



Editorial on Randwood litigation sparks debate. And, boy, did we get letters! Opinions on pages 4, 5 and 6.

Hyper-local news for Niagara-on-the-Lake
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The Lake Report

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Niagara-on-the-Lake

Residents speak out on official plan



NOTL council listening to a presentation at the public meeting Monday night. DARIYA BAIGUZHIEVA

Dariya Baiguzhiyeva
The Lake Report

Niagara-on-the-Lake residents took the podium to speak their minds about the town's official plan.

The meeting took place at the NOTL Community Centre on Monday night.

The town held two open houses and one public meeting this month to hear the public's opinion on the official plan. Members of the community now have until March 15 to submit their written comments to council before it goes to the region for approval.

There were a number of top issues brought up at the meeting.

Intensification was one of such topics.

Pat Rapone listed a number of benefits the plan would have if it allows intensification. Rapone used the example of a St. Davids' block between York Road, Concession 5 Road,

Warner Road and Tanbark Road. He said the land is scarcely populated, isn't being farmed and remains underused despite a number of services provided in the area.

He suggested considering including this block within the urban boundary or at least to allow creating one acre of estate lots.

"Allowing development makes the most sense to me and all the area property owners (with) whom I expressed my opinion," he said. "(It) should make good sense to municipal and regional planners as well."

On the other hand, Gracia Jones, president of NOTL Conservancy Group, said the town has already met its 15 per cent intensification target.

"We feel strongly that to make the intensification target 'the minimum' invites an increase later on, and that the town must take a strong position that

our 15 per cent intensification target for all new dwelling units is the maximum," she said.

Jones also pointed out any intensification development should be directed towards the areas where it will not impact cultural heritage resources.

Among agriculture issues, John Kirkby said he was "disappointed" in the proposed official plan and suggested it recognizes the impact of enhancing and restoring natural features on specialty crops.

"When the Greenbelt plan was developed, we understood it was to protect the best farmland for crop production," he said. "We did not know it was to increase unmanaged vegetation that will impact our crops we're trying to produce."

Some St. Davids' residents expressed disappointment at the lack of their inclusion in the plan.

Mike Pearsall from St.

Davids Ratepayers Association said the official plan cannot be accepted as it is. He listed a number of issues in St. Davids, such as a need for school and swimming pool improvement, and said the village should be included in the official plan.

"There is no way you're addressing a significant portion of your population," said Pearsall.

Dorothy Walker also had concerns with the plan as she said she felt St. Davids "was left in the shadows" within the plan.

St. Davids needs a community centre, a "bricks and mortar library" and a sustainable bus route as the village has a mixed population, she said.

"Currently residents cannot move freely between the communities without having their own transportation. And an increasing number of senior residents have

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Horse and driver safe after carriage mishap



Ethan, a Sentineal Carriages horse, took a tumble Saturday afternoon. RICHARD HARLEY

Richard Harley
Editor
The Lake Report

All parties are doing well after a horse carriage incident in Niagara-on-the-Lake Saturday which saw a carriage driver kicked multiple times and a horse trip and fall.

It all happened in about 15 minutes, says Laura Sentineal, who operates the carriage business with her husband Fred. A shaft broke on the right side of the carriage, causing the horse to veer right around the corner, resulting in the carriage striking a parked vehicle

and the horse eventually tripping on the curb and falling to the grass.

"When the shaft broke it pulled to the right, and that's why the horse turned, because it thought all the pressure was on its right hand side so it wanted to go right," Sentineal said.

"It was just this crazy alignment of circumstances."

She isn't sure how the shaft broke.

"It was really weird. Where it broke it's steel," she said. She also noted the carriage company has al-

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Species at risk discussed at meeting

Brittany Carter
The Lake Report

Parks Canada is on a mission to save and manage native species at risk in Niagara National Historic Sites of Canada.

In the afternoon of Feb. 26, Parks Canada hosted a free field visit to NNHS locations, followed by an open house at Navy Hall later in the evening to discuss species at risk at the NNHS. The goal was to offer hands-on engagement with the

community, providing information about the official multi-species action plan, answering questions posed by residents and addressing any raised concerns.

Ken Kingdon, resource conservation manager for Parks Canada, took the lead. Trekking through the Fort George property in the cold, the field visit took the group to two locations where experts brought to attention the invasion of non-native plant

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Residents address official plan

Continued from Front Page

deteriorating eyesight problems and cannot drive," said Walker. "We all pay taxes and it seems that these taxes are not used in a uniform way to benefit all equally."

Walker said the town promised to provide walking and biking trails, to replace felled trees and to provide benches in and around the village but these plans and promises were never fulfilled. Sidewalks and the community swimming pool also needed upgrading, she added.

As the wine industry plays a vital role in NOTL, there were quite a few numbers of wine-related questions addressed to council.

Jamie Slingerland, director of viniculture at Pillitteri Estates Winery, said the official plan should require farm wineries to have a minimum of 10 acres and estate wineries to have a



Patrick Little, lawyer for Save Our Rand Estate, addresses council with concerns about the town's official plan. DARIYA BAIGUZHIEVA

minimum of 20 acres. He also said 75 per cent of the land should be planted to have tender fruit or specialty crops of grapes.

Debbie Zimmerman, CEO of Grape Growers of Ontario, said "locally grown" wines should be clearly identified as "grown in Ontario." She also expressed her support of the requirement of a minimum

acreage and said it was important to integrate the natural heritage system with the agricultural system.

"The naturalization sites need to be managed as to protect them from becoming reservoirs or harbour sites for noxious weeds, invasive pests and other fauna that might negatively impact on the surrounding properties," said Zimmerman.

On the contrary, John Henricks from Niagara Planning Group said the wine industry and agriculture-related businesses need more flexibility as they are already "heavily regulated by the province."

"Don't close doors for developers," he said. "Wineries are making more money than farms and we want to be comfortable where we're going. Farms need to be viable by making money."

One of the last presenters was a lawyer Patrick Little from Heelis, Little, Almas, and Murray LLP of St. Catharines. He was speaking on behalf of his client group, Save Our Randwood Estate. Little said there were site-specific policies regarding the estate that weren't included in the new official plan. He said it could be an "inadvertent error" and that his clients "request that specific policies be carried forward."

Local MPP speaks against proposed changes to the provincial healthcare

Dariya Baiguzhiyeva
The Lake Report

Ontario's Health Minister Christine Elliott introduced legislation Tuesday which will merge 20 health agencies into one.

Six agencies and 14 local integration networks, including Cancer Care Ontario, eHealth Ontario and some others, will be consolidated into the new Ontario Health agency.

The government hopes to have 30 to 50 Ontario Health teams that each would be responsible for 300,000 people.

When a group of providers comes together – for example, a hospital, a nurse practitioner clinic and mental health team – they will be fiscally responsible for delivering care to everyone in their geographic area, said Elliott at the news conference.

People will be able to have access to digital services such as making online appointments, having access to local health records and virtually talking to a specialist.

Family health teams will continue to operate under the new system while the changes will be taking place gradually.

Elliott said the new system will save money but added it's going to take years for it to "become mature." However, the minister didn't say how many people could potentially lose their jobs as a result of this transformation.

The provincial government's plan to create a "super agency" that would manage healthcare services was first revealed by the Ontario NDP. The 81-page document titled "The Health System Efficiency Act" was leaked to the press last month.

At the news conference on Jan. 31, NDP Leader Andrea Horwath said the new legislation would allow privatizing health services.

Minister Elliott responded to the claims saying she hasn't seen the document but it was just a draft and the province would stay

committed to the public healthcare system. She also said the government had consulted with the public before drafting the bill.

Wayne Gates who is an MPP for the riding of Niagara Falls, also including Fort Erie and Niagara-on-the-Lake, spoke against the legislation.

"Mr. Ford, this message is directly from the constituents who tasked me to be their voice in this Legislature. We say no to health care privatization," said Gates at the Legislature on Feb. 21.

Gates said he believes healthcare services need to be publicly funded and publicly delivered.

"I think Canadians feel like I do," Gates told The Lake Report. "I think if elected PC members and Liberal, NDP and the Greens were honest with themselves, most of them would say, 'I want to keep my healthcare publicly funded and publicly delivered'. I believe they feel that way."

If healthcare services are privatized, single parents and those who have the least financial stability could be the most affected, he said.

Money should be re-invested in mental health and preventive care as well as go towards research, proper staffing and reducing wait lines.

"Every private dollar that goes into healthcare means that it's fewer dollars that go to frontline workers and staff," said Gates.

Gates posted a video on Facebook on Feb. 5 asking what residents think about the government's potential plans to privatize the healthcare system. The video has over 353,000 views and thousands of comments.

"That means that people are interested, not only in Ontario but right across the country," said Gates. "We had people from the United States commenting, saying what kind of disaster it is (up) there."

When asked how the possible regional amalgamation

Owner of damaged vehicle gets free carriage rides for life

Continued from Front Page

ready started to investigate how to make sure it never happens again.

"Whenever you have something happen like this, you've got to start at square one and go through everything. We've just to review everything and do whatever humanly possible that we can do to prevent this from happening again," she said.

The carriages get checked over every time they're used, she said, and they go in for regular maintenance.

"Sort of just like maintenance on a car," she said.

She's just happy nobody was hurt.

"The horse is fine," Sentineal said, noting he's seen a vet since to be sure.

In the rare cases when a horse falls to the ground, she said the carriage company's policy is to keep the horse calm and on the ground until someone arrives to assess its condition.

"As far as procedure and



Sentineal Carriages horse Ethan is fine after taking a fall Saturday afternoon. SUPPLIED

emergency protocol goes, it all went very smoothly. You know, you plan and prepare for the worst, and hope for the best. And 99 per cent of the time it's the best, but (that) night it wasn't."

It's not something the company is loving right now with the recent attention from animal rights activists, but has a relatively positive outlook.

People have been "wonderful" she said. "You know, they get it — stuff happens beyond your control once in a while. I saw somebody whip open a car

door the other day right in front of a bike, and the bike just missed getting doored. You know, stupid things happen all the time, and the only way to stay 100 per cent safe is to wrap yourself in bubblewrap and never leave your house. And even then something could happen. But you know, 30 years of doing this, this is a pretty exceptional occurrence.

We're happy it all got dealt with quickly and efficiently and that everybody is OK."

She said the company is also taking care of the damages to the vehicle.

The couple that owns the car was checking into the Prince of Wales Hotel at the time of the accident.

Ironically, they have been frequent customers of the carriage service over the years, Sentineal said. So on top of offering to pay the damages she gave them free rides for life.

"For life, yeah" she chuckled. "You know what, they were so nice and understanding. They were just concerned about the horse and the driver. They were really sweet."

Fire fighters, ambulance and police vehicles all attended the scene.

The carriage driver, Abby Moran, was sent to the hospital for examination after the incident and released later that night with minor injuries.

Moran was unable to speak with the paper before press time, but is doing well, said Sentineal.

The horse, Ethan, was taken to a vet. Sentineal says he is "completely fine."



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Field visit offers hands-on education about Parks Canada's **multi-species action plan**

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species that are endangering native plants.

He said the field visit was an "opportunity to show some people who aren't familiar with the land."

Plans to remove non-native and hybrid trees were mentioned, followed by replanting of native trees.

Carpooling in Parks Canada vehicles, the visit took the group to the Battlefield of Fort George National Historic Site, referred to as the Lakeshore Property, located between St. Catharines and NOTL along Lake Ontario. It consists of buildings, an open field named The Commons, and a Carolinian forest, part of Oak Grove.

Fort George National Historic Site sits next to Butler's Barracks, with a similar habitat making up the other half of The Commons and Oak Grove.

During the visit, Kingdon focused on the Butternut tree and the Eastern Flowering Dogwood tree, among others. He said these species are native to the area, holding local cultural and historical significance.

As an area rich in history, he said it's important to maintain the trees and species native to the location, some pre-dating the war of 1812.

Until recently, Kingdon said Parks Canada weren't concerned with management of the area because of its national historical site classification. The multi-species action plan brought the importance of managing the endangered species in the area to light.

"We're obligated to manage these species," he said, adding that he would like to see part of the location maintained as an open forest, or an oak savannah with 25 to



Gary Allen, Parks Canada Species at Risk specialist.
BRITTANY CARTER

35 per cent canopy cover.

He attributed part of the overgrowth of invasive species to a lack of fire on the site. His goal is to get fire on the landscape within the next five years.

In an email response, Kingdon said, "Fire is used to maintain grasslands and savannah by burning the young trees that are beginning to spread into the meadows. Fire is very good at killing young trees (it is often less successful on large trees), yet it rejuvenates the grasslands as the ash produces fertilizer for new growth (ash from a fire is rich in nutrients). As well, grass is adapted to burn, meaning that occasional fires do not harm it."

The importance of garnering the support of the residents was stressed by Kingdon.

"We need to be confident that we have the community's support while also managing for the right reasons."

Supporting Parks Canada's action plan and assisting in the explanation were Corey Burant, ecologist for Niagara Parks Commission; Jarmo Jalava, general expert; Paul O'Hara, expert on many things including White Wood Aster and

Butternut; Gary Allen, Parks Canada Species at Risk specialist and Chris Zoetewey, Niagara National Historic Sites resident expert on site history.

Peter Harvey, of the Harmony Resident's Group, said in an email response that he attended the open house held at Navy Hall, and spoke on behalf of the group. He said he showed support and addressed concerns for the lakeshore property in particular.

"Years ago when the old sewage treatment plant was built, no one seemed to give a damn for species at risk and the two large settling ponds were built; completely disrupting the habit of the flora and fauna, including species at risk."

He added that, after decades of the habitat adjusting to the environment, the de-commissioning of the old sewage treatment plant plans include potentially filling in the ponds, and disrupting the habitat once again. "Two wrongs do not make a right."

Harvey said that in 2015 the Harmony Residents Group undertook an in-depth study of converting wastewater treatment plants to open wetlands. This showed that it has been done successfully several times

here in Southern Ontario. He said the study showed that it had been done successfully several times.

"That is what can and should be done here in Niagara-on-the-Lake," Harvey said.

NOTL town staff were also in attendance. Mark Iamarino and Joanna Rees, town planners, said they went along for the field visit just to gain an understanding, without a specific plan in mind.

Some of the residents said they signed up out of curiosity and to learn more about the area.

Terry Mactaggart said she often hikes in the area in the warmer weather and was interested to hear about the different species native to the region.

Gerry Mackay also went to see the location and learn about the species. He said he doesn't necessarily agree with the plans to tear down existing trees to plant new ones, adding that reforestation is unsightly and doesn't allow for organic growth. He said he will return in the summer for walks through the path though.

Christine Earl said she hadn't yet formed a full opinion of the plans for the area, but she said, "you can't be too pure," adding that there needs to be room for adaptation. At the end of the visit, Sarah Quinlan Cutler, external relations manager for Parks Canada, asked the group if they felt the plans made sense.

In response, a resident said communication is extremely important, adding that it could become a big problem unless the plans and reasons behind them are outlined in a transparent way. She said constant education is necessary.

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could affect the health-care services, Gates said people will have to wait to see what the government is going to do.

"Who knows, maybe they won't amalgamate. I know

the residents of Niagara-on-the-Lake want to keep (the town) as Niagara-on-the-Lake and keep its uniqueness," he said. "Let's not try and guess what they're going to do. I do know that the residents of every community in Niagara and

every resident of Ontario deserve to have a publicly funded and delivered healthcare system that works for them."

Gates said it isn't the first time the government tries to privatize the healthcare system.

"None of this stuff is new but for my entire adult life, whenever it came to health-care, I've been very clear. We're not the United States of America. I don't want to see people going bankrupt in this country because of healthcare costs."



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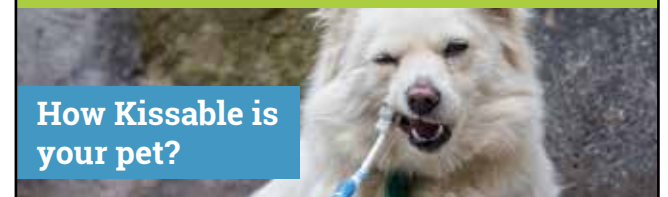
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LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

All of this could have been avoided

What is your first response to the picture to the right of the story?

"Oh, looks good ... this might look great on the Randwood Estate," perhaps?

I can only speak for myself, but I firmly believe that "the fight" over the proposed Randwood Development could have been almost entirely avoided had the residents and Mr. Marotta been on the same page in regards to the definition of what constitutes a development that is good for both Niagara-on-the-Lake and Mr. Marotta's business.

I leave those completely opposed to any change out of this debate.

There are many smaller builders in NOTL who are rarely spoken about, if at all, with the degree of frustration and nastiness that Mr. Marotta's developments



provoke.

Why aren't the folks in NOTL appreciative and accepting of someone who has the resources to make a very positive contribution to this beautiful town; someone who would most likely be welcomed by many other communities? I think the answer lies on the front page of The Lake Report (Feb. 21) with a simple picture of the proposed development. Personally, I can't get past

this drawing, I believe that Mr. Marotta's definition of "five-star" and "signature" and "legacy" and the proposed builds to attract "young" people and "attracting people with money" are not the same as the resident's of NOTL definition or need of the same.

If the first image proposed by Mr. Marotta had incorporated historical colours, old brick patterns and stone, real wrought iron, and any

other materials and building styles which define a more stately, historical approach to this particular property/development, I would have been the first person to shake Mr. Marotta's hand and sincerely thank him for his contributions to our town, as we do with many other business people who make such a positive impact in NOTL.

I could be completely wrong in my thinking but pictures are worth a thousand words ... change the building and scale and feel of the development to reflect what residents enjoy most about living here so much (it is certainly not because of an over-abundance of tourists and stucco) and maybe the hostility towards this endeavour could have been dissipated.

Carolyn Bernacci

constantly saying things that he will do unless he gets his way with the assumption that he will be able to do those things.

The best way to deal with a bully is to stand up to him.

We should all be encouraging people not to attend Two Sisters winery. There are plenty of other wineries that are just as good and much less expensive.

As a town we need to stick together, support council and show a united front. We need to seek support from the provincial government and any where else we can find it.

Despite all the people he claims support him the vast majority of NOTLers don't. Again, following the Trump lead he keeps repeating things with the theory that by doing so people will believe it.

Had we followed your advice in 1812 we would now be flying the Stars and Stripes over the town.

If we don't stand up to him this town will lose its special character which bring the tourists to town and of course the economy that flows from that.

Doug Johnson



More letters

TLR is my paper

In my opinion, The Lake Report is the best local newspaper. During the council election, it was the first paper I looked for to find out about the candidates and the issues. The reporting was unbiased and informative. I continue to look forward to receiving my copy of the paper for an analysis of the current local issues in Niagara-on-the-Lake and the Niagara region. The newspaper is also very easy to read due to the font choice, layout and white space.

I am not the only resident who feels this way. Anyone I have spoken to about your paper nods their head in whole-hearted agreement.

Keep up the good work!

Mary Varacalli

Thanks to good samaritans

An older gentleman took a tumble in Virgil two weeks ago near Gales Gas Bar. After falling and being unable to get up, three young men came by and helped him up and made sure he was safe. The man's family, who asked not to be identified, would like to thank the three young men who helped him.

"He didn't want his name or any other information put in just a shout out to the good samaritans," said a family member who contacted the paper.

The Lake Report also commends the young men.

Re: Stop spending bad money

While I accept that Editor Richard Harley had every right to express the views of his publication in the editorial published in the same edition of the paper, I strongly disagree with them. Virtually everyone I spoke to when I was a candidate in the 2018 NOTL municipal election campaign was concerned about future development in town, and supported protecting NOTL's unique natural and cultural heritage. Without exception, candidates seeking election to town council said they would act on both those concerns.

NOTL Council is not, in my view, "spending bad money" to initiate legal actions intended to preserve the heritage buildings and landscapes of the Randwood estate, it is taking action to achieve something voters elected it to do – and has my full support.

Terry Davis

The Lake Report

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Editorial: Clearing the air on NOTL vs. Marotta

Richard Harley
The Lake Report

Last week's editorial about the legal battles between the Town of Niagara-on-the-Lake and developer Benny Marotta touched a nerve.

To be clear, there is no suggestion by this paper that caving in to every potential legal battle is the right thing to do. It is, however, foolish to spend thousands of taxpayer dollars to fight what looks like a losing cause.

If there's something we don't know about why the municipality

strongly feels it will win the series of legal battles with Solmar and Two Sisters which lie ahead, the paper welcomes the information. We did not see such evidence in the town's court submissions.

We are not legal experts but we have read all the town's submissions and found the municipality's arguments weak, the affidavits from professionals full of qualifiers and maybes. And in almost every exhibit presented in the town's affidavits alleging Marotta destroyed heritage attributes, the same attributes are listed for all four properties.

Perhaps the court will see that as significant, but our reading of the documents, and the counter arguments Marotta filed with the court, led us to believe that the town's case is on thin ice.

Hence the editorial opinion expressed last week.

Like most of the community, we don't want to see random, unnecessary development, nor do we want to see heritage attributes lost. That is wrong. What we question is the wisdom of pursuing what, based on the evidence we have seen, seems to be a weak case.



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Re: Possible region amalgamation

As we debate Town vs. Region and which is best I thought the following letter to the editor of The Niagara Advance, published October 19, 2002, might be appropriate. I was the author.

When we first moved to Niagara-on-the-Lake from Toronto we fell in love with the history and ambiance of the lovely town. Being a cynic however I could see that this little town in the Colonies could not and would not survive the influx of newcomers. The fact that of every \$1 paid in real estate taxes we have a lord mayor and eight councillors to manage 18 cents!

The other 82 cents are managed by regional council on which we have two representatives! Not quite fair representation!

Since we came to town,

schools and hospitals have been closed ... again by boards on which NOTL has been under-represented.

Now we have the province studying local regional governance.

Better late than never.

The reality is that for all the untold millions of tax dollars that we, the citizens of NOTL, send to Niagara Region, Queen's Park and Ottawa, little is returned.

I would suggest it is time to secede from the disasters that surround us and declare NOTL a City State and govern ourselves in all areas of endeavour.

Constant news reports confirm the mismanagement of the upper levels of government and waste, corruption, pork barreling and the like appear to be the norm.

We, in NOTL could field

a military at least equal to that of Ottawa. Our navy would be jet propelled, and our airport would have working aircraft and helicopters!

Our economy would continue to generate the wealth for the Town to prosper and the money now expended on the salaries of the MP, MPP, Regional Councillors, their staffs, offices, perks, etc., would swell the coffers of Newark Neighbours and Red Roof Retreat, and realty taxes could be reduced and there would be no sales or income taxes. All tax money now flushed down the river to the region, Queen's Park and Ottawa would remain in Town to be spent far more wisely for the benefit of NOTLers.

The governing body would be close and would

be held accountable and we would impose a two-term limit with no termination allowances, indexed pensions or other perks. Councillor's jobs will be a mark of community service, not a profession.

It is time that the mouse roared!

It is likely that our move to secede may just set a nation-wide trend for others who are equally disheartened by the lack of leadership in an over-governed and inefficient nation.

Accordingly I propose the NOTL secede from the region, Ontario and Canada but retain its place as part of the British commonwealth flying proudly the Union Jack and singing heartily God Save the Queen.

Bill Cochran Sr.

Re: Town will pay a 'fortune' in legal fees

Dear Editor,

Contrary to Mr. Marotta's framing of the election as a SORE event, in fact a record number of voters in Niagara-on-the-Lake (and for that matter across the Niagara Region) showed up and voiced their displeasure with the bullying tactics of the developers and their enablers in the municipal and regional governments by voting in a new regime.

It may cost a few dollars in legal fees at the Regional level to protect the public purse from the Caslin, D'angelo fiasco lawsuits, but better to stand up for what is right than simply give in and pay out those extortionate claims. Similarly it cost a few dollars to reclaim the NPCA from the cabal so clearly exposed by the provincial auditor's report. I'm hoping the new board at the NPCA will spend a few more dollars on legal fees and try to recover the money wasted by the previous one.

Here in NOTL we elected a lord mayor and council committed to finally regaining control of our future through passing a new Official Plan and reigning in the bully tactics of some developers.

Even if it costs "a fortune" it will be worth every penny to control our own destiny and approve appropriate development sensitive to our heritage culture that meets the needs of the citizenry and not just the greed of some wealthy developers. I for one would be happy to donate to support the town should it decide it needed to establish some form of Legal Defense Fund, and from the people I have talked with there are hundreds who would support such a fund. Your editorial suggests we should simply roll over in the face of the legal bullying tactics and let Mr. Marotta have his way. Did you ever stop to think that maybe it will be Mr. Marotta on the hook for "a fortune" in legal fees when he loses?

Bob Bader

Re: Town will pay a 'fortune' in legal fees

Dear Editor,

The front-page headline and the editorial in your Feb. 21 issue are outrageous.

TOWN WILL PAY 'A FORTUNE' IN LEGAL FEES, your headline states boldly. Has The Lake Report already decided the outcome?

Your editorial is entitled: Stop spending bad money. You say "If a hotel at Randwood isn't going to cause the apocalypse, we might as well let it happen."

Benny Marotta's sentiments exactly!

Mr. Marotta must be very pleased with your paper. It seems safe to say that most residents and, probably, Town Council are not. That a fledgling new paper in town would take sides against the residents and town makes one wonder where you're coming from. Why isn't the paper on the side of the residents and town, against Benny Marotta?

Now, about Mr. Marotta. It's not unusual for a developer to be at odds with existing zoning and the wishes of residents. What's unusual in this case is that this is the historic Old Town of Niagara-on-the-Lake; that Marotta says he appreciates its history and charm; and that he and his family have taken up residence here to be a part of it. Yet Marotta has bought up much of the vacant land in town and is intent on filling it with high-density residential construction and a hotel that are out-of-character with the Old Town and everything residents and visitors cherish — whether we like it or not. "It's a business," he's quoted as saying. If residents and Town Council continue to object, he's going to make us pay for it in legal fees. With this plan and attitude, Marotta is becoming *persona non grata* in the community of which he wishes to be a part.

Is that the "legacy" he wishes to create for his family and their Two Sisters Winery here?

David Cottle



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OPINION



Lord Mayor's Column: 2019 budget

*Editor's note: Lord Mayor Betty Disero will submit a mayor's column on occasion.

Lord Mayor Betty Disero
Mayor's Column

It has been 10 weeks since council began discussing the budget, and on Monday Feb. 11, the 2019 Operating and Capital budgets were officially approved.

I would like to thank the public, staff, and my colleagues, all of whom worked very hard to find possible reductions to the budget. A very special thank you to the Town's finance department, led by Kyle Freeborn.

The bottom line is this: there is a 4.48 per cent increase to the Town budget. This means homeowners that have a property assessed at a value of \$501,641, currently pay \$5,000 in property taxes, and will see an increase on their property tax bill of \$45.84.

This is the Town's portion of the tax increase, which works out to just under one per cent or 0.92 per cent relative to your 2019 tax bill.

So how did we get here? Council first looked at revenue sources, then evaluated reserves funds, and lastly determined controllable and uncontrollable expenses. A breakdown of the approved budget will be available on the Town's website on Feb. 28, 2019.

It is important to remember this is only the Town's portion, the Region still has to approve their budget and the Province still has to set education rates.

Council faced several difficult decisions when looking at the budget. There was an obligation made by the previous Council (which I supported) to increase staff retention measures compounded with the increase of utility costs which brought the proposed Town budget to over 13 per cent.

The biggest savings came from reducing the Town's contribution to capital projects and reserves. Infrastructure maintenance, such as road and sidewalk repairs, is funded predominantly by the tax levy. When the Town

builds something new, ongoing maintenance costs must always be considered.

While the Town gets funds from other levels of government, or development charges, to create parks or subdivisions, the ongoing maintenance expenses comes from taxes.

The original proposal was to transfer \$2.47 million from the Operating account to the Capital account. Council reduced it to \$2.02 million. This by no means makes the budget sustainable, but it is a start. Over the next couple of years, we will have to build back the contribution to the Capital account or we will start to see less construction repairs.

Now, we must look to the future. Some questions have to be considered: how do we build up the reserves so we don't have to transfer so much money from the Operating budget? How do we build in \$1.1 million that is required annually to maintain existing facilities? The focus for this year's budget was human resources; the



Lord Mayor Betty Disero. RICHARD HARLEY

next couple budgets have to be about infrastructure maintenance and protecting our reserves.

I am happy to report that Council approved an Audit Committee. Over the next year a group of Councilors will work with staff to review and make changes to the budget process.

The group's focus will be discussed fully at their first meeting. I look forward to an efficient budget process for the 2020 budget.

It is going to be a very busy year and an extremely busy term of Council. I am confident that in collaboration with the public and staff, Council members are

up to the task.

If you have questions, concerns, or want to voice your opinion, I encourage you to reach out to myself or any of my fellow Council members. We are more than happy to speak with you about any subject because your input is valuable to our work.

Niagara-on-the-Lake's heritage needs protection, not flawed ideas

David Israelson
OPINION

The Lake Report's editorial on Feb. 21, 2019, "Stop Spending Bad Money", dealing with Niagara-on-the-Lake's heritage designation is one of the most disappointing pieces of opinion writing I have read.

The argument seems to go like this:

Developer wants to build something that a large number of residents do not want and believe will damage their town.

The town attaches historical significance to the property and the developer is mounting a legal challenge.

Simply because the developer is challenging this, the town should, as you put it, "back down", because fighting this costs money. The developer will also "sue" for court costs.

There are many reasons why this argument is par-

ticularly poorly thought out. Here is how this "reasoning" — and I use this term ironically in this case — would work in other situations:

A man comes to your door and says that he owns your house and you must get out. He does not own your house but says he will get a lawyer, will take you to court and demand court costs. By the Lake Report's reasoning, it could cost a lot to disagree, so you should leave.

The Leafs are scheduled to play Tampa. Tampa is higher in the standings and might win. By the Lake Report's reasoning, the Leafs should forfeit the game rather than take to the ice.

The editorial is based on a number of faulty or misleading premises. Let's start with the issue of court costs.

It sounds like the Lake Report is unaware that

court costs are always awarded in any civil case, either to one side, the other, or a combination of both. Typically the losing party pays. No one "sues" for costs.

After a hearing, either party might ask the tribunal that hears the case to vary the standard cost award, but there must be exceptional circumstances. A town defending a rich developer's challenge to a democratically-decided heritage designation would not be exceptional. It is what elected councils are expected to do by the voters who put them there.

Next, let's take the premise that our town's legal battles "don't bear much prospect of victory."

On what is this based? That the other side has hired lawyers? The Lake Report does not appear to understand the nature of administrative law deci-

sions and the considerations that go into them.

Again, by this reasoning, we should never take anyone to court for any transgression, because they might show up with a lawyer.

Third, the Lake Report says that "it's looking very much like municipal elections won't be the same next time around anyway." Who says so?

The Lake Report already published a previous — and also deeply flawed — analysis of possible amalgamation in this region. I did not find a single reliable source mentioned in that article. The writer has confirmed that the story is based on "number of sources who wouldn't go on the record, combined with intuition and common sense."

This is not common sense. It is innuendo. Sometimes there are circum-

stances where protecting sources is necessary — if they are whistleblowers, for example. This was not one of them. There was no reason for unsourced material of this kind in your article about amalgamation.

Is it true? Who knows? If this is what Lake Report stories are based on, why should anyone believe anything we read in the Lake Report?

The Lake Report also says that "it's a safe bet other developers are impacted by the town's actions too." Says who?

Even if the others are affected, judging by the turnout at numerous community meetings and protests, and the municipal election results, most residents might think it's a good thing if the rich heritage of Niagara-on-the-Lake is protected, rather than chopped down by developers.

It also doesn't make sense to decry as "political" a decision by elected officials to carry out their legal obligations to act in the interest of the people they serve. Indeed, Council might be liable were they to not defend a decision which a developer is attacking a council decision, in what appears to be a frivolous administrative challenge based entirely on the developer's self-interest.

It is disappointing to see a publication with such promise as the Lake Report be sullied by such pointless and ill-informed material. I hope we are not seeing a pattern.

Because really, we can do better.

Editor's note: David Israelson is a Niagara-on-the-Lake resident and member of the Town's Urban Design Committee.

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Crossroads Public School Me2We Club are champions of social justice

Brittany Carter
The Lake Report

Students and community members fighting for social justice were recognized at Crossroads Public School's rising stars assembly on Feb. 27.

Acknowledging students of the Me2We Club, Michele Zoccoli, teacher, announced the success of three recent programs to raise money for various organizations and causes. Zoccoli said the Me2We Club, which is made up of grade seven and eight students, has been pushing to collect donations and raise awareness for their efforts, on both a local and a global scale.

Pastor Jeff Martens of Cornerstone Community Church, spoke about the global initiative through the aide provided to Burundi, a small country in Africa south of Rowanda.

Martens said the church has been supporting the Batwah people of Burundi for more than 10 years and the partnership with Crossroads Public School began three years ago. With the help of the school and the Me2We Club, \$2400 was



Me2We Club at Crossroads Public School. BRITTANY CARTER

raised was allocated to cost of books as well.

Addressing the students of Crossroads, Martens said, "There's a lot of people (in Burundi) who need a lot of help. You've been a part of it."

On a local scale, Zoccoli announced the work the club has done through a battery drive. Mary Jane Johnson, director of communications for Hotel Dieu Shaver Health and Rehabilitation Centre and

the executive director for the Hotel Dieu Shaver Foundation was in attendance to talk about the money raised. She also thanked students for their contribution.

The battery drive collected 1270 batteries this year so far. Last year, 3840 were collected. Through that initiative, Crossroads along with other community members have raised \$25,000 for the rehabilitation centre.

The last program the members of Me2We addressed this year was a pop tab drive.

The drive was initiated by grade seven student, Charlotte Broughton, when she was in grade five. After making the connection with Niagara Lion's Club member

"It's thanks to Charlotte's leadership and passion that we started this campaign."

MICHELLE ZOCCOLI
TEACHER
CROSSROADS PUBLIC SCHOOL



Olivia Breakspeare and Rachel Moss of the Me2We Club at Crossroads School. BRITTANY CARTER



Michele Zoccoli and Charlotte Broughton of the Me2We Club at Crossroads. BRITTANY CARTER

Cathy Wickabrod during youth dances, Broughton said she wanted to help to collect tabs for the Ronald McDonald House.

Zoccoli said Broughton had a "strong passion for the pop tab campaign."

"It's thanks to Charlotte's leadership and passion that we started this campaign," Zoccoli said.

Through the campaign, 95,000 pop tabs were collected, weighing 100.5 lbs.

Wickabrod said that if not for the youth dances at the Lion's Club and Broughton's desire to do more, the partnership wouldn't exist.

Wickabrod acknowledged Broughton and thanked the students. "We are extremely grateful for all of your hard work."

The battery drive and pop tab campaigns are on-going. Students are encouraged to continue to bring them in throughout the year.

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Women of the Hour

Women in jazz will dominate this year's Live, Learn, Jazz Series

Brittany Carter
The Lake Report

The TD Niagara Jazz Festival is shining a light on the talented women of jazz through Live, Learn, Jazz – Women of the Hour.

During the festival's media launch on Feb. 25 at the Henry of Pelham Winery, Juliet Dunn, executive director and artistic producer, along with Peter Shea, co-creator and artistic consultant, announced the 2019 line-up for the upcoming season.

Adding new events to the roster and expanding existing programs, Dunn said she is excited and eager for the season ahead.

Volunteers passed hors d'oeuvres donated by Oscar Turchi from Savoia Hors D'Oeuvres and Gourmet Emporium, one of the official catering partners. An assortment of performers, volunteers, media and enthusiastic supporters of Dunn and Shea's endeavour to infuse jazz into the region spent the afternoon listening to specifics of the upcoming line-up.

Updates to the festival were made possible in part by funding from the City of St. Catharines Cultural Service, providing the TD Niagara Jazz Festival with \$12,000. Dunn thanked Michelle Nicholls and Kathleen Powell with the St. Catharines Cultural Services, who were in attendance.

The Live, Learn, Jazz series kicks off on March 8, aptly coinciding with International Women's Day.

Named Rhapsody at the Rotunda, the first performance will be held at the NOTL Public Library.

In an email response, Dunn said, "We will be transforming the NOTL library into an intimate upmarket 'speakeasy'



Peter Shea and Juliet Dunn announced the upcoming TD Niagara Jazz Festival Season. BRITTANY CARTER

After the kick-off performance on International Women's Day, each evening boasts a unique theme: Ellington at the Exchange on March 21; Trumpet, Tunes and Tannins on April 4; Tap, Tapas and Taps on May 2; Voices in the Vines on June 6 and Sax in the Vineyard on July 4.

Dunn said, apart from the Live, Learn, Jazz series, one of the most thrilling additions to the festival is the July 20 event. Niagara's Summer Mardi Gras will be a one-day spectacle at the Henley Regatta Bandstand in Port Dalhousie, from 4 p.m. to 11 p.m.

"It all started with an idea," Dunn said.

She attributed Shea with dreaming up the idea the event is based on, adding that he's believed in it since day one.

"I always envisioned that this area could be the New Orleans of the North. That's kind of where the idea came from," Shea said. "I love the music of New Orleans, I feel like it's the cradle, the birthplace of jazz."

He added that the region holds the potential to grow into something similar.

Featuring New Orleans-style music, the event will usher the Mardi Gras spirit into Niagara, offering a variety of experiences; dancing, music, beads, a parade, Creole food, Cajun culture and more.

Dunn said jazz can be a hard pill to swallow for some, adding that there's less interest in a straight-out jazz festival – tagging Mardi Gras onto the name garners a more enthusiastic response.

"Our unofficial tagline now is don't tell them it's jazz and they will come."

Shea added that jazz is like medicine, "You need it, but you've got to sugar-coat it sometimes."



Khea Emmanuel and Dakotah Emmanuel. BRITTANY CARTER



Faith D. Amour and Melissa Marie Shriner at the TD Niagara Jazz Festival media launch.. BRITTANY CARTER

featuring delicious nibbles and tastes of a few festival partners: Stratus Vineyards, The Hare Wine Co, Savoia Gourmet, 40 Creek Distillery and Mill Street Brewery."

The Diana Pantan Trio, with Reg Scwhager and Neil Swainson, will perform from 7 p.m. to 9:30 p.m and ticket price will include one drink and complimentary hors d'oeuvres.

The six-part series will hold each event at unique intimate locations and will feature strong female leads. Series passes can be purchased for \$199 plus HST on the TD Niagara Jazz Festival website.



Kim Schwenker and volunteer Carm Lenartowich. BRITTANY CARTER

Four of the headlining women attended the media launch, showing their support and excitement for the festival.

Faith D. Amour, Melissa

Marie Shriner and Khea Emmanuel were recognized by Dunn and Shea as just a few of the outstanding performers to take part in the series. Stacie McGregor

was included, as she skillfully provided ambience and a short performance on the keys.

The monthly concerts, each with a fun, lighthearted name, feature a variety of jazz styles integrating vocalists, tap-dancers and musicians.

The music scene is heavy in male performers, Dunn said, adding it's especially evident in jazz. She said the genre is about 95 per cent male-dominated.

"That's why it's really important to highlight the females in jazz. I don't think I've ever been so excited about one of our projects."

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Reif Winery and Newark Neighbours team up for March food drive

Dariya Baiguzhiyeva
The Lake Report

Reif Estate Winery and Newark Neighbours are coming together to help those in need by organizing a new "Taste for Hunger" food drive.

Throughout the whole month of March, members of the community can stop by the winery with a non-perishable food donation and get a free tasting of three wines.

"We're always thinking about giving back to the community," said Andrea Kaiser, a director of marketing at Reif Winery.

"Being around for 30 years as a winery, we look for ways to provide local support. And we also always look for ways to drive traffic and get visitors to come to visit us in the winter times."

People can bring any type of non-expired and non-perishable foods. Items like canned meats, chocolate, canned vegetables and fruits, scallop potato mixes, canned



Marion Ollerhead, left, and Hilary Bellis. DARIYA BAIGUZHIYEVA

pineapples and peaches are also welcome.

The donations will be collected in special barrels. Depending on how much is collected and how successful the drive is, Newark Neighbours will pick up donations every week, said Kaiser.

Newark Neighbours, that's been operating for

45 years, is the only food bank and thrift store in Niagara-on-the-Lake. They provide food and clothes for people in need and also organize special dinners during Easter, Thanksgiving and Christmas.

"March is the month before Easter and in the wine industry, it's a quieter month," said Hilary

Bellis, chair of Newark Neighbours. "So, it was good to bring awareness to our locals."

Usually, once Christmas is over, the number of donations to the food bank tends to go down.

"That's why this partnership with the winery at this time of year is helpful because it will start to

fill up our shelves again," said Bellis. "People forget about giving to us the rest of the year."

"Our shelves at the moment are pretty good, most of them I have stocked," said Marion Ollerhead, a food bank manager. "And as Hilary said, summertime hits and the donations go down quite considerably."

However, there are certain people who donate on a regular basis which is "lovely," added Bellis. "Every little bit helps."

This is the first year the food drive is happening but it's not the first time Reif Winery and Newark Neighbours have helped each other out.

"We have donated wine for their volunteer appreciation nights," said Kaiser.

"When I got to thinking about the idea of a food drive, it just naturally occurred to me to give Hillary a call. We do a lot of donations all across Ontario but we obviously try and stay focused close to home."

Kaiser said she's been thinking about organizing a food drive for over a year so working with Newark Neighbours seemed like a "natural partnership."

Klaus Reif, president and CEO of Reif Estate Winery, told The Lake Report that if the food drive is successful and they get enough support, they will make it an annual event.

NOTL Hydro encourages customers to go green

Brittany Carter
The Lake Report

Niagara-on-the-Lake Hydro wants customers to switch to e-billing and drop paper mail entirely on utility bills to save trees — in more ways than one.

To encourage its customers to switch to electronic billing, the company has pledged to donate \$10 for every change to the NOTL Tree Fund, a charity dedicated to raising money to cover the cost of replanting and maintaining town trees.

The utility company services more than 9,900 customers. Brodie Mosher, manager of conservation and administration for NOTL Hydro, said 1,657 have already made the switch to e-billing.

There are 356 customers

who opted for both paperless and traditional billing, but the \$10 donation to the tree fund will only be made for complete switches to paperless.

Mosher said he expects the utility to save about \$10 a year per customer, pushing those savings over to the tree fund to keep the money within the community.

Owned by the Town of NOTL, Mosher said the company chose the tree fund because of current updates to the tree-by-law and recent devastation of ash trees in the region by the emerald ash borer. The beetle-like species was discovered in Ontario in 2002.

An inventory of ash trees in town was made in 2014, assessing damage and potential risk of the trees.

In 2016, \$75,000 was in-



cluded in the town's budget to remove and replant local ash trees.

"We've done campaigns in the past. We like to try different ones that might peak different people's interests," Mosher said.

"This one seems ap-

propriate due to the tree by-laws that the town is considering. We thought it would be an appropriate measure to try to promote."

Through donations, the town raised \$3,100 in 2016 and \$2,700 in 2017 for the tree fund. It was established

in the late 1990s, when the town first participated in Communities in Bloom. The program was refreshed when the town began participating in CIB again over the last four years.

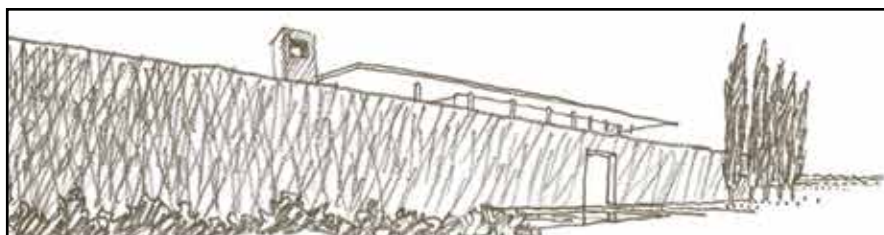
Mosher said the company understands that not every-

one has the option to pass on paper mail entirely so it will remain available for those who need it, and there is no specific target for the promotion.

NOTL Hydro hosted campaigns in the past to encourage customers to make the switch which included prize giveaways. Mosher said he thinks this promotion will be efficient and timely for the town.

"Each campaign we get a number of enrolments. This one specifically we wanted to target the tree fund. It's more efficient and it's more environmental."

Customers can make the switch online by logging into their account through the NOTL Hydro website. Direct donations to the tree fund can be made by visiting the NOTL.org.



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<p>10</p> <p>Spring Forward</p> <p>Bake with an Expert - 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. - Canadian Food and Wine Institute, NOTL Campus</p> <p>Winter Wonderland Food Tour - 1 p.m. - Niagara Culinary Tours</p>	<p>11</p> <p>Line Dancing - 10 a.m. to 11:30 a.m. - NOTL Community Centre</p> <p>Mario Kart Tournament - 2 p.m. to 4 p.m. - NOTL Public Library</p> <p>Town Council Meeting - 4 p.m. - Council Chambers</p> <p>Niagara Regional Native Centre: Community Drumming Night - 6 p.m. to 8 p.m. - Niagara Regional Native Centre</p>	<p>12</p> <p>NOTL Rotary Club - Noon - NOTL Community Centre</p> <p>Google Expeditions Virtual Reality Adventure - 2 p.m. to 3 p.m. - NOTL Public Library</p> <p>Seniors Fitness: Healthy Safe & Strong - 2:30 p.m. to 3:30 p.m. - NOTL Community Centre</p>	<p>Infohealth Clinical Good Reasons to Join - p.m. - NOTL Public Library</p> <p>Sewing in the Making Happy! - 2 p.m. to 3 p.m. - Public Library</p> <p>University Women - p.m. - NOTL Community Centre</p> <p>NOTL Toastmasters - 8:30 p.m. - Niagara Regional Native Centre Campus</p> <p>Wine & Words with Shoalts - 7:30 p.m. to 9 p.m. - Southbrook Vineyard</p>

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Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
	28 2019 Fabulicious! - Day 1 - Signature Kitchens of NOTL Bridge Seniors Casual Drop-in: Bridge - 1 p.m. to 4 p.m. - NOTL Community Centre Seniors Fitness: Healthy Safe & Strong - 2 p.m. to 3 p.m. / 3:30 p.m. to 4:30 p.m. - NOTL Community Centre Minecraft Club - 4 p.m. to 5 p.m. - NOTL Public Library Niagara Regional Native Centre: Community Social - 5 p.m. to 8 p.m. - Niagara Regional Native Centre	1 World Day of Prayer: Ecumenical Service - 1:30 p.m. - St. Vincent de Paul Church Pumphouse Instructors' Exhibition - 11 a.m. - Niagara Pumphouse Arts Centre Seated Laughter Fitness: Laugh Yourself Healthier - 2 p.m. to 3 p.m. - NOTL Community Centre Shaw Festival Annual Meeting - 2:30 p.m. - Shaw Festival Theatre Lobby St. Davids and District Lions Club: Friday Fish Fry - 4:30 p.m. to 7 p.m. - St. Davids and District Lions Club	2 St. John's Babysitting Course - 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. - NOTL Public Library Skating and a DJ - 5 p.m. to 9 p.m. - Wayne Gretzky Estates Winery & Distillery NOTL Home, Garden & Craft Show - 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. - Crossroads Public School Chorus Niagara: King David - 7:30 p.m. - Partridge Hall, First Ontario PAC
6 Wine Tasting Group - 11 a.m. - NOTL Public Library Wine Time - 11 a.m. to 12 p.m. - NOTL Public Library Wine & Cheese - 2 p.m. to 4 p.m. - NOTL Public Library Wine & Beer - 6:30 p.m. to 8:30 p.m. - NOTL Public Library	7 Babies and Books - 11 a.m. to 11:30 a.m. - NOTL Public Library Seniors Fitness: Healthy Safe & Strong - 2 p.m. to 3 p.m. / 3:30 p.m. to 4:30 p.m. - NOTL Community Centre Minecraft Club - 4 p.m. to 5 p.m. - NOTL Public Library Tinker Thinker Thursdays - 6 p.m. to 7 p.m. - NOTL Public Library Cribbage for Seniors - 1 p.m. - NOTL Community Centre	8 International Women's Day Live Learn Jazz Series: "Women of the Hour" Part 1 - Surprise Pop up Location in NOTL Yoga with Jenny - 10 a.m. to 11 a.m. - NOTL Public Library Seated Laughter Fitness: Laugh Yourself Healthier - 2 p.m. to 3 p.m. - NOTL Community Centre Knit a Bit - 2 p.m. to 4 p.m. - NOTL Public Library	9 Culinary Regions of Italy with Emily Romagna, North East Italy - 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. - Canadian Food and Wine Institute, NOTL Campus Customization Clinic - 10 a.m. to noon - Clare's Harley Davidson Cricut Design for Children - 10 a.m. to noon - NOTL Public Library Skating and a DJ - 5 p.m. to 9 p.m. - Wayne Gretzky Estates Winery & Distillery
13 Wine Tasting: Ten - 2 p.m. to 3 p.m. - NOTL Public Library Wine & Beer - 6:30 p.m. to 8:30 p.m. - NOTL Public Library Wine in Niagara - 7 p.m. to 9 p.m. - NOTL Public Library Wine & Beer - 6:30 p.m. to 8:30 p.m. - NOTL Public Library	14 Babies and Books - 11 a.m. to 11:30 a.m. - NOTL Public Library Cribbage for Seniors - 1 p.m. - NOTL Community Centre Super Straw Rockets - 2 p.m. to 4 p.m. - NOTL Public Library Minecraft Club - 4 p.m. to 5 p.m. - NOTL Public Library	15 Winter Wonderland Food Tour - 1 p.m. - Niagara Culinary Tours Mahjong Game Drop In - 1 p.m. to 4 p.m. - NOTL Community Centre Crafty Kids - 2 p.m. to 4 p.m. - NOTL Public Library St. Davids and District Lions Club: Friday Fish Fry - 4:30 p.m. to 7 p.m. - St. Davids and District Lions Club	16 Seed Library Lunch with Linda Crago - 10 a.m. to 11 a.m. - NOTL Public Library Artist Workshop: Elementary Watercolour with Peter Malaguti - 10:30 a.m. - RiverBrink Art Museum Winter Wonderland Food Tour - 1 p.m. - Niagara Culinary Tours Skating and a DJ - 5 p.m. to 9 p.m. - Wayne Gretzky Estates Winery & Distillery Culinary Regions of Italy: Tuscany and Central Italy - 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. - Canadian Food and Wine Institute, NOTL Campus

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Wanderers find friendship one Wednesday at a time



Wanderers Wednesdays at the Sandtrap. The core Wanderers group (from near left, around the table): Russ Phipps, Leslie Mann, Otto Lowas, Warren Fraser, Tony Read, David Waller, Keith Whitmee, Rick Preece, Rich Gallant and Keith Grimble. TIM TAYLOR

Local group inspires mutual support and conversation

Tim Taylor
The Lake Report

Count them — almost 1,000 Wednesday evenings together, since the Wanderers first gathered at a local pub some 21 years ago.

At first, the Wanderers just wanted some “guy” time. Their wives were spending the evening at Newcomers, an organization created to welcome new Niagara residents to the community.

The Niagara Newcomers is entirely female.

So, newly-arrived male newcomers, Tony Read and Keith Whitmee, just wanted to wile away a few hours chatting and getting to know each other, in their wives’ absence. Each week they tried a new watering hole. Hence the name:

Wanderers.

It wasn’t long before they began accumulating recruits to their Wednesday evening sojourns. Today the email list totals over 45 names, plus 30 or so spouses.

The core activity is the Wednesday night get-together at a designated pub. There have been many different pubs over the years, but for almost a year, the Wanderers have frequented the Sandtrap Pub & Grill.

“We gather for a drink and conversation,” says Tony Read, above the din of the Wednesday night crowd. Read is the self-styled honorary president

but acknowledges that he doesn’t do a great deal anymore, except enjoy the camaraderie.

The real work is done by Keith Whitmee, who provides secretarial services for the group, maintaining the participants list and making sure everyone knows

WARREN FRASER
WANDERER

“It is the best support group I’ve ever had, even better than work.”

what’s going on.

The Wanderers are no longer just about beer and conversation. On Monday mornings there’s golf. On Tuesday it’s snooker. Thursday is a day off. And Friday morning the walkers take over, completing brisk fair-weather walks around town,

often followed by lunch.

On a less frequent basis, Wanderer-regular Keith Grimble organizes bridge and wine-tasting events. They even run the “Wanderers Airbus,” a mutual transport system to get members to and from airports.

Today, the Wanderers encourage spouses to attend many of the activities.

But Wednesday remains just for the guys.

“There is only one rule,” according to Whitmee. “Rule number one says there are no rules.” But someone down the table immediately pipes in: “And we don’t talk about religion. We would talk about sex but most of us can’t remember.”

And while the average age of Wanderers is over

70, it’s not a prerequisite. They come from all sorts of working careers.

Not everyone does all the activities. “We hover around 20 or 25 for most and fewer for bridge and wine-tasting,” says Read.

The table is somewhat thoughtful when asked how someone joins the Wanderers. There seems to be no hard and fast rules. But the consensus is that an existing Wanderer must bring along a recruit to a Wednesday event. If they stick for three Wednesdays, the secretary will get their email address and count them in.

There’s clearly a feeling that many more members would make it harder to organize the kinds of events that make the Wanderers so special.

Warren Fraser is an original Wanderer — number five — he thinks, so that means since 1998. He tells a number of colourful stories about the early days. But then he becomes serious: “It is the best support group I’ve ever had, even better than work.”

Keith Grimble joined in 2002. He agrees with Fraser: “These are nice people. People you like to be around. We all have common interests. It is a wonderfully social experience.”

Conversations around the Wanderers’ table are punctuated by comfortable laughter, gentle ribbing and a kind of easy, familiar friendship.

With any luck, the Wanderers will be around for another 1,000 Wednesdays.





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Obituaries

Lorraine Andrews



ANDREWS, Lorraine Margaret (Caskenette) – Died peacefully surrounded by family on Thursday, February 21, 2019, at Providence Health Care Centre in Scarborough. Lorraine was born on August 3, 1923 in Preston, Ontario. Loving wife of the late Stanley Raymond Andrews (2010). Loving, caring Mother, Grandmother and GG, family meant everything to her. Children Judy (Neil) Andersen, Peggy (Bill) Marshall, Tim (Sandra) and Bob (Sharon) and the late Rod (late Mary), grandchildren Ethan (Lesley), Ryan (Laura), Devon (Barbara), Barry (Kristen), Russ (Christine), Carolyn (Marty), Angela, Jason (Chantal), GG to Sophie, Rowan, Ella, Huckleberry, Pippen, Arlo, Hannah, Abigail Lorraine, James, Cameron, Paige, Adelaide, Finnegan and Celeste. Lorraine was a chartered member of the St. Davids Lioness and a member of St. Vincent de Paul Roman Catholic Church. She also loved to quilt, knit and sew for her family. The family will receive friends at MORGAN FUNERAL HOME, 415 Regent St., Niagara-on-the-Lake, on Monday, March 4, 2019 from 9:30-11 a.m., with the service to follow. Burial to take place at Niagara Lakeshore Cemetery. In lieu of flowers family suggests donations to either the Providence Palliative Care or to the Heart & Stroke Foundation or to the Canadian Diabetes Association. Memories, photos and condolences may be shared at www.morganfuneral.com

Local snaps



Jordan Pierre reels in a line at the Queenston docks. RICHARD HARLEY



A dog musher traveling down the Niagara Parkway on his pedal-free bicycle. The man did not want to be identified because of pressure from dog mushing protesters. RICHARD HARLEY



Two people out fishing the Niagara River. RICHARD HARLEY

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Have some fun

Crossword by Debbie Whitehouse, Richard Harley

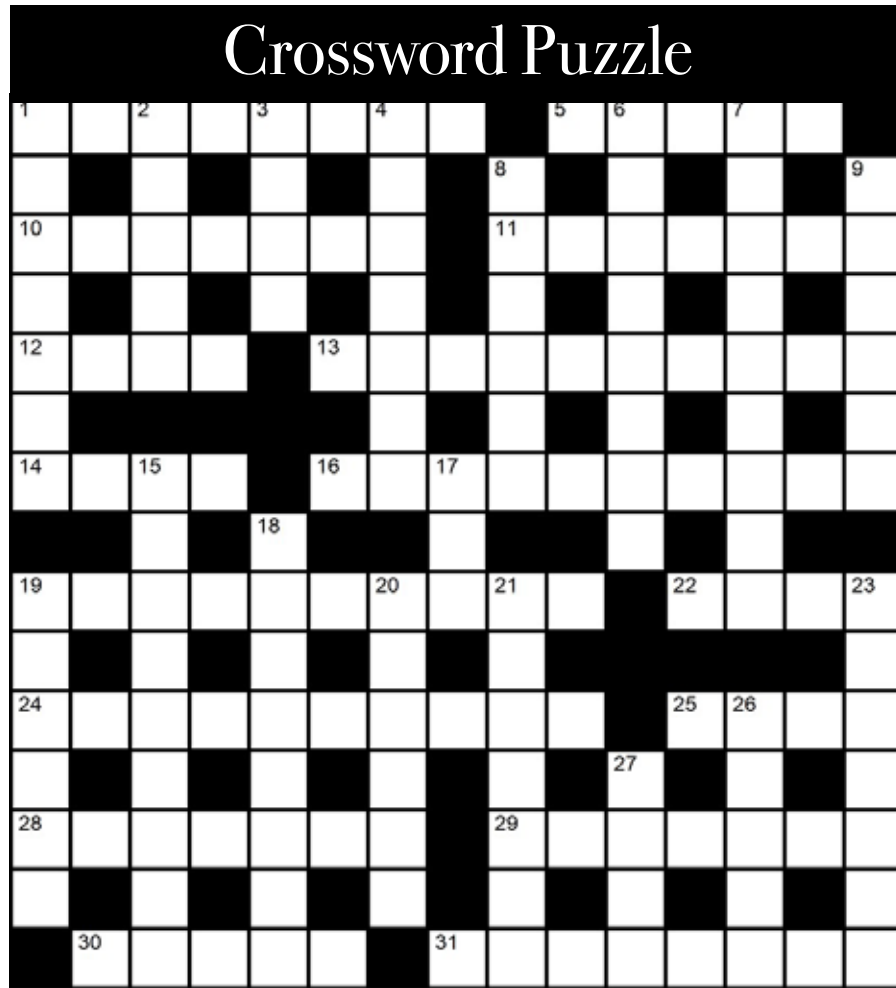
The Lake Report is looking for puzzle makers who would like to help develop this page. We are seeking both standard and cryptic crossword writers. editor@niagaranow.com

Across

- 1 Beautiful (8)
- 5 Moves through water (5)
- 10 Unconventional (7)
- 11 Pilot (7)
- 12 Pollen gatherers (4)
- 13 When the living is easy (10)
- 14 Otherwise (4)
- 16 Artificial sparkler (10)
- 19 Corridor (10)
- 22 Yorkshireman (4)
- 24 Preceding wedlock (10)
- 25 Precious stones (4)
- 28 Shining (7)
- 29 Hollowed inward (7)
- 30 Bovine mammary gland (5)
- 31 Austrian Alpine resident (8)

Down

- 1 Farewell (7)
- 2 Plunder (5)
- 3 Paradise (4)
- 4 Lie (7)
- 6 Restaurant worker (8)
- 7 Marriage (9)
- 8 Opera by Bizet (6)
- 9 Current of air (6)
- 15 Pendent (9)
- 17 Large island in the Channel (1,1,1)
- 18 Computer information store (8)
- 19 Thin and translucent (6)
- 20 Expels (6)
- 21 Disorder (7)
- 23 Oriental (7)
- 26 Fill with high spirits (5)
- 27 Untie (4)



Last issue's answers



Sudoku

3			6	7	8	5		
		2	5			4	6	
5					7			
8				1	3	9	7	6
		7				3		
1	3	6	9	4				5
		3						4
	9	1			5	6		
		5	4	6	1			9



Spring
needs to
hurry up.



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FEATURED 

Exploring Photos: with Jim Smith

QUEEN'S ROYAL SHORE



Queen's Royal beach was once the playground of the rich and famous and a site of luxury. The Queen's Royal Hotel has seen a number of changes. In this picture taken at the foot of Regent Street, one can be seen on the bank foot path once used by the patrons of the Queens Hotel to gain access the bathing houses and boat rental buildings that once stood there.

SUPPLIED/JIM SMITH

ARCHITEXT

Eye of the beholder

Brian Marshall
Featured

First, a quick word about residential design hierarchy. Briefly stated, every element used in the composition should work in concert to create an intuitive understanding of the design by guiding your eyes, and subsequently your movement, toward natural flow points (front door, principal reception room, etc.) in the design. Hierarchy is all about placing the emphasis on the most important elements of the building by using key design principles to set up a cascade which irresistibly draws your focus to these points.

Working together, scale and proportion play a vital role in establishing hierar-



Tract McMansions. SUPPLIED

chy while at the same time contributing to invocation of a 'comforting' emotional response when the building is experienced. In architecture, scale refers to sizing elements according to a known standard; most frequently the human form. So, by using scale the designer can maintain consistency between the perceived size relationships of: two specific elements; the elements to the whole; and/or, the entire composi-

tion to the viewer.

Proportion is the discipline of arranging elements to establish a consistent set of visual relationships between the building's individual components, the components to the whole, and the whole to its context. Aesthetically complete compositions require the designer achieves a perceived equality (or ratio) between all elements in the design.

The neo-classical

MacDougal house shows both simple and subtle applications of scale and proportion contributing to hierarchy.

The subtle: decreasing the vertical proportions of the second storey arch tier moves your eye down to the principal floor. Now you're there..

The simple: increasing the scale of the opening for the front door to fill the entire arch leaves no question where guests are received.

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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@niagaranow.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!

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.

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Bio of a **writer:** **Myrtle Burton**

Happily, I have been a member of the Writers Circle in Niagara-on-the-Lake from its beginning. A small writers' group of people, led by big ideas from a small lady, Hermine Steinberg, caught on right away. I loved seeing new faces of interesting men and women gather, gain momentum, numbers growing larger for each meeting. It appears that it was a group that needed to be established.



I have been a member of the community for 19 years. I never cease to be amazed at the tempo of this small town. Nothing holds it back! That's what makes the writers eager, constantly finding successes and camaraderie in people that think alike. We are fortunate indeed.

I have written a book which has just been published, and I am ready to defend what I have to say in the book. I am sure that some of the text will be disputed, but that's fine; writing should make a mark, whether it be finding love, escaping ghosts, or travelling through space to avoid contact with surreal beings. I have not yet conquered the sci-fi type of writing, although I admire it. Until then I will write about things that come to

me, real or fictional.

My book is controversial. I know that from reading all kinds of print and listening to bright folks that I deal with daily. I would like many people to read it, not for self-interest but for contemplating what I feel and talking about it. The greatest gifts from those who read and write is the amazing stretch of inner thoughts that are exposed. The result is a feast of ideas that makes one's mind work. That's good for everybody.

I titled my book "Gallimaufry." Nobody - nobody at all - knows what that ancient word means until he or she looks it up. I didn't either until I made a point of following up on it. It means a bunch of things,

or a medley, or a hodgepodge. With serious intent for my book, hodgepodge was not suitable. I have at least three would-be novels on my computer, and I had so many other scenes racing around in my head that I decided to put some of the thoughts into print as a bunch. That's how this hodgepodge - oops! - gallimaufry began. The stories, articles and poems may appear repetitious also. One often has a mindset that comes about on a regular basis, whether wished for or not.

A passage from one of my stories follows. A lady named Trudy has just purchased a new home, and I tried to describe her personality by describing her taste in decor.

Excerpt from Gallimaufry

Aunt Trudy had already had window treatments put in with yards of diaphanous white silk. There was an aura of pale blush, not-quite-pink pastel throughout the lower level. Aunt Trudy called the wall colour in the living area "Candied Mist," and adjoining rooms a closely-related "Palest Tulip." The thirty-foot "theatre" room was paneled with walnut. A library or den was a little lighter, as was all the trim and molding, in what Trudy called a toasted

maple. The atmosphere was, to Steph, pure elegance. Her face shone with admiration for her lovely aunt who somehow never seemed to warm up to people and yet had such good taste.

The front of the property was not yet fully landscaped. Several red bud trees had been planted, and numerous azaleas would be outstanding in the spring. Gardeners had been there, clipping and pruning the natural trees and bushes, but they had been given

strict orders from Trudy. She wanted the growth to be wild and plentiful; she didn't want "prying eyes gaping in the windows."

To Steph's delight there was a small stream at the furthest point of the backyard. There were dragonflies, and small minnows darted at the edges of the water.

(For some reason my stories usually end up as mysteries. I will not reveal what happens to Trudy.)

Caught Between the Walls



Concluding Chapter 1: Do you believe in ghosts?

Sharon Frayne
Writer's Circle

There was silence once again.

I knew I was alone that night, but also that I was standing on the very spot, where in the past, thousands of people had come to the Courthouse/Gaol. Some would have come in despair and desperation; and some would have come with hope. Some escaped to freedom and a hopeful future, others met with torture and death. I brushed a few little snowflakes off my shoulders. They felt heavy, as if they carried the pressure of something bigger.

"Ok," I yelled. "I get it. There's something here." I accepted the responsibility of discovering and sharing the tales.

As I stood in the snow, I wondered, what was it like — back in 1817 — what actions would land someone in a courthouse? How would they be represented and tried?

What punishments would be handed down? What would it be like to be in jail? Conditions must have been brutal in the cells of that time period.

My journey to find the vanished history of the 1817 Courthouse and Gaol began. Along the way, I uncovered heartbreaking tales of early prisoners; dramatic stories of the 19th century justice system and prisons; horrifying descriptions of punishments, including executions; the story of an escaped American slave and his rescue; defiant political prisoners; the tragic story of

the centre for British Home Children; and a dormitory for young Poles destined to fight in WW1.

It was late and cold, and time to head back home. I gazed up at the spectacular night sky. In some ways, stars are like humans, I thought. They are born, they live for a time, and then they die. But unlike us, their life span is billions of years. The poor souls who were here before me must have looked up at the same stars. Now they are gone and their stories are lost, I thought.

I stumbled back home through the snow. It was easier, because I'd already beaten a path. But travelling beside my trail was a second one. It led directly back to my home. The trail of two racing footprints. The path of the beast — or rather beasts that had rushed past me at the plaque.

They definitely weren't human. They were coyotes.

They must have raced from a distant woodlot, cut across my backyard, followed my trail and then dashed away beneath the swing set. That's what I'd seen racing towards me. Something had scared them away and kept me safe. The coyotes had disappeared, just like the stories of the old Courthouse.

I knew there had to be another path — hidden for a long time — that I must find and follow to discover the truth. In the distance, the empty swing in the snowy park creaked and lifted once again in the bitter night air. Then it hung motionless, still waiting beneath the silent starlit sky.

Pauline Reimer Gibson is an Audiologist with over 20 years of experience who loves helping people of all ages in the community. Julia Dick is the Front Office Coordinator and a longtime resident of Virgil. Call Julia today to book a free hearing test!



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NOTL skaters win medals



Skaters from the NOTL Skating Club competed in the Super Series – Brampton Flower City Invitational Competition held Feb. 15 to 17 in Brampton. Pictured left to right: Audrey Morrison, Jeong Lee, Marin McLaughlin, Ashley Backshall, Kyra Marotta, Ashleen Hale, Tatum Lyric Bidal, Soraya Felice, Mira Strickland (absent Rachael Hunter).

- 1st - Kyra Marotta (Pre-Novice Women)
- 5th - Ashleen Hale (Pre-Novice Women)
- 5th - Mira Strickland (STAR 5-U10)
- 6th - Soraya Felice (STAR 5-U13)
- 6th - Marin McLaughlin (Pre-Novice Women)
- 8th - Jeong Lee (STAR 5-U13)
- 10th - Ashley Backshall (STAR 9)
- 11th - Tatum Lyric Bidal (Juvenile Women-U14)
- 11th - Rachael Hunter – (STAR 8 and STAR 9)
- 13th - Ashley Backshall (STAR 10)
- 13th - Audrey Morrison (Novice Women)
- 14th - Mira Strickland (STAR 7)



High winds down power lines



A tree fell on a power line on Johnson Street Sunday afternoon. DARIYA BAIGUZHIEVA

Dariya Baiguzhiyeva
The Lake Report

Strong winds caused fallen trees and power outage throughout Niagara-on-the-Lake Sunday afternoon.

“We’re still receiving calls but we’ve got over a dozen calls so far about power outages in the city,” NOTL Hydro spokesperson told The Lake Report Sunday afternoon.

Outages were reported across town.



Local horse and rider grace pages of Horse Sport magazine

Jill Troyer
The Lake Report

Leslie McCormick and chestnut thoroughbred Alex’s Love have a long and successful history of competing together, but the first place red ribbon they won together at the last Royal Horse show was especially sweet. McCormick, an experienced coach and competitor, says Alex “was always the bridesmaid but never the bride” over their many years of competing at the Royal. Alex always competed reliably, and brought many ribbons home to Red Ribbon Stables, the family run barn on Concession #6 in Niagara-on-the-Lake where McCormick coaches and trains, but until now, never a first. Their big win is documented in the February edition of Horse

Sport magazine, noting they “won the Thoroughbred Senior Performance Under Saddle class.” Alex first arrived at Red Ribbon Stables as a young racehorse, to spend winters there between racing seasons. He had a long and successful racing career, with 83 starts, 13 wins, 16 seconds, and 13 thirds, with career earnings of \$190,323.00. McCormick says she loved his “movement, conformation, and manners” from the start, so when his racing career was over, McCormick sought out his owners and bought him so he could come to Red Ribbon Stables to stay, more than 10 years ago. “What you see is what you get with Alex,” says McCormick. “He’s a great asset to the farm, with a steady sweet disposition and lovely movement. He’s



Leslie McCormick with Alex’s Love at Red Ribbon Stables. JILL TROYER

absolutely reliable, he would never do anything rotten.” Alex has helped many young riders get started in the school at Red Ribbon Stables, while also competing with advanced riders.

McCormick has a soft

spot for thoroughbreds. Alex is one of 14 thoroughbreds living at Red Ribbon Stables, some owned by McCormick, and others who board at the barn. She says “the breed has been stigmatised as a high energy horse, but it all

comes down to individual temperament. Thoroughbreds are a very versatile breed, they can come off the race track and become successful at almost any discipline, from hunter or jumper, to eventing, or even western barrel rac-

ing.” One of McCormick’s newest thoroughbreds, a big chestnut named Curly, came off the track in mid-September, and competed at the Royal Horse show just weeks later, in November. McCormick notes with some pride that “Curly placed 5th and 6th in the Junior Thoroughbred Under Saddle class.” In addition to competing throughout the summer show season and at The Royal, McCormick trains horses, coaches riders, and hosts horse shows at Red Ribbon Stables. The lesson program has students of all ages, the youngest being 3 years old, the oldest at 60, with everything in between, and riders range from absolute beginners to advanced competitors. For more information visit the website at redribbonstables.com



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Mahjong community helps keeps minds active while building friendships

Jer Houghton
The Lake Report

When Lesley Walsh first moved to Niagara-on-the-Lake from Newmarket more than five years ago, she turned to the NOTL Newcomers group to stay active after retirement.

What she didn't know, was how an ancient Chinese game would foster so many lasting new friendships.

At the time, members from the group were meeting regularly to play Mahjong (also referred to as, Mah Jongg), a Chinese tile-based game that hones in on concentration, memory and strategy.

"A couple of the ladies got together and taught me the game, and I got absolutely hooked on it, very, very quickly," Walsh says. "Each hand is a challenge."

Played in groups of four or three (and rarely two), the tile-based game is complex, and not something that you can just sit in on.

It revolves around 54 hand sequences dictated by the Mahjong card, which changes at the beginning of every April.

"(That's) what also makes this game so interesting and why so many people like it to keep their memory going."

Walsh says the game constantly keeps your mind active by trying to quickly figure out what hands players are trying to play while trying to win yours.

"It's extremely good for keeping your brain active. Think of it as a skill game, strategy game, memory game to know what tiles have been given out," she says.

Since arriving to NOTL, Walsh says the popularity of the game has increased "ten-fold" in town.

You can now find organized Mahjong at weekly drop-ins played at the community centre and bi-monthly games through the NOTL Newcomers – it's even spread into residents' homes where groups meet to play and rotate from



Carol Matheson, Trish Spagnol, Marlene Walther and Lesley Walsh meet for their weekly Mahjong tile game at the Community Centre. JER HOUGHTON

house to house each week.

"It's unbelievable the play at the different venues," she says, explaining that at some houses there are anywhere from two to four tables playing at one time for upwards of three hours.

"In the group I'm with, there's eight of us that meet but I know of 20 to 30 women who belong to different groups, and they're all doing this."

Depending on the venue and group playing, each table will have different rules to make the game more challenging and enjoyable, and this is why training has become such a big aspect to starting, Walsh explains.

Walsh says she started doing a lot of training because of the amount of interest from so many people wanting to learn. Though a lot of her training is through the NOTL Newcomers, she trains her sorority club and has trained friends, acquaintances and couples in the past.

"I just started training a number of women, and then

my name got out, and now I do a lot of training for the newcomers that are coming in," she says.

"It's not one of those games that you can just go and sit and watch how it's played because there are a fair amount of rules and you have to have an understanding of how the tiles work."

She says she typically takes four to six people at a time over three weeks, which starts with learning how to set up the game, understanding the different types of tiles and knowing how each group of tiles are paired.

She says the second and third sessions are more about reinforcing the moves and strategies in how to start matching the patterns and tiles and being able to move around the card.

"That's why I do this over three sessions, then they're not intimidated by some of the more experienced players because they will feel more comfortable in being able to ask questions," Walsh adds.



"When you go out after you've had your training, however you get trained, most people say, 'I've had training, but I am new.' Everybody's been in that position, so they don't mind helping people out and answering lots of questions like, 'Can I do this? Or, I can put this? Will this work?'"

To be trained in the game of Mahjong by Walsh, she is

asking anyone interested to contact the community centre by leaving your information with the main desk and a group training session can be arranged.

For anyone looking to drop-in and play, the community centre offers Mahjong every Friday in the Mori room from 1 p.m. to 4 p.m. Residents can also join the NOTL Newcomers Mahjong group to play.

"It's just continually grown and grown – you go into the community centre at any time and you'll always see someone with a game of Mahjong going on," she says.

"Everybody's always wanting to make sure that they keep active. It's a social game, you're out meeting new people, but most of all, you're keeping your brain active."



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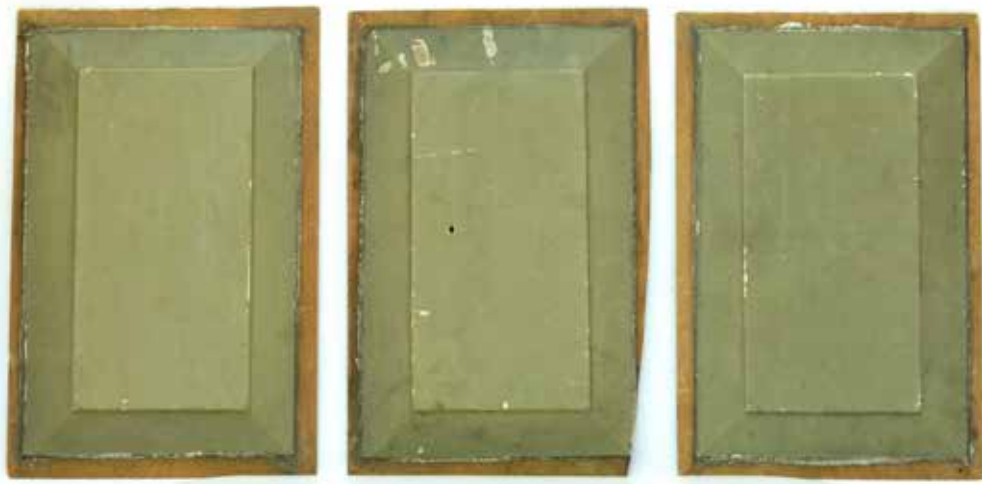


COMMUNITY

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.



NOTL History Museum's Artifact of the Week: **Wooden Panels** from the Ingersoll Home (969.116.1-3)



Answer: This week's artifact is wood paneling that surrounded the fireplace at the home of Thomas and Elizabeth Ingersoll in Great Barrington, Massachusetts. Thomas Ingersoll married Elizabeth Dewey on February 28, 1775 and had their first child, Laura, on September 13, 1775. After the American Revolution, Thomas moved his family to Queenston, Upper Canada in 1793. It is here that his first daughter, Laura married James Secord in 1797 and moved to their homestead in St. Davids. This homestead is also where Laura would start her legendary 32km walk to warn the British of a surprise American attack at Beaver Dams during the War of 1812.

Can you guess next week's artifact?

Clue: I didn't catch that last bit.



Simpson's Pharmasave has generously contributed funds to support various fundraising events for the Friends of Fort George over the past few years. Tony Chisholm, president of the Friends, presented a plaque Monday to Sean Simpson as a thank you for their continued support of our Canada Day celebrations. SUBMITTED



Betty & Jane: Plunger Patrol
Inspecting NOTL's bathrooms:
Wayne Gretzky Estates & Winery

Wayne Gretzky Estates & Winery has much to offer for a total body experience. A tour through this amazing facility hosts a winery, whiskey distillery, restaurant, gift store, and outside bar & eatery. The number 99 welcomes you to the outdoor skating rink and this facility "ups their game" where you can rent skates to practice your twirls, speed skating, or arrange a game of hockey. The restrooms boast beautiful white porcelain sinks, electronic hand dryers, automatic door openers, and hands free flush for all your bathroom needs. The Gretzky facility has made special effort to make their washrooms accessible to all. A Gold Plunger was awarded.

4.5/5 Golden Plungers



8th World Boy Scout Jamboree



RING FOUND

A valuable ring was found back in December of 2018 in the battery recycle bin at the Virgil Avondale.

At the finder's request, if you have lost a ring and suspect it may be yours, please call Rosemary at 905-688-3673 to describe and claim it.

RIDDLE ME THIS:

I disappear when you say my name. What am I?

Last Week's answer: A candle or pencil.
Answered first by Holly Anderson.
Email answers to editor@niagaranow.com for a chance to win a prize.

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FEATURED LOCAL STORY

Bill Tatarnic: An eye out for scenery

Amateur photographer keeps his work in the family

Tim Taylor
The Lake Report

Photography is a family affair for Bill Tatarnic.

An amateur photographer focusing on scenery shots in Niagara-on-the-Lake and the Niagara region, Tatarnic, 55, said he has been pursuing the hobby steadily over the last few years.

He encouraged his daughter, Cassandra, to explore photography during camping trips when his family was young.

“When we started camping with the family, she wasn’t too interested in (camping). So, I decided to give her the camera and let her take family photos and stuff like that.”

He said he became an impromptu chauffeur for his daughter, assisting her on her photographic journey by driving her to shoot pictures all over town. He suggested which photos to take and where she should point the camera. When she began taking more of an interest and asserting her independence, Tatarnic said he wasn’t ready to call it quits.

“When she became more independent, I thought, well I really want to take a picture of these things.”

He said that’s when the hobby started to take hold.

Since then, he said his daughter has been working up to a photography career after studying at Sheraton College. She shoots weddings on her own and is employed with a studio,

growing her portfolio on the road to her own photography company, Tatarnic said.

As for him, he said he’s strictly a hobbyist.

“For me, it’s more a hobby. I think it’s really hard to get into photography as a career. Seeing my daughter go through it, and other people I’ve talked to online; there’s a lot of competition.”

Using a Panasonic G9, he said he’s usually out snapping photos by himself.

While shooting in the winter is tough because the sun isn’t as prominent, he said he does enjoy the peace around town in the colder months.

“Winter is hard because it’s not as sunny. The sun really helps with the quality of the pictures.”

It’s gloomy in winter, so it’s hard to take really good shots.”

There is an upside to winter photography, though.

“There are opportunities with the ice and the snow. I like Niagara-on-the-Lake downtown, I like taking pictures at night. There are no crowds in your way.”

Experiencing new opportunities and learning along the way, Tatarnic said he’s open to furthering his knowledge of the craft. A co-worker and friend of his is also into photography, Tatarnic said he mentioned taking a course down the road.

“That’s something I’d like to get into.”

He’s had some playful run-ins with animals as



Bill Tatarnic snapping photos in NOTL. BRITTANY CARTER

well. A red fox came right up to him while he was shooting one day, he said it must have caught scent of a granola bar he had earlier.

“I think he was just looking for food. He went right inside my jacket.”

Another time, he said a bird landed on his head, “I think it was playing with me, trying to show off to its friends.”

Taking the opportunity to learn more about historic buildings in NOTL, Tatarnic said he will often take photos of the name of a building so he can learn more about it when he gets home.

While he said he doesn’t see himself taking photography past the hobby level, that’s for his daughter, he does plan to continue taking scenery shots around town and the region.

“It’s something I’ve really enjoyed.”

His pictures can be viewed on his Instagram page under the username @bylt63.



Old Town on a winter’s night by Bill Tatarnic.

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