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## Pro-carriage group threatens to **sue** town, police

Richard Harley  
The Lake Report

Supporters of Niagara-on-the-Lake's horse-drawn carriage business are threatening legal action against the Town of Niagara-on-

the-Lake and Niagara Regional Police if nothing is done to stop what they say is continued harassment by animal rights protesters.

For three years members of animal rights group At War for Animals Niaga-

ra have been regularly in town protesting the carriage company Sentineal Carriages. Those protests sparked a resident-driven counter-movement in 2018 called Locals For Carriages.

The co-founder of Locals

For Carriages, Jennifer Jones-Butski, sent an email to The Lake Report Tuesday, which included a letter addressed to NOTL Lord Mayor Betty Disero.

"Dear Lord Mayor, We are writing this letter

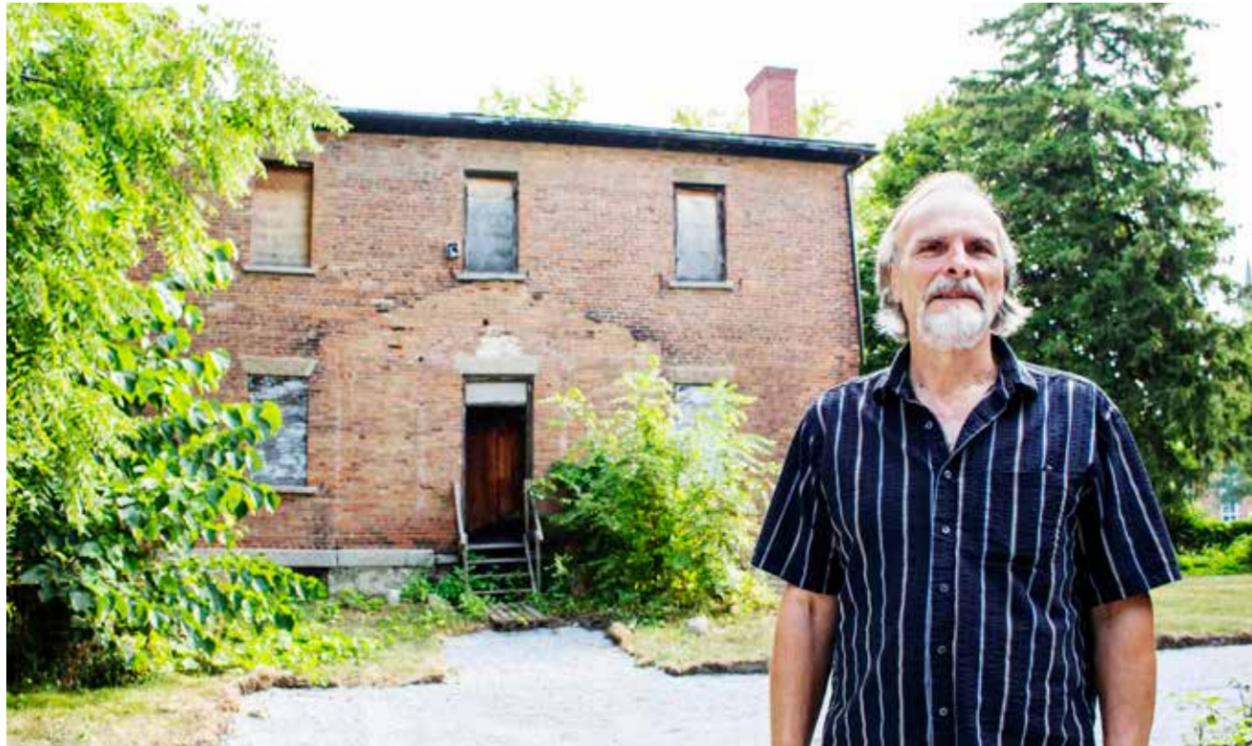
to inform you of our decision to protest the treatment of Niagara-on-the-Lake residents, visitors and small businesses at the hands of At War for Animals Niagara (AWFAN). The lack of action on the part

of the Town of Niagara-on-the-Lake and the Niagara Regional Police has created an unjust and dangerous situation. If we are unable to inspire the necessary

*Continued on Page 2*

## Bringing a home **back to life**

Heritage building has been vacant since 1968, but plans are to restore it



Brian Marshall stands out back at 240 Centre St. He will be overseeing the house as it is restored. RICHARD HARLEY

Richard Harley  
The Lake Report

One of Niagara-on-the-Lake's oldest Regency houses is getting a make-over.

The boarded-up red brick house at 240 Centre St. has been sitting vacant since about 1968, says Brian Marshall, an architectural histo-

rian, restoration consultant (and weekly Lake Report columnist) who will lead the charge in the restoration. Everyone driving into Old Town on Mississauga Street passes the now-derelict house.

The project will be done by NOTL company Brock Builders and a "variety of specialists."

"This house, to my knowledge, is the oldest surviving unaltered two-storey cubic form Regency house in the province and possibly in the country," Marshall said in an interview on the property.

The goal is to restore the period home to as close as possible to its original 1800s glory, he said.

The home was originally built by John Breakenridge in the early 1800s and was once described by The Gleaner newspaper as "the tastiest house in town." Over time it's seen many different owners.

"It's got a long history in town," Marshall said.

*Continued on Page 9*



Broken windows can be found all over the old Virgil school. RICHARD HARLEY

## Vandals target old Virgil school

Richard Harley  
The Lake Report

NOTL resident Filomena Pisano made a startling discovery Thursday when she arrived at her new art gallery inside the former Virgil public school.

Someone had broken multiple windows, smashed a wall, appeared to have urinated on the floor and left droplets of blood along the hallways of the historic building.

"It was very creepy," she told The Lake Report during an interview Sunday. "It looked like a horror movie to me."

She said the thing that worried her most was the blood.

"I thought OK, it was a bunch of punks, they broke a few (windows), but then when I saw the blood that scared me."

After walking the halls and discovering more damage, she and her son, who was with her, phoned the police.

In response to questions from The Lake Report, Niagara Regional Police Const. Philip Gavin said it was determined six male ages 14 to 16 had entered the building and caused about \$1,000 in damage.

He said the teens responsible "were identified and spoken to by the officer in

*Continued on Page 7*

## Tests find **no blue-green algae** at beach where dog died

Richard Harley  
The Lake Report

The waterfront at Ryerson Park in Chautauqua was clear of blue-green algae when it was tested last week, according to the

Ministry of the Environment and Niagara Region public health.

Tests were done at the small beach Wednesday after a dog died suddenly after swimming in the water a day earlier.

A veterinarian at Upper Canada Animal Hospital who examined the dog said the symptoms appeared to be toxic cyanobacteria, also called blue-green algae, which can be lethal to both dogs and humans. That

diagnosis has not changed in the wake of the water test results, a spokesperson said this week.

The Town of Niagara-on-the-Lake said in a

*Continued on Page 12*



Signs warning of untested water have been put up at Ryerson Park in Chautauqua. KEVIN MACLEAN



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# Mask ambassadors hit the streets of NOTL next week

Richard Harley  
The Lake Report

The Town of Niagara-on-the-Lake has partnered with the Shaw Guild to establish an ambassador program, which will have volunteers greet people on Queen Street to remind them about COVID-19 safety protocols.

The volunteers will hit the streets starting next Wednesday, and will be out each Friday, Saturday and Sunday until early September.

"This is a test," said Coun. Gary Burroughs, who helped organize the project with Coun. Wendy Cheropita.

"It's only going to run through past the first week in September to see how it works. I'm hoping that it'll be so successful that we can expand it and have it almost going full-time as welcome to our community," he said.



Margot Devlin, Lois Chapman, Kim Mustill, Laurie Harley (president of the Shaw Guild), Brenda Weafer and Cheryl Morris. SUPPLIED

Cheropita said so far 29 people have signed up as volunteers with the program.

The ambassadors will use key phrases, such as: "Welcome to Niagara-on-the-Lake, my name is \_\_\_\_\_ and I am a NOTL Ambassador."

"I'm here to help make

your stay as enjoyable as possible."

"Your safety is our priority."

"Ultimately reducing the spread of COVID-19 is the primary driver for all of us."

"There are a few things you need to know. We encourage you to maintain

two metres between you and others, you must wear a mask or a facial shield in all indoor spaces or where social distancing is not possible and please use hand sanitizers. They are available at the entrance of all retail stores and restaurants. Please use them for your safety."

The program was put together by Cheropita and Burroughs, with the help of town staff and the Shaw Guild.

"A couple of weeks ago we were directed to try and get a volunteer program going, and connected with the Shaw Guild. They have 320 volunteer members and so they were a perfect starting point," Burroughs said during Monday's committee of the whole meeting.

Burroughs noted the ambassadors will not be enforcing bylaws, just greeting people, and if they are wearing a mask, they will thank them.

During a presentation about the program, Cheropita outlined the major goals of the ambassadors, which are to "greet, support and educate."

Greet means "a friendly face to welcome visitors to our beautiful community,"

she said.

Support, she said, is to "provide citizens' support and assistance by gaining compliance for Stage 3 social distancing."

And the education aspect will focus on "the importance of creating a safe environment for you and me and reduce the spread of COVID in our community."

The volunteers have been asked not to talk to any protesters if they run into them, Cheropita added.

Burroughs and Cheropita both praised town staff and Shaw Guild members Laurie Harley and Cheryl Morris for helping to bring the project come together. They also thanked NOTL resident Rene Bertschi for making custom face shields and Andrew Niven of Konzelmann Estate Winery for donating a bottle of wine to each of the volunteers.

# Carriage group wants discussion on rights

Continued from Front Page

conversation and subsequent legislative changes, we are prepared to exhaust all legal means required to end the injustice described herein.

As it stands, all Canadians are granted equal protection under the Charter of Rights and Freedoms. However, the rights and freedoms set out in this Charter are not absolute. They can be and often are limited in order to preserve other rights.

We are fighting for an open discussion about where the rights of protesters end and where the rights of individuals begin. Self-identifying as a protester cannot provide immunity from the consequences associated with the behaviours observed in our community over the past three years. Such conduct is widely condemned in Canada and would not be tolerated under any other guise:

- Young children are frequently photographed and posted on websites without parents' consent.
- Tourists are verbally harassed and physically

intimidated.

• Workers as young as 16 are subjected to recurring intimidation and verbal assault, leaving them in a perpetual state of terror and wrought with long-term psychological damages.

• Expectant mothers holding babies have been berated walking down the street.

• Seasonal workers wear body cameras for protection against expected (not potential) abuse on the job.

• Men wearing body armour and handcuffs bring children to tears.

We will not stand idle as this miscarriage of justice continues before our eyes. We have been forced to watch in helpless horror as individuals are robbed of their fundamental rights. Our pleas are ignored while you allow people - often dressed in combat gear and not readily identifiable as protesters - to enter the heart of our community and instil fear.

Context matters when talking about justice. In this situation, we have multiple reports of harassment, terrified and traumatized workers, horrified and intimidated patrons, clashes

with families and a peaceful street corner that is no longer safe.

AWFAN has a mandate to end all animal domestication. Their right to protest this idea peacefully is protected under the Charter. However, NOTL workers, residents and visitors have equal right to not have their privacy and security imperilled, as you have now allowed for three years. A dangerous precedent has been set. If a group were to target bar patrons in the same way in support of ending alcohol consumption, they would feel entitled and empowered to do so.

The Town of Niagara-on-the-Lake and the Niagara Regional Police are both complicit in this injustice and therefore liable for the resulting damages incurred by countless businesses and individuals in Niagara-on-the-Lake. It is time for action because the community will no longer stand to have our fundamental rights cast aside without a fight.

We ask that you take immediate action to create a safer and more orderly environment for protesting in hopes of protecting all parties involved. NOTL

residents, small businesses and visitors have the right to move about the area free from fear. For this cause, our community is united.

Respectfully,  
Concerned residents of NOTL."

In the email, Jones said she's "no longer advocating on behalf of Sentinel Carriages Inc."

"Rather, I am but one of many concerned and horrified citizens demanding change," she said.

"There are some urgent questions that require immediate answers. Residents and small businesses of NOTL continue to be robbed of their fundamental rights by aggressive individuals masquerading as protestors for animal rights. The time has long passed for us to come together and demand action from the Township of Niagara-on-the-Lake."

Jones said she will be sending the letter to residents to collect statements of support and plans to submit those to Disero, too.

Anyone wishing to sign the letter can do so by getting in touch with Jones at [jenn@localsforcarriages.com](mailto:jenn@localsforcarriages.com)

# Town of NOTL receives \$500K from province for pandemic relief

Richard Harley  
The Lake Report

The Town of Niagara-on-the-Lake is getting about \$500,000 from the Ontario government to help with losses due to COVID-19.

Lord Mayor Betty Disero said she's grateful for the money, noting the town's deficit isn't as high as that, but that the town still isn't "out of the woods yet."

"We will be guarding that money and spending it very wisely, and not jumping to spend it immediately," Disero said during a Tuesday Coffee Chat.

"We're best off to keep that money close to us and see where it really is needed before we waste it," she said, noting the province might not bail the town out again.

# NOTL back to zero active COVID cases

Richard Harley  
The Lake Report

After a brief spike in active COVID-19 cases, Niagara-on-the-Lake is back to zero, according to Niagara Region Public Health.

Lord Mayor Betty Disero said it's "great news."

"What happened over the last month, we took a bit of a blip up and we had 17 cases over the past month," she said Tuesday during her

online coffee chat.

"We have to remember the virus is still here and around, and please ensure that you continue with physical distancing if you can't wear a face shield or a mask, and please wash your hands often. And try not to touch your face if you haven't at least sanitized your hands."

She recommends anyone who is out should use hand sanitizer, which she notes is provided in almost all stores.




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**Wayne Gates** MPP Niagara Falls representing Niagara-on-the-Lake & Fort Erie  
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# COVID helping fuel NOTL market

Kevin MacLean  
Managing Editor

People who have been cooped up at home for months during the COVID-19 pandemic and find they need more space are one of the factors driving the Niagara-on-the-Lake real estate market to new heights, two veteran realtors say.

"Having been quarantined in their house for up to two months people realized their present house didn't fit them for some reason. 'We don't need that dining room' or 'I need an office now that I'm working from home' or 'We don't like being this close to so many other people' or 'We need a pool for the kids,'" said Doug Widdicombe, senior vice-president of sales for Sotheby's International Realty in NOTL.

While many people are moving to Niagara from the GTA, there also seems to be a movement within Niagara Region to move "up" to larger homes to address some of the space concerns people have, he said.

Realtor Tom Elltoft said NOTL is seeing more of the town's higher-priced, larger properties changing hands.

"Along with pools, outdoor spaces have become



House sales are way up in NOTL. FILE PHOTO

far more popular," said Elltoft, of Niagara-on-the-Lake Realty.

"In the past the most popular properties were smaller, lower-maintenance bungalows. Although these bungalows will always have a large audience, it has become more balanced," he said.

"Confinement along with a heat wave has driven the desire for water and treed lots for locals and new residents alike."

Many factors can influence the real estate market, but after very slow months in the spring at the onset of the pandemic lockdown, home sales and prices have seen an upsurge, according to the Niagara Association of Realtors' monthly statistics market report.

Across the region in July, a total of 993 homes changed hands, up 38.5 per cent over the same period a year ago. That is also up from June, another boom month, when 767 homes sold.

In NOTL, 72 homes sold in July, almost triple the number of sales for that month in 2019.

The real estate association's House Price Index for last month showed the average sale price in NOTL was \$795,900. NOTL consistently has the highest real estate prices in the region.

Elltoft thinks we could be seeing the start of a major change in the NOTL market thanks to younger people moving to town.

"Generally what we are witnessing is an adjustment,

a repositioning or a re-evaluation in lifestyle for all Ontarians," he said.

COVID-19 has opened up more opportunities for people to work from home and that is leading to a younger group of buyers showing interest in NOTL, Elltoft said.

That change might have the greatest impact on the market and the community, he said.

As well, many locals and out-of-towners, mainly from the GTA, are looking at NOTL real estate as an investment, he said.

So, where are all those people who sell their NOTL properties moving to? Some are moving up to larger properties so they have room for their children and grandchildren to visit, but others are moving out, said Widdicombe.

In some cases in NOTL, "I have found the folks that downsized and got away from 'the kids' are now wanting to return to be closer to their grandkids in other cities or retiring and downsizing," he said.

"Others may be moving into a retirement home or simply want a change. As our community grows we will see more of this every year."

# 'We're moving away from democracy,' says Burroughs

Richard Harley  
The Lake Report

Coun. Gary Burroughs isn't happy with a proposed bylaw amendment that would allow as many as seven councillors to meet electronically for council meetings, even after the state of emergency is over in Niagara-on-the-Lake.

The bylaw means in theory that one councillor could be alone in a public meeting, if other members decide they have to join virtually.

"My basic problem with this whole thing is that we're moving away from democracy as I know it, and I'm old-fashioned," Burroughs said during the public meeting to discuss the bylaw.

The proposal also says that if part of the meet-



Coun. Gary Burroughs. FILE PHOTO

ing is conducted virtually, residents can only make presentations to council via an electronic submission.

"An electronic meeting shall not permit public delegations, except by way of electronic submission received in advance of the meeting, which shall be submitted to the town clerk prior to the start of the electronic meeting, and shall be provided to members at the meeting," the bylaw says.

Lord Mayor Betty Disero disagreed with Burroughs, saying she thinks

the idea helps keep democracy going during unprecedented times.

"This just really allows us to continue our work," she said. "It doesn't mean that this is going to force us to have electronic meetings," but it gives council the ability to have them if necessary.

She pointed out that with livestreamed video meetings, the public can see all councillors at once, even when they're not talking, which doesn't happen with regular council videos.

"So I disagree with my colleague that this is taking away democracy. I think it actually allows it to continue should there be a situation where we find ourselves not being able to meet."

She noted she "never believed in phone-in calling for meetings at all."

"But I see now, having gone through this for the last few months, that it can work."

Coun. Clare Cameron suggested to reword the part about public delegations in a "more positive" way.

"To just say that an electronic meeting shall permit public delegations by way of electronic submission. Just so that it doesn't sound negative."

She noted because council is only meeting electronically, the public has already lost an easy way to voice opinions on matters because they can't just drop in to the council chambers.

Town staff agreed to look at rewording the bylaw.

Council approved the report on the bylaw and it will be discussed at the next council meeting.

**Niagara-on-the-Lake Announces Photo Contest Winners**

Staff have been blown away by the level of public engagement in the Town of Niagara-on-the-Lake's inaugural Photo Contest! More than 300 beautiful photos were submitted, and more than 1,900 votes were cast for the top 5 images from each category. Congratulations to the following winners:

<u>Amenities &amp; Places</u>	<u>Nature &amp; Parks</u>
Brittany Massey	Frank Hayes
"Christmas Time Downtown NOTL"	"Nature at its Best"
<u>Arts, Culture &amp; Events</u>	<u>Recreation &amp; Sports</u>
Britiney Turasz	Britiney Turasz
"Come Ride Away"	"Sunset Kayaking"
<u>Innovation &amp; Economy</u>	
J Thwaites	
"Sunset Irrigation"	

The 5 winning photographs will be professionally framed, with credit given to each photographer, and displayed in a prominent location in town. The location will be determined at a later date.

Thank you to everyone who participated and voted!  
 To see the winning photos, visit [jointheconversationnotl.org](http://jointheconversationnotl.org).

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**Contributed by Patty Garriock**

"We can only do what we can do when we can do it and while we are still able to do it." - Patty Garriock



**Contributed by Norm Arsenault:**

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## Editorials: Ambassadors program a novel idea

Kevin MacLean  
 Managing Editor

Kudos to the Town of Niagara-on-the-Lake, members of the Shaw Guild, particularly Laurie Harley and Cheryl Morris, and Couns. Wendy Cheropita and Gary Burroughs for working to estab-

lish an ambassadors program to meet and greet people who visit Old Town – and to remind them about COVID-19 safety protocols.

For now it is just a pilot project, but we hope it proves successful and is carried on past Sept. 8.

In the COVID era, it is a

simple but important way to encourage people to maintain masking, distancing and other safety measures.

Longer term it is the sort of program that can help boost NOTL and promote its attractions and amenities to visitors.

It is inspiring – though

not surprising – that already about 30 people have volunteered to be "a friendly face to welcome visitors to our beautiful community," as Cheropita noted.

We look forward to seeing the ambassadors out on the street starting next week.

editor@niagaranow.com

## Take care when swimming at NOTL's beaches

Kevin MacLean  
 Managing Editor

Tragically, a family's dog died last week shortly after swimming in the waters of Lake Ontario off Ryerson Park in NOTL. Exposure to blue-green algae was – and still is – the suspected cause of the pup's death.

Thankfully, tests of water samples taken about 24 hours later showed no presence of the algae.

That should not be a surprise. In a body of water the size of Lake Ontario, with

its wind and wave action, the harmful algae was almost guaranteed to have been swept along elsewhere by the time it was tested.

What we cannot lose sight of is the fact a veterinarian from Upper Canada Animal Hospital diagnosed the dog as suffering from a textbook example of blue-green algae poisoning – and still believes that is what killed the animal.

It is vital that residents and visitors keep in mind that the algae has not been ruled out as the cause of death – it just was not present by the time

tests were done. There is a big difference.

As well, we are concerned with how the Town of Niagara-on-the-Lake reacted in posting signs warning people about the algae. About 24 hours after the fatal incident, signs were attached to the backs of four park benches, but not near the two entrances to the beach. As a result, several adults, pets and children missed the signs and were swimming. Neighbours cautioned them, put up their own signs, and in one case hosed down a

family who was concerned about exposure.

The next day, about 48 hours after the dog's death, after pleas on social media and elsewhere, signs were finally posted at the beach entrance. That's simply not good enough.

Now, finally, long-promised "educational" signs are up in the park and elsewhere on the lakefront warning that the water is not tested and urging people to use caution.

The town has now got it right, but why did it take so long?

## Hyundai dealer should reinstate fired woman

Dear editor:

I was enraged to read how Elizabeth Beattie was fired by AutoValue Hyundai (The Lake Report, Aug. 13) for inadvertently wearing a company name tag whilst defending her daughter against the actions of so-called animal rights activists.

The activists have the right to peaceful protest but their actions in sharing a video of Beattie with her

employer show that their protests are also proactive and vindictive.

Shame on the company, which took the bait and terminated this lady. I'm sure the resulting bad publicity dwarfs what would have resulted if a simple warning had been given. Do the right thing and reinstate this lady.

The actions of the protesters are disruptive to business and to traffic

safety. The other weekend I was cycling through the town and came to the four-way stop at Queen and King. The noise was loud and cyclists, drivers and pedestrians did not know when a protester would step off the curb in front of them. They also distracted myself and others as to whose turn it was to proceed at the junction. Niagara Regional Police do need to step up and at least

enforce the traffic laws.

On another sad note I also witnessed the felling of trees on the golf course as per Cathy Rye's letter about dwindling green space. The town is rapidly losing natural habitats and it is truly irreversible and sad to witness. Let's not wait until the green space is gone before coming to our senses, town council.

Peter Warrack  
 NOTL

## Angry over firing of mom who defended daughter

Dear editor:

I was upset after reading the article about Elizabeth Beattie getting fired after standing up to the horse carriage protesters and trying to protect her daughter (The Lake Report, Aug. 13).

There are many people to blame for this incident but my frustration and anger lies mostly with Meghan Cousineau for the firing of Beattie and her reasoning behind it.

Defending her daughter is "reflecting poorly on the business." Have you no integrity to look at all facts

and carefully look at the video and perhaps have a talk/warning with Beattie instead of taking immediate action?

"We've already been taking some abuse this morning ourselves." Have you no backbone to stand up to a bully's threats? Are you so desperately afraid of losing a few customers versus doing the right thing? And by not doing the right thing, you will lose more customers!

She claims she is unaware of the animal rights activists in NOTL since

she is not a resident! I have been a resident for less than two years, coming from the GTA and I have known about the protests for years.

"Protests are supposed to be peaceful. They are supposed to kind of abide by certain rules." No kidding! Tell that to the protesters, which is where the town and regional police force have also dropped the ball.

No one, especially not a 16-year-old, should feel scared at work. Any mother would be "reacting" to her

daughter calling in tears.

When will someone with authority step in and take serious action toward the protesters? Maybe once there is a serious injury to a horse by being spooked by them or a person/child gets hurt?

I sympathize with Beattie and the injustice that was done to her, while protester Jason King and his group keep harassing everyone – and Cousineau is worrying about her dealership's lost customers/sales.

Carole Nolin  
 NOTL



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# OPINION

## Short-term rentals: Residences without residents

Bill Garriock  
Special to The Lake Report



This short-term rental has prompted complaints. SUPPLIED

We are often asked why the hospital and both previous schools, Parliament Oak Public School and the high school, are closed.

And why is it that on Halloween for the past seven years not one child has come to our door in Old Town looking for treats? The answer I have been giving is that the Pied Piper came through town and all the children followed him out into the country.

But there may be another explanation. Over a period of time many family homes have become rental properties or B&Bs. In fact, there are now 147 cottage rentals, 25 villas (a “cottage” with four bedrooms instead of three), 142 B&Bs, 13 country inns and 10 vacation apartments, according to the Town of Niagara-on-the-Lake.

If one were to assume an average of three bedrooms per home, that would mean that the town has lost approximately 1,000 bedrooms for families and kids. So, the kids have left town because there was no place to sleep! The Pied Piper is not to blame after all.

And if fewer families are living here and it is tourists who are now occupying those 1,000 bedrooms, one

can understand why the community is no longer able to support a hospital or local schools.

B&Bs fit in a tourist town because the operators of them live in the homes and are part of the community. Good for them and good for the tourists who spend money here at the Shaw, music and jazz festivals, stores and wineries.

The taxes these establishments pay help to spread the tax burden and therefore we should end up with a vibrant community. And, yes, this is a tourist town and we should be grateful, but families, retirees and couples and singles live here as residents as well and should not be forgotten.

The 175 short-term rentals, however, don't fit. They are commercial units operating in residential areas. They are residences without residents.

The people who tempo-

rarily stay there are not part of our community. They come, they party, they make noise in pools where there is one, they walk the street, perhaps attend an event, they sleep and then they go home.

But more importantly, they are not neighbours, they have no vested interest in the welfare of those who actually live here. And these short-term rentals seem to be increasing in numbers. Yet another family home in our neighbourhood is currently being converted into a short-term rental.

Some cities and towns are beginning to deal with this trend. Barcelona, Spain, is one example. It realized that with an increasing number of cruise ships unloading thousands of tourists and others arriving by airplane, residents found that it was more profitable to sell their homes to be operated as tourist short-term

rentals than to live in them.

Demand drove prices up and families fled the popular areas of the city. “Neighbourhoods” disappeared, as did the sense of community that once existed.

Barcelona city council recognized what was happening and put in strict limits as to the number of rental units per “block.” Obviously, some were not happy with this but the city is slowly working its way back to having neighborhoods with a sense of community.

NOTL council has been examining rule changes for short-term rentals and has heard concerns from many quarters. Perhaps it is time NOTL councillors think through what type of a community we would like to be in future years. Without serious thought and without having a longer-term strategy and a clear plan, eventually the community as we would like it to be will disappear.

Who knows, with some progressive action, current short-term rental properties may once again become affordable homes, families will return and the kids will get some of their 1,000 bedrooms back ... and have neighbours.

*Bill Garriock lives in Niagara-on-the-Lake.*

## We need leader with vision of Kennedy or Douglas

Dear editor:

Before you think I'm crazy, let me segue into my letter by looking at two visionary leaders from the past: U.S. President John F. Kennedy and former Saskatchewan Premier Tommy Douglas.

On May 25, 1961, Kennedy, stood in front of a joint session of Congress and proposed landing a man on the moon and returning him safely before the decade was out. At the time engineers and scientists said it could not be done, the technology was just not available to undertake such a mammoth task. On July 20, 1969, Apollo 11 commander Neil Armstrong stepped off the lunar module onto the moon. Mission accomplished.

Again, in the early 1960s, Saskatchewan faced a bitter doctor's strike over state-controlled medicine proposed by then-premier Tommy Douglas, who many said was crazy. The province's Liberal party led by Ross Thatcher, backed the doctors, 90 per cent of whom went on strike. They vehemently opposed the plan and attacked Douglas. The following year, after the strike and doctors had returned to work, medicare was enacted in Saskatchewan. Within 10 years, the entire country was covered by medicare.

Today, our government, with regularity, points to the high and ever-increasing “health care budget for seniors.” Yes, as we age,

our health deteriorates and hospital and doctor visits typically become more frequent.

One contributing factor, and a financial one, is not being able to afford to purchase the food for a more healthy, nutritious diet. To follow and eat healthy, seniors need more disposable income. So, improve their overall health and subsequently our health care costs will be greatly reduced.

Attacking the increased income problem, start by fashioning an income tax plan that eliminates both federal and provincial income tax by age 80.

On a sliding scale, commence the reduction at, say, age 65 or 70. Who disagrees that by age 80 we have all

paid our fair share, and then some, of income tax?

Now, I'm no President Kennedy or Tommy Douglas, but where are our visionary government leaders of today, bickering over our “Teflon Don” of Canadian politics, Prime Minister Justin Trudeau.

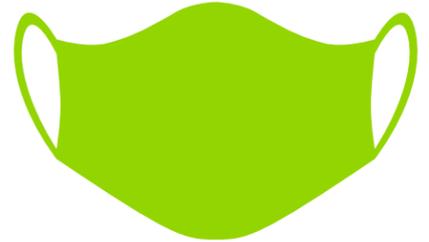
Big visions are tough, they are contentious and require strong leadership to drive them forward. They require guts.

At the time Kennedy said: “We choose to go to the moon in this decade, and do other things, not because they are easy, but because they are hard.”

We need a Kennedy or a Douglas in Ottawa.

*Samuel Young  
NOTL*

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# Vandalism at old school was **shocking** and worrisome

Dear editor:

I haven't fully moved into my new art studio at the old school house in Virgil but learned last Friday that someone broke in and vandalized the building.

Both door windows of the two churches there were smashed and the hallway to the newer section of the building was disgusting.

Broken glass everywhere, screwdriver on the floor and blood drops along the hallways, walls in classrooms kicked in. It looked like a horror movie to me but then again I have a wild imagination.

It was so disheartening. I am so very grateful that by chance I did not go there alone to discover the damage. My very tall, big, handsome son was with me. Alone I'm sure I would have fainted!

As always I turn to writing to alleviate my anxiety.



I am baffled that there is no apology and that the young men whom the police say did this are not cleaning up the mess they made. I'm left with a huge scar.

Dear Vanderlizers:

Is that even a word?

I hesitated to write this but then again I felt compelled. Writing helps me make sense of senselessness. I'm trying really hard to understand your why?

My neighbours are lovely people. It was so shock-

ing to walk in and see this beautiful historical building vandalized.

I wondered what you must have felt when you smashed the churches' door windows. Hey, I love the sound of breaking glass. So much that you'll find it within my art pieces. I imagine it's quite a cathartic release but couldn't you simply break some glasses in your own backyard.

Why the two churches and all the classrooms? I'm trying hard to understand your motive.

Perhaps you have one? Perhaps something so horrible happened to you that you carry all this anger within you. I'm sorry the world isn't a better place.

Mental health issues are rampant these days. I know. I suffer with anxiety. What I don't do is go smash other people's place of worship or work. Instead I create art.

If you were hungry and stealing food I could empathize more. No one wants to be hungry. And times are hard. With people losing their jobs. We all have to take care of one another. I moved here to do that. Live within a small community of caring people. And though this has happened I still believe it's a caring community.

You didn't take anything, rather you left some disturbing items on the scene. A screwdriver, broken glass and some blood.

I believe in freedom and having fun. Perhaps you thought it fun to be in a building alone at night in the dark. Damn I hope there are no ghosts, you know what they say about Niagara-on-the-Lake having the most ghosts in all of Canada, eh? I hope you didn't piss them off.

Perhaps you're upset

about how life is right now. I get it. It's tough to be in the world today. But that doesn't give you a green card to vandalize.

I'm upset. I am so grateful my son was with me. He's a big bear, so I feel safe around him. Had I been alone the fright may have caused me a heart attack, then you might have a manslaughter charge to deal with, and there are quite a few elders in the building. Didn't your parents teach you to respect your elders? I do not fair well when my safety is being challenged. And you sure challenged us all. I'm still feeling sick about it. Seeing all that damage was disheartening. I haven't even been there a month yet.

I don't like living in fear. It sucks. So I pray that somehow you have remorse and make it right and never come back to do more harm.

You hurt a lot of innocent people today. People who pay rent even when they can not use the building because of COVID. And now the place has to get cleaned up, but first the forensic department came to take samples of blood on the scene.

Anyhow I hope that all the anger you released has subsided and that you are willing to make some changes in your life.

I hope your parents can forgive you, as I already have. I don't wish to carry the burden of anger, it erodes us and causes us to do stupid things. You may still have time to turn this around. You did what you did. I'm so happy that no one was there for you to hurt. The damage can be repaired.

I just pray you stop. I mean it. I wish you well.

Warmly,

*Filomena Pisano*  
NOTL

## Poor service from Service Ontario

Dear editor:

"Service" Ontario is an oxymoron. If it was a private sector business relying on customer satisfaction it would have gone out of business years ago.

During a recent conversation with my brother, who shares the same birthday, he mentioned in passing that he had noticed that his car registration was about to expire and that he had not received notice of the upcoming expiry from the government department.

I subsequently checked and discovered that I had the perfect trifecta of expiring government services, namely my health card (five years), driver's licence (five years) and car registration (two years).

In checking government websites I found that the deadlines for renewals had been extended during the pandemic. For most, that would be sufficient reassurance should they need health services or have an interaction with police while driving their cars.

Unfortunately, from the perspective of an auto insurer it may not take

the same view should an insured be involved in an accident since driving with an expired driver's licence and/or car registration could lead an insurer to argue that there had been breach of the insurance contract.

There have been a few instances where insurers who had supposedly provided business interruption coverage for losses due to a pandemic have argued that they were not liable since this pandemic did not fall within the coverage.

Not wishing to potentially go to court against my insurer, I decided to go to the Service Ontario office in Virgil to do the requisite renewals before the expiry date.

When the Service Ontario office was on Mary Street in Old Town service was generally good. Since its move to the Virgil site, service can only be described as poor.

With that in mind I decided to arrive 15 minutes before the scheduled opening time. Unlike in previous years where the lineup occurred indoors, during the pandemic people had to

wait outdoors. Remember to bring an umbrella if rain is forecast.

When I arrived I was eighth in line. The gentleman in front of me appeared to have problems standing for a long time so spent as much time as possible leaning on his car (consider bringing a lawn chair).

By the time the office opened there were five people lined up behind me with all of us engaging in social distancing and some wearing masks even outdoors.

Although there were two clerks on duty only one was serving customers. The first customer took seven minutes, the second 18 minutes and the third a whopping 28 minutes. This was followed by the next taking 12 minutes, bringing the number served in the first 65 minutes to four.

Another was served and then the first clerk stopped dealing with customers and the other clerk took over. When the person in front of me was to head in they announced that I could also go in and the clerks were finally serving two people

at once.

When I left, the lineup was no shorter than when the office had opened. Woe be those who weren't served by 12:30 p.m. when both clerks were to take their lunch breaks.

One might argue that during a pandemic allowances must be made. Fair enough when one is referring to where to line up and the requirement to wear masks. However, alerting people of the upcoming expiry of their government service cards is not one of them since such notices should be computer-generated. Furthermore, the processing of the renewals on-site is the same, pandemic or no pandemic.

The Lake Report publishes many letters from those complaining about the high level of their taxes and that waste should be eliminated without identifying what services or programs should be eliminated. The adage that "You get what you pay for" applies even to that sorry enterprise, "Service" Ontario.

*Ron Fritz*  
Queenston

## Machiavellian politics in Niagara-on-the-Lake

Dear editor:

Gnothi Sophian means "Seek wisdom, know the truth," which my peers taught me in Grade 10. "Is it the truth?" is part of the four-way test, which I was taught as a founding member of NOTL Rotary.

Machiavellian politics does not subscribe to the truth as it seeks to distort or evade it. Is Machiavellian politics, or should I say Toronto politics, prevalent at NOTL council? If so by whom?

A few weeks ago when a draconian noise bylaw appeared on the council agenda, there was public outrage with 15,000-plus signatures opposing it. With this overwhelming opposition Lord Mayor Betty Disero announced on TV news that she signed the petition opposing this bylaw. When questioned by the reporter the mayor responded she did not know who/how this noise bylaw came forward. How Machiavellian is that!

The most Machiavel-

lian part is that we are told that the dead hand of a previous council made this report magically appear. I wonder if Disero, as a councillor back then, was the mover of a motion for a report or did she just merely support it?

To judge the truth, a person needs to know the process. Before anything appears on the agenda, other than of a legal time frame, it passes before the mayor and is given the nod.

Second, when a signature is absent from a report that means the author (staff) does not agree with the report, meaning political pressure likely brought this report forward.

Third, motions for a report made by a previous council two years ago are typically dead and do not bind the new mayor.

So with this knowledge let us always "Seek wisdom and know the truth" and ask ourselves every time "Is it the truth?"

*Jamie Slingerland*  
NOTL

# STEELE GALLERY

COMING SOON.  
CHECK THE LAKE REPORT  
FOR UPDATES ON OPENING



## Thank you for helping Shred-it event raise \$4,300

Dear editor:

Niagara-on-the-Lake Community Palliative Care Service extends its sincere gratitude to Doug Martin of Meridian Credit Union for once again donating the funds to cover our Shred-it trucks and their shredding employees.

The change of this year's venue, being the NOTL Community Centre due to COVID restrictions, was an awesome place to hold the event.

A special thank you to the Town of NOTL for being the last-minute answer. It

was an amazing, sunny day and we were truly elated to receive just under last year's donations.

With the help of all of our hard-working volunteers, we raised \$4,300.

Thank you, team.

Lastly, thank you to the town and area residents, once again, for providing this money, which will ultimately benefit the many clients we serve. See you next year!

**Bonnie Bagnulo**  
NOTL Community  
Palliative Care Service

## Will 'they' remember 'his' and 'her'?

Dear editor:

It ain't write. Please join me in remembrance of "his" and "her." They were a singular couple, albeit relentlessly possessive.

"They" has not passed, but is merely disoriented. When we meet "they" in a sentence we find that "they" is entirely out of place, like breakfast cereal on a dinner plate.

In keeping with these tragic reflections, consider the sad case of "he" and "she." I have heard a rumour to the effect that

they have left the subjective, joined a cult and are now following prepositions. Surely not! And they were always so proactive.

Now, back to "they." My advice to you after having read, "All My Pronouns" by Anne Fadiman in the August 2020 edition of Harper's, is to leave "they" alone and hope "they" do not come home. Indeed, eschew all references to the pronoun family. Seriously!

**David Lailey**  
NOTL

## The 'other' McFarland House in NOTL

Dear editor:

I read with great interest the story by columnist Brian Marshall on the McFarland House, "A family legacy."

The house is one of the marvels of keeping our history alive and our commitment to Niagara, which is both rich in atmosphere and beautiful in its maintenance of nature, woodlands and parkways.

I would draw your attention to David Hemmings' book "The House of McFarland" (2011, Bygones Publishing) and refer you

to pages 105 to 107, regarding the "other" McFarland house. My wife (since passed away) and I had conversations with David during his research for this book.

We have tried to keep the essential character of the house, refurbishing where possible (and with no access to any grant monies for the purpose) with such aspects as the missing shutters, now replaced. The very old split cedar rail fence we have also tried to maintain, though it is "growing dim."

Along with the original



Kaspar Pold's "other" McFarland House. SUPPLIED

main McFarland House, mine is a completely unique house, with visible stages of its evolution inside and out. An instructor at the Willowbank School of Restora-

tion Arts used to bring his students to view the various singular features of the house.

**Kaspar Pold**  
NOTL

## Town should listen to third party on tourism issues

Dear editor:

Why must the town of Niagara-on-the-Lake and council direct the development of a tourism strategy with a third party? Simply for the benefit of the constituents you represent, here are the reasons why:

1. The Chamber knows a lot about tourism and how it wants to market it. They are experienced in marketing plans and tactics.

2. The Chamber is an industry run group that will consult many stakeholders and then write a report that meets the needs of its own members.

3. Tourism unlike other industries in town does not own all of its own assets. Tourism profits off of public

assets such as the view, a picturesque historic town, parks, churches, public events etc. that do not all belong to the tourism industry. The tourism industry is not obligated to pay the upkeep of the public goods they live off.

4. The town and council does not know as much about tourism as the chamber knows and is at a disadvantage when it comes to good governance.

5. Town and council have an obligation to direct the development of the tourism strategy with a third party because:

The town and council spend public money supporting the activities of tourism and they have a fiduciary responsibility to

spend that money wisely and to know and understand how it will be used.

Because tourism benefits from town assets it does not own, the town and council have a important role in how they will be used and funded. Therefore town and council must have a tourism strategy for the use and upkeep of the public assets.

Tourism is both a positive and negative influence on the residents and other property owners in town e.g. noise, overcrowding, traffic, upkeep of gardens, additional cleaning, roads, parking lots and public events. The town and council must have a strategy to address that.

If the chamber is going to be the designated marketing

agency then there must be a strategy for governance, transparency and accountability.

6. The tourism industry can benefit from a well thought out tourism strategy which provides long term funding for tourism marketing and speeds up tourism infrastructure development.

Those are the reasons why the town and council need to direct the development of a tourism strategy with a third party. It would be wrong for the town and council to be wilfully ignorant. Council members are obligated to look after the interest of their constituents.

**Bruce Gitelman**  
Residents for  
Sustainable Tourism

## Artist says vandals need more than a scolding

Continued from Front Page

the presence of their respective parents."

"In line with the provisions of the Youth Criminal Justice Act the youths were cautioned with extra-judicial measures," he added.

Pisano said she's happy the youth were caught, but thinks they deserve more than a scolding.

"They should come clean up the entire mess and apologize to the people they affected," she said.

Though her studio was left unharmed, she sympathizes with the local churches and volunteers that also work out of the building on Four Mile Creek Road.

"The two churches had



Blood and glass were all over the floor of the hallways at the former Virgil School. RICHARD HARLEY

both door windows smashed and the hallway to the newer section of the building was disgusting," she said.

"It was so disheartening. I am so very grateful that by chance I did not go there alone today. My very tall, big, handsome son was with me. Alone I'm sure I would have fainted!

To vent her frustration

with the situation, she wrote a letter to the vandals. The letter appears in The Lake Report's opinion pages this week.

Still, she is thankful her art wasn't destroyed.

"That's my life work. I mean, you can't replace art once it's damaged," she said, noting it takes many hours to complete one of her pieces.

"I was lucky I didn't see a single dent in my spot."

Coincidentally Pisano and her son were about to go buy video cameras for her gallery, she said.

"My son said, 'Mom, I don't like you being there on your own. I'm going to get some cameras and we're going to install them.' I said, 'Well, you know what, let's go look at the space first and decide what we want to do.' And that's when we came and saw it."

"We never made it to Best Buy."

She said now she will be sure to install cameras just in case.

Lloyd Redekopp, the owner of the building, could not be reached for comment.

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# Police worry as tensions rise over carriage protests

Threats, criminal behaviour won't be tolerated, senior officer says. But Charter ensures protesters can have their say

**Editor's note:** This is the second part of a series focusing on the carriage protests in Niagara-on-the-Lake.

Richard Harley  
The Lake Report

After three years of protests, tensions are rising between Niagara-on-the-Lake's pro- and anti-carriage groups, both in-person and on social media, says a senior Niagara Regional Police officer.

"The rhetoric online on social media, the temperature is starting to rise," Insp. James McCaffrey said in an interview.

"And it's getting to the point where people are coming very close to committing some criminal acts on social media. There's some vague threats. Some are even inciting criminal behaviour. And that's not going to be tolerated," he said.

"We have gone to visit a few people already to warn them about what they are doing online," he said, adding, he worries about "vigilante behaviour of some kind."

The anti-carriage group, At War for Animals Niagara, says it plans a major protest in NOTL this Sunday, Aug. 23 at 12:30 p.m.

McCaffrey said police are trying not to escalate the situation by laying charges, but that charges will be laid if there is criminal behaviour. One man, a carriage customer, was charged in July with assault and theft after an incident involving protesters.

"If the evidence leads to the point where I believe enforcement is the best option for us, charges will be laid. Each individual incident that gets reported to us will be investigated," McCaffrey said.

Police are trying to remain neutral and maintain the peace and public safety, he said. "We're not turning a blind eye to what's going on. We recognize that this is an ongoing disagreement."

It's been frustrating for both sides and "I know the community is getting very concerned as well. We see the behaviours of everybody involved and we're continuing to educate or use discretion to best manage the situation. We don't want it to escalate and we're still just basically trying to preserve the peace."

His advice to both sides is to come to the negotiation table.



Police are worried about increasingly hostile communication from both sides of the issue. FILE

"And I really want the online rhetoric to stop. The temperature's rising too much. We really don't want to have to put our resources to go into people's houses to tell them to stop inciting violence," he said.

He also worries about people taking the law into their own hands. "We're not going to tolerate that. But we've got to start coming up with some resolutions at the negotiating table."

When it comes to online comments that might constitute a crime, police need to prove who was behind the keyboard, which can be challenging.

"We would interview the person to see what they have to say about it. But for the most part, we're hoping that we can still rely on not resulting in criminal charges. We don't want that. That's going to escalate the situation significantly. That's a last resort right now."

Many NOTL residents, along with Sean Sentineal, whose family operates the carriage business, have accused police of ignoring legitimate crimes of harassment by the protesters. It's been affecting business as some people shy away from the carriages.

McCaffrey said it's not an easy course to navigate.

"We do recognize that the businesses have a lawful right to exist and operate. We also recognize that the Charter of Rights and Freedoms gives these protesters the right to peaceful assembly," he said.

Defining peaceful assembly is "a challenge. We look at different sections of the Criminal Code, we also resort to case law to determine what is defined within the parameters of peaceful assembly," he said.

The courts have said the protesters have the right to be loud, he noted.

"A protest does not cease to be peaceful simply because the protesters are

loud and angry. So there are parameters that we have to take a look at."

He points to the case of a man arrested for loudly protesting at the municipal offices in Fort Erie. He was eventually removed from town property and charged with trespassing.

"He tore up the trespass notice and he decided to challenge that issue. It went all the way to the Court of Appeal," Ontario's highest court.

Like the protesters in NOTL, "He did use a loud megaphone, he did go back and forth. He was very loud, very angry. He is a very intimidating man. And there's a lot of expression in here about how people felt very intimidated by him, very similar to what we're hearing in Niagara-on-the-Lake." He said "a person's subjective feeling of disquiet, unease and even fear" is not enough to give them protection from the protesters.

The Fort Erie protester "was very loud, he was very angry, he was very abrasive. But the courts have found that that is still considered peaceful protest. So we have to take a look at that. We can't just lay charges because people are offended by the behaviour."

While there are town noise and sign bylaws, they don't trump the Charter, McCaffrey said.

"The Charter of Rights and Freedoms is the ultimate law of the land. It guarantees the freedom of peaceful assembly. So you are allowed to peacefully protest, you can use signs to peacefully protest for the purposes of communicating information. Part of our democracy, it depends upon the free and open debate of public issues," he said.

"What they're doing is allowable, it's guaranteed under the law, they can use signs. They can use a megaphone as well."

As for town bylaws re-

garding signage, the Charter protects the protesters, he added.

"That's my interpretation, that they are allowed to do it according to the Charter. You have to look at the intent of why they are there with the signs. The intent is to provide info for the purposes of obtaining or communicating information."

However, Niagara-on-the-Lake Lord Mayor Betty Disero has a different opinion.

Last month The Lake Report asked Disero if a person has a right to break bylaws if they are protesting. This came after a food truck operator refused to shut down his business after the town told him to stop operating because he was violating several town bylaws.

Disero responded that nobody can break town bylaws, even as part of a protest.

The same question was asked July 28 regarding the carriage protests.

"I stand by my statement that they may have the right to protest, but everyone is expected to adhere to town bylaws," Disero said.

McCaffrey said it comes down to what police think is going to help resolve the issue and he doesn't think enforcing town bylaws will help defuse the situation.

"If I were to lay one of the persons with a town bylaw (charge), is that going to resolve the issue here? No, that's a small facet in this. I'm trying to look at the greater good to come up with a resolution that benefits the town, Niagara-on-the-Lake's many visitors," McCaffrey said.

There have been complaints the protesters are intimidating carriage drivers, but he said intimidation is subjective.

"Granted, some people feel intimidated by the protesters, but there has to be evidence to support that. Just the mere fact that you're saying you feel intimidated — I understand that — but to date, there has been no evidence of violence that I can concur with this threat that (people feel)."

Businesses have a right to operate, but, again, the right to protest overrides that, he said.

"The court recognizes the mere fact that this affects your business does not supersede the person's right to peaceful expression," he said, once again adding that police are referring to case law in coming to that conclusion.

While acknowledging that either side in the dispute could launch a lawsuit against the police department, he said that "doesn't come into the equation" when laying charges.

"If there's sufficient grounds to lay a charge, then charges will be laid. If a breach of the law occurs, it's got to be dealt with as well, whether it be through discretion, education or enforcement."

If a lawsuit ever is filed, it would be up to the courts to decide if police acted maliciously toward one group, he said.

The police are trying to remain neutral in the dispute, he said. "We're not taking a side on this, we have to balance the rights of everybody involved. And I recognize that this does not make everyone happy."

He said he was out "walking the beat" in NOTL on July 28 and one big question he got from people about the protests was, "How is this considered peaceful?"

His answer: at times peace can be a pretty subjective term and previous court cases have shown that pretty much anything short of violence or threats of violence is considered peaceful.

"It's not what the layperson would define as peaceful. It goes far beyond that," he said.

"Threats of violence or violence do not have the Charter's protection. But being loud, being abrasive, being in your face is considered part of peaceful assembly. It's guaranteed under section 2(c) of the Charter."

Officers working the protests are concerned that after three years no progress is being made, McCaffrey said.

"I'm concerned that we're not moving forward. We need to talk about the core issues here. There's got to be a resolution out there that would perhaps be better for the town and everybody else involved."

He said he's tried to get both sides to the negotiation table, without success.

One idea that has been floated is the town leasing to the Sentineals the part of the road where the carriages operate. McCaffrey said that's an option, but noted it's not foolproof.

The section of roadway would be a small area in which the protesters would not be allowed, "but once the horses are outside of that small, defined area, we're

right back where we were before."

And protesters are allowed to use the middle of the road and impede traffic, because it's public space, he added.

He pointed to an incident in Toronto where 30 or 40 protesters shut down the Bloor Viaduct.

"They completely went on the road," he said. "The police officers came in and tried to negotiate a resolution to the situation. They weren't getting anywhere. So ultimately, I believe they were all arrested that day and taken from the scene."

They were charged with mischief, but the charges were all withdrawn immediately when they went before the court, he said. "The courts did not believe it was in the best interest of the public to prosecute them. So, again, negotiation is sometimes a way to try to resolve a situation."

McCaffrey said there have also been complaints from protesters about the carriage drivers.

"So there is a lot going on behind the scenes," he said.

"We are aware of what's going on and we will follow up with it. We may not necessarily lay charges because that's not always the best way to resolve an issue. We're still going to rely as much as we can on education and discretion."

He said police "continue to consult with the Crown attorney's office on a regular basis" about the NOTL protests;

While it's fair to say that these are sort of uncharted waters, he said it's not a Niagara-specific issue and that horse carriage protests have occurred around the country and beyond.

Sean Sentineal said even if the carriage business were to close, he doesn't think the protesters will go away.

"We've been doing business here for 30 years without an issue or a problem. So I'd hate to see town council and the mayor label us an issue, because I don't think it's just us, I think it's the town's issue," he said.

"If we are gone tomorrow, these people are still gonna be here. They yell at people eating meat on patios. They like the attention they get down here. We have millions of tourists that typically come through in a summer that they get to talk to and get attention from. So I think even if we're gone, they will still be here. For sure."

# Yellow Door Theatre holding youth auditions, receives grant money

Richard Harley  
The Lake Report



Niagara-on-the-Lake's Yellow Door Theatre Project is holding youth auditions after receiving grants for a new musical production.

The youth-based musical-theatre non-profit received a grant of \$3,500 from Niagara Investment in Culture and \$2,400 from the Town of Niagara-on-the-Lake, which will help Yellow Door to put on an original musical version of the well-known fairy tale "Hansel and Gretel."

"This is exciting news for Yellow Door Theatre

Project," artistic director Andorlie Hillstrom said in a media release.

"The funding received will enable the organization to commission playwright Lezlie Wade and composer Scott Christian to begin writing a new musical adaptation."

The musical will feature 14 young Niagara performers age 10 to 18, who are all

students of Yellow Door.

Hillstrom is also looking for young singers, actors and dancers to be part of a two-year program with Yellow Door, which will culminate in a livestream/in-theatre concert event on Dec. 11, 2020, at the FirstOntario Performing Arts Centre and another in 2021.

Elisabeth Cornett, mother of a Yellow Door singer,

speaks highly of the group. "(The kids) are not getting this quality of instruction and experience — or exposure for that matter, for those interested in a future in musical theatre — anywhere else in Niagara."

Virgil resident Michelle DuBois, whose daughter Catherine has been involved with Yellow Door for nearly four years, said, "The training she and her peers receive in the studio, which culminates in annual productions ... has been extremely positive both on and off the stage."

"Through musical

theatre training, Yellow Door teaches its students confidence, public speaking, teamwork and self-discipline. It truly lives up to its reputation and provides 'experience for life.' The Niagara region is very fortunate to have this accessible cultural training centre right here in our backyard."

Sandra and Lawrence Coctti said in an email that their children Enzo and Emilia "truly enjoyed their experience with Yellow Door's first online musical (Zoomsical) this summer. They were so proud to be

part of such a fun professional and talented theatre company."

"Cheers to all that made this happen during such times ... music makes the world go round and Yellow Door made that happen and more... they created smiles and excitement in our children. We truly feel the love, passion and caring that you have for each and every one of these amazing and talented kids. Thanks for giving us hope!"

Audition details are available at [www.yellow-doortheatre.com](http://www.yellow-doortheatre.com).

# Consultant hopes council will be sympathetic in helping restore old home

Continued from Front Page

Rescuing this particular piece of NOTL's heritage is a dream come true for Marshall, but he said he's got his work cut out for him as the house is "pretty much falling down at this point in time."

Because the house is in such bad shape, having been sitting for so long and vandalized numerous times, the Town of Niagara-on-the-Lake has agreed to cut him some slack on the mandatory archeological assessment, so he can start as soon as possible on structural repairs.

"All work of this type in Old Town needs to have a full archeological assessment done on the entire property," Marshall said.

The town is allowing the archeological work to be done on the front half first, "directly around the house, fix the house so it doesn't fall down in the interim. And then as soon as the house is stabilized, do the rest of the archeology on the property."

One of the big things to be done before major work can start is building the front porch, so there's safe access to the house.

"We have to do things inside the house, like hazardous materials removal, because there's 200 years worth of lead paints and asbestos in the house, not to mention installing windows to keep the weather out," Marshall said.



Brian Marshall is overseeing restoration of a long boarded-up house on Centre Street. RICHARD HARLEY

"So it's got to come out, we've got to have access to it. I'm altogether happy to work with the heritage committee on the back, but I really need the front porch approved. And hopefully the town council will see its way clear to co-operating with us on that one."

Part of the structural problem, Marshall said, is that the Harrison family, who owned the house from about 1906 to about 1952, damaged the structure when building out a back porch.

Another factor is that the Ure family, who owned the house from 1977 to 2016, filled in the cellar door with Portland cement, which is causing more structural problems.

"Basically what's happened is you got stress lines running through the back and you've got no support

under the centre of the back wall. So that's a major project," Marshall said.

He said the structural work will take about six to eight weeks. Once that's finished, the windows and doors will go in.

All of the windows will be replaced with custom period replicas, Marshall said.

"We're having accurate historical reproductions made for all the windows and doors on the exterior. Literally what we're doing here is what's known in the business as preservation and restoration."

The interior, he said, will be more of a rehabilitation, which "makes it more habitable for current day life."

"It's got to be done sympathetically and it's got to be done properly," he said.

"But what you don't want

to do is alter the main structure of the house."

He said the exterior work is expected to be done sometime in November.

The exterior work will cost "the better part of half a million dollars."

The current owner, Lloyd Kelly, is "a great lover of heritage architecture," Marshall said.

A lawyer in Texas, "he has been a visitor to Niagara-on-the-Lake for many, many years ... and he's always wanted a second home here."

"Say what you will about Americans, they have a huge respect for their own history. And, unfortunately, here in Canada — not so much maybe in Niagara-on-the-Lake — but nonetheless, generally speaking I can say that we don't."

He said Kelly would have liked to begin the restoration in spring, but the COVID pandemic delayed it.

He said the house has been declining since 1968.

"Essentially, nobody has touched the house since 1968. I have pictures of it in '77, and it was a mess then," Marshall said.

"The last family that owned the house that took care of it were the Roberts, who owned the house from about 1952 to the early 1960s. And after that, it just went downhill."

He said there's an "urban myth" about why the house was left to degrade, starting with the Ure family.

"The story goes that

during the early days of the restoration, Mrs. Ure got a bunch of inherited furniture from England. They put it in the house and somebody broke into the house, stole the furniture and she responded by saying the house is bad luck and they locked it up. Now, whether that's true or not, I do know the Ures owned five properties in town and most of them were in this kind of shape." Expert craftsmen will be doing the work. "You can't work with the masonry on a 200-year-old house unless you are a highly skilled restoration mason. So we are bringing in folks that understand and have a long track record of taking care of this kind of repair and stabilization," Marshall said.

The windows are going to be made locally, he said, and will be based on one remaining window sash from the original house.

"We're bringing in restoration glass from Europe to glaze the windows so the glazing is consistent with what would have appeared in the 19th century. There is enough left of the trim work and I have pictures from the '50s when the house was still in good shape to reproduce both the trim and doors."

He said he's not sure what to expect when the archeological assessment is completed.

"That's one of the reasons why we were so grateful to the town for being flexible in terms of doing this in two

phases, because my real fear is that sort of way out there in the backyard something is found, the whole site gets locked down and I can't save the house. So, by doing it in two stages, I can save the house and then pay homage to archeology."

Referring to all the restorations he's led over his career, Marshall said, "This particular project I consider to be one of the most significant, certainly in Niagara-on-the-Lake and in this area."

He said he thinks the project is also a benefit to the town, residents and visitors.

"Since last fall, I have been on site here easily 100 times. And every single time I'm here, somebody comes up to me and says,

'Are you going to fix the old house?' And it's indicative of the folks that live in NOTL and the pride and care they take of the town," he said, noting he hopes council will approve the front porch so the work can really begin.

"I think council reflects (the love of heritage) and represents those people in terms of bringing back a piece of history and benefiting the town in terms of just driving in. We're sitting on Mississauga and Centre (streets) here. If a visitor comes into this town, it's one of the first early houses they pass, and I'm thinking it would have a significant benefit from that perspective as well."



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always best dated. What am I?

Last week: When filled I can point the way. But when empty unmoving  
I stay. What am I?

Answer: A glove

Answered first by: Niamh Jones

Also answered correctly (in order) by: Janice Hall, Katie Reimer,  
Margie Enns, Sheila Meloche

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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Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday
<p><b>COVID-19</b></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><b>23</b></p> <p><b>Yoga in the Vineyard</b> - 10 a.m. - Lakeview Wine Co.</p> <p><b>Historic Walking Tours</b> - 11 a.m. - Queen's Royal Park</p> <p><b>LIVEstream.LOVE.WORLD. Series: Itamar Erez</b> - 2 p.m. - Virtual: NiagaraJazzFestival.com</p> <p><b>Jane Austen Tea Party</b> - 2 p.m. - Virtual: friendsoffortgeorge.ca</p> <p><b>The Missing Pages: At Home Concert Series</b> - 4 p.m. - Facebook @MusicNiagaraFestival</p>	<p><b>24</b></p> <p><b>Council</b> - 6 p.m. - Virtual: livestream.com/notl</p> <p><b>Famous and Infamous</b> - 2 p.m. - NOTL Museum</p>	<p><b>25</b></p> <p><b>Heritage Trail Committee</b> - 2 p.m. - Virtual: NOTL.org</p> <p><b>Outdoor Sketching</b> - 9 a.m. - Niagara Pumphouse Arts Centre</p> <p><b>Craft Night at Lakeview Wine Co.</b> - 5:30 p.m. - Lakeview Wine Co.</p>	<p><b>Artist Workshop: Paint with Josh Bellingham</b> - 10 a.m. to 1:30 p.m. - Royal Ontario Museum</p> <p><b>Come out and Play</b> - 9 a.m. - Niagara Pumphouse Arts Centre</p>
<p><b>30</b></p> <p><b>Historic Walking Tours</b> - 11 a.m. - Queen's Royal Park</p> <p><b>Ride to 55 Bike Rally Fundraiser</b> - 4 p.m. to 8 p.m. - Club 55</p> <p><b>Quartetto Gelato and Joe Pillitteri: At Home Concert Series</b> - 4 p.m. - Facebook @ MusicNiagaraFestival</p>	<p><b>31</b></p> <p><b>Community Wellness Committee</b> - 6 a.m. - Virtual: livestream.com/notl</p>	<p><b>1</b></p> <p><b>Desiree's Ride Bike Nights</b> - 7 p.m. - Club 55</p> <p><b>Outdoor Sketching</b> - 9 a.m. - Niagara Pumphouse Arts Centre</p>	<p><b>Irrigation Committee</b> - Virtual: livestream.com</p> <p><b>German Conversation</b> - 9 a.m. - Virtual: contact@aol.com</p>

Know of a local event? Tell us. Submit it directly to [www.niagaranow.com](http://www.niagaranow.com)

# Lake Report

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## COMMUNITY CALENDAR

Aug. 20 - Sept. 5

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Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
	<p><b>20</b></p> <p><b>Drop in Yoga</b> - 9 a.m. - RiverBrink Art Museum</p> <p><b>The Cayuga and her Cohorts</b> - 4 p.m. - NOTL Museum via ZOOM</p> <p><b>Craft Night at Lakeview Wine Co.</b> - 5:30 p.m. - Lakeview Wine Co.</p>	<p><b>21</b></p> <p><b>Lion Burger Returns</b> - 4 p.m. to 7 p.m. - St. Davids Lions Club</p> <p><b>Morning Zoom Art Program: Paint</b> - 9 a.m. - <a href="https://niagarapumphouse.ca/programs/registration">https://niagarapumphouse.ca/programs/registration</a></p> <p><b>Afternoon Zoom Art Program: Paint</b> - 1 p.m. - <a href="https://niagarapumphouse.ca/programs/registration">https://niagarapumphouse.ca/programs/registration</a></p>	<p><b>22</b></p> <p><b>Market @ The Village</b> - 8 a.m. to 1 p.m. - 111 Garrison Village Drive</p> <p><b>Coconut Quartz Pop Up Shop</b> - 11 a.m. - Lakeview Wine Co.</p> <p><b>Artist Workshop: Mandala Drawing with Lenore Walker</b> - 11 a.m. - RiverBrink Art Museum</p>
<p><b>26</b></p> <p><b>Photo Walk</b> - 10:30 - RiverBrink Art Museum</p> <p><b>Workshop with Pastel</b> - Niagara Pumphouse Arts</p>	<p><b>27</b></p> <p><b>Drop in Yoga</b> - 9 a.m. - RiverBrink Art Museum</p> <p><b>Ryan Thomas Band</b> - 9 p.m. - Olde Angel Inn</p> <p><b>Ten Things that will Save Your Life in the Trenches</b> - 4 p.m. - Virtual: nhsm.ca</p>	<p><b>28</b></p> <p><b>Mel Monaco and Company</b> - 3 p.m. - Ravine Vineyard Estate Winery</p> <p><b>Comedy Night</b> - 8 p.m. - The Exchange Brewery</p> <p><b>Out in the Open</b> - 9 a.m. to 12 p.m. - Niagara Pumphouse Arts Centre</p>	<p><b>29</b></p> <p><b>Market @ The Village</b> - 8 a.m. to 1 p.m. - 111 Garrison Village Drive</p> <p><b>Record Store Day</b> - 9 a.m. to 8 p.m. - SRC Vinyl</p> <p><b>Historic Walking Tours</b> - 11 a.m. - Queen's Royal Park</p>
<p><b>2</b></p> <p><b>Workshop</b> - 2 p.m. - Niagara Pumphouse Arts</p> <p><b>Support Group</b> - 10 a.m. - t.avocanotl@notl.com</p>	<p><b>3</b></p> <p><b>Environmental Advisory Committee</b> - 6 p.m. - Virtual: <a href="http://livestream.com/notl">livestream.com/notl</a></p>	<p><b>4</b></p> <p>No events</p>	<p><b>5</b></p> <p><b>Historic Walking Tours</b> - 11 a.m. - Queen's Royal Park</p> <p><b>Equithalasso Barn Demo</b> - 1 p.m. to 4 p.m. - Benchview Equestrian Centre</p>

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# Town unveils inaugural photo contest winners

## The Lake Report

The Town of Niagara-on-the-Lake's inaugural Photo Contest attracted more than 300 entries and almost 2,000 people cast votes to choose the winners in five categories.

The winners are:

**Amenities & Places:** Britany Massey for "Christmas Time Downtown NOTL"

**Arts, Culture & Events:** Britiney Turasz for "Come Ride Away"

**Innovation & Economy:** J. Thwaites for "Sunset Irrigation"

**Nature & Parks:** Frank Hayes for "Nature at its Best"

**Recreation & Sports:** Britiney Turasz for "Sunset Kayaking"

Town staff were "blown away by the level of participation in this contest," a news release noted.

The five winning photographs will be professionally framed, with credit given to the photographers, and will be displayed in a prominent location in town.

The location will be determined at a later date, when an in-person photo op can be arranged.

Winning photos can be seen at [www.jointheconversationnotl.org](http://www.jointheconversationnotl.org).



Nature at its best. Mom feeding the impatient kids.  
BY FRANK HAYES.



Christmas time downtown NOTL.  
BY BRITTANY MASSEY

## Opinion: Masked locals light up life in Niagara-on-the-Lake

Ross Robinson  
Special to The Lake Report

What to do next? I already have my Christmas tree up and my ladder is out of the shed to get the lights twinkling soon. This COVID lifestyle is getting to us all, as we try to fill up the days.

My social life is so quiet, the trash goes out more than I do.

There are many changes in our lives as we individually and collectively fight this virus. Happily, some NOTL residents can be counted on to buck up our spirits, even as we obediently line up to enter stores and follow the arrows as we shop.

One of my favourite townies is Judy MacLachlan, who has perhaps the smiliest smile in Old Town. Her entire face seems to be happy. From behind her mask, she always asks a good question. Not just to ask a question, but because she really wants to hear the answer. There is a big difference, eh? She lights up my visits to the Valu-marts and the Stage Coach restaurant.

My hockey captain Bill Dickson made me promise not to mention the annual hockey train wreck across the lake in



A masked Bill Dickson in Hendrik's Valu-mart.  
ROSS ROBINSON

Toronto. While honouring his request, I still want to wish the overpaid superstars good luck on their golf game. Dem bums in blue and white. The Leaves predictably fell earlier than ever this year, in August. I am confused.

Doug Garrett, now 93 years young, was the most positive person on the course during the NOTL Golf Club's championship weekend. Many of the golfers said they weren't playing too well, but multiple champion Doug's constant laugh could be heard from behind his mask.

When he plays, birdie, par or bogey, his smile is real. His motto seems to be, "Smile, and the world wonders what you're up to." Has he got another championship in him? I think so. His first win was in 1960. Yes, 1960. That's 60 years ago, lefties.

And speaking of smiling golfers, my pal Cam Calder always has a cheery thought or two to add to the day's blessings. Who looks more jaunty driving around town in his way-cool sports car? Masked up, bien sur.

Dawn and Paul Jacot always set the bar high for happiness. Even masked, their enthusiasm for old tunes, golf, running and enjoying the beauty of our town is evident, every single time we chat.

Need a smiling and loud (not too loud, under 55 decibels) cheering section for your next event? Call Dorothy Booth and Claire Bryan, who always have so much fun and laugh so much at the tennis club. You cannot mask enthusiasm. Paraphrasing crooner Debby Boone, way, way back in 1977, "They Light Up My Life."

My across-the-street neighbour Sharon Morrison has the most elegant penmanship in Chautauqua and is always smiling as she does her duties around her home. Summer, autumn, winter or spring. Count on it and she looks so purdy in a mask.

Mask on, brave York Volunteers. We will win this battle.

## Veterinarian still suspects toxic algae caused death of family's pup

Continued from Front Page

statement that tests from three samples indicated "no presence of blue-green algal bloom."

The dog, a one-year-old border collie named Jack, appeared "brain dead" when it arrived at the vet clinic, said owner Conor MacNeill. The dog was put down by veterinarians shortly after.

In a statement Tuesday to The Lake Report, MacNeill was critical of a report in the St. Catharines Standard last Saturday that said the toxic algae had been ruled out in Jack's death.

"In speaking with the vet it was our understanding that this appeared to be a textbook case of blue-green algae poisoning, but there was no way of knowing definitively without an autopsy. The Ministry of the Environment official informed us they do not typically carry out autopsies, opting to focus on testing the area in question. So after discussing this article with the vet, it is still felt blue-green algae poisoning appears to be the most likely cause of death, based on the evidence available."

"We understand that three samples of lake water were taken by the Ministry of the Environment from the beach at Ryerson Park

and those tests for blue-green algae bloom came back negative, ruling out its presence at the time of testing."

"However, this testing happened roughly 20 hours after Jack's death and ministry officials agreed that with the fluid nature of the lake and drastically different weather conditions, blue-green algae poisoning could not be ruled out as the cause of Jack's death, 20 hours prior."

"This is a difficult time for our family and our intention in speaking out on this has solely been to make other dog owners aware of the potential dangers blue-green algae poses, particularly around this time of year, in the hope of helping avoid this happening again."

John Gleddie, president of the Chautauqua Residents Association, said the incident "is proof that we should have our water quality at Ryerson Park tested on a regular basis."

Ross Robinson, a member of the association's board, said he is concerned that the town didn't put up signs until one day after the veterinary clinic made the announcement about the potential danger. He took it upon himself to go home and write his own sign. Another neighbour also put

up a homemade sign.

The town initially placed signs on the backs of four park benches on Wednesday, but not near the stairs or pathway down to the water. Some people who were in the water that day said they did not see the signs before they went in. By Thursday, two days after the dog died, warning signs were posted at the beach entries.

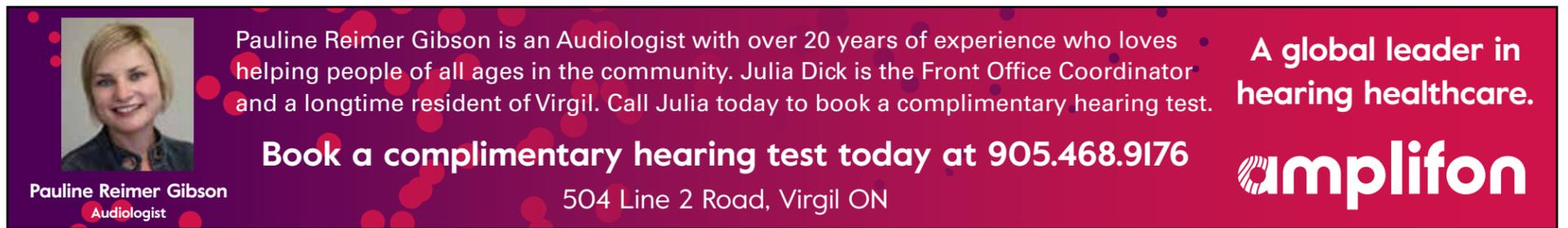
"I was astounded that no one posted warning signs at the two entrances to the waterfront immediately after hearing about this sad incident," Robinson said.

"Because of this shocking lack of action, people, including little children, were in the water soon after the dog was rushed to the vet. A friend saw at least two dogs swimming that evening."

The town is reminding swimmers that testing is not done regularly at Ryerson Park because it's "not a designated beach."

In late July, after questions from The Lake Report about water quality and testing of NOTL lakefront beaches, the town said it would be erecting "educational" signs at Ryerson Park telling people what conditions could lead to high E. coli in the water.

Those signs finally went up last Friday.



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Pauline Reimer Gibson  
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## Scandal & Gossip Tour a museum highlight

Julia Sacco  
Special to The Lake Report

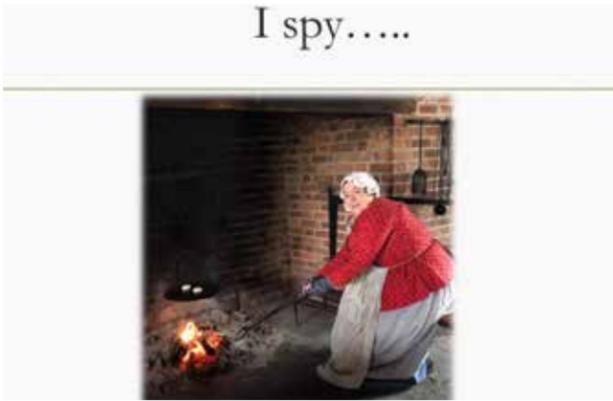
Mysterious underground passageways, a Canadian spy, and tales of love and scandal.

The Niagara-on-the-Lake Museum's "Virtual Scandal & Gossip Tour" last week showcased some of the town's most eclectic history.

The presentation, conducted online via Zoom, was led by producer and writer Barbara (Babs) Worthy, who took viewers on a trip around town with a detailed PowerPoint accompanied by great storytelling.

A recording of the tour can be viewed on YouTube or via a link among the webinars on the events page of the museum's website, <http://www.nhsm.ca/>.

The hour-long adventure began at the old Parliament Oak Public School, detailing stories of mysterious tunnels and prestigious property owners.



A screenshot from the virtual tour.

"There is a myth that under Parliament Oak School there is a tunnel that leads all the way from Regent Street to King Street," said Worthy.

"It was believed by some people that it was part of the Underground Railroad."

This was followed by tales from areas in NOTL including the Brockamour Manor and the Angel Inn, as well as stories about prominent people in history, like Mary Osborne, the Servos family, The Row-

leys, Charles Camidge, the Freemasons and more.

Worthy told viewers stories of love, scandal and jealousy attached to each building and person.

"In mid-September 1826, Batavia resident William Morgan went missing mysteriously."

"Later in 1826, William Morgan's book appeared and it revealed many secrets about the Freemasons," Worthy said, highlighting the rumoured kidnapping of Morgan to Fort

Niagara.

She completed the tour with the story of Catherine Pool, a Canadian spy during the War of 1812.

"Laura Secord was not alone in her bravery. Catherine Pool would walk up to those border guards and give those Yankees a smile," said Worthy.

"They let her go almost anywhere she pleased, with more than just bloomers under her skirt ..."

\* The Niagara-on-the-Lake Museum remains busy with events and more weekly virtual presentations.

Upcoming presentations include John Henry's "The Cayuga and her consorts: Remembering those beloved Niagara-to-Toronto steamers" on Aug. 20 and Scott Finlay's "Ten Things That Will Save Your Life in the Trenches" on Aug 27.

To take part in more experiences, check out the museum's website.

## Annual Jane Austen tea party goes virtual

Cara Nickerson  
Special to The Lake Report

The Friends of Fort George is hosting its seventh annual Jane Austen Tea Party on Sunday, Aug. 23.

The 2 p.m. event is a fundraiser for the organization, which aims to recognize and promote the historical value of the fort.

Executive director Amanda Gamble said the tea party is important because "Jane Austen is a contemporary writer for the time period that we portray at Fort George."

"Officers stationed at Fort George, that's what their lives would have been like," she said.

This year the tea party will be an online virtual event, due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

The group is selling take-home packages for \$25 that include a home tea party kit, equipped with tea, treats, craft ideas and other Regency-inspired goodies.

Attendees can also join along in a three-round trivia game while enjoying their tea and treats from the comfort of their own homes.

"I think this year with a lot of stuff cancelled it's nice for people to have something that they can join in on and look forward to," Gamble said.

The funds raised will go toward programs offered at the Friends of Fort George.

The Friends of Fort George is offering delivery in NOTL or in-store pick up at the gift shop. Anyone wishing to attend can order their package through the [friendsoffortgeorge.square.site](http://friendsoffortgeorge.square.site) website.

## Golf: Women Beat the Pro, but with a twist

Kevin MacLean  
Managing Editor

It was a tough day on the links Tuesday for NOTL Golf Club pro Billy Simkin as seven golfers beat him in a fun contest to get closest to the hole.

The NOTL 18 hole women's league's final Beat The Pro competition of the season had a twist, though. The women could choose which club Simkin used for his shot.

"This my favourite kind of competition," said Simkin, as the women forced him to hit everything from his driver to 4- and 5-iron and a gap wedge. A few had him hit his pitching wedge, his normal club from 100



Sharron Marlow. KEVIN MACLEAN

yards away on the par 3 fourth hole.

It was all in fun, though, as May Chang, club champ Yolanda Henry, Marie Ellison, Jennifer Meszaros, Louise Robitaille, A flight champ Cathy Murray

and Sharron Marlow all managed to Beat the Pro. Chang and Henry both sank their putts for birdies.

**MEN'S LEAGUE:** Paul Jacot was among the big winners in men's competition last Thursday as he

tied with several others for low gross 37 (one over par), tied for first in Stableford scoring with 23 points and scooped a \$20 gross skin for his birdie on the par 5 third hole.

Other winners: Tied for low gross, Don Allen (who scored a natural eagle two on the six, one of the toughest holes on the course), Dragan Racic, Glenn Young and Jim McMacken.

Top point-getters: Racic (23) and Bruce Dixon, Allen and Young (21). Net skins, \$40: Joe Intersano (#2), David Jackson (3), Ken Wilms (#5), Allen (#6) and Roman Mamalyga (#7). Gross skins: Stephen Warboys (#1), McMacken (#4) and Jim Meszaros (#5).

## Shoreline work begins at Ball's Beach park



Rankin Construction crew Jamie Fouger, foreman Bryan Gollwitzer, Scott Greves and Macgreggor Armstrong. RICHARD HARLEY

Richard Harley  
The Lake Report

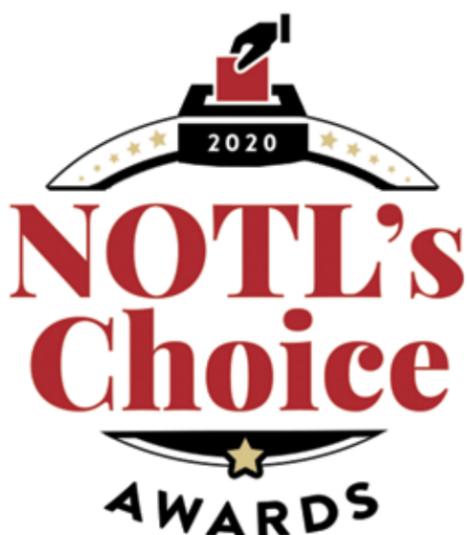
The town has begun shoreline protection work at Ball's Beach in Old Town.

Rankin Construction, the company that was chosen to complete the project, will be working

weekdays on installing a rock groyne in the area.

There will also be some tree maintenance and stone additions to the parkette, the town said in a statement.

The area will be closed for construction on weekdays, with work expected to be complete in mid- to late-September.



*Winners to be announced Sept. 3!*

*Thanks for 3,000 votes!*



Left: Nine-year-old Syme Jago, as Gabby, on the set of the early 1960s CBC television production of "The Forest Rangers." SUPPLIED Right: Syme Jago and Adrian Goldberg relax in their peaceful backyard oasis, an English garden to raise a twinge of envy in his old-country English relatives. TIM TAYLOR



## NOTL couple spearheads second pandemic **food drive**

Tim Taylor  
The Lake Report

Just three months after Niagara-on-the-Lake residents Syme Jago and Adrian Goldberg and a few friends raised thousands of dollars and hundreds of pounds of food for Newark Neighbours, the pair are planning to do it again, but bigger and smarter.

By Sept. 23, Jago and Goldberg are hoping to gather a team of residents and businesses who will use their networks to find food and money to support the well-known, hard-working charity, ensuring food security in the local community.

They want to call the day: Newark Neighbours Day.

The spark for their original food drive in June came during a regular early pandemic Zoom call with friends. One of the group spoke glowingly about Newark Neighbours and the increasing need for their services.

The conversation sent Jago's creative juices into overdrive.

"Well, let's just do something about it," she remembers saying. "I asked three other couples to help make our first food drive happen. No one hesitated to jump in."

It took just 11 days to get the word out and complete the collection. "We had donations from 65 homes. We raised \$3,500 and hundreds of pounds of food."

Jago, 67, describes the

effort as something akin to the old Faberge television commercial: "Tell two friends, who tell two friends, who tell two friends. It just grew."

It was when the four couples were delivering the donations, that they were told their efforts would keep the shelves stocked for many weeks. But the charity expected the need to grow in the future as government pandemic support programs end. And what's more, most of the donors said they would happily participate again.

Jago's light went on again. Those who know Jago, know the light goes on often, bringing determination and drive to both her personal and professional life.

She grew up in Toronto, a child actor from the age of three and a child star by the age of nine, playing Gabby on CBC's "The Forest Rangers" and in other television and film productions including Disney's "The Incredible Journey."

"Mom was a ballerina and had a dancing school in Toronto. She had a friend who was a casting director who needed a little girl who can speak well ..." and could she bring Syme in?

"There were no children doing it. So, I just kept going. I grew up at the CBC studios on Jarvis Street. That was home."

So, it was natural, after high school, for Jago to seek further education for

a career in the theatre. But she no longer wanted to be an actor.

"As a teenager, I decided it was too cutthroat to be in front of the camera, so I said, 'I'm going to go to school to learn the technical side.'"

She attended Ryerson's Theatre Technical faculty, graduating in the program's first class.

Fast-forward through almost 20 years of increasingly challenging theatre and event production, Jago is hired as the head of production for the soon-to-open SkyDome (now Rogers Centre.)

In her new role, she needed someone to be her head of lighting for the opening ceremonies in 1989. She hired a young(er) Goldberg, who had recently hung out his shingle in the specialty world of studio, event and production lighting.

Although it would be another 10 years before the couple would graduate from professional to life partners, they were almost immediately presented with a partnership opportunity with the company that had provided the spectacular pyrotechnics for the SkyDome opening ceremonies.

The new company formed the foundation for Jago's remaining professional career.

Goldberg, 69, had emigrated from his home northwest of London, England, in 1970, not yet quite 20 years of age. His parents operated a car hire firm, what we

would call a limousine or chauffeur service.

The young man arrived in Canada as a recently minted certified financial analyst.

Working in Toronto, he was constantly drawn to the theatre. And drifted into production lighting quite by chance.

"My love at the time was theatre," Goldberg remembers. "I got into amateur theatre. One day the lighting guy didn't show up. Everyone pointed at me."

"It really piqued my interest. I was asked to become the lighting director at a new community theatre. I spent quite a bit of time going to anybody and everybody who would talk to me about lighting. The rest is history."

Over his 40-plus-year career, Goldberg earned a reputation as one of the few lighting people in Canada who has covered all the lighting bases, through theatre, television, film and live production. His professional resume records over 400 project credits in Canada, the United States, Europe, South America, Asia, Australia and the Middle East.

He has travelled the world lighting the Billy Graham Crusade, built the iconic TORONTO sign at Nathan Phillips Square and will spend the next decade consulting on the complicated lighting requirements for the resurrection of the Centre Bloc of Canada's Parliament Buildings in Ottawa.

After marrying in 2000, the pair have often spent long periods of time on the opposite ends of the world.

Jago travelled for her pyrotechnic business, creating spectacular displays for the Rolling Stones, Disney's Epcot Centre and the Hong Kong harbour. Her last gig before retiring in 2015 was creating and managing the daily fireworks displays for the Toronto PanAm Games.

Goldberg was everywhere else, it seemed, making sure the world's broadcast services had access to the best lighting money could buy.

In 2002, the couple purchased a small cottage along Lakeshore Road in Niagara-on-the-Lake, just west of Konzelmann Estate Winery. It was a refuge, a quiet weekend haven from their frenetic working life.

"From the mid-'90s, we had come through here for brief stops, usually dining," said Goldberg. "It was a treat for us. It had an incredible vibe."

They moved here permanently in 2009, using it as an efficient base for travelling for their respective businesses.

Goldberg's professional life carries on apace. Jago has chosen her retirement activities carefully.

She has taken a job right next to her home at the Grimo Nut Nursery. She acts as the bookkeeper and office person.

"I have the best retirement job ever," she exclaims. "I help grow nuts. It is won-

derful to learn something completely different."

Jago is also an avid gardener and active member and supporter of St. Mark's Anglican Church, having served on the parish council. She and Goldberg volunteer to produce the church's regular Sunday YouTube services for the church during the pandemic.

But right now, Newark Neighbours Day, is capturing almost all their attention.

"We're starting again with the four couples and trying to build a network of people who will work with their own 'Rolodex' to motivate, activate and collect food and money in support of Newark Neighbours." A less grey-haired crowd would probably use the term contact list or Facebook friends ...

"We want to keep it basic. Not a lot of structure to the campaign. In our June effort, we learned that people really want to do this. We just need to declare it and nurture the idea."

"Please, please, please if you can help in any way, email me at [sjfooddrive@gmail.com](mailto:sjfooddrive@gmail.com) and we can get things moving. We need people to motivate others in our community and people to collect donations on Newark Neighbours Day, lots to do."

With Goldberg and Jago's drive, and a dedicated team to help them, there will be fewer food-needy people in our community.



Pauline Reimer Gibson  
Audiologist

Pauline Reimer Gibson is an Audiologist with over 20 years of experience who loves helping people of all ages in the community. Julia Dick is the Front Office Coordinator and a longtime resident of Virgil. Call Julia today to book a complimentary hearing test.

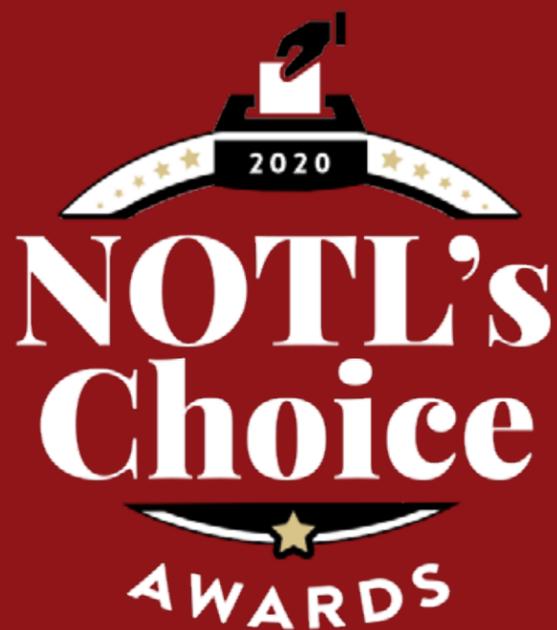
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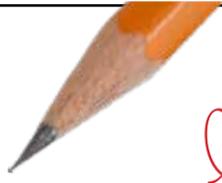
# The Lake Report



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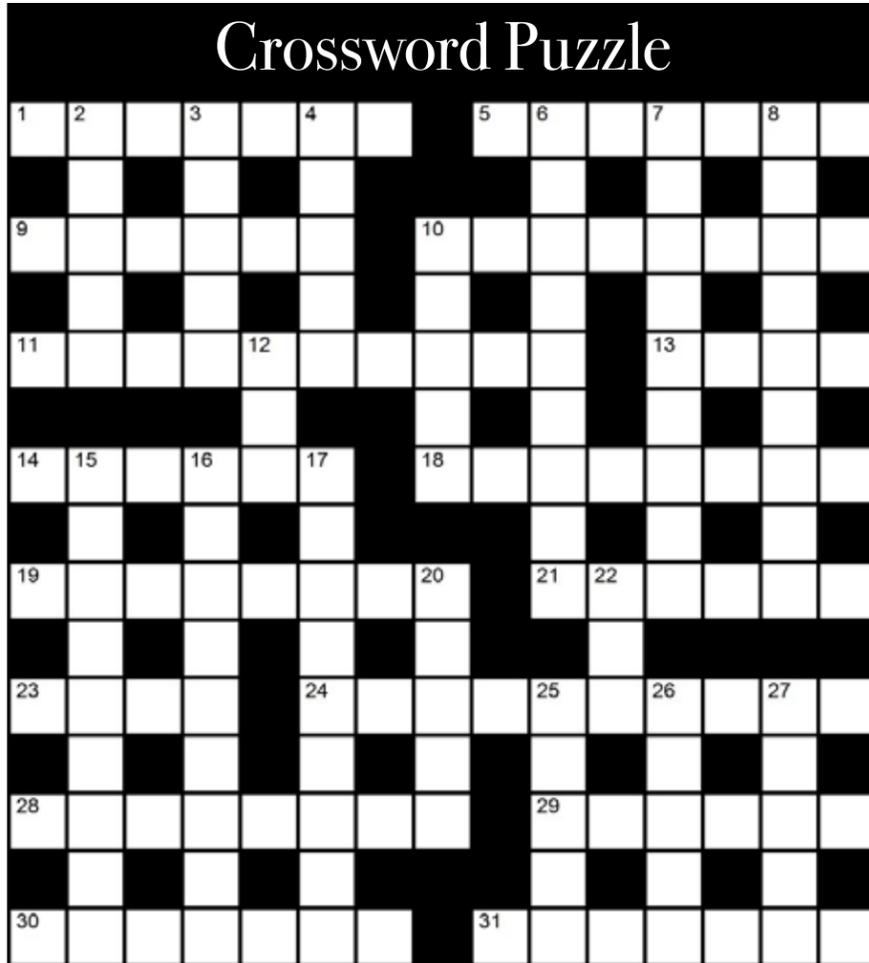
The Lake Report is looking for puzzle makers who would like to help develop this page. We are seeking both standard and cryptic crossword writers. [editor@niagaranow.com](mailto:editor@niagaranow.com)

**Across**

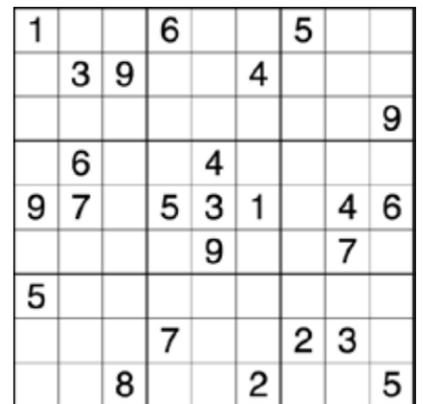
- 1. Husky (7)
- 5. Highest (7)
- 9. Complete (6)
- 10. Opening (8)
- 11. Shades (10)
- 13. Restraint (4)
- 14. Unsullied (6)
- 18. Foretells (8)
- 19. Fleet commander's vessel (8)
- 21. Chaise longue (6)
- 23. Having no money (4)
- 24. Writing materials (10)
- 28. Large amount of electrical power (8)
- 29. Stoppage (6)
- 30. Profound (7)
- 31. Nervous (7)

**Down**

- 2. Member of the Indian majority (5)
- 3. Unpaid (5)
- 4. 8th letter of the Greek alphabet (5)
- 6. Lay out too much (9)
- 7. Motherhood (9)
- 8. Table napkin (9)
- 10. Fabulous story-teller (5)
- 12. Permit (3)
- 15. Eve of All Saints' Day (9)
- 16. Source of sweetness (5,4)
- 17. Recipients of one of St. Paul's Epistles (9)
- 20. Braid (5)
- 22. Fuss (3)
- 25. Relative by marriage (2-3)
- 26. The dark (5)
- 27. Achieve (5)



Last issue's answers



# Music Niagara teams with college to film **live concert**

Richard Harley  
The Lake Report

While the novel coronavirus has put a damper on live entertainment across the globe, one Niagara non-profit is figuring out new ways to get music out to fans from the comfort of their home.

Music Niagara, in partnership with Niagara College's broadcasting department, filmed a live concert last Thursday. It will be available for viewing as of Aug. 30.

The event showcased the music of Quartetto Gelato in an intimate setting at Chateau des Charmes winery in Niagara-on-the-Lake.

Artistic director Atis Bankas said it's "very exciting to be able to put a concert together, even though it's in a virtual way."

"We have to adapt to conditions at hand, the reality at hand, and I don't

think that reality will leave us very quickly," he said of hosting shows during a global pandemic.

"We have to be creative and do the best we can to entertain. And, at the same time, I would say when times are dire, which they are, psychologically and physically ... the arts have much more importance than ever before — especially music. Music has the ability to soothe the soul."

Karen Lade, general manager of Music Niagara, said the season had originally planned 30 live shows, but instead will be doing 13, and filming five as part of its new "At Home Series."

"Instead of going live with a live audience, we partnered with Niagara College's film crew, and we will be filming today and with a very small audience of sponsors, which is fantastic," she said.

The show was hosted by NOTL comedian Joe



Music Niagara and Niagara College film a performance by Quartetto Gelato at Chateau des Charmes. RICHARD HARLEY

Pillitteri and dedicated to Elaine Lavery, who died of cancer in June. She was a big supporter and fan of Music Niagara.

Her husband Bob Lavery said it was a nice tribute to Elaine.

"My wife was very fond of Music Niagara," he said.

"In addition to liking the presentations, she liked the people she met. And she always felt it was a wonderful social event. And she used to say that the opening event during the spring was the social event of the year. So it means a lot to her. It means a lot to me, too."

Randy LeGallais, a board member of Music Niagara, said it's important to keep shows going, so people don't "forget who you are."

"It's very important that we keep our name out in front of them and our product out front," he said.

Lade said the shows help

the whole community.

"I think it's really important to work together with our partners like Chateau des Charmes, our other venue partners, as well as Niagara College because we need to work together during this time to keep our community thriving."

STEELE GALLERY

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# From Alaska to NOTL: Keeping in touch with ailing mom amid the pandemic

*COVID-19 has changed life for everyone. And when your mother is in long-term care, suffering from dementia, and you live thousands of kilometres away, keeping in touch means relying on technology and the innovation of dedicated workers in a Niagara-on-the-Lake nursing home. The author is an orthodontist, Coast Guard wife and home-schooling mom in Kodiak, Alaska. She is also the daughter of NOTL resident Dr. William Brown, a columnist for The Lake Report.*



Martha Brown Truncale, with her son William, and mom Janet. SUPPLIED

Dr. Martha Brown Truncale  
Special to The Lake Report

My family considered 2019 a difficult year due to the decision to place my mother in long-term care. Accelerating dementia had made life managing at home a burden for two older parents, not just one. A junction no one wants to reach.

I am the daughter that lives afar. An understatement given that my family lives on Kodiak Island in the Gulf of Alaska. Here, as with every corner of the globe, coronavirus has slipped into our community and forced freedom-loving people to adapt to face coverings, physical distancing (normally reserved for bears) and ruminations over school openings.

Until now, I have travelled to Niagara-on-the-Lake twice a year, enjoying family conversations, local walks and the familiarities of Canada. Not so, for the foreseeable future.

And what a year for the double whammy of long-term care and travel restrictions! Looking back, my visit in November 2019 was just-in-time. I got to see my mom in her new surroundings, provide some decorations and chew over the long-term care decision, however difficult that may have been.

My father and our friend Lynn both visited mom each day, taking her out for strolls around town, a latte, some errands and plenty of hugs. Then the long-term care doors closed and mom was gone. Months passed.

What did it mean to the family of residents in long-

term care? Unfortunately we share tears with those who lost their moms and dads without even a final goodbye. We understand that maintaining safety for residents is paramount, but the sadness of separation is overwhelming at times.

Barring connection to loved ones has created the disease of despair among residents, their spouses, children and friends. Radical thoughts started to swirl within our family, recalculating the wisdom of putting mom in long-term care at all. For if this was to be the new reality, should we just bring mom back home? Is her safety a substitute for her quality of life?

Then cracks opened in that separation. Connections made via WhatsApp and FaceTime reached across town, linking her facility to my father, only blocks away. This was followed by careful visitations. Dad has related his recent experience of Romeo-at-the-fence in The Lake Report.

Takeaway here: six feet of space is a desert in dementia. For physical closeness is the language of care when the mind has retired to the

quiet realm. A walk holding your best friend's hand reminds you of all the walks in a long marriage. A daily hug can replenish so much lost to conversation. This is the next allowance we will wait for. It is perhaps only achievable with a vaccine or instant, reliable testing.

Looking about, there is much to celebrate as an adaptive species. I have seen "hug curtains," photographs worn overtop PPE in the ICU, drive-by birthday celebrations. Good for us. People are finding ways to crack open these barriers and remind each other that our humour, compassion and joy are not lost.

I thank our great facilitator, Ruth Simmonds at the Niagara Long Term Care Residence, who texts every week to set up my video chat with mom. I know I join many families in expressing our heartfelt gratitude that Ruth, and many like her, have taken on this role.

In the background, nurses, aides, kitchen staff and others that make days at long-term care roll on are surely having to invent ways of engaging residents who have lost their connections

to family. We thank them, too, for stepping up for our moms and dads.

I used to talk by phone with mom every day. For most of my life I took for granted that she placed that call. As dementia crept in, I began to place that call and eventually I became the only one talking.

The back and forth faded to confirmatory laughs and alternate silence. Our phone-adaptation has been ongoing for more than a decade with this disease. Video chats in long-term care are our new version of this continuity.

I have learned that mom sparkles when I smile so I emphasize this. I remind her who I am, I give her grandson news, cat news, work news and yes, bear news.

In fact, I hold a cheat sheet of conversational tidbits so that I can keep a stream of chat at hand. I come to the screen hoping that we can step over this barrier again and I close with the same comment she and I have bandied back and forth for a lifetime.

"Well, that's all the news, that's new and improved. Love you, mom. Talk to you soon."



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The Niagara-on-the-Lake fire department's new 2019 Rosenbauer Cobra 101' aerial platform fire truck. KYLE TAYLOR

## Old Town station gets new fire truck

Richard Harley  
The Lake Report

NOTL has a new \$1.4-million fire truck. The truck, a 2019 Rosenbauer Cobra 101' aerial platform, is operating out of Station 1 in Old Town and is a replacement for an existing 2006 truck "that had been experiencing reliability issues and significant downtime due

to mechanical issues," Fire Chief Nick Ruller told The Lake Report.

"The reliability of the fire department fleet is incredibly important. Our firefighters take significant pride and ownership in their fleet and equipment as they not only play a critical role in fire suppression and civilian rescue, but are also their potential lifeline at an emergency scene," Ruller

said. An aerial truck has an "expected lifespan of 20 years of frontline service," he added.

Station 1's 2007 Spartan Smeal 105' aerial ladder truck has been relocated to Glendale to replace the 2006 aerial that was decommissioned.

"In addition to the platform that the firefighters can work from, the new truck also has a 2250

gpm pump, 300 gallons of onboard water, over 200 feet of ground ladders, and dual nozzles on the platform that allows it to flow water on multiple areas simultaneously."

"This significant investment in state-of-the-art equipment better positions our volunteer firefighters to meet the evolving needs and expectations of the community."

## Speed limit reduced on Concession 6 Road

Richard Harley  
The Lake Report

The speed limit on Concession 6 Road between Niagara Stone Road and Line 2 Road is likely to be lowered to 70 km/h from 80 km/h.

Town councillors unanimously approved a staff

report recommending the speed change at Monday's committee of the whole meeting, but still need to vote on it at a regular meeting of council.

The report said town staff conducted a study of traffic volume and speed on the road between July 8 and 15.

"During the investigation it was determined that the average speed was 62 km/h and the 85th percentile operating speed was 72 km/h."

The cost of converting two existing speed limit signs is an estimated \$250.

"Staff will also deter-

mine if any additional signage may be required," the report said.

Signs will be posted to warn drivers of the change and "Niagara Regional Police will also be advised of the revised speed limits to assist in future enforcement activities."

## Town to expand tennis courts at Memorial Park

Richard Harley  
The Lake Report

The Town of Niagara-on-the-Lake will be expanding the Memorial Park tennis courts, with work starting the week of Aug. 24.

Two additional playing courts will be added to the facility, says a staff report to

council.

The volleyball courts have been converted to tennis courts, as "tennis courts are in high demand," the report says.

This \$125,000 project was approved and included in the 2020 budget and \$40,000 of the total is funded by donations,

and the other \$85,000 comes from parkland and recreation reserve funds.

In 2016, town staff met with the tennis club to discuss its future plans and expansion of the courts at Memorial Park was a priority, the report says.

"Two courts would fit on the site. The tennis club

advised the courts are in high demand and are having trouble finding court times to satisfy their membership."

It said the consequences of not proceeding with the expansion are "increased complaints from the tennis club" and "overflow of tennis club players onto the public courts."

## Obituary

### Sheila Wolofsky



WOLOFSKY, Sheila (née Callan) – Passed away peacefully, in her favourite chair, overlooking her garden, on Friday, July 31st at the age of 91. She was predeceased by her husband of 70 years, Leib Wolofsky. Sheila was born in Grand'Mere, Quebec. She attained degrees from both McGill and Brock and taught ESL at Niagara

College. She sometimes accompanied Leib on his geological projects, spending time in many exotic countries. These experiences led to her great empathy and support for newcomers, including migrant workers in Niagara, as well as a lifelong involvement with the Niagara chapter of Amnesty International. Sheila had an ear for jazz and classical music, an eye for art, which she collected around the world, and a penchant for connecting people. Indeed she loved writing and receiving handwritten notes and letters. And she rarely forgot a birthday! The family would like to thank Sheila's wonderful caregiver Deborah Remolleno, whose presence allowed Sheila to remain at home, at peace. Cremation has taken place. A celebration of life will be held at a later date. Arrangements entrusted to MORGAN FUNERAL HOME, 415 Regent Street, Niagara-on-the-Lake. As an expression of sympathy, memorial donations may be made to Amnesty International. Memories, photos and condolences may be shared at [www.morganfuneral.com](http://www.morganfuneral.com)



## Country shows, take me home

Country singer JoJo Mason entertains a young fan at a private concert in Niagara-on-the-Lake on Sunday. Joanne Skubel won the intimate show in a contest held by Welland radio station Country89. VALERIE CHUBEY PHOTO

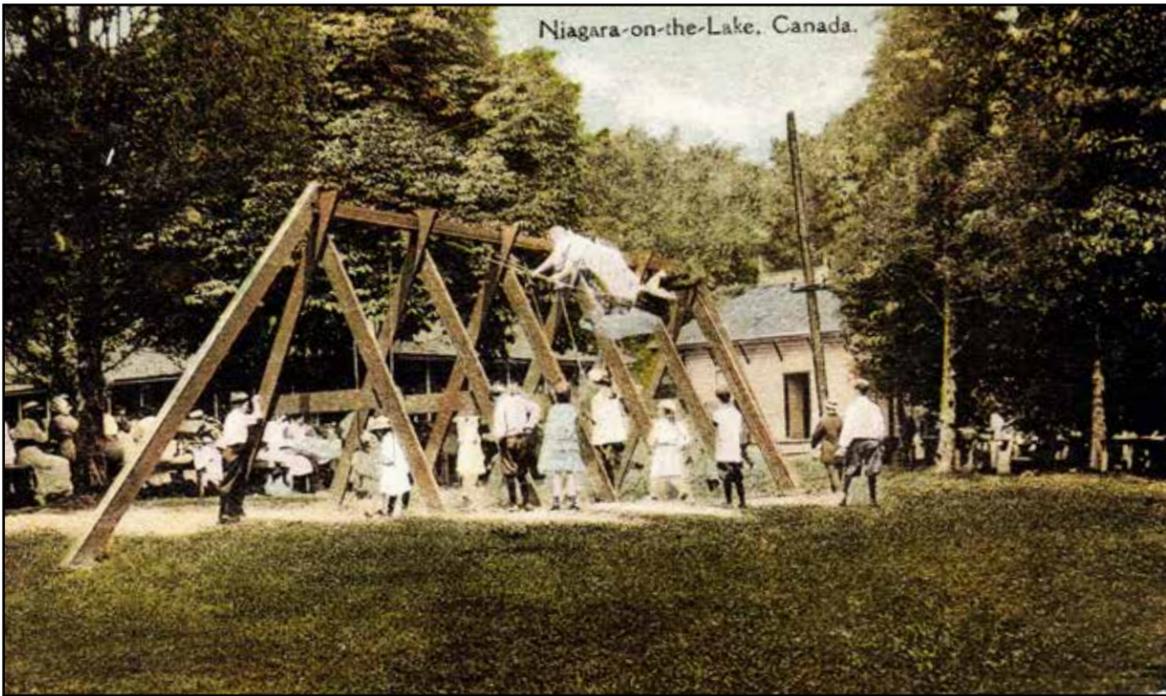


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## Old Simcoe Park swings

Once military reserve land, Simcoe Park was previously leased by the Town of Niagara for the enjoyment of its residents. It was a gated park that was apparently named after John Graves Simcoe by its first hired operator, Dick Taylor (the same gentleman who was featured in last week's column). The valley running through the park is the result of a dried-up waterway that continued down Prideaux and along Regent to the Niagara River. The installation of swings, "teeters," a refreshment stand and a pavilion were enjoyed by young and old alike. Former resident Ann Buyers fondly remembered the dances on Wednesdays and Saturdays led by an orchestra. However, she noted that the bathrooms were best not visited!



## Amongst the first

Brian Marshall  
Columnist



Peter Secord House. SUPPLIED/BRIAN MARSHALL

When the first Loyalists mustered out of militia regiments like Butler's Rangers in late 1779 and early 1780, the Crown had not developed any plan for their resettlement.

While it was generally accepted that the government had a duty to these individuals, there was no system in place to evaluate and adjudicate their claims for losses and loyalty.

Perhaps as a stop-gap measure the earliest Loyalists were offered the opportunity to settle as tenants-of-the-Crown; essentially they could build houses, farms and businesses, but the land (and buildings) remained

the property of the Crown.

One of the first of these mustered out Loyalists was 54-year-old Peter Secord, who is recorded as having commenced farming in what is now St. Davids in 1780. Within a few years he had constructed a solidly built little stone house. As time and money permitted, he extended his home with an in-line addition to create the facade seen from the street today.

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

random method that creates rough courses with non-uniform joints. In appearance, the facade represents a Georgian facade with five bays.

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

At some point, likely in the early 19th century, the entire house was coated

with lime render to both weatherproof and "fancy-up" the rubblestone walls. This render was removed by the current owner who has invested significant energy in the preservation and restoration of the house.

From his earliest days in Niagara, Peter Secord petitioned the Crown for a land grant. Acting in good faith as a tenant-of-the-Crown, Peter developed a successful farm and, in concert with his brother James, developed one of the earliest grist mill operations in Niagara.

Unfortunately, he was not high on the Crown's priority list and by 1793 he decided to leave Niagara and move to Norfolk County. When his land grants were finally awarded in 1796, he chose to remain in Norfolk and sold the properties to his nephew, David Secord.

While we do not know what saved it from the torch during the War of 1812, it remains today a wonderful glimpse into Loyalist architecture of the 18th century.

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**16-YEAR-OLD HAILEY BEATTIE HAS BEEN VERBALLY ATTACKED WHILE TRYING TO DO HER JOB.**



**PROTESTER JASON KING MAKES HIS VIEWS KNOWN TO A GROUP OF TOURISTS TAKING A CARRIAGE RIDE.**

# **WE WANT TO HEAR FROM YOU**

**Have you, or has someone you know been affected by the carriage protesters in Niagara-on-the-Lake in any way? Please share your story with us, in as much detail as you can. Be sure to include dates if possible and attach any photos and videos.**

**SEND US YOUR STORIES AT [TOGETHERNOTL@GMAIL.COM](mailto:TOGETHERNOTL@GMAIL.COM)**



**PROTESTERS OFTEN WEAR TACTICAL GEAR, HANDCUFFS AND MASKS DURING THEIR DEMONSTRATIONS.**



**FAMILIES TRYING TO ENJOY A CARRIAGE RIDE HAVE BEEN HARASSED, INCLUDING PREGNANT MOTHERS AND CHILDREN.**