



Naked sheep! | Page 13



As COVID restrictions ease, fears of war in Europe are on the rise

Evan Saunders
Local Journalism Initiative
The Lake Report

COVID restrictions may be easing across Niagara-on-the-Lake, but fears surrounding the war in Ukraine are on the rise.

For the first time in recent memory, sociable and hungry residents hoping to hang out at Sweets & Swirls in the NOTL Community Centre could

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NOTL man caught in vigilante video sting

Richard Harley
The Lake Report

A vigilante video of a Niagara-on-the-Lake man who was ousted as a director of OUTHiagara on Feb. 13 has been removed from a public YouTube channel dedicated to exposing Niagara child predators.

The video was made on Feb. 12 after Jordon Williams, a politically active resident who has been a vocal advocate for a rainbow

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Developer is selling Parliament Oak site

Evan Saunders
Local Journalism Initiative
The Lake Report

The former Parliament Oak school site at 325 King St. is officially for sale – again.

“Who knows where this can end up at the end of the day,” Old Town resident and Preserve Our Special Town founder Alan Gordon said in an interview Wednesday. “In some ways it’s good news and in some ways it’s,

well, here we go again.” Gordon’s group was a vocal opponent of the Liberty Sites (3) Ltd.’s proposal for a 71-unit apartment building and a handful of semi-detached and single-family homes for the location.

Liberty Sites is selling the property through CBRE Group Inc., vice-president Steven Davidson confirmed with The Lake Report on Wednesday.

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NOTLers reflect on Ukraine, past and present

Richard Harley
The Lake Report

In the wake of Russia’s invasion of Ukraine, some Niagara-on-the-Lake residents with Ukrainian heritage are thinking back on their own families and when they moved to Canada.

Andre Kostiuk’s thoughts have been of his father and grandfather.

“They left Ukraine just around the end of the Second World War because Poland was actually taking people from Ukraine and making them be part of their army,” Kostiuk says. “My grandfather, he didn’t want that and they were taking two of his sons to go into the army, so they decided to leave Ukraine.”

Kostiuk now lives on an 11-acre farm on Hunter Road, which his grandfather purchased for about \$12,000 in 1952. His grandparents, Omelan and Domka, came to Canada in the 1940s to escape war, moving first to B.C. They both worked, farming in the summer and lumberjacking in the winter to support their four sons.



Andre and Kim Kostiuk, with their dog Emma, stand in front of their Hunter Road farm. The property was purchased by Andre’s grandfather Omelan, who fled Ukraine for the freedom of Canada during the Second World War. RICHARD HARLEY

“They left everything they had. And there was a war going on. One of their sons was killed as they were leaving Ukraine so they had to just pick up and run. They wound up in Germany and then to get to Canada, they had to sign a contract

and had to work two years on a beet farm out in B.C. So that’s what they did,” Kostiuk says.

From there the family headed to Toronto. And eventually his grandfather, who didn’t drive, made the trek on foot to Niagara-

on-the-Lake where he purchased the Hunter Road farm.

“The deed read they bought the parcel of land, a horse and a saddle,” Kostiuk says.

A few years later they bought another four-and-

a-half acres. Eventually the property was passed down to Kostiuk’s father and uncle, and later sold to Kostiuk and his wife Kim, where the two raised three children, Dayna, William

Continued on Page 2

Town officially gives Rand Estate cultural heritage designation

Evan Saunders
Local Journalism Initiative
The Lake Report

The Rand Estate has officially been declared a property of cultural heritage value or interest in the town of Niagara-on-the-Lake.

The notice of intention

to designate the property started during the previous council’s term, Lord Mayor Betty Disero said in an interview on Tuesday.

“We’ve spent all term trying to finalize the notice of designation that was sent out by the previous council,” Disero said.

“We are just finalizing

what they started and, yes, it was a long journey to get there.”

Two bylaws were passed by council on Monday: one each for 200 John St. and 588 Charlotte St. declared the properties as being of cultural heritage value.

“It’s one more issue that’s

off our plate this term. We continue to move forward. It was just something that needed to be done,” Disero said.

The designation protects the property in two ways, she said.

“First of all, we’ve now identified and labelled, for lack of a better word at this

point, what we believe to be heritage features on the Rand Estate and what we as a community need to protect,” she said.

“The second thing is it sets out a process for any changes, if there are any requested changes to the Rand Estate as it sits today.”



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Reflections: How current times echo history

Continued from Front Page

and James.
Looking at the state of Ukraine today, Kostiuk says it's a sombre reminder of how fortunate they are to be in Canada.

Ukraine has been plagued with a history of conflict, Kostiuk says. And to see Russian leader Vladimir Putin attacking the country now based on bogus claims is just wrong.

He remembers his own father, Tom, who was held in a concentration camp for two years and forced to dig trenches.

His father was an orphan, born about 100 miles from Kyiv, the capital of Ukraine.

Kostiuk still has strong Ukrainian roots. Growing up, he attended Ukrainian school and Ukrainian churches.

Ukrainians, he says, are "very passionate" about their culture.

"Ukrainian people really care for their land and where they grew up," he says. "We are very proud to be Canadians but really proud of our background too."

Kostiuk has memories of his father getting off a 12-hour shift at General Motors and heading back to the farm to pick him up for 6:30 a.m. so they could tend to the farm.

"And then my dad would go home, get four hours of sleep and go back to work. And that's two weeks of that. Like we spent so much time down here."

Eventually Kostiuk and his brothers settled into Niagara-on-the-Lake, having started Green Acre Automotive on Lakeshore Road together. His brother still owns the business.

At the Kostiuk farm now, called "Legacy Farm" on the entrance to the property, Kostiuk and his wife Kim have just built a new home.

For years, they kept the tradition alive of keeping horses on the property. The two would take them out for rides through the peach orchards and around town.

Now, they've consolidated and no longer have horses.

It's all a far cry from the things Ukrainians are



Top: Andre and Kim Kostiuk can look over their land from their bedroom balcony. Bottom left: Andre's grandparents Omelan and Domka in 1964. They originally purchased the Hunter Road property in 1952. RICHARD HARLEY

dealing with in their home country. And while the Kostiuks no longer have ties to family in Ukraine, it's an emotional time.

"We live in a great country. My dad came over with my grandfather and they come over with nothing, right? Just whatever was their clothes on their backs sort of thing and look what we were offered here," Kostiuk says.

It's bitter for him, because he knows a lot of Ukrainians didn't want to leave their country. And it's an echo of the past happening again today.

"People did not leave Ukraine because they didn't like Ukraine, they left because of certain reasons that made them move on. And the heritage and the love for it is still there. And for this to be happening in 2022 is just honestly insane," Kostiuk says.

"What gives (Putin) a right to just walk in? Those people didn't do anything. Ukrainians aren't doing

anything to cause this to happen. They want to live their own lives. They're very proud of themselves. They're proud of their land, their country. Just trying to live in your own little corner of the world."

He calls the whole situation "unfathomable."

"I don't even know how (Putin) can think the way he's thinking."

Even though he's never visited Ukraine, he cares so much for the country he's considered getting a tattoo of the nation's flag, along with pictures of his three children.

He hopes to be able to visit the country one day, but wonders now if that will ever happen.

"I was angry when they took over the Black Sea, because really, I wanted to see it. I wanted to be there. And I wanted to go to Kyiv where my dad was born, or close to there. But I don't know if I'll be able to do that."

Asked what his grand-

father might say if he were alive today, Kostiuk says, plainly, "He'd be mad."

His grandfather was a "very passionate man," and paid close attention to issues surrounding Ukraine and Russia, he says.

"He would be very upset. But I'm sure he was glad that he left it and made a very good place for his family."

He'd like to see more than just economic sanctions against Russia.

"I don't agree with war. I don't agree with all that stuff. Putin is a smart man. He has thought far enough in advance to figure it out that there will be things that will be retaliated to ... he's planned for this. He made this plan, he's doing it."

The sanctions so far are "not enough. No. And I'm not condoning violence in any way. But sanctions to me? Very nice. It's politically right. But for someone to take over another country and attack people and kill

them because they want to, I don't think that's strong enough. No."

"The sanctions should be enough that they're actually hurting the country. Not just a slap on the wrist, you did something bad, here, look what we're doing," Kostiuk says.

"NATO's got to be strong and people have got to be strong, and they have to really show an outpouring, because he can do that to anyone."

He believes if Putin is allowed to take Ukraine, it's just the first domino.

"He was putting his toe in the pond when he took the Black Sea and he's now putting maybe half his foot in the pond and seeing 'What are they really gonna do to me?' and to him obviously it's value to do it or else he wouldn't be doing it."

"But what's next? He can do anything if they just don't make a very strong show of force now, because he's already done one thing too many."

Ukrainian congress president condemns Russian invasion

Richard Harley
The Lake Report

Ukrainians across Niagara are feeling trepidation, fear and anger right now, as their native country is invaded by Russia.

Irene Newton, president of the Ukrainian Canadian Congress Niagara, said there are "a lot of mixed feelings."

"A lot of us still have family over there, including myself. So there's fear for family, anger at, of course, the Russian government for doing what they did, and anger that the world let it get to this point," she said in an interview with The Lake Report.

"I wish that something could have been done sooner in advance, instead of being reactionary. Being proactive about this might have been the way to go.

But, of course, nobody really knew whether Putin was actually going to go through with this or not."

She said amid the anger is also a sense of gratefulness that countries worldwide are strongly condemning Russia's actions.

"At the same time, we're also grateful and thankful that the western governments have stepped up, that they're all on this one page together and putting in the sanctions and sending defensive and lethal weapons and money and humanitarian aid," she said.

Read the full story online at niagaranow.com/news.phpml/7065. Or scan the QR code below.



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Shuli Ramchandani, Sylvia Angelkotter, Brigitte Ediger and Elaine Doughty were happy to see COVID restrictions easing but fears of the war in Ukraine were at the forefront of their thoughts. EVAN SAUNDERS

As COVID restrictions ease, fears of war in Europe are on the rise among residents

Continued from Front Page

directly enter the cafe instead of routing through the proof of vaccination checkpoint at the main entrance.

About 20 residents were chatting and eating in the cafe on Tuesday, a refreshing sight in the often quiet social hub.

A group of four women were busily chatting away at the back of the cafe. And though one said it "was great" to be able to enter the community centre with few restrictions, they were preoccupied with worries about the Russian invasion in Ukraine.

"I was thinking about hopping home to see my sister (in England) but I don't know if it's a good time right now," Sylvia Angelkotter said.

"We don't know what is going to happen in Europe," she said.

For Brigitte Ediger, fears of Russian invasions of other former-Soviet bloc countries such as Lithuania and Estonia (both part of the European Union) were close to home.

"I was born there, by the Baltic Sea in Gdańsk (now part of Poland). I took my granddaughter back there once, to show her where I was from," she said.

"I had a girlfriend from Estonia. She's gone now."

Capacity limits have been

lifted at most businesses across Niagara-on-the-Lake. Although it isn't the busy season yet, some business owners and residents are looking forward to a normal summer.

"It's good. We've been getting here very gradually," Old Town resident Bette Ann James said as she perused the aisles at Hendrik's Your Independent Grocer on Tuesday.

Retailers and grocery stores no longer have to abide by capacity restrictions but several retailers said that hardly mattered in NOTL at this time of year.

"I can't say that there's been an uptick, no, it's still off-season. But, golly, I'm so happy that it's March," said Anne Froese, manager of Serendipity on Queen Street.

Although the effects of reduced restrictions are not immediate for NOTL retailers they have created a sense of ease for some.

"We're excited about it," Froese said. "The restaurants will probably notice it a lot more."

She said guarding the door to ensure the store does not exceed capacity has been "really intense over the last two years."

She is looking forward to keeping her store's door wide open during warm weather and not having to worry about how many customers come in off

the street to purchase her wares.

"We just hope it's going to stay positive," she said.

Froese said the business is mindful of its employees' safety and will be retaining strict masking mandates while allowing more people back inside.

"I just pray that we have a fantastic summer," said Paula Wardrop, retail manager at The Scented Market.

Wardrop said even though restrictions are being lifted she will still try to control the number of people in the small Queen Street store.

"I want people to move around," she said.

Policing capacity has not been a problem as it was a very slow winter in NOTL, Wardrop said. The store has been there for about a year.

Wardrop said she has noticed continued vigilance isn't easily wearing off as people are still being careful despite the newly relaxed rules.

"Everybody is very respectful now of everybody's space. That's my opinion. Nobody's on top of anybody anymore," she said.

Even though the business doesn't have a capacity limit sign, customers still wait outside for others to leave, even when Wardrop says they can enter.

"I think everybody has

a good mindset. I think everybody is being very respectful. A lot of people are vaccinated," she said.

"Even though this mask mandate might be lifted I think people might still wear them. I think I might," she said.

"I don't think anybody wants to go back (into a lockdown)."

Wardrop said she believes retailers are going to be alright but said she remains worried about the state of the restaurant industry.

Over at Silversmith Brewing Company in Virgil, people were drinking beer, eating food and bartender Cody Linthicum was ready for business to pick up where it left off in 2019.

"Let's let human beings be human beings again," he said.

Not needing to have a dedicated staff member checking vaccine certificates will be a relief for the relatively small restaurant, he said.

"On busy days we only have two people working and one of them would always be over (at the door)," he said.

Despite the difficulties the pandemic has imposed on small businesses and restaurants, Silversmith is "still kicking, baby!" he exclaimed and encouraged readers to stop by for a pint and some grub.

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Vigilantes target NOTL man in sting video

Continued from Front Page

crosswalk in downtown NOTL, appears to have ordered an Uber ride to bring a minor to his family's NOTL home.

The incident follows a sexually explicit online conversation with a man posing as a 15-year-old named "Jake" as part of a sting operation.

Williams was forced to leave the OUTniagara board four days prior to the initial Feb. 17 release of the video, which was posted on the YouTube channel of a group calling itself Regional Deviant Watch.

Williams said his departure from OUTniagara's board was over "internal differences of opinion."

The organization said it was unaware of the existence of the video when Williams left.

YouTube says the video has been removed because it violates the platform's terms of service.

Over the past several days, Williams did not respond to multiple phone calls and messages seeking

follow-up comment about the video and conversation. He earlier blocked a reporter from messaging on Facebook.

Last week Williams strongly denied any accusations of sexual misconduct.

"If there is a video posted alleging negative allegations attacking my character, they are incredibly hurtful and false in all respects," he said in an emailed statement.

Last week, a Niagara Regional Police spokesperson confirmed officers are "aware" of the video and that "cyber crime detectives are investigating."

The Lake Report has obtained a copy of the video, which documents three men meeting with Williams outside his family's home in NOTL. The online conversation prior to the video contains several sexually explicit suggestions by Williams.

Because of the explicit and sexual nature of the interaction, The Lake Report is not publishing full details of what was said.

In the video outside his home, Williams says he's



Jordan Williams, who ran unsuccessfully for NOTL town council in 2018 and also unsuccessfully sought the provincial Tory nomination, has been the subject of a vigilante sting operation into exploitation of minors. RICHARD HARLEY/FILE

there to meet someone named "Jake." But after the person confronting him says Williams knows Jake is a minor, he says he doesn't know any Jake.

The conversation to set up the sting begins on Grindr, a dating and sex app for gay men. After an introduction, the decoy asks to move the conversation to text mes-

sages, to which Williams agrees.

Screenshots of the online and text chats with the decoy show Williams being informed the person won't be 16 until July, but he initially continues to have a sexually explicit conversation.

Later, Williams suggests because the person is a minor, they can just "hang out."

Williams then orders the Uber ride, at a cost of about \$40, to bring "Jake" to his family's home in NOTL.

The man who confronts Williams in the video identified himself to The Lake Report as a 20-year-old Niagara Falls resident named Logan Bell.

In the video, Williams

appears to be inebriated. Bell said they weren't aware he was intoxicated based on the conversation, but that it was clear when they met him.

Bell was one of three men to confront Williams in the video. He said the others were there for "backup."

Bell is not the person who had the decoy chat with Williams, but is the Niagara connection to Regional Deviant Watch, so the Uber was ordered to his home.

He said the whole conversation with Williams took place over about an hour.

A section of the video in which Williams apparently talks about being a board member of OUTniagara was edited out before The Lake Report could view it.

During the video, Williams says he was only wanting to "hang out" and counsel Jake "if you f----- had issues about your sexuality, I would f----- talk to you about that. That's as far as it would go."

Bell notes the decoy never mentioned having issues with his sexuality.

Police discourage vigilantes from conducting investigations



Logan Bell, 20, finds suspected predators in the Niagara region through hook-up apps. After they've agreed to meet an underage child, he then confronts them in person and films a video of the interaction. SOURCED/YOUTUBE

Richard Harley
The Lake Report

Niagara Regional Police strongly discourage groups like Regional Deviant Watch from conducting their own investigations of potential criminal or sexual offenders.

Police spokesperson Stephanie Sabourin said the department does not "endorse civilian investigations and would expect that any criminal-related concerns are reported directly to police for appropriate investigation."

But that doesn't deter the man who identified himself as Logan Bell, who said he wants to prevent children from potential harm.

Bell, 20, from Niagara Falls, said he was inspired to start Regional Deviant Watch after seeing similar so-called "creep catcher" channels.

He said the amount of sex trafficking that happens in Niagara Falls also motivated him to do what he does.

"I got into this type of work because I realized there are no predator catchers down here. I watch many, many catchers online and it inspired me to start down here. We need to protect these innocent kids at all costs," Bell said.

As well, when he was 14, he says he saw a man taking a picture under a girl's skirt as she walked with her father on Clifton Hill. The man fled when confronted.

Bell said he wants to help shine a light on this activity.

There are more than a dozen videos on the group's channel and Bell said he brings all of them to the attention of police.

Officers are aware of what he does, he said, and he thinks many support it.

"I have communicated

with police about this work and for the most part they do condone it. They know we have good intentions when doing this type of work," Bell said.

"They do advise most predator catchers to leave this work to police, but they do know intentions are good and still look into every catch."

He said the conversations with suspects begin on hook-up apps, but that the group does not approach anyone.

They have a decoy profile and wait for people to approach them on Grindr and other apps like Meet Me and Jaumo.

He said people contact their decoy accounts daily.

To access apps like Grindr, Bell and his group have to set their age at 18 minimum. After they are approached, they move the conversations to text mes-

sages and inform suspects they are only 15.

"We put the lowest age possible and then tell them right away in message that we are in fact 15. That's what almost every catcher does as well," Bell says.

"The reason why we move conversations to text is because we get banned on Grindr a lot, which is a good thing because it means there are people who do the right thing and instantly block and report, not meet up with the child," he said.

"It's a bit better to move to text because you don't get reported as much, I find. It also gives us their phone number for further evidence."

Bell said group members typically bring backup when confronting a suspect, for safety and to have a third camera that shows they're merely confronting the subject.

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Everyone's 'breathing sigh of relief' as pharmacies well-stocked with rapid test kits

Richard Harley
The Lake Report

While there were supply challenges in the beginning, Niagara-on-the-Lake pharmacies are now stocked with COVID-19 rapid tests.

Julie Taylor, owner of Stone Road Pharmacy in Virgil, said the pharmacy is now receiving 300 tests per week and they aren't flying off the shelves.

She said in general people are feeling "a lot more relaxed" that the tests are reliably available.

"Everyone's breathing a sigh of relief," Taylor said.

At Simpson's Pharmacy, "Supplies of free test kits are readily available now and we also have an ample supply that we purchased that we will be selling once the free ones run out," owner Sean Simpson said.

"Hopefully, the increased access to rapid testing will help guide people's decisions on returning to work



Sabrina Lyszak and Amber Buchan give out rapid test kits at Simpson's Pharmacy. RICHARD HARLEY

and social settings after illness," he said.

"Although vaccination passport requirements are being dropped, we continue to provide vaccine to those wishing to receive it in order to protect themselves and others. We are also well stocked with KN95 and CA-N95 masks," Simpson said.

It was fairly easy for her

pharmacy to obtain the kits, Taylor said.

"I expressed my interest and 300 test kits started arriving weekly."

The first batch she had went extremely quickly, she said, but the pace has "declined now."

"The first 300 went in two days, and now we didn't even go through the next 300 in a week."

She will keep receiving 300 tests per week at her discretion, however she said one catch is a lack of storage space to keep them.

"With all the COVID supplies, we've ended up with a lot more products than originally anticipated. When you think of masks and sanitizer and vaccines, and then all the stuff that goes with the vaccines, the syringes, the sharps containers. And now the rapid tests."

"It takes up a lot of storage space, so we need to be very mindful of how much we have. It's a balance of meeting the demand, but then also just recognizing that I'm a small pharmacy and I'm limited to the real estate I have."

She said anyone can stop in and get a box of tests. Right now they are being limited to one per household.

Each box contains five rapid tests.

Data shows 25 convoy donations from NOTL

Richard Harley
The Lake Report

New data obtained by The Lake Report appears to show at least 25 people with Niagara-on-the-Lake addresses donated to the "freedom convoy" of trucks that tied up downtown Ottawa with three weeks of protests over COVID-19 safety regulations.

The data is part of leaked information from the crowdfunding site GiveSendGo.

Of the donations, 23 appear to have come from the L0S 1J0 area code, one from L0S 1P0 and one from L0S 1J1.

The data was provided to The Lake Report by ddosecrets.com.

Several other news outlets have also confirmed the data appears to be accurate.

The data suggests NOTLers gave at least \$3,334 to support the convoy.

After publishing initial data about three donations last week, The Lake Re-



"Freedom convoy" supporters at NOTL Husky truck stop. RICHARD HARLEY/FILE

port received several calls from people who did not agree with publishing the names of the donors. One of the NOTL donors named in the data denied making a contribution.

The Lake Report is not publishing the full list of names, as it has not been clearly defined whether making the donations was illegal.

However, the issue remains a controversial one, as an original GoFundMe supporting the convoy was shuttered by the Canadian

government after the funds were deemed to be supporting illegal activities.

Since then, convoy supporters have circumvented that decision and used GiveSendGo to make the legally-shaky donations.

GiveSendGo is a Christian funding platform that has been used to raise money for controversial figures and groups such as teenaged shooter Kyle Rittenhouse, the Proud Boys and political funding for Jan. 6 insurrection in the U.S. Unlike GoFundMe, the site appears

to actively be encouraging people to donate to the campaign.

On its Twitter page, the company posted messages such as: "To the people who are continuously taking a stand for freedom – YOU are making a difference in the world! This movement sets a foundation for people now and for future generations. You are not only inspiring people to stand up for their freedoms but actually taking action."

The company also previously responded to the data leak on Twitter, saying it is aware of the leak, but that no credit card information was leaked and no money was stolen.

The company said it was holding the money in an undisclosed U.S. bank account and is taking steps to prevent the Canadian government from freezing the funds and officials are "actively discussing the legal options for getting the funds where they need to go."

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COVID Tracker

NOTL active cases (last 28 days): 172
Region active cases: 1,338
Region deaths: 518
Region total cases: 34,179

**March 2 data per Niagara Region Public Health. Public health warns that "Due to the surge in COVID-19 cases, limited availability of testing, and changes to case and contact management practices, case counts shown (above) are an underestimate of the true number of individuals in Niagara with COVID-19. Data should be interpreted with caution." Case data for municipalities is also now being interpreted in 28-day cycles.*



Contributed by Patty Garriock

"There are two things to aim at in life: first, to get what you want; after that, to enjoy it. Only the wisest of mankind achieve the second." - Logan Pearsail Smith

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Winter deep freeze before spring

Photographer John DeLorenzi captured this photo of Niagara Falls in a deep freeze in February.

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



Editorial

Reflections and a look ahead

Kevin MacLean
 Managing Editor

Remember more than 700 days ago, when life as we thought was normal shut down for what many figured would be a few weeks to "crush the curve" of COVID-19?

Remember how hesitant our leaders were to even consider imposing mask mandates, let alone full-on societal shutdowns?

Remember that millions died worldwide? Remember the selfless efforts of those on the front lines of the COVID response?

Long before we had ever heard – or feared – that there might be a second wave, or third or ... we thought we might be able to quickly wrestle COVID

into submission.

So much has changed as we all struggle to figure out what "normal" is going to look like for the near future. Our lives, our psyches and our attitudes toward many things – especially the importance of a robust public health policy – have no doubt been altered irrevocably.

Two years of a global pandemic, amid repeated, unprecedented government-ordered shutdowns of society and businesses, will do that.

As of this week, it seems – again, we hope – that COVID is in the rear-view mirror. It's not gone, but it seems to be manageable now. Thank goodness. And heartfelt thanks to all who did their part to make it so.

Like any historic, world-changing event, the pandemic gave us much to reflect on. It also leaves a legacy of its own odd lexicon, unconventional words and phrases we might never have known or used otherwise in everyday conversation – and which we are not likely to forget.

Among them: antigen test, PCR, contact tracing, coronavirus, herd immunity, incubation period, N95, reproductive rate, social distancing, physical distancing, super spreader, stay-at-home order, transmission, viral shedding, ventilator, vaccine, Pfizer, Moderna, variants, Delta, Omicron, third wave, fourth wave, flattening the curve, masking up and PPE.

It has not been an easy

two years. Many people lost their lives and, in turn, the lockdowns were huge asks of individuals, organizations, businesses and society writ large.

We've always preached tolerance and patience throughout this pandemic and we want that to continue.

We also urge everyone to patronize the local shops and businesses that have been the backbone of our community these two years while weathering some really tough times.

And on top of that, support and be kind to one another – no matter what your differences may be. Now is the time for all of us to be pulling in the same direction.

editor@niagaranow.com



Emergencies Act was essential to end protests

Dear editor:

I would like to thank Tony Baldinelli for his opinion piece, ("Invoking the Emergencies Act was not justified, Baldinelli says," Feb. 24, Lake Report), but I was disappointed to read that he would vote against its invocation.

Citizens of Ottawa must

be considered as "endangered Canadians" by the very definition that he outlined in his interpretation of the Emergencies Act.

Their right to live safely without fear of injury to family, property, and mobility was threatened by national mobs partying, honking, hurling expletives and

illegally occupying Ottawa's streets – for weeks.

Businesses had to close, supply chains were severely disrupted, hospitals and fire departments had their effectiveness restricted – for weeks.

Municipal, provincial and federal police were put together and strategically able to end the blockade

in our national capital. My best regards to them.

Now, the Emergencies Act has been revoked, as it should be. The citizens of Ottawa seem thankful, as am I.

I hope that a Conservative government, if pushed, would act as well in the end.

Brian Emes
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Questions about the future of Willowbank

David Israelson
Special to The Lake Report



The proposed sale of the former Laura Secord school has prompted some questions about Willowbank's future, says writer David Israelson. FILE

What's the deal with Willowbank? Something just doesn't sit right about the esteemed restoration school's proposal to sell off ... a school building.

To be fair, Willowbank may have good reasons based on its own internal analysis for wanting to sell the former Laura Secord Memorial School that it acquired only a decade ago.

The property became available when the District School Board of Niagara unloaded it as part of its apparently never-ending drive to close public schools without caring what local communities think. The DSBN closed Laura Secord in 2010, then went on to close Old Town's Parliament Oak elementary school over the strong objections of residents.

The question now: Is what might be good for Willowbank right now also good for Queenston and Niagara-on-the-Lake? There are legitimate concerns about how selling Laura Secord to developers could affect both the community — and Willowbank itself — in the future.

For those who might not know, the Willowbank School of Restoration Arts in Queenston is something of an underappreciated gem. It offers programs that are hard to find or replicate anywhere else in Canada, indeed around the world.

Its graduates tend to get snapped up by thoughtful

urban planning firms and municipalities. Its programs teach important concepts for the 21st century — respecting heritage, conserving beautiful buildings and adapting and reusing materials to make our built-up environment resilient as we contend with climate change.

It's a huge asset to the community and the region as well as to education and the development of ideas for a sustainable future.

Full disclosure: I did some communications work for Willowbank about a decade ago. I don't work with the school now, but I'm interested in it and its programs — I guess I'm sort of a fanboy now.

Has Willowbank really thought this through enough? The school's vice-chair John Scott says of the Laura Secord property that, "We don't need it," and has speculated that "someone else could probably do something with it for the benefit of the community."

Sorry, "probably" is not

good enough. In Old Town, we are already in the midst of an increasingly testy debate over the future of the Parliament Oak property, with residents up in arms about proposals they fear will change the character of the neighbourhood without public benefit.

Are we looking at a similar situation about to unfold in Queenston? It could easily happen, even if Willowbank has only the best intentions in its plan to sell the land.

Secondly, if Willowbank doesn't think it needs the Laura Secord property now, is it confident that it will never need to use it? The school thought it had good use for it before, and the type of education Willowbank offers has great potential to increase in demand.

There will likely be new, creative ways for Willowbank to be an education leader. For example, old buildings everywhere need to be retrofitted for net zero carbon emissions by 2050 to deal with climate

change, and it's going to take expertise and skill to do this while protecting the heritage elements of these buildings.

Willowbank may be eager to put Laura Secord up for sale in a hot real estate market to extinguish its mortgage on the property and consolidate its programs into one building. But didn't Willowbank acquire Laura Secord in the first place with the intention to use the site for innovative, creative programming? The idea was to build a legacy, not to flip a building.

Selling an attractive property in the heart of a heritage-laden neighbourhood seems to be the opposite of what a place like Willowbank is about. The neighbours, the town council and Willowbank itself should ask: is this short-term thinking really best for Willowbank and its legacy ... and for the community?

David Israelson is a writer and non-practising lawyer who lives in Niagara-on-the-Lake.

Dear Litterbug: Please pick up after yourself



Letter writers Paul and Mary McHoull want an unknown litterbug to clean up his or her mess. SUPPLIED

Dear editor:
This letter is to the Queen Street Litterbug.

Dear Litterbug: On our daily walks we frequently walk along Queen Street next to the golf course and often find your neatly packed bag of trash.

It always contains the Globe and Mail, an empty Diet Coke bottle with a straw inside, a serviette and a paper bag from Tim Hortons.

On occasion there has also been a local newspaper

and parts of your mail with your name carefully ripped off the envelope.

So we know you are a local resident as you did not remove LOS 1JO from the bottom.

It disturbs us to see trash lying around our beautiful town, so we carry plastic bags, pick up your trash and take it home to put in our recycling.

If we can do this why can't you do the same?

*Paul and Mary McHoull
NOTL*

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HALL RENTAL AVAILABLE



Eliminating blind bids is **first step** toward housing affordability

The following is a letter sent to Premier Doug Ford and Housing Minister Steve Clark.

The recently released Housing Affordability Task Force report could only have been produced by a select group of developers, builders and service providers ancillary to that industry.

The recommendations contained therein, if enacted by your government, would lead to the disembowelment of the entire level of municipal and regional governance in Ontario.

It would hand the entire planning process over to the development industry and their financiers and destroy the concept of heritage designation, community planning and environmental protection in the supposed name of “dealing with the housing affordability problem.”

The development industry and its coterie of experts have for years been carping about a lack of supply driv-

ing prices to unattainable heights because of municipal red tape and drawn-out approval processes precluding builders from getting building permits to construct residential dwellings.

And yet, according to Statistics Canada, in the last four months of 2021 the lowest total in any month of existing building permits in Ontario was more than 2.5 million, which hardly represents any form of lack of supply.

Having been a realtor for over 40 years in Ontario I find your government’s proposed response to the “housing affordability” problem completely lacking in common sense and slanted entirely to prolonging the problem at the expense of the public to the benefit of your developer friends and their wealthy investors.

The essential problem with housing is the concept that housing is not a place to live for citizenry but rather a commodity to be traded in for profit of



The government’s affordable housing plan hurts municipalities and only benefits developers, says letter writer and realtor Robert Bader. JESSICA MAXWELL/FILE

speculators, wealthy investors and developers.

The first and cheapest, easiest solution to steeply rising home prices would be to outlaw the blind bidding process entirely in the province. Almost all sales in the past year have been through blind auctions where buyers bid with no

idea what the other bids are in the marketplace.

This entirely slants the process in favour of the seller and leads to escalating prices not based on market values, but rather on how much a buyer can be duped into paying without the information as to how much other buyers are offering.

Would the same hold true in the stock market, or any other market for goods or services? Perhaps there shouldn’t be any price tags on the food we buy in grocery stores and it should go to the highest blind bid?

The second action you should take would be an immediate and effec-

tive speculation tax on all residential property, which would make it unprofitable for speculators and speculative syndicates to profit from trading in residential real estate.

According to Teranet, investors accounted for a quarter of all housing sales in Ontario in the month of August 2021, the highest percentage in over a decade. They were the biggest group of buyers, underscoring the heightened risk to the market which is perhaps why Swiss Bank UBS ranked Toronto second behind Frankfurt in the 2021 Global Bubble Market Index.

I’m hoping that you and your government will be crystal clear in your position on your plans for the future of Ontario and the roles of municipal and regional levels of governments in those plans, such that the voters in Ontario will have a clear choice when heading to the voting booth.

Robert Bader
NOTL

St. Davids roundabout is a **costly, ill-conceived,** wrong-headed solution

Dear editor:

The \$4-million-plus roundabout that has been proposed for the Four Corners intersection of York Road and Four Mile Creek Road in St. Davids is not wanted by the residents of St. Davids and it is not needed.

Last November, the regional director of transportation services for Niagara told the NOTL town council that the proposal is effectively a “done deal” because the region has already jumped through all the necessary regulatory hoops and that there is nothing the town can do about it and, therefore, no need for further discussion.

Despite this, last November NOTL councillors voted unanimously for a resolution to express their disapproval of the proposal after listening to a presentation by regional representatives. Coun. Clare Cameron was quoted as saying that the council was expressing “what we’re hearing from our community.”

On the other hand, Coun. Gary Zalepa, who was elected to Niagara regional council to represent the residents of NOTL, seems to feel that he knows better and the residents who are opposed to the proposal are simply misinformed. He is reported to have made up his mind that “a roundabout is the best thing for the main intersection in St. Davids.”

What is wrong with this picture? How can the Region of Niagara be permitted to proceed with a proposal that is not wanted by the residents of St. Davids and is opposed by the town council?

This is an example of regional transportation planning bureaucrats run amok, ignoring the interests of local residents, using questionable studies and “lap-dog” experts to impose their so-called solution to a problem that their own approach to transportation planning is creating in the first place.

The logic is as follows:

*The regional transporta-

tion plan calls for traffic to increase on York and Four Mile Creek regional roads over the next 10 years;

*The Four Corners intersection in St. Davids, while not really a traffic problem today, will become one within the 10-year planning horizon;

*Therefore, the intersection must be upgraded to accommodate the increased traffic and a roundabout is the best way to upgrade, consistent with regional transportation planning policies to favour roundabouts over traffic lights.

This is not a plan for the residents of St. Davids. This is a plan for people who don’t live in St. Davids but who may occasionally drive through it and suffer the terrible inconvenience of being slightly delayed by a four-way stop.

It is disingenuous of Maged Elmadhoon, Niagara Region’s transportation manager, to assert that “understanding the character of St. Davids has been a core aspect of the project” and

that it could “add to the character of the village by putting something in the centre of the roundabout.”

At the same time, Mr. Elmadhoon states that both York and Four Mile Creek roads are regional roads and that “the intent of these roads is to move traffic” and that “there isn’t any study that says we need to move the traffic away.”

And that is precisely the problem! The terms of reference for the municipal class environmental assessment regarding the intersection were ridiculously narrow, extending only a few feet in each direction from the intersection. The scope of the study made no effort to consider the impact of increased traffic on the local community.

The study makes no mention of the elementary school just down the block nor the large residential community on the other side of the intersection from which young children walk to school. The assessment should have considered

whether the anticipated increase in traffic would be detrimental to the community and what could be done to preserve and enhance the character of the village.

The Village of St. Davids, with its haphazard mix of industrial and residential zoning, has already suffered from years of questionable planning but there are many ways the character of the village could be maintained and enhanced ... beginning with routing increasing traffic and heavy trucks away from the village core.

Sidewalks and parking areas could be added or improved, and bike lanes incorporated. The character of the village would be greatly enhanced by creating an environment for people to walk around, for example, with shops and restaurants for them to visit. None of this was even remotely considered in the region’s current approach.

The current, proposed plan should be scrapped. The estimated \$4-million price tag (which doesn’t

include the cost of expropriating private land necessary to complete the work) should be spent, instead on figuring out the best way to move regional traffic without having it go through the middle of St. Davids, and to initiatives that would actually enhance the village character rather than destroy it.

Regarding regional transportation planning, a good place to start would be to look into placing a roundabout at the intersection of York Road with Concession 6, scene of many recent actual, as opposed to hypothetical, crashes, and upgrading Concession Road 6 south of York Road to at least the same standard as Mewburn Road.

Local elections are coming up in October of this year and, as we have all heard, “All politics is Local.” The matter of the St. Davids roundabout promises to be a live issue in the election.

Donald Mackenzie
St. Davids



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Niagara College installed its own rainbow crosswalk in 2019. BRITTANY CARTER/FILE

Possible locations for NOTL's first rainbow crosswalk endorsed

Evan Saunders
Local Journalism Initiative
The Lake Report

Niagara-on-the-Lake is one step closer to having a rainbow crosswalk after council approved four possible locations for one.

During council's meeting Monday, Coun. John Wiens announced four intersections the diversity, equity and inclusivity committee chose as suitable for the crosswalk.

They are the intersections of: Queen and Mississauga streets, Wellington and Picton streets, King and Ricardo streets by Queen's Royal Park, and the crosswalk on Niagara Stone Road near the NOTL Community Centre.

"The committee also supports the idea of public consultation on the choice of one of the four locations and supports giving the public an opportunity to financially sponsor the cost for the crosswalk through fundraising," Wiens said.

Wiens said the town has already received funding for one out of four rainbow benches in town and that there should be public consultation for the benches and an opportunity for private fundraising to support their installation as well.

"Expediency of installation (should) be a factor in the decision," Wiens said.

Coun. Gary Burroughs was strongly in favour of a public consultation process but expressed concern

it would not be a robust survey.

"I think there's been lessons learned from some of the social media questionnaires done so far," he told councillors.

"And, hopefully, those lessons learned, we'll get a good response from a good proportion of our community so that we actually have a real understanding of what it is and how they feel about the issue."

"What I'm hoping is that when staff go to the public they don't use the same format as they did for the wall committee at Mississauga and Queen, which simply took apart the recommendation," he said.

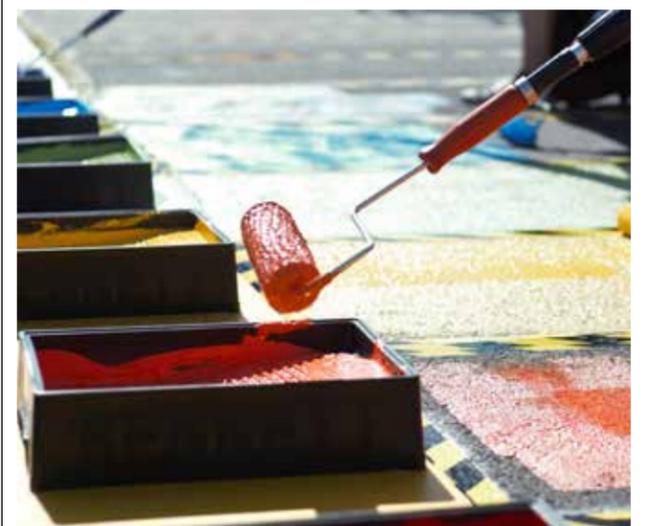
He suggested questions such as "What do you think about the rainbow crosswalk? Where should it be? Do you want one?"

Burroughs said he was unsure why the project was moving forward.

"I get that the diversity committee wants this. I think we have a history in Niagara-on-the-Lake of looking after a very diverse community for 50, 60 years. This isn't new to us. Maybe it's for visitors or maybe I'm misunderstanding what it's for," he said.

Chief administrator Marnie Cluckie said town staff would report to council on the format of the public consultation process once it is prepared.

The recommendations were passed unanimously by council.



Council has endorsed possible locations for NOTL's first rainbow Pride crosswalk. BRITTANY CARTER/FILE

Anatomy of a crosswalk Why does it cost so much?

Richard Harley
The Lake Report

The Town of Niagara-on-the-Lake has budgeted \$15,000 for a Pride crosswalk in town, and some NOTL residents are wondering why the project comes with such a high price tag.

"\$15,000 for paint? I'll do it for \$300 and save the taxpayers a lot of money," has been the sentiment of some of the comments on social media.

As with so many things, something so simple is a lot more complicated.

So, The Lake Report spoke to an expert whose company manufactures traffic paint to get a sense of why a rainbow crosswalk costs so much.

James Zhang, president of Polymight International Inc. in Brampton, said some paints last longer than others, and that's part of the cost.

For rainbow crosswalks, municipalities tend to use methyl methacrylate (or MMA) paint, which lasts about three to five years, he said.

By comparison, normal road paint is good for about a year and sometimes needs to be touched up more than once annually.

Another option, which the town is considering, is thermal plastic paint, which Zhang said also lasts longer

than traditional paint, but not as long as MMA paint.

Thermal paint provides coverage for about two years, he said, in comparison to the three to five years that MMA offers.

"MMA is the most durable stuff on the market," he said.

Zhang, whose company is in the process of being able to sell thermal plastic, recommends MMA paint for crosswalk projects. He said he's seen cases where the thermal plastic wore out too quickly.

Thermal is also more expensive, he adds.

"In general, (MMA paints) were designed at the very beginning for stops or for intersections where you really need to see the lines," he said.

"If you cross in the intersections and you see the zebra lines with the white bars in between, most of them are done by MMA."

Zhang said he has supplied paint to contractors that have done rainbow crosswalks in Ottawa, Toronto, London, Hamilton, Burlington and Blue Mountain.

But the real cost, he said, comes from the contractor. He said the MMA paint is a fraction of the cost of the installation.

"Typically, the contractor charges quite a bit to install it. I know our material is not that expensive, but the

contractor can charge sometimes close to \$1,000 a line, or bar. So one set of those rainbow colours, if it's seven colors, that will be \$7,000," he said.

"But I know from a material standpoint, it's a fraction of that."

While the cost is marked up, there's a lot of labour involved as crews have to start and stop while waiting for colours to dry, pre-mark lines and tape them.

"It's not something you can do with one guy," he said. "So it's a labour cost and mobilization."

Asked about the town's \$15,000 price tag, he said that's "not too bad if you put everything all together."

MMA is a two-stage liquid paint, like an epoxy, said Zhang, while thermal plastics are actually a powder coating that gets melted onto the road.

The Town of NOTL said it has also consulted an "industry expert contractor who regularly performs this type of work" and said he recommended thermal plastic.

"The contractor advised that they have completed similar installations for other municipalities, such as St. Catharines, Oakville, Milton and Halton Hills," the town said in response to questions from The Lake Report.

"The cost of implementing a permanent rainbow

crosswalk varies depending on the style and material selected. The contractor advised that they use 'preform thermal,' a thermoplastic material, with an added anti-slip agent," a town spokesperson said in a statement.

"Thermoplastic is a polymer material that is more durable than regular paint and has extended longevity. This helps to ensure that the crosswalk is safe and lasts longer."

The town said while \$15,000 is budgeted, it's only an estimate right now. The cost could vary depending on the project's scope, size and the materials used.

As well, "in order to accommodate each colour, the crosswalk needs to be a little wider than typical crosswalks. The length is determined by the crossing distance between the curbs on each side of the intersection."

The location of the NOTL rainbow crosswalk has not yet been finalized.

"A detailed quote could not be secured without the final location and complete specifications, so an estimate was used. Once a final determination is made for the crosswalk location, competitive quotes will be obtained from the market, and a final cost will be determined," the town said.



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Big Head Wines opens doors in big new location on Line 6 Road

Jill Troyer
The Lake Report

You can't miss the big smiles staff are sporting behind their masks when you walk through the massive glass doors into the new retail space at Big Head Wines.

They are palpably happy and clearly excited to be there.

"I feel relieved, it's been a long process, doing construction during a pandemic. This has been our aim for three years, so it's nice to finally be here," said Jakub Lipinski, head of operations.

The new space is on Line 6, near Four Mile Creek Road. The winery had leased a site on Hunter Road since 2014.

This "gives us control over our environment. We had six or seven years at the Hunter farm, which was originally a sour cherry and peach farm. We learned what we wanted in our new space and this was built as a winery," Lipinski explained. There are three tasting



Jakub Lipinski, head of operations at Big Head Wines, says he's relieved to open the new location. DON REYNOLDS

bars for customers, tucked into the production space.

Twenty concrete vats used for fermenting and storing wine dominate the room. They came from Italy and needed a special crew, with a special forklift, to get them into the building. The largest holds 6,000 litres of wine.

Early reviews from visitors since the location opened on Feb. 11 are positive.

"Everyone is loving it," said Lipinski. "They like how we still kept the raw feel to the space. We focus on quality of product, service and our people."

The site has 23 acres of vineyards, which will provide enough grapes for

about half of Big Head's production. The operation has another vineyard in Vineland and also purchases grapes from local growers.

Like other Niagara-on-the-Lake wineries, tastings at Big Head since COVID are by reservation and will likely stay that way. According to Lipinski, it lets staff spend more time interacting with customers and provides an enhanced experience.

And this is not the end of the story. There are plans to double the space, to add more room for barrel storage, and add pizza and gourmet coffee in the future.



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

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Grinder pump committee comes to close, offers **final recommendations**

Evan Saunders
Local Journalism Initiative
The Lake Report

Niagara-on-the-Lake's grinder pump committee has held its last meeting and submitted recommendations to the town, a moment that Lord Mayor Betty Disero referred to as an example of the good a committee can provide.

"I think this is a real success story for the town. There was an issue, it needed to be dealt with, it took a while to get the committee going but we did this term," Disero told councillors during a committee of the whole meeting on Feb. 14.

The grinder pump committee offered eight recommendations for improving residential properties that utilize grinder pumps, a mechanism that helps infrastructure process sewage.

Recommendations include the town creating operating and maintenance manuals for pump owners, maintaining an inventory of emergency parts for repairs, hosting inspections of grinder pumps before a new



Grinder pumps like this one are used in many homes in Bevan Heights. SUPPLIED

owner takes over a home and for the town to reimburse grinder pump owners \$75 for insurance fees.

Coun. Erwin Wiens did not support the reimbursement of fees for grinder pump owners, citing the myriad of other home utilities and infrastructure that Niagara-on-the-Lake residents pay for out-of-pocket.

"In a municipality like ours what happens is, when it comes to utilities, there's a number of inequities," Wiens said.

"There's people in our town that have no water, no

gas, no sewage and only essentially have trucked in oil for their heaters. And they have electricity, and that's it."

Wiens pointed out the many homeowners who have septic tanks on their properties which need to get pumped out once a year as a private expense.

"That's a \$300 bill every year for each system we have."

"We also have to be mindful of tax dollars and where they're going and when somebody purchases a house with a grinder pump, or a cistern, or a well or any (property) that doesn't support municipal services, they make those choices willingly," he said.

Wiens was the only councillor who voted against that particular recommendation. The rest of the report was passed unanimously with Wiens in support as well.

In a staff report, the cost of rebating \$75 to all grinder pump owners was estimated to be \$14,000. Coun. Norm Arsenault disputed this, suggesting the true cost would be around \$7,000.



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Thank You NOTL GOLF CLUB Members!

As there are so many members, current and past, as well as locals who visited the NOTL Golf Club over the years, I wanted to make sure I could thank as many of you as possible for what has been an incredible ride at North America's Oldest Course.

Thank you to every member or local who has ever dropped into the Pro Shop to talk golf or just about life. Thank you to the board of directors that gave a 24-year-old unproven pro a chance. I will never forget what Bob Cheriton, Bruce Murdoch, Ron Ashenhurst and the late Glen May and Rex Williams did for me.

To all of the staff that have ever worked for me and gave 100%, I thank you. To Ricky Watson, who was not only my co-pilot at the club, but also in life, thank you and all the best in your new career. To Kevin Winnington and Mike Magwood, who became more than just co-workers, I will miss our lunches together. And thank you to owners Jill and John Wiens for the past 15 years. I wish you all the best moving forward.

When I started at NOTL in 2006, my goal was to become the longest-serving Head Professional in the club's history. After achieving that now, it is time for me to move on to a job that will give me more time to be with my boys, Avery and Emmett. This move will also allow me to enjoy and play the beautiful game of golf again.

I want to thank every member who ever made an attempt to join in the club events and getaways that I organized. Without your support I could never have grown the club to what it is now. To my Peak and Peek participants and Solheim Ladies: Good luck and I will certainly miss you all. To the men who played in Frontier, the Toronto Hunt Inter-club or joined me at outside pro-am events around the province, thank you!

I want all members to know that I truly strived to make the Niagara-on-the-Lake Golf Club a great place to be a golf member and I hope the club continues to grow and improve on what Ricky and I have built.

I will be joining the Peninsula Lakes Golf Club in Fonthill as the Head Teaching Professional for the 2022 season and will be reunited with past NOTL employee and good friend Ashley Scrobe.

Thank you, Niagara-on-the-Lake. Let's keep in touch!

Billy Simkin
billysimkincpga@hotmail.com





NOTL's Pam Farrell helps secure \$10K for food insecure families

Maddy Gordon
Special to The Lake Report



Pam Farrell is hoping NOTLers will vote for her, to help her organization win another \$10,000 to support food insecure families in NOTL. SUPPLIED

For Niagara-on-the-Lake's Pam Farrell, knowing one in eight Canadian households have trouble putting food on the table simply wasn't something she was going to sit around and watch.

The volunteer executive director of GROW Community Food Literacy Centre was able to recognize a much bigger problem at hand and decided to take action.

Her hard work has not gone unnoticed. Farrell has been selected as one of 10 honourees in the L'Oréal's Women of Worth program, which is designed to empower and celebrate women for their accomplishments and services they've contributed to their communities.

Every year, each recipient is granted \$10,000 to help keep funding their organization. Nominations are judged on the criteria of their impact, community needs and solutions, passion and innovation.

Farrell has received \$10,000 for being selected as one of the 10 honourees and now needs voters to help her win the national competition, for a shot at

another \$10,000.

"I just felt so honoured to be selected as one of the 10 L'Oréal Paris Women of Worth, because it's such a far-reaching program," she said.

Farrell says the money will be used to broaden the GROW's programs, particularly the subsidized food market that it offers.

"We're hoping to expand that to accommodate the

increase in demand that we've seen for this type of service."

Closer to home, Farrell says food insecurity has always been a large issue in Niagara, and with the addition of the pandemic, she says the call for solutions has only grown louder.

A former elementary, secondary and adult-level teacher who studied language literacy at the Univer-

sity of Calgary, Farrell said the term literacy does not just have to entail reading and writing — it's an all-encompassing subject.

During her teaching years, she says she was able to see the consequences of food insecurity on families first-hand. Thus, her passion for food literacy was born.

Through her work with GROW, Farrell has been helping to fight food inse-

curity, promote healthier lifestyles and create sustainability through supporting low-income community members, specifically in the Elgin neighbourhood in Niagara Falls.

GROW's work includes running a weekly low-cost food market, as well as a community kitchen that offers a variety of cooking and food skills programs. Both of these ambitions are what help make GROW such a comfortable and inviting environment to those who suffer from food insecurity, Farrell said.

The organization has been able to help hundreds of local community members, including the more than 500 people who are registered with its market. To add to that number, Farrell estimates that with all of GROW's initiatives and other programs, the organization has been able to reach close to 15,000 people.

Farrell said the most gratifying part of her work has been seeing the model come to life — and actually help people in need.

"A rewarding moment is seeing that it's working. It's making a difference and so many people are benefiting from it," she said.

As for the future of

GROW, she said the next steps will be heavily focused on advocating for those who live with food insecurity, by reaching out to all levels of government, especially at the federal level.

"From a federal perspective we can address poverty, which is at the root cause of food insecurity."

Farrell plans to address these issues through better social security programs, since the majority of people who are food insecure are in social systems and those programs simply do not cover their basic needs.

Another big part of helping food insecure families is to help advocate for fair wages, "really driving the advocacy, advocating for a livable income, better social security service and expanding our programs so that we can reach more people that are low-income."

Farrell is hoping to garner votes for the upcoming Women of Worth event this March. She would like to encourage everyone to vote for GROW, to help them win the additional \$10,000 to support and expand their programs.

You can vote for Farrell at lorealparis.ca/en-ca/women-of-worth.

Eden co-op student Maddy Gordon joins The Lake Report as junior reporter

Maddy Gordon has joined The Lake Report as a reporter under Eden High School's co-op program:

My name is Maddy and I'm a 16-year-old co-op student who is very passionate about social justice and equity, and making a difference in my community.

I'm very excited to be

joining The Lake Report as an intern reporter for my co-op experience, as I greatly enjoy the study of journalism, along with broadening my knowledge in various subjects.

What sparked my interest in this field was growing up in an engaging, thought-provoking environment, where

I was constantly challenged to think outside the box and express my ideas in creative, refreshing ways. Thus, I learned at a young age the value and importance of having access to truthful, captivating information, which is what I believe is the core of journalism.

I am in Grade 11 at Eden

High School and other than my education and my part-time job, I like to spend my time playing softball, playing the guitar and listening to music. I also really love all types and genres of literature. My favourite book right now is "The Virgin Suicides" by Jeffrey Eugenides.

I also like to read about social issues, in hopes of educating myself about what is going on in the world around me. I believe that in order to make a positive change in the world, you need to start with your own growth and learning, which is something that I actively acknowledge and pursue in

my day-to-day life.

My fundamental goal is to make positive change in my community and in the lives of others.

I'd like to thank the kind and welcoming staff of The Lake Report for taking me on during these uncertain times. I'm very appreciative of this opportunity.

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175 sheep shaved in pre-summer shear-a-thon

Evan Saunders
Local Journalism Initiative
The Lake Report

Ba-ba black sheep, have you any wool? At Linc Farm, about 1,200 pounds of it, co-owner Juliet Orazietti says.

On Monday and Tuesday, Linc Farm underwent its yearly sheep shear, shaving off the coats of the 175 or so sheep that call the farm home.

“This is sort of the only day of the year that we need this much manpower,” Orazietti said as a group of volunteers gathered about helping sort through the freshly shorn wool.

The sheep are sheared every February, “about a month before they have their lambs,” Orazietti said.

“They’ve gotta be clean and the lambs need to be able to find the teat. So, we get rid of all the wool that’s in the way.”

After each lamb was shorn it ran full speed out of the barn to graze as if embarrassed to be seen without its cumbersome coat.

Following the two-day shear-a-thon the now-naked sheep have about 365 days to regrow their coat, she said

One sheep named Treble was a little luckier than the others. Treble had the responsibility of standing at the front of the line all day so the sheep behind felt confident taking their place in the shearing queue.

Treble’s reward for this diligence? Copious snacks and the privilege of being the last sheep to sport its fetching coat.

The farm brought in shearing master Don Metheral of the Great Lakes



Juliet Orazietti trims a sheep’s hooves at Linc Farm on Tuesday. EVAN SAUNDERS

Shearing Co. to perform the intensive work.

“He works all over the world. So, he comes and looks after our girls just one day a year and then he’s off looking after everybody else,” Orazietti said.

“You’ve got to train at it all the time to be good and stay fit.”

“And prevent an aneurysm,” Metheral added with a grin while he pulled another sheep to the shear.

Metheral didn’t just have to shear the sheep but also keep them in place while they struggled against the process, sometimes kicking and braying as they watched their luscious locks fall away.

Indeed, any one of them, if able, would most likely have gone the way of Samson and brought the farm down on top of themselves.

But shearing is for the sheep’s own good. As Orazietti noted, it enables their lambs to feed easier and keeps them free from possible parasitic infections and overheating in the warmer summer months.

The wool will be bagged and sent to various locations around Ontario and roughly 600 pounds of it will be sent to Alberta, Orazietti said.

Orazietti said she gets about six pounds of wool per sheep.

The wool will be processed into different materials such as yarn and even the soles for shoes, she said.

Volunteers were busy sweeping and helping sort through the wool to select the clean stuff from the, ahem, not so clean stuff.

“We take out the dirty wool if there’s too much hay or poop or mud in it,”

Orazietti said.

The dirty wool goes into a composting bin.

“It’s nice to be closer and to get to know the animals that you might wear,” volunteer Rebecca Golding said.

Golding is a resident of Queenston and said she found out about the volunteer opportunity through a newsletter the Oraziettis put together.

There was another star of the show besides Metheral and the volunteers. An energetic corgi pup named Henry.

Henry was frantically running around the barn chewing on loose pieces of wool before quickly crashing for a nap with a fresh piece of wool to snuggle.

“He’s going to be a celebrity around here,” one volunteer said.



RIDDLE ME THIS

I’m a four-letter word that can be written forward, backward or upside down, and can still be read from left to right. What am I?

Last issue: I’m a five-letter word that becomes shorter when you add two letters to me. What am I?

Answer: Short

Answered first by: Susan Hamilton

Also answered correctly (in order) by: Terry Nord, Margie Enns, Howard Jones, Bob Campbell, Sonja Schindeler, Kim McQuhae, Ginny Green, Steven Hall, Pam Dowling, Linda Becker, Wade Durling, Tammy Florio, Sylvia Wiens, Mike Berlis, Bruce Robb, Rob Hutchison, Mary Drost, Art Thomas, Sheila Meloche, KC King,

Email answers to editor@niagaranow.com, with your name, for a chance to win a \$20 Irish Harp Pub gift card every week. (Subject line: Riddle me this)

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New chamber president says focus is on **proper, fair** tourism strategy

Richard Harley
The Lake Report

The Niagara-on-the-Lake Chamber of Commerce has a new president.

The chamber announced last Thursday that Minerva Ward will replace Eduardo Lafforgue as the head of the organization. She is expected to begin March 7.

Right now she says it's a busy time for her, as she makes her move to Niagara, but she's already looking at what her first goals will be as the new president.

She said there will be the obvious learning curve as she feels the pulse of NOTL, but one thing she's sure of is that part of her plan is to create an official tourism strategy for the town — one that strikes a healthy balance between needs of residents, businesses and tourists.

"We want to ensure that when people come they have a fantastic experience in Niagara-on-the-Lake, but we also want to make sure that there's strong, positive resident sentiment, that tourism is not seen as disruptive to the local residents, but it works in



Minerva Ward is set to start her job as chamber president March 7. SUPPLIED

harmony."

Ward has an extensive background in tourism management.

She started her career in St. Lucia, where she ran a cruise terminal and visitor centre.

She left that work to start a real estate business, focusing on luxury homes and vacation rental properties.

Ward also has worked

for Sandals Resorts in St. Lucia and eventually made the move to Canada in 2012, taking a role with the Tourism Human Resources Association in British Columbia. She also served on several advisory boards, including the British Columbia Ministry of Education.

Recently, she spent more than three years living and working in the Arctic as re-

gional tourism development officer for the Northwest Territories.

She said she's keen to start learning about NOTL and suspects her experience working with cruises might be an asset for the town.

Asked if her experience might help guide the town in handling buses of tourists, she said she hasn't got

that far into finding out about the town just yet.

"I don't want to put my foot in my mouth by commenting," she said.

"I think my first priority will be really understanding the dynamics of what has happened, what is happening," she said.

She wants to focus on working with "stakeholders" like the Town of NOTL and tourism businesses to develop strategies that benefit the town as a whole.

"Just understanding, listening and trying to find creative solutions to having all those pieces come together."

She said not knowing exactly what she's walking into yet means the overall tourism strategy will be an important first step.

"One of the big things is that there's no tourism strategy for Niagara-on-the-Lake's tourism. And in speaking to the organization, it seems there's been some history there in who's responsible for that," she said.

"I don't want to say that there has not been (forward planning). I don't know. I haven't been in deep enough

to make that (decision). I give credit to all the workers who came before me. But I would need to understand what that looks like and create that roadmap for where we want tourism to go for the next five, 10, 15, 20 years."

To find out what the plan of attack should be, she said she'll be asking a lot of questions.

"How do we get residents involved, increase resident sentiment? How do we maximize the economic opportunities, while still respecting the carrying capacity of the destination? And what is the carrying capacity of NOTL? What in terms of physical numbers and in terms of the social and psychological impacts on residents?" she said, noting that "I seem to gather that there may be some residents' sentiment that (aren't thrilled about tourism)."

Looking at the short-term rental industry and the long list of problems it can create is on her radar, she said.

She said all of the problems, concerns and solutions should be "properly articulated" in the tourism strategy that's to come.



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Local restrictions **ineffective** if cases come from outside region: Hirji

Evan Saunders
Local Journalism Initiative
The Lake Report

Although localized health measures are always on the table, Niagara's acting medical officer of health says they will be ineffective if the rest of the province does not follow suit.

"We're going to see the infections being brought in from other regions here, anyway," Dr. Mustafa Hirji said during a COVID-19 media briefing on Monday.

"We probably won't be able to control COVID-19 with just local measures. We would need some broad regional measures and provincial measures to control COVID-19."

But that doesn't mean targeted measures in areas where COVID statistics are worsening will not be considered.

"We will definitely look at what makes sense to do locally and active places where we think it makes sense locally," Hirji said.

Hirji says there is no doubt that loosening restrictions will mean an increase in infections and hospital-



Capacity limit signs were still the norm on Tuesday, even though such restrictions had been lifted for retailers and restaurants. The restriction notices could soon become a piece of COVID-19 memorabilia as businesses drop protocols. EVAN SAUNDERS

izations due to COVID-19.

"It's pretty much a foregone conclusion that we're going to see increases in infections and cases. I think everybody would accept that that's going to happen when you reopen," he said.

Hirji said he believes the province is moving ahead with this in mind.

"What I think they are hoping is that with the increase of infections we're not necessarily going to see an unsustainable increase in

hospitalizations," he said.

But the data doesn't back up that optimism.

"I haven't seen any hard numbers, any hard modelling that would really give me confidence that's what is actually going to play out," he said.

"The best modelling we had from the science table is that we would flatten out at a relatively high number of hospitalizations over time."

Plateauing at a high level means any increase will

be more egregious than if restrictions had stayed in place until numbers were down.

"We could potentially go into maybe the fall where we still have a high number of hospitalizations, the weather cools, infections start to spread more and then we start to see a really bad increase in hospitalizations," he said.

"That makes me concerned that we are going to continue to see significant

numbers of people hospitalized, significant numbers of people sadly passing away from COVID-19 as we go forward."

Hirji said he is worried "our hospitals are not going to get relief. They are going to remain stressed."

But he emphasized the only way to know what is going to happen is to wait and see and that everyone should be getting vaccinated.

"The one thing that I think we can do to avoid (increased deaths and infections) is to, of course, get vaccinated," he said.

During his update, Hirji spoke about the authority provided to local health units by the province of Ontario to add extra restrictions in their region.

In recent weeks, he came under fire from some Niagara residents and even the province's acting medical officer of health, Dr. Kieran Moore, for the specific restrictions he had placed on Niagara businesses.

Hirji emphasized that, not long ago, Moore had issued a statement of support for the same restrictions.

"You may remember in

our media release on Dec. 2 we had this quote in it, which is by Dr. Kieran Moore, who was supportive of us taking additional local actions," Hirji said.

"Because localized actions are part of the province's plan and we were acting directly in alignment with them about putting local measures in place."

Hirji said during the summer of 2020 the province's chief medical officer actually encouraged regional medical officers to use localized restrictions.

Localized restrictions were put in place in dozens of Ontario regions throughout the pandemic, he said.

"I think there's a narrative sometimes that it's unusual that we're having local orders in place in Niagara and it is absolutely not unusual but is very much the norm and we have been the same as every other local public agency."

Hirji said in October the province emphasized new surges going forward should be addressed by local health authorities unless alarming provincewide trends demanded a more comprehensive response.



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Sailing school returns after two years, club looking for kids to register

Richard Harley
The Lake Report

After being closed for two years because of COVID-19, the NOTL Sailing Club is gearing up to restart its sailing school for youth again.

Rod Gardner, director of the NOTL club's "Learn to Sail" program, is eager to get kids signed up for the courses.

During an interview at the sailing club, Gardner was clearly excited about getting it up and running again.

Having been a sailor since he was four years old, he said sailing is a skill he thinks children should learn — from professionals.

The club's sailing instructors are highly trained and have to take several courses before they can teach students.

Sail Canada is the national authority that creates all of the courses, Gardner said.

"The Ontario Sailing Association puts all our instructors through a fairly rigorous learn to teach program. It's about 100 hours and about six different courses," he said.

"So that's kind of the safety piece of it. You gotta



Left: Rod Gardner, director of the Learn to Sail program, is hoping for students to register for the course. RICHARD HARLEY
Right: Students from the Learn to Sail program learn various sailing drills during the course. SUPPLIED



be safe and then you've got to be fun, right?"

The club will host two month-long sailing courses, one in July and one in August, each with capacity of about 30 students.

Right now there is an early bird special available online for parents.

He said so far 16 kids have registered for the courses, which are open to youth ages nine to 16.

The club is also waiting to see if it is selected to

receive government funding to open a program for kids ages five to 11.

The organization is also planning to host an alumni night on Mondays for kids who missed out on their last two years and are too old to continue sailing school.

"We're going to have three Monday nights in July, see if kids want to participate and run a sailing program for them and get them back out on the water, because a lot of those kids have

missed out the last couple years. And now they've got summer jobs, but they could just come down here on a Monday night and meet their old buddies."

He said the school is a big part of the club's mandate as a not-for-profit organization. "Teaching sailing is one of our founding pillars," he said, along with racing and cruising.

Eventually, he said the club wants to bring back its adult learn-to-sail program, too.

Traditionally, he said, it has been on Tuesday and Thursday nights in the summer.

Gardner said it's exciting to be able to offer the course again.

He remembers the feeling he had when COVID restrictions were first lifted for sailing.

"That day we we're allowed to sail again — it was like Saturday morning in July — I was here at 6 a.m. because I couldn't sleep," he said.

For kids, it's just nice to be able to get out and be on the water, on the water.

"It's that instant feeling that you're in control of your own vessel, right? You get out there, you're seven years old, and you're driving. You're steering, between you and the wind and the water."

"Finally the wind came in, I went out there and had the lake to myself. It was like Christmas morning again."

Parents can register their children for classes online at the sailing club's website, niagaraonthelakesailingclub.com/learn-to-sail.

Cost for the course is \$750 for the July session and \$700 for the August session, with a \$100 discount for early registrants until March 31.

Fees go toward the cost of maintaining and purchasing equipment. The boats used can cost up to \$10,000 each, he said.

The club also does fundraising to try to keep the fees as low as possible.

Children in the course must come with their own lifejacket and appropriate footwear.

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Parliament Oak for sale, 'Here we go again,' resident says

Continued from Front Page

Davidson said Liberty Sites did not wish to divulge information to the media regarding the sale.

CBRE Group would not confirm the sale details but a source told The Lake Report it was around \$15 million.

The District School Board of Niagara originally sold the property in 2018 to Liberty Sites for about \$4.9 million.

That sale process sparked controversy because the Town of Niagara-on-the-Lake also wanted to purchase the site but the school board opted to sell it to the developer.

Development of the Parliament Oak property has been the centre of controversy after Liberty Sites proposed a three-storey apartment building for the site.

That drew the ire of nearby residents such as Gordon, whose group Preserve Our Special Town was created to raise awareness about the project.

"It's not unusual for developers to actually



Liberty Sites (3) is selling the former Parliament Oak property on King Street. NOTL residents have strongly opposed a plan to build a 71-unit apartment building on the historically significant site, saying the proposed density is inappropriate for the surrounding neighbourhood. SOURCED

go through the approval process, get their approvals and then sell the property with what we call the value added," Gordon said.

He noted the controversy around Liberty Sites' plan has "muddied the waters" around the site and any future developer will have an uphill battle against residents who are

now hyper-aware of the situation.

Gordon said he is worried that if the property carries a large price tag it could mean future developers will be looking for even more housing density on the site.

"I believe there will be substantial resistance to any very intense develop-

ments such as the one that Liberty Sites has proposed in the first place."

Documents obtained by The Lake Report regarding the sale of the property have two conceptual site plans.

One has several detached homes and an apartment building while the other features 14 detached homes

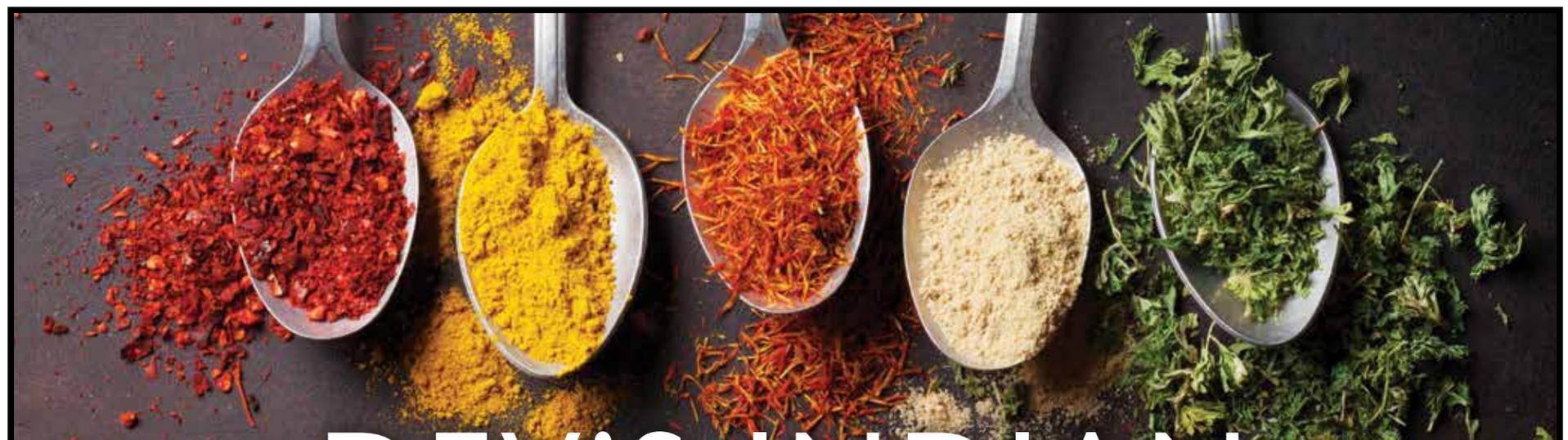
and two semi-attached residential properties located in the frontispiece of the old school.

"It's too bad the developer has chosen a different route than to work with the community to build something that everyone can be proud of," Lord Mayor Betty Disero said in an interview Wednesday.

Disero said she could not speak for council about whether the town might try to buy the property.

"Hopefully, at the end of the day, we'll be able to have something that everyone will be proud of," she said.

"We have to watch now to see who buys it and what happens."



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With Beijing Games done, Canada Summer Games **are next**



Ross's Ramblings

Ross Robinson
Columnist
The Lake Report

I worked at the Munich Olympic Village in 1972 and the Montreal Olympic Games in 1976.

In the athlete cafeterias, I was on a multinational 1052-member team, putting out over 15,000 meals each day. Living in the villages for three months, living the life, at the centre of the world's attention. Athletes and media everywhere, including in the world's first Olympic Village pub. Munchner bier, ja?

I loved being a very small part of those Games. We could relate to the athletes and events. Running, jumping, soccer, rowing and my favourite sport to watch,

women's volleyball. So athletic, so amateur, so intense, so positive. And such sportsmanship.

Way back in 1924, the first Winter Olympics in Chamonix, France, included 16 events in six sports, with some 258 athletes. Canada won the gold medal for hockey, outscoring opponents 122-3. We won four medals in total. Wee Norway won 16. Not much has changed, eh?

The Beijing Winter Olympics included 109 events. Canada won four gold medals, Norway won 16 gold medals. Our population is 38 million. Theirs is less than 6 million.

If you would like to know why Norwegians always dominate the Winter Olympics, do a quick Google of "Norway Sports Philosophy." It's really simple. Take the early pressure off the kids. Let them have fun, encouraging everyone.

Almost all Winter Olympic sports are exclusionary and expensive. Bobsleds, ski and hockey equipment all cost big money, and that's just to get involved.

While watching big air



The Canada Summer Games in NOTL are just 156 days away. SOURCED

and half-pipe and bobsledding, my buddy Potter in Pennsylvania kept asking, "Who does this stuff?" Seriously, how do they practice? Shouldn't the female pairs figure skaters wear hockey helmets? How do they not crack their skulls?"

Many Summer Olympic sports can be enjoyed by so many people. Running, swimming, jumping, soccer and the list goes on. Why wasn't men's sumo wrestling a demonstration sport at last summer's Tokyo Olympic Games?

But let's ramble back to Beijing. I was flummoxed to read that Australia had beaten Canada in mixed doubles curling. What the heck? And how great that

men's hockey finished with the Finnish team getting the gold. I keep hearing on TV that hockey is "our game."

Please know I am not complaining. Just wondering. Just asking.

Attagirls for winning the women's hockey gold medal. The players are so talented, so dedicated, so passionate attempting to grow the sport. But, with only two competitive nations, the International Olympic Committee could decide to eliminate this sport from the Olympics. It's a darned pity, eh?

Here's a suggestion. If Canada wants to win more medals at future Winter Olympics, just keep

convincing the IOC to add more weird events. How about mixed ski jumping? At least they don't hold hands in mid-air.

The CBC broadcasters should get gold medals for hyperbole and over-the-top overstatements. One CBC anchor mentioned that bobsledding German multi-medallist Francesco Friedrich was "a bit of a daredevil."

Yes, and Jennifer Aniston is "a bit of a looker" and Kim Kardashian is "a bit of a self-promoter." Can we all agree that Edmonton Oiler Connor McDavid is a "bit of a fast skater and has a few moves"?

Which somehow brings us back to our wonder-

ful Niagara Region. This August, we all will be cheering for up-and-coming Canadian athletes during the Niagara 2022 Canada Summer Games.

Right here in Niagara-on-the-Lake at Veteran's Memorial Park, we will welcome 84 tennis players from 10 provinces and the territories. Currently, 50 per cent female and 50 per cent male.

The NOTL Sailing Club will be the host venue for the sailing events with some 61 sailors, including nine para athletes.

The Niagara 2022 Canada Summer Games will feature 253 events, spread over 12 municipalities. Niagara residents and volunteers will make it a fortnight to remember, and the best part is that every single medal will be won by a Canadian. How great is that?

Every athlete will have done their best. There should be no drug scandals, no political power plays, just sports. Canadians will dominate.

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Head pro Billy Simkin is leaving the NOTL Golf Club. SUPPLIED

Changing of the guard at the NOTL Golf Club

Rick Janes
Special to The Lake Report

There is a plaque to the right of the clubhouse entrance at the Niagara-on-the-Lake Golf Club that celebrates the head professionals who have served the club over the past 100 years. Of the 19 names, Billy Simkin has been the longest-serving and had a mind to retire there. Until now, that is.

After 15 years as head professional, Billy Simkin, 39, is leaving the Niagara-on-the-Lake Golf Club to become head teaching professional at Peninsula Lakes Golf Club, a fine 27-hole facility near Fonthill.

Simkin arrived in Niagara-on-the-Lake in 2006, to be the assistant to head professional Scott Cochrane. With Cochrane's departure a year later, a 24-year-old Simkin took over the top job.

"When the board of directors gave me the chance to be head professional in 2007, my goal was to be the longest-serving head pro at North America's oldest golf course," said Simkin who achieved that distinction three years ago surpassing the tenure of Ross Leeder who was the pro for 12 years.

"While my vision was to retire at Niagara-on-the-Lake, the move to Penn Lakes is about resetting my career path as a teaching professional and spending more time with my two boys, Avery, 11 and Emmett 8. It's also a chance for me to get back to what I love, teaching and playing, rather than being stuck in an office."

Born and raised in Guelph, Simkin came to the game at an early age, at a time before Tiger Woods, when many courses wouldn't allow juniors

to play until they were 12 years old.

"I fell in love with the game when I was eight," said Simkin. "My parents would take the family to the old Pergola mini-putt and driving range on Highway 6, a couple of nights a week. Since I was too young to play a regulation golf course, this was my introduction to the game. I loved it."

When he was old enough, he started playing at Victoria Park West Golf Club in Guelph and became one of the top junior golfers in the region.

He started to compete as soon as he could and won the men's club championship at Victoria Park West at the age of 14. Self-taught, he took his game to the Puslinch Lakes Golf Club in Cambridge to be part of the junior program organized by Jack and Joyce Leggatt, parents of retired PGA Tour player Ian Leggatt.

"I knew that I wanted to be a golf professional when I was 12 years old. I remember the exact moment," said Simkin.

"It was early spring and I was watching the head professional at Victoria Park West take his new tour bag out of the box. That was it. It had his name on it. That's what I wanted. I started working at Victoria Park West as a range picker when I was 13."

While many top juniors typically pursue U.S. golf scholarships, Simkin chose the route of many club professionals and enrolled in the professional golf management program at Georgian College in Orillia, a career path that might prove to be a challenge for someone who has struggled with a stutter his entire life. While at Georgian, he worked at Blue Springs Golf Club.

"As a kid I knew that my speech would be a challenge given the communication skills that the golf business required. That's why working at Blue Springs, a private club, was so important for me," he said.

"Every member knew my challenge and no one there cared that I stuttered. That relaxed me. And when I came to Niagara-on-the-Lake, everyone embraced me and allowed me to grow. And that has meant a lot to me. Had I worked at a course that was strictly public, I would likely have struggled because of my stutter."

There will be a new head professional's name on the plaque outside the main entrance to the clubhouse this year. The club has started the search.

There are some big shoes to fill. At the end of last season, Ricky Watson left the golf business as an associate professional at the club to pursue a career in real estate. Watson, 31, had been a fixture there for 18 years. He and Simkin had worked together since 2006.

"Ricky and I tried hard to make Niagara-on-the-Lake a great golf club, not just a golf course. The goal was to create an active golf environment for the members, with leagues, events and championships," Simkin said.

"I'm proud of what we accomplished. Walking away from those 280 members is hard. They are the reason why I stayed so long. Many of them have become friends and that's what I'll miss most."

Rick Janes is a member of the Golf Journalists Association of Canada. He is a life member and past chief executive of the PGA of Canada and retired commissioner of the Canadian Tour.



Ontario is getting stronger

Across the province, more workers are joining the skilled trades as resources and industries in the north become part of the future of clean steel and electric vehicles.

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Have some fun



- Across**
- 9. Wiggler (9)
 - 10. Eight singers (5)
 - 11. Curtain calls (7)
 - 12. Trap (7)
 - 13. Debatable (13)
 - 20. Equipment for the reproduction of very good sound (2-2)
 - 21. Set apart (5)
 - 22. Irish county (4)
 - 23. Unpredictable (13)
 - 32. Tolerate (7)
 - 33. Sustain (7)
 - 34. Awaken (5)
 - 35. Appraising (9)
- Down**
- 1. Gem (5)
 - 2. Dealer in foodstuffs (6)
 - 3. Winged child (6)
 - 4. Sweet dessert (6)
 - 5. Simple life form (6)
 - 6. Dwarfed tree (6)
 - 7. Capital of Canada (6)
 - 8. Speak (5)
 - 13. Publish (5)
 - 14. Intense hatred (5)
 - 15. Hire (5)
 - 16. Island awarded the George Cross (5)
 - 17. A tenth part (5)
 - 18. Celestial body (5)
 - 19. Faithful (5)
 - 24. General escape (6)
 - 25. Maxed (6)
 - 26. Make over (6)
 - 27. Wretchedness (6)
 - 28. Son of one's brother or sister (6)
 - 29. Very handsome young man (6)
 - 30. E.g. the Romanovs (5)
 - 31. Male deer (5)

Crossword Puzzle

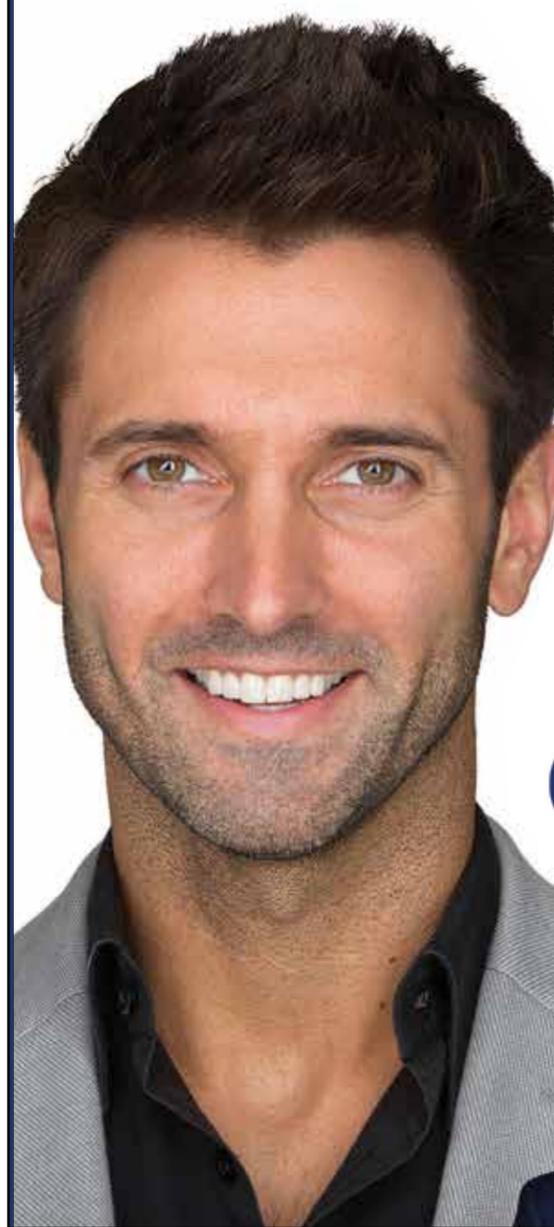
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Last issue's answers

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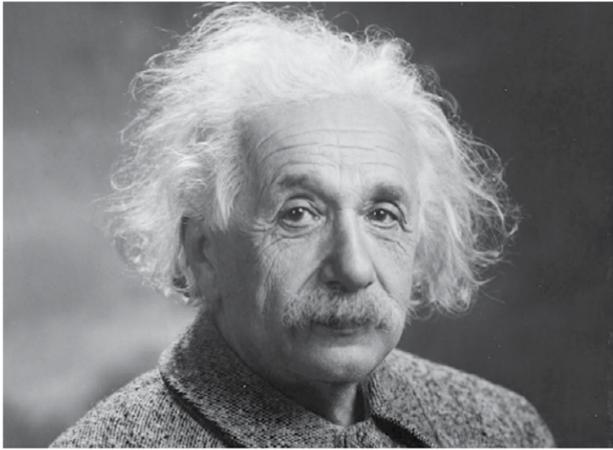


Einstein, relativity, neutron stars and **making mistakes**



DR. BROWN

Dr. William Brown
Special to The Lake Report



Scientists are trying to replicate conditions in our sun.

According to the brilliant Cambridge physicist and mathematician Paul Dirac, Albert Einstein was the most brilliant physicist of the 20th century, and possibly all time.

But even Einstein could be stubbornly, even spectacularly wrong.

Several physicists, including Paul Lemaitre, a young Belgian priest with graduate degrees from Cambridge and MIT in physics, pointed out to him that the mathematics Einstein employed to describe the relationships among mass, time and space in his theory of general relativity, also described an expanding universe and hence a very much smaller earlier universe in the past.

To which Einstein brusquely responded to Lemaitre, “Your mathematics may be excellent, but your physics is terrible” and went on to introduce his famous (or infamous depending on your perspective) cosmological constant into his equations to restore stability to the universe.

Later when astronomical observations by Erwin Hubble revealed the universe was indeed expanding, Einstein publicly apologized and withdrew his constant.

Although Einstein was one of the founding fathers of quantum physics based on his work on the quantal

nature of light and energy, he resisted the whole notion of uncertainty, and apparent lack of causality and sense of time inherent in quantum physics.

He spent the last 30 years of his life in self-imposed exile at Princeton University looking for a universal field theory that would reconcile general relativity with quantum physics. He didn’t succeed nor have any physicists since, including the likes of Stephen Hawking and Roger Penrose.

Ever since Einstein described general relativity, every attempt to find a flaw in the theory has failed,

much to the dismay of some physicists looking for a “theory of everything” in theoretical physics, but so far stymied in their search for such a holy grail.

The failure to reconcile general relativity (the physics of the large) with quantum physics (the physics of the subatomic universe) is a serious stumbling block to progress in understanding two major mysteries in physics: What happens to matter and energy inside black holes? And what happened in those first few seconds when the universe was born?

In 2002, two large neutron stars were spotted circling each other every 2.5 minutes and emitting bursts of radio waves at metronomically precise intervals – every 2.8 seconds for one star and every 23 milliseconds for the other. They are what astronomers call pulsars (short for pulse and stars).

When stars run out of fuel to sustain fusion, they sometimes shed their outer shells and collapse into black holes or neutron stars. Neutron stars are the densest objects in the uni-

verse, made up of neutrons jammed together, with, as Dennis Overbye, science writer for the New York Times, put it a few years ago, the mass of the sun crammed into something the size of New York City.

This pair of neutron stars offered the perfect opportunity to precisely test general relativity’s capacity to predict how the mass of neutron stars bend and alter the timing of the radio waves they emit.

Now, years later, after collecting radio-wave data generated by both neutron stars using radio telescopes scattered around the world, the scientists and engineers finally had enough data to analyze and answer the original question: How well did general relativity’s predictions stand up as predictors of mass-related changes in the radio signals from both neutron stars?

In this, the most demanding test of general relativity to date, the answer was a resounding, perfect on all accounts.

As with so many other predictions based on general relativity, including the

bending and slowing of light by masses, the generation of gravitational waves in space-time by the collision of black holes and other massive objects (for which studies a Nobel prize was awarded in 2017) and an expanding universe, Einstein turned out to be right or at least his equations turned out to be highly predictive, even if for philosophical reasons, he sometimes shrank from the implications of his own brilliant thought experiments and equations.

Even his cosmological constant turned out to be consistent with the expansile force generated by the as-yet mysterious dark energy and worth belated congratulations to Einstein.

What a paradox Einstein was: visionary, prophet, imaginative and sometimes stubbornly wrong – and except for his brilliance, like us, he made mistakes.

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

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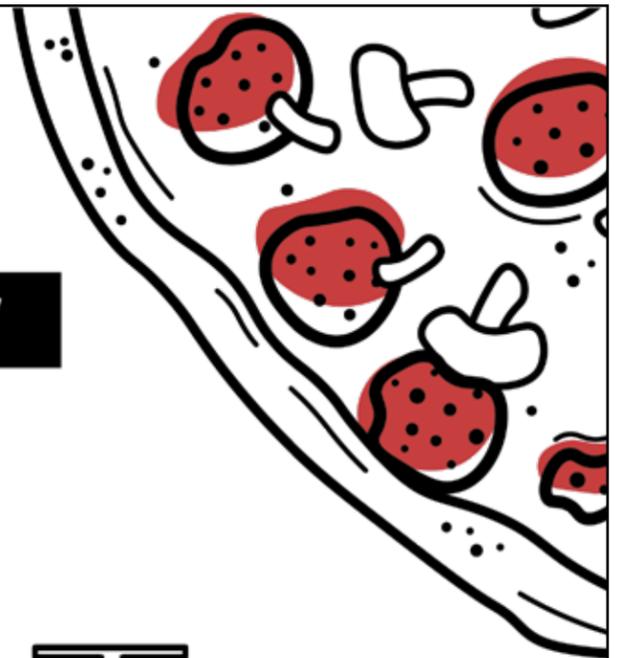
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Red brick home

This watercolour was painted by landscape artist George R. Bruenech. It features a red brick home with a figure of a woman seated on the porch. The house was formerly located in the hollow between Byron and Ricardo streets. This is the house of William Milloy, who ran the City of Toronto steamer following the death of his father Duncan Milloy in 1871. William was also known for taking over his father's Oban House, adding a second storey and converting it into the Oban Inn in 1895.



ARCHITEXT

A new vision for affordable housing

Brian Marshall
Columnist

My wife has a mantra she developed during her successful career as the CEO of an international corporation. It goes: "If you always do what you've always done, you'll always get what you've always got."

Today, the province of Ontario and, by default, its regions and municipalities, face a housing crisis.

In the last six decades, the answer has been to create milquetoast suburbia around our existing towns and cities on the best agricultural land in Canada. Moreover, those same towns and cities are dealing with antiquated service infrastructure that does or will require massive

investment, particularly should demand on those services increase.

Sadly, the recommendations from the province's Housing Affordability Task Force (see Arch-i-Text Feb. 24) ignores these challenges and simply digs deeper into the worn ruts we've driven down in the past.

Perhaps it is time we stop "doing what we've always done," understand that the few old surviving paradigms are adequately addressed by our existing urban centres and create a vision based on the new realities of the 21st century and beyond.

Consider that the last two pandemic years have shown that the majority of the employee functions necessary to business (both public and private) can be remotely performed and several recent published studies suggest measurably higher levels of productivity by employees working from home.

In the same vein, a substantial number of young families have taken advantage of this new remote work opportunity and migrated out of the GTA to relocate in smaller population centres across the province.

As an example, the small town of Smooth Rock Falls in far-flung northeastern Ontario, has grown by 60 families in the recent past.

Further, there are no longer any practical economic justifications for the province's new businesses and population growth to be concentrated in the traditional regions of south and southwestern Ontario. On the contrary, there are a multitude of economic reasons, underwritten by many 21st-century technologies, why not to do so.

The report of the Ontario Housing Affordability Task Force states this province will require 1.5 million new dwellings built in the next 10 years. If we accept this number as accurate, this equates to a reasonable-sized city. That being the case, why don't we locate a greenfield site on the Canadian Shield and build one?

I know on the face of it this suggestion sounds ridiculous. I can hear people thinking, "Do you have any idea how expensive that would be?" And, my response is that it would be at least 15 per cent less than the cost of incorporating 1.5 million new dwellings in or around existing towns

and cities, not to mention the benefit of protecting our precious farmland and natural ecosystem.

I'd like you to imagine a LEED-built city: designed from the ground up to be liveable, physically defined by universally accessible public spaces and parks that promote community. Its pedestrian mobility options, public transit systems and roadways logically designed for ease of users. Architecture and landscape design that is integrative from climatic and ecological contexts. And cutting-edge technologies incorporated into every building and service.

While it may strike you as a fantasy, I'd argue it is the only fiscally and socially responsible answer to this province's dilemma.

Nor am I relegating existing towns and cities to the dustbin of the past. Just the opposite, this solution would provide them with the "breather" necessary to retrench and evolve (perhaps led by New Urbanism) to meet the demands of the next 100 years.

Let's stop being reactive and become proactive, if for no other reason than our taxpayers' pocketbook.

Looking to the Stars



'Love planets' Venus and Mars inspire some spiritual renewal

This week both Venus and Mars move from business-like Capricorn into the renewal sign of Aquarius.

Thursday, March 3: The new moon is still very powerful today, with the added challenges of a Mars-Pluto conjunction in Capricorn. Serious willpower either helps or hinders what we are attempting to do. The more we want it, the more difficult (or easier) the world we face. Alexander Graham Bell was born on March 3, 1847. While in Brantford, Ont., he developed the telephone. On March 3, 1921, Drs. Banting and Best at the University of Toronto, announced their miracle drug, insulin.

Friday, March 4: The moon is in Aries all day, so energetic, impulsive emotions are the rule. These same emotions get caught in challenges from the need for security and doing the best for our karma. Be honest and act with quiet courage. On March 4, 1994, the great comedian, John Candy suffered a heart attack and died.

Saturday, March 5: If you need medical help, today is the day when a gift from spirit brings you what you are looking for. It may be that March 18, 2022, is also significant in this healing process. If not a health issue, good fortune in some other very significant way is coming. He was a star in the CFL, NHL and in lacrosse. Born on March 5, 1918, he was Red Storey.

Sunday, March 6: Today we see both Venus and Mars leave business-like Capricorn for the sign of renewal – Aquarius. This dance between the two "love planets" has been in play for several weeks now. Today, there's a new song to dance to and that song is Aquarius

with all the forward thinking, replenishing and new creation energy associated with that sign. Frozen food went on sale for the first time on March 6, 1930. Clarence Birdseye, while in the Arctic in Canada learned how the Inuit preserved fish by freezing it. He took the idea home to Massachusetts and the rest is history.

Monday, March 7: While the moon in Aries conjunct Uranus should bring a surprise, that same moon later in the day is square to Saturn, making for a difficult time when trying to accomplish just about anything. James Donnelly, patriarch of the Donnelly family (the Black Donnellys) was born on March 7, 1816, in Ireland. Along with four other family members, he was murdered on Feb. 4, 1880, in Ontario.

Tuesday, March 8: Generous, warm, loving – even sexy energy rules today as the moon in Gemini is in perfect harmony first with Mars in Aquarius and then with Venus in Aquarius, too. On March 8, 1971, Joe Frazier ended Muhammad Ali's 31-fight winning streak in 15 rounds in New York City.

Wednesday, March 9: Mercury has been traversing the sign of Aquarius since early January. Today, Mercury enters Pisces for a run that will last until nearly the end of the month. This means weeks of quieter news, more spiritual thinking and insights into life's mysteries. It was March 9, 1974, 29 years after the end of the Second World War that Japanese soldier Hiroo Onoda surrendered in the Philippines. He had not been advised that the war was over.

Bill Auchterlonie's weekly podcast is Looking to the Stars at www.lutts.ca.

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Time to start sowing vegetable seeds



GROWING TOGETHER 

Joanne Young
Garden Columnist

I am ready for spring, but as I am writing this, looking out the window at another snowy day, I don't think that winter is ready to give up yet.

They are calling for another 15 centimetres of snow. What a great day to go through the seed catalogues once again.

We are now at the beginning of March and it is almost time to start planting your vegetable seeds indoors. Here are some tips to get you off to a good start.

First, let's look at what supplies are needed. The easiest way to get started is to purchase a seed starter that comes with a tray that holds water, some pots or cell packs, and a clear plastic dome.

The clear dome placed over the pots in the tray helps to hold the moisture in until the seeds begin to germinate. If you like to recycle or use less plastic, you can always make your own containers to plant the seeds in. There are endless ideas online on what can be used – egg cartons,



Planting seeds early gives them an advantage. SOURCED

eggshells, newspaper, even toilet paper rolls.

For soil, you want to have a very light mix, something like a "seed starting mix" or a "potting mix." You do not want to use a "potting soil." The difference between potting mix and potting soil is that the mix contains no soil. It is comprised of peat moss, vermiculite, perlite and sometimes a fine mulch.

Potting soil does contain soil and is too heavy of a mix for seedlings. Another thing that you should have is some type of waterproof labels for each container. If you plant a lot of seeds from year to year, you may want to keep a journal, recording the dates on which you planted the seeds indoors and transplanted them out in the garden so that you can make changes the next year if needed. Of course, the last thing you need is the seeds themselves. Make sure you are buying seeds from a reputable supplier.

Now you are ready to start sowing your seeds. Fill your pots or cell pack with moistened potting mix so the soil level is just a little below the top. Very

lightly compress the soil mix with your fingers. Disperse seeds on the surface of the soil.

Then lightly cover the seeds with a very thin topping of more soil. Most seeds do not need to be very deep at all, so make sure you are not putting too much on top of them. Lightly and gently water the soil allowing the water to soak in.

It is OK if some water remains sitting in the tray below. Once watered, place the dome over top of the tray. You will notice condensation forming on the dome.

The seeds will not need watering again until they have germinated. Place trays near a bright sunny window. When the seedlings become visible, remove the dome permanently and start watering as required.

Do not let the soil dry out completely. To help strengthen the seedlings, you might want to have an oscillating fan running nearby. This helps strengthen the stems of the plants and improve air circulation so there will be fewer problems with fungus problems

such as damping off. As seedlings start to grow, rotate the trays around every couple of days to keep the plants growing straighter.

To know when the best time to sow your seeds always refer to your seed package for recommendations. Generally speaking:

Pepper seeds can be started indoors at the beginning of March. So can onion seeds.

Most tomato varieties and eggplant varieties should be planted mid- to late March. The seeds do not require bright light to germinate but need to be moved to a sunny spot once germinated.

Crops like broccoli, cauliflower, cabbage, lettuce and spinach can be direct seeded into your garden around April 11, assuming the ground can be worked. But it's better to start them indoors around mid- to late March and then transplant them into the garden around May 3. These plants can tolerate colder conditions.

For summer vegetables like beans, corn, squashes, pumpkins, cucumbers, watermelons, gourds and sunflowers, seeds can be directly planted into the ground around May 23, but because these vegetables need more days to mature, you can get a head-start by planting these summer vegetables indoors around May 3. Then transplant those seedlings out after the danger of frost is past.

Happy seed planting!
Joanne Young is a Niagara-on-the-Lake garden expert and coach. See her website at joanneyoung.ca.

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Richard Harley (Townline Road fire, Feb. 9, 2021)

Did you know?

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