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Hyper-local news for Niagara-on-the-Lake

Town’s restrictions on tree cuttings are unfair, councillors say

Evan Loe
Local Journalism Initiative
The Lake Report

Tree protections in Niagara-on-the-Lake don’t cut it.
That was the sentiment of councillors at a meeting Feb. 13 regardless of which side of the fence the tree fell on. After two residents came to council to appeal staff decisions to bar them from cutting down trees on their own property, some councillors took issue with the town’s approach to tree preservation. “I don’t think we should be punishing any resident that wants to remove one of 11 trees on their property,” Coun. Maria Mavridis said. Under current town regulations, residents need a permit from the town before they can legally cut down trees on their property. Those permits can be refused by town bylaw officers if the tree is found to be in good health and if the resident cannot provide a good reason for removing it. Matt Dietzsch wanted to cut down a large honey locust on his lot but bylaw officer Harry Althorpe said staff refused his application because he had given “no legitimate reason” to warrant the permit. “It’s not causing any

And the beat goes on

Foot patrols bring ‘nostalgic aspect’ back to policing in NOTL

There’s a saying that everything old is new again. While it’s most commonly used to describe things such as fashion, music and even home decor, policing can now be added to the list.

And officers from the Niagara Regional Police are back on regular foot patrols – walking the beat as it were – in Old Town. It is a practice the police service first brought back in 2022. “We’re reintroducing the nostalgic aspect of policing,” said Const. Michael Malachowsky, a member of the department’s Community Oriented Response and Engagement (or CORE) unit. “It’s an old tradition that has been brought back.”

Continued on Page 7

Volunteers help museum bring NOTL history to life

This is the fourth part in an ongoing series of stories to draw attention to the Niagara-on-the-Lake Museum as it embarks on a fundraising campaign for an expansion that would nearly double the size of the current museum on Castlethorugh Street.

Richard Hutton
Local Journalism Initiative
The Lake Report

Richard Merritt’s links to the Niagara-on-the-Lake Museum go back long before he became a volunteer there more than three decades ago. This was long before he even lived in Niagara. “I grew up in London, Ont., and one of my great, great aunts lived in Niagara.” Merritt said. “She’d tell me stories (about Niagara) as she fed me milk and cookies. I had an interest in

Continued on Page 6

Stacked effects of climate change could hit NOTL hard

Kyra Simone
Columnist

Minimal snowfall and balmy temperatures have caused confusion this winter. A symptom of both the climate crisis and El Niño, mild weather may have lasting effects for wildlife, farmers and greenspaces in 2024. As scientific knowledge has evolved, the term “global warming” has become outdated. Climate change is much more complex than areas across the globe gradually warming: it’s better described as climate “weirding,” where historically consistent patterns in local weather and temperature go off the rails and become sporadic and severe. Climate scientists determine long-term trends from hundreds to millions of years ago by studying paleoclimate records: ice cores, tree rings and layers of sediments formed over long periods of time. Trends on shorter timescales, even decades, vary greatly and must be compared to a long histori-

Continued on Page 7

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A proposed subdivision on the outskirts of Glendale is one step closer to becoming a reality.

Niagara-on-the-Lake council rubber-stamped Moderno Estates, a development proposal for 389 housing units, at a meeting Feb. 13.

The project by Hummel Properties Inc. and Marz Homes will be brought back for a final endorsement at a future meeting.

A report, signed by three senior staffers including the planning director and chief administrator, recommended the project on 38 acres on Concession 7 between York and Queenston roads be approved.

The report includes 55 single-family units, 128 on-street townhouses and 28 on-street townhouses, 178 single-family units, 128 sewage infrastructure.

City staff recommended the proposal for 389 housing units, at a meeting Feb. 13.

The report said the development application for 389 housing units, at a meeting Feb. 13.

The Lake Report Local Journalism Initiative Evan Loree

February 22, 2024 Page 2
WestJet agrees to rebook flights for family of murder victim Ashley Simpson

Richard Hutton
Local Journalism Initiative
The Lake Report

The family of Ashley Simpson will be able to attend a sentencing hearing for the man responsible for the St. Catharines woman’s death after a change of heart by a major Canadian airline.

“Last night, WestJet called me and booked all the flights for June 11,” Ashley’s mother, Cindy, said Thursday after receiving the news from WestJet that the flights had been rebooked.

“They apologized and sent condolences.”

The family had been booked to be on a flight from Toronto to Calgary and then on to Kelowna, B.C.

The flights were originally booked via the travel site FlightHub and it said any changes were WestJet’s responsibility.

WestJet had initially refused to rebook those flights as it could not find the booking, said Madison Kruger, a strategist with WestJet media relations.

“There was a bit of confusion,” Kruger said, adding that the airline needed what is called a “PNR (Passenger Name Record) number” that is created when a flight is booked.

“If the airline needed what was called a ‘PNR (Passenger Name Record) number’ that is created when a flight is booked, said Madison Kruger, a strategist with WestJet media relations.

“Where’s the cat?

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Continued from Front Page

Cutting trees causes councillor kerfuffle

Residents for cutting them down, he suspected council should set money aside in its budget to plant more trees.

“For us to put our town issues on Mr. Dietsch’s backburner is not fair,” Wiens said.

Coun. Sandra O’Connor and Coun. Sandra O’Connor bylaw officer and denied Smith’s appeal.

“Don’t we have a tree policy in the town to plant more trees,” Coun. Erwin Wiens said.

Rather than penalizing residents for cutting them down, he suggested council should set money aside in its budget to plant more trees.

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NEWS

Left: The Lake Report is nominated for Best News Story for an exclusive breaking news report on a $10,000 cash donation from prominent NOTL developer Benny Marotta to Coun. Gary Burroughs. Right: Award-winning photographer Dave Van de Laar is nominated once again for Photographer of the Year. His photos of a mother robin feeding her young, a fire truck cutting through a flooded street, an Easter service at the Wayside Chapel and a tight shot of a tennis player hitting the ball show a lot of diversity in his photo-journalism. The awards are among 27 in total for the paper’s journalism and advertising.

Left: Photographer Frank Hayes is up for a Best Feature Photo award for his shot of a blue heron taking flight.

Cartoonist Alperen Albayrak has been nominated for Best Editorial Cartoon for his illustration that was critical of a proposed Niagara-on-the-Lake housing development that would tower over neighbouring homes and could end up as illegal short-term rentals.

Reporter Evan Loree is nominated for Best Feature Writing for a story on a young diabetic who led a charity walk. The story contains a thorough look at what it’s like to live with juvenile diabetes and how a young girl is overcoming it.

Briefly, here are the categories in which The Lake Report received awards:

* General excellence (6,500 to 12,499 circulation)
* Best editorial – Kevin MacLean
* Best editorial cartoon – Alperen Albayrak
* Best editorial page/section – Richard Harley and Brian Marshall
* Education writing – Evan Loree
* Feature writing – Evan Loree
* Health and wellness – Julia Sacco
* Best investigative news story – Somer Slobodian
* Best news story (over 10,000 circulation) – Richard Harley
* Best rural story – Somer Slobodian
* Best feature/news series (over 10,000 circulation) – Somer Slobodian
* Best sport and recreation story – Somer Slobodian
* Best headline writing – Kevin MacLean and Richard Harley
* Diversity coverage – Evan Loree, Kevin MacLean and Somer Slobodian
* Best police/court story – Julia Sacco
* Best guest/freelance column – Frank Hayes
* Best feature photo (over 10,000 circulation) – Frank Hayes
* Best photo layout – Richard Harley, Evan Loree and Somer Slobodian
* Most creative grip and grin photo – Dave Van de Laar
* Photographer of the year – Dave Van de Laar
* Community service – “Off To The Races” – Special Edition: Election 2022 by the staff of The Lake Report
* Best special section – “Off To The Races” – Special Edition: Election 2022 by the staff of The Lake Report
* Best use of colour – Richard Harley
* Best community website (over 10,000 circulation) – niagarawow.com
* Best online experience – NOTL celebration of International Women’s Day
* Best creative ad, Honorable Mention – Richard Harley

Your Lake Report wins again

The Lake Report has been nominated for 27 awards in the Ontario Community Newspapers Association’s annual Better Newspapers Competition. And the nominees are:

Left: Photographer Frank Hayes is up for a Best Feature Photo award for his shot of a blue heron taking flight.

Cartoonist Alperen Albayrak has been nominated for Best Editorial Cartoon for his illustration that was critical of a proposed Niagara-on-the-Lake housing development that would tower over neighbouring homes and could end up as illegal short-term rentals.
Niagara's Humeniuk Foundation is donating $200,000 to Queenston's Willowbank School of Restoration Arts as part of a five-year program to help students spend a summer at a European heritage summer school.

The money, unveiled by Andrew Humeniuk, executive director of the Humeniuk Foundation and the Brown Homestead in St. Catharines, will provide financial support for up to four Willowbank students each summer over the next five years.

Students will be able to attend either Messors in Italy or the King's Foundation Summer School, which takes place at Dumfries House in Scotland and in London. Each student will receive a $10,000 bursary to cover tuition, travel and modest living costs.

The program is formally called the creation of the Humeniuk Scholarship at Willowbank: unleashing minds, transforming lives.

"We have employed numerous Willowbank graduates at the Brown Homestead over several years and have found them to be the passionate young professionals that the heritage community desperately needs," Humeniuk said in a statement.

"In our experience, the summer schools allow them invaluable access to additional perspectives and knowledge that benefit them in their careers and are also shared with their peers, Willowbank and the heritage sector itself," he said.

Willowbank president Dr. Faisal Arain applauded the scholarship as an indicator of the commitment of the Humeniuk Foundation and family to the value of Willowbank.

"This level of support will enable Willowbank to broaden the depth of knowledge we are able to provide through our diploma program. It will add a very important global dimension to the Willowbank experience," Arain said.

He committed to a five-year bursary program to give Willowbank the security of knowing the program is funded and allowing the leadership team to apply their time and efforts to other core needs.

"We foresee our relationship with Willowbank continuing beyond 2028, whether through continuation of the Humeniuk Scholarship or, if an alternative and sustainable funding opportunity is put in place, another area where support," he said.

Andrew Humeniuk, left, and Willowbank president Dr. Faisal Arain signed a five-year agreement to provide a $200,000 bursary for up to four students to attend a European summer school annually. SUPPLIED

Willowbank unveils $200,000 bursary from Humeniuk Foundation

Kevin MacLean
The Lake Report
As town grows, volunteers keep past alive

"When I first came here, there were two buildings," he said. "I first came here in 1973. There’s been lots of renovations." The connecting portion between Memorial Hall (built in 1906 as a museum) and the building that was the town’s first high school, built in 1875. Having someone so well versed in the history of the area on board is a blessing for the museum, said Barbara Worthy, the museum’s community engagement co-ordinator. But when the museum produced a series of documents on such topics as Black history and history of the Chautauqua neighbourhood, it could also be a little anxiety-provoking.

“We were terrified when he watched it in case we made mistakes,” she said with a laugh.

Merritt, meanwhile, said the fact that the town even has a museum, is something that should be cherished, if not celebrated.

“We’re lucky,” Merritt said, adding that a big city like Toronto doesn’t have one.

“They have some great stuff but it’s all locked away in warehouses.” While not as long-term as Merritt, Rick Meloen first became involved with the museum during celebrations marking the bicentennial of the War of 1812 just over a decade ago.

Melen was quick to jump on board with the idea. "I said, ‘Yeah, I’m in.’ I really wanted to do that," Meleno said. “I’ve been doing it ever since.” He is well known around NOTL, having worked for decades for the town, most recently as supervisor of public works, before he retired in 2009.

Since then, he has become involved in several initiatives, including the creation of the town’s Heritage Trail, where is the chair of the committee. He also serves on the board of directors for the Friends of Fort George.

And, of course, the historical walking tours, something he continues to do to this day.

As an offshoot of the War of 1812 bicentennial, the tours at the beginning naturally focused on historical sites in town that tied in with the conflict. “I still talk quite a bit on the walking tours about the War of 1812 because it did have such a big impact on the town,” Meloen said.

But that is only a part of today’s walking tours, he said, adding that stops on the tours give him a chance to provide a more fulsome history of the town.

“We go through St. Mark’s Cemetery because there’s a lot of interesting people that are interred there,” he said. “So you talk about the history, but that also gives you an opportunity to talk about the churches in the town.”

Then, there are the street names.

“I stop by King and Byron (streets), and I’ll talk about the street names because the street names in town are interesting,” Meleno said. “They change on King Street. It drives tourists crazy.”

The museum has embarked on the Building History, Strengthening Community fundraising campaign to help finance an 8,000-square-foot expansion – almost doubling the museum’s current 10,000 square feet of space – that will add to the facility’s storage and exhibition spaces as well as provide space to deliver programs for the community.

Through the campaign, the museum hopes to raise $5 million to cover half of the $10-million cost of the project, which will include a two-storey addition to the rear of Memorial Hall and more basement space for storage.

Like Merritt, Meloen thinks NOTL is blessed to have a repository of the town’s history.

“I think the museum for a small town is excellent,” he said. “This is probably, if not the best, one of the best for the size of the community, considering the history here and the significance of the town.”

The campaign to fund the expansion is important as the museum has an important role to play in NOTL’s evolving history.

The campaign is “doing well,” Worthy said. “People are showing their support. We just need to stir up their passion. The town deserves for this museum to be the best that it can be.”

Donations to the campaign can be made in person at the museum, located at 43 Castleburgh St. during operating hours, 1-5 p.m. seven days a week, or online through Canadahelps.org/en/charities/niagara-historical-society.
Town appoints committee to find new CAO

Evan Loree
Local Journalism Initiative
The Lake Report

The town of NOTL is looking for a new Jack Sparrow to captain its ship. Right now, Bruce Zvangi has the helm as Niagara-on-the-Lake’s chief administrative officer.

However, his role is temporary, meant to float the ship in the absence of a permanent chief administrator Marnie Cluckie, who left in January to become city manager in Hamilton.

At a meeting on Feb. 2, council formed a committee to find someone to fill the chief administrative officer position long-term.

The committee is comprised of Couns. Maria Maividis, Sandra O’Connor and Erwin Wiens, Lord Mayor Gary Zalapa and Zvangi.

When it came time to put names forward for the committee, councillors were eager beavers — five threw their hat in the ring.

“I do see great importance in this task,” said Coun. Tim Balasanski, who chaired the meeting.

Coun. Wendy Cheropita was the fifth to step up.

Cheropita and O’Connor bolstered their bids to be on the committee by appealing to prior experience in selecting a chief administrator.

Both were part of the selection process for Cluckie when she was hired in 2020.

“I think I have a lot to offer,” Cheropita said.

Though O’Connor said it might help to have an odd number of councillors on the committee to prevent tie votes, Zvangi was not too concerned by that potential outcome.

To ensure an effective interviewing process, the committee should be “relatively small,” he said.

“The committee’s role is really to vet the process, to help define it, bring it down and bring some candidates to council,” said O’Connor, who is making the final decision.

Zvangi said.

Council took a short recess to vote via ballot for their preferred committee members and then returned to formally appoint the three winners.

The chief administrator is the only staffer who reports directly to council, which is why council has a say in who gets the job.

“The CAO is the only real employee responsible to council, so therefore hiring of a CAO is probably one of the most important things a council will do,” Zalepa told The Lake Report.

He said the committee will hold public discussions on how the search will commence and the types of traits and qualifications council desires in the town’s future head of staff.

“They always want to get a picture with us,” he said.

evanloree@niagararow.com

NOTL cops back on the street beat

Continued from Front Page and Niagara-on-the-Lake’s other CORE units patrol St. Catharines (1 District) and Welland (3 District).

“The whole idea of us being out there makes us more available to come up to us casually to speak to us about anything under the sun,” Malachowsky said.

“Whether it be a resident that’s on the street who might ask us or start talking to us about speeding in their particular neighbourhood. Things that they normally wouldn’t maybe call in for now.”

It’s really a way for police to address issues of concern to a community at the grassroots level, he said.

“The idea behind this community unit is we have more time to engage with the community and look after our community,” Hawrylyshyn said.

“We are there for about half an hour to an hour and you’re learning a bunch of stuff.”

Those kinds of interactions cannot happen from a police cruiser, he said.

Meadow Cho, manager at Balzac’s Coffee Roasters, said the foot patrols are a welcome addition.

“It’s nice to have them around to help us if there is a problem,” she said.

“There’s always a bit of excitement when we see them.”

Colleague Joy Naemsch takes comfort in knowing police are nearby.

“There’s times when I am working in the store alone and I feel secure,” she said.

Officers will also work with businesses and residents to find solutions to issues they may be facing, Malachowsky.

For example, a homeowner may have experienced a break-in and when officers visit the scene, notice the front porch of the home is a lot of foliage and the view from the street may be obscured.

Malachowsky said the concept of crime prevention through environmental design – or CPTED for short – may be suggested to help the homeowner come up with a way to avoid further break-ins.

It could mean clearing away some of the plants that may be limiting visibility and, in turn, helping thieves.

“It may seem simple in nature, but the results actually work and there’s been a number of initiatives that we’ve done more so in Niagara Falls that have helped us tremendously in mitigating some of these issues,” Malachowsky said.

Feedback from the community has been positive.

“A lot of people are very pleasant when they want to come speak to us,” Malachowsky said.

“It’s just different from the everyday where a lot of the time, people call the police for incidents that are not so nice.”

And tourists, especially during the busy summer season, seem to appreciate their presence as well, Hawrylyshyn said.

“We try always to get a picture with us,” he said.

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Local Journalism Initiative
The Lake Report.

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Celebrating the women of NOTL. Again

Kevin MacLean
Managing Editor

In Niagara-on-the-Lake, nothing of substance seems to get accomplished without the efforts of a few men — and an army of women. That’s not a put down of men, but rather a reflection of the incredible role women play here in NOTL. As we said a year ago, when we first conceived the idea of producing a special feature section celebrating the contributions and the roles of women in NOTL, this demographic group is indeed a force in the community.

Our simple idea last year grew out of what we did in 2022. At that time we produced a small package of stories for International Women’s Day about immigrant women, our town council’s women and then-mayor, and a young dynamo, Maya Webster, who had convinced the province to cover the cost of glucose monitors for many people with diabetes.

All worthy of celebrating and highlighting. Last year, to kick it up a notch, we reached out to women in the community hoping to get the attention of 20 or 30 notable movers and shakers — community contributors — and take a photo of them on Queen Street in front of the town’s iconic clock tower cenotaph. They’d be representative of the women of NOTL.

Well, that army of women we mentioned earlier quickly grew to more than 100 and the result was mini-biographies of scores of women all wrapped up in an award-winning print and online presentation, video and mass photograph taken in the middle of Queen Street.

As we noted afterward, an overwhelming sentiment expressed by women on that sunny March morning a year ago was, “Let’s do this again next year!”

So, we are again inviting the women of NOTL to participate in The Lake Report’s celebration of … you.

In an email circulated a week or so ago to all the women to whom we’d reached out a year ago, we invited them — and anyone they knew — to come out again, at a new location, to celebrate International Women’s Day a few days early.

If you weren’t on that email list, our apologies. We are expanding it. But please come out on Monday, March 4.

In keeping with the themes of inclusion and celebration, please invite any and all women you know in NOTL — and ask them to confirm via email at kevin@niagaranow.com (just so we have some gauge as to the crowd size).

Friends, family, women you work with, people in organizations with which you are involved. The more, the merrier! Whether 50 or 100 or 150 women are able to come out, we consider it will be time well spent.

That week, the regular edition of The Lake Report will include a special feature section to commemorate International Women’s Day. We’re focusing on women in education and women in business — and we’ve received dozens of nominations from the community. We’ll feature some of those women in the souvenir section.

As well, we are including a limited amount of paid advertising in the section. A portion of the proceeds from those advertisements will be donated to two women-focused charities: Gillian’s Place women’s shelter and NOTL’s own Pink Pearl Foundation, which supports women dealing with cancer.

So, please join us as we assemble near the NOTL gazebo in Queen’s Royal Park in Old Town on Monday, March 4, 2024, at 10 a.m. to again take a mass photo to celebrate the work and contributions of the women of Niagara-on-the-Lake.

We hope you can be there. editor@niagaranow.com
Letter to the Editor:

Dear Editor:

Further to The Love Letter section featured in The Lake Report on Feb. 15, we have been people asking for books to be removed from library shelves.

The American Library Association introduced a resolution calling the Foundation for Intolerance and Racism a year ago and was introduced to an organization called the Foundation Against Intolerance and Racism (FAIR).

We will only be truly free and no longer encourage those with differing viewpoints to respect and challenge each other.

Class rights and liberties guaranteed to each individual, including freedom of speech and expression, equal protection under the law, and the right to personal privacy.

As library professionals, we need to respect and recommit to striving for library neutrality and viewpoint diversity in the collection.

As library professionals, we need to respect and recommit to striving for library neutrality and viewpoint diversity in the collection.

The organization supports Freedom to Read Week’s principles of intellectual freedom, freedom of expression, freedom to read and resistance to censorship.

We encourage you to read Freedom to Read Week’s principles of intellectual freedom, freedom of expression, freedom to read and resistance to censorship.

Censorship and what we are allowed to read

Public libraries should be home to many viewpoints, not just progressive ones.

We encourage you to read Freedom to Read Week’s principles of intellectual freedom, freedom of expression, freedom to read and resistance to censorship.

We encourage you to read Freedom to Read Week’s principles of intellectual freedom, freedom of expression, freedom to read and resistance to censorship.

Respectful disagreement because bad ideas are best confronted with good ideas and never with dehumanizing or blacklisting.

Objective truth that it is discoverable and scientific research untainted by political agenda.

Pro-human and compassionate opposition to intolerance and racism rooted in dignity and our common humanity.

FAIR is marking the 40th anniversary of Canada’s Freedom to Read Week by asking all writers, publishers, library workers, teachers, and readers to acknowledge that pressure to suppress the availability of books can come from across the political spectrum, and that librarian activism restricts freedom to read by suppressing heterodox viewpoints.

The organization supports Freedom to Read Week’s principles of intellectual freedom, freedom of expression, freedom to read and resistance to censorship.

We encourage you to read Freedom to Read Week’s principles of intellectual freedom, freedom of expression, freedom to read and resistance to censorship.

Dear editor:

Excited to read NOTL News in print

Love letter: First love and last love were found here in Niagara-on-the-Lake
North American design palette is the one most unadventurous death. One, apart from with a slow, stick it all under that. It's all chart that says 'bland' and for the Guardian: mophobia," who states the mility, but on the other side, the two, commonly referred to as "greige." the most popular colour palettes of homes have been muted greys and taupes or a mix of the two, commonly referred to as "greige.”

Furthermore, this colour palette is the one most North American design-ers said during 1923 they would most like to see "go away.” Off the top, let’s understand the “classic” refer-ence. Prior to the mid-19th century, nearly all pig-ments used to produce paint colours were based on naturally occurring materi-als - iron oxide, for example — mixed in a lime-wood turpentine base solution. This reality distinctly limited the colour options available to our ancestors. So, this “classic” choice of a paint scheme is, in part, an expression of these limitations rather than a representation of societal taste. That said, certainly the most common exterior paint treatment for wood-clad houses of this period was white with green shut-ters — something the author Charles Dickens comment-ed on during his 1842 visit to North America. He wrote: “All the build-ings looked as if they had been painted that morning … Every house is the whit-est of white; every Venetian blind the greenest of green; a ‘blind’ being a louvered shutter. Interestingly, the “white” that Dickens refers to was not what our eyes would interpret as “whitest of white.” All 19th-century white paint was “warm” with varying degrees — based on the quality of materials and skills of the painter who mixed it on site. Of battery undertones. Modern titanium white paint was introduced to the market around 1925. Three things occurred during the second half of the 19th century, which had a direct impact on colour palette options for build-ings. First, A.J. Downing, one of the most influential North American architects of the time, began to promote neutral tints. In one of his many publi-cations, he wrote that all the build-ings should be painted “soft and quiet shades called neutral tints, such as fawn, drab, grey, brown, etc., and … all positive colours, such as white, yellow, red, blue, black, etc., should always be avoided.” Downing’s 1842 book “Cottage Residences” actually contained a hand-coloured palette of his recommended paint colours. He then went on to spell out rules for the use of these colours, writing, “Choose a paint of some neutral tint that is quite satisfactory, and, if the tint is a light one, let the facings of the windows, cornices, etc., be painted several shades darker, of the same colour.” “The blinds may either be a darker shade than the facings, or else the darkest green,” he added. “If, on the one hand, the tint chosen is a dark one, then let the window dressings, etc., be painted of a much lighter shade of the same colour.” Restrictive, yes, but it laid the groundwork for the no-tion of “classic neutrals.” Second, the development of modern, chemically synthesized pigments was rapidly expanding the range of colour choices available in the market. Third, the industrial paint industry was born based on the technology to grind pigments in oil, put them in sealed cans and then ship the resultant “pre-mixed” paint to anywhere in North America serviced by the railroads. Given this manufacturing and logistical capability, these early paint companies put marketing into high gear, printing and broadly distributing colourful brochures and architectural pattern books featuring the full range of their colour options while promoting the use of the new, richer colours. So, in the simplest terms, the century between 1820 and 1920 had four major colour phases. Circa 1820 to 1840, the colour palette was light, delicate and dominated by white. Circa 1840 to 1870, was an era of pale earth tones. Circa 1870 to 1900, the late Victorian palette was dark and rich (albeit somewhat muddy to modern eyes). Then, circa 1890 to 1920, the palette gradually re-turned to whites and lighter pastels.

Today, my Benjamin Moore colour bag is a small suitcase containing nine distinct colour fans each holding roughly 100 paint colours. And that’s just one paint company. It could be said that we are drowning in a sea of colour choices! But, let’s get a little more practical — if someone is contemplating painting the exterior of their house, how does one navigate this cornucopia of choices? Before we get into col-ours, here are a few points to consider: 1. Understand the style of your home: certain paint schemes and colours will accentuate the architecture of your house or diminish it. For example, a collection of pastels would look jar-ring on a Ranch bungalow, while painting a Queen Anne in pale earth tones would result in the visual loss of its decorative ele-ments and details. 2. Recognize your geog-raphy: the quality, intensity and seasonal angles of sun-light plus the type of vegeta-tion and landscape can have a huge impact on the paint colours you choose.

That beautiful coral-pink stucco house in Bermuda or the wonderful burnt umber home in Arizona would look sadly out-of-place on a Canadian street.

1. Pick the right paint colour for your home. Brian Marshall is a NOTL realtor, author and expert consultant on archi-tectural design, restoration and heritage.
Community Announcement #1 – February 22, 2024

**Announcement Series:** We are presenting a series of community announcements to inform the residents of Niagara-on-the-Lake, about who we are, the history of this unique site, our rehabilitation and naturalization plans and our vision for this very special landscape. As well, we seek to receive community input and feedback as we proceed through the design and approvals processes.

**Who Are We:** Purchased from Lafarge Canada in 2008, the owners of Q Gardens (also known as Queenston Quarry Reclamation Company Ltd.) are Joe Lamanna (founder, The G&L Group), NOTL resident Angelo Butera (Panoramic Properties) and a small founders group lead by NOTL resident, Frank Racicoppo. E: fracioppo@rzclaw.com M: 905-941-5500

**The Site:** The Queenston Quarry property is located in Niagara-on-the-Lake, above St. Davids on the Niagara Escarpment, a UNESCO World Biosphere Reserve, bounded by the brow of the Escarpment and Bruce Trail to the north, Bevan Heights residences to the west, Niagara Townline Road / Portage Road to the south and Queenston Heights Park to the east. Historically, the Queenston Quarry extended down to York Road to the north; however, the Queenston Quarry donated 98-acres consisting of all the natural and heritage features of the quarry being the brow and bench of the escarpment to Ontario Heritage Trust which was later transferred to the Niagara Parks Commission. Today, all lands to the north and east of the Queenston Quarry including the Bruce Trail are public lands under the stewardship of the Niagara Parks Commission.

**Site Activity Since 2006:** We took possession of the Queenston Quarry in 2006 from Lafarge Canada and legal ownership in 2008. Lafarge elected to sell to us (from six other buyer proponents) as we presented the most attractive masterplan vision and environmental rehabilitation plan. Since our possession in 2006 we have embarked on earth moving and rehabilitation with the objective to and successfully have achieved the highest / cleanest soil standard (i.e. the Ministry of Environment, Conservation and Parks, Table 1 Standard). As well, since 1950’s the Queenston Quarry obtained a Ministry of Environment permit to receive and stack pile foundry sand from various industrial foundry operations throughout Niagara. Lafarge had recycled a portion of the foundry sand into asphalt and road deep base throughout Niagara. Since our ownership 2008 with 200,000 tons remaining on site, we screened and repurposed this foundry sand by screening and shipping it to cement plants across Ontario. The foundry sand is baked in kilns which converts it to clinker, being the raw ingredient to make cement that is used to make concrete. We have repurposed and shipped all the foundry sand with only 15,000 tons to go.

**Announcements to follow:**
- History
- Quarrying Activities
- Approvals Processes
- Community Input
- Naturalization / Biodiversity Plan
- Masterplan and Amenities
- Architecture

Contact: Frank Racicoppo 905-941-5500 E: fracioppo@rzclaw.com www.qgardenscanada.com
History buffs gawk at notable Fort George hoard of 19th century artifacts

Evan Loree
Local Journalism Initiative
The Lake Report

The Navy Hall was a veritable dragon’s hoard of historical treasure Friday morning.

Site supervisor Dan Laroche shared 27 historical artifacts with almost 30 visitors who attended the latest in a series of fireside chats hosted by the Friends of Fort George and Niagara Parks.

Laroche, presenting the artifacts one by one, was dressed in the attire of Fort Maj. Donald Campbell, who died of natural causes in 1812.

Among the highlights were a map, a portrait, a pistol and a box of bullets. The map showed the layout of Fort George as it was in 1804.

Laroche noted the fort was built in stages, starting in 1796. “It wasn’t really until about 1804 that it looks like it does today.”

The map was the most historically significant item he presented because it shows the fort as it was during the war. But a close second was a portrait of Edward Cotton, a major who died an “absolutely horrific” death after being shot in the battle of Fort George.

“Poor chap took about five months to die,” Laroche said. “From a heritage value perspective, that is a pretty big deal for us.”

After the talk, Laroche said the feeling of holding Cotton’s portrait, knowing he had died at the fort, was like touching gold.

The picture of the dead soldier was displayed on a table covered in white cloth, along with the rest of the historical menagerie.

A double-barrelled pistol designed to be more accurate than standard issue sidearms was one of the rarer items at the table.

A former maintenance supervisor with Parks Canada found the unique firearm under a tree root atop Queenston Heights at least 30 years ago, Laroche said.

He could not confirm that the gun was actually used in the battle, saying it was an extremely uncommon model.

He told The Lake Report its owner would have spent a pretty penny just to own it.

As far as boxes go, the wooden one Laroche displayed was far from garden variety.

It was an early 18th-century gun-powder box with three tin containers on the inside for storing different types of powder.

But the British army did not expect soldiers to worry about multiple powders, so the box more likely belonged to a hunter – who was more likely to need multiple powders.

Under Maj.-Gen. Sir Isaac Brock, soldiers were encouraged to pick up hunting as a way to ward off boredom and keep them out of the pubs of Niagara, Laroche said.

The double threat posed by “booze and boredom” to the discipline of soldiers remains a challenge for modern military officers, Laroche said, recalling a conversation he had with a sergeant in the Canadian Armed Forces.

History buffs gawk at notable Fort George hoard of 19th century artifacts with an audience of about 30 people at Navy Hall. A specialized kettle used for pouring hot dishes sits on the table on Friday. EVAN LOREE
Instruments of war were not the only ones on display. Laroche had several old kitchen gadgets and serving dishes on display, too. One was a black spice box, used to cut and grind spices for consumption. He also shared a copper “half-kettle” that could have been used to pour hot chocolate.

And adjacent to that, he had a little cup and saucer, used to serve hot chocolate. The beverage was popular in its day, but “quite bitter.” Laroche said, and not like the sweetened beverages available at your local coffee shop.

The oldest item on display was a pewter serving platter, the origin of which Laroche dated to about 1740. Though there were several residents in the crowd, like Lesley Stewart, who has “a general interest in anything old and historical,” there were a couple visitors at the table, too. Ken Coker came all the way from Acton, an hour and a half away, to hear the talk.

“I drive down for these things, they’re that interesting,” said the 64-year-old. Coker said he spent two summers working at Fort George in his teens and never lost his interest in the stronghold.

“Things could have gone very differently for the history of the country, had we failed here,” Coker said. Laroche described his interest in the history of Fort George as an “occupational hazard.” He took a summer job at the fort when he was still in high school and is still there 34 years later. The last fireside chat takes place this Friday at 11 a.m. at Navy Hall.

Tickets can be purchased from the Friends of Fort George Special Events webpage.

evaneloree@niagaranow.com

Love games? Join us for fun events every week at the Irish Harp Pub. Details at www.theirishharppub.com
College brewmasters hop to it for Pink Boots Society

Richard Hutton
Local Journalism Initiative
The Lake Report

Students in Niagara College’s program for future brewmasters are hard at work on unique batches of beer they’re brewing this winter – all to support the often-underrepresented women in the beer industry.

For Melissa Quiverio and Lina Farfan, their version of the Pink Boots Pilsner will pay homage to a brew from New Zealand, simply called the New Zealand Pilsner.

“We decided the recipe hops selected for the Pink Boots Pilsner were similar in aroma and flavour,” Quiverio said. “It’s got some notes of citrus with a raspberry flavour.”

She was one of a dozen or so participants in the open brew for the Pink Boots Society on Feb. 9.

All beers produced by the students will be available in Niagara and loving it!

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Pet Valu and NOTL Cats Rescue team up

Furry friends in search of a forever home were plenty to be found at Pet Valu across Canada last Saturday and Sunday – and the Virgil location was no exception. Pet Valu’s National Adoption Weekend, held four times a year, aims to support a community charity, with this year’s choice being NOTL Cat Rescue.

Laura and John Kott, co-owners of the Virgil store, chose this group, which provides foster families for rescued cats awaiting adoption along with essential medical services. Tanya Rice, director of fundraising with NOTL Cat Rescue, said that their organization has already received several helpful donations from people and businesses in the community.

Grape Escapes donated a cheque for $200 and for their upcoming spring fundraiser, NOTL Cats has been sponsored by Kauzlaric Farms on Concession 4, Bellyacres Farms on Ree Road and Handmade Pres- ents in Garrison Village.

“We have zero start-up costs for our spring fundraiser, which will be on March 30,” Rice told The Lake Report. For those who wish to make a donation in the form of supplies, NOTL Cats are always in need of food and litter, particularly Fancy Feast wet food, or Whiskas for stray outdoor cats, said Rice.

Pet Valu’s National Adoption Weekend is primarily focused on accepting donations and helping address the needs of pets in different places, Laura Kott said. “It goes toward whatever the community happens to need. Like when pets are affected by wildfires, or pets that are affected by flooding in other provinces,” she said.

However, Pet Valu itself is also in need of donations for sponsorship, specifically toward a larger in-store cage for events like adoption weekend.

“We’re glad to have the cage that we do have, but the more room for cats the better. Unfortunately, that’s expensive,” Kott said. The cost of a large cage, like the one in use at Pet Valu on Vansickle Road in St. Catharines would cost upwards of $3,000.

During adoption weekend, the store received a $500 pledge towards the needs of pets in different places. Laura Kott said. “It’s on our wish list,” Kott said.

For more information about the event, to become a sponsor or to donate items to the raffle or auctions, contact Red Roof executive director Stef- fanie Bjorgan via email, stefanie@redroofretreat.com, or call 289-868-9800.

John Michael’s is located at 1308 Upper’s Ln. in Thorold.
March 1 will be Niagara-on-the-Lake Minor Hockey Night at the Niagara Falls Canucks Jr. game. On Tuesday, Lord Mayor Gary Zalepa (a longtime former referee) was on hand at the NOTL Wolves U8 team’s practice. So were Canucks players Dryden Allen, Adrian Diotati, Wolf Gliss and Nate McGurk and the team mascot Justin Beaver. On March 1, members of the U8 team will be special guests of the Canucks and they’ll get a dressing room tour during warmups and play a mini game on the ice during the first intermission. Also, every player wearing a NOTL Minor Hockey Association jersey will get free entry to the Canucks game versus the Brantford 99ers. It’s at the Gale Centre, 5152 Thorold Stone Rd., Niagara Falls, at 7 p.m. Parents, siblings and others can buy $10 general admission tickets at the box office on game night. DAVE VAN DE LAAR

NOTL players get free entry to Canucks Jr. game

Top: Alexander Mills helps two-year-old Asher Mills navigate the ice during free skate at Pillar and Post Gardens on Monday. Bottom: Rafael Aparicio and Jessica Armstrong skated at Monday’s family day skate sponsored by the Fine Estates Team at the arena. JULIA SACCO

NEW TO MARKET

OPEN HOUSE
Sunday, February 25 | 2 - 4 p.m.

Welcome to your dream home nestled in a serene cul-de-sac setting! This exquisite two-storey condominium home boasts three bedrooms, and four luxurious baths, and open concept Kitchen/Dining and Great Room. This home is thoughtfully designed for secondary home buyers or young retirees seeking both luxury and convenience.

Learn more at nancybailey.evrealestate.com.
The U15 Rep Wolves of the NOTL Minor Hockey Association are The Lake Report’s featured Team of the Week.

Pictured in the front row, from left, are: Levi Bayne, Boyd Hopkins, Theo Kotsanis and Lucas Rempel. In the middle row are: Chase Hunter, Alex Swec, Nolan Funk and Lukas Friesen. In the back row are coach Mario Kotsanis, Holden Powell, Tommy Wilson, Rylan Cerros, Cole Wagar, Nolan Rappit and coach Scott Wagar. Absent are Stevie Pilleri-Smith and trainer Ray Hunter.

Kevan Dowd
The Lake Report

It's do or die now for the Niagara Jr. A Predators. After finishing their regular season last Friday night with a 3-0 loss to the first-place North York Renegades and posting a season record of 17-21-4-0, the Predators launched their best-of-three preliminary playoff round on Monday. It didn't go as head coach Kevin Taylor hoped. The Predators came up short on the road against the Durham Roadrunners, losing 4-1 in Oshawa. While Niagara outshot the Roadrunners 30-25 and never let their opponents run away with it, Shane Kaplan's lone goal 16 minutes into the last period was too little and too late for his team to stage any sort of a comeback. There's hope for the Predators, though, as they had some success against Durham during the regular season. While Niagara finished nine points and three spots behind the Roadrunners, Durham has struggled to beat the Predators in the past and lost to them twice. They host the Roadrunners this Friday, Feb. 23 at the Meridian Credit Union Arena in Virgil. The action starts at 7:30 p.m. It's a must-win game.

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It's do or die now for the Niagara Jr. A Predators. After finishing their regular season last Friday night with a 3-0 loss to the first-place North York Renegades and posting a season record of 17-21-4-0, the Predators launched their best-of-three preliminary playoff round on Monday. It didn't go as head coach Kevin Taylor hoped. The Predators came up short on the road against the Durham Roadrunners, losing 4-1 in Oshawa. While Niagara outshot the Roadrunners 30-25 and never let their opponents run away with it, Shane Kaplan's lone goal 16 minutes into the last period was too little and too late for his team to stage any sort of a comeback. There's hope for the Predators, though, as they had some success against Durham during the regular season. While Niagara finished nine points and three spots behind the Roadrunners, Durham has struggled to beat the Predators in the past and lost to them twice. They host the Roadrunners this Friday, Feb. 23 at the Meridian Credit Union Arena in Virgil. The action starts at 7:30 p.m. It's a must-win game.

The U15 Rep Wolves of the NOTL Minor Hockey Association are The Lake Report’s featured Team of the Week. Pictured in the front row, from left, are: Levi Bayne, Boyd Hopkins, Theo Kotsanis and Lucas Rempel. In the middle row are: Chase Hunter, Alex Swec, Nolan Funk and Lukas Friesen. In the back row are coach Mario Kotsanis, Holden Powell, Tommy Wilson, Rylan Cerros, Cole Wagar, Nolan Rappit and coach Scott Wagar. Absent are Stevie Pilleri-Smith and trainer Ray Hunter. DAVE VAN DE LAAR

Do-or-die time for Preds

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Across
8. Statuette (8)
9. Loudness (6)
10. Very small (3)
11. Eurasian religious symbol, now with appalling associations (8)
12. Belle’s boyfriend (4)
16. Alleviates (5)
19. Numb with fear (9)
21. It supplies tees and caddies (3,4)
23. Mythical horseman? (7)
24. Father of North Korea’s current leader (3,4,2)
26. Anesthetic liquid (5)
29. What the fourth Little Piggie had (4)
33. Cracks (8)
35. Alix, initially (1,1,1)
36. Nosy (6)
37. Takes a leisurely walk (8)

Down
1. Scenic vista (4)
2. Follow doggedly (6)
3. Sprite (5)
4. Relaxing music genre (3,3)
5. Declare formally (4)
6. Product of too much food and too little exercise (4)
7. Jane Austen’s inept matchmaker (4)
11. Type of coat sounds like a ewe’s relative (9)
13. Tomb inscription (7)
14. Militarily ready (5,4)
15. Churchill, affectionately (6)
17. Enter violently (5,2)
18. Instruct (6)
20. Special attention, briefly (1,1,1)
22. Snub-nosed dog (3)
23. Blood component (5)
24. Barbarous person (4)
25. Liquid way to pay (2,4)
27. Cocktail garnishes (6)
28. Narrative of heroic exploits (4)
30. Acquire through merit (4)
31. Send forth (4)
32. Instruction (6)
34. Alias, initially (1,1,1)
36. Nosy (6)
37. Takes a leisurely walk (8)

Have some fun

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No one doubts artificial intelligence’s ability to crunch huge amounts of data. What surprises some, however, is how well it learns, innovates and even seems to intuit in ways eerily similar to human brains.

The human mind is very flexible and adaptive at finding novel solutions and figuring stuff out. This is where AI potently becomes a threat: much as biological systems may be capable of evolving – much as biological systems do. In short, AI has become very intelligent and like highly intelligent, creative humans, may not be able to tell us how it became so.

That’s a stunning achievement on human programming to a measure of independence, which can only expand in the future. This means future AI systems may be capable of solving much as biological systems do. In short, AI has become very intelligent and like highly intelligent, creative humans, may not be able to tell us how it became so. This is where AI potently becomes a threat: should it ever develop and exceed the broad intelligence of humans? At that point, who’s in charge? Looking to the near future, the advent of truly powerful AI systems will change almost every aspect of our lives. Recently, I tried out what I thought were plausible tests of medical reasoning by presenting ChatGPT 3.5 with case material taken directly from the New England Journal of Medicine’s weekly clinical-pathological conferences. Just in case ChatGPT somehow had access to that material, I made up clinical cases and introduced ChatGPT to each case beginning with the history, checking to see what ChatGPT came up with, before feeding it more and more information to see how accurately it was. ChatGPT got the right answer in all 10 cases at what I would estimate would be the performance level of a well-trained clinical resident.

Maybe ChatGPT and future ChatGPT’s successors will continue to evolve, and humans won’t. As a patient, I welcome the help of ChatGPT and its successors as partners in an overworked system with plenty of its own flaws and rough edges, with long delays at every stage and not-always-pleasant encounters between patients and healthcare workers. So, I vote for AI-assisted health care. True, it can’t dress patients in medical gowns or dress wounds, but it is patient and respectful all the time.

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.
Climate change could have devastating effect on NOTL

Continued from Front Page

cal record before statements can be made about changes taking place.

Together, this mild winter is likely a result of a regular global event, El Niño, exacerbated by ongoing anthropogenic climate change (caused by human activities). El Niño leads to high surface temperatures in the central and eastern tropical Pacific Ocean, when surface winds that normally blow east-to-west along the equator weaken or reverse direction. This can raise global temperatures by a few tenths of a degree Celsius, for up to a year, with a peak during winter. It occurs between every two to 10 years, on an irregular basis.

A warmer winter could mean a difficult start to the growing season. Without much snow cover, there will not be large volumes of spring snowmelt to recharge soil moisture and ground water. All that is a potential problem in Niagara.

Farmers and gardeners alike could need supplemental irrigation to give spring growth a boost. Warmer, dryer conditions continuing into mid-2024 could increase the risk of drought. For gardeners planning spring plantings, native species are more resilient to changing conditions than ornamental varieties. Rain barrels can capture and make good use of rain falling, especially at the start of the growing season when gardens may need extra watering this year. Another symptom of climate change "weirding" is increased speed and magnitude of swings between high and low temperatures. The effects on Niagara vineyards and tender fruit will depend on conditions for the next few months: rapid cold snaps after mild winter conditions are particularly devastating. Plants can be lulled into a false sense of security by warm weather; "false spring" encourages them to come out of dormancy and bud early. However, if temperatures subsequently drop below -20 C, buds freeze and could die.

In extreme cases the plant may not survive and large swaths of the crop may need to be replanted. In Niagara, peach and nectarine trees are most vulnerable, followed by plums and cherries. But apples and pears are resilient. In mid-January, temperatures fell below this critical level in interior British Columbia, causing bud freezing that could reduce the 2024 grape yield more than 97 per cent. Wildlife may find this winter especially difficult due to weather whiplash. Too little snowpack might make it hard to stay warm, lowering the likelihood of survival for some animals, like reptiles and amphibians. Drier spring conditions could make it difficult for wildlife to find food. We may be more likely to see animals from all levels of the food chain, including deer and coyotes, providing for their young when meals are scarce. Consistently cold temperatures act as an ecosystem reset button. Populations of some invasive species, and those that are a nuisance from a human perspective, can be reduced by sustained cold. Included among those are ticks, mosquitoes, woolly adelgids, stink bugs and buckthorn.

With prolonged cold, a longer period of ice cover on lakes is also beneficial. Less of an ice "lid" leads to increased evaporation and lower lake levels, which allows water to warm up more quickly.

Warmer water temperatures may facilitate algal growth, which can deplete oxygen and affect other aquatic species, as well as produce toxins that affect water quality for drinking and recreation.

For decades, climate experts have been clear about the need to prevent warming of 1.5 C above pre-industrial levels. While society drags its feet on divestment from fossil fuels, this threshold looms closer than ever before. 2023 was the first year that temperatures consistently shattered this ceiling. At this point, we will not avoid climate change completely; the effects of extreme heat and weather are evident in our gardens, lakes and vineyards. And as temperatures continue to rise, urgent measures are required to curb emissions and transition to sustainable practices.

NOTL, native Kyra Simone is a PhD candidate in environmental science, with master’s degrees in biology and science communication. She studies climate change-induced wildfire and species-at-risk habitat in eastern Georgian Bay.

Brock’s cenotaph

On Clarence Street, in the village of Queenston, stands this monument, placed by His Royal Highness, Edward Albert, Prince of Wales, on Sept. 18, 1890. The inscription on the north face reads “near this spot, Major General Sir Isaac Brock KCB Provisional Lieutenant Governor of Upper Canada fell on 18 October 1812 while advancing to repel the invading enemy.” The new Brock Monument is clearly visible in the background (the original monument was bombed in 1840). It was completed in 1856 and was dedicated Oct. 13, 1859, the year before the monument in the foreground. An excursion car of the Niagara Falls Park & River Railway (the Great Gorge Route) is downbound toward Queenston Dock to pick up tourists arriving there from Toronto by boat. The track it is on is now Queenston Street. Another set of stairs leads to York Road, which also supported the rail line that carried the “Circle Route” Great Gorge cars across the Niagara River suspension bridge joining Queenston to Lewiston, N.Y. Note the white poles that carry the catenary, or the overhead electric cable, that the trolley cars used for power along the Queenston Street right-of-way, and also halfway up the bluff, just below Brock’s Monument, where the rail line crept precariously up the escarpment. The car appears to be one of the 500-series J.G. Brill-built cars constructed in 1900 in Philadelphia and rebuilt locally by the International Traction Company in 1912. This picture was taken shortly after that rebuilding, well before abandonment of the line in 1932.

Left: Family Day 2024 was a warm, sunny day with minimal ice at Niagara Shores Park. Right: Kyra Simone stands on a large ice shelf on the shore of Lake Ontario at Niagara Shores on Family Day 2021.
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Does landscaping boost your property’s value?

Joanne Young says a well-landscaped yard can increase your property value. MIDDJOURNEY

Are you planning on putting your house up for sale this coming year? Of course, you will want to get top dollar for your home.

The question that is often asked is if certain things can be done with your landscaping that will help your house sell quicker or even sell for more.

Landscaping can add thousands of dollars to the value of your property. Or, more accurately stated, a well-designed landscape can add value to your property.

In fact, it is one of the few home improvements you can make that not only adds immediate value but also increases in value as the years go by.

While interior decor and design concepts regularly go out of style and mechanical systems wear down, go out of style and mechanize concepts regularly also increases in value as adding immediate value but you can make that not only few home improvements.

Your yard can add value to your housing market and exactly depending on your neighborhood, the current housing market and exactly what improvements have been made.

Stay conservative: You may have heard it said before, but something is only worth what someone is willing to pay for it.

If you put a lot of money into a landscaping project but install or create something that only suits a small portion of people, you might have a hard time finding buyers who also appreciate the yard work. Instead, by staying conservatively with your yard work, you will find your return is better.

Also, by keeping it mild, potential buyers will more likely be able to see themselves enjoying the yard with their kids, or hosting summer dinner parties.

Pretty, but not too pretty: Of course, a home with beautiful gardens and magazine-worthy grass looks amazing, and you’ll likely hear compliments from neighbours and friends every time they visit, but this kind of yard is a lot of work.

If you choose to invest a significant amount of money into landscaping with extensive gardens and trees, then your home may only appeal to a small number of people.

Having an overly high-maintenance yard can turn off potential buyers, especially if it’s their first home or they live a busy lifestyle with children and growing commitments.

Nurture your lawn: Taking care of your lawn regularly is one of the most effective ways to increase the value of your property.

Make potential buyers long to walk barefoot on your lush, green grass by keeping it healthy.

When regular mowing and watering isn’t enough, try natural fertilizers, aeration, or even laying down a new lawn altogether.

Get rid of those ugly brown patches that distract the eyes of potential buyers and install edging for a trim and tidy look.

A well-maintained lawn will tell the future buyer that the home has been well cared for.

Add colour: Don’t be afraid to stand out. A pop of colour brings style to an otherwise plain palette.

Reviving your front door with a fresh coat of paint adds charm and noticeability to your home without breaking the bank.

There are multiple options: A red door can balance out the blandness of neutral siding; royal blue breathes life into sun-faded brick; and sage green has a calming effect that blends in with the natural environment.

This quick and easy improvement evolves your entryway into a focal point that will catch any buyer’s eye.

Even adding a couple of pots by the doorway with bright-coloured flowers can make a big difference.

Consider the buyer’s perspective: Koi ponds aren’t for everybody. Keep in mind that something could be of great value to one buyer while being a deal-breaker for another.

Even if you think a swimming pool would look great in your backyard, not every buyer will want to take on the maintenance and added cost that goes with it.

Rather than gambling on a big investment that may or may not appeal to a future homeowner, make sure you’ve researched what buyers are looking for in the current real estate climate.

“Curb appeal” refers to what potential buyers see when they drive up to the house.

A beautiful garden, a spacious deck and shining new paint can all make prospective owners take notice.

Homes with curb appeal also tend to sell more quickly, which can be an attractive quality when you come to sell your home.

So, if you are thinking that you may be selling your home in the coming months, remember not to go overboard, but keep things simple and well-maintained.

Clear away any clutter. Something as simple as edging the gardens can go a long way in people’s first impression of your home.

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