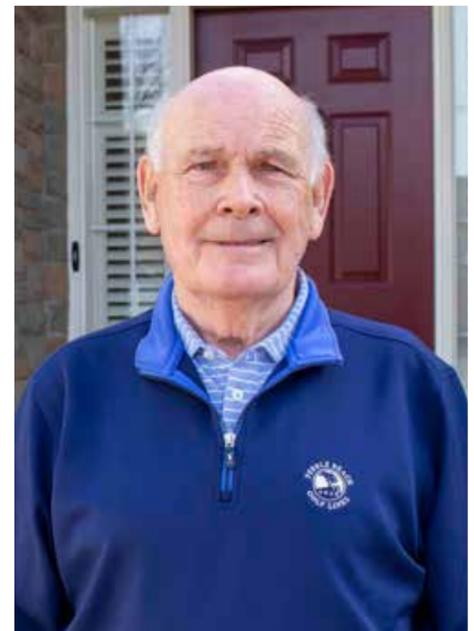
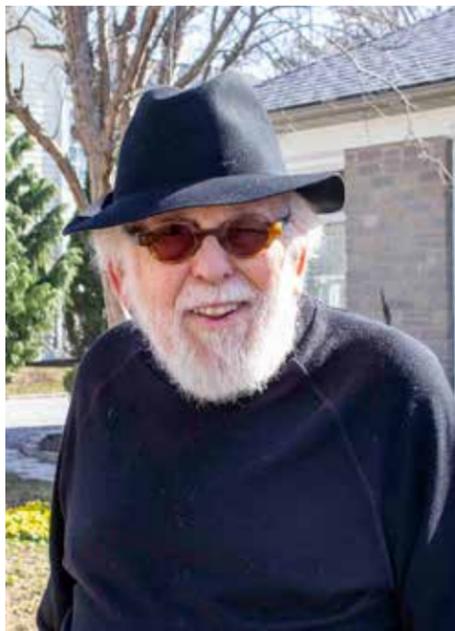
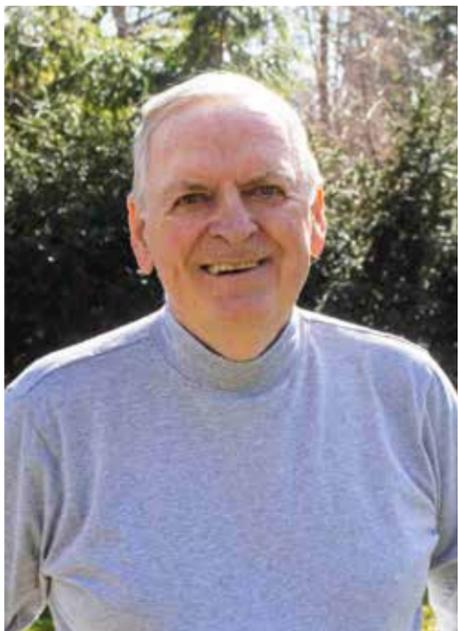




Silly walks bring smiles | Page 11

I GOT THE SHOT

NOTLers encourage others to get COVID-19 vaccine



Over-80s Bill Garriock, Donald Combe, Lena Disero and Sam Young have all received their COVID-19 vaccines and are encouraging others to get theirs too. RICHARD HARLEY PHOTOS

Richard Harley
The Lake Report

With most of the region's 80-plus population having either got their first COVID-19 vaccination shot or been booked for one, some of those who have already got the jab shared their experiences with The Lake Report.

For residents like Bill Garriock, Donald Combe and Lena Disero, it's been a world of relief.

"When I got it, I felt I had gained 10 years," said

Combe, adding that knowing his body now has what it takes to fight the virus brings a sense of relief and a feeling of safety.

He encourages anyone on the fence about taking the vaccine to get one.

"Go, just go. Whatever is offered, take it."

Garriock, while enjoying some gardening, said his experience was "actually a very good one."

"I couldn't get over how well-organized they were. My appointment was for 10:40, at 10:43 I had my

sticker on my shirt."

He, too, said it gives him hope of getting back to some form of normalcy, but added it's important for people to remember it takes about two weeks until the shot becomes fully effective against the virus.

"You still got a good two weeks before you're really mostly protected, and then even after that you really

have to continue to be careful because you can still catch the virus, except you just won't die of it, you won't end up in the hospital," he said.

DONALD COMBE
NOTL RESIDENT

little while — quite a while probably — we're going to have to continue to be very careful and follow the rules that are in place."

"When I got it, I felt I had gained 10 years."

He said the shot didn't faze him.

"I felt well after. For me it was just like getting the normal flu shot. I had no side effects at all, and I wasn't looking for any, but there certainly were none there."

Lord Mayor Betty Disero's mother Lena, who also received her shot, said getting the vaccine felt like a weight was lifted off her shoulders.

She's still not leaving the house much, she said, but feels "relieved" and safer to go to the store for essential items.

"I was so happy to go and have my vaccine," she said, adding she's still following health and safety protocols, like hand washing and wearing a mask in town.

Did YOU get the shot?

We want to encourage everyone in the community to follow the science and get their shot when they are eligible. Tell us your story about getting the COVID-19 vaccine. Email us at editor@niagaranow.com and provide us with all the details for a future edition of The Lake Report.

'Get protected,' get vaccinated, pharmacist urges

Kevin MacLean
The Lake Report

Sean Simpson is keen to start vaccinating the 3,500 people on his pharmacy's growing notification list, but in the meantime he strongly advises everyone who is eligible for a COVID-19 vaccine to get the shot ASAP — no matter which vaccine.

"The fastest way to get

this whole pandemic over with is to find a way to get a needle in your arm and get vaccinated, as soon as possible," the Niagara-on-the-Lake pharmacist said in an interview Tuesday.

"I know there's people that are on the fence, but I don't think anybody's looking for a way to prolong lockdowns and other restrictions. So if people are tired of wearing masks or they're

tired of all these rules or having to get tested, the best way forward is to get vaccinated," Simpson told The Lake Report.

"We've seen now that the vaccines are safe and effective, so let's get it done."

Whether you get the shot in Niagara or travel to Toronto or elsewhere to be vaccinated, he emphasized that the most important thing is to get the jab.

"I would encourage people to take whatever means they have available to them, in order to get themselves protected."

Simpson understands that some people are hesitant about vaccines, especially when they are so new. And AstraZeneca's in particular has prompted concerns about everything from



Sean Simpson is urging people to register for their COVID-19 vaccines as soon as possible. RICHARD HARLEY

Continued on Page 3



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Shaw Festival sees \$185K surplus in 2020

Theatre company uses pandemic downtime to focus on diversity, staff well-being

Richard Harley
The Lake Report

The Shaw Festival has continued to kick the pandemic to the side, defying the devastation many arts organizations are facing as a result of a year-long global battle with COVID-19.

Despite the performing arts industry being the second-worst hit industry besides air travel — seeing a direct loss of \$4.7 billion in Canada — Shaw managed to come out of 2020 with a \$185,000 surplus for a fourth year in a row, festival treasurer Kevin Patterson said during the organization's virtual annual general meeting on Friday.

With government grants factored in, as well as a performance interruption insurance policy implemented in 2015, Shaw was able to keep staff employed, put on more than 900 mostly virtual performances and managed an operating income of \$24.1 million in 2020, with expenses of \$23.9 million.

"To be able to announce an operating surplus in a year like 2020 is a remarkable feat and one everybody at the Shaw should be proud of," Patterson said.

The pandemic insurance policy "allowed the management team to proceed with other activities in 2020 with security and optimism," said Shaw board chair Peter Jewett.

Rather than struggling financially during COVID-19, Shaw's leadership team was able to focus on staff, patrons, artists and people, he said.

"We used the federal government's wage subsidy and our insurance to maintain employment. And we added all of our 2020 artists to a new summer employment program," Jewett said.

"We call this program ECOS, which stands for education and community outreach specialists, and that allowed us to maintain almost all of our workforce through the intended season, and it allowed us to stay connected with



Shaw Festival Fall Concert Series 2020, front, featuring Andrew Broderick, with Jonathan Tan, back left, and Kyle Blair.
PHOTO BY PETER ANDREW LUSZTYK/SUPPLIED

patrons, students and our communities."

Another major area of focus was ensuring the Shaw is a diverse, inclusive and safe environment for staff, Jewett said.

In 2020, the festival created a new equity, diversity and inclusivity task force comprised of 14 artists, board members and staff, along with a third-party consultant to make recommendations on the company's next steps and policy improvements.

Jewett said those recommendations are expected by April.

"We are determined that the Shaw will be a safe, respectful, trusting, diverse, equitable and inclusive workplace," he said.

"All of our Black, Indigenous and other employees and artists of colour have been on the receiving end of unacceptable racial comments and behaviours, whether consciously intended or not," he said.

"We cannot turn a blind eye on our history. So Shaw has taken this moment to look at how it can more widely supported and diversify its workforce, include a wider range of communities in its programs, boards

and volunteers."

He said the Shaw would "continue to ensure that those who have been excluded from our stages or treated in an unacceptable manner within our walls, by intent or not, will never have those barriers in front of them again."

Artistic director Tim Carroll spoke about some of the challenges the organization faced in 2020 and how the need for art was realized perhaps more than ever before.

"Well, we've learned haven't we this year? I hope we've learned something, it's a bit of a waste of a disaster if we don't learn something from it," he said.

"And what it feels to me we've learned is how right we were about human connection. We've been saying all along that theatre is actually a basic human need, and I think that's been proved," Carroll said.

"We've really felt the lack of our audiences, we've felt the pain of not being able to be together and share the same room and the same energy, so it's been a kind of vindication although not one we would have wished for."

Carroll said support from

his colleagues and the community has been a big factor in helping him "to keep going."

However, despite the challenges, with creative thinking, the festival was still able to put on more than 900 events, most of them virtual.

"It's been an education for me to see how much has been possible in the digital sphere. I must admit, I've never been convinced of the wondrousness of streamed performances, and I'm still not," Carroll said.

"But I did have my eyes really opened by the number of different ways we were able to engage with our audience."

He said it's important to take those lessons into the future. For example, some events like educational workshops actually saw more engagement, with fewer events.

The Shaw has also created a wellness initiative called Shaw Link to help staff through the pandemic by connecting them to share questions, concerns and talk about issues affecting the Shaw and its artists.

Carroll said it's been "a delight" watching the work of the group.

"I've really learned that we've got a kind of amazingly good people, amazingly strong people, and I really can't wait to get back and tell them to their faces," he said.

Carroll praised the company's executive director Tim Jennings for his work to help the Shaw's employees.

"I think everyone at the Shaw would want me to speak for them in saying that we have limitless gratitude for the untiring work he's done. A lot of that work isn't glamorous and a lot of it is hidden to the likes of us who just do the art, but I can tell you, and I'm sure you believe it, that Tim's focus has been absolutely unflinchingly on keeping everyone whole, on looking after the people in the organization."

Jennings echoed Carroll's sentiments about artists needing the work.

"For many, many artists the nature of this work is a calling and that calling they have to fulfil," he said. "And we've seen the mental health issues that affect society when we don't get to fulfil those basic human needs that art serves."

He also lauded Carroll and the artistic and production teams for their work to keep audience engagement alive.

They "pivoted and pivoted and pivoted again, all through last year creating new programs, and finding new and exciting ways to engage with our communities and trying and implementing dozens of new ideas on the fly, and then reworking them each time to make them better and to make better art," he said.

Associate artistic director Kimberly Rampersad noted that during the pandemic, performances "grew from backyards of donors, to offerings to the public on both the Shaw campus and with partner businesses in the Niagara region. And with further help from Fed Dev Ontario we grew, so we added two more musicians. And then we added microphones and sound design, which came with more crew members," she said.

Carroll said what the Shaw's learned in 2020 is just "scratching the surface" of what could be done in 2021.

The festival is also looking at "beta-testing" having actors work full-time, rather than on contract, and also taking on other roles within the company.

He said six actors will start next week as full-time staff members.

"It could be quite a game-changing transformation of the theatrical landscape if it caught on," Carroll said.

"I think it'll take a while to iron it out but I do think we've got the makings of a really good idea here."

Jennings said all of the staff and board members have worked hard during the year to ensure the Shaw's success.

"I am not sure that I have seen a team work harder than the Shaw's has this last year in a 35-year career. I am absolutely sure that our belief in theatre as serving basic human needs and societal needs has never been made more clear than it has been over the last 12 months."



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Electrical problem blamed for NOTL fire

Kevin MacLean
The Lake Report

An electrical malfunction caused a massive fire last month that did more than \$1 million in damage to businesses housed in three huge, repurposed former barns on Townline Road, the Ontario fire marshal says.



A cloud of smoke rises from the fire. FILE PHOTO

The fire, which started on the afternoon of Feb. 9 and burned into the early hours of the next day, destroyed several businesses, including Reclaimed by Roots, a custom producer of live-edge wood products.

The blaze was accidentally sparked by “an electrical failure or malfunction,” a spokesperson for the fire marshal told The Lake Report.

A detailed report of the fire investigation has been turned over to the Town of Niagara-on-the-Lake.

The provincial agency’s report has not been released publicly but, “Based on our response on the day of the fire, we can confirm the area of origin was a single-storey block ‘office’ building that adjoins the chicken

barn and main furniture shop,” fire chief Nick Ruller told The Lake Report.

The 500-foot-long barns, at 1238 Townline Rd., were also home to auto-repair businesses, boat storage facilities and companies building race cars.

In the aftermath of the blaze, Ruller estimated the damage total at \$2.5 million

and noted fire crews helped save between \$2.5 million and \$4 million in property.

Business owners pegged the damage figure much higher, but the official fire marshal report estimates the building losses totalled \$300,000 and the contents about \$1 million.

“I am proud of our team for their response efforts during the significant fire and the assistance they provided with investigation efforts and managing hot spots in the days to follow,” Ruller said in a statement Tuesday.

Several GoFundMe campaigns were launched after the fire and as of this week had raised more than \$35,000 to help some of the businesses recover.

Almost all 80-plus Niagara residents vaccinated or booked, region says

Richard Harley
The Lake Report

Almost all of Niagara’s 80-plus population has received at least one COVID shot or has an appointment for the vaccine, the region’s public health agency says.

In total, based on the latest census numbers, about 59 per cent of the 80-plus group has received their first shot already, with an additional 12 per cent booked to get theirs through Niagara Health and another 29 per cent at public health clinics.

“This is really great news that we’re moving quickly through this group,” said Niagara’s acting chief medical officer of health Dr. Mustafa Hirji.

The vaccine distribution is going well and there are still plenty of spaces for appointments, especially in Niagara-on-the-Lake’s clinics, he said.

Over the next few weeks the region hopes to inoculate any stragglers, while public health turns its focus to the 75 to 79 age group.

The region said that as of Monday it had already

delivered shots to about 7 per cent of the 75 to 79 age group through vaccinations at long-term care facilities and retirement homes.

Niagara Health physicians are already reaching out to the age group as well and “some have already been vaccinated,” Hirji said.

Another five per cent have been booked in to Niagara Health clinics and 22 per cent more were booked to receive their shots via public health clinics “after just a few hours of registration.”

“We’re making very good

progress,” Hirji said, adding he thinks both groups will have received their first shots by mid-April.

If the region can continue to keep COVID infection numbers down and vaccinations continue to roll out smoothly, Hirji predicted there could be a loosening of restrictions in two months.

As of Wednesday, the region had 380 active COVID cases, including 14 in NOTL. The region reported 237 cases of COVID variants, up from 119 a week ago.

Jump at first vaccine opportunity, pharmacist says

Continued from Front Page

blood clots to questions about the accuracy of its U.S. patient trials.

However, he noted the scientific data has shown the blood clot concerns were unwarranted. And world-wide data has shown the vaccine prevents deaths and hospitalizations.

“I think everybody should be jumping at the first opportunity to get any of the vaccines available,” Simpson said.

“They’re more effective, the sooner you get them, so if people are passing up



Sean Simpson.
RICHARD HARLEY

an opportunity to get one vaccine in front of the other, they’re potentially putting themselves at a greater risk than they might realize.”

He is thankful for the speed with which the new

vaccines have been developed, something that is unprecedented.

“If we reflect back to where we were a year ago and we were all just praying for a vaccine, it’s a pretty significant achievement of modern medicine that we actually have vaccines at this time,” he said.

Everyone has heard the advice to “be patient” and follow all the COVID protocols. But as people are vaccinated over the next month or two, Simpson anticipates seeing a significant drop in hospitalization and mortality rates.

“We all want things to happen faster” and with hundreds more pharmacies across Ontario expecting to hear any day now that they will be able to inoculate patients, he is confident that COVID can be beaten.

He’s “chomping at the bit” and ready to start offering vaccinations.

If all goes according to plan, “We’ll be well on our way to keeping the members of our community safe and each other safe, and getting our local restaurants and hotels and wineries and breweries, and everything else, open.”



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COVID Tracker

NOTL active cases: 14
Region active cases: 380
Region deaths: 375
Region total cases: 9,305
Region resolved cases: 8,550
Region variant cases: 244

*March 24 data per Niagara Region Public Health



Contributed by Patty Garriock

"Don't let yesterday
take up too much of today."
- Will Rogers.

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Editorial

Please, trust **the miracle** of modern science

Richard Harley
Editor-In-Chief

The Lake Report is encouraging everyone to register for the COVID-19 vaccine, any vaccine, as early as possible.

It's almost impossible to put into words how impressed we are with humanity.

Imagine two different images, one of a small human David compared to the Goliath of nature, each staring each other down. The tiny human looks a fraction of the size of the giant and there is no comparison as to who is at the mercy of whom.

That's where the world was during the last major pandemic, the Spanish Flu a century ago.

Now, imagine that same image, except this time the small human David is equal to the size of the Goliath rearing its head.

The human has almost a smug look on his/her face, suggesting a "bring it on" attitude.

That's where we are in 2021, thanks to incredibly smart people who have mapped the human genome, understood complex biochemistry and brought us to the point where a year after nature threw us a devastating curve ball, we're already tackling it head-on.

To not be impressed by that accomplishment is to simply not understand the progress humanity has made.

And now, if we all do get vaccinated, we can look

forward to opening up our economy again and getting back at it bigger and better than ever.

It doesn't mean we can all go out right away — it's going to take a while for the vaccine rollout to reach all of the population, and in the meantime, it's still our duty to act responsibly to protect our fellow inhabitants of this fragile planet.

But as those appointments become available, through Niagara Health, public health, pharmacies or family doctors, make sure to act quickly in getting your shots.

This is quite literally a miracle of modern science.

So trust the science, trust the people who are working so hard to make history and keep others alive to be a

part of our future.

Just get your vaccine. To the naysayers: educate yourselves about the vaccine from reputable sources — not your friends on Facebook.

It's time for us as a collective civilization to get behind science instead of fighting it.

Nothing else — no God, no delusional YouTube video, no conspiracy theorist — is going to protect you or your loved ones from this virus.

But luckily, thankfully, incredibly, we do have something that will.

And it's about 100 per cent effective in preventing COVID-19 related deaths and hospitalizations.

Act wisely. Get the shot..
editor@niagaranow.com



Niagara Health vaccine booking was **smooth sailing**

Dear editor:

We've all seen, heard and read a lot (too much?) about Canada's COVID vaccination situation — most of it negative.

I shouldn't comment on the macro elements of vaccine supply, federal government contracts, vaccine types and vaccine approvals. I'll leave that

to the experts and claimed experts.

But maybe a small word of praise might help. I recently used Niagara Health's online vaccination booking system.

It was extremely efficient providing immediate information on where you are in their queue, how long the projected wait time is and

even the comfort of a wee guy strolling across the screen to show you how the lineup is moving.

In my case, the promised wait time: 15 minutes. And guess what — no fake news. 15 minutes, it was.

Once you're in, basically all that's needed are some numbers from your health card and away you

go. Plus, you even get to choose your date, time and location. I'll settle for that.

Congrats to whichever Niagara Health department or staff designed the system — or successfully scrounged it from wherever. Some welcome good news.

Steve Ferley
NOTL

Residents also find construction hoarding **unsightly**

Dear editor:

It is not at all surprising that the long-term construction hoarding on Queen Street erected by Solmar (developer Benny Marotta) and Niacon in place now for about six years is an ongoing source of consternation for town council. ("Queen Street hoarding raises ire of NOTL councilors," March 18, The Lake Report).

It is also a source of consternation and irrita-

tion for many local town residents who view this hoarding as an eyesore that detracts from the image of Niagara-on-the-Lake as a historical and welcoming tourist location.

I think that I can safely speak for many when I agree with and support the creation of a bylaw by council that gives time limits on the use of hoarding and provides for strong penalties that discourage abuse.

The simple fact that nei-

ther Solmar (Marotta) or Niacon responded to your request to comment on this issue is a good indication of an unco-operative attitude on their part toward the local town residents.

In the case of Niacon, the property owner has presumably been compensated for a loss by fire in order to rebuild, whereas Solmar (Marotta), whose credibility is well-known and documented, again contradicts his past claims of being a concerned and

responsible local resident who is interested in adding to the beauty of Niagara-on-the-Lake through his developments.

In both cases, according to The Lake Report, they appear to offer only the weak argument of COVID-19 as an excuse for years of delay.

Unfortunately, in the meantime, we have no choice but to live with the hoarding.

Derek Collins
NOTL



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OPINION

AstraZeneca vaccine benefits far outweigh any risks

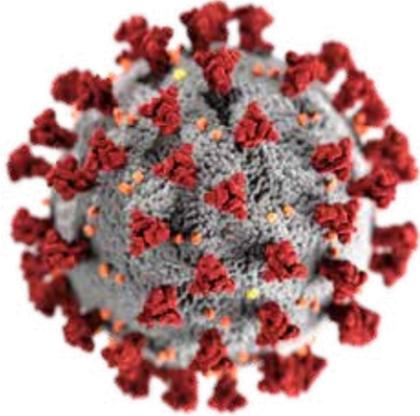
Dr. Menaka Pai
Special to The Lake Report

This is a long note on vaccines and blood clots (from somebody who spends an inordinate amount of time thinking about, preventing and treating blood clots).

Health Canada, the Public Health Agency of Canada, the European Medicines Agency and my profession's organization – Thrombosis Canada – have made clear statements that risks posed by the AstraZeneca vaccine are far outweighed by its benefits. Does that square with media reports? Should we really get the first shot available to us?

I love my job as a blood and blood clot specialist – love it. So much of it focuses on talking to people about risks and how to stay safe despite those risks. A lot of common medical procedures, drugs and life experiences (aging, pregnancy) increase your blood clot risk.

But, we take them on anyway because we've weighed our individual risk and benefit in the moment. We do so because we've decided that what's on the other side is worth it – a new hip, a new baby, prevention of



pregnancy, the long plane ride, the limb-saving cast ...

They're worried about the risk of clots with the AstraZeneca vaccine. Let's use that awesome human instinct (caution) and look at the data. Here's what we know, now:

1. The AstraZeneca vaccine doesn't increase the risk of blood clots beyond the general population signal.

2. Getting the AstraZeneca vaccine reduces your risk, overall, of dying or hospitalization.

3. Our vaccine safety and surveillance system is solid. It picked up about 40 unusual serious clots (out of 20 million-plus doses), some associated with low platelets (sticky cells that help your blood clot).

These rare, serious clots

are concerning. But if you're eligible for AstraZeneca vaccine? Our province is saying you're at risk for COVID-19. So that ultra rare risk is outweighed by the real and common risks of COVID-19 – an illness that itself gives you a less than 1 in 100 risk of blood clots.

The biggest driver of blood clots in the COVID-19 landscape is not vaccine – it's virus. This virus has wreaked havoc on every aspect of our life. It's kept kids out of school, threatened small businesses, taken away hugs, smiles, backyard barbecues and drinks with friends.

The best way to see ourselves through this havoc remains the vaccine. The best way to prevent clots remains the vaccine. I trust our country's health

approval and surveillance process. I trust it to guide me and guide people I care about (my patients and loved ones).

Scientists (including blood clot specialists) continue to collect and analyze data on vaccines, so we can detect, treat and advise with confidence. We (your doctors) will continue to give you our best advice, based on the best evidence.

We must work with you to talk about risks, benefits, fears, hopes and strategies to keep you safe and in tune with your body. We'll do that together. Take the first vaccine that is offered to you and we will get through this together too.

And for up-to-date, clear, science based information about blood clots, COVID-19 vaccines, best evidence and COVID-19, visit Thrombosis Canada at thrombosiscanada.ca and the Ontario COVID-19 science advisory table at covid19-sciencetable.ca.

Dr. Menaka Pai is a hematologist and thrombosis medicine physician at Hamilton Health Sciences. She originally shared this statement on her Twitter account @MPaiMD, on March 19.

Shameful to deny American the COVID vaccine

Dear editor:
Canadians ought to be ashamed that Ralph Dangelmaier, an 83-year-old American from Florida

(who is here with his wife, a Canadian, while she is being treated for cancer), was recently denied a COVID-19 vaccine appointment

while here in Canada. My wife and I were vaccinated while at our winter home in California in January. No questions asked!

Americans are very generous and, for this, we're very thankful.

John Morley
St. Davids

Kudos to NOTL's eclectic, contemporary homes

Dear editor:
The author of the March 4 letter, "Town needs homes to better respect NOTL heritage," has no inkling of the specific area's heritage at all.

Does he realize that 50 years ago this neighbourhood was woods and or-

chards and a few cottages? Residential homes were just starting to be built in this area. In the 1960s and '70s, as this area developed, one could purchase a lot and actually build according to your own design.

Now most new home buyers

are stuck purchasing cookie-cutter homes, Model A, B or C with zero creative input.

If the person "riding around town" was more observant perhaps he would have noticed three doors down there is a 40-year-old contemporary style home

(one of several in the area) that was built by Kevan O'Connor in the 1970s.

This special pocket of NOTL has an eclectic warm inviting feel which reflects the people who live here.

Mary Blom
NOTL

Vaccine centre in Falls exceptionally well-organized

Dear editor:
My wife and I visited the MacBain Community Centre in Niagara Falls on Sunday morning, March 21, for our scheduled COVID-19 vaccination shots.

We were both highly

impressed with the organization and military precision of the complete process, a smooth-flowing stress-free experience.

The shots being administered were the Moderna vaccine.

Absent from this shot was the needle prick sensation typically felt when you get the flu shot or a blood test – neither of us felt a thing.

Kudos – with a capital "K" – to the organizers and the dozens of volunteers for

the success of this site.

It is a model I would recommend for other locations and an achievement of which you should all be proud.

Samuel Young
NOTL

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Ode to a year in COVID lockdown

A year into the COVID-19 pandemic, nothing much has changed for those of us in the “lock-down” of the aged:

*I'm home in my house
and lucky to be so
many on the streets
nursing homes
seniors' residences
all of us relatively unchanged
in our daily routines
by the plague
it has no impact on us
we are in our own society's
munificent lockdown
allowed to live out
to the end of our time
filed away but with
the "best of intentions"
so much better, of course
than young family incommoded
society's push to achieve succeed
our modern Christian way
don't let old people
blight the day
of our society's headlong rush
to "fulfillment" by
ignoring our wisdom
and freely killing the planet*

Kaspar Pold
NOTL

Unhealthy noise levels from bird cannons

Dear editor:

On vineyards where propane cannons are detonating (decibels 120 to 130 known to cause health issues to hearing and nervous system), are workers provided with hearing protection, as is required by the Occupational Health and Safety Act when “any workers are exposed to hazardous sound levels”? The act defines hazardous sound levels at 85 decibels.

On its website, Occupational Safety and Health Administration in the U.S. provides typical noise levels for various industries including mining, construction, and farming. The highest typical noise level was listed among construction equipment, namely pile drivers, registering 119 to 125 decibels. This piece of equipment produced the highest and most hazardous sound level among all the industries listed on that site.

For farm equipment the highest typical noise level listed by the U.S. agency are power tools at 100 decibels. Interestingly, propane cannons, a typical piece of farming equipment emitting noise of 120 to 130 decibels, is excluded.

When you hear a pile driver in your neighbourhood, it'll be pounding away for some days until the job is done. Power tools, likewise, will be heard for a few hours or days from time to time.

A typical work shift exposure is eight hours a day, five days a week.

When the cannons start up, the residents' exposure to the blasting is 12 to 15 hours per day, seven days a week, from dozens of farms simultaneously.

Children are more highly susceptible to the negative effects of chronic impulse blasts. In some of the seriously affected areas, such

as St. Davids, there are five vineyards blasting away relentlessly. York Road suffers serious echoing off the Escarpment.

The measurement of decibels and their enhanced or diminished effects are dependent on a number of criteria: distance from the offending source, sound and shock-absorbing impediments, echo/rebounding off the Escarpment rockface (as happens along York Road and Sheppard Crescent) and whether the listener is stationary or merely driving past.

When noise is excessive it becomes unbearable, torturous and intolerable because of its frequency and its proximity, hence the impact of noise on residents living closest to the source.

Sadly, when a community becomes desensitized to or “becomes used to” that level of noise it means the damage to the sympathetic

nervous system, which reacts to alerts such as car horns and sirens, etc., has already occurred.

The Ontario Ministry of Agriculture Food and Rural Affairs suggests, as evidenced by its lack of responsive compassion, that vineyard blasts are normal farm noises everywhere, regardless of the surrounding residential population and despite the impact on an overwhelming number of rural residents.

Living alongside these industries make us the experts; we determine how much noise is acceptable and what is intolerable. Not the other way around.

If you are negatively impacted by blasting noise from farmers' cannons go to Facebook BAN THE CANNONS, Niagara and see the petition at <http://chnng.it/L9RB9S7y>.

Valeria Sebella
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.



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AstraZeneca vaccine '100% effective' against death, hospitalization, Hirji says

Richard Harley
The Lake Report



Dr. Mustafa Hirji. SUPPLIED

Niagara's top doctor says the public should have confidence in the AstraZeneca vaccine, despite recent concern about the vaccine's efficacy around the world.

This week the drug company announced the vaccine was found to be about 79 per cent effective in trials in the United States but questions then erupted about the accuracy of the data.

The region's acting medical officer of health, Dr. Mustafa Hirji, said his advice regarding AstraZeneca vaccine is "based on the careful scientific assessment of data by (Canada's) National Advisory Committee on Immunizations, particularly large clinical trials conducted in the United Kingdom and Brazil, as well as three months of real-world use in the United Kingdom where AstraZeneca is the primary vaccine of their COVID-19 vaccination program."

"This data strongly supports the safety and effectiveness of the vaccine," he told The Lake Report Tuesday.

He said media reports that some of the data AstraZeneca released might be incomplete are "unfortunate" but they don't change his assessment.

"We don't base our opinions on vaccines around press releases from producers. We base it on the National Advisory Committee on Immunization and their scientific review of the full, raw data of vaccine research."

In a conference call with reporters Monday, Hirji said the 79 per cent effectiveness initially reported "mirrors very closely to what we're seeing in terms of the efficacy of clinical trials elsewhere in the world, where it's close to 82 per cent effective."

"And more significantly, I think that vaccine is 100 per cent effective at preventing death or COVID-19 hospitalization,

which is the most important thing that we want to see this vaccine do."

While in Ontario the vaccine mainly has been given to people age 60 to 64, he said it is also showing to be just as effective for older people.

"So, some of those concerns that were initially present where maybe this vaccine didn't work as well in the 65 and above population, I think continue to be disproven," he said.

"In the United Kingdom, they've got 11 to 12 million people vaccinated with AstraZeneca and there again, they're seeing it's working really well on that 65 age group. And so this is one more vaccine

we have, that really can go to any adult, and it's going to have a real good impact."

He also said people should not be concerned about reports of blood clot issues related to the AstraZeneca vaccine.

"After more full review of the data, that really does not seem to be a significant concern, and it looks like their rate of getting those blood clots is equal to people who've been vaccinated versus the people who are not vaccinated."

He said for the people who got blood clots, it was "just their background" and it's unfortunate that "a couple of people got those blood clots shortly after getting their vaccine."

All four of the vaccines available in Canada "are very safe, very effective and most importantly, they're going to make sure people don't die, and make sure people don't get hospitalized. My opinion is the first vaccine you can get is the best vaccine you can get," he said.

Any vaccine will protect people from dying and keep them out of hospital, he noted, "and also make sure that you're not going to potentially pass infection on to people in your household or social context, who might be very vulnerable."

NOTL says **no** to movie shoot request

Richard Harley
The Lake Report

Councillors denied a request for a low-budget movie to film in downtown Niagara-on-the-Lake on Monday.

During Monday's council meeting, councillors heard a request to film in the Queen Street area by Alexander Broughton of Toronto-based Chesler/Perlmutter Productions.

The movie would have been "about icewine," Broughton said.

However, town staff had already denied the request, said CAO Marnie Cluckie,

as there wasn't enough time to get the details ironed out.

The request came mid-March, Cluckie said, for filming to start March 29.

She said it simply isn't enough time to connect all the moving parts required for a safe film shoot.

"There's certain things we look for, like, we want to make sure that the business impact is minimized, that garbage collection is addressed, that there's a fire safety plan with access, road closures are addressed, notification to fire and paramedics, that there is a COVID-19 plan and a number of other things," she said.

The film producers simply did not give the town enough time or notice of their plans, Cluckie said, noting it would take several weeks to get all the logistics together.

Broughton said the film industry, even for low-budget films, is very strict about COVID-19 procedures and that it would not be a long shoot.

Businesses along the street were also on board, he said.

"I've already talked to all the businesses that we're impacting directly, and everyone seems to be happy to have us."

He pointed out it would mean revenue for the town, as the team would have purchased permits and paid the stores that would have needed to close during filming.

His presentation wasn't specific about what those numbers would be.

His original intent was to close down part of Market Street for filming, but said since it would take more time, he would hire staff to ensure road safety.

Council voted unanimously in support of staff's recommendation not to allow the film production on such short notice.

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Tourists flock to NOTL in face of pandemic threat



The global COVID-19 pandemic and continued recommendations to stay home except for essential travel were of no concern to hordes of tourists that flocked to NOTL over the weekend. About half of people were wearing masks on the street. Meanwhile, variant cases of COVID-19 in Niagara have doubled inside a week. RICHARD HARLEY



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LIFE IN THE PANDEMIC

Waiting for 'work' to resume, gents **walked the talk**

Life since COVID-19 has changed things for all of us. We've experienced hardships, heartaches and challenges, but also new and sometimes unexpected reasons to be thankful. This occasional Lake Report series shares some of the stories of NOTL residents as we all reflect on our experience of life in a pandemic.

Kevin MacLean
The Lake Report



The group on a snowy walk at the Commons, Don Cruikshank (with Lala), Larry Mantle, Paul Jacot, Ken Porter (with Teddy making a cameo) and Norm Arsenault. KEVIN MACLEAN

It began with a message two days before Christmas and turned into a three-month winter odyssey of bad jokes, sporting and musical reminiscences, and more than a bit of COVID camaraderie to tide a group of guys over until everyone can get back to "work."

Ken Porter's email saying that he was planning to go walkabout several times a week struck a chord among our golfing Group of Seven (sometimes eight, sometimes fewer) and we eagerly joined him whenever we could. For this group, "work" means golf and our wintry layoff ends this week.

Porter's call to get off the couch came after several

weekly Zoom calls, led by trivia meister Paul Jacot, who would quiz the troops on all manner of arcane sports, musical, historical and geographic minutiae.

Not surprisingly, this eclectic group of gentlemen always manages to surprise with its collective knowledge of generally meaningless, but somehow meaningful, information.

However, it was time to head outdoors, physically distanced, of course. The jaunts started Dec. 28 with a hike on familiar turf – the Niagara-on-the-Lake Golf Club – and grew to encompass treks of five kilometres or more all over town.

Some were better than

others at getting out several times a week. Porter, Larry Mantle and Dow Wright seldom missed a walk. Don Cruikshank, Norm Arsenault and Jacot made it out whenever schedules permitted. Same with yours truly.

Porter's personal goal was to walk up to 30 kilometres a week leading up to springtime and now he's got an extra spring in his step as a result. The lanky Mantle, who could be a competitive speed walker, slowed his pace by about half so some of us could almost keep up. The buff Mr. Wright, who has been known to cycle from St. Davids to Old Town just for fun, is

always at home in the great outdoors.

The troupe walked in all kinds of weather but avoided a few blizzards. There were political and sports discussions, musical debates (Wrecking Crew: most underrated group of musicians ever? Definitely), and the aforementioned keep-your-brain-active trivia.

Cruikshank, who guided the crew on two historical walks around Queenston and environs, wisely remarked that "if there is one benefit to COVID, it has been the slowing down of our lives to the point where we can learn to smell the roses."

So, this year, "instead of

zooming around in our cars to the next destination, we are learning by walking how beautiful and interesting our local area is. So, it is good for our health, mentally as well as physically."

For Porter, "the walking club was a way to get outside and get in some exercise and catch up with the guys."

"I look forward to each day we get together as there is never a problem covering and debating all the topics, politics, sports, local and world news, trivia, storytelling and, most importantly, how everyone and their families are doing during these crazy times."

"I hate to admit it, but these fellow walkers are quite smart and each time out you learn something, but don't want to tell them that."

Arsenault has a "part-time" job as a town councillor that seems to involve about 60 hours of work each week, so he's often tied up. But he says, "The walks are a great way to get some exercise and maintain some level of sanity in these very unusual times."

Mantle echoes the sentiments about living in a community "with plenty

of wide-open, picturesque places to walkabout, at whatever pace suits your group."

"Everyone appreciates the usual routes along the lakefront, river, golf course and heritage trails. And our guys have taken us to interesting places I never knew existed – such as through the woods to the Butler family grave site."

That hike, led by Jacot, included quizzes on relevant historical details, of course.

This past Monday's 5.5-kilometres walk around the Commons, along the Niagara River and the waterfront into Old Town, was probably "our last one without golf clubs," as Cruikshank noted.

The NOTL Golf Club reopened Wednesday and several of Les Boys "went to work" and hit the links.

The walks, the talks, the bad (dad?) jokes will continue between shots three or four days a week through late next fall.

And once "work" is done for another season, here's hoping we'll all be fully vaccinated, able again to get out and explore the neighbourhoods of NOTL.

Council honours 1960s **handshake deal** for Grace United parking spots

Evan Saunders
Special to The Lake Report

Town councillors chose to honour a handshake agreement purportedly made between Grace United Church and the town in the 1960s to provide the church with total access to the four parking spaces outside the church on Victoria Street.

Town staff have been unable to find any documentation relating to the agreement. "Without a written agreement, town staff is challenged to validate that such an agreement existed," according to a report to council's committee of the whole on March 15.

Some councillors felt a written record of the agreement was unnecessary in order for council to honour it. "Years ago, when things



A parking sign outside the church. RICHARD HARLEY

were done in municipalities – all municipalities – a lot of things were done by a handshake. No agreements had to be signed," Lord Mayor Betty Disero said.

"I believe in my heart of hearts that an agreement was made back in the '60s."

The report recommended that one of the parking spots be reserved for the minister and the other three have a one-hour time limit,

in order to ensure turnover in the already crowded downtown district. One of the spots would be reserved for people with an accessible parking permit.

At Disero's suggestion, council on March 22 approved an updated motion and decided to lease all four parking spots over to the church, "at a cost of \$1."

Coun. Wendy Cheropita argued against devi-

ating from the original motion, saying she felt the staff recommendations were a "win-win solution, one that provides benefit for everyone."

Grace United Church has been complaining to the town since at least 2010 that the spots outside of the church had been co-opted for public use, even going so far as to install signs last December delineating the spots as being the property of the church before seeking municipal consent, according to the report.

The church was able to produce a receipt showing that it had paid for the curb to be installed outside the church on July 11, 1960. The church argued this was done in order to accommodate church parking and the designation has been lost in the

flow of time, the report said.

Town staff conceded that this is indeed proof that parking spots were installed outside the church, but provides no proof that they were designated for exclusive use by Grace United.

"The staff's opinion is that this curb was installed in 1960 as a delineation between the gravel shoulder and grass boulevard," the report states.

During the committee of the whole, Coun. Clare Cameron argued for the importance of the church as a municipal heritage site and social hub for the residents of NOTL.

"I am disappointed, I guess, to hear about the importance of parking turnover, which I don't recall being a strategic goal in our strategic plan, compared to

the importance of preserving our heritage culture and community assets," Cameron told councillors.

And, though originally resistant to the updated motion, Cheropita agreed the church deserved council's help, as an essential reflection of the NOTL spirit.

"People take care of each other here. We live in a kinder, nicer, gentler society, and I think that's something we should all try to uphold," Cheropita said in an interview Tuesday.

"In this crazy world, with such divisiveness globally, it's so nice to be living in a community where people really take the time to take care of each other, and respect each other, and build our community toward the greater good, rather than for the individual."



Pauline Reimer Gibson
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Crossroads celebrates **March Break** anyway

Crossroads School
Special to The Lake Report

What do you do when you can't go away for March Break at Crossroads Public School? You plan the best (and first) week-long Great Coyote Staycation, ever!

Fun-filled days of curriculum-based, school-wide, COVID-19 friendly lessons, activities, virtual field trips, theme days, delicious snacks, contests and creative

costumes had these Coyotes howling in the hallways.

Beach Day (because it's never too cold for flip-flops), Staycation Day (because we all miss our pajamas), Rainbow Day (because together we're stronger and magical), Kindness Day (because We Choose Kindness @ Crossroads), and Coyote Spirit Day (because #workhardbekind #havefun @CrossroadsPS) were all huge successes.

To finish the week and to include our entire Crossroads community in the week, we hosted our first-ever (and definitely not our last), online Coyote Family Couch Kahoot Trivia Night!

In all, 112 families and dozens of staff members and their families joined together virtually to play for awesome prizes. There were board games, chocolate, gift certificates from the Sandtrap, Bricks & Barley,

and Silks, gift certificates for Preserve My Pictures, and the grand prize of a one-week registration for SUPNiagara's kids' paddle boarding camp. All this was made possible by generous donations from local businesses and the school council.

It truly was a Great Coyote Staycation bringing all the students, staff and family members of the Crossroads family, together.

Students, staff and families from Crossroads Public School celebrate March Break last week with fun and activities during the Great Coyote Staycation. SUPPLIED

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Felix and Lucy Vollmer do their silliest walks in front of their Dorchester Street home. RICHARD HARLEY

‘Silly walk’ signs bring smiles through pandemic

Richard Harley
The Lake Report

Sometimes the smallest gestures can bring immense joy, especially during a global pandemic.

That was the goal of the Vollmer family when they placed two quirky signs on their lawn, encouraging people to do “silly walks” when passing by their Dorchester Street home.

The signs let walkers know they have officially entered “the jurisdiction of the Ministry of Silly Walks” and that between two signs they must perform their silliest silly walk.

Mom Sophia Vollmer said it was just a funny idea she found on a British Instagram account, largely inspired by Monty Python’s Flying Circus, and she hoped it would lighten people’s moods during the pandemic.

“I thought it would bring

more joy to the neighbourhood,” she said when reached by The Lake Report.

Her husband Markus and their three children Mika, Felix and Lucy moved into the home in December, as a temporary spot while they build a new home on Irvine Road, said Vollmer, and the sign has been a source of amusement.

She said not everyone participates — maybe about 10 per cent do, and mostly “husbands” — but the kids have found joy watching people to see whether or not they’re going to join in.

People usually do the “long stride marching kind of walk,” she said.

“I’ve seen a couple people maybe spin, do a kind of spin around and walk, but typically it’s like the long stride exaggerated military walk,” she said.

“And at the very beginning, a ton of people would

stop, and read it, and I would say maybe 10 per cent silly walked,” she said.

“The kids would watch it out the window and they’d be like, ‘Oh, are they gonna do it, are they gonna do it?’ Most people wouldn’t, but we caught a couple people doing it. Mostly it’s the husbands who do it. If it’s a single person they won’t do it at all. There’s higher chances if it’s two people walking.”

“We’ve had lots of people stop and take pictures of it. And then we kind of bust them and say that if they take a picture they have to do a silly walk for it,” she said. “And if they’re caught, they do it.”

Vollmer said she’s even received a letter from a neighbour who wanted to “apply for the position.”

“It was delivered one Saturday morning. She rang the doorbell and handed over and it was a whole letter

saying she was applying for the position.”

She said it’s been a source of entertainment for the kids.

“At the very beginning they got a kick out of it. I was kind of like ‘Guys I found this. Would you like to do this?’ and they were all over it and so we tried to find a way that it would last and it’s lasted throughout the whole snow and everything. It’s made it through rain and everything.”

Cathy Macdonald, who lives nearby in Chautauqua, said she noticed the sign one day and proceeded to do her best silly walk.

“I laughed out loud when I saw these signs and did my best (very bad) John Cleese silly walk,” Macdonald said, in a message to the paper about the sign.

Vollmer was delighted to hear people have enjoyed it. “It’s been well-received, I would say.”

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Town rejects licence fee cut for short-term rentals

Evan Saunders
Special to The Lake Report

In an ongoing struggle to balance the town budget with the needs of local businesses, councillors Monday night near-unanimously rejected a request by short-term rental owners to cut their \$175 per room annual licence fees in half.

But council approved a request that short-term rental operators be able to suspend their licence for the year due to COVID.

Staring down the barrel of a potential shortfall of \$170,000 in the 2021 budget, councillors tried to find a way to aid short-term rental owners without extensively interfering with the already-strained budget.

Council struggled with approving all of the requests made by short-term rental owners searching for help in the face of reduced business and capacity amid COVID, but nearly all councillors felt that some form of aid should be given to struggling operators.

“We have to make adjustments (for businesses) when it comes to COVID. I wasn’t



Councillors choose suspending licences over reducing fees for ailing short-term rental businesses. SOURCED

a big fan of (the motion), but I understand the logic,” Coun. Norm Arseneault, who voted against requests, told The Lake Report in an interview Tuesday.

Short-term rental owners have been granted until June 30 to decide whether they will operate for the remainder of the year due to concerns over the coronavirus pandemic.

If they choose not to, they can suspend their licence and avoid paying the yearly fee, then reopen in 2022 without having to apply for a new business licence, unless their licence is set to expire during the time they will have furloughed their business.

Councillors also made it clear that this would not

increase the bylaw-mandated licence renewal and inspection required every four years of operation. As well, any short-term rental owner whose licence expires in the next year will still have to go through the standard procedure, or else they would have to apply again as a new business.

It is a matter of safety, town clerk Peter Todd told councillors.

“We should be continuing to inspect these properties every four years,” he said.

Town treasurer Kyle Freeborn briefed councillors last week on the potential budget shortfall if all short-term rental owners choose not to operate this year, noting it could total over \$110,000. There is no way

to gauge how many will choose to operate until the June deadline has come and gone.

Freeborn informed council that the requested fee reduction could lead to a further loss of \$50,000 to \$60,000 for the town. That figure became untenable when taken with the potential \$110,000 loss from closed short-term rentals, as the money earned from the licensing fees has already been incorporated into the 2021 budget.

“I don’t think the fee is going to make or break any short-term rental. We’re talking \$175 a room. I don’t think it’s going to break the bank for anybody,” Arseneault said Tuesday.

“We have a budget in place. The budget relied on, very much on, the fees that are coming in.”

Freeborn noted that \$46,000 is being used to pay for contractors hired by the town to monitor complaints about rentals and ensure none violate any municipal regulations. The money to pay the contractors is coming directly from the 2021 short-term rental licensing fees, he said.



Enjoy the view

NOTL resident Dr. William Rodriguez captured these sunset pictures this week.



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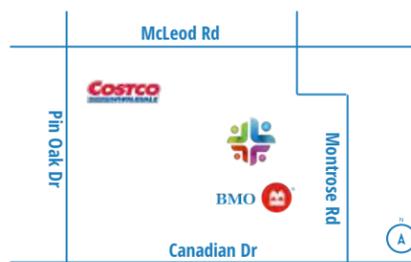
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Top: Bruce Dickson helps students cross the street. JESSALYN DUGUAY Left: Victor Tee. Right: Ingrid Tachauer. The three were honoured by the Town of NOTL for their crossing guard duties on Wednesday. SUPPLIED

NOTL crossing guards **honoured**

Jessalyn Duguay
Special to The Lake Report

Bruce Dickson has been helping Niagara-on-the-Lake students get to school safely for three years.

The retired Toronto investment executive, who now mans the school crossing zone on Line 2, behind Crossroads Public School, said it is by far the best job he's ever had.

"I became a crossing guard when my wife noticed an ad in the newspaper, saying the town was looking for a crossing guard," Dickson said in an interview. "I love children, and at the time I had parted company with my part-time job, so my wife thought (this job) would be something that kept me busy."

On Wednesday, the Municipal School Crossing Guard Program Committee of Niagara recognized Dickson, Victor Tee (St. Davids

Public School), and Ingrid Tachauer (Crossroads and St. Davids) for the third annual Crossing Guard Appreciation Day.

The trio of safety sentinels will be featured on the town's social media for the occasion and students were given the option of presenting them with thank-you cards that the town provided.

The best part of the job is the kids, Dickson says. "They are all always so polite and kind. I've gotten to see them grow up and develop these personalities," he said.

"It's a heart-warming thing that makes you feel alive, connected, part of the community. Because, well on the serious side, we (as crossing guards) are doing something that is really for their safety. And that makes you feel valuable and happy that you can do something for them."

Neighbour **saves** Garrison Village home

Richard Harley
The Lake Report

No one was injured during a vehicle fire in Niagara-on-the-Lake last Wednesday night, thanks to a neighbour who knew what they were doing.

NOTL fire crews were called to 17 Garrison Village Dr. at 8:54 p.m. for a pickup truck fire in the driveway. The truck was just two feet from the home,

but fire chief Nick Ruller said a neighbour used a garden hose to fend off the flames and it didn't spread to the house.

He "did a phenomenal job keeping the fire in check" until fire crews arrived, Ruller said. "Humble, but made a huge impact."

Firefighters arrived on scene in eight minutes, he said, and "knocked down" the fire within three or four minutes.



A truck caught fire last Wednesday in Garrison Village. SUPPLIED

Village project will add **20** new apartment units

Staff
The Lake Report

Construction has begun on 20 new one- and two-bedroom apartment units in three buildings in the latest phase of The Village development in Niagara-on-the-Lake.

The Shaw Festival has already agreed to rent one building, leasing seven units starting on Nov. 1.

"We are very excited to be bringing new rental housing to The Village," said John Hawley, president of Traditional Neighbourhood Developments Inc. "Providing a diversity of housing options has always been integral to our original

vision and master plan, and rental housing is a key part of that."

"They're going to be beautiful buildings, with architectural connections to heritage properties in Niagara-on-the-Lake," he said in a media statement.

His son Adam Hawley, vice-president of the development firm, said they drew inspiration for the project from the Willowbank Estate in Queenston, "with its beautiful curved staircases and prominent entrance."

"They're going to be exceptional buildings to frame our neighbourhood and the entrance to Old Town."



A rendering of what the new apartment building will look like when completed. SUPPLIED

Music Niagara brings back **At Home** concert series

Staff
The Lake Report

Music Niagara plans to continue its popular At Home concert series this summer and hopes to be able to include some live audiences for the shows.

The annual festival, marking its 23rd season, will launch on the summer solstice on June 20 and continue through the last day of summer on Sept. 22.

The At Home concerts were created last summer when the COVID-19 pandemic forced the Niagara-on-the-Lake festival to pivot and stage only virtual shows.

Music Niagara also plans three major fundraising events, starting with the Big Auction, with online bidding on a variety of items,



Music Niagara's At Home series resumes June 20. SUPPLIED

including: a one-week vacation in Costa Rica, sunset cruise on Lake Ontario, golf packages at Peninsula Lakes and the Toronto Golf Club, and a magnum of 1996 Chateau Lafite Rothschild.

The season will celebrate the 300th anniversary of Bach's Brandenburg concertos, along with music

of Vivaldi.

Astor Piazzolla's 100th birthday also will be marked with the nuevo tango and the French Connection jazz/classical series will continue.

In collaboration with actors from the Shaw Festival, "Soldier's Story" will commemorate the 50th anniversary of the death of Igor

Stravinsky.

And the festival's young violin virtuosos will perform Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart's five concertos in celebration of the 265th anniversary of his birth.

In July, the Great Debate is planned. The festival promises a "surprise cast of characters will face off in a lively debate on a favourite topic" – Mozart.

There also will be a chance to win a tower of 40 bottles of wine.

As well, Music Niagara and the Miller Group realtors have teamed up again to hold a fundraising tournament Aug. 4 at the Niagara-on-the-Lake Golf Club, featuring live musical performances on the course.

Registration for the alternate-shot tourney is limited to 54 players.



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Early spring gardening: **Let sleeping bugs lie**



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

Spring is just beginning and the world seems ready to wake up and come back to life. Though many of us are itching to get a head start in the garden, some critters are still slumbering in the flower beds.

Many insects overwinter in dead plant material and remain dormant until it's warmer. Butterfly and moth cocoons may be hidden among fallen leaves, and



Native bees and a Little Wood Satyr butterfly, which overwinter in garden debris. KYRA SIMONE

most native bee species stay warm underground.

Gentle gardening practices can maintain this crucial biodiversity and make sure our favourite plants continue to be pollinated year after year.

STILL CHILLY: It is best to leave any cleanup until it's consistently above 10C, day and night. In the Niagara area, it's possible to get frost even two weeks into May.

Both overwintering insects and our prized garden plants should be protected from cold snaps. Leaving decaying material can insulate plants

in the event of an unexpected April snowfall.

Pruning now can damage plants. When cut stems fill with water, temperatures that dip below freezing can cause injury or dieback.

CAREFUL CLEANUP: If you must start tidying, carefully place collected leaves or branches somewhere on your property until insects can safely emerge in the correct environment.

You'll be delighted to see many birds stopping by to collect sticks and grasses for their nests. Bundles of stems can even be left out through

the summer: native bees will nest in the hollow centres.

During this spring cleaning, roots can be left in the ground. This lets the garden re-absorb nutrients and makes it less likely for new weeds to sprout by maintaining soil structure.

Covering the ground with mulch right now might block emerging insects. It is also a bit too early for plants to use excess nutrients, so hold off on fertilizer.

It's also still too cold and damp to get your hands dirty in the soil. Working in the garden, walking on the

lawn, or using a lawnmower frequently can compress wet soil and may cause future issues with drainage and root growth.

BUSY BEES: If you're eager to put your green thumbs to good use, now is a perfect time to think ahead so that your little oasis can flourish.

Houseplants will benefit from additional nutrients now that the days are getting longer. Bird feeders can be cleaned to reduce mould and disease spread. Then put them back outside to welcome the newcomers return-

ing from their migration.

Early spring is an ideal time to start growing food garden plants indoors in sanitized containers.

Tomato and pepper seeds can be planted now, so they're ready to transplant outside after the risk of frost has passed. Celery, cucumbers, zucchini, broccoli and cauliflower can be started inside in April.

While giving our backyard bugs a little time to sleep in, thoughtful planning and tidying will guarantee that everything comes up roses later this spring.

Social gatherings can have deadly consequences.

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Essential workers



Firefighters

NOTL Pandemic Heroes



Teachers



Front-line workers

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!

Niagara EMS



Niagara EMS crews, the Falls Intervention Team and Mental Health and Addictions Response Team at their headquarters in Glendale, Niagara-on-the-Lake. RICHARD HARLEY

Niagara's paramedics deserve recognition as Pandemic Heroes, says retired paramedic educator Rick Chandler.

In nominating the region's paramedics, he noted that every day they respond to calls that involve considerable risk and exposure to COVID-19.

On a typical 12-hour shift, a paramedic might enter

private homes, businesses, long-term care homes, hospital emergency departments and public venues where people do not always practise social distancing, masking, or any of the things that the government outlines in its COVID policies, Chandler says.

Who are the heroes? Everybody who works as a front-line caregiver to those who are exposed or infected with COVID-19 are heroes, he says.

But perhaps the most heroic are the paramedics, doing their job without complaint or recognition, Chandler says. Not one individual, but all of them are heroes.

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GAMES



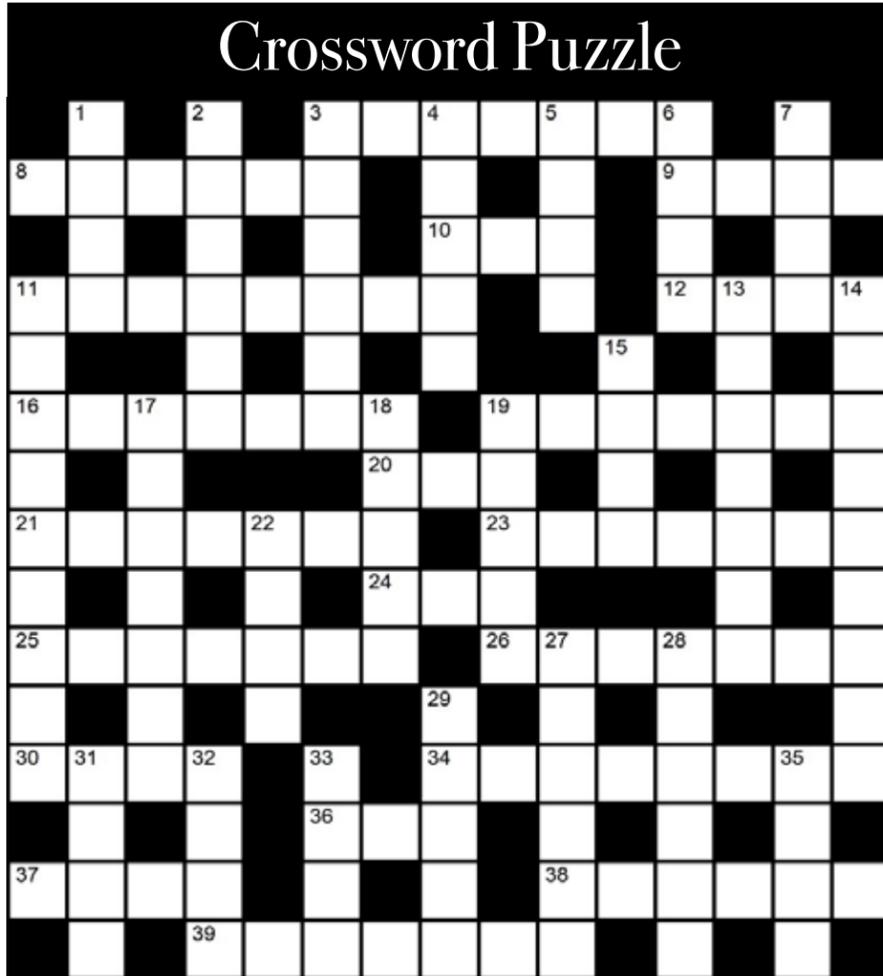
Have some fun

Across

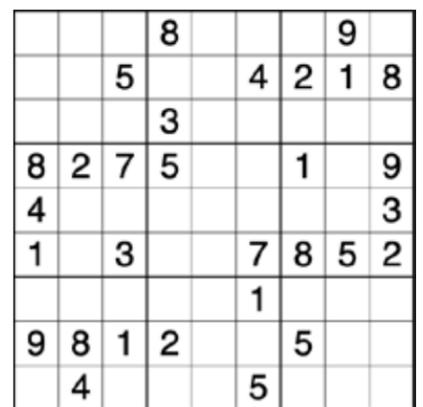
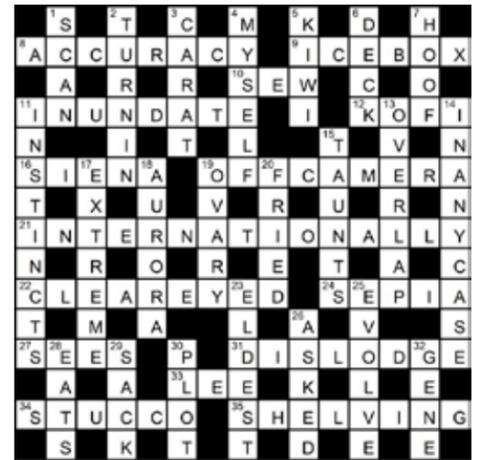
- 3. Very evil (7)
- 8. Feeling of guilt (6)
- 9. Norway's "Tiger City" (4)
- 10. Statute (3)
- 11. Like a shirt or guitar (8)
- 12. A long way off (4)
- 16. Save a bit (3,4)
- 19. Rectify sin so as to expose a former President's wife (7)
- 20. Outs partner (3)
- 21. American ornithologist and artist (7)
- 23. Spicy Spanish banger (7)
- 24. Civil aeronautics overseer (1,1,1)
- 25. Unsettled (2,5)
- 26. Governments in power (7)
- 30. World-beating writer who was also a WW2 fighter pilot (4)
- 34. Old records (8)
- 36. Type of raid (3)
- 37. Neck and neck (4)
- 38. Calculate (6)
- 39. Indignity (7)

Down

- 1. Global women's empowerment organization (1,1,1,1)
- 2. How some suspects are released (2,4)
- 3. Refuses to admit (6)
- 4. Financial wherewithal (5)
- 5. Military partnership (1,1,1,1)
- 6. Fizzy drink (4)
- 7. Napoleon escaped from here (4)
- 11. All over the shop (9)
- 13. Totalitarian type of government (7)
- 14. Presses on in chaos to get answers (9)
- 15. Pudding sounds like a way to start something (4)
- 17. European Jewish vernacular (7)
- 18. Because (5)
- 19. Richard's "Sound of Music" collaborator (5)
- 22. Defeat (4)
- 27. An accompanist, perhaps? (6)
- 28. Foolishness (6)
- 29. Cuban dance (5)
- 31. Ugandan despot (4)
- 32. "— and the Swan" (Greek mythology) (4)
- 33. Faculty senior, in short (4)
- 35. Cupid (4)



Last issue's answers



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Thoughts of spring

Penny-Lynn Cookson
Special to The Lake Report

For a few days this week the sunshine and warmth truly lifted our spirits to thoughts of spring. At last, spring with all its promise of rebirth, fertility, flowers and love.

What other painting in the world exemplifies this better than the famous and much loved “La Primavera” created by Sandro Botticelli for the ruling de’ Medici family of Florence on the occasion of a wedding in 1482.

Who commissioned the painting is not quite clear but it is believed that Lorenzo di Pierfrancesco de’ Medici gave it as a wedding gift to his new bride, Semiramide Appiano. It was placed in their bridal chamber near the millefleur (1,000 flower) tapestries popular at the time.

Later it was hung, together with Botticelli’s other famed painting, the “Birth of Venus,” at the Medici Villa di Castello until 1815 when it was transferred to the Uffizi Gallery where it remains one of its most admired paintings.

“La Primavera” continues to be controversial because its meaning is unclear. It is an allegory with figures from classical Greek and Roman mythology but also it references Renaissance Neo-Platonism, a focus of the scholars of the Medici court of Lorenzo the Magnificent.

Botticelli, being the favourite artist of Lorenzo, had access to their knowledge and to the literature and philosophy of ancient Roman writers such as Ovid, Lucretius and Virgil.

Renowned for his line, shading and colour, Bot-



Sandro Botticelli’s “La Primavera” c.1481, Tempera on wood, Uffizi Gallery, Florence. SUPPLIED

ticelli uses a technique in the painting unusual for the Renaissance as it is without spatial depth and in this regard appears influenced by the Gothic-style tapestries. Whatever the meaning it is a stunning work of art fascinating to decipher.

The scene is set in an orange grove, the oranges symbolic of the House of Medici, which has six round balls on its coat of arms. Spring is arriving with the early wind bringing forth the growth of plants and flowers. On the right, Zephyrus,

Greek god of the west wind, blows through the trees and abducts the pale green garden nymph, Chloris (from which we get chlorophyll), who is astonished but non-resistant.

Chloris is transformed by marriage into the goddess Flora, who from a fold in her splendid floral gown, scatters flowers as she moves through the grove. Hundreds of plant species and 130 specific flowers in the painting have been identified. Flora looks directly at the viewer with a slight-knowing smile.

In the centre, the April goddess of love and beauty, Venus, is an ethereal presence with her hand raised in the traditional greeting of the Virgin Mary to the Archangel Gabriel. She wears a robe of blue and red, the garment colours of the Virgin Mary, over her contemporary white gown on which is pinned a round gold pendant revealing a scene of Joseph, Mary and the infant Christ.

Venus stands behind the others, veiled head tilted, observant, sculpturally beautiful, but expressionless, the sacred and profane in one. Cupid, her blind-folded (love is blind?) son, bow drawn, aims his arrow on a diagonal down to Chastity, one of the Three Graces.

The Three Graces who accompanied Venus as virtues were popular in Roman statuary as they allowed the body to be shown from three sides achieving a figure in the round. They dance, hands and fingers elegantly intertwined, elongated bodies weightless in diaphanous

gowns, bejewelled, their hair in the latest fashion of the court topped with pearls, a symbol of purity.

Chastity, in between Pleasure and Beauty, looks to her left to the handsome Mercury, (the Greek Hermes), messenger of the Gods and as a Roman god of commerce and medicine a pun on the Medici, Italian for doctor.

Mercury is identified by his helmet, winged sandals and his caduceus, the medical symbol, held aloft to scatter the May clouds and as guardian of the grove, a protector of the House of Medici.

With “La Primavera,” Botticelli has created one of art history’s greatest examples of physical beauty, an enduring celebration of love, marriage, prosperity and the fertile awakening of a long desired spring.

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.

Dr. Brown: Complexities of sensation felt and ignored

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

We learned last week that much of the brain is not an equal access-control system. Some regions receive far more of the brain’s resources than others.

For example, those regions of the neocortex linked to facial expression, speech articulation and fine motor control of the hand are associated with much larger areas in the primary motor cortex compared to the proximal arm, shoulder, trunk and leg on the opposite side.

A similar unequal allocation of neocortical resources holds true for sensation. For instance, the face, mouth and hand claim much larger areas in the primary sensory neocortex compared to the rest of the arm and body.

This skewed allocation is well illustrated by the large number of touch-sensitive

receptors in the flexor tips of the fingers and thumb. These exceed by far the densities of similar receptors elsewhere in the body except for the lips, which are similarly sensitive to touch.

Most touch receptors in the flexor surfaces of thumb and fingertips (Merkel’s discs and Meissner’s corpuscles) have small receptive fields of the order of few square millimetres, while other, deeper receptors (Pacinian corpuscles) have larger receptive fields and are well suited for conveying high-frequency signals to the central nervous system.

Two-point discrimination – the ability to distinguish two separate points, is about 2-5 millimetres in the flexor tips of the fingers and thumb, 10-20 millimetres for the toes and sole of the foot, and 30-50 millimetres for the trunk. Hair follicles and the receptors that surround them are very

sensitive to touch.

Similar unequal resource allocations play out in the central nervous system where information of higher priorities, such as that from the fingers and thumb, face and lips enjoy richer connections at all levels.

Diseases that affect low threshold light-touch receptors are associated with loss of light-touch sensation and two-point discrimination as well as tingling and numbness, whether the lesion(s) involve the primary sensory neurons and fibres or the related connections in the spinal cord, brainstem, thalamus and primary sensory cortex.

Sometimes if the lesion involves the posterior part of the spinal cord in the neck, patients report that when they flex their neck, they experience an “electric-shock” sensation in their arms, trunk and legs – a sensation caused by traction on the large sensory nerve fibres, which convey light touch, joint position and vibration sensation, and all of which are conveyed in the back of the spinal cord (Lhermitte’s sign).

However, there’s more to sensation than touch.

What about muscle sense? Muscles have their own receptors, which provide the spinal cord, cerebellum and neocortex with information about the length of muscles and the rates with which muscles shorten or lengthen (muscle spindles) and receptors in tendons (Golgi tendon organs) that provide information about tension in muscles.

Muscle spindles and their central connections in the spinal cord, cerebellum and neocortex are vital for normal balance and co-ordinated movement. And diseases that affect these systems at any level are associated with loss of balance and impaired co-ordination, which are most striking when the cerebellum is affected.

But unlike light-touch and pain sensations, we have no conscious awareness of the information provided by muscle receptors, except when we trick them by vibrating selected muscles. If done when our eyes are shut, it can create bizarre illusions about the position of the vibrated arm or leg.

What about pain? Pain is mediated by small nerve fibres whose endings, unlike those of low-threshold touch pressure receptors, are devoid of any capsule. Pain fibres are found almost everywhere in the body.

One type is associated with sharp pricking pain and the other with deep aching and more diffuse pain. That’s an oversimplification, of course, but works in practice and broadly describes the nature of the pain associated with each type.

Lesions affecting this system, such as those that involve one side of the spinal cord, are associated with loss of pain and temperature sense on the side opposite the lesion and loss of touch-pressure, joint-position and vibration senses and weakness, all on the same side of the spinal cord as the lesion – the Brown-Sequard syndrome.

Much of the parietal lobe is tasked with integrating sensory information of all types and lesions that affect the non-dominant hemisphere may be associated with loss of awareness of the entire left side of the body,

including vision.

That was the case with my father, who had an ischemic stroke that involved his right (non-dominant) parietal lobe. It was associated with lack of awareness of his left leg such that often he left the leg behind when he tried to climb low fences and had to be reminded to lift the leg over the fence before continuing on.

Usually we’re aware of light-touch sensation only when, for example, we first sit down but within seconds are completely unaware of any continuing sensation on the backs of our thighs, buttocks and back.

Similarly, unless there’s some movement to alert us, much of what goes on in our visual fields except for the central 10-20 degrees of our vision, is neglected.

In short, sensations, unless alarming or otherwise important, are ignored or even actively suppressed, to allow us to get on with whatever occupies our attention and thus consciousness – the subject of the fifth session in the BRAIN series at the NOTL Public Library on March 31.

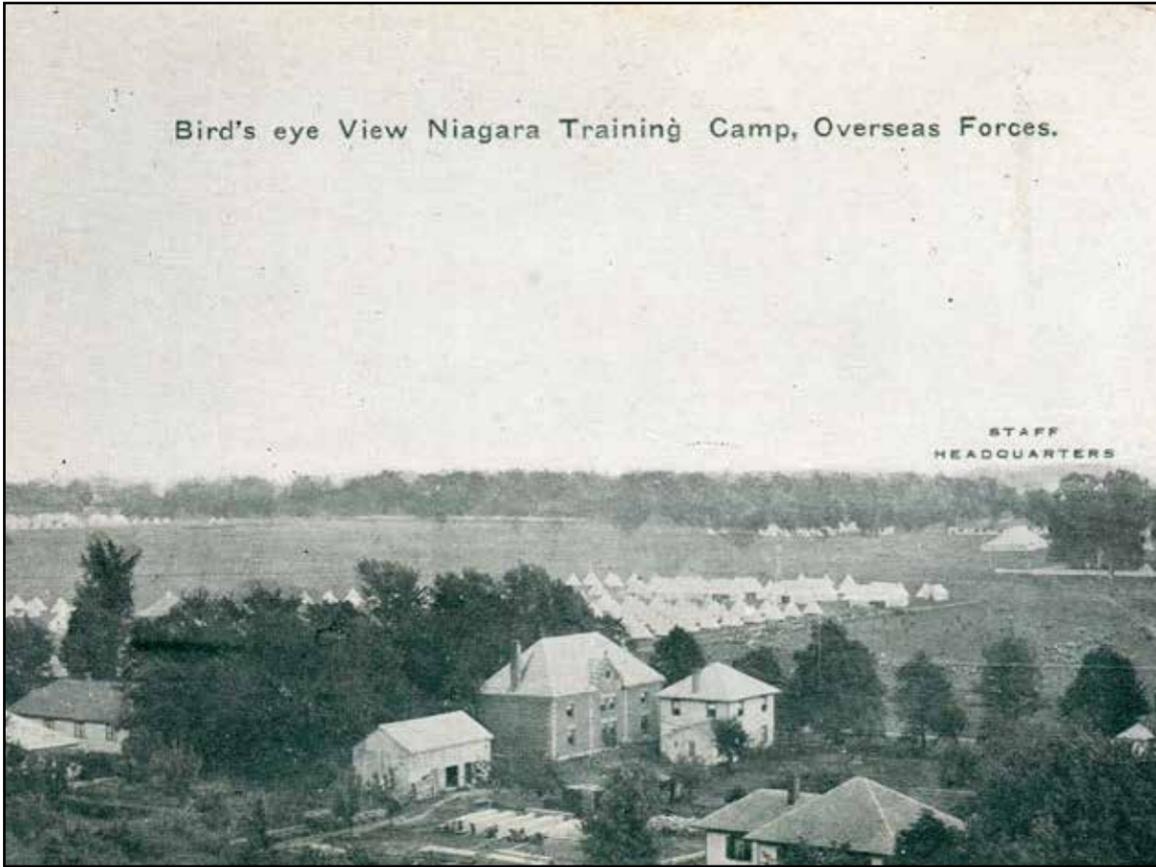


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A bird's-eye view

Here is a postcard, dated circa the First World War, printed by a local publisher named Frank H. Leslie. It is a bird's-eye view, taken from the Court House on Queen Street, showing the bell tents of the overseas forces at the Niagara Training Camp on the Commons. The large building in the centre is the back of the museum's Memorial Hall building on Castlereagh Street. Next door is the Carnochan house and in behind is the barn of John Carnochan, a former local carpenter who had a hand in building many homes in our town.



Sly as a fox

NOTL resident and Lake Report contributor Janice White took this photo of a fox at the Niagara-on-the-Lake Golf Club this week. See more fox photos at niagaranow.com.



I'm being followed by a moonshadow

The spring moon was bright as the sun went down on Monday, casting shadows across the moon's craters. RICHARD HARLEY

ARCHITEXT

The dig before you dig

Brian Marshall
Columnist

Several times in the past year I have found myself in the position of having to wave a yellow caution flag in front of clients around a requirement introduced in the town's new official plan. I'm speaking here of archeology.

To begin at the beginning, the history of settlement in Niagara stretches back far beyond the arrival of Europeans. In fact, this land has been in use for over 11,000 years.

It's estimated that the first

occupation occurred circa 100 AD by the Hopewell Culture, which was displaced by peoples of the Iroquoian linguistic family around 500 AD.

By 1400, Niagara was home to the Neutral Nation, which fell to attacks by the Haudenosaunee and then to smallpox. Haudenosaunee and Anishinaabeg (Mississauga) peoples moved into the area, and it was they who dealt with the immigrants from Europe and the Loyalists fleeing a newly formed United States.

This area has had a long and storied history of human occupation which, in places, still remains to be unearthed, studied and fully appreciated.

By now you may be thinking, "That's fascinating, but what's that got to do with waving a yellow caution flag?"

Well, with the passage of the new official plan, Niagara-on-the-Lake council set as a priority the archeological inventory of the lands within its boundaries.

In practice this means that if your property is located within the urban boundary areas defined as Old Town, Queenston, Virgil, St. Davids or Glendale and you apply for a building permit for work that will involve "disturbing the soil," you are required to have an archeological assessment of your entire property.

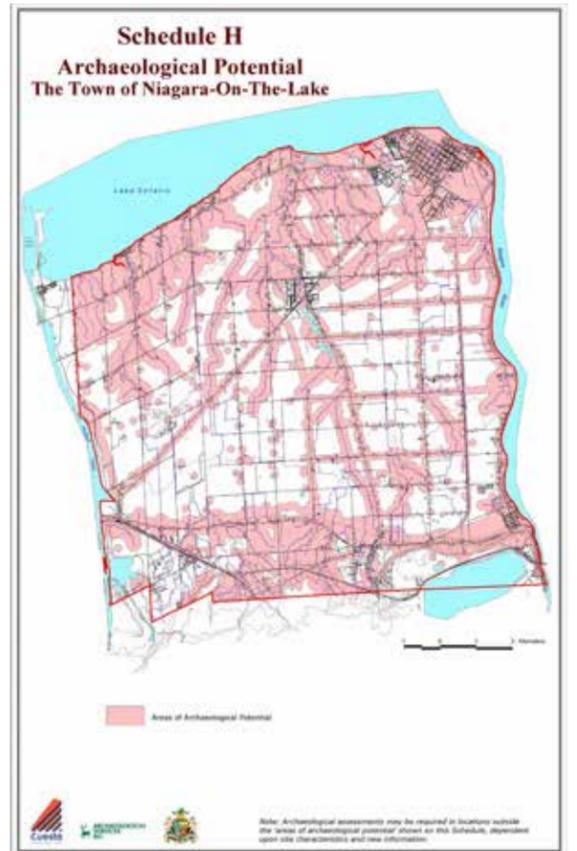
If, on the other hand, your lands are located outside these urban zones, you may or may not be required to undertake a similar assessment dependent largely on whether the work will occur in an area deemed to be of "archeological potential."

To explain, this will involve engaging the services

of a licensed archeologist who will perform a Stage 1 and 2 assessment; the latter referring to digging a series of small "test pits" at regular intervals around the property. The dirt is then screened to determine whether it contains finds of archeological significance. If nothing is found, you are good to go – for a fee of about \$2,500.

On the other hand, if there are finds, be prepared for Stage 3; a much more extensive dig to define the extent and potential of the archeological site at an average cost between \$10,000 and \$20,000 (but maybe more, particularly if a Stage 4 investigation is required).

My advice: check with the town to see if archeology has already been performed on your property. Otherwise, be prepared and budget for it.



If you're in the pink... SUPPLIED



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905 262 0895 BrockBuilders.ca
Niagara-on-the-Lake

FRESH. FRIENDLY. LOCAL.

1822 NIAGARA STONE ROAD 905-468-3224 HARVESTBARN.CA MONDAY - SATURDAY 9AM - 6PM SUNDAY 9AM - 5PM



FEATURE & SALE ITEMS FOR MARCH 22ND - 28TH / NIAGARA-ON-THE-LAKE

BELL PEPPERS - ASSORTED
PRODUCT OF ONTARIO



FEATURE
\$2.49
/LB

ENGLISH CUCUMBERS
PRODUCT OF ONTARIO



FEATURE
79¢
/EACH

BANANAS
PRODUCT OF THE TROPICS



FEATURE
69¢
/LB

BLACK PLUMS
PRODUCT OF CHILI



FEATURE
\$1.99
/LB

PRE-ORDER YOUR FRESH EASTER TURKEY, LAMB OR HAM!

Make your Easter dinner even more special with Harvest Barn.

CALL 905-468-3224



KOZLIK'S MUSTARD
ASSORTED FLAVOURS



REG. \$6.99
\$5.99
250mL JAR

LEVEL GROUND COFFEE
ASSORTED FLAVOURS



REG. \$12.99
\$10.99
300g BAG

ROLLING MEADOW
10% JUST CREAM



REG. \$3.99
\$3.59
473mL BOTTLE

SABLE & ROSENFELD
TIPSY OLIVES - ASSORTED



REG \$7.99
\$6.89
250mL BOTTLE



Baked Fresh Daily! **HOTCROSS BUNS**

Only while supplies last until Easter!

\$4.99/PACKAGE OF SIX



NO PICK-UP FEES. **FREE DELIVERY** ON ORDERS OVER \$45 (IN NOTL).

SHOP ONLINE AT HarvestBarn.ca



THE OLDE
ANGEL INN
est. 1789



AUTHENTIC BRITISH PUB FARE & DRAFT ALES TO GO

We offer an extensive menu filled with British authentic, home-style cooked food, available through take-out!

SUNDAY-SATURDAY 11AM-10PM | CALL 905.468.3411 TO PLACE YOUR ORDER TODAY

PATIO NOW OPEN, WEATHER PERMITTING

TAKE-OUT MENU

APPETIZERS

- Garlic Bread with Cheese 🍷 \$8
- 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.

🍷 ANGEL INN FAVOURITE 🍷 GLUTEN-FREE OPTION AVAILABLE 🍷 VEGETARIAN DISH

LOCAL FAVOURITES

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

WEEKLY SPECIALS WILL BE FOR TAKE-OUT ONLY

WE'RE OPEN

We are still here for all of your take-out needs and happy to welcome you for indoor dining!



**NOW OFFERING
FREE DELIVERY
WITHIN NOTL!**

**AS COVID NUMBERS GO DOWN
AND THE FLOWERS COME UP,**
we are feeling optimistic and hopeful for the Spring ahead! Can't wait to see all of our fellow NOTLers on the patio!

VISIT OLDEANGELINN.COM FOR FULL MENUS

**WHAT MAKES A GREAT PIE EVEN BETTER?
A GREAT PINT!**

ALL OF ANGEL'S DRAFT BEERS NOW AVAILABLE FOR TAKE-OUT.
BUY A GROWLER FOR \$5 | DOMESTIC FILLS \$18 | IMPORT FILLS \$22

NOT IN THE MOOD FOR A PINT?

BOTTLES OF HOUSE WINE AVAILABLE FOR TAKE-OUT
BOTTLES OF WINE \$25 | PREMIUM WINES \$50



**BRING IN THIS COUPON FOR
15% OFF TAKE-OUT ORDERS**

(Excluding alcohol and specials)

**'PROBABLY' THE BEST
TAKE-OUT IN THE WORLD**

224 Regent Street
Phone: 905.468.3411
oldeangelinn.com