



Far from the end of the road

Businesses reeling after continued construction work keeps patrons away



A unique drone's-eye view from above shows road crews at work Wednesday pouring a new asphalt base on a section of Niagara Stone Road from Four Mile Creek Road to Field Road in Virgil. Construction of the major Region of Niagara and Town of Niagara-on-the-Lake project has taken a toll on area businesses, operators say. And traffic has been a headache for motorists. This is the second section of roadway to have a new asphalt base laid down. Next, curbs need to be installed on the remaining section and a few weeks after that an asphalt base will be poured on that part. Construction work is expected to last into the fall. **Story on Page 11.** RENE BERTSCHI/SKYVIEW ARTS

Farmers keep close eye on crops after heavy rainfall

Somer Slobodian
Local Journalism Initiative
The Lake Report

Grape growers and tender fruit farmers are carefully watching over their vineyards and orchards after hail and a few days of heavy rain rocked parts of Niagara-on-the-Lake.

"The crop has looked really nice up to now so we are concerned if this (weather) pattern keeps going what's going to happen," said Matthias Oppenlaender, chair of Grape Growers of Ontario.

He said some of his crops had some damage due to the hail storm that passed through NOTL earlier this



Thwaites Farms lost peaches to the hail storm. SUPPLIED

week, but that as long as he can get some crop protection on the vines within the next few days, they should be fine. He'll need to spray the vines that experienced hail to protect them from powdery mildew.

The mildew can grow in

areas with very high humidity and rain, much like what Niagara has been experiencing, so it's a concern, said Debbie Zimmerman, CEO of Grape Growers of Ontario.

Scott MacSween, who operates Quiet Acres

Farm in NOTL, said the hail affected 30 acres of peaches and nectarines on two of his farms along Lakeshore Road.

While workers are picking the fruit, they'll have to discard the ones that are bruised due to the hail.

"It's very unfortunate, but it could have been a lot worse," he said.

He has about 230 acres of tender fruit in total.

"The other 200 acres are fine — that's the main thing," he said.

He's grateful that the hail did not affect his crop more severely and that it only lasted a short time.

Continued on Page 6



MIND YOUR METERS

Speeding has become a serious concern in Niagara-on-the-Lake neighbourhoods. And while the drivers are fast, solutions are often slow or have ground to a halt.

The Lake Report's special five-story package this week explores complaints about speeding in different areas of town. A Virgil mother is concerned for her son with autism on Annmarie Drive, a Chautauqua father is worried about his two daughters on his Shakespeare Avenue, a McNab-area farmer is pleased to finally see stop signs at a treacherous intersection. From all corners of town the message seems to be that something should be done to curb speeds on residential streets. As well as the underlying message to drivers: Mind your speedometers — and your manners.

Read our stories about residents who are seeking action from the town and region, in a quest to ensure NOTL's roads are safe for pedestrians, cyclists and motorists. See pages 2, 3, 4 and 5.



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MIND YOUR METERS

Speeding on Annmarie Dr. worries residents

Somer Slobodian
Local Journalism Initiative
The Lake Report

Residents on Annmarie Drive in Virgil say they want to see cars slow down on the road in the neighbourhood before somebody gets seriously hurt.

Speeding in this neighbourhood started gaining attention after a resident posted on Facebook about a Dominos Pizza driver speeding down the street intentionally.

The driver was suspended for two weeks. However, Shannah Pumariega, a mother of two living on Annmarie Drive, said he was just one piece of a bigger problem.

“This situation is a branch of an original problem that I have been trying to fight for the last two years,” she said.

The incident with the Dominos driver could’ve been avoided if the street had speed bumps, she said.

If more isn’t done to address speeding on Annmarie, she’s worried one of the 18 children living in the community could be hit.

“It’s not a risk any of us moms are willing to take,” she said.

The town has done a few things to address the concerns, such as installing speed limit and safety signs on the street this year.

Two years ago, it conducted a speeding survey along Annmarie, which reportedly showed no signs of excessive speeding.

However, some residents disagree with the survey’s conclusion and want to see more safety measures put in place — such as reducing the speed limit from 50 kilometres an hour and adding stop signs or speed bumps.

Pumariega moved to Niagara-on-the-Lake from Windsor in March 2021 with her husband and two

sons after learning Niagara has an abundance of resources for children with autism.

This was important to her since her five-and-a-half-year-old son, Miguelito, has autism.

When she first moved in, the streets were much safer, she said.

This was important since Miguelito isn’t always aware of potential threats in his immediate surroundings, such as cars, she said.

“Annmarie Drive was blocked, it wasn’t all the way through, so the kids would play and they would run across the street,” she said.

However, since the Paradise Grove subdivision opened up in 2021, cars can now take Paradise Grove down Annmarie to Line 2.

“I think people are opting to take this road instead of just using Concession 4,” said Stacy Long, another resident on Annmarie Drive.

Long said she sits on her front porch a lot and sees cars driving at “crazy” speeds.

“There’s been times where from my porch I’ve had to yell across the street at some of the other kids because they’re on their bikes,” she said.

She noted that since cars park on the street, sometimes kids don’t see the cars — and vice versa.

“It’s always a very close call and it’s happened a few times,” she said.

When the Paradise Grove subdivision opened up, many neighbours were nervous.

“Our hearts would race when we see the cars go by,” said Pumariega.

She said she’s seen cars blur by going well over the speed limit.

Marah Minor, the town’s spokesperson, told The Lake Report in an email that the town conducted a

“Our hearts would race when we see the cars go by.”

SHANNAH PUMARIEGA
ANNMARIE DRIVE RESIDENT



Shannah Pumariega, left, with her husband Miguel and two sons Diego, bottom left, and Miguelito. The parents are among many who have speed concerns. SOMER SLOBODIAN

seven-day traffic count on Annmarie Drive in July 2021, in response to residents’ concerns.

The majority of drivers, 85 per cent, drove 45 kilometres an hour, she wrote — below the speed limit.

With no evidence of “excessive speeding” along Annmarie Drive, the town has not considered stop signs or speed bumps in the area, she wrote.

The survey’s findings, however, don’t square with

the worry the people in the neighbourhood have been carrying.

Amanda Frets, another resident of Annmarie, said in an email to The Lake Report that the community has been trying to curb speeding in the neighbourhood ever since it became a through-way street.

“We put signs out alerting others that children are playing in the area, lawn signs asking drivers to slow down, one family bought

metal caution signs and put them up but still people speed on by,” she wrote.

Frets has been living on Annmarie Drive for 16 years and attended the public meetings years ago about the new development known today as Paradise Grove — and, at the time, spoke to the traffic concerns residents are seeing today.

After Paradise Grove opened to more traffic, Pumariega reached out to MPP Wayne Gates about

her safety concerns, who put her in touch with a council member in June 2021, who is no longer part of council.

She spoke with the member about getting autism signs installed on the street and about other traffic solutions like speed bumps and stop signs.

Speed limit signs were put at both ends of the street in 2023, Minor wrote, along with “warning signs regarding a resident with a disability.”

The sign reads “autistic child.”

While Pumariega is happy the sign was installed, she thought it was lacking some key essentials — like what to do in an area where there’s a child with autism.

“I thought to myself, not everybody knows how to navigate autism,” she said.

Jessica Werner, who lives on Annmarie Drive, and Long both said the autism sign hasn’t helped reduce speeding and further measures need to be taken.

“I already think that 50 kilometres an hour is really, really high for residential streets,” Werner said.

Long agreed, saying she guesses some people go as fast as 70 kilometres down the residential street.

“There should be a sign saying 30 in this area,” said Long.

Meanwhile, Fret said she feels like “the only thing that will effectively work is speed humps.”

Minor said another traffic survey will be done in 2023 due to continued development and traffic in the area.

Still, residents are worried that something bad will happen before anything is done about speeding.

“I’m just looking for people to slow down before somebody before one of the kids gets hurt,” said Werner.

Current data doesn’t meet the requirement for the town to request more presence from the Niagara Regional Police Service, she added, but residents can report online or by calling 289-248-1060.

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MIND YOUR METERS

Chautauqua residents **skeptical** of town's neighbourhood traffic study findings

Evan Loree
Local Journalism Initiative
The Lake Report

Niagara-on-the-Lake staff say Chautauqua does not have a speeding problem, based on information they collected from a traffic study done in the spring.

Some of its residents, however, disagree and say they believe the study doesn't give a full picture of the problem in their neighbourhood.

In an email to Chautauqua resident Matt Finlin, director of operations Rome D'Angelo said traffic data the town gathered in April and May in the neighbourhood has "not demonstrated a speeding problem."

The town assesses speeding concerns using guidelines set by the Transportation Association of Canada, D'Angelo said in the email.

An area is deemed to have a speeding problem when 15 per cent of the drivers surpass the limit by 10 kilometres per hour or more, he wrote.

According to data the town collected between April 17 and 24, the average speed of the fastest 15 per cent of drivers using Shakespeare Avenue was 47 km/hr.

From May 8 to 15, according to their data, it was 46 km/h.

This is below the residential street's posted limit of 50 km/h.

The data they provided from their traffic study, Finlin said, paints half the picture.

"It's really disappointing," he said, adding that data aside, he's observed drivers "flying down our road at least once a day."

Finlin initially reached out to Lord Mayor Gary Zalepa via email on April 21 with his concerns about speeding in his neighbourhood.

The lord mayor and Finlin exchanged emails on the subject, with Zalepa writing



Matt Finlin says the town's study of Chautauqua's traffic doesn't tell the whole story. Right: Brian Crow, former president of the Chautauqua Residents Association, is advocating for lower speed limits in the neighbourhood, which has narrow streets and no sidewalks. EVAN LOREE



that he would consult with the town's chief administrator Marnie Cluckie for updates on the situation in Chautauqua.

"I am concerned about the overall poor driving habits that appear to be exhibited in general, including speeding and careless driving," Zalepa wrote to Finlin on May 16.

Cluckie wrote to Finlin on May 16 that D'Angelo would follow up with him and provide a comprehensive update.

It wasn't until Finlin messaged the town again on July 17 that he received a response from the director of operations with information about the traffic study.

Finlin said the situation felt like "bureaucrats pushing things aside."

Brian Crow, founder of the resident advocacy group Friends of Ryerson Park, said the data was "wrong, wrong and wrong."

"It doesn't make any sense," Crow said, for people to be "travelling at 49 kilometres an hour down our narrow street."

Crow lives on Wilber-

force Avenue, which is narrower than Shakespeare but similarly has a speed limit of 50 kilometres per hour.

"Not only should speed limits be reduced, there should be traffic calming measures put in place," Crow said.

Crow said the 50 km/h limit is especially fast on Wilberforce, which is almost too narrow for two lanes.

Crow's neighbour John Scott, also a member of the Friends of Ryerson Park recalls the advocacy group brought up the same issues almost two years ago.

"We found that excessive speed on these tiny roads was extremely dangerous," Scott, a resident of Vincent Avenue, said.

"We've got little kids on these roads and we've got seniors," he said.

Between the kids, seniors and lack of sidewalks, "it's just not a place where you can have fast-driving vehicles," Scott said.

Finlin previously suggested the town could use speed bumps and humps to slow down traffic, which he

said "significantly forces the driver to slow down."

A draft of the town's transportation master plan, still awaiting final approval from council, identifies speed bumps as a potential tool the town can use to slow traffic.

The plan also recommends that staff consider the option of a "town-wide speed limit reduction on local streets."

The municipality doesn't set the 50 km/h speed on roads like Wilberforce. Speed limits for residential streets are standardized across the province in the Ontario Highway Traffic Act.

"No one ever went out, initially to Chautauqua, and said, 'What should the speed limit be?'" said Shaun Devlin, another member of the Friends of Ryerson Park.

However, in 2018, the province amended the Highway Traffic Act to permit towns to set lower speed limits.

Devlin pointed out that other municipalities have already reduced speeds on residential roads town-wide, taking advantage of the legislative change.

One of these is St. Catharines, which took a blanket approach to the issue and reduced residential speed limits to 40 kilometres an hour last September.

The change didn't come free, however: St. Catharines city staff stated in a report signed in September that the budgeted cost to install 40 km/h signs on all their residential roads was \$262,600.


Scott and the other members of the Friends of Ryerson Park suggest that Chautauqua could be the site of a pilot project next year to tackle speeding.

The forested neighbourhood could be a good testing ground for a reduced speed limit in the community, Scott said.

"Let's just drop it to 30-35 and see what the effect is."

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MIND YOUR METERS

St. Davids residents want drivers to **slow it down**

Evan Loree
Local Journalism Initiative
The Lake Report

Fast traffic persists in St. Davids and residents are asking the region to help slow things down.

Dan Segal, president of the St. Davids Ratepayers Association, said his fellow residents have been concerned about the congestion and speed along York and Four Mile Creek roads ever since he joined the association two years ago.

“The residents of St. Davids request that a community safety zone be created along the segment of Four Mile Creek Road that passes through our community,” Segal wrote in a letter to Niagara Region, which is responsible for the road.

While there is an existing safety zone on York Road – where the speed is set to 40 kilometres per hour during

peak hours and fines are increased – the residents want another one on the intersecting regional road.

Many residents have children who attend the nearby St. Davids Public School on York Road, Segal told The Lake Report.

They worry about how safe their kids are crossing the regional road on their way to school, he said.

Crossing Four Mile Creek Road, Segal said, is a “little bit like playing Frogger.”

“That’s been an issue since we’ve moved in,” he added.

Segal’s family has lived in the neighbourhood since 2018 and he has a newborn plus two older kids, ages five and seven, who will be attending St. Davids this fall.

“I wouldn’t want them crossing that road at this point,” he said.

He said the cars move pretty quickly along Four



Dan Segal, president of the St. Davids Ratepayers Association, is happy to see the region takes the traffic concerns of residents seriously. SUPPLIED

Mile Creek Road and the sightlines aren’t always good because of a bend in the road.

There are crosswalks for pedestrians on York Road, near the school, Segal said.

But there are none on

Four Mile Creek Road, even though many St. Davids students and senior residents living in Creekside Senior Estates need to venture across.

“I think having students who live in the community

able to walk to school is great and we want to promote that,” he added.

The residents of St. Davids struggled with the region last September when it brought in bike bollards on Four Mile Creek Road to help slow traffic.

While Segal said he wasn’t for or against the measure, he appreciated that the region was taking residents’ concerns seriously.

Niagara-on-the-Lake Coun. Adriana Vizzari said she supports the ratepayer association’s activism.

Vizzari is a resident of St. Davids and has four children attending St. Davids Public School.

“There’s over 400 kids going to that school, so speed is an issue,” she said.

Rather than dwelling on the traffic risks to her kids and those of her neighbours, Vizzari said she’d “rather be proactive.”

She pointed out that the

region deems Four Mile Creek Road to be “unsafe” and as such, she has the option of sending her kids to school by bus, even though they live one kilometre away.

“We walk often,” she said. “Without a parent, it’s not possible.”

Vizzari said Four Mile Creek Road is treacherous to cross as an adult.

She pointed out there are several businesses in St. Davids that front on the busy regional road, and drivers frequently have to brake as they turn left into the driveways and parking lots.

This causes drivers behind them to mount the shoulder in an effort to pass.

Without sidewalks, Vizzari said the shoulders are used by bikers and pedestrians who frequent the area.

People interested in supporting the residents’ efforts can sign the petition at the association’s website.

Stop signs **successfully slow** speeders at tricky intersection

Evan Loree
Local Journalism Initiative
The Lake Report

A few signs have made a world of difference in rural Niagara-on-the-Lake.

Residents on McNab Road say they’re happy to see slower speeds and fewer accidents in their neighbourhood after the town installed a stop sign and reduced speed limits at the corner of Church and McNab roads.

Retired farmer Tony Giordano lives at the top of a hill near the intersection and says he’s thankful to the former lord mayor Betty Disero and the previous council for calming the traffic.

Giordano said he has neighbours who had been complaining about speeding in the neighbourhood for 30 years or more.

It wasn’t until the former

lord mayor met him at his property on Church Road in March 2022 that things changed.

It was a “done deal” when Disero was backing out of his driveway in her car and another driver almost hit her, Giordano said.

“It scared the sh-- out of her.”

That was March 29, from Giordano’s recollection.

Less than a month later, on April 25, council voted unanimously to install a four-way stop at the intersection and reduce the speed limits on Church Road, from Concession 6 to Read Road from 80 to 60 kilometres per hour.

Giordano was surprised to learn when he phoned the town last year that they didn’t have a record of any accidents at the intersection.

“The town does not get notified unless there’s a death,” Giordano said.

But he wonders how somebody wasn’t killed at that intersection when the speed limit was still 80 kilometres an hour.

Some of his neighbours were skeptical of decreasing the speed to 60 last summer, but now, “they say it’s the greatest thing since sliced bread,” Giordano said.

Next-door neighbour Priya Gill has two kids, one 15-year-old and one eight-year-old.

Before the stop signs were put in, Gill wouldn’t let her kids get anywhere near the road.

Gill told The Lake Report the traffic is dramatically slower since last summer and she feels her kids are much safer when they’re outside playing.

It’s better now, Gill said, because even if drivers are “not following the exact speed,” they still need to



Resident Tony Giordano says the traffic issues on McNab and Church are much better since the town reduced the speed limit last summer. EVAN LOREE

“slow down for the stop sign.”

Before the stop signs were put in and before the speed limits were decreased, Giordano said there were regular collisions and near misses at the intersection, which sits at the bottom of a little valley.

He recalls one incident

where a driver ended up in the backyard of neighbours Karen Perry and Joanne Lynagh.

Lynagh and Perry, who live at the corner of Church and McNab, were happy to report the stop sign and reduced speed limit have “completely eliminated” the speeding through their intersection.

“We have seen so many times over the years crashes, near crashes, and cars driven off the road,” Lynagh told The Lake Report in an email.

Perry and Lynagh have lived together at their property on Church Road for 22 years and are happy to report that they feel much safer.



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MIND YOUR METERS



From left, Virgil residents Sharon Velsink, Amanda Nickason, Tanya Rice and Deborah Rabey are alarmed about the traffic speeds on Line 2 Road. Pets have been killed and they are concerned a child could be the next victim. EVAN LOREE

Line 2 residents want action to **protect kids**

Evan Loree
Local Journalism Initiative
The Lake Report

Last time it was a cat, but next time it could be a child. After two cats were struck dead by swift-moving vehicles on Line 2 Road in Niagara-on-the-Lake, residents worry that eventually a child could be injured on the semi-rural street.

Line 2 resident Sharon Velsink had the misfortune of finding an injured cat on the side of the road in April. The cat was “bleeding” and “dragging his lower back leg behind him” when Velsink came out to check his condition.

She told The Lake Report it had been struck by a vehicle.

Velsink called neighbour Tanya Rice, known for her work with NOTL Cats, and the two called the Lincoln County Humane Society.

The black and white cat died of its injuries later that day after being picked up by a humane society worker.

Rice said another cat died in a separate incident in March.

Velsink has two kids, ages 11 and 13.

Her youngest has taken to cutting through a neighbour’s plum orchard on

his way home from school because the drivers on Line 2 move so fast.

Like Velsink, Rice worries it a child could get hurt. “Somewhere down the road it’s going to be a child, a youth, walking back from a friend’s house,” Rice said.

She and her neighbours are planning to go door-knocking this week to raise awareness of the speeding issues and press town council for “immediate solutions.”

They also have a petition set up on Change.Org for people who want to support their cause.

Rice points out the speed limit on Line 2 changes at its junction with Concession 6.

Once drivers cross Concession 6 on their way toward Niagara Stone Road, the limit drops to 50 km/h from 80.

“There are several signs there that say as much, but they ignore that,” Rice said.

Coun. Maria Mavridis, who helped the Line 2 residents set up the petition online last week, said she’s in favour of the solutions proposed by the residents, including sidewalks, speed bumps and lower speed limits.

Mavridis lives in the neighbourhood with her 13-year-old daughter Hope, who attends Crossroads Public School.

She said even if her and her neighbours’ kids weren’t regularly on the road, the speeds would still be a concern for her.

“I don’t know that even if they change the 80 to 60 that it would make a difference because there’s no one around to monitor that,” Mavridis said.

She was also unconvinced that speed bumps are a viable solution, based on conversations she’d had with town staff.

Amanda Nickason is so concerned about speeders that sometimes she will drive her children to school, despite it being a five-minute walk from her home on Line 2.

In an email to The Lake Report, Nickason said her two kids are also eligible for bus pickup despite being less than half a kilometre away.

To pick them up, Nickason said she has to cross Line 2 twice, so she and her kids can use the sidewalks..

Sidewalks on Line 2 stretch from Niagara Stone Road to Bourdeaux Drive, behind Crossroads.

“If we had a sidewalk put in this wouldn’t happen,” Nickason said.

While Mavridis has noticed an increase in traffic since construction began on Niagara Stone Road, neighbour Deborah Rabey said the speeding issues predate the construction.

“People got used to using it as a cut through to (Niagara Stone),” she said.

“Now that they put in some housing developments here, there’s a lot of people, a lot of children, seniors,” she added.

Rabey said she tends to avoid Line 2 whenever she’s out for a walk because cars pass at such high speeds.

She’d like to see the town install some speed bumps on either side of the crosswalk near Crossroads.

The town’s unfinished transportation plan recommends extending the school safety zone from Niagara Stone Road and Line 2, all the way to the intersection at Pierpoint Drive.

But the residents agree that if they have to wait for sidewalks and other such solutions, the town should at least install some speed bumps in the meantime.

“The kids now are just as important as the kids later,” Nickason said.

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Left A painting by Fortunino Mataia depicts the capture of the sugar refinery at Courcellette. William Edward Rossiter right, and many others died in that battle. (Canadian War Museum)

Mother and son charged in series of NOTL break-ins

Kevin MacLean
The Lake Report

A mother and son from London, Ont., are facing a long list of charges in connection with a series of break-ins at Niagara businesses, including four locations in Niagara-on-the-Lake.

Niagara Regional Police detectives investigating a series of linked commercial break and enters in NOTL, St. Catharines and Niagara Falls arrested two people on Saturday, July 22.

Four small businesses in NOTL were among those hit during the overnight early-morning thefts: York Barber Lounge in St. Davids, Handmade Presence and the Garrison House in the Garrison Village plaza, and Bliss Aveda Salon in Virgil.

Police said the “smash and grab” style break-ins happened on July 5 in NOTL and on July 14 and 15 in Niagara Falls. The St.

Catharines incidents were June 30 and July 10, investigators said.

In the break-ins, the culprits broke windows to gain entry. The incidents resulted in the loss of thousands of dollars in merchandise and damage to property, police said.

Dominick Matthew Waindubence, 19, faces nine counts of break and enter, theft from automobile under \$5,000, possession of stolen property under \$5,000 and mischief under \$5,000.

His mother, Tonya Marie Waindubence, 43, is charged with break and enter and possession of stolen property under \$5,000.

The charges are also related to a smash and grab of a parked car in NOTL, police said.

Items stolen in the crime spree included cash, cash registers, video game consoles and games, and cellphones.

MISSING IN ACTION

‘Game of luck’ ran out for Pte. William Rossiter

In both world wars, there were men killed in action or who died in service who had a connection with Niagara-on-the-Lake but for various reasons were not commemorated on either the memorial clock tower cenotaph in Old Town or the Niagara Township war memorial in Queenston. In some cases, they lived for only a brief time in Niagara and had no family here when the monuments were built. In other cases, they had lived near McNab, not then part of NOTL or Niagara Township. While their names are not read out at the ceremonies at these monuments on Remembrance Day, they too should be remembered.

Ron Dale
Special to The Lake Report

William Edward Rossiter had a challenging life growing up in Somerset County, England.

Born in Shepton Mallet on March 19, 1889, he was initially raised by his grandmother, widow Hester Rossiter, whose husband Job had died a year before the birth of William Edward.

Hester remarried to Samuel Clarke and William Edward continued to live with them.

William Rossiter immigrated to Canada and eventually resided in McNab, now part of Niagara-on-the-Lake, staying with his cousin Bertha Wilson and her husband Arthur.

Rossiter trained as an ironworker and worked in St. Catharines. His closest relatives, with whom he frequently corresponded, were his uncle George and aunt Marie Anna Rossiter, who owned Cannard’s Grave Inn located in Shepton Mallet in Somerset.

Soon after the outbreak of the First World War, Rossiter enlisted for active service overseas. He already had an interest in the army, having served for a few years in the 19th Lincoln militia regiment as a part-time soldier.

He signed on with the 19th Battalion, Canadian Expeditionary Force on Nov. 12, 1914.

Private Rossiter trained with his battalion at the Toronto Exhibition Camp from November 1914 to May 1915. On May 13, the unit was taken by train to Montreal where the soldiers boarded the RMS Scandinavian for shipment to England and the war. Ten days later, they disembarked at Plymouth Sound.

The 19th Battalion was sent to Shorncliffe Camp in West Sandling to continue training. After four months, they were considered ready to enter combat.

They were marched to Folkestone and embarked on Sept. 14, 1915, landing in Boulogne, France, the following morning, part of the 2nd Division of the Canadian Corps.

A week after landing in France the battalion entered the trenches near Wulverghem, Belgium, and soon began to suffer casualties. The men continued to serve at the front with intervals of manning the front-line trenches and periods of duty in the reserve trenches with occasional withdrawal to the rear areas for rest.

On Oct. 22, 1915, Private Rossiter wrote to his uncle

George and aunt Maria: “The trenches are hard on a man all the time as we don’t get proper rest, and none too much to eat.”

He may have regretted enlisting when he wrote, “I shall be glad when this war is over.”

He also spoke of the casualties in his unit and the seemingly random ways in which men met their doom. Like so many soldiers, he believed in fate.

“It’s a game of luck,” he stated.

In April 1916, the men fought in their first major offensive in the operations at the St. Eloi craters from April 7 to 12 during which time they beat back German attacks and counterattacked to drive the Germans from the crater positions.

The battalion suffered 125 casualties including 29 killed, but Rossiter survived without a scratch.

That June, the 19th Battalion was again involved in a major battle, the Battle of Mount Sorrel in the Ypres Salient in Belgium. During their time on the front line, from June 5 to 11, more casualties were incurred.

Rossiter came through unscathed, while around him men were killed or wounded daily.

The 19th Battalion moved from the Ypres sector to

the Somme in late August, moving into the front-line trenches on Sept. 10 in preparation for an attack on Courcellette, part of the larger and bloody Battle of the Somme that began on July 1 and finally ended on Nov. 18.

On Sept. 15, the 19th Battalion went “over the top” in the second wave of attackers of the 2nd Division Canadian Corps.

During the battle, the fiercest fighting took place in the ruins of a destroyed sugar refinery. In that battle, the 19th Battalion suffered more than 250 casualties, killed, wounded, or missing.

For Pte. William Edward Rossiter, the “game of luck” had finally turned against him. He was killed on Sept. 16 at the sugar refinery.

The location of his burial, if indeed a grave was ever dug, is unknown. He is commemorated on the Vimy Memorial in France.

On the heels of The Lake Report’s 53-part “Monuments Men” series, which exhaustively documented the story of every soldier commemorated on the town’s two cenotaphs, Ron Dale’s “Missing in Action” stories profile Niagara-on-the-Lake soldiers who died in wartime but are not listed on the town’s monuments.

Grape growers concerned about getting more rain

Continued from Front Page

However, he’s concerned about the rain that was expected to start Wednesday night and fall until Thursday morning.

“That’s what’s got us a little bit worried,” he said.

For grape growers, it’s still early, said Zimmerman, so they’ll have to wait and see what happens.

“If we can get in and get the right crop pesticides on them, they’ll be fine, as long as the weather starts getting dry,” said Oppenlaender.

Phil Tregunno, from Tregunno Fruit Farms, was one of the lucky ones who didn’t get hail — likely due to his Parkway-area location away from the lake.

“Just a lot of rain. We could use it to stop,” he said.

Erwin Wiens, a NOTL grape grower and deputy lord mayor of Niagara-on-the-Lake, said his farm didn’t have any hail either.

However, he said that “excess rain is not helpful right now.”

It washes away all the spray that farmers put on their vines to keep diseases, like powdery mildew, at bay.

So once it dries, workers will need to spray again, he said.

He added that with conditions being so wet, farmers can’t get workers or tractors out to the fields as excessive rain can also cause drainage issues.

“We’re at the mercy of Mother Nature,” said Wiens.

On a positive note, said Zimmerman, growers have done a great job bringing back their crops after they suffered serious damage last year.

“We work with Mother Nature and what we’re given and we have the tools sometimes to mitigate some of the challenges,” she said.

“But I would say growers are looking forward hopefully to a decent crop.”



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Fists of **cash** for fists of steel

St. Davids amateur boxer Mckenzie Wright, pictured with friend and former Olympic boxer Mandy Bujold, brought in more than \$3,000 at a fundraiser last week at the Sandtrap Pub & Grill. The money will be used to support Wright on her journey to the Pan Am Games, and hopefully, the 2024 Paris Olympics. She's now in Cali, Colombia, getting ready to compete in the Pan Am qualifiers from Aug. 3 to 10. Finishing in the top four would be her ticket to the Pan Am Games in Chile this October. DAVE VAN DE LAAR

NOTL cyclist **dies** of injuries suffered in hit-and-run

Staff
The Lake Report

An 84-year-old Niagara-on-the-Lake cyclist who was seriously hurt in a hit-and-run crash has died of his injuries.

Niagara Regional Police said Nester Chemerika died Tuesday in hospital in Hamilton.

He had been cycling along East and West Line about 7:50 p.m. on July 13 when he was struck from behind by a truck that left the scene.

Forensic investigators have impounded a truck suspected in the incident and are examining it for evidence.

Police seized the pewter

coloured 1999 GMC Sierra pickup in Niagara Falls on Tuesday, July 19.

Investigators said that after striking Chemerika and leaving him unattended in the north side ditch, the vehicle fled southbound down Concession 2 to York Road, where it turned west toward St. Davids.

Once in St. Davids it turned down Four Mile Creek Road and headed to Niagara Falls.

Police are asking anyone along this route with video footage to review it between 7:30 and 8:30 p.m. on July 13 for a 1999 GMC Sierra pickup truck.

A police statement about the seized vehicle said "detectives noted that the



Police seized the pewter-coloured 1999 GMC Sierra pickup they suspect hit the cyclist. They're examining it for evidence. SUPPLIED

damaged areas had recently undergone repair."

The truck was repaired with used GMC auto parts, including a used grill, passenger side headlights and a passenger side towing rear-view mirror, police said.

Investigators have asked auto parts recycling businesses and wrecking yards in Niagara to report any suspicious sales since July 13, when Chemerika was hit.


As well, they have asked auto body repair shops to

report any repairs done to a pewter coloured 1999 GMC pickup truck.

The driver hasn't been identified and no arrests have been made.


Earlier police issued a statement saying, "The person responsible should contact legal counsel and arrange for a safe and peaceful surrender."

Anyone with information is asked to call police at 905-688-4111, option 3, extension 1009089.



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You can't park here, you'll get toad



Seen here chillin' like a villain, a toad on the heritage trail is one of the few NOTL residents thankful for the heavy rainfall this week. Hail damaged some fruit crops on farms close to Lake Ontario. SOMER SLOBODIAN

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Contributed by Patty Garriock
 "Happiness is not a possession to be prized, it is a quality of thought, a state of mind."
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Editorials

Around and around we go

Kevin MacLean
 Managing Editor

"The joint was rockin,' goin' round and round."

With apologies to the late, great Chuck Berry, his lyrics might be appropriate locally almost 70 years later.

It won't be long now that Niagara-on-the-Lake residents, visitors and commuters will be able to take a spin around the region's newest roundabout.

As many drivers found out the hard way this past week, the Glendale exit from the QEW has been a no-go zone.

It has been closed to enable more work on the multi-million dollar diverging diamond interchange and the accompanying roundabout at the north end where Glendale meets York Road.

We've never quite understood why the Ontario government insisted on building the hyper-expensive criss-cross traffic option at Glendale (at a

cost of some \$54 million). It's the first one in Ontario (rah, rah) and one of only a few in Canada.

Having driven the one in Calgary several times, we never understood the fuss by those who felt the Glendale version would be a confusing mess.

When you're driving in an unfamiliar area, after all, you're just supposed to stay alert, follow the signs and road markings, non?

In Calgary, we didn't realize we were on the diverging diamond until we had driven through it. No big deal.

And neither is Glendale's a big deal. Follow the leader, follow the signs and markings, pay attention to your surroundings and there should be few problems.

But still some people complain about it. By all means, vent about the ridiculous amount spent by Doug Ford's provincial Progressive Conservatives, but we've yet to see any major functional problems

with the new roadway.

Which brings us to the new roundabout at York Road and Glendale.

Perhaps some of the doomsayers will be proven right about mammoth 53-foot tractor-trailers having trouble negotiating the new, under-construction traffic circle.

But we expect (and hope) that the road engineers will have ironed out all those bugs when they designed the road.

Roundabouts are not a North American thing, of course. And many drivers remain confused about how to negotiate them.

But they are not an accident waiting to happen any more than are oncoming cars hurtling toward one another separated only by a ribbon of paint on the asphalt of a two-lane road.

And we manage to negotiate that situation on thousands of roads every day across Canada.

Having just spent time overseas driving (on the

"other" side of the road) and navigating hundreds of roundabouts large and small, at high speed and low, we can attest that a little knowledge and education goes a long way if you have any doubts about what to do.

In Europe and the U.K., roundabouts are a way of life and seen as a sensible way to keep traffic moving.

Over here, many see them as a nuisance.

Here's hoping the new traffic circle at York Road and Glendale doesn't fall into the latter category.

But having survived driving the "wrong side" roundabouts, we offer a simple bit of advice about driving them: Follow the signs, be alert and, know that any vehicle already on the roundabout has the right-of-way. That's the single biggest thing we tried to remember "over there."

And don't rush, wait for a break in traffic, ease your way in.

It really is an efficient way to keep cars moving.

We welcome your letters

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

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Fond memories of a life well-lived



John Kormos. SUPPLIED

Dear editor:
On behalf of Willowbank in Queenston and myself, I wish to pay tribute to John Kormos, whose obituary appeared in the July 20 edition of The Lake Report.
We offer condolences to his wife Elizabeth and his relatives. He was an amazing man – teacher, school principal, antique dealer.
John bought and restored with period furniture the house built for Robert Hamilton and Catherine Askin's first son Robert and Mary Biggar – in 1808.

It is designated under the Ontario Heritage Act.
As a member of the Queenston Community Association, he fought alongside Laura Dodson and the NOTL Conservancy and Coun. Rob Copeland and his wife Helena, former lord mayor Gary Burrows etc. to save Willowbank and its 12-plus acres from becoming a country inn, winery, convention centre – or demolished.
Thanks to the Bright Urban families, they won. Laura recruited John to the founding Willowbank board

in 2002.
He inaugurated and led the jazz festival fundraisers for many years.
Most of our early furniture and rugs came from his clients' estates as donations for tax credits.
He gave lectures to our students at the Willowbank School of Restoration Arts. And, generously, he did our appraisals for many years.
Thank you, John, for your good works and your friendship. Truly a life well-lived.
**Elizabeth Oliver-Malone
NOTL**

Marotta should sell part of Parliament Oak

Dear editor:
On July 13, in an op-ed piece ("A hotel is only option to preserve public access.") the publisher and editor-in-chief of the Lake Report, Richard Harley, stated that council should allow the developer of the Parliament Oak property to break the bylaws of the town and approve a monstrous hotel because it's the only way to justify the price he paid for the land.
Certainly, council and the community have no responsibility to ensure that the developer will maximize the profitability of his investments. Changing the bylaws might be in developer Benny Marotta's best interests but it would definitely not be in the community's best interests.

As an aside, Mr. Harley waxes poetically about the public greenspace but, as the proposed hotel has insufficient parking, I fear the pretty little parkette on Regent Street would soon be paved over.
The most environmentally unfriendly act in development is to tear down existing usable buildings, taking huge piles of debris to the landfill and then manufacturing new materials for the new construction – which creates more pollution and destroys our natural resources.
I think the developer should consider selling the existing school site to a community group to be reused as a badly needed community hub and a school.

He could then retain the balance of the land facing Regent, Gage and King streets and develop it into single-family residential lots.
An existing community group had offered the same \$8 million to purchase the property from the previous owner but that company sold it to Marotta, probably just to spite the town for not approving its proposal.
I think that this community group might still be interested in acquiring the west side of the site, leaving the other three streets available for Marotta to develop as housing.
This would yield a significant profit for the developer, who could get credit for giving the town what it needs.
**Wayne Murray
NOTL**

Editor's note: *The July 13 op-ed piece did not suggest the town should break any bylaws (or change any zoning) because of the amount of money paid for the property. What was suggested is that anyone who expects the developer to build a community hub or similar institution after paying \$8 million for the property is not in touch with reality. The op-ed made several other coherent points about why council should allow a hotel on the property and how residents should fight instead to ensure the greenspace is kept as promised. To suggest we said the town should change laws to help the developer is incorrect.*

Virgil road work is necessary but bumps, potholes a disgrace

Dear editor:
The major reconstruction work being done through Virgil is necessary and welcome and will take time.
That is understood.
However, how that reconstruction is happening is unexpected and aggravating for drivers passing through.
The state of the temporary roads is unconscionable.
The potholes and bumps and changes in eleva-

tion that one has to drive through are a disgrace.
Passage needs to be slow and the road can be damaging to some cars.
No grading of these roads appears to be done, nor supply of gravel provided while the work is proceeding.
Can that requirement somehow be imposed on the contractor as soon as possible, please?
**Peter Rand
NOTL**



Construction crews started paving a portion of Niagara Stone Road on Wednesday. MADDY GORDON

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Creating a *more welcoming* Old Town for all





Brian Marshall
Columnist

Those who know me understand that there has to be a compelling reason for me to visit Old Town on weekends during the high season.

It's not that I mind sharing the treasure that is our town with tourists, on the contrary, I'm an ardent supporter of the opportunity to broaden the knowledge and experience of the visitors with respect to our country's built and cultural heritage.

Generally, it's not the people – it's their cars.

Long lines of traffic turn what is normally a short pleasant drive into a lengthy and arduous marathon exacerbated by navigation system dependant drivers who cannot simply go from point A to point B without their navigation system's direction.

And, even once into Old Town, it is impossible to avoid tourist traffic by dodging onto the residential streets since every single road from Front to Mary is lined bumper to bumper with parked cars while at the same time being heavily traversed by drivers searching for a parking space.

Certainly, on numerous occasions, I have had my visitors complain about these same issues while expressing their understanding of why my wife and I chose to live on our small farm in NOTL's countryside.

Fact is, Niagara-on-the-Lake was not designed to



A neighbour the owner of this heritage home likely regrets. SUPPLIED

handle the seasonal influx of 3.5 million visitors each year.

Moreover, no town council during the last 50 years has seriously addressed this issue but rather studiously ignored this aspect of planning, even when petitions with potential solutions have been brought before them.

Consider Williamsburg in Virginia with annual visitor counts of approximately four million per year where one cannot drive into a historic district, which is completely closed to vehicular traffic and street parking in close proximity to the district is not permitted (with extremely heavy fines and towing levied on those who choose to ignore the prohibition).

Instead, there are a number of visitor parking lots on the periphery from which one can ride coach transit to the historic district, hop on an efficient transit system for movement

around town or access the 48 miles of bicycle trails constructed since 1992.

Similar parking and transit plans have been proposed for NOTL periodically since the 1980s with no real uptake by any serving council. Since the town owns various vacant properties which could be converted to permeable surfaced parking lots, I wonder what the reason could have been.

Then, there is the town of Banff in Alberta, where they close their main street to vehicular traffic from mid-May to mid-October, converting it to a pedestrian mall, something that receives uniform accolades from 4.5 million tourists that visit annually.

According to a study conducted by Liricon Capital for the Town Council, they spend more time and money in the various shops and restaurants than prior to its institution.

Paid parking lots have been provided in various

locations at walking, biking and transit distances from downtown. Parking in residential neighbourhoods is solely reserved for residents with valid parking permits.

The concept of converting Queen Street to a pedestrian mall during high season is an idea floated by someone virtually every year but, to my knowledge, it has never been truly tried.

It's something I find very odd given virtually every study I have seen shows similar commercial benefits to those experienced by Banff.

Of course, the town would lose a number of metered parking spots, which brings us back to the parking lot question and proper traffic (parking) planning for 3.5 million visitors.

Moving on, the recent article by Evan Loree ("Three-storey apartment proposed on edge of Old Town") in last week's edition of *The Lake Report* caused me to think about

town planning at a different level.

Why, I wondered, would a developer attempt to have a property in the midst of a single-family residential neighbourhood zoned R1 be rezoned to allow for an apartment building?

I thought, surely there was existing zoning in place within other Old Town locations that would be more appropriate for such a tenanted multi-storey building.

Now admittedly, I am certainly not a planner, however, a layman's review of the in-force Old Town zoning maps did not identify any locations with this zoning where building(s) were not currently existing.

In other words, if I am correct in my reading of the maps, anytime a developer wishes to construct the type of building mentioned in Mr. Loree's article they will need to undertake a rezoning application for lands they happen to own in Old Town.

It seems to me this approach puts the town planning onus on the developer (i.e. they attempt to choose the location for an apartment building) rather than the town itself determining what the evolution of our streetscapes and neighbourhoods shall be.

Further, should any such proposed building remove the privacy of, cast deep shadows over or destroy lines of sight from, (etc.) adjoining properties, neighbour resistance would be expected.

So, it is more than a little odd for the Town to employ a process which will likely be disruptive and adversarial, particularly when the process has the potential to fundamentally alter the character of a neighbourhood.

Would a complete zoning plan that reflects both existing conditions and future build opportunities not represent a far more effective method of managing neighbourhood development?

And, while conducting this bit of research, I happened to stumble across another planning item which left me wondering.

Back in 2009-2010, the town council employed and paid consultants to develop a secondary plan for the dock area to effectively manage development and ensure the neighbourhood character was protected.

Over the next couple of years, the comprehensive and well written plan underwent a series of positive administrative amendments. Then, in 2013, the council deferred its adoption.

Ten years later, it still molders on a shelf in the Town Hall and the dock area remains floating in the unknown.

Why?

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



'Economic progress' and the future of Niagara-on-the-Lake

Dear editor:

Alexander Evans' letter of June 29, "Denying town, SORE legal costs sends important message," is very revealing.

He claims to cheer for the judicial system awarding costs to discourage frivolous

lawsuits, but fails to mention the utterly frivolous nature of developer Benny Marotta's appeals to both the Conservation Review Board (which is a tribunal, not a court) and his simultaneous Superior Court challenge of the designating bylaws,

which he lost, and finally abandoning his appeal, paid a combined \$170,000 to the town and SORE in March 2021.

I only wish the frivolous proposals made by him and his wealthy capitalist friends providing "eco-

economic progress" to Niagara-on-the-Lake were subject to the same penalties and costs assessed by the courts, instead of the easy ride they get with the Ontario Land Tribunal.

Meanwhile, if we want good planning and protec-

tion of our individual and collective rights, I think we need more support for our local government, not less.

But maybe Mr. Evans thinks the committed volunteers on the town's urban design and heritage committees should just rubber-

stamp every proposal in the name of "economic progress" and there should be no zoning and planning for the common good and a livable, viable future for Niagara-on-the-Lake?

Bob Bader
NOTL



Glendale roundabout construction progresses

Construction at York Road and Glendale Avenue in Niagara-on-the-Lake began last Saturday. The intersection's roundabout will be fully closed until July 28 at 7 a.m. according to a construction notice update from Morrison Hershfield. If there are weather delays, the dates range from July 28 to Aug. 4. Detour signage is in place. JULIA SACCO

Still a while to go before Virgil road work finished, businesses left in limbo

Maddy Gordon
The Lake Report

A major road reconstruction project in Virgil is progressing – another section of asphalt base was put down this week – but area businesses and customers are getting tired of the seemingly never-ending disruption.

Since February, the busy Niagara Stone Road has been overtaken by orange tape and heavy trucks, restricting access to store parking lots and building entrances.

Road dust, potholes and a slow, bumpy ride are also common complaints.

The \$10-million project is mainly funded by the Region of Niagara, though the Town of Niagara-on-the-Lake is spending about \$1.4 million on landscaping.

The work includes new storm sewers, a middle lane for left-turning vehicles from Four Mile Creek to Line 1, plus new signals, sidewalks, crosswalks, overhead lighting and landscaping features.

Meanwhile, for Virgil businesses, the disruption

means fewer customers and less revenue coming in.

Martin Mazza, owner of Italian Pizza & Subs, said he's seen a big downturn in business due to the disturbance.

"I consider this year number four of COVID, as far as sales go," he said.

Mazza told The Lake Report his phone line, water line and gas line were all cut multiple times during the construction.

His phone line went down three times in one week, he said.

The road work "just adds to the traffic, which is making it more frustrating for the people that are forced to drive through this every day," Mazza said.

Reached on Wednesday after the paving began, Mazza said he felt grateful to see some progress.

He had a chance to drive along the new asphalt today and said it looked good.

Two coats of the base coat were completed today.

"Progress is being made, as long as there's progress being made, I'm happy," he said.

He said that the "proof is in the asphalt."

Other businesses along Niagara Stone Road are having similar experiences.

"It's been going on for six months, so it's obviously making an impact," said Silks restaurant owner Joel Dempsey.

"Some days when they're working out front, the parking lot access is closed. If you know how to get around back then that's great. But if you don't, then you can't really come in."

"We really have no choice but to suck it up," said Dempsey.

Avondale employee Melissa Overend said she has not seen some regular customers in months because of the lack of accessibility to the store.

It definitely affects business during the day, especially when there are trucks parked right in front of the driveway, she said.

Town of NOTL spokesperson Marah Minor said the municipality is "committed to supporting these local businesses by actively communicating their operational status to customers who inquire, ensuring they are aware that the businesses remain open."



Top: A construction worker lays down asphalt on Niagara Stone Road. Bottom: Italian Pizza and Subs owner Martin Mazza says the construction and mistakenly cut phone lines are chasing away all of his customers. MADDY GORDON

TD Niagara Jazz Festival caps off 10th anniversary

Julia Sacco
The Lake Report

The TD Niagara Jazz Festival concluded its summer lineup with Music in the Park at Simcoe Park last Saturday.

Featuring food, free dance lessons and, of course, jazz from 10 different acts, the free event garnered a huge turnout of NOTLers and visitors alike.

Music in the Park followed two weekends of festivities including Jazz Under the Stars at Jackson-Triggs Winery and a Jazz Picnic at Willowbank in Queenston.

This year marked the 10th anniversary of the TD Niagara Jazz Festival, founded by Juliet Dunn and her late husband Peter Shea.



Jazz lovers danced the night away during the free salsa lessons offered at Music in the Park. JULIA SACCO



George Webber, Chair of Friends of the Forgotten educated a group on the history of the Niagara Baptist Church Burial Ground during his Tent Talk at the Jazz Festival. JULIA SACCO

Friends of Forgotten add a little jazz to kickstart burial ground fundraising

Julia Sacco
The Lake Report

While listening to jazz in the park, some music lovers decided to set some time aside for a history lesson.

George Webber was given space for his “Tent Talk” Saturday evening during the TD Niagara Jazz Festival’s Music in the Park at Simcoe Park.

Webber spent his half-hour time slot speaking about the Niagara Baptist Church Burial Ground on Mississagua Street, and efforts to preserve the site and honour those buried there, some of the earliest members of Niagara’s Black community.

“I didn’t know whether I’d be talking to five people or

50 people, but it didn’t matter to me. I just wanted to start talking about it,” said Webber, chair of Friends of the Forgotten.

Juliet Dunn, co-founder of the TD Niagara Jazz Festival, is a member of the group’s advisory committee.

Webber said the main focus of his talk was to share the history of the burial ground in order to spread awareness and hopefully obtain donations to fund plans for the site.

Speaking to council at its meeting on June 27, Webber reported that Friends of the Forgotten will need up to \$50,000 to fund the second and third stages of archeological assessments that need to be completed on the property.

The history of the burial ground dates to the 1800s, when the Niagara Baptist Church was active and a congregation site for parishioners in the community.

“We have five strategies in place,” Webber said. The group hopes to secure funding from government, service clubs and organizations, individual residents, businesses and foundations.

Members also want to make sure they approach each sector they’re requesting funding from properly.

“For me, how you go out and talk to each individual resident is much different than how you would approach a business,” Webber said.

Along with a general history of the burial ground

and those buried there, Webber addressed audience questions, including one about the changing of the site’s name.

Before last year, the site was largely referred to as the Negro Burial Ground.

“I’ve got bigger problems,” joked Webber.

“If they wanted to change it they would have consulted folks like Natasha Henry and other leaders within the Black community and my guess is, that is what they would have wanted,” he told The Lake Report.

For more information on the Niagara Baptist Church Burial Ground and how you can donate, visit the Friends of the Forgotten website at friendsoftheforgotten.ca.


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Singer-songwriter recorded **new album** at old Niagara-on-the-Lake family farm

Zahraa Hmood
The Lake Report

It was a dark and tempestuous October night in Niagara-on-the-Lake three years ago, on an old peach farm next to Lake Ontario.

Inside the farm's wooden cabin, however, singer-songwriter Avalon Tassonyi and friends were safe from the thunderstorm, recording music together off the floor.

When the power went out, they lit the room with candles. Then, flashes of lightning began to fill the sky. Tassonyi made a connection there between the two sources of light and heat, one minute and personal, the other large and omnipresent – a spectrum representing life itself.

"That's something that I try to capture in my songs," said Tassonyi, who uses they/them pronouns. "Detail but also big-picture, and personal but also universal, and just trying to create something that does both of those things at once."

That night became the inspiration for the title of Tassonyi's sophomore album, "Candlelightning," which is out now.

This latest project, a mix of folk, country and rock music, was produced entirely in Niagara-on-the-Lake and recorded at the old family farm where they has been living on and off since mid-2020.

Originally from Toronto, Tassonyi relocated to NOTL from Montreal, which was home for a decade before.

The timing of this record, like their first, is pertinent. The debut album, self-titled, came out last spring, at the tail end of another lockdown,



Avalon Tassonyi says their latest record "Candlelightning" emerged from six months of recording music live with friends in an old cabin on their family's peach farm in Niagara-on-the-Lake. SUPPLIED

and was recorded by Tassonyi in isolation.

"Candlelightning," however, was a collaborative effort and comes now after we've put more than a year of lockdown behind us.

"Most of the album was recorded while everything was still locked down. I was in a bubble with three other people," Tassonyi said.

Two of those people helped record this album: bassist and vocalist Eliza Niemi and drummer Eli Kaufman – who were both with Tassonyi on that stormy October evening.

Tassonyi, meanwhile, wrote the tracks, sings on the record and plays guitar, piano, harmonica and more.

A handful of other musicians Tassonyi knows feature on the album, recorded over the course of six months in 2020 and 2021, including pianist Nick Nausbaum, vocalist Cedric Noel, flutist Vic Bury and trumpet player David Lavoie.

"I just really like the way music sounds when it's played together in a room with a bunch of people," they said.

Outside of the recording process, however, Tassonyi spent their life in Niagara-on-the-Lake in solitude, as many others did during the pandemic. And, like others, they're slowly returning to the world, reconnecting with friends in the city these days.

"Now, we're coming more into this collective ethos of seeing the value of being together," Tassonyi said. "I think this music captures that. The timing feels good to put it out there."

The album starts off on a strong note with "Yes or No," a warm, upbeat folk track dedicated to one of Tassonyi's biggest philosophies for navigating life: to be like water and not worry about the thing you can't control.

"It's kind of like the central song on the album."

As the record progresses, however, the songs enter a softer, more melancholy state of country folk, such as on the sixth track, "Planting a Garden," a tableau of Tassonyi's secluded life on the NOTL farm, tending to a small crop of vegetables.

"I have dreams of doing a lot more gardening and farming, but it might be something that doesn't come to be until I'm in my 40s or 50s," they said. "I'm just focusing on my music."

While this record is sonically similar to Tassonyi's self-titled album from last year, it does take a turn in a new direction at the end, finishing off with a jazz ballad called "You Snuck Up On Me." Tassonyi said they've always loved the genre.

"I was doing a bit of jazz in school and that's always been an influence, but it's not the genre I was working in for my own music."

After spending most of their life moving around, and on the road touring solo and with other bands, Tassonyi feels lucky to call multiple places home: Toronto, Montreal and wherever they're playing on stage.

"I think my deepest home is the family spot in Niagara-on-the-Lake," they said. It once belonged to Tassonyi's grandparents, who immigrated to Canada from Hungary, and Tassonyi spent many summers visiting with family.

However, in the spirit of "Candlelightning" and its embrace of togetherness, home can also be wherever you're with the people you love and feel connected with, Tassonyi said.

"Music is a gift and I'm happy to be able to share with people," they said.

"Candlelightning," out now on Vain Mina Records, is available to purchase online at Bandcamp, and for listening on Spotify, Apple Music, Tidal and YouTube.



This week's riddle is "Jeopardy!" style.
Category: 5 BURROS

This melancholy donkey whose tail is attached by a nail debuted in a 1926 story.

Last issue:

Category: DISNEY SONGS

Clue: "Feed the Birds" from this film was said to be one of Walt Disney's personal favorites.

Answer: What is "Mary Poppins?"

Answered first by: Claudia Grimwood

Also answered correctly (in order) by: Bob Wheatley, Jane Morris, Susan Hamilton, Janice Taylor, Jim Dandy, Becky Creager, Catherine Clarke, Marjory Walker-Barone, Pam Dowling, Lynda Collet, Val King, Lynn Brownlow, Wade Durling, Sylvia Wiens, Nancy Rocca, Elaine Landray, Melanie Morris, KC King

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

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Big growth in NOTL's gardens over 30 years

Julia Sacco
The Lake Report

Niagara-on-the-Lake residents took a tour of their town last Monday to learn about the work that goes into making it the place they call home.

For the public library's final Live and Learn session on July 17, NOTLers got the chance to learn the ins and outs of town on a walk led by J.B. Hopkins.

Hopkins is a parks supervisor with the Town of Niagara-on-the-Lake and has been in the position for 17 years.

He has seen NOTL go through the monumental changes that made it the popular tourist destination it is today, including the reconstruction of Queen Street in 1992.

Hopkins emphasized that when he began his work with the town in 1990, things looked much different.

"It was a very historically significant place, with



J.B. Hopkins gave NOTLers the rare opportunity to get behind-the-scenes intel on just how our town has become one of the prettiest in Canada. JULIA SACCO

a lot of attractive trees and architecture, but in terms of improvement, it wasn't there," he said.

Part of that vast improvement is due to the horticultural landscaping Hopkins and other members of the town completed – and continue to work on every day.

"How I do my plant selection is, I base it on what is most successful," he said.

He said he surveyed different university trial gardens across North America

for the most aesthetically pleasing and long-lasting plants to ensure success in our plantings.

"That certainly doesn't exclude pollinator plants," he said, though his main focus is beauty and longevity.

With a somewhat limited budget of \$32,000 for ground supplies on Queen Street and \$56,000 for all parks, Hopkins and the town are proud of being able to cultivate the space worthy of the title "one

of the prettiest towns in Canada."

There's more to a successful design than just picking florals, Hopkins added, citing the town's 2017 international victory in the Communities in Bloom competition.

"Certainly we did extremely well in terms of our gardens and floral displays," he said.

"But it was the volunteer component that was so instrumental."

Band in the Barn fundraiser supports NOTL Museum

Julia Sacco
The Lake Report

Nobody said fundraisers can't be a rockin' good time.

The Niagara-on-the-Lake Museum is kicking off its fundraising season this Friday with Band in the Barn.

The fun begins at 7:30 p.m. at Joey Rigg and Pete Wilke's historic farmhouse and barn.

Featuring music from the band Dark Horse along with an open bar and snacks, the museum assures that it will be a night of fun and dancing.

Member of the museum's board of directors Stewart Hall plays drums in Dark Horse and said that coming out for a night of soul, rock and more is worth it to support a worthy cause.

"The idea is just to have a really fun party, listen to some music and enjoy the



heritage farm," Hall said.

He added that the museum is a unique institution in our small town.

"It's the oldest museum in Ontario. It's the repository for all the town's archives so it has information that actually goes back to before the town's founding," he said.

To support the NOTL Museum and enjoy a night of live music, purchase advance tickets for \$80 each at notlmuseum.ca/whats-on/view/id/523.

Each ticket holder will be issued a \$40 tax receipt. Band in the Barn's rain date is July 30.

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‘Unfair’ 6.1% wine tax needs to be **eliminated**, industry says

Somer Slobodian
Local Journalism Initiative
The Lake Report

The wine industry is once again calling on the government to eliminate the 6.1 per cent tax on VQA wines.

Niagara Region’s council unanimously supported a motion last week by Niagara-on-the-Lake Regional Coun. Andrea Kaiser asking the region to put pressure on the province to drop the tax.

She hopes that, after several calls over the years to remove the tax, it will be successful.

Kaiser said the wine industry has been pushing the province for more than 10 years on this issue, with no success.

“I think it’s important just to keep at it because the province needs to know that it’s still not resolved,” she told The Lake Report in an interview.

The tax, often referred to as a “sin tax,” is charged on Ontario VQA wines sold at on-site winery stores – not, for example, at an LCBO store.

“The wine industry sees it as an unfair tax,” Kaiser said.



NOTL Regional Coun. Andrea Kaiser says the province needs to rescind the 6.1 per cent tax on Ontario’s VQA wines. The region supported her unanimously. SOMER SLOBODIAN

Canada has some of the highest alcohol taxes in the world, according to the Canadian Chamber of Commerce: they report that Canadians pay about \$20 billion per year in alcohol taxes.

If a winery in NOTL sells a bottle of wine at its on-site retail store, it’ll include the usual taxes that every business has to pay like HST, Kaiser said – but that’s not the end of it.

“Then, there’s this random 6.1 per cent tax that is required that we remit to the government,” she said.

“If you’re not allowing industries to be profitable and reinvest back in themselves, they can’t grow,” she said.

A report released in June by Deloitte Canada and commissioned by Ontario Craft Wineries, Tourism Partnership of Niagara and Wine Growers Ontario states that Niagara’s wine industry, if supported, could bring in \$8 billion in gross domestic product to the region over the next 25 years.

One way to support the industry would be to eliminate the sin tax and distribution restrictions, states

the report.

The long-term benefits of cutting the tax would outweigh any short-term losses, according to the report.

Some in the wine industry are already cash-strapped, Kaiser said.

It costs a lot for aspiring viticulturalists to start up, she said, and they need to invest a lot of money in necessary things such as infrastructure and agricultural land – it also takes three years before new vines start to bear fruit.

Then, add on the 6.1 per cent tax and “it really starts to impede on the ability for wineries to reinvest,” said Kaiser.

MPP Wayne Gates said he’s brought multiple bills to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario that would eliminate the tax.

“I’ve been very, very disappointed with this government, certainly with the Conservative government and the Liberal government before it,” said Gates.

He said when he’s brought the bill forward in the past, members would “stand up and talk and support it,” but there would be little follow-through.

“When it comes time that they can move the bill forward, get it into committee, have it debated and bring it back for a third reading and make it law – they never do that,” said Gates.

He said he’s going to bring the bill to eliminate the 6.1 per cent tax back to provincial parliament again soon.

“Maybe the government this time will support the bill and eliminate the 6.1 per cent tax. I think that’s the big issue,” he said.

Gates said he’s heard how difficult it’s been for small and medium-sized wineries to find the funds to stay in business.

“If we got rid of that tax, that would allow the local wineries to reinvest in their staffing, or their winery themselves,” he said.

Whatever profits they may earn from the tax being cut could, in turn, be redirected toward funding better marketing strategies, Kaiser said.

“A lot of small wineries are operating sort of like on a shoestring marketing budget,” she said.

They’re also struggling with the increased cost of

wages, said Gates.

Kaiser and Gates agree that the province needs to start owning its domestic market – and for them, that means eliminating the tax and addressing what they say is a disadvantage wineries face when it comes to distributing their products at the LCBO.

Wineries are looking at a 73 per cent mark-up on bottles if they want to sell at the LCBO, said Kaiser.

She said if it’s a \$20 bottle of wine, the LCBO takes 73 per cent right off the bat.

“There’s not a lot left for the individual wineries to be profitable,” she said.

The industry also faces low market shares in the LCBO and wineries also don’t have the option to directly deliver wine to customers – an option other provinces have, such as British Columbia.

“I think it’s time for everyone to be a little more visionary about the long-term viability of our industry... and of Niagara,” said Kaiser.

“This is an investment that we really need for the community. So, we’ll just keep at it.”

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Cross-country tour brings **Davis Cup** to NOTL

Kevin MacLean
The Lake Report

The Davis Cup is coming home – to Niagara-on-the-Lake.

The most prestigious trophy in international men's team tennis – which Canada won last fall for the first time ever – will be in town next Thursday afternoon.

And it will be on display near the site where the idea for the Davis Cup was first conceived.

Way back in the 1890s, NOTL was at the epicentre of international tennis competition, including the Canadian Open, hosted on the lawn tennis courts of the Queen's Royal Hotel.

Top players from around the world would converge on NOTL and in 1896 friends suggested to millionaire tennis player Dwight Davis of St. Louis that he sponsor the trophy for what eventually became known worldwide as the Davis Cup.



Rosemary Goodwin with a printout of the first national tennis championship held in NOTL in 1885. The Davis Cup returns to NOTL next Thursday. FILE/EVAN SAUNDERS

The cup was first contested in 1900 and 122 years later, in November of last year, Canada beat Australia to claim its inaugural championship.

And since April, the cup has been on a cross-country tour, culminating in its final stop in Niagara-

on-the-Lake before heading to the National Bank Open tournaments in Toronto and Montreal starting next weekend.

Rosemary Goodwin, a director of the NOTL Tennis Club, has worked for months to arrange the visit. And on Thursday, Aug.

3, from 3 to 7 p.m., just off Front Street near Queen's Royal Park, people will be able to view and take pictures with the prized cup – and Team Canada captain Frank Dancevic.

The cup will be displayed on the private tennis court of Sam and Robin Ridesic,

whose property is not far from the site where those lawn tennis matches were played more than a century ago.

Dignitaries, tennis officials and Dancevic, a native of Niagara Falls who now lives in Montreal, will be among those on hand for the day.

For Dancevic, it will be particularly poignant because he spent his formative years in Niagara honing his skills and learning the game.

Goodwin thinks NOTL was the perfect location for the final stop on the cup's tour.

"While so much of our history here is about wars, the Queen's Royal Hotel played a major role in society and witnessed the huge changes that took place during the Victorian years from the 1880s and through to the 1920s," she said in an interview.

The hotel was a real crossroads.

"The tennis players loved coming here. It was the party town, a place where they let their hair down and the Americans and the Canadians formed bonds and friendships," she said.


If not for NOTL, there might never have been a Davis Cup.

Goodwin is also hoping that having the cup in town might spur some people to dig through family archives for photos, documents and memorabilia from that long-ago tennis era in town.

Not a lot of items remain from those years.

Meanwhile, Goodwin teamed up with writer Carol Kurtz, video producer Adrian Thiessen, historian Tady Saczkowski and photographer Rene Bertschi to create a video about the story behind the Davis Cup and NOTL's role in its conception.

View the video under Davis Cup Champions Tour on the tennis club's website, niagaratennisclub.com.



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Two NOTL teams **win** divisional lacrosse championships

Kevin MacLean
The Lake Report

Two Niagara-on-the-Lake lacrosse teams returned home as divisional champions after a weekend tournament in Grimsby.

The U9 major Niagara Thunderhawks team won the Zone 9 U9 "B" division championship Saturday with a 10-2 decision over the Hamilton Bengals.

And the U11 Thunderhawks edged the St. Catharines Athletics 6-5 to win their Zone 9 U11 "B" title.

The U9 team went unbeaten through the round-robin portion of the playoffs, defeating the Burlington Blaze, Lincoln Redcoats and Hamilton, before facing the Bengals again in the final.

Coach James Sticca called the win a "total team effort at both ends of the floor."

The U9 major team is coached by Sticca, Chris Riddle, Matt Dietsch, Kevin Coffey and Adam Stewart.

Players are: Ryan Riddle, Lucas Froese, Colton Di-



The U9 major Thunderhawks defeated Hamilton to win their title. LISA ALFARANO Right: The Thunderhawks U11 team won the B championship. JODI THORIMBERT



etsch, Smith Kaposy, Kaleb Coffey, Rily Hill, Theo Moore, Reed Francis, Lee Jay Allen, Jason Young, Ethan Sticca, Sydney Heriman, Noah Scaringi and Weston Stewart.

Hill, Riddle and Coffey scored twice each in the final, with singles added by Dietsch, Kaposy, Froese and Moore.

The U11 Thunderhawks are coached by Jay Thorimbert, Dave Funk, Chris

Riddle, Jason Meleskie and Brandon Berry.

They also were undefeated, with wins over Lincoln, Pelham and St. Catharines and a tie versus Hamilton.

Players are: James Froese, Owen Thorimbert, Jace Szabo, Brody Cech, Chris Washburn Jr., Jesiah Paul, Conor Bailey, Hunter Berry, Nicholas Riddle, Nikolaas Peters, Nash Funk, Blake Bedic, Colton Meleskie, Charlie Fratangelo, Peter

Kostanis and Bentley Barry.

In the team's win in the final over the Athletics, Froese had a hat trick and Bailey, Cech and Thorimbert contributed singles.

Meanwhile, the U7 Thunderhawks wrapped up their regular season by playing in the Welland Future Stars tournament on the weekend.

After tough losses to the Oakville Hawks, Mimico Mountaineers and Center Wellington Riverhawks,

on Sunday they beat the Pelham Raiders 1 team 7-3.

"As a team that struggled to get many wins this year, that was a great way to wrap up a fun season," said team spokesperson Tracey Hope.

The Thunderhawks are coached by Corey Fowler, Jared Hope, Jason Meleskie, Adam Stewart, James Sticca, Jay Thorimbert and Jeremy Werner.

The roster includes: Carmen Coccimiglio, Colton

Ferguson, Cole Fowler, Harper Herriman, Catherine Hope, Arlo Kaposy, Ben Kirkness, Walker Meleskie, Callum Moore, Kenny Neudorf, Reece Nichols, Calvin Spence, Georgia Stewart, Mark Stewart, Noah Sticca, Nora Thorimbert, Amelia Werner and Hunter Willms.

In their final game, the scorers were: Hope and Reece Nichols with a pair each, while Moore, Neudorf and Sticca had a goal each.

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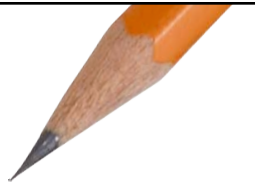
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- Across**
- 9. Georgia's capital (7)
 - 10. An ancient one had a bird problem (7)
 - 11. Banish (5)
 - 12. Comparable (9)
 - 13. Road journey refreshment break (3,4)
 - 16. Wield (5)
 - 17. Fish eggs (3)
 - 18. Oddball (6)
 - 19. Entirely (6)
 - 22. Pre-DVD technology (1,1,1)
 - 24. Dorian Gray's vice (5)
 - 26. Door knockers (7)
 - 27. Seen behind the scenes (9)
 - 29. Believer in karma (5)
 - 31. Found between sea and shining sea (7)
 - 32. Make clear (7)
- Down**
- 1. Try (7)
 - 2. Bluff King Hal's regnal no. (4)
 - 3. First-class (4-4)
 - 4. View unfavourably (10)
 - 5. Youth charity (1,1,1,1)
 - 6. Monotonous routine (6)
 - 7. Next? (6,4)
 - 8. Adjusts beforehand (7)
 - 14. If it's too hot, get out of it (3,7)
 - 15. New actress about spreading the word (10)
 - 20. Last remaining chance of relief (4,4)
 - 21. Tofu base (7)
 - 23. Publishing (7)
 - 25. Home of the Prado (6)
 - 28. Oil-rich monarchy on the Arabian Peninsula (4)
 - 30. Old boatman (4)

Crossword Puzzle

1		2	3	4		5	6	7	8
9						10			
11					12				
13		14				15		16	
					17				
21									23
24				25					
27					28			29	30
31						32			

Last issue's answers

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

		2				8
		4	9		5	
	7		3	6	9	
		6				2
	2		5		1	
1					7	
		8	1	2		4
		2		9	1	
9				8		





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Shedding light on the brain – and what **makes it tick**



DR. BROWN

Dr. William Brown
Columnist

If you want to figure out how the brain works, there are several options.

One classical method, which served clinical neurologists and neurosurgeons very well in the 19th and 20th centuries, was to correlate clinical symptoms and findings with the location of lesions such as a stroke, tumour, or perhaps a traumatic lesion.

For example, discrete lesions affecting the visual pathway from the optic nerve through to the primary visual cortex correlate surprisingly well with deficits in the visual fields.

In addition, electrical shock-like symptoms in the arms and legs, triggered by flexing the neck, correlate with lesions located in the

mid-high cervical spinal cord.

Or, a small lesion in the dorsal-medial nucleus of the thalamus may interfere with the inability to form and retain new memories.

Then, along came CT, and later MRI imaging technologies, which revolutionized correlating the location of lesions with the patient's clinical signs and symptoms.

However sometimes, as with multiple sclerosis (where multiple lesions widely separated from one another in the nervous system are common), it may be impossible to correlate specific lesions seen with MRI with the patient's clinical symptoms or findings.

One major problem with CT and MRI studies is they often reveal clinically insignificant abnormalities, especially with degenerative diseases affecting the spine.

In the last two to three decades, functional MRI (fMRI) became the darling of clinical psychologists.

It may be used to correlate regions of increased oxygen utilization and cerebral blood flow with selective movements of the thumb,



talking, reading or more complex activities such as listening to or playing music, meditation – the list goes on, depending on the inventiveness of psychologists.

But, as tantalizing as these scans may be to watch when the brain “lights up” in response to some stimulus, the temporal and special resolution of fMRI signals may be poor in relation to the underlying neuronal activity in the brain.

The brain processes information quickly in part because the firing times of neurons may be brief. The speed with which nerve fibers transmit impulses can be as high as 50 to 70 metres per second (that's 180 to 252 kilometres per hour) between, for example, large nerve cells in the motor cortex and their target motor

neurons in the spinal cord.

What's needed is a tool that offers much better temporal and spatial resolution – equivalent to the brain's natural firing patterns and the speeds with which nerve impulses are transmitted.

That's precisely what opto-genetics offers. This field has taken off because it provides the necessary resolution and can be used to analyze the electrical activity of nerve cells in real time, while the brain goes about its normal business.

Here's the sequence:

- Employ a viral vector, which is designed to carry specific genes into functionally specific neurons in the brain, which then create specific light sensitive proteins within the neurons.
- Those proteins may be designed to emit light signals that can be detected by a nearby device when the targeted neurons naturally fire.
- Or, the light sensitive proteins may be designed to respond to light signals generated by a nearby probe, by firing (excitation), or in the case of active nerve cells, not firing (inhibition).
- In both instances, opto-

genetics brings unparalleled specificity to functional, anatomical and genetic studies of how the brain goes about its daily tasks.

In a nutshell, that's a lot of biological engineering, and what all the fuss has been about for the last three decades.

It was also the reason the Lasker prize in basic medicine was awarded to Karl Deisseroth, Peter Hegemann and Gero Miesenböck.

Roughly half of all Lasker prize winners in basic medicine go on to win a Nobel Prize within a few years and, in this case, should do so given the magnitude of the achievement.

What these winners and others showed was that it was possible to stimulate and inhibit functionally and genetically-specific neurons to find out what those cells contribute to defined tasks, without injuring the nerve cells.

That's a big deal compared to what physiologists employing needle or very fine-tipped glass electrodes were able to do not so long ago.

We learned a lot with those technically demand-

ing techniques, some of my own studies included, but the specificity that optogenetics offers now is a “game changer,” to use an overused but, in this case, deserved expression.

What's the payoff for diseases? Macular degeneration is the most common cause of serious blindness in later life and is related to degeneration of the light sensitive cells in the retina, which contact the initial neurons in a chain that leads to the visual cortex.

Without those light-sensitive cells, especially in the central field of vision (macula), reading may become impossible, no matter the font size.

What if we could insert stem cells carrying light sensitive opsins (light sensitive proteins) into the retina to reconnect with those first nerve cells?

So far, animal studies have been encouraging, but it's not easy.

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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LIVE MUSIC FOR AUGUST

AUGUST 4 - WHISKEY RATTLERS

AUGUST 5 - THE ARYTHMICS

AUGUST 10 - MOONLIGHT

AUGUST 11 - A SIMPLE GESTURE

AUGUST 12 - RYAN THOMAS BAND

AUGUST 13 - RYAN SMELLE (BEER GARDEN 2-5)

AUGUST 18 - UNDERCOVER

AUGUST 19 - RILEY MICHAELS

AUGUST 20 - MAPLE JAM DUO (BEER GARDEN 2-5)

AUGUST 25 - MAPLE JAM

AUGUST 26 - UNDERCOVER

AUGUST 27 - RYAN SMELLE (BEER GARDEN 2-5)

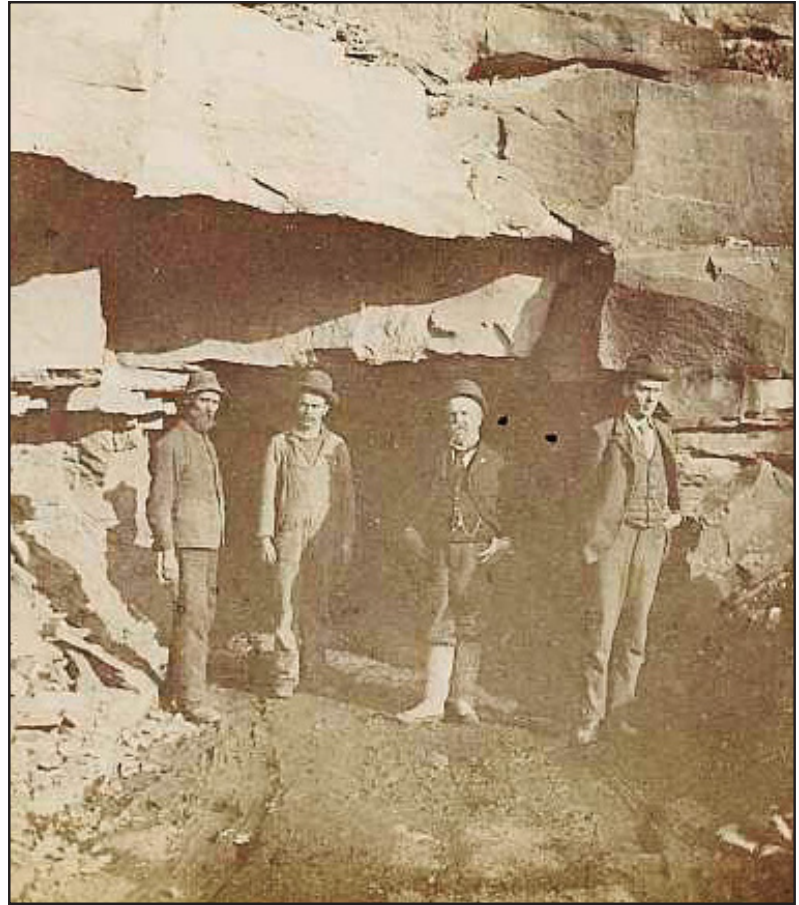
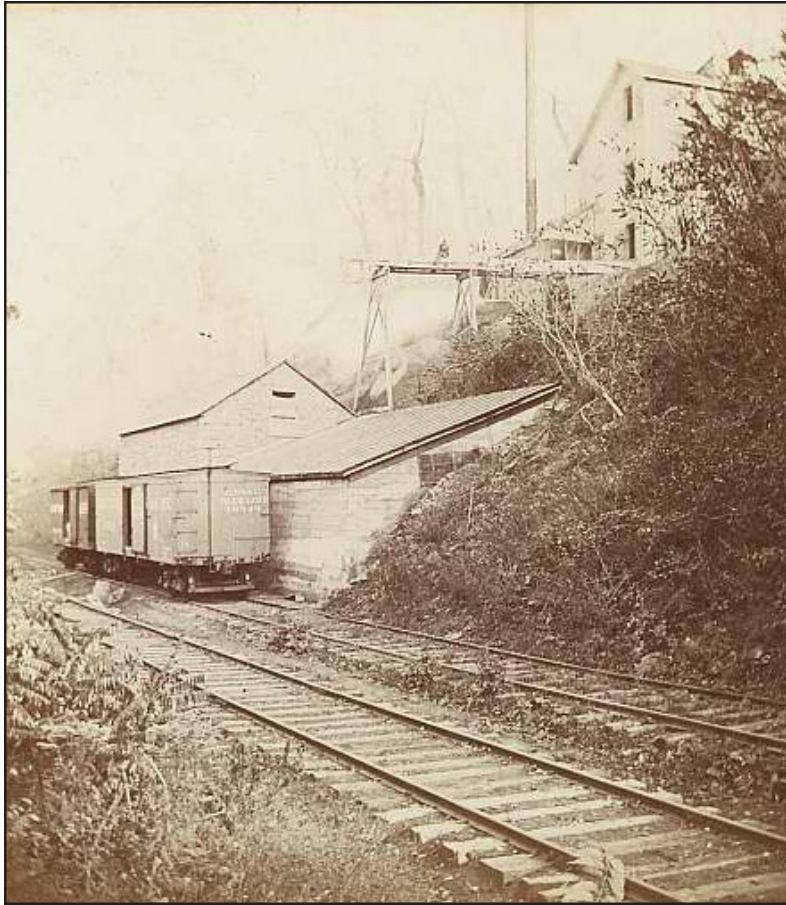
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EXPLORING PHOTOS
WITH NOTL MUSEUM



St. Davids Cement Works

This week's photograph is of St. Davids Cement Works, also known as the Queenston Cement Works, which was built near the Queenston Quarries by Isaac Usher and Sons in 1882. A layer of natural cement is located along the Niagara Escarpment. A thick layer was located near the Queenston Quarries, where the Cement Works was built to mine the product. Tunnels were dug into the cement to remove the material and install three to six kilns. The cement was then fired and packed into wooden barrels for sale. This natural cement was needed during the building of the Welland Canal as mortar between the large cut stone blocks. Unreliable as a building material it was eventually replaced by Portland Cement in the early 1900s. Portland had a more stable cement that set faster. The Cement Works closed in 1905.

Mother Nature empathetically reminds NOTL **she is in charge**



Ross's Ramblings

Ross Robinson
Columnist

Yes, folks, we mere mortals are just along for the ride. When Mother Nature sends us a message, find some shelter and hunker down.

On Sunday our town was hopping until the rains, thunder, lightning, hail and wind stopped us in our tracks.

Personally, I was enjoying an early afternoon nap in Queen's Royal Park, recharging my battery after a Saturday at the 2023 Summer Jazz Festival concert in Simcoe Park.

Various genres of music were presented by superstars from Poland, Portugal and here in Canada, all for a very fair price in the natural

amphitheatre that we take for granted.

The breezes through the trees, the sun warming us and the good feelings from the lucky people who found themselves in our town. Congratulations to Juliet Dunn and her team, and thanks to Mother Nature for her kindness.

It was a wonderful day to be in Niagara-on-the-Lake. The joint was jumping with various activities for various people.

And thousands of strollers licking hundreds of ice cream cones while strolling along our Queen Street sidewalks, admiring the flowers and looking at the storefronts.

Now and again, the bells chimed from various churches and the cenotaph to subtly remind us how lucky we all are.

I had enjoyed spanokopitas on Queen Street from Gyros on the Lake (pronounced Heroes on the Lake) and needed a break. Or is it spanakapita?

However, you spell it, they taste as good as any snack sold by Goody's in the Pla-



A group huddles under the gazebo at Queen's Royal Park to avoid the pouring rain. ROSS ROBINSON

ka in Athens, a short walk from Syntagma Square, just under the Parthenon on the Acropolis.

Zoe and Shirley and their co-workers always serve us promptly with big smiles. And their prices are so fair.

Back now to my Sunday nap on the shore of Lake Ontario.

I was dozing, when a few light raindrops shook my shoulder. People were casually heading for the historic gazebo. Gee, so historic it was built in 1983, some 40 years ago, for the filming of the Stephen King movie "The Dead Zone."

Happily, it was big enough to shelter about 40 of us from the impending storm. The clouds were darkening, and we could see lightning and hear thunder.

Everybody seemed to be happy to be right where they were, and anyone with an umbrella or a Maid of the Mist rain poncho was a big winner.

Little children were in strollers, sheltered from the wet weather by protective parents, grandparents, brothers and sisters.

People from all over the world were now forced by Mother Nature to gather

together to stay reasonably dry.

Languages and more languages. Punjabi, Korean, French, Arabic, Persian, English, Mandarin, Spanish, Jamaican, German and more.

And not one word of complaint about the storm. Not one negative word. Many of my pals in the historic gazebo knew what real hardships were, and a rainstorm in Niagara-on-the-Lake didn't qualify as a big deal.

Find some shelter, hunker down and enjoy the moment with family and friends.

But we were exposed to the elements, and a few sudden and piercing thunderclaps stopped us in our tracks. I wondered how many of my new friends in the historic gazebo had heard the sounds of real bombs exploding near them back home.

Yes, we are so lucky here in Canada. In aisle four of the ValuMart (I know, I know, The Independent) I occasionally hear someone commenting that life is tough, and that survival is

a bit of a challenge. Yes, a loaf of bread can cost over \$6, but let's put things in perspective.

Survival is a relative term and my experience in our historic gazebo reminded me that we all have different terms of reference.

And the geese and seagulls down by Queen's Royal Park? They found calm spots to shelter from the storm, puffed out their feathers and went into relaxation mode.

Occasionally they would flap their wings to dry off, but generally, they were impervious to the storm.

When Mother Nature had given us enough of a wet and multisensory thrill, they calmly resumed their lives, walking in the park and swimming in the lake and river: looking for food and wondering where to forage next.

My friends in the gazebo dispersed to wherever they were going. Not one negative word had been uttered and somehow we all felt a little more Canadian.

We are so fortunate to live in Canada, eh?

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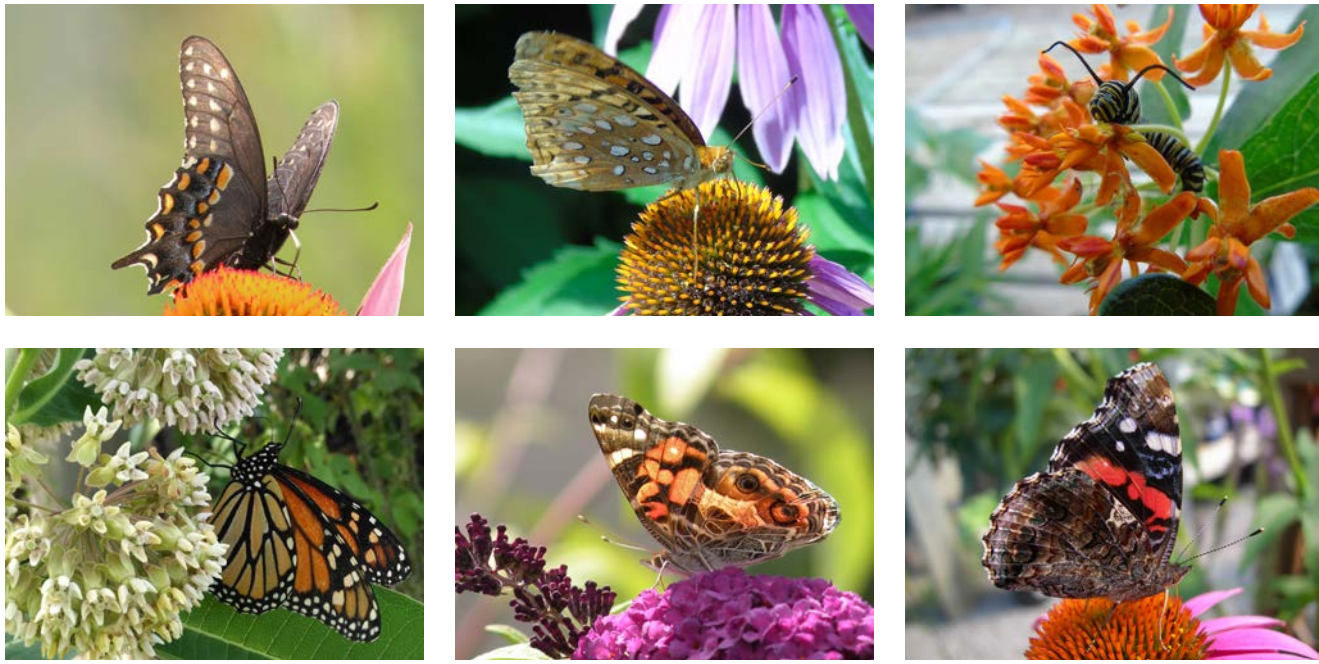
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Clockwise from top left: A black swallowtail butterfly, a fritillary butterfly on coneflower, a monarch caterpillar on butterfly weed, a monarch on milkweed, a painted lady on butterfly bush and a red admiral on coneflower. JOANNE YOUNG

How to attract butterflies



GROWING TOGETHER

Joanne Young
Columnist

Brightly coloured butterflies are always a welcomed addition to anyone's garden, not only because of their beauty but also because of their usefulness in pollinating flowers.

Who doesn't want to sit out in their gardens and enjoy watching a butterfly flitting around from flower to flower?

There are many plants that you can be adding to your garden to help attract butterflies.

As well as just attracting butterflies for your own enjoyment, it is vitally important to incorporate plants that serve the needs of all life stages of the butterfly – plants that will help sustain the population of butterflies.

The insects need places to lay eggs, food plants for their larvae (caterpillars), places to form chrysalides and nectar sources for adults.

We warmly welcome any butterfly into our garden but react negatively to any cat-

terpillar that is eating up the leaves of our prized plants. You can't have one without the other.

What's that old saying? "In order to see a butterfly you have to tolerate some caterpillars." Or something like that.

Here are some butterfly garden necessities:

Plant native flowering plants - Because many butterflies and native flowering plants have co-evolved over time and depend on each other for survival and reproduction, it is particularly important to install native flowering plants local to your geographic area.

Native plants provide butterflies with the nectar needed as adults and the foliage they need as caterpillars.

Plant type and colour are important - Adult butterflies are attracted to red, yellow, orange, pink and purple blossoms that are flat-topped or clustered and have short flower tubes.

Plant good nectar sources in the sun - Your key butterfly nectar source plants should receive full sun from mid-morning to mid-afternoon. Butterfly adults generally feed only in the sun.

If the sun is limited in your landscape, try adding butterfly nectar sources to the vegetable garden.

Plant for continuous bloom - Butterflies need nectar throughout the adult phase of their life span. Try to plant so that when

one plant stops blooming, another begins.

Say no to insecticides - Insecticides are marketed to kill insects. Don't use these materials in or near the butterfly garden or even better, anywhere on your property.

If an insecticide is necessary, just target the problem area and not use it as a general spray for the entire garden.

Feed butterfly caterpillars - If you don't "grow" caterpillars, there will be no adults. Bringing caterpillar foods into your garden can greatly increase your chances of attracting unusual and uncommon butterflies while giving you yet another reason to plant an increasing variety of native plants.

In many cases, caterpillars of a species feed on only a very limited variety of plants. We are familiar with the fact that monarchs use milkweed as their host plant, so two native plants that we can be putting in our gardens are swamp milkweed (*Asclepias incarnata*) and butterfly weed (*Asclepias tuberosa*).

The painted lady butterfly uses pearly everlasting, mallow, asters and legumes as its host plant. The giant swallowtail butterfly's host plants include willows, cottonwood trees and choke-cherry.

Shasta daisies are the larval host to painted lady butterflies, mourning

cloaks and red admiral butterflies. Even oak trees are a larval host to many types of butterflies.

Provide a place for butterflies to rest - Butterflies need sun for orientation and to warm their wings for flight. Place flat stones in your garden to provide space for butterflies to rest and bask in the sun.

Give them a place for puddling - Butterflies often congregate on wet sand and mud to partake in "puddling," drinking water and extracting minerals from damp puddles.

Place coarse sand in a shallow pan and then insert the pan in the soil of your habitat. Make sure to keep the sand moist.

Some of the plants that will attract butterflies into your garden to increase pollination are yarrow (*achillea*), agastache (anise hyssop), butterfly weed (*asclepias*), asters, baptista, buddleia (butterfly bush), chelone (turtlehead), echinacea (coneflower), blanket flower (*gaillardia*), false sunflower (*heliopsis*), sneezeweed (*helenium*), bee balm (*monarda*), summer phlox, black-eyed Susans (*rudbeckia*) and stonecrop (*sedum*).

There are also many more to choose from.

Let's all do our part to keep our butterfly populations healthy and strong.

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

NHL player joins St. Davids Carnival



Matt Prochownik, left, and his son Kohyn got to meet Ben Harpur, New York Rangers defenceman, at the St. Davids Carnival on Wednesday. Kohyn says he plays the same position when he's on the ice. The carnival runs from July 26 to 29 at the Lions Club in St. Davids. EVAN LOREE

Plenty to do in NOTL in August

Julia Sacco
The Lake Report

Niagara-on-the-Lake has no shortage of fun activities for people of all ages this summer.

Starting this coming weekend, the St. Davids Lions Carnival returns for its 60th anniversary from July 26 to 29 at the Lions Club Grounds.

This Saturday will also hold the Kids Day @ the Market in support of the NOTL Youth Collective from 8 a.m. to 1 p.m.

After a three-year hiatus, the day of activities is back, featuring a bouncy castle, inflatables, face painting, crafts, storytimes with NOTL authors and a visit from the Tiny Museum. All activities are free but donations to the Youth Collective are appreciated.

The carnival will feature family favourites like grocery baskets, food and rides, along with new additions including a dog show and tulip bulb sale run by the Leos.

The Past is Present Heritage Festival returns Monday, Aug. 7 at the

Niagara-on-the-Lake Museum. Running from 11 a.m. to 3 p.m., the festival is free to all and features historic demonstrations, live music and a pig roast.

On Saturday, Aug. 12, the official Peach Festival returns to Queen Street, offering a weekend of fun and food featuring NOTL's homegrown peaches from 10 a.m. to 6 p.m.

This celebration will be followed by St. Vincent de Paul's 34th-annual Peach Festival the next day, Sunday, Aug. 13 at 73 Picton St. from 10 a.m. to 3:30 p.m.

After Saturday's Peach Festival is the Shades of Rose Dinner from 6 to 11 p.m. on Queen Street. The dress code is strictly pink and guests can enjoy an extensive beverage list and music from the George St. Kitts Band. Book your table of eight here niagaraonthelake.com/accomodations.

From August 18 to 25, the Niagara-on-the-Lake Sailing Club is hosting the 2023 Shark 24 World Championship. To register, visit yachtscoring.com/emenu.cfm?eID=15311.



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Remembering Anita: *A Legacy of Love*



“You can’t enjoy the fruits of a tree without first planting the seed and nurturing it’s growth.” A common phrase and one that was first sowed into our vocabulary more than a decade ago by our dear friend, Anita Robertson. For those who did not have the pleasure of knowing her, she was as good as they come. Anita believed in United Way’s mission with all of her heart, and made it her goal to learn as much as she could about the challenges facing vulnerable people in our communities and what she could do to help.

Anita was an integral part of the United Way family. Her volunteer journey with United Way began when she served alongside her husband Joe as the 2011 Leadership Co-Chairs, helping to raise vital funds for the annual campaign. Anita would go on to serve as the 2015 Campaign Chair, a role she committed to completely, at times putting in full time hours to ensure a successful campaign. She would continue her commitment to United Way by serving as a Board Member for United Way of St. Catharines & District from 2016 to 2018, and on the Transition Committee that led to the amalgamation of the three area United Ways that formed United Way Niagara. This steadfast commitment earned Anita the 2017 Volunteer of the Year Award.



Anita, with Frances Hallworth (CEO) and Peter W. Partridge (Past Board Chair), receiving 2017 Volunteer of the Year Award.



Anita, Campaign Chair, with Sean Simpson (Past Board Chair) and Frances Hallworth, revealing 2015 Campaign achievement.

To the United Way team, Anita was more than a donor and volunteer, she became a true friend and colleague. It was not uncommon for Anita to stop by the office with treats for staff, call to check in on her way to the cottage, send a “job well done” email, or a handwritten card in times of happiness or sorrow. She was always thinking of others and was deeply focused on understanding the needs of the community and hearing stories first-hand. She had a way with people, always making everyone feel comfortable in her presence. She strongly believed that by showing and sharing these stories, people would become more engaged in their community and support of United Way would follow. Beyond her friendship, Anita’s devotion to our cause was a true gift. The countless hours she spent working to improve lives has no doubt made an immense impact in the Niagara community.

Sadly, five years ago, our United Way family, and the Niagara community as a whole, was forever changed with the news that Anita, Joe and their daughter Laura, had died in a tragic accident.

In the wake of Anita’s death, the staff and Board of United Way decided that one of the ways we would honour Anita’s memory was to establish The Anita Robertson Legacy Award. This memorial award is presented annually to an individual or individuals that embody Anita’s kind heart and community spirit.

Recipients of The Anita Robertson Legacy Award:

2018: Heidi Burgess & Karen MacKay

2019: Sean Simpson

2020: Domenic & Patrizia Trapasso

2021: The Late Bill Heelis

2022: Carol & Mike Clarke

Our team was not alone in wanting to commemorate this remarkable woman. For those who knew Anita, it should come as no surprise that she had an army of friends who wanted to honour her legacy too. It was through friendship and love that The Anita Project was born. The project brings together friends of Anita to fundraise for and pack Hygiene and Welcome Home Kits which are distributed to our partners across Niagara. The idea came from a “packing party” Anita introduced friends to several years prior, to share stories and help fill needs in the community. When you are living in poverty, acquiring everyday essentials like these can be a challenge. Hygiene products are often overlooked as donations to shelters and food banks. United Way has responded to this need in the community by providing people living in poverty or those at crisis shelters with hygiene products at no cost. Anita played an instrumental role in launching this initiative and it is fitting that the project lives on through her friends.

The women behind The Anita Project have worked diligently to raise more than \$90,000 since 2018, providing more than 5,000 hygiene kits and 470 Welcome Home Kits to people and families in need. All of the kits are distributed through agency partners dealing directly with people experiencing poverty and homelessness – a cause near and dear to Anita. In total, 65 agencies across Niagara have received kits. A meaningful and impactful tribute to Anita and the Robertson family.



Anita and Joe Robertson at a United Way event they hosted at their home in 2015.



Anita, with daughter Laura, at a United Way event in 2017.

If you would like to make a donation to address local poverty in honour of Anita, visit unitedwayniagara.org.

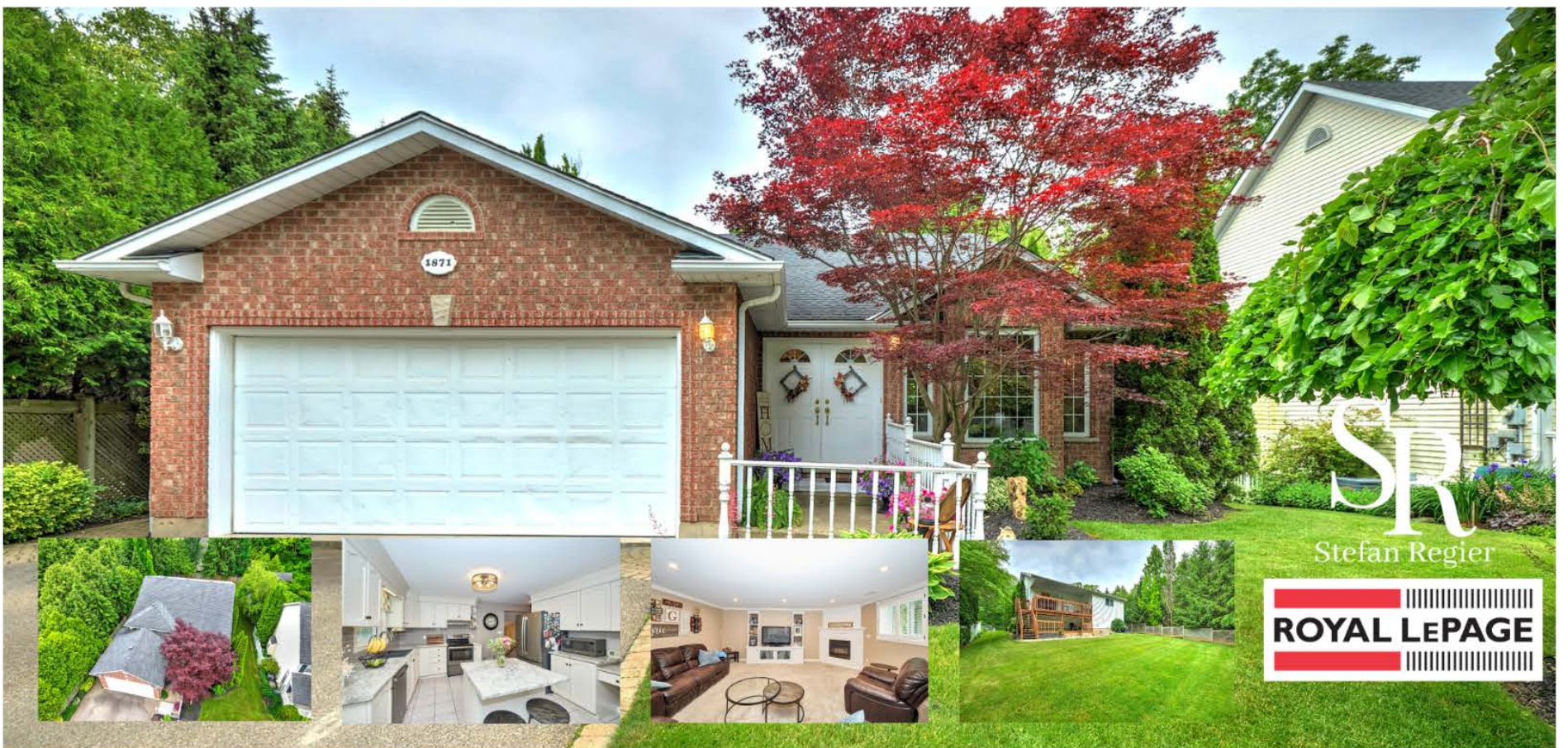
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