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The Lake Report



Airport plans expansion | Page 5

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Canada's most-awarded community newspaper

May 15, 2025

Virgil Stampede will test run parking shuttle

Zahraa Hmood
The Lake Report

The community of Virgil is ready to welcome the start of Niagara-on-the-Lake's lively summer season this May long weekend with the return of the 57th-annual Virgil Stampede from Saturday to Monday.

Thousands are expected to come out to the Virgil Sports Park from May 17 to 19 for a weekend of carnival rides, games, family-friendly events, classic fair food and, on Monday evening, a fireworks show to celebrate Victoria Day.

The grounds at 1565 Four Mile Creek Rd. will be open on Saturday from 10 a.m. to 9 p.m., Sunday from 11 a.m. to 8 p.m. and Monday from 10 a.m. to 10 p.m.

Tickets are \$5 per person and admission is free for those 10 and under. Early bird ride bracelets, valid for a single day, are \$35 until Saturday, when they'll be \$45. They can be bought at Phil's Independent at

Continued on Page 2

NOTL army rallies for change

Hundreds of people show up to first residents association meeting



A crowd of about 300 people attends the first NOTL Residents Association meeting at the community centre on Wednesday evening. It was an introductory meeting that established what the goals of association are — creating a unified voice for NOTL residents and defining a clear path forward to help encourage reasonable development and advocate for interests of residents. DAVE VAN DE LAAR

Julia Sacco | Local Journalism Initiative | The Lake Report

The more than 300 chairs set up for Wednesday evening's inaugural open house of the Niagara-on-the-Lake Residents Association were filled with those ready to have

their voices heard on the issues and topics most important to them as people who call NOTL home.

To open the much-anticipated meeting, which filled the NOTL

Community Centre's main hall, former councillor Stuart McCormack opted to highlight the positive aspects of Niagara-on-the-Lake.

"I know there may be a lot of

pent-up frustration," he noted.

But there are many great aspects to the town, he said, singling out the expansion of

Continued on Page 3

Marotta threatens to sue councillors personally over Rand Estate

Paige Seburn
Local Journalism Initiative
The Lake Report

A developer who threatened to sue the Town of Niagara-on-the-Lake over a controversial proposal for

the Rand Estate has not yet taken formal legal action, according to Lord Mayor Gary Zalepa.

Instead, Solmar (Niagara 2) Inc., owned by Benny Marotta, has filed for a judicial review of an Ontario

Land Tribunal decision regarding access to the Rand Estate — not a lawsuit, Zalepa said.

"There is a court filing that Mr. Marotta made to judicially review the (tribunal) decision," Zalepa said.

"But that's not a lawsuit per se — that's just his right to have that reviewed."

Solmar's threat to "commence proceedings" against the town last month has not materialized in the form of a legal claim.

"I haven't gotten anything," said Coun. Maria Mavridis. "I don't even know if the threat is there, to be honest with you."

The issue concerns vehicle access to the proposed development at 200 John St.

E. and 588 Charlotte St.

In an April 9 email to the town's legal counsel, Scott Snider, Solmar lawyer Sara J. Premi said the company would ask the tribunal to

Continued on Page 8



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Shuttle service will run on Monday only

Continued from Front Page

1551 Niagara Stone Rd., or online.

Organizers have heightened the security and police presence at the Stampede over the years — security will be checking bags as guests enter the fairgrounds. Backpacks are not allowed into the park.

New this year, to help those driving to the Stampede, organizers and volunteers are introducing a free parking shuttle service, running only on Monday.

The shuttle will take people from Niagara United Mennonite Church at 1775 Niagara Stone Rd. to Lorraine Street.

From Lorraine Street, people can walk to get into the grounds. The road at Lorraine Street and Arena Road is closed to vehicles.

“Over the years, the Stampede has grown, but convenient parking for guests is very limited,” wrote Stampede organizer Sharon VanNoort via email.

Their goal is to help people who are parking further away from the Virgil Sports Park and to keep people from parking on



Discounted ride passes are being sold at Phil's Independent until May 17 for \$35. FILE

Creek Road during the busiest day of the Stampede, for their safety. Plus, Van Noort added, the hope is it will help with traffic congestion in Virgil.

The shuttle will run from noon to 11 p.m., with a second shuttle vehicle to be added at 9 p.m. Pickup will be every 20 minutes.

There is no parking available on the Stampede grounds, except for accessible parking. Two parking lots will be open the whole weekend for Stampede attendees in the area: The

NOTL Town Hall at 1593 Four Mile Creek Rd. and Cornerstone Community Church at 1570 Niagara Stone Rd.

A third lot, at Meridian Credit Union (1567 Niagara Stone Rd.), will be open Sunday and Monday online. Phil's Independent will open on Monday to deal with parking overflow.

“At the end of the day, we hope to improve the experience for anyone attending the Virgil Stampede,” VanNoort wrote, adding that if the shuttle program is successful this year, organizers

The Virgil Business Association has pledged the net proceeds from this year's Stampede to the Red Roof Retreat and Radiant Care's Pleasant Manor Retirement Village, which will each get \$50,000 to fund facility upgrades.

The business association hosts and funds the Stampede every year and has financially supported several sports and recreation facilities in the village over the years.

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Association want residents' voices to matter

Continued from Front Page

Pleasant Manor, and the work of Newark Neighbours and NOTL Palliative Care.

The hour-long meeting started about 10 minutes late to allow people to find parking as the community centre's lot was at capacity.

Association director Ron Simkus spoke on behalf of Old Town residents during the meeting, which focused on the need for respectful dialogue and informed engagement with local government.

Simkus told The Lake Report a number of people have asked him why NOTL needs a residents association.

The answer, he said, is that "generally, we're getting many people who are saying, 'We're just not being listened to.'"

"You know, there's a difference between hearing and listening."

Weston Miller, the president of the Chautauqua Residents Association, is a third-generation NOTLer. He says the town is in dire need of a united resident voice.

"We are living through an era in our town where our democratic norms are being weakened," he said.

Miller cited the appointment of Coun. Andrew Niven and Lord Mayor Gary Zalepa's vote in favour of the newly implemented strong mayor powers as signals of this weakening.

"Persistence isn't optional, it's essential," Miller said, adding that change takes



NOTL Residents Association board member Steve Hardaker advocates for reasonable development and limits on building heights in Glendale. DAVE VAN DE LAAR

time, but it must happen through the pillars of unity, organization and persistence.

Simkus explained the meeting was not intended to pick a fight with council, but rather to highlight the things that need to be addressed.

Niven and Couns. Gary Burroughs, Wendy Cheropita, Sandra O'Connor and Adriana Vizzari were among those in the crowd.

"The election's coming next year and you have to think pretty hard about who you want on council in 2026 because these issues, a lot of them, are not being addressed," Simkus said in an interview.

Simkus referred to the countless council livestreams his wife tunes into weekly.

Residents come to council to make delegations and are passionate about the issues bothering them.

Councillors sometimes make faces mocking the person trying to speak, or scroll on their smartphones,

Simkus said.

"This kind of behaviour is unacceptable."

He emphasized that after such presentations councillors effectively check off the box that residents have been heard.

"But the response you get quite often is you are not listened to," Simkus said.

"Hearing is an involuntary process that our minds use to accept a sound, but listening requires cognitive attention and focus," he added.

Simkus addressed the dismissal of some residents as NIMBYs.

"If we were truly doing a good job as NIMBYs we wouldn't have allowed our only hospital to be closed, our only school to be closed," he said.

Other members of the association highlighted their focuses for each respective neighbourhood in Niagara-on-the-Lake.

Ronalda Clifton spoke on behalf of St. Davids, highlighting issues like the much-maligned proposed

roundabout and speeding concerns in residential areas.

Clifton said St. Davids should be a walkable community.

Norm Arsenault, a former councillor from the last term of NOTL council, spoke on behalf of Virgil, saying the residents association is looking for solutions for things that are important.

"The intention is to speak as a unified voice — for you," he said.

Following presentations from association members, people in the audience were encouraged to ask questions and offer comments.

Terry Mactaggart thanked the organizers of the residents association for coming together for the presentation.

Looking forward, Mactaggart said he is thinking about what can be done proactively to make the town greater.

"We're a tourist town — we can't only be a tourist town."

Police investigating two assaults in NOTL

Staff
The Lake Report

Niagara Regional Police are investigating two separate assaults on the same woman in Niagara-on-the-Lake.

The first incident occurred around 9:20 p.m. on May 5, when the woman was walking her dog near Niagara Stone Road and

Henry Street. Police say she was approached from behind and assaulted by an unknown man wearing dark clothing. She was able to escape without injury.

The second assault happened six days later, on May 11, around 10 p.m., in the woman's backyard near Homestead and Frontier drives. She was again at-

tacked from behind by a man described as about 5-foot-10 with an average build and dressed in black. The suspect fled on foot and the woman was not injured.

Police have canvassed the neighbourhood and reviewed surveillance footage. They are asking anyone with security or dash camera footage from the two

evenings to come forward.

Footage requested includes May 5 between 8:30 and 10 p.m. and May 11 between 9 and 11 p.m.

Anyone with information can call 905-688-4111, option 3, ext. 1009701. Anonymous tips can be submitted through Crime Stoppers of Niagara at 1-800-222-TIPS or online.

Two seriously injured in crash at Four Mile Creek and Line 7

Staff
The Lake Report

Two people suffered serious injuries in a two-vehicle collision Tuesday evening in Niagara-on-the-Lake.

Emergency crews were called to the intersection of Four Mile Creek Road and Line 7 Road around

5:46 p.m. on May 13.

Police say a white 2005 GMC Sierra pickup truck and a black 2020 Toyota Corolla collided in the intersection. The 51-year-old driver of the pickup, a Niagara-on-the-Lake woman, was not hurt.

The 49-year-old driver of the Corolla, a woman from Niagara Falls, and one

passenger were taken to a local hospital with minor injuries. Two other passengers were taken to hospitals outside the region with serious injuries — one by Ornge air ambulance.

Both vehicles were heavily damaged and towed from the scene. The road was closed for several hours and reopened around

10:10 p.m.

Niagara police continue to investigate. Anyone with information is asked to contact 2 District officers at 905-688-4111, option 3, ext. 1022200, referencing incident 25-49552. Tips can also be left anonymously through Crime Stoppers at 1-800-222-8477.



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Mass dying of invasive fish sparks concern as hundreds wash ashore

Paige Seburn
Local Journalism Initiative
The Lake Report

Residents have spotted an unusual number of dead fish up and down the Lake Ontario shoreline in Niagara-on-the-Lake this spring.

For resident Diane Miller, the sight in her backyard was both startling and upsetting as she discovered the lifeless fish along the water’s edge on May 6.

“It was a bit of a shock,” said Miller. “And then it was a little sad.”

Senior media spokesperson Gary Wheeler from the Ministry of the Environment, Conservation and Parks told The Lake Report the ministry took water samples on April 30 from Lake Ontario after a large number of dead fish were found in Mississauga.

Tests showed the fish die-offs, or fish kills, were not tied to water pollution, he said.

“The ministry has not



Dead alewife fish are washing up along the shoreline of Lake Ontario in Niagara-on-the-Lake. DIANE MILLER

had any recent reports of spills linked to fish die-offs in Lake Ontario,” wrote Wheeler in an email.

The Ministry of Natural Resources and Forestry said that the dead fish were identified as alewife, a member of the herring family. They are abundant in Lake Ontario.

“Large spring-time mortality events are common with this species in the Great Lakes,” wrote a spokesperson for the ministry in an email. “These events are natural and not indicative of a larger envi-

ronmental or health crisis.”

“However, it is advisable to avoid direct contact with dead fish to prevent any potential health risks.”

Alewives usually live in deep, cold water, but in May and June, they move to shallow areas to lay eggs.

These fish die-offs happen when alewives swim from the cold, deep parts of Lake Ontario to the warmer, shallow areas to lay eggs.

If the weather changes quickly, like during a storm, cold water can rise to the surface and shock the fish.

After a long, cold winter,

alewives are already weak, so the sudden temperature change can make them sick or kill them.

“Spawning takes a lot of energy and can be stressful,” the ministry wrote.

In the spring, these three stressors often occur for alewife at the same time.

Miller said she is not concerned about harm to herself or her family and thinks it’s likely from natural causes.

“We’re getting a lot of bird migration right now,” she said. “That’s nature.”

She said it would be reassuring if the municipality had confirmed it had checked with the right authorities and that there is nothing to worry about.

However, Miller said she wouldn’t expect the town to be responsible for cleaning up the fish.

What tends to happen, according to the Toronto and Region Conservation Authority’s website, is that the waves and currents help

carry the dead fish back into the lake, and wildlife can swoop in to make the most of the unexpected food supply.

“It went away and then yesterday — it was quite warm — and I didn’t actually go right down to the water, but you could see a few floaters,” she said. “But the birds are certainly feeding.”

This kind of die-off has happened before, like in 2019, and looks the same this year, states the conservation authority’s website.

Miller moved into her home in 2020 and said she has never seen anything like this.

The Niagara Peninsula Conservation Authority declined to comment and said the Ministry of Natural Resources and Forestry would be better suited to answer questions about the die-offs.

But its beach conditions webpage does state that large numbers of dead fish

in the water can increase the risk of illness or injury.

“Please be advised that there are always risks associated with swimming in natural bodies of water,” the webpage states, going on to say that changing conditions can raise bacteria levels.

When contacted about the beach webpage, the conservation authority said in an email: “Our ‘beach conditions’ page provides the public with general information related to potential environmental factors that affect water quality at our park beaches.”

“We have not made any assumptions or conclusions about the impact of the observed fish die-off on public health.”

To report dead fish, residents can contact the Ministry of Natural Resources and Forestry at 1-800-387-7011. Instructions on reporting fish die-offs are available at ontario.ca/page/dead-animals-or-fish-found-your-property. paigeseburn@niagaranow.com



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Flight plan for the future: Niagara airport charts 20-year vision

Paige Seburn
Local Journalism Initiative
The Lake Report

The Niagara District Airport is preparing for major upgrades and looking at ways to fly more travellers to more places in Canada and North America — but those behind the new master plan say it's still early and they need public feedback to shape the next 20 years.

A new master plan has been underway since last summer to guide the airport located in Niagara-on-the-Lake through 2045, with a draft expected in the coming months and completion anticipated for this summer.

The airport — run by a commission made up of the municipalities of St. Catharines, Niagara Falls and Niagara-on-the-Lake — is collaborating on the plan with Avia NG, an aviation consulting firm.

"This is not my master plan," said Joshua Horst, a senior manager with Avia NG, to a group gathered at the airport on Wednesday.

"It's your master plan for this airport — as taxpayers, as the region that has vested interest in this airport."

A public session was held May 7 at the terminal, where residents could review early concepts, ask questions and provide input — all of which will directly influence the final plan.

No budget or funding for the upgrade and development concepts has been set at this time.

An airport master plan lays out a roadmap for fixing and upgrading airport spaces. It also identifies where future growth could happen and shows why the airport matters.

"A lot of people — I've heard it through this process today — are just not aware of what this airport does today and what it could be in the future," said Horst at the session.

Other residents have shared some "understandable" thoughts and concerns, said Horst in an interview with The Lake Report.

"There's been some expressing, 'Let's see this airport grow.' Others are coming up with some hesitancy and wanting more clarity around, 'What does the plan really mean? What's the runway extension potential look like?'" Horst said.

The airport's strategic plan led to an update to the



The Niagara District Airport is updating its master plan to guide growth over the next 20 years — potentially adding commercial flight service. SOURCED

master plan — its first since 1992.

The first stage of the recommended redevelopment plan includes a new fire hall, operations building, fuel farm upgrades and an expanded terminal.

It also shows that one of the airport's three runways could be closed and turned into a taxiway to improve traffic flow.

Stage two includes a new terminal building — about 4,000 to 6,000 square metres, subject to refinement — plus a new parking lot.

The existing terminal would stay, repurposed as a service centre for general aviation, meaning private and charter flights.

An air service study found strong demand for commercial flights, which, currently, the airport doesn't have.

Dan Pilon, the airport's chief executive officer, said that to handle commercial flights, especially with the size of planes they need, the airport currently lacks proper facilities, including space for security and customs, and may need to extend the runway depending on the aircraft size.

He said a commercial scheduled flight is one with passengers who bought a ticket to fly from point A to point B, like at Pearson, whereas a charter is when someone rents the whole plane.

"There's a lot more to it than that, but that's the basic thing," he said in an interview.

The airport is considering starting with domestic routes to Ottawa and Montreal, eventually expanding to Vancouver, Calgary and warm-weather destinations like Cancun, Varadero, Punta Cana, Montego Bay and Florida.

Adding customs services is also being considered, which could open routes to New York, Boston, Chicago and Las Vegas. These aren't confirmed routes, just the ones with the most demand.

Spencer Abt, a NOTL resident who does maintenance on aircraft in Sudbury, sees big potential in expanding airport services, especially for private jets.

"There's definitely opportunity, even just looking at it from fixing them, which is my point of view," said Abt.

"There's lots of jobs that you don't think of right off the top of your head. There's plenty that expanding the airport can do."

He believes scheduled commercial flights wouldn't hinder the airport's existing services, but would make travel more affordable.

"Gets more tourism in here," he said, adding that a flight to Ottawa would be convenient for him.

Pilon said the region is the 13th largest metropolitan area in Canada.

"We're not the 13th largest airport," he said, adding that economic growth in tourism depends on access, and limited transportation options have kept the region's visitor numbers flat for 20 to 25 years.

"We've had other regions and other airports that have jumped right over us. Many times over," he said.

The region's population is expected to grow to 700,000 by 2051, and people in the area already take more flights than the national average.

"If we make it a whole lot easier for people to live here to actually do that (take flights) instead of having to go to all these other locations, that's a benefit."

There were small commercial flights from the

airport to Toronto through FlyGTA — a short-haul airline starting service in NOTL in 2017 — but COVID shut it down.

"It saw year-over-year growth. And that, I think, highlighted the potential that got people thinking," said Horst in an interview.

Niagara also attracts more than 13 million tourists a year, with 4.5 million overnight stays in 2019. The area has a higher, on average, disposable income than other airport areas, making it a promising location for future air service, the crowd was told.

"It's about making sure people come here and spend their dollars here," Pilon said.

The airport's 2023 strategic plan set four priorities that now guide the master plan: advocacy, alignment, analytics and protecting the airport as a long-term asset.

The airport has collected data, mapped opportunities and constraints and assessed its needs. What happens next depends, in part, on what the community says now.

"I'm not out here delivering you a finished product today. That frankly would be inappropriate," said Horst at the session.

After hearing the community's thoughts, a draft plan will be produced, which will lead to a capital and phasing plan, which won't set fixed construction dates but will lay out how the airport could expand in stages, building just enough, at the right time.

A future public session will be announced by the airport in the coming weeks, or people can share feedback online at niagaradistrictairportmasterplan2025-2045.ca.

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Hoverlink from Niagara to Toronto **one step closer** to reality

Julia Sacco
Local Journalism Initiative
The Lake Report

Hoverlink Ontario is one step closer to touching water in Lake Ontario, with its goal of bridging Niagara-on-the-Lake to Toronto in around 30 minutes.

Through a partnership with PortsToronto (formerly the Toronto Port Authority), the company has officially secured a docking area in Toronto after more than three years of consultation, announced in a media release on Monday.

The Hoverlink will depart from a docking area in Port Weller to Toronto, near Billy Bishop Airport, across from Stadium Road.

“With its Niagara site already shovel-ready, this milestone clears a major hurdle for launching North America’s first large-scale hovercraft transit route,” the release reads.

Company president Erika Potrz told The Lake Report



The Hoverlink will depart from a docking area in Port Weller to Toronto, near Billy Bishop Airport. FILE

there is still a two-year minimum before the crafts are actually manufactured.

“Some of those timelines have been extended because of tariffs and the impact on manufacturing,” she said.

When it does hit the water, the Hoverlink will bring positive change to NOTL’s tourism, Potrz said.

Hoverlink has been in contact with tourism groups, including the Niagara Parks Commission

and Wineries of Niagara-on-the-Lake for “several years” to discuss maximizing the transportation’s positive impact.

“I’ve met with everybody in economic development across the entire region to have conversations about how we can work together to increase tourism and utilize this as a new way of bringing more awareness to what we offer in the Niagara region,” Potrz said.

Because the Hoverlink will be the first of its kind in North America, it will garner a lot of media coverage, drawing attention to NOTL as well, she added.

The Lake Report asked Queen Street patrons what they think about the Hoverlink.

Carol Fraser lives in Old Town and says she would definitely be interested in trying out the Hoverlink.

“On an occasional basis, certainly not every week or anything, but definitely yes,” Fraser said.

Fraser and her husband Robin tend to avoid travel to Toronto nowadays, and the Hoverlink would make travelling back and forth easier, she said.

“We avoid it because of the traffic.”

Kat Rezo was visiting NOTL from Hamilton and said she probably wouldn’t use the Hoverlink, because the route from Hamilton to Toronto is pretty straightforward.

“I think I’d be nervous about the waters,” she said.

Choppy waters are a main focus of the folks over at Hoverlink, Potrz said.

The Hoverlink’s technology is the correct one when it comes to navigating Lake Ontario, she said.

“You’re hovering a meter above the water, so it really doesn’t matter what’s happening underneath. You’re having a smooth consumer experience,” Potrz said.

She emphasized that the Hoverlink is something that has never been attempted before.

“There’s never been a military grade hovercraft on Lake Ontario,” Potrz said.

Potrz referenced a ferry predicated on cargo movement out of Rochester and a hydrofoil, which is “not a competent marine craft,” she said.

“We’ve chosen the right technology to cross 365 days a year to make this a viable transit project.”

In September of 2024, the

projected cost of a round-trip journey on the Hoverlink was about \$50 to \$60.

Amanda McFadyen, a visitor to NOTL from Woodstock, said she saw news about the Hoverlink in the past and thought it was an interesting idea.

“But as somebody who’s living in the area, I could drive and take the Go Train (which would be) probably easier and probably less expensive,” McFadyen said in an interview.

Potrz said Hoverlink has to reevaluate pricing from the original projection.

The company is now looking at a variety of pricing options, for commuters, wholesale tourism operators and retail ticket prices.

“I’m less anchored on one particular price at this point. We do want it to be comparable to existing travel options,” Potrz said.


“We want to make sure a multitude of people can actually afford it.”

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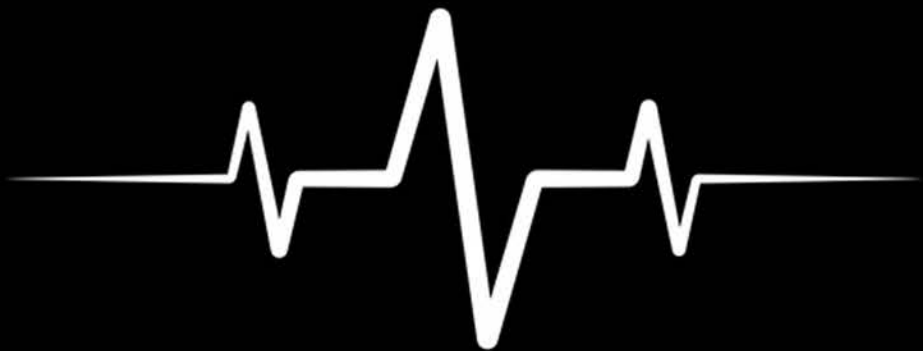
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No lawsuits yet, says lord mayor, but councillors uneasy

Continued from Front Page

close the file and abandon required studies if the town did not agree to access via the panhandle or Charlotte Street “by end of week.”

The email continued, stating the developer would instruct “litigation lawyers to commence proceedings again(st) the town and will name the lord mayor, deputy mayor and council members as defendants.”

No legal action followed. Premi declined to comment. Neither Marotta nor Snider responded to requests for comment by press time.

“I have not received any formal lawsuit or any further documents from Mr. Marotta regarding this matter,” said Zalepa. “Currently, it’s all speculative.”

A judicial review does not re-evaluate the merits of a decision but examines whether the tribunal acted lawfully and fairly.

Earlier this year, the tribunal ordered Solmar to consult with the town and Save Our Rand Estate (SORE), a federally incorporated not-for-profit group advocating for the estate’s



The historic Rand Estate is once again the focal point of a development dispute, with the developer threatening legal action against the town. PAIGE SEBURN

preservation and responsible development.

The legal threat appears to target only council, excluding SORE.

“(It) was directed to the individual members of council,” SORE wrote in an email. “We are not fearful. And regretfully, not surprised.”

SORE’s lawyer, Sonia Patel, said in an email to The Lake Report, “As this matter is currently before the court, we are unable to comment.”

Zalepa said the town is

prepared to respond appropriately if a legal filing arrives.

“We would just review it properly, get our expert advice from our legal counsel and then respond as needed,” he said.

Mavridis noted councillors are now protected if legal threats arise — but that wasn’t always the case.

“There wasn’t any bylaw in place, but now there is — to protect councillors,” she said, adding, “Everyone has the right to sue.”

Before April 29, the

town had no bylaw to protect councillors from legal action related to their official duties. The adoption of a new bylaw followed a lawsuit filed against Mavridis by Sunset Grill on April 8.

Under the bylaw, a councillor must repay the town if found guilty. If cleared or the error was unintentional, the town will seek to recover costs through its insurance, Mavridis said.

Coun. Wendy Cheropita said the situation is unsettling and unclear.

“It does leave me with a little bit of unease,” she said. “I don’t recall anything like that happening.”

She praised chief administrative officer Bruce Zvaniga for keeping councillors informed but expressed concern about using taxpayer dollars for councillors’ legal defence.

The tribunal decided to deny access to the Rand Estate via both the panhandle — a narrow strip connecting to John Street East — and Charlotte Street, which includes part of the Upper Canada Heritage Trail.

“It wasn’t council’s decision to not allow the panhandle. It was the ruling from the land tribunal,” said Zalepa, who declared a conflict due to the proximity of his home.

“Key to developing the project is finding an access route into the subdivision so that residents can enter and exit the new community,” states Solmar’s March 24 application record.

Zalepa said the decision to sue the town rather than the tribunal is “for Mr. Marotta to explain.”

SORE, meanwhile, said “it doesn’t make sense to sue council,” arguing the town likely rejected panhandle access for the same reasons the tribunal did — harm to heritage features, tree loss and safety concerns raised by traffic experts.

SORE also believes council rejected Charlotte Street access because of the impact on the trail and nearby residents.

The group says the best access point is between 144 and 176 John St., which was used until the 1990s.

SORE maintains the entire Rand Estate should be planned comprehensively, not in segments, as it says Marotta has tried to do since 2018.

Zalepa said the town will consider any new application from Solmar if submitted.

“We’ll have to wait and see what the outcome is of that review,” he said.

“It’s just like anything — when we’ll hear, all of a sudden, that there will be a decision. We look forward to seeing that.”

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Linwood Barclay to talk about new **supernatural-thriller**

Jill Troyer
The Lake Report

Linwood Barclay has a brand new novel coming out next week, and he's coming to Niagara-on-the-Lake to talk about it.

He is the guest author at Wine and Words on May 21 at Caroline Cellars, in collaboration with the NOTL Public Library.

Barclay has written 20 New York Times bestselling thrillers, which have sold millions of copies worldwide.

His faithful fans will notice this book is not like his others. It twists and turns down a sinister track, pulling you deeper and deeper into the dark world of supernatural evil.

"This one is different. It's kind of out of my lane," he notes.

"Whistle" is not just a thriller, it's a supernatural chiller: "All the other novels are very much rooted in the real world. There are elements of horror and the supernatural in "Whistle," which is what makes it a big departure," Barclay explains.

"I had more fun writing 'Whistle' than just about anything else I've done in at least the last 10 years. It was kind of liberating because I could do outlandish, bizarre things and really not have to explain myself, whereas in any of the other novels, there's gotta be a reason for everything. In a good thriller, everything should fit together like a Swiss watch," he says.

With "Whistle," he says, "I thought, I can do something crazy here and I think I can get away with it."

"Whistle" tells the story of Annie Blunt, an author of children's books living in New York City. She's had a terrible year of tragedy, including the sudden death of her husband. Annie decides to take her young son, Charlie, to a small town for a fresh start.

Life there is not what she expected. Strange things start to happen when Charlie sets up an old toy train set he finds in the rented house. Annie realizes she left one nightmare behind, only to step into another.

The novel packs surprise, suspense and sheer hor-



American-born Canadian author Linwood Barclay has written 20 New York Times bestselling thrillers. His latest novel, 'Whistle,' is his first time taking on the supernatural. He'll be in NOTL to talk about it May 21. SUPPLIED

ror. Toy trains, typically associated with joy and innocence, become sinister instruments of evil.

Barclay explains why he chose toy trains for his villainy.

"It just didn't seem fair to me that in horror, you know, dolls, like Chucky and Annabelle and Megan, they all get to be terrifying, so why not a train? Why not a toy train?"

There was also a practical reason for choosing toy trains: "I thought, well, why not make something evil that I'm also very familiar with? Even just the toy train parts I can get right without having to research, and I know how they work, and I know how they're built. I have built many model train sets in my time," he says.

Even now, he has a full setup in his basement, a large room with one massive model railway and scenery.

"Whistle" is evocative of a Stephen King horror novel, but with its own original storyline and characters. Barclay says of King, "I've admired his work for a very long time. I've been a fan forever."

The admiration is mutual. King's endorsement is displayed on the cover of "Whistle," and Barclay says, "He was the book's first reader. When I had the very first draft done, I asked him, 'Do you want to read it?' and he said, 'Oh yeah, but I don't want to read it on the screen. Can you print it out?' So I printed it and mailed it to him."

Barclay says he's not sure yet if he'll write another horror novel.

"I think it's really going to depend on how people respond to 'Whistle.' If it does really well, then I might go there."

In the meantime, he's already written his next thriller. "I wanted to get it done because any time now, our daughter is going to have twins, and I anticipate the rest of the year will be complete mayhem."

Barclay is on a whirlwind tour next week, with appearances here in NOTL, Grimsby and Burlington. In June, he'll be travelling to various events in the U.K.

He looks forward to these appearances, saying, "Writing is a very isolating kind of profession, so when you get a chance to actually go out to something good like Niagara and see people, it's a nice break."

Wine and Words, being held from 7 to 9 p.m., is a fundraising event for the NOTL Public Library. To register, visit notl-publiclibrary.libnet.info/event/13004785.



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Thunderhawks **dominate** lacrosse match

Jack Sarter, #91, buries the Thunderhawks' second goal of the game during Niagara-on-the-Lake's dominant 12-0 win over the Pelham Raiders. The shutout was part of a special home opener night for the club, marking a major milestone — the return of a U15 team for the first time in more than five years. In past seasons, NOTL didn't have the numbers to support a squad at this age level, and players were sent to nearby centres like Pelham or St. Catharines. Being able to ice a full U15 team again is a proud moment for the Thunderhawks, says board secretary Tracey Hope. DAVE VAN DE LAAR



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Some sharp shooting in NOTL golf leagues

Staff
The Lake Report

Devon Neudorf's 2-over par 38 led the field in the Thursday night men's league at the Niagara-on-the-Lake Golf Club, while Ron Planche's 22 points was tops under the Stableford scoring format.

Net skins, worth \$35, went to Mark Wheaton, Peter Chilibeck, John Weinseis, Matt Vandelaar and Michael Sanders.

Jim McMacken's birdie on #7 earned a gross skin worth \$110, Doug Hernder won the 50/50 draw and Patrick Craig took home \$200 for sinking a long putt in the putting contest.

Other winners were: Kevin MacLean (longest putt #2), Nick Ella (longest drive #3), Dave D'Agostino (closest to the pin #4) and Dean McCann (closest to the pin #9).

In the women's 18-hole league on Tuesday morn-



Left: Carroll Baker shot 45 to take top honours in Business Ladies league play Monday at the Niagara-on-the-Lake Golf Club. Right: Devon Neudorf fired a 2-over 38 and won low gross in men's league last Thursday. FILE PHOTOS

ing Louise Robitaille had the hot hand, with three birdies en route to an 82 for low gross honours. Martha Cruikshank was next with 87 and Yolanda Henry shot 90.

Cruikshank and May Chang tied for low net score, with 71. Next were Gayle Tanner and Henry



(net 73) and Robitaille (net 75).

Henry needed only 26 putts for her round and earned the fewest putts prize. Robitaille and Cruikshank had 27 putts and Chang had 28.

Sally Miller shot a 49 to win low gross in women's nine-hole league play, also

on Tuesday. She also had the longest drive on #2.


Julie Smethurst took low net honours with 32 and Cathy Saytar had the longest drive on #8.

McMacken also was top dog in Tuesday's Woofs league, with a 1-over 37. Dave Gagne was low net with 29.5 and Rick Janes' birdie on #8 won the hidden hole prize. Norm Kerr was closest to the pin on #4.

Carroll Baker was top shooter in the Monday night Business Ladies league, firing a 45 this week.

Other winners were: Danielle Waters (longest drive on #1), Nancy Jackson (closest to the 150 on #2), Frankie Rothschild (longest putt #7) and Wendy Lowe (closest to pin #9).


Last week's league winners were: Claire Forbes (low gross, 44), Erin Howe-Hull (longest drive #1), Isobel Sipos (closest to 150 on #2), Suzanne Watson (closest to pin #4) and Trish Anthony (longest putt #7).



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Gardeners snap up plants at Hort Society sale

Andrew Hawlitzky
The Lake Report

Local green thumbs proved they were no late bloomers at the Niagara-on-the-Lake Horticultural Society's annual plant sale, quickly clearing tables of popular items within the first hour.

Saturday's event at Meridian Credit Union Arena opened ahead of its scheduled 9 a.m. start, as eager customers were already lined up around the building.

"All the gardeners look forward to this day because they know they're going to get good, well-cared-for plants," said Cindy Grant, president of the NOTL Horticultural Society.

Grant said the sale has been held annually since 2013 and has become a must-attend for local gardening enthusiasts.

"Everything is local. Many plants are donations from our members' gardens and they're very affordably priced," said volunteer Kathryn O'Grady.

Susan Dodd, the event's co-ordinator, said community spirit is at the heart of

Eager gardeners were quick to get their hands on plants at this year's Horticultural Society plant sale at the Meridian arena in Virgil. The sale has become so popular that people line up around the building well in advance of opening. DAVE VAN DE LAAR

the sale's popularity.

"It's always like this," she said. "We really appreciate the support, and everybody seems to have a fun time. It's nice to have such enthusiasm."

Proceeds help fund horticultural scholarships at Niagara College and the Niagara Parks School of Horticulture.

The society also maintains local green spaces,

including the pollinator garden at Newark Park, and delivers flowers to seniors in long-term care.


Alan and Barbara Large, a local couple, offered on-the-spot gardening tool sharpening at the event.

"We look forward to this day," said Alan Large. "It's fun to meet people and sharpen some strange gardening tools you don't often see."

Next up for the society is its popular Garden Tour on July 10 — a major fundraiser that draws visitors from across Ontario and beyond.

"If this event is big, the Garden Tour is huge," said Grant. "We'll have nearly 100 volunteers and seven beautiful gardens featured — it's an exciting day for the whole community."


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- Emily Bronte

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Fox in the rectory

A fox pauses in the backyard of the St. Mark’s rectory after crossing King Street around 8 p.m. on April 30. Spotted from a nearby truck, the fox sat calmly for about 30 seconds before disappearing toward the cemetery.
DAVE VAN DE LAAR



Opinion

Who won the federal election? We did



David Israelson
Special to The Lake Report

The candidate I backed in the April 28 federal election didn’t win, but I’m glad about the election results anyway.
I’m sorry our candidate lost, of course. I think she would have been an excellent Member of Parliament. But I’m grateful for the way our entire election transpired, not just because the party and the leader I supported won.
I’m also happy because this was an election that worked, more or less, the way elections are supposed to work. It was a reasonably clean campaign; we, the voters, had important issues put before us. And we were offered real choices about how we want to meet the deep challenges we face, for the very survival of Canada.
In these days of so-called “populist” politics, that’s actually a lot to be thankful for.

Some people will say the system is still flawed, that we should have some sort of weighted voting system that takes into account the proportion of Canadians who did not want Mark Carney to lead a Liberal government as prime minister.
Maybe so. But this is a debate for future elections. We all went into this one knowing what the system is now, and our voting system, whatever its shortcomings, worked the way it is supposed to work.
Significant voter turnout
According to Elections Canada, voter turnout in the Niagara Falls—Niagara-on-the-Lake riding was 66.7 per cent, with 60,590 of 90,766 registered electors casting ballots. This is not a super-high turnout, but it’s respectable.
The national turnout was the highest in a federal election since 1993. Canadians were engaged.
Residents who answered their doors to canvassers certainly were. They were anxious to talk about what was on their minds, especially protecting Canadian sovereignty and how to make life more affordable.
The riding’s voters also had the opportunity to hear all the main candidates

debate. Those candidates, Liberal Andrea Kaiser, Conservative (and winner) Tony Baldinelli and New Democrat Shannon Mitchell all took part in a debate that was televised and available online.
This is important. It’s in sharp contrast to elections in many other countries — you know which ones — where one side tries to shut the other down by either ignoring them or insulting them.
Listening and pulling together
This is significant for local residents and all Canadians. We’re in the early stages of the biggest political fight most of us have ever seen in this country; if we’re going to win, we need to listen to each other and pull together.
That doesn’t mean we all need to agree on every detail of how to take on Donald Trump, tariffs, trade and threats. Challenging each other’s ideas is what having a Parliament with a government and an opposition is for — debating and letting the strongest ideas prevail.
In Niagara-on-the-Lake, I think we can draw a few lessons from this election.
First, even in a crisis,

which is what we’re in now with the United States, it’s OK, and even essential, to question what’s the best way forward.
What’s more important is to hear everyone’s ideas and then, rather than argue endlessly and dither, to come up with the best way forward. That’s what everyone is counting on Prime Minister Carney to do now.
Secondly, maybe we can apply what we’ve seen in this election to our politics at other levels of government.
Too often, we’ve seen our provincial, regional and local governments trample over views that many people hold strongly — about protecting green space, about appropriate development. Our representatives need to listen to us after they’re elected, not just when they’re running.
Win or lose, in a democracy, our voices should be heard. In our riding, I think that happened even though my candidate didn’t win.
Let’s hope it happens again in our community.
David Israelson is a writer and non-practising lawyer who lives in Niagara-on-the-Lake.



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How are YOU pushing back against Trump?



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

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

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

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

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

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

Send them to editor@niagaranow.com.

Flying blind through NOTL’s murky housing market



THE TURNER REPORT
Garth Turner
Columnist

The folks down the street were pumped when a buyer finally came along.

“Seven months,” she said. “Never thought it would take so long, since we priced to sell. But thank God we got out now.”

Old Town. Waterview. Renovated. They thought selling last autumn would be a no-brainer. So they went ahead and bought firm down on Lake Erie. Then Trump showed up. And the stress began.

Real estate’s a mess right now. Sales are down everywhere. The GTA has a whack of condos nobody wants. Inventory is up. Days-on-market swelling. Trade wars, tariffs and recession are on the wind. But, weirdly, prices haven’t moved much.

“I believe that we, as a nation, will remain cautious until Trump’s tariffs with Canada are resolved, in one way or another,” says local Sotheby agent Kymberley McKee. “Once we know what we’re dealing with, the economy may begin to gradually pick up.” But not yet.

Making matters worse — or at least opaque — in this bucolic burg is the fact the realtor cartel stopped counting.

For some reason (they



A recent reno and flip in Old Town now on the market for \$2.6 million. “Affordable” homes have disappeared.

blame the IT guys) the Niagara Association of Realtors ceased publishing stats months ago. This coincided with a significant slide in the market, which would make a cynic wonder if the house-floggers are in no special hurry to find their password or pay the Cogeco bill and get back online.

I put this to the boss, Lisa Taylor: “Some agents and investors feel they are ‘flying blind’ at a difficult time without this input. What’s going on? When will data flow again?”

Crickets. Seems they’re comfortable keeping us ignorant. All we know is that in the first three months of the year, it was a disaster. Detached home sales down 38 per cent. Townhouses off 48 per cent. Unloved condos crashing 54 per cent.

What’s the status of real estate in NOTL now?

There are 359 properties for sale. Fewer than 50 are condos. Overall, it’s an expensive place to buy into. More than 60 per cent of all homes have an ask of over \$1 million. In fact, one in four are priced at \$1.5 million or above. Almost 70 places cost in excess of \$2 million.

Affordable? Ha. Fuhgeddaboutit. Just 27 properties (most of them condos) are on the market for \$500,000 or less. That’s about 7 per cent of all listings — which may surprise folks who once thought half a million dollars was, like, a lot of dough.

Let’s do the math.

The average house in Virgil, for example, is \$1.3 million. With a 10 per cent downpayment (\$130,000 cash) and land transfer tax figured in (\$27,500 — ouch), a couple would need

to borrow \$1.193 million.

At current mortgage rates that’s a monthly of \$6,730, plus property tax, utilities, cable, insurance and enough scotch to forget you owe \$1.193 million.

This also requires a household income of \$245,000. That’s double the Canadian average and qualifies to be in the top 4 per cent for income. It’s also swamps the average NOTL family income of \$126,800.

So if the locals have a hard time buying here, who is?

Not enough people, clearly. It’s a tough gig for the house-sellers now. But those who do buy likely come from the urban east and move to NOTL with equity.

That means they skew older (no surprise there — hang around the post office and count the white hairs). Also, with scant entry-level affordable homes and even fewer rentals, young families get scarce. All made worse as smaller starter-type homes are snapped up by investors for Airbnb income.

Consequently, NOTL remains one of the few towns where unhosted, lucrative vacation rentals haven’t been banished to allow for long-term tenants.

Local politicians were slated to have a staff report on the issue by now but — like the realtor statistics — poof. Real estate values stay aloft. Buyers stay indebted. The renters stay out.

We can do better.

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

garth@garth.ca



This week’s riddle is “Jeopardy!” style.
Category: WHAT’S THAT SONG?

Hall & Oates:
“She’ll only come out at night,
the lean and hungry type.”

Last issue: THAT’S BANANAS

Clue: Banana is a word in the language of these animated yellow sidekicks, whose banana song was in a trailer for “Despicable Me 2.”

Answer: What are Minions?

Answered first by: Bill Hamilton

Also answered correctly (in order) by:
Lynda Collet, Jane Morris, Claudia Grimwood, Sue Rautenberg, Mike Gander, Margaret Garaughty, Karen Williams, Bob Wheatley, Esther VanGorder, Wade Durling, Katie Reimer, Jim Dandy, Nancy Rocca, Sheryl Christensen, Sylvia Wiens, Jeff Lake, Michelle Gallacher, Sheila Meloche, Tuija Johansson, Catherine Clarke, KC King

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

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We welcome your letters

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

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Ford government attacks Ontario's livability



ARCHITEXT

Brian Marshall
Columnist

On Feb. 27, the voters of Ontario spoke and handed Doug Ford another majority government. This election occurred 15 months early because Premier Ford claimed that he required a new mandate to deal with U.S. President Trump's tariff threats, and the people of Ontario believed him.

But, during the few short weeks since that election, what has Ford done with that mandate?

Let's take a look at a couple of bills recently introduced to the legislature.

On April 17, the Ford government quietly tabled the omnibus Bill 5, labelled the Protect Ontario by Unleashing our Economy Act.

This bill has been roundly condemned by the leaders of Ontario's First Nations, environmental advocacy organizations and civil liberties groups.

Quite simply, the proposed legislation seeks to gut environmental protection, continuing Ford's earlier assaults in 2020 and 2022, which weakened conservation authority's powers and granted the Minister of Natural Resources the unilateral authority to approve development applications.

Bill 5 proposes to eliminate the Endangered Species Act (once considered the gold standard of its type in Canada) and replace it with a severely compromised Species Conservation Act which strangely no longer protects species "habitat" (a word absent in the proposed legislation) but only the exact location of the plant or animal.

Further, this act allows any species, endangered or otherwise, to be removed as part of a development or infrastructure proposal, provided it is not the "last" individual of that species, while simultaneously conferring upon a provincial minister the power to identify whether or not a species is endangered.

In addition, Bill 5 proposes to amend the Mining Act and the Environmental Assessment Act with provisions removing due process reviews to facilitate mining activities.

The proposed legislation



Bill 5 proposes to remove all protection from unidentified districts and landscapes of historic and cultural significance, such as the Indigenous cairn shown. SOURCED

also continues the Ford government's past actions to chip away at and erode the Ontario Heritage Act.

Schedule 6 of the bill removes all protection for any as yet undiscovered or formally unidentified districts and landscapes of historic and/or cultural significance if they happen to be in areas, which, "in the opinion of the lieutenant governor in council ... could advance the following provincial priorities: Transit, housing, health and long-term care, other infrastructure or such other priorities as may be prescribed."

In reality, removing protection from these sites could very easily destroy important First Nations historic and sacred sites — including burial grounds and cairns — while also potentially causing the loss of colonial settlement sites.

After all, if no archeological investigation is required, then the government, land owners and developers can claim plausible deniability for such an event resulting from their actions.

Finally, this bill introduces the intent to empower the Ontario government to declare "special economic

zones" — geographic areas in which "trusted proponents" and/or identified projects will not have to comply with existing provincial laws nor municipal bylaws that will essentially create lawless zones for the benefit of a select few.

More egregiously, there was no consultation with the province's First Nations related to any of the bill's provisions.

In a statement from the Anishnawbe Business Professional Association published on May 9, its president, Jason Rasevych, declares, "Bill 5 is not a pathway to prosperity; it is a direct assault on the foundations of respectful partnership and shared decision-making, which are crucial for any legitimate economic development in our territories."

Rasevych continues, "The proposed 'special economic zones,' with their sweeping powers to exempt projects from provincial and municipal laws, and the alarming lack of commitment to free, prior, and informed consent (FPIC), threaten to exclude First Nations businesses and communities from meaningful participation and oversight in projects that directly affect our lands, waters, and livelihoods. This is not economic reconciliation; it is economic marginalization."

A thorough analysis of Bill 5 from the Canadian Environmental Law Association in its May submission to various Ontario government ministries underwrites why they categorically oppose "all 10 schedules in Bill 5, and we call upon the Ontario government to withdraw this unjustifiable attack on environmental law and the rule of law."

Bluntly, there is no upside to Bill 5 — it's a train wreck waiting to happen.

And, right now, its status is second reading and referred to the standing committee for review.

It is vital that Ontarians loudly express their opposition to Bill 5 by contacting the sitting members of provincial parliament, including the government's ministers and the premier.

The Ford government has reversed course before and we need them to do it again now.

Next week, we'll examine another piece of proposed legislation: Protect Ontario by Building Faster and Smarter Act. Stay tuned.

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



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Enough with the Rand Estate legal battles

Dear editor:

This Benny Marotta, Blair McArthur and Save Our Rand Estate (SORE) thing is getting out of hand, and at all of our expense.

Lord Mayor Gary Zalepa must resign now.

I have had enough of the Marotta fight and the expenses incurred forced upon the residents by town council, who, apparently, might be sued personally, including the next-door neighbours of the Rand Estate, who have used the SORE group for their NIMBY attack at the expense of everybody.

McArthur owns 10 acres

with one house on site that is not used until Christmas, when one can tour and get a cookie before departing the property. Imagine one house on 10 acres, and nobody lives there on a permanent basis.

Both McArthur and Marotta are multi-millionaires, maybe even billionaires. One inherited his money, the other worked for and made his millions; set that aside for now.

The NIMBY millionaire McArthur has been riding on our taxes to pay for the fight against Marotta, who is trying to build more housing for people to live, and not simply to visit for

an exchange of a cookie one time a year during the Rotary Club's Holiday House Tour.

We have paid for this stupid dispute and it keeps on going.

Zalepa, who knows absolutely nothing about real estate or effective governance, has been saying that we have to pony up 10 per cent tax increases per year. No more, I say.

Get Zalepa out and put somebody competent into the role of the head councillor of this town for a change.

How acceptable is it for Zalepa to have allowed all of the other council-

lors to possibly have to defend themselves against serious personal lawsuits for something that need not be, all at everybody's expense?

We have a dysfunctional council with an inept mayor at the helm. Get rid of Zalepa — I refuse to pay any more tax increases because of this dope.

Never mind how he runs public meetings: Arrogant, rude and disrespectful. We need a person with a civil servant mentality, not a goon. It has become so bad that Zalepa may have to leave town.

*Peter Rusin
St. Davids*

Dog owners, please pick up after your pets

Dear editor:

My parents live in NOTL, we visit often, and consequently, I frequent the Commons to walk the furry granddaughter. It is, as your readers know, a beautiful place.

However I have to say I am truly bewildered by something that I encounter every time I visit — discarded and abandoned bags of dog poop lying by (and occasionally on) the walking path.

I'm not sure what the

thinking that creates this issue is.

Perhaps it's that the perpetrators feel that their dog's download is just too heavy to carry, all four ounces of it, or that somehow, a minion of some kind will come, tug their forelock and gratefully carry it to the bin, glad to be of service to their lord or ladyships, or it's that they feel that other dog walkers need the excitement of trying not to step in the little biological

landmines that are being left behind.

Who knows?

Anyway, if you are one of the people who do this, you should know that, like face-melting halitosis or chronic body odour, your friends are not going to say anything, but they are not enjoying your company.

Please take a second to understand that it is inconsiderate, selfish and lazy.

*Julian Goss
(and Lila the dog)
Toronto/NOTL*



Pick up your dog's litter, writes Julian Goss.

Great editorial — we must fight misinformation

Dear editor:

I live in London, Ont., and last night I read a repost from a friend in B.C., who shared your editorial, posted by Radio Free Canada ("Editorial: Poilievre is truly great — at pandering," Aug. 14, 2024).

I include this rather laborious linking because it's gratifying to see connections across our country. I shared my friend's post on Canadians Against Poilievre, a very civil and well-administered Facebook group that helped many of us stay reasonably sane during the weeks lead-

ing up to the election.

I posted the share around nine hours ago, and so far, it has been shared 135 more times.

I have the greatest respect for those holding the energy for honest journalism and want to thank Niagara Now and similar outlets for doing so.

I'm not sure in what manner laws here and elsewhere can be passed/changed to help fight misinformation/disinformation, but I'm interested in finding out.

Thank you for your work!

*Susannah Joyce
London*



Letter writer Susannah Joyce says it's important to hold politicians accountable for misinformation. FILE

Not just 'wine country' — NOTL's heritage matters, too

Dear editor:

I am pleased to see that council has decided that Niagara-on-the-Lake is more than "wine country," but was disappointed to learn that their new vision statement will say that the town is "known for its natural beauty, food and wine and unrivalled cultural ex-

periences" ("Wine country" at the heart of a controversy over new tourism vision," May 8).

The phrase "cultural experiences" is too weak. The town is noted for its extremely rich heritage. It is a town of firsts and preserves an incredible collection of built heritage.

Visitors come to the historic town of Niagara to experience its heritage ambience combined with visits to wineries, the Shaw, and so on. Would our wine industry, hospitality sector and the Shaw be as successful if it were not for the heritage setting? Other parts of Ontario can boast of wine and

natural beauty, but attract far fewer tourists to their streets.

Our heritage is our most important asset from a tourism perspective. Let's not forget how blessed we are with such a rich history and so many reminders of a dramatic past.

*Ron Dale
NOTL*

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Joy, joyful and joyous on the streets of our town



Ross's Ramblings

Ross Robinson
Columnist

Last year at this time, I rambled about Mother's Day being the kindest day of the year. Our town has taken it to the next level this year. A feeling of joy and happiness filled our town last weekend. So many people smiling, laughing, learning and celebrating. Especially with the unpredictable world in which we live now. A long winter is behind us, and we are smiling at the future. I don't know how it happened or how large a team worked on the Niagara-on-the-Lake In Bloom Festival, but congratulations on making NOTL absolutely magical

last weekend. How many banquet event orders were generated, and how much teamwork went into such a complex event? So many meetings, such attention to detail, so many conversations and decisions to make the concept a reality. From what I understand, in late May this year, the 20th-annual Chelsea in Bloom will be celebrated in jolly old London. I don't know, nor do I really care, who is responsible for "the In Blooms" there and here. We have all been reminded that magic can happen when like-minded people come together with a common purpose and a dream. It's shocking to remember that only a few years ago, the area across John Street from the Pillar and Post Inn & Spa was an underutilized and sad parking lot. Jimmy Lai and his visionary family and corporate team waited, strategized and then generously created the Monet-inspired gardens. For all of us to enjoy. Free! In Bloom was such a



Ross Robinson says NOTL In Bloom was a wonderful way to celebrate our town on Mother's Day weekend. Find more photos online at niagaranow.com. DAVE VAN DE LAAR

tribute to them and the very large team at Vintage Hotels. I first heard of the In Bloom concept only five months ago. Is that possible? From the little I have learned, the concept was embraced by so many wonderful characters. May I ramble a bit? To name just a few, the team at Vintage Hotels, Niagara-on-the-Lake Tourism, the Museum, the parks, the Town of NOTL. And more.

Nationally known Frankie Flowers was totally enthusiastic to join in as a headliner who provided credibility and knowledge. So many Niagara area business people bought in, quietly joining the team with only one goal. To create a new event, built around a common love of flowers. Hey, who doesn't love blooms? May I include the word serendipity here? Niagara-

on-the-Lake In Bloom kept getting better and better. Yes, the signage, the timing, the enthusiastic and smiling people working the event, and the pervasive first-class feelings. But the fun of flowers being used to create a container of popcorn, a pot of tea pouring into a cup, and yes, sushi. Trust me, it was all happening. Imagination and creativity in high gear. Around every corner, another surprise. With all the ill feelings and uncertainty in the world today, In Bloom was a much-needed and unexpected joy. People came from near and far to marvel, to smile and to smell. The Bubbles, Bonnets and Blooms welcome reception, and the Gardens of the World dinner gala at the Queen's Landing. Seminars to educate and entertain the many gardeners who were with us. And hey, they overspent on sound. The devil is in the details. Sure, the whole event hopefully created good

revenue for Vintage Inns and others. Isn't that what makes this type of creative masterpiece sustainable? Rambling on, and having planned several events over the years, I must say I was absolutely flabbergasted while glimpsing NOTL In Bloom. The organizers, obviously passionate and talented, had blessed us with their professionalism. The subtle and hard-working hands of the Vintage Hotels and Lai family of hotels team. This seems like the perfect opportunity to reach out and voice our appreciation to everyone involved with last week's Niagara-on-the-Lake In Bloom. A brave and risky undertaking at any time, let alone in the midst of the uncertainty in our world today. It was marvellous to be a tiny part of such an artistic, cultural and financial triumph. Great things can happen when great people lean into a great concept. Now, let's all take time to stop and smell the roses.

St. Davids school needs better plan for the future

Dear editor:
As a concerned citizen and taxpayer, I read with great interest your recent article highlighting the approved York Road development and the important discussion it sparked regarding school capacity in our growing community (May 8, "Council approves York Road residential units, sparking school board discussion.") St. Davids is a beautiful and rapidly expanding area of Niagara-on-the-Lake. Families are continuing to move here, drawn by its charm and vibrancy. However, this growth

and lack of planning from the District School Board of Niagara has placed an unsustainable strain on St. Davids Public School. With enrolment now far beyond its intended capacity, students are learning in overcrowded conditions and portable classrooms meant only as short-term solutions. Simply put, the school can no longer meet the needs of the community as it stands today, let alone accommodate the growth this new development represents. What is especially troubling is that just minutes down the road sits Crossroads Public School — a

modern, well-equipped facility that is currently underutilized with empty classrooms and experiencing a diminishing student population. In a time when school board resources are stretched and taxpayer dollars must be spent wisely, it's hard to understand why we continue to add portables to an already overcrowded school when we have a viable, long-term solution nearby. This is a moment for decisive action. The District School Board of Niagara must act and re-examine school boundaries in

Niagara-on-the-Lake with an eye toward sustainability and fairness. We owe it to the students and teaching staff to ensure their learning environments are safe, appropriate, and enriching — and we owe it to taxpayers to ensure public resources are used efficiently and responsibly. It's time for meaningful steps to be taken to balance enrolment and plan wisely for the future. The continued growth of St. Davids requires smart, collaborative planning, and our schools should reflect that.
Andrew Stewart
St. Davids

Region ignoring residents on St. Davids roundabout

Dear editor:
So the region and the town want to know what the citizens of NOTL want to see in the heart of St. David's now that they have ignored the majority of residents who have consistently, for years, said "no roundabout" (The Lake Report, "Future St. Davids roundabout narrowed down to two options, region asks residents to vote for one," May 1). It is astounding that not only do we get an unneeded roundabout, but the region sees fit to send a four-page voting process to determine

what it should look like. At least when the town undertook the unneeded "wall" makeover at the entrance to Old Town, it was being funded by an individual donor, had some measure of support and was advertised through Join the Conversation as opposed to being funded by our taxes. And, to add insult to injury, we also get to pay for the voting promotion to pick out what we didn't want in the first place should look like? Give your head a shake!
Bob Bader
NOTL

'Strong mayor powers' put democracy in jeopardy in Niagara-on-the-Lake

Dear editor:
The election of Donald Trump as the U.S. president, and his subsequent imposition of tariffs on Canadian products, clearly influenced the outcomes of the Ontario and federal elections in our country. Premier Doug Ford convinced voters that he was the best person to stand up to Mr. Trump, as did Mark Carney. Both ran successful campaigns built primarily on that premise.

While Mr. Carney also put forward innovative plans to address housing affordability and the economic fallout from the U.S. trade war, Mr. Ford's campaign was focused almost entirely on his supposed abilities to protect Ontario workers from potential job losses and the impacts of U.S. tariffs. Despite the efforts of his political opponents to talk about health care, affordability and other issues,

Mr. Ford's message clearly resonated with voters. In hindsight, I'm disappointed that the state of democracy in Ontario was never raised as an issue in the provincial election. It's easy to decry the decline of democracy in the U.S., where President Trump has used executive orders to rule virtually unchecked, but Ontario isn't perfect either. Premier Ford's bestowing of superpowers on mayors

across the province has created the means for our municipal elected leaders to act in similar ways. When mayors can legally override the decisions of an elected municipal council and usurp the hiring process for senior staff positions, democracy is in peril. We're about to find out just how serious an issue this is for Niagara-on-the-Lake. Perhaps Lord Mayor Gary Zalepa will be cautious about using the super

mayor powers bestowed on him by Premier Ford ("It's still a democratic process": Council doesn't reject strong mayor powers," May 8, The Lake Report). I certainly hope that proves to be the case. But I won't be surprised if he does opt to use them, nor to see controversial development projects and large municipal tax increases get the green light as a result. That's just one of the reasons why I plan to

attend the upcoming Niagara-on-the-Lake Residents Association meeting. Voices raised in opposition to undemocratic decisions might make a difference. I hope so. Because the basic principle of democracy — one person, one vote, whether by a member of a municipal council or by a voter at the ballot box — no longer applies in Ontario.
Terry Davis
NOTL



Dead trees threaten NOTL's power lines



Tim Curtis
Special to The Lake Report

About two weeks ago, a large dead tree fell across some of the NOTL Hydro power lines on Four Mile Creek Road. Fortunately, the power lines were not damaged and the tree had sufficiently dried out that a fault did not occur.

NOTL Hydro crews were able to limit the outage needed to remove the tree to fewer than 100 customers and only around about three minutes by switching some of the feeder lines.

This April 30 incident

was the fourth such outage caused by a dead tree falling on our lines in this area. The previous outages were much more disruptive, with thousands of customers without power for much longer periods of time.

Due to the emerald ash borer, there are many more tall dead trees around than normal. As these trees weaken, they are at an increased risk of falling and causing outages.

NOTL Hydro has tried to reduce this risk by boosting its tree-trimming budget by 50 per cent this year and doing in the tree trimming during the first quarter. We also have been working closely with the Town of Niagara-on-the-Lake and the Niagara Region, which are proactively taking down the dead trees on their properties.

But we can only trim trees around our lines and the town

and region can only remove trees on their public rights-of-way. Trees on private property are the responsibility of the property owner.

Hydro recognizes that having a tree removed by a professional arborist is not cheap and can cost thousands of dollars, depending on the size and location of the tree. This cost should be compared to the potential cost if the tree falls and damages someone's property, including NOTL Hydro-owned power lines.

Our utility traditionally has not charged for the cost of repairing damage caused by a fallen tree. However, it is something that is being considered in the case of a property owner who does not take the appropriate actions if they have been asked to do so.

The vast majority of property owners do not want to be the cause of an outage

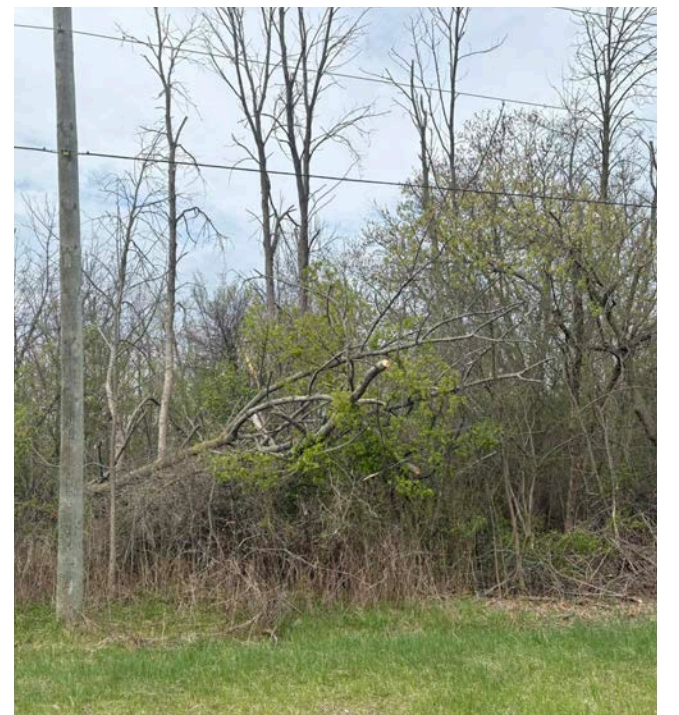
and they work with us to remove any dangers. Unfortunately, there are always exceptions.

On a more positive note, if you have concerns with the potential danger from a tree on your property, feel free to give us a call at 905-468-4235.

We will not remove the tree and we are not arborists, but we may be able to provide you some guidance about the risk to our power lines and what needs to be done.

NOTL Hydro is fully aware that the number of outages has been much higher than normal, starting last summer. Increasing the tree-trimming budget and activity is one of the actions being taken to try to reduce outages.

We are also accelerating the program to replace some of our older equipment, like porcelain



Whether on public or private land, dead trees like this one can cause serious service disruptions if they fall on power lines. That's why they must be taken down promptly.

insulators and overloaded transformers. Some of the outage causes (car accidents, lightning, loss of supply from Hydro One) are beyond our control.

For these, we are in-

creasing our investments in switching and reclosing technologies that help reduce the length of an outage.

Tim Curtis is president and CEO of NOTL Hydro.

Canadian sovereignty, and the relationship between our provinces

Dear editor:

Last week, Donald Trump was asked whether he might use military force to achieve an annexation. He answered that it would be "highly unlikely."

Eyebrows up! Unlikely? Wow! Is Trump reserving his options at this point?

If the mercurial Mr. Trump says "unlikely" on Monday, we might well hear "possibly" on Tuesday. If he felt confident about the feedback, he could be saying "probably" by Wednesday. With his sycophants egging him on ... well, you

see what I'm getting at.

But why would he be using the word "unlikely"? There could be several reasons, the first being fear of starting an actual war. This would also bring fear of NATO coming to defend us.

Thirdly, surely he could not be confident of support from the House or the Senate for such truly mad belligerence. Are those reasons not sufficient to deter him from his insane idea?

Conversely, he may be thinking that at this time we are weak. Two of our western provinces with

powerful ties to the United States are openly discussing the idea of how they might choose "sovereignty within Canada," whatever that means.

Maybe he thinks this is his opportunity to seize the moment. Suppose he annexed those two provinces? Canada, broken into three pieces. How would British Columbia feel about that? I hate to say it, but would there not be a certain ambivalence?

Which brings me to the present relationships between provinces.

Shortly after our country was first established, the equation was Ontario plus Québec plus the Maritime provinces. With Ontario on the one hand and Québec just across the river, that made Ottawa a reasonable choice as a location for the national government.

But now, does that still work? Ever since the Prairies were opened up, a mere 140 years ago, there has been a certain discordance, the western provinces often being at odds with faraway Ottawa.

Much of this disunity was

on account of the already existing residents, the Métis and the Indigenous people being generally ignored, disrespected and treated not as citizens, but as wards of the state. We are still trying to repair the damage done by that.

Our country is still young. Some of our problems are caused simply by the geographic reality: The huge size of our country; the great differences in climate; and the differing utility of the land, which inevitably induces very different interests,

aims and concerns of the various groups inhabiting it. There is uneasiness between these groups.

We've got a lot of work to do, but the bright side is this: The threat from the south has unified us to a new level. The great majority of us agree on what we don't want.

P.S. Here's a thought — considering our country is bigger than the United States, why don't we invite them in as the 11th province?

*Andrew Henwood
NOTL*

Chance for town to do something better with its new urban design review panel

Dear editor:

NOTL may be looking at a tool for molding a more positive future. As Brian Marshall recently explained, the urban design committee stands to be replaced by an urban design review panel (The Lake Report, "Arch-i-text: Why urban design and urban planning are not interchangeable," May 1). A review of the terms of reference for the panel will take place May 21.

Though the current administration is in a rush, we need to take a careful look at this opportunity, so that we get it right.

Done well, this could be a game changer for development in NOTL. As the interim CAO noted, several communities throughout Ontario have adopted the urban design review panel

model. So have many others throughout Canada and Europe.

Not all face the exact same challenges as NOTL, but we all find ourselves in need of expert change management and design integrity in a time of rapid expansion.

The key advantage of the review panel structure is the flipping of the script on something that is simply not working in NOTL. The past three years have seen turmoil around new developments and the application process. From frustrated residents who've spoken out to claims of confusion and frustration from applicants, it's clear that procedure, expectations and legislation are not aligning.

The current process begins with an obfuscatory

pre-consultation meeting, after which planners deem an application complete and make their recommendations for approval. The planning director insists that applicants tailor submissions to fit local requirements.

Reality reveals that applicants are asking for multiple variances (one submission had a list of 26 requests) and increasingly, amendments to the official plan. We also see an abundance of non-contextual proposals that come with greater implications for infrastructure (increased costs for taxpayers).

If an applicant goes in believing their application is complete and will be recommended for approval, no wonder they find themselves baffled by expert reviews and public comments.

The new model, the one adopted by Ottawa, Hamilton, Burlington and other communities, turns this process on its head. Urban design is embedded in the official plan and becomes an integral part of the pre-consultation stage.

Design guidelines are established and provided to applicants who can determine whether their project fits in with the vision articulated in the respective official plan. The whole process helps to minimize costs associated with inappropriate construction and makes for a more cohesive, attractive and user-friendly community.

I agree with Mr. Marshall, who points out the importance of an urban design specialist on staff. This position can easily replace an

existing one at no additional cost. The streamlining and clarity would provide even more savings for the town.

Larger projects would be reviewed by the urban design review panel of experts — ideally made up of a combination of local experts and those from firms around the province.

What is required to make this happen?

Articulate an overall long-term vision for NOTL

Embed urban design and review processes in the official plan; create urban design guidelines

Hire an urban design specialist

Allocate design priority zones; determine unique density, height and other considerations

Create architectural control guidelines for staff and

applicants

There's no need to reinvent the wheel. Those communities currently experiencing success with their review panels have shared their information, including video demonstrations of panels in action.

We can do better in NOTL and there are resources to help us figure out how. This would be a step towards a more positive, cost-effective way of encouraging appropriate development in the current environment of flawed, broad-brush provincial directives.

Other communities are doing it. Will we? Stay tuned.

*Chrys Kaloudis
Former urban design
committee member
NOTL*

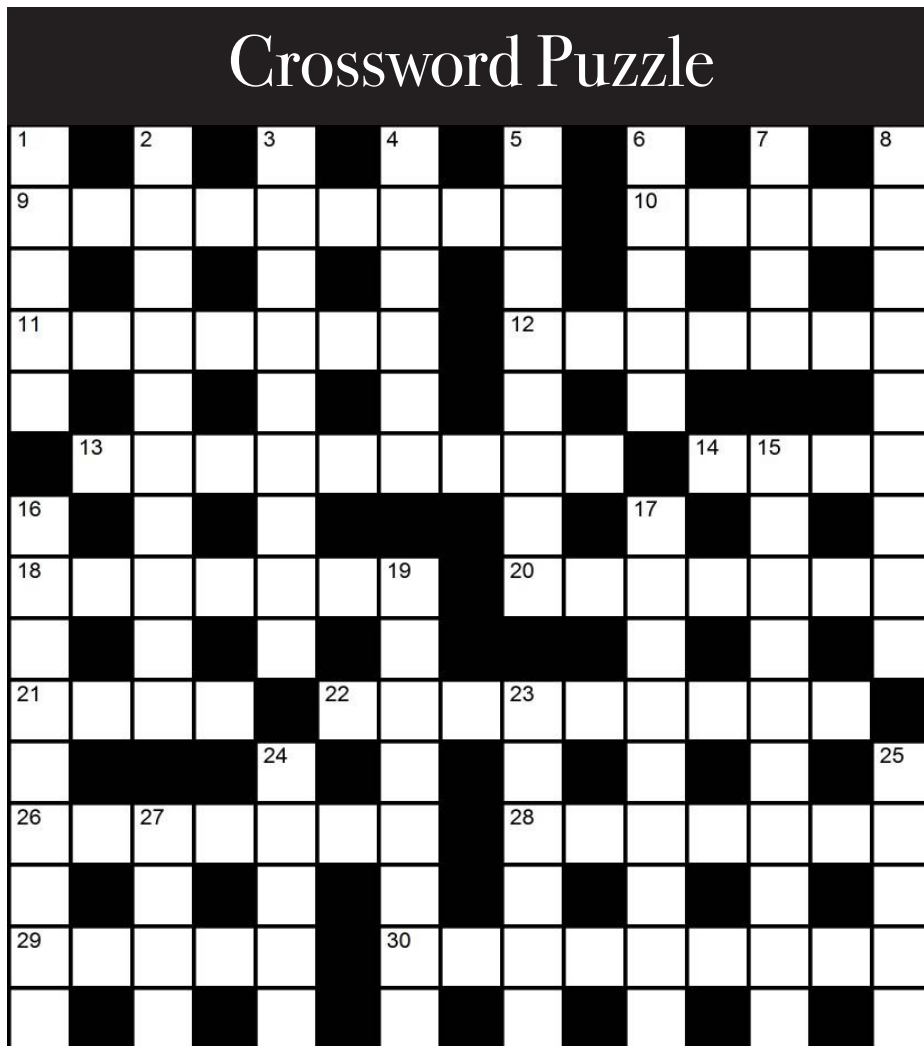


Have some fun

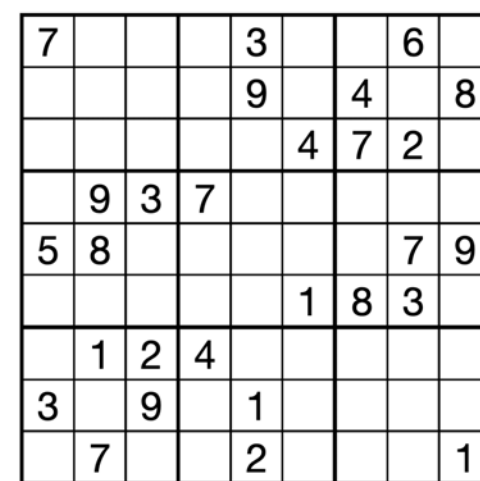
9. Playwright (9)
10. Moor (3,2)
11. Space surrounding an altar (7)
12. Quickly (7)
13. Runner (9)
14. Cougar (4)
18. Distinct sort or kind (7)
20. Surgical knife (7)
21. A great deal (4)
22. Herald (9)
26. Hedge (7)
28. Books of maps (7)
29. Young hooter (5)
30. Abbreviated (9)

1. Decree (5)
2. Executives (10)
3. Biting (9)
- 4 Fiddle (6)
5. Old liners (8)
6. The Roman Empire's home country (5)
7. Large mass of floating ice (4)
8. As thumbs are (9)
15. Disagreeable (10)
16. Psalter (5,4)
17. Moon (9)
19. Astonishment (8)
23. Lea (6)
24. Threescore (5)
25. Stage whisper (5)
27. Depend (4)

Crossword Puzzle

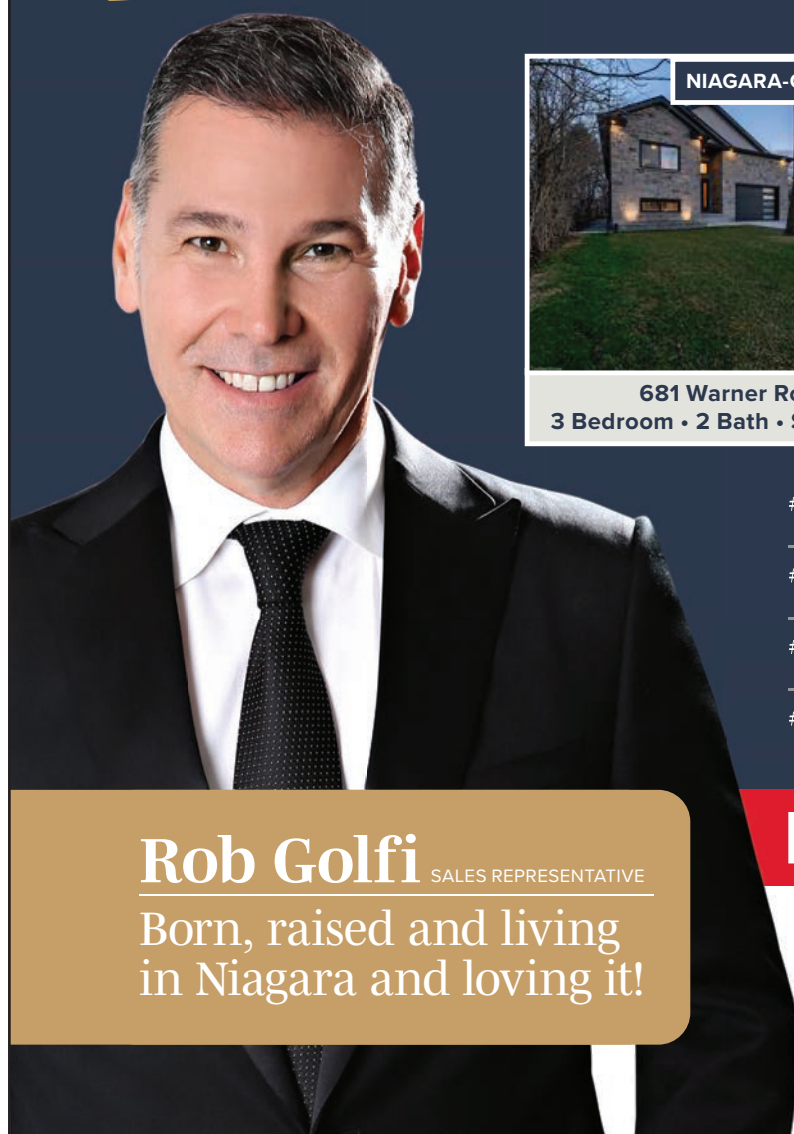


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14	A		B		E				D		15	H				U
16	G	R	I	N	D	E	R		17		18	N	I	E	L	S
	G		A		O			20	H	O	E		A		O	C
21	R	U	N	A	W	A	Y				22	W	E	L	F	A
	E				L		T							T	P	S
23	S		A	L	E		25	C	H	I	L	D	H	O	O	D
	S		A		A		27		M		Y		I		P	H
29	I	D	Y	L					30	I	N	C	L	E	M	E
	O		U		O					R		C	S			M
31	N	A	P	L	E	S			32	F	A	S	T	B	A	L



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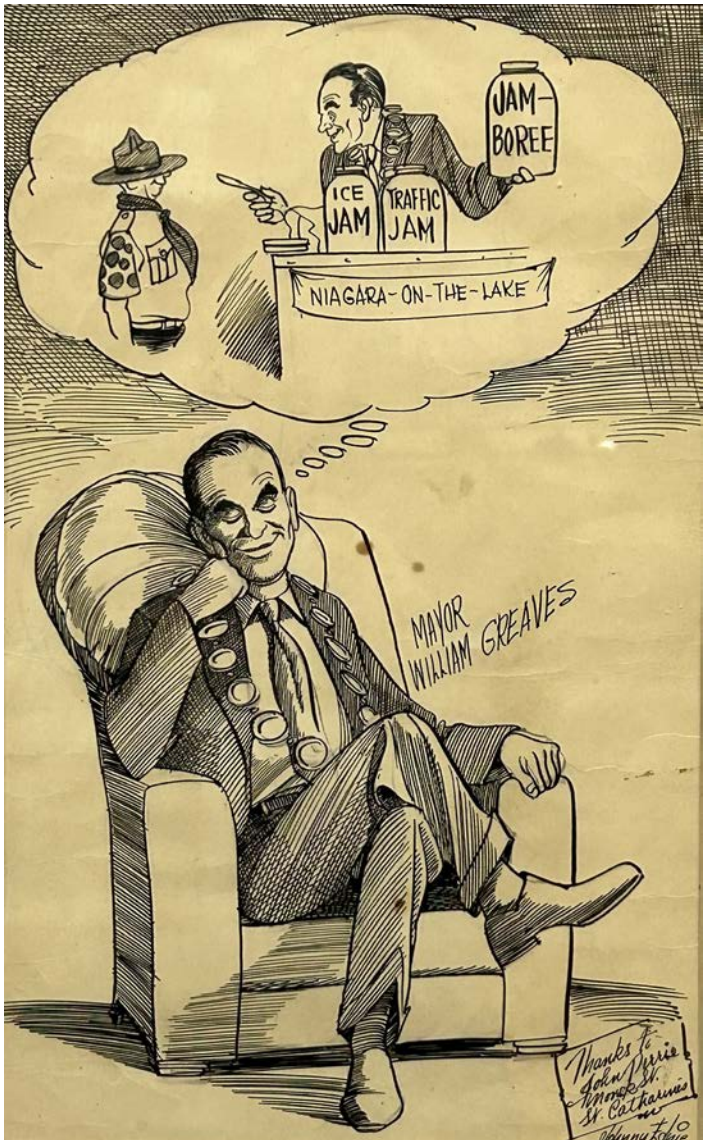
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EXPLORING HISTORY
WITH NOTL MUSEUM

A real jam for the lord mayor

This 1955 political cartoon highlights the issues that were top of mind for then Lord Mayor William Greaves Jr. during his tenure. It seems he was in a real “jam” that year.

The ice jam of 1955 created a lot of damage along the Niagara River until 1964, when a “boom” was installed to block the ice flow in Fort Erie. The Boy Scouts Jamboree brought in 11,000 Scouts and 250,000 spectators that year, which no doubt caused more traffic jams than the Tulip Festival on Line 3 did recently. And if you weren’t quite sure why there’s all this jam talk, Lord Mayor Greaves was part of the Greaves Jams Family business in town!

Here’s my advice for Lord Mayor Greaves: How do you get out of a jam? By having toast!



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2025 MUNICIPAL TAX REMINDER NOTICE Interim Second Installment due May 21, 2025 Tax Rates as per Interim By-Law No. 2024-078

Payment Options:

- By **mail** to the Town of Niagara-on-the-Lake (1593 Four Mile Creek Road, P.O. Box 100, Virgil ON, L0S 1T0)
- **In-person** or via **front or side entrance drop box** at Town Hall (1593 Four Mile Creek Road, Virgil)
- **Electronically** from a bank account using your 19-digit roll number
 - If payment is made at a bank or other pay station, the account will be credited only after the Town has received settlement from the bank. Please allow 10 business days for payment processing.

If you did not receive a tax notice, please call the Town at 905-468-3266 ext. 0 to ensure your correct mailing address and P.O. Box number are on file. To avoid penalties and interest charges, the Town must receive payment by May 21, 2025. On the first day of default and every month after, a 1.25% penalty will be added. Penalties will not be waived.

Pre-Authorized Payment Plan (PAP) and eSend Program

Save time and potential late fees by paying your taxes through a PAP plan, online or through telephone banking. You can also request to receive property tax bills and Town notices by email via eSend. Learn more at www.notl.com/council-government/property-taxes.



New Virgil Stampede Parking Shuttle Available

ONLY available Monday, May 19

Pickup/parking: Niagara United Mennonite Church at 1775 Niagara Stone Rd.

Drop off: Lorraine Street

Pick up every 20 minutes. Free to ride.

Shuttle runs from noon to 11 p.m., with a second shuttle added at 9 p.m.



NOTL in Bloom decorates the town



Across NOTL beautiful floral displays were set up over the weekend, showcasing some amazing artwork, like these lollipop arrangements in front of Zees restaurant on Queen Street. Other places decorated included the Court House and the Monet gardens at Pillar and Post. Find more photos online at niagaranow.com.
DAVE VAN DE LAAR



How this toxic worm targets your garden’s helpful worms



GROWING TOGETHER 

Joanne Young
Columnist

Last week, I wrote an article about a type of invasive worm that is becoming more visible in Ontario: The Asian jumping worm which can destroy soil structure.

There is another species of earthworm that is also becoming an invasive species.

Hammerhead worms (genus *Bipalium*) are invasive terrestrial flatworms originally from Southeast Asia, particularly countries like China, Japan and Korea. They also have made their way to North America mainly through the trade of plants and soil.

They have a long, flat, ribbon-like body. Their length ranges from a few inches to over a foot long — yikes!

As their name suggests, hammerhead worms have a broad, flattened head that is shaped like a hammer or anvil. The worms are typically brown, grey or yellowish in colour with darker stripes running the length of the body. They



As their name suggests, hammerhead worms have a broad, flattened head that is shaped like a hammer or anvil.

move using cilia on their underside and by having muscular contractions.

Hammerhead worms are usually found in moist, shady environments such as under rocks, logs, leaf litter and garden soil. They are nocturnal, meaning that they are more active at night or in moist environments.

Why are they considered invasive or dangerous? I am glad you asked.

Hammerhead worms prey on common earthworms and other invertebrates, which are crucial for soil health. They digest earthworms externally by secreting a mucus that contains enzymes and neurotoxins to immobilize and liquefy their prey.

The neurotoxin is called tetrodotoxin, the same toxin found in pufferfish. While the amount is not usually lethal to humans, it can irritate skin if handled

without gloves, and it’s potentially harmful if ingested by pets.

The hammerhead worm reproduces mainly asexually, meaning that it can reproduce by fragmentation. If you were to cut a hammerhead worm in half (or even smaller pieces), the worm can regenerate into two new worms. Some species can reproduce sexually, but asexual reproduction is more common in invasive species.

As we know, regular earthworms help aerate soil and recycle organic matter. Finding earthworms in the soil while gardening is always a good sign that you have healthy soil.

A decline in earthworm populations due to hammerhead worms can negatively affect agriculture, gardens and ecosystems. We need to be diligent in controlling this invasive species if we

want to keep it at bay.

Here are some ways to control them:

Use gloves or tools in the garden. Never touch them barehanded due to their toxins (tetrodotoxin).

Place them in a sealed plastic bag with vinegar, salt or citrus oil to kill them. Dispose of the sealed bag in the trash.

Do not cut them — each piece can regenerate into a new worm.

If you have found this worm in your garden, do not share any plants with neighbours and friends.

Visit EDDMapS Ontario to report sightings with precise location information and photos. This is managed by the Ontario Federation of Anglers and Hunters and is supported by the Ministry of Natural Resources and Forestry. Reporting any sightings will help efforts to control the spread of the hammerhead worms.

Standard pesticides are ineffective and can harm beneficial soil organisms more than the worms themselves. *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 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 pre-register for the classes, visit notlHORTSOCIETY.COM/classes.

Obituaries

Mary ‘Kathy’ Beigie



BEIGIE, Mary Catherine (Kathy) —
November 1, 1937 - May 1, 2025

Kathy (Hall) Beigie was born in Lansing, Ohio to William and Helen Hall and grew up with siblings Bill and David. Her lifelong love of music blossomed in childhood, inspired by

her mother, who often played piano accompaniments at the local movie house. As a child, she played pickup sports with neighborhood kids including future Hall of Famers Phil Niekro (baseball) and John Havlicek (basketball).

Kathy attended Muskingum College where she studied music and once performed Gershwin’s “Rhapsody in Blue” with a symphony orchestra. While singing with the college choir, Kathy met fellow choir member and Muskingum student Carl Beigie whom she married in the early 1960s. The couple moved to Arlington, Massachusetts where Kathy began her teaching career while Carl continued his studies at MIT. Her sons David and Darin were born in 1963 and 1964, respectively. The family moved for a brief time to London, Ontario before relocating to Manhasset, New York. In the early 1970’s, the family moved to Montreal. Kathy would eventually become a dual U.S. and Canadian citizen.

In Montreal, Kathy resumed teaching piano. In the 1980’s the family moved to Toronto where Kathy worked for many years at the St. Michael’s Choir School, forming lasting friendships with students and staff. Kathy traveled throughout North America, Europe and Asia with Carl, but her true passions remained family, faith and music. After relocating to Niagara-on-the-Lake, Kathy cared for Carl who suffered a series of strokes while she battled breast cancer herself. Following Carl’s passing in 2010, Kathy spent cherished times with neighbors and friends and was an active member at the St. Andrew’s Presbyterian Church, where she volunteered writing personal notes to those confined to hospitals and elder care facilities. During the pandemic, Kathy adapted and began conducting piano lessons over FaceTime. Right up until her passing, she was still teaching a few students.

Kathy is survived by sons Darin and David, David’s wife Sue, and their sons Aidan and Matthew. She is also survived by extended family in California and Ohio. The family expresses gratitude to the friends, neighbors, church members, students and care givers who supported her. Kathy would lean on her faith throughout her life. She passed quietly in her sleep at the Chapel Heights Senior Community facility in Niagara Falls. We remember her for a life well lived and will always hold her close to our hearts.

A memorial service will be held at 11 a.m., Saturday, May 24 at St. Andrew’s Presbyterian Church. A reception will follow the service. In lieu of flowers, the family invites people to make donations to St. Andrew’s Presbyterian Church, 323 Simcoe St., Niagara-on-the-Lake, L0S1J0. E-transfers can be sent to giftsstandrews@gmail.com.

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



Beverly Rockett

ROCKETT, Beverly —
Died peacefully with loved ones at her side on April 22, 2025. Cremation has already taken place. Interment will be at St. Mark’s Anglican Church, NOTL, on June 7 at 11 a.m.

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128th Racing Season
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Upcoming Events

Tuesday, May 27 - Opening Day
free concert with The Figure Four

Sunday, June 15 - Father's Day
special noon post time and farmer's
market

Monday, June 30 - Free concert after
racing with The Tragically Trip

Tuesday, July 1 - Family Day on
Canada Day
special noon post time & free kids
activities

Tuesday, July 8 - Free concert after
racing with Cottage Brew

Sunday, July 13 - Wiener Dog Races
take place after horse racing ends

Sunday, July 27 - Fort Foodie Fest
brings a convoy of food trucks to the
track

Monday, August 4 - Close out the
Civic Holiday long weekend with
racing at noon and farmer's market

Sunday, August 17 - Basset Hound
& Corgi Races take place after horse
racing ends

Monday, September 1 - Puss n Boots
Cup
for Labour Day long weekend racing
begins at noon

Tuesday, September 9 - The 90th
Prince of Wales Stakes

Monday, October 13 - Track-O-Lantern
returns with free trick-or-treating for
kids

Tuesday, October 21 - Fan
Appreciation & Closing Day



DOG RACES

Wiener Dogs
July 13

Corgis & Basset Hounds
August 17

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www.forterieracing.com

90th Prince of Wales Stakes

Tuesday, September 9

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2025 Racing Schedule

May							June						
S	M	T	W	T	F	S	S	M	T	W	T	F	S
							1	2	3	4	5	6	7
							8	9	10	11	12	13	14
							15	16	17	18	19	20	21
18	19	20	21	22	23	24	22	23	24	25	26	27	28
25	26	27	28	29	30	31	29	30					
July							August						
S	M	T	W	T	F	S	S	M	T	W	T	F	S
		1	2	3	4	5						1	2
6	7	8	9	10	11	12	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
13	14	15	16	17	18	19	10	11	12	13	14	15	16
20	21	22	23	24	25	26	17	18	19	20	21	22	23
27	28	29	30	31			24	25	26	27	28	29	30
September							October						
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7	8	9	10	11	12	13	5	6	7	8	9	10	11
14	15	16	17	18	19	20	12	13	14	15	16	17	18
21	22	23	24	25	26	27	19	20	21	22	23	24	25
28	29	30					26	27	28	29	30	31	

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