



A day in the pod: No homework and 'quantum physics' for four-year-olds

Evan Saunders
Local Journalism Initiative
The Lake Report

At the Niagara Alternative Learning Alliance there's no homework, no tests and kids as young as eight are being taught questionable scientific subjects such as epigenetics.

"It's all about the kids. We don't do tests and we don't do homework, right? Because we don't want the kids to be on their core brain," Lori Davidson, co-founder of the pod, said in

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Chamber president resigns, takes job in Yukon

Richard Harley
The Lake Report

NOTL Chamber of Commerce president Eduardo Lafforgue has a cool new job. Very cool, actually.

He has resigned from the chamber and will be taking on a role as tourism director for the Yukon Territory.

He said the job was an opportunity that he couldn't pass up.

"It's a fantastic opportunity. They don't come around very often, but at my age

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NOTL approves 2.99% budget hike for 2022

Evan Saunders
Local Journalism Initiative
The Lake Report

Niagara-on-the-Lake's 2022 operating budget will mean a 2.99 per cent general tax increase for

property owners.

Owners of a home with an average assessment value of \$536,960 will see an annual increase of \$44.08 on their municipal taxes, the town said.

Urban residents will also

see a significant increase in the special levy for stormwater management.

Spending in that category will jump to \$879,443 from \$456,998 in 2021, equating to a \$53.17 increase on the average tax bill for a total

of \$97.25.

The large investment in stormwater management is a result of new legislation, treasurer Kyle Freeborn said.

"There is now legislative requirements to do regular

clean-outs of infrastructure and provide more in-depth documentation (and) data collection that is subject to a compliance audit," he said.

"The storm program has

Continued on Page 2

Willowbank to sell Laura Secord school

Restoration school says historic building is unused and sale makes sense

Richard Harley
The Lake Report

The Willowbank School of Restoration Arts is preparing to sell the historic former Laura Secord school property in Queenston.

Board vice-chair John Scott has been helping lead the way to the sale, and says it's a natural step for the school, which doesn't make use of the surplus property.

He said it has nothing to do with Willowbank being in danger of closing.

"Willowbank is a very, very strong operating school," he said.

"We've been analyzing Willowbank and what it needs to operate and be sustainable in the long-term. And we've spent six or seven months looking at it, several people," he said.

"We said, 'What do we need, what don't we need?' and you come down to the fact that that particular school is not required. We basically don't use it," he told The Lake Report.

"It needs to be maintained and the resources we



Willowbank's vice-chair John Scott says selling the unused property is the best option for the school. RICHARD HARLEY

have we want to dedicate towards the operation of the (Willowbank) school, so it makes no sense for us to continue it and it makes all kinds of good sense for somebody else to have it."

He wants whoever takes it over to "do something to the

benefit of Queenston. I don't know what that would be, but that's what I think will happen."

He said 96 per cent of the school's graduates are in demand.

"We have people on Parliament Hill working on the

restoration there. Willowbank is a jewel. Everybody in this area should be very proud of it."

He said he is unaware what the value of the estimated one-acre property is right now, but that the board will be in discussions with

commercial agents in the coming weeks.

The property does have heritage value, especially the original part of the school built in 1906, he said.

"It's structurally

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60th anniversary season for Shaw Festival kicks off early

Jill Troyer
The Lake Report

The Shaw Festival has an ambitious season planned for its 60th anniversary, and it gets underway next week. There are 22 new shows, and a schedule that starts Feb. 9 and spans the calendar through to Dec. 23.

"Our focus for 2022 is to restore consumer confidence. We want to encourage people to get back out and return to a safe environment," explains executive director/CEO Tim Jennings.

Early ticket sales were strong when the season was first announced last fall,

and then "Omicron slowed things down, but hopefully we'll make that up," said Jennings.

He hopes the province's new hotel credit will get more Ontarians coming and staying over. The Ontario Staycation Tax Credit al-

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Shaw's executive director Tim Jennings. FILE/SUPPLIED



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Restaurateur hopes this is **final** COVID reopening

Evan Saunders
Local Journalism Initiative
The Lake Report

Silks Country Kitchen took the day off on Monday to reorient from a takeout model back to in-house dining, and co-owner Jen Phelan would like for it to be the last time.

"I'm very hopeful that this will be it and it seems that (the province) is saying all the right things," Phelan said on Tuesday.

Last Thursday, Ontario's chief medical officer of health said the province will need to start living with COVID-19. Phelan's optimism is checked in the face of such comments by the back-and-forth lockdowns and rhetoric of the past two years.

"They said all the right things before, too," she said.

Regardless, she said it is great to be open again and thanked Silks' customers for helping the Virgil restaurant get through the hard times.

"We're in a good area



Jen Phelan serves up drinks to the boys at the bar, Randy Debon, Frank Davis and the inscrutable Freduardo. EVAN SAUNDERS

and we've been here a long time. We've got a pretty good core group that's stuck around," she said.

Phelan said one of the most difficult aspects of the repeated lockdowns has been retaining new hires.

"We've kept everybody working but you always

lose one or two people each time you reopen, which is a struggle," she said.

The employment climate created by the pandemic has made it difficult to find new staff.

"They're just harder to replace. Nobody wants to come to work because

they're afraid they're not going to have a job in two months," Phelan said.

"We're just looking for some normalcy."

Over at the bar, some longtime Silk regulars showed up to enjoy their fourth day-one pint at the popular restaurant.

"Oh my God, it feels so good to be back in here," said Randy Debon, a veteran of 20-plus years patronizing Silks.

"Look how much they lose being closed for no reason," Debon said.

He said it's difficult for customers to lose their favourite hangout but more difficult for staff and the owners who lose income.

"We enjoy coming here, so it's hard. I mean, how the heck do these people all pay rent and everything when it's closed? You can only make so much money on takeout," he said.

"You try to help them out, but," Debon trailed off.

But regaining that community spirit and connecting was sweet for the boys at the bar.

"It's just nice to see Jen again," Frank Davis said.

"To see all of them, everybody!" Debon added in.

"Hopefully it will last this time, 'cause this up-and-down yo-yo stuff has got to stop, one way or another.

It's killing small businesses and it's killing restaurants," Davis said.

He said it isn't just the closures and loss of income that hurts restaurants.

"You end up throwing away a bunch of inventory and there's a lot of waste," he said.

In the annals of history there are few people who have the strength of character to only have one name. Seal, Bono, Cher, Sting and in the little community of Virgil there is Freduardo.

"This is the best place to go with anybody who wants to come," Freduardo said.

"Good food, good atmosphere," Freduardo said before being interrupted by Debon.

"You're supposed to say, 'Go Habs, Go!'" Debon said.

"Go Leafs, Go!" Freduardo retorted.

It will come as no surprise to the reader that Debon and Freduardo sat at opposite ends of the group.

Erwin Wiens **criticizes** council spending, prompts rebuttal from Disero

Continued from Front Page

struggled in the past few years to remain a program that can cover all of its mandates."

"With this investment, the town will be able to move forward with the cleaning and meeting new legislative requirements."

The storm levy will remain an increased expense for the foreseeable future, Freeborn told councillors during a special council meeting to pass the budget on Monday.

Other key drivers of the budget were salaries for staff, insurance, legislative requirements and reduced revenue for the town due to the pandemic.

When budget discussions started last October, staff had originally proposed a more than 13 per cent increase in taxes. After specific directions from council to keep the budget between a two and five per cent increase, staff were able to shave off more than \$1 million in spending.



Coun. Erwin Wiens.

The total operating budget is \$40,158,178, up from \$37,327,452 last year.

The town's budget was repeatedly called unsustainable and Coun. Allan Bisback referred to it as "maintenance budget 2.0."

One of the key changes for easing taxes and making the budget more sustainable is the passing of the municipal accommodation tax, a new revenue tool for Niagara-on-the-Lake, Bisback said.

The so-called hotel tax is set to begin in July after being narrowly approved in a 5-4 vote.

Coun. Erwin Wiens was not entirely thrilled about

having to direct staff to cut the operating budget. He was the only councillor to vote against the budget.

"We think it's a victory that we went back to our operations and said, 'Hey, we need you guys to cut more,'" Wiens told his fellow councillors.

"Now we're in a situation where we can't do the day-to-day operations."

Bisback pushed back against that comment.

"No services have been cut, all the town services have been protected, which is great news for residents," he said on Tuesday.

But that was only the first of several opportunities Wiens took to lambaste the budget and the work the current council has done for the past four years.

At one point during the meeting, he accused councillors of voting "against the tourism strategy."

"Just a point of order because I'm getting a little bit annoyed when statements are being made by my colleagues. I'm not aware that

this council voted against the tourism strategy," Bisback said.

"We have the public listening to this and we're sending mixed messages."

Chief administrator Marlene Cluckie assured Bisback that councillors had never voted against the tourism strategy and it was moving forward as planned.

Wiens further claimed council had failed to "heed one warning" passed on by staff relating to the town falling behind in budgetary concerns and poorly prioritizing where money is spent.

"We don't have a revenue problem, we have an expense problem and we've never addressed it. All it was is we went back to operations and said, 'Spend less money,' and that's not the way to do it."

"I'm leaving after four years and I'm leaving the next council to have to have a huge tax increase because we're not sustainable."

Wiens said council had been too lenient on spend-

ing due to the municipal election this fall. He also criticized the amount of legal fees allocated in the budget (\$500,000) and the money spent on consultants. The town currently has 19 active studies as part of the budget.

"I feel bad (for the next council). I won't be there to deal with it but I apologize to them in advance."

On Wednesday, Wiens confirmed he has no plans to run for another term.

His speech did not sit well with Lord Mayor Betty Disero, who highlighted the struggles the town has faced throughout the COVID-19 pandemic.

"I'm sure we're all living on the same planet because we've all had to deal with COVID and those issues."

She also pushed back against Wiens' claims that the town is taking on unnecessary legal fees.

"When we arrived here three years ago no one ever anticipated that developers would be taking us to court and that we would have to

react and defend the town from lawsuits," Disero said.

"We have to respond to lawsuits or our town would be much worse off in terms of development and people taking advantage than we are today," she said.

"I'm quite proud that all of us, or, most of us, have decided to defend our positions."

"I think the successes that we've had in those lawsuits showed us that we did the right thing, defending our town. It costs money, yes, but it needed to be done," Disero said.

She acknowledged people may be frustrated, "but governments are messy, democracy is messy and we're moving forward the best we can."

"I'm at least proud of the direction we are taking, not only with the budget but with this town. And if it meant we had to have some developers sue us and take us to court because they wanted what they wanted, I was proud to defend our town."



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Niagara Long Term Care outbreak is **easing up**

Richard Harley
The Lake Report

An outbreak of COVID-19 at the Niagara Long Term Care residence in Niagara-on-the-Lake appears to almost be over.

While the home remains in outbreak status, executive director Chris Poos said the third floor of the home is now COVID-free.

The Wellington Street care home is still dealing with one active resident case (with 36 resolved) and four active staff cases (33 resolved). Two residents with COVID-19 have died during the outbreak while palliative.

"The cause was not directly related to COVID-19, but they did contract the virus while palliative," Poos said.

"We remain in regular contact with public health,"



Niagara Long Term Care residence. FILE PHOTO

he said. "Our staff and resident PCR swabs from (Monday) are with St. Joseph's (hospital in Hamilton) and we expect to have the results within 24 to 48 hours."

Poos said the home is continuing with all outbreak protocols which include residents being isolated to their rooms and receiving in-room meal service.

Group activities and communal dining are on hold and increased cleaning is happening in all high-touch areas and on surfaces, he said.

General visitation and resident social absences are not allowed now, however fully vaccinated designated essential caregivers may visit one at a time and must pass active screening, receive a

negative rapid test and wear full PPE including a respirator mask.

Poos said residents are receiving rapid and PCR tests, and staff are being rapid tested daily as they enter the home.

"This practice will continue throughout this outbreak," he said.

"We continue to encourage virtual visits with residents and many residents have designated essential caregivers that are allowed to come into the home and participate in the care of their loved one," he said.

"We are well stocked with all PPE, most staff have returned to work, and the home is stable."

A year ago, in January 2021, before vaccines were available, a COVID outbreak at the facility led to 11 deaths and more than 120 infections.

Sale of property will help Willowbank **longterm**

Continued from Front Page

sound and it has got a heritage designation. And it really is really quite something. The addition of 1952, I'm not sure. I don't know if there's any historic value there but there sure as heck is to that main structure that's towards the riverside."

He said the school would not be adding any stipulations to the sale.

"Nor would we get into trying to suggest anything to anybody. We're not going to steer it one way or another. We're not going to try to rezone it. We'll just kind of put it out there and see what comes to us," Scott said.

He said he believes the sale is "to the benefit of everybody, to have something down there that somebody's using."

"It's to the benefit of Willowbank to not have to maintain a building that is



John Scott in front of a later addition to the school, which he suspects doesn't have much heritage value. The original building is historically designated. RICHARD HARLEY

basically taking resources away from the school, so it's actually a very positive story in my mind."

He said Willowbank isn't sure what the money will go to yet, but noted there is a "bit of a mortgage" on the Laura Secord property.

That mortgage will have to be retired.

"And then any funds over and above that we put into an endowment fund and the endowment fund would be for sustaining the school over the long-term," Scott said.

"We're not in trouble. Obviously, we're not going to take that money and operate. We're going to invest that money and if there is a lot of money left, we'll invest in and take the earnings off that money and use it for the school."

NOTL capital budget totals **\$10.5 million**

Evan Saunders
The Lake Report

Niagara-on-the-Lake's 2022 capital budget has been set at \$10.5 million, up

\$100,000 from a year ago.

Key projects include a water-main replacement near Line 4 and Airport Road totalling \$2.62 million, \$855,000 for a replacement

pumper truck for the fire department, and \$750,000 for reconstruction on Line 3 Road, among many other long-term projects.

The roads department

is using the largest portion of the budget (32 per cent) followed by water at about 28 per cent, and fire and emergency services at 21 per cent.

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Broadcast legend **Ralph Mellanby** was active in NOTL's sports community

Ross Robinson
The Lake Report

I always felt lucky after spending time with Ralph Mellanby at his home above St. Davids.

He enjoyed visitors and warmly shared his memories and memorabilia. His wife Gillian would sometimes remind me that he wasn't name dropping when he mentioned the Rocket, the Hulls, Ballard, Orr, Eagleson, John Denver and Anne Murray.

These were people he worked with during his long broadcasting career, bringing a dream world to the people of Canada. He was innovative, determined and visionary

The title of one of his books was "Let the Games Begin: My life with Olympians, hockey heroes and other good sports."

Ralph was always a good sport. When he and Gillian moved to Niagara, they quickly involved themselves in the sporting community. I nicknamed him The Commissioner, because when he said something should happen, it happened.

Gillian was soon a central figure on the women's tennis scene. A strong player and a good sport.

When Ralph and I watched sports on television, it was so interesting sharing time with a man who had won five Emmy Awards, had helped broadcast nearly a dozen Olympic Games and graced countless head tables.

He was a broadcasting pioneer and innovator, who produced Hockey Night in Canada, Stanley Cups, the "Miracle on Ice" in Lake Placid, numerous Grey Cups and Briers, the Blue Jays, nos Expos, and the Summit Series in 1972. And more. How about



Ralph Mellanby talks about his career at a NOTL tennis tournament. FILE/RICHARD HARLEY

executive producer of the 1988 Calgary Winter Olympics, overseeing the worldwide feed?

Growing up in western Ontario, he had been taught by his parents and coaches that sports should be a place to compete, to have fun and to earn the respect of other athletes.

Ralph was an outstanding athlete and learned to play within the rules, to be a good sport. His goal was to make sports fairer, more interesting and more fun for everyone. And to win!

He was pleased to share fun stories and precious memories from his broadcasting career and he was always thinking about ways to modify the rules. While advocating for changes, he was never afraid to upset people if those people needed upsetting.

Often, we would discuss how games could be improved for spectators. In his business, if the game was better to watch, more people would watch on television – and then more advertisers would spend more money to buy more

ads. Voila! Ralph was paid to figger this out, eh?

A few years ago, I asked Ralph to explain his "Rules Evolution Philosophy" to participants in the World Premiere Men's One-Serve Tennis Tournament here in NOTL. He happily showed up at 8:30 a.m. to speak.

"The rules and strategies must evolve as talent levels improve. Aces are boring. Get the ball in play and let fans watch rallies and great shot-making. Then, they cheer."

For another NOTL club tournament, the late Don Goodwin, longtime voice of the Rogers Cup, and an important Tennis Canada personality, volunteered to be our distinguished and efficient emcee. How lucky are we in our little town? So much talent.

The three-point arc and the 24-second shot clock in basketball, a few timely rule changes in rugby, and shorter versions of cricket. Even curling has made some changes.

To quote Ralph, "Five sets in men's Grand Slam tennis? Cruel and unusual

punishment for the players and presumptuous to ask fans to watch one match for over four hours."

Several times over the years, I asked Ralph for his thoughts about fighting and violence in hockey.

He always reiterated his statement to the members of then-Prime Minister Brian Mulroney's task force on fair play in sports, more than 35 years ago: "Until the NHL totally bans fighting, it will never have a meaningful television contract in the United States. Americans think of hockey as just one step above roller derby." Yes, sports fans, 35 years ago.

"Watch the world juniors, college and university hockey, Olympic hockey. They love it. And no fighting!"

Yes, Ralph Mellanby has passed away at age 87. The world of sports broadcasting has lost a great man, who was always a good sport and was always thinking of ways to make sports better.

As Gillian Mellanby told me, "Ralph loved making new friends. Ralph never met a stranger."



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

COVID Tracker

NOTL active cases: 98

Region active cases: 2,658

Region deaths: 492

Region total cases: 31,664

Region resolved cases: 28,514

**Feb. 3 data per Niagara Region Public Health.*

Public health warns that "Due to the surge in COVID-19 cases, limited availability of testing, and changes to case and contact management practices, case counts shown below are an underestimate of the true number of individuals in Niagara with COVID-19. Data should be interpreted with caution."



Contributed by Patty Garriock

"It's the possibility of having a dream come true that makes life interesting."

- Paul Coelho

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Running on water

NOTL photographer Dave Van de Laar captured this photo of a Canadian goose "running" on the water near the Jetboat launch in Queenston.

Calling all NOTL photographers: send us some of your interesting, evocative, quirky images of life around town and we'll consider them for this space on our editorial page. Email images (1 MB or more) to editor@niagaranow.com.



Editorial

Coun. Zalepa and the St. Davids roundabout

Richard Harley
Editor-In-Chief

Niagara-on-the-Lake regional Coun. Gary Zalepa seems to have made up his mind that a roundabout is the best thing for the main intersection in St. Davids.

But NOTL residents, whom he was elected to represent, overwhelmingly disagree.

So far, there's been almost nothing but opposition to the idea, from nearby business owners who fear it will hurt their enterprises, to residents who fear it will simply destroy the character of the village's historic

"Four Corners."

And while we do understand the region's push toward roundabouts — we feel this is not the place for one.

Aside from it being too small an intersection for an effective roundabout without disturbing the character of the entire neighbourhood, we also question whether any traffic problem exists there.

We pass through that area regularly. Every week we deliver our paper to St. Davids. Not once have we experienced any significant or noteworthy traffic congestion at the intersection.

There may be a brief stop from time to time, but certainly nothing to merit destroying the character of an already vulnerable neighbourhood.

And even if there is a minor traffic issue, Zalepa should remember that residents chose him to represent and fight for their interests, not to let projects move forward that could hurt our town's character — even if the region's planners and consultants are in favour of it.

Just because it looks good on paper, doesn't mean it's the right course of action. And based on the input

of residents and businesses, and our own observations, this roundabout is a solution in search of a problem.

While we recognize Mr. Zalepa's right to cast his vote as he sees fit, what's good for the Region of Niagara, isn't necessarily good for NOTL.

With a municipal election on the horizon, our councillor has made a choice that could prove unpopular with the electorate. We respect that but strongly disagree with his position.

The region needs to scrap this roundabout idea ... yesterday.
editor@niagaranow.com



Mixing truckers, vaccinations and politics

Dear editor:

What probably 99 per cent of the "truckers" demonstrating for their "rights" in Ottawa are ignoring is that they have all been vaccinated and that is why they are alive and healthy in a healthy society with one of the lowest infant mortality rates in the world.

The Canadian public has to assume therefore that their motives for "demonstrating" are other than the need for vaccination to protect themselves and others.

Surely they are not so crass and ignorant that they would endanger family,



Protesters at the NOTL Husky on York Road Jan 27. RICHARD HARLEY

friends, co-workers and the public by not being vaccinated, by not wearing a mask?

Hence we, Canadians at large, are forced to conclude that these truckers are the tools of various political entities — and

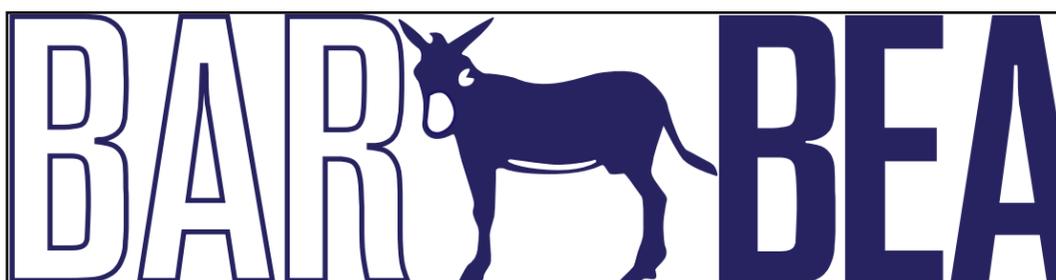
prominent among those, all so-called conservative and extreme right-wing racist white supremacist hate groups masquerading as political parties.

This is Canadians literally aping American attitudes and behaviours.

That Canadian truckers are allowing themselves to be so manipulated and used is shameful.

It all reminds me of the Monty Python skit with the "Lumberjack" song.

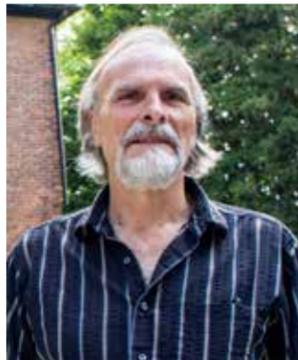
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Where do we stand on **personal freedom?**



Brian Marshall
OPINION

There is something ugly rising within my country. Something that I never would have believed that a populace, which has traditionally been a model of inclusivity based upon a live-and-let-live ethos, might be subject to.

Not that I'm suggesting we are saints, lord knows that historically our country has many shameful stains, however I believed that these were not formed from the fibre of the many but rather forged by the agenda of the few.

Recently, I have been forced to reconsider my beliefs.

In the last two years across this country we have been asked to make sacrific-

es that in many ways might be suggested to parallel (in significantly different ways) those of our parents and grandparents during wars that spanned a significant portion of the globe.

And we have complied. We have shouldered the restrictions and made concessions relative to our personal freedoms that at the very least might be described as draconian.

Still, these sacrifices might be justified based on our understanding they were made for the greater good of all. And that is what Canadians have always been recognized for.

However, in the past few weeks I have listened on radio to my fellow citizens suggesting that those who have not complied with the majority position should be denied basic health care and other essential services. That those who do not choose to accept the will of the majority should be "put on an island and abandoned to their own devices."

Do Canadians really support ghettoizing their fellow citizens?

At a time like this I am reminded of the words of Voltaire's biographer,

Evelyn Beatrice Hall (S.G. Tallentyre) when describing her subject's philosophy: "I disapprove of what you say, but will defend to the death your right to say it."

In our current milieu, I might also paraphrase this to: I disagree with your decision but will defend to the death your right of choice to make it.

Which brings me to The Lake Report's Jan. 27 editorial "Close maskless school now," in which the first nine paragraphs speak to denying these people the right and the freedom to make their own choice.

With all due respect to the author of this editorial, my family has had men and women who served in every major conflict this country has been involved in over the last 120 years and, in every case, they fought to preserve the freedoms (including that of choice) that every Canadian has had as an inalienable right to practise and enjoy.

Whether we agree with these folks' decision or not, it is not our place to deny them their right of choice.

I submit that the current protest in Ottawa funded by an unprecedented level of

GoFundMe contributions which, as of Jan. 28 (as reported by Bell Media 1010) averaged about \$100 per contribution, without any expectation of financial return, is a very clear plebiscite.

Further, based on televised statements from the legitimate protesters, I do not feel this movement represents a vaxx/anti-vaxx divide. It's a protest engendered by government-imposed limitations on individual rights and freedoms, an issue I believe far more Canadians are invested in than whether or not someone gets the "jab."

Our duty as citizens of a free and democratic society is to safeguard the principles around which Canada has evolved.

This duty is not the purview of elected governments driven by political agendas. It is my responsibility, and your responsibility, as individual Canadians to determine whether we preserve a free and inclusive society for future generations.

Guess it's up to each of us to decide, but I know where I will stand.

Brian Marshall writes *The Lake Report's* weekly *Arch-i-Text* column.

Thanks for investigating **maskless school** in our town

Dear editor:

Thank you for your investigative journalism Jan. 27 on the operation of the Niagara Alternative Learning Alliance in Virgil, "50 children attending maskless, non-distanced

'learning pod' " in Virgil.

And thanks also for your editorial suggesting this maskless school should be shut down.

Gail Lord
NOTL



Editorial **hit the mark**

Dear editor:

Thanks you so much for your Jan. 27 editorial, "Close maskless school now."

I am a retired secondary school teacher and senior in the community, and it represented extremely well how I feel about this.

Carol Oriold
NOTL

Simple solution for Queen and Mississagua

Dear editor:

Having lived near the intersection of Queen and Mississagua streets dating back to the 1960s, I witnessed vehicles going straight through many times, ruining the display on the golf course.

The answer is simple, economical, no maintenance: put in rumble strips on Mississagua. It should be a three-way stop.

Doug Bruce
Niagara Falls

Yes, Virgil learning pod should be **shut down**

Dear editor:

Thank you for your forthright editorial Jan. 27 on Virgil's pod school. Yes, it should be closed down now.

The children pictured may well be learning about gardening but the organizers have a more insidious curriculum. They are teaching the children that our laws do not apply to them.

(I assume that they are also learning that the rules requiring them to wear a bicycle helmet or a seatbelt may also be ignored.)

As a former elementary school principal, I know that a school is a place where children learn to live and work with others in their community for the benefit of all.

What they are learning here is that they are somehow special and have no need to care about what



is good for anyone beyond their bubble. There is no such thing as a "parallel society."

We all share the same space and breathe the same air.

I despair for these children who are being taught that they are the in some unique place where society's rules do not apply.

This approach to learning will lead to ignorance, selfishness and anarchy.

Jim Reynolds
NOTL

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Left: Lori Davidson, co-founder of the Niagara Alternative Learning Alliance. Right: Students of mixed ages learn about growing plants. FILE/EVAN SAUNDERS

Pod school operators teach ‘specialized’ lessons

Continued from Front Page

an interview last week. “Today we are going to be talking about epigenetics and how the chemicals released in your brain are based on your thoughts,” Davidson said.

Epigenetics is a relatively new science based on understanding the changing behaviour of genes under certain conditions, according to the U.S. Centers for Disease Control.

It has been criticized as being susceptible to quackery and pseudoscience and in 2020, Dr. Allison Bernstein told McGill University’s Office for Science and Society that “this field is too new at this point for there to be any evidence-based recommendations.”

Nevertheless, Davidson spoke about the power of the placebo and thinking over one’s biology.

“Fear is the number one disease that can turn your genes on and off. Fear is a true killer so we can’t let the kids be scared,” she said.

“A lot of kids have a fear-based response to math. They’re reacting as if there’s a tiger in the room and if you’re reacting as if there’s a tiger in the room you can’t learn.”

“And if you’re trying to learn off a computer, it’s releasing too much serotonin, which means your brain won’t work.”

Davidson explained an exercise she had for the children to help them with their mental health.

“The younger kids are

going to draw sad faces and then happy faces and then what makes them happy because they want to turn sad thoughts into positive thoughts,” Davidson said.

She gave a further example.

“‘Oh, I hate doing laundry.’ Change it into, ‘I’m thankful that I have laundry to do,’ because you want to release good chemicals in your body because that keeps you healthy,” she said.

After a question from The Lake Report regarding the status of COVID-19 testing at the pod, the founders refused to answer and asked to be withheld from the publication and further interviews.

This week they reaffirmed their unwillingness to engage in interviews or conversation regarding the operation in the old Virgil school.

The “learning pod” allows more than 50 children and adults to mix without wearing masks. After inquiries by The Lake Report last week about the school’s curriculum, practices and policies, the Ontario education ministry, Region of Niagara and Town of Niagara-on-the-Lake all said they were investigating the school.

Previously, Davidson laid out what a regular day would look like for the pod children.

“They normally play outside until about 9:30, the littles, anyway, because they have more energy to burn off. But, yeah, there is structure,” she said.

When a reporter visited

last week, some kids were in classes, some outside, some in the halls and one was having a nap on a couch.

“We do the homeschooling based on the Ontario curriculum and we get that out of the way in the morning and the rest of the day is all skill development,” co-founder Monica McCourt said.

“We teach epigenetics to the kids, we teach quantum physics to a four-year-old. It’s not hard to do, right?”

LORI DAVIDSON
CO-FOUNDER,
NIAGARA ALTERNATIVE LEARNING
ALLIANCE

Davidson said the kids also have the freedom to choose what they would like to learn.

“If a child wants to play piano all day, oh, we’ve got music educators, let’s do that. We have guitar, one of our educators speaks three different languages, three of them speak Spanish, we’ve got four French teachers,” she said.

“So, it’s basically whatever you want.”

Davidson said the pod teaches “specialty lessons” every day between 1 and 3 p.m. and provided an example.

“We taught them how to make vinegar the very first day,” she said.

“Because, you know, what did everybody panic about during the initial pandemic

was no hand sanitizers. Like, calm down guys, it’s just vinegar and calm down, we can make it with fruit,” she said.

A 2014 study by the National Collaborating Centre for Environmental Health determined vinegar, while capable of killing germs, is not strong enough to be a true substitute for manufactured sanitizers.

Davidson said if a child needed help with speech development then the money paid by parents, which goes into what Davidson refers to as “the collective,” would be used to hire a professional.

“We’ll figure it out, because that’s what the collective does. We take care of that child together,” she said.

Davidson said she sometimes teaches one lesson to children ranging from eight to 13 and last Monday was preparing to teach them epigenetics.

She said she used to run a restaurant and made no claims to The Lake Report about having teaching credentials.

“I have to base a lesson which all of them can understand and then I give them work at the level that they will understand,” she said.

“So, it’s about empowerment too, so we’re teaching kids how to feel powerful and be in control of their own destiny so they’re not scared of things,” she said.

“We teach epigenetics to the kids, we teach quantum physics to a four-year-old. It’s not hard to do, right?”

Davidson said many of the parents who are dropping kids off at the pod have

shown an interest in learning from them as well.

“A lot of adults don’t know this stuff either and that’s why we have a lot of adults coming in and they’re like, ‘Oh, we want to learn this stuff too, we don’t know any of it,’” she said.

Davidson said they were also teaching the kids “foraging lessons.”

“We’re just going to drop the kids off at Malcomson Eco Park and they’re going to learn how to forage there,” she said.

Davidson said adults had volunteered their time to teach the kids outdoor survival lessons.

All of these “skills-based lessons” serve to teach the kids what Davidson deems “the old knowledge.”

“Our grandparents are passing away and they have information that we don’t have about how to grow your own food, how to mend a hole in your pants, how to fix your car,” McCourt said.

“So many kids, they just don’t know. They have no clue how to do any of this and a lot of adults our age don’t know how to do it either,” she said.

“We’re trying to bring that back to the education system for children and teach them the basics, because they’re not getting this from the government.”

McCourt said she was going to teach the kids small engine repair by having them take apart a weed whacker.

Davidson referred to two women as the “crystal sisters,” and said they teach

the kids yoga and “geology” every morning.

She also said one of her influences is South African politician Michael Tellingier for creating a free community in South Africa.

Tellingier is the author of several books, such as “Slave Species of the Gods: The Secret History of the Anunnaki and their Mission on Earth,” which posits a claim that human beings are the result of genetic engineering by an alien species known as the Anunnaki, who used us as slaves on Earth and left us here, according to the book’s description on Amazon.com.

“The resumes that we have from the people that are coming in here are just phenomenal,” Davidson said.

The Lake Report acquired the informal resume of one of the teachers at the pod, Désirée Key.

Key is learned in four languages and has a B.A. from Brock University in applied linguistics and Spanish.

“As a teenager, I quit high school, travelled around Europe for a year, and then enrolled in an experimental high school in Germany,” she told The Lake Report in an email.

Key is also a sound and usui reiki master teacher, a “gentle yet powerful form of energy healing,” she said.

According to the Cancer Research Institute of the United Kingdom and many other sources, “there is no scientific evidence to show that reiki can prevent, treat or cure cancer, or any other disease.”



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NOTL council approves **2% hotel tax** to begin July 1

Evan Saunders
Local Journalism Initiative
The Lake Report



Coun. Allan Bisback said he thinks the accommodation tax should be expanded to all types of rentals eventually. SOURCED

After years of deliberation, false starts and delays, Niagara-on-the-Lake councillors have approved the implementation of a controversial municipal accommodation tax.

The tax is set to commence on July 1, after narrowly passing in a 5-4 council vote last week.

For many councillors, it was a simple matter of embracing one of the few revenue options available to the town.

“It’s a revenue tool that we have not been using and it strikes me as very strange that a premiere destination like Niagara-on-the-Lake (has) not been using that,” Coun. Allan Bisback said in an interview on Tuesday.

For a town that welcomes millions of tourists every year, it makes no sense for residents to foot the bill to improve tourism infrastructure in town, Bisback said.

For now, the tax will only be paid by people staying in rentals with five or more rooms – mainly hotels. Most B&Bs and short-term rentals will be exempt, though some councillors said they expect the tax will be expanded in the future.

“The only way we have to get additional revenue is through (the municipal accommodation tax),” Lord Mayor Betty Disero told councillors.

Bisback said revenue

from the tax will be divided between the town and an entity to manage marketing and advertising for the town’s tourist sector.

Exactly what the entity is and what the percentage split will be is still to be determined.

The tax was originally supposed to be approved for implementation at the end of 2021 but was voted down by council on Dec. 20.

During that meeting, treasurer Kyle Freeborn presented scenarios for how much the tax may generate.

Town staff recommended an option that calculated earnings based on a 60 per cent room occupation rate, an average room price of \$200 and a tax of 2 per cent, resulting in more than \$1 million in annual tax revenue, with the municipality keeping 50 per cent for itself, or \$530,987.

The presentation estimated the the town will earn roughly \$44,000 per month from the tax. If implemented in July, that could total some \$264,000 by the end of the year.

The tax is planned to ramp up over several years, starting off at 2 per cent in 2022 and reaching 4 per cent in 2024, doubling the estimated revenue.

In places such as Marin County, Calif., the transient occupancy tax is 14 per cent for short-term rentals and 10 per cent for most other rentals.

Three projects initially were proposed to be funded by the tax: The Canada Summer Games 13 by 13 event (\$60,000), landscaping on Queen and Victoria streets (\$101,685) and a \$140,000 donation to the Niagara-on-the-Lake Museum.

As part of the operational budget passed by council on Jan. 31, the summer games gathering is now being funded out of the parking reserves thanks to the cancellation of this year’s icewine festival. The town had earmarked \$40,000 for the festival.

Landscaping on Queen and Victoria streets has been deferred.

The motion to approve the tax included a reduced donation to the museum of \$100,000 and stipulated the rest of the money generated by the tax will go into a reserve fund.

Coun. Clare Cameron said conflating support for the museum with approval of the accommodation tax was manipulative.

“I feel there’s something very coercive about this and I’m not comfortable with that,” she said.

She said the town was ignoring industry concerns by implementing the tax before doing extensive public and industry consultation.

Along with Coun. Gary Burroughs, she said the tax was poorly timed since the hospitality industry is suffering due to the pandemic.

Paul McIntyre of Vintage Inns and Janet Jones, chair of the town’s tourism advisory working group, asked council to defer the tax until after discussions with the industry and short-term rental operators.

But Disero said backlash from industry reps and councillors served no purpose other than to delay the launch of the tax.

“It seems to me that we’re just trying to stall this out, yet again,” she said.

Industry officials’ requests for the tax to be delayed for “consultation” are suspect, she said.

“We’ve talked about (the municipal accommodation tax) since 2016. There have been so many discussions and each time we are asked to hold off, hold off, hold off — it’s a tactic not to do it,” she said.

The industry will continue to try to delay the tax and the only way to get the hospitality sector to actually come to the table for discussions on its implementation was to “tell them there’s a deadline,” she said.

After debate among councillors, it was decided a governance advisory

group will be formed to meet with hospitality officials and industry experts prior to the implementation of the tax in July.

Disero ensured a line was added that stipulated the governance group could not delay the start of the levy.

McIntyre and Jones agreed making the tax only applicable to rentals with five or more rooms was unfair, but acknowledged the parameters of the tax will most likely be expanded over time.

“If it’s a room tax, then it’s a room tax,” Jones said.

Bisback said the tax was designed this way to give a break to short-term rental operators who had to close down entirely during much of the pandemic, whereas hotels could still operate with limited capacity.

But he said he wants the rules to be expanded to include all short-term rentals one day.

“I actually am a big supporter that eventually they need to come into the fray,” he said.

He also justified the choice as a matter of money.

“To be blunt, from a revenue point of view, the majority of rooms are in the hotels,” Bisback said.

He was optimistic about the economic future of tourism in NOTL.

“We will come out of this pandemic, we will recover,” he said. “We just need to temper the emotion a little bit.”

Shaw starts Feb. 9 with **22 new shows** planned for season

Continued from Front Page

lows Ontario residents to claim 20 per cent of eligible accommodation expenses, to encourage people to explore the province and give a boost to the tourism and hospitality sectors impacted by COVID.

Returning Americans would also help boost audience numbers. While there were what Jennings terms “a fair number” of Americans last summer, it was not on a scale to match the past.

In a normal year, Jennings says 35 to 40 per cent of the

audience is from the U.S., and he’s hoping the COVID testing requirements for the border get relaxed. “So we’re chatting with the government about that.”

He concedes, “It may be ambitious to expect a full return this season, but we’re building to restore confidence for ‘23-24, so we’re not in a lull” coming off COVID restrictions.

“It can take five to seven years to build back audience if we’re not aggressive about it. So the February start is part of that,” he explained.

“This Is How We Got

Here” by Native Earth Performing Arts opens on Feb. 9. It’s the first time the Shaw has presented a play by a guest company.

According to Jennings, “it’s a great, great play we’d like our audience to have the opportunity to see, and it’s an amazing company. I’m very hopeful this will be the start of an ongoing relationship.”

Native Earth Performing Arts is Canada’s oldest professional Indigenous performing arts company and the play has won multiple awards. It is described as a

story about love, loss and letting go.

Last season, of course, was a COVID roller coaster, as restrictions came and went and shifted unexpectedly.

Jennings acknowledges it was challenging, but said it was “a very successful year, probably the largest theatre season in North America. We put on 600 performances and 17 different productions.”

The company created new outdoor spaces, implemented COVID protocols and learned to pivot, repeat-

edly. It was a huge amount of work, so Jennings says “staff are excited about the new season, if still a little tired – 600 performances last season was like Olympic-level swimming through molasses.”

The effort is in service of the higher purpose of the festival. Jennings describes it this way: “We work to make the world a better place, to serve basic human needs, like gathering together to share a common narrative, and engaging with each other to talk about it together. These

needs aren’t taken care of with online experiences. It just isn’t the same as gathering in person for live performances.”

Much of life the last two years has been virtual and socially distanced, so a robust return to live performance is part of getting back to normal.

Jennings reminds us that “social interaction is a muscle we haven’t exercised for almost two years,” but “people are sticking with us and it sounds like they’re looking forward to coming back.”



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Roundabout is **safest alternative** for St. Davids, region's expert says

Evan Saunders
Local Journalism Initiative
The Lake Report

The planned St. Davids roundabout will have a dedicated pedestrian crosswalk, opportunities for St. Davids' history to be celebrated and will make the intersection safer than any alternative, a consultant for the region says.

"They are definitely safer and safer for everyone, not just drivers but for pedestrians and cyclists as well," Phil Weber, senior project manager and traffic engineer from CIMA+, said in an interview Monday.

Weber has a master's degree in transportation engineering, has been involved in the design and construction of more than 200 roundabouts across North America and teaches courses on their implementation.

And Maged Elmadhoon, transportation manager for the Region of Niagara, said local businesses will be consulted more directly as the project progresses to its detailed design phase at the end of the year.

He said the intersection was marked as needing traffic improvements in 2017 by the region's transportation master plan in order to address current traffic concerns and accommodate future growth in Niagara-on-the-Lake.

Weber said the roundabout will be more efficient and safer than any alternative, saying views on traffic signal installations can be incorrect.

"We think with traffic signals, 'Oh, we just look at the existing intersection and we slap up a few signal poles and we're done, right?'"



Left: Traffic engineer Phil Weber. Right: Maged Elmadhoon, transportation manager for the Region of Niagara, says a roundabout is merely a traffic control tool and will not greatly impact the character of St. Davids. SUPPLIED

Weber said.

"That's not the case at all with signals. With signals, what we're going to have to do is we're going to have to widen the whole intersection out to add left turn lanes, we're gonna have to put in medians."

He said traffic signals would require a similar amount of land expropriation as the roundabout.

He also emphasized there's no doubt the roundabout will be the safer alternative – and laid out several reasons why.

"The big one is that traffic is moving more slowly," he said.

Weber also stressed there are fewer points of contact for pedestrians and vehicles, noting most pedestrian and vehicle collisions at intersections occur when drivers are making left- or right-hand turns.

He said the one thing that makes an intersection with traffic signals safer for pedestrians is the inclusion of a signalled crosswalk.

But Elmadhoon said this roundabout will "absolutely" have a specialized pedestrian crosswalk installed to accommodate

local schoolchildren and other pedestrians.

"We will put it in. It will be there in that roundabout," Elmadhoon said.

He said the exact design of the pedestrian crosswalk will be determined at a later date but further stressed its inclusion is guaranteed.

Regarding residents' concerns that a roundabout will irrevocably change the character of St. Davids' historic centre, Elmadhoon said a roundabout is only a traffic calming feature and the character of the "Four Corners" can encompass it.

"Whether you put a traffic signal, whether you keep it as a four-way stop or whether you put in a roundabout, at the end of the day it's only a traffic control measure in order to ensure that the intersection is performing safe and to the expected level of service."

He said understanding and studying the character of St. Davids has been a core aspect of the project.

"We have taken this from day one, even in our notice of commencement. We acknowledge that this has a certain character," he said.

"That's why there is an-

other section in the environmental report dealing with urban design and landscaping and trying to see how we can keep the character of the intersection, something to reflect the history."

The environmental assessment report is expected to be released in the next several months. Afterward, there will be a 30-day public review and commenting period hosted by the region, Elmadhoon said.

Weber sees the roundabout as a chance to strengthen the character of St. Davids.

"There is an opportunity there to add to the character of the village by putting something in the centre of the roundabout that can enhance the village itself," he said.

"Some public art in the middle or even at the very least some landscaping that can add to the village character."

Weber said the team has put together a memo for the region that contains suggestions for enhancing the roundabout as a cultural feature and said residents and the town will have the chance to add their input.

Another upgrade the region plans on bringing to the intersection is improved infrastructure for cyclists in the area.

Weber said the installation of bike tracks along York and Four Mile Creek roads is the reason why on-street parking is being removed close to the intersection.

"It's a matter of fitting in what we can. I mean, it's a very narrow right-of-way," he said.

"It's all part of the region's efforts to make everything more pedestrian- and cycle-friendly."

A cycle track is a bike lane adjacent to the sidewalk but not on the road itself.

The team also addressed concerns raised by some residents that agricultural equipment and transport trucks would not be able to navigate the roundabout.

Weber said the roundabout is being designed with these vehicles in mind, noting there have been no issues with roundabouts and large vehicles at other locations in Niagara.

"Around the centre island there's something called a truck apron. That's a pretty common feature of single-lane roundabouts," he said.

The apron allows large vehicles' rear wheels to track across the sides of the roundabout, he said.

The current project cost estimate is about \$4 million. "That includes the roundabout, the cycle tracks, the widened sidewalks, utility relocates and everything," Weber said.

He said the estimated cost is preliminary and subject to change.

One cost not included is the expropriation of

land required to widen the intersection and accommodate the roundabout. There are no current estimates for that cost.

Expropriation and the impact the roundabout will have on local businesses is something the region considers carefully during the detailed design phase, Elmadhoon said.

Weber said a traffic signal and roundabout result in similar levels of expropriation.

"The region's real estate staff will be in contact to discuss the level of impact, disturbance, damage, injurious affections, business loss – anything," Elmadhoon said.

If things go smoothly, Elmadhoon said detailed design could begin by the end of the year.

He pushed back against calls for traffic to be routed off York and Four Mile Creek roads.

"These are regional roads and regional roads are designed to move traffic and move people and goods," he said.

"The intent of these roads are to move traffic. There isn't any study that says we need to move traffic away."

Elmadhoon said leaving the intersection as it is is not "on the table" and a roundabout is the recommendation provided in the environmental assessment study.

"The proposed roundabout will create slow and uniform traffic speeds with no congestion well into the long future horizon. In addition, the roundabout will be safer through the elimination of red light running and angle collisions," he said in an email to The Lake Report.


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Ella Wiens, 11, just after falling off her toboggan in Simcoe Park. EVAN SAUNDERS

Tobogganing at Simcoe Park



Left: Malcolm and Merritt Hawley smiling as they reach the bottom of the hill. Right: Naomi Wiens, 8, helps her 20-month-old brother Caleb learn the ropes of sledding. EVAN SAUNDERS



Evan Saunders
Local Journalism Initiative
The Lake Report

After ten days of isolation from COVID-19, the Hawley family decided to enjoy some outdoor activity with a wintry pastime many Niagara-on-the-Lakers are familiar with: tobogganing in Simcoe Park.

“We are out of COVID lockdown. This is our first

outing,” Brianne Hawley said at Simcoe Park.

“It’s nice to see people,” Brianne said with a laugh.

Brianne, her husband Adam and children Malcolm, 2, and Merritt, 4, spent the better part of their Saturday at Simcoe Park embracing the chilly day.

“The kids are loving it. We beat COVID, we’re out and nobody cares about the

cold,” Brianne said.

Adam was busy performing a familiar dad task: he was the designated sled puller when the kids had to get back to the top of the hill.

And, yes, the kids were sure to be seated on the sled before Adam had to drag it back to the top.

“It’s so great to be able to do this with all the lockdowns and this is the

perfect park to do it in,” Brianne said.

She said the family handled COVID well.

“We were fairly asymptomatic. We tested on rapid tests and we all got it, across the board,” she said.

“Good thing we live in a place that we can just be at home. We all hung out together, didn’t we, Merritt?” she asked her son.

“Ya,” came the shy reply.

RIDDLE ME THIS

You can find me at the end of the rainbow. What am I?

Last issue: Mississippi has four S’s and four I’s. How do you spell that without using S or I?

Answer: THAT

Answered first by: Margie Enns

Also answered correctly (in order) by: Terry Nord, Eva Rasciauskas, Mary Drost, Howard Jones, Bob Campbell, Pam Dowling, Mike Berlis, Christine Yakymishen, Sheila Meloche, Sylvia Wiens, Wade Durling, Rob Hutchison, Ron Cane, Maria Janeiro, Doug Bruce, David Steele, Sue Gulley, George Dunbar, Peter Koop, Tammy Florio

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



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Keeping it
Green 

Kyra Simone
Special to The Lake Report

On our most recent litter cleanup, my mum Ann Marie and I got talking about the idea of the “bystander effect.”

In grade school, I had been taught about this phenomenon many times, especially in the context of bullying.

When something harmful is taking place, people are inclined to look on and do nothing – but they are just as much part of the problem.

As we removed countless Q-tips, bottle caps and single-use tooth flossers from the beach, we realized how closely the bystander



Left: A pedicure toe spacer on the beach at Niagara Shores Park. Right: Kyra and her mother Ann Marie hold up tooth flossers collected from the beach. KYRA SIMONE

effect also applies to the environment.

It's unfortunately common for witnesses not to take action in response to bullying, crime or a health emergency. This so-called bystander effect is partly due to social cues.

In such a situation, it's common to look around and gauge the level of panic or outrage among others and to match their behaviour. Especially when the degree of harm is unclear, bystanders may think it's acceptable to do nothing when they don't see others taking action.

The problem is, when

everyone thinks “Someone else will step in,” nobody does.

This diffusion of responsibility can be heightened by a fear of social consequences. With bullying, onlookers might not be friends with the target, or might worry that they will be bullied themselves.

This is true too of our interactions with nature. Maybe we're worried about looking uncool when picking up trash or we don't know what action to take.

The first step is to form a stronger relationship. A lot of us are very separate



from the outdoor world; getting to know it more closely will help us to understand when things are wrong and help us feel equipped to step in.

In some places, bystanders are required by law to help someone in need, if they can do so safely. Are we not also morally guilty when we fail to address an environmental concern?

Even if we're not actively “bullying” the planet by littering, normalizing and excusing problematic actions desensitizes us to the true extent of harm.

We're complicit in this

harm when we walk by litter on the way to and from work each day, but don't pick it up.

We're complicit when we see a grove of trees being clear-cut to make room for development, but don't question or report it.

We're complicit when our staff take smoke breaks every shift, but we don't install receptacles and signage to make sure cigarette butts are recycled.

We're complicit when we watch pieces of plastic blow around on garbage day, without saying something to the neighbour who

put their bins out the windy night before.

We can't just stand by and bemoan the damage being done to our environment – we need to stand up and actually work at improving it.

It can be simple to go from enabling bystander to doing your part: gentle social pressure to discourage unsustainable practices, positive encouragement to friends who make green shifts and encouraging workplaces to set up more eco-friendly systems.

It not only does good, it feels good too.

Note: If you have a concern about an activity that impacts the local environment, please submit a complaint or inquiry and town staff will follow up. Start here: [NOTL.com/service-request-complaint-form](https://www.notl.com/service-request-complaint-form).

Kyra Simone is a green-at-heart NOTL resident with master's degrees in biology and science communication. In her spare time, she advocates for sustainable change, picks up litter, makes recycled jewelry, and transforms furniture bound for the landfill.



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Jack Shrubbs, 79, led junior golf program

Kevin MacLean
The Lake Report

But for a degenerative bone condition when he was a youngster, Jack Shrubbs might have had a professional career in baseball or basketball, his daughter says.

Shrubbs, who died in Niagara-on-the-Lake last week at age 79 after a long battle with brain cancer, was a talented athlete from a young age, excelling at any sport he tried, his daughter Mary D'Allesandro said in an interview.

As a youngster, though, he developed a bone condition that led to a long stay at Sick Kids hospital, alone and away from his family in Chatham. Doctors used pioneering bone graft surgery to save young Jack's leg, leaving him with a scar from his hip to his calf.

He didn't allow his close call to deter him and continued to play the sports he loved, especially baseball.

It was the 1950s and "I really do believe that he would have had a life as a professional athlete, as a basketball or baseball player," D'Allesandro said.

When she once asked her dad if big league sports teams had ever recruited him, he said there had been some interest but, he told her, "when they found out about my leg, I couldn't take it to the next level."

But he did have a memorable brush with fame.

In Chatham, he played on a team with future major league Hall of Fame pitcher Ferguson Jenkins. Except Shrubbs was the star pitcher and Jenkins played first base.

He eventually turned to golf and became a true student of the game – and was a fixture at the Niagara-on-the-Lake Golf Club after retiring from a career in marketing and sales in the Toronto area.

Shrubbs loved encouraging and teaching children sports, but emphasized "it has to be fun," D'Allesandro said.

At the NOTL club, pros Billy Simkin and Ricky Watson noted Shrubbs developed and led the junior golf program for years.

"Jack was always around chipping, putting and



Luca and Daniel D'Allesandro with granddad Jack Shrubbs after a season-ending junior golf day. Shrubbs was a coach and mentor to young athletes. SUPPLIED

practising, often with his grandsons Daniel and Luca, whom he loved so much," Simkin said.

And he was out every Sunday during the summer to lead the juniors. His tutoring helped develop some excellent young players, including his grandsons, who both won junior titles at the club.

The one youngster he wasn't able to "indoctrinate" into golf was his granddaughter Natalie. He recognized she was a natural athlete, but Shrubbs couldn't convince her to take up the game, D'Allesandro said. Riding in the cart was enough.

Natalie is an elite level junior figure skater, who has represented Canada around the world in ice dance competitions many

times and her grandfather was immensely proud of her accomplishments.

Born in Hamilton, Jack grew up in both Chatham and Peterborough. His father became police chief in Peterborough and Shrubbs would often say that ensured he and his brother Wayne would always steer clear of trouble.

Jack and Jane were married in 1967, after meeting at a Ryerson/St. Michael's Nursing School dance. A few years after Mary was born, they had a second daughter, Sarah, a former triathlete.

After moving to NOTL, he became active as a volunteer and was honoured by the town in 2015 for his work in sports and recreation.

His many golf buddies at

the NOTL club recall him as a humble, gentle man.

"He was always asking about my granddaughter even though he never got to meet her," said Norm Arsenault.

"He was the first person, along with his brother Wayne, that I played golf with when I moved here and we remained friends ever since."

Dow Wright said, "His love of life and golf was always evident, and there was always a sunny optimism toward imminent improvement till the last day I ever played with him. Never defeated and never complained."

A private visitation has been held and the family plans to hold a celebration of his life at the golf club this spring.

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Eduardo Lafforgue headed to Yukon for new job as territory's tourism director

Continued from Front Page

they will not come around again, for sure," he said in an interview.

He said he's looking forward to moving up the ladder and promoting an entire territory, and to be close to nature and connected with Canada's First Nations.

For Lafforgue, the cold won't be entirely new. He and his wife raised their children for years in Quebec, where he said temperatures were often -25C in the cold seasons.

"We're used to -25C, and very often, and having a pile of snow in the morning when I was driving to my office in Montreal."

"And I'm very used to that. So no problem," he said.

His children made sure to get him a parting gift to help keep him warm.

"The goodbye gift from our children is big, big, big coats, and snow rails, boots. So we're prepared," he laughs.

Lafforgue has lived around the world. Nation-



Eduardo Lafforgue is resigning from the NOTL Chamber of Commerce. His last day is Feb. 28. FILE PHOTO

ally Spanish Canadian, he was born in Argentina, lived in England and Mexico, and eventually found his way to Canada.

Before his last day with the NOTL chamber on Feb. 28, he said he's focused on "leaving everything as much in order for the board and my successor as I can."

Some projects he is winding down are the chamber's "shop local" campaign,

which he said will continue with other chambers, as well as securing more rapid tests for local businesses.

Getting the rapid tests early was something he was proud of doing in 2021, he said.

"We were one of the first 28 chambers to start this program," he said. "At the beginning, not everybody was willing to do it or pushing for that. We're 98

chambers participating. And we're very proud of what we achieved with that and the fact that it has been so successful. It's very good and it has been, we have saved lives actually. So it's fantastic."

When he gets to the Yukon he said it will be a "very tough first 90 days" getting to know the programs, staff and coordinating with Destination Canada.

He said being selected for the position makes him feel "like 30 years younger."

"You know these kinds of opportunities come to people that are (in their 30s), not my age," he said.

He said he will miss a lot about NOTL.

"I will miss my board. My board is absolutely fantastic. I will miss the theatre, I will miss the wineries and I will miss my friends — the friends that we have made up here," he said.

"But they're all invited to go up north. And some of them I'm sure will," he said, in true marketing director fashion.



A thief tried to pry open the drive-thru window and ended up smashing the glass. RICHARD HARLEY

Sono's cafe victim of break and enter again

Staff
The Lake Report

Sono's Cafe in Virgil was again the victim of a break and enter last week.

Some overnight between Jan. 24 and 25, a suspect "appeared to attempt to pry open a window at the cafe," said police in response to questions from The Lake Report.

"The suspect then smashed out the window before leaving the area."

Mahmoud Sono, owner

of Sono's Cafe, said no money or property was stolen, and that the diner no longer keeps any cash in the register overnight.

The diner had to replace a panel of broken glass at the drive-thru window. Pry marks where the intruder tried to force the window open are still visible.

The cafe was targeted in 2019, with thieves stealing \$3,700 and damaging the diner's security system.



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'The Magpie'

Penny-Lynn Cookson
Special to The Lake Report

To mask or not to mask continues to be a contentious gamble in our time.

In 18th century Venice, the mask did not have to be mandated, it was enthusiastically supported. For six months of the year during Carnival, the indispensable masks were worn by everyone in the city – rich and poor, magistrates and prostitutes, shopkeepers and priests, beggars and dignitaries, even masked mothers nursing masked infants. Only money changers were exempt from the tradition. There were masked parties, masked balls and masked processions through the streets. Masks remain essential to the Venice Carnival to this day.

From its beginning in 1162, to celebrate a military victory, the festival grew to become official during the Renaissance and famously by the 18th Century

when it lasted from early October to Shrove Tuesday in February or March. Carnival was theatre and music, puppet shows, ropewalkers, buskers, fortune tellers, fireworks and exotic animals, all a diversion from the reality of a once powerful city-state in decline. The pleasures were addictive. There were affairs and betrayals, a mingling of classes and strangers normally forbidden and an obsession with gambling. Dice and cards were played everywhere, in shops, taverns, on bridges and in gondolas. Patricians gambled in grand houses and in the houses of courtesans. In 1638, the Venetian state financed the Ridotto, the first legal public gaming house and the prototype for the casinos of Europe. Better to control and profit from what could not be prevented. To the Venetians, for a man to risk nothing was a man worth nothing. The Venetian gentleman was expected to



Pietro Longhi, "Il Ridotto," c.1757-60, Oil on canvas, Pinacoteca Querini Stampalia, Venice, Italy. SUPPLIED

suffer loss or gain or bankruptcy with a demeanour of indifference.

Pietro Longhi (1701-1785), was a Venetian artist with a keen eye and precise brush for everyday life depicted in small easel paintings favoured by patrician collectors. These "genre" works reflected the shift of interest from spiritual to secular art subjects among patrons. Longhi portrayed the daily activities, formalities and amusements of social life from the salons to the piazzas where rigid

hierarchical social conventions were abandoned during Carnival season. In "Il Ridotto," there is no obvious story to tell or lively activity apparent in the simple composition. The figures are detached, restrained, puppet-like, arranged as if on a theatre set. This Ridotto is a place of covert assignation, hushed whispers and silence, gambling and risk. The costumes are those of the Carnival, white and black masks, the tabarro cape and zendale hood that

covers the head topped by the tricorne black hat. The men wear full face white Bauta masks, best for anonymity and only allowed to be worn by citizens. The central man presses in to lift the woman's skirt. Her gaze is elsewhere as she toys with a fan. Her dress of silk brocade suggests wealth. She is likely a courtesan as she is unmasked. Three other women wear the patrician black moretta masks held in place by the teeth preventing speech. At the gambling table three

men hunch over their cards, some strewn on the floor. A retainer holds a bag, money? In the lower left corner, a man watches the couple. Spies are everywhere in Venice. Behind the spectacle and display lies a hidden world of secrets and conspiracies.

See "La Serenissima" – Venice in Art and History with art historian Penny-Lynn Cookson, Thursdays from Feb. 17 to March 24 on Zoom, from RiverBrink Art Museum, Queenston.

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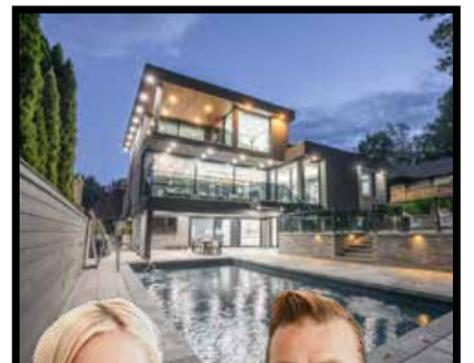
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GAMES



Have some fun

Across

- 1. Charges (5)
- 4. Unwavering (9)
- 10. Wedding (8)
- 11. Bicycle seat (6)
- 12. Tonsorial tidier (9)
- 14. Yellowish citrus fruit (5)
- 17. Indian exercise method (4)
- 18. Type of radiation (5)
- 22. Sprite (5)
- 23. Folds (7)
- 24. Vision (5)
- 25. Vacant (5)
- 28. Woodwind instrument (4)
- 31. Academy award (5)
- 34. Disgusting (9)
- 36. Condescending (6)
- 37. Event (8)
- 38. Secondary piece of equipment (9)
- 39. Got up (5)

Down

- 2. U S state on the Gulf Coast (7)
- 3. Aural membrane (7)
- 5. Minute (6)
- 6. Too (4)
- 7. Soft sweetmeat (5)
- 8. Simultaneous firing of artillery (5)
- 9. Native New Zealander (5)
- 13. Raise (5)
- 14. Pass into disuse (5)
- 15. State of confusion (3-2)
- 16. Destitute (5)
- 18. Zest (5)
- 19. Sorcery (5)
- 20. Participant (5)
- 21. Spanish Mister (5)
- 26. Bullfighter (7)
- 27. Lease holders (7)
- 29. Weirder (6)
- 30. Contact (5)
- 32. Operated by sound waves (5)
- 33. Residence (5)
- 35. Stains (4)

Crossword Puzzle

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Last issue's answers

P	S	Y	C	H	A	S	P	A	I	N		
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A truck rolls past the crowds at Husky truck stop on York Road on Jan. 27. Hundreds of people gathered at the truck stop and down the road to watch and support the truckers, some of who were headed to Ottawa to protest vaccine mandates for long-haul truckers. Others were simply there to voice their own frustrations with pandemic safety measures like lockdowns, vaccine passports and other strategies that have helped reduce the spread and impact of COVID-19
RICHARD HARLEY

Trucker convoy passes through NOTL

Richard Harley
The Lake Report

Supporters of a Canada-wide movement against vaccine mandates for truckers gathered in Niagara-on-the-Lake early last Thursday morning, waving “freedom” flags and anti-Trudeau signs. And they may be back again.

An online post about a “Niagara Local Convoy in support of our amazing truckers” advises residents to “steer clear” of the Husky Travel Centre on York Road in St. Da-

vids again this Saturday.

It says supporters can meet at the Husky between 12:30 and 1 p.m. for a “slow roll” to Grimsby via Hwy. 8.

“Bring your signs and flags, ready to make some noise and have some fun,” it advises.

Last week hundreds of people met at the Husky, filling the parking lots at both the service centre and Clare’s Harley Davidson across the street to show support for the “Canada Unity Freedom Convoy.”

An employee at Husky said she arrived around

6 a.m. and people were already lining up to see the truckers.

Anita Doppenberg, a St. Davids resident who was there early to support her trucker husband John, said the message of the rally was purely about freedom of choice.

“(It’s not about) don’t get vaccinated or don’t wear mask. If you need to do those things, by all means do that,” she said.

“This is about freedom of choice for all Canadians. People need to make their own decisions, they need to

have informed consent, parental consent, risk-benefit analysis and all those types of things,” Doppenberg said.

“People are smart and they can make their own medical decisions, but to have that kind of dictated to you seems just a little bit, you know — how does one solution fit everybody when we’re also diverse at different medical situations?”

She said she’d been hearing from people who are part of the BearHug movement that, “It’s the first time I feel proud to be Canadian.”



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Winter fun in NOTL

Seeing the community come together to build and maintain the skating rink in Virgil had us thinking of when rinks were created in Simcoe Park or along Lake Ontario and, in some locations, on the Niagara River. This photograph is always a puzzle for us: it looks to be circa 1900 and shows a group of friends enjoying an outdoor skate together on either a frozen Lake Ontario or a select location along the Niagara River. The exact location is unknown, but one thing is for sure, they're all enjoying some winter fun. Thank you to all those involved with the community ice rink. Not only are you carrying on a NOTL tradition but you are helping to create long-lasting memories for many young residents. **The NOTL Museum reopens today, Feb. 3, with winter hours 1 to 5 p.m. Thursday through Monday. Admission is free for Niagara residents for the month of February.**



60 years of Modernism

Brian Marshall
Columnist



Contemporary - Mid Century Modern. SUPPLIED

Living in a community that is known for its relative concentration of surviving buildings from the 19th century, it is sometimes easy to neglect the fact that the majority of our dwellings actually represent the 20th and 21st centuries.

In fact, it seems that architectural styles, particularly of the Modernist schools, are dismissed as interlopers that do not belong here.

In reality, sprinkled across Niagara-on-the-Lake in village, town and rural settings one can quite easily find well over 60 years of Modernist expression. With the exception of the original classic International style commonly constructed between 1920 and 1950 (to my knowledge), every Modernist style is represented in our community.

Take, for example, the residential enclave of Bevan

Heights. Located near Four Mile Creek and Stamford Townline Road, it sits on the Escarpment and its three streets are lined with houses built after 1950. While many of these houses can be said to be the ubiquitous bungalows, split-level, styled ranch forms (etc.) of the late 20th and early 21st centuries, leavening the mix are more uncommon designs.

On Mallette Crescent sit three homes of the Contemporary school (often referred to as Mid-Century Modern). Inspired by Wright's Usonian houses and his treatises on affordable home design that related to the landscape, this style was initially popularized by J. Eichler in California.

Common elements include a low-pitched or flat roof with wide overhanging eaves; windows to, or just below, the roof line;

recessed or obscured asymmetrically placed entry; horizontal, ground-hugging lines; warm material used such as stone, brick or wood; and a low, broad chimney.

A vaulted ceiling through the interior's main public space was quite often included, as is the case with these three homes. The dwelling at #2 Mallette can be suggested as a "classic" Contemporary expression.

Continuing up Melrose Drive we pass a variety of Modernist designs before arriving at #72, which represents a fine expression of the 21st-century Modern style.

Its exterior displays the mixed materials (in this case, stone, metal, wood and glass) required by the style's parameters.

In a very wise decision by the architect, the metal frames of its indus-

trial windows and the metal cladding have each been colour-matched from the main stone field, thereby creating a flowing composition that tends to lighten the visual weight of the building.

Finally, near the end of Melrose at #106 is an example of a style that galvanized the imagination of young architects in the 1960s after its centre-stage publicity in what was one of the earliest ecologically based housing developments in North America.

On this house the interplay between typically multi-directional shed roof elements over a complex three-part massing is striking while the strong diagonal roof lines are enhanced by the vertical board and batten cladding – all working in concert to create a lasting impression.

Here the entry is recessed and the reverse shed through dormers prominently display fixed plate windows. It's one of the two finest examples of period shed style homes in NOTL.

In some ways, Bevan Heights is a microcosm of our town's residential architecture post-1950. It's worth a peek.

Looking to the Stars



Memories of a plane crash and 'the day the music died'

This week we see the first quarter moon in Taurus. And Mercury goes direct.

Thursday, Feb. 3: Here on the east coast of North America, Mercury appears to go direct at 11:12 tonight when it's already Friday in London and almost Saturday in Australia. Still, the full effect of Mercury turning from retrograde to direct may take a couple of days, so be patient when the wi-fi connection fails. It was Feb. 3, 1959, that a plane crash took the lives of Buddy Holly, J.P. Richardson and Ritchie Valens, a tragedy immortalized by Don McLean in his classic song "American Pie," about "the day the music died."

Friday, Feb. 4: Two big connections in the sky as we see Mars get a positive bump from Jupiter, and health and work matters improve while the sun moves to the same spot in Aquarius as Saturn, bringing a serious edge to life. This is a serious edge, which can bring good fortune if dealt with honestly. Facebook was "born" on this day in 2004 in founder Mark Zuckerberg's dorm at Harvard.

Saturday, Feb. 5: The moon is in Aries all day and is in an argumentative mood with Venus. And with Mars. And even with Saturn. Remember to breathe. It was one year ago today that we said goodbye to Christopher Plummer, most famous for his role as Capt. Georg

Johannes von Trapp in "The Sound of Music."

Sunday, Feb. 6: Divide today into two parts. This morning it's all fiery arguments. Tonight may seem aimless, but easier. "You've Lost that Lovin' Feeling" by the Righteous Brothers was Number One on Billboard on Feb. 6, 1965.

Monday, Feb. 7: With Venus and Mars together in Capricorn and the moon in Taurus, it's a perfect day for sexy generosity and lots of love. Happy birthday to two-time NBA MVP, Steve Nash. Born in South Africa, raised in Canada, he played for many years as a point guard for the Phoenix Suns.

Tuesday, Feb. 8: Today is the first quarter moon in Taurus, a day to review our lists of "wants," especially for things that can be accomplished over the next few weeks. A surprise puts a smile on many faces. It was Feb. 8, 1928, that Disney Brothers Cartoon Studios became Walt Disney Studios.

Wednesday, Feb. 9: Powerful, firm and calm is this day of spiritual awareness thanks to the moon conjunct with its own north node. Today, we get to find out where our life is really headed. And it was Sunday, Feb. 9, 1964, that the Beatles first appeared on the Ed Sullivan Show. The audience approached 80 million viewers.

Bill Auchterlonie's podcast "Looking up to the Stars" is at www.lutts.ca.

Astrology is a form of entertainment, not a science.



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Creating a 'sense of place'



Riverbed down slope. JOANNE YOUNG PHOTOS

Joanne Young
Garden Columnist

Like our homes, gardens are an expression of who we are. If you are living in a newer neighbourhood, you will know that houses tend to look are similar.

As you go down some newer streets, very few houses stand out from one another. So how do we create a space that speaks of and to its surroundings, one that feels special and unique?

We can do this by giving your garden a sense of place, meaning that you are linking your garden to your home and its surroundings.

Your garden design reflects your personality, complements the age and architecture of your house, blends into the community and uses plants suited to the local climate and your on-site conditions. Your garden needs to look like it belongs with the surroundings, like it has always been there.

REFLECTING UNIQUE NATURAL ELEMENTS

Make sure you are using natural elements that are indigenous to your region. For example, if you lived in Northern Ontario, you might use more granite rocks in your garden.

If you live on the Niagara Escarpment the rocks of choice would be limestone moss rocks.

What first drew you to the area where you live? Was it the mature trees or a lake or river? Does your property back on to a natural wooded area or ravine? Incorporate these elements into your garden.

One property that I designed was located on Lake Ontario and included their own private beach, so it was already a beautiful setting.

But to help tie in their

landscape to the lake and at the same time address a drainage issue, I introduced a dry riverbed that meanders throughout the yard, leading the eye toward the lake. By using smooth beach stones, it helped to make it a natural transition from garden to beach to lake.

Another way that I have incorporated a sense of place by using natural features is to take advantage of a neighbouring woodland.

When a property backs on to a forested area, I often introduce native trees and shrubs along the back of the garden and just gradually space plants further apart, so it appears that the forest was naturally petering out.

A sloped area could lend itself to a natural looking rock garden or a waterfall/pond area. A waterfall would normally wind its way down a hillside. So set a water feature in the right place with the right plants and some boulders to create the illusion that it has existed for a long time.

Boulders can also be placed strategically along a path, forcing a path to change direction, as if the stone has always been there and people had to work around such a timeless and "immovable" object.

REFLECTING YOUR ARCHITECTURE

Another wonderful way of giving your garden a sense of place is to reflect the architecture of your home.

You will often hear that your garden is an extension of your home – and it truly is. Just as you have furnished and decorated the inside of your home to match the architecture of it and reflect your style, the outside of your home should also bring this out. Here are some suggestions.

Repeat some of the lines of the house in the actual shape

of beds and hard surfaces. If you have a more contemporary style home with strong horizontal lines, you can mimic those lines in the shape of your garden and walkways by doing more geometric shapes as opposed to curved beds.

If your front entranceway has a curved archway over the front door, pick up on this arch and repeat the same curve in the shaping of front steps or landings. It seems like a very subtle thing to do, but your eye does notice it and it gives you the sense that things are working together harmoniously.

A second way of reflecting your architecture is by repeating some of the same materials. Imagine a more modern stucco home with strong lines. By incorporating a low stucco wall out in the garden, you have created a sense of place.

REFLECTING YOUR PERSONALITY

When creating a sense of place, make sure your choices reflect your personality.

Think about the way you want to spend your summer days. You want to make your garden a place that reminds you of joyful times or of certain people from your past.

What childhood memories do you have of gardens? For me, the fragrance of different plants such as lily-of-the-valley and peonies remind me of my parent's garden.

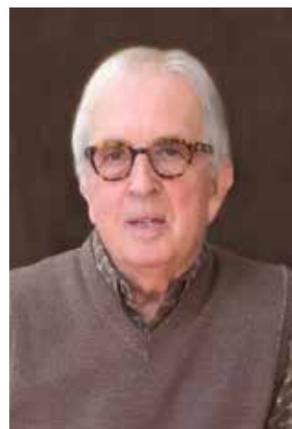
There is a rose called Double Delight that also reminds me of my grandma because its scent is the same as the hand cream that she always used.

Take some time to think about how you can add a "sense of place" to your garden.

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

Obituaries

Jack Shrubbs



SHRUBBS, Jack William - Passed away at home on Thursday, Jan. 27, 2022 in his 80th year. Jack will always be remembered by all who knew and loved him as a gentle, kind and special "guy." Husband of 55 years to his soul-mate Jane. Dear Dad to Sarah Shrubbs (Matt) and Mary D'Alessandro (Dan). Proud Grandpa to Daniel, Luca and Natalie. Beloved brother to Wayne Shrubbs (Astrid). A celebration of Jack's life will be planned this spring for family, friends and the community to honour and remember Jack. It will be just in time for the opening of golf season, as he would have wanted it. A private visitation has taken place. Arrangements entrusted to Morgan Funeral Home, 415 Regent St., Niagara-on-the-Lake. Memories, photos and condolences may be shared at www.morganfuneral.com



William Charles Ruller



The world has lost a man of God, the definition of a humanitarian, loving husband, caring, wise and supportive father and grandfather (Pa), brother, brother-in-law, uncle and great uncle, friend, and mentor to so many around the world.

William Charles Ruller was born March 18, 1947, in Niagara Falls, Ontario, to Kenneth and Marjorie Ruller, the third oldest of six children. Will passed away suddenly while on a father and son road trip on Saturday, January 29.

Up to the age of 20, Will lived in Canada, graduating from Niagara District Secondary School, before moving on to Forestry School. Following his graduation, he moved to New Zealand and within five years met and married the love of his life, Annie. They were happily married for 42 years, raising their four children, Kimberley, Keren, Philippa, and Nicholas, before Annie passed away in 2014. Will and Annie shared in the joy of their growing family through loving relationships with their children's spouses and grandchildren.

Will lived a principled life that was full of adventure, including world travel, his reach through his ministries with Youth for Christ, International Child Care, his Christian music business and Pastoral roles in the church spanned across Canada from coast to coast, the U.S., Haiti, Egypt, Central and South America, New Zealand and the South Pacific. So many lives were touched and positively impacted by Will's commitment to his convictions.

Will instilled his love of the outdoors in all his children and grandchildren. In his youth in NZ, he enjoyed white water kayaking, mountain hiking and spending time in the Kauri forests of the NZ North Island. Upon his return to Canada in 1980 with his family, many great memories were made at Algonquin Park, Bowron Lakes, and Rainbow Falls, to name a few special places. All who knew Will knew his "One Way Willy" motto to get the most out of any outing. He took this to a new level once he had his motorhome under him over the last ten years, enabling him and Annie to further strengthen adult relationships with siblings, children, and grandchildren on his cross Canada trips, never missing a chance to put in a 1000km day. He was happiest behind the wheel, out on an adventure. The recent addition to Will's life, Lily, his Labrador puppy, put a new spring into his step and was his co-pilot for this past year's road trips known as the "Willy and Lily show." He will be missed!

Those that knew Will (and there are MANY) knew him to be the definition of integrity, empathy and compassion. He was unique in his ability to see a need and match it with the required resource, whether physical, emotional, or spiritual. Will's genuine gift and ability to listen and give counsel will make his passing all the more real as he is the one you would go to with matters of the heart in times like these.

Will leaves a legacy through all those he encountered and those fortunate enough to call him father, brother, uncle, Pa, and friend to be your best self, live life to the fullest, follow your convictions, and never miss an opportunity to help someone in any kind of need.

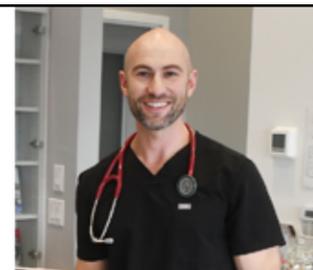
A ceremony will be held at a later date.



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