



A ride for justice | Page 5



Liam Neumann with Brody.

NOTL's well water smells like 'rotten eggs'

Evan Loree
Local Journalism Initiative
The Lake Report

Rural residents in Niagara-on-the-Lake are fed up with their water service.

Juan Neumann, a grape grower who lives on East and West Line, wants the town to extend a municipal water line down his road to serve the many residents who live there.

After going door-to-door collecting signatures in support of a water line, he estimates the proposed project has 98 per cent support from residents on the rural road.

"We believe we have the right to clean, potable water like everybody else in this country," Neumann said. While people in the urban areas of town get their water through a service line con-

nected to their homes, some rural residents like Neumann get their water from a well, and the quality is not the same.

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Police continue search for missing rafter

Evan Loree
Local Journalism Initiative
The Lake Report

The search for Niagara-on-the-Lake native Liam Neumann continued Wednesday with few answers after police spent three days scouring Twelve Mile Creek for signs of the missing man.

"The river has not given him up yet," Neumann's mother Barbara Worthy told The Lake Report on Wednesday evening.

Still processing the disappearance of her son, Worthy said she was not ready to talk about it.

"I'm trying not to talk about it because I just break every time."

Worthy said she hasn't eaten since Sunday.

"And it's not for lack of food. My house is filled with people bringing food. I just can't eat," she said.

Worthy, well-known in

Continued on Page 2

TOP OF HER CLASS

St. Davids boxer dominates competition in pursuit of Olympic dream



St. Davids boxer Mckenzie Wright will fight at the Pan Am qualifiers in Cali, Colombia, in August. SOMER SLOBODIAN

Somer Slobodian | Local Journalism Initiative | The Lake Report

St. Davids boxer Mckenzie Wright is dominating Canadian amateur boxing in her weight class as she fights her way toward a dream of representing her country at the Olympics.

The road to the Olympic Games is long and difficult, but the powerful Niagara-on-the-Lake pugilist has just taken a big step along it – she earned the chance to qualify for the Pan

American Games, which are in Chile in October.

She'll travel to Colombia in August for a shot at the Pan Am Games – and then maybe the Paris 2024 Olympics.

"People always ask me, 'Do you think you want to try for the Olympics?' And I would always say, 'I'm not good enough,'" she

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Long-range plans for Glendale neighbourhood unveiled

Steve Hardaker
Community Correspondent

Residents of Niagara-on-the-Lake's Glendale community received an update on long-term plans for the

area – including potential new schools, grocery stores and a major transit hub – during a public information meeting last week.

About 40 people attended a briefing on the Glendale

secondary plan project at the Hilton Garden Inn on York Road on June 21.

Other long-range ideas discussed included restrictions on density, building heights and potential

population growth due to the neighbourhood's close proximity to Niagara District Airport.

Within 20 to 30 years, the Glendale neighbourhood could have 19,000 residents,

more than the current population of NOTL.

Glendale is bordered by Queenston Road to the north, Concession 7 to the east, the Niagara Escarpment to the south and

Homer Road to the west.

Four separate locations near the new diverging diamond interchange are being considered for a bus ter-

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Government pledges \$5 million to grape growers for relief

Somer Slobodian
Local Journalism Initiative
The Lake Report

After harsh winter weather last year set many of Niagara-on-the-Lake's grape growers back, the provincial and federal governments are dedicating \$5 million in disaster relief funding to give farmers across the province a boost.

Ontario's Agriculture Minister Lisa Thompson visited Huebel Grape Estates on Line 3 Road last Thursday to celebrate not only the previously announced funding for Ontario's grape growers but also for the unveiling of the provincial wine and grape industry's "Certified Sustainable" growers sign. "Last year when we were here, and we saw clearly the devastation of the winter kill, I knew that we couldn't waste any time," Thompson told The Lake Report.

Eligible grape growers can apply to have up to 70 per cent of the cost covered of replacing or renewing lost or damaged grapevines. Thompson said the province worked with the federal government to launch this initiative.

The funding is given through the Sustainable



From left, Danny Oppenlaender, Aaron Oppenlaender, Jessica Solanki, Erwin Wiens, Lisa Thompson, Matthias Oppenlaender, MPP Tony Baldinelli, Kevin Watson and Lord Mayor Gary Zalepa. SOMER SLOBODIAN

Canadian Agricultural Partnership and delivered by Agricorp, which connects farmers with programs such as these.

Many grape growers continue to struggle after the harsh winter of early 2022 caused significant vine damage on many farms.

According to a news release from Grape Growers of Ontario, grape production was down 44 per cent in 2022 and reduced farm gate value, the product's market value minus selling costs, by \$49 million.

Erwin Wiens, a NOTL councillor and grape grower, said not only did growers

lose their source of income, but now they have to renew everything they lost, which "takes an incredible amount of energy and time."

Renewing a vineyard is labour-intensive and costs a lot of money, sometimes upwards of \$35,000 an acre to replace the vines, said Wiens.

For him, the funding announcement was welcome news.

"Every little bit helps and that's why we're always grateful," he said.

Matthias Oppenlaender, chair of Grape Growers of Ontario and owner of Huebel Grape Estates, said applications for growers

will open in July to disperse the funds.

Growers can apply through the Canada-Ontario Grapevine Winter Injury Initiative (2021-2022).

News of the Certified Sustainable signs was also celebrated last Thursday, June 22.

The Sustainable Winegrowing Ontario Certified program created by the Ontario Craft Wineries and Grape Growers of Ontario looks to ensure wine is made more sustainably.

According to the program's website, this means that during production, winemakers are being environmentally friendly and

respecting natural resources, involving good business practices and are committed to social responsibility in their communities.

"This is important for the entire industry, from the vineyard to the glass, so both the winery and the vineyards are certified sustainable," said Debbie Zimmerman, chief executive officer of Grape Growers of Ontario.

It started off as two separate programs in 2007, but in 2021, the two programs were merged together to create the Sustainable Winegrowing Ontario Certified program.

The Certified Sustainable sign will hang on participating vineyards, and Certified Sustainable labels can be found on Ontario VQA wine bottles, beginning with the 2021 vintage.

"(It) goes from the vineyard to the wine knowing that what you're getting is going through sustainability journeys," said Jessica Solanki, assistant vineyard manager at Huebel Grape Estates.

Announcing signs was a good first step in the right direction, said Zimmerman.

More than 100 vineyards and wineries are certified sustainable through the program, she said, and

she hopes the number will increase over time.

On the program's website, it says its vision is to have all of Ontario's VQA wines certified sustainable by 2030.

"We're working towards a carbon-negative program in the future," said Zimmerman.

The first step to becoming sustainable, she said, is to make sure farmers understand what sustainable practices they should be using on the farm.

Farms will then be audited by a third party, and if successful, they'll be certified.

Farms will continue to be audited annually to make sure proper procedures are being followed, and to offer any advice.

Solanki said becoming certified sustainable is not only good for right now but also for future generations.

"I feel like sustainability also means resilience," said Solanki.

"It's important for my generation so that we can keep farming but (also) for the generations coming after us," she added.

Along with the \$5 million relief funding for grape growers, the government announced \$5 million in relief funding for beekeepers.

Missing man often camped near where he disappeared

Continued from Front Page

NOTL for her work with the town's museum, said she spoke to police Wednesday and they were very helpful.

She said she appreciated their frankness, noting they were taking it "really seriously" and planned to resume the search Thursday.

Jordan Meyer said he met some witnesses Tuesday afternoon near where his lifelong friend was last seen Sunday night.

He disappeared in the creek's rapids, where the river starts to bend, near Hillcrest Avenue in St. Catharines.

The creek runs roughly parallel to Ontario Street.

Meyer said a witness told him Neumann was floating down the creek on an inflatable raft with his dog Brody when he reached the rapids.

After paddling the raft closer to shore, he got out to pull it the rest of the way.

"He was still in the water - like at the bank of the creek - where it's very steep, slippery, muddy, murky, rocky," Meyer said.

And then he slipped. Niagara Regional Police spokesperson Const. Philip Gavin said Neumann "became distressed in the water, submerged and was not seen again."

"The water in that area of Twelve Mile Creek is fast

flowing with rapids," Gavin said in an email to The Lake Report.

The raft, with the dog aboard, floated off.

Meyer said the dog was found safe near the St. Catharines Rowing Club, along with some of the missing man's belongings, including a backpack and cellphone.

On Wednesday afternoon, Gavin said police were "spreading their time between shoreline land searches and water-based searches."

A canine unit was called in to help with the ground search.

Meyer said the dog was initially taken to the Lin-



Niagara police marine units search Twelve Mile Creek for Liam Neumann. SUPPLIED

coln County Humane Society, where a chip traced the owners back to Neumann and his mother.

Carol Perrin, a friend of Neumann's family, said

they were first alerted that he was missing Sunday night.

She said it is common for Neumann, who was raised in NOTL and living in St.

Catharines, to take a tent and camp overnight near the creek.

Meyer said Neumann was out camping but no tent has been located.



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NOTL's well water smells like 'rotten eggs,' rural residents want clean supply lines

Continued from Front Page

While the town treats all the water running through its lines for harmful contaminants, residents like Neumann have to test, treat and filter their water themselves.

"We've lived here for 52 years, and we feel like we've been discriminated against," Neumann said.

The 71-year-old farmer said he's been watching his well water deteriorate for 30 years and plans to make it his mission to get a rural water line installed.

Neumann's petition, which town staff are currently reviewing, was raised by Coun. Erwin Wiens at a council meeting on May 23.

After discussing the issues caused by the lack of water service to the area, council asked staff to look into potential solutions to the problem.

In a follow-up with the town, spokesperson Marah Minor said water line extensions outside the urban boundary, like the one proposed, are "not permitted" except in "special circumstances," such as when addressing health issues.

"Upon initial review, (the water line) does not appear to be supported under the current planning policies," she added.

Coun. Erwin Wiens explains there's an assumption that where water lines get built, developments follow.

"That's not true," Wiens said. "Water is water, and that's what we need."

"Development is a zoning issue," he added, and the zoning on East and West Line does not permit anything other than agricultural use.

Neumann explained it as such: "We are locked into the Greenbelt. And whether we like it or not, we're here to stay."

In the meantime, he says the water is so poor it has turned his taps, toilets, pipes and other fixtures brown.

And his neighbour Scott MacSween, a tender fruit grower, says the smell is enough to turn your stomach.

"It just smells like rotten



Juan Neumann wants to the Town of NOTL to install a new water line along East and West Line. EVAN LOREE

eggs," he said.

It gets its smell from the high amount of sulphur in the aquifer, MacSween added.

Neumann isn't sure what else could be in the water, but he worries industrial runoff from now-closed chemical factories in Niagara Falls may have contaminated the aquifers as far north as rural NOTL.

He specifically mentioned the old Cyanamid factory near the Gale Centre in Niagara Falls, which closed in 1992.

A 2004 report by Golder and Associates said that the plant actively polluted the Chippawa Power Canal south of St. Davids which flows into the Niagara River.

Erika Navarro, a spokesperson for the Niagara Peninsula Conservation Authority, said there is "no connection" between the canal and aquifer, meaning any contaminants in the power canal would not be transferred to the water at the bottom of Neumann's well.

And Aecom conducted a risk assessment of the property in 2010 and concluded that the risk of the contaminants flowing from the old factory site to the Niagara River via groundwater was extremely low.

Furthermore, The Niagara Peninsula Conservation

Authority said in a 2023 water quality report that the major contaminants in the aquifers were not from industrial run-off, but from agricultural waste.

The Niagara Peninsula Conservation Authority monitors drinking water across the region and consistently gives the health of NOTL's aquifers Bs for good and Fs for poor.

Navarro said the group only monitors one well in Niagara-on-the-Lake and its test results cannot apply to the whole area because water quality varies across the aquifer.

That said, tests on this well water, viewable at the Ministry of the Environment, Conservation and Parks' website, show that amounts for dangerous chemicals like lead and arsenic are in decline and have been.

When wells are on private property like Neumann's, it falls to the owner to test them for drinkability.

The region offers water quality testing kits to well owners for free and recommends owners test their well water seasonally.

Neumann feels these tests are inadequate though, saying they are used to test for E. coli, but not for dangerous chemicals like arsenic or lead.

"There's ways to filter it and clean it up. But the cost

is horrendous," he added.

He estimates that he spends about \$1,000 a year filtering the well water and still does not feel comfortable drinking it.

MacSween is not so concerned about industrial waste.

The bigger issue, he says, is the headache of having to truck in municipal water to wash all his fruit during harvest season.

Rather than washing it in well water, he buys municipal water by the truckload and has it shipped to his properties.

"Our wells are very poor on our farms," MacSween said, pointing out that he couldn't get sufficient water pressure from the well to wash his fruit efficiently.

He suggested the water pressure issues might be from the number of residents using the aquifer.

For seven weeks during harvest season, MacSween said, the farm goes through about 6,000 litres of water a day.

His water is delivered by Your Water Company, a water delivery service in the Niagara Region.

He estimates it costs at least \$120 per delivery, and in the busy season, he receives two 3,000-gallon shipments a day.

He says the first 3,000 gallons are just for washing the fruit, and the rest is to provide his team of 50 migrant workers with drinking water.

MacSween often worries about what could happen if one of the delivery trucks breaks down.

"I haven't had the problem but it's always in the back of my mind," he said.

Wiens pointed out that it's bad for the environment to have multiple trucks on the road delivering water as often as they are.

And while the water shipped to his farms is clean, MacSween said he still needs to test it, in case it becomes contaminated while sitting in the transport trucks or in the underground tanks on his property.

For MacSween, he said, "It's just one more thing that we have to contend with."

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New milestone reached in **restoration** of Fort Mississauga

Somer Slobodian
Local Journalism Initiative
The Lake Report

Nestled amid the grounds of the Niagara-on-the-Lake Golf Club, where the Niagara River washes into Lake Ontario, is a fire- and bomb-proof fortification with walls thick enough to withstand cannonballs.

Since 2019, the Fort Mississauga national historic site has been undergoing extensive renovations to repair water damage inside its walls.

A \$7.3-million federal infrastructure grant funded the project.

Chris Zoetewey, the project's lead, and Sarah Quinlan Cutler, the interim superintendent of national historic sites in southwestern Ontario, were pleased to showcase the heritage site's finished exterior work during a media tour last Friday.

Those working on the restoration have reinstated the earthworks surrounding the fort, replaced the roof, stabilized the central tower and structures and built a new pedestrian boardwalk.

They also completed work to stabilize the shoreline to combat erosion, ensure public safety and protect historical artifacts, along with revegetation along the shoreline.

The exterior restoration at the fort was completed in November 2021.

Before restoration began, Zoetewey said the team discovered a large amount of water building up within the walls.

The thick exterior walls are made of brick, as are



Sarah Quinlan Cutler, acting superintendent of national historic sites in southwestern Ontario and Chris Zoetewey, project lead, stand inside Fort Mississauga. SOMER SLOBODIAN

the interior walls, and in between is limestone rubble.

The limestone rubble is from the first lighthouse of Upper Canada that used to sit where the fort is today.

"Because it's rubble-filled, it's got brick on the inside, brick on the outside. If water gets in there and freezes, it pushes the wall out," he said.

He pointed to an exterior corner of the fort that was bulged out due to water damage.

"We had the entire tower evaluated and a heritage recording done, and based on that, we were getting water into the rubble fill," he said. "So we had to do something about it."

Though the exterior restoration stage is completed, the team needs to let the water drain naturally before it continues with interior work on the walls.

Zoetewey said it could take five to 10 years for the water to fully drain.

"Now we wait for the column to dry, because if we were to jump on the restoration immediately, it would destroy any work that we would do," he said.

Fort Mississauga was built between 1814 and 1816 after the battle of the War of 1812 and is the only one of its kind left in Canada with a square tower and star-shaped earthwork.

The walls of the fort are

so thick they could withstand cannon fire.

"If a cannonball hits the brick on the outside, the energy from that impact actually gets carried to the rubble fill," said Zoetewey.

All the energy from the impact gets dispersed, making the fort a safe place to be in an attack.

Fort Mississauga has a lot of unique and historic characteristics, many connected to Niagara-on-the-Lake.

"It is sort of a jewel and has ties to all of the history of Niagara-on-the-Lake," said Zoetewey.

"It's believed the first 10 feet of this structure is built from the reclaimed brick of the town of Niagara-on-the-Lake after the Americans

left and burned the town to the ground," he added.

During the tour, The Lake Report got a look inside the historic fort.

The first thing you notice is the cold air on your skin. The second thing is how dark it is.

Once your eyes adjust, you can see you're walking on a newly built wooden pathway that allows people to move from the first room to the magazine powder room, where the ammunition would have been stored.

"We were very happy that we were able to complete this design with very, very little impact to the heritage of the building," said Zoetewey.

He said that the pathway was supported by helical piers, "actually cuts into the soils and minimizes the impact on the soil."

One look over the railing and you can see the original floor the team accidentally found during the restoration process.

"You can see the original features from the rebellion period that we exposed," said Zoetewey.

Even the holes in the walls within the fort have a story.

"You can see square holes – those are the wood pegs for where they would actually attach the shelving to the wall," he said.

The fort is a work in progress, but restoring it is a way to "give our past a future," said Quinlan Cutler.

"(We want to) see what we can do with this to make sure people can really connect with the history of this area," she said.

"Not just this era, but the era before this as well. So bringing in First Nations stories, bringing in military stories," she added.

She said they'd also like to find ways to bring people through the building in the future.

In 2021, the restoration team won an award of excellence in conservation engineering from the Canadian Association of Heritage Professions for stabilizing Fort Mississauga's tower.

"We were really proud of the work that Chris and his team and the archeologists and the cultural resource specialists did here," said Quinlan Cutler.

Bake sale brings **Pride** to NOTL amid acts of hate

Julia Sacco
The Lake Report

For Mel Thivierge, Sunday's Pride bake sale was about supporting an important cause without being the centre of attention.

"I thought I could lend extra hands because, in the back of my mind, there was a very, very slim concern" that there would be protesters, Thivierge told The Lake Report.

The bake sale led by

mother Tara Rosling and her daughter Eliana McManus was planned in response to the vandalism of the town's Pride crosswalk.

Thivierge came out on their motorcycle to keep an eye on the area for any issues, along with their friend Jeff — plus, to enjoy baked goods and lemonade.

Thivierge, who works as a lighting technician at the Shaw Festival, ex-

plained that they wanted to come out and support the two-spirit and LGBTQ+ community in Niagara-on-the-Lake amid recent acts of hate.

"There had been a drag queen storytime that had been protested, thankfully nothing happened (here) which is great. But I just wanted to be in support, to support the community," Thivierge said.

Vanessa Wormwell, 21, was also in attendance

to show her support in NOTL, along with her mom Chris, who was volunteering.

"There's not a lot for the 2SLGBTQI+ community around, so to be able to have this here shows that people care," she said.

The sale, which featured baked goods, lemonade, face painting and a silent auction raised \$4,016 in support of Egale Canada, a Toronto-based advocacy organization.



Tara Rosling and Eliana McManus more than doubled their \$2,000 goal for Sunday's Pride Bake Sale, raising more than \$4,000 for Egale Canada. JULIA SACCO



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About 120 bikers took part in the Ride for Justice on Sunday afternoon. DAVE VAN DE LAAR

Motorcycle squads hit the road to keep residential school history **out of shadows**

Evan Loree
Local Journalism Initiative
The Lake Report

Hailed by smoke bombs and the rhythmic beat of a leather-skinned hand drum, motorcycle riders from across southern Ontario rolled into Niagara Sunday afternoon in an effort to bring attention to a painful legacy for many in Canada's history.

About 120 riders from a handful of motorcycle clubs rolled up to the Niagara Regional Native Centre in Niagara-on-the-Lake to boost awareness of the legacy of residential schools, in a campaign called the Ride for Justice.

"We created the ride to bring awareness, basically to help the survivors," said ride organizer Justin Bearelle.

The campaign also collected donations to support Indigenous-based organizations, with the Native Centre and the Indian Residential School Survivors' Society among this year's recipients.

Volunteers helped set up fundraising activities before the ride, such as a penny raffle. Bearelle said the ride raised about \$6,000 in donations, but by press time, he said he was still waiting on donations to come in through

the group's website.

One of the volunteers was Jennifer Riegler, a member of the Red Spirit Motorcycle Club. She said she feels a personal connection to the more than 150,000 children who attended Indian residential schools and were subjected to what the Truth and Reconciliation Commission said amounted to "cultural genocide."

"I'm a mom myself, so I could just imagine the devastation with these children," Riegler said. "I think this needs to stay active and not get lost," she added.

For some of the bikers at the Ride for Justice, the grisly history of residential schools did not become apparent until news of mass child graves being discovered by radar technology in Kamloops, B.C., made national headlines.

Bearelle said it hit close to home for him because he has family in Kamloops, some of whom would have been in residential schools.

He said it's important to "educate yourself" about the history and "the sacrifices the native people went through."

The first residential school was opened in 1831 and the last school did not close until 1996.

Children who attended the schools were given substandard education, were malnourished by the staff and were punished for speaking their language or practising their culture.

And the National Truth and Reconciliation Commission described the abuse and maltreatment as "institutionalized."

For rider Alex Lein, it was the extent of the issue that surprised him the most.

"This was orchestrated across the country specifically to destroy cultures," he said.

Lein discussed how the intent of residential schools was, in words frequently attributed to Canada's first prime minister, John A. Macdonald, to "kill the Indian in the child."

"That's some racist bulls---," he said.

Mark Baker, commander of the 999th Legion Motorcycle Club, shared the same view.

"I didn't realize this was nearly as big as it was. This is gigantic," he said.

A portion of the money the Ride for Justice raises will be used to support youth programs, said Dawn Moughtin, one of the Native Centre's executive directors.

This year, she said, the centre can use the money to fund summer camp activities.

"It allows them to go take like off-site trips for the end of camp," she said.

And since the donation are received, the centre does not have to pursue other channels for funding and can spend with flexibility.

"If there's a family that that needs rent support we can do that," she said.

The Truth and Reconciliation Commission's report, published in 2015, stated that from the beginning, both the Canadian government and the churches running schools "placed their own interests ahead of the children in their care" and then covered up the abuse.

The lack of discipline and supervision of the staff "created situations where students were prey to sexual and physical abusers," it said.

"Nobody wants to admit or acknowledge the way they've been treated in Canada and still continue to be treated," Baker said.

Lein, agreed, pointing out he was in high school when the last residential school closed.

"This is not something that happened a long time ago. This is an ongoing process."

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With 19,000 people or more by 2043, area could have transit hub, schools, retail stores

Continued from Front Page

minal, which is envisioned as part of other community facilities.

The current preferred location is near the intersection of Glendale Avenue and Taylor Road, not far from the Outlet Collection mall.

Discussions with three Niagara school boards are ongoing and the Catholic and public boards each are considering building an elementary school.

The schools could be co-located on adjacent properties or one might be north of the QEW and the other south of the highway.

As well, it was revealed the Conseil Scolaire Via-monde (the region's French public school board) could be interested in locating a high school in Glendale.

A portion of Glendale falls under federal airport zoning regulations for the Niagara District Airport and building heights within that zone are restricted to seven storeys.

Niagara Region is reviewing Transport Canada's regulations and their potential influence on development.

Proposed building heights for the higher-density builds

will be dependent in part on the outcome of the review, the results of which are expected by this August.

Among those attending the information session were NOTL's chief planner Kirsten McCauley, senior regional planner Amy Shanks, three consultants working on the project and Coun. Sandra O'Connor.

In an email response to questions from The Lake Report, McCauley said, "The vision for Glendale is to become a complete community. The secondary plan policies will encourage a variety of land uses and built form with a diverse range of housing."

"Providing some higher-density built form in Glendale will increase housing options for different family sizes, ages and incomes," she said.

"Glendale is identified as a strategic growth area in the Niagara official plan to accommodate growth for the town."

The purpose of last week's session was to outline the progress on the secondary plan so far. When completed and approved, the plan should lead to submission of develop-



About 40 people attended a briefing on the Glendale secondary plan project on June 21. STEVE HARDAKER

ment applications from the various landowners in the community.

The public meeting was preceded by a community focus group session on June 19 where members listened to and discussed the details that were presented at the community forum.

The focus group is made up of several residents, project consultants and municipal planning staff.

One member of the town's urban design committee is on the focus group to ensure similar design standards are used in Glendale as in the other settlement areas of NOTL.

When Niagara Region completed the Glendale Niagara district plan in the fall of 2020 developing a vision and a plan to support future residential and employment development in Glendale, it authorized staff to work collaboratively with the Town of NOTL on updating the existing Glendale secondary plan.

The region's Glendale plan also includes a small portion of St. Catharines between Homer Road and the Welland Canal.

Consultant Donna Hinde led the attendees through a detailed presentation of the progress updating the secondary plan, which has included previous studies, a public information session and discussions with school boards and the airport authority.

The result was the emergence of some preferred land uses for the area, such as the transit hub, schools and retail stores.

Consultants also have been developing a residential market study and retail market study as well as job opportunities for the Glendale area.

Consultant Aaron Farrell discussed the work being done to complete a subwatershed study to determine appropriate buffers and environmental protection areas around the three watercourses in Glendale.

Additionally, consultant Jocelyn Lee described the transportation assessment that is now under way to determine what is needed to accommodate Glendale's growth. Included is a proposed road network in addition to the current streets in the area.

Cycling and multi-use trails also are being explored.

The current housing supply in Glendale comprises about 465 single-family homes in the Niagara on the Green neighbourhood and 40 predominantly large-lot homes on Queenston Road.

Planners expect strong future growth in the area thanks to high levels of international migration to Ontario, the excellent highway accessibility, future expansion of GO Transit services in Niagara and chronic housing shortages across the GTHA.

Depending on the eventual population of Glendale, there will be a need for one or two grocery stores and up to 350,000 square feet of retail space in the community.

O'Connor said local job opportunities will play a "major role" in the success of Glendale's secondary plan.

"An adequate supply of employment lands must be maintained," she said in an email.

"I am pleased that we are considering mixed-use development" in the area.

"Mixed housing options, retail hubs along a main street-type plan, transportation hub, community hubs, are all great new urban type

initiatives that are planned, and in my opinion, are positive," O'Connor said.

"I think that green development initiatives should be encouraged in the plan as well."

Population and employment growth have been projected for the short, medium and long term.

In the short term (between now and 2031), Glendale's is projected to grow to 4,900 residents and 5,800 jobs.

In the medium term (2032 to 2043), the population could grow to 13,100 residents and 8,800 jobs.

In the long term, (beyond 2043), the population is projected to grow to 19,300 and 9,100 jobs – making Glendale the most populous community in Niagara-on-the-Lake.

Residential intensification around the Outlet Collection in the medium to long term will depend on the review of airport regulations, which could also affect the eventual population potential for Glendale.

The existing Glendale secondary plan was approved by council in 2010 but there has been minimal residential development since then.

Once the plan is updated, developers are expected to start submitting applications to start building in the area.

The Glendale of the future aims to be a complete community with the amenities that current and future residents will want and need.

Steve Hardaker has lived in Glendale for over 13 years and is active in many community organizations.

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Niagara-on-the-Lake

Protester's hunger strike was a lie, says former supporter

Somer Slobodian
Local Journalism Initiative
The Lake Report

It turns out a one-day hunger strike staged by protester James Russell was really just a contrived media stunt after all.

When the Toronto resident held a hunger strike at the Niagara Baptist Church Burial Ground in April, he locked a 10-pound gold chain to his wrist and secured it to the historic plaque on the site.

He vowed not to leave until the Town of Niagara-on-the-Lake agreed to unearth 19 headstones believed to be buried on the property.

He told the media that only his wife had the combination to the lock.

However, it all appears to have been an elaborate stunt.

Yvonne Bredow, who joined Russell at the cemetery that April night, said

he had the combination the whole time and even unchained himself to sit in his car with her to warm up in the middle of the night.

She said he also went to the nearby Tim Hortons the next morning to get food.

The Lake Report repeatedly tried to reach Russell for comment on Bredow's allegations but he did not respond in time for publication.

He has refused to speak to this newspaper since shortly after his hunger strike when we published a story in which critics called his protest "misleading" and a "publicity stunt."

Bredow said when she heard the 76-year-old Russell had chained himself to the plaque, she felt she had to go and be with him so he wasn't alone.

She also thought she was doing the right thing, she said.

And she wishes more people in town had supported her in 2020 when she staged a large Black Lives Matter rally after writing a front-page opinion piece in The Lake Report about racist attitudes in NOTL.

However, what Russell did during his hunger strike didn't sit well with her.

"I'm thinking, if this is what you're doing on your hunger strike here, did you do it at all your other hunger strikes?" she said.

After that April protest, Russell said he would hold a large rally in June to force the town to uncover the buried headstones.

The June 18 rally attracted only a small group of supporters.

During the planning stages for the protest, a stage one archeological assessment was completed by the town and the resident-led committee working to restore the



James Russell was allegedly untruthful about his hunger strike in April at the Niagara Baptist Church Burial Ground. SOMER SLOBODIAN

burial ground, the Friends of the Forgotten.

Bredow thought completion of the assessment was a good first step but she was never told it was finished.

"For me, not letting us know that the first step was completed is holding back information (and) holding back information is the same as lying to me," she said.

She said she told Russell it takes time to implement change but he didn't want

to hear it.

Bredow said integrity and character are important to her and she felt he wasn't being straight with the community.

"I feel like I got used as an in (to Niagara-on-the-Lake). And I didn't like that feeling," she said.

So she decided she didn't want to be a part of Russell's protest.

She said she supports the cause, which is unearthing the headstones, and would

have backed him if he was honest and truthful.

"The way he went about it through lies and holding back information, and going against what he said he was going to do, which was the hunger strike and locking himself in, it just removed any credibility he had in my mind," she said.

"If you don't do something with a pure heart, and for the right intentions and tell the truth while you're doing it, it can't work."

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Contributed by Patty Garriock

"Minds, like parachutes,
do best when they are open."
-David Johnston

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Fort George comes to life



Last weekend's re-enactment "Fort George in the Great War" allowed the fort to showcase a piece of NOTL history they don't usually explore. Displays, including a musket demonstration and information on war nurses, gave visitors and inside look at Canada's role in the First World War. DAVE VAN DE LAAR

Editorial

A day to celebrate Canada

Kevin MacLean
Managing Editor

"... Our home and native land. True patriot love in all of us command. With glowing hearts we see thee rise, The true north strong and free ..."

As the words to our national anthem remind us, in Canada we have much to be thankful and grateful about.

And when some of our leaders and would-be leaders try to divide and conquer by arguing otherwise, perhaps we'd all do well to remember how fortunate we are to call this country home.

Yes, things could always be better. There are problems desperately in need of fixing, crises that require resolution, wrongs that need to be made right.

Yes, the people in charge of leading our town, our province, our nation don't always make the right – or best – decisions. And sometimes they play politics with issues, often

because they're too interested and vested in power and control.

But that's why we have the option every now and then to mark a ballot and vote for a change in direction or leadership.

"We are fortunate to live in what is perhaps the greatest country in the world."

It is a privilege millions of people in many corners of the world can only dream about. And one that we, the voters, take for granted.

At this time 156 years ago, the Fathers of Confederation set about to establish this nation, physically and philosophically linking a disparate group of provinces into an enduring dominion that has flourished – and by many measurements today remains the envy of numerous nations worldwide.

Canada Day is our day, our chance to revel in being Canadian, to wear red and white, to celebrate our commonalities and our differences, our history and our future.

Here in Niagara-on-the-Lake, the first capital of Upper Canada long before there was a "Canada," we take issues of heritage, history and preservation to heart.

Like many small towns across the country, NOTL plays host to many Canada Day celebrations – with everything cake to barbecues to fireworks – and we urge everyone to take the time to take in some of these slices of Canadiana.

Three years ago, in 2020, we were unable to celebrate July 1. Remember "bubbles" and social distancing?

In 2021, Canada Day here was largely a virtual celebration, with the major gatherings again shelved by the COVID pandemic.

Last year, we finally returned to some semblance

of normal as society tried to put the pandemic in the rear-view mirror. Still, though, many were uncomfortable in crowds and chose not to participate.

Now, in 2023, COVID remains among us but as a society we have managed to cope with it and adapt. That is part of what being Canadian means. We change, we move along, we find ways to make life work.

So, with a full slate of Canada Day celebrations planned in NOTL, we encourage everyone to get out this Saturday (and the rest of the weekend for events that run past July 1) to take part in the revelry.

And when you're enjoying the barbecues, the artistry, the history and pageantry, the massive Canada Day cake, the fireworks, the camaraderie, take a few moments to reflect on how, despite its flaws, we are fortunate to live in what is perhaps the greatest country in the world.

Happy #156, Canada.

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Denying town, SORE legal costs sends **important message**

Dear editor:

I usually find myself cheering for the judicial system to award legal costs so as to discourage the growing trend of frivolous lawsuits taking place in this province.

But upon reading the June 22 article in The Lake Report, "Town, SORE lose bid to recover legal costs from Solmar," I couldn't have been happier.

What a great message sent to SORE (Save Our Rand Estate) and our municipal government that, "If you want to hold back progress in Niagara-on-the-Lake you're going to have to pay for it yourself."

I do, however, find it ironic that during a month where I, and many others, celebrate "social progress" we find our government and special interest groups

working hard to stop "economic progress."

As a capitalist, I can't tell SORE how to spend its money – \$365,000 in legal costs – but surely this money would have been better spent on ... well ... anything else?

However, as a taxpayer, I can say clearly to our elected representatives, "this is NOT what government should be spending our taxpayer dollars on.

This is not protecting individual rights."

And that is why I've started an organization dedicated to lowering taxes in NOTL.

NOTL4LowerTaxes is, so far, a party of one, but will work hard to let you keep your hard-earned money so your government doesn't waste it on frivolous legal battles.

Alexander Evans
NOTL



SORE supporters at a public meeting in 2019. The group has lost an appeal for costs at the Ontario Land Tribunal. FILE

Let's **move on** with our lives

Dear editor:

There seems to have been a preponderance of articles over the past year regarding the LGBTQ etc. community as some feel there is an apparent hate against them.

Some media have been staunch advocates, with regular articles and repeated references to the need to highlight the existence of the group and the incidents of hate, such as the defacing of the new rainbow crosswalk here in Niagara-on-the-Lake.

There are those among us who would consider the defacing of Queen Victoria's statue in Winnipeg to be an act of hate. To my knowledge, no official reaction was made, nor was it rectified.

June is Pride Month, as everyone is aware.

But I find it disturbing that our fallen soldiers are given only one day in the year to be acknowledged for the ultimate service these men and women gave to the world.

However, I don't believe they would have requested or expected it.

There is so much more going on in the country that should be written and editorialized about.

Can't we just get on with our lives and the LGBTQ with theirs and place the emphasis on other issues that would be more inclusive and representative of the wider community?

Jean O'Malley
NOTL



The town's Pride crosswalk was vandalized days after it was completed. FILE

NOTL in **dark ages** in limiting nuisance lighting

Dear editor:

A big shout out to Brian Marshall for "bringing to light" the potentially adverse impact of poorly designed bright exterior LED lights with his June 1 Arch-i-text column, "Of lights and rights and other things."

With the increase in development in Niagara-on-the-Lake and with a higher density of homes being built, it is imperative to have a nuisance lighting bylaw in place.

While the Town of NOTL has a recently updated noise bylaw for excess noise that is bothersome to residents after 11 p.m., the council has failed to address troublesome lighting by the lengthy delays in bringing forward a nuisance lighting bylaw that remains in draft form.

These delays in implementation were also addressed in a June 8 letter to the editor by Paul Jurbala ("Town hasn't yet taken

action on light pollution issue"). He has had a hand in trying to illuminate lighting concerns, with little success.

It is my understanding that this bylaw will not be moved forward until early 2024, which was earlier attributed to the pandemic, staff changes and absences, and to the election of the new council and bringing members up to speed.

As a resident of NOTL for the past few years, I cherish the small-town feel, while knowing, however, that development is a legislated part of life in Ontario.

In my opinion, NOTL is in the dark ages when it comes to dealing with nuisance lighting.

We have fallen behind such other Ontario municipalities such as Mississauga, Huntsville, Clarington, Orillia, Ajax, Brock, Burlington, Kingston, Pickering, Richmond Hill, Lasalle, Uxbridge, Whitby, Scugog and Toronto which have been progressive in implementing

nuisance lighting bylaws.

Huntsville has even recently updated its existing bylaw on light pollution to further protect the dark sky with increased enforcement clarity.

With the proliferation of LED lighting both in new construction and in inexpensive big-box store DIY retrofits, it seems there is an incorrect myth that brighter lights are better – but they can have a negative impact on neighbouring properties.

Overly bright lights can be a major cause of light trespass and light spill. This problem is just going to become increasingly problematic with the development that has been slated for our area.

Like climate change, protecting our dark sky is a real concern, so let's not leave this matter until it's too late.

After the completion of the town's retrofits of street-lighting to LEDs, it is my understanding the 4,000K

lamps were switched to 3,000K due to complaints from residents.

The town indicated it installed dark sky-friendly fixtures with shielding in place to proactively eliminate light spill onto neighbouring properties.

It would seem town planners are well-versed in good lighting design, so why then, with this in mind, have they not expanded responsible lighting ordinances in the form of an updated lighting bylaw?

Light pollution is considered undesirable and many people feel it reduces the enjoyment of the night sky. Effective lighting systems must be designed to eliminate direct and indirect skyward lighting.

Lighting complaints are frequently due to nuisance glare or excessive brightness with complaints that "light is shining in my window." Such concerns can be addressed by containing light within the



Deb Stephens says NOTL has fallen behind and needs to start limiting nuisance lighting. SUPPLIED

design area and carefully selecting, locating and mounting well-shielded lighting fixtures.

As residents of NOTL, we should be able to enjoy the evening sky from our front porches or backyards without having to endure glare or intrusive light coming in through our windows as a result of light trespass from poorly designed lighting fixtures.

While the town has had a zoning bylaw in place for

several years, it seems to be outdated and to lack the specifics to address the general concerns of nuisance lighting in NOTL.

In short, it is like using a typewriter in the age of high-tech. Let's leave the typewriters for Tom Hanks and catch up with the other proactive Ontario municipalities that have put the much-needed lighting bylaws in place.

Deb Stephens
NOTL

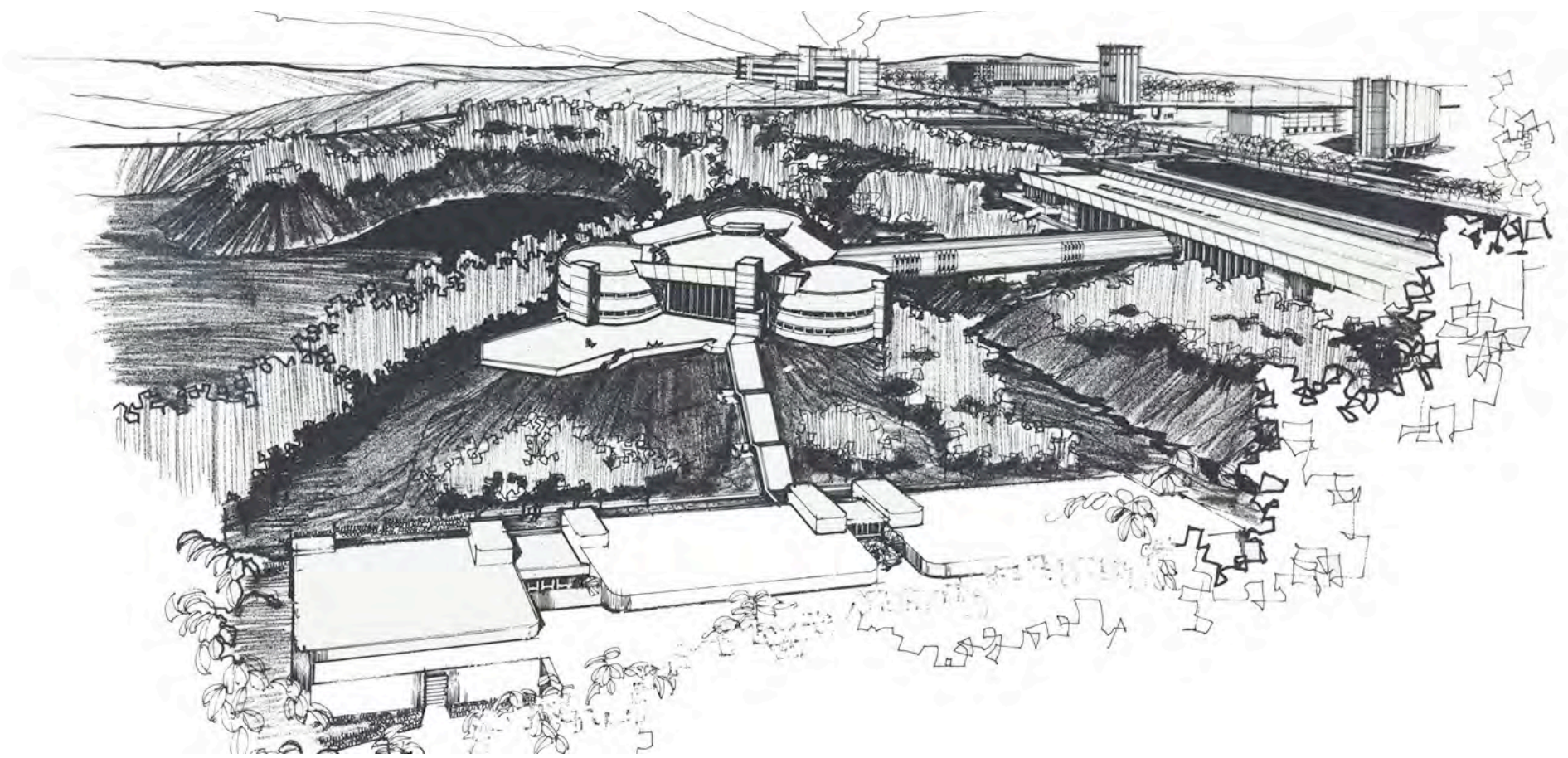


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The Ontario Science Centre, which has an exceptional Brutalist design, is threatened, says columnist Brian Marshall.

As one might expect, **Brutalism** was true to its name



ARCHITEXT

Brian Marshall
Columnist

The prefix “neo” is derived from the Greek word “neos,” which means “new.”

It is often used to indicate something that is new or modern. For example, the neoclassical style of architecture is a revival and modern interpretation of a classical style.

While recently perusing one of the architectural journals I subscribe to, one article entitled “Exploring the New Trend in Neobrutalism” caused a shiver to run up my spine.

Could it really be true that there were architects that wished to revive what was, in my opinion, one of the saddest episodes in 20th-century design expression?

As I read the article, and then conducted further investigation, it became obvious that there were, in

fact, a number of designers who were championing the resurrection of brutalism.

To provide some historical context, brutalism was a relatively short-lived post-war architectural style which was completely abandoned by Western architects in the early 1970s.

Although the style claimed to have roots in international modernism, it was, in truth, a rejection of that modernism as no more than “shallow aestheticism.”

The proponents of brutalism proudly proclaimed that architecture should directly reflect the highest levels of one’s goals – call it existential weight – and that a building should not be the result of reasoning but of ethical action, their maxim being: “An ethic, not an aesthetic.”

Now, it is important to understand this style had its start in the war-devastated lands of Europe and these architects believed their designs should assume a new role in society.

In the simplest sense, it would be a non-political role focused on human needs for shelter and work. Many, if not most of these architects believed in egalitarianism and their interior designs generally characterized that philosophy in

repetitious spaces of similar size and configuration.

They chose to employ exposed materials (pipes, boilers, mechanical equipment, etc.) and the unrelieved rough texture and colour of poured concrete to construct buildings that appeared massive – even those with a relatively small footprint – with reoccurring modular components conjoined into what were often awkward compositions.

This can be illustrated in the description of Paul Rudolph’s 1963 brutalist Arts & Architecture building at Yale University by Dezeen Magazine’s columnist Alexandra Lange as “strange and quirky and difficult.”

Further, brutalist architects made no attempt to integrate their designs into either the landscape or the existing streetscape.

On the contrary, most of these buildings were intended to sit on the land, rather than in it, and dominate their surroundings; a brooding dominance actuated by their massive, monolithic appearance, rigid geometric lines and unremitting gray concrete.

But, driven (I suspect) by the architecture critics’ glowing descriptions, in the 1960s governments, corporations and institutions lined up to commission brutalist

designs for office buildings, community hubs, student residences, public housing, and the like.

Certainly, Canada was no exception to jumping on the bandwagon, with the result that virtually every city in this country has examples of brutalist architecture.

While the critics praised the buildings, the general public loathed them.

In the mid-1970s, students at the University of Guelph variously described the brutalist South Residence as “depressing,” “ugly” and “confusing” and ascribed its design to an architect who specialized in penitentiaries – a myth that still persists to this day.

In 2001, the BBC invited their audience to vote on the country’s ugliest building: The Tricorn Shopping Centre in Portsmouth, a 1963 brutalist design by Rodney Gordon, was elected by a landslide.

A building praised by architecture critic Jonathan Meades as “fecund, rich, untrammelled” and the product of “genius” in 1963, was described by the then Prince of Wales in 2001 as “a mildewed lump of elephant droppings.” The building was torn down in 2004.

By the mid-1970s, brutalism was yesterday’s news in

Europe and North America. Only in the Eastern Bloc countries did it continue to be a viable architectural style, becoming almost synonymous with common building design in the Warsaw Pact countries until the fall of the Soviet Union.

Still, to be fair to brutalism, there are examples which rise above the vast majority of these designs. However, almost invariably, the architect responsible veered away from brutalist criteria to accomplish this feat.

Consider Ron Thom’s work on the Trent University campus wherein he abandoned the “dominance” criteria and integrated brutalist elements into the surrounding landscape, something that Arthur Erickson also did at the University of Lethbridge.

Similarly, in Toronto, Raymond Moriyama not only integrated brutalist architecture into the city’s river valley setting but also introduced curved elements to soften the design of the Ontario Science Centre – a complex currently threatened with destruction by the Ford government.

Then there is the fanciful Chapel of Notre Dame du Haut in Ronchamps, France in which architect Le Corbusier introduced

curves, strategically placed punctuated openings and white walls.

And, of course, we cannot forget the gorgeous work of Canada’s foremost Indigenous architect, Douglas Cardinal, in Red Deer, Alta.. St. Mary’s Parish is a tour de force of brutalist elements filtered through the screen of his heritage and softened by the site’s appropriate use of brick.

Mere words cannot say enough about a design that renders brutalism organic through the genius of this architect. Google the St. Mary’s church in Red Deer and you’ll see what I mean.

That said, a handful of exceptions, all a result of the architect not being true to the precepts of brutalism, amongst the thousands of buildings built in the style does not change my initial stance that this was a sorry episode in 20th-century design.

And, from what I’ve seen of the “neobrutalists,” the designs are certainly no better, particularly since several are directed at the residential market.

In this specific case, just call me a NIMBY.

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



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June is Cataract
Awareness Month



Going **slow and steady** keeps nesting turtles safe



Keeping it **Green**

Kyra Simone
Columnist

Turtles in Niagara are braving roads in search of sites to lay eggs. Thoughtful driving and small acts of compassion make a monumental difference in protecting turtle populations.

Southern Ontario has the highest turtle diversity in all of Canada, with our province's wetlands supporting eight unique species. Recent Niagara sightings include snapping, midland painted, northern map and globally endangered Blanding's turtles.

These dinosaur cousins are essential ecosystem engineers, removing bacteria from water and cycling nutrients through the food web by grazing on plants and scavenging carcasses.

Some plants rely on turtles to disperse seeds after digesting their fruit.

Sadly, all eight native Ontario turtle species are federally listed as species-at-risk. Habitat loss and fragmentation, thanks in part to legislation like Bill 23, which strips crucial wetland ecosystems of protections, have caused sharp population declines.

Road mortality is another key threat to turtles, where these slow and thoughtful creatures meet automobile drivers in a hurry.

At this time of year, many turtles are out exploring in Niagara. Between May and mid-July, females leave the safety of wetlands and travel more than six kilometres in search of nest habitat.

Females are particular about nest sites: They prefer to select well-draining soil, without much shading by vegetation. Their eggs require a narrow range of moisture and temperature conditions to develop.

For many turtle species, incubation temperatures affect the sex ratio of hatchlings. For example, a painted turtle nest that experiences warm conditions will produce a greater number of female turtles.

Some turtles, like Blanding's turtles, display site fidelity and return to the same nesting sites year-after-year.

"If you have turtles nesting on your property, you



Helping an endangered Blanding's turtle safely cross the highway. KYRA SIMONE

can play an important role in protecting eggs. After the turtle finishes nesting, you can install a nest protector — you can purchase these or build your own, if you're handy," says Dr. Chantel Markle, assistant professor and turtle conservation biologist at the University of Waterloo.

CROSSING GUARDS NEEDED

Tragically, turtle road mortality spikes during nesting season in Niagara. Harming turtles can yield fines up to \$100,000 and jail time due to their protected status under federal legislation.

Because females take

up to 25 years to reach maturity and lay eggs, the loss of one adult female can be devastating. Less than one per cent of turtle eggs and hatchlings survive to adulthood.

"Adult turtles are incredibly important to the population. If even a few are killed on the road each year, this has long-lasting consequences," says Markle.

During the vulnerable nesting season, these brave mamas need all the help they can get to cross safely. Drivers who come across a turtle should move it in the direction it was going, if safe to do so.

For extra visibility, I

wear my orange safety vest from field research. Large turtles like snappers can be moved by holding the shell on either side of the tail and dragging or "wheelbarrow-walking," while smaller turtles can be held like a hamburger.

Turtles should never be picked up by the tail. After touching a turtle, use hand sanitizer to kill any bacteria.

Injured turtles can be treated at the Ontario Turtle Conservation Centre, Ontario's only turtle trauma centre. Good Samaritans should gently place the injured turtle in a plastic container with a secure, ventilated lid, without water

and immediately call 705-741-5000.

The OTCC will require information about the specific location where the turtle was found. Their volunteer and veterinarian network will transport it to a care facility and treat any injuries.

"Turtles can survive a tremendous amount of trauma. Even if it doesn't look good, it's best to call the OTCC. Every turtle counts," Markle says.

Turtles can survive extreme blood loss and injuries that would require euthanasia in other species. Even if the mother doesn't survive, it may be possible for the conservation centre to rescue and incubate her eggs.

Each of these resilient beings has the potential to outlive us, with some turtles living longer than 100 years. So sticking our neck out for these gentle reptiles is the least we can do — and preserving their critical wetland habitat would also be wise.

Kyra Simone is a PhD student in environmental science, with master's degrees in biology and science communication. Her doctoral research focuses on climate change-induced wildfire and turtle nesting habitat in eastern Georgian Bay.

Green-thumbed neighbours dazzle **Shaw Guild Garden Tour** spectators

Julia Sacco
The Lake Report

With lots of water, sunlight and the help of several master gardeners, the homes at the centre of the 17th-annual Shaw Guild Garden Tour boasted their lush gardens to all ticketholders.

Of the nine properties on the tour, 48 Colonel Butler Cres. may have had some of the most unique garden spreads.

For Marlene and Wayne Penner, full artistic control was important in their planting process.

"We do it all ourselves," Marlene Penner told The Lake Report.

Along with a beautiful wisteria tree, dead nettle and bee balm, the gargoyles featured in nearly every section of the garden were the most important feature to the Penners.

"We are the master gardeners. We like to have full

control, because if we didn't — no gargoyles," Marlene joked.

Gardening is a big hobby for the Penners: maintaining such a large garden requires a little bit of work every day.

"It's gotta be in your blood," Wayne Penner said.

"It's something you have to enjoy because obviously, I don't let it get ahead of me. If I'm out there mowing and see a weed, I get the weed out," Marlene added.

All properties on the tour completed their showings with the help of numerous master gardeners, including the popular 428 Queen St. property.

Diane Turner was one of the two master gardeners who helped identify the species at this home, which included species like mountain fleece, Japanese quince and more.

Turner has been working with Master Gardeners Niagara for about 20 years, as

a way of sharing her passion for gardening as a hobby.

"I've always loved gardening: I was a gardener at home," she said.

Describing the Queen Street property, Turner said the property has "a lot of planting," including "lovely" specimens like dogwood trees.

"Give it a year, it's a rather new garden. In a year, it will be incredible," she said.

There were many more unique gardens part of the tour, like the one at King's Point Condominium on 215 Ricardo St., which was formed with the help of the condo's garden committee.

Music and entertainment were featured at multiple properties, such as singer-songwriters and live paintings.

All funds raised from ticket sales will go to benefit the Shaw Festival and its functions.



Wayne and Marlene Penner, along with their pup Ella, were happy to show off their gargoyle-donned garden during Saturday's Shaw Guild Garden Tour. JULIA SACCO

Royal Oak student **places second** in region-wide poetry contest

Evan Loree
Local Journalism Initiative
The Lake Report

A Royal Oak student is feeling a little overwhelmed after placing second in a regional poetry contest – for writing about an ancestor who made a great sacrifice over 100 years ago.

Lev Prokipchuk Steacie, a Grade 7 student from Niagara-on-the-Lake, secured his spot against students from 16 different schools across Niagara.

He is the first from Niagara-on-the-Lake to place this high in the Royal Canadian Legion's annual Remembrance Day poetry contest in six years, says Stan Harrington, legion member and NOTL native.

"It's a bit overwhelming, actually," the 12-year-old student said.

Lev says he dedicated the poem to his great-great-great grandfather, Capt.

Richard Steacie, who died of a gunshot to the neck in the First World War.

"Ever since I've been little, we've always told stories about him," Lev said.

When he learned of the Legion's poetry contest, he decided it was a good time to share his ancestor's story.

"I am surprised to see this side of Lev," said his mother, Christyna Prokipchuk.

Prokipchuk describes her son as a science nerd, a label he wears proudly.

She said it's "really nice to see him excel and apply himself" in an artistic subject.

"I don't like literature. I don't like essays. I don't like that. But I really, really, really like words," Lev said.

Captain Steacie was in the Royal Montreal Regiment and died in the second Battle of Ypres in 1915.

According to the Royal Montreal Regiment Foundation, Captain Steacie was buried at an unnamed grave in Belgium.

The detail was well-captured in Lev's poem: "For years his grave had no name / But in my family, he has a great deal of fame," he wrote.

It wasn't until author and historian Michel Gravel and Capt. Grant Furholter of the Royal Montreal Regiment looked to ensure Steacie's grave was properly memorialized.

The Grade 7 student began working on the poem in the fall, shortly after his father, Aaron Steacie, died of a heart attack in September at age 41.

Lev said the act of "writing or creating things" was both a "distraction" and a place for him to talk about his challenges.

"It made me have more of a connection with that



Lev Steacie shows off his award for placing second in the poetry contest. EVAN LOREE

sense of family," he added.

His mother explained her son was proud of his family legacy, both the Prokipchuk and the Steacie side, and this would have come out in the poem regardless of his father's death.

"Lev loves the fact that he's Ukrainian, and he loves the fact that he's a Steacie as well," she said.

Plus, Lev already expresses his creativity in the world of science experiments – in which he learns lessons not unlike what one writing a poem may learn.

"Sometimes it'll turn out good. And sometimes, it will turn out bad. And even if things do turn out bad, it's not really considered a failure," he said.

Although Lev will not be moving onto the provincial level of the Legion's poetry competition, he still received a medal, a certificate and a cash prize for placing second.

Lev said he can see how people can get drawn into poetry and says he can see himself doing it for fun, not just for school assignments.



Colin Brezicki's qualifications as a judge include teaching English and writing two of his own novels. JULIA SACCO

Legion's first **literary awards** judged by NOTL author

Julia Sacco
The Lake Report

Oxford University graduate, published author and former English teacher Colin Brezicki brought his expertise to judge the Legion's first annual literary contest for seniors.

During the awards luncheon on Sunday, Brezicki told The Lake Report his time as a teacher exposed him to many different kinds of creative writing, but that it's still "always an adventure," when judging someone's work.



Colin Brezicki signed copies of his own novels after announcing the winners of the contest. JULIA SACCO

"Along with the objectivity, it's also very subjective. Somebody else could read the same pieces and come

up with a totally different takeaway," he said.

NOTLers over the age of 55 could submit their work under the poetry, short story or essay category for a shot at a prize bag from the Legion presented shortly after the awards luncheon.

Majorie Clark took home the award in the short story category for her work titled "Joe." Graham McMillan took home the prize for his essay "Five by Five" and Valerie King won poetry with her piece titled "Time."

Although judging one's creative work is not an

easy task, Brezicki said, he believes the three chosen winners would be standouts to all who read the pieces.

He uses one tool in particular to distinguish good work: "I always like writing that doesn't sound like writing, and that includes my own. If it sounds like writing I've got to change it."

At the end of the ceremony, writers could purchase one of Brezicki's novels, "A Case for Dr. Palindrome" and "All That Remains," with the chance to have it signed by the author himself.


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Group potluck a joyous occasion



Members of the Facebook group "Joyous NOTL" met outside McFarland House for their second annual potluck lunch. The soon-to-open Craig's Cookies donated sweet treats for picnic-goers to enjoy while also sharing their homemade mains including salads, charcuterie and pulled pork. The group's founder, Mariah Reese, said that the potluck was an opportunity for NOTLers of different ages and backgrounds to meet up and share some joy. JULIA SACCO

Pickleball club president unsure if Queenston courts will be new hub

Evan Loree
Local Journalism Initiative
The Lake Report

The Niagara Parks Commission is planning to repave some dilapidated tennis ball courts in Queenston.

It could be a new place to play for the displaced Niagara-on-the-Lake Pickleball Club, which has been looking for a new place to play ever since losing its outdoor home at the Virgil Sports Park.

Coun. Erwin Wiens, who also sits on the board of commissioners for Niagara Parks, says the restoration of the old courts will take until at least next year since the cost will be part of the commission's 2024-2025 budget cycle.

The pickleball club's president John Hindle says it's too early to say if the lo-

cation in Queenston is going to be the future of the club.

But with the success of the town's pickleball tournament last weekend, Hindle said "It's exciting news that the Parks Commission is at least considering putting pickleball up there."

Hindle said there is a definite need for more courts, as pickleball continues to rise in popularity.

"We have probably two or three two-hour sessions every day of the week, and every one of them is full to capacity," Hindle said.

Not only are play sessions at capacity, there's also a waiting list every week of 10 to 20 people, he added.

While the courts in Queenston are not yet up for consideration, Hindle said there are two tennis courts in St. Davids which "could be – at a low cost – converted to pickleball."



Pickleball club president John Hindle says it's too soon to know if the Queenston Heights courts will be the club's future home. FILE PHOTO/SOMER SLOBODIAN

Meanwhile, he said the old pickleball courts in Virgil could be turned into tennis courts.

The pickleball club is also considering other options for a new home, Hindle said, including an old baseball diamond near the NOTL Legion and a third location near Old Town's tennis courts, at two under-

used soccer fields.

The club has not received much feedback from council on the potential of these options, Hindle said.

He acknowledged the new council was "consumed with getting budget done" early this year, but hopes by next spring they can work together to secure the club a suitable home.



This week's riddle is "Jeopardy!" style.
Category: FINISH THE LINE

Oscar Wilde wrote, "There is only one thing in the world worse than being talked about, and that is" these four words.

Last issue:

Category: STATE YOUR NAME

Clue: 1920s nightclub hostess Texas Guinan was arrested several times for operating these illegal "quiet" establishments.

Answer: What is a speakeasy?

Answered first by: Margie Enns

Also answered correctly (in order) by: Claudia Grimwood, Al Brockway, Jane Morris, Lynda Collet, Catherine Clarke, Jim Dandy, Wade Durling, Bob Wheatley, Mike Gander, Nancy Rocca, Pam Dowling, Sylvia Wiens, Gordon Yanow, Elaine Landray, John VanderPerk, Sheila Meloche, KC King

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

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Pounding of drums celebrates summer solstice

Julia Sacco
The Lake Report

A glowing sunset, lots of laughter and dozens of sailboats made last Wednesday's "Drumming Down the Sun," a celebration of summer's arrival, a magical evening for dozens.

As the sun set over Ryerson Park in Niagara-on-the-Lake's Chautauqua neighbourhood, people trickled in with lawn chairs to have a seat and commemorate this year's summer solstice.

It was the celebration's first time back after three years due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

However, the event's organizer, Loretta Pietrobbon, said it didn't feel like the hiatus created a "gap" in enthusiasm.

"I see some familiar faces from back in 2019," she said.

Drumming Down the Sun is held annually during the summer solstice and invites



A group of people drums down the sun for the summer solstice, led by drummer Kevin Richard Hotte. DAVE VAN DE LAAR

people to participate in a drum circle with drum master Kevin Richard Hotte during sunset.

There was also a lesson in gentle yoga, which Ara Ribas, founder of ARAYO-GA, taught.

Hotte also founded Circular Motion, an organization offering a variety of drum therapy workshops.

"Hand drumming is more of a connection with your body and your mind because you're directly touching the drum instead of using drumsticks," he said.

He loves sharing his passion for drumming with others and being able to honour the dawn of a new season.

"It's a feel-good time

and a feel-good moment for people, especially after what we've had the last few years," he said.

The crowd has been bigger in the past, and he was hoping for more people, but nevertheless, he said they'll make a good night no matter what.

As neighbours got together to play the hand

drums, they and others also watched dozens of sailboats gather on the Niagara River, adding to the view of the water during sunset.

This was NOTL resident Lorraine Trapani's first time at the summer solstice celebration — and her first time at Ryerson Park.

She used to attend a solstice celebration in Port

Dalhousie, but because she now lives here, she chose to check out the one in NOTL.

She mentioned how beautiful Ryerson Park is and how much quieter it is than Port Dalhousie.

She also loves the energy the crowd brings to these gatherings.

"It's a great celebration to start the summer," she said.

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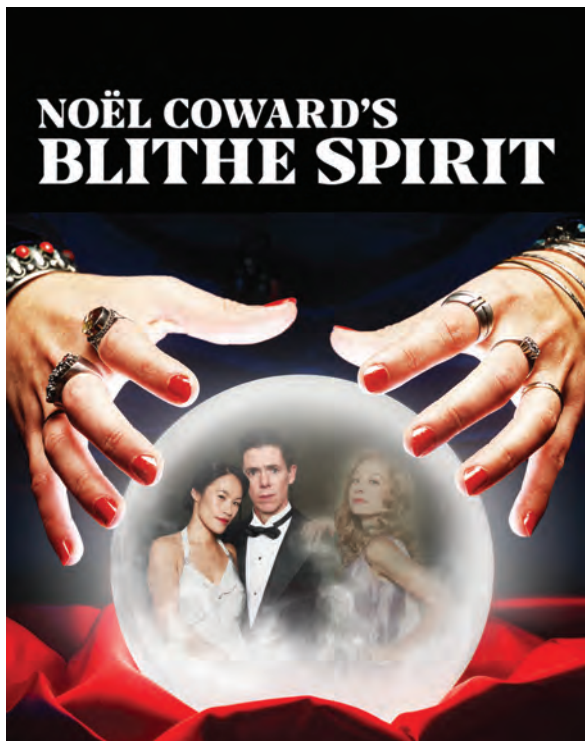
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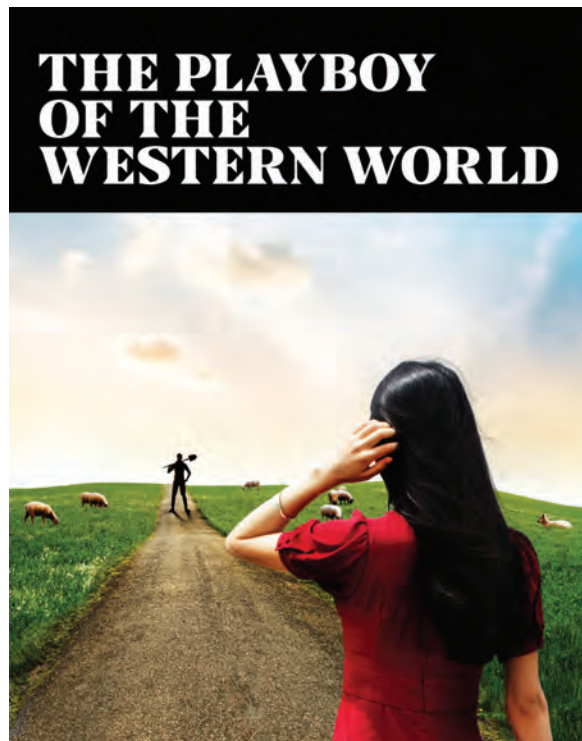
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Julie Lumsden in Gypsy. Photo by David Cooper; Donna Soares, Damien Atkins and Julia Course. Photo by Peter Andrew Luszyk.
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Jacques scores in men's league, Williams wins match play

Kevin MacLean
The Lake Report

Rainy weather and soggy fairways forced cancellation of several leagues the past few days at the Niagara-on-the-Lake Golf Club.

However, the weather wasn't a factor in last Thursday's men's competition.

Sharp-shooting former hockey pro Jeff Jacques was the big winner, hitting his tee shot on #9 closest to the pin to scoop a birdie and some cash in the gross skins game.

He also nailed his approach on #2 closer than anyone else to grab another prize.

Meanwhile, Matt Szczerko's 1-over 37 led all players to win low gross honours. Mike Freel's 23 points was tops in modified Stableford scoring.

Other winners were: Zach Luis (longest drive #1), Jim Rye (closest to the pin #4), Kurt Hamm (longest putt #6), and Marc Sandwell (longest putt #7).

Wil Neufeld won a gross skin with a birdie on #2 and net skins went to Bill



Deborah Williams, left, and Maureen Taylor battled cool and windy conditions last week in the final round of match play competition. Williams won a close match. SUPPLIED

Smethurst (#2) and Al Demray (#9).

In last week's WOOFs league, Patrick Craig's score of 37 was the low gross winner, while Ted Wiens won low net (33). Ted Baker was closest to the pin on #4.

The wind was a big factor in last Tuesday's 18-hole women's league play, where landing tee shots in the fairway on the par 4s and par 5s earned two golfers some prizes.

Christine Earl and Carolyn Porter were the straight-shooters, each hitting 10 fairways. Other winners were: Cathy Murray (closest to the

pin #4) while Lisa Allen (#3) and Janice White (#2) both picked up birdie prizes.

Best gross scores were: Martha Cruikshank (85), Allen (90), Yolanda Henry (95), Maria Townley (96) and Brenda Bell (97).

Net winners were: Cruikshank (70), Allen (73), Townley (74), Bell (75) and Sharron Marlow (76).

The nine-hole women's league wrapped up its annual match play competition last week.

In cool and windy conditions, Deborah Williams won a close-fought match over Maureen Taylor to earn the title.



Coaches and players on the U7 Niagara Thunderhawks competed in a lacrosse tournament in Fort Erie. ADAM STEWART

U7 Thunderhawks compete in Fort Erie

Staff
The Lake Report

Members of the Niagara-on-the-Lake Thunderhawks U7 lacrosse team competed in their first tournament of the season last weekend in Fort Erie.

It was a great experience for the young squad, who faced some tough competition.

The team played the Fort Erie Hawks, St. Catharines

Athletics and the Lincoln Redcoats, unfortunately losing every game. But that didn't matter.

"The kids all had such a great time, gave it their all and still never gave up even when it seemed we were outmatched," commented parent Tracey Hope.

The roster is comprised of: 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.

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



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St. Davids' Mckenzie Wright top of her weight class

Continued from Front Page

told The Lake Report. "But now I'm here and it's a reality. It's a possibility now," she added.

Wright dominated the 2023 Pan American Games Domestic Qualification Competition at the INS Quebec sports complex in Montreal last week, coming out number one in all of Canada in the 50-kilogram weight class.

Now, the Niagara College nursing student will fight in the Pan Am qualifiers in Cali, Colombia, in August. The top four from that competition will advance to the Pan Am Games.

The Pan Ams in October in Santiago are a direct qualification competition for the Paris 2024 Olympic Games, meaning the top two finishers will earn a trip to Paris.

Wright won the national title back in February at the Canadian Elite Championships in Brampton in the 48-kilogram class.

Since 48 kilograms is not an Olympic weight class, she had to move



St. Davids boxer Mckenzie Wright sports her Team Canada shirt at City Boxing Club in Niagara Falls. SOMER SLOBODIAN

up to the 50-kilogram category for last week's tournament.

As she prepared for Montreal, Wright said she didn't talk to many people outside of her bubble for two weeks prior to the competition to really focus on her mental training.

When it was almost fight time, she made sure she listened to her favourite pump-up song in her hotel room — "The Champion" by Carrie Underwood.

"That's the one that sets my mind to dig deep, then go for it," she said.

After drawing a bye last Monday night, she had her first match on Wednesday against Grace Fahnbulleh from New Brunswick.

She went in focused and determined — and with a strong right hand.

"My most effective weapon was my right hand," she said.

"My right knuckles are still sore from it, just from

that fight because there were so many that were landed," she added.

She said she won on all five score cards and dominated all three rounds.

On Thursday, only one competitor stood between her and the chance to represent Canada at the qualifiers in Cali: British Columbia's Nyousha Nakhjiri.

"This one was definitely more messy," said Wright.

"There was more wrestling, more grabbing. I

thought she brought a more competitive edge than the first one," she added.

But Wright didn't let that get to her — she was still able to outbox her opponent and come out on top in all three rounds.

"Before they even announced the decision, we knew we had it. It was really exciting," she said.

Wright returned to boxing less than two years ago after a four-year hiatus and quickly rose to the top while balancing full-time studies at nursing school.

Not only is she number one in Canada, now she gets to represent her country in Colombia in August.

"I was in tears at the end when she won," said Jesse Sallows, Wright's coach at City Boxing Club in Niagara Falls.

"It was just the biggest moment to date," he added.

Not only was it a big moment for Wright and Sallows, but also for their gym.

"Every coach's dream is to have someone go on the international stage and represent Canada, but also your gym," he said.

Pursuing her nursing

degree has complicated life for Wright while she chases her Olympic dream.

"All my other competitors, they magically become full-time boxers, they found sponsors, they found funding," and preparing for competition is all they have to worry about, she said.

In addition to full-time training, Wright also works full-time nights as a nurse, without pay, while she completes her nursing hours.

The road to the Pan Am Games isn't cheap and Team Canada doesn't pitch in, she said.

So Wright is hoping to find a sponsor sooner rather than later.

"It's going to be about \$10,000 to get to the Pan American Games," said Wright.

To help with financial costs, Wright has set up a GoFundMe and will also be holding a meet and greet fundraiser at the Niagara-on-the-Lake Golf Club on July 19 at 3:30 p.m.

There will be photo opportunities and raffle prizes at the fundraiser, and a chance to learn more about Wright.



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Across

- 4. Thick slices (5)
 - 9. Greyish-fawn (7)
 - 10. Result (5)
 - 11. Efface (5)
 - 12. Recover (7)
 - 13. Path (5)
 - 14. Common people (5)
 - 17. Type of gum (6)
 - 18. Cried (4)
 - 19. Wet (5)
 - 21. Elephant (6)
 - 23. Swiss city (6)
 - 26. Vends (5)
 - 27. Bog (4)
 - 29. Bitter conflict (6)
 - 30. Armed strongholds (5)
 - 33. Thank you (French) (5)
 - 34. Type of bath (7)
 - 35. Cowboy display (5)
 - 36. Metal spikes (5)
 - 37. Diviners (7)
 - 38. Adjusted (5)
- Down**
- 1. Invariable (8)
 - 2. Natives of e.g. Venice (8)
 - 3. Calming medicines (9)
 - 4. Doze (5)
 - 5. Diminish (5)
 - 6. Prophets (5)
 - 7. Guarantee (6)
 - 8. Forsake (6)
 - 15. Notice (7)
 - 16. Stopper (4)
 - 20. 24 hours ago (9)
 - 22. Make over (4)
 - 24. Qualified (8)
 - 25. Purple quartz (8)
 - 27. Instant (6)
 - 28. Vile (6)
 - 30. Being before all others (5)
 - 31. Radioactive gaseous element (5)
 - 32. Offered oneself for election (5)

Crossword Puzzle

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
9						10	
			11				
12						13	
			14	15	16		
17						18	
			19			20	
21				22		23	24
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			35				
36					37		
			38				

Last issue's answers

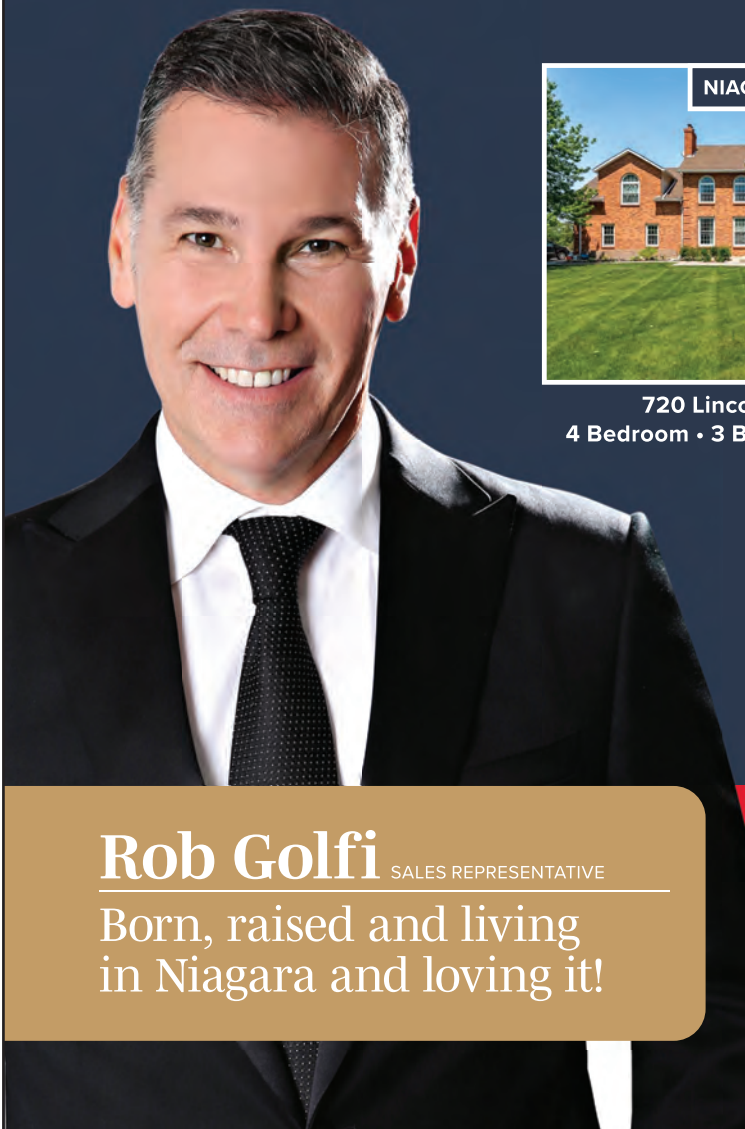
S	O	D	S	L	U	F	B
P	L	A	T	E	A	U	E
I	H	L	C	A	K	R	E
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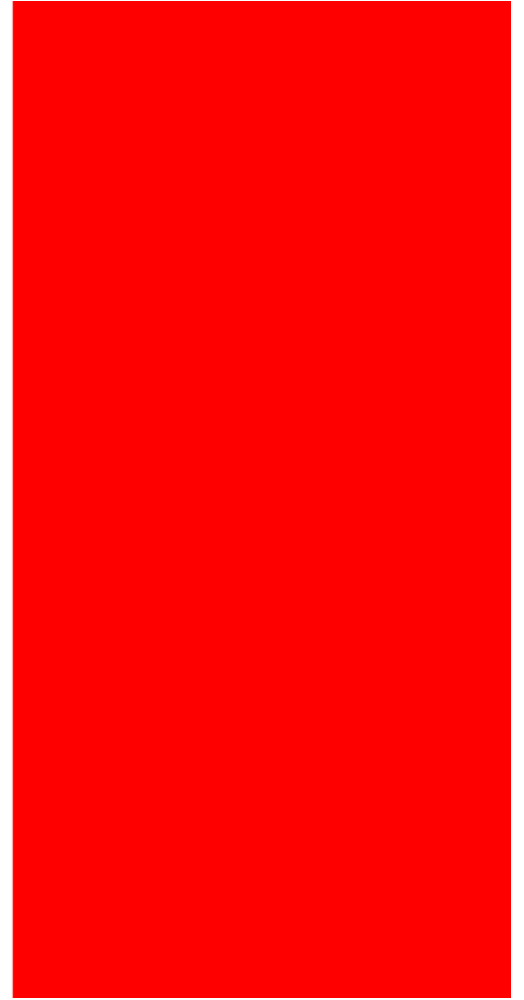


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O Canada



Canada Day activities in NOTL

Somer Slobodian
Local Journalism Initiative
The Lake Report

Canada Day is this weekend and, as always, Niagara-on-the-Lake is brimming with activities. Here's where you can celebrate right here in NOTL:

Simcoe Park

Simcoe Park is a favourite destination for kids and adults alike. There will be a barbecue from 11 a.m. to 3 p.m., kids activities all day Saturday and live entertainment all afternoon.

The giant cake parade will roll along Queen Street accompanied by the 41st Regiment Fife & Drum Corps at 3 p.m. The parade

will end at Simcoe Park where the cake will be cut and served at about 3:30 p.m.

The design of the cake, created by Willow Cakes & Pastries, remains a secret until Canada Day.

Fort George

Fort George is another great way to spend Canada Day, with free tours running all day from 10 a.m. to 10 p.m., food trucks starting at 4 p.m., historical presentations at 6:30 p.m., live music at 7:30 p.m. and a fireworks display at 10 p.m.

The historical presentations include musket demonstrations, kiddie militia and drill and the 41st Regiment Fife & Drum Corps.

Niagara-on-the-Lake Legion Branch 124

The Legion will be hosting an all day barbecue starting at noon with a DJ and live music. The legion will also be fundraising for restoration of NOTL's cenotaph.

The Irish Harp Pub

From 4 to 8 p.m., the Irish Harp Pub will be offering live music, a pig roast, cold beer and a buffet to celebrate Canada Day. More information can be found on theirishharppub.com.

Artistry by the Lake

From July 1 to 3, the NOTL Chamber of Commerce will showcase more than 80 artists and artisans at Queen's Royal Park.

NOTL Museum

The NOTL Museum will be offering free admission all day on Canada Day from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m.

Ravine Vineyard Estate Winery

Spend the day at Ravine Vineyard listening to music, enjoying some drinks and watching the fireworks display that's said to be one for the books. The fun starts at 5 p.m. and the fireworks are scheduled to start at about 10:10 p.m.

Terry Fox shirts

Joan King will be at Simcoe Park on Canada Day selling Terry Fox T-shirts. The shirts are designed by Ryan Reynolds.



Fireworks displays will be at Fort George in Old Town and Ravine Vineyard Estate Winery in St. Davids. FILE

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Caddies at the NOTL golf course

School's out and Niagara-on-the-Lake kids no doubt are excited for some summertime fun. This 1902 photograph features the Niagara Golf Club caddies goofing around near the clubhouse while on their summer break. Local boys in Niagara often found jobs at the club caddying for the wealthy visitors to town. There were two classes of caddies at the golf club. The "first-class" caddies, who earned 25 cents per round, had to have good sight, an understanding of the game and the course, and had to be well-behaved. The "second-class" caddies, who earned 20 cents for each round were required to be well-behaved and were only expected to carry the clubs. Hired caddies were required to make a deposit of \$1 at the beginning of the season to guarantee good behaviour. Enjoy your summer break, kids.

Just asking: How old is **too old** for a nation's leader?



DR. BROWN

Dr. William Brown
Columnist

American President Joe Biden is now 80 years old, and in the next presidential election in November 2024, he will be nearly 82. Four years later, near the end of what could be his second term, he will be 86.

That's nudging 90. Hence, the question — is there an age beyond which no one should be allowed to run for president?

Is there a time beyond which humans simply aren't up to snuff, cognitively speaking, for incredibly demanding jobs such as the presidency of the United States, presidents and prime ministers in other countries, cabinet ministers and supreme court justices?

Biologically speaking, the numbers aren't encouraging.

The risk of significant cognitive impairment rises steeply much past 80 and is not uncommon in the 70s,

whether from Alzheimer's disease, frontotemporal degeneration, Lewy body dementia, cerebrovascular disease or combinations of any of the above — never mind common, natural age-related senescent changes affecting the brain.

The results are various functional changes. Older people walk slower and are more prone to stumbling and falls.

They also tend to talk slower and don't process information with the same speed and fidelity as they did in their younger days.

Memory begins to fail for names and past or upcoming events. I share some of those pitfalls and know others of my generation who are only too aware of their own cognitive failings.

These familiar observations are signs the brain isn't as sharp and reliable a tool as it used to be.

Compounding these increasingly challenging cognitive issues is the fact that older people tend to tire more readily and find it harder to concentrate and focus on tasks at hand.

It's not enough, perhaps, to meet diagnostic criteria for mild cognitive impairment but is nonetheless significant and a com-



US president Joe Biden.

mon prologue to clinical dementia.

Paralleling the foregoing behavioural and performance declines are progressive structural changes in the brain such as atrophy, neocortical thinning and ventricular enlargement.

Although Biden is said to have had a speech impediment for years, his tendency to mumble and say the wrong thing except in carefully scripted speeches with the teleprompter in front of him, or when he has notes close at hand, seems to be more common as he ages.

Like most presidents, he has highly competent staff nearby to help him out, but I wonder what happens off-camera.

That doesn't mean Biden's

presidency hasn't been effective — it has. In his first term, his administration passed important new legislation such as the bill on infrastructure.

But success in achievements, such as that bill, tends to be collaborative by nature and reflects the contributions of a team, of which the president is the ultimate head but not the author of the details on which the success of so many bills depends.

I worry too because, like Ronald Reagan before him, Biden might be developing significant cognitive impairment, which might impair his judgement in the coming years.

What later became frank clinical signs of Alzheimer's disease in Reagan probably developed two to three decades earlier based on what we've learned over the years from PET scanning studies.

They reveal amyloid and tau accumulation long before "obvious" clinical manifestations develop, such as mild cognitive impairment.

Presidents don't have to be in their 80s to have cognitive issues. By 1944, former U.S. president Franklin Roosevelt was a shadow

of his former self and not up to the job at the Yalta conference of negotiating with Joseph Stalin, former premier of the Soviet Union, about post-war Europe.

Former prime minister Winston Churchill had a history of ischemic heart disease during the war and several strokes in his second term according to his physician.

Or, what about former president Lyndon B. Johnson, who had two severe periods of depression, serious enough to warrant quietly stepping back from his responsibilities, while others managed for short periods, including his wife Ladybird whose diary published after her death revealed the details.

Surely, it's in the best interests of the countries they serve to impose age limits on the presidency and other key leadership positions in cabinets, senates, parliaments and the courts.

It's not simply a matter of whether Biden, who I've chosen to highlight the problem, is competent now to fulfill the responsibilities of his job. It's whether he or others like him will be able to continue to do so throughout their terms.

If they can't, what mecha-

nisms are there for monitoring competency and removing those who are no longer cognitively competent to do their jobs?

Given the aging of so many Western countries and other countries such as Russia and China and their leaders, these are not light matters.

Leadership at high levels requires attention to biological competencies, as well as others, to serve.

Given the risks of misjudgement these days, those in power need the necessary cognitive skills, emotional maturity, energy and stamina to do their jobs effectively as a prerequisite for serving their country.

For those reasons, it makes sense to impose a limit of 80 years of age, beyond which candidates cannot serve.

Do you want the pilot and co-pilot in the cockpit of the commercial jet flying you to Europe or Australia? At least pilots have mandatory rest periods. Presidents do not.

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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Left: Boxwood blight. Right: Powdery mildew on a maple tree. JOANNE YOUNG

Hundreds of people turn out for return of Strawberry Social

Somer Slobodian
Local Journalism Initiative
The Lake Report

A little more than 280 people were at the NOTL Community Centre last Thursday for the return of the annual Strawberry Social luncheon.

It was the first fully in-person Strawberry Social since the COVID-19 pandemic began.

It's a nice way to "stay connected to the community," said Heather Henry, who was there with her mom, Mary Williams, and aunt, Florence Mearns.

"It's quite nice. I enjoy it," Mearns said.

Seniors over the age of 65 attended the social afternoon to chat, see old friends and enjoy some delicious food — and of course, strawberries.

The Strawberry Social has been running for about 24 years, and Henry's aunt, Mearns, said she's been coming since the beginning.

She said she used to volunteer, and now it's something she looks forward to every year.

"It's just exciting for everyone to be back in person. The seniors really love the event, and they look forward to it," said Marah Minor, the town's spokesperson.

Many there agreed that community functions like the Strawberry Social are a great way to get people together.

"I think social connections are really valuable and people have come to be even more aware of that because of the pandemic," said Lord Mayor Gary Zalepa.

Zalepa, along with other council members, members of staff and even MPP Wayne Gates were running around the room topping up drinks and replenishing empty salad bowls.

Minor said staff also delivered strawberry tarts to Niagara-on-the-Lake's three long-term care homes.



Top: From left, clockwise, Brigitte Ediger, Loraine Rancour, Dinie Muste, Mary Williams, Florence Mearns, Heather Henry and Irene Wall. Bottom: Anna Fish, left, and Stirling Fish have lived in NOTL for 28 years. SOMER SLOBODIAN

How to prevent garden diseases



GROWING TOGETHER 

Joanne Young
Columnist

In last week's article, I wrote about a couple of insect problems that I have been seeing in many gardens at this time.

This week, I would like to write about a couple of disease problems that you may be encountering in your own gardens as we head into the summer months and how best to treat them and/or how to prevent them from destroying your plants.

Over the past two to three years, boxwoods have been bombarded with several problems. If your boxwoods are not being attacked by the box tree moth (see my article from June 22 for a description), they could be suffering from boxwood blight.

Boxwood blight is caused by a pathogen called *Calonectria pseudonaviculata*.

This fungal disease can cause widespread leaf drop and can eventually kill the plant.

This particular blight is also known to affect the Japanese plant pachysandra. The disease first presents itself on the leaves as circular lesions with dark brown edges and black striping on the leaf stem.

As the disease progresses the leaves will turn straw colour and drop off. The fungal spores can remain viable on fallen leaves for up to five years, so it is important to clean up any dead, fallen leaves to help prevent the spread of the disease.

The sticky fungal spores can be spread by wind, rain, birds, insects, animals, gardening tools or even on clothing such as shoes, making the transmission of this disease very easy. The fungus thrives in warm, humid weather.

There is no known spray that will stop the disease, but spraying unaffected foliage with a fungicide containing chlorothalonil every 10 to 14 days will help the spread of the disease. You can also contact your local tree care services.

Make sure that you sanitize your pruners with a bleach and water solution (one part bleach to nine

parts water) after every time you prune your boxwoods as a precaution.

Powdery mildew is another fungus that appears on the leaves of a wide variety of plants from annuals and perennials to shrubs and even shade trees.

It first makes its appearance with small patches of white film on the top of the leaves that can be wiped off with your finger. As the fungus spreads, it can cover the entire leaf surface.

As it continues to progress, the leaves will often turn yellow and then brown. Powdery mildew will slow down a plant's growth and affect the overall health of the plant. In severe cases, it can even kill the plant.

The fungus is made up of spores that fly through the air due to wind as well as splashing water that land on other plants, making it highly contagious.

Unlike some fungi that require moisture to thrive, powdery mildew usually occurs after a long, dry period as we experienced several weeks ago.

Other factors that lead to the likelihood of mildew are poor air circulation around the plants and when leaves go into the evening with water on them.

The best way to keep powdery mildew from

becoming a problem is by carefully monitoring your plants on a regular basis.

As soon as you start noticing some leaves with white spots on them, pinch those leaves off and discard them — do not compost them.

Also, try to improve the air circulation around and through plants by thinning out crossing branches. Keep plants that are susceptible to powdery mildew evenly watered especially during dry periods. Don't let the soil dry out for a long period of time.

You can also use a garden fungicide spray every 10 to 14 days to stop it from spreading. Please note that with most fungicides and insecticides, you should not be using them when temperatures are over 25 C.

When shopping for new plants, look for varieties that are more resistant to powdery mildew.

Some plants that are more susceptible to powdery mildew are peonies, summer phlox, ninebark, gerbera daisies, zucchini, melons, and Norway maple.

These methods of treatment can also be applied to other fungal leaf issues such as black spot fungus.

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


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