundaries — the heritage conservation district undertaking will enter its second phase: The writing of a plan



Shared during the municipal heritage committee meeting on April 2, this map shows the recommended boundaries for the new heritage conservation district in NOTL.

for the district.

This plan is a detailed document that describes the cultural heritage values of the district and captures unambiguous objectives and conservation policy direction, together with guidance on how to preserve those values.

Realistically, a well-written plan provides the town with guidelines for managing future change in a fashion that protects and preserves the heritage attributes that constitute the district's unique character.

Further, it defines the criteria for evaluating heritage permit applications for proposed changes to properties within the district.

Moreover, a heritage conservation district plan is a vital resource for property owners by identifying how their property contributes to the district and providing a clear understanding of the planning and permit application process/criteria within the district.

The Ontario Heritage Act in section 41.1 specifies that the plan must include:

- A statement of the objectives to be achieved in designating the area as a heritage conservation district;
- A statement explaining the cultural heritage value or interest of the heritage conservation district;
- A description of the heritage attributes of the heritage conservation district and of properties in the district:

P• olicy statements, guidelines and procedures for achieving the stated objectives and managing change in the heritage conservation district, and;

• A description of the alterations or classes of alterations that are minor in nature and that the owner of property in the heritage

conservation district may carry out or permit to be carried out on any exterior part of the property without obtaining a heritage permit.

Importantly, the plan will have different policies and guidelines for contributing and non-contributing properties.

For example, except in very rare circumstances, the demolition of a contributing property will not be allowed within the district, whereas a building on a non-contributing property may be replaced with new infill construction, provided that the new design respects the district's unique character and does not adversely affect it.

With regard to zoning bylaws (the legal instruments that govern items like building heights, densities, setbacks, parking requirements, etc.), except where a particular portion of the bylaw would negatively impact the district's character, such remain in effect.

Now, it is normal and typical practice that, during the development of a heritage conservation district plan, existing zoning bylaw provisions are reviewed to ensure such are aligned with the district's unique character and, where necessary, revised.

In short, making sure the

ducks are in order upfront to avoid any issues later.

What a district plan does not do is prevent change or "freeze" the district in time.

It is a tool to manage change, the policies and guidelines accept the evolution of buildings and structures over time while ensuring that any such change complements, rather than detracts from, the district's unique character.

Town staff and Cultural Spaces anticipate extensive public consultation around the proposed heritage conservation district and its instruments will occur in the third quarter of 2025.

Further, it is their intent to complete the municipal heritage committee reviews and present the proposed creation of the heritage conservation district to town council for their deliberation and vote by the end of this calendar year.

With so much to be gained by the town and residents of Niagara-on-the-Lake, I sincerely hope that they succeed in meeting their schedule.

The sooner the better, the better the sooner.

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





















OPINION (%)



NOTL's library is an invaluable community asset



Dr. Robin Williams Special to The Lake Report

As I sit at a table in our sun-filled, beautiful space at the Niagara-on-the-Lake Public Library, I am reminded of the importance of local libraries in the development of Canada and its nationhood.

I can't help but wonder what Andrew Horton and his 40 other NOTL residents were thinking 225 years ago as they banded together in that spring to become the first subscription circulating library in Upper Canada.

Later that summer, on Aug. 15, 1800, Horton and another resident, Martin McClellan, were tasked with collecting subscriptions and ordering books. The initial collection was 80 books; by 1805, it had grown to a robust 344 volumes.

Over the years, the library services were impacted by the winds of war (1812, First World War, Second World War) with interruptions, and changes in governance until Janet Carnochan (a familiar NOTL name) ensured that the library was established as the social, political and information centre for the community.

From the late 1800s, the library was in the courthouse building on Queen Street and enjoyed multiple renovations and expansions into the building's indoor rifle range, garage and furnace room. But the library finally outgrew its setting and amidst some controversy that many of us will remember, it was moved in 2000 to its current location on Anderson Lane.

One further renovation occurred in 2017 to meet new accessibility standards, along with major advances in technology and information retrieval.

Today, we enjoy the beautiful multi-use space with movable shelving to open up space for exhibits and presentations, the latest in programs and services, and



Libraries give children the ability to learn about a variety of subjects as well as reading, writes Dr. Robin Williams.

even a new privacy "pod."

We have a housed collection of over 43,000 items, including a robust historical collection, making our library a valued local research source.

As well, we have access to nearly 500,000 items through the LiNC system from Niagara's regional and provincial libraries. We have eBooks and other digital books and magazines — opening our lives to an immense world beyond our doorsteps.

If Horton or Carnochan are watching, they must be grinning from ear to ear.

And you know what else

they are delighted about? We have a new CEO, Laura Tait, who leads our devoted and energized team, which is providing dynamic programs about and beyond books for all Niagara-onthe-Lake residents and families. And NOTL's library has a cadre of committed volunteers.

As a retired pediatrician and public health physician, I have a special place in my heart for kids and, especially, our youngest.

Over my career, we have come to realize that the basis of early child development is the wiring and pruning of neural connections in a child's brain, nestled in a backdrop of positive emotional, relational health — yes, love builds

The daily "to and fro" between babies and their moms, dads and families is critical to their development. And you know what else matters? High-quality early learning and care settings, like we see regularly at the NOTL library.

The COVID pandemic took its toll on all of us, but children and teenagers suffered in their own unique

It has affected their learning, literacy, socialization and screen use, and emotional well-being. Rates of anxiety and depression are worrisome in children and their parents.

And the repair going forward asks of each of us, including schools and our libraries, to step up and help address the challenges.

During March break, the library was full of little voices, creating a gentle din. Folks were coming and going, meeting reptiles, joining wire-art workshops, engaging with

books and stories.

Programs from knitting circles to book groups, seed library to trivia night, filled the rooms with energy, voices and fun. The place

This is exactly what community connection looks like.

In the current world chaos, including recent American defunding of libraries and museums, Canadian libraries and ours in particular are important assets, contributing to building "community." People from all backgrounds and ages, and all socioeconomic strata, come comfortably in and out of our front door.

And the future direction for our library is the basis of a needed community discussion. Where we go from here, over our next 225 years, will need your support, wisdom and guidance.

Stay tuned because we will be looking for your

Order of Canada recipient Dr. Robin Williams is a member of the NOTL Public Library board and chair of its advocacy and fundraising committee.

Degenerative disease in the spine, part 2: The neck



DR. BROWN

Dr. William Brown Columnist

Degenerative disease in the spine is a very common age-related disease, which most commonly affects the mid-to-lower lumbar and cervical spines, where the natural curve and flexibility of the spine are most pronounced.

Those factors increase wear and tear changes in the vertebrae, discs, posterior facet joints and associated ligaments and explain why pain and stiffness are so common in the lower back and neck beginning in midlife and why, past 50 years of age, imaging studies reveal degenerative changes in almost everyone, whether they have symptoms or not.

This week focuses on the cervical spine.

The degenerative changes observed in the cervical

spine are similar to those observed in the lumbosacral spine — disc space narrowing and bulging discs, thickening of the vertebral edges where they meet the discs, similar changes in the posterior facet joints and thickening of spinal ligaments.

Those pathological changes in the cervical region may crowd the exit foramina for the cervical roots, especially for the C5, C6. C7 nerve roots or less often, the C8 nerve root.

But unlike the lumbosacral region, where the spinal cord ends well above the most affected regions of the spine, degenerative changes in the cervical region may sometimes be severe enough to compress the spinal cord, producing weakness and instability in the legs and adding to weakness in the arms.

The pain and stiffness in the neck limit flexion, extension and rotation of the neck the last of which can limit the extent to which some drivers can properly check for traffic beside and behind them, a real problem these days where rear and back corner visibility in some cars is so limited



— posing a real risk for drivers on busy streets and highways.

Like the lumbar spine, the pathology seen on imaging studies commonly involves two or more levels — and more, the older we are. This places a premium on the clinical history and examination to figure out which changes in imaging studies are relevant to the patients' symptoms.

Tips to which nerve roots are relevant include pain and weakness in the shoulder and shoulder blade muscles for the C5 root, tingling in the thumb, weakness in the biceps and loss of or a reduced biceps reflex for the C6 root, tingling in the index and middle fingers, weakness in the triceps and a lost or a reduced triceps reflex for the C7 root, and for the C8 root, tingling in the baby finger and weakness in the small muscles of the hand.

There are other findings, of course, but those are the most helpful.

Evidence that the spinal cord is compressed is based on weakness in what's often referred to as a "longtrack" distribution - involving flexion of the hip and knee and dorsiflexion and eversion of the ankle and toes, together with a upgoing big toe if the bottom of the foot is stroked accompanied by brisker than normal tendon reflexes in the legs.

Some patients report that they feel an electric shock sensation extending from their neck and often into their trunk legs when they flex their neck, cough or step down hard on something.

This symptom is proof positive that the spinal cord is affected in the neck, but not the specific cause.

The point is that examining patients thoroughly is essential to making sense of the patient's symptoms and clinical findings and determining the best options for treating the symptoms.

What can be done? For patients with evidence that the spinal cord is compressed and especially if accompanied by weakness in cocking

up and everting the feet, which so often lead to tripping and falls, consideration should be given to surgically "decompressing" the spinal cord from the front or back accompanied by fusion to stabilize the cervical spine should that be indicated.

Which approach is best depends on the precise features of each case and frankly, the neurosurgeon.

In my experience working in major centers in London Ont., Boston and Hamilton, Ont., the most important decision is choosing a spine center with a multidisciplinary approach and expertise to properly assess complex spine cases, whether in the lower back or neck.

In the spring, there will be a several-week series at the Niagara-on-the-Lake Public Library on the causes of neck and lower back pain and common nerve injuries in the arm and leg.

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.

Fundraiser, drive and raffle for animal rescue this weekend

Paige Seburn Local Journalism Initiative The Lake Report

As kitten season pushes animal rescues to their limits, a Niagara-on-the-Lake volunteer group is stepping up with a spring fundraiser this Saturday to help ease the strain.

Tanya Rice is hosting her fifth annual planter and bake sale through her volunteer group, the Community Initiative for Animal Rescue, to raise money for two organizations: Angel's Rest Dog Rescue and the Heart and the Hope of Lost and Found Pets Niagara.

On Saturday, April 12, from 9 a.m. to 2 p.m. at 456 Line 2 Rd., behind Crossroads School, visitors can shop for spring and Easterthemed planters ranging from \$35 to \$50, pick up homemade baked goods and donate to a pet food drive — all in support of animals



Founder and volunteer Tanya Rice, left, and volunteer Erika Buchkowsky prepare for this Saturday's pet fundraiser and drive to support animal rescues. PAIGE SEBURN

in need. Rice will accept cash and debit.

The volunteer group focuses on helping rescue organizations cover the costs of animals' needs, like spay and neuter efforts, vaccines, microchipping and foster care.

Rice said she always chooses one cat and one dog group to support at each fundraiser.

Donations of adult and

senior canned dog and cat food, kitten and puppy food and kibble, litter, litter boxes, puppy training pads and Pet Valu gift cards are always needed, she said.

She suggests Fancy Feast
— it's high-quality, affordable and typically under \$11
at Walmart, she said.

In addition to the sale and drive, Rice is running an Easter raffle at the Husky Travel Centre at 615 York Rd., with tickets available in the restaurant daily from 7 a.m. to 8 p.m. until April 18.

The draw will be held that day at 3 p.m., with prizes including a custom spring floral arrangement worth \$75, an artificial spring wreath worth \$60 and a basket of Easter treats worth \$50.

Volunteer Erika Buchkowsky said spring is a critical time for rescue efforts, as it marks the start of kitten season, when even young cats can get pregnant, often stretching cat rescue groups and foster homes to their limits.

"This is when the females go into heat," she said. "Even young cats that are only six months old can get pregnant. So it could be kittens having kittens and they multiply."

Rice said that while warm weather and a curious kitten might make the outdoors seem inviting, the risks could outweigh the appeal. According to NOTL bylaws, if a resident keeps an animal outside for more than eight hours, they must provide shelter, shade, a dry resting area and a designated bathroom spot.

At all times, owners must also provide clean water, proper food, access to veterinary care, a clean living space and enough room and activity to keep their pets healthy.

But Rice said those conditions are not always met for outdoor cats — and even if they are, it's not the only concern.

An outdoor cat risks being hit by a car, contracting diseases, or being attacked by other animals.

"People don't understand when they just say, 'Oh, my cat just goes out every once in a while," Rice said. "You put them in jeopardy of poor health."

She also wants people to think twice before bringing

home a bunny this season because every year, the group sees a wave of surrendered rabbits after Easter, she said.

Rice said she's optimistic about this Saturday's turnout, especially after her February fundraiser, which started as a simple effort to restock the pet pantry at Newark Neighbours but ended up helping even more than she expected.

"We did four organizations beyond Newark," she

This weekend's fundraiser is also supported by nearby sponsors, including Kauzlaric Family Farm, Bellyacres Farm, 2x4 Jam Co. and Coconut Quartz. Cheryl Chiarelli, the creator and curator of Coconut Quartz, will be on-site selling custom "We Love Pets" bracelets, with a portion of sales going to the cause.

paigeseburn@niagaranow.com

St. Michael students earn chess gold



St. Michael Grade 7 and 8 students Luke Fratangelo, Cian Doyle, Luke Simpson, Nello Pagnotta, Isaac Trapasso and Logan Elrod took home gold at the Niagara Catholic regional chess tournament with the help of coach Alex Lingerfelt. The St. Michael Lightning chess team took on the "best of the best" at the tournament, held at the Seaway Mall in Welland, Lingerfelt said. SUPPLIED

Nyanyas learn history of tea

Guests learned about the history and flavours of international teas during a presentation by tea sommelier James Cadeau at the Nyanyas of Niagara's fundraiser for the Stephen Lewis Foundation, held Tuesday April 8 in the Mori Room at the Niagara-on-the-Lake Community Centre. The Nyanyas of Niagara is a group that supports women in Africa through funds raised for housing, school fees, grief counselling and more.





Lord Mayor Gary Zalepa shakes hands with Doug Ford during a visit to NOTL during Ford's election campaign.

Strong mayor powers aimed to help support government priorities like building homes

Continued from Front Page

priorities, such as building more homes, transit and infrastructure, the release

The goal of the increased powers is to allow heads of council to support government priorities shared by the province and these municipalities.

Some of these duties include choosing to appoint the town's CAO, hiring certain municipal department heads, creating committees of council, proposing the municipal budget, proposing and vetoing certain bylaws and more.

Currently, 47 municipalities have these enhanced powers, which were rolled

out in 2022, first for Toronto and Ottawa.

Rob Flack, the minister of municipal affairs and housing, said heads of council are key partners in provincial efforts to build more homes and infrastructure across the province.

"By extending strong mayor powers to these additional municipalities, we are providing mayors every tool at our disposal to empower them to get homes and infrastructure built faster," Flack said in the release.

"Mayors know their municipalities best, and we support them in taking bold actions for their communities."

juliasacco@niagaranow.com

















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Sysco



Have some fun

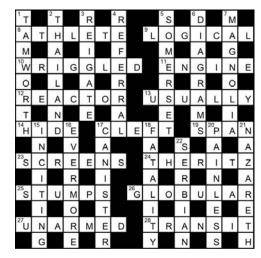
Across

- 1. Pulled a face (8)
- 6. Deeply felt (6)
- 9. Business combination (6)
- 10. Rain gently (8)
- 11. Orts (9)
- 12. Hangs around (5)
- 14. Undiluted (6)
- 16. Units of sound intensity (8)
- 18. Weird things (8)
- 20. Charge with a crime (6)
- 21. Expect (5)
- 23. Stopped (6,3)
- 26. Fighting axe (8)
- 27. Scheduled (6)
- 28. Public address (6)
- 29. Rule out in advance (8)

Down

- 2. Returned to office (2-7)
- 3. Power (5)
- 4. Murderous painter of "The Supper
- at Emmaus" (10)
- 5. Craved (7)
- 6. Calvary inscription (1,1,1,1)
- 7. Retired (4,2,3)
- 8. Team race (5)
- 13. Providing grounds for a lawsuit (10)
- 15. Bring into being (9)
- 17. Midlands cathedral city (9)
- 19. Conceited and snobbish (5-2)
- 22. Shout with joy (5)
- 24. Whimsically funny (5)
- 25. Sprint (4)

Last issue's answers

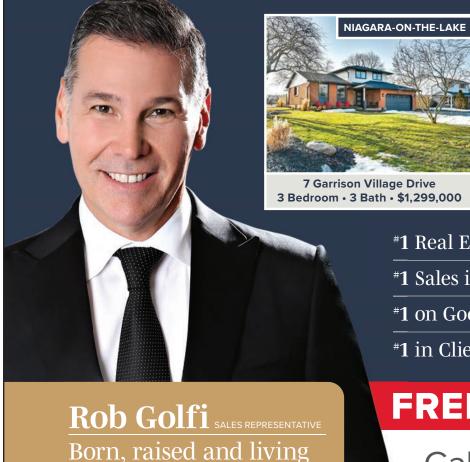


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		5	4		6	7		
			3					
				3		5		9
2	6						1	7
4		3		1				
					5			
		4	1		7	2		
						1	6	8





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"Source: Google Trends and Google Reviews "Source: REIMAX LLC rankings for Large Team Residential, 2024. "Source: REDATUM Agents by units — listing and selling combined performance in TREB Jan 1- June 30, 2024. REIMAX Excarpment Golff Really Inc., Brokerage, Independently owned and operated.

FEATURED



Much ado about mulch



GROWING TOGETHER

Joanne Young Columnist

I am often asked if it is necessary to put mulch on your gardens. Is it helpful or harmful to use it?

Mulching your garden in the spring is one of the best ways to give your plants a good start for the season.

Here's why you should mulch:

1. Mulch is an excellent way to control weeds. Mulch helps to prevent weeds from germinating by stopping sunlight from hitting the soil directly, making it less likely for weed seeds to sprout.

This reduces the need for chemical weed killers and reduces overall maintenance.

2. Mulch helps the soil retain more moisture. Mulch helps retain moisture in the soil by reducing evaporation, keeping the roots of your plants hydrated, especially during dry spells.

It is estimated that a mulched garden requires 30 per cent less additional water than a garden that is not mulched.

3. Mulch helps with soil temperature regulation. It acts as a natural insulator, keeping the soil cooler in



Mulch should be added around the base of plants, but not piled up directly against their stems or trunks. SUPPLIED

the summer and warmer in the spring and fall, helping your plants maintain consistent root temperatures.

By keeping the soil warmer in the winter, it is protecting the root systems of less hardy plants.

4. Mulch improves soil structure. Organic mulches break down over time, adding valuable nutrients to the soil and improving its texture, aeration, and drainage.

5. Mulch protects from erosion. Mulch helps reduce soil erosion by preventing heavy rainfall from washing away the soil.

6. Mulch provides aesthetic appeal. It gives your garden a neat, finished look while enhancing the colors of your plants and flowers.

How to mulch your garden in spring

Choose the right mulch: Organic vs. inorganic:

I highly recommend that any mulch you put down be an organic mulch. Options of organic types are wood chips, bark, straw, composted leaves, or compost. Organic mulches improve soil quality over time as they break down.

There are inorganic forms of mulch that are used, but these should only be used for smaller decorative purposes or in low-maintenance areas. Materials like gravel, stone, or rubber are longer-

lasting but don't improve

soil quality.
Personally, I would
never recommend the use
of rubber mulch for obvious
reasons. My thinking is to
never add anything to the
soil that never came from
the soil.

Prepare the garden beds: Clear the area: Remove any weeds, debris, or dead plants from the area where you plan to mulch. This gives your mulch a cleaner foundation to settle into.

Water the soil: Before applying mulch, ensure the soil is moist. If it's been a dry spell, water the area thoroughly.

Applying the mulch: Thickness: Aim for about two to four inches of mulch. If it's too thin, it won't be effective in blocking weeds or retaining moisture. Too thick, and it can suffocate plants or cause fungal is-

Keep it away from plant stems: Mulch should be applied around the base of plants, but not piled up directly against their stems or trunks. Keep the mulch two to three finger widths away from the base of the plant. This prevents moisture buildup that could lead to rot or fungal diseases.

If you are applying mulch two to three inches thick, you should not need to use landscape fabric between the soil and mulch.

Maintaining the mulch:

Replenish as needed: Over time, mulch will break down and may need to be replenished, especially if it's organic. Keep an eye on the mulch levels and add more as it decomposes.

Extra tips for mulching success:

Timing: A great time to put down mulch is in the spring after the soil has warmed up, but before the hot summer heat sets in. Early to mid-spring is the ideal time for most areas.

Avoid over-mulching: Too much mulch can make the soil too acidic and inhibit water penetration. It can also promote mold growth.

Monitor moisture: Even with mulch, be sure to keep an eye on your plants and check if they need additional watering.

Mulching is a simple, low-cost garden technique that has big benefits for your plants and garden's overall health. Happy gardening!

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

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







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EXPLORING HISTORY

WITH NOTE MUSEUM

Queen Street, c. 1930s

In the 1930s, there were a series of photographs taken of Queen Street for insurance purposes. This particular image shows the west side of the street. Buildings are addressed 4-12 Queen St. and show a general store (selling English dishware and Winchester Cigarettes), the Firehall (built in 1911), and G. Librock's Stationery Store (selling tobacco, postcards and English china). These buildings still exist today. Unfortunately, the original firehall, in private hands at the time, burned down in November 2009. Thank you to the owners who rebuilt it as a replica. It helps to maintain the unique character of the heritage district's main street.





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Obituaries & Announcement

Nigel Napier-Andrews



NAPIER-ANDREWS, Nigel —

At the age of 82, Nigel Napier-Andrews passed away on Saturday, March 22. He took his last breath surrounded by a kaleidoscope of spring flowers in his Niagara-onthe-Lake home, with family

and friends by his side,

raising a glass of Veuve Clicquot in his honour.

A father, grandfather, husband, sailor, commodore, author, scriptwriter and world-travelling bon vivant, Nigel moved to Niagara-on-the-Lake in 2022 with his beloved wife Diane (née Watts), whom he lost just over a year later.

He instantly fell in love with the town and, with his friend Matt Phillips, continued his video series Escapes with Nigel which focused on the town's charms. He also partnered with another friend, Peter Donato, to begin the groundwork for an official Niagara Film Office to attract movie and television producers to the region.

Nigel was born in London, England in 1942 while his father Ken was a prisoner of war in WWII. He was raised by his mother, Lushie, and his grandparents in Wimbledon.

After the war, the family moved to Cairo, Egypt then Benghazi, Libya, and finally, in 1959 to Kenya. Eventually, with political and racial unrest settling in, Nigel fled back to England, where he was hired as a buyer for an advertising agency.

That led to a role in administration with the BBC, who in 1966 sent him to Canada as their on-site production manager during Expo '67.

In true Nigel fashion, he connected with many CBC representatives in the press club, who convinced him to stay in Canada to work for the national broadcaster.

Nigel spent 24 years with the CBC, producing programs such as Elwood Glover's Luncheon Date, the hit panel show This is the Law, and Graham Kerr's The Galloping Gourmet and co-produced the very first broadcast of the Gemini Awards show.

After leaving the CBC he continued to work in broadcasting as a freelancer before being brought into Royal Bank of Canada's public relations department, where he successfully pitched an idea for a quarterly video program that took him to every corner of Canada and the Caribbean through the years.

He retired from RBC in 2009 but never stopped creating. There were his numerous cookbooks (starting with How to Eat Well and Stay Single in 1974 through to Simplifood Too which arrived in late 2024), film scripts, several video series and his blog Gentleman's Portion, which ran from August 2012 until his final farewell post in March 2025.

Nigel was extremely proud of his British heritage. It was difficult not to be immediately charmed by his posh British accent, 'the Queen's English', as it's referred to. But he loved Canada and its heritage and culture, and made friends everywhere he went.

Predeceased by his wife Diane, Nigel shared his final moments with his children Rebecca Tanti (David), Megan, and Matthew (Shanna). He also had a chance to say farewell to his grandchildren Trevor and Evelyn and his beloved nephew Hamish Brims (Lauren).

In that final blog post, the man who had recently beaten prostate cancer, melanoma and a devastating 2021 car crash, faced his diagnosis head-on. He thanked his friends and family for their extraordinary outpouring of love.

"I have come to terms with my future," Nigel wrote. "I hope that my family and friends will come to terms with my future. I have had a good life. A very full life."

Nigel inspired many through his creative and passionate outlook on life. He loved writing, creating, reading, cooking, sailing, horseback riding, travel and adventure. These passions will live on in his children, grandchildren and friends for the rest of their lives.

At his request, Nigel Napier-Andrews will be privately cremated and an epic Celebration of Life will take place in NOTL at a later date. Details to come.

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

Herbert 'Herb' Jantz



JANTZ, Herbert — It is with great sadness and heartbreak that we announce the sudden passing of Herbert Jantz on April 1st 2025.

He will be greatly missed by his children Joshua and Jessica and was a muchloved Opa to Halen, Ryker, Cassidy and Mieka.

He will always be remembered by his siblings Ella, Trudy, Helmut, Liz and Henry(deceased), along with all his nieces and nephews.

Herb loved life, his old cars, riding his motorcycles and thrifting where he would chat up anyone willing to listen.

A celebration of life will be held at a later date to be determined.

Memorial donations may be made to Diabetes Canada or the Humane Society.

Online condolences at www.tallmanfuneralhomes.ca

Alison Hepburn



HEPBURN, Alison-Suddenly and with heavy hearts, we announce the passing of Alison on April 4, 2025, at the age of 65. Beloved wife of Dave Galloway for 20 years (2020). Cherished daughter of Diana (David). Loving mother of Megan Zetlian (Tro) and Dave Seymour.

Proud Nanny of Jonathan and Penelope. Dear sister of Sue Booth (Don) and sister-in-law of Lorie Wybenga (Lambert), and Dan Galloway (Wendy).

Cremation has taken place, and a celebration of Alison's life will be held at a later date. For those who wish, memorial donations may be made to the Canadian Cancer Society or to the Walker Family Cancer Centre.

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

Karen Gansel



KAREN MADENE
GANSEL — 1944 - 2025
The family will receive
family and friends at a
Celebration of Life on
April 24, at 11 a.m. at St.
Andrew's Presbyterian
Church, 323 Simcoe St.,
Niagara-on-the-Lake,
Ontario Canada. The
service will be livestreamed

at https://www.facebook.com/share/v/1NDXAzFv6S/.

Donations can be made in Karen's name to the Canadian Authors Association at https://www.canadahelps.org/en/dn/24602.

Please send condolences and write on Karen's Memorial Page at www.morganfuneral.com/memorials/karen-gan-sel/5535218/index.php#wall.



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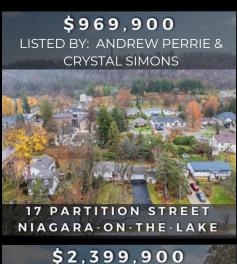
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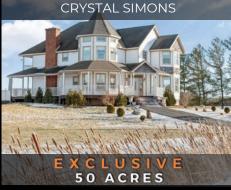








LISTED BY: ANDREW PERRIE



LISTED BY: ANDREW PERRIE &



















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