



Hub opens for farm workers | Page 10

Indoor dining, gyms return

After months of COVID-19 lockdowns, business is resuming



David O'Reilly has the first pint at Bricks & Barley since indoor dining was closed in April. He was the first one to sit inside and has been such a loyal customer that staff emblazoned his name on his favourite chair. EVAN SAUNDERS

Evan Saunders
Local Journalism Initiative
The Lake Report

Restaurants were abuzz as diners returned indoors this past week and some gym goers felt like they could finally get their mental health back on track with a good, sweaty workout.

Friday was the first day of reopening under the province's Step 3 rules.

Inside Bricks & Barley in Virgil, there is a special

chair at the far end of the bar.

Emblazoned on it is a plaque that reads "David O'Reilly."

It's no coincidence that O'Reilly was the first person to sit down inside the restaurant since April, in his own chair nonetheless.

O'Reilly's been a regular at the restaurant since it opened in January 2019. He's such a good customer the staff got him his own chair a year and a half ago.

He sat at the bar and enjoyed a cold Canadian and told The Lake Report it felt "very good" to be back inside his favourite restaurant.

"My ex-wife will love this story," he laughed.

General manager David McDonald was busy bracing his staff for what was already a busy day before the place even opened.

"People have been waiting for this weekend," he said.

The patio was completely

booked throughout the day and staff were planning on directing walk-ins to the indoor dining area.

McDonald said COVID-19 really brought out the supportive side of the Virgil community.

"(The lockdown has) been great, actually. I've had a non-stop response from the community right from the get-go," he said.

"It's been really heart-

Continued on Page 2



A bioswale at Simcoe Park is helping to filter out E. coli bacteria from storm drains in town. SUPPLIED

Queen's Royal Beach sees significant water quality improvements

Richard Harley
The Lake Report

The water at Queen's Royal beach in Niagara-on-the-Lake is significantly cleaner now than it was prior to 2017, water tests results show.

Tests show water is at acceptable bacteria levels much more often when compared to bacteria levels in 2017 and before that.

The change is due in part to remedial actions taken on by the Niagara Peninsula Conservation Authority and the Town of Niagara-on-the-Lake, officials say.

Over the last three years, leaks in sewers and storm drains have been fixed to control E. coli bacteria from the storm water drain that

runs into the mouth of the Niagara River at Queen's Royal as part of the Niagara River Remedial Action Plan program.

Natalie Green, project manager for the program, said the evidence is clear that the water is cleaner as a result.

"Prior to 2017, the beach rarely met safe swimming guidelines. We were looking at maybe between 45 per cent of samples to 75 per cent of samples being able to be safe for swimming. Now it's consistently over 80 per cent," she said.

While there are occasions when the water isn't safe for swimming, it's an overall average that's being looked

Continued on Page 9

Harvest Barn posts fun and pun-filled road signs

Stephanie Beattie
Special to The Lake Report

Humorous, farm-themed roadside signs at Harvest Barn aim to spread positivity for NOTL residents and visitors.

Tammy Van Berkel, a manager at Harvest Barn NOTL and director of finance and administration for Konzelmann Estate Winery, is the driving force behind the creative road signs at the market on Niagara Stone Road.

"When we drive by a sign and it makes us smile

or makes us chuckle, it's an opportunity to support each other with words of affirmation and encouragement," Van Berkel said.

The store began putting up the signs a few months ago after the town's "kindness" campaign began.

Alongside the messages in support of local businesses and spreading kindness, many of the signs have displayed light-hearted produce-focused puns.

Van Berkel said Harvest Barn is a bridge between the residential community

and the agricultural sector, and farmers and seasonal produce figure prominently in the signage.

The staff works together to plan the sayings for each sign, sometimes with the help of Google, she said.

They also try to change the signs weekly to "keep things fresh."

"The challenge for us, that we like, is to take common sayings and then use certain fruits and vegetables to try and do the play on words."

Like one that said, "Thanks a melon NOTL, we

a-peach-iate your support."

"It might be really corny, but that makes me laugh," she said.

The store definitely wants to continue the funny, punny signs long-term. (The market isn't the only area business posting light-hearted messages. The eSkoot Niagara rental store on Mississauga Street has contributed fun and philosophical messages for a few years.)

Van Berkel noted, "We're having a lot of fun with it and also we've had a lot of positive feedback."



Tammy Van Berkel in front of this week's Harvest Barn sign. RICHARD HARLEY



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Hummel **appeals** court decision in lawsuit against town

Richard Harley
The Lake Report

Niagara-on-the-Lake developer Rainer Hummel has filed an appeal in a lawsuit against the Town of Niagara-on-the-Lake that was rejected in April.

The lawsuit, filed on behalf of Hummel Properties Inc., alleges the town and mayor acted in secrecy and illegally to implement an interim control bylaw to freeze all development in Old Town.

Hummel has a new legal

team, Brian Gover and Justin Safayeni, lawyers with Stockwoods LLP, based in Toronto.

The developer's case was rejected by Justice James Ramsay after a court hearing in April. He ruled the town did not act illegally in halting development, as overdevelopment was a subject of concern among residents.

Hummel's factum, filed with the Ontario Court of Appeal, the province's highest court, alleges the town put the freeze in place to target one specific developer, Benny

Marotta, whose companies Solmar Development Corp. (Solmar (Niagara 2) Inc.) and Two Sisters Resorts Corp. were at the centre of a controversial plan for a hotel on the former Rand Estate.

Among several accusations against the town pertaining to the two-year freeze, Hummel alleges the municipality acted in bad faith to plan and implement the development freeze, contrary to specific rules outlined in provincial planning policies, as well as contrary to the town's own bylaws.

The factum, obtained by The Lake Report, alleges Hummel Properties suffered damages as a result of the development freeze. The company has requested a trial on the issue of damages.

Hummel's lawyers submitted their 55-page factum to the court on July 5. The town has 30 days to file a response.

The Town of NOTL said it has not yet filed a response to the factum and will not comment on ongoing legal matters.



Rainer Hummel and Lord Mayor Betty Disero after Hummel won citizen of the year in 2018. FILE/JER HOUGHTON

Business, customers all relieved to see some **normalcy** return

Continued from Front Page

warming, having all of these people show up to support our local businesses. It's been great."

Over at the Sandtrap Pub & Grill on Mary Street, diners were enjoying the indoor space due to limited patio seating and staff were too busy to chat as they ran from the patio to the dining room serving guests.

Henry Andrews was taking one of his employees out for a burger lunch while his mother was away on vacation.

"Me and my wife come to the Sandtrap quite a bit. It's enjoyable and it's excellent to be dining inside again," Andrews said.

For Aiden Darosa, being able to pump some iron in the gym was a huge relief.

"Through the whole COVID thing and with the lockdown I went through a really hard time," said Darosa, member of NPNG Fitness in Virgil. "I think a lot of people did."

"Some people come to the gym for two hours a day and then go home and they don't do anything because this is what makes them happy," he said.

Darosa felt gyms were unfairly targeted as non-essential businesses, noting gyms are essential to many people's mental health. Their continued closures may have done more harm than good, he said.

"The gym, the atmosphere and the social community is such a benefit to each and every person's mental



Top: Sandtrap Pub & Grill customers Henry Andrews and Travis Culp enjoy their first meal inside the restaurant since April. Bottom: Aiden Darosa says not being able to go to the gym has had a severe impact on his and many others mental health. He was at NPNG Fitness on reopening day to get back to being himself. EVAN SAUNDERS PHOTOS

health," he said.

"Personally, if I don't wake up and go to the gym, I feel lethargic, I feel tired and unmotivated," he said.

He felt that with people losing their jobs, their income and their social lives due to COVID, taking away

gyms was just furthering the suffering in an already shutdown society.

On top of the economic suffering individuals went through, people had to pay exorbitant prices to work out at home.

"I went online to try and

find gym equipment and it was impossible. People were charging \$200 for a 20-pound dumbbell," he said.

"I bought a bench press set for almost \$600. That's a week's pay for most people just so they can make them-

selves feel happy," he said.

Walmart's website shows a 20-pound dumbbell can be bought for \$40, representing a 500 per cent markup by resellers, a common problem at times during the pandemic.

The financial toll of working out at home has only made the return to the gym that much sweeter.

"I'm just happy to be back," Darosa said.

With Step 3 also came the reopening of the Niagara-on-the-Lake Museum.

Staff were busy Friday ensuring that exhibits were in full regalia and people could come in and enjoy the museum for the first time since the April lockdown forced it to close.

"It's almost like bringing life back into the museum," managing curator Sarah Kaufman said.

"We've been quiet and we've been closed. We're very excited to bring people back in and welcome them, safely, to the museum."

Kaufman doesn't think people were aware that museums had to stay closed throughout the previous two phases of the reopening plan.

"I've had people just walk in sometimes when the staff were here and the door was unlocked and go, 'We want to see your exhibits,'" she said.

She felt bad that she had to ask them to leave, but such is life in lockdown.

The big exhibit at the museum right now is Making Her Mark, which showcases the many contributions

of Niagara-on-the-Lake's women to the town and the world over the last 200 years.

"A lot of the women in here range from the very beginning of the town to more recently. So, we have people like Donna Scott, who founded Flare magazine and received the Order of Canada. She just passed recently."

Scott was a trailblazer for Canadian women in business and died in March 2020. She is featured alongside other famous Canadian women like Laura Secord and other NOTL recipients of the Order of Canada.

The museum is also introducing its new community courtyard, a tented space with seating and photo stand-in boards for fun photo opportunities.

The museum will be hosting silent movie nights in the courtyard on Aug. 19 and 26. They will be showing Charlie Chaplin's legendary comedy "City Lights" and the equally famous film, "The Cameraman," by Edward Sedgwick and Buster Keaton.

There is also yoga on Wednesday mornings in the courtyard, a summer camp in August and an upcoming pig roast and treasure sale on Aug. 2 to help raise money for the museum.

It may seem like the museum has its hands full, but Kaufman said they didn't plan as many events as during pre-pandemic summers out of fear another lockdown could lead to cancellations.

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More than 150 dogs were removed from 115 Delater St. last week. FILE/EVAN SAUNDERS

No charges *yet* in NOTL puppy raid

Evan Saunders
Local Journalism Initiative
The Lake Report

More than 150 dogs removed from a rented Niagara-on-the-Lake home last week are doing well and likely will go up for adoption.

The house on Delater Street smells now and suffered some damage from the dogs, owner Arthur Scauzillo said.

Provincial Animal Welfare Services (PAWS) staff rescued the canines and an employee of the Lincoln County Humane Society in St. Catharines said she expects the dogs will be adopted out once the animal welfare investigation is complete.

Brianna Dingman, an animal care technician with the humane society, said this was the first large “hoarding” issue that the organization has had to help PAWS officials with. The PAWS agency handles all animal welfare cases in the province.

Investigators would say little about why the dogs were being kept at the waterfront-area house. The investigation remains ongoing and no charges have been laid.

Scauzillo, a lawyer in Toronto, said he started renting out the home to Christina Grein and Anthony Biondi in April. He told The Lake Report they are both in their sixties.

“Oh my God, that’s insane,” Scauzillo said when informed that more than

150 dogs were found inside his property.

“There was no indication. I don’t know what to do about it. I feel like I did everything I could. It’s just bad luck,” he said.

The couple passed all credit and background checks, including with their former landlord.

He said the couple had been renting a farmhouse in Brampton before moving to NOTL.

Scauzillo suspects that the boxes Delater Street neighbours said they saw being moved during the night were dogs being transported into the Delater Street home.

Scauzillo, in his sixties and married with grown children, said, “We’re all dog lovers. It’s just so horrific that this could have happened.”

“My daughter has a French bulldog and we all just fawn over it.”

He thanked neighbouring residents for alerting authorities.

Scauzillo said he went to the house last Friday to inform the couple they need to leave by the end of the month and to inspect for damage.

“The whole house needs to be repainted. The walls are all yellowy,” he said.

The vinyl flooring in the kitchen has also been stained yellow and there are scratch marks on the hardwood floors and walls, he said.

Scauzillo’s visit inside the residence confirmed that a bad smell neighbours have

been reporting was indeed emanating from the home.

“Oh yeah, there’s a smell.” Scauzillo said Biondi was very apologetic but “that doesn’t get him very far in my book,” he said.

Grein wouldn’t see him, she was “too embarrassed,” he said.

While neighbours speculated that the animals were part of a puppy mill operation, that has yet to be confirmed.

The dogs were removed from the home at 115 Delater St. between July 9 and 14, according to Brent Ross, a spokesperson for the ministry of the solicitor general.

“The removal of a large number of animals usually involves a high degree of logistics and planning to organize appropriate shelter and veterinarian care,” Ross said.

PAWS staff organized boarding facilities, shelters, humane societies, animal experts and veterinarians to provide shelter and care, he said.

The rescued dogs were moved to several different locations across the province but animal welfare services officials would not say where they were taken.

Dingman said the dogs were doing reasonably well, though she did not see them herself.

It is not known if any of the dogs will need to be euthanized but Dingman didn’t expect that would happen.

“From what I’ve been told I don’t see why they

wouldn’t be going up for adoption at some point,” she said.

“(Putting them down) is a last resort. Our end goal is either to get the dogs to a rescue or up for adoption and let them live out the rest of their lives the way they should. The ministry has the same goal.”

However, the dogs can’t go up for adoption until animal welfare services gives the go-ahead, Dingman said.

PAWS was established in January 2020 and now handles all animal abuse and welfare issues in Ontario.

The agency has received more than 69,000 calls related to issues of animal abuse since its inception, Ross told The Lake Report in an email.

Before that, humane societies would handle cases but now they are legally obligated to contact animal welfare and cannot take dogs in when abuse is suspected, Dingman said.

“If we have a dog that comes in as a stray that’s showing signs of neglect or abuse and the owner wants to claim the dog, we have to release the dog and immediately call the ministry,” she said.

Pups rescued from hoarding situations usually suffer from hair loss, dental issues and uncut nails, she said.

Persons charged with abusing animals can face up to two years in jail and a fine of \$150,000 for a first-time offence, according to the government of Ontario’s website.



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Editor-In-Chief: Richard Harley
Managing Editor: Kevin MacLean
Publisher: Niagara Now
Design & Layout: Richard Harley
Advertising: Rob Lamond, Lisa Jeffrey
Contributors: Evan Saunders, Jessica Maxwell, Jill Troyer, Tim Taylor, Bernard Lansbergen, Denise Ascenzo, Linda Fritz, Dr. William Brown, Brian Marshall, NOTL Museum, Kyra Simone, Gail Kendall, Norm Arsenaault, Patty Garriock, Steve Hardaker, Ross Robinson, Tim Carroll, NOTL Writers' Circle, Penny-Lynn Cookson, Janice White and many more members of the NOTL community

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COVID Tracker

NOTL active cases: 1
Region active cases: 51
Region deaths: 418
Region total cases: 16,311
Region resolved cases: 15,842

*July 21 data per Niagara Region Public Health



Contributed by Patty Garriock

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Editorial: Public information: Part 1

Kevin MacLean
 Managing Editor

The "open court" principle in Canada ensures that regular folks, the public, can trust that judicial matters are carried out fairly and openly, without bias or prejudice.

Many lay people don't understand that, other than instances involving minors, identities of sexual assault victims and many family law cases, most incidents that come before our courts are fully open to the public.

This means that anyone is free to watch, listen and, in the case of the media, report on what happens. And the vast majority of documents, including those used as exhibits, are supposed to be publicly available. Hence the term "public documents" is an important one in the court context.

The first cog in our justice system involves the police. They investigate and, in some cases, charge individuals, putting before the courts allegations to be weighed and tested by our independent judiciary.

In Canada, unlike some countries, everyone is



presumed innocent until proven otherwise and trials are conducted publicly to ensure that justice is not only done, but seen to be done, openly and fairly. This is crucial for all involved, from the accused, to the victim, to the families of those affected, among others.

And this practice is fundamental to the functioning of our free, open and democratic society.

Once a person (or sometimes a corporation) is charged with an offence and information about the case is put before the courts, the basic particulars (who, what, where, when, why) of the case should be readily available to the public and the media. And note, we are not talking about releasing evidence in advance of trials or details that could compromise an

investigation. Just basic information.

Unfortunately, in Niagara Region and in some other jurisdictions, that is not always the case. Information often is released selectively, at the sole discretion of the Niagara police bureaucracy, based on what the force decides should be available to the public or the media. This makes the police the enforcers of the law as well as the arbiters of what the public should know about any given incident. They are the gatekeepers.

In Niagara, it can be something as innocuous as what hospital a person has been taken to (a trauma unit at an out-of-town hospital, is a common phrase used by Niagara Regional Police). Or the street where an incident occurred. Or the name of a person killed. Or the name of someone

charged with an offence, serious or otherwise.

In many instances the information being withheld is neither newsworthy nor consequential enough that the media or people in the community will even care to know all the details. Sometimes it is vital information.

That's not the point. The Canadian principle remains that once charges are laid and cases are moved to the court system, this public information should be available.

However, it is disconcerting, to say the least, when someone dies on a public roadway and an individual faces charges related to the fatal incident – and our police shield the identity of the accused from the public. It opens a Pandora's Box of questions, concerns and doubts.

This has happened even though the police have submitted full information before the public courts.

It is plain wrong and an affront to the ideal of an "open" justice system.

Next: The cat-and-mouse game over who is accused.

editor@niagaranow.com

Saddened by loss of tender fruit orchards

Dear editor:

Growing up on a fruit farm with every type of peaches, plums, pears, cherries, strawberries and whatever Mom and Grandma grew in their gardens, we were truly blessed.

It's so sad to see most of the orchards around here disappearing and only rows upon rows of grapes being planted for the wine industry.

When one knows that tender fruit can grow only in certain soil and climate conditions like we have

here, I find these changes so distressing. You cannot grow peaches and nectarines just anywhere.

I've been told there is lots of money going to the government in the taxes on wine. Is that true?

Are people drinking more and more alcoholic beverages?

In the past year we have taken long drives through our town. We followed many different routes along various lines and concessions randomly turning off one to another.

Very, very few orchards could be seen – just rows and rows of grapes.

And then there's the development.

Just drive along Concession 4 past the former Mori Nursery and Garden Centre. The beautiful, healthy, mature row of spruce trees next to the former garden centre disappeared almost overnight.

Now we look at piles of concrete.

The row of cedars along the other side of the road

that used to shelter some of the greenhouses has disappeared too.

What does this developer have against mature trees? Is he not aware that they are vital in purifying the air, fighting climate change, sheltering birds and other wildlife – let alone providing some shade for exhausted workers to shelter in the shade?

I have to admit it – I'm feeling very sad these days.

Charlotte Letkemann
 NOTL

Opposition to 'traditional marriage' sign is intolerant

Dear editor:

I am infuriated that a resident from Virgil in NOTL was condemned by the LGBTQ community for displaying a sign showing he was in a "traditional marriage" (ie. male/female).

The newspaper published his name and address while failing to publish the addresses of the two nearby LGBTQ residents whose sensitivity was obviously offended.

If members of the LG-

BTQ community have been upset with the traditional marriage sign displayed in Virgil, perhaps they will give a thought to the many residents in NOTL who are equally upset with the suggestion of installing

a rainbow crosswalk and painted benches in the town to exhibit the LGBTQ's own agenda.

Who is being intolerant here?

Jean O'Malley
 NOTL



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The kind of neighbour **Lukas Smith** was



Dear editor:

Lukas Smith, who died after being hit by a car last weekend, built and owned a house on Wilberforce Avenue in the Chautauqua neighbourhood.

He ran it as an Airbnb and was very concerned that his guests not disturb our neighbourhood.

He left his card with some of us so we could

contact him if there ever was a problem, but we never needed to. He was very selective about who stayed in his home.

When we had a major snowstorm this past winter, he showed up with his snowblower.

He not only looked after his house, but cleared the driveways for many on our street. He would not take

any money.

When we suggested that we could give some money to his young son who was helping him, he said, no. He wanted his son to learn that you just do things for people because you should.

That was our neighbour. What a very sad loss.

**Peggy Hooke
NOTL**

Canada **must rescue** Afghan translators now

Dear editor:

Every time we turn on our TVs or pick up a newspaper we are reminded of the way our early governments treated the Indigenous people.

Our present government leaders cannot undo the sins of past governments, but if they act in any way like they have in the past their actions will be totally inadequate. The actions of their predecessors were deplorable, to say the very least.

Now fast-forward to the 21st century and we have

another decision to be made by our present government. If we do not want another black eye by taking too long in deciding to help the Afghan translators who assisted our troops and saved their lives.

Our government must stop the delays and act now. Will the bureaucrats in Ottawa get these faithful people and their families out of their country in time to prevent their deaths?

Insisting on following certain immigration rules will result in those who helped us in being tortured

and killed by Taliban forces, who are overrunning their country.

If the translators and their families do not get the passes needed to enter Canada before the Taliban overruns the country and kills those whom they call traitors, we as a nation will once again have blood on our hands.

We realize that immigration rules are necessary, but not at a time like this for these people. Forget the rules before it's too late to be able to save their lives.

Have some concern for

those whose actions were so beneficial to our troops. They were there for us when we needed them. Now be there for them in their time of need.

Prime Minister Justin Trudeau must respond to this urgent request and have some compassion for these faithful servants.

We must not desert them. The U.S. government is removing its translators and their families by the end of the month. We must do the same thing.

**Tom Thornton
NOTL**

'Are you fully vaccinated?' is the **real** question

Dear editor:

It was great to get back in the gym at the NOTL Community Centre on Saturday morning. Finally, at least in this country, we are seeing light at the end of the tunnel.

To enter the facility I was required to answer a

few COVID-related questions:

Have you been out of the country in the past 14 days? No.

Do you have any of the following symptoms ... ? No.

Are you living with or have you come in contact

with anyone with COVID-19? No.

But wait, aren't you going to ask me another question?

The most important of all! Are you fully vaccinated against COVID-19?

With a mountain of irrefutable evidence and as

our governments justifiably exert immense energy reminding us that getting vaccinated is the key to getting back to normal and saving lives, why on earth is this not the first question to be asked?

**Perry Hartwick
NOTL**

Town, DSBN need to **reopen** NOTL class spaces

Dear editor:

In a letter to the editor last fall I stressed that the District School Board of Niagara's policy of closing schools in NOTL and putting students on buses to larger schools in NOTL or secondary schools outside of town was dangerous because of COVID.

Closing and busing was never a good idea from an academic perspective; now it is a health issue as well.

The delta variant has

made it clear that there will be no return to "normal." Our town council and the DSBN must move to keep our children in our town, in smaller classes and therefore safer.

The present minister of education is moving toward a 15-student limit per class. Is there a way that NOTL could move this summer to reopen Parliament Oak, Col. John Butler and Virgil schools to provide space at the elementary level?

As well, the property and building that comprised Niagara District Secondary School is operational and could be used immediately.

I would hope that the current owners of those properties would have some compassion for NOTL students and allow the town and/or the DSBN to lease these spaces for students for the next couple of years.

There isn't time to build new schools in NOTL. This will be dif-

ficult for everyone. Response to COVID is not easy for anyone.

If any students in this town have to ride buses or leave NOTL to attend classes in overcrowded schools in St. Catharines or Niagara Falls, both the DSBN and our town council should be held responsible for the inevitable health consequences.

**Don MacDougall
NOTL**

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Let's **not rush** to reopen U.S. border yet

Dear editor:

All residents of Niagara-on-the-Lake and, indeed, the Niagara region benefit from open borders with the United States.

It is probably correct to say that our economy depends a great deal on visitors from the U.S. and they have been welcome here for over a century.

We all live quite close to the border and most of us have interacted with American tourists inadvertently or socially or commercially over the years.

Such interaction has consequences, both good and bad.

I, and Niagarans I speak to, do not yet, however, wish to see the border opened up to large-scale flow of non-essential traffic.

The U.S. is still tens of millions of people away from even the first dose of vaccination and given the mindset of so many Americans in certain parts of their country, will likely never achieve any kind of so-called "herd immunity."

Instead, America will see the continuation of pandemic hot spots and will fight a constant battle to put out the small, localized outbreaks of COVID-19 that will inevitably continue.

These outbreaks are sparked by people carrying COVID out of the hot spots and infecting people in already "cleared" areas, especially areas where the population is anti-vaccination.

Canada needs to protect its own population, espe-

cially in view of the more serious consequences of being ill with COVID now coming to light, even after recovery and vaccination.

Instead, let's encourage the already substantial flow of Ontarians and Canadians from all over our country to experience all the natural beauty of the region, the cuisine and, of course, the excellent wines, complemented by a burgeoning micro-brewing scene and local distilleries.

Kaspar Pold
NOTL



Parliament Oak should be **a school**

Dear editor:

Further to Brian Marshall's July 8 Arch-i-text column, "NOTL must take control of development," the former Parliament

Oak school should be a school and the old NOTL hospital should be a new hospital

Brian Emes
NOTL

Thanks to town for finding **alternate location** for tai chi classes

Dear editor:

The seniors in my class and I would like to give a very big thank you to Coun. Erwin Wiens and parks and recreation manager Kevin Turcotte who worked to find an alternative venue for our tai chi (taiji) classes.

We appreciated the support from Lord Mayor Betty Disero and all those who assisted us as well. Prior to this resolution, the concern that we had is

described below.

According to the Stage 3 reopening on July 16, gyms and fitness centres are allowed to open with limitations. In our NOTL Community Centre, the upper level gym is open, but not the ground floor rooms for fitness classes, which will open in September.

This delay of classes affects the seniors in our community unfairly. I am a senior myself. Most seniors need specific ex-

ercise classes for balance to prevent falls. Unable to recover from injuries due to falls, they may end up in long-term care homes. This is a situation most seniors want to avoid.

There have been numerous studies done to find the best exercise modality for seniors to prevent falls. Harvard Health Publishing (part of Harvard Medical School) and Consumer Reports referred to an analysis of 10 studies

involving 2,600 patients published in the Journal of the American Geriatrics Society in 2017.

It found that "older adults who participated in one- to three-hour tai chi sessions each week for up to 26 weeks lowered their fall risk by 43 per cent and cut in half their likelihood of injuring themselves as a result of a fall."

Most surprising: the analysis also suggested that tai chi worked bet-

ter than other approaches such as physical therapy, balance training, resistance exercises, stretching, or yoga to prevent falls.

Although we were allowed to practise taiji outdoors in the park this summer, many seniors in my group have balance issues and problems with heat. Speaking for the seniors in my group, I presented our situation to the town. At our ages, we do not have the luxury of time to keep

waiting.

We were thrilled when we were offered the air-conditioned Mary Snider room in the Virgil arena to practise our Taiji-Flow right now. We greatly appreciate the compassion shown to seniors in this community by our town representatives, who found a resolution to our problem.

Yimlei Molly Yep
Autumn Leaf Taiji
NOTL

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Beware the modern-day highwaymen

J. Richard Wright
Special to The Lake Report

Most of us have probably heard of Dick Turpin, a notorious British highwayman who cashed in his chips in 1739 after being found guilty of appropriating a horse that wasn't exactly his.

However, before his inglorious end, this rogue roamed the highways and byways of merry old England lifting purses from gentlemen and ladies alike at the business end of a musket.

As the trap door springs and the rope drops for our anti-hero, fast-forward 260 or so years to the story of another highwayman who was charged with the public trust by Ontarians.

Unfortunately, these citizens had no idea that, when voted into power, he would take something that rightfully belonged to them and sell it for a song.

First conceived in the 1950s, after 10 years of construction, Ontario's 407 toll highway opened in 1997. The idea was that taxpayers would repay its construction costs through usage fees. After an estimated 30 years (six years from now) the highway would be free to all travellers.

It took Premier Mike Harris slightly more than a year to lust over the 407 and its



Richard Wright holds the bill for his very expensive adventure on Hwy. 407. SUPPLIED

potential salability.

In typical Conservative mode, he took a public asset that belonged to Ontario taxpayers and sold it in the largest privatization deal in the province's history. The price: \$3.1 billion for a 99-year lease.

Some government watchdogs called it a bargain-basement price, others said it was a sweetheart deal. For the purchasers, that is, not the people of Ontario.

Were Harris's motivations as pure as the driven snow oozing out of a Conservative philosophy of small government, few regulations, and private commercialization of public assets?

Or, facing voters once again, was he trying to balance the budget to get re-elected in 1999? (Quoting a figure who remains in the shadows: "Who knows what evil lurks in the hearts of man?")

Considering that the 407 company declared revenues of \$1.5 billion in 2020, and it was sold for \$3.1 billion nearly 23 years ago, one can only wonder.

Of course, the \$1.5 billion isn't free and clear. There are expenses and stipulations and obligations to be met.

What is clear, however, is that Harris allowed the 407 to set its own rates and Ontario now has, arguably, the most expensive toll road in the world, even beating out Austria and Switzerland and the USA's Pennsylvania Turnpike.

And, despite ownership changing hands to subsequent consortiums of highwaymen, Ontarians can look forward to paying through the schnoz for 77 more years to use it.

Safely ensconced in the grotto/paradise of Niagara-on-the-Lake, this NOTLer didn't dither about the rights

or wrongs or costs of the 407. At least until I had occasion to travel to the far side of Toronto.

But what's a couple of dollars, eh? So I used the 407 from Burlington to Brock Road, near Pickering. And came home the same way.

A little over a week later, the sky darkened, thunder rolled and the bill from the 407 arrived.

Citizens of Niagara-on-the-Lake, gather round and listen closely.

The charges were thus: Basic toll charges: \$104.08. Trip toll charges for two trips (one going and one coming) at \$1 per trip for a total of \$2; camera charges each way were \$4.20 for a total of \$8.40. Account fee was \$3.95. Then a toll charge of \$1.72 for Highway 412 and 418, wherever they are.

The grand total: \$120.15 for the trip to and fro. Or, 21 Big Macs. Or, a flight to Florida, and most of the way back, from across the river.

Indeed, mea culpa. And I expected to pay. But \$120.15? Talk about a bunch of highwaymen! Dick Turpin would be so envious.

J. Richard Wright is a Niagara-on-the-Lake author with two novels, more than 50 radio and TV plays, and more than 2,000 articles to his credit.

Cyclists and drivers need to be more aware

Dear editor:

On my way in to Virgil this past Sunday morning, I witnessed a near-miss that, had it happened, would have been catastrophic.

A car came zipping out of a driveway on Niagara Stone Road and narrowly missed a cyclist. The cyclist swerved into the road and the car quickly swerved onto the shoulder.

Thankfully, the cyclist was wearing a helmet and was obviously aware of their surroundings. The car then continued zipping along through the roundabout, never really slowing down.

As I continued toward Virgil, at the business across from Crossroads I noticed a large group of people getting ready for a bike ride. Not a helmet in sight.

On my way home, a car in front of me ran the stop sign on Carlton Street at Niagara Stone Road and sped away.

I've noticed large groups of cyclists in NOTL – and why not? It's a beautiful place to live and visit. However, these groups seem to think that driving two and three across is OK and that wearing helmets is optional. Having lived on Niagara Stone Road for most of my life, I know how scary busy the road is. Speed limits are treated as suggestions. I've been passed on both sides while waiting to turn into my driveway.

We tell anyone who visits that one never backs onto Niagara Stone Road – always drive out. It's just too scary otherwise.

And I know that the sur-

rounding roads can be just as frightening.

What I don't understand is how people are willing to get on a bicycle on these roads, without a helmet. The risk is just so high. And then maybe go do a winery tour? Even worse. Inhibitions and reaction times are down.

I've seen groups of kids and adults on bikes. Kids are wearing helmets, adults aren't. So if the adults are hit by a car, who's going to take care of them? The kids?

So what's the solution? Drivers need to slow down and cyclists need to observe road rules. And take safety seriously.

Maybe if the wineries gave a discount to cyclists who wear a helmet, there'd

be more buy-in.

It doesn't take much to create an accident; they happen so quickly.

And to anyone who believes a helmet isn't necessary, think on this: Do you have your person picked out? You know, the one who will be there to care for you, to wash you, to lift you into your chair, to feed you, to dress you. Because a traumatic head injury changes life. For the injured person and for everyone around them.

For the love of all that's good, drivers, please slow down, and cyclists, put a helmet on your head. And wear it properly.

It's not hard. Neither is your head.

*Audrey Wall
NOTL*

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Pauline Reimer Gibson
Audiologist

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Council roundup: More feedback sought on gateway project

Evan Saunders
Local Journalism Initiative
The Lake Report

Niagara-on-the-Lake councillors have decided to give the public two more weeks to offer their comments on the proposed gateway at the intersection of Mississagua and Queen streets.

The current design featuring a 25-foot obelisk has sparked some loud, negative feedback, prompting the extension.

“I think we’re gilding the lily here by erecting a tower in a community where we have lots of existing, beautiful genuine assets that have been here so long,” Coun. Clare Cameron told committee of the whole Monday night during a marathon six-and-a-half-hour session.

Cameron expressed her displeasure that this was the only design presented to council, when there was an alternative design by the Seferian Design Group. She requested that a previous concept, known as the “The Origin” design, also be made available for public



A proposed design for a new gateway into Old Town. SOURCED

and council consideration instead of just the obelisk design.

The \$250,000 project is funded by a donation by NOTL philanthropist Gerry Kowalchuk.

Lord Mayor Betty Disero expressed support for the controversial design.

“Believe me, I’m not a heritage planner nor am I an artist,” she said. “I do have some questions about

the obelisk, though, and whether or not that represents Niagara-on-the-Lake.”

The town’s online Join the Conversation page will open on July 27 and close on Aug. 22. Both designs presented by Seferian at a May 27 communities in bloom meeting will be included on the page.

The town is aiming to begin construction on the gateway in spring 2022.

Ontario. Phragmites release toxins from their roots into the soil to kill surrounding plants and outcompete them for water and sunlight, according to the provincial government.

Shipping delays due to COVID-19 caused the price to be \$8,046 more than originally intended.

New breathing apparatus for NOTL firefighters

A \$415,615 debenture was approved by councillors to aid in purchasing self-contained breathing apparatus for the fire department.

The total cost of the new equipment is projected to be \$902,630.

“Self-contained breathing apparatus are an essential component in protecting the health and safety of firefighters, providing the firefighter with the ability to breathe and communicate in hazardous atmospheres,” a report from NOTL staff says.

The town currently has 66 units, 18 of which have had critical failures. The

units are over 10 years old and in need of replacement, the report said.

Fireworks restrictions

Council has tasked town staff with drafting a report that comments on restricting the sound level of fireworks.

The “quiet fireworks” referred to by staff rank around 75 decibels in sound, compared to the 120 for regular fireworks, according to Coun. Norm Arsenault.

The reports are not expected to come about for six months, chief administrative officer Marnie Cluckie told councillors.

Public input will be sought at a future date regarding any firework restrictions.

Ryerson Park renaming

Councillors unanimously expressed their support for the renaming of Ryerson Park in consultation with the Niagara Regional Native Centre.

Phragmite-fighting tractors

The Town of Niagara-on-the-Lake spent \$416,046 on the purchase of a tractor and specialized equipment to help in the battle against phragmites, according to a report endorsed Monday.

Phragmites are an invasive species of perennial grass that causes damage to ecosystems across



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New Simcoe Park bioswale filtering human bacteria

Continued from Front Page

at. As long as more than 80 per cent of tests come back within the safe range, the results are considered acceptable.

“Our target for the remedial action plan is that the levels of bacteria are below the guidelines for safe swimming at least 80 per cent of the time,” Green said.

At least twice in summer of 2020, in June and July, water tests showed high levels of E. coli bacteria.

However, overall, for the last three years, the beach has met the safe swimming target, Green said. In 2020, 90.5 per cent of tests met the safe-to-swim standard.

“We’ve been monitoring this site since the ‘90s probably and the last three years have been the best years, and it’s because we’ve been doing a lot of different actions in the town to try to improve that water. We knew where particular sources (of bacteria) were and we were targeting them specifically.”

Some of the work included fixing storm and waste water sewers, which had been leaking and causing bacteria from human waste to enter the storm water sewers that drain at Queen’s Royal Beach.

From 2010 to 2015 there were studies done to identify potential sources of bacteria entering the river. One of the sources identified was the storm drain at Queen’s Royal Beach.

From 2017 to 2019, the town received \$235,000 funding from the province and federal government to do a full investigation



A sign will be installed at Simcoe Park explaining the bioswale. SUPPLIED

of the sewer catchment area of the storm sewers, “which shouldn’t carry human sources of bacteria,” Green said.

The total cost of the remediation project was \$998,285.

Storm sewers normally only carry runoff from the road and land, while sanitary sewers transport human waste.

She said the town identified a number of sources of bacteria entering the storm sewers. One of them was raccoons living in the sewer.

The town installed raccoon prevention grates to stop them from entering the sewer, “so that the raccoons couldn’t get in there and have families and defecate in the sewer systems.”

The other problem was that broken sewer infrastructure was allowing bacteria from human waste to get into the storm sewers.

“The joints were offset where sometimes there were cracks in the pipes, so there was what’s called infiltration. The yucky water was getting into the storm water,” Green said.

The town fixed those pipes and lined them to prevent the problem.

The biggest cause, though, Green said, was coming from down the road at Simcoe Park where three storm drains that collected water from elsewhere drained into the park.

“Those were major sources of bacteria, human bacteria, from issues in the storm system. And the solution there was to build, it’s called the bioswale, it’s like a mini water treatment plant in the park,” she said.

It collects the dirty water and after storms or when snow melts, “it all goes to a particular location that’s been redesigned and engi-

neered to capture that water, hold it back, let it filter out.”

“There’s mulch and sand and gravel and native plants in that part of Simcoe Park, and it filters it out before then it goes to the next pipe, which then eventually leads to Queen’s Royal Beach.”

She said the bioswale alone is 89 per cent effective at removing bacteria from the water.

“And monitoring again at those sites shows that there’s no human sources any more of bacteria coming out of the storm outfall at Queen’s Royal Beach. So we’ve dealt with all those issues.”

She said there are natural sources of bacteria in the water, such as animal waste and bacteria from disturbed sand, which means it will never be 100 per cent clean.

“The important part is that there’s a target or a threshold to meet to make sure that it’s safe. So if the

bacteria is below a particular level, then it’s safe for swimming, and the risk to human health is fairly low,” she said.

When the levels of bacteria are high, beaches are posted as unsafe to swim.

Green is excited about the remedial action – and the bioswale.

“It’s a nature-based solution to a water quality problem, so we use native plants in that particular location that are good at tolerating water, and can be flooded with water every once in a while because when there’s a lot of storm water it’ll fill up. But there’s different things flowering at different times, so not only does it help water, it helps be a food source for butterflies and for bees and for other insects in the area.”

The dirty water naturally seeps through the rock, mulch and the gravel, “and that cleans it,” she said.

The bioswale was built in spring of 2020 and was monitored all summer.

“Every time there was a rainfall event we would have people going out and sampling the water, going in, going out, to make sure that it was working.”

Monitoring the water in a fast-moving river current is also challenging, but Green says the conservation authority suspects the storm drain had been affecting the water quality more than sources coming from the river.

“The current in the river does move fairly quickly, but that’s why we do monitoring three times a week,” she said.

Evidence suggests the remediation work has had a strong effect.

Green said there is some human waste bacteria coming from the Niagara River itself, from “upstream sources that we can’t necessarily control within our program,” but that it’s very low.

“There is always a low level in the background because wastewater treatment plants discharge to the river. There are other locations where that can happen but we know from our monitoring that those sources are very low and are not the main issue.”

The remedial work is part of a larger goal to protect the Niagara River and its ecosystem.

The Niagara River was listed in the 1980s as “one of many degraded Great Lakes locations,” she said.

“Degraded means historic pollution problems.”

“For the Niagara River the main issues were contaminants, historic forces of contaminants in the Niagara River, things like PCBs, that were produced locally and have now been banned, but are still lingering in the sediments, but mainly on the U.S. side,” she said.

“The loss of habitat is also a main issue for us that we’re still working on. And then the water quality problems related to human sources of bacteria, which is what brings us back to the beach closings and the beach postings that were happening in Niagara-on-the-Lake.”

Queen’s Royal is the only public beach located on the Niagara River, Green said.

“A lot of people think Queen’s Royal Beach is on Lake Ontario but it’s actually part of the Niagara River.”

Grace United Church takes innovative approach to reopening

John Sayers
Special to The Lake Report

July 18 seemed almost like a pre-pandemic Sunday at Grace United Church – except for (i) having to enter and exit the church via the side door to comply with provincial recordkeeping regulations and provide easier access for those with mobility issues; (ii) signing in and providing contact information; (iii) having to

wear a mask even during the singing of hymns; and (iv) being suitably socially distanced.

You’ve heard the expression “the new normal”? This past Sunday had the bittersweet feel of that new normal.

That’s the “bitter.” Here’s the “sweet.”

Like every other church in town, we have been closed down for well over a year. In fact, this week had been pre-

ceded by 70 Sundays without a Sunday morning service.

Like most other churches, we have been able to provide online services, in our case taped in the church on Thursdays, then edited and released to our website and to Facebook in time for Sunday morning worship at home.

But there is no substitute for real people worshipping together in a church on Sunday.

Our electronic presence

was thanks to Frank Giesbrecht, our member who is a master of camera and electronic wizardry. Over the period of taping, we enhanced our lighting and upgraded Frank’s camera because most people in this world have become accustomed to the slick productions of commercial television.

Even though we can’t match that – we can try! Should we have to shutter once more

(perish the thought), we are well along the learning curve. And, for a trial period, Frank will now be taping the Sunday services and putting them online for those who are unable to attend in person.

Our minister, Maureen Ellison, says she was blessed with the resource of Frank and his choirmaster and pianist wife Esther on Thursdays, and with the wholehearted support of the congregation

throughout.

Our attendance is still limited by provincial formula, so each week members will have to “apply” for a slot for the coming Sunday.

Pauline Miller, chair of the church council, will be the gatekeeper for the attendance numbers. It’s not perfect. And it may never be perfect. But it’s the new normal and we are pleased to be there and meeting in person once again.

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Farm Workers Hub provides necessities and connections

Evan Saunders
Local Journalism Initiative
The Lake Report

Niagara-on-the-Lake's inaugural Farm Workers Hub attracted more than 100 migrant workers Thursday night who turned out to receive donations from community members across the municipality.

The donations are available for farm workers only and can be picked up from the hub between 4 and 8 p.m. on Thursdays. There are over 1,000 seasonal workers in NOTL right now, according to organizer Julia Buxton-Cox.

"They're hard workers, so this is our way of saying thank you for being a good worker and a good neighbour," she told The Lake Report.

She emphasized the essential work that migrant workers perform, ensuring the success of the Canadian agricultural industry.

"The fact of the matter is that many Canadians don't want these jobs. These guys work really hard, it's minimum wage and they're very skilled workers."

With COVID-19 restrictions relaxing, organizers Dianne Hughes and Buxton-Cox felt it was the perfect time to open the store.

The hub is in a portable in the back parking lot of Cornerstone Community Church on Niagara Stone Road in Virgil. The church has loaned the portable to them throughout the summer.

Some of the workers have been coming every summer for 25 years or more, Buxton-Cox noted.

One wall of the portable was dedicated to displaying



Top: Uton poses next to a photo of his father in a grey suit back home in Portland, Jamaica. Photos of migrant workers families were collected by the Niagara-on-the-Lake Public Library in 2015 for an art exhibit. Bottom: Dianne Hughes started working with Niagara Workers Welcome four years ago. This is the first year she and Julia Buxton-Cox have been able to host a physical hub for farmworkers to acquire donated items. EVAN SAUNDERS

pictures of farm workers' families from back home, collected by the NOTL Public Library for an exhibit several years ago.

The hub has items ranging from long-sleeve shirts, sweaters, jeans and other clothing items to plates, utensils, bath towels and

household necessities that farm workers need upon arriving in Canada.

"Everything we have has been graciously donated

by the community, which is why we can pass it along at no cost to the workers," Buxton-Cox said.

She and Dianne Hughes have been working for several years with the Niagara Workers Welcome project, which undertakes a myriad of programs to help migrant workers in the region, such as hosting social events to introduce them to the community.

"Different situations came up. Sometimes emergency food situations, like if they get sick and they can't earn money, they need food. We gave them clothes because it's not the responsibility of the farmer to clothe the workers," Hughes said.

She said she was originally preparing welcome packages for the workers consisting of small food items, socks, Advil and other small essentials.

"We want to walk alongside the farmers in helping care for the farm workers while they are here. That's really the goal: as a community to come together and welcome our friends on the farm."

Niagara Workers Welcome has been doing deliveries for 15 years for farm workers. This year, Hughes and Buxton-Cox thought it better to host a physical store for workers to collect donations.

"It just sort of morphed into this," Hughes said.

Buxton-Cox said COVID-19 and the Black Lives Matter movement have highlighted the importance of migrant workers in Canada.

"With everything that's going on in the world, people are more keen than ever

to get involved and really be accepting of our friends on the farm," she said.

"We're at a tipping point in our community where people really want to know more about farm workers."

The pair were originally planning on expanding the hub to be open on Sundays as well. But, with a turnout of over 100 workers on their first evening, they don't think they'll have enough materials to be open more than once a week.

That's why the farm workers hub is still calling for donations from across the community.

Needed items include men's hoodies, long-sleeve button shirts, jeans and work pants sizes 32-38, rubber boots and lined winter boots sizes 8-13, pots and pans, and clock radios.

All items must be washed and cleaned before donation.

Items can be dropped off at the farm workers hub from 4 to 8 p.m. on Thursdays or delivered to Buxton-Cox's front porch in Chautauqua. She said she can be reached via Facebook or at 905-483-9717 to arrange drop off times.

They are also looking for volunteers to help sort and organize materials during opening hours on Thursdays.

Donating isn't the only way NOTL residents can help improve the time that migrant workers spend in Canada.

"It's really a simple thing: if you see a bunch of workers out in the field beep your horn and lift your hand. You'll see everyone in the field wave back. Just make them feel welcome," Buxton-Cox said.

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Mike Shatkosky
Owner

Unvaccinated urged to get jab

Kevin MacLean
The Lake Report

With the Delta variant growing, flu season on the horizon and children under 12 not yet eligible for COVID vaccines, NOTL pharmacist Sean Simpson worries people who have hesitated about getting the shot could cause serious problems for themselves and those youngsters who are unvaccinated.

Niagara – and Ontario – have done a good job of ensuring everyone who wants a COVID vaccine has been able to get one, Simpson said.

But kids under 12 are “going to be at higher risk and so the one thing that unvaccinated people can do if they’re eligible to be vaccinated is get the vaccine because it will help us to protect that vulnerable population until the time comes when they will be able to be vaccinated,” he said in an interview Tuesday.

Typically health care practitioners talk about protecting the older population when flu season is looming but kids can be vulnerable to the flu also, said Simpson.

With many of Ontario’s shutdown restrictions being lifted and more people socializing and congregating, he is concerned about both COVID and the flu being spread.

“As long as there’s a significant number of people that are unvaccinated there will be hospitalizations and there will be deaths” due to COVID, he said.

“We know that that’s largely unnecessary at this point. There’s ample (vaccine) supply available so



Pharmacy owner Sean Simpson is encouraging anyone who hasn’t had a vaccine to get the jab to protect themselves and their children. FILE/RICHARD HARLEY

if anybody’s on the fence, they literally can make a choice that not only they save their own life but to help save others.”

That attitude has generally resonated among Canadians, he said, which is why the country’s vaccination rollout has been “very successful.”

“But I think there’s still more work that we could do to protect others in our community and those around us.”

Simpson wants unvaccinated adults to know that they need not be worried about the serum.

“We’ve got thousands of people locally who have got the vaccine, not to mention, millions across the country and hundreds of millions, if not billions,

worldwide. So, we know these are safe and we know they’re effective.”

At his two pharmacies in Niagara-on-the-Lake, Simpson said they have whittled down a wait list that once had nearly 5,000 names on it.

Now, there are about 250 people waiting and he expects they will all have their shots within the next week or two. And for anyone who still needs their first shot, there should be no waiting, he said.

In fact, after several months of high demand “the phones aren’t ringing, the messages aren’t coming through at the same pace” now, he said.

Depending on the number of doses received at his stores in the coming

days, he anticipates having more serum available than people signed up.

The Virgil location is dispensing Pfizer while the Apothecary in Old Town is allotted Moderna.

Among those still seeking the jab, Simpson is seeing a shift in priorities. Now, with the possibility of travel on the horizon, more people are getting inoculated so they can vacation or visit loved ones.

As well, some people are inquiring about getting private COVID tests for travel or work, he said.

The rapid antigen test (\$30) and PCR screening (\$165) are both available but he cautioned people to check exactly which test authorities will accept if you’re travelling.

RIDDLE ME THIS

I am served at a table, In gatherings of two or four. Served small, white, and round. You’ll love some, and that’s part of the fun. What am I?

Last issue: Always in you, sometimes on you. If I surround you, I can kill you. What am I?

Answer: Water

Also accepted: Blood

Answered first by: Mary Drost

Also answered correctly (in order) by: Howard Jones, Maria Janeiro, Pam Dowling, Wade Durling, Charlotte and Gwendolyn Webber Mayeda, James Langendoen, John Venables, Robert Wilms, Sandra James, John Weinsis, Sylvia Wiens, Melanie Morris, Josh Langendoen, Terrie Courtlander, Marlene McCarthy, Susan Pohorly, Sheri Durksen, Tee Bucci

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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Chef Crawford opens up **BarBea** wine and snack bar

Richard Harley
The Lake Report

Chef Ryan Crawford is at it again, this time bringing a Spanish influence to his newest Niagara-on-the-Lake restaurant, BarBea,

The wine shop and snack bar is located next to Ruffino's Pasta Bar & Grill at the corner of Mississagua and Mary streets.

For Crawford and his partner Brett Rumble, the bar is a chance to celebrate Niagara wines in a warm and inviting environment.

"We sort of said it's the one stop shop for wine," Crawford said, noting the goal is to have 1,000 different wines available, including 100 by the glass.

"Our goal is to showcase Niagara against international wines, so all of our wines by the glass, we'll do, say, a Gamay from Ontario, then a Gamay from Beaujolais in France. We'll do a Riesling from Niagara and a Riesling from Germany, just to showcase how well we make wine in Niagara."

The restaurant will also serve up small plates of



Brett Rumble and Ryan Crawford sip wine at their newly-opened BarBea restaurant on Wednesday. RICHARD HARLEY

food inspired by the Basque Country in Spain, as well as a raw bar serving up plenty of seafood.

Crawford also plans featured cocktails, something his restaurants have become known for.

In another signature Crawford move, the restaurant will highlight ingredients from Niagara, mainly from his farm, as well as foraged mushrooms and foods from

around the region.

One of the items is a tortilla made with chanterelle mushrooms foraged by NOTL resident Andrew Ball.

Another is a pepper dish with fresh farm peppers.

Crawford said he also plans to start an oyster bar to carry on a tradition started by the Stone Road Grille, which was located on the site several years ago. Crawford took over the space and

eventually turned it into Ruffino's.

"We're trying to bring that back," he said.

BarBea isn't an extension of Ruffino's, but an entirely different restaurant, with different food, a different wine focus, Crawford noted.

Still, Rumble said people will be able to walk through both restaurants.

"You can travel through two different spaces and

enjoy two different experiences," she said.

"Different parts of the world," Crawford added.

While the restaurant will have plenty of food options, the focus is on wine, they said.

"Niagara needs a place where people who don't have time to go to every single winery can come and experience great Niagara wines. We're trying to curate, I

guess we call it, Niagara's top 100 — trying to curate that so people can come do that, if you don't have time to travel."

He said it's also a great spot for locals to grab a bottle of wine, noting bottles are priced "extremely competitively" to the LCBO.

With the heavy wine focus, Crawford also will open a wine members club, giving people wines hand-picked by him and Rumble.

"It's giving people a chance to try some fun wines that we've sort of chosen through our tastings and our experiences and our travels."

Crawford said his new venture is really just another option for people to grab a glass of wine after work.

They hope it will also be a spot where people in the wine industry come to hang out and drink wine.

The restaurant will be open late, he said, though he's not entirely sure how late just yet.

The restaurant opens on Friday, with a special soft opening on Wednesday and Thursday.

Our **WINE SHOP & SNACK BAR** is the kind of destination where you can spend a leisurely afternoon or evening exploring new wines from Niagara's largest selection of VQA & International wines. Enjoy a glass or two of wine & some tapas, or stock up for a dinner party at home. Our chic & welcoming atmosphere encourages socializing with friends and fellow wine lovers. Our knowledgeable wine and culinary team allows for a sense of discovery. Think of us as your onestop shop for wine!

Cheers, Ryan, Brett & Family

****Come in with a filled out wine club form & have a glass of wine on us****



BAR BEA

Sommelier Selected & Chef Tested Wines

Do you love wine and want to bring Chef Crawford's BarBea wine experience home on the regular? After living in Niagara for almost 20 Years Chef Ryan Crawford has become fully immersed in the local wine scene. He has built strong relationships with winemakers local and afar. In this exclusive wine club subscription he looks to introduce you to some of the roads less traveled in the world of wine. Each quarter Chef Ryan's BarBea restaurant will send you 5 wines that are sommelier selected from Ryan's inner circle. Ryan will also include a little something from the kitchen that will help you round out an experience at home. Each case will also include a newsletter about the season, visits with winemakers & grape growers and information from each of the wineries. Our first shipment will go out the in the first week of August. We have three different options, because wine isn't one-size-fits-all.

The Niagara Local Club is a quarterly selection of unique wines from Niagara. Sommelier Selected & Chef Tested. (August, November, February, May)

The International Sipper Club is a quarterly selection of low intervention wines from Chef Crawford's travels & tastings. Each wine has a story: we're sure you'll love tasting each one. (September, December, March, June)

The 500 Club is the best of the best. A bit more expensive but worth every penny! Because sometimes you need that special wine. (October, January, April, July)

Join one, or you can join them all to receive 5 wines each month!! Cheers, Ryan

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Couple brings Italian art experience to Willowbank

Gail Kendall
Special to The Lake Report

Two visual artists are bringing their experience as art teachers in Florence, Italy, to Niagara-on-the-Lake.

Sharon Okun and her husband Adam Markovic will be opening a cultural hub, part gallery, part studio and classroom, where artists and creators in different disciplines will produce and display their work while offering classes and/or workshops in their own separate studios (former classrooms) at the newly named Willowbank Studio in Queenston.

The Willowbank Studio will be operating out of the former Laura Secord Elementary School at 5 Walnut St.

The couple is hoping their new workshop will offer a bit of relief from what the world has gone through since the pandemic began in March 2020.

Okun appreciates the positive enthusiasm their work provides and feels it is a small window into something other than the darkness of all that has been going on in the world.

She and Markovic met in 2008 while studying painting in Florence and have been living and working together ever since. They have been represented by galleries in Canada, Belgium, Italy, the United States and the U.K.

Together, they've been able to sustain a life as working artists and a large part of that has been as teachers.

They began in 2009 by establishing "Studio Santo Spirito," an atelier in the heart of Florence.

There they taught the painting techniques of 16th- to 19th-century masters. Students were guided through beginning portraiture, still life and figure drawing, with an emphasis on the importance of observing directly from life.

Also included in the curriculum were discussions on the history of art and workshops on the proper use of traditional art materials. Students were given extensive training in colour



Sharon Okun and Adam Markovic are opening a cultural hub and art gallery at Willowbank Studio in Queenston. GAIL KENDALL

theory and were shown how to grind their own paint from raw pigment, how to prepare traditional substrates and various painting mediums, varnishes, inks and stains.

In 2012, they brought their knowledge and appreciation of art and history back to Canada. Here, they have continued their careers as artists, painting for exhibitions and teaching workshops. First they lived in Montreal, and for the last year have been in Paris, Ont.

Markovic also has extensive experience as a designer and woodworker. His bespoke furniture is included in private collections across Canada, the United States and Italy. He has also been involved in many renovation projects, including restaurant interiors, high-end residential lofts and the conversion of industrial spaces into residential/work space.

Okun's family has deep roots in the Niagara area. In 1918, her grandfather established what would become Rosberg's Department Store in Niagara Falls.

Her grandfather, Harold Rosberg, transformed the menswear store into a three-storey complex that

included numerous departments and businesses serving the communities of the region. The store was the main anchor of the downtown area and was operated by three generations of Rosbergs until it closed in 1988.

Moving to Niagara allows Okun and Markovic to be closer to their collectors who are either in the area or Toronto. In addition, they will be inviting visiting lecturers from Toronto.

Brett Sherlock, a NOTL native and part-time Willowbank teacher, encouraged Okun and Markovic to look at Queenston as a place to set up shop.

He had seen them in Montreal in their studio, an old school that had been converted into lofts. He posed for a portrait with Okun and put the thought of a school, Markovic's ability to build things and their desire to return to the Niagara area together, resulting in their discovering the perfect location for their studio in Queenston.

The Willowbank Studio space has been empty for 12 years except for a stained glass shop and some downstairs classrooms that are being used while the main Willowbank campus is renovated.

On Sherlock's advice, they drove down to Queenston and immediately fell in love. They found it to be very peaceful, quiet and less touristy than other areas of NOTL.

"We're definitely drawn to the magic of the building, the fact that it does have such a rich history and that the town is so connected to it is something we are very aware of," says Markovic.

On first seeing the school, both Okun and Markovic thought it was too good to be true. It was the perfect place and exactly what their vision was for a studio. Their desire and dream studio was to each have a separate, but connected, personal space. Add on some workshop areas and spaces for other creatives and the Queenston building offered up all they wanted.

Their first experience driving through Queenston was in November and each time they drove past the school, as Markovic said, he would "feel a little sick in the stomach" because they wanted it so bad.

Both appreciate that there is no commercial aspect to Queenston, just a quiet, little village with a huge historical influence — perfect for the work they produce.

Six months after Mar-

kovic submitted his written proposal, the Willowbank board approved the plan and the couple took over the school in June.

The main goal is to create a culturally rich centre that is versatile enough to let Okun and Markovic have their own studios to produce their work, a gallery for exhibitions, and space for workshops and classes.

Markovic explains that the rooms have "ample hanging walls and as soon as they get the lighting figured out, it will make a nice gallery."

Walking into this space fills one with nostalgia. They have kept the essence of the space intact. The main room is a paint apothecary, where all the materials will be made, from paint to stretchers to panels, and workshops conducted on paint-making.

Inspired by an apothecary in Florence that sells all raw materials from pigments, Markovic wanted to replicate that feel. He repurposed all the material from the building, including wainscoting, shelving, chalkboards and tried to keep things as authentic as possible. There are still pencil sharpeners and the old intercom system on the wall.

Okun's room is a large classroom, steps from the main room. It displays some completed art pieces as well as some in progress and still on the easel.

A small collection of what looks like vintage photographs, which are actually paintings, are scattered around the room and you could spend hours just taking in the talent displayed in her artwork. An impressive collection of brushes and oil paints sit atop a large, wheeled cabinet that can be moved about.

There will be ample space to display Okun's art, with plans to offer evening painting classes, art materials workshops and life drawing sessions for the community.

Next door is Markovic's room, another large classroom with his art displayed on the walls. During COVID, Markovic changed everything about

his approach to painting. Okun remained figurative in her work, meaning she represents forms that are recognizably derived from life, but Markovic took a leap and started doing more abstract work.

They both experimented more with textures and tend to feed off of each other's creativity.

They have come to appreciate having a separation of home and studio. They spend hours each day now at the studio, returning home in the evening. They feel they are more productive and less procrastinating when their studio is not part of their home.

"Now that we don't live in our studio, it's really nice to leave and come back fresh," says Markovic.

"I think we will work longer days to get things done," adds Okun.

They are searching for the right people to come and take on the other rooms in the building. Makers who have studied the past and are bringing it into the present would be their preference; those of who work hands on with carpentry, ceramics, instruments to name a few.

Depending on provincial restrictions, they hope to host an open door event in the fall to welcome and thank the community for their support.

They look to offer adult classes, maybe an outdoor seating area for a community gathering space and perhaps a small exhibition of their work.

"We feel like Queenston gave us this beautiful building and we want to give something back," says Markovic.

"We feel very honoured to be in this beautiful historical site at the hub of what feels to us like the prettiest town in Canada," says Okun.

"We know how important that building is for the community and it is our mandate to infuse it with art and beauty. We are very excited about this new opportunity that Willowbank has given us and we look forward to opening our doors to visitors when COVID is under control."



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SPORTS & LEISURE

		<p>NOTICE OF ELECTRONIC OPEN HOUSE AND ELECTRONIC PUBLIC MEETING</p>
	<p>What:</p>	<p>Notice of Virtual Public Consultation Meeting Niagara-on-the-Lake Transportation Master Plan (TMP)</p>  
	<p>When:</p>	<p>Public Meetings:</p> <p>Thursday, July 29, 2021, from 2:00 p.m. - 3:00 p.m. Thursday, July 29, 2021, from 6:00 p.m. - 7:00 p.m.</p>
	<p>Where:</p>	<p>The Electronic Open House and Electronic Public Meeting may be recorded and will be available for viewing at the following link: https://livestream.com/notl</p>
	<p>Regarding:</p>	<p>The Town of Niagara-on-the-Lake is developing a Transportation Master Plan (TMP). The TMP will serve as a long-range strategic plan for the Town that addresses existing challenges and opportunities, supports growth, and recommends policies to that support an efficient, multi-modal transportation network including vehicular, bicycle, pedestrian, and transit mobility. The study will provide an assessment of the Town's transportation improvement needs to the 2031 horizon and will provide recommendations for operational, design, and transportation policies that the Town uses to manage its transportation infrastructure.</p>
	<p>What is this?</p>	<p>We are hosting the second round of Virtual Public Consultation Meetings to share our progress on the Master Plan and to receive your feedback on our evaluation of the transportation network and recommended solutions. The Public Consultation Meeting will be hosted online using the Microsoft Teams platform and will include a presentation by the project team followed by a live Question and Answer Session.</p>
	<p>Niagara-on-the-Lake Town Hall is closed to the public due to the COVID-19 emergency and in-person meetings have been cancelled. As permitted under Provincial legislation and the Town's Procedural By-law, Council and Committee meetings are being conducted electronically during the declared state of emergency.</p>	<p>You are invited to attend these meetings electronically to gather information and provide input regarding this matter.</p> <p>If you wish to participate and make an oral presentation or ask questions at the Electronic Public Meeting, you must register in advance with Town Staff as noted below. Following registration, you will be provided with instructions to connect to the Public Meeting on your computer, tablet or telephone.</p> <p>Public Meeting –Bobbie-Jo Talarico, Administrative Assistant, Operations(bobbiejo.talarico@notl.com or 905-468-3266 ext. 302) (register as soon as possible but prior to 12 noon on Monday, July 26, 2021)</p> <p>Written comments are encouraged and must be submitted to Bobbie-Jo Talarico, Administrative Assistant bobbiejo.talarico@notl.com, at 1593 Four Mile Creek Road, P.O. Box 100, Virgil, ON L0S 1T0 or via email at referencing the above file number. Unless indicated otherwise, all submissions, including personal information, will become part of the public record.</p>
	<p>For more information:</p>	<p>The presentation, along with a summary of the Question and Answers will be posted on the project webpage following the meeting: www.jointheconversationnotl.org/TransportationMasterPlan. On the project webpage you will also find information on the study, key dates and events, and further opportunities to submit input to the project team.</p> <p>For more information regarding this matter, please contact:</p> <p>Mike Komljenovic, Engineering Supervisor at 905-468-3266 ext. 240 or via email at mike.komljenovic@notl.com. or</p> <p>Brian Putre, Project Manager, Stantec Consulting Ltd. at 437-991-7213 or via email at Brian.Putre@stantec.com</p>
	<p>If you wish to be notified of the future decision with respect to the Transportation Master Plan, you must Register on the Join the Conversation page.</p>	



Things are almost back to normal on the golf course, with many COVID restrictions eased. Glenn Young was one of the first to be able to clean his golf ball Friday as ball washers were reinstated at the NOTL Golf Club. JIM GARRETT PHOTO

Men scoop big cash prizes

Kevin MacLean
The Lake Report

A rainout the week before led to some sizable pay-days for competitors in last Thursday men's league golf competition at Niagara-on-the-Lake Golf Club.

John Kozik was the big winner, as his birdie 3 on the second hole won him \$270 in the gross skins category.

Net skins of \$133 each went to Dean McCann (#3), Drew Porter (#6) and Darryl McCrossan (#8).

That all overshadowed a 1-under 35 by Mark Derbyshire to take low gross honours.

Jim Ricci led the field in modified Stableford scoring,

with 22 points. He topped John Reynolds, Bernard Marlow and John Sobil (21 points each), and John Thomson, Glenn Young and McCrossan with 20 points).

In July 13 WOOFs league play, Derbyshire had another 35 to win low gross. Glen Murray won low net (34.5) and John Reynolds was closest to the pin on #4. Jim Meszaros won the hidden hole prize and Randy Busbridge took home 455 in the 50/50 draw.

On July 6, Drew Porter's 40 was the leading WOOFs score, while Todd Watson won low net with 35. Ray Rempel won the hidden hole with a birdie on the seventh hole and Ric Blouin was closest to the pin on #4

with a shot that was "inches from an ace." John Thomson earned \$70 in the 50/50 draw.

Women's results

Martha Cruikshank's 91 was good for a one-shot win in 18 hole ladies league play on Tuesday. Yolanda Henry was second (92), followed by Margot Richardson and Robin Foster, tied with 96. Low net winners were Janice White and Foster (72), followed by Marlene Sibbald and Jennifer Meszaros (74). Cruikshank had a birdie on the par-5 third hole.

The top three finishers in a chipping contest were Yolanda Henry, Margot Richardson and Gayle Tanner.

Reading time in the park



Tabatha and Shawn enjoy a peaceful reading session at Ryerson Park. ROSS ROBINSON



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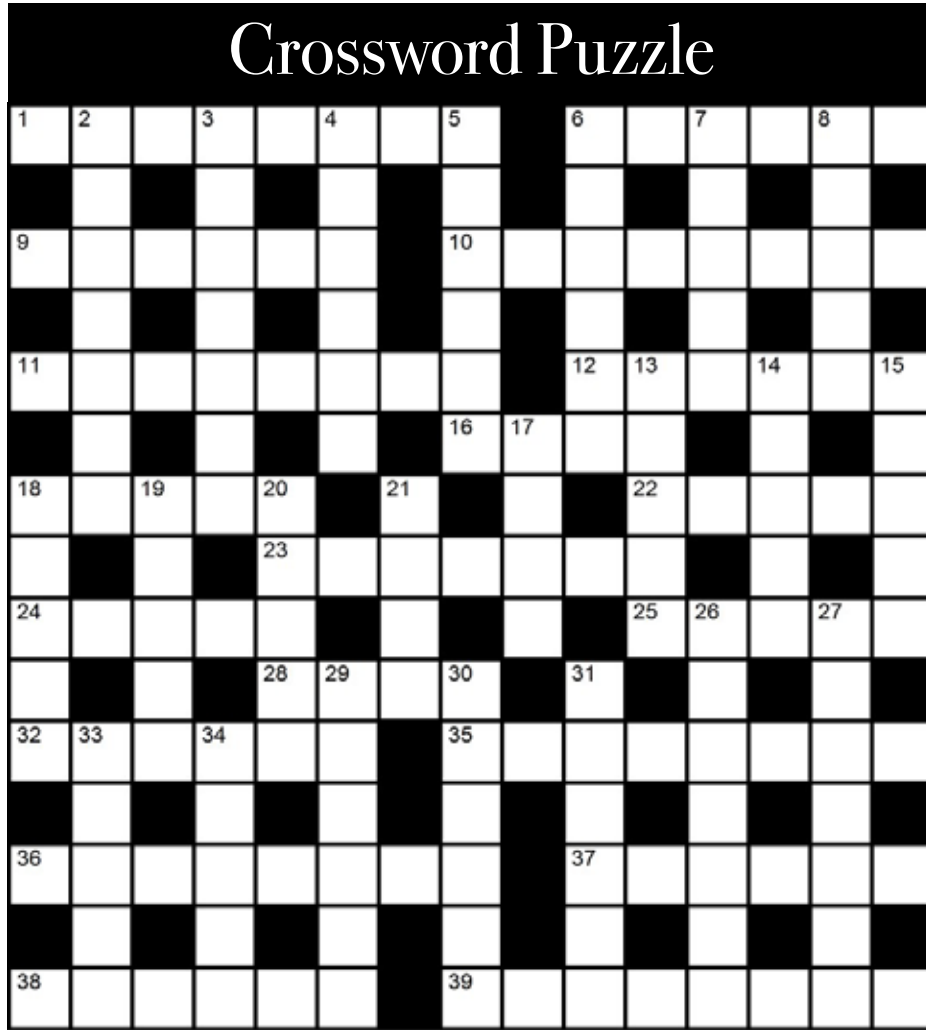
Across

- 1. Fall apart (8)
- 6. Calls on (6)
- 9. Second-smallest banknote (6)
- 10. Wide view of an extensive area (8)
- 11. Resident of e.g. Tobermory, Portree or Ventnor (8)
- 12. Fast (6)
- 16. Reflected sound (4)
- 18. Storage centre (5)
- 22. Ruin (5)
- 23. Dense collection of housing (7)
- 24. Give consent (5)
- 25. The devil (5)
- 28. 60% of us live here (4)
- 32. 25% (6)
- 35. Snakes (8)
- 36. Appreciative (8)
- 37. Self-dressing and preparation (6)
- 38. Insecure knot (6)
- 39. Slaughter (8)

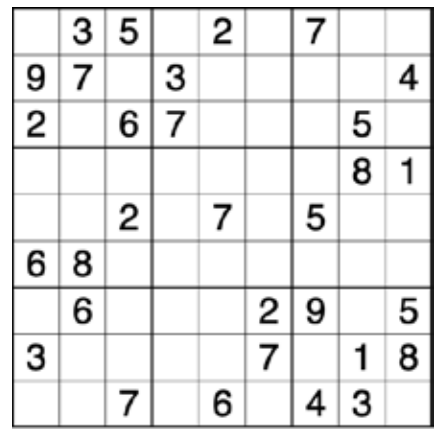
Down

- 2. Supervise (7)
- 3. Once upon a time (4,3)
- 4. Procession (6)
- 5. Die (6)
- 6. Disappear (6)
- 7. Rush (5)
- 8. Shy (5)
- 13. Welsh county (5)
- 14. Wield (5)
- 15. Territory in NW Canada (5)
- 17. Musical staff sign (4)
- 18. Diminutive being of folklore (5)
- 19. Hidden (5)
- 20. Something special (5)
- 21. Positions (4)
- 26. The New World (7)
- 27. Aardvark (3,4)
- 29. Evasive (6)
- 30. Institution for mentally ill (6)
- 31. Boxes (6)
- 33. Contrasting (5)
- 34. Argument (3-2)

Have some fun



Last issue's answers




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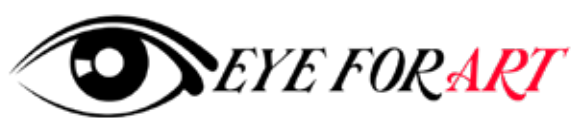
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FEATURED



'Christ's Entry into Brussels in 1889'

Penny-Lynn Cookson
Special to The Lake Report

Sunday, July 11, 2021, will remain a day not easily forgotten by football fans. The Euro Cup 2020 was won by Italy over England on penalties.

Euphoria for Italy and, for England, crushing disappointment. Earlier, a pregame ticketless crowd breached security and poured into Wembley Stadium as a chaotic mass of yelling bodies, pushing forward between hanging banners to reach seats.

There were no COVID masks but plenty of decorative paint streaks masking faces: red and white for England; green, white and red for Italy. The colourful costumes, the waving flags, the joyous and anguished faces and the turbulence in the stands kept reminding me of the paintings of the Belgian artist James

Ensor, the "master of the macabre," a loner who loved being in a crowd.

In Ensor's huge 8-foot high by 14-foot wide painting of "Christ's Entry into Brussels in 1889," we see a conflict between reason and madness, order and revolt.

Ensor imagines Christ as a revolutionary figure, the liberating king, who traditionally entered Jerusalem on Palm Sunday, nearly lost to view in the maelstrom of a carnival crowd surging toward the viewer, banners flying, a uniformed band marching and the dignitaries observing from the side.

A few days later, the same masked and grimacing fickle crowd will shout to the Romans for his execution, the implication being if Christ showed up in Brussels in 1889 he'd be crucified again.

As Ensor regularly attended carnivals, he was an



James Ensor, "Christ's Entry into Brussels in 1889," 1888, oil on canvas, J. Paul Getty Museum, Los Angeles. SOURCED

acute observer of crowds, their theatrical vibrancy and noise, and saw that beneath the raucous energy and fantasy lay undercurrents of menace and violence. He was a visionary in the pure fantastical tradition of Spain's Goya and of his fellow Flemish artists Hieronymus Bosch and Bruegel the Younger.

Ensor was born in the seaside resort town of Ostend, Belgium, in 1860. His father was English, his mother Belgian and her family's business was a curio shop catering to tourists and those attending the annual Ostend Carni-

val. Masks, therefore, were a big part of their trade, along with seashells, knick-knacks, chinoiserie and Japanese fans.

The family lived above the shop and Ensor had his studio in the attic. The assorted objects in the shop were frequently incorporated into his work as he was stimulated by "their opulent colour, reflections and sparkling rays of light." He studied in Brussels at the academy but chafed at the traditional academic approach and the rejection of his work by the Salon and critics.

Initially, he was a stylistic

nomad, passing through Post-Impressionism, Fauvism and Symbolism and the progressive Les Vingt group but parted ways as he was a singular, opinionated artist confident in his own unique vision, solitary but socially engaged in the issues of his time and the debates on the nature of modernism.

His early subjects and themes had been interiors, still life, landscapes, religious topics and portraiture. In the 1880s his subject matter changed to fantasy, caricature and satire, the carnival crowds and the grotesque. Individuals appeared

as clowns or skeletons, their faces covered with masks representing the true faces of humanity, more often suggesting nightmares than carefree joy.

On his mysterious use of masks, Ensor was candid that they were an opportunity for extravagant gesture, expression and decoration, for "exquisite turbulence." On his frequent use of skulls? Commonplace, regularly turning up on the beach where 130,000 Flemish were massacred in the 17th-century war against Spain.

By 1929, his brilliance acknowledged at last, he was made a baron by King Leopold. His precise technique, use of vibrant colour, violence and fantasy presaged German Expressionism and Belgian Surrealism. His statement that he had "anticipated all modern tendencies in every direction" has proved true.

Penny-Lynn Cookson is an art historian who taught at the University of Toronto for 10 years. She also was head of extension services at the Art Gallery of Ontario. Watch for her upcoming lecture series at the Pump-house Arts Centre and at RiverBrink Art Museum.

Dr. Brown: Indeed, miraculous medical recoveries do happen

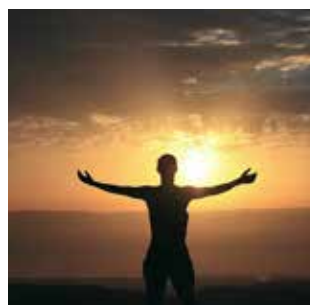
Dr. William Brown
The Lake Report

When I was a medical student, the dean of Medicine at Western University presented the history of a young man who had a malignant melanoma with metastases to his liver (based on a laparoscopic biopsy) and lungs (based on chest X-rays).

He was rapidly losing weight, and in those days, little could be done and there was every expectation the patient would not survive long. But because he developed severe anemia, he was given blood transfusions.

And to everyone's surprise, he began to recover. Within a few months he felt better, regained weight, evidence of the metastatic lesions in his lungs resolved and he returned to work.

The dean, who looked after him when he was on staff at the Princess Margaret Hospital, was stunned as was everyone else familiar



with the case and speculated this might be a rare example of spontaneous remission, with a query about the role the transfusions might have played in his recovery.

Like the preceding case, half a century ago there wasn't much that could be done for most heart diseases, strokes and cancers. But in the last 50 years there have been major advances in the prevention and management of all three – and what might have been considered miraculous recoveries in earlier times occur more often these days.

One example of this was John, a middle-aged man, who was found to have a

late-stage cancer, which initially was considered too advanced to do much about because the cancer had spread to his liver and bones.

Then for John, and to some extent his physicians, the unexpected happened: a combination of checkpoint inhibitor drugs and radiation turned around what looked like a hopeless situation. Several months later all trace of the original cancer was gone and remained so thereafter.

Was that a miracle? For his wife, it was an answer to her prayers. For his part, John was content to attribute his good fortune to the miraculous action of the checkpoint inhibitor drugs and the physicians in the cancer clinic who suggested their use.

A similar spectacular outcome for late-stage cancer famously occurred with former U.S. President Jimmy Carter whose malignant melanoma had spread to several organs, including the brain, but resolved following

treatment with immunotherapeutic drugs similar to John's. And for that family of drugs, Tasuku Honjo of Japan and James Allison from the United States, were awarded a Nobel prize in 2018.

Sometimes healings are stunning, even if bewildering. In my career I have looked after many patients who suffered from intractable pain, severe enough to take opiates and other pain medications and seek the help of experts in London, Ont., Toronto, Boston, Hamilton and the Mayo Clinic.

Two cases stand out. One was forced to give up her job as a custodian for a high school because of the severity of the pain in her lower back and legs. A friend suggested that she seek out a faith healer in Quebec.

Within days of seeing her, the pain began to improve to the point that within several weeks she was off all her pain medications and, shortly thereafter, was able to return

to work only to have the pain return in about a year.

Like the first time, after a return visit to the same faith healer, the pain resolved again for several months, and I lost further contact with her.

The other case involved a man suffering from what was called trigeminal neuralgia for which he had been treated with a variety of epilepsy and pain medications, to little effect except to make him groggy and unsteady.

In a nearby Indigenous community there was a teenage girl who was reputed by band members to possess healing powers through her touch. When she touched the painful side of his face, almost immediately the pain began to improve and he, like the woman who saw the faith healer, was able to stop his medications and return to work.

And like her, his symptoms recurred several months later. Unfortunately this time, the girl who "cured" him the first

time around, had moved on and band members were unable to locate her. The resolution of the pain was dramatic in both cases and begs the question: What explains the resolution of the pain and for so long?

Each of the cases had what might be called a miraculous outcome and while the actions of checkpoint inhibitors are understood, spontaneous resolution of a malignant cancer and faith healer-induced resolutions of pain are much harder to explain.

It's a subject worth exploring in the autumn Infohealth series and a reminder, if we need reminding, that physicians don't always have answers and there's more mystery than many might be ready to admit.

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.

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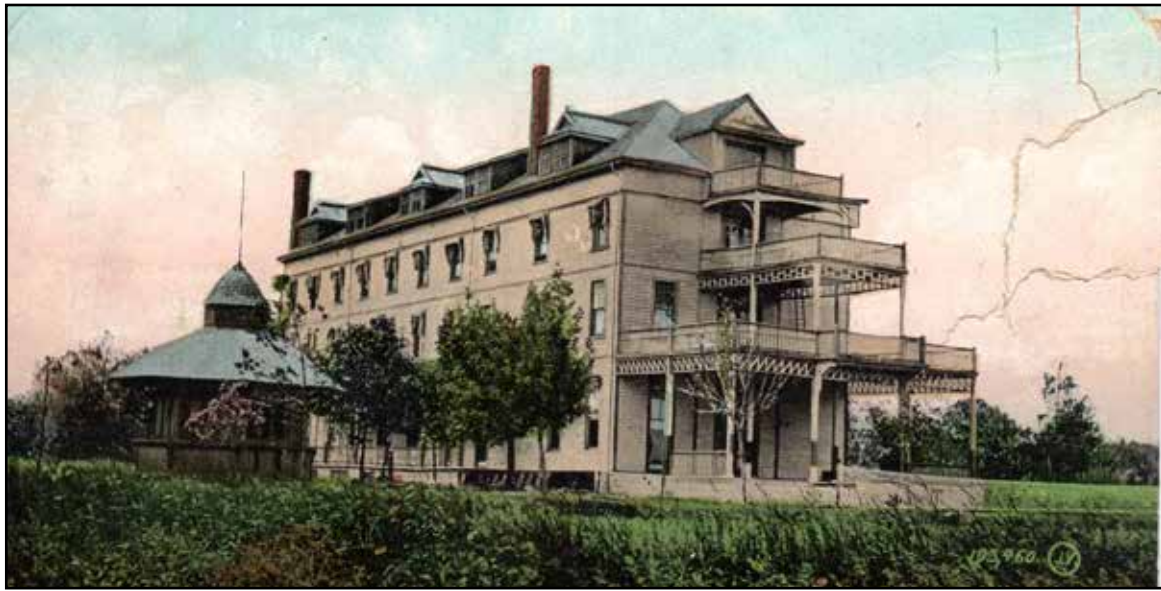
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The end of the Chautauqua Hotel

Further to last week's photo on the Niagara Assembly establishing a Chautauqua movement in Niagara-on-the-Lake, here is an image of the three-storey Chautauqua Hotel. The Chautauqua program offered religious and educational courses for guests of varying ages, botany and drawing classes, concerts, swimming, tennis, lawn bowling, fishing, boating and croquet. The grounds also included a 4,000-seat amphitheatre in the middle of the grounds (within Circle Street today). Unfortunately, we have yet to find an image of the amphitheatre's exterior. Sadly, the movement's semi-religious atmosphere did not have the appeal that was expected. The hotel was purchased by the Niagara Syndicate around 1894, which ran the resort until the hotel burned in 1909. Guests had only minutes to escape, with some jumping from the balconies. It was believed that the fire started in the servants' quarters in the basement from the explosion of a lamp one of the girls had been using to curl her hair. The damages were so significant that the owners decided not to rebuild. This marked the end of the Chautauqua movement in NOTL.

ARCHITEXT

The road forward on development

Brian Marshall
Columnist



Archi-text columnist
Brian Marshall. FILE

Over the last two weeks, this column has raised the issue of managing Niagara-on-the-Lake's development and the role of design review guidelines.

For those who suggest that guidelines might not be acceptable under the provincial legislation, I beg to differ. Design review guidelines speak only and specifically to maintaining/enhancing the community consensus about neighbourhood design.

In other words, these guidelines act to ensure the neighbourhood character and abutting properties are respected during the design process while giving some much-needed reference criteria to our urban design committee.

Further, granting a building permit is solely under the authority of the town and, provided compliant bylaws are in place, there is no real legislative barrier to requiring architects and builders conform to a town's design review guidelines. In fact, to build anything in The Village in NOTL requires approval by the "Village architect."

Obviously, town council will be required to adopt bylaws to support the guidelines. Items like contextual zoning (maximum building height limitations based on the average height of shouldering properties) as opposed to the current townwide 10-metre high restriction that pays no attention to existing streetscape.

However, this is a pretty straightforward process of identifying the bylaws required by the guidelines and subsequently ratifying them.

This brings us to the question of cost for developing design review guidelines, which could very easily be astronomical if handled in a normal government fashion.

Here again, with the resident expertise of the town citizens, including nationally recognized landscape architects, design architects, urban designers, lawyers, both public and private management professionals, and builders (among other fields), I suspect the majority of the costs for creating these guidelines could easily be defrayed by volunteers. In fact, I am aware of a rapidly coalescing group of citizens who propose to do just that.

While design review guidelines are a powerful tool in a community management kit-bag, these should not be considered a panacea. There are other options that might and should, where feasible, be exercised as well.

In the July 15 edition of this paper, Coun. Norm Arsenault is quoted as suggesting Ontario's community planning permit system is something "we should have done two and a half years ago." This may be a potentially worthy undertaking, but as he stated, "it's a long-term process."

Thinking outside the box for a few moments, there may be options with shorter time horizons.

One option among several may be associated with the provincial provision for "special policy areas" (SPA). These areas are effectively exempt from the Planning Act. While SPAs are principally associated with floodplains, has anyone ever seen a flood plain map of NOTL overlaid by a 100-year flood event (a fundamental criteria defined by the legislation)?

Not surprisingly, given our topography and proximity to major bodies of water, an uneducated eyeball estimate suggests a significant portion of the town might qualify.

And that's only one of several creative options that might be initiated.

Looking to the Stars



Full moon means revelation, clarity

Bill Auchterlonie
Special to The Lake Report

This week we see the sun enter Leo, a full moon in Aquarius and more.

Thursday, July 22: Happy birthday to all Leos! Today, the sun enters its favourite sign, Leo. There is a certain magic to the Leo season. No matter what your sun sign is, this is the best time of the year to embody the sun's qualities: authenticity, confidence, courage, radiance, warmth and generosity. Just before the sun enters Leo, Venus, newly arrived in Virgo, is exactly opposite Jupiter in Pisces – bringing good news in relationships and, for some, finances. On July 22, 1940, Alex Trebek was born. For a few years he hosted a quiz show on the CBC called "Reach for the Top." This foreshadowed his 36-year run as host of "Jeopardy!" but, sadly, he died on Nov. 8, 2020.

Friday, July 23: Today we have a full moon in Aquarius. The full moon is conjunct Pluto and near to Saturn – not too close, but close enough to feel its influence. At this full moon we may feel like we did back in early 2020, when we had the Saturn-Pluto conjunction. But this time the moon and Saturn are in Aquarius, so there is a sense of moving forward. "Look at how far we've come!" Full moons are when things are revealed and we gain clarity about something that has previously been kept in the dark. It was July 23, 1879, that U.S. President Andrew Jackson signed the patent for the typewriter, invented by William Austin Burt.

Saturday, July 24: Imagination and conservative thinking work together to make life more secure – especially home life. July 24, 1534, was the day that Jacques Cartier landed at what became Quebec City and claimed the two Canadas for France. Canada was the Iroquois

name for the settlements at Quebec City and Montreal.

Sunday, July 25: Powerful forces from deep within inspire revised ideas about how we approach matters, especially questions of security. Getting angry is likely not the best option. At 91 years of age, Canada's 12th prime minister, Louis St. Laurent, returned to spirit having served nine years as the leader of our country.

Monday, July 26: A stressful start to the work week with the moon in Pisces will leave tears and loneliness in its wake. Our birthday celebrant today won a Nobel Prize in literature and an Oscar. He also was co-founder of the London School of Economics. Closer to home we have a theatre company named for him. George Bernard Shaw was born July 26, 1856, in Dublin, Ireland.

Tuesday July 27: After a 12-day sprint in the sign of Cancer, Mercury enters Leo. Once we've done our introspection, it's time to speak out. To deliver our message. To roar the truth. On July 27, 1921, Banting and Best isolated insulin at their lab in the University of Toronto. Diabetes would no longer kill.

Wednesday, July 28: Today, Jupiter leaves Pisces and re-enters Aquarius. This is our time to revisit any "unfinished" Jupiter in Aquarius business. Hopefully, Jupiter's brief transit through Pisces has stirred our imagination, broadened our horizons and helped us find answers outside the box of logic and reason. Now it's time to go back to logic and reason, and finish what we have started. On July 27, 1866, Beatrix Potter was born. She went on to write and illustrate the famous children's books about Peter Rabbit.

Next week it's the third quarter moon in Taurus. And more.

Obtain your personal birth chart including a forecast for the year ahead on Bill Auchterlonie's podcast at auchterlonieonastrology.ca.

Astrology is a form of entertainment, not a science.



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‘Hammerhead’ turnaround **rejected**

Evan Saunders
Local Journalism Initiative
The Lake Report

Niagara-on-the-Lake town councillors have rejected a staff recommendation to reopen a small parking area where River Beach Drive meets Balls Beach Park and turn it into a “hammerhead” turnaround.

Councillors felt the town’s recommendations interfered too much with the park, did not increase safety and did not take the environment into consideration.

A so-called hammerhead turnaround is a designated area in which cars cannot park but can use the spot to unload items such as kayaks or coolers and perform a three-point turn to leave instead of reversing out.

Councillors were presented with a staff report at a committee of the whole general meeting on July 19 which came after consultation with Associated Engineering on how to improve safety in the area.

Recommendations included the installation of the turnaround, allowing parking on the south side of River Beach Drive and along Turntable Way, and connecting Ball Street and River Beach Drive with a paved road.

Councillors closed the area last year to address residents’ concerns about pedestrian safety.



Large armour stones block off a former parking area near Balls Beach. EVAN SAUNDERS

Robin Ridesic told council that closing the parking area last year improved safety but the new proposal by staff to reopen it will make it dangerous to pedestrians again. There is a municipal parking lot roughly 100 metres east on River Beach Drive.

Town administrators were at a loss when councillors rejected the report’s recommendations.

“Staff are looking at other staff and texting each other that we’re all confused,” director of operations Sheldon Randall told councillors.

“I think we met the mandate of council and residents’ concerns about what we were supposed to do and we’re not sure (what to do next).”

Ridesic said residents “are all happy with the current situation and do not believe there is any longer a safety concern.”

Some councillors felt, as did Ridesic, that the staff recommendation simply reinstated the original

problem.

“I would like to say that the hammerhead does not address the safety issue. In fact, it brings back the safety issue that council has already addressed,” Ridesic said.

Randall had a different take.

“It was never determined that it was unsafe to begin with. I think the number one difference that you are going to see is that we’re not recommending having cars parked there other than just a short time for drop offs,” he said.

Lord Mayor Betty Disero disagreed while thanking staff for the work they did. She argued that opening up the spot will encourage people to park there.

“We can have an argument whether it’s a loading zone or a parking lot. But if you look at years previous to this, cars park there even though we say we are going to enforce it and nobody is going to be allowed. Cars park there,” she said.

The mayor also disliked that the hammerhead and the proposed connection between Ball Street and River Beach Drive would cut into the park, saying she would rather have that preserved as green space.

“I’m not a believer of putting parking lots in parks,” she said.

Some councillors were also concerned about the effect that paving in the park would have on a large willow tree located about three metres away from the proposed parking area. Others were quick to point out that willow trees have a short lifespan.

“It’s nice to think that big old trees are going to live forever but they don’t, especially willows,” Coun. Clare Cameron said.

Coun. Erwin Wiens was in favour of installing the hammerhead and noted cars had been parking and turning around in that area since before he was born. He said there was no justification for blocking off the area.

Coun. Sandra O’Connor offered a motion that staff review their original report and amend it. Her motion suggested the town take the environment into consideration and install parking along one side of Turntable Way.

The motion was passed 5-4 and will go to next week’s council meeting for final approval.

Obituary

Lukas Smith



It is with profound sadness that we announce the sudden passing of our dear husband, father, son, and friend, Lukas Smith on Sunday, July 11, 2021. Lukas is survived by his beloved wife Trish and precious children Bryden, Riley and Miaya. His parents Andrew Smith and Rosemary Beech, his siblings Amanda Smith, Melissa Smith and his niece and nephew, Noah and Abby.

His parents-in-law Peter and Arlene Thiessen, his sister-in-law Karen Thiessen and predeceased by his brother-in-law Gerald. Lukas will be so deeply missed; cherished husband, adored father and son, friend and mentor to so many.

The Smiths received friends and family for public visitation on Saturday, July 17 from 2 p.m. to 4 p.m. and 6 p.m. to 8 p.m. and again on Sunday, July 18 from 1 p.m. - 4 p.m. at Cornerstone Community Church Orchard Campus (434 Hunter Rd., Niagara-on-the-Lake, ON L0S 1J0).

An outdoor funeral service to remember Lukas took place on Monday, July 19 at 10:30 a.m. at Cornerstone Community Church Orchard Campus.



THE FAMILY OF THE LATE LYNN BRADLEY WOULD LIKE TO THANK EVERYONE WHO SENT CARDS, FLOWERS, AND DONATIONS TO ST. ANDREW’S PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH. YOUR KINDNESS AND GENEROSITY AT THIS DIFFICULT TIME WERE VERY MUCH APPRECIATED.

Gardening: Important steps for **preparing your lawn** for winter

This is the ninth in a 10-week gardening column series, organized by the Niagara-on-the-Lake Communities in Bloom committee.



Joanne Young
Special to The Lake Report

There are many chores that need to be done in the fall before you put your garden to bed for the winter. But first and foremost, there



Overseeding grass in fall can help your lawn in a number of ways, says garden expert Joanne Young. SOURCED

are many things you can do to prepare your lawn.

Dethatch: Thatch is the layer of slowly decomposing grass stems, dead roots and debris that accumulates above the soil and below the grass blades. Thatch becomes a problem if it

is thicker than a quarter inch because it stops nutrients and moisture from penetrating to the roots. Use a thatching rake to pull out some of the brown, decomposing material.

Aerate: This is a process whereby small cores of soil

are removed from the turf to breakdown hard soils and add more oxygen, which is required by the roots. If you have sandy soil, you will not need to aerate as often as you do with clay soils. If it has been a very dry summer, aerate your lawn in the fall so the soil will be better able to absorb winter precipitation.

Aerating is done with a special machine (usually by lawn care companies), but you can also use aerating sandals or hand tools.

Overseed: Over time your lawn becomes thinner, depending on the amount of sunlight and moisture it receives. Early- to mid-fall

is a great time to overseed your lawn as a way of thickening it up. The thicker the lawn is the fewer weeds you will have. Also, the thicker the lawn is the less the sun will be directly hitting the soil and drying it out, thus, less water is needed.

Before overseeding, mow your lawn as short as you can and rake over the area with a stiff-toothed rake to loosen up the soil. Spread the seed on top of the raked soil. Keep seed evenly moist. After two weeks you should be seeing the grass seed germinating.

Fertilize: The final application of fertilizer should be applied about one

month before the ground freezes – usually just after the last time you mow your lawn for the season. To help strengthen the lawn’s root system for next spring, fertilize with an organic fertilizer that is low in nitrogen and higher in potassium (e.g., 4-3-9).

Visit jointheconversationnotl.org/garden to check out the Garden of the Week contest, run by the Town of Niagara-on-the-Lake’s Communities in Bloom committee, and submit your garden or garden feature for consideration in one of 10 categories.

Joanne Young is a garden coach and designer.



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