

Car goes into pond | Page 7

## Council approves Hummel plan for **four-storey hotel**

Julia Sacco  
Local Journalism Initiative  
The Lake Report

Councillors passed a controversial bylaw Tuesday night to make way for the creation of an 81-

room hotel in Old Town. The new bylaw permits land around 228 Queen St. to be rezoned to allow the hotel development.

Couns. Wendy Cheropita, Nick Ruller, Adriana Vizzari, Erwin

Wiens and Lord Mayor Gary Zalepa cast votes in favour of the plan.

Couns. Tim Balasiuk, Gary Burroughs and Sandra O'Connor voted against it.

Burroughs shared several issues he found with the

proposal, including the absence of a required buffer strip.

"A five-foot 11-inch fence is in the bylaw. There's a four-storey building going right next to the residential area with

no buffer. I have a problem with that," he said.

Burroughs also pointed to the bylaw's requirement for two accessible parking spaces for the 81-room hotel and said two spaces doesn't meet the town's requirement

for accessible parking on such a site.

The hotel, proposed by developer Rainer Hummel, has upset some residents of Old Town, including

*Continued on Page 2*

## Queenston residents call for **lower** speed limits in the village

Julia Sacco  
Local Journalism Initiative  
The Lake Report

The Queenston Residents Association is speaking up about its desire for safer roads in the community — for pedestrians, cyclists and drivers alike.

During Tuesday night's council meeting, Adrian Schoot Uiterkamp, the association's director, made a presentation at the podium asking council to decrease speed limits in Queenston.

"The critical issue in Queenston is the speed and a mix of traffic on the streets, with only three of the 10 streets having a sidewalk," Schoot Uiterkamp said.

He added that the small, quiet village of Queenston attracts vehicles, cyclists and hikers with its scenic routes and attractions, complicating safety measures.

Traffic and speeding are not new issues in Queenston either, Schoot Uiterkamp said.

Concerns from the Queenston Residents Association grew after resident Louise Leyland was killed by a cyclist last April.

"The (association) has expressed concern to the town and council for many years," Schoot Uiterkamp said.

A survey was put out to residents of Queenston last

*Continued on Page 5*

## Lake Report's Dave Van de Laar named **Photographer of Year**

Accolade is one of 27 awards to paper for journalism excellence



Photographer Dave Van de Laar earned the title of Photographer of the Year with this shot of a robin feeding its babies, and other photos.



Kevin MacLean | The Lake Report

The Lake Report continued its dominance of the provincial community newspaper industry awards with the unveiling of the winners in the annual Ontario Community Newspapers Association awards last week.

Niagara-on-the-Lake's newspaper and news website NiagaraNow.com took a total of 27 awards, far and away more than any other Ontario publication, large or small.

The industry contest was for news, features, photography and advertising published between Oct. 1, 2022, and Sept. 30, 2023.

In all, the paper won the most first-place awards with nine — including Photographer of the Year for NOTL's Dave Van de Laar — along with nine second-place prizes and eight third-place awards.

The paper also received one honourable mention.

Richard Harley, the founder and editor-in-chief of The Lake Report, credited the hard work and dedication of the newspaper's news and advertising staff and numerous community contributors for the latest awards.

"As well, we owe a debt of gratitude to everyone in the community for being avid readers of our little paper and for allowing us the privilege of telling their stories," he noted.

"But without the dozens of small and large businesses that support us every week to advertise their goods and services, none of this would be possible," Harley said.

Van de Laar, a retired City of Niagara Falls infrastructure and asset technologist, has lived in NOTL all his life.

He took up photography 15

years ago and has been shooting for The Lake Report for about three years.

He was a runner-up for the Photographer of the Year award last year. He also took first place this year in one of the feature photography categories.

Since 2020, The Lake Report has now won 96 provincial and national awards, more than any other publication in the country.

*For more on the awards, see Page 10 and our special pullout section saluting the stories, photos and people who won, on Pages 11 to 13.*



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# Residents fear hotel will **take over entrance** to Old Town

Continued from Front Page

complaints from Harald Wattrus, during a planning meeting on May 7.

Wattrus' in-laws own Philips House, a property at 184 Queen St., immediately southeast of Hummel's proposed development.

Isaac Tang, legal counsel to the owners, made a presentation during Tuesday's meeting addressing their concerns.

Tang shared similar feelings with Burroughs, saying that the hotel simply is not compatible with the area.

"You would think there would be more setbacks and more buffering," Tang said.

At 13.5 metres tall, with modern architecture and design, the hotel will "set a different tone for the area," he said.

"The first thing you see when driving into town is this property."

He argued the property put before council was more of a destination location than a hotel, set to include a restaurant, two kitchens, a bar, an event space and a penthouse.

O'Connor, who voted



Coun. Gary Burroughs expressed concern over multiple aspects of rezoning 228 Queen St. to allow for an 81-room hotel, while Lord Mayor Gary Zalepa voted in favour of the rezoning. JULIA SACCO

against the plan, had similar concerns.

"I think that the whole size of the building, the mass of it — it's a four-storey building, the design of the building itself — it's not in keeping with the rest of the community, the streetscape of the community, specifically as the entrance to our heritage

area," she told The Lake Report later.

O'Connor also worried about stormwater management and the construction of a water table for underground parking.

Developers plan to look closer at these issues during the site plan stage, she said, but it is "too far down the road to be looking at these



things."

Tang referenced that aspect when listing possible detriments to the area, including dewatering, increased run-off, more traffic and poor planning regarding parking spaces.

Along with the hotel, Hummel proposed a three-storey parking garage with 163 spaces for guests.

"I understand that a three-storey parking garage is unprecedented in this town," Tang said.

He believes that the developer has provided insufficient information to council on how all of the parking spaces will be achieved.

Tang's final point was that if council passed the bylaw,

there would be no right for third-party appeals under Bill 185.

"I understand all 23 residents have submitted concerns opposing the developer," Tang said.

Cheropita, who supported the proposal, said that integration into Old Town will certainly be possible for the new development.

"I very carefully reviewed the project and this is zoning that we are approving. This is not the final product," she said in an interview.

Council will still have an opportunity to ensure that things such as underground parking are done properly and that some form of barrier is added for residents, Cheropita said.

"(Council) has to ensure that integration is done with concern for the (Niagara-on-the-Lake) residents and the beautiful historic homes that are in the area," she said.

"I do still think there is an opportunity to be able to ensure that the things residents were not happy about will still be addressed."

[juliasacco@niagaranow.com](mailto:juliasacco@niagaranow.com)

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## Eight properties featured in horticultural society's 30th annual garden tour

Jo-Ann Fraser  
Special to The Lake Report

The Niagara-on-the-Lake Horticultural Society is marking the 30th anniversary of its annual Gardeners' Garden Tour this year.

In addition to this cherished tradition, the society is introducing a new fundraiser, a summer barbecue hosted by Kent Heritage Farms.

The tour is on July 6 and the barbecue is set for July 21.

Proceeds from both events will support the organization's scholarship fund designed to nurture the next generation of horticulturists.

The horticultural society has created two student scholarships, one at Niagara College and one at the Niagara Parks School of Horticulture.

Through the scholarship fund, the organization is investing in both the personal growth of students and contributing to the advancement of the horticultural industry as a whole by cultivating a pool of talented professionals who will drive innovation, promote sustainable practices and inspire others with their expertise and passion.

"Our goal is to foster students' talents and equip them with the knowledge and skills necessary to shape the future of horticulture," says Cindy Grant, president of the horticultural Society.

This year's garden tour organizing committee has curated a selection of eight unique gardens, allowing visitors to both admire the beauty and learn directly from the homeowners, who have worked tirelessly to create these exceptional gardens.

"The garden tour is a testament to the enduring love of gardening and the power of sharing knowledge that has made this annual event a cherished tradition in our community," said Sandra Stokes, co-chair of the event.

This year's tour showcases a variety of private gardens, each with its own unique charm:

From the serene "Garden



This organic garden boasts a kaleidoscope of plants providing year-round interest. It is a must-visit destination delighting the senses and soothing the soul, organizers say.

Getaway" with its vibrant perennials and tranquil pool, to the "Sensory Delights" cascading waterfalls and lush hostas, and the "Tropical Oasis" of Loretta Drive with its palms and magnolias.

The "Verdant Organic Oasis" delights with graceful maples, redbuds and cypresses, while "Nature's Canvas" impresses with its creatively designed perennial beds, water features and birdhouses.

The majestic evergreens and informal hedges of "Serenity Sanctuary" provide an escape and "Designer's Delight" captivates with its remarkable transformation under a towering beech, boasting abundant flowering shrubs, magnolias, maples and grasses.

"The annual Gardeners' Garden Tour is a wonderful celebration of our community's horticultural heritage and natural beauty," said Susan Jurbala, co-chair of the event.

The tour typically attracts more than 1,000 visitors to town, from locations across southern Ontario and beyond, injecting tourism dollars into local businesses and restaurants.

The society has also partnered with the Bonsai Society to present a show at the Pumphouse, which will serve as headquarters for the tour.

"Attendees will have the chance to admire the intricate details of these miniature trees," said Nancy Barry, president of the Niagara Bonsai Society.

"We'd like to invite the community to join us and

gain insights into this ancient Japanese and Chinese art form."

Bookending that showcase, will be a tour of the pollinator garden at Southbrook Organic Vineyards, Canada's first certified organic and biodynamic winery.

Visitors will learn about the vital role of pollinators in the ecosystem while enjoying the beauty of the surrounding vineyards.

The 30th Annual Gardeners' Garden Tour is on Saturday, July 6, from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. at various homes throughout Niagara-on-the-Lake.

Tickets are \$25 until July 5 and \$30 on the day of the tour, with children under 12 admitted free.

A few weeks later, on Sunday, July 21, guests will embark on a culinary adventure at the horticultural society's summer barbecue, hosted by Kent Heritage Farms.

"I'm passionate about community fundraising efforts and have been involved for many years," said Paul Kent.

"My love of gardening led me to join the Niagara-on-the-Lake Horticultural Society. By hosting their summer barbecue fundraiser at my home, the property will truly come alive with people," he said.

"It's a great opportunity to bring the community together while raising money for the society's scholarship fund. I'm excited to share my gardens and support such an important local cause."

The Kent Heritage Farm grill masters have outdone

themselves creating the menu. Guests will feast on succulent grilled breast of capon or savour the smoky flavors of ribeye satays.

Burger enthusiasts will enjoy the juicy sliders, featuring both Wagyu and brisket patties, as well as irresistible chicken burgers. For those seeking a touch of global flair, the honey and garlic pork and chicken sausage and the aromatic Indian butter chicken and rice are sure to please.

Vegetarians need not worry, as the grilled vegetables, vegetarian lasagna and vegetarian paneer promise to satisfy even the most discerning palates.

And what better way to cleanse your palate than with the refreshing sweetness of watermelon slices, fresh fruit and a sweet treat?

To complement this culinary extravaganza, Southbrook Organic Vineyards will have a selection of its wines available by the glass at a cash bar.

Every contribution, no matter how small, can make a significant difference in the lives of aspiring horticulturists. Together, we can pave the way for a greener, more beautiful future, one student at a time.

The barbecue at Kent Heritage Farms is Sunday, July 21 from 1 to 5 p.m. at 1139 Queenston St., St. Davids. Tickets are \$50.

More information and tickets to both events can be found at [www.notlHORTSOCIETY.COM](http://www.notlHORTSOCIETY.COM).

Jo-Ann Fraser is vice-president of the Niagara-on-the-Lake Horticultural Society.



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About 150 people signed up to get a rare public glimpse of the interior of Fort Mississauga. RICHARD WRIGHT

## Fort Mississauga tour a trip into the past

Richard Wright  
The Lake Report

For Canadian history buffs, there was nary a better place to be on the evening of Friday, May 25 than on the golf course in Niagara-on-the-Lake.

For nestled along the back end of the first hole of the NOTL Golf Club, obscured slightly by a berm of earth works that once served as a shield for cannon fire, there is a structure with such significance to the Canadian identity that its present-day obscurity is considered an affront to some of this nation's history enthusiasts.

"This is a part of Canada that so few people really understand," said Ronnie Roberts, one of more than 150 attendees who attended a rare tour inside Fort Mississauga, a historical structure from the era of the War of 1812.

The Friends of Fort George and Parks Canada co-hosted this tour, which gave participants a look inside the more than 200-year-old structure located near the mouth of the Niagara River.

"The War of 1812 is a war that is so significant and yet there is a failure in our education system to really describe what went on

here," Roberts said.

A relatively new resident of NOTL, Roberts has been fascinated by Fort Mississauga since his chance encounter with the building on a walk with his wife three years ago.

"The fact that I had to ask, 'What is that in the distance?' is evidence to the fact that we have never been exposed to this," said the self-proclaimed amateur historian.

"This is one of the most important aspects of our history. We could have lost the country," he stressed, noting the significance of the outcome of the War of 1812, which ended in a stalemate.

That significance isn't lost on the Friends of Fort George nor on Parks Canada.

With the building sitting derelict for most of the past seven decades, the two organizations joined forces in 2019 to begin restoration of the historical landmark.

It was all made possible thanks to a \$7.3 million grant from the federal government.

A two-storey square building, it originally featured a compartmentalized interior layout of areas for soldiers, a dry goods storage, an armament storage

(magazine) and wall ports for viewing outside and for pointing small arms in all directions.

It still has a centre wall extending from one end of the building to the other, but is now mainly a wide open space on each side of that wall due to the collapse of the floor that separates the first and second storeys.

"When work began, there was about 10 feet of water inside the building as a result of the roof failing and moisture coming in through the walls," said Parks Canada project manager Chris Zoetewey, who also served as tour guide last Friday.

"The water would freeze in the winter months and the resulting ice was pushing the building apart."

Vandals caused additional damage in the 1960s, he added.

Part of the restoration also included a new sturdy wooden gangway that allowed the visitors to see the structure's entire interior from an elevated position.

Other work included re-establishing the earth works, the clean up and removal of debris from the interior, replacing the roof, stabilizing the central tower, restoring the two powder magazines and sally port as well as a constructing

**PHOTO  
GALLERY**  
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and new wooden pedestrian boardwalk to the front gate.

Tour feedback received by the Friends of Fort George was that of awe and appreciation, said executive director Amada Gamble, who was on-site to greet people dressed in her best 1800s-era garb.

"It is a great way for everybody to connect with history and to remind us that it is here and that it is so important."

For Roberts, the experience was surreal.

"My first thoughts were of the youth who came from England and all of a sudden they were put in this situation," he said. "To think that they were inside there is incredible, and to experience walking through it ... is absolutely amazing."

The first phase of the restoration, stymied by the work-stoppages of the pandemic, took about two years to complete.

The project's second phase, said Zoetewey, will commence when it is certain that no water and moisture remain in the structure.

Now that proper drainage has been established, that alone, said Zoetewey, could take between five and 10 years to naturally occur.

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**Cora Long D.D.**



# Survey shows residents want speed reduced

Continued from Front Page

year, he said, in which 98 per cent of respondents were in favour of lowering the speed limit.

"This gave us the mandate to create 20 action items. Six action points have been implemented so far," he said.

During Tuesday's meeting, Schoot Uiterkamp presented three more requests.

"Our priority is to have the speed limit reduced throughout Queenston Village from 50 kilometres to 30 kilometres as soon as possible," he said.

"We are concerned about waiting until the town's urban and rural traffic study is completed."

In addition, he requested the installation of rumble strips or speed cushions at the north and south ends of



Adrian Schoot Uiterkamp says speed limits in Queenston should be reduced from 50 km to 30 km/h. JULIA SACCO

Queenston Street, safety bollards at key points for cyclists and speed limit boards at key traffic points.

Coun. Gary Burroughs responded to the presentation saying he understands these requests, but still has concerns regarding the details.

"I'm not clear how the bicycles are dealt with," Burroughs said.

Schoot Uiterkamp said that rumble strips and speed cushions are the best way to target cycling speed for the time being.

Europe has more effective ways to manage multiple

traffic types, but they are costly and require a lot of replanning, he added.

"I don't think small communities in Ontario are ready for that yet," Schoot Uiterkamp said

Burroughs said that he also believes the changes will need some backing from police.

"I believe enforcement is a necessity," he said.

Schoot Uiterkamp has been in contact with the police and Niagara Parks about enforcing road safety, but they are busy at this time of year, he said.

Niagara Regional Police Services also made a presentation during the meeting and discussed recent road safety implementations, including speed cameras at Crossroads and St. Davids public schools.

[juliasacco@niagaranow.com](mailto:juliasacco@niagaranow.com)

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# Summer kick-off party at community centre

Staff  
The Lake Report

The Niagara-on-the-Lake Public Library and community centre are getting ready for a day of fun, food and festivities as they gear up to celebrate the start of the summer.

An afternoon of family-

friendly entertainment is taking place on Saturday, June 15 from 11 a.m. to 2 p.m. at 10 Anderson Ln., where families can come out and enjoy activities for all ages, plus free hot dogs, popcorn and cotton candy.

This will mark the start of the library's summer reading club and summer

program registration at the community centre, including the aquatics and summer camp.

Other entertainment in store for the summer kick-off party include giant Legos and lawn games, a green screen photo booth, a bouncy house, the installation of the NOTL Tiny Museum

and the musical stylings of the NOTL Ukesters and performers from the Yellow Door Theatre Project.

In addition, the event will feature community information tables where local organizations will provide resources and information.

For more information, visit [notlpubliclibrary.org](http://notlpubliclibrary.org).

# Register for Palliative Care's annual butterfly release on June 15

Staff  
The Lake Report

The time is drawing near once again for NOTL Palliative Care's annual butterfly release event, where participants join in dedicating a butterfly to someone they love who has passed way — then, setting that butterfly free out into the world.

This will be the third-annual butterfly release in Niagara-on-the-Lake, which will take place this year on Saturday, June 15 at the NOTL Community Centre from 1 to 3 p.m.

The event is meant as an opportunity for those griev-

ing the loss of a loved one to honour them and process their grief with others.

"Grief is an intricate ever-evolving journey that impacts everyone differently. It alters the way we perceive life, leaving us with memories that tug at our hearts, reminding us of what we had and what we now carry in our hearts," wrote Bonnie Bagnulo, Palliative Care's executive director, in an email.

The palliative care organization hosted the first event of this kind, in which participants released indigenous painted lady butterflies from the community centre, in June 2022.



Reserve your spot to release a butterfly in honour of a loved one on June 15. The cost is \$25. MIDJOURNEY

Alongside participating in the ceremonial process of releasing a butterfly, the service is a way to support others in the community carrying grief, "listening with compassion and without judgement," Bagnulo wrote.


"With our societal norms to engage, ambiguous and disenfranchised grief is often hard to recognize

in others," she continued. "Witnessing grief is a show of love and support that expresses, 'I'm here for you, I see your grief.'"

To reserve a spot, and a butterfly, contact the Palliative Care group at [notlpc@bellnet.ca](mailto:notlpc@bellnet.ca). The cost of reservation is \$25.

For more information, visit [notlpc.com](http://notlpc.com) or call 905-468-4433.

**Niagara-on-the-Lake Lawn Bowling Club**



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Participants run out of the starting gates May 26 at the Walk To Cure Diabetes in Virgil. DAVE VAN DE LAAR

## Run for juvenile diabetes raises \$13K

Richard Wright  
The Lake Report

A walk held at the Virgil's Centennial Sports Park on Sunday managed to raise a little more than \$13,000 in a fight to find a cure for juvenile diabetes.

The Niagara Juvenile Diabetes Reserach Foundation Walk to Cure Diabetes narrowly missed its fundraising target of \$15,000, said a regional administrator with

the national organization, but those who took part in the walk enjoyed the spirit of the event.

"It was so much fun," said Miriam Dos Anjos, a senior development officer Juvenile Diabetes Research Foundation Canada, based out of Aurora, who was in Virgil to take part in the fun.

"It was such an inclusive family-filled fun day," she said.

The immediate goal of

the walk was about being surrounded by others who know what it's like to have the rare health condition, Dos Anjos added.

"The walk provides an opportunity for kids to meet other kids living with Type 1 diabetes, maybe even make a buddy helping them feel less alone on their journey," she said.

Over 120 people registered for the walk, which turned into a run for many.

Jumping out of the gates at 10:45 a.m., participants completed three one-kilometre loops of the complex and then were treated to games, prizes and family activities.

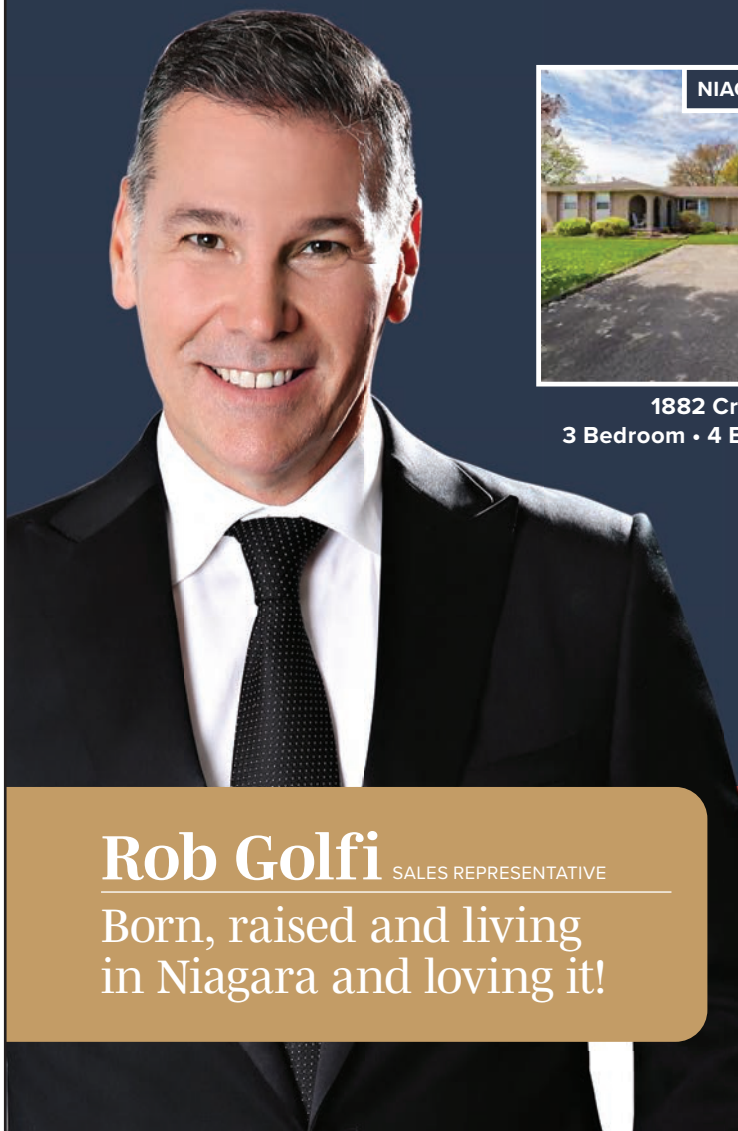
This was the 50th anniversary of the organization's Walk to Cure Diabetes.

Similar events were held close to 50 communities across the country.

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Emergency crews were on the scene Wednesday evening after a vehicle went into a pond at the intersection of Church and Stewart roads in Niagara-on-the-Lake. Rescue divers were searching the pond for survivors. RICHARD HARLEY

## Vehicle submerged in pond after collision

Richard Harley  
The Lake Report

Emergency crews were frantically searching a pond in rural Niagara-on-the-Lake on Wednesday evening after a car was submerged in the water following a collision near Church and Stewart roads.

Niagara Regional Police and firefighters from the Niagara-on-the-Lake and St. Catharines fire departments blocked off the road while emergency crews dove into the pond, hoping to find survivors.

Emergency medical personnel and a rescue boat also were on the scene.

As of about 7 p.m. Wednesday it was unknown how many people were in the submerged vehicle.

Niagara-on-the-Lake fire chief Jay Plato said there was an “accident at the intersection of Church and



Above: A vehicle has damage to its left side after colliding with a car that ended up submerged in a nearby pond. The crash flattened a stop sign at the intersection. Below: EMS was ready with stretchers on scene. RICHARD HARLEY

Stewart” just before 6 p.m.

A crowd of onlookers gathered around the scene. Some in the crowd said the vehicle already had been submerged for more than an hour.

It’s unclear exactly what caused the crash.

A second vehicle on the scene had damage to its



left side and a stop sign at Church and Stewart roads was bent flat to the ground.

**This is a developing story. See NiagaraNow.com for updates.**

## NOTL soccer season sees a soggy start

Richard Wright  
The Lake Report

A pair of early rain delays at the Centennial Sports Park in Virgil May 26 eventually turned into a complete shutdown of the Niagara-on-the-Lake Soccer Club’s season-opening festival following the arrival of stormy weather.

Club president Carrie Plaskett said that while policy does allow games to begin or continue with light to moderate rain, they must be called due to safety reasons when thunder and lightning is seen or heard.

“It wasn’t an ideal launch,” she said. “But we managed to get the Timbits out for a little while so that was good.”



Four-year-old Weston Haynes gets in a bit of practice before rain shut down opening day. DAVE VAN DE LAAR

Timbit players are the youngest in the club’s ranks, ranging from three to eight years old.

Older players in the club’s U10 to U13/14 divisions, who were slated to play later in the day, didn’t man-

age to get in any games.

Despite the implementation of the safety protocols, and the obvious disappointment of not being able to play, Plaskett said players and parents understood that it was just not safe to continue.

“Everyone just took it in stride,” she said.

Now that the opening weekend is behind them, the club’s 2024 season is in full stride with games and practices being held on local fields almost on a daily basis from now until the end of August.

In all, the club oversees three divisions of boys and girls house league play: Timbits, U11/12 and U13/14.

It has two travel teams, one a U12 team and the other in the U14 division.

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## Out for a test ride



Fred Sentineal, owner of Sentineal Carriages, on a training run with Griffen, two-and-a-half-year-old percheron.  
 DAVE VAN DE LAAR

**Canada** The Local Journalism Initiative is funded by the Government of Canada.



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Contributed by Patty Garriock

“My happiness is not the means to any end. It is the end. It is its own goal. It is its own purpose.” - Ayn Rand.

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### Editorial

## A strong commitment to community

Kevin MacLean  
 Managing Editor

We often hear from people in the community how happy and proud they are that their community newspaper — The Lake Report — regularly is recognized with awards for the work our staff and contributors do.

That’s heart-warming and much-appreciated.

But we don’t do what we do in hopes that it will earn accolades or awards. Those prizes are just the byproduct of doing good work.

We also realize that writing about the work we do can feel a bit over-the-top and self-congratulatory, but, again, that is not our intention.

Yes, we want you, dear reader, to know that we’ve been singled out for a job well done (who doesn’t?).

However, there is far more to it.

Publishing a newspaper is a tough job in the digital age. The costs of staff, printing, distribution, rent and a whole lot more just keep going up.

Yet the demand for a printed version of quality news about our community

has not abated. It remains huge here in Niagara-on-the-Lake both with readers and advertisers.

Readers will go online if they have to, but most still want to hold the paper, clip items and settle down to read about their community. As someone noted, “Reading the paper is relaxing. Having to go online all the time is work.”

A year ago at this time there were three newspapers covering NOTL and environs. Last fall we lost Niagara This Week when Torstar Corp.’s Metroland division shuttered all its print products.

And in February, the NOTL Local printed its final edition and moved to online-only under the auspices of the Village Media corporate umbrella.

That leaves The Lake Report, locally owned and operated, to focus on what’s known as hyperlocal news — which means if it doesn’t have some sort of direct connection to NOTL, you probably will not find it in our pages.

Because there is no shortage of places for you to find provincial, national, world, entertainment news etc., we train our sights on

NOTL and only NOTL, which makes us unique.

Unlike too many media outlets nowadays, we refuse to simply reproduce unedited, unchecked, unadulterated news releases from officialdom. That’s easy but it’s not journalism. It’s really just public relations. And lazy.

Whether it’s the police, the town, elected officials or corporate entities, we will not just replicate their messages to the masses.

We’ve always promised to offer you balanced, reliable and professional reporting.

You might not always agree with what we do — and when we mess up, you always let us know — but that is the joy of doing such a very public job.

Looking down the road, we recognize that printing a newspaper every week might eventually change. The high costs associated with print have already claimed NOTL’s two other papers.

That’s one reason why we continue to encourage the community to contribute or donate to our enterprise — for the communal good.

There likely will come a

time in a few years where the only way publications like ours will be able to carry on is if you are willing to pay good money for good journalism.

Doing grassroots community journalism is a reciprocal relationship — one that wouldn’t be possible without our deeply caring, engaged and loyal readers (who let us into our lives to tell their stories).

Without you reading and supporting us, without our valued advertisers using our pages to get their messages out, we simply could not exist.

NOTL is an awesome community to live in, to visit, to grow in — and to write about. From politics to community events to agriculture, businesses and tourism, sports, schools, service organizations, community groups and much more, there really is no shortage of news in our wee town.

The honours we win are as much your awards and a testament to this community as they are to our ability and commitment to report on NOTL.

Because, no matter what, without you, there is no “us.”  
 editor@niagaranow.com

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### LETTER OF THE WEEK

## Development rules **can't be same** for every town

Dear editor:

Contrary to some of the comments made at recent Town of Niagara-on-the-Lake planning meetings, I don't think that the staff and councillors are being personally or individually criticized.

I understand that the community is upset not so much by the staff's comments but by a process that allows bad ideas and excessive and incompatible designs to proceed regardless of their merit as long as the town's rules are followed.

Yet these rules appear to encourage inappropriate developments.

One of the important issues when studying a proposal is "does it provide the aesthetics and functionality to complement the town and can it improve the quality of life for current and future members of the community?"

If the town as we know it and love it, is destroyed by staff and councillors' decisions, they may try to defend themselves by claiming that they followed the



Wayne Murray says NOTL is a special town that should be treated as such when it comes to development. MIDJOURNEY

rules, without appreciating that what they did is much more important than how they did it.

The philosophy of some bureaucrats also may be to delay making decisions on matters for which they could be criticized and therefore their reaction might be to show that they followed the rules.

However, I believe that town staff should place a higher priority on making the right decisions for the community (which I think is the single most important small town in the country).

Defending, or rather, not

criticizing large, incompatible or unsympathetic buildings on land not zoned for them on the basis that all development proposals have to be seriously considered and treated similarly, is patently wrong.

There's no question that our town is unique and that it has to be planned differently than other communities.

But we need leadership to discourage the many opportunists who are trying to capitalize on the charm of the Old Town, which for the last 50 years was protected by individuals who dedicated themselves to ensuring

that any new buildings in the town maintained the scale, density and compatibility with other buildings.

It's called contextualism and the principle was understood by Margarita Howe, Laura Dobson, Peter Stokes, Don Chapman and many others who constantly reminded council and staff that it wouldn't take much to destroy what we had.

They also reminded the administration that it should find all ways possible to discourage misguided developers from doing what they have done to almost every other town in the province.

The recourse of an Ontario Land Tribunal hearing is a waste of time since it appears to be administered by unsympathetic individuals who want the rules for every town in the province to be the same.

We're not the same, so staff and councillors must discourage opportunists by any means possible from trying to destroy our uniqueness.

**Wayne Murray**  
NOTL

## When will we **know details** of Village retail project?

Dear editor:

I was going to be facetious and segue into this letter by claiming that our council had finally resolved the decades old residential parking problem, while observing that the blacktop and curb work has been completed on the land adjacent to our Shoppers Drug Store and Niven Road.

However, I was informed that rumour has it this is actually a planned retail project as part of the Village development. The operative word here is "rumour."

There's no site plan billboard on the property.

Such signs are often displayed at developments to advise the public and neighbourhood what is actually planned for a property.

A boutique hotel, a grocery store, etc.? Who knows?

The developer, John Hawley, knows, but for some unknown reason has elected to keep this from the residents of Niagara-on-the-Lake.

Accordingly, can someone from our town council or municipal planning department put these rumours to rest and provide us with an answer and an estimated

timeline for the project's completion?

**Samuel Young**  
NOTL

*Editor's note: The Lake Report has inquired several times with developer John Hawley about the future of the Village project, including the potential grocery store and hotel. He has declined to discuss the specific details of his plans for the site.*

## Stop! Drivers **oblivious** to crosswalk's flashing lights

Dear editor:

It seems I am risking my life every time I walk to the Niagara-on-the-Lake Public Library.

Last Thursday, I witnessed other dumbfounded pedestrians unable to cross Niagara Stone Road at Anderson Lane as oblivious motorists hurtled through the crosswalk even though the flashing lights were

activated.

Drivers, please slow down and look up as you approach Anderson Lane from either direction.

If you happen to spot an irate foot traveller shaking their fist and cursing, that is an important clue.

And pedestrians, good luck.

**Helen Kopec**  
NOTL



Helen Kopec says cars are failing to stop at the pedestrian crosswalk on Mississagua Street. RICHARD WRIGHT

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# Don't underestimate the **utility** of heritage buildings





Brian Marshall  
Columnist

A few days ago, I was privileged to chat with a number of Queenston residents about the history, heritage and unique character of their village.

It was completely apropos that this discussion took place in the historic Queenston Library and Community Centre — a building that has been integral to the community for almost 180 years.

Completed in 1845, it was built by the Baptist congregation of Queenston to serve as its church and was constructed of rough-faced ashlar limestone cut from the nearby Queenston quarry on the top of the Escarpment.

Architecturally, it is an outstanding example of early Gothic Revival in the province.

Each of the large window openings and its main entry are surmounted by pointed Gothic arches.

The projecting frontispiece gives the impression of a tower and is appointed with a unique elliptical opening vertically aligned with the pointed arch of the main door.

Due to a dwindling Baptist congregation, it ceased to be a place of worship around 1918 and was sold to the Women's Institute in 1928 to be its local base of operations.

Now, the Women's Institute was — and is — a fascinating organization.

Founded in 1897 by Adelaide Hoodless in Stoney Creek, Ont., it was originally formed with the objective of educating rural women in "a better understanding of the economic and hygienic value of food and a more scientific care of children with a view to raising the general standard of life of farm people."



The Queenston Baptist Church, which has been a mainstay in the village of Queenston since 1845, has served multiple religious, social and educational functions throughout its existence. BRIAN MARSHALL

By 1913, the organization had institutes in every province and in 1915, it had jumped the pond to Europe opening the first institute in Sandringham, England, with Queen Mary serving as the president.

At the time the Women's Institute acquired the Baptist church, the early courses in cooking, sewing, home nutrition, childcare and handicrafts had been expanded to include home nursing, first aid, dairying, beekeeping, poultry raising, banking and business skills. Key to its success was that each Women's Institute member society operated at the community level, reflective of and responsive to specific local needs.

The Queenston Women's Institute operated out of the Baptist Church building until 1954 when the decision was made to sell the property — for reasons I have not been able to ascertain — to one Mrs. A. Anthony.

What purposes Anthony put the building to over the 16 years she owned it are unclear to this writer, however, in 1970, she sold the property to Dr. Djamal Afrukhteh.

Less than 24 months later, Afrukhteh deeded the ownership of the property to the Town of Niagara-on-the-Lake on the condition the

building be used as a public library in perpetuity.

The residents of Queenston immediately embarked on a fundraising effort gathering \$50,000 in contributions which were used for the restoration of the building and the library opened in December of 1972.

Unfortunately, all did not proceed swimmingly from there.

In 1975, NOTL's library board announced that the Virgil and Queenston branches would be closed.

Seventeen months of furious negotiation ensued between the library board, town council, Queenston residents and Afrukhteh, finally culminating in an agreement that the building would function as a community centre and library staffed by community volunteers on an "access upon request basis."

So, it pretty much remains to this day ... still serving the residents of Queenston.

If a single NOTL building could be cited as an example of how an historic building has validated its original function as a social anchor to the surrounding community, the Queenston Baptist Church would surely be near the top of the list.

From the church's original religious and social function, through the Women's

Institute decades with an educational and social purpose to its use today as a social and educational centre, it remains a cultural heritage touchpoint in the village of Queenston.

All this, while standing proud and displaying its truly fine early Upper Canada Gothic Revival architecture for residents and visitors alike to enjoy.

Of course, it is not the only heritage building in Niagara-on-the-Lake to remain relevant through ongoing contribution to the warp and weave of the community.

During one recent sleepless night, I took the opportunity to watch a series of lecture presentations put on by the Nottingham and Derby Society of Architects, out of England.

The content of one presentation in particular stood out to me entitled "Economic, Social and Environmental Benefits of Heritage Restoration."

While this presentation is couched in the U.K. experience, there are truths that apply to the international theatre and our local context.

Consider that in the year 2018, there were 75.8 million visits to historic venues in England by visitors drawn from international

sources (27 per cent), local/day trippers (49 per cent) and vacationing nationals (25 per cent).

The most popular of these venues were historic houses followed by historic gardens.

According to data reported by Historic England in 2020, the direct, indirect and induced economic benefits generated by these visits totalled 36.6 billion British pounds (in Canadian currency, \$63.6 billion) and generated 563,000 jobs.

Have you ever noticed where Niagara-on-the-Lake's visitors tend to gravitate to — where they stop to take photos and selfies?

From my observation, it's in front of historic plaques, heritage buildings, established gardens and parks.

Whether in England or NOTL, people are drawn to and revel in the sense of connection with the past that only historic streetscapes can provide.

Interestingly, there appear to be health benefits derived by the people who make these treks to historic venues: a lower incidence of visits to doctors and access to mental health services is recorded in this population.

Historic England's 2020 data suggests that the estimated savings in national healthcare costs as a result

of visiting heritage venues equals 193 million British pounds (C\$ 335.6 million) annually.

Apparently, the gentle smiles we see on the faces of the visitors as they stroll through town is symptomatic of a general health tonic that is taken home with them.

On the environmental sustainability front, the presentation pointed out that "the energy costs and associated CO2 emissions of naturally vented historic buildings are often 30 per cent lower than those of a typical air-conditioned building."

Moreover, that traditional architecture is characterized by features such as hood mouldings and sills which protect the walls of the building from weather staving. "These protective features are often very decorative, but their primary purpose is practical."

Historic buildings were designed and built to last centuries. They incorporated learnings that generations of builders developed to preserve the integrity of the structure.

In part, this is why buildings like the Queenston Baptist Church continue to serve people and the community.

And, it is not alone. At 7 Queen St. stands the circa 1880 building that originally housed Niagara's first telephone exchange and has recently been repurposed as the Exchange brewery.

The circa 1890 old cannery building located at 48 John St. was subject to an adaptive reuse project in the 1970s to become the Pillar & Post Inn.

Both of these historic structures have been given a new purpose and, as such, will continue to grace our town and its visitors into the foreseeable future.

Because it is old does not mean it is worthless.

On the contrary, because of its age it becomes more valuable, delivers greater benefits — if only one has the vision to see them.

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



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# The Lake Report

wins

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## Honoured by the Ontario Community Newspapers Association for journalism and advertising excellence

**A**s the recipient of nearly 100 provincial and national awards over the past four years, the staff of The Lake Report and its many community contributors are justifiably proud of the work they produce every week to keep Niagara-on-the-Lake readers informed.

This year, in the annual Ontario Community Newspapers Association awards, The Lake Report took home a total of 27 awards, the most of any publication of any size.

The paper placed first in nine categories, earned nine second-place awards, eight third-place finishes and one honourable mention.

In the general excellence category, among papers with a circulation of 6,500 to 12,499, The Lake Report

ranked second, behind the Haliburton Highlander and one spot ahead of the now-defunct NOTL Local newspaper.

Among the first-place honours received were Best Editorial Page or Section, featuring an editorial by editor-in-chief Richard Harley on NOTL finally implementing a municipal accommodation tax, a column by Brian Marshall about the town's built heritage and reader letters on everything from development to health care and cycling safety.

Reporter Evan Loree's front-page feature on the first day back to school was judged the best in the Education class.

Former reporter Somer Slobodian earned two major writing awards for her three-part series on the lack of

affordable rental accommodation in Niagara-on-the-Lake.

Her work took top honours for Best Investigative News Story and also won the award for Best Feature or News Series (circulation over 10,000). It was published between March 23 and April 6, 2023.

The judges noted, "This series addressed a crucial issue in Niagara-on-the-Lake and across Canada — the inability of so many people to find housing. The series looked at the problem from the perspective of many people and let the community know that much more needs to be done."

"It was easy to read from start to finish and very compelling. This is

*Continued on Page 12*



# Awards include nine first-place wins

Continued from Page 11

exactly the kind of reporting a small community needs. Excellent work!"

Slobodian, Loree and managing editor Kevin MacLean shared the top prize for Diversity Coverage, for a series of news and feature stories and an editorial published between June and August 2023.

The series looked at the repeated vandalism of the town's new rainbow crosswalk along with resident and political responses to the issue.

The 2022 Remembrance Day ceremony in NOTL was one of the wettest in memory as torrential rain drenched the event.

Slobodian, Loree and Harley teamed up to capture the day in dynamic and emotional photos to produce "NOTL Remembers" and earn the Best Photo Layout award.

The judge said it was "by far the best" of the 26 entries in that category.

Dave Van de Laar, who was named Ontario's Photographer of the Year, also took top prize for the Most Creative Grip and Grin Photo.

In the news industry, cheque presentations and

static events like political announcements are nicknamed "grip and grins," because they usually just depict people standing around shaking hands or smiling for the camera.

Our photographer used his knack for good timing at the finale of the World Shark Championships in NOTL last August to snap a shot of the winning crew celebrating.

The candid camera caught regatta chair Rod Gardner with world champion sailors Chris Clarke, Alex Letchford and Josh Wiwcharyk whooping it up with their trophies in hand.

The Lake Report's 20-page 2022 municipal election section "Off To The Races" won a pair of awards: first place for Special Section and third place in the prestigious Community Service category.

One of the judges called it "the most powerful, reader-friendly election section I've seen."

The paper's nine second-place awards went to:

The entire paper for General Excellence, featuring the March 9 and Aug. 10 editions.

Loree for Feature Writing (over 10,000 circulation), for



Reporting in the paper's March 23, 2023 issue won three awards. A series by Somer Slobodian on high rental costs won first place for Best Investigative News Story and Best Feature News Series. A breaking news story about a cash donation from a developer to a town councillor won second place in the Best News Story category.

a front-page story on young Greta Sobol's quest to find a cure for juvenile diabetes.

Julia Sacco in the Health & Wellness category, for her on-going "Code Grey" series on health care issues. Her winning story documented the need for another nurse practitioner and more home care in NOTL.

Slobodian for Best Rural

Story about a project that set up traps around the area to limit the spread of the spotted lanternfly, an invasive species that can wipe out entire vineyards.

Slobodian for Sport & Recreation Story, a feature profile on St. Davids boxer Mckenzie Wright and her quest to earn a spot on the Canadian Olympic team.

Wright is competing this week in Bangkok in her final shot at the opportunity to represent Canada at this summer's Paris Games.

MacLean and Harley for Best Headline Writing.

Sacco for Best Police or Court Story about the aftermath of the tragic death of Louise Leyland, who was struck and killed by a cyclist while walking in Queenston last spring.

Contributor Frank Hayes of St. Davids for Best Guest or Freelance Column for an opinion piece urging drivers and cyclists to show more respect one another.

Hayes also took second in the Best Feature Photo category for his dynamic photo of a blue heron "walking on water" as it prepares to take flight.

The Lake Report's eight third-place awards went to:

Harley for Best News Story (over 10,000 circulation) for breaking the story about the town asking the OPP to investigate developer Benny Marotta giving Coun. Gary Burroughs an envelope with \$10,000 in cash in it.

MacLean for Best Editorial (over 10,000 circulation), for "Important questions for NOTL's councillors," in the wake of the \$10,000 in cash

handed over by Marotta.

High school student Alperen Albayrak for Best Editorial Cartoon, about the controversial King Street condos possibly being used as short-term rentals.

Harley for the Best Use of Colour, for a full-page ad featuring a portrait of his newborn son, Levi.

The Lake Report team in the Community Service category for our 20-page municipal election special section, Off To The Races.

The Lake Report team in the Best Vertical Product category, for our 80-page glossy magazine, "NOTL: A Guide for Distinguished Explorers," summer 2023 edition. The summer 2024 edition will be out next month.

The Lake Report team and contributor Rene Bertsch for Best Online Experience, for a video documenting the production of our March 2023 celebration of International Women's Day.

The Lake Report team for Best Community Website (over 10,000 circulation), for niaganow.com.

Harley also earned an honourable mention in the Best Creative Ad category, for the announcement of the birth of Levi.



The Lake Report received second-place honours in the prestigious General Excellence category.

Dave Van de Laar won Photographer of the Year for his work, including these photos. A candid shot of a service at the Wayside Chapel on the Niagara Parkway, a tight close-up tennis action shot, and a photo of a fire truck splashing through a flooded street after heavy rains left the town "in the lake" instead of "on" it.

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Clockwise from top left: Managing Editor Kevin MacLean, Editor-In-Chief Richard Harley, Photographer Dave Van de Laar, Reporter Julia Sacco, Former reporter Somer Slobodian, Reporter Evan Loree, guest columnist Frank Hayes and regular Arch-i-text columnist Brian Marshall. Together they make up the winning team of 2022-23.

# Ontario's award-winning team of 2022-23



That's a total of

# 96

awards since 2020

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A photo essay by Richard Harley, Evan Loree and Somer Slobodian on Remembrance Day won first place for Best Photo Layout. The paper was awarded Best Editorial Page or Section for its opinion section. A third-place award was given to Alperen Albayrak for Best Editorial Cartoon.

“We owe a debt of gratitude to everyone in the community for being avid readers of our little paper and for allowing us the privilege of telling their stories. Without the dozens of small and large businesses that support us every week to advertise their goods and services, none of this would be possible.”

RICHARD HARLEY  
EDITOR-IN-CHIEF  
THE LAKE REPORT  
NIAGARANOW.COM

Somer Slobodian won Best Diversity Coverage for coverage of vandalism of the town's rainbow crosswalk. Dave Van de Laar won Most Creative Grip and Grin Photo for a shot of sailors celebrating a race victory. The paper's election issue won third-place for Best Community Service.





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Leah Hyatt, Claire Falle and Sophie Timmins are performers in The Yellow Door Theatre Project. The project is searching for more members. Auditions open this Sunday. SUPPLIED

## Yellow Door Theatre is holding auditions for a full season of shows

Julia Sacco  
The Lake Report

The Yellow Door Theatre Project is running things a bit differently this year—and needs your help to make it all happen.

For the first time in the project's history, Yellow Door will offer a full season of shows for 2024, including *The Little Prince*, *Into the Woods Jr.* and *Beauty and the Beast Jr.*

Andorlie Hillstrom, the project's founder, said that for all of the shows to run the company will need to grow from its current number of around 26 members to 45 cast members.

"This is expanding our numbers and much of the work will be double cast to provide as many opportunities for as many participants as possible to have performing experience," she told *The Lake Report*.

Hillstrom said the first question that she gets from people is "When is the next show?"

"This will certainly help keep (the kids) challenged and interested in the arts over the course of the year," she said.

Auditions for the entire theatre season will take place this Sunday, June 2 from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. at the theatre's rehearsal

space, 504 Line 2 Road in Virgil.

Before coming to auditions, those interested are required to fill out a form on the theatre's website, available at [yellowdoortheatre.com/news-events](http://yellowdoortheatre.com/news-events).

All information regarding age ranges and roles available are available within the form.

"I want to see previous members come out for the auditions, but I'm always looking for new faces and new talent to come through our doors," Hillstrom said.

She added that everyone can look forward to what is sure to be a "terribly exciting season."



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JUNE 6 - **MAPLE JAM** (9 - MIDNIGHT)

JUNE 7 - **BLACKSHEEP**

JUNE 8 - **MIDNIGHT SONS**

JUNE 9 - **MEL MONACO** (2-5 P.M.)

JUNE 13 - **THE HITMEN** (9 - MIDNIGHT)

JUNE 14 - **COTTAGE BREW**

JUNE 15 - **THE ARYTHMICS**

JUNE 16 - **BLACKSHEEP DUO** (2-5 P.M.)

JUNE 20 - **A SIMPLE GESTURE** (9 - MIDNIGHT)

JUNE 21 - **WHISKEY RATTLERS**

JUNE 22 - **BUTLER'S BACKYARD**

JUNE 23 - **RON MCEWAN** (2-5 P.M.)

JUNE 27 - **RYAN THOMAS TRIO** (9 - MIDNIGHT)

JUNE 28 - **THE BLACKSTONES**

JUNE 29 - **LOST BOYS**

JUNE 27 - **RYAN THOMAS** (12:30 - 3:30 P.M.)



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# U13 Thunderhawks win Mike Jones tourney

Tracey Hope  
Special to The Lake Report

The U13 Niagara Thunderhawks were crowned champions at the annual Mike Jones Memorial Lacrosse Tournament on Sunday in Virgil after a 7-3 come-from-behind win over the Pelham Raiders.

Niagara opened the game with goals by Jax Johnson and Ryder Kallies as the first period ended tied 2-2.

Pelham took the lead in the second period, but couldn't hang on as the Thunderhawks answered with four goals by Elijah Paul (2), Jake Van Spronsen and Jax Johnson.

Niagara added one more by Mason Jaeckle in the third period to seal the win.

The tournament, which attracted 24 teams, is named in honour of the late Mike Jones, a former Junior B lacrosse player who grew up in Queenston.

On the weekend, the Niagara U13s started their round-robin series strong with back-to-back wins over the Halton Hills Bulldogs (14-1) and Toronto Beaches 2 team (15-0), giving their goalie Benjamin Eramian his first shutout of the season.

The boys came up a goal short in a 4-3 loss to the Guelph Regals 1 team in game 3.



Goaltender Benjamin Eurasian is mobbed by teammates after their championship win. DAVE VAN DE LAAR

Saturday evening in their semifinal, at the end of the first period the Thunderhawks trailed the Six Nations 1 team 4-3 thanks to two goals by Elijah Paul and one from Hunter Froese.

In the second, Niagara tied the game up quickly and battled hard to take a 6-5 lead into the third thanks to goals scored by the Froese brothers, James and Hunter, and Elijah Paul.

Jax Johnson and Mason Jaeckle stretched the lead to 8-5 and Six Nations added one more before time ran out. The win sent Niagara to the championship game on Sunday morning.

The Thunderhawks team is full of seasoned talent, with some of the boys playing together since junior paperweight, said team manager Nancy Washburn.

The winning squad includes Jesiah Paul, Hunter Froese, Elijah Paul, Jack Kislasko, C.J. Washburn, Jake Van Spronsen, Miller Davis, Conor Bailey, Quintin Doxtator, James Froese, Max Plomish, Mason Jaeckle, Ryder Kallies, Benjamin Eramian, Jax Johnson and Brody Cech.

They're coached by Connor Watson along with assistants Dan Willms, Braedon Rawsthorne, Chris Weier, Aaron Ward and Cam Overstrom.

The U11 Thunderhawks came up just short of repeating as champions, losing in the semifinal to Pelham.

"With only a few games under our belt this season, our home tournament comes early," said coach Jay Thorimbert.

The team has been putting in the work at practices

to come prepared for games.

"The coaching staff couldn't be more proud of the players' growth from game 1 to game 4," Thorimbert added.

After going 2-1 in the round-robin, Niagara fell behind 6-0 early but rallied to outscore Pelham over the final two periods, but fell 8-4.

Team members are: Lucas Froese, Kaleb Coffey, Ryan Riddle, Nicholas Riddle, Owen Thorimbert, Colton Meleskie, Peter Kotsanis, Charlie Fratangelo, Nash Funk, Hunter Berry, Bentley Berry, Lincoln Venneri, Jaxson Good, Mac Pickett, Hunter Grant and Logan Nichols.

The U9 Thunderhawks had a tough weekend, losing all three games to teams from larger centres.

But the team took solace that their scoring was spread among a variety of different players.

Team members are: T.J. Gault, Carmen Coccimiglio, Brock Friesen, Bennett Hope, Hunter Konopka, Nico Mirabella, Christopher Treanor, Ben Kirkness, Noah Werner, Colton Ferguson, Tessa Froese, Kenny Neuhof, Auston Cwierniewski, Connor Cech, Hunter Willms, Reece Nichols, Lincoln Thwaites, Noah Sticca, Nora Thorimbert and Harper Herriman.



This week's riddle is "Jeopardy!" style.  
Category: WHO WAS THAT MASKED MAN?

**In 2012's "The Amazing Spider-Man," this actor gets unmasked by NYPD captain Denis Leary.**

Last issue:

Category: SLOW TALK

Clue: This six-letter word means the car's engine is running but the car isn't moving.

Answer: What is idling?

Answered first by: Susan Hamilton

Also answered correctly (in order) by: Claudia Grimwood, Margie Enns, Jane Morris, Lynda Collet, Sue Rautenberg, Esther VanGorder, Jeff Lake, Jesse Agnew, Becky Creager, Wade Durling, Susan Dewar, Nancy Rocca, Mike Gander, Debra Jacobs, Pam Dowling, Tami Lepp, Katie Reimer, Sheila Meloche, Jim Dandy, Bob Wheatley, Tuija Johansson, Howard Jones, Sylvia Wiens, Sandra Baskin, Kathy Humphries, Catherine Clarke, Paulette Kennedy, Maria Janeiro, Hedy Wiebe, David Spencer, Marla Percy

Email answers to editor@niagaranow.com, with your name, for a chance to win a \$25 Irish Harp Pub gift card every week. (Subject line: Riddle me this)

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

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## Singles date night comes to Ruffino's

Richard Wright  
The Lake Report

The search for that intimate connection can take us to some interesting places — or it might keep us on the couch, thanks to the powerful little match-making tools we all have in our hands.

In reality, one doesn't even need to leave their home to enter today's dating scene.

The ease offered by online dating services is too juicy a peach to ignore.

But, for at least two Niagara-on-the-Lake women, that peach is getting more sour with every passing right or left swipe of the screen.

One of them, resident Paula Aitken, wants to know where in-person human interaction has gone.

"My friend and I were together and we are having a glass of wine and kinda begrudging the whole on-line dating thing," said the 52-year-old.



Melina Morsch (left) and Paula Aitken are tired of online dating and have organized a night for singles to mingle in NOTL for June 6 at Bar Ruffino. SUPPLIED

She is part of a group organizing a singles event, taking place June 6 at Ruffino's Pasta Bar and Grill's new side bar.

"In our parents' generation, they would go to dances, they would meet in bars, they would have social events or meet through friends. I feel our only recourse these days is online," she said.

But online dating can be more like work, according to Aitken.

"I find it is essentially like reading a resume," said Aitken. "You might think, 'Well, this person looks great on paper' and then you meet face-to-face and it is something completely different."

So Aitken and her friends decided to take out the

anonymity of the internet and give people a chance to show others who they are in real life.

Ruffino's will transform its sister venue Bar Ruffino into a more open space with seating at the bar.

The booths along the wall will remain, but the centre of the tastefully decorated room will be opened with standing tables for added mobility and engagement.

The evening will feature a casual mix and mingle feel and though there's no official dress code, it's probably best to dress to impress.

Sharing-foods such as antipasto, tapas, risotto balls, oysters, charcuterie, cheese and veggies and wood fired pizza will be served and included in the price, as well as a complimentary glass of sparkling wine upon arrival.

Tickets for "Singles Mix and Mingle" at Ruffinos are available on Eventbrite for \$65.

[wright@niagaranow.com](mailto:wright@niagaranow.com)

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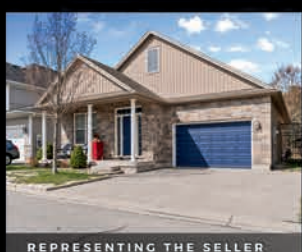
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**Across**

- 9. Bridge feat (5,4)
- 10. Fragrance (5)
- 11. 9/11 Islamic terrorist group (2-5)
- 12. Later edition (7)
- 13. Prayer conclusion (4)
- 14. Remote options? (2,8)
- 17. Fall short (4)
- 18. Advanced slowly (5)
- 19. Final fire (4)
- 21. Economy based on supply and demand (4,6)
- 22. Sound contented (4)
- 25. Aged Ray misunderstood storage charge (7)
- 28. The --- Affair, a French wrongful imprisonment scandal (7)
- 29. Promenades (5)
- 30. Annually (5,4)

**Down**

- 1. Long green lizard (6)
- 2. Mrs. J F K (10)
- 3. Extra (5)
- 4. Small Central American republic (2,8)
- 5. Arab chief (4)
- 6. Reprimands (7)
- 7. Boo-Boo's buddy (4)
- 8. Kitsch (3,5)
- 15. Angrily headed east for salt water (3,4,3)
- 16. Stand up! (2,4,4)
- 17. Pack number (5-3)
- 20. Foreign office (7)
- 23. Stair verticals (6)
- 24. Maasai Mara location (5)
- 26. Trundle (4)
- 27. Inspects (4)

**Crossword Puzzle**

1		2		3		4		5		6		7		8
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**Last issue's answers**

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# We might never know what causes long COVID



**DR. BROWN**

Dr. William Brown  
Columnist

Early in the COVID-19 pandemic before effective vaccines were available, life-threatening cases were common even among healthy, young health care workers.

Even so, most fatal cases involved the elderly, those with multiple comorbid medical conditions and others with compromised immune systems.

Fortunately, with the advent of effective mRNA vaccines, regular booster shots and the development of antibody and antiviral drugs, hospitalizations and severe COVID cases are much less common, if not entirely gone.

But because the virus continues to mutate, we're not out of the woods yet.

From the outset of COVID, some patients developed chronic, even debilitating symptoms, which lasted many weeks, and in some instances several years.

Some people were severely ill with COVID at the outset but there were others who had a mild infection or perhaps tested positive without symptoms yet went on to develop what's been called "long COVID."

The incidence varies widely from as low as five per cent to as high as 30 per cent of COVID cases — the spread perhaps a reflection of differing criteria for the diagnosis and uncertainty about the underlying causes and pathology.

In the early days of COVID, many of the most seriously ill patients developed large blood clots affecting blood vessels in the brain, lungs, and other organs.

However, in the case of long COVID, it wasn't the large blood clots sometimes seen in acute COVID that are the problem.

Rather, it was the presence of putative tiny blood clots in the circulation and tissues that prompted some scien-

tists to suggest that it was those tiny clots, which might be the cause of some of the symptoms in long COVID.

Going further, some scientists and patients suggested that anticoagulants and filtering the blood made sense for treating long COVID.

Despite hundreds of studies, some very expensive and long, no one knows what causes long COVID.

The symptoms are real enough: debilitating fatigue, loss of energy, headaches, trouble concentrating, focusing and memory loss (what's been called "brain fog"), difficulty sleeping and a host of other symptoms similar in nature, if not cause, to the chronic fatigue syndrome, chronic Barr-Epstein virus infections, and what followed some cases of SARS-Cov1.

Some suggest that persistence of COVID viral particles, especially the spike protein or even the whole virus, may play roles in provoking and sustaining inflammatory immune responses, as well as possible continuing mutations in the host's COVID virus.

The frustrating situation now is that several years after the pandemic began, we're no further ahead in understanding the cause of long COVID.

This is despite exhaustive studies that show intriguing possible factors such as the presence of those tiny blood clots, evidence of on-going inflammation and the presence of the virus or at least parts of it in some patients with long COVID.

That makes it difficult to manage long COVID, just as it is to manage other long post-viral symptoms.

Sometimes humans infected with a virus carry it for a lifetime. That happens with chickenpox, which may lay dormant for several decades before a bout of shingles develops.

Fortunately, the Shingrix vaccine is effective at preventing those sometimes painful and prolonged outbreaks in 90 per cent of those carrying the dormant virus.

The latter protection isn't 100 per cent, nor is there any guarantee that the protection offered by Shingrix will last more than 10 years.

I doubt that we will ever know what causes most cases of long COVID or that the symptoms will entirely resolve in all patients. Unfortunately, some medical problems remain enigmas, and how to treat them mysteries.

One example involves the recent fiascos over the Food and Drug Administration's (FDA) flip-flopping approval, non-approval, conditional approval, back to approval status of several new monoclonal antibody (mab) drugs designed to rid the brain of accumulations of various forms of amyloid in patients with Alzheimer's disease.

They all do that, more or less, but none slow the decline in cognitive and behavioral status in ways that we would clinically notice, and most are associated with significant, even dangerous, side effects.

It's a story fuelled by enormous pressure from pharmaceutical companies, which have invested billions in these drugs, and understandable pressure from patients, their families and Alzheimer's societies.

Everyone lost in this one, including the reputation of the FDA. Recently two similar drugs (based also on monoclonal antibodies) failed in Parkinson's disease.

It's tricky finding effective treatments for neurodegenerative diseases, where treatments may help but the benefits are modest, and costs are development and costs for the patient are high.

High expectations are often fuelled by ads (watch CNN any days) and those promoting the drugs. And when treatments fail to deliver, or the effectiveness is iffy and accompanied by significant side effects, it's very hard on families and patients.

Here clinics, physicians and scientists all too often aren't as sensitive as they could be.

That's what seems to be happening with long COVID these days.

*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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## Glencairn (14785 Niagara River Pkwy)

This grand, two-storey estate overlooking the Niagara River is an important and rare example of a Classic (Greek) Revival house in a picturesque setting in Ontario. The original 2,500-square-foot home was designed by John Latshaw in 1832 and was built for John Hamilton, a prominent boatbuilder and member of the Upper Canada Legislative Assembly. Hamilton didn't live in this house long, but instead used it as a summer home for his family. Over the years, several prominent community members have owned the property, including William A. Thomson, the president of the Erie and Niagara Railway, and John D. Larkin, owner of the Larkin Soap Company in Buffalo. The estate also has several outbuildings including a stone schoolhouse, constructed in the 1830s for Hamilton's estate workers. Larkin played host to friend and architect, Frank Lloyd Wright, which spurred many rumours of Wright's involvement in any renovations or additions to this property. However, to this day these are just rumours.

The NOTL Museum's new exhibition "Our Prettiest Homes: Beyond the Bricks and Mortar" has now opened to the public. Come and learn a bit more about some of our heritage homes and the families who lived in them.

## Local Legion presents a **mini Woodstock** music festival



### Ross's Ramblings

Ross Robinson  
Columnist

Some five years ago, I explained in The Lake Report why I missed Woodstock back in August of 1969.

I had been working for the summer on Cape Cod, and mistakenly thought the big celebration of music, peace and love was way back in Woodstock, Ont., a long 10 hour drive, each way.

In fact, it was only four hours away in Woodstock, N.Y.

Max Yasgur's farm near the small town of Bethel was taken over by a large mob worried about the war in Vietnam, civil rights and the culture of recreational drugs.

Yes indeed, peace, love

and rock and roll.

It became apparent that the crowd was overwhelming the organizers, and the fences and ticket booths couldn't be installed.

The new free entry fee drew some 400,000 young people — organizers were expecting about 25,000 people.

Rain, mud, a lack of food for sale, and a total lack of sanitary facilities all made for a memorable, disgusting, delightful and unforgettable experience.

Jimi Hendrix was the highest paid performer, at \$18,000. Joan Baez was paid \$10,000, and Blood, Sweat & Tears got \$15,000.

How times have changed, with Taylor Swift getting much more than that nowadays. Much more, eh?

Two weeks ago here in our peaceful town, an old high school pal and I decided to meet at the Legion for a cold adult beverage or two on a warm and sunny day.

We thought there might be a half dozen people having a cold one in the bar, perhaps with a pickled egg.



Aging local peacenick Harry Edgecombe and a group of local folks enjoy a Woodstock type day on the lawn of the Legion on a perfect spring day. ROSS ROBINSON

Imagine our delight when we joined about two hundred music lovers on the lawn facing King Street. Rather than mud, thanks to Rick Leitch, the lawns and flower beds were pristine.

A tent had been set up over a small stage, and Mia and Benjamin Hackett of Azalea were entertaining the crowd.

Don Grose and John

Clause also took to the stage on a perfect day at the Legion in our town.

How we have progressed. Fifty five years ago, no toilets: now, clean men's and ladies' washrooms in the Legion.

Then, no food or drinks available: now, Shannon and Sandra were behind the bar serving ice cold beer and pickled eggs.

Back at Woodstock in 1969, only cold and sloppy food being shared: in 2024, Henry and the BBQ meisters had the catering under control and there were a lot of happy people on the lawn. Many stayed for several hours.

Fifty five years ago, discussion topics were Vietnam, civil rights and drugs. Earlier this month here in our town, we talked about the St. David's roundabout, SORE and the Rand Estate development and the awkward situation at our town library.

It is understood that many babies were conceived on the farm near Woodstock in 1969. This is probably not the case after our impromptu "Woodstock" at the NOTL Legion in 2024

A month before Woodstock, on July 20 at 8:17 p.m., Americans had landed on the moon.

I have a vivid memory of being at a bar called Your Father's Moustache on Cape Cod, listening to a muscular and bearded singer named John Brown singing "God Bless

America" and "America the Beautiful."

He was playing his guitar, leading a sing-along, sitting comfortably astride a non working toilet on the stage.

From the moon's surface, Neil Armstrong said, "That's one small step for a man, one giant leap for mankind."

Times were so much simpler then.

Now, really rich people can pay really a lot of money to experience private space travel.

Someday, we will be able to buy a Mars Bar at a bar on Mars. Will an "Earth Bar" wrapping be litter on a sidewalk?

Then, daily tragedies in Vietnam. Now, daily horrible heartbreaks in Gaza, Ukraine and many other parts of the world.

Will mankind ever devise a way to live together in peace and harmony?

Maybe the young flower children at Woodstock were on the right path.

Peace, love and rock and roll.

It felt good at the NOTL Legion a couple of weeks ago.

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# Silversmith Brewing among finalists for Niagara chamber awards

Staff  
The Lake Report

Pillars of the Niagara-on-the-Lake business community are being recognized by the Greater Niagara Chamber of Commerce among finalists of the annual Niagara Business Achievement Awards.

Silversmith Brewing is one of five nominees for the Business of the Year award, while two other businesses, Centennial Construction & Contracting Niagara Inc. and Rugged Books Inc., are nominated for an Excellence in Business Award for businesses that has 26 or more employees, among four nominees.

The brewery has been operating out of the more than 100-year-old church on Niagara Stone Road since 2011, serving its award-winning Black Lager among other brewpub offerings.

Recognition of the



Silversmith is among the finalists for the Business of the Year award. FILE

company's success from the chamber of commerce began when it received an award for Outstanding New Business in 2014.

Centennial Construction & Contracting Niagara Inc. has been in operation since

1992 and runs its construction services out of its home base on Townline Road in Glendale.

Rugged Books Inc., also on Townline Road in Glendale, specializes in providing a variety of refurbished tech devices, including laptops and tablets, for customers.

Three businesses from NOTL are nominated for the Excellence in Tourism & Hospitality award: Budapest Bakeshop, Silversmith Brewing and Two Sisters Vineyards.

Budapest Bakeshop, located on Queen Street in Old Town, was founded by a husband and wife duo in 2018, Anett and Todd Kane, serving up sweet and savoury Hungarian baked goods.

Two Sisters Vineyards, which began its journey as a vineyard in 2007, previously won the Business That Gives Back Award in 2022

in the chamber's Women in Business Awards.

Two figures whose organizations operate, in part, in NOTL are set to be bestowed awards for Community Leadership and Entrepreneur of the Year: Janice Thomson and Mark Sherk, respectively.

Thomson previously held the role of chair for Niagara Parks' board of directors from 2010 to 2018 and is currently president and CEO of Niagara Falls Tourism. She was honoured as the town's citizen of the year in 2016.

Sherk is president of Verge Insurance Group, which runs Reimer Verge Insurance Brokers in Virgil.

The awards gala will be held on Thursday, June 13, when the winners will be announced.

For more information, and to purchase a ticket for the upcoming awards gala, visit [nbaa.gncc.ca](http://nbaa.gncc.ca).

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# FEATURED



Top left: Candling a pine by removing two thirds of the candle. Right: Shear your hedges so the base is wider than top. Bottom left: Make individual cuts when trimming your evergreens for a more natural look. JOANNE YOUNG

## Pruning evergreens the smart way



**GROWING TOGETHER**

Joanne Young  
Columnist

Pruning plants properly seems to be one the most frustrating and misunderstood areas of gardening.

The longevity of a plant is partially determined by how well a plant has been pruned over the years.

Most evergreens need pruning to stay within the size and scale of most landscapes.

Evergreens come in all different shapes and sizes: spreading, rounded, upright, horizontal, and weeping.

The natural branching pattern of the plant dictates its shape. By respecting this inherent form when pruning, it is possible to limit the size of the plant without changing its form.

Not only does this preserve the plant's true beauty, but it saves the expense of replacing overgrown plants.

Now is a great time to prune your evergreens.

**Facts about evergreens:**

- Because the evergreen retain its foliage year around, it compensates

for this by losing its oldest growth every year. An evergreen plant will usually hang on to its needles or leaves for three to five seasons.

- Unlike deciduous trees and shrubs, most evergreens will not rejuvenate itself if cut back to old, bare wood. Yews are the main exception.

- Most evergreens grow primarily from buds set the previous year and have few, if any, latent buds. It is generally safe to prune back only to one- or two-year-old growth, which still has existing buds.

- It is almost impossible to rejuvenate an old, overgrown evergreen. Therefore, it is important to prune on a yearly basis and not wait until the shrub or tree has become to large.

- The best time to prune most evergreens is after the new growth has emerged late spring to early summer. On most evergreens, the new growth emerges a lighter colour. Once the colour has faded to the older growth, this would be the best time to shear.

- To keep a more natural look, make individual cuts with the secateurs and not with the shears.

- To achieve a more formal, sheared, geometric look, shear up to three-fourths of the newest growth.

- Most evergreens will push out new growth twice in a season: late spring and again in late summer. You could do a second pruning

at this latter time but not too late into the fall because it will stimulate new growth that will not have time to harden off before winter.

- Always make sure that your pruners are sharp or it may cause a brown cast.

When pruning any plant, it is always good to know what your goal is and that will help you determine how to best prune your shrub.

Here are the two main goals of pruning evergreens:

**Control the size of plant**

The best way to control the size of a plant is by natural pruning. Natural pruning means that you are making selective cuts in order to thin or reduce the overall size of the plant.

This cannot be done with shears, but with secateurs or loppers. This means cutting one stem at a time and not just shearing off the tips.

When pruning is completed, it should look like no cuts have been made and should still have its natural form.

**Maintain a certain shape**

One of the goals of pruning might be to maintain a certain shape such as a hedge, a pyramidal evergreen, a globe form, or specimen plants like spirals and pompons.

This is best achieved by shearing.

With shearing, you are just removing new tip growth, creating a full dense look.

Even though electric

shears makes the job easier, hand shears make a much nicer job of things.

Electric shears just tear the plant tissue, while hand shears makes a cleaner cut.

When the plant tissue is torn there is more die back at the tips giving the sheared shrub a brownish tinge.

Always make sure that any pruning tool is sharp and clean before using to prevent this from happening.

**Do not top evergreens!**

An unsatisfactory approach to tree maintenance for any tree is to top it.

Topping is the removal of all branches of a mature tree above an arbitrary height.

Large evergreen trees do not respond well to topping.

The removal of the upper main trunk through topping opens to tree to internal decay, disease or damaging insects — it also removes the most productive portion of the crown of the tree.

The result is that the tree becomes a hazard to itself, neighbouring trees and your property.

The practice of topping to control tree size of growth is not justified.

If the tree is too large to fit the space, it should be removed and replaced with a smaller species.

Happy pruning.  
Joanne Young is a Niagara-on-the-Lake garden expert and coach. See her website at [joanneyoung.ca](http://joanneyoung.ca).

## Obituary

### Bruce Hall



HALL, Bruce –  
It is with great sadness that we announce the passing of Bruce Hall on Monday, May 20, 2024, at Westhills Care Centre, St. Catharines, at the age of 89 years. Beloved husband of the late Lois Hall (January 21, 2017). Devoted father of Steven Hall (Glenda) and Kevin Hall. Proud grandfather of

Erin (Ron) Brouse, Brandy (Travis) Kroker and Brittany Hall (David). Great grandfather of Harrison, Winston, and Liliana and uncle of Cheryl Fraser (Dave), Colleen Smith and Diane Smith and Ross Harris. Bruce will also be fondly remembered by extended family and friends. Predeceased by his sister Allison Smith (Tommy).

Bruce was hired by the Niagara Region when it was first formed, after having worked for the City of St Catharines for a short time. He spent his entire 30+ year career at one of three pollution control facilities (Pt Dahousie, Pt Weller and the NOTL plant). He also ran the 10-acre family farm from the mid '60s to his 88th year. He had an extremely strong work ethic and a desire to stay engaged w/ farm production. He remained an active volunteer in the activities of Upper Canada Lodge many years after the passing of his wife.

The family would like to acknowledge: all of the staff at PARAMED, with a special mention of Sue, his favourite PSW and Sheila the coordinator for enabling him to stay in the family home until the last two weeks; the nursing staff at the Hartzel Rd clinic, with a loving tip of the hat to Sally, our favourite nurse and Shana the scheduler; and

Andrea Kamerman, RN, and Dr Tim Bastedo for ensuring that he was placed in a nursing home when the need arose.

He belonged to a special, daily coffee group at Sono's in Virgil until he fell ill last year but tried to go weekly until he moved to Westhills. By far, his favourite weekly outing, was Fish & Chips at the NOTL Branch 124 Legion. His last attendance was about a month ago. Even as his dementia increased, he always knew what day Thursday was and would ask us several times a day if "we were still going to fish & chips" that evening. He loved all things farming and tractors. The family attended many farm shows and ploughing matches throughout the years as family outings.

A memorial service will be held at Morgan Funeral Home, 415 Regent St., Niagara-on-the-Lake, on Saturday, June 1, 2024, at 1 p.m. Cremation has taken place, and a private family interment will take place later at McNab Cemetery. For those who wish, may make a memorial donation to either the Canadian Cancer Society or to Alzheimer Society. Memories, photos, and condolences may be shared at [www.morganfuneral.com](http://www.morganfuneral.com)



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