



Michael Howe was a fierce advocate for Niagara-on-the-Lake | Page 6

## NOTL doctors head to **The Village**

Family health team will practise out of planned new facility



Dr. Tim Bastedo, health team executive director Mary Keith and The Village developer Adam Hawley stand in front of the location of the future new home of Niagara North Family Health Team in The Village. RICHARD HARLEY

Richard Harley  
The Lake Report

Some of Niagara-on-the-Lake's doctors are getting new digs.

Next January, five NOTL doctors and the entire Niagara North Family Health Team are planning to move to The Village plaza,

to a yet-to-be-constructed building behind the CIBC bank.

The facility will be called the Village Medical Centre and will be home to the practices of physicians Iram Ahmed, Tim Bastedo, Karen Berti, Samreen Malik and Pratik Kalani, as well as the members of

the Niagara North Family Health Team.

The other doctors from the current facility – Dirgham Al-Jarrah, Steve Durocher, Abby Mahdy, Ronan O'Leary, Luigi Ricciardi and Francois Viviers – are expected to remain at the site behind Simpson's Pharmacy on

Niagara Stone Road.

Their affiliation with the health team will continue unchanged, said Mary Keith, executive director of the health team.

All the allied health services currently available at the Niagara Medical Centre

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## Police shoot, kill man after chase

Pickup's tires flattened, pursuit ends along Niagara Parkway

Richard Harley  
The Lake Report

Police shot and killed a man in Niagara-on-the-Lake Tuesday after a chase that started in Niagara Falls.

The province's Special

Investigations Unit has been called in to investigate the incident, which ended when the suspect's vehicle ran off the road on the Niagara Parkway at Line 3, near Inskillin Wines.

Multiple sources told The

Lake Report the shooting occurred after a police chased a red pickup truck at high speed from near Lundy's Lane all the way to NOTL.

Witnesses said police used spike belts to disable the

vehicle. One unconfirmed report claimed the truck drove at officers while trying to escape.

Police said the man, who has not yet been identified,

*Continued on Page 11*



Radiant Care Pleasant Manor CEO Tim Siemens says one staff member has tested positive. FILE PHOTO

## COVID reaches NOTL long-term care homes

Richard Harley  
The Lake Report

After months of dodging COVID-19, two of Niagara-on-the-Lake's long-term care homes are now in the midst of outbreaks.

The Niagara Long Term Care Residence on Wellington Street (formerly Chartwell) declared an out-

break on Saturday after one staff member tested positive during a regular weekly test, executive director Chris Poos told The Lake Report.

"Since then, we have received two resident positive cases and one additional staff member. Both staff members are asymptomatic and self-isolating at home," Poos said.

On Tuesday evening, Niagara Public Health reported an outbreak at Radiant Care Pleasant Manor in Virgil.

As of Wednesday, Niagara-on-the-Lake had 15 active cases of COVID-19, with a total of 111 cases since the pandemic began, according to public health statistics.

Radiant Care CEO Tim Siemens said one staff member has tested positive for COVID and is isolating at home. No residents have had positive tests, he said Wednesday.

At Niagara Long Term Care, "We are conducting regular weekly testing for

*Continued on Page 13*



## HINDSIGHT 2020: THE YEAR IN REVIEW

Kevin MacLean  
Managing Editor

The year 2020 was an unforgettably forgettable one as the lives of literally every person on the planet were changed in some way.

It already has been well-documented, here and elsewhere, but without the unselfish work, bravery and positive attitudes of front-line workers everywhere, society's already frayed fabric no doubt would have unravelled.

So, The Lake Report thanks all those front-line workers: in hospitals and clinics, pharmacies and medical centres, all our emergency services, grocery stores, essential retailers and service providers, plus the hundreds of volunteers here in Niagara-on-the-Lake (and millions around the world) who stepped up, made a difference and helped their community get through COVID-19, so far.

YOU are our Newsmakers

*Continued on Page 2*

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# HINDSIGHT 2020: THE YEAR IN REVIEW

Continued from Front Page

of the Year – and we salute you, one and all. Literally, we could not have done it without you.

While the pandemic was the big news of 2020, many other events and people made headlines. Here are a few of the highlights:

**Jan. 9 edition** – Julia Buxton-Cox launches NOTL's Buy Nothing Project via Facebook, a place to find and swap goods and services at no cost.

The Town of Niagara-on-the-Lake and developer Benny Marotta face off in court over the historic designation of the Rand Estate. Dozens of residents flock to the courthouse in St. Catharines to support the case against Marotta's Solmar Development Corp.

**Jan. 16** – Marotta loses in court but says he might appeal Justice Linda Walters' ruling. A few weeks later he follows through and files an appeal.

The town approves, in principle, a 4 per cent hotel tax. But a week later, councillors backtrack.

Operators of short-term rentals in NOTL tell councillors they are not happy with plans to increase licensing fees and make changes to the bylaw governing rentals.

Philanthropist Gerry Kowalchuk donates up to \$250,000 to fund improvements to the gateway to NOTL at Queen and Mississauga streets.

**Jan. 23** – As usual (except in 2020), large crowds flock to the annual Icewine Festival and Icewine Village on Queen Street.

Developer Rainer Hummel launches a \$500,000 lawsuit against the Town of NOTL over a moratorium on development in Old Town.

Town council approves the 2020 budget and an 8.62 per cent tax increase, hiking the average homeowner's tax bill by \$92.

The Welland Canal is drained for another winter season and our story and photos take you behind the scenes to explain how they "pull the plug" on all that water.

**Jan. 30** – Parking on Queen Street has been a headache forever. But visitors, residents and business operators have some ideas, including: more parking lots, more free spots, better signage, longer parking periods, a mobile app, two-storey parking garages tucked into nooks off Queen Street, special permits for downtown workers, shuttle buses from outside Old Town.

History Unveiled writer Denise Ascenzo takes an in-depth look at the NOTL Legion's history in the modern era.

**Feb. 6** – A testy debate ensues at NOTL council over how involved politicians should be in a "service review" being conducted by consulting firm Deloitte. Clare Cameron's request for an interim report, which council could then suggest revisions to, is defeated.

In an exclusive op-ed, Regional Coun. Gary Zalepa urges a major restructuring of taxation policies at all levels of government to make Canada more competitive.

In response to The Lake Report's story on Queen Street parking problems, councillors



acknowledge the issue is a major concern but say there is no quick and easy fix.

**Feb. 13** – It's true, seniors can enjoy sex and love late in life, says columnist Dr. William Brown.

A Region of Niagara official tells NOTL councillors that picking up garbage every second week, starting in October, doesn't amount to a reduction in service.

The town launches a \$5-million campaign to help replace the St. Davids community pool. The COVID-19 pandemic keeps the pool closed all summer. Then, in September, the town was refused a major federal-provincial grant of \$4.7 million for the project, putting plans in jeopardy. The town still hopes to repair and reopen the pool in 2021.

**Feb. 20** – The Lake Report unveils the nominees for the first-ever NOTL's Choice awards, reader-nominated businesses that excel in our community. Winners will be voted on by readers.

Behind the scenes at the hugely popular Legion fish fry. Every Thursday, with military efficiency, the NOTL Legion feeds hundreds of hungry patrons.

**Feb. 27** – At the urging of young climate activists Hazel Norris and Molly Shara, the Town of NOTL declares we are facing a climate emergency.

The Lake Report launches a new series called Innovation in Wine Country. Writer Jill Troyer looks at how Niagara growers are staying on the leading edge of innovation. Part 1: Using lasers to deter birds from attacking crops.

**March 5** – Who really won the War of 1812? Well, it's complicated, History Unveiled writer Denise Ascenzo says.

Provincial and regional representatives unveil the latest on plans for a major redesign of the Glendale exit from the QEW. The multi-phase project will incorporate what is called a diverging diamond interchange.

**March 12** – The Shaw Festival has a hugely successful year and posts a surplus of more

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## Life in the Pandemic

# She's coping but asks, Where is the vaccine?

**Editor's Note:** Life since COVID-19 has changed things for all of us. We've experienced hardships, heartaches and challenges, but also new and sometimes unexpected reasons to be thankful. This new Lake Report series will share some of the stories of NOTL residents as we all reflect on our experience of life in a pandemic.



Sheila Hirsch-Kalm. FILE PHOTO

Jill Troyer  
The Lake Report

Living through the COVID-19 pandemic can cause frustration even among the most resilient of Niagara-on-the-Lake residents.

Sheila Hirsch-Kalm took it all in stride for the first nine months, from spring lockdown through the summer and into the colour-coded restrictions that followed, making the most of every day.

But, as the second wave grinds on into January, Hirsch-Kalm is frustrated with the lack of information about the process and timing for rolling out the vaccine in Niagara.

At first her take on the pandemic was that "this is a replay with a different twist."

Hirsch-Kalm lives in St. Davids today, but she was a young nurse in Scotland in the 1950s, caring for patients during polio and tuberculosis epidemics.

Asked about how she's been coping with the current pandemic, she said, "I've been through this before."

"We had whole wards of people in iron lungs," she recalls, adding, "We did not have fancy equipment to protect ourselves."

Right up until Christmas-time, Hirsch-Kalm had a pragmatic response to the situation. Some people, she said, become terrified, others say, "Let's get on with it." And get on with it, is just what she's done.

After the first lockdown in the spring, Hirsch-Kalm found joy in her extensive gardens at her home on York Road, and made sure to share the space – safely – with others.

She has been gardening in NOTL for 20 years and says this summer her garden was her saviour.

Known to many in NOTL as a past-president of the NOTL Horticultural Society, and the driving force behind the more than 100,000 daffodil bulbs planted in nine NOTL gardens to support those touched by cancer, Hirsch-Kalm kept up with various other volunteer activities and garden society memberships online.

Hirsch-Kalm admits she

misses travelling with her husband since the pandemic started, since "it was a big part of our lives, and suddenly it all had to be cancelled," though she's quick to add the pandemic "slowed us up and we've had more time to sit together in the garden."

But as the seasons have slipped from spring to summer to fall and into winter, Hirsch-Kalm is becoming impatient for news of the vaccine and the process to administer it.

"The vaccine was my hope."

Now 84, Hirsch-Kalm has more reasons than most to be nervous about the pandemic.

"I have no hip on one side and no immunity. I could've become terrified of life, but that's not me. I've got cancer as well, but I've always got a reason to get up and get on with it."

That will to carry on is not diminished, but Hirsch-Kalm says, "There's such uncertainty now, we're hunkered down again, and we still don't know how or when the vaccine will be available."



Hirsch-Kalm has kept busy keeping her garden looking luscious. SUPPLIED

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# Councillor **not keen** on fire station merger

Richard Harley  
The Lake Report

Niagara-on-the-Lake town Coun. Erwin Wiens doesn't think it's wise to explore the option of expanding and renovating the St. Davids fire station to merge it with Queenston's firehall.

The idea was put forward by Coun. Sandra O'Connor at a Dec. 14 committee of the whole meeting as a possible alternative to building a new fire station.

During a Dec. 21 council meeting, Wiens said he didn't support spending the money on a feasibility report because the town's fire master plan suggests the best option would be for a new building.

"There's already been eight previous reports in regards to this culminating in the 2020 fire master plan, and that was conducted by emergency management training at a cost of \$70,000," Wiens said.

He said Fire Chief Nick Ruller estimates the cost of another staff report would be another \$15,000 to \$20,000 and would put the fire master plan on hold.

More importantly,



Coun. Erwin Wiens doesn't think moving Queenston firefighters into St. Davids building is wise. FILE PHOTO

Wiens said, is that moving Queenston to St. Davids would take the village of Queenston out of the six-minute response time that the town currently has.

"I would never, ever agree to having to move (Queenston) to (St. Davids) because the distance is too far. And we all know that 30 seconds saves lives."

He said he also feared "the morale, retention and engagement at Station 4 firefighters could be lost" if the town decides to merge the two stations inside the current St. Davids station.

He said Queenston firefighters are feeling "kicked to the curb."

"In the volunteer fire

model that we have, it is crucial for their morale that we keep them engaged," he said.

"They feel dejected and upset that they might be losing their station. And, as everybody knows, each station has their own association and they're proud and they built this up."

Instead, he suggested following the fire master plan which suggests a new building.

O'Connor defended her motion.

"I think it is our fiduciary responsibility to look at all aspects of making that recommendation, including the dollars and cents," she said.

"What I was saying is we don't have the full picture,

and until I have the full picture, I don't feel that we're doing due diligence to our residents with their tax dollars in finalizing that decision."

Coun. Allan Bisback supported O'Connor.

He said he thinks it's important to look at the costs of upgrading the St. Davids station, so residents know council did its homework.

"If the optimum solution is to put a new facility in and we're going to spend \$3 to \$4 million, I think it's worth spending \$15,000 or \$20,000 to make sure the residents know that we did look at the current building," he said.

If all the work has been done before, "it should not take that long just to brush that up and bring it forward to call current day costings."

"Everyone wants a shiny new building. I understand that. And I understand the morale and the service issue. And that is something that needs to be considered, clearly," Bisback said.

Council decided to put exploring pricing on hold until the time that any pricing of a new building comes forward.

# Five NOTL doctors **moving** to The Village

Continued from Front Page

and the Old Town hospital site will also move to the new facility, Keith said. It is unclear what will happen to the labs now operating at the former hospital.

Simpson's Pharmacy will remain at its current location.

However, no moves will happen until the new facility is built, Keith added.

Efforts to find a long-term home for the medical group have been ongoing for more than seven years, since the news of the eventual closure of the NOTL hospital, she said.

The proposed Virgil Medical Centre near Crossroads Public School is no longer on the table for the health team, she added.

Lloyd Redekopp, the NOTL developer who has been planning the Virgil centre for several years, said



Dr. Tim Bastedo is one of the doctors moving to the new location in The Village. RICHARD HARLEY

the health team's announcement doesn't change his proposal.

The health team has formalized an agreement with John and Adam Hawley, developers of The Village, to construct a purpose-built facility directly behind the CIBC, Keith told The Lake Report.

"This single-storey building will provide ground-level access to health care in an accessible location in

an established commercial destination," Keith said in a statement.

"It will house family physicians, nurse practitioners, a diabetes support team, registered dietitians, a mental health team, chiropody/foot care, nurse educators and occupational therapy," she said.

The building will also be the home of all of the family health team group programming as well as

the administration staff.

Bastedo said though the latest concept differs from the original plan to move to Virgil, "it represents part of a new way forward for primary care in Niagara-on-the-Lake."

"We are looking forward to being able to provide our patients centralized care in a facility designed to fit their needs and the needs of the health care team," he said.

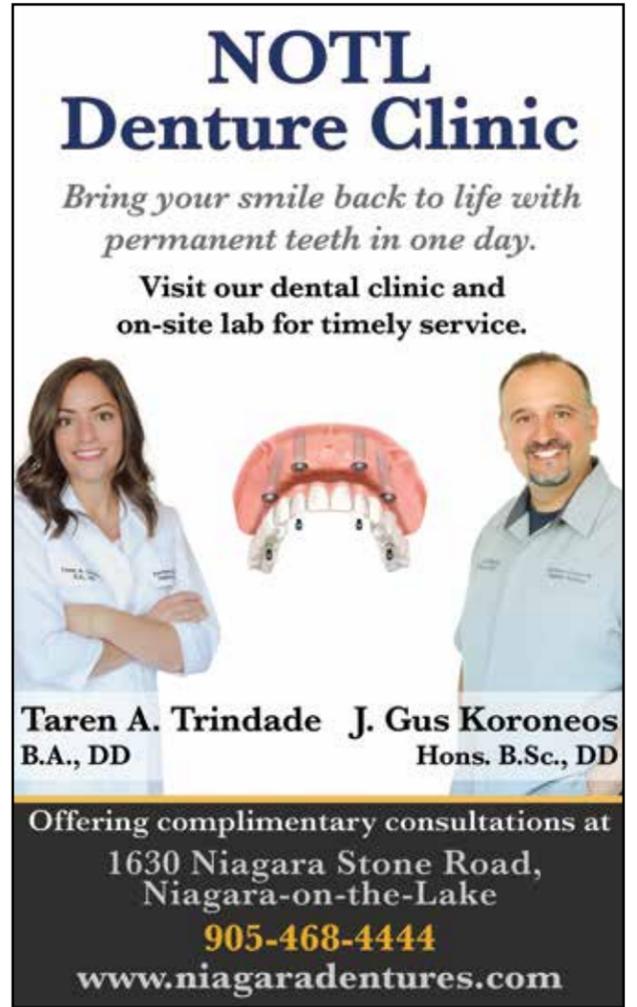
"Our team, our town and the practice of medicine have evolved over the last several years," Bastedo said. "That time has provided perspective on how to best deliver quality care and we are excited about how the new facility will help us achieve that."

John and Adam Hawley said they are "thrilled to welcome the doctors and the family health team to The Village."

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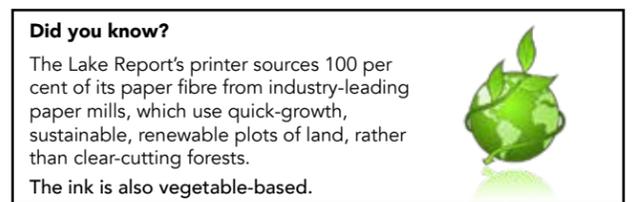
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**Contributed by Patty Garriock**  
 "It is our choices that show what we truly are, far more than our abilities."  
 - J.K. Rowling.



**Contributed by Norm Arsenaault:**  
 Did you know? If your toilet is from 1992 or earlier, you probably have an inefficient model that uses between 3.5 to 7 gallons per flush. Newer, high-efficiency toilets use less than 1.3 gallons per flush. Older shower heads can use 3 gallons per minute or more. New, efficient models use 2 gallons per minute or less. A family of four using low-flow shower heads instead of full-flow models can save about 20,000 gallons of water per year. (World Wildlife Association)

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## Editorial: Let's hope 2021 is kinder

Kevin MacLean  
 Managing Editor

Though there's been a lot of bad news in the first week of the year — COVID reaching NOTL's long-term care homes, a police shooting and a province-wide lockdown — there's also been some good news.

For the first issue of the year, and while we're all cooped up at home again, we wanted to focus on some things that can bring us some joy.

So, without further ado ...  
 Kudos to Niagara's doctors

on finding their new "forever home" in The Village, and to John and Adam Hawley for helping to make that happen. It seems to be a much better location than beside Crossroads Public School.

Kudos to NOTL councillors, for standing firm on some important changes to the town's short-term rental bylaw. We hope these efforts help to protect what's left of our neighbourhoods from being hollowed out by what boils down to a commercial business in a residentially zoned area.

Kudos to the VanNoort

family, for spearheading a fundraising campaign that collected \$13,000 to help fund epilepsy research. And well wishes to Eric VanNoort. We hope you're healing up quickly from your brain surgery. That's sure to be one bad ass scar.

Kudos to the management and staff at Wayne Gretzky Estates, for putting Niagara-on-the-Lake front and centre in CBC's national New Year's Eve broadcast. It was an honour to see our little town on the big stage. Thanks also to The Great One himself for taking the

time to respond to questions from The Lake Report. It's not every day you get to pose a question to a major Canadian icon.

Finally, but perhaps most importantly, kudos to all of the front-line and essential workers helping our community. The Lake Report has aptly deemed you Newsmakers of the Year.

Here's hoping we are all prepared for a better 2021. A vaccine is on the way, and hopefully, with some luck, we can all be together again soon..

editor@niagaranow.com



## Our volunteer firefighters are true professionals

Dear editor:

My husband Ken Hernder has retired after 38 years as a Queenston volunteer firefighter. With our population growing and recruitment becoming more difficult, the town is considering amalgamating Queenston and St. Davids fire operations. I'd like to offer some insight into our firefighters' duties:

You may think that the little village of Queenston's firefighters wouldn't see much action, but consider that NOTL Station #4 territory encompasses the Queenston-Lewiston international bridge (vehicular accidents, bomb threats, chemical spills and, in one case, a transport carrying nuclear detonators) and from the Floral Clock beyond to Hydro One, where a power generator once caught fire.

Hazmat calls, Niagara District Airport plane crashes (some even trained extinguishing jet fuel at Niagara Falls, N.Y.'s, military base) responding to calls along Hwy. 405, the QEW over the Skyway up to Niagara Street in St. Catharines — arriving first on scene which means in command of.

Raised funds to purchase and train on Hurst power tools, making them for many years the only department in town equipped with the jaws



NOTL firefighters. FILE PHOTO

of life, responding to all extrication calls. Residential & commercial fires/rescues, including the rural farms and greenhouses; backup for the entire town including Niagara College, the Outlet Mall and White Oaks.

Medical assist calls, arriving before paramedics, equipped with defibrillators; at times applying first aid alongside paramedics in ambulances all the way to the hospital. Once Ken was left to guard a body at the side of the road until the coroner and retrieval vehicle arrived.

Water rescues on the Niagara River, including boating accidents, even refugees crossing from the States, often having to

rappel over the riverbank into the gorge, services now outsourced by the town. Understand that our volunteers in NOTL are trained to the level of paid professionals and the National Fire Protection Association.

Queenston had NOTL's first female firefighter with our still active Deralyn George-Mackenzie, opening the doors to others who have since followed.

Hours of training with full-time jobs besides, new recruits require eight month/250 hours on nights and weekends, having to acquire Class DZ licences. At one particularly grisly accident on the Queenston-Lewiston bridge,

an OPP officer asked Ken when "his shift" was over since he had been on scene for such a long time. The officer couldn't believe these firefighters were volunteers and said it was one of the most professionally managed rescue scenes he'd ever witnessed.

At the 1992 Christmas evening blaze that ravaged the Oban Inn, Ken was one of the last to leave at 4 a.m. At one point he had fallen into a sinkhole. After walking back alone to his pickup truck parked on the main street, he found his sleeves had frozen solid and had to whack them against a telephone pole just so he could get out his keys.

On the lighter side, at Private Eyes when a toilet seat was set afire, patrons assumed they were just "part of the show." A call for a "pool on fire"?! And not to forget the continuous fundraising for local sports, schools and charities.

Giving of their time, expertise and compassionate service, these first responders are an integral part of each of our NOTL communities, keeping safe our residents, property and visitors alike 24/7 when response time matters a great deal.

We honour our firefighters!

Cindy Hernder  
 Virgil



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# OPINION



## Mayor and Simpson should **lead** vaccine plan

Dear editor:  
This is an open letter to Lord Mayor Betty Disero and Sean Simpson of Simpson's Pharmacy.  
Clearly the COVID-19 vaccine rollout in Canada, and Ontario specifically, is akin to something one would expect in a Third World country. The actors behind the distribution organization, including Ret. Gen. Rick Hillier, are totally incompetent as is evident from their results to date.  
Hillier, for example should, as the renowned

management guru Prof. Peter Drucker used to preach, stick to his knitting. Stated another way, "Stick to what you know," not as he has been doing, injecting himself into the role of research scientist or infectious disease expert by proposing to the medical community that the vaccine be given once rather than twice.  
Accordingly, Mayor Disero and Mr. Simpson, take the bull by the horns and take the play from these bad actors.  
Immediately establish a local action team – go-get-

ters who get things done; we have them in spades in NOTL. Use the community centre, similar to the flu vaccine setup, but larger. This could be established within one week. Staffing to administer the injections would be the least of the problem, we have an abundance of qualified retiree nurses from doctor's offices etc. in our immediate region. Operate the centre seven days a week.  
On completion of the centre's setup, go on Canada's national TV channels and highlight, "We

are ready. Where are the vaccines?"  
If we wait on politicians like Premier Doug Ford, we will be sitting here mid-year to next fall. We had nine months knowing we were eventually going to get a vaccine.  
Planners should have been proactive setting up distribution plans and specific centres, not waiting until we had the vaccine and saying, "How do we get it out in the community?"  
Reactive clowns.  
**Samuel Young**  
*NOTL*

## Always get quotes **in writing**

Dear editor:  
During COVID times we all had the opportunity to do some home improvements, whether it be plumbing, yard work, etc. Those who are handy do it themselves. Those who are not call the "experts."  
My personal objective was simple: look for a local advertiser and choose and

support local business. This I did.  
All appeared fine but being under the COVID spell, I accepted a verbal quote for work to be done in my home. I am penning this note to remind everyone to get a work contract in writing.  
I knew better than to accept a verbal agreement but blindly relied and trusted

my chosen local expert. In hindsight, a reputable company would have automatically issued a written agreement for both parties to review and sign.  
What was agreed upon verbally was never completed and full payment was still expected. What transpired due to not having a written contract led to a lien

on my property and lawyer litigation.  
Just a reminder to all of us that "times are different today" and unfortunately not every business practises honesty and integrity. Save yourself a headache and get everything in writing.  
Be smart and be safe.  
**Raquel Bignucolo**  
*NOTL*

## Travelling in pandemic not a mistake. It was **selfish**

Dear editor:  
As we appreciate Ontario Finance Minister Rod Phillips' action in doing the right thing and resigning his cabinet post over his Caribbean vacation during the pandemic, we have to pause at his explanation. For instance, he called it a dumb, dumb mistake. I have a hard time with the word mistake.  
Unless he mistakenly made airline and hotel reservations in St. Barts. Then he went out and mistakenly drove to the airport.  
Another mistake was getting on an aircraft and travelling at 30,000 feet for several hours to a southern island. One would think that

on disembarking he would have noticed he wasn't freezing a certain part of his anatomy off and realize he'd obviously made a big boo-boo by travelling out of Canada during a pandemic.  
Not to kick a man when he's down, but what his actions demonstrate wasn't a mistake at all but extremely poor judgment for an Ontario government leader. I would guess elitism also played a role in his decision. Not that it isn't a common mistake to think one is exceptional and then grant oneself an exception to the rules of a situation.  
Mr. Phillips should know that we are all tired. Most

of us would like a warm, southern vacation. But instead we mask up, sanitize, social distance and follow the rules.  
Sadly, some selfish Canadians have also skirted the rules, shipped their cars over the border or all the way to Florida, and headed into one of the hottest pandemic zones in the U.S.  
Knowing, of course, that if they contracted COVID-19 by their actions, their insurance company would quickly jet them out of Florida and back to Canada where our exhausted health care workers would have to deal with these people bearing a self-inflicted illness.

(I once wrote an article on an insurance company that exclusively served Canadian snowbirds and was told its primary goal was to get sick Canadians out of the U.S. and back to Canada where the Canadian health care system would pay for their treatment and not the insurance company. Of course, that didn't make it into the article.)  
While Mr. Phillips paid a price in his removal from cabinet, we can only hope that other leaders will lead by example and follow the rules without exception. No matter how exceptional they feel.  
**J. Richard Wright**  
*NOTL*

## Please **clear** your sidewalk

Dear editor:  
On behalf of all us elderly walkers, kudos to the responsible residents who promptly clear the snow from the sidewalks in front of their homes.  
To all those able-bodied

residents who do not, thereby laying the foundation for icy sidewalks that can cause injurious slips and falls, may the bird of paradise fly up your nose.  
**Larry Mantle**  
*NOTL*

## Christmas lights were **magical**

Dear editor:  
Thank you for publishing the addresses of some of the wonderful Christmas light displays about town.  
My husband planned a route, which took us about an hour. We did this before going to see Glow Safari

Niagara.  
Having to hunker down this past year has taught us to find enjoyment in the simple things.  
It was a magical few hours.  
**Leslie Moulson**  
*Virgil*

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## Thanks to NOTLers for supporting NOTL Palliative Care in 2020

Dear editor:  
We at Niagara-on-the-Lake Community Palliative Care Service would like to express our gratitude once again to the wonderful people of Niagara-on-the-Lake and surrounding areas.  
This year's Santa for Palliative Care Campaign was a more-than-welcome surprise.  
We saw many families take advantage of the online personal Santa visits and total donations exceeded

\$4,000.  
With great thanks to the Niagara College broadcast media faculty and students and our own Tim Taylor (aka Santa), we will certainly be able to service many more local families free of charge.  
On behalf of Niagara-on-the-Lake Community Palliative Care Service, thank you all.  
**Bonnie Bagnulo**  
*Executive director*  
*NOTL Palliative Care*

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## HINDSIGHT 2020: THE YEAR IN REVIEW

Continued from Page 2

than \$500,000 thanks to increased attendance and record high revenue from donor gifts.

Good news: Your municipal taxes will rise but the town says NOTL water rates will not increase for 2020.

The Spirit of Niagara Awards celebrate the people who help shape our community, with a ceremony at Ravine Vineyard Estate Winery in St. Davids.

**March 19** – An era of uncertainty and the reality of COVID-19 hits home: The border closes and that means big problems for Niagara farmers, town offices close and NOTL businesses adapt to curbside pickup, takeout only or just close up – for now.

The Lake Report devotes almost its entire edition – the first of many such Special Editions over the next several months – to news and information to help readers understand what is happening in NOTL.

The town enacts an emergency bylaw that allows the mayor and chief administrator to make key decisions without council's prior approval. That will lead to some controversy in the months to come.

Foreshadowing things to come, the Shaw Festival cancels the first month of its 2020 season, which was due to launch April 2.

**March 26** – Despite numerous other restrictions, the federal government allows seasonal workers with valid visas to come to Canada to help the agricultural industry.

With a lot of misinformation and confusion about COVID, columnist Dr. William Brown explains how the virus attacks humans.

Queen Street, usually bustling with activity, is marked by dozens of stores with signs announcing closures due to COVID-19. The town waives parking fees and other fees for those who don't pay levies on time.

**April 2** – NOTL resident Margot Hickson returns from a memorable vacation to New Zealand and southeast Asia – and tests positive for the virus. Her husband Ian Reece is showing some symptoms but ultimately tested negative.

The province gives the town special powers to issue fines for anyone not following emergency orders regarding business closings, sizes of gatherings or unfair pricing of essential goods.

In one of the first of many statements and videos, Lord Mayor Betty Disero begs people to stay home and to embrace physical distancing. #StayHomeNOTL becomes an ongoing message.

**April 9** – Migrant farm workers arrive at farms in NOTL and after a mandatory 14-day quarantine they will be able to start helping out.

A few NOTL business operators, fearful about COVID spreading in the community, have barred migrant workers from their stores. That amounts to racial profiling, a Brock professor says.

The Virgil Stampede is yet another casualty of COVID. And the Shaw Festival, having cancelled all shows up until June 30, warns it is nearing the financial breaking point.

**April 16** – "Smile stones," bearing messages of hope and positivity in the middle of the pandemic, mysteriously appear throughout a NOTL neighbourhood.

NOTL's major summertime events – the strawberry, cherry and peach festivals – are all cancelled due to COVID-19. And for the first time in 42 years, the NOTL Soccer Club delays the start of its season. Eventually, the season is cancelled.

Continued on Page 8

## Michael Howe was a lover of life and fierce advocate for NOTL

Richard Harley  
The Lake Report

Michael Howe's dedication to Niagara-on-the-Lake never wavered.

The 74-year-old, who died Dec. 29 after a battle with leukemia, was a fierce advocate for preserving the history and charm of the town where he grew up and met the love of his life.

Marsha Howe, his wife of 46 years, recalls when they met as teens on a double date at Queenston Heights.

"Just rolling around in the grass," she says fondly.

Michael was 16 and Marsha only 14 at the time.

Shortly after that fateful afternoon, both Michael and Marsha went to Toronto to pursue their education, with Michael heading to Queen's University at a young age, having skipped some grades in school.

"He went off to university quite young and quite ill-prepared," Marsha said.

But things worked out well and Michael graduated with a master's in business administration – a step toward his lifelong career as a chartered accountant, which took him all over the globe.

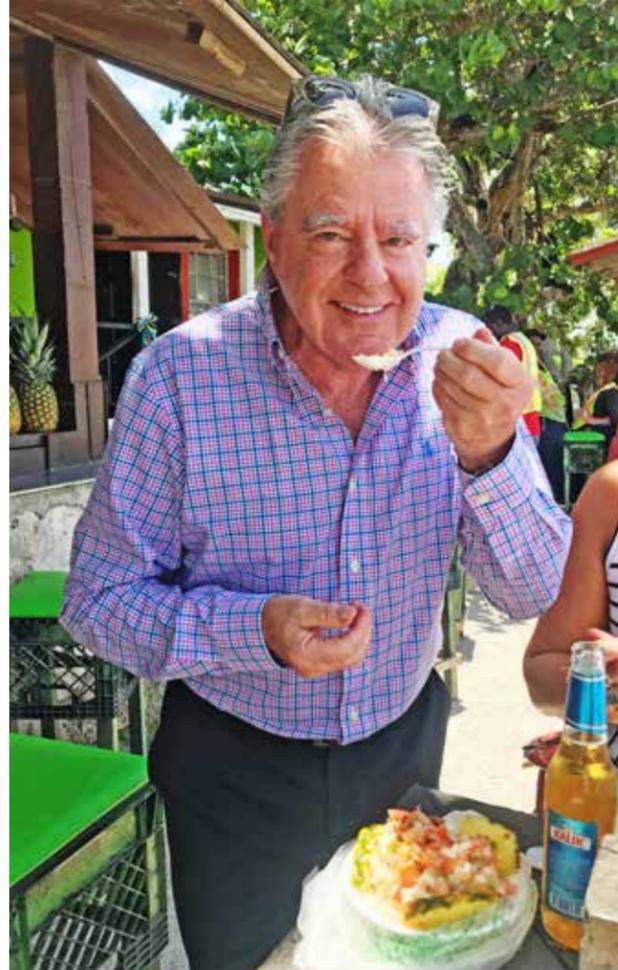
"He was an A-type personality. He really dug his heels in."

He ended up being the first MBA hired by Peat Marwick International, which later merged with Klynveld Main Goerdeler to form KPMG, one of the world's largest accounting firms.

He officially retired when he was 64, but never really stopped working. Until November 2020, he had been doing risk management in Bermuda and the Cayman Islands.

Michael was moral and well-respected in his career, Marsha said, adding she's been stunned by the number of people he's worked with and mentored.

On top of a greatly successful career, Howe fought hard to protect the heritage of Niagara-on-the-Lake – a passion that was ingrained in him his whole life.



Michael Howe. SUPPLIED

His father Norman was a founding member of the Niagara Foundation, which actively fights to preserve the town's history. His mother Margherita was a founding member of the Niagara-on-the-Lake Conservancy.

Michael took over as president of the Niagara Foundation from 2012 to 2020.

Brad Nixon, vice-president of the foundation, said Howe was "instrumental in maintaining and keeping the foundation as the force that it is today."

"He provided leadership. He provided a vision of where the community should be going and some of the issues that we should be advocating on," said Nixon.

"It meant a lot to them. It was consistent with not just his own views but what he inherited from his mother and his father."

In a light anecdote about the type of person Michael was, Nixon recalled a time at a party when Michael's sister Louisa was tasked with preparing some food.

"And she produced sar-

dine sandwiches," he said.

"I don't know where the idea came from, but we put them on the table and by the end of the day, as you can imagine, there was all sorts of excellent food, but the sardine sandwiches weren't touched."

"So at the end of the night, Michael started auctioning them off with all proceeds going to Willowbank. And he raised several hundred dollars for Willowbank by auctioning off the sardine sandwiches."

Nixon said he'll remember Michael as a "very good friend."

"And not just a personal friend but as a real friend of the entire community. A friend who was supportive and hoped for the best interests of the community and worked for the best interests of the community."

In his personal life, Michael loved to travel the world, enjoyed fine foods and wine, nice cars and hosting parties. Plus he always made sure he was well-dressed, Marsha said. He also had a keen wit and "scathing wit."

"He could make me laugh, laugh, laugh, laugh, laugh my ass off – before it became popular," Marsha said. "It would often start first thing in the morning, before your eyes were even open he'd throw out something funny at you."

"And his addresses at the annual parties were kind of classic Michael."

"He loved good food and good wine. He loved good living," Marsha said, adding he was "meticulous about how he presented himself."

He was also "terribly house-proud," she says.

"The house is always immaculate. I have never had to vacuum or dust. That was something that he always did – the garden was immaculate."

Michael also loved animals, Marsha said, especially his dog Buster, a Brittany.

He travelled so often, he became a million-mile flyer with Air Canada.

His favourite places to go were London and Capri, an island in Italy's Bay of Naples.

It was on his last trip to Capri when he started to notice he was getting out of breath from walking the hilly area. That was the first sign of his leukemia, Marsha said.

"I thought it was absolutely crazy because my sister's lived in Italy for 15 years. And she has a place on Capri, so we've been to Capri like eight or nine times. We're very familiar with it."

When they returned home last Christmas, he was diagnosed with pre-leukemia, Marsha said, and from there underwent extensive treatments, including stem cell transplants and chemotherapy.

He had even been approved for an experimental treatment at Princess Margaret Hospital in Toronto, but fell ill and was unable to participate.

He fought hard and loved life, Marsha said.

"We had a great time together," she says.

The couple renewed their vows two years ago in Niagara-on-the-Lake.



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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!

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The Kane family. SUPPLIED

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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](http://www.budapestbakeshop.com) and on Instagram and Facebook @budapestbakeshop.

## Clare's Harley-Davidson

Submitted  
The Lake Report

When you walk into Clare's Harley-Davidson of Niagara you'll get quite the WOW factor. It's so much more than just a motorcycle shop. Clare's has genuine H-D parts and accessories for your motorcycle including hand grips, saddle bags, decorative fuel cap medallions to state-of-the-art GPS units. There is always an extensive inventory of Harley-Davidson mirrors, exhausts, bike covers, windshields, cleaning products and performance parts.

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Clare's Harley-Davidson of Niagara. SUPPLIED

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## Neob Niagara

Submitted  
The Lake Report

In 2008, Robert and Melissa planted their first lavender plant at 758 Niagara Stone Rd. and three years later they started extracting Niagara Lavender.

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The lavender field at Neob. SUPPLIED

support over the years and not to forget they receive an automatic 10 per cent discount in-store and online.

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them or send a note via their website, [neobniagara.com](http://neobniagara.com). It is a simple process and they will be happy to set you up. [neobniagara.com](http://neobniagara.com)

## Airway CPAP

Submitted  
The Lake Report

Deo and Linda Lillie welcome you to Airway CPAP Inc.

After 10 years of providing CPAP machines and supplies to clients in Brampton, Deo, a respiratory therapist, and Linda decided to open a branch of their business in their hometown of Niagara-on-the-Lake (a much easier commute!)

CPAP therapy is the gold standard of treatment for those suffering with sleep apnea. Sleep apnea is a potentially serious condition where a person will have repeated episodes of stopping breathing during the night. Symptoms of sleep apnea



Linda Lillie of Airway CPAP. SUPPLIED

include loud snoring, gasping for breath or choking, fatigue, daytime sleepiness, persistent high blood pressure, waking with a dry mouth, sore throat or headache, lack of focus during the day. If you have one or more symptoms, please ask your family doctor to book a sleep study for you.

For more information, or if you need a new CPAP mask or other supplies, please call Linda to make an appointment at 289-868-9212. Airway CPAP is an essential service and remains open, by appointment, during lockdown. We are located at 111A Garrison Village Dr., Suite 202 in NOTL.

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Image Detail: Lauren Stewart Harris, Study for "In the Ward 1, City Paintings", 1918. Collection of Samuel E. Weir ©RiverBrink Art Museum

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Continued from Front Page 6

In response to our story about allegations of racial profiling of migrant workers, NOTL resident Yvonne Bredow writes about her experiences as a Black woman in town.

**April 23** – Erin Jarvis is one of three nurse practitioners helping keep NOTLers safe during the pandemic. We profile her in the first part of a series. Next are Jane Carson and Elise Suhadolc.

Lord Mayor Betty Disero wants to know how many people in NOTL have COVID. But the Region of Niagara won't say, citing privacy concerns. So it only publishes region-wide statistics. The region eventually relents, but it still lists cases per 10,000 population, rather than issuing easy-to-understand total patient numbers.

Town worker Tara Druzina's planning department job shifts to community outreach due to the pandemic and she initiated a pen pal program for residents of long-term care homes. It's been a great success.

**April 30** – Struggling to find ways to keep tourists away, the town could ban parking on Queen Street in Old Town, interim CAO Sheldon Randall says.

After another weekend of unwanted visitors, Lord Mayor Betty Disero makes a video plea to tourists to stay away from NOTL.

Given the town's concerns about the influx of visitors, The Lake Report hit the streets to find out just who is coming to town. Most were from the Greater Toronto Area.

**May 7** – Parking was indeed banned in Old Town but more than 10,000 cars entered the area the previous weekend, the town says. And 19 were towed, 113 ticketed and eight emergency order fines issued.

Parking lots owned by the Niagara Parks Commission are packed most weekends and the agency says it has no plans to close the lots to deter visitors.

Mother's Day looms and garden centres get the green light to reopen.

House sales in Niagara dropped 62 per cent in April compared to a year earlier, but realtors are confident of a rebound.

**May 14** – Some grape growers' contracts with wineries have not been renewed. It's not all COVID-related, but the trend is sparking concerns.

Coun. Norm Arsenault launches a campaign to have people fly the NOTL flag. He needs at least 200 orders to make it happen. NOTLers order more than 400 flags and the blue ensign now is proudly flown all over town.

Confounded with how to deal with a continued influx of tourists, the town's emergency operations control group decides to reopen public washrooms and lift the short-lived parking ban.

**May 21** – Despite the pandemic, various cost savings mean the town has a financial surplus at the moment. But that could change quickly, the town treasurer warns.

Long lines of physically distanced visitors are seen outside public washrooms as thousands of tourists visited NOTL on the Victoria Day long weekend.

The NOTL Farmers' Market is set to reopen for the summer season, but with restrictions.

**May 28** – Finally, the Region of Niagara relents and reveals how many COVID cases each municipality has had. In NOTL, so far: 21. In early May, some 10,000 cars entered Old Town on the weekend. The weekend after Victoria Day saw 22,513 vehicles drive into downtown, the town says.

The town considers allowing restaurants to use part of the sidewalk for patios. Once approved, the idea is a big hit with everyone.

**June 4** – At 7:30 nightly since March 19 neighbours in The Village development gather outside to make noise, sing and play music in tribute to front-line and health care workers.

NOTL resident Laurie Stratton says a town bylaw officer got "aggressive" after he complained about the officer "aggressively speeding."

Thanks to the generosity of landlord Lloyd Redekopp, Virgil's Yellow Door Theatre Project avoids closing and is now hosting classes online via Zoom.

The Lake Report

SPECIAL EDITION: NOTL copes with COVID-19

**Allied against racism**

Report accuses farmers of exploiting migrant workers

NOTL real estate sales jump, strong recovery predicted

Peninsula Flooring Ltd.

**June 11** – Yvonne Bredow, who documented her racism experiences in The Lake Report, leads an anti-racism rally through Old Town.

Coun. Stuart McCormack draws criticism for being the only council member to not sign a letter condemning racism.

After enduring three years of animal rights protests, the Sente-neals ask the province to include protection for carriage operators in new legislation.

**June 18** – NOTL downtown businesses urge the town to provide financial relief measures, including instituting a heritage tax rebate program and free parking or make Queen Street a pedestrian mall.

In the wake of an advocacy group's report saying migrant farm workers are being exploited by farmers, Erwin Wiens urges workers to speak up if bosses are not playing by the rules.

Police use NOTL as a training ground for new canine recruits.

**June 25** – The town updates its freeze on urban development in Old Town, which sparked at least one lawsuit, from developer Rainer Hummel.

Some retailers want Queen Street closed to traffic, but the town's chief administrator says the move could cause other problems, like traffic moving onto residential side streets.

The second wave of COVID-19 could be worse than the first, columnist Dr. William Brown rightly predicts.

**July 3** – Weeks after being loudly criticized by some for not supporting a town statement decrying racism, Coun. Stuart McCormack resigns. He said he disagreed with the "direction council is taking." Sandra O'Connor is later appointed to fill his seat.

The town closes Queen Street to traffic on July 1 as part of an experiment to see what works best for businesses and visitors alike. But many are upset with town signs saying "Road Closed" instead of telling visitors the street was "open for walking."

Even a pandemic doesn't deter NOTLers from celebrating Canada Day in socially distanced style. <https://www.niagararow.com/news.phtml/4094-covid-doesnt-deter-canada-day-celebrations>

The Pillar and Post marks a half-century in operation.

**July 9** – The town's chief administrator and his family help rescue a couple tossed into the Niagara River.

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SAFE, ON-SITE TOURS

# THE YEAR IN REVIEW

An urban NOTL barnyard hosts private tours to showcase the farm's nearly 500 animals.

A service review by consultants from Deloitte suggests \$1 million in savings and new revenue for the town. But it means higher parking and user fees.

A group calling itself Voters for Sustainable Tourism advocates for promoting tourism in a way that doesn't degrade the quality of life for residents. "Overtourism" is not healthy, the group says.

**July 16** – The Queen Street pedestrian mall experiment doesn't last long. Council changes gears and opens the street to traffic but widens walkways and creates more space for social distancing.

Almost daily during the pandemic, Trudy Enns plays the recorder outside her mom Betty's window as she visits her at Pleasant Manor.

Unable to stage concerts before a live audience, Music Niagara launches a wholly online season with its At Home series.

**July 23** – "Life was pretty darn good," and then Eric Van-Noort's epileptic seizures started. His mother Sharon tells the story.

E. coli levels at NOTL's Queen's Royal Beach, home of the iconic gazebo, have exceeded allowable limits twice so far this summer. But the results are not available to the public so people have no way of knowing if the water is dangerous.

COVID has taken a major toll on NOTL charities. Tim Taylor takes an in-depth look at how they are battling to survive.

**July 30** – The COVID pandemic could cost NOTL businesses \$78 million over the next year, according to a survey of 181 businesses conducted by Niagara Economic Development.

NOTL's emergency control group, empowered to make quick decisions without council approval, prompts some tense debate at council. But a move to rescind its controversial power is defeated.

After questions from The Lake Report, the town starts posting web advisories on water-quality conditions at Queen's Royal Beach.

**Aug. 6** – Entrepreneur and community builder Liz Hawley, who together with her husband John built The Village development in NOTL, is killed in a head-on collision on Niagara Stone Road.

Almost 90 per cent of NOTL residents support mandatory face masks, according to a survey of readers of The Lake Report.

Carriage operators in NOTL express frustration with lack of police action against animal rights protesters.

**Aug. 13** – Dangerous blue-green algae is suspected in the sudden death of a dog that was swimming in Lake Ontario.

After concerns from residents, Coun. Clare Cameron suggests "putting the brakes" on Virgil's new skatepark, now under construction.

Proposed changes to NOTL's noise bylaw are scrapped after a major petition, national news coverage and a satirical piece ridiculed the idea.

**Aug. 20** – Vandals target the old Virgil public school, breaking windows and causing about \$1,000 in damage. Six boys ages 14 to 16 are cautioned by police but not charged.

Architecture expert Brian Marshall oversees restoration of the historic Breakenridge house at 240 Centre St. in NOTL for owner Lloyd Kelly, a lawyer from Texas.

Threats and criminal behaviour involving carriage protests in NOTL will not be tolerated, a senior police officer warns.

**Aug. 27** – Pro- and anti-carriage groups descend on downtown NOTL and go head-to-head to express their views.

Aubrey Blake Clements, accused in the fatal crash that killed Liz Hawley, was impaired by drugs, police allege. Clements never gets his day in court as he dies unexpectedly at age 32 in late November.

The federal government contributes \$500,000 to boost NOTL tourism and another \$400,000 to help the Shaw Festival, which has had to cancel its entire season.

**Sept. 3** – A Special Edition, featuring the winners of the inaugural NOTL's Choice Awards, voted on by more than 3,000 readers.

As COVID restrictions continue to ease, the town says the community centre will reopen.

A new boardwalk at Fort Mississauga will connect walkers to the lakefront and the historic remnants.

**Sept. 10** – A new basketball court in the Glendale area is a slam dunk winner with the community.

Residents and neighbours are angry after the Town of NOTL allowed more than two dozen healthy trees to be chopped down along the Upper Canada Heritage Trail.

Retired teachers offer some back-to-school lessons for education in the COVID era.

**Sept. 17** – The Virgil skatepark opens and is an instant hit with young users who flock to it.

Joseph Pohorly, a teacher, engineer, farmer and founder of Joseph's Estates Wines, among many other accomplishments, dies at age 88.

A series of Music Niagara virtual concerts is planned to celebrate Beethoven's 250th birthday.

**Sept. 24** – A NOTL Hydro worker who stole more than \$250,000 from the utility is fired and police are called in to investigate.

The annual Terry Fox Run, a virtual version this year, raises \$30,000 in NOTL.

The Legion fish fry resumes with drive-through delivery and it sells out on opening night.

**Oct. 1** – Bell Canada contractors begin excavation work to bring the Fibe network to town.

Niagara Region endorses the Glendale District Plan, which will bring up to 15,000 people to the neighbourhood when completed.

NOTL council meetings are lonnnnnng, twice as long as some other Niagara municipalities. Councillors debate ways to reduce meetings but opt not to change the schedule for 2021.

**Oct. 8** – A great summer means great wines and Niagara grape growers expect tremendous vintages from the 2020 crop.

Discarded masks and gloves are a unique symptom of COVID, environmental columnist Kyra Simone says.

How Shaw Festival CEO Tim Jennings steered the company through the COVID minefield.

**Oct. 15** – Chautauqua residents want the town to help reduce traffic from areas narrow streets.

Writer Jill Troyer takes readers behind the scenes of the annual grape harvest.

The traditional Christmas parade in NOTL is cancelled. But organizers come up with a novel concept – a drive-by parade.

**Oct. 22** – Alternate-week garbage pickup starts and environmental columnist Kyra Simone has tips for how to save more and throw out less.

Mystery pumpkin deliveries to some NOTL residents by a Good Samaritan prompt smiles and thanks.

Restaurant owner Maria Mavridis' idea for ensuring NOTL kids get Halloween goodies, despite the pandemic, mushrooms into 700 goodie bags thanks to donations from area businesses.

**Oct. 29** – After three years of dealing with loud opposition to his plans, developer Benny Marotta puts two of the Rand Estate's main properties on the market – for a whopping \$19 million.

The town approves an extra \$340,000 to help fund the \$2 million expansion of the Niagara Nursery School.

The Legion poppy campaign will go ahead despite pandemic restrictions. The goal is \$20,000.

**Nov. 5** – NOTL business landmark Mori Gardens is closing after the leased land on which it sits is bought by developer Benny Marotta.

Maya Webster, 9, continues her fight for diabetes research and is chosen as a delegate to the Juvenile Diabetes Kids for a Cure Lobby Day.

As part of our Remembrance Day coverage, we write about the Legion's Memory Project and Second World War veteran Lewis Lambert.

## RIDDLE ME THIS

I eat, I live. I breathe, I live. I drink, I die. What am I?

Last issue: I can be cracked, I can be made. I can be told, I can be played. What am I?

Answer: A joke

Answered first by: Margie Enns

Also answered correctly (in order) by: Kathy Neufeld, Freda Balluch, Sandie Lawrence, Sandie Lawrence, Wade Durling, Josh Langendoen, Pam Dowling, Elizabeth Oliver-Malone, Greg Jensen, Sylvia Wiens, Elaine Landray, Laurel Simmons, Katie Reimer

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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Continued on Page 10

# HINDSIGHT 2020: THE YEAR IN REVIEW

Continued from Page 9

**Nov. 12** – The large, formal Remembrance Day ceremony couldn't be held, but NOTL did not forget. Residents spontaneously came out to honour veterans and a small online ceremony was held at the Legion.

NOTL wins six Niagara Biennial Design Awards, including one for The Village neighbourhood's Luminaires candle lighting project.

Silks Country Kitchen is more than just a breakfast purveyor and the family-owned restaurant celebrates 25 years in business.

**Nov. 19** – Marnie Cluckie is named the town's new chief administrator. She starts work on Dec. 9.

Active COVID cases in NOTL decline to just two but Niagara Region imposes new stricter controls, including no more than four people seated together in restaurants.

The mayor says having child care available is crucial for the town to attract younger families and that is one reason council is spending another \$340,000 on the expanded Niagara Nursery School.

**Nov. 26** – About 300 people get stuck in the community centre parking lot – as part of a drive-thru flu shot clinic.

Joan King is overwhelmed by the community's generosity in helping fill Christmas stockings for every resident of NOTL's long-term care homes.

A long list of volunteer firefighters, with a combined more than 280 years of service, are honoured by the town.

**Dec. 3** – Our road test of NOTL's new on-demand transit service shows it is a smooth and affordable option for getting around. For only \$3 per trip.

Correspondent Ross Robinson says a hike to Woodend Conservation Authority is a welcome escape from COVID cabin fever.

Vince Pillitteri, founder of Seaway Farms, is honoured with a lifetime achievement award by the Ontario Produce Marketing Association.

**Dec. 10** – Spectacular photos of fabulous Christmas light displays around NOTL. And a guide on where to find them.

COVID vaccines won't mean an immediate end to masks and restrictions, Dr. William Brown says.

Is Doug Ford trying to kill the Greenbelt? It seems so, says columnist David Israelson.

Christmas parade guru Bob Cheriton hangs 'em up after almost 20 years.

**Dec. 17** – It's our last print edition before the holidays: Days after complex brain surgery for epilepsy, Eric VanNoort is home recovering in time for Christmas.

Benny Marotta slaps the Town of NOTL with a \$1 million lawsuit in a dispute over a small strip of land in St. Davids.

After much debate and division, the town alters its short-term rental bylaw, without the controversial "principal residence" rule.

NOTL wins the prestigious National Trust Prince of Wales Prize for its sustained commitment to heritage conservation.

\* See [www.niagaranow.com](http://www.niagaranow.com) for a more extensive look at the NOTL news of the past year.



Canadian comedy icon Rick Mercer hosts CBC's national New Year's Eve broadcast from Wayne Gretzky Estates in Niagara-on-the-Lake. SCREENSHOT

## Niagara-on-the-Lake takes **main stage** for CBC New Year's Eve broadcast

Richard Harley  
The Lake Report

As a year for the history books came to a close, Niagara-on-the-Lake made its way to centre stage for CBC's national New Year's Eve broadcast.

The show, viewed by about 2 million people and hosted by Canadian comedy icon Rick Mercer, was hosted at Wayne Gretzky Estates, with the broadcast jumping all around Canada and a final performance by Tyler Shaw on the Gretzky rink.

Tim Coons, manager for Gretzky Estates, said the NOTL distillery and winery was "thrilled" to be approached to host the show.

"We're so fortunate to be able to kind of help to represent Niagara-on-the-Lake. And so this was certainly an opportunity for all of Canada to be able to see what Niagara-on-the-Lake has to offer and just how special a place we are," he said.

"A lot of people are really excited. I guess you could maybe say that people feel honoured, almost as though we're inviting Canada into our homes."

Canadian hockey legend Wayne Gretzky said having the estate chosen to host Canada's New Year's Eve celebration was "a really special honour."

"I was so proud to be able

to share our beautiful outdoor space and skating rink with all of Canada on such a special night," Gretzky said in an emailed response to questions from The Lake Report.

"Showcasing the estate also gave Canadians a small glimpse of what Niagara-on-the-Lake has to offer. I want to wish my family, friends, my estate partner John Peller and all Canadians a great 2021," The Great One added.

Coons said the producers of the show approached the NOTL operation with the opportunity.

"Some of the event organizers and Rick, they had been to the Gretzky property before. And so they approached us and just said, 'You know, there's the opportunity to host a New Year's Eve special CBC feature,' and essentially the concept was and is that they used the Gretzky rink as the anchor desk, and then bounced all throughout Canada, through all the provinces, to just check in on Canadians to see how they were celebrating their New Year's Eve."

He said there's been a lot of "buzz" about the event on social media and people emailing or calling to share their excitement.

"And we have a ton of wine club members that live right in Niagara-on-

the-Lake and so they've been emailing us sharing just how excited they are that we're part of it," he said.

The timing of the show couldn't have been better because they had to close down the operation anyway, Coons said.

"So, because they were using the rink space for three days for the production, it was certainly good timing for us. Even more importantly, it was just a great opportunity to host Rick, such an honour to be able to host such an iconic Canadian at one of the greatest Canadian's properties. It was a ton of fun and a huge honour."

The filming took place on Dec. 29, 30 and 31, Coons said, with a lot of the show, including Tyler Shaw's performance, being filmed live on New Year's Eve.

He said the CBC crew took extra precautions for COVID safety.

"They're a world-class outfit. And so if you can imagine they have COVID protocols," he said.

Every team member on the broadcast was required to take a rapid COVID test each day of shooting, as well as undergo screening for symptoms. The crew also wore badges that would let them know if they got too close to another member.

"If you came within six feet of someone else, it would flash and beep," Coons said.

A video from Wayne Gretzky was filmed elsewhere and sent in due to travel restrictions, he said.

"He sent in a video message to welcome Rick, who he knows. And, again, he was just so excited to be able to host Rick at his property and on his rink."

He said CBC brought in a lot of extra props like Christmas trees, pyrotechnics and all the gear for Shaw's performance.

"There was a ton of setup that was required."

Coons said though he didn't get to meet Mercer personally as he wasn't there during the filming, but the employees who did had a great time.

"The team got to hang out with them and they had a great time entertaining him and Tyler Shaw."

Coons said it's exciting, too, that so many people viewed the broadcast.

"In terms of the total scope and size of the impact, that's pretty impressive. We were so fortunate to be able to host them and hopefully we can host them again."

Anyone wishing to view the New Year's Eve broadcast can do so here: [https://youtu.be/ExRHKu6\\_vdQ?t=41](https://youtu.be/ExRHKu6_vdQ?t=41)



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# Town passes short-term rental changes, despite outcry from industry

Richard Harley  
The Lake Report

The Town of Niagara-on-the-Lake has moved forward with some of its proposed changes to the short-term rental licence bylaw, despite outcries from industry stakeholders who wanted the decision to be made by the town's newly approved short-term rental committee.

The changes include a \$1,000 fine for advertising without a valid licence number displayed on the ad and for the town to hire a third-party service (Granicus) to monitor and collect evidence against illegal operators and nuisance properties.

The change in advertising regulations means it is much easier to track down illegal listings, while the third-party service will give the town real-time evidence to fine these properties and take them to court if they do not comply.

The difference of trying to prove an illegal property versus an illegal advertisement is "day and night," said Lord Mayor Betty Disero.

Short-term rental industry representatives spoke at council's Dec. 21 meeting,



Former Bed and Breakfast Association president David Levesque speaks to council. SOURCED

asking the town to let the decision be made by the committee of all stakeholders and urging council not to implement fines for advertising without a licence.

David Levesque, former president of the NOTL Bed & Breakfast Association, argued the short-term rental committee should make the decisions as to whether the proposed changes were appropriate and suggested a longer timeframe for the committee, which originally was to complete this one issue by April.

"I am a bit baffled by why council wants to set such a narrow scope and timeframe on the upcoming short-term rental committee," he said.

"I do feel we have a long and bumpy road ahead of

us as a community, dealing with the (short-term rental) question and making sure the changes to the bylaw will make the difference we are hoping for."

He suggested holding quarterly meetings after spring, to allow the committee more time to tackle issues.

"How can we not be in favour of setting the neutral backbones of collaboration between the town, the short-term rental industry and the residents for the betterment of all?" he said.

He also opposed the \$1,000 fine for rentals advertising without a licence, arguing there isn't a way for owners to include that information on their websites.

Levesque said the best course of action is to

wait until these platforms include a specific spot to list a licence number before implementing any sort of fine based on advertising, adding that rental operators shouldn't have to pay a fine for "what should have been the platform's responsibility in the first place."

He suggested trying to get listing companies like Airbnb to include a field for licence numbers, "before overreacting by throwing fines at our own law-abiding citizens."

However, he also said the "big platforms" for rentals "don't want to be responsible for enforcing a valid licence number."

Couns. Norm Arsenault and Allan Bisback weren't buying it and asked if the owners provide their own descriptions on the websites, to which Levesque conceded they generally do.

Levesque argued that some sites like Booking.com change the listing descriptions.

Arsenault said he's aware of other municipalities with the same bylaw and that short-term rental owners in those communities are placing the licence number in the description.

"Markham just passed a bylaw back in June

## Councillor raises concerns about third-party service

Coun. Erwin Wiens isn't convinced hiring a third-party compliance company to monitor and collect evidence against short-term rentals will have much of an impact on nuisance homes and illegal operators.

He pointed out that without enforcement, the town can have all the evidence it needs against a rental owner, it still won't be able to enforce the fines.

"I don't think this is that complex. The issue we have is enforcement," Wiens said, adding based on inquiries he's made, bylaw and the Crown prosecutor was not consulted on the regulations.

"The linchpin of this whole thing is that we don't have the bylaw officers in place to do any enforcement whatsoever. I have serious concerns when an outside agency is going to be asking our complainants at two in the morning to go collect that and collect evidence and take pictures of noisy parties. I see that fraught with danger and fraught with problems."

"We don't have the bylaw officer involved to lay the charge to get to court," he said.

"I think we're leading the public astray if we think there's going to be any enforcement. This is all going to be just a report that we come back to."

He also expressed concerns the committee would only bring back ideas council has already heard.

"I am very uncomfortable with where we're going because essentially in my opinion we're kicking this can down the road."

Coun. Norm Arsenault responded by saying bylaw enforcement has been consulted on the issue, but Wiens requested that be removed from the record, suggesting it was inaccurate.

and they do include their licence number. So, it is being done, it is doable," Arsenault said.

Levesque also said "the town is truly underestimating everyone's willingness to help on this particular

matter and will be surprised how far they will get by simply asking us nicely to include our licence number everywhere online."

**Read the full story online at [www.niagaranow.com/news/phtml/4927](http://www.niagaranow.com/news/phtml/4927)**

## Man dead after police shooting on Parkway

Continued from Front Page

reportedly fled on foot after his truck hit the ditch. He was shot and then "transported to hospital with life-threatening injuries where he was pronounced deceased."

On Wednesday, Niagara Regional Police said a woman was arrested at the scene and faces a number of charges.

Lindsey Archer, 29, of Dundas, Ont., was charged with possession of property obtained by crime under \$5,000, possession of property obtained by crime over \$5,000, obstructing police and drug possession.

Two Niagara police officers were injured at the scene, treated for minor injuries in hospital and released.

The officers were treated

at a local hospital for minor injuries and have since been released.

NOTL resident Jennifer Ruttan was working at Dawland Landscape Maintenance near Line 6 Road when she saw the truck pass on the Parkway.

"I was outside the shop when I heard the sirens. Saw the red truck with flat tires ... you could hear them. He was being followed by nine police vehicles, two of them Niagara Parks Police," she said.

"We could hear the sirens and figured they stopped him by or on Line 3 because the sirens didn't sound to be getting further. Saw two fire trucks go by within a few minutes."

Several NOTL residents reported seeing cruisers,

some unmarked, travelling at high speed through town at the time of the incident.

Rene Bertschi said, "It was like watching a video on one of the social media networks with police cars racing down highways with sirens and lights flashing to stop some traffic violation subject."

Eastbound on York Road at Four Mile Creek Road in St. Davids, he was about to turn left toward Virgil.

"I noticed a red pickup truck coming from the west, passing all the standing cars on the left lane at high speed toward the intersection. To my surprise, everyone at the corner stopped as this truck raced through the stop sign," he told The Lake Report.

"I thought, 'What a moron,' but a few seconds later, two police cars followed to



A man is dead after leading police on a chase into Niagara-on-the-Lake. ANDREW COLLINS

pursue the red truck, leaving us in a state of shock before all of us continued on our daily routines," Bertschi said.

Niagara Regional, Niagara Parks and OPP officers were all involved in the pursuit at some point, witnesses reported.

Officers were originally called to the area of Lundy's Lane and Corwin

Avenue in Niagara Falls after someone reported two people sleeping in a vehicle, the SIU said in a news release.

When police arrived, the vehicle fled and officers followed, "making numerous attempts to stop it," the investigators said.

Four investigators and three forensic investigators have been assigned to the

case. One Niagara Regional officer has been designated as a subject officer and two officers with the regional police and two from Niagara Parks Police have been designated as witness officers, the SIU said.

Freelance reporter Andrew Collins posted a video of the incident on YouTube: <https://youtu.be/YmJe-Z4TW9M?t=40>



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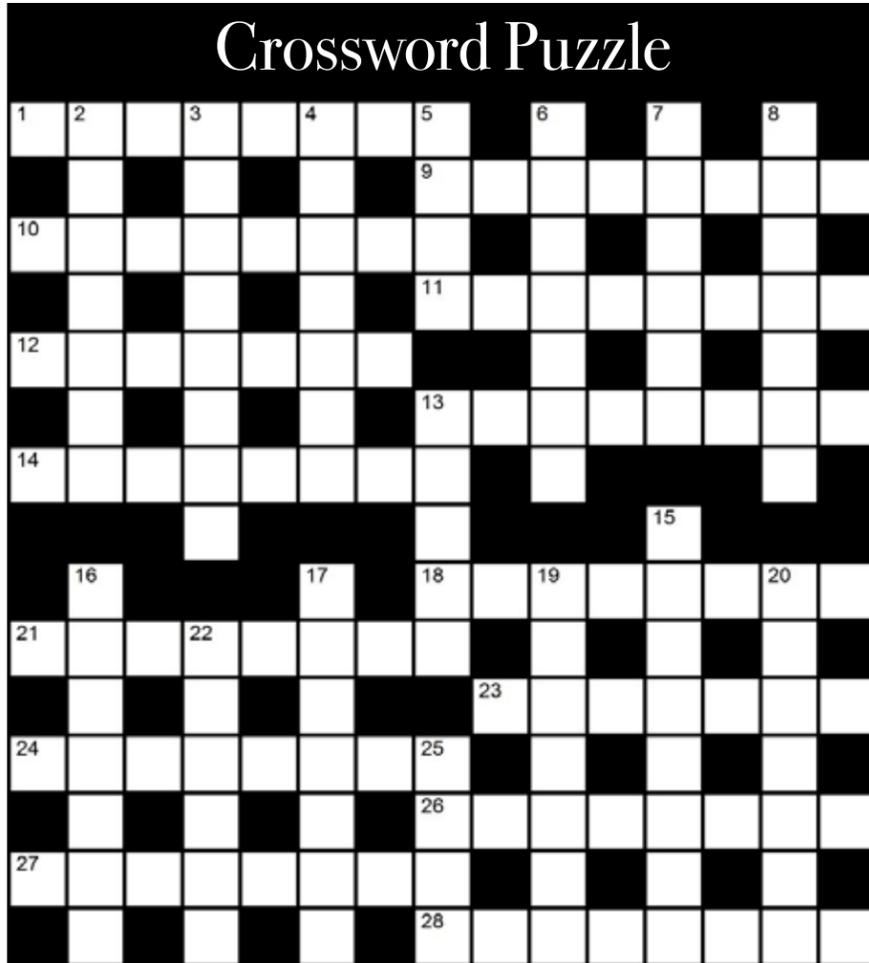
*Have some fun*

**Across**

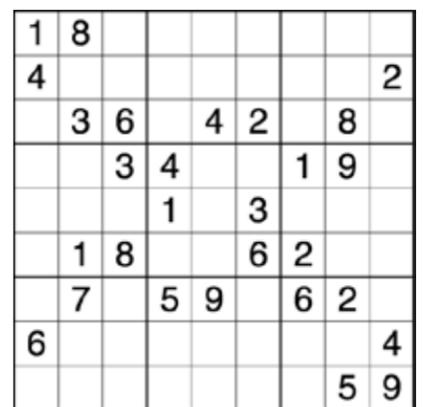
- 1. German liqueur (8)
- 9. Burden excessively (8)
- 10. Self-important (8)
- 11. Travelling case for clothes (8)
- 12. Refrain voluntarily (7)
- 13. Gambling game (4,4)
- 14. Private feud (8)
- 18. Acts (8)
- 21. Bald (8)
- 23. Black magic (7)
- 24. I o W town (8)
- 26. Staple of Mediterranean cooking (5,3)
- 27. Goodbye (8)
- 28. Charismatic (8)

**Down**

- 2. Responsive to drugs (7)
- 3. Midday (8)
- 4. Musician who could play the Moonlight Sonata (7)
- 5. Drunkards (4)
- 6. Musical performance (7)
- 7. Tranquil (6)
- 8. Cushion for kneeling (7)
- 13. Poches with a torch (5)
- 15. Substantial (8)
- 16. West Atlantic island country (7)
- 17. Decreased (7)
- 19. Covering for a building (7)
- 20. Cocktail (7)
- 22. Battered (6)
- 25. Small island (4)



Last issue's answers



# Dialling down the heat: NOTL firefighter retires after 38 years

Richard Harley  
The Lake Report

Queenston firefighter Ken Hernder says leaving the fire station doesn't mean his time with the firefighting community is over.

The Virgil resident (Greater Virgil Area, as he says) is retiring from firefighting after 38 years serving the Niagara-on-the-Lake community.

He officially turned off his pager on New Year's Eve when the clock struck midnight.

"My wife keeps saying, 'I don't know what I'm going to do with you Monday nights now.' I'm going to have to find another hobby to keep me busy," says Hernder in a phone interview.

But he's not worried about twiddling his thumbs.

"I have lots of projects, so I keep busy anyways," he says.

He also still works part-



Ken Hernder is looking forward to spending time with his new grandson. SUPPLIED

time as a wine consultant at Two Sisters Winery.

"It keeps me busy. And hopefully when this pandemic's all over, I also do Niagara-on-the-Lake culinary walking tours."

One the biggest changes

will be adjusting to not having to be readily available for fire calls, Hernder says.

"You get kind of set in your way from doing this for 38 years, especially when you're on call 24/7. So it's a different life."

"I don't have to listen to (my pager) any more. No more getting up at three or four o'clock in the morning, so that's nice."

He said it's been a "very good run" for him and looks back fondly to his

early years.

"Queenston, back in the day, we were one of the first halls. Niagara-on-the-Lake didn't have any rescue equipment when it came to the jaws of life, and the boys in Queenston along with local people, we actually raised the money to purchase it ourselves," he says.

He's seen plenty of changes over time and remembers when Queenston firefighters did water rescues and were trained to rappel down into the gorge for rescues.

"When I first joined, believe it or not, Niagara-on-the-Lake did have a rescue boat. The Queenston fire department went out and bought a little 12-foot aluminum boat with a nine horsepower on it. But it didn't last very long after a couple of incidents on the Niagara River. We made requests to the town to purchase a bigger boat and the town said no, so we immediately sold it."

Before the Jet Boats, the Queenston fire service also did body retrievals.

"And for years we were the only fire department in Niagara-on-the-Lake that ran to every motor vehicle accident call."

He said he'll still be involved in the fire hall's various events and be there to mentor any up-and-comers.

"We have a very strong association side. And we do our spaghetti dinners and our fundraising for sports and local families, etc.," he says.

"A lot of our retired members are still very active."

One thing he'll miss is the camaraderie of Monday night meetings.

"It's going to the hall, the training, it's working with brothers and sisters," he says.

With his extra time, he's looking forward, pandemic pending, to spending time with his new grandson Holden.



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# Dr. Brown: Vaccines look promising. Now let's get them to people

*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



PIXABAY PHOTO

The news on the vaccine front in late 2020 was hope at last – hope that we could finally put Covid-19 behind us in 2021 and the sooner the better. The first three vaccines look very promising. The efficacy rates for Pfizer-BioNTech's vaccine and the Moderna vaccine created by Massachusetts Technology working with The US Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases, exceed ninety percent, including clients sixty-five years of age and older. Oxford-AstraZeneca's vaccine was less impressive: the efficacy rate ranged from sixty to ninety percent, depending on how the data was analyzed and unlike the other two, this vaccine may be less effective for those over age sixty-five. The logistics for distributing these vaccines range from relatively easy to challenging.

Here Oxford's vaccine wins out: it can be safely stored in ordinary refrigerators unlike the minus 20 degrees C required for the Moderna vaccine, and the frigid minus 70 degrees C mandated for Pfizer's vaccine. The ease of handling and distributing the Oxford vaccine coupled with its

lower price, has made the Oxford vaccine the best choice for poorer, less well-resourced countries, charitable organizations and the WHO as well as the UK and India.

Fortunately there are other vaccines in the pipeline which are designed to target different viral proteins and thus offer potential backups should the immunological protection conferred by the current crop prove too short in duration or the virus manages to mutate itself around the current vaccine targets.

The major challenge is not manufacturing enough of the vaccines but getting the vaccines to those most in need as quickly as possible. First off should be those working in emergency rooms and intensive care units who are charged directly and indirectly with caring for patients with Covid-19 and I would argue, residents and staff in long-term care facilities and their staff. After all, that's where most of the dying takes place in this pandemic. Thereafter,

should follow those who are sixty-five years of age and over and all with comorbid conditions and finally, last in line, the young and healthy. But rolling out vaccines on a massive scale is no easy challenge as the US and Canada are finding out, what with bureaucratic boondoggles and shortages of trained staff.

The goals of such an ambitious program are twofold: to protect those vaccinated from the disease and to quickly immunize enough of the population to stop the spread of the virus. Anthony Fauci suggests that vaccination of eighty percent or more of the population is necessary to block the spread of the virus – the so-called herd effect. If so, I'm worried because so many, including some within the health care system, are wary of taking the vaccine because of misleading information spread by social media and in some instances, politicians more concerned with their image than looking after the welfare of the

public. That and my concern about the efficiency of governments and the health care system in getting the vaccine to those in need as quickly as possible and in sufficient numbers to harness the herd effect, are my chief worries and should be yours.

We know we're in deep trouble when case numbers continue to rise, and intensive care units are overloaded. That's the situation made worse now by the fact that many of the staff in emergency rooms and intensive care units are at the end of their physical and mental ropes, given the escalating demands to manage more patients while continuing to provide humane care. In WWII, combat fatigue often rendered frontline units unfit for action within a hundred days or less, depending on the intensity of the combat, the toll in dead and wounded and unrelenting fatigue.

Well, some physician and nurse intensivists have been on duty caring for the sick and ministering to the dying much longer. For example, one intensivist reported that he had been on duty 257 days straight. I would say that's well past the limit and left me wondering, about his and others effectiveness when they've been in the frontline trenches of this pandemic too long.

That kind of pressure simply cannot be sustained. Yet in some regions many continue to ignore what in the middle of a pandemic

like this, is a moral responsibility to do what is necessary to reduce the spread of the virus by distancing, wearing masks and avoiding all but familiar small 'bubble' groups. Wilful ignorance of such public health measures coupled with a virus that is now much more transmissible, makes containment of the virus all but impossible and runs up the death and disability rates. In my opinion, there is no 'right' to flaunt public health measures designed to protect the health and life of others.

One of the toughest jobs is figuring out which patients are most at risk for developing severe Covid disease and hence those most in need of tracking and possible intensive care. That job just became easier with the discovery that the viral load (amount of the virus) carried by patients correlates with their prognosis. Those with high viral loads are most at risk and those with low viral loads are least at risk. Measuring viral load is not a new idea - it's been done for decades in HIV patients and should be adopted.

Lessons Learned, Ignored and Distorted

We learned that this virus frequently mutates – fortunately most of the time with no consequences for the public. Sometimes however the consequences are fearsome as with the recent mutant strain which greatly increased the transmissibility of this disease and

fanned the spikes in cases and deaths. Regular genomic sequencing should be a must but only the UK has done so and regularly reports its findings.

We also learned what works – social distancing, masking, avoiding crowds – and what clearly does not work – failure to take those simple measures, with the result that we witnessed huge spikes in the infection and death rates this fall, and now our own community with no clear end in sight. It is a dark beginning to the New Year.

We also learned about the cost of isolating those in long-term care who are unable to get out, walk and see the world around them and most important, hug and be hugged by their friends and loved ones. We all feel that loss.

Finally we learned just how important responsible media have been in keeping us up to date, especially with the best sources in the UK, US and Canada. Those sources, like many medical journals, continue to provide free access to Covid related material. Of course there's been another side to the media – sources which willfully distort and ignore important information. That has consequences such as wariness about vaccines in the midst of a public health disaster.

Now there's a subject worth talking and writing about.

Best wishes and hope for the new year.

# Hirji warns against non-essential travel

*Continued from Front Page*

COVID-19. All residents were tested on Jan. 5, and all staff today and tomorrow, Jan. 6 and 7," Poos said.

"We remain vigilant 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," he said.

"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 said the home is in daily contact with public health officials "to assist us in managing the outbreak and hope for the good news to come soon that the Pfizer-BioNTech and/or Moderna vaccines become available to all residents and staff in the Niagara area."

In nursing homes, under provincial rules even one case constitutes an outbreak.

Until now, Niagara-on-

the-Lake's long-term care homes had managed to avoid COVID-19 outbreaks, despite the virus being a major problem for similar facilities across the country.

Niagara Region's acting chief medical officer, Dr. Mustafa Hirji, said luck and fewer community cases were among the reasons NOTL care homes avoided outbreaks in the past.

It helped that NOTL has "fewer (care) homes than other municipalities, which reduced their probability of having cases get into a home," he told The

Lake Report.

As well, "NOTL's cases per population were relatively lower for much of the year than other parts of Niagara, which reduced their risk of outbreaks."

Meanwhile, the COVID-19 situation in the region is serious, Hirji warned.

"To that end, public health urges everyone to forgo non-essential trips outside the household. This includes any international travel, or even travel outside of our home community. Stopping the spread of infection is critical to saving lives."



Dr. Mustafa Hirji. SUPPLIED

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## Father lucky to be alive after Christmas crash

Richard Harley  
The Lake Report

A Virgil father is lucky to be alive after being struck by a vehicle on Christmas Day.

Ken Rumsey, 52, was airlifted to St. Michael's Hospital in Toronto with serious injuries Dec. 25, after a vehicle collided with a truck owned by a Good Samaritan who was helping Rumsey pull his daughter's vehicle out of a ditch.

It happened around 6:30 p.m. on Concession 7 and Niagara Stone Road.

Rumsey's daughter Hailey had hit a snow drift and gone into the ditch, so he and his son Dylan went to help get her vehicle unstuck. During the attempt, Dylan's vehicle also got stuck in the ditch.

That's when the Good Samaritan showed up.

"We were waiting for my cousin to come pull me out and some guy in a truck stopped to help," Dylan Rumsey said.

As they were hooking the straps up to his truck another vehicle "came flying down (the road) and smoked us while my dad was under the other guy's truck."

Rumsey said the impact threw him back about 10 feet into the ditch, while his father and the wife of the Good Samaritan took the brunt of the impact.

The wife of the Good Samaritan, whose name Rumsey never got, was carried away on a stretcher.

"We're pretty banged up but he got the worst of it," Rumsey said.



The red Volkswagen that crashed into a stopped pickup truck on Christmas Day. SUPPLIED

"When I got up my dad was laying beside the truck with his head split open, pretty well unconscious."

The vehicle that struck the others, a red Volkswagen, was driven by a 64-year-old man from Niagara-on-the-Lake, whom Rumsey identified as Virgil resident Helmut Klassen.

Police did not do a roadside breathalyzer test at the scene and no charges have been laid.

Niagara Regional Police spokesperson Const. Phil Gavin said police "do not complete roadside testing for every collision."

"The officers make the determination if it is necessary based on the totality of their investigation," he said in response to questions

from The Lake Report.

"Weather and road conditions were determined to have played a role in the collision."

Rumsey said he feels for the people who tried to help.

"(They were) trying to do a nice thing," he said.

"All our lights and four-ways were on. I saw my sister's car, turned off, from two kilometres away. It was clear as day."

He said his dad now needs "a full set of teeth, stitches in his mouth, nose, face, head."

Dylan Rumsey also has an injured hip, knee and ankle, but didn't go to the hospital.

"I didn't want to. I wanted the paramedics to focus on

my dad and the kids from the guy's truck helping," he said.

Ken Rumsey is back home recovering now and is doing better, his son said.

"It's mostly his teeth we are concerned for. They airlifted him as a precaution for a fractured skull," Dylan said.

He said he'd like to get in touch with the Good Samaritan, to thank him for his help.

"I tried to get the guy's name but he was a bit shaken up. I'd love to thank him again."

The Good Samaritan was a 48-year-old St. Catharines resident, though police said privacy concerns prevent them from identifying him.

## Obituaries

### Michael Howe



HOWE, Michael Norman – Passed away peacefully at Hospice Niagara on Tuesday, December 29, 2020 at the age of 74.

Beloved husband of Marsha for 46 years. Loving father of Christopher Howe.

Caring brother of Peter (Judy McLeod) Howe, Robin Howe and Louise (John Thompson) Howe.

Fondly remembered by his nieces and nephew Rosalind, Joelle, Alexandra

and Trevor. Predeceased by his parents Margherita and Norman Howe.

Michael was born in Toronto and raised in Niagara-on-the-Lake. He was educated at Queen's University graduating in 1968 with a Business degree and a Masters in Business Administration. He joined Peat Marwick in 1974 and remained with KPMG for his entire career as a Chartered Accountant. Michael was a consummate professional, passionate about his work which continued until November of this year. His career was marked by frequent and extensive international travel and over the years he visited nearly all of the world's major cities. He was highly respected internationally for his expertise in Risk Management. Most recently, he worked in the off-shore practice in Bermuda and The Cayman Islands. Through the years he was a positive mentor for many of his colleagues. Michael cared deeply about his community and the Town of Niagara-on-the-Lake and fought to preserve its heritage, mainly through the work of the Niagara Foundation of which he was president of their board for many years. He will be remembered for his wry sense of humour, scathing wit and gusto for life. He loved dogs. Duster, his Brittany, was his best buddy.

At home he enjoyed working in the garden and gave true meaning to the term "House Proud".

Above all was the life Michael shared with Marsha. He genuinely lived his marriage vows, "till death do us part". He truly loved Marsha and he will be eternally missed.

Cremation has taken place. A celebration of Michael's life will take place at a later date. Arrangements entrusted to MORGAN FUNERAL HOME, 415 Regent St., Niagara-on-the-Lake. In lieu of flowers those who wish may make donations to Hospice Niagara or Lincoln County Humane Society. Memories, photos and condolences may be shared at [www.morganfuneral.com](http://www.morganfuneral.com)



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## Non-essential travel puts front-line workers at risk: Fire chief

Richard Harley  
The Lake Report

Non-essential travel doesn't just put the travelers at risk, says Niagara-on-the-Lake fire chief Nick Ruller.

Ruller reminded council and the public that leaving the house during the pandemic can have "unintended consequences."

"One of our biggest concerns that we've had throughout this evolving pandemic has been the



Fire chief Nick Ruller. SUPPLIED

unintended consequences that can occur from simple things like non-essential travel," he told council

during the final meeting of 2020, just before the province went into lockdown.

Ruller said it's important to highlight there are implications that often aren't in the forefront of people's minds.

"However, a simple motor vehicle collision can involve several police officers, several paramedics, eight to 10 firefighters," he said.

"Essentially we are putting our essential workers at greater risk if we don't abide by the recommenda-

tions of public health."

The chief encouraged people to listen to public health recommendations to avoid all non-essential travel.

"That really means don't leave your home unless you're leaving for things like getting groceries, access to health care and things along those lines."

Ruller asked residents to help assist volunteer firefighters in keeping people and their families safe by staying home.



Pauline Reimer Gibson  
Audiologist

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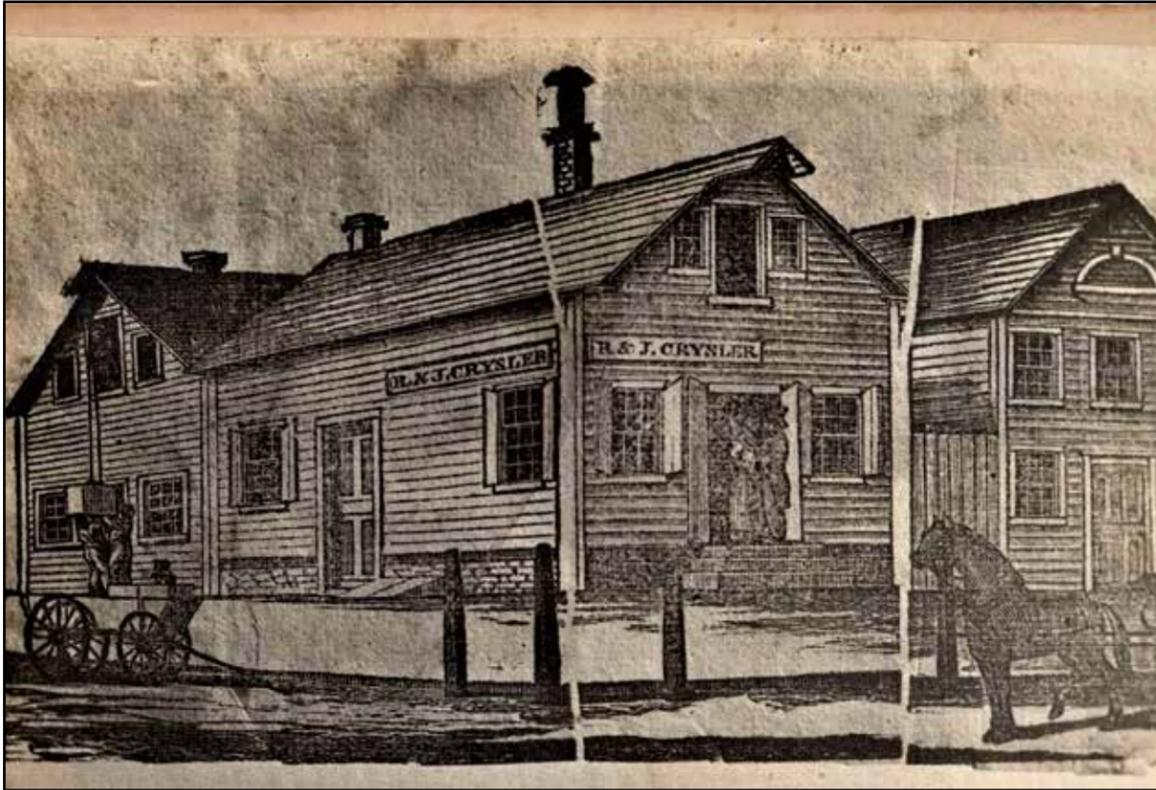
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## R & J Crysler Store, 1832

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## A masterwork

Brian Marshall  
Columnist

I regret never having the opportunity to meet the renowned Niagara architect Don Chapman.

We had some tentative plans to do so in the spring, but the COVID lockdown denied that opportunity. Now, alas, he has passed and I shall never have the chance to know him except through the work he left behind.

I have often admired from afar the home he designed and built for his family. In the past, I had commented several times to his son that I'd love to get a closer look and recently we both had the time in our schedules to walk around



Behind this will lies mastery. BRIAN MARSHALL

the property.

Nestled down into the landscape overlooking the Niagara River, this is a house that defies classification. One can see influences from the International style, which Chapman would have been strongly exposed to in his university days in Manitoba, but there is also a strong flavour of the West Coast Organic tradition and hints of heritage styling with unique touches born of the architect's own creativity.

This is a house of

textures wherein a solid expanse of white brick masonry is juxtaposed against natural rough-sawn shou sugi ban timber elements and flawless sheets of huge float glass windows. It is a house of modules as if a tiny village was seamlessly joined by glass and timber colonnades. And it is a house of courtyards, each with its own flavour but all invariably impressing one with a feeling of zen normally associated with meditative Japanese gardens.

At roughly 6,000 square feet, largely spread across a single storey, it is hard to imagine that the house does not sprawl across the landscape, but nothing could be further from the truth.

In fact, it is so well integrated with its setting it seems to have grown rather than been built. As one walks around each corner of the home (and there are many) there is a different treat in store.

Here an expanse of vertical wood cladding that at first appears random but then reveals itself as a brilliant repetition of pattern that delights the eye. Next, a beautiful glimpse of the Niagara River perfectly framed by two corners of masonry and eaves of the high-pitched roofs.

In the life of every talented architect there are a few buildings that may be called his masterwork. I don't know if Don Chapman felt that way about his house, but I can tell you that I certainly do.



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