



# The Lake Report

Vol. 3, Issue 7

Niagara-on-the-Lake's most respected newspaper

February 20, 2020

## Drydocks alive once again

### Heddle Shipyards fills Port Weller graving docks with winter work



A drone shot of two large Great Lake Bulk Vessels in the drydock at Port Weller. Heddle Shipyards is undertaking the multimillion-dollar seaworthiness survey and refit on both ships. **Find more photos at [www.niagaranow.com](http://www.niagaranow.com)**  
COURTESY OF RENE BERTSCHI, SKYVIEW ARTS INC.

Tim Taylor  
The Lake Report

There's a sense of urgency at Heddle Shipyards' graving docks at Port Weller. An urgency that has rarely been matched in the Niagara drydock's recent history.

For the first time in decades, the drydock is undertaking extensive maintenance work on two large bulk carriers, at the same time. The work must be completed by the reopening of the Welland Canal, expected in late March.

The short Great Lakes shipping season simply demands its ships be operational for every ice-free moment.

When the Rt. Hon. Paul J. Martin arrived late last December and the Kaministiquia a few days later, the Heddle Shipyards team sprang into action, dedicating 150 skilled trades and labourers to the mammoth task.

According to Ted Kirk-

patrick, business development manager for Heddle, the 2020 crew works two shifts a day, only idle for four hours. "This is the busiest we've ever been here," says Kirkpatrick.

**“You can now buy new ships built in China or Korea for at least half the price of building in Canada. On the other hand, while maintenance here is also more expensive, it is not economic to go all the way to China just for repairs. That's our advantage.”**

In 2017, Heddle entered into a long-term lease with the St. Lawrence Seaway Management Corporation, which manages and operates the Canadian assets of the Seaway on behalf of the government of Canada.

Over the past few decades, the Port Weller drydock has been empty more than it has

been full — a checkered history of excitement and disappointment driven by the fortunes of the Great Lakes marine industry.

But you wouldn't know that today.

TED KIRKPATRICK  
BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT MANAGER  
HEDDLE SHIPYARDS

Heddle Shipyards owns and operates drydocks for vessel repairs, maintenance and overhauls in Port Weller, Hamilton (where it is headquartered), Thunder Bay, Newfoundland and Nova Scotia.

"When we acquired Port Weller in 2017, there was nothing here," says Kirk-

patrick. "It was completely stripped of essential equipment. Everything had been sold at auction. The electricity was off, the pipes burst. Essentially (it was) a shell. We started from the ground up. The drydocks themselves were the only real value."

Kirkpatrick is a St. Catharines native. After attending Wilfrid Laurier University he took to the ships as his father had before him, earning his navigation officer's ticket. He liked the adventure of it. Now he helps manage his company's relationships with the four major Canadian-flagged shipping companies — some 90 vessels — serving the Great Lakes' ports.

"There are a finite number of Canadian-flagged bulk vessels on the Great Lakes," Kirkpatrick says. "Everyone knows who we are and we know all the major carriers."

*Continued on Page 2*



Darren Trostenko is a longtime volunteer firefighter. DARIYA BAIGUZHIEVA

## Town of NOTL appoints a second deputy fire chief

Story on Page 7



Emilie Walker, 4, helps Little Ray's director Kevin Dungey hold a snake at the Survival of the Slowest exhibit. BRITTANY CARTER

## Niagara Parks showcases slow-moving animals

Story on Page 13



Residents and developers listen to the presentation regarding a proposed community planning permit system. DARIYA BAIGUZHIEVA

## New permit system for development discussed

Story on Page 7



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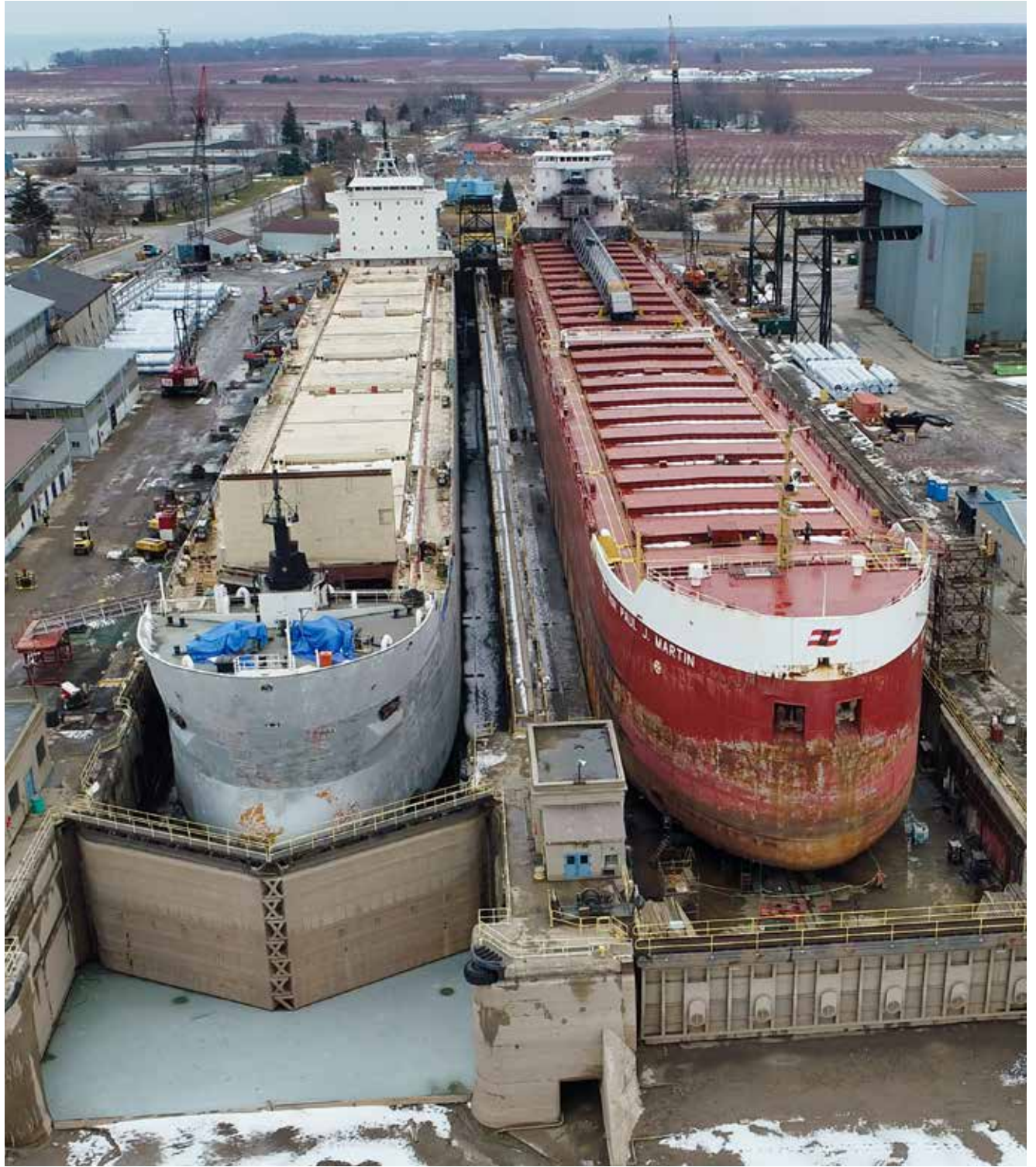
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Top left: The Rt. Hon. Paul J. Martin requires major steel replacement below water level, during its five-year seaworthiness refit at Heddle Shipyards' Port Weller Drydock this winter. Bottom left: Ted Kirkpatrick, Business Development Manager for Heddle Shipyards, operator of the Port Weller drydocks, gazes up at the mammoth side of the Rt. Hon. Paul J. Martin, one of two large bulk carriers currently perched high and dry, undergoing major seasonal refits and maintenance. Right: An aerial view of Heddle Shipyards in Port Weller shows two lakeliners in the dry docks for maintenance. PHOTOS BY TIM TAYLOR AND COURTESY OF RENE BERTSCHI, SKYVIEW ARTS INC.

# Niagara **drydocks** bringing work back to NOTL

*Continued from Front Page*

He is evidently proud of the success Heddle has achieved in three short seasons in Niagara.

"As we do more jobs, we execute them better. Now we get looked upon as a valued supplier. We look forward to a continuing supply of boats for maintenance over the years."

That blossoming success is also apparent in the growing workforce that once again makes Port Weller part of their annual work cycle.

"We go down to 12 (employees) in summer. It's always a challenge to get

ready for the winter season."

Recently the company went from 20 employees to 150 in the span of four weeks.

"As we've started to get back on the map, we're getting more traction."

"Now we're starting to see the same people come back every winter. It's guaranteed work."

According to Kirkpatrick, the core group of workers who stay year-round are local. But many people in the winter crews come from all over Canada, including Newfoundland, Alberta and across Ontario.

And Heddle needs more workers. At any given time,

employment websites include more than 30 Heddle opportunities for welders, machinists and a long list of specialist skills.

To help overcome the skills shortage, Heddle is working with Mohawk College to provide potential tradespeople some hands-on experience.

"We're donating a scrap tugboat for the program," says Kirkpatrick. "It will be an eight to 10-week program where students get practical experience replacing a piece of a ship's hull or removing a valve, machining it and reinstalling it. It's a unique program," says Kirkpatrick.

Heddle is planning a similar program with Niagara College beginning as early as this summer.

Kirkpatrick believes the time when lakers are built in Canada is over.

"You can now buy new ships built in China or Korea for at least half the price of building in Canada. On the other hand, while maintenance here is also more expensive, it is not economical to go all the way to China just for repairs. That's our advantage."

But Heddle isn't stopping there.

Because the industry is so cyclical, Kirkpatrick is generating business in other

areas, using the company's skills and attributes.

He points to Heddle's contract with the Ashbridge's Bay Wastewater Treatment Plant project in Toronto.

"We're doing the wastewater outfall pipes. We have unique equipment, skills and access for the project. It has nothing to do with marine, but it is an 18-month project."

Just over 30 years ago on the quayside in Hamilton, with nothing more than a welding machine, Rick Heddle founded what is now Heddle Shipyards. The company has grown to be the largest Canadian vessel lifestyle services and dry-

dock company in Canada.

And with the help of regional and municipal governments, Heddle is vying to become part of the Federal National Shipbuilding Strategy, a \$100-billion procurement program to replace the aging Coast Guard and naval fleets.

"It's the largest public procurement program in government history — a 35-year effort. We'd like to be added to the list, at least as a major component supplier."

With a little luck and a lot of effort, Heddle Shipyards will once again be a part of the Niagara landscape for decades to come.

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# Two aging ships receiving facelifts

Tim Taylor

Two massive bulk carriers sit side-by-side, nestled in the cocoon created by the Port Weller drydocks on the western edge of Niagara-on-the-Lake, south of Lock One on the Welland Canal.

Like two dowager sisters, the Rt. Hon. Paul J. Martin and the Kaministiquia, both Canadian-flagged vessels, sit patiently for their five-year seaworthiness review and the facelift that will send them out again to ply the ports of the Great Lakes. Both arrived over the last six weeks.

The Paul Martin is almost 50 years old, the senior, by a decade, of the Kaministiquia. They look their ages, a little worn, but experienced.

Both ships are very close to the maximum size navigable through the St. Lawrence Seaway. Longer than the Kaministiquia by just 10 feet, at 739 feet, the Paul Martin, literally just fits the modern canal locks. There are larger ships on the Great Lakes, but their 1,000-foot lengths never leave Lake Superior.

Built in Glasgow, Scotland,



For the first time, the Port Weller drydock is also completing non-marine work, assembling wastewater outfall pipes to be used in the new Ashbridge's Bay Wastewater Treatment Plant in Toronto. The pipes are shown here, prior to final assembly. TIM TAYLOR

and launched as the Voyageur Pioneer some 36 years ago, the Kaministiquia is called a "Salty-Laker," capable of delivering both sea and lake-bound cargos. She began her ocean voyages in late 1983, with grain loaded in Duluth, Minn., bound for France.

Like many vessels sailing the Great Lakes, the Kaministiquia has had many owners, many names, many cargos and many colours. In 2008, she was registered by Lower Lakes Towing Ltd., a division of Rand Logistics of New York. During her career she has carried coal, soy-

beans, steel, canola, iron ore, sugar, barley and other grains.

Her name comes from the Kaministiquia River, a small estuary just west of current-day Thunder Bay. It was frequented by early coureurs des bois.

The Rt. Hon. Paul J. Martin was launched from its Collingwood, Ont., shipyard, directly into Great Lakes steel shipping. Now owned by Canada Steamship Lines, the ship first came to the Port Weller drydocks in 1999 for a major hull replacement, a massive project. An entirely new, larger hull was

constructed and joined to the former engine-room section.

Ted Kirkpatrick, business development manager at Heddle Shipyards, the new operator on the Port Weller drydocks, describes the work underway on the two vessels as big projects.

"The Paul Martin is the bigger of the two, but they are both substantial," he says. The projects are a boon to Heddle. "We'll do more revenue in the first three months of 2020, than we did in all of 2019."

While the ships spend their winter at Port Weller, in addition to their five-year seaworthiness survey and any steel work that arises from that assessment, each owner gives Heddle a long list of maintenance projects and improvements to complete, including complete blasting and paint work.

So, with any luck and a lot of effort, the Kaministiquia and the Paul Martin will once again join the roughly 90 Canadian-flagged ships on the Great Lakes, when the seaway opens in March.

A big job, indeed.

# Shipyard worker has been on the job 45 years

Tim Taylor

John Menz has worked at the Port Weller drydocks for more than half of the 83-year history of the facility.

Menz grew up in Port Dalhousie, attending what was then called Lakeport High School (now Eden High School). When he left high school in 1975, he moved naturally into a five-day welding course put on by the busy nearby drydock, which at the time was always searching for new, young talent.

Other than a few years in other fabricating operations, Menz has been in Port Weller ever since.

He has the smiling, weathered face of someone who happily works outside in the elements. You can tell he works hard and plays hard.

Now, just as he reaches his 64th birthday, he's beginning to consider retirement, although he's known his employer, Heddle



John Menz, shift supervisor. TIM TAYLOR

Shipyards, still needs his knowledge and experience.

Menz is a day shift supervisor, overseeing the work of 25 men putting the Kaministiquia back into shape. He's also the dockmaster responsible for parking these huge lock-sized vessels in the drydock.

He admits he has his hands full with the Kaministiquia. "The pressure is always there to complete the work in time for the reopen-

ing of the canal," he says.

And they always seem to need more workers. "We were saying this morning, we need at least five more men to keep to the schedule."

Menz has worked for all four of the companies that have operated Port Weller over the decades. The first three companies ended in bankruptcy. "Whenever there was work going on here, they found me to come back."

"In fact, I was working here with Algoma Ship Repair—that would have been 2016. And Rick Heddle (CEO of Heddle Shipyards) was touring the facility before signing a long-term lease. He was going on board, I was coming off an Algoma boat, and we met on the gangway.

"So, we chatted. And he remembered me when they eventually took over the following year."

The biggest change over his 45 years at Port Weller

has been welding technology. "It all used to be stick welding in the early days," remembers Menz. "Now all the welding is done with wire-fed machines. Much faster and cleaner. Just pull the trigger and weld."

Menz expresses optimism about this go-around at Port Weller. "The drive is there. They are chasing work. And they want to make this a viable shipyard again. Putting a lot of capital into the place."

Menz and his second wife have four children and eight grandchildren, mostly in and around St. Catharines.

He is torn between the call of retirement and the needs of an industry he's served for close to five decades.

But he doesn't seem too worried. With 45 years in, he's looking forward to working in his extensive basement woodworking shop in the winter and his prosperous backyard gardens in summer.

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**Staff:** Brittany Carter, Dariya Baiguzhiyeva, Jill Troyer, Tim Taylor, Eunice Tang  
**Contributors:** Denise Ascenzo, Linda Fritz, Ross Robinson, Brian Marshall, Tim Carroll, Susan Des Islets, NOTL Writers' Circle, Jim Smith, Jaclyn Wilms, Collin Gooddine, Plunger Patrol, and many more members of the local community

**Contributed by Norm Arsenaault:**

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**Contributed by Patty Garriock**

Somewhere, something incredible is waiting to be known. – Journalist Sharon Begley.

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## Editorial

### Solution needed for short-term rentals

Richard Harley  
 Editor-in-Chief

Niagara-on-the-Lake has a short-term rental problem.

With the increase in investment properties and Airbnbs, and taxes on live-in bed and breakfast operators, there seems to be a lack of sympathy and good policy on the part of our local government to protect the real people living in our town.

A number of problems arise from treating investment properties for Airbnbs the same as live-in bed and breakfasts, such as the lack of affordable rental housing, and the crackdown on bed and breakfast operators using their principal residence as a subsidiary income.

Here is a list of solutions council should look at and adopt.

1. Short-term rental operators with investment properties should be required to pay a higher rate of tax than live-in B&B operators.

2. What is and isn't an investment property should be clearly defined and strictly regulated, with the actual homeowner having to live in the house year-round for a licence to be granted. This would stop people from simply having their niece/nephew or a hired employee live in the basement to bypass the law. A reasonable minimum length of time an owner must live in the house should be established and also be clearly defined. During away periods, the owner should not be allowed to operate a short-term rental out of the residence without paying tax

rates for an investment property.

3. In all cases where the homeowner does not reside in the house for the majority of the year, the taxes should be steep. This would help prevent the hollowing out of neighbourhoods to property investors that want to operate short-term rentals, and allow a better chance for locals to rent or purchase property in town.

4. Short-term rentals with year-round, live-in owners should be exempt from the recent increase in licence fees. Bed and breakfasts are hobby businesses for many live-in operators and those live-in operators should be the ones that benefit from town policy, as they are real, voting residents of the town. An all-encompassing licence fee for short-term operators is only damaging to residents.

5. Any rental property found to be operating illegally should face a hefty fine and be shut down for a lengthy period. The onus should be on the illegal operator to prove, after that time, that they will abide by the laws in the future. In Montreal, tenants of a condo complex were ordered to pay more than \$50,000 after renting out properties contrary to the building's regulations. A hefty fine is always a good deterrent.

Further to those important additions, live-in operators should be exempt from any future municipal accommodation taxes.

Council has deferred discussions on a potential municipal accommodation tax, but it won't be long before the issue is back on the table.

If a hotel accommodation tax is to be applied to Niagara-on-the-Lake, it should only affect businesses that are operating purely as investment properties, ie. hotels and owner-absent short-term rentals. Again, this needs to be clearly defined, and if it is, a hotel accommodation tax should be a no-brainer for a municipality with hefty legal bills to pay.

If applied and regulated, these simple additions would not only benefit the real residents of NOTL on their tax bills, it would help stop the hollowing out of neighbourhoods to investment property owners.

Take someone like me for example: I love NOTL, I want to live here. Aside from property values being ridiculously high, it's hard to expect it will get any easier to rent or purchase in NOTL if houses continue to be purchased as investments — to provide a service the town isn't properly regulating.

The town should heed the example of cities like Vancouver, which have banned Airbnbs for non-principal residences.

As well, companies like Airbnb should be paying taxes to operate within a municipal boundary.

Whatever is done to protect our town, it should be at the expense of for-profit businesses, and not the residents looking to stay and make a living in their hometown, nor the small bed and breakfast operators who operate from their primary residence. This would simply be good planning in the interests of the public..

[editor@niagaranow.com](mailto:editor@niagaranow.com)

## Thank you!



The Lake Report would like to thank all of those who have made donations to the paper in the past few weeks. While it isn't the end of the road for us, every little bit helps us keep the news coming for free to every household in town. And for this we can't say "thank you" enough.

In the coming weeks we'll be publishing the names of those who have donated more than \$100, unless they've requested to remain anonymous.

Thank you again.

- Richard Harley, Editor-in-Chief



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# OPINION

## Dr. Brown: The complex role of physical beauty in human relationships over time



Dr. William Brown  
Special to The Lake Report



Comparison of faces of Homo sapiens (left) and Homo neanderthalensis (right). WIKIMEDIA COMMONS

To hear proponents of evolution speak, evolution was (and is) all about natural selection by favouring certain traits, which might offer some advantage in a competitive world for survival created by the environment, including climate, food sources and safety from predators and disease.

Of course, what defines fittest depends on the bias of those making the judgement. This was never more obvious than in the long debate about whether neanderthals had the cognitive wherewithal to compete with modern humans.

For much of the time since the prominent bony eyebrows and thick-boned skeleton were described, neanderthals were considered relative dimwits compared to modern humans, despite a brain cavity equal or larger than that of modern humans.

Indeed, the reason neanderthals became extinct was assumed to be that they couldn't cognitively compete with modern humans. That was the story until the last two decades, when startling discoveries revealed that not only were neanderthals capable artists (based on many examples of their cave art), but that art was created a minimum

of 20,000 and possibly as much as 90,000 years before modern humans lived in Western Europe – and that's using highly accurate dating techniques.

So, neanderthals clearly had the imagination and symbolic thinking to create art and very likely possessed symbolic language as well – traits hitherto considered to be exclusive to modern humans. They also created jewelry from seashells long before similar jewelry was created in South Africa 70,000 years ago. This comparison of creativity in neanderthals and modern humans illustrates just how treacherous assumptions can be when they're based on flimsy evidence.

However, there are plenty of examples of natural selection at work, such as the shaping of the size, shape and length of bird beaks to best fit changes in the configuration of flowers from which birds feed, and the shape, size and colours of fish belonging to the same root cichlid species, to match changing environmental niches for food and safety in Lake Victoria in Africa.

But there's more to natural selection than physical and cognitive traits, which

are the usual traits touted as targets for natural selection. What about beauty as a force for selection?

There are plenty of examples where beauty trumps other traits – none better than the case of bower birds and birds of paradise in southeast Asia and Australia, whose extraordinary colours, elaborate courtship behaviours and decorated nests were wonderfully celebrated by David Attenborough, as among the clearest testimony to the power of beauty as a selective force.

Looking good has its risks however – all that colourful plumage, elaborate stage-set, and dance routine draws attention from predators.

Which brings us to Valentine's Day and human attraction and love. Just how important is physical beauty to human relationships, courting and mating?

To judge by the actors chosen for certain movie roles, magazines at check-out counters in variety and grocery stores, and the size of the beauty-aid industry, physical beauty surely counts for a lot, at least for first impressions.

But what constitutes beauty in humans varies all over the map. In paleo-

lithic times (between 11,000 and 35,000 years ago), "Venus" statuettes were common, which showed big-breasted women with genitalia and body sizes to match. Yet in the world of fashion, preferred body shapes and facial features vary wildly from age to age and culture to culture.

Beyond physical traits, personality, behaviour and character are surely as important, or more so, than physical features, especially for long-term relationships. Many would rank day-in, day-out thoughtfulness, respect, and love, and yes, romantic attraction, as very important. These and other traits, to which readers might want to add their own picks, wear well over the long haul and often dictate whether relationships have staying power.

Valentine's Day is as relevant for oldsters as teenagers, if not more so, because we've had more experience with the game of life and love, and found out a thing or two, sometimes the hard way, for what works and doesn't work in relationships. We all know couples (and may indeed be one of those couples), who know what it means to be happily married for many decades, where the relationship grows from strength to strength, even if, as happens eventually, the body begins to fail.

*Dr. William Brown is a professor of neurology at McMaster University and co-founder of the Info-health series held on the second Wednesday of each month at the Niagara-on-the-Lake Public Library.*



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## TIDBITS

### Provincewide teacher strike continues Friday

Both elementary and secondary schools under the District School Board of Niagara, including Crossroads and St. Davids schols, will be closed this Friday, Feb. 21 for a one-day provincewide strike held by four major provincial education unions. Catholic elementary schools, including Virgil's St. Michael school, will also be closed Friday.

### Museum seeking input on future programs and development

The Niagara-on-the-Lake Museum will hold a public session on Friday, Feb. 28 from 4 to 5:30 p.m. to gather feedback on future development and programs. The museum is looking to explore public expectations of services and exhibits offered, and how the museum can better serve the community. There will also be an online survey available after the session which will help museum staff easily gather more public input.



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The Lake Report welcomes your letters to the editor. Please, write early and often. Letters ideally should be under 400 words long. Occasionally, longer letters may be published. All letters may be edited for conciseness, accuracy, libel and defamation. Please include your full name, street address and a daytime telephone number so that authorship can be authenticated. Only names and general addresses (eg. Virgil, St. Davids, NOTL) will be published. Send your letters to [editor@niagaranow.com](mailto:editor@niagaranow.com) or drop them by our office at 724 Mississauga St., NOTL.

*The Lake Report*

## B&B owners are paying big fees to town

Dear editor:

I would like to comment on the issues in Samuel Young's letter in the Feb. 13 paper, "Council caved to tourism interest in passing 'political' budget."

He complains about the politicians "caving in" to the tourist industry.

Council was so "beaten into submission" that they raised my licence fee 300 per cent. I also have to pay the same property tax increase as Mr. Young.

It has also been pointed out that about 10 years ago MPAC imposed an increased tax on a property being used as a B&B property versus just a home.

I would also like to point out to Mr. Young that because of tourism, his house is probably worth more than if the Shaw Festival and the wineries and the supporting industries, which includes restaurants and B&Bs, were not here.

I do agree with his comments regarding unlicensed rental properties. I don't mind competing with anybody but it needs to be an even playing field. If I pay for a licence, so should they.

I get inspected annually by a bylaw officer, fire inspector and health inspector. So should they.

My understanding is that the increased licence fees are to be used to track down and punish the offending properties. The hope is that through fines and additional licences that the rates I now pay may be able to be reduced in future.

So, Mr. Young, I and the other legal B&B owners are paying to correct the situations you describe regarding the illegal places, not you.

While, like most people, I don't like to see taxes increased I do believe there is some need.

Besides the normal things that have to be maintained and improved such as roads and sewers, I don't have a problem with the town fighting some of the upstanding citizens of this town such as Benny Marotta and Rainer Hummel.

Like it or not the Old Town area is the main driver bringing people to town. Besides the tourist activities that Mr. Young opposes, they also come to enjoy the quaintness of the town. The construction Mr. Marotta has done and proposes takes away from that quaintness.

If this good citizen would work with the town and keep his buildings to enhance the town's look rather than diminish it by putting in Toronto designs that increase his wealth and taking the town to court anytime he doesn't get his way, it would make his and our lives easier.

I do like the latest drawings of the hotel he wants to build on the Randwood Estate, I still think it is three or four storeys too high.

Owning a winery I would have thought he would want to maintain the things that bring people to town and, hence, to his winery.

Somebody also commented that Mr. Hummel should focus first on sorting out his Queen and Mississauga property before taking the town to court over any other issue.

**Doug Johnson**  
NOTL

## Not just a photo, but full set of architectural plans

Dear editor:

As a lawyer for Two Sisters/Solmar, it is frustrating to see comments from NOTL opposition groups that mischaracterize my clients' efforts to engage the Town of Niagara-on-the-Lake and the community to try to work out differences. A couple of very recent examples will illustrate.

Michael Howe, president of the Niagara Foundation, wrote in your Feb. 13 issue (Letter: "Marotta lawyer paints his client as a victim when he's the one suing") that it is a "virtual certainty" that our clients' settlement offers "would be aggressively promoting the merits of ... proceeding with development of the Rand Estate including a convention centre and 170-unit subdivision."

In fact, as public court filings available to Mr. Howe reveal, the settlement offers had nothing to do with approval of the development proposals. They were about settling and approving those heritage attributes of the four properties upon which our client and the town can agree, and leaving the rest for the Conservation Review Board to report on.

Not to be outdone, SORE has now posted to its website that our clients delivered to the town only a "picture" of their revised hotel proposal, and that SORE and the town "have no clarity on whether Benny Marotta intends to follow through with detailed design information."

Again, a simple check with the town clerk or planning department would have confirmed that our clients didn't just file a picture. They filed a full set of architectural drawings and a site plan.

SORE also claims that "the building appears to be the same height as Benny Marotta's previous proposals and several storeys higher than the Romance Inn proposal contemplated." In fact, the proposed building meets the height requirement in the Romance Inn zoning bylaw.

**Michael Melling**  
Partner, Davies Howe LLP  
Toronto

## Letter writer was incorrect

**In his letter to the editor published on Feb. 13 ("NOTL council continues poor financial planning"), former town councillor Jamie Slingerland questioned why Coun. Clare Cameron had not volunteered to help lead the fundraising effort for the new St. Davids pool.**

**The author regrets mistakenly stating that Cameron lives in St. Davids when she in fact resides in Virgil.**



## Bias in favour of developer

Dear editor:

I am writing regarding the editor's note appended to the letter from Michael Howe, president of the Niagara Foundation.

The editor agrees that the prime copy space has been devoted to Benny Marotta and his renewed development plans. Given that there is more than just one party to the very controversial Randwood issue as well as other viewpoints, this is clearly an acknowledgement of bias on the part of The Lake Report.

In my opinion, this is part of a long history of bias in favour of Solmar by this newspaper in which the obvious has been denied repeatedly to the extent that it has become tiresome for many.

Except for a minority of hard core supporters of Mr. Marotta and his plans, it has been my experience that a majority of local residents have a similar opinion of undisguised bias by The Lake Report and have drawn their own conclusion as to the reason why.

There seems to have been no challenge or question as to the veracity of statements made by Solmar on the part of the reporter. This is an issue that The Lake Report needs to address in the face of a readership that in my opinion is becoming increasingly skeptical.

**Derek Collins**  
NOTL

## Collecting Queenston folklore and ghost stories

Dear editor:

I am writing regarding the story "South Landing Inn still operates today," published on Feb. 13.

I enjoy all the History Unveiled stories, especially those of Queenston presented by Linda Fritz.

All are well-researched and very informative.

The information presented by Linda is all documented facts. However, there are so many folklore and ghost stories associated with the buildings and surroundings of Queenston.

For example, during Prohibition, the South Landing Inn ran as a speakeasy and had a secret storage area under the veranda where the alcohol was stashed.

I am collecting photos and folklore stories of Queenston and hope that your readers will share them with me.

Please email to: [legend@queenstonvillage.ca](mailto:legend@queenstonvillage.ca).

**Kathy Thomas**  
NOTL

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Newly appointed deputy fire chief Darren Trostenko.  
 DARIYA BAIGUZHIEVA

## Trostenko is new deputy fire chief

Dariya Baiguzhiyeva  
 The Lake Report

The Town of Niagara-on-the-Lake has appointed a second deputy fire chief.

St. Davids resident Darren Trostenko, a 30-year volunteer firefighter for NOTL, will now serve as a deputy fire chief under chief Nick Ruller, alongside current deputy chief Jay Plato.

Trostenko, 50, has served as a district chief at Station 2 in St. Davids for two years, an assistant district chief for seven years, as a fire captain for 16 years and a volunteer firefighter for five years.

He also worked at Penner Home Hardware for 20 years.

When the town's fire department started its organizational changes last December, a second deputy fire chief position was created to address workload concerns and staff turnover due to low salaries.

Trostenko said he liked "a lot of approaches" the fire department has been taking recently, and the way the town's fire chief Nick Ruller is moving the fire department forward.

"I felt comfortable that we're like-minded and look at things similarly," he said of the entire fire department. "When I found out I was the successful candidate, I was very excited and happy to take what I've been doing for the past 30 years and doing it at the full-time capacity."

Trostenko is responsible for operations, professional development and training, fleet and equipment maintenance, and occupational health and safety.

Plato, who served as a fire prevention officer and an

acting deputy chief, was promoted to a deputy chief position in charge of fire prevention and public education, emergency management, community outreach, data analytics and decision support.

Trostenko said he didn't have aspirations of becoming a firefighter when he was young. Growing up in St. Davids, he knew some local firefighters and at the age of 21 decided he wanted to give back to the community.

"I thought it would be a good thing to do, (to) be a part of what volunteers do," he told The Lake Report. "I thought it would be an interesting and rewarding thing to pursue."

Trostenko's youngest son Eric is also a local volunteer firefighter while his oldest son Brian pursues a career in policing.

If someone wants to become a firefighter, Trostenko warns it's a "demanding" job.

"To truly be dedicated, it does take a commitment of your time, of your family's time for them to understand when you're away."

The town's fire department is working on many initiatives, he said, and the health and safety of firefighters is something the department is constantly striving to improve upon.

"In my short period of being in this position, I've enjoyed it and I look forward to seeing some of the initiatives ... come to fruition and I want to be a part of the volunteer fire department here in Niagara-on-the-Lake and seeing it continue to support all the volunteers that give so much of their time to the residents."

## Glendale Notes: Mayor meets with residents

Steve Hardaker  
 Community Correspondent

A small but very inquisitive group of residents met with Lord Mayor Betty Disero at the Holiday Inn Express in Glendale for her monthly coffee chat on Feb. 11.

Residents from communities across NOTL attended, so the variety of questions and discussions covered many town-wide issues.

Topics discussed ranged from hopes to start a long-term visioning for the town

to progress on rehabilitating the Heritage Trail; from the Glendale Niagara District Plan to establishing new bylaws and reviewing existing bylaws; and, from the potential amalgamating of the St. Davids and Queenston firehalls to how tourism enhancement will be funded now that council has deferred the idea of a Municipal Accommodation Tax.

One highlight the lord mayor talked about was how the town and the Region of Niagara are collaborating on potential

enhancements around the approved new interchange on Glendale Avenue over the QEW.

Possibilities include a traffic circle at the York Road/Glendale Avenue intersection and amenities like lighting, garbage containers and flower boxes on the separated pedestrian/cycling component of the overpass.

Included in the town-region collaboration are enhancements and beautification on Niagara Stone Road through Virgil, with a goal to give the area a

more village type of feel. Plans are expected to be revealed in March.

The Lord Mayor's Coffee Chats are held monthly in one of the five Niagara-on-the-Lake communities. The one-hour sessions give residents an opportunity to talk with Disero in a relaxed and casual setting.

The next coffee chat will be on March 10 from 4 to 5 p.m. at the Queenston Library.

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

## Permit for development discussed at open house

Dariya Baiguzhiyeva  
 The Lake Report

The town of Niagara-on-the-Lake is looking at implementing a land-use planning system that would allow more "certainty" when it comes to preserving the character of the town.

At the open house held at the town hall Tuesday, town's planner Jesse Auspitz explained how a community planning permit system would work if a bylaw is passed.

About 25 people, comprised of community residents and developers, attended the meeting. Lord Mayor Betty Disero was on hand as well along with Couns. Stuart McCormack and Norm Arsenault.

One of the main objectives behind the system is preserving a "small-town character," Auspitz said. A "handful" of Ontario municipalities, including Gananoque, as well as the province of Alberta have implemented the system.

The permit system provides an alternative to zoning, minor variance and site plan control processes by combining them into one application and approval. Town council or a delegated authority would be in charge of making a decision regarding issuing a development permit.

The town's official plan will have to be amended to include policies allowing to implement the system.

The system would be ap-



Town's planner Jesse Auspitz explains how the proposed system would make the development approval process faster and more efficient. DARIYA BAIGUZHIEVA

plicable to the entire town of NOTL but some bylaws may be passed for certain character areas, Auspitz said.

The permit system is comprised of three components: a policy basis within the official plan, a community planning permit system bylaw and a development permit that can be issued as a planning approval.

The process of reviewing development permit applications would be expedited and would take 45 days, compared to 90 days for zoning, 30 days for site plan approval and 30 days for minor variances.

"A lot of the control comes from the forefront," Auspitz said.

There are three stages to the process. The first one is gathering public input and adopting official plan policies. The next two steps would be passing community planning bylaws and issuing community planning permits.

Currently, neighbours can appeal the decision regarding minor variance and zoning bylaw amendments. But with the community planning permit system, only the applicant can appeal the decision. The applicant will also have 20 days to do so.

"The development industry will still have opportunities to appeal," Lord Mayor Betty Disero said. "I just didn't want to give the community members that are here the impression that once this is all in, nobody can appeal. I'm just trying to manage expectations."

The public can provide their input regarding the proposed policies by making a delegation to council at the next public meeting on March 9 or by sending their written submissions to the town clerk.

Anyone, who has made a submission to council before a decision on establishing the system is made, will be able to appeal council's decision or non-decision to the Local Planning Appeal Tribunal.

Once a bylaw is passed, it cannot be amended within the next five years unless decided otherwise by council.

The Village developer John Hawley commended the town for looking at the proposed system.

"I think it will provide certainty for residents," he said. "It's a really positive tool the town can use. It provides so much more certainty upfront."

A draft bylaw can be viewed on the town's website on Public Notices under the Planning Act webpage.

The next public meeting regarding the permit system will be held at the town hall at 6 p.m. on March 9.

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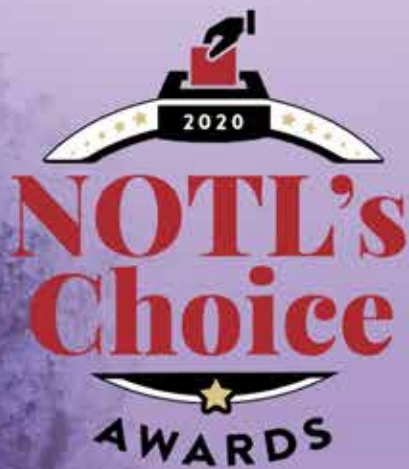
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# Concussion discussion sheds light on memory concerns

Brittany Carter  
The Lake Report

Medical science has made strides understanding concussions and brain injuries, which is why St. Davids resident Dow Wright says he was eager to listen to Dr. William Brown's Infohealth talk last Wednesday afternoon – to learn how previous sports-related concussions might impact his memory now.

Wright said he was interested to learn about the advancements made in the field during the presentation on concussions at the Niagara-on-the-Lake Public Library. It was the first Infohealth session he's attended, though he said he's been reading Brown's column in The Lake Report regularly.

"I thought I would see if I could understand a little more and if I could do anything about it other than avoiding them, which is too late now," he said.

Wright played sports throughout his life and suffered many concussions along the way. Though at



Hannah Snyder, Abhay Issar and June Dong with Dr. William Brown after Wednesday's Infohealth session on concussions. BRITTANY CARTER

63 he's still active, he said he's transitioned into lower-impact activities. Where he would once mountain bike, he now rides on the road.

"And I play a lot of golf," he said.

Over the last several years he said he's begun to notice lapses in memory.

"As I get older, I start to notice memory issues or

little things that I'm not sure are natural aging or something possibly related to past concussions or not."

When he brought the memory issues up with his doctor about 10 years ago, he said he was met with, "It's just a part of aging."

And though he said that very well may be the case, he wanted to learn more

about concussions for himself through the Infohealth session.

While Wright attended the session for specific answers about concussions, other residents like Alma and Earle Harvey have been attending Brown's talks regularly.

"It's always informative," Alma Harvey said before

Wednesday's talk.

She said Brown's talks always cover important health information that is just "good to know."

Medical student Hannah Snyder, who is being mentored by Brown, led the latest session alongside fellow students Abhay Issar and June Dong.

Though there are still areas of uncertainty regarding the brain after injury, scientific studies have brought us closer to understanding how to recognize and treat concussions, Snyder said.

Concussions, or mild traumatic brain injuries, often occur after a bump or jolt to the head, causing the brain to move rapidly back and forth within the skull.

While anyone can be at risk of possible concussions, Snyder said higher risks are associated with high-impact sports; vehicle, pedestrian or bicycle accidents; falling, especially in young children and older adults; and those who have previously experienced concussions.

Proven preventive measures include wearing

protective gear and helmets during recreational sports, and getting regular exercise to improve strength, balance and co-ordination, she said.

One of the biggest concerns for patients is how quick they can return to work or play after a concussion, Snyder said. Patients should wait until they have had at least 24 hours of physical and cognitive rest, and should only return to work "as tolerated," she said.

John Carter, a resident who also attended the presentation, said the medical students often steal the show.

"That's another reason I come out to these talks," he said. "They're incredibly bright."

He said he likes science and Brown always covers a wide range of topics. A neurologist, Brown doesn't stick to solely neurological discussions, he said.

"It's from that science interest that I'm here."

Carter said he doesn't come with any specific clinical interest; he just attends to learn what he can.

# Spring flood watch: New rock barrier can't be installed until July

Dariya Baiguzhiyeva  
The Lake Report

The work on installing a groyne – a pile of large rocks to stop waves from crashing on to the shore – at NOTL's Dock Area will not start until after July 15 when the fish spawning season is over, a town official says.

The work hasn't started yet because there is a hole or a pocket at the edge of the existing groyne in the water, Brett Ruck, the town's environmental services supervisor, told NOTL council's committee of the whole meeting on Feb. 10.

"Had we started not knowing the void is there, it would've been a significant extra in cost," Ruck told The Lake Report. "Since we did find out it's there, it's better we plan for it."

The void has to be filled with other rocks before the groyne can be placed on top of it, Ruck said at the meeting.

The groyne itself is located to the left of the historic culvert at Ball's Beach Park. Town staff are working on a shoreline stabilization project with consultants from Toronto-based Shoreplan Engineering firm.

Construction cannot start between March 1 and until after July 15 because of a federal restriction that prevents staff from entering the water during fish spawning season, Ruck told councillors.

Once the project starts, the in-water work will take about two weeks, he said in an information report to council.

Last summer, town staff had to wait for the water

level to drop as high levels prevented them from seeing what was going on underwater. However, this year, the staff will just have to deal with working in deep water once the construction starts in July, Ruck said.

The same measures that were taken last spring, including placing metered bags, tiger dams and bladders, will be taken this year as well, and will also protect more area, Ruck said.

There are also pumps available for immediate use if needed.

"It's going to be exactly the same process we did last year. Pretty much the same locations and we'll weather through the storm at that point," Ruck told The Lake Report.

He said he wasn't sure how much higher the water

level would go this year as it depends on what happens at Lake Superior, on the works at the Moses-Saunders dam near Cornwall and how the government "overall manages the system."

"I just know the water levels are expected to go up and I'll wait till I get close to the time."

Once the staff receives a marine archeological report, a tender to complete the work at the Ball's Beach will be finalized, Ruck said in a phone interview.

"Always protect yourself as though the town is not protecting you," Ruck advised residents who live near the Dock Area. "The town is protecting infrastructure so that people can continue to live in their homes."

The staff is also investigating all available grant



A new rock groyne to protect the dock area can't be installed until after fish spawning season is over in July. BRITTANY CARTER/FILE PHOTO

options, Ruck told councillors.

Several shoreline protection projects, including manhole and catchbasin upgrades on Melville Street, a pump feasibility study, Riverbeach Park restoration and other work, are estimated to cost more than \$1 million. There is currently \$128,000 in the budget allocated for the Dock Area works, according to Ruck's report.

If the town decides to

wait for funding and until reserves get built up, the work at the Dock Area could take up to 2029, Ruck told councillors.

However, if the town decided to debenture the funds, all the work could be completed this year.

"It's just the matter of the funds," Ruck said at the meeting.

Council will make a decision regarding funding once they have a complete report from staff.





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<b>23</b>	<b>24</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>26</b>
<b>Days of Wine and Chocolate</b> - 11 a.m. to 5 p.m. - <b>Info Session Q and A for Senior Help at Home</b> - 2 p.m. to 4 p.m. - <b>JazzyOke Singalong Sundays</b> - 1 p.m. to 4 p.m. - Club 55 <b>The Writers' Circle Rising Spirits Celebration</b> - 7 p.m. - The Old Winery Restaurant <b>Teen Literary Alliance</b> - 1:30 p.m. - NOTL Public Library	<b>Council</b> - 6 p.m. - Council Chambers <b>Canadian Cancer Society Volunteer Tea</b> - 2 p.m. - St. Vincent de Paul Church Parish Hall <b>Famous and Infamous: Harry Nyquist by Peter Kemball</b> - 2 p.m. - NOTL Museum <b>Books and Babies</b> - 11 a.m. to 11:45 a.m. - NOTL Public Library <b>Beer and Books: The Farm</b> - 7 p.m. - The Old Winery Restaurant	<b>Mardi Gras Gathering with Entertainment RSVP 905 935 1800</b> - 2 p.m. - Royal Henley <b>Heritage Trail Committee</b> - 2 p.m. - Council Chambers <b>NOTL Horticultural Society February Meeting</b> - 6:30 p.m. to 9 p.m. - NOTL Community Centre <b>Urban Design Committee</b> - 5 p.m. - Council Chambers <b>Duplicate Bridge (ACBL Sanctioned)</b> - 1 p.m. to 4 p.m. - NOTL Community Centre <b>Niagara Golden Age Club: Seniors Euchre</b> - 1 p.m. - NOTL Community Centre	<b>Black History Month</b> - 2 p.m. - RiverBrink Art Museum <b>Chess Club</b> - 5 p.m. - Library <b>STEAM Story Time: Explorers</b> - 11 a.m. - Library <b>German Conversation</b> - 9:45 a.m. to 11:20 a.m. - Community Centre <b>Legion General Meeting</b> - 7 p.m. - R
<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>Open Mic at the Legion with host Buzz Hummer</b> - 2 p.m. to 5 p.m. - NOTL Legion <b>Writers' Circle</b> - 2 p.m. - NOTL Public Library <b>Ukulele Workshop</b> - 3 p.m. to 5 p.m. - NOTL Community Centre	<b>Fun Duplicate Bridge</b> - 9 a.m. to noon - NOTL Community Centre <b>Babies and Books</b> - 11 a.m. - NOTL Public Library	<b>Tumble Tots</b> - 9 a.m. - NOTL Public Library <b>Nobel Prize Series Nobel Prize in Economics</b> - 2 p.m. - NOTL Public Library <b>Table Tennis</b> - 10 a.m. to 12 p.m. - NOTL Community Centre <b>Murder Mystery Dinner Theatre</b> - 6 p.m. - The Irish Harp <b>Duplicate Bridge (ACBL Sanctioned)</b> - 1 p.m. to 4 p.m. - NOTL Community Centre <b>Niagara Golden Age Club: Seniors Euchre</b> - 1 p.m. - NOTL Community Centre	<b>The Upside to Down</b> - 905 935 1800 - 11 a.m. - Henley <b>Steam Story Time: Forces</b> - 11 a.m. - NOTL Public Library <b>Movie: Downton Abbey</b> - NOTL Public Library <b>Networking Etiquette</b> - 5:30 p.m. to 7:30 p.m. - Armoury Niagara Col <b>German Conversation</b> - 9:45 a.m. to 11:20 a.m. - Community Centre

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Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
	<b>20</b> <b>Customer Experience and Technology Committee</b> - 4 p.m. - Council Chambers <b>Flag raising - Kinsmen Club</b> - 1 p.m. - Town Hall <b>Homeschooler Drop in</b> - 10 a.m. to 11:30 a.m. - NOTL Public Library <b>Seniors Drop in: Casual Bridge</b> - 1 p.m. to 4 p.m. - NOTL Community Centre <b>NLH Workshop: More Moves #2</b> - 7:30 p.m. - NOTL Community Centre	<b>21</b> <b>Yoga with Jenny</b> - 10 a.m. - NOTL Public Library <b>Days of Wine and Chocolate</b> - 11 a.m. to 5 p.m. - <b>Double Film: Remember Africille and Black Mother, Black Daughter</b> - 11:30 a.m. - NOTL Museum <b>Forty Creek Whisky Tasting at Navy Hall</b> - 7 p.m. - Navy Hall <b>Duplicate Bridge (ACBL Sanctioned)</b> - 1 p.m. to 4 p.m. - NOTL Community Centre <b>Knit a Bit</b> - 2 p.m. - NOTL Public Library	<b>22</b> <b>Flag raising - World Think Day</b> - 10 a.m. - Town Hall <b>Days of Wine and Chocolate</b> - 11 a.m. to 5 p.m. - <b>Shaw Festival Film Series: Once Upon a Time in ... Hollywood</b> - 3 p.m. - Shaw Festival Theatre <b>Babarinde Williams Drums et al</b> - 11 a.m. - NOTL Public Library
<b>26</b> <b>Art film series</b> - Art Museum - NOTL Public	<b>27</b> <b>Homeschooler Drop In</b> - 10 a.m. to 11:30 a.m. - NOTL Public Library <b>Oddities of the Universe with Dr. Brian Pihack</b> - 7 p.m. - NOTL Public Library <b>Tinker Thinker</b> - 6 p.m. - NOTL Public Library <b>Seniors Drop in: Casual Bridge</b> - 1 p.m. to 4 p.m. - NOTL Community Centre <b>Homeschooler Drop in</b> - 9:30 a.m. to 11 a.m. - NOTL Public Library	<b>28</b> <b>Film: Speakers of the Dead</b> - 11:30 a.m. - NOTL Museum <b>Yoga with Jenny</b> - 10 a.m. - NOTL Public Library <b>Homeschool: Fantastic Food and Nutrition</b> - 11 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. - NOTL Public Library <b>Duplicate Bridge (ACBL Sanctioned)</b> - 1 p.m. to 4 p.m. - NOTL Community Centre <b>Knit a Bit</b> - 2 p.m. - NOTL Public Library	<b>29</b> <b>Brew your own Kombucha</b> - 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. - Canadian Food and Wine Institute <b>Indoor Goat Yoga</b> - 1 p.m. - Small Talk Vineyards
<b>4</b> <b>Resizing RSVP</b> - a.m. - Royal	<b>5</b> <b>Table Tennis</b> - 10:15 a.m. to 12:15 p.m. - NOTL Community Centre <b>Homeschooler Drop In</b> - 10 a.m. to 11:30 a.m. - NOTL Public Library <b>Tinker Thinker</b> - 6 p.m. - NOTL Public Library <b>Seniors Drop in: Casual Bridge</b> - 1 p.m. to 4 p.m. - NOTL Community Centre	<b>6</b> <b>Shaw Festival Annual Meeting</b> - 2 p.m. - Royal George Theatre <b>Yoga with Jenny</b> - 10 a.m. - NOTL Public Library <b>Knit a Bit</b> - 2 p.m. - NOTL Public Library <b>Duplicate Bridge (ACBL Sanctioned)</b> - 1 p.m. to 4 p.m. - NOTL Community Centre	<b>7</b> <b>Paper Bag Princess Day</b> - 11 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. - NOTL Public Library <b>Annual Home Show</b> - 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. - Crossroads Public School <b>Youth Skate Night</b> - 6 p.m. to 8 p.m. - Fort George Skating Rink

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The nominees are in.



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Candy Shoppe

43 Queen St. | 905-468-4994

Nominated for NOTL's  
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for your nomination!

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# Survival of the Slowest brings exotic animals to Niagara

Brittany Carter  
 The Lake Report

Niagara Parks invites you to slow down, with the Survival of the Slowest exhibit by Little Ray's Nature Centre, and director Kevin Dungey says he hopes the exhibit will foster a passion for "backyard conservation."

The exhibit was created for the Niagara Parks Butterfly Conservatory by Little Ray's in collaboration with the Canadian Museum of Nature, and will run from Feb. 15 until May 31.

Dungey says although this exhibit focuses on exotic animals, he hopes it will ignite a spark in children to ask questions about conservation, and to bring that interest back home.

In Ontario there are more than 200 native animals at risk of extinction, and he says many people don't even know that some of those animals exist.

"I can walk into a Grade 12 classroom and ask them to name five species at risk."

He says students respond with tigers, elephants and pandas. But when he asks



Barry (Allen) the sloth steals the show at the Survival of the Slowest exhibit at the Butterfly Conservatory. BRITTANY CARTER

them to name five Ontario species at risk he's often met with no response.

"We can't do anything to help something if we don't even know what it is," he says.

Hands-on learning opportunities provided by Little Ray's are something he hopes will help create that lifelong passion to do something to help protect

the animals.

While television programs and YouTube channels can provide some insight, he says nothing beats coming out and actually interacting with the animals.

"What we're trying to do is to get them off their screens and passionate about nature. And I tell people all the time, YouTube isn't going to teach

you what a snake feels like," he says.

"Nature documentaries and videos definitely have their place but if you take your child sitting on the couch watching TV, okay. And then you take another child, and you take a turtle and you put it right in their hands; that creates that connection to nature."

Dungey says he doesn't

see passion being created by watching videos about nature. It's when young people are interacting with the animals in person he says their "faces light up."

"It makes me think that hopefully the champion will carry that passion with them into adulthood," he adds.

The new exhibit at the Butterfly Conservatory will offer that opportunity to see some of nature's slowest creatures up close.

Barry the two-towed sloth, ironically named for Barry Allen, also known as the Flash, is arguably the highlight of the exhibit. But Hammer the green iguana is sure to catch your eye cohabitating with the red-footed tortoises. And though green iguanas aren't typically slow animals, Dungey says the iguana was included in the exhibit because he compliments the tortoises.

Little Ray's Nature Centres, based out of Ottawa, was founded in 1995 as a family-based educational outreach program and reptile rescue. It has since grown to the largest exotic animal rescue in

Canada. The organization is nationally accredited by the Canadian Association of Accredited Zoos and Aquariums and licensed by the Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources.

The collaboration between Little Ray's and the Niagara Parks has been running since about the inception of Family Day, a Niagara Parks official said. New exhibits and interactive experiences are featured each year, debuting on Family Day weekend.

Admission to the Butterfly Conservatory, which includes access to the Survival of the Slowest Exhibit, costs \$16.50 for adults and \$10.75 for children six to 12 years old. Children five years and younger are free.

The Niagara Falls Wonder Pass includes admission to the Butterfly Conservatory, as well as Journey Behind the Falls, Niagara's Fury, and the Floral Showhouse, and a two-day WEGO bus and two days on the Falls Incline Railway. The pass costs \$25 for adults, \$17 for children and admission is free for children five years old and younger.

## Stories of black history in NOTL

By Shawna Butts/NOTL Museum/Special to The Lake Report

### Chloe Cooley and The Act to Limit Slavery

In 1793, Chloe Cooley, a woman enslaved in Queenston, was bound, tossed in a boat and transported across the Niagara River to be sold by her owner Adam Vrooman. Whispers of abolition had been circulating in the newly formed province among the enslaved and enslavers. Many enslavers decided to liquidate their slave assets at this time for fear of losing money. Cooley resisted fiercely, knowing that her potential freedom in Canada was in jeopardy. Peter Martin, a free black man, a former Butler's Ranger, and a leader in the black community, appeared in front of the executive council of the legislature to inform Lieut.-Gov. John Graves Simcoe of the violence exhibited against Cooley. Simcoe, who was already an abolitionist, became more determined to enact legislation that would ban slavery in Upper Canada. Since many of the executive council members were slave owners themselves, Simcoe was only able to pass a bill that would slowly phase out slavery in Upper Canada. This act was made into law on July 9, 1793. The act did not free existing slaves; however, it forbade the importation of new slaves, granted freedom to the children born from slaves when they reached age 25 and ensured the children of these newly freed slaves would also be free. It allowed for the gradual abolition of slavery and set the stage for the beginnings of the Underground Railroad.

For more information on Niagara-on-the-Lake's black history and to learn more about members of the black community in Niagara, please visit [vofpark.org](http://vofpark.org).





# GAMES



*Have some fun*

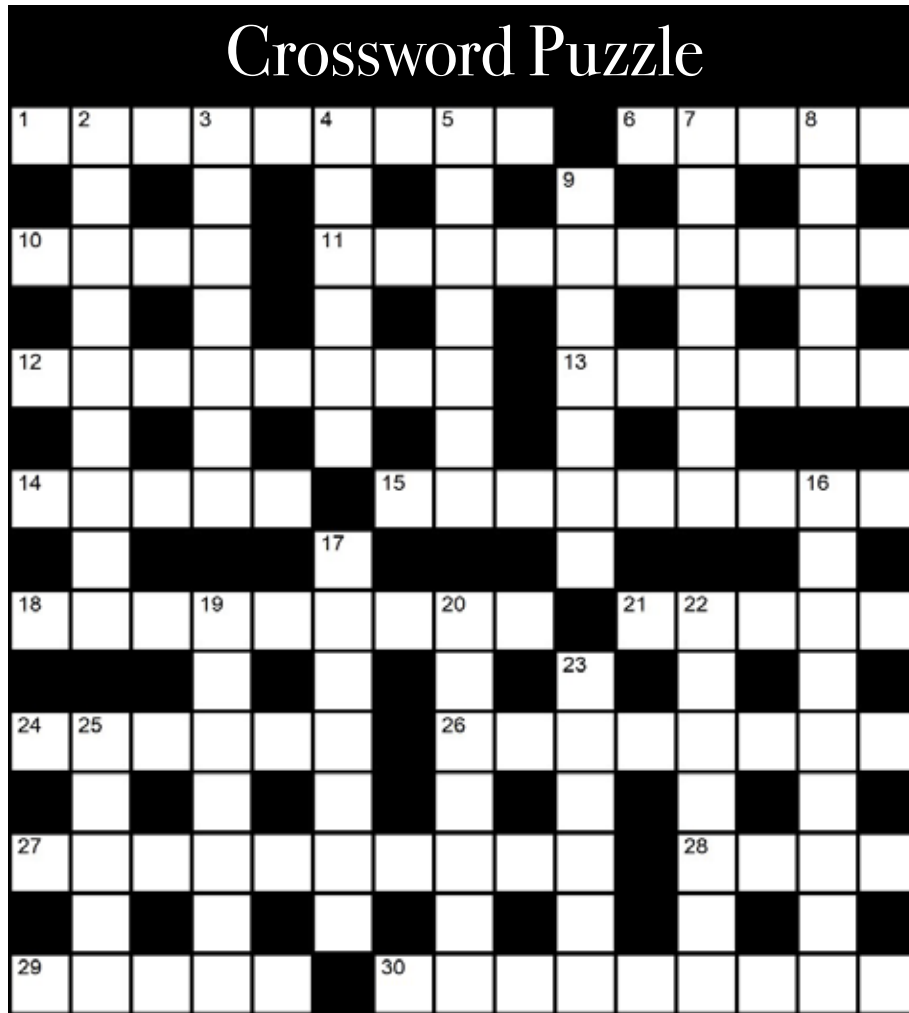
The Lake Report is looking for puzzle makers who would like to help develop this page. We are seeking both standard and cryptic crossword writers. [editor@niagaranow.com](mailto:editor@niagaranow.com)

**Across**

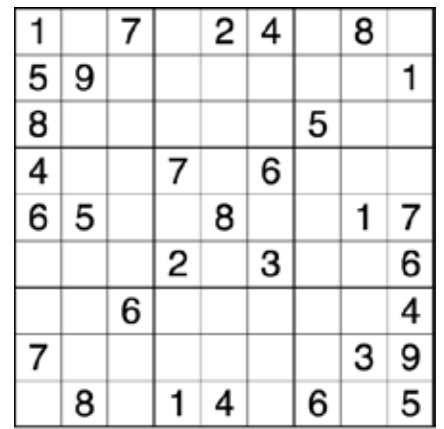
- 1. They get in the way (9)
- 6. Long-continued practice (5)
- 10. Macchu Picchu builder (4)
- 11. Resting, like actors (10)
- 12. Canes (8)
- 13. Stretched-out rectangle (6)
- 14. Embellish (5)
- 15. Strong dislike (9)
- 18. Turn on the waterworks (4,5)
- 21. Fleecer (5)
- 24. Showy decoration (6)
- 26. Amount of sugar needed to help with medication (8)
- 27. Diversion (10)
- 28. First name in French fashion (4)
- 29. Worrier's malady (5)
- 30. Advocates of land reform (9)

**Down**

- 2. Communication problem for musicians in narrow streets? (9)
- 3. Rotates around a kind of heater (7)
- 4. Trapped (6)
- 5. 19th century American philosopher (7)
- 7. ---, coulda, woulda (7)
- 8. Eco-conscious (5)
- 9. Raring to go (2,3,2)
- 16. Immensely powerful (9)
- 17. Suffer remorse (4,3)
- 19. Merit (7)
- 20. Hazing (7)
- 22. Husband of Eleanor of Aquitaine (5,2)
- 23. Piano (6)
- 25. Standard of perfection (5)



**Last issue's answers**



# The Lake Report

NOTL readers *love* The Lake Report and we *love* our readers. With the winter season upon us and printing/distribution/staff costs at an all-time high, we need a little *love* to keep the news and top-quality journalism coming to every home in Niagara-on-the-Lake.

We realize this is a big ask and we don't make it lightly. **We need your help.**



**What The Lake Report brings to your community**

- Current, factual and non-partisan news for Niagara-on-the-Lake residents, delivered free to every home
- Dozens of important, exclusive NOTL news stories that you will not read in any other community publication
- A newspaper that does not shy away from holding our elected officials accountable for decisions that affect us all
- We ask the tough questions that need to be asked and explore complex issues that need to be addressed
- Support for countless NOTL charities and organizations
- A way for NOTL residents to stay informed about upcoming events and happenings
- An outlet to voice your opinions about matters that affect your town, your life
- In-depth feature stories about Niagara-on-the-Lake history, arts, sports, recreation and the people who live in our community
- Provides local jobs for local residents
- A special, unique paper for our special, unique town and community
- Resident discount program that helps businesses and residents
- Glossy, professional visitor guide magazines that support the NOTL business community and tell the world about all the great things our town has to offer

**How you can help keep local news alive in NOTL**

*Donations of all sizes are welcome, of course.*

**Bronze – \$200**

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Your Perk: A large heartfelt thank you in print

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Your Perk: A really big heartfelt thank you in print

**Platinum – \$5,000**

Your Perk: A ginormous heartfelt thank you and photograph in print

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**We need your help**

Your donation helps to ensure that real, relevant community news continues to flourish in Niagara-on-the-Lake and that we can deliver it to every NOTL home every week.

Email transfers with password Donation can be sent to [editor@niagaranow.com](mailto:editor@niagaranow.com). Cheques payable to The Lake Report can be mailed to the NOTL Post Office, L0S1J0, PO Box 724, or dropped at our office at John and Mississauga street in Old Town.





Vehicles from the Italian police car museum collection. Find more Hometown Traveller stories at [www.niagaranow.com](http://www.niagaranow.com)  
WIKIMEDIA COMMONS

## We'd love to hear your stories!

People from Niagara-on-the-Lake travel to some of the most interesting places on Earth and we'd like to hear about your vacations.

So, if you have ever wanted to be a travel writer, here is your chance. Send us a travelogue story about your vacation, along with some photos.

It's impossible to include everything, but stories ideally should be 250 to 600 words and focus on a unique, quirky or particularly interesting aspect of your trip. It can be about a vacation you have just taken, one you're on now (lucky you!), or a holiday you took a few years ago.

Sometimes, just a picture is worth a thousand words. So, if you aren't able to write a story about your trip, send us two or three snapshots from your holiday and we will try to publish some of them.

In all cases, smartphone photos are perfectly acceptable. Just make sure each digital image you send us is around 1 to 2 MB in size. Include destination information and the names (from left) of everyone in each photo. And tell us who took the photo, if possible.

As a bonus, bring along a copy of *The Lake Report* and include it in your photo!

Send your stories and photos to [editor@niagaranow.com](mailto:editor@niagaranow.com) and be sure to write TRAVEL in the subject line.

Happy trails.

# Hometown Traveller

## Police car museum one of Rome's hidden treasures

Linda Fritz  
Special to The Lake Report

I have not one, but three favourite cities in the world, and have visited them all many times. The one that comes out on top is either the one I've just visited, or the one I'm about to.

Since I was in Rome in October, it will be number one for a while. Visitors to Rome must visit the traditional sites — the Colosseum, the Forum, the Pantheon and St. Peter's just to name a few. There will be lots of people at all of these places, but it must be done. It's particularly important to visit the Trevi Fountain. Make sure you throw a coin into it to ensure a return to the city.

Rome, however, is more than these tourist sites.

In ancient Rome the business district was known as the Forum. It's impossible to miss the largest, near the Colosseum. There are, however, two more business areas close by, although you have to look for them. Their entrances look like office buildings or banks. Behind these facades, though, are streets and building complexes. They are much quieter than their better-known neighbour, but well worth a visit.

After a busy day at these attractions, visit Rinascente Tritone, an upmarket department store. Recently renovated, it's a pleasure to see where Romans shop.

The rooftop restaurant offers splendid views of the city. Go for a glass of prosecco. It's a great place to spend time admiring the impeccably-dressed Italians.

While the roof top is a lot of fun, it is only half the reason to visit Rinascente. Go to the basement and make your way through the stylish kitchen wares you didn't know you needed.

You will eventually come across an aqueduct that has been serving Rome for more than 2,000 years. The arches and brick work are behind glass. While I was there, shoppers were ignoring it, but I was fascinated. Today the aqueduct feeds the nearby Trevi Fountain.

Rome has hundreds of fountains and many tourists are surprised to learn that the water flowing through them is drinkable. Fill up your bottle with this astonishingly cool refreshment. It's free.

There also is a plethora of small museums located in residential neighbourhoods around Rome. An absolutely fabulous one is the Museo delle Auto della Polizia di Stato, the police car museum.

A short bus ride will take you there. The Roman bus system is easy to navigate. Download the free app to get your route. Tickets can be purchased at most hotels and they are good for an hour and half once activated. Any tickets not used can be returned to

your hotel for a refund.

The police car museum displays vehicles that were used by the state police over the past 60 years. These include bicycles, tank-like vehicles for working in the mountains as well as a variety of cars such as an Alfa Romeo Pantera and the Giulia, a selection of Fiats, including the off-road vehicle the Campagnola, and — wait for it — a Ferrari 250 GTE. All have been lovingly restored. At times visitors feel as if they are looking at three-dimensional art.

We toured the museum with a group of school kids. Police in full uniform led them through the exhibits. The highlight for one young boy was being

placed on an absolutely splendid Ducati motorbike. I had never seen a look of such sheer joy before. His schoolmates were envious. So was I.

After visiting the museum, go for a coffee at one of the neighbourhood bars. An espresso is much cheaper in this part of the city.

These are just a few of Rome's lesser known treasures. If you have taken my advice, and have thrown your coin into the Trevi Fountain, you will be returning to visit many more times.

Queenston resident Linda Fritz is a frequent contributor to *The Lake Report's History Unveiled* column and is an avid traveller.



### NOTL: SPECIAL WINTER EDITION

The Lake Report's winter magazine highlights some of the best places and things to do in NOTL.

You can pick up a physical copy at all restaurants, hotels and businesses or you can visit our office at 496 Mississagua St. in Old Town.



### NOTL'S CHOICE AWARDS

You took the time to nominate your favourites, now it's time to vote on the best businesses, organizations and individual professionals in Niagara-on-the-Lake.

To vote, go to [LakeReport.ca](http://LakeReport.ca)



### PRESS PASS PROGRAM

The Lake Report Press Pass Program gets local residents discounts at a long list of businesses in Niagara-on-the-Lake. Valid for local residents only.

To sign up, visit our office for a card at 496 Mississagua St. in Old Town.



# FEATURED



Delicious homemade meatballs. COLLIN GOODINE

## COOKING WITH COLLIN

### Meatballs to fill and warm a hungry belly

#### Homemade meatballs

Collin Goodine  
Special to The Lake Report

Whether they are Swedish, sweet and sour, teriyaki, Italian, pork, beef, turkey or chicken – meatballs are always a crowd pleaser. The versatility of the meatball is a good, hearty way to fill and warm a hungry belly in the cold months of winter and the comfort of them is always reminiscent of home. These soft melt-in-your mouth meatballs were shown to me when I worked alongside a few lovely Nonnas. The care and perfection they demanded for their food was something I will never forget. I made a couple of adjustments, but I am sure Nonna would be proud. Mangiare, buon appetito.

**Ingredients:**

- 2 lb ground veal
- 3 lb ground pork
- 5 eggs
- 2 cups bread crumbs
- 1/2 tsp black pepper
- 1 tsp salt
- 1/2 tsp garlic puree
- 1/3 tsp pecorino, grated
- 1 tsp chopped parsley
- 1-1/2 cups water

Did you make this recipe? Send us pictures of the finished product and we'll publish it in the paper.

**Directions:**

In a stand mixer, mix the meat and slowly add the eggs one at a time. Once all the eggs are in, mix everything else into the meat.  
Add water.  
Scoop the meat into the size of meat balls you require and set aside. With lightly oiled hands, roll the meat into perfect balls and place onto sheet pan.  
Bake in the oven until cooked, about 20 minutes at 350F. Place into homemade tomato sauce and simmer for 10 to 15 minutes.



Little Ray's director Kevin Dungey shows off Hammer, the green iguana. BRITTANY CARTER

## STAY FIT NOTL



Jena Slingerland and her son Carter Paul demonstrating a plank. STAY FIT NOTL

### Fitness and the new mom

Jena Slingerland  
Special to The Lake Report

Your body just went through a nine-month marathon and now you have a new baby relying on you for everything. Fitting in exercise to your new routine is probably the last thing on your mind. The truth is exercise and physical activity will help you feel stronger, and give you more energy (which is probably in short supply!). Here are a few exercises you can do at home with your little one. Baby will have fun too!

1. Squat and Press
2. Glute Bridge (with baby on hips)
3. Plank and tickle
4. Alternating Lunge with baby

For videos on how to perform these stretches correctly visit @niagarafit on instagram.

### Whiskey tasting returns to Navy Hall



Whisky lovers will be able to savour seven award-winning whisky samples paired with hors d'oeuvres and learn about the role alcohol played in the life of Fort George soldiers in the 19th century at the annual whisky tasting event.

Taking place at the historic Navy Hall on Friday, Feb. 21, the event will start at 7 p.m. It is hosted by the Friends of Fort George in partnership with Parks Canada and Forty Creek Distilleries.

Tickets cost \$45 per person and include food and seven different Forty Creek whisky samples.

"During the early 1800s, soldiers rations included rum, and for the officers of that time, the Officers' dinner would have included wine to be served with dinner. There were strict rules around the Officers' dinner and fines for not following those rules were paid in bottles of wine," said Amanda Gamble, executive director for the Friends of Fort George.

"For us, the whisky tasting event brings this aspect of early 19th venture to life. It allows people to try different whiskeys in a social atmosphere (like the Officers' dinners) while taking place in Navy Hall, where the dinners were held. Alcohol continued to play an important role within the army throughout the first and Second World War."

Chris Thompson, Forty Creek North American brand ambassador, will host the evening.

The money raised will help to hire students for the summer at Fort George and Brock's Monument.

"In 2019, the Friends of Fort George hired 14 students. We are hoping to continue supporting Niagara's youth with meaningful summer employment, and events like this allow us to raise much-needed funds to cover wages," Tony Chisholm, president of the Friends of Fort George, said in a statement.

Tickets can be purchased by calling 905-468-6621 or emailing admin@friendsoffortgeorge.ca.

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# EXPLORING PHOTOS

WITH JIM SMITH



## Niagara firefighters

A few Niagara firefighters from years past are seen in this picture playing cards at the old fire hall on King Street. While I don't have the names of all the people pictured, included are Truman Yates, Horace Awd, Jim Henry, John Nesbit, Bill Ball and Ted Warner. Today the old fire hall is the restaurant called Grill on King. Previous to being the old fire hall it was Jack Greene's livery stable where we could rent a saddle horse for \$1.50 an hour. The horse trail went down Platoff Street to the Commons, where you were free to ride wherever you wanted.

SUPPLIED PHOTO/JIM SMITH



**Looking for a way to contribute?**

Are you looking to give back to the Niagara-on-the-Lake community?

The Lake Report is looking for extra help with advertising sales, and we're hoping there are volunteers out there who would spend some time helping us out. Volunteering with NOTL's favourite newspaper is a fantastic way to give back to your community. The paper, which is delivered free to every home in NOTL, support countless local charities and initiatives and informs readers about truly important issues you won't find covered in any other local publication.

If you're interested, give Rob Lamond a call at 905-246-4671, or send an email to [roblamond@niagaranow.com](mailto:roblamond@niagaranow.com)

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### ARCHITEXT

## A design for quotation

Brian Marshall  
Featured



Quote on plans. SUPPLIED/BRIAN MARSHALL

The old saying that goes "Anything is possible provided you throw enough money at it" is perhaps nowhere more appropriate than during a renovation. Given that one is able to get building permits, it is possible to design and construct virtually anything one dreams of if the budget is large enough. However since most of us do not have endless pocket-books it's vital to maintain a disciplined approach to the design process.

In the Jan. 30 Arch-i-text we talked about the importance of developing solid design criteria upon which to base the renovation

design. While this document provides a framework, its primary purpose is to ensure the completed renovation will meet your practical needs and requirements. It will not, however, manage the creative exercise of actual design. That's up to you.

Context and flow must be the watch-words you employ while working with a designer. In other words, how will each design decision contribute to the overall look, feel and function you wish to achieve, and further, how will the overall renovation integrate within

the existing house without extending the scope-of-work and budget.

To illustrate the latter point, let's say that during the design of a kitchen reno, your designer suggests removing a wall in order to create an open-concept kitchen/living room. Aside from the additional cost to demo the wall and seamlessly repair floor and ceiling, this suggestion presents a series of potential ramifications to your design/decorating choices. For example, will those clean modern cabinets you prefer 'work' with

the living room's traditional mantelpiece and mouldings? You may have to choose a different cabinet style or replace the mantelpiece and mouldings. Flooring, lighting, colours, and other items all must be considered in the context of the single large space and may require work (and dollars) beyond your original intent.

That said, if you take the time to work systematically through each step with your designer, the result will be a set of plans that not only fulfill the design criteria but actually exceed your original expectation.

With the plans in-hand, there's only one more thing to decide before it's time to circle back on your short-listed contractors for quotations. Namely, what will the contractor be providing and what (if anything) do you plan on sourcing and buying yourself. Make that decision and you're good to go to quote.

*Next week... the contract.*

Advertising inquiries?  
Email [advertising@niagaranow.com](mailto:advertising@niagaranow.com)  
or call Rob at 905.246.4671

### Did you know?

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# Launcelot Servos was a Niagara **golf pioneer**



Denise Ascenzo  
Exclusive/The Lake Report

The surname Servos is quite prominent in the history records of Niagara-on-the-Lake. Few, though, know of Launcelot Cressy Servos, golf professional, golf instructor, golf course designer, author and playwright.

Launcelot C. Servos was born in October 1879 in Buffalo, N.Y. He was the great-great grandson of Daniel Servos (1748), who served with Butler's Rangers during the American Revolutionary War.

Servos' parents, John Dase Servos and Hannah Catherine (Lowe) Servos, returned to Niagara when their only child was one year old.

In 1875, the Niagara Golf Club was founded and a nine-hole course was developed on the military reserve lands near Fort Mississauga. Then, in 1882, another nine-hole golf course was opened on the Fort George Commons.

At an early age, golf became a lure for Servos. There is no true accounting of when he started playing the game of golf, but it can be speculated that as a young boy he would have found summer employment as a caddy at both of the town's golf courses. As caddies, they would have had the opportunity to play later in the day when golf members were finished.

In 1896, the Niagara Golf Club proposed an international golf tournament with players from Canada, England and the United States participating. However, there was a small problem because in 1888

the Royal and Ancient Golf Club of Scotland determined that a tournament had to be played on 18 holes, not nine. So it was decided that the tournament in Niagara would have to be played on both golf courses.

There is a delightful story of why the Royal and Ancient Club decided 18 was the right number of holes to be played. It is said that after each hole, a player was to drink a shot of Scotch whisky. The entire bottle would be empty after 18 shots. I am not sure if any golfer could have continued playing golf if those bottles had been any bigger.

In January 1897 there is one report by the New York Times from Magnolia Springs Golf Club of a "long ball" driving contest; the best shot was 187 yards, with Servos coming in second with a drive of 186 yards.

Later, in September of 1897, during the International Tournament here in Niagara (now NOTL), the first event was an open handicap where Servos had a net score of 82, giving him an easy victory.

The Belleview Hotel in Tampa, Fla., decided to build a golf course in 1898 and Servos designed all 12 holes of the course. Historians in Florida have recorded that Servos was responsible for the very first golf course to be built in Florida.

On Jan. 29, 1899, the New York Times reported that Launcelot Cressy Servos was one of the few American-born professional golfers on the circuit. It went on to explain how Servos crafted his skills on the courses in Niagara.

Then, in January 1900, at the U.S. Open in Tampa, Servos made the longest drive in the contest. His 230-yard shot earned the prize purse of \$10. In June of that year, as reported by the



A signed card by Launcelot Cressy Servos. SOURCED IMAGE

Boston Evening Transcript, Servos' drive was beaten by Harry Varden with a distance of 250 yards. It must be noted that this was a time before golf balls had dimples on them (1905) and before American rubber manufacturers put a rubber core in the golf ball. Both of these changes to the ball increased the distance it could be driven.

The Guinness Book of Records validated the longest drive in golf history in 1974 at the Winterwood Golf Course in Las Vegas, Nev., when Mike Austin drove a ball 516 yards. To this day, his record has not been beaten.

By 1901, Servos was classified as a golf

instructor and gave lessons at courses throughout New England in the summer and Florida in the winter. He was also sponsored by Noyes Brothers golf club manufacturers, which gave him opportunities to travel to even more golf courses throughout the United States. Although he travelled extensively, Servos still maintained a residence on Gate Street with his mother in Niagara.

In 1904, at the Mountain Golf Club in Florida, Servos set a record for a single round of 18 holes with a score of 75. Later that year, he lowered his own record when he shot a 69.

In 1905, Servos turned his talents to writing with "Practical Instruction

in Golf." The book was published and sold for \$2 and continued to be sold into the 1930s. There were many chapters, such as the stance, the grip, the swing and an unusual one titled "Fat Man's Swing."

Then, in the 1920s, Servos turned his talents to playwriting. He produced small operettas for radio shows and for theatre. His first was "Builders of an Empire," which told the story of the United Empire Loyalist in Niagara.

In 1923, Servos wrote his second golf book titled "The Professional Golfer." Then in 1924 he wrote two more operettas, "Laura Secord" and "The Golden Dog," which had a very different story

line from William Kirby's book "Le Chien d'or." In 1927, Servos' book "Frontenac and the Maid of the Mist" was published. It is a whimsical love story about the wife of a captain during the War of 1812 and her fascination with Niagara Falls. Servos went on to write several more stories and operettas in his lifetime.

Launcelot C. Servos has been lauded as one of the most successful golfers in the early days of the game. In 1938, the October edition of Goldfom Magazine stated: "When a man has given more than 75,000 golf lessons in the past 40 years, he is likely to give a pretty definite idea of how to teach the game. This is very definitely true of L.C. Servos, who laid out Miami's first golf course in 1898 and who has been active in the teaching and promotion of the game ever since."

In 1940, columnist Allen Anderson quoted Tom Meany (a sports writer with the New York World Telegram): "Launcelot C. Servos, veteran Canadian professional golfer has lowered records of no fewer than 316 courses."

On May 11, 1969, Launcelot Cressy Servos died at the Pine Tree Nursing Home in Toronto. He is buried in St. Mark's Cemetery in Niagara-on-the-Lake, beside his mother.

Unfortunately Servos does not appear in any of the records of the Canadian PGA because he had joined the U.S. PGA. However, we do have a Canadian sports hero in our midst and Launcelot C. Servos should be recognized for his accomplishments.

*I wish to thank Doug Phibbs for providing the research on Launcelot Cressy Servos.*

**More Niagara's History Unveiled articles about the past of Niagara-on-the-Lake are available at: [www.niagaranow.com](http://www.niagaranow.com)**



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# COMMUNITY



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



## Flag raised for women

Regional councillor Gary Zalepa, Lord Mayor Betty Disero, Coun. Erwin Wiens with Rosemary Evangelista, Lucy Reaman, Margaret Byl and Sandra Edgeworth during the flag raising for the Women's Institute Tuesday morning. Read the full story and see more pictures at [www.niagaranow.com](http://www.niagaranow.com). BRITTANY CARTER



## THE GOLDEN PLUNGER

With Betty and Jane

Two Sisters Winery



Renee Wright accepts The Golden Plunger award for Two Sisters Winery. THE GOLDEN PLUNGER

While patrolling along the Niagara Parkway we happened upon a lovely winery called Two Sisters. This scenic establishment is nestled into the Niagara Escarpment and is considered "small," but the vibe is definitely "big" with a classic Mediterranean style. It hosts many culinary events and offers the perfect wine for tasting or to accompany authentic dishes from Kitchen 76. The "toiletas" definitely combined the old with the new and maintained the Mediterranean design with decorative artistry, marble counters and tiling. Sensor-activated faucets and hand dryers speak to modern technology without compromising its beauty, leaving the guest feeling slightly "pampered."

4/5 Golden Plungers



## NOTL DART LEAGUE

Each week, dart teams face off at local restaurants and pubs. Find scores here weekly, exclusive to The Lake Report.

Silks Jini	168
Legion Guzzlers	145
Sandtrap Close Shavians	142
Legion Guyz	128
Sandtrap	117
Legion Airs	116
Silks Legends	107
Legion Dartbags	79



## Tarot of the week

Lisa Tache/Special

DATE: Feb. 20, 2020

The Two of swords is about not seeing a situation clearly and decisions. It's a time when you are indecisive and apprehensive about making the next move. It's about balance with give and take. It indicates a period before you make a final decision. The Two of Swords indicates that you are facing a challenging decision, but not sure which option to take. Something is up in the air and you are not ready to deal with it. You are not seeing things clearly and may have guarded emotions. You are not letting anything in or out. Turn inward so you can decide. Weigh out the pros and cons. Trust your own judgement and have patience. Be sure to choose the path that most aligns with your true self.

Keywords. Difficult decisions, weighing up options, an impasse, avoidance, conflicting ideas or visions.

### ASK YOURSELF THIS

What do I consider as I make this decision?

## RIDDLE ME THIS

You use me from head to toe. The more I work, the thinner I grow. What am I?

Last Week: Forwards I am heavy, I sure weigh a lot. But when I'm backwards, I certainly am not. What am I?

Answer: A "ton"

Answered first by: Margie Enns

Also answered correctly (in order) by: Lynne Stewart, Howard Jones, Scott Vanderlee, Julia Klassen, Gary Davis, Katie Reimer, Cathy DeBon

Email answers, with your name, to [editor@niagaranow.com](mailto:editor@niagaranow.com) for a chance to win a prize.



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## FEATURED LOCAL STORY



Left: Legion president Paul Eramian (right) sends out finished orders of fish and chips. Top right: Legion member and former president Stan Harrington prepares the fresh batter. Bottom right: Volunteer cook Gary Bradnam dunks the fish in flour and batter before it gets deep-fried. PHOTOS BY RICHARD HARLEY

# Military efficiency at Legion fish fry

Not much has changed in 15 years. The fish is cooked to order, the batter is homemade and the beer is cold

Richard Harley  
The Lake Report

Many Niagara-on-the-Lake residents will tell you the same thing when it comes to fish and chips in town — the Legion does it best.

It's not surprising, really, when you take into account that the Legion has been putting on fish night once a week for longer than members can even remember.

As Legion president Paul Eramian puts it, "It's been going on for decades — since folks actually used to grind their own cabbage."

On any given Thursday you can find a line of hungry people waiting for fresh fish, coleslaw, fries and delicious, soft French bread for chip sandwiches. The meal is prepared by a line of volunteer cooks, many who have been donating their time for years.

Past president Stan Harrington, who has been cook-

ing for almost 15 years, says they cook about 150 pounds of fish weekly — about 2.5 tonnes a year.

"And we bang them out in really record time," he says.

Harrington and the cooks couldn't recall just when the fry started, but he agreed it's likely been going on since the Legion's inception in 1966.

"I started when I was 10," the 77-year-old jokes.

Harrington says there are plenty of "urban myths" he's heard about how the fish fry started.

"I only know the rumours," he said. "The problem is, what they did then you can't do today because of health regulations and stuff, but supposedly the fish were fresh caught and they would gut it and clean it right here... But I don't know what kind of fish it was."

Former legion fry cook David Steele, 74, says the whole thing started one day when a local who operated

a food truck came in with an extra supply of fish and asked if anyone wanted to have a fish fry.

"I've heard that story, too," Harrington said. "It's a fuzzy story, you don't really know if it's true or not."

Regardless of how it started, the whole process has developed a military efficiency over time. First orders are taken downstairs and brought up by hand to the cooks, who immediately start to prepare the food. When it's all packed up, the order gets sent back down with one of the volunteer Air Cadets, who shout out numbers and wait for people to claim their tasty treat.

Some other changes have been made to keep up with health regulations. For example, the fish now has to come in frozen.

"The fish now does come in frozen because of health regulations. We can't get it (fresh) here because we can't keep it. But it's Had-

dock ... And it's wild," he says proudly.

"We make our own batter — it's a beer-based batter — and that recipe hasn't changed in about 15 years."

Currently the fish comes from the Atlantic, the coleslaw is made by the woman's auxiliary, and the fresh-cut fries come from Lococo's and the French bread is from Hendrik's Valu-mart.

Over the years the process has changed in other ways, too. Eramian says just recently the Legion started using biodegradable paper cups for coleslaw (eat-in only, takeout is still plastic).

"You know, to reduce our carbon footprint, so to speak," Eramian says.

To streamline the process, the coleslaw is now handmade by the Women's Auxiliary of the Legion.

"It's a big help," says Eramian.

With the number of people coming through on the average fry night, it

makes sense the prepping needs to be done early, Harrington says.

"When we get busy, people know they have to wait a while, but they also know it's fresh," says Harrington.

The local clientele is "steady," he says, and people from all over the world end up trying it out, too.

"It's mostly people from the Niagara region, but we have people come from other places as well."

Years ago, members started a map of where people came from, Harrington says.

"We had so many places we quit doing it," he says.

"But it was interesting, because a lot of people stay at the B&Bs, and they say 'oh, go to the Legion for fish fry' — They come here and they're from Germany or France or Belgium or whatever. A lot from the UK.

And of course what happens too, because there are a lot of new Canadians in town, they have relatives and they

bring them here for fish and chips."

He says he enjoys seeing all the locals come in every week and getting to chat with them. The best part, though, is the people he volunteers with.

"We've got a great mix of people. My grandkids worked there at one point, my wife did for quite a few years. It's all like family."

Gary Bradnam, who has been volunteering as a cook for about eight years, also says the best part of it is the "camaraderie."

"And showing that you're doing something to raise money for the Legion," he adds.

Bradnam says realistically the fish fry is the Legion's major fundraiser, and what keeps the branch going.

"It's pretty well our bread and butter. It's what keeps our doors open," Bradnam said.

"We've got a great group here to work with us," Eramian says.

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