$1.5M nursery school approved

More than 80 children already on waiting list for future child care facility

Richard Harley
Editor

Niagara-on-the-Lake is getting a new $1.5 million nursery school — and the wait list already has more than 80 names on it.

Council approved construction of the new child care facility after a closed session Monday evening.

The 4,308-square-foot facility will be added to the east side of the Niagara-on-the-Lake Community Centre, adjacent to the public library. The main entrance will be on Anderson Lane.

The facility will include an infant playroom with a kitchenette and a separate sleeping area, a toddler playroom, a preschool playroom with adjacent washrooms and changing rooms, and a school-aged room, as well as office and storage spaces.

The Niagara Nursery School & Child Care Centre now operates out of the Robertson Room at the community centre and can’t accommodate infants or toddlers. The new space will have room for 10 infants, 15 toddlers, 24 preschoolers, and 20 school-aged children.

The costs for the construction will be shared by the Town of Niagara-on-the-Lake, Niagara Region and the Ministry of Education, through the Community-Based Early Years and Child Care Capital Program grant.

The region provided $200,000 and the province kicked in a grant of $515,000 toward the building’s cost. The town’s $165,869 contribution will come from development charges, not tax revenues.

The nursery school must also contribute $100,000.

In addition, the town is issuing a 20-year debenture for $551,961. The school’s monthly rental payments will be equal to the town’s costs for carrying the debenture.

The nursery school will be

Continued on Page 2
Traffic lights on in Virgil

Dariya Baiguzhiyeva
The Lake Report

Finally, the new traffic lights in Virgil are up and running.

The signals at the corner of Niagara Stone and Field roads started operating on Tuesday, June 11, after a protracted installation.

Martin Mazza, a former councilor and owner of Italian Pizza and Subs across near the intersection, had a front row seat and said he had been watching the construction unfold in front of his restaurant for about three months.

He expressed frustration over how much time it took to set up the lights and how much “waste” he saw with the project, he said.

It felt like Groundhog Day seeing what appeared to be the same work being done repeatedly, said Mazza, adding it took the Region of Niagara 96 days to complete the project.

“They would rip out the concrete, the curbs, pour them – couple of weeks later, they rip them up again because it wasn’t right,” he said. “Four times they ripped those curbs out. Four times.

Mazza also questioned why the region didn’t install the lights before the retail development on Niagara Stone Road was built, which includes a full-size LCBO store and a Tim Hortons location.

Carolyn Ryall, the region’s director of transportation services, said a series of steps needed to be followed during the construction period.

“There is a sequencing of events that transpire during any construction,” she said in a phone interview.

“The region made every attempt to make the area safe and accessible for all users.”

“We had co-ordination with utilities as well as a partnership with the developer that had us working together on a sequence of how the work rolled out,” said Ryall.

Because the developer didn’t warrant an intersection, the region didn’t start the construction before the plaza was built, she said.

The new bylaw also requires a permit for hot tubs, which have to be kept closed and locked at all times when the pool isn’t supervised.

The new bylaw requires swimming pool and hot tub owners to fully comply within six months. 

There are about 900 to 1,000 swimming pools in NOTL, according to a town staff report. Although the exact number of hot tubs in town is not known, staff reported there could be as many hot tubs as there are pools.

At the council meeting on Monday, Coun. Allan Bissack made a motion to hire three contract officers to make sure residents comply with the bylaw.

Councillors were split on the issue, with Clare Camenzuli saying the notings the regulations do not cover other bodies of water, like ponds.

“Because (this bylaw) doesn’t cover other bodies of water, it’s not going to be a guarantee,” said Camenzuli.

“They are afraid because they couldn’t cross this road safely,” he told The Lake Report.

“Niagara Region spent $250,000 on the installation. That covered grade work below and above the ground including proper signing, Road markings, curbs, sidewalks and asphalt repair in the area around the roads.

Depending on the task and the sequence of work, between two and five crew members worked on-site, said Ryall.

“This intersection is being put into place based on a lot of the feedback we’ve received from the community on the need for it,” she told The Lake Report.

NOTL regional councillor Gary Zalepa Jr. said, “Sometimes there are things that are not foreseen during construction projects. I think that’s the case here. I wish people had looked to ask for the facts first before they get too excited about what’s going on.”

NOTL vintners win big at provincial wine awards

Richard Harley
Editor

Niagara-on-the-Lake wineries scored a decisive victory for homegrown wine, sweeping up 41 medals at this year’s Ontario Wine Awards.

Fifteen NOTL wineries — all members of the Wineries of Niagara-on-the-Lake association — took home 11 gold, 14 silver and 14 bronze medals across 23 award categories.

The winning bottles were revealed last Thursday during an awards ceremony at Niagara College.

Trius Winery and Peller Estates both took home a news release.

The Ontario Wine Awards competition was founded in 1995 by wine critic Tony Aspler. This year marked the contest’s 25th anniversary, with a record participation of 78 wineries and 542 Ontario VQA wines.

A complete list of this year’s award winners can be found at: ontariowineawards.ca.

Town won’t hire staff to enforce new pool bylaw

NOTL’s new swimming pool and hot tub bylaw divined the council’s meeting on Monday night as they rejected a plan to hire three contract staff to enforce the statute.

The updated nine-page bylaw, which was passed at the council meeting in May, includes several new and more detailed regulations and safety measures for enclosures.

Pools should now be enclosed with a fence not less than 1.52 metres (5 feet) and not more than 2 metres (6 feet) high. The wall of a building can be considered part of the swimming pool if it’s at least 1.52 metres (5 feet) in height and provided that the windows are locked.

If there are doors providing direct access to a swimming pool, from a garage or a house, they have to be equipped with a self-latching device. All the 0.52 metres from the ground and have to be locked when not in use. Every gate and entrance has to be kept closed and locked at all times when the pool isn’t supervised.

The new bylaw also requires a permit for hot tubs, which have to be locked when not used and have a secured cover. Hot tubs that don’t have a locking cover will need to comply with the “Swimming pool enclosure regulations.”

The previous bylaw, from 1977, was just three pages and had the same minimum height requirement of five feet. Gates had to be same height as the fence and had to be locked when not in use.

The new bylaw requires swimming pool and hot tub owners to fully comply within six months. There are about 900 to 1,000 swimming pools in NOTL, according to a town staff report. Although the exact number of hot tubs in town is not known, staff reported there could be as many hot tubs as there are pools.

At the council meeting on Monday, Coun. Allan Bissack made a motion to hire three contract officers to make sure residents comply with the bylaw.

Councillors were split on the issue, with Clare Camenzuli saying the notings the regulations do not cover other bodies of water, like ponds.

“Because (this bylaw) doesn’t cover other bodies of water, it’s not going to be a guarantee,” said Camenzuli.

“Complemented by our fine wines, unique terroir and unforgettable experiences, the Wineries of Niagara-on-the-Lake have truly evolved into a world class destination,” he said in a news release.

The Ontario Wine Awards competition was founded in 1995 by wine critic Tony Aspler. This year marked the contest’s 25th anniversary, with a record participation of 78 wineries and 542 Ontario VQA wines.

A complete list of this year’s award winners can be found at: ontariowineawards.ca.

NOTL vintners win big at provincial wine awards

Herbert Konzelmann was awarded the Lifetime Achievement Award for his dedication to fine wine.

Richard Harley
Editor

Niagara-on-the-Lake wineries scored a decisive victory for homegrown wine, sweeping up 41 medals at this year’s Ontario Wine Awards.

Fifteen NOTL wineries — all members of the Wineries of Niagara-on-the-Lake association — took home 11 gold, 14 silver and 14 bronze medals across 23 award categories.

The winning bottles were revealed last Thursday during an awards ceremony at Niagara College.

Trius Winery and Peller Estates both took home a news release.

The Ontario Wine Awards competition was founded in 1995 by wine critic Tony Aspler. This year marked the contest’s 25th anniversary, with a record participation of 78 wineries and 542 Ontario VQA wines.

A complete list of this year’s award winners can be found at: ontariowineawards.ca.

NOTL vintners win big at provincial wine awards

Herbert Konzelmann was awarded the Lifetime Achievement Award for his dedication to fine wine.

Richard Harley
Editor

Niagara-on-the-Lake wineries scored a decisive victory for homegrown wine, sweeping up 41 medals at this year’s Ontario Wine Awards.

Fifteen NOTL wineries — all members of the Wineries of Niagara-on-the-Lake association — took home 11 gold, 14 silver and 14 bronze medals across 23 award categories.

The winning bottles were revealed last Thursday during an awards ceremony at Niagara College.

Trius Winery and Peller Estates both took home a news release.

The Ontario Wine Awards competition was founded in 1995 by wine critic Tony Aspler. This year marked the contest’s 25th anniversary, with a record participation of 78 wineries and 542 Ontario VQA wines.

A complete list of this year’s award winners can be found at: ontariowineawards.ca.

NOTL vintners win big at provincial wine awards

Herbert Konzelmann was awarded the Lifetime Achievement Award for his dedication to fine wine.

Richard Harley
Editor

Niagara-on-the-Lake wineries scored a decisive victory for homegrown wine, sweeping up 41 medals at this year’s Ontario Wine Awards.

Fifteen NOTL wineries — all members of the Wineries of Niagara-on-the-Lake association — took home 11 gold, 14 silver and 14 bronze medals across 23 award categories.

The winning bottles were revealed last Thursday during an awards ceremony at Niagara College.

Trius Winery and Peller Estates both took home a news release.

The Ontario Wine Awards competition was founded in 1995 by wine critic Tony Aspler. This year marked the contest’s 25th anniversary, with a record participation of 78 wineries and 542 Ontario VQA wines.

A complete list of this year’s award winners can be found at: ontariowineawards.ca.
Effortless and delicious dining
Join us for authentic Sichuan & Dim Sum with new menu items arriving daily.

$1 Dim Sum
All day, every day!

$20.99 Brunch
Sunday

$18.99 Dinner Special
Sunday–Thursday

$15.99 Lunch Express Special
Monday–Thursday

Takeout and Delivery Available

CHILIJIAO.COM • 905.468.6114
271 MARY ST, NIAGARA-ON-THE-LAKE, ON

Soldiers stand for Poland

Continued from Front Page

The plot is considered sovereign Polish soil, which Canada ceded to Poland so the fallen soldiers could remain buried in their motherland.

Zofia Soja, president of the Canadian Polish Congress, Niagara district, said the celebration has remained essentially unchanged in the more than 100 years since its inception.

This year, Soja said more than 500 people were in attendance. The military gun salute was performed by the 10th Battery 56 Field Regiment of the Royal Canadian Artillery.

After participants gathered around the small cemetery to pay respects and lay wreaths, the group marched to the cenotaph at the centre of Queen Street. Those in attendance included people from Polish schools, scouts, veterans, legion members and town council members. In all, more than 30 Polish organizations were represented.

Soja has been planning the pilgrimage for the last six years. The event takes several months of planning and co-ordinating to ensure those travelling for the occasion can make it to the march, she said.

Mayor wants NOTL official plan expedited

Dariya Baiguzhiyeva
The Lake Report

The town has to be ready with a new official plan in case the province approves regional amalgamation, Lord Mayor Betty Disero says.

“I need you to hear frustration in my voice,” Disero told NOTL councillors on Monday.

“I fear that we will go to the table … without an official plan.”

With the updated official plan and if the province decides to move forward with the amalgamation, the town will know its priorities – such as heritage, wineries and farming communities – and will ensure that the town’s non-unionized staff employees receive “fair and equitable” treatment, said Disero.

The current official plan was adopted in 1994 and has undergone several updates over the years with the first review of the official plan starting in 2002.

The Ontario government is in the midst of a review of the province’s eight regional municipalities, including Niagara. That review could result in amalgamations across Ontario. There are also eight lower-tier municipalities within those eight regions.

With a government announcement expected before the fall, the town needs to endorse the new plan and send it to the Region of Niagara, even without the region’s or the province’s comments, said Disero.

Director of community and development services Craig Larmour said he would check if the planning consultants who are developing the new plan are available for a special session.

A motion was then passed for town staff to plan a special meeting with the consultants to work on finalizing the plan. Once it is done and endorsed by the council, it will be sent to the region.

Peninsula Flooring Ltd.
13 Henegan Road | Virgil Business Park 905-468-2135

SALE  CUSTOM AREA RUGS BY

Hibernia  Hibernia  Hibernia
Antirn  Antirn  Antirn
Stanton  Stanton  Stanton
Rosecore  Rosecore  Rosecore

30% OFF FULL CUSTOM RUGS
Editorial: Just the facts, please

Kevin MacLean
Managing Editor

We all make mistakes, keep secrets. Sometimes we overreact, are tentative and cautious, worried about doing the right thing. That can be understandable. But in this modern era of accountability and transparency, it is essential for our public institutions to embrace openness and accept that information is power. And sometimes information that the gatekeepers of those institutions might feel awkward or hesitant about disseminating really needs to be shared with the public.

Especially when it is information that the public will be keenly interested in. We saw this last month when the Town of Niagara-on-the-Lake publicly released a controversial 210-page report on E. coli contaminating Lake Ontario. While we can debate whether information on the progress of that two-year investigation should have been kept under wraps for so long, the fact remains once it was fixed, the town released the report. Kudos for that.

Not so much in the Randwood case, the Town of NOTL vs. Solmar et al. The municipality, a public institution, laid public charges under the Ontario Heritage Act, by filing public documents in a public courthouse in Welland on a matter of huge public interest to people in Niagara-on-the-Lake. In March.

But three months later, the town has yet to officially, or publicly, release that information, even when asked for it. As The Lake Report noted in a story a week ago, this is somewhat unusual because there is no compelling moral or legal reason for not publicizing the fact charges were laid – or at least releasing factual information (not opinions or evidence, just the facts) related to the case, especially when asked about it. That’s how our public legal system works.

With all due respect, the town’s legal opinion that publicizing the fact charges were laid might be seen as unfair to the accused is simply convenient, obstructionist hogwash. That’s not how our public legal system works.

After hearing that charges might have been laid, we investigated so that we could inform you, the public, our readers about the facts. No one is presupposing guilty, but when your municipality takes a prominent area developer to court and then the eventual outcome is, the public deserves to know about it.

Kudos to SORE, the citizen group that has been deeply involved in the Randwood case and is pushing for the town to be more open with information about this court case. Because, frankly, it is not the town’s information that is being kept under wraps. It is YOUR information.

editor@niagaranow.com

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Opposing opinions

Rentals do not have to be owner-occupied

Dear editor:

Re: “Town urged to crack down on short-term rentals,” The Lake Report, June 6: As the owner of Niagara Holiday Rentals, I am concerned about the continued suggestion that short-term rentals in Old Town only be owner-occupied and that there are problems with absent owners and noise complaints.

We manage 25 short-term rentals, all in Old Town, and I encourage any neighbour of our properties to contact me should there ever be a noise problem or complaint at any of the houses that we manage.

I constantly keep an eye on our houses and our guests and should our houses ever be empty for more than a week I am sure to stop in and ensure the house and the property are maintained.

Niagara Holiday Rentals has been in operation for 10 years and my wife and I recently purchased it and I have yet to hear of any problems with our properties.

I will try and make a more concerted effort to meet and talk with the neighbours of the properties that we manage, but you can’t miss our van, so if you see me, don’t hesitate to come talk to me about any concerns or just to say hi and introduce yourself.

My phone number is on the door of all the houses that we manage, so feel free to call me with any issues.

We live in town and are proud to be able to share all that the town has to offer with our guests.

We are also owners and operators of a bed and breakfast and we know that the guests we have at our B & B are different than the guests that we have at our cottages. We also own and have managed our own vacation rental for three years before joining Niagara Holiday Rentals.

There are many families and guests who come here for up to a week, sometimes longer. An owner-occupied property or bed and breakfast is too expensive for these longer stays.

Renting an entire home for the family allows them to cook a few meals and not spend a lot of money eating out every day. A few of our homes also allow pets, which aren’t allowed at a bed and breakfast.

As an owner of a dog ourselves, we know that our dog is part of the family and we want to take her with us when we travel for vacation.

Jason Clements
NOTL

In support of on-site rental owners

Dear editor:

Re: “Town urged to crack down on short-term rentals,” The Lake Report, June 6: In support of the argument for the owner to be on-site for short-term rentals in NOTL, I would add that an on-site owner would take pride of ownership and ensure the lawn and gardens are well-tended.

They also would make sure that household garbage is properly stored and put out to the collection, and not be utilized as a buffet for night predators. Containers would not become wind-blow dustpans on neighbours’ yards.

A short-term rental is, at its heart, a commercial property and, as such, has no legitimate right to a location in a residential area unless it is a primary residence. The town must get its arms around this growing problem.

William Cochran Sr.
NOTL

The Lake Report is looking for experienced reporters with journalism degrees. As your trusted local paper, we only hire the best.

The Lake Report is free of political influence and doesn’t adhere to any outside advisors. Truthful, unbiased reporting is something we’re proud of.
A bridge too far: Canal traffic advisories often too little, too late

George Herman
Special to The Lake Report

Moving back to NOTL after a long absence, I was delighted to find that the problematic drive to St. Catharines over the Welland Canal had entered the 21st century. The St. Lawrence Seaway Management Corporation had instituted a bridge forecasting system. Phone app and radio broadcast! Bravo, Seaway Corp., I thought.

Until I started using the “system.” With marginally useful information present, itself made meaningless by the inaccuracy of the forecasts themselves, it was an afterthought, with scant resources devoted to it: nothing more than a sop to address the Seaway Corp.’s community impact mandate. So I wrote an email, outlining my needs as a typical motorist. We drive over the bridge when down, have to wait or detour when up. “Next ship out” advisories don’t tell us much.

How about “bridge up” and “bridge down” forecasts? Simplicity itself. And the FM broadcast’s vague window, in no case longer than 10 minutes, belligerently tells us to hurry, the change is the FM. Its range appears to have shrunk and it is frequently off the air. The spokesperson has ignored follow-up emails. MP Rob Nicholson’s office has been a real letdown, behaving exactly the same way. I’m neither a crank nor a crusader. I’ve adopted the path of least resistance. I’ve voted with my feet and discovered Niagara Falls. Anything I can do in St. Kitts I can do in the Falls, with the sole exception of visiting Costco. For me it’s a satisfactory solution, but I will share some perspective on the basic problem.

The Seaway Corp.’s high-handed treatment of motorists is not unique. In my working life, I saw the GTAAs (Greater Toronto Airports Authority) take over from Transport Canada and run roughshod over the travelling public and Pearson employees alike. It works like this: a corporation (or “authority”) comes to manage, via management contract or lease, major infrastructure. Because of the nature of the latter, the corporation in effect downloads and runs roughshod over the travelling public and Pearson employees alike. The community, of course, remains affected, since there are no “competing” major infrastructure alternatives. But not being customers, its members have no leverage with the corporation, aside from possible, and meaningless, member board representation. Meanwhile the government — with which they did have leverage formerly as constituents — is now insulated by the presence of the corporation.

Works for everybody except the thousands of collateral victims.

With the GTAAs the stakes were higher and there were no other choices. I am now retired and it just boils down to personal choices, which I fortunately have. Hello Niagara Falls, goodbye St. Catharines.

I am not writing this either to disparage St. Catharines or promote Niagara Falls, but I won’t compare or catalogue. I do, however, believe that the Seaway Corp.’s cynical approach to its community responsibilities does not come without consequence. I have illustrated one example. No doubt there are others. Bravo, Seaway Corp.

George Herman wants the Seaway authority to do a better job of advising motorists when bridges are available. KEVIN MACLEAN
Let’s return to civil debate, not name-calling

Dear editor:

Last week’s issue of The Lake Report contained an op-ed that I’d like to take issue with. David Israelson’s piece about the NDSB (“Niagara school board’s disgraceful cone of silence”), may have had a valid point, but I think any validity to his statement was lost when he resorted to so much name-calling that it was apparent that was all he was interested in.

I compared this to a much more to the point, and I think, balanced view of events, in another paper, where I felt I got some valid information, and a way to see a fix for the code of conduct.

It seemed as if his whole intent was to make the chair of the board look terrible. There is no conversation there. There is no attempting to discuss board’s code of conduct and I’d say no interest in hearing another view.

If, in fact the code of conduct needs revision, that’s a conversation to be had with the parties concerned. I know if I was the chair of that board I would not even respond to him.

This is what’s happening now all over social media, and with obviously no results, no change, no improvement.

I would love to see a move toward considered debate. People seemingly love to hate more than anything else. It’s all I hear. We desperately need a return to civility.

Rick Cullis
N.O.T.L.
**Cricket match: Clippers vs. Lions**

Carol Miller, treasurer of Caribbean Workers Outreach Project, Kimberly Hines, visiting minister from Jamaica, Donna Brown, chair of CWOP. BRITTANY CARTER

84-83 Clippers

Brittany Carter
The Lake Report

On Sunday the Niagara Clippers beat the Lincoln Lions 84-83 with five wickets left to play, for the annual Caribbean Workers Project Cricket match.

The match took place on the soccer field at the Veterans Memorial Park.

On the tee: Eagen top dog at WOOFs

Kevin MacLean
The Lake Report

Mike Eagen shot a 2-over 38 to earn low gross honours on June 4 during WOOFs league play at the Niagara-on-the-Lake Golf Club. Jack Hanna had low net with 30 and Ted Wiens got closest to the pin on #4. Jim Sifton won the hidden hole (#7) and Ron Planche is $55 richer thanks to the 50/50 draw.

**Thursday Men’s League:**
Jim McMacken was the big winner on June 6 Men’s Night, shooting best low-gross score of 1-under 35 and grabbing closest to the pin on two holes (#1 and #4), a $40 gross skin and he was "A" flight winner with 24 points.


**Friday Couples league:**
Tie-breaking retrogression was needed to determine the winner of the June 7 Couples league game as three groups all shot 34. Winners were Ron New - man and Bonnie Lamou - rie and Dow and Judy Wright. Second: Jim and Anne Sifton and John and Michelle Scott. Third: Joe and Cathy Taylor and David and Sue Gagne. Honorable mention: Neil and Rasa Wilkinson and John Veeneman and Barb Russell. Quiz winners for last Canadian to win the Canadian Open: Margot Richardson and Ross Smith.

**On the tee:**
Eagen top dog at WOOFs

**50th Birthday for all things 1969**

Were you born in 1969? Do you know someone born in 1969? Do you just want to celebrate 1969?

Join other 69’ers August 17th @ Caroline Cellars 5pm – 10pm Raffle/door prizes, 50/50 draw Non-profit event.

All proceeds will be donated to Red Roof Retreat.  $50 per person Tickets available on Eventbrite. Find our event page on Facebook! Tickets selling fast!

On the tee: Eagen top dog at WOOFs
The Bells of St. Marks

One of Ontario’s 48 sets of bells lives right here in Niagara-on-the-Lake

Tim Taylor
The Lake Report

It was the middle of the 1820s. The War of 1812 still cast a long shadow. Niagara townsfolk craved a steeple bell to announce important community happenings and sound the alarm in times of calamity.

Ninety residents answered the subscription call for the town’s first bell. By 1828, the single bell was mounted in the belfry of St. Mark’s Anglican Church, swing-mounted and rung by a stout cord, dropped three floors into the church entryway.

Current St. Mark’s Rector, William Roberts reflects on the town’s first bell. By 1828, the subscription call for the first bell was answered. Ninety residents pledged an average of $18 each to have a steeple bell mounted in the belfry of St. Mark’s Anglican Church, swing-mounted and rung by a stout cord, dropped three floors into the church entryway.

The bells at St. Mark’s Church. SUPPLIED

Secco, a Niagara Falls resident and longtime St. Mark’s chimer, attended a McCrady masterclass in Ottawa. She returned to inspire the next generation of St. Mark’s chimers. “As people are leaving, I am still thinking about the bells: “There is something very primal in all of us. For me, it’s the sound of the bells crackling through the cold air. It’s what Christmas is all about.”

After retiring from a 30-year career as a family doctor, she returned to the bells in earnest, achieving the coveted dominion carillonneur position 10 years ago. She has played over 200 carillons around North America. For many who aspire to play the bells, McCrady is a chiming and carillon hero.

Through master classes and teaching, she has inspired hundreds to take up the bells. So it was that Bernadette Secco, a Niagara Falls resident and longtime St. Mark’s chimer, attended a McCrady masterclass in Ottawa. She returned to inspire the next generation of St. Mark’s chimers.

Dr. Andrea McCrady, Canada’s dominion carillonneur, performs over 200 recitals each year, on the 53-bell Peace Tower Carillon in Ottawa. She recently visited Niagara-on-the-Lake and played the bells of St. Mark’s.

SUPPLIED PHOTO/HOUSE OF COMMONS

The sound of the chimes is almost other-worldly — even calming amidst all the noise pollution in our world these days.

The Bells of St. Mark’s have grown in number and stature to become one of the three largest chimes in Ontario. And certainly, the largest in any small parish church.

In the world of chiming, there are generally two major categories of bell sets based on the number of bells.

Sounds simple. If your set is less than 23 bells, it is a chime. Twenty-three or more bells (two octaves), it is a carillon.

The St. Mark’s bells are a little more complicated. They are a hybrid of the two types. It is a large chime — 19 bells — with the tuning and console of a larger carillon. It can play, with some adjustments, almost any music on its one and a half octaves.

The St. Mark’s chime “is more sophisticated than a straight chime,” says Dr. Andrea McCrady, the dominion carillonneur in Ottawa.

McCrady visited Niagara-on-the-Lake this spring and played a brief after-service chime recital at St. Mark’s. She performs over 200 recitals a year on the 53-bell carillon at the Peace Tower in Ottawa.

“St. Mark’s started out as a chime,” she recalls. “But became a hybrid, when a small carillon keyboard was installed at the same time as the chime was being doubled in size.

“They are a lovely set of bells. They really are. They are very well-tuned. You can have confidence in their music.”

She adds that the St. Mark’s bell tower has a fine sturdy sound box. “And there’s also great value in having a very fine churchyard to wander and listen to the chimes.”

McCrady was enamored with the chimes from an early age, starting on piano when she was six. She retained an interest in chiming through medical school, even travelling on a special scholarship to Europe, to explore some of the finest carillons in the world.

After retiring from a 30-year career as a family doctor, she returned to the bells in earnest, achieving the coveted dominion carillonneur position 10 years ago. She has played over 200 carillons around North America.

For many who aspire to play the bells, McCrady is a chiming and carillon hero.

Through master classes and teaching, she has inspired hundreds to take up the bells.

So it was that Bernadette Secco, a Niagara Falls resident and longtime St. Mark’s chimer, attended a McCrady masterclass in Ottawa. She returned to inspire the next generation of St. Mark’s chimers.

“I’ve been practising the piano for over 50 years,” says Secco. “When we were kids, my grandparents would walk us along the Niagara River on Sundays, dressed in our frilly dresses. I could hear the 55-bell carillon at the Rainbow Bridge. I was just fascinated by it.”

Secco speaks with passion about the bells. “There is something very primal in all of us. For me, it’s the bells. I vibrate with them. It’s like the best massage I ever had.”

Her favourite time for chiming is after the last service on Christmas Eve at St. Mark’s.

“As people are leaving, I scurry up (into the tower) and play Silent Night,” she says, her eyes sparkling as she speaks. “It’s a quiet, simple version because the sound of the bells crackles through the cold air. It’s what Christmas is all about.”

Secco has passed this passion on to the two chimers who share the St. Mark’s bell tower for special events.

Christine Bishop, a music teacher from Bourneemouth, England, came to Canada and Niagara-on-the-Lake, with her husband, six years ago. They Googled “nice places to live in Ontario” and NOTL was top of the list. When Secco called for new chimers in the St. Mark’s Sunday bulletin, Bishop leapt at the chance to take lessons from such an accomplished musician. That was four years ago. Now, in addition to her part-time chiming at St. Mark’s, Bishop volunteers as a music teacher at Royal Oak School and has a gaggle of 20 local piano students.

“I really love chiming the bells,” she says. “It is a real joy. Every time I chime, I think of all the people that can hear the music. But I also think of all the chimers that have played these bells before over the last two cen -

Continued on Page 9
Further into history

The Bells of St. Mark’s have a long and colourful history, part of a centuries-long international tradition. It wasn’t until 1877 that the original, 1828 bell was replaced by six new bells, financed by two local widowers, in memory of their wives. The 1828 bell was given to St. Saviour’s church in Queenston. In 1917, the St. Mark’s Ladies Guild added three more bells as a memorial to parish sons killed in action in France. The Bells of St. Mark’s then provided a full octave range of nine bells. In 2006, all nine bells were removed for tuning and reconditioning to carillon standards. At the same time, the aging belfry was repaired, reinforced and readied for the return of the original nine bells and nine more, bringing the total to 18. At the same time, the instrument was equipped with an electronic-pneumatic system allowing music to be programmed and the Westminster Quarters played.

In 2012, a single bell was added: The Brock, so named to commemorate the War of 1812 hero and the bicentennial celebrations. Bell chimes and carillons are also measured by their weight. Bell chimes and carillons are also measured by their weight. The total weight of all 19 St. Mark’s bells is 5,852 pounds — almost three tons. The largest of the St. Mark’s bells is 1,240 pounds, the smallest is 92 pounds. Bells, unlike other instruments, do not go out of tune. They are cast of an alloy of roughly three parts copper to one-part tin. They are cast slightly larger than their final form to allow for a lathe-like shaving of the inside to more precisely tune the sound of each bell.

There are some 2,600 sets of tower bells in the world, including 48 in Ontario. The largest Canadian carillon is at the Rainbow Bridge (55 bells and 43 tons) in Niagara Falls. Fully refurbished in the 1990s, this carillon has not been played since the tragedy of 9/11. It is still considered a security risk.

The climb

A casual exploration of St. Mark’s Anglican Church will offer few clues as to how to find the chime keyboard, let alone, the actual bells in the belfry. I needed a guide for both of my recent climbs: Sidle along a very narrow passage (less than a foot wide) behind the organ pipes, without touching anything, stepping over large and small conduits. Then up a makeshift ladder, reminiscent of a nautical gangway. Not there yet. From this small, enclosed space, up another long ladder, through a small opening in the ceiling, into another smaller room. It is windowless and contains an awkward-looking contraption that looks like a marriage between a small organ and a weaving loom, with 20 stainless steel wires threading their way from the top of the keyboard mounting, through the ceiling above, to their connected bells.

Each wire is attached through the console to a lever that looks a bit like a small wheellbarrow handle, stuck into the instrument, ready for the chimer to push down and activate a bell for each hand. All the bells are on the next level up, partially protected from the elements. But not too protected — you want to hear the bells…
Mayor’s step team walks the walk for wellness

Brittany Carter
The Lake Report

Niagara-on-the-Lake is going the distance, and more, to encourage health and wellness through the NOTL June Step Challenge – the town crushed its initial group goal in the first 12 days of the challenge. The goal to reach 14,856,000 kilometres, the distance to cross Canada, didn’t stand a chance. By Wednesday, June 12, participants from across NOTL had covered 15,604,124 kilometres, 105 per cent of June’s target.
The challenge will continue throughout the month. The lord mayor’s team, Women Walking for Wellness, is comprised of Betty Disero, chief administrator Holly Dowd and town staffs Victoria Steele and Shauna Arenburg. The group met at the Queenston Library on Friday and walked 4.61 kilometres in just over an hour. In total, the team collectively walked 242.4 kilometres by Wednesday morning.

They will meet in each community across NOTL throughout the month. On June 14, they will be at the Royal Niagara Golf Club in Niagara on the Green, on June 21 at Fire Station #2 in St. Davids, on June 25 at the community centre in Old Town, and on June 26 at the town hall in Virgil. Residents are encouraged to join the walks, which will depart at 9 a.m. on each day.

Annual Strawberry Social returns for senior residents

Richard Harley
Editor

Niagara-on-the-Lake’s Senior Citizens Strawberry Social isn’t just about shortcake and ice cream. It’s about community. It’s always been that way, says Lord Mayor Betty Disero.

The annual event is a chance for town officials to connect with senior residents, celebrate local fruit, and have an afternoon of fun. A strawberry treat doesn’t hurt either.

“People wait for the Strawberry Social every year,” she told The Lake Report.

“It’s a tradition that the town is very proud of hosting and we do it because of the good graces of our community commercial operators.”
The social is Monday, June 17, and doors open at 11 a.m., with lunch at 11:45. Besides a light meal, some delicious strawberries and ice cream, the social includes musical entertainment by pianist Frank Krahn and a performance by the St. Michael Catholic Elementary School Choir. The event is open to all senior citizens of Niagara-on-the-Lake.

Disero thanked Seaway Farms for donating the strawberries. “It is because of community members like Seaway Farms that the town can provide an opportunity for nearly 300 seniors to enjoy a time of fellowship,” she said in a news release.

Seaway Farms has been providing strawberries for the event for several years now. Eileen Pillitteri, a co-owner and an operator of Seaway Farms, said they provided about 15 cases of strawberries this year.

“We are very glad to support the Niagara-on-the-Lake community and the Strawberry Social,” Pillitteri told The Lake Report.

Disero also thanked town staff members, Niagara-on-the-Lake Hydro and the public library for assisting with the event.

The Lake Report is looking for experienced reporters with journalism degrees. As your trusted local paper, we only hire the best.

The Lake Report is free of political influence and doesn’t adhere to any outside advisors. Truthful, unbiased reporting is something we’re proud of.
The Lake Report is calling on all cooks, chefs, bakers and food enthusiasts in Niagara-on-the-Lake. We want your favourite family recipes, and the stories that go with them, to share with the community. Whether it’s a special stew, soup, or salad; the best bread or muffins; or a decadent dessert, we’d like to hear from you!

We’d love it if you could include pictures of the food where possible, and of the family member who might have passed the recipe down. If there is any family folklore associated with the recipe, we’d love to hear that too. Maybe there’s a certain occasion when it’s always made, perhaps there’s a funny or sad story to tell that relates to that particular recipe, or certain traditions that accompany it.

We will publish selected recipes regularly, and at the end of the year we’ll compile all the recipes together as a book of NOTL family favourites. Proceeds from the sale of the book will be donated to a local charity.

Please send your recipes, pictures and stories to: recipes@niagaranow.com

The top recipes will be published in an annual paperback book which will be available (in limited supply) to residents of Niagara-on-the-Lake at The Lake Report office. This year’s book (title uncertain!) will be released in the coming months!

**Lush Centre Street property named first winner of the garden season**

Joe Carlino is co-owner of the winning garden on Centre Street in NOTL. DARIYA BAIGUZHIYEVA

“A garden teeming with lilacs, hydrangeas as well as yellow and red barberries is the first winner of NOTL’s annual Garden of The Week contest.

When homeowners Steve Cohen and Joe Carlino moved in to their house at 210 Centre St. last year, there was nothing but dirt from Simcoe Street right up to the house, said Carlino.

“It really looked like a job site,” Carlino told The Lake Report. And because it’s a new house, not a heritage property, “our responsibility was really to get this to look like it’s always been here.”

Three judges stopped by the garden and asked to have a look, said Carlino, adding he had no idea their garden was nominated for the contest.

The judges complimented the garden’s “flowing design, very simple yet elegant.”

“The colour palette of lime and burgundy is stunning set against the home. The homeowners have done a magnificent job,” the judges said, according to a media release from the Town of NOTL.

Feeling “bumbled and happy,” Carlino said once everything has been planted and the mulch has been put down, it’s just “weeding every now and again,” so taking care of the garden doesn’t take too much time.

The Town of Niagara-on-the-Lake sponsors the Garden of the Week contest in collaboration with the NOTL Horticultural Society and Communities in Bloom. Residents can nominate as many gardens as they like, as long as the gardens meet the criteria.

Nominations are still being accepted for the Garden of the Week contest, which runs until Aug. 31. The event is put on by the NOTL Horticultural Society in co-operation with Communities in Bloom.

The nomination deadline for each week is Monday evening and all nominees will carry on to following weeks for consideration.

Residents can nominate as many gardens as they like, as long as the gardens meet the criteria.

The contest is open to all residents of NOTL with front gardens visible from the road. Each garden will be judged on streetscape and curb appeal, personal expression and creativity, colour and texture, and maintenance and neatness.

Winners will be announced on the town’s website and will receive a bottle of wine donated by Caroline Estate Winery and a gift certificate from Regal Florist and Garden Centre.

Submissions can be made through the town’s Join The Conversation page or by email to cib@notl.com.

**Calling all cooks! Local recipe book planned for 2019**

The Lake Report is calling on all cooks, chefs, bakers and food enthusiasts in Niagara-on-the-Lake. We want your favourite family recipes, and the stories that go with them, to share with the community. Whether it’s a special stew, soup, or salad; the best bread or muffins; or a decadent dessert, we’d like to hear from you!

We’d love it if you could include pictures of the food where possible, and of the family member who might have passed the recipe down. If there is any family folklore associated with the recipe, we’d love to hear that too. Maybe there’s a certain occasion when it’s always made, perhaps there’s a funny or sad story to tell that relates to that particular recipe, or certain traditions that accompany it.

We will publish selected recipes regularly, and at the end of the year we’ll compile all the recipes together as a book of NOTL family favourites. The top recipes will be published in an annual paperback book which will be available (in limited supply) to residents of Niagara-on-the-Lake at The Lake Report office. This year’s book (title uncertain!) will be released in the coming months!

**A glimpse into garden tours**

Brenda McArthur, property owner of 210 John Street East, one of the stops during the Shaw Guild Garden Tour Saturday. BRITTANY CARTER

Jennifer Gardiner, volunteer of the Shaw Guild for 20 years. BRITTANY CARTER

**How to nominate a garden**

Nominations are still being accepted for the Garden of the Week contest, which runs until Aug. 31. The event is put on by the NOTL Horticultural Society in co-operation with Communities in Bloom.

The nomination deadline for each week is Monday evening and all nominees will carry on to following weeks for consideration.

Residents can nominate as many gardens as they like, as long as the gardens meet the criteria.

The contest is open to all residents of NOTL with front gardens visible from the road. Each garden will be judged on streetscape and curb appeal, personal expression and creativity, colour and texture, and maintenance and neatness.

Winners will be announced on the town’s website and will receive a bottle of wine donated by Caroline Estate Winery and a gift certificate from Regal Florist and Garden Centre.

Submissions can be made through the town’s Join The Conversation page or by email to cib@notl.com.

**How to nominate a garden**

Nominations are still being accepted for the Garden of the Week contest, which runs until Aug. 31. The event is put on by the NOTL Horticultural Society in co-operation with Communities in Bloom.

The nomination deadline for each week is Monday evening and all nominees will carry on to following weeks for consideration.

Residents can nominate as many gardens as they like, as long as the gardens meet the criteria.

The contest is open to all residents of NOTL with front gardens visible from the road. Each garden will be judged on streetscape and curb appeal, personal expression and creativity, colour and texture, and maintenance and neatness.

Winners will be announced on the town’s website and will receive a bottle of wine donated by Caroline Estate Winery and a gift certificate from Regal Florist and Garden Centre.

Submissions can be made through the town’s Join The Conversation page or by email to cib@notl.com.

**How to nominate a garden**

Nominations are still being accepted for the Garden of the Week contest, which runs until Aug. 31. The event is put on by the NOTL Horticultural Society in co-operation with Communities in Bloom.

The nomination deadline for each week is Monday evening and all nominees will carry on to following weeks for consideration.

Residents can nominate as many gardens as they like, as long as the gardens meet the criteria.

The contest is open to all residents of NOTL with front gardens visible from the road. Each garden will be judged on streetscape and curb appeal, personal expression and creativity, colour and texture, and maintenance and neatness.

Winners will be announced on the town’s website and will receive a bottle of wine donated by Caroline Estate Winery and a gift certificate from Regal Florist and Garden Centre.

Submissions can be made through the town’s Join The Conversation page or by email to cib@notl.com.
### Sunday
- **Father’s Day**
- **Homegrown Wine Festival** - Wineries of Niagara
- **Walking Tours of Old Town** - 11 a.m. - Queen’s Royal Park
- **Ghost Tours of Fort George** - 6:30 p.m. - Fort George

### Monday
- **Fun Duplicate Bridge** - 9 a.m. to noon - NOTL Community Centre
- **Monday Night Teen Hang Out** - 6 p.m. to 7:15 p.m. - NOTL Public Library
- **Strawberry Social** - 7:30 a.m. to 1 p.m. - NOTL Community Centre
- **Community Drumming Night** - 6 p.m. to 8 p.m. - Niagara Regional Native Centre

### Tuesday
- **NOTL Chamber of Commerce Annual Golf Tournament** - 11 a.m. - Royal Niagara Golf Club
- **NOTL Rotary Club - Noon** - NOTL Community Centre
- **Duplicate Bridge (Sancionted ACBL)** - 1 p.m. to 4 p.m. - NOTL Community Centre
- **Niagara Golden Age Club:**
  - **Seniors Euchre**
  - **ACBL**
  - **Duplicate Bridge (Sancionted ACBL)**

### Wednesday
- **German Conversations** - 10 a.m. to 7:30 p.m. - NOTL Community Centre
- **NOTL SupperMarkets**
  - **9 p.m. - The Village NOTL Toastmasters**
  - **9 p.m. - Niagara College Campus**
LOCAL CALENDAR

June 13 - June 29

Ravenshead Homes
www.RavensheadHomes.com
Renovations ~ Additions ~ Inspections
289 969 5991

CALENDAR

Wednesday

13
Seniors Fitness: Healthy Safe & Strong - 2 p.m. to 3 p.m. / 3:30 p.m. to 4:30 p.m. - NOTL Community Centre
Porchetta in the Park - 2 p.m. to 5 p.m. - NOTL Community Centre
The White Effect Dinner - 7 p.m. to 11 p.m. - Queenston Heights
Clare’s Bike Night - 6 p.m. to 9 p.m. - Clare’s Harley Davidson - 7 p.m. - Stratus Vineyards

14
Duplicate Bridge - 1 p.m. to 4 p.m. - NOTL Community Centre
Neighbourhood Walks: Irish Town/Rye Park - 6 p.m. - Rye Park
Annual Seafood Picnic - 7 p.m. - Reif Estate Winery
Trius Red Presents Movie Night in the Vineyard: Mama Mia - 8 p.m. - Trius Winery & Restaurant
Fireworks at Reif Estate Winery - 10:30 p.m. to 11 p.m. - Reif Estate Winery

15
Homegrown Wine Festival - Wineries of Niagara
Farmers’ Market - 8 a.m. to 1 p.m. - The Village
United Empire Loyalist Flag Raising - 9 a.m. - Queen Street, Cenotaph
Niagara College: Mastering the BBQ - 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. - Canadian Food and Wine Institute at Niagara College

Thursday

19
Practical Genealogy: Beginner Class - 1 p.m. to 3 p.m. - NOTL Public Library
Seniors Fitness: Healthy Safe & Strong - 2 p.m. to 3 p.m. / 3:30 p.m. to 4:30 p.m. - NOTL Community Centre
Porchetta in the Park - 2 p.m. to 5 p.m. - NOTL Community Centre
The White Effect Dinner - 7 p.m. to 11 p.m. - Queenston Heights
Clare’s Bike Night - 6 p.m. to 9 p.m. - Clare’s Harley Davidson - 7 p.m. - Stratus Vineyards

20
Duplicate Bridge (Sancionted ACBL) - 1 p.m. to 4 p.m. - NOTL Community Centre
Mahjong Game: Drop in - 1 p.m. to 4 p.m. - NOTL Community Centre
Neighbourhood Walks: Queen Street Estates - 6 p.m. - Post Office, Queen Street
Trius Red Presents Movie Night in the Vineyard: My Best Friend’s Wedding - 8 p.m. - Trius Winery & Restaurant

Friday

21
Laura Secord Walk in support of War Child Canada - 7 a.m. to 5 p.m. - Laura Secord House
Farmers’ Market - 8 a.m. to 1 p.m. - The Village
Strawberry Festival - 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. - St. Andrew’s Presbyterian Church
St. Davids Vet Clinic: Community BBQ - 11 a.m. to 2 p.m. - St. Davids Vet Clinic

22
Laura Secord Walk in support of War Child Canada - 7 a.m. to 5 p.m. - Laura Secord House
Farmers’ Market - 8 a.m. to 1 p.m. - The Village
Strawberry Festival - 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. - St. Andrew’s Presbyterian Church
St. Davids Vet Clinic: Community BBQ - 11 a.m. to 2 p.m. - St. Davids Vet Clinic

Saturday

23
Duplicate Bridge (Sancionted ACBL) - 1 p.m. to 4 p.m. - NOTL Community Centre
Mahjong Game: Drop in - 1 p.m. to 4 p.m. - NOTL Community Centre
Neighbourhood Walks: Queen Street Estates - 6 p.m. - Post Office, Queen Street
Trius Red Presents Movie Night in the Vineyard: Mean Girls - 8 p.m. - Trius Winery & Restaurant

24
Farmers’ Market - 8 a.m. to 1 p.m. - The Village
Artistry by the Lake - 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. - Queen’s Royal Park

25
Farmers’ Market - 8 a.m. to 1 p.m. - The Village
Artistry by the Lake - 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. - Queen’s Royal Park

26
Seniors Fitness: Healthy Safe & Strong - 2 p.m. to 3 p.m. / 3:30 p.m. to 4:30 p.m. - NOTL Community Centre
Porchetta in the Park - 2 p.m. to 5 p.m. - NOTL Community Centre
The White Effect Dinner - 7 p.m. to 11 p.m. - Queenston Heights
Clare’s Bike Night - 6 p.m. to 9 p.m. - Clare’s Harley Davidson - 7 p.m. - Stratus Vineyards

27
Duplicate Bridge (Sancionted ACBL) - 1 p.m. to 4 p.m. - NOTL Community Centre
Mahjong Game: Drop in - 1 p.m. to 4 p.m. - NOTL Community Centre
Neighbourhood Walks: Irish Town / Rye Park - 6 p.m. - Rye Park
Trius Red Presents Movie Night in the Vineyard: Mean Girls - 8 p.m. - Trius Winery & Restaurant

28
Farmers’ Market - 8 a.m. to 1 p.m. - The Village
Artistry by the Lake - 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. - Queen’s Royal Park

29
Farmers’ Market - 8 a.m. to 1 p.m. - The Village
Artistry by the Lake - 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. - Queen’s Royal Park

Know of a local event? Tell us. Submit it directly to www.niagarawith.com or send us an email at events@niagarawith.com
Morgan Lambert and Simona Berardocco accept awards on behalf of their sisters Kaitlyn Lambert and Elena Berardocco. DARIYA BAIGUZHIYEVA

**Town volunteers honoured**

**Sports and recreation:**

Karen Wright.

Wright started a tennis program called “Tennis 4 Kids,” for children aged 6 and up. The program runs at the NOTL Community Centre and Wright provides the equipment. She has coached more than 100 tennis players in NOTL and her commitment is “unwavering,” said Coun. Gary Burroughs.

**Environment:**

Sandra O’Connor and Finn Madsen.

O’Connor, who was chair of the urban tree bylaw initiative on a private property, worked “tirelessly” to seek public input and develop the documents. As a board member of the Preservation of Agricultural Lands Society, she helped the organization update information on Niagara’s fruit farming history dating back to 1792.

Madsen, who was chair of Harmony Residents group, is also a member of the UNESCO Committee and the town’s Communities in Bloom committee. Madsen has been advocating for the preservation of Parks Canada-owned property on Lakeshore Road and believes it will not only create a legacy for NOTL residents and visitors but will also be a place for young children, said Coun. Allan Blishuk.

**Working with the senior community:**

Linda Murray and Gord Harris.

Harris has been volunteering with Red Roof Retreat and for their contributions to the youth and education sector.

**Working with youth/education:**

Linda Murray and Gord Harris.

Harris has been volunteering with Red Roof Retreat for 15 years. First known as the “grass-cutting guy,” Harris has been taking care of the 11-acre property and is “a very worthy recipient who represented quiet giving and the value of volunteer time to make the place a little brighter,” said Disero.

**Working with the community:**

Helga Rahn, Joyce Loewen and Sylvia Eady.

Rahn volunteers with the Niagara United Mennonite Church, Pleasant Manor Retirement Village, Christian Thrift Benefit Shop, Niagara Warehouse of Hope and the Virgil Women’s Institute. She has been helping out at the thrift shop once a week since 1975.

**Culture (arts, music, heritage):**

Lise Andreana and Cheryl Morris.

Andreana has been recognized for her role as a chair of the Niagara Pumphouse Arts Centre board of directors. She volunteered 1,617 hours over the past year alone and, since her election to the board in 2016, she has been working to engage, enrich and celebrate NOTL’s diverse and growing population through the visual arts.

Morris was honoured for her contributions to the Shaw Guild. She has been overseeing the scheduling process for the guild’s volunteers, developed training materials, conducted a pilot program and trained over 200 members. Morris is also a member of the town’s heritage trail committee, a marketing lead for the 2019 Canadian Snowbirds event and is on the board of the Niagara Pumphouse Arts Centre.

**Volunteers under 21:**

Kaitlyn Lambert and Elena Berardocco.

These two 13-year-old girls organized a climate change strike in front of NOTL’s town hall on March 15. The worldwide movement, named Fridays for Future, was started by 15-year-old Swedish girl Greta Thunberg. Lambert and Berardocco, who were inspired by Thunberg, decided to organize their own strike in NOTL as the closest protests were taking place in Hamilton and Buffalo. The girls are leading their peers and are taking time to educate the public about climate change, said Coun. Norm Arsenault. Both girls were unable to attend the ceremony, but their younger sisters, Morgan Lambert and Simona Berardocco, were on hand to accept the awards on their sisters’ behalf.

**Community/civic engagement:**

Sheila Tierney, and Michel and Marie Lapointe.

Tierney has been working with the Canadian Cancer Society for more than 50 years. She has organized door-to-door canvassing in April and daffodil pin sales in March. The money raised was used for Wheels of Hope program which supports people dealing with cancer.

Michael and Marie Lapointe received a joint award. Marie Lapointe is a longtime volunteer at Parliament Oak School and Crossroads Public School. She also helps migrant workers with Spanish translations, campaigns for the Canadian Cancer Society and has supported the Terry Fox run for several years.

Michael Lapointe has helped with the Terry Fox Run and has campaigned for local charities such as the Heart and Stroke Foundation. He also used to volunteer for search and rescue operations and repairs bikes for migrant workers.
Simply White Interiors has been putting its authentic touch on Niagara homes for nearly 10 years

Helga Rahn.

Sheila Tierney.

Michel and Marie Lapointe.

A thriving business with a small town story

Simply White Interiors has been putting its authentic touch on Niagara homes for nearly 10 years

Submitted Content

Sponsored content

A large white sign is mounted above a display of curated window treatments in Unit 3, at 347 Airport Rd., Niagara-on-the-Lake. It reads, “SIMPLY WHITE. Furnishings. Accessories. Colour.” Brenda and Kirk Petrunick, owners of Simply White Interiors, have kept this sign for nearly a decade. They like to remember where it used to hang at their first location in downtown St. Catharines.

The sign is a nod to their humble beginnings in a cozy retail space, which they’ve moved on to flourish in their Niagara-on-the-Lake studio. With a full interior design team, Simply White serves commercial and residential clients in Niagara and the GTA.

“Remembering where we started is how we stay true to our mission as a company and a team;” says Brenda. “For us, that looks like supporting other small businesses and building meaningful relationships with our clients. We’re like the little engine that could.”

And it seems Simply White is gaining steam with each new chapter of its business journey. At their studio in Niagara-on-the-Lake, the Simply White team offers complete interior design services. They work with their customers on conceptual design development, space planning, and finish and material selection, which includes custom drapery, bedding, blinds, and upholstery. Sometimes the scope of their projects is large, assisting with drawings for a new build or renovation. Other times, they provide expert advice on furniture arrangement or colour choice while they update a customer’s home or cottage.

“Our big focus is the interior, your living space,” says Kirk. “But we also do a tremendous amount of renovation and refurbishing.”

When visiting the Simply White studio, customers will find many local artisans setting the tranquil interior scene. This holds true to Brenda and Kirk’s passion for supporting other local businesses and bringing attention to high-quality Canadian craftsmanship.

Simply White also carries popular lines such as Dash & Albert Carpets, Pine Cone Hill Bedding and Hunter Douglas Blinds. Throughout the design journey, customers have access to Simply White’s extensive fabric library with top manufacturers such as Robert Allen, Fabricut, Duralee and Kravet.

The creative team of five seamstresses produces every project by hand in their onsite workroom. After 25 years sewing together, these seamstresses have completed a wide range of exciting projects and take great pride in their work.

As customers are faced with countless choices along their interior design journey, they can turn to in-house designers, Elizabeth Loomis or Taylor Rumble, to get the guidance they need. Brenda describes their designers as a source of calm and confidence for customers throughout the decision-making process, especially because of their talent for listening to what their customers need and turning it into reality.

It’s this creative relationship between the designer and client that the team values so deeply in their work. “We’ve always considered it an honour to be invited into someone’s home to share our designs with them,” says Brenda. “We don’t take it lightly that someone has entrusted even the smallest piece of their home to us. It always feels like a privilege and we treat it that way.”

Customers are welcomed by appointment to sit down with the team at Simply White Interiors and create their own personal interior decorating plan. With the whole team working onsite, it’s possible visitors will be greeted by the team sitting down to eat their “family lunch” at the big live-edge harvest table. They’re a team that cultivates an authentic small-town feeling in the way they work together, create together and do business together.

“I have wonderful memories growing up in the small-business world of Niagara-on-the-Lake,” says Brenda. “It’s the way small-town business should be and we strive to give that feeling to our team members and customers at Simply White Interiors.”

Kirk and Brenda Petrunick of Simply White Interiors.

Readers with interior design needs can visit the Simply White website at: www.swi.design or contact the team directly at 905-708-4784. The studio is located at 347 Airport Rd., Unit 3, Niagara-on-the-Lake.

Featured

Simply White Interiors

347 Airport Road | Unit 3 | Niagara-on-the-Lake
905 708 4784 | www.swi.design

Sponsored Content

“Remembering where we started is how we stay true to our mission as a company and a team,” says Brenda. “For us, that looks like supporting other small businesses and building meaningful relationships with our clients. We’re like the little engine that could.”

And it seems Simply White is gaining steam with each new chapter of its business journey. At their studio in Niagara-on-the-Lake, the Simply White team offers complete interior design services. They work with their customers on conceptual design development, space planning, and finish and material selection, which includes custom drapery, bedding, blinds, and upholstery. Sometimes the scope of their projects is large, assisting with drawings for a new build or renovation. Other times, they provide expert advice on furniture arrangement or colour choice while they update a customer’s home or cottage.

“Our big focus is the interior, your living space,” says Kirk. “But we also do a tremendous amount of renovation and refurbishing.”

When visiting the Simply White studio, customers will find many local artisans setting the tranquil interior scene. This holds true to Brenda and Kirk’s passion for supporting other local businesses and bringing attention to high-quality Canadian craftsmanship.

Simply White also carries popular lines such as Dash & Albert Carpets, Pine Cone Hill Bedding and Hunter Douglas Blinds. Throughout the design journey, customers have access to Simply White’s extensive fabric library with top manufacturers such as Robert Allen, Fabricut, Duralee and Kravet.

The creative team of five seamstresses produces every project by hand in their onsite workroom. After 25 years sewing together, these seamstresses have completed a wide range of exciting projects and take great pride in their work.

As customers are faced with countless choices along their interior design journey, they can turn to in-house designers, Elizabeth Loomis or Taylor Rumble, to get the guidance they need. Brenda describes their designers as a source of calm and confidence for customers throughout the decision-making process, especially because of their talent for listening to what their customers need and turning it into reality.

It’s this creative relationship between the designer and client that the team values so deeply in their work. “We’ve always considered it an honour to be invited into someone’s home to share our designs with them,” says Brenda. “We don’t take it lightly that someone has entrusted even the smallest piece of their home to us. It always feels like a privilege and we treat it that way.”

Customers are welcomed by appointment to sit down with the team at Simply White Interiors and create their own personal interior decorating plan. With the whole team working onsite, it’s possible visitors will be greeted by the team sitting down to eat their “family lunch” at the big live-edge harvest table. They’re a team that cultivates an authentic small-town feeling in the way they work together, create together and do business together.

“I have wonderful memories growing up in the small-business world of Niagara-on-the-Lake,” says Brenda. “It’s the way small-town business should be and we strive to give that feeling to our team members and customers at Simply White Interiors.”

Readers with interior design needs can visit the Simply White website at: www.swi.design or contact the team directly at 905-708-4784. The studio is located at 347 Airport Rd., Unit 3, Niagara-on-the-Lake.

Simply White Interiors

347 Airport Road | Unit 3 | Niagara-on-the-Lake
905 708 4784 | www.swi.design

Sponsored Content
NOTL resident spells out hopes for a competitive Scrabble club in town

Brittany Carter
The Lake Report

The words are out of the bag – NOTL resident Joel Talento stacked his tiles against Scrabble players from around the world last weekend at the North American Scrabble Players Association tournament.

Now, Talento wants to bring his love for the strategic game home by starting a Scrabble club in Niagara-on-the-Lake.

He said he has been in touch with the community centre and library to try to get a club off the ground. Nothing is official yet, but he said he hopes it will spell out more competitive Scrabble locally.

Joel Talento plays for Canada during a Scrabble Tournament on the weekend.

BRIANNA CARTER

Talento has been playing drop-in games casually with some friends at Sweets and Swirls Café, but he figures NOTL residents would be up for an organized Scrabble club.

In the next few weeks he will take the test to become a certified club director with the association, he said, which will allow him to oversee sanctioned clubs.

The 5th Niagara Falls International Open held 21 rounds in total from Friday to Sunday at the Scotiabank Convention Centre. While the convention centre was buzzing with Niagara Falls Comic Con hype, which took place at the same time on the main floor, Scrabble players occupied a conference room upstairs, quietly spelling out their best moves against some of the brightest international wordsmiths.

Talento placed 21st out of 25 players. While he said he would have liked to finish higher, he still had a great time and will definitely try again next year.

"It’s the camaraderie, I’ve seen people here that I’ve played with from all over the world.

Picking up the book Word Freak by Stephen Fatsis in 2001 pushed Talento into the world of competitive Scrabble, he said.

“It’s a story about him being a reporter playing competitive Scrabble and he ended up being a really good player. After that I went to a Scrabble club," Talento said.

Starting as what those in the Scrabbleverse call a living room player, Talento began studying the two and three letter words of the North American dictionary to improve his game.

The tournament this year was more of a challenge, he said, because it was international. While he has spent a lot of time studying the North American version of the game, he had to put in extra preparation time for the international tournament.

He's a lover of words and anagrams, and, given the chance, is quick to present you with the various words that can be made from your name. After moving to NOTL from Vancouver several years ago, he said he took a hiatus from competitive playing.

He said his wife, Kendra Cooper, encouraged him to pick up the game again now that their children, Ellie, 7 and Max, 4, are a little older.

"I love numbers, I love words, and I love strategy," Talento created an Instagram account and said anyone interested in playing can message him at ScrabbleNOTL.
Unicycle ride for a good cause

Zachary Wells rides his unicycle through town as part of a 500 km ride during the month of June to raise money for SickKids Foundation. This is the third year Wells has ridden to raise money for the cause. So far he’s raised more than $5,000 for the foundation. RICHARD HARLEY
The Lake Report is looking for puzzle makers who would like to help develop this page. We are seeking both standard and cryptic crossword writers. editor@niagaranow.com

Across
1. No-show (8)
5. Ring fighter (5)
10. Seed providing milk and meat (7)
11. Anthroloid (3-4)
12. Performs (4)
13. Limited (10)
14. Island in central Hawaii (4)
15. Area of South London (10)
19. Senior mail official (10)
22. Passport endorsement (4)
24. Large city (10)
26. Fruit, a.k.a. the Chinese gooseberry (4)
28. Hearing distance (7)
29. Employ excessively (7)
30. Stench (5)
31. Signal to arise (8)

Down
1. Praise vociferously (7)
2. Pruning shears (9)
3. Not one (4)
4. Radical (7)
6. Biddable (8)
7. Survive (5)
8. Chicken of very small size (6)
9. Lethal (6)
16. Farrow (3)
17. Religious (9)
18. Flatten out (8)
19. Treat with excessive indulgence (6)
20. Grunts (6)
21. Incident (7)
23. City in central Texas (7)
25. Fortune-telling cards (5)
27. Lake or pond (4)

Crossword Puzzle

Sudoku

27 Niagara on the Green, NOTL
$469,900 | MLS 30729852
Aaron Cherney* & Helen Mosca*
Lucy Continelli**

220 Mary Street, NOTL
$749,000 | MLS 30733253
Aaron Cherney* & Helen Mosca*
Lucy Continelli**

584 Simcoe Street, NOTL
$759,900 | MLS 30736995
Aaron Cherney* & Helen Mosca*
Lucy Continelli**
St. Davids community group holds golf and dinner social

Greg Walker
Special to The Lake Report

After weeks of thunderstorms and heavy rain, June 6 dawned overcast and misty. As the morning progressed, however, the mist burned off and the clouds dissipated to create perfect conditions for the Friends of St. Davids’ first “Nine & Dine” golf and dinner event.

By tee-off time in the afternoon, the sky was clear, and the sun shone on 22 intrepid novice and experienced golfers at the St. Davids Golf Club.

After an afternoon of play and fun on the golf course, the players were joined by family and friends for dinner at Ravine Winery. If the golf course was beautiful, nestled as it is just below the Niagara escarpment, the venue for dinner was spectacular. The 41 guests enjoyed a wonderful buffet dinner in Ravine’s big tent with an amazing view of the vineyard.

Paul Harber, Ravine’s proprietor, had presented four gift certificates to Friends of St Davids. These were raffled and the proceeds of $150 will be donated to the St. Davids LEOs to help them meet their goal of raising enough to pay for a second dog guide for a person with disabilities.

Friends of St. Davids is planning a “Porchetta in the Park” on June 23 and a further donation will be made to the LEOs after that event.

Great One comes to town

Wayne Gretzky attended a private party last Sunday for the launch of a new 8000-square foot beer garden at Wayne Gretzky Estate Winery. With a Bocce ball court, a ping pong table, a pool table as well as a large outdoor firepit and an outdoor cabanas on site, the beer garden will be offering a light grill menu with sausages and pretzels as well as draft beer, wine and cider.

Niagara College’s brewmaster professor Jon Downing was also on hand to celebrate the opening of a beer garden.

“The event was fantastic, the weather was perfect,” Downing told The Lake Report. “It was a great honour to be invited.”

Wayne Gretzky attended a private party last Sunday for the launch of a new 8000-square foot beer garden at Wayne Gretzky Estate Winery. With a Bocce ball court, a ping pong table, a pool table as well as a large outdoor firepit and an outdoor cabanas on site, the beer garden will be offering a light grill menu with sausages and pretzels as well as draft beer, wine and cider.

Niagara College’s brewmaster professor Jon Downing was also on hand to celebrate the opening of a beer garden.

“The event was fantastic, the weather was perfect,” Downing told The Lake Report. “It was a great honour to be invited.”
Mike Keenan
Special to The Lake Report

In his 1933 novel “Lost Horizon,” British author James Hilton’s describes “Shangri-La” as a mystical, earthly paradise. Lerner and Loewe followed with the 1947 quaint Scottish town “Brigadoon,” a magical venue that appears for only 24 hours every 100 years. Corwin Ferguson’s clever projections indicate that Brigadoon is the high dosage antidote for the war-weary, whether it’s the 1746 Battle of Culloden or more contemporary Second World War. As with several plays last season, artistic director Tim Albright, soon-to-be脑子 George Krissa as Tommy Nature’s optimist and renewed ability to laugh at all for whom to cheer. The Festival Theatre was full, and the audience loved this romantic, escap- ist, happy-ending musical romp through the Scottish Highlands. And thanks to Corwin Ferguson, we even encounter a magnificent stag along the way in a brooding, primeval forest. The production opened on Broadway in 1947 and ran for 581 performances. A 1954 film version starred Gene Kelly and Cyd Charisse, and a 1966 television version starred Canadian actor Peter Falk, aka Columbo. Brigadoon, directed by Glynnis Leyshon plays until Oct. 13 at the Festi- nal Theatre, 10 Queen’s Parade, Niagara-on-the- Lake. Shawfest.com or 905-468-2172.

You can access the program at: www.shawfest. com/playbill/brigadoon/

Kirsti Frank as Meg Brockie with the cast of Brigadoon. SUPPLIED PHOTO/DAVID COOPER

The Brigadoon musical selections are expertly played by a proficient 16-piece orchestra directed by Shaw’s talented Paul Sportelli, but they contain only one song that one might remember, “Almost Like Being In Love.” This song title reflects the core problem for Kris: return home to marry a woman he realizes that he does not love – or remain forever in Brigadoon but with his newfound sweetheart, Fiona MacLaren (Alexis Gordon). Neighbours and created many beautiful grandfather clocks. He and his wife Sharon were involved in our precious Chautauqua, and in several clubs in Niagara. Our Piping Down The Sun event was so well-at- tended and loving last June, with Scottish dancing, the Evergreen Singers and the City of Thorold Pipe Band parading down Vincent Avenue to play in Ryerson Park at about 7:30 p.m. The St. Andrew’s Society of Niagara-on-the-Lake will be out in force, and president Alan Dickson will present a wee his- tory of the society and talk about the future. Join them wearing kilts, tartan skirts and other Scottish clothing, and a hammer throw? Perhaps Karts wheels in Kilt? Last year, a potential pack- ing problem was cleverly avoided when many people spoke with friends who live in the Chautauqua neighbour- hood. Many driveways easily accommodated two, three or four cars for the early-evening event.

Who should attend? In a word, everyone. Whether you can trace your family history back to United Em-pire Loyalists, or whether you have recently moved to NOTL from Trawna, or if you recently arrived in Canada from another coun-try, be with us. Last year, many people were enjoying a picnic in Ryerson Park when the action began. A re- ally Canadian moment occurred when about 30 people from Syria, via Toronto, joined us and had a truly emotional and sponta- neous experience.

So, on Saturday, June 22, at 7:15 in the evening, make your way to Ryerson Park in Chautauqua. Bring a sandwich or snack – and some bug spray. And a donation of two bucks per person to cover costs. Get r-r-r-ready to be a Scot for an evening, as we enjoy piping down the sun in Ryerson Park.

The Lake Report is looking for experienced reporters with journalism degrees. As your trusted local paper, we only hire the best.

The Lake Report is free of political influence and doesn’t adhere to any outside advisors. Truthful, unbiased reporting is something we’re proud of.

© 2014 Lake Publishing Company
“Vernacular” is one of those terms that regularly creeps into my conversations with folks when describing their heritage home and it’s not uncommon that the word requires some definition. Applied to historic architecture, vernacular refers to a building designed by someone with no training in the discipline, generally guided by local community conventions and the functionality of the house, using local materials with little emphasis placed on aesthetic or decorative elements.

In the 18th and early 19th centuries, vernacular cottages were among the most common homes found in Niagara-on-the-Lake. While many were torn down during the intervening years, a surprising number still survive due, I suspect, to that superb livability. While this type of house continued to be built throughout the 19th century, it became much less frequent as ready availability of plan books, competitive pricing of shipped-in materials and ready access to skilled labour increased.

Interestingly, in the 20th century an increasing client demand for an understated “quiet” house with a highly functional interior caused a small number of architects to begin drawing on the earlier vernacular tradition for their designs. Unfortunately, lacking a Traditional Neighbourhood Development Plan, our town has seen only the occasional new vernacular built. Apparently we prefer the current version of the developers’ matchbox house?

Above and below: Ivy Deko, 3, spends an afternoon with cousin Kennedy Bastine in Virgil.
The Mennonites’ long road to Virgil

Denise Ascenzo
Exclusive/The Lake Report

The Mennonites are considered a prominent addition to the community of Virgil, having arrived in 1934, mainly from the Ukraine.

There is another Mennonite settlement close by, in Vineland, but that community had Swiss or southern German origins. They came via Pennsylvania in 1663 shortly after the American Revolution.

The history of the migration of the Ukraine Mennonites is complicated. They first lived in Holland, which was a province under the control of King Philip of Spain (1527-1598).

They were not Catholic and were subject to war by the Spanish king. They fled to Poland and Germany where Protestants were not persecuted. The Mennonites lived in peace for over two hundred years.

By the 1870s, the Mennonites found they were once again being persecuted for their beliefs. Being pacifists and refusing to participate in any activity that supported an aggressive power, they found themselves slowly being pushed off their lands.

This sudden loss of land was resolved when Catherine the Great (1729-1796) of Russia wanted to settle large areas of land taken from the Turks and Tatars. The skilled Mennonite farmers offered a land deal that was beneficial for all. They moved once again, this time to the region of Russia called Ukraine. They became known as “Russlaenders.”

The Russlaenders were industrious, successful and prosperous farmers and business owners, which eventually put them in a difficult position when the Communist regime was firmly in power in 1920.

The government decided to take away ownership of their lands and businesses, eliminate their private communities and to con-...
Niagara-on-the-Lake Horticultural donation from the fruition thanks to a gen-
on-the-Lake is coming to a historic trail in Niagara-

Dariya Baiguzhiyeva

Donations and hard work helping restore heritage trail

The goal of restoring a historic trail in Niagara-on-the-Lake is coming to fruition thanks to a generous donation from the Niagara-on-the-Lake Horticultural Society.

The society has donated $3,600 to the town’s heritage trail committee, which is responsible for rehabilitating and raising awareness about the Upper Canada Heritage Trail.

“We like to give back to the community in any way we can,” said Suzanne Rate, the society’s treasurer.

Several town councillors and staff joined some members of the town’s heritage trail committee at the trail’s entrance on Monday afternoon to thank the society for its donation.

The heritage trail committee, in collaboration with the town, has used the money to plant about 60 trees and shrubs at the trail’s three northern entrances: John Street, Paffard Street and Charlotte Street. The municipality was responsible for the design and planting in all three gardens.

The town used native plant materials, which were more suitable for the trail, said Dave Voogt, a cemetery co-ordinator for the town. Some trees were also donated from the cemetery. With four crew members, it took a couple of days to do the planting, Voogt told The Lake Report.

The idea of preserving the trail started in 2017 with the Canada 150 committee. After the committee realized that the improvements needed for the trail would take years, the legacy subcommittee was formed, which later became the heritage trail committee.

“To see something that we’ve been working on for so long coming to fruition is the first little step towards many improvements we have,” said Dick Coyne, one of the committee’s members.

The 10-kilometre trail follows the historic Erie and Ontario Railroad along Concession I. One of the first railroads in the province, it was in use until the 1950s. The trail also connects NOTL with St. Davids, going all the way up to York Road.

“This is an excellent start. We hope at some future date to be able to have the trail actually delineated, have a hard surface and make it more user-friendly,” said Rick Meloen, chair of the heritage trail committee.

When the committee finalizes the restoration plans and figures out how much the trail’s reconstruction will cost, it will start a major fundraising, said Meloen.

A number of residents who use the trail for hiking, biking or walking with their dogs said they supported the trail’s rehabilitation. Julie Clark, who lives along the trail on Paffard Street, said she has been using the trail for 30 years and it was important to restore it partly because of its historic significance.

From NOTL, the bustle of the city is just an illusion

Happy Father’s Day

Country Markets

Harvest Barn

Stock up for dad’s backyard barbecue

Grilling & Barbecue Sauces • Pies • Tarts

Deserts • Napkins • And More!

Open 9-6 Daily, Sundays 9-5:30

Betty & Jane: Plunger Patrol

Inspecting NOTL’s bathrooms: Riverbend Inn and Vineyard

From the pillars at the entrance of this Georgian mansion to the double stairsed front lobby, past the grand piano to the patio overlooking the vineyards, you will experience luxury and quality at Riverbend. We enjoyed our dinner, but still coveted the plates that passed our table. Then we ventured to the bathrooms, where grandeur meets modern convenience. This restored 1860s Georgian mansion has stately washrooms in classic rich, warm tones with fine antique furnishings. Riverbend’s intimate charm and luxurious settings extend to its facilities. The bathrooms boast wood-panelled floor-length stall doors which provide privacy and buffer the noise of traditional bathroom stalls. We are fans of fauna and both restrooms hosted healthy plants. We invite you to submit photos and stories for consideration in this section. Send your submissions to editor@niagaranow.com for a chance to be featured.

RIDDLE ME THIS:

I jump when I walk,
I sit when I stand.

What am I?

Last Week’s Riddle: I have cities, but no houses. I have mountains, but no trees. I have water, but no fish. What am I?

Answer: A map

Answered first by: Katie Reimer

Also answered correctly by: David Steele, Margie Enns, Cheryl House, Britnay Turasz, Buddy Andres, Susan Pohorly

Email answers to editor@niagaranow.com for a chance to win a prize.

Mary Nicol receives a Golden Plunger award for restoration of Riverbend Inn and Vineyard.

4/5 Gold Plungers

DARIYA BAIGUZHIYEVA

The Lake Report

The idea of preserving the trail started in 2017 with the Canada 150 committee. After the committee realized that the improvements needed for the trail would take years, the legacy subcommittee was formed, which later became the heritage trail committee.

“The goal of restoring a historic trail in Niagara-on-the-Lake is coming to fruition thanks to a generous donation from the Niagara-on-the-Lake Horticultural Society.”

“We like to give back to the community in any way we can,” said Suzanne Rate, the society’s treasurer.

Several town councillors and staff joined some members of the town’s heritage trail committee at the trail’s entrance on Monday afternoon to thank the society for its donation.

The heritage trail committee, in collaboration with the town, has used the money to plant about 60 trees and shrubs at the trail’s three northern entrances: John Street, Paffard Street and Charlotte Street. The municipality was responsible for the design and planting in all three gardens.

The town used native plant materials, which were more suitable for the trail, said Dave Voogt, a cemetery co-ordinator for the town. Some trees were also donated from the cemetery. With four crew members, it took a couple of days to do the planting, Voogt told The Lake Report.

The idea of preserving the trail started in 2017 with the Canada 150 committee. After the committee realized that the improvements needed for the trail would take years, the legacy subcommittee was formed, which later became the heritage trail committee.

“To see something that we’ve been working on for so long coming to fruition is the first little step towards many improvements we have,” said Dick Coyne, one of the committee’s members.

The 10-kilometre trail follows the historic Erie and Ontario Railroad along Concession I. One of the first railroads in the province, it was in use until the 1950s. The trail also connects NOTL with St. Davids, going all the way up to York Road.

“This is an excellent start. We hope at some future date to be able to have the trail actually delineated, have a hard surface and make it more user-friendly,” said Rick Meloen, chair of the heritage trail committee.

When the committee finalizes the restoration plans and figures out how much the trail’s reconstruction will cost, it will start a major fundraising, said Meloen.

A number of residents who use the trail for hiking, biking or walking with their dogs said they supported the trail’s rehabilitation. Julie Clark, who lives along the trail on Paffard Street, said she has been using the trail for 30 years and it was important to restore it partly because of its historic significance.
At 75, Jim Smith has had lots of time to fix many of the town’s historic icons. When the town clock stopped working properly, Smith fixed it. When the Court House bell kept interrupting the Shaw plays, Smith fixed it. When the St. Mark’s bells needed repair, Smith fixed them.

He officially retired from his position as maintenance mechanic at the town hospital in 1994, at the age of 50. But that just gave him more time to fix things.

“Best job I could have ever had in my life,” says Smith. “I fixed things. I know electrical, I know plumbing, I know carpentry. So fixing things is my cup of tea.”

Smith grew up surrounded by the family business. His father, an Ottawa carpenter, plied his trade. “Officially, dad was a carpenter. Unofficially, he worked for everyone who needed something fixed.”

He acknowledges that school was never his thing. “I was 17 in Grade 8, so they moved me up to the high school,” he says. “That didn’t last long.”

But it was long enough for Smith to meet Heidi, his wife of 53 years. “We have three wonderful kids, scattered around the region, four grandchildren and our first great-grandchild is expected later this summer.”

Smith has vivid recollections of his early life in town during the 1940s and ’50s. “We spent all our summer days at the beach. Most us called it Lion’s Beach, because the Lion’s Club ran the refreshment stand. But it really was the Queen’s Royal Beach — just down from today’s gazebo.”

“Jim Smith can repair just about anything,” says Smith’s Niagara roots are just about as deep as you can find today. He can trace his local connection back to the 1800s, to his great-great-grandfather, who was buried in the cemetery at St. Mark’s. “I just buried my mother there. She lived to be 103.”

After he left high school, Smith bounced around in a couple of short-term positions, but they didn’t use his natural skills. “They weren’t career things.”

Then he heard about the hospital job. It became his career. When he retired, he immediately took up a part-time job, as caretaker of the Niagara Apothecary, at the corner of Queen and King streets. Built in 1820, as a pharmacy, the Apothecary is now owned by the Ontario Heritage Trust and operated as a museum by the Ontario College of Pharmacists. But that job certainly doesn’t keep him busy. In the mid-nineties, Smith noticed that the Memorial Clock Tower on Queen Street didn’t keep time. He petitioned the town to make him the official voluntary clock keeper. They agreed.

“The clock was cuckoo. I had no idea what the mechanism would look like,” says he. “I changed the system to a completely modern system. It keeps perfect time.”

After more than 20 years as clock keeper, Smith recently advertised and found a successor. “It was just too hard to climb up there.”

It’s the same sort of tale for the historic bell in the Court House belfry. Installed in 1835, the bell chime wreaked havoc on the Shaw Festival plays during performances in the Court House theatre. Leave it to Smith to cobble together a system that would pause the bells when the actors were on stage.

And long before the major refurbishment and addition of nine bells to the St. Mark’s Church chimes, Smith puttered away keeping the smaller system alive. He’d grown up admiring the church bells as much for the intricate playing mechanism as the beautiful sound.

“I used anything I could to make them work,” he remembers. “I didn’t read music, so I took the music home and worked out how to play it.”

“And when they installed the automatic system in 2006, we programmed the computer to play automatically. It’s really wonderful.”

Smith has vivid recollections of his early life in town during the 1940s and ’50s. “We spent all our summer days at the beach. Most us called it Lion’s Beach, because the Lion’s Club ran the refreshment stand. But it really was the Queen’s Royal Beach — just down from today’s gazebo.”

“Jim Smith can repair just about anything,” says Smith. “He took to photography at a very early age. “My dad gave me a bellows camera to shoot the Scout Jamboree of 1955. I watched him develop his own pictures.”

“When I was 13 my mother gave me a little brownie camera. I still have it. I love taking pictures.”

He estimates he now has over 500,000 prints, origi- nals and duplicates, both his own and thousands given to him by others. He has all the hard copies, but the pictures are also filed digitally, taking up almost 2 terabytes of computer storage. He admits to wandering through the well-organized computer files, almost daily. “I just love looking at them. The memories when we were kids. Flying kites at Fort Mississauga.”

“My mother used to say I had a terrible memory. But I can remember all my pictures.”

One mental picture stands out. In the 1950s, the second green at Niagara’s historic lakeside golf course, was inside the ramparts of Fort Mississauga—a blind shot from the fairway.

So, Smith and his band of friends, waited patiently in a small hidden tunnel inside the fort for a golf ball to come over the embankment and land on the green. They quickly rushed out before the golfer appeared, dropped the ball into the cup and retreated to cover. One very happy golfer, with one eagle! But if Smith is content about the town’s past, he seems somehow disappoint- ed with where it is now. “I’m afraid we are a non-town,” he muses. “Queen Street used to be part of the community not just a fa- çade. It was a people’s town. You knew everyone, all the families.

“As a kid, you didn’t do anything wrong because you knew someone would tell your mother.”

Can the town be fixed? “That’s a tough one. The town has already flipped. There’s little of that era left.”

But Smith quickly throws off his chagrín, returning happily to his vibrant memories. With any luck, Jim Smith, armed with both the past and his innate skills, will find a way to fix his town, too.