



The Lake Report

Vol. 3, Issue 8

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

February 27, 2020



Writers' Circle celebrates talent

Richard Harley
Editor

The room was filled with laughs as the Niagara-on-the-Lake Writers' Circle held its seventh annual Rising Spirits award ceremony on Sunday, celebrating the winners of the writing competition.

The night was opened up with a spoken-word poem

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Sock program sees massive town support

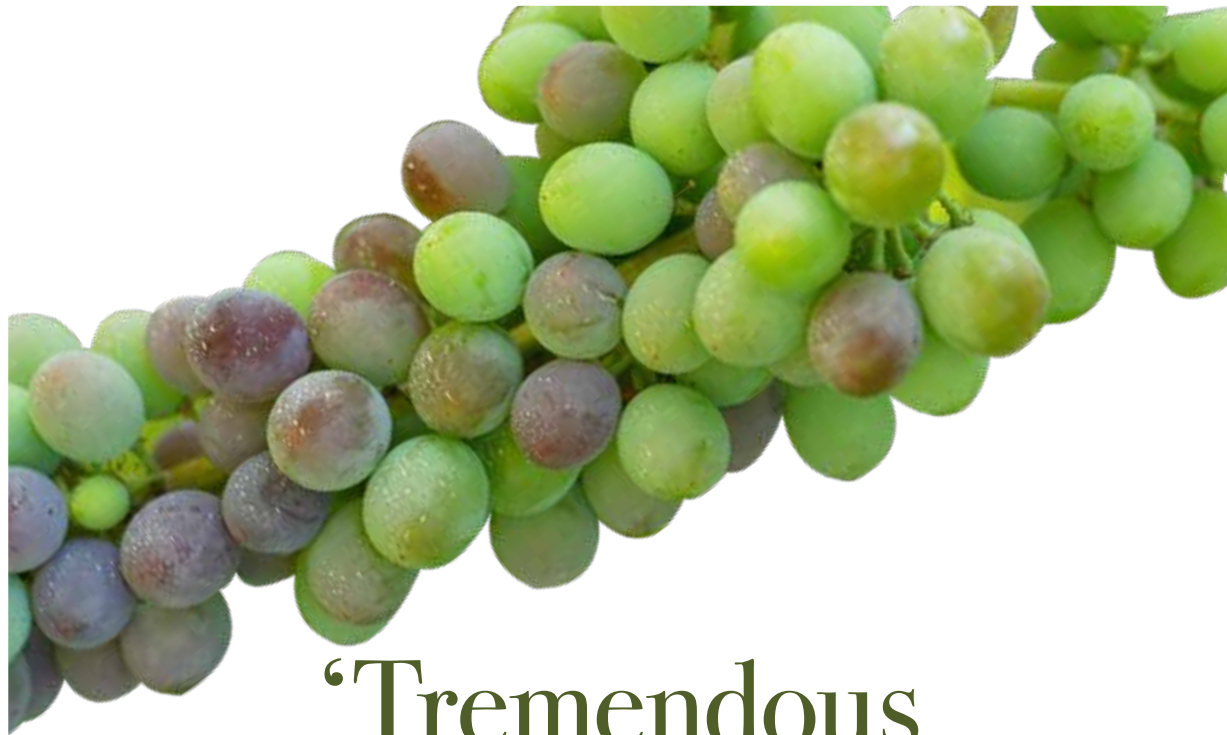
Dariya Baiguzhiyeva
The Lake Report

In just one week, the Niagara-on-the-Lake community helped provide more than 300 pairs of socks to keep those in need warm during the winter season.

Avondale Food Stores across Niagara are accepting donations for the Socks for Change charity, whose goal is to provide 35,000 pairs of socks and 50,000 winter accessories for some-

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INNOVATION IN WINE COUNTRY: PART 1



'Tremendous progress'

Grape farmers and wineries investing in evolution, growth and new technologies

Jill Troyer
The Lake Report

Niagara-on-the-Lake is synonymous with vineyards and wineries – they are an integral part of our landscape, our identity and our economy.

"Ripe, robust, remarkable" is how the Winery and Grower Alliance of Ontario describes the province's wine industry and the Niagara Peninsula is Ontario's largest wine growing region, responsible for more than 90 per cent of Ontario's grape production, according to an independent report prepared for the industry in 2017.

"We're still a young industry, particularly compared to the world, thinking of Spain, Italy, France. But the wine industry has a real impact in Niagara, so we have to keep maintaining a positive business environment. We can't be complacent," asserts Aaron Dobbin, president and CEO of the growers' alliance.

That sentiment is echoed by Debbie Zimmerman, CEO of the Grape Growers of Ontario.

"Things are always changing. We have to be flexible and innovation has to continue."

Some facts and figures from the Niagara Region economic development team underline the impact of the wine industry in Niagara.

In terms of jobs, wineries in Niagara directly employ 1,744 people in processing, and support an additional 15,126 jobs in hospitality, retail and services to wineries.

In terms of tourism, wineries in Niagara attracted 2.02 million of the 12.9 million tourists that came to Niagara in 2017, representing 16 per cent of total visitors to the Niagara region.

And in terms of straight up annual economic impact, the estimate is \$3.7 billion in revenue, taxes and wages.

"The Ontario wine and grape industry has made tremendous progress in the last decade, with strong growth and increased consumer demand for authentic, local VQA wines," reports a study completed recently by Deloitte, on behalf of the industry. The report adds that "the consumer and business landscape is constantly changing."

The Deloitte study surveyed growers and wineries, and one of its findings was that the priorities for new investment are overwhelmingly for "production and processing capacity, tourism and hospitality, and production and processing efficiencies."

Recent changes in local wineries reflect those priorities. Some have invested in new technology to increase efficiency, some have invested in expansion to increase production capacity, and some have invested in improvements and expansions to serve the tourist sector.

The Lake Report has developed an extensive series of stories to explore the evolution and growth of the wine industry in our own backyard, and future stories will feature NOTL wineries and related businesses that demonstrate how the industry is innovating and growing for the future. We'll finish the series with a review of challenges the industry faces going into the future.

This week: Could lasers be the high-tech answer to the perennial problem of birds devastating vineyards?

Part 1: Battle of the birds: Story on Page 16

Town of NOTL declares climate emergency



Dariya Baiguzhiyeva
The Lake Report

In a close vote, Niagara-on-the-Lake councillors have approved declaring a climate emergency in town.

Young climate activists Hazel Norris and Molly Shara addressed council Monday night urging the town to make the decision.

Following in the footsteps of many other municipalities across Canada, making the declaration will be a start of a more eco-friendly future and will change the way people think about their daily lives, the two St. Michael Catholic Elementary School students explained.

"Unless we all put in some effort, no progress will be made," Norris said.

The girls, who have been vocal about climate issues, held two monthly strikes in front of the town hall last fall and formed their own Climate Action Committee this January.

"Yes, political changes are needed. However, people are more inclined to commit to something when it puts themselves and their loved ones at risk," Shara told councillors. "Climate change is

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Tourism reps unhappy with mayor's advocacy for accommodation tax

Dariya Baiguzhiyeva
The Lake Report

Lord Mayor Betty Disero's presentation on capital tourism projects on Monday night was "disappointing" and was meant to "justify a municipal accommodation tax," says tourism industry representative Bob Jackson.

Jackson, chief executive officer of Lais Hotel Properties Limited, attended the workshop Monday along with some members of the tourism and accommodation industry.

"Last night, it was very concerning to us because we felt it was a false premise. All about getting an accommodation tax in," he told The Lake Report in an interview Tuesday.

Disero made a presentation to council sharing her vision of how Niagara-on-the-Lake could look in the next decade or two and discussed what capital projects could be undertaken in NOTL and how to pay for them.

The projects could be paid for by raising taxes or user fees, public fundraising, charging more for events, borrowing money or by implementing a municipal accommodation tax, Disero said.

She said that over the last year she's been thinking of how council operates and asked councillors how they want to be remembered by the end of their term in 2022.

She stressed her presenta-

tion is a starting point for discussions and nothing has been set in stone yet.

NOTL has other parts besides Old Town that are equally historically significant and have to be included in any marketing plans, Disero said.

Some of the potential capital projects included parking at Fort George, heritage lighting and Christmas decorations, Niagara Stone Road improvements, public washrooms, St. Davids Centre and lighting at the gazebo.

One of the lord mayor's ideas was putting up decorative lighting and upgrading the landscape in the proposed development zone in Glendale to enhance the gateway into town. That would cost approximately \$100,000 in addition to a rough cost of \$14,000 for planting, \$11,000 for irrigation and \$5,000 for electrical upgrades.

The cost would be shared between the town and the Niagara Region, but the town wouldn't have to pay until the end of the contract in 2023. However, the region will require a commitment in 2020, Disero said.

Another idea was to make Virgil look more like "a village" where people would stop and go for a walk or shopping.

"I want you to think higher level," Disero told councillors.

"This concept for Virgil is one that will make it into a pleasant, user-friendly

village that will also help businesses that are there now and other businesses in the hospitality and tourism industry come in and develop. It will help us to expand on the existing businesses we have now."

The region is committed to redoing Niagara Stone Road in 2021-22 without any enhancements, unless the town commits to them, Disero said.

The streetscape concept for Niagara Stone Road, including benches, decorative crosswalks, hanging baskets, banner arms, a parkette with Christmas tree hookups on Field Road, an illuminated steel arch and other upgrades were estimated to cost almost \$1 million.

Out of all projects proposed by Disero, only public washrooms on Queen Street have already been included in the town's 10-year capital budget projections.

The town has \$6.5 million per year to spend and there is also a \$10.6 million shortfall every year in the town's capital program.

"You can't nickel-and-dime your way into trying to find (money). We need substantive changes," Disero said.

Another idea included giving Queen Street a facelift, in particular, making the streets narrower by adding more sidewalk space, Disero said, adding that it "wouldn't take away one parking spot."

"It's a mature street. The



Bob Jackson, chief executive officer of Lais Hotel Properties Limited thinks the mayor's Monday presentation advocated for a municipal accommodation tax.

DARIYA BAIGUZHIEVA

street is cracking, the sidewalk is lifting. It will have to be redone," she said. "But all of it will be done through a public process with all the residents and businesses on the street."

In regard to parking, regional councillor Gary Zalepa said the town could use expert help to look at a parking situation and start identifying what can be done. Technology can also be used to improve the experience for both residents and visitors alike, he said.

"We're willing to help as much as we can with support at the region to help the town with that because it's an important thing for us," he said.

Jackson said he drives down Queen Street every day and he disagreed with the lord mayor that the main strip needs overhauling.

"Frankly, it is one of the best-kept streets in town

compared to others. So, that's not an issue."

Jackson said it was "frustrating" for the idea of implementing the hotel tax to keep being brought up after the tourism industry has expressed its strong opposition to it numerous times.

"The projects the lord mayor outlined last night, are they specifically targeted towards tourism? I would argue they are not."

"To be looking at companies that invest the most in this community and guests that invest the most in this community to pay for the town's shortfalls from the budget perspective is incredibly misguided," Jackson said.

At the meeting, Coun. Allan Bisback thanked Disero for the presentation, saying he is ready to provide his support.

"I think we get too

bogged down in day-to-day stuff ... so this makes me excited," he said.

Coun. Gary Burroughs said there needs to be a "wholesome discussion" with the NOTL Chamber of Commerce and he was concerned the concepts appeared to be "a push" for a municipal accommodation tax.

"My only concern is we already have a communication issue with the residents of our town. Throwing out another issue without really clarifying what it is going to be is a mistake because it will be misinterpreted and cause even more communication problems," Burroughs said. "When it goes out, explain exactly what it is."

At the end of her presentation, Disero reminded everyone her concepts were just a starting point for a discussion.

Tidbits

Nominations open for humanitarian award

Nominations are now open for the T. Roy Adams Humanitarian of the Year Award. The award is presented annually by the Niagara Region to honour someone in the Niagara Region who exemplifies Adam's values and dedication to community service. Nominations are open until March 31. The nomination form can be found at niagararegion.ca.

Library survey closes this week

The NOTL Public Library will conclude its month-long community survey this week. To take the survey visit the joint-conversationnotl.org.

Town, Parks Canada talk retirement home

The town will meet with Parks Canada and Niagara Region to explore how the Upper Canada Lodge building can be used after the facility closes in 2022.

New members appointed to pool fundraising committee

The St. Davids Pool Fundraising Committee members now include Paul Harber, Joe Typer, Susan Snider, Adriana Vizzari, Glenn Young, Couns. Gary Burroughs, John Wiens, and David K. Scott, Jill Barber and Taren Trindade.



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NOTL declares climate emergency

Continued from Front Page

exactly that.”

Declaring an emergency will help lay the groundwork for improving the transit system (one of the action committee’s ideas to reduce the town’s carbon footprint) and banning single-use plastics, they said.

Currently, NOTL transit runs on the hour with four inbound stops and five outbound stops starting too late and ending too early in the day, they said, adding the system is “far from convenient” for seniors without cars, youth who can’t drive and low-income workers.

“How hard is it to bring your cup to a café, sip your drink without a straw and buy a reusable grocery bag?” Shara said. “To us, it’s absurd that so many places have not banned single-plastics use yet.”

Coun. Norm Arsenault brought forward a motion to declare a climate emergency and form a town environmental advisory committee

consisting of Coun. Gary Burroughs, Arsenault and seven other community residents.

The committee will act as “a voice” and advise on sustainability, Arsenault said.

The committee will be tasked with providing recommendations on how to reduce the town’s carbon footprint. Some of the proposed options were to implement new technologies and replace existing municipal fleets and transit with zero-emission vehicles.

Some councillors questioned how the decision would affect town operations of pumper trucks, water pumps or phragmite-removal machines that could be running on diesel.

Coun. Erwin Wiens said he commended Arsenault for bringing the cause to the forefront, but said there are more pressing issues the town is facing. An “emergency” requires “immediate responses,” he said.

“I love the idea of what he’s doing ... but we have an infrastructure here of



Molly Shara and Hazel Norris. DARIYA BAIGUZHIEVA

sewers that need to be fixed.”

Coun. Clare Cameron shared the same sentiment, saying the word “emergency” implies some urgent and immediate actions are required.

She questioned how the town will balance the climate decision with other pressing issues like phragmites or when town’s fire pumper trucks and equipment are running on diesel.

“How do we reconcile the trade-off between multiple things that we’re potentially calling emergencies?”

Arsenault agreed with Cameron but explained that making a declaration is rather symbolic at this point and the town isn’t go-

ing to stop using equipment that runs on diesel.

“The intent is to start somewhere. You need to start looking at what is doable,” he said. “The intent is not to say you’re going to stop using fuel totally. That’s not realistic. The intent is to start somewhere, start reducing footprint and work towards an achievable goal.”

In two separate votes, councillors first unanimously approved forming a committee and then narrowly voted to declare a climate emergency with four councillors – Stuart McCormack, Erwin Wiens, Wendy Cheropita and Clare Cameron – voting against the idea.

\$2 sock program supports people in need

Continued from Front Page

one in need in Niagara. Since Virgil’s Avondale started the sale on Feb. 14, area residents have bought 330 pairs of socks for \$2 each.

Store manager Kathy Brown said she was overwhelmed by the community support.

“I’m blown away by what they’ve done,” she told The Lake Report.

“It’s a good cause. I can’t believe people are coming in buying five (pairs) at a time, 10 at a time. It’s amazing, it’s just blowing me away.”

Donations help provide wool socks and winter accessories such as toques and scarves to more than 70 shelters and charitable organizations in Niagara.

Donations also go to the Niagara Regional Police



Donations can be made at Avondale food stores across Niagara. DARIYA BAIGUZHIEVA

cruisers and EMS ambulances as well as more than 150 elementary and secondary schools under the public, Catholic and French Catholic school boards.

The charity was first started by West49 founder Sam Baio in 2019.

“Homelessness is a problem but it only represents less than one per cent of those in poverty,” Baio said in a statement.

“Of course, we want to provide warm socks, toques, scarves and neck tubes to those who are homeless but we also want to serve those with homes who may need extra help to stay warm during the cold winter months.”

More than 30,335 pairs of socks and 54,750 winter accessories have been so far donated this season. All socks are made in Canada.

In NOTL, socks went to Niagara Workers Welcome,

Crossroads Public School and St. Michael Catholic Elementary School, according to the charity’s website.

A pair can be bought for only \$2, a bundle of 10 pairs for \$20 or a bundle of 25 pairs for \$50.

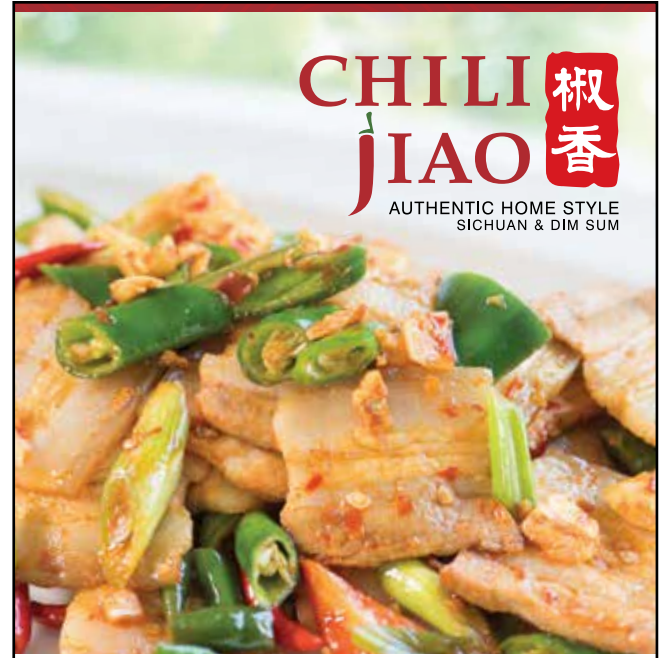
Brown’s goal is to sell 500 pairs and she is positive town residents will help the store to surpass its goal.

After the word spread on Facebook groups about the initiative, more people became aware and “it has just taken off,” Brown said. One person in Toronto even e-transferred the money to buy 10 pairs, she added.

“It’s a great town. It really is,” Brown said.

Those who donate can leave their names on a special card that will be displayed at the store.

“It’s amazing and I’m proud of people,” store clerk Debbie Miller added.



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**Contributed by Norm Arsenaault:**

When planning a holiday you should consider green alternatives, or consider a "staycation" by enjoying a local holiday, thus reducing the environmental impact of vacationing, and benefiting/engaging with your local community, ecology, and economy. Green Loons is a great place to start; they offer some amazing destinations with the feel-good Green factor. greenloons.com

**Contributed by Patty Garriock**

It's no use going back to yesterday because I am a better person today.

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Editorial

Kudos to council on climate crisis

Richard Harley
 Editor-in-Chief

Congratulations to town council for declaring a climate emergency on Monday.

It's good to see that our elected officials recognize the advice of the world's top scientists that yes, climate change is real, caused by humans, and something

needs to give for our planet's sake. And kudos to young NOTL activists Hazel Norris and Molly Shara for helping drive home the message.

Even economists at JP Morgan (no bastion of socialist thought) have warned that human-caused climate change has put the planet on an unsustainable trajectory, and that climate policy must change, or Earth will face irreversible

consequences.

Without change, the climate crisis will impact the global economy, the survival of species on Earth, including humans, among other issues like water stress.

We may only be a small town, but every bit helps. Now it's up to us to heed the message of our town and take steps to become more eco-conscious.

editor@niagaranow.com



Good editorial on short-term rentals

Dear editor:

This very morning I had the pleasure of reading your detailed and extremely informative editorial on short-term rentals and the like, ("Solution needed for short-term rentals," Feb. 20).

Good reporting on a controversial topic in NOTL.

Out here in the hinterlands, there is definitely mumbling and grumblings on the upswing about this subject, and people are taking a second look, literally, at rentals and wondering, "Hey is that licensed? Is it registered?"

Your editorial is good for the town as it increases one's awareness of illegal rentals.

Again thanks for the good journalism.

Keith Bullen
 NOTL

Tremendous work on dry dock story

Dear editor:

I just finished reading the story on the dry docks ("Dry dock alive once again," Feb. 20) and I think it's the best presented story I have seen in your paper. Great layout and story presentation, and tremendous photos. Well done.

Regards,

Christopher Allen
 NOTL

Should absentee homeowners be taxed more, too?

Dear editor:

We are proud owners of a property in NOTL that we rent out to visitors for approximately one-third of the year.

We have been running this for eight years with excellent property managers who live in town.

We dearly love our property and spend many hours keeping our property looking the very best it can be. Many local residents have commented on how well we have improved the property.

We are involved in our community, we are "real" people, I have been a member of a board in the town, my husband and I are members of Friends of Fort George and attend many functions.

We have excellent relationships with our neighbours and take great interest in the community. We support the community in two major ways: we live and spend our money in the community and we bring wonderful visitors to town and they also spend money locally. We are not "hollowing out" the community.

We are the real people in this town! You may not be aware that 50 per cent of short-term vacation rentals are actually owned by so-called real people living in town.

Short-term rental properties should not have to pay more taxes than B&Bs. This is not fair at all. We are all in the same business, providing accommodations to the two million yearly visitors to the town.

We turn away 50 per cent of potential guests as we want to protect the community. Like anyone else, we don't want parties happening in our home. We have multi-generational families staying in our home. We often hear from neighbours how nice our guests are and some were even invited to a neighbourhood street party barbecue!

We know of people that have second homes in NOTL. They do not operate short-term rentals but they are not living in the property full-time either! Should their taxes be raised?

You talk about B&Bs being "hobby businesses." I know several B&B owners and I think they would strongly disagree with you. They own businesses and are keen to make a profit like any business in town, including yourselves with The Lake Report.

From our perspective, this town needs to ensure anyone running a short-term rental property is always properly registered/regulating with the municipality. We agree with you that anyone operating illegally should face a hefty fine.

Finally, raising taxes is not the solution to "protecting" the town we all love.

Alison and Nick Lloyd-Davies
 NOTL



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OPINION

Dr. Brown: Chimpanzees and humans

Chimp behaviour suggests common evolutionary root to people



Dr. William Brown
Special to The Lake Report

In 1979, Frans De Waal, then a young primatologist, wrote what turned out to be a bestseller, "Chimpanzee Politics," which caught the attention and fancy of a wide swath of American readers and politicians.

The book was based on De Waal's observations of a colony of chimpanzees at the Bergers Zoo in Arnhem, Netherlands, where several generations of chimpanzees live on a two-acre island surrounded by a water-filled moat that allows observers plentiful opportunities to observe chimpanzee behaviour and relationships over many years.

Newt Gingrich, the then powerful Republican speaker of the house and many of his congressional colleagues, got a kick out of the close parallels between the political shenanigans of members of the mostly male congress and the behaviour of the male chimpanzees.

In his book, Frans De Waal suggested that entire passages from Machiavelli's classic book, "The Prince," first published in 1532, (which chronicled the sometimes-devilish alliances and schemes ambitious princes used to gain and hang on to power), were directly applicable to the behaviour male chimpanzees display as they wheel and deal to maintain and extend their influence and power within the colony.

Such a similarity in behaviour, between the two primate species, suggests a common evolutionary root.

At the genomic level, early DNA studies suggested that chimpanzees and humans, share all but 2 per cent of their DNA with one another. Maybe so, but those DNA studies obvi-



An illustration of a chimpanzee and human face. GENETICLITERACYPROJECT.ORG

ously don't tell the whole story, given that the brains of chimpanzees are roughly one-third the size of the human brain.

Most of the human expansion was in the neocortex, especially areas related to our far more developed symbolic speech characteristic, and the sheer range and number of human achievements in the arts and science that far surpass anything any ape has done, however clever they might be.

However, similarities between the two species may be much closer at the level of social intelligence and the role emotions play in their behaviour. Social intelligence involves the ability to navigate the social landscape, which begins with a well-developed sense of self-awareness and extends to the ability to read the emotions and perhaps intentions of others, both with respect to oneself and among others in a group.

Chimpanzees can be quite clever and cunning in furthering their ambitions within the hierarchy of males and the larger troop, by forming alliances of convenience to boost their status relative to competitors or hold on to power, including the power

to control access to sex with females in oestrus. And like some humans, they remember grievances, sometimes for years, before settling old scores at times and places of their choice.

With males, it's all about dominance, ambition and preferred access to mates. Alpha males can be very jealous and controlling in access to females, although most of the time, females get to say no, and rape is unusual. Females are more tuned to relationships, which tend to be much more stable and longer lasting than relationships between males, who tend to be more calculating and strategic in nature in fostering or breaking relationships.

De Waal points out that while high-status males are much more concerned with any breach of sexual access, females are more concerned about whether breaches involve a loss of a close (dare I say, loving) relationship with another chimp.

But the most impressive figure to emerge in troops of chimpanzees are the grandmothers, the "mamma" figures who, despite their greater age and physical fragility, are highly respected by both sexes and often the "go to person" for settling disputes.

In one example, a trio of males was chased up a tree for transgressions and kept there by others in the troop. It was "Mama," the grandmother, who finally climbed the tree, kissed and hugged them and then led them down the tree to safety, with no challenges from any member of the troop. That's power.

What struck Gingrich and other politicians 40 years ago, and since, was that power-seeking behaviour in humans, even if well-masked, closely parallels the hierarchical, power-seeking actions of male chimps, including seeking advantageous alliances with others.

All of this suggests such social behaviours have deep evolutionary roots – at least as far back as the last common ancestor for the apes and humans, and possibly much longer. And although our clothes and possessions differ from the "naked ape," our naked behaviours, at their roots, are very similar. That's unnerving!

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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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 or drop them by our office at 724 Mississauga St., NOTL.

The Lake Report

Short-term rental operators are 'real people'

Dear editor:

I am writing regarding editor Richard Harley's Feb. 20 editorial, "Solution needed for short-term rentals."

There needs to be a response to this editorial because of the number of errors and misleading statements in it. For instance, Mr. Harley says that "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."

In fact, fully half of the short term/vacation rental homes are owned and managed by people living in NOTL. Are these residents then not "real" people? Ouch. I'm one of these "not-real" people!

I imagine also that B&B owners take exception to being called "hobby" businesses, which implies they are not expected to make any money — but are merely "hobbies."

B&Bs are another accommodation business that supply needed accommodation to travellers and tourists that wish to stay in town overnight or longer, just as short-term rental and vacation homes encourage longer stays as well.

Both businesses bring to town the right kind of tourist: those who stay awhile and frequent our restaurants, theatres and wineries — not just day-trippers.

He says the vacation rental should be regulated with the actual homeowner having to live in the house. Unfortunately, that means there would be no more cottage rentals in town.

These vacation home rentals have become very popular with tourists who like to stay overnight. The legal ones in town are regulated and subject to town fees. It is the illegal homes that need to be stopped and fined.

Stopping illegal rentals is where I agree with Mr. Harley. By some reports there are more illegal short-term rentals than there are legal and regulated homes, which pay a hefty fee for their licence. This is where we need more action from the town.

It is also erroneous to continually refer to Airbnbs. This is merely a marketing platform — one of many. A large number of local B&Bs are also listed on that platform.

As well, Mr. Harley blames short-term rentals for "hollowing out of neighbourhoods." This is simply not the case. In my neighbourhood, in Old Town, half of the neighbouring houses are second homes. Some neighbours we see only a few days a month and even more rarely in the winter when other neighbours are gone for months at a time.

On it goes. There were other errors that show Mr. Harley's opinion piece was poorly researched and showed a lack of knowledge of the accommodation businesses which are so important to this town.

Tony Chisholm
NOTL

Agreed that illegal short-term rentals are a **problem**, but disagree that legal ones are hollowing out NOTL

Dear editor:

I would welcome the opportunity to discuss with editor Richard Harley his solutions to the supposed short-term rental problem in Niagara-on-the-Lake, (editorial, Feb. 20, "Solution needed for short-term rentals").

My wife and I are the owners of Niagara Holiday Rentals and manage 25 vacation homes in Old Town. We are also the owners of a B&B in Old Town. In addition to my experience managing both owner-occupied short-term rentals and whole-home rentals, I have also managed long-term rentals for nearly 10 years.

Unfortunately, short-term rentals have a bad reputation, however, it is just a few bad houses that are causing this misperception. And repeating the complaints of Toronto that short-term rentals are taking away affordable housing is misinformed.

Yes, NOTL is expensive, as is Toronto, but the lack of affordable housing is not the result of short-term rentals, not in Toronto, nor in NOTL. Short-term rentals are a very small factor in influencing affordable housing.

The current mortgage rules in Canada are affecting the lack of affordable housing. The current flawed landlord tenant laws in Ontario are a huge reason for the lack of affordable housing and have directly resulted in many investment properties converting from long-term rentals to short-term rentals.

I've experienced this first-hand with investment properties I owned in London, Ont., and know of many investors who have converted their properties from long-term to short-term rentals due to the problems experienced with long-term rentals.

Regarding the solutions outlined in your editorial:

1. Why must short-term rental operators pay a higher rate than live-in B&B operators? Some vacation rentals are vacation homes for the homeowners. Allowing guests while the home is not used by the owners avoids empty houses and empty streets. According to the town staff and councillors, only a small amount of collected taxes goes to the municipality. Requiring short-term rental properties to pay higher taxes is unfair by any measure.

2. Why must the owner live in the house year-round for a licence to be granted? Many vacation rentals are owned by residents, or have a competent, local property manager looking after the rental. Very few, if any, B&Bs allow young children or pets. Families with children can visit the town and stay at a vacation rental, and there are some that allow a small dog. A family with kids can't affordably stay in a hotel, and likely couldn't bring their family pet. A licensed vacation home allows more families and small groups to affordably stay and experience Niagara-on-the-Lake.

3. There are second homes that aren't used as short-term rentals that the owners only visit on an infrequent basis. Those are empty homes hollowing out the neighbourhood. A vacation rental home is accommodating guests, it's not hollowing the neighbourhood, but allowing families and friends to get together and experience the town at an affordable rate.

4. The increase in licence fees is a user fee. If you exempt one user over another that sounds very biased. Owning a B&B is not a hobby business. A hobby business is not meant to make

money. Many owners of a B&B could not afford the home if it did not make any money. A number of short-term rental home owners do live in Niagara-on-the-lake, are voting residents, and share a second home with visitors to the town. By also living in town it provides a local host to keep an eye on the property and not have a unwatched "party house" (which seems to be the misconception that all short-term rentals are party houses).

5. I agree with the point that the short-term rental bylaws need to have some bite. It's not fair for those operating a legal short-term rental and paying the licence fees to be competing against those who aren't following the current safety laws and not paying the licensing fees. The short-term rental bylaw needs to be enforceable and ensure that all properties are licensed and pay their share.

The municipal accommodation tax is not the best solution for Niagara-on-the-Lake. Town council decided to defer it until more questions can be answered.

There are many unanswered questions about the municipal accommodation tax and it's unclear whether it will be the cash machine that it has been portrayed as.

The editorial by Mr. Harley perpetuates another misconception. Not all short-term rentals are "owner absent" and not all short-term rentals are "party houses." Many owners live in town and keep a close eye on their property and their guests. And many other homes employ a local property manager to maintain the house and also ensure guests are respectful to the home and also to neighbours.

Comparing Niagara-on-the-Lake to Vancouver, or to Toronto, is not a good comparison. Niagara-on-the-Lake is predominantly supported by tourism and by agriculture. Toronto and Vancouver have a lot more than tourism. We could allow highrise apartments, condos and hotels in Old Town if you want to be like Toronto or Vancouver.

If only principal residences were allowed as short-term rentals, then if the owner leaves town while guests are staying at the house then the home is not being watched while the guests are staying there. A second home where the owner lives in town, or that is managed by a local property manager, ensures that the home is watched while the guests are there.

The Niagara-on-the-Lake residents looking to stay and make a living in their hometown are more than likely involved in some way in tourism, which is supported by short-term rentals. So, being too restrictive could very well negatively affect the town. It might make homes more affordable through reduced housing prices, but as a result reduce the jobs and income of those people making a living in the town.

Without tourism would the Shaw Festival still be here? Would Fort George? Would all the great restaurants and wineries survive? Probably not.

Whatever is done to protect our town, it should not be at the expense of businesses that are supporting tourism and encouraging guests to stay in town for more than a few hours.

Jason Clements
Niagara Holiday Rentals
NOTL



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The nominees are in.

The first ever NOTL's Choice Awards nominees are in, chosen by residents of Niagara-on-the-Lake. Many businesses wanted to say thanks to the community for nominating them. Find a full list of nominees at www.lakereport.ca and make sure to vote for your favourites. Voting closes March 30.



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Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday
<h1>The Lake Report</h1> <p>COMMUNITY FAVOURITES: Legion Fish Fry every Thursday 4:30 p.m. to 7:30 p.m. Duplicate Bridge at the Community Centre Tuesdays and Fridays at 1 p.m.</p>			
1	2	3	4
<p>Open Mic at the Legion with host Buzz Hummer - 2 p.m. to 5 p.m. - NOTL Legion</p> <p>Writers' Circle - 2 p.m. - NOTL Public Library</p> <p>Ukulele Workshop - 3 p.m. to 5 p.m. - NOTL Community Centre</p>	<p>Fun Duplicate Bridge - 9 a.m. to noon - NOTL Community Centre</p> <p>Babies and Books - 11 a.m. - NOTL Public Library</p> <p>Community Wellness Committee - 10 a.m. - Council Chambers</p>	<p>Tumble Tots - 9 a.m. - NOTL Public Library</p> <p>Nobel Prize Series Nobel Prize in Economics - 2 p.m. - NOTL Public Library</p> <p>Table Tennis - 10 a.m. to 12 p.m. - NOTL Community Centre</p> <p>Murder Mystery Dinner Theatre - 6 p.m. - The Irish Harp</p> <p>Duplicate Bridge (ACBL Sanctioned) - 1 p.m. to 4 p.m. - NOTL Community Centre</p> <p>Niagara Golden Age Club: Seniors Euchre - 1 p.m. - NOTL Community Centre</p>	<p>The Upside to Down - 905 935 1800 - 11 a.m. - Henley</p> <p>Steam Story Time: Forces - 11 a.m. - NOTL Public Library</p> <p>Movie: Downton Abbey - 11 a.m. - NOTL Public Library</p> <p>Networking Etiquette - 5:30 p.m. to 7:30 p.m. - Armoury Niagara Col</p> <p>German Conversation - 9:45 a.m. to 11:20 a.m. - Community Centre</p>
8	9	10	11
<p>International Women's Day - 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. - Riverview Cellars Estate Winery</p> <p>8th Annual Evening for Women - 3 p.m. to 8 p.m. - Club 55</p>	<p>Committee of the whole - Planning - 6 p.m. - Council Chambers</p> <p>Public Meeting: Zoning By-law Amendment - 6 p.m. - Council Chambers</p> <p>Public Meeting: Community Planning Permit System - 6 p.m. - Council Chambers</p> <p>Fun Duplicate Bridge - 9 a.m. to noon - NOTL Community Centre</p> <p>Babies and Books - 11 a.m. - NOTL Public Library</p>	<p>Table Tennis - 10 a.m. to 12 p.m. - NOTL Community Centre</p> <p>Coffee with Lord Mayor - 4-5 p.m. - Queenston Library</p> <p>Duplicate Bridge (ACBL Sanctioned) - 1 p.m. to 4 p.m. - NOTL Community Centre</p> <p>NOTL Rotary Club - Noon - NOTL Community Centre</p> <p>Niagara Golden Age Club: Seniors Euchre - 1 p.m. - NOTL Community Centre</p>	<p>STEAM Story Time - 11:45 a.m. - NOTL Public Library</p> <p>German Conversation - 9:45 a.m. to 11:20 a.m. - Community Centre</p> <p>NOTL Toastmasters - Niagara College Danforth Campus</p> <p>Community Skate - 6 a.m. to 6 p.m. - Wayne Estates Winery Rink</p> <p>Special Council Meeting - 7 p.m. - Council Chambers</p>

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

The Lake Report

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COMMUNITY CALENDAR

Feb. 27 - March 14

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Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
	27 Homeschooler Drop In - 10 a.m. to 11:30 a.m. - NOTL Public Library Oddities of the Universe with Dr. Brian Pihack - 7 p.m. - NOTL Public Library Tinker Thinker - 6 p.m. - NOTL Public Library Seniors Drop in: Casual Bridge - 1 p.m. to 4 p.m. - NOTL Community Centre Homeschooler Drop in - 9:30 a.m. to 11 a.m. - NOTL Public Library	28 Film: Speakers of the Dead - 11:30 a.m. - NOTL Museum Yoga with Jenny - 10 a.m. - NOTL Public Library Homeschool: Fantastic Food and Nutrition - 11 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. - NOTL Public Library Duplicate Bridge (ACBL Sanctioned) - 1 p.m. to 4 p.m. - NOTL Community Centre Knit a Bit - 2 p.m. - NOTL Public Library	29 Brew your own Kombucha - 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. - Canadian Food and Wine Institute Indoor Goat Yoga - 1 p.m. - Small Talk Vineyards
4 Resizing RSVP - 10 a.m. - Royal George Theatre Energy and Environment - 10 a.m. - NOTL Public Library Obbey - 2 p.m. - NOTL Public Library Wine Night - 7 p.m. - The Old Winery Wine Group - 10 a.m. - NOTL Public Library	5 Table Tennis - 10:15 a.m. to 12:15 p.m. - NOTL Community Centre Homeschooler Drop In - 10 a.m. to 11:30 a.m. - NOTL Public Library Tinker Thinker - 6 p.m. - NOTL Public Library Seniors Drop in: Casual Bridge - 1 p.m. to 4 p.m. - NOTL Community Centre	6 Shaw Festival Annual Meeting - 2 p.m. - Royal George Theatre Yoga with Jenny - 10 a.m. - NOTL Public Library Knit a Bit - 2 p.m. - NOTL Public Library Duplicate Bridge (ACBL Sanctioned) - 1 p.m. to 4 p.m. - NOTL Community Centre	7 Paper Bag Princess Day - 11 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. - NOTL Public Library Annual Home Show - 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. - Crossroads Public School Youth Skate Night - 6 p.m. to 8 p.m. - Fort George Skating Rink Culinary Regions of Italy - 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. - Canadian Food and Wine Institute Home and Garden Craft Show - 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. - Crossroads Public School
11 Table Tennis - 10:15 a.m. to 12:15 p.m. - NOTL Community Centre Seniors Drop in: Casual Bridge - 1 p.m. to 4 p.m. - NOTL Community Centre Homeschooler Drop in - 9:30 a.m. to 11 a.m. - NOTL Public Library Customer Experience and Technology Committee - 4 p.m. - Council Chambers	12 Table Tennis - 10:15 a.m. to 12:15 p.m. - NOTL Community Centre Seniors Drop in: Casual Bridge - 1 p.m. to 4 p.m. - NOTL Community Centre Homeschooler Drop in - 9:30 a.m. to 11 a.m. - NOTL Public Library Customer Experience and Technology Committee - 4 p.m. - Council Chambers	13 Duplicate Bridge (ACBL Sanctioned) - 1 p.m. to 4 p.m. - NOTL Community Centre Knit a Bit - 2 p.m. - NOTL Public Library Steve Goldberger and the Gentle Spirits - 9 p.m. - The Old Winery Restaurant	14 A Ball in the Regency Style - 7 p.m. - Fort George The Breakfast Club - 10 p.m. - Club 55

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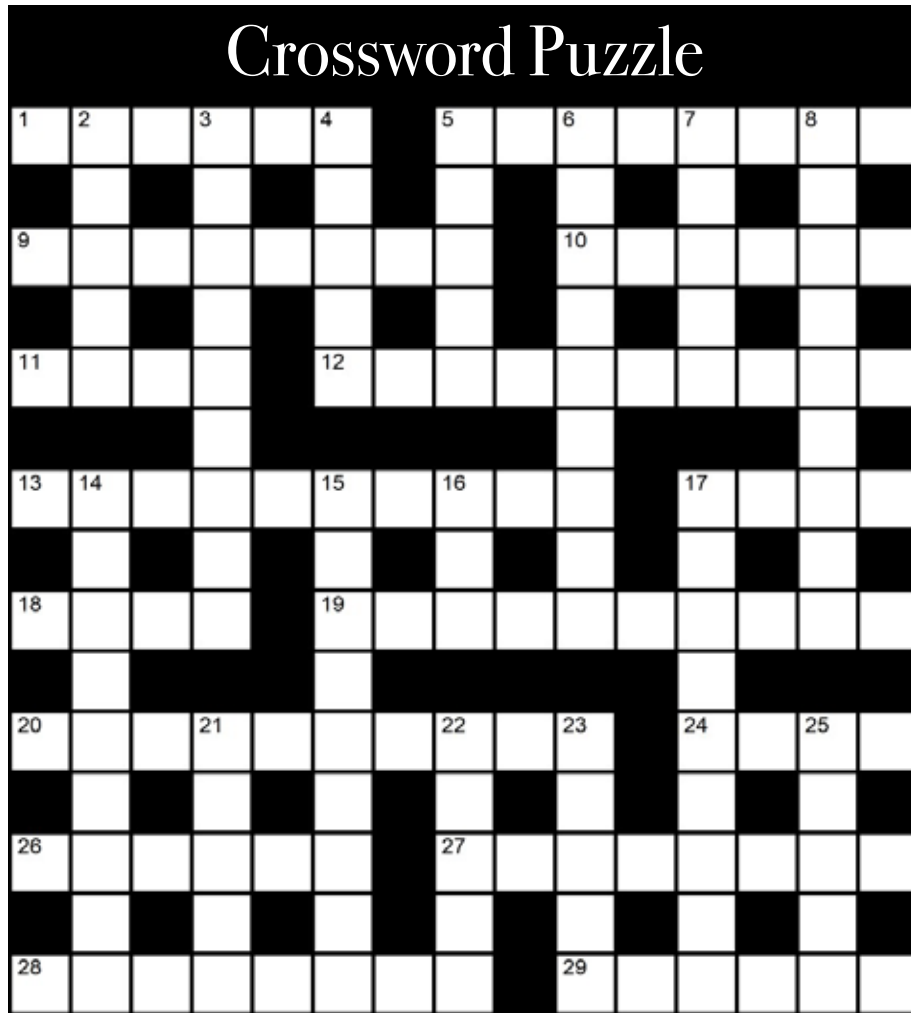
The Lake Report is looking for puzzle makers who would like to help develop this page. We are seeking both standard and cryptic crossword writers. editor@niagaranow.com

Across

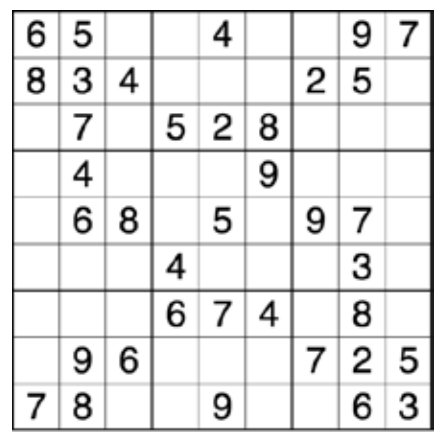
- 1. Disreputable (6)
- 5. Fraught with danger (8)
- 9. Like most lunch breaks (4-4)
- 10. Longtime Zimbabwean leader (6)
- 11. Sticky snares (4)
- 12. Sparsely distributed amount (10)
- 13. She saw deserts ranged below (10)
- 17. Imperial field measure (4)
- 18. In the proper manner (4)
- 19. Group who stick it to the ball (6,4)
- 20. Grandstanders (10)
- 24. Eliot's were practical (4)
- 26. Landing places (6)
- 27. Develops and utilizes (8)
- 28. Character sketches (8)
- 29. Raised the roof (6)

Down

- 2. Residence (5)
- 3. Sheers off (5,4)
- 4. Often bought with emulsion (5)
- 5. Communicator before texts and smartphones (5)
- 6. Recall past experiences (9)
- 7. Within the rules (5)
- 8. Inner city, perhaps (5,4)
- 14. Like Gabriel, for example (9)
- 15. Dry run (9)
- 16. And so on (3)
- 17. Scholar to sort out where to learn to paint (3,6)
- 21. Bluff (5)
- 22. Bakers? (5)
- 23. Mawkish (5)
- 25. Right of ownership (5)



Last issue's answers



Top: Lena Scholman and Catherine Skinner share 10 tips for every writer during the awards ceremony on Sunday. Bottom left: Bill Hamilton hosts the ceremony and welcomes speakers to the stage. Bottom right: Founder Hermine Steinberg accepts a gift from the Writers' Circle. PHOTOS BY RICHARD HARLEY

Writers' Circle celebrates talent across the province

Continued from Front Page

by NOTL resident Holmes Hook, who "broke the ice" with a jingle hockey stick as he spoke.

First-place winners in each category then read short stories and passages from their winning pieces.

The night was also an accolade to founder Hermine Steinberg, who recently moved to Toronto and had to give up her position as the chair of the group.

Terry Belleville spoke to the audience and read kind words about Steinberg, written by various people who have been involved in the Writers' Circle in some fashion.

"... Hermine is a force of nature. Without her ability to focus and organize us mere mortals into pro-

ductive and much better writers, while at the same time meeting friends and having fun, I would not be the writer I am today," he read from a letter by former member Doug Reid.

In a letter by Richard West, now chair of the group, said if there was one word to describe Steinberg it would be "caring."

"All that caring was brought into endless hard work to make the NOTL Writers' Circle what it is today," West wrote.

Past member John Sayers echoed comments about Steinberg in an interview with The Lake Report.

"All this has happened because of (Steinberg). It wouldn't have happened, I think, without her, and it picks up all the keen, enthusiastic, knowledgeable

people who have come to Niagara-on-the-Lake, and Niagara broadly, too."

After hearing the letters, Steinberg was presented with a small gift from the members.

New this year, the competition was opened up to writers across Ontario. Member Bill Hamilton, who MCed the event, said the decision was a good one, resulting in about 15 more submissions than usual.

He also thanked Steinberg for her efforts in bringing the group to its eighth year.

A compilation of stories from contestants can be found in a paperback release by the Writers' Circle, called "Rising Spirits 2019." Anyone interested in a copy, or in joining the Writers' Circle, can email West at rwest1564@gmail.com.



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A view from the side of a mountain in Costa Rica. Find more Hometown Traveller stories at www.niagaranow.com
BRITTANY CARTER

Hometown Traveller: Costa Rican yoga retreat

Brittany Carter
The Lake Report

Forget everything you think you know about a vegan yoga retreat in Costa Rica.

The trip isn't what you might think, and so much more than you could imagine.

Costa Rica was high on my travel bucket list, so I'm committed from the first whispers of this excursion and easily enlisted my husband to join. My yoga teaching friend Ashley Blake is pursuing a travel-advising career under the brand Live Love Yoga Retreats and this is her pilot project; we're more than willing to offer ourselves up as guinea pigs.

Paying the deposit close to a year in advance we're armed with so much preparation, anticipation and expectations about the upcoming vacation, but none of our preconceived notions do the actual experience any justice.

In the early hours of Sunday, Feb. 2, a group of 14 marginally acquainted travellers gathered at Pearson International Airport to hop a plane to San Jose, Costa Rica.

The next seven days are a blend of tranquillity and chaos in a whirlwind of adventure, mindfulness, new friendships and unforgettable moments.

Stepping off the plane after about a five-hour flight, our group follows fearless leaders and tour guides Blake and Eric Martin, comically re-

ferred to as "Mom and Dad" for the week, to claim our bags and secure our rental vans for the stay. We accept the family vibe and become one solitary unit throughout the trip.

Costa Rica runs on its own schedule – much more laid-back than Toronto. So, it's no real surprise when we bounce from one baggage carousel to another and then back again to track down our belongings. A laissez-faire mindset is evident; diligent organization and strict schedules take less precedence in the Central American country.

But when in Rome, err, Costa Rica, right?
Pura Vida.

With a bit of confusion and lots of patience we eventually collect our bags, board our rental vehicles and carve our way through the countryside from San Jose toward the small surf town of Dominical, Puntarenas. During our entire day of travel, we soak up the remaining daylight and incredible mountain views through the windows of our two large vans, and finally arrive at Ville Ambiente, our home for the week.

Gorgeous doesn't begin to describe the open mansion tucked away in the mountain surrounded by the flourishing jungle and far-off views of the Pacific Ocean.

I'm not vegan and neither are more than half of us on the retreat, but we are willing and eager to try new things. I'm the type who vacations

for the food, so I am more than thrilled when I take my first bite of our incredible vegan meal prepared for us on our first night. The food is so delicious, flavourful and filling I could easily forget there's any other way to eat.

And though our breakfast each morning and three dinners throughout the week are expertly prepared vegan spreads by Uvita's The Private Chef company, we are also encouraged to check out local restaurants and "Sodas," which are little markets and cafes, to discover meals that speak to our taste buds. There's ample opportunity to try the local fare.

The highlight is our sunset, ocean-view dinner at El Avion restaurant in Manuel Antonio. The restaurant is built in a converted CIA-operated, C-123 surplus military cargo plane, which was integral in the Iran-Contra affair in 1986, or so the story goes. As to how the plane became the setting for a sunset-view dinner on an ocean bluff in Manuel Antonio?

"If we tell you ... we would have to kill you," El Avion's website warns.

Whatever the restaurant's origins – after a long day exploring Manuel Antonio National Park, playing peek-a-boo with white-headed Capuchin monkeys, trying to spot a two-toed sloth and soaking up the sun while lounging with iguanas on the beach – an early dinner at El Avion is exactly what

our group needs.

While savoury food and breathtaking views vie to steal the show this trip, I most look forward to our two yoga classes beginning and ending each day back at the villa. After all, Dominical is home to the Envision Festival, a week-long immersive experience celebrating sustainability, music, movement, spirituality, health, art and education, which begins one week after we leave. What better setting to connect with ourselves through yoga and meditation?

An hour-long Hatha Yoga class at sunrise amidst the Costa Rican jungle to a soundtrack of howler monkeys in the distance is only matched by the tranquillity of soothing evening yoga and jungle sound meditation under the stars to close out each night.

Our week is a well-thought out and carefully planned mix of quiet downtime and adventurous excursions. And while we take the opportunity to truly revel in the serenity of our secluded villa peaking out over the mountainside, we're fearless in our desire to seek out new experiences.

If you ever find yourself in Costa Rica you'd be doing yourself a disservice to skip the six-kilometre hike up to Nauyaca Waterfalls. Reading mixed reviews beforehand about appropriate footwear for the hike, I opt for sandals, and sometimes bare feet, though admittedly the



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journey may be easier with running shoes.

Equipped with snacks and water, we power hike for more than an hour; hot, exhausted and triumphant when we reach the top. We're met with the offering of a fresh, cold coconut for purchase at the end of our climb, and I'm certain nothing has ever tasted more nourishing and refreshing. A quick break to drink coconut water and snack on the "meat" is all we need to rejuvenate ourselves before continuing our climb down the man-made stairs toward the waterfall.

Of course, if the combined 12-kilometre hike isn't for you there are also truck and horse-back tours available.

Upon reaching the waterfall we are blown away by its natural beauty. A few steps farther down, those who love ice-cold water are welcome to swim at the foot of the waterfall. I'm content staying dry while capturing all I can through the lens of my camera.

And if the idea of intrepid adventures and stunning waterfalls excites you – Uvita Waterfall is another must-see. Though again, I choose to view the excitement perched on a rock with my camera, many brave the steep climb to slide down a natural waterslide.

Our last day is bittersweet with unscheduled downtime in Dominical. Surfing lessons are popular and several of the group take to the seven-foot waves for a few hours of instruction in the morning. My husband is newly converted and I'm certain I'll be fighting off his imminent purchase of a surfboard.

I spend my last few hours being enchanted by Costa Rica and wandering the beach road in solitude while my husband falls for the waves. The town looks to be gearing up for the upcoming Envision Festival; a shop boasting "Free Art" has been open for less than a month and with the smell of incense surrounding the laid-back, friendly shop owners sitting on the floor, the setting embodies everything I imagine the festival to feel like.

The end of the week comes too quickly and soon we are driving back toward San Jose, windows down, hungrily soaking up the last of the warm sun before boarding our plane back to Toronto.

Keeping those surf-town vibes close to my heart as I ease my way back into real life, I'm already daydreaming about another blissful stint back to Central America where my soul comes alive and my heart is happy.



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FEATURED



Delicious homemade tomato sauce. COLLIN GOODINE

COOKING WITH COLLIN

Tomato sauce to go with those meatballs

Homemade tomato sauce

Collin Goodine
Special to The Lake Report

Last week we featured a recipe for Italian-style meatballs, so I thought I would share with you a very simple, but tasty tomato sauce. After all, how can you have spaghetti and meatballs without the sauce?

This one can be used as an everyday sauce, whether for meatball subs, pasta, lasagna, eggplant Parmesan or just a dip for arancini. Or it can be used as a base/mother sauce for your more complex sauces like bolognese, arabiatta, puttanesca or even in soups. It can also be stored, frozen or jarred.

Whatever you decide to use this tomato sauce for, please have fun making it and enjoy.

Ingredients:

- | | |
|--|-----------------------|
| 1/4 cup canola oil | 3 cans water |
| 1/4 cup olive oil | 1 cup salt |
| 2 chopped red peppers | 1/2 cup sugar |
| 1 large white onion | 1/2 cup chicken stock |
| 1 large red onion | 1 large carrot |
| 9 cans (28oz) good quality Italian whole tomatoes, peeled with basil | |

Directions:

In a large, thick-bottomed pot heat the two oils, chopped peppers and onions. Allow them to simmer for 20-30 minutes. While the vegetables are simmering, place all other ingredients except the carrot into another large pot and simmer. When the peppers are tender, add the oil mixture to the tomato mixture and stir to incorporate. Put the carrot into the sauce and push to the bottom. Allow the tomato sauce to simmer until the carrot is very soft and overcooked. Turn off the sauce and puree with a stick blender or a food processor until you reach your desired texture. Season with salt and pepper to taste.

Royal Oak student report



Royal Oak students purchase reusable coffee cups for their teachers to be more eco-conscious. SUPPLIED PHOTO

Eco-Warriors declare war on coffee cups

Teia and Diego
Royal Oak Community School
Special to The Lake Report

The Eco Warriors Club is a group of students at Royal Oak who work with our Principal, Ms. Julia, and who want to save the Earth and make our school and community more eco-friendly. One of things we've done as a group is a "trash audit" to see what garbage our school creates. The trash that we found the most of was yogurt cups and little things like chips and goldfish containers. The Eco-Warriors noticed that the teachers were creating a lot of waste with coffee cups so we went to Starbucks and bought reusable mugs, then we decorated them and gave them to the teachers. The teachers loved the designs on their new coffee cups and it has made a big impact already!

Our next idea is teaching the school about boomerang lunches. Boomerang lunches are when you bring home what you brought to school with the goal of little to no garbage. We are creating a campaign to teach our classmates and then our goal is litterless lunches — we will let you know how this goes!



Fitness on vacation

Jaclyn Willms
Special to The Lake Report

It is the season for vacations and travelling and your fitness and health may get pushed to the back burner. Don't let it! Here are five tips you can practice while you're away to keep your health in the forefront.

Enjoy your vacations!

Tips on staying fit while travelling;

1. Drink tons of water. Staying hydrated is key.
2. Take the stairs as often as you can. Work those glutes!
3. Buy groceries instead of always eating out.
4. Make tea your new favourite drink!
5. Get in some movement or stretching to keep your muscles moving and blood flowing.

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



Jaclyn Willms demonstrates a "downward dog" beside the pool in Miami Beach, Florida. STAY FIT NOTL

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EXPLORING PHOTOS

WITH JIM SMITH



Vern Davey's butcher shop


The store on Queen Street that is now Just Christmas previously was the Niagara Advance's printing and publishing office. Prior to the Advance, the store was home to Vern Davey's butcher shop. This picture shows Davey's shop as it looked at that time. The man standing in the middle is Edward Sherlock, who was the chief of police. It was the Davey family who took in my grandmother from the Bernardo home in England. She lived upstairs in this building and it is here that she met my grandfather. My great-grandfather had his barber shop just next door and I can see his barber pole on the right edge of the picture just under where the photo is torn.

SUPPLIED PHOTO/JIM SMITH

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Nature and Niagara National Historic Sites

Interested in learning more about the nature conservation projects taking place at Paradise Grove, Niagara Shores Park, and Fort Mississauga? Join us for a field visit to Paradise Grove and/or a public open house to discover more about nature-based initiatives in the Niagara Region.

Paradise Grove Field Visit
Thursday March 12, 2020
1:45 to 3 p.m.
Meet at the John and Charlotte St parking lot
Pre-register by calling 905-468-6602

Public Open House
6:30 to 8:00 p.m.
Navy Hall, 305 Ricardo Street,
Niagara-on-the-Lake

For more information
parksCanada.gc.ca/fortgeorge
ont-niagara@pc.gc.ca
905-468-6602



 **Canada**



The contract

Brian Marshall
Featured



What's in that contract? SUPPLIED/BRIAN MARSHALL

With design plans in-hand, completing the quotation process is relatively straightforward. The short-listed contractors don't have to guess at the scope-of-work, it's there in front of them.

Do not be surprised if a contractor makes suggestions to modify the design based on their build experience. Very often these suggestions can lead to cost savings in the project while leaving the integrity of the design intact. Note that "low-bid" is not always the "best bid"; ensure you understand exactly what each contractor is providing in their quotation including the cost of

change-orders (incurred if you make a change in the scope-of-work during the build). All quotes should clearly specify all details, responsibilities and accountabilities in writing.

Once you have made the final decision on the contractor for the project, it is vital that a written contract be executed by both parties. This contract is not your quote, no matter what format it is presented in. Most reputable contractors will have a standardized contract which was either prepared or reviewed by their lawyer.

Unfortunately, many of these standardized contracts tend to be weighted in the contractor's favour and provide you little protection. Generally this is not a deliberate action by the contractor to gain advantage, but rather the natural result of their solicitor's duties and obligations. Unless the contractor specifically directs the inclusion of clauses to protect the client, it is likely such will be absent. Luckily, contracts can be amended prior to execution.

So, what are some of the items that should be in your

contract?

First, a schedule of payment tied directly to completion of project deliverables. These milestones should be clear and unequivocal.

Second, a project schedule with completion dates specified for each deliverable. A penalty clause (usually financial) for failure by the contractor to complete on schedule should be considered.

Third, your right to have any portion of the work inspected by an independent third party expert, at your cost, and the contractor's responsibility for remediation of any deficiencies found thereby.

Fourth, waiver by the contractor of their right to place a lien on your property; this establishes equal legal recourse for both parties in the event of a dispute.

Finally, if this is a major renovation, run the contract by your lawyer; spending a few bucks now can avoid major problems later!



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



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.



Did you know?

The Lake Report's printer sources 100 per cent of its paper fibre from industry leading paper mills, which use quick-growth, sustainable, renewable plots of land, rather than clear-cutting forests.

The ink is also vegetable-based.

NIAGARA'S HISTORY
UNVEILED

Stories of black history in NOTL

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

Settlement in Niagara

Niagara is one of the few towns in Ontario that has had black residents since the province's inception. However, in the years following the War of 1812, Niagara saw an increase in black immigrants and runaway slaves; news of Ontario's slave ban had reached the United States. When the United States Fugitive Slave Act of 1850 was passed, the Underground Railroad movement became increasingly active and freedom-seekers found their way into Niagara and the surrounding area.

In town, black residents formed their own community by acquiring property near one another. This area, nicknamed the "coloured village," was located roughly south of William Street and between King and Butler streets. The new residents also joined local church congregations, and Niagara, Queenston, Virgil and St. Davids each saw their Baptist church membership grow. In Niagara, the black community attended the Baptist church on Mississagua Street, now the site known as the "Negro Burial Ground."

Many found work on farms or were labourers, and some managed to become prosperous. Louis Ross owned a barbershop, Daniel Waters owned and operated a livery stable, and his brother John was a landlord. In the 1870s, John ran for and was elected as Niagara's first black town councillor, representing an all-white ward; he was re-elected three times.

By the late-1800s, the black population moved to larger areas, like St. Catharines, to find work, but several residents chose to remain in Niagara-on-the-Lake. Even though the population was small, the black community influenced the social and political life of the town. Few traces remain today of the settlement; however, the Negro Burial Ground, the Daniel Waters home and the William Stewart home are a few surviving reminders.

For more stories about Niagara-on-the-Lake's black history and to learn more about members of the black community in Niagara, visit vofpark.org.



A map of Newark in 1813. OURONTARIO.CA

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MLS ID #30781731



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201-61 PAFFARO STREET, NIAGARA-ON-THE-LAKE - \$440,000
MLS ID #30791111



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MLS ID #30781095



765 LAKESHORE ROAD, NIAGARA-ON-THE-LAKE - \$1,725,000
MLS ID #30754879



502 LAKESHORE ROAD, NIAGARA-ON-THE-LAKE - \$1,100,000
MLS ID #30775348



720 KING STREET, NIAGARA-ON-THE-LAKE - \$1,650,000
MLS ID #30769475



OPEN HOUSE SUNDAY 2:00PM - 4:00PM

8 UPPER CANADA DR., NIAGARA-ON-THE-LAKE - \$725,000
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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 for a chance to be featured.



Flag raised for Kin Canada

Members of the NOTL Kinsmen Club, a Zone D deputy governor Lori Dawn Antaya, Lord Mayor Betty Disero and Coun. Erwin Wiens during flag raising ceremony last Thursday.

Read the full story and see more pictures at www.niagaranow.com. DARIYA BAIGUZHIEVA



Niagara College Teaching Winery



Events associate Rachel Surla accepts the Golden Plunger on behalf of the Niagara College Teaching Winery. THE GOLDEN PLUNGER

One of the wine experts at the Niagara College Teaching Winery will lead your group out to their vineyards (weather permitting) to discuss the growing season, terroir and the Canadian wine industry as a whole. Next, make your way into the onsite winemaking facilities where you will learn about the vine-to-bottle journey of the college's award-winning wines. Then, enjoy a structured tasting of three VQA wines and finish off your experience with a trip to their washroom facilities. Of course, that was our highlight. Like many Niagara wineries, there is an instructional sign informing guests not to stand on the toilets. For some reason, at wineries in particular, this is a problem.

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	180
Legion Guzzlers	155
SandTrap Close Shavians	147
Legion Guyz	135
SandTrap	128
Legion 'Ayles'	126
Silks Legends	113
Legion Dartbags	86



Tarot of the week

Lisa Tache/Special

DATE: Feb. 27, 2020

The Seven of Wands shows a man on top of a hill, armed with a wand in each hand and fighting off six more wands

from below. He appears to be defending his territory. We've all had those days when it feels like we are battling one thing after another and not getting anywhere. The Seven of Wands is a card of obstacles, defense and holding your ground. It describes those times when we must assert ourselves and defend our position. The Seven of Wands reminds us of our strength and encourages us to keep moving forward. When the Seven of Wands appears in a Tarot reading, expect to see an increase in people who disagree with you. You will need to secure your territory and fight for what you stand for. This will require courage and persistence, but you have the strength and determination to do it.

ASK YOURSELF THIS

What do you feel you need to protect at this time?

RIDDLE ME THIS

Give me food and I will live. Give me water and I will die. What am I?

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

Answer: A bar of soap

Answered first by: Megan Vanderlee

Also answered correctly (in order) by: Lynne Stewart, Quinn Tiller, Kathy Neufeld, Hilda Kroeker, Bob Wheatley, Sheila Meloche, Pam Dowling, Julia Klassen, Susan Pohorly, Margie Enns, Susan Davies, Wendy Bosela, Gary Davis, Sadie Willms, Cathy DeBon, Britiney Turasz, Katie Reimer

Email answers, with your name, to editor@niagaranow.com for a chance to win a prize.



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INNOVATION IN WINE COUNTRY: PART 1

Battle of the birds

New **laser deterrent system** could be future of bird control

Jill Troyer
The Lake Report

An exhibit showcasing an automated laser unit designed to keep birds out of vineyards proved to be very popular at the Ontario Fruit and Vegetable Convention in Niagara Falls last week.

"It was the busiest show that I have ever done in my 20-plus years," said Jeremy Perkins, a sales representative for Bird Control Group, a Dutch company that makes the laser unit. "I would expect that we will sell at least 25 or more units in Ontario this year."

One grower from Niagara-on-the-Lake who talked to Perkins at the show said he'd seen articles about the laser in various farming magazines.

And while he is interested in the technology, the \$10,000 U.S. pricetag might be hard to justify.

Bird bangers, also known as bird cannons, are commonly used to scare off birds and have long been a source of tension between Niagara grape growers and residents who complain about the noise.

Lee Kuhn, operations manager at Malivoire Wine in Beamsville, went to the show and bought two units to install.

"We like to be innovators," he said. "We saw them in use in Oregon and California when we were there, and talked to people that have them, and they

seem exceptional."

"We do a lot of netting, and it's extremely costly. It can be up to \$1,000 per acre, so for us, these units will pay for themselves in two years," Kuhn said.

"We also use bird cannons and that upsets the neighbours, so we're trying to stop. We'll turn them off when we install the lasers, and hope the lasers work well right from the start," he added.

Each laser machine can cover 20 acres.

The automated unit projects a green laser beam, which scares birds away.

"Birds see it differently than humans. We see it as a point of light, but birds see the whole beam. They perceive it as a solid object, like a stick of

light, so they feel they're under attack and they leave the area," said Perkins. It's like a light sabre coming at them and they perceive it as a threat.

"I've been in sales for 25 years. I've sold bangers and speakers with birds of prey sounds on them. There always comes a point when you have to move them or change something or update, because the birds get used to them. This is the first product that is the real deal," said Perkins.

"They never get used to it, because we set multiple different patterns that constantly change."

"To be effective, it's really important to start using the laser at least two

"We do a lot of netting, and it's extremely costly. It can be up to \$1,000 per acre, so for us, these units will pay for themselves in two years."

LEE KUHN
MALIVOIRE WINE



Top: Birds can cause a lot of damage to farmers during harvest season. DARIYA BAIGUZHIEVA/FILE Bottom: Jeremy Perkins of Bird Control Group explains how the laser works. JILL TROYER

weeks before the grapes are ripe, and before birds have already started eating them," he explained.

"Once birds are established in a vineyard, and they've tasted ripe grapes, it's harder to move them after they have a reason to stay. You need to start before the fruit is ripe, and you train them that this area is protected."

Growers who have used the laser as instructed have reduced the number of birds in their vineyards by as much as 90 per cent, according to Perkins.

The laser unit, which was initially used to keep birds from blueberry crops, was adopted by grape growers in the United States in 2018, and it's popularity is on the rise.

"We've upped production three times since last year. The company is growing rapidly," said Perkins.

Back at Malivoire, Kuhn is hoping the lasers work "at least as well as netting, and maybe even better." He expects to get a lot of interest from other growers in Niagara, wanting to see it in action, and see how effective it is.

Kuhn plans to have the units, which will be solar powered, set up in the next few weeks, and turned on just as soon as there is the first hint of sweetness in the grapes.

Next: How Lakeview Vineyard Equipment has grown to support innovation in the wine industry and create jobs in NOTL.

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