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Leaky sewers a symptom of **low infrastructure spending**, mayor says

Evan Loree
Local Journalism Initiative
The Lake Report

The town is dealing with an all-too-common problem in Garrison Village: leaky sewage pipes.

The Niagara Peninsula Conservation Authority is reporting continually high levels of E. coli in Two Mile Creek.

This has been an ongoing problem since 2015, and since 2021, the

town has spent about \$1.3 million on infrastructure improvements to sewer lines there.

Meanwhile, the town is budgeting another \$750,000 in next year's budget for more repairs.

Rome D'Angelo, the town's director of operations, couldn't say what the total cost of repairs would be once all the work is complete.

But Lord Mayor Gary Zalepa says leaky sewage

lines like those in Garrison Village are a symptom of a bigger issue towns all over Canada have with funding their infrastructure.

"The real crux of the whole matter is municipalities are required

to fund larger portions of these infrastructure projects using property tax dollars. That's not sustainable," he said.

Over the past 25 years,

Continued on Page 2



NOTL's **house of history** is bursting at the seams

This is the first of an ongoing series of stories about the Niagara-on-the-Lake Museum as it embarks on a multi-million-dollar fundraising campaign for an expansion that will nearly double the size of the facility on Castlereagh Street.

Richard Hutton
Local Journalism Initiative
The Lake Report

The need for more space at the Niagara-on-the-Lake Museum was well-known.

The plan was formulated and all that was needed to get a fundraising campaign underway for the museum's expansion was to begin soliciting donations.

Then, in March 2020, the world stopped.

"We were about to start reaching out to donors and

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Artist's work is **on the button**



Artist Gail Kerr with John Strecker, chair of the Niagara-on-the-Lake Christmas Parade donation committee. RICHARD HUTTON

Richard Hutton | Local Journalism Initiative | The Lake Report

There's one particular decoration that helps Gail Kerr get into the spirit of the Christmas season.

"I love my nutcracker," Kerr said. "I painted him from the one that graces my mantel every

Christmas and I thought I'll just paint him because I love him and he brings me joy."

Now, Kerr's nutcracker will now not only grace the mantel in her home, but it will also appear on buttons being sold to raise

funds for the Niagara-on-the-Lake Christmas Parade.

Her design was chosen by the parade's donation committee. Kerr, for one, is thrilled.

"Maybe he can bring joy to the people that wear the button

and the people that watch the parade," she said.

She describes the work as "pop art," a style from the '50s and '60s utilizing bright co-

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'I thought moving to a small town would be safer,' says tire slash victim

Richard Hutton
Local Journalism Initiative
The Lake Report

Yousaf Shaikh hopped in his car, ready to pick up his son from work.

That's when he noticed

something was wrong.

It was about 9:30 p.m. on Sunday, Nov. 5 and when he began to drive, something didn't feel right.

"I got out (of the car) and then I was like, 'Oh my God,'" Shaikh said. "That's

when I realized all the tires have been slashed."

It was the same story with a second family vehicle, leaving Shaikh stuck, unable to get his son.

"I was really shocked. I understand that these

things happen," he said.

"You read the papers every single day about shootings (and) stabbings."

Crime was part of the reason he moved his family from Brampton to Niagara-on-the-Lake's Glendale

area six years ago.

"I thought moving to a small town would be safer," Shaikh said. "I guess this just goes to show crime can happen anywhere at any time."

About 90 minutes before

he attempted to drive his car that night, security cameras at his home captured an image of what appears to be a male on his driveway.

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Kids' increased screen time post-COVID is a **big concern**, expert warns

Julia Sacco
The Lake Report



Kids are using screens more since COVID. MIDJOURNEY

The brunt of the COVID-19 pandemic may be passing, but life has not gone back to “normal” for everyone – and for the generation of young people who lived through these past three years, the effects could last years.

The amount of time children spend looking at screens recreationally has increased, on average, by more than an hour every day because of the pandemic, says a District School Board of Niagara expert.

That change is contributing to rising mental health concerns and causing students to have trouble focusing on school, said Dr. Amanda Sherman.

During the pandemic,

screens supplemented the loss of face-to-face contact students faced due to lockdowns and school closures, Sherman, the board's mental health lead, told participants at a public forum hosted by Niagara District Council of Women.

“We know there was a lot of social isolation at that time: children were disconnected from their peers, which is particularly

important,” Sherman said.

She referenced 46 studies of more than 29,000 students that found screen time increased during the pandemic: on average, before COVID, children were spending 162 minutes, or less than three hours, a day on screens.

During the pandemic, that increased by 84 minutes to 246 minutes. And that total hasn't changed much post-

pandemic, Sherman said.

“This is really challenging,” she said. “For individuals aged 12 to 18, screen time is really a problem still.”

Increased screen time has more serious lasting impacts, Sherman said: during the first year of the pandemic, she said, a quarter of children and adolescents reported clinically elevated depression symptoms and 21 per cent reported clinical anxiety symptoms.

Two studies conducted this year also confirmed increased emergency room visits, hospitalizations and hospital admissions for self-harm.

Diagnoses of anorexia also went up during the pandemic, climbing from 25 cases to 41 per month.

At the online meeting

where Sherman spoke, one of the topics of concern was mental health, in response to the school board including this as a focus area in its five-year plan, published in late October.

Coming back to school in person, Sherman said, she noticed students are still having a hard time focusing on classes and practising self-regulation.

“Students are still getting used to routines and structures of being at school,” she said, “after spending for what during their short lives is a very significant amount of time at home, learning off of screens and going back and forth from home and school during closures.”

In order to address these lingering issues, the school board has turned to a program called Mind Up.

“Students learn in this program about neuroscience, about brain regions and, specifically, about mindfulness practices,” Sherman said.

She also emphasized the use of the term “brain break,” which can include things like those mindfulness practices, as well as drawing, journaling, stretching, or even just pausing to use your senses.

Teachers are especially aware of the damage excess screen time can have on students and are taking steps to address it, Sherman said.

“Educators do try as much as they can to do activities that aren't screen-based,” she said.

We live in a digital world and tech is integrated into the classroom, but balance is crucial, Sherman said.

Fixing leaking sewer lines could lead to **higher taxes**: Zalepa

Continued from Front Page

funding from higher levels of government, including the province, has fallen, Zalepa noted.

As a result, towns are required to chip in larger amounts to help keep the roads, pipes, bridges and other assets intact – and they simply do not have “the financial bandwidth” to keep up, he said.

“This is not a one-year problem. This is not a five-year problem,” Zalepa said. “This is a chronic 30-year underfunding of capital.”

“Municipal politicians find it too easy to borrow from the capital kitty to keep the tax rate down,” he added.

The only solution to the town's infrastructure issues, whether they be leaky pipes in Garrison Village or cracked roads in Virgil, is to raise taxes, he said.

“Unless some other level of government steps back into the picture,” he added.

If the town wants to do anything to protect the environment, investing in sewer infrastructure makes a major difference, said Coun. Erwin Wiens, the deputy lord mayor.

“It's not going to be cheap,” he said.



Lord Mayor Gary Zalepa says he thinks this council is ready to put money into repairing the leaky the sewer lines that are contaminating Two Mile Creek. EVAN LOREE

But he thinks the current council is ready to put “our money where our mouth is.”

Wiens said council has been putting more into its capital reserve to benefit future infrastructure projects like sewer repairs.

The previous council, on the other hand, was behind on infrastructure investments, he said.

“Now we have this big bill that's coming,” he said. “We have to make a concerted effort so that the next generation isn't paying for it.”

Gregory Ford, director of

water programs for water advocacy organization Swim Drink Fish, said the is a common scenario across Ontario.

“Oftentimes, we do have aging infrastructure that results in leaks,” he added.

E. coli can cause some types of algae to grow more rapidly, which can deplete oxygen in the water and, causing fish to suffocate, Ford explained.

This bacteria, however, is also an “indicator that there are more pathogenic substances in the water.”

E. coli found in human feces, for example, might

show high levels of pharmaceuticals, caffeine and sucralose, none of which are good for fish and wildlife, he said.

“It's not something that we often think about, but it does have impacts,” he said.

Birth control medications, too, can enter the water supply through broken sewage lines, Ford said.

In people, E. coli can cause nausea, vomiting and fevers, though most symptoms pass in five to 10 days, Health Canada says on its website.

Some towns have combined sewers, which direct both storm water and toilet water to the same outflow, Ford said.

“Oftentimes, when we get excessive rains, those pipes can overflow,” he said. “Then, they deposit either partially or untreated wastewater directly into our receiving water bodies.”

Operations director D'Angelo said NOTL doesn't have any combined sewers and that separate systems are generally cleaner.

However, he also said, the town discovered a few homes in Garrison Village that had their sanitary lines

mistakenly connected to the town's storm water pipes.

The misconnected lines have been fixed since the town first retained engineering company GM BluePlan to find the E. coli source in 2017.

Trees can cause issues for sewer lines as well, because their roots can puncture the concrete lines over time, forming cracks and holes that allow untreated water from sanitary lines to spill out.

D'Angelo said the town uses cameras to inspect the lines for these kinds of cracks and will cut back roots if they become problematic.

“Removal is considered a last resort and efforts are made to preserve trees whenever possible,” he added.

Cracks can also form because of shifting soil, corrosion or aging, he said.

This isn't the first time the town has had to clean up broken sewer lines.

Zalepa pointed out the town had to deal with the same issue at Queen's Royal Beach.

The public beach became the subject of much scrutiny from The Lake Report in 2019, when it

learned of a two-year-long investigation of the E. coli levels at the beach.

In addition to finding high E. coli levels at the beach, the investigation – also led by GM BluePlan – found, “The outfall located at Two Mile Creek has been identified with similar E. coli characteristics as the Queen's Royal Beach.”

By 2021, the Niagara Peninsula Conservation Authority was reporting much lower levels of E. coli at the beach, thanks to a series of infrastructure fixes that cost the town almost \$1 million.

“To give credit where it's due, the municipality of Niagara-on-the-Lake has made some amazing strides,” Ford said.

The waters at Queen's Royal Beach is tested three times a week from May to September as part of the Niagara River Remedial Action Plan.

And in March 2023, Environment and Climate Change Canada redesignated the water around Queen's Royal Beach as “not impaired.”

Neither D'Angelo, Wiens nor Zalepa said they were aware of any other leaking sanitary lines in Niagara-on-the-Lake.



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Rainbow Bridge **vehicle explosion** closes border

Richard Hutton
Local Journalism Initiative
The Lake Report



A vehicle explosion on the U.S. side of the Rainbow Bridge in Niagara Falls forced the closing of all four bridges between Niagara and New York State on Wednesday.

A fiery vehicle crash Wednesday on the U.S. side of the Rainbow Bridge in Niagara Falls resulted in the closing of all four border crossings between Niagara and New York state, sparking concerns of a terrorist attack.

Shortly before noon on Nov. 22, a vehicle exploded in the toll booth area on the U.S. side of the bridge.

It was not confirmed at press time which direction the vehicle was travelling but a witness told Buffalo TV station WGRZ that he saw the vehicle speeding down Main Street in Niagara Falls, N.Y., going "100 miles per hour" in the direction of the border.

The witness said the vehicle struck a fence before going airborne and crashing near the toll booths and exploding into flames.

Two people in the vehicle were killed and a border officer was injured.

The crash resulted in the closure of the Queenston-Lewiston, Whirlpool, Rainbow and Peace bridges.

All of the crossings, except for the Rainbow Bridge, were reopened shortly after 5 p.m. Buffalo-Niagara International Airport, which also was shut down, resumed flights on the eve of the U.S. Thanksgiving.

New York Governor Kathy Hochul, in a briefing Wednesday evening, played down the fears the crash was an act of terror.

"We're not aware of any (terrorist) threats to this area," she said.

She said investigators are dealing with a complex scene.

"The pieces are scattered over 13, 14 toll booths, so it is a large scene and it will take a lot of time for our federal law enforcement partners."

The Canada Border Services Agency, meanwhile, said it is working with U.S. officials.

"We are liaising with our U.S. counterparts on this matter. The FBI is leading the ongoing investigation," the agency posted on X, formerly Twitter.

The Niagara Regional Police said in a news release that they are continuing to monitor the situation but said "there is no known threat on the Canadian side of the Niagara border."

Prime Minister Justin Trudeau addressed the incident in the House of Commons.

Describing the incident as "a very serious situation," he said Canadian law enforcement and border officials are offering assistance as the investigation unfolds.

"We were in close contact with U.S. officials and we'll continue to work closely with them," he said.

Questions after **tires slashed** in Niagara on the Green

Continued from Front Page

A loud hissing sound can be heard in the security footage, as the man methodically plunges a knife or sharp object into the sidewalls of the tires on both vehicles.

However, the images are not clear enough to positively identify the culprit.

As a result of the incident, Shaikh has invested in new security cameras and lighting to protect his property.

He has already replaced the tires on one of the vehicles and between the tires and new security equipment, he said he has already spent between \$3,000 and \$4,000.

His family has been left shaken by the incident. Even putting new tires on one of the family vehicles has sparked a new round of concern.

"What if he comes back and slashes the tires again?" Shaikh asked.

As far as he can tell, his family was the only one to have had this happen to them.



Yousaf Shaikh said his family is shaken after the tires on two vehicles were slashed on Nov. 6. RICHARD HUTTON

"I Googled it. I found one incident but those are Niagara Falls," he said.

He filed a report with Niagara Regional Police Service the morning after the incident.

According to police, the suspect in the case is described as a white male between the ages of 30 and 40, medium build and about five feet and eight inches tall.

At the time of the incident, he was wearing a white hat, dark coat, dark pants and white shoes.

Police spokesperson Const. Phil Gavin said

there are several steps that people can take to protect their property, including:

- Make the effort to get to know your neighbours. A caring and connected community who look out for one another is a powerful defence against crime.
 - Install motion-detection or improve lighting where automobiles are kept as a deterrent.
 - The use of quality, well-positioned cameras can help identify suspects in the event of a crime.
- Cameras can also be a deterrent. A motion

activated trail camera can be an effective moderately priced option.

• Where possible, parking vehicles in a garage will add a layer of protection.

Gavin said it is unlikely that neighbours who have security cameras would be of any assistance to a police investigation as too much time has passed and any footage has likely been overwritten.

In cases such as what occurred to the Shaikh family, it shows that it is "imperative for the public to actively engage in safeguarding their personal property and belongings" to prevent crimes from happening.

"By promptly reporting any suspicious activity or potential criminal incidents, members of the public play an instrumental role in fostering a safer environment for everyone," Gavin said.

"This proactive approach enhances the strength of the partnership between the community and the police, reinforcing a united front against criminal activities."

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The view from above

Niagara-on-the-Lake photographer John DeLorenzi captured this spectacular scene along the Niagara River on a beautiful fall day last week. A rare birds-eye drone view of the Niagara Pumphouse with Fort George in the background. The leaves are falling, the sun is highlighting the golden leaves, but at street level, the town is preparing for the holiday season. Yes, it's beginning to look a lot like Christmas.

See more pictures at niagaranow.com



Residents concerned severance plans could mean **loss of old trees**

Evan Loree
Local Journalism Initiative
The Lake Report

Residents are not ready to say goodbye to trees in one Old Town neighbourhood.

A handful of people voiced some opposition to a request from custom home builder Dave Funk to make two lots out of one at 474 Simcoe St. at a council meeting Nov. 7.

Before he can demolish the existing house and build two new ones, the lot needs to be severed and rezoned.

That was the request before council.

Several residents, and some councillors, raised concerns that when the existing house comes down to make room for two new ones it will mean the death of healthy and well-established trees on the lot.

"In that block, those trees, they really form lots of shade. And they're really mature," said Coun. Wendy Cheropita.

Resident Keith Kennedy



Resident Keith Kennedy lists a few concerns he has for the proposed severance of 474 Simcoe St., among them impacts to the old trees on the lot. EVAN LOREE

said larger trees store more carbon dioxide and do more to keep the air clean than small trees.

"The bigger the tree gets, the better it is for climate," he said.

He voiced concerns about how the tree loss would impact water drainage in

the area.

William Heikoop, a planner representing Funk, said eight trees would need to be removed for the project to go forward. Three of them are in the front yard.

Heikoop said he and his team could revisit their tree protection plan when

designing the driveways for the two homes.

The oldest tree is 102 years old, according to an arborist report submitted with the planning application.

Resident Stuart McCormack said the town has an obligation under its official plan to preserve healthy trees.

"Existing trees must not be unnecessarily removed and that wherever possible existing trees should be preserved and protected," the official plan states.

The plan also states that when trees "must be removed," new ones should be planted to replace them.

"This proposal maximizes tree loss," McCormack said.

This was an environmental issue for Simcoe Street resident Beatrice Ombuki-Berman.

Canada is getting warmer and she's seeing less snow than she used to.

"Due to climate change, we all have to care," Ombuki-Berman said.

Coun. Maria Mavridis said some of the neighbouring houses were new and trees had been cut down to make way for them in the past.

"It was OK then but not OK now?" she asked.

Head planner Kirsten McCauley said each application is reviewed on its own merits and surrounding properties are considered as part of the review.

McCormack also said the proposal to split the lot is a classic case of an owner wanting to "make not more money, but the most money" on a property.

This elicited applause from the audience.

It's not council's responsibility to help developers maximize profits on their investments, he argued.

The two new houses would be "sticking out like sore thumbs" if they are built, he added.

Resident Barry Solomon also objected to what he saw as developers taking "no interest in the people who are

going to be living looking at the structures they make."

He and Ombuki-Berman both took issue with the lack of architectural drawings submitted with Funk's severance application.

"Why is that information being hid from us?" Ombuki-Berman asked.

She suggested it's because the owner doesn't want people to see the potential "damage" from the planned houses.

Heikoop said he had no drawings to share because there are no buyers for the future lots yet and the homes would be custom-built.

The request to sever the lot would come with a later application, Heikoop explained.

But in the meantime, he is asking for zoning changes that would allow the builder to make homes with 36 per cent lot coverage instead of 33 per cent.

He said this would allow the builder to install decks and covered porches.

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Sarah Kaufman, managing director and curator of the NOTL Museum, with community engagement co-ordinator Barb Worthy. The museum is working hard to raise funds for its planned expansion. RICHARD HUTTON

Museum fundraising for **new expansion**

Continued from Front Page

COVID hit,” says Sarah Kaufman, the museum’s managing director.

Thanks to the COVID-19 pandemic, which saw non-essential indoor spaces shut down for months, as well as organizations shifting their priorities to health and safety in the face of a potentially fatal disease, those plans were put on hold.

Now, even though COVID is still lurking, the pandemic is in the rearview mirror.

With that, the museum’s expansion plans are back on the front burner.

“We’ve sort of been quietly chatting with individuals in town and now we’re thinking we need to communicate that this is happening, why it’s happening and just kind of get the buzz out there about why it’s important,” Kaufman said.

The goal of the museum’s fundraising project, dubbed the Building History, Strengthening Community Campaign, is to raise \$5 million to help cover half of the cost of the \$10-million expansion project.

The ambitious plan includes a two-storey addition to the rear of the museum’s Memorial Hall and more basement space for storage.

In total, it will add more than 8,000 square feet of space to the museum, almost doubling its current 10,000 square feet.

Prominent NOTL phar-

macist Sean Simpson was brought on board to be the face of the campaign and to raise half of the cost, with the hope of obtaining matching government grants to cover the remainder.

“I think our museum is one of the gems of our community,” Kaufman said. “We hold the community’s collection here. We have history that is nationally and provincially significant.”

While the museum may be smaller than others around the world, it represents something much larger than its size, said Barbara Worthy, the museum’s community engagement co-ordinator.

“That history that you see here and you feel here, learn here, is actually majorly significant to Canada’s development,” she said. “And that includes our Indigenous history and our Black history.”

The museum is home to the Laura Secord collection and boasts a hat belonging to Maj.-Gen. Sir Isaac Brock among its several artifacts.

“We’ve got probably the best War of 1812 collection in Canada here at the museum and we want to showcase it,” Kaufman said.

The museum not only needs additional space not only for its ever-expanding collection, but also space for the museum to run more community programs, she said.

A lot of its children’s events are run outdoors,

but when the weather turns bad and the programs are brought inside, it’s a scramble to find room, she said.

With tourism being a big economic driver in NOTL, the museum has its own role to play in this endeavour.

Making improvements will only help it be a contributor to the town’s economic health, said Amy Klassen, the museum’s director of finance and marketing.

It’s the only NOTL historic site open all year, though hours are reduced in winter, she said.

Having year-round hours means the museum continues to attract visitors to town, she said.

The Niagara Icewine Festival, a long-time winter event, is joined by newer offerings for the snowy season, such as the Shaw Festival’s winter productions — including a staging of Charles Dickens classic, “A Christmas Carol” and “Brigadoon” — along with outdoor skating at the Wayne Gretzky Estates winery.

All these keep visitors coming to Niagara-on-the-Lake during what was traditionally the offseason for tourism. And, as such, people are no longer confining their NOTL visits to the warmer months.

“It’s important that we are part of that,” Klassen said.

The historic façade of the museum will not change, she added. The addition, to

be built behind the main building, will not dramatically affect the overall look of the facility.

“We worked with the municipal heritage committee through the whole process and have our heritage permits and they’re happy with it,” Klassen said.

“The build is purpose-driven. We need to have more space.”

Worthy, meanwhile, said great care has been taken to preserve the original buildings that comprise the museum, especially Memorial Hall, as it was the first Ontario building constructed specifically as a museum when it was built in 1907.

“It gives it incredible prestige,” she said.

Today, the museum has 53,000 items in its collection and runs 80 annual programs. In total, the museum gets help from some 100 volunteers, who do everything from acting as tour guides to gardening.

Museum leadership hopes the expansion project can be completed by 2026, the 100th anniversary of the death of museum founder Janet Carnochan.

Donations to the Building History, Strengthening Community fundraising campaign can be made in person at the museum, at 43 Castlereagh St. during its operating hours of 1 to 5 p.m., seven days a week, or online at canadahelps.org/en/charities/niagara-historical-society.

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Contributed by Patty Garriock

“Don’t wish me happiness. I don’t expect to be
happy all the time. Wish me courage and strength
and a sense of humor. I need them all.”

- Anne Morrow Lindbergh

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Christmas trees on sale



Helen Ferley was not set on taking home a Christmas tree in November but found a winner she couldn't turn down at the Niagara Lions Club sale at Cornerstone Community Church. **See story on Page 9.** JULIA SACCO

Editorial

NOTL needs to **solve** its sewer problems

Kevin MacLean
Managing Editor

No one really likes to talk about the very human problem of managing society's sewage waste.

But not only do we have to talk about it, we have to pay for it.

If we don't have an efficient, properly enclosed disposal system, we can look forward to all sorts of problems down the proverbial road. And a big bill to pay in order to bring things back up to par.

For at least the second time in recent years, Niagara-on-the-Lake is faced with the messy, expensive and unenviable job of cleaning up and retrofitting a sewer system that has developed leaks and problems.

And it is seeping into one of the area's watercourses – this time it's Two Mile Creek.

The result is that Two Mile Creek has the highest level of E. coli of any

water system in the entire Niagara watershed, according to the Niagara Peninsula Conservation Authority. An embarrassing statistic.

The last time NOTL had to publicly deal with such a problem, about four years ago, it was pipes at Simcoe Park discharging into Lake Ontario.

At that time, as was shown in an investigation by The Lake Report, the Town of Niagara-on-the-Lake had been quietly dealing with the problem for about two years.

But the old, damaged and deteriorating sewer pipes had been allowing untreated sewage to seep into Lake Ontario at Queen's Royal Beach for several years.

Are these the only cases of sewer pipe problems in NOTL?

Well, since no one really likes to talk about it until it becomes a major issue, we can't be sure. But it appears the latest problems have

been going on for a good length of time.

That is disconcerting but we are glad the municipality is working to fix it.

Unlike 200 years ago and through much of the Victorian era, when sewer systems were notoriously non-existent or ineffective, we expect that when we flush, the effluent will travel to a multi-million-dollar sewage treatment plant (like the one on Lakeshore Road). There the water will be treated, cleaned properly and eventually returned to the natural environment.

Actually, that expectation is so ingrained, who really actually thinks about it? No one, until problems occur and effluent ends up where it is not supposed to be.

As Lord Mayor Gary Zalepa frankly notes in a story in this week's edition, this is all a symptom of a bigger issue towns across Canada have with funding infrastructure.

“This is not a one-year

problem. This is not a five-year problem,” Zalepa said. “This is a chronic 30-year underfunding of capital.”

And as we see every year at budget deliberation time, councillors here and everywhere else, are happy to kick capital repairs down the road if it means that tax increases can be limited.

The town probably can't afford the latest costly repairs – we're talking hundreds of thousands of dollars or more, potentially. But the reality is, the town cannot afford not to do them.

And legally, morally, environmentally, the town must do them.

The lessons here seem obvious: one, municipalities and our elected leaders have to stop putting off repairs to key infrastructure. And two, we all, as taxpayers, have to understand that we must foot the bill.

Kicking the can down the road is not the answer.

editor@niagaranow.com

Correction: A story in the Nov. 16 edition of The Lake Report (“Wartime history comes ‘full circle’ for NOTL’s Gregg family”) contained incorrect information regarding a Niagara-on-the-Lake Museum presentation about the Farmerettes. The presentation was sponsored by Geoffrey and Lorraine Joyner.

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LETTER OF THE WEEK

Let common sense prevail in St. Davids

Dear editor:

I read Peter Rusin's Nov. 2 letter suggesting the proposed St. Davids roundabout will probably cost \$10 million or more with necessary expropriations.

I pass through this intersection at least twice a week and as I sit at the stop sign, I wonder why common sense hasn't kicked in at the Niagara Region planning department.

Surely the easiest and

safest solution would be a simple traffic light.

There would be no expropriation needed and it might take a month maximum to install.

For \$10 million, the region could fund a full-time traffic warden with a stop and go sign.

But that's not nearly as glamorous as a roundabout, is it?

Nigel Napier-Andrews
NOTL



Writer Nigel Napier-Andrews doesn't think it's wise to spend \$10 million on a roundabout in St. Davids. FILE

Willow bakery lauded for annual Cake Parade

Dear editor:

Friends of Fort George president Tony Chisholm and staff stopped by to meet Sean O'Donnell at Willow Cakes & Pastries to say thanks for once again donating the time, effort, supplies, space and skills for the huge cake for Canada Day – and to also give a donation to help support their efforts.

For more than 10 years, Willow has donated a large four- by eight-foot cake designed by Catherine O'Donnell and her team.

The giant cake travels down Queen Street to Simcoe Park on July 1, where it is distributed to over 2,000 Canada Day participants each year.

Earlier this year, the Friends of Fort George succeeded in obtaining a grant from the Town of Niagara-on-the-Lake to help to cover the cost of the Canada Day fireworks, as well as the Cake Parade.

A \$600 donation was given to Willow from these funds.



Willow Cakes & Pastries co-owner Sean O'Donnell accepts a donation of \$600 toward its mammoth Canada Day cake, which it donates every year. SUPPLIED

Canada Day celebrations in Niagara-on-the-Lake are truly a community event, including many volunteers from the Friends of Fort George, the Niagara-on-the-Lake Rotary Club and several local businesses,

like Willow, that support the festivities.

We are so glad we can support each other this way and are looking forward to working together again in 2024.

For many local people, the

Cake Parade is the highlight of the Canada Day celebrations and we owe a huge "Thank You" to Willow Cakes & Pastries.

Amanda Gamble
Executive director
Friends of Fort George

Exploring History photo brought back memories

Dear editor:

I'm a longtime fan of your excellent weekly publication and I enjoy writing letters to newspaper editors.

I've always enjoyed the Niagara-on-the-Lake Museum's "Exploring History" feature each week, probably because I'm a photographer and a member of the Photographic Historical Society of Canada.

The Nov. 16 edition featured an interesting photo of Jan Paderewski. The acclaimed pianist and future premier of Poland was visiting Niagara-on-the-Lake and inspecting the troops at Niagara Camp in 1917.

It particularly caught my attention because, as a child (c. 1939), I'd often heard



Jan Paderewski (with the moustache, hat and cane) visits NOTL in 1917. NOTL MUSEUM

that name from my mother who was a piano teacher and loved his compositions.

It brought back childhood memories.

I was slightly disappointed when the photo caption did not say where

Paderewski was among those pictured in the large crowd.

However, I believe my educated guess (aided by the caption's mention of his wife) allows me to believe he's in the centre of the five

onstage figures. An impressive-looking chap!

I had never before seen a photo of the famous pianist, so I thank you for another fine "Exploring History."

George Dunbar
Toronto

Willowbank seeks funding help from community

The following letter to the community was submitted by the board of Willowbank in Queenston.

As you know, Willowbank is a unique private career college and has been on the vanguard of heritage conservation and the adaptive reuse of existing buildings since 2006.

And, as you have been hearing, we are on an upward trajectory to even greater significance.

Yet we're wrestling with the rapidly growing financial reality of operating our storied School of Restoration Arts. Your support is crucial to its success.

Tuition covers just over a third of the annual cost of providing each student with the best education in heritage conservation.

As Willowbank is not eligible for provincial funding, we must make up the difference through the generosity of our community.

To bridge our current operating gap, we seek to raise \$30,000 this season. In early 2024, we will also need to invest \$125,000 to construct a third-floor external exit stair.

The generosity of our community members not only helps provide students with a great education but

also assists in producing passionate heritage professionals who champion the role of cultural heritage preservation in our communities here in Niagara and around the world. Your support makes a difference.

Consider Willowbank as you think about your annual charitable contributions during this season of giving.

Contribute to Willowbank either through Canada Helps (canadahelps.org/en/charities/Willowbank) or directly to Willowbank at PO Box 212, 14487 Niagara Parkway, Queenston.

Willowbank is a registered charity so you will receive a tax receipt.

Your generosity today will make a difference to the financial sustainability of Willowbank as an innovative institution shaping new approaches to the stewardship of historic places and sustainable communities, now and for generations to come.

John Scott, chair, Victoria Broer, Patrick Little, Elizabeth Oliver-Malone, Carmen Masi, Emily Bright, Clinton Brown, Steve Hudson, Sasha Knight, Andrew Humeniuk, Frank Racioppo
Willowbank board of directors

Legion will take sound 'burden off the town' for next year's ceremony

Dear editor:

On behalf of the General Nelles Branch #124 of the Royal Canadian Legion, I would like to thank all of those who supported the Remembrance Day services on Nov. 11 at the Queen Street cenotaph and in Queenston.

A thank you to the veterans, branch associate members, RCMP, town fire department and cadets for marching with us. Thanks also to those who presented wreaths on behalf of their family or organization.

Our chaplain put together a concise service with participation from townfolk. The Old Town service was well attended, although being a Saturday, schools did not participate.

We acknowledge that there was a problem with the amplified sound and a

remedy has already been found for next year. The branch is taking that burden off the town.

The first two weeks in November is when we hold our poppy campaign, reminding everyone of the sacrifice of previous generations and the ongoing work of the Canadian military.

Nearly all of the local businesses supported us by allowing counter boxes in their stores and to those brave members who stood in the cold to meet people on the street with a poppy, we say thank you and well done.

We had a successful poppy campaign which met last year's collection for veterans in need.

Al Howse, president
Royal Canadian Legion branch 124
NOTL

How war has touched our lives – and architecture



Brian Marshall
Columnist

On Nov. 11, I stood at the back of the crowd gathered in Old Town to mark Remembrance Day.

I thought that here, in Niagara-on-the-Lake, the occasion would reflect the profound influence that the military and military service has had on the evolution of the town.

Sadly, I was mistaken.

The original settlement here was established in large part by the refugees from and the loyalist soldiers who fought in the American Revolutionary War.

In 1792, John Graves Simcoe chose the little town as the temporary capital of the new province of Upper Canada and, before he returned to England in 1796, had ordered the construction of Fort George to counter the growing American threat posed by Fort Niagara across the river.

While the lands associated with the military and subsequent surveying performed under military direction fundamentally shaped the physical development of the town, it was the economic benefits derived from the military's presence that, in large part, made the town's growth viable (and supported it for many decades thereafter).

Indeed, it could be argued that the principal reason for the rebuilding of the town after the War 1812 (as anything more than a rural village) was the ongoing presence of the military, jobs associated with supporting its infrastructure and military dollars than flowed into the local economy.

And, speaking of that particular war, we will

never know the actual count of people under arms who gave their lives in the service of the King since the military only recorded the deaths of actual soldiers – not those of militiamen and Indigenous fighters.

However, it has been estimated that total mortality (from all causes) for all those bearing arms on the British side was in excess of 20,000.

We will not explore the participation of between 35,000 and 50,000 Canadians who fought in the American Civil War nor the Fenian Raid, which culminated in the Battles of Ridgeway and Fort Erie (in which 13 Canadian volunteers lost their lives).

Then in 1899 came the Boer War. Seven thousand Canadians fought in South Africa and 40 were killed in action.

Between 1914 and 1918, the First World War raged across Europe. In those four years, roughly 650,000 Canadians served with more than one in 10 (about 66,000) giving their lives, while another 172,000 were wounded.

It was to be “the war that ended all wars” but, of course, it was not. In 1939, the Second World War erupted and, by its end in 1945, approximately 1.1 million Canadians – 10 per cent of the country's total population - saw active military service.

Over 45,000 of these men and women died, while roughly 55,000 were wounded.

Only five years later in 1950, 26,000 soldiers in the Canadian military were back in action in Korea, where 516 lost their lives and more than 1,200 returned home wounded.

Whether by choice or mischance, about 30,000 Canadians fought in the Vietnam War, leaving more than 134 dead behind.

In 1990 came the Gulf War, wherein more than 5,100 Canadian military personnel served. While there were no battlefield deaths, 1,800 of these men and women subsequently died as a result of “debilitating medical conditions.”



The Queenston cenotaph is a reminder of Canadian sacrifices. From 1899 to 2012 more than 110,000 Canadians died in war and many more suffered physical and psychological injuries. Brian Marshall says Remembrance Day is a chance to honour them. DAVE VAN DE LAAR

Most recently, some 40,000 Canadian soldiers were on the ground in Afghanistan.

The tally of 158 dead and 2,071 wounded does not encompass those “thousands of other veterans of the war (who) were wounded physically and psychologically, leading to additional deaths by suicide” (Canadian War Museum: “Remembering the Afghanistan War”).

Finally, let us not neglect those 125,000 men and women of our Canadian Armed Forces who served this country in “peace-keeping missions” wearing the bright blue target helmet of the United Nations and under strict orders not to shoot until shot upon.

In Cambodia, Cyprus, East Timor, Egypt, Ethiopia and Eritrea, Golan

Heights, Haiti, Rwanda, Somalia and the Balkans – wherein Canadian personnel saw some of the heaviest fighting since Korea (look up the Battle of the Medak Pocket for insight) – 130 Canadian soldiers lost their lives and untold thousands were wounded.

It is quite a list, isn't it?

From 1899 to 2012, at least 111,844 Canadians died in war and more than double that number came back physically wounded.

The mental scars and trauma have never been fully tallied, but there is a published estimate that one in seven of the soldiers who served in Afghanistan returned with some level of PTSD (which might imply similar numbers for over two million Canadian soldiers who have served in other war theatres).

Fact is, this country has – to a significant degree – been shaped by the wars Canadians have participated in – both by the loss of those who never returned and by the impact left on those who did come back.

My own family had members who served in the Boer War, the First World War, the Second World War, Korea and Vietnam. My circle of friends includes men and women who served as “peacekeepers” in the Gulf War and Afghanistan. And, I am far from unique in this regard.

It isn't that Canadians glory in war: on the contrary, most of us consider it to be the ultimate expression of human stupidity.

However, when there is no other alternative and we are forced to take up arms,

we accept the cost and get the dirty job done.

So, by now I'm sure you are wondering: why I am writing about this in the Arch-i-text column?

The answer is quite simple. Look around this town, at the built heritage, the cultural landscapes, and everywhere you turn, your eyes will bear witness to the hands, minds and example of men and women who served.

Among many other items, a quick sampling of these marks might include: The landmarks represented by Old Town's cenotaph, the soldiers' memorial in Queenston and Brock's Monument on the Heights.

The majority of surviving pre-1812 houses in NOTL were built by loyalist refugees and soldiers (the Field House on Niagara River Parkway and the Clement House on Four Mile Creek Road being two examples).

The rebuilding of town after the burning in the War of 1812 and military backbone of the local economy bequeathed to us the highest concentration of Neo-Classical and Regency dwellings in the country.

The Niagara-on-the-Lake Golf Club (within which is located Fort Mississauga), the oldest in the country, was developed on former military reserve lands. The enclaves of Wartime (Victory) Houses in Virgil and Old Town. And so on.

For more than 200 years this town has provided men and women to serve their country and the military tradition has, in turn, become an intrinsic part of the warp and weave of this town.

Remembrance Day is not a tourist event nor is it simply a time for old soldiers to gather. It is an opportunity for Canadians to reflect, consider and appreciate the contributions made by the men and women who have served, to the community we live in today.

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



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Cora Long D.D.

Navigating the **years ahead** in NOTL

At a black-tie gala at the Court House on Saturday night, the Niagara Foundation celebrated Ward Simpson as its newest Living Landmark recipient. In his address to the gathering, foundation chair Lyle Hall spoke about the urgent need for careful development as Niagara-on-the-Lake experiences unprecedented growth in the coming years. This is a partial text of his speech.



Lyle Hall
Special to The Lake Report

But I'd be remiss if I didn't take the opportunity to say a few words about the Niagara Foundation and our mandate.

Since its founding in 1962, the Niagara Foundation has promoted the history, traditions and culture of the Niagara area.

What does that mean?

Initially, the foundation focused on identification of historic buildings.

We published a refer-

ence guide covering the town's early architecture. We purchased, restored and protected buildings such as the Apothecary and the Foghorn House at 99 River Beach Rd.

And we supported, financially, repairs and restoration of many heritage buildings.

More recently, though, we have concentrated on advocacy, addressing the rapid and significant changes brought about through growth and its associated development – mostly residential.

Niagara-on-the-Lake is not immune to growth. The world around us is evolving and development is an undeniable part of that evolution.

However, in the pursuit of progress, we can't lose sight of what has defined us, what has given our town its

unique character and charm.

We see it daily in our streetscapes, heritage commercial and residential buildings, and notably, in the care and attention paid to keep up these fine examples of heritage.

But what about the future?

I like playing with numbers.

In 1971, a year after the town and township of Niagara were combined to become the Town of NOTL, we had a population of 12,500.

In 1991, two decades later, we had grown to 12,900.

In 2011, another 20 years and with growth of 20 per cent, our population had risen to 15,400.

Last year, within just 10 years, we experienced another 20 per cent growth, rising to a population of 19,090.

By 2051, there could be 29,000 people in Niagara-on-the-Lake – a 50 per cent increase over last year and 2.5 times the number of people who resided here in 1971.

Now, I'm not here to be the town crier of doom and gloom, but we need to have an open conversation about how we're going to accommodate thousands of additional residents.

And not just where they live, but where they shop, educate their children, engage in recreational pursuits and otherwise enjoy their community.

Does that mean accommodating all of the expected growth, in highrise structures, on greenfield sites solely in Glendale? Of course not.

Glendale is part of the solution and a big part of the

town's future, but development will occur throughout the five villages and rural areas that comprise Niagara-on-the-Lake.

While development is inevitable, it doesn't have to involve destroying heritage streetscapes, the very thing that makes all our villages unique.

Incompatible land uses, densities, and/or structures compromise our enjoyment of the community. And, from a tourism perspective, they gradually erode the motivation for visiting in the first place.

Bad development is like inviting termites to a picnic – you might not notice the damage immediately, but over time, it eats away at the foundation of what holds a town together.

We've seen some bad development and we are

seeing pressure for more. We've also seen responsible development with new projects that complement our heritage buildings.

Our town council has a big job, and a big responsibility, to manage this growth through this term and in subsequent years.

We believe the foundation also has a job: to maintain the history, traditions and culture of Niagara-on-the-Lake.

We hope to do that in lockstep with town council and in a way that results in a community where we want to live and invite others to visit.

The bottom line is that change is inevitable, but so is the responsibility to ensure that the essence of our town isn't lost in the shuffle.

Lyle Hall is chair of the Niagara Foundation.

Woman sought after incident at Virgil church

Richard Hutton
Local Journalism Initiative
The Lake Report

Terry Flynn was helping out at the Niagara Lions Club Christmas tree lot at Cornerstone Community Church's town campus on Niagara Stone Road when he heard the sound of breaking glass.

The front door to the church had been smashed from the inside, he thinks by a woman driving a 2019 GMC Terrain who had stopped at the lot and had inquired about purchasing a tree.

"She seemed like she wasn't all there," said Flynn, a former town councillor and retired paramedic.

"She looked like she needed some help. The next thing I heard was glass breaking and I called the police."

He described the woman as being "a little dishevelled" and that he felt bad for her.

Flynn said his paramedic instincts kicked in and he began asking the woman if she needed help.

"She talked to me,"



Terry Flynn was working at the NOTL Lions Christmas Tree sales lot at Cornerstone Church when a window in the front door of the church was broken. RICHARD HUTTON

Flynn said, adding that the woman's language was "a little rough."

Jeff Martin, associate pastor at Cornerstone, said he wasn't aware of any other

similar incidents at the site at Niagara Stone and Field roads.

"This might have been the first time something like this has happened," he said.

"We've had people coming to this building before who are looking for someone to listen (to them)."

The woman had left the scene by the time police arrived but the officers received a second report concerning the GMC driver.

The woman, reported as being possibly impaired, went to the nearby LCBO location on Niagara Stone Road just after 2 p.m. the same day as the church incident and attempted to buy alcohol. Staff at the liquor store refused to serve her.

"The investigation determined the female associated (with) the GMC had run from the area just prior to the officers arriving," police spokesperson Const. Phil Gavin said in an email to The Lake Report.

The woman's vehicle was towed from the scene, Gavin said, adding that the investigation is ongoing and no arrests had been made.

Martin, meanwhile, said he does not know how much it will cost to fix the damage.

"It's a little annoying that we have to fix it," he said.

Support the community by buying a **Lions tree**

Julia Sacco
The Lake Report

Helen Ferley was considering getting an artificial tree this year, but in the end, she and her husband Steve always come back to the Niagara Lions tree sale.

"We went to look at some artificial trees, but a natural tree is lovely and the smell is nice and perfect," Ferley told The Lake Report.

Ferley moved to Niagara-on-the-Lake in 2006 and said she has been buying her tree from the Niagara Lions on and off since then.

She didn't plan to buy a tree this early, but found the perfect one to take home while browsing the sale.

"I have a whole pile of decorations that I've collected over the years," Ferley said. "I love to sit under the tree with Christmas music on and a cup of tea by the fire and just enjoy the light from the tree and all the decorations."

Steve MacSween, who helps facilitate tree sales since they began on Saturday, said they have already

sold around 100 trees as of Wednesday afternoon.

"By the first week of December they'll be gone."

To secure your tree at Cornerstone Community Church, head over Monday to Friday from 10:30 a.m. to 7 p.m. or weekends from 9 a.m. to 7 p.m.

Over at the St. Davids Lions Club, Stephanie Hall from the St. Davids Veterinary Clinic picked up her tree for this weekend's pet photos with Santa Claus photo-op.

"Every year we buy our tree from the Lions Club, right up the hill from the vet clinic," Hall told The Lake Report. "We set it up and it's our annual tradition to have a photo with Santa and your pet."

Allen Snider, the Lions Club's president, urged NOTLers to support their local causes when buying a tree, rather than the big box stores.

"Everything goes to the Lions Club, wherever money we make," Snider said.

Tree sales will continue at the St. Davids Lions Club until all trees are sold from 10 a.m. to 6 or 7 p.m. each day.



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Grace United Church's popular **Christmas Market** returns Saturday

John Sayers
Special to The Lake Report

The Christmas Market at Grace United Church is this Saturday, Nov. 25, from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. and it may be your answer to the eternal question – what to buy for family and friends for Christmas?

After all, it's just a month – exactly – before Santa descends the chimney with his sack of goodies.

More about the jams and sauces and tourtieres and baking later, but let's start with Christmas baskets and treasures.

Each basket is unique and at this stage it's too late for me to take off the wrappings and see, but a couple of ingredients caught my eye earlier.

How about margarita glasses? I saw a few of them ready to go under wraps and thought of the late Jimmy Buffett who died this year. Remember his signature song "Margaritaville"?



Tourtieres and margarita glasses are items up for sale on Saturday. SUPPLIED

Reportedly there is more than one tiki bar in the Deep South that gives you a free glass with each margarita they serve you. Someone had to drink a few glasses to be able to donate these to join some appropriate accompaniments in one or more baskets.

And I noted a lovely green pottery vase clearly marked as Roseville Pottery on the base.

Your hard-to-buy-for version of Great Aunt Matilda won't likely have one of these and she would be rhapsodic over having a warm, dark green earthy vase in which to show off the flowers her loving family and friends bring her during the gardening season.

At this writing, we have seen the trove of baskets and the boxes of delights to fill those baskets but we

don't know what went into which basket.

Lacking in artistic talent, this writer lets others apply their packaging and display talents to the project. I just contemplate in wonder how it all comes together.

And in addition to the baskets, there are some belated arrivals for our earlier treasures sale, which we can now offer to buyers much closer to the gifting season

for which they are most appropriate.

It's so hard to describe baskets that haven't been made yet but be assured there is something hard-to-find for the selective buyer on a budget.

If not, how about jams, jellies and sauces? Or shortbread cookies, which one of our own artisans makes every year for a large band of enthusiastic regular buyers?

And just in time for the winter and Christmas season is the tourtiere, favourite of all who need a traditional, hot, hunger-friendly repast in the cold, dark days of December and January.

In packages of two pies, they will brighten everyone's winter dinners as they recall the early culinary triumphs of Canada's French settlers.

And don't forget other baking. The wonders of our own home freezers mean that we can all buy short-

bread, tarts, pies, date and nut loaves, cookies, muffins and other yummy home baked goods well in advance, as our later contribution to the family's annual Christmas feast.

They will never know the home baking you have thawed and brought doesn't exactly come from your own oven.

Jams? You know that Grace United is famous for its jams, jellies and sauces.

Sorry, we have sold all of the 32 cases of Colonial Sauce that were created in 2023, but it's not too early to put your name down for some precious and popular jars in 2024.

The earlybird gets the sauce. And the pre-Christmas bird also surveys a wide selection of other delectable spreads.

So, mark your calendar for this Saturday morning at Grace United Church. And remember, early shoppers get the greatest selection of everything.



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'The Mistletoe Bride' is back, but with another venue added

Evan Loree
Local Journalism Initiative
The Lake Report

Tara Rosling's annual Christmas performance may not be for the faint of heart.

The veteran stage and TV actress says a woman fainted during her performance of "The Mistletoe Bride" at Silversmith Brewery in 2022.

"I actually stopped asked if she was OK, because I was worried," the Niagara-on-the-Lake resident said.

She wasn't sure why the woman fainted, saying the subject of the story could trigger some people, but the woman may also have had a medical condition.

Peter Hinton, whose directorial talents are often seen on the stage at the Shaw Festival, adapted "The Mistletoe Bride" from Jeanette Winterson's short story of the same name.

Rosling, well-known for her role as President T'Rina in "Star Trek: Discovery," frequently collaborates with Hinton, most recently performing in his adaptation of Edith Wharton's "The Shadow of a Doubt."

"We just wanted to work on something together. So he brought this to me and then we created it together."

Winterson's "The Mistletoe Bride" tells the story of a



Tickets usually sell fast for "The Mistletoe Bride," which Tara Rosling will perform on Dec. 19 and 21. EVAN LOREE

bride who becomes trapped in a chest while playing hide and seek with her groom on her wedding night.

From the confines of her chest, she spies her groom committing adultery.

Unable to escape, the bride suffocates and is found years later as a skeleton in a bride's dress.

Rosling will be doing a dramatic reading of the bride's harrowing experience at Silversmith Brewery Dec. 19 at 7 p.m. and again at Ironwood Cider House Dec. 21, also at 7 p.m.

"I love that it's become an annual tradition. Like people have already contacted me this year asking when it's going to happen," she said.

This is the actress's first time at Ironwood, but she hopes it'll be another packed show.

Last year she delivered one performance virtually over Zoom on Dec. 22 – however, she said she wasn't fond of performing in front of a screen.

"I prefer to do it live." "It's a very bizarre sensation performing to a computer screen," she added.

Tickets are pay what you can and all proceeds go to Gillian's Place, which shelters families from domestic abuse.

In her nine years of performing the show, she estimates it's raised about \$20,000 for the shelter and hopes she can crack another \$3,000 this year.

Tickets to the Ironwood show can be purchased at Eventbrite.com, by looking up "Mistletoe Bride Performance" in Niagara-on-the-Lake. For the Silversmith show, call the brewery.

Citizenship judge earns **community award**

Julia Sacco
The Lake Report



Rochelle Ivri was named winner of the Community Impact award at the Niagara Women in Business Awards. SUPPLIED

Citizenship Judge Rochelle Ivri is no stranger to awards.

With an impressive list of honours already, including the Law Society of Ontario's Lincoln Alexander Award, Ivri last week added the Community Impact title at Niagara's Women in Business Awards.

"I was very impressed with the level of excellence that I saw in everyone who had been nominated, in every category, not just my own," Ivri, 48, said of the awards sponsored by the Greater Niagara Chamber of Commerce.

With so many great women up for an award, the Niagara-on-the-Lake resident said she was honoured to be acknowledged.

"I was pleasantly surprised and I was shocked. It was affirming for me given all the work I do both locally and provincially and federally," she said.

In announcing her award, the chamber noted, "Her role as a citizenship judge is pivotal both in conferring citizenship to our newest

As to why Ivri she was nominated, her work in NOTL comes to mind, she said.

Her husband Eldean works in finance and wealth management and the work the two do in the community "really sustains us," she said.

In Niagara-on-the-Lake, Ivri has served on the boards of the NOTL Public Library and Bravo! Niagara. Ivri's husband Eldean works in finance in town as a wealth manager.

Growing up in North York, Ivri was always told that giving time and giving back is of utmost importance.

Canadians and conducting vital community outreach to encourage active citizenship and civic engagement."

Ivri holds an honours degree in criminology, is a professor in the paralegal program at Mohawk College and is an adjunct professor at Queen's University Law School.

At work, she is one of only nine citizenship judges in the country.

"This past August, I swore in my 100,000th new Canadian, which was a great milestone. I'm very proud of that," she said.

"This past August, I swore in my 100,000th new Canadian, which was a great milestone."

ROCHELLE IVRI

"As we've been raising our children and as we've grown into our careers, it's been really important to give back, in whatever capacity we are able to," Ivri said.

With an impressive array of awards under her belt, Ivri emphasized that her work is never done with recognition in mind.

"The way that I was raised is that you are never doing the things you do for accolades. You are doing the things you do because you have a personal responsibility to do them," she said.

"It was never an expectation and it's still not an expectation, so when I do get recognized it's just so fulfilling and really humbling as well."

At home, Ivri is passing that community spirit onto her three children, Michaiiah, Ezekiel and Zachariah.

"We're at a stage in our lives where we're pouring into our kids and I enjoy seeing them thrive and come into their own as well," she said.

Ivri's daughter Michaiiah is a past-chair of Niagara-on-the-Lake Youth Council as well as president of the Leos club, where Ezekiel was also on the executive.

"I'm just really proud that they, too, are taking on their own way of being responsible for their community," Ivri said.

NOTL Gives Back **charity drive** returns

Evan Loree
Local Journalism Initiative
The Lake Report



Get ready to give back for Niagara-on-the-Lake's annual food, clothing and toy drive.

NOTL Gives Back is back in town Saturday, Nov. 25 from 11 a.m. to 1 p.m. for the fourth year in a row.

People can donate their gently used clothes, non-perishable food and toys at the Meridian Credit Union Arena in Virgil on the day of the event.

Donations can also be dropped off at Revel Realty in Virgil until Monday, Dec. 4.

"NOTL Gives Back is a fantastic collective effort for our community to support those in need during the holidays," said Lord Mayor Gary Zalepa in a news release.

This year the town is teaming up with the NOTL Minor Hockey Association, Revel Realty, Fine Estates Team and MAC Inc.

The charity drive was started in the days of

COVID-19 "when the need for donations was at an all-time high," said Marnie Cluckie, the town's chief administrator.

The food and clothing will go to the food bank and thrift clothing store Newark Neighbours, but the toys will be donated to McMaster Children's Hospital.

"We place a lot of importance on giving back," MAC Inc. founder Jessie MacDonald said. "I hope to see many familiar faces at the event."

Those stopping by on Nov. 25 are welcomed to enjoy some hot chocolate and cookies – and, maybe, expect a visit from old St. Nick himself.



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Holiday fun in NOTL



From farm gear and Santa parades to stepping back in time, there are plenty of ways to get into the spirit of the holidays in Niagara-on-the-Lake. Here's how.

Candlelight Stroll | Friday, Dec. 1

Candlelight Stroll, 6:30-9:30 p.m.: A hugely popular event with proceeds going to charity. The annual walk, organized by the Chamber of Commerce, starts on Queen Street at the historic courthouse. Candles can be purchased for \$5 each and will be on sale onsite until 8 p.m. Prior to the stroll, there will be a number of warmup events, including performances by members of the Shaw Festival and the Niagara Star Singers from 2 to 5:30 p.m. Santa Claus will also be on hand.



Holiday House Tour | Saturday, Dec. 2 and Sunday, Dec. 3

Rotary Holiday House Tour, 9:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. each day: Visit six uniquely decorated NOTL homes, plus cultural and historic sites. Tickets are \$45 and include a complimentary wine tasting. All proceeds to charities supported by the Rotary Club of Niagara-on-the-Lake.

Christmas Parade | Saturday, Dec. 9

Christmas Parade, Saturday, 11 a.m.: Enjoy floats, marching bands and more. The parade will start at the intersection of King and Centre streets in Old Town and make its way down Castlereagh, Wellington, Byron/Prideaux and Simcoe streets before heading back to Queen.

A Garrison Christmas | Saturday, Dec. 9 and Sunday, Dec. 10


A Garrison Christmas at Fort George, noon to 4 p.m.: Visitors will experience Christmas traditions from the early 19th century as the fort will be done up for the holiday season with traditional decorations of garland and natural greenery. Hot beverages and treats will be available.



Christmas Tractor Parade | Thursday, Dec. 14

Third annual Christmas Tractor Parade, 6 p.m.: Fifty or more tractors decked out with an array of lights and other holiday decorations take to the streets of Virgil. The parade is also a fundraiser for Joe Pillitteri's Team Pillsy, which raises money for cancer research for the Terry Fox Foundation.


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Ward Simpson is a Living Landmark

Kevin MacLean
The Lake Report

The urge to help just seems to be in Ward Simpson's blood.

The longtime Niagara-on-the-Lake pharmacist was honoured on Saturday night with the Niagara Foundation's 2023 Living Landmark award, for his nearly 50 years of community building.

The founder of Simpson's Pharmacy was singled out for this year's award in recognition of a long list of achievements centred around helping to make Niagara-on-the-Lake a better place.

"Leading by example, he has not only worked tirelessly himself, but has galvanized countless others to get involved themselves," the foundation said in a testimonial in the evening's program.

The 79-year-old, a perennial star of the town's Christmas Parade and rumoured to be a close friend of Santa himself, might best be known for his many years of work with Red Roof Retreat and for fundraising in the community.

But he's also been a Citizen of the Year, earned the Rotary Club's prestigious Paul Harris Award twice, received the NOTL Lions Melvin Jones Award, chaired the NOTL Sports Wall of Fame and St. Vincent de Paul parish council, been a Virgil Business Association member and a lifelong member of the Chamber of Commerce.

And that's just scratching the surface.

He was introduced to the crowd by longtime friend and golf buddy Paul Dickson, who colourfully remi-



Ward Simpson entertains the crowd with a both lighthearted and poignant speech during a black-tie dinner at the NOTL Court House last Saturday night. KEVIN MACLEAN

nised about some of their trips together to Ireland.

Then, in a sometimes hilarious, often self-deprecating and at times poignant speech to a crowd of about 160 at a black-tie dinner at the Court House, Simpson emphasized how family made a difference in his life.

His own family looms large, including his wife Oresta ("she should be the Living Landmark," he said), their children Lisa and Sean (both pharmacists) and grandchildren Luke and Natalie.

Then there was the family who comprised the pharmacy's staff (including Elly Forbes, "who started with me one week after I opened the store" and is still there) and the family of volunteers from his many community endeavours – from the Virgil Stampede to his church, to endless fundraising committees.

But it all started for him long before that.

"I was fortunate to have 10 parents. Mom Mary and dad Sherman (a pharmacist) were the primary parents,

but being the last of nine children, I had five brothers and three sisters as co-parents," he said.

Jim, Jane, John, Muriel, Kirk, Hugh, Paul, Margaret – and Ward.

"All set examples for me" – though we might have to wait for his memoirs to learn more about the incident involving his brothers "setting fire to the Welland River."

While the evening's spotlight was on Simpson, he shared it by singling out many of those who play key roles in the community, including Red Roof founders Steffanie and Moe Bjorgan. "This small charity with a big heart provides special care for children with special needs," Simpson noted. "Through respite care, day programs, day trips, camps etc., the children who participate are treated to very special times," he said.

"When these children arrive at Red Roof their eyes brighten up, smiles come to their faces and, more importantly, smiles come to the faces of the staff there

to look after them."

He also touched on how NOTL has changed over the past four decades, remarking on the town's charm, "majestic Queen Street" and those working hard to maintain the area's quaintness.

With Lord Mayor Gary Zalepa and a handful of council members in attendance, he asked them to protect the community he's been so involved in, urging them to be "firm" in their zoning decisions and to remember, "No means no."

Past Living Landmark recipients were: Jim Alexander (2022), Penny Coles (2021), the Citizens of NOTL (2020), Gracia Janes (2019), Judy MacLachlan (2018), Dr. Richard Merritt (2017), Norma Jane Pratt and Blair Harber (2016), Gary Burroughs (2015), Debi Pratt (2014), Jim Smith (2013), Peter Stokes (2012), Christopher Newton (2011), Joy Ormsby (2010), John Walker (2009), Calvin Rand (2008), Donald Combe (2007) and Norm Howe and Gerry Wooll (2006).



This week's riddle is "Jeopardy!" style.
Category: "F"OODS

The name of this sizzling Tex-Mex dish is Spanish for "little strips."

Last issue:

Category: TELEVISION

Clue: In 1963, British actor William Hartnell became the first lead on this series; there have been 12 playing it since.

Answer: What is Dr. Who? (Not who is Dr. Who. The question refers to the series, not the character.)

Answered first by: Bob Wheatley

Also answered correctly (in order) by: Jane Morris, Catherine Clarke, Pam Dowling, Sheila Meloche, Wade Durling, Marla Percy, Nancy Rocca, Gail Benjafield

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NOTL farm hosts free **pick-your-own-tomatoes** day

Julia Sacco
The Lake Report

Sukyi Finn's favourite thing to do with her farm fresh tomatoes is make fresh bruschetta with onions and cheese.

"We did a couple of dinners and lunches last month and almost 100 per cent of what was on the table came from our farm," said her husband, Michael Watson.

Finn and Watson started Front Step Farms Inc. on Line 1 Road in 2022 to provide food to the community.

Watson is a generational farmer originally from Niagara and returned here during the pandemic. He and Finn started growing on the land in 2021.

"After we started – like everybody else – having problems during COVID, we would just focus on hot peppers and crops related to making hot peppers and hot sauce.

"We then built in some of the crops that we



Sukyi Finn and Michael Watson have held pick-your-own-tomato days at their farm four times this year. JULIA SACCO

planned initially," Watson said.

The greenhouse still holds various herbs, kale, rhubarb, swiss chard, peppers, strawberries, tomatoes and more.

Last weekend, in response to an overabundance of

tomatoes, Walker and Finn decided to hold a pick-your-own cherry tomatoes day, where NOTLers can stop by and fill a bin for free.

"The cherry tomatoes were starting to become a bit more abundant because we didn't have ourselves

linked with a big chain," Watson said.

At the same time, their produce was ready late and wholesale selling wasn't a viable option.

"So then, it became the cherry tomato (picking). We thought, 'Why not help

people have a little taste?' So that's what brought us to today."

They had a pick-your-own-tomatoes day four or five times throughout the summer. Watson said the farm always receives a good bit of interaction with

the town, whether people stopped in for a few minutes or an hour.

After relocating to their current farm location in Niagara-on-the-Lake, they struggled somewhat at first to integrate into the community – these outreach events help them make connections.

"For the time being we're really going to focus here and if people want to come they can come – and if they don't free food gets them to sometimes come, then we meet them and they come again," Watson said.

The ultimate goal, he added, is to make food simple and accessible to everyone.

"We're not giving away gold, the real thing is the concept. If you give something, you will receive," he said.

Watson and Finn don't use any pesticides on their produce.

"It's really simple: it's not rocket science, it's food," Watson said.



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Parade buttons pay for marching bands

Continued from Front Page

hours made popular by the likes of Andy Warhol. It's something that Kerr said is a little different for her.

"I usually work in more impressionistic styles or realism," Kerr said. "But this was kind of fun. I thought ... this is suitable for this kind of application."

The work features a brightly-coloured nutcracker figure set against the deep blue of a starry night sky.

It was an image that caught the attention of the parade donation committee when Kerr's work was recommended by the wife of committee member Mike Carleton.

When chair John Strecker and the rest of the committee saw Kerr's work, Strecker said it was the perfect image for the fundraiser.

"It has all the elements of what we needed for the parade. It's Christmassy," Strecker said.

Boxes of buttons have been distributed to busi-



Members of the Niagara-on-the-Lake Christmas Parade donation committee will be encouraging residents to purchase buttons to support the parade. RICHARD HUTTON

nesses across town including Sweets and Swirls at the NOTL Community Centre, the Sandtrap Pub & Grill, Avondale (Mary Street and St. Davids locations), Starbucks (Old Town and Virgil), Hendrick's Independent Grocer (Queen Street), Tim Hortons (Virgil), the Junction (St. Davids) and the Royal Canadian Legion branch 124.

Committee members will be at Penner Home Hardware and Phil's Independent Grocer in Virgil on Saturday, Nov. 25 from 11 a.m. to 1 p.m. The buttons are \$3 each.

"All the money goes towards paying for the marching bands," Strecker said, adding that the total stands at \$12,000 for this year's parade.

In past years, people have been more than generous in their desire to help, Strecker said.

"When we're seeing (people) face to face, there's people that give us \$10 and \$20. They're really supportive of the parade."

The Niagara-on-the-Lake Christmas Parade will be held on Saturday, Dec. 9 at 11 a.m. in Old Town.



Pets can pose with Santa at St. Davids Vet Clinic

Staff
The Lake Report

The stockings are being hung, the lights are aglow, carols will fill the air – and Santa is making his way to the St. Davids Vet Clinic.

This Saturday, Nov. 25 from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. the clinic is welcoming its feline and canine friends (and their humans) to stop in for a free photo with the jolly man in red.

Clinic owner Dr. Stephanie Hall said there will be

a warm cup of cheer, some delicious goodies and pet-friendly gift baskets to be won.

"For those dogs and cats that like a little less of the paw-parazzi atmosphere, there will be a quiet room set up where we can capture that precious photo with the big man away from the crowds," she said.

There is no charge for photos with Santa, but the clinic is accepting donations to the Lioness Guide Dogs Foundation.

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TEAM OF THE WEEK



U11 rep Wolves

The Lake Report is highlighting all NOTL Minor Hockey Association teams this season with a new weekly photo feature. Kicking it off, we'd like to introduce the Wolves U11 rep team. Front row: Goalies William Ecker, Peter Kotsanis. Middle: Vincenzo Coppola, Nash Funk, Noah Kassam, Tennyson Powell, Nathan Reid, Jack Friesen, Owen Thorimbert and Jordan Dulas. Behind them: Charlie Hiebendaal, Faith Whyte, Dean Pagnotta, Conor Bailey, Micah Penner and William Lidstone. Coaching staff: Luigi Coppola, Steve Lidstone, Adam Whyte, Gary Friesen and Amyn Kassam. DAVE VAN DE LAAR

Predators end losing streak with **two wins**

Kevan Dowd
The Lake Report

A pair of wins last weekend means the Jr. A Niagara Predators can breathe a little easier knowing their losing streak is over and their point-count is growing. "It's nice that we're back in the win column," said Predators head coach Kevin Taylor. "The boys are excited, they're feeling good, which is nice to see again. It's always nice when you win but especially this one because it's been so long, you start wondering, when the next one's going to be," said Taylor.

The weekend started off with a 4-1 win at home over the Tottenham Railers last Friday night.

Keeping things going on the road the next day, Niagara put down the Toronto Flyers 7-4. The Flyers are last in the Greater Metro Hockey League's south division.

In the past few weeks, Taylor has spoken frankly about his players not showing up to play and having no explanation for their performances. But he was singing a different tune after

this weekend.

"We worked hard over the past week. There are still some problems and we're going to get through them but we're making some changes," he said.

"They came out and they wanted to play."

Taylor hopes the weekend was the start of a much-needed comeback.

"We have to start making some moves up the ladder. It's important," he said.

They can only hope their latest wins can keep them energized and focused as they prepare for a tough upcoming weekend.

They face the second-place Durham Roadrunners and first-place North York Renegades on the road Saturday and finish Sunday afternoon at home against the Flyers.

Although the Predators have never managed a win against Durham or North York, they have mostly held their own against them.

The Predators host Durham at the Meridian Credit Union Arena this Friday, Nov. 24 at 7:30 p.m. then play the Flyers at home Sunday, Nov. 26 at 3:30 pm.

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November 25th, 2023
9:00am to Noon

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Handmade Market

Lock 3 Museum
St. Catharines

25 November
10am - 3pm
free admission

Shopping, Santa & The Grinch, Nibbles, Face Painting

Holiday Market

December 1 to 10, 2023

Shop for one-of-a-kind treasures at the Holiday Market presented by the
NIAGARA PUMPHOUSE ARTS CENTRE
247 Ricardo Street, Niagara-on-the-Lake | holidaymarket.ca

- Hand-made gifts & decor
- Winter-themed art for sale
- Ornaments & stocking stuffers
- Festive treats on Dec. 1 & 2
- Holiday helpers
- No charge to enter

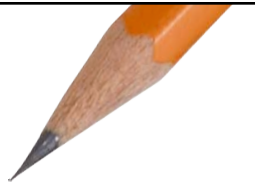
Proceeds from the event benefit children & seniors programs

niagara.pumphouse | niagarapumphouse

Bring a food item donation for Newark Neighbours Food Bank



Have some fun



Across

- 1. Insurers cover them (5)
- 4. Avert scam, abusing studio kit (2,7)
- 9. Manic-depressive (7)
- 10. River mouth (7)
- 11. Die (5,4)
- 12. Food poisoning bacteria (1,4)
- 13. Recast (7)
- 15. Fortification sounds like a horn, maybe (7)
- 17. Vigorous (7)
- 19. Distended (7)
- 21. Instruct (5)
- 23. Lifted out (7,2)
- 25. Hackneyed (7)
- 26. Provocations (7)
- 27. Ayrshire golf course owned by Donald Trump (9)
- 28. Book preceding Philemon (5)

Down

- 1. Only Hitchcock film to get a Best Picture Oscar (7)
- 2. Not a leading player (10,5)
- 3. Top briefs (5)
- 4. Prospered (7)
- 5. Less cloudy (7)
- 6. Corner joint (5)
- 7. Grounds for acquittal (10,5)
- 8. Top cutter? (7)
- 14. Deck speed measure (1,1,1)
- 16. Long March leader (3)
- 17. Motown (7)
- 18. "Waterworld" star (7)
- 19. Drops in (5,2)
- 20. They're often changed on little ones (7)
- 22. Big banger? (1-4)
- 24. "--- Your Wagon", Frederick Loewe musical (5)

Crossword Puzzle

1		2		3		4		5		6		7		8
9								10						
11										12				
13				14				15		16				
17						18		19						20
21				22		23				24				
25								26						
27										28				

Last issue's answers

1	S	2	F	3	W	4	O	5	E	6	F	7	V	8	R			
9	O	P	E	N	A	I	R	10	C	H	O	L	E	R	A			
	U	V	I	A	O	R	T		S									
11	T	R	E	S	S	12	T	O	L	L	B	O	O	T	H			
	H	R	T	O	O		I											
13	K	E	P	T	14	D	R	U	G	15	D	E	B	R	A			
	O	I	M	Y	Y		D	A	P									
19	R	U	T	T	E	D	21	O	22	S	B	E	A	R	U	P		
	E	C	R				23	A	24	D	O	U	R	25	C	E	D	E
27	F	O	L	K	M	U	S	I	C	29	N	A	D	I	R			
	A	U	E	S														
30	R	E	T	I	N	U	E	31	M	C	E	N	R	O	E			
	M	E	T	Y														

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





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When **electrical signalling** in the brain fails



DR. BROWN

Dr. William Brown
Columnist

Biology is far more complex than quantum physics and the study of the universe and stars.

And in biology, the brain is much the most complex system with the possible exception of the operations of single cells and the immune system.

But for all its 80 to 100 billion nerve cells and the trillions of related connections between them, the brain's code is based on sending and receiving electrical signals called action potentials.

These are brief, several millisecond reversals of the normal transmembrane potential across the membranes of nerve cells and their branches, which are transmitted with speeds

ranging from 70 metres per second in the largest diameter nerve fibres to as slow as one metre per second in the smallest diameter nerve fibres.

All but the latter small-sized nerve fibres in the central and peripheral nervous systems are surrounded by a fatty sheath called myelin, which allows the impulse to skip along the nerve fibre.

At points where nerve fibres contact their target cells lies a thin gap (the synaptic cleft) where the action potential in the terminal of the proximate nerve fibre triggers the release of a chemical (acetylcholine, serotonin, glutamate, dopamine, or others), which crosses the synaptic gap and triggers a subthreshold conditioning potential or even an action potential in the target cell.

Understanding these processes were highlighted by the awarding of Nobel Prizes to Alan Hodgkin, Andrew Huxley, John Eccles and Bernard Katz.

What could go wrong with such an elegant system for sending and receiving signals, a system which with



some variations, has been conserved through hundreds of millions of years of evolution – a sure signal (no pun intended) that it worked really well?

As it turns out, a lot can go wrong.

Information is coded in the nervous system, not only by what cells are connected to what cells, but by the frequency with which action potentials occur.

Unfortunately, diseases such as multiple sclerosis in the brain and acute and chronic demyelinating neuropathies affecting the peripheral nervous system, often attack the myelin sheath with the result that action potentials are

blocked or their firing rates curtailed.

The result in the case of motor nerve fibres is weakness or for the equivalent in sensory fibres, loss of sensation, whether touch, thermal or pain or some instances spontaneous bursts of impulses in the most affected regions of the cells or their nerve fibres, which produce tingling, burning and electric shock-like pain.

Fortunately for the three disorders mentioned, conduction may be restored at least partially paving the way for more normal function.

Worse than the consequences of partial or complete loss of the myelin

sheath occurs when the cell-body or its peripheral processes, begin to die, whether related to age or inflammatory, autoimmune, toxic, nutritional deficiencies, or other mechanisms. The list is long.

On the motor side, the loss of motoneurons in the brainstem or spinal cord may go unrecognized.

Motoneurons are connected to a family of muscle fibres that constitute what Sir Charles Sherrington (another Nobel laureate) called the motor unit.

The loss of up to a third of motoneurons may be masked by surviving motoneurons that establish connections with the orphaned muscle fibres following the death of their parent motor nerve cells.

This means that there may be little or no weakness, or atrophy of affected muscles for many months in diseases such as amyotrophic lateral sclerosis, also known as ALS, because surviving nerve cells pick up the slack.

That's the good news. The bad news is that if those surviving moto-

neurons become affected together with their greatly expanded innervation field of muscle fibres, their loss will be much more costly.

Similar forms of functional compensations probably take place in the brain – in Parkinson's disease, for example – before symptoms or signs of the disease become apparent.

Ditto for some of the dementias such as Alzheimer's, where the disease has usually been going on for several decades before it is recognized clinically.

These illustrations of the impact of losses of the myelin sheath and nerve cells make the point that interfering with signalling in the peripheral and central nervous systems has serious functional consequences.

The clinical consequences of this may be masked by the capacity of related surviving nerve fibres and nerve cells to carry the load – up to a point.

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.

LERNER AND LOEWE'S BRIGADOON

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Celebrate the holiday season with the return of one of the most romantic and magical musicals! Boy meets girl – in an enchanted Scottish village. This feast of song and dance from Lerner and Loewe has been entrancing audiences for more than seven decades.

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David Andrew Reid with the cast of *Brigadoon*. Photo by David Cooper.



EXPLORING HISTORY WITH NOTL MUSEUM



Portrait of Ogenegoqua or Charlotte McMurray, 1868

Charlotte was the daughter of an Irish fur trader and an Ojibwe woman from Sault Ste. Marie. As a young woman, she became an interpreter for missionaries and helped translate Christian sermons into the Anishinaabemowin language. When she met her husband, Rev. William McMurray, she helped him write the first manual of religious instruction in the Ojibwe language. Charlotte and her husband moved to Niagara-on-the-Lake when he became the rector of St. Mark's Anglican Church in 1857. This unique portrait will be on display in the Niagara-on-the-Lake Museum's upcoming exhibition, "Strike a Pose: The Art of Self Obsession," which shows how the people of Niagara-on-the-Lake have chosen to document themselves, either through paintings and drawings, or photography. In Charlotte's portrait, she was careful about how she chose to present herself. She must have missed her family living up north, as her outfit features portraits of her family and her headdress is in the shape of a camera.

Our main street becomes more HOHOHO fabulous every year



Ross's Ramblings

Ross Robinson
Columnist

Not that many years ago, it seemed that Niagara-on-the-Lake's idea of decorating Queen Street for the festive season was to spend 20 bucks on white lights at Canadian Tire or Penners.

Improvements have been made thanks to the efforts of many people and now our hearts can swell with pride and Christmas spirit.

Well done, neighbours. I spend a lot of time downtown and can report that visitors from near and far are into the holiday spirit as they stroll, meander and shuffle along our sidewalks.

As a well-traveled and peripatetic observer of our

world, I can confidently say the block between King and Regent streets, on the south side, is becoming a world-class retail mixture. It looks good and the variety of storefronts really shows well.

Hatleys on the corner leads us to the Little Blue House, then Firehall Flame, both indoors and on the patio.

Then wee Gyros on the Lake, which could be in the Plaka in Athens. Its spanakopita is the perfect spinach snack, conjuring up the image of the Parthenon on the Acropolis and Syntagma Square.

The Owl and Pussycat shop has a unique facade, including the pineapple promising hospitality.

Reiner's Originals sells unique ottomans and then Father Christmas welcomes us to the amazing and seasonal Just Christmas store.

NEOB Lavender uses olfactory marketing to entice us into their store and Beau Chapeau's window displays cause many passersbys to not just pass by. People love



Santa is hanging around Just Christmas on Queen Street for the season. ROSS ROBINSON

trying on hats.

Cow's and Cool as a Moose may seem a bit over the top, but their products and service successfully satisfy so many tourists. Their classy shopping bags make a statement as happy tourists continue down the sidewalk.

Just across Regent Street is the very busy Sunset Grill, though I would have thought a breakfast eatery would have been named

Sunrise Grill. Should we thank the Eagles or Don Henley for this curious subtlety?

The north side of Queen Street also has some stores that catch attention. Bobbo Tea delights snack seekers and the FatFace boutique is uniquely named. I guess the name could have been more sassy if another body part had been used in the name.

The street lighting team has really upped its game,

and storefronts and Christmas trees are more gaily decorated every day. Hopefully this year's tree by the cenotaph will do our town proud after a rather weak effort last year.

Hats off to the McArthur family for their creative work at the old Court House. So many visitors are stopping to take group and family souvenir photos, which will market Niagara-on-the-Lake around North

America and the world.

And, don't forget to mail your letter to Santa Claus, with a convenient red mailbox in front of the Court House. Which Canada Post bureaucrat came up with the wonderful postal code for Santa's Workshop at the North Pole? HOHOHO, indeed.

The weather, as you all know, will be perfect for Christmas shopping, so give yourselves a treat by spending some time enjoying the ambience of downtown NOTL over the next few weeks.

Ho ho ho, and we'll see you downtown this Christmas season. Take out your earbuds, pocket your mobile devices and enjoy the precious moments.

It really is a multisensory experience, with so many people being so downright nice to each other.

How fortunate we are to live here ... in 2023.

Say a quiet prayer for people in other parts of the world who are suffering, in many cases through no fault of their own.

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Congratulations to our Sellers and Buyers!
We are thrilled to announce the remarkable sale of one of Old Town's most iconic and historic properties! With immense pride and gratitude, we extend our special congratulations to the incredible owner of **The Owl and The Pussycat at the Sign of the Pineapple** for an extraordinary three decades of unwavering service and support to Old Town NOTL.

Your dedication, passion, and commitment have woven invaluable threads into the fabric of our beloved community, your legacy will forever be etched in the heart of this town.

We eagerly welcome the new owner, a beacon of support and generosity in our town. Their charitable spirit and dedication to our community promise to elevate the level of service even further, ensuring that Old Town continues to thrive and flourish.

Let's continue to write the story of Niagara-on-the-Lake's legacy together. Congratulations to all, and cheers to the exciting chapters yet to unfold!

With deepest gratitude and warmest wishes,
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Left: Weeping white pine. Top right: Holly covered in snow. Bottom right: Weeping blue atlas cedar. JOANNE YOUNG

Getting your evergreens ready for the **long, cold, dark** winter



GROWING TOGETHER 

Joanne Young
Columnist

Here are some helpful tips to help your evergreens make it successfully through the winter:

Make sure that you are not pruning your evergreens at this time of year: you should have stopped any pruning by the beginning of September.

Pruning invigorates new growth and if the new growth has not had enough time to harden off before the cold weather hits, it will be more susceptible to damage during the winter months.

One of things that can affect your evergreens throughout the cold months is winter desiccation.

This is where the foliage is losing more moisture than the roots can replace which can be the case if planted in an area where there is constant high winds.

The best thing that you can do for all your evergreens is to make sure that you give them a slow, deep watering just prior to the ground freezing up for the winter.

This is especially true for your broadleaf evergreens such as rhododendrons, hollies and boxwoods.

If the soil around the roots is moist going into the winter, then if we have an early February thaw, the moisture is right there available to the roots.

Do you know that the rhododendron plant has a built-in system to help protect itself against cold windy days?

The pores, out from which they can lose moisture, are located on the underside of the leaves.

So, to protect themselves on cold windy days they roll their leaves under to reduce the moisture lost. The tighter their leaves are rolled, the colder the day is.

People often ask if they must wrap their evergreens with burlap for the winter. The quick answer is no.

If you have planted the evergreens where they are in the proper conditions, there is no need for wrapping it up with burlap.

Why plant an evergreen to enjoy the foliage colour in the winter and then cover it with burlap?

The only time they would need protection is if they are getting constant strong winds, such as at a lake, or if they are located close to a road where they are getting salt spray.

If this is the case, instead of wrapping the entire shrub, consider putting up a barrier just on the side that is receiving the heavy winds or salt.

The best way to create a barrier is to put in a couple of stakes and attach either a couple of layers of burlap

between them or a piece of plywood.

If you rap burlap just around the plant itself, snow will get caught in the burlap and can crush foliage or damage branches.

It is always best to wrap the burlap around stakes and not the plant itself. If you have some plants that are marginally hardy (Zone 7), they may benefit from the protection of burlap and mulching over the roots with shredded leaves.

Another possible winter hazard for pyramidal evergreens, such as emerald cedars and pyramid junipers, is that they can be damaged by heavy, wet snow causing the multi-leaders to split apart.

To prevent this from occurring, some people will tie rope around the entire perimeter of the shrub which does detract from its appearance.

Instead, simply tie together some of the main stems from the inside of the shrub with a stretch tie or with something that will not cut into the wood (e.g. wire through an old piece of hose).

By following the above tips, your evergreens will be better prepared to face another winter.

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

Obituaries

Helen Froese



Froese, Helen - It is with heavy hearts, that we announce the peaceful passing of Helen Froese (nee Siemens) on November 20, 2023, at the age of 66. Helen was a beloved wife to Ed. Cherished mother to her children: Ian (Renee), Jillian (Chris), and Stephen (Jenn). Helen's unwavering love and guidance were the foundation upon which her children built their lives.

As a proud and adored Oma, Helen brought boundless love and joy to her grandchildren: Brendan, Luc, Ava, Oliver, Harrison, Indy, and Max. She was a dear sister to John (Anita), Henry (Elsie), Alice (Mark), Victor, and Annie (Bob). She will also be remembered by her many loving nieces and nephews and their families. Predeceased by her parents, Anna and Henry, and her niece and nephews, Amy Marie, Gary, Drew, and Tigger. Helen's memory will forever be etched in the hearts of those who had the privilege of knowing her.

In accordance with Helen's wishes, cremation has taken place. A celebration of her life will be held at Caroline Cellars, 1010 Line 2, Virgil, on Friday, November 24 from 1-4 p.m.

If desired, memorial donations may be made to Hospice Niagara.

A special thank you to Dr. Bertie for all the personalized, empathetic care that was forwarded to our family.

Online condolences may be shared on Helen's tribute page at www.tallmanfuneralhomes.ca.



Lois Kurtz



LOIS KURTZ
1933-2023

In her 91st year, Lois passed away peacefully at Niagara Falls hospital after a short illness. Lois will be sadly missed by her loving husband of 70 years, John, son Philip (Yvonne), daughter Carol (Joe) and grandkids Peter, Beth, Sarah, Annalisa, and Sasha. Lois was born in Kitchener to Vernon and

Salome Cressman. One of five sisters, Lois is survived by Elizabeth and predeceased by Sarah, Ruth, and Esther. Lois was a middle child with lots of spark. She caught the eye of a young man at church youth group when they were both 13 and that relationship lasted for seven decades of marriage and a lifetime of adventures together, including teaching at a hill station in India for 5 years and living and working in Hong Kong at Union Church.

Lois was a wonderful teacher, pastor's wife, mother, grandmother, ping pong player, and "hostess with the mostess." She was generous, brave, strong-willed and relentlessly positive, with a passion for cake. A Memorial Service will be held at St. Andrew's Presbyterian Church in Niagara-on-the-Lake on Saturday, Dec. 2 at 2 p.m.

Did you know?

The Lake Report's printer sources 100 per cent of its paper fibre from industry-leading paper mills, which use quick-growth, sustainable, renewable plots of land, rather than clear-cutting forests.

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MAC Inc's 14th Annual Toy Drive with NOTL GIVES BACK



In partnership with The Town of Niagara-on-the-Lake, NOTL Minor Hockey Association, The Fine Estates Team & Revel Realty.

WHEN: Saturday, November 25, 11 a.m. - 1 p.m.
Join us for cookies, hot chocolate and photos with Santa!

WHERE: Meridian Credit Union Arena
1567 Four Mile Creek Rd., Niagara-on-the-Lake

We are collecting toys, non-perishable food items and clothing. Donations of toys will go to McMaster Childrens Hospital & Ronald McDonald House. Donations on non-perishable food items & clothing will go to Newark Neighbours.

Donations can also be dropped off at REVEL Realty NOTL until December 5th at 1596 Four Mile Creek Rd., NOTL.

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