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Canada's most-awarded community newspaper

February 20, 2025

With election a week away, there are now seven candidates

Julia Sacco Local Journalism Initiative The Lake Report

Niagara-on-the-Lake voters will have seven candidates to choose from when they cast ballots in the Feb. 27 provincial election. Representing the Niagara Falls riding are incumbent Wayne Gates for the NDP, independent candidate Joedy Burdett, Gary Dumelie for the New

Blue Party, Shafoli Kapur

for the Liberals, Ruth-Ann Nieuwesteeg for the Progressive Conservatives, Andrew Soifert for the Ontario Party and Celia Taylor representing the Green Party.

Kapur was announced as

the Liberal candidate last week.

Despite the short notice, Kapur is more than ready to represent NOTL's riding, she told The Lake Report.

"I had 20 ridings to choose from but I chose

Niagara Falls because I felt to represent Niagara Falls is an honour for me," she said.

Based in Toronto since coming to Canada in 2009, Kapur made the move to Portage Road in Niagara Falls shortly after her candidacy was announced last week.

"Just because I was not born here and just because I (didn't) live in Niagara Falls doesn't make me any less

Continued on Page 4

Red Roof to expand in big way

Andrew Hawlitzky The Lake Report

A \$100,000 donation from the Wise Guys Charity Fund will help Niagara-onthe-Lake's Red Roof Retreat with major expansion plans.

On Friday, Red Roof launched its "All You Need is Love" campaign to engage the community and secure funding for a new, fully accessible two-storey building. This expansion aims to meet the growing demand for quality care and family support through programs and activities for individuals with special needs.

According to executive director Steffanie Bjorgan, Wise Guys Charity Fund has supported Red Roof in the past, assisting with purchases for a van and playground. The community-funded charity surprised Bjorgan with the amount of initial support they delivered.

"We did not expect that amount of money, that was fantastic. What a great way to kick off the campaign."

Continued on Page XX

Top in business celebrated at Peller

Keystone Award recipients include long list of NOTL entrepreneurs



Arlene Dickinson, left, stands with John Hawley, son Adam Hawley and Dean French as the Hawleys accept an award for their contributions to Niagara-on-the-Lake's economy at the Keystone Awards. They were honoured for the Village development. PAIGE SEBURN

Paige Seburn | Local Journalism Initiative | The Lake Report

ragons' Den star Arlene Dickinson sat fireside at Pellar Estates last week and made eye contact with the young women in the room as she delivered a message to everyone: Don't fear failure, don't hold yourself back and let nothing stand in the way of your dreams.

Dickinson, a South African-Canadian entrepreneur, was a keynote speaker for the Keystone Awards, which were founded by Dean French to celebrate the Top 10 small and medium-sized enterprises with at least 50 employees in each riding.

The fourth annual show in Niagara-on-the-Lake on Feb. 12 recognized top employers from across Niagara, highlighting how these business owners create jobs and strengthen the economy in ways big businesses can't.

Several NOTL business leaders were recognized, including

Continued on Page 2

The Lake Report honoured with 19 more provincial awards

Staff The Lake Report

Two members of The Lake Report's staff have been nominated for prestigious journalism awards administered by the Ontario Community Newspapers Association.

Photographer Dave Van de Laar and news reporter Julia Sacco were singled out in the industry organization's annual awards competition.

Van de Laar, the association's reigning Photographer of the Year, is one of the finalists for that honour for the third consecutive year and Sacco is a finalist for Reporter of the Year.

Both awards honour

g Photographer some of the period, from October 2023 through September 2024.
Their nominations are among 19 awards for The

among 19 awards for The Lake Report and its website, niagaranow.com, in

recipients for a selection of

the annual Better Newspapers Competition, which is adjudicated by the industry association. The Lake Report competes in the largest circulation category (8,000

Continued on Page 8







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NOTL business makers honoured

Continued from Front Page

Melissa Marotta-Paolicelli and Angela Marotta, coproprietors of Two Sisters Vineyards; Blair Harber, coowner of Ravine Vineyard; George Lepp, owner of Lepp Farms and Si Wai Lai,

owner of the Oban Inn. Other winners were Andrew Perrie, head coach and sales representative at Revel Realty; Evan Macdonald, head coach and sales representative at Revel; Jessie Macdonald, head coach and broker at Revel; Klaus Reif, owner of Reif Estate Winery; David Feldberg, owner of Stratus Vineyards and John Hawley, president/ developer of the Village subdivision in Niagara-onthe-Lake, along with his son Adam Hawley, vice-president of the Village.

Tickets, which sold out, were \$150 each and included dinner and drinks from Pellar and a talk from Dickinson.

Dickinson, with her father's help, took time to confidently dream big advice she now shares with entrepreneurs on Dragons' Den, a Canadian show

where entrepreneurs pitch to investors, which she joined 19 years ago.

That confidence comes when you don't let selfdoubt hold you back, especially for young women who are often told not to dream big, she said.

At the ceremony, The Lake Report asked Dickinson how women can maintain independence while accepting help from men and others, balancing confidence without shutting out support.

She said while women must stand up for themselves, men also need to advocate for and be allies to women in their efforts.

"We're not trying to take your place. We're trying to just stand beside you," she said to the men in the room.

Dickinson was once the only woman on the show and pushed for more women to join.

"Why on earth could that be even remotely okay when 50 per cent of our workforce is women?" she said.

"It's so important to talk about this," she said in an interview with The Lake Report.

Marotta-Paolicelli and



NOTL's Alana Hurov played a key role in shaping the awards ceremony.

Marotta, co-proprietors of Two Sisters Vineyards who grew up in a "a very entrepreneurial family," won a Keystone Award. They said it was an honour to celebrate female empowerment with Dickinson.

"We felt we had to work harder to prove ourselves, as well as to be taken seriously, being two women in a male-dominated industry," Marotta-Paolicelli said.

Even so, the sisters built an award-winning femaleled winery — allowing them to focus on both the wine's taste and the emotional experience, Marotta-Paolicelli said.

Marotta said accepting help from men and others without losing confidence is key for an entrepreneur's progress.

"In order to grow we all need to be willing to evolve and learn," Marotta said.

"For the guys in the room, it's time for us to listen," French said to wrap up the talk. "We all have daughters, mothers, wives. I think we can up our game."

"It's important to recognize entrepreneurs for what they do," said Adam Hawley. "It's not always easy and sometimes it can be lonely as well. But it's such a key, important part of the quality of life that we enjoy in Niagara-on-the-Lake."

Hawley said the Village's impact on job creation is what earned it the award. With its commercial development entering its final phases, its new hotel and additional leased business spaces will add even more jobs, he said.

paigeseburn@niagaranow.com





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Page 3 February 20, 2025



Town buys section of heritage trail from Niagara Region, but work is still years away

Local Journalism Initiative The Lake Report

The last leg of the heritage trail is still a few years away from being restored after being purchased by the town.

Niagara-on-the-Lake council approved \$3,156 for the purchase of about one kilometre of the Upper Canada Heritage Trail stretching from Line 9 to York Road.

The committee is working on the second leg of the trail, which runs from East and West Line to Line 3 Road.

Tony Chisholm, vicechair of the heritage trail committee, hopes to wrap up the work on this section in the spring.



Heritage trail committee chair Rick Meloen says it will still be a while before restoration begins on this stretch of the Upper Canada Heritage Trail. EVAN LOREE

Chisholm said he hopes to start the third phase of the trail, beginning at Line 3 and terminating at Line 9, before the end of 2025.

But there's no estimate for when they can begin working on the final stretch.

"It jerks along at its own pace depending on how successful we are with donations and grants," he said.

Chisholm said the last

phase also needed the most work. The committee would have

to raise funds for an engineering study and potentially for repairs and removals of old culverts, so getting an accurate cost estimate for the restorations was impossible.

Committee chair Rick Meloen said much of the damage to that section was done while it was owned by Niagara Region.

"I'm hoping maybe, when we get there to Phase Four, that maybe the region will would help out a little bit,"

Despite the stop-and-start pace of the project, Meloen was confident interest would not wane in the project, and residents would continue to support the restoration.

"The pandemic brought everything to a halt. But now we seem to have a little more momentum again," Meloen said.

The first stretch of trail cost about \$101.000 to complete, he said.

The second section is estimated at \$126,000.

Meloen estimated the third phase, the longest portion of the trail, would cost up to \$250,000.



Town issues two-year parking licences to carriage operators

Evan Loree The Lake Report

At a short committee of the whole meeting, council chose to extend parking permits to carriage operators for two years instead of one.

Sentineal Carriages and Vineyard to Village Horse and Carriage Co. will share six licences allowing them to park carriages on townowned land on King Street, outside the Prince of Wales Hotel.

Though council agreed to renew the land occupancy licences for another two years, Coun. Sandra O'Connor withheld her

O'Connor recalled council's "angst" when renewing the licences in 2024, and a request from staff to recommend new criteria for allowing the licenses.

She said she would endorse the licence renewal if it was for one year instead of two.

Coun. Wendy Cheropita said carriage operators had been asking for two-year licences and would be pleased with the change.

Lord Mayor Gary Zalepa said council expressed interest in changing criteria for

how operators are selected for the licences in 2024.

Acting chief administrator Bruce Zvaniga said staff failed to compile the necessary research to complete a report last year.

In 2024, there were three operators competing for the licences but for 2025 there are only two, which Cheropita said simplified the issue.

Data shows speeding a continued issue in rural NOTL

Evan Loree The Lake Report

Data collected from speed minders around Niagaraon-the-Lake show speeding is worst in Niagara-on-the-Lake's rural areas.

"I know that council has in the past asked for a strategy with respect to managing safety on rural roads," said Lord Mayor Gary Zalepa said.

"Obviously the report

shows that that continues to be a problem," he added.

Zalepa then asked for an update on staff's plan to reduce speeding in those areas.

Coun. Wendy Cheropita said she gets a lot of calls about speeding from residents in Old Town but the data shows that speeds are being respected all over the town's urban centre.

"I was happy to see the speed limits as low as they were," she added.

The data was collected from streets around town for 12 weeks between August and November.

A staff report on the data showed drivers speed most on Church Road from Townline to Irvine Road.

The speed limit on Church Road is 60 km/h but the average speed is 71

The fastest drivers recorded by the speedminders were going 84 km/h, or 24

km/h over the limit.

Drivers on nearby Scott Street were similarly caught going as fast as 91 km/h.

The data, organized into weekly tables, uses an exclamation mark to indicate streets with excessively high speeds.

Acting operations director Darren MacKenzie agreed to report back at a future meeting on how staff plan to reduce speeding in the



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Town to limit speaking times to five minutes at council

Evan Loree The Lake Report

Councillors are asking staff for revisions on its procedural bylaw after being dissatisfied with some technical details and a lack of clarity.

The town's procedural bylaw lays out rules of conduct at town meetings.

It impacts speaking times for residents, consultants

and other presenters, the organization of the agenda and the types of topics that can be discussed.

The updates establish five-minute speaking times at meetings where there are more than three delegates.

Currently, people are given ten minutes to speak on agenda items at town

The updates also bring changes that make it more consistent with rules in the Municipal Act, which provides guidelines on council

Coun. Sandra O'Connor asked staff to update the language of the bylaw so it would be easier to discuss issues which are of interest to the residents but not necessarily in the town's jurisdiction.

As written, she said the bylaw makes it harder to

advocate on issues like healthcare, education, trade and tariffs, which do impact

Town Clerk Grant Bivol said if an issue was in the "general interest" of the residents then council was in its right to discuss them under the current rules.

Lord Mayor Gary Zalepa asked for more clarity in some of the definitions used in the document.



ELECTION 2025



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Seven candidates in Feb. 27 election

Continued from Front Page

Canadian," she said.

"I want to do things for the community. I want to give back to Canada," she said.

If elected, Kapur's top priorities for the residents of Niagara are health care and affordability, along with an emphasis on tourism, she said.

Celia Taylor was made official as the Green Party's candidate for NOTL's riding earlier this month.

When The Lake Report reached out for comment, Karen Fraser, chair of the Niagara Falls riding explained Taylor is a "paper candidate" and cannot do any interviews with media.

"She's not refusing, she's just following the rules," Fraser said.

Fraser described a paper candidate as someone who will hold a space on the ballot so residents can vote Green if they wish to.

"She's very dedicated, but because she's only a paper candidate, head office asked her not to be part of anything," Fraser told The Lake Report.

While the party is grateful



Incumbent New Democrat Wayne Gates and Progressive Conservative Ruth-Ann Nieuwesteeg. FILE/SUPPLIED

for their work, because many paper candidates are new to the process, they have been asked to abstain from interviews, Fraser said.

Taylor is an enthusiastic leader nonetheless, being born and raised in Niagara Falls, Fraser said.

Her "about" page on the Green Party website highlights a focus on preserving the region's natural environment and ensuring sustainability for future generations.

Incumbent Gates has been in the running for months, nominated by his party back in October.

Gates, who has been involved in NOTL politics as a New Democrat since 2014, promised to keep up what he called a number

resteeg. FILE/SUPPLIED of "big wins" the NDP has

won for the riding.

His priorities for NOTL include health care and keeping an open line of communication with residents, Gates said in an earlier interview.

"If I get the honour of representing the residents for another term, I'll continue to be the hardestworking MPP in Ontario," Gates said.

Progressive Conservative candidate Ruth-Ann Nieuwesteeg has not responded to several interview requests.

On the party website, Nieuwesteeg is identified as a lifelong resident of Niagara Falls and a business owner.

Nieuwesteeg has owned and operated Patterson

Funeral Home with her family for more than 25 years, the page says.

Independent candidate Joedy Burdett's website outlines his role as someone born and raised in Niagara, with special links to the community as owner of Niagara Tinting.

"I will be working to advance our community's general wants and needs and ensure that proposed legislation benefits our local riding in both the short and long term," Burdett said on the webpage.

Gary Dumelie is running as candidate for the New Blue Party, which vows to reduce administrative costs in education, support alternative schooling, end "woke" activism with the removal of critical race theory and gender identity theory from schools, support the elimination of government-funded green policies, defund elective abortion and more.

Andrew Soifert is a candidate for the Ontario Party, running on a basis of freedom, family and faith, according to the party's website.

juliasacco@niagaranow.com



Zalepa fires back at questions during open house

Julia Sacco Local Journalism Initiative The Lake Report

Old Town's instalment of Lord Mayor Gary Zalepa's open house sessions opened the floor for discussions on leadership and municipal decision making.

One of the first to pose a question following Zalepa's presentation, Niagara-on-the-Lake resident Richard James started the discussion off on development.

"Do you have any concerns about some of the decisions that have been made in the last year by council?" James asked.

"Are you concerned about the level of unpopularity of these developments?" he continued.

In response, Zalepa replied with a simple "no," he is not concerned.

"This is where we get to decisions that have to be made and not everybody is going to agree with it," he said.

Zalepa said all decisions



Lord Mayor Gary Zalepa speaks to residents at Tuesday's open house.

were made by a majority of councillors who feel they are doing what's best for the community.

Resident Karen Taylor-Jones has been outspoken against council-approved developments and Tuesday's meeting was no exception.

"When council is making all these decisions, are they truly listening to the residents of this community?" Taylor-Jones asked.

Zalpea responded with the rhetorical question, "what is listening?" which was met with laughs from the crowd of around 100 NOTLers.

Zalepa said Taylor–Jones is one voice, while another resident is another.

"Council does the best job they can to hear all the aggregate voices and they have to make tough decisions," he said.

"My answer to your question is yes, they listen. But by making a decision that's contrary to what your opinion was, that doesn't mean we didn't listen."

Taylor-Jones referenced the protest she organized in July of last year, wherein hundreds of residents came to town hall to protest the Parliament Oak Hotel development.

"I brought 300 people," Taylor-Jones said.

"They weren't very nice," Zalepa said, which was met with groans from the crowd.

Resident Terry Mactaggart said one of the biggest issues he has with current council is a conflict of interest.

Mactaggart asked what recourse those who object to the lack of declaration of interest or the way in which certain council (members) are behaving have.

Zalepa said council has a conflict of interest guideline which outlines what councillors have to declare as a conflict of interest.

He added at the start of every meeting, councillors declare their conflict if they feel they have one.

"If anybody feels that it is improperly declared you have full recourse through a complaint to the integrity commissioner which the town has," Zalepa said.

Councillors take conflicts of interest very seriously and often get their own legal advice, Zalepa said.

The final open house will take place on Thursday, Feb. 20 in Queenston at Fire Station 4 beginning at 6:30 p.m.

If you want to send your questions in advance, you can send them to communications@notl.com.

juliasacco@niagaranow.com

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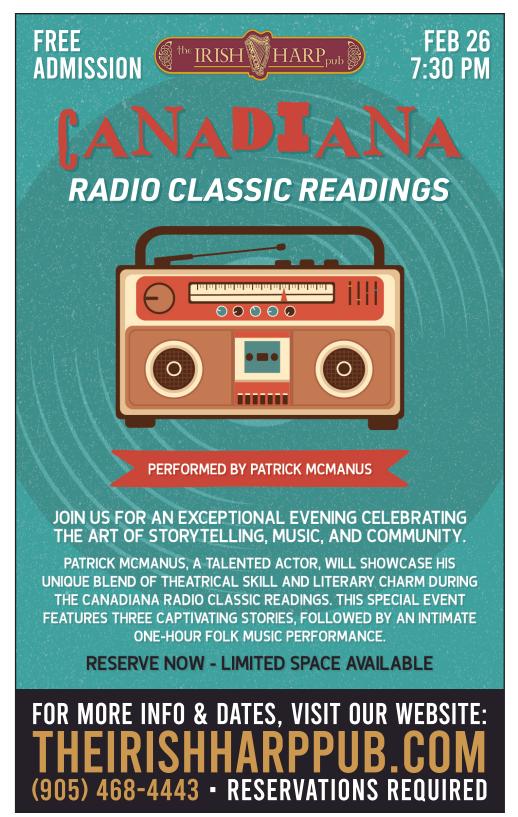
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Furry friends feel the love on Valentine's Day

Paige Seburn Local Journalism Initiative The Lake Report

A Valentine's Day pet food drive had residents dropping off donations by the bagful to help rescues in Niagara-on-the-Lake, plus the local food bank, which stocks pet food.

Organized by Community Initiative for Animal Rescue, a fundraising group founded by Tanya Rice, the drive on Feb. 14 saw a steady stream of supporters at her home on Line 2 Road throughout the morning and early afternoon.

Rice founded the group of animal advocates to raise funds for animal welfare in Niagara, though it doesn't handle rescues, adoptions or fostering.

She said it's more urgent than ever to protect vulnerable animals — with the town's rise in animal abandonment and surrenders coupled with dropping temperatures.

Cindy Grant, food bank manager at Newark Neighbours, said every bit helps.

"All donations mean the world to us," she said. "Having a cat myself, I know how fast cat food goes."

Newark Neighbours



From left, Erika Buchkowsky, Tanya Rice, Margot Richardson, Cindy Grant, Carolyn Greenfield and Cheryl Chiarelli at the Community Initiative for Animal Rescue pet food drive at 456 Line 2 Rd. in Niagara-on-the-Lake. PAIGE SEBURN

has a small pet pantry, only stocked when people donate — Grant said they plan to continue with this system, since most of the food bank's clients don't have pets.

"But the few that do are very grateful for it," Grant said, adding she's excited to restock the shelves with some much-needed canned pet food.

Donors brought in kibble, cat litter and several dog coats for Angel's Rest, along with plenty of other items, she said.

The drive ended up collecting five pounds of cat treats, two pounds of dog treats, 432 pounds of litter (400 pounds donated by Pet Valu) and 240 pounds of pet food (102

pounds from Pet Valu).

Attendees were also able to enjoy some Valentine's Day chocolates and hot cocoa while there, provided by Rice and her group.

The drive wrapped up in the afternoon, but fundraising continued at Husky Travel Centre, 615 York Rd., NOTL, where the volunteer group held a Valentines Day raffle for a \$150 Valentine's Day basket. The raffle had been open since Feb. 1.

All the money raised from the raffle will be used to purchase Pet Valu gift cards for Newark Neighbours and surrounding rescues.

"Say we don't have kitten food or they need dietary food — we can give them a gift card," Rice said, adding how this way she can ensure each rescue gets exactly what they need.

Wanda Woodland of Niagara Falls won, while Amanda Stephenson of St. Catharines took home a second place prize of a Kauzlaric Farm jam and chocolate basket.

Rice was happy with the turnout of her Valentine's Day initiatives.

On top of items donated at the drive, \$180 was raised from cash donations and the raffle raised \$480.

Another adventure for a good cause is on the horizon for Rice and her group — a spring fundraiser, set for April 12. You can fetch more details soon.

paigeseburn@niagaranow.com

\$100K donation a huge step for Red Roof

Continued from Front Page

Since then, Red Roof has raised nearly half of the total budget needed to fund the expansion including a \$6,800 donation from Jody Finn-Vermelon, whose family has long supported the retreat through initiatives like her annual sale of over 4,500 heart-shaped cookies.

"It's very important to us as a family," Finn-Vermelon said. "This is just a way for us to give back."

Red Roof Retreat, which has served more than 300 families in the region, currently operates out of a modest 1,100-square-foot facility.

The plan is to replace Red Roof's existing bungalow property on Concession 6 with a state-of-the-art, 5,700-square-foot accessible two-story building spanning 5,700 square feet.

"We've had wait lists since the day we opened. The house has served its purpose, but we've really outgrown it," said Bjorgan.

In addition to the new building, the historic red barn — which gave the charity its name — will be



Wise Guys Charity presents Red Roof Retreat with a cheque for \$100,000. The funds will help the organization in its plan to significantly expand its facilities. SUPPLIED

preserved and enhanced with new cladding and upgraded interior space.

A year-round covered pavilion is also in the works, designed to extend outdoor programming options, especially during the region's increasingly hot summers and unpredictable weather.

"The world has changed, summers are hotter, and we can't really build capacity if we don't have more space to go to, especially when it's inclement weather," Bjorgan said.

Construction is slated to begin this fall, with a target opening in 2026. Red Roof services will continue uninterrupted throughout the building process.

Alternative locations, including Kevan's House on Concession 2 and a facility at Cornerstone Church on Hunter Road, will temporarily accommodate programs, ensuring current clients experience no disruption.

Over the coming months, the "All You Need is Love" campaign will roll out a series of social media features spotlighting the individuals and families behind the retreat.

"Every Wednesday is going to be a kind of who's who of Red Roof Retreat," Bjorgan explained. "We're reintroducing what we do, how we do it and where we're headed."

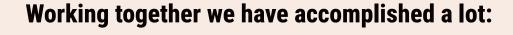
The charity will unveil detailed physical drawings during a free public skate event on February 25 from 10:30 to 11:30 a.m. at the Meridian Credit Union Arena in Virgil.

andrew@niagaranow.com



Wayne GATES

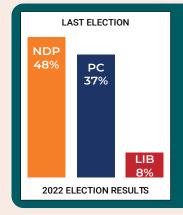
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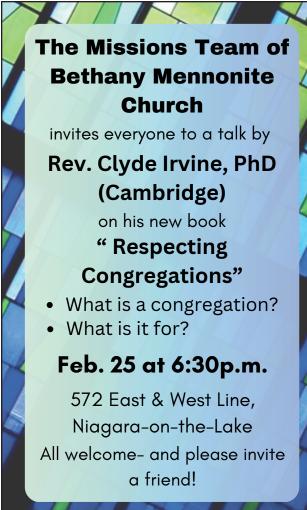
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And the LIBERALS? Their "local" appointed candidate lives in Toronto and has no connection to Niagara. They aren't serious about Niagara-on-the-Lake.







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Left: Richard Harley's story about NOTL resident Peter Earle's battle with ALS is a finalist for Best Feature Story. Above: Dave Van de Laar is once again a finalist for Photographer of the Year. Reporter Julia Sacco is a finalist for Reporter of the Year.

The Lake Report finalist in 19 categories

Continued from Front Page

and over) and is up against some of the biggest publications in Ontario.

Despite that, NOTL's newspaper again was singled out for more awards than any other publication in the province. Since 2020, the paper has now received 131 provincial and national awards for its journalism, advertising and community work.

"It's sort of surreal that what started as a small monthly newspaper in 2018 has evolved into Canada's most-awarded newspaper," said Lake Report founder and editor-in-chief Richard Harley.

"Every day we are thankful for our readers, supporters and advertisers who help us continue to produce meaningful journalism that matters to the residents of our town," he added.

"To continue to receive recognition of the quality of our work, not just from our readers, but from unbiased industry peers and experts, helps to fuel the fire that keeps the paper going."

The finalists will gather at Queen's Landing in Niagara-on-the-Lake on April 11 when first, second and third-place winners will be unveiled during a gala awards presentation.

It is the first time since 2018, prior to the COVID pandemic, that the newspaper association will hold its awards presentation inperson. The organization's board voted last month to hold the event in NOTL.

The Lake Report is one

of three finalists for overall General Excellence in the largest circulation class, along with the Elmira-Woolwich Observer and the Haliburton Highlander.

The paper's expansive letters and opinion pages also are nominated for Best Editorial Section and niagaranow.com is a finalist for Best Community Newspaper Website.

Our "Celebrating the Women of NOTL" special section last March 7 marking International Women's Day was chosen as a finalist in the Community Service category, which aims to honour publications that go above and beyond just reporting the news.

The Lake Report's photography was recognized with several awards.

NOTL resident and freelance photographer John DeLorenzi is in the running for Best Spot News Photo for his drone's-eye image showing crews and heavy equipment reinforcing the breakwall to protect the Lake Ontario shoreline near the NOTL Golf Club.

The Page 1 image, published Feb. 8, 2024, gave readers an unusual and exclusive view of the massive project.

Former reporter Evan Loree's heartwarming image of Kat Forbes and Brandon Poirier at the Candlelight Stroll earned a finalist spot in the Best Grip and Grin Photo category.

Van de Laar is also nominated for Best Feature Photo, for an image published on Oct. 13, 2023, depicting six-yearold Jack Hill, clad in a soldier's uniform at the 254th birthday celebrations at Queenston Heights for Maj.-Gen. Sir Isaac Brock.

He also scored a nomination in the Best Sports Photo category for an emotive front-page image published Feb. 29, 2024.

It showed a teary-eyed Niagara Predators' Tyler Gearing consoling all-star goaltender Zane Clausen after the Jr. A team was ousted from the Greater Metro Hockey League playoffs.

Sacco received an honourable mention along with Richard Hutton and Kevin MacLean in the Best Investigative News Story category for a series of stories on the firing of NOTL chief librarian Cathy Simpson over the content of an opinion piece she wrote for The Lake Report about Freedom to Read Week.

As well, Sacco earned an Arts and Entertainment nod for her Feb. 14, 2024, feature story on NOTL artist Edward Spera and his expedition to the Arctic. She also is in the running in the Health and Wellness category for her ongoing "Code Grey" series on health care problems in town.

Her April 25, 2024, feature looked at the surging senior population in NOTL and the efforts to attract more doctors and nurse practitioners to care for a sicker and older demographic.

Harley, who started The Lake Report and niagaranow.

com seven years ago, is a finalist in four categories.

His emotional and thought-provoking frontpage story on NOTL store owner Peter Earle's battle with ALS and plan to die on his own terms using medical assistance is a finalist for Best Feature Story.

It was published on May 2, 2024, one month before Earle died.

As well, Harley's blistering, critical editorial taking federal Conservative leader Pierre Poilievre to task for lies, innuendo and pandering statements made during a visit to NOTL.

The Aug. 15, 2024, editorial made waves across the country as thousands of people shared it on social media.

Harley also is a finalist in the Best In-house Promotion category, for creating a four-page section celebrating the 27 provincial awards that The Lake Report won in 2023.

He and MacLean also are finalists for the Best Headline Writing award.

Former staff reporter Richard Wright received two nominations for his exclusive and in-depth sixpart "Summer of the Flood" series, which explored problems and repercussions related to heavy rains that caused hundreds of thousands of dollars in damages to homes and properties this past summer.

His work was singled out in the Best Feature/News Series and Best Online Journalism categories. The series was published between Aug. 29 and Oct. 3.



WAYNE GATES' RECORD FAILS TO PROTECT NIAGARA

- THE 6.1% TAX ON WINERY RETAIL STORES
- SAID NO TO FUNDING FOR THE NEW SOUTH NIAGARA HOSPITAL
- VOTED AGAINST THE
 EXTENSION OF GO TRANSIT
 SERVICES TO NIAGARA

The Lake Report

OPINION



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Editor-In-Chief: Richard Harley
Managing Editor: Zahraa Hmood
Editor Emeritus: Kevin MacLean
Design & Layout: Richard Harley
Advertising: Megan Vanderlee
Contributors: Denise Ascenzo,
Dr. William Brown, Penny-Lynn Co

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



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Contributed by Patty Garriock

"Too much of a good thing can be wonderful." - Mae West

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Advertising Department: 905-932-5646

Office Address

496 Mississagua St., NOTL, Ontario, Canada.

Mailing Address

PO Box 724, Niagara-on-the-Lake, LOS1J0

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A fine time at the arena

From left, Colin Fowler, Cam Fowler, Theo Bernard, 4, and Cathy Fowler enjoy a family skate on Monday. The Fine Estates Team from Revel Realty rented out the Virgil arena and invited anyone to come and have a skate — plus free hot dogs, popcorn, drinks and goodie bags. DAVE VAN DE LAAR



Editorial

Gates is a candidate for the people

Richard Harley Editor-In-Chief

There's a provincial election Feb. 27.

Despite that, you might not have heard much about this riding's candidates running this year — because most of them won't pick up the phone or sit down for a chat.

Other than incumbent New Democrat Wayne Gates and Liberal candidate Shafoli Kapur, none of the people running for this riding have returned phone calls to this newspaper — or any media, for that matter, so far as we can tell.

When it comes to the Progressive Conservatives, candidate Ruth-Ann Nieuwesteeg has simply been missing in action. She hasn't consented to interviews and has dodged debates.

We're left to speculate that perhaps she has no reason to listen to constituents and presume she'll simply take her marching orders from PC leader Doug Ford.

That's the Tory way in Ontario — toe the party line, centralize decision-making responsibilities and avoid potential problems by not having candidates step out of the bubble and connect with people and the media in small towns like ours.

Conveniently, Nieuwesteeg managed to make it for a photo op when the PC leader staged a campaign stop in Niagara-on-the-Lake two weeks ago.

This, combined with the



nearly eight-year PC track record governing Ontario, tells us a lot. She's not ready to lead, especially in this riding, which is packed with people who care about our future.

The Liberals' candidate
— after they took weeks to
find one — was parachuted
in from Toronto and doesn't
live in the riding. Enough
said.

The Greens, while we love the ideology, have always been sort of a sacrificial lamb, ie. they don't really stand a chance so it's not really a wise use of your vote. It will just split the vote on the left.

If you are the kind of person who would vote Green, perhaps you're the kind of person who should instead consider voting against the Progressive Conservatives.

In our riding, there now are seven people on the ballot, but really, it is a two-party race.

In our view, the only real local candidate worth his salt is incumbent Wayne Gates, who since 2014 has represented the Niagara Falls riding — which includes Niagara-on-the-Lake

and Fort Erie.

A grassroots politician, Gates always makes time for his constituents and doesn't hide from the media. He has a plan of attack and is familiar with what issues matter to the people living and working in our communities.

As an NDPer, unless an orange wave washes over Ontario, he won't have a seat at the governing party's table — as some PC supporters like to argue. But under our system, your vote is for the riding candidate and Gates is the best choice.

He understands the issues and won't just be another pushover or pawn for the Ford regime if the Tories are returned to power.

Let's all remember their track record and lack of real action on important issues such as health care, education and daycare.

Plus there is a long list of issues that Ford has stumbled on — notably the Greenbelt, privatizing more health care instead of "curing" hallway medicine and his cozy relations with deep-pocketed individuals. And let's not forget about turning Ontario Place into a European spa.

Unlike a PC backbencher, Gates will genuinely be fighting for the people, not just blustering about it as Ford does.

In our assessment, there's simply no better option for Niagara than Gates.

If you want someone to challenge the province's underspending on health care to decrease wait times for you and your family to receive emergency care, then vote Gates.

If you want someone you can actually reach to discuss issues that matter to you, vote Gates.

If you want a candidate who cares only about what Ford and his cronies, developer friends and private interests think, then vote Nieuwesteeg.

It's pretty simple. A vote for Gates is a vote for the people. A vote for Nieuwesteeg is a vote to further the interests of the province's most wealthy. (As for Ford's pitch that he needs the mandate to be able to fight Donald Trump ... that's hogwash.)

But wait, Ford promised \$35 million to the Shaw Festival? If he is re-elected.

Let's think about that: If the Progressive Conservatives are suddenly going to support the arts in NOTL, in the midst of an election campaign — is there any ulterior motive?

The NDP has a long history of supporting the arts, culture, health care and beyond.

Ford likes to say he is "for the people" when in truth a vote for Ford is a vote for the rich and powerful.

You decide.

In this riding, vote strategically and don't waste your ballot on an independent, Liberal or Green candidate. If the left is divided, Ford and his party are the only beneficiaries.

editor@niagaranow.com



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When freedom to speak was no freedom at all



THE TURNER REPORT

Garth Turner Columnist

Regular addicts may recall my encounter with NOTL Museum.

It was a fine summer day. A heritage festival was in full swing out on the street. Perfect for a town that rose from the smoky rubble of a Yankee attack two centuries ago.

But feting our past was not on the agenda. A musical group sang loudly of "genocide" and the "murder of women and children."

So I asked the boss, Sarah Kaufman, why such an inappropriate, regret-laden and historically dodgy act was picked for a street party to celebrate our ancestors.

Her response: "The NOTL Museum is committed to diversity, equity and inclusion. As part of that, we have decided to address tough topics of Black history and enslavement ... as well as the uncomfortable Indigenous history of Canada. Every country has positive history as well as negative history."

Hmm. DEI, Sarah said. That's why local pride should be sacrificed on the alter of societal guilt.

But here's what the policy actually means: "Diversity, equity, and inclusion are organizational frameworks that seek to promote the fair treatment and full participation of all people, particularly groups who have historically been underrepresented or subject to discrimination based on identity or disability."

DEI, in other words, is about workplace fairness. Seems like a reasonable goal. It's not about rewriting history to make NOTLers culpable for social mores or the sins of our ancestors. But it sure helps get government funding, which our busy-bee museum excels at.

Well, since I raised the issue with Sarah, the world has changed. The new American president wiped out the entire DEI program permeating the U.S. civil service. Within days major corporations followed suit, from Meta to Walmart, Amazon, JPMorgan, Disney and Deloitte.

It's a serious shot in the culture war now gripping society as conservatives fight back against progressives and Donald Trump daily expands and extends his executive power to refashion the way Americans think.

Where once it was



Cathy Simpson.

unforgivable to express an alternative point of view, in the days of X, JD Vance, Elon and the orange guy it's now mainstream.

At least down there. But what's the state of so-called "intellectual freedom" in our town?

I sought out Cathy Simpson. A year ago she wrote a column about it in this very paper, as an ode to Freedom to Read week.

At the time she was our chief librarian. Now she's unemployed after being dumped in a high-profile dismissal by the library board. Her crime? That article. And specifically referencing an American outfit called FAIR (Foundation Against Intolerance and Racism).

Founded in 2021, FAIR campaigns against diversity programs, ethnic studies curricula and antiracism initiatives, which it calls

"critical race theory." It's conservative, rightist, controversial and has been a leading voice in the dump-DEI movement.

Simpson's argument that all viewpoints should be heard — especially in a library — was logical, but the FAIR reference opened her up for an attack that she could not survive.

"I don't regret what's happened, even though it's been horrible," she told me. "I could not live with myself if I did not stand for those principles. It's just being a decent human being."

Simpson has been lionized on the political right. She gained international attention. Media galore. Her stance was referenced in the U.S. Congress. Yet she remains a woman traumatized by her treatment. She wrote about freedom and got canned for it. A few months before everything seemed to change.

"Extremism has trickled down from universities to our schools. Instead of silencing people, however, we need to engage those who may not agree with you. Bad ideas are best confronted, not suppressed."

"I just want us to get back to the middle."

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

garth@garth.ca

RIDDLEMETHIS

This week's riddle is "Jeopardy!" style. Category: SUMMING UP THE SPIELBERG MOVIE

Amity Island has a very, very big tourism problem.

Last issue: ALL ABOUT HAIR

Clue: Tiny muscles called arrector pili in our follicles make our hair literally do this, as a ghost in Shakespeare promises to do.

Answer: What is stand on end? Answered first by: Lynda Collet

Also answered correctly (in order) by: Claudia Grimwood, Bob Wheatley, Jane Morris, Sue Rautenberg, Becky Creager, Jim Dandy, Esther VanGorder, Katie Reimer, Catherine Clarke, Nancy Rocca, Marla Percy, Lynda Hosty, Sheila Meloche, David Spencer, Wade Durling

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

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

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How can amalgamation not save money?

Dear editor:

With regards to the local NDP candidate's claim that amalgamation of Niagara's communities would lead to increased taxes, fewer services as presented in the recent Lake Report (Feb. 6, "Opinion: Amalgamation of Niagara's border communities will lead to increased taxes and fewer services") Wayne Gates neglects to mention that the proposal

would eliminate two levels of municipal governments with duplicate services and replace it with one city.

How would this not save tax dollars?

It was the Bill Davis government of the 1970s that first introduced the notion of regional government. Other large communities developed a comparable apparatus to that developed by the Niagara Region government, to enhance in the delivery of infrastructure services.

Since that time, all other large communities but Niagara have evolved into a one-city administration.

This age of communication technologies enhances the access to municipal information, which in its own merit should eliminate the burdensome, out-of-touch and unsympathetic to local

needs style of the current Niagara regional government administration.

Let our regional government evolve, Mr. Gates, and stay out the debate, unless you want to introduce a private members bill — if re-elected — to impose a referendum on the issue during the next municipal election.

> Derek Insley **NOTL**

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Ford's overture and what lies ahead for Ontarians



ARCHITEXT

Brian Marshall Columnist

Within two days of Premier Doug Ford's election call, his party received the joint mayoral endorsement of the region's three largest cities — Niagara Falls, St. Catharines and Welland.

How odd, I thought, as I read the CHCH story (Jan. 31, "Exclusive: Niagara mayors endorse Ontario PC leader Doug Ford"): Here are three mayors acting in their official capacity — as was clearly defined in their joint letter to the media outlet — who are taking a partisan position to support one political party.

From one perspective it's understandable since, should the Progressive Conservatives be re-elected and choose to go forward with their ill-advised plan to amalgamate within the Niagara Region, their respective cities will expand

exponentially.

That said, should the provincial election result in a change in government, how would that play out for their respective constituents — given that these mayors had declared a political preference?

Really not well I suspect. Moreover, at the time I wondered ... how does this fit with the constraints of their municipal code of conduct criteria?

Which brings us to Ford's Feb. 8 election stump visit at the Niagara District Airport.

During these proceedings, Coun. Erwin Wiens stated, ""From the town of Niagara-on-the-Lake, as the deputy lord mayor, I want to endorse the premier in this election. We look forward to working with you so much."

This declaration flies in the face of Niagara-on-the-Lake's code of conduct, section 10.1, wherein it states that a "member" — elected or otherwise — "shall not use the influence of their office or appointment for any purpose other than the exercise of his or her official duties in the public interest."

In my opinion, by evoking his office as deputy lord mayor in this endorsement, Mr. Wiens has crossed the line.



Columnist Brian Marshall says local politicians shouldn't use their influence to support party politics in elections.

To be completely clear, should any citizen in their private capacity choose to endorse a political party, knock on doors and organize a voter support base to underwrite their position, I'm fully onboard with that.

But, any elected official who declares their municipal position and assumes they can willy-nilly speak for the electorate to endorse any one political party, thereby potentially risking the municipality's future prosperity, is another kettle of fish.

Moving on, let's set aside the premier's bombastic pronouncements regarding his willingness to go toeto-toe with U.S. President Donald Trump over the tariffs — loosely claiming to be the "best person" for that job and proudly proclaiming "Canada is not for sale."

This while he is championing a "Fortress Am-Can" proposal that, in essence, will fully integrate the American and Canadian economies which will lead to the complete loss of Canada's economic sovereignty — the 51st state in all but name.

Again, let's sidestep these issues to put a focus on the record of the Ford government after six years in power.

So, let me ask the question: Do you believe that

you and your children are better or worse off today after six years of Doug Ford's leadership?

My impression, based on conversations with folks across the province, is that the majority feel they and their children are more economically challenged in 2025 and have little expectation this will change under a continued Ford government.

This feeling is borne out by the facts.

Despite multiple pieces of legislation designed to make it easier and cheaper for privately held development corporations to move projects forward, new home construction in Ontario has been effectively stalled since 2022 and, in 2024, new single family housing starts hit a 69-year low. Nor were the stats on multi-unit development starts notably better.

This must be set in the context of the extraordinary increase in the cost of housing since 2018.

The government's pledge to create "attainable" housing — an undefined term that I assume relates to its definition of "affordable" being a sale price of 20 per cent below market average — has, to date, not resulted in a single built start.

In 2024, more than 80,000 Ontarians were homeless — a 25 per cent increase since 2022.

In the same period, over one million Ontarians were forced to access food banks to feed their families.

Currently, approximately 2.5 million Ontarians do not have a family doctor and the government's own projections show health care staffing shortages are expected to worsen.

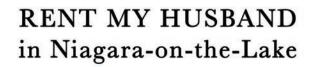
Because I'm running out of race track here, we won't visit the incredibly wasteful spending of taxpayer dollars associated with the Greenbelt debacle, the unnecessary \$1.4 billion spent to advance beer and wine sales into alternate retail environments by a mere 12 months and many other similar examples of politically motivated silliness.

Sure, the premier and his local sycophants may point to grandiose promises of investments in Niagara's infrastructure — most of which have not, to date, materialized — but, how does that translate to the health of your family's pocket book?

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







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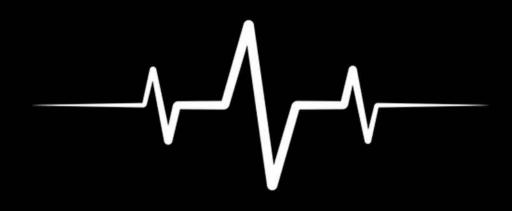












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NOTL swimmer earns University of Miami scholarship

Paige Seburn Local Journalism Initiative The Lake Report

With sights set on the Olympics, Peyton Leigh is taking her talents to the University of Miami.

The 17-year-old swimmer from Holy Cross Secondary School is officially committed to the university after years of hard work.

When she was 15, she qualified for the Olympic trials and although she didn't make the Olympics, she kept working hard and set new personal bests at other competitions like the Speedo Canadian Junior Championships.

Swimming over 20 hours a week, adding weight training on top of that, Peyton's excited to represent her efforts in a big city.

"It means a lot, coming from a small town and being able to make it that far," she said.

Peyton said her goals from here are clear: score points for her team and



Peyton Leigh, in her University of Miami sweater, stands by the snowy lake in Niagara-on-the-Lake, ready for the next chapter of her swimming career. SUPPLIED

"being an all-around good teammate," qualify for the Canada junior team and, ultimately, earn a spot at the Olympics — hopefully by 2028.

For Peyton, "home" has meant Garrison Village in Niagara-on-the-Lake — the chilly tight-knit community where she built her foundation as a competitive swim-

mer, she said.

But in a year and a half she'll be swapping cold winters for sunny days at the university's campus in a city near Miami called Coral Gables, where she'll swim at NCAA Division I.

She'll miss spending time on the lake, but the proximity to both the beach and the city — each just 20 minutes

away — isn't a bad tradeoff, she said.

Peyton chose Miami over other schools she visited like Penn State and Alabama because of its smaller team's welcoming atmosphere and the opportunity for more one-on-one coaching.

"A lot of people, when they think of the University of Miami, you think it's big. But it's not that big. It's quite small," she said.

Unlike larger programs with co-ed teams, Miami's women's-only roster of 22 swimmers allows for personalized attention — something she said will help her become a better swimmer.

"I've heard some coaches say, 'it's kind of hard to get to know everybody.' This way, I feel like you know everybody really well," she said, adding that it's important for coaches to understand you as a person so they can better help you succeed, both in and outside the pool.

"They really care about her as a person — not just as Peyton Leigh, the swimmer," Peyton's mom, Christi Leigh said.

Christi said her daughter has been swimming since she was five months old and Georgia, Peyton's 14-yearold sister, started swimming at the same age.

"We both work really

hard," Peyton said.

Georgia is not focused on pursuing university swimming right now, though she's doing well and enjoying her progress, Christi said.

The Leighs have spent countless hours driving to and from the girls' practices, Christi said.

"As a family, it's a lot of juggling — driving to practice and picking up from practice," she said. But Peyton's new driver's license has helped ease the load.

"I hope one day this helps with their dedication to life, work and people," Christi said. "It's worth it."

She said it's been bittersweet to watch her daughter plan to move so far for school.

"Right now I'm pretending that it's years and years away," she said. "I have another year and a half to digest all of this."

"I know that she'll thrive and it's the best decision for her," Christi said.

paigeseburn@niagaranow.com



2025 MUNICIPAL TAX REMINDER NOTICE Interim First Installment due February 28, 2025

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- **Electronically** from a bank account using your 19-digit roll number
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If you did not receive a tax notice, please call the Town at 905-468-3266 ext. O 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 February 28, 2025. On the first day of default and every month after, a 1.25% penalty will be added. Penalties will not be waived.

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

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Clearing the air about corporate animal care

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At Upper Canada Animal Hospital, we have spoken to several clients who raised concerns after a recent CBC website article and TV program cast a dark shadow on the corporate ownership of veterinary hospitals in Canada. I sincerely appreciate those clients reaching out and speaking up, and I'm happy to report that after our discussions, we were able to alleviate their concerns.

I've seen the CBC article, and want to respond to some of the unfounded allegations as they relate to our hospital (which is partly owned by NVA Canada).

To begin with, I clearly acknowledge that the cost of veterinary care has increased in recent years. Media coverage claims this is because of corporate ownership. The fact is that the increases are almost totally due to the rising costs of running a hospital. Staff wages have increased dramatically, and frankly they needed to. But so has the cost of every supply and service provider that a hospital requires in order to function.

Animal hospitals across North America, corporate or not, are feeling the rising cost of providing care and service. As we all know, this is not limited to veterinary care. Every sector has been hit with higher operating costs over the last five years, and for any business to stay in business, a portion of these expenses must be passed on to clients.

I opened Upper Canada Animal Hospital in 1996, and continue to be the main driving force behind the hospital. About three years ago I sold a portion of the hospital to NVA Canada, with the stipulation that I would retain ownership of a substantial portion of the operation.

When I first envisioned opening Upper Canada, I had a decision to make. Would I compete with other hospitals on price, or focus



Thanks to NVA Canada's ability to recruit high quality staff, Upper Canada Animal Hospital can once again commit to longer hours and Saturday morning appointments. From left, Dr. Shawn Baskin, Dr. Laura Golding and Dr. Jim Turpel guarantee your pet receives excellent care. Visit them at 323 Mary St. or call them at 905-468-4100. SUPPLIED

on providing exceptional care to patients and clients, thereby providing the best outcomes possible?

I think most people accept that lower cost is basically achieved through lower quality.

My goal was simple provide excellent care: treat every pet as it were my own; treat each owner the way I would want to be treated; never waste anyone's money on unnecessary recommendations; and hope that owners would see the value in the service we provided. These ethics are embraced as much today as

they were 28 years ago.

Years went by and we grew, but we never deviated from our mandate to provide the best care possible. Most people are unaware that, every day, clients from all over Ontario and New York state are referred to us by over 150 veterinary hospitals. These clinics trust us because they have learned that their clients are in good hands at Upper Canada. That respect is a direct result of the level of care that we hold ourselves accountable to.

So, why did I enter into a corporate partnership?

It began with COVID, when many people got new pets, or just noticed more issues with their pets because they were home all day. This meant more appointments, and each appointment took longer due to COVID mandates. Plus clinics were often shortstaffed as our own people got sick and had to quarantine. In this very stressful period, many veterinarians relocated or just left the profession.

At Upper Canada we lost two excellent vets. During the pandemic, Ontario had six unfilled vacancies for

every veterinarian available. Getting back to full staff was extremely stressful for our team.

Given the staffing crisis and the constant pressure to provide service, for the first time in my career I questioned the long-term viability of the hospital. That is what led me to entertain the idea of joint corporate ownership.

I'll be honest, I was skeptical. I had heard of corporations revamping hospital policies or creating cultures that caused good staff members to leave. But companies also have

entire teams whose job is to recruit the best veterinary candidates possible. We needed help.

We spent a year studying the options out there, and chose NVA Canada. We liked their philosophy of "helping pets and people who love them."

They also take a handsoff approach, letting us run the hospital the way we see fit. I needed to know that my patients, clients and staff would remain in good hands. And if I am to continue practicing for 10 to 20 years (that's the plan), I need to have principled partners I respect and trust.

Thanks to NVA's ability to recruit Dr. Laura Golding and Dr. Shawn Baskin, we are back to being fully staffed. At a time when many hospitals are reducing their hours, we can commit to being open until 6 pm during the week, and restarting some Saturday morning appointments. Drs. Golding and Baskin are compassionate, knowledgeable and experienced. We thank our lucky stars that they're part of our team.

Besides attracting excellent veterinarians, NVA provides other important benefits. They support all of our team, for instance by providing continuing education opportunities so staff can keep learning and growing. They also provide up-to-date information, equipment and technologies. They enable us to become better at what we do, while never dictating how we treat a patient or

NVA has been a blessing to our hospital, and in hindsight I feel fortunate to have chosen them to support our mission of providing exceptional care to all who enter our doors.

Thank you for reading this, and for choosing Upper Canada. If any of our clients have any concerns, please feel free to contact myself or our manager, Tracey, at the hospital.

Warmest regards, Jim Turpel BSc, DVM



UPPER CANADA ANIMAL HOSPITAL



Have some fun

Across

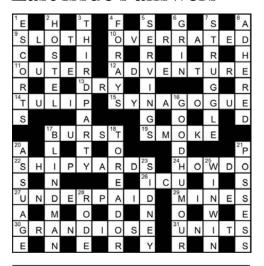
- 1. Total (3-2)
- 4. Fat bakers make a hash of the morning meal (9)
- 9. Framework of hexagonal cells (9)
- 10. Petty officer on a merchant ship (5)
- 11. Game with traps and checks (3,6)
- 12. Headed (5)
- 13. "Good Will Hunting" star (4,5)
- 15. Cheap WW2 sub-machine gun (4)
- 17. Of the present month (4)
- 19. Victories (9)
- 23. Overtly aggressive man (5)
- 24. Perceptive (9)
- 26. Where you are now (5)
- 27. Noiseless (9)
- 28. Aping (9)
- 29. Sides in an eternal battle (5)

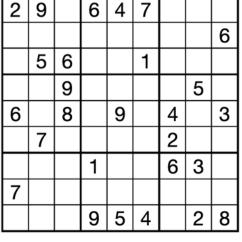
Down

- 1. Belief that there is no God (7)
- 2. Not strict (7)
- 3. Cargoes (8)
- 4. Tolerate (5)
- 5. At an early stage (9)
- 6. Sticky snacks? (6)
- 7. Kind of rifle (7)
- 8. Switched on (5,2)
- 14. Il Duce (9)
- 16. Humiliates (8)
- 17. Tel Aviv native, for example (7)
- 18. Feudal Japanese warrior (7)
- 20. Support for an orator (7)
- 21. Artists' models (7)
- 22. Battle of Jericho leader (6)
- 25. Colloquialism (5)

Crossword Puzzle 10 13 16 18 23 24 28

Last issue's answers







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"Source: Google Trends and Google Reviews "Source: REMAY LLC rankings for Large Team Residential, 2023. "Source: REDATUM Agents by units—listing and selling combined performance in TRREB Jan 1- June 30, 2024, REMAX Excarpment Golff Restly Inc.; Bokerage, Independently owned and operated





The Coloured Corps and Fort Mississauga

The Coloured Corps fought in several battles during the War of 1812. In the early months of 1814, they were assigned to serve as a company of artificers — soldiers who performed engineering and construction duties. The initial work by the Coloured Corps included digging trenches and constructing the outer defence wall. The beginnings of a stone and brick tower, the powder magazines and barracks were soon built. The constant threat of attack would have made construction efforts extremely dangerous, perhaps causing them to work under the cover of darkness. When the Coloured Corps was disbanded in 1815, Fort Mississauga was not complete. The tower was completed in 1823, but the fort itself remained unfinished.



ELECT

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Ruth-Ann Nieuwesteeg is a lifelong resident of Niagara and the longtime owner and operator of Patterson Funeral Home.

A sitting Niagara Falls city councillor, Ruth-Ann is known for her extensive community involvement and strong leadership.



Authorized by the CFO of the Ruth-Ann Nieuwesteeg Campaign



Picking the right plants for privacy



GROWING TOGETHER

Joanne Young Columnist

As more and more houses are being built closer together than ever, and yards seem to be getting smaller, it gets more challenging to find trees that can provide you with some privacy — while not taking over your space at the same time.

With the demand for skinnier trees to meet these needs, the nursery industry has been able to breed different plants that will remain narrow while still providing that privacy to block off those unwanted views

Narrow growing trees can also create bold statements in your yard. They can be used as specimen plants to draw a person's eye to a certain feature.

Here are a few deciduous and coniferous trees you might want to consider when looking for privacy.

Liquidambar styraciflua 'Slender Silhouette' — Slender Silhouette sweetgum

Slender Silhouette is a tall columnar cultivar of the sweetgum.

As it matures, it will maintain its erect, uniform, columnar form, growing upwards with the top of the



Slender silhouette wweet gum. JOANNE YOUNG

tree about the same width as near the bottom.

It will grow to a height of 50 to 60 feet and a width of five to six feet. The bark is deeply furrowed or ridged as the tree ages.

The deciduous leaves are star-shaped and the tree produces fruits that are rounded prickly, woody capsules.

Initially, they seem fruitless, but gradually they begin to produce a few fruits. The yields from year to year can fluctuate, but they are much less in number than the species.

The fall foliage color is unpredictable, but it may be in shades of yellow, orange, red or burgundy.

Picea abies 'Cuppressina' — columnar Norway spruce

The elegant columnar Norway spruce is highly valued as an accent or perimeter planting where a strong vertical effect is needed.

Dark green evergreen needles are slightly curved on upright branches, creating a slender, uniform form with dense branching to the ground

Withstands heavy snow loads. It tolerates heat and humidity better than others spruces. They are an ideal windbreak or privacy wall.

Spruce grows best in full sun. 'Cuppressina' spruce will grow approximately 20 feet tall and five to six feet wide

Pica glauca 'Pendula' — weeping white spruce

The weeping white spruce is a unusually, slender conifer with drooping branches and a narrow growth pattern

The tree features attractive, densely packed, blue-green needles. The fast-growing, columnar weeping evergreen tree grows between 20 to 40 feet tall and five feet wide.

Weeping white spruce can be planted as a vertical accent while keeping the planting area to a minimum.

Its distinctive shape makes it a great choice for planting as a specimen plant.

Thuja occidentalis 'North Pole' — North Pole cedar

The North Pole cedar is a narrow, columnar evergreen tree with dark green foliage that holds its color well throughout the winter. They make an excellent hedge or screen.

Because pruning is not usually needed, it makes for a very low maintenance plant.

North Pole cedars are faster growing and will reach a height of 15 feet and six feet wide.

Picea pungens 'Fastigiata' — Columnar Blue Spruce

Have you always liked the powdery blue colour of Colorado blue spruce, but you don't have the space for one? Then the columnar blue spruce might be the answer.

It is an excellent choice for a tall, columnar evergreen tree. zThe conifer has a distinct tight, pyramidal growth pattern and columnar habit.

This spectacular narrow, columnar blue spruce grows 20 tall and has a spread four feet after a period 10 years.

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

The Niagara-on-the-Lake Horticultural Society is pleased to be hosting a series of Saturday morning gardening classes, available to the public. They will be facilitated by Joanne Young starting on March 1 and will run until May 31. Join us for the classes that interest you. For all the details and to pre-register for the classes, visit notlhortsociety.com/ classes.

Obituary

Jodi Bradford



BRADFORD, Jodi - Loving and devoted mother to Sarah, Owen, James and Ben Bradford-Andrew and wife of David Andrew, passed away peacefully on Feb. 14, 2025, at her home in Niagara on the Lake at the age of 55. She was the daughter of Jeanne and the late William Bradford, and

sister of Nikki (husband: Mark McCandless) and Pippa Bradford (husband: Mervyn Patterson). Jodi was born in Niagara and spent several years living on a sailboat in the Caribbean with her parents. Jodi excelled academically at Governor Simcoe High School, where she won the prestigious Governor General's Award. She went on to earn an Honors Bachelor of Arts from the University of Western Ontario before attending law school and becoming a lawyer in London, Ontario.

In 2004, Jodi, David, and Sarah moved to Belgium, where their family grew with the birth of triplet boys Owen, James, and Ben in 2006. Jodi was always intensely proud of all her children and whole-heartedly embraced the difficulties of raising a growing family in a foreign country, all while battling her first cancer diagnosis. She remained incredibly courageous, grounded, and selfless while prioritizing the wellbeing and happiness of her family and friends.

In addition to living in Belgium, Jodi also lived in Northern Virginia and Texas but always returned to her historic home in Niagara-on-the-Lake for joy-filled summers with her children, friends and extended family. She cherished the town and her life in the community gave her happiness and peace over the years.

Jodi is also survived by her nieces (Alexandra and Ella), nephews (Nicholas, Bradford and Jordan) and best friend Donna Melanson, her beloved cats Phelps and Penny, the family dog Finnigan and many dear friends. She led life with courage and kindness. She inspired faith, grace and a steadfast commitment to doing what is right— a beautiful legacy that will live on through the values she instilled in her children.

A memorial service will be held at St. Mark's Anglican Church, Niagara-on-the-Lake, on Feb. 22, 2025 at noon.



For obituary and memorial inquiries, please contact editor@niagaranow.com.

Learn & Live seminar addresses fall prevention with Niagara EMS

Julia Sacco Local Journalism Initiative The Lake Report

Niagara EMS hopes to educate residents of Niagaraon-the-Lake on what causes falls and which preventative measures can be taken to avoid them.

During the next Learn & Live session on Monday, Feb. 24, occupational therapy student Holly Thomson will outline the fall prevention program along with essential tips.

Marty Mako, commander of mobile integrated health at Niagara EMS, told The Lake Report the FITS team (falls intervention team) is a multi-disciplinary response team involving a paramedic and occupational therapist who respond to low-acuity 911 calls — meaning, a call where the patient's symp-

toms mean there's a low chance of a more serious health problem developing.

"In the old days, prior to having this team, we would have sent an ambulance and two paramedics to all of these calls," he said.

"And we wouldn't have addressed why the fall happened in the first place."

The new team will help the fallen patient, assess for underlying injuries and the severity of the fall and determine the root cause of the accident, Mako said.

"We're able to go upstream with more of a preventive approach and that is new," he said.

During Thomson's presentation, attendees will have the opportunity to learn and ask questions afterward.

The hope is to spotlight and profile the FITS team

for all those who could benefit from its services, Mako said.

"Even though it's been around for five plus years now — maybe because of COVID — the community isn't aware that we even have these teams," he said.

Those interested in attending the Learn & Live Presentation can register for free online at notlpubliclibrary.org.



Marty Mako.



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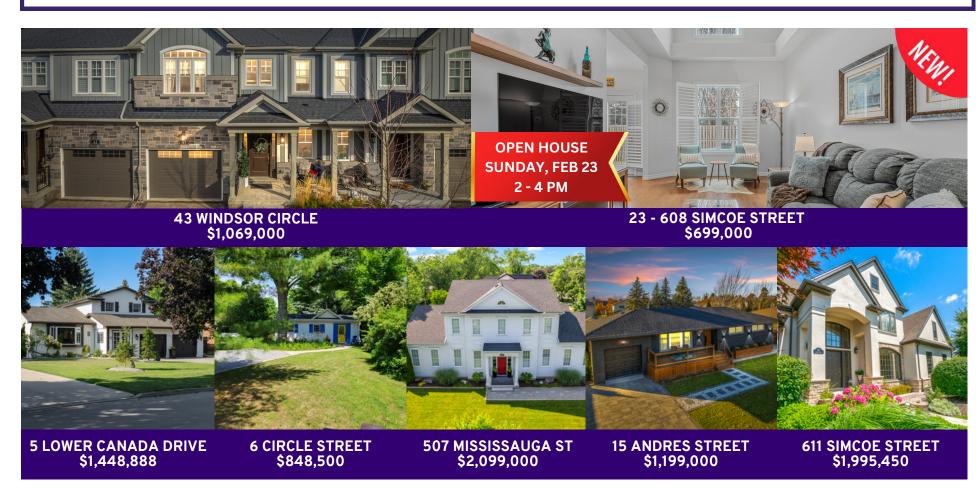
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