



NOTL hero makes change | Page 4



## Bulletproof vests and Kevlar helmets for Ukraine

Evan Saunders  
Local Journalism Initiative  
The Lake Report

At St. John Byzantine Catholic Church in St. Catharines, emotions and frustration about the unjust conflict in Ukraine are running high.

“It’s not a war, it’s an invasion,” Rev. Anton Szymychalski said at the church on Wednesday morning.

But there is also an air of hope as donations pour

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## Virgil Stampede likely a go for 2022

Staff  
The Lake Report

Despite musings online, Virgil Business Association president Richard Wall says the Virgil Stampede is not officially a go — yet.

“We just haven’t had a meeting where we have officially decided that it’s happening,” Wall said in an interview Wednesday.

He noted that every-

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# Finding freedom and safety in Canada

Teresa Wong left Hong Kong with two of her children after Communist regime crackdown

**Editor’s note:** While we celebrate the progress of equality for women around the world, we want to highlight some of the strong, fearless women who have made incredibly tough decisions to protect themselves and their families. This story is about one of Niagara-on-the-Lake’s newest residents, Teresa Wong. A mother of three, Wong fled the formerly democratic state of Hong Kong for the freedom of Canada in December 2021.



Teresa Wong looks out from her home on Concession 2, where she’s been living since December. She left her home in Hong Kong for the quiet safety and freedom of Niagara-on-the-Lake, to find a better life for her children after she saw the state’s education system changing. RICHARD HARLEY

Richard Harley  
The Lake Report

Imagine waking up in two years and Canada is no longer a free, democratic country.

Imagine you’re no longer allowed to criticize the

government, once-independent newspapers are being shuttered and state-controlled propaganda is now part of your education system.

For Teresa Wong, a 40-year-old mother of three from Hong Kong, that was

the reality for her family.

Wong left Hong Kong in 2021 after two years dealing with the changing state, where people who once enjoyed freedoms we take for granted are now being prosecuted for speaking out.

She’s now living in Niag-

ara-on-the-Lake, thanks to a longstanding friendship with her high school English teacher, Kaspar Pold.

Wong was able to bring two of her young children with her to Canada. Her husband and 10-year-old daughter are still in Hong

Kong and plan to move to Canada when they can.

She travelled on a six-month tourist visa, a move she’d been planning since before the pandemic hit in 2020.

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# In NOTL, strong women are leading by example

Richard Harley  
The Lake Report

While women in Canada and around the world still face obstacles to achieve equal rights and opportunities, there’s a strong sense that, at least in Niagara-on-the-Lake, things are headed in the right direction.

Our town has four women leaders on its council and for International Women’s Day and ahead of the 2022 municipal election, The Lake Report asked them about some of the challenges they’ve faced as women in politics, and what advice they have for women looking to get into government.

In four separate interviews, all female members of NOTL council said they have not faced any discrimination based on gender while working for the town and its residents.

For Coun. Clare Cameron, who received the most votes of any councillor in

*Continued on Page 3*



Some of the strong women who run NOTL. RICHARD HARLEY



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# '180-degree change' in Hong Kong drove mother to Canada

Continued from Front Page

## A mother's breaking point

Her reason for fleeing Hong Kong was simple. "Everything has changed."

The breaking point was seeing her children's education altered, and a growing division between people who supported the Chinese government's takeover of Hong Kong and those who strongly protest the loss of freedom.

"Before, we were free in Hong Kong. We can talk whatever we want, we can say our ideas out in public, right? But since 2019, especially in 2020, the government controlled the people so fast," she says in an interview with The Lake Report.

The loss of rights was shocking and swift, she says.

"Can you imagine, like here in Canada, you can say whatever you want. If something (is) wrong, you can go and strike and speak in public. Suddenly, someone says, 'Oh, the national law comes that you can't say something — if you say that you will go directly in jail.'"

"What would you feel like?" she asked. "You're frightened, right?"

She says it's especially frightening thinking about her children.

The division in the country is palpable, she says, and it's reaching into the schools.

When China's crackdown first happened in 2019, Hong Kong citizens took to the streets in droves to protest the new rules.

But Wong says that just created more division and discrimination because, as police arrested citizens, people started to turn their hatred on each other.

She remembers a story from a friend, about a teacher who asked students in a classroom to stand up if their parents worked for the police. The teacher then told the rest of the students to stay clear of those whose parents were affiliated with the police and to ask them why their parents are "doing

this to Hong Kong."

It was a big shock, she says. "It's like something got ruined in the education. I don't want my kids to be educated in that kind of system and that kind of environment again," Wong says.

So she planned her departure.

## Swift totalitarian action

Soon after the the latest crackdown on democracy in Hong Kong, Wong says the Chinese government began to "clean" teachers who were speaking out against the state and attending rallies and protests. Some were forced to quit teaching or to bend to the government's philosophy.

"It actually is like a 180-degree change."

She says schools need to be free places, so "that teachers and students can talk and discuss."

"The politics, they should understand both sides, right? And then judge by themselves later on. We can't just say, 'Oh, this one is wrong. You need to memorize it. This is wrong. You can't go on demonstration. You can't say something against the government.' That's the truth of education. Otherwise it is not education, it's like feeding."

It's like propaganda or brainwashing, she says, and was "really a big shock."

At one time, Hong Kong was one of the "most cosmopolitan" cities in the world, but no longer, thanks to the Chinese government's crackdown on society.

She says the government is doing everything it can to silence the views of people who question the state.

The country has also banned free, independent media from operating.

One of the biggest media companies, Apple Daily, was forced to shut down in 2021 after its accounts were frozen and its leaders arrested.

That newspaper was owned by Jimmy Lai, who has a strong Niagara-on-the-Lake connection through his sister Si Wai, who was a major investor and visionary of the town's hotel industry through Vintage Hotels.



Teresa Wong met Kaspar Pold when she was a high school student in Hong Kong. The NOTL resident offered up his home to Wong and her family after seeing the Chinese government crack down on the formerly democratic state. RICHARD HARLEY

"And Lai is in jail, of course," Wong says.

Wong was a reader of Lai's newspaper and considers him a great person for speaking out against the government.

"I loved the newspaper because from that newspaper, I can see what I can't see from the others — no matter in a political way or any other ways, they're telling the truth. But unfortunately, we don't have it any more."

## From early days in 2019

When the government first started suppressing democracy in Hong Kong, she says she didn't attend the protests. She would make her opinions known to people she knew and post some things online, but didn't want to fight and risk persecution, for the sake of her children, who are now 12, 10 and 6.

She remembers the fear as young people took to the streets and parents getting calls that their teenagers had been arrested for speaking out.

That's when the division started.

"I know a lot of people split up with families, with friends, only because their mindsets are different, for or against the government," she says.

"That's not a healthy environment for kids to grow up. When they grow up, through their life, they need friends, right? They can't be

choosing friends because of political viewpoints."

She says the attitude among many is "black or white. You need to choose. No grey."

Wong worked in the tourism industry in Hong Kong for 12 years, having studied in Switzerland and graduated in 2006.

She remembers she could have moved anywhere in the world at that time, but chose to go back to Hong Kong because she saw a future there — but no longer.

The loss of freedom and truthful education wasn't something she was about to let her kids be subjected to.

If her children aren't able to learn and discuss politics and history honestly, they will know nothing about the truth of Hong Kong and that will have a lasting impact on generations of people, she says.

"And then later on, maybe five or 10 years later, the government will publish a book, some kind of so-called Hong Kong history, that will say something really good, right?"

Now she is taking a personal support worker course in Canada so she can get a full-time job and secure a work visa.

Then, she says, her husband and daughter will be able to move to Canada, too, hopefully by this summer.

Wong says she didn't have a hard time leaving the country, largely because she used a travel visa and hadn't been arrested previously for

protesting the government.

Others who are known to the government and have been arrested aren't allowed to leave the country, she says.

## Three months in Canada

She says she feels safe in Canada.

"And meanwhile, I'm a bit worried about my husband and my girl there," she says, noting that cases of COVID-19 have been out of control in the state in recent weeks.

Seeing the Hong Kong government's reaction to COVID-19 is another thing she finds troubling.

"I can't imagine how the most effective, high-efficiency city like Hong Kong, nowadays has become messy like the Third World. People standing outside waiting to get into the hospital for days" and the government reacting slowly to the upsurge.

Talking about International Women's Day and what it means to her to be an obviously strong woman, she says motherhood made her fierce.

"I think women are powerful, especially once they become a mother. They have the natural right to protect their kids and their family. And then nowadays I think women should be treated as equal as men for any point of view. No matter on career, or for anything else in our society."

To other women who may be facing situations they want to leave, she offers these words: "Be brave. Nothing is impossible once you start your first step."

## Her NOTL connection

Wong met NOTL resident Kaspar Pold in 1998, while he was teaching English in Hong Kong. Schools there have what they call "native" teachers, she explains, in which teachers primarily speak the language they teach.

Pold only taught at her school for two years, but the two kept running into each other and maintained a friendship over time.

He and his late wife lived in Hong Kong until 2005.

Wong says Pold worried about China exercising control over Hong Kong's democracy and offered her his home in Canada.

Eventually, she took him up on the offer and says she loves being in Niagara-on-the-Lake.

"Some areas just remind me of my study life in Switzerland. Lovely people here. Lovely environment."

## Calling on Canada

Wong hopes her travel visa is extended due to the pandemic and that once she gets a work visa, her children can attend school here. As visitors, they are unable to register for classes.

She says she looked for jobs in NOTL's hotels when she arrived, but found no full-time work in her field.

Wong says one thing the Canadian government could do to help people seeking asylum here is to loosen the immigration laws and allow anyone who is fleeing Hong Kong quick passage to the country, similar to what the U.K. is doing.

"Because a lot of people would like to come," she says, adding she knows friends who would have liked to have moved to Canada.

"Canada is the first choice but they finally turned to the U.K. because the U.K. has got an easier path to go," she says.



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# NOTL's mighty women lead by example

Continued from Front Page



Some of NOTL's women leaders, town chief administrative officer Marnie Cluckie, Lord Mayor Betty Disero, Coun Sandra O'Connor and Coun. Wendy Cheropita. Absent, Coun. Clare Cameron. Each one of them said NOTL is welcoming to women. RICHARD HARLEY

the 2018 election, some of the challenges of being a woman in politics are associated with motherhood. For many women, she says it's still common to spend more hours taking care of the kids and home front.

Reached by the phone with children audibly in the background, she said careful planning and dedication can overcome those hurdles.

"You try to plan as best you can. What does today look like and what opportunities do you have today to maybe accomplish something that you can't accomplish tomorrow because something else is going on," she said.

While she feels "lucky" to be on a council that hears all members openly regardless of gender, she said one challenge for her was being pregnant during the 2018 municipal election.

Cameron said she did hear some muttering about how she might not have time to do the job.

But nonetheless, she ended up topping the polls and became deputy mayor.

"You can do hard things if you're determined enough. You can make it work. There's no hurdle that can't be overcome if you're determined enough," Cameron said.

Coun. Wendy Cheropita said she is proud that NOTL has strong female representation on town council.

"I have not felt that being a woman has hindered me in any way. I think that I can say I have a very good and respectful relationship with my male colleagues, also with staff," she said.

She noted over her career, she didn't feel discrimination based on gender and that NOTL and its residents have echoed that.

"It's intelligent, smart residents that embrace this special place that we live in, and I think, come with a very healthy attitude," she said.

She encourages other women, especially young women, to get involved in politics, to bring a more diverse voice to our community.

Coun. Sandra O'Connor

says while she wouldn't tolerate discrimination toward women, she does think the town could benefit from having more women involved in committees — an idea she put forward that was supported by council last year.

O'Connor said there are obvious benefits to having varied representation in a community.

"Any kind of diversity leads to a broader discussion on the issues and the more different aspects we can see of an issue, I think the better decisions council will make," she said.

While society isn't changing quite as fast as she would like, the changes are evident, O'Connor said.

In the past she said she's been denied job opportunities for being a female in a male-dominated environment.

"I don't find that any more," she said.

Another positive she sees with NOTL having almost equal representation of women on council is that it could inspire other women to get involved with the town.

"Once women are seeing that, hey, almost 50 per cent of council are females, that we are open to having female representation at our decision-making level, then they will say 'Yeah, maybe I can do that, too.' It's good to have these symbols there so that women can see that it is an achievable goal,"

Lord Mayor Betty Disero, who began her career as a politician in Toronto in the 1980s, said she's seen things

change over that time.

As a young woman getting into politics — a mostly male-dominated space, especially in the '80s — she said people would often ask her why she would pursue such a career path.

In her early days, people didn't take her seriously and "part of it was my age and part of it was because I was a woman."

But it didn't stop her and she always made sure her voice was heard.

Over time she's heard from other women who have emailed or called to thank her for being a role model and helping them through their own challenges as women.

As for why NOTL council has more women than most, each councillor had their own perspective.

It's a combination of things, says O'Connor — one factor is that NOTL is a unique, progressive town. Another is that we are starting to see the goals of equal opportunities for women being met.

Cameron said it wouldn't be possible to have so many women on council if no women ran.

Disero said she thinks a big part of it is that NOTL residents are open-minded.

"I really feel that the Niagara-on-the-Lake population is mostly progressive in their thinking and I think that's why we have as many women members of council that we have."

And what's their advice for women who might be thinking about getting into politics?

"You need a thick skin," Cameron said. "And you need to choose your battles, just like in a lot of things about life, and value your relationships. Above all else, value people."

Disero and O'Connor had similar messages: Just do it.

"I think that you should be informed, that you should be interested and that you should go for it. If there's any hesitation, you know, go for it," O'Connor said.

"There's still a challenge. But I believe that we are getting beyond that challenge," Disero said.

"Every year we take another step, and we'll have to be doing that for a few more years. And eventually, we will get total equality. We're not there yet. But I think we're moving forward in a good direction. And we just keep moving forward."

Disero noted and praised the many women who run NOTL's amenities, including Lise Andreana from the Pumphouse, Sarah Kaufman at the NOTL Museum, town CAO Marnie Cluckie, Cathy Simpson at the library, Deborah Antoncic from RiverBrink Art Museum, among many others.

Niagara Region's "Seat at the Table" program, which aims to address barriers that women and gender-diverse people face when running for municipal office, holds the first of four workshops starting next month.

The first session takes place virtually on Thursday, April 7 at 6 p.m. For more, see the region's website.

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# NOTL hero improves lives of thousands of diabetics

## 10-year-old Maya Webster's campaign pays off as province agrees to cover cost of glucose monitors

Evan Saunders  
Local Journalism Initiative  
The Lake Report

Most people are lucky if they can honestly say they have improved a single person's life. But one Niagara-on-the-Lake resident has just improved the lives of thousands of Ontarians who have type 1 diabetes.

And she's only 10 years old.

After three years of campaigning with Niagara MPP Wayne Gates, Maya Webster has succeeded in getting continuous glucose monitoring systems covered by the Ontario government for many people with type 1 diabetes.

"I cried happy tears," Maya said about receiving the news.

When Maya started trying to help diabetic Canadians she was barely seven years old.

And all of her work was about helping other people so they could have the same level of safety she was privileged to have. Her family's insurance benefits already covered the cost of her glucose monitor.

"I didn't think it was fair that I was lucky to have my mom's benefits when there are people out there who don't have any," Maya said in an interview at her NOTL home on Monday.

Continuous glucose monitoring helps diabetics constantly monitor their blood sugar levels.

Without the system, people with diabetes have no choice but to go through stretches of time where they have no idea if their blood sugar level is falling or rising to a possibly life-threatening level.

Compounding this, many diabetics don't realize when their blood sugar level is changing, putting their lives



NOTL's own Maya Webster proudly displays her continuous glucose monitoring system. She just succeeded in a three-year push to get the device subsidized by the Ontario government for people with type 1 diabetes. EVAN SAUNDERS

in danger.

The coverage for continuous glucose monitoring is only applicable to people who don't feel their changing blood sugar levels.

"Which is very important because it's the most dangerous," Maya said.

The system can be extremely expensive. It can cost an individual up to \$4,000 per year for the system, Maya's mother Christi Webster said.

And while Maya is duly happy to have increased coverage for type 1 diabetics in Ontario, she already has her eyes set on a bigger goal.

"My next goal would probably be for all of Canada and all people with type 1 diabetes to eventually be covered," she said.

Maya knows too well the dangers of type 1 diabetes. She has been hospitalized several times in the past when her blood sugar levels were dangerously high.

But since getting the continuous monitoring system Maya has not spent a single day in a hospital bed, underlining the major difference the system can make for people.

Maya has friends with type 1 diabetes who haven't been able to get continuous glucose monitoring systems. Until now.

"Knowing now that they can be more safe with continuous glucose monitoring, it really felt good," she said.

Maya is an avid basketball fan and player. Not only has having continuous monitoring made her life safer, it has enabled her life to be more normal, she said.

"If I'm playing basketball I get distracted very easily," Maya said.

"Like sometimes if I'm burning energy I get a tired feeling but it's not a low (blood sugar) feeling, so I ignore it, have some water, and keep playing."

Maya's dad is one of the

coaches of her basketball team and is always keeping an eye on his athletic daughter's levels while she is focused on her dribble and lay-ups.

"If he sees me beeping he comes to me, 'Have some Skittles.' I look at him like, 'How am I low?'"

"But it's because I'm playing basketball."

Having a monitor gives her freedom, Webster said. Maya was able to go her first sleepover at a friend's recently, "which is a normal kid thing to do. But with diabetes it's hard."

In the past, Webster always hosted sleepovers at her house so she could monitor Maya's blood sugar levels.

The monitoring system provides relief for parents, who can even check blood sugar levels with their phones while their kid is out living a normal childhood.

This year marks the 100th anniversary of insulin first

being used to treat someone with type 1 diabetes.

Before the discovery, made by several Canadians at the University of Toronto in 1921, it was normal for people with type 1 to live less than two years, according to Diabetes U.K.

Maya is a youth ambassador with JDRE, an American non-profit dedicated to raising awareness and helping those with type 1 diabetes.

Her journey to help Ontarians with type 1 diabetes saw her address politicians in Ottawa, at Queen's Park and go door-to-door to thousands of homes to get signatures for support.

Maya fondly recalled being vocal at rallies in front of Queen's Park.

"I started a chant," Maya said proudly.

The chant was "CGM for all! CGM for all! And I had a microphone with me," she said.

"And then people looked

out the window and they had to come down to see what was happening. So, we got to educate more people."

She said at the next rally she's going to have a megaphone.

Maya was also bolstered by the unwavering support and dedication of Niagara MPP Wayne Gates.

"He was very helpful and he came with us to a lot of places and he was very supportive about everything," Maya said.

"He literally came door-to-door with us. He knocked on doors, he helped set up a bunch of different signing things at public events that got us a lot of signatures," Webster said.

"We love Wayne. He's really for the people."

Webster said Gates has already promised the hard-working and benevolent 10-year-old a job once she is ready or interested.

Maya also gave a shout out to Phil Leboudec, owner of Phil's The Independent Grocer in Virgil. Leboudec helped the family out by having them gather signatures outside of his store.

"It was more like a campaign because we were staying in one spot for people to come because, it's a grocery store, people are going to be coming in and out," Maya said.

"Phil is a great guy," Webster said.

"He actually helped with some of the diabetes events that we did, with sponsoring for condiments and snacks. Once I told him what it was for he was very helpful," Maya said.

Webster said part of the education work she and Maya do is helping people understand how serious type 1 diabetes is.

"It's not low maintenance and it's not caused by anything she did," Webster said.



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Left: Laryssa Doig and her daughter Alana in front of a tiny fraction of the donations coming in to help Ukraine. Right: Scott Thompson and Holly Stewart are helped by church member Bryan Trush. Thompson and Stewart brought donations of rubbing alcohol and hydrogen peroxide to help wounded Ukrainians. EVAN SAUNDERS

# Bulletproof vests and Kevlar helmets: Ukrainian church asks NOTLers to help **embattled nation**

*Continued from Front Page*

in from across the Niagara Region to support the people and soldiers defending the democratic nation.

“It’s been amazing, really, the turnout for volunteers and people donating. Everyone’s got some sort of a connection to Ukraine right now, whether they are Ukrainian or not,” donation organizer Laryssa Doig said.

The church has been collecting medical, military and cash donations to send directly to Ukraine. It raised more than \$60,000 in five days to pay for shipping, buy supplies and make direct donations to Ukrainian charities.

They have already shipped 600 boxes of supplies to the embattled country, Doig said.

But they will be doing this until the war is ended and need to tap into Niagara-on-the-Lake’s generous spirit to help as many people as possible, she said.

“If we can rally as a community in Niagara-on-the-Lake, that would be amazing,” Doig said.

She referenced NOTL’s distinct military history in Canada and said residents should see their desire to help Ukraine as an extension of that past.

“The war history is there. I know no one has lived through it like this. But, you go to the museum, you go to Fort George, it’s all part of the history, regardless.”

The church is looking for specific supplies right now in the form of military, medical aid and cash donations.

Items include: trauma medical supplies, Polysporin with antibiotics, Kevlar helmets and bulletproof vests, among many others.

A full list can be found on the church’s Facebook page, [www.facebook.com/stjohn-nukrainian/](http://www.facebook.com/stjohn-nukrainian/).

Doig realizes not everyone has Kevlar helmets and vests lying around their home and encourages individuals to join with their neighbours to purchase such supplies.

“Anyone from Niagara-on-the-Lake, if you want to match up with your neighbour or bring in a monetary donation. Money is huge, because it’s going there almost immediately,” she said.

Doig said a “crazy” number of people have been reaching out to the church asking how they can help.

“It’s incredible. People are calling the office here saying they can host a family,” she said.

“It’s like, ‘We don’t speak the language but we want to help out, any way we can.’”

Scott Thompson and Holly Stewart pulled up to the church in a large van loaded with dozens of boxes of hydrogen peroxide and rubbing alcohol to help the wounded.

“It seems like an unjust war and that’s where the compassion is coming from for the whole world right now,” said Thompson, who has no direct ties to the country.

“It seems, from an outsider’s perspective, that this is an act of pure aggression,” he said.

“It’s scary to say the least and donating is the least we can do,” said Stewart.

They both work for Avondale Food Stores and Stewart said stores across the region can now accept point-of-sale donations that will be forwarded to the church.

It is up to individual managers to determine whether

their store will accept the donations but they all have the option, Stewart said in an email to The Lake Report.

Sharon Faulkner walked into the church supported by a cane in one hand and carrying a box of medical supplies in the other.

The senior barely spoke a sentence about the invasion of Ukraine before she broke into tears and could not continue with an interview.

“You know I can’t (speak about it) because I’ll cry,” was all she could manage to say before her eyes filled with tears.

Church member and volunteer Bryan Trush spoke about the prolonged difficulty the last few years have presented.

“It’s devastating. Basically, we’ve gone from a pandemic to a war and in my lifetime I never would have expected this,” he said.

“It’s unbelievable, to be honest.”

He encouraged people to donate, no matter how little. “Every bit helps, right? Look at all this stuff. It’s incredible.”

The church’s auditorium is lined with boxes and supplies for a hundred feet in either direction.

Szymchalski said he understands people feel helpless in Canada.

“What can you do? Well, this is all that we can do,” he said, gesturing to the supplies around him.

“So, we try to do it the best and we say we are here as long as they need us.”

“It’s completely unprovoked. It amazes me that it is even happening,” he said.

One donor, who wanted to remain anonymous, said, “I cannot believe, in 2022, that this is happening. Putin’s got

to go. He is threatening the whole world. He is threatening democracy everywhere.”

“It’s disgusting. (Ukraine President Volodymyr) Zelensky is the true hero right now,” she said.

Doig has family in Ukraine and has been in constant contact with them as they try to cross the border into Poland.

“We have one cousin who has a two- and seven-year-old. She tried to cross the border by herself because her husband couldn’t leave,” Doig said.

“She was waiting for over 24 hours to cross the border. So, she decided to go back because her kids were not doing very well.”

Doig said her cousin is in a safer area of Ukraine than many others, but noted she still feels “helpless.”

“That’s how this whole thing got started. I was sitting on the couch watching CNN for those first 36 hours and, like, you’ve got to do something,” she said.

“When I started, I was selling T-shirts and baking cookies to sell and now I’m shipping boxes halfway around the world.”

Doig said most of her extended family is in Lviv, but has now travelled to smaller northern villages for safety.

“They’ve been in touch via Facebook every day, which is great.”

Doig quoted the adage “it takes a village.” In this case, it will take the whole region of Niagara to help those suffering from the Russian invasion.

Donations can be brought directly to the church, at 91 Lakeshore Rd. in St. Catharines, between 8:30 a.m. and 8 p.m. until Saturday, March 12.



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**Canada** The Local Journalism Initiative is funded by the Government of Canada.

## COVID Tracker

**NOTL active cases (last 28 days): 155**

**Region active cases: 1,237**

**Region deaths: 519**

**Region total cases: 34,649**

*\*March 9 data per Niagara Region Public Health.*

*Public health warns that "Due to the surge in COVID-19 cases, limited availability of testing, and changes to case and contact management practices, case counts shown (above) are an underestimate of the true number of individuals in Niagara with COVID-19. Data should be interpreted with caution." Case data for municipalities is also now being interpreted in 28-day cycles.*



**Contributed by Patty Garriock**

"Laughter is the sun that drives winter from the human face." - Victor Hugo

## HOW TO GET IN TOUCH

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## auf Wiedersehen, winter!

Photographer Gail Kendall captured this photo of NOTL trees covered in snow. Luckily, the first day of spring is March 20 and with any luck, the cold stuff is behind us.

**Calling all NOTL photographers: send us some of your interesting, evocative, quirky images of life around town and we'll consider them for this space on our editorial page. Email images (1 MB or more) to editor@niagaranow.com.**



## Editorial

# The fierce women of NOTL

Richard Harley  
Editor-In-Chief

Niagara-on-the-Lake is home to countless strong, fearless, talented, hard-working and intelligent women.

We know this first-hand because so many of them contribute to this newspaper and to our community at large.

So, in honour of International Women's Day this year, we decided to focus this edition of The Lake Report on some of the incredible women in our community. Among them:

Teresa Wong, one of NOTL's newest residents, is a fierce mother, having left the formerly democratic

state of Hong Kong for Canada to give her children a chance at a better life, political freedom and a balanced education.

It's not every day we come face-to-face with someone as courageous as Wong, willing to speak out about how China has cracked down on democratic freedoms we take for granted and in doing so altered life as it was once known in Hong Kong. Kudos to her.

Another young woman in NOTL, though a mere 10 years old, has now helped secure funding for thousands of people who live with type 1 diabetes. Maya Webster's selfless campaign to force the pro-

vincial government to act is an inspiration to us all.

As the world watches the Russian invasion unfold in Ukraine, NOTL actress Tara Rosling is once again stepping up to support humanitarian efforts – this time with a bake sale fundraiser. It's a small way to do something to help the cause.

Another NOTL mother, Priya Litt, is one of the bronze medal finalists at the Global Music Awards, a prestigious international music competition based out of La Jolla, Calif. Her music has received millions of streams on music platforms such as Spotify.

NOTL's women leaders share insights about politics and how the world

is changing for women. We are proud to have these women representing our community, bringing much-needed diversity to our municipal leadership.

NOTL has also just welcomed two more women to prominent posts, town planning director Kirsten McCauley and Chamber of Commerce president Minerva Ward.

And as Lord Mayor Betty Disero told us this week, these are just a few of the outstanding women who help keep this town running and make it the special place we know it to be.

To all of you, we offer our thanks and indebtedness for everything you do.  
*editor@niagaranow.com*



## Little Libraries are true community gems

Dear editor:

I was on my morning walk this past week and stopped at one of the many Little Libraries in town.

After a quick look, I grabbed "Friction" by Sandra Brown. Although a fierce reader, with over 30 books "to read" in my personal library, I devoured my new novel in a few short days.

Last May, the Village Community Association

installed two new Little Libraries in The Village and the boxes have seen a lot of turnover.

Custom-designed (and meeting The Village's architectural code requirements), we added two promotional windows: one for the Village Community Association and one for the NOTL Public Library.

I want to thank Debbie Krause, the library's

community engagement co-ordinator, for supplying us with library community programs for our Little Libraries.

But back to my new book. Now that I have been introduced to a new author, what better place to find more Sandra Brown books than our local library. I checked online and there are several copies of her books.

I regularly pass Little

Libraries on my walks (on Shakespeare Avenue, Front Street, Anne Street, Perez Road, and MacDonell Road) and periodically look inside (when I want to carry a book with me).

Thank you everyone for leaving books and keeping this amazing service alive.

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# Let's plan Parliament Oak's future – and **do it right**

Wayne Gates  
Special to The Lake Report

With the pending sale of the Parliament Oak site, the contentious issue of dense residential development on the property appears to be closed. Good.

Now it's time for a plan to avoid this happening again in the future and the key to that is every level of government agreeing that residents' voices come first.

As anyone listening to me will have heard, building homes is one piece, and only one piece, of the immediately needed solutions to the housing affordability crisis that keeps our kids, and seniors looking to downsize, out of the local housing market.

Despite this need, I firmly believe there are some areas of our province that we should carefully consider development on. That includes protected greenspaces, environmental landmarks, and yes, cultural heritage sites.

It is not hard to find the history of the Parliament Oak site or the Old Town itself. Our Greenbelt should not be sold off for mass development and I feel the same way about losing our cultural heritage in a space that played such a crucial role in the founding of this country.



Crowds of people formed a hand-in-hand circle around Parliament Oak in 2018, protesting the closure of the school and sale of the property. RICHARD HARLEY/FILE

These spaces are special to our nation and our community – and that needs to be recognized.

That isn't to say the space cannot be developed. In fact, there have been development ideas for Parliament Oak that I supported. A number of years ago residents wanted to use the space as a community centre to give back to the town – I thought that was an idea worth pursuing.

That is a night and day difference from selling the property to a developer who seeks to create as many units as possible, not to address the housing crisis, but in the pursuit of profit.

So what's the solution?

Well, if we could turn back time, we'd reverse the detestable decision of the Wynne government to shutter the school and cut the neighbourhood off from easily accessible education.

How ironic that a space supposedly shuttered due to population issues is now being considered a solution for a rapidly growing population. However, fond wishes and nostalgia won't bring the site back, so we must look forward.

I believe the residents who surround the site are the stewards of the Old Town. Go ahead, talk to them and see. They love the area and know its history better than

anyone not from the community.

Any future developments should bring them to the table. They've proven they're reasonable and willing to discuss future options that give back to the community so long as the historic nature of the Old Town isn't torn down and cut up.

To me that's reasonable. Any approvals should have them at the table. That way we redevelop the historic site without ripping up the history.

I do give the lord mayor, town councillors and staff credit for hosting the meetings they did to give these residents a platform. I think many of us appreciated hearing the voices shared in those platforms set up by our local representatives.

Now we must look toward what mechanisms we can put in place to ensure those voices have a true impact on future developments before the projects are planned – not after.

Like the Greenbelt, once you develop on it, you can't get it back. These spaces were preserved by our ancestors, who built the community we love. We shouldn't be the generation that refused to offer our kids the same thing.

*Wayne Gates is the New Democratic Party MPP for Niagara Falls riding.*

# Thank you, NOTL, for **helping stable owner**

Dear editor:  
On behalf of Dinah McGibbon, the owner of Niagara Riding Stables in Niagara-on-the-Lake, I want to give my heartfelt thanks

to the generous members of the community who made donations to help build a new barn roof, which collapsed due to heavy snow on Feb. 4. The rebuilding expense

is enormous and so far we have raised \$13,000, a good beginning. Anyone still wishing to donate or to support Dinah by reserving a delightful trail

ride along the foot of the Niagara Escarpment can find information on her beautiful website: [niagarariding.com](http://niagarariding.com)  
**Helen Kopec**  
NOTL

# Nations are **banding together** over Ukraine

Dear editor:  
The current conflict in eastern Europe is indeed troublesome, but within it, I believe, can be found a small glimmer of hope.

The current negative forces evident in this conflict have brought about positive reactions from so many nations, and are demonstrating beyond any doubt the necessity of the principle of collec-

tive security prescribed by Bahá'u'lláh more than a century ago as a means of resolving conflict.

While the international arrangement envisioned by Him for the full application of this principle is far from having been adopted by the rulers of mankind, a step toward the behaviour outlined for the nations by Him is being taken.

Foreshadowing the future

reorientation of the nations, Bahá'u'lláh wrote: "Be united, O concourse of the sovereigns of the world."

He wrote, "for thereby will the tempest of discord be stilled amongst you, and your peoples find rest. Should any one among you take up arms against another, rise ye all against him, for this is naught but manifest justice."

While it is difficult to imagine any good arising from this current conflict, there is no doubt in my mind that it will hasten the day when humanity as a whole will achieve its maturity – the next step in its long evolution – through the realization and practice of its essential oneness.

**Lawrence Clarke**  
Virgil

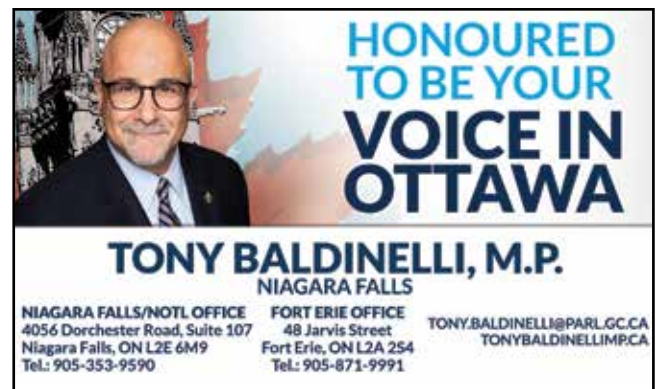


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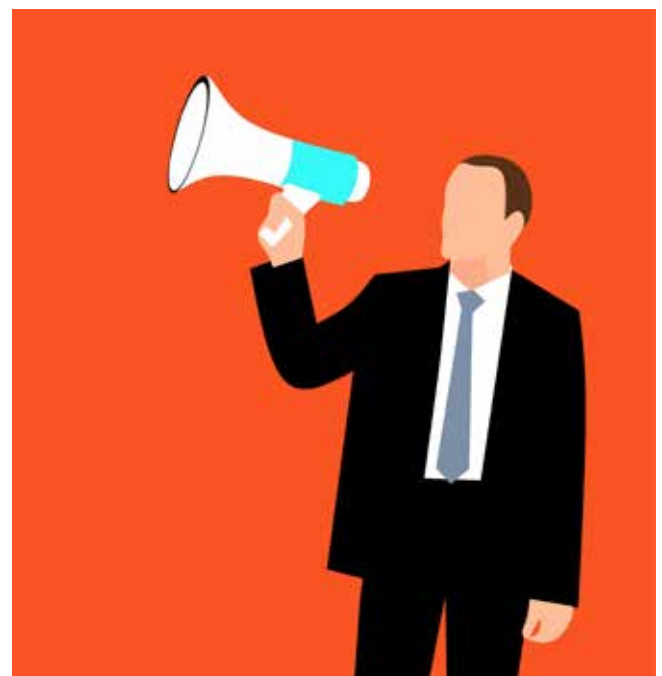
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# I've had enough with the all the protests

Dear editor:

I initially wanted to refrain from making any comments about the self-proclaimed "freedom convoy."

I've had enough. I woke up one morning thinking about what I had missed in understanding the events of the past few weeks related to the protests that sprang up across Canada.

Had I been too complacent about my placid little life in Niagara-on-the-Lake, away (for now) from what happened in Ottawa, Canadian cities and the U.S. border?

Have I been too far removed from what is happening since I have not been directly affected by it?

Should I just give up and submit to international extremist groups and far-right evangelical forces in the United States?

Fortunately, an article published in La Presse de Montréal headlined "Mind Your Own Business (please)" was sent to me.

If nothing else, I invite you to at least read the first few paragraphs, translated here:

"For 26 days, their trucks had held the country hos-



"Freedom convoy" protesters at the NOTL Husky truck stop on Jan. 27. RICHARD HARLEY/FILE

tage. Some of them had the wheels removed from their juggernauts to prevent law enforcement from towing them. Their operations were financed by foreign funds. Funds paid, among others, by the American secret services. At their head was one of the leaders of Patria y Libertad, a far-right paramilitary group.

It was Chile's Red October in 1972.

The Chilean truckers' strike had been the first of a series of crises engineered to destabilize the democratically elected government

of Salvador Allende. With the success that we know: a year later, the military junta had seized power."

Reading this article, it did not seem to me that the armed forces were going to be called as they were during the Oka crisis in 1990, which was a protest against a court decision allowing the expansion of a golf course.

Are politicians just too concerned about the backlash that could ensue in the next election? Will part of the electorate also go all the way to oust the current

political parties? That said, I can understand the danger of creating martyrs among extremists. Certain things are a-changing!

Here in Ontario Premier Doug Ford, disappeared for almost two weeks. The premiers of the western provinces could also have acted, as pointed out by Winnipeg Free Press journalist Niigaan Sinclair.

As an example, to deal with the border protests in Coutts, Alta., Premier Jason Kenney could have invoked the Infrastructure Act, which he has used or tried to use against Indigenous people linked to the construction of pipelines.

Arguably, our politicians initially preferred to use white gloves to try to put an end to protests.

However, I must admit that law enforcement must be careful about creating martyrs that the leaders of these convoys will seize upon to promote their causes, whatever they may be.

It is despicable that organizers tried to use children as human shields. What country are we in anyway?

**Gilbert Comeault**  
**NOTL**



Kirsten McCauley, the town's new planner. SUPPLIED

## Former regional staffer named new town planner

Staff  
The Lake Report

Kirsten McCauley is taking the helm from Craig Larmour as Niagara-on-the-Lake's director of community and development services.

"I look forward to having Kirsten join our senior management team," chief administrative officer Marnie Cluckie said in a news release.

"Kirsten has extensive experience in the planning field, has proven leadership capabilities and is committed to providing customer service excellence."

McCauley has been a senior planner with the Region of Niagara for four years. Before that she worked as a planner for the City of Hamilton and the Township of West Lincoln in a 20-year career.

This won't be McCauley's first foray into NOTL affairs. She worked on the Glendale secondary plan with the town and region.

"This experience has supported her knowledge of the town and has allowed her to build excellent working relationships with members of town staff in advance of her new role," the town announcement said.



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# NOTL actor holding **bake sale** for Ukraine

Richard Harley  
The Lake Report

Tara Rosling doesn't like war. Seeing what's happening in Ukraine, the Niagara-on-the-Lake actor and her daughter Eliana wanted to do something to help. "It feels kind of silly in a way to hold a bake sale, but at the same time it feels super important to do something," Rosling told The Lake Report.



Tara Rosling and her daughter Eliana are hosting a bake sale for Ukraine on Sunday. SUPPLIED

But right now, "I think there's such a profound sense of helplessness and powerlessness, that we all wish to help in some way." While she doesn't have ties to Ukraine, Rosling said her world view is that we're all cut of the same cloth. "This might sound really, really bizarre and hokey, but I just believe in helping people in need. And I think that really (the world is) one in the same in terms of environmentalism and humanitarianism," she said. "It's treating others with respect and love, as well as the planet." She also wants to see the community come together. "It feels really important to gather as a community.

So I think that's part of the initiative or the impulse behind having a community event. I could just go online and donate 500 bucks myself, but it feels really important that the community gather." The sale will take place in a pop-up tent in Rosling's driveway on Shakespeare Avenue on Sunday, March 13 from 2 p.m. to 4 p.m. It will happen rain or shine, and if necessary, she'll move it into her garage. The baked goods won't have price tags, but are available for whatever donation people want to leave. All proceeds from the sale will go to the Canadian Red

Cross Ukraine Humanitarian Crisis Appeal. After Rosling posted her idea for the fundraiser on Facebook and asking for bakers, people have been reaching out with offers to help, she said. "People are donating gluten-free cookies, muffins, banana bread, lemon squares, chocolate peanut butter squares, peanut butter cookies, chocolate chip cookies, OMA bars — who knows what those are? — cupcakes, brownies, scones — it goes on and on and on. Somebody donated calligraphy. It's great. I'm profoundly moved by the response of the community."

Rosling, who also owns a small eco-friendly business called the Little Green Shop, will also be selling her items and 40 per cent of proceeds will go to humanitarian efforts in Ukraine. This isn't the first time Rosling and Eliana have stepped up for humanitarian causes. The two have also helped raise money for residential school survivors and for Gillian's Place in Niagara.

On a shared planet, we all need to come to each other's aid sometimes, she said. "I think we've lost sight of a really fundamental truth in that none of this belongs to us, that we are all visitors," Rosling said. "The planet gives us Earth and sustains us, but we're just passing through. And war is like the antithesis of (that). It's people deciding that they're going to go out and claim more territory that doesn't even belong to us. It's just so asinine and so devastating," she added. "So I just, I truly believe it's all one and the same in terms of how we treat the planet and how we treat each other. We're all made of the same fabric."

# New municipal clerk has **ties to NOTL**

Richard Harley  
The Lake Report



Ralph Walton.

The Town of Niagara-on-the-Lake's new clerk, Ralph Walton, previously worked for the Region of Niagara and has owned a property in NOTL for many years. "I had spent time down here with the region and I lived in old Niagara-on-the-Lake and I just grew to love it, everything about it," Walton said in an interview. "When the opportunity came up to come and work and also to live in the municipality, it was just something that was very appealing to me." Walton spent three years as the clerk for the region before moving on to Durham, where he spent five years as clerk and director of legislative services. He also is a gardener and recently welcomed a labradoodle puppy into the household, his first dog. Walton said his first few weeks with the town have been positive. "It's been excellent. I've really enjoyed meeting all of my colleagues, meeting

the council and the senior management team. Excellent people and very committed," he said. He gave kudos to Colleen Hutt who has been serving as acting clerk since Peter Todd was fired by the town last summer. "She has just taken on the burden and I am just so impressed with her." Walton said beyond getting to know his team and the flow of the town he is looking forward to the return of the supper market at The Village, something he and his wife would routinely go to when he worked for the region. "It was an awful lot of fun. You could go over there and meet people and have wonderful food," he said.



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PIXABAY PHOTO

## A March Break Tea Party to go

Staff  
The Lake Report

Calling all kids and those young at heart.

The Niagara-on-the-Lake Museum and the Friends of Fort George has put together a March Break Tea Party for next week.

Participants can enjoy afternoon tea with family and friends thanks to some special tea party packages.

Each package costs \$15 and includes instructions on how to make the perfect cup of tea, a half-dozen cookies from the Fort George Bill of Fare cookbook, a scone and jam, historic recipes to try at home, special activities and a gift from the Fort George and museum gift shops.

Packages can be ordered online through the Niagara-on-the-Lake Museum ([notlmuseumshop.square.site/](http://notlmuseumshop.square.site/))

and the Friends of Fort George ([friendsoffortgeorge.square.site/](http://friendsoffortgeorge.square.site/)). Final orders are due on Monday, March 14 at 5 p.m.

Packages can be picked up from the museum at 43 Castlereagh St. on March 17 or 18 between 1 and 5 p.m.

Proceeds from the event will support student summer employment opportunities at Fort George and Brock's Monument.

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Photos of Tom Rooney (Cyrano de Bergerac), Julie Lumsden (Gaslight) and Shane Carty (Damn Yankees) by Peter Andrew Luszyk.

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Virgil's iconic fair could be returning in 2022. RICHARD HARLEY/FILE

## Virgil Stampede *likely* this year

*Continued from Front Page*

one he had spoken to is willing and wants to host the stampede, but he did not want to commit to it before the group had gotten together to formally discuss it.

He hopes an official announcement will come next week.

Meanwhile, chatter on social media is pointing toward the stampede being

nigh on inevitable.

"You bet we are," Phil Leboudec, a VBA member and owner of Phil's The Independent Grocer in Virgil, wrote on Facebook in response to a post from Dianne Cowland asking about the stampede.

The comment garnered lots of likes and love reactions.

Leboudec wrote he had already booked the pony rides and fireworks for the

beloved May long weekend event.

"The highlight of the year! Glad it's coming back," Nancy Vanderheide-Voogt wrote on the post.

The event was last held in 2019 before the coronavirus pandemic began.

"Fantastic. Our family will be so excited. Thx," Carol Fawcett wrote.

Stay tuned for an official announcement from stampede organizers soon.



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10:00am - 11:00am on Thursday, March 24

1:00pm - 2:00pm on Wednesday, March 30

Registration is required to attend. Please email us at [info@notl-ambassadors.ca](mailto:info@notl-ambassadors.ca).

If you can't make it to either of these, you can still get involved. Contact us!

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Left: Patricia Haftar with her painting on display at the Niagara Pumphouse Arts Centre. Centre: Tim Sullivan with his painting of Lake Ontario as viewed from his NOTL home. Right: Lynne Gaetz with two of her painting on display now at the Pumphouse Art Centre. **Find more pictures of the artists' work on Page 18.** EVAN SAUNDERS

## NOTL artists join forces to **raise town's profile** as visual arts centre

Evan Saunders  
Local Journalism Initiative  
The Lake Report

Niagara-on-the-Lake is celebrated for many things. It has one of the strongest theatre scenes in North America thanks to the Shaw Festival and its culture and history are at the forefront for many.

But resident artists feel the town offers more by way of visual arts than it gets recognition for.

Thus the Niagara-on-the-Lake Arts Collective was formed last year.

"The arts collective is a way for us to bring more awareness to the visual arts in Niagara-on-the-Lake," Niagara Pumphouse Arts Centre chair Lise Andreana said during a reception celebrating the collective's exhibition on Sunday.

"We're known for arts and culture but more for the theatre and the historical basis. So, this is a way to make some room for visual artists at the table."

The collective was es-

tablished so NOTL artists have a way of promoting and supporting each other, she said.

"To be honest, I was a little disappointed that there wasn't more support for the fine arts here," resident artist Lynne Gaetz said.

"I come from Cambridge, where the city paid for an arts centre, they paid for a studio tour. Things that weren't being done here," she said.

"Our collective would like to see the fine arts become one of the draws for the region."

One of the ways to accomplish this is through a robust promotional campaign. The collective has social media accounts across several platforms and encourages people to check out its website, NOTLartscollective.com, to learn about members, purchase art pieces and keep an eye on upcoming events.

Joanne Morandin is the social media purveyor for the collective.

Morandin is taking classes at the Pumphouse and one day her pieces may be exhibited as part of the collective.

She said the Pumphouse and collective are more than worthy of her time to help them raise awareness.

**“It creates a more diverse, more resilient and more economically viable area for all of us.”**

LISE ANDREANA  
CHAIR  
NIAGARA PUMPHOUSE ARTS CENTRE

Anyone interested in joining the collective needs to be a professional artist, a gallery owner or a curator with some ties to NOTL, Andreana said.

Gaetz said she usually tries to represent a specific emotion in her paintings.

"What I really try to do is try to have a strong emotion that's obvious

and evident in the work," said Gaetz, who has been living in NOTL for a little more than a year.

One of her pieces on display featured a rising tide of water slowly consuming a montage of images representing modern culture.

"I was really thinking about climate change, rising water when I did this," she said.

Tim Sullivan said he uses the natural beauty of NOTL to find inspiration for his paintings. He had one on display, a view of Lake Ontario from his home on Firelane 2.

"We're close to the lake. It's part of my morning view," he said.

Sullivan said he had been painting his whole life but his retirement in NOTL turned it into a full-time passion.

"One thing led to another and I was so struck by the beauty of this area — being close to the lake and the vineyards and orchards — it's just quite overwhelming," he said.

"It was a hobby that quickly became something I loved doing."

Sullivan was open about the creative process.

An artist makes "a lot of trash stuff, too, that doesn't make the cut," he said.

"You might think it's terrible but somebody else might think it's interesting. They might get it."

Borrowing a Bob Rossism, Sullivan said, "There's always lots of happy accidents" when creating.

Lord Mayor Betty Disero was on hand and in a brief speech said she hopes to commit more town resources to promoting NOTL's visual arts scene.

"The town, for me, is serviced well in promoting performing arts and our cultural heritage," she said.

"But I don't believe the town spends enough time or effort promoting visual art or promoting how blessed we are with the many artists in our town that work on many different types of mediums."

Disero said the town had recently been in discussions with the Pumphouse, the public library, the Niagara-on-the-Lake Museum, RiverBrink Art Museum and the Niagara Parks Commission on how to better celebrate its artists.

"I keep saying this and I will continue to say this, you are the soul of our community and you bring us life and richness that we could not get if you weren't here."

Andreana noted that "Having an art collective in our town supports the growth of arts and culture for both residents and visitors alike. It strengthens our creative economy and helps support both individual artists and art organizations."

"It creates a more diverse, more resilient and more economically viable area for all of us."

The exhibition is on display in the Joyner Gallery at the Pumphouse until March 22. The collective will be putting up new pieces at the beginning of April, Andreana said.

  
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Artistic director Tim Carroll said the death of former director Christopher Newton was a personal blow as Newton had been a strong supporter of Carroll's work at the theatre. SUPPLIED/SHAW FESTIVAL

## Despite pandemic, Shaw posts **\$114,000** surplus

Evan Saunders  
Local Journalism Initiative  
The Lake Report

The Shaw Festival celebrated its fifth consecutive financial surplus in 2021 despite pandemic limitations.

"Notwithstanding these restrictions we've been working under, in 2021 we managed to realize a fifth consecutive surplus," outgoing chair Peter Jewett said during the company's annual general meeting on Friday.

"This is actually an incredible achievement produced by the hard and dedicated efforts of the whole Shaw team."

Jewett has been the chair of the board since 2017. He is stepping down this year and Ian Joseph will be taking up the mantle.

Niagara-on-the-Lake's beloved theatre company ended the year with a surplus of about \$114,000 on revenue of \$26 million. That total was up from \$24 million in 2020.

The four main revenue drivers were COVID-19

grants of \$7.7 million, fundraising of \$7.3 million, pandemic-related insurance payouts of about \$4.4 million and earned revenue of \$3.8 million.

The main expense for the company was by far the production and artistic categories at \$12.6 million.

"Announcing another consecutive year of operating surplus during a pandemic is a remarkable feat and everyone at the Shaw should be very, very proud," treasurer Greg Prince said.

But it wasn't the high mark the treasurer was hoping to see.

"Despite all best hopes, 2021 did not see a return to the normality of 2019," Prince said.

For perspective, the company's earned revenue was more than \$21 million in 2019, versus \$3.8 million in 2021.

Prince thanked the government and private donors who made the year possible.

Executive director Tim Jennings celebrated the company's work, noting it resulted in "North America's largest season of

live theatre" for 2021.

"It was a momentous season, even for a normal year, which it most certainly was not," Jennings said.

"In the end, though, we managed 445 live performances (but we did lose 303 scheduled performances."

"With each loss this team would push, again and again, to add another piece and devise some new and exciting program to reconnect us with each other."

"It was truly remarkable," he said.

The inventiveness of the staff was also celebrated by associate artistic director Kimberley Rampersad, who said one of her highlights for the season was "revisiting the outdoors."

"Particularly, for me, revisiting the Duke Ellington 2.0. Being able to see everybody outside, being able to see all of the audience members with a little more safety was really, really special," Rampersad said. "It's so beautiful out here."

The series was a highlight for artistic director Tim Carroll as well.

"It was so magical that I sort of forgot I was the boss for a bit," he said. "Listening to amazing jazz music with the beautiful setting. It was kind of perfect."

The virtual meeting included a tribute to former artistic director Christopher Newton, who held the post for 23 seasons and died in 2021 at the age of 85.

Carroll said losing Newton was a personal "blow." "He had been a great supporter of me ever since I got here," Carroll said.

In total, the festival attracted more than 48,000 attendees throughout the year.

It also held 2,300 educational events which were attended by 54,000 people in person and digitally.

The 2022 season marks the company's 60th year in operation and is already well underway.

The Shaw's production of "Cyrano de Bergerac" by Edmund Rostad starts on March 20. Tickets are available at <https://www.shawfest.com/whats-on-tickets/>.



## RIDDLE ME THIS

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**Answer: Noon**

**Answered first by: Terry Nord**

**Also answered correctly (in order) by: Mary Ann Enns, Margie Enns, Pam Dowling, Wade Durling, Ted Wiens, Sheila Meloche, Rob Hutchison, Sara Corbett, Maria Janeiro,**

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# Two Sisters opening **new winery** near Garrison Village

Evan Saunders  
Local Journalism Initiative  
The Lake Report



Two Sisters Winery has a new location planned for the corner of Niven Road and Niagara Stone Road. EVAN SAUNDERS

Two Sisters Winery is expanding its operation with a new vineyard along Niagara Stone Road.

Stone Eagle Winery is being planned at the southwest corner of Niven Road and will focus on producing “ultra premium wines,” estate sommelier Dieter Unruh said during a public meeting about the development on March 2.

“Stone Eagle is really intended to build upon and elevate the success that has already been experienced here at Two Sisters,” Unruh said.

Co-owner Angela Marotta also spoke about the expansion.

“We recognize the potential here to continue to raise awareness about beautiful, high-quality wines on a national and international scale,” Marotta said.

“Our team’s primary focus and Stone Eagle Winery’s principal use is the farming and production of wine,” she said.

“Our secondary use at

Stone Eagle Winery is the education and retail sale on premise of the wines produced.”

Marotta said the company’s goal is to build “a winery that will become another beautiful landmark in the region, using the highest standards in construction and material with classical architectural details.”

The property is roughly 40 acres and the planting of vineyards is already un-

derway, planner Mary Lou Tanner said.

The main building will cover more than 40,000 square feet, according to drawings shared during the meeting.

The building will include a restaurant, tasting bar, regular bar and a retail space. There will be covered verandas on the flanks of the structure.

Behind the winery and directly attached is the pro-

duction facility, covering around 24,000 square feet.

Tanner noted the company wanted to be as transparent as possible in sharing building details and noted there will be 142 parking spaces, more than required under the town’s bylaw.

The winery is looking for zoning changes to allow connection to the municipal sewer system.

To hide the production

facility from street view, the owners also are requesting a variance so the winery can be taller than normally allowed, Tanner said.

Architect Bill Hicks said the driveway off Niagara Stone Road would be lined with trees and designed to represent a classic winery style found around the world. There will be a central green space in the parking lot, he said.

Lord Mayor Betty Disero attended the meeting and asked the Two Sisters team whether they had checked the height of surrounding winery buildings to ensure they would be in a compatible range.

Tanner said they had not but would be sure to provide that information at an open house scheduled for April 4.

Unruh touted some of the accolades Two Sisters has received in its eight years of operation.

In 2021, its Chardonnay was awarded a gold medal as one of the best in the world in the Chardonnay du Monde competition in France.

“Arguably the world’s most prestigious Chardonnay competition,” Unruh said.

The winery also received a gold medal for its sparkling wine at the World Sparkling Wine Championship in the United Kingdom for 2021, he said.

“The reputation that Two Sisters has managed to establish in such a short period of time is truly an incredible accomplishment,” he said.



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# Snowblower jockeys **conquered** this year's epic snowfalls



## Ross's Ramblings

Ross Robinson  
Columnist  
The Lake Report

winter might not be done with us yet.

Walks have been so refreshing, with so much snow, really cold weather and so much sunshine. Evening walks, wearing warm reflective winter gear, of course, offer the advantage of looking in windows.

Chiropractors are no doubt busy, helping "slip and fall" victims. Darned ice under a dusting of snow. It happens so fast, and hopefully not while walking alone.

Instead of remembering the ongoing global deadly pandemic or Putin, let's call this the Year of the Snowblower. Despite several major dumps of snow, local driveways not only were cleared promptly, but the edges looked like the boards of a hockey rink. Smooth, almost sculptured, like a perfectly trimmed hedge in the Hamptons, or #4 green at the NOTL Golf Club.

Even as the last snowflakes are drifting down, satisfied NOTL snowblowers stand back and admire the results of their toil, feeling satisfied and a bit macho. Time permitting, many of them nip over to

They're everywhere. They're everywhere.

Is it just me, or has there been a dramatic increase in snowblower usage this winter? So many driveways and sidewalks have been groomed to perfection so soon after the last snowflakes landed.

This has been such an authentic Canadian winter, especially for someone who grew up in Kirkland Lake and Winnipeg. Real snow dumps and really cold weather.

With recent rain and mild temps, most of the snow is gone. But beware the Ides of March – spring may be around the corner but



Joseph Neufeld uses his snowblower and his sister Sarah-Joy has a shovel to dig out a happy resident in the Chatauqua neighbourhood. KEVIN MACLEAN/FILE

clear the snow at a neighbour's house. What's a fair compensation? A tuna casserole? Four tallboy cans of Oast House Barnraiser?

There has been lots of chatting between folks and snow blower operators. "The Leafs are a sure thing this year. I am sick and tired of wearing a mask and watching TV." I suggest that many locals have met many locals for the first time this winter, while walking a dog or finishing up with the snowblower.

And, isn't it nice that Husqvarnas and other

machines are muffled and fairly quiet? Unlike power lawn mowers and those gawd awful leaf blowers?

Next winter, let's copy the plowing matches that farmers enjoy each summer all over Ontario. It would be unique and such fun to have a snowblowing match in Ryerson Park, with prizes for straightest snowblowing and best figure eight. And while we're at it, a snowman competition for the youngsters and families.

This winter, I have learned a new word. "Windrow." That's what snow-

plows create at the edge of sidewalks and the end of driveways. Our NOTL roads department has done yeoman work this winter, but, of course, many cranky residents were chagrined that their street and sidewalk didn't get plowed first.

The plows and crews were everywhere, but obviously they couldn't be everywhere at the same time. Atta-boys and thanx.

Having said that, on the evening after the first major snowfall, Jan. 17, I think, I was out for a very slow drive around town. Many sidewalks were already cleared, but at the major intersection of King and Queen, pedestrians were stymied by snow piles at least four feet high. Unpassable. Other Queen Street corners presented the same frustration. No way to get by for most of us without crampons and ropes.

For no other reason than that I had nothing else to do, I drove out to our arenas in Virgil. Highway 55 was totally clear, as was Creek Road. The rinks were still closed, but the parking lots were snowflake free.

Totally clear. Same with the areas around the town hall and the works department. Perhaps for good reason, but those optics are bad.

Rambling now to a close, I will limn the ultimate snowblower event of the winter. The morning after the first big snowstorm in January, our secondary street had not been plowed. At about noon, I went for a walk in the fairly deep snow. What I saw was so wonderfully Canadian.

Three determined and well-meaning neighbours had organized themselves and were snowblowing in formation. Three abreast! Like you see on the QEW or the 401 during major snowstorms. With each pass down the street, they were clearing a swath about five feet wide.

After several passes down our 400-metre street, it was passable. All they need for next time is flashing blue lights on their toques.

Cheers to snowblowers. And cheers to the snow blowers.

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# Jr. A Predators expect **tough first-round** playoff series

Kevan Dowd  
Special to The Lake Report

Three straight wins meant a strong finish for the Niagara Jr. A Predators' debut season – and secured third place in the Greater Metro Hockey League's southern division ahead of the playoffs.

An 8-0 final last Friday night at home and 9-3 finish on the road Saturday, both against the Tottenham Thunder, followed by a 4-3 road win over the Plattsville Lakers Sunday, means the Predators face the sixth-place Lakers in the first round of the postseason.

Turning away an incredible 75 shots, Niagara goaltender Iain Riordon blanked Tottenham Friday night, with Reese Bisci netting three goals – two in the first period and his final in the third. Additional goals from Alexander Page, Alexander Insulander, Pontus Madsen and Alexander Andrews in the second period and recent draft Mackenzie Okumura in the third made for the 8-0 win.

"I said, 'Whatever you do, you can't play them as



The Niagara Predators start their playoff run this week. KEVAN DOWD

if they're last place,' " said Predators head coach and owner Robert Turnbull.

"Everybody skated hard, everybody worked hard. Overall I was pleased, we weren't looking to score more goals, we were looking to move the puck and improve our transition game."

Showing no sign of slowing down the following night in Tottenham, the scoresheet was littered with Predators' players including a pair of tallies each for

Bisci, Georgy Kholmovsky and Brendan Morin as well as singles for Okumura, Andrews and Dante Massi.

"Friday and Saturday the boys were moving the puck really well – Saturday especially – and I think they've really figured out communication on the ice," said assistant coach Sam Marson. "They just really played together well as a team Friday and Saturday."

In a major case of déjà vu, Niagara beat the Plattsville Lakers 4-3 in a shootout

Sunday, a week after they last met and lost 4-3 in a shootout.

This time around, Plattsville took an early two-goal lead after 20 minutes but Niagara bounced back in the second period with a penalty shot goal by Insulander eight minutes in and a tying goal from Kholmovsky at the 14:45 mark.

Plattsville regained the lead halfway through the third but in true nail-biting fashion, a pulled goalie and extra man led to a third

goal from Insulander with less than 30 seconds left on the clock. Overtime settled nothing but a single shootout goal from Madsen meant a 4-3 finish and three straight Ws.

"Luckily this time it came out in our favour," said Marson. "That game we started off pretty slow but we built up some momentum in the second period with a power play goal scored by Alex Insulander."

"Both teams had their chances but neither put it through and then we put it through in a shootout which was nice to see."

The Predators now enter the first round of the playoffs, a best-of-three matchup against Plattsville that started Wednesday, March 9, on the road with a "home" game in Port Colborne.

Both Turnbull and Marson are optimistic going into the playoffs but know there will be challenges including being short key goal scorers such as Mario Zitella and Noah Capercione due to injuries.

"We know Mario's not going to play and we know

Noah isn't going to play for at least two weeks," said Turnbull.

"It's going to be very difficult for us to get through the first round so I'm pretty sure I'm going to have to bring a defenceman up and we're going to need solid goaltending to advance. As long as we improve our communication and they talk to one another, it doesn't matter who we play, it's going to help us improve."

Marson also thinks the injuries will pose a challenge but is confident in her team.

"I just think that because we've been shorthanded the past few games we still have the team to beat them, if the boys play the game like we know they can, they can pull it off," she said. "I know we have the team we need for the playoffs to take it all the way if they really want to."

Due to unavailability of ice at the Meridian Credit Union Arena in Virgil, the Predators' second playoff game will be in Plattsville Friday night. If necessary, a third game will be scheduled to determine the series winner.



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**ARTS & ENTERTAINMENT**

# NOTL artist wins global award

Maddy Gordon  
 Special to The Lake Report

NOTL resident and Canadian musical artist Priya Litt has been honoured as one of the bronze medal finalists at the Global Music Awards, a prestigious international music competition based out of La Jolla, Calif.

Her song “Green Tara Mantra” received honours in the female vocalist and song categories, alongside “Om Mani Padme Hum,” which was singled out in the new age and emerging artist categories.

Litt, one of 17 Canadian winners, is proud of her achievement.

“I feel very honoured, very grateful. I’m very thankful for receiving this. It’s a very prestigious award,” she said.

The Global Music Awards judge entries based on the creativity and quality of the music, two prominent aspects of Litt’s discography. With the utilization of euphonious melodies and a mesmerizing voice, Litt says she tries to create positive energy through music that touches people all over the world.



Priya Litt. SUPPLIED

Collectively, Litt’s songs have amassed millions of streams, plays, views and downloads over many platforms.

“Spreading the positive energy, the love, the joy, the happiness, that inspires me to make music.”

This has not been her only recognition. Recently, Litt won the “Best World Song” at the Clouzine International Music Awards, for “Green Tara Mantra.”

“You’re going up against so many amazing musicians, and to be a part of it and to receive honours and the four medallions, it’s amazing.”

It’s one thing to be able

to spread your positivity through art, but it’s another to be recognized for your hard work, she said.

As for the future of Litt’s music career, she has every intention of continuing her craft, and to keep sharing her positive energy with the world.

“Now more than ever, the world needs more positivity and good energy,” she said.

Litt credited Prashant Singh for his work mixing and mastering her music.

To listen to her music and follow along her musical journey, you can visit [www.priyalitt.com](http://www.priyalitt.com) and her Instagram, @priya\_litt.



## Collective art

Niagara-on-the-Lake’s visual artists are sorely underrepresented in the municipality, which is why some of them have banded together and formed the NOTL Arts Collective. Here are four works of art on display at the Niagara-on-the-Lake Pumphouse Arts Centre by artists with local connections.

Top left: “Alizarin Daydream” by Ron Boaks. Top Right: “Tangonisma” by Ron Clavier. Bottom left: “Fire at Will” by Nancy Wardle. “Tranquility” by Susan Holly.

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## Origami cranes for essential workers

Staff  
The Lake Report

Essential workers have been exposed to the dangers of COVID-19 throughout the pandemic – all to ensure the community’s health and safety.

They put their own well-being on the line so that critical services and operations continued.

To honour these unsung heroes, an art installation featuring colourful origami cranes will be on display at the Niagara-on-the-Lake Community Centre.

An opening reception will be held on March 24 at 2:30 p.m., marking the two-year anniversary of COVID lockdowns in Ontario and across Canada.

The project started in early January when the Niagara Pumphouse Arts Centre team invited people in the community to join them in creating 1,000 origami cranes to honour essential workers.

This well-known tradition originated in Japan and promises to grant a wish to anyone who folds 1,000 cranes.

“We have had incred-



Paper cranes will line the community centre.

ible community support, with volunteers coming in droves to participate in this project,” said Pumphouse director Rima Boles. “It was inspiring to hear stories of neighbours, families and friends folding cranes together in-person or online.”

The next phase of the project involved securing a fitting venue for the exhibit. In collaboration with staff from the Town of Niagara-on-the-Lake, the community centre was selected for the art display. With the help of volunteers, the paper cranes will be assembled to be hung by the windows of the community centre.

“When the exhibit opens, we invite everyone to see the remarkable and stunning

origami cranes on display that represent the collective effort of many volunteers and organizations,” said Boles.

“Fulfilling the legend of the crane, the assembly during the opening ceremony will make a wish for the end of the pandemic,” she added.

Lord Mayor Betty Disero said the project sends a “wonderful message” to the community.

“I am looking forward to seeing all of the origami cranes displayed at the community centre, including the 50 made by CAO Marnie Cluckie and me. It is my hope that community members will look upon these cranes and reflect on the dedication of all essential workers throughout this pandemic.”

The art installation is scheduled to run through April 7.

After the show ends, the Pumphouse hopes to find new homes for the paper cranes.

The public is invited to nominate an essential worker or organization to receive a strand of origami cranes from the exhibit by sending an email to [office@niagarapumphouse.ca](mailto:office@niagarapumphouse.ca).

## Museum explores Shaw Festival at 60

Staff  
The Lake Report

The next virtual lecture hosted by the Niagara-on-the-Lake Museum brings together the “academic and the actress.”

The Shaw’s resident scholar and literary adviser of the Bernard Shaw estate will be in conversation March 16 with ensemble alumna member, Barbara Worthy, celebrating, debating, and remembering 60 years of one of the world’s great theatre companies.

Together they will reminisce on the highs and lows of the Shaw Festival, its enormous impact on Niagara-on-the-Lake, and the personalities and performances that have made it one of the world’s great English-speaking theatre companies.

Leonard Conolly brings substantial academic credit to his role. He is the past-president and vice-chancellor of Trent University, holds degrees from four universities around the world, was professor of English at the universities of Saskatchewan, Alberta, Guelph and Trent, and has authored



Brian Doherty, founding producer of Shaw Festival. SUPPLIED

more than 60 articles and 20 books, including many about Bernard Shaw.

He also founded the L.W. Conolly Theatre Archives at the University of Guelph, the largest collection of Canadian theatre archives available, and one of the world’s most important collections of Bernard Shaw material.

Worthy has had a long-term relationship with the Shaw, from acting in the Christopher Newton company, directing and writing under Jackie Maxwell, teaching during the Tim Carroll years, as well as producing the Bell Canada Shaw Festival Series for a decade with CBC Radio.

And apart from working with the NOTL Museum, she has since produced a long list of historical documentaries, with a special focus on the Niagara region.

Join the conversation and travel down memory lane with Conolly and Worthy on Wednesday, March 16, at 11 a.m.

The final lecture in the NOTL Museum’s winter virtual series is on March 30, when local author and researcher David Hemmings explores “Heritage Homes of Niagara.”

All lectures start at 11 a.m. and registration is required. Visit [www.notlmuseum.ca](http://www.notlmuseum.ca) for more details.

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# Have some fun



**Across**

- 4. Fit out (5)
- 9. Release (7)
- 10. Capital of Tibet (5)
- 11. Sift (5)
- 12. Italian little one (7)
- 13. Covered with water (5)
- 14. Thin fogs (5)
- 17. One or the other (6)
- 18. Receiving device (6)
- 19. Gemstone (4)
- 20. Separated (6)
- 22. Vast (6)
- 25. Inspires dread (4)
- 26. Best (6)
- 29. Swordsman (6)
- 31. Forest god (5)
- 34. River horse (Abbr.) (5)
- 35. Doctors (7)
- 36. Obscure road (5)
- 37. Chocolate ingredient (5)
- 38. Place in order (7)
- 39. Pertaining to the kidneys (5)

**Down**

- 1. Unsustainable boom (6)
- 2. Curved sword (8)
- 3. Long-haired cat breed (8)
- 4. Derby venue (5)
- 5. Consumers (5)
- 6. Make happy (6)
- 7. Adventurous expedition (6)
- 8. Universal in extent (8)
- 15. Irreverence (7)
- 16. Baby powder (4)
- 20. Prediction (8)
- 21. Individual facts (4)
- 23. Capsize (8)
- 24. Tubular pasta (8)
- 27. Themes (6)
- 28. Line on a weather map (6)
- 30. Dared (6)
- 32. West Welsh seaside resort (5)
- 33. Saudi Arabian currency (5)

## Crossword Puzzle

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Last issue's answers

J	G	C	M	A	B	O	U							
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		9	7		5
	2	6		1	4





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# Newest space telescope could connect us to Earth's **past and future**



**DR. BROWN**

Dr. William Brown  
Special to The Lake Report



James Webb space telescope mirror. NASA/DESIREE STOVER

The James Webb space telescope was launched with much fanfare on Christmas Eve to take up station a million miles from Earth, where the gravitational forces of the sun, Earth and moon acting on the telescope cancel one another out.

Twenty-five years in the making from conception to launch, this technological marvel has two main goals over the next decade. The first is to understand the role of dark matter and black holes in the creation of the first generation of stars and galaxies about one million years following the Big Bang.

Hubble, the famous predecessor to the Webb telescope, was by design, ill-equipped to explore this

very early period because Hubble was designed to detect visible light signals, not light signals stretched into the infrared range by the early, expanding universe.

For precisely that reason, the Webb telescope was expressly designed from the outset to pick up the faintest signals in the infrared range, while carefully avoiding any extraneous signals in that range created by the sun, moon or Earth

by covering the back of the telescope with a gigantic tennis-court-sized shield, pointing the collecting face of the telescope away from those celestial bodies and taking extraordinary steps to avoid any signals in the infrared range being generated by the telescope itself.

The result is a masterpiece of engineering well capable of exploring the early universe.

The second goal of the

Webb telescope is to step up the search for planets that might support life in the Milky Way and beyond – not blisteringly hot such as Venus or too frigid like the outer planets in our solar system – and possessing the right mix of life-friendly elements. The latter include hydrogen and oxygen (think water here), carbon, nitrogen, phosphorus, sodium, potassium, chloride, calcium, magnesium, copper and iron.

Carbon is the one element, which, more than the others, is most capable of forming stable, but not too stable, bonds with other elements essential to carbon-based life and without which RNA, DNA, proteins and other organic compounds would not have been possible. In that sense, carbon is the matriarchal bond-making element. The other essential, of course, is water – preferably in liquid form.

However simple they look compared to nucleated cells, bacteria and archaea are far from simple. They possess complex developed energy systems and hundreds, sometimes thousands, of genes. That complexity

must have taken hundreds of millions of years – perhaps even a billion years or more – to evolve and make the simplest cell complex.

But however chancy it may have been, life on Earth from the simplest to the most complex is living proof it can happen. And if life developed here, given the math and the laws of physics and chemistry, why not elsewhere?

Current conservative estimates suggest there are roughly 300,000 planets in our Milky Way alone that could support life. Given other estimates that there might be as many as two trillion galaxies, the math suggests there could be many trillions of habitable planets.

That's a staggeringly huge number and strongly suggests to me, at least, that even if the chance of life emerging on any "life-friendly" planet was as low as one in a billion or perhaps as chancy one in a trillion, that still leaves a lot of planets with life, if not now, then in the past or in the future. And if that's true, we are definitely not alone.

Which leads me to

conclude that life probably exists in many places in the universe, even if, as was the case for almost two billion years on Earth, only at the single cell level.

Of course, the big question is whether life might have evolved or will evolve to achieve an intelligence akin to or exceeding our own. To which, again the numbers suggest, why not?

That's a question the Webb telescope and studies yet to come might help to solve in our continuing search to better understand an enormous expanding universe of which Earth is but a tiny, tiny part of the whole.

Humans are, after all, a compulsive story-creating and storytelling species. By far the greatest story ever told might turn out to be the discovery of carbon-based life beyond our pale blue planet, as Carl Sagan so elegantly described Earth three decades ago.

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

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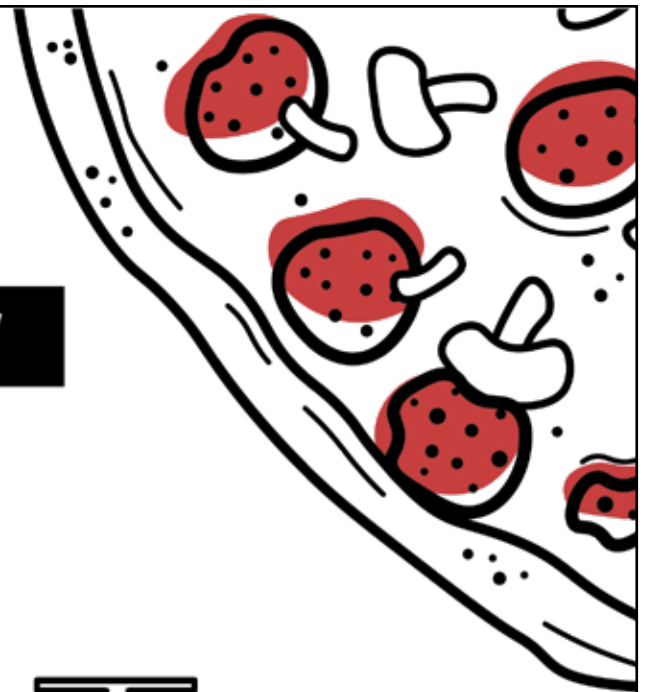
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# EXPLORING PHOTOS

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## The Pumphouse

The 1891 Pumphouse on Ricardo Street, shown on the right of this c.1904 photograph, is a fine example of industrial architecture in Niagara-on-the-Lake. Built during the late 19th- and early 20th-century boom period, the pumphouse supplied the town with water from the Niagara River until 1983. The steam pumps also generated electricity for the growing town. The lighthouse is seen on the left side of the photograph. Both buildings still stand today. The pumphouse is a wonderful example of adaptive reuse of heritage buildings in our community as many of us enjoy the displays and programs of the Niagara Pumphouse Arts Centre.



ARCHITEXT

### 'Cellular' neighbourhoods

Brian Marshall  
Columnist

What can be done with cities that have grown based on automobile dependency?

Sprawling across many square miles, we have created urban environments that have little (or nothing) to do with community. Your friends are not often your neighbours but rather people at the other end of a car trip between your home and theirs.

Gone are the neighbourhood mom-and-pop stores and businesses subsumed into centralized retail centres serviced by roads and highways.

Gone too are local schools, rinks and parks; children are bused to school or driven by their parents

while rinks and parks are not for simple play but rather complexes devoted to organized activities that people get to by car.

Is it really any surprise that today, more often than not, the word social is only heard in the context of social media?

As slaves to our automobile culture we have created vast sterile seas of suburbia in which each house is an isolated island and public transit, whether by rails or wheels, is woefully inadequate because we have cars, don't you know.

Today our cities face a dilemma in housing. The cost of housing, driven by practical limitations of distance and an increasing shortage of developable (in the traditional format) land, has risen beyond the means of many first-time home buyers (and others) while at the same time rents have wildly escalated to consume a significant portion of average take-home pay.

But cities cannot be viable without this demographic nor without the contribution of new immigrants.

In the last 60 years we attempted to answer this growing problem with densification in the form

of highrise condominium towers, essentially a vertical expression of sterile suburbia.

And while this worked for a while to provide dwellings for young singles or couples, it is extraordinarily challenging to raise a family in a 450- to 700-square-foot cubicle in the sky, particularly when the stressors inherent in high-density environments are multiplied by the absence of any form of integrative local community.

So, if going out or up doesn't work, how can cities find a solution to this growing problem?

To partially answer that question it behooves us to look at city neighbourhoods built before the domination of the automobile (many of which are still viable communities today).

Many old European cities can loosely be described as "cellular" in nature. Each "cell" has a radius often no greater than a 10- to 15-minute walk from its core (and sometimes much smaller).

At that core is a central square (piazza, plein, plazuela, praca, etc.), which often has both stores and open-air vendors.

Many of the buildings (often 2.5 to five storeys tall) along the streets and laneways leading out of the core are mixed-use, for example with a shop, bistro, cafe below or at grade, above which are dwellings ranging from flats to multi-storey family homes.

Each of these cells is a walkable distinct neighbourhood which today is commonly serviced by public transit along the shared neighbourhood periphery.

These neighbourhoods work because each has a relatively small population encompassing a range of income levels, are walkable, mixed-use buildings promote social interaction, the central square forms a venue for community socialization and many of the residents' daily needs can be met inside the neighbourhood.

As our cities rethink their viability for the next 100 years, this cellular neighbourhood concept drawn from our past should be front and centre in their planning. And indeed, it should be enfolded in Niagara-on-the-Lake's future vision as well – because the creep of failed suburbia is happening here.

## Looking to the Stars



### Mercurial Mercury exercises its influence

This week, Mercury leaves Aquarius for Pisces.

**Thursday, March 10:** Yesterday, Mercury entered Pisces and our thinking, communication and interactions will become more Piscean in nature. Mercury is the "I only believe in what I can see, feel and touch" planet – and so in Pisces. Mercury can have difficulties staying factual and concise. If you want clarity, wait for Mercury to move into Aries later this month. But if you love magic and metaphors, if you thrive in subtlety, if you want to "see" what's invisible to the eye, then Mercury in Pisces is your transit. Some people, like artists, love the elusive quality of Mercury in Pisces, while people with strong earth or air placements can find it confusing. To make the most of the coming two weeks, immerse yourself into Piscean activities: read, write, watch fantasy movies, keep a dream journal and, most importantly, surrender to Pisces' mysterious ways. Happy birthday to former prime minister Kim Campbell, born March 10, 1947.

**Friday, March 11:** The moon moves into her home sign of Cancer today and is met with stressful requests from both Venus and Mars. A deep breath and a fresh perspective are all that's needed. The announcement of a new pandemic, COVID-19, was made by the World Health Organization on March 11, 2020.

**Saturday, March 12:** The sun in Pisces and the moon in Cancer are in perfect harmony which may make us all a bit lazy. Minor stresses may be more frustrating than problematic. Canada's third prime minister was John Abbott, born March 12, 1821.

**Sunday, March 13:** Today, the sun is conjunct Neptune. Sun-Neptune conjunctions are our opportunity to understand

something about ourselves that is difficult to grasp otherwise. Neptune can expose our blind spots, but also our zones of genius. It rules those parts of ourselves we don't pay attention to, we overlook or we're just oblivious to. When the sun meets Neptune, it shines a light on what's otherwise difficult to see. The result? A more well-rounded understanding of yourself and what makes us human. Percival Lowell, the astronomer who discovered the planet Pluto, was born March 13, 1855. I always thought Pluto was named for the Lord of the Underworld. Or Walt Disney's cartoon dog. But perhaps we should credit Percy Lovell.

**Monday, March 14:** With the moon in Leo all day, opposite both Mars and Venus, tension is front and centre stage. Do something that encourages pride and watch life come back. It was March 14, 1879, in a small town called Ulm in Germany that Albert Einstein was born.

**Tuesday, March 15:** No two energies could be more unlike than the moon and Saturn. Today they argue. At its worst, it's a stalemate. At its best, it's a clever solution to a stubborn problem. It was March 15, in the year 44 BC, that Julius Caesar was murdered by seven senators on what was known as "the Ides of March." Greta Thunberg began her protests against climate change on March 15, 2019.

**Wednesday, March 10:** As we get closer to the full moon on Saturday, the moon, moving into Virgo, offers stress and tension. Relax and breathe – and adapt where you are able. It was March 16, 1985, that the great hockey star, Eddie Shore, died.

**Bill Auchterlonie's podcast, Looking up to the Stars, is at [www.lutts.ca](http://www.lutts.ca).**

*Astrology is a form of entertainment, not a science.*

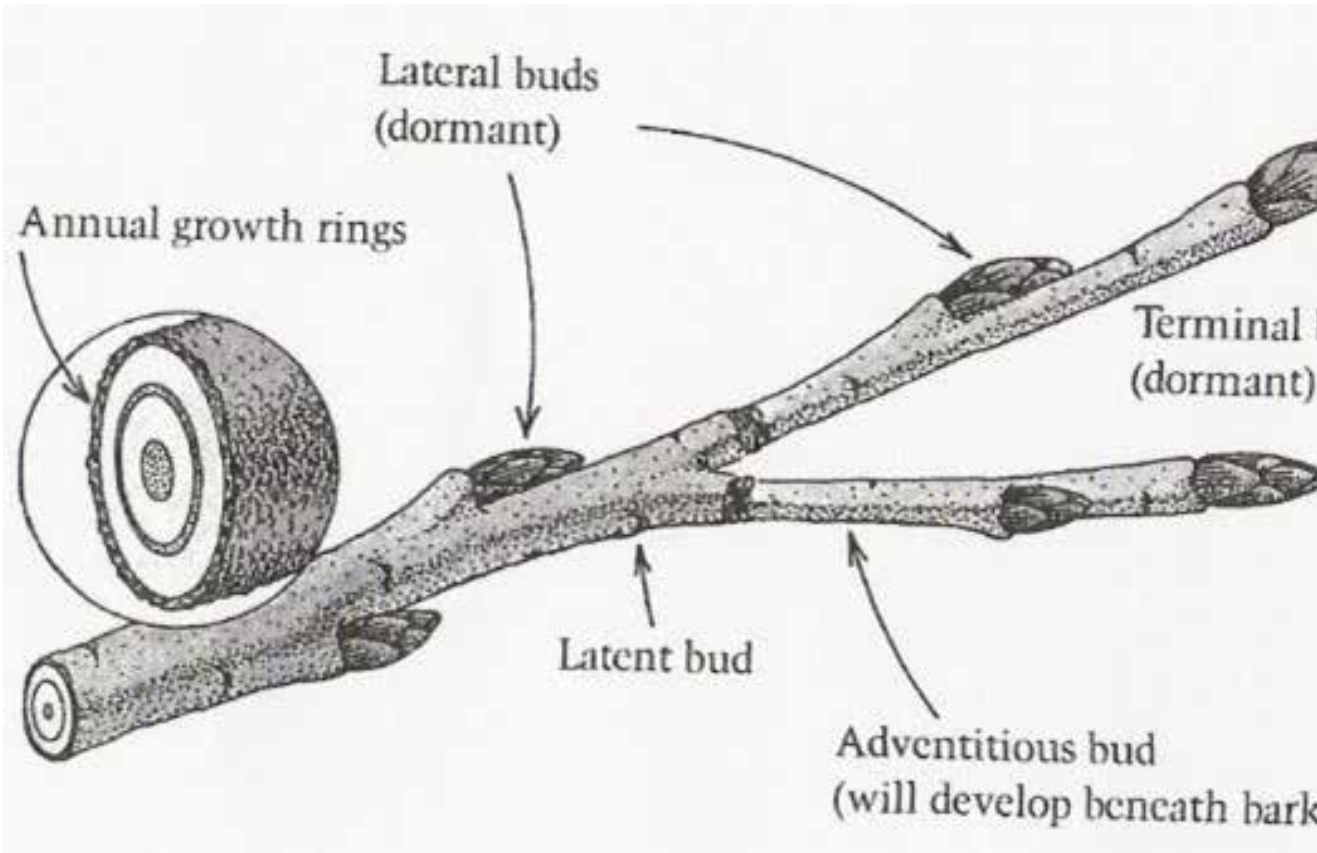
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## For best results, follow the science behind pruning



**GROWING TOGETHER** 

Joanne Young  
Garden Columnist

To prune or not to prune?

One of the first chores that we attack in our gardens each spring is pruning, but I find most people are not quite sure how to prune properly. Knowing the proper pruning times and techniques can make all the difference.

Pruning promotes flowering, reduces pests and diseases and contributes to the plant's overall health, all while helping it maintain an attractive shape. The longevity of a plant is determined by how well it has been pruned over the years. To understand pruning better it is important to first understand how a plant grows. Here are three scientific facts to help us out.

**FACT #1:** There are four types of buds found on any branch: terminal buds, lateral buds, latent buds and

adventitious buds. The terminal bud (a.k.a. the apical bud) is found on the tip of any branch.

The lateral buds form during one growing season and remain dormant until the next growth period when they grow into stems, leaves or flowers. New leaves emerge first from the terminal buds then the lateral buds.

Not every bud grows into a branch, leaf or flower, though. Some buds on young twigs remain inactive for many seasons. These are the latent buds, which are the plant's insurance. Should a branch be cut off or broken above a dormant latent bud a new shoot can quickly develop.

Adventitious buds develop where no buds previously existed. These sometimes grow after a branch is wounded or cut back to mature tissue. These are different in that they develop close to the branch surface from deeper mature tissue.

**FACT #2:** All plants grow from the tips, or to put it more scientifically, all plants go through a phenomenon called apical dominance.

There are many different shapes of plants available to choose from. Some are more upright, some are round and some grow flat to the ground. But what causes

plants to grow into different forms?

All plants produce a hormone in the terminal buds known as auxin. This hormone suppresses the growth of the other buds, signally them to remain dormant. The hormone is strongest at the tips so the buds closest to the terminal bud are stunted the most. As the auxins move farther from the terminal buds the buds are less stunted, causing more growth to occur.

This hormonal effect determines a plant's branching pattern and its response to pruning. A pyramidal plant produces more auxin than a low-growing plant. When you prune off the terminal bud, the growth patterns become drastically altered.

The science of pruning lies in understanding the growth pattern of plants. If you remove a terminal bud, it releases the lateral, latent and adventitious buds from the growth inhibition caused by apical dominance.

Many of the buds behind the pruning cut sprout into branches; where one stem once grew, now a cluster of stems may emerge. If you are trying to maintain a certain shaped plant, special attention must be taken as to how you prune.

**FACT #3:** As we go into autumn, plants go dormant and the leaves start to

turn beautiful fall colours, but what we don't see is what is going on inside the plant.

All summer, the leaves have been storing up food from the sun in a process called photosynthesis. As fall approaches, all this stored energy starts to move from the leaves, down the stem and back into the roots by late winter.

In the spring, that same energy (food) then moves from the roots, up the stem and forces out new leaves. If this whole process did not occur, a plant, when it dropped its leaves, would lose all its stored energy, resulting in a weakened plant.

As temperatures start to warm up in the spring and we start to tap maple trees to collect the sap to make syrup, we often say "the sap is rising" – and that is exactly what is happening. The plant's food is rising from the base and into the branches. This is what forces out the new leaves.

Knowing all this, the best time to prune most deciduous shrubs is late dormant period to early spring (March to early April) before the new leaves emerge.

Next, we will look at some general rules of pruning deciduous shrubs.

Joanne Young is a Niagara-on-the-Lake garden expert and coach. See her website at [joanneyoung.ca](http://joanneyoung.ca).

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