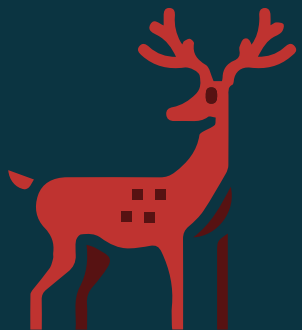
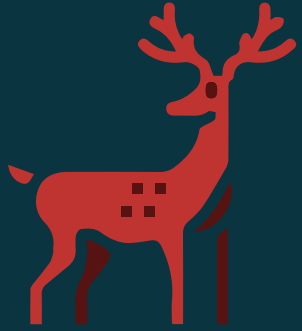




HAPPY HOLIDAYS

FROM

The
Lake Report



That's a **wrap**

With the end of 2022, comes the end of another volume of The Lake Report. As usual, our small staff is taking a holiday break. So for this final issue of the year, we wanted to do something a bit special by wrapping our paper in, well, wrapping paper. The idea is that readers can take the centrespread (or even our special front and back pages) out and use it to wrap some of their Christmas gifts. It's an eco-friendly way to wrap a present – and hopefully readers enjoy our Christmas design and content. We wish everyone a very happy holiday season, no matter what you're celebrating, and even if you're not celebrating anything.

A year of **relief**

With COVID-19 under control (but not yet vanquished), Niagara-on-the-Lake has welcomed back its cherished annual festivals, shows and other community happenings. Live music is back, live theatre is back, bringing life back. Here's to good health, things being open, conversations with our friends and neighbours and eventually defeating the nasty virus that kept us all inside and away from family for the last two years. Get out and enjoy yourself, safely.



A year of **change**



Niagara-on-the-Lake has a new lord mayor and several new councillors. After an election that showed people wanted change, we're keenly interested to see what the future has in store for the communities of NOTL. We ask council members to please listen to the residents that elected them, to certainly take into account town staff and expert advice, but to carefully weigh the impact of council decisions on the lives of the residents who elected them. And fight like hell against Doug Ford's new Bill 23, which could lead to significant development changes in historic enclaves like NOTL – while leaving council powerless to fight them.

A year of **excellence**

This year has been a great one for our wee paper, having been honoured as the most-awarded community newspaper in the whole country. That's a big accolade – one that lets us know we're keeping our community informed while providing an important service to readers. It also lets our community and advertisers know where readers are turning to find the important news about NOTL, while giving us all a reason to be proud. We'll be back on Jan. 5, with more of the quality journalism you have come to expect.





Decked out tractors will parade through Virgil on Thursday

Somer Slobodian
Local Journalism Initiative
The Lake Report

Tractors will roll through Virgil on Thursday for the second annual Christmas tractor parade.

"We have 33 (tractors) as compared to 18 from last year," said Dorothy Soo-Wiens, who organized last year's event with her husband, Erwin.

Leading this year's parade

Continued on Page 24



Chuck McShane.

Homebuilder president complains about NOTL fee increases

Evan Loree
Local Journalism Initiative
The Lake Report

On a cold Tuesday night, the first gathering of Niagara-on-the-Lake's new council got a little hot Dec. 13 when the head of the Niagara Home Builders Association complained

Continued on Page 7

Santa wows kids and crowds

The big guy in red helps raise money for NOTL's palliative care service



Nolan Tamby was in awe of Santa Claus during Sunday's photo-op in support of palliative care at the community centre. JULIA SACCO

Julia Sacco
The Lake Report

The dedicated team at the Niagara-on-the-Lake Community Palliative Care Service is hard at work all year round, so last Sunday the group decided to treat themselves and let the community to share a smile with Santa.

Executive director Bonnie Bagnulo expressed the group's immense thanks for all of the donations and support that goes into all of the free services that palliative care provides.

"We are very blessed with the donations we receive," she said.

"Today is our way of giving back to the community and it's

also our way of doing something that's fun because death and dying is not always easy," said Bagnulo.

Tim Taylor volunteered his services at the community centre as Santa once again and visitors were able to pose for a photo, colour festive pictures and enjoy free delicious cook-

ies and hot chocolate from Sweets & Swirls Cafe.

"I'm getting my knee sat on quite a bit, the kids are drawing and having fun. It's great," said Taylor.

Bagnulo said that this year alone Taylor has helped raise

Continued on Page 24

Family still seeking answers in death of Matthew Wilson

Kevin MacLean
The Lake Report

Matthew Wilson was a walker.

And on the night he was killed, the 40-year-old was walking along Lakeshore Road, headed home to Virgil from St. Catharines. A

long trek. He never made it. Hit by a black Ford F-150 pickup truck driven by Niagara-on-the-Lake farmer Robert Enns, Wilson died alone and unattended in the southside ditch, near 263 Lakeshore Rd., about 200 metres from Tina's fruit market.

A small, black handmade cross, marks the spot.

Now, as his family's second Christmas without him approaches, a Santa, snowman and other decorations have been added to the memorial.

Crafted by his stepfather, John Franz, using wood

from a pine shelf Wilson himself had built, the cross is emblazoned with a blue heart.

It commemorates the place where Wilson was found by the westbound driver of a recycling truck

Continued on Page 4



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Justice system 'too lax, too lenient,' victim's mother says

Continued from Front Page

more than eight hours after he was struck.

On Friday, Dec. 1, a half-dozen sombre family members packed the front row of an otherwise near-empty Welland courtroom to hear the verdict, prepared for any eventuality.

As Justice of the Peace Mary Shelley quietly pronounced Enns guilty of failing to report an accident, the family let out a collective, almost imperceptible, sigh of relief, the tension and sadness dissipated, for the moment at least.

They had been hoping for some vindication and justice for Wilson.

For such a serious matter, failing to report an accident is a relatively minor Provincial Offences Act charge – not a criminal count. But based on the evidence and with no witnesses, it was the only charge Enns faced.

He was not in court that morning to hear the verdict, which caught both the family and Crown prosecutor Henry Limheng by surprise.

Colleen Franz, the petite, soft-spoken mother of the victim, remains angry though she insists she does not hate the man who took her son's life shortly after 10:30 p.m. on April 4, 2021.

But she does have some questions for Enns:

"Why did you not call 911?"

"Why have you never, ever said you're sorry?"

"Why did you not come to court to hear the verdict?"

At his trial in October, Enns said he drank a glass of wine earlier in the evening. He also testified he thought he had hit a deer but admitted it also crossed his mind that it could have been a person.

Franz says that had her son got medical attention sooner, he might not have died. She'll never know.

"He didn't deserve to be left at the side of the road."

"As the justice of the peace said, 'Seconds matter.'"

"Mr. Enns used his phone flashlight" at the scene to view the damage to his truck and try to determine what he had hit.

"He could have dialled 911. An Ornge air ambu-



Left: A Niagara Regional Police photo entered into evidence shows the damage to the right front portion of Robert Enns' pickup truck. Right: From left, Shelly Gould, Robert Wilson, Kirk Wilson, Melanie Wilson, Colleen Franz and John Franz gather outside the Welland courthouse. EVAN LOREE

lance could have taken Matthew to an out-of-town trauma centre," Franz says.

Enns made that call just after 8:08 the next morning, when he realized the damage to his truck was extensive and when he heard police had closed Lakeshore to investigate a fatality.

Matthew Wilson was a walker.

A few years before he was killed, he developed a blood clot in his right leg – a hereditary condition that was treated successfully but the doctor advised him to walk more. So, he did. A lot.

The night he died, his mother met up with him in St. Catharines. COVID was raging and Wilson had been laid off from his job as a bar back at Fallsview Casino.

He and his mom were going to go to Starbucks for coffee but instead they just talked. "I was with him till 9:01 that night," she says.

Because Franz was driving, she urged Wilson to let her take him home, but, "He said he was going to talk with a girl."

"I'll just walk," he said. Back to the Homestead area of Virgil, about six kilometres from where he took his last steps.

Barely 90 minutes after he and his mom said goodbye, he was laying in the shallow ditch on Lakeshore Road. And no one knew.

Now, 20 months since

that fateful night, Colleen Franz is still grieving.

She prepared a lengthy victim impact statement but did not read it in court because Enns was not there to hear it. She'd spent months writing and revising it.

Now, her life is forever changed and her son's life is forever lost, she says.

Feelings of anger and bitterness remain. And lots of questions.

"It hits me every day," she says. "There are certain things I don't want to do any more. Certain places I don't go to in Niagara-on-the-Lake any more because they remind me ..."

"Basically, I sit in my house."

She's had counselling and been befriended by two other mothers who lost sons. "They have been an immense help to me."

"Losing a child is the worst thing that can happen to a parent," she says. "I don't know how to get over it. It still haunts me every day."

The circumstances of Wilson's final hours traumatize her still.

A few days before her son died, Franz says, a dog smacked into her car.

The dog weighed about 40 pounds, less than a quarter of what her adult son weighed.

"I felt that impact unbelievably. It made a huge noise and I stopped immediately. I got out of the car."

She says the owner was

nearby and told Franz, "I saw the whole thing. The dog ran into you."

Franz was shaken and wanted to cover the vet bill, but the owner refused.

Fortunately, the dog was fine.

"I wanted to do everything I could for the dog. That person didn't do the best that he could for my son."

"It still hurts every day," she says. "Matthew didn't deserve to die."

While living with the loss of her son remains a heavy burden, she lauds the work done by the police and the prosecutor.

She says Limheng, an assistant Crown attorney, and lead investigator Det.-Const. Ryan Dool were both "outstanding." So was Annie English of the police department's victims assistance program.

"I have heard so much through the years against the police. I think that the police in this case went over and above the call of duty," she says.

"It's our justice system that's failing us and failing a lot of other people out there, too. Unfortunately, it's not geared more towards victims, which is sad."

The maximum fine for failing to report an accident is \$1,000. The \$500 fine levied in the death of her son strikes many people as unfair. Enns also received nine months probation.

In Franz's experience,

"the system is too lax, too lenient" and diminishes the rights of victims.

"Mr. Enns, I don't know whether he has any feelings of remorse or regret or sorrow other than for himself. And that bothers me."

"At one time, 'I'm sorry' would have gone a long way," she says. But not now.

Her son's friends have been a comfort. She says she received 300 to 400 calls, notes and messages speaking highly of Wilson.

"They've all had such wonderful things to say about him and things that he did for them."

It helps her to know that other people cared for Wilson.

And on the first Mother's Day after his death, the family got together and carried the small black cross down to Lakeshore Road, where John Franz pounded it into the ground with help from her grandson Zachary.

"We all said a prayer and then we went to Matthew's grave" in Lundy's Lane cemetery where he's buried with her parents and other relatives.

Matthew Wilson was a walker.

He died while walking eastward toward NOTL along the unlit south shoulder of Lakeshore Road.

In piecing together the case, Niagara Regional Police investigators obtained a dark, grainy, black and white surveillance video

from a security camera at Seaway Farms, at Stewart and Lakeshore roads.

It was played in court at Enns' trial in October.

In the video, for a few seconds around 10:26 p.m., Wilson can be seen walking eastward along Lakeshore.

Eight minutes later, at 10:34 p.m., Enns' pickup truck passes Seaway.

Twenty seconds afterward, well off-camera, a thud is heard.

Enns testified that he circled back and stopped, using the flashlight from his mobile phone to look around and to inspect the damage to his truck. Some of this was captured on the Seaway Farms video.

In the pitch dark, with his phone flashlight, he thought he had some broken lights and other minor damage, Enns said.

After the impact, he didn't see any sign of a deer, or of Wilson, or Wilson's left shoe near the middle of the road, or his brimmed, dark-coloured cap, or right shoe near the shoulder of the road, court was told.

Enns then drove to his home, about 1.5 kilometres away, on Irvine Road.

Matthew Wilson's body was discovered in the shallow, south side ditch by the driver of a recycling truck headed toward St. Catharines about 7:20 the next morning.

He immediately called 911.

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Vehicles on Lakeshore Road pass by the memorial erected by Matthew Wilson's family at the spot where he died, about 200 metres east of Tina's fruit market. KEVIN MACLEAN

A mother's lament

'Grief is only a word until you live it'

Kevin MacLean
The Lake Report

Colleen Franz, the mother of Matthew Wilson, wrote a deeply emotional victim impact statement, more than 50 pages long.

Because Robert Enns was not in court to hear the verdict against him in the crash that killed her son, Franz did not read her statement to the court.

Wilson was walking home along Lakeshore Road the night of April 4, 2021, when he was fatally struck by a pickup truck driven by Enns.

Franz shared her statement with The Lake Report and parts of it are excerpted here.

"My son's death is the most heart-wrenching, chest-crushing, breath-stealing tragedy I have ever gone through. There are days I wanted to die. I cry at night. I cry in the day," Franz wrote.

"I wear a smile in front of others, a smile to hide my incessant suffering as my soul silently screams in secret."

"My life will never go back to what it once was. I will never be the same person I once was. A part of me died when Matt died."

"There are no words

that will ever describe the pain, the sorrow, the despair that I and Matt's family have felt and will continue to suffer for the rest of our lives."

"Matt was not perfect. Matt made mistakes in his teenage years, filled with tears and defeats, but through his tremendous perseverance, immense self-discipline he thankfully saw many victories when he set about to correct all his mistakes."

An honour roll student, her son played tennis, soccer, baseball, golf and lacrosse, "but his true passion was hockey."

He also helped his older brother Kirk in coaching atom house league hockey teams in Niagara-on-the-Lake.

"I was elated to see my two sons out on the rink working together teaching young kids to skate, learn the game of hockey while instilling the kids with good sportsmanship," she wrote.

"Matt loved music. He played the piano, the guitar and had a beautiful singing voice." He and Kirk spent hours composing songs, singing, playing their guitars and keyboards.

"As their mother, it was rewarding to see my two

sons spending time together not only as brothers, but as best friends."

"I loved Matt's infectious passion for life, his enthusiasm to get involved, his kind heart, his gentle ways and his positive optimistic attitude."

Her son loved to travel and taught himself to speak Mandarin because he hoped to travel to the Far East some day. Two of his cousins were born in Hong Kong.

"Sadly, Matt's dreams of future travelling will never reach fruition."

She says she often witnessed acts of kindness by her son.

"When Matt thought I wasn't watching, I saw him reach out to help a friend who was struggling. I knew Matt learned that we all have to take care of each other and to make the best of what we are given."

"When Matt thought I wasn't watching, I saw him gladly give his brand new winter coat to a stranger who didn't have a coat. I saw Matt take the shoes off his own feet and give them to a man who had no shoes."

"When Matt saw a man with no shirt, he literally gave away the shirt off his back plus many of his

sweatshirts, hoodies etc. Matt always said he had another shirt and more shoes at home and this man didn't have any."

The death of her son defines her life now.

"I didn't just lose my son once on April 4, 2021. I lose Matt over and over."

"I lose Matt every morning when I open my eyes to a new day. I lose Matt many times every day when fierce waves of grief jolt through me like a bolt of lightning that rips into my heart reminding me Matt is gone, dead, forever and for always."

"A person that loses her husband is called a widow. A person that loses a parent is called an orphan. There is no word to describe a parent, a mother who loses a child, because that is a loss like no other."

"I am hesitant to talk about Matt as some people think I should be over it by now and tell me I must move on. 'Move on where?' is what I ask. Move to the left where nothing will ever be right again or move to the right where nothing is left because my son is dead?"

"Grief is only a word until you live it, feel it. No one can understand it until it happens to them."

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Above: It's a winter wonderland at Wanda and Terry Nord's house along the Niagara Parkway. Below: One of the many ornaments hanging from light display. SOMER SLOBODIAN

A magical wonderland inspired by joy and peace

Couple's colourful display on the Niagara Parkway is a stunning light show

Somer Slobodian
Local Journalism Initiative
The Lake Report

If you've driven the Niagara Parkway in the winter, you know it's extremely dark – no street lamps, only lights from distant homes or an oncoming vehicle.

Then, in the week's before Christmas, as you approach Line 2 Road, a bright glow is visible high in the sky.

As you get closer, it grows brighter until you realize it isn't from a single source, but literally thousands of multi-coloured lights that create a spectacular winter wonderland.

Drivers slow to look, some park nearby and, young or old, walk over to stand on the shoulder of the road, drawn to the display that can only be described as magical.

All are mesmerized by hundreds of radiant balls dangling from trees, a beautiful life-sized horse and sleigh on the front lawn and bushes wrapped in strings of lights.



PHOTO GALLERY
See more pictures at niagaranow.com

"It's all about bringing joy to people," says Wanda Nord, the woman behind the famous Niagara-on-the-Lake light show.

There are lights in every direction you look – blue, red, purple, yellow and green – all coming together to create something beautiful along the otherwise dark, eerie parkway.

Nord and her husband, Terry, first flicked the switch on the winter oasis 13 years ago, after being inspired by the famous,

long-running light display at a home on York Road.

The Nord's light show grows bigger every year. "I started with four balls 13 years ago," she said.

It's a vision she has created as she custom-designs each shining ball of light and sparkling tree.

The lights take about seven full days to hang,

but come down much more quickly, she said.

How do they get the lights up so high in the trees? "The little fairies put them up there," she said with a laugh.

It's not about the publicity or notoriety for Nord (she was reluctant to even be interviewed) – it's about the magic, peace and love it brings not only to herself, but the entire community.

"You're standing here. It's calm. It's peaceful. Everybody has their own interpretation of it and their own feelings," she said.

"And so to keep this ambiance is very important to me."

She recalled a time when, as she was plugging in some of the lights, a family pulled up. Their windows were down and she could hear a child singing "Twinkle Twinkle Little Star."

"The child had seen the stars that are on this star tree," she said, pointing to the large yellow stars dangling high in one of the trees.

After the child finished his song, everyone in the car cheered and clapped. Then she heard something she'll never forget.

"A male voice said, 'Well, that was worth it,' " she said.

And Nord thought, "That is exactly what we want."

"We want people to come and kind of peek through the gates and the hedge and look up high and have this feeling of wonder," she said.

It's about the little, and big, faces that light up in awe when they see the collection of lit up reindeer, trees and bushes. Or when they see her house illuminated by a variety of lights and shapes.

She doesn't have a particular favourite. "I love them all."

"The reason is because they're my creation. I created them. They're like children," she said.

As for how many lights she has or how much it all costs, she doesn't want to spoil the magic.

"It becomes a technical

thing as opposed to magic and wonder, which is what we create," she said.

And it truly is magical. Even with cars passing by, it's easy to stand engulfed by the colourful lights and a feeling of calm washing over you.

Every direction you look, you can find something that makes you stop and stare.

Something that makes you stop and smile.

"We want to bring people joy and this is why we go higher and higher every year," said Nord.

She often comes out at night to marvel at the display and take a peaceful walk, but steers clear of being seen by those looking from the street. She doesn't want to spoil the magic for anyone.

It's the couple's way of saying Merry Christmas to the community, she said.

The lights are on every night, from 5 to 10 p.m., until Jan. 1 at 15630 Niagara Parkway.

"It's all magic," she said, smiling.



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COUNCIL ROUNDUP

Homebuilder president **complains** about Niagara-on-the-Lake's fee increases

Continued from Front Page

about hikes in development-related fees.

Chuck McShane was visibly frustrated over a 15.6 per cent increase in town fees used to offset the cost of providing parking and other infrastructure needs.

One of the fees is called cash in lieu of parking and town treasurer Kyle Freeborn told The Lake Report after the meeting the issue doesn't come up very often.

The town charges the fee to developers who are unable to provide parking for their projects.

According to a staff report, the fee is used to offset the cost to the town of providing the space itself.

The town is increasing the charge to \$65,988 per parking space for 2023.

Freeborn said the bulk of the cost comes from the land itself, which is exceptionally expensive in Old Town.

The other fee increase McShane spoke about was development charges.

Similar to the parking fee, development charges are used by the town to offset infrastructure costs like parks, sewers and sidewalks.

The town has decided to increase development charges for single-family homes. This hike will also be 15.6 per cent.

"Government-imposed fees and charges are passed on to the end consumer and new home purchaser, and as such, the (Niagara Home Builders Association) has an obligation to ensure fairness and accountability on their behalf," said McShane.

He urged council to produce a report justifying the 15.6 per cent increase in the two fees.

"These fees do not just affect the developer," said McShane.

"It also affects every homeowner in Niagara-on-the-Lake," he added.

McShane's presentation was interrupted by the meeting's acting chair, Coun. Tim Balasiuk, who was trying to keep del-



Chuck McShane, president of the Niagara Home Building Association, isn't happy about NOTL increasing development-related fees. EVAN LOREE

egations to 10 minutes, in accordance with the town's procedural bylaw.

McShane did not think that was fair as he was presenting on three separate items on the meeting's agenda.

After McShane's presentation, councillors agreed they would make an effort to communicate the fee increases more effectively in the future.

For Tuesday's committee of the whole meeting, seven council members attended in-person while Couns. Erwin Wiens and Maria Mavridis joining virtually.

Response to Bill 23 deferred

The mood of the room cooled after council heard Coun. Sandra O'Connor's motion asking Premier Doug Ford to "pause" enacting his controversial Bill 23 legislation until there is "meaningful consultation" with municipalities.

"I'm wondering if we're going to give a response if we should be a little more specific to just Niagara-on-the-Lake," said Coun. Wendy Cheropita.

Bill 23, also known as the More Homes Built Faster Act, will have widespread effects on development controls across the province.

Cheropita pointed out the province was not removing any agricultural land from NOTL and that the greater concern for the town was the effect of the bill on heritage preservation.

"I was hoping that this new council would not be

as full of criticism about our province where we get a lot of funding and wording it a little more delicately," said Coun. Gary Burroughs.

He added that the motion was "a bit aggressive" and he did not think it would change the premier's mind.

Lord Mayor Gary Zalepa suggested the town should be careful and noted there are some aspects of the bill that have yet to be moved on.

He was worried the town might receive a cold shoulder if it was too aggressive with its concerns.

"I think that's strategically a blunder," he said, encouraging O'Connor to look closely at the items in the bill that are yet to be determined and tailor the motion to the needs of the town.

Zalepa said Bill 23 does not amend the Greenbelt, that the amendments are part of a separate legislation released the same day.

O'Connor insisted they vote on the motion and Burroughs responded with a motion to defer it to council's meeting on Dec. 20.

Committee assignments

People looking to offer a special set of skills to the town will soon get the chance to apply for seats on the town's many committees and boards now that the council has begun to assign councillors to committees.

Coun. Tim Balasiuk will be sitting on the Christmas Parade and municipal heritage committees.

Coun. Gary Burroughs will also be on the heritage

committee, the transportation advisory committee and the RiverBrink Museum's board of directors.

Coun. Wendy Cheropita will sit on the urban design committee and the Chamber of Commerce.

Coun Maria Mavridis will be on the short-term rental committee, the transportation advisory committee and the Niagara Region transportation committee

Coun. Sandra O'Connor will join the board of Music Niagara and the Pumphouse Arts Centre. She will also be appointed to the Court of Revision.

Coun. Nick Ruller will be on the Niagara Historical Society and the Court of Revision.

Adriana Vizzari will be on the NOTL Public Library Board and the NOTL Energy Board.

Erwin Wiens will sit on the Niagara Parks Commission, Niagara District Airport Commission and the Court of Revision.

And Lord Mayor Gary Zalepa will sit on the board for the Shaw Festival and the NOTL Energy Board.

Decisions on appointment to the municipal accommodation tax committee were deferred until Dec. 20

The town's new selection committee, used to screen applicants to its boards and committees, will be made up of Cheropita, O'Connor, Vizzari and Zalepa.

The selection committee will oversee appointments of citizens to a long list of town committees.

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Carol Sing at the Wayside Chapel

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The Local Journalism Initiative is funded by the Government of Canada.

COVID Tracker

NOTL active cases (last 28 days): 40

Region active cases: 574

Region deaths: 663

Region total cases: 49,140

**Dec. 14 data per Niagara Region Public Health.*

Public health warns that "Due to the surge in COVID-19 cases, limited availability of testing, and changes to case and contact management practices, case counts shown (above) are an underestimate of the true number of individuals in Niagara with COVID-19. Data should be interpreted with caution." Case data for municipalities is also now being interpreted in 28-day cycles.



Contributed by Patty Garriock

"If I could only give three words of advice, they would be, "Tell the truth." If I got three more words, I'd add: "All the time." - Randy Pausch

HOW TO GET IN TOUCH

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Have a lead on a story?

Call 905.359.2270 or send an email to editor@niagaranow.com

Dahoo dores



Lake Report photographer Dave Van de Laar caught the Grinch in town during the annual Christmas Parade on Saturday.

Editorial

Another year over, a new one almost begun

Kevin MacLean
Managing Editor

Season's greetings. Happy holidays. Merry Christmas. Happy Hanukkah. Joyeux Noël. Happy Kwanzaa. Feliz Navidad. Buon natale.

Whatever you celebrate at this time of year, however you say it, we wish you all the best.

To echo the sentiments in our Page 2 editorial note to readers, as 2022 comes to a close let's all look forward to more of what made the year great: COVID less dominant, (mainly thanks to masks and so many people being vaccinated), and our ability to mix, mingle and socialize restored after two years under wraps.

Humans are social beings and we need to interact with one another, so being able to do that made 2022

a memorable year for many of us.

We have said it many times before, but we feel privileged to serve Niagara-on-the-Lake, to have residents open their lives to us and allow us to share their stories with the world. And to have so many advertisers who entrust us with getting their message out to the community – because without those advertisers, there would be no Lake Report.

We've also documented repeatedly how kind and generous the people of this community tend to be to one another, especially when people are in need.

Of course, life is not all roses and rainbows. As your community voice, we must sometimes write about things that some people would rather not hear about. That's journalism.

We're happy to spread cheer and laud those who are deserving, but we will not simply be cheerleaders.

After a year in which The Lake Report was honoured with more awards than any other community newspaper in the country, we think it is important not to rest on our laurels.

That's why we have expanded our coverage and increased our staff in the past few months – all with the aim of bringing you more news about the things that really matter here in NOTL.

This week, we are publishing our biggest regular edition ever. At 36 pages, we have exceeded the capacity of our printer to produce a paper with full colour on every page. That's a little inside baseball, perhaps, but such growth is a reflection of the

trust our readers and advertisers have placed in us.

Looking ahead to 2023, we have been working this fall on plans to bring you more high-calibre investigative journalism about NOTL and Niagara, and we will unveil more about those plans in the new year.

In the meantime, we can promise that any NOTL news, big, small or in between, is vital to us. We encourage you, as always, to let us know about any fun, cool, odd, interesting or important happenings in the community. If it is important to you, it is important to us.

The Lake Report returns on Jan. 5, but until then please go to our news website, NiagaraNow.com, for updates and all the latest news.

Happy New Year, NOTL.
editor@niagaranow.com

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\$500 fine in fatal accident is unbelievable

Dear editor:

The article in The Lake Report on Dec. 8 (“NOTL farmer fined \$500 in crash that killed pedestrian,”) regarding a vehicle accident on Lakeshore Road in which an innocent pedestrian was killed has me shaking my head in disbelief.

A \$500 fine? Is that all this young man’s life was worth?

This is such a shame.

The accident happened not far from my house on Lakeshore Road.

I drive by the site daily and am reminded every time I see the little memorial at the side of the road put there by Matthew Wilson’s family.

The story in the paper frankly is unbelievable to me – a \$500 fine and

probation. Shameful.

There is a metre-wide bike and pedestrian path on that section of Lakeshore and one can only assume the pedestrian wasn’t walking in the middle of the road.

The driver admitted he had one glass of wine hours before, thought he hit a deer but admitted it could have been a person.

He didn’t report the accident until the next morning and estimated the damage at \$1,500 when it turned out to be more than \$10,000.

Something just doesn’t add up and a \$500 fine for a life lost is just a slap on the wrist.

Unbelievable.

*Peter Newman
NOTL*

Don’t lump all farmers into the same category

Dear editor:

After reading your Dec. 8 news story “Mexican workers accuse Canadian farmers of mistreatment” and editorial “Do the right thing for seasonal workers,” I wanted to shine light on the fact that not all farmers can be put in the same category.

At Lament Farms on York Road, we have employed seasonal agricultural workers from Mexico since 2011. When our workers arrive in March, I feel like company has just arrived from out of town and I need to make sure they are well-kept and taken care of.

Our facilities are inspected yearly by public health and our workers are housed in an air-conditioned, four-bedroom, two-storey house with laundry facilities in the basement.

This includes a working washer and dryer at no cost to the worker other than a programmed, preset cost of \$2.39 per working day for utilities, if they work for more than four hours in that day.

Last year we renovated the kitchen and two bathrooms for them. They each have their own bedroom. We drive them every Thursday to the bank and to get groceries.

When they need a ride on a Sunday to go to the mall,



Michelle Lament’s farmworkers enjoy a modern facility. SUPPLIED

they message me and I give them a ride.

When they need ointment for a cut, I run it over to them. When their fridge stops working, we fix it. When the toilet plugs up, we fix it.

I’ll surprise them with a pizza or cooked chicken, just so they don’t have to cook after a long, hot July day.

I also feel like it’s a landlord/tenant situation in some ways but without the rent money. They show up every day and get the

job done. Would Canadian workers do that if housing were included?

My point is that we treat our workers with respect and hope in return that they will do the same.

Not every one is a hard worker. Some try to get the group to slow down a bit.

Bottom line is that we need these workers and they need us too.

Most Canadians won’t work in the farm fields and because of that we need to house these workers and make sure their needs

are taken care of for eight months.

If a worker isn’t happy at a farm he doesn’t have to return to the same farm and vice versa.

If we add a new worker to the group and he’s not keeping up with the other workers, then it’s not fair to the others when they’re making the same wage.

Some farmers may not be a mother hen to their workers but I think that most are good apples.

*Michelle Lament
NOTL*

Land owner should allow scan for Black graves

Dear editor:

I noted with interest Brian Marshall’s lengthy opinion column (“There is no historical evidence that Breakenridge owned slaves,”) in the Dec. 8 issue of The Lake Report listing the reasons he

disbelieved the decades-old, widely held belief that there are Black Canadians buried on the property of 240 Centre St.

My question to Mr. Marshall, and his Texas employer is, why have they repeatedly refused

my request to allow a ground penetrating radar scan of the property given the scan is non-invasive, requires three hours at the most and I have volunteered to pay the \$3,000 cost of it.

Best practices dictates

that a land purchaser make every effort to confirm that people are not buried on their Niagara-on-the-Lake property. My enslaved, Black ancestors deserve nothing less.


*James Russell
Toronto*



THANK YOU

The Ladies Auxiliary of the RCL, Branch 124 would like to thank the following businesses for their valued support of donations to our “Penny” raffle. It was a great success because of them.

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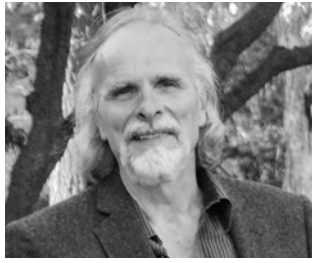

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We’re closed over the holidays from Dec. 18 to Jan. 1.

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Big developments in NOTL's future if YOU don't stand up



Brian Marshall
Columnist

The impact of the passage of the Ford government's Bill 23 has started already.

Last week one of this column's readers sent me an email link to a new real estate listing for a 38.665-acre property zoned agricultural in Niagara-on-the-Lake. This listing (MLS #X5845386) read:

"With The Passing Of Bill 23, This Ag Zoned Property Offers Great Potential For A Small (40-80 Units) Tiny Home Community With Current Owner Cutting In The 1st Of Several Possible Roads And Gravel Pads. Property Offers An Existing 3 Br Home With An Existing Out Building And Rental Income. Possibility To Sever The Current Residence From The Existing Lot And Develop On The Back Parcel. Hydro And Natural Gas Services Existing At The Back Parcel Property Line, Turnkey Developments Canada Has Assessed This Parcel In A Consulting Capacity With A Positive Development Report Being Issued."

One could argue the description in this listing could be the handiwork of an overly zealous and inexperienced realtor, but not only is the realtor licensed as a "broker," he appears to

be connected to the "Turnkey Developments" cited in the description.

Further, his real estate licence is held by iPro Realty, one of the two largest real estate brokerages in Canada and the brokerage is accountable for the contents of any MLS listing.

Taken together, this suggests a common viewpoint (realtor and real estate brokerage) relative to Ford's Bill 23 legislation.

Now, whether or not it is financially feasible to realize the "great potential" outlined in this particular listing is a moot point. The fact is that the signal has been sent with the passage of Bill 23: the Greenbelt is open for development.

In a February 2018 meeting with developers, Doug Ford stated he would "open up a big chunk of it (the Greenbelt) up and we are going to start building."

The political backlash that arose from this comment resulted in a retraction in May 2018 wherein he stated, "Unequivocally, we won't touch the Greenbelt. Unlike other governments that don't listen to people, I've heard it loud and clear that people don't want me touching the Greenbelt. We won't touch the Greenbelt."

In April 2021, Mr. Ford reiterated his stance saying, "I'm not touching the Greenbelt. I've said that from the beginning, we haven't and we're going to continue down that track."

Surprise!
With his second majority safely in the bag and four years until the next election, one of the first pieces of major government legislation introduced not only touched the Greenbelt, it ripped



Doug Ford's Bill 23 means this could be your new neighbour, says Lake Report columnist Brian Marshall. He says it's up to the people to push back. BRANDON DA SILVA

7,400 acres out of it.

Apparently, it is more important to Mr. Ford that the 2018 promise to developers was kept rather than his promises to the voters who elected him.

This really shouldn't be any startling revelation, folks. His government's track record during their first term relative to granting developers favours includes issuing more minister's zoning orders (MZOs) to expedite development (and not just for housing) in a shorter period of time than any other government in Ontario's history.

But why?

A Torstar/National Observer investigation (pub-

lished April 6, 2021) into the proposed Highway 413, reported that the developers who owned land on or in proximity to the planned route were "also prolific PC donors, contributing at least \$813,000 to support the party since 2014."

The article also said: "The group of developers owns 39 properties covering 3,300 acres that are conservatively valued at nearly half a billion dollars, according to land registry documents. The value of those lands could rise dramatically if the highway is built and residential, commercial and industrial development is allowed to spread along the route."

"The developers include the Cortellucci, DeGasperi, Guglietti and De Meneghi families, John Di Poce, Benny Marotta, Argo Development and Fieldgate Homes."

It isn't about needing more land to build houses on – the government's own real estate sector weighted Ontario Housing Affordability Task Force in its report clearly stated that existing lands were more than sufficient to meet the projected requirement for housing.

It is pretty obvious why Bill 23 was written and passed.

And, that brings us back home to Niagara-on-the-

Lake, where the old NOTL hospital, Parliament Oak and Randwood properties (among others) are near-term targets for development.

In a post-Bill 23 province, with local municipal oversight (bylaws) replaced by skeletonized provincial regulations/development parameters, heritage sidelined and legislative denial of preserving community character, any one of these properties could be developed into high density multi-storey complexes without any local direction/input, heritage considerations or code limitations.

Be damned the neighbours and existing streetscapes!

And, for those who think the regulatory changes will take longer to develop and enact than the four-year mandate given the Ford government, I respectfully suggest you might think again.

They have had four years to create their "hands-off" regulatory program which, I suspect, is fully constructed and good-to-go.

That said, Ford has been stopped before by the collective will of the people. And God knows, this is the time where communities across Ontario (particularly us NOTL folks) need to come together to preserve Ontario and our town.

I ask you to stand up, individually and collectively, to make the calls, take the actions and use our collective influence to very clearly tell Doug Ford "NO!"

Brian Marshall is a NOTL realtor, author and expert consultant on architectural design, restoration and heritage.



On Queen Street this past Sunday night, a skunk scavenges for something to eat in the garbage put out by one of the downtown businesses. SANDI JOHNSTON

Piles of trash let skunks dine out at 'Queen Street Buffet'

Dear editor:

Late at night, when we travel along Queen Street, we often see legions of skunks dining on the garbage put out by our downtown restaurant and/or hotel operators.

The problem is obvious; the garbage is not secured in proper, animal-proof containers.

As the skunks enthusiastically tear into the garbage

bags and cardboard boxes that likely contain food scraps or grease, we can't help wonder how long before rats hear of the

Queen Street Buffet and board a bus from nearby cities where they are acknowledged as a growing problem.

When coyotes were appearing in town and facing off with people and pets,

residents were advised not to put out garbage until the morning hours to prevent overnight scavenging.

Yet business owners in Niagara-on-the-Lake are allowed to put out their garbage in totally unsuitable containers.

In fact, we are surprised that the refuse collectors (who have to pick up this mess) haven't complained to

the town about the problem. Or, did they do so but the town chose to give businesses a pass?

It's time to mandate proper garbage containers for businesses before we create an even larger problem that we won't like. Apologies to Pepe Le Pew and his entourage.

*J. Richard Wright
NOTL*



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Ford lied about Greenbelt. Now, Bill 23 will be bad for Niagara

David Israelson
Special to The Lake Report

If you think it's bad how Doug Ford's government is wrecking Ontario's Greenbelt, wait till we see what they have in store for Niagara-on-the-Lake.

It's not going to be pretty for Canada's most beautiful town. Do you enjoy Niagara-on-the-Lake's picturesque vistas, its streets lined with authentic heritage housing and buildings, its tree-lined streets and its languid lines and concession roads bordered by vineyards and orchards?

Enjoy it fast, because the Ford government has removed virtually all the legal protection for this.

Law will wreck the Greenbelt

On Nov. 28, Ford brought into law his big lie, when the province passed his notorious Bill 23.

The big lie was this: before the election he said that he "won't touch the Greenbelt." Bill 23 enshrines the lie into law — thanks to the new legislation, Ford *will* touch the Greenbelt.

The government will let developers slice it up for



Doug Ford. FILE

suburbs and strip malls, with no say by local communities.

True, the new law is officially supposed to help ease the shortage of affordable housing in Ontario. And it's also true that, while the Ford government plans to let developers build on the Greenbelt and perhaps even on flood plains, the government also proposes to add some greenspace.

The devil is in the details. While affordable housing is a worthwhile goal that everyone can support, nothing in Bill 23 guarantees a single home that a typical

Ontario family could afford will be built in Ontario.

And as for adding land to the Greenbelt, once a government starts allowing parts of its protected space to be paved, it means the Greenbelt isn't protected. It's hard to look at this new law as anything else but a land grab — a massive transfer of wealth to a few select developers.

Woes for region, conservation and town

What does this have to do with Niagara-on-the-Lake? The details are still becoming clear, but it doesn't look good.

Though pressed for time, the town's staff, as well as Niagara Region officials and the Niagara Peninsula Conservation Authority all submitted comments to the province in the run-up to the bill's passage.

In its submission, dated Nov. 17, the region's planning and development services department asked the province to put the brakes on the legal changes. The region stands to lose up to \$60 million in development charges.

These are fees local governments collect from

developers to help make sure new housing has proper services and is affordable; they help ensure the new projects don't become a burden on the taxpayers.

That won't happen under the new law and regional officials are already worried. Instead of developers paying their fair share, "It goes without saying that ... fewer affordable housing projects will be completed in Niagara as it is unlikely that future councils will decide to make up this significant shortfall through increased property taxes," the region's submission said.

The conservation authority is also worried. It warned Ford that Bill 23, which weakens the authorities' ability to protect the environment, "will have minimal effect in increasing the housing supply and could lead to unintended future consequences associated with the loss of critical natural heritage features such as wetlands."

Weak conservation authorities "could also lead to more development being located in natural hazards, higher costs in property damage, increased burden

on municipal partners, and absolute erosion of the ecosystem approach" to protecting the environment, the Niagara conservation officials said.

End to heritage protection?

As for Niagara-on-the-Lake itself, the town's administrators have warned the province that the new rules "make it challenging to conserve important heritage buildings." As if it weren't already challenging enough.

"The town has approximately 200 listed properties on the Municipal Heritage Register," the administrators said. Under the new law, all of these properties must go through the sometimes complicated process of being designated as protected within the next two years. If they don't, a developer can knock them down.

"The town's tourist economy relies on the attraction of Old Town, its historical character and the heritage buildings," they said. Putting a time limit on registering everything worth protecting in a town this size won't work, they added. Is this Ford's idea of the end

of history?

Time to speak out

What can people do now that Ford has passed this noxious bill without allowing reasonable public debate? The best thing seems to be to keep asking questions.

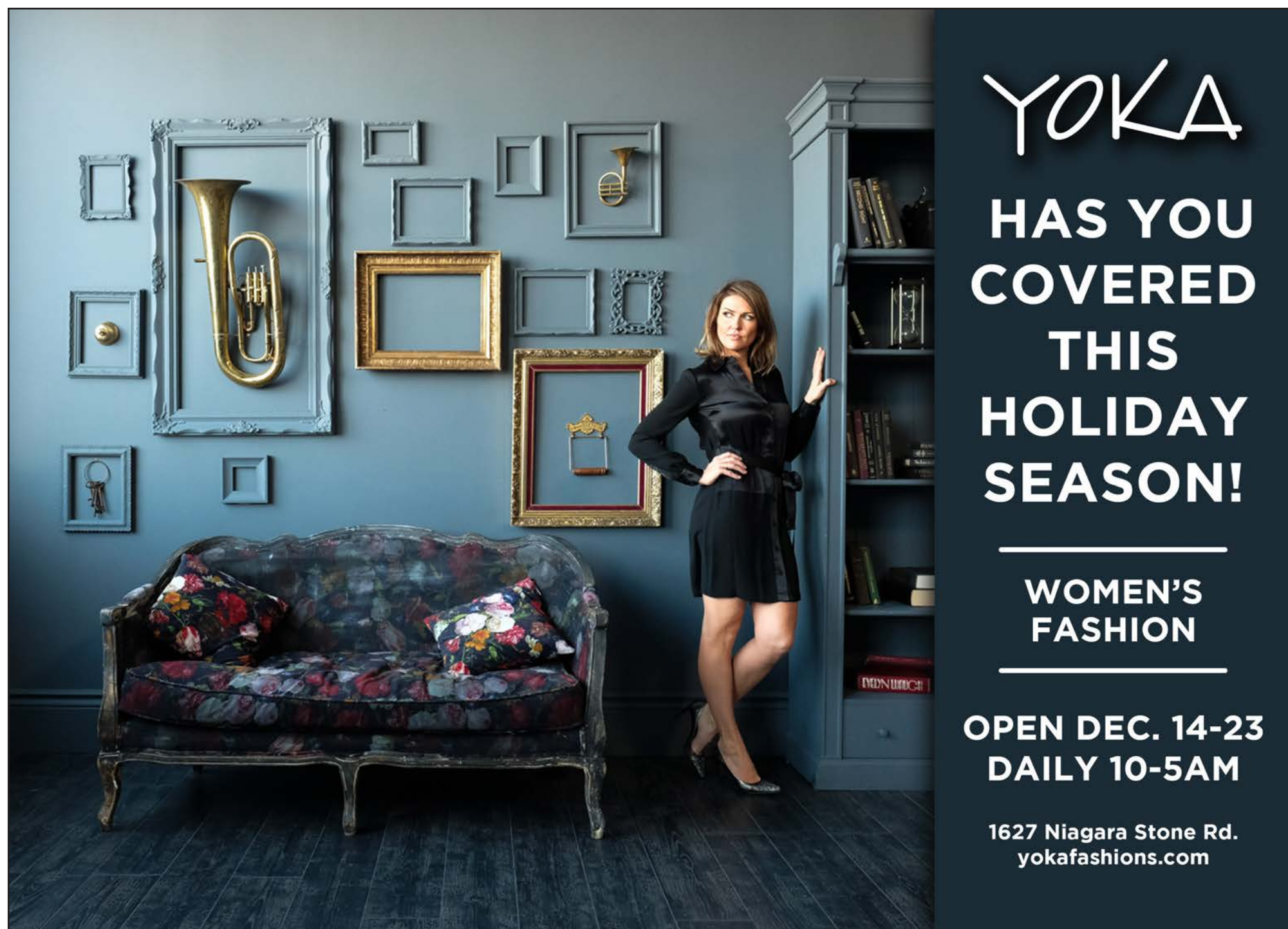
Why did he lie about the Greenbelt? Did any developers know in advance that the changes were coming, so they could buy up land cheap? Did anyone inside the government tip them off?

Eventually, if enough people ask enough questions, it will be impossible to avoid answering. Niagara-on-the-Lake joined the chorus across the province demanding that this awful new law be put on hold.

The experts have weighed in. Now it's time for Ford to pull back Bill 23. Do it for the people.

David Israelson is a writer and non-practising lawyer who lives in Niagara-on-the-Lake.

*** Watch for The Lake Report's in-depth series on Bill 23 in January examining what the new rules could mean for NOTL and Niagara.**



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The man in red returns to Old Town for parade

Julia Sacco
The Lake Report

After two years without the beloved Christmas Parade, Niagara-on-the-Lake warmly welcomed Santa back again Saturday with one of the largest crowds in memory.

The sunny streets of Old Town were packed with families and countless little ones, many experiencing their first-ever parade.

Mom Sharon Convery was bundled up with her son Liam in anticipation of seeing Santa.

"This is Liam's first time because of COVID. He has been very excited for his first parade," said Convery.

Andrea Smerek and Sarah Bobco brought out their little ones Teddy and Evelyn to experience their first parade, saying they were most looking forward to "the music and the crowd on this beautiful sunny day."

And the day certainly delivered.

Elaborate and unique floats passed through the streets of Old Town, wowing the crowd.

Highlights include the brand-new Santa Claus float, an appearance from the Grinch, an army of

Christmas Jeeps and a whole lot more.

Elle Lewandowski from St. Catharines told The Lake Report that her favourite part of the parade was "seeing Santa" and that she got "so much candy and bubblegum."

"My favourite part was being on the float and saying 'Merry Christmas' while I was waving," said Charlie Walton, who stood on the Thunderhawks Lacrosse float.

Aside from making unforgettable holiday memories for kids, this year's Christmas parade was successful in drawing out a crowd.

John Strecker was collecting donations for \$3 keep-sake buttons all day and said that this year brought out what he thinks may have been a record crowd.

The buttons help offset costs of the day, from the band to the floats, and other expenses.

"A lot of people were really generous. We had a few people hand us \$50," he said.

After a triumphant return, NOTLers already cannot wait until next year, with Strecker sharing the communal excitement.

"We are so happy to have the parade back."



PHOTO GALLERY
See more pictures at niagaranow.com



Clockwise from top: Santa parades through NOTL. Royal Oak School was a part of the procession. Kids hold out their hands for some candy as the parade goes by. The Burlington Teen Tour Band plays a tune. Elle Lewandowski shows off her candy haul from Saturday's parade. DAVE VAN DE LAAR/EVAN LOREE/JULIA SACCO



NOTLers together again at parade afterparty

Julia Sacco
The Lake Report

Every year following the Christmas Parade, the Niagara-on-the-Lake District 1 Firefighters Association hosts a family party and barbecue – and this year was no different.

After two years without a normal parade, NOTLers were happy to celebrate the

successful day and wind down with some delicious food and good company at the station beside the community centre.

District Chief Dayton Kruitbosch shared the team's excitement at being able to finally get people together.

"It's an event that we like to do after the parade to bring the community together, get everybody out

and have a good time. It's nice to be able to do this kind of stuff again."

Aside from a delicious barbecue lunch including burgers, sausages and hot dogs, attendees could purchase tickets for a turkey raffle, with many taking home a big bird for their holiday dinner.

The team from Angel's Rest Dog Rescue came

to the family party for the first time this year and Vanessa Mac already secured a turkey.

"I think everybody wins a turkey," joked Mike Navarro.

Kruitbosch said that since the party was run by the firefighters association all money raised will be dispersed among projects the group supports.



NOTL District 1 Fire Station was packed to the brim for Saturday's family party after that parade. JULIA SACCO



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This time of year, our thoughts turn gratefully to our community, our employees, our customers, partners, and suppliers who make our success possible. We thank you for all that you do, and wish you all the best this holiday season and beyond!

FROM EVERYONE AT DAWLAND WE WISH YOU A
Happy Holidays & Happy New Year!

WE LOOK FORWARD TO SEEING YOU ALL IN 2023!



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 **FEATURED**



Left: Amid hostilities in the First World War, enemies meet during the Christmas truce in 1914. ILLUSTRATED LONDON NEWS Right: Canadian artillerymen prepare to fire a large shell at the German trenches on Dec. 25, 1917. LIBRARY AND ARCHIVES CANADA

CHRISTMAS IN THE TRENCHES

When soldiers from both sides celebrated together

Ron Dale
Special to The Lake Report

The First World War (1914-1918) was defined by trench warfare.

Trenches narrowly separated French, Belgian, British, Canadian and other Commonwealth forces from their German enemies and stretched from the Swiss border to the North Sea.

The muddy, rat-infested trenches were continuously under fire, making front-line duty a terrifying experience.

But during the first Christmas in the trenches, some remarkable events occurred.

The opposing forces came to an unofficial agreement to “live and let live” and the guns went silent for a brief period in what became known as the Christmas truce.

British Lt. Bruce Bairnsfather, best known for his caricatures of life at the front, was in the trenches and later wrote an account of the event.

He noted that the German guns stopped firing and the front grew quiet on Christmas Eve.

The British soldiers heard singing from the German trenches across “no man’s land.” A German shouted from his own trench, inviting the British to come over and join them.

Soon soldiers from both sides emerged from their trenches, meeting in no man’s land. They shook hands, exchanged souvenirs, shared rations and even had a game of soccer.

In “Bullets & Billets, published in 1916, Bairnsfather wrote: “The whole spirit of Christmas seemed to be there, so much so that I remember thinking, “This

indescribable something in the air, this peace and goodwill feeling, surely will have some effect on the situation here to-day!”

The 16th Canadian Scottish Battalion had a similar experience in 1915.

The battalion had taken over a section of front-line trenches on Christmas Eve. Again, on Christmas Day, the Germans took the initiative, waving bottles of wine and shouting greetings across the narrow strip of no man’s land separating their trenches from the Canadians.

Some Canadians, against orders, climbed their parapets and walked over to meet with the enemy. In some places officers were successful in ordering their men to return to their trenches.

Elsewhere, Germans and Canadians met to exchange

Christmas greetings and trade souvenirs, and share cigarettes, cigars and wine.

Major Urquhart of the Canadian Scottish Battalion observed that he had “a strange feeling looking at these fellows in perfect friendship and shooting at them the next day. What an insane thing.”

These events did not go unnoticed by senior commanders, who feared that fraternization with the enemy might make their own soldiers reluctant to kill the Germans.

In 1916, British and Canadian gunners were ordered to bombard German lines to discourage any fraternization.

Nonetheless, Padre Kidd of the Canadian 21st Battalion at the front noted that they could hear Christmas carols coming from enemy trenches.

The Germans were playing carols on a gramophone set up to broadcast the music across no man’s land for the Canadians to enjoy.

Despite the goodwill in some sectors of the front line, the artillery of both sides in other areas continued to fire on Christmas Day during the rest of the war.

Casualty figures show that it was not as severe as normal. Two Canadians were killed on Christmas Day in 1915, 19 died in 1916 and three in 1918, all by artillery.

Whether shivering in the front-line trenches or enjoying a Christmas dinner in a rest area, the men celebrated Christmas.

During Christmas of 1917, members of the 21st Battalion were out of the trenches in a rest area. Padre Kidd reported that Christmas din-

ner was served to the men and “a Christmas tree was erected and entertainment provided at which the curé and children of the village were guests.”

Canadians believed that this would be the “war to end wars.” Sadly, it was not.

During the Second World War (1939-45), on Christmas Day 84 Canadian men were killed in action.

During the holidays it is worthwhile to pause and think of those who risked everything to ensure our freedom.

Thanks to them we can all celebrate the season, each culture in its own way. It is fervently hoped that all the sacrifices made will be the last and that mankind can finally achieve “peace on earth.”

And that no new names will need to be chiselled onto our cenotaphs.

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Ruffino's

PASTA BAR & GRILL

DECEMBER
2022



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NEW CHEF NEW MENU

Our family keeps growing! Ruffino's and BARBEA are proud to introduce our new executive chef, Peter Pietruniak. Peter joins us after years of working in some of the best kitchens around the world. A family man at heart, Peter, his wife Stephanie (Winery Retail Operations Manager at Palatine Hills in NOTL), and daughter Edith have been proud members of our community for over 4 years. Peter brings with him a great sense of family to our team, hence the new menu and kids menu!

Food is a part of every big moment in people's lives

Our new menus are more family inspired with larger secondos (mains), multiple contoris (sides) for sharing, and new family priced pizza and pastas. Peter cooks from the heart with a keen eye for detail. He says "I like to make people happy and cooking is the way I know how to do that. Food is a part of every big moment in people's lives." We are excited for the new things to come and look forward to welcoming you and your family at Ruffino's. Our new menu launches this Friday! Peter also plans to bring back our signature tasting menus in the new year for our chef's bar diners. Come test out his new tasting menu New Year's Eve if you wish to get a sneak peak! You can also come try some of his new creations at BARBEA!



Wishing You & Your Family a Happy Holiday



Two years ago we announced the start of something new! A Pop-Up Italian restaurant in town. Our hope was to bring family and friends together in a warm and inviting atmosphere. What started out as a little pop-up at Backhouse turned into the little restaurant that you wished was just around the corner which has now become a full-blown bricks and mortar restaurant. We are continually reminded how important community is, by the countless visits from friends, family, and locals alike. We want to thank you and your family for your continued support and wish everyone a Merry Christmas and Happy New Year! Our fires are burning bright and our dining room is as warm and welcoming as the fires we cook on! We look forward to welcoming you and your family over the holidays! Come check out our new menu, starting this Friday! Or, if you're looking for a swanky cocktail party and to do some dancing on New Year's Eve - Ruffino's and BARBEA is your spot!

Cheers,
Ryan, Brett, and the Ruffino's Family
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Ruffino's

PASTA BAR & GRILL



SUNDAY DECEMBER 18 11-4PM
\$20/PER CHILD | PARENTS CAN DINE TOO

DECEMBER 2022

Ruffino's

EDITION 12

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ANTIPASTI

MARINATED OLIVES | rosemary | lemon | chili 12
SMELT BOQUERONES | pickled beet | marigold vinegar | fennel 11
CALAMARI FRITTI | horseradish aioli | grilled lemon 18
ATLANTIC SCALLOP | polenta | sundried tomato pesto 16
ARRANCINI | rice | mozerella | nduja | pomodoro 14

BIRRA \$10

Peroni
Moretti
Ontario Craft

FOCACCIA \$6

House Baked
Rosemary &
Sea Salt
Sourdough
Bread
Olive Oil
Balsamic

COCKTAILS \$14

NEGRONI SOUR
campari | vermouth | dillon's gin
lemon | orange syrup | egg

Ruffino 75
prosecco | dillon's elderflower
sweetness | dillon's gin | lemon

UPTOWN NOTL
aperol | LTD vodka | triple sec
lime | sweetness

ESPRESSO MARTINI
walnut amaro | espresso
kahlua | 99 cream | LTD vodka

VIN BRULE FREDDO
red wine | dillon's brandy
cherry | winter spice



SPARKLING WINE

Moscato di Niagara Meldville - Niagara \$13 | \$65
Prosecco Sorelle Bronca - Italy \$13 | \$63
Prosecco Rosato Sorelle Bronca - Italy \$75
Lambrusco Rosato Lini Labrusca - Italy \$78
Lambrusco Venturini Baldini - Italy \$78
Champagne Monmarthe - France \$33 | \$147



APEROL
SPRITZ
\$15

INSALATAS

CAESAR SALAD \$15 BRESAOLA CARPACCIO \$16
winter greens | black olive black garlic | grano padano
parmigiano | fried sourdough charred onion oil

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12" | \$24



Gluten Free + \$7

THE OG | basil | sauce pomodoro | fior de latte
PEPPERONI | mozzarella | sauce pomodoro
VEGONIO | swiss chard pesto | mushrooms | olives | peppers
CATALONIA | almond romesco | sobrasada | pickled guidillos | quince
BURRATA | confit garlic | shallot | mortadella | pistachio | rosemary
THE CONFINO | duck confit | garlic | peccorino | apricot compote
LANCLOTTI | pork ragu a la bolognese | mozzarella

THE GREAT
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Salumi | Fromagi
Pate | Focaccia
Olives | Preserves

DOLCI

Gelato \$9
Almond Torta \$12
Chocolate Torta \$12
Tiramisu \$12
Fromagi \$16

Chef's Corner

Spanish Christmas Cookies - Polvorones

Ingredients:

1 1/2 cups all-purpose flour
3/4 cup raw almonds
1/2 cup plus 2 tablespoons unsalted butter
1/2 cup sugar
2 tablespoons brown sugar
1/2 teaspoon vanilla extract (or try Spanish Brandy)
1/2 teaspoon cinnamon
1/2 teaspoon kosher salt
Icing sugar for dusting optional

1. Preheat oven to 350F; place flour onto parchment lined baking sheet
2. Toast flour in oven in for 5 minutes; mixing flour every minute to ensure it toasts evenly
3. Place almonds on cookie sheet & toast 4 minutes, toss & toast 4 more minutes - allow to cool
4. Pulse almonds in food processor into a fine meal (like flour)
5. Reduce oven to 250F
6. Add butter, both sugars, salt, cinnamon & vanilla into a bowl
7. Cream together ingredients in the bowl
8. Gently mix in flour and toasted almond meal until combined
9. Gather dough (it will be crumbly) and press together to form a ball
10. Place dough on parchment paper lined cutting board or table
11. Press down dough and with a floured rolling pin, gently roll to approximately 1/2 inch thick
12. Using a cookie cutter to cut cookies (I like to use a 2" circle cutter)
13. Carefully remove with a cake spatula or thin knife and place onto parchment lined sheet
14. Bake for 25-30 minutes, until cookies toast lightly on the edges
15. Allow cookies to cool completely before removing and dusting with icing sugar



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HOLIDAY GIFT GUIDE 2022



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We will also be offering bar flights between 5-6 p.m., Sunday-Thursday, in our dining room. A red, white or a whiskey flight. If you stay with us for dinner your flight fee will be waived. Guests must be seated and ordered by 6 p.m.

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HOLIDAY GIFT GUIDE 2022



NEW YEAR'S EVE AT KITCHEN76 BOOK YOUR RESERVATION

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The
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Merry Christmas & Happy New Year!

From Paul, Matt and the Sandtrap Family.

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FUNGHI

fussili | veal sugo
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pecorino romano



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clams | green garlic
fermented chilies
preserved lemon

SPAGHETTI & MEAT BALLS

tomato | basil | parmigiano

CACIO e PEPE

spaghetti | pepper
pecorino romano

PORK RAGU A LA BOLOGNESE

canestri rigati | parmigiano

SECONDOS
INCLUDES CHOICE OF 2 CONTORI

VEAL CHOP MARSALA | mushroom marsala sauce 42

1/2 WOOD OVEN CHICKEN | lemon | prosciutto | chicken skin gravy 32

GRILLED OCTOPUS | farrato nero 36

WOOD-FIRED MARKET FISH | grilled lemon MP

CONTORI | SIDES \$10

ZUCCA AL FORNO

winter squash | buratta

ROASTED POTATOES

fingerling potatoes
rosemary | parmigiano

MEATBALLS +\$4

pomodoro | fiore di latte
marinated pepper

SOFT POLENTA

Grass Fed Butter
Parmigiano

SIDE CAESAR SALAD

winter greens | black olive
parmigiano | fried sourdough

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speakeasy has a welcoming atmosphere that encourages socializing with friends & fellow wine lovers. The plates are reminiscent of the old Backhouse tasting menus but now you can choose from a multitude of dishes to create your own tasting menu. See you for your next date night!

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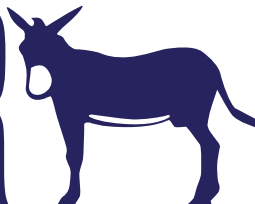
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DAILY
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CHINESE FOOD POP-UP

Ruffino's was initially a little pop-up restaurant inside Backhouse 2 days a week. Our goal was to bring traditional family friendly Italian cooking to Niagara-On-The-Lake. One that you wished was just around the corner! Notler's loved it! It was recieved with great fanfare as we filled a little culinary gap in town. Ruffino's was born out of the ashes of COVID! Now we bring you Wong Tong Food! WTF Chinese is a new and improved version of our greatly successful SHITONG chinese pop-up! SHITONG was so successful that the SHI (Donald Shi) and his wife have moved on and opened their own little noodle shop in St. Catharines called Endless Noodles (@noodlesendless) - Go check it out! Missing part of the duo, we asked our great friend Joanne Wang (@toronto2niagara) to consult with Daniel Tong and help bring a new wave of Chinese cooking to Niagara. Joanne's love of food goes back to her childhood, where her Taiwanese mother made all the Chinese dishes that were unavailable at that time in the suburbs of Chicago. Joanne's mom was such a good cook that people often told her she should open a restaurant. The family regularly made treks to Chicago's Chinatown for ingredients and meals out, but mom's cooking was usually just as good (or better!). It was an early lesson in how ingredients and technique impacted the quality of a dish. Once Joanne moved to Toronto in the mid 90s, she discovered the online food community of Chowhound, where finding deliciousness was the goal, regardless of what or where it was to be found. That started her decades-long love affair with all things delicious. To prepare for WTF Joanne drove us around Toronto as she showed us her favourite authentic Chinese haunts and contrasted them with the new wave of HOT downtown Chinese restaurants. We learned about the intricacies of each dish, chatting with the chefs and cooks in hopes to bring authentic regional Chinese cooking to Niagara this winter! WTF will be popping up in BARBEA 4-10pm every Thursday January 19 until May. We have also enlisted the help of DJ Marinko to bring some Chinese beats to get the party rocking! As we did in Ruffino's, we intend to have a new, unique beverage menu full of sakes and beers for you to enjoy. Joanne was happy to consult with the chef's of Ruffino's and BARBEA on their Chinese food pop-up, as she has generally been disappointed with the Chinese restaurants in Niagara. She'd love to help locals break out of the "egg rolls and chicken balls" mould and try the home-style Chinese cooking that she loves so much.

WTF chinese

- Magic Chinese Chilies \$6
- Chinese Charcuterie Plate \$14
chinese sausage, chili beef, char sui
- not your average Chicken Balls \$14
- Mama Tong Eggroll \$4
- Chinese Beef Burrito \$8
- Sourdough BBQ Pork Bun \$6
- Pot Stickers \$10
- Smack Cucumber \$12
- Mama Wang Bacon Fried Rice \$16
- Pork Cooked 2 Times \$18
- Burning Pork Noodle \$16
- Triad Chicken \$18
general tso, sweet 'n sour, hidden
- Hong Kong Snow Crab \$32
- Dry Pot Cabbage \$12
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- Steamed Rice \$4
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Wang Tong Food

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thursday nights | dine in | takeout | delivery
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AT THE BAR

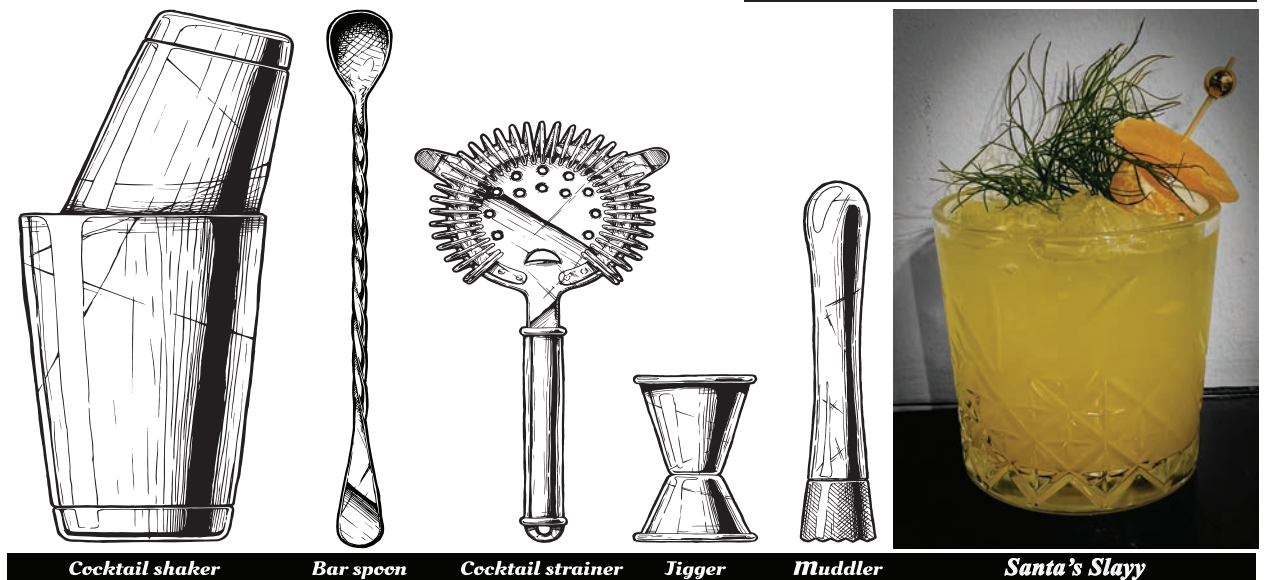
SANTA'S SLAYV

- 2oz Dillons Dry Gin 7
- 1oz Fennel & Ginger Syrup*
- 0.5oz Lemon Juice
- 1 Clementine Peeled
- Ravine Vineyards Brut

Add 2oz gin to shaker with 1 peeled clementine.
Add 1oz fennel & ginger syrup and 0.5oz lemon juice.
Muddle clementine until fully juiced.
Shake with ice. Strain into a rocks glass with ice.
Top with sparkling wine. Garnish with fresh fennel & clementine

*Fennel & Ginger Syrup

Bring 1cup water to a boil add 1/2cup chopped fennel bulb, 4 inches ginger and 1 cup white sugar. Let mixture sit over night to steep. Strain.



Cocktail shaker Bar spoon Cocktail strainer Jigger Muddler Santa's Slayv



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As a holiday Bonus for new subscribers, we are offering 10% off 1 year pre-paid subscription per club or 15% if you join all three!!



Tara Rosling looks out to the crowd at the Irish Harp before her performance of "The Mistletoe Bride." SOMER SLOBODIAN

Rosling's voice warms room in 'Mistletoe Bride'

Evan Loree
Local Journalism Initiative
The Lake Report

Tara Rosling performed a dramatic reading of Jeanette Winterson's "The Mistletoe Bride" Sunday night before a packed audience at the Irish Harp.

It's the story of a young bride-to-be who becomes locked in a chest while spying her betrothed making love to another woman one night during a traditional game of hide and seek.

Every table was full for Rosling's performance, though she had to compete with the swing and sway of the Harp's double bay doors as staff shuffled in and out of the kitchen to deliver food.

"I'm not used to telling the story next to a kitchen," she joked at the start of the show.

Rosling brings all the charisma of a crackling campfire in the night.

The veteran of the Shaw Festival and "Star Trek: Discovery" uses her voice to draw you in as if to warm the shivers out of your spine.

She soothes and unsettles the audience in equal measure as the fear of her character waxes and wanes with the story's twists and turns.

The audience can feel the character's fear of suffocating as Rosling chokes on her words in the climax of the story.

A small group of Irish Harp serving staff gathered outside the kitchen to learn the fate of the bride in the box.

And the double bay doors sat still on their hinges as Rosling announced the serendipitous survival of her character, trapped in her husband's chest.

Asked after her performance how she gets inside the heads of her characters, Rosling couldn't say.

"If I had to explain what my process is, I couldn't," she said, adding that every actor has a different approach and it can vary depending on the audience.

"One of the things that's so exciting about theatre is every audience is different,"

she said.

Rosling's performance of "The Mistletoe Bride" was adapted by Peter Hinton from Winterson's original story.

All proceeds from Rosling's performances go to Gillian's Place, a shelter for abused women.

Her performance at the Irish Harp raised about \$1,000.

She will be performing at Silversmith Brewery in Virgil on Dec. 20 at 7:30 p.m., and virtually over Zoom on Dec. 22 at 7:30, for people who were unable to get tickets to live shows.

People interested in attending virtually should email Rosling at tara-rosling@hotmail.com.



This week's riddle is "Jeopardy!" style.
Category: GETTING SPORT "E"

In the NFL, a defender who makes contact with an opponent before the ball is snapped is guilty of this infraction.

Last issue:

Category: 3-letter verbs

Clue: To deplete something's energy or weaken it gradually.

Answer: What is sap?

Answered first by: Jane Morris

Also answered correctly (in order) by:
Pam Dowling, Susan Dewar, Carol Durling,
Sylvia Wiens, Kay Waller, Jim Dandy,
Rob Hutchison, Margie Enns, Yvonne DeSouza

*REMEMBER TO PUT "WHAT IS" FOR JEOPARDY QUESTIONS!

Email answers to editor@niagaranow.com, with your name, for a chance to win a \$20 Irish Harp Pub gift card every week. (Subject line: Riddle me this)

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Kirkus Reviews calls NOTL author's first novel an...
"...Engrossing whodunit ..." and says "... This intense, gripping racetrack drama is a winner..."
T. Lawrence Davis's *The Pale Horse* is available now through major online book sellers.
Visit www.tlawrencedavis.ca for more information on the novel and to order your copy.

Tractor parade through Virgil on Thursday

Continued from Front Page

will be a fire truck, followed by town crier Thomas Pekar, with his decked out Kubota tractor.

The parade begins at 6 p.m. behind the arena in Virgil.

It will then turn right onto Four Mile Creek Road, then right onto Pleasant Lane, past Pleasant Manor, and continue onto Eden Street. It will head down Line 1 Road, go right on Concession Road 4, right on Line 2 Road, and finally right onto Four Mile Creek Road, ending at the arena.

Soo-Wiens is excited to bring the tractor parade back to Niagara-on-the-Lake. The idea came to fruition last year when the Christmas parade was cancelled due to COVID.

"I thought, 'Oh, that's so sad. What are we going to do?'" said Soo-Wiens.

Then on the news she saw that Selkirk, Ont., had a small tractor parade.



This tractor will be pulling Mr. and Mrs. Claus through Virgil. SOMER SLOBODIAN

"I said, 'Oh, my goodness, that's what we're gonna do!'" she said.

Within two weeks, Niagara-on-the-Lake had a tractor parade.

Some people Soo-Wiens has talked to said they'll be having people over to watch the parade from their driveway this year.

"It's lovely to hear of all

those new traditions that you can have from watching a parade," she said.

Last year's crowd favourite was the Hummel Properties tractor, which was decked out as Rudolph the Red-Nosed Reindeer.

"You can see the creativity coming out. You can see the fun Christmas spirit of everyone," she said.

Since the tractors all will be gathering behind the arena, Soo-Wiens asks people to park in the front of the facility.

"I think even all the farmers and everyone involved are excited about just really decorating it up as best as they can," she said.

NOTL Penguin Dip is back on Boxing Day

Staff
The Lake Report

This Boxing Day brave souls can join Chris Bjorgan for the Penguin Dip at Balls Beach in Niagara-on-the-Lake.

The annual plunge into icy Lake Ontario happens will be the 47th time people have

taken the cool plunge, said Bjorgan.

For those who have not heard about the dip but want to become a penguin, Bjorgan said, "what happens is a whole bunch of really crazy people show up and we jump in the water three times."

The past three years, the dip has been under the radar

due to COVID, with only four penguins participating, he said.

This year he doesn't know how many people will show up but said in past years, "we have had up to 60."

His fondest memories come from surviving the three dips into the freezing water.

Bjorgan recommends bringing extra towels and parking as close by as possible.

"Now, I'll tell you something, after a day of lying around, filling your gut on Christmas Day and being lazy, going out for a quick dip in the water the next day really gets you back on course," he said.

Santa visits community centre for palliative care

Continued from Front Page

over \$10,000 for palliative care, calling him "truly our gift."

For one family in particular, NOTL Palliative Care providing the experience to meet Santa was

especially important.

Jeff Cowan and his family lost their vehicle after an accident, leaving them with no way to make a trip to see Santa.

Luckily, when they found out about Santa at the community centre, they

were able to walk over from their home nearby.

"Without this being here, we wouldn't have seen Santa with the kids at all," said Cowan.

There is nothing like the holidays to give the community a boost. Santa's

visit prompted big smiles all around.

"It's a time when all of the volunteers can get together and enjoy the smiles of the children and the healthy," said Bagnulo.

"What better time than time with Santa."

Christmas carols at NOTL's tiniest chapel Saturday

Staff
The Lake Report

It's time to tune up your singing voice.

On Saturday, the tiny Living Water Wayside Chapel will hold its first Carol Sing for anyone who wants to get in the Christmas spirit and

belt out some holiday tunes.

The singing starts at 3:30 p.m. and is expected to last about 30 to 45 minutes.

Dianne Ticknor from St. Andrew's Presbyterian Church will be leading the carollers.

"It is a time for people to take a few minutes out of

their busy schedules and to partake in some songs of the season," Rick Meloen, one of the organizers, wrote in an email to The Lake Report.

Since the chapel only sits six people, the singing will take place outside. So dress for the weather.

Melon isn't sure how many will attend, but hopes there's a good turnout.

"If this works out it may become an annual event," he said.

The chapel is at 15796 Niagara Pkwy. in Niagara-on-the-Lake, just past Line 1 Road.

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Predators **back in win column** after one-sided losses

Kevan Dowd
The Lake Report

The Jr. A Niagara Predators took back the reigns and steered themselves to a 5-1 victory over the Windsor Aces on Friday night.

The win takes the team out of a slump that saw two losses in the week preceding the game, including a 6-1 loss to the Bradford Bulls the Wednesday prior and a 10-1 loss to the North York Renegades four days before that.

Returning to home ice Friday at the Meridian Credit Union Arena, the Predators played a quick and clean game to skate away with the win.

"I think obviously the quick turn-around Saturday and being short bodies didn't really help from the get go," said assistant coach Connor Shipton about the loss to North York. "But it was a good game in Bradford, even though it was a 6-1 loss; take away the second period and it's a 2-0



With teammate Cole Ellis (#23) waiting on the doorstep, Niagara's Gianluca Minicozzi looks to make a play versus the Windsor Aces. Predators won 5-1. KEVAN DOWD

game. They carried it over here tonight, they got the win for [goaltender Warren Krogman], we'll move up in the standing, it's all trending in the right direction right now."

The Predators took the lead early with first period

goals from Nolan Wyers and Cameron Savoie at the 1:28 and 15:53 mark, respectively.

Reese Bisci upped Niagara's lead to three 1:08 into the second period with Windsor netting their only goal two minutes later.

But Niagara's Cole Ellis kept the heat on, notching a fourth for his team after exactly 35 minutes of play.

Leo Savin finished things off with Niagara's last tally and the final goal of the night with a little under four minutes left on the clock.

"You can't ask for a better game," said Shipton. "They did what we asked of them, they played well in front of [Krogman] to get him his first career win, that's all we can ask for. There were a few little things to clean up but all-in-all it was a great

game, it's what we want to see."

Friday was Shipton and the Predators other assistant coach Greg Wilson's third game filling in for head coach Kevin Taylor who had been serving a three-game suspension. Taylor was suspended when Riley Ellis jumped the bench to join a fight during a game against the Northumberland Stars Dec. 2.

With the Predators improving a little bit more over each game, Shipton was pleased to see everything come together Friday night.

"There were no real hiccups for most of the game," he said. "They played pretty disciplined, took no stupid penalties, had tons of chances. They just need to keep firing it, keep crowding the net and we'll eventually keep banging in more and more goals."

The Predators return to the ice at the Meridian Credit Union Arena against the Tottenham Thunder this Friday, Dec. 16 at 7:30 p.m.



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Come along on my new free walking tours of NOTL



Ross's Ramblings

Ross Robinson
Columnist

Free walking tours are popular around the world. Jerusalem, Boston, Sydney, Vancouver, Paris, Auschwitz, Nashville, Athens. And yes, Lunenburg.

Niagara-on-the-Lake stands ready. Aye, ready!

Last Saturday afternoon, a hardy group of locals got together for a promotional photo on the top steps of the old Court House on Queen Street.

Why on Dec. 10? Simply because that is a significant date in our town's history and the story should be told to more people. And it was cold, just like it was cold on Dec. 10, 1813. We had warmer clothes and warm boots.

This was the 209th anniversary, to the day, of the torching of Newark, by Americans led by Brig.-Gen. George McClure and his sleazebag traitor buddy Joseph Willcocks.

The conflagration left women and children on the cold and snowy streets, desperate to find shelter and warmth and food. Only four buildings were left standing.

There was no Red Cross or temporary shelter to provide care. No shuttle bus to shelters in St. Catharines. The newly homeless had to walk west to save themselves. Just imagine.

I am an amateur scribbler and I really enjoy meeting people. My children have done plenty of free walking tours and they tell me it is time I tell some of Niagara's stories to many people.

The research has been completed, a fascinating 1.5-hour free walking tour has been mapped out and the marketing is in place.

It's history, presented in an entertaining way. A historical and fairly hysterical



Columnist Ross Robinson is starting free walking tours of NOTL. ROSS ROBINSON

script has been written.

We all know there is no free lunch. So how can there be a free walking tour? Simple. It is a well-known fact that these tours are tip-based and many tourists start their visits to new places with this type of tour.

If the tour guide and tour are great, tip generously. If not, don't tip. (But at least say thank you.)

Back in 2015, I enjoyed the most meaningful vacation or business trip of my life.

My goal was to be singing "Oh Little: Town of Bethlehem" at midnight on

Christmas Eve. In Bethlehem. With new friends, in the midst of stern and observing Arab soldiers, many of them armed with loaded rifles.

That day had started with a free walking tour of the Old City of Jerusalem. The guide met us at 10 a.m. at the historic Jaffa Gate.

Was he a local? No. He was from Kansas City and was a student at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem. This was his side hustle to help pay the bills.

He did a great job, so we all tipped him generously as the tour ended. And we

met some new and interesting friends.

What a concept.

I returned home after this incredible trip with more understanding the Middle East, in tears about the Holocaust and man's inhumanity to man. I was a more complete person. Yad Vashem changed my life forever.

So here we are. This free walking tour of Niagara-on-the-Lake will provide visitors with knowledge, presented by a local who loves his hometown, including some lesser known stories.

Such as the tragic story

of the Foam, when seven young sailors from the Royal Canadian Yacht Club in Toronto drowned when their yacht sank at the mouth of the Niagara River. They were heading to a dance at the Queen's Royal Hotel.

Why were they all buried in NOTL and not back in their family plots in Toronto? There is a story there and it should be told. (Lake Report colleague Tim Taylor delved into it last year in a series of articles.)

And are there really ghosts in the Angel Inn and the St. Mark's Church rectory? Those stories are already being told.

The Polish Soldier's Cemetery on Byron Street, behind St. Vincent de Paul Church, tells such a brave and emotional story.

Lots more interesting NOTL and Newark stories will be shared, starting very soon.

Every day at 10 a.m., starting from the top step of the old Court House on Queen Street.

Visit notlfreewalkingtours.com for more details.

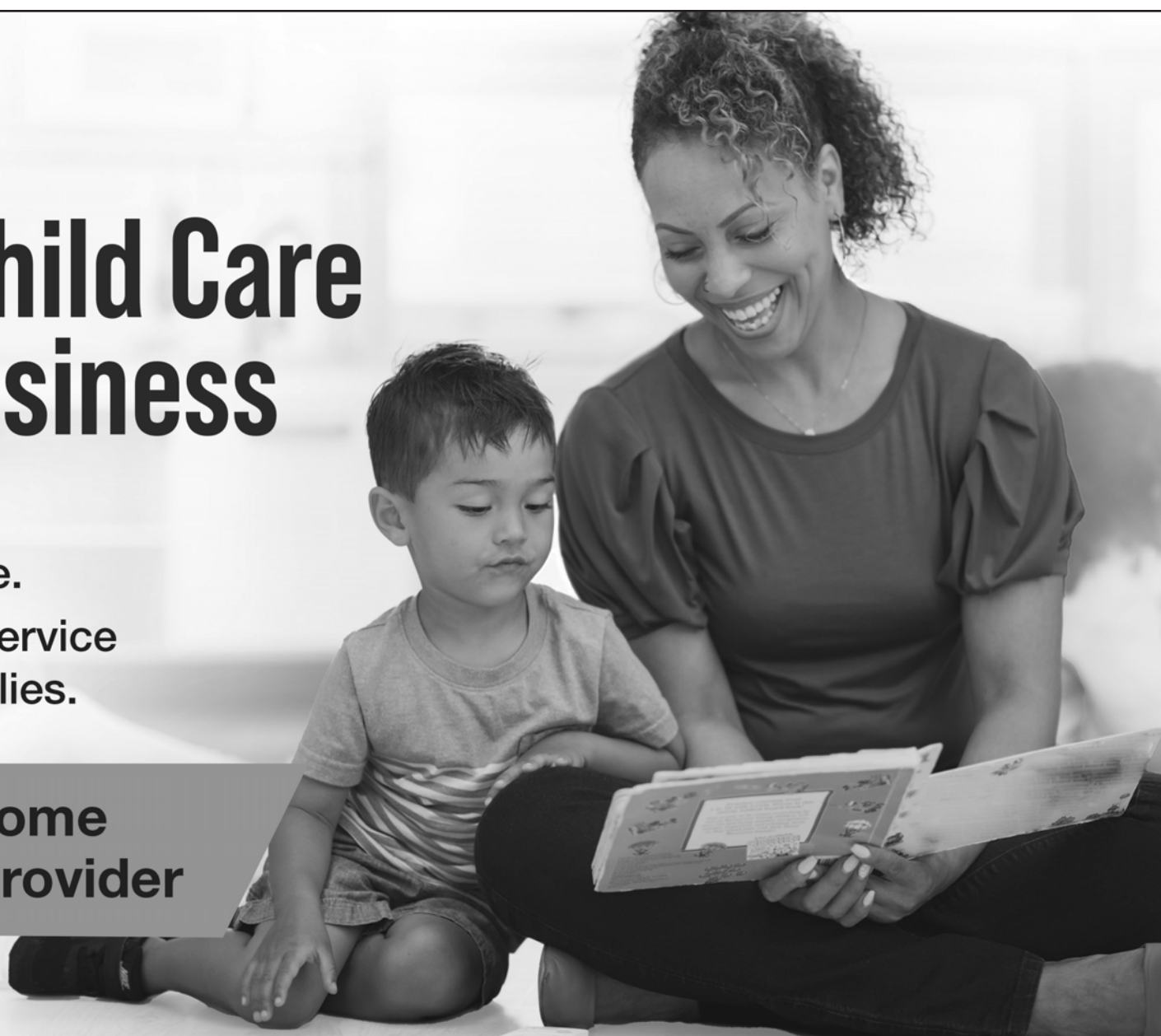
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Hometown Traveller: A wealth of kindness in a time of need

Jill Troyer
The Lake Report

That Friday morning, standing on the dock at our resort in Curacao, waiting for the dive boat to come and pick us up for our morning dives, I caught sight of a vibrant rainbow stretching down from a cloud to touch the ocean surface.

I saw it as an omen it would be a special morning, and it was. Just not the kind of special I had in mind.

Our first dive was relaxing, though at the end of the dive it was a bit of a challenge getting up the ladder and back into the boat, with the rolling waves churning up the sea.

We clambered back on board, and proceeded to switch tanks to be ready for the next dive, after a short interval. It would be our last dive for this vacation, finishing off a magical week of swimming with turtles and eels and big schools of small chromis.

The time came to exit the boat for our next dive. As I've done more than 100 times before, I stood, with my heavy tank and weights, flippers on, mask at the ready, and carefully shuffled toward the back of the boat. A perfect storm of circumstances then conspired to change the day.

In that split second when one hand had released the bar I held for support and the other hand still reached for the next, a surge rocked the boat. My left fin crossed over my right, and I pitched to the deck, off balance in my heavy gear.

Crunch, pop, twist. My right ankle was trapped, it was like falling with crossed skis, and I think I invented some special words in that moment of agony.

But this is not the story of my pain, it's the story of my wonder and gratitude for the grace and kindness to come.

Once I could breathe again and had muttered many very Canadian "sorry's" to my dive mates on board for the disruption to their morning outing, the captain turned the boat around and headed for shore.



Award-winning Lake Report journalist Jill Troyer enjoys a dive in Curacao. Bottom left: Returning to the resort from treatment at the hospital in Willemstad. Bottom right: Troyer and her husband Don Reynolds on the dive boat.
DON REYNOLDS



We arrived at the dock and I stood on my one good leg, with one arm around my husband's shoulder, the other around that of the young and handsome (I was injured, not blind!) dive master.

I intended to hop off the boat with their assistance. Instead, I felt myself being scooped into the air and swinging between them like a 10-year-old as their hands formed a seat beneath me.

They lifted me off the boat, carried me along the dock and up the driveway to a waiting SUV. I couldn't help giggling all the way. There was something both ludicrous and joyous in that moment.

The dive shop owner, Eline, was waiting to drive my husband and I straight to the hospital in Willemstad. She threaded her car unerringly through the chaotic traffic, intermittently checking on how I was doing and maintaining a stream of entertaining storytelling to keep me

distracted.

The hospital is brand new, it just opened in 2020. The doctor who saw me was ever so ginger as she gently cut my dive boot off to expose my bruised and swelling ankle, explaining that it was definitely broken.

She told me twice she thought I was very calm considering what had happened to me. And even more so, considering what was about to happen.

After x-rays, I was off to the "cast room," where a team worked together first to relocate my ankle joint, then splint it in place. The pain may have been excruciating, but it was short-lived and the team was as kind as could be.

They praised me, even though they had done the hard work. They even taught me some colourful words in their local lingo.

After a couple of days resting, we headed to the airport to fly home as scheduled. At the check-in counter I asked for a wheel-

chair and was directed to a comfortable spot to sit and wait. As I waited, I watched with dismay as the lineup for clearing immigration grew longer and longer, snaking around and back like switchbacks on a mountain trail.

My wheelchair arrived, and with it, a smiling chauffeur. We zipped past the ever-lengthening line and cleared immigration in a flash. Next was a quick shortcut to bypass the security line, then an elevator ride to the concourse and a final sprint to the finish line.

I was dropped at my gate with a flourish, left shaking my head at the dazzling speed and ease of it.

Once home, I reported straight to our local hospital for follow up. I'd been instructed to see an orthopedic surgeon, to assess the need for surgery.

Hospitals in Ontario have been under tremendous ongoing pressure since COVID and patients have been experiencing long waits and

delays.

The emergency department at St. Catharines was busy that day, as it typically is. I expected perhaps some short tempers from frustrated people, whether staff or patients.

Instead I saw people looking out for each other, alert for cues that someone might need help or even a word of encouragement.

After sitting in the waiting room for a couple of hours, with my foot propped up on a wheelchair in an attempt to limit swelling, I got up to head to the washroom. Ever ungainly on my crutches, a woman nearby noticed as I eyed the distance with a grimace.

"I'll take you in the wheelchair," she said, popping out of her seat. Another woman nearby joined us, competing for the job. "I'm a nurse," she said, "I'll take her."

Both were there with their own woes, but each was quick to read my slight distress and leap into action.

Later, in the hallway waiting area for "diagnostic imaging," patients bantered about their afflictions, swapped stories and shared information.

When one person ventured down the hall to a vending machine for a drink, the others promised to be on the lookout should her name be called in her brief absence.

A nurse came by and told me I needed to get my blood work done. As I began to struggle to my feet, she placed her hand on my arm and said, sit. I'll come to you. And returned with her basket of swabs and tubes and syringes to draw my blood where I sat.

When the orthopedic surgeon arrived to explain the surgery I needed, he was clearly swamped. He'd just come out of surgery, he took a call about prepping for a major emergency surgery that had just come in, and he had nine more patient consults to do.

Yet he was still empathetic and thorough, even apologizing for having to hurry away.

Back at home, friends, neighbours and family members were quick to rally. Perhaps not unexpectedly, but still I was so touched to feel their love and caring wrap me up like a warm blanket on a chilly day.

Was all of this the Christmas spirit at work, I wondered?

We are barraged with news of infection, inflation and environmental degradation.

We live with knowledge of injustices, tragedies and abuses.

They are real and important to be aware of.

Yet that landscape can obscure what is all around us, sometimes where we least expect it.

It is the spirit of kindness that pervades every day life.

I was privileged on those days to open my eyes and to see what was already there.

What is always there.

Now I think the rainbow I saw that Friday morning did, in fact, portend something special, and the real pot of gold is the wealth of kindness all around us.

FISH FRY

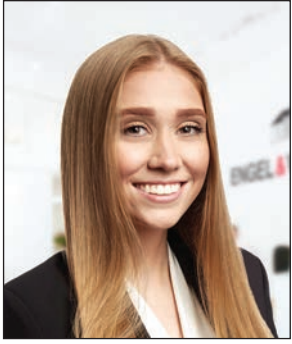
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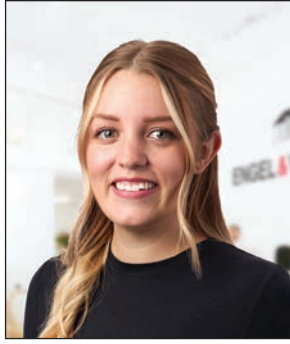
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Have some fun



Across

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

Down

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

Crossword Puzzle

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Last issue's answers

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Entangled in a fine mess of questions about quantum physics



DR. BROWN
Dr. William Brown
Special to The Lake Report

Entanglement at a distance might apply to two lovers or different countries aligned by common interests, but to physicists it applies to two or more identical particles, say two photons of light or two electrons, which separated, sometimes by vast distances, behave as one.

Sorting out whether entanglement at a distance was real or “spooky at a distance” as Albert Einstein famously dismissed it, was what this year’s Nobel Prize in physics was all about.

The prize, won by John Clauser, Alain Aspect and Anton Zeilinger, closes a chapter about the nature of quantum physics (mechanics) and whether the counterintuitive, strange rules that appear to govern

the quantum universe are a complete description of reality or as Einstein claimed, the whole field was fundamentally incomplete.

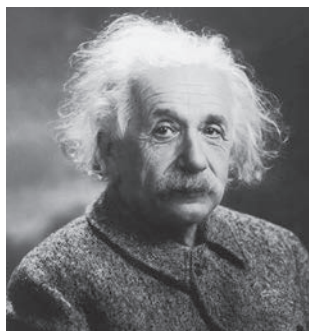
The quantum world, revealed in the first third of the 20th century, was a strange world for physicists trained in classical Newtonian physics or even general relativity.

For one, there was a strange but fundamental uncertainty to quantum mechanics. For example, in the case of electrons, the position of any individual electron at any given moment can only be determined probabilistically – the higher the probability, the more likely an electron was to be found in given spot.

This was associated with a corresponding reduction in the ability to determine the same electron’s momentum and vice versa.

Adding weirdness to weirdness, observing quantum events appears to change the event. Both expressions are defining characteristics of the quantum universe’s fundamental uncertainty as Heisenberg originally defined it in 1927.

For his part, Einstein, al-



though one of the founding fathers of quantum mechanics, together with his lifetime friend Niels Bohr, was constantly at odds with Bohr about the fundamental nature of quantum mechanics and of reality. Einstein simply couldn’t abide the uncertainty and apparent absence of causality, so characteristic of the new physics.

Most quantum physicists, while acknowledging Einstein’s misgivings, were more interested in the applications of quantum mechanics to harnessing the atom to provide enormous energy and later the development of digital computers and lasers.

For them, Einstein’s badgering questions were irrelevant.

Einstein was brilliant but he was stubborn about

quantum mechanics’ lack of causality and statistical fuzziness, although he came to recognize the equations describing quantum mechanics were correct and highly predictive.

Even so, through the 1920s and 1930s he continued to challenge Bohr and his Copenhagen school for quantum mechanics by devising a series of brilliant thought experiments, which often took weeks or even months for Bohr and his colleagues to figure out and prove wrong.

Finally, in 1935, together with Nathan Rosen and Boris Podolsky, Einstein published his last thought experiment challenge to quantum mechanics by claiming once more that it failed to accurately describe reality.

They posited a pair of particles, which once entangled with one another, would remain so, even if they were far apart. If the property of one of the two particles was measured and changed as a result, such as the direction of the particle’s spin, the other particle’s spin would also change in lockstep no mat-

ter the distance between the two. This would be true for photons too, but in this case, the property would be polarity, not spin.

Quantum mechanics held that whatever the distance between the particles – even light years apart – the two particles would remain entangled. That is, a change in one would instantly change the other.

Or were there “hidden variables,” as theoretical physicist John Stewart Bell put it, whereby a change in one particle was somehow locked into the other particle?

This year’s Nobel in physics was all about solving Einstein’s riddle and putting to rest his last challenge to quantum mechanics.

Bell, like John Clauser, one of this year’s laureates, was sympathetic to Einstein’s challenge, but nonetheless set out a framework for the kind of experiment and calculations that might settle the issue.

This year’s laureates progressively refined their experiments by excluding hidden variables that might influence the result, such as the tools used to mea-

sure the polarity of the two photons.

They showed conclusively that yes – entanglement of particles at a distance was fact and behaved in a manner consistent with quantum mechanics, and not in any way consistent with the presence of hidden variables.

Was Einstein wrong in his claim that quantum mechanics is not the whole story? Maybe, but Bohr was unnerved by Einstein’s last challenge and none of his colleagues successfully answered the riddle – nor does the work of these laureates.

The problem remains that Einstein’s challenge went much deeper and like many philosophical questions, hinges on definitions, in this case the meaning of reality. For Einstein, there was always something deeper than general relativity and quantum mechanics.

In that conviction, he was similar to Roger Penrose, the 2020 laureate in physics, who repeatedly speaks of deeper realities.

I’m sympathetic to both, even if most pragmatists in quantum mechanics might say, “Get over it.”

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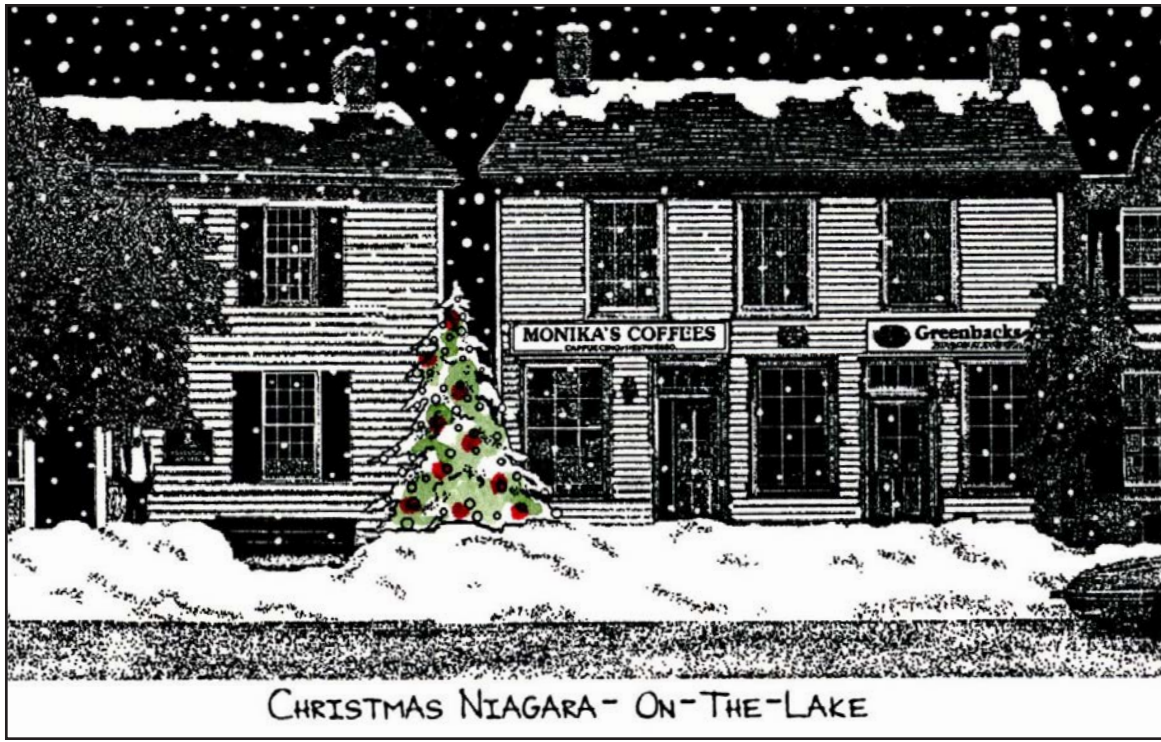
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CHRISTMAS NIAGARA - ON-THE-LAKE

Queen Street Christmas

This Christmas card of Queen Street shows former businesses Monika's Coffees and the Greenbacks store. The former Customs House, c. 1825, is on the right. The Customs House was where the paperwork for imports and exports was filled out as well as where tariffs and duties were paid. Probably the most famous of the customs collectors was author William Kirby, whose home still exists on Front Street nearby. Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year from the team at the Niagara-on-the-Lake Museum.

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This holiday season, please consider supporting Niagara-on-the-Lake by making a donation to The Lake Report. Support our award-winning team of journalists, to help us continue to publish Canada's top community newspaper.



The Lake Report

In Memoriam

Happy Heavenly Birthday!



Happy 100 Heavenly Birthday to Blanche Quinn. So Dec 23, 2022 is your 100th Birthday. We really thought you would still be with us for this momentous occasion. Your family is continuing to grow ... but you know this don't you. We miss you dearly (and your famous quick wit). 100 Birthday bells are ringing for The Great One!

Looking to the Stars

Jupiter moves into Aries and brings strong influences

Bill Auchterlonie
Columnist

Thursday, Dec. 15: Mercury is in charge today, first with a connection to Chiron encouraging a forgive-and-forget approach to whatever comes your way. Then it offers a very different kind of connection to Mars which, even though you are angry, may fall on deaf ears. Perhaps it's time to adjust expectations. On Dec. 15, 1939, "Gone with the Wind" premiered. With its revenue adjusted for inflation, the classic remains the highest grossing film of all time.



Friday, Dec. 16: Today is the third-quarter moon in Virgo, where the moon is 90 degrees to the sun in Sagittarius. It's a challenge supported by both Pluto and Jupiter. Be determined but also laid back to make the most of it. It was Dec. 16, 1927, that Arthur C. Clarke was born. His most famous writing is still "2001: A Space Odyssey."



Saturday, Dec. 17: A very positive connection between Mercury in Capricorn with Uranus in Taurus gets a positive boost from Venus in Capricorn. It is a day where wide-eyed meets the future. Canada's long-serving prime minister, William Lyon Mackenzie King, was born on Dec. 17, 1874.

Sunday, Dec. 18: Lady luck is here for everyone today. Take advantage of opportunities that have been waiting for you to recognize them. "Avatar," James Cameron's top grossing film starring Sam Worthington and Sigourney Weaver was released on Dec. 18, 2009.

Monday, Dec. 19: Both Venus and Mars connect to Chiron today. With Venus there is a drive to remove or fix harmful relationships. With Mars comes an opportunity to heal and finally clear up a long-standing issue and see a better way forward. Stanley Kubrick's "A Clockwork Orange" premiered on Dec. 19, 1971.



Tuesday, Dec. 20: Today, Jupiter enters Aries. Jupiter has already spent a few months in Aries, so this energy is not completely new. However, this time Jupiter is in Aries to stay for a while and to fulfill more of its mission. Jupiter in Aries is bold and courageous. He's convinced he's right and there's nothing that's going to stop Jupiter in Aries from going for what he believes in. Jupiter in Aries invites you to be bold and courageous in the area of your life ruled by Aries. This energy will influence you until May 2023, so you have a good four and half months to take purposeful action. Before Donald Trump coined the phrase "billions and billions," astronomer Carl Sagan used it as key words in his 1980 TV series, "Cosmos."



Wednesday, Dec. 21: At 4:48 p.m. today, we mark the winter solstice. It's the day the sun enters Capricorn. This comes with tremendous energy and sense of direction. We now feel we can move mountains. This is a great time to be clear about what it is that you want to achieve. Happy birthday #85 to Jane Fonda.

Have a listen to my podcast, Looking up to the Stars, at www.lutts.com.

Astrology is a form of entertainment, not a science.



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Wishing everyone a safe and Merry Christmas and Happy New Year
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Your canvas: Simple suggestions for decorating your Christmas tree



GROWING TOGETHER 

Joanne Young
Gardening Columnist

Your Christmas tree is your canvas, so it's important to select a good one — gorgeous ornaments can do only so much for a scraggly tree.

Some people prefer the look and smell of a real tree, while others like the reliability of an artificial one. Whatever you choose, get a well-shaped tree.

If you're getting a real tree, try to see it out of its netting before purchasing. With both cut and artificial trees, look for full, evenly spaced branches and a symmetrical shape that tapers toward the top. The more branch tips the better.

For real trees, you'll need a tree stand with a deep-water reservoir, which you should fill only after the tree is in place. Make sure your stand is large enough for the size of tree.

Make a fresh cut at the base of the tree just before bringing it inside. Keep checking the water level in the stand regularly and top it up when needed.

Pick a color scheme: There is nothing wrong with an eclectic Christmas tree decorated with childhood ornaments but sticking to one colour scheme will make your tree look cohesive and complete.

Keep in mind that you might want to choose something that doesn't clash with the room. If looking for something different or starting from scratch, maybe try something like blue and lime or orange, copper and browns.

For a truly minimalist winter look, use only white and silver decorations.



Christmas trees are a breeze, if you pick your colours and theme and plan accordingly, says Joanne Young.

Pick a theme: Some people select a specific theme for their Christmas trees, such as angels, nutcrackers or snowflakes. A theme can make it stand out against other trees.

No theme is wrong and should reflect your personality. If you're not much of a theme person, don't worry about it — "Christmas" is enough theme for most trees.

The first thing to put on the tree is the lights. They go first so that you don't see wires all over the other decorations.

Consider your colour scheme and theme to decide what type of lights are best for you: clear or coloured. Of course, if you have a green tree, green wired lights are best ... and for a

white tree — white wired lights.

When it comes to how many lights to put on the tree, the basic rule is at least 100 lights per foot of tree. String the lights from bottom to top, pushing them partway into the branches to hide the cord.

Make sure the prong end of the string of lights is at the bottom. Once the lights are on, you have the worst part of the job done.

The next thing to add is any garlands or ribbons so that they will not get caught in an ornament hook and make that ornament fall. What you choose to use will depend on your personal taste whether it is wired ribbon, berry garlands, or bell garlands or decorative cording.

If using ribbon, make sure that it is large enough to see from a distance, but not so large that it is hard to handle.

Putting on the topper before the ornaments might seem crazy but think of it this way: you don't want to be yelling "Timber!" on a tree loaded with precious glass ornaments if something goes wrong.

What kind of topper you choose depends on the theme and look of your tree — whether it is a traditional star or angel or using floral or berry picks or a bow.

When placing ornaments on the tree, I like to start with some larger items in between the branches toward the centre of the tree. This gives more of a sense of depth.

These items could be something like medium-sized grapevine balls, larger (non-breakable) ornaments, or even stuffed animals. Then you can start placing on the other baubles.

Make sure you have a variety of shapes (balls, teardrops etc.) as well as textures — some matte finish and some shiny or glittery finishes.

For that more cohesive look you may want to consider using the same colour but different hues and tones. Remember to place some a few inches back into the tree, to give it a little depth.

For the smaller ornaments, make a grouping of them so that they will have the same impact as the larger ornaments— e.g. group together several smaller birds.

Consider the bottom of the tree. If you have pets or small children, you might want to avoid placing anything too precious where it can be pulled down easily.

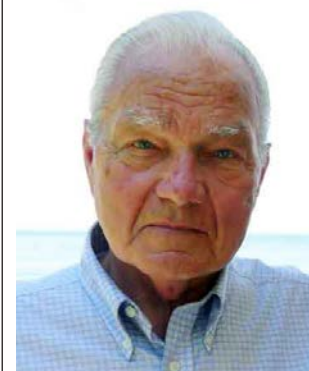
Place solid heavy-looking ornaments near the bottom and deep inside a tree and your lacy and lighter ornaments further out to give balance.

Have a Merry Christmas and enjoy time with family and friends.

Joanne Young is a Niagara-on-the-Lake garden expert and coach. See her website at joanneyoung.ca.

Obituary

John Kamin



Kamin, John
July 18, 1932 - December 3, 2022

It is with heavy hearts and so much love, that we announce the passing of our father and grandfather, John Kamin on December 3, 2022, with family by his side.

Dad was never the same after losing his beloved and darling wife of 55 years, Elveana on May 17, 2022.

Although heartbroken, we take comfort knowing that Dad and Mom have reunited and are holding hands once again.

Devoted father of Rebecca (Jamie King) and Cynthia (Kevin Lamotte). Adored grandfather of Connor, Dylan and Charlotte. Predeceased by his parents Krisjanis and Marta Kaminskis, sister Irma and brother-in-law Nick Ermanson, as well as his parents-in-law Anton and Minnie Bienkowski.

Born in Elksni, Latvia, his happy childhood was interrupted by the Russian advance into Latvia during WWII. He left on foot with his family making their way to refugee camps in Hamburg, Germany where he completed high school and spent his teenage years. His family was sponsored and first settled in Oklahoma, before immigrating to Canada in 1950 to reunite with other family members. Dad first lived and worked in Toronto for the Toronto Transit Commission, eventually purchasing land in Niagara-on-the-Lake with his parents. Dad was a wonderful son and helped grow and maintain a small vineyard while working full time at Thompson Products, and later General Motors in St. Catharines. His work ethic and commitment to provide for his family characterized the kind of man he continued to be throughout his life.

Dad met his sweetheart, Elveana at a ballroom dance studio and they married on June 25, 1966. Mom and Dad built a home, a family, and a beautiful life in Niagara-on-the-Lake. They remained dance partners throughout life, inseparable and truly in love. Dad cherished every moment with his wife and daughters, and celebrated each passing year with gratitude and pride.

Dad was the happiest and proudest grandpa. His grandchildren always received his full attention, and he looked forward to listening to shared stories, joys or worries of their day. He engaged in their activities and interests, and was supportive of their hopes and dreams. His grandchildren meant the world to him.

Dad was one-of-a-kind, a gentleman to the end. He exemplified decency, honesty, and absolute selflessness. He accepted everyone without judgement; always treating them with respect and kindness. He was a gentle soul who quietly helped and supported others without hesitation, never seeking attention or praise.

Dad was thoughtful with his words, a well-spoken and intelligent man. He was inventive and could figure out how to build or fix anything. He loved studying maps, and he never missed a geography question in Trivial Pursuit. Dad appreciated the simple things in life; bowling, sitting outside with his loyal dogs, listening to his favourite songs, catching up with friends and enjoying a sunset with a glass of local wine. Dad considered the love and happiness of his family, his greatest blessings.

Dad had the kindest eyes and an even kinder heart. He made the world a better place. We will cherish our memories forever and always. Until we meet again Dad.

A private Funeral Mass was held at St. Vincent de Paul Church in Niagara-on-the-Lake on Wednesday December 7, 2022, followed by the Rite of Committal at Niagara Lakeshore Cemetery. As an expression of sympathy, memorial donations may be given to the Heart and Stroke Foundation or the Canadian Cancer Society. Memories, photos and condolences may be shared at www.morganfuneral.com



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Farmworker Hub needs donations of winter clothing

Somer Slobodian
Local Journalism Initiative
The Lake Report

Do you have some extra winter clothing you're not sure what to do with? Consider donating it to the NOTL Farmworker Hub.

Seasonal agricultural workers will be beginning returning in January and the Farmworkers Hub is badly in need of winter clothes for them.

Where the back rooms off the hub in Virgil are normally bursting with donations, bins are empty and the tables are clear.

"You can imagine with 3,000 visits that we did this year in seven and a half months, the overstock in the background needs to be full," said Julia Buxton-Cox, founder of the Farmworker Hub.

"And the bins in our sorting room are empty. There's nothing there," she added.

She started the organization in 2021 during the COVID pandemic to help seasonal agricultural workers who come to Canada from around the world. The hub provides them with essential items at no cost.



Julia Buxton-Cox, left, stands with Brittney Slihas next to a rack with winter jackets for workers. SOMER SLOBODIAN

Gear comes from residents, charities and businesses.

"Anything that's collected, we give away at no cost. So it's completely free to the workers," Buxton-Cox said.

The most urgent items needed are work pants (in sizes 32 to 36), hoodies, winter jackets and long-sleeve, buttoned shirts.

The hub only has nine winter jackets and 12 hoodies as of this week – not nearly enough given the hundreds of workers they'll be seeing in the new year.

"So many of them don't have the ability to buy a winter coat in their home countries because it's very hot where they come from," said Buxton-Cox.

She also noted that, especially in the winter months, workers are always layering

up to try to keep warm – particularly during icewine season.

Long-sleeve, buttoned shirts not only add an extra layer of warmth, but in the warmer months they protect workers' skin from the peach fuzz, which can be an irritant.

Other items the workers require include backpacks, food, towels, sheets and running shoes. However, the four main winter items are the top priority.

Workers start arriving in January, with the main influx coming near March and April to work at the vineyards and the orchards.

With the number of workers they helped last year, the hub is hoping to bring on more volunteers in the new year to help with sorting, driving, interacting with

workers and writing applications for grants.

"My favourite thing about the hub is the relationships that we've all fostered," said Brittney Slihas, the agency's volunteer coordinator.

The hub is located in Cornerstone Community Church at 1570 Niagara Stone Rd.

Though it is closed to the public until mid-March, staff are still accepting donations and continue to work hard behind the scenes. During the off-season, they deliver any requests they receive directly to the farmworkers.

Anyone interested in donating can contact Buxton-Cox at 905-483-9717 and arrange either a pick up or drop off at her home in the Chautauqua neighbourhood. There is also a donation bin outside by the front door of the hub.

"Please don't think that one pair of jeans doesn't matter. It does," she said.

"Every single coat, even if you have one pair of jeans or one coat. It all makes a big difference in the life of a worker who's coming here for eight to 10 months of the year," she added.

Did you know?

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