



Homophobic sign decried | Page 2

'Hostaholic' ready to retire

NOTL grower is one of Ontario's best-known Hosta 'collectors'

Tim Taylor
The Lake Report

Bruce Cumpson describes his 30-year obsession with growing and selling hostas as a "hobby that got out of control."

His Olde Towne Gardens is a small perennial farm and garden centre nestled, almost hidden, among larger tender fruit and vineyards, along Lakeshore at Town-line Road.

Drive down the short driveway, past the farmhouse, to the barn and into another world inhabited by hundreds of shade trees and literally thousands of hostas—more than 600 varieties—that thrive in the dappled sunshine of a summery afternoon.

Hostas are one of the most popular perennial plants in North America, often called the friendship plant because it is so easy to divide and share with your neighbours. The large leafy, often sprawling, plants thrive in partial shade and need protection from the heat of the afternoon sun.

Some call Cumpson a



Bruce Cumpson has had a love affair with hostas for over 30 years. He's often called a "hostaholic." He just sold Olde Towne Gardens on Lakeshore Road. TIM TAYLOR

hostaholic. Others a hosta whisperer.

Long before the world of hostas became an obsession and a business, Cumpson bought a house on Niagara Street in St. Catharines. As fate would have it, there was a thriving hosta garden

on the new property.

"There were more than a hundred hostas," Cumpson, 68, smiles, remembering the discovery as the start of his hosta odyssey. "I didn't know what the plant was. I asked my neighbour. I thought it was lettuce or

something."

Cumpson started reading and researching about hostas. He was gradually drawn into the hosta world.

"In those days, almost all hostas came from the States.

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A map shows where trees are to be removed. SUPPLIED

Two Mile Creek forest restoration will remove 400 trees

Richard Harley
The Lake Report

The Niagara Peninsula Conservation Authority will be taking down about 400 ash and Manitoba maple trees along Two Mile Creek near Butler's Burial Ground this month.

The forest rejuvenation project will see about four hectares of trees removed and replaced with native tree species. The replanting will most likely happen in 2022 but some work could start this fall.

The removal of the trees will cost about \$80,000, a regional official said. The cost for the replantings is not yet known.

Dan Drennan, a conservation authority watershed forester, said the reforestation project is a "new direction"

for the agency, which is mandated to manage and protect watersheds across the region.

The main purpose of the reforestation is to combat the effects of the emerald ash borer beetle, an invasive species which first entered Ontario in 2001 in the Windsor area and started to affect Niagara-on-the-Lake in 2012.

"That's when I first started to notice the trees being impacted by it, I could see the holes going into the trees," said Drennan, who has been a forester with the authority for 13 years.

The property is owned by the conservation authority, but was once used for agriculture. He said when the agency acquired the

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Parliament Oak plan **not compatible** with Old Town, residents say

Evan Saunders
Local Journalism Initiative
The Lake Report

A proposed development on the old Parliament Oak school property is "outrageous," inappropriate and ignores the character of Niagara-on-the-Lake's Old Town area, residents told a virtual open house meeting about the project Tuesday.

Residents were highly critical of the proposed density, size of a planned apartment building and what they

view as lack of conformity with the town.

Liberty Sites (3) Ltd. is proposing an 80-unit, three-storey apartment building and 12 semi-detached homes on the former school property.

"There is absolutely no question that this is an outrageous and flagrant disregard for the character of this neighbourhood and the houses in the neighbourhood," NOTL resident Alan Gordon told the development team.

The development will have 92 units on four acres of land resulting in 23 units per acre.

The town's maximum allowed density for an intensification area as stated in the official plan is 12 units per acre, Gordon said.

"And this development isn't even in an intensification area," he said.

Intensification areas are designated high-density development areas.

The 2019 official plan, section 4.14.4.2, states that

council shall ensure any new development in existing residential areas fits with the character of adjacent residences. This includes building height and lot depth.

Consulting architect Ralph Giannone said the apartment would be level with the existing school property with a maximum height of 11 metres.

"That is a complete fabrication," Gordon said.

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A artist's rendering of the proposed Parliament Oak development in Old Town. SUPPLIED



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'Traditional marriage' sign decried as homophobic, hateful

Richard Harley
The Lake Report

A lawn sign that celebrates "traditional marriage" has drawn loud criticism from neighbours and Niagara-on-the-Lake residents for being a message of homophobia and intolerance.

The sign, which is displayed on the lawn of 17 Henry St. in Virgil, says, "Celebrating our traditional marriage" and includes the male and female gender symbols intertwined.

NOTL resident Barnabas Farkas took to Facebook Monday to express his anger about the sign, calling it "disgusting behaviour."

Farkas said he is openly gay and has been married to his husband for 16 years. He lives a short walk away from the sign.

"This morning on my way to work this is what we had to pass. Here we are in the 21st century, putting up lawn signs like this," said his post.

"In the times when kids are still struggling to come out, be themselves, you put a sign on your lawn not only stating the word 'traditional' but you even had the male and female sign printed! All I can say is shame on you and shame on the person who printed this for you."

The property also displays a "No More Lock-downs" sign.

Rudi Koller, who owns the home and had the sign printed in Toronto, said he has no plans to take the sign down. In fact, he said he had multiple copies printed in anticipation that they might get stolen.

"I put (it) up last week and I'm saying what I believe in," he said in an interview at his home Tuesday.

"A man and a woman. That's the sign, right? In a marriage."

Asked to clarify whether he is against gay marriage, he said "I don't hate them. That's their lifestyle."

"If I have a neighbour living beside me, the way I grew up, I have to respect the neighbour. I have to respect their lifestyle, but I don't have to agree to their

lifestyle. But I will not hate them."

Koller doesn't use Facebook and hasn't seen the chatter online, but said he doesn't believe his sign is discriminatory.

He put it up in "protest" of the town considering a rainbow crosswalk and benches and flying the Pride flag in June to commemorate Pride Month.

"If they have the right to promote their lifestyle, then so I too have the right to promote my lifestyle," he said.

"I believe in one woman, one man marriage. What they do is their stuff, but I don't agree that the town falls over their feet, and only promotes them."

Koller said he doesn't understand why members of the LGBTQ+ community are advocating for rainbow crosswalks.

"Here they can get married, they have the benefits, everything, so why are they pushing? Why are they wanting to be advertising more and more, like the sidewalk, and the park benches? Why are they pushing for that?" he said.

"What we're gonna do next, paint the town rainbow colours? Because they will not stop when the sidewalk is painted and when the park benches are painted. They will find another excuse to demand more, and I think this is discriminatory, what the town is doing to the rest of the people. Because there's no promotion for the rest of the people."

He said it's not fair to people who aren't members of the LGBTQ+ community.

"What (has the town) done for the native, which is a minority. What have they done for the Black people, is a minority, what have they done for the low-income people in town?"

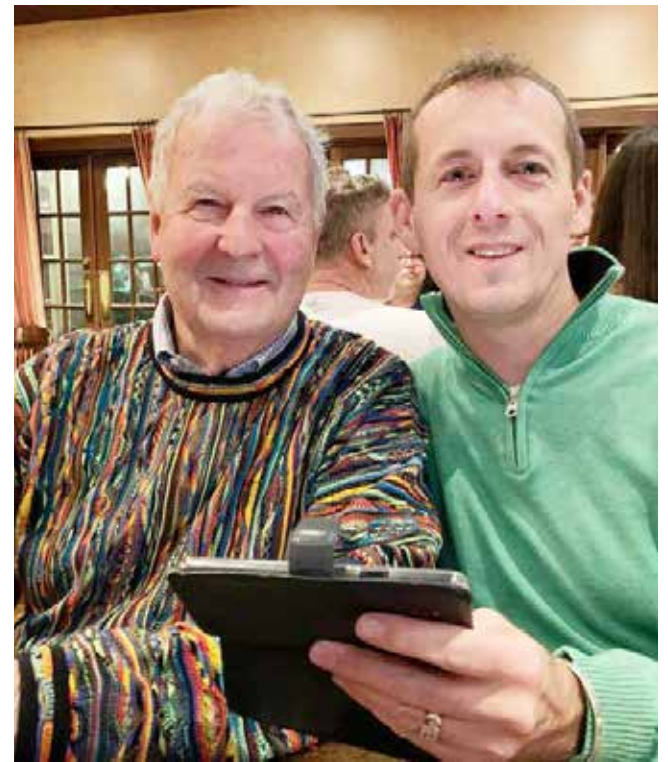
"The responsibility of the mayor and councillors is to promote equality to all the people. There's no equality, when we only promote one group."

Lord Mayor Betty Disero said there are "a few things wrong with the sign."

"One, the sign is not permitted by bylaw. Two, there is a general absence of specific symbols for any major-



Left: A sign at 17 Henry St. in Virgil has been decried by NOTL residents for being homophobic after being posted to Facebook. RICHARD HARLEY Right: Michael Tansley and Barnabas Farkas. SUPPLIED



ity because they already have privileges that others have not been privy to," she told The Lake Report.

"Three, it is negatively provocative and may be designed to bait rather than engage in meaningful, civil dialogue. Four, Posting this signage appears to ignore the history of exclusion faced by the 2SLGBTQIA+ community and the strength the 2SLGBTQIA+ community has shown in the face of adversity. This sign, unfortunately, does not represent the equity and inclusion we are striving to achieve."

Koller said he was raised never to hate anyone, but to "counterbalance" what he perceives to be a one-sided narrative "promoting" the LGBTQ+ community.

Asked what he thought about the scores of people who see his signs as hate speech, he said "that's how the gay people try to shut everybody down."

"Let's say you don't like it, I could say, 'Oh, you're hating me.' That's what the gay community does. Like I say, I don't hate the gay community."

"If they have the right to display their sexual preference, then it's my responsibility, not my right, my responsibility, to display my belief. But nobody talks about the responsibility anymore."

"I do it because I feel my responsibility to promote our marriage, our lifestyle. If minorities can do it, why can't I do it?"

Koller said one of the signs was already stolen while he was at church on Sunday this week. He said plans to keep one on his lawn.

Hundreds of comments by Niagara-on-the-Lake residents decried the lawn sign and expressed the same feeling of disgust and disbelief as Farkas felt.

"How sad, they must feel very isolated and alone in their beliefs to have to put out a message like this. Perhaps they're hoping for like-minded people to knock on their door. This does not represent NOTL. We represent NOTL," said Facebook user Brett Sherlock.

"I find this very disgusting and offensive! It's the year 2021! Love is love! I'm sorry these people find this remotely acceptable!" said Adriana Miele.

"This is nothing but crystal clear message of hate. I hope they don't have children to continue this bigotry," said Tim Vandelaar.

"Why? Who does this? Doing something like this is deliberate in their intentions to hurt another human. You don't do this thinking it will be fine. Some will argue that people put Pride signs out so why can't they for

this. That's privilege right there ... not being able to accept what privilege means and what it means to be oppressed," said Kathryn Hoshkiw.

Somewhat ironically, Koller insisted he was taught not to hate others. "My father always said, real men and real women, they do not bring out hate," he said.

When pointed out again that his sign is perceived as hate, he said that's "hog-wash."

When told his flag offends many people, Koller said, "I was offended when I go into the town hall, to the post office and see the Pride flag flying."

Told of some of Koller's comments, Farkas said it is unfortunate to see his neighbour behaving this way.

"I would like to ask him, did he put an 'All Lives Matter' sign out during Black History Month or when the Voices of Freedom Park opened? Did he protest when Niagara Parks opened the Landscape of Nations? Probably the answer will be no to all. So, therefore he is nothing but homophobic. As I said many times, people don't have to like us, or accept. Just have respect."

"There are many kids just alone in this area (I am two streets away from him) and a sign like this can do

lots of damage," he said.

To some of the people supporting Koller, Farkas suggested they do some research on why Pride Month exists.

"I invite them to educate themselves. Learn about our community, learn the history, what the previous LGBTQ+ generations had to go through to get to where we are today — and we are still fighting. Fighting because of people and behaviour like this."

"We still have a long way to go, unfortunately. When one celebrates their marriage, they have balloons, God knows what animals and big letters at the front of their house. Fun stuff. When one has a sign out (next to an anti-lockdown sign) that states 'traditional' marriage with a female and male symbol, that's not celebration. That's a statement, that's a message, that's vile and targeted," Farkas said.

It's "easy for the straight community to come up with signs like this then use the free speech card or religion or whatever else they come up with. In some people's eyes, we are still nothing. Some people, even locally, commented under my post, saying 'choice of sexuality.' We are more than nothing. We are humans and it's not a choice. This is us and this is Canada in 2021. There is no place for signs like this."



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On Canada Day, Leila Ridesic and Ruby Elltoft set up a shoe memorial for the thousands of Indigenous children that died while attending Canadian residential schools. EVAN SAUNDERS

Memorial honours Indigenous children

Evan Saunders
Local Journalism Initiative
The Lake Report

While many people debated whether celebrating Canada Day was appropriate given the discoveries of children's remains on residential school properties, two Niagara-on-the-Lake youth created a memorial for the children on the steps of the old hospital on July 1.

"When we heard the news, we knew it wasn't right. We wanted to do something about it," Ruby Elltoft, 12, told The Lake Report.

Ruby and classmate Leila Ridesic, 12, wanted to set up a shoe memorial to ensure awareness about the Indigenous and Canadian history of residential

schools did not escape their community.

They both attend Royal Oak School, which is now located in the old hospital. And they knew it was the perfect setting for a memorial.

"Lots of people come by this place because it's really important, so we did it here so lots of people could get involved," Leila said.

The young pair of activists credited Royal Oak for teaching them about residential schools.

"Our school has always taught us about how bad residential schools were and how Indigenous people were treated," she said.

"Our principal made sure to send out lots of emails" asking for people to donate children's shoes for the memorial, Leila added.

"Next year they are going to teach even more about residential schools."

Their friend, Elliana McManus, 12, arrived to help with the memorial and brought along homemade signs to hang on the pillars at the front of the school.

The signs, in black marker on orange Bristol board, read, "Every Child Matters" and "In honour of all the residential school victims."

The girls had their own take on the use of children's shoes in the memorial.

"Kids shoes show everybody the personality (of the children), so we decided to gather everyone's shoes," Ruby said.

Each pair of shoes had a unique personality attached to it. This helped to indi-

vidualize the missing children. All around them were various pairs of Crocs, running shoes, rubber boots and an authentic pair of children's moccasins that one supporter dropped off.

"Our hope is that this will get people to think about it and spread awareness," Leila said.

"That way if people are walking by with their little kids, and the kids don't know about it, they can ask their parents. But we also want anyone to think about it."

The memorial will be up indefinitely, and the duo plans on donating the shoes if they are in a suitable condition sometime in the future. People are encouraged to pay their respects and donate a pair of shoes at the memorial.

Step Challenge exceeds 50 million steps

Stephanie Beattie
Special to The Lake Report

It's a huge number: 50,232,770 total steps logged.

Walkers in the month-long Niagara-on-the-Lake Step Challenge smashed the original goal of 20 million steps, and led by participant Notty-Woman, easily exceeded the revised goal of 40 million.

Notty-Woman totalled a remarkable 1,560,115 steps for top individual tally, helping her two-member team,

Notty People, to second place with 2,566,590 steps. Most teams had four members.

The Bayne family team, nicknamed Pfinally Pfeeling Pfine, was first with 2,848,999 steps.

In third place was the team We're Small But Active, which logged 2,222,314 steps.

In the individual category, Notty-Man had 1,006,475 steps, edging out Tracey Beattie with 941,102 steps.

The Town of NOTL, which organized the June 1

to 30 event, did not release the full names of participants and none could be reached for comment. The Lake Report, which co-sponsored the challenge finished 30th out of 35 active teams.

"Thanks to all of our #NOTLSteppers, who absolutely obliterated our group goal by taking a whopping 50,232,770 steps collectively," the town said in a social media post.


The NOTL website encouraged participants to track their steps with activity trackers such as an Apple

Watch, Fitbit, Garmin and other alternative pedometers.

Steps were tracked on the MoveSpring app, which displayed leaderboards highlighting the top teams and individual steppers.


Weekly winners were announced along with prizes for teams and individuals.

The final team prize includes 18 holes at a NOTL golf course of the team's choosing and the individual winner receives a bottle of wine and \$100 gift certificate to Ruffino's Pasta Bar & Grill.



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COVID Tracker

NOTL active cases: 4
Region active cases: 104
Region deaths: 415
Region total cases: 16,263
Region resolved cases: 15,744

*July 7 data per Niagara Region Public Health



Contributed by Patty Garriock

"The most important thing is to enjoy life – to be happy – it's all that matters."

- Audrey Hepburn

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Editorial: A shameful sign of the times

Kevin MacLean
 Richard Harley
 The Lake Report

Like most minorities and people who have endured decades of discrimination, members of the LGBTQ+ community have fought long and hard to be accepted and their human rights respected.

And like most minorities, the battle continues.

As we have reported and documented, casual and overt racism has often reared its head in Niagara-on-the-Lake over the years. So, we suppose it is not surprising that homophobic hate messages in the form of a lawn sign promoting "traditional marriage" is the latest volley in the privileged population's continuing war against "others."

Virgil resident Rudi Koller, as reported on our front page this week, sees nothing wrong, hateful or discriminatory about the

"Celebrating Our Traditional Marriage" sign he put up right beside a "No More Lockdowns" sign.

He is upset about Pride flags flying, rainbow crosswalks being proposed and what he calls the LGBTQ+ community's "promotion" of its "lifestyle" and "orientation." All of those attitudes show a profound misunderstanding and ignorance of the human condition — and established human rights.

This is not about free speech — it's about hateful speech that targets a minority. Period. (And for what it's worth, freedom of speech is an Americanism. In Canada, our Charter gives us the right to freedom of expression, within limits.)

As with so many things nowadays, it took a post on social media to bring this case of obvious homophobia to the attention of the greater community.

And thankfully, most of those who commented on the posting understood the sign is a clear message of intolerance and hate toward the LGBTQ+ community and were critical of the person displaying it.

So, why is this homophobic? Well, it should be pretty self-explanatory, for many reasons, the most obvious perhaps being that it's a not-so-subliminal message that somehow heterosexual marriages are better than others.

If it had just said, "Celebrating Our Marriage," without "traditional" or the intertwined symbols of male and female gender, there wouldn't have been an issue. That's how people celebrate.

But including "traditional" is not only a mockery of the word, but an obvious attempt at provoking the LGBTQ+ community — a few days after Pride Month ended, no less. It is

intentionally designed to hurt. Instead, it seems to have made a lot of people angry, embarrassed, feeling shameful.

While Mr. Koller says he was raised never to show hate to another person, and that doing so is cowardly, his actions speak louder. The fact he had several copies printed, anticipating problems, indicates he at least had an inkling as to how the sign might be received.

The intolerance is shameful, and not what a supposedly progressive, friendly town is supposed to be.

Perhaps therein lies the bigger, unspoken problem. Together with other instances of bigotry here, perhaps our quaint little tourist town really is not as friendly and tolerant as we'd like to believe.

It seems Niagara-on-the-Lake still has a long way to go.

editor@niagaranow.com

Column about Parliament Oak hit the mark

Dear editor:

I have just finished reading Brian Marshall's July 1 Arch-i-text column twice, concerning the Parliament Oak site and what is proposed for its development, "Parliament Oak questions."

I hope many people make a point to read this and really take in what is clearly expressed in

a very thoughtful and seemingly unbiased way.

It's the kind of piece I would like to have written but not having his impressive technical background, I can only share his concern and interest.

His views on what can possibly happen in this very important and sensitive core area must be kept in the public eye.

It is very unfortunate that because of COVID the critical open house phase of this project will be the dreaded "virtual" public meeting.

The virtual situation really seems to make public input much more difficult for many people and benefit the developer.

Also, because of the immense size and overall

character of this project, there is only one chance to get this development as correct as possible.

Keep an eye on this one and be aware that the old Niagara hospital site is waiting in the background. There's more to come.

Christopher Allen
 NOTL

Atrocities inflicted by men and women of God

Dear editor:

Most of the right things about the inhuman atrocity that were the residential schools are being said in the media.

But often writers and commentators, very carefully it seems, "skate" around the issue of just "who" the teachers were in the many Catholic church-run "schools" that are at the heart of the horrors and are quite rightly castigated by everybody who has taken the time and trouble to look into the matter.

The reality was that these

"teachers" were mostly not teachers, but in the case of the Kamloops school and over 40 others, Catholic nuns and priests who may or may not have had any teaching skills at all.

Such skills were, in the concept of the "residential schools," quite secondary to the objective of "kill the Indian," which required "sterner" measures.

Those sterner measures included, as ample evidence has shown, an "electric chair," corporal punishment, deprivation of life sustenance, forced labour, lack of

medical care, sexual attacks by priests and nuns, torture by many additional physical and psychological means.

Sterner measures included clandestine burials of little children who died of the atrocities these "men and women of God" inflicted on them.

It is in fact quite painful just to write about this and think of little children being subjected to brutality rivaling Nazi death camps.

And, of course, all this was carried out by Catholic "religious" nuns and priests dedicated to saving human-

ity by the "love of God."

Nobody should pussy-foot around this issue: the very people, Catholic priests and nuns, who one would expect to express the love of God to little children did the exact opposite: they practised what amounted to expressions of hate.

We have a long way to go in Canada, given that still today racism is rampant in our society and our Indigenous Peoples continue to be shoved, ever so imperceptibly, to the sidelines.

Kaspar Pold
 NOTL



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The Monet gardens at Pillar and Post. RENE BERTSCHI PHOTO

Pillar and Post ‘Monet’ gardens a **delight**

Dear editor:

The Pillar and Post “Monet” gardens are an emotional delight to the senses.

While absorbing the visual impact, my mood lifted and I thought of future visits to drink in the ever-chang-

ing scenes as the gardens mature.

Despite the immense cost of such a project I am sure it will reap rewards of fame and fortune for the Vintage Inns and the great appreciation and respect of NOTL residents.

It is definitely refreshing to see something of such aesthetic value contributed to a town by a commercial company as opposed to the more usual approach of exploiting space for profit without incorporating a single square foot for the enhancement of

the community.

Sadly such areas also do not create architecture that will be appreciated by future generations as will the Pillar and Post gardens.

Thank you, Vintage Inns.

Ann Handels
NOTL

Town being **eroded** one developer at a time

Dear editor:

I have spent hours studying the various reports and submissions for the proposal for the Parliament Oak site.

Thousands of words, trying to convince me and the town that this proposal is somehow in harmony and compatible with the existing established residential area that surrounds the site. The streetscape study purports that “the proposed semi-detached residences are roughly comparable in size to the larger houses in the surrounding contexts.”

If you look at the diagram included with this study showing “proposed structure’s scale and massing,” the semi-detached dwellings have a larger foot-

print than one of the biggest houses in the neighbourhood – 83 Gage St., which sits alone, on a one-acre lot.

The elevations of the apartment building beside and behind these “modest” semi-detached dwellings indicate the development is not even compatible with itself.

The semis look like doll houses placed behind and in front of the massive wall of the apartment building. It would be interesting if these elevations continued across the bounding streets to show the existing homes across Regent, Centre and King streets.

Surely an illustration of this sort should be included in the streetscape study.

The application for the

apartment building requests a “medium density residential” designation. According to the official plan, intensification sites would have a minimum density of six units per acre and a maximum density of 12 units per acre.

This proposal is for 92 units on a four-acre site or 23 units per acre – almost twice the density noted as maximum.

The parking, servicing and delivery access to all 92 units, including the apartment building, is from the local roads.

There are 181 parking spaces provided on the site. That is a large number of cars coming and going and does not include service

or delivery vehicles. Local roads are designated in the official plan as servicing individual dwellings or semi-detached units.

This is totally unacceptable and will forever change the nature of our neighbourhood. It also impacts directly two single-family dwellings – one on Centre Street and one on Gage Street immeasurably.

Our town is being eroded, bit by bit, one developer at a time. Funny, they all claim to “love this place.” But what they love is the profit-making potential, not the charming and delightful place to live that will soon be a distant memory.

Connie Tintinalli
NOTL

Changing names, removing statues is **not** erasing history

Dear editor:

I have read with interest the opinions of several readers who are upset that statues are being removed at various public sites and institutions.

Cries of “we can’t undo history” and “Ryerson did good things too” are key arguments.

I would simply like to remind people that we had no trouble bringing down statues of Hitler or Stalin

after the Second World War.

Hitler and Stalin were perceived to have committed genocide against other races and their own people. It could also be argued Hitler did “good things” like building modern infrastructure in Germany.

Did we change our history by removing their statues? No? So what’s so different now?

I suppose it all comes

down to what we consider genocide. If the residential school system is genocide and we acknowledge that it was created to “Kill the Indian in every child” then why do we get upset about statues coming down and names being changed?

Before we get on our high horse about statue removal, we should think about how a Jewish person would feel walking past a statue of Hitler today?

If it would be abhorrent to us to make them do that, why would we accept it for our own Indigenous brothers and sisters?

Truth and reconciliation means accepting the truth of genocide of Canada’s Indigenous people, and if reconciliation means taking down statues that hurt and offend them, then down they should come.

Lyndsay Gazzard
NOTL

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Parliament Oak plan **upsets** residents

Continued from Front Page

The official plan says buildings in Old Town are not to exceed 10 metres in height, he said

The existing Parliament Oak building is 1.45 metres above the surrounding grade according to Liberty Site's own submitted survey.

Therefore, the building's actual height is "12.45 metres. I'd like everybody listening to be aware that this is equivalent to 41 feet," Gordon said.

"It may have three floors, but this is the equivalent to a four-storey building that's being put into a neighbourhood of one and two-storey dwellings."

Gordon called it an "outrageous disregard for the heights of existing buildings within Old Town."

The official plan also states that new development should be consistent with existing lot depth and width.

The proposed semi-detached homes have widths ranging from 10 metres to 14.5, Gordon said.

"The majority of the lots (in this neighbourhood) are between 20 and 30 metres



NOTL residents gather in 2017 to protest the sale of Parliament Oak school to a developer. Now residents are opposed to the development plan. FILE PHOTO

wide."

"This is nowhere near consistent, as required by the official plan, with the surrounding neighbourhood."

Representatives from Liberty Sites did not respond to Gordon's comments.

Other attendees were equally frustrated by the proposal.

"This is an outrage and it is insensitive to everybody," Parliament Oak neighbour Atis Bankas said.

Bankas took offence with a local newspaper report that said the developer had consulted with neighbours.

During an earlier virtual meeting, "we were not even

allowed to speak," he said.

Residents had to submit their questions before the meeting in written form, said Bankas, "which was quite demeaning."

Paul DeMello, lawyer for Liberty Sites, commented on the free-form nature of the open house.

"We didn't have pre-prepared questions, so we don't know exactly what people are going to ask," he said.

Speakers were also concerned the apartments will be run as short-term rentals.

Town planner Mark Iamarino noted the town's rental bylaw only permits single-detached dwellings to be licensed as short-term rentals.

In March, town council reviewed a report from Granicus Host Compliance, a consultant hired to review the state of short-term rentals in the municipality.

"Assuming Granicus' figures are correct, there may be over 200 illegal unhosted (short-term rentals) in NOTL," the staff report said.

Gracia Janes, speaking on behalf of the NOTL Conservancy, said she worried about the project setting a precedent.

"The density is extraordinary. It is a precedent," she said.

"There's no need for this. It's just a commercial endeavour to take advantage."



Police seized more than \$60,000 in illegal drugs on Canada Day in Niagara-on-the-Lake. FILE PHOTO

Canada Day traffic stop leads to **drug seizure**

Staff
The Lake Report

Police seized over \$60,000 in illegal drugs during a traffic stop on Canada Day near Stanley Avenue and Highway 405 in Niagara-on-the-Lake, according to a Niagara Regional Police Service news release.

An officer pulled over a driver after checking the licence plate of a 2003 Audi and discovering the registered owner was a suspended driver, police said.

Upon inspecting the vehicle, officers found that one

passenger was not wearing a seatbelt. The same passenger then provided a false identity, police said.

An ensuing vehicle search led to the discovery and seizure of over \$50,000 worth of suspected fentanyl and \$10,000 in methamphetamine. As well, \$988 in cash was found.

Jesse Marius Lalande, 37, of St. Catharines, Sarah Lyon, 37, of NOTL, and Charles Ian Buckingham, 41, of NOTL face several charges, including possession of a schedule 1 substance for the purpose of trafficking.

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Forest restoration will remove 400 trees

Continued from Front Page

land, it let the trees grow naturally and most of the trees that took over were ash trees.

“Green ash is like a pioneer species in the forest community. So it’s like first one on-site, it grows fast and dominates the site,” he said.

“That was fine and everything, but back in 2012, emerald ash borers came into the region and started killing off the trees. Once a tree gets impacted by beetles, it’s usually dead within four years, so a lot of trees in Niagara-on-the-Lake in the Old Town area, by 2016 they were either dead or pretty much declining.”

He said the problem is that there are no “desirable forest species underneath the dead ash to replace them.”

“So what’s underneath all the dead ash is Manitoba maple,” Drennan said. “And Manitoba maple is considered like a weed tree. Even in the Niagara-on-the-Lake urban tree bylaw, it’s classified as a nuisance tree.”

He said foresters and biologists don’t want to have a monoculture of Manitoba maples.

“It’s not great for wildlife. It’s not great for forest composition. You want diversity, so that’s why we came up with the idea to clear the



Trees are being cleared along Two Mile Creek near Butler’s Burial Ground. RICHARD HARLEY

dead ash trees and get rid of the Manitoba maple.”

Once the trees are removed, about 6,000 new seedlings will be planted.

“It’s hard to come up with that many seedlings in a short period of time so that’s why I’m thinking logistically it’s going to be 2022,” Drennan said.

The trees replanted will be a diverse mixture of native species, including sugar maples, red maples, different types of oak trees and poplar trees such as trembling aspen, hickories as well as some conifers, he said.

If nothing was done, the ash trees would fall down and the invasive species would create a thicket that nobody could walk through.

The plan is also to remove

invasive Norway maples in the process. The authority will try to maintain some willow trees in the forest.

Having such a narrow range of trees is not great for wildlife habitat, Drennan said.

“With wildlife habitat you’d like to have a diversity of tree species but also structure,” he said. “We like to see multi levels, as you go up through the forest. So, especially bird habitat, different bird species prefer canopy, other ones like the middle and then the other ones like being down on the ground. And when you have a thicket of Manitoba maple, you don’t have that structure, that vertical structure.”

It will take a while for the seedlings to grow, but “we figured this is a good

way to start, to go in to interfere with the site in a positive way, and plant the native species that would have a hard time competing with the Manitoba maple on their own.”

“It’s kind of like a renovation,” he said.

He expects some people might not be happy that the trail through Butler’s Burial Ground to Garrison Village will be closed during the clearing for about 12 to 15 days.

“A lot of people use it, and during operations, we’re going to have to restrict access. There’s going to be machines in there and we just don’t want anybody getting hurt,” he said.

He said the clearing will be done with mechanized forestry equipment, not chainsaws.

Another part of the operation will be using the machines to remove dead logs and trees that have fallen into Two Mile Creek.

Some of the dead trees, about a dozen, will be left up as bird and bat habitat. Those trees were identified by a biologist and avian expert, Drennan said.

Part of the reason the work is being done in July is because it’s in between fall and spring spawning seasons for most wildlife. It also helps that the ground is drier, so the machinery doesn’t ruin the top soil.

Legion fish fry supports Indigenous community

Staff
The Lake Report

In lieu of Canada Day celebrations this year, the Niagara-on-the-Lake Royal Canadian Legion Hall, branch 124, held its weekly fish fry and donated \$2 of every meal sold to the Niagara Regional Native Centre.

“Hopefully, that will help some healing,” bar steward Megan Vanderlee said.

Vanderlee felt that the Legion had to do something to support Indigenous Peoples in Canada.

“It’s way past time. We have to own our past and try to fix it,” she said.

The fish fry has been one of the Legion’s hallmark events for decades.



Stan Harrington mixes beer batter for fish and chips. FILE

“It’s always been hugely popular. The community support has been amazing throughout this time,” said Vanderlee.

Stan Harrington, a former president and long-time member of branch 124, showed up wearing an orange shirt to support

Indigenous Peoples and said this Canada Day was different for him.

“For 20 years I’ve worn the same socks (on Canada Day). They’re white, made in Montreal and they’ve got a little Canadian flag on the side,” Harrington said.

“I’ve only worn them 20 times, because that’s how many Canada Days I’ve had them for. But not this year.”

Harrington spoke about how it feels to have not known what was going on at residential schools even though he was around during the height of their operations.

“I should have known because of my age. I should have known. It’s embarrassing that we didn’t know,” he said.

He remembered speaking with Indigenous children where he grew up near London, Ont. They told him that their parents paid to send them to public school instead of residential school and he said he is frustrated that the reality of residential schools did not dawn on him.

He also recalled hearing about a young boy being pulled from a school because he was severely beaten.

“We didn’t know. We should have known. We should have known,” he said.

The Legion will announce at a later date how much the fish fry raised for the native centre.

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Salons grateful to be open after extended COVID lockdown

Evan Saunders
Local Journalism Initiative
The Lake Report

After months of closures, salon owners are happy to open their doors for customers again as Ontario enters Step 2 of its reopening plan.

Lockdowns resulted in some salons closing permanently, but for one young NOTL salon owner the shutdown was a chance to spend time with his dying mother.

"It was bittersweet," Stephen Cymba, 31, said in an interview.

About three weeks ago, his mother Katherine died of cancer but the COVID lockdown enabled him to focus on spending time with her instead of running his business.

"A lot of people said I must be bored because the salon was closed. But it kind of worked out in a weird way. I was able to be with and help take care of her in the end."

Cymba has owned



Adrianna Rankin gets her hair cut by Cathy Cabral at Hypnotyc Hair Salon on the first day of Step 2 of Ontario's reopening plan. EVAN SAUNDERS

Simba's Salon in Virgil for the last two years.

His business now being open has provided him with a way to stay close with his mother.

"It's good now to work, to keep busy and to honour my mom. She loved this place. So, the best way for me to get back to myself is honour her and make her proud."

To keep up with customer demand, Cymba plans to start early and work late.

He said customers were surprised he has not

raised his prices due to the financial challenges caused by multiple lockdowns.

"I'm not going to change my prices just because the economy's dipped. I've put my heart and soul into this place. I can pay for the cleaning products, people don't have to compensate me for that," he said.

"People are pinching pennies right now. I'm not going to ask more from them."

Ontario officially moved into step two of the pro-

vincial reopening plan on Wednesday, June 30. Salons had been closed since April 8, the start of the third lockdown order in Ontario.

"It feels really good. We're all happy to be back," Hypnotyc Hair Lounge manager Kristy Lewis told The Lake Report.

Lewis said business is back in full swing. "It's been a little crazy on the phones."

Cymba has had a similar experience.

"I learned that I have a limit of 70 voicemails. So, that's good," the stylist laughed.

The lockdown forced Cymba to let go of his employees so now he is running the whole operation himself.

On top of taking care of his clients' hair, Cymba is "the receptionist, I get to clean everything, I do all the orders and the laundry."

That has not been a problem for him.

"It's all good. I was doing it for other people, so why not do it for myself."

But there is another responsibility that stylists have, as any frequent customer understands.

"I'm a therapist as well," Cymba said.

People have been venting to him even more than usual due to the stress that COVID-19 has created, he said.

Cymba had been cutting hair for a decade at other salons until he opened his own. With restrictions lifted, people have wasted no time in booking their appointments with the young owner.

We're booked "right into the rest of the month," he said.

Prospective clients had best reach out to their favourite salon as soon as possible if they want a summer cut.

"Most of July we're booked already," Lewis said.

On opening day, Adrianna Rankin was getting her hair cut at Hypnotyc. While it was nice to have her hair

done again, she said she was even more excited to get her eight-year-old son in for an appointment.

"I tried to cut my son's hair. It's just not the same when mommy does it," Rankin said.

After the province moved to Step 2 a few days earlier than originally planned, some salons in town, such as Bliss Aveda Salon, were still closed on June 30.

Bliss planned to open on Monday, July 5, an employee said.

For Lewis, the early reopening was easy to handle. She had more difficulty with the prolonged lockdowns.

"Following the news every week and hearing how it's changing every single week has been a little difficult. But we are thankful to be open," she said.

"There are some places that have gone out of business because they just couldn't handle the pandemic. We're thankful we have our clientele, who have all been coming back."

Ross' Ramblings: Ongoing global pandemic causes confusion and changes

Ross Robinson
The Lake Report

Another groggy early morning in downtown Chautauqua and the garbage truck is noisily making its way along our streets.

Ah hah. It's Friday! How many times were we not sure what day it was? Or even what the date was? The 14th. The 15th? The 16th? Less to do, less reason to know the exact date.

Here we are, some 16 months into the COVID-19 pandemic, and on our way to the finish line.



COVID-19 protective face masks hanging. SUPPLIED

What a journey it has been and our lives have been modified in so many ways.

Thank goodness for my various tennis leagues,

which help me to know what day it is. George Dell organizes Big Hitters on Monday evenings. Gerry Kowalchuk is the boss of geriatrics on Wednesday mornings. Terry Francis organizes 30 former athletes for Top Guns on Thursday evenings, while Dominic Ventresca's Dominators play between 8:30 to 11:30 Saturday mornings.

The real fun is on Friday and Sunday evenings when Marilyn Francis and Pippa De Leonardis herd us cats for Mixed Dubs. Tennis with music, and tea and

biscuits later. What's not to love, eh?

Some awkward moments arose during the early months of the new normal. While waiting at the red light at Mary and Mississauga streets, several times I blushed a bit when I looked to my left and saw a woman behind the steering wheel of her car.

How daring, how risqué I thought, having her underwear hanging from her rear-view mirror. Then, I realized it was her COVID-19 mask, not her intimate apparel. Black, blue, white,

whatever. How silly of me.

And at the Avondale stores, chance encounters with normally well turned out, chic female friends, who were wearing baggy grey sweatpants. Sometimes without any war paint on. Small talk was truncated and short memories became a bonus.

And during the four summer months of 2020, I performed my ablutions with hot showers only three or four times each month. No, I wasn't on the nose, because I bathed in the fresh waters of Lake Ontario almost

every day.

Rode my bike down to Ryerson Park with a bar of Ivory soap and a bottle of Head & Shoulders shampoo. Into the water, and it is a different kind of clean. And a good heart starter.

With most Tim Hortons and McDonald's outlets closed, many NOTLers and visitors needed to find alternative public washrooms. Nature pees became more common, as this is a necessity, not a luxury.

Read the full story online at www.niagaranow.com/opinion/phtml/5872

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Canada Day **cupcakes** a drive-thru hit



John Sayers, Judith Sayers, Nancy Wilkes and Maureen Hayslip hand out Canada Day packages outside Fort George on June 30. EVAN SAUNDERS

Rotary BBQ inspires **lunch gift** for migrant workers

Evan Saunders
Local Journalism Initiative
The Lake Report

The annual Niagara-on-the-Lake Rotary Club drive-thru barbecue was in full swing on July 1 and one NOTL resident used the opportunity to provide lunch for migrant workers.



St. Davids resident Bert O'Connell used the Canada Day barbecue as an opportunity to buy lunch for migrant workers. EVAN SAUNDERS

Bert O'Connell, of St. Davids, saw this year's pork roast as an opportunity to give back to the many migrant workers who are living on farms across the municipality right now.

said he saw the effect that residential schools have had on Indigenous Peoples in Canada.

"I saw these migrant workers out in the heat, they were going for their lunch," he told The Lake Report.

And the recent discoveries of children's remains on residential school properties prompted him to do something good with his Canada Day.

"They just looked down. Everybody else is on holiday and they still have to work. So, I thought I would bring them a pizza but then I realized the Rotary was having its barbecue."

"The emotional toll it took on her dad and all of his family – when I think of that I almost break down. There was suicide, or people would drink themselves

O'Connell, whose ex-wife is of Indigenous descent,

to death," O'Connell said.

He said he would not be celebrating Canada Day himself, but felt that doing a good deed was the most patriotic act of all.

O'Connell left the Rotary barbecue with a pile of pork sandwiches, soft drinks and a big smile on his face, ready to brighten somebody else's day.

Rotary spokesperson Gary Hatton said the club initially wasn't going to hold a barbecue this year,

"but we felt like we had to do something."

The club usually grills hot dogs and burgers for several thousand people in Simcoe Park, he said.

This year, members held a drive-thru pig roast in the parking lot of the Niagara United Mennonite Church on Niagara Stone Road. PigOut Catering cooked for the event, with a full pig roasting on a spit.

The usual Rotary Club barbecue is complete with pancake breakfast, a band and a Canada Day parade through town. But COVID-19 safety precautions came first and foremost this year.

"We can't have people out of their cars and mingling about, so the drive-thru format is great," said Rotarian Greg Fedoryn.

"Last year we did (a smaller barbecue) and then this year we kind of built it up more."

RIDDLE ME THIS

Thirty white horses on a red hill, first they champ, then they stamp, then they stand still.
What are we?

Last issue: I have eyes but I can't see. I live in the dark until you need me. What am I?

Answer: A potato

Also accepted: A sewing needle

Answered first by: Wade Durling

Also answered correctly (in order) by: Mary Drost, Michele Campbell, Gerry Hruby, Sam Young, Susan Hamilton, Bob Stevens, Jim Baird, Elaine Landray, Maria Janeiro, Gary Davis, Kirby Llacer, Margie Enns, Carl Nickel, Tee Bucci, Wesley Turner, Conrad Gener, Dena Broeders, James Langendoen, Lillian Farinavci, Robert Wilms, Sylvia Wiens

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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NOTL bustling with **summer action**



Front row: Pippa de Leonardis, Rosemary Goodwin, Cathy Buis, Mary Lou Turner, Fran Doran, Deb Robert, Shirley Rednall, Susan Browne, Gillian Venturi, Dorothy Booth, Sonja Schindeler. Back row: Cate Mee, Maggie Hobbs, Danna McDonough, Kim Laidlaw, Pat Lewis, Barb Kavanagh, Marilyn Francis, Barbara Criveller, Lori Oakes, Pat Young, Zeny Umoquit, Wendy Dell, Cathy Reid. ROSS ROBINSON PHOTO



Mary Towndrow practises her tennis swing. SUPPLIED



Owen, 10, takes a dive at the Memorial Park pool in Old Town on Saturday.

Paul Chapman top **point-getter** in men's golf league



Mike Eagen, above, tied with Jim McMacken for low gross 38 in last week's WOOFs league play. KEVIN MACLEAN

Kevin MacLean
The Lake Report

Paul Chapman led the field in the NOTL Golf Club men's league on July 1, totalling 24 under the modified Stableford scoring system.

Jim Sifton was right behind with 22, and Warren Tutton and Jim Ricci tied for third with 21 points each.

Reigning men's open champion James Grigjanis-Meusel continued his dominance this season, winning low gross with a 2-under 34.

Birdies earned Rai Lauge (#1), Ron Newman (#2) and Jeff Jacques (#3) \$67 each

in gross skins. Lauge and Newman also added \$43 in net skins on the same holes. John Kozik scooped the prize money wiith his birdie on #6.

Joe Interisano (#4) and Rick Blouin (#9) took closest to the pin honours.

Tuesday WOOFs: Mike Eagen and Jim McMacken shared low gross as each carded a 2-over 38 in WOOFs league play on June 29. Jim Ricci was net winner with 33. Hidden hole winners were Don Allen, Glen Murray and Ted Wiens, with birdies on #6.

After a measurement, it was determined Eagen and Cal Cochrane were close to the pin on #4. Peter

Falconer scooped the \$50 prize in the 50/50 draw.

Women's leagues: Two foursomes – Trish Anthony, Margot Hickson, Sharon Allen and Barb Werner, and Maureen Dickson, Penny Green, Suzanne Rate and Helen McCallum – tied for first with a 5-over 41 in nine hole women's league competition on June 29.

The group of Judy Cardiff, Linda Williams and Charlotte Kainola were next with 44.

Our extreme weather played havoc with the 18 hole women's league the past two weeks.

On June 29, overbearing heat forced many of the women to limit play to

just nine holes, but several birdies and chip-ins were recorded. And on July 6, a torrential downpour soaked everyone and cut short rounds.

Last week, Michele Darling (#2), Barbara Ahluwalia, Marie Ellison (#7) and Nikki Jenkins (#9) all had birds, and Darling chipped in on #7 and #8. It was a big day for Jenkins, who played a full round and broke 100 with her milestone score of 99.

This week, before the deluge, the top three low gross winners were Lisa Allen, Yolanda Henry and Cathy Murray. Low net honours went to Allen, Marlene Sibbald and Murray.

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A collage of masks and gloves that columnist Kyra Simone spotted in a walk around NOTL. KYRA SIMONE



Lake Ontario needs more ‘love,’ series of shoreline cleanups show

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



Kyra Simone
Special to The Lake Report

A series of cleanups by GTA non-profit A Greener Future collected more than 119,000 bits of litter from Lake Ontario shorelines, including more than 1,500 pieces at three parks in Niagara-on-the-Lake.

Founder Rochelle Byrne says the annual Love Your Lake program has documented an increase in plastic pollution, especially personal protective equipment (PPE).

The organization's volunteers conducted 266 cleanups between Kingston and Niagara Falls in May and June. Among the items found were over 500 pieces of PPE, which represents a 711 per cent increase in PPE litter since the group's 2020 findings.

In June, Love Your Lake

retrieved 215 pieces of litter from Ryerson Park, 1,173 from Queen's Royal Park, and another 215 from Niagara Shores Park.

NOTL volunteers like myself have found a large number of masks elsewhere around town, so the scale of discarded PPE litter in NOTL is much larger.

"The more we use of something disposable, the more ends up in our environment," said Byrne.

And while masks are likely not left behind on purpose, "They fall out of people's pockets or blow out of lid-less garbage cans."

She urges people to dispose of masks securely.

Although some people feel safer wearing disposable masks, Canada's public health guidelines still recommend cloth masks. With two layers and a filter pocket, these reusable alternatives are a more environmental choice.

Luckily, fewer gloves were found this year, Byrne said.

"At the beginning of the pandemic, people were wearing gloves because they thought it would help," but we now understand the low risk of COVID-19 transmission via surfaces.

"There's more litter from single-use items compared to previous years," including plastic bags, cans, plastic lids, straws and cutlery, she said. This may be due to pandemic-restricted use of

refillable containers at grocery and fast-food locations.

PRETTIEST TOWN? Niagara-on-the-Lake's Queen's Royal Park has been a Love Your Lake cleanup site since the program's inception in 2014 and to date volunteers have removed 10,000 pieces of litter from that beach alone.

"At Queen's Royal Park, there's lots of plastic pieces," Byrne noted.

One common culprit: nurdles. These small pellets are melted down to make plastic products and packaging, but Byrne said many of them are spilled into the lake by ships transporting this raw material to manufacturers.

As for what litter is most prevalent, she said, "Number one is cigarette butts. They're absolutely everywhere." Styrofoam and other plastic pieces are the next most common finds.

To raise awareness about plastic pollution, last year Byrne undertook a 430-kilometre paddleboard journey around Lake Ontario. While on the water, she could observe the condition of the lake up close.

"I thought I had a pretty good idea of how bad things were, but it's way worse than I thought," she said. She found oily brown slime, slicks of pollution, really smelly areas, algae blooms and a lot of dead fish.

"I did paddle through areas where you could tell there was a sewage bypass:

condoms, tampon applicators, chunks of toilet paper," she said. "I'm really glad I didn't fall in."

In fact, NOTL has a combined sewer overflow near Ryerson Park's Mississauga Beach. Because these systems use shared pipes for sanitary and storm water, they can overflow during wet weather.

"People have no idea that when they flush their toilet, it could end up in the lake," Byrne said.

SHOWING THE LOVE: "Plastic pollution affects us all, whether we want to think about it or not. It's in our drinking water," she said. Litter cleanups are just one way to take care of our vulnerable lakes.

"We can all do something," she said. Pick up litter when you see it, avoid buying single-use plastics and support organizations that are fighting to protect our land and water.

She doesn't expect everyone to be an environmentalist, "That's not realistic." But she is hopeful that solutions will arise when people from many different backgrounds make small changes and work together.

Local cleanups with A Greener Future later this year may be on the agenda of the Town of NOTL's environmental advisory committee.

For more information, find the organization on Facebook @TheGreenerTeam.



Thank you to our wonderful community for your support over the past 2 years! My team and I are so grateful for the relationships we've been able to make and opportunities to serve you.

Last year we celebrated our anniversary with hand sanitizer sales. This year, we will celebrate with syringes filled with Pfizer vaccines.

We could have never imagined all that would happen when we first opened our doors in July 2019, and we will continue to adapt to continue to care for our community.

Many things have changed, yet our slogan that hangs above the dispensary stays the same: Caring beyond the prescription. COVID-19 cannot take that away. The process of visiting our pharmacy may look different on the surface: plexiglass barriers, floor markings and masked faces, however the cheerful greetings, friendly advice and efficient medication distribution remain unchanged – or perhaps even stronger than ever.

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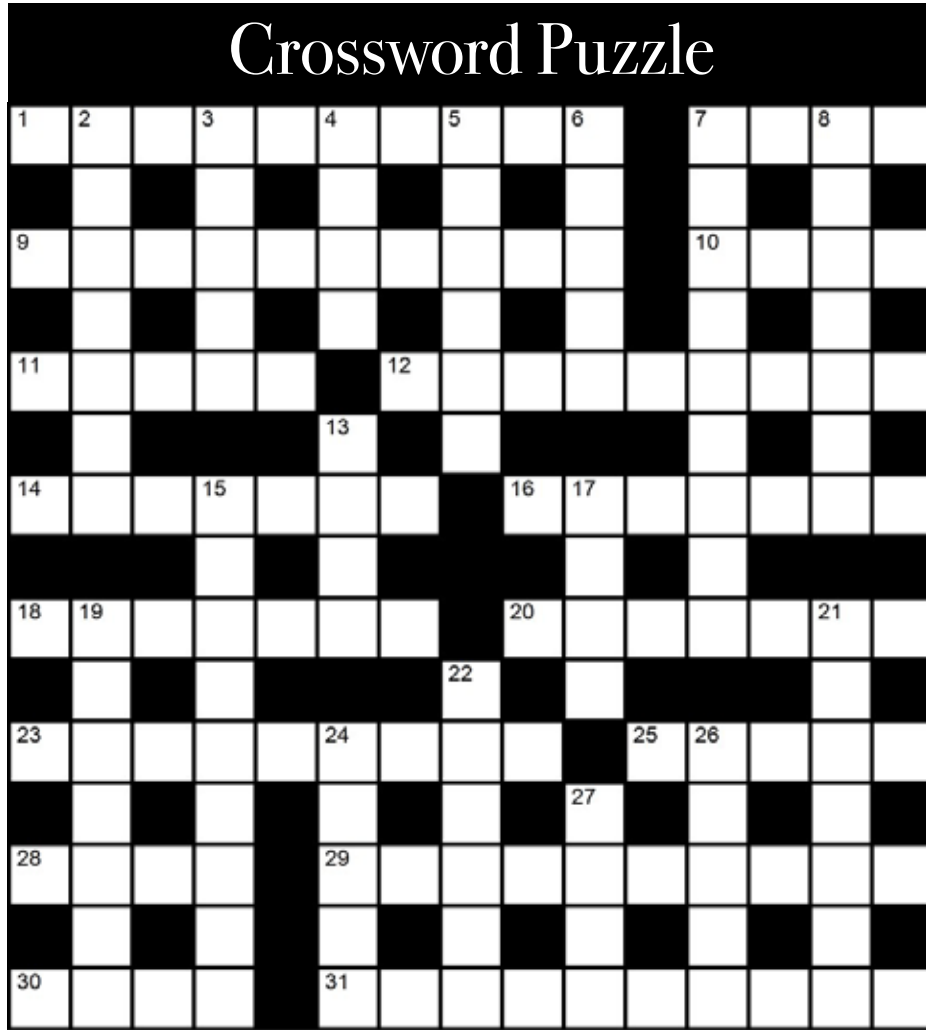
Have some fun

Across

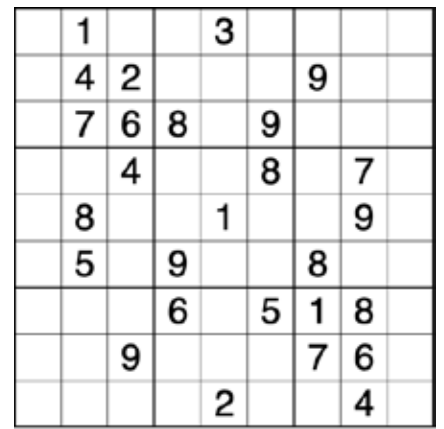
- 1. Sheets and blankets (10)
- 7. Unfortunately (4)
- 9. Partly unrelated female sibling (10)
- 10. Grain husks (4)
- 11. Investigate closely (5)
- 12. Of no value (9)
- 14. Dog-houses (7)
- 16. Altar cloth (7)
- 18. Cases (7)
- 20. Implore urgently (7)
- 23. Inflammation of the stomach (9)
- 25. Wading bird (5)
- 28. Form of wrestling (4)
- 29. Beyond the power of Man (10)
- 30. Hay store (4)
- 31. The lot (10)

Down

- 2. Qualify (7)
- 3. Managed (5)
- 4. Leave out (4)
- 5. Frankfurter (3,3)
- 6. Small fish (5)
- 7. Vehicle for injured people (9)
- 8. Formerly the world's fourth largest lake (4,3)
- 13. Stop up a hole (4)
- 15. Wee Willie Winkie's attire (9)
- 17. Grass (4)
- 19. Sea north of Australia (7)
- 21. Hanging cloth (7)
- 22. Baby's feeding bottle cap (6)
- 24. Point in question (5)
- 26. Not easily broken (5)
- 27. Salver (4)



Last issue's answers




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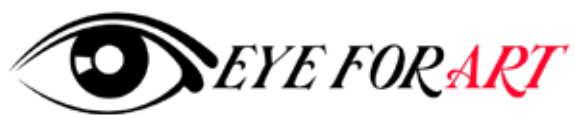
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FEATURED



'Niagara' captures natural wonder of falls

Penny-Lynn Cookson
Special to The Lake Report

Now, before you sigh “Not another image of Niagara Falls,” wait – because the back story is fascinating.

There may be other falls: Angel is the highest, Iguazu the largest, Victoria exotic, Havasu colourful, but Niagara is the most powerful, exhilarating and famous.

Being the most commonly painted subject in 18th- and 19th-century European and American landscape painting, it was known as the Eighth Wonder of the World and later as the Honorary Capital of the World.

Prints were given as wedding gifts. Its image appeared on stereographs, china, wallpaper and lampshades. But beyond the tourist appeal and the

beauty lay deeper currents of nationalism, nature, the land and God.

The artist who best conveyed those themes was Frederic Edwin Church who in 1857, at age 31, created “Niagara” as a panoramic and dramatic natural wonder to outshine any place in Europe and as a symbol of America’s promise. This was Niagara as manifest destiny, as soul, spirit and prophecy, a mythical deluge that would wash away the memory of the Old World and bring forth the New World.

Church was born in Hartford, Conn., in 1826 to affluent parents who encouraged his early talent. He was the only pupil to Thomas Cole, America’s leading landscape painter and founder of the Hudson River School, which reflected 19th-century American



Frederic Edwin Church, “Niagara,” 1857, oil on canvas, National Gallery of Art, Washington, DC. WIKIMEDIA COMMONS

themes of discovery, exploration, settlement and nature as a reflection of God.

At 19, Church exhibited at the National Academy in New York and at 23 was the youngest person elected to full membership. He travelled extensively throughout the northeastern U.S. and, inspired by the explorations and writing of the great German geographer and naturalist Alexander von Humboldt, he spent five months in Colombia and Ecuador.

His paintings of the Andes were a great success but it was “Niagara” that made his reputation as the most

important landscape painter in America. No artist prior to Church had captured the magnificent sweep, drama and detail of the Horseshoe Falls seen from the Canadian side on such a grand scale.

His canvas is nearly three times wider than the height. The eye is led sideways, suggesting the vast western wilderness still to be explored. By eliminating foreground and framing that direct the eye deep into the composition, the viewer is thrust forward and down to experience the scene from the very edge of the drop off.

A large tree trunk is swept by the force of the currents.

Water swiftly slides over rock ledges to form a foaming white pool before tumbling over the precipice into the mist and river below. A rainbow is seen in the upper left and its other half in the thick mist inspire transcendence.

The painting was exhibited alone, illuminated in a darkened Manhattan gallery. Admission was 25 cents, which included the use of binoculars to increase the thrill of the experience. In two weeks, over 100,000 people had seen “the finest oil picture ever painted this side of the Atlantic.” It toured to major U.S. cities, Britain and Paris, where it

won the silver medal in the 1867 Exposition Universelle.

Niagara’s fame continued to inspire. Daredevils such as The Great Blondin and Nik Wallenda walked tightropes over the falls. Annie Edson Taylor at 63 was the first person to survive going over the falls in a barrel in 1901. “Niagara,” a 1953 film noir thriller, starred Marilyn Monroe, who appeared in the release poster lying horizontally across the top of the falls.

The type reads, “Marilyn Monroe and ‘Niagara,’ a raging torrent of emotion that even nature can’t control!” Hollywood aside, let’s concur with Pierre Berton, author of “Niagara,” who wrote: “Of the hundreds of paintings made of Niagara before Church and after him, this is by common consent the greatest.”

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: Why did neanderthals disappear thousands of years ago?

Dr. William Brown
The Lake Report

About 100,000 years ago, 36 stocky people walked along a beach in southern Spain leaving footprints behind in the sand which later fossilized.

Most were made by adults and a few by children whose irregular prints suggested they were playing, perhaps even dancing, leaving us to wonder what they might have been talking or even laughing about.

The scene of frolicking children and leisurely walking adults is common enough on almost any beach where families and friends gather together. But it would be another 60,000 years before modern humans set foot in western Europe. These prints were made by neanderthals.

Neanderthals were short, stocky, rugged people who lived in small communities scattered throughout much of Eurasia. They were closely related to modern humans, and another group, the denisovans who lived in East



Asia. And with whom, both modern humans and neanderthals sired children and shared genes as did neanderthals with humans, traces of whose trysts may be found to this day in humans outside of Africa.

Until recently little was known about the appearance of denisovans except for a mandible in Nepal – until a skull was rediscovered in China. The large skull, at the upper range for modern humans, was named “Dragon Man” by the Chinese archeological team and

dated between 309,000 and 138,000 years ago.

His face was broad, the orbits large and squarish and the overall shape of the skull was longitudinally flatter than the more globular shape characteristic of most modern humans. These and other features suggested to some scientists that this was our first look at a denisovan skull and face. So far, however, we know nothing about the life and culture of denisovans, unlike neanderthals.

For nearly a century after the first neanderthal skull was discovered in the Neander Valley in Germany, neanderthals were cartooned as dimwitted, based on their large brows and stocky appearance, which was considered brutish.

A different behavioural picture emerged in the last few decades. Studies revealed neanderthals buried their dead, created cave art decades before modern humans reached western Europe, fashioned jewelry and at least in one instance built a ceremonial site deep in a

cave in the Aveyron valley in Southeast France, which was occupied by neanderthals as early as 174,000 years ago.

This and other evidence suggest neanderthals were capable of symbolic thinking and probably language, and possessed an imagination, which if not quite the equal of modern humans, was still impressive.

They were also survivors who managed to live through several major swings in environmental climate. Yet they, their denisovan close cousins and other contemporary home species in Africa, Indonesia and the Philippines, all disappeared from the historical record, leaving modern humans as the “Lone Survivor” as Chris Stringer so aptly put it in the title of his 2012 book. But why did the neanderthals disappear?

There’s no evidence that modern humans killed them off, at least in any systematic fashion or that humans outcompeted neanderthals for scarce food resources, although that’s a possibility. A recent genetic study from the

Max Planck Institute, led by Svante Paabo, suggests another possibility: the number of fathering males may have been reduced to such a low level that there were too few to sustain genetic diversity and fend off the accumulation of harmful mutations, which might have threatened the health of the community.

In other words, neanderthals had become an endangered species for much the same reason in our time that mountain gorillas are endangered or woolly mammoth communities died out roughly 10,000 years ago – inbreeding triggered too many harmful mutations.

This fine genetic study from an excellent institute also suggested that males tended to remain in their natal communities whereas females dispersed to other communities, an arrangement that might have made matters worse if there were too few fathering males.

Of course, the obvious question is why so few fathering males? Or was the quality of their sperm in

some fashion impaired? We don’t know, but at least this study suggests some first steps toward solving the puzzle for the neanderthals, leaving all those other now-extinct hominin species as mysteries to solve.

It would not surprise me if Svante Paabo receives a Nobel Prize for his highly original pioneering work in the field of paleolithic genetics as a vital tool for solving the mysteries of human origins.

Coupled with much more precise dating technologies, enhanced techniques such as satellite searches for locating likely sources for fossils and sophisticated methods such as CT scanning and AI for analyzing fossils, the field of paleoanthropology has transformed in the last few decades.

Look for a new series on human origins next year.

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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Parliament Oak opens, 1948

This image of Parliament Oak school was taken from the corner of King and Centre streets on Sept. 12, 1948. It was the official opening of the school, which replaced the former one at the corner of Davy and Platoff streets. The school's name was based on a belief that one of the sessions of the first Parliament was held under a large oak tree on the property. The school opened at a cost of \$191,000 and initial enrollment included 280 students, eight teachers and the principal, Mr. Brunton. Further additions to the building took place in 1956 (classrooms), 1966 (library, classrooms and staff room) and 1976 (the community gym and auditorium). The school closed in 2015.



NOTL must take control of development

Brian Marshall
Columnist



Already happening in NOTL. SUPPLIED

On the morning of Canada Day I visited with some folks in Old Town.

They live in what appears to be a modest 1920s bungalow, however, passing the threshold I was gobsmacked by an interior that displayed the best of New Traditional design.

Passing through the house, I stepped out onto a deck overlooking a beautifully landscaped backyard, but there was a shadow to my right that stopped my enjoyment; a shadow caused by a massive new infill build (effectively a wall replete with overlooking balcony) that altered the entire neighbourhood line-of-sight.

Nonplussed, I turned to the property owner who stated,

"It conforms to the town's building bylaws, but because you can, should you really?"

In a nutshell, that is the question facing the Town of Niagara-on-the-Lake. We have two major projects (Parliament Oak and the old NOTL hospital) under consideration in Old Town, residential infills are popping up like mushrooms, significant commercial properties are in the hands of developers who, no doubt, are planning future projects, and medium-high density residential developments are proliferating across the landscape.

Even on the line and concession roads in the so-called "greenbelt" homes are popping up at a nearly frenetic pace.

The face of Niagara-on-the-Lake is changing at a speed that echoes that of Mississauga in the late 20th century and continues today in Oakville, Bronte, Burlington, etc. And, just like those towns and cities, NOTL has no centralized vision or oversight governance in place to ensure our town does not become just one more casualty within the Golden Horseshoe's urbanized sea of mediocrity.

Take a drive up to Unionville or Markham to visit examples of towns in which a gracious built-heritage and gentle lifestyle have been completely bastardized by the results of unmanaged development.

There are those who believe there is nothing that

can be done to manage the development juggernaut of southern Ontario, but I beg to differ.

Over several decades, the chief administrator of the Town of Mono (now retired and a valued resident of NOTL) successfully ensured that any development in his jurisdiction respected both existing cultural heritage landscapes and conformed to the residents' commonly held vision for the town.

So, can it be done?

The answer is "Yes," the people in towns and cities across North America have successfully assumed management oversight on development.

Should it be done?

In my opinion it's vital, but I am only one voice and it really devolves upon the will and action of my fellow citizens in Niagara-on-the-Lake.

How can it be done?

In short: establish design review guidelines and associated administration, neither of which is terribly complicated or expensive. But, that explanation must wait until next week's column.

Looking to the Stars



Excitement ahead for Venus and Mars

Bill Auchterlonie
Special to The Lake Report

This is the week of the new moon in her home sign of Cancer. It's also the week of the most exciting aspect in astrology – Venus conjunct Mars.

Thursday, July 8: The biggest event today is Venus making a square to Uranus. Just like with Mars, Venus' T-square with Saturn and Uranus will initially push us outside our comfort zone. As with Mars, Chiron comes to save the day. This back-and-forth process of rewiring our heart to higher frequencies will be extremely healing and cathartic. On July 8, 1834, Frederick Zeppelin was born in Germany. He designed and built the cigar-shaped aircraft which, in 1937, caught fire in New Jersey while attempting to land. The image is well-known for its appearance on the cover of the inaugural album of the British rock band Led Zeppelin.

Friday, July 9: The new moon is in her home sign of Cancer is tonight. New moons are a time to make a list of things we want to accomplish in the next 28 1/2 days – between now and the time of the next new moon. The list, this time, will be strongly influenced by Neptune in Pisces, which is in perfect harmony with this new moon. Pay attention to dreams and any other unusual communications and put those items on your list. Bill Haley & the Comets' hit "Rock Around the Clock" was #1 on Billboard on July 9, 1955. Rock and roll is here to stay!

Saturday, July 10: Dreamy and frustrating are not things we usually find together as feelings on the same day, but that's what we get today. With luck, we can use imagination to resolve frustration. On July 10, 2018, just three years ago, Toronto's Drake surpassed the Beatles with the most Top 10 singles – simultaneously – on the Billboard Hot 100. Beatles = 5. Drake = 7.

Sunday, July 11: Mercury leaves its home sign of Gemini and enters Cancer this afternoon. Communications (including talking to oneself) go from lively and quick to more personal, emotional and sensitive. This is so until the end of July when Mercury enters Leo. On this day in 1969, David Bowie released his giant hit "Space Oddity" nine days before Apollo 11 landed on the moon. Thirty-one years later, Canadian astronaut Chris Hadfield performed Bowie's tune live from the International Space Station.

Monday, July 12: Inspirational ideas and news make this a Monday to celebrate. Today, Nobel Prize winner Malala Yousafzai celebrates birthday #24.

Tuesday, July 13: Venus and Mars meet in the sky in Leo. They attract each other and, as a result of their passion, something new comes into existence. Whether it's a new life, new relationship or a new creative project, Venus conjunct Mars is our cosmic go-ahead to get our creative juices flowing. Creativity means going back to the source, understanding who you really are – and then simply unleashing your truth, whatever that may be. Harrison Ford is still one of the most successful actors in Hollywood. Today he turns 79.

Wednesday, July 14: With the moon in discriminating Virgo, we might not expect to feel a surprise, but that's what's in store, at least emotionally. "Easy Rider," the Hollywood film that changed Hollywood, directed by Dennis Hopper, who co-starred with Peter Fonda and Jack Nicholson, was first seen on July 14, 1969.

Next time: Chiron turns retrograde, the first quarter moon in Libra and Venus enters Virgo.

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Cumpson sells his longtime **hosta** business

Continued from Front Page

And were they expensive! I heard about a Hosta Society and joined it. Then I got a life membership.”

In the early 1990s, Cumpson bought his current property, then a peach orchard on its last legs. He was thinking of retiring after a long career with General Motors in St. Catharines, and his dream of a hosta business would help make that happen.

Cumpson is an Old Town boy, through and through, but he has trouble pinpointing his heritage. “Gosh, we’ve been more than 100 years in Niagara, but I’m not exactly sure. I had a great uncle who owned the stagecoach that went from Buffalo all the way to Hamilton.”

“My grandpa was a gravedigger at St. Mark’s. He rang the church bell faithfully every day at noon and five. He let me ride the bell.”

As a boy, Cumpson remembers his father had one great job as a confectionery salesman for Gullion’s Wholesale on Queen Street. He travelled throughout the Niagara Peninsula selling candy to local food and convenience stores.

“So, I got the first Eat-more ever sold. And I got the first Turkish Delight,



Bruce Cumpson stands behind a sea of hostas. TIM TAYLOR

before anyone else.”

He attributes his love of gardening to his father.

“Dad was a rose man. He had 900 roses on the Lakeshore property. My job was to take care of the roses. I had to hoe them up in the fall.”

His mother was from

Nova Scotia and spent 40 years as a nurse at the Niagara-on-the-Lake hospital. “She came up from Nova Scotia with three other ladies to work at the hospital. They stayed in the old nursing residence behind the hospital. The building that was just torn down.”

Cumpson’s family lived on Lakeshore Road, not far from the old rifle range. He attended both Butler and McNab public schools and went on to Niagara District and Kernahan Park High School in St. Catharines.

But school wasn’t really his thing.

In 1970, Cumpson was 17, and the Pillar and Post Restaurant was just taking shape, his father told him to go over and ask the chef for a job.

“So, I walked into the kitchen. The chef told me to come here the next day at 8 o’clock. I was a pot washer. ‘I’ll be here chef.’ ”

Cumpson spent eight years at the Pillar and Post, from kitchen, to dining room and, finally, bar manager. He attributes his ability to connect with his customers to his years at the hotel.

He also got married at the P&P.

That was when he realized he needed a job that provided benefits for his family. He spent the next 30 years at General Motors in St. Catharines, a job he describes as “tough — it just wasn’t for me.”

But he persevered, working his day job and spending nights and weekends with his hostas.

Cumpson describes himself as a collector, just like stamps or hockey cards.

Over the years he’s travelled all over North America searching for that one variety he covets.

“My first order from Ohio was \$1,100 for 10 hostas — just one stem, no leaves. More than \$100 a plant. But those 10 plants became hundreds.”

He’s even had one of his varieties registered with the American Hosta Society. It’s called the Niagara-on-the-Lake. “I own that right now.”

Cumpson doesn’t practise what is called man-hybridizing, creating new varieties by purposefully pollinating varieties, to make new ones.

But he is happy to have the bees do that for him. “I have so many varieties, the bees are hopping.”

Cumpson lives on the farm with Judy, his partner of over 20 years. Together, they have a blended family of four grown children from previous marriages, and two rambunctious grandchildren.

In the early days, Judy helped him run the garden business before he retired from GM in 2008. But now he pretty much does everything himself, often working, after a brief supper, long into the evening.

He admits, he is tired.

The couple had the farm and garden centre up for sale and it just sold this week. They hope new own-

ers will keep the business going.

“I don’t know what I will do if it doesn’t sell as a hosta business. I just keep potting now so I don’t have to think about it.

The transition to their new life is already underway. They are renovating a home on the Niagara Parkway, preparing for the transition.

Cumpson laughs at the suggestion he might not have any hostas in his life after the sale and move happen.

“I’ve got lots to plant. I have got 300 over there (at the new house) already. I’m going to do seedlings. I will do seedlings and sell them at the market in St. Catharines. Setting a table up.”

But he admits leaving his hostas will not be easy. He knows almost all his plants personally, by their formal name.

“I know all about hostas. I’ve done everything from one end to the other with hostas.”

His customers will miss him.

This is the latest in a sometimes series of stories about NOTL gardeners and growers and what makes them tick.

See Cumpson’s tips for growing hostas at www.niagaranow.com/news.phtml/5839

Bulbs can be more than just **early bloomers**, says NOTL gardener

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



Peggy Bell
Special to The Lake Report

In some centuries of their colourful history, bulbs have been used for flavouring and medicine, they’ve been emblazoned on royal banners, but mainly, they’re grown for their beauty.

Bulbs bring the first wel-



Tulip bulbs. SUPPLIED

come burst of colour, signalling the end of winter.

To beginner gardeners, spring bulbs mean crocuses, daffodils and tulips, but there are more than a dozen other kinds of bulbs.

Although bulbs like full sun, they can be planted

among deciduous trees that haven’t leafed out yet.

To extend bloom time, plant a single variety in different locations. The sunniest spots produce the earliest flowers, shade the latest.

Planting different varieties

can yield blooms in the early, mid and late season.

For spring bulbs, the sooner you plant in the fall, the better. It’s much nicer to plant on a sunny September day than in chilly November. The more time the bulbs have to put out their roots before the ground freezes, the stronger they will be.

If your earth is heavy and largely clay, add one to two inches of coarse sand in the bottom of the bulb hole you dig to assure fast growth of the root system.

Soak thoroughly to wash the soil in around the bulbs, eliminate air spaces and start the bulbs rooting.

After the bulbs have finished, cut off the flower head and allow the leaves

to yellow and wither before cutting back. This will build up energy for next year’s cycle.

Planting bulbs in groups of five or more will give you the most impressive impact.

Many bulbs — such as snowdrops, winter aconite (earliest yellow), scilla, dwarf irises, chionodoxas (glory of the snow), muscari (grape hyacinths), lily of the valley, anemones, leucojum (spring snowflake), daffodils, ranunculuses, fritillarias, ornithogalum (star of Bethlehem) — will naturalize or multiply over the years, creating larger clumps, making a good return on your initial investment.

The narcissus (daffodil

family) have countless varieties and from the earliest to the latest will give eight weeks or more of continuous bloom.

Tulips can also have an extended bloom time by planting early, mid and late varieties.

Treat yourself to a fall teaser by planting autumn crocuses, especially the doubles that resemble water lilies.

Plant late August or early September and three weeks later they’ll be in bloom while the leaves are falling. Get to a garden centre early for the best selection. Happy planting!

Peggy Bell is a member of Niagara-on-the-Lake’s Communities in Bloom committee.



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VEGETABLE BARLEY



REG. \$4.99
\$3.99
398mL CAN

Baked Fresh Daily!
**8" STRAWBERRY
RHUBARB PIE**
ONLY \$5.99!



NO PICK-UP FEES. **FREE DELIVERY** ON ORDERS OVER \$45 (IN NOTL).
SHOP ONLINE AT HarvestBarn.ca