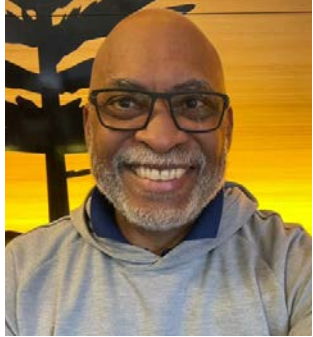




Icewine Fest draws crowds | Page 3



George Webber.

Archeological assessment to begin at Black burial ground

Somer Slobodian
Local Journalism Initiative
The Lake Report

After months of preparation and determination by a citizen-driven fundraising committee, the first stage of an archeological assessment will be done at the Niagara Baptist Church Burial Ground.

"Myself and the team are over the moon," said committee executive George Webber.

"This is the first step towards revitalizing and revamping a neglected property. We are also going to blaze a trail for others who would like to do the same thing for their projects," he said in an email.

The site, formerly known as the Negro Burial Ground, is a plot of land in Niagara-on-the-Lake on Mississauga Street, near Mary Street. It was established in 1929 by John Oakley.

The committee has been in communication with the town, which owns the land, and the Bereavement

Continued on Page 2

The Wright stuff

St. Davids boxer competing in national championships and maybe a shot at Olympics



Mckenzie Wright works out on the speed bag. She competes in the national championships starting Thursday. SOMER SLOBODIAN

Somer Slobodian
Local Journalism Initiative
The Lake Report

It was game over when amateur boxer Mckenzie Wright hit her opponent with a clean right hand and rocked her with a firm left hook.

It took Wright about 20 seconds to shake American champion Jasmine Hampton's confidence in the boxing ring in

Detroit last March.

It was Wright's first match back after about a four-year hiatus – and she told almost no one she was doing it. No need for any added pressure.

She was competing in the 54-kilogram weight class, a bit above her usual 48-kilogram category.

But that didn't bother her. She's always liked being an underdog and there was some-

thing satisfying about watching a bigger dog hit the mat.

She remembers the smug look in Hampton's eyes when they met at the weigh-in.

"She just looked at me like I was a joke," says Wright.

Little did Hampton know, Wright already had about 50 matches under her belt.

When the five foot four Canadian hit her with the right-left combination she felt her oppo-

nent's confidence shift.

Two rounds later, she had won a split decision over Hampton, an 11-time U.S. national champion fighting in her own hometown. And Wright had been out of the ring for four years.

"That was very satisfying," she says with a grin, the Wright stuff confidently on display.

Continued on Page 10



Coun. Maria Mavridis said her two restaurants are still recovering from lockdown.

Temporary patios extended, town debates making them permanent

Evan Loree
Local Journalism Initiative
The Lake Report

More than 30 restaurants in Niagara-on-the-Lake have temporary patios thanks to emergency legislation that was passed during

the pandemic.

The NOTL council plans to grant a third permit extension to the restaurants that operate temporary patios but staff admits it has homework to do before it can make these patios a permanent feature.

At a meeting of the committee of the whole Jan. 24, staff came to council looking for direction on whether to pursue a permanent solution for the temporary measure.

Director of development Kirsten McCauley told

council that restaurants can continue to use temporary patios without having to compensate the town for lost parking fees associated with patios built over on-street parking spaces.

Nor would they be charged an application fee.

However, if the town replaces the temporary patio program with a permanent one, "A fee would need to be implemented to offset additional staff resources," a staff report said.

Continued on Page 13



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Archeological assessment to begin at Black burial ground

Continued from Front Page

Authority of Ontario, which is responsible for burial sites across the province.

“We need to be in lock-step with them in terms of what we do and how we go about doing it. So, the town really can’t progress or proceed unless (the) bereavement authority says you should,” Webber said in an interview with The Lake Report.

The group had to privately raise \$5,000 before the bereavement authority would approve a stage one assessment by an archeological firm, he added.

The committee has raised close to \$7,000 and recently received an email from Kevin Turcotte, the town’s manager of parks and recreation, confirming the municipality will be proceeding with the stage one assessment.

The town has engaged Archaeological Research Associates Ltd., an archeological and heritage consulting firm, Turcotte told Webber.

The fundraising committee includes Webber, Sarah Kaufman, Cheryl Morris and Rene Bertschi.

Toronto resident James Russell, who was a member of the committee until last October, began restoration efforts at the grounds back in 2021 with his wife Marilyn.



A stage one archeological assessment will begin at the Niagara Baptist Church Burial Ground this year. SUPPLIED

Using ground penetrating radar, they discovered the suspected remains of 28 Canadian settlers’ bodies buried there.

There are four stages in the archeological assessment process. The first is a background study and property inspection.

Stage two and stage three assessments could include

digging test pits to find artifacts, depending on the field conditions.

If significant items are found, stage four would include preservation or excavation of the site.

Webber said committee members agreed they weren’t going to go through with anything that involved digging up the headstones.

It would cost too much money to excavate and restore them, he said.

Town staff will report the results to town council once stage one is completed and next steps will be determined at that time, spokesperson Marah Minor told The Lake Report.

According to the Ontario government, “A stage 2 as-

essment is required when the consultant archeologist identifies areas of archeological potential.”

If other stages are required, and if those stages include digging, Webber said the town or the bereavement authority will decide on the next steps, at the cost of the town or the bereavement authority.

“If the stage one assessment finds anything significant and the consultant recommends a stage two archeological assessment, town staff will consult with the Bereavement Authority of Ontario and the fundraising group and report back to council,” said Minor.

If that’s the case, it might prevent the committee from continuing with its vision for the cemetery, said Webber.

Instead of digging, the committee has been hard at work compiling a list of people who are most likely buried on the property.

“The ultimate vision is to create a mural wall of some kind with the names of the people we believe are buried there,” said Webber.

He also hopes to create a walkway with benches in the cemetery.

Bertschi has been doing all of the research and Webber said they have a “high degree of confidence on who might be buried there.”

So far the names of 18 people believed buried on the property have been found.

The committee has a site plan to show the public once the town allows it to be released.

The next steps for the committee include preparing a presentation to council and then public fundraising.

“We’re taking it one step at a time,” said Webber.

BarrelHead’s peachy concoction wins icewine cocktail competition



David McDonald, Arnie Lepp and Minerva Ward judged the top three cocktails. It didn’t win but pictured above is a smoked icewine negroni by Peller Estates. JULIA SACCO

Julia Sacco
The Lake Report

Icewine isn’t exactly known as a cocktail mixer, but Saturday night’s Icewine Cocktail Competition could convert a nonbeliever.

After the day’s icewine festivities, about 150 ticket holders met in the ballroom of the old Court House for an evening of music, dancing, food and, of course, cocktails.

“We really wanted to showcase how modern icewine is, that it’s not just a sipping wine,” said Jessica Taylor, events manager for the NOTL Chamber of Commerce, which organizes the festival.

The versatility of the drink shone through in each of the unique creations offered throughout the night, but one cocktail stood out to voters and judges alike.

BarrelHead’s Peach Mule, featuring Spirit in Niagara’s Juicy Peach Eau de Vie, took home the victory based on both audience votes and a final judgment by a panel that included Arnie Lepp, Minerva Ward and David McDonald.

“We’ve been serving it on our patio for four years. We’ve sold over 30,000 of them,” said BarrelHead’s Michael Zappitelli.

“It was a no-brainer for us.”

Taylor explained that deciding on the winning cocktail could not have been an easy task given all the unique flavours offered.

“They really brought their A-game. I didn’t even know you could make cocktails with icewine, so it’s just fantastic to see its versatility on display in creations by our five-star restaurants and wineries,” she said.

“I’ve been looking at all these cocktails for months now and honestly I couldn’t pick one. They put in a lot of work into creating handmade cocktails and they’ve done a fantastic job”

Aside from testing out the number of drinks and

samplings offered at the competition, the audience could dance along to music from the DJ or even enjoy a trick or two from magician Shaun Ferguson – two new additions to the celebration for its comeback post-pandemic.

Taylor outlined all of the hard work that went into ensuring that guests could once again enjoy the competition night to the absolute fullest.

“We kind of went with an ‘80s modern feel, everything old is new again. It really showcases everything that’s here in the grand hall in Niagara-on-the-Lake,” she said.



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Pre-pandemic crowds return to icewine festival

Julia Sacco
The Lake Report

The Niagara-on-the-Lake Icewine Festival's return to Old Town this year was an epic comeback, Chamber of Commerce chair Andrew Niven says.

Planning for this year's festival began in September and with many NOTL wineries returning to pre-pandemic visitor numbers, Niven was optimistic the festivities would draw a crowd.

"We had high hopes for this festival in terms of traffic and visitation and it really did not let us down," said Niven.

With new additions including a lesson on icewine history from Andrea Kaiser, an events stage and a designated VIP area (with fire pits and a private cocktail bar), the two weekends saw a turnout around 15 per cent higher than in 2019.

"We really tried to



The Icewine Festival's VIP lounge offered exclusive cocktails for two tokens. JULIA SACCO

enhance the festival, even if it's in a small way," said Niven.

"We try to do different things every year to not only make it continually different for those who visit every year but to make the whole festival better," he added.

"The feedback we heard from guests was really great."

The final day of this year's festival closed with a stellar performance from the three-piece band J.I.N., who managed to rock the crowd despite the cold and

snow, ending the weekend on a high note.

The festival is over but the Chocolate & Cheese program is being hosted by 20 wineries over four weekends in February. See the Wineries of Niagara-on-the-Lake website for details.

20 NOTL wineries indulging in Chocolate & Cheese

Somer Slobodian
Local Journalism Initiative
The Lake Report

Wine, chocolate and cheese ... a tasty combination.

NOTL's Chocolate & Cheese touring pass program is back each weekend in February.

"This is the second year now that we're doing the program as cheese and chocolate," Madison Vine, board chair of the Wineries of Niagara-on-the-Lake, told The Lake Report.

"Historically it was always chocolate."

Each of the 20 participating wineries decides what wines and food pairings they'll serve, said Vine.

"Wineries have gotten very creative in showcasing these cheese and chocolate pairings with our wines," she said.

Riverview Cellars Estate Winery on the Niagara Parkway is a perfect example of that.

Guests will be given a tasting of its newly released 2020 Barrel 81 Cabernet Merlot, paired with a creamy



Pillitteri Estates Winery is one of the 20 NOTL wineries participating in the Chocolate & Cheese Wine Festival that will run every weekend in February. SOMER SLOBODIAN

Mac n' Cheese topped with crunchy Cheetos.

At Konzelmann Estate Winery on Lakeshore Road, visitors will indulge in a mini chocolate and caramel cheesecake from Willow Cakes & Pastries, while

enjoying a tasting of the 2021 Merlot Barrel Aged Reserve.

"Our wineries do try and put their best foot forward because for a lot of people visiting this might be their first time coming or the

only time that they're able to come for a while," said Vine.

An individual pass is available for \$75 and includes 16 tastings per person, with a limit of eight per day. You would need two days to complete the pass, but it can be used over all four weekends.

There's also a new option this year, a couples pass. It also is \$75 and includes 16 tastings total split between a couple — so, eight tastings per person. That pass can be used in one day or spread out over the month.

When purchasing a pass, guests will need to pick which days they will be attending and which wineries they'll be going to.

A designated driver's pass is also available at a discounted rate.

Tastings will be available from 11 a.m. to 5 p.m., from Friday to Sunday each weekend in February. Reservations will close at 6 a.m. the day before.

Click on the "experiences" tab on wineriesofniagaraonthelake.com to learn more or purchase passes.

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Left: Allied soldiers use horse-drawn wagons to move artillery guns to a new position. Right: During the First World War, ammunition, rations and supplies were loaded onto trucks, light rail cars or horse-drawn wagons like these to take them to the gun positions. LIBRARY AND ARCHIVES CANADA/IMPERIAL WAR MUSEUM



Police officers carried assault rifles as they investigated a report of a weapon on Sunday. JULIA SACCO

NOTL man released after police investigate report of gun in house

Julia Sacco
The Lake Report

A man arrested after a report of a gun inside a Niagara-on-the-Lake home Sunday was released without charges after police say there was no evidence a crime was committed.

More than half a dozen police vehicles, including the region's emergency task unit and crisis negotiators, were called to the area of Anne Street between Simcoe and Mississauga streets about 3 p.m. Sunday after a firearm report was received.

Heavily armed police were seen in bullet-proof vests with some carrying what appeared to be assault rifles.

Neighbours who heard the commotion and saw the police activity came outside to find out what was happening.

"They're containing someone in a house," a couple from nearby Copperfield Street said.

After about two hours, police arrested one person at the scene.

Streets were reopened around 5:30 p.m. and police said there was no threat to public safety.

Then, on Monday morning, police released a statement stating that detectives searched a residence and did not find evidence of a criminal offence.

Police have not confirmed any details about what the person was doing there.

THE MONUMENTS MEN

Gunner Leslie Cudney killed by German artillery

It's been a century since Niagara-on-the-Lake's iconic clock tower cenotaph was erected. Then, in 1926, the Township of Niagara unveiled its own memorial in Queenston. In recognition of those who fought and died in two world wars and beyond, NOTL historian Ron Dale has been researching the stories of the people – all men – whose names are engraved on the two cenotaphs. This is one in a series of stories documenting and remembering the sacrifices of those commemorated on the municipal memorial in Queenston.

Ron Dale
Special to The Lake Report

By September 1918, the Allies were slowly forcing the German army to retreat toward their final defensive position, the Hindenburg Line.

The Battle of Amiens, from Aug. 8 to 11, had resulted in the Germans suffering 27,000 casualties on the first day alone and many of the enemy surrendered as the Canadians advanced.

The Germans were pushed back 13 kilometres from their original front-line positions.

During August, 57,000 German prisoners were taken and 650 pieces of their artillery captured.

The end of the long war was in sight.

It was at this time that the last man from what was

then Niagara Township was killed fighting in France.

Leslie Cudney was born on July 23, 1893, in Niagara Township, youngest of the seven children of farmer John Cudney and Elvira Dunn. Elvira died of pneumonia in the spring of 1901 when Leslie was 9.

John Cudney ensured that his children received a good education and, by 1914, the year that John remarried, Leslie was employed as an accountant in Niagara Falls.

Two years later, Leslie volunteered for active service in the First World War, travelling to London, Ont., in June 1916 to begin the enlistment process and finally joining the Canadian Field Artillery on Sept. 4, 1916.

Gunner Cudney's training period in Canada was unusually short.

After receiving a uniform and very rudimentary instruction in foot drill and military protocols, he was sent by train to Halifax and embarked for Europe on Oct. 4, 1916.

Nine days later he disembarked at Liverpool and was sent by train to the Canadian Army training camp at Shorncliffe, Kent, England. Again, his training period was short, lasting only three months.

Cudney arrived in France on Jan. 14, 1917, and remained in a reinforcement camp until required at the front.

Finally, he was posted to the 5th Brigade of the Canadian Field Artillery on May 11, 1917.

He served as a driver, rather than training to load and fire artillery pieces. While his army rank was "gunner," his work involved transportation of ammunition and supplies to the gun position.

Because he had grown up on a farm, he had a great deal of experience handling horses. At that time a limited number of trucks and a larger number of horse-drawn wagons kept the artillery supplied.

Ammunition, rations and supplies assembled in England were shipped to France and loaded on railroad cars to be taken toward the front lines.

Depots were established far enough from the battlefield to ensure the enemy did not shell the ammunition "dumps."

From there, the goods were transported by motor vehicles to smaller brigade depots closer to the front.

Here the ammunition, rations and so on were loaded onto trucks, light rail cars or horse-drawn wagons to take them to the gun positions as required. This was the most dangerous part of the transportation system, frequently subjected to enemy artillery fire.

While the Allies' artillery continued to fire at enemy positions daily, the amount of gunfire was

increased during major attacks.

Cudney served in action at the Battle of Hill 70 from Aug. 15 to 25, 1917. During this time, the artillery backing the Canadian Corps fired close to a million shells at the Germans. Cudney continued to serve, transporting ammunition to the gun positions each day, frequently under long-distance shell fire from enemy guns. Only two months before the war ended, his luck ran out.

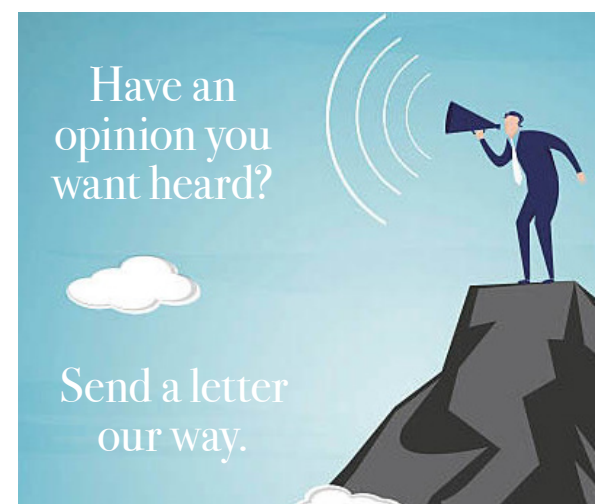
The official document known as the "Circumstances of Death" is clear about how he lost his life:

"The enemy were shelling the wagon lines on the night of Sept. 6-7, 1918, when one of the shells dropped near Gunner Cudney, a piece of which entered his chest. He was given immediate attention and conveyed to the dressing station, from where he was evacuated to No. 4 Canadian Field Ambulance, where he died."

Cudney was undoubtedly buried near the location of the field ambulance station but somehow the exact location of his grave was lost. He has no known grave.

His name is engraved on the Vimy Monument, along with 11,284 other Canadian soldiers whose final resting places remain unknown.

As well, Leslie John Cudney is commemorated on the municipal cenotaph at Queenston.



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Sixteen-year-old Sunday school teacher Maya Gazzard delivers a shot to Rev. YongSeok Baek while fellow organizer Nancy Lang watches the action. The group is working on opening a hub for youth in St. Davids. STEVE HARDAKER

New St. Davids group is ‘Safe Haven’ for teens

Steve Hardaker
Community Correspondent

A new youth group is about to launch in Niagara-on-the-Lake, at St. Davids-Queenston United Church on York Road.

Known as Safe Haven, the new youth group is geared for teens between 13 and 17 years of age.

Like the new Virgil-based NOTL Youth Collective, it has been in the works for a long time.

When Rev. YongSeok Baek became the new minister at St. Davids-Queenston in the late summer of 2021, a priority was to start a youth group at the church where teens could hang out. He, along with a core group of volunteers, have been planning it ever since.

Among those assisting Baek in establishing the group are Nancy Lang, the church’s chair of Christian education, and Maya Gazzard, a NOTL teen and the church’s Sunday school teacher.

In an interview, Baek explained how the St. Davids Youth Group got started.

“I met many times with

Maya during coffee times at church to get her views on what the youth of Niagara-on-the-Lake desire. She had many good ideas.”

“Maya explained that her and her friends do not have many places or the time to hang out. They congregate at the mall where there is free wifi, at Tim Hortons and in the area parks when the weather is good,” he said.

“Maya also explained that some of her friends have concerns with gender identity and how they are perceived and need a safe, positive space to go to.”

Baek’s conclusion from those discussions was that the church could provide a safe, warm and welcoming space for youth to come and play and hang out – a safe haven.

NOTL Coun. Adriana Vizarrri, a St. Davids resident, was pleased to see such “much-needed youth programming” being established.

“We have an amazing growing community with many new young families that appreciate and support a youth hub. We hope to continue this with a future

municipal facility,” she said in an email.

The new organization is not a spiritual group as not all youth practise a religious faith.

The first step was to obtain a seed grant from the United Church Foundation to purchase items for the teens to use while at the church.

They included musical instruments, tablet computers, board and video games, a ping-pong table, an air hockey game, and various pieces of lounging furniture.

Baek hopes to provide a safe and welcoming space where teens can gather to do what teens do best – play and hang out with friends.

Baek outlined how the facility will be set up during youth group meetings at church board’s January meeting, saying, “There will be different theme centres, including a music section, e-table (with iPads, etc.), a game section (Nintendo, TV), a sports section (ping pong, foosball, air hockey), and a snack section and a quiet area where the kids can just sit and talk or do homework.”

The first meeting for Safe Haven will be this Friday, Feb. 3 from 6 to 9 p.m. The group will meet the first and third Friday of each month. Teens will need to register in advance and attendance will be taken.

In an email, Gazzard, 16, said, “I’m excited about Safe Haven because there are no places for kids like me to just hang out and to have a space where they can eat, laugh and do activities together.”

“There are lots of things to do for lots of people – like musical instruments, a projector for movies, foosball and ping-pong tables, board games etc.”

“We are trying to offer a space for teens to go where they can hang out and feel safe and accepted without judgment. Our space is LGBTQIA2+ friendly.”

“The space on York Road is large, comfortable and convenient for teens in the St. Davids, Queenston, Glendale and Niagara Falls areas,” she said.

“I’m sure parents would also appreciate a safe space for teens to hang out while they go to dinner or a movie on Friday night.”

NOTL man arrested for suspended driving, meth

Staff
The Lake Report

Police have charged a Niagara-on-the-Lake man with possession of crystal meth and for driving with a suspended licence.

A Niagara Regional Police officer using automated licence plate recognition software picked up a Mazda 3 travelling in St. Catharines on Monday at 8:51 p.m.

The software alerted the officer that the vehicle’s

registered owner was a suspended driver, police said.

After stopping the car and searching it the officer found 16.9 grams of suspected crystal methamphetamine.

Kevin Bentum, 50, of

Niagara-on-the-Lake, was arrested and charged with possession of crystal methamphetamine and driving while under suspension.

He was released on a promise to appear in court on Feb. 23 in St. Catharines.

Celebrating Black History Month





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Canada The Local Journalism Initiative is funded by the Government of Canada.

COVID Tracker

NOTL active cases (last 28 days): 67
Region active cases: 727
Region deaths: 711
Region total cases: 51,041

**Feb. 1 data per Niagara Region Public Health.*

Public health warns that "Due to the surge in COVID-19 cases, limited availability of testing, and changes to case and contact management practices, case counts shown (above) are an underestimate of the true number of individuals in Niagara with COVID-19. Data should be interpreted with caution." Case data for municipalities is also now being interpreted in 28-day cycles.



Contributed by Patty Garriock

"I always felt that the great high privilege, relief and comfort of friendship was that one had to explain nothing." - Katherine Mansfield

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Roll over, Beethoven



Lake Report photographer Dave Van de Laar captured a photo of JIN playing at the NOTL Icewine Festival on Sunday.

Editorial

There's good news aplenty

Kevin MacLean
 Managing Editor

This edition of The Lake Report boasts several good news items (as it does most weeks).

It's timely and welcome front-page news that the first stage of an archeological assessment will soon begin at the Niagara Baptist Church Burial Ground.

It is fitting that we are reporting this story as Black History Month begins again.

The small cemetery on Niagara Stone Road near Mary Street is thought to be the resting place for 28 or more Black settlers who called Niagara-on-the-Lake home well over a century ago.

NOTL's heritage as an important stop on the Un-

derground Railroad and the contributions of many Black settlers needs to be preserved and never forgotten.

The Town of NOTL and the Bereavement Authority of Ontario are to be credited for allowing the initial stage of an archeological assessment to be conducted.

This is an important historical property in Niagara-on-the-Lake and one that deserves to be preserved. But also, every effort must be made to ensure its story is told and passed on to future generations.

The real heroes in this story, though, are the members of a community committee who were told they had to come up with \$5,000 before anyone would listen to them.

So, the committee, which

includes George Webber, Sarah Kaufman, Cheryl Morris and Rene Bertschi, raised nearly \$7,000.

Congratulations to all those who worked to make this happen. We look forward to what their work discovers.

Also on Page 1 is news that the town is extending the temporary outdoor patios that have been one of the biggest positives to come out of the pandemic.

Yes, there are some concerns about lost parking revenue and whether eventually making them permanent is the right decision. We support the idea of making these patios a fixture along Queen Street, but understand that the town likely will study and report on the concept in due course.

Our vote, if we had one, is yea.

Also, we wish St. Davids amateur boxer Mckenzie Wright, profiled on the front page, all the best as she fights in the Canadian national championships this weekend.

It's a tough competition and the top two fighters in her division will then be eligible to try to qualify for the 2024 Olympics in Paris. She's still a long way from making that trip, but we'll be in her corner, cheering her on.

Lastly, it was welcome news that, after two pandemic years, the resurgent and expanded NOTL Icewine Festival bounced back to pre-COVID attendance. Sweet!

editor@niagaranow.com

We welcome your letters

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



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Reasons why heritage is **important**

Dear editor:

The Jan. 26 letter from Alexander Evans, “Just “ask why” when debating property rights in NOTL,” suggests we “ask why” heritage negates individual rights, Niagara-on-the-Lake receives special treatment and houses of the 1880s are protected over the contemporary.

Mr. Evans’ basis for such questioning is his belief that “property is sacrosanct” and that one of our most fundamental individual rights is “being able to choose what we do with our own property.”

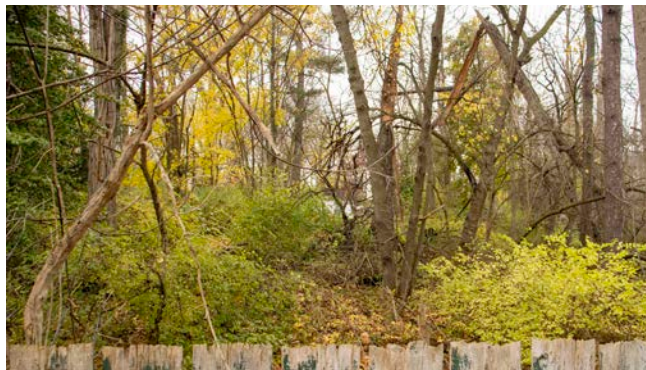
Unfortunately, Mr. Evans is incorrect.

Unlike the United States, in Canada property rights are not constitutionally protected nor are we able to simply do what we want with our property.

It’s not that we don’t have certain rights, just that these rights are not absolute.

But leaving the legal argument aside, let’s “ask why” heritage and architecture is important in NOTL.

I would argue it’s because the majority of us who live



We must continue to fight to preserve NOTL’s built heritage, says writer Lyle Hall. FILE PHOTO

here believe it to be true.

Over the years, the councils we have elected acknowledged the importance of heritage either through the official plan or actions to highlight, showcase and promote heritage features.

For example, in the most recent election campaign, all nine successful members of our current council agreed on the importance of investigating an expansion of the heritage district.

The previous council’s 2018-2022 strategic plan focused on “preserving unique community elements” as the first objective of its first “pillar.”

Perhaps a more satisfying rationale for “why” is

that civilizations through millennia have made efforts to preserve their history and heritage – whether artifacts, stories, music, art or built form.

Democracies (and even totalitarian regimes) have enshrined laws to protect and preserve important components of their history, including guidelines that govern the rights of property owners. This is not an NOTL-specific phenomenon.

Further, much of the built form in NOTL represents the founding heritage of Upper Canada, located on the lands of the Neutral Nation, the Mississauga and the Haudenosaunee.

Much of the built history and heritage is captured and preserved through many of our original residential properties and streetscapes.

Look at some of the most beautiful and culturally enriching cities in the world. I’m sure glad they asked “why?”

And thank you for reminding us to do the same in our historic community.

No, Mr. Evans, there is no injustice.

The rules governing what can and can’t be built in NOTL, as well as every other community across this country, are developed over time, are modified and updated, and are appealable on a case-by-case basis.

Some would argue that more should be done to protect our heritage. Given some of the development that’s occurred in NOTL over the past few years, I would put myself in that camp.

Others might not. But these are decisions we make as a community.

*Lyle Hall
President*

The Niagara Foundation

Apartment building has **no place** in midst of bungalow homes

Dear editor:

Applications have been received for an Official Plan Amendment and Zoning By-law Amendment to permit an apartment building containing 41 residential units with a height of 18 metres (59 feet) at 223-227 Mary Street.

This would allow the building of a four-storey apartment literally in the backyards of single home dwellings. Many of the homes are bungalows.

We’ve been here before with a Public Meeting held on July 18, 2016 with most people voicing their objection. Subsequently, the amendment was refused by Council on September 19, 2016.

I believe the area is zoned for single home dwellings; the high density of 41 residential units is unsuitable for the block; and the height will result in a lack of privacy for the surrounding homes especially the ones whose backyards will be directly affected.

In my opinion, the location is inappropriate and, if approved, will be the beginning of the end of Niagara-on-the-Lake’s heritage and historical community. If this receives a “go”, it could set a precedent for developers inserting apartment complexes in the middle of single homes throughout Niagara-on-the-Lake.”

*Janice Barker
Old Town*

Church whistleblower faces **legal persecution**

Dear editor:

I urge every Canadian to read the overview summary of events by a very sincere clerical whistleblower, whose research into the horrors of the Canadian residential schools led to his persecution by Canadian legal authorities.

The story of former United Church minister Kevin Annett is documented online at canadiangenocide.nativeweb.org.

If you thought this kind of thing could not happen in Canada the Good, think again.

Governments and the churches involved acted like something out of the medieval era Inquisition, seeking to shut people up summarily, under threat of actual jail.

As well, crimes that I have not seen cited in other sources are highlighted by Annette and it is unbeliev-

able to me that they happened in Canada.

The acts were so inhuman and animalistic that it is no wonder the perpetrators decades later want to suppress all mention of them and are taking people to court if they speak up.

The additional factor, of course, is that the so-called Truth and Reconciliation Commission about the residential school genocide was really another way to

suppress everything about it by burying it all under a mantle of “forgiveness” and hoping thereby that all fault and criminal responsibility would be ended.

These kinds of attempts to evade criminal responsibility are being made by “beloved” institutions, various levels of government and churches.

This is an open, festering wound on the body Canada.

*Kaspar Pold
NOTL*

Four-storey apartment plan is **alarming threat**

Dear editor:

I am writing regarding your story about a plan for a four-storey apartment building on Mary Street, “Neighbours unhappy with revised plan for 41-unit apartment building.” (The Lake Report, Jan. 26).

This proposal is really alarming and a real threat to this area of the town.

Actually, all of the town is now under threat.

This zoning request will set a unacceptable and possibly irreversible precedent, if approved.

The height is totally unacceptable and must be reduce as it overshadows everything in the area.

It is a massive building, totally out of place for this

area.

If it is at least reduced to three storeys, the developers could avoid many of the problems they have brought on.

The expression “hornets’ nest” comes to mind. This is a chance for the new town council to now show us some real leadership and concern for our beautiful

and historic town, which is constantly under threat from this type of inappropriate development.

Councillors must do the right thing. This is a real test to see if our election choices were correct and can be counted on.

The clock is ticking.
*Christopher Allen
NOTL*

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Architecture can make or break a community. Here's an example



ARCHITEXT

Brian Marshall
Columnist

My wife and I moved to Niagara-on-the-Lake in 2015.

We came here because NOTL offered us an opportunity to reclaim the small-town lifestyle we had enjoyed for many years in King City prior to the rapacious GTA expansion of development that subsumed that village.

By 2014, we had experienced the loss of surrounding farms, open fields, wood lots and wildlife habitat to closed-loop subdivisions infilled with a limited number of variations on the McMansion theme.

And, even more impactful, the loss of small-town personal engagement and civility, which the car-centric developer's model savages.

Those who "come from away" will know what I'm

speaking to. You may or may not have known your next-door neighbours, but two doors down, well not so much.

Nor, sadly, did you care, because smiles (or, God forbid, greetings) exchanged on the sidewalk were viewed with skepticism and conversations were strictly verboten.

And, for those NOTL lifers, just imagine going through a day where nobody you engaged with knew your name.

Where your neighbour may or may not take the time of day to smile or say "hello."

Where you could not have a personal exchange with your bank teller or a floor person in your local hardware store.

That is our future should the GTA model of development prevail. The special and unique community that is Niagara-on-the-Lake will become one more casualty in the failed Golden Horse-shoe model.

But, rather than talk about new subdivisions, this week let's narrow down on infill development; that is new construction in older, existing neighbourhoods.

In past columns I have written about the criteria that should be employed



Columnist Brian Marshall says if allowed, the four-storey apartment would tower over neighbouring residences.

whenever an infill build is contemplated.

Best practices suggest that the topography and existing streetscape should dictate many elements of the design rather than the design being imposed on the streetscape.

Things like height, massing, topography, setback patterning, establishing open space, preserving lines of sight and privacy are all important design considerations to achieve contextual integration of the new building within an existing setting.

Of course, failure to follow best practices inevitably results in an awkward, out-

of-place finished product – an isolated island divorced from the surrounding community.

Further, such a building can actually disrupt, injure, handicap and, in some cases, destroy established social bonds within the surrounding neighbourhood.

Let's illustrate this using the 41-unit apartment building (reported on by Evan Loree in this newspaper last week) proposed for development at 223/227 Mary St. on the town block bounded by Mary, Mississauga, William and Simcoe streets.

Combined, the two lots have a frontage of ap-

proximately 150 feet, an irregular depth that varies from 255.48 to 298.53 feet, and directly borders nine other properties with existing single-family dwellings that range from one to two storeys in height.

As contemplated, this apartment building will rise to over 59 feet, effectively more than twice the height of the tallest existing house on the block and indeed, more than double the height of any existing building within eyesight of this property (or saving the Festival Theatre, in the entire town).

Not only would this towering edifice be completely out of context with any of the streetscapes in town, every single house on the block would be adversely affected.

Among other negative impacts, private yards would no longer be private but overlooked by apartment windows, existing lines of sight would be blocked by the imposing walls of the new building and the quality of light would diminish as large shadows are cast by the four-storey structure.

And this speaks not at all to the quality of the proposed design which appears to be a stylistic mish-mash generally drawing on the worst Millenium Mansion

(aka "McMansion") traits with random projections, eclectically conjoined roof styles and four different types of windows on the facade.

With all due respect to the proponents, who are asking the town to consider a height variance (nothing minor about this one folks), 80 per cent over the existing 10-metre bylaw limit, this development has no redeeming qualities in my view.

I submit there were excellent reasons for town council to reject this overture in 2016 and can only hope in Doug Ford's Ontario, there is the political will and means to have it kyboshed once and for all.

On a separate but related note, the 10-metre height restriction is ubiquitous across Niagara-on-the-Lake. In my opinion, given the various settlement areas, the densities and population of the town, that height limitation is more than adequate to meet our growth projections.

There are far better solutions for affordable housing (rental or otherwise) than going vertical.

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

Questions about NOTL development

Dear editor:

I am writing in response to Doreen Bell's letter, "A beautiful town but I wonder about some attitudes," in the Dec. 8 edition of The Lake Report.

My family was warmly welcomed into the township in 1948 when we purchased a farm on the Niagara Parkway. I hope Doreen Bell was welcomed in the same way.

I have observed many changes to Niagara-on-the-Lake over the years.

No one has come into this community and tried to take control in the way developer Benny Marotta has.

His company now owns good agricultural land adjacent to the urban boundaries of the Old Town, St. Davids and

Virgil. The prices paid for most of this land cannot justify keeping it for agriculture use.

The company has also purchased the old Parliament Oak school property. What will the company need to do with it to see a return on his investment?

Mr. Marotta has a right to buy land for development, but the control of so much land in the hands of one developer should be a concern for all of us.

The battles over the Rand Estate are just an example of what could lay ahead for the town.

How will NOTL maintain its unique character when it is already starting to look like every other developed municipality anywhere in the province?

The problem was not

the past mayor and council. We can only hope for the sake of the whole town, that the new mayor and council does not give in to Mr. Marotta and his tactics.

New Lord Mayor Gary Zalepa makes his living in real estate, so what is he going to support? When he was previously on council, amendments were made to the zoning bylaw that limited the rights of adjoining property owners.

The new deputy mayor, Coun. Erwin Wiens, is a cousin of developer Rainer Hummel. During his first term, Mr. Wiens did not support any funding for legal fees to oppose development. Why is that?

*Kip Voegel
NOTL*

Here's why NOTL is so special

Dear editor:

I am writing regarding Alexander Evans' Jan. 26 letter, "Just 'ask why,' when debating property rights in NOTL."

Why does heritage negate individual rights? Because official plans and zoning bylaws have been passed because the majority of residents want the town's heritage to be protected.

Because we love how this town's architecture looks and revere the past.

Because this is what draws tourists to this town and keeps our small businesses going.

Because if you want to build a different style of house there is enough land in Ontario (or anywhere in Canada) that you can build what you want somewhere else.



NOTL's built heritage teaches us about our past and the foundation of what we now call Canada. FILE PHOTO

Why does Niagara-on-the-Lake deserve special treatment?

Because it is so special and draws tourists from all over, from near and far, to enjoy this preserved gem and all that it offers – including the enormously popular Shaw Festival.

Why are houses of the 1800s protected over the contemporary?

Because those of us that live here love how they look

and want to keep a portion of the past just the way it was. By building different styles all over the place, it totally ruins the look and feeling of the historic part of the town.

We move here and spend the money on our homes because of the very special nature of this lovely town, so don't expect us not to fight to keep it this way.

*Paulette Kennedy
NOTL*



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NOTL Scots and wannabe Scots devour haggis at Robbie Burns Night



Ross's Ramblings

Ross Robinson
Columnist

Often, haggis is a hard sell, but not last Friday evening in our town.

The stars must have aligned, because many of us, fans of Robbie Burns, asked for seconds and thirds of this traditional Scottish prandial pleasure.

In fact, in the 10 weeks leading up to this year's celebration, Opies Meats in Hamilton sold 3.5 tons (7,000 pounds!) of haggis.

Cooked in a sheep stomach lining, haggis is a mixture of chopped pork hearts, livers and tongues. Appropriate spices create a wonderful meal.

Yum Yum, eh? Or does it sound offal?

'Twas a dark and stormy Friday night when the St.

Andrews Society of Niagara-on-the-Lake gathered at Navy Hall down by the Niagara River on Jan. 27.

Society president Alan Dickson and his enthusiastic committee had put together a first-class evening to honour Scotland's much-loved bard and Alan sternly instructed us to respect "Best of Order" as various speakers spoke and dancers danced.

Guests braved the windy and bitterly cold evening, arriving in warm overcoats and the odd full-length fur coat.

A good number of men wore kilts and thankfully the freezing temperature precluded any of us from arriving at Navy Hall by parachute. The ladies were beautiful in various tartan garments and Scottish accessories.

The evening's printed program was a four-page, full-colour masterpiece prepared by Anne Dickson of Executive Catering Niagara, a division of PigOut Catering.

After Cock-a-Leekie Soup, the menu offered three choices of entrée. Wanting to be adventurously daring, I chose Bashed Neeps and Tatties. Hey, with my Orkney



Alan Dickson, president of the St. Andrews Historical Society, presents the haggis to guests at Navy Hall Saturday night.
ROSS ROBINSON

Island ancestry, it was time to revert to my roots.

A tasty and sweet low-cal Sherry Trifle capped the meal and I was fortunate to be given a second and third dessert by a January-dieting table companion.

The speakers enthusiastically rolled their "R's" and the excellent sound system allowed everyone to enjoy the songs, poems and traditional Scottish allegories.

A professional audio system had been installed for the evening, and my dinner companions and I could

hear every word from every speaker. That being said, the rolling of R's prevented us from understanding many of the words, but that only added to the evening's authenticity and enjoyment.

Piper Morgan Stanford loudly indicated our Scottish evening was under way and Parliament Oak Public School graduate Abbie Gowans played a delightful solo on her fiddle.

One of the absolute highlights of a Robbie Burns Night is the Address to the Haggis. This year, our effervescent lassie Lorna Penman did the honours, with clarity, enthusiasm and decorum. Attendees raised their glasses and downed a relatively smooth single malt shot.

Ale house keeper/wench Trish Spagnol outdid even herself, actively making certain no one stepped out of line and deftly moved the evening's program along.

Handsomely dressed in full regalia, as ever, was Derrick Penman, with his authentic fur sporran. For the uninitiated, a sporran is an essential component of a Scottish Highland costume, a large pouch for men, commonly of fur, worn sus-

pended from a belt, in front of the kilt.

This year, he delivered a toast and the Selkirk Grace. He eloquently rolled more R's than a Glasgow pub bouncer at closing time.

There were very few dry eyes after youthful St. Andrews Society member Andrew Dickson recited the Immortal Memory, and then multi-talented Diana Carroll delighted the assemblage with an inspired version of Willie Wastle. Was that presentation a wee bit naughty?

This was certainly not a bunch of elderly NOTLers enjoying a winter's evening at liberty.

Next on the program was a vibrant, energetic and talented troupe from the Audrey Watkins School of Highland Dance.

Our late pal Geoff Martin initiated an annual financial stipend to support this group in their efforts to continue Scottish traditions. This year, some 20 costumed dancers were truly fabulous.

As our 2023 Robbie Burns Night continued to a spectacular and authentic finale, David Lee presented his Toast to the Lassies. This annual and traditional Scottish

speech delights the gentlemen and teases the lassies.

Nervously, we gentlemen await the Reply to the Toast to the Lassies, delivered with confidence, flair and irreverence this year by Barbara Lee.

My main takeaway from this lovely Lassie's Reply was that her horse Malone is very talented and has a long and appreciated attention span.

In loud and good voices, we sang "Auld Lang Syne" twice during the evening. The words were printed on the back of the program, which allowed us to really let loose with the harmonies and the chorus.

At the bottom of this year's Burns Night program were the words, "For the love of Robert Burns." So well enunciated ...

The NOTL St. Andrew's Society is a spirited group of fun and history lovers. New members are most welcome and with COVID-19 in our r-rear-r view mirr-r-rors, please consider joining our active clan.

No passport necessary. Just the proper attitude and the desire to celebrate all things Scottish.



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St. Davids boxer competes in national competitions

Continued from Front Page

She tries not to worry about her competitors, though. For her bout with Hampton, “I was just focused on me.”

Wright lives in St. Davids with her parents, Dow and Judy, but grew up in Oakville.

She has been boxing on and off for 15 years and when she’s not in the ring, she’s studying nursing at Niagara College.

Juggling school and boxing can be a “nightmare,” she admits

“It’s definitely more draining on the mind than it is on the body,” she adds.

Wright seems to thrive on competition. In 2010, she became only the second Canadian to win national titles in both boxing and kickboxing in the same year.

She’s also a two-time national champion in amateur boxing and remembers one of her matches quite fondly.

“I was definitely the underdog. And I drew the girl who had been on the national team for a few years. She was very experienced.”

No worries. “I came out and smoked her.”

In amateur boxing, boxers fight three rounds, each three minutes long. Fighters are required to wear protective headgear.

Wright says she trains hard to prepare and never feels unsafe even if she’s in the ring with a bigger or stronger opponent.

“Obviously, there’s going to be a hard shot here and there. But we’re taught to monitor for any concussion symptoms,” she says.

In 2017, she took a few years off and lived in South Africa where she worked



Mckenzie Wright will be fighting at the national championships in Brampton starting Thursday. If she finishes in the top two she can try to qualify for the Olympics. SOMER SLOBODIAN

taking visitors on safari tours.

When the pandemic began in 2020, she had two options — come home or get stuck in South Africa behind the locked-down borders.

She hopped on the second-last flight back to Canada.

She wasn’t planning on training again until her friend Mandy Bujold, who was preparing for the 2020 Olympic Games in Tokyo, asked if she wanted to join her training camp.

“That’s kind of what sparked my training to get back into it. So, we sparred together every week for months,” Wright says.

Now, she has her sights set on winning the Elite National Championships in Brampton. She’ll be com-

peting for the national title in the 48-kilogram weight class from Feb. 2 to 5.

A finish in the top two at the nationals and she’ll “be able to jump into one of the Olympic categories and go to the (Olympic) qualifiers,” she says.

If that happens, she would be competing in the 50-kilogram Olympic division in her bid to fight in the 2024 Paris Olympics.

Making it to the Olympic qualifiers would mean a big change — she’d need to find sponsors to help defray costs, since the road to amateur glory and representing your country is an expensive one.

“In Canada, we don’t get the funding, even if you are on the national team or on the Olympic team. So much

of it is self-funded,” she says.

Wright trains at the City Boxing Club in Niagara Falls six days a week with her coach Jesse Sallows, a two-time Golden Glove champion himself.

Competing in the nationals has been Wright’s goal since he started training her, Sallows says.

“I remember her bringing it up and she’s been so focused on it.”

Training is her favourite part of the day, Wright says as she sits on a large tire in the gym.

In addition to working out at City Boxing Club, she trains on her own at least three times a week.

If she’s not in school, she’ll train twice daily, six days a week.

“She’s a great role model for all the other boxers because she doesn’t come here and play around,” says Sallows.

Wright has been training with him for about a year now and says they clicked right away. She loves his coaching style — which is hands-on, focused and relaxed.

Working out with Sallows a week before the nationals, she’s quick and light on her feet, and seems to float around the ring.

As she dances about, her low bun bounces slightly, her dark blond hair hidden under a black bandana.

Barely 105 pounds, she packs a powerful punch. The sinewy muscles of her sculpted arms stand out with every strike as she pounds the hard sparring pads her coach is holding.

Her favourite punch is the uppercut. Everyone seems to forget about the uppercut, she says.

Sallows is impressed with his protege. “She’s so fast. She throws combinations, four- or five-punch combinations, so quick and just a very strong girl for her weight.”

Leading up to the nationals, she’s been focusing on hard sparring, hitting the hard pads and conditioning inside the gym and out.

That includes sprinting up hills or around the track. In the gym, it means pounding the heavy bag.

A few days before any big competition, she’ll ease up on the workload, she says.

To prepare herself mentally, she’s been working on her focus and positive outlook.

“I have a little book that I’ve read before every fight,”

she says.

The book, “Winning State Wrestling,” is about “owning your competitive mentality and not breaking under the pressure.”

Sallows describes his fighter as “a beast” and it seems some others agree.

During the Boxing Ontario provincial championships last November, two opponents dropped out of matches against Wright within 48 hours.

“They were scared, to be honest,” she says.

She ended up winning by a walkover.

That was extremely disappointing, though, since finding competitive matches is a challenge.

She often needs to travel to her bouts, since there are not many female boxers in southern Ontario.

Her division used to be the most competitive, but now she can go months without a match, she says.

Last year, about half a dozen of her scheduled bouts were cancelled.

“I don’t know what happened to all the girls,” she says.

With the national championships this weekend, “I’ve pretty much been training for this, very consistently (with) tunnel vision for the last eight weeks,” Wright says.

And she feels ready.

Even when the crowd is screaming, the adrenaline rushing, she’s zoned in on only one thing.

“I don’t hear anything. I only hear my coach’s voice.”

From the opening bell, she’ll be bobbing and weaving, searching for an opening — a chance to step up and deliver a shot of the Wright stuff.


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Niagara Community Foundation invests \$43,000 to improve NOTL health services

Julia Sacco
The Lake Report

Niagara-on-the-Lake is in need of a health care makeover and the Niagara Community Foundation wants to help.

The organization received \$460,000 in assets from the closing Niagara-on-the-Lake Healthcare Foundation in 2018 and committed to continue helping NOTL health care providers.

Each year, the community foundation works with providers to assess their need level and accordingly disperses funding.

In 2022, the four organizations that received grants totalling \$43,580 included: Pathstone Mental Health Foundation (\$10,000 to support



The Niagara Community Foundation received \$460,000 from the Niagara-on-the-Lake Healthcare Foundation when it closed in 2018, which it has since started to disperse to other NOTL health care organizations. SUPPLIED

counselling for NOTL youth), Niagara Health Foundation (\$10,000 to buy mobile ventilators), NOTL Palliative Care Services (\$5,760 to help hire a new counsellor and \$7,830 for renovation costs at its new location) and the Niagara North Family Health Team (\$9,990 to purchase new waiting room chairs).

Executive director Bryan Rose explained how funding dispersal is decided, saying that the foundation aims to respond to the organizations' most important demands.

"This year, obviously mental health is a huge subject and an important topic, especially for youth, so one of the bigger grants

that we did for 2022 was the Pathstone Mental Health Foundation to support counselling for NOTL youth," he said.

"Every year it's different and unique things that come up. In the past, we've supported great organizations, like Red Roof Retreat and the Upper Canada Lodge."

As for 2023, funding decisions will not be made until later in the year, but Rose said about \$50,000 will be given out once the grants committee connects with NOTL organizations and assesses needs.

"We really just wanted to let the residents of Niagara-on-the-Lake know that this fund exists and is continuing to funnel funds into the health care sector for the benefit of our residents."

NOTL ranks second in Canada on Tripadvisor

Somer Slobodian
Local Journalism Initiative
The Lake Report

And the people have spoken.

Niagara-on-the-Lake has been honoured with Tripadvisor's 2023 Travelers' Choice "Best of the Best" Popular Destination in Canada award.

This award doesn't come from judges, but from customers and the ratings they left for restaurants, hotels, things to do and other activities in the area. The reviews are collected over a 12-month period.

NOTL moved up from fifth place in 2021 to second this year, edging out second-place Banff, Alta., and other destinations like Quebec City (#6) and Toronto (#10).

Vancouver was number one this year, just ahead of NOTL.

"It speaks to Niagara-on-the-Lake as a destination and the quality of destination that we are," Minerva Ward, president of the Niagara-on-the-Lake Chamber of Commerce and Tourism NOTL, said in an interview with The Lake Report.

Though cities like Toronto, Quebec City and Montreal are large, the award shows that size doesn't matter — because NOTL outranked all of them.

"Size is not what is important. We beat out so many bigger destinations by the quality of experiences that we have," said Ward.

The top four attractions in Niagara-on-the-Lake on Tripadvisor were all wineries —

Konzelmann Estate Winery, Reif Estate Winery, Chateau des Charmes Winery and Peller Estates Winery, respectively.

Nine out of the 12 top attractions are wineries, which speaks volumes to the power of the wine industry in Niagara-on-the-Lake, Ward said in an email to The Lake Report.

To get to the number one spot, Ward said NOTL must continue to do what it does best.

"Ensure it's a pristine destination, ensuring that we offer quality experiences, that we deliver on our value promise or brand promise," said Ward.

As long as NOTL continues to be a place where people can celebrate and experience a wide variety of activities — like spas, winer-

ies and dining — then the town might see that number one spot in the near future.

It's "the quality of experiences we have in that make us a premium destination," said Ward.

Find out more about the ranking here.

"The travel resurgence we've seen throughout the past year has even further heightened the competition," John Boris, chief marketing officer for Tripadvisor, said in announcing the winners.

"Ranking among the Best of the Best demonstrates that you have provided exemplary experiences to those who matter most: your guests. With changing expectations, continued labor shortages, and rising costs, this is no easy feat."



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

**Crossword, jigsaw, Sudoku ...
all are a real this.**

Last issue:

Category: *FRY FRY AGAIN*

Clue: This long Mexican fritter is deep-fried, cinnamon-coated and all-delicious.

Answer: What is a churro?

Answered first by: Steven Hall

Also answered correctly (in order) by:
Valerie Thomas, Susan Mcmillan, Hedy Wiebe,
Jamie Swanson, Elaine Landray

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Final battle at the Harp will determine finalists

Julia Sacco
The Lake Report

The end is near for Battle of the Bands at the Irish Harp Pub and the last battle before the finale featured rocking performances from the Black Sheep and Spared No Expense.

New Rising Sun qualified for the final with a win last week. Their unique renditions of familiar favourites – and their bongos – stole the show.

This week's performances started with Spared No Expense, the duo of Josh Coulter and Mike Harshaw, who spared no expense when it came to musical skill.

"It's hard to put your finger on what we play. We're used to playing by request and playing to the room, so this is a new room," said Coulter.

"We've picked some Irish tunes. We don't get to play them too often, so that's kinda cool."

Covering hits ranging from "Jane" by the Barena-



Josh Coulter and Mike Harshaw are Spared No Expense. They rocked the Irish Harp Pub with their guitar and drum skills during Battle of the Bands on Monday. JULIA SACCO

ked Ladies to "The Night That Paddy Murphy Died" by Great Big Sea, the Grimsby two-piece kept the audience at high energy for their entire set with impressive guitar solos and crazy drumming skills.

The Black Sheep, a duo hailing from St. Catharines, featuring of Andre Groleau and Sean Oakes, followed up with an all acoustic set. They offered up nostalgic favourites including a med-

ley of "Ring of Fire" and "Take Me Home, Country Roads" that wowed the audience.

"Our music is all over the map, top 40 from the '60s up to last year. We have a blast," said Groleau.

"We love the beverages, the atmosphere, all of it."

Livestreams of performances are still up on the Irish Harp's Facebook page and winners will be determined by a panel of judges,

audience members, as well as online voting which will close at midnight Thursday.

The finale will take place Feb. 6 at 7, where the winner will receive a \$1,000 cash prize and a music contract with the pub with gigs beginning in March.

To cast a vote for the final two acts, leave a comment on one of the videos posted to the Irish Harp's Facebook page at www.facebook.com/theirishharppub.

First open mic night of the year attracts a variety of talent

Julia Sacco
The Lake Report

For a chance to experience live music and good company look no further than the NOTL Legion's Open Mic Night held on the last Sunday of each month.

"As far as open mics go this one is very well-attended," said host Randy Busbridge, known musically as Buzz Hummer.

"It's about 50/50 amateurs and professionals. A lot of people are just here to listen and have fun."

Among the highlights of last Sunday afternoon were a performance from Julie Van Horne accompanied by various other musicians, including Rayburn Blake, the former guitarist for Mashmakhan, known for their chart-topping single "As The Years Go By."

The group rocked the room with familiar favou-



Julia Van Horne rocks the Legion during Open Mic on Sunday. JULIA SACCO

rites, including covers of "These Boots Are Made for Walkin'" and "Me and Bobby McGee."

Ed Bertoli went solo and got the crowd singing along to hits like "Lay Down" by the Strawbs and "Pink Cadillac" by Bruce Springsteen.

The Legion's open mic usually attracts around 40 to 50 people and is open to anyone who wishes to share their talents.

"It's very informal," said Busbridge.

The next Open Mic Night is from 2 to 5 p.m. on Sunday, Feb. 26.

WTF chinese CELEBRATE THE LIFE OF CHEF DANIEL TONG

Beloved Chef Daniel Tong tragically passed away on Saturday, January 21, 2023 leaving behind his wife Melanie and their children Atlas and Olivia. Thursday, February 2, 2023 Ruffino's & BARBEA will be offering a special WTF Chinese Menu in memory of Chef Dan with proceeds going to support his family.


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- Post-secondary education preferred.
- Any real estate office and social media experience is an asset.

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- References are required.
- Must have vehicle as public transportation is not available.
- Ability to maintain regular, punctual attendance.
- Must be able to talk, listen and speak clearly on telephone and take notes of key information.

Email resume to angelika.zammit@gmail.com

It will take time, but town looking at making patios permanent

Continued from Front Page

It will take almost 20 hours and \$1,500 for staff to process each permit, the report said.

“That seems like a long time,” Coun. Wendy Cheropita commented.

Coun. Nick Ruller, the former fire chief, and chief administrator Marnie Cluckie pointed out that it was feasible for a permit like this to involve half a dozen town departments.

Ruller said the clerk, by-law, finance, road, building and planning departments each might need to review a single patio permit.

However, Coun. Gary Burroughs felt “a lot more input” was needed before the town could make the patios permanent.

“It has affected the streetscape of Queen Street. Is that the shape and form that we want to move forward? Is that what the businesses want?” he asked.

“I think we need to do a little bit more,” he added.

Staff research into the permanent patio solution will commence once the patio extension receives final approval, likely at the next council meeting.

Reed Davidson, a line cook at the Sunset Grill, told The Lake Report the restaurant gets lineups out the door during patio season.

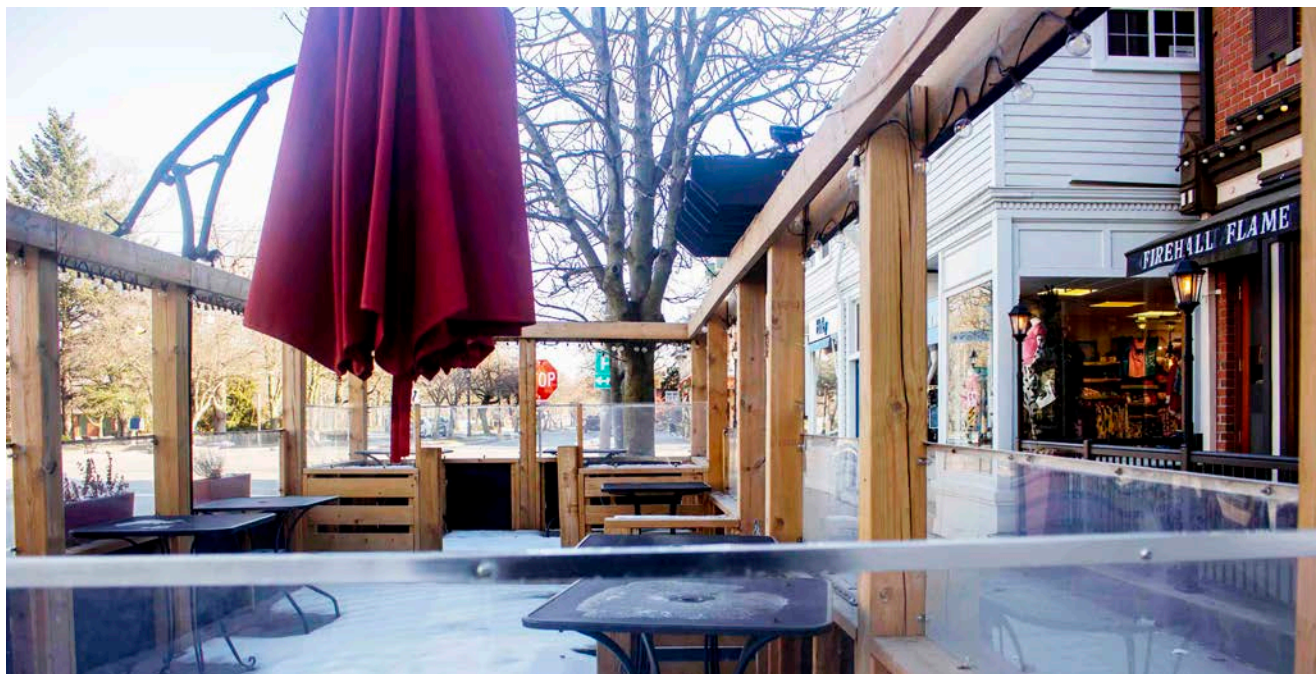
“People come down here for the look of the town,” he said.

“Those window spots over there, always the first seats to go,” he added, referring to seats by the restaurant’s street front window.

Davidson remembers when restaurants were closing their doors at the start of the pandemic and how many career cooks like himself had no job security.

Patio extensions were a big help, keeping restaurants open at a critical time.

The Sunset Grill seats almost 80 people in the winter, but its patio extension adds nearly 30 more seats, he said.



The patio outside Firehall Flame is closed for winter but will be able to open in spring. EVAN LOREE

That translates to a significant and welcome bump in business, said Davidson.

Coun. Maria Mavridis – who also runs two restaurants Corks Wine Bar and Firehall Flame on Queen Street – said she had a different experience in 2020.

The outdoor seating at Firehall Flame is allowed

under the temporary patio program.

The additional 18 seats it provided were not a financial game changer during the lockdowns, Mavridis said.

“It helped us keep our employees employed,” she said, but as the 86 indoor seats were still inacces-

sible during lockdown, they weren’t bringing in any revenue.

Mavridis did not declare a conflict of interest in the debate over the patio program, and noted it was not necessary.

“It’s not directly for just my patio,” she told The Lake Report. “It’s for the

entire community.”

According to the Municipal Conflict of Interest act, council members do not have to declare a conflict when benefiting from services also provided to the wider community.

She said her restaurants are still recovering from the lockdown.

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Softball registration to begin Feb. 10

Somer Slobodian
Local Journalism Initiative
The Lake Report

Parents will be able to sign their kids up for NOTL softball soon.

On Feb. 10, online registration is scheduled to open for kids ages three through 14, and, if there's enough interest, for ages 15 to 18.

"We're basically a starter league in Niagara-on-the-Lake just so kids can get started in baseball," said program organizer Peter Flynn.

This is the third year Flynn has run the summer softball program. Last year, about 120 kids signed up and he expects about the same number this year.

The Learn to Play division will be for children aged three to six and will run once a week, teaching players the basics of softball.

"We just keep them active and busy doing those skills, kind of designed for their age group to get them interested and just out and about," said Flynn.

The coaches pitch group will be for ages seven to 10. "They get five pitches to put the ball into play and we teach the kids the basics of baseball. It's like a real game," said Flynn.

Slo-pitch is for ages 11 to 14, and if there are enough players, there will be a slo-pitch group for kids 15 to 18.

It costs \$150 to register and programs run from the first week of June to around mid-August at the Centennial Arena in Virgil.

Dates are not finalized yet but Flynn said the programs will run in the evenings either on Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday or Thursday.

Once he knows the soccer program schedule he'll have a better idea what evenings the softball programs will run. He tries to co-ordinate with soccer so that kids can play both sports if they want.

The website to register isn't up and running yet, but those interested can contact Flynn at 905-327-1620.

Predators in fourth place, two teams on their heels

Kevan Dowd
The Lake Report

Two straight weekend wins have made the Niagara Jr. A Predators' fourth-place position official – though two teams remain right on their tail.

Besting the Tottenham Thunder 7-1 Friday and the Windsor Stars 5-2 Saturday was enough to break the three-way tie for fourth in the Greater Metro Hockey League's south division and give the Predators a healthy confidence boost.

"Fourth place is important for us. That's what we're gunning for," said Predators head coach Kevin Taylor.

"And if we keep playing how we are we can finish up in fourth and playoffs are a whole different creature."

Going into this weekend, Niagara has 33 points, Northumberland 32 and St. George 31. The Predators have two games in hand.

Last Friday on home ice, Niagara maintained its perfect win record against Tottenham.

The Predators' Leo Savin opened things up, scoring three minutes in, with teammates Timur Mirzaiants and



The Predators play St. George this Friday in Virgil.

Declan Fogarty each adding one in the first period.

This was just the start for Fogarty, who netted another 33 seconds into the second period and a pair in the third for a total of four and the game's first star.

Cameron Savoie would also make the scoresheet 15 minutes into the middle period, five minutes after Tottenham's only goal.

"I thought they played well. It's coming together," Taylor said of his team.

"We turned over the puck and you always think if we turned it over to a different team they could have used that opportunity and scored. So we have to clean up the game a bit."

"We got ourselves in some trouble but we got out of it and that's the big thing," he added.

"We're learning to play a lot better. The team's finally coming together and we're getting some confidence."

Niagara kept the pressure on the next night in Windsor, earning a second W over the division's last-place team.

"It wasn't the prettiest win but a win's a win," said Taylor. "I said to the guys the next day, 'Good teams find a way to win.' And that's how far we've come because we played them before and we struggled and we lost 3-1. This time around we won 5-2."

"We needed the win, we deserved to win and we came out with the win."

It was no more than a one goal game for the first 40 minutes with Guy Manco earning Niagara's first tally 13:23 into the first period,

and Windsor not answering back until the 17-minute mark of the second.

Things took a turn in the last 20 minutes with a marker for Niagara's Anthony Tropea, and Savin, Mirzaiants and Savoie each getting their second of the weekend. Windsor added one for a 5-2 final score.

The Predators now face the St. George Ravens, who are two points behind them and have posed a challenge.

While Taylor notes the importance of the game, he is not counting his team out.

"St. George is an important game. We're either going to finish fourth or fifth it looks like, so if it's going to be St. George in the first round you want to send the message, 'This is how it's going to be,'" he said.

"So we're going to continue to work our system and perfect it and that's what we've been trying to focus on. I think once they buy into it, they'll understand the significance of what we've been trying to do all along."

The Predators play St. George at the Meridian Credit Union Arena this Friday, Feb. 3, at 7:30 p.m.

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- Across**
- Bolsters (7)
 - First of the patriarchs (7)
 - The way things are (2,2,2)
 - One's hands and knees (3,5)
 - Pau/Pamplona separators (8)
 - Word usage (6)
 - Blurred (3,2,5)
 - Indifferent (2-2)
 - Swindle (4)
 - Showed up again (10)
 - Four-wheeled covered carriage (6)
 - At peace (2,6)
 - Alert guardian (8)
 - They connect horses to carts (6)
 - Detectors (7)
 - They live between Land's End and John 'O Groats, broadly (7)
- Down**
- "Don't be ridiculous!" (1,3,3)
 - "Hands off!" (3,2,2)
 - Greatly desired (6-3)
 - Future tulips (5)
 - Quantities (7)
 - Passenger-protection devices (3,4)
 - Hobnobber's activity (11)
 - Top celebrity (9)
 - Pretence (7)
 - Physicians (7)
 - Bituminous pitch (7)
 - Former manager of The Beatles (7)
 - Beneath (5)

Crossword Puzzle

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
9				10			
11					12		
13					14		15
16	17	18	19			20	21
22			23	24			
25					26		
27					28		

Last issue's answers

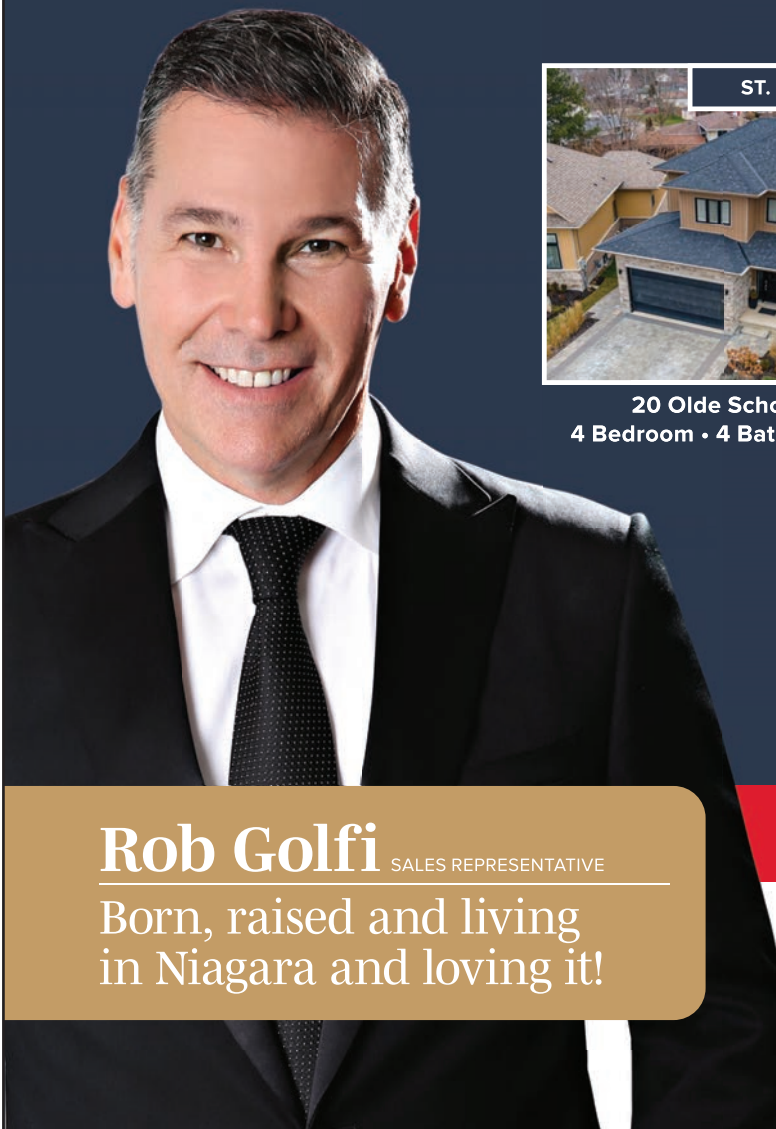
1	O	N	S	J	W	A	A									
2	A	F	T	E	R	Y	O	U	9	I	N	C	A	R	E	
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5	A	P	T	E	D											
6	C	L	A	S	S	Y	14	H	A	Y	F	E	V	E	R	
7	A	H	E	E	N	C										
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10	G	E	T	A	G	R	I	P	19	R	E	L	A	Y	S	
11	R	A	O	A	S											
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			4				
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			9	5		1	
1		8				3	7
	4			1			



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Latest fusion ‘breakthrough’ **more hype** than sound science



DR. BROWN

Dr. William Brown
Special to The Lake Report

Several decades ago, long before there was any sense of urgency and angst about burning fossil fuels and climate change, scientists began to explore the feasibility of harnessing the way the sun fuses hydrogen nuclei to form helium nuclei as way to create abundant “clean” energy with little or no harmful radiation.

Now every step of the way toward nuclear fusion is heralded and hyped by the media and research groups. The recent media blitz, fuelled by the climate crisis, was no different.

Progress in fusion research in the United States and Europe has been agonizingly slow because it takes extremely high temperatures and, in some engineering designs,

extreme pressures, to force like-charged hydrogen nuclei to form helium nuclei and create more energy than was required to trigger fusion and sustain the process.

In the case of the sun, those conditions are met naturally by the enormous gravitational forces and temperatures (10 million degrees Celsius) found in the solar core, where fusion takes place.

But recreating anything like those conditions on Earth presents major design, material and engineering challenges, to say nothing of the need for continuous funding from governments better known for thinking short-term.

Solving those challenges has been an incremental process for two of the major players, ITER (the International Thermonuclear Experimental Reactor, an international consortium of 35 countries including the EU, U.K., U.S., China, Canada and Japan and based in France), and in the United States, the NIF (National Ignition Facility, based in California).

Each uses the same nuclear fuel comprised of the two



Nuclear fusion occurs naturally in the sun’s core, but on Earth, it’s a whole different (and challenging) ball game.

heavy hydrogen isotopes, deuterium (one proton combined with one neutron in the nucleus) and tritium (one proton and two neutrons).

The principle of both designs is to contain a few milligrams of the nuclear fuel comprised of heavy hydrogen (deuterium and tritium) and heat it high enough that hydrogen nuclei become separated from their electrons to form a highly ionized plasma.

Heated high enough, the hydrogen nuclei will combine to form helium nuclei, losing a tiny bit of mass in

the process and creating a huge amount of energy.

Remember Einstein’s simplest, most powerful equation, $E=mc^2$? What that equation states so simply is that for a tiny bit of mass lost, a huge amount of energy is created – i.e., the mc^2 where m is mass and c the speed of light squared.

In the NIF fusion device, a few milligrams of nuclear fuel contained within a pencil eraser-sized metal cylinder is briefly heated by 192 gigantic, highly focused lasers to the 3 million degrees centigrade needed to strip the

deuterium and tritium hydrogen atoms of their electrons and create the highly ionized plasma conditions necessary for the helium nuclei to fuse and release an enormous amount of energy briefly in a one-time shot.

The recent media hype was about the fact that, for the first time, more energy was generated – very briefly – than was needed to fire the lasers which require an enormous amount of electrical energy.

That was a “first” for any fusion device so far, but a long way from a commercial device that must run – not in single brief shots but repeatedly to sustain fusion long enough to create useful energy.

This was a one-shot deal and there was no provision for capturing the energy as might be done with a water jacket where the heat could be converted into steam.

From the reports, there were no plans to do so. The fact is the NIF facility was not designed to create a practical fusion.

Fusion for creating efficient practical power is probably several decades away because many chal-

lenging engineering problems remain.

If anything, the ITER device in France is a better proposition because it doesn’t depend on costly, unreliable one-shot lasers that require far too much power off the grid with no prospect of solving that problem anytime soon. It was yet another example of a grandstanding event but certainly not good science.

Fusion is needed because climate change is reaching the tipping point beyond which unusually severe weather, including storms, floods, fires, air and water pollution, will become common place. Fusion is probably the best answer to providing cheap sustainable electrical energy, which should free the world from fossil fuels – we hope.

In the interim, why not nuclear fission devices? The technology is mature and Canada has the talent and experience to make it work.

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

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From the roots: How to keep your orchids happy and healthy



GROWING TOGETHER

Although once considered an expensive plant to be grown by elitists, the orchid has become the top-selling indoor plant.

The orchid family is one of the largest in the realm of flowering plants: More than 25,000 species grow naturally on every continent except Antarctica.

Orchids are either epiphytic (air-growing) or terrestrial (earth-growing); most orchids that you see for sale at florists, grocery stores and big box stores are epiphytic.

In the wild, epiphytes cling to trees and stumps, and draw in moisture through their roots from the mist and rain and decom-

posing leaves. Knowing this will help you to understand how to better care for your orchid.

Many consider orchids to be a difficult plant to grow, but once it finds a happy spot and falls into a routine, the plant should regularly throw out new roots and leaves or canes, and reward you yearly with a beautiful bloom.

Orchids thrive in strong light, but not hot, direct afternoon sunlight. I find that they do best close to an east-facing window, where they will receive plenty of morning sun, or set back slightly from a south-facing window.

Too much light and the leaves can turn a reddish-brown. With too little sun, the leaves will be dark green, but the plant won't bloom.

Orchids also need high humidity and airflow around the roots. They need regular periods of drying alternated with heavy watering.

So proper watering techniques are critical because



Making sure your orchid's roots have proper drainage is an essential step.

the most common cause of orchids dying is being overwatered.

Usually, when you receive a store-bought orchid, it comes in a thin plastic pot that has drainage holes, but then they are set inside a more decorative pot with no drainage.

They also are often potted in soaked sphagnum moss. I am not sure why some shop do this because it violates two of the main rules for orchids.

There is no air flow around the roots and the

roots are never given a chance to completely dry out. Thus, the plant cannot breathe and root rot is inevitable.

Some sources will tell you to water your orchids by placing an ice cube in the pot once a week. The better way, though, is to consistently water your orchid once every one to two weeks.

Make sure the potting medium dries out in between waterings. And always remove the inside pot from the decorative one when watering so the excess water can drain away. Do not allow the roots to sit in water for any length of time.

When an orchid spills out of its pot, the roots trail down the sides of the pot or if the growing medium is reduced to crumbs, it's time for repotting.

Do it at the beginning of the next growth cycle (typically in the spring). Do not repot an orchid while it is in bloom.

Orchids should be placed in specialized orchid pots in an orchid mixture. These

pots feature wide drainage slits so water will literally run through the pot. They are widely available.

And orchid potting mixture is usually composed of several chunky ingredients, including pine bark, charcoal and even Styrofoam.

When repotting an orchid, carefully remove the plant from its existing pot and shake off all of the old potting medium.

Examine the roots and cut off any that are blackened, spongy or brittle. The healthy roots will be white or light green.

Hold the plant upright in the new pot and fill in around it with new potting medium, tamping down gently, to about an inch from the top of the pot.

Always use a soil that is specifically made for orchids. Do not use a standard potting soil.

Water the orchid well to settle the medium around its roots, adding more mixture if necessary. Not all roots need to go inside the pot.

As a general rule, fertilize orchids every two weeks

during peak growth (spring and summer) and once a month during dormancy (fall and winter).

Use a 20-20-20 fertilizer or orchid food, diluted to half-strength. Typically, an orchid can rebloom every eight to 12 months.

When your plant has finished flowering, the flower stalk (called a spike) can be cut. Prune the spike off at the base, being careful not to accidentally snip any leaves or roots as well.

Phalaenopsis orchids will often produce more flowers from the same flower spike, so don't be too quick to snip it off. In fact, leaving the flower spike on Phalaenopsis orchids can speed up the time between blooms.

If the spike is still green, cut it back, leaving three nodes up from the base. New flowers will often emerge from this old spike.

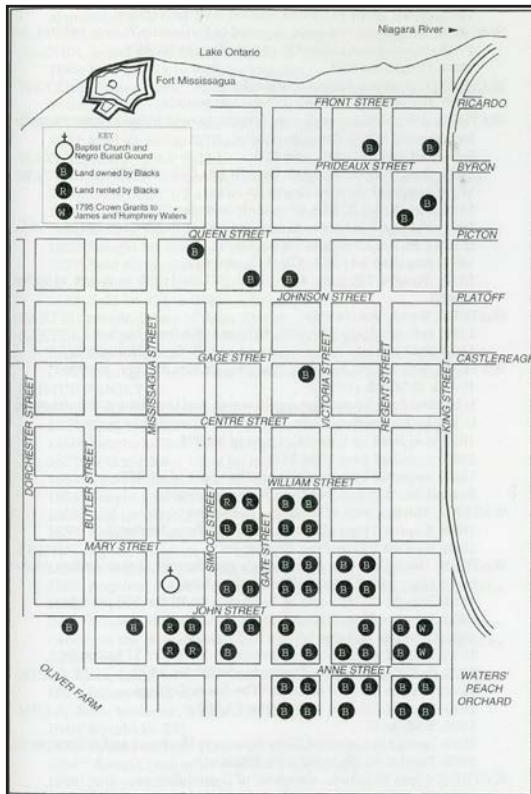
Needing some flowers in your life? You can't go wrong with an orchid.

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

EXPLORING PHOTOS WITH NOTL MUSEUM

NOTL's 'coloured village'

Every February in Canada we celebrate the legacy of Black Canadians. Niagara-on-the-Lake has a significant connection to early Black history of this country and we look forward to incorporating some local stories in the next few weeks. This week's image is a schematic plan of part of the Town of Niagara that shows where many Black residents lived during the mid-1800s. This area was known as the "coloured village." Some families stayed here for only a short time while others, such as the Waters family lived here for more than 120 years. During the 1860s, a few blocks from this neighbourhood, one would find the temporary homes of a Ku Klux Klan leader and Confederate war leaders who were "hiding out" in the Town of Niagara. How strange it must have been for the residents of the "coloured village," who were comprised of Black Loyalists, people recently freed from enslavement, possibly those still under enslavement and runaways from the United States. For more information on local Black history, please visit the NOTL Museum's website or book shop.



Obituary

Anthony 'Tony' Ravesi



RAVESI, Anthony "Tony"— It is with heavy hearts that we announce the passing of our beloved Tony on January 26, 2023 at the age of 76. Tony suffered from Parkinson's and sadly succumbed to complications of Covid.

He is predeceased by his parents Domenico and Maria Ravesi. He leaves behind his loving Soulmate, Judy; his daughter Angela (John) and his son Tony (Kelly), and his adored grandchildren Alex, Giada and Lucas.

Also left behind are his stepdaughter, Kelly and stepson, Michael, as well as step grandchildren Chelsea, Jordan, Chloe, Mackenzie and Andrew. Left to share in our loving memories of Tony are his sisters Stella (late Gerry), Elvira (Ron), Columba (late Domenic) and brother Joe (Lynn).

He will be lovingly remembered by many nieces, nephews and cousins.

Tony was employed for 42 years at W.S. Tyler Co. in St. Catharines, as a Fine Wire Weaver. He was a proud union president for 30 years, working tirelessly to improve working conditions for the members.

Tony was also a member of the Royal Canadian Legion Branch 124 in NOTL for 40 years, and a member of the Lions Club (NOTL branch) before his illness.

Sincere thanks to the staff at Upper Canada Lodge, especially Queenston House, for their support and kindness throughout Tony's stay, and for their guidance through our long goodbye.

Cremation has taken place. Visitation will be held at Morgan Funeral Home, 415 Regent St., Niagara-on-the-Lake, on Friday, Feb. 3 from 2-4 & 6-8 p.m. A memorial service will be held at the funeral home on Saturday morning, February 4th at 11 o'clock. For those who wish, memorial donations may be made to a charity of your choice.

"Dad, may you be at peace and soar with the birds."

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



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