



Woman loses job after defending daughter from protesters | Page 7

Blue-green algae suspected as dog dies after lake swim



Declan and Jack were like brothers, until Jack suddenly died Tuesday. A NOTL veterinarian says it's possibly the result of ingesting toxic algae during a swim in Lake Ontario at Ryerson Park beach. SUPPLIED PHOTO

Richard Harley
The Lake Report

A dog that died suddenly Tuesday after swimming in Lake Ontario at Ryerson Park beach may have been poisoned by blue-green algae, a Niagara-on-the-Lake veterinary hospital says.

The Town of Niagara-on-the-Lake is warning people to avoid the area and has put signs on benches in the park warning everyone to stay out of the water. Environment ministry staff tested the water Wednesday as part of an investigation

into the incident, the town said.

Conor MacNeill, a William Street resident and owner of the year-old border collie named Jack, said the incident happened while his seven-year-old son Declan was on a playdate with friends at the beach on Lake Ontario.

"The kids were swimming too. Jack was jumping around after them and he just came in and he laid down on my feet and I thought he was just sleeping from being tired. And 10 minutes later, we got up to go and he didn't get up," he said.

He and his wife Paula rushed Jack to Upper Canada Animal Hospital on Mary Street, where he died.

"He was kind of dead, brain dead, they thought, when we got there."

He said the veterinarian said it looked like "all the symptoms of the blue-green algae poisoning."

The animal hospital posted a warning on its Facebook page Tuesday to advise of the potential threat.

"We have seen a patient today that was potentially exposed to a toxic cyanobacteria at Ryerson Park

beach in Niagara-on-the-Lake," the post reads.

"Cyanobacteria can cause both neurological and liver toxicity and can be rapidly fatal. Public health and the Ministry of Environment have been notified and are investigating. Out of an abundance of caution, we recommend avoiding any swimming (for you or your pets) at this location until they can complete their investigation," the vet hospital said.

As of 5 p.m. Wednesday, signs were affixed to four

Continued on Page 3



Steve Hare, president of Propour Concrete Services works on the new Virgil skatepark. RICHARD HARLEY

Cameron wants to 'put the brakes' on Virgil skatepark

Richard Harley
The Lake Report

Coun. Clare Cameron wants the town to "significantly reconsider" and "put the brakes" on plans for a Virgil skatepark that is already under construction.

"I'm really concerned at how this is progressing," she told councillors Monday during a committee of the whole meeting.

Cameron said she's heard from residents whose properties will "be impacted" by the project.

She also said she has concerns about "sandwiching a skatepark" close to "what was a fairly pleasant picnic pavilion and what is a fairly well-used baseball diamond with flying projectiles everywhere."

Raiana Drive resident

David Brown, whose house is close to the skatepark development, said he doesn't think residents were properly consulted after the final location was chosen.

He said he's tried to get in touch with the town about the plans since June.

"I've sent 10 emails to the mayor and gotten two responses," he said in an interview.

He added he has no problem with kids having fun, as he works with hockey players aged 10 to 16, but he has a concern about noise and the proximity of the skatepark to his residence and the baseball diamond.

"We'll also have a liability issue with regard to baseball and the picnic area," he said. "There's

Continued on Page 10

Noisy, unlicensed 'party house' frustrates neighbours

Kevin MacLean
Managing Editor

Music pounding day and night. Ten or more people partying, with no physical distancing. Trash and booze bottles strewn outside. An unkempt and overgrown yard.

And no help from the town.

That's what Chris and Jane Hutchings say they have been dealing with

almost every weekend since last November when the historic two-plus-one bedroom home next to theirs at Byron and Wellington streets became an AirBnB rental for up to 10 guests.

"We don't want to come across as grumpy old people" trying to stop younger folks from having fun, said Jane Hutchings.

"We'd just like to have some recourse," added her husband. "The last thing

we want to do is phone the police or walk over," knock on the door and face a possible confrontation with the "party house" renters.

The town has known about problems at the house at 89 Byron St. in Old Town since at least last February. That's when a bylaw enforcement officer knocked on the Hutchings' door and asked about complaints from other neighbours about the house.

It's not just any old house: it's the historic, one-of-a-kind home designed and built by the late Canadian artist Campbell Scott. In 2010, the house was officially designated by the town as a property of cultural heritage value.

The house rents for up to \$667 per night. As well, the property is listed for sale on MLS for \$1.5 million.

Continued on Page 2



Jane and Chris Hutchings, with their dogs, in their backyard next to the former Campbell Scott house. SUPPLIED



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Council **scraps** changes to noise bylaw

Richard Harley
The Lake Report

After a petition with more than 9,000 signatures, national news coverage, a satire piece in the Beaverton and a noisy flash mob, town council has scrapped proposed changes to the town's noise bylaw.

The proposed changes would have seen enforce-

ment of any noise above 55 decibels in Niagara-on-the-Lake, between the hours of 11 a.m. and 9 p.m.

Lord Mayor Betty Disero told councillors at Monday's committee of the whole meeting that the whole draft bylaw needed to be tossed out, noting no changes to the current draft would have calmed residents down.

Instead, council will focus

on enforcement of its current noise bylaw.

Councillors agreed, as the decision was unanimous to scrap the draft changes.

Disero said now it's about focusing on how to positively move forward.

A workshop will be held at a future council meeting, where staff will "help councillors to better understand the current noise bylaw and

provide a formal report outlining enforcement challenges," said a town news release.

"There was such a strong reaction from the community that Council felt it best to calm the waters and take this off the table," stated Disero.

"Our focus now will be on how we will enforce the existing noise bylaw."



Ryan Crawford and David Watt sing O Canada during a protest against the noise bylaw Monday. RICHARD HARLEY

Neighbours want town to act on 'party house'

Continued from Front Page

Now owned by someone from Brampton, its online scheduling calendar indicates it is booked as a short-term rental every weekend this summer through November.

Despite that, it is not licensed as a short-term rental property, according to the Town of Niagara-on-the-Lake. But until a tougher bylaw is passed, it appears there is little the town legally can do to stop unlicensed rentals from operating.

The town says it has received and is processing a number of complaints and has advised the owner of the problems. The town would not reveal any specifics of the complaints.

It is literally a quiet neighbourhood, normally. The Hutchings' property, a beautiful, well-kept oasis, abuts the graveyard at St. Mark's Anglican Church. Across the street is the cemetery at St. Vincent de Paul Roman Catholic Church and Simcoe Park is barely a block away.

Chris and Jane Hutchings and other neighbours, like James Booty, said they have tried to follow all the proper protocols – complaining to the town, repeatedly, even contacting the mayor directly, but to no avail.

It has had no effect on the problems. And as far as they know, nothing has been done by the town to curb the partying – in at least one case they say 14 people were on the property – which continues without fail every Friday and Saturday night. On long weekends, they said it can start on

Thursday.

This past weekend a tent was set up on the property, they noted.

And in the era of COVID-19, the partiers – inevitably younger people and often mostly males – certainly are not practising physical and social distancing, the neighbours said.

On Saturday, Niagara Regional Police officers were dispatched to the house about 3:30 in the afternoon and "the resident agreed to turn down the music," said Const. Phil Gavin.

It's unclear who called the police. Prior to that, about midday, Jane Hutchings emailed owner Ratul Kumar, having recently obtained his contact info. Around 2 p.m. Kumar responded apologetically and said he had been assured there would be no more loud music or noise.

Hutchings said there was a brief respite, but then the music was cranked back up.

Realtor Tom Elltoft was in the area and thought there was an outdoor concert happening at nearby Simcoe Park. He happened to be doing some work inside the old NOTL hospital around the corner and it was so loud "my first thought was there was a band in the park or demonstration on Queen Street."

Around 4 p.m. he saw the police at the Campbell Scott house and heard the music blasting.

Elltoft is familiar with the rental property and said he has seen cars with U.S. plates parked there on occasion.

"This is not the first story I've heard about unlicensed bed and breakfasts with



A large pile of garbage bags, but no recycling, outside the Campbell Scott house after a weekend rental. SUPPLIED

out-of-country guests. The concern is not just about noise but have these guests self-quarantined?" he told The Lake Report.

On Tuesday, Kumar responded by email to a series of questions from The Lake Report, saying he is out of town, but added that the property is rented to a numbered company. He said he would respond after speaking to the people associated with the company.

He did not answer any of the specific questions that were put to him about the property or the complaints and upkeep issues.

Booty and his partner Brett Sherlock live on Wellington Street about 50 metres north of the house.

Despite the distance, they hear the music and noise, and have had enough.

"The town is not taking any action," Booty said in an interview. He doesn't begrudge someone trying to operate a business, but with renters causing grief almost every weekend, "the owner is try-

ing to maximize profit at the expense of the neighbours."

Because Kumar, the owner, resides two hours away in Brampton – and apparently does not have an on-site or local property manager – even though he was apologetic about the noise, he is not in a position to act when problems arise, Booty said.

The disturbances caused by the guests are "unreasonable behaviour" and Booty said the town needs to take action promptly.

"We understand the town and bylaw officers are stretched, but this seems to be a clear case," he said. And while bylaw infractions are complaint-driven, the neighbours are seeing no results from their complaints, he added.

"There has to be action from the town, more than just issuing parking tickets" in other parts of NOTL, Booty said.

Another problem is on weekends, short of flagging down a bylaw enforcement

officer who is busy ticketing illegal parkers, there is no way to notify the town when the partying is causing headaches. And the town says the neighbours' only option after-hours or weekends is to call the police.

Booty and the Hutchings say they have told bylaw officers they just need to drop around any weekend, often from 11 a.m. onward, to witness the noise.

They noted NOTL Coun. Gary Burroughs lives a block away and said he also has complained to the town. Burroughs could not be reached for comment.

David Levesque, president of the NOTL Bed and Breakfast Association, said anyone with similar complaints should use the town's online reporting system.

"The formal thing to do is to file a complaint on the town's website using the 'Online Service Request & Complaint Form.' Each request or complaint is assigned a number and processed, therefore it is the best way

to report anything and make sure it is not getting lost under piles of other emails," he told The Lake Report.

"That said, if you know how to reach the owner or manager of a short-term rental, the very first thing to do is to talk to them directly if you have concerns. Trying to solve these issues in a neighbourly manner should always be the first course of action."

Gavin said police officers regularly have to deal with noise issues.

"When we attend a noise complaint and request the noise be turned down it is customary for the member of the public to be cautioned regarding continued or further noise," Gavin said.

"We would prefer people be respectful of their neighbours and the community. Sometimes that doesn't happen or sometimes people don't realize how loud they are being."

Find more photos at www.niagaranow.com/news.phtml/4298



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Wayne Gates MPP Niagara Falls representing Niagara-on-the-Lake & Fort Erie
905-357-0681 | wgates-co@ndp.on.ca | WayneGates.com

Ministry investigating toxic algae

Continued from Front Page

benches in the park, the closest about 25 metres from the walkways to the water. No signs were erected at the top of the stairway or path. Several people were swimming, including a mother and her young daughter, a senior and a couple had their small dog cooling off in the water.

They all got out when a nearby resident cautioned them about the warning signs. None of them showed any immediate ill effects.

Niagara Region public health spokesperson Meredith Maxwell emphasized the presence of blue-green algae had not yet been confirmed. "At this point it is a suspicion being investigated and not a diagnosis or confirmed cause of illness. This is currently a Ministry of Environment, Conservation and Parks and veterinary investigation," she told The Lake Report.

"We can't comment or take action until they complete the investigation and we're able to get true information," she said, adding that pets and people should always avoid consuming beach water.

The World Health Organization says humans exposed to blue-green algae can be affected with "a range of symptoms including skin irritation, stomach cramps, vomiting, nausea, diarrhea, fever, sore throat, headache, muscle and joint pain, blisters of the mouth and liver damage."

"Swimmers in water containing cyanobacterial toxins may suffer allergic reactions, such as asthma, eye irritation, rashes, and blisters around the mouth and nose. Animals, birds, and fish can also be poisoned by high levels of toxin-producing cyanobacteria."

The deadly algae can kill a pet quickly.

"A dog can basically just drink a little bit of the water and it can be 10 minutes and they're dead. It's so crazy. I've never heard of anything like this," MacNeill said.

"He was the healthiest dog, strongest dog. We actually had him one year to the day yesterday. We picked him up last year."

He said Jack helped the family cope with the global pandemic.

"It's impossible to imagine the last six months without Jack. He's given Declan so much entertainment and joy."

MacNeill said the main thing he wants to get across is that this toxic algae exists and to warn other dog owners to be careful.

"There's a chance it could have been something else but it doesn't seem likely. There's a very high chance that this is what it is. But regardless, until we know for sure what's going on down there, nobody should be going into the water with their children or dogs."

He said he wishes there had been testing and signs at the beach to warn dog owners of the potential risk.

"I think it goes without saying with the number of people that are swimming down there ... it should be getting tested."

MacNeill said he wants to spread the message about the algae.

"The word on this really needs to get out. For Ontario, Jack's story is a very big story. We did everything right with him. I've never heard of this algae. I don't think a lot of people have heard of this algae. It blooms when the lake gets to a certain temperature apparently."

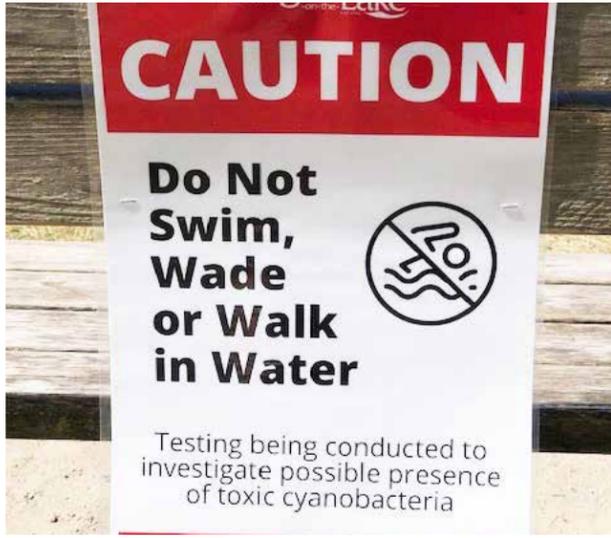
He said if he'd known about the algae sooner, he wouldn't have taken his dog to the beach.

"We're talking about such a beautiful, healthy, full of life dog, just coming into his own. It's so sad."

An Ontario government webpage highlights concerns about cyanobacteria. "One key factor contributing to the growth of blue-green algae is the amount of available nutrients such as phosphorus and nitrogen," it says.

"Blue-green algae blooms can be caused by agricultural and stormwater runoff as well as leaching from septic systems. In Ontario, phosphorus tends to be the nutrient that influences the growth of algae."

The toxic algae, which oxygenated Earth's atmosphere two billion years ago, is toxic



Top: The Town of NOTL has posted some signs warning people of the potential danger of blue-green algae at Ryerson Park beach. Bottom: Pictures of Declan and Jack. SUPPLIED PHOTOS

to pets, and was responsible for killing three dogs in North Carolina last year.

MacNeill said the day they were at the beach, the water was really wavy, so he suspects the algae might have come from elsewhere in the lake.

"If this did blow in from way out in the middle of Lake Ontario, it could have landed anywhere,

and people need to know that this thing exists. If that story gets out, (across Ontario potentially, if one other dog gets saved by somebody not going down there, that would mean a lot to us."

Niagara public health has information on the algae at www.niagararegion.ca/living/water/blue-green-algae.aspx.

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Contributed by Patty Garriock
 "If we don't help each other, who will?"
 – Barbara Mandrell



Contributed by Norm Arsenault:
 Simplify: Simplify your life as much as possible. Only keep belongings that you use/enjoy on a regular basis. By making the effort to reduce what you own, you will naturally purchase less/create less waste in the future.

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Editorial: Noise and **action** on complaints

Kevin MacLean
 Managing Editor

Many NOTLers don't like noise disturbing the tranquillity of life in Canada's self-proclaimed "prettiest town."

Just look at the reaction to the now-notorious Pedal Pub tourist attraction, which could lose its licence to operate after Niagara-on-the-Lake council recommended the region not renew it later this month.

But it seems town council's plan to severely limit noise emanations under a revised noise bylaw was just one step too far.

After a lot of noise about the noise bylaw, including a flash mob protest, a petition that rightly suggested hootin' and hollerin' and Happy Birthday singin' could become extinct in NOTL, this past Monday councillors did the right thing and

pulled the proverbial plug on the plan.

No doubt the numerous objections loudly voiced by residents, embarrassing national news coverage that made NOTL look like the town that fun forgot and a brilliant satirical piece by the Beaverton helped bring councillors around.

Now, the municipality will focus its efforts on enforcing the bylaw already on the books.

Speaking of enforcement and acting on complaints, we hope this means town bylaw officers will be freed up from the slam-dunk job of ticketing tourists on Queen Street, along Niagara Boulevard and elsewhere to stop by 89 Byron St., an unlicensed short-term rental that has been the subject of numerous noise and other complaints. But little action.

Or maybe there has been some action. We don't know, because other than admitting that some complaints have been received and the town "has made efforts to inform the owner," municipal staff won't answer our specific questions about the situation.

As our story on page 1 outlines, Chris and Jane Hutchings, and some of their neighbours, have been putting up with the noise and headaches since last November – and all summer, with a respite thanks to the COVID-19 shutdown.

We don't think the questions we have are unnecessarily intrusive, but like the neighbours, we'd like to know what action has been taken by the town. Because the neighbours feel like their complaints have just been sucked into some bureaucratic black hole.

Some of the questions

we put to the town: Have any bylaw-related charges (or other infractions) been levied against the property or its owner?

As there have been noise, property standards and litter complaints voiced, which of those is the town pursuing with the owner/numbered company?

The owner says he has rented the property to a numbered company. Is the town dealing with/contacting the owner, Ratul Kumar, or someone else regarding the neighbours' complaints?

How many complaints have been received and when was the first one made?

We'll have more questions, no doubt. On behalf of the folks who have to live with a "party house" next door, a few simple answers would be appreciated.

editor@niagaranow.com



Please **don't** change transit schedule

Dear editor:

This is an open letter to members of Niagara-on-the-Lake town council.

We believe that NOTL council will be discussing resumption of transit soon at a virtual meeting, which we cannot attend or participate in, but can watch via the livestream broadcast.

We want councillors to be aware of our concerns as they are considering a new schedule for restarting NOTL Transit.

If the buses do resume running, we would like

the town to please keep in mind the connection schedule for the regional buses going to Niagara Falls and St. Catharines, and also for connection with GO Transit. It works reasonably well now, though it can mean some long trips.

For us, it would be great if the town keeps the pickup stops the same as before the pandemic forced the buses to stop. Mary and Rose Marie are not far from the community centre.

However, Catherine catches the bus on Airport

Road near the Niagara Regional Native Centre.

Unfortunately, the bus only passes that area on its way in to NOTL. So she has to ride the bus all the way to the community centre in Old Town and stay on until it heads back along Niagara Stone Road to the outlet mall or Niagara College.

It means an extra hour of travelling time each time she uses the bus, which is three or four times a week.

That is a long, but bearable trip because the

NOTL and regional buses have been co-ordinated to meet at the outlet mall or college.

This is why we hope the town will maintain the same pickup schedule as we had before COVID.

As well, since many people and businesses don't know about NOTL's bus service, perhaps the town can work to promote it more.

Catherine Starrs
 Mary McGrath

Rose Marie Maryschak
 NOTL

An **authoritarian** approach to town governance

Dear editor:

Abrogating authority, as defined by Webster's – the act of abrogating; repeal by authority – seems to be something that Lord Mayor Betty Disero is developing an expertise in during her tenure as our municipal leader.

Examples of such abrogation keep growing during this term of council under the provincial emergency

guidelines delegated to municipalities.

Let's review, the most evident action was the temporary placing of cameras on Queen Street in the name of securing information related to "social distancing" arguments.

The unilateral action of the emergency control group continued with the closing of Queen Street for

a pedestrian mall.

These actions on their own may benefit the community in the long term but statistical evidence will never be accessible to satisfy arguments during council discussions.

In fact, it seems that council discussions occur after the fact, resulting in acrimonious council meetings.

Next there was a proposed

bylaw, since rejected, to restrict any noise during the day.

What is planned for us next, photo radar for speedsters, just like Toronto? All in the name of emergency planning by non-elected officials.

Really, who is asking for this?

Derek Insley
 Virgil



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OPINION

Dr. Hirji: NOTL has done well curbing COVID, but now **isn't the time to stop**



Dr. Mustafa Hirji
Special to The Lake Report

For five months, Niagara has lived with COVID-19. Fortunately, thanks to all of us working together, we have slowed the spread of infection, protecting lives and enabling a safe reopening of most of our economy.

As we head into the next chapter of this pandemic, I want to share how all of us can help to keep our communities safe.

There are three ingredients to an infection spreading through our community: the pathogen (e.g. virus) must be introduced; there must be close interaction among us so that the pathogen can move from person

to person; and we must lack immunity.

Our response to this pandemic has addressed each of these in turn. From January until late March, we focused on preventing the COVID-19 virus from taking hold in Canada. Federal monitoring of international arrivals, and local public health efforts to find infected travellers kept COVID-19 at bay. This bought us time to prepare.

By mid-March, with COVID-19 now spreading in Canada, public health shifted to finding and isolating infected persons, and tracing contacts. By isolating cases and contacts, we stopped interactions with others, thereby halting the spread of infection.

Provinces instituted emergency measures preventing large gatherings and closing businesses to further stop interactions.

Ultimately, we hope to shift to managing COVID-19 by that third element: addressing immunity. Unparalleled global efforts are underway to develop vaccines that can provide us that immunity.

While we await a vaccine, all the ingredients that allow COVID-19 to spread are still here: the infection is in our communities; with businesses reopening, we are now interacting more than we have for several months; and almost none of us have immunity.

Recently, we have begun to see larger pockets of infection where people have had close interaction. This includes an increase of COVID-19 cases in Niagara-on-the-Lake tied to the close interactions in households and social events.

Fortunately, this transmission has thus far been contained, resulting in little additional risk to the public at large. However, it illustrates the potential for a new wave of infection to arise if we let our guard down.

Therefore, we must redouble efforts to keep two metres distance from each other. We should keep washing or sanitizing our hands often. We're now required to wear a face covering when indoors, but we should wear it outdoors too if within two metres of people.

And we should stay home and get tested if we have any symptoms of illness. Keeping this up after five months is understandably hard. But practising these measures will avoid the kinds of interactions that risk infection spreading to our friends, neighbours and loved ones.

As we enter this chapter of the pandemic, Niagara has the distinct advantage of well-defined communities like Niagara-on-the-Lake that have been resilient enough to endure the disruption of losing physical interaction and strong enough to pull together to support each other.

It is therefore no surprise that we have managed COVID-19 better than other parts of the province, like the GTA.

I believe this will be our greatest strength as we head into the coming months: remaining united as a community to practise measures that protect each other and to exercise compassion in supporting each other.

Dr. Mustafa Hirji is Niagara Region's acting medical officer of health.

No public **toilets** for Navy Hall visitors

Dear editor:

We are writing to you and copying our contacts at Parks Canada and the Niagara-on-the-Lake town council.

It has always been a pleasure for us to enjoy a "front row seat" at the gatherings held on the parkland adjoining Navy Hall.

Over the few years that we have lived beside the park, we have conversed with hundreds of visitors to our community.

We have offered suggestions to these travellers for restaurants, wineries and places of interest when asked to provide them. Weekends were especially festive during the summer months, as there were often weddings held on the site, and who can resist witnessing a wedding ceremony?

The COVID-19 pandemic has changed everything. Un-



A sailboat passes by Navy Hall. FILE/BRITTANY CARTER

like the other public outdoor spaces within our town that have reopened for visitation from the public, Navy Hall, which is overseen by the federal government, has no open toilet facilities.

It also has no staff presence on the weekends. It is a federal facility within the confines of the municipality of Niagara-on-the-Lake. As such we are all stakeholders in this dilemma.

Over the past several months during the many

stages of "emergency" in our town, we have witnessed a frightening disregard for propriety and decency.

Large groups of visitors start arriving at the park as early as 6 a.m. to claim their shaded area of picnic ground along the water's edge, and they often do not leave until late afternoon.

Our beautiful destination area is being turned into a public toilet. During the past weeks we have

observed many visitors urinating, defecating and disposing feminine hygiene and other paper products at the river's edge.

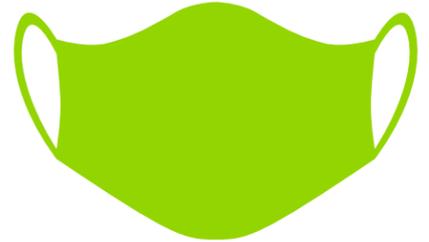
The small shoreline corner of our property that borders the park has a steady lineup of men who leave their fishing poles at the Navy Hall dock and walk over to relieve themselves. We cannot avoid seeing these instances from most vantage points in our home.

In reopening our town to visitors and tourism with the obvious benefits to our economy, there also needs to be appropriate oversight of same.

Until this oversight can be provided routinely, we respectfully suggest that this facility return to restricted access.

*Nancy and Fred Ross
NOTL*

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Niagara Region



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Examples of NOTL's **dwindling** green space

Dear editor:

While playing at the Niagara-on-the-Lake Golf Club last week I was dismayed to see a big, beautiful, healthy maple tree being cut down.



in the first place?).

We approached the workers who told us all the trees were being cut down to make way for a road to the fort. (There we already several trees down in the gully). The location of this is beside the seventh green and behind the eighth tee box (pictured).

Apparently Parks Canada is building a walkway to Fort Mississauga for more visitors (how many visitors to that fort do they really get

From a safety perspective, this could pose a danger to these tourists walking behind two of the greens on the course's perimeter, not to mention how to stop them from coming onto the course.

But more than that, one of the sad things to me is

that when we were on the first green, which also backs onto this green space, we saw a red fox run past and into these woods. These woods could be their home.

Then today, while on a walk, I saw a large sign that has been erected in Chautauqua on the corner of William and Circle streets for a "proposed subdivision." Niagara-on-the-Lake was a small, unique town full of charm. That is why we live here. We are losing this charm and becoming a series of subdivisions.

This subdivision's location is one of the last wooded areas in town, an area that

is home to deer, red foxes and coyotes, to name a few. This is their home as well as ours.

Who is supposed to protect them and preserve our ever dwindling greenspace? We are losing so much of this green space around town, and destroying more natural habitats of our wildlife needlessly. Do we really need to destroy this land for more homes?

I can't be the only one who feels this way. Do we wait until it's all gone before we decide we made a mistake?

*Cathy Rye
NOTL*



NOTL Pedal Pushers for Palliative Care. FILE PHOTO

Help NOTL Community Fund help NOTL during pandemic

Dear editor:

In the July 23 edition of The Lake Report we read the heroic stories of nine charities in NOTL who have adapted to meet the growing demands of our community throughout the COVID-19 pandemic.

As was noted in that article, charities have suffered a "double hit" seeing an increase in demand for services and a decrease in revenue with the cancellation of fundraising efforts and events.

Despite these challenging times, our local charities continue to step up to the plate by providing the services needed. From palliative care services, current health challenges, our charitable sector continues to be there for our town in this time of need. But now it is our time to step up to the plate and support them.

Five years ago, under the leadership of then-Lord Mayor Patrick Darte, a group of passionate residents, leaders and philanthropists came together to form the Niagara-on-the-Lake Community Fund, an endowment fund held in perpetuity, under the umbrella of the Niagara Community Foundation. Our goal from the beginning was to create a fund that would support our charitable sector in their time of need.

When COVID-19 hit, we were in a position to help, through both our local fund and the bigger Niagara Community Foundation funds. Thank you to all those who have over the years contributed to make this possible.

Since the pandemic hit in March, the NOTL Community Fund has been able to contribute \$38,000 here in Niagara-on-the-Lake to meet current needs. The Niagara Community Foundation has invested \$300,000 into the Niagara Region's

charitable sector, including \$20,000 from the NOTL Healthcare Foundation Fund to support the emergency needs of our community.

On top of this impressive investment, the foundation facilitated the dispersal of over \$900,000 of federal funds to charities across Niagara. They have been there for the charitable sector at each turn of this pandemic and will continue to ride the wave as we transition into the recovery phase. It can't be done without all of us collectively involved!

As a proud resident of NOTL, I am acutely aware that as a tourist town with a mature population, there is a "double hit" in our vulnerabilities to the COVID-19 virus. As The Lake Report has urged us before, we need to remain vigilant to maintain the health of our community, however we also need to remain vigilant to ensure our charitable sector is not let down under the pressure and unknown future.

Just as the NOTL charities support those most vulnerable in our community, we, the residents, need to step up to the plate as well. Everyone's support is needed and appreciated.

Please consider supporting our local charities by contacting the Niagara Community Foundation or a member of the NOTL Fund Committee to make a donation or to create an endowment fund that will not only meet the needs of today but will be ready for the double hit of the future.

The NOTL Fund committee members include Nancy Bailey, Ann-Louise Branscombe, Wendy Cheropita, Patrick Darte, Mario Ferrara, Brianne Hawley, Debi Pratt and Shawn Spiewak.

*Mike Berlis
Chair
NOTL Community Fund
niagaracommunity
foundation.org*

Let's get head start on St. Davids pool

Dear editor:

As we were made aware of last year, this was to be the final summer for the St. Davids pool as designs were being prepared for a new facility. We were prepared to have the pool closed after this summer.

However, the recent decision not to open the St. Davids Community Pool this summer left many families without their much needed and loved recreational facility.

Although very disappointing, this early closure due to the pandemic does create

a tremendous opportunity for the pool's future. By not opening the pool could not the money allocated for this year's operational costs be diverted to help fund the new facility? These funds could then be used to decommission the existing pool this year. Also, by tendering now for the demolition of the existing pool and facilities this would accelerate the construction schedule by up to a year.

While awaiting a decision on provincial funding and grants, the architects and engineers could proceed with

the final design and contract documents. With a little imagination, the consultants could incorporate contingencies into these documents to align with the final government funding amount. This would allow for a spring tender and an early 2021 summer construction start.

It is very easy to respond with the standard array of excuses such as, "yea, but...", or "what about...", or "we can't because...", but the reality is YES YOU CAN! What is necessary is a little hard work, imagination, creativity, and some decisive

leadership.

We understand that the mayor and council are dealing with serious issues at the present time with the pandemic that have seriously affected our town, however these are not valid excuses for brushing this aside and not addressing this matter.

I would encourage our residents to phone, email, contact the mayor and councilors in order to provide some positive encouragement. They need to hear our voices.

*Richard Sammons
St. Davids*

Toastmasters is **fun, inclusive** community

Dear editor:

Having been a member of a Toastmasters club in Toronto in the 1960s, I considered joining the startup NOTL club when I first learned of it, but didn't fancy trekking in a snowstorm from the Old Town to the club's location in the boonies. Sorry, Glendale.

That's probably for the best, because Brittany Carter's story ("All hail the toastmaster," July 30) made it all sound as serious as an MBA seminar. It needn't be.

The Toronto club met at lunchtime in the Franz Josef Room of the Walker House Hotel at the foot of University Avenue, now the site of a 19-storey tower. It was the perfect spot for four editors at Maclean-Hunter just up the street.

We had no idea we were pushing our comfort zone because the phrase wasn't in the lexicon. The club was portrayed as a way to overcome the jitters when speaking in public and be gently corrected and advised by a sympathetic audience. And it was to be fun.

Sympathetic or not, we would bait each other when one was speaking. I don't remember whether that was allowed but a toastmaster should be prepared for hecklers.

One editor habitually wore toe rubbers even when no rain was forecast. He never heard the end of it. When the district director was in the audience we were particularly careful to avoid "ums," "ahs" or "I means." He was unforgiving

about those "word whiskers," as he called them.

A pleasure at every meeting was, on short notice, having to talk for one minute on a topic. None of us became a Kenneth Williams or Clement Freud of the long-running BBC program "Just a Minute," but we did learn to avoid hesitation, repetition and deviation.

One of my colleagues, upset with the unsalted butter served with the buns, always managed to insert into his presentations a swipe at "this cow grease." OK, that would have been deviation.

Speaking of repetition, in his interview, distinguished Toastmaster Miguel Mori used "move forward" three times. He would not have got away with even the second mention in the Franz Josef

Room. Gently of course, but mercilessly.

Toastmasters gave me confidence to address groups of various sizes with no qualms. When my boss, who taught a university evening class in journalism, asked me to sub for him I didn't hesitate — even though the subject that night was editorial writing and I had never written an editorial.

He supplied me with enough examples so I was able to wing it. None of my students threw a bun at me, something I had done to a colleague at a Toastmasters session, so I was ready for anything.

Ah yes, things were different then.

*Don Cameron
NOTL*




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Mother **fired** after defending daughter against protesters

Richard Harley
The Lake Report

A Niagara woman has lost her job, after a video of her trying to protect her 16-year-old daughter from NOTL horse carriage protesters was sent to her employer.

The woman, Elizabeth Beattie, was fired from AutoValue Hyundai in Niagara Falls after being filmed telling protesters to leave her daughter alone.

Her daughter Hailey works for Sentineal Carriages in Niagara-on-the-Lake, which for three years has been a regular target of protests by animal rights activists.

On multiple occasions the protesters have verbally accosted carriage operators and customers, including children, and recently a pregnant mother and her two-year-old daughter.

Beattie said the company fired her because she was wearing a company name tag when she was filmed July 4.

She said she was so concerned for her daughter that she forgot to take the nametag off, heading straight to Old Town after she got off work at 4 p.m.

“My daughter text messaged me one day saying, ‘Mom, the protesters are here. I’m scared.’ So right after work, I came downtown and I was still wearing my name tag from work because I was so upset that I didn’t realize I didn’t take it off,” she said.

She said all she wanted that day was for protesters, specifically a man named Jason King, to leave her daughter alone.

“When I arrived, I approached Jason King and I asked him several times to please leave my child alone,” she said.

“(Protesters) then posted an edited video on YouTube,” she said. The footage of Beattie is interspersed with other unrelated videos.

Beattie points out the nametag isn’t legible in the video. The tag is attached to a lanyard around her neck and it flops around during the video, making it difficult to read or recognize.

The video, which calls her a “Karen” (a derogatory term



Elizabeth Beattie was fired from AutoValue Hyundai after defending her young daughter. SOURCED

for women who are vocal in expressing concerns) was sent to every salesperson at the Hyundai dealership at about 2 a.m. on Aug. 7.

“This is what your employee, Elizabeth Beatrice, does on her time off,” the message said.

“Watch the entire video. My family lives in the area and sent the link of the video to me. Needless to say, they won’t be doing business at your dealership. They are also sending the link of the video to all the people they know in the area so they do not consider doing business at your dealership. I suggest you think about the kind of people you want working for your company,” it threatens.

The message was signed by a Shelly Johns, though it is not clear if that person is the sender. Prior to the email, King tried to send the video to the dealership’s Facebook page, but it was removed.

The video also is posted on a YouTube channel called Vegan Gaze, and is cut and edited to accentuate Beattie’s response, in some parts repeating parts of the video and using dramatic music alongside clips of Beattie.

In the video, Beattie asks protesters to stop filming her daughter, and suggests they go protest at Marineland instead of the carriages, pointing out that many of the carriage horses are saved from slaughter.

“Stop making people feel bad for doing their job, for trying to live,” Beattie can be heard saying.

“You’re making children feel unsafe.”

Also in the video, while being recorded herself, Beattie starts to record back, say-

ing, “How do you like it?”

She then follows the protesters and tells them if they have the right to stand on the sidewalk, then so does she.

Beattie was fired later in the day on Aug. 7 over the video. She was a service co-ordinator and had worked at the dealership since Jan. 2, 2020.

Beattie said her employer didn’t do an investigation into who sent the video and that the day she was fired she felt she was coerced into signing a termination letter, which she hadn’t even read because she had tears in her eyes.

“They pointed to where I needed to sign, and I said to them, ‘Sorry I can’t even hold a pen, I have so many tears I can’t see.’”

AutoValue Hyundai controller Meghan Cousineau said Beattie was fired because she was wearing “business accessories” and the incident of her defending her daughter is “reflecting poorly” on the business.

“Unfortunately, she was wearing business-related accessories,” Cousineau said, during a phone interview, adding the company has also now been harassed.

“We’ve already been taking some abuse this morning ourselves,” she said.

She said while what Beattie does on her own time is “her business,” the dealership treated the incident as if she was on company time because she was wearing her name tag.

“What she does in her own time is her business but she was being careless, unfortunately, acting out of anger, I guess you could say, and she neglected to take off her (name tag). It’s reflecting

poorly on us.”

In the video, the name tag is visible but not legible.

However, Cousineau said “any business would be” concerned about public blowback from the way Beattie behaved on the video.

“We don’t agree with her behaviour. We made that quite clear with her. And, you know what, unfortunately there’s consequences to everybody’s actions,”

However, Cousineau said she sympathizes with Beattie in trying to defend her daughter.

“Obviously we’re all parents here, we all want to defend our kids. However, that being said, our behaviour and in doing such things needs to be appropriate. And unfortunately, the video that is surfacing only shows her poor behaviour,” she said.

“Perhaps there was other behaviour from the protesters, I have no doubt about that. I don’t employ the protesters, however. And if that’s going to be her behaviour on a public street, I just can’t take the chance that she’s going to have poor behaviour at work and do harm to a customer. She didn’t really show any care or concern for that in the footage that everybody has seen.”

She said she’s unaware of the continued protests by animal rights activists in NOTL, but that “there are consequences to actions.”

“I’m not a resident of Niagara-on-the-Lake so perhaps I’m not up to speed on all the nitty gritty, but, you know, protests are supposed to be peaceful. They’re supposed to kind of abide by certain rules. She wasn’t abiding by that. And, unfortunately, maybe the video is one-sided, but there are consequences to actions when they fall outside of the appropriate societal rules.”

She added that she isn’t siding with either party.

“The protest really isn’t what the issue was about. It’s her specific behaviour in (the video) — her very disrespectful actions, getting in people’s faces, following them up and down the street, yelling ... that behaviour is not necessary and that behaviour is unbecoming of any individual, employed,

not employed, it really doesn’t matter.”

Beattie said she thinks the firing constitutes wrongful dismissal. She said she has currently not received any severance pay.

The termination letter, signed by general manager Ralph Sheuermann, warns the company could pursue legal action against her in the future if she says anything bad about the company.

“You shall refrain from making any statements contrary to the best interests of the company,” her letter warns. “In particular, you shall not make adverse or unfavourable public statements concerning the company or your relationship with the company (whether verbal, in writing, via social media or in any other manner).”

She was also asked to agree not to discuss the termination letter with anyone besides her family, legal counsel, accountant or financial adviser.

“From my understanding it was the fact that I had my name tag on still. I did remove my name tag, once I realized it was on me. But I didn’t get any warning or written up or anything, it was just straight let go,” Beattie said.

She said she doesn’t think there’s been any consequences for protesters actively trying to sabotage her job, or for harassing a minor.

She’s called police, she said, but they have done nothing.

“I called the police for harassment. And they said, ‘We will call Jason and tell him to stop,’ “ however police told her they would not press charges, even though they believe the protesters actions to be harassment, Beattie said, fighting tears during an interview.

“I feel that I can’t rely on the police for their help. I feel that if I call them they think I’m a joke,” she said.

She said she also tried to report the incident of her daughter being harassed to police, but she had to call numerous times before an officer came to take a statement. Beattie said she called 911 to report it, but police didn’t come to take a statement. So she called again the next day, and again they

didn’t come. The following day, after calling again, an officer showed up at about 11 p.m.

Now, she said she doesn’t feel police are protecting her.

“The fact that I called 911 and no one followed up with me and I had to do two follow-ups in three days for a police officer to come to my home scares me,” she said.

Beattie said she doesn’t blame her employers as much as she blames police for not enforcing charges of harassment on King.

“It was a great company to work for, and I know they felt bad for letting me go,” she said, adding she would likely take her job back if offered.

“I don’t hold anything against them. They’re just doing their job. I’m just heartbroken that it turned out this way. Had the police actually stepped up in the first place and charged Jason King with harassment the first time he went after my employers and when he made the video, then maybe we wouldn’t be here right now.”

She said she thinks it’s important to add that the protesters are attacking anyone who doesn’t subscribe to their beliefs, which she thinks is wrong and a violation of her own rights.

“For them to attack everybody who doesn’t believe in the same things that they believe in is wrong. And I give them respect for protesting for animals that can’t speak their mind. I don’t condemn them for doing what they’re doing. But if someone doesn’t believe in the same things you do, it doesn’t mean you can attack them and affect their place of employment and their whole life.”

Hailey is still working for the carriage company, and Beattie got her a camera so she can record when she feels threatened and intimidated.

To date, Niagara Regional Police have not laid any criminal charges for harassment against protesters, despite pleas from the carriage operators and residents of NOTL.

The video can be viewed at www.youtube.com/watch?v=UpuQ1xIqPHU

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Answered first by: Margaret Garaughty

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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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<p>COVID-19</p> <p>Due to COVID-19, many events are now virtual. Find a list of NOTL events here week to week.</p> <p>Stay safe, wash your hands, wear a mask and distance whenever possible.</p>			
<p>16</p> <p>Walking Tours of Historic NOTL - 11 a.m. - Queen's Royal Park</p> <p>Yoga in the Vineyard - 10 a.m. - Lakeview Wine Co.</p> <p>Fife and Drum Muster and Soliders Field Day - 10 a.m. - Fort George</p> <p>Ludwig in Vienna: Three Pearls - 4 p.m. - Virtual: Facebook @MusicNiagaraFestival</p>	<p>17</p> <p>Committee of the Whole: General - 6 p.m. - Virtual: https://notl.org/content/livestream-broadcast</p> <p>Morning Zoom Art Program: Paint - 9 a.m. - https://niagarapumphouse.ca/programs/registration</p> <p>Afternoon Zoom Art Program: Paint - 1 p.m. - https://niagarapumphouse.ca/programs/registration</p>	<p>18</p> <p>Virtual Coffee with the Lord Mayor - 6 p.m. - Virtual: https://www.notl.org/content/virtual-coffee-lord-mayor</p> <p>Desiree's Ride Bike Nights - 7 p.m. - Club 55</p> <p>Outdoor Sketching - 9 a.m. - Niagara Pumphouse Arts Centre</p>	<p>Morning Zoom Art Paint - 9 a.m. - https://niagarapumphouse.ca/registration</p> <p>Afternoon Zoom Art Paint - 1 p.m. - https://niagarapumphouse.ca/registration</p> <p>Come out and Play - 9 a.m. - Niagara Pumphouse Arts Centre</p>
<p>23</p> <p>Yoga in the Vineyard - 10 a.m. - Lakeview Wine Co.</p> <p>Historic Walking Tours - 11 a.m. - Queen's Royal Park</p> <p>LIVEstream.LOVE.WORLD. Series: Itamar Erez - 2 p.m. - Virtual: NiagaraJazzFestival.com</p> <p>Jane Austen Tea Party - 2 p.m. - Virtual: friendsoffortgeorge.ca</p> <p>The Missing Pages: At Home Concert Series - 4 p.m. - Facebook @MusicNiagaraFestival</p>	<p>24</p> <p>Council - 6 p.m. - Virtual: livestream.com/notl</p> <p>Famous and Infamous - 2 p.m. - NOTL Museum</p>	<p>25</p> <p>Heritage Trail Committee - 2 p.m. - Virtual: NOTL.org</p> <p>Outdoor Sketching - 9 a.m. - Niagara Pumphouse Arts Centre</p> <p>Craft Night at Lakeview Wine Co. - 5:30 p.m. - Lakeview Wine Co.</p>	<p>Artist Workshop: Paint with Josh Bellingh - a.m. to 1:30 p.m. - R Museum</p> <p>Come out and Play - 9 a.m. - Niagara Pumphouse Arts Centre</p>

Know of a local event? Tell us. Submit it directly to www.niag

Lake Report

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COMMUNITY CALENDAR

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Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
	13 Drop in Yoga - 9 a.m. - RiverBrink Art Museum	14 Lion Burger Returns - 4 p.m. to 7 p.m. - St. Davids Lions Club Afternoon Zoom Art Program: Draw - 1 p.m. - niagarapumphouse.ca/programs/registration Drop in Yoga - 9 a.m. - RiverBrink Art Museum	15 Market @ The Village - 8 a.m. to 1 p.m. - 111 Garrison Village Drive Walking Tours of Historic NOTL - 11 a.m. - Queen's Royal Park MJ's FryDay in support of the Matthews family - 11 a.m. - 8 p.m. - MJ's Own Munchies
	19 Drop in Yoga - 9 a.m. - RiverBrink Art Museum The Cayuga and her Cohorts - 4 p.m. - NOTL Museum via ZOOM Craft Night at Lakeview Wine Co. - 5:30 p.m. - Lakeview Wine Co. with Pastel Pumphouse Arts	21 Lion Burger Returns - 4 p.m. to 7 p.m. - St. Davids Lions Club Morning Zoom Art Program: Paint - 9 a.m. - https://niagarapumphouse.ca/programs/registration Afternoon Zoom Art Program: Paint - 1 p.m. - https://niagarapumphouse.ca/programs/registration	22 Market @ The Village - 8 a.m. to 1 p.m. - 111 Garrison Village Drive Coconut Quartz Pop Up Shop - 11 a.m. - Lakeview Wine Co. Artist Workshop: Mandala Drawing with Lenore Walker - 11 a.m. - RiverBrink Art Museum
26 Photo Walk am - 10:30 - RiverBrink Art with Pastel Pumphouse Arts	27 Drop in Yoga - 9 a.m. - RiverBrink Art Museum Ryan Thomas Band - 9 p.m. - Olde Angel Inn Ten Things that will Save Your Life in the Trenches - 4 p.m. - Virtual: nhsm.ca	28 Mel Monaco and Company - 3 p.m. - Ravine Vineyard Estate Winery Comedy Night - 8 p.m. - The Exchange Brewery Out in the Open - 9 a.m. to 12 p.m. - Niagara Pumphouse Arts Centre	29 Market @ The Village - 8 a.m. to 1 p.m. - 111 Garrison Village Drive Record Store Day - 9 a.m. to 8 p.m. - SRC Vinyl Historic Walking Tours - 11 a.m. - Queen's Royal Park

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Code Club at library will teach kids how computers work

Jessica Maxwell
The Lake Report

Code Club is coming to the library to teach kids more about the language used by the technology they interact with almost every day.

NOTL Public Library's micro bits summer camp's success and great response from the community is pushing staff members to make the program bigger and better, said children's library services associate Kasia Dupuis.

The program is designed for children 18 and

under with most of the programming aimed at those between 8 and 14.

"It's really for kids of any age who want to practise with the way they think about computers," Dupuis said.

"If they have no background at all, it's a great way to start."

It is free to sign up and those interested can do so through the library website. Code Club participants will have several components to complete.

"It's a part on-screen, part off-screen, introduction to coding concepts

and mainly the way to think about how computers think," Dupuis said.

"It focuses on things like patterning, recognition and sequencing, and all the little parts that you can turn on in your brain to better understand how computers work in general and therefore how to speak to them."

Code Club will be the first part of the coding initiative introduced at the NOTL library until two more programs start in October. These programs include programs geared toward kids ages 3 to 5 and 6 to 10.

"Storytime with Cubetto" will involve a no-screen story time focused on coding language and communicating with a little robot named Cubetto.

"Hello, World!" explores coding concepts through a series of virtual workshops involving games and projects conducted by library staff via video conferencing.

Dupuis and Christine Reganti, an IT/makery assistant, are the team behind these new programs and will facilitate the sessions by video conferencing until it is safe to do so in person.



Frankie Dupuis learning early coding with Cubetto. SUPPLIED

Resident says there was **no chance** for public input on skatepark location

Continued from Front Page

no way anybody in their right mind with any sort of professional forethought would put a skateboard park on the adjacent foul line to the left field of a baseball diamond," Brown said.

"When I look at it, I'm like, 'Who the hell thought of this and how did they go about it?'"

He also questions why the location was moved from where the original skatepark was (beside the Bricks and Barley plaza) in the first place.

"The site where they put it wasn't even up for debate at the public meeting," he said, pointing out that the town's director of operations Kevin Turcotte said in 2018 it would be going next to the splash pad.

He said a post by Phil Leboudec about the park sparked debate on Facebook and that people have since criticized him and neighbours as being anti-children or anti-fun.

But that's not the case, he said. He just wants things to be done by the book, with proper resident consultation.

"I appreciate the time that everyone puts in to raise the money," he said, but he doesn't think enough thought went into the project. "And if we're handling a skateboard park like that, what are we doing with all the other things in town that need to be thought of and looked after?"



Final site selection for the skatepark. SUPPLIED

Cameron said she doesn't think council was given the chance to make a decision on the location of the park.

While information was posted to the town's Join the Conversation page online, that "is not the official channel for decision-making at the town. Council is."

She noted the Virgil Business Association had input because it is funding "a significant portion" of the project, but she said the town is now funding an equal portion.

"The cost is now \$300,000-plus," she said. "And I'm very concerned the residents are being impacted negatively by this and the people who might wish to use the skatepark will be potentially not hav-

ing the best experience as well."

She said she wants to "put the brakes" on the park, until council can have a more fulsome discussion about it.

Interim CAO Sheldon Randall said he "wouldn't recommend" that council halt the progress, pointing out the tender has already been awarded and the builders are getting ready to pour concrete.

"I want to get this right," Cameron said. "I don't want us to just barrel forward because we started something."

Coun. Gary Burroughs said he supported Cameron.

Randall pointed out the project is supposed to be complete in two weeks and that the town would have to

stop the project would have to go to council.

Coun. John Wiens said he had the same concerns and was not aware of where the skatepark was going. "As soon as I was made aware, I thought that was very close to the neighbours in that area." He said he's "very concerned" about the location and the noise at the facility.

Coun. Erwin Wiens said he has concerns about halting the skatepark, noting the Virgil Stampede was fundraising for it in 2019.

"It's past the eleventh hour, and we're referring to it as a boondoggle."

"This council should have known, everybody at this table, when this was going on and how this was going on. Because if I knew what was going on, then everybody should have known. To say you didn't know is not fair, and it's not fair to refer to it as a boondoggle to our staff. Because the information was readily available, always has been."

Burroughs and Cameron were both shaking their heads on the livestream broadcast.

"I know you're shaking your head and all that stuff Gary, but you knew it was going on. To say you didn't know is ridiculous," Wiens said.

Coun. Allan Bisback, who was chairing the meeting, asked councillors to keep things cool.

Coun. Wendy Cheropita

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said she wasn't aware of the skatepark plans either and supports halting the project.

"I didn't have this project on my radar until the residents started to complain," she said, noting she isn't blaming town staff.

"My concern is really one, is just the proximity to the few residents where they are so, so close that it will impact their life and their lifestyles dramatically."

She said she only saw the location clearly on Sunday "and was sorry that I didn't look at it earlier."

Coun. Norm Arsenault said he can't defend stopping the project after it's gone through "such a long approval process," noting it's been in the works since 2018 and was approved by the previous council.

He said he appreciates the residents saying they didn't know anything about it, however "it's not the job of staff or council to go knock on every door to say, 'By the way there's something's coming up here.' It's up to residents to inform themselves when there's something going on. It was advertised widely."

Cameron asked for information on how much it would cost to halt the project to be brought to council next week.

In an email obtained by The Lake Report, Lord Mayor Betty Disero said in the meantime staff will continue park construction.



Pauline Reimer Gibson
Audiologist

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Campaign to **cut** wine tax gathering steam

Jill Troyer
The Lake Report

More than 3,000 people have signed a petition calling on the provincial government to eliminate a 6.1% tax on wine sold at wineries.

The petition was launched by Ontario Craft Wineries and their president, Richard Linley, says, "The response has been overwhelmingly positive and we are really appreciative of the support for our wineries."

Linley said the tax, which is charged on every bottle of wine sold at the cellar door, in addition to other taxes including the HST, punishes small wineries that sell their own wine to the public from their winery premises. "No other retail product pays a tax like this," he noted.

"The goal is to raise awareness with the government and the public," he said.

Linley is not alone in advocating for the tax to be eliminated.

"There's no reason for this tax," said Greg Berti, vice-president of global markets, industry relations, & business development for Andrew Peller Limited.

"It's a lot of money that could help fill the financial hole created by the COVID crisis, and in future, it would be reinvested," he said.

"It's most frustrating because it's unfair," said Andrea Kaiser, chair of the Wineries of NOTL and director of marketing for Reif Estate Winery.

"The provincial government could relieve our unfair tax burden now. It should have been done years ago, then we'd be in a stronger financial position. COVID has exacerbated the situation."

The wine industry is aligned on this issue and the

need for relief has gained urgency.

"When you look at the devastation in the industry, with restaurants closed, tourism almost non-existent until very recently, it would be very helpful, to help pay some bills now, and as recovery builds, as a stimulus to turn from break even to profit, and eventually leading to re-investments," said Del Rollo, vice-president of industry and government relations at Arterra Wines.

"This is something the government can move on immediately and it would be really meaningful to the industry," he says.

In addition to the petition and industry lobbying on this issue, political action is planned as well.

Niagara NDP MPP Wayne Gates says his party will bring forward a bill to eliminate the tax when the

legislature resumes sitting in September.

"It should be a non-partisan issue. I hope we can get all-party support for it," said Gates, adding, "the premier has been visiting Niagara recently, saying we have to buy local to show our support for local businesses, so here's an opportunity to support Niagara wineries."

Finance Minister Rod Phillips was not available for an interview, but a spokesperson from his office, press secretary Emily Hogeveen provided the following comments via email.

"Our government recognizes the toll the COVID-19 pandemic is taking on Ontario's wineries and will continue to work with industry to ensure it remains an important part of our province's economy."

She said, "The government is reviewing Ontario's



Ontario Craft Wineries president Richard Linley. SUPPLIED

approach to how beverage alcohol is sold in the province and is looking at ways to provide more choice and access to consumers. We are also committed to evaluating the tax regime as part of the alcohol review."

Linley said the petition will be submitted to the finance minister. "We've heard nothing so far (from government) but we'll reach out in the coming week."

Timing is important, Linley explained, because this tax was temporarily deferred until the end of August as a response to the economic

challenges caused by the pandemic, "so we really want the tax eliminated before that date."

Rollo said the petition and advocacy are important.

"I'm cautiously optimistic. The government is listening to us, though these are challenging times and they have many demands on them right now."

Whatever the short term outcome, he said, "We'll keep fighting."

The petition can be found at www.change.org/o/ontario_craft_wineries.

Golf: NOTL club crowns new **champions** after dramatic finale

Kevin MacLean
Managing Editor

The Niagara-on-the-Lake Golf Club crowned two new club champions Sunday as the men battled down to the last putt and the women's champ fended off challenges from all comers to claim their titles.

James Grigjanis-Meusel, 26, sank a four-foot putt for par on the 18th hole on the final day of the tournament to edge defending champ Joe Doria by one shot.

Yolanda Henry, second by one shot to last year's champion Louise Robitaille after the opening round Saturday, finished five shots ahead of Ginny Green. Robitaille was third.

The big drama came in the men's final few holes. After several lead changes early in the round, Grigjanis-Meusel and Doria were tied after 15 holes. That's when Doria made a rare mistake.

Hitting a 56-degree wedge from a downhill, sidehill lie 92 yards from the pin, he sailed his second shot hard and low. It bounced on the top tier of the small, unforgiving green and rolled over the back edge toward Lake Ontario – and out of bounds.



Left: Proud parents Daina and Heinz embrace the 2020 NOTL Golf Club men's open champion, their son James Grigjanis-Meusel. Right: The women's winners, front, Ginny Green (senior champ), Yolanda Henry (club champ), rear, Martha Cruikshank (super senior), Patty Garriock (B flight), Cathy Murray (A flight) and Andrea Douglas (C flight). KEVIN MACLEAN/MAY CHANG



With a two-stroke penalty, he finished with a double-bogey six. Grigjanis-Meusel narrowly missed a 20-foot birdie putt from the fringe but went up two shots.

On the next hole, Doria missed a short par putt that would have got him back to within a shot headed to the long par-3 closing hole.

Hitting first, Grigjanis-Meusel, junior champ in 2010, sent his tee shot to the back left corner of the 18th green, about 65 feet past the hole. Doria stopped his tee shot about 15 feet beyond the pin, setting up a birdie opportunity.

Unfazed, Grigjanis-Meusel confidently rolled his mammoth putt to within about four feet. Doria nailed his birdie, the first time he has ever recorded a two on

the 18th, he said later.

That meant Grigjanis-Meusel had to sink his tricky downhill par putt to avoid a playoff and secure the win with a two-day total of 149.

Admitting afterward he was a "little nervous" standing over his final putt, he made no mistake. "Putting practice the night before was the key" to his win, he told The Lake Report.

"It feels good winning the open flight. I've always wanted to get my name on the big board" inside the clubhouse where all club champs are featured. "And it's nice that it happened to be 10 years after my junior win."

Doria said he and Grigjanis-Meusel were rooting each other on during the final round. "It was a good

battle with a good friend. I hated losing but if I was going to lose, I'd want it to be to James," he said. "It was a hard-fought battle and he is deserving of it. I'm proud of him."

As for that second shot on 17, it is memorable. "It's my first lost ball at NOTL Golf Club. Ever," Doria said.

For Henry, always one of the top women's golfers at the NOTL club, her win capped a stellar weekend of play, shooting 86 Saturday and closing with an 80.

"It still seems surreal and it's taking time to sink in," she said Tuesday.

"I started off on Saturday a bit shaky, taking a seven, a triple bogey on the first hole. It took me a while to settle down and regain focus," she said.

"I had more confidence after a much better start on Sunday and played more consistently with a 38 on the front 9, which included two birdies and 42 on the back 9."

She's taking a few days off now and enjoying a visit with her grandson Vaughan, who has been attending golf camp at the club.

It is Henry's second "open" championship title, winning previously in 2016. For the past three years she was senior women's champ.

This year, Green (171) took home the women's senior title and Martha Cruikshank (178), another former club champ, was the super senior cup winner.

On the men's side, Jim McMacken (153), who finished only four shots behind

Grigjanis-Meusel, won the senior title for the second time. Peter Falconer (163) put on a fine putting display and was the super senior champ.

In the women's competition, Cathy Murray (183) won A flight, Patty Garriock (190) took B and Andrea Douglas (207) won C.

Jon Taylor (156) was men's A flight winner, Kevin MacLean (165) won the B flight and Ron Planche (173) took C. That title was settled in a one-hole playoff, with Planche edging Jim Sifton and Rai Lauge. Johnson Hu (189) won the D flight championship by one shot over Butch Rive.

With the COVID-19 pandemic, the NOTL club has a booming junior program this year. Ella Carrique was crowned the girls junior champ (under 19) and Keira Dexter won the bantam girls (under 15) title.

Bruce DeLuca was junior boys champ and Jaden Patterson took the juvenile boys (under 17) title. Brandon Falk won bantam boys and Jeff Carrique was named boys under 13 winner.

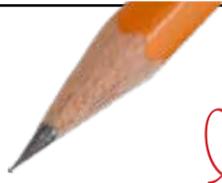
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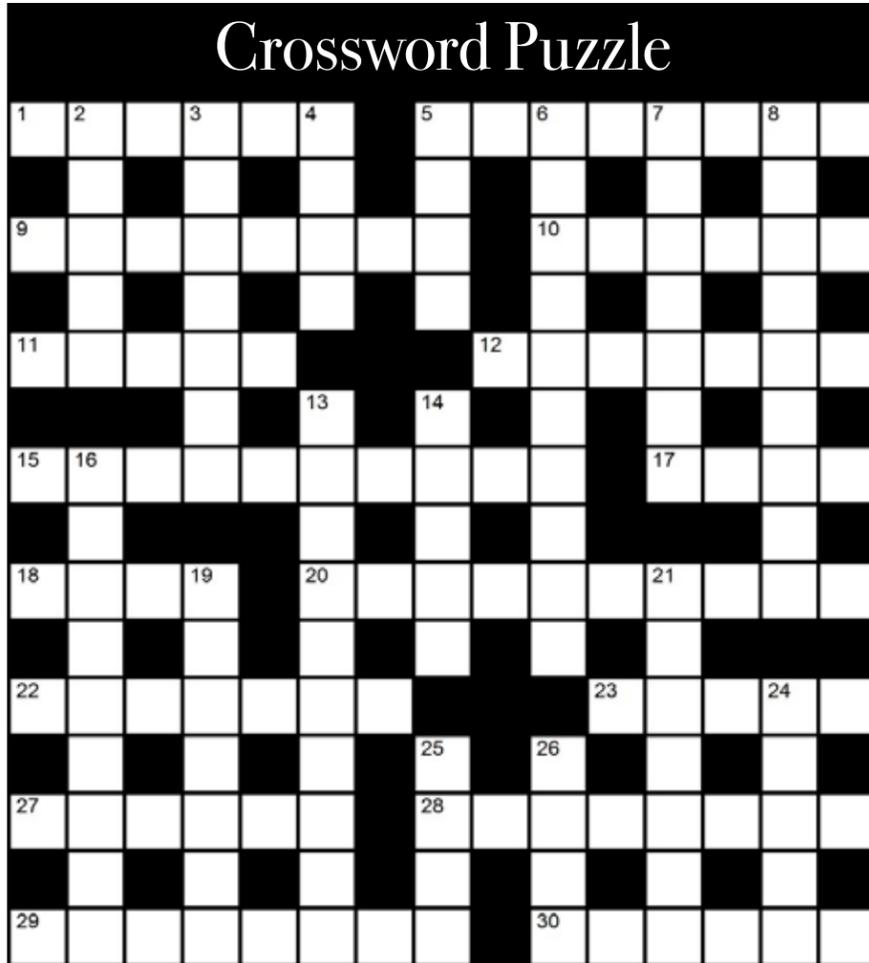
The Lake Report is looking for puzzle makers who would like to help develop this page. We are seeking both standard and cryptic crossword writers. editor@niagaranow.com

Across

- 1. Gossamer (6)
- 5. Like many Sherpas (8)
- 9. Affliction of cats and other fur-lickers (8)
- 10. Skin condition sought by beachgoers (6)
- 11. Science of logic, quantity, shape and arrangement (Abbr.) (5)
- 12. Tacit (7)
- 15. Owner of a business (10)
- 17. Inert gaseous element (4)
- 18. Sour (4)
- 20. Place for American children in the holidays (6,4)
- 22. Galilee native (7)
- 23. Spread out (5)
- 27. Small restaurant (6)
- 28. Elongate (8)
- 29. South American boa (8)
- 30. Person in the petroleum industry (6)

Down

- 2. D-Day beach (5)
- 3. Navy vessel (7)
- 4. Spoiled child (4)
- 5. World's longest river (4)
- 6. Autopsy (4-6)
- 7. Wool fat (7)
- 8. Private room on a passenger ship (9)
- 13. Hollywood (10)
- 14. Stub (5)
- 16. Economic decline (9)
- 19. Severe (7)
- 21. Uppercase (7)
- 24. Cub leader (5)
- 25. Entreaty (4)
- 26. Keen on (4)



Last issue's answers



Music Niagara hosts **virtual classes** for promising young musicians

David Israelson
Special to The Lake Report

With the fall approaching and nobody quite sure about how exactly to reopen the schools safely, many of us are asking: "Is there anything I can do to make a difference for young people?"

At Music Niagara we think so — and if you think so too, you can help.

Now in our 22nd year, Music Niagara has quickly created two programs that offer hands-on educational and inspirational opportunities aimed at youth.

The first is a partnership with Niagara College broadcasting program students. We're working with these bright, energetic students, who video and edit for virtual broadcast our Music Niagara's 2020 At Home concert series.

The second is our inaugural Virtual Performance Academy.

We are conducting livestreaming classes, each



Music Niagara artistic director Atis Bankas.
RICHARD HARLEY

day for 12 young musicians in Canada and Mexico — again, thanks to our partnership with the broadcasting students from Niagara College.

Each day will consist of piano and violin master classes and instruction with an added signature component called Now Add the Drama — presented by Shaw Festival actors. This curriculum piece inspires music students to integrate the dramatic skills of an actor, interpreting music through imagery, inspira-

tion and words.

All classes will take place via Zoom, from the physical safe distance of the students' homes, with technical production by Niagara College students.

In addition to the academy curriculum music students will work, practise and interpret at least two pieces during the two-week Virtual Academy, with the repertoire varying from the baroque to the classical, or the romantic to the contemporary, leading to the goal of an online young virtuoso concert.

Emma Meinrenken and Jasmin Lin are confirmed as violin instructors. Both of these brilliant musicians are students of Music Niagara's founder and artistic director (and Niagara-on-the-Lake resident) Atis Bankas and alumnae of Music Niagara's Performance Academy.

Teaching alongside Bankas is good for both the students and their teachers, Emma and Jasmin, who gain invaluable experience.

"Musicians gain inspiration from each other. We get energy from our students and they gain insight and experience. It's great to work with Emma and Jasmin too and I think the students also appreciate that they are closer in age to our participants," said Bankas.

Both Emma and Jasmin are now enrolled in top world class music schools.

The virtual learning continues the work of the last two pre-COVID summers, when six Mexican youth between the ages of

17 and 20 travelled for the first time to Canada to attend Niagara-on-the-Lake's Performance Academy. Hosted by generous families in town and with their travel expenses paid for by a group of Canadians who winter in Mexico, the Music Niagara Performance Academy was a life-changing experience for these promising students.

"Not only have the classes and concerts left their mark on them, it was the entire experience," said Aurora Cadenas, director of the Celaya School of Music where the Mexican musicians study during the year.

"Atis Bankas took so much personal care to make the students' experience memorable. He did everything from finding instruments to driving. The lives of these high-level musicians who participated — and, of course, the music world — will be better because of Atis and Music Niagara," Cadenas added.

Up to four of the 12 students enrolled in the 2020 Virtual Performance Academy will be Mexican. One of the added benefits of participating is that they can work on developing their English by taking classes online.

The 2020 Music Niagara Virtual Performance Academy takes place Aug. 17-19 and Aug. 24-26.

"We think the Virtual Performance Academy is vital because it offers inspiration, encouragement and most of all, hope — not only to our participants but for everyone who loves music," Bankas says.

"And of course, we hope people have been enjoying our At Home Festival in this unusual year."

To donate, go to "Ways to Give" at www.musicniagara.org.

David Israelson is a Niagara-on-the-Lake resident and member of Music Niagara's board of directors.

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Parents 'uneasy' with Ontario government's **back-to-school** plan

Brittany Carter
The Lake Report

The back-to-school jitters are hitting harder this year with many parents uncertain about the Ministry of Education's plan to reopen schools in less than a month.

One Niagara-on-the-Lake parent of three Crossroads Public School students said she is in "disbelief" the government is willing to play a "very risky game of what-if with our kids" for the sake of financial economical regrowth.

Stephanie Baxter said she does want her three kids back in school, for their mental health, social connection and for proper education.

"Because I am not a qualified teacher and I cannot give them what they need from school. But I honestly can't see how this year is going to play out, or how this is going to be a good thing," Baxter said.

On July 30, the Ontario government announced its plan to reopen schools this September.

The plan suggests elementary schools, from kindergarten to Grade 8, will reopen five days a week. Students will remain in the same cohort, which means they will stay with the same teacher and group of students for the entire school day, with limited exposure to multiple teachers.

Secondary schools will open on an adapted model, the plan states. Students will see different timetables designed to keep them in the same small cohort of students. Under the government's outline, secondary students of designated school boards would also see 50 per cent of their learning done remotely.

"Secondary school students in an adapted model would be assigned curriculum-linked work on remote learning days and, where possible, would participate in synchronous learning with their teacher and classmates for a period of each school day," the CO-

VID-19: reopening schools page states.

On Aug. 10, the District School Board of Niagara sent out a Return to School Intent Questionnaire to be completed by parents by Aug. 17. The form directs parents to information about expectations for in-class learning versus the voluntary virtual learning options.

But Baxter said she still thinks it's "too soon" to be making the decision about sending her children back to school. She said she is reaching out to the school board for more detailed information on how the school will provide support for children with special needs.

"But what kind of support is there going to be for my special needs child that needs a full-time (education assistant) if we choose online? This is my struggle," she said.

Until she receives more information, she said she is not yet willing to make the decision to send her kids to school or keep them home.

Megan Vanderlee, a NOTL parent of three school-aged children, said she doesn't think the Ministry of Education followed Sick Kids' recommendations, adding the plan needs some work.

"Well, I don't honestly think it's much of a plan. I think they took a little bit of money and sprinkled it around and didn't take into account what Sick Kids suggested," she said.

The Sick Kids, COVID-19: Guidance for School Reopening document states: "Attention should be paid to improving classroom ventilation (e.g. optimizing ventilation system maintenance and increasing the proportion of outside air brought in through these systems) in consultation with experts in physical plant design and modification."

Proper ventilation and air flow in classrooms are top concerns for many parents and educators and isn't thoroughly addressed in the Ontario government's outline.

NOTL resident Florence Franzo, an early childhood educator with a Greater Toronto Area school board, is offering tutoring services for families who may want to opt out of in-class learning this year.

"I'm nervous myself to go back to school. I feel that the federal and provincial government hasn't put enough options in place to protect our children," she said.

"Because I teach kindergarten, having all the children in the classroom is ludicrous, and what I've said is the correct word because you cannot social distance the little children, and it's cruel to have them sitting at a desk all day."

Franzo said lowering class size and updating ventilation inside the schools needs to happen before she would be comfortable going back.

"Essentially the number one thing that they need to do is lower the (number of) children in the classroom ... A ventilation system or better ventilation system is needed in all of the classes," she added.

Vanderlee said she's still waiting to hear back from her school board about its plan for the year.

"We haven't gotten anything official from the school board yet."

Kate McGeachin, a NOTL parent of two young students, said she has "mixed feelings" about the government's plan.

"I definitely want my girls to go back to school. I found the last six months really challenging because my husband and I both worked from home through it all. And through March, April and May, they were at home with us," she said.

McGeachin and her husband "struggled" to keep their jobs, to entertain their children through the day and to also manage the homeschooling, she said.

"So, I really do want them to go back to school, but I have really mixed feelings about it because

they're my babies. I want to keep them safe and I don't know if the school system is the safest place for them right now," she said.

After the DSBN's announcement, McGeachin said they will be sending their girls to school in September.

"Like all parents, my husband and I are faced with an extremely tough decision. We are forced to choose between our girls' mental health, our mental health, our physical health, including the health of their extremely involved grandparents, and our jobs."

"In the end, we have decided to send our girls back to school. I hope it's the right decision," she said.

Stacey MacIntyre is a NOTL parent of two young students who would be attending Crossroads. As of now, "We are definitely keeping them home" this school year.

"At this point, I don't think anything will change our decision. Even if they make a vaccine there would be a long period of testing. We just don't see the point of taking the risk when we are lucky enough to have a teacher within our bubble of 10," she said.

She said she understands many people may not be "as lucky as us" to have a teacher available to them. Her mother-in-law is a retired teacher and offered to help with schooling for now, she said.

"Hopefully, if those of us who can do this will do this, the system will not be overburdened and those parents who do not have this option will be able to send their children to smaller class sizes to make it safer for everyone," MacIntyre said.

Baxter said she isn't so sure the children won't be back home within the next few months, anyway.

"I predict we will be right back to where we have been the last five months in the next three to four months with our children being sent to school five days a week," Baxter said.

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Nearly 1,000 Lions Burgers sold at drive-thru barbecue in two weeks

Jessica Maxwell
The Lake Report

The Friday night drive-thru barbecue at the St. Davids Lions Club is becoming a hot spot after selling nearly 1,000 burgers in its first two weeks.

Between 4 and 7 p.m. people can drive through the Lions Club site on York Road to pick up a Lion Burger for \$10, hot dog for \$6, peameal bacon on a bun for \$10 or a great Canadian lion burger (hamburger with peameal bacon) for \$12. All combos include fries and a bottle of water.

The first week of Lion Burger sales completely sold out all 405 burgers, club president Ted Burrows said.

Because of the overwhelming response on July 31, he ordered 600 burgers for the second week of the fundraiser.



Lions Susan Pitman and Janet Guy pack up burger orders as a team. JESSICA MAXWELL

Halfway through the event on Aug. 7, he said they had already sold 400 burgers and the traffic was steady. It was almost another sellout.

"It's great support that we can see," Burrows said. Because the burger night has proven so popular, it will continue.

"The (Lions) carnival generated usually about 75

per cent of our budgeted charities, so we have to make that up somehow."

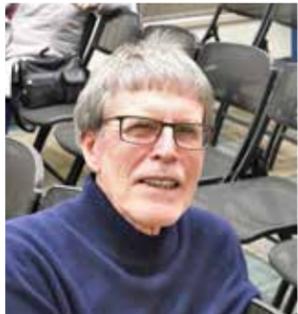
Money raised through the Lions Burger nights will fund community projects and "this is a good way to do it and we're having fun doing it," Burrows said.

"We're here to help the public and that's where we get our greatest feelings." St. Davids Lions Club

student volunteers, the Leos, were on hand again Friday night to help take orders and deliver them to people in their cars.

Burrows said it is great to have the help of the Leos at the event and thinks it helps to show the younger generation what they can accomplish by volunteering in the community.

Dr. Brown: Long-term care and **Romeo**



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

Dr. William Brown
Special to The Lake Report

One of the toughest challenges we face with social distancing and face masks is that we can't wrap our arms about those we care about when they're lonely or otherwise in need.

I face that twice a week with my wife, at the long-term care facility where she lives these days. In warm clear days we practise our version of Romeo and Juliet: I outside the chain-link fence and she on the garden side – six feet from one

another – and talk.

I must admit it's really difficult some days because she doesn't understand why we can't come closer, hold hands and hug one another. That's hard for her and hard for me.

But however challenging the circumstances, the reasons for strict control are obvious. Long-term care facilities have had a terrible time with COVID-19.

Infections and deaths, especially in Ontario and Quebec and every country struck by the virus, far exceed those in the rest of the population for several reasons.

Social distancing is all but impossible in the boxed-in space of most long-term care facilities, many of the residents are frail and the possibility of contact with this highly transmissible virus, whether by droplet, spray, aerosol or contact, is much higher, if only because so many staff come and go regularly.

That last reason is why long-term care homes clamped down by regularly testing staff and anyone

who might directly or indirectly carry the virus into the facility. Point-of-entry surveillance is so important because once in, the virus spreads quickly, overwhelming staff and other residents.

Compared to other countries, Canada fared well after faltering early, chiefly related to those long-term care facilities. Since then, through far stricter controls and a combination of social distancing, wearing masks and good old-fashioned Canadian common sense about avoiding groups outside one's "bubble" of family and close friends, Canada has done comparatively well.

But we're not off the hook. Countries like Australia and New Zealand had exemplary records, especially the latter. Even so, both experienced spikes related to careless close-contact social groups and sometimes, wilful behaviour on the part of individuals.

Some of the latter included persons who knew they were positive for

the virus but went ahead anyway with their travel plans and joining social groups. The result in some instances was a spreading chain of infections – all of which was preventable with common sense and a sense of responsibility toward the welfare of others.

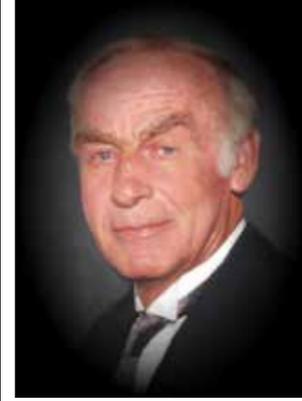
This pandemic will be with us until effective vaccines become widely available, likely sometime in the first quarter of 2021. Until then we can't count on the "herd effect" because 90 percent or more of the population has no acquired natural immunity to the virus as yet.

That means social distancing, wearing masks and practising common sense when it comes to group events will be necessary for several months to come. That's not good news. The alternative we've witnessed south of the border is far worse.

Let's hope that effective vaccines become available earlier. And in the meantime we all miss closer contact with those we love. That's tough.

Obituary

Donald Chapman



CHAPMAN, Donald Nelson, B. Arch., M.R.A.I.C., O.A.A.- Died peacefully on August 8, 2020 in his 95th year after a long, happy life with family, friends and accomplishments. Predeceased by his mother and father Meryl and Clifford Chapman, his brothers Gordon and Neil Chapman.

He is loved and remembered by his beloved wife,

Isobel, his dear children Reid and Susan, Lisa and Patrick, Gregory and Sarah, and his dear grandchildren, Lloyd, Juliette, Christopher, Ryan and Abigail, and his many cousins, nieces and nephews across Canada.

Don was born in Winnipeg, Manitoba on November 13, 1925, and spent his youth in Regina, Saskatchewan. He studied Engineering at the University of Saskatchewan and graduated in Architecture from the University of Manitoba.

After graduation, he worked in Minneapolis, Minnesota and Toronto, Ontario before establishing his Architectural Practice in Niagara Falls, Ontario in 1953. His firm designed many buildings throughout Southern Ontario including the Niagara Falls Library, many projects for the Niagara Parks Commission, school boards, hospital boards, churches and Public buildings.

He had been a member of the Heritage Committee of Niagara-on-the-Lake for 35 years, and a member of the Urban Design Committee since its inception.

"I meant to do my work today-
But a brown bird sang in the apple tree,
And a butterfly flitted across the field,
And all the leaves were calling me.
And the wind went sighing over the land,
Tossing the grasses to and fro,
And a rainbow held out his shining hand-
So what could I do but laugh and go?"

By: Richard Le Gallienne

A private family service will take place. Arrangements and messages of condolences may be made through MORSE & SON FUNERAL HOME, 5917 Main Street, Niagara Falls In lieu of flowers, for anyone who wishes, please make a donation to a charity of your choice.

Memories, photos and condolences may be shared at www.morseandson.com



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Dick Taylor's boathouse

Dick Taylor's boathouse business along the Niagara River was originally located near the Foghorn (99 River Beach Rd.) but later moved up river. There were a number of boathouses on the Niagara River. Taylor originally worked for Jack Redhead's boathouse but ventured out on his own as more tourists came into town. Visitors to the grand Queen's Royal Hotel could rent the boats for fishing or rowing on the river. A similar boat to the ones in the picture can be found on display at the Niagara-on-the-Lake Museum.

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ARCHITEXT

A family legacy

Brian Marshall
Columnist



McFarland House. SUPPLIED/BRIAN MARSHALL

In the 18th century, even the most successful craftsman could not become a wealthy man from his trade; certainly comfortable, but never in a position to leave a legacy to their children.

And a legacy was what John McFarland wished to create when, after serving decades of service as a shipwright to the Royal Navy, he purchased Lots 22, 23 and 25 in Niagara Township while simultaneously applying for and eventually receiving a land grant of 500 acres in Niagara Township and an additional 500 acres in Grimsby.

Arriving here in the early 1790s, McFarland and his

family set to building that legacy with a will and by the end of the decade had established a thriving farm and brickworks business. His success was heralded by the completion of a substantial manor home in 1800.

Built with bricks of his own manufacture laid five wythes (layers) thick in a Flemish bond pattern, it is the epitome of the conservative Georgian style favoured in Upper Canada.

Its main entry is centred on the facade and each of

the openings are ranked (second-floor openings directly above those on the first floor) into five bays. The windows are 12 panes over 12 panes and the door is topped by a rectangular three-pane transom.

The house trim is clean, simple and minimalist as befitting this type of Georgian expression, wherein symmetry and balance principally underwrite its graceful but somewhat austere demeanour.

From this house backing onto the Niagara River,

John McFarland would view the steady expansion of his legacy (by 1810 he owned over 2,500 acres in Canada West) until the War of 1812 broke into his world.

He was arrested by the American invaders and then force-marched to a prisoner of war camp near Albany, N.Y., to spend the rest of the war interred under harsh conditions. His fine house was occupied, then variously used as officers' headquarters and a hospital by both opposing armies. When McFarland finally returned home after the war, he found his house severely ravaged but still standing.

McFarland died in 1815, leaving his sons to restore the house. Still, his legacy lived on and the wealth he had created supported his descendants for generations. In the 1950s the Niagara Parks Commission purchased the McFarland House and after a historical restoration program, opened it to the public in 1959.

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