

FALLING INTO THE LAKE



Since 1950, Niagara-on-the-Lake has lost more than 90 metres of shoreline in some areas. Breathtaking new aerial footage and historic photos of Niagara Shores Park show the extensive damage to the park has been amplified by high lake levels in 2017 and 2019.

The Lake Report spoke with private homeowners, shoreline experts, Parks Canada officials, and residents who remember how much has been lost, to get the full spectrum of erosion, and the toll it's taken on the town's landscape.

We've put together this special edition you have in your hands, along with a 40-minute documentary, all of which can be found at NiagaraShores.com

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An aerial shot of fallen trees at Niagara Shores Park. RENE BERTSCHI/SPECIAL TO THE LAKE REPORT

Part 1

“The lake just keeps consuming.”

Since 1950, Niagara Shores Park — once called Happy Land, and later, simply, the Conservation Area — has lost about 90 metres of shoreline.

Breathtaking photos and exclusive aerial video shot from a drone flying high above Lake Ontario this spring and summer show how the pounding, high lake water in 2017 and 2019 has taken a major toll on several kilometres of shoreline as well as the park, which is owned by Parks Canada.

This year alone, the secluded public park, located just west of Old Town and near the new Niagara Region sewage treatment plant, has lost large chunks of its lakeside embankment and numerous trees have fallen into the lake.

NOTL resident Chris Allen first alerted The Lake Report to the latest erosion, after viewing the devastation by canoe from about 20 feet offshore in early summer.

All along the shore for about three kilometres, from Shakespeare Avenue to Four Mile Point, Allen reported “extensive erosion and more fresh trees down.” One possibly 200-year-old oak, he says, was a few feet from falling into the lake, and there is “no hope of saving it.”

The Lake Report’s editor, Richard Harley, having grown up frequenting the park, also has observed its collapse over the years. However, rather than rushing to publish a few photographs of the devastation, we decided to launch a much more in-depth investigation and it became a summer-long project.

The park has about 580 metres of shoreline, 330 metres of which is naturally eroding, according to Parks Canada.

Parks Canada spokesperson Rae Kingdon says because the erosion “does not present a risk to cultural or

Producer: Richard Harley

Research & Reporting: Denise Ascenzo, Dariya Baiguzhiyeva, Brittany Carter, Richard Harley, Kevin MacLean and Jill Troyer

natural resources, nor does it threaten any infrastructure,” there are no plans to try to limit the damage.

In an interview for The Lake Report’s documentary video, Parks Canada’s asset manager for southwestern Ontario, Brendan Buggeln, spoke with reporter Dariya Baiguzhiyeva about some of the reasons why the park has been left to erode.

Erosion is a natural process, and not all of it is bad, says Buggeln. In the case of Niagara Shores Park, erosion is necessary for a colony of nesting bank swallows, which burrow into the steep cliff faces. The endangered birds need near-vertical cliffs in order to nest and as the shoreline at the park erodes, it provides that habitat.

“We determined that any erosion mitigation we could do there would threaten the habitat of the species at risk,” says Buggeln.

Letting erosion take place also means a beach will remain, he says. Mitigating the damage with rock walls would eliminate any beach and destroy the habitat of the bank swallow.

Some Niagara-on-the-Lake residents, like Alan Plut, are concerned about the loss of beachfront in town due to shoreline protection at places like the Niagara-on-the-Lake

Golf Club and Ball’s Beach. But even Plut thinks Niagara Shores Park should be protected, as the land is eroding at an alarming rate.

Standing near the edge of the park’s cliffs today, he recalls when the park extended much farther out.

“I remember as a kid, it seemed like the tree line was a lot further back from the edge of the cliff. But it’s going fast,” says Plut, as he surveys the damage and exposed roots of fallen trees.

“These roots, they’ve been completely washed off by the lake, the tree is half exposed — it’s about to topple in at any moment.”

Plut says in his lifetime, he’s watched about 40 to 50 yards of land fall into the lake.

“The lake just keeps consuming.”

Buggeln says there are methods that can protect a shoreline, while still preserving a beach, such as beach rejuvenation and offshore breakwalls.

With Lake Ontario water levels at record highs this year, the steep bank is eroding faster, he says. As the waves crash into it, large chunks fall away.

“If you happen to be down there, (the water) is like a steam shovel taking chunks of the earth down,” says lake-front land owner Bruce Ferguson, who has seen extensive erosion damage on his family property over his lifetime.

Niagara Shores Park is losing about 1.1 metres of shoreline per year, Parks Canada says, but, as Kingdon notes, no mitigation measures are planned. Given that Parks Canada

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Top: The destruction at Niagara Shores Park can be seen along 330 metres of actively eroding shoreline. The lake is claiming the land at an alarming pace, and residents are concerned about the future of the park. Left: Bank swallows are a factor complicating potential shoreline protection efforts at the park. Right: A shot from 2016 shows a tree sliding into the water. The tree can be seen in a picture on page 2 in 2019, dead in the water. PHOTOS BY RICHARD HARLEY

Continued from Page 2

opted to protect the bank swallow habitat by leaving the site as-is, no detailed costing was developed for the other options, says Kingdon.

As the lake swallows the shoreline, local residents and longtime visitors to Niagara Shores Park have started to take notice.

The impactful sight has left some residents stunned by the overall damage and the lack of preventive measures to fix them.

Scott Maxwell, of Niagara Falls, has been hiking along the Niagara Shores path since he was young. He says the changes he's seen occurring at the park are "astounding."

"When I was a kid in the '60s, this would go out 250, 300 feet. There used to be the army huts here and officer's barracks," he says of the area next to the path along Niagara Shores Park. The path has since grown over and the beach isn't as sandy, or accessible, as he remembers it.

Cindy Maxwell, who joins him for walks along the path, notes "devastating changes" and erosion along the way. She says some parts of the beach have become virtually inaccessible in just a year.

"Last year we used to walk here, down to the beach – you can't get to that place now," she says.

She thinks it's a shame the beach isn't being maintained

at all. "Back in the '70s the water came up 10, 15 feet. All this used to be a sandbar, it was wide open into the lake," Maxwell says. He also notes that where the area once allowed for painted turtles to nest along the sandbanks, the high-water levels and erosion damage have put an end to that.

"Painted turtles used to nest here, and hatch and I haven't seen one for a long time," he says.

Beth Turner has lived in NOTL for several months and has been walking the path since she moved to town. She says even over the last few months, she's noticed drastic changes to the shoreline and the park.

"Oh, we've definitely noticed a change in the erosion over that time. We've seen new trees down in the ground. It's really sad," she says.

"I think it's terrible because it's really changing the whole way the entire park looks, losing the beautiful trees, and it doesn't feel safe anymore."

She says if she had young children, she wouldn't allow them to walk near the edge, commenting on how easily the trees have fallen in and how dangerous the path is becoming.

In other parts of Niagara, Parks Canada has done extensive shoreline protection to mitigate damage to cultural assets, while others like Ferguson are left to deal with erosion at their own expense, and have questions — and theories — about why lake levels have been so high in previous years.

See Page 4 for Part 2: "It's a threatened species in Canada."



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A bank swallow at Niagara Shores Park. The species is threatened in Canada. RICHARD HARLEY

Part 2 “It’s a threatened species in Canada.”

Just off the steep cliff faces of Niagara Shores Park, at almost all hours during spring, summer and fall, a captivating aerobatics show is on display.

A colony of small birds dances its way to a fresh meal for its young fledglings, which nest metres away in the soft sand and clay of the park’s embankment.

The birds, appropriately, are called bank swallows, and build their burrows into sandy vertical faces along lakes and rivers.

The story of the bank swallow might not have a happy ending, though — as Ontario has lost more than 90 per cent of its bank swallow population since 1972, thanks to shoreline protection and lakefront development. They are one of Ontario’s most threatened bird species.

The Lake Report spoke with Bird Studies Canada experts Liz Purves and Megan Hiebert to find out a bit more about the birds and why the populations are in decline, and to see if it is related to eroding shorelines.

Purves and Hiebert spend their summers doing hands-on research with bank swallows along the coast of Lake Erie.

They literally count bank swallow burrows as part of their research and are acknowledged experts on the birds — which are often confused with other types of swallows, like barn swallows and cliffside swallows.

Bank swallows are aerial insectivores, which means they eat insects while in flight.

The spectacle is fascinating to watch, as the tiny birds swoop through the sky, performing aerial tricks as they

hunt. But this means they need to nest in places where food is abundant. Lakes and riverbeds provide ideal habitats, with plenty of insects hovering above the water.

The birds come all the way from South America to spend the summer in Niagara-on-the-Lake. Tagged birds have been recaptured and documented as far away as Peru.

Many Niagara residents are concerned the erosion is destroying the habitat for the birds, but, in fact, the opposite is true, experts say. Near-vertical cliffs are crucial to the bank swallows’ habitat and nesting, but those steep embankments are only formed via erosion. Building a breakwater barrier near their nesting area could destroy their habitat.

On the other hand, erosion can be deadly to the birds and their habitats, if it occurs aggressively at the wrong time of the year.

“Erosion is tricky because it has to happen at the right time for bank swallows,” says Hiebert. “It has to happen before they start laying eggs, before they get into nest building, and definitely before they have babies. If it happens when they have babies, well, that kind of sucks.”

“I can’t say for sure it’s because of high water levels, but it kind of looks that way,” she says.

“You could see places where there had been recent erosion, and it probably just wiped out a whole ton of nests, which is unfortunate.”

Bank swallows are finicky, in that all tests so far have shown they won’t use artificial nests, or nest in an arti-

cial environment. They want sandy, soft banks, close to the water. And there isn’t much that can substitute for that. Near the water, bugs are flying, and food is prevalent.

“The artificial habitats that I’ve heard of haven’t worked out spectacularly,” says Hiebert. “I know that they have been trying different mixes of sand and stuff, to try and entice the bank swallows to go in it, and they just wouldn’t use it. They prefer a pile of dirt.”

As crashing waves continue to erode Niagara’s shoreline by an average of one metre per year, the challenge of preserving coastal land comes face-to-face with preservation efforts for the bank swallow.

Niagara Shores Park is home to a significant population of the tiny, migratory bird that makes its burrows in embankments along lakefronts and riverbeds.

Amid growing concerns about the preservation of bank swallow habitat in Niagara-on-the-Lake, The Lake Report spoke at length with Purves and Hiebert about the life cycle of the birds and the causes leading to the decline of the species in the province.

With populations being at the lowest the province has seen in ten years, combined with the ongoing loss of shoreline, there is a sense of urgency in finding out the best ways to protect the swallows, while preserving coastal land.

Purves and Hiebert, who are researching bank swallow

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Top: Baby bank swallows peer out of a burrow at Niagara Shores Park.
Bottom: A mature bank swallow swoops out of its nest at Niagara Shores Park. RICHARD HARLEY

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populations and patterns in Ontario, say the birds will only nest on cliffs like those in Niagara Shores.

Part of the problem is that without shoreline erosion, which creates steep banks, the birds wouldn't have places to burrow. As more and more shoreline protection occurs along the Great Lakes, it stops the natural creation of the birds' habitat.

Steep banks are critical, say Purves and Hiebert. The angle prevents grass and plants from growing in the side of the cliff. If the grass were to grow, the birds, which use their tiny beaks to build their burrows, wouldn't be able to make their nests. Though they're powerful enough to dig holes up to one metre into the soft sand, they aren't able to burrow into thick roots.

The steep angle also helps the birds keep out of the way of natural predators, like racoons and skunks, which are prevalent in Niagara-on-the-Lake.

In the case of the bank swallow population, finding a way to prevent eroding shoreline, while preserving natural bank swallow habitat, is crucial to the success of preservation.

Researchers have tried to create artificial habitats for the birds, but they haven't been successful. "The birds don't like it," says Purves.

There is no specific guideline for how to repair a shoreline while mitigating damage to bank swallow habitat, Purves and Hiebert say.

And federal laws restrict the further destruction of bank swallow habitats, so without a functional plan for shoreline protection that also preserves swallow burrows, a solution seems unlikely.

See Page 6 for Part 3: "An entire cherry orchard is gone."

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FALLING into the lake



Lakefront homeowner Bruce Ferguson stands at the end of his property, where he's lost more than 100 feet of land to erosion since 1969. RICHARD HARLEY

Part 3

“An entire cherry orchard is gone.”

Along the shores of Lake Ontario in Niagara, private landowners are having their own troubles with erosion.

Bruce Ferguson's family has lived in the McNab area west of Old Town for more than 100 years. In that time, he says the extensive erosion has caused him and neighbours concern.

He recalls stories of entire farm roads and orchards falling into the lake, houses being moved across the street to be saved, and of swimming on the remnants of structures that had been consumed long ago.

Once 300 acres, when his grandfather owned it, Ferguson's property has passed hands from his father to him, and been sectioned into about 1.5 acres of land for Ferguson and his wife Patricia to build a home.

“Being on the lake over the years we've had our share of erosion,” Ferguson says. “Over that time, we've lost, well we lost a cherry orchard, and then the 100 feet we've lost since I've owned it.”

The erosion has caused enough concern for him to look into historical maps of the land, which show a devastating loss of land.

He says he had the land surveyed in 2003 when he was planning on building a house on the property.

“They made up the deeds in 1969, we had it resurveyed in 2003, when we were planning on building. I knew we were

losing property to erosion. I had him write down in his survey what it is now, compared to what the deed says,” he says.

The comparison revealed he had lost more than 100 feet off the east side of his property, and more than 60 off the west in 34 years.

“To put that into perspective, our house is set back 110 feet from the edge of the bank. That is about what we've lost off the end of the property,” Ferguson says, as he contemplates the land that has vanished. “In my lifetime, this was actually dirt and sod and trees and grass.”

After an interview for our documentary, we asked Ferguson to take us to his house to show us the extent of the erosion for ourselves. What we saw was that since 1970, he has lost almost half of the land between his back porch and the lake.

To Ferguson, erosion is nothing new — it's just gotten worse with the high lake levels in 2017 and 2019. And he, like others along the lakefront, are wondering why.

Ferguson says the working theory is that it's due to the changes made in lake level inputs and outputs by the International Joint Commission, which controls lake flow for Lake Erie, Lake Ontario, and the Ottawa basin to Quebec.

For private land owners, whether it's important to them or not, shoreline protection still comes with a hefty cost.

Ferguson received estimates for protection or preserva-

tion of about \$1,000 per foot. That price tag “sort of adds up,” says Ferguson, who has 150 feet of beachfront property in the McNab area, about eight kilometres west of Niagara-on-the-Lake's Old Town district.

Currently there is no federal or municipal funding available for people who want to protect their property, or reclaim lost land.

“It's unfortunate what we've been seeing is there's no preventive money as such for land owners, it's more remediation works,” says Brett Ruck, manager of environmental services for the Town of Niagara-on-the-Lake.

“When you're looking at remediation, you've already sustained the damage so you've got to be able to protect yourself ahead of time if you think that threat is there for your property.”

As far as compensation for loss of land, Ferguson says he, too, is unaware of any money that's available.

“I really don't know if there is a recourse in Ontario for losses that you've incurred due to erosion.”

The Town of Niagara-on-the-Lake has had to contend with erosion problems and has completed its own shoreline protection along the mouth of the Niagara River at Ball's Beach Park, Nelson Park and River Beach Park.

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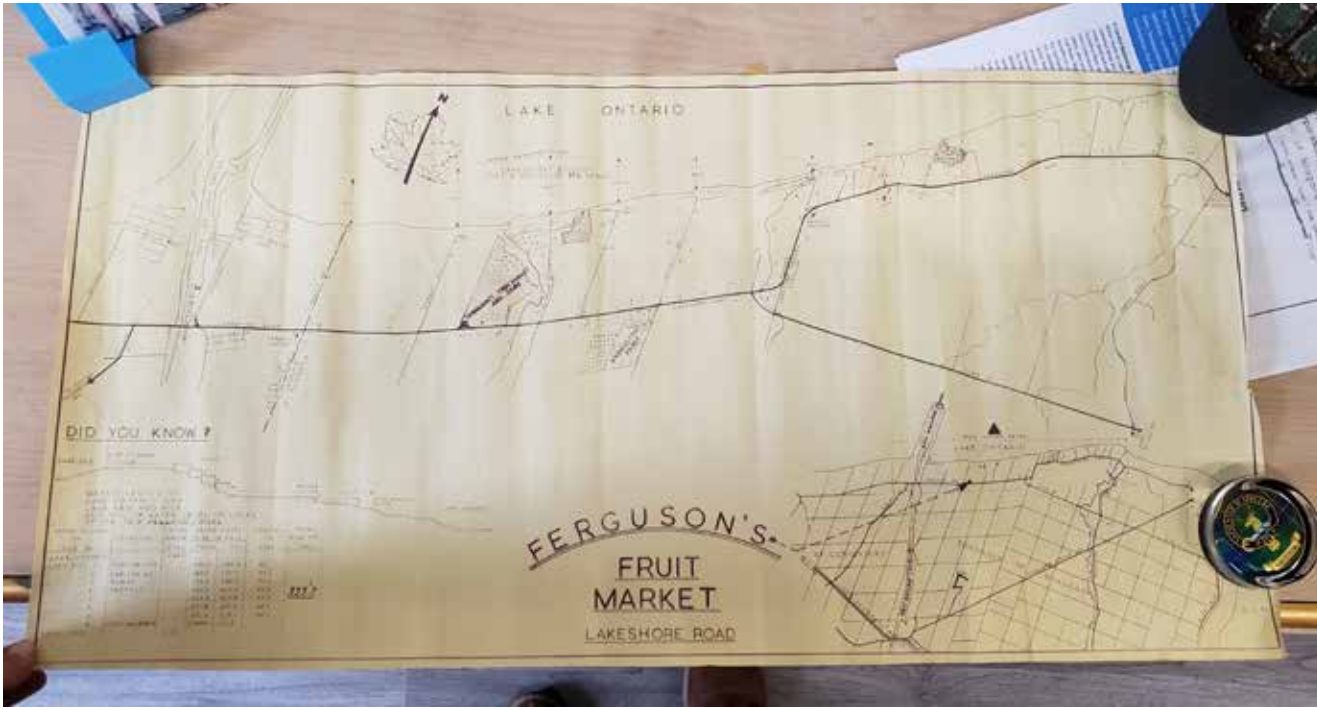
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Top: A map of the approximate shoreline in 1791. Middle: A maple tree claimed by the lake. Bottom: Bruce Ferguson with his grandchildren at his lakefront property. SUPPLIED PHOTOS



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At Ball's Beach, a groyne — a pile of rocks to protect the shore — has been put in place to stop waves crashing, but the rocks still have to be turned and placed properly to be fully effective.

The town needs the water level to fall and approval from the Ministry of the Environment before more work can be done on the groyne.

Niagara-on-the-Lake Lord Mayor Betty Disero says there are provincial guidelines that have to be followed and that as soon as the lake levels are down, the province "should allow" the town to finish the shoreline protection.

"We're losing land, we're losing trees and we have to stop it before we start to lose one of our parks so the shoreline protection project is very, very important," Disero says.

Ferguson admits, he could take the initiative to do shoreline protection on his own, but that for him, preserving beach access is more important. Some other NOTL residents, like Dave Glasz, agree, and wish the town would act to open up public beach access.

"I'm willing to tolerate a bit of erosion to preserve a beachfront," says Ferguson. "I go down there with my grandkids, and the turtles lay their eggs on the beach, and we think it's sort of neat."

See Page 8 for Part 4: "It's a national historic site."

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FALLING into the lake



An aerial shot of the Niagara-on-the-Lake Golf Club and Fort Mississauga National Historic Site at the mouth of the Niagara River. RENE BERTSCHI

Part 4

“It’s a national historic site.”

Across the Great Lakes, scenes like the one above are becoming more and more frequent. In an attempt to save land from being claimed by powerful bodies of water, rocks and boulders are used to limit wave damage and prevent erosion.

Along the coast of the Fort Mississauga National Historic Site and the historic Niagara-on-the-Lake Golf Club, Parks Canada has spent \$4.9 million in federal infrastructure money to restore and protect 600 metres of shoreline.

The work was started in 2018 and was completed this summer, one year ahead of schedule, an accomplishment that Parks Canada asset manager Brendan Buggeln says the agency is proud of.

With a new record lake level in 2019, the erosion could have taken a further toll on the golf course — the oldest in North America.

“We prevented more possible erosion,” says Buggeln.

The area, whose beachfront was swallowed by the lake many years ago, was becoming a hazard for golfers and most of the trees were dying. Parks Canada removed around 200 trees, and plans to plant another 300, he says.

The type of protection done along that part of the Lake Ontario shore is called a breakwater. Large boulders are built up several feet high to ensure that powerful waves hit the rocks and “break” before they can crash on the bank or shoreline.

Other types of shoreline protection include offshore breakwalls, beach nourishment or installing stone groynes. Parks Canada owns the golf course land and leases it to the NOTL Golf Club, and the agency determined the best plan was a breakwater with a gravel road for trucks to get in and out with boulders.

Buggeln says different types of protection are appropriate for different areas.

“At Fort Mississauga we decided action was necessary for public safety, for the visitor experience, for the cultural resources, and for the infrastructure that was there.”

“Fort Mississauga is a fascinating national historic site. It was developed just after the War of 1812, in response to the loss of Fort George, and wanting to protect against Fort Niagara and control the mouth of the Niagara River ... and was an active military site right through the end World War Two.”

“There’s lots of buried artifacts, lots of in situ (on-site) artifacts, and so we were worried about losing those to erosion, and losing the fort proper. So all of these things put together, we thought it was important to act to protect this site for future Canadians to come and see it.”

When it became evident to Parks Canada that high lake levels would increase shoreline erosion even more, the agency hired a consultant to explore shoreline protection solutions at both Fort Mississauga and Niagara Shores Park. At Niagara Shores, they determined shoreline protection

wasn’t appropriate, largely due to an active population of threatened bank swallows.

At Niagara Shores, Buggeln says the agency was “less concerned with cultural heritage,” when compared to Fort Mississauga — which was an active military site for many years and contains buried artifacts.

“It’s a national historic site. It’s nationally significant in Canada.”

Buggeln says erosion is just a part of life.

“Erosion is a natural process. If lakeshore and rivers were left to themselves, there would be places that would be eroding, and places that would be building up with the sediment in the water. Over time, as many shorelines get hardened, there are fewer and fewer sources of sediment for the water, so places ... where sediment would be settling and depositing, those are becoming fewer.”

Looking to the future of Niagara Shores Park, with North America’s oldest golf course and one of Canada’s national historic sites now protected, Buggeln says it’s “hard to say” what could change to make Parks Canada reverse its decision not to protect the land at Niagara Shores.

The bank, which had no beach left, was threatened to collapse, and most of the trees were damaged or dying, says Buggeln.

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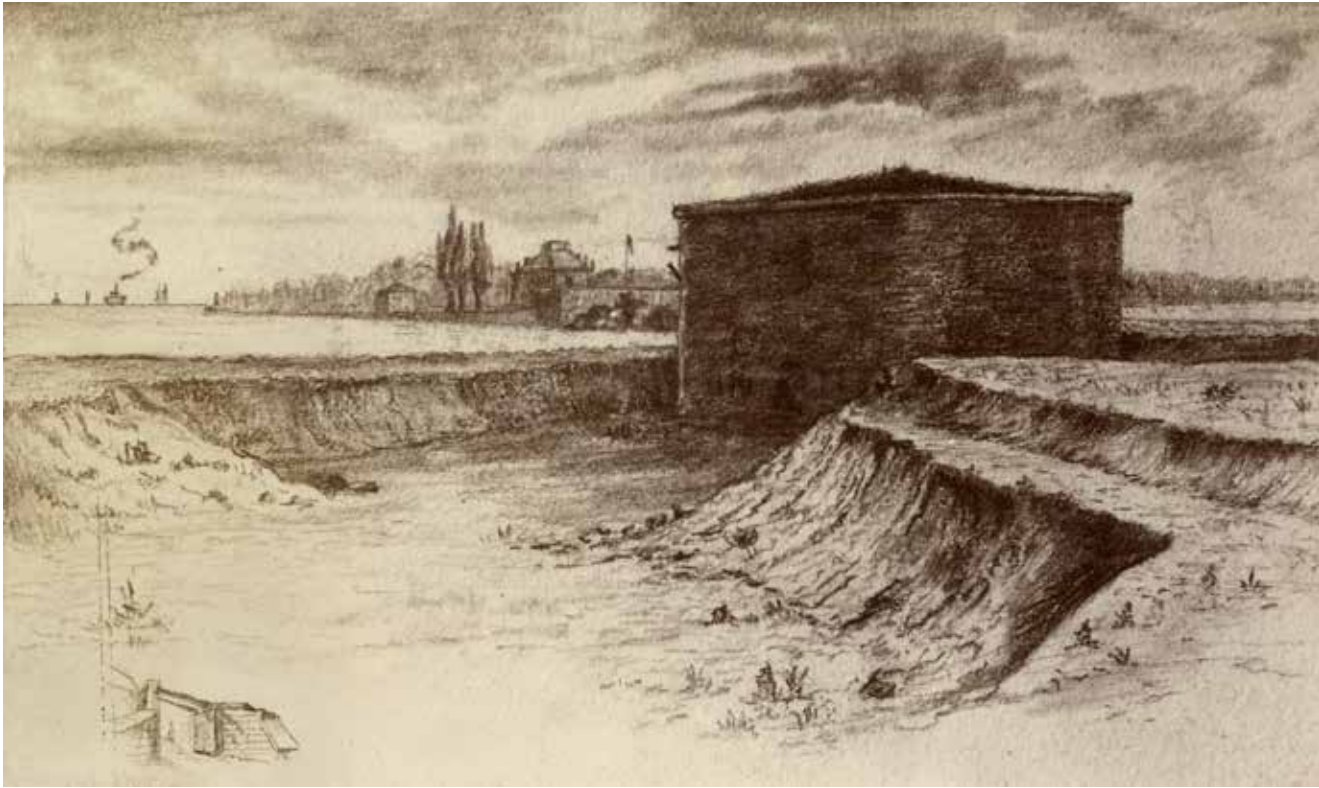
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Top: A historic drawing of Fort Mississauga. Middle: An aerial view of the fort from 1953. Bottom: Trees falling along the shore of Fort Mississauga in 2017. SUPPLIED PHOTOS

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Kingdon says the breakwall is “helping to protect Fort Mississauga and the historic artifacts along the lakeshore property, while at the same time ensuring public safety.”

The agency “is continuing to monitor any public safety concerns at Niagara Shores Park and, to date, have excluded vehicles to help mitigate the risk,” she says.

“Shoreline erosion is a long-term, ongoing natural process, with rates of erosion varying each year due to lake levels and weather events. Erosion rates are generally increased in high water years, like this year and 2017.”

Kingdon says many people have expressed interest in having a pedestrian walkway included along the rebuilt waterfront. However, at the moment, Parks Canada has no plans for one but might assess the viability of a walkway in the future.



See Page 10 for Part 5: “I wouldn’t be happy to know it was manmade.”

You Had Your Hearing Tested. Now What?

Get Informed. Generally, there will be two outcomes after your hearing evaluation.

The first outcome, you were informed that your hearing is within normal limits, with a recommendation to revisit the status of your hearing in one or two years and make it part of your health and wellness routine.

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Rehabilitation for an age related hearing loss does not include pharmaceutical interventions or a corrective surgical procedure.

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2019 Rising Spirits Creative Writing Contest

The NOTL Writers' Circle is happy to announce the 2019/20 Rising Spirits Creative Writing contest is now open. The competition invites Ontario residents to submit their short stories (fiction and non-fiction) and poetry.

Winners will have their work published in our annual anthology and be presented with awards and prizes at the Awards Celebration which will be held on Sunday, February 23rd at The Old Winery in beautiful Niagara-on-the-Lake.

We are excited to announce that our judge for this year's contest is Brian Henry, celebrated book editor, writer, creative writing instructor, and publisher of Canada's most popular blog for writers - Quick Brown Fox. Mr. Henry will also provide feedback for the pieces submitted by the winners.

Cash prizes for 4 Writing Categories
(Fiction, Non-Fiction, Poetry, and Youth)

1st Place - \$250

2nd Place - \$100

3rd Place - \$50

Over the past seven years, The Rising Spirits Awards Celebration has grown into an extraordinary community event with storytelling, music, wine, and special guest speakers.

Contest details and entry forms are available at: www.notlwriterscircle.com

Deadline for submissions is October 31st, 2019.

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FALLING into the lake



The Moses-Saunders Dam near Cornwall controls water levels between Lake Ontario and the St. Lawrence Seaway. SUPPLIED PHOTO

Part 5 “I wouldn’t be happy to know it’s manmade.”

The last few years have been worse than others for shoreline erosion, as is evident by numerous photos of fallen trees, sand and clay.

When searching for the cause of the increased decay, everything points to high lake levels in 2017 and 2019.

Niagara-on-the-Lake resident Bruce Ferguson, who owns a home on a portion of his late grandfather’s property, believes it is largely due to a change in the way the water is let out of Lake Ontario.

In 2017, the International Joint Commission changed the way it lets water flow into the St. Lawrence River.

Ferguson doesn’t think the date is entirely coincidental.

“I think everyone is saying, ‘Well, it’s not the fault of the International Joint Commission, it was just bad luck that they changed the regulations, and then they had this tremendously wet year.’”

“There’s got to be some co-relation to what the changes are with the International Joint Commission, and the way they’re controlling the lake. A lot of people said – including a lot of people in the state of New York, who have been very vocal about this – that the IJC should have released more water out of the lake sooner. When everything gets flooded, then they can’t, because they’ll flood down stream. The province of Quebec and the Ottawa River is already full.”

Experts say the high lake level is a result of increased precipitation, amplified by the effects of climate change.

“I think climate change and everything is being blamed for all this, but I can tell you, this is nothing new,” says Ferguson.

Bird Studies Canada officials wouldn’t comment on “rumours” but say high lake levels this year, seem to have had a negative impact on bank swallows, with erosion happening at the worst possible times for the birds’ nesting cycle.

As of late August, water levels in both Lake Ontario and Lake Erie are dropping steadily, but they’re still significantly above average.

“All Great Lakes had record (levels) this year, and Lake Erie and Lake Ontario had all-time record highs since our first reliable data was recorded in 1918,” says Frank Seglenieks, a water resources engineer with Environment and Climate Change Canada.

Lake Ontario peaked at an all-time high of 75.92 metres on June 15. Since then, there’s been a drop of 43 cm, to 75.49 metres, which is still 55 cm above average.

“Even by the end of the year, the levels will still be above average,” says Seglenieks.

This comes on the heels of high water levels in 2017, which reached 75.88 metres, and caused major erosion problems and tree loss along the shoreline in Niagara-on-the-Lake.

“Impacts this year include loss of beach at Lakeside Park in Port Dalhousie, the carousel there was closed for much of the season, and marinas had to scramble to build floating docks,” says Steve Miller, senior manager of water resources for the Niagara Peninsula Conservation Authority.

The spike in water levels was “caused by a very wet winter and above average precipitation into spring,” Seglenieks explains. Data from Environment and Climate

Change Canada, a federal government agency, backs that up, showing very high rainfall rates in the spring months.

May of this year saw 130.2 mm of rainfall in the Vineland area, much higher than the average of 75.6 mm. Welland saw 97.2 mm versus the average of 84.7 mm in the same month.

In June and July, when the water level in Lake Ontario started to stabilize and drop, Vineland had dryer weather, with just 58.5 mm of precipitation compared to the average of 85.1 mm. Welland also saw significantly less rain in July, with 49 mm versus the average of 85 mm.

Lake Ontario is affected by local rainfall, but also by the flow of water from Lake Erie, over Niagara Falls and down the Niagara River.

There are no controls on the inflow of water into Lake Ontario from Lake Erie, a fact that Rob Caldwell, Canadian secretary of the International Lake Ontario-St. Lawrence River Board, emphasizes with a quote from Gordon Lightfoot’s epic “The Wreck of the Edmund Fitzgerald” – “Lake Ontario takes in what Lake Erie can send her.”

Once the water level is up, there’s no simple solution to bring it down.

“The only spot we can manage is controlling outflows at the Moses-Saunders Power Dam in Cornwall. It’s the only way we can influence water levels of Lake Ontario,” says Caldwell.

But any water released from Lake Ontario goes into the St. Lawrence River. “Operators have a balancing act

Continued on Page 11

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The water level in Lake Ontario was so high this year it flooded the docks at the sailing club. DARIYA BAIGUZHIEVA

Continued from Page 10

to plan, because letting too much water out would flood Montreal, and affect freighter navigation. Not enough water let out and Lake Ontario rises,” Miller explains.

Further exacerbating the situation this spring was the heavy rain and flooding in the Ottawa River basin, affecting eastern Ontario and Quebec. “That limited how much they could release from Lake Ontario,” he adds.

The St. Lawrence River board started releasing water at the dam in June and it has continued for more than two months, the longest period ever, surpassing the 55 days of outflow in 2017.

Since June 13, the dam has had “outflow at a steady rate of 10,400 cubic metres per second. That was slightly reduced on Aug. 21, to 10,110 cubic metres per second – to keep currents in the St. Lawrence River safe,” says Seglenieks.

“Outflow from the dam results in stronger currents in the St. Lawrence, which can pose a danger to all users, whether swimmers, boaters, divers or ships,” he says.

The current is 50 per cent stronger in some places in the St. Lawrence this summer.

Seglenieks shares a story from a cottager in the Thousand Islands area, who reported that when he jumps in the water off his dock, the current normally takes him downstream about 80 feet in 60 seconds, and he is able to swim back.

When he jumped in the first time this summer, the current took him 120 feet in 60 seconds, and he couldn’t swim back. His son came out in a boat to rescue him, and then “cleaved the dock off the shore trying to dock in the strong current.”

Water levels, while falling, will be above average right through the fall, according to Miller.

While we “haven’t seen big storm events so far,” the next threat is the chance that “a storm from the northeast could blow in, typically late October into November, that’s a critical time for storms and shoreline damage, erosion, and flooding,” he warns. And if the storm surge comes from Kingston toward our shores it could cause serious damage.

The effect of going into the next season with above average levels “is dependent on snowpack and rainfall,” says Miller.

“If we get a harsh winter with prolonged ice cover and high snowfall, we’ll see high water levels again. If we have a mild winter with low precipitation, we’ll get some relief,” predicts Mike McKay, executive director of the Great Lakes Institute for Environmental Research at the University of Windsor.

Longer term, while “it’s a natural phenomenon for water levels to fluctuate, extreme variation might be the new normal,” says McKay, adding there’s “a link to climate change as one of the factors.”

Other experts are of similar opinion. “With climate change, will we see more frequent and more intense flooding? Yes and yes, we just don’t know how much,” says Caldwell.

“In terms of predictions, there’s no general trend, but we can expect more extremes, of both high and low water levels. It’s hard to say when you’re in the middle of it ... we’ll see more extremes, they will happen more often, but I wouldn’t want to put a number on it,” says Seglenieks.

He points out that 2012 saw record low water levels on Lake Huron and Michigan, and now in 2019 record highs in Lake Ontario and Lake Erie, so “both highs and lows fit into the scenarios in the model we’re seeing.”

Going forward, “It’s important to be adaptable, and plan for such extremes when designing infrastructure, for example, docks that can handle both high and low water levels,” Seglenieks emphasizes.

Over at the Niagara Peninsula Conservation Authority, “every day we look at water levels and weather forecasts to assess the threat, and we issue flood warnings if conditions warrant,” Miller says.

He adds that “we’re implementing an app you can download onto your phone, which will reach individuals with warnings. It’s called Alertable. It currently pulls information and warnings from Environment Canada, but we will tailor the information we provide to our local area and conditions.”

Miller says the app will roll out early October.

See Page 12 for Part 6: “Shore it up and leave it alone.”

“Great responses from the article. We have been approached at least five times with ‘hey, you’re that guy in the paper.’ One thing’s for sure, everyone in town reads your paper front to back! Great use of our marketing funds and great article.”

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Thank you.



FALLING into the lake



Scenes like this are becoming more frequent around the globe, as increased precipitation creates challenges with erosion. SUPPLIED PHOTO

Part 6 “Shore it up and leave it alone.”

Residents, Parks Canada officials and the Town of Niagara-on-the-Lake all have ideas about what is the best way to protect shoreline properties along Lake Ontario.

Some people think aggressive shoreline measures using large stones is the solution, while others argue preserving beach access is more important.

In some areas, shoreline protection threatens natural wildlife and animals that make their homes on the banks and cliffs.

Residents like Alan Plut think areas like Niagara Shores Park, which has lost more than 90 metres of shoreline over the last 70 years (an average of more than one metre a year), should be protected using measures like stone barriers, to preserve what’s left of the quickly eroding property.

“Shore up the banks and leave it alone,” says Plut. “At least stop the lake from claiming the land ... then we’d still have a park.”

He says he would like to see the area cleaned up, so walkers wouldn’t have to worry about ticks, though he is cautious about losing the land to tourism, and would prefer to see it kept as a spot for locals. Others, like private land owner Bruce Ferguson, have left their properties to erode to preserve a beachfront.

Some residents living near Ryerson Park in Old Town, where the embankment was protected in 1997, say they miss having a beach.

“What’s Niagara-on-the-Lake if you’re not on the lake — if you don’t have access to the lake?” says Dave Glasz, who has spent his summers in NOTL since he was a child.

His parents bought a house with a tree growing through it, which he now owns, and the tree is still there; nature poking its head into life isn’t strange to him. He’d prefer to see the erosion, if it means having a place to lay down a towel.

Parks Canada did not have cost estimates done on different types of shoreline protection at Niagara Shores, after deciding to let it erode.

“Erosion is a natural process,” says Parks Canada asset manager Brendan Buggeln. “If lakeshores and rivers were left to themselves, there would be places that would be eroding, and places that would be building up with the sediment in the water.”

“There are a number of different things you can do, including allowing shoreline to erode where appropriate.”

Parks Canada this summer completed shoreline protection along the Niagara-on-the-Lake Golf Club up to Fort Mississauga, a national historic site. It cost almost \$5 million and was finished in about 18 months, ahead of schedule.

Buggeln says the solution isn’t always cut and dry, and that different protection methods are appropriate for different areas. At Niagara Shores Park, shoreline protection would devastate the bank swallow population, he says.

“I don’t want to speak on behalf of Parks Canada of all the different things that other people should be doing, because different methods of shore protection are valid in different areas,” says Buggeln.

“I’d say that everything is a balance. We’re always bal-

ancing different things. In this case we know that there is concern about the changing landscape, and some of trees, but then that has to be balanced with the bank swallows, the species at risk, who require this habitat. There’s less and less of this habitat available naturally. It’s important to maintain the small pieces that do still exist on the lakeshore.”

Bank swallow field researcher Liz Purves, of Bird Studies Canada, says she’d like to see bank swallows “kept in the conversation.”

“Before they start putting up these barriers to erosion, or damming up waterways and decreasing waterflow, which decreases erosion, I’d like them to just be aware that there are these birds around, that do require that erosion.”

Looking toward the future she’d like to see guidelines established for government bodies and developers, outlining methods of shoreline protection that can mitigate damage to bank swallow populations. No such recommendations exist currently.

She says more funding for Bird Studies Canada would help in efforts to create a plan and permit further research on artificial habitats for bank swallows.

“I think what frustrates a lot of people that aren’t government, aren’t municipalities is: no one is going to allow me, us to do that. What would happen if I started building my property out a mile into the lake? I’m sure someone is going to stop me — going to tell me I can’t do that.”

Continued on Page 13

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Top: Trees have been claimed by the lake at Niagara Shores Park. RENE BERTSCHI
Bottom: Dave Glasz's son on the beach at Ryerson Park in 1982, long before shoreline protection. SUPPLIED



Continued from Page 12

Dave and John Glasz say they'd like to see beachfront access at the rifle range property.

"If they could put a big rock barrier along the lake ... similar to what they've done at the golf course, it would make the water accessible to the community at large. It would be a nice edition.

"And there's a lot of property there," adds Dave Glasz. "There could be a lot of beachfront."

"Where the rifle range was, it's a large open land. It could be a lot of things, and one of them could be access to the beach. Which is what I remember. Which is what I enjoy. It's one of the reasons we're living here in the summer, 'cause my parents loved it as well."

"I would imagine to get the equipment in here to shore this up, you're talking big money," says Plut.

Watch the documentary at NiagaraShores.com

Dedicated to the memories of Douglas Steele and Jacquelyn Allcock, for all the cherished times at Happy Land.

Special thanks to:

- Chris Allen
- Bruce and Patricia Ferguson
- Dave and Laura Glasz
- John Glasz
- Niagara Historical Society & Museum
- Parks Canada staff
- Alan Plut
- Liz Purves and Megan Hiebert of Bird Studies Canada
- Great Lakes-St. Lawrence Seaway System
- Skyview Arts Inc. (Rene Bertschi)



Yum - recipes

Local recipe book planned for 2019

The Lake Report is calling on all cooks, chefs, bakers and food enthusiasts in Niagara-on-the-Lake. We want your favourite family recipes, and the stories that go with them, to share with the community. Whether it's a special stew, soup, or salad; the best bread or muffins; or a decadent dessert, we'd like to hear from you!

We'd love it if you could include pictures of the food where possible, and of the family member who might have passed the recipe down. If there is any family folklore associated with the recipe, we'd love to hear that too. Maybe there's a certain occasion when it's always made, perhaps there's a funny or sad story to tell that relates to that particular recipe, or certain traditions that accompany it.

We will publish selected recipes regularly, and at the end of the year we'll compile all the recipes together as a book of NOTL family favourites. Proceeds from the sale of the book will be donated to a local charity.

Please send your recipes, pictures and stories to: recipes@niagaranow.com

The top recipes will be published in an annual paperback book which will be available (in limited supply) to residents of Niagara-on-the-Lake at The Lake Report office. This year's book (title uncertain!) will be released in the coming months!

The Lake Report

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1	2	3	
<p>RiveBrink Art Sale (Free Admission) - 11 a.m. to 4 p.m. - RiverBrink Art Museum</p> <p>Walking Tours of Old Town - 11 a.m. - Queen's Royal Park</p> <p>Ghost Tours of Fort George - 8:30 p.m. - Fort George</p>	<p>Fun Duplicate Bridge - 9 a.m. to noon - NOTL Community Centre</p> <p>Italian Conversation Group - 1 p.m. to 2 p.m. - NOTL Community Centre</p> <p>Card Making - 1 p.m. to 4 p.m. - NOTL Community Centre</p> <p>Community Drumming Night - 6 p.m. to 8 p.m. - Niagara Regional Native Centre</p>	<p>Tumble Tots - 9 a.m. to 11:30 a.m. - NOTL Public Library</p> <p>NOTL Rotary Club - Noon - NOTL Community Centre</p> <p>Duplicate Bridge (Sancionted ACBL) - 1 p.m. to 4 p.m. - NOTL Community Centre</p> <p>Niagara Golden Age Club: Seniors Euchre - 1:30 p.m. - NOTL Community Centre</p> <p>Yellow Door Theatre: First Day of Classes - yellowdoortheatre.com - Yellow Door Theatre, 504 Line 2 Virgil</p>	<p>German Conversation - 9:45 a.m. to 11:20 a.m. - Community Centre</p> <p>Michelangelo 'Il Di</p> <p>Penny-Lynn Cookson - RiverBrink Art Museum</p> <p>Painting: Drop in - p.m. - NOTL Commu</p> <p>NOTL SupperMarket - 9 p.m. - The Village</p>
8	9	10	
<p>Walking Tours of Old Town - 11 a.m. - Queen's Royal Park</p> <p>Writers' Circle - 2 p.m. to 4 p.m. - NOTL Public Library</p> <p>Ghost Tours of Fort George - 8:30 p.m. - Fort George</p>	<p>Fun Duplicate Bridge - 9 a.m. to noon - NOTL Community Centre</p> <p>Pig Roast (Community Event) - 2 p.m. to 8 p.m. - 410 King St.</p> <p>Committee of the Whole - 5 p.m. - Council Chambers</p> <p>Community Drumming Night - 6 p.m. to 8 p.m. - Niagara Regional Native Centre</p>	<p>Art Sale: Magdalena Titian - 10:30 a.m. to 4 p.m. - St. Mark's Church, Addison Hall</p> <p>Duplicate Bridge (Sancionted ACBL) - 1 p.m. to 4 p.m. - NOTL Community Centre</p> <p>NOTL Rotary Club - Noon - NOTL Community Centre</p> <p>Niagara Golden Age Club: Seniors Euchre - 1:30 p.m. - NOTL Community Centre</p>	<p>German Conversation - 9:45 a.m. to 11:20 a.m. - Community Centre</p> <p>Third Annual Music Tournament - Noon - NOTL Golf Club</p> <p>NOTL Snowbirds 20 - Niagara District Airpo</p> <p>NOTL SupperMarket - 9 p.m. - The Village</p> <p>University Women - p.m. - NOTL Commu Simpson Room</p>

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Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
	29 Miss Ilona's School of Dance: Registration - 5 p.m. to 8 p.m. - 470 Hunter Road Trius Red Presents Movie Night in the Vineyard: A Star is Born - 8 p.m. - Trius Winery & Restaurant Community Engagement Open House - 4 p.m. - Willowbank Estate House, 14487 Niagara Parkway Yellow Door Theatre: In Person Registration - 5 p.m. to 8 p.m. - Yellow Door Theatre, 504 Line 2 Virgil	30 Duplicate Bridge (Sanctioned ACBL) - 1 p.m. to 4 p.m. - NOTL Community Centre Mahjong Game: Drop in - 1 p.m. to 4 p.m. - NOTL Community Centre Wayne Gates Office - 1:30 p.m. to 4 p.m. - NOTL Public Library RiverBrink Art Sale: Opening Reception (Tickets \$50) - 4 p.m. to 7 p.m. - RiverBrink Art Museum	31 Farmers' Market - 8 a.m. to 1 p.m. - The Village Grace United Church Festival Market - 8 a.m. to 2 p.m. - Grace United Church RiveBrink Art Sale (Free Admission) - 11 a.m. to 4 p.m. - RiverBrink Art Museum Walking Tours of Old Town - 11 a.m. - Queen's Royal Park
	4 Sportball Niagara - 9:30 a.m. to 11:30 a.m. - NOTL Community Centre Seniors Drop in: Casual Bridge - 1 p.m. to 4 p.m. - NOTL Community Centre Seniors Fitness: Healthy Safe & Strong - 2 p.m. to 3 p.m. / 3:00 p.m. to 4:00 p.m. - NOTL Community Centre	6 Duplicate Bridge (Sanctioned ACBL) - 1 p.m. to 4 p.m. - NOTL Community Centre Mahjong Game: Drop in - 1 p.m. to 4 p.m. - NOTL Community Centre Knit a Bit - 2 p.m. to 4 p.m. - NOTL Public Library Moonlight Picnic 2019 - 6 p.m. to 10 p.m. - Niagara Pumphouse Arts Centre	7 Farmers' Market - 8 a.m. to 1 p.m. - The Village Mori Gardens Fall Garden Seminar Series: Fantastic Fall Planters - 10 a.m. - Mori Gardens Walking Tours of Old Town - 11 a.m. - Queen's Royal Park SourPalooza Beer Festival - Noon to 7:30 p.m. - Court House, The Market Hall
	11 NOTL Golf Classic Tournament - 10:30 a.m. - Royal Niagara Golf Club Seniors Drop in: Casual Bridge - 1 p.m. to 4 p.m. - NOTL Community Centre Therapy Tails with Jasper - 4:30 p.m. to 5:30 p.m. - NOTL Public Library The White Effect Dinner - 7 p.m. to 11 p.m. - Queenston Heights	13 Yoga with Jenny - 10 a.m. to 11 a.m. - NOTL Public Library Mahjong Game: Drop in - 1 p.m. to 4 p.m. - NOTL Community Centre Duplicate Bridge (Sanctioned ACBL) - 1 p.m. to 4 p.m. - NOTL Community Centre Knit a Bit - 2 p.m. to 4 p.m. - NOTL Public Library	14 Niagara Grape & Wine Festival - All Day - Farmers' Market - 8 a.m. to 1 p.m. - The Village Mori Gardens Fall Garden Seminar Series: The Magic of Bulbs - 10 a.m. - Mori Gardens Mori Gardens Fall Garden Seminar Series: Create your own garden design - 1 p.m. - Mori Gardens Icewine Martini Party - 7 p.m. to 9:30 p.m. - 9 Weatherstone Ct.

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Green Tip of the Week

Contributed by Norm Arsenault:

Use reusable water bottles instead of buying plastic ones. Scientist believe that 8.8 millions tons of plastic end up in the oceans each and every year (National Geographic)

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 "Live as well as you dare."
 - Writer Sydney Smith.



Editorial: Erosion crisis needs creative solutions

Richard Harley
 Editor

Niagara-on-the-Lake's unprotected shoreline is falling into the lake.

For almost three months, The Lake Report has been investigating the erosion crisis, working hard over the summer to bring readers the most comprehensive look at Niagara-on-the-Lake's eroding banks and bluffs ever undertaken. And we're proud to have accomplished that goal.

But during our research, a couple of important questions came to mind, a key one being: What is the future of our public parks?

With one metre of our Lake Ontario shoreline being eaten away each year, and complicated factors preventing work in some areas, there is no easy answer.

Despite a common misperception that erosion is destroying the habitat of Ontario's threatened bank swallows at Niagara Shores Park, we have learned that the erosion is actually necessary for the birds' habitat.

So where does this leave us, when trying to ensure a park remains?

The bank swallow colonies present a challenge — but it's one we are confident can be overcome with critical and creative thinking.

If the birds require a steep bank, let's find out how to give it to them, while protecting the park at the same time. Niagara Shores Park is a gem, a beautiful oasis, and it is deserving of protection. But if the park goes, so do the swallows.

Secondly, we have heard from residents who want beach access. As one of our

interviewees, Dave Glasz, astutely says in our documentary, "What is Niagara-on-the-Lake if you don't have access to the lake?"

The Lake Report encourages citizens and corporations to step up and provide private funding for Bird Studies Canada, to help the non-profit organization experiment with artificial habitats for bank swallows, and for research to help create guidelines for government bodies and developers that are implementing shoreline protection, to help mitigate damage to swallow colonies.

The Lake Report also encourages Parks Canada to be proactive about the erosion of Niagara Shores Park. Despite the lack of concern about heritage, for residents who use the park now and in the future, it is a place of history and memories.

The shoreline protection that must be done should preserve beach access at the park, and include beach nourishment, to create an open-access beach for the public to use.

You will find our video documentary at NiagaraShores.com, and a special thank you to all who helped make this project possible on Page 13. And, if you're curious about some of those who put it all together, check out a photo from our staff and contributors gathering over the weekend. It's amazing to see how far this little community newspaper has come and how much our readers care about their community.

We're the paper that could. And will. And does.

Thanks for supporting us.

editor@niagaranow.com

Peach Pickers Picnic a wonderful community celebration

Dear editor:

The annual Peach Pickers Picnic celebration was a great success.

On Aug. 11, the community of Niagara-on-the-Lake came together to recognize and celebrate our farmers and the farm workers who come from the Caribbean and Mexico, leaving their wives and children behind to bring us our soft fruits and tend our vineyards.

Without them, we would not have our Peach Festival, Cherry Festival, Strawberry Festival and our incredible wineries here in Niagara.

The event brought together locals and volunteers from the Rotary Club of NOTL, Gateway Church, community members and town councilors, who served meals to the workers who had dedicated the greater part of their day to harvesting our fruit.

Five hundred meals had been planned for, but close to 800 meals were served, with home delivery coming off the barbecue at 10:30 p.m. to 20 workers who could not attend.

Music and dancing and celebration happened at the Garrison Village picnic site.

This worthwhile event needs to be recognized. Each year the event gets bigger and better, with additional support recognizing our agricultural community.

Thank you to everyone who donated money and time, and contributed in picking up and driving people, preparing, serving and supporting this worthwhile event.

Thank you to our farmers and local heroes who work long hours on our farms so that we can celebrate and enjoy the bounty of your labour.

Visit <https://yourtv.tv/niagara> and search "peach pickers" to see video of the celebration.

Sincerely,

*Patricia Murenbeeld
 Port Weller East*



Vineridge Academy volunteers gather boxes of documents for shredding. BRITTANY CARTER

Shred-it event raised \$4,700 for palliative care

Dear editor:

Niagara-on-the-Lake Community Palliative Care Service would like to extend a huge "thank you" to the awesome group of people who contributed to a very successful Community Shred-it event on Saturday, Aug. 17.

Thanks to the support of the Meridian Credit Union, the dedicated efforts from Vineridge Academy, Shred-it employees, and our agency's own volunteers.

The groups' spirits could not be dampened despite working in heavy downpours at times.

And a very special thanks to the generosity of the local residents, who helped us raise more than \$4,700.

The proceeds will go to help us continue providing free services and equipment to the seriously ill and their caregivers in our community.

*Margret Walker
 Event co-ordinator
 Bonnie Bagnulo
 Program manager*

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Early Summer by Lillian Asquith

NEWS

Sportsmen **Garrett and Wall** inducted into Niagara-on-the-Lake Wall of Fame

Dariya Baiguzhiyeva
The Lake Report

The night was filled with laughter and tears as veteran Niagara-on-the-Lake sportsmen Doug Garrett and Dave Wall were honoured for their sports achievement during an induction ceremony last Friday.

The Sports Wall of Fame induction ceremony at Meridian Credit Union Arena drew a big crowd of friends and families who came to support two winners.

Each year, the Sports Wall of Fame committee chooses two NOTL residents to recognize for their significant contributions in athletics.

Garrett was inducted in the athlete category and Wall was honoured in the builder category.

The 92-year-old Garrett has 16 championship titles at the NOTL Golf Club at men's, senior and super senior levels, as well as a Senior Champion of Champions crown for the entire Niagara district.

"This is a wonderful experience and something I didn't expect," Garrett said about the ceremony. When he learned he was going to be inducted, he said he had



Dahlia Clarke hugs her grandfather Doug Garrett at the induction ceremony held last Friday. DARIYA BAIGUZHIYEVA

tears in his eyes.

His granddaughter Dahlia Clarke was raised by Garrett who used to call her "Peanut." Clarke, who now has "Papa's peanut" tattooed on her forearm, said her grandfather is the best man she's ever met.

"He definitely deserves this award," Clarke told The Lake Report. "I'm happy to be here visiting from out of town ... Ninety-two years old and he's still golfing. Isn't that incredible?"

Paul Dickson, who's been playing golf with Garrett for 30 years, said his friend is the best putter around.

"He's my mascot. And he calls me his leprechaun," Dickson said.

The 91-year-old Wall was honoured for his behind-the-scenes contributions toward helping build the sports park, two arenas in Virgil and baseball diamonds.

He was also one of the creators of the Wallbangers hockey team in 1984. The team members still meet at 6:30 Sunday mornings to play hockey.

"(Wall) was involved right from the start. It's good to see they recognize him," said Vic Tee, who used to play on the Wallbangers team.

Coincidentally, when the second ice pad was opened in Virgil in 2003, it was three generations of the

Wall family - Dave, Richard and Brandon - who were the first to step on the ice.

"It's a great honour for my father and pride for our family," Virgil Business Association president Richard Wall told The Lake Report.

Committee chair Ward Simpson hosted the ceremony. After the opening remarks from Lord Mayor Betty Disero and Niagara Falls MPP Wayne Gates, both winners took the podium to make speeches.

Garrett reminisced about his life, thanked his friends and family as well as the committee for the nomination and ended his speech with some golf-related jokes.

Dave Wall read a poem, then his son Richard talked about his father's achievements, describing him as a "visionary" and an "avid sports fan" who played golf, baseball and was a long-distance swimmer on top of that.

"His vision came from his understanding sports is an important part of the community," Richard said.

After the speeches, two plaques featuring the inductees' photos and a short biography were unveiled.

Amalgamation question won't be answered till late fall, Disero says

Dariya Baiguzhiyeva
The Lake Report

The details of the province's review of regional government are expected to come out in November, after the federal election, says Lord Mayor Betty Disero, who attended the 2019 Association of Municipalities Ontario conference last week.

The conference, which took place in Ottawa from Aug. 18-21, gathered municipal leaders and provincial ministers from all across Ontario.

Disero said Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing Steve Clarke indicated the results of the review

are expected later this fall.

During a speech at the conference, Clark said the government had received more than 8,500 submissions and about 100 in-person presentations on the regional review.

As Ontario is in the midst of reviewing all eight regional municipalities and Simcoe County, many experts think the review will result in amalgamations.

Disero, who has previously stated she prefers the current two-tier model, with some revisions at the regional level, as opposed to a one-city or four-city model, said she passed her message along to "anyone who would listen" includ-

ing ministers, regional colleagues, town councillors and media.

"We're trying to be as transparent as possible and let people know what we are up to. As things happen, everybody will find out," Disero said.

Coun. Erwin Wiens, interim CAO Sheldon Randall, director of community and development Craig Larmour and manager of environmental services Brett Ruck also attended the delegation meetings.

The town officials met with a number of ministers to discuss the issues of shoreline erosion, phragmites' invasion, the

importance of heritage and the need for funding for the irrigation and drainage system.

The ministers listened and were "very receptive," Disero said. In particular, regulations in regard to Bill 108 and heritage will be beneficial to NOTL, she added.

"We have many significant historical areas and as long as they're helping us protect them, that's great," she told The Lake Report.

"We do have issues with phragmites that other farming communities may or may not have, so anything they can do to help us along with that, would be beneficial for Niagara-on-the-Lake."

Town staff are in contact with the authorities and discussions are ongoing in regard to the issues, Disero said.



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Pathstone brings free youth mental health clinics to NOTL

Brittany Carter
The Lake Report

Niagara-on-the-Lake is getting a badly needed once-a-week free youth mental health clinic starting in September.

Pathstone Mental Health has partnered with the Niagara Community Foundation, the Lord Mayor's Youth Advisory Council, NOTL town council and Red Roof Retreat to bring free Monday counselling sessions, called the Hear and Now Walk-In Clinic, to NOTL youth.

The NOTL clinic will open on Sept. 9 at Red Roof Retreat, 1594 Concession 6 Rd., and will be open every Monday from 11:30 a.m. to 7:30 p.m., with the last appointment taken at 6 p.m. Up-to-date wait times and locations of clinics can be found online.

Clinics are open to youth up to 18 years old, and families are welcome. Kids

can come with or without their parents and don't need health cards or appointments to be seen.

"This is an initiative that was in Pathstone's strategic plan to open up walk-in clinics to be able to reach out to clients who may not be able to get to us in St. Catharines," said Kim Rossi, Pathstone's director of philanthropy and public relations.

Pathstone's Branscombe Mental Health Centre on Fourth Avenue in St. Catharines offers walk-in services five days a week. The centre isn't easily accessible to other communities, Rossi said, which is why the satellite clinics were established in Welland, Fort Erie, Port Colborne, Niagara Falls and Beamsville.

Niagara-on-the-Lake and Grimsby will join them in two weeks.

"To access services here is not always feasible for many. So, we wanted to cre-

ate clinics that they could go to in their own neighbourhoods," Rossi said.

Bethany Poltl, chair of the lord mayor's Youth Advisory Council, has been working hard to focus on mental health awareness for NOTL youth, she said in an email response.

"Having approximately 3,000 young people in NOTL, and now having a free mental health service for them to access is such a positive action in our awareness and reaching out to all youth," Poltl said.

"Now we need to follow through," she said, adding that everyone, including parents, schools, coaches and teachers, need to be on board with the initiative to provide mental health services to NOTL youth, and to advertise and make kids aware of the clinic.

"And I would encourage young people to go and find out what our clinic has to support them," Poltl added.



Pathstone Mental Health will run weekly free youth mental health clinics in NOTL at Red Roof Retreat starting on Sept. 9. Clinics are open to young people up to age 18. SUPPLIED

Rossi said she met with Lord Mayor Betty Disero to discuss the idea of a walk-in clinic in NOTL. Disero was on board immediately, she said. Once the town was willing to work on making the clinic a reality, Rossi said the organization needed to find the funding to support it.

After speaking with Bryan Rose, executive director of the Niagara Community Foundation, she learned of money specifically allocated for NOTL health care. Rossi brought the foundation, the town and the youth advisory committee together to bring the clinic to life, with Red Roof Retreat donating the space for the weekly sessions.

"I hope that every youth

will see this as a place they can go to ask questions, learn strategies, and find answers," Poltl said in a media release.

After speaking with Disero, and getting the board to match the foundation's funding, a two-year commitment was made, with the clinic launching this fall.

"Niagara Community Foundation came to the table with \$10,000. Betty's council and youth advisory committee came to the table with the other \$10,000 for this year and next year. So, it's sort of like a matching gift that they've partnered on," she said.

The free youth clinics will have marketing material in every school, clinic and community partner loca-

tion so kids are aware of the mental health services available to them.

"We called it Hear and Now. That was the goal. It's a clinic that hears what you want to talk about, right now. So, it's an immediate response to any issues you're having," she said.

Rossi said they wanted to keep the space as available and welcoming as possible, providing kids with an outlet to discuss whatever is bothering them in the moment.

"I can't compartmentalize what the walk-in is. If you have a concern that you want to talk about, it doesn't matter what it is. It could be minor to someone else but major to you, we'll see those people," she said.

Mammoth book sale at Grace United started as a hometown farmers' market

John Sayers
Special to The Lake Report

This isn't your ancestors' sale. The 2019 Festival Market at Grace United Church, on Saturday, August 31st, has morphed from a farmers' market in 1966 to a much larger event now.

Mary Snider, Grace United Church's historian, recalls that in 1966 her late father, Will Haines, realized that he had a lot of vegetables in his large garden and they could be used to raise money for the church.

He was joined by the Greaves family, who had access to lots of fruit, and Linda Werner, who had both fruit and vegetables. The re-

sult was the first-ever Grace United Church Market.

Many years passed and over those years Snider recalls that the produce was enhanced by other offerings, including the first-ever garage sale in 1986. So here we are, more than 50 years from its inception, and the market continues to evolve.

A decade or so ago, the name was changed to the Festival Market to reflect the fact that it's no longer just a farmers' market. Following the respective strawberry, cherry, and peach festivals in town, it could have been called the Harvest Festival – but that smacked too much of the purely agrarian roots of the event.

Festival Market organizer Leslie Woodward reports that there's delicious baking, breakfast, dazzling jewelry, and other attractions, but says let's talk about two facets specifically. For book lovers, there are more than 4,000 books as well as some 500 DVDs and CDs. You'll also find sheet music and other ephemera.

And for those in search of something unique and special, this year's silent auction, headed by Gail Martin and assisted by Jay Moyer, includes some framed and desirable original posters that can accurately be called "eye candy."

You can follow the bidding upward, or you can select the Buy-It-Now' op-

tion that eliminates any uncertainty. Martin notes we introduced that option a year ago and it was really well-received.

For your Man-Cave, there's a Niagara Falls Wrestling poster of some 60 years ago that may well be the only survivor of fragile posters that were tacked up to promote the event.

Wrestling fans of long ago cheered for their heroes like Johnny Valentine and booed villains such as Hans Schmidt. Life was so much simpler in those days.

If you're a Rolling Stones fan, a poster distributed to promote their Toronto concert in 2002 will surely be irresistible. Finally, among many other types of silent



The silent auction at Grace United includes original framed poster from an early 1960s wrestling event in Niagara Falls and a Rolling Stones concert in Toronto in 2002. SUPPLIED

auction items, a poster with stunning graphics promoting the World Rowing Championships in 1973 has been donated by a member of the team that represented Canada in that competition.

If you want to use the Buy It Now option, you can dash in at 8 a.m. and capture your prize. If you want to buy a book by your favourite author, you can come then or hope that it will still be there when you have rubbed the Saturday morn-

ing sleep out of your eyes a little later.

But if you want first pick of the home baking maybe you should wake from the sandman's effects a little earlier. Parking will be better and you can find us on Victoria Street just around the corner from the Shaw Café.

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Nancy Bongard, Mary Bullen and Keith Bullen with some of the donated art for RiverBrink's sale. BRITTANY CARTER

More than **200 pieces** of original and historic artwork highlight weekend sale at RiverBrink

Brittany Carter
The Lake Report

More than 200 original and historic art pieces are "priced to sell" for the RiverBrink Art Museum's three-day fundraiser this Friday to Sunday at the museum on Queenston Street.

The sale, organized by Nancy Bongard, Mary and Keith Bullen, and Don MacLeod, was planned to raise money for RiverBrink programming and exhibitions.

The show will feature more than 180 original

works of art plus many historical pieces donated by local collectors.

Some of the pieces were specifically created for the show and all have been priced by Geoffrey Joyner, whom Bongard calls a "guru in Canadian art." Art pieces are priced anywhere from \$10 to \$900, she said.

"We asked him to help us for St. Mark's (church) and he was very glad to do that, and we asked him to do it again for this show. He priced all of the art. It isn't necessarily what the artists

would expect, but we check with them," Bongard said.

She was asked by a board member of RiverBrink to organize the sale, she said, after an "incredibly successful" art emporium she organized with the same team for St. Mark's Anglican Church a few years ago.

"In two days, we raised over \$14,000, almost \$15,000, all on donated art. So, a member of the board (at RiverBrink) asked if I would undertake this again. I put the same little team together," she said.

Keith Bullen said he will ring a bell each time a piece is sold over the weekend.

"We work beautifully together and we have fun," Bongard added.

The show will kickstart with an exclusive ticketed reception on Friday, Aug. 30, from 4 to 7 p.m. Tickets are \$50 and can be purchased by contacting the museum at manager@riverbrink.org or by calling 905-262-4510. The sale will be open to the public Saturday and Sunday from 11 a.m. to 4 p.m.

Library celebrates **end of season** with summer party for all



Felix Bator, 3, plays with chess at the party held at the library last Thursday. DARIYA BAIGUZHUYEVA

Dariya Baiguzhiyeva
The Lake Report

The Niagara-on-the-Lake Public Library said goodbye to summer with its fifth annual end-of-summer party.

The celebration, which also marked the end of the read-for-beads program, was held at the community garden behind the library on Thursday, Aug. 22.

Almost 100 children signed up for the summer reading program, said Kasia Dupuis, the children's library services associate.

"So this is kind of a thank-you and 'awesome job, everybody' (party), crafting your beads and making some activities," Dupuis said.

Power Off and Play activities were set up for children. There was also pizza and a cupcake-decorating table because, "You can't

have a party without a cake," Dupuis said.

Heather Grealy, who came to the party with four children, said it was great to be outdoors as the kids could enjoy doing different activities.

Her daughter Ellie said she enjoyed reading during the summer, while her son Braden said he liked the unicorn party and the space party.

The summer reading program launched on June 22 and runs until the end of August.

Children who participated in the program received a necklace and a passport with questions and summer tasks inside. For every book read and for completing the tasks, they received different beads.

Then at the party, children had a chance to decorate their necklaces with personalized tags and beads.

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- Alina, Eurocleaners

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Vigil urges more protection for migrant workers

Dariya Baiguzhiyeva
The Lake Report

Migrant workers, friends and strangers who gathered Sunday for a vigil to honour a worker killed by a hit-and-run driver say more has to be done to protect the seasonal staff who are the backbone of Niagara's fruit and wine industry.

"What happened to this young lady could've happened to us because we're all offshore workers," said Jermaine Campbell, a migrant worker at Thwaites Farms.

The death of Zenaida, 33, was the second major incident for migrant workers in a matter of days.

A major fire damaged Pioneer Flower Farms in St. Catharines and destroyed the living quarters and belongings of more than 21 seasonal workers. No one was injured but more than 130 workers were affected in total.

Many migrant workers are afraid to speak up, said Kit Andres of the Migrant Workers Alliance for Change.

The workers want both the municipal and federal governments to overhaul transit and road safety infrastructure, provide compensation and protection for workers affected by the Pioneer fire, institute a national migrant worker housing strategy and allow workers to apply for permanent



Kit Andres of The Migrant Workers Alliance for Change stands in front of the memorial for migrant worker Zenaida who died after a hit-and-run accident. DARIYA BAIGUZHIIYEVA

resident status on arrival. "Seventy per cent of immigration in Canada is temporary," said Sonia Aviles, one of the vigil's organizers. "We want a one-tier immigration system. We don't want temporariness because it creates a system of vulnerability to the workers. They're exploited."

Campbell said there should also be a compensation package or a fund in case a migrant worker loses a family member.

About 60 people attended the vigil held in front of St. Davids Hydroponics on Concession 7 Road near Line 6, not far from where Zenaida was run over.

The hit-and-run victim, who only has been identified by her first name at her family's request, was struck

by a speeding truck about 11 p.m. on Saturday, Aug. 17, while she was walking home after a church picnic. She succumbed to her injuries on Monday afternoon, Aug. 19.

To help cover funeral costs and to provide support to Zenaida's parents and two young daughters at home in Mexico, pastoral worker Wilfred Bout launched an online GoFundMe page. Over \$34,000 has been raised online in less than a week.

Patrick McCabe, 21, surrendered to police last Wednesday and is now free on bail. McCabe is facing charges of fail to stop at the scene of an accident and dangerous operation of a motor vehicle causing death, police said.

The vigil organized by

the Migrant Workers Alliance was also in support of those who were affected by the Pioneer Flower Farms fire the day before the hit-and-run.

At the vigil, Aviles read the names of some migrant workers who have died in Canada in recent years. The vigil was held in both English and Spanish.

Line 6 resident Sue Greenman said the speed limit on rural roads like Concession 7 should be reduced to 60 km/h from 80 km/h. Adding more bike paths and having a larger police presence on rural roads would be good as well, she told The Lake Report.

Some migrant workers are hired on an employer-specific work permit, commonly known as a

"closed" permit, which allows them to work only for the employer named on that permit. Other workers, who are hired through the Seasonal Agricultural Worker Program, can work for any farm participating in the program. An open work permit is not job-specific.

If migrant workers have a closed permit and have problems with their employers, they will be "stuck" working there, which opens them up to abuse, said Kyle Hoskin, who volunteers with the workers alliance.

"It's absolutely shameful that we even allow closed-work permits to exist,"

Hoskin told The Lake Report. "On top of that, we treat (migrant workers) as second-class citizens. They can't travel, they have limited rights."

Under the Seasonal Agricultural Worker Program, workers are allowed to stay in Canada for up to eight months.

In July 2019, the federal government introduced a three-year Agri-Food Immigration Pilot project which is expected to allow farm workers to apply for permanent residency.

Lord Mayor Betty Disero and Coun. Norm Arsenaault were on hand at the vigil, too. Arsenaault addressed the crowd, saying their voices are heard at the local level. He said he will bring the issue up at the safety committee meeting and, although

he can't promise anything, the town will help as much as it can to raise awareness and bring the workers' concerns to the federal government's attention.

It's good the councillors were present at the vigil but the alliance wants "words come to action," Aviles said. The organization's representatives will be at the St. Catharines Labour Day parade asking people to sign the Unite Against Racism Pledge petition.

"We are part of the Migrant Rights Network and as part our ongoing work, in the context of the upcoming federal elections, we are asking people around our country to sign the pledge to not let politicians divide us using anti-immigrant rhetoric," Aviles said.

"And most of all, we want for (farm) workers to access permanent resident status on arrival because they contribute to the system. All immigrants in other categories have access to permanent residency when they arrive," she said.

Anna Belanger, who is an English as a Second Language program co-ordinator at the Niagara Folk Arts Multicultural Centre, said everyone deserves "a chance for an equal opportunity in Canada."

The morning after the vigil, Disero announced the flag at town hall was lowered for the day in memory of Zenaida.

Classic cars visit Virgil

Dariya Baiguzhiyeva
The Lake Report

For Sandy Szeman, the Virgil Volunteer Firefighters Car Show and BBQ is one of the best car shows to attend.

"It's not too big, not too small," she said. "It's well-organized and people are friendly."

Szeman and her husband John had their 1957 Chevy on display at the eighth annual car show at the Virgil Firehall on Sunday. Hosted in collaboration with the Niagara-on-the-Lake

Lions Club, the show featured about 170 classic cars.

The Szemans, who attended a Mississippi car show last year and are going to the Daytona Beach show this fall, were in Virgil for the third year.

Car enthusiast Michael O'Sullivan said car shows are nostalgic and let him see well-preserved vehicles from days gone by.

"I like the upkeep of the cars," he said. "You don't see these old cars anymore."

Jim Stehling, who brought in his 1975 Cor-

vette, said he prefers going to the Virgil car show as "it's a charity."

PartSource gave goodie bags to all the participating drivers and had a raffle with money going to the Canadian Tire Jumpstart charity.

All proceeds from the fundraiser go back into the community, said Jason Disher, the event organizer.

"I think the event went fantastic. It was extremely busy all day and we had cars start showing up at 7:30 a.m.," Disher told The Lake Report. "And the weather was gorgeous."



About 170 cars rolled in to Virgil for the annual car show. DARIYA BAIGUZHIIYEVA



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Hydro box beautification plan leads to safety concerns

Brittany Carter
The Lake Report

A call for art submissions to beautify hydro boxes in NOTL has sparked a conversation about safety procedures, and while the concerns are valid, they may be unwarranted, says NOTL Hydro president Tim Curtis. An email thread created by dock area resident and retired engineer Ron Simkus raised concerns that using the pad-mounted residential transformers as art installations around town could lead to a dangerous level of comfort around the electrical boxes.

In his email chain, which included Curtis, many local residents, the mayor, members of council, as well as The Lake Report, Simkus said the boxes need to be properly identified as dangerous and off-limits.

“Stay away from the big green box is the right message! These boxes should not be ‘attention grabbers’ or perceived as playground features,” Simkus said.

Curtis noted the concerns in his response, but assured residents that safety is something NOTL Hydro takes “enormously seriously.”

“I would hope that with the art on them that people might be even less likely to sit on them or interfere with them. Ron’s comments are very valid, but that’s something that we have considered and we’re comfortable that we’re not creating any additional risk,” Curtis said in an interview, adding that warning labels will definitely remain visible on the hydro boxes.

The beautification project started with an idea from Curtis, who brought the



A hydro box near Memorial Park. BRITTANY CARTER

plan to Lord Mayor Betty Disero. He said she already had a similar idea.

“It was something I brought up in one of our board meetings, and the lord mayor actually had pictures on her phone. It was something she’d obviously been thinking of. We were on the same wavelength, so we just took it from there,” Curtis said.

He welcomed anyone with questions or comments about NOTL Hydro, its services and safety measures to drop in to the office at 8 Henegan Rd., or to call 905-468-4235. He said safety brochures can also be picked up in the office or viewed online at notlhydro.com.

The pilot project to beautify the hydro boxes is a partnership among the Niagara Pumphouse Arts Cen-

tre, Niagara-on-the-Lake Hydro and the Communities in Bloom committee.

Three boxes have been selected for the project, at King and Ricardo streets, Memorial Park off King Street, and on Front Street near Victoria Street.

The aim is to find art that fits the community beautification theme, which can include but isn’t limited to gardens and landscapes, and NOTL history and landmarks. The contest is open to artists who live, work or operate in the Niagara region.

Proposals are being accepted until Sept. 18, and the winners will be notified by Sept. 25. Each of the three winners will receive a \$500 honorarium.

Proposals can be submitted using the online form. There is a \$20 fee to enter.

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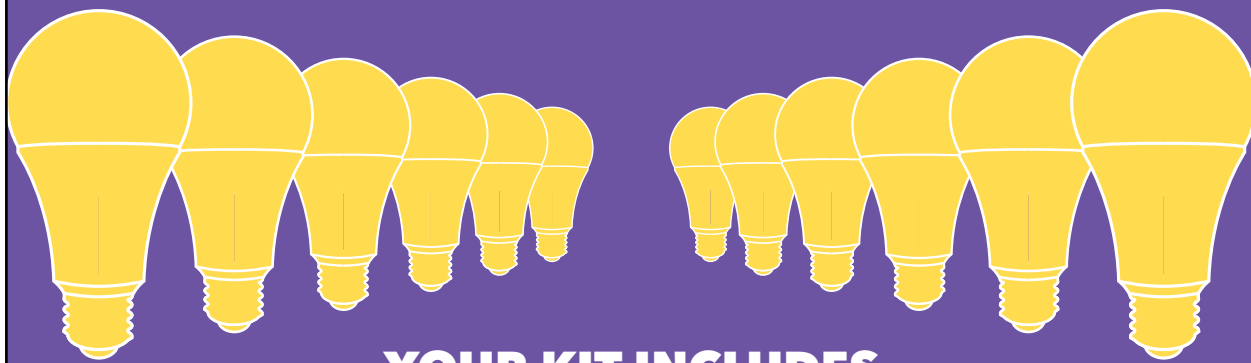
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Solheim team captain Martha Cruikshank and men's Ryder Cup captain Harry Huizer, with the hardware. Below, the women's Solheim Cup team and their opponents from the Ryder Cup team. SUBMITTED

NOTL men edge women in **Ryder vs. Solheim** match

Kevin MacLean
Managing Editor

The men's Ryder Cup team avenged a one-sided loss a year ago and fought back last Friday to edge the women's Solheim Cup team in their annual head-to-head match at the Niagara-on-the-Lake Golf Club.

After being trounced in 2018, men's captain Harry Huizer had promised his team a comeback win and they squeaked out a victory over a very tough women's squad, captained by Martha Cruikshank.

The men won 20-16 in the match play format tourney. Each team played nine holes of

better ball (lowest score) and nine of cumulative scoring.

Other results: Tom Wiley had a near-record day in men's league play Aug. 22, tying the club record by netting 27 points in the Stableford format scoring to win the B Flight. Stephen Warboys, Don Allen and Joe Doria shot 1-over 37 to win low gross honours. Warboys also won a gross skin for a birdie 3 on the tough sixth hole and was closest to the pin on #9. A flight: Don Allen, Richard Guay, Dragan Racic (23 points). Closest to pin: Ted Carmichael, Dan Regan, Harry Huizer. Long drive: Jeff Jacques and Racic.

50/50: Alan Dickson (\$200).

Women's 18-hole league, Aug. 27: Low gross: Martha Cruikshank (84), Michele Darling (86), Brenda Bell (87). Low net: Chris Earl and Bell (65), Margot Richardson (67), Sharron Marlow (68). Fewest putts: Lisa Allen and Darling (29), May Chang (30), Cruikshank (32). Closest to pin: Barbara Ahluwalia, Bell. Birdies: Darling #7. Chip-ins: Darling #7, Richardson #13. Pro Billy Simkin's putting contest: First, Margot Richardson (100 points), second Chris Earl (75), third Cathy Murray (70).

Couples league, Aug. 23: First: Glenn & Debbie

Young and Rai Lauge & Jo Holden (32), second, David & Sue Gagne and Dean & Susan McCann (32), third, David & Donna Lailey and Jim & Janice McMacken (33). Most honest: Bob & Elaine Lavery and Bernard & Sharron Marlow. Closest to pin: David Gagne, Sue Avent. Long putt: Glenn Young, Janice McMacken.

WOOFs league: Jim McMacken continued his stellar play, winning low gross with an even-par 36 on Aug. 20. Tom Goodbody took low net and Keith Lay won the hidden hold. Closest to pin: Daryl Fry. 50/50: Ted Wiens (\$55).



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Rotary's \$2,000 donation helps Yellow Door kick off season

Michelle Dubois
Special to The Lake Report

Members of the Rotary Club of Niagara-on-the-Lake have donated \$2,000 to Virgil's Yellow Door Theatre Project and were treated to a special performance by youth and teen members of the company.

The Rotary Club is sponsoring the dress rehearsals for the 2019 Yellow Door fall productions of "Going Under" (teen company) and "Bremen Rock City" (youth

company) being presented at the First Ontario Performing Arts Centre in December.

To show their appreciation, five young performers who receive training at Yellow Door, provided Rotary members with a singing showcase under the tutelage of artistic director Andorlie Hillstrom.

"The Niagara-on-the-Lake Rotary Club was blown away by the level of talent on display," said Rotary Club member Paul Lalonde, who

spearheaded the Yellow Door sponsorship.

"You could see the confidence emanating from these talented kids because of the opportunities given to them by the Yellow Door Theatre Project. We are proud to be supporting such a wonderful charitable organization."

Hillstrom said Yellow Door "is so grateful for the support and generosity of organizations like the Rotary Club. This will help us move forward with plans for our fall productions."



Performers from the Yellow Door Theatre, front: Catherine Dubois and Ayla Jamal, rear: Hannah Jamal, Lukas Romanelli, Sydney Cornett and piano accompanist Patrick Bowman. ANDORLIE HILLSTROM/SUBMITTED

Writers' Circle: *The Gift* – Maggie's dilemma

Hermine Steinberg
NOTL Writers' Circle

In the previous installments of The Gift, I shared the story of five friends who encountered a magical spirit who gave them an enchanted tea that could transform them to the idealized version of themselves at half their age. They were given three days to decide whether they would accept the gift. This is Maggie's story.

Maggie needed time to try to make sense of this incomprehensible day.

After months of complaining about back pain, her doctor sent her for a CT scan. Today, she went to the oncology clinic to discuss the results. Maggie stared out the window while her husband, Charlie, spent the entire 20-minute drive to the clinic regaling her with stories about people they knew who had overcome their cancers and lived happily ever after.

She wished he would just stop talking, but she understood that his verbosity when nervous was a way to calm himself down.

Dr. Traper had a kind face and invited them to sit on a sofa. He pulled up a chair and suggested they record the meeting. Most people had difficulty remembering details under stress. He was right.

The only things Maggie remembered was him tell-

ing her she had stage four pancreatic cancer. When Charlie asked about treatment options, he talked about palliative care and pain management. Maggie asked how long she had. Eventually, Traper conceded that the typical survival rate after one year was very low. In her case, he guessed it would be a matter of months. "But you never know. Miracles can happen," he told them.

Maggie looked over at Charlie, who was now openly sobbing. Her first reaction was to reach out to console him. She never felt so alone as in that moment. Suddenly, all she could think about was meeting her friends later that day.

Heading home along the dark silent streets, she was almost certain what happened in the forest was a delusion. The doctor said she needed a miracle and her mind conjured one up. The only thing that convinced her she was wrong was the velvet sachet at the end of the gold cord around her neck. She held it to her nose and that devastating memory returned to her immediately.

It was the day Charlie got a job offer in Calgary. He had been laid-off the year before and had been depressed for months. He came home thrilled to share his good news. But his good news meant she would have to give up her well-paying job, life-long friends, and

living driving distance to her two daughters who were in university. That was 15 years ago.

Then three years ago, when he was given a retirement package, he once again unilaterally decided they should both retire and move to this town, where he dreamt of living. Maggie knew Charlie loved her. The important thing, as he continually pointed out, was that they were together. Her mother warned her many years ago that true love doesn't bind you, but lifts you up. Since her mother passed, those words seemed to haunt her.

Charlie was waiting on the front porch. He took her hand and led her into the kitchen. Dinner was prepared and one of their "special" wines was uncorked. Maggie was touched by his concern and desire to comfort her. But when they began eating, he told her that he came up with a fabulous idea. They should go on "their" dream vacation to New Zealand, have fun for a few weeks. When they got back, they could figure out what to do next.

But it was Charlie who wanted to go to New Zealand. She had wanted to organize a family vacation to a ski chalet in Quebec. And now she couldn't think about anything she would want more than to spend time with her children and grandkids around her.

Maggie could see he was



disappointed. He tried to convince her that they should do something really special. Then, without thinking, he said, "We can go to Quebec anytime."

Of course, Charlie immediately apologized and said they should sleep on it, talk about it again tomorrow. But Maggie knew what that meant. He probably already had booked the tickets and counted on convincing her – he always did that what he wanted, and was best for both of them.

Her anger swelled. "I've found the miracle," she blurted. Maggie grabbed the velvet pouch. "I received this gift today and I think I'm going to accept it."

"What do you mean? What is it?"

Maggie told Charlie that he may not believe her but she now was convinced that it was all true. After he heard the whole story, Charlie was silent for a moment and then began to laugh. "You had me going there. I first thought you had some sort of breakdown but then realized this was just your way of telling me you're pissed off and think I'm being selfish about

New Zealand. So now you're going to do something totally selfish."

Despite everything that had happened to Maggie that day, all the shock and awe she went through in the last twelve hours, what Charlie said totally stupefied her. She slowly rose from her chair and walked over to turn on the tea kettle. She then faced Charlie. "You think wanting to survive, giving myself a way to avoid facing a painful death, is selfish?"

"You would be choosing a prolonged life that would eventually not include me. Instead of giving your family closure, you would cause confusion and chaos."

The whistle from the kettle blew. Maggie took out her favourite china cup and silver tea infuser.

"I don't know what mind game you think you're playing." Charlie's voice quivered. "I don't believe this tea will do a damn thing but even if it did, transforming would create more problems than it solved. People wouldn't even recognize you or believe it was actually you."

"Becoming younger and healthier would be more

problematic than death?"

Maggie took a sip of the tea.

"OK, OK, we're both under a lot of stress and saying things that are totally ridiculous. Of course, I wish you could take a magical potion and become healthy." Charlie stood staring at Maggie as she continued to gulp down the tea. "Is that what you wanted to hear? That nothing is more important than your health and happiness?"

Maggie put down the cup. "It isn't what I needed to hear you say, it's what I wanted to believe because that's what I've wished for you all these years."

Charlie turned his back toward her, trying to contain his frustration. He knew she was afraid, maybe even traumatized by the day's events. He needed her to see things his way, get things back under control. "Can't we just take a step back and try to figure all this out tomorrow?" When he swung back around to face her, he couldn't believe his eyes.

A beautiful young woman with olive skin and raven black hair cascading down her shoulders was standing before him. Maggie's hazel eyes sparkled.

"I've already taken a step back. And yes, tomorrow we'll start figuring out what each of us should do next. Maybe this is a second chance for both of us."

To be continued ...

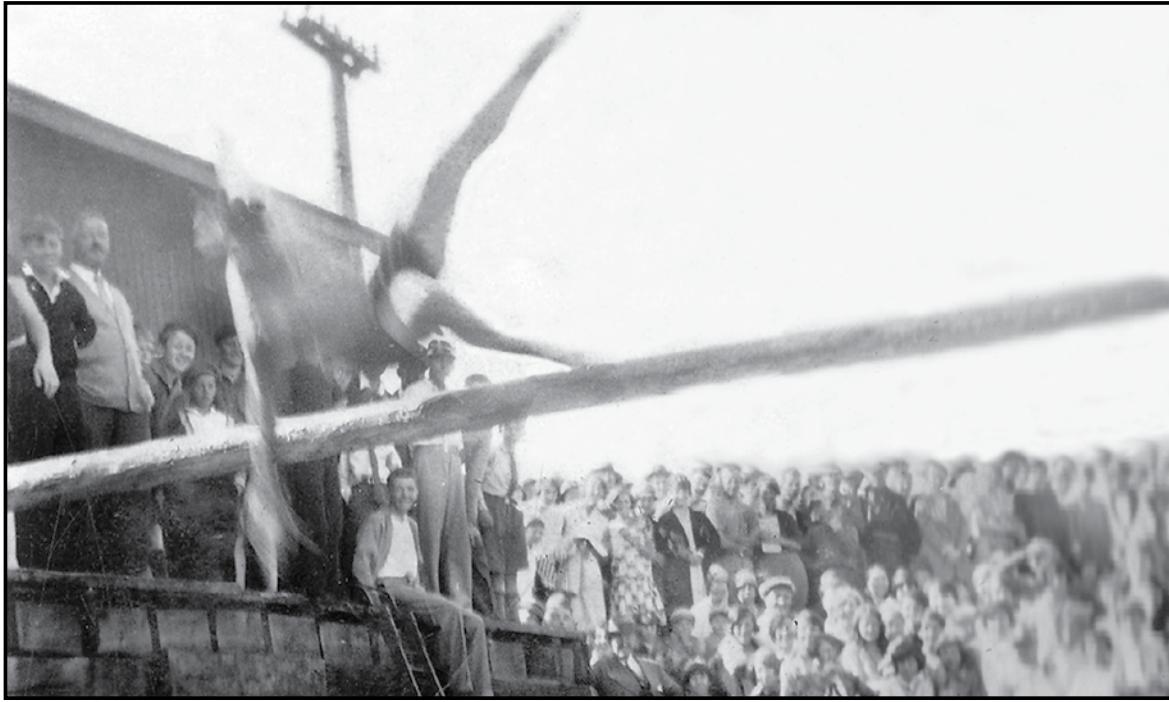
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Exploring Photos: with Jim Smith

Exclusive to The Lake Report



The greasy pole

Labour Day was filled with many activities put on by the Niagara firefighters up to the mid-1950s. There were potato sack races, tug o' war, wheel barrel races and bingo. These events took place in both Simcoe Park and at Queen's Royal Park. But one event took place at the Niagara dock where a large pole was suspended from shore over the Niagara River. The pole was kept slippery with plenty of grease and a dollar bill was tacked to the far end. All you had to do was walk out on the pole and retrieve the dollar bill and it was yours. Not many made it, as seen in this 1927 picture where the young man making an attempt is seen flying with his legs up in the air as he heads for the water below.

SUPPLIED PHOTO/JIM SMITH

The Lake Report

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- Alina, Eurocleaners



A rare eclectic

Brian Marshall
Featured



A Nicholson and MacBeth-designed Eclectic Spanish Revival. BRIAN MARSHALL

The early 20th century saw a bit of a housing boom in Niagara.

Certainly all of the most popular architectural styles are well represented: Arts & Crafts, Craftsman, Edwardian Classicism, and various presentations of the Eclectic school, including Neo-Georgian, Colonial Revival and Tudor Revival.

That said, despite the prevailing social conservatism of the majority, there also were those brave souls who embraced the more uncommon (in Canada) design expressions of the period and engaged architects who were prepared to creatively respond.

Among the finest of these

intrepid designers was the architectural team of Arthur Nicholson and Robert MacBeth, for whom Niagara became a theatre of innovation.

The synergistic design relationship that developed between these two men during their decade-long association resulted in some of the most brilliant residences of the period.

Although best known for their Arts & Crafts and Tudor Revival interpretations, Nicholson and MacBeth were not hesitant to take on commissions from clients who wanted something that was more un-

usual. And the Eclectic revival options certainly offered that.

Generally speaking, Eclectics can be grouped into three categories: English & Anglo-American (Neo-Georgian, Colonial Revival, Classical Revival and Tudor Revival), French (Chateausque, Beaux Arts and French Eclectic), and Mediterranean/Spanish (Italian Renaissance, Mission, Spanish Revival, Monterey and Pueblo Revival).

It was into this last category that Nicholson and MacBeth focused when, in 1928, Arthur Bate (of Taylor & Bate Brewery) awarded them the com-

mission to design a Spanish Revival home on Yates Street in St. Catharines.

Despite never having designed a Spanish Revival (not often seen outside of California, Arizona, Texas or Florida), the architects more than justified their selection with a stellar interpretation.

With an asymmetrical facade, its half-round door with a faux iron grill (in this case, leaded glass) is emphasized by an impressive, honed limestone surround topped by a pair of half-round windows framed by Solomonic pilasters.

The half-round theme continues in the suspended French doors and the first-floor window pair. The combination of half-round and rectangular openings with irregular heights and distribution is the norm for Spanish Revival as is the clay Mission tile roofing. Since most Spanish Revivals are stucco'd, I suspect the brick cladding was a slight concession to neighbourhood norms.

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- James Green
Owner, Ravenshead Homes



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Special Olympics has opened doors for Tess Trojan in work, social and educational aspects of her life. BRITTANY CARTER

Special Olympics fundraiser aims to establish chapter in NOTL

Brittany Carter
The Lake Report

The Special Olympics has opened doors for Niagara athletes like Tess Trojan, and Nancy Bailey is trying to bring that same opportunity to more Niagara-on-the-Lake residents with special needs.

Trojan has been immersed with sports since she was young. At 30 years old, she is now mentoring kids, competing in tournaments and speaking at national conferences – and she credits her involvement in athletics for much of her success.

Being so involved with sports has helped her achieve many of the things she never knew she wanted to do, and the Special Olym-

pics was the organization that helped her get there, Trojan said. She travelled to Abu Dhabi thanks to the Special Olympics, an experience she said she never would have expected.

“That was a trip of a lifetime, going to Abu Dhabi. That was a lot of fun,” she said.

Now, Trojan works as an usher with the Niagara Ice Dogs and the Meridian Centre when she's not focusing on golf, 10-pin bowling and basketball, which she said are her favourite sports at the moment.

Jane Trojan, Tess's mother, said her daughter has been interested in sports since she was very young, but the Special Olympics made more opportunities

“It takes a village to keep the spirit of Special Olympics alive and to be part of a global family. By getting involved we can make it possible for people with intellectual disabilities to experience the transformative power of sport”

NANCY BAILEY
ENGEL AND VOLKERS

available to her.

“It got her out with other kids, and it was kind of a protected environment. We knew what she was up to. She's always just loved sports, and she's just very physical and very active, so it's been a really good fit,” she said.

Trojan said she's happy to be able to bring her experiences to others.

“My goal was working with kids and recreation. I'm doing the special needs activity program at Brock. I mentor a young girl with Down syndrome a couple times a week to keep me busy, and I really do enjoy it,” Trojan said.

Bailey, a realtor with Engel and Volkers, has been pushing to bring a Special Olympics community to

Niagara-on-the-Lake.

“I attended the opening of our shop in Oakville last fall and met a child who was so sweet and so positively affected by Special Olympics. I knew that when I opened our NOTL shop that I would get involved, too,” Bailey said.

“I found out that in the Ontario chapter, Niagara-on-the-Lake was the only place that did not have a community and I was determined to change that,” she added.

Bailey has been working on raising money to bring her goal of a NOTL chapter to life. A concert on Sept. 4 at the Jackson-Triggs Amphitheatre will be a fundraiser for the chapter.

“Club 27: A rock concert experience” will feature tributes to singers and musicians such as Janis Joplin, Jimi Hendrix and Kurt Cobain, all of whom died by the age of 27.

The concert will support Special Olympics Ontario and the push for a Niagara-on-the-Lake community.

“It takes a village to keep the spirit of Special Olympics alive and to be part of a global family. By getting involved we can make it possible for people with intellectual disabilities to experience the transformative power of sport,” Bailey said.

Tickets can be purchased at greateststatesniagara.com for \$45. Doors open at 6 p.m. and the show starts at 7 p.m.

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905-468-3912



COMMUNITY



We invite you to submit photos and stories for consideration in this section.
Send your submissions to editor@niagaranow.com for a chance to be featured.



An incredible team

The Lake Report celebrated a staff party during the weekend. Spirits were high as we looked back at how much the paper has grown, and continues to grow. From left, Ross Robinson, Richard West, Denise Ascenzo, Kurtis Hubert, Dariya Baiguzhiyeva, Jer Houghton, Jessica Maxwell, Brian Marshall, May Chang, Brittany Carter, Hermine Steinberg, Tim Taylor, Kathy Taylor, Rob Lamond, Valerie Lamond, Richard Harley, Susan Des Islets, Kevin MacLean, and Dale Des Islets.
SCOTT DAVIDSON/SPECIAL TO THE LAKE REPORT



The Silver Plunger
With Betty and Jane
Silks Country Kitchen



Joel Dempsey with the special Silver Plunger awarded to Silks. PLUNGER PATROL

There's a sign at Silks Country Kitchen in Virgil that proclaims the restaurant's washrooms are for patrons only. This week's award winner was truly "A" list as the Plunger Patrol honours Silks with our Silver Plunger of Distinction. Silks bathrooms earned this award by hosting Prime Minister Justin Trudeau recently. Security was on high alert for the PM's visit. One bodyguard appeared to be focused on the entrances and exits to restaurant. However, there was one special security guard designated to watch the door to the men's room. Guards also made sure it was empty before the PM entered. While we have never ranked Silks' bathrooms, if they are good enough for Trudeau, they are good enough for us. Until now Silks' most famous guests were Hulk Hogan, a couple of sports stars and some Shaw actor regulars. The Plunger Patrol awards Silks with a Silver Plunger of Distinction.

5/5 Silver Plungers



Building community partnerships



Steve Irwin has provided The Lake Report with a new bike for deliveries. The Lake Report is proud to have a community partnership with Steve and Vine Velo. DARIYA BAIGUZHIEVA

RIDDLE ME THIS:

I certainly taste better
than I smell. What am I?

Last week: I was the world's tallest mountain before Mount Everest was discovered. What am I?
Answer: Mount Everest was still the tallest mountain before it was discovered.

Answered first by: Margie Enns
Also answered correctly by: Marion Briston, Bob Tebbutt, Katie Reimer, Cheryl House, Louise & Wern Rogalski

Email answers to editor@niagaranow.com for a chance to win a prize.

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Fri, Sat..... 12:00-9:30pm
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FEATURED LOCAL STORY

The Great NOTL Summer Walkabout

Back-to-school shopping at the outlet mall

Welcome to the latest episode of the Great NOTL Summer Walkabout, a summer-long series of stories that will take you to all corners of Niagara-on-the-Lake. Our reporters will trek around the community to meet residents and visitors, attend events, visit area landmarks and tell stories about what they find. Enjoy the Walkabout.

Brittany Carter
The Lake Report

A new school year looms less than a week away but it was business as usual at the Outlet Collection at Glendale on Tuesday afternoon as families like the Fergusons squeezed in a back-to-school shopping excursion.

Adam Ferguson from Oshawa said the family was in town for their daughter's seventh birthday. They stopped at the mall for some quick school shopping, though mostly they ended up with stuffed animals and toys, he said.

School uniforms make back-to-school shopping trips quite a bit easier, Michelle Ferguson said, so they spent the afternoon doing some relaxed browsing before heading back to their hotel for the night.

She said the family made

the trip down to Niagara in July for one night and decided to return for Olivia's seventh birthday. The youngest, Lily, will be starting school for the first time this September.

"It's nice to make it out for a quick trip before school starts back up," Ferguson said.

Hurried locals and relaxed tourists visited the mall for shopping and a typical afternoon outing, and an interactive marketing campaign brought shoppers together for games and a chance to win instant prizes. The interactive Game On area will be onsite until Sept. 8.

Leo Lapico from Windsor sat by the games with sons Gian and Enzo, while they waited for family to finish shopping. Lapico said they didn't come to Niagara for the mall, but it was nice to get some of the shopping



The Outlet Collection in Glendale saw business as usual on Tuesday, just one week before school starts back up. BRITTANY CARTER

out of the way. He said they didn't try any of the games, but they managed to buy some school shoes with relative ease, which is often a struggle, he added.

As first-time visitors to the outlets at Glendale, Lapico said it's quite a bit nicer than the Lundy's Lane outlet mall he visited the last time he made the trip.

"This is a grander scale, it's nice, it's quaint, and I like the activities," he said.

Though many shoppers hailed from across Ontario, some made it from as far away as England. Elaine and Holly Barclay are visiting family from Toronto, who brought them down to do some sightseeing in Niagara. The family took a quick shopping break at the Outlet Collection before planning to see Niagara-on-the-Lake's Historic District in the morning, Barclay said.

Barclay said while she was excited for school to begin, she wasn't as excited for the vacation to end, especially considering she said she'd have to find a way to bring all of her shopping spoils home. She said she's spent so much time shopping she won't have enough room to bring everything home on the plane.

The Roos family from Hamilton said they make the drive down to the outlet mall whenever they have a lot of shopping to do because "it's easier to get to than the Milton one," Jeff Roos said.

"Back to school. Mostly a change of season. Christmas, when big things are coming up. We would either do this one or the Milton one, but lately it's been up this way because it's straight down the QEW," he said.

Tourists and visitors were happy and eager to offer

some insight into their shopping trip on Tuesday.

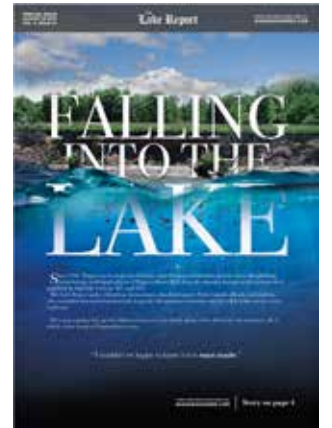
Many locals, however, were speeding through the mall to secure their back-to-school necessities before September hits and routine strikes back up.

Unable to stop several families for more than a quick word about where they were from before continuing the mad dash to the next store, the shopping vibe definitely varied at the mall on Tuesday depending on whether they were vacationing or simply running errands.

A few retail workers said they didn't see much difference in traffic coming through their doors. Though one employee of a youth clothing store said he's worked at the mall for three years and nothing much has changed in the amount of shopper traffic.

"It's pretty consistent all the time," he said.

What's in this week's newspaper?



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migrant workers

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NOTL Wall of
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health clinic comes
to NOTL

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RiverBrink art sale
this weekend

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Men edge women in
NOTL match play

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Join us for our Annual
Harvest Party!

Saturday, September 21st
from 12-6pm



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