



March Break tourney | Pages 18-19

NOTL municipal tax bill is expected to jump about 6.75%

Evan Loree
Local Journalism Initiative
The Lake Report

Niagara-on-the-Lake residents can expect a municipal tax hike of about 6.75 per cent for 2024.

The budget debate got heated when NOTL's nine elected officials discussed ways to save money in the 2024 budget.

A proposed hike of 9.88 per cent was slashed twice in two hours before

council on Feb. 29 agreed it was ready to get the seal of approval later in March.

Council decided to transfer more than \$198,000 in reserve funds into the 2024 operating budget.

That shaved 1.32 per cent off the proposed tax increase.

Council found another 1.81 per cent in savings after re-evaluating the proposed salaries for new staff positions.

The new positions, some of which were cut from the 2023 budget, were estimated to cost the town about \$661,000.

Some of the more notable positions include a mechanic, a senior planner and a

climate change co-ordinator.

When Coun. Nick Ruller said some of the staffers likely wouldn't be hired until the year was half done, staff revisited the numbers

Continued on Page 5



Is it trash or a treasure? Be prepared to toss it

From junk drawers to overstuffed basements, many of us have a lot of "stuff" we no longer need. This four-part series will help you deal with it and maybe give new life to old items.

Denise Ascenzo
The Lake Report

The "death cleaning" we all must face is a daunting task.

Many of us are cavalier about not taking responsibility for our mess and figure our kids can look after it one day.

But is this something you want them to remember you by? Like wills, power-of-attorney papers and other legal documents, looking after our own belongings is the responsible thing to do.

Arlene Stephenson of "Downsizing Divas" sug-

Continued on Page 14

Shaw lost \$5.7M in 2023

But charitable donations pushed revenue to record \$36.7 million



Despite a record operating deficit in 2023, Shaw Festival executive director Tim Jennings is optimistic about the future. EVAN LOREE

Evan Loree | Local Journalism Initiative | The Lake Report

It was a tough fiscal year for the Shaw Festival.

In the face of a rapid drop off in COVID-19 relief funds, inflation, lagging attendance and an expensive slate of productions, the non-profit theatrical

company came out of 2023 a bit worse for wear.

"We lost about \$5.7 million last year," Shaw treasurer Greg Prince told the company's annual general meeting on Friday.

The deficit came despite raking in a record \$36.7 million in revenue.

Attendance was up to about 210,000 from 171,000 in 2022, but was still short of the Shaw's pre-pandemic numbers.

Prince said the Shaw hosted about 267,000 people in 2019.

"Audiences didn't come back as quickly as we thought they would," he said.

Continued on Page 4



Mckenzie Wright.

One point seals NOTL boxer's fate at Olympic qualifier

Kevin MacLean
The Lake Report

A single point and a lone judge who saw her bout differently was all it took to derail boxer Mckenzie Wright's latest quest to

compete in the Paris 2024 Summer Olympics.

The St. Davids fighter narrowly lost a qualifying bout to eventual champion Aira Villegas of the Philippines in the 50-kilogram weight class at a tournament

in Italy last Friday.

Wright will now compete in one final tournament in Bangkok, Thailand, in May where she'll battle for a chance to live out her Olympic dream.

While she's disappointed

with the latest result, Wright is pleased with her performance in Busto Arsizio, near Milan.

"The experience of competing at such a high level with everything on the line is the most exciting thing

I will ever do so I am still always appreciating every moment because I know one day I will miss it," she told The Lake Report shortly after returning to Canada on

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Saga of **illegally paved** conservation land finally resolved

Evan Loree
Local Journalism Initiative
The Lake Report

The town has granted a developer permission to pave over conservation land — more than five years after the work was completed.

In 2018, the developer Vrancor Group, responsible for two neighbouring hotels in Glendale — Holiday Inn Express and Staybridge Suites — built a private roadway connecting Glendale Avenue to Counsell Street and a parking lot on conservation land adjacent to the QEW, at 524 York Rd.

Now, years later, Vrancor and Niagara-on-the-Lake have agreed to some mitigating steps to restore the once-protected land by planting some trees and shrubs.

Council approved a bylaw Feb. 27 that rezones the land, now a parking lot and roadway, for commercial uses.

The lot and roadway were built without the town's approval in 2018, according to a staff report discussed at a meeting on Feb. 6.

"I'm just concerned that we're saying, 'That was then and now we're just going to



A car drives through environmental conservation lands that were paved over by Vrancor Inc. in 2018. The road connects Glendale Avenue to Counsell Street. The town has retroactively granted permission to pave it. FILE

approve it all,' " Coun. Gary Burroughs told his peers.

He asked if the town could levy fines on the landowners for paving the land ahead of approval.

Director of planning Kirsten McCauley said no, as it has been over five years since the land was paved.

"The woodlands were

there a lot longer than that," Burroughs said.

There was a "bit of a miscommunication" over the roadway approvals when Vrancor dug up the land, McCauley said.

Later, Coun. Sandra O'Connor told The Lake Report she wasn't sure how the roadway's construction went ahead without

the town's consent but said the developer had not done its "due diligence" to get it right in the first place.

The developer completed all the required environmental research before it started digging, McCauley said.

On the town's website, an environmental impact study dated November 2016 is

attached to the developer's application for planning amendments with three addendums.

Myler Ecological Consulting, an environmental consulting firm retained by the developer, reported in one addendum in April 2021 that the construction of the driveway and parking lot was "insufficient to threaten

the health and integrity of the woodland or its ecological functions."

The zoning changes approved by council bring the unapproved driveway into compliance with town zoning bylaws.

The developer will be required to plant two shrubs or trees for every tree or shrub that was removed during the construction period, the staff report says.

O'Connor, citing an appendix of agency comments brought to the meeting, said regional staff felt the mitigation measures were not sufficient given the encroachment of the driveway.

This much has been resolved, McCauley said.

Some of the plantings will take place in a nearby ravine, west of the hotels and north of York Road, according to the staff report.

The report also says the developer will have to submit an annual ecological report and allow the town to visit the site for inspections.

O'Connor said it was "very frustrating" it had taken so long to resolve the problem.

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Tickets, please! Did Virgil speed cam catch you?



Staff
The Lake Report

Did you get a surprise in the mail, a ticket for speeding through the school zone outside Crossroads Public School in Virgil?

The automated speed camera has been operating for about two months now but Niagara Region, which

installed it, hasn't been too forthcoming yet about how much over the limit you need to be going in order to get dinged.

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people have been fined.

Send an email to editor@niagaranow.com and include a snapshot of your ticket and tell us your story, briefly. And no, we won't publish your name – unless you ask us to.

In April, the Virgil camera is scheduled to move to York Road near St. Davids Public School.

St. Davids desperately seeks sidewalks

Evan Loree
Local Journalism Initiative
The Lake Report

St. Davids is not a safe place for pedestrians, some residents say.

Two representatives of the St. Davids Ratepayers Association, a membership club representing the interests of the village's residents, urged council to support their effort to get sidewalks and crosswalks built on dangerous roads in their community.

"We want to improve the walkability and accessibility of the village," said resident Mike Pearsall at council's committee of the whole planning meeting in March 5.

In the end, the issue was too complicated to resolve then and there, so council asked staff to assess the needs of pedestrians in St. Davids and report back with recommendations for safer sidewalks and crosswalks in the community.

Pearsall, and neighbour John Gartner, want to build sidewalks on York Road, from Four Mile Creek Road to Lions Park on York Road, and on Four Mile Creek, from Millpond to the post office.

It's not possible to get from the village centre to the park and pool safely by walking, Pearsall said.

"It doesn't really make any sense that you can't walk in front of our park and our pool," said Coun. Adriana Vizzari, who also lives in St. Davids.

Pearsall estimates it would cost about \$300,000 to build the sidewalks.

"It's not something we expect to be done this year," he said.



Coun. Adriana Vizzari says pedestrian safety is not a new issue in St. Davids. EVAN LOREE

Pearsall also wants a new crosswalk on Four Mile Creek, near David Secord Drive.

It would cost the town about \$10,000 to add button-activated, flashing signs with audible warnings on either side of the crosswalk, plus the cost of paint, if it wanted to install a similar crosswalk to the one crossing Niagara Stone Road near Anderson Lane, Pearsall said.

"My only concern is that we're going to build sidewalks on a regional road," said Coun. Gary Burroughs.

The region owns both York and Four Mile Creek roads, meaning it's responsible for any construction on them.

The town would have to go to the region if it wanted to start construction at either location proposed by Pearsall.

Regardless of questions of how the infrastructure gets

built, there was a consensus on the need for it.

Before she joined council, Vizzari said she approached the region for a sidewalk on York Road to help keep her kids safe from traffic as they walk to school.

"The solution from the region was they started busing my kids. They bus one kilometre to St. Davids school because that road is uncrossable," she said. Gartner said he is reluctant to cross Four Mile Creek Road since losing his eyesight in the last three years.

"Since this happened to me, I basically have not crossed it without assistance from others," he said.

Improvements to pedestrian walkways in St. Davids, especially at the intersection of Four Mile Creek and York roads, are part of a five-year roadwork plan valued by the region at \$84 million.

Coun. Maria Mavridis didn't want to wait for the designs of a roundabout planned for that intersection before taking action, though.

She said she wants to get something done during this term of council.

Vizzari agreed. "It's funny to hear 'maybe two years out,' on a sidewalk in front of a rec facility that's been around since the '70s," she said, asking if there is a way to expedite the work.

Coun. Erwin Wiens cautioned against the move to rush a report back to council.

He said residents on East and West Line had been waiting for a staff report about clean drinking water for over a year now.

"We always have to remember when we're expediting reports what we have to leave behind."

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Legion honours contest winners

The Niagara-on-the-Lake branch of the Royal Canadian Legion is handing out first, second and third-place plaques to the winners of its annual Youth Remembrance Contest. In the first two weeks of March, Lori Beak, Stan Harrington and Henry Adamowski of the NOTL Legion gave plaques and cheques to students from four different schools across town. The contest, which takes place in communities across Canada, invites Canadian youth to honour the country's veterans and foster the tradition of remembrance through visual art, writing and video. In total, the Legion handed out almost 120 plaques to students across town after receiving 400 submissions of essays, poster art and poetry from NOTL's kids. First-place winners received a cheque for \$20, second-place winners got \$15 and third-placers received \$10. Beak said the submissions are evaluated by volunteer judges, Penny-Lynn Cookson, Gale Kerr and David Antscherl. The contest takes place across town, but the winners have the chance to have their work entered into progressively wider contests, the largest of which takes place at the national level Beak, who helps the Legion co-ordinate the program, told The Lake Report they choose the top submissions from the primary, junior and intermediate levels to be judged at the zone level, which includes up to 16 municipalities from the Niagara and Hamilton regions. EVAN LOREE



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2023 an 'investment' for Shaw Festival

Continued from Front Page

Predictably, the lingering impacts of COVID put a dent in attendance rates, but summer wildfires also had an impact, Prince said.

Shaw board chair Ian Joseph said the company had planned for a deficit in 2023 but was not anticipating the reality of that loss.

In response, Joseph said they were planning to cut operating costs back by 12 per cent for 2024.

Despite the budget cuts, Joseph said 2024 will be a "year for growth" and the Shaw will continue to invest in its artists and staff.

One Shaw asset in need of investment is the Royal George Theatre on Queen Street.

The old theatre is "well beyond its intended lifespan," said Joseph.

Executive director Tim Jennings said the clay foundation is "slowly dissolving" and its basement is prone to flooding.

"Fixing the George is something that has to happen," he said during a question-and-answer period.

Illnesses plagued the



Shaw treasurer Greg Prince says the theatre company ran a \$5.7-million deficit in 2023. EVAN LOREE

Shaw's shows throughout the 2023 season, too.

"I don't believe we had one week of the season that had less than five people out," Jennings said.

However, the annual meeting was not just doom and gloom.

The \$36.7 million in revenue was helped by about \$15.5 million in charitable donations, Joseph said. That also was a record total for Shaw.

Jennings said attendance is trending up for the first

couple of months of 2024 and, if those trends hold, it would put the Shaw ahead of its 2024 budget.

"We're getting back to what I call normal fairly soon," he added.

It wasn't just about the numbers on the page, though.

"I remind myself that financial success as a charity is not the only thing that drives us," Jennings said.

Artistically, "it was the biggest season in our history," Jennings said.

"If all we were trying to do was save money, we wouldn't have done the 'Mahabharata,'" said artistic director Tim Carroll.

The adaptation of a 4,000-year-old Sanskrit epic poem, staged as a two-day production spanning more than five hours in total, was not expected to make much money, but Shaw also is focused on investing in new audiences, Carroll said.

"If we had been thinking about things like average ticket price, we wouldn't do family programming," he added.

Family shows are lower priced but it's important to invest in young audiences to preserve the future of live theatre, Carroll said.

Shaw, with its non-profit business model, does not break even on its shows, Jennings said.

To do so, the company would have to ratchet up ticket prices into the \$400 range.

That would make the Shaw inaccessible to a wide range of people and is not how the company operates, Jennings said.

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Residents will see town tax bill rise **\$91** this year

Continued from Front Page

to reflect the reality of the future labour costs.

Those living in the urban area will pay one per cent more for stormwater services in 2024.

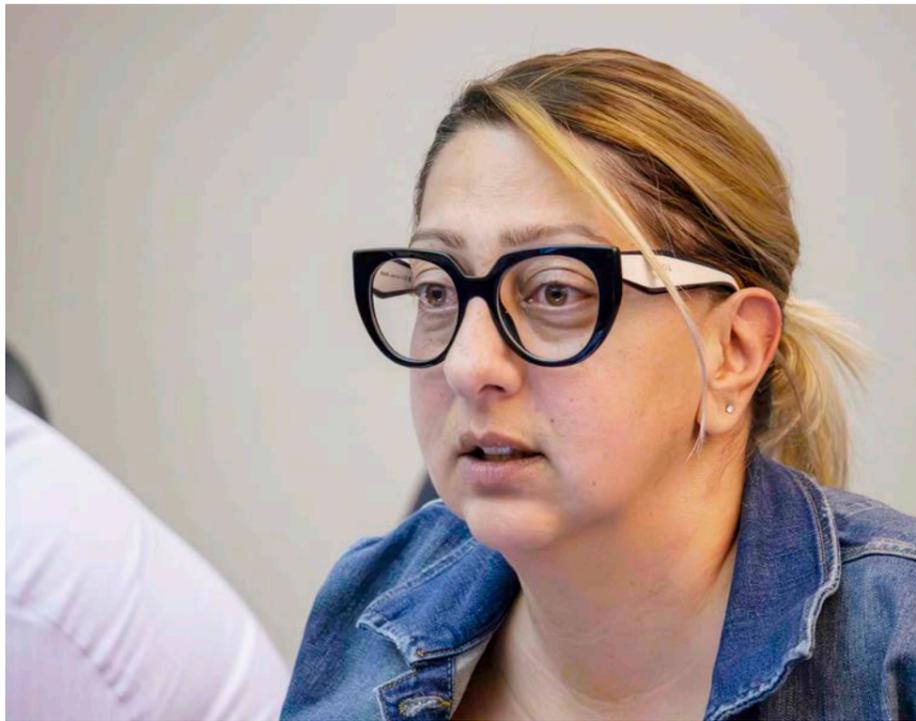
The municipal portion of last year's average annual property tax bill was about \$1,328 (before school and regional levies) on a home assessed at \$544,000.

The town's 6.75 per cent increase will bump that up about \$91 annually, to about \$1,419.

That's \$40 less than the average total of \$1,459 that staff calculated would come with the 9.88 per cent increase.

It took intense discussions to get there, with some councillors advocating for increased spending on labour and infrastructure, and others advising caution in the use of taxpayers' money. "This municipality needs to be properly resourced," said Lord Mayor Gary Zalepa, adding that talks of budget cuts are "endemic" to under-resourced organizations.

And if council wants to successfully deliver on the promises made in its strate-



Coun. Maria Mavridis says NOTL councillors are the lowest paid in the region. She tried unsuccessfully to have council include a 2.5 per cent pay raise in the 2024 budget. EVAN LOREE

gic plan, it must be ready to fund them.

Burroughs was not prepared to swallow the 9.8 per cent hike.

"You're not paying for it, our residents are paying for it. And that's why we have to be cautious with the spending," he said.

Rather than arguing for labour and infrastructure cuts, Burroughs said the

town needs to accurately report its revenue streams.

He said money from the 2022 room tax was still not reflected in the town's budgeting process and ought to be considered before council agrees to hike the levy.

Burroughs said Coun. Erwin Wiens wouldn't run his business the way the town does.

"You're darn tootin' I wouldn't run my business this way," Wiens said.

He argued previous councils routinely underfunded staff.

"You guys cut and cut and cut, and used up all our reserves, and spent it all on legal, and then you dumped this bag of dog crap on us," Wiens said.

It was reckless for council

to spend money fighting developers at the Ontario Land Tribunal, which resolves land disputes, despite having a losing track record and regardless of staff recommendations, he said.

Referring to a three-storey condo proposal at the end of King Street, he said council just approved \$80,000 in lawyer fees trying to fight it.

"I'm sure I'm being blamed for most of the condition we're in now," said Burroughs, who has been involved in town politics for the last 25 years.

The reality, he said, is running a town is not the same as running a business.

As Coun. Sandra O'Connor noted, "Businesses make profits, governments provide services."

The proposed budget allocates \$650,000 for legal fees for 2024, \$150,000 more than was budgeted in 2023.

Though the town budgeted \$500,000 in 2023, Freeborn said the best estimate for actual legal costs in 2023 was \$760,000.

That figure is subject to change as the town is still closing out the costs from 2023, he said.

Coun. Maria Mavridis said the \$150,000 fig-

ure does not "honestly" represent the town's legal expenses.

Mavridis also pitched a 2.5 per cent pay increase for the eight councillors, saying they were the lowest-paid in the region.

Staff had already planned to spend 2 per cent more on councillors for 2024.

Mavridis later told The Lake Report it was about the principle, not the money.

"Council is a full-time job when you care," she said.

And Coun. Wendy Chero-pita, who supported it, said it would have a small impact on the levy.

The proposed raise would have added about \$5,600 to the nearly \$227,000 budgeted for council salaries in the proposed budget.

She could not muster enough support from her peers, though, who cited procedural issues.

"At first blush, I can't support this," Zalepa said.

He said there was a "good process in place" to determine their salaries and the budget committee meeting was not the place for it.

The budget will be brought back to council March 26 for final approval.

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Town wants to **expand** heritage registry before end of year

Evan Loree
Local Journalism Initiative
The Lake Report

In a game of tug of war with the province, Niagara-on-the-Lake municipal staffers are looking to tighten their grip on the town's heritage assets.

Under advice from town staff, the municipal heritage committee approved plans to have more properties on the town's list of heritage properties properly designated, before newly set provincial deadlines expire.

Municipalities are required to keep a register of properties designated under the Ontario Heritage Act, but it may also include non-designated properties if they are of heritage interest to the town.

With the passing of Bill 23, the More Homes Built Faster Act, in November 2022, the province introduced changes to the Ontario Heritage Act.

One change requires towns designate all properties on their registers within two years or have them forcibly removed.

Under Bill 23, properties that are removed from the register cannot be returned to the list for at least five years, town heritage planner Sumra Zia told the heritage committee on March 5.

Listing properties on the town's heritage register provides "interim protection from demolition," Zia said in a report attached to the meeting agenda.

However, designation under the Ontario Heritage

Act provides more robust protection.

According to the town's website, properties with Part IV designation cannot be altered without the consent of town council.

"We're under enormous amount of pressure with limited resources," committee member David Snelgrove said.

He asked if the town had reached out to higher levels of government that could ease the workload with legislative support.

Chief town planner Kirsten McCauley said the town had spoken to the ministry of citizenship and multiculturalism official seeking for such support at the 2024 conference of the Rural Ontario Municipal Association.



Not only is the town planning to fill out its heritage registry in 2025, it is planning to expand the heritage district in Old Town. EVAN LOREE

The town made a similar request to the ministry at the same event in 2023.

Because the undesignated properties on the town's register are set to expire in December, staff are looking to build a register full of new properties that have not previously been included on the list.

Zia emphasized that the undesignated properties on the list will be "completely removed" in December.

Before it can decide what makes the list for 2025, the town needs to collect data on its heritage prospects, she said.

She said the town would be setting up "working groups" consisting of mem-

bers of the committee and qualified volunteers.

The groups will survey the town for properties that could be added to the heritage register.

The data could then be reviewed by staff with support from Brock University, the NOTL Public Library and the NOTL Museum.



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A toast to women



Niagara College students Melisa Quiverio and Lina Farfan show off their Pink Boots brew — Rose Parks New Zealand Pilsner — they created for International Women's Day on March 8. The brew was one of four created by women enrolled in the college's brewmaster and brewery operations management program as well as staff and volunteers from Niagara's School of Wine, Beer and Spirits in support of women and non-binary people in the beer industry. Other beers included Rose Wellies, Pale Moonlight American Pale Ale and Knock Your Pink Boots Off. The project was supported by the Pink Boots Society, which helps women pursuing careers in beer making through teaching and scholarships. SUPPLIED

NOTLers play a round in the sunny south

Many Niagara-on-the-Lake residents are fortunate to escape winter for a few days, weeks or months. NOTL golfers Glenn Young and Randy McCartney arranged to meet up for a round at the picturesque Grand Cayman North Sound Club. SUPPLIED



Chamber program helps Niagara charities



An initiative that grew out of the Canadian Chamber of Commerce's group insurance benefits program to help small businesses offer benefits to their employees is now helping grassroots community organizations in Niagara. The Johnston Group's Higher Purpose Program contributes to community organizations by matching donations made by their local advisers to Niagara businesses. As part of the program, last week, the Garrett Insurance Group's charitable Agape Fund presented cheques totalling \$11,000 to Red Roof Retreat, Big Brothers Big Sisters Niagara and Youth Unlimited. On hand for the presentation were Jeremy Garrett, Cindy Haines and Red Roof's Steffanie Bjorgan. Red Roof and Youth Unlimited each received \$3,000 while Big Brothers Big Sisters received \$5,000. SUPPLIED

Pumphouse exhibit celebrates *journey of aging*

Staff
The Lake Report

A Niagara-on-the-Lake painter who brought a huge splash of colour to Virgil last fall with a mural paying tribute to agriculture workers is set to showcase a solo art exhibition this spring.

Ron Clavier will be hosting his show, titled “Coming of Age,” at the Niagara Pumphouse Arts Centre from April 2 to 28.

The exhibition’s goal is to challenge the conventional notion of “coming of age,” typically tied to legal adulthood based on age.

Instead, the artist is encouraging viewers to appreciate the continuous process of personal growth, regardless of age.

“Coming of Age,” the exhibition, consists of 17 representational figurative canvases, each reflecting Clavier’s philosophical beliefs.

“Aiming beyond mere aesthetic appeal, the paintings prompt viewers to reflect on their own experiences and perceptions,” read a media release from the arts centre. “The artist defies artistic boundaries,



“Remembering Giverny” by Ron Clavier. SUPPLIED

incorporating diverse styles and subjects throughout his career.”

As a neuroscientist, psychologist, author, and educator, Clavier values shared perspectives.

In 2023, he collaborated with the Pumphouse Arts Centre to create a giant mural completed on the Niagara Orchard and Vineyard Corp. building on Niagara Stone Road, completed last November.

The mural, based on an original oil painting of his called “Days End,” depicts a farmer looking out into a field, and represents the town’s farming community — whom he calls the

“heroes” of Niagara-on-the-Lake.

Clavier’s art serves as an invitation to spark a dialogue with viewers.

The exhibition invites its visitors to consider the challenges and rewards of aging.

Despite the changes that come with age, each painting highlights the “upside” of growing older.

The public is invited to the show’s opening reception on Sunday, April 7, from 2 to 4 p.m.

Attendees will have the opportunity to personally engage with the artist, savour the artwork and connect with fellow art appreciators over refreshments

and nibbles.

This event is supported by Château des Charmes, providing an assortment of fine wines.

In conjunction with the exhibition, a talk titled “Eye to Eye with the Artist: A Conversation with Ron Clavier ‘Coming of Age’” will be held on April 13 and 26.

Open to the public at no charge, Clavier will lead the discussion on aging and dispelling misconceptions in society’s emphasis on youth.

More information about the exhibition, which will run in the Joyner Gallery, can be found at niagarapumphouse.ca/exhibitions.



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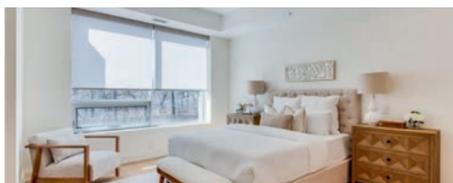
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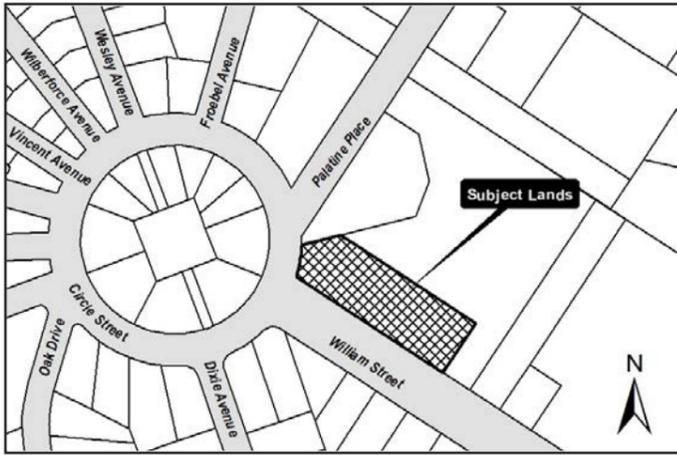
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NOTICE OF INTENTION TO PASS AMENDING ZONING BY-LAW TO REMOVE HOLDING (H) SYMBOL



What:

Notice of Intention to Pass an Amending Zoning By-law to Remove Holding (H) Symbol (under Section 36 of the Planning Act, R.S.O. 1990 as amended).

Regarding:

File ZBA-03-2024 – 455 William Street Subdivision, Niagara-on-the-Lake

What is this?

The Zoning By-law amendment application proposes to remove the Holding (H) symbol that applies to the subject lands (see location map) through site specific Zoning By-law 4316DM-19. The Holding (H) symbol shall be removed upon final approval of a plan of subdivision on the property. The required conditions of final subdivision approval have been satisfied through a separate process with the Town (File 26T-18-20-02). Removal of the Holding (H) symbol will permit development of the plan of subdivision (5 lots for single-detached dwellings) with the existing site-specific Zoning By-law provisions.

The Council for the Town of Niagara-on-the Lake may pass the proposed Zoning By-law Amendment to remove the Holding (H) symbol from the subject lands no earlier than the **March 26, 2024** Council meeting. However, Council may consider the proposed Zoning By-law Amendment at a later meeting. Under Section 36(3) of the Planning Act, only the applicant has appeal rights with respect to the removal of a Holding (H) symbol. There are no third-party rights to appeal the proposed Zoning By-law Amendment.

Town Hall is open for the public to attend Committee of the Whole and Council Meetings in-person. Alternatively, the public will continue to have the option to register in advance to participate electronically.

If you wish to participate electronically to make an oral presentation or ask questions at the Council meeting, you must register in advance with the Town Clerk (clerks@notl.com or 905-468-3266). You will receive an email on the date of the meeting with instructions to connect to the Council meeting on your computer, tablet or telephone.

If you wish to attend the Council meeting in-person, registration with the Clerk is appreciated.

If you wish to view the Council meeting for information purposes, registration is not required. The meeting will be recorded and available for viewing on the Town's website at <https://www.notl.com/council-government/mayor-council/meetings-agendas-minutes>.

Please contact Victoria Nikoltcheva, Planner II, at 905-468-6451 or via email at victoria.nikoltcheva@notl.com if additional information is required.

A copy of the application and supporting documents for the proposal may be obtained on the Town's website, <https://www.notl.com/business-development/public-planning-notices> or at the Community and Development Services Department within Town Hall (1593 Four Mile Creek Road, Virgil, ON).

Dated at the Town of Niagara-on-the-Lake, **March 14, 2024.**

Grant Bivol, Town Clerk



Women in wine celebrated

Top: Alli Findlay, head winemaker at Niagara College, Emma Smalley, assistant winemaker and Brett Rumble, co-owner of Barbea Wine Shop & Snack Bar. The two college winemakers were celebrated at a winemaker's dinner on Wednesday, March 6 at Ruffino's and Barbea. Dinner, prepared by Ruffino's chefs, was paired with various Dean's List wines from the college. Bottom: Niagara College public relations students were an integral part of setting up the dinner to honour females in the wine business. Back row, from left: Students Katelyn Partington, Alysha Bachelor, Sarah Fisher, Niagara College president Sean Kennedy, Niagara College Teaching Winery general manager Steve Gill, Niagara College vice-president, academic Fiona Allan. Front row, Glory Plume, Niagara College Teaching Winery events co-ordinator Jessica NealEllis, Naomi Fox. RICHARD HARLEY

Reif, Pillitteri wines win in Texas

Staff
The Lake Report

Two Niagara-on-the-Lake wineries were winners at an annual wine competition in the United States.

Reif Estate Winery's 2019 Grand Reserve icewine was awarded a judges' selection and best of show award for icewine style at TEXSOM, which brings in top tasters from across the world to judge wines from around the globe.

As well, Pillitteri Estates Winery took home six medals in the competition.

Gold medals went to Pillitteri's Reisling and Vidal ice wines, its Cabernet and Cabernet Franc icewines took silver along with its

Fusion Gewurztraminer-Riesling, and the Exclamation Cabernet Franc won a bronze medal.

Reif president Klaus Reif was pleased with the honour.

"While of course, it is always a pleasure to have our wines recognized around the world, there are some awards that feel extra special, and this one of them," he said in a news release.

"To win one of the highest and most coveted awards of the competition is immensely rewarding for the entire winemaking team," he said.

A total of 102 entries, demonstrating quality and unique character that are exceptional even among

their medal-winning peers, received a judges' selection nomination, which were elevated to Platinum medals.

The judges' selection nominees were subjected to head-to-head judging and 44, including Reif's entry, were awarded a judges' selection medal and best of show as the highest award of the competition.

Reif, one of Niagara-on-the-Lake's founding family wineries, opened in 1982.

The 125-acre vineyard planted in 1977 now produces a complete range of varieties used in the production of all estate bottled wines, including Reif's signature Vidal icewine, a perennial medal winner.

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Kids meet Lego challenge



Richard Hutton
Local Journalism Initiative
The Lake Report

Budding young builders put their skills to the test as the Niagara-on-the-Lake Public Library hosted its Lego competition Monday — part of the library's March Break activity program for kids.

"We've been seeing a lot of interest in Lego," said Sharon McDonald, children's library service associate. "We thought we'd put that to good use."

In all, 16 kids between the ages of seven and 10 were on hand for the event.

The kids were divided into three groups and tasked with different timed challenges, including one in which they had to make a person out of plastic bricks with their eyes closed.

"There were five rounds of activities that featured teamwork," McDonald said.

hutton@niagaranow.com



Annabelle Poapst recreated the space station from the Lego Movie at the Niagara-on-the-Lake Public Library's Lego competition Monday. Bottom: Mathilda Montgomery shows off her handiwork library's Lego competition.
RICHARD HUTTON



Cindy Carter's miniature "Rainbow Bridge" is a way of remembering the pets she's had in her life. It is for sale at Pet Valu in Virgil with proceeds to NOTL Cats Rescue. JULIA SACCO

Miniatures support NOTL Cats

Julia Sacco
The Lake Report

Cindy Carter is downsizing her handmade miniature collection and Niagara-on-the-Lake residents have the opportunity to get their hands on them — in support of a good cause.

To support NOTL Cats Rescue, Carter has donated several miniatures to Pet Valu in Virgil, where they will be on display for bidding.

Carter, who handmakes the miniatures along with her friend Linda, said that this partnership allows them to keep on hobbying without running out of space in their homes.

"We both love doing it, but for a small hobby it sure does take up a lot of room," Carter told The Lake Report.

She brings in different models whenever one sells out and a bidding sheet is

available at the front of the store.

Money raised from sales of the miniatures will go toward NOTL Cats Rescue and helping house kitties in need.

Winners are urged to pick up their item if they've won past auctions.

Those interested in buying other miniatures including houses, furniture and more can reach Carter at 905-468-5063 before 6 p.m., daily.

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Contributed by Patty Garriock

“You have to start where you are. There is nothing wrong with being where you are – it’s one of the infinite experiences available to us.”
 - Thaddeus Golos

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Sun halo shines on NOTL

Reader Sharon Frayne took this photo from her Old Town backyard on Monday afternoon. “I’ve never seen a sun halo before! It only lasted a few minutes,” she said, adding that her camera “didn’t capture the yellow/purple glow at the outer ring.”

According to the U.S. National Weather Service, “A halo is a ring or light that forms around the sun or moon as the sun or moon light refracts off ice crystals present in a thin veil of cirrus clouds. The halo is usually seen as a bright white ring, although sometimes it can have colour.”

Editorials

Fighting to represent Canada

Kevin MacLean
 Managing Editor

It was perhaps fitting that Niagara-on-the-Lake boxer Mckenzie Wright’s latest ring battle occurred on International Women’s Day.

Fighting in the 50-kilogram weight class, the diminutive 33-year-old Niagara College nursing grad is pound-for-pound one of the toughest, grittiest people we’ve ever encountered, male or female.

As a Canadian champion multiple times, Wright has travelled the world — often at her own expense — to literally fight for her country. And she’s done us all proud.

Her goal is to represent

Canada at the 2024 Paris Olympic Games this summer and she continues to come oh-so-close to making that dream a reality.

Last Friday, in her latest bid to make the grade for Paris, Wright was edged out by Aira Villegas of the Philippines by the slimmest of margins at an Olympic qualifying tournament in Italy.

She lost by a single point in a match that turned on the decision of one judge whose assessment of the fight was not in Canadian’s favour.

Villegas went on to handily win the division and punch her own ticket for Paris.

It was a tough bout, “a war,” as Wright told The Lake Report. And one we feel she deserved to win.

We only can imagine what the overall outcome of the tournament would have been if the judging panel had ruled in favour of the Canadian champ.

She won two of the three rounds, but lost the fight. It seems unfair and illogical, but sometimes that’s the reality of a judged sport.

Wright is not letting that deter her, as she prepares for one more chance to qualify for Paris.

In May, she will travel to Bangkok, Thailand, to train and compete in yet

another tournament.

As Wright herself pointed out, “Once again I am proving I belong at the highest level of boxing in the world.” That’s not a humble brag; it’s the truth.

She’s worked for years to get to this point and deserves the support and well wishes of us all as she heads to the other side of the world to fight for Canada. And herself.

Meanwhile, she won’t be resting on her laurels. Later this week she expects to be back at City Boxing Club in Niagara Falls, preparing to make her Olympic dream a reality.

editor@niagaranow.com

Two outside-the-box ideas worth discussing

Kevin MacLean
 Managing Editor

Generally, we refrain from commenting on issues raised in letters to the editor.

That is the readers’ forum. But two items intrigued us in recent weeks, so we wanted to highlight them, despite the fact they might be considered wild pipe dreams.

Resident Elizabeth Mason, in a presentation to council and a letter in our

pages, suggested that, after years of battles, Solmar Development Corp. owner Benny Marotta consider donating the Rand Estate to the community.

His family has already given millions to Niagara College and the region’s hospitals, so why not consider donating the property at 200 John St. and 588 Charlotte St. to the town?

Think of the legacy that would offer a man who has been vilified by many in the community. It’s a

historic site and could be revamped as a public property. Details to be determined.

A long shot? Probably. However, it’s been done elsewhere (think, Toronto’s Casa Loma, though that became a civic property due to unpaid taxes). But nothing ventured, nothing gained.

Another reader suggestion also involves Marotta.

Letter writer Samuel Young suggested the town negotiate a deal to sell the old NOTL hospital site

to Marotta as part of a deal to also build a much-needed, modern long-term care home on the site of the soon-to-close Upper Canada Lodge.

It’s complicated because the region owns Upper Canada, but rather than let the old hospital site remain derelict, is there an opportunity to build something in both places that benefits the community? And offers a lasting legacy for all involved?

editor@niagaranow.com

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LETTER OF THE WEEK

A stunning edition celebrating International Women's Day

Dear editor:
 I just received the latest edition of The Lake Report and I am stunned beyond words.

What a breathtaking photo on the front page of Niagara-on-the-Lake women celebrating International Women's Day.

It warmed my heart as I'm sure it did for all who received the paper.

You had spectacular weather and clearly a very talented photographer who was able to capture this moment with such clarity.

But it didn't end there. What an honour it was to

even be mentioned in your Honour Roll on page 14.

When it comes to newspapers I am very old-fashioned. This will be one of those editions that I will cherish and keep for my grandchildren.

It is yet another reason to keep newspapers in print format. They are often "keepers." When everything turns digital one day, this will be even more valuable to me.

Your International Women's Day initiative should stir even more awards for The Lake Report in the future. You

have set a standard that should travel across this great country.

Yes, women have a certain strength that comes from the heart. We are fuelled by a different form of propulsion than men, which historically often meant we were powerless.

But thank the good Lord this has changed. The special recognition your paper has shown is all part of that remarkable change.

Thank you sincerely not only from myself, but for every woman and girl who showed up for the wonderful photo.



I will indeed regret it forever that my daughter Tanya and I were unable to make it on that sunny Monday morning.

My gratitude runs deeper than the Niagara River. Bless you all at The Lake Report.

Trisha Romance
 NOTL

Is tourism strategy report being skewed by town?

Dear editor:

As we await the publication of Niagara-on-the-Lake's tourism strategy report, it was amusing to read about the committee members, and others, sanitizing particular sections of the report and collating the numerous changes, prior to releasing the edited edition to council for approval.

Of particular note is the proposal by committee member Vlad Haltigin that one photo in the document be replaced with one that doesn't make the tourist district look crowded. That's pathetic.

It was also proposed that a photo of the Niagara-on-the-Lake Ambassadors group be included. Do I see Coun. Wendy Cheropita's fingerprints all over the Ambassadors' inclusion?

The report in its final form will clearly be contrived to support the select few representing their sacred cow industries and businesses — in short, a con job and a waste of consultants' fees.

Do they really think all NOTL residents are stupid?

Samuel Young
 NOTL

Chief librarian deserves to be commended

Dear editor:
 I have read Niagara-on-the-Lake Public Library CEO Cathy Simpson's opinion piece respecting Freedom to Read Week, ("Censorship and what we are allowed to read," The Lake Report, Feb. 22), and the letter to the editor authored by Matthew French, "Opinion piece espoused right wing talking points," which appeared in the Feb. 29 edition.



Niagara-on-the-Lake Library CEO Cathy Simpson.

I happen to agree with the sentiments expressed by Ms. Simpson, but more importantly her right to express them.

However, I found Mr. French's comments about her, which were dripping with hostility, extremely disappointing.

Although I believe he had a right to express his views, it seems to me they were misguided and offensive.

Rather than rebut her views, he chose to attack her personally and in a manner that to me was aimed at harming her both emotionally and economically, which I find both ironic and hypocritical.

Lost in Mr. French's rhetoric is the fact that today's orthodoxy is tomorrow's heterodoxy. And who is it that determines what constitutes "orthodoxy" as opposed to "heterodoxy"?

What constitutes ortho-

doxy is largely subjective. If it is interpreted too liberally, as it appears Mr. French does, to cover every recent fad, it would eliminate much meritorious literature.

I believe Ms. Simpson's expressing the need to permit more diverse content at the library needs to be supported.

She should be commended, rather than pilloried, for having the courage to express her views and refusal to be intimidated by those with Mr. French's worldview.

Anthony Powell
 NOTL

Dear editor:

As a Mennonite, my ancestors came to Canada so we could live out our cultural and spiritual values — mainly our commitment to non-violence.

We commit our lives to rejecting violence and resisting injustice wherever we encounter it.

Sadly, many Mennonites have lost our way and fallen in step with upholding the status quo that further marginalizes our neighbours who experience daily violence — people who are homeless, queer, disabled, migrants and refugees, Black and Indigenous. And people who are Palestinian.

The good news is that hundreds of Mennonites (including myself and

people from my church) are organizing across the United States and Canada during Holy Week to call on our elected representatives to support an immediate and permanent ceasefire, increased humanitarian aid, a release of all hostages (all for all), an end to weapons funding and an end to the occupation of Palestine.

As Mennonites, it's our duty and our inheritance to speak out against violence, especially state-sanctioned violence and genocide. Will you join me?

Email buns-not-bombs@protonmail.com to learn more about how you can be part of the peaceful solution.

Kit Andres
 NOTL

Has tree worshipping become the new religion?

Dear editor:
 It has been years since I have read such a heartless letter by Beth Macdonald, "Time to change thinking about our environment," (The Lake Report, March 7).

In Ms. Macdonald's world, the preservation of trees outweighs a grandparent's desire to make their yard more inviting for visiting grandchildren or outweighs an elderly senior's desire to remain in their home, which they may have lived in for decades, because they can no longer deal with their "messy" trees.

Unlike other letters published in The Lake Report on this topic at least Ms. Macdonald makes passing reference to the "danger" presented by trees.

In her world the benefits of trees outweigh the fact



Letter writer Ron Fritz questions the zeal that many exhibit when it comes to protecting trees.

that apparently healthy trees can cause significant damage to homes and vehicles, the loss of power during the depths of winter and even death either when they are toppled or have branches break off during a storm.

Ordinarily we expect our politicians to protect us from obvious dangers and

yet the tree bylaw does just the opposite.

She asserts that you will welcome the shade of trees when it is "42 C in July" without considering that there are other alternatives.

I live in a rambling heritage-designated, west-facing property that has no trees along its 80-foot frontage.

When I moved into the property, I had installed two very large energy-efficient central air conditioners.

The last time I ran the air conditioner servicing the 200-year-old main part of the badly insulated house was more than five years ago.

The other air conditioner servicing the rest of the house has been run from three to five days in each of those same five-plus years.

Instead, we open windows to promote cross breezes and close the

blinds on the 11 west- and south-facing windows.

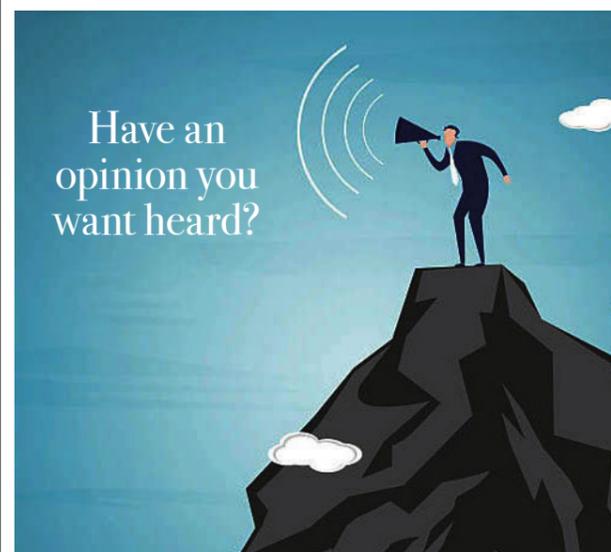
Those in favour of the tree bylaw argue that all trees, whether on public or private property, are a community benefit. Yet, they are not prepared to pay for that benefit.

Perhaps they might think differently if a successful class-action law suit was brought by those against the bylaw arguing that town council has expropriated their trees on private property without compensation and for the ongoing maintenance costs of those trees.

The amount of damages would run into at least eight figures, which would have to be met by a significant increase in property taxes.

Has the worshipping of trees become the new religion?

Ron Fritz
 Queenston



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

19th century and New Traditional by **generation**



Brian Marshall
Columnist



Left column, from top to bottom: An Ontario gothic, a Regency cottage and a saltbox, all from the 19th century. On the right of each photo is its New Traditional counterpart. The photos illustrate how modern designs can have a historical context and sympathetic design while still remaining distinct, says columnist Brian Marshall.

Over the past few years, this column has stressed the importance of sympathetic — and contextually appropriate — design to achieve new developments (or renovations and additions) that integrate into the existing community.

By adhering to the principal criteria of sympathetic design — character, scale, form, siting, materials, colours and detailing — most architectural styles can be successfully integrated into an existing streetscape.

In short, the new design must “speak to” and relate to its neighbourhood.

So, this week I thought we might depart from the Arch-i-text’s normal format in favour of a more visual depiction of contextually appropriate design by comparing actual 19th-century homes to those of the modern New Traditional design school.

It should be noted that successful New Traditional designs are extraordinarily challenging to execute (perhaps the principal reason most architects avoid them).

As the noted author and historical preservation advocate Virginia Savage McAlester writes, these architects must “understand classical principles and architectural style well enough to subtly alter or rearrange elements to create New Traditional home designs, not copies” — houses instantly familiar yet subtly different from the homes that inspired them.

Architectural historian Vincent Scully describes this process as a “conversation across the generations.”

And, it is precisely because these houses are “instantly familiar” that I

felt three of NOTL’s New Traditional examples would serve to best illustrate how considered architectural design can speak to a community’s existing built character.

That said, let’s begin with the saltbox — a North American vernacular expression that dates from the late 1600s.

Generally speaking, the saltbox presents a two-storey front massing which, on the rear, descends under a continuous roof line to a single-storey.

While the majority of saltbox homes were symmetrical (central bay containing main entry), because they were vernacular, many asymmetrical examples (presenting the bay contain-

ing the main entry to the left or right of centre) were built.

Still, the facade commonly presented rigidly ranked bays with windows and/or doors vertically aligned.

On the left, we can see a circa 1820 asymmetrical four-bay saltbox, while on the right, is a late 20th-century New Traditional symmetrical three-bay expression.

Now, while the facades may differ in the number of bays and the location of the main entry, the building forms are very similar, as are the strictly ranked bays, simple opening trim and exterior clapboard cladding.

But, marking the New Traditional departures, its six-over-six windows are

not true-divided, there are no eave returns on the gable ends and, most importantly, no chimney breaks the clean lines of the roof.

Moving on to our next example, we have a Regency cottage.

This Regency expression was a single-storey with a square footprint topped by a hip roof.

These houses were invariably symmetrical, their main entry in the centre of either three or five bays.

They appeared low-slung, hugging the landscape, while a comparatively tall, massive chimney — or chimneys — rose above the roof ridge.

Again on the left is a circa 1817 Regency cottage and beside it to the right is a

New Traditional interpretation of the expression.

While the two are clearly related, there are two important elements by which we can immediately distinguish “modern” from “period.”

First, like the saltbox, there is a notable absence of a chimney. Second is the main entry statement.

Both are classically inspired, however, the period house pilasters are true columns which support an entablature that sits beneath the eaves thereby reinforcing the horizontal lines of the dwelling.

The New Traditional house has modern squared pilasters with a plain entablature surmounted by a triangular pediment that

breaks the horizontal line of the eaves.

Our last example is drawn from the Gothic Revival style.

To quote from Robert Mikel’s Ontario House Styles, “If Ontario had an official house style, a Gothic cottage ... would be it.”

This home was symmetrically balanced: its centred main entry was shouldered on either side by arched window openings typically placed equidistant between the door and the end of the facade.

Directly above the main entry, a tall pointed gable, generally appointed with an arched window, broke the eaves.

A wide front verandah (or porch) nearly always graced the facade and was commonly fitted with Gothic decorative elements.

In this case, we are comparing a one-and-three-quarters-storey mid-19th-century period cottage (which has lost its chimneys and front porch, although the anchor stones remain in the brick field) to a contemporary one-and-a-half-storey interpretation.

So, the roof pitches differ but the important distinctions between historic and modern are still readily identifiable.

Consider the narrower width of the modern openings, the trimmed-out false arches of its main floor windows, the lack of a main entry surround, the one-piece gable window and the contemporary clean lines of the porch elements and it is simple to distinguish the original Gothic cottage from the New Traditional interpretation of the style.

These three examples are simple illustrations of how modern design can speak to a historical context and yet remain distinct.

That said, a talented architect can create that contextual relationship between disparate styles by rigid compliance with the criteria of sympathetic design.

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



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Some questions about town's fiscal governance

Dear editor:
In The Lake Report on Feb. 15, columnist Brian Marshall wrote a rather sympathetic article, ("A concrete look at local governance,") that essentially excused Niagara-on-the-Lake town council from appealing cases to the Ontario Land Tribunal because of budgetary constraints related to legal expenses as follows:

"It is my understanding that town council has budgeted \$500,000 for 2024 legal expenses. While that may sound like a lot, using simple math at \$400 per hour, that's only 250 hours."

"And, of course, this calculation does not consider the plethora of additional charges, which reduce that number of hours. Moreover, this budget must cover all the town's legal expenses — not just those associated with planning issues."

"On those issues, I'd posit that the budget may be sufficient to fund between four and six properly researched, prepared and presented

Municipality	Statistics Canada		NOTL Paying	
	2021	Environmental Expenses	Environmental Expenses Per Person	More Than Other Municipalities
St. Catharines	136,803	53,762,000	392.99	4,661,140.32
Niagara Falls	94,415	36,307,000	384.55	4,822,271.88
Welland	55,750	28,483,256	510.91	2,410,245.87
Fort Erie	32,901	19,099,961	580.53	1,081,380.16
Grimsby	28,883	12,302,390	425.94	4,032,184.42
Lincoln	25,719	8,768,019	340.92	5,655,099.10
Thorold	23,816	11,308,522	474.83	3,098,972.43
Port Colborne	20,033	11,151,156	556.64	1,537,372.18
Niagara on the Lake	19,088	12,162,504	637.18	0.00
Pelham	18,192	5,545,852	304.85	6,343,505.38
West Lincoln	15,454	4,307,691	278.74	6,841,861.72
Niagara Region	471,054	166,576,000	353.62	5,412,529.08

Letter writer Gienek Ksiazkiewicz says NOTL has much higher environmental expenses than other Niagara municipalities. He says NOTL can afford to fight development cases at the Ontario Land Tribunal. SUPPLIED

cases before the Ontario Land Tribunal." Audited financial statements for 2022 and 2021 showed that the town made a profit (or in government lingo, had a surplus) of \$4,945,031 in 2022 and \$2,924,403 in 2021.

Cash in the bank totalled \$22,333,108 in 2022 and \$21,032,114 in 2021. Cash from operations totalled \$8,653,141 in 2022 and \$7,914,756 in 2021.

The town has only \$5,476,721 of long-term

debt. And actually, the financial statements say the town has assumed responsibility for the payment of principal and interest charges on certain long-term liabilities issued by other municipalities, not ours.

Why do we have to pick up debt obligations of another municipality?

I guess we're a cash cow.

But every taxpayer is paying for this debt repayment when that \$5.5-million debt repayment could have

been spent on our community whether for a new swimming pool, library, community centre or, heaven forbid, going to the Ontario Land Tribunal.

The problem with members of town council is not that they don't have the cash to go to the Ontario Land Tribunal to protect the community — they just don't want to.

To go to the Ontario Land Tribunal, legal counsel estimates that it might cost between \$25,000 and

\$50,000. Budgeting a reasonable amount of money for things like the land tribunal is merely an excuse not to do it. The town could easily argue on behalf of its residents in way more than six cases a year.

The largest expense the town has is labelled "environmental" in its audited consolidated statements. Documents state this is for sanitary, storm and water systems.

It was \$13,187,941 in 2022 and \$12,162,504 in

2021. When compared with other Niagara municipalities those numbers are disproportionately large. All these expenses are as of Dec. 31, 2021.

For instance, compared to West Lincoln we're paying \$6,841,861 more than a similar geographic population base. That equates to \$358.43 per person in taxes in NOTL.

In summary, NOTL is subsidizing one or more other municipalities, which increases our property taxes.

Town council has enough money to do a lot of things, including defending our neighbourhoods at the Ontario Land Tribunal.

Why are we paying more in property taxes because of what appears to be an excessive amount for environmental expenses when compared with other municipalities?

Why are our property taxes going up? How is this good fiscal governance?

Gienek Ksiazkiewicz
St. Davids

NOTL needs a public high school

Dear editor:
This is an open letter to Niagara-on-the-Lake parents.

Does it make sense to you that a town with 1,000-plus teens doesn't provide a high school (Statistics Canada, 2021) or youth programming?

Our 2,100-plus kids aged 14 and under are crammed into three public schools while our former schools are sitting empty or turned into private schools. Young families have continued to move here since COVID.

Last year, busing alone cost Niagara taxpayers more than \$37 million, including sending our kids out of town.

Kids deserve a public education that is accessible in their own community with local friendships, part-time jobs, never mind avoiding the extra air pollution.

A town employee commented unofficially that our children have no future in NOTL, that in 10 years it



Many parents think it's egregious that a prominent town like NOTL has no home high school and students have to bus to St. Catharines to get a secondary education.

will be just a sea of hotels ... So, as our population continues to increase, why have our schools been sold while neighbouring cities have managed to keep 100-year-old schools operating?

Can our children wait 10 more years to squeeze into one French high school in Glendale with 15,000 new residents?

What costs more: Close three schools and replace them with a mega-school like in Grimsby and here against fierce opposition or to make use of existing infrastructure?

Notice a pattern in who is managing more than \$500 million of our tax dollars? The benefits of amalgamation are a myth.

Our school board needs to practise what it preaches: In the short term, be inclusive by offering local evening classes as it already does with the low German sessions in the Routes Learning program at Crossroads Public School.

Better yet, why not partner with the town on youth programs in our public schools outside of regular school hours?

In the long term, reacquire some land to address the overcrowding. No child should be educated in a portable. And pretty soon we'll need another elementary school.

Our former high school is central (currently private with no bursaries for locals). Or what about the historic 325 King St.? There are plenty of hotels already sitting half-empty. Does this make sense?

Let's start paying more attention to whether those who represent us have our best interests in mind since NOTL children matter too and should be part of the future of our town, not just tourism.

Concerned parents of NOTL who are interested in this issue can contact me at notlhighschool@gmail.com. Also see my online petition at <https://chnng.it/2dWt6yPvcP>.

Lauren Bubnic
NOTL

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Is it trash or a treasure? Be prepared to **toss it**

Continued from Front Page

gests that if there is no urgency, then do the clearing out yourself.

Start small — but start. Now.

Clean out your purse or the one drawer or that closet in the hall.

“The key is to start one job and complete that one job. Be brutal, lose the guilt and learn to live your life with memories, not stuff,” Stephenson said in an interview.

Too often we start on the junk drawer, find a tool and go to the tool box to put it where it belongs.

Once in the tool box we find the box cutter that should be on the shelf in the basement.

Off we go to the basement and we decide the shelf should be tidied. Now we have three projects on the go and nothing gets completed.

So, start and finish that one drawer. Once the drawer is cleared, then and only then, should you put away other items.

Stephenson also advises that if you just need to clear



Dennis Den Besten, of Niagara Computer Systems, accepts many old electronic devices, but says you need to make arrangements in advance. DENISE ASCENZO

out the garage or the basement, set a schedule, stick to it and don't become distracted.

The work bench or the china cabinets are two examples of why you must look at your things with a critical eye.

When was the last time you used that power tool? Will you ever be serving a 12-course dinner again?

If your children do not

want these items, then it is time to let them go. If they do want them, they must take them immediately.

Otherwise you become a caretaker of their stuff.

Stephenson suggests you make four categories for all your belongings: items to keep, things for the garbage, things to donate and finally items to sell.

However, the question of “What if I need that after I

have disposed of it?” is real.

“Consider this,” Stephenson said. “Should you get rid of 10 items and then realize you needed to keep one, then go buy that one. Smile because you did get rid of nine items that were not needed.”

Consigning items to the garbage might sound easy but, truthfully, it is hard work.

Broken furniture, haz-

ardous waste, mattresses, broken appliances all require specific disposal. And those 35 pillows you thought might be useful one day are in fact garbage; no one wants your old, used pillows.

The region will pick up large items. Just call with two working days' notice and advise them what will be at the curb on your garbage collection day.

Check the Niagara Region website to get a list of what they will pick up.

Larger furniture, if not worn or broken, is accepted by Habitat For Humanity Niagara's ReStore on Bunting Road in St. Catharines.

Habitat will take many items, even kitchen cabinets, and it also will arrange to pick up larger pieces for free.

Hazardous waste must be taken to specific locations and not put in your regular garbage. Check the region's website for locations and what items are accepted. (There is no charge.)

Automotive parts and tires can be taken to most auto recycling yards. Rubber tire recycling is quite

profitable and many of these companies are glad to take the tires off your hands.

That cabinet full of prescription drugs as well as any over-the-counter medications can be taken to your local pharmacy.

Do not flush them down the toilet as those chemicals will eventually end up in our water system. While you are bagging up the drugs for the pharmacy, consider taking all those old reading glasses along as well.

If there is a huge amount of garbage, more than you can manage in a timely fashion, then consider ordering up a small bin to be dropped in your driveway. You will be very relieved when that full bin is taken away.

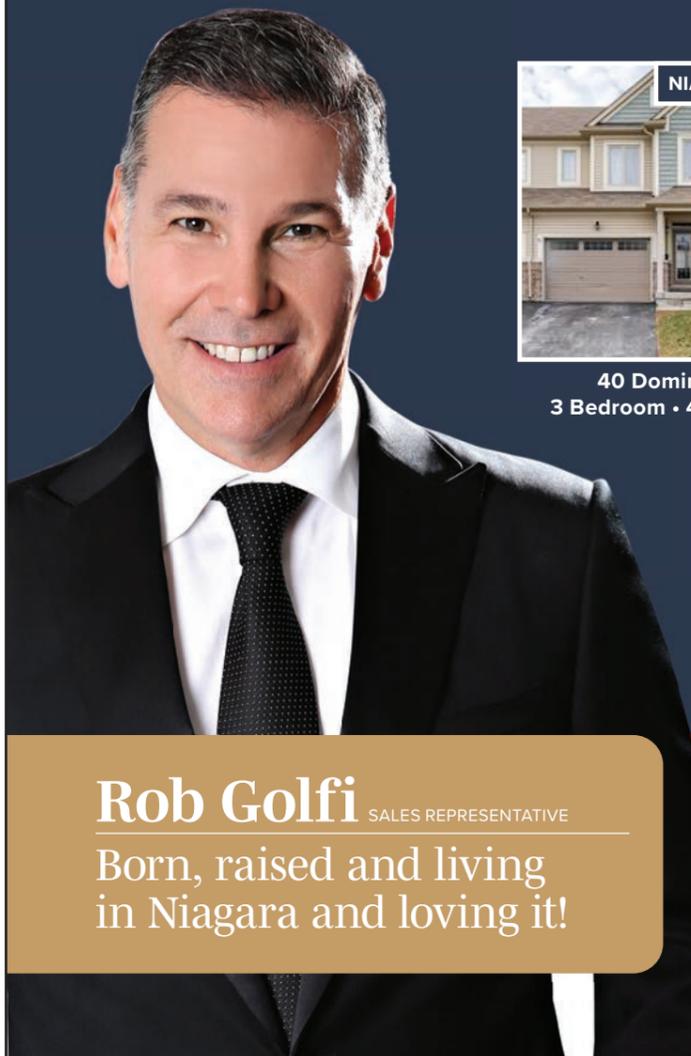
The goal of using garbage as a clearing-out method is to really look at what you have and recognize that not everything is a treasure or salvageable.

Remember, you are cleaning up your mess so that others are not burdened with the task.

Next: Donate items to charities so others will benefit.

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Todd Green reconciles feelings of personal loss with 'Five Years Later'

Richard Hutton
Local Journalism Initiative
The Lake Report

Todd Green wears many hats. By day, he's a marketing professor at Brock University in St. Catharines. Outside of the university, the St. Davids resident is also the executive director of the Tomorrow's Voices Foundation, a charitable children's choir he established in 2017.

With a passion for nurturing young talent, Green founded the organization to provide aspiring singers across Canada with a platform to showcase their voices.

Today, the foundation operates in six cities and three provinces, impacting the lives of hundreds of children.

Now, you can add singer-songwriter to his extensive resume.

He has just released his first single "Five Years Later," along with an accompanying music video, a song that comes from Green's experience coping with the loss of a member of his family.

At 46 years old, Green said releasing music wasn't an immediate process.

"I had it in mind that I

wanted to write music and record music," he said. "I wasn't sure if I would be into writing lyrics for someone else to sing."

He had taken an eight-week songwriting course where he was required to write an original song and learn to perform.

"It's just like, OK, get over yourself and just do it," Green said. "That's sort of how we got to this point."

With the help of the course, he felt he was finally ready.

The act of writing music has made his love of music – Green boasts some 800 albums in his record collection – even greater.

"I think I love music so much that I was almost worried about sort of ruining music for myself by not being good at it – if that makes any sense," Green said.

Green has found himself inspired by artists from multiple genres – classic rock, indie rock, folk and electronic music.

"The first concert I ever went to was to see Paul McCartney when I was 14," he said. "And then, I have tickets for bands like Vampire Weekend and Sarah McLaughlin and Feist this summer. (It's a) really,



Todd Green, a professor at Brock University and executive director of Tomorrow's Voices Foundation, finally worked up his nerve to release his own music.

STEPHEN LEITHWOOD

really wide range but then, I also really love the Chemical Brothers and Prodigy and stuff like that."

Green has burst out of the gate with an emotionally charged song that handles a tough subject – the loss of a loved one.

"Five Years Later" draws from Green's feelings about the death of his former stepson as the result of suicide.

"The song was part of the process I have been going through since he passed away, and I was finally able to put into words what I

have been thinking since I found out he had passed," Green said.

He has other songs in various stages and plans to put out an EP "of five or six songs," which he hopes to release by the end of the year.

Green has also been composing instrumental "electronic synth music" over the past few years and is contemplating releasing an EP comprised solely of this genre.

Released under the name TDG (his initials), the instrumentals came about with a lot less stress and anxiety on his part.

"It's easier to hide behind production," Green said. "I already have enough for the electronics and stuff. I have a bit of a backlog on that side."

He hopes a couple of charitable endeavours can benefit from sales of "Five Years Later."

The track can be streamed on Spotify and is available for download via bandcamp.com.

Proceeds from the single will go to Kids Help Phone and a memorial fund for the music program at the Alberta school where his former stepson was a student.

hutton@niagaranow.com



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

I'm so sorry!
It's "through my own fault!"

Last issue:

Category: TV

Clue: This sitcom centres on a Korean-Canadian family that runs a store that rarely closes.

Answer: What is Kim's Convenience?

Answered first by: Claudia Grimwood

Also answered correctly (in order) by: Bill Hamilton, Howard Jones, Lynda Collet, Jane Morris, Esther VanGorder, Pam Dowling, Wade Durling, Jim Dandy, Sheila Meloche, Mary Kolbuc, Catherine Clarke, Barry Woods, Hedy Wiebe, Nancy Rocca, Elaine Landray, Jenny Scott, Marla Percy, Daniel Smith, Tuija Johansson, Mike Gander, Bob Wheatley

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

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Bikes for Farmworkers sees ‘dry spell’ as supply runs low

Richard Hutton
Local Journalism Initiative
The Lake Report

With hundreds of seasonal agricultural workers set to come to town to work the farms in Niagara-on-the-Lake, many will be looking for a way to get around.

Right now, however, the organization that helps provide them with an affordable mode of transportation says its supply is dwindling in numbers.

Since 2017, the Gateway Community Church’s Bikes for Farmworkers has been repairing bicycles donated by the community.

The bicycles are fully reconditioned and then sold for \$25 to workers for their personal use.

Last year, the group, made up of volunteers working in their spare time, sold 368 bikes, down slightly from 2022’s 420.

This year, 150 bikes have been repaired and are ready to go.

But for program co-ordinator Ken Eden and the volunteers, therein lies the problem — they need more bikes.



Bikes for Farmworkers volunteer Leslie Mann with the lone bicycle awaiting repair in the workshop. RICHARD HUTTON

“We’re in a bit of a dry spell now,” Eden said as a small group tended to repairs on the remaining few bicycles the group currently has on hand. “We’ve fixed

all that we have.” With that in mind, Bikes for Farmworkers will host a bicycle drop-off on Saturday, March 16, from 10 a.m. to 1 p.m. at the shop housed

in the former Virgil Public School, located at 1665 Creek Rd. (at the corner of Field Avenue). “We’re looking for repairable adult bikes,” Eden said.

It’s not the first time the group has found itself short of bikes, he added. “We ran into this last year, too, only we ran into it a little later.”

Money from the sale of bicycles goes to help cover the cost of parts needed to fix them.

“The bike shops treat us really, really well on the supplies we buy,” Eden said. “They treat us really great.”

While a bike may be something many people take for granted, for the workers, it’s a means of having a measure of independence while they’re here in the country, Eden said.

“The vast majority – you might as well say all of them – say it’s their only means of personal transportation.”

Volunteer Leslie Mann said it’s unusual for the group to run out of bikes to repair so early.

“Normally, at the beginning of the season or in the winter, these would all have been bikes ready to repair,” he said, pointing to rows of bikes being stored at the shop. “We’ve already done them all.”

For more information on the Bikes for Farmworkers program contact Eden at 289-547-7442 or at gatewaynotl.com/bikes.

hutton@niagaranow.com



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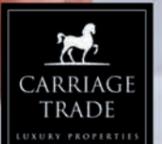
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CALL OR TEXT MICHELLE 905-401-8874

Museum workshop will help residents uncover their home's history

Staff
The Lake Report

Niagara-on-the-Lake is home to many properties of historical significance.

The town became a National Historic District back in 2003 via the Canadian Register of Historic Places, based on NOTL's collection of homes dating between 1812 and 1850.

But, whether you're a homeowner, a real estate agent looking to put a potential heritage asset on the market or a member of town staff looking into the designation of a property, how do you go about finding out more about a home's history?

The Niagara-on-the-Lake Museum is hosting an event on Saturday, April 6 that will share how to use the Ontario Land Registry to learn more about a building's heritage.

Representatives from the Brown Homestead in St. Catharines will conduct an all-day workshop to teach the ins and outs of using the registry to trace the history of a property.

"This workshop provides unique learning opportunities to both staff and the public on a subject that garners ongoing curiosity and fascination," said Amy Klassen, the museum's director of finance and marketing.

Representatives from the homestead will walk participants through the process of using OnLand, an online portal of property records for Ontario.

The workshop will give an overview of Ontario's land registry system and structure, best practices for using the OnLand database, as well as how to trace the history of any given parcel of land from its Crown pat-



A NOTL Museum workshop will help people learn how to do research about their home's history. SUPPLIED

ent back to the present time.

Participants are welcome to bring their laptops or tablets, or simply take notes.

The Brown Homestead was founded in 2015 to preserve and maintain significant heritage buildings and sites.

The workshop runs from

9 am until 3:30 p.m. and all are encouraged to bring a packed lunch for the break.

The cost is \$50 per person or \$40 for museum members.

Registration is required as space is limited. To register for the workshop, call 905-468-3912.



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Niagara-on-the-Lake forward Austin Cwierniewski scored on this beauty top-shelf shot during U9 action Saturday at the March Break Classic Tournament at the Meridian Credit Union Arena. Cwierniewski and his teammates won the game 4-1. RICHARD WRIGHT

Volunteers **score big** at March Break Classic

Richard Wright
The Lake Report

It is said it takes a community to raise a child, but then who raises the community?

Minor hockey organizations can take some credit and the Niagara-on-the-Lake Minor Hockey Association filled the net in both areas last weekend.

A total of 41 teams in six divisions descended on the Meridian Credit Union Arena for the annual March Break Classic, a staple youth sporting event in

Niagara-on-the-Lake for over 40 years.

And while player success and the healthy development of young humans was the focus, one can't deny what Canada's game also does for a community, and for the people who take nothing in return to make it happen.

"The reason I started volunteering and giving my time back is for all the parents who drove me to games when I was a kid," said NOTL minor hockey president Pete Flynn.

He might as well have pulled up a cot next to the

Zamboni with all the time he spent at the rink on the weekend.

A former player and a father of three athletic youngsters, Flynn also was busy coaching his U11 local league team through to the semifinals in their division on Monday afternoon.

So, he knows the value of minor sports.

Not only is he the association president, but he is also heavily involved in youth slo-pitch and started the high school hockey program at A.N. Myer in Niagara Falls.

"The kids are out, they get to play sports, they get to come together as a community to become friends and unite as a team," he noted.

Healthy, confident, well-rounded youth. This is a recipe for success for anyone interested in building communities.

Mitchell Olsen is a 15-year-old player with NOTL Wolves U18 B Team, a rep squad that is a step higher than the local league teams that played in town on the weekend.

But he was there, having traded his skates and stick

for a seat in the timekeeper's box.

"It's good to help the community," he said, adding that it also helps with his own development since volunteer hours are added to his high school transcript.

"But since I have already finished (the 40-hour high school requirement), now I am just doing this to help out. To me, hockey isn't so much a team, it's a family."

In total, 14 community members make up the NOTL Minor Hockey Association's board.

Many of those people give

up hundreds of hours a year to help administer the organization and to volunteer for special events such as the March Break Classic, which boasted more than 70 games over four days.

The association's volunteer co-ordinator, Carrie Plaskett said board members, players and parents are selfless in their desire to help.

"We have a good community here. There are a lot of people who volunteer. Often the people I see out there are the people who are out there at every tournament."



Left: Volunteers are an absolute necessity for any youth organization. The Niagara-on-the-Lake Minor Hockey Association is lucky to have many people willing to help out, including, seated Tania VanGent and Kailey Burns, with Carrie Plaskett, referee Dave Holt and Adrianna Miele behind. Top right: Niagara-on-the-Lake Minor Hockey Association president Pete Flynn serves up a hot dog Saturday outside the Meridian Credit Union Arena. Not unfamiliar with filling multiple roles in order to make sure things happen, Flynn is one of dozens of volunteers who help make minor hockey a reality for youngsters in the community. Bottom: The NOTL U18 Wolves celebrate Austin Leboudec's goal to put NOTL up 1-0 versus Valley East in Sunday's final. But Valley East came back with five goals of its own to win 5-2. DAVE VAN DE LAAR

U9s find positives in gold medal loss

Richard Wright
The Lake Report

The Niagara-on-the-Lake U9 local league Wolves ran up against a powerhouse squad from Sault Ste. Marie in Sunday's final of the March Break Classic at Meridian Credit Union Arena.

Coming off a 3-1 record in preliminary play, NOTL settled for the silver medal following an 11-0 loss.

The Wolves entered the tournament final with wins over Lawfield, West London and Beverley Township.

Their only round-robin defeat was also against the Soo, who finished with an impressive 5-0 record and only two goals against.

"I thought we played hard," said NOTL coach Gary Friesen, giving credit to the Soo.

"Even just getting a shot on goal is an accomplishment against that team," said Friesen.

"I told the boys: 'Let's just play hard and don't worry about the scoreboard. Let's get some shots on net and try to limit them.' And we almost got a couple. These kids all worked really, really hard."



The U9 Wolves lost 11-0 to the Soo in the final, taking the silver medal. DAVE VAN DE LAAR

Soo coach Marco Bernabucci was gracious in victory, noting that his team has had its struggles throughout the year, but has somehow found that extra gear during tournament play.

"We've got some great hockey (in the Soo)," he said. "But believe it or not, our regular season hasn't been as successful. We went 2-2 in our first tournament and lost out in the semifinals."

"Then our second tournament, this weekend,

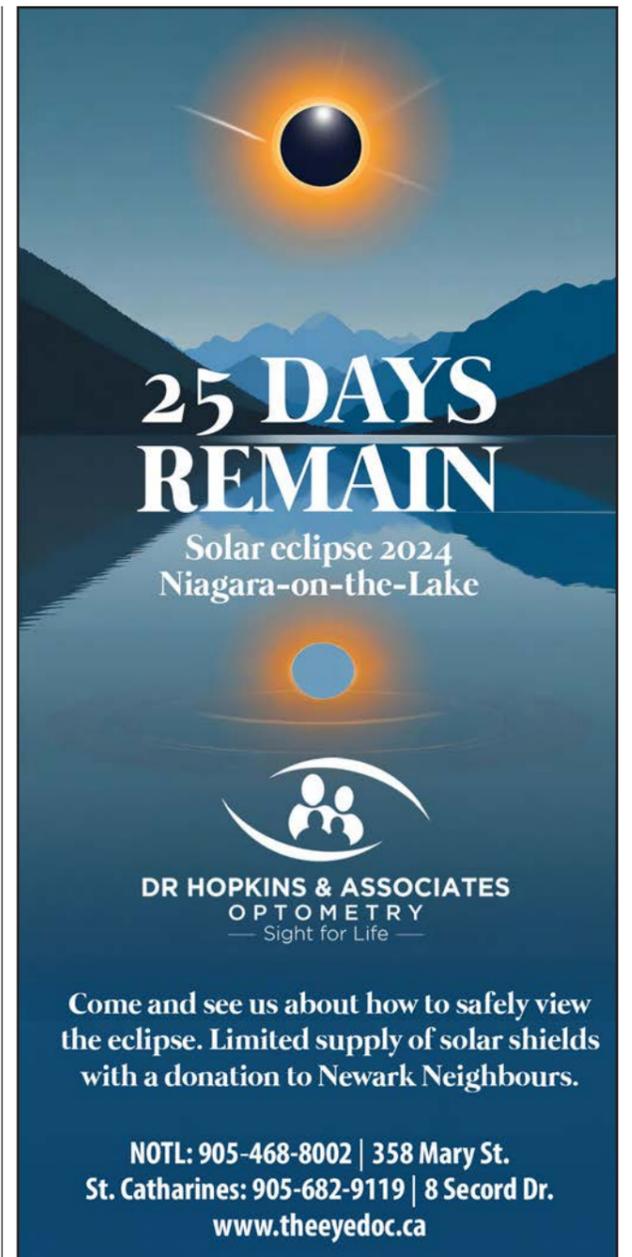
going 5-0 and winning the championship was great. But in our regular season play we are 1-8. It's really competitive. There are four really good teams where we are from."

NOTL's earlier play over the weekend featured a beauty semifinal contest Saturday against Beverley Township where the Wolves came away with a 4-1 decision that took until the final seconds before the home team felt safe.

"(Saturday's) game was one of the most exciting games I have ever coached," said Friesen, a former major junior player.

Goalie Nathan Muir had a great game in that one, making some point-blank saves and giving his team the chance to win and advance to Sunday's final.

Austin Cwierniewski, George Petrakis and Brock Friesen, who had two — one with just two seconds left in the game — scored the NOTL goals.



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TEAM OF THE WEEK

U11 Local League 1 Wolves



The Lake Report's NOTL Minor Hockey Association Team of the Week is the NOTL Wolves U11 Local League 1 squad. Pictured here from left in the front row are: Amodeo Santini, Nathan Flynn, James Bredin, Ryan Lebrasseur, Leo Pillitteri, Taylor Steele and Norah Palmer. Second row: Declan MacNeill, Avery Warren, Sophie and Stephanie Wassilko, Mia Unruh and Daisha Necakov-Waller. Back row: coaches Peter Flynn, Steve Lebrasseur and Mike Palmer. Missing are Andrew Kallie and William Trapasso. DAVE VAN DE LAAR



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Newark Neighbours, together with our partners from the NOTL Rotary, NOTL Kinsmen and St. David's Lions Clubs, are holding a porch pick-up food drive. On Saturday March 23, 2024, teams are available to pick up your food donations anytime between 10 a.m. and 4 p.m.

If you wish to donate in support of our food bank, please call 905-468-7498 or email us at newarkneighbours1@gmail.com to register your address for pick-up.

ITEMS REQUIRED FOR EASTER HAMPERS:

- Stuffing mix, cranberry sauce, canned gravy or mix (turkey or chicken), cranberry and/or apple juice, apple sauce, canned fruit and vegetables (corn, pineapple, green beans, peas), snack crackers (any type), cookies (any kind), chocolates for Easter baskets.

ITEMS REQUIRED ON AN ONGOING BASIS:

- Canned salmon, canned tuna, Sidekicks and ramen soup packets, canned chili or spaghetti or ravioli, peanut butter, granola bars, cookies, Chunky Soups - any kind or flavour canned beef stew, Habitant soups, canned ham, corned beef or Spam, Flakes of Ham, Chicken or Turkey, Jams (any flavour), canned fruit, soda, soup crackers, Kraft Dinner, canned beans (kidney, chickpeas, lentils), canned tomatoes, canned potatoes, instant mashed potatoes, tomato sauce, pasta, rice, pudding cups (any flavour), cereal and oatmeal, coffee (any kind — instant/regular/ decaf), tea, shelf stable milk (e.g. condensed, powdered, rice, etc.), paper towels, toilet paper, household items ie. dish soap, laundry detergent, cleaning products, condiments (salad dressings, mayonnaise, sauces, HP Sauce, soy sauce, Worcestershire sauce, etc.), dried spices, salt & pepper, toiletries (toothpaste, toothbrushes, razors, hand and body lotion, mouthwash, feminine products).



NOTL boxer Mckenzie Wright has one more chance to make Olympics

Continued from Front Page

Tuesday evening.

Her match with Villegas “was definitely the highest-calibre fight I’ve been in and it was a war. Unfortunately, it was a clash of styles that caused us to keep tangling where neither one of us was willing to take a step back.”

People watching the fight at home via livestream can’t always see the round-by-round scores, Wright said.

With five judges scoring the match, she took the first and final rounds 3-2 but Villegas won the middle round 4-1.

“It’s hard to explain because the scoring is complicated, but basically it was one judge who gave her both the first and second I needed to flip to give me the third,” she said.

So, although three of the judges gave the Canadian

the last round, “that one judge was not one of them.”

“When you count up the points, it’s a one-point difference and (Villegas) takes the fight. That’s a tough one to accept, knowing that I won two of three rounds.”

Despite the setback, the weeks spent in Italy preparing for the tournament and her performance against Villegas were a confidence boost for Wright.

“Once again I am proving I belong at the highest level of boxing in the world. My opponent went on to win the whole bracket and not only qualified, but did it with ease.”

“Unfortunately, that’s just luck of the draw. I was a huge underdog in the fight, only finding out later she is a world bronze medalist,” Wright said.

“It’s reassuring to know that it was a razor-close

finish with the top level, so I can’t give up. There are four more spots left that someone has to win, so why not me?”

Versus Villegas, she stuck to her game plan and made adjustments to come back and win the third round.

“I implemented a lot of things we had been working on during our three-week camp out there where I was sparring other previous Olympians, world medalists, and other girls who have already qualified their spot for Paris. So, I do know I’m right there with them.”

In that third round, Wright unleashed a flurry of combinations and uppercuts in the final three minutes, rocking her opponent, while Villegas countered with numerous punches that missed or landed lightly.

In the livestreamed match, described by the colour

commentators as “terrifically competitive” with the decision on “a knife’s edge,” Wright put in a strong and gutsy performance.

She appeared to have won the bout, but couldn’t change that lone judge’s opinion.

“I’m also happy with the adversity I was able to overcome and still perform really well,” Wright said.

“Our shuttle to the venue was a 30-minute bus ride and our bus driver found it to be more important to have a leisurely dinner than to leave on time.”

“We left half an hour late and on arrival I found out the fight before mine had been scrapped. I started getting my hands gauzed by my coach as soon as I arrived,” she said. That usually takes 20 minutes.

She managed to do her full warm-up and get fo-



Canadian champ Mckenzie Wright, in red, battles with Aira Villegas of the Philippines in their 50-kg bout in Italy. Wright won two of the three rounds but lost the match by a single point. She will compete in one more tournament in her bid to qualify for the Paris Olympics. SUPPLIED

cused in 10 minutes before walking out to the ring.

“There is always adversity that will come up and performing under non-ideal circumstances at the highest level, you better keep it together. And I’m happy I was able to do just that,” Wright said.

Now that she’s back home,

“I will probably be back in the gym for light training by the end of the week. I’m disappointed but I’m always motivated to keep pushing because I’m so close.”

“I have about six weeks to keep practising the little adjustments I want to make and then I get to do it all again.”

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Have some fun



Across

- 9. Unsettled (9)
- 10. Italian fashion house (5)
- 11. Cranium (5)
- 12. Skint (9)
- 13. Hot Capri lot all at sea (8)
- 14. Social or cultural surroundings (6)
- 15. Dark, sweet Italian red wine condiment (8,7)
- 19. Animosity (6)
- 20. A wide variety (3-5)
- 23. Paired up (9)
- 25. Israeli port and resort (5)
- 27. As expected (2,3)
- 28. Mixes (9)

Down

- 1. Tots up (4)
- 2. Pre-euro Portuguese money (6)
- 3. Cores (6)
- 4. UAE sheikdom (3,5)
- 5. Smartphone ancestors (1,1,2)
- 6. Pyromaniac's practice (8)
- 7. Searching minutely (8)
- 8. Beach attendants (10)
- 13. Serving utensil or cooking measure (10)
- 16. Verse often beginning: "There was a ..." (8)
- 17. Showed up (8)
- 18. Legalize (8)
- 21. Spanish fortified wine (6)
- 22. Souvenirs (6)
- 24. Drops from on high (4)
- 26. Piece of work (4)

Crossword Puzzle

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Last issue's answers

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		9	3	5				





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Exploring ‘Middle Land’ – life **beyond** what we can see



DR. BROWN

Dr. William Brown
Columnist

When I wrote my book “Perspectives” in 2015, I hoped to explore how the world we live in might be viewed from the perspective of Earth’s place in the universe, the origins of life and our species, how our brain evolved and in turn was shaped by culture and the role of spirituality and religion in human life.

That’s a lot in one sentence and proved to be more than a handful to tackle.

This is week one of a five-part series on “Middle Land”: worlds beyond our senses.

The hurdles I faced to gain a larger understanding of where we fit in the world were often ones of scale.

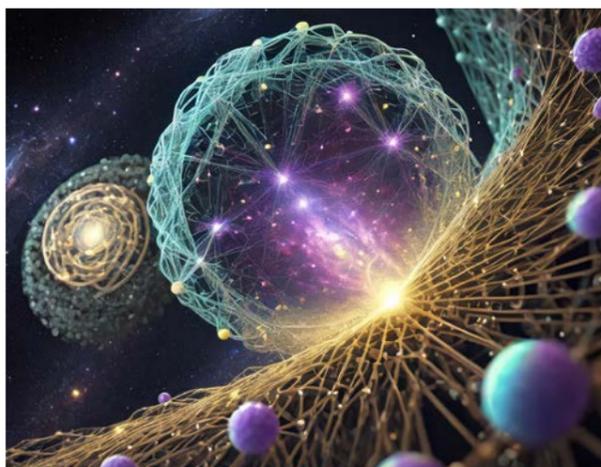
As Michael Shermer so aptly expressed it: “One of

the reasons human perceptions so often prove wrong is that we evolved in what evolutionary biologist Richard Dawkins’ once called Middle World – a land midway between short and long, small and large, slow and fast, young and old.”

Out of alliterative preference, Shermer preferred to call it Middle Land and went on to say, “In the Middle Land, of space our senses evolved for perceiving objects of middling size – say, between grains of sand and mountain ranges. But we are not equipped to perceive atoms and germs on one end of the scale, or galaxies and expanding universes, on the other end.”

He continued: “In the Middle Land of speed, we can detect objects moving at a walking or running pace, but the glacially slow movement of continents (and glaciers) and the bogglingly fast speed of light are literally impenetrable.

Our Middle Land time scales, he said, “range from the psychological ‘now’ of three seconds in duration to the few decades of a human lifetime, far too short to wit-



ness evolution, continental drift, or long-term environmental changes.”

Middle Land numeracy, he added, “leads us to pay attention to and remember short-term trends, meaningful coincidences and personal anecdotes. The result is that we don’t see the stuff off the scales of our perceptions.”

He concluded as such: “For the every day, we focus on what we can see with our eyes, hear with our ears and feel with our touch. But much beyond the limits of our eyes, ears and touch, we’re literally ‘out of touch.’

“And,” he said, “making things worse, in the fourth

dimension – time – we’re preoccupied with the present moment. Even the immediate past of minutes and hours ago, tends to fade quickly from awareness and memory – the more so as we age.”

Unlike other species, we have options.

We can expand our reach beyond what we see with our eyes, hear with our ears and touch what is at hand.

For example, by employing sophisticated radio-telescopes ganged together to form one large earth-based telescope (the Event Horizon telescope), the James Webb telescope and other telescopes on land

and in space, it’s possible to look back in time to as early as one million years after the Big Bang – but not the earliest several hundred thousand years, for which there’s a catch.

The early universe was so hot that hydrogen and helium nuclei were too energetic to combine with electrons to form stable atoms.

The result was that for the first 385,000 years following the Big Bang, photons, including light, were unable to escape and present-day land telescopes are unable to see what happened in that earliest moment in the evolution of the universe – that is, perhaps, until the advent of gravitational wave detectors.

Building on Albert Einstein’s speculation that anything as large as the Big Bang might have created ripples – waves of expansion and contraction called gravitational waves– in space-time, scientists set out to build devices super-sensitive enough to pick up gravitational waves created, for example, by the collision of two black holes.

They succeeded in 2015, when very faint gravitational waves generated by the collision of two modest-sized black holes over two billion years ago were detected.

For this triumph in science and engineering, a Nobel Prize was justly awarded in 2017.

Hopefully, similar waves dating back to the Big Bang itself might be detectable in the future – with much more sensitive space-based detectors.

If successful, this could open the door to finding out just what happened in that violent inflationary expansion of the universe within the first trillionth of a trillionth of a second that immediately followed the Big Bang, and perhaps give us clues to what generated the Big Bang in the first place.

Next, we turn to the sub-atomic world of particles, forces and time.

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



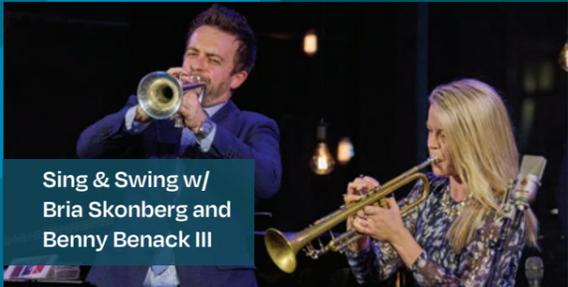
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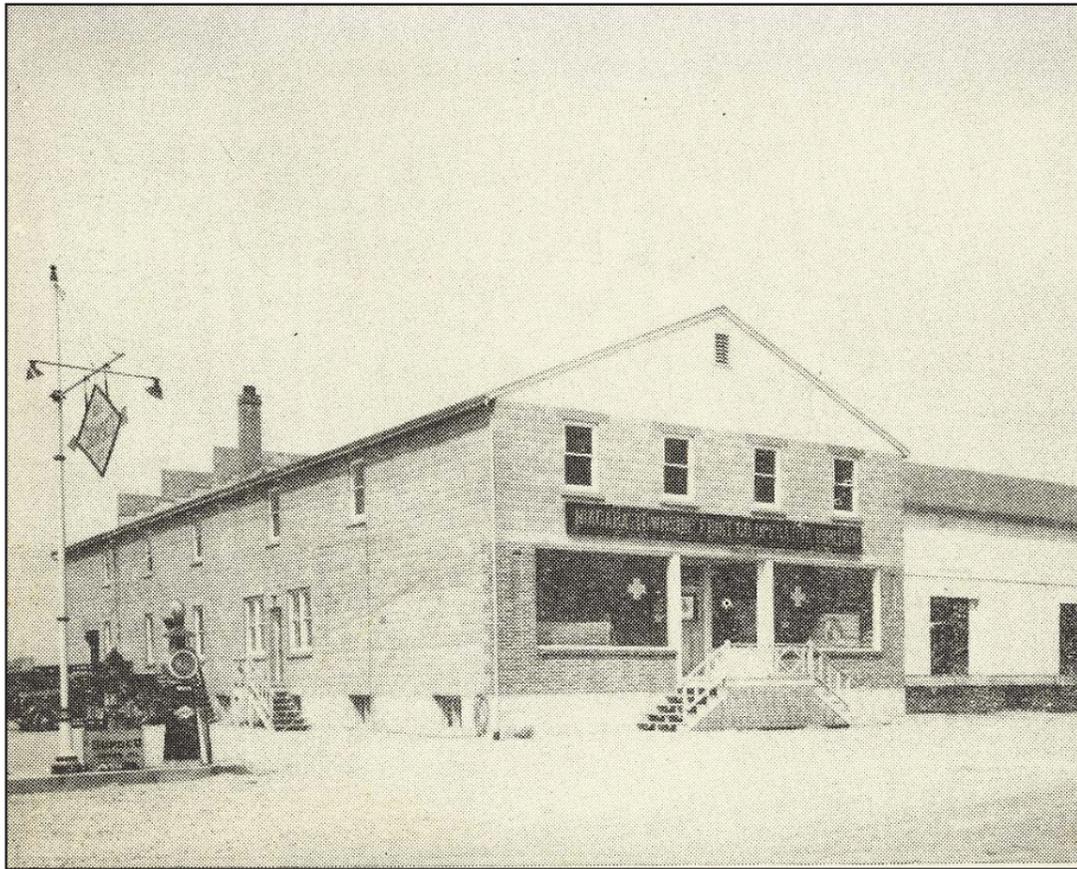
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25 APR
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2 MAY
7 MAY
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EXPLORING HISTORY
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Niagara Township Fruit Co-Operative, 1944

This co-operative was organized and received its charter in March 1937. The co-operative movement in Canada originated when barn raising and other co-operative activities were commonplace. Traditionally, the co-op would buy bulk fruit from the growers and then market the produce. Any profits above expenses were returned to the members at the end of the year. This co-op in Virgil recognized the need for banking services for the local farmers around Virgil and formed a “people’s bank.” With assistance from Ed Regier, a credit union charter was granted in December 1944, forming the Niagara Township Credit Union. Space was provided in the Niagara Township Fruit Co-Operative building in Virgil. This credit union was renamed Niagara Credit Union and then eventually became part of the much larger Meridian Credit Union. The original building in the pamphlet still exists and was owned by Louth and Niagara Orchards, a private organization selling farm supplies. Now, it is occupied by Niagara Orchard & Vineyard Corp, which provides products and services for growers such as baskets, custom packing and repair. You may recognize the building with a large mural on Niagara Stone Road depicting a farmer in the fields. It was created by Ron Clavier in partnership with the Niagara Pumphouse Art Centre.

Brock keeps focus on sports, not spectacles



Ross's Ramblings

Ross Robinson
Columnist

No gambling ads, no bad behaviour by players or spectators.

Just a great sporting event in a packed and eponymous Bob Davis Gymnasium up at Brock University last Friday evening.

There were about 3,000 fans, including my former hockey teammate Bob Davis: always great to see him.

Sitting in the second row, right behind a dozen or so macho, loud, enthusiastic and wacko Brock rugby players cheering on their OUA number-one-ranked friends, the Badgers, in the women’s volleyball provincial final match against the McMaster Marauders.

It was a night to remember, watching the sport I love most.

A fellow NOTL senior citizen and I made the short drive up to Brock, happy to have purchased the last two available tickets.

Such a deal at \$10 each!

The noise was incredible and the tension palpable, but the student event staff had the situation totally under control.

The amazing athletes were warming up, there was fresh popcorn and pop for two bucks and no alcohol or recreational drugs in the area (at least to my knowledge).

The final match started after the appropriate pre-game ceremony — and great points right away.

So athletic, so positive, such respect for the rules and the officials.

Win or lose the point, and a few positive words before the next serve.

Never a pout or a negative sideways glance, no potty mouths and lots of back pats — “Great point,” or “Nice try.”

We were surrounded by students, next to two



The highly ranked Brock University women’s volleyball team finish off their Ontario University Athletics final game against McMaster as the rowdy Brock rugby team chants, “Start the bus. Start the bus!” Brock will now compete in the national championship. ROSS ROBINSON

coeds who play intramural basketball and volleyball at McMaster University.

Were they flirting with the rugby players? Whatever. We felt welcome and they shared popcorn.

The 20-ish rugby-playing student-athletes were loud, a bit bizarre, unashamedly Brock Badgers and 100 per cent biased — but never a negative comment about the referees.

They cheered after every Brock point and banged those dumb red plastic sticks together to add to the

clamour and cacophony.

There are so many negative stories in the media discussing all that is wrong with sports.

If you want to feel better about the future of our great country, go on the Brock University or Niagara College websites, find out what sports are scheduled and make the short drive.

The rugby players were too much. Mostly thickly built, neatly dressed, stylishly coiffed and just plain full of energy and fun.

Perhaps this Ontario

As the Badgers got closer to a win, and their invitation to the national championships, it got noisier and noisier.

Finally, the winning point. On to the nationals!

There was elation for the Badgers, on and off the court, and sadness for the McMaster folks.

But not one instance of bad sportsmanship. All around, respect for a well-played match and everyone had done their best.

On one particular night, both teams cannot be the best, but both teams can try their best. Isn’t that what sport should be all about?

I am so thankful my parents — both fine athletes in their days — totally understood the lessons that sports can teach, the good and the bad.

Our Canada has a bright future in the world, and the young people at our beleaguered colleges and universities give me confidence. And pride.

Next weekend, let’s cheer for the Badgers at the nationals in Hamilton.



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Keep an eye out for these spring **early bloomers**



GROWING TOGETHER 

Joanne Young
Columnist

Well, once again that furry, little, loveable groundhog – Wiarthon Willie – seems to have accurately predicted the coming of an early spring (although, as I write this, there is a light snow falling).

It has certainly been an unusually mild winter — no complaints here.

With milder daily temperatures, some early-blooming plants have opened even earlier than normal.

As you're out on a walk or driving around, you can already see some plants in full bloom.

Here are some of the ones that you are seeing.

Snowdrops
(*Galanthus nivalis*)
As the name suggests,

snowdrops are one of the first spring flowers to bloom, often blooming while there is still a bit of snow on the ground.

This cheerful bulb is truly a no-fuss plant. It can be grown in a full sun or part-shade location in the yard.

Remember, because it blooms so early, deciduous trees are not in leaf yet and are not shading the ground where the bulbs are growing.

There are no known pests or diseases with this bulb. The plants will naturalize (spread freely) and form a colony.

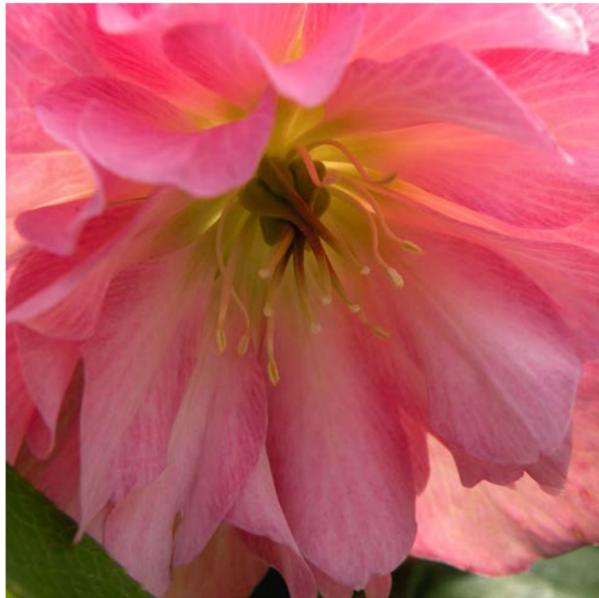
The bulbs for these plants are purchased in the fall (September/October) and planted by mid-November.

There are several cultivars of snowdrops available, including some double-flowering varieties.

On a note of caution, snowdrops are toxic plants for humans, dogs and cats alike.

Avoid letting kids or pets come into contact with any parts of the plants or consider other, non-toxic choices.

Winter aconite
(*Eranthis hyemalis*)
Winter aconite is another bulb that bursts into bloom



Helleborus flowers bloom in early spring. JOANNE YOUNG

in early spring.

It is a low-spreading plant that opens up with a mass of upward-facing, bright yellow, buttercup-like flowers.

Winter aconite grows in a clump four inches high and about eight inches across. Its leaves are bright green.

This plant will tend to self-seed (if happy) and naturalize.

It grows best in evenly moist, humus-rich soil in full sun or part shade.

Plant the bulbs in the fall and try not to disturb the planting area once the bulbs

are put in the ground.

This is one bulb that the deer do not like.

Winter aconite is stunning as a border, along pathways, rock gardens and planted under shrubs and trees.

Lenten rose
(*Helleborus x hybridus*)

The Lenten rose (a.k.a. hellebore) is a perennial plant whose name comes from its rose-like blooms.

In addition, this plant is seen blooming in early spring, often during the Lent season.

The attractive plant is fairly easy to grow in the garden and will add a nice splash of colour to gloomy, shaded areas.

This plant grows best in rich, well-draining soil kept somewhat moist.

It also prefers to be planted in partial to full shade, making it great for adding colour and texture to dark areas of the garden.

The Lenten rose flower will begin blooming in late winter to early spring, lighting the garden with colours ranging from white and pink, red and purple to almost black.

There are many varieties to choose from.

Heath (*Erica carnea*)

This low-spreading evergreen is now covered with masses of white–dark pink flowers.

Winter heath is often referred to as heather, but true heather is the summer-blooming *Calluna vulgaris*.

This low-mounding evergreen (reaching eight to 10 inches tall) makes a great ground cover for sunny areas and requires very little care.

Plants can be sheared lightly after flowers fade, but not any later, as the next

year's flower buds are set in the summer.

Low maintenance, deer and salt-tolerant, drought-tolerant (once established) and easy to grow — all reasons to add this plant to your garden.

Chinese witch hazel
(*Hamamelis mollis*)

Chinese witch hazel is a large-growing, rounded shrub or small tree.

They have been in bloom now for a couple of weeks.

It has unique, strongly fragrant, brilliant golden-yellow flowers from late winter to early spring.

Each flower consists of four golden, ribbon-like, crinkled petals.

The flowers are clustered along bare branches.

Chinese witch hazels will grow 12 to 15 feet high and wide and do best in full sun to part shade in humus-rich soil with even moisture.

Witch hazels are also known for their beautiful gold to orange to scarlet fall colours.

Then, the fun of searching for that perfect piece begins.

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

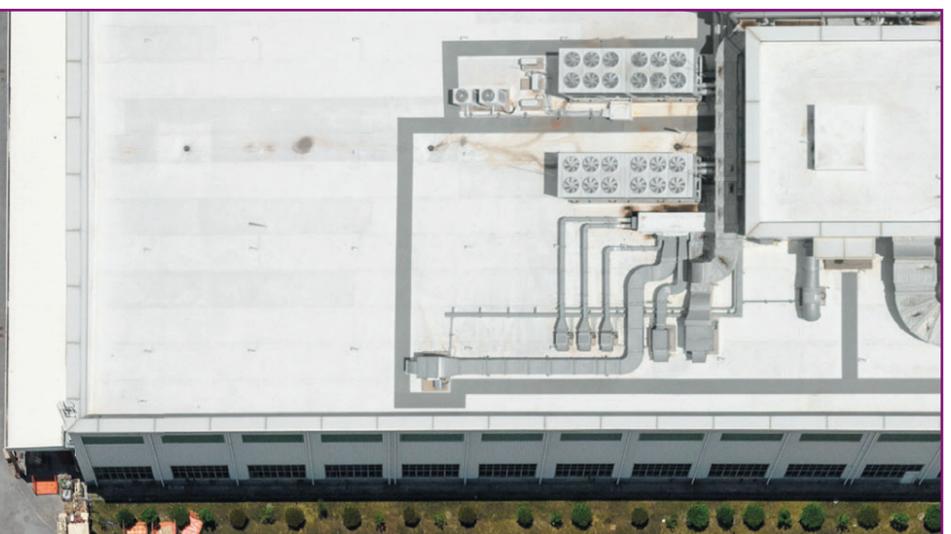
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Obituaries

Richard (Rick) Corvino



CORVINO, Richard (Rick) Andrew Valentine — February 20, 1949– March 2, 2024

With broken hearts, we announce the sudden passing of Rick, our beloved husband, father, and Papa. He left us suddenly, the second of March on the Island of Green Turtle Cay, Abaco, Bahamas.

He is survived by his wife Janis, his dearest friend in the whole wide world. They were together for 60 years. He leaves behind his loving sons and daughters-in-law: Robin and Vanesa, Lucas and Jess, and Daniel and Lauren. Adoring Papa of Samantha, Valentina, Vincent, Ryan and Caden. Rick will be missed by his brother Ralph, and never forgotten by his large and loving Spurek and Carruth extended families.

Rick had a long and creative career as a Gifted Education teacher with the District School Board of Niagara. His classrooms were like none other. Retiring in 2005, he enjoyed sailing, volleyball, travelling, puttering around in his garden, camping with his family, or just simply sitting on his boat and watching the Niagara River go by.

He was a caretaker. He cared about his town of Niagara-on-the-Lake and its trees, the Niagara-on-the-Lake sailing club, his animal and plant collections, his vehicle collections, and above all, his family and friends. His eclectic style and iconic bandana and moustache were easily recognized. He always stood out in a crowd.

If you asked him, he was seldom wrong, but by the way, Rick, you left the burners on again.

Rick, I love you more than life, and more than I could possibly say. I love you forever.

— Janis

You are welcome to join us on Sunday, March 24 at the Niagara-on-the-Lake Sailing Club for an informal farewell gathering from 1 to 4 p.m. BYOB (Bring your own Bandana). In lieu of flowers, donations can be made to the Heart and Stroke Foundation. Online condolences can be made at richardcorvino.muchloved.com

Nona Mary Macdonald Heaslip



NONA MARY MACDONALD HEASLIP, C.M., B.A., L.L.D. (Hon), D.S.Litt.(Hon), (b. November 20, 1930) died peacefully after a brief illness at Toronto Western Hospital on March 6, 2024. Adored wife of the late William Arthurs Heaslip, C.M., she was predeceased by her brothers, Alan and Malcolm, Malcolm's wife, Nancy, and nephew, Bradford. Babu, as she was known to the Macdonalds, is survived by her sister-in-law Joyce, and will be dearly missed by her nieces and nephews, Nona Louise, Doris (Michael Van Buer), Alan, Ronald (Loralee Delbrouck), Carol, and great nephews, Lincoln and Davis. She is also remembered as the fun-loving matriarch of the Heaslip clan by niece Brenda Radford, and her children, Victoria (Matt Couto), Devin, Vanessa, and Spencer, and numerous other relatives. Nona was born in Saskatoon to Dr. Ronald Hugh and Nona (nee Hutcheson). She graduated from City Park High School and attended St. Michael's College at the University of Toronto. Upon completing her English degree, Nona began a career in print journalism at The Star Phoenix in her hometown, The Province in Vancouver, and United Press International in Montreal. Nona moved

into radio and television production at the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation before relocating to New York. There she produced media programming for the United Nations and eventually became the Television-Radio Publicity Director for Time Incorporated. Always up for a new challenge, Nona also worked in the United Kingdom, which allowed her to keep in touch with relatives there and to feed her travel bug by traversing Europe on holidays. In the mid 1970s, Nona returned to Canada to work in public relations at Ontario Place and then at the University of Toronto, where she was the first PR Manager. She advised three university presidents and modernized U of T's external relations portfolio. To this day, prospective students and guests may start their campus tours, which she established, from the Nona Macdonald Visitors Centre. Her work was recognized with two awards from the Council for Advancement and Support of Education. Nona was active in the community as President of the John Simcoe Historical Association, the Couchiching Institute on Public Affairs, and the Empire Club of Canada. Her professional expertise and love of theatre made her a valued member of many boards including The Shaw Festival and Asolo Repertory Theatre (Sarasota, Florida). She was also a driving force behind the formation of the Theatre Museum of Canada. Nona and her husband Bill created The William and Nona Heaslip Foundation, which funds undergraduate Heaslip Scholars in ten universities across Canada as well as supporting many other charitable organizations in the education, arts, and health sectors. Nona's commitment to giving back was recognized by three universities, which awarded her honorary degrees (U of PEI, St. Michael's and Trinity College, U of T). She was named to the Order of Canada in 2021 and was thrilled to travel to Ottawa two years later to receive her award. Nona will be deeply missed by her wide circle of friends and by an even wider community of artists, medical practitioners, and students who have benefited from her generosity. Nona's greatest joy was connecting with people; she loved nothing better than gathering to share stories and laughter. She was a member of several clubs where she enjoyed the social life and stayed active as long as possible playing tennis, golf, and swimming. Nona hosted many parties in her lovely home and beautiful garden, often including live music, singing (especially Christmas carols), and dancing. Nona will be especially missed by her longtime housekeeper and party facilitator, Carmelita Alcalá. The family is grateful to the compassionate caregivers who made Nona's last two years much more comfortable and to the excellent staff at Toronto Western Hospital. The visitation was held on Tuesday, March 12, 2024, at the Mount Pleasant Funeral Centre, 375 Mount Pleasant Road, Toronto. A joyous celebration of life will follow in the spring. It will be a party! In lieu of flowers, friends are encouraged to honour Nona's generosity by donating to the charity of their choice. For online condolences, please visit www.etchouch.ca



Roger Hughes



HUGHES, The Honourable Roger Thomas, KC – September 16, 1941 – March 7, 2024
Roger died peacefully at his home in Niagara-on-the-Lake on March 7, 2024 after a brief illness. He was born in Montreal in 1941 and grew up in Welland and Marathon, Ontario.

Roger graduated with an engineering degree from Queen's University in 1963 and from University of Toronto Law School in 1966. He enjoyed a successful career as a barrister, specializing in intellectual property litigation, but was happiest as a judge of the Federal Court of Canada from 2005 until his retirement in 2016.

Roger is survived by his wife, Susan Peacock; his children, Timothy (Lisa Mantello), Michael (Elizabeth Laitman Hughes) and Megan (Milosh Rodic); and his grandchildren, Magdalen, Simon, Beatrice, Nathaniel, and Lucie.

Cremation has taken place and a celebration of Roger's life will be held on Thursday, March 21 at 11 a.m. at St. Thomas's Anglican Church, 383 Huron St., Toronto.

Memorial donations to St. Mark's Anglican Church, Niagara-on-the-Lake would be

greatly appreciated by Roger's family.

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



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