



First COVID death, major case spike in NOTL care homes

Richard Harley
The Lake Report

A resident of the Niagara Long Term Care Residence has died after contracting COVID-19 and cases in NOTL have surged to their

highest level since the pandemic began, quadrupling since last week.

The death is the first known COVID-linked fatality in a Niagara-on-the-Lake care facility.

Another 21 residents

and four staff members at the Niagara Long Term Care Residence (formerly Chartwell) on Wellington Street have active cases of COVID-19 as of Tuesday, executive director Chris Poos told The Lake Report.

As of Wednesday, NOTL overall had 62 active COVID cases, up substantially from 15 a week earlier. The town has had 181 total cases since the pandemic began.

Poos said the facility has had daily calls with public

health officials and ongoing weekly testing for staff and residents who previously tested negative.

“We are also in regular contact with all residents, families and staff regarding the status of COVID-19 in

our home,” he said.

Pleasant Manor’s long-term care home in Virgil is also in the midst of a COVID outbreak, but officials with Radiant Care, which

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NOTLer gets COVID vaccine



Megan Vanderlee is one of the first NOTL residents to receive a COVID-19 vaccine. RICHARD HARLEY

Richard Harley
The Lake Report

Megan Vanderlee is among the first Niagara-on-the-Lake residents to have received the COVID-19 vaccine.

The vaccine is being rolled out in Niagara this

week, but she was given her first dose of the two-part Pfizer vaccine at Hamilton Health Sciences on Jan. 2. She is scheduled to get her second shot Jan. 23.

Vanderlee was able to get the vaccine because she was an essential caregiver to her mother Emmajane, who had

been staying at St. Joseph’s Villa in Dundas.

The home was able to offer her the chance to get the shot because Hamilton received some of the first shipments of the vaccine in Ontario, she said.

“Hamilton region, since they had a higher number

of cases, they got the first shipments like Toronto and Peel and Essex. We were fortunate enough to be offered it for safety for our folks,” Vanderlee said.

Her mother died Jan. 5.

“So it was kind of like the

Continued on Page 2



Pharmacy owner Sean Simpson. FILE PHOTO

Niagara gets vaccine, but rollout too slow, pharmacist Simpson says

Kevin MacLean
Managing Editor

The first of 11,000 doses of Pfizer’s COVID-19 vaccine were injected into people in Niagara on Wednesday – and it is a welcome but overdue development, says NOTL pharmacist Sean Simpson.

He just wishes the provincial and federal governments would show a lot more “urgency” when it comes to rolling out the vaccine to the front-line health care staff and those most vulnerable to COVID.

With the thousands of doses the government says Canada has already re-

ceived, Simpson said a more imaginative approach to the rollout is in order.

“We really should have a military-style sense of urgency around getting this done. There’s no reason, in my opinion, for any delay whatsoever,” he said in an interview.

“I think there can be much more grassroots preparation and mobilization of health care professionals that would expedite delivery to the wider swath of people and provide more protection, faster, so that we could get the economy back up and running.”

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Former NOTL Hydro VP charged in \$425,000 fraud

Kevin MacLean
Managing Editor

Niagara-on-the-Lake Hydro’s former vice-president of operations has been charged with fraud after more than \$425,000 was stolen from the utility.

Detectives from the Niagara Regional Police Service central fraud unit

arrested Kazi Marouf, 67, of Fort Erie, on Tuesday.

Kazi, who was fired in September, faces one count of fraud over \$5,000 and was released from custody pending a court appearance on March 22.

NOTL Hydro CEO Tim Curtis said that 94 per cent of the missing money – more than \$400,000

– has been repaid.

Investigators said the fraud occurred between March 2019 and July 2020.

As previously reported by The Lake Report, the scheme involved phony invoices issued and paid over that 18-month period.

The fraud was discovered by an employee in

the finance department who was processing a payment.

After the employee brought the discrepancy to the attention of senior management, the utility began an internal investigation and subsequently hired a Toronto forensic accounting firm to look into the case.




Kazi Marouf, right, has been charged with defrauding NOTL Hydro of more than \$425,000. FILE PHOTO

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Early-morning fire **badly damages** two NOTL homes

Richard Harley
The Lake Report

Two family homes were badly damaged after a vehicle caught fire and the blaze spread to the structures early Friday morning.

Firefighters were called to the home at 162 Anne St. for a report of a vehicle fire against a building at 5:54 a.m., said Fire Chief Nick Ruller.

Ruller arrived on scene by 6 a.m. and found the fire had spread from a truck in the driveway to the house's roofline above the garage.

The call was upgraded and firefighters from four stations in NOTL were called to the scene.

John Marano, who has lived at 162 Anne since 2018 with his wife Julie and son Guy, said the fire has devastated his family.

"You have no idea," he said in an interview Friday afternoon.

Marano said his son had returned from work at about 4:30 a.m. and gone to bed. About an hour later he heard the truck's alarm going off.

"I came out and that window over there was all red, so I figured it was some car or something shining a light on, so of course I went to investigate."

He said that's when he discovered the front end of the truck was engulfed in flames.

"I got my son out and



A blaze tore through two Anne Street homes on Friday. See NiagaraNow.com for more photos. RICHARD HARLEY

we went around to get all my neighbours out of their house and my neighbours already had called 911. I also did, but they indicated the call was already in."

Marano said a neighbour's daughter was one of the first to notice the fire.

"Her name is River. She's seven years old, the bedroom's right in the front. And she heard a noise. She looked out the window, she saw the engine on fire, and she went to her mom and dad," Marano said.

"So the father right away I believe called 911. And they were fantastic. Couldn't ask for better neighbours."

Marano said he's not sure

of the damage yet. "It's anywhere between \$1 and a million dollars," he said.

Now his family will have to be put up in a temporary home by their insurance company.

"Everything is in progress right now. And we're doing the best we can with the situation."

The house beside Marano's also is unlivable. It belongs to Eduardo Lafforgue, president of the NOTL Chamber of Commerce.

Lafforgue said while the fire destroyed his home and several irreplaceable objects, he is thankful everyone made it out alive.

He also heard the truck's

alarm. "And when I looked through the window, there was a flame," he said.

He immediately woke his wife and dog, left the house and knocked on the neighbour's door.

"My bedroom is completely, completely destroyed. And the inside of my house," he said.

He said some Italian antiques, as well as a chair that has been with him and his wife in four countries, were destroyed.

"The important thing is that we are all alive."

Ruller said the blaze and house structure presented a challenge for fire crews.

"We had a fair amount

of fire extension into the attic space. So, the biggest challenge for us at that point is that we had to work from the inside of the structure, pulling the ceilings to get at fire that was travelling through voids," Ruller said.

"Those voids are kind of unprotected spaces so the main fire spread here. The challenge that we had is that it's travelling across plywood and stuff like that up in the voids of the attic, so it was very labour intensive."

Firefighters were able to contain the blaze to two units, though there was extensive damage to a neighbouring house at 160 Windsor Cr.

"Our firefighters did a phenomenal job. They got hose lines into the affected units, pulled ceilings, did a lot of salvage work, throwing tarps to make sure that we were trying to preserve what we could of the property," Ruller said.

"The other two units of the four-unit block essentially are completely unaffected by the fire. There may be a bit of smoke damage but the damage is minimal in those areas."

Ruller said fires in dense row housing and new builds can present problems.

"This really has the potential with this type of development, with the density, it can be very challenging — lightweight construction, new builds, there's a lot of challenges that are presented with that versus some of our older building stock," Ruller said.

"We are dealing with things like floor joists that are glue and particleboard. A lot of it's engineered products, synthetic-based, so the fire has an opportunity to spread rapidly."

Ruller said he's "incredibly impressed how quick the deployment was," with the first pumper arriving on scene nine minutes after the call came in.

"The crews did a phenomenal job."

At the height of the fire, Ruller said there were about 35 firefighters on scene.

NOTLer among **first in town** to get vaccine

Continued from Front Page

last gift she ever gave me," Vanderlee said of getting the vaccine.

Getting it was rather painless and "similar to a flu shot," Vanderlee said, though there were extra screening protocols and physical distancing.

"They screen you once, they screen you twice, then you go into this huge conference room which is all sectioned off with volunteers bringing you to the properly sectioned areas," she told The Lake Report.

She said each section had two nurses and people were

spaced 10 feet apart.

"They go over the questionnaire again. Then they do the injection and then you go wait for about 15 minutes and then you must go see paramedic before you leave."

She said a paramedic she spoke with told here there hadn't been any negative reactions to the vaccine so far at the clinic.

Vanderlee said the worst part was the jab of the needle.

"It hurts when a needle goes in your arm and you might feel sore. My arm felt a little sore the next day. Similar to a flu shot."

She said being able to

visit her mom was difficult, as the home had been in COVID lockdown and had seen previous cases and deaths in other wings of the complex.

It wasn't until her mother was put in end-of-life care that the home allowed three people to visit.

While she was taking care of her mother, Vanderlee was getting weekly COVID tests at Simpson's Pharmacy in NOTL.

She said the vaccine was offered to anybody who was an essential caregiver.

"Any essential caregiver that wanted one could have one, because, of course, it's not mandatory. Some of

the nurses said they'd rather wait for the Moderna, so they did."

A week later, Vanderlee said she has "not turned into a zombie yet" and encourages everyone to get the vaccine.

"I think it's my responsibility almost at this point to say, I feel fine, there's no side effects. It's old science, just used on a new mutation."

She reminds anyone who is skeptical that "you're not injected with the COVID virus."

"It's a protein that surrounds a virus that your body — my body — is now building antibodies to attack



Megan Vanderlee receives her first dose of the Pfizer vaccine in Hamilton. RICHARD HARLEY

when it sees it again."

To those that are still skeptical after hearing her story, she says, "Just do some research."

"If you choose not to, just remember there's a lot

worse things out there, like (post-COVID) symptoms," she said.

"I've known people who have had (COVID) in the area and were very ill and are still having symptoms."

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Niagara icewine harvest will be late and **smallest ever**, say grape growers

Jill Troyer
The Lake Report



Grapes on the vine at Pillitteri Estates. SUPPLIED

The temperature must drop to -8 C before the frozen grapes can be picked to make the sweet wine that Niagara is known for around the world.

But this year, the mild winter has growers watching the weather forecast closely. So far, forecasts aren't predicting temperatures cold enough in the next two weeks.

"The weather is concerning, it's been mild, with lots of rain," said Matthias Oppenlaender, chair of the Grape Growers of Ontario. He also is CEO and director of operations for Huebel Grapes Estates, which has 500 acres of vineyards in Niagara-on-the-Lake.

"We are watching the weather every day," he added.

Not only will the harvest be relatively late this year, it will also be the smallest ever.

The amount of grapes set aside for icewine this year totals just "1,068 tonnes, down significantly from last year's 5,789 tonnes

and setting a record low," according to the VQA 2020 vintage report.

"Demand is down because of COVID, so growers are taking a step back this season," said Oppenlaender. "Exports of icewine are down and we've had no international tourists since the pandemic began."

Jamie Slingerland,

director of viniculture for Pillitteri Estates Winery, noted, "International tourists coming through on bus tours are a major source of sales for icewine."

Exports were stable for Pillitteri in 2020, but Slingerland said he doesn't know how 2021 will look, and the loss of sales from international tourists at the winery door means icewine inventories are higher than usual, which is why production is being reduced.

As to the weather, he said "we are farmers who are perpetual optimists ... it will eventually get cold this winter, sooner or later."

But he's hoping "it will be sooner rather than later because the losses increase over time due to grape dehydration and birds that reduce icewine yields."

Niagara Long Term Care has **25** active cases

Continued from Front Page

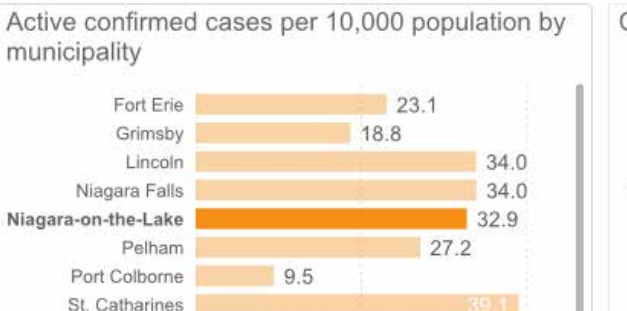
operates the facility, did not return calls or emails.

However, an internal email from CEO Tim Siemens sent to staff Wednesday afternoon, said Pleasant Manor has four COVID cases – three patients and one long-term care worker. A staff memo issued the previous day included a positive test for one member of the centre's supportive housing staff.

A week ago the Virgil facility had only one positive case, an employee. The centre's apartments, wellness suites and life lease units are not in outbreak, Siemens emphasized.

The staff member who tested positive has completed self-isolation and returned to work, Siemens said in Tuesday's memo. The emails from the CEO were sent to The Lake Report by an employee. Three of the four residents who were in contact with that staff member also have finished their isolation, he said.

The memos said the latest positive test result was Tuesday at Pleasant Manor, a private non-profit operation affiliated with



Top: Niagara Long Term Care Residence on Wellington Street. RICHARD HARLEY
Bottom left: Executive director Chris Poos. SOURCED Bottom right: A chart of active cases in the region. NIAGARA PUBLIC HEALTH

the Mennonite church. No other cases have been confirmed since then.

Radiant Care's Tabor Manor in St. Catharines has a much more serious outbreak, with 23 residents and nine staff infected, Siemens wrote Wednesday.

Siemens told staff that with the vaccine now available in Niagara Region, he is hopeful Radiant Care's facilities will receive it soon.

At Niagara LTC, Poos said, "We remain diligent in all our infection prevention and control measures including, twice daily screening of residents and staff for any signs of the COVID-19 virus and regular testing."

"Residents are isolated to their rooms, receiving in-room meal service and are being cared for by staff on contact droplet precautions. Staff are wearing full

personal protective equipment at all times, which is well-stocked in the home."

Poos also said he's hopeful for a vaccine to come soon.

"As with all long-term care and retirement homes, we are hopeful that good news will come soon and that the Pfizer-BioNTech and/or Moderna vaccines will become available to all residents and staff in the Niagara area."



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Contributed by Patty Garriock
 "Always speak the truth and you'll never be concerned with your memory."
 - Carolyn Coats.



Contributed by Norm Arsenault:
 Did you know? The average dishwasher in homes today uses 8.7 gallons of water per load. Washing by hand for 10 minutes with water running can use 20 gallons. Today's dishwashers are about 95% more energy-efficient than those bought in 1972—your old dishwasher may be costing you more in energy bills than it would take to buy a new one. (World Wildlife Association)

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Editorial: Not the time to get **complacent**

Ricahrd Harley
 Editor

After a long run of few cases in Niagara-on-the-Lake, COVID-19 has settled into our quaint town.

With cases higher than ever before (the number of active cases this week has surpassed the total number of cases we had from March to October 2020) it is now more important than ever before to make sure we're following the advice of public health authorities to keep ourselves and our community safe.

Our public health agency and our politicians have been clear: Now is not the time to get complacent.

Instead, now is the time to make sure we're being extra careful and cautious. It's time to be staying home.

But alarmingly, everywhere you look there are

"COVIDiots" that aren't taking things seriously.

Even some municipalities, like Niagara Falls, appear to be avoiding listening to health advice.

For example, the province was clear that grooming services are not essential. However, Niagara Falls decided to interpret the regulations in a different way and leave them open.

And while groomers and vets alike do agree that groomers offer an essential service, it is still the law put in place by the province. So, whether we agree or not, we're still obligated to follow those orders.

Niagara-on-the-Lake has been great about quickly responding to new regulations. There's plenty of information available to anyone who is wondering what is and isn't allowed.

But until the rules are changed, now is not the

time to start a revolution.

We need to be vigilant in letting the people in our lives know they have to take the virus seriously.

If one of your family members or friends is not doing their part, speak up. Educate them on how their decisions have a larger potential impact than just them possibly getting sick and dying.

What it really means is you're putting your family, your loved ones, your friends' families at risk.

In other words, it means is you're selfish.

Let's not be selfish.

To end on a positive note, we would like to applaud Niagara Long Term Care Residence and its executive director Chris Poos for the quick replies and transparency surrounding outbreaks in the Wellington Street long-term care facility.

It's important that our community has access to all the information regarding COVID-19.

Nursing home infection stats should be available through the public health department. Unfortunately, public health hasn't been as transparent as it could be and leaves it to individual homes to announce their case counts.

That's why we're relying on people like Poos to help us stay informed.

When we see the impact directly in front of us, it becomes harder for those COVIDiots to deny what's happening.

This virus is deadly. This virus doesn't care who you are. It doesn't care if you don't believe it will affect you. It is dangerous.

So, let's act accordingly.
 editor@niagaranow.com



Vaccine distribution another **botched** project

Dear editor:

We have witnessed worldwide the contempt, shock and public backlash against the criminal sentencing in our court systems, often described as "criminals have more rights than the victim."

As we, and in particular our front-line workers, long-term care homes and higher-risk seniors in the Niagara region and elsewhere wait patiently for the COVID-19 vaccine, our society's worst imprisoned criminal population is at the head of the line.

To call this as outrageous is a gross under-

statement and just another of our elected officials' mishandling of the whole crisis, from procurement to distribution.

We are quarantined. Could we not quarantine convicts in their cells? Vaccinate the guards and service staff first. Are nurses, doctors and law-abiding seniors etc. not as important as our prisoners?

Pharmacist Sean Simpson has said he was hoping the government would apply "lessons learned" from the flu vaccine shortage debacle. That's wishful thinking as these ac-

tors could not organize a booze-up in a pub.

Another Doug Ford roll-out disaster is the legalized cannabis market, which he effectively killed by throttling the number of retail outlet stores. Ontario with a population of 14.6 million has 100-plus stores -- in comparison Alberta with a third of the population, at 4.4 million, has 300-plus stores.

The illegal market loves Doug Ford and while the illegal sector is booming, investors lost hundreds of millions as legal company's stocks got wiped out.

In summation, as I wrote

in a letter last week, we have to take the play away from our officials in Ottawa and Queen's Park. In concert with our local health authorities, let's establish and staff our own distribution centres. When it comes to distribution, this writer would have involved real professionals from Amazon, Walmart, Ikea etc., whose businesses live and breathe distribution.

Real distribution experts, not Ret. Gen. Rick Hillier, who is purportedly drawing \$ 20,000 per month.

Samuel Young
 NOTL

Lord mayor **congratulates** Hazel McCallion

Dear editor:

I am so happy for Hazel McCallion on her award of the Order of Ontario.

While I have known Hazel for almost 40 years, I really got to know the extent

of her dedication to her community in 1997 when we worked together at the Greater Toronto Services Board.

She was passionate about providing the infrastruc-

ture necessary to provide services to not only her own community, but to uniting the Greater Toronto Area.

Hazel has been a valuable mentor to me throughout my career. I was thrilled to

be able to welcome her to Niagara-on-the-Lake for the council inauguration. We continue to speak from time to time on important issues.

Lord Mayor Betty Disero
 NOTL



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OPINION

Your NOTL firefighters **cannot** do it alone

Fire Chief Nick Ruller
Special to The Lake Report



Fire Chief Nick Ruller. FILE PHOTO

As a volunteer firefighter, there were many things that I loved about the position.

The opportunity to make someone's day better, being surrounded by others who deeply care about their community, the camaraderie and the excitement. The unwavering support from the community has always been here in Niagara-on-the-Lake and, now as fire chief, I am even more appreciative for it.

Inevitably, our volunteer firefighters are often dealing with highly emotionally charged situations, where there is tremendous risk to both life and property. In my 22 years in the fire service, it has become overwhelmingly clear that our response can never be fast enough when tragedy strikes.

As soon as an individual realizes they need help, they immediately need us there to mitigate the incident. Unfortunately, we cannot be at the scene at the emergency's inception.

According to Dr. David Eagleman, a neuroscientist and adjunct professor at Stanford University, "because memories are laid down more richly during a frightening situation, the event seems to have taken longer in retrospect."

Consequently, more often than not, our firefighters are subjected to unjustified criticism over the time it took them to arrive on scene. I am proud to share that, at our most recent fire, we had a four-person crew arrive on scene with water applied to the fire in less than eight minutes.

Let us consider what transpires in those eight minutes. Volunteer firefighters have a pager activate via two-tone paging signals that include a voice message providing information regarding the incident (one minute).

Now, the firefighter prepares to leave work, home, a restaurant or other event to drive to the fire station (one to two minutes). Firefighters proceed in their personal vehicles with a flashing green light activated, relying on motorists to yield to them so they can arrive at the station as

soon as possible (three to five minutes).

Upon arrival, they don protective clothing and board a fire apparatus with anywhere from three to five other firefighters (one to two minutes). Now, they are en route to the incident location, relying on motorists once again to yield the right-of-way so the fire truck can arrive on scene as fast and safely as possible (up to six minutes).

Fire safety requires a partnership between residents and their firefighters. Your firefighters cannot do it alone.

Our firefighters hold themselves to very high standards. As an organization, we have an established training curriculum, mandatory training and performance objectives, all based off North American standards.

Volunteer firefighters train weekly on focused de-

ployment drills for firefighting, emergency medical response and auto extrication, to name a few disciplines. We invest in modern personal protective equipment, fire apparatus and firefighting equipment. We have standing programs to ensure that firefighting equipment is tested and maintained in a state of operational readiness.

As residents, we need you to take personal responsibility for your fire safety. Ensure you have working smoke alarms on every level of your home. Test your alarms, change the batteries regularly, ensure the devices are not too old.

Invest in fire extinguishers and ensure you know how to utilize them. Practice a home escape plan with your family so they know what to do if a fire occurs. Yield to flashing green lights and all responding fire vehicles. As employers, allow our volunteer firefighters to respond during business hours where practical and reasonable.

Your volunteer firefighters have been here to help you since 1816. They are committed to being high-performing, progressive and visionary in the provision of emergency services within our community. Nonetheless, they need you to do your part.

Call **CAA**, use flares when you have car trouble

Dear editor:

I was alarmed to read your story about the crash on Christmas Day that almost claimed the lives of several people, "Virgil father healing up after serious Christmas Day collision,"

Jan. 7.

I was deeply relieved that everyone survived.

I hope that I'm not the only one whose takeaway from this story was that you must always call CAA (or other emergency service) for

roadside issues.

If that isn't financially viable for you, then try to invest in some roadside flares or lights, so that you are easily seen.

I know this might be obvious, but it just startles

me how few people have an emergency kit in their car. Especially in winter.

"Stay home, Stay safe" has multiple benefits these days.

Best wishes,

Bea Campbell
Virgil

Restaurants should give NOTLers **priority**

Dear editor:

During these difficult times, I am writing to you to express my frustrations as they relate to the "support local" or "buy local" campaigns. As these campaigns roll out, I will be the first to support them.

My particular "beef" is with the restaurant businesses. I have lived here in the region for 10-plus years. I have gone to many

establishments requiring reservations, even now. When things are busy it appears that it doesn't matter where you live and definitely NOT, if you're local.

Now during COVID times, these same establishments that didn't care that they let in a Toronto customer over a NOTL customer, all of a sudden are begging individuals

like me to patronize their restaurant whether in person or using take-out.

It has left me with a bad taste, so to speak. If they hadn't been rude and bullying in the good times they would have individuals like me rushing to support them. Now, I am more inclined to stay home.

It's time that locals get recognized in some manner. As an example,

it would be very easy to say to the reservations taker that I have a driver's licence that proves I'm from the area and thereby receive priority for seating.

Otherwise, best of luck in waiting for the Americans and Torontonians to arrive in the pre-COVID numbers you were used to before.

Bernd Christmas
Queenston

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Dog rescued after falling in crevice

Richard Harley
The Lake Report

A family's dog is home safe after being rescued from a 20-foot crevice on the banks of Lake Ontario.

The dog, named Jazmin, fell into the crevice Sunday while on a walk with its owners near Lakeshore Road in Niagara-on-the-Lake.

NOTL firefighters were called at 2:44 p.m. and managed to get the dog out in about an hour and 15 minutes.

Joe Pillitteri, who lives on Lakeshore Road near where the incident occurred, saw the firefighters coming down the street and went to see what was happening.

He had been burning some brush and thought maybe they were coming for him.

"I started a little brush-fire, which I didn't know you're not supposed to do right now. So shortly after I started it, I see fire trucks coming down the service road that goes to the lake," he said.

He said he quickly Googled it and discovered there's a fire ban in place.

"They don't want any unnecessary fire calls for any reasons so there's an outdoor fire ban."

But then he noticed they turned toward the lake, so he hopped on his Ga-



Firefighters rescue a stuck dog on Sunday. SUPPLIED PHOTOS

tor and followed.

"And you could hear it yelping, the poor thing. And (the firefighters) were on site and kind of jumped into action. It was pretty, pretty incredible," he said.

Fire Chief Nick Ruller said the crevice appeared to be a result of a "wall shear" type collapse due to shoreline erosion.

He said the crew of about 15 firefighters decided the best way to save the dog was to remove an unstable piece of the embankment.

"Knowing that a cubic yard of soil is roughly 2,500 to 3,000 lbs, it was imperative that we ensured that our crews operating above and below the crevice were safe at all times. This meant clear communication, avoiding loading

the edge with unnecessary personnel and having spotters in various areas to assess changing conditions," Ruller said,

"Crews utilized various equipment such as high-pressure air bags, battery-powered jaws-of-life and basic hand tools like shovels and pick-axes. They drew on training and principles from other types of rescue scenarios, including leverage, cribbing, and lifting techniques, and applied them to this unique scenario."

Pillitteri was able to offer some assistance, with firefighters using his Gator to tie off so if the chunk let go they wouldn't fall down the steep bank. He also headed to his nearby business, Lakeview Vineyard

Equipment Inc., to grab extra shovels.

"It was actually probably like the closest to the action I've ever been with the volunteer firefighters," he said.

Pillitteri said he was impressed by the quick, organized response by firefighters.

He said everyone was "cool, calm, collected" and reinforced safety the whole time.

"Selfless work on all of their parts. You can tell there's a lot of animal lovers in that group and just a great culture and a great feeling to observe."

He said the dog seemed to appreciate it.

"As they got it freed, the dog was a little spooked but, like, super happy."



Dr. Tom Stewart. SOURCED

Fired hospital CEO eligible for \$1M severance, but Niagara won't be paying it

Kevin MacLean
Managing Editor

Fired Niagara Health chief executive officer Dr. Tom Stewart will receive a severance of more than \$1 million, but it won't be paid by the Niagara hospital group.

Stewart had been hired by Niagara through a contract with the executive's main employer, Hamilton-based St. Joseph's Health System.

His agreement with St. Joseph's makes him eligible for 24 months of severance and the hospital board confirmed this week that it fired Stewart without cause.

That makes him eligible for up to two years of his annual \$552,500 salary with St. Joseph's. He also earned a bonus of up to \$97,500 but

that is not part of his severance package.

Stewart also received six weeks of vacation annually and a monthly car allowance of \$2,000.

A copy of Stewart's contract went missing from St. Joseph's website late last week. It was reposted online after inquiries from The Lake Report asking for a copy of the agreement, which is considered a public document.

He was fired, first by Niagara Health and later by St. Joseph's, days after he admitted taking a Christmas holiday to the Dominican Republic in the midst of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Lynn Guerriero, current president of Niagara Health, was named president and interim CEO.

NOTL sees uptick in COVID enforcement with lockdown measures

Richard Harley
The Lake Report

Niagara-on-the-Lake laid seven COVID-related charges in December, largely due to the province's lockdown that began on Boxing Day.

Prior to December, the town did not lay a COVID-related charge since May.

The information on COVID enforcement was contained in a report to council Monday and shows in total the town has laid 66 charges and had 1,475 instances of "education" since the global pandemic was declared last March.

Lord Mayor Betty Di-

sero said the slight uptick in enforcement was a result of increased restrictions and subsequent complaints by residents through the town's COVID hotline.

She said complaints came in particularly around Christmas and New Year's Eve.

The reason the town hadn't been enforcing COVID restrictions previously, she said, is because those restrictions weren't as strong.

"When we went into shutdown on Dec. 26, it became a regulation that people from different households not congregate indoors," she said.

"Before that, that regula-

tion was only a recommendation. So we couldn't lay charges or we didn't lay charges because it wasn't a regulation."

She said the town also just doesn't have the resources to address every complaint.

"We do not have the manpower in our bylaw office to go after everyone, all the time. So, if we would have been picking and choosing, or just going to where there's complaints, there would have been an outcry from the public. 'Why not go after this person? Why did you go after that person?'"

For those reasons, and because NOTL had rela-

Month	Inquiries/Complaints	Unique Inspections	Education	Enforcement (charges)
March	158	3	54	0
April	1258	72	387	13
May	605	74	476	46
June	130	10	230	0
July	129	3	53	0
August	6	1	1	0
September	18	4	10	0
October	82	9	108	0
November	103	6	156	0
December	122	25	139	7
Total	2611	207	1475	66

COVID-19 enforcement stats for NOTL. SOURCED

tively few COVID cases, council opted for educating violators.

She said in the months leading up to December, people were "complying more readily" with restrictions.

"They say 33 per cent of the population has become a little more complacent in terms of following the

rules," she said, adding it gets worse around holidays.

"We saw our first spike two weeks after Labour Day. The next spike was two weeks after Thanksgiving."

She said she doesn't think earlier and heavier enforcement would have made much of a difference in people becoming

complacent.

"I don't think fining people in the summer would have changed this. I think people just after around Thanksgiving got tired and said, 'The hell with it. I'm going to visit my family. It's only for a day. It's Christmas.' I'm not sure if fines at that point would have changed that."

She said people are "not understanding that they're not invincible."

She notes that in the first two months of the pandemic, NOTL was one of the few municipalities to actually lay charges. In April, 13 charges were laid and in May 46 tickets were issued.



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Budapest Bakeshop

Submitted
The Lake Report

Budapest Bakeshop is a family-owned business run by Anett and Todd Kane along with our daughters, Helena and Victoria. Since opening our doors in April of 2019, we have brought Hungarian chimney cakes, known as Kurtoskalacs, to the heart of Niagara-on-the-Lake. We like to say that we bake cakes that aren't cakes at all!

Our chimney cake dough is made fresh each morning and multiple times throughout the day. We serve both sweet and savory styles of the chimney, ranging from the classic Cinnamon



The Kane family. SUPPLIED

Sugar or Nutella Walnut to a Jalapeno & Cheddar, Hungarian Sausage, or our Chimney Sandwich.

We are excited and getting ready to move into our new location at 118 Queen St. (formerly Starbucks) in February. This larger space

will give us more room to bake along with some additional seating inside and a great patio, which we intend to use year-round. Check us out online at www.budapestbakeshop.com and on Instagram and Facebook @budapestbakeshop.

Sandtrap Pub & Grill

Submitted
The Lake Report

At the Sandtrap Pub and Grill, "Keeping it Local" is our motto. Paul and Matt Dietsch are hands-on owners who, along with their amazing staff, enjoy welcoming new residents and life-long NOTLers to their pub.

Our menu consists of homemade comfort foods, pizza, wings, daily soups and more all available for eat in or take out. The pub has received many compliments on the leadership show with the current pandemic protocols, especially the cleanliness.

When things get back



Sandtrap's motto is "Keeping it local." SUPPLIED

to normal, with the spacing of tables and installation of plexiglass dividers, customers can feel comfortable dining indoors. We welcome you to come and

enjoy what makes us the most popular spot for locals. To take out or dine in, call 905-468-8727. See our menu at sandtrappub.com. We're at 358 Mary St.

Konzelmann Estate Winery

Submitted
The Lake Report

Konzelmann Estate Winery has long been heralded for providing one of the most friendly, informative and educational experiences in Niagara's Wine Country. Located just five minutes from historic Old Town, Konzelmann sits directly on the shores of Lake Ontario and boasts stunning views of the Toronto skyline.

As one of Niagara's first wineries, Konzelmann has garnered many prestigious national and international awards, including Canada's only placement on the Wine Spectator Top 100 List. All



Konzelmann Estate Winery. SUPPLIED

Konzelmann wines are carefully handcraft'ed by fourth-generation winemaker Herbert Konzelmann, who strives to produce high-quality wine from grapes grown on the family-owned lakefront vineyard.

Be sure to look for exciting experiences over the winter months. As always we will continue to offer free delivery to Niagara-on-the-Lake residents using promo code NOTL20 (minimum two bottle purchase). www.konzelmann.ca

RiverBrink Art Museum

Submitted
The Lake Report

Beginning Jan. 21, 2021, the RiverBrink Art Museum is offering an online course devoted to the work of Flemish artist Peter Paul Rubens (1577-1640).

Over the course of five weeks, lectures will focus on key works by the highly prolific Baroque painter and delve into the artist's techniques and materials. Director/curator Debra Antonic will alternate weeks with Sandra Lawrence, retired paintings conservator, to provide participants with insights into the artist's life and working practice.

The course is designed for all art lovers who are miss-



RiverBrink. FILE PHOTO

ing the opportunity to travel and experience the work of this great master first-hand. Join us to learn more about the stories, symbolism, and iconography behind some of Rubens' most important works, and to better under-

stand the artist's originality and innovation. The cost is \$60 for RiverBrink members, \$75 for non-members. See the website www.riverbrink.org for more information. To register contact manager@riverbrink.org.

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Frustrated groomer says service is **essential** to some pets

Richard Harley
The Lake Report

Tania Sapielak of The Mutt Hutt doesn't agree with grooming services being shut down during the provincial lockdown.

She wonders why the province did an about-face on whether grooming is an essential service.

During the first major lockdown, she said groomers fought to show grooming is an essential service, despite the initial optics.

It isn't always a matter of simply getting your dog pampered and looking nice. Some pets have a legitimate need for a groomer, she told The Lake Report.

"We went through all this last time, proving our point that it's a health concern, that matts can make dogs very sick. They can get infections, sores, long nails can break feet, cause arthritis."

And though she's not a veterinarian, she said often groomers are important in recognizing issues that require a vet's attention.

"We spot lumps before an owner would, because we're seeing the dog, we're handling them differently — we're seeing all what's underneath the skin. We're not diagnosing but we're recognizing issues and



Tania Sapielak, owner of The Mutt Hutt with her dog. She says grooming is essential and wants to get back to helping animals. RICHARD HARLEY

problems that we're sending them to vets for that save the dogs' lives. There's so many reasons why we are essential," she said.

"We're the front line of animal help."

June Mergl, owner of the Virgil Animal Hospital and another veterinary clinic in Niagara Falls, said she agrees groomers are essential for the health of some dogs.

"They provide a pretty

important service in terms of keeping the dog's coat and skin in good condition. And that's very important for a lot of dogs that have dermatitis or all sorts of skin infections," she said.

"I know a lot of people would argue, 'Well, just take them to the vet.' But we're so swamped that trying to fit in a nail trim at an economical price for an elderly person" whose dog needs that treatment would

be very difficult right now.

"Older animals that have problems with their nail growth need regular nail trims and the groomers do that on a regular basis, a lot cheaper than the vets can do."

She said in the past vets have had to only do "truly essential services."

"But there's a lot of breeds of dogs that have to be trimmed and if you leave them for too long a

time, they can get in a lot of troubles, even with defecation, normal functions. The fur sticks there, they get blocked up, all sorts of things."

She said she doesn't agree groomers should be closed, adding it's easy enough for them to do the same contactless service as vets are doing.

"A grooming parlour could do that very easily. There's no problem with that. And you're not going to spread COVID by animals. It would be extremely unlikely," Mergl said.

While the province's new lockdown regulations have not permitted groomers to open, some municipalities have interpreted the regulations differently.

Niagara Falls and Thorold, for example, have said groomers can remain open.

Sapielak thinks it's not fair to NOTL residents and pets that require the service.

"Last lockdown, the Town of Niagara-on-the-Lake gave me a letter deeming me essential," she said.

"And now I'm deemed non-essential. That to me is a contradiction."

She said she'd like to see groomers be able to work in a way that's complying with the law.

"Half the time we don't even see people. We can't

tally work in a non-contact environment," she said, adding there are lots of ways to pass dogs off without contact and payment can be done virtually.

"You go into Costco, there's like 200 people. To me it makes absolutely no sense."

"I'd like to see us be able to operate and offer the health and welfare that we give our clients," she said.

"I've been doing this 25 years, so I'm trained, I know a dog's anatomy, probably just as good as a vet would because I've been handling animals for so long. I know what's supposed to be there and what's not supposed to be there, what's concerning and what's not concerning," she said.

"I'm not a vet, don't claim to be a vet. But I do diagnose other skin issues that vets can't, because that's what I deal with, coat and fur."

She said her main concern is the animals.

"It's not about the money right now," she said. All groomers are concerned about the health and welfare of the animals.

"I want to be back to work, to help my clients. I want to make sure they're all maintaining their health."

You ask, we answer: **Is dog grooming an essential service?**

Richard Harley
The Lake Report

The Lake Report received a question from a NOTL resident asking about whether dog grooming is permitted during the province's COVID-19 lockdown. Here's what we found:

The Town of Niagara-on-the-Lake said it's interpreting the province's lockdown guidelines to mean dog grooming is not allowed and is not an essential service.

In response to questions from The Lake Report, the town said according to the current regulation (O. Reg.

82/20) effective Dec. 26 that "pet grooming is not listed as a permissible service that may be open."

The town provided an excerpt from the previous lockdown regulation regarding grooming, as well as the new regulation.

Previously the regulation

said "businesses that provide pet services, including pet grooming services, pet sitting services, pet walking services and pet training services, including services for the training and provision of service animals" could open.

However, that was re-

voked Dec. 26 and updated to say only businesses that provide pet training services exclusively for service animals can stay open.

"Given that they specifically revoked the former Section 23 that spoke to pet grooming and replaced it with "businesses

that provide pet training services exclusively for service animals," the town interprets this as the province's intent to not allow for pet grooming, (unless, of course, a case can be made that grooming is necessary for the pet's "health and welfare").

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#ThompsonTough campaign raises \$21,000 for NOTL coach who had stroke

Julia Sacco
Special to The Lake Report



Warren Thompson arrived home Saturday. SUPPLIED

The community response to a fundraiser dedicated to NOTL native Warren “Beach” Thompson has warmed the hearts of organizers.

Niagara-on-the-Lake farmer Michael Watson and St. Catharines resident Stephany Delano organized a GoFundMe campaign hashtagged #ThompsonTough after Thompson, 55, a beloved former hockey coach, suffered a stroke in early December.

The fundraiser, launched on Tuesday, Jan. 5, had already exceeded its \$20,000 goal a week later. The total was \$21,002, and counting, as of Wednesday.

Watson said he was overwhelmed with feelings of gratitude for all who have donated.

“People who don’t even know Warren have chipped in,” said Watson. “A lot of names I recognize from

growing up in (NOTL) show up on the donors list.”

Thompson’s wife, Candace “Candy” Bureau, said her husband has had a big impact on many in the community, which is why he is so loved.

“I say that he’s a socialite in the sense that he knows a lot of people and is very well-known,” she said.

And when it comes to sports, “He will stop and

talk to anybody.”

“Community-wise (he loves) anything to do with sports. Because he hasn’t been coaching the last two winters he will go watch anybody’s children, grandchildren, it doesn’t matter who, if there’s a child’s sports game to watch, he’s on it,” said Bureau.

Thompson, who helped coach with the NOTL Wolves for several years, was released from Hotel Dieu Shaver Hospital on Jan. 8.

However, he has speech issues and limited mobility, so his home will need to be made more accessible.

The fundraiser, posted online by family friend Stephany Delano, will ultimately help Thompson’s family renovate their St. Catharines home and aid him in his recovery.

“Right now we live in a wartime house, so the bathroom is still on the second floor. So for Warren to get around he can’t manipulate

the stairs,” said Bureau.

The money raised from the #ThompsonTough campaign will go toward installing an accessible main-floor bathroom with “a walk-in shower, lifted toilet and a sink.”

Bureau extended her thanks to both Watson and Delano for their hard work in organizing the fundraiser, as well as to all who have contributed to #ThompsonTough.

“In a time of such negativity and loss, there is always positivity and blessings to be found. We could have allowed ourselves to be consumed by grief but there is so much to be thankful for,” she said.

To make a donation to #ThompsonTough visit https://www.gofundme.com/f/x8y5vn-thompsonstough?utm_campaign=p_cp+share-sheet&utm_medium=copy_link_all&utm_source=customer or email candacebureau@gmail.com.

Tune in: Gaio Family Feud episode airs Jan. 25

Jessica Maxwell
Special to The Lake Report

Niagara-on-the-Lake residents can cheer on the Gaio family Jan. 25.

The family has been waiting patiently for their episode of the gameshow “Family Feud Canada” to air since it was filmed three months ago.

The episode airs at 8:30 p.m. on CBC and CBC Gem. The family will be watching for the first time along with NOTLers who tune in.

“What we see that night is the same thing everybody else can see because we didn’t see any of the rough cuts or nothing,” said dad Walter Gaio. “We’re going to be seeing it for the first time like everybody else.”

He said it’s been hard not sharing the outcome with people before the episode airs, especially with so many people asking when they can watch them compete.

“It is the best feeling to be able to represent the town, to represent our farming

community and just the overwhelming support of this town,” Katherine Gaio said.

Katherine said it is so great to share an experience like this with her daughter and she wishes her daughter Hailey could have been there to compete with them. She is working abroad.

She says participating from your couch at home versus being in studio competing on-set is a whole different game.

“It goes by so fast,” Ryan Gaio said. “It took about an

hour but for me it felt like five seconds when you’re in it.”

Ryan said it will be fun to relive the experience when the episode airs.

“The whole experience is a once-in-a-lifetime thing,” Walter said. “People do exciting things in their lifetime, but this is something you will never do again.”

He said he’s putting out a challenge to Niagara residents in hopes of seeing another family chosen to represent the region next season.

RIDDLE ME THIS

I am a ball that can be rolled, but never bounced or thrown. What am I?

Last issue: I eat, I live. I breathe, I live. I drink, I die. What am I?

Answer: Fire

Answered first by: Jason “Riddle Master” Baker

Also answered correctly (in order) by: Susan Hamilton, Wade Durling, Kathy Neufeld, Maple Brown, Pam Dowling, Margie Enns, Elaine Landray, Sheila Meloche, Mike Gendron,

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

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Historic designation **protects** Rand Estate, mayor says

Richard Harley
The Lake Report

With Niagara-on-the-Lake councillors unanimously agreeing to designate the Rand Estate as being of historical significance, any future development of the site means historic features on the property will have to be preserved, the mayor says.

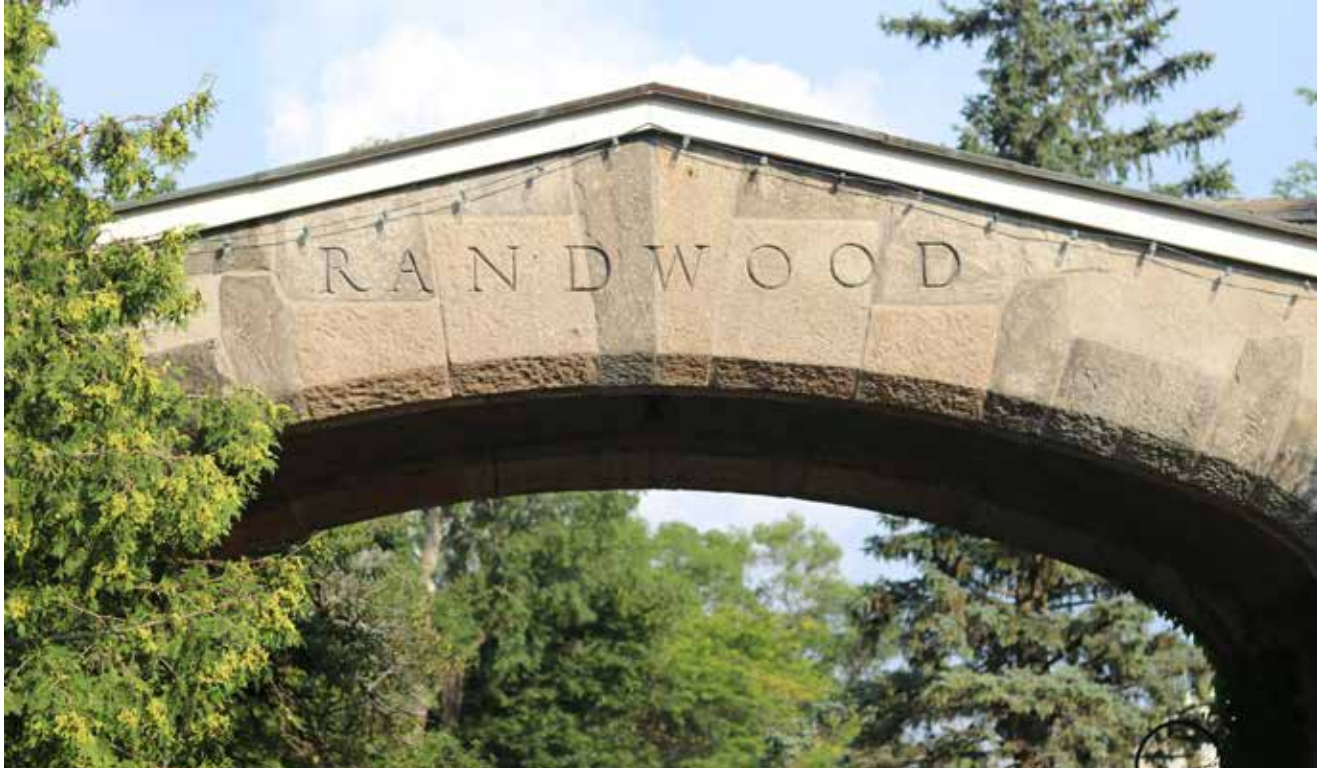
NOTL Lord Mayor Betty Disero said the move means certain features, such as the main buildings and the century-old Dunnington-Grubb landscaping, must be protected.

“(Now) there are rules and criteria that need to be followed when you’re developing that site,” she said.

Council designated two properties that make up the estate, 177 and 244 John St. E., during its final meeting of 2020 on Dec. 21.

She said it is a positive move for the town.

“And it’s something that I’ve believed since the beginning is that (if) you want to develop the site, let’s figure out what heritage, what needs to be protected and go from



An old entrance to the Rand Estate. FILE PHOTO

there,” she said.

“It’s part of our job as a council and our obligation to protect the heritage aspects in the town, and so I’m relieved that at this point that we’ve been able to designate what is special about that site and move forward.”

Developer Benny Marotta, owner of Two Sisters

Resorts Corp., which owns the properties, had planned to build a hotel and conference centre on the land.

However, after legal battles and vocal opposition from a resident group called Save Our Rand Estate (SORE), the property has been put back on the market with a pricetag of \$19 million.

Lyle Hall, a spokesperson for SORE, said the group is happy to finally see the historic designation finalized.

“SORE is pleased to see council following through on the previous council’s decision to protect the heritage assets of the Rand Estate under the Heritage Act,” Hall said.

“It’s unfortunate that

Benny Marotta delayed this by over two years by bringing spurious legal challenges to the courts and the Conservation Review Board. SORE looks forward to a successful outcome of the town’s prosecution of the Marotta companies for the outrageous clear-cutting of a large part of the Rand Es-

tate in November of 2018.”

Marotta said he had always agreed to designate the three buildings within the Rand Estate and the Dunnington-Grubb landscape features in front of the main Rand house.

“I suppose members of SORE and council needed to create some drama,” he said of the designation.

“In my opinion council has acted only to please the SORE group. It is irresponsible, incompetent and inexperienced behaviour. This is what you get when you have a politically motivated council that makes decisions out of fear of disappointing a small and aggressive group of people — at the expense of taxpayers and businesses,” he told The Lake Report.

“For a small town to have a dysfunctional council that shows its interest is not for the benefit of the municipality, something went wrong during the past election.”

Marotta said as far as a potential sale of the estate, “We have interested buyers and we are exploring our options.”

**Stop the Spread
COVID-19
can be deadly.
Stay home.
Save lives.**



‘We really should have a **military-style** sense of urgency around getting this done,’ says NOTL pharmacist

Continued from Front Page

Niagara Region’s first shipment of the much-anticipated vaccine arrived in St. Catharines on Tuesday as part of the first phase of the province’s vaccine delivery.

Niagara Health officials said health care workers, essential caregivers, and residents at long-term care and high-risk retirement homes will be among the first to get the COVID shots. It’s not known when the vaccine will reach NOTL care homes.

On Wednesday, in a media briefing, provincial officials said their target is to provide the first dose of vaccines to all nursing home residents, staff and other essential workers by Feb. 15.

Following Ontario’s vaccination guidelines, in the first phase which runs till the end of March, “Other high-risk groups, including adults in First Nations, Métis and Inuit populations, and adult chronic home care recipients” will get vaccinated, Niagara Health



PIXABAY PHOTO

spokesperson Mary Taws said in a media statement.

For now the plan is for those shots to largely be delivered at hospital and public health clinics, but Simpson says that’s inadequate.

Waiting till phase 2, in April or later, before pharmacies and other community outlets get the vaccine for delivery to older, vulnerable populations is not good enough, Simpson said in an interview.

In phase 2, from April to July, Niagara Health plans to vaccinate high-risk older adults and other at-risk people in the region.

During phase 3, likely in August, everyone else will be able to get inoculated, according to the province’s plan.

With all the doses that

officials say Canada has received or has coming, Simpson said that timeline could easily be accelerated.

For instance, in Niagara-on-the-Lake alone, his pharmacies could easily give shots to more than 100 people daily, he said. With other pharmacies, clinics and doctors’ offices participating, “It’s not unreasonable to think that our town could vaccinate 500 people a day.”

At that pace, everyone in NOTL who needs a vaccination could be done in a matter of days, while ensuring those most at risk get their shot first.

In “40 or 50 days, we’d have the whole town vaccinated with two doses,” Simpson said.

“I realize that’s not going to happen just because of

the way that they’re stratifying prioritizing groups according to risk,” but it shows what is possible, he noted.


Given the chance, “I’d like to think that we could quickly turn around and vaccinate those groups, which would put a significant dent in those that are considered to be most at risk.”

Drive-through vaccination clinics, extended hours or seven-day-a-week operations could be options worth exploring, Simpson said.

As fast as the vaccine is coming into the country is how fast he’d like to see it getting out and into people’s arms. Not sitting in freezers, awaiting distribution.

But that will only happen with a greater sense of urgency exhibited by the government, he said.

“We’ve got Family Day coming up in February and as much as I’d love to take another day off with family, I’d be more thrilled to be able to say that I worked all day and was able to support vaccination efforts somewhere.”



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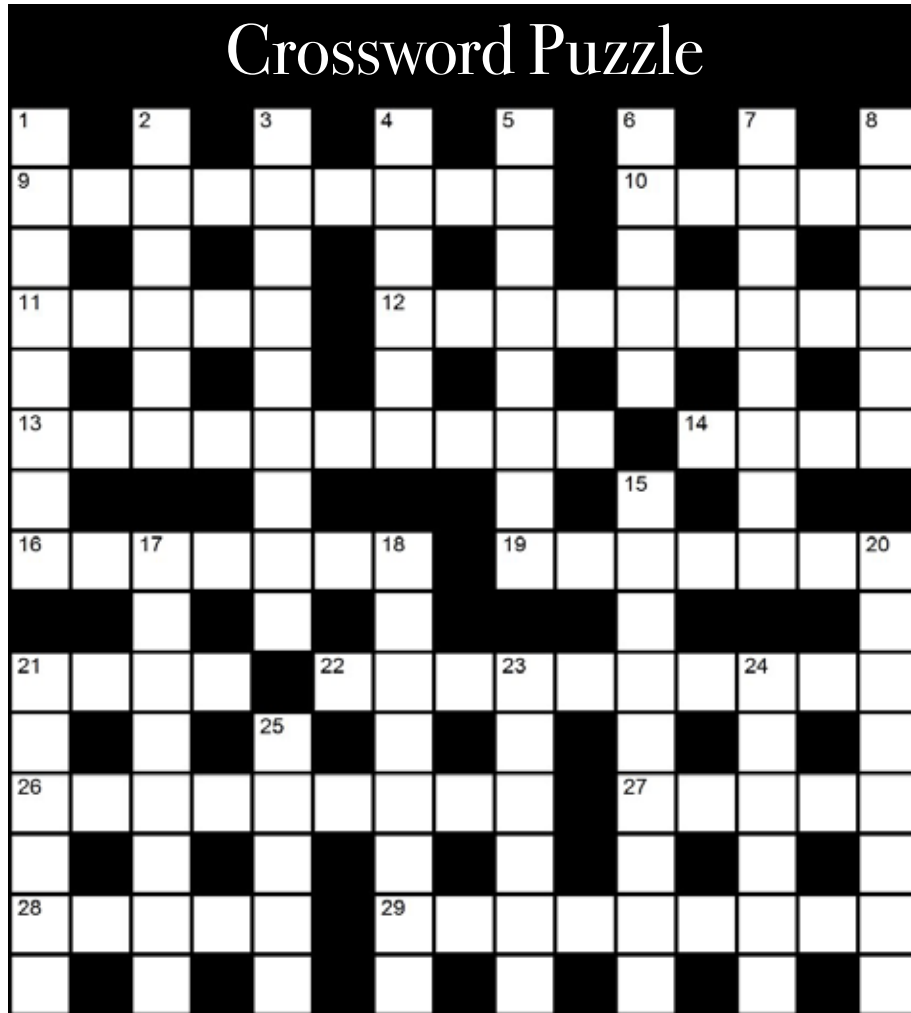
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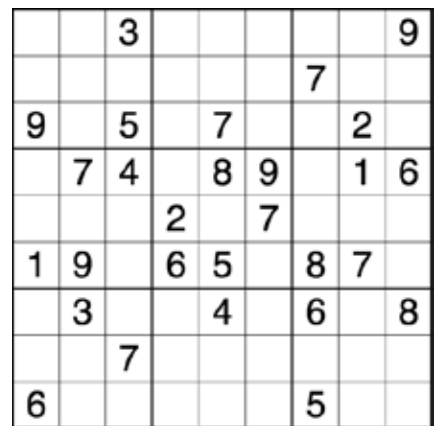
- 9. Radical (9)
- 10. Accommodate (5)
- 11. Find the answer (5)
- 12. Holy Land (9)
- 13. Increase in speed (10)
- 14. Finishes (4)
- 16. "The great grey-green, greasy --- River" (Kipling) (7)
- 19. Scholar (7)
- 21. Possesses (4)
- 22. Quantifiable (10)
- 26. Heaven or hell, maybe (9)
- 27. Sort of line dance (5)
- 28. Marijuana (5)
- 29. Dear (9)

Down

- 1. Army dining room (4,4)
- 2. Leaning letter (6)
- 3. Armed resistance (9)
- 4. Smoked herring (6)
- 5. Sporting competitors (8)
- 6. Silence! (5)
- 7. Group of spectators (8)
- 8. Makes over (6)
- 15. Grease (9)
- 17. Lack of variety (8)
- 18. Unequal (3-5)
- 20. Adolescent (8)
- 21. E.g. Seville (6)
- 23. Drowsy (6)
- 24. Outlaw (6)
- 25. Experiment (5)



Last issue's answers



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Dr. Brown: Finding **our way** through the universe

Dr. William Brown is a professor of neurology at McMaster University and co-founder of the Infohealth series at the Niagara-on-the-Lake Public Library.

Dr. William Brown
Special to The Lake Report



The USS Enterprise from Star Trek: The Next Generation.
SOURCED PHOTO

In the fictional “Star Trek” series of the 1980s and 1990s, it was never clear how the Starship Enterprise found its way among the stars.

Most fans of the series were probably more impressed with the claim that the starship was capable of blasting along at several times the speed of light, a feat that physicists pointed out was impossible, given Einstein’s theory of general relativity.

The latter makes clear that the energy required and the mass of the ship and everyone in the ship would rise steeply to reach infinity values at lightspeed making travel at lightspeed or anything close to it impossible, never mind blasting along at multiples of light-speed.

That realization makes it

clear that travel to the centre of the Milky Way or the far reaches of the universe is impossible within a human lifetime and thousands, if not millions of lifetimes, for destinations in the distant universe.

What about landing a spaceship on Mars? How do spacecraft find their way to Mars and land precisely on a predetermined small site on the planet’s surface?

To navigate with such precision, what’s needed are stationary beacons located throughout the universe from which the position and course of spacecraft can be determined. Those beacons exist: they are called quasars.

Quasars are massive

black holes, millions or even billions of times the mass of our sun, which formed soon after the Big Bang. Together with dark matter, they helped to shape the early universe, including the formation of the earliest galaxies and stars.

Some of those stars were giants and burned through their stores of hydrogen quickly before finally exploding in giant supernovas and scattering their remnants throughout the neighbouring early universe.

Some of the latter remnants, together with other matter and particles within the gravitational reach of these giant black holes, formed fiercely hot coronas whirling about the black

holes outside the event horizon and generated huge amounts of energy in the form of radiation.

Over the last several decades radio telescopes dispersed about the Earth’s surface identified and located thousands of those radio-beacons. More recently the focus shifted to the visible band of the electromagnetic spectrum as the chief source for identifying and mapping the locations of quasars for providing precise reference co-ordinates.

Quasars are ideal because they are found where they originated – at the farthest reaches of the universe – which, despite the enormous distances involved (many billions of light years away from Earth), their emissions are sufficiently bright to be detected and precisely located.

How precise? Within a hundred millionths of a degree and much better if the bearings from more quasars are taken into account. That’s very impressive – and it allows us to land a craft on Mars within a few centimetres.

Such precise information serves other purposes. You may not be aware of it, but the Earth wobbles and jerks sometimes in response to natural phenomena such as earthquakes and hurricanes. Both of those may throw off the accuracy of GPS signals and cause navigational errors by land and air unless corrective data from quasars is used to compensate for the Earth’s movements.

(And remember my essays on time – time passes slower at the surface of the Earth compared to higher altitudes, and at higher speeds relative to slower speeds, corrections for which must also be incorporated into GPS calculations for accurate readings. We take GPS for granted these days – accurate to within a few centimeters – when all the potential and realized errors are taken into account and signals from several satellites are used. Without those corrections, GPS is almost as fallible as any other form of navigation, and when the signals from satellites go down, as they sometimes do, the result, especially in

remote areas where ground navigational aids may be few and far between, can be dangerous – think the Arctic and Antarctica here.)

Let’s close this item on quasars with a little perspective. Remember that to see far out in the universe is to truly to see far back in time.

That is certainly true for quasars: the signals we pick up in our time, began their voyage to Earth many billions of years ago when the universe was young. What we see now therefore, happened a very long time ago. That realization was brought home to me by Michael Shermer, who recounted looking through his home telescope at Andromeda, the nearest galaxy to the Milky Way.

A moment’s thought brought him the realization that the photons of light arriving on his eyes began their voyage from Andromeda about the time when that famous bipedal ape named Lucy walked the Earth some 3.4 million years ago.

That’s a mind boggler and a great perspective with which to begin 2021.

Keeping it Green

What’s the rush? Sustainability in online shopping



Kyra Simone is a NOTL-born nature lover with a master’s degree in biology. In her spare time, she advocates for sustainable change, picks up garbage, makes recycled jewelry, and transforms furniture bound for the landfill.

Kyra Simone
Special to The Lake Report

We can all admit, 2020 was quite a year. Due to COVID-19 restrictions, we went out mostly for essentials and that will be the norm for the next month or more.

While online shop-

ping helped us maintain our distance, shipping an increased number of parcels inevitably had an environmental impact. In 2021, we can resolve to reduce our purchasing footprint by better understanding the most wasteful aspects of online shopping.

Slow Down: Sometimes, buying items online has a lower impact than shopping at brick and mortar stores.

With standard shipping, as many parcels are delivered to an area as possible by optimizing routes, grouping orders into one parcel to each address and filling trucks completely. In this scenario, it makes sense that online orders produce fewer emissions than if every shopper had driven to a store for each purchase.

Unfortunately, rush shipping leaves efficiency on the doorstep, so to speak.

The same-day shipping offered by online retailers like Amazon has actu-



Rushed online orders are often mailed separately, and in non-recyclable packaging. KYRA SIMONE

ally led customers to make more one-off, low-cost purchases, rather than bundling items to meet a threshold for shipping discounts. These small parcels, now all shipped individually, have an exponentially higher carbon footprint.

Rush shipping puts immense stress on delivery logistics. As a result, less-full trucks are deployed more frequently, and to customers that are more spread out.

Delivery drivers work under gruelling conditions, sometimes dropping off more than 250 packages per day. This affords only a few minutes per parcel and leaves little room for bathroom breaks or road safety.

It’s best to choose standard shipping, whenever possible. Choosing the faster option, even if it’s free, ultimately means the planet pays a price.

Point of No Return:

Simple, free returns are another environmental pitfall of online shopping.

Knowing we can send back unwanted items makes us more likely to buy products we haven’t used. For example, we might purchase several clothing sizes to guarantee a proper fit.

While about one-tenth of purchases from physical stores are returned, this proportion can be up to 40 per cent for online orders.

Sadly, it is often difficult and expensive for returns to be processed and resold, even if they have never been used. For example, each clothing item must be inspected, pressed, sometimes cleaned and repackaged.

Most online returns are liquidated, shredded at recycling facilities, sent to landfill or incinerated. Some countries require e-retailers to recycle or donate unused products, but Canada does not yet have such legislation.

To avoid returning

products, consumers can carefully review sizing information or contact sellers upfront for details. If items must be returned, they can sometimes be brought to the closest retail store instead of mailed.

Lots to Unpack: While the above aspects are large, systemic problems, conscious consumer choices can reduce the environmental impact of online purchases.

We can request that all items from an e-retailer be sent in one parcel to reduce packaging and emissions from multiple shipments. Even better, we can ask for plastic-free packaging.

Finally, delivery companies may make several trips if a recipient is not home. Opting to receive parcels at a nearby pickup point instead prevents the extra emissions from multiple delivery attempts.

This year, don’t forget to add green online shopping habits to your cart.



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Randwood Part 4

Calvin Rand and the modern era

This story is one in a series about the history of the Rand Estate, about 35 acres of land lying behind the stone wall on John and Charlotte streets, along the Upper Canada Heritage Trail and whose eastern boundary is a hedge between the properties at 176 and 210 John St.

Elizabeth Masson
Special to The Lake Report



Calvin Rand. SUPPLIED

After his parents' deaths, it was Calvin Rand (1929-2016) who took the most interest in the property, spending summers there in the 1950s with his wife Patricia and their five daughters.

Starting in 1961, they lived at Randwood on a permanent basis with the girls attending Parliament Oak School but by the end of 1964, it once again reverted to a summer residence.

In 1971, Calvin Rand established the Niagara Institute of International Studies at Randwood and became its first president. He modelled it after the Aspen Institute, now based in Washington, D.C., but originally founded in Aspen, Colorado, in 1949 as a think tank and forum where leaders could examine the values of society and exchange ideas.

Its offices were in the Pillar and Post Inn down John Street with Randwood being the location for seminars.

The Niagara Institute proved to be a success as the executives of major corporations across Canada attended its seminars and conferences. They found the informal atmosphere of a home was conducive to reflection and discussion. The institute leased Randwood from the Rands for nine months of the year, while the family continued to occupy it during the summer.

In 1976, Randwood and the Sheets house next door were sold to the Devonian Foundation of Calgary, which continued to lease the two properties to the Niagara Institute. The foundation was named after the Devonian Shield in Alberta where its founder, Eric Harvie, had discovered a huge reserve of oil in 1948.

The Rand family, after renovating the guesthouse behind Randwood, continued to spend their summers there. In 1980, the institute, after considerable fundraising from public and private entities as well as trade unions, purchased the Randwood and Sheets House property from the Devonian Foundation.

Meanwhile, changes had begun to happen on other parts of the Rand Estate. In the 1950s, Col. Henry Sheets had sold the two gatehouses on Charlotte and the nearby stables and milkhouse.

It was in the gatehouse to the left of the Randwood arch that Brian Doherty was living when he founded the Shaw Festival in 1962 with the help of various townspeople, in particular Calvin Rand.

For the remainder of his life, Rand was a great supporter of the Shaw. Not only was he president of the board of directors until 1979 but remained on the board until his death in 2016.

Opening night parties, sometimes involving 300 to 400 people, were held at Randwood in the 1960s.

The stables in 1954 were remodelled into a series of rental apartments. In 1988, the Town of Niagara-on-the-Lake designated the stables and milkhouse to be of architectural and historic value under the Ontario Heritage Act.

Architecturally, the two buildings were found to typify model farm buildings designed to accompany an estate in the early 20th century. Their historical value came because the property was associated with Peter Russell, William Dickson, Henry Lansing and the Rand family.

The barn near the railroad tracks, which George Rand II had built in 1936, was bought in 1956 by Henry Sheets Jr., who had it converted into a house. He occupied it in the summer until 1979 when he sold it to Robert Dingman.

The stucco-clad house still retains the doors to the four original barn stalls and a cupola with a metal weathervane of a person riding a horse. A wing addition, which is not accessible from the main part of the house, was originally used for tenants. There are several one-room outbuildings as well. They served as a chicken coop and a small granary.

Also, in the 1980s, the land to the north and south of the stables was sold to developers. To the north, individual houses were built on Christopher Street while a series of townhouses was built to the south, on Weatherstone Court.

The Niagara Institute, despite its continuing popularity (in 1991, with a staff of 27, it ran 95 workshops and seminars), decided that the upkeep on the Randwood and Sheets House properties had become unaffordable and put them up for sale.

The institute, incidentally, after amalgamation with the Conference Board of Canada, continues to organize executive leadership programs through its headquarters on Glendale Road.

The institute property was bought in 1993 by William Fox to house the School of Philosophy which he was running, at that point, in Toronto. The school, which has branches around the world, was started in London, England, in 1936. Originally, it was set up for the study of economics, but it was later decided that an understanding of philosophical principles was also needed.

The Foxes greatly expanded Randwood by adding a solarium, a music room, a second kitchen and putting a large addition on the back for offices and classrooms. Designs for these additions were made by Chapman Murray Architects of Niagara Falls.

Renovations were also made to the Sheets House and the Coach House. As well, the Foxes purchased the former stables at 9 Weatherstone Court, which had been divided into apartments and had it transformed into a single-family residence. The two subsequent owners of the property have made many changes to both its interior and grounds.

July 2006, Randwood, the Sheets House, the Coach House, and 13 acres of land were sold to artist Trisha Romance and her husband Gary Peterson, who lived next door in Brunswick Place at 210 John St.

Four years later, they sent a proposal to the town to develop the property into an entity they called the Romance Inn & Artistic Centre. Their plan was to add five new buildings to the existing three, which would be developed into a 106-room hotel, a restaurant seating 200, a spa, artists' studio, conference centre, special events site with a capacity of 250, as well as a parking garage. They also sought to change the zoning

to commercial from residential under the town's official plan.

The hotel plan and zoning change created a great deal of controversy in town as evidenced by the number of people who attended the two public meetings at the community centre in the fall of 2011.

The majority of residents who spoke at these meetings opposed the hotel development on the grounds that there would be insufficient parking, the adjacent streets could not handle the increased traffic, but particularly because of the expected high noise levels from the special events site.

And, of course, there was concern about the zoning change of a large piece of property that was surrounded by parkland and residentially zoned properties.

After the promise of changes to the site plan, the proposal came to a vote of the town council on Dec. 12, 2011. Four councillors were in favour and four opposed with the tie being broken by Lord Mayor Dave Eke who voted in favour of the rezoning.

However, along with the approval of official plan amendment No. 51, a number of stipulations were made: at the site plan stage, the property must be designated under Part IV of the Ontario Heritage Act, that new buildings and additions must be approved by the municipal heritage committee, and that a tree preservation plan must be prepared by a qualified professional.

A new site plan was never submitted for the Romance Inn. Instead, by 2017, the property owned by the Romance-Petersons, that which Calvin Rand's daughters had inherited, and the property owned by the Dingmans, were all bought by companies headed by one person: Benny Marotta.

However, after almost three years of allegations of destruction of historic features on the properties and vocal opposition to Marotta's proposals for a hotel and other amenities, he put the Randwood property that faces John Street on the market in October 2020. The asking price is \$19 million.

The final chapter in the story of the historic Rand Estate has yet to be written.

Elizabeth (Betsy) Masson has been a research volunteer at the Niagara-on-the-lake Museum for more than 15 years.

Obituary

Emmajane Scott-Brown



Surrounded by her children, on January 5th, 2021, in her 81st glorious year, at St. Joseph's Villa in Dundas. Loving mother of Megan (John) of Niagara-on-the-Lake, George (Sheri) of Florida, and Eliza-Jane (Rick) of Hamilton. Adoring grandmother to Andrew, Steven, Ducolon, John, Sam, and Claire, and favourite human to her cat, Kaydee. Predeceased by her parents Gladys and Clarence Green of Lyn, ON, and her siblings, twin brother Edward, Dawn, Eileen, and Floyd, and step sons Michael and Duncan. Remembered lovingly by stepchildren Jane, Geoffrey, and Patrick. Sadly missed by many loving nieces, nephews, cousins, and friends.

Emmajane was a pioneer in so many ways. By 28 she was a multi-rated pilot in an age when few women took to the skies. She was elected to the Lennox & Addington Board of Education and then shattered the glass ceiling by becoming the first female Board Chair. She went on to become the first female president of the Ontario Public School Trustees Association before being appointed by Premier David Peterson as Chair of The Friends of Canada Foundation. She ran as an MPP in Etobicoke before becoming a licensed real estate agent in Toronto.

Her love of adventure took her to the U.S. where she became a small business owner, a life coach, and earned her Masters of Divinity in Spiritual Psychology before returning to Canada to spend her golden years enjoying her grandchildren. It was then she finally had the opportunity to chase her truest passion, singing. She spent many years as a member and Chair of the MELOS choir, and eventually an alto in the Kingston Choral Society. Deepest thanks to her caretakers at SJV during her final months, especially Stacey, Marcia, Valoreen, and Pamela for their incredible care and compassion. Cremation has already taken place and there will be a service and interment at St. John the Baptist Anglican Church in Lyn, ON, when conditions allow.

In lieu of flowers, donations to the Kingston Choral Society would be greatly appreciated in her memory at kingstonchoralsociety.ca



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ARCHITEXT

Correctly ... the Ontario Cottage

Brian Marshall
Columnist

There is a lot of sloppy terminology employed in the heritage field when describing architecture. While accuracy is one of my hobby-horses, it's something I believe is central to establishing a common understanding of our historical as-built heritage.

During the last week I encountered two separate heritage professionals who, when describing the same house in their individual reports, used a term ("Gothic Cottage") which attempts to merge a building form with an architectural style.

Let's take a moment to cursorily define both "style" and "form."



Ontario Cottage with Regency elements. BRIAN MARSHALL

An architectural style is an internationally recognized set of defined parameters which, when employed with discipline by a skilled designer, consistently results in a finished presentation that can loosely be described as appearing to belong to the same "family." Examples of common 19th-century architectural styles include Georgian, Regency, Gothic Revival and Queen Anne.

On the other hand, a building form (or type) relates to the basic shape of a house upon which the designer will incorporate the elements and details of a style. The American Foursquare and the Ontario

Cottage were both building forms that were widely used in this manner; with the latter being so frequently built here it was actually named after our province.

In the late 1820s, one-and-a-half storey, three bay, end-gabled or hipped-roof houses with a centred front facing gable began to be built. It was rare that an architect was involved in the design of these homes.

These were very practical houses built by skilled carpenters or (in the second half of the 19th century) masons. But that didn't preclude the liberal incorporation of the most popular architectural elements of the day.

Thus, early examples of this form might sport a Regency verandah with French doors letting on to it. Then, after 1840, the pointed, segmental arched or semi-circular windows, a trim-work decorated porch, and/or fancy barge-board, popularized by the Gothic Revival style, might be included in the build.

Still, no matter what the stylistic details might have been, this building form was so appealing (and cost-effective) to the average person contemplating building a new home, the Ontario Cottage was a go-to form throughout the 1800s and well into the early decades of the 1900s.

Correctly, the heritage professionals could have said an "Ontario Cottage form with Gothic elements" but, of course, since the house in question has no Gothic elements, that would have been incorrect as well. I suppose calling it an Ontario Cottage would be too simple?



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- French Onion Soup**
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- BBQ Bacon Wrapped Scallops**
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- Crab Cakes**
Breaded crab cakes garnished with baby greens, served with chipotle mayo 15
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- Bangers and Mash**
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- Shepherd's Pie**
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- Steak Guinness and Onion Pie**
Slow roasted beef, Guinness gravy, sautéed onions, topped with puff pastry, served with fresh cut fries and peas & carrots 17
- Steak and Kidney Pie (Not available for Take-Out)**
Slow roasted beef and beef kidneys, Guinness gravy, topped with puff pastry, served with fresh cut fries and peas & carrots 16
- Chicken and Peach Pie (Not available for Take-Out)**
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PLEASE ADVISE YOUR SERVER OF ANY FOOD ALLERGIES | TAXES AND GRATUITIES ADDITIONAL | GROUPS OF EIGHT PERSONS OR MORE ARE SUBJECT TO AN 18% GRATUITY

Offering Frozen Soup to Go (30oz ea.)
- Chili \$18
- Beef Barley \$16
- Mulligatawny \$16

Booze to Go:
Import Bottles \$5ea or 6 for \$26
Domestic Bottle \$4ea or 6 for \$22
Tall Cans Import & Premium \$6ea or 6 for \$30






Bottle of Domestic Wine \$25
Growlers: 64oz Domestic \$18
Growlers: 64oz Import and Premium \$22
(\$5 Deposit required)

LOCAL FAVOURITES

ALL SERVED WITH FRESH CUT FRIES OR SUB GARDEN SALAD FOR \$3.50 OR CAESAR OR GREEK SALAD FOR \$4.00 EXTRAS GF Bread \$2

- Fish Butty**
Beer Battered Haddock Filet, topped with Creamy Coleslaw, served on a toasted buttery sesame bun 15
- Shrimp in a Basket**
Crispy Fried Shrimp and Tangy Seafood Sauce 15
- Portobello Mushroom Melt**  **GF**
Portobello mushroom stacked with roasted red peppers, Havarti cheese, on a spaccatelli bun, served with fresh cut fries 16
- Roast Beef Dip Sandwich**
Slow roasted beef with caramelized onions, Havarti cheese, au jus 17
- Chicken Fingers**
Tender strips of breaded chicken breast served with plum sauce 15
- Steak and Guinness Poutine**
Slow roasted beef, sautéed onions, real cheese curds and shredded Cheddar, smothered in Guinness gravy 17
- Reuben Sandwich**
Corned beef, sauerkraut and melted Swiss cheese on rye bread 17
- Meat Loaf Sandwich**
Lettuce, tomato, BBQ mayo, crispy onions, melted cheese on a Ciabatta bun 16
- Turkey Club Sandwich**  **GF**
Home cooked turkey breast, bacon, lettuce and tomato 16
- Fresh Quiche of the Day**
Served with Chef's garden salad 16
- Chicken Caesar Wrap**
All white meat chicken, romaine lettuce, bacon and parmesan cheese, wrapped inside a soft tortilla 16
- Buffalo Chicken Wrap**
Breaded chicken tender, romaine lettuce, tomato, 3 cheese blend with a buffalo blue cheese sauce wrapped inside a soft tortilla 16
- Shepherd's Pie Poutine**
Ground beef, mixed vegetables, real cheese curds and shredded. 16



SALADS

- Caesar Salad**  **GF**
Romaine lettuce, Parmesan cheese, bacon and croutons 12
- Greek Salad**   **GF**
Romaine lettuce, Feta cheese, cucumbers, black olives, tomatoes, red onions with balsamic vinaigrette on the side 12
- Garden Salad**   **GF**
Mixed greens, tomatoes, cucumbers, and carrots 11

CHOICE OF DRESSING Italian, Balsamic, Ranch, Blue Cheese, or Thousand Island
ADD Fresh Chicken \$5.00, Bread Roll \$2.50, Extra Dressing \$0.75, GF Bun \$2.50

HOUSE-MADE BURGERS

ALL SERVED WITH FRESH CUT FRIES OR SUB GARDEN SALAD FOR \$3.50 OR CAESAR OR GREEK SALAD FOR \$4.00

- Angus Burger**
All beef patty topped with lettuce, tomato and pickle 14
- The Red Eye**
All beef patty topped with a fried egg, bacon, cheddar & hot sauce 16
- Olde Smokey**
All beef patty topped with bacon, KC BBQ sauce, crispy onions, cheddar & chipotle mayo 16
- Bacon Cheese Burger**
All beef patty topped with cheese, bacon, lettuce, tomato and pickle 16
- Beyond Meat Vegetarian Burger**   **GF**
Topped with lettuce, tomato and pickle 16
- Bacon Portobello Mushroom**
All beef patty topped with, bacon, mushrooms & Swiss cheese 16
- Lamb Burger (Not available for Take-Out)**
Tzatziki sauce, lettuce, tomato, red onion and cucumber topped with feta cheese 18

EXTRAS Sautéed Onions or Mushrooms on a Burger \$2

BRING IN THIS COUPON FOR
15% OFF TAKEOUT ORDERS

(Excluding alcohol and specials)

