TOWN WILL PAY ‘A FORTUNE’ IN LEGAL FEES

The town claims the lands to be developed bear significant historical value and alleges Marotta has caused permanent damage to the site’s heritage aspects while preparing to build. Marotta, who owns Two Sisters Resorts Corp. and Solmar Development Corp., denies the allegations. He claims only specific aspects of the property have real heritage value and that he’s done what’s legally required to protect them.

NOTL air cadets speak their minds

Members of the 809 Newark Royal Canadian Air Cadet Squadron spoke their minds at the Croatian National Centre Wednesday night, as part of the cadet’s annual National Effective Speaking Program. Each year, cadets across Canada participate, with the goal of building self-confidence, organizational and interpersonal skills.

Some of the topics this year included peer pressure among youth, the voting age limit, the history of Avro Arrow aircraft, and what it means to be a Canadian. Cadets could also choose their own topic as long as it was about cadet life, aviation, science and technology, Canadian history or citizenship.

Niagara-on-the-Lake’s squadron Capt. Jody Lemoine said effective speaking used to be a core component of the air cadet training program.

“We still do it. But it’s been moved out of the core training and it’s been taken over by our civilian side sponsorship committee,” he said.

For the first part of the event, speakers had to deliver a five-minute speech on one of the topics provided by the Air Cadet League of Canada.
Marotta will seek legal fees from the town

Dariya Baiguzhiyeva
The Lake Report

The Town of Niagara-on-the-Lake approved its annual budget Feb. 11, and implemented a 4.5 per cent property tax increase. The 2019 budget is $9,365,750.

The budget report, prepared by the town staff, also provided a 10-year capital forecast of $72,536,350.

During the meeting of the whole Feb. 4, the council reviewed the operating and capital draft budgets. The initial property tax increase was proposed to be 7.21 per cent or $5.10 per cent after growth.

Council was aiming to have a 4.5 per cent increase after growth. After a number of updates and changes the target was met.

Some of the motions made to the budget included reducing Byron Street parking meters, providing for the NOTL Museum from the parking reserve, deferring Line 199 Recreation Master Plan to a future year, and reducing the rent for 176 Wellington street by $6,550.

With these changes, the approved operating budget will see a 4.48 per cent or $11,518.55 increase over growth. Since the 2019 Ontario Municipal Partnership Fund allocation hasn’t been announced yet, it might make changes to the 2019 operating budget.

In 2019, the town plans to spend $53,500 on transit, $1,365,000 on water, $1,470,000 on wastewater, $1,015,000 on parks, recreation and facilities, $333,500 on fire and emergency services and $108,250 on corporate services.

One of the projects in the corporate services department is a purchase of aerial photography from the Niagara Region. According to the budget report, the reason for this project is because aerial ortho imagery is an “important and useful layer of any Geographic Information System (GIS)” and it will allow the “town GIS staff to perform various analyses.” The cost for this project is $5,000.

There is no money intended to spend on building services and by-law enforcement in the next two years.

The town will also locate $80,837 on bridges and culverts, $27,000 dollars on street lighting and $1,342,769 on roads, sidewalks and lights. From the budget funds spent on roads, the most expensive project is Quenston Road. “Townline – construction. This project has $1,670,000 allocated to it. The town project will include replacing 1.5 metre bike lanes on both sides of the road. The project also includes the Ontario Community Infrastructure Fund in the amount of $332,135.

Of the roads projects, the concrete road replacement on Line 1 Road (0.19 kilometres west of Concession 2). The budget report said the bridge was identified as in poor condition by 2017 Structure Inspection report and needs an immediate replacement. The cost of this project will be $545,000.

The NOTL Library will also see some improvements with money spent on furniture replacement, public laptop and the facilities and materials development. It is projected to have $73,000 spent on it.

According to the budget report, NOTL Community Centre needs more tables and chairs for the cafeteria. It also has to update the furniture, games, toys and computers in Penner Room, said the report. So $10,000 of the budget funds will go to Community Centre amenities.

Cannery Park will have the most amount of $19,000 budget money out of the parks, recreation and facilities projects, with $175,000 allocated to it. Some other improvements across this department include community centre amenities, renovated courthouse washrooms, River Beach Park restorations and defibrillator placement across the town.

Among projects in the water section, the Quenston project has the highest amount of budget money for 2019. The budget predicts to spend $520,000.

While the least amount of funds among this section will be spent on Paxton Lane Park and South End with $20,000 allocated to the project. The budget report also says $1,085,000 of wastewater money will be spent on Chautauqua area (Dixie – Circle to Lakeshore). For the fire and emergency services, $65,000 will go to replacing protective equipment and $25,000 to buying firefighting equipment. The Glendale fire station will also be money repaired with $50,000 allocated to it.

The report says the repair work will extend the life of the apparatus floor and reduce potential future costs.

The repair works also include replacing loose and damaged floor tiles in the front vestibule and replacing some panels in overhead doors.
NOTL Newcomers Club a welcoming place for women

Brittany Carter
The Lake Report

Women in Niagara-on-the-Lake undergoing significant life changes need a place to connect – that’s just what the NOTL Newcomers are offering. Since 1991, the group has been providing a place for women to come together socially, sharing common interests and familiarizing themselves with the town.

Susan Ksiazkiewicz, president, said the club is about more than just meeting up with people and going to events – it aims to build lasting friendships and bonds. Opening its doors to women going through transitional periods in their lives, the club offers a chance to start fresh. Whether being new to town, going through a separation or reaching retirement – it’s available to add a sense of community to women’s lives.

The National Newcomers Association operates Canada-wide – the NOTL chapter is the only one that keeps membership to just women. The group is a not-for-profit organization with a board of directors and annual meetings. Special interest programs are hosted throughout the group, covering activities such as knitting, book clubs, lunch meet-ups, etc. They are operated independently, organized by a convenor who keeps track of membership and feedback.

Peggy Hooke, past president, said while the special interest groups are run independently, they need to remain structured.

“If you run an interest group there has to be a convenor. We don’t want it random and loose, there has to be someone keeping a list, making sure (attendees) are members, and reporting back to the board. Someone taking pictures for the newsletters.

Clubs need to stay within predetermined guidelines.

Specifically, no political, religious or business affiliations.

SUSAN KSIAZKIEWICZ, PAST PRESIDENT

Susan Ksiazkiewicz, president, said it’s a common ground for like-minded women to come together.

“We try to keep it neutral.”

The NOTL Newcomers host Coffee and Conversations on the last Friday of every month in the Simpson’s Room of the community centre, offering members and those interested in joining an opportunity to catch up, chat and sign up for groups and events.

Ksiazkiewicz said the monthly meet-up is a great place for women who are interested in joining the club to get an idea of what they are all about. They provide an added value to outings that wouldn’t necessarily be experienced individually.

Hooke said the monthly meet-up tends to be weight-ed to the new people.

“We also find that friends tend to be clustered, not by deliberation, but by when they come into the group. People who are new this year will tend to make friends with other people who are new this year, and they’ll join groups together. Five years down the road they’ll still be good friends.”

Hooke said they do more than just visit an attraction.

“We wouldn’t just go to a winery, we’d have a whisky tasting. There’s a program over and above what you yourself might do if you were to visit these places,” she said, adding that they don’t just go out to social events. “It’s important to note that we get added value from what we’re doing.”

As to why the group wanted to keep it women-only?

“That’s really a funny story,” said Hooke. Rosanne Fedorkow, the founder of the NOTL University Women’s Club, with Betty Hilton, who had recently moved to town, wanted to organize a club for people new to the area. Their aim was to provide intellectual stimulation while introducing members to NOTL.

The first meeting, held in Hilton’s living room, was attended by three women and one man. The man never returned for subsequent meetings – setting the women-only precedence for the club.

Hooke said the club is open to women of any age, but membership tends to center around the age of retirement.

“It’s for women of any age, but we would be pulling your leg to say there isn’t a dominate demographic.”

SUSAN KSIAZKIEWICZ, PRESIDENT

The NOTL Newcomers Club a welcoming place for women
Editorial: Stop spending bad money

Richard Harley
The Lake Report

The Town of Niagara-on-the-Lake should reconsider spending funds on a series of legal battles, many of which don’t bear much prospect of victory. In April the town will defend its decision to claim historical significance of the entire Randwood Estate by means of designation. Benny Marotta has said if he wins he will sue for the legal costs too. It isn’t yet known how much that will be. So why don’t we just not spend the money?

As much as some people might not like the idea of a hotel or another subdivision in town, fighting what is likely a losing battle and spending taxpayer dollars to do it doesn’t seem like a wise reaction. Fighting losing battles might do great things for campaigns, but it hurts the town as a whole when it costs hundreds of thousands of dollars — maybe more. Besides, it’s looking very much like municipal elections won’t be the same next time around anyway, so our council members should toss any cares to the wind when it comes to votes and just do what’s fiscally responsible. If we don’t back down, we have to keep in mind we could be sharing the costs with another municipality soon. It wouldn’t be the most kind start for us to ask our new spouse(s) to swallow our debts when we marry.

It’s a safe bet other developers are impacted by the town’s actions too. That fire has already started to smolder, and developers know each other and work together. Given the loud, negative public sentiment toward Marotta, skilled lawyers could make the case that the town made a political decision to take him on and is acting out of malice.

It really does seem like we’re fighting a losing battle. If a hotel at Randwood isn’t going to cause the apocalypse, we might as well let it happen. Or we can wait to see how much it really costs us.

Better solution: stop spending our money frivolously.
Shaw Festival film series shortens winter weeks for fun-loving local folk

Ross Robinson
Special to The Lake Report

Quietly over the past fifteen years, a very special film phenomena has crept into the social fabric of Niagara-on-the-Lake. Many Canadians are snowbirds, heading south for the winter. But many of us stay in Niagara and find ways to entertain ourselves as the hours of darkness trumps the hours of light.

A Shaw Festival film on a Saturday afternoon is so much more than just a movie. We could drive over to St. Catharines or Niagara Falls for Two Dollar Tuesdays, pay way too much for a tub of popcorn with extra butter and a sugar filled, supersized soda pop, or stay home and watch Netflix on TV. But the cachet of sitting in the elegant Shaw Festival Theatre, surrounded by world class theatre for our community, and paying ten dollars for tickets for a screening of a film is far more entertaining than at the produce counters of any supermarket.

The Shaw Festival Film Series in Niagara-on-the-Lake, a very special one, begins next Saturday afternoon, Jan. 24 at 2 p.m. in The Lake Report. The creativity, determination and generosity of Stephen Levy, Carol and John Walker and their wingers have provided so many “who knew” moments.

The effervescent smiles of the volunteer team as they enthusiastically welcome us, and sell four lucky draw tickets for ten dollars. (All proceeds remitted to the Shaw Festival, the wonderful partners who provide our world class theatre for our small town outings.)

Lucky draw prizes are always appreciated, donated by the award winning Oh Canada Eh? Dinner Show, Garrison House, Treadwell’s, Ginger and the Dollar Store on Welland Avenue in St. Catharines.

At almost exactly 3 p.m. each Shaw Film day, the uniquely talented Stephen Levy takes to the stage to provide a brief preview of what’s coming.

Intuitive, incisive, easy-to-love, and occasionally irreverent and politically incorrect, he calls a spade a spade and provides a horticultural instrument.

Thank goodness the house lights have been dimmed, because sometimes there are a lot of blushing cheeks in the audience.

Last week, the mood in the theatre was so positive as Stephen finished his remarks, he was overcome by the vibe, and invited everyone over to his home after the film to enjoy a brief viewing of “A Star is Born”.

Having learned so much at the Shaw Festival Film Series is a catalyst for community spirit. For a couple of days after a film, we think about it, we talk about it, and we plan for next Saturday. It has become so much more than a film. Not just a movie, but now an integral part of living in our special Niagara Peninsula.

Vive the Film Series. Vive le Shaw Festival. Vive Niagara-on-the-Lake.

We are so fortunate to live in Canada in 2019.
Good winter for grapevines - so far

Jill Troyer
The Lake Report

Grape growers in Niagara have a dedicated ally when it comes to protecting their vines over the winter and his name is Jim Willwerth. He is the senior viticulturist at the Cool Climate Oenology and Viticulture Institute at Brock University and for the last nine years he has been meticulously gathering and compiling data to help grape growers prevent winter damage to their vines and mitigate the impact when there is damage from extreme cold.

Because of an effective partnership between the viticulture institute and the grape growers themselves, “We’re leaders in the world,” Willwerth says.

Matthias Oppenlaender, chair of the Grape Growers of Ontario concurs. “It’s a fantastic relationship. The research is very valuable to the industry because it is based on our needs.”

Willwerth and his team gather samples of buds from vineyards at regular intervals and test them to determine their cold hardiness, which varies depending on the time of year, the location and the grape variety.

“We put the buds into a temperature chamber that simulates a cold event, reducing the temperature by four degrees an hour, and note the temperature at the point where the bud becomes damaged to determine it’s cold hardiness,” Willwerth explains.

More than 40,000 buds are tested each winter. Growers use that information to determine when to use their wind machines to prevent damage. According to Oppenlaender, “We were losing crops until we brought in wind technology. It’s an absolutely critical piece of the puzzle and the research helps us know when to use it.”

A given block of vines might be hardy to -10C in December, but as the winter wears on, the vine will develop hardiness to even lower temperatures, such as -20C.

So when a cold snap is forecast, growers can look at Willwerth’s data online, where it’s broken down by date, location and grape varietal. If it says their buds are cold hardy to -20C and the temperature is going down to -25C, they know they need to use their wind machines to moderate the temperature around their vines to prevent damage to the buds.

Conversely, if their buds are cold hardy to -20C and the temperature is going down to -17C, they know they don’t need to run the machines.

Willwerth says that precision helps growers collectively save as much as $2 million a year in fuel costs, because they’re not running the wind machines unless they’re sure they need them.

“There are more than 400 users who take advantage of the data and the accuracy is dependent on the buds. If there’s a little bit of damage to some of the sensitive varieties, like Merlot and Syrah, but nothing severe.” When there is limited damage to buds, growers adjust their pruning methods to leave more buds on the vine, which mitigates the impact of the damage, he says.

Luckily, the freezing rain this month was no threat to the buds, Willwerth says. “The freezing rain ice on the plant will actually cause them to break.”

He emphasizes “the crop is dependent on the buds. If they die, there is no fruit,” so preventing damage is critical. “When there is serious damage to vines, it takes up to five years to get the vine back into production, so it’s a significant loss for growers. They still have costs related to caring for those vines, but without any crop.”

“The summer growing season is important, but winter can be even more nerve-wracking,” says Oppenlaender, but so far, so good this winter.

“There are some concerns for some very site specific sensitive varieties like Syrah and Merlot, but they have survived well so far, and I feel very optimistic right now.”

All of the data can be found on the viticulture institute’s Vine Alert website, at www.ccovi.ca/vine-alert.
N OTL residents talk late-night Amber Alerts

Duriya Baiguzhiyeva  
The Lake Report

For some Niagara-on-the-Lake residents, late hours don’t matter when it comes to a missing child.

Many Canadians were left shocked after an 11-year-old girl was found dead Thursday night. She had been abducted and her father is charged with murder in her death. Many others expressed anger and indignation after they were wakened by late-night Amber Alerts.

Peel Regional Police issued their first Amber Alert just after 11:30 p.m. The second alert, stating the girl was found, was sent at around 12:30 a.m. The third notification was issued early Friday morning.

Police report Riya Rajkumar was out for her birthday with her father, 41-year-old Roopesh Rajkumar. Roopesh was supposed to return Riya home to her mother by a certain time but didn’t. According to police, he later indicated he was intending to harm himself and his daughter.

The girl was found dead at a home in Brampton, police said. Her father was arrested and is now in the hospital with the self-inflicted gunshot wound, according to media reports.

Some people started complaining after the Amber Alerts were issued, stirring or waking them up.

Police said the alerts helped locate the suspect and his vehicle. “The system works,” they said. “Thank you to all those called with tips.”

The Lake Report asked NOTL residents what they thought about Amber Alerts.

When Kathryn Hock was wakened by an alert, it wasn’t something that bothered her, she said.

“Anything greater things in life to complain about. You need to save your complaints for something that is a little more stressful. To get wakened up when a child is missing is not something that you should complain about.”

However, she said the entire system needs to change but “it will never be changed.”

Phil Leboudec said the issue isn’t with the alert system because it is “effective.”

“I have two kids and I’m grateful that the system like that exists,” he said. “To have a system in place where everybody becomes involved and it becomes a larger community that can keep their eye out, I don’t think it’s a bad thing. The issue is that there are selfish people who out there who care less about other people’s safety.”

Blair Cowan said the Amber Alert system was great and he was happy with it.

“I don’t think there are any changes to be made,” he said. “And alerts shouldn’t be limited to any area.”

Sandra Knof said she has no issues with Amber Alerts but it “needs a different way of working.”

“Instead of getting mad at people who complain, you need to look at what’s wrong with the system,” she said. “Let’s figure out how to solve this. Because we don’t want people shutting off all Amber Alerts when they need it because it helps during the day.”

Many NOTL residents expressed their opinions on Facebook too.

Margo Banks said people need the Amber Alert system.

“Turn off your phone if your sleep is more important than finding a missing child,” she said.

Many agreed that late-night alerts should be issued at any hour.

Ruth Danck-Maltese said Amber Alerts “shouldn’t have a time limit on it” because “it’s an emergency.”

Carrie Finnen DeBor was “definitely in favor of 24/7 alerts,” while Daniel Oliver commented that “it’s worth the small annoyance it may cause people.”

“Any time, any hour,” said Michael Dunn. “When children are involved, it should be all hands on deck – drop everything.”

Liz Pullman shared the same sentiment.

“I can’t understand the people who would complain. It’s an emergency and the alert should be issued as soon as possible, regardless of the time.”

Another resident, Gail Kendall, pointed out how the alert helped find the girl and her father.

Paul Miele also commented telling to “keep the Amber Alerts at any time of the day or night. It might be one of us who may need help from all of our neighbours in Ontario.”

Const. Aklil Moomen, the media relations officer for Peel Regional Police, said it was “disappointing and upsetting” that some people were complaining about the alerts.

“I appreciate that a lot of people were sleeping but the immediate need to locate the child outweighed the momentary inconvenience that some people encountered,” he tweeted. “Tragically this incident did not have the outcome we were all hoping for but the suspect was located as a direct result of a citizen receiving the alert and calling 9-1-1.”

The Amber Alert is a warning system that notifies the public of an abducted child who could be in imminent danger. The alert provides information about the abducted child, the suspected abductor and any vehicle description available. In Canada, each province operates its own Amber Alert program and only police agencies can issue the alert.

According to Alert Ready, Canada’s emergency alert system, notifications are sent through broadcast channels, such as television and radio, as well as compatible, LTE-connected wireless devices.

If the device is turned off, it will not receive an alert. If the phone is set to silent, it will display an emergency alert but there might not be any alert sounds.

People can stop the alerts by sending “STOP” or “AR-RET” to 26237 (AMBER).
Residents encouraged to explore local history during Heritage Week

Dariya Baiguzhiyeva
The Lake Report

Niagara-on-the-Lake is well-known for its numerous historic sites and heritage buildings.

In light of Ontario Heritage Week, the Historical Society is encouraging locals and tourists in the town and across the country to visit museums, sites and cultural centres, and celebrate their diverse heritage. Since 1974, the third Monday of February has been identified as a Heritage Day in Canada. In 1985, the Ontario government identified the third week of February as Ontario Heritage Week. Each town and historic organization across Canada celebrate this week differently, from holding educational events to providing free access to unique historic spaces.

The theme for this year’s week is Heritage: The Tie that Binds. “In celebration of our past and our future, we encourage all Canadians – whether young or old, deeply rooted or new to Canada – to visit museums, historic sites and cultural centres, and connect with traditional knowledge keepers, educators, parents and grandparents to experience Heritage: The Tie that Binds,” said the National Trust of Canada website.

Niagara-on-the-Lake Museum representatives said they don’t have any special events planned for this year’s Heritage Week. Coun. Clare Cameron, who is a member of the town’s municipal heritage committee, said preserving local heritage is important. “The fact that we have a large collection of heritage buildings in Old Town but also some interesting sites in other villages within Niagara-on-the-Lake is part of what attracts people to come and visit and that’s what attracts people to want to live here. So economically, I think it’s a defining feature of what we are as a community. For that reason, too, I think it’s important that we protect it.”

Cameron said she would like to see the committee consider developing a mobile application or a map that would let users recognize and learn about historic sites and properties.

The Niagara Historical Society Museum.
DARIYA BAIGUZHIYEVA

“Of course, we ask a lot from people who act as volunteers, there’s only so much you can do,” she said. “But that’s something I’d love to see because we have so many good stories to tell about the buildings around us.”

For people who want to learn more about their roots, NOTL Library is holding monthly workshops led by David Hemmings. Hemmings, president of the Niagara Historical Society and Museum, said he started hosting Practical Genealogy and DNA workshops as a “service to the community.”

The first session, Practical Genealogy, is for people who don’t know where to start their genealogical research, said Hemmings. These workshops are also valuable to people who might not have money to buy subscriptions to genealogical databases.

The second session, the DNA workshop, is for more experienced participants who already have some understanding of the testing. However, people should be ready to discover something they might not like. “I always say ‘beware of what you ask for’,” said Hemmings. “You might have people in your background you wouldn’t make friends with. People who had occupations or life experiences that led them doing things you wouldn’t do. But that’s a reality. That’s life too.”

Knowing your heritage and roots is important because it is “valuable to your overall awareness of who you are,” said Hemmings.

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Author speaks of Indigenous discrimination and her hope for change

Brittany Carter
The Lake Report

After centuries of shameful atrocities committed against Canada’s Indigenous population, award-winning investigative journalist Tanya Talaga is counting on the next generation of native Canadians to continue the push to preserve Indigenous language and culture.

“I am very much hopeful,” Talaga told a sold-out audience at the Hare Wine Company on Feb. 13.

Retaining Indigenous languages is “so important” and native youth are taking it upon themselves to keep them alive, Talaga said.

“We often say how resilient our communities are. Our youth are getting smarter,” she said change is coming.

“You can see the weave through the native community,”

Talaga, an Indigenous issues columnist and long-time investigative reporter for the Toronto Star, was speaking as part of Wine and Words hosted by the Niagara-on-the-Lake Public Library.

She spoke with fierce conviction about her bestselling book, Seven Fallen Feathers, Racism, Death, and Hard Truths in a Northern City.

The book focuses on systemic failures of the institutions that should be protecting and encouraging the native community. It’s a narrative on the lives of the seven native students who died between 2000 to 2011 in Thunder Bay, 50 years after 12-year-old Chanie Wenjack froze to death after running from a residential school. An inquest was called after Wenjack’s death, but none of the resulting recommendations were implemented.

With only standing room left available, the event was the busiest co-ordinators have seen.

The audience, predominately non-native, was keenly interested in what Talaga had to say.

The book is steeped in Canadian culture, or more accurately, a deep-rooted, shameful piece of Canadian history. It’s about the atrocities in the native education system and how the deaths of seven children went otherwise unnoticed and ignored by most of Canadian mainstream media.

A member of the audience asked about the importance of family and community, adding that parallels can be drawn locally between the strength of community, and when the community is weakened, the whole system can be broken.

While Talaga said she agrees family is important, she is telling a different story altogether.

“It has never been an even playing field for Indigenous people,” she said, adding that the inequality is vast.

Experiences covered in the book and throughout her talks are matters that hit home with Talaga.

While she didn’t attend residential schools herself, she is of Polish and Indigenous descent, and is surrounded by family and friends who can tell the story of racism and inequality.

Her great-grandmother, Liz Gauthier, was a residential school survivor.

In her presentation, Talaga talked of how her path was altered to tell the story that needed to be told.

When she began her journey, the goal was to write an article about the lack of native votes in the federal election.

She met with Stan Beardy, the Nishawbe-Aski Nation’s grand chief. Looking for answers as to why Indigenous people never seemed to vote, she said she rambled about native voting patterns, commenting on the fact that Indigenous people could act as a swing vote in many ridings.

While she continued to ask questions along that vein, she said Beardy retorted with concerns about the disappearance of 15-year-old Jordan Wabasse.

In an excerpt from Seven Fallen Feathers, she said: “I launch into my spiel, trying not to sound like a salesperson or an interloper into his world, someone who kind of belongs here and kind of does not. This is the curse of my mixed blood. I am the daughter of a half-Anish mom and a Polish father.”

After 15 minutes of the same line of questioning, she said she told herself to smarten up and listen to what the grand chief was trying to tell her.

From that point, she began to investigate the deaths of the seven fallen feathers, a term coined by Christian Morrisseau, father of one of the students and cover artist of her book.

Her newest book, All Our Relations: Finding the Path Forward, explores youth suicide rates in Indigenous communities across not only Canada but also reaching areas of the United States, Norway, Brazil and Australia.

Debbie Krause, community engagement coordinator for the library, said the talk by Talaga set a different tone than other speakers the library has hosted. Often, Krause said the authors brought in are fiction writers.

“I think it was wonderful. She was a very poignant speaker. She told a story that needed to be told and she had the audience’s attention the whole time, which is phenomenal because she spoke for quite a while.”

She said the venue was perfect as well, adding that (The Hare Wine Company) did a great job hosting the event.

Those in attendance were offered refreshments and a glass of wine after the question and answer period. Many were local teachers, both current and retired.

Liz Bonisteel, of Miskito descent, which is one of the First People groups Indigenous to Nicaragua, is a teacher librarian at Harriet Tubman Public School in St. Catharines. She said she came to the event with colleagues.

Talaga spoke of common experiences across the globe, Bonisteel said, adding that All Our Relations was meaningful to her because it delves into a global Indigenous perspective.

“It’s a common experience. (Talaga) tries to answer the question; how do I support the next generation?”

Among other teachers in the audience, Maria Rocca Martin, retired teacher for 36 years with the Niagara Catholic District School Board, said the book spoke to her.

“I read her book and I was riveted. It was thoughtfully written with a kind of sad desperation. It makes you wonder, when will things change?” Rocca Martin said she taught at Fort Simpson, Northwest Territories for a portion of her career, where 90 per cent of the students were native.

She asked Talaga at the end of her speech what she would say to native children to keep them strong and looking ahead during tough times they face.

Talaga responded that the kids are “very much at the forefront,” adding that, “You draw on your strength. It’s going to take a long time for all of these institutions to change.”

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COMMUNITY FAVOURITES:
Legion Fish Fry every Thursday!
Duplicate Bridge at the Community Centre, Tuesdays and Fridays at 1 p.m.
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<td>2019 Fabulicious! - Day 1</td>
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<td>Senior Citizens</td>
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<td>Short Film: C'est Mois (with Howard Davis) 2 p.m. to 3 p.m.</td>
<td>NOTL Public Library</td>
<td>Seniors Fitness: Healthy Safe &amp; Strong 2 p.m. to 3 p.m. 3:30 p.m. to 4:30 p.m. NOTL Community Centre</td>
<td>Spanish Conversation Group 10 a.m. to 11:30 a.m. NOTL Community Centre</td>
<td>Days of Wine &amp; Chocolate 11 a.m. to 5 p.m. Wineries of NOTL Cribbage for Seniors 1 p.m. NOTL Community Centre</td>
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<td>2019 Fabulous! - Day 3</td>
<td>Signature Kitchens of NOTL Tech Talk: Engine Performance Workshop 10 a.m. to noon - Claire’s Harley Davidson</td>
<td>Seated Laughter Fitness: Laugh Yourself Healthier 2 p.m. to 3 p.m. NOTL Community Centre</td>
<td>Wineries of NOTL Skating and a DJ 5 p.m. to 9 p.m. Wayne Gretzky Estates</td>
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<td>2019 Fabulous! - Day 4</td>
<td>Signature Kitchens of NOTL Days of Wine &amp; Chocolate 11 a.m. to 5 p.m.</td>
<td>Whisky Tasting at Navy Hall 7 p.m. NOTL Community Centre</td>
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Drums and tales celebrates Black History Month at library

Continued from Front Page

He also founded Drums et al, a company “meant to bring the joy of drumming, and to educate, inspire and entertain all at once.”

From his workshop, the Nigerian native said he expects people to learn something new and understand the principles of community and collaboration.

“The drums always come out when we need to talk about anything important in the community in Africa,” said Williams.

The reason why participants use Djembe, one of the types of drums, is thanks to its structure, high range, and how easy it is to carry it around.

“The Djembe represents all African drums in this workshop,” said Williams.

During the event, he taught the audience the basics of drumming and told the story of The Turtle and The Pot of Wisdom, one of the West-African folktales Williams said he grew up hearing. The moral of the story, he said, is to be humble and disciplined.

“The drums are for adults, the stories are for the kids,” Williams told The Lake Report. “The part of the session is for grown-ups to drum and listen to the stories. But I want the kids to be part of the stories. If I ask the question, it’s for the kids. I allow them to talk and this way I teach the kids.”

After the event, Williams said he loved the energy. Debbie Krause, the library’s engagement coordinator, said she was pleased with the event’s turnout.

“The response was wonderful, very positive,” she said. “I think we learned a lot and we had a lot of fun doing it.”

One of the attendants, Joy Mcfarlane Brown, said the event was fantastic.

“It was an excellent activity to do,” said Brown. “The (event resonated) with me through rhythm, the sound and just thinking about my ancestors (who came from Africa).”

Monica Armstrong, another participant, said she also enjoyed the event.

“I have one of these little drums at home. And I didn’t know exactly how to work it so now I know how to work it,” she said laughing. “I love rhythm. And this is a lot of rhythm.”

Babarinde Williams plays drums for the crowd on Saturday.

Drums rang out at the public library Saturday. DARIYA BAIGUZHIYEVA

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809 Newark Air Cadets speak their minds

The second part of the competition included a two-minute impromptu speech on why speakers loved being cadets.

“One of the things that I found about the effective speaking with our cadets is they have a very interesting perspective,” said Lemoine. “They don’t usually speak about their thoughts and how they flow. With effective speaking, they get to pick a topic and unravel their own thinking on it so it’s a glimpse in how they think, how they see things they wouldn’t otherwise get.”

Thomas Forsyth, James Couroux and Shaelynn Lett were announced the winners. They now have a chance to go to the regional competitions and, in case of the win, they can advance to the provincial and national competitions.

The first-place winner Forsyth said he chose to talk about a tactical perspective on the battle of Vimy Ridge after he watched Peter Jackson’s They Shall Not Grow Old documentary.

“The runner-up Couroux decided to talk about the uses and advancements of ballistic body armour.

“It was one that I was really drawn to as liking universes that incorporated specific ballistic armour tactics because that’s a really wide side to choose it,” he said.

Lett, who finished third, said what is a Canadian “was always a topic that stuck out to me the most.”

There were three judges at the event. One of them, Lynn Taylor-Roehm, has been fulfilling this role for three years.

“I’m totally blown away by these kids. I think they show maturity much beyond their age and any self-confidence they’ve developed is terrific,” she said. “And every year they get more confident, much more knowledgeable. I can’t say enough good things about it.”

For another judge, Louise Leyland, it was a “pleasure” to be there.

“Thomas Forsyth, James Couroux and Shaelynn Lett were announced the winners. They now have a chance to go to the regional competitions and, in case of the win, they can advance to the provincial and national competitions.”

“Every year they mesmerize us with their speeches,” she said. “I think the themes this year were really something they cared about, they knew about, and they spoke with passion. And with maturity. I’m really very proud of them.”

Neeti Mehrotra, a secretary of the squadron’s sponsorship committee, shared the same sentiment and said it is amazing to see cadets grow up.

“It’s just seeing kids come in at 12 years old, they’re so shy. And within six months, you see them become young adults,” she said.

Retired Flight Lieut. Sam Kingdon agreed the event was great.

“The kids really catch on to it. It makes them a little more confident and that’s great.”
Across
3. This “old” place in St. Davids serves up a cold pint.
4. Shaw’s artistic director.
6. “The” in our other official language
7. Opposite of even.
8. The Court ______.
9. We eat their spuds (province).
11. This pharmacy is open only to look.
12. Your party host will appreciate this
13. A railway to freedom
16. Some are stubborn
17. Abbreviation for city across lake
18. Rick Mercer does this well
21. The other royal street.
24. Keeps time on Queen Street

Down
1. Slave who escaped imprisonment.
2. ______ Empire Loyalists.
5. The best community newspaper.
6. Unique name for the top role in town.
11. This pharmacy is open only to look.
15. John Graves Simcoe was Lt. ______.
18. A place of retreat.
21. The other royal street.
22. A Queenston monument stands in his honour.
25. ______ Empire Loyalists.

Have some fun
Crossword by Debbie Whitehouse, Richard Harley

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

Sudoku

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2018 LUXURY MARKET SHARE

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A brief interlude
Brian Marshall
Featured

Recently, I received a comment on this series from a landscape designer who said, “You’re talking about architecture but I use the same principles in what I do.” This got me to thinking that perhaps I had ‘skipped a beat’ by not properly introducing this series of articles at the get-go. You see, she’s right; the half dozen key principles featured in these articles are ubiquitous to all residential design disciplines. Indeed, many iconic architects considered this so vital in composing a property with intuitive ‘liveability’ that they'd handle every design aspect, including landscape and furniture, to ensure flawless integration.

I’ve always believed that the best client was the educated client. These folks could ask the questions which invariably produced the best results. However, learning key design principles, often couched in techno-speak and obscured behind clouds of marketing (by those who would rather you didn’t have the knowledge to raise questions that really need to be asked), can be a challenge. But, without these ‘educated’ questions, things will often go awry.

Take for example the Millennium Mansion; a late 20th Century builder-friendly style focused on the upscale market. In far too many cases, designers working in this style would ignore the principles of good design and produce a cacophony that justifiably earned the nickname “Tract McMansion”. I’d like to believe that had the builders been faced with educated buyers most of these flawed designs would never have seen the light of day.

Hopefully, this series on Design will give you a basic framework to assess “the good, the bad, and the ugly.”

At the end of March 1955 the Niagara river was completely jammed with ice 50-feet thick above the waterline. Two houses, ten cottages and numerous docks and boat houses were completely destroyed. The picture shows the ice in the entrance to the Niagara marina with two boat houses and Shepherd boat works in the background.

SUPPLIED/JIM SMITH

Did you know?
The Lake Report’s printer sources 100 per cent of its paper fibre from industry leading paper mills, which use quick-growth, sustainable, renewable plots of land, rather than clear-cutting forests. The ink is also vegetable-based.

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Calling all chefs!
Local recipe book planned for 2019

The Lake Report is calling on all cooks, chefs, bakers and food enthusiasts in Niagara-on-the-Lake. We want your favourite family recipes, and the stories that go with them, to share with the community. Whether it’s a special stew, soup, or salad; the best bread or muffins; or a decadent dessert, we’d like to hear from you!

We’d love it if you could include pictures of the food where possible, and of the family member who might have passed the recipe down. If there is any family folklore associated with the recipe, we’d love to hear that too. Maybe there’s a certain occasion when it’s always made, perhaps there’s a funny or sad story to tell that relates to that particular recipe, or certain traditions that accompany it.

We will publish selected recipes regularly and at the end of the year we’ll compile all the recipes together as a book of NOTL family favourites. Proceeds from the sale of the book will be donated to a local charity.

Please send your recipes, pictures and stories to: recipes@niagarano.com

The top recipes will be published in an annual paperback book which will be available (in limited supply) to residents of Niagara-on-the-Lake at The Lake Report office. This year’s book (title uncertain) will be released in the coming months!

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Chapter One from the novel, Caught Between the Walls by Sharon Frayne

Do You Believe in Ghosts? (Continued)

Incredible, I thought. You'd never know there used to be a building here. It's bad enough enough now. What was this place like in winter, back in 1817, when it was a jail? I hesitated, hoping the storm would just then give up. It just wasn't going to stop. I decided to continue the journey back to my warm home. It was tough going. Like walking through frozen quicksand. After a few plunging steps, I had to stop to let my heavy lungs and racing pulse settle down. I gasped for breath and the cold air burned like fire inside my lungs. The wind erased the visible world and my thoughts were filled with the tales.

I gave up and I decided to stay. Around midnight the storm gave up its relentless rain. The wind died down and the grudgingly silent storm kept me inside. I sat back and read my book. I would have plenty of warning before the train would leave again and so I got lost in the novel.

"What are you doing?" I looked up to find a rather perturbed looking policeman of about my age speaking to me. "Reading," was my sheepish response. Without further ado he instructed me to go with him. Scrambling to put my book in my bag I exited the carriage and jogged a couple of steps to catch up to him. We strode side by side down a completely empty platform towards the unmanned ticket barrier. The station was eerily quiet. No noise of trains. No hubbub from crowds seeking their trains. Almost silence.

As we padded through the platforms gate onto a deserted concourse my buddy muttered, "Bomb scare."

He led me through the concourse. We weaved our way between newspaper stands, advertising bollards, benches and other obstacles. At each of these he was twisting his head right and left at looking at the ground behind each obstacle.

The concourse main doors were open and we boldly marched through into the sunshine and turned right. Before me at the edge of Melton Street I saw a big police officer and a small crowd being watched over by two policemen.

Everyone stared at us as we marched in step up to the barrier. Once there my buddy lifted the tape and I ducked through. I turned to face my policeman believing he may wish to ask more questions. Before he could speak there was a deep muffled explosion.

"I was terrified, and my heart pounded like it would go on and on."
Penner MacKay: The rhythm of life

Brittany Carter
The Lake Report

The beat of a marching band drum started it all for Penner MacKay more than 60 years ago, setting him on a musical journey, carving out his own path.

MacKay, bright, happy and enthusiastic, has a passion for life. That passion is demonstrated through a love of drumming, the only career he ever considered.

His studio, a small building starting out as a bare-bones structure on the NOTL property purchased with his wife, holds an uncountable number of drums. The studio allows for sound reverberation unlike any other, attributed in part to the many drums in the small space. There was nothing to the structure when he started out - no floor, no drywall, no windows, no beams. He transformed it into the studio it is today.

“I think we got lucky. I really didn’t think about the acoustics, that much when we did all this. You hit one drum and you’re getting a bigger sound. You can throw a blanket over it if you don’t want that kind of reverberation.”

The room is lined with photographs of momentous occasions, gifts from his many students over the years and, of course, drums of working sizes, styles and origins.

Stepping out of the cold into the warm studio is like stepping through a gateway to another time, burning incense, dim lighting, dated memorabilia; it tells the story of MacKay’s history.

He says his foray into a drumming career began at the age of five in Cornwall, Ont. His neighbour was in a marching band and brought home his drum for the summer.

“I just thought, that looks like a lot of fun.”

After his neighbour gave him a pair of drumsticks for Christmas he began drumming on every piece of furniture in the house.

He didn’t pursue the hobby further until high school when he signed up for music classes and joined the band. He says it was the lifestyle that inspired him.

“I just got the bug. I really saw what it could be like.”

In high school, his teacher was an old big band trumpeter from England. MacKay says he helped him along his path, knowing he wanted to make a career out of music.

“We had a really good relationship.”

He set MacKay up for drum lessons. A well-known drummer in Montreal, Spike McKendry, was home visiting family for a week. His music teacher sent him to a drum lesson from a “real amazing player.”

“It was 1969. I still have the three pages of footage that he wrote out - books I should get, (drum beats) I should learn. He said if you ever want to come to Montreal to hear me play, you’re welcome to come and crash on my couch.”

MacKay took the offer to heart.

“Next Friday, who’s out on the 401 with his thumb out? Me.”

MacKay has been playing in bands of various genres ever since. He says he doesn’t have a favourite type of music or a favourite band, it all depends on mood. He’s not simply a rock musician, or a jazz musician, but he is, undoubtedly, a musician through and through.

His love of drums and drumming doesn’t end in performing. He’s been teaching local kids for more than 20 years. Building his own drums is also a passion.

The wine-barrel drums he built were inspired by a book he read while on the road, written about Mickey Hart, drummer for the Grateful Dead, called Drumming at the Edge of Magic.

The book referenced a friend of Hart’s who ran a summer camp for kids from rough neighbourhoods. It was suggested Hart bring the drums and put something together for the kids. “We would grab a barrel and cut it in half, got a hide, made a camp drum. When I got home, I thought, I want to make a barrel drum.”

The wine-barrel drums opened new avenues for MacKay. He was asked to play at the SkyDome, now the Rogers Centre, before some Argonauts games as part of a martial arts demonstration. He says that’s not something he would have had the opportunity to do if the wine-barrel drums were never created.

The SkyDome gig was unpaid, but MacKay says he didn’t mind. He never scoffed at playing gigs for free, especially when it was for a good cause. He’s performed at the Niagara Peninsula Children’s Centre for special-needs kids. “I don’t need money to do that. I’d bring bands in and pay them myself for god’s sake. You’ve got to give sometimes.”

For the SkyDome performance, he says he was able to bring his boys along. “My kids were young. We’d take the football with us and play until they told us we couldn’t.”

His boys, Andrew and Jesse MacKay, are both drummers themselves. MacKay says it’s really something to be able to play gigs with his sons. “It’s kind of cool that we can share that kind of passion.”

His wife, Susan MacKay, is a writer – a family of creative minds.

Raising a family in his line of work wasn’t easy, driving him to seek out different aspects of drumming. If artists can do a bunch of things in their fields, he says it’s possible to make a living.

Building the wine-barrel drums, teaching aspiring musicians and branching out in his field are some of the ways he ensured to keep the magic alive.

“That the fact that I can diversify. That I can go do a theatre gig in the pit, or I can do a movie soundtrack, or I can go play rock gigs every Saturday night at a club in Niagara-on-the-Lake – it keeps it interesting.”

He has no reservations about how lucky he has been. Though, with the time, effort and dedication that went into building up his career, luck has little to do with it.

“I’m the luckiest guy in the world. I just turned 68, and I’ve been doing this for more than 50 years.”

That wasn’t the first time he referred to himself as the luckiest guy in the world. He treasures his life, glowing while talking of past experiences and boasting about still being able to play – it’s clear he’s being genuine.

That’s not to say he hasn’t had his rough patches. MacKay says it’s really something to make you give up or they can be pushed through – he always chose the latter.

Living in NOTL has given him so much creatively and socially, though he wasn’t as enthusiastic when he and his wife first moved to the town more than 30 years ago. He says it didn’t take him long to thrive as a musician in this town; Toronto was the hot-spot for musicians.

Over time, he says he came to love it. Lasting friendships have been cultivated, ice-skating and going for beers weekly. He plays every Saturday at the Old Winery Restaurant with a group called The Niagara Rhythm Section.

“The people I play with on a Saturday night, four of us live in this neck of the woods. Our guests come from all over.”

“I used to joke with my wife, ‘If I build it, they will come,’ that line from that movie, Field of Dreams. “Sure enough, we have gotten the incredible MacKays to these events, and they have joined in. We’ve got such a scene, it’s really something.”

What’s next for MacKay? “More of this,” he says. His love for music and creativity isn’t going anywhere. He says while he’s not looking for gigs, he’s open to the possibility when they come along. He talks of plans to make more drums, learn new music, keep as active as he can – he has no desire to stop.

“My father, he worked for the Woolworth company for 45 years, a store manager. He had to retire a little early, in his early 60s. When I thought about it, it was like, I don’t have the switch, like, I don’t have to think anymore.”

MacKay says that’s not the path for him.

“That is the kiss of death, if you don’t have that anymore. I really believe if you have the old muscle going, you have a better shot. I mean I’m forgetful, but who isn’t forgetful at 68.”

Every step MacKay has taken and every person he has met along the way has led him to this point in his life. Acknowledging that everything kind of falls into place, and you can’t be happier with the opportunity when they come so far.

“It’s like the guy when we was five; if that guy didn’t have a drum next door, maybe none of this happened.”

It’s funny how the triggers in our life really set us on a path.”
Tender fruits

Denise Ascenzo

Three hundred years ago, there were no orchards of peaches, cherries or any type of fruit tree and no vineyards in the Niagara-on-the-Lake region.

The French encountered an Indigenous people, on the west side of the river, the Attiwanderonok, whom they named “La Nation Neutre” because they were “neutral” during the wars of the Haudenosaunee (Five Nations of Iroquois), and the Wendat (Huron).

The Neutrals were primarily farmers, fishermen, game hunters and gatherers (wild berries and grapes). The land in the NOTL region was perfect for their farming with the hot summers, mild winters, sufficient rainfall and well drained soil. They planted in the traditional method used throughout the St. Lawrence and Great Lakes regions, the “Three Sisters” method.

This method saw the fields cleared and then planted with three different types of seeds; corn, runner beans and squash. The corn grew tall enough for the beans to climb up them while the squash covered the ground below to hold in moisture.

With the arrival of the Europeans in the 1600s, the fur trade flourished but it created massive rivalries amongst the Indigenous nations. Many nations wanted full control of being the middleman between the French and the tribal nations in southern Ontario. The “Beaver War” in the 1640s saw the Haudenosaunee destroy the Wendat, Petun, Erie and Neutral Nations.

In 1762 the French had established a permanent fort, Fort Niagara, on land then claimed by the Seneca. During this period, the land on the west side of the Niagara River was used for farming to supply the fort with fresh food. It is possible that some fruit trees, found years later, might have been planted as well.

By the end of the American Revolution in 1783, 80,000 Americans (United Empire Loyalists) left the United States. Of that number, 50,000 Loyalists settled in Canada where free land grants were offered by the British government.

The Loyalists who had arrived at Fort Niagara, were soon crossing to the east side of the Niagara River, land grants in hand, to build new homes and to farm the land. The first crops planted were wheat, oats, barley and corn. It is speculated, that a few fruit trees were brought over as well by Loyalists for their own private gardens.

However, it must be noted that in the diary of Elizabeth Simcoe, wife of John Graves Simcoe, Lt. Governor of Upper Canada (1792-96), while they were stationed in Newark (NOTL), was an entry written in 1792: “We have 30 large May Dwarf cherry trees behind the house and three standard peach trees.” These cherry trees were quite large which might suggest that they were the trees that the French had planted many years before.

In 1792 the Niagara Agricultural Society was founded under the government of Lt. Gov. Simcoe. It was the first of its kind in Upper Canada, with its main purpose to promote and expand farming in the region. The original founders were made up of merchants, politicians, clergymen and a few gentlemen farmers.

By 1794 the importation and planting of fruit trees was in full swing. Commerce in fruit farming was officially in Niagara-on-the-Lake. While farming was thriving the Niagara Agricultural Society folded in 1805.

It was in the 1820s that a group of regional farmers developed the new Agricultural Society, one that was more cognisant to the development of farming and in particular tender fruit orchards.

The 1880s saw the Niagara Peninsula region below the escarpment become Ontario’s largest (and still is) tender fruit growing area. Tender fruits include peaches, nectarines, apricots, pears, grapes, as well as sweet and sour cherries. Grapes grew wild in the Niagara Peninsula prior to the coming of the Loyalists and would have been harvested by Indigenous people. Another entry in Mrs. Simcoe’s diary stated that Captain Smith made wine from wild grapes and “it turned out very tolerable wine”.

Imported grape vines came to Ontario as early as 1811 by German settler Johann Schiller, who planted them on his farm in Cooksville.

By the turn of the 20th century there were over sixty private vineyards and cottage wineries in the NOTL region but prohibition in the early part of the century stymied the growth of the industry. By 1960 there remained only six wineries in operation.

The vineyards we see today are quite young with the majority having been planted in the 1970s. Inskilkin received the first wine licence in Ontario in 1974. Ontario now produces 71 percent of wine in Canada.

Large scale fruit farming was restricted to a seasonal market, lucrative but not long term sustainable. A new method of not only getting fresh fruit to markets but also to produce a product that consumers could put away for winter use was needed. Canning was the answer.

Canning was a relatively new concept. First started in France in the 1700s, many methods were experimented with to preserve food. Glass jars with special lids, clay pots with wax seals or tin canisters, hand cut, with small circular discs (lids) soldered in place, usually using lead, were all experimented with.

The first successful canning factory to process food at a commercial level was in Boston in the 1820s. The actual term “can” was an abbreviation of the word canister, which not only was a noun but also became a verb as well “to can”.

The first canning in Ontario was established during the 1870s in the Picton area. By the 1880s there were many canneries in the NOTL region.

St. Davids had several canneries, one of which was owned by the Lowry family. It was called the Lowry Grist Mill and Cannery, built in the 1890s. The canery preserved all varieties of tender fruits from the region. Today the Cannery Park Housing Development occupies the original site of the canning factory.

NOTL (Old Town) had a huge cannery in operation canning peaches and tomatoes from the 1890s to 1957 when it finally closed its doors. The Pillar and Post Hotel took over the site. You can still see upon entering the lobby the wonderful beams of the old factory.

In the 1940s the Niagara Canning company was established by Peter Wall and the Mennonite Community. Unfortunately by 1948 the cannery went bankrupt. Today you can find the remains of the buildings when you visit Strewn Winery.

By the 1980s most canneries in Ontario had been shut down. Besides the growing and canning of the tender fruits, which in itself is labour intensive, many auxiliary industries developed. A basket factory was located down near the docks. Willow trees, used in the manufacturing of the baskets were planted near the site. Today, several of these trees are still growing in the dock area and can be seen.

Transportation developed quite rapidly with the railway lines being brought right into Niagara-on-the-Lake. The steamships on the Lake Ontario also came to NOTL meeting up with the train’s schedule to transport the fresh fruits to Toronto and markets beyond. These two means of transportation expanded the market for the farmer’s fresh fruit immeasurably. Now we have the transport truck industry that relies on the tender fruit farmers for business.

The Niagara Peninsula, between the escarpment and Lake Ontario produces the largest amount of Ontario’s tender fruit. Ninety-four percent of Ontario grapes come from this region. Peaches are at 90 percent, plums 80 per cent, sweet cherries 75 per cent, pears 72 per cent, and sour cherries 60 per cent.

From a few peach trees brought over to NOTL and planted in 1793, the Ontario tender fruit industry has now grown to over $100 million.

More of Denise’s articles about the history of Niagara-on-the-Lake are available at www.niagaranow.com.

Denise is a regular Niagara Now contributor and a respected voice in the community on historical matters. She has dedicated countless hours to promoting and advocating for the preservation of local history. If information is disputed, please send us a message.

To touch or story idea, please contact editor@niagaranow.com.
Community

All Niagara-on-the-Lake residents and visitors are welcome to submit photos and stories for consideration in this section. Please send submissions to editor@niagaranow.com.

 Artifact of the Week: Tussie Mussie

**Answer:** This week’s artifact is the Tussie Mussie, sometimes referred to as a nosegay or posy holder. It gained popularity during the reign of Queen Victoria (1837-1901) when small bouquets of flowers became a trending fashion accessory. The Tussie Mussie also served as an odor-eliminator that masked the smell of the streets and other repugnant scents due to poor personal hygiene. This funnel-shaped vase (c.1870) would be attached to the wearer’s clothing or carried by hand through the ring at the bottom. It is believed that this artifact may have been donated by Miss L.F. Clement.

Can you guess next week’s artifact?

**Clue:** I contained dangerous heat for safety.

Email answers to editor@niagaranow.com

The first winner will be listed next week.

A deer tries to get some seeds.

KAREN MOORE/SUBMITTED

Betty & Jane: Plunger Patrol

Inspecting NOTL’s bathrooms:

Trius Winery

We enjoyed our visit to Trius Winery and our tastings of Trius Sauvignon Blanc and Trius Dry Riesling both whites. The tasting room and accompanying washrooms are however all about the red. When it comes to restrooms it turns out we are also fans of the Red. We gave Trius Winery and their red themed facilities 3/5 plungers.

3/5 Golden Plungers

RIDDLE ME THIS:

I’m tall when I’m young, short when I’m old. What am I?

Last Week’s answer: A cat.

Answered first by William Hargreaves.

Email answers to editor@niagaranow.com for a chance to win a prize.

Carol MacKenzie of Virgil with her four-month-old cockapoo Angus taking a brisk stroll around Centennial Park.

JER HUGHTON

Support Local Business

Find what you need right at home. Check the paper weekly to find great local businesses.
'Historical Gossip':
films about who we were

Local filmmaker capturing essence of small town Niagara

Barbara Tranter is determined to make a full-length documentary film capturing the social fabric of her home town, Niagara-on-the-Lake. And she’s already started.

For the last couple of years, Tranter (all her long-time local friends call her Barbie) has created short film vignettes highlighting the personalities and memories of mostly octogenarian local characters. She’s working feverishly to make sure she captures these social histories while the central characters are still with us.

She talks both about the concept and the films Historical Gossip. She has made five short films so far and several more are in the concept and planning stages. Her subjects to date include Norman Howe, Blanche Quinn, Al Derbishyre and Donald Combe.

Each film has been premiered in front of a live audience at the Shaw Festival Film Series, as a prelude to the featured presentation.

Tranter loves attending the live screenings. “There is nothing better than hearing 700 people responding, laughing at the right moment and getting into the characters of the films,” she says proudly. “People are stopping me on the street and telling me to keep going, they are learning so much.”

She is adamant that the films are not about Niagara’s factual history. “I call it gossip, because it is only the recollections and feelings of the people who were here through the second half of the last century,” she says. “Each story tells a heartfelt, often funny, very tangible picture of our town, from one person’s point of view.”

Tranter hopes the current short films and the larger documentary when it is completed, will help everyone, long-time resident and newly-arrived, get a feeling of the strength of the town’s sense of community. She likens the idea to Stephen Leacock’s Sunshine Sketches of a Little Town, about life in Small Town, Ontario at the turn of the last century.

The filmmaker believes the real changes in the town began with the first season of the Shaw in 1963. “Before that, we were really just any old small town,” she says. “The start of the change was the arrival of Shaw. We loved it. There was so much happening.”

Tranter’s Historical Gossip films document the town in transition, from pre-Shaw to post-Shaw.

She has a perfect pedigree for this.

Born in Niagara-on-the-Lake in the early 1950s, daughter of a town dentist and dietician, she was drawn to filmmaking as a young girl, sitting in the back row of the Brock Theatre (now the Shaw Festival’s Royal George theatre on Queen Street), sometimes seeing the same film twice, on Friday night and then the Saturday matinee. And she knows all the personalities she is now featuring, as part of her own life experiences in the town.

“We were just a small town. In the 50s, our small block, just off Queen Street, had 27 children. We were a roving gang of unsupervised children,” she chuckles. “There was no crime. It was exciting.”

As a child.

“A graduate of Niagara District Secondary School, York University, Simon Fraser and the University of California, Tranter has won several film and TV awards. In 1987, she earned a Gemini Award for her production of The Canadian Conspiracy, and in 1988, the Best Canadian Documentary at the Toronto International Film Festival for Artist on Fire. She’s been cinematographer, editor, director, producer and independent cinema owner, several times over. For Historical Gossip, Tranter uses a small film crew and her own footage, shot on both a professional camera and her iPhone. She rough-edits the footage and then sends it to professional editors for finishing.

First and foremost, for Tranter, is the desire to entertain. “I hope these stories on the town’s social fabric do that,” she says.

But she takes pains to make sure her focus on the past doesn’t mean she values the present less. She is encouraged by Niagara Now. “So many of the new people in town are talented,” she says. “There is a real brain trust that is accumulating with people choosing to move — or move back — here. The town is exciting again, but for different reasons.”

You can tell, as she’s thinking about the project, her mind is racing with new creative ideas. But she acknowledges the most important step at this point is creating a business plan. To date, Historical Gossip has been entirely self-financed. “I need to convince the networks who will air the documentary, and the people who will support it,” Tranter concedes.

“You can tell, she has the skill, drive and passion to make it happen.