



Golf pros **run** for men's health

Run through snowstorm caps phenomenal Movember fundraiser



Club champion James Grigjanis-Meusel, left, and associate pro Ricky Watson hit the finish line on the ninth hole as pro Billy Simkin clocks them in at 1 hour and 47 minutes. KEVIN MACLEAN

Kevin MacLean
Managing Editor

It started as a simple challenge to help raise money for men's health and ended in the snow and rain Tuesday morning in the middle of the first winter storm of the season.

And it was a runaway success.

Niagara-on-the-Lake golf pros Ricky Watson

and Billy Simkin, and club champion James Grigjanis-Meusel, a greenskeeper at the NOTL club, slogged their way through the sleet as they ran from the Floral Clock high up in Queenston all the way to Old Town.

Their 18-kilometre journey, which finished with a lap of the nine-hole lakeside golf course, raised more than \$7,000 for the Movember campaign for men's health.

"Our goal was \$2,000 and to get over \$7,000 is incredible," Watson said after the run. As of Wednesday afternoon, the total stood at \$7,150.

"The support from our community and club members has been overwhelming. The members and community deserve so much recognition and credit for this."

The fundraiser came

about after the PGA of Ontario encouraged golf pros across the province to take part in a collective team fundraising effort, Simkin told The Lake Report.

"While sitting in our office, I said to Ricky, 'If you grow the moustache, I will run five yards for every dollar raised,'" Simkin said.

Watson immediately said

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Santa in NOTL's 2018 Christmas Parade. FILE PHOTO

Santa is coming to your **neighbourhood**

Staff
The Lake Report

Santa Claus is coming to town, after all.

Santa Around the Town, the alternative to Niagara-on-the-Lake's traditional Christmas parade, will bring St. Nicholas to all five Niagara-on-the-Lake communities on Saturday, Dec. 12.

Santa will begin his journey at 9:30 a.m. and residents can find out when he will reach their area by following his progress via the town's Facebook page.

"We worked hard to create an experience that people can enjoy safely, while maintaining social distance, yet one that will still fill our community with holiday spirit," said Kevin Turcotte, acting director of operations and a member of the Christmas parade committee.

"We encourage all Niagara-on-the-Lake residents to step outside for some Christmas cheer," Turcotte said in a town announcement.

Santa Around the Town is a "targeted local event" only for Niagara-on-the-Lake residents, the town said.

The jolly old fellow won't be able to hit every street but a map of his route is available online at notl.com/Christmas.

The town asks that residents stay within their community and, if you need to drive to get to the nearest route, avoid gathering by waving to Santa from within your vehicle.

"Thank you to the Christmas parade committee members for thinking outside the box this year to keep the Christmas spirit alive in Niagara-on-the-Lake," said Lord Mayor Betty Disero.

"We are thrilled to have Santa travel around the town giving our residents a special personal holiday greeting!"

The town thanked Sentinel Carriages for donating Santa's sleigh.

In case of rain, Santa's journey around town will happen on Sunday, Dec. 13.

NOTL councillor pushes **debunked** claims about 5G health effects

Richard Harley
The Lake Report

Niagara-on-the-Lake town councillor Wendy Cheropita has some concerns about the safety of 5G cellular networks, but they appear to be based on widely debunked, fringe conspiracy theories.

And last week she came within one vote of getting NOTL council to explore those theories.

Cheropita began spouting

unscientific claims about 5G during a council meeting on Nov. 25, claiming that because it operates at a higher frequency than other networks, the signals can be harmful to children and pregnant mothers.

These claims have been widely debunked, including in a New York Times investigation into where the false claims about 5G are coming from.

Still, Cheropita told council she wanted to "have an

open discussion and share a little bit of information" about 5G, which refers to the fifth generation of wireless communications.

"Number one, 5G is at a much higher frequency than any other cell frequency. It requires also significantly more antennas than any other form before it, including places like light posts, which could be in residential areas, near schools, and they are obviously operating 24 hours a day, seven days a

week," she said.

"Health Canada to this point, apparently, is using 1920s data in order to assess the implications of 5G and there are serious, serious concerns that have been identified," she claimed.

Health Canada says otherwise.

"And there's some really smart people working behind the scenes, including the World Health Organi-

Continued on Page 2



Coun. Wendy Cheropita. SUPPLIED

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Councillor makes **false claims** about effects of 5G

Continued from Front Page

zation, a former CAO of Microsoft,” Cheropita said. “And what they have discovered in hundreds of scientific studies is that 5G will suppress the immune system of human beings. It has a negative effect on pregnant women and children, it can cause physical system changes, as well as cognitive changes, and cell damage affecting the cellular processes that play a role in cancer development.”

There is no evidence to support any of those claims and 5G is widely considered safe by the science community.

While it is true 5G does operate at a higher radio-frequency (RF) and that effects can be harmful at high exposures, there are established exposure limits in Canada, “with a safety margin of at least 50-fold from the threshold for possible adverse health effects,” according to available government information on radiofrequency.

According to Health Canada, “5G will operate using both the frequencies used by current mobile devices (e.g., 3G and 4G) as well as frequencies above 6GHz, also known as millimetre waves.”

But those high frequencies have been used for years “in many applications, such as security-screening units at airports, police radar, remote sensors and technology in medicine,” says a government of Canada information page about 5G.

“Based on the available scientific evidence, there are no health risks from exposures to the low levels of radiofrequency EMF emitted by cellphones and antenna installations,” it continues.

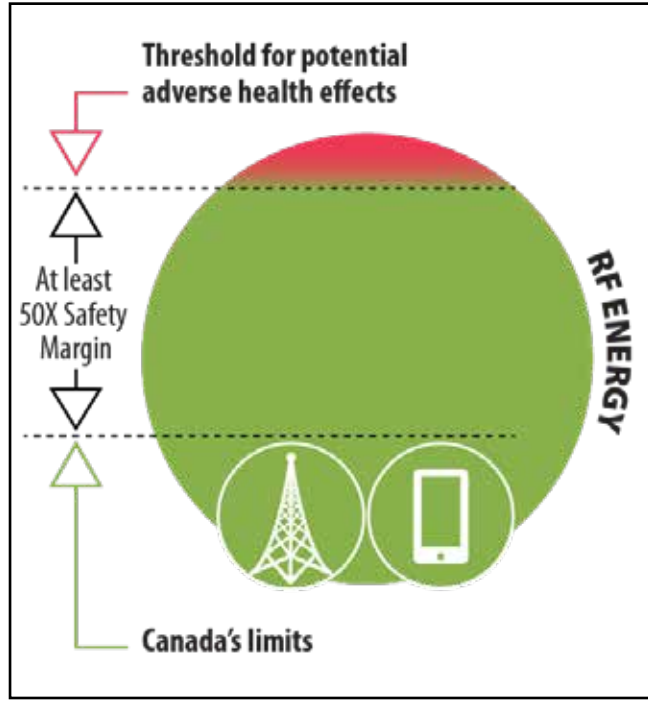
The issue of misinformation surrounding 5G is also addressed.

“Misinformation and opinions on the health risks from exposure to radiofrequency EMF are increasing on social media and on the internet.”

Cheropita suggested council “demand that Health Canada do some kind of



Left: Coun. Wendy Cheropita. Right: An infographic on the government of Canada’s website. FILE/SUPPLIED



comprehensive review” of 5G health implications and “transparency of the potential health effects and to investigate and have Health Canada report on the specific health concerns that have already been identified.”

However, Health Canada has already said it has no concerns with the radio frequency associated with 5G.

“Another frequent concern is the potential for radiofrequency EMF to increase risks of cancer. The scientific evidence does not support a link between exposure to radiofrequency EMF and cancer at the levels permitted by Canadian exposure guidelines,” the government website says.

“While there have been some studies reporting an increase in incidence of brain cancer among long-term, heavy cellphone users, other studies conducted in many countries around the world, including studies assessing brain cancer trends among large populations, do not find changes in brain cancer incidence. This is despite widespread use of cellphones over the past 25 years.”

Cheropita suggested other types of networks are safer.

“There are other options besides cell towers, like Bell Canada is putting in fibre optics right now. And that is much better and does not produce any of the same health implications as 5G,” she said.

However, fiber optic is a form of cable and 5G is a wireless network. Cellphones cannot run on fibre optic alone and use networks like 5G to connect to the fiber backbone.

Cheropita was under the impression that additional 5G towers would be placed in NOTL by Telus, saying she got the information from a story in the Niagara Advance.

Interim chief administrator Sheldon Randall clarified that as far as he was aware, there are no plans for additional 5G towers in NOTL.

“I think some companies will be primarily using the infrastructure in the towers that they already have,” he said, adding it’s not up to the municipality to decide acceptable radiofrequency levels.

“Unfortunately, we don’t have a say in whether the technology is considered safe or not. That is Health Canada. We’d be more than happy to work with any councillors that would like to put out any letters or ask for further clarity from Health Canada on what they consider to be safe or not safe for 5G.”

Coun. Sandra O’Connor said she thought Cheropita did a “a good job of talking about some new health concerns of 5G,” though she admitted she doesn’t “pretend to understand” its complexities.

She pointed out that

motions forwarded from the City of Niagara Falls regarding 5G, which sparked the discussion, were about the height of the towers, asking the federal government to be involved in assessing health concerns, and asking city staff to provide a report on liability if there is a 5G health claim on the city’s insurance.

However, Coun. Clare Cameron fired back in defence of science.

“Not quite sure how to put this except to say that I do not share any of these health concerns,” she said.

“And somebody has to stick up for science, especially in the time that we’re living in. And I’m going back through history, people have expressed concerns about mysterious health ailments even from when electricity started going into people’s homes.”

She said her only concerns about 5G antennas in our community would be primarily aesthetic and logistical, “not one related to health concerns.”

“Until a medical doctor is speaking to us about a proven, scientifically proven, concern, I just, I’m a little bit stunned that we’ve spent so much time even hearing this tonight,” she said.

“But I simply want to express my confidence that there is not a mysterious health threat posed to our community by 5G.”

Coun. Allan Bisback was quick to agree with Cameron.

“(She) beat me to it. She articulated all my comments and my views clearly. Until we have the medical professionals coming to talk to us, I think we should be very careful in what we’re doing here. So I can’t support this,” he said.

Cheropita continued to try to convince council there are health concerns with 5G.

“Given that there’s obviously not a consensus as to how people feel about 5G, and there are many, many, many scientific journals that have been produced that come from the scientific community” that she would like to see “an open public discussion to bring forward some of the scientific proof about the dangers of 5G.”

She did not mention any specific scientific journal that says there is any health concern with 5G at approved Canadian levels.

Coun. Erwin Wiens pointed out the town has already signed a contract with Telus for 5G services.

“So it’s almost sending out a mixed message,” he said, adding he agrees with Cameron and Bisback about scientific evidence and thinks the issue is “outside the realm of the municipality.”

Cheropita continued to say there are “lots of studies” that support her claims and that there should be “some kind of discussion.”

“Perhaps I should think about it and come back

with at least some specific evidence so that we can open up some discussions,” she said.

Her motion was narrowly defeated, with Couns. Gary Burroughs, Norm Arsenault, O’Connor and Cheropita voting to explore the unfounded claims of 5G health concerns.

The federal government website recommends a number of studies on its 5G page and clarifies a bit about the scientific process.

“There are criteria that scientists use in order to establish scientific evidence for the existence of an adverse health effect. The evidence needs to be reproducible to ensure the results were not random or due to other factors. The evidence needs to be consistent across studies; for example, the evidence is stronger if different types of studies (epidemiology and laboratory) point to the same conclusion. The evidence needs to be evaluated in its totality, meaning that both positive and negative results are evaluated on their own merit and then evaluated as a whole. Finally, the evidence needs to be generally accepted by the broader scientific community.”

Despite Cheropita’s claims about the World Health Organization finding hundreds of studies on 5G, the WHO information page on 5G says “to date, and after much research performed, no adverse health effect has been causally linked with exposure to wireless technologies. Health-related conclusions are drawn from studies performed across the entire radio spectrum but, so far, only a few studies have been carried out at the frequencies to be used by 5G.”

Niagara’s acting chief medical officer Dr. Mustafa Hirji told The Lake Report that people need to be careful about the information they share.

“There is unfortunately a large volume of incorrect information being spread during this pandemic – what the World Health Organization has dubbed the Infodemic.”



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Road test: NOTL's new on-demand transit service **delivers** – for just \$3

Richard Harley
The Lake Report

A \$3 ride, for real? With Niagara-on-the-Lake's new NRT On-Demand transit system just launched, The Lake Report decided to see first-hand how the new ride-share system works and what the experience is like for users. Here's how it went.

First of all, the ride was \$3 as promised. The same ride in an Uber would cost \$30.

We decided to use the NRT app to book a trip from Glendale near the outlet mall to our office on John Street West in Old Town.

After selecting the pick-up location and destination in the app, it quickly said a vehicle could be there in four minutes — not bad, considering there are only two buses serving Glendale, Old Town and Virgil.

The app requires you to create an account and provide a credit card info for payment, but it's a pretty simple setup. (Tip: Until Dec. 31, the transit service is offering a \$10 account credit to first-time users.)

The "bus" — a 2020 Toyota Sienna minivan — picks you up from the nearest corner and will take you directly to your destination in Glendale, Old Town or Virgil.

Friendly driver Samantha Pye said it was her first time driving the route in NOTL, but said she has



An NRT OnDemand van. RICHARD HARLEY

driven in other Niagara municipalities that also offer the same on-demand system.

Things have been going smoothly since the service launched less than two weeks ago, though she's still getting used to the new routes. We took the ride at about 2 p.m., and she had started her first shift in NOTL at 1 p.m.

She's excited to be driving in NOTL, she said, noting she took all the shifts she could get working here.

In other municipalities, she said people sometimes book all the seats to ensure they're the only ones traveling in the bus, or to make room for groceries, etc.

"It's hard for people that understand the rideshare concept — they kind of think we're a cab, so they can show up with all their groceries and their walker and things like that, which so far hasn't been a problem for me, but I also have another lady, she books three seats, so that she can have her walker and things like that," Pye said.

Booking all three seats is

allowed, she said.

As far as COVID safety, she said the drivers are fully equipped with sanitizer, extra face masks and they wipe down the vehicle after each ride.

The new service has some advantages over conventional transit, she said.

"I'm not gonna call bus drivers lazy, because they're not by any means, but they don't have time after every passenger to wipe down where they could have been."

"So in that aspect it's really good so far."

For drivers, she said the only problem is they need to stretch once in a while.

"A bus driver laughed at me, I got out of the van to fill up one day and I was really busy and she saw the stretch ... She's like 'Yeah, drove a bus for 40 years, Sweetie. That's what's gonna happen.' I'm like, 'Oh no, better start doing some pilates.'"

As far as the routes and app goes, she thinks they've worked out most of the glitches.

"With everything new, you're gonna get bugs."

She said drivers all have to undergo background checks and take training before starting the service.

"We do accommodate wheelchairs, so we also had to take an extra course for that."

Ridership is growing slowly and she expects more people will use it as they learn about the service. The Lake Report was her first ride on Thursday.

"It's only been a few days," Pye said. "One girl told me she's been quite busy but then another gentleman that I took over for today said he sat for like pretty much his whole shift just waiting for a ride."

Grimsby has taken to the new transit, she said. "They love it."

"Another thing, too, the kids in Grimsby are loving it. I had these girls just take it just to go to McDonald's," she said.

"You just kind of have to think of this as like a little bus, except a lot more clean. Everything in the back is adjustable as far as like temperature and things like that so in the summertime there's AC, in the winter there's heat."

Drivers are stationed at two terminals, she said, one at the outlet mall and another on Queen's Parade.

In the end, the service delivered precisely as promised, right to the driveway of our office, for just \$3.

The service runs from 7 a.m. until 7 p.m. Monday to Saturday, except holidays.



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Cheropita stands by 5G **misinformation**

Richard Harley
The Lake Report

After being contacted by The Lake Report with questions about where she received false information about 5G hazards, Coun. Wendy Cheropita said it was from information sent by a resident.

Cheropita stands by her advocacy for council to "look into" the health hazards of 5G networks.

When asked to supply the evidence she received, she sent a YouTube video of Frank Clegg, a former president of Microsoft Canada, which contained more sketchy claims about 5G.

"They started sending both Sandra (O'Connor) and I a lot of articles, and then some videos ... they are extremely compelling," Cheropita said.

When asked if she thinks Health Canada is wrong in

its information, which says 5G is not hazardous, she said she thinks lobbyists may have been to blame and that the agency has made mistakes before.

She said her information on 5G is "coming from good sources" but could not name any sources when asked to do so on the phone.

"I know there's always people (that) will say, conspiracy theories, and I didn't find the information to be

written in that way. It was written with credibility," she said.

"Health Canada authorized smoking and the use of asbestos and it's not like there haven't been mistakes made along the way. And so, I would think that it's important for all of us to do our own homework."

When asked if that means she didn't trust Health Canada, she said no and ended the call.

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POSITIVE POWER

Contributed by **Patty Garriock**

“Enjoy the satisfaction from doing little things well.”



Contributed by **Norm Arsenault:**

Did you know? In Canada, single-use plastics make up most of plastic litter that is found in freshwater environments. In Canada, up to 15 billion plastic bags are used every year and close to 57 million straws are used daily. The Government of Canada will ban harmful single-use plastics as early as 2021 (such as plastic bags, straws, cutlery, plates, and stir sticks).
(World Wildlife Organization)

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Editorial: Council is **no place** for misinformation

Richard Harley
 Editor-In-Chief

Unfortunately, misinformation is everywhere in 2020.

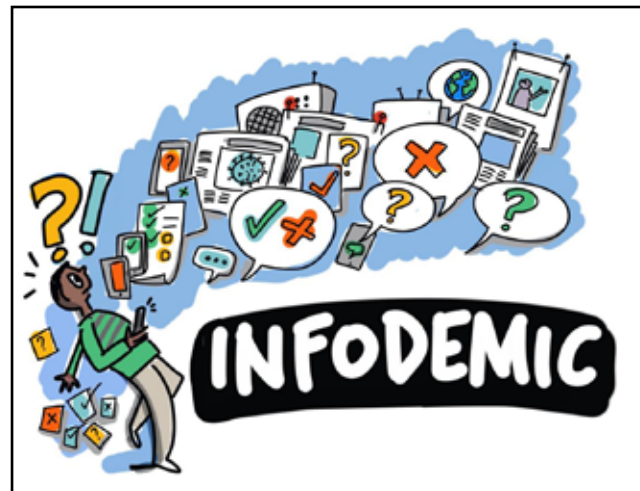
And unfortunately, some of that misinformation made it into a public meeting of Niagara-on-the-Lake council last week thanks to some of our elected officials.

While we understand Couns. Wendy Cheropita and Sandra O'Connor have the best interests of the community at heart, it is worrisome to hear them advocating in favour of debunked conspiracy theories.

Misinformation is indeed readily available on the internet. When it is passed along by our elected officials, it is deeply concerning.

In this case, NOTL was considering jumping on the bandwagon of a motion passed unanimously by Niagara Falls council, asking for more study by Health Canada on the already-debunked concerns some people have about 5G.

Holding office as an elected official is a sacred duty and trust. So, it is the responsibility of councillors to make



sure they've fully done their homework before bringing unfounded claims to council and potentially wasting tax dollars to find out what is already widely known.

Health Canada and other expert organizations have been clear: there are no health risks associated with 5G, especially at the exposure limits set by the Canadian government. Just because wacky theories and allegations can be found on the internet doesn't mean they should be investigated (or propagated by councillors), especially when they have already been widely debunked.

We are all for tilting at windmills occasionally, but to challenge the scientific experts is to challenge the entire system — a system we are fortunate to have and be able to trust.

The problem with questioning those experts and authorities, especially when it is a respected councillor doing so, is that other people could jump on the same bandwagon. Questioning authority is to be commended, but not when it is misguided and lacks critical analysis.

We've seen enough of that throughout this pandemic, with people trusting You-

Tube videos and their own half-baked opinions instead of medical professionals with mountains of credentials.

It's also not the town's role to be expending time and energy on the health effects of 5G, when organizations like Health Canada and the World Health Organization have been so clear.

So, we ask Cheropita and O'Connor to give some sober second thought to whether they wish to in effect question the legitimacy of Health Canada experts based largely on a YouTube video and questionable “research” sent to them.

If you're into doing your own research, that's fine. But explore all sides before you bring such unscientific ideas to a public setting.

A large body of research shows the concerns over 5G are unwarranted.

We sincerely wish Cheropita and O'Connor the best and respect the job they do, but we also hope they give more thought to issues that are little more than conspiracy theories before bringing them to council.

editor@niagaranow.com



Town needs to act **faster** on rental bylaw

Dear editor:

First let me preface this letter by strongly stating that the taxpayers, not tourists from Texas nor Hamilton etc., elect the lord mayor and town council of NOTL.

We elect them — we can remove them. In other words, they serve at the pleasure of their constituents.

Accordingly, the jury is in on both the short-term rental and other attendant problems associated with tourist saturation.

The residents have spoken. Our local newspapers have been inundated in recent years with protests to our elected officials, not to mention the numerous editorials. “The residents speak” section of the Group for Sustainable Tourism newsletter, votersbefore-

tourists.com, plus our Chautauqua neighbourhood representative group.

The residents are fed up. It's time for action, no need for any more dog-and-pony show meetings. The issues have been voiced repeatedly and spelled out clearly. It's becoming a broken record.

We are also tired of being threatened by the B&B, Airbnb, hotel owners, etc. about what will happen if we don't keep flooding NOTL with even more tourists. We are already a world-known destination spot. Visitors will keep coming.

As proposed by a writer from Queenston, we should defund the \$118,000 we give to the Chamber of Commerce. Overtourism does not speak to spending more taxpayer dollars to attract more. We

have other, better priorities. The action on the short-term rentals is an excellent first step. Kudos all around. I agree 100 per cent with the proposed new bylaw, with the following caveat: the 2024 effective date will only encourage any potential investor to buy and open a rental property.

An additional three years is too long to further hollow out our neighbourhoods. Make the effective date January 2022 and tightly control any issuance of operating licences.

Additionally, a proposed rental posting should be visible, at the property, to afford any adjacent property owner the opportunity to challenge the application.

Currently, a property is sold and bingo a rental springs up next door

with no prior warning. Happened to me.

To the lord mayor and council, I say more aggressive and immediate action on matters already discussed is being demanded by your electorate.

We want our town back. You have heard how Queen Street, etc. has been lost to the taxpayer from April through October. Do we have to wait and elect a new slate of officials to get things done?

As noted above, you all serve at the pleasure of your constituents — their ongoing backlash and frustrations gives one the sense you are tone deaf to their pleas. Not a good scenario for re-election.

To all, happy holidays, wear a mask and stay safe.

Samuel Young
 NOTL

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OPINION

A request from Santa for parade

Dear parents:
Santa Claus is coming to town on Saturday, Dec. 12 (the bad weather date is Sunday, Dec. 13).
There will not be a large parade in downtown Niagara-on-the-Lake, so Santa is coming out to tour the town's five neighbourhoods.

We will start in the Glendale area, then head to St. Davids, then to Queenston, on to the Old Town and finish up in Virgil.
Go to the town's website, notl.com/Christmas, to see a map.
Santa is asking that parents can stand behind their chil-

dren and hold up a sign with their names so perhaps Santa can call them by name.
Santa's eyesight isn't what it used to be, so please make the sign large and legible.
Merry Christmas to all and we'll see you on Dec. 12.
**Santa Claus
North Pole**



Short-term rental restrictions are **not** the way to go

Dear editor:
I have followed the recent discussion regarding proposals to limit short-term rentals to owner-occupied properties, with interest and sadness.
We have visited Niagara-on-the-Lake on a number of occasions, since our eldest son decided to build his life in Canada and to get married in NOTL.
Like others of your correspondents, we have rented licensed cottages to enable extended family get together for special occasions, when family members from across the Atlantic could join those who live in Canada.
In fact, if it were not for the current COVID pandemic, we had planned to be renting at least one cottage for a celebration of my husband's 70th birth-

day in January.
We shop in your supermarkets, eat in your cafes, pubs and restaurants, and visit your vineyards and breweries. Our grandchildren play in the playground and pester us to buy things in the local shops.
We are very conscious of the time, energy, money and, dare I say it, love ploughed back into these often historic properties, to maintain them to the highest standards.
We wouldn't come if the only accommodations were sterile hotel rooms or owner-occupied bed and breakfasts.
I fully appreciate the frustration caused to residents by rude, anti-social visitors, but fail to understand why you would wish to ban licensed, non-

hosted rentals, particularly when these already have to meet stringent criteria and constitute only a tiny percentage of your housing stock.
In your editorial you choose to do a comparison with the problems in Venice. As someone who has visited Venice often, for 40 years, I can tell you that the biggest complaints from residents relate not to those who rent apartments or stay in the city's hotels, but the hordes of day trippers, who don't contribute by spending money in ordinary shops, hotels, cafes, bars and restaurants, but treat the city as if it was Disneyland.
Residents see their grocers, butchers, bakers and pharmacies replaced by shops selling tourist tat, whilst day trippers drop

their rubbish and disrespect churches, which they see simply as places to get a selfie.
The "backwash" as you put it, from Niagara Falls will not keep your vibrant restaurants, pubs and cafes open to provide local jobs and for you to enjoy, it will simply clog up Queen Street.
The very real issues arising from the explosion of the Airbnb phenomenon across the world are not going to be dealt with by destroying your small, highly regulated, licensed rental sector.
Those of us who are repeat visitors do care about the health of your lovely community and hope we are not to be excluded.
**Dr. Sally Carman
Rochester, Kent
England**

I support making short-term rentals owner-occupied

Dear editor:
I am happy with the town's proposal that short-term rental houses should be owner-occupied and their licences should be issued only to NOTL residents. This way the landlord can be responsible for enforcing good behaviour of noisy and disruptive

visitors.
There are instances of people renting houses for a couple of families and then filling them up with more people than declared on the rental contract – and then end up disturbing the neighbours with wild parties.
Most short-term rentals

are empty during the winter and do not necessarily contribute to the economy but create a shortage of residences. This makes it difficult for families or retirees to make their homes in this beautiful town.
There are many places to stay for Shaw theatrical productions and for winery

lovers. The purchase of houses by out-of-town investors for the purpose of short-term rental operations may create unpleasant changes in the ambience of this town, similar to what has happened in Venice.
**Maria Morriss
NOTL**

Town's proposal **not the answer** to short-term rental problems

Dear editor:
If it is the intention of the Town of Niagara-on-the-Lake to eliminate short-term cottage rentals, its plan is exactly the way to do it.
If the decision to limit short-term rentals solely to properties with owners in residence is implemented, the concept of a cottage

rental will be untenable. This is not the best way to deal with the problem.
The attraction of cottage rentals is obvious. Privacy is paramount. The experience should be a home away from home.
Remaining accommodation will be hotels and B&Bs only, which do not lend

themselves to longer stays or families.
The problem is unlicensed (and licensed), unsupervised party houses.
The solution to the problem, clearly, is a well-managed, well-directed short-term rental model with responsible ownership and well thought-out regulation

by the municipality.
The responsibility of the town is a budget, now lacking, for the appropriate bylaws, and the enforcement officers, now lacking, to make it work.
Owners residing alongside guests is NOT the answer.
**Chris and Jane Hutchings
NOTL**



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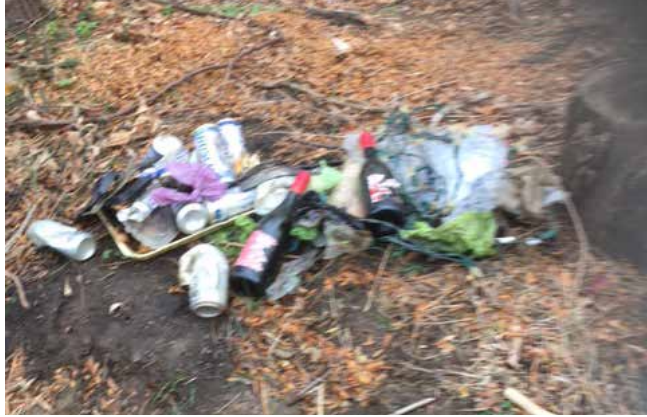
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Pick up your trash

Niagara-on-the-Lake resident Jean Grimble sent us this picture of a pile of trash left along the Upper Canada Heritage Trail.

"It was all heaped together. No attempt to clean up the mess!" Grimble said.

Community centre's Sweets and Swirls cafe is an **essential** service

Dear editor:
A recent letter to The Lake Report extolled the virtues of Sweets and Swirls, the NOTL Community Centre cafe.

The writer felt the cafe's closure on Saturdays, related to the latest COVID restrictions, was an overreach on the part of the town.

I absolutely agree that there are no tourists here. It

is a safe, cheerful, welcoming and comforting connection for a great many senior residents, my husband and I included.

It is a very important part of life in this community.

I propose it be declared "an essential service" for the mental welfare of NOTL locals.

Ann Handels
NOTL

Vaccine, yes. But **fix** long-term care

Dear editor:
Remember someone repeating COVID, COVID, COVID over and over again?

Now Premier Doug Ford and other premiers keep saying vaccine, vaccine, vaccine! And Ford wants a specific delivery date.

If he wants to deliver something, let him start with long-term care homes giving caregivers full employment, working in one

specific place instead of working in different centres to make a living wage, adequate protective clothing and equipment, sick leave benefits, weekly testing of residents and staff to those he calls our heroes.

These also include people working in grocery stores.

As to the vaccine, I'd rather wait and see what will be happening to those who receive it, maybe as early as mid-December.

I'm really tired of hearing the media ask when the vaccine is going to be ready.

When it arrives, it should be first given to the people who are the most vulnerable, the elderly and the caregivers (doctors, nurses, people working in hospitals and in long-term care homes) and essential workers.

Not to be too cynical is Ford's rush for a vac-

cine a way to circumvent what is needed in long-term care homes? Why not start preparing now for the next pandemic?

I also find inconsistencies in the premier's decision to keep open revenue-generating government agencies, such as the LCBO, and big box stores while closing small businesses and restaurants.

Gilbert Comeault
NOTL

Rental bylaw review **ignored** sound governance practices

Dear editor:
I am very concerned about the process undertaken by the Town of Niagara-on-the-Lake with respect to its proposed changes to the short-term rental bylaw.

Discussing specific changes to the bylaw as a first step in regulatory reform is totally inappropriate and premature. We are being asked to comment on proposed changes without the benefit of any documentation on the matter from a governance perspective.

This approach pushes us into an emotional debate that fuels "populist" preconceptions. It unnecessarily divides us.

Typically when a municipality decides to review the regulatory framework on an issue, it carries out its due

diligence by first initiating a comprehensive consultative process with all stakeholders to identify all the issues from a "governance" perspective. It is then expected to report on its findings.

I have seen no such report. Usually a situation analysis on the issue follows, along with a market analysis, using evidence-based data, reports from various sources, including mapping and reference to our collective vision for the future of our community.

Municipalities also typically review current or upcoming legislation and regulations to ensure that proposed changes don't conflict. Options are then analyzed to determine their impact on all facets of the community. A cost-benefit

analysis is carried out. I have seen no such reports.

Federal and provincial governments have published several reports urging municipalities to revisit regulations surrounding short-term rentals in consideration of the changes in our socio-economic environment.

The criteria describing the types of accommodation has not been updated to reflect existing concerns or new realities in the market. Why are we not talking about this?

Other municipalities have also struggled. It has taken several months of consultations and even years for Kingston and Ottawa, who will be taking a year to rewrite the short-term rental bylaw, after two years of deliberations. Why do

we think we can do this in a few weeks?

Short-term rentals support economic activity in NOTL and provide a source of income for many. Tourism remains a pillar of economic sustainability in our town.

Council must exercise its governance leadership now. It must establish a realistic time line to carry out its due diligence. A formal, non-partisan consultative process that respects procedural fairness and that is inclusive of all stakeholders must be carried out before we can even discuss proposed changes to the current bylaw.

Let's get it done! The community deserves better governance practices.

Claire Cronier
NOTL

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Rotary's Enchanted Wonderland Stroll **cancelled**

Dear editor:
Unfortunately the Enchanted Wonderland Stroll of Dec. 4 and 5 has been cancelled due to COVID-19 restrictions.

We thank the McArthur's for offering to share their beautiful property with us.

Along with everyone

else involved, we are deeply disappointed.

The Holiday House Silent Auction will proceed as planned Dec. 4 to 12 at Regal Florist and Garden Centre.

Lorna Penman, Rose Campbell, Fran Boot
The Rotary Holiday House
Tour committee



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Lake Report SHOP LOCAL

SUPPORTING OUR BUSINESS
COMMUNITY THROUGH COVID

COVID-19 has taken its toll on Niagara-on-the-Lake, and The Lake Report wants to help businesses during these times. We're offering FREE short stories to help remind residents about local businesses. If you would like to be included, simply send us 150 words about your business and a photo to go with the story. We know everyone is suffering and this is just our small part to give back to the community that supports us. Send stories to editor@niagaranow.com

Bliss Aveda Salon

Submitted
The Lake Report

At Bliss Aveda Salon in Virgil, owner Sandra Cocetti and her team have a combined 80-plus years of expertise in hair styling, colouring and education. Sandra's dream for Bliss has always been to have a space that promotes kindness, acceptance, professionalism and joy.

Just a month after Sandra hosted a 20-hour Hair-A-Thon, donating all proceeds to Red Roof Retreat, the salon, along with multiple other local businesses, was forced to close due to COVID-19. Having the time away, gifted Sandra and



The Cocetti family. SUPPLIED

her team time with family and a chance to reflect and recharge.

June 2020 marked a "re-opening" for Bliss and it was important that they maintain on-going communication with their guests. Despite the realization that there may not be much control over what happens during these

challenging times, they found control in their sense of family, the amount of love and positivity they bring every day with each other and their beloved guests.

More than a hair salon, Bliss cares about their guests' mind, body and soul. Call us at 905-468-5344, www.blissniagara.com

Irish Design

Submitted
The Lake Report

Irish Design has been promoting the finest Irish craft and design for over 34 years here in Niagara-on-the-Lake.

We offer an unrivalled collection of beautiful merino wool aran sweaters and knitwear in an array of colours and stunning contemporary designs that are suitable for the whole family.

In addition, we proudly sell tweed coats and jackets from iconic Irish companies like Magee of Donegal, Jimmy Hourihan and Jack Murphy. Our gift selection extends from fine Belleek china and Celtic jewelry to hats, scarves, blankets and



Maureen and Paul Dickson in front of the shop. SUPPLIED

tweed bags.

Our products are about connection to our homeland, with its rugged coastline and wild landscapes and the comfort, warmth and style of its people.

In a year where the world has been under severe stress,

we are grateful to and want to thank our customers here in Canada for their continued support. We now offer our annual sale with store-wide reductions. We hope you are staying healthy and we look forward to serving you this winter season.

St. David's Veterinary Clinic

Submitted
The Lake Report

St. David's Veterinary Clinic provides high-quality, evidence-based medicine in a warm, welcoming environment. Our clinic offers a range of services including vaccines, senior pet care, radiology, surgery, dentistry and more.

Dr. Stephanie Hall, a graduate of the Ontario Veterinary College, opened St. David's Veterinary Clinic in 2011, and with the support of the community has grown the clinic to meet the needs of thousands of pets in the NOTL area. This September we welcomed Dr. Jessica Kilkenny, a fellow OVC graduate, to our



Dr. Steph and Dr. Jess. SUPPLIED

dedicated team.

Currently we offer our full spectrum of veterinary care with drop-off appointments and provide curbside pick up for pet food and medication refills. Our online boutique is stocked with food, toys and treats to

be delivered directly to you.

St. David's Veterinary Clinic strives to provide the community with top-notch veterinary care, combined with excellent communication and compassion. We look forward to meeting you.

Ferox and Icellars

Submitted
The Lake Report

Despite difficult economic times, the spirit of giving is alive this season. Two local businesses decided that mutual support and charitable activity are now especially important in our communities, and to the family companies that constitute an integral part of them.

Icellars and Ferox wineries have chosen to aid Bethlehem Housing and Support Services, a Niagara charity severely impacted by the current circumstances. This organization, in tandem with the community, helps individuals and families in despair find affordable housing and services.



SUPPLIED

With offering a holiday gift pack (\$250) featuring three bottles from each winery, \$10 will be donated to Bethlehem Housing and Support Services from every one sold. As well, we offer free delivery of the six-pack in Niagara.

Ferox and Icellars greatly welcome your support for local business and residents in need.

Gift packs are available at both Icellars and Ferox retail stores and online wine shops: icellars.ca and ferox.ca.

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\$53M Glendale/QEW interchange project about to begin

Steve Hardaker
Community Correspondent
Glendale

The Ministry of Transportation is working in partnership with Niagara Region on a major road construction project in Glendale that will provide a unique experience to those travelling into Niagara-on-the-Lake.

The \$53.8 million project will replace the current Glendale Avenue overpass over the QEW with a diverging diamond interchange.

The ministry has awarded the contract to Brennan Paving and Construction Ltd., with Morrison Hershfield providing design support. The project is in the design phase, which is expected to conclude by the spring of 2021.

Three levels of government – provincial, regional and municipal – are funding the project, which will be the first of its kind for any highway in Ontario and only the third diverging diamond interchange in Canada.

The other two are in Calgary and Regina, and a second for Ontario is also planned in Barrie.

In a response to a question as to why the province chose the diverging diamond interchange over other configurations, Astrid Poesi, communications co-ordinator for the ministry stated: “In fall 2017, MTO initiated an environmental assessment and preliminary design



A visual of the diverging diamond interchange. SUPPLIED

study for improvements at the QEW/Glendale Avenue interchange in Niagara-on-the-Lake.”

“Through this study, several interchange alternatives were identified and evaluated using a number of different environmental factors and criteria with respect to the socioeconomic, cultural and natural environments. Also considered were future transportation needs and traffic operations, in conjunction with safety.”

“The diverging diamond interchange met these criteria, considering engineering factors and cost.”

According to project documentation, the interchange will reduce “vehicle conflict points along with allowing unrestricted turning movements.”

The interchange will allow traffic to enter or exit the QEW without having to turn through lanes of on-coming traffic, lowering the number of potential vehicle conflict points thus making it safer for vehicles occupants.

A shared four-metre-wide pedestrian and cycling path will also run through the middle of the bridge structure with dedicated signal crossings at each end.

“Pedestrians/cyclists are accommodated via this multiuse path and there are fewer vehicle/pedestrian crossing points,” according to project documents.

There will also be a new commuter carpool lot created in the northwest quadrant of the interchange, providing opportunities for

car sharing and future GO Transit for people travelling toward the Greater Toronto and Hamilton area for work.

Another component of the project will see a new single-lane roundabout constructed at the intersection of Glendale Avenue and York Road providing unrestricted right-turn movement of traffic.

A third element of the project will be the construction of a new road connection from Glendale Avenue to Airport Road.

The connection will first loop around from northbound Glendale Avenue under the new bridge structure just north of the interchange then connect to the intersection of Airport Road and York Road, thus providing a more direct

route to the historic Old Town tourist area.

There will also be lane modifications on Glendale Avenue westbound from Taylor Road to Niagara on the Green Boulevard, as well as on the QEW between Highway 405 and the base of the Garden City Skyway.

The Town of Niagara-on-the-Lake will contribute money for the streetscaping, including landscaping and irrigation within the roundabout and decorative LED lighting on the overpass.

The province has committed to fund 80 per cent of the cost of the project. Niagara Region was unable to provide the funding it will supply.

In an emailed statement, Regional Coun. Gary

Zalepa said the amount required from the region “is not in final form. The MTO project has several adjustments that require reworking” and the region expects a more precise amount will be available soon.

The town has so far committed to contributing \$334,300 to the regional total.

The construction phase will start immediately after the design is finished next spring and will be done in five separate stages. The interchange is expected to open in late 2022 and the project will be completed by late 2023.

During the construction phase, the existing overpass and interchange will continue to be used before being demolished when the diverging diamond interchange is ready for use in 2022.

A public education session is planned for the fall of 2022, just before the new interchange is opened.

With this aggressive schedule, the town has granted the ministry a temporary exemption from its noise bylaw in order to permit construction to continue overnight and on Sundays.

With this QEW interchange being the only one for visitors accessing Niagara-on-the-Lake, the completion of this unique project will provide for a new gateway into the town.

Steve Hardaker has lived in Glendale for 10 years and is active in many community organizations.

Council formally thanks Sheldon Randall for time as interim CAO

Richard Harley
The Lake Report

Being the chief administrator of a municipality is a tough job to begin with, even before a global pandemic was thrown into the mix.

But interim CAO Sheldon Randall stuck with it, spending hundreds of hours serving the Town of Niagara-on-the-Lake while the hunt for a new permanent chief administrator was underway.

Town council offered a

formal thank you to Randall last Wednesday for his time as interim CAO.

The motion by Coun. Clare Cameron came at the same time as council officially approved Marnie Cluckie as the town’s new CAO.

Lord Mayor Betty Disero said she has increased respect for the work Randall has done for the town while filling the role of CAO.

“I would also like to express gratitude and thanks to Sheldon Randall on all the work that he’s done this

year,” Disero said.

“I can tell you that it was not easy with all the work that we did as a council and also having to deal with COVID and everything else we did throughout the year.

“People’s tensions were high. A lot of frustration in some cases, and I just want to say, Sheldon, I am every day, more and more appreciative of the work that you do for this town.”

Coun. Allan Bisback also thanked Randall.

“I would like to extend

my personal thanks to the interim CAO for the work that he did, his leadership through COVID,” he said.

“I think you did a great job and I know you’ll work well with Miss Cluckie.”

In an interview, Disero said the challenges presented this year would be difficult for even a veteran CAO.

“It’s hard enough for a seasoned CAO to work their way through it. Sheldon just stepped up (and) took on the task with vigilance.”



Interim CAO Sheldon Randall will resume his job as director of operations Dec. 9. SUPPLIED



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Noisy grate a nuisance for neighbours

Editor's note: Since the interview for this story, the neighbours said asphalt was put down in some areas of the street. They say it has reduced the noise problem, but not resolved the issue completely.

Richard Harley
The Lake Report



A loose grate on Mississagua Street is giving neighbours a headache. RICHARD HARLEY

Two NOTLers who live near the intersection of Mississagua Street and John Street West say they're fed up with a loud banging from traffic hitting a loose grate.

"It's made me crazy since I moved in. And I don't hear the traffic, I don't hear anything but that — Ba-dun-ka-dun — ba-dun-ka-dun," says Katie Aeby. "Every single time a car goes over it."

"Every time," agrees Lena Disero, who lives diagonally across from Aeby.

"And the trucks are worse, especially ones with the trailers."

The two say the sound has been an issue for five years and want it fixed.

"I thought I was the only one," Disero says, chatting with Aeby during a chance encounter in front of the

NOTL post office. "I said, 'How come nobody else hears this except me. I'm going deaf!'"

"It keeps me awake at night sometimes," Aeby says.

"I wear hearing aids. I mean I wear the plugs at night but I still hear it. That's how loud it is," Disero says.

Disero says she called the region about the grate, but says no action has been taken yet.

"They said, 'Oh yeah, OK we'll put it on record' but no record ever showed. They said, 'Leave it with us and we'll go and see what's

happening.'"

A Region of Niagara official said she was unaware of the grate before receiving an inquiry from The Lake Report, but sent workers down right away to check it out.

"This is the first that transportation at Niagara Region has been made aware of this. There was nothing logged within our system. Upon receipt of your email, staff immediately went on-site this afternoon (Dec. 1) to investigate and they found no issues related to infrastructure on Mississagua Street," said Carolyn Ryall, director

transportation service, in an emailed response.

"Staff also investigated John Street West and there appears to be two catchbasins (four lids in total) that do make noise when driven over. No deficiency was noted. However, staff will investigate the lids further and repair as required."

Ryall said the region is "confirming ownership and will repair if it is regional infrastructure."

"If under the jurisdiction of the municipality, they will be notified of the request to investigate further."

Disero says she's had to bring her dog in before because of the sound.

"She was scared one day. It is not right. If there is a flaw on the road they should be able to fill it and make it solid."

"It's bothered me from the time I've moved, honest to God. I moved from a nice area in Aurora to a major highway."

The two are hoping something is done to fix the sound for good.

"It's obviously a loose plate. It's not brain surgery," Aeby says.



Santa Claus is coming to Niagara-on-the-Lake! Rather than the traditional parade, Santa will be driving through all five Villages on December 12, 2020, to wave to residents and wish everyone a Merry Christmas!

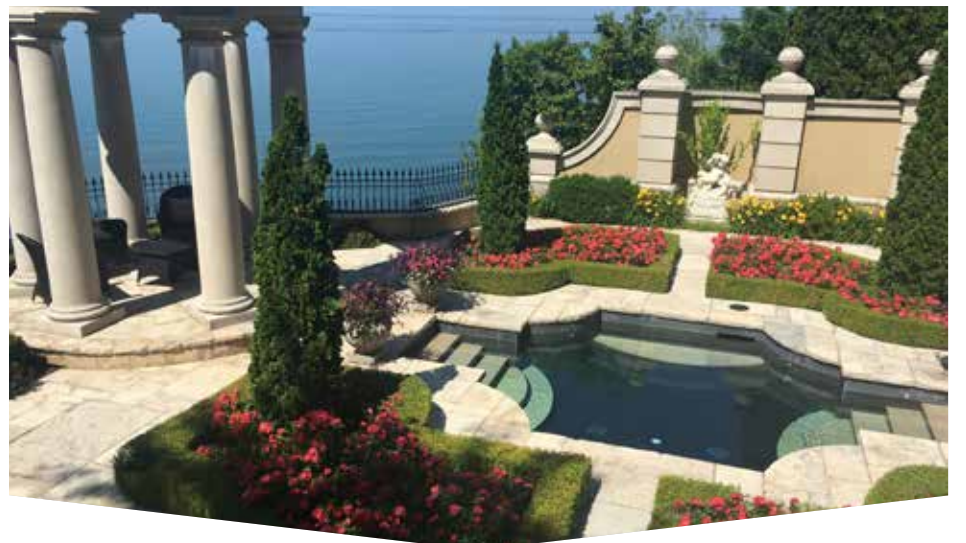
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RIDDLE ME THIS

When it comes to me, you go on red and stop on green. What am I?

Last week: Two in a corner, one in a room, zero in a house, but one in a shelter. What am I?

Answer: The letter "r"

Answered first by: Sheelah Young

Also answered correctly (in order) by: Julia Klassen, Susan Hamilton, Howard Jones, Sylvia Wiens, Sheila Meloche, Wade Durling, Judy Stanley, Pam Dowling, Josh Langendoen, James Langendoen, Pat Young, Kristen Bastien, Katie Reimer, Margie Enns, Kathy Neufeld

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



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<p>COVID-19</p> <p>Due to COVID-19, many events are now virtual. Find a list of NOTL events here week to week.</p> <p>Stay safe, wash your hands, wear a mask and distance whenever possible.</p>			
<p>LEGION FISH FRY EVERY THURSDAY!</p> <p>From 4 to 6:30 p.m. Drive-thru only Cash only</p>			
6	7	8	9
<p>Artful Treasures - 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. - Niagara Pumphouse Arts Centre (online only until Dec. 31)</p> <p>Shaw Festival Me and My Girl pre/post show entertainment - 6 p.m. - Queen's Landing Hotel</p>	<p>Holiday House Silent Auction - 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. - Regal Florist and Garden Centre</p> <p>Committee of the Whole: Planning - 6 p.m. - Virtual: livestream.com/notl</p> <p>Niagara's Name that Tune - 7 p.m. - The Irish Harp</p>	<p>Transportation Advisory Committee - 2 p.m. - Virtual: livestream.com/notl</p> <p>Municipal Heritage - 6:30 p.m. - Virtual: livestream.com/notl</p> <p>Rhyme Time: Virtual circle time for infants and toddlers - 11 a.m. - Virtual: notlpubliclibrary.org</p> <p>Holiday Wreath Workshop - 6 p.m. - Lakeview Wine Co.</p> <p>Holiday House Silent Auction - 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. - Regal Florist and Garden Centre</p>	<p>German Conversation - a.m. - Virtual: contactaol.com</p> <p>Communities in Bloom - Virtual: livestream.com/notl</p> <p>Virtual STEAM Story - a.m. to 11:30 a.m. - Virtual: notlpubliclibrary.org</p> <p>Nobel Prize - Zoom Series - 2 p.m. to 3 p.m. - notlpubliclibrary.org</p> <p>Holiday House Silent Auction - a.m. to 4 p.m. - Regal Florist and Garden Centre</p>
13	14	15	16
<p>GOC Bike Nights - 2 p.m. - Club 55</p> <p>Knitting for Beginners: Infinity Cowl - 1 p.m. - Niagara Pumphouse Arts Centre</p> <p>Soul Jame - 5 p.m. - Club 55</p>	<p>ETFO First Virtual Winter Festravaganza - 3 p.m. - Virtual: etfoniagara.ca</p> <p>Committee of the Whole: General - 6 p.m. - Virtual: livestream.com/notl</p> <p>Niagara's Name that Tune - 7 p.m. - The Irish Harp</p>	<p>Rhyme Time: Virtual circle time for infants and toddlers - 11 a.m. - Virtual: notlpubliclibrary.org</p> <p>Heritage Trail Committee - 2 p.m. - Virtual: livestream.com/notl</p> <p>Holiday Wreath Workshop - 6 p.m. - Lakeview Wine Co.</p>	<p>St. Davids Pool Fun Committee - 2 p.m. - livestream.com/notl</p> <p>Fireside Reads: Virtual Book Club - 5 p.m. - notlpubliclibrary.org</p> <p>German Conversation - a.m. - Virtual: contactaol.com</p>

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



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Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
	3	4	5
	<p>Environmental Advisory Committee - 6 p.m. - Virtual: livestream.com/notl</p> <p>Minecraft Club: Virtual Mini Game - 4 p.m. - Virtual: notlpubliclibrary.com</p>	<p>LIVE Stream.LOVE.JAZZ Series: Faith Amour Duo - 7 p.m. - @ jazzniagara/live</p> <p>NOTL Cats Donation Drive - 5 p.m. to 8 p.m. - 456 Line 2 Rd</p> <p>Virtual Candlelight Stroll - 7 p.m. - Virtual: www.yourtv.tv/niagara</p> <p>Artful Treasures - 1 p.m. to 4 p.m. - Niagara Pumphouse Arts Centre</p> <p>St. Davids Lions Fish Fry - 4:30 p.m. to 7 p.m. - St. Davids Lions Club</p>	<p>Artful Treasures - 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. - Niagara Pumphouse Arts Centre (online only until Dec. 31)</p> <p>Open Studio Art Exhibit and Sale - 11 a.m. to 7 p.m. - 358 Gate St.</p> <p>Holiday House Silent Auction - 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. - Regal Florist and Garden Centre</p> <p>NOTL Give Back Christmas Drive - 10 a.m. to 1 p.m. - NOTL Community Centre</p>
	10	11	12
<p>Book Group - 10 a.m. - Virtual: notlpubliclibrary.com</p> <p>Book Room - 2 p.m. - Virtual: notlpubliclibrary.com</p> <p>Book Time - 11 a.m. - Virtual: notlpubliclibrary.com</p> <p>Lecture - 7 p.m. - Virtual: notlpubliclibrary.com</p> <p>Art Auction - 10 a.m. - Regal Florist and Garden Centre</p>	<p>History in the Vineyard - 6 p.m. to 9 p.m. - Ravine Vineyard Estate Winery</p> <p>MINECRAFT Club Virtual: Mini Game - 4 p.m. to 5 p.m. - Virtual: notlpubliclibrary.org</p> <p>Holiday House Silent Auction - 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. - Regal Florist and Garden Centre</p> <p>RiverBrink Reads: Katherine Ashenburg, Sofie & Cecilia - 7 p.m. - Virtual: manager@riverbrink.org</p>	<p>Coffee with the Curator: Adopt an Artwork - 11 a.m. - Virtual: manager@riverbrink.org</p> <p>Holiday House Silent Auction - 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. - Regal Florist and Garden Centre</p>	<p>Shaw Festival Me and My Girl pre/post show entertainment - 6 p.m. - Queen's Landing Hotel</p> <p>Knitting for Beginners: Infinity Cowl - 10 a.m. - Niagara Pumphouse Arts Centre</p> <p>Holiday House Silent Auction - 10 a.m. to 12 p.m. - Regal Florist and Garden Centre</p>
16	17	18	19
<p>Book Group - 10 a.m. - Virtual: notlpubliclibrary.com</p>	<p>Comittee of Adjustment - 6:30 p.m. - Virtual: livestream.com/notl</p>	<p>Drinks at Home: with Sarah and Debbie on Zoom - 4 p.m. to 5 p.m. - Virtual: notlpubliclibrary.org</p> <p>St. Davids Lions Fish Fry - 4:30 p.m. to 7 p.m. - St. Davids Lions Club</p>	<p>Shaw Festival Me and My Girl Pre/Post Show Entertainment - 6 p.m. - Queen's Landing Hotel</p>

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Fresh coat of **Dec. 1 snow** brings out fun-seekers



Left: Svea Barton, 2, builds a snowman at Simcoe Park on Dec. 1, after the town's first big snowfall of the season. Top Right: Svea Barton goes for a toboggan ride down the hill at Simcoe Park. Bottom right: Britney Goertz of Virgil toboggans on the hill at Fort George. PHOTOS BY JESSICA MAXWELL/RICHARD HARLEY



Left: The clock tower cenotaph with a fresh coat of snow. Middle: Snow-covered trees along Ricardo Street. Right: Be careful on trails that have no winter maintenance, like this one in Niagara on the Green. PHOTOS BY RICHARD HARLEY

Money raised will help fund **mental health and cancer research**

Continued from Front Page

he would run, too – and the race was on.

But why five yards? “Basically, we figured raising \$1,000 would equate to us doing two laps of the course, so that was our goal.”

They quickly learned how supportive the club's members and the community are – and the goal doubled to \$2,000.

“As donations started piling in, Ricky and I realized that this was more than some ‘fun run’ and began our training,” Simkin said.

“We only had one month to prepare so it was pretty tough, but we got there.”

Watson said he ran about 120 kilometres this past month to get ready.



Friends and club members applaud the runners James Grigjanis-Meusel, Ricky Watson and Billy Simkin after they hit the finish line. KEVIN MACLEAN

Movember, a campaign held every November, encourages men to grow a moustache and raise money for men's health, including mental health, prostate and testicular cancer.

“Knowing many people, including NOTL Golf Club members who have had

prostate cancer made this a great charity,” said Watson.

On Tuesday, with heavy snow mixed with rain, the run was set for the Floral Clock around 8:30 a.m.

“Being a bit older, I started at 7:45,” Simkin said. Watson and Grigjanis-Meusel thought they'd catch

him en route but they never did, hitting the finish line a few minutes apart.

Simkin covered the route along the Niagara Parkway in two hours 16 minutes while the other two finished in one hour 47 minutes.

The lanky Grigjanis-Meusel, an avid runner and biker, got recruited to the team only a couple of weeks ago when Watson joked that they should run together. Afterward, Grigjanis-Meusel said he felt great and marvelled, “My socks are completely dry.”

While their shoes and clothes were soaked Watson said golf club member Paul Battaglia, who has completed gruelling Ironman competitions, gave them a valuable tip: wear a

plastic bag over your socks inside your shoes to keep your feet dry.

“That was a lifesaver. The conditions were terrible,” Watson said.

“The majority of the run was wet and into the wind with snow blowing into us, but we ran at a comfortable pace and had minimal issues,” he said.

“The toughest part of the run was the nine-hole lap on the course as the snow was extremely wet on the grass.”

They were not the only ones out on the Parkway during their trek. St. Davids resident Dow Wright, a club member, walked the entire distance and Maureen Dickson, Tina Stewart and Ria Rosenberg drove along, checking on the runners

and offering them water, Watson said.

The participating members of the PGA of Ontario raised about \$11,000 in total, but \$7,000 of that was by the NOTL team.

“The next closest fundraiser to us was around \$1,200,” Simkin said. “We lapped everyone.”

“I feel really good about what Ricky and I accomplished. This puts us on the map as a club, as a town and as professionals,” he said.

“My legs truly hurt, but that will go away. The fact we did this in such a short time is a memory that will last forever.”

Fundraising is still open and if people wish to donate just search for Watson's account at ca.movember.com.



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Ross' Ravings: Woodend hike a **welcome escape** from COVID cabin fever

Ross Robinson
Special to The Lake Report

After the wonderful discovery of the Winter Festival of Lights in Niagara Falls last weekend, I have again struck it rich right next door in our beautiful Niagara. Bring it on, global pandemic.

We need to hunker down and be safe, but we also need fresh air and exercise. Physically distance, but don't live on the couch.

Sunday was a perfect late autumn day. Very cool, sunny and fresh. After a hearty, physically distanced and COVID-19 protocol-observing breakfast at Good Eats Diner by the Homer Bridge, son Scott suggested we take a hike at the nearby Woodend Conversation Area.

I had not been to Woodend since 1986, when Donald Ziraldo and I did a training run from then-new White Oaks up the hill and along a trail or two. Since then, I have driven past it on Townline Road hundreds of times. Never really gave a thought to stopping in. I had been there, done that.



Thousands of Niagara students learn in the forests at the unique and inspiring Walker Living Campus off of Townline Road. ROSS ROBINSON

It was a short drive to the well-signed parking area and already about 40 cars were there at 9:30 a.m. The Niagara Peninsula Conversation Authority has closed the Woodend office and public washrooms and the Walker Living Campus. The many trails are easy to access and well-maintained. Hurray.

The conservation authority and the Bruce Trail Club have ensured the directional arrows and marks are clear and well-placed. Staff and volunteers keep the chainsaws busy when trees fall down across trails. This all makes for perfect hikes,

along safe, rooty, gently up and down, twisting trails.

Instinctively I started to yodel, remembering long ago wanderwegs in Switzerland's Jungfrau and Bavaria's Schwarzwald. "I love to go a-wandering, along the mountain track."

Son Scott suggested I contribute to the silence and stop yodelling.

The forest floors are blanketed with dead leaves and fallen trees, lying every which way. Squirrels, birds and other locals all busy, going about their late November business. The sun warmly peeping through.

As Robert Service

rhymed, "The snows that are older than history, The woods where the weird shadows slant. The stillness, the moonlight, the mystery, I've bade 'em good' by, but I can't."

About 10 minutes into the forest, we came upon the magnificent Walker Living Campus. A working partnership that works for outdoor environmental education, with the conservation authority, the District School Board of Niagara, the Bruce Trail Club and other groups no doubt too numerous to list.

When my children were students at Parliament Oak Public School and Laura Secord Secondary School, every year they would excitedly tell us about their school trips to Woodend. I was always a bit ho hum, since my memories were of a pretty nice little nature area.

Who knew? The buildings are large, but fit in so well with the surrounding forests. Native rocks, rugged wood furniture, turf roofs. Easy to understand interpretive panel, and lists of all the Niagara schools

involved in programming. This is definitely "feel good."

We continue on the trails, walking past dramatic stratified limestone and shale cliffs. All this started some 450,000,000 (that's 450 million!) years ago, as the bed of a tropical sea. The sediments have been compressed into rock, magnesium-rich limestone and shale. (To put it simply, a geologist I am not.)

Again, great directional signage. Only two traffic signs, both "No Parking - Fire Lane." Huh?

At the height of land at the east end of Woodend, we look down at the Queen Elizabeth Way and the continuous hum of rushing vehicles, each driver hurling their car or truck toward some important destination.

A really good number of folks are out on the Woodend trails enjoying this day and such a variety of ages. Older hikers with their Nordic poles, young families with kids in backpack, or tagging along trying to keep up.

And a refreshing number of younger people, in pairs

or small groups. Such a healthy amenity for nearby Niagara College and Brock University. A great alternative to pubs?

After a wonderful morning, back to reality. Many more cars in the parking lot. Bewdy, eh? We pause by a cool red Jeep to admire the new blue Ontario licence plate. I take a picture of the slogan, "A Place to Grow."

The husky driver gets out and asks, "What's up?"

We ask him about the Whistler and Banff decals on his window. They just got back from a long driving vacation out west. "B.C. people were cool. They were just happy to take our money. Some Alberta people were a bit weird about visitors from Ontario."

O Canada, my Home and Native Land. Gotta love it.

Please, take a hike. Visit Woodend and the other jewels in our region. Even after it has snowed. The late Gordie Howe told us, "There is no such thing as cold weather. Just cold clothing."

Use COVID-19 as a reason to get out and revel in Canada's nature.

PUBLIC NOTICES

Resident parking permits and dog licenses are now available for purchase/pick up from the Town Municipal Offices at 1593 Four Mile Creek Road, Virgil and the Niagara-on-the-Lake Community Centre at 14 Anderson Lane, Niagara-on-the-Lake. Please fill out the appropriate application form from our website www.notl.com and drop off the completed form with your payment at 1593 Four Mile Creek Road in one of our drop boxes. You will be called when your permit and/or license is ready for pick up.

Resident Parking Permits

Parking Permits are available exclusively to residents of the Town of Niagara-on-the-Lake and entitles the holder to one hour of free parking at any parking machine in the Heritage District. Please note a valid piece of identification must be shown as proof of address in order to obtain a permit. Permits are valid for the vehicle identified, by licence plate number shown on the face of the permit only and are non-transferable.

Permits issued are valid from January 1 to December 31 of any given year. Residents must therefore renew the permit each year.

The current resident parking permit fee is \$20.00, this fee is subject to change effective January 1, 2021.

Dog Licenses

All dogs must be licensed by **January 1, 2021**. If you purchase a dog license before **December 24, 2020**, you will receive a \$10 discount off the annual licensing fee. Save an additional \$10 by providing proof that your dog has been spayed or neutered. **You must provide proof of current rabies vaccination at time of purchase to obtain a license.**

The current annual licensing fees are \$22.00 for an altered dog or \$32.00 for an unaltered dog, these fees are subject to change effective January 1, 2021.

Please note Town offices are currently closed to the public. Town staff are available by phone until Thursday, December 24, 2020, at 12:00 p.m. Staff will be available again by phone starting 8:30 a.m. on Monday, January 4, 2021.



Vince Pillitteri honoured for lifetime in fruit industry

Founder of Niagara-on-the-Lake's Seaway Farms says family is reason for all his hard work

Brittany Carter
The Lake Report

"On a farm, there's always something to eat." Vince Pillitteri says he took his father Charles Pillitteri's words to heart, driving his commitment to farming over the last 60 years.

On Nov. 19, he received the Ontario Produce Marketing Association's Lifetime Achievement Award for his career with Seaway Farms in Niagara-on-the-Lake.

He says his passion for tending the land was influenced by his father.

"My father started working when he was six years old in Italy. You know what he always said to me? He said, 'You know Vince, on a farm, there's always something to eat.' Because he lived through a couple wars ... and he said no matter how bad it gets, there's always something there (on a farm)."

Pillitteri has been active in Niagara's tender fruit industry since before 1970, when he opened Seaway Farms with his wife Margaret on a small parcel of land on Lakeshore Road in NOTL.

"We try to get a good product out and meet our commitments. Our word is



Vince Pillitteri received a lifetime achievement award from the Ontario Produce Marketing Association. SUPPLIED

our bond," he says.

He says he never expected the lifetime achievement award, but he is "very grateful" to have received the distinction.

"If someone had said to me, 'You know, you'll die first before you get that award,' I would have said, 'I know I'll die first. I won't get that award,'" Pillitteri says.

At 77, he has continued to persevere through the years. He faced many challenges throughout his career, from rising interest rates to the destruction of his first fruit stand and greenhouse in an electrical fire.

"There were some rough

times with interest rates and marketing, and all kinds of goodies. But we survived it all, changed things as we went along, a little bit at a time. Rome wasn't built in a day," he says.

But he met each challenge with determination and he continued to grow his business.

After the fire in the 1980s, he rebuilt Seaway Farms with a larger fruit market and a garden centre. He continued to farm strawberries, plums, cherries and peaches and sold fruit to the Toronto Food Terminal.

He eventually joined the Ontario Tender Fruit

Marketing Board and the Ontario Produce Marketing Association to further support the industry. It was by attending industry events that he secured relationships with customers like Metro Inc. and Sobeys, which Seaway Farms still supplies today.

And while advancing his business has always been a priority, Pillitteri says family is the most important thing, and the reason for all his hard work over the years.

"If you haven't got family, you haven't got much," he says.

Eileen Pillitteri, one of three children, says she's

learned a lot from her father over the years – and valuing family is the most important. His other two children are Joe Pillitteri and Caroline Martinelli.

"I have learned to assist your neighbour whenever possible, as this is an industry where you want to help your fellow farmers," she says.

Her dad says he may have had his difference with other growers in the industry but there's a common thread of respect between them.

"It meant a lot to me because all the people that I have known over the years, they've all helped a lot. And

they've all helped the cause, have tried to make it better," he says of the grower community.

"I have learned to be humble, be quick to help, compete but remain fair, don't fear change, express gratitude, have an opinion, rise early, work hard, use your talents, and most importantly, value family," Eileen says.

"These are many life lessons that I hope to carry out with my children and my family as well, thanks to his example," she adds.

Now, her father says Eileen has taken over operations of the farm. His family spans throughout NOTL with various businesses and wineries in the area.

And this area is unlike any other in the world, Pillitteri says.

"There's not a better place in the world to live, other than here. I'm being honest. I've been all over, and I wouldn't trade this spot for anywhere in the world. There are good people, there's four distinct seasons, we've got fruit. We've got everything that you could possibly want in life," he says.

"We're very fortunate to be where we are, and we're not going anywhere."

History in the Vineyard adapts with take-out dinner fundraiser

Brittany Carter
The Lake Report

The second annual History in the Vineyard will carry on despite increased restrictions on restaurants to ease the spread of the coronavirus, but a take-home dinner and virtual presentation will replace the original plan of an in-person event this year.

"This year we really had to adapt to the situation which seems to be getting increasingly worse all the time," said Tony Chisholm, president of the Friends of Fort George.

They've tried to put together "something that's still interesting to people and give them a wider choice of food, and also give them some sort of a presen-



From last year's event. BRITTANY CARTER/FILE

tation that they can watch at home," Chisholm said.

"It will be unique to Niagara-on-the-Lake, but it will also involve the history of the area and what Christmas was like," he said. "It should be a fun event. And it's so close to Christmas, we thought that was appropriate."

Tickets cost \$100 and

will include a three-course, gourmet take-home meal prepared by either Ruffino's Pasta Bar and Grill, The Garrison House or Ravine Vineyard Estate Winery, a link to the special YouTube presentation, and a \$40 tax receipt.

Paul Harber of Ravine will also donate a bottle of wine for orders

in multiples of two. Orders can be placed online at <https://www.canadahelps.org/en/charities/niagara-historical-society/events/history-in-the-vineyard/> and specific pickup times will be scheduled for Dec. 10 from 4 to 6 p.m.

The event, in support of the Friends of Fort George and the NOTL Historical Society, also coincides with the society's 125-year anniversary on Dec. 12.

"The Friends of Fort George were kind to let us piggyback on this event," said Amy Klassen, the NOTL Museum's director of finance and marketing.

"With the recent changes to restaurant (COVID restrictions) we thought it would be in the best interests, easier and safer, this

year to move to a takeout model," she said.

Although people will not be able to gather in person and celebrate together as they did last year, she said the new model will still offer the experience of coming together. And she stressed how meaningful participating in this event can be for the charities involved, which have not been able to hold many regular fundraisers this year because of the pandemic.

"It's important to these charities and it's a great way to support local businesses and help these charities," Klassen said.

The museum will also be including a small treat with the pickup orders to commemorate its anniversary.

Chisholm said the pan-

demic has made fundraising "extremely difficult."

"The fact that it is supporting two local charities that you know really need the revenue at this point in time because of the lack of fundraising all year. It's made it difficult for both of these charities to keep going," he said.

Although people won't be able come together in person, organizers still plan to "dress it up as much as possible."

"It's kind of a unique event and people are going to have some sort of a presentation to go along with it. We're going to try and make as much of a fun event as possible by being dressed up in costume as the cars arrive and that type of thing," he said.



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Pleasant Manor approved for 160-bed facility

Existing home will be converted to community housing for seniors

Richard Harley
The Lake Report

Pleasant Manor long-term care home in Niagara-on-the-Lake now has all the pieces in order for its new 160-bed facility, after being granted 38 additional bed licences.

The new facility will replace the existing long-term care home in Virgil.

In 2018, when construction of a new facility at the home was given a green light, the province had only allotted 122 bed licences (including 41 already at the facility). The 38 additional beds brings the total of new beds in the new facility to 160.

Tim Siemens, CEO of Radiant Care Pleasant Manor, said he's been pushing hard to get the new bed licences.

"Back in April of 2018, the government allocated 81 new bed licences to Pleasant Manor. And when we do the math, 81 plus 41 is 122. We were 38 beds shy of reaching that number of 160 that we were approved for," he said.

"And so we've been pushing hard since that time in 2018 to obtain another 38 licences. That's the big change since 2018," he said and it makes the 160-bed



Radiant Care Pleasant Manor CEO Tim Siemens. A new 160-bed facility is planned as an addition to Pleasant Manor. RICHARD HARLEY/FILE

project "viable and ready to go."

He said he's excited the project can move forward as planned.

"We've been waiting a long time for this. The plan itself is 22 years in the making and that extends beyond the 20 years I've been with the organization."

He said the new facility will have a positive impact on the community, offering more long-term care beds to people who need them, and take up some of the loss from the closing of Upper Canada Lodge (a facility operated by the Region of Niagara).

The expansion will see 119 new beds created at Pleasant Manor. The other 41 beds will be taken by current Pleasant Manor residents, who will switch

to the new facility when it is constructed. The facility with the original 41 beds will be converted into community housing for seniors.

The additional beds will help Pleasant Manor "respond to current and projected demand for long-term care in our community," Siemens said.

"We know that our community of Niagara-on-the-Lake has the highest percentage of people 65 years of age and over, I think, in the country. I think it's over 31 per cent now and that will continue for the foreseeable future."

"Extending beyond the long-term care project, it allows Pleasant Manor to retrofit the existing long-term care home, once it's vacated, to create semi-independent housing for our seniors in

our community, which is a desperate need as well."

Siemens said the project will also bring about 200 jobs to the municipality.

"That's really huge," Siemens said. "And that is something from an economic standpoint."

"Not everybody will live in Niagara-on-the-Lake. Some people will be coming from outlying communities, but the fact remains that we will need to hire about 200 new employees," he said.

"When the new home is opened up, the 41 residents from Pleasant Manor's existing long-term care home will move across the property into the brand new long-term care home. And then we will welcome 119 new family members to the Pleasant Manor family."



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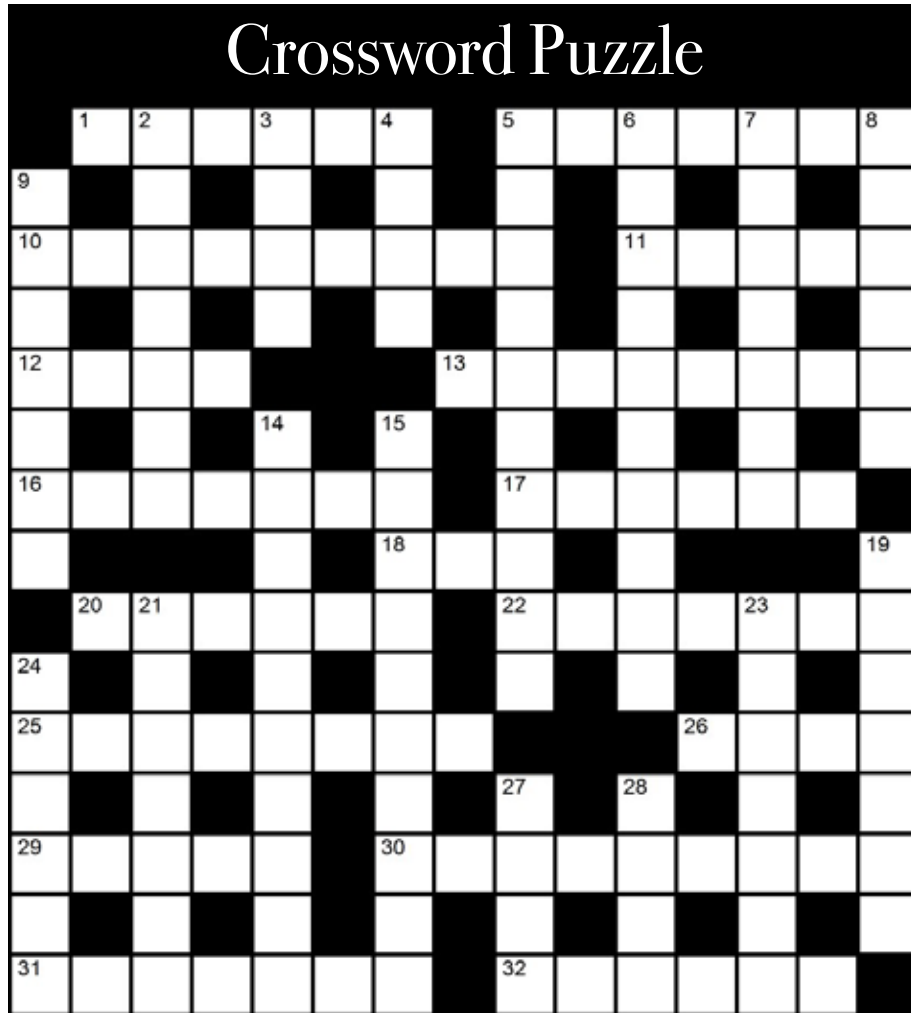
Have some fun

Across

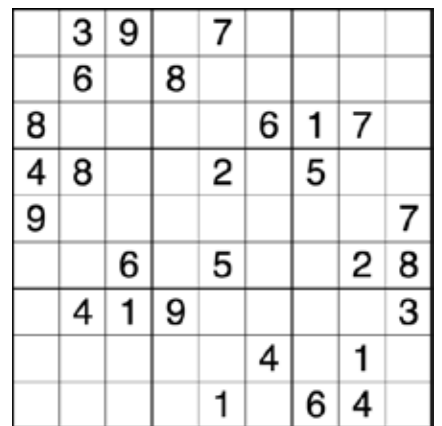
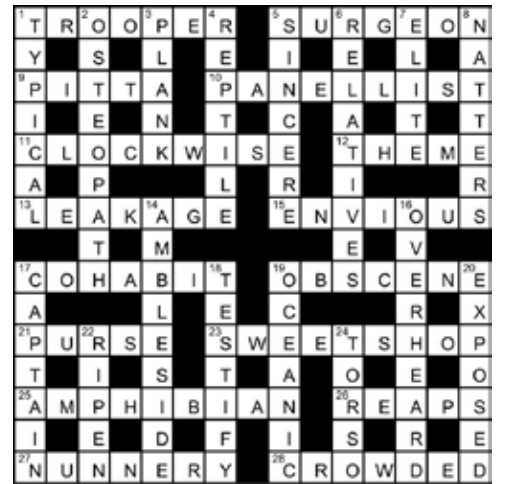
- 1. Hang loosely (6)
- 5. Church songbook (7)
- 10. Under an assumed name (9)
- 11. Strictly accurate (5)
- 12. Ogle (4)
- 13. Not merely local (8)
- 16. Efflux (7)
- 17. Stevedore (6)
- 18. Period of history (3)
- 20. Bother (6)
- 22. Not this one and not that one (7)
- 25. Supporter of a monarch (8)
- 26. Fijian capital (4)
- 29. Between (5)
- 30. Take turns (9)
- 31. Phantom (7)
- 32. Pedlar (6)

Down

- 2. Aged (7)
- 3. Jokes (4)
- 4. Send forth (4)
- 5. Fuel (10)
- 6. Constituent of vinegar (6,4)
- 7. Learner (7)
- 8. Child's toy (6)
- 9. Crest (7)
- 14. Torch (10)
- 15. Lottery (10)
- 19. Unrealistic person (7)
- 21. From now on (3,4)
- 23. Transport charge (7)
- 24. Keyboard instruments (6)
- 27. Where many land speed records have been attempted (4)
- 28. Fill out (4)



Last issue's answers



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Scaled-down Rotary Holiday House Tours cancelled

Brittany Carter
The Lake Report

This year's already pared down version of the Niagara-on-the-Lake Rotary Club's annual holiday house tours has been cancelled.

The last-minute decision was made this week after event organizers further examined the Ontario government's COVID-19 regulations, which placed Niagara-on-the-Lake in the orange-restrict level along with the rest of the Niagara region on Nov.16.

All refunds have been made through Eventbrite, where tickets were initially purchased, the Rotary Club said.

Lorna Penman, chair of the NOTL Rotary's Holiday House Tours, said the decision to cancel wasn't made lightly.

"It just came to light that we just couldn't do it. It was against COVID restrictions," Penman said.

She said there was a bit of a "grey area" in the regulations regarding the event. Had the tour been held in a staffed business or facility, it would likely have been able to go on as planned, with strict adherence to COVID regulations.



An interior shot of the McArthur Estate. RICHARD HARLEY

The provincial government's COVID response framework states limits for organized public events and gatherings in staffed businesses and facilities are 50 people indoors and 100 outdoors under the orange-restrict level. Those are the limits Penman said the NOTL Rotary planned for.

But because the tours were to be held on a private residence at the McArthur Estate on John Street, Penman said the limit for permitted functions is lower.

Limits for functions, parties, dinners, gatherings, barbecues or wedding receptions held in private residences, backyards, or parks are 10 people indoors and 25 outdoors.

"It was just a bit of a grey area that was just brought

to our attention at the last minute. It's just one of these things," she said.

She said the decision to cancel was "very upsetting" for everyone involved, but it was necessary.

"The owners are devastated. Brenda and Blair McArthur and all the staff worked so hard to make the place absolutely beautiful. And we had it all worked out, all the COVID restrictions, etc.," she said.

The fact that many ticketholders were possibly coming from locked down areas also played a part in the decision to cancel, Penman said.

"One of the other reasons that we thought long and hard about this cancellation is because a lot of people were coming from locked

down areas, right into Niagara-on-the-Lake," she said.

Rotary fundraising may be at an all-time low this year with COVID-19, but spirits are high as the group carries on with its other holiday fundraising plans this holiday season.

The silent auction will take place every day except Sundays from Dec. 4 to 12, at Regal Florist and Garden Centre, 1616 Niagara Stone Rd. in Virgil.

And the Ho Ho Ho! Holiday House Totes are still available for sale at niagaraonthe-lake.com/rotary.

Penman said donations are always appreciated so the service club can continue supporting the local and international communities.

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Jenny L. Wright and Kyle Blair in Holiday Inn (2019). Photo by Emily Cooper.

Celebrate life's events

The Lake Report would like to help you celebrate events that are important to you. Birthdays, anniversaries, achievements, or just a fun message to a friend. It's a great way to support your local paper, and have some fun at the same time!

Contact editor@niagaranow.com

Dr. Brown: What's the best choice — exercise or exercise machine?

Dr. William Brown
Special to The Lake Report

A friend asked, what's the best exercise machine? Cut off as we've been for nine months from the workout facilities at the Prince of Wales or Pillar and Post, his question was timely.

It wasn't so long ago that fitness for me was as simple as lacing up my running shoes, wearing whatever clothes suited the weather and heading outdoors to put my miles in.

Unfortunately, creeping degenerative changes in my knees forced me to cut back on running and increase my time on elliptical trainers and to a lesser extent, stationary bikes — that is until I discovered my old NordicTrack machine gathering dust in the basement.

Twenty-five years ago when I was in Boston, I was



PIXABAY PHOTO

recovering from yet another surgical fix for one of my knees and resorted to a NordicTrack machine built to simulate cross-country skiing, to keep fit.

It was a rugged, simple affair made mostly of wood with some steel parts and which, like cross-country skiing, engaged all the major muscle groups in my arms, legs and trunk,

with surprisingly little impact on the joints. And, much to my surprise, when I began to run again eight weeks later, my fitness had barely skipped a beat — the machine had done the job while I recovered from the knee surgery.

The NordicTrack machine I own, like me these days, is showing its age, what with occasional slipping belts and loose connections, but well worth the morning effort for maintaining my overall fitness.

That said, occasionally I was reminded of why those simple machines never really caught with the public despite their training potential. Unlike stationary bikes and elliptical trainers, learning to use a NordicTrack machine was fraught with the odd sudden unexpected backward slip and frantic clutches of the handles to

prevent a fall.

Most new users gave up too soon and as a result, many a machine was later found curbside waiting for someone one to cart it away. But whatever its shortcomings for beginners, like cross-country skiing, the NordicTrack machine offers an efficient way to become aerobically fit and work all the body's major muscle groups with one machine, unlike stationary bikes.

For me, all indoor fitness machines are just that — indoors. And for that reason I took up road biking this summer and enjoyed every minute of it, whatever the headwinds and even the odd storm.

In the Niagara region we're blessed with lots of concession and line roads where road traffic is light except for other bikers often strung out in single file.

Some purists deride road biking in Niagara because of the absence of challenging hills, except for the escarpment. Maybe, but the area is beautiful in all seasons and well worth a brisk walk, run or bike ride — or mixing two or all three even in the winter when conditions allow.

We're in the season of starkness — the tiniest of skeletal tree branches, no longer hidden by leaves — a season of whites and some greys but still beautiful. That's what I miss most about training indoors — the beauty of the outdoors, whatever the season.


So for me, the way forward with my exercise and fitness, is a compromise. Indoors for those days that are thoroughly miserable outside and a combination of indoor and outdoor exercises that combine training

as many muscle groups as possible with intense enough intervals to keep my heart and lungs in good shape.

These days my exercise routines involve one or two short runs outside a week, the NordicTrack machine first thing every morning and, for good measure soon, an elliptical trainer to provide some indoor variety.

So, in answer to the question posed by my friend — an elliptical trainer makes sense because, like the NordicTrack machine, it conditions the arms, legs and trunk muscles without the trickiness of the latter to worry about. To that I add a variety of stretching and strength training floor exercises.

Next, we'll explore the science of exercise as an aid to picking and choosing what may work for you.

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This image of Woodlawn, the home built at 176 John St. by Robert Dickson in 1822, is from a 1905 booklet titled "Illustrated Niagara-on-the-Lake, Canada," published by John S. Clarke. COURTESY NIAGARA-ON-THE-LAKE MUSEUM

The famous personages of Randwood

This story is one in a series about the history of the Rand Estate, about 35 acres of land lying behind the stone wall on John and Charlotte streets, along the Heritage Trail and whose eastern boundary is a hedge between the properties at 176 and 210 John St.

Elizabeth Masson
Special to The Lake Report

No other estate in Niagara-on-the-Lake has been owned by so many famous personages as that of Randwood on John Street.

The land upon which today's Rand Estate sits was originally part of a 160-acre tract granted to Peter Russell in 1796. Russell was receiver general and a member of the executive council of Upper Canada.

He and his half-sister Elizabeth built a comfortable house on a small farm located in the middle of today's Commons. That house is believed to be the foundation of the hospital

attached to Fort George, which one can see on the Commons today.

Russell, forced to move to York when Simcoe decided it would take the place of Niagara as the capital of Upper Canada, sold his Crown grant in August 1798 to William Dickson.

Dickson, from Dumfries, Scotland had been recruited by his cousin Robert Hamilton, the founder of Queenston, to join him in his business ventures in Canada. Dickson's first house, at King and Prideaux streets, was the first one in the province to be made of brick. Dickson, who became one of Upper Canada's first lawyers, married Charlotte Adlam, who had come to Niagara as governess to another member of the executive council, William Jarvis.

In 1811, on the part of Russell's Crown grant which is now John Street, Dickson then built a large house with a library holding 1,000 books. In

May of 1813, the invading Americans took him prisoner and along with a number of other prominent Niagarans, he was sent to East Greenbush, N.Y., near Albany.

On Dec. 10, 1813, when the town of Niagara was burned by the retreating Americans, Dickson's house is said to have been the first one torched. It was burned, not by the regular American army soldiers, but by the Canadian Volunteers, under the command of Joseph Willcocks.

Willcocks was a distant relative of Peter Russell and had stayed with Russell and his sister (to whom he made "amorous advances") when he first moved to Niagara from Ireland.

The targeted burning was because Dickson had fought a duel and killed a friend of Willcocks' in New York state in 1806; duelling was illegal in Upper Canada then. The duel occurred near Fort Niagara at 7 a.m.

The two men counted off 10 paces, turned and fired almost simultaneously. His opponent, a Mr. Weekes, missed but Dickson's ball went through Weekes's body and he died the next day.

Dickson's wife Charlotte was ill at the time the town was burned and was carried outside in her bed where she watched the house burn down on a bitterly cold December night. Charlotte Street is named after her.

Following the War of 1812, Dickson gave a portion of his land to the town to build a courthouse on what is now Rye Street, sold off other sections, and then divided the remainder between his two oldest sons, giving each about 500 feet of frontage on John Street.

William Dickson then moved to Galt (now Cambridge) and developed his land holdings there. He returned to Niagara in 1836 to live out the "remnant" of his life.

Of interest is the fact that Langdon Hall, the Relais & Chateaux property in Cambridge, Ont., was built by William Dickson's great-granddaughter and the great-grandson of John Jacob Astor.

The eastern portion of Dickson's John Street property went to son William who in turn sold it to Capt. Robert Melville, president of the Niagara Harbor and Dock Company. Melville built Brunswick Place, which stands today at 210 John St. Son Robert Dickson built the present brick house at 176 John St. in 1822 on the foundation of his father's house; he named it Woodlawn.

In 1873, William Dickson's youngest son Walter sold Woodlawn for \$18,000 to American Civil War Gen. Henry Lansing; he was at that time, the secretary-treasurer of the Buffalo and Erie Railroad. Lansing added the third floor, the mansard roof, and an enclosed tower which

the Rands later opened up.

While Lansing visited Niagara only in the summer, his sons Livingston and Watts, settled permanently in town and both were buried at St. Mark's.

Watts Lansing built three houses in town, two of which are still standing: one opposite the Charles Inn on Queen Street is currently owned by developer Rainer Hummel. The other, opposite the golf course at 284 Queen St., was lived in by his daughter Sara who died in 1974 at age 87.

In 1910, the Lansings sold their property on John Street to George Rand, who was a self-made millionaire and the chair of Marine Trust Co. of Buffalo.

Elizabeth (Betsy) Masson has been a research volunteer at the Niagara-on-the-lake Museum for more than 15 years.

More Niagara's History Unveiled articles about the past of Niagara-on-the-Lake are available at: www.niagaranow.com



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EXPLORING PHOTOS WITH NOTL MUSEUM



Bell hops at Queen's Royal

This photograph is a new addition to our collection. It shows the bell hops, and their supervisors, of the Queen's Royal Hotel lined up along the end of King Street. The former lawn bowling and tennis greens are fenced off behind them. Today you would see the gazebo and Queen's Royal Park from this perspective. We know that the man fifth from the left is Walter Reid, but do you recognize anyone else in this photo? This first-class hotel opened in 1869 as the Royal Niagara Hotel. It was a destination for many wanting to escape the confines of the city and enjoy a peaceful time by the lake. The advancement of roads and cars and the beginning of the Depression era led to the demise of the hotel in 1927. After several furnishings were auctioned off, the building was demolished in 1930.



A saltbox?

Brian Marshall
Columnist

As many who know me can attest, I have a tendency to be irked by the casual misuse of architectural terminology.

It's not that I'd stop a conversation to correct the individual speaking, but it starts an itch that sooner or later I simply have to scratch, particularly if the term is one that is commonly used incorrectly. In this case, I'm talking about "saltbox."

So, what is a saltbox house?

In general, it is a two-storey house with a gable roof that extends on the rear above a one-storey section. This one-storey section



A fine asymmetrical saltbox. BRIAN MARSHALL

may have been built as an original part of the building footprint or added at a later date. The roof may be a single pitch from ridge to eave (commonly referred to as a "cat-slide" roof) or two pitches, with the steeper pitch over the two storeys and a lower pitch over the single storey (a broken-back roof) changing at the junction point.

Now, although there were one-and-a-half-storey houses in the saltbox form, these tended to be the exception to the rule since

the wall height (from grade to eaves) required to create the continuous rear roof (cat-slide or broken-back) was much taller than typical. Keep in mind that folks built a storey and a half to save money!

Historically, it has been broadly accepted that the saltbox form originated in colonial New England during the mid 17th century. Common settlers' houses of the time were small, often only one room deep, and the addition of a single-storey addition across the

back with a simple extension of the roofline was an economical way to expand the house.

Not only was the form practical, but it eminently suited the colonial lifestyle, which led to a popularity that saw it built across eastern North America well into the 19th century.

Niagara-on-the-Lake has several fine examples of saltboxes built in the 1800s. These include a classic symmetrical (entry centred with windows to either side) presentation in Old Town, a lovingly cared for (and more uncommon) asymmetrical four-bay beauty in Queenston, and, as rare as hen's teeth, a Stackhouse in a saltbox form embodied in the plaqued Steward House.

As to why it's called a saltbox, the answer's pretty straightforward: the form has a very strong resemblance to the small, finely crafted wooden boxes which, at that time, were used to store salt.

FOOD & TOY DRIVE

Help those less-fortunate in Niagara. We are accepting food and new unwrapped toy donations at our office at 8 Henegan Road until Friday December 11, 2020. Food donations will support Newark Neighbours and are in great need. Toy donations will support other local charities where accepted.

We normally get the bulk of our donations at the NOTL Christmas Parade. If you are not able to drop off a donation, we will pick it up on December 9th. Call our office at 905-468-4235 or email us at fooddrive@notlhydro.com to arrange a pickup. Please leave your donation outside your front door as our staff will not enter households.

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