GATES TALKS REGION MERGER

Consultation is crucial for smaller communities like Niagara-on-the-Lake

Richard Harley
The Lake Report

Niagara Falls MPP Wayne Gates says he is worried about whether the wishes of smaller communities will be heard during a provincial review of regional government.

While the province’s plans for the future of regional governments remain unclear, Premier Doug Ford has said he wants to find efficiencies and eliminate duplication. That has many Niagara politicians worried about amalgamation and merger of some municipal governments.

“I’ll be honest, we know very little about the plans of the province,” said Gates. “They have not indicated to us or talked to us about any legislation that’s going to be brought forward yet.”

Still, he is “absolutely” concerned the provincial government is going to make a rushed decision. The regional review is expected to be completed by the summer.

“Everything that I’ve seen since we’ve had a new premier in the province of Ontario has been rushed,” he said during a phone interview with The Lake Report.

“He rushed the bill to go through for autism. That’s got parents from right around the province so upset. Instead of consulting with experts around that bill they just went ahead and did it — did not talk to parents, did not talk to the service providers; didn’t talk to the universities and the colleges. Everything they seem to do is a rush without consultation. And I think that’s a mistake. I think you’ve got to talk to people.”

Public consultations will be held this spring, an official with the provincial Ministry of Municipal Affairs said. Residents need to listen to the public and the wishes of small communities with unique identities.

Richard Harley
The Lake Report

Residents champion Niagara spirit

Jer Houghton
The Lake Report

The Chamber of Commerce hosted its annual Spirit of Niagara Awards Tuesday, recognizing individuals and businesses for achievements and community contributions to Niagara-on-the-Lake.

“IT was a fantastic experience for everyone,” said Janice Thomson, president of the Chamber of Commerce. Nominations came through the public and business community before the Chamber of Commerce awards committee selected the winners.

“The awards night honours seven groups and companies that included the Christopher Newton Award for Extraordinary Vision in Business, the Peter Ling Award for Entrepreneurial Spirit, the Community Leadership Award, the Company Year Award, the Lord Mayor’s Award for Excellence, the Celia Liu Award for Excellence in Hospitality, and the Chamber of Commerce’s Chair Award.”

continued on Page 16
A proposed rent increase for the NOTL Community Centre’s Sweets and Swirls Café could hurt the business, the owner says.

The Town of Niagara-on-the-Lake has included the taxes in a new lease agreement for the café and that has owner James Cadeau concerned.

The town didn’t include payment of the property taxes for the site in its original lease agreement and the municipality has been paying those taxes, said Holly Dowd, the town’s chief administrative officer.

As council’s committee of the whole meeting Monday night, Cadeau wanted to know how the tax value was ascertained.

“The additional tax proposed will effectively raise our rent by 50 per cent,” he said. “So I feel I must do my due diligence on this to be fair to the town and ourselves.”

Cadeau said he contacted the Municipal Property Assessment Corporation (MPAC) but doesn’t know when he will meet with its representative.

“Once this has been cleared up, we can discuss what is a reasonable contribution of property tax,” he added.

“We paid a reasonable amount of rent during the first five years of our lease, with reasonable increases built in,” said Cadeau.

“We believe the town council is working on an equitable solution and we are confirming the accuracy of the assessment with MPAC.”

In the previous lease contract, the property tax wasn’t included due to the town’s error, according to the staff report. “(The owner) knew property tax was part of the lease agreement but maybe they didn’t know they were supposed to pay it,” Dowd said.

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Sweets and Swirls Café’s owners concerned over proposed rent increase

Dariya Baiguzhiyeva

The Lake Report

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Cadeau and his wife Erin Lockard have operated the Sweets and Swirls Café at community centre for five years. The first two years were difficult for them, he said.

“Erin poured her soul and her heart into that place and it’s only within the last two years we’re starting to see benefits,” said Cadeau. If the rent goes up, the prices at the café would also have to increase, he said.

“We’ve tried really hard to keep it reasonable,” he said. “It’s going to be hard to keep the prices down if we have to pay more and more. We want to cater to all the people of the community.”

Sheldon Randall, the town’s director of operations, said the tenant knew how much the taxes would be at the time of negotiating the café’s lease extension back in November 2018.

Coun. Gary Burroughs suggested there had to be a transitional charge of property taxes and Coun. Wendy Cheropita supported him.

“I would hate to see us force a good tenant to not be able to have a viable business if we’re increasing the lease payment so high in one year,” she said.

Coun. Allan Bisbach also spoke in favour of the motion, saying “we want to support small business and it’s a great venue to go.”

Coun. John Wiens said as someone in the food industry, he knows how difficult it can be to make ends meet.

Bisbach also expressed concerns about possible precedents as there is another tenant in the community centre, Niagara Nursery School.

“If we put transitional planning for one place, we need to put it in for the others too, said Bisbach.

“We have to be very careful,” agreed Coun. Stuart McCormack.

“If we’re going to do a deal for one party, we should be doing for all that are similarly situated. And to not do it is giving somebody a favourable or preferential treatment.”

As the new lease agreement with the café is for five years, Coun. Norm Arsenault made a motion to have the full amount of property taxes be phased in over the first three years of the lease.

The motion was carried and the final decision will be made by council next Monday.

Other examples have had long-lasting and even fatal effects, he said, such as the water treatment disaster in Walkerton.

“Seven people died in Walkerton because of the privatization of the water treatment services there,” he said.

Another part of the review, which mayors across Guelph’s riding have also expressed concerns about, is the possibility of reducing the number of politicians. “Maybe around the same time, we can have, like I’m elected to represent Niagara Falls, NOTL and Fort Erie,” Gates said.

By removing local politicians, Gates said people “lose that politician that’s going to come to your house when they have a flood in the basement and a cracked sidewalk.”

“I think having less politicians means an increase in efficiency,” he added. “Maybe around the same time, we can have, like I’m elected to represent Niagara Falls, NOTL and Fort Erie,” Gates said.

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Town may revoke 56 bed and breakfast licences

Dariya Baiguzhiyeva
The Lake Report

About one third of Niagara-on-the-Lake bed and breakfast owners could lose their licences for failing to renew and pay for their permits as well as for having an expired certificate of insurance.

NOTL's committee of the whole voted to revoke 56 short-term rental licences during its Monday meeting.

According to the town’s 2018 report, there are 145 bed and breakfasts in town. Coun. Gary Burroughs asked what efforts were made to contact the owners. “I just hope we’re not hurting somebody’s livelihood,” he said.

Chief Administrative Officer Holly Dowd said annual payments for short-term rental permits must be received by the end of December each year and the owners were notified multiple times through emails and phone calls.

“If they don’t respond to us, you can only phone and send… I don’t know how many times you’d like us to do it,” she said.

Burroughs said he would like to make “human contact” as the town doesn’t “do that a lot anymore.” Coun. Allan Bisback, who used to operate a bed and breakfast business, asked how many properties on the list were repeat offenders as it wasn’t fair to those who are licensed.

“We do go year after year after year after someone who doesn’t pay and only when they show up on the list or on the paper… do they finally come up and pay?” said Bisback. “Because if they don’t pay, that’s not very fair to folks who are licensed and are following the rules. That means they’re purporting themselves in a public domain being a licensed establishment in this town.”

“If you’re licensed, I see it as a privilege, not a right,” said Bisback. “I see no issue revoking licences as long as we’re very sure that we’ve done the mail and the contact.”

This year, the number of operators owning money is significantly compared to previous years, said town clerk Peter Todd.

“The last couple of years I don’t believe we’ve had any be revoked because they saw their name on the list, they came in and paid,” he said.

Short-term rental licences are valid for four years and the insurance coverage should be a minimum of $2 million. Bed and breakfast operators can reapply for their licences within a year and that would be considered a renewal. The entire application process takes four to six weeks.

Coun. John Wiens said operators need to “sign up and pay.”

“I don’t know how far we can hold their hand,” he said.

Coun. Norm Arsenault agreed with Wiens, saying knocking on doors was “absurd” and it would set a precedent.

“These businesses have to take responsibility,” he said. “If this is your livelihood, then step up.”

In a report to the town’s corporate services advisory committee, staff said the listed properties will be monitored to ensure they don’t operate without a licence. Violations could result in a $500 fine per occurrence. The committee approved the report with only Burroughs voting against it.

The final decision will be made by council March 11.

Town to negotiate parking lot charges with Parks Canada

Dariya Baiguzhiyeva
The Lake Report

NOTL will start paying Parks Canada for use of its parking lot by tourist buses. Parks Canada was initially looking to charge 50 per cent of gross revenues for the use of its parking lot in Fort George. The town staff negotiated that down to 25 per cent.

For the past 18 years, the town hasn’t been paying Parks Canada for using its parking lot at the fort. Tour buses drop visitors off there and then they are shuttled to downtown.

“(Parks Canada) were awesome to work with,” Sheldon Randall, the town’s director of operations, told council’s committee of the whole meeting Monday night.

“This lot is very valuable to the town.”

“The time has come. There’s a big push from Parks Canada that they need to change the way they’re doing their business and this is the way they want to do business going forward.”

“Sounds like we owe them a big thank-you note,” said Coun. Clare Cameron in regards to Parks Canada allowing the town to use its lot for free in the past.

Lord Mayor Betty Disero acknowledged the staff’s efforts to negotiate the price down but said the lot brings added value to Parks Canada as it gets visitors to Fort George and into their gift shop.

“The $25 that we’ve added to the parking fee for buses, I guess (Parks Canada) decided they wanted it for themselves,” she said.

Randall argued saying it was difficult to make people go on tour around the fort.

“The big impact for tourism in the area is downtown,” he said. “Right now, Parks Canada’s perspective is that primarily having their buses really does support downtown than it does them.”

For a one-year contract, starting April 1, estimated gross revenue is $272,000. The estimated cost to operate the lot is $250,000 a year.

Parks Canada also owns 34 parking spaces at the former NOTL hospital site on Wellington Street. The estimated gross revenue for parking meters at the former hospital is $16,000. The town would receive 60 per cent of this gross or $9,600, and Parks Canada would have 40 per cent share of its gross revenues.

The committee approved Diseron’s motion to reduce the fee for Fort George lot. Town staff will report back to next council meeting on March 11.
Let your taste buds guide you through this one of a kind experience. Only $25/person.

konzelmann.ca
In the Lake Report’s Feb. 28 edition, the paper achieved a modicum of redemption to the editorial of its previous edition by posting a number of cogent letters to the editor criticizing the previous week’s editorial on the matter of Randwood legal fees.

Yet, in the Lake Report’s following editorial, the paper perpetuated its earlier mischief about legal fees arising from Solmar’s litigation against the Town.

The editor decries the fact the Town has not been forthcoming in disclosing its own legal advice ignoring that such disclosure would be a serious breach of what is otherwise an in-camera matter and would be strategically unsafe.

Of course, he does not ask for Solmar to do the same and assumes the propriety of Solmar’s position on each of the five suits without a wink of due diligence to which we are privy.

The Editor does not explain why he and the paper’s legal experts have so concluded nor is there disclosure as to who these legal experts are.

Perhaps the Editor might muse that Solmar’s legal attacks on the Town’s heritage initiatives are part of a broader strategy counting principally in its deep pockets and the Town’s lesser ones and that albeit its legal initiatives lack merit and are frivolous and vexatious, they will never be so determined by the Courts, as Solmar counts on the Town caving before then due to adverse press publicity and cost fear-mongering such as the Lake Report itself is about.

Think again please.

The Feb. 28 edition through a sop to those critical of last week’s editorial in publishing letters critical to it, but then repeats itself not addressing the validity of the arguments posed in the letters to it.

Peter Howe

The Lake Report
The Lake Report strongly encourages readers to support the local businesses that advertise with us. When reading, we ask you to remember the businesses you see allow us to operate and keep the paper free and independent.

When you’re looking for a service or product, check the paper and try someone local first.

There are a variety of great businesses inside to choose from — don’t forget to mention you saw them in the paper!

The Lake Report would also like to acknowledge and thank those who have made financial contributions to the paper, whether through our donate button online or by mailing us a cheque.

The paper encourages all residents to support the paper through a “voluntary subscription” annually.

For those interested in supporting us, we suggest $1 per issue, per household, at $2 per issue per year. That’s only $52 — less than most people spend on pizza and wings.

Larger donations are also greatly appreciated. For transparency, donations of more than $1,000 will be published in the paper (with a big thank you) and donors will receive an exclusive limited edition Lake Report mug, as well as a copy of the first edition of the paper signed by staff.

To support The Lake Report, mail cheques to the Niagara-on-the-Lake Post Office, L0S1J0, PO Box 724. Please make cheques payable to Niagara Now Ltd. and note it as a donation.

TOPIC A modicum of redemption. But ...

NEWS Pancake Tuesday fights cancer

Brittany Carter The Lake Report

Sunset Grill in Niagara-on-the-Lake participated in Pancake Tuesday for the second year, offering servings of pancakes for $1 each.

Proceeds earned through the fundraiser were donated to the Canadian Cancer Society. More than $100,000 has been raised nationwide since the chain’s initial participation in the fundraiser 11 years ago. This year $27,000 was raised across Canada compared to the $24,000 last year.

Scott Gauld, owner of the Queen Street location, said it’s NOTL’s off-season so he didn’t notice a huge increase in customers, but he said those who did come in were looking forward to it.

“It’s a decent turnout. It’s not too bad but it could improve. We try to promote it the best we can,” Gauld said, adding that it is all for a good cause.

The fundraiser takes place annually throughout the chain across Canada. Last year, he said the store earned upwards of $300 by the end of the day’s campaign.

“We’re just trying to earn some money for the Canadian Cancer Society. Everyone knows someone who has cancer.”

This year, Gauld said the store earned about $200, adding that he would bump that number up to $300 for the charity.

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“What I tend to do is bump that number up, given it’s not a very busy time of year for us.”

He said customers can look forward to it in the future, adding that the store will continue promoting it each year.

Keeping fundraising campaigns in mind all year, Gauld said the store also promotes the Terry Fox Run in the summer.
Tamon Tuesday has Niagara women covered

Brittany Carter
The Lake Report

The United Way called for under-donated products for women during Tampon Tuesday, a fundraising campaign that took place across Canada March 5. An initiative of the United Way to gather unopened boxes of feminine hygiene products for women in need, Tampon Tuesday has been happening annually for 10 years.

United Way Niagara joined the project three years ago in St. Catharines, expanding the reach to Niagara Falls and Welland this year after three local United Way chapters came together to form the Niagara branch. Tanya Faulkner, labour program and service co-ordinator for United Way Niagara, said the event provided an evening of socializing and networking while bringing awareness to the fact that these products are often under donated and in demand.

With support from community partners, who had bins out to collect boxes leading up to Tuesday evening’s event, Faulkner said she was hopeful they would reach their goal.

Referencing the foodbox challenge that circled social media sites, Faulkner said the community was “very involved.” The challenge asked people to donate just one box of pads or tampons. “One box to make a difference,” she said.

Niagara-on-the-Lake residents were up to the challenge. Simpson’s Pharmasave on Niagara Stone Road in NOTL took part this year, collecting boxes right up until they were delivered to Cat’s Kitchen on Tuesday evening. Operations manager Catherine Porter said the store received overwhelming support from community and staff. “Often those sort of products are forgotten but very much needed. It’s really something that the United Way has highlighted. Their mission is to highlight the need for those products.”

Porter said the store actively supports the United Way, promoting initiatives in-store and online to boost community involvement.

Faulkner said the Tampon Tuesday campaign is important because it helps women receive products they may not have otherwise. Often women have to make the choice between buying food or buying tampons. She said they should be able to have both. Some parents, unable to afford hygiene products for their daughters, will have to keep them home from school, she said. “It creates a bigger problem getting into missed school and falling behind.”

“It’s something that we can do to help them, so they can worry about the things they need to worry about, not to have to worry about something that is natural for women. We want to take away the stigma of needing these products and having your period.”

On Tuesday evening, supporters gathered at Jack Astor’s in St. Catharines, Cat’s Kitchen in Niagara Falls and Mr. Mike’s Steakhouse Casual in Welland, to listen to representatives from the United Way agencies speak about the importance of these donations and the impact they have on the lives of women in need.

Faulkner said United Way hosted similar events on the same night across Canada. People were asked to bring an unopened box of feminine hygiene products and the first 150 people through the doors received a pink lei as a thank you.

Last year, Faulkner said the project gathered 2,300 boxes, which went out to three or four area agencies. This year, she said the goal was 6,000 boxes, which they gave to 16 different agencies around the Niagara region, including the YWCA and Gillian’s Place. “Almost triple, but we’re tripling our area.”

By the end of the evening, Faulkner said they had collected 3,000 boxes. United Way Niagara will continue to collect them all week, up to and including International Women’s Day on Friday.

Agencies will accept donations of feminine hygiene products year round.

Documentary ‘risks everything’ at History Museum

Brittany Carter
The Lake Report

Fighting for freedom, African-American’s who journeyed to Canada are documented in Risking Everything: A Story of Niagara’s Freedom Seekers. The Niagara Historical Society and Museum will host a free screening of the half-hour film on March 14 at 6 p.m.

Directed and produced by Isadore “Izzy” Bleckman, award-winning photographer, and his wife Mary Roseberry, retired professor of literature and journalism at Niagara County Community College, the film tells the story of those who made the journey from the “slave states” to Canada before the US Civil War.

The film was released on Feb. 20, during Black History Month, in celebration of all of the people who made the dangerous journey in the search of better lives. Sifting through hundreds of hours of video footage and recordings, Bleckman and Roseberry, with Bleckman’s daughter, Sheera Bleckman, edited the material down to a half-hour documentary film.

The creation of the ‘Freedom Crossing’ monument in Lewiston, NY, kickstarted the team’s film in 2009. Hours of the construction and installation of the monument, by Susan Geisler, renowned sculptor, was filmed while the team also conducted interviews and research of the history of people on both sides of the border with a commitment to the opposition of slavery.

In an NHS Museum’s media release, Roseberry is quoted: “The monument tells a powerful story, a continuing story about people who risk their lives to find a place where they can live a decent life, and others who are willing to assist them.”

“We often think of slavery as if it is a long-ago story,” Roseberry said, “but the past is our beginning and has taken us to who we are today. The stories of earlier generations need to be told again and again, not only in written narrative, but in images, in the spoken voice, and in art such as Susan’s sculpture. My husband and I have had the opportunity to play a role in expanding and deepening our international story.”

Niagara Historical Society and Museum host special events and exhibitions throughout the year, which can be found at www.niagarahistoricalmuseum.org or by calling 905-468-3912.

Located at 43 Castlereagh St., the museum is open daily from 1 p.m. to 5 p.m. until April, then 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. from May to October.
Yellow Door Theatre Project to present Crack of Doom

Brittany Carter
The Lake Report

The world is ending, and Niagara-on-the-Lake teens are demonstrating how they’re spending the crucial moments leading up to their eventual demise – through musical theatre.

The Yellow Door Theatre Project encourages and trains local kids in theatre, providing guidance in the dramatic arts. The company aims to provide NOTL youth with invaluable training in acting, dancing and singing talents.

On March 16 and 17 at 7 p.m. at the Yellow Door’s rehearsal studio in Virgil, the Teen Theatre Company will be performing Crack of Doom: Or How I Learned to Love the Meteor. Admission is $10 at the door.

The play is an original piece written by Canadian playwrights Suzy Wilde and Matt Bernard. The screenplay, initially geared toward college-aged performers, has been adapted to a more relatable to teenagers. Originally, the play was set in a University, for Yellow Door’s performance it’s been changed to take place in a high school.

Andorlie Hillstrom, artistic director of Yellow Door, said the screenplay didn’t require a lot of other changes. A few characters have been updated to make them more relatable to the young actors.

She said the kids have been having a lot of fun with the material.

“If and foremost, the musical is a comedy. We have laughed a great deal over the course of rehearsals thus far. And the kids are having a wonderful time.”

It deals with high school relationships, with struggles kids might have regarding dating and friendships.

“There’s this whole thing about what we do do with those last few hours. From a high schooler’s perspective, what would that mean? What would be important to them?”

Thematically, the musical poses the question — what in this life is the most important? Throughout the play the characters struggle with education and career choices, until the meteor crashes into the mix, adding another dilemma altogether.

Suddenly, the characters must deal with the fact that they only have a few hours left to live. She said it becomes make-believe. “It’s not something that could be dealt with realistically.”

She stressed the humour of the musical. “I know it doesn’t sound like much of a comedy, but it’s very funny, it truly is. There is a seriousness, overall, to the premise, but it’s written in such a beautiful way.”

As for the characters portrayed by the teens, she said they’re all unique.

“It’s been a challenge, from an acting perspective, putting together their thoughts and ideas.”

She said they continuously workshop the piece, engaging closely with the director and interacting with each other.

“They get to truly work together, as a group, in a collaborative sense, and they’re having a blast.”

Yellow Door works with professionals in the theatre industry to bring authenticity and education to the kids.

“The people we have had work with us not only have a professional pedigree but they also love being in an environment with children. They’re teachers and they’re mentors.”

Class becomes a mentoring environment for everyone, Hillstrom said.

The performance is put on in their rehearsal space, not on a traditional stage. Hillstrom said working in that manner provides a host of benefits for the kids, allowing them to work closely with each other and the audience, as well as fostering a more relaxed atmosphere.

Acting in a small space so close to the audience, the teens learn to remain focused the entire time. She said that’s a learning curve they need to work through.

Yellow Door is a theatre project for local kids, in operation for the last four years. Hillstrom said it’s still in its infant stage; there’s so much more they can do. The Teen Theatre Company began two years ago to hone in on backing teen’s talents.

She said there were so many talented teenagers in the program that she wanted to offer them something more.

Through the individual attention the group receives during workshops, she said they develop faster as performers.

“Quite honestly, I’ve got some great kids. I thought, I need to find something else for you guys.

So, that’s how it has kind of happened. They’re spectacular, really are. I have no doubt that we’re seeing individuals who are going to later go on to professional careers.”

Giving that age group the opportunity to work through a piece that is both mature and challenging, tarted specifically to them. It helps to move them forward technically, she said.

Yellow Door provides the performers with what Hillstrom calls a transferable skill.

“What I’ve observed is they learn how to be comfortable in front of a group, public speaking, to articulate. They learn to work in small groups, large groups, to collaborate with others.”

ANDORLIE HILLSTROM
ARTISTIC DIRECTOR
YELLOW DOOR THEATRE PROJECT
The oldest books west of Quebec

Brittany Carter
The Lake Report

St. Mark’s Anglican Church has been sitting on a historical goldmine for generations. Housing one of the oldest libraries in Canada, the Addison Library holds books dating back to the 1700s. The oldest is dated 1599.

Donald Combe, one of the library’s caretakers and a member of the archive committee, said it’s the oldest library in Ontario, “Arguably, one of the oldest in the country.”

Robert Addison originally brought his collection of 1500 books overseas to Canada from England in 1791. There are about 1350 in the collection.

When Addison came, he brought with him the library, which is an extraordinary feat to think in 1791. Crossing the ocean was one thing but carring along with him 1500 books as carry-on luggage was another, Combes said.

Stored in St. Mark’s church, he said they’re the town’s books.

“From the beginning, St. Mark’s was always the centre of the town. The earliest burials are here. The other cemeteries didn’t exist until the mid-1830s,” he said, reiterating the idea that the books are a hidden gem of NOTL. “This library, I like to feel in a real way, does belong to Niagara-on-the-Lake.”

The books are now housed in the room designed by Canadian artist Campbell Scott and constructed by Bill German, a local craftsman.

Covering a variety of subjects, it was likely that Addison traveled to Canada as a missionary. Combe said, speculating that Addison was hoping to create a school when he arrived.

“In which case he would have needed a good selection of books,” Combe said.

There are many religious works in the collection, from volumes of scriptures and sermons to an early version of the bible, known as the Britches Bible, published in 1599.

When Addison came, he brought the books dating back to the 1700s. The oldest is dated 1599. The oldest is dated 1599.

“The books were kept at the church, not belonging to the church itself and only belonging to the rector as long as he was part of the church.”

The collection was eventually donated to McMaster University, with some contentious issues. After several years, the church reclaimed the books and they were stored in the crypt under the church, where they sat until the library was built.

“They were put into the crypt and sealed - because it was such a contentious issue, that the rector at that time didn’t wish to deal with the contentious issue,” Combes said the books sat in the crypt for at least 10 years before it was re-opened.

“When they were opened, they were in perfect condition because McMaster had begun restoration with them, had put preservatives on the covers. They were all individually bubble-wrapped in the crypt, and they were safe.”

To properly house the books, Combes said it was decided that the hall would be created.

From that point, Combe said Peter Babcock and Murray Wilcox, both members of the archive committee, have “worked tirelessly, endlessly with the books” to gain knowledge of what the books are and, to some extent, how important they are.

The product of two years of work, Babcock and Wilcox published a transcribed version of a book of sermons.

“What is interesting about the book is that after the first few sermons were written the author turned the book around and upside down - so we mirrored that in our published version,” Babcock said, adding, “it looks something awful.”

The pair poured over the original, transcribing the book word for word, calling on Fred Habermehl, another member of the archive committee dedicating his time to working with the books, for help with particularly tough words and phrases.

Wilcox said their aim was to replicate the original volume, adding the markings, strike-out and notes in the margins to the published version.

Wilcox said he got involved with the library after using the church’s archive material for some personal research. For three months he returned consistently, pouring over material with assistance from members of the archive committee.

After that, he said he saw Babcock transcribing in the library, with a magnifying glass, writing everything out by hand.

“I had previous experience transcribing letters and taking photos, digitizing it and enlarging it on screen. I thought, I can help Peter out,” he said.

He digitized all of the pages in the sermons book. “I thought, well I’ll help them for a bit. They gave me three months, I’ll give them three. Well it got to be so enjoyable.”

He said he enjoyed it so much he continued working with the books long after he initially planned. Babcock was pulled in by Combe.

“That’s my fault,” Combe said, adding that he knew Babcock would share his interest in the library’s history.

As for Combe, he started by first transcribing the stones in the town’s three cemeteries. A true storyteller, he said the lives of the people buried in the cemeteries interested him.

With the help of Habermehl, a book providing a walking tour of the three cemeteries of St. Mark’s, St. Andrew’s and St. Vincent de Paul’s called Stones, Saints and Sinners was published.

“It’s wonderful to think if there are a lot of stories out there, and there are a lot of stories in here too,” Combe said, referring to the cemetery, viewed out the window of the library, “Not just the contents of the book but who owned the book and why they owned it – it moved to the next person, and who that person was, and why it ended up here, was it really valuable?”

Habermehl and Combe published many books together.

“As far as the books are concerned, Donald and I have been working on books for years. We started out transcribing historic cemeteries. Published that. We had so much material we didn’t know what to do with it, so we decided to put it in print,” Habermehl said, joking that it started them down “this ugly path.”

Combes said the work that can be done with the books is endless. “There’s enough work in this library to keep a bunch of librarians busy for several lifetimes.”
To everyone in Niagara-on-the-Lake, we have two words:

Thank you.

You welcomed our patrons to Niagara with open arms. You nourished them with your amazing food and wine. You gave them fabulous places to stay. You volunteered at our theatres tirelessly. And you came to our plays in droves. From all of the staff and artists at The Shaw to everyone in Niagara: our heartfelt gratitude for helping make the 2018 Season a huge success.

- Attendance was at its highest in many years
- 90% of patrons gave the season a 9-out-of-10 or better
- Our Ensemble kept growing in talent and diversity
- We continued to push the boundaries of what is possible in North American theatre
- We achieved a healthy surplus

Our 2019 Season begins April 6. We can’t wait to see you!

Charitable no. 11914 7882 RR00G1
**Community Favourites:**

- Legion Fish Fry every Thursday - 4:30 p.m. to 7:30 p.m.
- St. Davids Lions Club Fish Fry, March 1 and 15 - 4:30 p.m. to 7 p.m.
- Duplicate Bridge at the Community Centre, Tuesdays and Fridays at 10 a.m.

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<th>Sunday</th>
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<tr>
<td>Spring Forward Bake with an Expert - 9 p.m. to 1 p.m. - Canadian Food and Wine Institute, NOTL Campus</td>
<td>Line Dancing - 10 a.m. to 11:30 a.m. - NOTL Community Centre</td>
<td>NOTL Rotary Club - Noon - NOTL Community Centre</td>
<td>InfoHealth Clinical Good Reasons to Join a p.m. - NOTL Public Library</td>
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<tr>
<td>Winter Wonderland Food Tour - 7 p.m. - Niagara Culinary Tours</td>
<td>Marie Kart Tournament - 2 p.m. to 4 p.m. - NOTL Public Library</td>
<td>Seniors Fitness - Healthy Food &amp; Strong - 2:30 p.m. to 3:30 p.m. - NOTL Community Centre</td>
<td>Sewing in the Make It Happy! - 2 p.m. to 3 p.m. - NOTL Public Library</td>
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<td>Town Council Meeting - 4 p.m. - Council Chambers</td>
<td>NOTL Rotary Club - Noon - NOTL Community Centre</td>
<td>University Women in Niagara - 5 p.m. to 10 p.m. - NOTL Public Library</td>
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<td>Niagara Regional Native Centre: Community Drumming Night - 6 p.m. to 8 p.m. - Niagara Regional Native Centre</td>
<td>Google Expeditions Virtual Reality Adventure - 2 p.m. to 3 p.m. - NOTL Public Library</td>
<td>NOTL Toastmasters - 8:30 p.m. - Niagara College, NOTL Campus</td>
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<td>Seniors Fitness - Healthy Food &amp; Strong - 2:30 p.m. to 3:30 p.m. - NOTL Community Centre</td>
<td>Wine &amp; Words with Shoals - 7:30 p.m. - Southbrook Vineyards</td>
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<td>Winter Wonderland Food Tour - 7 p.m. - Niagara Culinary Tours</td>
<td>Seniors Fitness: Healthy Food &amp; Strong - 3:30 p.m. to 4:30 p.m. - NOTL Community Centre</td>
<td>NOTL Rotary Club - Noon - NOTL Community Centre</td>
<td>Simpson’s Seniors’ a.m. to 8 p.m. - Simpson’s Seniors’ Luncheon/Barbeque at the Library</td>
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<td>Author Reading: Michael Mirolla and Caitlen Galway</td>
<td>Line Dancing - 10 a.m. to 11:30 a.m. - NOTL Public Library</td>
<td>Golden Age Club - 1 p.m. to 4 p.m. - NOTL Community Centre</td>
<td>St. Andrew’s Lecture Series - 225 Years: The McFarland’s of St. Andrews with David Andrews and St. Andrew’s Presbyterian Church</td>
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<td>Simply STEAM Store &amp; School - 10 a.m. to noon - NOTL Public Library</td>
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<td>Paint Night at the Exchange Brewery - 7 p.m. - NOTL Pub Publi</td>
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<td><strong>Babies and Books</strong></td>
<td><strong>Niagara Culinary Tours</strong></td>
<td><strong>International Women’s Day</strong></td>
<td><strong>Culinary Regions of Italy with Emily Romagna, North East Italy</strong></td>
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<td>7:30 a.m. to 9:30 a.m.</td>
<td>1 p.m.</td>
<td>Live Learn Jazz Series: “Women of the Hour” Part 1</td>
<td>Customization Clinic - 10 a.m. to noon - Clare’s Harley Davidson</td>
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<td>NOTL Public Library</td>
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<td>Yoga with Jenny - 10 a.m. to 11 a.m.</td>
<td>Cricut Design for Children - 10 a.m. to noon - NOTL Public Library</td>
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<td><strong>Seniors Fitness: Healthy &amp; Strong</strong></td>
<td><strong>Paint Nite at The Exchange</strong></td>
<td><strong>Seated Laughter Fitness: Laugh Yourself Healthier</strong></td>
<td>Skating and a DJ - 5 p.m. to 9 p.m. - Wayne Gretzky Estates Winery &amp; Distillery</td>
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<td><strong>Babies and Books</strong></td>
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<td><strong>Winter Wonderland Food Tour</strong></td>
<td><strong>Seed Library Launch with Linda Crago</strong></td>
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<td>11 a.m. to 11:30 a.m.</td>
<td>NOTL Public Library</td>
<td>1 p.m. - Niagara Culinary Tours</td>
<td><strong>10 a.m. to 11 a.m. - NOTL Public Library</strong></td>
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<td>NOTL Public Library</td>
<td><strong>Winter Wonderland Food Tour</strong></td>
<td><strong>Mahjong Game Drop In</strong></td>
<td><strong>Artist Workshop: Elementary Watercolour with Peter Malaguti</strong></td>
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<td>11 a.m. to 11:30 a.m.</td>
<td>NOTL Public Library</td>
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<td>10:30 a.m. - RiverBrink Art Museum</td>
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<td><strong>Cribbage for Seniors</strong></td>
<td><strong>Super Straw Rockets</strong></td>
<td><strong>Crafty Kids</strong></td>
<td>Winter Wonderland Food Tour - 1 p.m. - Niagara Culinary Tours</td>
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<td>Skating and a DJ - 5 p.m. to 9 p.m. - Wayne Gretzky Estates Winery &amp; Distillery</td>
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<td><strong>Live, Learn, Jazz: Diana Panton</strong></td>
<td><strong>Niagara College Spring Open House</strong></td>
<td><strong>Progressive Dinner: A Taste of Italy</strong></td>
<td><strong>Culinary Regions of Italy: Tuscany and Central Italy</strong></td>
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<td><strong>Dance at the Community Centre, Tuesdays and Fridays at 1 p.m.</strong></td>
<td><strong>ART: Art and Fashion Lecture Series: Indigenous Stories/History with Gary Parker</strong></td>
<td><strong>Babies and Books - 11 a.m. to 11:30 a.m.</strong></td>
<td><strong>Day - 8:30 a.m. to 9:30 a.m.</strong></td>
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<td><strong>DNA Workshop - 3 p.m. to 5 p.m.</strong></td>
<td>NOTL Public Library</td>
<td>THE EXCHANGE - 2:30 p.m. to 3:30 p.m.</td>
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<td><strong>Niagara Historical Society &amp; Museum</strong></td>
<td><strong>Niagara Culinary Tours</strong></td>
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Laura MacFadden stands in front of the Old Niagara Bookshop. JER HOUGHTON

This story is 50 years in the making

How passion, a sharp mind, and the Shaw Festival are helping a local book store stand out in the modern world

Jer Houghton
The Lake Report

For a half a century, Laura MacFadden has been working hard to bring good-old-fashioned books to the town of Niagara-on-the-Lake.

Over the years she's had different storefronts in town, but there's one thing that's remained unwavering throughout it all — MacFadden's love of literature.

As the proud owner of the Old Niagara Bookshop — the only dedicated book store in the heritage district of Old Town — she has worked tirelessly since its inception to ensure the shop has remained a landmark stop for residents and tourists alike.

In an age where book stores are struggling around the country, she tells a tale of how the shop came to be.

After leaving Toronto and a career in financial investment, she moved with her husband to NOTL to raise their two children in 1968.

If I had this image of a fleeting visit to Niagara-on-the-Lake being a quaint little village, which wouldn be a lot better than the city of Toronto to raise a family,” MacFadden recalls.

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When she first started out, she says, the Shaw Festival was starting out at the Court House Theatre, the Prince of Wales played host to a beverage room, and Parliament Oak was actually an architect's home.

Queen Street also featured the Country Store, Kurts' Barbershop and the offices of the Niagara Advance newspaper.

“[It hadn’t been discovered],” she says, explaining a lot of the properties in Old Town were used as summer retreats for people from the U.S.

She was drawn to the town's rich history, attributing much of her attraction to the area.

Growing up in Toronto, MacFadden wasn’t used to small communities, but that didn't discourage her from looking to her passion in books to find a way to start a business venture.

And so when she learned the Niagara Advance was moving across the street and their office space was available, she took it over and opened up a very small book store called The Book Nook.

When I moved in I had maybe 300, maybe 250 square feet — it was tiny,” she says, laughing to herself.

“And when I first opened up, some of the people in town said, ‘You’re going to burn this up in here.’ It was so tiny.”

Ironically, she didn’t even have heat back then.

“I had to get a space heater,” she jests.

Thinking back to her discovery of books, MacFadden remembers receiving them throughout her childhood as gifts for her birthday and Christmas — each one inscribed by her father.

“They were important in our household,” she says proudly. “I grew up with books … I was surrounded with books, I was curious about books.”

Her father had a great library and it was a “true collector,” she recalls.

“There’s a big difference between a reader and a collector, and my father was a collector … People collect because it’s a passion,” she says fondly of him.

MacFadden now too has quite the collection, with her first inventory coming from the Oxford University Press.

“That’s where I started and I still have customers who remember as children getting their first book on Brock — and that was an Oxford classic.”

When she first started out, she didn’t want to bargain for her sales. She preferred the set price model.

“When you buy new books, there’s a price on it. And that is why I started selling new books.”

In those days, a trade paperback would be $2.50 compared to $20 today.

She remembers being met with a lot of opposition when first opening the shop, explaining a lot of residents questioned her and the need for a book store when there was a library.

“I was a married woman with children. I should be home with my children. And I was depriving somebody of a way to earn a living,” she says, describing the sentiments of those times.

“I’ve always focused on what I’m doing, which is selling books and learning what I want.”

For the past 50 years, MacFadden has managed to successfully operate the only book shop in town, despite few other shops carrying some of the same books.

She says the growing popularity of the Shaw Festival has been integral to her business in that she has always tried to find books pertaining to shows every year.

“I was just an independent bookseller — I’m not catering to a huge market and certainly in those days, I was always trying to find things that were related to the theatre,” she says.

“I wouldn’t have been here 10 years if the theatre hadn’t survived, and so long as they survive, I thought a book shop would survive.”

Despite various struggles in being a female business owner, MacFadden treaded ahead, growing her inventory and moving locations three times over four decades, all within Queen and King Street.

Her store now resides on Regent Street, having changed names to the Old Niagara Bookshop.

“I was in the old part of town, so I called myself the Old Niagara Bookshop, simple as that.”

As an independent bookseller, the Old Niagara Bookshop has become known for carrying books of the “true sort” that ‘merit,’ denotes MacFadden.

You can find shelves that range from non-fiction to Canadiana classics, to many other noteworthy heartless classics in fiction and children’s literature.

“For instance, I carry books of the true sort; those that inform, entertain and enlighten — and I digress a little bit in the summer and have more what I call fluff, my overnight mysteries that aren’t disturbing,” she says.

“And you can’t talk down. I try to only have really good writers, good authors. Books are really an extension of the arts and so that’s the important part.”

MacFadden says for a small bookseller, it’s a “hard balance” dealing with customers and knowing what they want.

“If the town has changed, and certainly my inventory has changed — but then the people coming here have changed, and we attract people from all over the world.”

MacFadden says she likes to carry Canadian authors, especially those she considers the greats in Canadian literature, which have always been in demand.

“When you get people from other countries, they know Farley Mowat, they know The Boat Who Wouldn’t Float and Never Cry Wolf; they know Pierre Berton, and of course they know the girl with the red pigtails, they know Anne of Green Gables,” she says.

Her dedication to the shop and her desire to read all these years has been about the freedom she has had as an independent bookseller.

“I’ve been in this for freedom, I’m like Anne of Green Gables, a free spirit,” she says with a smile.

“I think to be restricted in what you carry, which the chains are, wouldn’t work for me — I want that freedom, which many people take and say, I want to carry that,” Part of that freedom comes with researching the catalogues to learn about the publishers, the authors, the stories and their value. As much as finding this process fascinating to figure out trends, it helps her sell books of her choosing.

“I carry things because I think they’re important. The other reason I carry them is there is sometimes an inanity for a person or an event,” she says.

“You’ve got to be in tune with what’s going on.”

Other times books will likely never be reprinted because they get subsidies, she explains.

MacFadden admits she is a “bit serious” when it comes to the selection of books she carries, but it is also part of deeming “good literature.”

“I know I’m quirky, and (people) think I’m a bit bizarre, but that’s what book sellers are all about,” she says.

“Children are grown, my grandchildren are grown, so what do I do? I read books, I read catalogs, I’m not alone — I know that many curators, that’s what they do.”

Moving forward she says she’s been fortunate with good health and will continue operating the shop for as long as she can.

“It’s like everything else, it’s called a music-deliberate practice,” she says, explaining the idea is to work daily whether you have one customer that day or none at all.

“If it wasn’t my shop, it wouldn’t be another. It would be whoever decided to put a book shop.”

Laura MacFadden stands in front of the Old Niagara Bookshop. JER HOUGHTON

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Visit our Bunting Road branch in St Catharines or any of our 8 branches across Niagara!
Did you know?
The Lake Report’s printer sources 100 per cent of its paper fibre from industry leading paper mills, which use quick-growth, sustainable, renewable plots of land, rather than clear-cutting forests.
The ink is also vegetable-based.

Advertising inquiries?
Email us at advertising@niagaranon.com or call Rob at 905-246-4671
Across
1 Eyots (5)
5 Rubbish (5)
8 Incantation (5)
10 Russian sleigh (6)
11 Defence covering (6)
12 Having the form of a song (5)
13 Sister of Mary and Lazarus (6)
14 Resident of e.g. Nairobi (6)
15 Stage play (5)
17 Scratched (6)
19 Plan (6)
21 Cuban dance (5)
22 Die from lack of food (6)
23 Professional killer (6)
24 Locations (5)
25 Workshop machinery (6)
27 Pressed (6)
29 Greek architectural style (5)
31 Go back (6)
32 Beast (6)
33 Porridge (5)
34 E.g. Tarka (5)
35 Is inclined (5)

Down
2 Bill (9)
3 Throw out (5)
4 Not in any circumstances (Poetical) (4)
6 Recall past experiences (9)
7 Sweat room (5)
8 Mayonnaise (5,8)
9 Lazy (13)
16 Allow to enter (5)
18 Storage building (9)
20 Cemetery (9)
26 Representative (5)
28 Oil source (5)
30 Part of speech (4)

Have some fun

Crossword Puzzle

The Lake Report is looking for puzzle makers who would like to help develop this page. We are seeking both standard and cryptic crossword writers. editor@niagaranow.com

Last issue’s answers

Sudoku

Wayne Gates
MPP Niagara Falls Riding
Serving Niagara Falls, Niagara-on-the-Lake & Fort Erie
905-357-0681  •  WayneGates.com • wgates-co@ndp.on.ca

March 7, 2019

Spring needs to hurry up.
Unifying the composition
Brian Marshall
Featured

While there are many design principles and elements in the toolbox of the talented designer, there is only one more combo that I wish to address in this series: rhythm and pattern.

Carefully applied in concert with the other principles we have addressed, rhythm and pattern speak to the natural human attraction for order thereby conveying a sense of comfort and contentment.

These two principles work “hand-in-glove.” Rhythm can be defined as the regular (or rhythmic) occurrence of similar and/or identical elements to produce a sense of predictability, movement and sequence across the composition. Although rhythm can be achieved with various forms, the two most common are structure (such as a series of columns) and pattern. Patterns are surface elements, generally decorative, which visually provide both variety and unity. Here’s the key, items set in cadence create a sense of rhythm and ‘rhythm repeated’ forms a pattern. The Gothic farmhouse shown boasts multiple examples of applied rhythm and pattern of elements (brackets, pillars, etc.) which contribute to a unified composition that extends past the facade to successfully marry the original front portion of the house and the rear addition.

So, at the end of the day, the architect will use the key principles in concert, always considering the composition as they employ them.

The result will be a ‘good’ design; a home which evokes a sense of order, balance, hierarchy, scale, proportion, rhythm and pattern; a unified composition that integrates with its site, and simply feels “right” while delivering intuitive livability.

The corner of King and Queen streets used to be known as Connolly’s Corner. It was a favorite store for kids in town as Jim Connolly sold penny candy. Three black balls for a penny, three tar babies a penny, and twist licorice was two cents each. Mr. Connolly would put the candy we bought in a little brown paper bag.

SUPPLIED/JIM SMITH

In this line you have a mix of text in the left column and a photo of the building. The text is discussing rhythm and pattern in design.

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

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

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

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

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

Did you know?
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Call all chefs!
Local recipe book planned for 2019

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

Did you know?
The Lake Report’s printer sources 100 per cent of its paper fibre from industry leading paper mills, which use quick-growth, sustainable, renewable plots of land, rather than clear-cutting forests. The ink is also vegetable-based.

Advertising inquiries?
Email advertising@niagaranow.com

In this line you have a mix of text in the left column and a photo of the building. The text is discussing rhythm and pattern in design.

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

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

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YOUR SPIRIT OF NIAGARA AWARD WINNERS

Presented by the Niagara-on-the-Lake Chamber of Commerce, the Spirit of Niagara awards honour residents who have made a lasting impact on the community. This ceremony started 28 years ago with one award for Citizen of the Year.

Christopher Newton Award for Extraordinary Vision in Business - Alfred Dyck, All Green Irrigation

Peter Ling Award for Entrepreneurial Spirit - Outlet Collection at Niagara

Community Leadership Award - Bob Mavridis, Corks and Orzo Restaurants

Company of the Year Award - Angela Marotta and Melissa Marotta-Paolicelli, Two Sisters Vineyards

Lord Mayor’s Award of Excellence (Citizen of the Year) - Rainer Hummel

Celia Liu Award for Excellence in Hospitality - Mark Torrance, Andrew Peller Ltd.

Chamber of Commerce Chair’s Award - Lord Mayor’s Youth Advisory Council
Rainer Hummel receives the Citizen of the Year Award from Lord Mayor Betty Disero during this year’s Spirit of Niagara Awards. JER HOUGHTON

Bethany Poltl along with fellow members of the Lord Mayor’s Youth Advisory Council receiving the Chamber of Commerce’s Chair’s Award for their leadership. JER HOUGHTON

Janice Thomson, president of the Chamber of Commerce. JER HOUGHTON

Thank you to all who submitted nominations and attended Spirit of Niagara. The Chamber of Commerce appreciates this opportunity to salute the Town’s Finest Citizens.

Nominations are open year round at www.niagaraonthelake.com/spirit-of-niagara.
W.L. Mackenzie Part 1 of 2

Denise Ascenzo
Featured

The Birthplace of Responsible Government

At the turn of the 20th century, lying hidden at the bottom of the Niagara escarpment in Queenston, Ontario, was a building with only a few walls left standing. A stone marker was all that could be seen that told the curious tourist that this had been the home of William Lyon Mackenzie.

In 1936, the Provincial Ministry of Highways and Public Works, under the direction of Thomas McQuesten, began reconstructing historic sites in Ontario. This was to provide relief work during the Great Depression, to build tourism infrastructure and to instill in Canadians a pride in our past achievements.

Among the sites reconstructed was the Mackenzie house. The remaining ruins were used in the reconstruction of the building which was based on typical building styles of the 1820s era.

On June 18, 1938, the 126th anniversary of the beginning of the War of 1812, the Mackenzie house was opened to the public by William Lyon Mackenzie King, Prime Minister of Canada (1921-30 & 1935-48) and the grandson of William Lyon Mackenzie.

William Lyon Mackenzie was born in Scotland in 1795 and immigrated to Upper Canada in 1820. By 1824 while living in Queenston, he became involved in politics and founded a newspaper called the Colonial Advocate. Mackenzie's editorials criticized the ruling oligarchy who were known as the Family Compact because their positions in government were filled through nepotism.

The Lieutenant Governors of the province, appointed by the British parliament, tended to appoint very conservative, wealthy men who had gained prominence in the War of 1812 or who were successful businessmen to the Executive Council. Upper Canada did have an elected assembly but the real power lay with the Lieutenant Governor and the unelected Executive Council. Those who could vote for the Legislative Assembly were limited to land owners with property worth a certain amount. Farmers renting their property, many minor tradesmen and labourers were not enfranchised.

Mackenzie was very critical of this and by 1824 decided to move his paper to York (Toronto) where he could respond much more quickly to government decisions. By 1826 he had been deeply in debt with his creditors threatening to have him arrested.

Mackenzie fled to the United States in May of that year. Shortly after his move, his entire printery in York was vandalized by his political opponents. He was awarded damages and this enabled him to return to York, repay his debts and set himself up again in the newspaper business once again.

Not to be restricted to just voicing his political views in the paper, Mackenzie entered politics and was elected to the Provincial Parliament in 1828. His primary goal was to have fair government representation for the people.

He had quite the colourful political career, always attacking and criticizing his political opponents. He was expelled six times from the Legislature by the Tory Majority, only to be returned to office by his constituents in subsequent by-elections.

In 1834 the town of York was incorporated as the City of Toronto. Mackenzie was elected as the Mayor of Toronto but was defeated in the 1835 election. The following year he lost his provincial parliamentary seat. At this time, Mackenzie founded a more radical newspaper, the Constitution where he continued to savagely criticise the provincial parliament.

It was during the depression of 1837 that talk of rebellion was being bantered about in local taverns and in Mackenzie's paper. Free grants of land were only available to United Empire Loyalists and their families, veterans of the War of 1812 and to immigrants from the British Isles. American immigrants had to purchase or lease their land.

Only those who owned property worth a certain amount (5-10 pounds depending on the period) and who had sworn the oath of Loyalty to the Crown were eligible to vote. Understandably, there were many discontented new immigrants from the United States.

With the economic turn down and two years of failed harvests, many of the colony's farmers were subject to harsh debt collection laws.

The seeds of discontent had been planted, a rebellion was inevitable. In December of 1837, around 500 would be revolutionaries gathered at Montgomery's Tavern on Yonge Street. They were ill-equipped for any type of battle but they decided to march south on Yonge with the aim of seizing muskets and ammunition from the Armoury at Fort York. They were opposed by 27 Loyalist volunteers who fired a volley of musket fire, killing three and wounding five of the rebels.

The remaining rebels quickly retreated to Montgomery's Tavern. Later that evening and the following day hundreds of loyal militia, including many farmers from York County and the Hamilton area arrived to bolster the government forces. This force then marched towards Montgomery's Tavern, disarming the remaining rebels.

After the failure at Toronto, Mackenzie fled to the Buffalo area and garnered support. In the winter of 1838, Mackenzie and his remaining rebels, along with some American supporters occupied Navy Island in the Niagara River, south of the Horseshoe Falls. Mackenzie claimed the island as the capital of the Republic of Upper Canada.

However this too was short lived when a group of Canadian volunteers captured and burned the supply ship, Caroline, that the rebels had used to bombard the island from the mainland with cannon and mortar fire.

The rebellion was over in Toronto and the rebels had been driven from Navy Island, but it was not over. There were a few more skirmishes in 1838 including invasions by Upper Canadian rebels and American supporters in Essex County, Niagara, and Prescott.

In each of these actions the rebels were defeated by strong forces of loyal militia and British regulars. The people of Upper Canada did not rise up to join the rebels, support for armed insurrection ended. Farmers had to get back to their land and merchants could not afford to host the rebels for fear of government retaliation.

Several of the rebels were caught and their leaders were executed. Samuel Lount and Peter Matthews were executed in Toronto. Many other rebels were exiled to the penal colony of Van Diemen's Land (Tasmania), Australia.

Read Part 2 next week.
All Niagara-on-the-Lake residents and visitors are welcome to submit photos and stories for consideration in this section. Please send submissions to editor@niagaranow.com.

Snow birds

Artifact of the Week: Mrs. Sampson’s Hearing Aid

Answer: This week’s artifact was a hearing aid or ear trumpet used and owned by a Mrs. Sampson. This hearing aid (circa 1882) would have been set on a table and pointed at the person speaking to her. Because of its large size, it would not have been carried around every day, but would have been used for larger gatherings or meetings. This piece was donated by Miss Minnie Ball in 1911.

The Artifact of the Week column is submitted by the Niagara Historical Society & Museum, exclusive to The Lake Report.

Can you guess next week’s artifact? >

Clue: I am needed to receive a sacrament.

Congratulations, Dorothy!

Longtime local Niagara-on-the-Lake resident Dorothy Bates was the winner of an online contest by Niagara Now and The Lake Report. Congratulations Dorothy, and thank you for sharing and liking our Facebook page. Dorothy will soon be snacking on $60 worth of products from local artisan cheese shop Cheese Secrets. Thanks to the owners of Cheese Secrets as well!

RING FOUND

A valuable ring was found back in December of 2018 in the battery recycle bin at the Virgil Avondale. At the finder’s request, if you have lost a ring and suspect it may be yours, please call Rosemary at 905-688-3673 to describe and claim it.

Betty & Jane: Plunger Patrol

Looking for a bit of winter relief, the NOTL Plunger Patrol found the right “flush” which sent us to a delightful winery called Between the Lines. Several unique features awaited our visit. Between the Lines is very proud of its famous fishing guru Bob Izumi’s wine collection, which he personally selects and oversees every year. One dollar from each bottle sold is donated to his foundation and the Ontario Fisheries Conservation. Between the Lines also boasts of being Canada’s first Winery to produce sparkling wine in a can, very convenient for those impromptu picnics or road trips. When visiting the privy we noticed several unique qualities here as well. It was large and privately located with an extra level of rustic comfort and lots of room for total accessibility. Between the Lines came up “sparkling” and was awarded 3.5/5 gold Plungers!

RIDDLE ME THIS:

The more you take the more you leave behind. What am I?

Last Week’s answer: Silence.
Answered first by Sabrina Hymus.
Email answers to editor@niagaranow.com for a chance to win a prize.

SUPPORT LOCAL BUSINESS

The Lake Report encourages readers to support the businesses that advertise in this paper.
Women walk for fitness and friendship

30 years of walking and talking in town forges strong bonds

Tim Taylor
The Lake Report

For almost three decades, a group of Niagara-on-the-Lake women, have gathered every weekday morning, almost whatever the weather, to walk around town for exercise and fellowship. “That’s longer than some marriages last,” one of the women quips over coffee at Sweets and Swirls Cafe at the Community Centre, fol- lowing one day’s brisk walk.

These days there are as many as twelve walkers/talkers, but the normal daily average is seven or eight. And they are not weather-wimps, braving the elements on all but the slippiest ice day. “While the walking keeps bodies active, it is only the vehicle for connecting with each other,” says Kathryn Litke, focusing on the fellowship thread. “We have so much respect for each other,” Terry Mac taggart, says. “We’re always there for each other in sick- nesses or hard times. And the central spot to gather, but more importantly, to rally after the walk for what most agree is almost more impor- tant than the exercise—fel- lowship and networking.”

The group generally sets off in one of four direc- tions from the Community Centre. Where they walk each day isn’t decided until the mood of all the day’s walkers is surveyed.

Over the years, the group has learned to punctuate their walks by searching for “spots of beauty”. A spot of beauty is most often something in nature that strikes the hikers—a patch of blue sky in an otherwise drab day, a small garden of colourful flowers, anything that brightens the moment. “Even in the winter, when things are grey, we find our spot of beauty,” says Mau- reen Dalgleish.

At the post-walk conflag, the community informa- tion surfaces faster than a Google search. What’s hap- pening, where and when. It is all anyone needs to know about what’s happening around town.

Not surprisingly, the group around the table, this cold and windy morning, comes from a wide array of different backgrounds, careers and locales. That makes for both more cre- ative conversation and some expanding horizons. Dale Stuteley teaches the others Mah Jong. Other members lead crafting sessions or organize monarch catching. Some liken the daily post-walk sessions to a book club—trading books, magazines and recipes, even celebrating each other’s birthdays.

For most, the added attraction is the mutual sup- port. Charlotte Letkemann remembers: “You all helped out when I had heart surgery three years ago, preparing and delivering lunches for my first week home.”

Ruth de Laat, a group veteran, wants to make sure everyone understands they are not just a walking group. “We are a fellowship group or rather a fellow- woman-ship group," she states strongly. “We are a support group for each other. A network.”

by telephone. Now it’s all email.

Over the years, their post-walk talking spots have moved to various cafes around town. But now they meet at the Commu- nity Centre, both to have a central spot to gather, but more importantly, to rally after the walk for what most agree is almost more impor- tant than the exercise—fel- lowship and networking.

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What’s in a name? One thing that has defied agreement amongst the stalwart group is what to call themselves. They’ve rejected “Streetwalkers”, per- hap或许 for obvious reasons. The “Love- lies” didn’t seem right. The “Walky- talkies” was already taken.

But on this occasion, as if by magic, a consensus is finally reached, after 30 years, some 6,000 walks and just as many talks.

The group will henceforth be known as the Calendar Girls, picking up the idea from a 2018 photo calendar, cre- ated by Lorraine Kelly, to commemo- rate the year’s activities.

“Won’t someone think we walk around naked,” someone at the gathering wonders.

“So what,” someone else pipes in. It’s a fun group.

The Calendar Girls celebrating a birthday. From left front around the table: Maureen Dalgleish, Dale Stuteley, Kathryn Litke, Joyce Loewen, Heather Hall, Terry Mactaggart, Marlene Bridgman, Kathy Clark, Ruth de Laat, Sheila Tierney, Charlotte Letkemann and Lorraine Kelly. Helen Chapman and Creena MacNeill are also Calendar Girls, but not present for the photo. SUPPLIED PHOTO

The Lake Report
March 7, 2019
Page 20