



## Virgil pharmacy offers the job

But pharmacist unsure when the next batch of AstraZeneca will arrive



Pharmacist Julie Dyck prepares a dose of AstraZeneca vaccine for her evening clinic Tuesday. JESSICA MAXWELL PHOTO

Jessica Maxwell  
The Lake Report

Stone Road Pharmacy in Virgil has started holding evening vaccination clinics to try to reach more people who want to get the jab.

Head pharmacist and owner Julie Dyck said the pharmacy received 300 doses of the AstraZeneca vaccine on April 15.

Evening vaccine clinics at the pharmacy started on Monday and run from

6:30 p.m. to 9 p.m.

“For evening clinics I’m able to squeeze people in a lot faster. You don’t have the same foot traffic coming in, so it can just be vaccinations,” Dyck said.

People can call the pharmacy at 905-468-3000 to be put on the waitlist for when more vaccines are available. There already are hundreds of people on the list, she said.

The pharmacy administered two-thirds of the

COVID vaccines it received in one week, averaging 40 shots per day.

Dyck said she is not sure when the next shipment will arrive, telling The Lake Report that the Ministry of Health isn’t giving any answers and “has asked us not to ask them.”

Despite that, she said Stone Road Pharmacy feels fortunate to be one of three pharmacies in Niagara-on-the-Lake that is able to offer COVID-19 vaccinations.

Simpson’s Pharmacies two locations are also dispensing vaccines.

“I think we are very lucky,” Dyck said. “Currently, a city like Thorold has none, so this is pretty special that people have three different opportunities.”

St. Catharines resident Barb Armstrong arrived early for the first vaccine clinic on Monday night.

*Continued on Page 3*



The iconic old town clock tower cenotaph. FILE PHOTO

## 30% of NOTL newcomers face hostility, survey finds

Evan Saunders  
The Lake Report

About 30 per cent of Niagara-on-the-Lake residents say they face hostility based on how long they have lived here, according to a survey conducted by the town’s inclusion and diversity committee.

While 97.6 per cent of the 173 survey respondents agreed NOTL would benefit from more inclusion and diversity, 24 per cent said they have felt unwelcome as customers or employees, or have heard about or witnessed discrimination in area businesses.

Among other concerns, the survey also highlighted complaints about homophobia directed at Shaw Festival staff and a lack of women on town-appointed committees.

The inclusion committee reported the results of its January online survey on diversity and inclusivity in NOTL at Monday’s council meeting and laid out the next steps for dealing with the issues.

The immediate next step on these issues is the creation of focus groups to meet in May and more clearly gather feedback, experience and suggestions from the community, committee member Kiera Sangster told council in a detailed presentation.

The focus groups will revolve around four areas in which the survey showed NOTL needs to improve.

These include: the treatment of migratory and seasonal farm workers; racialized residents, workers

*Continued on Page 2*

## Hooked on Hiking: Trails should come with a warning to users: ‘Hiking may be addictive’



Happy hiker in a tree at Calcium Pits, in the Iroquoia section of the Bruce Trail. SUPPLIED

Jill Troyer  
The Lake Report

It started small. A long stroll on the Upper Canada Heritage Trail in Niagara-on-the-Lake, or through the Commons and along the Parkway. It seemed so innocent. COVID lockdowns and restrictions made outdoor walking more appealing than ever.

Then came the teaser – a sweet little 90-minute hike with the Niagara Bruce Trail Club in Jordan. Sure,

there were some rocky bits, a slightly treacherous section close to a steep drop off, and some stairs. Well, 118 stairs actually. But hey, we were in the forest, there was a fast-running stream, and not one, but two, count ‘em, TWO waterfalls to gawk at.

Now, this hike felt challenging, so I stayed with it for several weeks as late summer slipped into fall. One of the other hikers was

*Continued on Page 10*

## Town allows propane barbecues in three parks

Evan Saunders  
The Lake Report

Propane barbecues will be allowed in three of Niagara-on-the-Lake’s parks after an outright ban of them sparked a community backlash – but some councillors feel that a prohibition on barbecues in any parks is exclusionary.

An amendment to the month-old park’s bylaw was passed by council Monday allowing propane barbecues to be used in Centennial

Park in Virgil, St. Davids Lions Park and Memorial Park in Old Town.

The decision to allow propane barbecues in only three parks is “based on the sizes and different characteristics of our parks, and after consultation with our staff,” Coun. Sandra O’Connor told council.

“We have some small parks or parkettes with minimal facilities,” she said.

A further amendment

*Continued on Page 2*



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# 30% of NOTL newcomers face hostility, survey finds

Continued from Front Page

and visitors; the treatment of Shaw artists and employees; and a lack of accessibility for the visually and mobility impaired.

Coun. Erwin Wiens, in speaking about a plan to allow propane barbecues in some town parks, made some impassioned comments about exclusion in NOTL.

He lambasted unnamed groups that complain about others “monopolizing our parks” and called out “very white, very wealthy and very privileged” residents for trying to exclude people.

“We should be making people inclusive,” said Wiens, who as a farmer employs migrant workers.

“My wife feels it, as a visible minority, and my kids feel it as visible minorities, and the people that work for me are all visible minorities. And they feel it,” he said.

Among the bevy of revealing data collected by the town from the survey, councillors homed in on question 26, which asked if respondents had experienced hostility in the town based on how long they have lived here.

“That’s a pretty stark slide, quite frankly, to see that 30



Members of the inclusivity committee brief councillors on a recent survey and the next steps on dealing with issues of diversity and inclusivity in NOTL. SOURCED IMAGE

per cent have felt that,” Coun. Norm Arsenault said, with Coun. Wendy Cheropita adding it is “one that really disturbs me terribly.”

The survey also featured extensive written feedback from respondents. One person, who said she and her husband work in human resources, noted: “I definitely think the town has an inclusion problem. Just look at the Facebook group comments today, again people complaining (about) too many Toronto people ... (if) you pay tax here, you are a NOTL resident.”

Sangster also highlighted a comment about racial

discrimination in town: “I am appalled at the stories I have heard about people of colour having racial slurs hurled at them or things thrown at them based solely on the colour of their skin. The prejudice specifically toward migrant farm workers is unacceptable and needs to be called out. We need to expose this unacceptable behaviour and ensure the community knows it will not be tolerated.”

In the wake of the report, councillors also passed a motion to fill eight vacancies on town committees. Eight women were appointed to those positions.

“I just wanted to comment on the increase in gender diversity in the appointments here, and I’d like to thank those who applied and also the committee for making that happen,” Coun. Sandra O’Connor said.

It wasn’t all negative news in the survey and Cheropita noted in an interview Tuesday that 72 per cent of people felt they do belong in NOTL.

“That made me happy. Because I think we are a community that strives from a town perspective and through our committees towards being inclusive,” she said.

Most of the worrisome results were in the 20 per cent to 30 per cent range, she said, “which is not good. We would prefer to have zero. But I think it shows us just where the opportunities lie to be able to correct the situations where it’s not a positive experience, such as with our migrant workers.”

Other positives from the survey were that 97.6 per cent said they believe that diversity and inclusivity benefit NOTL and 92.4 per cent thought it is important for the town to promote inclusivity and diversity.

“The solution will be up to all of us,” Cheropita told council. “You certainly have my heart in doing whatever is necessary to make these changes here, so that everyone feels included.”

Thanks to the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, the town will see quick movement on accessibility issues, Cheropita said. The deadline for businesses and non-profits to file a report to the provincial government is June 30, according to the act’s website.

“With an aging population here, it becomes even more important,” she said.

Another immediate issue for Cheropita, as outlined in the town’s strategic plan and highlighted by the inclusivity survey as a weakness, is attracting and retaining younger families and people to the town.

“We’re looking to attract young families and that’s to have a more diversified population,” she said.

“That comes with certain expectations for education, for accessibility to recreational activities, to creating entrepreneurial activities that are attractive to young people and affordable accommodations.”

# Wiens has problem with park ‘exclusivity’

Continued from Front Page

by Lord Mayor Betty Disero that would allow town staff to add other parks to the list will be debated at the next meeting.

O’Connor told The Lake Report she thinks more parks will be added provided people barbecue responsibly.

Small propane barbecues are seen as a minor fire risk as opposed to charcoal barbecues, which remain banned under the new bylaw.

“The problem with coal is that the heat stays in coal for such a long time. Normally people are leaving the park before the coal has cooled down. As a result, where do you dispose of them? You can’t put them in the garbage, ‘cause that

would start a fire. It’s a safety factor,” O’Connor said in an interview Tuesday.

Since there already has been a lot of debate on the idea of barbecues in parks, some councillors were curious what initiated the amendment.

“Is this as a result of feedback that we were receiving through various channels?” Coun. Allan Bisback asked. “I’m just wondering what drove the decision.”

“I did hear feedback from various people with regards to that,” O’Connor said.

O’Connor said it was based on “feedback from various people.”

“Some from when I was at the agricultural committee, asking ‘Why was this done?’ As well as other

feedback from residents.”

But the decision, though popular with councillors, wasn’t enough for Coun. Erwin Wiens.

After decades of allowing families to have barbecues in NOTL’s parks, only allowing three parks to continue is an exclusionary policy for families who can’t afford to only shop and dine out in NOTL, Wiens said.

“I am somewhat troubled by this, but in a larger picture,” he said. “The only problem that’s ever come up with any of our parks over time has been coals, leaving behind coals. There’s never been an issue with people having (propane) barbecues in parks.”

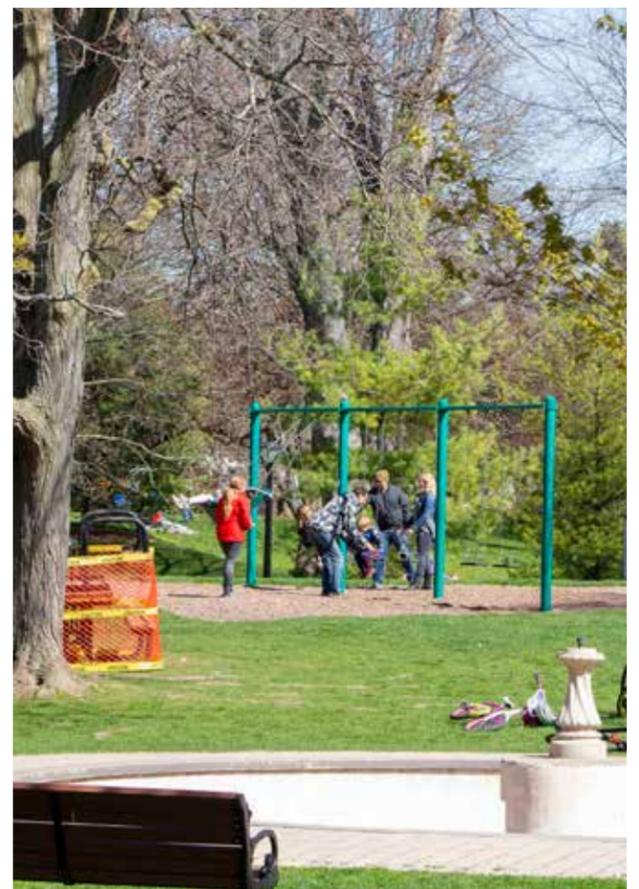
Wiens framed the issue as one of wealthy, privileged members of NOTL’s

community acting as if the parks are solely for them.

He said parks are an essential public space and his impassioned speech convinced fellow councillors Allan Bisback and Wendy Cheropita to abstain from the vote, a route that Wiens took himself.

“If I voted against this motion then what would happen is (it would look like) I’m not in favour of barbecues. That’s not true. But if I vote for it, as a compromise, that means that I’m compromising my principles and I won’t do that,” Wiens told councillors.

The three abstained votes were marked as “no’s” by the town and council approved allowing propane barbecues in the three parks.



Families gather at Simcoe Park. JESSICA MAXWELL

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# NOTL seeks **feedback** on Ryerson Park

Richard Harley  
The Lake Report

The Town of Niagara-on-the-Lake wants to hear from residents about the use of Ryerson Park, located along Niagara Boulevard in the Chautauqua neighbourhood.

A town survey is asking residents their thoughts on what should be done to mitigate complaints about over-use of the small park due to its growing popularity.

The survey comes after resident group Friends of Ryerson Park has claimed the park is being overused by visitors to town, creating parking and traffic headaches, and unsanitary conditions because the park has no public washrooms.

The survey, available through the Town's Join the Conversation platform, is open until Tuesday, May 4.

During Monday's council meeting, Coun. Erwin Wiens took exception to the general attitude of some residents who feel the parks should be limited to residents, saying he believes a public park should be available to everyone.

He abstained from voting on a plan to allow propane barbecues in some parks, saying it was being done to mitigate use of some parks.

"There's never been an issue with people have any barbecues in parks, but then since parks are becoming more and more popular, we've had a very vocal group, a very large group, and they're well-heeled, priv-



Ryerson Park's small beach and sunset views have been big attractions for many years. JESSICA MAXWELL

ileged, well-educated and they can speak and they've used words like overcrowding, or overuse, but they've also used words like 'our park.' We need to take back 'our park,' " he said. Wiens said, "Whether you live next door to a park, or across town from a park or even in British Columbia, parks are a public issue and entity."

"Parks are supposed to be inclusionary for everybody." Many of the concerns about overuse of the parks come from wealthy, educated white people, who aren't focused on inclusivity, but exclusivity, pointing out the town now has a committee to look at inclusion in town.

"When we talk about inclusion, inclusion is much more than just the committee or a report," Wiens said.

"There is no such thing as overuse. There is no such thing. We build these things

for people to use them, to come to them, to enjoy them and if we want to attack people who come to this town, we're going to attack people that don't have the money that all of us have," he said.

"It's going to be people that rent places, and they want to feel welcome, not have pictures taken of them that are sent to us because they're 'monopolizing' our parks."

He said "people cannot monopolize a park" and doesn't agree that people should be stopped from "having fun and listening to kids screaming" in the parks.

"God forbid somebody changes a diaper in public, or somebody breastfeeds," Wiens said.

He said council needs to focus on calling out exclusive attitudes when it comes to parks.

"I've been speaking up against this since I've heard all the delegations of all of this, none of them has been inclusive, none of it. It's all been exclusive, and by very wealthy, very privileged, very white people who live next door to parks, who feel that they have their parks and they have more of a use to that park than anybody else. And that's not true."

"None of that ever gets called out, because the people who are saying it are privileged, they're wealthy, they're educated, they're well-spoken, and they can do that. And so we don't speak out against it," Wiens said.

"So, what we do is we compromise by saying, 'We'll give you this park,' so it was separate but equal. It didn't work in the '60s in the Deep South and it doesn't work here. This is not inclusion, and our parks bylaw should be the last bastion of the use of our Charter of where we say everybody should be welcome."

Wiens noted his wife and children are visible minorities, as are workers on his farm, and they all "feel that" pressure.

Some of the suggestions from the Friends of Ryerson Park have included enforcing and restricting parking in the neighbourhood. Safety concerns about emergency vehicles accessing Chautauqua's narrow streets also have been raised.

# Pharmacy **unsure** when more shots coming

Continued from Front Page

Originally the closest place her husband could find a vaccine appointment was in Mississauga before getting a call for a spot in Niagara.

"Shortly after, he was able to get us closer to home, which was here, so that's awesome," Armstrong said. "He got his in St. Catharines Saturday and I'm getting mine today."

Though she did have mixed feelings because of negative publicity about the AstraZeneca shot, she knew

she wanted her vaccine as soon as possible.

"I have a lot of friends in the health care profession who said, 'You know, getting this one is better than none at the moment,' " Armstrong said.

"I'm excited, though. It's step one towards maybe normal."

Dyck said she's been giving flu shots for 10 years. "And that's been great to help the community. But this is rewarding to another level."

People are so excited they're showing up with their sleeves already rolled



Dyck plans to build a pyramid to show how many vaccines have been given so far. JESSICA MAXWELL

up. "And when they come in you can't see their smile, but you can feel it."

Though people still have many questions about

COVID-19 vaccines, Dyck said she is happy that she can help give some answers and advice to people in the community.



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**NOTL active cases: 67**  
**Region active cases: 2,853**  
**Region deaths: 391**  
**Region total cases: 13,551**  
**Region resolved cases: 10,307**  
**Region variant cases: 2,516**

\*April 28 data per Niagara Region Public Health



**Contributed by Patty Garriock**  
 "If you want light to come into your life, you need to stand where it is shining."  
 - Guy Finley

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## Editorial

# Newcomers are proud to be NOTLers

Richard Harley  
 Editor



From the beginning of The Lake Report, three years ago next week, one of our goals was to begin to bridge the gap between longtime Niagara-on-the-Lake residents and newcomers.

In our front-page editorial in Issue 1, in May of 2018, we wrote that "The Lake Report intends to quench the thirst for a print newspaper in NOTL. Part of that includes featuring stories about locals, both new and old."

So it's disappointing to hear from a town survey that people are still feeling discriminated against because they aren't born and bred in town.

Imagine buying a home in Niagara-on-the-Lake because you genuinely want to live in what various surveys have declared one of Canada's "friendliest"

towns, only to find your neighbours hold a grudge because you're new, or from Toronto, or Oakville or whatever.

While there is evidence that many complaints to the town are from phones with 416 area codes, it shouldn't paint all Toronto people as griping quidnuncs.

Anyone from anywhere can be a jerk of a neighbour. Plus that doesn't mean their complaints are not valid. (And many people who have "come from away" years ago have retained 416 mobile numbers.)

It's not to say you can't or shouldn't be proud to be a longtime, generational NOTL resident — you

absolutely should celebrate your heritage and tell stories of how the town was. We publish historical retrospectives every week.

And you can even disagree with the way the town has become a tourism and retirement destination. But what would NOTL be without them?

Newcomers have often heard that they'll never be considered locals unless they were born here or can trace their NOTL bonafides back generations. That quaint joke isn't so funny when you read some of the nasty online comments whenever a newcomer dares question the status quo. Start with bird canons: The "not-so-friendly" side of NOTL quickly rears its head.

A former NOTL councillor once told us that "People move here and want to pull up the drawbridge behind them so no one follows."

(Well, maybe during a pandemic, but that is another issue entirely.)

But don't blame people coming to live here. Blame the real problems that started to hollow out the town and force locals out, like the municipality allowing the short-term rental industry to devastate neighbourhoods and artificially inflate housing prices, or the school board closing the high school so a younger generation lost its ties to NOTL.

The vast majority of NOTL residents are proud to live here, no matter when they arrived, so there's no room for discrimination based on how long someone has been in town.

The world has changed, NOTL has changed. Accept it, because change is a constant in life. Meanwhile, to paraphrase the late Rodney King, "Can't we all get along?"

editor@niagaranow.com



## Thanks for keeping us questioning our opinions

Dear editor:

A letter writer wrote to express his frustration that your paper seemed to criticize our prime minister, ("Keep opinions in the opinion section," April 15). Apparently he felt that gave concern you were becoming a political hack.

I wanted to ensure you

knew that his opinion was that of one person's extreme view.

I read your paper because I disagree with you half the time and agree the other half. If you only write based on appeasing one political viewpoint, then you become what the letter professes to be opposed to.

I now have to read you

weekly to see if you are totally wrong or a genius, i.e. obviously a genius when we agree!

I suggest the letter writer is accustomed to the CBC/Toronto Star approach to journalism: full coverage of one side of every issue.

Please keep me questioning my viewpoint. It makes

for a much better paper and makes me question my position on issues.

Forcing readers to think is worth the odd critic. Hell, it might be me complaining next time. That won't mean I am right, but it will mean you made me think.

Mike Macdonald  
 Glendale

## I witness isolation at many levels in care facilities

Dear editor:

Sincere thanks to Dr. William Brown and his family for sharing their own personal journey through the unimaginable effects of isolation, ("Imagine isolation in care homes, especially for those with dementia," The Lake Report, April 22).

As a resident of Pleasant

Manor in Virgil, I witness isolation at many levels, not only in the long-term care area but also those who try to "behave" but are confused with so many ongoing restrictions and rules.

Indeed just imagine "being shut up in one room for weeks on end with little social interaction except for meals, the comings and go-

ings of staff, with no opportunity to walk the corridors, visit common spaces or perhaps even get outside for a walk in a fenced space."

Further imagine not even being able to open a window, just a few inches, for just a few minutes.

The abundance of caution no longer makes any sense at all. At what price is the

quality of life — just to keep the statistics down, but watch our loved ones fade away?

Several of my peers are dealing with a loved one in isolation. Their heartache is beyond understanding. They just have to watch it.

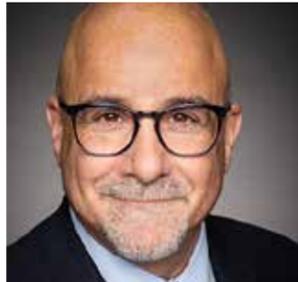
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# OPINION

## Liberal budget **shortchanges** tourism sector



Tony Baldinelli  
Special to The Lake Report

On April 19, the federal government unveiled their long-awaited budget.

Last Thursday, I had the opportunity to participate in debate in the House of Commons to respond to the budget and address its many shortfalls.

In addition to being overdue by more than two years, this budget was well off the mark when it

came to prioritizing what is needed to get us out of this pandemic crisis and return life to normal as quickly as possible.

I continue to worry for those small businesses and workers involved in the travel and tourism sectors, including those in Niagara-on-the-Lake.

The 2021 budget will see the federal government extend the Canadian Emergency Wage Subsidy (CEWS) and the Canadian Emergency Rent Subsidy (CERS) until Sept. 25 of this year, while an additional 12 weeks is being added to the Canada Recovery Benefit (CRB).

However, the subsidy rates for both CEWS and CERS will begin to gradually decrease beginning on July

4. For the Canada Recovery Benefit, the \$500 payment usually received will be reduced to \$300 for the last eight weeks of the benefit.

Those who have been hardest hit in our travel and tourism industry have been asking for these essential programs to be extended right through until the end of 2021.

They provided ample warning that travel and tourism will not resume right away as if switching on a light, yet the Liberal government has chosen this arbitrary timeline, which will reduce supports all while the sector is on the verge of losing another summer tourism season.

It is as if through this budget, the Liberals simply want to wish this pandemic

away and pretend we have already made it to the other side. As all Canadians know, we aren't there yet. We are still waging this war against COVID.

It is a shame the federal government used its budget announcement as a flashy attempt to turn the channel on a devastating pandemic, at a time when it is the worst it has ever been.

Canadians deserve far better federal leadership than we are getting from this government. As your member of Parliament, I will continue to stand up for our local interests in Ottawa.

*Tony Baldinelli is the Conservative MP for Niagara Falls riding, which includes Niagara-on-the-Lake and Fort Erie.*

## More **public consultation** needed for old hospital

Dear editor:

The lack of public consultation on the future of the former hospital site in Old Town is concerning.

During the 2018 municipal election campaign, which took place just over a year after NOTL purchased the site, a number of residents asked candidates what their plans were for the property.

While the responses from candidates varied – from creating a facility to meet the needs of seniors that might incorporate space for programs geared toward children, to turning it into a parking lot – most candidates, including the current lord mayor, were adamant that there would be public consultation before any final decisions were made.

Several organizations and individuals from NOTL also put forward ideas on possible uses for the old hospital site, which included the construction of a public art gallery as well as creating a new theatre for the Shaw Festival. But the common theme at the time was that those suggestions should rightly be considered during a broader public consultation process on the site's future.

That public consultation has not occurred. Yet the former doctors and nurses' residence on the site has



The old NOTL hospital building. JESSICA MAXWELL

been demolished at taxpayers' expense, apparently to make that portion of the property more attractive to prospective buyers, and council is engaging a fairness monitor as part of its plans to eventually sell the remainder of the former hospital site.

As part of that process, it is also preparing to issue a request for expression of interest (RFEI) to seek proposals and concepts for the property. All of this is being guided by a hospital site steering committee made up of town councillors and town staff. There is no public representation on the committee.

In a presentation to council at its March 22 meeting, town clerk Peter Todd explained that through the RFEI pro-

cess, NOTL is "seeking responses that clearly demonstrate the nature of the proposed operations and use of the site" and how that would: benefit the local economy and town, enhance the heritage district and distinct character of Old Town, advance the town's vision – "Working together to maintain our heritage, agriculture and distinct beauty while creating vibrant sustainable communities for all" – and contribute to the advancement of the town's strategic plan.

Town staff will evaluate the responses received based on categories and weightings as outlined in the criteria of the RFEI, and a "selection committee will make recommendations to the town's hospital

site steering committee and/or council before proceeding further with the short-listed proponents to the next stage."

The process outlined to council does not include public consultation on the proposals prior to the development of the short list, nor was there any public consultation (to the best of my knowledge) on the types of projects that might be deemed an appropriate fit for the former hospital site in advance of the RFEI being finalized.

I will be dismayed, and angry, if residents are only informed about the plans for the former hospital site after they are finalized and construction is set to begin, as was the case with the new nursery school being built as an addition to the NOTL Community Centre.

It would also be reasonable, I believe, given that council has continued to impose annual municipal tax increases, despite not having an urgent need for the COVID-19 relief funding it received from the province this year, for taxpayers to be told what NOTL intends to do with the significant revenues that will almost certainly be realized through the sale of the former hospital site.

*Terry Davis  
NOTL*

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## Flowers keep **vanishing** from parents' graves



Dear editor:  
For many years, my mother Brigitte Knauer lovingly tended the graves of her mother, mother-in-law and sister, as well as that of her husband Harry

Knauer (my father), at Lakeshore Cemetery.

She planted beautiful pots with fresh flowers and in the height of the summer watered them at least three times a week.

As she got older, when I was in Niagara-on-the-Lake on Sundays, I watered them to give her a break.

She once told me, when I'm gone, don't feel you have to do this. You can't get here every other day when it's hot. Just put some silk flowers there.

Well, last September my dear mother passed away at age 85 and, just before

Easter, when I removed the Christmas wreaths, I bought some beautiful, high-quality silk flowers and placed some arrangements in the vases at their graves.

I secured them so they wouldn't get blown away, yet when I went to check on them a week later my parents' flowers were gone.

I looked all around but found nothing, so apparently they hadn't blown away but had walked away.

I replaced them and a week later they were gone again as well as one of my grandmother's arrangements. I was sick and was

disturbed that anyone would do that.

I replaced them yet one more time and hope that whoever took all my flowers is feeling at least a twinge of a guilty conscience when looking at them.

Who does that?  
I'm disgusted and I'm afraid my belief that all people are inherently good has been challenged.

I hope that common decency will prevail and this will not happen to anyone else. Respect the deceased and those who mourn them.

*Christine Beatty  
Niagara Falls*

## Hummel lawsuit **not worthy** of citizen of the year



Rainer Hummel wins citizen of the year in 2018. FILE

opinions are similar to those expressed in greater detail by Justice James Ramsay of the Ontario Superior Court, who has dismissed Hummel's claims as contrived and invalid in their entirety.

Now, of course, as one might expect, he plans to appeal this decision. (After all, is this not within his legal rights and is there not still a chance even now for him to reach into the pockets of the resident taxpayer!)

To me this is very regrettable coming from someone who received an award as citizen of the year in 2018.

How on earth did this individual with his obvious interest in personal enrichment (at the expense of the resident taxpayer), regardless of other factors that may or may not be related, become a recipient of this award?

As I see it, this is simply not the action of a citizen of the year.

*Derek Collins  
NOTL*

## Could **retired police** help out NOTL bylaw officers?

Dear editor:  
Having lived in NOTL for 31 years, which included 23 years as the owner/operator of Linden House B&B, we were perplexed to read in the last two Lake Reports about the problems being faced by our bylaw officers, who have taken on a thankless job, ("Bylaw officers harassed for enforcing restrictions," April 15 and "Town offers

tourists masks, places staff at parks," April 8).

In our B&B years we had wonderful guests who have become friends and still call us to meet them for lunch or dinner when they are coming to town for the theatre – although we have missed them for a couple of years now.

When we thought about the problem the bylaw officers are facing and the

time delays when calling the police for back-up, the idea occurred that surely within our four villages there could be Region of Niagara police or even retired police living.

We wondered if one could be "on-call" during the weekends in the busy tourist season should the local bylaw people need assistance.

The response time would be much less – 10

or 15 minutes to the Old Town. This is just a suggestion. After all, a large portion of our taxes go to policing.

It is too bad that visitors want to come to our town but don't want to follow the pandemic requirements.

It seems as though this situation has brought out the worst in some people.

*Elaine and Phil Landray  
NOTL*



**Your turn is coming soon.**

Ontario's COVID-19 vaccine plan is helping to stop the spread and save lives. Thousands of people across the province are getting vaccinated every day.



As vaccinations continue, we need to stay the course to protect those we love. Wear a mask. Wash your hands. Keep your distance.



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# People **dying** from COVID are more than just statistics

Dear editor:

Today the province reported 40 deaths from COVID-19. If these people had died from a bus accident, plane crash, or by the hands of a shooter, their names, faces, life stories would be posted all over the media.

A mountain of flowers and tributes would be heaped somewhere. Instead, they are just an impersonal statistic. And therein lies one contributor to the current resistance to public health measures.

The pandemic has divided our world in so many ways. One colossal division is between those of us who are at arm's-length from the carnage of COVID and the health care workers who aren't; and between those of us who work at home and those who are employed in high person-contact settings.

The people who live with the daily fear that they may be gasping for oxygen tomorrow aren't marching



Town of Niagara-on-the-Lake signs at the entrances to Old Town advise visitors of pandemic orders, to wear a mask and be kind. RICHARD HARLEY

for their "freedom." They're fearing for their lives.

There's my niece, a hospitalist physician in B.C. She's the most fearless person I know, who as a young adult travelled by herself throughout the Third World. She's afraid now,

very afraid. Why? Because her world is not filled with impersonal statistics, but the concrete reality of COVID and its effects.

There's also the young woman who was behind me at the triage desk the night I had to go to the hospital

emergency room. Like me, she had to leave family and friends at the door.

She stood alone, eyes wide with fear, struggling to breathe. I both wanted to hug this stranger and hoped she'd be whisked out of my presence as quickly as possible. (She was.) Since that encounter, I've been prepared to do whatever it takes to not get what she had.

There's a lot of frustration toward people marching maskless in the street – and I share that. For one thing, it probably extends my period of COVID-incarceration.

That said, I understand some of where they are coming from. We are all frustrated and looking for a righteous and visible reason to be angry. It's hard to express anger at an invisible threat, especially when that threat is more present in others' lives than ours.

There is also an information gap that can lead us to underestimate the gravity of

the situation.

As it happens, I am a fan of statistics and my professional life relies on them. Even still, I know that statistics don't bridge the gap between those protected from real knowledge of COVID and those who live with it daily. Nor does discussing the pandemic in a dispassionate tone with the occasional flash of smile to the camera.

Statistics provide cold information; emotion and stories convey meaning and significance. If we are to grasp the dire reality of this pandemic, we need to hear more stories of actual people who have suffered and died.

At a minimum, we need to see authentic, meaningful emotion in our experts and leaders. Why did Dr. Bonnie Henry become an international hero at the beginning of the pandemic? Because she wept on camera.

Forty people died yesterday in this province from

COVID. If my circumstances were less privileged, it could have been me or one of the people I dearly love in this world.

If the choice were between my freedom to live as I used to or the lives of those I know and love — or my own life — that decision would be a no-brainer.

Instead, the choice is between my freedom and the lives of those I don't know, but who are loved (I hope) by others. Should still be a no-brainer ... but it would help if we were routinely given more meaningful information than impersonal statistics.

In the absence of that, though, let's pause when we hear the daily toll and imagine that one of those nameless people is someone we'd dearly miss. It might make those COVID privations a little easier to bear.

**Dr. Kathryn Belicki**  
Professor emeritus  
of psychology  
Brock University

## Ford puts economy ahead of **people's** lives

Dear editor:

As I write this on April 23, Ontario is registering between 3,000 and 4,000 new positive cases of COVID-19 daily with some 700 people in intensive care units and overworked health care workers in need of rescue.

For humanitarian reasons, I support Premier Doug Ford's request for help from other Canadian provinces. Help is needed for people in low-income communities, hospitals, ICUs and wherever the government has refused to bring in paid sick leave.

It is obvious to me that Ford and his cabinet are catering to major corporate funders, the private sector and their base. It is clear that the economy comes before the lives of people.

However, Ford must take responsibility, for the following reasons:

- His government does not take seriously what health professionals recommend.

For ideological reasons, arguably supported by the private sector, he refuses (for the moment, anyway)

to implement a sick leave program as an alternative to the inadequate program of the federal government. The federal government only provides a salary a week later, with the requirement to reapply each time the employee requests new sick leave.

Essential workers often work in low-paying jobs. They frequently have to live from paycheque to paycheque. Not getting immediate help could mean not being able to put food on the table.

Sick leave in Ontario was abolished after the Ford government came to power. So what is important? Health or the economy? To have a healthy economy, don't you have to have a healthy workforce? Will he finally see the light of common sense and do an about-face?

Dr. Theresa Tam, Canada's chief public health officer, recently said that in Ontario, one of the COVID-19 variants appears to be a clear winner. The race between the vaccine and the variants is therefore at

a critical point. Besides the rollout of vaccines immunization, it is becoming clear that we need tighter control in some areas and less in others.

The Ford government should redistribute vaccines from areas with high income, but few COVID-19 infections, to low-income areas, with high incidences of this virus.

High-income areas in the GTA have pharmacies to administer the AstraZeneca vaccine, compared to few or no pharmacies able to do so in low-income areas. Unfortunately, these neighbourhoods voted NDP in the 2018 provincial election. (Note that Ford's Conservatives won 76 out of 124 seats with 40 per cent of the vote.)

- Doug Ford waited until the vaccine arrived to fix problems in long-term care homes, especially for-profit ones.

- We see the result of electing someone who made labels to oppose the carbon tax by insisting they be stuck on gas pumps. He has no health care exper-

tise. Ford is a populist proud of his simplistic approach.

He is a political animal who is aware of the votes instead of listening to the health experts. What is the point of closing parks, playgrounds and golf courses when workplaces are often contaminated by COVID-19?

- Fortunately there are doctors who have the courage to contradict him and act for the good of the less-protected who do not vote Conservative. Some have issued guidelines ordering businesses with five or more cases of COVID-19 in the past two weeks to shut down for 10 days.

The absence of sick days under provincial law is clearly a major factor in the spread of the pandemic. Yet the premier told us he has the best brains to work on the pandemic. It was then that a reporter asked this question: "So where have they gone?"

Let's hope they show up soon.

**Gilbert Comeault**  
NOTL

## Table legs **missing** in famous painting

Dear editor:

I was surprised to find that Penny-Lynn Cookson in her detailed description of "L'Absinthe" by Degas (Eye for Art, April 22) did not mention the detail that I have always found the most intriguing about the painting: there are no table legs.

Below the table to the right, one sees two pairs of legs. Below the one to the left, which holds a carafe of water, there is nothing. It is as if the table is floating in air.

I first learned about this in an art history course that I took many a year ago.

Since then, whenever I have visited the Musée du Jeu de Paume in Paris, where Impressionist art was housed until 1986, or the Musée d'Orsay, where it is today, I make it a point to seek out "L'Absinthe."

The lack of table legs is very evident when viewing the 68- x 92-centimetre oil painting in person.

**Elizabeth Masson**  
NOTL

## iClean and now iPhone charges just fine

Dear editor:

My iPhone wouldn't charge properly.

The internet deluged me with reasons and fixes as to why. Then I found what the most common reason for this is.

Lint from pockets can get into the charging port and

disrupt the connections to the USB cable.

Cleaning out the port with a suitable thin implement works wonders. Don't be surprised how much lint gets in there!

Cheers,  
**Richard West**  
NOTL



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STEFAN REGIER  
SALES REPRESENTATIVE



# Garden plots at B-Y's Honey Farm prove popular

Fatima Baig  
Special to The Lake Report

It's a good thing B-Y's Honey Farm has lots of space – because its 50 rental plots for people to grow their own organic food are almost sold out.

As of this week, owner Ed Unger said only one plot was still available for rent. And the success of the endeavour means he'll consider expanding the number of plots available in the future.

Unger says people can use the plots to produce their own food with only one condition: no pesticides or chemical sprays can be used.

He said the goal is to provide a space for people who otherwise wouldn't have an area to grow their own food. The plots cost \$80 for a 10-by-20 foot space and \$50 for a 10-by-10 spot.

Unger attributes the success of the plots to people understanding the idea of organic and healthy living. "I think people really get the idea to get real products out there and stay natural."

Growing organic food is



Plots of land ready to be used for summer gardens. JESSICA MAXWELL

healthier than buying food, since many foods are grown using pesticides, he said.

"We don't allow any pesticides to be used here, so everything is grown naturally."

He also said parents and families are interested in renting out plots because they want to be able to get outside with their kids.

"I find it very good for

kids to get muddy and dirty. They need to know a little bit about nature and get involved and a lot of parents say that's what they are looking forward to."

Graham Shanks is among those renting a plot from B-Y's Honey Farm.

The Old Town resident first got into growing his own food for the enjoyment – and the fresher taste of the

food. He is growing vegetables in his home garden but also rented out a plot on B-Y's to grow more.

Shanks grew up in England, where community garden plots are common. "It was a great way to feed families and cut back on the cost of vegetables and the food that you put on the table," he said.

He also enjoys see-

ing his grandchildren eat the vegetables out of the garden and learn from him about growing vegetables. They learn "a little bit from me as far as where the vegetables come from and how they grow."

Shanks said he shares the vegetables he grows with family and friends.

"When our friends found out that I got one of the allotments they all commented that they were all looking forward to seeing the vegetables that I am going to bring and be handing over to them this year. So, they obviously look forward to the fresh vegetables out of the garden as well," he said.

At B-Y's, Unger is also the beekeeper. He said he has been doing beekeeping his whole life and comes from three-plus generations of beekeepers who have kept bees in Russia and South America.

He wants to encourage people to grow their own food, which he says has both financial and health benefits compared to store-bought fruits and vegetables. Renting plots of

land for gardens is a great way for people to see those benefits first-hand, he said.

"We have 52 acres here, so we just see what's going on with land prices and food prices going up and with what's going on. People want to get outside and stuff, so we decided we wanted to offer a natural approach for people to come out and grow their own food," said Chris Chabot, marketing manager at B-Y's.

Unger said renting out plots allows for more food to be grown on the farm and gives people the ability to produce their own food.

"There are many people who live in apartments and don't have a place where they can actually grow things. We have plenty of land here, so we'll give them an opportunity to do something with their family," he said.

The work and labour is left to whoever rents the plot. However, for those new to gardening or planting, people who work on the farm are available to offer tips and advice.

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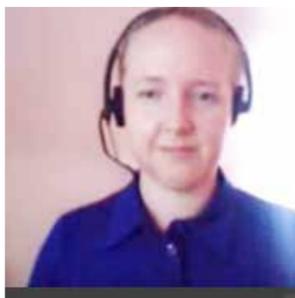
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# Town's irrigation system needs major overhaul, councillors told

## Infrastructure can't meet demand when farms need water most

Evan Saunders  
Special to The Lake Report



Angela Peck presents the irrigation master plan to council. SOURCED

Niagara-on-the-Lake's irrigation infrastructure is incapable of supplying all farms when demand is highest and the system needs a major overhaul, town councillors were told last week.

After more than a year of collecting data and stakeholder opinions, Brett Ruck, environmental services supervisor, outlined the town's new draft irrigation master plan and it calls for a 20 per cent fee increase for farmers this year.

That would bring farmers' costs to \$40.02 per acre for 2021.

The sweeping plan also says fees will have to rise an extra one per cent every year until 2030 to pay for its recommendations. It includes a 10- and 25-year plan for the town to follow in order to improve irrigation services.

"This irrigation plan is long overdue, I think we can all agree," Ruck told council's committee of the whole meeting.

The plan highlights the major deficiencies in the town's current irrigation system and provides several paths for fixing things and improving the whole system in the future.

Associated Engineering worked with the town on the irrigation master plan and ran tests on the system that simulated average consumption of water in two scenarios.

One was based around an average demand of two inches for two days biweek-

travel a whole lot farther. So, they end up having to pay more cost as they go downstream, because they affect more residents as it goes down."

"It's always the guy at the bottom of the hill who will scream the second loudest, because the guy at the top doesn't understand why I'm charging assessment so high."

The report also found issue with some of the town's bylaws, which prevent the town from properly penalizing farmers who use too much water.

"It almost took us seven days to place a fine on somebody. And, by that time, they've already taken the water, gone, and they said, 'OK, I won't use it for the rest of the summer,'" Ruck told councillors.

"The bylaw really needs to be set up so we can give a fine immediately."

The report doesn't just seek to increase water capacity to ensure farmers get what they need – it also includes several key updates to create ease of use for the town.

The report found that the system is entirely manual, causing the town to spend more by sending out staff on foot to do ground work and check the system and water usage.

One example that Ruck put forward was lifting an irrigation weir gate.

The gates are "where we spend a lot of time and energy. Out at the gates, lifting them a quarter-inch, half-inch, down, up, down – it's constant. So we're look-

ing at automating the gate so it's controlled more from the app, so we don't have to spend time getting staff to come out for a four-hour call out just to lift the gate a half-inch," he said.

As Coun. Allan Bisback put it, "to me, (that) means labour."

And so the report recommends that the system be upgraded and automated, with data being collected and sent to the town digitally instead of manually by staff.

The draft master plan presents two paths to improve the irrigation system: a costlier and possibly un-installable 25-year plan and a more feasible and cheaper 10-year plan.

The 25-year plan was more general, with its final goal being to "meet ultimate levels of service," according to the report. The plan also pledges to create a secure water source for farmers, have sustainable assets and commit to all the improvements recommended for the irrigation system.

Ruck and Peck also presented a more focused 10-year plan, with specific goals and rate increases. This scenario includes improving the pumping capacity at East Chester and Whirlpool, repairing siphons, securing a water permit along the canal to draw more water, and a myriad of engineering upgrades among other things.

Regardless of which option council chooses, the report notes that town and irrigator co-operation will be essential for success.

ly, and another high-stress test that simulated a 10-year drought had farms run at three inches instead of two.

These tests found that "the level of service provided by the existing system is inadequate to supply the complete system during those two target scenarios," consultant Angela Peck told councillors.

The test found that water shortages begin halfway through the system, with the farms farthest from the water source losing the most.

"No one ever draws (water) an inch an acre and is being neighbourly. They all want it at the same time and then there's nothing left. So, it's very difficult to manage that (with the current infrastructure)," Ruck said.

As a result, farmers farthest from the water source don't know if they will have enough water for their crops when they need it most.

And those same farmers on the far end of the irrigation channel pay the highest cost for their water.

"And the reason for that," Ruck said, "is that droplet of water that comes off the most extreme end has to

# Errant car strikes home on Queen Street

Staff  
The Lake Report

A car struck a house on Queen Street on Saturday, but police haven't said how it happened.

A Lake Report reader emailed about the incident, saying they believed the incident was racing related.

The car, a 2017 Nissan Al-

tima, struck 157 Queen St. at about 2:20 p.m.

"Officers attended to a home in the area of Queen Street and Simcoe Street and found a 2017 Nissan Altima had left the road way and struck a Queen Street house," said police Const. Phil Gavin.

There were no injuries and the investigation is ongoing, he said.



A dent in the house. RICHARD HARLEY



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# Hooked on hiking Niagara's wilderness trails

Continued from Front Page

about to turn 90 and I made it my mission to keep up with him. It was tough, but I did it and felt a small swell of pride. Those steps never got easier, but the forest was incessantly charming.

Soon the cycle of lockdowns spelled an end to those organized hikes, so as winter settled in, I set out to explore some local sections of the trail with my hiking buddy. Never great navigators, we stuck to going out and back at Queenston and Woodend, two spots with easy access to the trail.

We enjoyed tromping along the escarpment, marvelling at the massive boulders and thrilling to the exhilarating winter air. The joy of sunshine and fresh snow even inspired some snow angels along the way.

Then it happened. In a flash, a moment faster than time.

We had just ventured onto the trail at Woodend, fresh snow dusting some ice patches. A kindly man coming toward us paused to say hello and to tell us the trail ahead was a bit icy. As my friend stopped to make room for him to pass with safe space, distracted by his comments and the need to move away, she slipped on the ice, and in that instant, broke her leg.

Tea, sympathy and medical treatment ensued for my friend. And perhaps this turn of events ought to have been a warning to me. Go back! Give it up! Hiking is dangerous!

But, no. Apparently the lure was too strong.

Scheduled hikes were still on hold due to COVID. But recent hiking acquaintances



Spring sun on Twenty Mile Creek in Jordan, part of the Niagara section of the Bruce Trail. SUPPLIED

conspired to tempt me.

Just as I was feeling the pangs of withdrawal from my regular hikes with my now-injured friend, an invitation came to tag along with a small group on a three-hour hike. Three hours?? I thought. In the deep snow??

I don't think I can do this. I don't think I should do this. I don't think I will do this.

And then, I did it.

There were moments of winter splendour and forest wonder, but they were followed with the misery of plodding along an open berm in snow up to my knees into gale-force winds. That may have dissuaded others from further winter hikes, but instead of feeling discouraged, I felt a stubborn satisfaction at finishing despite the conditions.

Here's what happened next.

In hindsight, I can see this was the moment I took

the bait, not really knowing the consequences.

A casual mention was made, no pressure, no persuasion. Just a dangle ... "We're doing an end-to-end of the Toronto section of the trail. It'll be three days a week, about 15 kilometres each hike. Come along if you like."

Why not, I thought. I'll just try it, I thought. I can quit anytime, I thought.

And so it began. Early morning drives to obscure co-ordinates, parking on the edges of remote roads and heading out on the trail.

I felt like I'd entered a secret world of enchanted forests, sweetly flowing streams, and on some days, gushing waterfalls. The air was fresh and bracing, the smells were woodsy and wet, and I drank in the scenery deeply. I experienced a rush of wonder I came to crave.

Crunching along on the ice, climbing sometimes treacherous slopes, and

trudging on even near the end when my feet were sore and my pack heavy, I felt the fulfillment of finishing something that wasn't easy, but was worth the effort. There was a buzz even in the physical weariness.

And if all of that wasn't enough to ensnare me, my fellow hikers added an irresistible layer of easy camaraderie, light laughter and kindness.

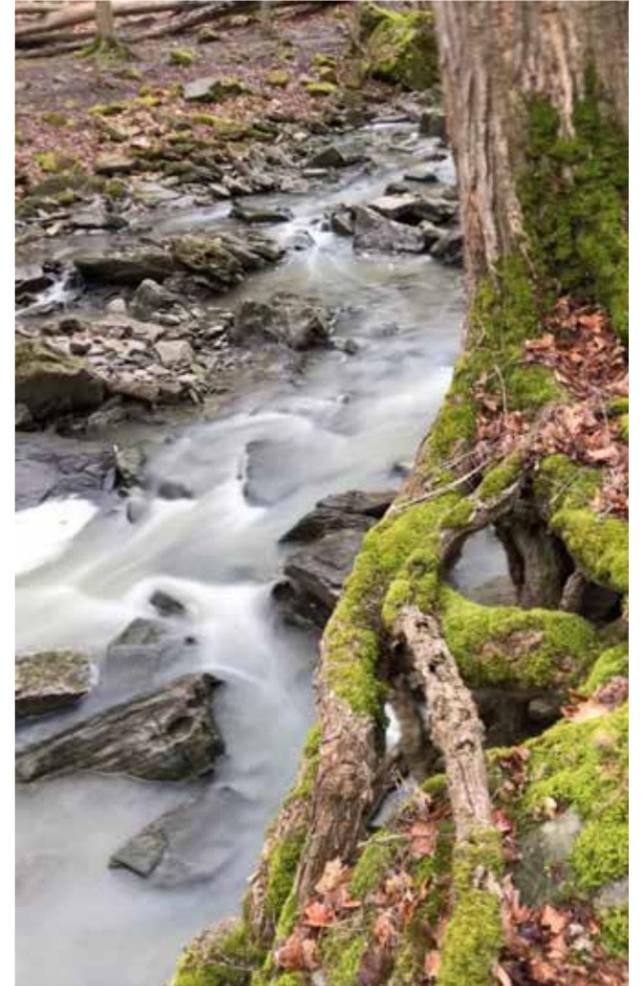
I was all in.

And my obsession extended beyond my hours on the trail.

Soon my Facebook feed was filled with endless pictures of mossy rocks, gnarly tree roots and cascading waterfalls.

I jumped every time the doorbell rang, anticipating delivery of coveted new poles or the perfect new knapsack, to bring a burst of joy on those days I was not hiking.

My focus on food turned to trail snacks and electro-



Nature's beauty on the Bruce Trail through Rockway, part of the Niagara section of the Bruce Trail. SUPPLIED

lyte drinks, and I studied tree species and tips to identify wildflowers.

Even my home workouts took on a new intensity, as I now saw the exercise as enabling my habit.

As that marathon end-to-end hike neared a close, with more than 100 kilometres logged, I felt an impending melancholy. Where would that rush come from once it was over?

I scaled back to shorter hikes just twice a week, exploring some of the many beautiful trails in and around NOTL, as wintry ice retreated and spring mud emerged.

Then came the chance to join another end-to-end marathon, even longer than the last! I didn't think twice. The trout lilies were blooming, the blackbirds were trilling and we were exploring more of the escarpment.

We had finished six hikes and covered 124 kilometres when the most recent round of COVID restrictions forced us to cancel the rest.

For now, I'm reverting to solitary jogs for my outdoor exercise, but the moment it's safe to get back on the trails with a friend or two, I'll be packing my poles and checking my map for the next adventure.

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**Mike Shatkosky**  
Owner



Downtown Niagara-on-the-Lake. RICHARD HARLEY

## NOTL voted most 'beautiful and sustainable' events destination by industry group

Staff  
The Lake Report

Niagara-on-the-Lake was voted Canada's most beautiful and sustainable destination for events during a virtual Earth Day event hosted by the Sustainable Events Forum.

NOTL chief administrative officer Marnie Cluckie called it "a spectacular surprise and honour."

"Niagara-on-the-Lake had some fierce and very worthy competition for this great distinction and we are thrilled to have been chosen."

For Lord Mayor Betty Disero, "This is such a great honour to be voted Canada's most beautiful and sustainable events destination."

"I look forward to welcoming tourists and visitors back to experience all that is beautiful, unique and wonderful about our town, once it is safe to do so."

Only registered participants were able to vote,

with about 450 people taking part in the event. Most attendees were from the meeting profession – hotels, destination management organizations and meeting planners from across Canada.

NOTL received about 35 per cent of all the votes cast, said Natalie Lowe, president of the Sustainable Events Forum.

Following its nomination, NOTL, along with fellow nominees St. John's, Charlottetown, Halifax, Quebec City, Montreal, Banff, Vancouver, Victoria and Whitehorse, were assigned a champion to represent the town and attest to how it exhibits beauty and sustainability.

Shari Bricks, managing director of Bond Association Management in Toronto, hosted a short video highlighting NOTL's beauty and sustainability.

A town official said NOTL tried to "highlight sustainability leaders in the community."

"For example, Stratus Winery was the first winery in Canada to earn the LEED (Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design) Canada Certification. NOTL is home to many wineries that engage in natural, biodynamic, and/or organic winemaking, such as Southbrook Vineyard, Frogpond Farm Winery and Ravine Vineyard. These wineries, and others, are the perfect place to host an event," said town engagement co-ordinator Lauren Kruitbosch.

"There are also many amazing restaurants in Niagara-on-the-Lake that make sustainability efforts. For example, Ryan Crawford focuses on reducing food waste and grows many of his ingredients in his own garden. Treadwell has been doing farm-to-table cuisine since 2006 and also focuses on local ingredients and local suppliers. Again, these are all great event locations."

She said organizations like Parks Canada also embody sustainability "by preserving and protecting historic sites, like Fort George" and the agency's sustainable development strategy outlines its plan to take effective action on climate change.

Cluckie noted, "Sustainability is not something that is achieved, but rather a state for which we continually strive. Niagara-on-the-Lake is committed to continuous improvements, including reducing our carbon footprint and being good stewards of this beautiful environment in which we live, work and play."

The Sustainable Events Forum is an industry organization that started as a single event 19 months ago. The organization's goal is to increase awareness in the event sector on sustainability.

Bricks' video promoting NOTL can be found at [www.youtube.com/watch?v=z63B58hDNnE](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=z63B58hDNnE).

## RIDDLE ME THIS

I can be heard and caught but never seen. What am I?

Last issue: I have 13 hearts, but no other organs? What am I?

Answer: A deck of cards

Answered first by: Sheelah Young

Also answered correctly (in order) by: Jennifer Risdon, Bob Campbell, Shirley Holroyd, Wade Durling, Brenda Bartley, Bob Stevens, David Steele, Mike Berlis, Tami Lepp, Sheila Meloche, Johanne Drolet, Ardeth Staz, Jack Pentesco, Pam Dowling, Roger Marcos, Patricia (plad1956), Maria Janeiro, Mary Drost, Katie Reimer, Sadie Willms, Elaine Landray, Sylvia Wiens, Debbie MacIntyre, June Pozzebon, Tee Bucci, Chris Van de Laar, Carol Von Pasecky, Janice Taylor, Margie Enns

Email answers, with your name, to editor@niagaranow.com for a chance to win a prize. (Subject line: Riddle me this)

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### NOTICE OF COMPLETE APPLICATION, ELECTRONIC OPEN HOUSE AND ELECTRONIC PUBLIC MEETING

**What:** Notice of Complete Application, Open House and Public Meeting for an Official Plan Amendment (under Section 22 of the Planning Act, R.S.O. 1990, c. P.13, as amended), Zoning By-law Amendment (under Section 34 of the Planning Act, R.S.O. 1990, c. P.13, as amended), and Draft Plan of Subdivision (under Section 51 of the Planning Act, R.S.O. 1990, c. P.13, as amended).

**When:** Open House: **Tuesday, June 15, 2021 at 5:00 pm**  
Public Meeting: **Wednesday, July 14, 2021 at 5:00 pm** (or soon thereafter)

**Where:** The Electronic Open House and Electronic Public Meeting may be recorded and will be available for viewing at the following link: <https://livestream.com/notl>

**Re:** Files OPA-02-2020, ZBA-11-2020 & 26T-18-20-01  
200 John Street East & 588 Charlotte Street, Niagara-on-the-Lake

**What is this?**

Applications have been received for an Official Plan Amendment, Zoning By-law Amendment and Draft Plan of Subdivision on the subject lands (see the location map) to facilitate the development of 125 single-detached dwellings, 66 semi-detached dwellings and blocks of land for parks, natural areas and future development all on a private road network. A portion of the lands within the existing Urban Area Boundary are proposed to be designated Low Density Residential in the Official Plan. The Zoning By-law Amendment requests a site-specific Residential (R2) Zone for the residential lots, Open Space (OS) Zone for parks and Natural Heritage System Overlay for natural areas.



**Dialogue is encouraged:**

**Niagara-on-the-Lake Town Hall is closed to the public due to the COVID-19 emergency and in-person meetings have been cancelled. As permitted under Provincial legislation and the Town's Procedural By-law, Council and Committee meetings are being conducted electronically.**

You are invited to attend these meetings electronically to gather information and provide input regarding this matter.

If you wish to participate and make an oral presentation or ask questions at the Electronic Open House and/or Electronic Public Meeting, you must register in advance with Town Staff as noted below. Following registration, you will be provided with instructions to connect to the Open House and/or Public Meeting on your computer, tablet or telephone.

- Open House - Mark Iamarino ([mark.iamarino@notl.com](mailto:mark.iamarino@notl.com) or 905-468-6423) (register as soon as possible but prior to 12 noon on Tuesday, June 15, 2021)
- Public Meeting - Peter Todd ([peter.todd@notl.com](mailto:peter.todd@notl.com) or 905-468-3061, ext. 228) (register as soon as possible but prior to 12 noon on Wednesday, July 14, 2021)

Written comments on the applications are encouraged and must be submitted to Peter Todd, Town Clerk, at 1593 Four Mile Creek Road, P.O. Box 100, Virgil, ON L0S 1T0 or to the Town via email at [public.meeting@notl.com](mailto:public.meeting@notl.com) referencing the above file numbers. Unless indicated otherwise, all submissions, including personal information, will become part of the public record.

**For more information:**

For more information regarding this matter, please contact Mark Iamarino, Senior Planner, at 905-468-6423 or via email at [mark.iamarino@notl.com](mailto:mark.iamarino@notl.com).

A copy of the applications and supporting documents for the proposal may be obtained via the Town's website, [www.notl.org/content/public-notice-under-planning-act](http://www.notl.org/content/public-notice-under-planning-act).

If you wish to be notified of the future decision with respect to the applications, you must submit a written request to the Town Clerk including your name and the address to which such notice should be sent.

If a person or public body does not share their views in writing to the Town Clerk or orally at a statutory Public Meeting before a decision is made, the person/public body:

- Is not entitled to appeal the decision of the Town of Niagara-on-the-Lake to the Local Planning Appeal Tribunal; and
- May not be added as a party to the hearing of an appeal before the Local Planning Appeal Tribunal unless, in the opinion of the Tribunal, there are reasonable grounds to do so.

Dated at the Town of Niagara-on-the-Lake, April 29, 2021  
Peter Todd - Town Clerk



A sign outlining park rules looms over Chautauqua Park. ROSS ROBINSON

## Ross' Ramblings: Signs of the times grow wordy, verbose and palaverous

Ross Robinson  
Special to The Lake Report

Back in Canada's wonderful and chest-expanding 1967 Centennial Year, which was also my second year of Grade 13 at Sir Winston Churchill Secondary School in St. Catharines, our precise and eloquent British-born English teacher Mr. Bartlett would ask us, "Why use just one or two simple words to emphasize a point, when two or three less well-known words would suffice?"

During the current lockdown, many of us have too much time on our hands. So, indulge me while I ramble about wordy signs.

To be clear, our local signs should obey the concept of K.I.S.S. Keep it simple and straightforward. Instead of "This Outdoor Amenity is closed," how about "Playground Closed" or "Tennis Courts Closed."

It seems that sign makers and sign authors are paid by the word. I learned this in 1972 while working at the Olympic Games Village in Munich for three months. The host city had to provide all signage in three languages. French, to remember Baron Pierre de Coubertin, the visionary (misogynist) founder of the modern Olympics in 1896, English, as a widely used international language, and German, for obvious reasons.

Hundreds of taxi stands were verbosely signed "Taxi, Taxis, Taxi."

But back to our piece of geographical and cultural paradise.

What used to be simple and direct has become verbose, euphuistic (look up euphemism) and a bit too much.

For example, I recently saw a metal sign indicating a "Tow Away Zone." It read, and I'm not making this up, "All Vehicles noted to be in violation of Parking Policies will be Relocated."

Right here on Niagara-on-the-Lake's high street, Queen Street, in front of an ice cream shoppe, we see temporary metal fencing and professionally made signs reading, "Cows Staging Area." Huh? Where should we line up?

In a local public park, new and laminated signs read, Ryerson Park SURVEY. We want your feedback. "The Town of Niagara-on-the-Lake is soliciting public engagement regarding the use of this park (Ryerson Park)." Soliciting public engagement? Sheesh, eh?

The newest "Welcome Signs" at our playgrounds include some 14 instructions. To pass muster, we must use parks only during daylight hours, inspect play equipment before using, we cannot run, push or shove, and we must wear proper footwear at all times. We must stay away from moving swings and the bottom of slides.

Do they think citizens using these playgrounds are children? With no common sense? No skipping ropes and adult supervision is recommended. Not required?

Hopefully I am not being whiny. Just observin' and commentin'.

This global pandemic is forcing new thoughts and actions by various levels of government.

Our leaders have so many responsibilities. To name a few: Safe water, safe roads, education, parks and recreation, libraries, policing and the list goes on.

I thank them, but respectfully ask that potential liabilities and potential legal fees do not totally rule the day.

How about providing our beleaguered bylaw officers with colourful, unique uniforms? Perhaps the great Angie Strauss could design clothing more welcoming than the current dark blue militaristic uniforms? Just thinkin'.

And while I am expressing gratitude, let's have a shout out for the hardworking, happy and courteous crew from Circle P Paving. They started at 7:01 a.m. on Monday, April 19, and except for two snow days, haven't stopped upgrading our streets in Chautauqua. It has been amazing to watch. As the foreman said, "This is what we do, eh?"

So, in the year 2021, I cannot find words or energy to talk about the "Alcohol in the Parks" kerfuffle.

My late mother would say, "Goodness gracious me. Grow up."

As ever, she gets the last word.

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Steak and Guinness Pie



NOTL vineyards. FILE PHOTO

## History in the Vineyard fundraiser returns

Staff  
The Lake Report

The Friends of Fort George, NOTL Museum and Ravine Vineyard Estate Winery are hosting another History in the Vineyard (at home) fundraiser on May 20, just in time for the Victoria Day long weekend.

“With this dinner, we will be commemorating the 209th anniversary of the Battle of Fort George with a special video presentation that is being prepared by our volunteer committee,” notes Amy Klassen, the Niagara-on-the-Lake Museum’s director of finance and marketing.

Previous History in the Vineyard fundraisers have been a great source of income for both museum and the Friends of Fort George, says Friends president Tony Chisholm.

All proceeds from the evening will help to support ongoing projects of the Friends and the museum/historical society.

More than 200 tickets were sold for the last one, on Feb. 11. It brought in “thousands of needed dollars for both organizations, while also supporting three local restaurants: Ravine Vineyard Estate Winery, the Garrison House, and Ruffino’s Pasta Bar & Grill,” says Chisholm.

COVID restrictions mean it will again be a take-out/delivered event. The three chefs have prepared a special menu with lots of choices. The food will be distributed in special containers that can go directly in the oven to be warmed up.

With each ticket purchase, you can also purchase up to two bottles of Ravine’s Sand & Gravel wine for \$10 per bottle. The evening will feature a historical presentation about the Battle of Fort George.

Tickets at \$100 per person, are now on sale and can be purchased at [www.nhsm.ca](http://www.nhsm.ca) or [friendsoffortgeorge.ca](http://friendsoffortgeorge.ca). The price includes a \$40 tax receipt.

## Kendall’s Corner



Spring is in the air and flowers are ready to bloom.  
GAIL KENDALL

# Season interrupted: NOTL’s Brandon Skubel plays hockey for McGill

Right winger from St. Davids spent three years in Quebec junior league

Brittney Cutler  
Special to The Lake Report

Brandon Skubel had high hopes for his first season playing university hockey this year. And like everyone else, the Niagara-on-the-Lake native is hoping life returns to normal soon.

The talented right winger, who grew up playing hockey in Niagara, joined the McGill University men’s varsity team this year after a stellar three years playing in Quebec’s major junior league.

His first season of university hockey in Montreal was frustratingly short-lived, though.

“September and October, we practised for a couple of weeks and then COVID got really bad again and then everything just shut down, our season got cancelled,” says Skubel, 21.

He is enrolled in the arts program at McGill, but says he is aiming for a major in economics and a minor in social entrepreneurship.

This summer, while he’s home in St. Davids, he is putting that into practice by operating his own business, Niagara Student Painters.

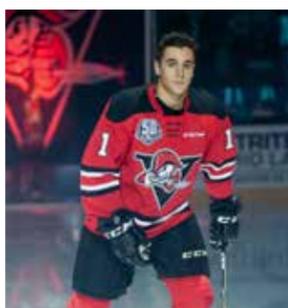
Because he played three seasons for the Drummondville Voltigeurs of the Quebec Major Junior Hockey League, he has three years of post-secondary schooling paid for.

“My junior career, it was a grind. It was a lot of hard work, really busy but a lot of fun, and there were no regrets,” says Skubel.

In 178 games with the Voltigeurs, he had 41 goals and 74 assists for 115 regular-season career points. Skubel also won the team’s defensive player of the year award in his final season.

Liam Heelis, head coach of the McGill Redbirds, says he’s really happy to have a player of Skubel’s talent and demeanour on the team.

He first met Skubel in his last junior year at Marcel Dionne Arena in



Right-winger Brandon Skubel grew up playing hockey in Niagara-on-the-Lake. SUPPLIED PHOTOS

Drummondville and says he instantly recognized he wanted him to play at McGill.

“I knew right away this was a person we wanted on our team. He had a high level of respect and positive regard for everyone on his team in Drummondville,” says Heelis.

“For us, what makes Brandon special is how he conducts himself and treats others,” Heelis told The Lake Report.

“He has a unique presence around him, a presence that his teammates want to be around. His good habits are contagious for his teammates.”

Heelis says that as a team player, Skubel is a strong communicator and a natural leader, even though he is a first-year student-athlete.

Besides his commitment, Skubel is the type of player to practise his skills religiously and expresses his ideas in a way that is clear for his teammates to understand, the coach says.

Skubel, who has played hockey for most of his life, says he began playing in Virgil when he was about four years old. He went on to play elite AAA hockey for the Niagara North Stars but wasn’t drafted by any Ontario Hockey League

teams. He spent the 2015-16 season at Ridley College and the following he was with the Junior B St. Catharines Falcons.

“I went out to Drummondville in the summer and I met up with their coaches and general managers. Then we had a talk about what they had for us and then I chose to go to Drummondville. I thought they had a better program and I really liked their coach,” says Skubel.

At age 18, he attended a 10-day tryout camp and made the team.

Hockey is in his blood, he says, as his father and uncles play the game, which motivated him to play it as well. His sister, Maddy, played a little when she was younger.

“This is something that I am super fortunate about and it keeps me passionate as well as getting to see my uncles still play hockey at their age,” Skubel says in an email.

His father Bruno says Brandon has relied on his hustle and hard work to succeed. He particularly recalls one time after a AAA hockey game around the peewee age when Brandon did not have a good game and ended being moved onto a different line by the coach.

“We had a discussion at the dinner table where I asked him, ‘Were you happy with your game?’ and he said no,” Bruno told The Lake Report in an email.

“I told him the best thing to do was to skate against the fastest player on his team during practice and he went out next practice and did exactly what we talked about. I think this is where he accepted that he had to work hard to achieve what he needed to do.”

He says Bruno applies the same work ethic to his schooling. “As parents, we are very proud of his accomplishments and continue to support him,” says Bruno.

This off-season, Skubel is committed to training for hockey, but COVID makes it difficult.

“Right now, it’s definitely tricky because everything is kind of shut down,” he says, but he usually works out about an hour a day.

Skubel likes to spend his free time with his family: his mother Donna, dad and sister. He also likes to watch a lot of live games and tries to stay as active as possible and keep his hockey skills sharp when he’s not on the rink.

With Niagara Student Painters, he hopes to stay busy this summer and notes he is looking to hire some hard-working students to help them gain marketing, sales and labour experience doing interior and exterior painting around Niagara.

Skubel credits his strong work ethic for his accomplishments and hopes to motivate young people who aspire to achieve similar success.

“Wherever you are, you have to work hard for it. The biggest thing is to make sure you’re working hard for it and looking to improve,” he says.

To contact Skubel’s fledgling company, search Niagara Student Painters on Facebook.



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## Ship slips past Toronto

One of the great sights on Lake Ontario is watching the canal ships navigate their way up to the St. Lawrence River, or various destinations. This photograph shows the McKeil Spirit, a cement ship on its way to Toronto from Port Weller on Sunday RICHARD HARLEY PHOTO

## Going Green: How you can help reduce climate change

Robin Jinchereau  
Special to The Lake Report

Most of us are aware that carbon emissions are increasing globally and this results in global climate change.

The International Energy Agency in its 2021 annual report estimates global energy-related carbon dioxide emissions will have their second-largest ever annual increase as Asian countries will increase their coal use by 50 per cent to allow them to produce the goods that we will consume when we eventually exit the pandemic.

If we committed to reusing items that we normally throw away, we could potentially reduce our carbon footprint by 50 per cent.

The Niagara Region waste management authority in its latest waste audit in August



Avid recycler Robin Jinchereau and his wife produce only one small kitchen-size garbage bag every two weeks. GLORIA JINCHEREAU PHOTO

2020 said half of what gets put into a garbage bag could go into the green bin.

In fact, the Ontario government estimates that as a province we produce 3.5 million tonnes of garbage per year – enough to fill the Rogers Centre five times.

Reducing organics in our waste would mean that less methane is produced and

this would lower the rate at which climate change occurs. Most of the stuff that goes into green bins gets composted and reused within our region.

Sweden has one of the lowest waste levels in the world. According to that country's waste management agency, from 1975 to 2019, the Swedes increased

the recycling of their waste to 99 per cent from 38 per cent. This has allowed Sweden to be a net importer of garbage from the European Union.

From each tonne of garbage the Swedes import (and they get paid \$43 USD to import it), they biologically recycle 15.5 per cent, while 33.8 per cent goes to material recycling and 50.2 per cent is used for energy recovery. Their estimate is that for each one tonne of waste recycled, they reduce carbon dioxide emissions by 500 kilograms.

If Ontario adopted Sweden's methodology we could reduce our carbon dioxide emissions by 875,000 tonnes annually. This would have a definite impact on slowing climate change. In part this is why the new U.S. President Joe

Biden has embarked on a campaign of trying to drive green energy.

As well, consider buying a battery-operated car. According to Natural Resources Canada, the cost of a Honda Accord 1.5L gas car is about \$26,000. It costs about \$1,500 per year to buy gas to cover 20,000 kilometres, the car emits 214 grams of CO<sub>2</sub> per kilometre driven.

The same car with a battery engine (EV car) is priced at about \$45,000. It costs about \$500 to charge it to drive 20,000 kilometres but the CO<sub>2</sub> emissions are zero.

While the upfront cost of an EV car after subsidies of \$7,500 is about \$11,500 higher, if you take into account lower annual fuel and repair costs, it is estimated that the cost break even point is between eight and

nine years. But you reduce your carbon footprint by 28 tonnes of CO<sub>2</sub>.

Over the next few weeks, I will explore how you could reduce your impact on global climate change – and perhaps create a better world for your children and your grandchildren by curbing your waste levels.

We'll look at how to reduce, reuse and recycle with a goal to try to get you to reduce your waste level from two garbage bags every two weeks to one small kitchen bag every garbage day.

*Niagara-on-the-Lake resident Robin Jinchereau has degrees in human biology and business administration. He is retired from a long career in the pharmaceuticals industry and has been fascinated for the last 45 years about how to reduce waste.*



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The Lake Report wants to help recognize NOTL's Pandemic Heroes — people who have made a difference, big or small, in a positive way. You can help us recognize someone in the community by sending a bit about the person and why they're a Pandemic Hero. Please send your nominations early to [editor@niagaranow.com](mailto:editor@niagaranow.com). A special thanks to Ravine Vineyard Estate Winery for providing a bottle of sparkling wine to each of our pandemic heroes. That's the spirit!

# Penner Building Centre staff



The staff at Penner Building Centre, with John to the left. FILE PHOTO/RICHARD HARLEY

This week's Pandemic Heroes nomination comes from chef Ryan Crawford, who wanted to celebrate the staff at Penner Building Centre in Virgil. He said through the pandemic,

the staff have adapted and gone out of their way to help fill orders for residents. "I want to nominate Penner's because they're awesome," Crawford said, specifically men-

tioning managers John and Judy. "I have Judy's cellphone. I text her, 'Hey, I need this.' And she's like 'Got it' and gets it, and then it's getting late in the day, she'll come and drop it off for me."

He said a simple good deed deserves to be recognized during the pandemic. He also commends the staff, who, like many, got "ripped on" by some customers when the

pandemic restrictions began. "I just want to say these two people are like keeping it going. They help everybody out, they're the friendliest people," Crawford said.

Proud of our NOTL Pandemic Heroes

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A heartfelt thank you from all of us at Ravine Vineyard to all of the NOTL Pandemic Heroes. We are all very fortunate to have you in our community

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TONY.BALDINELLI@PARL.GC.CA, TONYBALDINELLI.M.P.CA

# GAMES



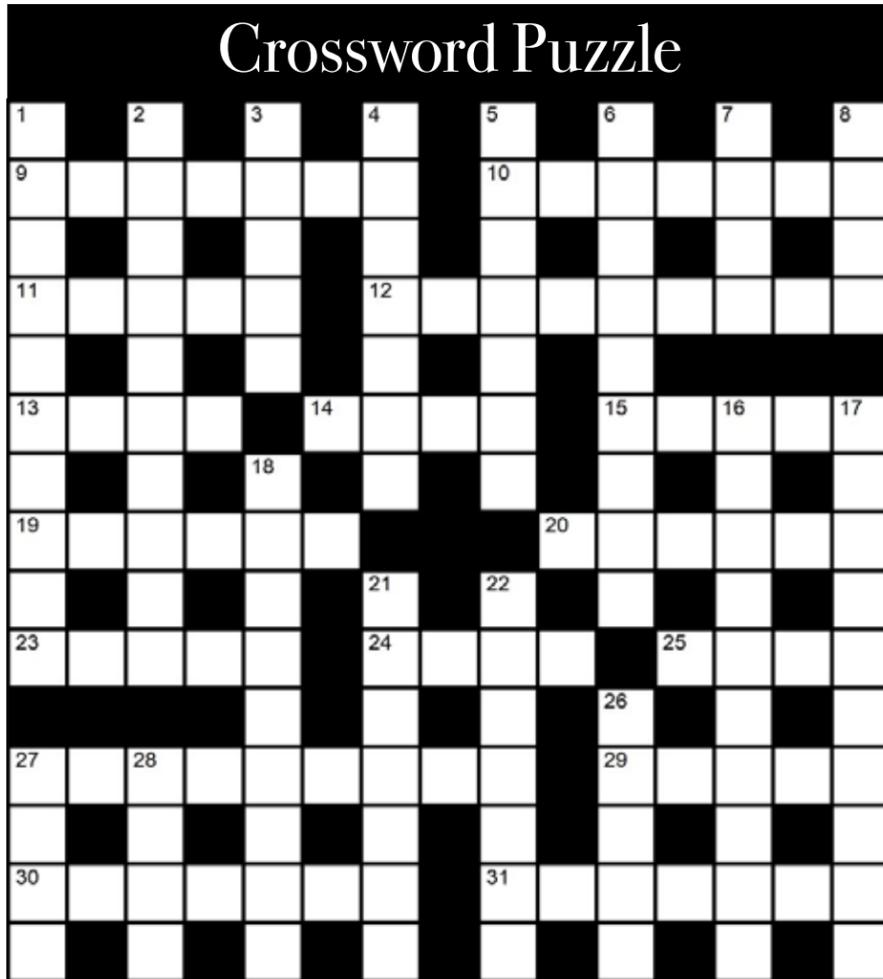
*Have some fun*

**Across**

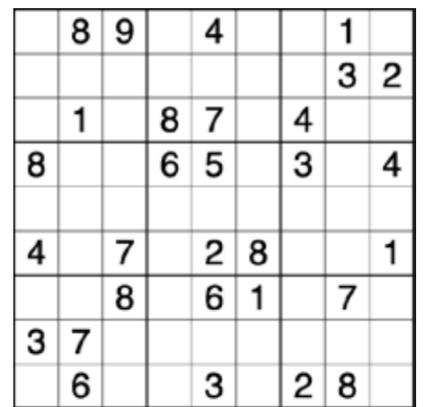
- 9. Al fresco (4-3)
- 10. Deadly intestinal ailment (7)
- 11. What Rapunzel grew (5)
- 12. Collection point for passage fees (9)
- 13. Retained (4)
- 14. It might be proscribed or prescribed (4)
- 15. Winger sliced bread (5)
- 19. Furrowed (6)
- 20. Face hardship bravely (4,2)
- 23. Despise (5)
- 24. Sullen (4)
- 25. Yield (4)
- 27. Community tunes and songs (4,5)
- 29. Rock bottom (5)
- 30. Entourage (7)
- 31. John ---, tempestuous court star (7)

**Down**

- 1. On one side of a notorious DM Z (5,5)
- 2. High level of excitement (5,5)
- 3. Your personal "equator"? (5)
- 4. Rhetorical skill (7)
- 5. Greenery? (7)
- 6. Out (9)
- 7. Turn down (4)
- 8. Unwise (4)
- 16. They can mix zombies (10)
- 17. Sources of Dabinetts, for example (5,5)
- 18. Gaiety (9)
- 21. Eventful trip (7)
- 22. Give in (7)
- 26. Lay to rest (5)
- 27. Grange (4)
- 28. Mandolin-like instrument (4)



Last issue's answers



  
MEDIUM



**NOTICE OF APPROVAL  
OF TAX & RATE BY-LAW  
2021 TAX RATES FOR GENERAL LEVY  
& SPECIAL AREA LEVIES**

TAKE NOTICE that the Council of the Corporation of the Town of Niagara-on-the-Lake will consider a report for the 2021 Tax Rates for General Levy and Special Area Levies at the Council meeting on:

**Committee of the Whole General Meeting  
Monday, May 10, 2021  
6:00 p.m.**

**Electronic Participation Meeting Only**

A copy of the report will be available on the Town website at [www.notl.com](http://www.notl.com) on Thursday May 6, 2021. Delegation requests to speak to the report must be arranged prior to the meeting date. Registrations to speak must be submitted to the Office of the Town Clerk in writing no later than 12:00 p.m. on May 10, 2021.

Final approval of the By-law will be considered at the May 17, 2021, Council Meeting.

For further information, please contact the Corporate Services Department at 905 468-3266.

Peter Todd  
Town Clerk

## Large white 'coywolf' seen in NOTL

Betsy Masson  
Special to The Lake Report

A large white coyote or wolf-like animal has been spotted several times wandering around Niagara-on-the-Lake.

The first known sighting took place on the morning of March 24 when homeowners who back onto One Mile Creek saw what they described as a white animal resembling a wolf.

They reported this to their neighbours and urged them to be careful when out gardening. On the same morning, a group of schoolchildren spotted the animal while walking to their bus stop.

Nearly a month later, a similar-looking animal was seen coming from the direction of One Mile Creek and crossing Simcoe Street. It was last seen in the graveyard behind St. Andrew's Church, headed toward Mississauga Street.

Most recently, the animal was seen on the evening of April 23 accompanied by a smaller one near One Mile Creek. They passed within six feet of people in their backyard. That night, their neighbours heard a loud howling sound and concluded



This image of a "coywolf" resembles the animal Betsy Masson saw. WIKIMEDIA COMMONS

ed that the animal had been in a fight with its prey.

Niagara-on-the-Lake animal control officer Ken Reid says two such animals have been seen at the corner of King and Mary streets and that he, himself, has seen one. He thinks the animal is a large coyote.

Coyotes are afraid of humans, Reid noted, and when he saw it, he yelled and the animal ran off.

Reid thinks there must be a den in the swampy area of One Mile Creek on the Commons. He also believes these animals have become bold now because there is not as much activity in town now due to the pandemic.

According to information found online, coyotes, as such, no longer exist in Ontario. DNA studies done in the 1990s showed that they are now a genetic hybrid of eastern coyotes and western wolves and should be termed "coywolves."

They are most frequently out at dusk, during the night and in the early morning hours. People with dogs and small children are advised to be particularly careful at those times.

There are no known photos of this coywolf, but if anyone obtains one, please contact The Lake Report at [editor@niagaranow.com](mailto:editor@niagaranow.com).

**#SPREADKINDNESS**



## Opening the windows

Penny-Lynn Cookson  
Special to The Lake Report

We're opening windows to spring and flowers and blossoming trees, just as Matisse wants us to do with him in his dazzling "Open Window, Collioure."

It's 1905 and Matisse has left Paris with fellow artist Andre Derain to soak up the sun, sea, palm trees and warm breezes of the Cote d'Azur.

He sits in his hotel room, doors open into the interior, picks up his brushes and creates a work that communicates the positive aspects of life, spontaneity and his own joie de vivre. In this painting, he button-holes us saying: "You have to be here and see this with me!"

Matisse goes to the max, using colour right out

of the tubes. He disregards chiaroscuro, light and shadow, to contrast instead broad areas of green and red, the complementary opposites on the colour wheel.

The contrast also appears in the terracotta pots on the wrought-iron balcony with their red flowers, surrounding green foliage and the red awning seen through smaller window panes. We look out to the red masts of serenely bobbing sailboats, the masts casting pink reflections in the sea.

He uses a dazzling variety of brushstrokes from long broad sweeps on the interior walls to the short, staccato dots and lines of the exterior. Each area from the interior to the balcony to the harbour has a different handling of the brushes, resulting in an effect of

dancing cross-rhythms.

The composition is a series of frames within frames; the wall holding the window, the window framing the exterior, the balcony containing the sailboats, sea and sky. Masterful.

"Open Window" was exhibited at the Salon d'automne of 1905 with works by Derain and other artists such as Dufy, de Vlaminck and Braque. Although they were influenced by Post-Impressionists such as Van Gogh, Gauguin and Seurat, they now moved beyond their values of representation to emphasize strong colour, dissonance and urgent bold brushwork.

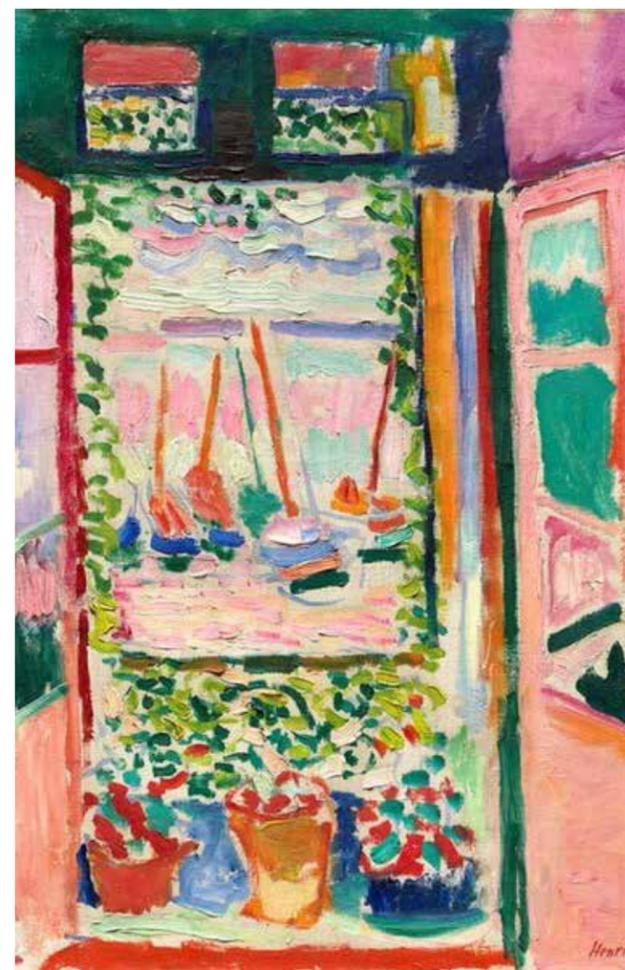
The paintings of Matisse and the others were not well-received by critics or public. One art critic, Louis Vauxcelle, wrote that a sculpture in the room was surrounded by "les fauves" (the wild beasts). The name stuck and the movement became known as Fauvism. It lasted as

a style from 1904-1910 although the group only remained cohesive from 1904-1907.

Fauvism was the first avant-garde movement of the 20th century. For Matisse, the greatest of modernists, intense colour was independent, it was liberating, a means to establish structure, to unify, to describe light and space, to project a mood and communicate the artist's emotional state.

There is no anxiety, fear, alienation or conflict in his work. In "Open Window" we share his spiritual, joyous and optimistic response to nature and life, just as he intended.

*Penny-Lynn Cookson is an art historian who taught at the University of Toronto for 10 years. She also was head of extension services at the Art Gallery of Ontario. See her lecture series "Art and Revolution, From Cave Art to the Future" Thursdays on Zoom until April 29 at RiverBrink Art Museum in Queenston.*



Henri Matisse, "Open Window, Collioure," 1905, oil on canvas, National Gallery of Art, Washington, D.C. SUPPLIED

# Dr. Brown: Not as nimble as we age, falls are major danger

Dr. William Brown  
Special to The Lake Report

When we were children and teenagers, we often fell. And if we had much to do with rough and tumble sports, falls were part of the game with nothing more to show for them than a few scrapes and bruises.

By the time we were adults our falling days were over, except perhaps for the odd fall skiing after which we brushed ourselves off and kept going.

Then, much later in life, falls became more common and more likely to be associated with sprains or worse. That happened to my sister in B.C. who, at 86, was an active walker and doer, but one day fell off a ladder and fractured her hip. Unfortunately, a few weeks later following hip surgery, she developed a clot in one leg and a few days later died from a sudden pulmonary embolus.

Looking back, at 86 she shouldn't have climbed that ladder, but like many of us probably assumed that what she had been doing for years without a second thought was still OK. It wasn't.



Dr. William Brown. SUPPLIED

Sally had a history of at least one minor symptomatic stroke several years before and a CT scan had shown evidence of several other clinically silent small strokes. When she was told about them, she dismissed them, despite feeling a little off-balance from time to time.

And that's the problem isn't it. We're not as nimble and sure-footed as we once were but ignore the risks.

Too often, we fall – perhaps a slip on a wet floor or ice, catching a foot on a carpet edge, tripped by

the cat darting in front of us or our ankle turns when we're walking or gardening – and when we least expect, we're down, without the quick reflexes of our youth to check our fall or failing that, soften our landing.

The numbers are worrying. Roughly 30 per cent of those 65 or older experience one fall a year and 10 per cent have two or more falls in a year.

Some of those falls are associated with a significant sprain or worse, such as dislocation of the shoulder or fracture of the wrist, hip

or ankle – or perhaps a head injury or maybe several of the above.

Falls in the elderly account for roughly 300,000 ER visits annually in Canada. That's a lot of falls and they're probably underreported by patients to members of their family or family doctor because, "I don't want to make a fuss" or "I don't want any pressure from my family to move into a long-term care facility" or "I'll be more careful next time."

And some of those "fallers," without saying much to anyone, begin to curtail their activities and social lives out of fear that they might have another fall.

A higher risk of falling can be related to many factors – weakness chiefly affecting the trunk (core) and leg muscles, significant drops in blood pressure when standing up (postural hypotension), dehydration, medications (especially sedatives), impaired walking related to degenerative spine disease, movement disorders such as Parkinson's disease, cognitive impairment of any kind, impaired vision, arrhythmias of the heart

such as atrial fibrillation or bradycardia and other risk factors – often in variable combinations.

All of these concerns, and others, are important risk factors for falling – some of which can be changed for the better by, for example, cutting out certain medications known to increase the risk of falls, managing postural hypotension and cardiac arrhythmias, and strength-training programs to improve weakness and impaired balance.

Anyone over the age of 65 who has fallen two or more times needs to be assessed to determine which risk factors might have contributed to the falls, including checking the home environment to look for obvious risks for falls.

One simple test you might want to try at home – with someone there to keep their eye on you – is the TUG test, which stands for Timed Up and Go. This test measures the time between when you get up from a chair, walk 10 feet (three metres), cross the line, turn around and return to sit down again in the same

chair. Google it to get the details.

Physiotherapists and physicians in geriatric clinics use this test to assess your speed and balance and, hence, risk for falling. Simply watching someone walk provides other useful clues to impairments the subject might not be aware of.

Falls are an important subject because of the risks of serious fall-related injuries. For that reason falls are the first subject to be addressed by the Infohealth series, which returns on May 5 at 2 p.m. using Zoom and YouTube.

June's Infohealth session is on lumbar stenosis. No sessions are planned for July and August but Infohealth returns in the fall. McMaster medical students rejoin the program in January 2022.

Please remember to register for the sessions with the Niagara-on-the-Lake Public Library – and stay safe.

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



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## EXPLORING PHOTOS

WITH NOTL MUSEUM



## 1955 Blossom Blessing Festival

We are all enjoying the beautiful blossoms on the fruit trees this spring. This week's photo is of the 1955 Blossom Blessing Festival in Niagara-on-the-Lake. Little is known about this festival, so it may have been short-lived. What has been gathered is that the community would come together for a parade to celebrate spring and have the religious leaders offer a blessing for a successful fruit season. This photo in particular shows children riding on one of the floats, with blossoms attached, heading down Picton Street toward King Street. The Moffat Inn building can be seen on the left. There is no doubt we are very fortunate to live in a strong fruit-farming community and we are sure we would all be more than willing to get together to bless the fruit of the Earth as soon as it is safe to do so.



A late-April snow last week left young fruit buds covered — farmers say the white blanket may have saved the buds from harmful sub-zero temperatures. RICHARD HARLEY

## Cold weather interrupts early farming season

Bernard Lansbergen  
The Lake Report

Despite warmer weather of late, last week still saw the Niagara region covered in about 15 centimetres of snow.

It was a cozy “winter-lude” for some and a real headache for others, especially local farmers whose crops had already started blooming.

“When the blossoms are out every year, you kind of worry about it,” says Maureen MacSween from MacSween Farms, where apricots, plums, cherries, nectarines and peaches are starting to grow.

“We were worried when we did have cold temperatures,” she said. “It’s one of those things a farmer has to contend with every year.”

“We’re quite confident there wasn’t any damage,” said MacSween, adding that the pink of the blossoms, paired with the white of the snow made for quite a magnificent view.

Snow itself isn’t the issue, explained Kai Wiens from Queenston-based Kai Wiens Family Farm, whose crops consist of peaches, nectarines, cherries, and plums.

“It’s temperatures. At -2.7 degrees, you lose about 10 per cent of the blooms, and at -5 (degrees) you lose 90 per cent.”

For now it’s too early to say what effect the temperatures will have had on the blooms, because a few hot days are necessary before the damage can be assessed, but the hope is that the snow will have prevented most damage.

“The idea is that the snow covered the bloom completely and, (because) snow is zero degrees, hopefully the bloom was at zero degrees,” he told The Lake Report.

This kind of fluctuating weather isn’t that strange for a place like NOTL. “The climate is always changing,” said Wiens, pointing out he also had snow in his blooms back in 1990.

“If we have an early season, that’s good for us,” said Wiens, adding that this year’s season started 10 days early. “I think it’s going to be a really good (one).”

MacSween noted “There’s a lot of blooms out there. We have beehives and they’ve been pollinating all of the fruit so it looks like it’s going to be a spectacular year.”

## ARCHITEXT

### Two churches, two styles

Brian Marshall  
Columnist

It’s 1852 in Niagara-on-the-Lake and the second Presbyterian church in town had just opened its doors. Built a mere five-minute walk from St. Andrew’s Presbyterian Church, it was a very different building.

The new church was designed by William Thomas who, just a few years earlier, had designed the town’s new Court House and town hall.

Despite being of fairly modest dimensions, this church followed the styling cues of the early Romanesque Revival. A series of proportionally massive piers flanked each side of the building, dividing the

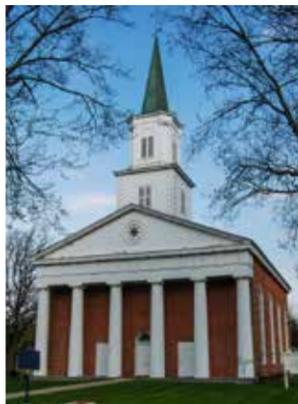


Left: Grace United Church - Romanesque style. Right: St. Andrew’s Presbyterian Church - Greek Revival style. SUPPLIED/BRIAN MARSHALL

tall semi-circular arched windows.

On the facade, the windows and entry door were capped by smooth, stylized cable and tassel mouldings. Following the facade’s gable roof line, set proud of the main field in the contrasting pink brick of the piers, was the repetition of the semi-circular arch pattern typical of the style.

In all, a very clever and striking rendition of an architectural style typically meant for much larger buildings.



A mere 20 years earlier, in 1831, St. Andrew’s had been completed in the then cutting-edge Greek Revival style. With capacity for 600 people, it was the largest church in town.

Its facade is dressed with six Doric columns, which rise to support a clean, simple entablature undecorated except for 11 triglyphs and broken dentil mouldings.

These mouldings are used again on the raked edges of the pediment centred within which is the striking (but unusual for a

Protestant church) gilded sun emblem. Limestone quoins, watertable and semi-circular keyed arches above the windows and main entry set off a brick field laid in a modified Flemish bond pattern.

Rising high above the church itself is the steeple with its copper-clad roof supported by four pairs of Ionic columns. This was a church designed to impress.

The answer to why the second church was built, I’ll leave to the historians, but it was not likely due to too many congregants in St. Andrew’s. It was subsequently sold to the Methodists in 1874. Then, when the Methodists merged with others to form the United Church, the building became Grace United Church.

Both buildings representing two 19th-century architectural expressions are worthy of viewing. And, if the doors are open, the original interior of St. Andrew’s with its box pews, high pulpit and preserved elements is a special treat.



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