



Lakefront condos proposed | Page 3

## Violence mars final night of Stampede

Somer Slobodian  
Local Journalism Initiative  
The Lake Report

After several violent incidents Monday night, the Virgil Stampede is going to look into increased safety

and security for next year. After the fair closed on Monday, some Niagara-on-the-Lake residents voiced their concerns on community Facebook pages, citing several fights, use of pepper spray, a knife being dropped

and one allegation of a gun being seen. Richard Wall, president of the Virgil Business Association, which organizes the Stampede, said the fair had St. John Ambulance personnel and eight guards from

Paladin Security on duty. "Everything went really smoothly up until really the last hour," he said. "For lack of a better term, there were some teenagers

*Continued on Page 16*



## Short-term rentals to be subject to room tax

Evan Loree  
Local Journalism Initiative  
The Lake Report

Council has set a deadline for next January to extend its hotel room tax to cottage rentals and bed and breakfasts, most of which do not currently collect the tax.

"Hopefully, seven months is enough time and will put a little fire under everybody," said Coun. Maria Mavridis, who brought the motion to council Tuesday morning.

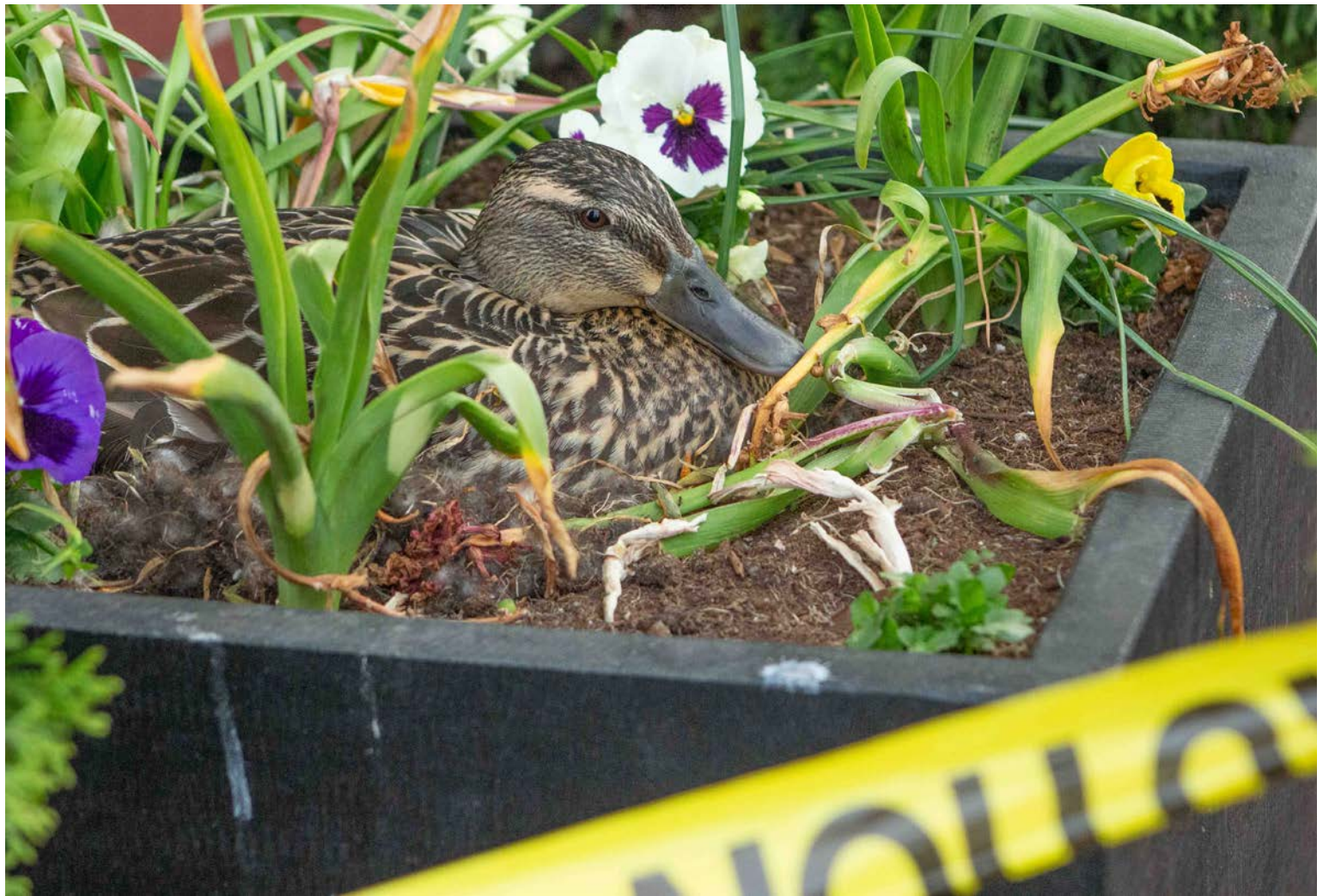
Under the existing rules, only businesses with more than five rooms have to collect the tax, an additional two per cent of the advertised room rate.

Mavridis suggests the municipal accommodation tax be "applied to all accom-

*Continued on Page 2*

## Don't dare touch the duck

Mother mallard is nurturing her eggs at the Pillar & Post Gardens



A mother duck was found nesting her eight eggs in a flower pot in The Gardens at Pillar and Post. Staff have placed caution tape around her spot to protect the resting mother. Ducks nurse their eggs for about 20 weeks before they hatch. JULIA SACCO

## GO Transit expansion means more tourism: Zalepa

Somer Slobodian  
Local Journalism Initiative  
The Lake Report

An increase in GO Transit services between Toronto and Niagara Falls could mean more visitors

to Niagara-on-the-Lake – and maybe ease parking pressures in town, the lord mayor says.

Premier Doug Ford announced the increase in weekday and weekend GO train services last Friday

and the new trips began the next day.

There are now an additional two daily round trips along with one more daily roundtrip on weekends to Niagara Falls.

This brings the total of

weekly round trips between Toronto and Niagara Falls to 21.

Lord Mayor Gary Zalepa called the announcement a "needed improvement."

*Continued on Page 3*





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# Queen's Royal Beach reaches **water quality** milestone

Somer Slobodian  
Local Journalism Initiative  
The Lake Report

If you're looking for a way to cool off and have fun this summer, you may feel a bit better about taking a dip in the waters of the Niagara River.

After eight years of cleaning up and monitoring Queen's Royal Beach, the water quality has increased significantly, with the province officially recognizing its improvement.

In March, the Niagara Peninsula Conservation Authority received correspondence from Environment and Climate Change Canada stating the beach's status has now been changed from "impaired" to "not impaired."

The conservation authority and the Town of Niagara-on-the-Lake worked together through the Niagara River Remedial Action Plan to address the river's water quality issues, caused by human waste.

Queen's Royal Beach is the only swimmable beach along the Niagara River.

"The river was considered to be bad or degraded because of water-quality problems," said Natalie Green, the action plan's project manager.

This was due to human E. coli making its way into the water from human sources

such as poor sewage treatment and leaking pipes.

The Remedial Action Plan was enforced when the Great Lakes Water Quality Agreement listed the Niagara River as one of 43 original areas of concern in 1987.

The plan uses a list of 14 "impairments" to help address issues in the Niagara River related to water use.

These categories of impairments determine if an ecosystem is healthy. Each category targets a specific area that needs improvement.

Some areas include wildlife habitats, water quality and fish populations.

For the Niagara River, Green explained, the bacterial levels were not reaching the targeted levels of safety as often as they should have.

Before 2018, only 44 to 75 per cent of water testing samples came back as safe for swimming.

From 2018 to 2020, however, water quality samples met proper targets more than 80 per cent of the time, said Green.

According to data from the Niagara Region, in 2018 the beach was safe to swim 86.8 per cent of the time, 86 per cent in 2019 and 92 per cent in 2020.

"The water quality improvement at Queen's Royal Beach is a significant accomplishment," Marnie



Paula Moura takes samples at Queens Royal Beach in 2019. SUPPLIED

Cluckie, the town's chief administrative officer, said in an email to The Lake Report.

It cost almost \$1 million to improve the water quality at the beach.

The town discovered the King Street stormwater outlet, which discharges stormwater near the beach, was the main source of contamination.

Testing found human sources of E. coli in the stormwater pipe that drained into the river.

Water running off of the roads into the river should only carry stormwater from the roads and lawns, Green said.

"It shouldn't have human bacteria because that should

be going into the pipes that take the water to the water treatment plant," she said.

After this discovery, the town began trying to fix the problem. It received funding from Environment and Climate Change Canada between 2017 to 2019 to investigate the stormwater outlet area and find the issue's source.

Green's assessment report on the issue, published in 2021, states there were several issues with bacterial contamination due to improper sewer connections, abandoned sewer infrastructure and poor stormwater infrastructure conditions, to name a few.

Green said the wading pool in Simcoe Park along

Queen Street was a big contributor to high E. coli levels.

She said children would urinate in the pool and that water would go directly into the river.

When the town figured out this was an issue, it reconnected the pool to the water treatment plant, Green said.

"Now, all of the water from that wading pool goes to a wastewater treatment plant to get treated instead of going directly into the river," she said.

Using provincial and government funding, the town continued water quality improvements by sampling the water three times a week, conducting an investigation

into the stormwater outlet, implementing the remedial action plan and adding a bioswale at Simcoe Park.

A bioswale acts as a miniature treatment plant and catches, stores and filters stormwater.

According to Green's report, those monitoring the bioswale between 2018 and 2020 found the system was 89 to 95 per cent effective at reducing bacteria.

The town also replaced cracked pipes and home pipes that weren't going to the sewage treatment plant.

Green said the beach will never be 100 per cent free of bacteria and residents should still check the Niagara Region's water quality page before swimming – especially after a storm.

However, compared to eight years ago, the water quality is significantly better, she said, which is "great news."

"We can move ahead and start focusing on our next big Niagara River issues," said Green.

There are four remaining "Beneficial Use Impairments" along the Canadian side of the Niagara River listed as impaired.

Green said the action plan will be working on the "Degradation of Fish & Wildlife Populations" impairment assessment next, followed by "Loss of Fish & Wildlife Habitat."

# Mavridis suggests **expanding tax** to all short-term rentals

*Continued from Front Page*

modation establishments, including all those with less than five rooms."

Council introduced the room tax and its current rules in June 2022 to bring in additional revenue and help promote the town's festivals and other tourist attractions.

At that time, councillors decided to exempt small operators from collecting the room tax because many were struggling to sustain business during the pandemic.

The Lake Report found that under the current system only 36 of 347 short-

term rentals are expected to collect the tax.

According to staff, tax collections on these rooms could rake in an additional \$600,000 in revenue for the town.

Meanwhile, hotel operators argue if the room tax is here to stay, the town should collect it from short-term rentals as well.

Even industry stakeholders like David Levesque, a member of Stay Niagara-on-the-Lake (an association for short-term rental operators), told council it has "long seemed inevitable" small operators would have to start charging the room tax to guests.



Coun. Maria Mavridis.

Coun. Gary Burroughs supported Mavridis' motion to extend the tax to the currently-exempt small bed and breakfasts, but wanted two committees up and running before the change next winter.

The first committee will oversee the use of the room tax. Burroughs pointed out

this term of council has yet to form the committee.

Burroughs also wants to reinstate the old short-term rental committee, which would work with the wider industry to ensure it was prepared to start collecting the tax.

Both he and Levesque were part of the short-term rental committee in 2021.

The committee brought 33 recommendations to council on July 26, 2021 which were then given to staff for input.

Burroughs said he asked for a status update on these recommendations 10 ten times since but has yet to see them return to council for discussion.

Levesque agreed with Burroughs on reinstating the short-term rental committee.

After some discussion, council amended Mavridis' original motion to also reinstate the short-term rental committee.

"Another consultation process with the accommodation sector is needed before going forward," said Levesque.

He argued that smaller operators struggle to implement the town's room tax because the computer systems they use to run their businesses are not always advanced enough to calculate the tax in its current form.

"I'm concerned that you're spending so much time on complicated computer programs when I'm not sure it's that difficult on individual operators," Burroughs said.

Levesque said he wants to give people the tools they need to make this work so it's "not a complete headache for everyone."

Burroughs said he did not think it would be such a big headache.

Levesque said he was not against extending the tax to short-term rentals but wanted to make sure all parties were "going with this idea together" and "doing what's needed to make it work."



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A rendering of the proposed Blythwood Homes condominiums at 61 Melville St. SUPPLIED

## Residents **OK** with Melville condo plans

Evan Loree  
Local Journalism Initiative  
The Lake Report

A developer is planning to replace the old King George III Inn near the docks in Niagara-on-the-Lake with a compact condominium.

Blythwood Homes bought 61 Melville St., also known as the former American Hotel, in June 2021.

Blythwood vice-president Alexa Mills said the company has been working on the property for about two years.

“We commissioned an initial proposal that was unfortunately out of character with the area,” Mills said.

Residents said the building was too high, dark and bulky for the neighborhood, she added.

So, Blythwood hired NOTL architects Connie Tintinalli and Wayne Murray to draft something new.

Mills said the new design should “complement the historic harbour area.”

William Heikoop, an Upper Canada Consultants senior planner, presented the owner’s plans at an open house May 17 to an audience of six residents.

“We’ve taken a marine inspiration approach,” he said.

He pointed to the proposed building’s colour scheme, circular windows and pillars as examples of that inspiration.

The plan will consist of 12 condominium units spread across three storeys and include 24 parking spaces.

At 12 metres high, the proposal falls within the town’s height requirements.

“The proposed site is to be heavily landscaped,” Heikoop said, helping to beautify the view from the street.

He said 16 of the building’s proposed parking spaces are contained in its parking garage.

The building covers almost 67 per cent of the lot, but the town sets a limit of 50 per cent on lot coverage.

This was not missed by resident Jim Reynolds, who attended the public open house on May 17.

“You’re 17 per cent over,” he said.

Reynolds also said that the eight parking spaces outside the building might not be necessary and suggested the space be used as a garden or landscape feature.

Meanwhile, nearby resident Ron Simkus was concerned about how resilient the property would be to floods from Lake Ontario.

Simkus said the last time he’d spoken to the developer they had discussed using the main floor of the building for parking only, to help

protect its future residents from flooding.

Heikoop said the issue of climate change and its impact on flooding was “a bit of a bigger discussion that impacts the entire area.”

In the current design, he said the owners were planning to build the main floor a few steps higher than the sidewalk to alleviate potential flooding problems.

Simkus, also concerned about drainage in the neighbourhood, suggested the developers put in permeable surfaces for the parking lot, instead of asphalt.

“The existing site is completely covered in asphalt,” Heikoop said. “What we’re proposing is a significant improvement on that.”

The residents gave mostly positive feedback on the proposal, though they will get a chance to voice any additional concerns June 13 at a public meeting.

## Expanded GO train **enhances connection** to GTA

*Continued from Front Page*

“It’s a good sign that it’s not just a summer announcement as well. It sounds like it’s a permanent service enhancement,” he said.

Not only can increased GO services boost tourism in Niagara-on-the-Lake, Zalepa said it may alleviate parking concerns by encouraging people to visit NOTL via transit.

Offering more trips can help people commute to their jobs, homes and also jumpstart tourism to Niagara, the province said in a news release.

Tourism in Niagara is a \$1.8 billion industry and provides more than 23,000 jobs, the release noted.

Minerva Ward, president of the Niagara-on-the-Lake Chamber of Commerce and Tourism NOTL, said this latest development “greatly” enhances connectivity between the Greater Toronto Area and Niagara-on-the-Lake and provides “more convenient” transportation options for the town’s residents and visitors.

“It will drive economic growth by attracting more tourists and increasing visitor spending in the region,” she wrote in an email to The

Lake Report.

The province also announced that GO train services to St. Catharines VIA Rail station will resume.

Zalepa said the “next big step” will be helping tourists easily get from the train stations to Niagara-on-the-Lake.

Right now tourists can get to NOTL from Niagara Falls or St. Catharines by taxi, rideshare or a private shuttle service, said Ward.

Tourists can also use the Niagara Region Transit OnDemand system to get to NOTL. Fares cost \$3 within Niagara-on-the-Lake or \$6 to travel between cities.

Fares can be booked on

the NRT OnDemand app or by calling 1-833-678-5463 option 1.

Travellers can also take the WEGO orange line shuttle between Niagara Falls and Niagara-on-the-Lake daily until Oct. 29.

The WEGO orange line shuttle departs from the Niagara Falls Butterfly Conservatory at 10:30 a.m. daily and the last shuttle leaves from Fort George in NOTL at 6 p.m.

As of June 30, the shuttle will depart from the Niagara Falls Floral Clock at 9:30 a.m. daily and the last shuttle leaves from Fort George at 7 p.m.

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Left: Canadian soldiers advance toward the Gothic Line, a key defensive point for the Germans. Right: Alvin Hutchinson's tombstone in Italy. LIBRARY AND ARCHIVES CANADA/VIRTUAL WAR MEMORIAL

## NOTL Arts Collective hosts latest exhibit at Château des Charmes

Staff  
The Lake Report

Coming soon to Niagara-on-the-Lake: a sensory experience for your eyes, your taste buds and your imagination.

A collective of artists from Niagara-on-the-Lake is hosting a six-month-long art exhibit opening this spring at Château des Charmes, a winery in St. Davids.

The new exhibit will open to the public from May 26 to Oct. 26 at no charge.

It will feature work from the NOTL Arts Collective, which includes 25 professional artists from Niagara-on-the-Lake, plus curators and supporting galleries such as the Niagara Pump-house Arts Centre.

The arts collective is hosting an opening reception for the exhibit on June 1 from 5:30 to 7:30 p.m. where guests will be able to enjoy a complimentary glass of sparkling wine while enjoying the exhibit.

"Over the years, Château des Charmes has been a strong supporter of local arts and artists," said Rima Boles, Niagara

Pumphouse's arts director in a media release. "It's really important for us to align with a local company that shares our vision and believes in our growth.

Last fall was the start of the winery's collaboration with the NOTL Arts Collective. Members showcased their works on the property's second floor in the St. Davids Bench Room and the Paul Bosc Lounge.

"In a town like Niagara-on-the-Lake, the arts not only add to the visitors' experience but also play a vital role in the community. Art adds to the identity and uniqueness of our town," stated Paul Bosc, Château des Charmes's owner and founder.

Château des Charmes already has a partnership with the arts centre as its official wine sponsor: its wines are exclusively served at all the art centre's events.

"Through this partnership, we want to contribute to Niagara Pump-house Arts Centre's efforts of strengthening the visual arts community," Bosc stated.

For more information about the upcoming exhibit, visit [notlartscollective.com/](http://notlartscollective.com/) events.



Back row: NOTL Arts Collective members Lynn Weiner, Nancy Wardle, Lynne Gaetz and Niagara Pump-house board chair Lise Andreana. Front: Rima Boles, Pumphouse direct, Paul-André Bosc, president of Château des Charmes and Victoria Gilbert, Pumphouse volunteer. SUPPLIED

# THE MONUMENTS MEN

## 'God loved you more': Pte. James Alvin Hutchinson

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

Ron Dale  
Special to The Lake Report

Almost a year before the invasion of Normandy on June 6, 1944, Canadians were fighting to drive German forces from Sicily and Italy.

Along with American and British forces, Canadians landed in Sicily on July 10, 1943, and finally forced the German defenders from Sicily on Aug. 6.

Canadians landed in Italy on Sept. 3, 1943, and fought against a slowly retreating enemy until February 1945.

During this Mediterranean campaign, the Canadian Army suffered 25,264 casualties, including more than 5,900 killed.

The bloodiest battles for the Canadians were fought in crossing the Moro River

and the capture of Ortona on the Adriatic coast.

The Moro River Campaign from Dec. 4, 1943, until Jan. 4, 1944, took the lives of 2,339 Canadian men.

Between January and May 1944, the Allies launched four major offensives to drive the Germans back from their prepared defensive lines. Rome was abandoned by the Germans and occupied by the Allies on June 4, 1944.

By August 1944 the Germans had been driven back to their "Gothic Line" of defences and the Canadian Corps was tasked with breaking through that line.

The Canadians crossed the Metauro River on Aug. 25 and five days later fought bloody actions at Foglia River on the Gothic Line.

By Sept. 2, the Canadians had smashed through part of that line and were advancing to the Conca River, forcing the Germans farther north. The city of Rimini was their next objective.

It was during this campaign that Pte. James Alvin Hutchinson of St. Davids began his war.

Known as Alvin, he was born on Feb. 22, 1925, in Heathcote, Ont., son of Edwin Hutchinson and Annie Hazel Bovair. Alvin Hutchinson was living in St. Davids with his parents by 1943, working as a truck driver for the Otis-Fensom

elevator company.

On Oct. 12, 1943, at the age of 18, the minimum age for enlisting, he joined the Canadian Army.

From Nov. 6 to Dec. 20, Hutchinson completed basic training in Toronto before receiving more advanced infantry training at Camp Borden, not far from where he was born.

This training was somewhat hurried, lasting from Dec. 21 to Feb. 19, 1944, including time away from camp for Christmas leave.

From Camp Borden he travelled to Woodstock for vehicle training. He was a truck driver in civilian life, so it was not long before he qualified on a variety of military vehicles.

By May he was considered ready to be sent to war. On May 8, 1944, he disembarked in England and was assigned to the 3rd Canadian Reinforcement Unit.

On July 16, 1944, Hutchinson embarked on a transport ship bound for the Mediterranean. After arriving in North Africa, he was shipped to Italy and initially assigned to the 48th Highlander Regiment.

He was then transferred to the Princess Louise Dragoon Guards Regiment, which had suffered heavy casualties in the Italian campaign. He arrived at the camp of the Princess Louise Regiment on Sept. 12 while they were fighting their way

toward Rimini.

Hutchinson was almost immediately in action. The Canadians were facing very well-trained German troops of the 1st Parachute Regiment.

The Canadians were pummeled by artillery, tanks, machine-guns and mortar fire. The Germans were slowly pushed back and eventually abandoned the Coriano Ridge, a major defensive position.

On Sept. 21, the Allies finally entered Rimini, which had been deserted by the German defenders.

The next objective for the Princess Louise Regiment, as part of the 5th Armoured Division, was to advance across the Lombardy Plains to Bologna and the Po River.

During this struggle the Germans continued their fighting withdrawal. It was during this time that Alvin was mortally wounded, dying of his wounds on Sept. 28, five months before his 20th birthday.

Hutchinson is buried in the Gradara military cemetery in Provincia di Pesaro e Urbino, Italy.

His mother chose the inscription on his tombstone in Gradara: "Dear Son, We Loved You Dearly but God Loved You More. Rest in Peace."

Hutchinson is remembered on the cenotaph in Queenston and on his parents' tombstone in Heathcote.

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# Draft strategic plan ready for resident input

Evan Loree  
Local Journalism Initiative  
The Lake Report



Lord Mayor Gary Zalepa and deputy mayor Erwin Wiens chat during a council meeting. EVAN LOREE

The town's draft strategic plan is now ready for resident feedback and suggestions.

The plan – meant to be a roadmap of council's priorities for the next four years – is available for residents to review and comment on at public information sessions around town until May 30.

Residents can also provide feedback by filling out surveys on the town's Join the Conversation forum.

While the plan is far from finalized, the town has identified some initial priorities, including youth programs, health infrastructure, urban planning, economic development and tourism management.

The full list of proposed priorities can also be found on the town's forum along with a staff presentation outlining some of the topics covered in their brainstorming sessions.

Lord Mayor Gary Zalepa wouldn't declare what he'd like to prioritize, saying he wants to hear from residents first.

He made an exception about managing the town's growth, which he said was "going to bubble to the top."

Some councillors questioned the large amount of input staff have had at this stage in the plan.

Coun. Wendy Cheropita said senior staff brainstormed their own ideas for the strategic plan and then brought those suggestions to council.

Staff and council then held a joint brainstorming session April 19 and the various topics that came up were given to staff, who drafted the plan based on what was discussed.

Victoria Steele, the town's new director of strategy and government relations, then presented the draft to council May 16.

"We looked at some potential priorities and goals. Our senior management team had come up with some they wanted to finish from the previous term," Steele said.

Cheropita pointed out there was a lot in the draft

that had already "been in the queue for a couple of years" and said plans like these are supposed to be looking ahead.

"It's a highly unusual process," she later told The Lake Report.

In her experience, council usually sets priorities and provides its own vision and staff is in charge of implementing it, she said.

After seeing the drafted plan, Coun. Gary Burroughs wondered if it is being designed by council or by staff.

"Really, strategic plans are council's strategic plan, not staff's," he said. "It's way too staff-driven."

Despite his concerns, Burroughs voted with the majority to start getting feedback on the draft plan.

Cheropita and Coun. Sandra O'Connor both voted against sending it out for feedback, arguing it would have been helpful to first refine their ideas with a short meeting.

Coun. Erwin Wiens, on the other hand, said the process for this term is "very similar" to what he remembers from his first term.

"For me personally, it's been a lot easier because I understand the process," he said.

"I have no concerns with our strategic plan whatsoever," he added.

Chief administrator Marnie Cluckie told The Lake Report developing an effective plan "requires engaging as many people as much as possible."

The previous council hired a consultant to oversee the strategic plan but she said this council decided to have a staff member facilitate it.

That responsibility belongs to Steele, who was

previously acting town clerk.

The whole point of the plan "is to get everyone rowing in the same direction," Cluckie said.

"That requires having a shared vision and common goals, open communication and buy-in at all levels."

Zalepa said council is going to hold "an extra workshop following the public feedback."

He said this will help councillors feel like their goals and priorities are part of the plan.

In the current draft, the priority projects are subdivided into four categories, the fourth of which contains items that will help staff optimize service.

O'Connor thinks residents may focus too closely on this category and that it might "detract from the more important messages that we're trying to develop."

She also was concerned there were no environmental stewardship projects in the draft of strategic priorities.

This is partially because staff are planning to address all town projects from the environmental perspective.

O'Connor called this "an attempt to keep the environment in there," but felt it was being relegated to a "second priority."

For Burroughs, short-term rentals need to be addressed in the strategic plan.

"To me short-term rentals are a big deal in this town," he said.

Burroughs sat on the former short-term rental committee and he feels the solutions proposed by the committee would "fit this town very, very nicely."

He said council has not seen an update on the committee's suggestions since July 2021.

Cheropita, on the other hand, got a few of her top concerns into the draft plan.

One of them was the town's capital reserves, which she said the previous council decided not to top up two years in a row.

It's important, she said, to turn inward and look to "operate more efficiently, where we might find cost savings."

Wiens, well-known for his advocacy for the agricultural community, also listed responsible spending as a top priority.

"You know the old adage, and it's cliché, but every day is budget day," he said.

These concerns would be covered under the town's sustainable budget program, which was listed as a priority in the plan's second category.

In their discussion of the strategic plan on May 16, councillors decided to not hold another meeting to discuss it.

Coun. Nick Ruller said the town needs to stay on schedule with the plan.

"This is intended to be a community-driven strategic plan," Ruller said.

"The more time we spend as council trying to refine and narrow the focus, the more problematic that will be as far as accurately capturing the broader community's interest," he said.

Ruller noted pushing the schedule into the summer could decrease community engagement because many residents leave on vacation.

He also said he wants an approved strategic plan before councillors get into the budget.

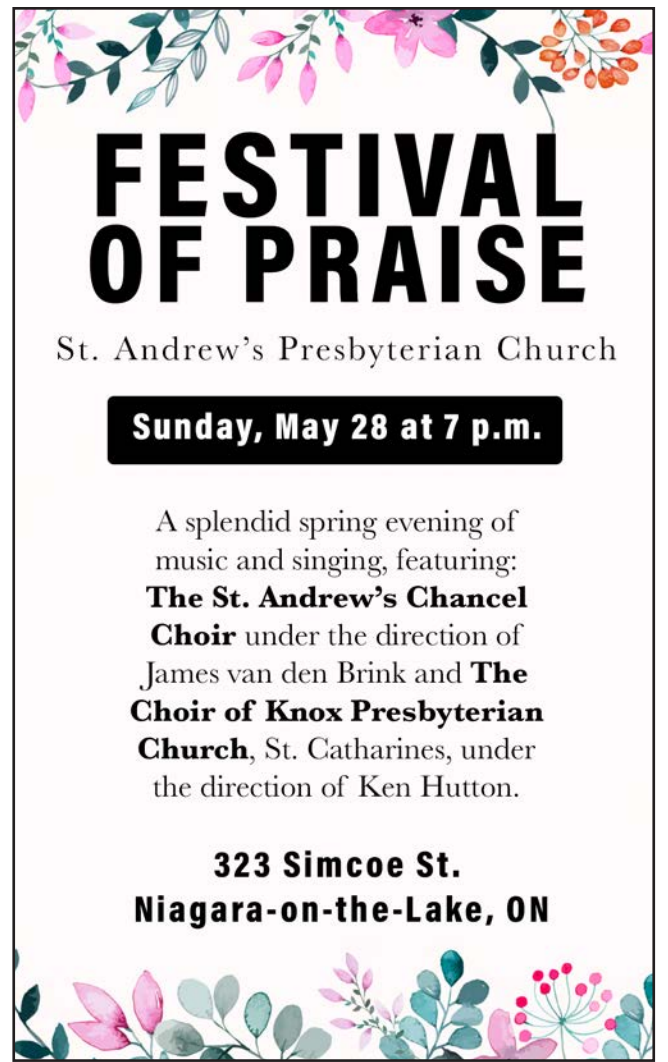
"Arguably, we will be the biggest impediment to a strategic budget if we don't continue to move this along," he said.

### UPCOMING SESSIONS

The town's information sessions for the draft strategic plan started Tuesday.

There will be two more May 29, the first at Virgil Sports Park from noon to 2 p.m. and another at Sparky's Park in St. Davids from 3:30 to 5:30 p.m.

The remaining three will be May 30, at the Glendale outlet mall's food court from 11:30 a.m. to 1:30 p.m., the second at the old Court House from 2:30 to 4:30 p.m. and the last one online at 6:30 p.m.



## FESTIVAL OF PRAISE

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**Contributed by Patty Garriock**

“Always go with the choice that scares you the most – because that’s the one that is going to require the most from you.” - Caroline Myss

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Call 905.359.2270 or send an email to editor@niagaranow.com

## Virgil fireworks a sight to see



The Virgil Business Association outdid itself again this year on the Virgil Stampede fireworks display. They seemed to last forever and spectators were hooting and hollering in excitement. RICHARD HARLEY

## Editorial

### Commitment to tax rentals is a good first step

Richard Harley  
 Editor-In-Chief

Niagara-on-the-Lake is finally going to make short-term rentals charge the same two per cent accommodation tax as hotels do.

Although the town is taking its time, giving rental operators a generous seven months to prepare, it’s a win for the town.

As we have said repeatedly in editorials about short-term rentals, it means more revenue and a leveling of the playing field for hotel operators who have been obligated to charge the tax to their guests since July 2022.

It means a fairer system and it was the right thing to do.

This paper has been vocal in advocating for the tax, especially after our research in 2021 found that just 12

of 255 short-term rentals would be subject to the tax under rules set out by the town’s council at the time.

Good work on the commitment, councillors. It’s about time, to be frank.

Now, let’s ensure all rentals are taxed, no matter how many rooms they have, and figure out how to use the income, while also looking into a temporary rezoning strategy for unhosted rentals.

Coun. Gary Burroughs’ suggestion that a committee be established to oversee the use of the funds is a good idea. We hope the people on that committee come to the table with open minds.

The money is meant to be used to support tourism and tourism-related activities and infrastructure.

We’ve said this also many times before: In Niagara-on-the-Lake, that could be

just about anything, because almost all paths lead to NOTL’s tourism industry in some form or fashion.

For example: It could be used to help restore and beautify the Niagara Baptist Church Burial Ground in the way that Voices of Freedom Park has been turned into a lovely testament to NOTL’s Black heritage and history.

Or it could be used to fill pot holes near Newark Park.

Almost anything can be justified — maybe even legal fees for protecting the town’s built heritage, which is a major tourism draw.

Smart thinking allows the money to be spent wisely instead of using it on only the obvious tourism-related activities like marketing and festivals. Although some of the revenue can be used for those things, too.

The town estimates the

income from expanding the tax to be about \$600,000.

It might be even more than that. And one way or another, that’s money taxpayers don’t have to spend.

If the town is to bring back a short-term rental committee as Burroughs suggests, then council must ensure it is not once again overpowered by industry stakeholders.

It must have equal representation from residents, including ones who are not happy with the current system of managing unhosted rentals.

And it should go without saying that it should not take another year for the town to raise its accommodation tax to four per cent.

It’s a plan that has already been suggested and accepted and it could be done at the same seven-month marker. Or sooner.

## We welcome your letters

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

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Reader Greg Hope took these photos of buildings in need of repair downtown. He wonders why nothing is being done to fix the damage. SUPPLIED

## Rotting wood, peeling paint plague Old Town shops

Dear editor:

I am a newer resident, having lived here for 18 months, and want to express my concerns about the slow disintegration of some downtown Niagara-on-the-Lake storefronts and buildings.

I used to visit here before and I don't recall the disrepair of buildings to this degree. Many of the storefronts have rotting wood or aggressively peeling paint around windows, doors and siding. It is in many buildings.

Clearly it has taken years to get to this state. I don't know if it's the property owner not doing the the maintenance or the business that is supposed to be doing it as part of a lease agreement, but it certainly is being neglected.

What the store owners and businesses are forgetting to realize is that this neglect is seen by every tourist and potential customer walking by. Maybe they come this year, but may think to themselves and tell their friends that this place is going downhill and not worth the visit again?

I am not picking on any stores in particular, but here are a few examples.

The Bank of Montreal building's window ledges have rotting wood and peeling paint in several places including near the sign. It has been neglected for years.

I am a BMO customer and a few months ago I went in to speak to the manager, but she was busy so I spoke to an employee about how it looks. She said she

never noticed – and I said, “Maybe you work here and just walk by and don't think about it.”

The building is nice and fancy inside and care has been taken to make sure the customers have a nice place to visit. But what about the presentation outside?

We know BMO cares about its reputation, but somehow in this historic district its business front is looking shabby.

You would think here in NOTL, especially, they would want to get it right. I left my name and number for the manager to call and never heard back. As of a few days ago no repairs had been done.

Other examples: Greaves Jams' building is missing paint in many areas of the storefront. At the Shiny

Company the wood is decaying so badly around the window areas that it appears to be completely gone. I inquired and was told they were hoping to get something done but not in the immediate future.

Even the Shaw ticket office has stucco falling off and missing from the side of the sales office. If you look at the Pillar and Post's sign at the corner of John and King, it is so rotten it looks like it may fall apart soon.

And the beautiful metal fence around the house there is all rusting as it hasn't been painted in many years.

I walk my dog in the Commons near Butler's Barracks and sticking out like a sore thumb is the horrible shape of the two old military buildings

there beside the one Parks Canada building that is maintained.

Both buildings are a mess of peeling paint and rotted doors and windows. No doubt animals can get inside.

I asked the manager there why these two buildings are not maintained and he didn't have a good answer, saying it was too expensive to do a full repair, so they just sit for now.

He said it would cost \$4 million to have the buildings brought back, a figure that sounded bizarre to me. This could have been avoided with regular painting and maintenance.

If you let things go, it costs so much more in the end. Again, what must tourists from other countries think? That Canada cannot

even preserve its heritage? It is embarrassing.

I am not trying to pick on any specific business because the problems are everywhere. If I notice this, wouldn't many of the visitors also? And do they speak to their friends and says it's not worth coming here again? It really could lead to a slow erosion of tourism.

As a regular reader of The Lake Report, paper I see the people up in arms about many things, such as new builds and how they won't fit into the character of this beautiful town.

Shouldn't they and the business owners be concerned about the shape of the downtown core and its disintegration?

*Greg Hope*  
NOTL

## We need to persuade Doug Ford to stop privatized health care

Dear editor:

I had a hip replacement in 2016, a successful procedure after a wait of a couple of months.

Now, we have the enactment of Bill 60, where the Ontario government is

opening hospital services to private and for-profit companies.

Previously this government limited wages for medical personnel, including nurses, who we know were overworked.

Remember how we tried to encourage them with banging of saucepans?

If I were a nurse – tired, overworked and underpaid – I would be very tempted to try the private sector.

If many do this imagine

how much more understaffed the public system will be.

What is the result?

If you can afford it, you go private (at least \$40,000 for a hip replacement before inflation took hold) or else you wait and wait.

The condition can only get worse (remember the lad with curvature of the spine?) or perhaps you die. Then you only have funeral expenses.

Is it possible to persuade Premier Doug Ford that we do not want private care

overtaking a public system, which could be an example to the continent?

If only he was in touch with what Ontarians actually want, instead of just his rich pals.

*Cynthia Rand*  
NOTL



### BEYOND THE MIST

Join us at the NOTL Museum for a panel discussion on Niagara's Indigenous history. June 8 | 7 p.m. | Tickets at [notlmuseum.ca](http://notlmuseum.ca).

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NIAGARA  
PARKS



# Taking inventory of NOTL's built heritage homes



Brian Marshall  
Columnist

For nearly five decades, my partner and beloved wife has been my muse, my inspiration and my grounding influence.

It is due to her providing a "court of sober second thought" that some of my most audacious concepts have been realized and I owe her more than can possibly be expressed in words.

She, as much as I (being a mere source of subject expertise and scribbler of words), is responsible for the subject matter of this column.

And, so it was once again over this morning's coffee when I floated my thoughts for this week's topic, she suggested that it was past time to provide Arch-i-text readers with some insight into the progress of the built-heritage inventory project that had been initiated in this column on March 2 of this year, "A call to action to protect NOTL's built heritage, and more."

Because, as she pointed out, one cannot cherish nor protect something they do not know they have.

More than 25 residents of Niagara-on-the-Lake volunteered to assist in this undertaking and, having determined to begin by locating all the "old" houses in the rural areas of town, each set off to survey one or more of the 15 defined districts.

These volunteers traversed every road and street in their district on the hunt for dwellings that might pre-date 1925.

As each district was completed, the findings were forwarded to a central pool and, from there, the build date of each identified house was determined using the MPAC (Municipal Property Assessment Corp.) database.

Finally, using the same database, a thorough property-by-property examination of the entire district was conducted in an attempt to capture the historic domiciles that might have been "disguised" by renovations.

Now, it must be said that MPAC build dating is often inaccurate, particularly with respect to 19th-century homes.

However, in the main, the dating falls on the conservative side (e.g. the Durham-Slingerland House has an MPAC build date of 1870 whereas we know that it is actually circa 1840) and hence can be considered a reasonable reference for identifying builds that occurred prior to 1925.

For surety, each house so identified was subjected to a visual architectural assess-



One of the seven surviving John D. Larkin Craftsman houses in NOTL. BRIAN MARSHALL

ment, in some cases augmented by limited research, to verify it fell before the point of demarcation.

As of this writing, 14 of the 15 rural districts have been inventoried, with only the smallest yet to be processed and the current rural inventory of historic houses stands at 284.

Insofar as the settlement areas are concerned, St. Davids has been inventoried but is awaiting our two historians' inquiries regarding build dating of several buildings that MPAC has no data on and the Queenston inventory is now underway.

Upon completion of the final rural district, Virgil is next on the docket and then we will turn our attention to Old Town.

All that said, this undertaking has uncovered

numerable fascinating and, in some cases, disturbing finds.

Speaking to the latter, my list of threatened historic houses has lengthened. In past columns I have spoken to the vacant, boarded-up circa 1850 stone Regency at 512 Carlton St. and more recently the circa 1900 Arts & Crafts and circa 1857 Georgian (55 and 49 Queenston Rd. respectively) slated for demolition by the province to make way for the expansion of the Skyway bridge.

We can add to this the circa 1903 house at 240 East and West Line. The Town would like to see it gone because of its proximity to a watercourse.

Also there is the circa 1920 Arts & Crafts home at 1996 Four Mile Creek Rd.; the circa 1890 (or

earlier) vernacular farmhouse at 815 Concession 6 Rd.; the circa 1880 Ontario Gothic farmhouse at 897 Concession 7 Rd.; the vernacular Hall & Parlour folk house, circa 1890 (and likely much earlier) at 1132 Line 9 Rd.; and, the glorious circa 1870 dwelling at 1893 York Rd., which is completely constructed of Grimsby red sandstone, with Queenston limestone appointments. This home would be a crying shame to lose.

On a more positive note, there are the surviving seven Craftsman houses that John D. Larkin of Buffalo caused to be built in 1908 as dwellings for his employees (Mr. Larkin owned 1,900 acres in NOTL at the beginning of the 20th century).

Of concrete construction, the exteriors of six of these

houses are largely as-built with bell-curved, hipped roofs and graceful porches speaking to a time when the relationship between employer and employee was different than that of today.

Three of these houses front on Niagara River Parkway (#15306, 15316 and 15322) while the other four are on Line 6 Road just off the Parkway at #1569, 1573, 1577 and 1581. (I must mention that one of our intrepid volunteer couples owns 1577 and has done a smashing job ensuring its preservation and restoration)

Then, out at 765 Four Mile Creek Rd., is, to my knowledge, the only surviving Italianate house in NOTL. While over the years it has lost its original eaves and eave brackets on the main massing (although these are preserved on the sidewall bay), it still proclaims many of the elements of the style.

Several as-built Second Empire homes have been identified and among a significant smattering of Ontario Gothic farmhouses are several with two and even three front-facing gable wall dormers; I guess if one was good, more was better.

I encourage you to take a drive in the country where our built heritage survives and is (largely) well.

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



## Isn't having more health care options a **good thing** for Ontarians?

Dear editor:

I am writing regarding the May 11 story, "Health coalition launches referendum to stop Ford's expansion of private clinics."

I have a few questions and comments in regards to this topic (which seems to have taken on a life of its own).

First the question: will the coalition's planned referendum offer people a chance to vote "for" or "against" or just "against" health care system changes?

We have a huge crisis regarding access to care and services. Many of the long wait time procedures affect older people. This will only get worse as our population ages.

Because our system is "free for all" (but truly we pay for this through our very high taxes), there is no way it can be perfect and easily accessible. It definitely needs help. Doing nothing is not an option.

Having another layer of specialty services outside of the hospital scene should be, or could be, both cost-effective and offer more access to more people.

But the third-party element is of concern to doctors. Can this not be minimized or supervised instead of just dismissing it?

There are already many private clinics – if you want to call them that. Many of



Writer Carroll Baker doesn't see any problem with Doug Ford's push for privatized health care in Ontario. FILE

us have been to a clinic for a colonoscopy, eye exams, cataract surgery and the dermatologist. The Shoul-dice Hospital in Thornhill is a world-renowned facility for hernia operations.

When you actually think about your doctor's office (if you are lucky enough to have one), they operate much like a private clinic.

The doctors all have to pay their own business

costs, rent, salaries, supplies etc. and then bill OHIP for the time when they see you, the patient. Many doctors also provide (for a fee) services that are not covered by OHIP.

What is so wrong with having a surgeon have a clinic where all he or she does every day is knee surgery, for example?

There could be huge advantages because you would increase the number of doctors who could choose these specialties and therefore the calibre of care goes way up. But the big upside would be accessibility.

If we think a two-tier health care system is not already in place, we are

dreaming. I did not know until recently that one can in fact go to another province to pay for a surgery that you cannot access here because of long wait times.

And Ontario doctors can also be paid for services by patients not covered by OHIP.

But that is not what is really under discussion here. We are talking about increasing access to services we already provide, so we don't have to look elsewhere. I see no downside.

But it is a complex issue and I am sure I am not the only one who does not fully understand it.

*Carroll Baker  
NOTL*





# Safer cycling infrastructure needed in Niagara

Dear editor:

As lawyers for injured cyclists and grieving families, we were devastated to learn that a cyclist was killed Saturday May 21 in Niagara. While details remain limited, this incident follows another cyclist killed two days earlier in Burlington.

Both collisions happened near highway overpasses.

Major highways that divide municipalities are treacherous for pedestrians and cyclists to traverse. A Kitchener cyclist recently referred to the highway through that municipality as the Berlin Wall.

We know safe infrastructure for vulnerable road users is lacking where this

person was killed, at Stanley Avenue and the 405.

There are no separated bike lanes, despite it being located close to Queenston Heights Park, the Botanical Gardens, Niagara River trails, and several bike tour operators and bike rental companies.

On top of that, crossing over the 405 at this location is confusing. On one side is a painted white line with enough room for what could be a bike lane.

However, the other side of the road doesn't have the same shoulder – in either case, paint is not safe infrastructure.

It is amazing safe infrastructure is not already a

feature of this developed area. Perhaps that would have saved this cyclist's life.

We know that the cost of building safe infrastructure is outweighed by the cost of death and injury that can result from its absence.

The weight of this preventable tragedy will burden his family for years to come. The cost of losing another person on our roads will certainly be high, not only for his loved ones but for the community he contributed to, his employer and the justice system.

Out of our Hamilton office we represent a Niagara-area cyclist seriously injured by a driver who

failed to yield near to a popular winery. Our client spent months recovering in hospital in Niagara. We must act to prevent these tragedies.

Niagara boasts a hearty tourism industry that in many cases encourages cycling.

That encouragement must be accompanied by safe cycling routes and investments in infrastructure that keep vulnerable road users safe. Cycling is a boon to the region's economy and it is incumbent on local governments to invest in safe cycling.

**Dave Shellnutt**  
*The Biking Lawyer LLP*  
Hamilton



Lawyer Dave Shellnutt says Niagara needs to have safer routes for cyclists. SUPPLIED

## Developers need to commit to a vision of NOTL's uniqueness

Dear editor:

I read, with interest and some despair, Bonita Cawker's May 18 letter, "NOTL is growing and that means more development."

I believe we are facing a much bigger issue than merely NIMBY vs "development is going to happen, just get on with it."

I also believe the group voicing concern is not a small minority of the population, certainly not in the conversations I have had with people.

I am not a member of any group on either side of the discussion but there seems to be a large, diverse cross-section of our community concerned about the course of growth in NOTL.

Regarding the Parliament Oak hotel proposal, I'm not sure a quiet residential area with narrow streets and few sidewalks is the appropriate place to drop in a 129-room hotel.

However, I think it is vital to look at the foundation or building blocks of a community before running headlong into expansion and development.

If you are building homes that target the "retired" community, one must address the fact we don't have enough doctors to service our current population. We don't have a hospital nor a walk-in medical clinic and we only have one small medical lab with limited services.

If you are building homes that target the "family" community, we have limited availability of schools, plus the whole doctor and medical concerns.

We have a volunteer fire department. Where is the tipping point for these brave men and women who are answering ever-increasing calls? We have a limited police service – what is the tipping point for them?

I think we need to take a step back and look at a much bigger picture.

At what point does development, either in housing communities or tourist accommodation, actually end up changing the face of NOTL so that it is no longer the community that people flocked to?

People from larger metropolises are moving here because we are not those communities, but we are in danger of becoming mini versions of them.

At what point do we kill the goose that laid the golden egg? When are we no longer recognizable as the town that made people want to come here in the first place?

Is there the chance that down the road, development turns us into a Disneyland, a façade of what we actually have now? I love visiting Disneyland, but I wouldn't want to live there.

I don't have the answers, but I believe there is so much more to be discussed.

There are many historic and beautiful country communities that have achieved the fine balance and successfully integrated a historically designated and protected area while allowing development outside the designated area.

Another reality of Niagara-on-the-Lake is that, at

our core, we are an agricultural community. One of the main attractions of the area is the winery industry.

There are designated agricultural and greenbelt areas surrounding the town that cannot and, must not, be built upon. There are already safety issues along Lakeshore and rural roads due to increased vehicular traffic and speeding in complete disregard of the reality of slow-moving farm vehicles or cyclists.

Some people moving into housing at the edge of town don't realize they are moving into an agricultural area.

I was most amused at one gathering where some people who had recently purchased a home here for their weekend and holiday use were complaining that the farm vehicles actually worked, in the mornings on the weekend.

They were trying to rally neighbours to present a petition to council asking that farm vehicles not be allowed to be used before noon on weekends.

Some commercial and residential developers have been sensitive to the realities of our community and have created excellent examples of how development can move ahead positively.

It takes a developer with vision to work respectfully within the framework of a community. They need to want to protect what makes that community unique and not impose their own personal view of what NOTL should become.

**Syme Jago**  
NOTL



People once opposed the development of the Queen's Landing. EVAN LOREE

## People are right to speak up about planning issues

Dear editor:

I couldn't help but notice that peppered through the May 11 edition of The Lake Report were a number of references to existing buildings that had been opposed by residents at the time they were submitted to council for approval.

Specifically several references to Queen's Landing before it was built in 1990 ("up in arms") and a certain private house ("architectural blasphemy").

Apparently no one minds them now.

Is this meant to indicate that people just protest over nothing and then get over it? I wonder.

In fact, that is what usually happens.

A structure that is not sympathetic to the architectural vernacular of a town is proposed and a group of residents object to it.

Most of the submissions get approved anyway and then the existing residents learn to live with it.

Why? Because they have to get on with their lives and acceptance allows you to do that.

New people arrive and they also accept the new buildings because the buildings are already there.

The new buildings that do not support the original ambiance of the town set a precedent for others to follow at a later date and they do. And gradually the original character of the town is eroded – only old photographs remain.

The character of Niagara-on-the-Lake was established early on as early Canadian (your architecture columnist Brian Marshall probably has a better descriptor than that).

The fact that the character of the town still remains to some extent today is the result of the hard work of many committed residents over the years.

Despite the huge cultural significance of the area, few buildings are actually designated and there are no design guidelines to protect the original ambiance of the place.

As a result, insensitive buildings get approved and the fight continues.

The submissions that prompt the greatest protests

are the ones that demonstrate the least sympathy for the local vernacular.

This is not about density. This is about scale and design.

Protests are more likely to be successful in stopping certain developments or modifying designs to be more supportive of the surrounding neighbourhood only in areas of great affluence, such as Caledon or Toronto's Rosedale area.

They have been able to stop many unsuitable initiatives but not without a huge effort and considerable resources. And their fight, too, is never over.

People should speak out when they are not in agreement with a proposal and I don't blame them for moving on if they lose their fight.

But that doesn't mean they were wrong or that the people protesting now are wrong or that they shouldn't have bothered.

It just means that in the examples quoted, they didn't win.

**Jackie Bonic**  
NOTL



# A taste of **upper crust** life on Officer's Day at Fort George

Julia Sacco  
The Lake Report

Unless you can travel back in time, it's not easy to picture how officers during the War of 1812 lived off the battlefield.

That is unless you're at Officer's Day at Fort George.

One day each spring, Fort George staff and volunteer re-enactors showcase how officers and the elite class in the colonies lived during the war.

This year's Officer's Day took place on Saturday, May 20, and saw re-enactors travel to the national historic site from far and wide to take part in a variety of day-to-day activities people then would've done.

Chris McKay, from London, Ont., helped come up with the idea for this year's new "dressing an officer" presentation, inspired by fashion shows held during previous re-enactments.

He took on the role of a footman, a servant tasked with dressing the officer himself.

"We thought, 'You know what, we've done that for two, three years, what else can we do that's different?'" McKay said.

His dad, a history lover, used to take him and his siblings to all the different forts in the Niagara region to watch the war re-enact-



Chris McKay carefully dresses volunteer Kostiantyn Kryvasov at the "dress an officer" presentation during Officer's Day at Fort George. The historical afternoon gives a glimpse into the lives of the elite in 1812. JULIA SACCO

ments. He fell in love with them.

"When I was old enough, I thought 'That's something I'd like to do.' So, I found a group in my area and joined. That was 22 or 23

years ago now and I haven't looked back," McKay said.

Fort George has hosted an Officer's Day several times in the past.

Originally, the re-enactors wanted to host a ball in the

evening for themselves at the national historic site, said Peter Martin, the special events coordinator for Parks Canada.

"I said, 'What can we do during the day for the pub-

lic?' So, we came up with this Officer's Day idea," he said.

Martin explained that this day allows the re-enactors to tell an entirely different story than the usual of a fight on a battlefield.

"We do duels occasionally, which is part of officer life to a certain degree. The dancing is always a highlight," he said.

The clothing that goes into demonstrations like the dressing of the officers, as well as many of the uniforms used in re-enactment are made by one of the re-enactors.

Peter Twist works as a tailor for occasions like this, as well as Hollywood films.

"I joined a re-enactment unit back in the late '80s and I had never sewn anything in my life," he said.

Twist said his friend who made him his first uniform eventually moved to England, so he had to be taught to sew and carry on the skill.

"That's how it started, and it just sort of grew from there," he said.

Twist makes most of the uniforms for the staff at Fort George and he said a garment can take two to three weeks to complete.

A lot of teamwork goes into re-enactments and presentations at Fort George and Chris McKay said that is exactly what makes the experience so special.

"My favourite part is the people. All of my best friends are re-enactors and (I love) sitting around the fire and connecting with people at the end of the day," he said.

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# The Battle of Fort George

## When NOTL became American territory, briefly

*This year marks the 210th anniversary of the Battle of Fort George. This is the last in a three-part series about the battle and how, for a time, what is now Niagara-on-the-Lake was controlled by the Americans.*

Aiden Lord  
Friends of Fort George

It's late May 1813. The beachhead has been successfully established by the American forces, after bashing through the lines of the British defenders.

The British are routed and heading for Burlington Heights. The American force sweeps up from the landing grounds, through the streets of Niagara-on-the-Lake and into the charred remains of Fort George.

The American occupation of Niagara has begun.

Once the Americans secured Fort George, they were faced by their first set of problems.

Their supply lines had not had time to catch up with them and as a result they did not receive their tenting equipment, mess kits, rations or any other crucial supplies.

So, they were left with one option, forage.

They scrounged what they could from Government House in Newark and the surrounding land, acquiring some food and drink. They then slept on the rough ground of the fort for the night, having no alternative.

All the buildings had been destroyed, burned by hot shot from their own bombardment and finished off by the retreating British force. This was only the start to the Americans'



perilous time occupying Fort George; it essentially foreshadowed the misfortune to come.

During the coming months of 1813, their situation was not an easy one to be subjected to. No buildings were rebuilt for the force to occupy within the walls of the fort, so they lived in basic tents, a canvas village of its own, separate from the town.

The American supply chain also struggled to bear the weight of its many soldiers and they were forced to turn to alternative means. They raided farms and the nearby township for some of their food supply and, as for the remainder, they enlisted some locals such as Mrs. Whitten to bake bread for them.

In addition, they enlisted other locals to fulfil their

other needs, such as the Mississauga Point lighthouse keeper's three daughters, who were recruited as laundresses to clean the soldiers clothing.

For the Americans, it was a rather miserable and harsh summer, not knowing if their next meal would be as hearty and full as the last, if it came at all, their only respite being to retire to their tented city within the grounds of the fort.

It was decided that this stalemate had gone on long enough and the Americans, under Gen. Henry Dearborn attempted to send a large army inland.

They were repulsed in the disastrous battle of Stoney Creek on the night of June 6, 1813, and the following battles of Forty Creek (Grimsby) against the British and their Indigenous

allies sent them back to Fort George.

Once again, a breakout was attempted at Beaverdams, however word was carried through of this by Laura Secord, which resulted in a large Indigenous force soundly defeating the American attackers. As a result, the Americans withdrew from Fort Erie in the south of the peninsula and concentrated their efforts and men at Fort George.

After this the British slowly encroached on the American positions, gradually surrounding them with advance pickets which would skirmish often to keep the Americans in disarray, stop them from plundering supplies or moving farther inland.

Then more ill news for the Americans struck, a

typhoid outbreak in their camp incapacitated and killed many of their number. Even General Dearborn himself was bedridden.

Afterward, the general decided to focus on other fronts, slowly siphoning what men he retained at Fort George to Sackets Harbour for other plans. This left a dwindling number of Americans, who were also rather disorganized within Fort George.

By the winter of 1813, the Americans decided to retreat to their own side, abandoning their position and foothold in area.

But just before they withdrew, they told the citizens of Newark to leave their homes. They burned the village to stop it being occupied for the winter by the advancing British forces. However, this also put all

When American forces occupied what is now Niagara-on-the-Lake for seven months in 1813, they were forced to camp in tents. When they retreated that December, they burned the town. SUPPLIED

the townsfolk out of their homes and shelter for the approaching winter.

For seven months, since its capture in May of 1813, the fort and town were in American hands.

Although they were plagued by many hardships during that time, it was the American "stronghold" in the British side of the peninsula, up until their withdrawal in December 1813.

*The Friends of Fort George is a non-profit, charitable organization that works with Parks Canada for the protection, preservation and interpretation of Niagara's national historic sites. Special events commemorating the 210th anniversary of the Battle of Fort George will include a special re-enactment weekend on July 15 and 16.*

## Friends of Fort George gather at NOTL Museum for book signing

Staff  
The Lake Report

It's an effort four years in the making.

On Sunday, the Friends of Fort George hosted a book signing for "Fort George: A History," which highlights the story of the national historic site, in the past and today.

The book was co-written by multiple members of the Friends of Fort George,

including its president Tony Chisholm, who signed copies outside of the Fort George Gift Shop.

"It's the first complete history of Fort George, and that's what makes it special," Chisholm said.

The book was released last November and since then, Chisholm estimates they have sold around 300 copies.

Joseph Last, a retired archaeologist, was able to put

together a never-before-seen account of the archaeology done on the site.

"It contains a lot of new information that's never been published before," said Chisholm.

To get your hands on a copy of your own, visit Fort George, the Niagara-on-the-Lake Museum, or the Friends of Fort George website at [friendsoffortgeorge.ca](http://friendsoffortgeorge.ca).



Richard Merritt, a co-author of "Fort George: A History," signs a copy of the book. JULIA SACCO



# Farmers' market returns – but construction won't interrupt weekend sales

Somer Slobodian  
Local Journalism Initiative  
The Lake Report

There's been plenty of activity this year in the Garrison Village, and with the farmers' market returning this weekend, things are going to get busier.

"The Market at The Village" will kick off its 17th season on Saturday, May 27 at 8 a.m., operating every Saturday for the next four months.

The market's coordinator, Sharon Brinsmead-Taylor, said the construction site at the corner of Niven Road and Regional Road 55 won't affect the market, since there's no construction on the weekends.

The construction is part of developer John Hawley's expansion for the Garrison Village. Once done, there will be a new grocery store, a four-storey hotel, an amphitheatre and a central plaza.

"In spite of the construc-

tion, we will be operating just like we have every other year," Brinsmead-Taylor said.

The market will be held in its usual spot in the parking lot near the Garrison House, with a picnic area on the nearby grass.

"We'll have a nice seating area there with umbrellas to protect people from the sun so they can sit and enjoy and have their coffee and morning breakfast," she said.

The first 25 people to arrive on May 27 will receive a swag bag full of goodies from the vendors.

Throughout the season, there will be 25 full-time and part-time vendors, she said, the majority of whom will set up shop every week.

Bartel Farms, Sweets and Swirls Cafe and Gryphon Ridge Highlands are a few businesses visitors can expect to see.

Brinsmead-Taylor said shopping at the market is

"a great way to start your weekend."

She said she does most of her shopping on Saturdays since the market offers a little bit of everything.

"There's always something available to pick up that's locally made and a good representation of what we have here in Niagara," she said.

She said she loves everything about the market — especially the vendors, the locals and the tourists who visit each year.

"Everybody has such a positive attitude," she said.

The market will be held in its usual spot in the parking lot near the Garrison House.

"We will have our sunny picnic area right up on the grass," she said.

There's parking in the front lot as well as in the back near the new medical centre.

The market will be open every Saturday from 8 a.m. to 1 p.m. until Oct. 7.



Ken Bartel sells tomato plants from Bartel Farms at the farmers' market in 2022. FILE

# Rain or shine, paws hit the trail

Julia Sacco  
The Lake Report

Niagara-on-the-Lake residents walk their furry friends along the Upper Canada Heritage Trail all the time, but this past Saturday, they raised money while doing it.

The Heritage Trail committee collected donations at its annual fundraising event "Paws on the Trail" on May 20, which will go toward their ongoing work

to revamp the 10-kilometre-long trail.

"We had fun, the dogs seemed to have fun and everyone behaved themselves. It was really good," he said.

Despite the rain, dedicated dog lovers came out to walk the trail, enjoy the vendors and activities and support the cause.

"We're happy for the turnout that came: There are some people that came from out of town," said committee chair Rick Meloen.

"There's a lot of interest in an event like this, so we're going to regroup and see if we can do it again next year," he added.

Meloen did not have a final tally of the amount of money raised through pledged donations and vendors who took part in the fundraiser, but said 35 people registered \$45 donations.

"We're looking forward to rehabilitating and reconstructing as much of the trail as we can," he said.




Cam the springer Spaniel and his owner Tim Barry from Virgil posed with smiles in the doggy kissing booth at the Paws on the Trail fundraiser. JULIA SACCO

  
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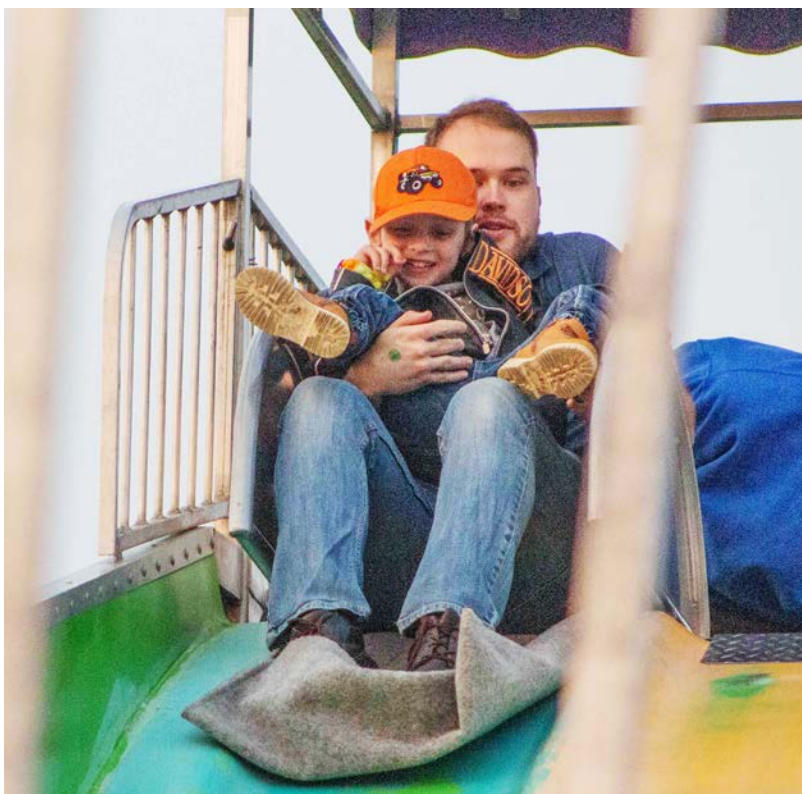




Saturday afternoon attendance was dismal at the Virgil Stampede due to rainy conditions, but by Sunday long lines of people were back out enjoying the popular fair. For those who did show up Saturday, they could go on the rides over and over again. RICHARD HARLEY

## THE VIRGIL STAMPEDE

# Saturday was rainy day for carnival, rest of weekend drew big crowds



Left: Four-year-old Alex McRae heads down the giant slide during Monday's Stampede festivities. Right: Two-year-old Roman LeClerc aims for the win at the squirt gun game during the Stampede on Sunday. JULIA SACCO

See our special section on Pages 14-16 for photos and complete coverage of this year's Stampede.



# VOLUNTEERS MAKE THE DIFFERENCE



Jack Wiwcharyk and Sam Vanderlee.



Lida Kowal and Adriana Miele help dish out poutine and onion rings at a Stampede concession stand.



Sandy Cowan and Claire Vanderlee.



Anja Seeger ran the main entrance to the Stampede on Monday alongside her husband Albrecht. After their shift ended they enjoyed the fair together.

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Victoria Skubel, Ron Surgeoner, Janice Coholan.

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Sharon VanNoort and Sam Hildebrandt worked at the Stampede's back entrance, collecting cash payments.



Tanya Van Gent, Megan Vanderlee, Carrie Plaskett and Cory Abt.

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From Sharon and Rob Van Noort




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# People of The Virgil Stampede

Julia Sacco  
The Lake Report

For 55 years, the Virgil Stampede has been a staple of life in Niagara-on-the-Lake.

With attractions from pony rides and reptile shows, to a Ferris wheel, midway and all the classic carnival snacks, the Stampede literally has something for everyone. Inspired by the Humans of New York, we spoke to a random cross-section of the “Humans of the Virgil Stampede.”

## Landon and Dante

For 13-year-olds Landon Friesen and Dante Torelli, the Stampede is a combination of everything that keeps them coming back each year.

Seated at a picnic table chowing down on candy apples, the two teens talk about what the Stampede means to them.

“I’ve been coming here since I was around two years old,” said Friesen. “I like the games and rides and how everyone’s getting together.”

As for this year’s highlights, Torelli had a particular moment in mind.

“Well, we witnessed someone throw up,” he laughed.

“And the skateboarding event was pretty cool, too,” Friesen chimed in.

## Blake

While most kids were in line for the Ferris wheel or sipping on lemonade, 12-year-old Blake Marchil-



Clockwise from top left: Landon Friesen and Dante Torelli enjoy carnival snacks and watch the skateboarders during the Stampede on Monday. Jay Mandarino and Blake Marchildon were all smiles after the best trick contest where Marchildon took first place. Harvey LePage has spent decades working the carnival circuit and enjoys the Virgil Stampede for its unique sense of community. Christine Bloomfield works as a school teacher when she is not running games on the carnival circuit. JULIA SACCO

don could be found at the skatepark.

After winning the CJs Skatepark Best Trick Contest, Marchildon sat down chatted about his time at the Stampede.

The Orangeville native has been skateboarding for the last three years and said it is his main hobby and priority.

His favourite part of the day? “Probably winning.” Marchildon said he was

pretty exhausted after the competition but looked forward to enjoying the rest of the Stampede.

Jay Mandarino, the founder of CJs Skatepark, extended his thanks to NOTL.

“It was great being in Niagara-on-the-Lake at the Virgil Stampede event where I was the MC. Everybody had a great time. What a well-run event. Congratulations to all the volunteers

and staff behind the Stampede,” he said via email.

## Christina and Larry

Christina Wills and Larry Lauber are relatively new stampeders, but the memories they’ve made will surely last a lifetime.

Seated under a tree waiting for the fireworks to begin, Wills recalled how exactly one year ago, Lauber popped the question.

“We got engaged last year right under this tree.

With the fireworks going off behind us, he proposed to me.”

Originally from Niagara Falls, Wills said she was confused why Lauber was so adamant about driving all the way to Virgil. But it all came together.

“He and my daughter had planned it and I thought, ‘What are you guys doing? I guess I’ll go.’ He proposed to me while I was in jeans and a T-shirt, but it didn’t matter.”

Lauber said that he chose the Stampede for their moment because of its “perfect view.”

The couple have yet to set a wedding date since Wills’ daughter is tying the knot in September, but, for now, they were happy to celebrate their anniversary and snack on carnival food.

“I love the food,” Lauber said.

## Harvey

Of course, the Stampede itself couldn’t go on without the help of countless employees and volunteers.

Harvey LePage is one of them, with a lifetime of carnival experience under his belt.

“I’ve been doing this 47 years and this will be my fifth (Virgil) Stampede.”

After travelling across the country for events like the Calgary Stampede and other carnivals in Edmonton and Regina, LePage says NOTL stands out from the rest.

“People are really nice and friendly. It’s a real community,” he said. “And the food is great.”

LePage was one of many employees helping run the Stampede. Many workers have deep roots in the industry.

Christine Bloomfield, who operated the basketball toss game, told The Lake Report about one of her colleagues who has both her children and grandchildren working alongside her.

“They have three generations here today.”

# Violence on final night of Virgil Stampede raises security concerns

Continued from Front Page

with some ideas of causing trouble that caused trouble,” he added.

Security measures will be reviewed and possibly upgraded for next year, he said.

Stephanie Baxter, whose 13-year-old daughter phoned her upset after witnessing more than one incident, said the fights happened between 8 to 9:30 p.m.

Videos obtained by The Lake Report show fights breaking out and in one case a knife appears to be dropped by one of the people fighting. The knife is then picked up by a bystander.

“It was the most terrifying thing to get a phone call from your daughter screaming and crying, ‘They have guns and knives mom. I’m so scared,’” said Baxter.

She said she was parked at the nearby Meridian



A knife can be seen falling to the ground in a video of a fight that was obtained by The Lake Report. SUPPLIED

bank waiting for the fireworks when she got the call from her daughter at about 9:15 p.m.

“I ran from Meridian to behind the post office where my daughter was with a small group of friends talking with the police officer,” she said.

“There wasn’t really much I could do,” Baxter said. “My daughter gave her statement to the police and the police officers just said, ‘We have your information. You guys get home safe, and we walked away.’”

After her daughter’s friend was assaulted, Baxter

said her daughter went to security and told guards that there were fights and people might have guns and knives.

“And security told them it’s not their problem. ‘Call the cops.’ And proceeded to walk away from the teenage girls. Which is when my daughter called me.”

Another video obtained by The Lake Report and shared on TikTok shows a fight happening and security standing watching.

Baxter said she thinks the security was abysmal.

“I get that security doesn’t want to jump in when there’s multiple people in a fight for the safety of them not being jumped, but this was absolutely ridiculous,” she said.

When The Lake Report’s staff arrived this year, nobody checked their camera bags. In past years, bags were checked.

Niagara Regional Police

Const. Philip Gavin said officers were called to the Stampede at 8:46 p.m. Monday after receiving a call that someone had a gun and possibly a knife.

There was a fight involving teenagers between the ages of 14 and 18, and one person was arrested initially, he said in an email.

“As the investigation continued and possible witnesses were located in the crowd, it was determined that no handgun was actually seen or displayed,” he said.

“Locating forthcoming witnesses to corroborate statements was also difficult at the busy scene,” he added.

Gavin said the person who had been detained was released because there was no evidence he had committed a crime.

Shortly after 10 p.m., police responded to another

large fight that involved teenagers being sprayed with bear mace, said Gavin.

A video shared with The Lake Report showed a teen receiving first aid after being sprayed.

An anonymous commenter shared concerns about the fighting on the NOTL 4 All Facebook page.

People there also commented on a lack of help from security guards when the fights began.

Looking ahead, Wall said he will be debriefing with his organizing team and Niagara Regional Police about what changes could be made for next year.

That may include adding more security, he said, or having a mix of security and police on duty, but as of now it’s too early to say.

“It’s always a handful of bad apples that make a mess for the larger population,” he said.



# Purse bingo **sells out** for Community Crew

Julia Sacco  
The Lake Report

Both parking lots at Club Heidelberg were overflowing with cars for Friday's purse bingo fundraiser.

"The woman who won the 50/50 draw won \$657, that's how popular it was," said NOTL's Nancy Broerse, lead organizer and chair of special events and fundraising for Business & Professional Women of Niagara Falls.

"I was worried we'd run out of dessert but luckily we didn't."

The bingo evening was organized by Broerse along with other members of BPW of Niagara Falls in support of Community Crew and its efforts to provide over 4,000 lunches to 30 different schools in Niagara each week.

"Who would've thought that there'd be so many needy children in this abundant area?" said Broerse.

Luckily, with designer purses, door prizes and vendors galore, purse bingo brought out a full crowd and immense financial support from the community.



Nancy Broerse was elated with the success of the first ever purse bingo event in support of Community Crew. Ticket holders had the opportunity to not only play for the chance to win a designer bag, but browse vendors and enjoy a meal. JULIA SACCO

"We were so lucky to have so many people donate for the silent auction and lunch bag raffle," Broerse said.

"To hear the women screaming and hollering when they won a purse was a hoot."

Broerse said that it is her hope that after fundraisers like these, more women

will be urged to join the Business & Professional Women.

"I think we will get a few new members out of this," she said.

She explained that women from different communities across Niagara are welcome to join, with some members hailing from Niagara-on-the-Lake as

well as St.Catharines.

"Just because it says Niagara Falls doesn't mean we don't take members from NOTL. We advocate for equality for all women."

Those interested in finding out more can visit the Business & Professional Women Niagara Falls website at [bpwniagarafalls.com](http://bpwniagarafalls.com).

# Oh yes, they can bake a **cherry pie**

Each spring, the women of St. Mark's Anglican Church (and a few friends) bake hundreds of cherry pies as the cornerstone of the church's annual Cherry Festival. Their assembly line would have made Henry Ford proud. This year's team of bakers, above, made almost 750 pies, equalling the previous record for the much sought-after dessert treats. Using the same recipe for the past 35 years, the team now requires 1,100 pounds of cherries, 240 pounds of flour and an equal amount of lard, to make the pies. Both cooked and frozen pies go on sale on Saturday, July 8, at 9 a.m. in the churchyard on Byron Street – and they sell out quickly. TIM TAYLOR



This week's riddle is "Jeopardy!" style.  
Category: NAMES IN FASHION

**The tennis shirt is now called a polo shirt thanks to this American designer.**

Last issue:

Category: AT THE ORGAN

Clue: It's the organ that's often contrasted with brawn.

Answer: What is brain?

Answered first by: Bill Hamilton

Also answered correctly (in order) by: Claudia Grimwood, Bob Wheatley, Bob Stevens, Becky Creager, Al Brockway, Jim Dandy, Wade Durling, Nancy Rocca, Pam Dowling, Hedy Wiebe, Shani Waller, Yvonne DeSouza, KC King, Sylvia Wiens, Margie Enns, Elaine Landray,

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

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# Walking tour looks at history of town's heritage homes

Julia Sacco  
The Lake Report

More than 230 years ago, Niagara-on-the-Lake was founded as the first capital of Upper Canada.

Some of the original homes of important townspeople still stand here today, and on Friday, realtor and architecture expert Brian Marshall led a walking tour in which he highlighted some key properties.

The trek was part of the NOTL Museum's 2023 series of "Neighbourhood Walks," held every Friday this May.

Perhaps one of the most eye-catching homes in NOTL is the Fanny Rowley house across from Queen's Royal Park, which marked the tour's start.

At one point in time, Marshall said, Rowley probably owned more real estate in Canada than anybody else.

"She did it all on her own, in days prior to women voting," he said.



Brian Marshall shares his expertise about the historical architecture of Niagara-on-the-Lake during the Neighbourhood Walks series last Friday. JULIA SACCO

During each stop on the tour, Marshall shared facts about the structures in town and how they were constructed.

"Some of the most expensive houses were built out of stone," said Marshall. People often mimicked

a particular kind of stone technique called ashlar, he said, which is finely cut masonry stones worked until they are squared.

"Not many people could afford that, so what they would do is build a relatively inexpensive structure, coat it with stucco and then scribe the stucco so that it looked like ashlar block – expensive by association," Marshall said.

Along the way, Marshall, a columnist for The Lake Report, showed guests the varying styles of homes around Old Town, including eclectic, Greek revival, Craftsman and more.

Many of the homes built during the 1800s served multiple purposes, Marshall said, operating as the owner's place of business and living quarters.

One example of this is a property that belonged to the town's doctor at the time, who also ran his medical practice from there.

Another property was a house that doubled as a tavern.

The tour ended at the Breakenridge property on Centre Street, one of

the town's oldest Regency houses.

Marshall worked as a consultant on the property during its restoration a few years ago.

"I was called to help and I told them I was retired. He said, 'It's 240 Centre St.' and I told him I'd be right down."

The home, previously owned by a couple of what Marshall described as "heritage house hoarders," was left standing empty and abandoned in 1968.

Then, a few years ago, Lloyd Kelly, a Texas lawyer searching for a second home in Niagara-on-the-Lake, purchased the property.

The home is now nearly restored to its former 19th-century glory.

• *The NOTL Museum's final sold-out tour in the Neighbourhood Walks series is this Friday, May 26.*

*Rick Meloen will lead ticket holders through the Chautauqua neighbourhood.*

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## NOTL Ambassadors are back in town for summer season

Staff  
The Lake Report

The Niagara-on-the-Lake Ambassadors have hit the streets for the 2023 summer season.

The unique program, designed by volunteers and the tourism industry, aims to welcome visitors and help enhance their overall experience.

Ambassadors were out over the Victoria Day long weekend – except Saturday when bad weather forced a "rain day."

The program will continue on Fridays, weekends and holiday Mondays until Sept. 4.

The volunteers stroll the streets of Old Town and staff a kiosk on Queen Street, connecting with visitors, answering their questions and providing current information on what's happening every day in NOTL.

During their 17-week season in 2022, Ambassadors met more than 9,200 people from across Canada, the United States and more than 25 other countries.

This year the team of 59 Ambassadors includes 22 new members, all of whom have completed a comprehensive orientation and are ready to start meeting visitors.



NOTL Ambassadors are back in the streets, helping tourists find out where to go and what to see. SUPPLIED

Minerva Ward, president of the Chamber of Commerce and Tourism NOTL, noted, "It's wonderful to see this amazing group of volunteers sharing their pride and stories with visitors from around the world." "We look forward to having their energy, passion and enthusiasm back again this year."

Laurie Harley, co-leader of the Ambassadors, pointed out the "all-volunteer" program wouldn't be possible without the support of Tourism NOTL and a dedicated group of tourism partners.

"They are our champions. They host site visits, provide in-kind support, keep us informed and, most importantly, encourage us

to keep sharing the unique NOTL story and create unforgettable memories for our visitors."

The Town of Niagara-on-the-Lake launched the project in 2020 to assist in COVID support and remains a key partner, Harley said.

Chief administrator Marnie Cluckie said, "This group of friendly and helpful volunteers provides assistance and expertise to visitors to Old Town during the spring and summer months, helping them make the most of their Niagara-on-the-Lake experience."

"We are so very grateful to the Ambassadors for their willingness to serve our community in this way," she added.



## Unpack Indigenous historical baggage at library's next Learn & Live session

Somer Slobodian  
Local Journalism Initiative  
The Lake Report

This June at the Niagara-on-the-Lake Public Library: an opportunity to take a closer look at what Indigenous people in this country carry.

The library is hosting an educational session raising awareness on Indigenous issues called "Unpacking Indigenous Baggage - Updating your Carry-ons" on Monday, June 5.

This is part of its ongoing "Learn & Live: Enriched Living For All Ages" educational series.

Willow Shawanoo-Kechego, the Niagara Regional Native Centre's outreach and fundraising coordinator, will lead this session.

"We will look at where we are today, discuss some of the headline history along with break down some of that old luggage.

In unity, we can bring light to the truth and start the path to reconciliation," reads a description of the session on the library's website.

Cindy Grant, one of Learn & Live's organizers, says she hopes Shawanoo-Kechego will hone in on some of the Indigenous baggage relevant to the Niagara region, discuss what people should be aware of and how they can help moving forward.

"There is a lot that we can all learn about Indigenous issues both nationally (and) globally, but more particularly in the Niagara region," said Grant.

The Learn & Live program aims at enriching residents' lives through educational presentations.

"Diversity, inclusivity and equality are so important for people to learn about and try to incorporate them into their daily lives," said Terry Mactag-

gart, one of the Learn & Live organizers, in an email to The Lake Report.

Past sessions include "Expanding the Options for Successful Aging in Place" and "Do you Want to Write a Memoir?" Shawanoo-Kechego could not be reached in time for comment before publication.

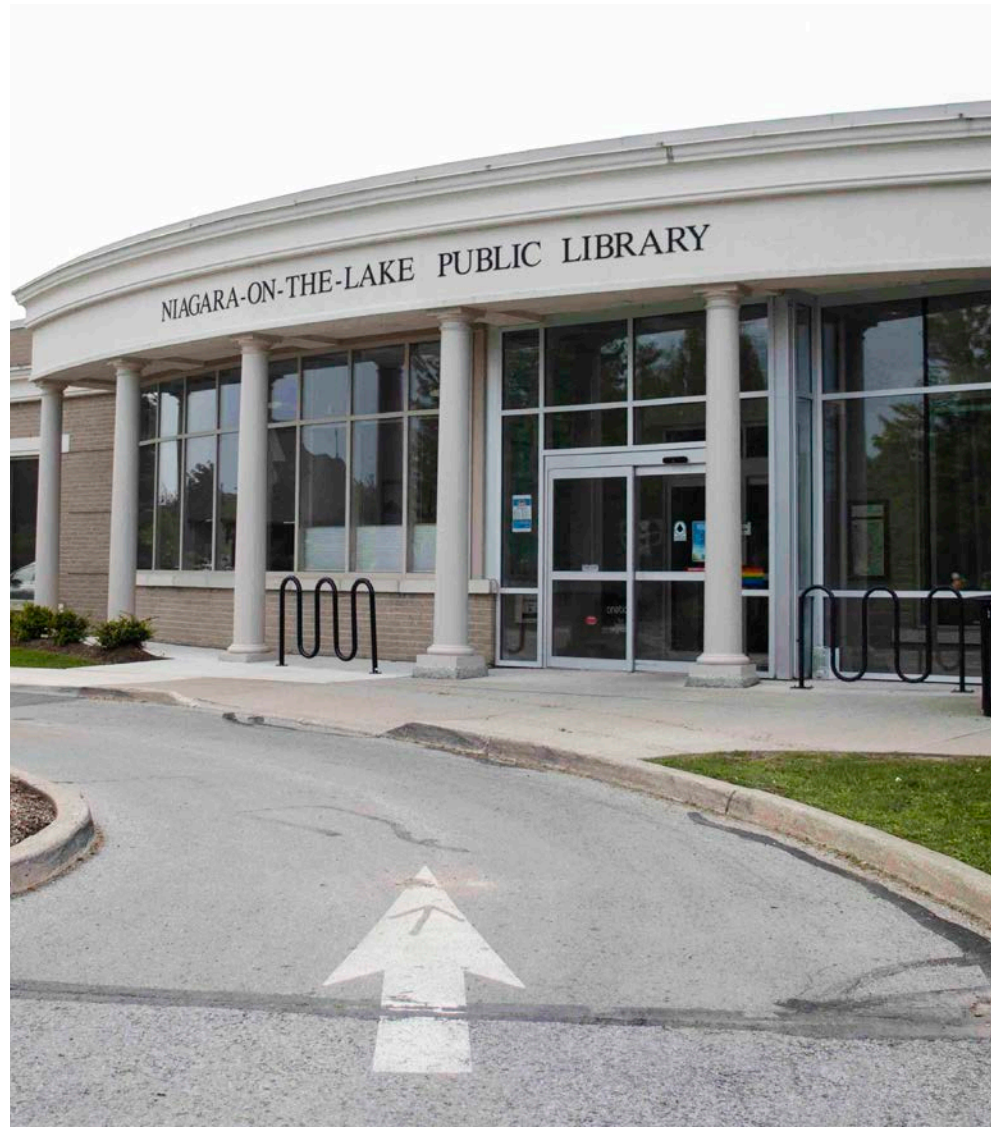
"I know from talking to other people that are working with her (Willow) on other projects that she is very passionate and very engaged," said Grant.

There's been a lot of interest in the upcoming session on Indigenous issues, Grant said.

She's looking forward to seeing what Shawanoo-Kechego has planned for the presentation.

The session will be held at the library on June 5 from 6:30 to 8 p.m.

To register, visit [Notlpubliclibrary.libnet.info/event/8173665](http://notlpubliclibrary.libnet.info/event/8173665)



The next Learn & Live session at the NOTL Public Library is called "Unpacking Indigenous Baggage - Updating your Carry-ons." The session runs on June 5. SOMER SLOBODIAN

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# COMMENT

## A former fan **flummoxed** by failed hockey fortunes



### Ross's Ramblings

Ross Robinson  
Columnist

Yes, I am bewildered again this year by the results of the hockey playoffs. Also puzzled, flummoxed, confounded and confused. Try as I might, I just don't understand how year after year teams from Alberta and Ontario and Manitoba get beaten out earlier than teams from Florida, California, Nevada, North Carolina. And Texas! The past three or four weeks were great fun, as I joined friends and other hockey fans in a few differ-

ent sports-themed taverns around Niagara-on-the-Lake. A few times each week, I selfishly cheered for the Toronto Maple Leafs because the longer they lasted in the playoffs, the more fun I was able to have watching hockey.

I fully comprehend that many of the players who ply their fast and furious trade come from Canada. Our great country is still a hockey power and many of the best skaters come from north of the 49th parallel.

Which leads me to ask why there has been a paucity of goaltenders who call Canada home? The past two decades, non-Canadians have been the kings of the creases.

Between the pipes, I've seen Sergei Bobrovsky, Ilya Samsonov, Andrei Vasilevskiy and the now-retired Henrik Lundqvist performing splendidly night after night, keeping their teams



Hailey and Sue Rumsey deserve a Leafs victory. FILE

in contention with key saves. How acrobatic, brave and cool are they, eh?

Not long ago, when I was a truly committed hockey fan, goalies had names like Glenn Hall, Gerry Cheevers, Jacques Plante and Johnny Bower. Not to mention Georges Vezina and Gump Worsley.

Quite often, they were smaller than the defencemen and forwards. As a kid playing on neighbourhood and community centre rinks, the smallest boys, and perhaps the weakest skat-

ers, were shoved into goal if they wanted to play the games.

Oh how, times have changed. Now, with the butterfly style of goaltending seeming to be the flavour of the times, many of the goaltenders are often well over six feet tall.

There is precious little room to shoot the puck into the net, except over their shoulders. In fact, most goals seem to be skilfully deflected, or redirected off a skate or hip, after the goalies have been screened

by opposition players taking a beating the "the dirty zones."

When we watch games from the 1950s and 1960s, the players we thought were speedy were actually playing "slow motion hockey" when compared to the highly conditioned and skilled players of today. Thank goodness for video replay, which is often essential to determine who actually scored the goal.

It will be over 30 years since a Canadian-based team won the coveted Stanley Cup. This can't be true, but it certainly is a fact.

So now I ramble back to my original disconnect about how hockey teams based in the United States of America annually dispatch our Canadian franchises. When I think deeply about this, I get a bit out of balance. They are not smarter and their payrolls are roughly equal.

Canadian hockey fans have a genuine, DNA-rooted need to win hockey games. Our basic genetic makeup demands success on the ice.

Having said that, we seem to be willing to be disappointed each spring, as our ice warriors look forlorn in the handshake lines and while suffering through the post-game "media availability." May I ask, whatever happened to press conferences?

American teams beating us in ice hockey can only be compared to teams from South Africa or Australia beating Dutch speed skaters. Or Canadian alligator wrestlers beating rasslers from Florida or Louisiana. Or badminton players from Canada whupping players from Malaysia.

This whole hockey situation has me off-balance. I really need to see a Canadian NHL team win the Stanley Cup. And, moreso, Canada needs it.



### 2022-2026 COUNCIL STRATEGIC PLAN PUBLIC FEEDBACK OPPORTUNITIES

Get involved in Council's Strategic Planning process!

- Complete the online survey before June 1, 2023.
- Register to attend the Virtual Information Session on May 30.
- Stop by any of the following locations in May to learn more and provide your input.

[www.jointheconversationnotl.org/strategic-plan-2022-2026](http://www.jointheconversationnotl.org/strategic-plan-2022-2026)

**Tuesday 23** Queenston Library  
32 Queenston Street  
1:00 p.m. to 3:00 p.m.

**Monday 29** Community Centre  
14 Anderson Lane  
9:00 a.m. to 11:00 a.m.

**Monday 29** Virgil Sports Park  
1565 Four Mile Creek Road  
12:00 p.m. to 2:00 p.m.

**Monday 29** Sparky's Park  
Tanbark Road  
3:30 p.m. to 5:30 p.m.

**Tuesday 30** Outlet Mall Food Court  
300 Taylor Road  
11:30 a.m. to 1:30 p.m.

**Tuesday 30** Courthouse  
26 Queen Street  
2:30 p.m. to 4:30 p.m.

**Tuesday 30** Virtual Information Session  
Registration Required | 6:30 p.m.

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905-468-3266 | [www.notl.com](http://www.notl.com)



The Pubdaddy Blues Band rocked the Legion on Saturday in support of Sue Pauls. JULIA SACCO

## Legion raises more than **\$3,000** for former bartender Sue Pauls

Julia Sacco  
The Lake Report

More than \$3,000 was raised in support of former Legion bartender Sue Pauls on Saturday, says Legion president Al Howse.

Pauls suffered a devastating stroke in November 2022, which left her blind

and paralyzed. She is now living in Garden City Manor long-term care.

The fundraiser featured music from Pubdaddy Blues Band, a raffle and food, and attracted about 50 supportive NOTLers.

"One member had donated a hat covered in scratch tickets. She went around and sold tickets on

that as well," Howse said.

The Legion is still accepting donations to help with Pauls' personal care, clothing, special wheelchair and travel expenses.

Those interested in helping out can donate money in person at the Legion on 410 King St. The Legion does not accept e-transfer donations.



# Carmichael goes one better to be WOOFs' top dog again

Kevin MacLean  
The Lake Report

Ted Carmichael is the top dog for the second consecutive week. He followed up last week's 2-over 38, bettering it by a shot with a score of 1-over 37 on Tuesday in the WOOFs men's league at the Niagara-on-the-Lake Golf Club.

He edged out Don Allen by one shot. Rai Lauge was low net last week winner and Jim Cosgrove captured that category this week.

Brian MacIntyre was closest to the pin on #4 last week and Dan Reagan had the honour this week.

In last Thursday's men's league action, Mark Derbyshire and Matt Szczurko both shot 37 to share low gross honours.

Jack Hanna had the best score in modified Stableford scoring for the

second week in a row, with 22 points.

Other winners were: Josh D'Agostino (longest drive), Ted Wiens (closest to the 150 marker on #2), Joe Mulholland (closest to the pin #1), Glenn Young (longest putt #6), Drew Porter (longest putt #8) and Larry Mantle (closest to the pin #9).

Net skins winners were: Jim McMacken (#5), Porter (#2) and Gary Wasylow (#4). Gross skins, both birdies, were won by McMacken (#5) and Dean McCann (#7).

In the nine-hole women's league, Tuesday morning, Candace MacLean, with a net score of 31, won the Captain's Cup. Other winners were: Judy Cardiff (longest putt on #2) and Ruth Dowsett (lucky draw).

Diana Dimmer won low gross with a score of 42,

followed by Deborah Williams (47) and Peggy Larder (48). Top net scores were: MacLean (31), Jill Planche (33) and tied Bonnie Lamourie, Larder and Margot Hickson, all tied with 34.

In the 18-hole women's league on Tuesday, under the Stableford scoring system, Sharron Marlow was tops with 39 points.

Yolanda Henry, Christine Earl and Martha Cruikshank were second with 35 points, followed by May Chang and Patty Garriock with 31.

Best gross scores were: Cruikshank (88), Louise Robitaille (89), Henry (90), Carroll Baker (94) and Marlow (98).

Net score winners were: Marlow (69), Henry (73), Cruikshank (73), Earl (74) and Chang (77).



Ted Carmichael, right, has been the top shooter in the NOTL Golf Club's WOOFs league the past two weeks. Rai Lauge, left, won low net last week. KEN BURR

# Popular golf course lounge reopens in Glendale after 3-year hiatus

Steve Hardaker  
Community Correspondent

After a three-year hiatus, the Double Eagle Lounge and Patio at the Royal Niagara Golf Club in NOTL's Glendale community had its grand reopening last Friday evening.

And judging from the turnout of guests, its long-anticipated revival was well-received by the public and residents of the Niagara on the Green neighbourhood.

Guitarist Brad Battle provided live entertainment, something the club hopes to continue monthly.

There is lots new at the club, including the food and beverage team, the menu and some of the management staff.

Some of the favourite selections Friday evening included the ham and brie melt, beef tips, fish and chips, and the pulled pork sandwich.

Royal Niagara opened in 1999 and is one of six Kaneff courses in the Greater Toronto Hamilton Area.

The 27-hole course is nestled between the historic Welland Canal, the beautiful Bruce Trail and the Niagara Escarpment – and is more than 7,000 yards long from the back tees.

In 2003, it hosted the Telus Skins match, featur-



Niagara on the Green neighbours and friends enjoy a meal on Friday at the newly reopened Double Eagle Lounge and Restaurant at Royal Niagara Golf Club. STEVE HARDAKER

ing Vijay Singh, Sergio Garcia, John Daly and Canadian Ian Leggatt.

New on the management team is course superintendent John Chappell, who has a lofty goal for 2023.

"I want to make Royal Niagara the best Kaneff course," he said.

To help achieve that, "the fairways and greens are being cut more frequently and the greens are being rolled every day."

Chappell also said about 60 tonnes white sand from Ohio is being added to the bunkers in 2023.

"With time and care, Royal Niagara Golf Club will become a signature golf course."

Cam Zeppa is the new assistant operations manager and a class A CPGA golf pro. He previously was associate pro at the NOTL Golf Club.

His goal for 2023 is to make his new club "the premiere Niagara golf course."

"I want to bring this course back to what it was when it first opened," he said. A tall order indeed.

That starts with good customer service from all staff, he said. "I want golfers to come back again after their round."

He concedes "2023 will be the rebuilding year" but hopes to make Royal Niagara a destination course and one of Kaneff's top courses.

The Double Eagle Lounge and Patio is an important part of that rebuilding process and visitors enjoyed a wonderful grand reopening last Friday evening.

For now, the lounge and patio will be open Wednesday, Friday, Saturday and Sunday. If it proves a popular choice for restaurant-goers, it may open on other days during the week.

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

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**EXPLORING PHOTOS**  
WITH NOTL MUSEUM



## Sandsuckers in the Niagara River, 1950s

This circa 1950s photograph shows one of the three ships that would be used to dredge the sandbar at the mouth of the Niagara River. The sandbar was a source of clean sand, which was ideal for producing concrete. A large amount of concrete was needed for the construction of two projects in Niagara in the early 1900s — the fourth Welland Canal and the massive Sir Adam Beck hydro-electric project in Queenston. Dredging operations began in 1916 and continued until the 1990s using suction type dredgers, locally known as “sand suckers.” These sand suckers could remove tons of sand per day (total amounts unknown), which changed the underwater topography of the river. This irreversibly altered the flow of the Niagara River at its entrance to Lake Ontario, which has contributed to increased erosion along the waterfront. It also destroyed spawning grounds and is said to have contributed to the collapse of the fishing industry locally.



Yellow Door Theatre Project is looking for talent for its summer production of “Newsies.” SUPPLIED

## Yellow Door holds open auditions for fall musical

Julia Sacco  
The Lake Report

From Disney to Broadway, and now to Niagara-on-the-Lake: the Yellow Door Theatre Project is holding auditions for the fall production of “Newsies.”

Auditions will be held on June 4 at the Yellow Door’s location in Virgil.

The theatre is seeking to bring on 28 performers between the ages of 10 and 18. No experience is required for those auditioning.

The theatre’s fall compa-

ny production will premiere at the FirstOntario Performing Arts Centre on Dec. 6.

The Disney film-turned-Broadway musical came out in 1992 and was inspired by the newsboys’ strike of 1899 in New York City.

The play has won two Tony Awards for Best Original Score, and is known for its most popular songs including “Carrying the Banner,” “Seize the Day” and “Santa Fe.”

Those interested in auditioning can book a time slot at [yellowdoortheatre.com](http://yellowdoortheatre.com).



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# Entropy and the **end of light, and life,** in the universe



**DR. BROWN**

Dr. William Brown  
Columnist

Entropy is hardly a household word.

It certainly wasn't one I knew much about until 2020, when I began to develop the library series, "Physics: The Camelot Period 1900-1930."

As a prologue for that series, I needed to look back to the 1800s. Most of us are familiar with the fathers of evolutionary theory, Wallace and Darwin and less so Faraday and Maxwell – pioneers in electromagnetism.

But it's a rare person, outside of physicists and engineers, who is familiar with thermodynamics – the science of heat and energy.

Thermodynamics began with the Industrial Revolution, especially the development and efficiency of the steam engine. Today's col-

umn focuses on the second law of thermodynamics.

This law states that energy comes in two forms: one is usable and the other disorderly and more important, inaccessible, or in the language of thermodynamics, entropic.

Beginning with the Big Bang, moving forward to the present and trillions of years into the future, the fraction of the universe's energy which is unusable, has and will continue to increase. However, the net sum of the energy, usable and not usable, will remain the same.

That's what the first law of thermodynamics says – no overall loss of energy even if, as the second law states, the fraction of the universe's energy (which is entropic) increases with time.

Take stars for example. The intense gravitational forces that create stars in the first place create enormous pressures and temperatures, which, working together in the star's core, are sufficient to fuse trillions and trillions of hydrogen nuclei into helium nuclei per second.

In the process, tiny bits of matter are transformed



Dr. Brown says thermodynamics is a difficult subject to wrap one's head around. PIXABAY

into enormous amounts of energy, known as nuclear fusion. The reason? Remember Albert Einstein's most iconic equation:  $E$  (energy) =  $m$  (mass)  $\times$   $c^2$  (the speed of light squared).

Most of the latter energy comes in the form of photons of energy generated in the star's core from which they eventually reach the surface of the star and create the light that bathes surrounding space including in our case, Earth.

Without this light, there would be no photosynthesis, no plants and no us.

The synthesis of more complex, heavier elements continues through to iron beyond which synthesis of heavier elements requires the far more intense pressures and temperatures typical of supernovas, or other horrendous events such as collisions of neutron stars, for their creation.

Nucleosynthesis and the creation of more complex

elements reduce entropy somewhat, but there's a net loss. Why?

An enormous amount of the energy released by stars, including our sun, is dispersed – wasted if you like – and no longer accessible, meaning an increase in entropy.

In like fashion, the creation of life and the increasing complexity of life (analogous to the increasing complexity of atoms through nucleosynthesis) requires a lot of energy that becomes less accessible with use and hence, increases entropy.

For the long term – possibly trillions of years in the future – the energy economy of the universe will continue to provide enough low-entropic energy to sustain the formation of stars and thus light and heat to keep the universe and, anthropomorphically speaking, life humming.

But eventually, the math and probabilities of the second law of thermodynamics will catch up with the universe.

The result, sometime in the very distant future, will be not enough accessible – and therefore usable –

energy to keep stars forming and for those present, all will run down, this time with no replacements.

That's when the lights will go out in the universe.

That is unless there's another cycle of creation – a new Big Bang with a new injection of energy into the system.

Perhaps that's what happened when our universe began. It may have signalled the end of a previous universe.

Perhaps an infusion of energy might come from other universes with which ours coexists, but which are out of reach of any tools we now possess to see them.

I used to think the whole idea of multiverses was crazy, but like Einstein, who couldn't accept an expanding universe until the evidence was overwhelming, we could be wrong about multiverses.

If Einstein could be wrong, we're in good company.

*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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# Perennials bring that added something to your garden



**GROWING TOGETHER**

Joanne Young  
Columnist



Britt-Marie Crawford ligularia. JOANNE YOUNG

We are just starting to enjoy the beautiful perennial blooms for the season – the carpets of creeping phlox, the huge peony flowers and stately delphiniums.

As gorgeous as all these flowers are, the one drawback is they live short lives – sometimes just two or three weeks.

If only they could develop an everblooming peony: It would be an instant hit.

There are some perennials though that can provide you with interest for spring, summer, and fall.

Some perennials are repeat bloomers, some have a unique leaf texture and some have show-stopping coloured foliage.

It is important to remember interest can come from different aspects of the plant, not just the flowers.

For me, I would have to say its foliage is even more critical than its bloom.

Here are a few perennials that will provide you with more than a couple of weeks of interest.

### **Variegated sweet iris (Iris pallida ‘Aureo Variegata’)**

There is always something alluring about an iris flower, especially with its unique form.

But I think you will agree, once the bloom is finished, the leaves have very little to offer and will often start to turn yellow and brown.

Beautiful, vertically striped green and yellow blade-like leaves contrast wonderfully with fragrant lavender-blue flowers. I have also found that the flower stalks do not fall as the German irises do.

So, if you cannot resist having irises in your garden, the variegated iris is a definite winner.

The variegated iris requires a sunny location with well-drained soil. When planting, make sure that the top of the rhizomes is slightly above ground.

Once the blooms have finished, what remains is striking striped foliage that will add interest throughout the summer and fall as well.

### **Bear’s breeches (Acanthus mollis)**

As I stated earlier, it is not all about the flower. In the case of bear’s breeches, it is equally known for its leaves and its flowers.

The huge, thistle-like leaves of the bear’s breeches were used extensively in Roman and Greek art and architecture. They are most famously recreated on stones as decoration on Corinthian columns.

The leaves themselves create a bold statement in any landscape. Then, come midsummer to fall, bear’s breeches produces striking three-foot-tall spires of white to pink snapdragon-like flowers, topped by purple sheaths.

A good addition to a shade or partial shade border garden.

### **Britt-Marie Crawford ligularia**

Ligularia, also known as leopard plant, is a genus of plants best known for their large leaves.

Britt-Marie Crawford is a particular cultivar known for its large, rounded, dark bur-

gundy leaves which maintain their rich, deep colour from spring through fall.

In midsummer to early fall, the plant sends up purplish-black flower stalks with clusters of large, bright, golden-orange, black-eyed Susan-like flowers. The cheery orange flowers add to an already beautiful plant.

This particular cultivar will grow to be three to four inches tall and three inches wide. It performs best in full sun to part shade locations and in moist soil. It does well alongside streams, bogs, and ponds.

### **King of Hearts bleeding heart (Dicentra ‘King of Hearts’)**

Most of you will be familiar with the common bleeding heart plant with its dangling heart-shaped flowers. But, did you know that there are some dwarf varieties that repeatedly bloom throughout the summer?

One such cultivar, King of Hearts, is very floriferous, sporting solid pink heart-shaped flowers. Unlike the traditional bleeding heart, this variety will grow about 10 inches high with a 12-inch spread.

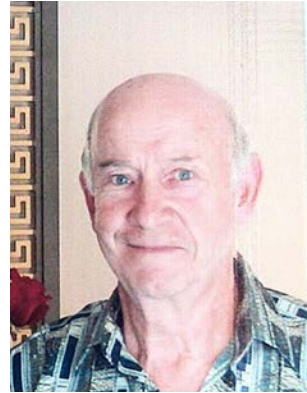
Not only does it bloom over a long period of time, but it also has attractive, finely textured, blue-green foliage that contrasts nicely with hostas.

Bleeding hearts thrive in a part shade garden with moist but well-drained soils.

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

## Obituaries

### James Langohr



Langohr, James Gordon “Jim”

At the St. Catharines General Hospital, on Sunday May 21, 2023, Jim Langohr passed away at 81 years of age. Beloved husband of Barbara (nee Brammer). Son of the late Gordon and Violet Langohr. Dear brother of Allan Langohr (Sheila), Leah Edwards (Kevin), Lynda Sawatzky (Jacob), Gordon Langohr (Ingrid), Ann Dean (the late Ross), the late Jack Langohr and the late Judith Hindrea (Bruce). Sadly missed by many nieces, nephews, extended family and friends. Jim was a Master Electrician and could fix just about anything. He was always willing to help anyone right away. Jim also truly loved all outdoor activities. In keeping with Jim’s wishes, cremation has

taken place. Arrangements entrusted to Considerate Cremation & Burial Services, 26 Nihan Drive, St. Catharines (between Lake Street & Scott Street), 289-362-1144.

He was the best. B.

Online condolences may be made at CCBSCares.ca



### Cheryl Munce



MUNCE, Cheryl – Passed away with her loving family by her side at the Greater Niagara General Hospital on Friday, May 19, 2023 at the age of 65. Beloved wife of Dave of 43 years. Loving mother of Ryan (Ashley) Munce and Kyle Munce (Amber Groom). Caring grandmother of Haven and Amber’s son Keaton. Dear twin sister (“womb mate”) of Karen (Norm) Smart, sister of Cathy Hoffman-Burns and Theresa (Greg) Hale, and sister-in-law of Donny Munce. She will be sadly missed by her fur family MINI and Cooper. Fondly remembered by many nieces, nephews, and friends.

Cheryl worked in the automotive industry for over 30 years in executive level roles, receiving accolades for her achievements in a male-dominated field. In recent years, she rose to become a top producing and well-respected realtor in the Niagara region, fulfilling yet another lifelong goal.

Golfing with Dave, animals and her fur-babies were some of Cheryl’s passions but above all Cheryl’s love of spending time with her family was most important. Cheryl and Dave were best friends throughout their marriage and spent countless hours together building memories and relaxing in Florida. She will be forever missed.

Cremation has taken place. Friends and family are invited to call at Morgan Funeral Home, 415 Regent St., Niagara-on-the-Lake, on Saturday, May 27, 2023 from 12 to 2 p.m. A funeral service to celebrate Cheryl’s life will take place at the funeral home at 2 p.m. A private family interment will take place at a later date. Friends and family who are unable to join the family for the funeral service may view a live stream of the service at www.facebook.com/morseandson. Those who wish may make a memorial donation to the Niagara SPCA Humane Society or the Heart & Stroke Foundation. Cheryl’s family would like to ask everyone to have a conversation with your loved ones and make your wishes known to them about helping others through organ and tissue donations with the Trillium Gift of Life Network as she did. Memories, photos and condolences may be shared at www.morganfuneral.com



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