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Floral shop creates buzz | Page 9

Vol. 8, Issue 20

Canada's most-awarded community newspaper

May 22, 2025

Councillors respond to claims of mocking, phone use at meetings

Paige Seburn Local Journalism Initiative The Lake Report

Lord Mayor Gary Zalepa and most councillors say they welcome the feedback from last week's inaugural Niagara-on-the-Lake Residents Association open house, where residents accused council of ignoring concerns and showing disrespect during meetings.

Residents said councillors sometimes appear distracted or dismissive, with some claiming councillors make faces or use their phones during delegations.

Residents also criticized recent council moves, like decisions they say contributed to the closure of the Old Town hospital and local school, a point Coun. Maria Mavridis disputed in an interview.

"Niagara Health and (the District School Board of Niagara) did that, not council," said Mavridis. She said

Continued on Page 2

Stampede fuels weekend fun

Rides, animals, balloons, prizes and skateboards make annual fair a smash hit



Doo Doo the clown entertains kids with a balloon show at the Virgil Stampede on Sunday. That was just one of the many activities the annual fair provided for kids. Others included a reptile petting zoo, pony rides and face painting. DAVE VAN DE LAAR

Andrew Hawlitzky | The Lake Report

nce again, the Virgil Business Association has delivered the spectacular Virgil Stampede, exciting attendees with new rides and services.

The Stampede, which has run for 58 years, ran Saturday through Monday at Centennial Sports Park, drawing an expectedly huge and jubilant crowd while raising \$100,000 for Red Roof Retreat and Radiant Care's Pleasant Manor Retirement Village.

Albion Amusements rolled out a fresh slate of carnival games, a rock-climbing wall, the Ava-

lanche pendulum ride, bumper cars, a kids' coaster and the classic merry-go-round. Only the Ferris wheel shut down briefly

Continued on Page 4

'It's not like this road is a racetrack': Residents defend restaurant patios

Paige Seburn Local Journalism Initiative The Lake Report

Niagara-on-the-Lake's council says the temporary patio program has had its time, but residents who

spoke with The Lake Report say they disagree.

Back in March, council voted to end the temporary patio program by the end of this year.

On April 29, Coun. Wendy Cheropita asked council to reconsider the decision, but the majority still voted to shut it down. Only Cheropita and Lord Mayor Gary Zalepa voted otherwise.

So now, the program will end Dec. 31, which means all patios under the temporary program must shut down and reapply through other means. Applications are still being accepted for this year — just not on Queen Street.

NOTL resident Peter Blanchet said patios bring energy and life to the area. "The streets become

alive," said Blanchet. "It's so important."

And they are good for tourism too, he said when people visit, they want to see a vibrant, busy street.

He said it benefits restaurants, too.

"It extends the amount of people that can use the restaurant," he said.

For resident Maryanne

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Councillors say it's important for residents to be heard

Continued from Front Page

that kind of misinformation divides and distracts from real issues.

Frustrated by claims council doesn't listen, she stressed her efforts: "I respond to emails, I return calls."

Mavridis said she respects residents' issues but felt like the mood shifted during the meeting from exciting unity to "political positioning," and "pointed criticism of council and a countdown to the next election," she said. It even led some residents

"There is no councillor that is mocking a resident," Mavridis said. "When the residents are delegating, council is not to speak or get into debate."

to leave early, she said.

Mavridis said, starting in September, the association would "put up profiles of each councillor and what they have done and haven't done," she said.

"That's where they lost me."

Regarding phone use, Mavridis said councillors only use phones during meetings to check agendas, past votes



Residents at a 2024 committee of adjustment meeting. Many say they feel unheard by Niagara-on-the-Lake's council — a claim that has sparked division among councillors, with one questioning the concerns and others thinking they're constructive. FILE PHOTO

or facts. "I've opened up Google Maps," she said.

But Coun. Gary Burroughs said this actually isn't allowed either.

"I've been trying to say no cell phone use during meetings — and it's in our bylaw as well," said Burroughs in an interview. "We should be listening."

"You clarify details through the chair and then through the senior staff."

Burroughs said he has

not seen council mocking anyone at a meeting before, but does not support it.

"It's not appropriate, if it happens."

Burroughs said he didn't sense any tension at the meeting. He felt the goal was to share concerns and learn about town-wide is-

"So I didn't find it negative. But I wasn't thinking it would be," he said. "To me, I think they've done an excellent job."

But the mention of a countdown to the next election surprised him, he said.

"It surprised me that they're talking about it," he said, adding he'd rather see the association focus on creating a clear plan for its goals — something council hasn't seen yet.

For Burroughs, sharing councillor profiles could be helpful if done to inform, not sway votes.

Coun. Andrew Niven said it was a well-run, engaging meeting and he wants to make sure no resident is left out of the conversation.

"I want to ensure that all voices are heard," said Niven in a message.

Issues like flooding and safety also came up at the meeting — concerns that Coun. Wendy Cheropita has as well.

"As a councillor, I do share the concerns," said Cheropita in an interview. "I thought that the tone of the meeting was quite positive."

"They were getting across some concerns," she said. "In a very good, constructive way."

Cheropita agreed with Burroughs in that posting council profiles could help, if done fairly, but said the election countdown might have been unnecessary.

"Maybe there was, you know, a little bit of drama and excitement," she said. "That might have been the intention, I have no idea."

Cheropita argued councillors should listen carefully — and avoid phones, at all times. She's even had residents bring this to her

attention, she said.

"That's just simply wrong," she said, adding that there are rules against phone use and it's up to the chair to step in if mocking or distractions happen.

"I always turn my chair and I listen to the residents because I think it is really, really important that we are listening and hearing what they have to say," she said, adding that it's critical to make residents feel heard and comfortable.

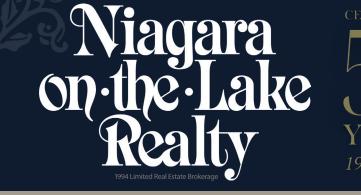
Burroughs, Cheropita and Niven said they all engage with residents outside of council meetings on a regular basis as well.

Although Zalepa could not attend the meeting, he is also always "happy to receive comments from this group or any other, or individual, either in person or in writing," he said.

This informed community input helps guide council's decisions, he said.

No action from the town has been taken as a result of the meeting. Another association meeting "amongst themselves" is planned for May 29, Burroughs said.

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Irish Harp owner says loss of patios will alter tourism in Niagara-on-the-Lake

Julia Sacco Local Journalism Initiative The Lake Report

Niagara-on-the-Lake councillors finalized their vote this spring to end the town's temporary patio program at the end of this year, and some business owners with patio permits say the landscape of local business and tourism is about to change.

Business owners with patio permits issued during the pandemic will soon see changes, with some having no opportunity to reapply at all.

Speaking with The Lake Report, Lord Mayor Gary Zalepa said all patios operating under temporary licenses will cease operations in December, and those on municipal lands may not be able to reapply for permanent licenses.

"Any patio on townowned land, once the end of the temporary permits expire, they will not be able to continue there," Zalepa said.

In cases where patio li-



Irish Harp owner Jovie Joki says the removal of some NOTL patios will have a great effect on tourism in town, and the cost to apply for new ones is too high. PAIGE SEBURN

censes were granted but the structures themselves are on privately owned property, owners can apply for a new, permanent permit.

Paul Dietsch, co-owner of The Sandtrap Pub & Grill, said this is likely the route his business will take.

In an interview, Dietsch said the pub isn't affected very much by the changes.

"We will still have to apply for a permanent permit, which is definitely in our plans. But yeah, just the (patios) on town lands have

to worry," he said.

Jovie Joki, owner of the Irish Harp, is one of the business owners who has to worry.

The Harp's patio is primarily on private property, but part of it extends onto municipal lands, Joki said in an interview.

The municipality has estimated that the annual cost of having a patio on a parking space, per spot, could be \$10,352 to \$13,800, stated communications co-ordinator

Marah Minor in an email. If Joki were to try and get

If Joki were to try and get a permanent patio, the cost would be extortionate, she said, based on her looking into the cost of buying parking spots and creating the required parking spaces to accommodate diners using the patio.

"It's really close to a million dollars."

The high price tag factors in parking spaces that the town requires for patios, "Whereas before, it was just waived," she said.

Joki added she was hoping the town would introduce a seasonal program, but after several meetings discussing it, the subject has seemingly been dropped.

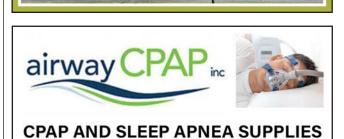
"Everything's just been shelved, I don't really know what happened," she said.

Jokie said the patio program's end will hurt tourism in NOTL.

"It's not good at this time, especially with everything else and the Americans not coming here — it's not going to help," she said.

With files from ZahraaHmood.





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Residents have grown to love patios on Queen

Continued from Front Page

Meloche, no patios means no more outings with her pup, Squirt.

"Usually if there's a pub, like outdoors, we go outdoors instead of indoors," said Meloche, whose Weiner-Chihuahua mix is the reason she wishes patios would stay.

"That's why I like it," she said.

But for some, it's about losing something that became part of everyday life, like for resident Marnie Szabo.

"Not a fan," said Szabo.
"We got used to it."

"It's kind of nice to sit outside."

Sunset Grill server Teresa Mckellar said the patios' end is a loss both on and off the clock.

"Very sad about it, actually," said Mckellar. "The patios do so well."

Mckellar said she definitely saw more business once patios were implemented at the restaurant.

"The people seem to really love the patios," she said, adding that she does too.

"You just love being outside, right? Like, it's just a different feel, dif-



Residents have come to appreciate NOTL's temporary patios, like this one at the Angel Inn which welcomes dogs. Many residents want them to remain. PAIGE SEBURN

ferent atmosphere," she said. "It's nice."

Mckellar isn't the only one who appreciates the Sunset Grill patio — resident Tracey Girolami said she does too.

"It's so much nicer than the noise inside, with the dishes and whatever going on," said Girolami. "I kind of like eating outside in the morning."

Not only does it let residents enjoy picturesque NOTL in the summertime, but she said it helps make up for the town's limited outdoor dining options.

"There should be more places to sit outside," she said.

Girolami said she doesn't see traffic or parking posing any issues that would prevent patios from being able to operate "for just a few months out of the year," she said.

"(Residents) are driving slow and we've got enough parking for everybody," she said. "People can walk if they need to."

Resident Angelo Marguglio agrees and said patios "are not bothering anybody," adding that he does "not know why anybody wants to get rid of them."

"I think they add a nice buzz and it's more seating," he said. "It's good for the restaurants to have more space.

He said with a view like Queen Street, sitting outside becomes that much more desirable and worthy of the town coming to an agreement to allow patios.

"It's nice to sit outdoors," said Angelo. "It's not like this road is a racetrack."

"People are very cautious," added Judy Marguglio, also a NOTL resident.

Judy said she sits outside as much as she can to soak up the town's beauty.

"And because summer's kind of short here. So we want to enjoy it as much as we can," she said"

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First year of shuttle bus is a success, says organizer

Continued from Front Page

on Saturday when winds spiked and the Avalanche wasn't running on Sunday.

"People have been very happy with the variety of things that we've brought this year and a little bit of a different layout," said Albion owner-operator Carrie Robertson.

Kids dashed between free pony rides, face painting, reptile shows and knifejuggling sets at the kids pavilion, while world-famous Shane "Doo Doo the Clown" Farberman performed all three days.

"I'm doing three comedy shows a day and unlimited balloons for the kids, and I'm just excited to be here," said Farberman, who is also known for his role in the Adam Sandler film Billy Madison.

"The kids have been waiting months for this, and they go crazy when the games open," said Dominik Choquette-Lague, who's worked at the Stampede game booths for the past seven years.

Ontario Ice Cream truck owner Joe Prajza was parked at the Stampede.

"It's been fantastic. It's been easy to work with everybody and get everything done," said Prajza.

Red Roof Retreat volunteers took over the Mary







Left: The Virgil Stampede was once again a huge hit with locals and visitors alike, offering up lots of fun rides, games and activities for all ages. Top right: Kolt Dommasch, 5, after getting his face painted. Bottom right: Fiona Mills, 5, climbs the rock wall game. DAVE VAN DE LAAR

Snider Room at the Meridian Credit Union Arena beside the carnival to host the annual nickel sale raffle.

"This has been a draw for locals since the beginning," said volunteer Rob Burns.

Over at the food booths, volunteers were hard at work cooking up reasonably priced eats for carnival goers — a plate of onion rings for \$4, generous portions of poutine fries for \$6 and the always popular pork on a bun.

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

No serious security problems occurred at the Stampede over the long weekend, though there were discussions about safety stemming from a fight that broke out in 2023 and the recent car attack at a festival in Vancouver on April 27.

"Anything can happen at these sorts of things, so you have to be prepared for any scenario, really," said security guard Artist Harvard.

CJ's Skatepark returned to NOTL on Victoria Day for a third year at Virgil Sports Park, lending boards and pads, running five-minute lessons and giving out prizes, including two new skateboards.

On Victoria Day, a shuttle service proved to be a big success at the Virgil Stampede, with more than 184 people using the service, easing parking headaches and earning quick praise from riders and organizers alike.

"This is the first year

we're running buses, so people don't have to worry about being towed on Four Mile Creek," said Sharon VanNoort, who directed people onto the shuttle from United Mennonite Church.

After a 10-minute ride, passengers were dropped off beside Meridian Credit Union Arena, in front of the main gate entrance to the Stampede.

"Every load had people on it, and mid-afternoon guests were very happy with the shuttle," said VanNoort.

"We had people come,

and then they decided they were going to go try and find a parking spot closer to the Stampede and then shortly they came back to use the shuttle because they couldn't find a parking spot," she added.

A second coach joined the loop at 9 p.m. to keep lines short and get everyone back to their cars safely.

The Stampede came to an end, as it has for the past 58 years, with fireworks over Centennial Sports Park at 9:30 p.m., enjoyed by a shoulder-to-shoulder crowd.

CJ's Skatepark ramps up the fun

Andrew Hawlitzky The Lake Report

CJ's Skatepark instructors came to the Virgil Stampede on Victoria Day and sent many kids rolling down ramps for the first time.

The Mississauga not-forprofit returned to NOTL on Victoria Day for a third year at Virgil Sports Park, lending boards and pads, running five-minute lessons and a 2 p.m. demo before raffling 100 prizes, including two new skateboards.

Jay Mandarino, president and founder of CJ's Skatepark, said events like this let instructors demonstrate to kids what's possible on a skateboard and teach them how to feel comfortable on the board.

The open, self-paced nature of skateboarding, he added, puts less pressure on kids than team sports and helps them build confidence.

"It's really all about the community and getting more youth engaged because they don't feel there's a lot for them," said Mandarino.

More than 100 youngsters, from toddlers to teens, tried their first ramps with protective gear and boards that CJ's Skatepark provided.

Kevin David, senior skateboard instructor, taught himself to skate (long before the birth of YouTube tutorials) and said he's happy he can provide a safer and more encouraging environment for kids to learn.

"At first, it's fear, and then they're surprised at how well they actually do with instruction," he said.

Mandarino, who operates the world's largest indoor not-for-profit skatepark and certifies coaches in 53 countries, said skateboarding's inclusivity extends to riders with physical or learning challenges through adaptive programs and peer mentoring.

"Anybody can do a few basic things and feel empowered," said Mandarino. CJ Skatepark, which

certifies instructors in 53 countries, plans to roll back into Virgil next year.

andrew@niagaranow.com



Richart Bastien, 14, gets some air during the skateboard demonstration. DAVE VAN DE LAAR



CURATORS: OUR ERASTOUR

This year the Niagara Historical Society celebrates its 130th Anniversary, and there is no way that we could mark this occasion without celebrating our Curators and the fascinating items they have collected over the years. Our feature exhibit is inspired by Taylor Swift's Eras Tour, so those "Swifties" out there will notice some lyrics and references for a little fun.

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NOTL Ambassadors open new kiosk

Paige Seburn Local Journalism Initiative The Lake Report

A new seasonal kiosk on Queen Street is helping the Niagara-on-the-Lake Ambassadors better connect with people and promote what NOTL has to offer its visitors.

The NOTL Ambassadors, now in its fifth season, launched this year's program on May 16 with a new kiosk and 30 new members, bringing the total to 102 volunteers.

A ribbon-cutting for the kiosk, and the reopening of the old Court House on Queen Street, was held the day of the launch.

"It's now officially open," said Laurie Harley, co-lead of the NOTL Ambassadors, adding that the lord mayor cut the ribbon.

Located beside the Court House, the street-level kiosk is a visible space where ambassadors will welcome and inform visitors and residents about what's going on in town and hand out brochures, guides, menu books and maps.

It has larger maps mounted on its sides for when ambassadors aren't present.

"It's an opportunity to come and spend some time and chat with us ambassadors and to find out what's going on throughout the day," said ambassador Laura Sadak.

The idea for the kiosk began more than two years



NOTL Ambassadors Laura Sadak, left, and Linda Hicks in front of the new Queen Street kiosk. It will better help them guide visitors around town. PAIGE SEBURN

ago with the NOTL Ambassadors and came to life with the help of community support, Harley said.

The kiosk is a "tribute to the volunteer force we have in this town," she said, and the people who give their time "make things happen."

"It's a testament to them," said Harley.

Ambassadors in blue vests will be at the kiosk and walking around Old Town on Fridays, Saturdays, Sundays and holiday Mondays from Victoria Day weekend to Thanksgiving.

During a typical shift, which is 12 p.m. to 2 p.m. or 2 p.m. to 4 p.m., a group of two ambassadors will stay at the kiosk to help visitors and residents with questions, like where to park, how to get to the lake or where to get a bite to eat.

Three ambassadors will be stationed inside the

Court House — one outside, two inside. Another group of two will walk around Old Town with pamphlets, saying hi and offering help.

The kiosk allows visitors to ask questions and get personalized recommendations to help them make the most of their time in town.

Harley said residents are also often pleasantly surprised when ambassadors tell them about offerings in town they hadn't heard about prior.

When tourists share where they're from, what they enjoy, concerns and other feedback, it's valuable information for ambassadors to pass along, Harley said — the town uses it to improve planning and better serve future visitors.

The kiosk has doors that swing out and display maps and materials — the Stay NOTL tourist guide map

is the ambassadors' most popular handout, Harley said.

Ambassador Linda Hicks said a typical question from people is "Where is the bathroom?"

"Wineries are a big thing too," she said in an interview. Sadak added that people often ask about good places to eat, what to see and how to best spend time

The kiosk was built by graduating students from Niagara College's School of Trades, said Harley.

"We made the attempt to make everything local and everybody came through for us," Harley said.

The kiosk was inspired by a sentry box that was there in 2012 to commemorate the Battle of 1812. Sadak said it's the only one of its kind in town.

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NOTL Museum named 2025 Living Landmark

Andrew Hawlitzky The Lake Report

It was 1985 when the Niagara Historical Society was born, with a mission to give locals an appreciation for the legacy of the place in which they lived.

Now, 130 years later, that society operates the Niagara-on-the-Lake Museum, a collection of more than 50,000 local artifacts and archives.

In recognition of the museum's 130th anniversary this year, the Niagara Foundation has chosen to name it the town's newest Living Landmark.

The Niagara Foundation announced on May 13 that the museum will receive its 2025 Living Landmark award. Primarily given to a single person, this is the third time the prize has gone to a group or organization.

"Getting an award like this is validation that what



The Niagara Foundation has named the NOTL Museum as its Living Landmark recipient for 2025. SUPPLIED

you've been spending your time doing is recognized — it's a pat on the back in the community as a whole," Lyle Hall, chair of the Niagara Foundation.

The honour will be presented on Nov. 12 at Navy Hall, recognizing the volunteer museum's stewardship of its thousands of artifacts, documents, photographs and books, housed in its primary home on Castlereagh Street.

"This is the first year we've given it to an institution or an organization, and we thought it was appropriate given the museum's 130th anniversary —

they're almost twice as old as we are," said Hall.

The foundation previously honoured the citizens of Niagara-on-the-Lake in 2020 and business partners Norm Howe and Gerry Wooll in 2006.

"We recognize the role they've played in highlighting heritage and the history of the community through their expansion plans and ongoing programming," he added.

Sarah Kaufman, CEO and curator of the NOTL Museum, said that while the museum does get community recognition, the Living Landmark award is an honour for all past and present

"We weren't expecting it. I think our board and staff here were in shock and just overwhelmed with the honour," said Kaufman.

The museum relies on members and donors to preserve everything from War of 1812 relics to everyday photographs.

"We work so hard with the community to promote this history in Macon Lake, history that's very nationally and provincially significant," said Kaufman.

"Recognition for the hard work members, staff and board have done to ensure the community doesn't forget our history feels so important to get."

Tickets for the November fundraising dinner will be released in early autumn with proceeds supporting the foundation's heritage programming.

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Sudsy pups fetch \$500 for dog guides

Andrew Hawlitzky
The Lake Report

Soapy water flew off wagging tails Saturday as youth volunteers in Virgil turned bath time into a lifeline for future dog guides.

The St. Davids LEO Club, marking its 10th anniversary, washed pets on May 17 and earlier on May 3, raising \$500 for the Lions Foundation of Canada Dog Guides.

The cash will be added to pledges at the 40th anniversary Pet Valu Walk for Dog Guides on Sunday, May 25, at St. Davids Lions Park to support Canada Dog Guides in providing service dogs to qualified applicants for free.

The wash last Saturday was scheduled to run until 3 p.m., but wrapped up early as Susan Snider from the St. Davids Lions Club expected some families may be busy at the Virgil Stampede.

"People are so gracious and so generous in this community," said Snider.

Most owners paid the \$20



LEO Club members Eddy, Evan, Gwynn, Emma, Kayla, Sophia, Logan and Rory give local labrador KoKo a wash, raising money for the Lions Foundation for Canada Dog Guides. ANDREW HAWLITZKY

fee but some, like one man with a Doberman named Churchill, handed over much more.

"He gave us a \$100 bill, and some people gave donations, and they didn't bring a dog," said Snider.

Service dogs are often very pricey: Each animal costs up to \$35,000 to raise from a puppy to their graduation, and the Lions Foundation for Canadian Dog Guides receives no government funding.

Canada Dog Guides pairs dogs with Canadians who may need help with many different conditions, such as vision or hearing impairment, diabetes, epilepsy, autism and more.

"Getting these dogs

changes their lives. It opens up their lives and gives them independence and confidence. It's pretty amazing, and it's very emotional when you go to the graduation," said Snider.

Canada Dog Guides is able to provide these dogs to people who need them most for free through the support of Lions Clubs and the generosity of donors.

Snider praised the LEOs members for their willingness to serve the community at the fundraiser.

"These youths gave up their Saturday to wash dogs and give back," said Snider.

Snider said the Lions Club and the LEOs are always looking for new members and help to fundraise for great causes like Dog Guides, which give back to the community.

Registration for Sunday's Pet Valu Walk for Dog Guides opens at 10:30 a.m., the first paws will hit the trail at 11 a.m.

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The art of catering, by Treadwell

Stephanie Don Griot 124 on Queen **SPONSORED**

With roots stretching from the U.K. to Port Dalhousie, Treadwell Cuisine now calls the heart of Niagara-on-the-Lake home, proudly located at 124 on Queen Hotel and Spa.

More than just a celebrated restaurant, Treadwell also offers exceptional catering services. Grounded in modern European cuisine and driven by seasonal inspiration, Treadwell is committed to thoughtfully showcasing locally grown ingredients, upholding a deep respect for the farmerto-table connection.

At the helm is Stephen Treadwell, the visionary behind the name, concept and culinary philosophy a true craftsman dedicated to excellence.

As the founder and chef, Stephen Treadwell has trained in some of England, Switzerland and Sweden's finest kitchens.

From 1988 to 1994, he was chef de cuisine at Auberge du Pommier in Toronto, considered one of the finest French restaurants in Canada.

After the restaurant was named "Patron's Pick" as "Best Restaurant in Toronto 1994," Stephen left Auberge du Pommier for Niagaraon-the-Lake, becoming executive chef at Queen's Landing.

Over the next 11 years, Stephen would not only establish the Tiara Dining Room as one of the top hotel restaurants in Canada (named "Best Restaurant in Southern Ontario" by Stir magazine) but would also pioneer the concept of "Niagara cuisine" with fellow chefs Michael Olsen, Mark Picone and Tony de Luca.

Since opening Treadwell, Stephen has been inducted as "Chef of the Year" and a fellow into the Ontario Hostelry Institute, as well as being named 2009 "Niagara Entrepreneur of the Year" by the Niagara Entrepreneur of the Year Awards.

What remains constant in the roles and restaurants of Stephen's past is his loyal commitment to local partners, wineries and local business owners.

Inspiring the constantly evolving menu at Treadwell is the sincere farm-to-table philosophy, locally sourcing farm-produced ingredients.

Stephen explains, "Our executive chef Jason Williams has been known to



Executive Chef Jason Williams is always on the lookout for the finest seasonal ingredients to showcase in Treadwell's cuisine.

stop along his route into town as he drives past farm fields to pick up whatever catches his eye, like a fresh bunch of spring asparagus, or a freshly foraged truffle."

By personally knowing the area's farmers and crop producers, the Treadwell team are well aware of the seasonal availabilities in advance.

66 We ensure to work closely with our local producers leading up to events to ensure that the quality is fresh and ripe in anticipation for upcoming events."

> STEPHEN TREADWELL FOUNDER

Stephen states, "We cannot always predict what weather, sunshine or rainfall will be for the future summer, so we ensure to work closely with our local producers leading up to events to ensure that the quality is fresh and ripe in anticipation for upcoming events."

"The same concept is offered in our catering menus," says Stephen.

Treadwell Cuisine is well known for offering exquisite off-site catering experiences at events such as weddings and corporate events at wineries, social parties at estate homes, or on-site in the historic Gate House for corporate functions, weddings and social events.

Stephen explains that "ensuring that the Treadwell

name and experience not only reflects the entire hardworking team on-site at the Queen Street restaurant location, but also reflects it to any event where our trained chefs are committed to offering that excellence."

The seasonal menu selections offer consistency, availability of fresh produce, fair pricing and lasting relationships.

Setting off-site catering apart from other businesses, Treadwell goes well above and beyond to ensure that no matter where their dishes are served, the team is prepared to create the magic with portable kitchen equipment such as ovens set up in sometimes the most hard-to-reach locations in a field, on a hilltop or in a vineyard.

Stephen says, "The majority of the locations we host don't always offer a kitchen to cook the food. We want to ensure that every plate that is sent to a guest is hot and fresh."

Logistics and execution are key when it comes to a successful catering event, and the experienced Treadwell team is the crucial piece in transferring the equipment from the kitchen to the off-site location.

"Our staff have been with us for years, decades even. We do not have a high turnover rate, and that creates a successful team and ensures the consistency in quality," says Stephen.

One of the most memorable off-site catering events that Stephen recalls was in 2012 at a wedding hosted at Southbrook Vineyards, which hosted many European and local guests.

"The event was based and sourced local. The incredible team of chefs went above and beyond creating a spectacular menu featuring locally sourced short ribs, salmon and the freshest assortment of charcuterie and vegetables."

Stephen adds, "The menu creation for our catering events are never the same. We offer such a wonderful variety of dishes that are suitable to the entire guest list. Our goal is to create a memorable experience so those guests will come back to Niagara-on-the-Lake and experience Treadwell Cuisine, either in the restaurant, or at their own hosted event."

Niagara-on-the-Lake has quite a few catering options and competition for the Treadwell team.

However, the restaurant's reputation for excellence and ability to generate the same quality and consistency of food for the right price - inside the restaurant as well as any off-site location — sets the business apart from any other, while offering guests and event hosts an experience they are going to walk away from talking about.

Treadwell's large production kitchen is located on the main street of Niagaraon-the-Lake, perfect for corporate events, weddings and social events at the historic Gate House.

To book your next catering event with Treadwell, contact the 124Q sales team to create and customize your menu ideas into an incredible event experience.

Visit online at: https:// www.treadwellcuisine.com/ catering-events.



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Renowned portrait artist Emily Profit visits RiverBrink Art for one week

Linda Frtiz Special to The Lake Report

Queenston, a village of arSerious, joyful or just plain mischievous: The children depicted in Emily Profit's portrait work run the gamut of expressions and have included a variety of young sitters, including the grandson of the current Duke of Wellington.

Next week, Profit will be paying a weeklong visit to Queenston, arriving May 26, where she will connect with the village's active art scene and be available for commissions.

Profit specializes in the portraits of children, though her portfolio also includes adult sitters, such as Tom Bradby, the British television journalist and novelist. Her works are in collections in London, New York, Italy, Belgium and the United States.

Although Profit now lives near Winchester in the English county of Hampshire, she trained in Florence, Italy where she met Queenston artists Sharon Okun



Artist Emily Profit is renowned for her portraits of children. She will be in Queenston starting May 26. SUPPLIED

and Adam Markovic.

Queenston, a village of around 400 people, has an active art scene. It is home to RiverBrink Art Museum as well as individual painters, potters, map makers and sculptors. It has also hosted weekend art shows and sales at the community centre.

Profit works from photographs that she takes herself. She needs approximately half an hour with the subject in order to get the best images. The finished portrait, usually 16 by 20 inches, should be delivered to the client in four to six weeks. She is willing to discuss group portraits.

Her base will be the studio shared by Okun and Markovic in the former Laura Secord school in Queenston.

Markovic and Okun met Profit in Florence in the late 1990s. They studied together at the Charles Cecil studio where they received training in classical techniques of drawing and oil painting.

The studio is located in Florence's most historic artists' workshop still in active use. It was recently profiled on the CBS program Sunday Morning.

Florence remained home to Okun and Profit for some time. They later apprenticed together with Richard Serrin, an American painter who lived and worked in the city for more five decades.

Okun says that they would wake up at the crack of dawn to go and draw the statues at the Loggia die Lanzi in the Piazza della Signoria next to the Uffizi Gallery before the tourists got there.

Florence not only made them friends for life, it convinced them that art was integral to their lives.

You can find Emily Profit's website at emilyprofit.com.

If you would like an appointment to commission a painting, contact Sharon Okun at inquiry@sharonokun.com.

Lemon toss to support summer camp for kids

Staff
The Lake Report

Students from across
Niagara will form a giant
circle and pass a lemon
from one to the next at the
Outlet Collection next week
— all in support of children
in need.

The "Lemon Twist" relay takes place Thursday, May 22 from noon to 1 p.m. at the Outlet Collection at Niagara shopping centre and aims to send one very busy lemon a full kilometre through the hands of students from the Niagara Catholic District School Board and District School Board of Niagara.

The unusual challenge is part of a campaign to promote the fourth annual Mountainview LemonAID Day for Family and Children's Services Niagara — a "kids helping kids" initiative that supports sending FACS-supported children to summer camp.

LemonAID Day, supported by title sponsor Mountainview Homes, gives participating families everything they need to



run a free lemonade stand, including pitchers, cups, T-shirts, hats and signage. Tim Hortons is also providing lemonade concentrate for each stand.

A total of 100 stands are available across Niagara and registration is now open at facsniagarafoundation.org.

Last year's LemonAID Day helped raise enough money to provide more than 600 weeks of camp for over 400 children.

This year's Lemon Twist event also acts as a lead-up to an anticipated Guinness World Record attempt in 2026. FACS communications co-ordinator Brett Sweeney said it's too early to release details.





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ARTS | **



Buzz-worthy floral display earns prize at In Bloom Festival

Paige Seburn Local Journalism Initiative The Lake Report

The team at June Floral & Garden was buzzing with excitement after winning the Best Floral Installation award at the first-ever Niagara-on-the-Lake In Bloom Festival last weekend — and landing a surprise morning TV spot.

"We made five bees that were stunningly beautiful," said flower shop owner Joanne Bassie. "It was really nice to be able to see it all kind of come together."

The festival, held from May 9 to 12, was presented by Vintage Hotels, which invited June Floral & Garden to take part in creating a floral arrangement, and the Tourism Partnership of Niagara.

Locations in town were decorated with eye-catching floral displays. The festival featured a bonnet luncheon, a garden fair and a gala dinner hosted by TV personality and gardening expert Frank Ferragine of Frankie Flowers, who led gardening demos as well.

June Floral & Garden won a glass trophy and a gift



One of the floral bees from June Floral & Garden's display. The flower shop and its staff were awarded Best Floral Installation at the NOTL In Bloom Festival. DAVE VAN DE LAAR

bag filled with "all kinds of goodies," said floral designer Amy Post.

"We were actually invited to be on Breakfast Television with Frankie Flowers," said Post.

Bassie got the call about the win on May 11 and phoned each of her employees to share the good news.

The next morning, the team appeared on television at 7:15 a.m., where Ferragine and Jennifer Holmes, who leads Clippings Floral Design,

handed them the award.

Alexandra Blackadder, marketing director of Lais Hotel Properties Limited, said in an email that the award was given to the installation with "exceptional design and outstanding creativity."

The flower shop opened in November 2022 and changed its name to June Floral & Garden in April

"I think every single one of us touched that project," said Bassie about her team.

The idea started with tos and suggestions helped spark the concept. With food as the festival's theme,

the team wanted to focus

on the role bees play in the food chain. "Without bees, we don't have any of our other plants

theme," said Post. June Floral & Garden's

Vintage Hotels, whose pho-

and foods. So, the bees were an integral part of the

bee display, garden and honeycomb were the central installation in the gardens at Pillar and Post Hotel & Spa.

"It was in the middle, so the vantage point was from all sides," said Bassie. "We knew it had to be something big."

Post said Bassie's concept drawing helped the team's focus and "really brought it all together."

Her husband welded the bee frames, which were filled with pool noodle foam and covered in floral foam to attach dried flowers.

"We decided that we wanted to go with dried flowers so we could make them earlier," said Bassie, who sourced them from the wholesaler Botanico.

The team spent a week testing different foam shapes and building techniques for the bees before finding a design it liked.

Post said Bassie built the honeycomb using chicken wire, fabric and resin, then painted it with several coats to get the right colour.

Bassie also planted a 15-foot garden around the bees on setup day using plants sourced from Voogt Greenhouses, Riverview Greenhouses and Maple Leaf Nurseries.

"It just brought everything

together," Bassie said.

The team didn't know about the awards until setup

"We didn't go into it thinking about awards," Bassie said.

"We just did it for the joy of doing it," said Post. "We all love flowers and they bring a lot of joy to people."

Blackadder wrote that Ferragine selected the bee installation as the winner for both its creative design and the message behind it.

For Ferragine, it showed how important bees are in gardens, from making honey to pollination, wrote Blackadder.

"He also appreciated that June Floral & Garden took their installation one step further, in incorporating a sustainable bee garden beneath their installation with intention to help to preserve the bee population," wrote Blackadder.

Both Bassie and Post said they hope to take part in next year's NOTL in Bloom Festival.

"There's always unforeseen things, but we had a lot of help," said Bassie. "We'd love to participate again."

paigeseburn@niagaranow.com



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Chilly morning doesn't deter women golfers

Staff
The Lake Report

The unseasonably cool temperatures on Tuesday morning didn't deter the women who compete in the weekly leagues at the Niagara-on-the-Lake Golf Club.

When the first group in the 18-hole women's league teed off at 7:30 a.m., the skies were bright but the temperature was barely 5 Celsius. It felt frosty by the lake.

That didn't stop them from posting some hot scores, though.

Yolanda Henry had the hottest hand, winning low gross honours with a score of 94.

She was followed by Diana Dimmer (95), May Chang (96), Marie Ellison (97) and Susan Gagne (99).

the pin on #4.

Net score winners were:
Trish Anthony (69), Chang

Henry also was closest to

Trish Anthony (69), Chang and Ellison (72), Cheryl Yamamoto (73), and Sharron Marlow and Gagne (75).

Chang also had the fewest putts, needing only 29 for her round. Other top putters were: Ellison and Marlow



Yolanda Henry led the NOTL Golf Club's 18-hole women's league Tuesday, shooting a 94. FILE/DAVE VAN DE LAAR

(31), Anthony, Lisa Allen and Judy Mantle (33).

When the nine-hole league women hit the links about an hour later, there was still a chill in the air.

But Suzanne Watson and Joan Maida (48), Lyn Sanders and Susan Horne (49), and Patti Garriock (51) recorded the top scores.

Maida also won low gross (31), followed by Carole Matheson (36) and Sanders, Garriock and Peggy Larder (37). Longest drives were by Julie Smethurst (#3) and Lucy Brookhouser (#5). Brookhouser also sank the longest putt on #9.

By the time the Tuesday men's Woofs league started play around noon, the mercury had climbed a bit and the frostiness had abated.

Brian Ridgeway and Jim McMacken were the top shooters, with 2-over 38. Ron Newman scooped the net prize with 29.5 after handicap was applied.

McMacken was closest to the pin on #4 and holed out for a birdie. Tony Sanfelice's bird on #7 earned the hidden hole prize.

Meanwhile, the legendary
Mark Derbyshire, who won
the NOTL men's club championship 30 straight years
from 1976 to 2005 — plus
a few more a decade later
— was back in form for the
Thursday men's league last

He carded a 2-over 38 to earn low gross and also won a gross skin for a birdie on #6.

Other winners: Peter Falconer sank the longest putt on #2, John Liotta boomed the longest drive on #3, while Stephen Warboys was closest to the pin on #4 and James O'Connor was closest on #9.

Net skins winners, worth \$45, were: Oleh Hrycko (#2), Derek Merza (#5), Bob Lowe (#6) and Michael Sanders (#8).

Gross skins (\$15) went to: Jim Rye (birdie #1), Steve Millward (birdie #9), Patrick Craig (birdie #3), Nick Elia (birdie #5) and Sanders, for his remarkable eagle 2 on the par-4 8th hole.



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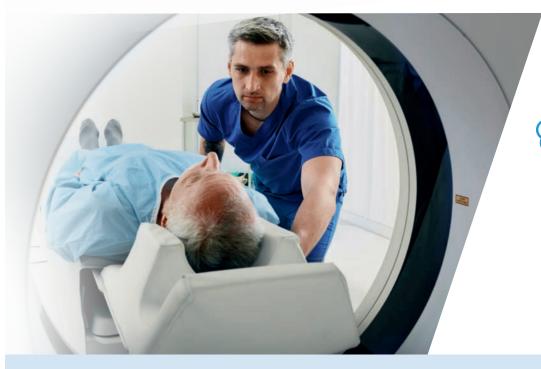
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Contributed by Patty Garriock

"Some old-fashioned things like fresh air and sunshine are hard to beat." - Laura Ingalls Wilder

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Don't hate, just skate

From left, Barry Asbaghi, Greg Orlando and Carter Goulet show off their skills with high-flying tricks on Sunday at the skate park, during the Virgil Stampede. DAVE VAN DE LAAR



Editorial

The first step on a difficult journey

Kevin MacLean Editor Emeritus

It was all over in just 63 minutes — far quicker than a typical meeting of any town council, school board or other similar gathering.

The start of the formal "coming out party" for the Niagara-on-the-Lake Residents Association last Wednesday evening was delayed by 10 minutes because the community centre lot was so jammed people couldn't find a place to park.

Then, from 6:40 to 7:43 p.m., the 300-plus who packed the main hall at the community centre heard from a variety of speakers.

They described the intentions and motivations behind the establishment of a faction of residents who are not happy with how the town's elected officials are managing NOTL nor how they are dealing with people's concerns.

It's a purely organic and grassroots movement.

As Ron Simkus, one of the association's directors, astutely told the crowd, many residents feel the lord mayor and other members of council are hearing their pleas — but are not actually, actively listening to them.

Of course, having supported development and other changes that some residents question or oppose, many on the "winning" side of council's regular 5-4 split



Ron Simkus addresses the crowd at the first-ever NOTL Residents Association meeting. DAVE VAN DE LAAR

might tell you they have indeed listened. They just see things differently.

Full credit to association chair (and one-time councillor) Stuart McCormack for emphasizing the desire to keep things constructive. "Try to be positive in a negative way" as much as possible.

But, as he cautioned in paraphrasing a quote from "The Leopard," if residents want things to stay the same, "we must change."

Effecting substantial change could be an uphill battle.

Many of the issues people have raised concerns about are done deals.

On Page 15, columnist Garth Turner this week highlights some of those projects, from the hotel on the site of Parliament Oak to a large new phase of the Village development and planned major highrise condos beside White Oaks in Glendale, to name a few.

Those are among numer-

ous plans that have been in the pipeline for years. So NOTL is already on the cusp of major change and the spectre of even more growth looms large.

Full marks to the organizers of the residents association for stepping up and attempting to be the catalyst for change.

In Doug Ford's Ontario, it will be a tall order.

Ordinary folks can push back, elected councils can reject or modify development proposals and small towns like NOTL can strive to maintain their history and charm and quaintness.

However, in many ways the deck is stacked against them. Because big money talks in this province and developers have the ear of the premier and his newly re-elected majority govern-

Despite Ford's folksy Everyman demeanour, his new dubiously named Protect Ontario by Unleashing our Economy Act coupled with

2022's More Homes Built Faster Act and many other so-called anti-red tape measures, usurp much of the power local residents and their councils once had.

In short, curtailing or controlling some of the objectionable projects that people have protested about — with more such developments coming - will be difficult.

Because we're not just fighting developers, we're fighting provincial mandates.

Of course, that does not mean we should just fold up our tent and accept what's coming. And this commentary is not an attempt to pour cold water on the goals of the residents association. The organizers' ideas are laudable.

But it is meant as a caution that everyone needs to go into this process with their eyes wide open and realize it is going to be a tough slog.

The fact remains that 300 people took the time to show their support for what the residents association is trying to do between now and the next municipal

In doing so, they've taken the first step on what no doubt will be a long road.

But in the interests of maintaining a strong and vibrant NOTL, it is a journey we all must make. Together.

kevin@niagaranow.com



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Start restoring democracy in NOTL

Dear editor:

Townspeople voted in the 2022 municipal elections on the understanding that all council members, including the lord mayor, had equal voting power.

But "strong mayor powers," recently granted through provincial legislation to some mayors, including Lord Mayor Gary Zalepa, allow a mayor, unilaterally, not only to propose bylaws to help meet provincial priorities in the development of housing, transit and infrastructure, but also to veto bylaws that interfere with these priorities (The Lake Report, "'It's still a democratic process': Council doesn't reject strong mayor powers," May 8).

If the lord mayor chooses to use these strong mayor powers, the balance of power at Town Hall would be fundamentally changed; in my opinion, that is something that should not occur



has the right to use those

go some way to restore

powers. However, he could

confidence that democracy,

at times on life support in

NOTL, is actually still alive.

He could agree not to use

strong mayor powers until

the next municipal election

in 2026, when voters could

decide whether or not they

disproportionate power.

years, we have witnessed

NOTL council blatantly

disregard the views of the

electorate on a number of

want a lord mayor with such

In the past two and a half

without the blessing of the electorate.

I contacted the lord mayor, expressing my concerns about his potential use of those powers. He pointed out, rather disingenuously, that council could veto his decision, but he omitted to say it would require a twothirds vote.

And in any case, based on past voting patterns, the chances of six of the nine council members voting against him would be slim to none.

The lord mayor certainly

occasions

The case of Andrew Niven's appointment to council, well covered in these pages in October 2024, was a particularly egregious breakdown of democracy ("Andrew Niven selected as NOTL's new councillor during private meeting," Oct. 17, 2024).

We were not fooled by Deputy Lord Mayor Erwin Wiens' glib statement that "What we did was completely democratic." It's hard to imagine what some councillors think is the definition of democracy ("Appointment of new councillor was 'completely democratic,' Wiens says," Oct. 24, 2024).

The lord mayor has the opportunity to show respect for the electorate and thus go at least a small way to start to repair democracy in NOTL.

Michael Fox Old Town

HARP_{pub} RIDDLEMETHIS

This week's riddle is "Jeopardy!" style. Category: HERE BE MONSTERS

This legendary multi-armed sea monster probably was imagined from sightings of giant squid and octopi off the coast of Norway.

Last issue: WHAT'S THAT SONG?

Clue: Hall & Oates: "She'll only come out at night,

the lean and hungry type."

Answer: What are Minions?

Answered first by: Susan Hamilton

Also answered correctly (in order) by:
Margie Enns, Sue Rautenberg, Bob Wheatley,
Daniel Smith, Jeff Lake, Jane Morris, Lynda Collet,
Claudia Grimwood, Randie Topps, Mike Gander,
Jesse Agnew, Tuija Johansson, Becky Creager,
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Chasing the elusive: Leaders who will listen



THE TURNER REPORT

Garth Turner Columnist

The next election campaign kicked off last Wednesday night.

Nah, nothing to do with Carney, Trump or Ford. This is more serious. This vote is about the Big Questions.

Like, why is there a muddy hole with an ugly blue fence around it where the Old Town public school once stood? Is there no school because kids are sparse in a town with no affordable family homes and hundreds of Airbnbs?

How did that forest of steel girders sprout up by the Village drugstore? Suddenly there's a major new Disney-winery, sprawling hotel, stacks of vacay rentals, food emporium and new street of stores — so, who decided to make this look like Mississauga?

Did local officials really allow 700 trees to be cut down in Virgil for some houses yet to be sold, let alone built? Why are folks in St. Davids being forced into a traffic overhaul or the people in Glendale con-



NOTL's new residents association is seeing high sign-up rates after its first public meeting. DAVE VAN DE LAAR

fronted with hulking condo towers? How was the battle to preserve heritage properties that survived intact for two centuries suddenly lost?

Why did citizens have to protest outside town hall last year with signs and slurs just to be heard? And why wasn't the mayor there the other night when the largest political mob in modern NOTL history packed the community centre, fully 500 days before a

"If you were the lord mayor or the deputy mayor," says organizer Stuart McCormack, "why wouldn't you show up?"

"You don't take on those jobs for the comfort factor. If you want to understand what people's feelings are and what the organization is doing, then it seems to me it would be prudent to keep an eye on things. You

know what they say — keep your friends close and your enemies closer."

The NOTL Residents Association is now alive, kicking, organizing, growing and feisty. Director Norm Arsenault told me new apps have been streaming in, "at the rate of 50 or 60 a day."

On that first night there were no more chairs in the hall. The parking lot outside looked like Costco before a hurricane.

The goal, simply, is to punt from office people who make bad decisions, don't reflect the popular will or are seen as imperious and aloof. Not showing up, says McCormack, was an excellent indicator.

Granted, being a local politician is not an easy gig. Especially in a place where tourists swamp residents, people pour in from the metropolis down the QEW,

connected, weirdos show up to "save" the horses and we risk being loved to death and turning into an amusement park. Yes, taxes are high and

developers are hungry and

Yes, taxes are high and increasing too fast, but the real issue is not having leaders that listen.

Already there's chatter

about who the contenders will be for the top job. Former Lord Mayor Betty Disero, the ex-Toronto politician, may return. HVAC mogul and philanthropist Vaughn Goettler is actively considering another run. Regional councilor and recently defeated federal Liberal candidate Andrea Kaiser is a contender. And the current boss, Gary Zalepa, may reoffer despite his slipped halo.

"There are a thousand and one rumors in this town," McCormack says, "and one of them may possibly be true."

So the rebs now have a volunteer army, a social media presence and the political capital that only a packed hall on the night of a big hockey game can bring. The goal will be even more engaged citizens, more passion in local politics and a slate of candidates.

This is how deep change starts. Bums in chairs. Taking back the town.

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

garth@garth.ca







Good and bad of Ford government's new Bill 17



ARCHITEXT

Brian Marshall Columnist

Last week, we took a look at Bill 5 (Protect Ontario by Unleashing our Economy Act), a piece of proposed legislation which has been broadly condemned by all manner of groups, including the legal community, which suggests it is an attack on "the rule of law."

Following on from Bill 5, on May 12, Rob Flack, the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing, trotted Bill 17, the Protect Ontario by Building Faster and Smarter Act, out on the floor of the legislature while proclaiming it will speed up the construction of new homes while helping to lower the cost of those homes.

Contrary to Bill 5, this one is not all bad.

For example, standardizing the calculation of development charges (the fees municipalities charge developers, which are

typically used to pay for the new infrastructure required to service the developments) across all Ontario's municipalities is something that should have been done long

Indeed, it is this lack of standardization which has allowed some municipalities to wildly increase their development charges.

According to an April 10, 2024 article published by Open Council ("Development charges in Ontario and growth pays for growth"), "Over a 20 year period between 2004 and 2024, an analysis of 27 municipalities in Ontario found that all of them increased their development charges for single detached units more than the rate of inflation in Canada (54 per cent) and increased the non-residential building construction price index (144 per cent)." In some cases, increases in excess of 800 per cent.

Now, as an aside, according to the Association of Municipalities Ontario in 2019, development charges represented in the cost of a new home actually represented five to seven per cent of that cost.

However, when all government charges — including 13 per cent HST — are totalled, the Canadian



Columnist Brian Marshall says both Bill 5 and Bill 17 have serious flaws and negative implications but will be passed into law if the Ford government has its way.

Centre for Economic Analysis in its 2023 report, "An Uncomfortable Contradiction: Taxation of Ontario Housing," calculated total charges at 31 per cent of a home's purchase price with the feds being the largest beneficiary at a 39 per cent share of the revenues generated by the charges.

Realistically, while the calculation of municipal development charges should be standardized, they form a relatively small portion of the total government charges and are, in many cases, insufficient to cover municipal growth-related costs.

However, many of the proposed provisions in this bill present serious concerns.

Which brings us to a problematic provision (for municipalities) in Bill 17, which changes the timing of development fee payment from the date that the permit, or permits, are issued to the date on which the new building is occupied, and gives builders the option to pay the lowest development charge available at the time

of payment.

This decision will not only force municipalities to pay for new infrastructure in advance of receiving funds, but also expose the lowest level of government to absorbing any financial shortfall if development fees may be reduced during the time between permitting and occupancy.

Amongst other things, the legislation also gives the Ford government the ability to pare down the list of requirements for a development application, establish which studies would be required and force municipalities to accept studies, certified by a qualified professional, presented by the developer as fulfilling the requirements notwithstanding any municipal concerns with its contents or lack thereof.

Furthermore, the Ford government is currently contemplating excluding the requirements for studies such as sun/shadow, wind, urban design, lighting and so on, which is absolutely retrogressive.

These are all provisions that directly reduce the oversight and authority of municipalities (and the input of citizens) in local development.

Of course, that centralization of power into the hands of the provincial government, both elected and bureaucratic, has been a consistent theme since Ford was first elected as premier.

Even more objectionable is that the proposed legislation expands the authority to issue ministerial zoning orders and their conditions, which allow the province to override local zoning laws to allow development, to the discretion and opinion of the Minister of Infrastructure.

This is making ministerial zoning orders, a highly

controversial tool which tramples on the authority of municipalities and provincial policy/plans alike (see "Arch-i-text: The good, the bad and the ugly of development," Nov. 8, 2023) used by the Ford government over 107 times during its first five years in office (compared to 15 times in the 16 years of the previous administration), lean even more into favouritism of select developers.

Oh, and affordable housing? This bill says no more than five per cent can be required — Toronto currently requires 22 per cent.

Thus, on the remote chance this legislation does speed up home construction (both the More Homes Built Faster Act and Bill 109 failed to do so), the vast majority of those homes will not be "affordable" (even within Ford's constrained definition of that term).

And that's not all this Bill has in store for the average Ontario community and its residents ... if you're up to reading governmentese, Bill 17 can be found on the Legislative Assembly of Ontario's website.

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



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OPINION 🕞

A health and senior care plan for old hospital

Dear editor:

I'm reaching out to share a proposal that addresses the urgent need for senior housing and health care in Old Town Niagara-on-the-Lake, concerns highlighted in both the community needs survey and The Lake

Three years ago, I submitted a comprehensive, 176-page proposal for the old hospital site, including architectural plans. While the original RFP process was not completed, the Town's recent interest in exploring site uses through a consultant presents a timely opportunity to revisit this ready-to-launch initiative.

Our proposal includes Wellness Estates NOTL, an adult condominium community designed to help residents age in place through integrated health services.

It also features the RegenaLife Centre, offering Canada's first advanced artificial intelligence screening for cancer, heart disease, and dementia, bringing world-class medical care tailored specifically to the needs of NOTL.



Letter writer Nick Vaccaro has a plan he wants residents to hear about for the old hospital at 176 Wellington St. FILE

The project includes the Discseel Centre, an innovative surgical facility specializing in spinal disc repair, and a Healing Arts Centre, inspired by early discussions with Gail Lord, which would integrate the arts into wellness services, if she decides to support such an initiative.

A community centre with potential amenities such as a pool is also being considered, with public input encouraged through our

If the project proceeds, Gatta Homes will oversee final design and construction, ensuring quality and local craftsmanship.

I believe Niagara-on-the-Lake residents will welcome a thoughtfully designed health-focused condominium community, supported by trusted local partners and featuring globally recognized medical services.

With strong preliminary interest and much of the groundwork already completed, we are wellpositioned to move forward pending community and council support.

To invite dialogue and inform the public, I plan to run a two-page feature in The Lake Report.

Page one will introduce Wellness Estates and direct readers to our website to provide feedback, sign a petition, or participate in our public forum.

Page two will highlight RegenaLife's AI health screening technology, which extends life and improves outcomes.

A public meeting is planned for June or July, where Cyrus Gatta and I will present the proposal and take questions from residents.

I invite you to review our website and would welcome a meeting with you or a reporter to discuss further. Your coverage can help guide pu blic awareness and decision-making about the site's future.

> Nick Vaccaro Founder/president, RegenaLife and Wellness Estates Niagara Falls



Public support for St. Davids roundabout not strong enough

Dear editor:

I like numbers. That's why, when I was the chair of the St. Davids Ratepayers Association, we surveyed our membership with a simple question.

We asked which alternative the responding member preferred, a roundabout or traffic signals at the intersection of York and Four Mile Creek roads. It was a very simple, neutral question.

The result was an absolute split, 50 per cent favoured the traffic signals, 50 per cent the roundabout. That's why we didn't advocate for either alternative, instead focusing on ensuring that the region and the public were aware of the strengths and weaknesses of each proposed alternative in this specific location.

We did advocate for improved and expanded pedestrian sidewalks east of Four Mile Creek Road if the roundabout was chosen. Personally, I'm disappointed that the region didn't see fit to expand the project to correct this long-term deficiency.

I've read every letter on this subject in all of the local newspapers without finding a single numeric alternative to our findings. There's been plenty of time and opportunity.

The reason that all of the recent letters have been negative and the reason that some contributors sense that they are "the majority" is because residents who prefer or are OK with the roundabout are no longer advocating.

> Kenn Moody St. Davids

How molecular motors and cars delivered on Feynman's challenge



DR. BR®WN

Dr. William Brown Columnist

On Jan. 14 this year, an obituary caught my eye which captured the life and contributions to chemistry of Fraser Stoddart who, as the New York Times put it, "built machines out of molecules," and won a Nobel Prize in 2016 for doing so.

Our annual reviews of Nobel prizes at the Niagaraon-the-Lake Public Library began in 2017, and so missed his 2016 achievement and what an extraordinary man Stoddart was together with his fellow laureates, Jean-Pierre Sauvage and Bernard Peringa for their efforts to design and build tiny molecular motors and devices.

The whole field of molecular-sized devices began with Richard Feynman, a brilliant American quantum physicist, himself a Nobel Prize winner.

He was famous for his

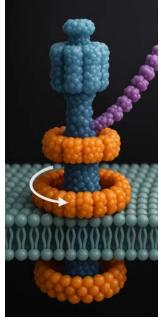
galvanizing series of lectures in the field (they can be seen on YouTube), his eccentricity and his extraordinary talent for inspiring physicists, other scientists and the public.

The Nobel committee caught the flavour of the man in their background information for the 2016 Nobel Prize in chemistry, by recalling Feynman's 1984 lecture in which he challenged scientists to imagine and create tiny molecular

Recalling that lecture, the Nobel committee described what happened: "Feynman stood at the podium, barefoot, wearing a pink polo top and beige shorts, and turned to his audience and said, 'Now let's talk about the possibility of making machines with moveable parts, which are very tiny."

He was convinced it was possible to build machines on the nanometer scale one example of which from nature was the corkscrew shape of macromolecules of flagella, which when they spin, move bacteria forward.

The aims of Feynman were twofold: Inspire scientists to take on the challenge of building tiny molecular machines and provide a few hints about how they might go about it.



The Nobel committee went on to add, "and when he folded up his notes at the lecture's end, he looked out at the audience and said mischievously, 'Have a delightful time in designing all kinds of machinery to see if you can do it. And give it 25 to 30 years, there will be some practical use for it. What it is, I do not know."

Feynman's timing was prophetic because 25 to 30 years later, a Nobel Prize was shared by Sauvage, Stoddart and Feringa in 2016 for showing how molecular machines could be built step by step.

Step one was taken by

Sauvage in 1983. Normally, molecules are joined by strong covalent bonds in which atoms share electrons, Sauvage managed to link ring molecules in a chain, likened by some to the linked circles in the Olympic symbol.

He showed that molecules could be linked physically, which allowed movement between the molecules in the chain without the rigid constraints chemical bonds would impose between successive molecules in the

Step two was taken by Stoddart who, in 1991, managed to thread a molecular ring onto a molecular axle physically without resorting

to chemical bonds. This molecular model allowed for movement back and forth in the axis of the axle, and was the starting point for molecular lift, or perhaps molecular muscle contraction and relaxation or a molecule-based computer chip, far smaller and faster than ordinary computer chips.

Step three came in 1999 with Feringa, who was the first to develop a rotor blade, which given an energy source, could spin continually in the same direction.

With this tool he was able to rotate a glass cylinder

10,000 times larger than the motor and to top it off, later designed a nano car. That was impressive, not so much for its practical use then, but for the future of more practical molecular tools.

More recently, a fourwheel-drive molecular vehicle was developed. Some visionaries imagine that tiny devices might be adopted for treating cancer and vascular disease.

That's the view the Nobel committee took in awarding the prize in 2016 — the award was made based on hope and the promise of what molecular tools might offer in the future.

That's forward thinking, very much in line with Feynman's vision for what was possible in 1984.

Last year, the chemistry prize was awarded to Demis Hassabis, John Jumper and David Baker. The efforts of Hassabis, Jumper and Google concentrated on deciphering the 3D shapes of proteins from the order of amino acids in proteins.

Baker's interest focused on designing and building novel proteins to serve as tiny molecular-sized motors, novel sensing proteins and mimicking viruses for vac-

What began with an obituary became a reminder

to me of how the best of science sometimes works, beginning in this case with the prophetic insight and inspiration provided by Feynman and later the hard work of Sauvage, Stoddart, Feringa, Baker and many others.

Readers might be interested in Feynman's lectures: They remain immensely popular and are available on YouTube.

So also, is last year's lecture on the Nobel chemistry Prize, which is available on the Niagara-on-the-Lake website. Just look for the YouTube symbol at the bottom of the web page for all Noble talks and other series which you might be interested in such as "Aging," "Artificial Intelligence" or even "Mindfulness and Meditation."

If you go to the Nobel. org website, you can find out about all the Nobel Prizes, including in science summaries of the work, the work in the laureate's own words and in some cases, amazing biographical information about the laureates.

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





Hockey query after puzzling game seven in Toronto



Ross's Ramblings

Ross Robinson Columnist

I still think hockey is one of the world's best games, when played properly. It can be so exciting. To my friends and family, my thoughts about "Canada's game" are well known, against the norm, and can apparently get quite tiresome. That's what they tell me whenever I suggest a rule change or verbalize anything but agreement with the NHL status quo.

As I ramble this week, I will remember it is not fair to kick a man while he is down. To pile on, as it were. So I promise not to pontificate or sound like a know-it-all after the second round mystery that was the

Toronto Maple Leafs versus Florida series.

A good many NOTLers had strong opinions and high hopes for the Leafs after a strong regular season provided them with home ice advantage for the playoffs. Playing the seventh game at home against the Ottawa Senators in round one had been a good thing, and worked to Toronto's advantage.

Please understand that I am admittedly one of the world's worst spectators. Always have been. Even as a kid at the River Heights Community Centre in Winnipeg in the 1950s, my mother would get exasperated when I just couldn't seem to be interested in watching my pals play their house league games on the frozen rinks. Freezing cold weather, natural ice, and somehow our toes and ears were warm enough. If my team wasn't playing, I just couldn't watch the game.

A good woollen Canadian toque, probably hand-knit, and hopefully in the red, white and blue



colours of the Montreal Canadiens, my favourite team. With Maurice the Rocket Richard and his younger brother the Pocket Rocket, Boom Boom Geoffrion and the team's eccentric goalie Jacques Plante. What the heck, he was the first NHL goalie to wear a mask. Well, sort of a mask.

An ice-cold Prairie
Saturday at the three rinks,
then home for dinner, hot
chocolate, Gregory Clarke's
folksy column in the
Saturday paper, and Hockey
Night in Canada on the one
available television channel.

Who said life was so much simpler back then? If we had to be punished for some real or perceived transgression, we might have to stay in the house for an hour or two or three. Nowadays, sometimes the punishment is staying outside, away from computers and other screens.

My, aren't I rambling this week? Where is this all going?

I am being mindful — it would serve no purpose to call the Leafs a "group" of underachieving, overpaid, overhyped professional hockey players. A half dozen or so of them are supremely talented NHLers who just can't seem to get it together in the playoffs. My memory tells me it has been 58 years since their last Stanley Cup Parade in 1967.

Apparently, that's the longest winless streak going. But, it would serve no purpose to bring this up again, so I won't write anything more about it.

What really bothered me during the latest game seven happened just 13 seconds into the second period.

Veteran referee Chris Rooney was inadvertently clipped by the high stick of Florida defenceman Niko Mikkola. The stick went up under Rooney's half visor, and suddenly, silence. A man down, and blood all over the ice by the boards.

The game was delayed while standby official, Garrett Rank, got ready to fill in. Rooney was badly cut, ending up with a brutal black eye, but thankfully, there was no permanent damage to his eye.

In the past, there have been incidents where on-ice officials have been seriously injured. One even had his career ended when hit in the temple by a deflected slapshot from the point.

Still, not one of the between-period talking heads, and not one of the print journalists following the game, mentioned that perhaps the NHL should make it mandatory for officials to wear full masks or full cages.

I will wrap up this Rambling by asking, "What am I missing?" Wouldn't that make sense?



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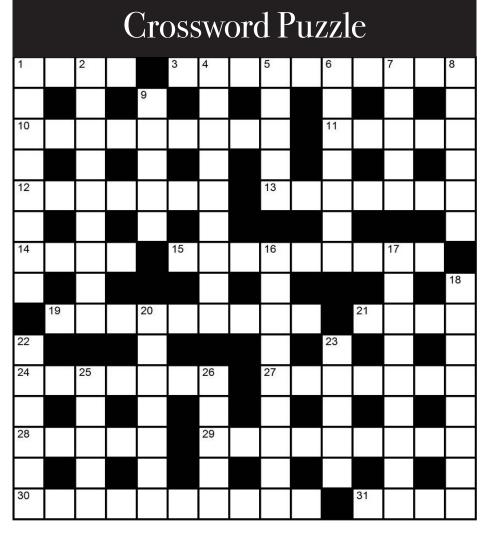
Across

- 1. U S space group (1,1,1,1)
- 3. Court game (10)
- 10. Consequently (9)
- 11. Female sovereign (5)
- 12. Survive (7)
- 13. Bowling pin (7)
- 14. Skin eruption (4)
- 15. Pachyderms (9)
- 19. Sue (9)
- 21. German Mrs (4)
- 24. Passage (7)
- 27. Surrey commuter village (7)
- 28. Trembling poplar (5)
- 29. Mouth organ (9)
- 30. Science of numbers (10)
- 31. Undiluted (4)

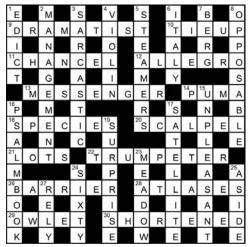
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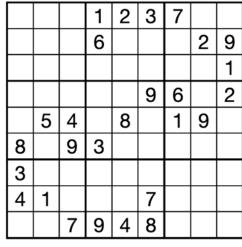
- 1. Belonging to a country (8)
- 2. Enticement (9)
- 4. Papal (9)
- 5. Leg joints (5)
- 6. Mexican liquor (7)
- 7. Proficient (5)
- 8. Beam over a door (6)
- 9. Started (5)
- 16. Medley (3-6)
- 17. Frighten, usually by violence (9)
- 18. Take away (8)
- 20. Squeeze together (7)
- 22. Las Vegas setting (6)
- 23. Racecourse (5)
- 25. Island in the Bay of Naples (5)
- 26. Resort lake in both California and
- 22 down (5)

Have some fun



Last issue's answers

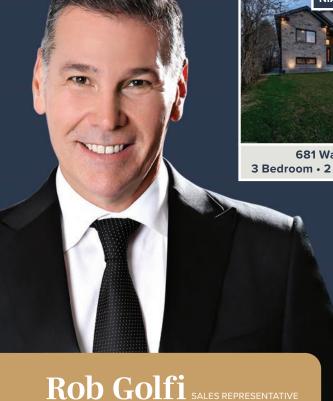








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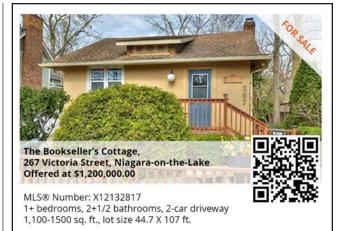






Lawn bowling in the 1920s

This week's photo shows the former lawn bowling green at the corner of Johnson and Regent streets in the Old Town district of Niagara-on-the-Lake. Today, the Voices of Freedom Park is located here, honouring our local Black History. The photograph shows four gentlemen playing while eight other players and a referee watch. Visible in the background is the brick water tower that once stood on King Street, near where Aura on the Lake is today. This tower was damaged after Hurricane Hazel hit in the fall of 1954 and was replaced with a metal water tower. The lawn bowling club began in 1877 and moved from this location to its new home at the Community Centre in 2011. Residents can learn more about the sport at their upcoming open house on June 11 from 2 to 4 p.m.



Original Niagara-on-the-Lake Book Seller's cottage well-appointed bungalow in the heart of Old Town, steps from vibrant Queen Street. This inviting home blends historic charm and modern comfort, with two cozy gas fireplaces, multiple built-in bookcases, custom pine finishes and a bright, sun-filled rear addition (2024). Stand-alone 4-season garden suite has: 3-piece bath, heat/AC; on-demand hot water; built-in bookcases - a versatile guest suite/ home office retreat in a low-maintenance, private garden oasis. Added features include ample outdoor enclosed storage and a dedicated EV car charger. Charming shops, top-tier dining, lush parks, and the renowned Shaw Festival Theatre just a few short blocks away, the Book Seller's Cottage offers a unique blend of unbeatable location, timeless elegance and practical amenities.

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What are the benefits of joining and continuing your membership with the Niagara-on-the-Lake Chamber of Commerce?

Networking Opportunities

Access to local business leaders, entrepreneurs, and professionals. Regular events like mixers, luncheons, and business expos to build relationships. Opportunities to collaborate with fellow members on joint initiatives or promotions.

Marketing and Visibility

Business directory listing on the NOTL Chamber website, which is visited by locals and tourists. Promotion through the Chamber's social media, newsletters, and visitor guides. Sponsorship opportunities and exposure at Chamber events.

Advocacy and Representation

The Chamber advocates for business interests at the municipal and regional levels. Participation in committees or consultations that influence local economic development or tourism policy.

Business Resources and Support

Access to workshops, training, and educational sessions on topics like marketing, HR, and business development. Referrals and recommendations from the Chamber to potential customers or partners. Insight into local trends, tourism statistics, and economic updates.

Credibility and Trust

Being a member signals that your business is reputable and engaged in the community. Chamber affiliation can influence potential customers or clients to choose your business over a non-member.

Member-to-Member Discounts

Access to exclusive discounts and perks from other member businesses. Ability to offer your own incentives to fellow members, driving business and fostering loyalty.

For more information regarding membership, please reach out to Stacey Mulholland, membership officer at stacey@niagaraonthelake.com or call 289-547-7556.







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Incredible Herc visits NOTL airport



A Royal Canadian Air Force CC-130 Hercules sits on the tarmac during a training stop in Niagara. Pilots said they were conducting flight rescue training over Lake Ontario. At the same time, a Dassault Falcon jet owned by Jim Pattison Industries Ltd. also landed at the airport. JOHN DELORENZI



The art of container gardening



GROWING TOGETHER

Joanne Young Columnist

Container gardening is a versatile and rewarding method of cultivating plants, particularly in urban environments where space is often limited. Whether you live in a bustling city apartment, a suburban home or out in the country, container gardening allows you to create vibrant, green spaces with minimal fuss.

Let's look at some of the benefits, techniques and creative possibilities of container gardening.

Benefits of container gardening

Container gardening offers numerous advantages, making it an attractive option for gardeners of all skill levels.

Space efficiency:

Containers can fit in small spaces such as balconies, patios and windowsills, making it possible to garden in areas where traditional garden beds are not feasible.

Mobility: Containers are movable, allowing you to change the layout of your garden, transport plants indoors during harsh weather or optimize sunlight exposure throughout the day.

Control over soil quality: You have complete control over the soil used, ensuring optimal conditions for plant



Choosing the right containers for your planters is essential for the plants to survive, and can help accent your home.

growth and reducing the risk of soil-borne diseases.

Water management: Containers allow for efficient water usage, making it easier to prevent overwatering or underwatering.

Choosing the right containers

Selecting the appropriate containers is essential for the success of your garden. Here are some factors to

Determine your style or desired effect that you want to create — modern, rustic, Zen, etc. For example, for a modern look, you would use containers that have straight, simple lines, whether square, rectangular or round. For a rustic look, you might use a wooden barrel or even repurpose an old basin.

How much space do you have? Pots should be proportional to your space. If you have a large patio or deck space, clustering pots together may be the answer to make them look proportional to your space.

Are you wanting to use shrubs, perennials, annuals, vegetables or tropicals? Some plants will require larger pots for rooting space.

Will the pots be remaining outside for the winter? Porous pots such as ceramic, terra cotta and concrete may crack if left out for the winter. Wood, plastic or resin-type pots overwinter well outside.

All pots must have proper drainage. Are saucers then necessary? If pots are going to be sitting directly on a hard surface, they should be raised (by using pot feet or bricks) one to two inches for proper drainage.

Choosing the right plants

Determine how much sun the area receives and at what time of day.

Consider wind conditions or any other environmental conditions.

Desired effect — tropical, English cottage, formal, etc.

Do you want something flowering, herbs, vegetables or just greenery? Are you looking just for summer interest or something in all seasons?

What mood would you like to create? Cool colours (white, purples, blues) are relaxing and tranquil, while warm colours (reds, oranges, yellows) are vibrant and add excitement.

Cool colours also recede in the landscape, making a small area seem larger. Warm colours come at you. This is important when viewing things from a distance.

Proportion and shape: The shape of the pot and planting should be comfortable with one another. Plants should not be more than twice the height of the pot, or more than 1.5 times the width of the pot.

Planting for texture: Small feathery leaves and dainty flowers give a delicate, subtle look and are appreciated more if seen from up close. Bold flowers and large leaves can be appreciated from a distance. To achieve a balanced look, make sure that there is a good mixture of bold and delicate flowers and foliage.

Container gardening is a delightful way to bring nature into your home and cultivate beautiful, productive plants. With thoughtful planning and care, your container garden can flourish, providing you with fresh produce, fragrant herbs and vibrant blooms.

Embrace the art of container gardening and transform your living space into a green oasis.

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

Arlene Dolynski



DOLYNSKI, Arlene (Raven) –

It is with great sadness that we announce the passing of Arlene Dolynski, on May 15, 2025 at the St. Catharines General Hospital, at the age of 84.

Reunited with her beloved husband Tony. Devoted mother of Sue Grove,

Stephen (Sue) and Tony Jr. (Denise). Adored grandmother of Kurt (Holly), Amber (Scott), Megan, Jaimee (Jon), Gregory, Stephanie (Sebastian) and Danielle. Great Granny of Jordyn, Jaxxon, Kingston, Andy, Evan, Savannah, Carson, Kolton, Lucas and Sammie. Survived by her sisters Wendy (Val) and Janet (Ben). Fondly remembered by many nieces, nephews, cousins and friends.

In keeping with Arlene's wishes, cremation has taken place. The family will receive friends at Morgan Funeral Home, 415 Regent St., Niagara-on-the-Lake, on Saturday May 24, 2025, from 11 a.m. to 1 p.m., followed by a service to celebrate the life of Arlene at the funeral home.

In lieu of flowers an expression of sympathy, those who wish may make a memorial donation to the Alzheimer's Society of Niagara. Memories, photos and condolences may be shared at www.morganfuneral.com.



David Wiwcharyk



Wiwcharyk, David (Selfie taken May 2nd 2025 celebrating their 55th wedding anniversary in Algonquin Park)

David Julian Wiwcharyk, born November 17, 1951, peacefully passed away surrounded by family on May 15. David is survived by his beloved wife Victoria

(Vicki, nee Lewis), son Josh (Niki), grandson Jack, sisters Joanna (predeceased) and Regina, numerous in-laws, nieces and nephews, and close friends Luis, Kira, and Luke, who had become like family.

Dave grew up on Larkin Road in Niagara-on the-Lake and went on to live a life filled with friends, adventures, and a variety of careers spanning from industry to entrepreneurship before finally discovering his passion as a certified psychotherapist (RP, CTP), where he applied his diverse and resilient life experiences to his practice. When he wasn't reading, Dave enjoyed, hiking, road-trips, and boating. He was a warm and beautiful man who was known for his patience, loyalty, good humour, and quiet strength.

Following Dave's wishes, cremation has taken place. Friends and family are invited to a memorial service on June 21, 2025, at the Calvary Church, 89 Scott St. in St. Catharines, to be followed by an enthusiastic Celebration of Life at Club Heidelberg, 569 Lake Street, St. Catharines — the same hall where Dave and Vicki celebrated their wedding in 1970.

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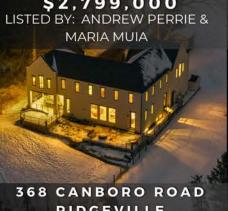


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