



Kekoo Gatta.

NOTL
home builder
Kekoo Gatta
drowns in
Niagara River

Staff
The Lake Report

A prominent NOTL custom home builder is dead after he went swimming in the Niagara River on Tuesday night.

Kekoo Gatta, 60, didn't return home after going for a swim in the river off his docked boat near the mouth of the river.

Gatta was the founder and owner of Gatta Homes, a luxury development company based mainly in Niagara-on-the-Lake for more than 30 years.

"Officers arrived on scene to learn that a resident of the home, a 60-year-old man, had gone swimming in the Niagara River off his docked boat," Const. Phil Gavin with Niagara Regional Police said in response to questions from The Lake Report.

"When his family did not hear from him for an extended time, they became concerned for his welfare," Gavin said.

Police refused to identify

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SUMMER OF THE FLOOD

Wet basements, lost valuables and overwhelmed sump pumps



The Apricot Glen storm pond has been level with Nathan Sacevich's backyard several times this summer after rainfalls. SUBMITTED

Richard Wright | Local Journalism Initiative | The Lake Report

Two extreme rainstorms in June and July created flash floods in several areas around Niagara-on-the-Lake, overwhelming sewers, drains, culverts, ditches, storm ponds and streams. They caused tremendous damage to homes and properties.

In last week's first instalment of our Summer of the Flood series, we offered an overview of the situation and told the horrific stories of several residents. In this second part of the series, in their own words, we share the stories of more residents who fell victim to the rushing water and sewage. In an accompanying story, we also hear from an expert who explains what exactly the terms 100-year and 500-year storm mean. Often used by public officials to explain the type of storms NOTL has endured this summer, some question whether they have any relevance in today's world of rapidly changing weather patterns.

Joyce Furlane: St. Davids
We were affected by the heavy rain of June 18 and our entire basement was completely flooded. We lost most of our furniture and other belongings.

With the repair and replacement of goods, the damage amounted to the \$100,000 range.

The drain at the front of our house completely overflowed, causing the sidewalk and bottom of our driveway to flood.

The sump pump could not keep up with the overflow of water from the town drain. In the aftermath we have replaced our sump pump, which, like

our basement, was only two years old.

We also added a secondary pump with a water line connected to the town water in case of a power outage or for extra help if there is an overabundance of water.

There is a second pipe com-

ing out with the original pipe to flow in a different direction. The town was also able to come out and clear the drain as well as the neighbour's drain as they were flooded as well.

I think with the new subdivi-

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Migrant workers have unequal access to resources, volunteer group says

Julia Sacco
Local Journalism Initiative
The Lake Report

Justicia for Migrant Workers began its open letter to the Ford government by stating that 2024 is en route

to becoming one of the hottest years on record.

The group is a volunteer-run political collective that strives to promote the rights of migrant farm workers.

This letter the collective submitted was addressed

to Doug Ford and Minister of Labour David Piccini: it includes a list of emergency measures the group demands the government implement for the safety of farm workers.

This includes measures

that would allow workers to take adequate breaks during hot days and have access to first aid, plus the closure of farms during extreme weather.

The Lake Report attended a press conference

last month with Minister of Agriculture Rob Flack and MPP Sam Oosterhoff and questioned the politicians on how they plan to address the concerns of farm workers and advocates.

When questioned on what

will be done about workers who may experience heat stroke on the job, Flack said the government is still exploring the issue.

"We're looking into the

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Gatta was respected builder and coach

Continued from Front Page

Gatta, but his family confirmed his death Wednesday morning in a telephone call. Emergency crews were called to the area of Gatta's Ricardo Street home just after 9:30 p.m. Tuesday, police said.

Search efforts included help from the NOTL and St. Catharines fire departments, Niagara police and the Canadian Coast Guard.

Members of the police marine search unit located his body around 11:20 p.m., about 25 to 30 feet from where he went missing.

Foul play is not suspected, police said.

Besides being a well-known builder, Gatta had been a coach with the Brock University junior wrestling team.

His children Zubin, Cyrus and Farrantina have all been competitive wrestlers.

Wrestling "kept me off the streets," Kekoo Gatta told The Lake Report in a 2022 story about Zubin winning gold at the Canada Summer Games.

"It was a poor man's sport. Growing up, we had



Kekoo Gatta outside one of his net zero properties at 28 Cottage St. FILE/EVAN LOREE

no money, so the only thing you needed was a pair of shorts and a T-shirt and lots of sweat," he said.

Gatta said his high school wrestling coach was sensitive to the needs of lower-income students.

His coach, Tom Sills, used to pay for their tournaments and the occasional trip to

McDonald's when Gatta attended Thorold Secondary School in the early 1980s.

In his final two years of high school, Gatta trained under former Olympic wrestler Richard Deschatelets Sr., who started the Brock University wrestling program.

"We had no money. So it was really good — fam-

ily — belonging to a certain wrestling family," Gatta said.

The sport also taught him some valuable life lessons that he said he carried with him into the building industry.

"I give it all to wrestling," he said.

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Migrant workers have unequal access to resources, volunteer group says

Continued from Front Page

matter, obviously," he said. "It's just come forward so obviously I want to emphasize the safety and concerns of all Ontarians."

He promised they would look into the issue and "sustainable" solutions would come.

When questioned on what resources farm workers have access to as it stands now, MPP Oosterhoff insisted that workers have access to the quality of workplace care that permanent residents in Canada have.

"The Occupational Health and Safety Act lays out requirements for every workplace in the province of Ontario," Oosterhoff said.

A pamphlet published by the Niagara Migrant Workers Interest Group outlined the three basic rights given to farm workers through the Occupational Health and Safety Act: the right to know about any possible hazards on their farm; the right to participate in either electing a health and safety representative or a joint health and safety committee; and the right to refuse work.

Oosterhoff added that having worked in agriculture while growing up on a farm, there are always expectations set in this field of work.

"There's always an expectation under that act of an employer's responsibility to their employees, regardless of the program they're here under," he said.

During a visit Oosterhoff took to St. Davids Hydroponics in June, he saw no workers outside at 2 p.m.: everyone was sent home due to extreme heat.

"But if there were to be concerns, obviously the Ministry of Labour would be the place to go. And that would apply to the temporary foreign workers as well," he said.

But for Chris Ramsaroop and Taneeta Doma, from Justicia for Migrant Workers, the answer isn't so simple.

Doma, the political group's staff lawyer, said



Following a news conference in Vineland, Rob Flack, minister of farming, agriculture and agribusiness, said the government is "still exploring the issue" of heat safety. JULIA SACCO

even so much as speaking out about bad working conditions could result in the firing of a temporary foreign worker.

This, combined with the intentional lack of resources given to workers from employers, makes for extremely difficult circumstances when it comes to getting medical help or accommodation.

"What happens in a lot of cases is workers don't even get their health cards for several weeks or months after they arrive in Canada, so they can't even access OHIP or any government insurance," Doma said.

A 2023 article on OHIP for temporary foreign workers, from the Canadian Immigration Lawyers Association, highlights this: when arriving to Canada, it states, temporary foreign workers have to submit proof of residence before being approved for OHIP coverage.

"This process can be lengthy and delay access to essential health care services," the article reads.

With private insurance, Doma said, oftentimes it isn't available to farm workers, or there are significant limits to the types that they can get so workers will sometimes have to pay out of pocket for care.

The lawyers association's article states that regulations require all employers who hire temporary foreign workers to provide private health insurance that covers emergency medical care during the period their health insurance isn't active, "except those who employ workers under agreements for seasonal agricultural workers, which include health insurance provisions."

If a worker speaks up against mistreatment and is terminated, Doma added, they lose all access to health care — even if they still have a valid work permit.

"What happens is, if workers complain — which they shouldn't have to — they're losing their jobs, they're losing their livelihood and nothing is changing in the workplace."

In response to Oosterhoff's answer to farm work distress, Ramsaroop outlined how solutions for foreign workers differ from permanent Canadian residents.

"On paper, we can see that workers do have the same rights. But because of heightened vulnerability, because they're tied to an employer, because of the way that the laws work for employers and not workers, migrant agricultural work-

ers have unequal access and do not have the same rights as Canadian workers," Ramsaroop said.

Edward Dunsworth, an assistant professor of history at McGill University, holds an area of expertise in migrant workers and labour.

Historically, farm workers and migrant workers were treated as "exceptional," in that there were a different set of protections for farmworkers than for other labourers.

"And essentially that logic has kind of continued," Dunsworth said.

There is a negative incentive for any sort of complaints from migrant workers about unsafe conditions, Dunsworth also said, but there is no simple solution.

An open work permit allowing workers to choose jobs freely would be "huge," said Dunsworth.

"It's a basic right that most Canadian workers don't have to think twice about," he said.

Dunsworth also recognized the hard work done by activists for "decades" that have made progress in public awareness and small improvements.

"But ultimately, the key structural problems with the program remain."

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Corn roast brings out neighbours

Baileigh Miller, 20 months old, is one of the newest residents of Chautauqua. Here she enjoys some good old corn on the cob at the annual neighbourhood corn roast on Monday.
SUPPLIED/WESTON MILLER

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Much-needed restoration begins on iconic cenotaph

Julia Sacco
Local Journalism Initiative
The Lake Report

Niagara-on-the-Lake's landmark clock tower cenotaph has been in need of a serious restoration for some time now — and that time has finally come.

In a media release Thursday morning, the town confirmed municipal staff and contractors will soon begin restorations to the 102-year-old tower on Queen Street, with work scheduled to start on Tuesday, Sept. 3 and conclude on Thursday, Oct. 31.

Last September, cenotaph committee member Peter Warrack told The Lake Report he had hoped restorations would begin before the end of last year.

The long-awaited repairs will include the installation of scaffolding on the entire structure and brickwork repointing, parging, clock face restoration and interior renovations, according to the town's release.

The town said the restorations were made possible by the generosity of community members who donated toward the cenotaph's repairs.

Repairs were estimated to cost \$80,500 and a campaign held in October of



NOTL's cenotaph, unveiled in 1922, has been in need of renovations for a number of years, with repairs quoted at more than \$80,000. FILE/RICHARD HARLEY

last year helped NOTLers reach that goal.

The town said roads will remain open during the restoration, but there may be some lane rerouting around the cenotaph while the work is completed.

The clock tower was un-

veiled in 1922 to honour those who died fighting in the First World War — it now memorializes dozens of individuals who died in service of their country in both world wars and beyond, with their names engraved on the cenotaph.

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Two down, 198 more days to go

Julia Sacco
Local Journalism Initiative
The Lake Report

Kids across Niagara-on-the-Lake waved goodbye to summer with books in their hands as they made their way into the first day of school on Tuesday morning. When the final bell rang to send kids home at 3:05, students at St. Davids Public School were eager to get back to their parents.

Nadia Jamal anxiously awaited pickup for her four-year-old daughter Kiana, who just finished her first day of junior kindergarten.

Jamal said she was able to get some errands done, but still missed her little one all day.

"I kept reminding myself that she can do it and I thought of her every second," she said.

Kiana ran into her mom's arms before telling The Lake Report her favourite part of school was playing and meeting new friends.

The first day back can be a big deal even for older kids.

Eighth-grader Leah Pfeffer was catching up with family friends Lily and Sadie Shearer at pickup time.

Leah said she was anxious to get back to school and



Kiana was excited to see her mom Nadia Jamal after her first day of school. JULIA SACCO

see her friends again.

Lily Shearer, who was starting Grade 4, said she had been looking forward to meeting her new teacher.

"She was good," she said.

While hordes of kids made their way out of the school and into buses and cars, parents and teachers were assured that everyone was kept safe.

Niagara Regional Police were stationed at different schools in NOTL throughout the day for the 24th anniversary of Road Safety Day.

Following Crossroads Public School in the morning and St. Michael Catholic School at lunchtime, officers patrolled near St. Davids during pickup time.

"It's important that the community is aware that in our school zones, people take extra steps to drive safely," Const. Phil Gavin said in an interview.

An officer was on hand with a radar speed gun, ensuring drivers were adhering to limits in front of the school.

Near schools across the region, officers stopped nearly 150 vehicles on the first day of classes. They issued 57 tickets for speeding and 29 for other offences. Three people were arrested on outstanding warrants.

Along with education and enforcement outside of the school, Gavin said officers had a chance to chat with students about road safety.

"Which is a really awesome element of this as well," he said.

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Feds giving \$100K to NOTL Museum for history education

Richard Wright
Local Journalism Initiative
The Lake Report

As the Niagara-on-the-Lake Museum treads along the path of its \$10-million expansion plans, the federal government has pledged \$100,000 to aid in its growth.

Niagara MPs Vance Badawey and Chris Bittle, for Niagara Centre and St. Catharines, respectively, made the announcement Sept. 3 on the front yard of the historical repository, with museum staff and board members, municipal officers and members of the public in attendance.

This is part of the federal government's plan to allot \$1.3 million total to regional organizations through its Tourism Growth Program.

The money will be used to create the new exhibits, says curator Sarah Kaufman, with an added goal of enhancing Indigenous and Black history

education in the region so, "we can better tell these under-told stories of Canada in new and engaging ways," she said.

The museum is in the midst of a \$10-million expansion and renovation project, looking to add space to, and upgrade, its property.

Made up of three separate buildings, its central and oldest — the former Niagara High School on Castlereagh Street — will be 150 years old next year.

"(This funding) coincides with the museum's plans to expand its facilities in the near future and to continue collecting and to be accessible for all Canadians to visit and volunteer, and so that we have a new programming space for experiential learning," said Kaufman.

Tim Johnson sits on the museum's board of directors and is a member of the Six Nations Indigenous community.

He is excited to see the museum delve even further



NOTL Museum board member Tim Johnson is flanked by MP Chris Bittle, left, MP Vance Badawey and museum curator Sarah Kaufman. The trio were part of a Sept. 3 funding announcement for \$100,000. RICHARD WRIGHT

into the Indigenous history of the entire Niagara region.

"This area is so rich with history, and what's been overlooked for a long time is the Indigenous presence and their involvement in that history and in shaping that history," said Johnson.

As he spoke, he was reminded of an archeological dig that provided evidence that elements of this country's First Peoples were here in Niagara for millennia prior to the arrival of European settlers.

"That particular archeological finding was near Hamilton where they found the blood remains of an elephant, or a woolly mammoth, on a spear point," he said, adding that

the finding was dated back 13,000 years.

Johnson didn't stop there with his history lesson, taking the time to share another interesting piece of knowledge that many who reside in one of the most popular tourism destinations in the world might not know.

There is geologic evidence showing that Niagara Falls, the group of waterfalls in the Niagara Gorge, began 12,500 years ago.

"So, that means it is very likely Indigenous Peoples witnessed the birth of Niagara Falls and have been here the whole time, right through its erosion to its present location."

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SUMMER OF THE FLOOD



Fatima Cunha’s life turned upside down when sewage entered her home, rendering living space and furniture useless and destroying her bathroom. SUBMITTED

Basements, bathrooms destroyed by sewage

Continued from Front Page

sion, all the debris had gone into the drains and they hadn’t been cleared in three years. Yes, there is a drainage issue here in St. Davids and I hope this is addressed because in my 60 years I have never encountered flooding like this in a new house.

I am happy that the drains have been addressed, however, this needs to be maintained on a regular basis to prevent this kind of damage from happening again.

UPDATE: Fortunately, the insurance company, Intact, is covering everything minus the extra sump pump work. They only reimburse \$1,000 for that. I am still waiting for my cheque for the loss of all our items.

Cecilia Bennett: Ricardo Street, Old Town

I live in an area built on the slopes of Fort George. Because of the location, rain water flows from the higher areas of the hill and town and goes down in some areas of our private road all the way toward the Niagara River and occasionally floods Ricardo Street.

The recent flooding did not block the residents on our side of Ricardo Street, but the Kingspoint condominium was affected, as the street was underwater all the way to the only B&B at the foot of Fort George. At one time Ricardo Street would have severe floods that did not recede for days.

We also have a problem with Japanese knotweed in some areas and I think we, as a community, can kill two birds with one stone.

This highly invasive weed, which I can see around Fort George and nearby areas, needs to be dug out.

If we dig it out we can plant rain gardens on the slopes, which my research shows will absorb water and filter the debris that can pollute our rivers.

It is a matter of finding people who have experience with rain gardens and can determine where they should be planted.

Denise Curry: 698 Concession 6 Rd.

I have photos of the water on my property and the water up to the side of my home which went into my recreation room.

I have lived on this property since 1985 with no issues. The ditches not being cleaned out had a lot to do with the problems on my property.

I called the town several times and after the second rainfall I asked them to come right away so they could see the overflow from the ditch on my property. The ditches still have not been cleaned out.

Fatima Cunha: St. Davids

Our house was one of those badly affected on June 18. It was not just water, there was sewage with the rain water.

I understand, the sewage pumps in St. Davids failed that day and we had a massive sewage backup.

I had about 10 inches of sewage in my basement when I got home from work. I’m still trying to deal with this problem. Sewage came out of the bathtub, toilet, shower, floor drains like a tsunami.

Many neighbours also had the same problem. All of us called the town many times and didn’t get a response from our messages. It’s been over six weeks and no answers. My whole basement was destroyed.

I had to replace my furnace, washer, dryer, freezer and fridge. All my furniture is gone, including a lot of irreplaceable sentimental items.

It appears St. Davids sewage pumps are working way above capacity because of all the new developments and they continue to build more subdivisions.

Marie Giles: St. Davids

We were flooded out in the early hours of June 18 during the powerful monsoon that blew in and flooded our St. Davids home.

Apparently, the local infrastructure could not handle the amount of water, had nowhere to go, but back up into our home. Our basement is gutted. Everything is stored in our garage.

Is there any help out there for us? Toronto is getting all the media attention, as its disaster supersedes ours. Seems like we are left behind.

Janice Barker: Old Town

My property is on Simcoe Street between Mary and William streets. I’ve owned it since 2001 and all was well until 2017 when we had heavy rain in April.

I was informed that water from William, Gate, and Mary streets runs onto my property and ends up in the middle of the backyard on the south side.



Several photos across town depict major flooding events over the summer and previous years. While residents struggle to deal with issues, these events have become more and more common. Some people say it’s because of a lack of infrastructure capable of handling an increase in housing development over the last several years.

Continued on Page 7

SUMMER OF THE FLOOD



Left: This view, taken of Maryellen Barker’s property, is one that might be seen from the window of a boat not from a truck on a municipal street. Top right: The water on Yannick Wertsch’s property took about a week to recede after the June 18 storm. Bottom right: The flooding at Bill Nagy’s house in St. Davids consumed his property. SUBMITTED

Continued from Page 6

A backyard sump pump was installed at my expense in 2017 and all was well until 2024 when the pump failed. I’ve since installed a powerful pump, but was told it should be down four feet to avoid freezing.

In the meantime, I may get some bales of straw to keep the pump warm in the coming winter in case the job can’t be done until next year.

Maryellen Holmes: St. Davids

My husband has lived here more than 40 years. Before the new homes were built, sewers were installed, new power grid to supply and support all these new homes, we had floods as the power would be out for extended periods of time, affecting our sump pump.

After that, we changed our set up and had no issues until this summer when we have had two floods in our basement.

The sump pump couldn’t keep up with all the rain falling and then the ground was so saturated it was a vicious cycle of pumping out and coming right back in our basement from a spot we still aren’t sure of.

We have to now dig up all around the back wall of our home to see if there is an issue with the tile bedding, crack in foundation or sump pump drain pipe issue.

Our sump pump runs fairly regularly compared to neighbours on both sides of our house as we are the low spot on Tanbark Road.

I don’t believe the town has done enough to support all of these new homes. I believe this will continue as the water has nowhere to go now.

Grinder pumps are also an issue. We should never have been forced to remove our fully working septic tanks for these stupid pumps.

Nathan Sacevich: St. Davids

After the Apricot Glen storm pond failure in July 2023, the town responded with long-overdue routine maintenance in spring 2024, which was a massive and likely expensive undertaking.

I have taken video of the July 2024 post-clean out of the same storm pond. The pond has been in continuity with my backyard three times this summer.

Our infrastructure is inadequate to meet our community’s existing needs.

Suzanne Jong: St. Davids

I submitted a work order in early spring requesting our back drainage ditch be cleared. The town did not respond, I have called numerous times and have gone in person. All requests are ignored.

The back ditch runs through many properties on Line 7 and our under-drainage from the farm also empties into it. The ditch is full of tall grass and they refuse to do anything with it.

This ditch drains into a creek on Line 7 which constantly overflows and the water floods our property along with many others.

The town refuses to do anything. The last heavy rain was within an inch of our basement windows.

Yannick Wertsch: Line 5 Road

After the major rainfall in June the Harrison ditch on Concession 3 could not keep up with the volume of water and started pushing water toward our property.

The drains going under the road of Line 5 are partially clogged and wouldn’t split the water to both sides of the road. This caused the water to reach up to our house.

The only reason it didn’t go further is that Line 5 Road started flooding over toward our neighbour’s farm. The water took about a week to recede completely.

Next: In Part 3, The Lake Report takes a look at NOTL’s stormwater and drainage infrastructure. Is it adequate? And we will delve into beliefs that over-development in NOTL has played a big role in helping to create the wet, wild and destructive summer of 2024.

‘Once-in-couple-generation storms’ — Is that accurate?

Richard Wright
Local Journalism Initiative
The Lake Report

With two torrential summer rainfalls happening in less than a month in Niagara-on-the-Lake, and similar weather patterns happening on a consistent basis in the Greater Toronto Area since June, the 100-year and 500-year rainfall events have become curious distinctions.

As a result, many are questioning the validity of these statements.

Using rainfall data and climate patterns from the Niagara Region, infrastructure engineer Steve Miller, from the Niagara Peninsula Conservation Authority, explains how to understand the 100-year rainfall phenomenon.

“You can think of it as a probability,” he said.

“The 100-year rainfall has a one per cent chance of happening every year. And much the same with a 500-year storm, which has a 0.2 per cent chance of occurring every year.”

So, using his explanation, these types of storms can happen more often than described, albeit the chances are slim.

In Niagara-on-the-Lake, the June 18 storm that flooded homes and property and washed out ditches and roadways, “brought up to 45 (millimetres) (1.75 inches) of rain in the eastern regions of the Niagara Peninsula watershed,” the conservation authority stated in a news release at the time.

However, during the same storm, Queenston residents Win and Kal Laar recorded 101 mm in just an hour at their

Sheppard Crescent home.

For a storm to be classified as a 100-year storm in Niagara, Miller said four inches (101.6 mm) of rain must fall in 12 hours, while a 500-year storm is 11 inches (279.4 mm) over the same period of time, which would put the June 18 storm somewhere in the middle of the 100-year and 500-year classifications.

Geographical location is also important to determining the type of storm.

“But in other locations, like the west coast of B.C., that is a rainforest — their 100-year storm looks different,” he added.

In an interview with The Lake Report in July, Lord Mayor Gary Zalepa — incorrectly, based on the Laars’ calculations — used the 500-year rainfall calculation to defend the community’s drainage infrastructure.

“In the St. Davids area on that day, they experienced three-and-a-half inches of rain in less than an hour and that’s almost a 500-year rain event,” he said in noting the infrastructure is not built to manage that volume of water in that short period of time.

In Niagara, average rainfall amounts vary depending on where you are.

“For instance, our southern coast, the coast along Lake Erie or Port Colborne and Fort Erie. They get about 1,000 (millimetres) of rain a year,” said Miller.

“The north part, you know, St. Catharines, Niagara-on-the-Lake, gets a little bit less, about 890 mm. So the magnitude of the storm generally depends on where you are.”

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Contributed by Patty Garriock

“Joy comes not through possession or ownership but through a wise and loving heart.” - Buddha

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Painting at Queen's Royal

Photographer Dave Van de Laar captured this shot of two people plein air painting the gazebo at Queen's Royal Park on a sunny day.

Opinion

Things politicians shouldn't mess with



THE TURNER REPORT

Garth Turner
Columnist

Days ago the leader of His Majesty's loyal Canadian opposition was in town to talk to some friendlies.

In response, the editor of The Lake Report ripped Pierre Poilievre a new one for his stance on defunding local media, including this paper. (Relax. I'm a volunteer.)

Ottawa's "Local Journalism Initiative" helps pay for reporters. Mr. Poilievre claims that buys the Libs favourable coverage. Mr. Editor says get stuffed:

"He panders to a crowd that's so anti-Liberal, they're willing to eat up and digest anything he says. He's hoping that voters so dislike Justin Trudeau that they won't see beyond his simplistic, bumper-sticker rhetoric."

Now tell us what you really think.

Well, I know Pierre. We served in Parliament together. He was Stephen Harper's highly effective attack dog. As Justin Trudeau sinks in the polls, Poilievre rises.

So, if he becomes prime minister later next year, will this newspaper, like the CBC (also targeted for defunding), wither and fall like a diseased grape?

Beats me. The editor can fight that battle. Instead let's talk about the sexy world of monetary policy because the Con leader wants the Bank of Canada governor's head on a stick.

He alleges Tiff Macklem is incompetent and created inflation. "I will fire the governor of the central bank to get inflation under control," he said famously when in Niagara Falls. He also called our central bank, "financially illiterate."

So what's the deal? Does this matter? And has Tiff blown his job?

First, the current facts. After the COVID lockdowns the economy released like a coiled spring. Demand shot up. So did inflation, from 0 per cent to 8 per cent. Ouch.

The central bank raised rates 10 times to cool things off. Mortgages went from

1.5 per cent to 6 per cent. It worked.

Price escalation has dropped sharply (2.5 per cent). There was no recession. No big spike in the jobless rate. It's what economists call the Holy Grail (or, these days, the Taylor Swift) of policy — a "soft landing."

Now rates are falling. Three cuts by the Bank of Canada with the most recent happening this week. There are two more to come in 2024, most economists think — so five reductions in one year, with mortgages now in the 4 per cent range and descending.

That (if you've been reading this pathetic column lately) is good news for the logjammed NOTL housing market where listings have soared, prices stuck and sales plopped.

But did Tiff cause inflation, as Pierre claims? Or do we just need someone to blame for everything?

The post-pandemic surge came with supply-chain disruption after people were told to stay home, factories and restaurants closed and shipments ceased. Inflation erupted in the U.K., the U.S., across Europe, in Australia and Canada.

Central banks abandoned

the cheap rates they'd used to fight COVID and started to hike. It worked here. Our inflation rate peaked lower than in the U.S. Our interest rates came down sooner. In fact, the Bank of Canada, as it turned out, was the first one in the industrialized world to reduce the cost of debt.

In short, inflation was a global bad. Our guys responded. The surge in prices was corralled. Now we have lower mortgages, less inflation, no recession and the International Monetary Fund says our growth will lead the world next year.

How is that a mess? Yes, houses and groceries still cost too much. And the Liberals may well deserve to be tanked for running up debts, deficits and wokeness.

But if there's one thing Canada got right in the last four years, it was allowing the central bank do its job. Letting career politicians mess with monetary policy is a sketchy idea.

Better they just tell editors what to do.

Oh, wait ...
Garth Turner is a NOTL resident, journalist, author, wealth manager and former federal MP and minister.

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LETTER OF THE WEEK

Act of kindness will long be remembered

Dear editor:

An act of kindness is being selfless, caring, compassionate and unconditionally kind. Let me explain.

A few weeks ago, I was sitting on a bench at the Queenston docks waiting for my grandchildren to return from their ride on a Whirlpool Jetboat.

As I watched the excited crowd lining up to get on the next boat, I noticed a little problem at the front of the line.

A young boy visiting the area with his family was told he was not allowed on the ride because of his height and age. The look on that young boy's face just about broke my heart.

This was something he had looked forward to all day and now he was being denied this exciting opportunity. His mother decided to stay back with him and sat down on the bench beside me.

How does a mom console a sobbing boy? I tried to



John Kinney on one of his jet boats. FILE/SOMER SLOBODIAN

help by telling him that I had been on that ride many times and that he would enjoy it much more when he was older.

Whirlpool Jetboats owner John Kinney noticed the distraught boy from a distance and came over to where we were sitting.

He spoke kindly to the boy, offering to take him,

his mother and me for a ride when all the other boats had returned. Not only would he get a ride, but he would be allowed to steer the boat.

I can't even describe the look on the boy's face as he sat on John's lap steering the boat as we motored up and down the river (we did not go into the rapids.)

That young boy will never

forget the kindness shown to him by John Kinney that day. That is what Niagara-on-the-Lake is all about: People helping people.

For me it showed that a little bit of kindness goes a long way. Thanks, John. You not only made his day, you made mine as well.

Margie Enns
NOTL

Old hospital better for commercial development

The following letter to Lord Mayor Gary Zalepa was submitted to The Lake Report for publication.

I was pleased to see you showing an interest in providing more housing in the town, ("Old hospital, other sites could be seniors hous-

ing, Zalepa says," The Lake Report, Aug. 15).

However, the hospital site is surrounded by commercial properties such as two major hotels, restaurants and the main Shaw Festival theatre.

Therefore, it is more suit-

able and more valuable for a commercial use, such as a hotel. Similarly, when a property is completely surrounded by residential uses, that property is obviously more suitable for housing, not a hotel.

Perhaps in the future you

should focus on properties that are currently used for housing. Alternatively, it could be land that is adjacent to residential use, where it could be rezoned for housing.

Wayne Murray
NOTL

House project is inappropriate for Chautauqua

Dear editor:

A project in Chautauqua is a prime example of what happens when local residents, homeowners and taxpayers lose any say over what happens in their own neighbourhood.

The builder or land owners just go to the Ontario Land Tribunal board even if their proposal is turned down by town council.

Developments seem to get automatic approval with no thought or concern for size, height, property coverage in our very special and well-loved little area.

I invite any interested locals to drive by 7 Vincent Ave. and have a good look at what could happen anywhere in our beautiful historic town. This should be a wake up call.

I would be interested in people's thoughts on this property failure. This house may be appropriate in a larger setting, but it is totally inappropriate for this site.

It is really offensive in every way in this interesting and historic neighbourhood.

Christopher Allen
NOTL



Letter writer Christopher Allen says this home in Chautauqua isn't appropriate for the small lot it is built on. FILE



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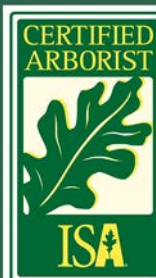
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The history of NOTL's stone houses





Brian Marshall
Columnist

About a week and a half ago, I had a short chat with Justin Chandler, a CBC reporter who was writing an article around the book “Defiant Builders: The Story of How Loyalists Constructed a New Society from Stone” by Michael Robert Bussière.

Specifically, Chandler was looking for some additional context on that early period of building in Niagara and the significance of old stone buildings today.

After we finished our conversation, it occurred to me that with the exception of a couple of individual cases, we never visited Niagara-on-the-Lake’s stone houses in this column and it was well past time we should do so.

But, before we go looking, allow me to provide a few basic definitions related to stone masonry construction.

In what is generally referred to as rubblestone, blocks of stone which are either undressed, or roughly dressed (worked into a required shape) and may be laid uncoursed, random or coursed, in a mortar suitable to the requirements of the wall.

When laid uncoursed, stone of all shapes and sizes are used with the only proviso that a proper bond between the stones is created.

Whereas, the random method involves selecting and/or dressing stones to allow laying in rough courses with non-uniform joints — a common method used the masonry of many historic stone farm houses.

Finally, the coursed method involves squaring each stone to create equal-sized blocks in each course (block size varies between



215 Four Mile Creek Rd. in St. Davids is the site of Ontario’s oldest-surviving building, built circa 1782. It was constructed of whirlpool sandstone.

courses) that are laid with roughly uniform, vertically broken joints.

The exterior face of each stone may be left as found or roughly flattened by the mason striking off the high points.

Occasionally, coursed rubblestone blocks might be rusticated — dressing the exposed face with a projecting and/or rough surfaced face on which the edges have been relieved (chamfered) at about a 45-degree angle to produce a recessed mortar joint.

The shadow line of this recessed joint tends to accentuate the stone’s strong, bold appearance.

The three rubblestone methods have been presented from least expensive to most expensive which, in turn, leads us to ashlar stone — used only in high status dwellings built for those with deep pockets.

Ashlar is stone that has been cut and dressed on all the faces that meet other stones.

The exposed face is worked and squared but may range from smooth to rough.

Generally, ashlar is laid in parallel horizontal courses, or in discontinuous courses (both vertical & horizontal), the latter requiring a significant level of expertise

on the part of the stone mason to achieve a pleasing pattern.

Ashlar stone was (and is currently) also cut into relatively thin pieces and historically used as a veneer over rubblestone construction.

Now, let’s take a road trip around Niagara-on-the-Lake to visit a few of the town’s stone houses in a general build date chronological order.

We’ll start in St. Davids at 215 Four Mile Creek Rd. — the site of Ontario’s oldest-surviving building — built by Peter Secord circa 1782.

Constructed of whirlpool sandstone that was probably found on the property, the stones were laid in the rubblestone random method.

In appearance, the facade represents a Georgian facade with five bays.

While the middle bay (front door) is not precisely centred as one would normally expect, this slight off-set placement is almost certainly due to the house being constructed in two stages, as are the three chimneys when two would be the norm.

As would have been common practice at the time, particularly after the second stage expansion was added, the dwelling would have received a coat of lime render

(stucco) to both weather-proof and “fancy up” the rubblestone walls.

From here, we’ll drive down towards Queenston to look at 1755 York Rd., a grand two-storey, five-bay, Georgian circa 1817 home set up on a rise of land overlooking the road.

It was built for Capt. William Davis, who purchased the original acreage from David Secord after the War of 1812.

In this, and the much more modest house he built for his son at 1717 York Rd., we can see an example of the coursed rubblestone method with the stone blocks having been “worked” to produce a more refined presentation.

From here, let us visit what is, perhaps, the most refined and architecturally significant expressions of period stonework on a 19th-century residential building in the country — we arrive at the circa 1830 Warner House at 287 Warner Rd.

Constructed of Grimsby red sandstone and Queenston limestone following ashlar stone masonry parameters, this relatively modest Regency cottage is an understated tour-de-force period status statement.

Built utilizing the most expensive stone work of the day, the Regency

cottage form mitigates any social class statement while establishing an embraceable “successful but still just folks” ethos within their 19th-century community.

In my opinion, one of the most skillfully designed pieces of architectural messaging built in the socially conservative theatre of 19th-century Upper Canada.

Moving on, it is my postulation that, sometime during the 1830s, a new stone mason set up business in Niagara.

And, it is due to this mason’s work we owe many of the NOTL stone houses built between 1835 and 1880.

Most commonly, this mason’s work resulted in houses with coursed and uncoursed stone fields that featured brick quoins and lintels.

Examples of this can be seen on the impressive Brown-Tregunno House at 15176 Niagara River Pkwy., the lovingly restored Gothic Revival farmhouse that can be found at 1540 Concession 6 Rd. and the classic Gothic Revival with its gorgeous pointed arch transom window above the main entry at 1023 East & West Line.

Less frequently, the mason substituted Queenston

limestone for the brick in the lintels and quoins on one of his builds.

Out on Carlton Street at #512 stands a beautiful example of this application, displaying rusticated limestone quoins and full limestone arched surrounds setting off every opening.

Unfortunately, this building is owned by a large winery and is the victim of demolition by neglect.

From here, let’s skip over to 1436 Concession 2 Rd., the James McFarland house, which may be the work of this mason but may equally have been built by the original owner.

Constructed of uncoursed locally found fieldstone with brick quoins and lintels, this pretty-as-a-picture, one-and-a-half storey dwelling has been carefully restored by its current owner.

Now, these are certainly not all of NOTL’s stone houses but only a sampling.

As you drive the byways of our town watch for them — even those disguised behind inappropriate additions.

They are a part of our shared heritage that is worthy of note.

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



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Lemonade stand sweetens the pot for a cause that's close to home

Paige Seburn
The Lake Report

When Spot, the friendly dog, eagerly greeted guests at Ishani's lemonade stand, it was a perfect reminder of why Ishani Ayona Pal's family hosts the stand every year.

Spot, who was rescued from the Niagara Dog Rescue Centre, inspired eight-year-old Ishani to give back to the place that gave him a second chance.

"I do it for Spot," said Ishani, who just had her third-annual lemonade stand for the centre on Saturday, Aug. 31.

Held out front of Ishani's home from 12:30 to 4:30 p.m., this intimate, invite-only fundraiser has become a neighbourhood tradition, with bright decorations and two refreshing flavours adding to the festive atmosphere this year.



Ishani Ayona Pal and her dog Spot, full name Spoticus, run the stand. PAIGE SEBURN

The lemonade stand has seen impressive growth since its first year, with donations increasing from \$900 in 2022 to double that last year.

Ishani's mother, Urbee Shome, said the lemonade sale not only supports the dog rescue centre but also has a profound impact on Ishani.

She is so proud of her eagerness to support the rescue centre, she said, as it allows Ishani to channel her passion for helping others into something meaningful.

"It's our way of contributing," said Shome.

Neighbours Brent and Joseph Longmoore, who have attended every year, said they appreciate the

community feel of the lemonade stand.

"It's a good chance to get together with your neighbours in the neighbourhood," Brent Longmoore said.

It's more than just a summer treat, he said — it's a heartfelt gesture that highlights the impact of community support.

Joseph Longmoore said

the stand has also grown with more decorations and flavours each year, making it even more enjoyable.

With more than \$2,000 raised by Ishani to support the Niagara Dog Rescue Centre this year, the lemonade stand continues to show the power of local initiatives and the difference they can make for animals in need.

Festival Market draws crowds with jams and more

Paige Seburn
The Lake Report

As Rosemary French glanced across the street from her workplace, Upper Canada Native Art, the familiar sight of a canopy drew her attention.

Memories of last year's homemade jams, bursting with rich flavours, pulled her back to Grace United Church's Festival Market on Victoria Street.

Held every year on Labour Day weekend, this year's market on Aug. 31 began under grey skies, but the promise of delicious treats and community spirit kept people coming.



Rosemary French with some of the jam she picked up from the church festival. PAIGE SEBURN

The market kicked off at 8 a.m. with a pancake breakfast and continued throughout the day with offerings of home-baked goods, jams, jellies, preserves, and more, with a barbecue lunch at 11:30 a.m.

For French, the draw was the jams — especially the reduced-sugar raspberry she first discovered last year.

"I thought I'd come back,"

she said, already planning to try a few new flavours.

Crafted by Heinz Probst, a longtime member of the church, alongside David Greaves, these jams and jellies hold a special place in the hearts of many attendees.

Using recipes passed down through generations, they ensure that each jar is a piece of local heritage.

Probst said that as the skies cleared, the market picked up pace.

He has been part of the Grace United Church community for more than 20 years, and said that the support from the local community has been consistent, with not just locals attending but also travellers passing through on their way back to Toronto or beyond.

"It's always well-supported by the community. And this time, they've got a huge indoor treasure sale. It's all good stuff from the '30s, '40s and '50s," he said.

For Donna Turner, another dedicated church member, the market is more than just a gathering — it's a tradition.

Having been a part of the church for many years, she said that she's seen how these types of things foster mutual support among the community.

"We're just thankful for all the people that come out and support us," said Turner.

"A lot of people from other churches come to support us, and when they have functions, we go there and support them. So, it's mutual support. It's a very friendly community."

As the day progressed, more people arrived, drawn by the promise of great food, good company and a chance to support a good cause.

McCartney is NOTL club’s latest Legend

Staff
The Lake Report

Randy McCartney was crowned the winner of the annual Legends Cup at Niagara-on-the-Lake Golf Club last week.

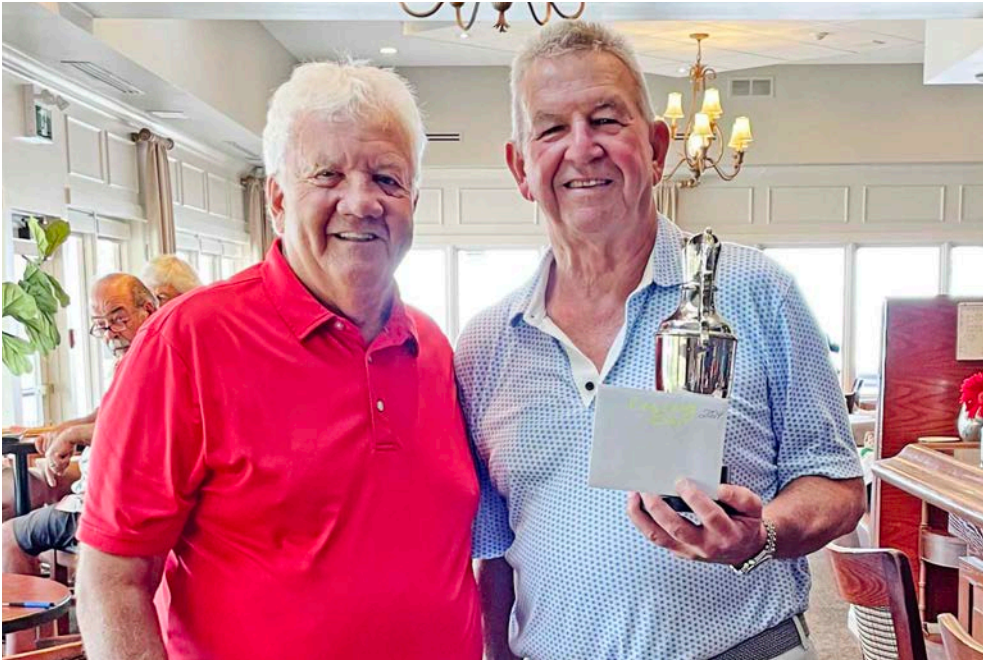
The tourney, a cumulative score over three nine-hole rounds, is open to club members over 80 who compete for the Claret Jug championship trophy.

Organizer Bill Katrynuk noted the Legends Cup is a competition as well as showcase for longtime respected members of the club.

Besides the annual tournament winners, over the years several men have been officially inducted as “legends,” including Al Derbyshire and Doug Garrett (2014), Jim Brown (2023) and Harry Huizer and Katrynuk (2023).

In other golf action: Five women managed to Beat the Pro on the fourth hole during 18-hole women’s league play on Tuesday.

Martha Cruikshank,



Bill Katrynuk, left, congratulates Legends Cup winner Randy McCartney. SUPPLIED

Gayle Tanner, May Chang, Sue Sherk and Judy Mantle were successful while Margaret Richardson was closest to the pin on #9.

Louise Robitaille and Diana Dimmer had the fewest putts, with just 29. Robitaille won low gross with a 77 and Gayle Tanner was low net with a 68.

Jim McMacken won low gross with a 1-over 37 in last Thursday’s men’s league play and John Schmidt was tops in Stableford scoring with 26 points.

Bob Lavery was closest to the 150 marker on #1, Bill Garriock had the longest putt on #2, Jeffrey Carlson

bombed the longest drive on #3 and closest to the hole winners were Derek Merza (#4) and McMacken (#9).

Gross skins went to Robert Yamamoto (#1), Tom Elltoft (#4), Jeff Jacques (#7) and Kurt Hamm (#8). Jacques also collected all the net skins dough for his net eagle on #3.



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NOTL teen’s miracle golf shot one for the record books

Kevin MacLean
The Lake Report

Call it a fluke, miraculous or destiny, but a young Niagara-on-the-Lake golfer made a shot last week that almost no one else apparently has managed.

As darkness was descending last Tuesday, Ethan Peters teed it up on the 300-yard, par-4 seventh at the NOTL Golf Club — and knocked it in the hole.

Except nobody knew it. At first.

Peters, who spent the summer working on the patio at the club, was enjoying a day off with friends from work when he launched his way into the record books.

The seventh hole is a dogleg left and runs along the shore of Lake Ontario. Between the tee and the green, massive trees mark the corner where the fairway bends left toward a tricky, two-tiered green.

Hit the ball too far and you can land over the embankment and on the shore-



Ethan Peters, 19, holds the ball he used to score a hole-in-one on the 7th hole. OWEN HOWELLS

line. Hit it short and you can be in the trees or one of the greenside bunkers.

Most players just send the ball straight down to the corner and hit a short iron into the green.

But when you’re 19 and full of energy, you go for it. That’s what Peters did. A lefty, the second-year

Brock University student carved his shot about 280 yards over the trees from the white tees and lost sight of it.

It had a bit of a slice action so the ball was moving right to left, and could have ended up in the lake, depending on how hard it landed on the green.

another one, aiming to just finish off. He figured his original had gone out of bounds.

That’s when he looked in the hole and found his ball, a TaylorMade TP5.

“It was amazing,” the second-year forensic psychology and criminal justice student said.

“We were all celebrating and jumping around.”

By then, it was too dark to continue, so they headed in to the clubhouse for a small celebration followed by a trip to the casino in Niagara Falls.

Mom and dad, Jason and Lori, his two older sisters and his grandparents were all ecstatic when they heard the news.

Peters, who has been playing for about 11 years, said he doesn’t play often enough to keep track of his handicap, though he typically plays bogey golf.

He said he just tries to have fun and not take it too seriously.

So, has there ever been a

hole-in-one on the seventh before? Apparently not.

Plenty of big hitters have reached the green from the tee and many have made an eagle 2.

Former NOTL club pro Billy Simkin and assistant pro Ricky Watson recalled one instance many years ago when a player hit his first shot into the lake and then knocked his next shot into the hole — for a birdie 3.

Longtime former club champion Mark Derbyshire knows the story.

“I made the green a number of times when I was younger. I never got a hole-in-one on seven, though,” he told The Lake Report.

However, “a number of years ago, Scott Bratton hit a ball in the lake and then knocked it in the hole from the tee for a birdie.”

So, whether a fluke, miracle or destiny, Peters is in the record books now for having aced one of the tougher holes on the NOTL course.

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NOTLers win gold at Canada Senior Games

Hugh Dow
Special to The Lake Report

Players from NOTL and across Niagara Region brought home the gold from the Canada Senior Games in Quebec City from Aug. 26 to 30.

More than 2,000 seniors from across the country participated in the event in a wide range of sports.

To qualify, athletes had to have won their event at the Ontario Senior Games and before that at the Niagara Senior Region Games.

Niagara-on-the-Lake Tennis Club members Fran Doran and Kim Laidlaw won gold in the women's 65+ category and NOTL's Manny Umoquit partnered with Maria Dinga to take gold in mixed 70+ doubles.

Umoquit also won gold with partner George Nijbert in the men's 70+ competition while McIlhone teamed with Hank Andrulis to bring home gold in men's 60+.

In the pickleball competition, NOTL Tennis Club members Ken McGillivray and his partner Gerald Pepe won a bronze medal.

Niagara's Gerald Pepe also won a Silver medal with his partner Sylvia Malgady in the Mixed event.

Meanwhile, the Niagara-on-the-Lake Tennis Club's popular men's and wom-



NOTL's Manny Umoquit won gold in two events at the Canada Senior Games in Quebec City. FILE

en's doubles tournament wrapped up with perfect late-summer weather and intense competition.

Thanks to a large number of entries, the men's tourney featured A and B divisions and the women's competition had one division.

Men's A division: From pool play, Manny Umoquit and Gerry McIlhone emerged as the overall winners from round-robin play on one side of the draw while Rob Lipovsky and Brad Butler emerged as winners on the other side.

Rob Booker and Adam Wodz and Mohsin Kamran and Steve Tremblay placed second in their respective draws and met in the consolation final.

Umoquit and McIlhone won the championship final in straight sets 6-3, 6-3 over Lipovsky and Butler. In the consolation final, Kamran and Tremblay defeated Booker Adam Wodz 6-2, 6-3.

Women's division: Four teams advanced to the championship semifinals from round-robin play and four second-place teams went to the consolation semis.

Charlene Duras and Nancy Marchese defeated Wendy Dell and Rosie Sherman in one semi and Shannon Brander and Karen Rhind defeated Paula Lepp and Ann Davies in the other. In the finals, Duras and Marchese were victorious over Brander and Rhind, 6-4, 6-2.

In the women's consolation round, Cathy Buis and Pippa de Leonardis defeated Patricia Spagnol and Yoko Miele in one semifinal and in the other, Margaret Hobbs and Kelly Larmour beat Sarah Chapman Jay and Bo Wang Frappe.

The final was a hard fought battle, with Buis and de Leonardis winning the first set 6-2.

Hobbs and Kelly Larmour bounced back to take the second 7-5, so a 10-point tiebreaker was needed to crown the winner.

Buis and de Leonardis won the tiebreaker 10-3 in a well-played, exciting match.

Men's B division: Four pairs emerged from the round-robin to play in the championship round and four second-place teams qualified for the consolation championship.

In the championship semifinals, Michael Logue and Denis Davicino won a nail-biter over Rob Lamond and Doug Campbell.

Tied at six games apiece and 30-30 when time was called, the match came down to one sudden-death point. That point went to Logue and Davicino in a hard-fought match.

In the other championship semi, Jean Lalonde and Rick Bennet defeated Jim O'Gorman and Bill Devolin.

In the consolation semis, George Dell and David Rodgers beat Dennis McCarthy and Maz Sen, while Enzo Mancuso and Peter Buis ousted Mac MacSween and Terry Ratkovsky.

The championship final saw Logue and Davicino defeat Lalonde and Bennet 6-4, 6-1. In the consolation championship, Mancuso and Peter Buis edged Dell and Rodgers, 6-2, 7-6.



This week's riddle is "Jeopardy!" style.
Category: ALSO A CANDY

It's when you get your peanuts
for all your hard work.

Last issue:

Category: MAMMALS

Clue: Pan troglodytes is the scientific name for this close relative of humans and bonobos.

Answer: What is a gazebo?

Answered first by: Claudia Grimwood

Also answered correctly (in order) by:
Bill Hamilton, Jane Morris, Brenda Stewart, Sue Rautenberg, Lynda Collet, Mike Gander, Wade Durling, Susan Dewar, Catherine Clarke, Howard Jones, Margaret Garaughty, Esther VanGorder, Margie Enns, Marla Percy, Marjory Walker-Barone, Bob Wheatley, Jim Dandy, Katie Reimer, Tuija Johansson, Daniel Smith, Sheila Meloche

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

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Award-winning Canadian author helps **build new worlds** in NOTL

Richard West
Special to The Lake Report

For 25 years, Julie Czerneda has been publishing successful books. She is an eight-time award winner and a member of the Canadian Science Fiction and Fantasy Hall of Fame.

Her books reflect her unique skills: she is a scientist specializing in biology, which helps influence her world-building skills.

But it's her curiosity about life in general and how interesting ideas can be molded into compelling stories that crowns her recipe for success.

On Thursday, Sept. 19, she will visit the Niagara-on-the-Lake Public Library between 6:30 to 8 p.m. to promote her latest book, "A Change of Place."

It will be released for sale just two days before she visits NOTL.

Czerneda has published 23 novels over the last 27 years, plus many short stories.

She will describe how she



Julie Czerneda has been publishing books for 25 years, combining her creativity with her knowledge as a biology scientist to invent fantastical worlds. SUPPLIED

approaches the challenge of world-building so that the reader is comfortable with her story settings. There will be a Q&A session.

Julie's first book, "A Thousand Words for a Stranger," was published in 1997. This formed the foun-

dation for a nine-book saga, set in three trilogies.

A very different tale, "Beholder's Eye," followed in 1998. This became a seven-book series. Clearly her readers kept demanding more.

Czerneda's stories are

embedded in worlds that often differ from our local environment or time. Her ability to describe these worlds while telling the core story is remarkable.

Often the environment itself is a threat, or the locals themselves are the threat. The reader is transported into another world where there are forces and events driving the protagonist from one tight spot to another.

The result is not just fascinating — it's fun.

Her latest book, "A Change of Place," and her 25th anniversary collection "Imaginations," will be available for purchase, cash only, at the event.

So, I encourage you to visit the NOTL library on Sept. 19 to meet Czerneda and hear her story of becoming an award-winning author.

The event is free but requires that you register in advance. To register, go to notlpubliclibrary.org.

To learn more about the author, visit her website at czerneda.com.

European trips **life-changing** for Willowbank students

Katie Houghton
Special to The Lake Report

Four students at the Willowbank School of Restoration Arts have returned from summer sojourns to study at top heritage conservation schools in Europe.

Claire Brinkworth and Bailey Sprenger attended Messors in Italy while classmates Julia Hodgson and Michael Salvage went to the King's Foundation Summer School at Dumfries House in Scotland thanks to \$10,000 scholarships from the Humeniuk Foundation.

In Italy, Brinkworth and Sprenger gained practical hands-on experience in the conservation and restoration of cultural heritage, frescoes and fine art.

And in Scotland, Hodgson and Salvage studied at the stunning Dumfries House, highlighting vernacular and regenerative approaches to building.

The scholarships, which covered tuition, travel and modest living costs, were made possible by a \$200,000 investment by the Humeniuk Foundation as part of a five-year program for the Queenston school.



Julia Hodgson at Dumfries House creates a sail vault using thin clay tiles. Tile vaults derive their strength from their geometry rather than the material used. SUPPLIED

All four students have returned with a deeper perspective and appreciation of heritage and gratitude for the people who shared their traditional crafts with them.

Of her experience at Messors, Brinkworth said, "This trip is a time in my life that I will truly cherish

and remember forever. It was honestly the best month of my life."

"The Messors program is an experience that I wish everyone could do at least once in their lives."

She particularly enjoyed the lectures, especially on iconography, and the site

visits across southern Italy. The experience broadened her perspective on conservation worldwide and provided clarity on career possibilities as a conservationist.

That's exactly what Andrew Humeniuk, executive director of the Humeniuk

Foundation and the Brown Homestead in St. Catharines, hoped the scholarship would create.

"In our experience, the summer schools allow them invaluable access to additional perspectives and knowledge that benefit them in their careers and are also shared with their peers, Willowbank and the heritage sector itself," he said.

Sprenger was equally inspired by the experience at Messors and its global instructors and colleagues, noting it was an all-encompassing, immersive experience that combined history, beauty, culture and conservation.

"I walk away from the Messors experience with a changed perspective on heritage: that materials need to be preserved, not only because of aesthetics, but for their value," she said.

And also "for the understanding they provide, not only because they are part of the past. Conservation is part of the future."

Now entering her third year at Willowbank, she has a renewed approach to the career in heritage that she plans to pursue.

"I will approach new projects with an openness and mindfulness of the inherent value I may not recognize at first glance," she said.

"Remembering that my work is a part of a larger story, I will do my best to make my part a respectful, sensitive one."

Creating and learning was also at the heart of the King's Foundation program, which emphasized that tradition exists within the ideas and lived experiences of craftspeople more than physical examples of their work, Hodgson said.

"I feel very grateful to my instructors for their willingness to share their experiences, formulas and life's work."

Willowbank president Dr. Faisal Arain said the Humeniuk Scholarship has enabled students access to world-class heritage training, thereby adding yet another layer to the Willowbank experience and broadening the depth of knowledge from the diploma program.

Students return to campus next week and eagerly anticipate enjoying the presentations from all four students who travelled to Europe.

‘Candida’ brings Shaw’s probe of gender roles to 21st century

“CANDIDA”
★ ★ ★
(out of five)

Royal George Theatre, 2 hours, 10 minutes, one intermission. Ends Oct. 11.
By Bernard Shaw. Directed by Severn Thompson.

Penny-Lynn Cookson
Special to The Lake Report

Who is this Candida, Candida, Candida? Her name is fervently repeated by the lovestruck young poet Eugene Marchbanks in a face-to-face confrontation with her stunned husband, the Rev. James Mavor Morell.

In his wildest nightmare, the shaken-to-the-core reverend cannot imagine how this snivelling, aristocratic young whelp could possibly be a contender for the affection of his beloved, beautiful wife, Candida.

Their altercation will not lead to a duel at dawn. There will be no flashing swords or drawn pistols for possession of Candida, but there will be ripostes, parries, barbs, a poker and iron to the chest that will stab the hearts of those occupying a perceived “perfect” traditional home in north-east London one day in October 1954.

In this triangle of love, originally described by Bernard Shaw as “a mystery,” Candida must choose which of the two men will be her future.

It is Eugene, who Candida believes understands them all, who insists that Candida alone, independently, must make the decision that will potentially destabilize and alter the lives of those around her.

When “Candida” first surfaced as one of Shaw’s “Pleasant Plays” in 1898, Victorian Britain was in a time of peace and stability, of rising middle-class prosperity and values and brewing with social and cultural change.

Women were forming leagues and unions to fight for the right to vote and stand in elections both local and national.

Shaw was a social activist and supporter of the Pankhursts and suffrage. He abhorred “Candidamania,” a romantic perception of “Candida” that swept New York City’s theatre crowd in 1904.

Shaw, the committed So-



Sanjay Talwar as Rev. James Mavor Morell, Johnathan Sousa as Eugene Marchbanks and Sochi Fried as Candida Morell in *Candida*. EMILY COOPER

cialist, nonetheless enjoyed the capitalist gains of his increasing royalties allowing him to be a full-time writer and recipient of the Nobel Prize for literature in 1925.

“Candida” was not one of Shaw’s most important plays, but it continues to strike a resonant chord decade after decade because at its heart is the right of a woman to decide her present and future, her right to control her own body, to have children or not, to have equal rights for pay and jobs and to support a husband’s career and ambition — but not at the expense of forfeiting her own aspirations.

Now in 2024, what does this 1954 setting of “Candida” at the Shaw tell us?

The Rev. James Morell (Sanjay Talwar) is an ego-driven, stolid, kind Anglican clergyman, in demand as a renowned speaker and lecturer to all who will benefit from his wisdom and social activism for a better society. His calendar is full.

His devoted secretary, Prospertine Garnett, a single, lower middle-class woman, organizes his business life, receives less pay than previous jobs, has no life beyond her job and has an unrequited love for her boss.

Jealous of his verbal devotion to Candida, she claims to appreciate her real qualities more than any man can. Gabriella Sundar Singh did not have the depth that this role demands.

The philistine father of Candida, Mr. Burgess (a superb Ric Reid) has been absent for three years after a dust-up with his son-in-law, James.

Candy’s Daddy is a rapacious, swaggering, capitalist factory owner and clothing manufacturer with a bad reputation for stiffing his

workers, especially women. He is outraged when the mere typist Prossy calls him a fathead.

He professes to have reformed, spouting insincerity and platitudes. The reforms? Women fired, replaced by technology and the few remaining men now earning 6p more! Let bygones be bygones! He wants a town council contract and James has the network to get it.

The naive, assistant curate, Lexi Mill (an excellent Damien Atkins), is as rigidly uptight as his rolled umbrella protectively clutched to his body.

Hesitant, ever fearful, he answers the spiritual call but lacks the spirit of any real-life engagement, let alone following James’s advice to “get a wife like my Candida.”

Into their lives, enters Eugene (Johnathan Sousa in an over-wrought performance) the privileged upper-class son of an earl. Eton-educated, money in pocket, alienated from his background, he is a rebel against convention, boredom and a life without cultural purpose.

He has an aesthetic, artistic sensibility with a passion for personal freedom, poetry and Candida. To him, Candida is a goddess. Her fingers should never be sullied by mundane domestic tasks.

Eugene has gifted a copy of Titian’s “Assumption of the Virgin” to her. It hangs over the fireplace in the rec-tory drawing room.

Angels cluster below the Virgin Mary as she rises into a golden sky. All eyes are uplifted to the angel holding the crown that God will place on her head.

Sadly, no one has thought to create a worthy replica for the set. The significance of the painting is not only Eugene’s deification of Candida but Shaw’s own

engagement with a hot topic, the Marian theology controversy. Is Mary dead or alive when ascending?

And what of Candida? Sochi Fried gives a lively, no-nonsense spin to an energetic woman, supportive of her husband in the no-divorce social conformity of the 1950s.

Women had again been the most vulnerable of the workforce with jobs lost and given to the returning soldiers of the Second World War.

Candida may be frustrated by James’s obsession with his work and his frequent absences, but she is not a handmaiden or passive receptacle in her marriage.

She patronizes her “boys,” Eugene and James. She is warm and comforting, a mother figure — then bang! She’s capable of a lightning strike of cold calculation meant to set a fire of communication.

Candida does not want to suppress her feelings or doubts. She longs for communication with words that speak from the heart what is necessary. Not platitudes, not the expected, but true words of emotion and meaning, a confession of spirit that astonishes and deeply wounds her husband who admits he can’t talk. He can only preach.

James gives Candida and Eugene time to be alone. Eugene does what he does best, reads his poetry to her.

Candida is bored. She would have preferred something more amusingly suggestive. Eugene believes that we long for love, but we are too shy to act. Will he succumb to temptation?

Will the realities of Candida’s life: stability, the guardianship of her children, her home, her economic security and her husband’s love determine her choice? Will she choose temptation?

She asks Eugene to remember that when he is 30, she will be 45. When he is 60, she will be 75. Shaw recognizes an eternal angst of women’s insecurity: age discrimination and male misogyny.

Eugene understanding, replies that in 100 years they will be the same age. Liberated, he disappears into the waiting night.

Tradition is upheld.
Penny-Lynn Cookson is an arts and culture historian, writer and lecturer living in Niagara-on-the-Lake.

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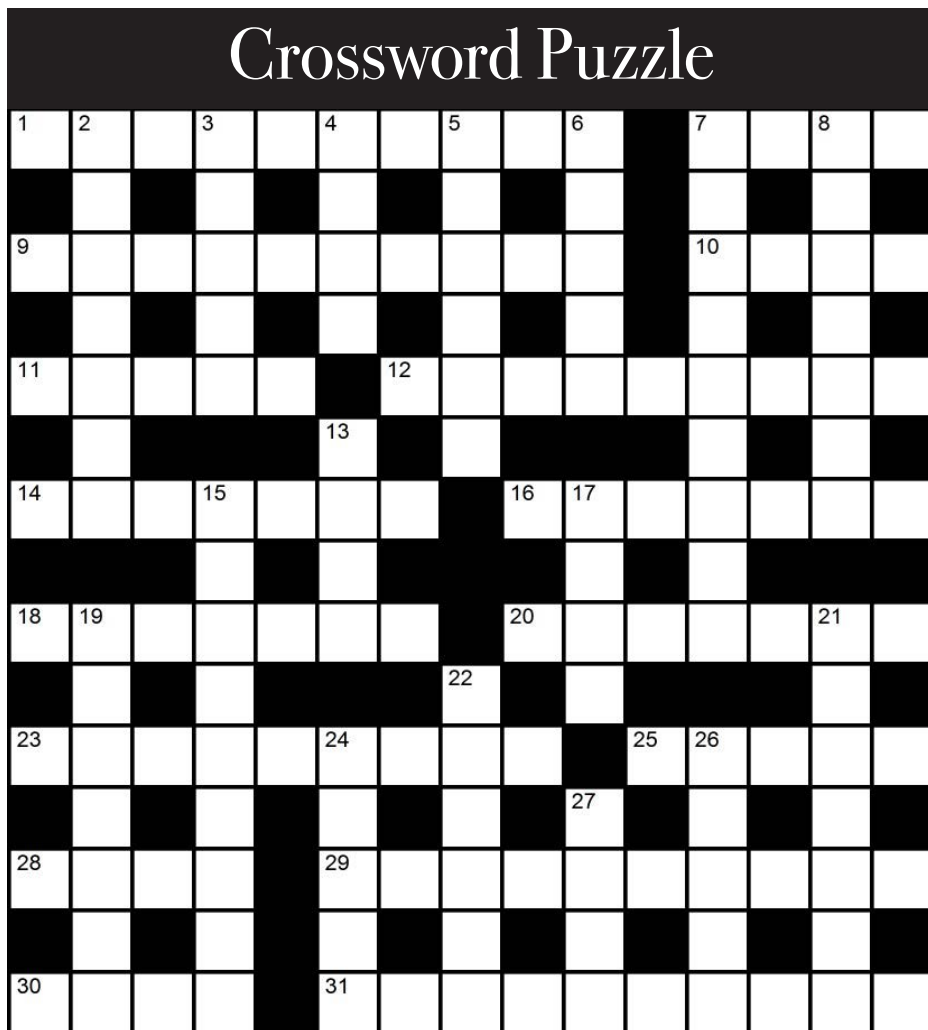
Have some fun

1. Sheets and blankets (10)
7. Unfortunately (4)
9. Partly unrelated female sibling (10)
10. Grain husks (4)
11. Investigate closely (5)
12. Of no value (9)
14. Dog-houses (7)
16. Altar cloth (7)
18. Cases (7)
20. Implore urgently (7)
23. Inflammation of the stomach (9)
25. Wading bird (5)
28. Form of wrestling (4)
29. Beyond the power of Man (10)
30. Hay store (4)
31. The lot (10)

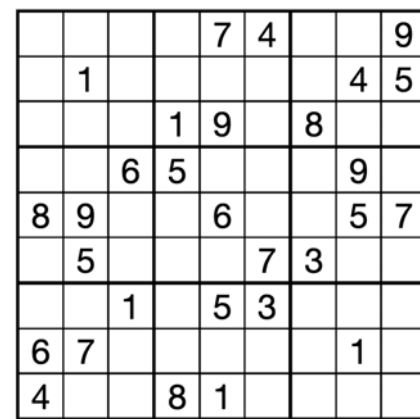
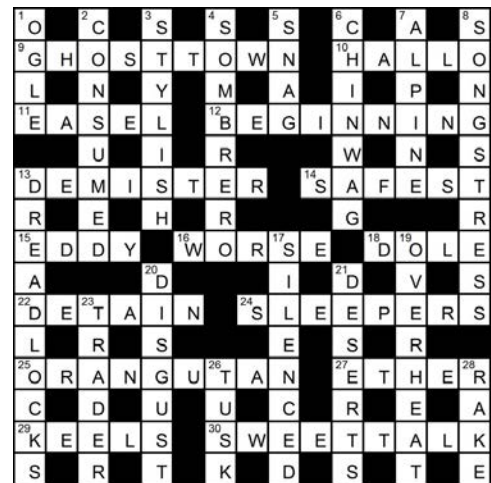
Down

2. Qualify (7)
- 3 Managed (5)
4. Leave out (4)
5. Frankfurter (3,3)
6. Small fish (5)
7. Vehicle for injured people (9)
8. Formerly the world's fourth largest lake (4,3)
13. Stop up a hole (4)
15. Wee Willie Winkie's attire (9)
17. Grass (4)
19. Sea north of Australia (7)
21. Hanging cloth (7)
22. Baby's feeding bottle cap (6)
24. Point in question (5)
26. Not easily broken (5)
27. Salver (4)

Crossword Puzzle



Last issue's answers



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The Big Bang to current affairs

Dr. Brown explains why he writes what he writes for The Lake Report



DR. BROWN

Dr. William Brown
Columnist

I often run into readers who recognize me from my picture in The Lake Report who for the most part like what I write about even if some of the material is a little odd and off the beaten path of current hot issues and politics.

For their interest and support I'm most grateful. What most readers seem to enjoy are the perspectives and subject matter, which they might not ordinarily read about, especially in a local newspaper.

The topics range widely from how global climate change over hundreds of thousands of years influenced migration patterns of our prehuman ancestors, to human evolution over the last five to six million years, creation stories from the beginning of the universe to stars, to life itself, the origins of moral behaviour, black holes and even speculation about what might become of our species, earth and the sun.

I've enjoyed learning and writing about those and oth-

er topics for much the same reasons I would imagine my readers do: we are curious and we want to understand as much as we can about who we are, what our place is in the grand scheme and, like very compelling plays or novels, we want to know how it all might turn out.

To which end, science, especially in the last two centuries made staggering contributions to creation stories from the Big Bang to particles and forces, carbon-based life and so on ... but I'm getting ahead of myself.

Let's start at the beginning.

For much of my career I was a practicing neurologist and neuroscientist. Both were closely related because many of the patients I cared for suffered from disorders involving peripheral nerves or motor nerve cells and the scientist in me explored both.

I was fortunate because, like a bevy of other young neurologists, neurosurgeons, pathologists and neuroscientists, we were free to immerse ourselves in our interests with a lot of support from like-minded and collegial colleagues in the heyday of Western University's novel and spanking new combined department of clinical neurological sciences.

It was a wonderful Camelot period for all of us and we flourished.

But so involved was I in



From evolution and primitive humans, to vaccines, black holes and Alzheimer's disease, Dr. William Brown has written about it all for The Lake Report's science column.

what consumed me, that I paid little attention to science writ wider such as astrophysics to quantum physics, chemistry, evolutionary biology and beyond.

Then, I read an interview in the New York Times by Dennis Overbye, one of my favorite science writers, with Chris Stringer, a London-based anthropologist who had just published his book, "Lone Survivor: How We Came To Be The Only Humans On Earth."

The interview and book captivated me and opened a whole new world — the story of human evolution. So bitten, I began to read much more widely in science.

The key was to read excellent books by authors such as Stringer, journals such as Nature and Science and selected speciality journals.

Gradually, I learned enough to write a wide-ranging book, published in 2016, which I titled "Perspectives." It covered everything from the beginnings of the universe to evolution, the human brain, to artificial intelligence, culture and religion.

Once bitten, I took the advice of Steven Weinberg, a particle physicist and Nobel Prize winner, who wrote "If you want to know something, teach it."

That's precisely what I've

tried to do through a succession of six-week series at the Niagara-on-the-Lake Public Library, beginning with the Camelot years in physics between 1900 and 1930, and others which followed.

Perhaps the best series were based on the yearly Nobel awards in physics, chemistry and medicine or physiology, because these are based on excellent studies by excellent scientists and very aptly summarized by Nobel committees.

In every instance, the challenge was to first understand what each laureate did, write about it for The Lake Report and then share what I learned with others at the Niagara-on-the-Lake

library in a way that hopefully made sense to the readership and audience without dumbing the material down.

That was the challenge for the InfoHealth series, sponsored by the NOTL library, for 12 years and a great way to learn about what works for lay audiences, who were more than intelligent enough but not familiar with science-based material.

Finally, why The Lake Report in the title of this article? Because: what other local paper in Canada publishes such crazy stuff?

That says a lot for the community where we live.

In a similar fashion, the Niagara-on-the-Lake library has fostered literacy and interest in science and medicine by their programs at the library.

Sure, we get all steamed up about this or that hot topic or project, but we also care, and we can see beyond our noses to be interested and contribute in all kinds of ways.

It's one more reason why Niagara-on-the-Lake and region is such a special place to live — our very own Camelot.

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.

Healing Cycle returns, seeks team enrolment to reach \$25K goal

Julia Sacco
Local Journalism Initiative
The Lake Report

Last year's Healing Cycle for Niagara-on-the-Lake Community Palliative Care helped kickstart a service for people who are not terminal but still face life-changing health limitations.

Generosity from the community has been important for the organization to function, said executive director Bonnie Bagnulo — for this year's Hummel Family

Healing Cycle, to be held Sunday, Sept. 22, she hopes that support will continue.

"We'd like to get to that goal of \$25,000, because then we get the \$25,000 nomination which makes \$50,000. Last year we did \$60,000," Bagnulo said.

The marathon can be completed as a five-kilometre, 10-kilometre or 25-kilometre bike, run or walk, and will commence at 9 a.m. from 176 Wellington St.

This year, the palliative care group is hoping for funding to cover all bases.

"It's not just about money, it's about services," Bagnulo said.

After moving to a new location and expanding, government funding is not enough.

"General donations are needed across the board, for equipment, for programs," Bagnulo said.

"We've got rent we're paying, which we've never paid before."

Organizers are looking to recruit businesses to enroll as a team for the marathon.

"What they can do is

ask colleagues to collect donations to get them to that \$500 corporate level," Bagnulo said.

The \$500 corporate donation gets the business included in advertising and on T-shirts.

"We're looking for teams of riders so that we can have more riders," Bagnulo said.

"It's way more fun when we're all riding together."

To find out more, visit the NOTL palliative care website, or make an online donation here thehealingcycle.crowdfunder.ca/69898.



Teams can sign up now to participate in the Hummel Family Healing Cycle, which raises money for NOTL Community Palliative Care Services. FILE



Pauline Reimer Gibson
Audiologist

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**Niagara Belt Line's
Car #684, 1906**

This is the final image of the Great Gorge Route series. It is a close-up of the Niagara Belt Line car #684 that is waiting for sightseers to reboard at a station at the base of the Niagara River Gorge, on the U.S. side of the river. The car is southbound and would next scale the side of the gorge to the top, then cross the river over the former Honeymoon Bridge (located 500 feet upriver of the present-day Rainbow Bridge). As shown, it was an open car with 14 benches. It was 43 feet long, weighed just over 18 tons and was powered by four 50-hp motors. This car was part of a series of 18 similar cars, all built at the same time for the Niagara Falls Park and River Railway. It ran until the end of service in Canada in September of 1932, after which time it was scrapped. The American half of the line, including the Rapids station stop depicted here, closed shortly after, in 1935.

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JODEY'S JOURNEY

Jodey Porter
Special to The Lake Report

I've been mostly blind, most of my life. This past March I travelled to New Jersey to meet the canine companion that will enable me to recapture my life. By week two our student complement is down by one. This is tough and not for everyone.

By Sunday, the remaining group have all passed a pretty tough solo walk, a 16-block route navigating, crossing streets, dealing with traffic, people, dogs and other distractions, some created by the school and others just plain part of the world we live in.

On Monday, we have all started a more difficult new route, nicknamed the "Nightmare on Elm Street." It is about five kilometres, has super difficult crossings, a busy commercial district with signs and street furniture, deep tree wells, uneven curbs and lots of noise and confusion. It is around a hill in the centre

of town. So how do we do this? And who are we?

Our student group ranges in age from a 25-year-old Cornell graduate, now a civil rights lawyer, working in Washington for the ACLU, to a salty, hilariously funny, 80-year-old retired dump truck driver from Rhode Island.

We span the ages, educational levels and just about every reach of humanity.

But we all share a traumatic and frightening loss of vision in the world in which we live. What brings us together is a united desire to live more independently, without needing another person to help us.

We want to live fully, be who we are and give back. This is something we share across every social origin, language, country and whatever our life experience has been.

So, who are the dogs? Well, they are oddly paired with each of us.

Hayley, the wonderful young civil rights lawyer, has a beautiful, petite, black Labrador retriever. Named Paisley, she is outgoing, del-



Here are the D-brothers, all from the same litter, born June 30, 2022. A good-looking family. From left: Dallas with Rosemary, Doc with Jodey Porter, Dillard with Aleeha and the big guy, Dexter with Alexandria. SUPPLIED

icate and full of energy. She suits Hayley's personality to a T and will be a brilliant companion as Hayley makes her way from courtroom to courtroom in Washington.

Our retired dump truck driver is an absolute hoot. He is beyond politically incorrect, so much fun it hurts. He gets everyone to belly laugh all the time and, guess what, his dog's name is Rubble.

Accidents like this just plain happen here. It's a bit bizarre, but it seems everything is just meant to be.

There's Cheryl from

Saskatchewan and her chocolate lab, Éclair. And Meredith, the lawyer and science-fiction writer with her German shepherd Sully.

There's Justin with his dog Bear and Aleeha with Dillard, Alexandria from small-town Texas has Dexter and Rosemary from Pennsylvania has Dallas. And on it goes.

I've already told you a bit about Doc, but what you don't know is that he is one of four brothers all assigned here in class to four young women. I am the oldest of the group and

the youngest is Alexandria, who is only 31, with two young daughters.

The four brothers are: Dallas, Dexter, Dillard and, finally, Doc.

They are all very large, solid golden crosses. Three of them look like black labs and one looks a bit more like a golden retriever. They are all strong, share characteristics of courage and energy, and all love to be together under the dining room table when possible.

When we meet our dogs, they are only five days out of the kennel and their incredibly strict regimen of training led by dedicated instructors.

Each instructor receives a group of dogs a year in advance of our attending school. At age eight weeks, the pups are taken from their mothers and put in a capable foster home to learn about how to live in a house, socialization, family and all the normal stuff that doggies need to know.

At 13 months, when the trainer considers them ready, they are separated from their first home and

returned to the campus of the guide dog school.

They are assessed for their worthiness and capacity to become a guide dog. Seeing Eye has an incredible success rate of its dogs becoming guide dog capable — more than 70 per cent.

Daniel, my instructor, got his dogs for training more than a year ago. All eight dogs are still guide dog eligible and that is extraordinary.

This is a family, make no mistake, and the dogs and people and teachers and managers and historians and funders all move together toward a single goal: freedom.

Next: We go home. In many ways, that means Doc and I start all over again, overcoming the idiosyncrasies of our little town. What kind of mayhem can we get into?

NOTL resident Jodey Porter is a former provincial assistant deputy minister of health and member of the Ontario Human Rights Commission. Her story is told in collaboration with writer Tim Taylor.

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If at first you don't succeed ... **change your plan**



GROWING TOGETHER 

Joanne Young
Columnist

Like the old saying goes, "If at first you don't succeed, try, try again!"

Now don't get me wrong, I am all for motivating others to persevere, but when it comes to gardening, I would like to put some limits on that phrase.

After 35 years of helping clients solve their gardening dilemmas, one of the statements that I have heard repeatedly usually goes something like this: "I have planted 10 different things in this same spot and nothing has survived. What can I plant?"

I think they hope I will know of a miracle plant that will survive this impossible

area, but my response is always the same: "If nothing has worked yet, stop trying to plant something there!"

We all have places in our gardens that prove to be difficult spots. It could be under a large maple tree with thick roots. It could be a low lying, wet corner, or maybe an extremely dry place under a large overhang.

These locations can be the source of much frustration. So, instead of "try, try again," it is time to stop, take a step back and look at your situation differently.

Most likely, at this point, the solution to your garden's most frustrating problem is not a plant. Just remember that for every problem, there is a solution.

So, what can you do with these difficult spaces?

The first step is to analyze what the actual problem is. Is it poor soil conditions and you cannot get your shovel into the ground? Is it a drainage issue? Is it an area with scorching sun that never gets a drop of rain? How many hours of sun does this area receive?

The second step is to consider the style you want



One good way to make use of problematic garden space where things won't grow is finding another use, such as attracting birds with a bird bath, writes Joanne Young. PEXELS

to achieve. Do you want a more contemporary look, a more traditional look, a zen look, or more of a rustic look? This will help you determine what your solution may be.

For example, one of the most difficult areas we have in our gardens can be found under the canopy of larger trees, whether deciduous or evergreen.

The reduced light levels and established root systems of the trees can make it impossible for anything to grow.

There are ways though to make these areas still look landscaped without just leaving a large dirt patch underneath the tree.

Think about what you can

add to that area that will help you convey your theme or style to your garden's visitors.

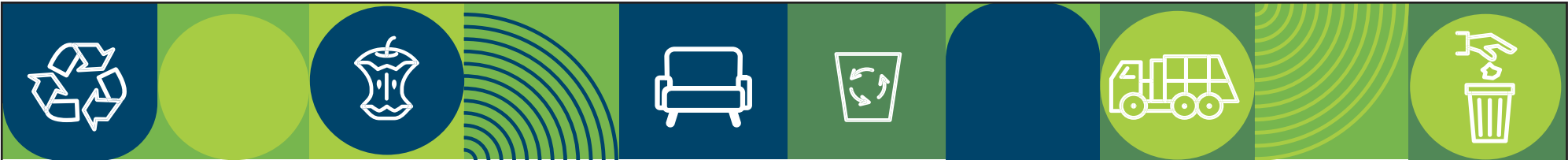
Here are some possible solutions for those impossible areas.

1. Use a statue or sculpture that conveys your style.
2. Place one or more armour stones or moss rocks.
3. Apply bark mulch or river rock to make it look finished.
4. Set a collection of pots in an area containing annuals or perennials — even on their own.
5. Create a sitting area with a bench or a couple of chairs — even if it just for looks.
6. Use space for attracting birds with a bird bath, bird houses or feeders.

Whatever your style is, think about how you can take those impossible areas and turn them into special features in your garden.

Remember, if at first you don't succeed, it is time to get creative.

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



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