



Variant cases rising as predicted, Hirji fears return to lockdown

Richard Harley
The Lake Report

Niagara's chief medical officer of health has consistently warned that COVID-19 variants are likely to climb based on federal and

provincial estimations – and that the province shouldn't have reopened early.

Now Niagara is starting to see those variant cases rise, just as Dr. Mustafa Hirji and other scientific experts predicted.

Two weeks ago Niagara public health had confirmed six cases of the variant in Niagara. As of Wednesday, 82 variant cases had been recorded in the region, up from 40 a week earlier. Niagara-on-the-Lake

had nine active COVID cases but it is not known if any are variants.

"Over 30 per cent of our cases in the province are now variant cases and (it's) heading towards reaching a point where they perhaps

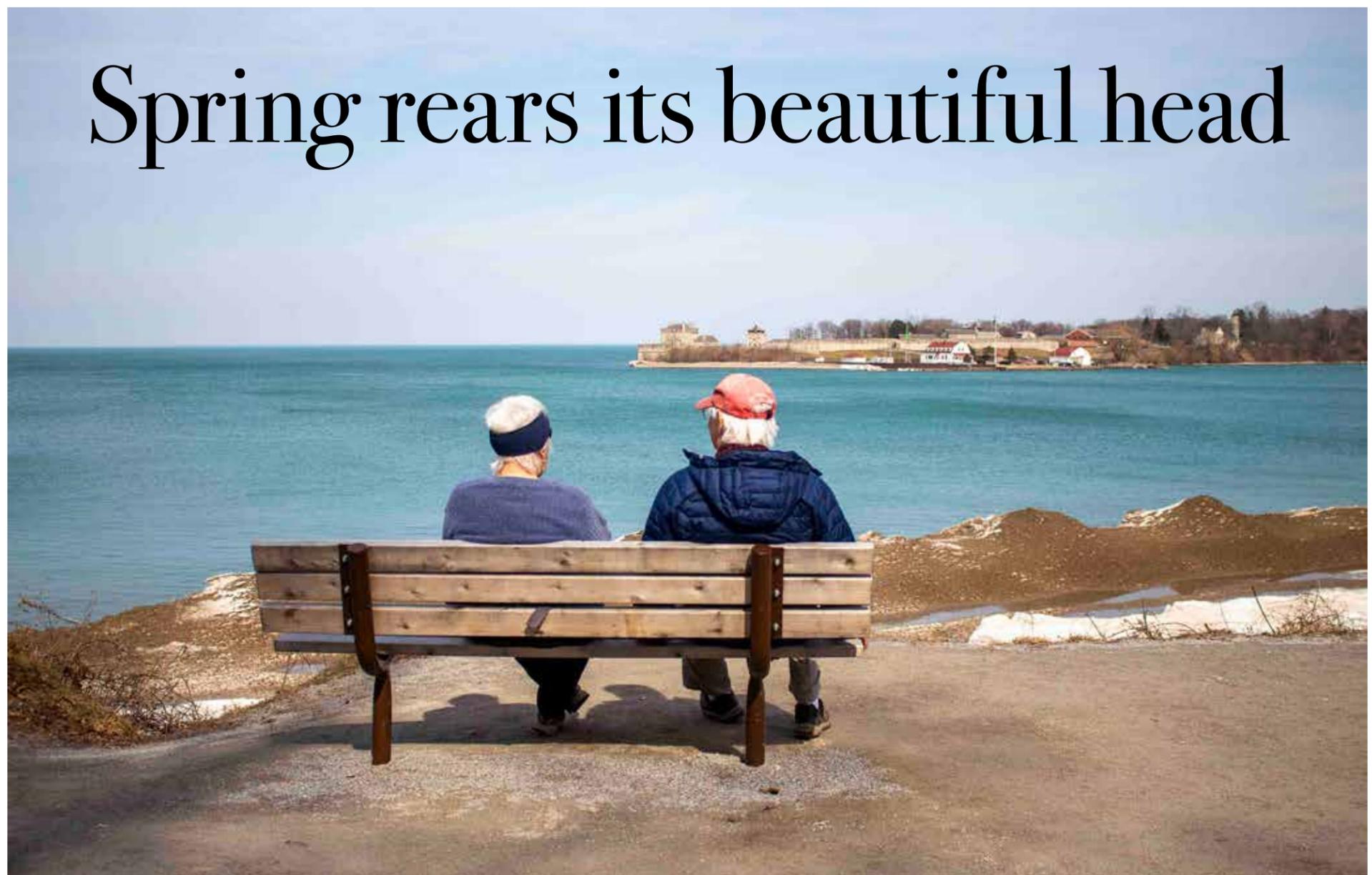
start to dominate," Hirji told a media conference Monday.

He said the growth in variant cases, mainly the B.1.1.7 variant originally discovered in the U.K., is "really tracking what we're seeing in other countries

around the world" as variant cases start to climb globally.

"And I showed in previous weeks, the U.K., Netherlands had huge third waves linked to variant cases. And we

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Spring rears its beautiful head

Niagara-on-the-Lake residents Chris and Dave Lansley look out over the mouth of the Niagara River on Wednesday, as winter temperatures finally subside. Below, the lake ice melts quickly, creating pools of water. See our "Lion in winter" essay on pages 10 and 11 for a look back at the changing lake through the winter months. RICHARD HARLEY

NOTL to get \$427,007 in additional COVID funding

Evan Saunders
Special to The Lake Report

Niagara-on-the-Lake is receiving \$427,007 from the province to help cover COVID-related costs.

The provincial grant, part of more than \$500 million the government announced it is doling out to municipal-

ities, will arrive in two installments, one by May 1 and the second by Nov. 1.

The province determined the amount each municipality would receive based on COVID case counts and measurable impact on town operations, Monday's committee of the whole meeting was told.

"The formula they used across the whole province was a fair formula," Lord Mayor Betty Disero said in an interview on Tuesday.

The mayor noted the money is intended for "our expenses from COVID," but was reluctant to commit to spending it in specific areas. She wants to wait for a

full report from the town's emergency control group on where the money is most needed "before the council starts spending any of it."

"There will be an obligation from the town to provide some assistance to the department of health



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Council considers 30 per cent reduction in short-term rental fees

Evan Saunders
The Lake Report

Councillors approved plans on Monday to consider ways to aid NOTL's ailing short-term rental industry after a presentation by John Foreman, president of the Niagara-on-the-Lake Bed & Breakfast Association.

Foreman asked for a 30 per cent reduction in short-term rental licence fees for 2021 and for owners to be allowed to delay paying their 2021 fees without penalty until they are able to determine whether they will open for the season.

He also asked to amend council's newly created short-term rental committee, to add a representative from the Bed & Breakfast Association. His concern was that there was not enough representation on the committee from members

of the industry in NOTL.

Council's committee of the whole voted almost unanimously to add the two new members, Claire Cronier and Rene Brewer, to the committee, despite it creating an imbalance of industry representatives and regular residents. Council's original goal had been to create a committee with equal representation.

The recommendations for reducing licence fees are to be considered this week by town staff, with a report to come back March 15.

In an interview on Tuesday, Coun. Norm Arsenault, who sits on the short-term rental committee, said he's "not totally opposed" to decreasing licence fees, but thinks it needs more discussion.

"My main concern is the budget," he said.

Foreman also briefed councillors on some of the stark

financial troubles that he said short-term rental owners are experiencing.

According to Foreman, most of NOTL's short-term rental market made 20 to 30 per cent of their regular yearly income during 2020.

"In my own case, bookings were down 82 per cent from the previous year," he told councillors.

Although vaccines are providing a glimmer of hope for 2021, he worries that the industry will still suffer.

Even with lockdowns lifted, rental owners need to operate with social distancing guidelines in place, which means reduced capacity, and that severely limits the ability to generate income, Foreman said.

"One thing I can tell you for sure is that there will be less B&Bs in Niagara-on-the-Lake at the end of the

pandemic than there were at the start," he said.

Arsenault said reducing licence fees would be a challenge and that some of the money is already accounted for.

"We hired Host Compliance this year to help us out with various aspects of a new bylaw that came into effect last December. So, some of those expenses have already been paid for and that money's allotted to pay for this company," Arsenault said.

"If that money's not coming in from one place, it's got to come from somewhere else."

Foreman also took issue with a town bylaw that regulates licence renewals for short-term rentals. Under the bylaw, owners waiting to have their licences renewed are not allowed to operate,



John Foreman asks council for a reduction in short-term rental license fees for 2021. SOURCED

accept bookings or advertise. That is problematic because licence renewals have been backlogged for months due to the pandemic, preventing businesses from booking customers until May, he said.

"Normally, licence renewals would have been processed before the expiry of the current licence in the previous year," Foreman said.

"Our request is that STRs awaiting processing of their licence renewal application be allowed to operate while their application is being processed. This seems only fair."

Chief administrator Marnie Cluckie responded that senior management

had already agreed to allow short-term rentals awaiting licence renewals to continue operations, but "hadn't been able to communicate that effectively yet."

"It's a technicality that's being fixed," Arsenault added on Tuesday.

Coun. Gary Burroughs said he was happy with adding two more members from the short-term rental industry to the committee.

"As a member of the committee that met last week, it's a terrific committee, and everybody's quite willing to participate. I think adding two more will only make it a better committee," Burroughs said.

NOTL to protect trees from development

Evan Saunders
The Lake Report

Niagara-on-the-Lake council is taking steps to prevent the destruction of healthy trees on municipal property.

Councillors unanimously passed a motion by Coun. Sandra O'Connor that says the town will "strive to protect and preserve (healthy) trees" on municipal property from destruction due to development.

"We've had a couple situations where some of us have been disappointed (about) a tree on a municipal property having to come down," Coun. Allan Bisback told council.

The vote clarifies the language and policies in bylaw 1873-17, which regulates the town's ability to protect trees on public property, in order to ensure the town can enforce the protection of healthy trees.

In an interview, O'Connor noted the economic and ecological importance of trees for Niagara-on-the-Lake.

"They do raise property values," she said, "so from



The Town of NOTL clears trees for its own development at the community centre in June 2020. FILE PHOTO

an economic perspective it is better."

"But it's so much more than that," O'Connor said. "They clean our air, they provide oxygen, they cool our houses down in the summertime, they provide absorption of water to prevent flooding issues and major runoff, and they provide shelter for birds and animals. So, for all these variety of reasons, trees are very important to us."

O'Connor also noted the importance of trees from a heritage perspective and

of recognizing and protecting mature trees. "If they're healthy," she added.

She stressed the town will use qualified arborists to provide reports on the health and safety of trees and said the town had no interest in maintaining trees that are at the end of their lifecycle or are hazardous to the buildings and people around them.

The motion also says "Applicants must be willing to work with the town to preserve and accommodate existing healthy trees and

may be required to alter their proposed driveway locations and home designs where reasonable."

"It's very important for us to define what reasonable is," O'Connor said.

"If there were a large number of mature trees in front of the whole lot, then perhaps one might have to come down to enable entrance to it," she said. Those details will be refined with staff over the next few weeks and will be outlined in the bylaw document.

The motion also deals with what happens if tree removal is allowed for driveways or home design.

"The owner will be required to pay for a tree to be planted along the frontage of the property," the motion says.

The town has a list of approved trees that can be planted along streets.

If none of those trees are suitable due to placement of utilities or because they obscure the sightline of the road then the owner will "have to contribute an (undetermined) amount to the town's tree fund," according to the motion.

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'We're in a race to get vaccines into arms': Hirji

Continued from Front Page

may be on that trajectory," Hirji said.

He said the province's science table advisers have predicted next week variant cases will make up 40 per cent of all COVID-19 cases.

"And that'll probably continue to grow from there," he said, adding variants will soon be the dominant number of cases.

As those variant cases climb, non-variant cases are beginning to come down provincially, Hirji said.

However in Niagara, both cases of variants and non-variants are rising.

Similar to the provincial numbers, Niagara's variant cases make up about 30 per cent of all cases, Hirji said.

"So even without the variants, it looks like cases are starting to go up here in Niagara. So obviously, that's not a good trend to have."

He said it's likely cases are rising because of Niagara's quick reopening, which he had warned was too soon.

"More people are going outside of their home, recreating, shopping with

retail open again. And that, of course, is likely leading to more interpersonal interactions and more chance of infection spreading. That's probably partly a driver of why we're seeing those cases go up."

More people were staying home during the lockdown "and that seems to have deteriorated again."

Other public health regions are seeing similar patterns, he said.

The big concern is that if cases start to rise rapidly, "the proportion of five per cent or so who are going to need ICU care or that 15 to 20 per cent who might need hospital care will start to be taken from a larger number of overall cases."

He said hospitalizations came down after the first wave in 2020, but have not fallen significantly since the second lockdown.

"It's come down and flattened out, but we never really brought it back down to a low level. So if we do unfortunately end up with a third wave, we would be starting from a point where hospitalizations, ICU oc-

cupancy is already pretty high," Hirji said.

"And that is going to I think be a concern in terms of the pressure on our health care system, and does make it more likely that the province would be forced to have a third lockdown in order to make sure our health care system doesn't become completely overwhelmed."

He reiterated what he's been saying for weeks: people need to continue to stay home except for essential reasons and to stay six feet apart.

The one saving grace that could protect people is vaccinations, he noted.

While people over 80 are next on the list for vaccines, most hospitalizations are among people in the 60 to 79 age bracket, as well as a "big chunk" of people in their 40s and 50s.

"We're in a race to get vaccines into arms," he said, adding it's going to be a while still before those most at risk of hospitalization are immunized.

"I don't know vaccination is going to be enough to get us to the point where we

can avoid seeing a surge of hospitalizations."

The "good news" is deaths are coming down, as most deaths were among long-term care residents, who have now been vaccinated.

That might mean "when we go through that third wave, we won't see the really terrible number of people passing away," Hirji said.

The main goal is to speed up vaccinations and he said there are a couple of ways that could happen.

First, he said, is that more vaccines have now been approved by Health Canada, including those from Johnson & Johnson and Astra-Zeneca.

He said he's hearing vaccine shipments will start to increase by the end of March.

As well, "we are stretching out second doses of vaccines later than they previously were. So instead of giving that second dose three to four weeks later, it'll now be four months later, which means that three weeks from now, people who would be getting their second dose

won't get it, and those doses can actually go into new people to give them their first dose of protection."

He hopes that means people can get their first vaccine shot twice as quickly.

The initial doses have proven to be extremely effective and Hirji hopes regional clinics across Niagara will be "up and running" by March 22.

The province's registration system for vaccines is supposed to open March 15, and people over 80 can start to book their vaccinations.

Because Niagara has been labelled one of 13 "hotspots" for COVID-19 in the province, the region should be getting more vaccines, he said. In December and January, Niagara wasn't considered a hot spot, which contributed to vaccines being delayed, he added.

Public health is continuing to vaccinate health care workers this week, as well as the Indigenous community and people in retirement homes.

Identified hotspot areas in Niagara that will be prioritized include homeless

shelters and the agricultural sector.

He said while there's "been some chatter" about Niagara being behind in receiving vaccines, in reality, the region is "keeping pace" with other areas.

As far as delivering vaccines, he said Niagara is "actually a little bit above the provincial average."

What makes Niagara seem like it's having a slower rollout is the high number of seniors and people in long-term care homes, he said.

"The big story though, to me, around vaccinations, I think goes back to the threat of variants and whether we'll be able to get enough vaccine and be able to deliver it fast enough that we can get ahead of this curve," he said.

He urged people to continue to stay home other than for essential purposes, "really only for another couple months" while the vaccines are rolled out.

"By the time you get to summer, those vaccines will make sure that we don't see this kind of increase, and we can be past the risk of any sort of third wave."

Council unsure where money is needed most

Continued from Front Page

with respect to the vaccine rollout," she said. "I suspect, although I don't know for sure, that some of the money will go towards that. But I don't want to do any pie-in-the-sky wishes until we know for sure."

While \$400,000 is a helpful cash injection for the town, Disero noted she didn't want the money from the province to "preclude my desire to work with the minister of tourism to try and get some additional help for our tourism industry and our wine industry that has been badly hit by this pandemic."

During a committee of the whole meeting Monday, Coun. Erwin Wiens expressed concerns that the town is incurring extra costs to train officers to enforce provincial and regional laws governing COVID-19, and wondered if there will be



NOTL is getting \$427,000 from the province. FILE PHOTO

any funding to specifically address that.

"It's costing our taxpayers a lot of money to enforce provincial laws," he said. "Are we looking at getting any sort of remuneration from the province or the region to offset the costs?"

Chief administrator Marnie Cluckie said it's unclear if there will be money for that but said she would look into it.

The funding comes as the region is gearing up for increased vaccine distribu-

tion. The NOTL Community Centre on Anderson Lane has been designated as the vaccine distribution centre for NOTL, the committee was told.

There are 11 other vaccination centres across Niagara, "strategically located so that no resident has to travel further than 15 minutes to receive a vaccine," Cluckie told councillors.

With Niagara Region now considered a hot spot for COVID, there will be increased shipments of

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NOTL active cases: 9
Region active cases: 224
Region deaths: 369
Region total cases: 8,814
Region resolved cases: 8,211
Region variant cases: 86

*Mar. 10 data per Niagara Region Public Health



Contributed by Patty Garriock
 "Keep looking up ...
 that's the secret of life."
 - Charles M. Schulz

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Editorial

Use the proper channels to make change

Richard Harley
Editor-In-Chief

Canada is great. And one of the reasons is because we're able to live freely as long as we do so within a reasonable set of laws.

After last week's Lake Report story about hunter Randy Norris, who has legally been hunting coyotes in Niagara-on-the-Lake for decades, many readers were vocal in saying they don't agree with sport hunting.

And The Lake Report agrees. It seems like senseless killing. If farmers do indeed need coyotes culled to protect livestock, there's evidence to suggest non-lethal methods of controlling livestock predation are more effective. Some

of those methods include guard animals, fladry, chemical repellents and protection collars.

In fact, there's even evidence to suggest killing coyotes as a form of control can lead to compensatory breeding, actually making the problem worse. Some scientists suggest coyotes will increase their litter size by when the population is threatened.

"In an unexploited population, you might have two or three survive. But when you exploit or kill a coyote population, you ensure the survival of almost the entire litter," says Robert Crabtree, founder and chief scientist of Yellowstone Ecological Research Centre and coyote advocate, in a video for Project Coyote.

Another article from National Public Radio, suggests though the U.S. government culls tens of thousands of coyotes annually to protect deer populations, that it isn't the most effective way. Some states have even made it mandatory to include non-lethal approaches to managing coyotes.

Nature works in mysterious ways.

But even though emerging science suggests killing coyotes isn't an effective means of control, what we don't agree with is people actively seeking out confrontation with coyote hunters or calling the police every time they're seen doing something that's legal. The arguments likely won't lead anywhere positive and

amount to a waste of police time, because they have to show up to every gun-related call.

Instead, anyone who doesn't agree with coyote hunting should take their concerns to elected officials and use the proper channels to try to make change.

Use the science and bring your voice to the table in a meaningful way. Wasting police time is not going to get anyone anywhere.

And if you spot someone trespassing on your property, gather evidence. Film a video, rather than creating confrontation. Real evidence could greatly help in laying charges against potential trespassers. But, until then, police can't do anything.

editor@niagaranow.com



Our leaders need to launch economic recovery now

Dear editor:
This is an open letter to our government leaders. As we transition back to normalcy post COVID-19, as a result of the proposed accelerated vaccine roll-out, it is not too early to begin and announce "Canada's economic recovery program" to jump-start the ailing economy.

Priority number 1 within this program must be the tools to revive the small business community, which has been devastated by the revolving lockdowns. This, of course, must happen in concert with much broader goals addressing infrastructure upgrades, revised tax structures, accelerated capital equipment write downs, etc.

For decades, governments

and economists have proclaimed the importance of a robust and vibrant economy to pay down mounting national debt. Simultaneously they quote the undisputed fact that small business is the engine of any strong economy and the leading contributor to employment growth.

In 2019, Canada had 1.23 million employer businesses, of these 1.2 million or 97.9 per cent were small businesses. Government financial support to date has simply kept individuals and businesses on life support. These programs have not been stimulus funds but they have prevented what clearly would have been a deep and prolonged depression and afforded

us the luxury of a more rapid recovery to full employment.

Therefore the time is now, not later, to fashion our aggressive economic recovery plan. Let's not drag our feet by procrastinating and thereby repeating the COVID-19 vaccination roll-out train wreck and become the laughing stock of the world for a second time.

On April 30, 2020, in a letter to this newspaper I suggested: "A global post COVID-19 economic recovery plan would require one similar to the European Recovery Plan after the Second World War, commonly known as the Marshall Plan, on steroids."

President Joe Biden has announced the second of such massive expenditures –

\$1.9 trillion – to jump-start the U.S. economy. Prime Minister Justin Trudeau is the consummate rear-view mirror driver, a follower never a leader. Perhaps he will follow Biden and announce his plan as a precursor to an early election. Without it, he is toast. Hopefully, it will include his 2019 and 2020 reneged promises to seniors re: CPP and OAS increases.

Politicians of all parties, get your collective heads together in concert with our brilliant and best business leaders and get this plan in place ASAP. Leave your egos at the door. Not promises – action. As the adage goes, "Plan your work and work your plan."

Samuel Young
NOTL

We welcome your letters

The Lake Report welcomes your letters to the editor. Please, write early and often. Letters ideally should be under 400 words long. Occasionally, longer letters may be published. All letters may be edited for conciseness, accuracy, libel and defamation. Please include your full name, street address and a daytime telephone number so that authorship can be authenticated. Only names and general addresses (eg. Virgil, St. Davids, NOTL) will be published. Send your letters to editor@niagaranow.com or drop them by our office at 496 Mississauga St., NOTL.



Coyote on the prowl. SUPPLIED/PIROSKA BACSO

Coyotes are a beautiful, valuable natural resource

Dear editor:
I am writing in response to your March 4 article, "Hunter says hobby is legal, needed."

Coyotes, as top-of-the-chain predators, are an essential part of our natural system. They are responsible for the control of vermin and other smaller animals, which if not kept in natural balance by predators become, in the least, an annoyance, and at best, a health risk.

These animals will become a destructive force when their numbers rise because the natural balance is disrupted. Killing coyotes does not bring a balance to nature, but it certainly sets the course for problems down the road.

We need only look to Niagara Falls, which has been struggling with rat infestations for years because the rat population has exploded unchecked. It is not only urban centres that will struggle with overpopulation of vermin: look to barns housing animals and feed, and you will find the same problems. Left to predators, these problems are positively controlled.

I have lived in Niagara for 20 years and have come across the "sport" of hunting coyotes. Let us be clear that these animals are set on the run by hunting dogs fitted with tracker collars, followed by their handler through GPS signal, and when they all meet in an open space, the coyote is shot.

This can be a road, which was my experience a number of years ago, or, it may be neighbouring, "non-sanctioned" farmland. Animals do not observe legal property boundaries to

make it tidy for the hunter who is determined not to trespass onto unsanctioned land to kill. These individuals have, in my experience demonstrated their lack of respectfulness of private property by absolutely trespassing while in pursuit to "harvest" the animal.

Given the staggering numbers of 30 to 60 coyotes shot and killed by one hunter per season, we are losing these valuable animals at an alarming rate. To leave the bodies to rot, though apparently illegal, certainly happens, despite the claim that they are skinned and the remains left for carrion scavengers.

I recall last year the discovery of a fair number of dead coyotes dumped on an embankment along the Niagara Parkway. I have, myself, seen bodies also dumped on the embankment of the Queenston boat launch upper parking lot, and my dog sniffed out a dead coyote, in an untied garbage bag, in the bushes approaching the same parking lot.

It is unbelievable the viewpoint individuals who pursue this "sport" appear to put forth: that they are respectful do-gooders for our community who are bringing a balance in the animal population.

It is difficult to come to terms with these animals being killed "... for a Saturday or a Sunday to enjoy our day." Seeing the dead coyotes dumped, en masse, is appalling and certainly does not engender a respectful mindset of anything.

Mr. Norris infers that many coyotes carry mange and can infect dogs. Sar-

coptic Mange poses a threat to all mammals but is completely treatable; and to this point a dog, under veterinary supervision, is able to be successfully treated for mange whereas the coyote, not benefitting from the same treatment will die of starvation and organ failure. All mammals infected with the parasite can spread the affliction on, not just the coyote.

Hunter Randy Norris, quite rightly, says Niagara-on-the-Lake is considered rural and as such, we have these wild animals in abundance. Coyotes do not make a distinction between wild, farm or domestic animals, and will hunt, unselectively, an easy target.

It is the responsibility of every animal owner, whether a farmer or urban-dwelling dog and cat owner, to ensure their animals are safe at all times. We are charged with understanding the dangers to our animals in the places we live.

Not owning to this responsibility leaves only ourselves to blame in the event coyotes kill our animals. To blame the coyote, even go so far as to suggest that the solution to the "problem" of coyotes is to eradicate them is absurd. Perhaps the farmers are unaware that livestock-guarding dogs such the Great Pyrenees or Maremma breeds are a bold and strong defence – dogs suited for just this purpose: guardians of livestock against predators.

According to your article we have more deer these days, in part due to the hunters' efforts to bring balance. Could it be that the avarice of the devel-

oper who seemingly builds every square inch of land in our area, plus intensive agricultural practices, which have eliminated the natural habit for animal residents, forcing them further into more human-occupied space, are the cause of the perceived increase?

A trip to the Niagara Parks Botanical Gardens might suggest they are increasingly becoming problematic given the permanent fencing that has been installed throughout the gardens to keep the overrun of deer from destroying the plantings. Deer numbers have become a problem, one which the coyotes are well adapted to solving.

Finally, your article informs the reader that the coyotes are hunted between late December until the second week in March. Coyotes mate from January through to March with a gestation of 60 days. This will put the birth of the pups between mid-March and mid-May. The overlap of the first two weeks into March can see a pregnant female shot and killed – and then a den of newborn pups can starve because their mother has been the resultant fatality of a Sunday afternoon's enjoyment for some.

Man in his infinite wisdom believes he knows better and our intervention in nature has never shown, in the long run, to be of benefit. Coyotes are a beautiful and valuable resource, one we should respect and be thankful for.

We must preserve, unfettered, their right to live among us.

Angela Ondruska
Queenston



We will win against COVID – keep wearing your mask and checking in on loved ones

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International Women's Day: Let's continue the work of those who fought for equality

The following message from NOTL Lord Mayor Betty Disero, Deputy Lord Mayor Clare Cameron and chief administrator Marnie Cluckie was issued to mark International Women's Day on March 8.

Opportunity is a hopeful word. We all want opportunity.

Opportunity for a job, a home, a life with meaning. Throughout history, women have had the additional burden of fighting for the opportunity to have equal rights.

For the rights we hold today, we owe a debt of gratitude to many who have

made notable strides over more than 100 years, to break through the glass ceiling of equality.

On this day, March 8, as we celebrate the social, economic, cultural and political achievements of women and girls, we also recognize the work that still needs to be done.

Every time we see a woman volunteering to help their community, running for public office, on stage in front of a microphone, leading a campaign for change, opening a new business, or excelling in their field, we are encouraged that women are making their mark.

getting their recognition, finding their opportunity.

We are amazed when we see the enthusiasm of the young women on the lord mayor's youth advisory council. We see these young leaders using their voices and harnessing their power and we want to help in any way we can, so they don't have to struggle to be considered equal in all respects.

Their love of people, the planet and this town gives us solace that our future is in good hands.

So here is the challenge to women and allies: While we struggle to find our place and make a difference in

our lifetime, let's bring others with us.

Let's look beside and behind ourselves and help raise one another up. Let's make sure there are opportunities for all women, including Indigenous women, Black women, women of colour, transgender women and those people who do not identify as any gender.

Wherever we can, let's be a mentor, a friend, a supporter. Let's continue the great work of those who came before us, so the next generation does not have to struggle to find their opportunity.

Together, we are stronger.

Critical letter was house shaming

Dear editor:

As the owner of the other house I presume Dr. William Rodriguez referred to in his letter to the editor in the March 4 edition of The Lake Report as being "out of place" and to "not reflect the heritage" of NOTL, I have no issue with his argument for a heritage conservation plan for NOTL.

However, I would like to point out that it is unfair to single out my and my neighbours' houses when there are a number of houses on that same street, on adjoining streets, and in the "downtown" proper (all of which were built prior to the

two singled out), that could be deemed to not reflect the heritage of NOTL.

Dare I say our sin seems to be that we've had modern houses built (again, not a precedent in NOTL). To single out two houses among many, not to mention providing a photo of one of them with a terrible caption, is disingenuous and mean-spirited.

In my opinion, this letter was not worth publishing as it does not promote constructive dialogue and serves no other purpose than to house-shame.

Edith Morber
NOTL

Appalled by hunter's 'hobby' of killing

Dear editor:

I was appalled by the article on coyote hunter Randy Norris, ("Hunter says hobby is legal, needed," March 4).

It is rather difficult to agree with or have any sympathy for anyone who actually looks at killing as a "hobby."

Perhaps culling the coyotes is necessary. However, there should be some control in place by the Ministry of Natural Resources. I feel that open season all year and no tags required is a travesty.

Of course, the hunters do not eat the meat! Then ... how many pelts can they have hanging in their hunting rooms?

Perhaps now we have some idea how the coyote carcasses appeared along the Niagara River

last winter. Leaving them anywhere in the woods for other creatures to devour is neither an intelligent nor a responsible way to dispose of the remains.

Do the hunters have permission to do this on private property? Or do they just dispose of them on public lands?

With the ongoing development in Niagara-on-the-Lake and the cultivation of former naturalized areas, the habitat for our wildlife is being diminished significantly. Leaving control of the coyote population to a group of hunters, without informed guidelines, is a mistake.

It's a conundrum for sure. Obviously we will just have to agree to disagree!

Jane Calver
NOTL

Killing coyotes is trophy hunting

Dear editor:

Further to your story, "Hunter says hobby is legal, needed," (March 4), about coyote hunters in NOTL:

They do it for sport? It would only be a sport if the coyotes could fire back.

Nice hobby. There are much more positive hobbies than just killing for the fun of it.

The practice of killing an animal simply to show off its head and pelt or sell it for profit is nothing but trophy hunting.

Most of the general public worldwide is against this. The comment about people "calling his group thugs" is an accurate one.

John Watt
Elaine Tanner
NOTL



NOTL resident Janice White captured this photo of a red-tail hawk on the NOTL golf course. SUBMITTED/JANICE WHITE

Dr. Robin Williams recognized in ceremony

Richard Harley
The Lake Report



Dr. Robin Williams. SUPPLIED

COVID-19 has wreaked havoc around the globe, but it also has united women in the pandemic battle, Dr. Robin Williams says.

The Niagara-on-the-Lake physician spoke at an International Women's Day event on Friday at which she was honoured for her long, impressive career as a doctor and advocate.

At the virtual gathering, hosted by the Greater Niagara Chamber of Commerce's Women in Niagara council, Williams gave an uplifting speech, outlining some of the work she's done related to COVID-19 and the role women have played in the pandemic.

"We've been through a global fight for survival of humanity and such a cute little red spiked ball that you see on the news all the time, this doggone COVID-19 that has just wreaked havoc with our lives," she said.

"The world has felt off kilter, off its axis. It's like we've been in a worldwide cyclone and I think for the first time in centuries, we are united as women all across the world."

your dreams," she said. "The ones that have been for real in your life, but also the ones that have come from books and films, from your workplace, your teachers, all those who have helped you to see and realize what your potential is."

The St. Davids resident has been a pediatrician, was Niagara's top public health doctor for many years and received the Order of Canada for her career's work.

She now is a special adviser to Ontario's Ministry of Health and served as a special adviser to Niagara's community co-ordination task force for COVID-19 vaccinations.

"Williams comes from a family of physicians, following in their footsteps and obtaining her MD in 1970," said Niagara Region chair Jim Bradley.

Early in her career, Williams was associate medical officer of the newly created Niagara Region and "soon discovered her calling, helping children and their families live happily and healthily," Bradley said.

"She became a pediatrician, and in 1981 opened her private practice in Niagara

Falls. In 1995, Dr. Williams became Niagara's medical officer of health, a post she held for 16 years."

Part of her legacy as medical officer includes the creation of smoke-free zones and non-smoking areas, pre-empting the Smoke-free Ontario Act by years and "saving countless lives from secondhand smoke," he said.

"Dr. Williams was also a driving force behind the creation of the Niagara Children's Charter, which created policies to support children and youth and ensure a healthy future for our region."

He praised her for her work with Ontario children, bringing the Ontario Early Years Centre to Niagara to create a positive environment for children to play, explore and interact, and for her accolades as an educator.

She holds professorships at the University of Western Ontario's Faculty of Medicine and Dentistry and McMaster University Department of Pediatrics. She also recently served as vice-chair of Brock University's board of trustees and is a member of the NOTL Public Library board.

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Ketogenic bakery opens downtown amid pandemic

Richard Harley
The Lake Report

Melissa Woodworth wasn't going to let a pandemic slow down the opening of her ketogenic bakery.

The entrepreneur and mother of four, who officially opened her new business Nola's on the Lake in downtown Niagara-on-the-Lake last Thursday, has ploughed through the norms and managed to create a successful small business during a time of uncertainty.

It's the second bakery location she has opened in eight months, all through a global pandemic, enduring lockdowns and deciphering what that means in multiple regions.

"(We've) kept open, stayed open, kind of tried to share our story and our reasons why with everyone, as much as we can," she said.

"I think the only struggle that we've had is getting our name and our word out there that we're open and that we're here for everyone. I think there was so much confusion with so many different



General manager Hydee Lloyd and owner Melissa Woodworth outside Nola's during their grand opening on March 4. RICHARD HARLEY

regions of what was open and what was not open."

Starting in a pandemic, she went into business prepared to handle a different marketplace and was fortunate not to have to close down her Grimsby store,

Nola's Granola's. "We always kept online open, like online ordering, and our store never closed down, so I don't think we really suffered."

She said her story started when her son Sam, now 19,

was three and began having frequent seizures.

"Back then, alternative medicines weren't a thing," she said. "So he was on different pills and potions and what have you."

"After a series of tests

and biopsies and MRIs and all this, there was really nothing else that the doctors thought that they could do for him," she said.

Afterward a neurologist at McMaster hospital in Hamilton suggested trying a ketogenic diet, which is low in carbohydrates and sugars. It was something that was largely unheard of at the time.

"And this was 15 years ago, mind you, so we started Sam on the ketogenic diet and he did become seizure-free."

Over the course of her son's life, she's wanted to find a way to help people in similar situations.

"I mean the ketogenic diet can help so many people for so many different reasons it's not just for what Sam was cured from."

She says NOTLers have been very supportive since she opened location at 106 Queen St.

"All week the locals have been walking by and knocking on the door and being like, 'How are you' and introducing themselves,"

she said. "I think the community support has been absolutely awesome. And I think coming from a small town and starting off small really helped us in kind of creating a good foundation for what's coming up next."

She said she plans to move to Niagara-on-the-Lake in April to be closer to the store.

NOTL resident Linda Hosty was in the shop on opening day and said she's happy to have a dedicated keto store in town.

"I'm one of those that have been peeking through the windows and hoping that they're opening soon," she said.

Having the option for people who are celiac or need to eat keto for various reasons is a welcome addition, she added.

Her niece has two children who need to be on a keto diet for epilepsy and that keto "is not just a fad."

"This is a need that they're satisfying, as well as, you know, the treats that we don't need but we want."

Most NOTL Airbnbs followed lockdown rules, survey finds

Vicky Qiao
Special to The Lake Report

Almost all NOTL short-term rentals listed on Airbnb followed the rules when pandemic regulations barred them from opening over most of the past three months, a Lake Report survey shows.

After Ontario entered a provincial shutdown on Dec. 26, short-term rentals, including Airbnbs, could no longer be booked for recreational purposes.

According to the provincial guidelines, reservations made after Nov. 22 were not permitted except for urgent housing needs.

As a popular weekend getaway destination, Niagara-on-the-Lake is home to many rentals promoted on the Airbnb platform.

A reporter from The Lake Report, posing as a potential renter, reached out to operators via airbnb.ca to see if the hosts were following the rules.



A two-bedroom bungalow in Old Town is listed on Airbnb. SOURCED

Only two of 20 properties contacted were in apparent contravention of the rules.

Many rentals listed on the website were open for booking, but most hosts said that they could only approve the reservation if the region moved out of the grey lockdown zone. That

designation was in place until March 2.

"We're not sure what announcements will be made and if we will be allowed to operate, but many of our guests are holding the dates then cancelling if we cannot," said Erica, the co-host of a Niagara Vineyard two-

bedroom rental.

The cancellation policy on the website allows users to cancel reservations for free within a certain period of time, which means they can still book and cancel later for free.

"It is probably best to wait until the situation is clearer. Cancellation, although possible, is a hassle," said Ken, the host of Green Gables in Old Town NOTL.

"Hopefully there's clearer information soon. I can't host during a lockdown as I get my licence taken away and you possibly could get fined as well."

The host of Cottage by the Marina, located at 114 Lockhart St., also decided to hold off bookings until March.

"Unfortunately, I am not able to accommodate you due to Covid 19!" said Viorica.

However, not every rental on airbnb.ca seemed to be following the restrictions.

Out of the 20 we con-

tacted, two were accepting bookings for the weekend of Feb. 26.

An Airbnb host identified as Suneet said, "The entire house is available" for booking the week. It had already been booked for Saturday, Feb. 27.

"Pe," the co-host of a vineyard estate near the Wayne Gretzky winery property, said they "would love to host" for a weekend stay.

The host of Vistula Bed and Breakfast, at 672 King St., also said the rental was in operation and available for booking, but only for an "emergency."

When asked about safety measures, she responded that "tourist stay is forbidden but if it (is) emergency or necessity you can book. For details you can go to NOTL city hall."

Rental hosts also were aware that some of their competitors were secretly operating.

"I believe some hosts are

still doing this but can be fined and lose licence ... The restrictions should be lifted after March 2," said Kristina, the host of Southampton House.

Another concern comes from the guest reviews of NOTL airbnbs listed on the website, which feature reviews posted during the lockdown period.

The house hosted by Suneet, for instance, has two reviews posted in February and five in January.

Although the review section does not say when people visited, it does raise the question whether some airbnbs might have been housing guests during the shutdown.

Many hosts were frustrated and anxious for reopening.

"We are so upset. Despite having low numbers, our region is staying in grey and unable to accept reservations at this time," said Erin, the host of a bungalow in NOTL.

The restaurant has been

One year later: \$5 mask stand still operating

Richard Harley
The Lake Report

A year ago Rachael Danieluk joined a group of NOTL women to start making masks for front-line workers.

After that project came to a close, it evolved into her own homemade mask shop at the end of her driveway, which is still operating 12 months later as the pandemic continues.

"There were about 60 of us. We were making masks and donating them to front-line workers. And then I decided to see if the community wanted to buy them, so I put a little tent out here," Danieluk said in an interview at her East and West Line home.

"I thought it would only last for a few weeks, but here I am a year later."

Danieluk's shop, which started off as a tent, has evolved into a small sun-room where anyone can stop in and purchase a homemade face mask for \$5.



Rachael Danieluk stands in front of her \$5 mask stand on East and West Line. RICHARD HARLEY

She said she has "regular customers" who stop in to buy masks and she's selling about 20 to 30 per week.

People have even come to know the shop as the "\$5 mask stand," she said.

The extra revenue has been helpful during the

pandemic, she said. "At the time my husband was laid off, so it was good to get a bit of extra money come in."

Her husband, who specializes in building glass sunrooms, built her shop with extra materials he had.

"In the beginning, because nothing was open, it was very, very busy. I was selling out every day, but now they're everywhere, they're in all the stores. At the beginning you couldn't buy them anywhere really, 'cause nowhere was open."

Danieluk said she's donated about 1,000 masks and the mask group donated "tens of thousands."

She had also been making scrubs and gowns for NOTL health care workers. "And then that started

dying off, so I just thought I'd see if (the shop) goes, because I had so much fabric from making clothes for my kids."

She said she dabbled in sewing when she was in high school, but really picked up the skill when her children were born.

"I used to sew back when I was a teenager, but I hadn't done it for quite some time."

Her masks have gone all over the world, she said.

"I'm from Britain, so I sent quite a lot of parcels back, because they're quite behind the mask policy. The kids don't have to wear them or anything over there."

She said NOTL farmers have also purchased masks for their workers to take back to Jamaica.

"So that's been quite nice," Danieluk said.

She also continues to donate masks, most recently to the farmworker welcome packages organized by Jane Andres.

Restaurants say limit of 10 customers simply isn't sustainable

Fatima Baig
Special to The Lake Report

Restaurants can now open for up to 10 people to dine in but some NOTL operators are taking a wait-and-see approach to determine if it is financially feasible.

Justine Lakeit, front-of-house manager at Caroline Cellars' Farmhouse Cafe, is one of several restaurant managers who said the 10-person limit makes it difficult to reopen successfully and provide a stable work environment.

"It's a challenge to have 10 people. We are only open for lunch, so our takeout options are somewhat limited," Lakeit told The Lake Report.

"We do have great support from local businesses who order lunch, but not everybody is working at the office. It's not the same as if we were open for dinner, since our takeout options are limited, so it's not necessarily always financially stable."

The restaurant has been closed since Dec. 26 and management is thinking about reopening if Niagara goes into the COVID orange zone. "We don't want to bring back our staff only to have to lay them off again in a couple of weeks if we end up back in grey zone," said Lakeit.



Sandtrap bartender Matt Gordon pours a beer before the second lockdown. FILE

provides some income, she noted, but many restaurant owners don't have that additional revenue source.

Paul Dietsch's sole income is from his restaurant, the Sand Trap Pub & Grill, which has reopened. Before the pandemic, the restaurant had 26 employees and now is down to six or seven.

"Right now, we are paying our bills, our rent, our

utilities and our day-to-day operational expenses, but it's definitely not profitable yet," Dietsch said.

He feels his restaurant would be able to support more than 10 people with social distancing. "Before, when we were in orange, we still had six feet of separation and still followed protocols with hand wash-

ings and social distancing," he said.

He finds most people are still using takeout as the primary method of supporting local restaurants. "We can still get only 10 people inside. That's not very many people. We are licensed for 155 here," he said.

The pandemic has forced Dietsch to dip into his savings. "We had a solid financial background going into COVID. We are dipping into those reserve funds, most definitely," he said.

It is helpful that the Town of Niagara-on-the-Lake has cut red tape and allowed restaurants to continue operating outdoor patios again this summer, he said.

Wage and rent subsidies, and other programs, have been welcome. "Every little bit helps, but even with that support, it's still not enough," he said.

Lakeit and Deitsch aren't the only restaurateurs who believe being restricted to 10 customers is not sustainable.

Chris Rigas, owner of the Old Firehall in St. Davids, noted restaurants still need to pay to turn on their equipment no matter how many people are inside.

"Light, heat ... costs you the same when you have 10 or 50 people," he said.

Limited capacity isn't a long-term solution for restaurant owners, he said. And Rigas noted he tries to support his employees, but he is constrained.

"They are on unemployment and you try to give them as many hours as you can to help things. We have been restricted with the business we can do. If an owner hasn't made money in a year, his ability to help is very limited."

He said many people in Niagara rely on the hospitality sector to operate at normal capacity and restaurants are a safe option that should not have so many restrictions.

"The provincial data says we are the second-lowest setting" for COVID transmission, Rigas said.

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Jan. 26: It's been a mild winter to date, with little snow so far.



Jan. 29: Days later, snow and shore ice starts to accumulate.



Feb. 5: Big waves hit the ice pack, as snow "castles" form.



Feb. 9: The lake is calm and there is a fresh dusting of snow.



Feb. 14: An unusual phenomenon, circles of ice in the water.



Feb. 17: More ice castles have formed and the snow pack stretches offshore. On the horizon, additional ice floes, maybe from the Niagara River cover the lake.



Feb. 23: The lake eats away at its wintry covering.



Feb. 26: Canada Geese return on a sunny day winter's day.



Feb. 27: After a snowy month, March is a not far off.



March 2: True to tradition, March roars in like a lion.



March 8: Rocks, sand, snow change the shoreline.

The lion in winter

Words and photographs by Kevin MacLean

Lake Ontario truly is a "great" lake, a lion whose voice sometimes roars and occasionally whispers. It can be majestic and sublime, immensely powerful and dead calm, its placid waters turning to a churning froth at the whim of Mother Nature. With winds that can blow in from any northern direction, this beautiful body of water is ever-changing, day to day and hour to hour. Over the

course of six weeks, we documented the lake's personality at the point where its waters meet Ryerson Park in Niagara-on-the-Lake. From late January's still-green embankments, to mid-February's ice floes and snow castles, to early March's howling winds and this week's spring-like temperatures, Lake Ontario exhibits its greatness day in and day out.



Feb. 19: The lake is churning and the ice castles of two days ago are gone.



Feb. 20: Her work unfinished, Mother Nature dumps a fresh white blanket.

RIDDLE ME THIS

I occur once in a minute, twice in a moment, and never in one thousand years. What am I?

Last issue: I can fly but have no wings. I can cry but have no eyes. Everywhere I go, darkness follows. What am I?

Answer: A cloud

Answered first by: Sheelah Young

Also answered correctly (in order) by: Suzanne Elias, Susan Hamilton, Katie Reimer, Lida Kowal, Michaiiah Ivri, Sheila Meloche, Dan Fleck, Jacob Willms, Carol Durling, Mary Drost, Elaine Landray, Art Thomas, Tee Buccì, Margie Enns, Maria Janeiro

Email answers, with your name, to editor@niagaranow.com for a chance to win a prize. (Subject line: Riddle me this)

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Shervills were a precious slice of NOTL

Ross Robinson
Special to The Lake Report

We love our wee town where the Niagara River flows into Lake Ontario. So much beauty and so many unique and interesting people enrich our lives here every day.

We all moved here for different reasons, from different parts of the world, and established ourselves in the first capital of Upper Canada. How about a grateful moment as the global pandemic continues to dominate our daily lives?

Let's look back and smile, thinking of Pauline and Derek Shervill, two Brits who graced our streets for so many years. Understated and locally ubiquitous, and always on top of local issues and the national Canadian news.

On Monday, March 8, International Women's Day, Pauline died peacefully in Abbotsford, B.C. Since moving west last year after Derek died in October, she had been surrounded by the love of her granddaughter Natalie Ocean and her husband Cameron.

She was so happy to be with her 16-month-old great-grandson Azaryah. Young Rya cuddled and entertained his Nana and each morning they had a cup of orange pekoe tea to-



Enthusiastic and proud as ever, Derek and Pauline Shervill chat at a Wednesday Suppermarket in The Village with Scott Robinson. The Shervs welcomed Scott to Chautauqua when he was three days old in 1996, and never stopped watching over him and cheering for him. Local love is strong. SUPPLIED/ROSS ROBINSON

gether while looking at the beautiful British Columbia mountain scenery.

Pauline and Derek grew up in southeast London, witnessing and surviving The Blitz during the Second World War. If asked, they would limn the horrifying scene as the high-pitched whizzing of Doodlebugs told everyone to get indoors. Children would be dragged into the nearest open doorway, sometimes not knowing whose house or shop it was.

They sometimes saw the German planes and several times could see the eyes of the attacking pilot. Backyard bomb shelters with metal roofs, dug out of the soil, with food and water rations for eight people for

a few days. After the "All clear," the kids would go out on the streets and scavenge for sellable shrapnel.

When old enough, Pauline got a job and Derek joined the army. He became a lightweight boxing champion and never lost his wiry toughness. Married in 1955, they emigrated to Canada in 1957. A printing business in Leaside, hockey, they became such fine Canadians. Derek worked part-time at a Vic Tanny's gym and he never stopped lifting weights to maintain his lean and mean body.

Then, the big retirement move in the late 1980s, when they found their little piece of paradise after some 30 years in the big city. They bought their dream

home on Vincent Avenue in downtown Chautauqua, just a short dog walking wander to Ryerson Park and the bluff overlooking a Great Lake. Not many days went by without a walk or two, or three, with their precious dogs to make certain all was good with the neighbourhood and their neighbours.

They truly had their ears to the ground and their eyes alertly observed what was going on. They loved to chat with people in the park. Pauline would provide her comments on the TV sports from the previous night. Derek was just a little bit cynical, believing, "There is no new news. Just different people doing the same things to different people."

One summer day back in 1996, Derek was pictured on the front page of the Niagara Advance as part of a protest group, holding a sign opposing a local issue. Two weeks later, I noticed him again on the front page, this time holding a sign in support of a group supporting the same issue.

When I questioned this blatant flip-flop, Derek pondered, took a draw on his pipe, and replied, "I think that if people believe strongly enough to get out and protest, I should support them." Who could argue with that logic and conviction?

Indeed, this Shervill vignette is not funny, but it is funny. In about 1998, a local teenager was sometimes driving too fast along our narrow Vincent Avenue. One morning, Sherv yelled at him to slow down... The good-sized kid got out of his car and lipped off to his golden aged neighbour, assuming an aggressive stance. Our Sherv, with his pipe in his right hand, knocked the kid on his butt with a sharp left uppercut. The police came, wrote up the necessary report, and that ended the speeding on Vincent Avenue.

Pauline was always improving their garden, never too busy for a happy and not short chinwag with a passerby. Front and back, their English gardens and fish ponds were so beautiful, and such a joy to lucky us.

They were both waiting when we arrived home from the hospital with our baby son Scott in 1996, and held him so lovingly. They babysat, and watched out, understanding "it takes a village to raise a child."

Same thing in 2000 when baby Carrie made her Chautauqua debut. They cradled her, saw to her and, yes, watched over her and her friends as they grew up. They never missed a christening with Father

Montague, or a birthday party, or a Christmas Eve. Such wonderful people living across the street.

If they were in town on a Thursday, they were at the Legion for fish and chips. "You can take the Brits out of the country, but you can't take the country out of the Brits." While Saturday night singalongs were big at the Oban Inn, Derek would serenade the crowd around the piano, looking lovingly at Pauline as he crooned, "If you were the only girl in the world."

In 1997 and 1998, aging gracefully, they proudly sat in the festive and gaily decorated Senteinal carriage, as honorary marshals of our annual Chautauqua Christmas Carol Stroll. They dressed warmly, and enjoyed cold and snowy carolling along our neighbourhood streets. Santa would arrive, there was hot chocolate, and marshmallows were toasted over hot coals. All was good with the world.

Last year, Derek left us suddenly after 88 eventful, brave and friend-filled years.

We miss the Shervills so much, a steady presence in our eclectic and unique corner of NOTL. We have been so fortunate, and yes, we continue to be so fortunate.



Fore! Women get in the swing

St. Davids and Queenston golf courses reopened this week and on Tuesday a large group of NOTL women hit the links at St. Davids. From left, Yolanda Henry, May Chang, Sue Gagne, Marg Ketcheson, Martha Cruikshank, Lisa Allen, Ginny Green and Chris Earl. SUPPLIED

NOTL Seed Library encourages home growing

Bernard Lansbergen
Special to The Lake Report

Spring is here, which means the Seed Library is once again opening its doors, in an effort to get the people of Niagara-on-the-Lake to grow their own vegetables.

The program, which started in 2019, is a project of the NOTL Public Library, that lets anyone in town reserve seeds online, pick them up at the library and grow them at home.

It's a project that aims to include the whole community. As Christine Reganti, the library's IT/Makery assistant and manager of

the Seed Library, explains: "You don't need a huge garden to be able to grow your own stuff, you can use pots. So even if you live in a small apartment or you have big farm land, anyone can participate."

The Seed Library boasts a collection of over 70 different seeds, all of the heirloom variety, which means they have a history of being passed down in the community and they produce plants that are identical to their parent. Says Reganti: "It's a pretty wide variety with lots of different types of seeds, from flowers, to vegetables, and grains," as well as herbs.



NOTL's seed library offers 70 different seeds. PIXABAY

But the project is not only about planting seeds and growing them. It's also about giving back to the community. At the end of the growing season the library asks anyone who is willing to donate some of their seeds to the library's catalogue.

While the Seed Library is currently supplemented with seeds from outside sources,

the goal is to make it a self-sustaining system. "We would love to expand the collection," says Reganti.

She hopes this project will bring the community together during these difficult times: "There's nothing like helping each other grow stuff."

To request or donate seeds, go to notpubliclibrary.org/seedlibrary.

Finally open again, salons busy offering much-needed haircuts

Brittney Cutler
Special to The Lake Report

Niagara-on-the-Lake salon owners say haircuts were long overdue for some clients after the region moved into the COVID red zone on March 1.

It was the first week salons could open all year and the phones didn't stop ringing, said Sandra Cocetti, owner of Bliss Aveda Concept Salon in Virgil.

The salon's hours haven't changed, but the business is limiting the number of clients inside and maintaining social distancing.

"Safety wise, we've extended our services, so it gives us enough time



Corrie Konik has her hair done at Rapunzel's Hair Salon (before and after shots). SUPPLIED

obviously to do our sanitizing, restructuring of our space and we have a girl that floats around as our hostess to make sure that everything is polished and cleaned right after a client has come and gone," Cocetti said.

She said she learned a lot about reopening after the first wave of the pandemic, and it's something that she's kind of gotten used to.

"Not that we want to get used to lockdown, but we learned from the first one that this is out of our

control, we just need to do our parts," said Cocetti.

"Every day since we've been shut down, right after the holidays, I've been doing local deliveries, curbside, colour kits, and just communicating with clients, as emails have been popping in and overall just trying to stay positive," she said.

The reopening was just in time for some clients, who were getting a bit shaggy.

One customer told Cocetti that before the salons reopened she took her dog to the groomer and "desperately requested the dog groomer give them a haircut as well."

Another hair stylist, Gail Adams, from Rapunzel's

Hair Salon, said it's good to get back to work. Like Bliss, her salon had been offering take-home colour kits.

"We've been offering to do colours, not here, but to give the clients the colour kits to do themselves at home. But that's all we did," Adams said.

Adams said the salon has hand sanitizers at every station and at the front door for customers and staff to use. They also take clients' temperatures when they arrive and only accept appointments.

"Everyone is at least six feet apart," she said. "Basically it's one person in, and when they leave, another person comes in."

On an average day, they see 10 to 12 clients for appointments and they're staying open longer to get the same number of people into the salon as they did pre-COVID.

Adams said she's glad to be open and back in business, but she noted the short notice about reopening from the provincial government gave her team little time to prepare for the bookings ahead.

"We're trying to do colours and haircuts as well as book clients in, it's hard. If we had another couple of days, we could've had all of our clients booked in and not worried about the phone ringing," she said.

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Get in the Loop: Repackaging the way we shop



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

Kyra Simone
Special to The Lake Report

In advance of forthcoming plastic bans, a novel online store offers groceries and household products with reusable packaging.

If you ever take a step back to consider your kitchen and pantry, you'll notice that most food purchases are shrouded in plastic. Unfortunately, only about 10 per cent of this packaging is recycled

in Canada.

Even with our best intentions, many types of packaging aren't even accepted at the curb. Crinkly and foil-lined plastics, like cereal bags and granola bar wrappers, can only be repurposed through specialized mail-in programs.

Terracycle is one company that accepts the otherwise unrecyclable. But founder Tom Szaky acknowledges the flood of plastic must be stemmed long before the flawed disposal stage.

On Feb. 1, the company partnered with Loblaw's to launch an online store offering groceries, household products, and hygiene items in refillable packaging. Through Loop-store.ca, households can reduce waste in an affordable way without greatly altering their recycling habits.

ROUND & AROUND: Loop already operates in the United States and parts of Europe. It now delivers to most of Ontario and carries an ever-



Loop offers these types of products in containers that are returned and refilled. KYRA SIMONE

expanding list of products, including spices, grains, sauces, beverages and even deodorant.

According to Loop's website, not all areas of Niagara are eligible for delivery yet, but the company continues to quickly add new postal codes.

Delivery is free for

orders greater than \$50, which is less than the cost of a typical grocery run. While some specialty items are a bit pricey, the essentials are reasonable and costs will come down as this new model is proven effective.

Much like beer-bottle returns, customers pay a

deposit on each container. Then, Loop picks up empty vessels and refunds the deposit.

It's the same process you'd normally go through to place containers in the blue box. Loop will sort, clean and send them back to manufacturers to be refilled.

Most Loop packaging is plastic-free, because participating manufacturers must make vessels durable enough to be refilled at least 10 times. Even dented or broken containers will be picked up; they are designed to be remade without "downcycling."

POSITIVE FEED-BACK LOOP: Through this new model, consumers can dip their toes into the world of reusable packaging before large plastic cutbacks are implemented. Canada aims to ban single-use plastics by the end of the year and Niagara-on-the-Lake already prohibits these items in municipal buildings.

Fifteen of the world's largest retailers have

signed on with Loop, and even Tim Hortons plans to release reusable packaging later in 2021. Although it is a substantial investment for manufacturers to completely overhaul their production, smaller companies may eventually be able to access funding for this shift as consumer habits begin to evolve.

If you're like me, you may already avoid single-use packaging or buy in bulk. Zero-waste grocery stores in some cities, like London's Reimagine Co., dispense food and household products for customers who bring their own containers.

While such stores attract many eco-conscious shoppers, Loop is the first initiative to implement reusable packaging on such a large scale, and in partnership with grocery chains.

In the future, we will likely be able to buy refillable products from, and return the packaging to, our local grocery stores.

So, say it with me: Reduce, reuse, repeat!



Ryan Crawford, Paul Harber, David Watt

Niagara-on-the-Lake's Three Musketeers of giving – Ryan Cochrane, Paul Harber and David Watt – have been nominated as Pandemic Heroes.

Throughout the pandemic, and long before, the three restaurateurs have consistently made efforts to give back to the community and spread positivity.

At the beginning of the pandemic, as advertising revenue began to decline due to closures and lockdowns, Crawford immediately set out to help The Lake Report, recognizing the importance of balanced and accurate local reporting during the pandemic.

He organized a GoFundMe which raised more than \$6,000 to help keep the news coming.

He also collected donations for the paper at his restaurant, Ruffino's Pasta Bar & Grill.

In June 2020, the three helped co-ordinate gift baskets to go to Niagara seniors living in long-term care homes along with Meals on Wheels deliveries.

At the time, Watt, owner of the Garrison House restaurant, told The Lake Report it was the least they could do to help seniors who were isolated in their rooms due to COVID-19.

Crawford echoed his sentiments. "It's like the elderly are just lonely, sitting by themselves. And sometimes their family can't even visit them, so we just wanted to kind of cheer them up and give them something to enjoy. We want to make them smile. We're chefs and we love making people smile through our food and through gifts through whatever we do," he said.

In September and in February, the three helped the raise money for the Niagara-on-the-Lake Museum by providing food for its reinvented History in the Vineyard fundraiser.

Over the course of the pandemic, these three individuals have gone above and beyond to make our lives just a little bit brighter.

Harber, proprietor of Ravine Vineyard Estate Winery in St. Davids, is widely known as a generous contributor to the community. Besides all his other efforts, he also donated bottles of sparkling champagne to the Pandemic Heroes project.

The Lake Report wants to help recognize NOTL's Pandemic Heroes – people who have made a difference, big or small, in a positive way. You can help us recognize someone in the community by sending a bit about the person and why they're a Pandemic Hero. Please send your nominations early to editor@niagaranow.com. A special thanks to Ravine Vineyard Estate Winery for providing a bottle of sparkling wine to each of our pandemic heroes. That's the spirit!



David Watt, Ryan Crawford and Paul Harber. FILE/RICHARD HARLEY



Ryan Crawford at his restaurant Ruffino's Pasta Bar & Grill. FILE/RICHARD HARLEY

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A heartfelt thank you from all of us at Ravine Vineyard to all of the NOTL Pandemic Heroes. We are all very fortunate to have you in our community

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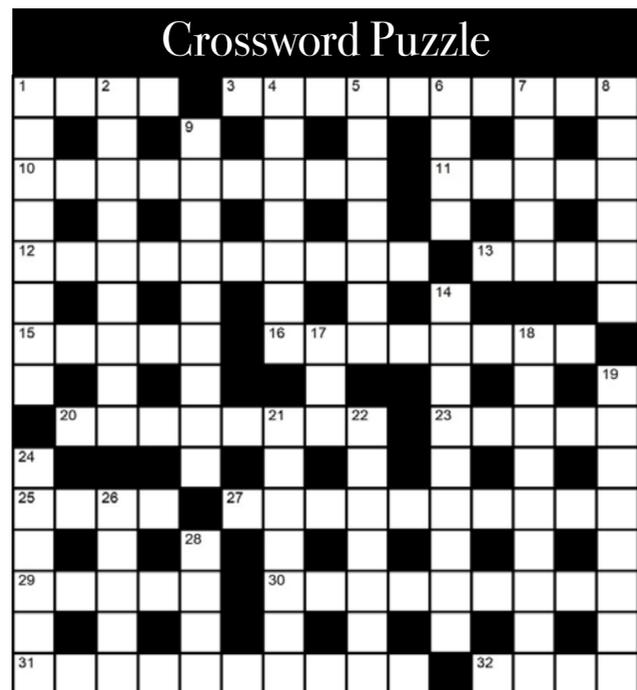
Have some fun

Across

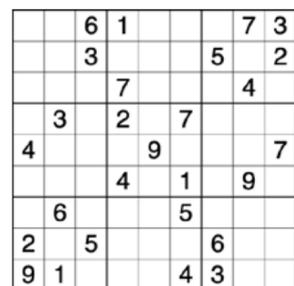
1. It preceded the C I S (1,1,1,1)
3. Comes before a sentence (10)
10. In a higher bracket (9)
11. School tool (5)
12. Taggers' normal medium (5-5)
13. Ore vein (4)
15. Mission Impossible's --- Hunt (5)
16. Those who change to suit the circumstances (8)
20. Eternity is about the whole (8)
23. South American ruminant (5)
25. One of five on D-Day (4)
27. Two-sided (10)
29. This Tom had a cabin (5)
30. Knock hen out for 25% (3-6)
31. Silver lining (6,4)
32. Reply request (1,1,1,1)

Down

1. Not cleaned (8)
2. Spiky customer on the seabed (3,6)
4. Site of major WW2 battle in the Pacific (7)
5. Roofed open gallery attached to a house (7)
6. Known in Eire as "the rebel city" (4)
7. Icehouse? (5)
8. Turbulent Severn causes anxiety (6)
9. Avoiding the outdoors (7,2)
14. Small daggers (9)
17. Foundation of pointillism (3)
18. Comforts (9)
19. Operated by 29 Across, perhaps (8)
21. Paper cutters, maybe (7)
22. Important period for accountants (4-3)
24. City satellite (6)
26. Plain code for computers (1,1,1,1,1)
28. Common term for computer and web programs (4)



Last issue's answers



MEDIUM



Heroes then and now

Penny-Lynn Cookson
Special to The Lake Report

The Lake Report's call out for nominations for our pandemic heroes serves to remind us that through the long march of history's plagues and pandemics there have been those among us who continue to exemplify courage, compassion and care.

In the face of fear and uncertainty, social and economic upheaval, illness and death, the tireless acts of caregivers continue to give us hope and consolation.

It remains surprising how few images of plagues there actually are in art history. Most show anguish, fear and the reminders of death but there are not many that actually focus on realistically depicting disease.

Perhaps artists were too

sick themselves or fearful of contagion? Or were these simply undesirable subjects to explore given how dreadful the circumstances? Or perhaps the disease was too commonplace to depict?

In our own time, when we have seen artwork of measles, mumps or chicken pox? Although there remain occasional outbreaks of bubonic plague, most recently in Madagascar, only one gruesome image has surfaced, a 2012 photo of a man in Oregon with blackened fingers, infected while trying to wrest a mouse out of his choking cat's mouth.

In the art of past pandemics, we see social disruption, the fallen, the last rites, the mourning, the carrying of coffins and ministering of aid. Most often the scenes portrayed were created years after the fact and the plague



Jacopo Oddi, La Franceschina Codex c. 1474. SUPPLIED

referenced has been misidentified as the bubonic plague.

It is actually leprosy or smallpox where the victims are covered head to toe with festering red boils and lesions. Victims of the bubonic plague or Black Death have "buboes," painful swollen lymph nodes that can appear on the thighs, armpits, neck or groin and are caused by the contagious bite of an infected flea. Death comes quickly.

Leprosy lingers and the unfortunate lepers were

hounded, shunned, reduced to beggars and segregated, ringing the hand bells they were required to carry to warn others they must stay away from them. Sadly, those suffering from eczema or psoriasis were also mistakenly persecuted as lepers as such skin diseases were not understood.

In this 15th-century image from La Franceschina Codex, painted by Jacopo Oddi, we see the devastating reality of diseases like smallpox and leprosy and the atten-

tioned, shunned, reduced to beggars and segregated, ringing the hand bells they were required to carry to warn others they must stay away from them. Sadly, those suffering from eczema or psoriasis were also mistakenly persecuted as lepers as such skin diseases were not understood.

Two Franciscan monks to the right attend to a feverish man, one using tongs to hold a soaked sponge to soothe his lesions, while the other

holds the mortar containing the medicinal oil. In the foreground, a monk in a gesture of compassion, gently touches the outstretched fingertips of another patient.

The sitting man in front holds his beggar's bowl while he rings his bells warning us to beware of the danger of contagion. In this image we see works of mercy, the offering of food and water, the care of the sick, the gift of blessings, the consoling of the dying and the healing touch given by those who willingly place themselves at the risk of death motivated by love not duty.

Heroes all.

Penny-Lynn Cookson is an art historian who taught at the University of Toronto for 10 years. She also was head of extension services at the Art Gallery of Ontario. See her upcoming lecture series "Art and Revolution, From Cave Art to the Future" Thursdays on Zoom, March 11 to April 29 at RiverBrink Art Museum in Queenston.

Dr. Brown: Functional MRIs and conduction of nerve impulses

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

Dr. William Brown
Special to The Lake Report

Our brain is enormously complex and capable of great feats of imagination, creation, ingenuity and understanding the world around us. Yet our brains can be mysteriously opaque about how they go about much of their business.

That's not to say that we haven't made progress - we have - by studying the absence or alteration of functions created by lesions that affect the brain, studies such as those pioneered by Penfield, who mapped the exposed brains of patients undergoing surgery for epilepsies, and the flood of functional MRI (fMRI) studies in the last two decades. Even so, the brain remains an enigma when it comes to the nature of thought, feelings, awareness and that bugaboo for physiologists and psycholo-



gists alike - consciousness.

Jack Eccles, a Nobel laureate, made the point in a lecture in the late 1980s when he repeatedly tapped the lectern with his right index finger and suggested that such movements were preceded by the firing of hundreds, if not a few thousand nerve cells, in the functionally related region of his left motor cortex.

His next slide revealed it was possible to detect electrical activity which preceded each tap of his finger by at least a tenth of a second. He went on to suggest that such localized nerve cell activity in the neocortex would be associated with local increases in oxygen consumption and blood flow. He was right.

Functional MRI was designed to detect just such activity-related changes as a means of localizing brain activity associated with a variety of tasks. Examples

include localizing the increased metabolic activity associated with speech, imagining a walk along a familiar route or perhaps figuring out what goes on in the brain during mediation.

One very practical use of fMRIs is to map the brain for speech and voluntary movement to avoid injuring these regions during surgery. Positron emission tomography (PET) may be less popular than fMRI for localizing purposes but provides a sensitive way to identify deposits of amyloid and tau in the brain one or two decades before patients with Alzheimer's disease develop their earliest symptoms.

But beguiling as such colour images can be, they can be misleading because sometimes there's more going on in the brain than rises to the threshold for creating those images.

There's also the matter of scale. Functional MRI operates on a grand scale but provides little information about how the brain operates at the cellular scale. But it's precisely at the latter scale where some of the most fundamental

processes of the brain, such as conditioning, learning and memory, take place.

The latter type of study was carried out by Eric Kandel, who won the Nobel prize for his work. He chose aplasia, a primitive sea slug because it has a small number of large, early identifiable and functionally specific nerve cells with which he was able to show how conditioning and short- and long-term memory work at the cellular level, including the genetic and biochemical underpinnings for these phenomena.

Perhaps the best examples of choosing a simple organism to study basic phenomena in nervous tissue were the classical studies of the action potential by Hodgkin and Huxley soon after the Second World War. They chose the giant axon of the squid because it was easy to see with the naked eye and large enough to easily insert one of their electrodes inside the axon.

The latter made it possible to clamp the voltage across the membrane at

fixed values while they studied the associated currents that accompany the action potential. They also examined how changes to the concentrations of selected ions outside or inside the axon changed the action potential. And like Kandel's later work, it was elegant and generalizable to far more evolved and complex nervous systems, including our own, and one more example of how biological systems that work are evolutionarily conserved.

The giant nerve fibre of the squid has no insulating fatty sheath (myelin) wrapped about the nerve fibre as do many mammalian nerve fibres. It was left to Huxley and Stampfli to show that the "active" part of the action potential in myelinated nerve fibres was not continuously conducted as in the giant squid nerve fibre but jumped from one "active" region to the next in a string of active regions separated by intervals of 1/50th to 1/10th of a millimetre.

Thus it greatly conserved energy and in-

creased the conduction velocities of larger myelinated nerve fibres from a few metres per second, typical of the squid axon, to the 50 to 70 metres per second typical of large-myelinated nerve fibres in brains, spinal cords and peripheral nerves of humans.

By the way, 55 to 70 metres per second translates to 181 to 254 km/h and well over the speed limit on the QEW. Not bad for nerve fibres one-hundredth of a millimetre or less in diameter.

McDonald, Rasminsky and Sears later showed how loss of the myelin sheath in nerve fibres could greatly slow and even block transmission in affected nerves, causing loss of sensation, paralysis and balance in multiple sclerosis and other inflammatory conditions affecting the brain, spinal cord and peripheral nerves.

These and other phenomena that govern nervous and synaptic transmission in the brain are the subject of the third virtual session in the BRAIN series on March 17. Register via the NOTL library's website.



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The Corporation of the Town of Niagara-on-the-Lake is seeking additional members for the following:

- One (1) citizen to be appointed to the Customer Experience & Technology Committee
- One (1) citizen to be appointed to the Inclusivity Committee
- Two (2) citizens to be appointed to the Transportation Advisory Committee
- Two (2) citizens to be appointed to the Communities in Bloom
- Two (2) Niagara-on-the-Lake student representatives attending a secondary or post-secondary institution

Application forms and Terms of Reference are available on the Town's website www.notl.org. Applications will be accepted until 3:00 p.m. on March 26, 2021. A resume identifying specific qualifications for the committee terms of reference is required with the application.

Completed applications may be submitted to the Corporate Services Department, Municipal Offices, 1593 Four Mile Creek Road, PO Box 100, Virgil ON L0S 1T0 or by email to peter.todd@notl.com

Peter Todd, Town Clerk
March 11, 2021



The Bunny Trail egg hunt in 2017. SUPPLIED/NIAGARA NURSERY SCHOOL

Bunny trail returns with a twist

Staff
The Lake Report

After being cancelled by COVID last year, the annual Bunny Trail is returning to NOTL this Easter - but with a twist.

The Niagara Nursery School and Child Care Centre and the Town

of NOTL are working together to give out take-home Bunny Trail packages on April 3.

The project is a fundraiser for the school's major expansion project. Families can purchase a package through the school's website at niagaranurseryschool.ca.

Residents and business owners are invited to donate sealed sweets or Easter-themed activities including stickers, colouring books, pencils, etc., for inclusion in the packages. Contact the school by email at niagaranurserydirector2@gmail.com to arrange a donation.

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Gibson's general store

This photograph, circa 1950s, shows the front door and gas pumps of George Gibson's General Store, which was formerly located at the corner of Four Mile Creek Road and Highway 55 (where Silks Country Kitchen is today). It was one of two grocery stores in Virgil and with Gibson acting as the local postmaster for 43 years, it was also the village post office. The building was torn down in the 1970s when the Department of Highways needed room for a road allowance. The current plaza was built shortly after.

ARCHITEXT

It's about integration

Brian Marshall
Columnist



Integration enhances the streetscape. SUPPLIED

Architecture is a reflection of the prevailing socio-political-economic attitudes of society.

As society changes, so too should architecture if it wishes to have relevance and be supportive of contemporary lifestyles.

Bluntly, there are very few folks reading this column that could happily live in an unaltered early 19th-century house wherein every room had a function and each room had a door that was kept closed to ensure separation.

An open-concept interior would have been anathema in the Georgian era, just as seeing a kitchen would have been shocking to the average Victorian. Their homes, both interior and exterior,

displayed society's mores.

That said, allow me to state in unequivocal terms that, with the general exception of the Millennium Mansion, there is not an architectural style I do not appreciate. Set in the correct context and properly executed by a talented designer, every style yields admirable architecture.

Canada's architectural legacy has evolved and should continue to evolve in keeping with societal change. Any attempt to limit that evolution could easily result in an architectural landscape better suited to being a museum exhibit

rather than a living, growing town.

However, that is not meant to suggest I believe in "anything goes and allow survival of the fittest to prevail." A poor design (or a brilliant design set in the wrong context) can have a negative impact on streetscape and neighbourhood that lasts for decades.

It is my experience that every truly exceptional architect will evaluate context before putting a pencil to paper. He or she will walk the neighbourhood, thoroughly understand the streetscape and, finally, the lot itself prior to even think-

ing about design. I have seen these individuals turn down a commission because the client's vision was not compatible with the context. Unfortunately, this often resulted in the commission going to an architect willing to make that mistake, to the detriment of both the neighbours and the new build.

As a result, I have come to believe that architectural guidelines are the best safeguard a community has to ensure new builds, infills and major exterior alterations to existing houses are compatibly integrated within the streetscape.

To be clear, it is not my position that guidelines (with the exception of heritage applications) should be used to limit creative design expression nor dictate conformity to certain architectural styles, but rather to conserve the contextual integrity of a street or neighbourhood.

I have seen 21st-century Modern homes "work" within a traditional streetscape far more effectively than the Ranch bungalow a few doors down.

Obituary

John Rednall



John's relatives and his many friends in Niagara on the Lake were saddened by his recent passing. John was a kind, genuine, generous and self-effacing man who led a very full life on several continents. John's nature is best summed up in his final wishes: in lieu of a donation or flowers, please perform an act of unexpected kindness today.



Virgil Stampede cancelled for 2021

Richard Harley
The Lake Report

The Virgil Stampede is a no-go again this year.

Richard Wall, president of the Virgil Business Association, which puts on the annual carnival, said the event usually attracts thousands of people, and with heightened security concerns over the past few years, there was no way to safely manage the crowds safely during the pandemic.

"We don't really know how he could possibly manage an event like that with proper social distancing," he told The Lake Report.

Cancelling it was the "practical decision," he said. "Security has been a concern for us for the last four or five years, so if you

can imagine how much heightened an issue social distancing would be. It certainly wouldn't be something that we would be able to manage, especially on a volunteer basis."

With restaurants and tourism-related operations being the hardest hit industries, the association decided it was not the right time to hold a major event that might compete with businesses trying to recover.

"For us to fundraise when they're just hopefully opening up again is probably not the right thing to do. So we're just going to lay back one more year."

He said the association is looking at two or three "possible" options for a fundraiser near the end of summer, but nothing has been finalized yet.

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- Fresh Cut Fries \$7
Add a side of Guinness gravy, curry sauce or grated cheese for \$1.50 or make it a poutine for \$3
- Homemade English Sausage Rolls \$12
- Potato Skins \$14
- Chicken Wings \$15
- French Onion Soup \$8
- BBQ Bacon Wrapped Scallops \$16
- Crab Cakes \$15
- Deep Fried Pickles \$9

HOUSE-MADE BURGERS

ALL SERVED WITH FRESH CUT FRIES OR SUB GARDEN SALAD FOR \$3.50 OR CAESAR OR GREEK SALAD FOR \$4.00

- Angus Burger \$14
(lettuce, tomato & pickle)
 - The Red Eye \$16
(fried egg, bacon, cheddar & hot sauce)
 - Olde Smokey \$16
(bacon, KC BBQ Sauce, crispy onion, cheddar & chipotle mayo)
 - Bacon Cheese Burger \$16
(cheese, bacon, lettuce, tomato & pickle)
 - Beyond Meat Burger 🍷 \$16
(lettuce, tomato & pickle)
 - Bacon Portobello Mushroom \$16
(bacon, mushrooms & Swiss cheese)
- EXTRAS:** Sautéed onions or mushrooms on a burger +\$2

DESSERTS

- Cheesecake of the day \$8
- Bread Pudding \$8

All prices plus HST.

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LOCAL FAVOURITES

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- Fish Butty \$15
- Shrimp In a Basket \$15
- Portobello Mushroom Melt 🍷 \$16
- Roast Beef Dip Sandwich \$17
- Chicken Fingers \$15
- Steak and Guinness Poutine \$17
- Reuben Sandwich \$17
- Meat Loaf Sandwich \$16
- Turkey Club Sandwich 🍷 \$16
- Chicken Caesar Wrap \$16
- Buffalo Chicken Wrap \$16
- Shepherd's Pie Poutine \$16

EXTRAS: Gluten-free bread +\$2

PUB FARE

- Award Winning English Style Fish and Chips \$18
- Baked Chicken Curry 🍷 \$18
- Bangers and Mash \$16
- Shepherd's Pie \$16
- Steak Guinness and Onion Pie \$17
- Liver and Onions \$17

EXTRAS: Mushy Peas +\$3

SALADS

- Caesar Salad 🍷 \$12
- Greek Salad 🍷 \$12
- Garden Salad 🍷 \$11

Choice of dressing: Italian, Balsamic, Ranch, Blue Cheese, or Thousand Island

ADD: Fresh Chicken \$5, Bread Roll \$2.50, Extra Dressing \$0.75, GF Bun \$2.50

WEEKLY SPECIALS

MONDAY: Buck-a-Cluck \$1 Wings
Minimum of 10. Celery, Carrots and Blue Cheese for \$2.50

TUESDAY: Baked Chicken Curry \$16
Served over basmati rice, fresh cut fries or half & half

WEDNESDAY: BOGO BURGERS! Buy 1, Get 1 Half Price
Buy any house made burger and get the second half price

THURSDAY: Liver & Onions \$15
Served with mashed potatoes, peas and carrots

FRIDAY: Fish Fri-Yay \$16 - 1 piece | \$24 - 2 pieces
Haddock served with fries, homemade coleslaw, tartar sauce, & lemon wedge

SUNDAY: Roast Beef Dinner \$20
Slow roasted beef served with peas, carrots, parsnips, Yorkshire pudding, and mashed or roasted potatoes

All prices plus HST.

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