



## \$1.5M damage in blaze

Fire may have started in neighbour's shed, chief says



Firefighters battle a blaze on Tuesday. **More photos on Page 8 and online at niagaranow.com.** STEPHANIE PENKARSKI

Evan Saunders  
Local Journalism Initiative  
The Lake Report

A fire caused extensive damage to a Niagara-on-the-Lake home on Tuesday.

The fire started around 4 p.m. and spread from a neighbouring shed to a newly built home on Simcoe Street near William.

NOTL fire chief Nick Ruller said the damage is estimated at about \$1.5 million. Because the damage is so

extensive the Ontario fire marshal is investigating and was on scene Wednesday, Ruller said.

No official cause has been determined yet, but the investigation is focused on the neighbour's shed as the area of origin, he said. A bus in the neighbouring driveway was destroyed in the fire.

Maddie Mulligan, who lives across the street, was outside with a technician from Bell when the blaze started.

"We saw a shed on fire and then we heard a big bang. It was so loud," Mulligan said.

"We looked outside and it was this billowing smoke coming out, and then we started seeing the bus on fire. Then it went onto the side of the fence and that's when the whole side of the other house went off."

As the fire started to consume the bus Mulligan began to get worried.

"We thought that something was going to explode,

like if the bus had gasoline in it," she said.

"What a loss and what a shame. That house just went up. It's gorgeous," said Mulligan.

Russel Levrov, the Bell technician working at Mulligan's house, said he was the first to call 911.

Ruller said crews from all NOTL stations were called in to assist with the blaze.

He said there was "significant fire involvement into the attic" of the home.



A bank swallow nests at Niagara Shores Park. FILE/RICHARD HARLEY

## Niagara Shores Park could **reopen** for vehicles next summer

Kevin MacLean  
The Lake Report

Niagara Shores Park, a natural gem on Lake Ontario with beautiful sunsets and stunning views of the Toronto skyline, could be fully reopened to the public as early as next summer, Parks Canada says.

For months, the Town of Niagara-on-the-Lake has been pushing the federal agency to expand access to the park to help ease traffic and congestion around Ryerson Park in the nearby Chautauqua neighbourhood.

"I'm being very optimistic," said Lisa Curtis, Parks Canada's superintendent of national historic sites for southwestern Ontario.

The pandemic has wreaked havoc with the agency's ability to conduct environmental and other

assessments, but "we're all hoping that something could take place for next season," possibly by June.

"But because the pandemic is so unpredictable, I can never say how fast things will go."

What is most definite, however, is that the park soon will be fully accessible to the public, she said. "Eventually it will happen. It is part of our management plan" for the park.

Niagara Shores, off Lakeshore Road about 1.5 kilometres west of Ryerson Park, has been closed to vehicles since 2014. Safety concerns were one of the reasons, as people were driving vehicles right up near the edge of the bluffs, Curtis said. As well, the grounds were damaged by

*Continued on Page 3*

## Many eligible for vaccines will have to **wait** for bookings, says Hirji

Richard Harley  
The Lake Report

The province has opened up vaccine bookings Tuesday to anyone 18 and over, but Niagara's chief medical officer of health says there might be a wait for some people.

Booking availability is dependent on vaccine supply, Dr. Mustafa Hirji told a news conference Mon-

day. He said there won't be enough appointments available for the number of people who have become eligible overnight.

People need to know they might not be able to book an appointment soon as bookings likely will fill up quickly, he said.

"As it stands right now, we don't even have confirmed shipments of our vaccines for much later, so we only have appoint-

ments into the early part of June." He hopes there will be more information about more clinic appointments "in the near future."

Anyone who can't book should be vigilant and keep checking, as there are no plans to create bookings until there's a guarantee vaccines will be available, he said.

The 18 to 39 age group consists of about 120,000 people in Niagara, he said,

but the region will only be getting about 20,000 vaccines in the next couple of weeks.

With people 12 to 17 to become eligible on May 31, the total is closer to 160,000 people.

"If you look at how many vaccines we've done, it's about a bit under 230,000 in Niagara so far. So this is a huge addition-

*Continued on Page 2*



Kelly Bungard from Virgil got her jab at the vaccine clinic on Saturday at the NOTL Community Centre. JANICE WHITE



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# Ford government criticized for outdoor restrictions

## Data shows over 100,000 visitors to NOTL on weekend as COVID fatigue wears on residents and businesses

Evan Saunders  
Local Journalism Initiative  
The Lake Report

Mobile phone data shows over 100,000 people entered Niagara-on-the-Lake last weekend as residents and visitors grow tired of indoor and outdoor restrictions.

On the heels of the provincial government extending the latest stay-at-home order to June 2, downtown NOTL was packed.

During the town's COVID update on Monday, chief administrative officer Marnie Cluckie revealed the startling statistic.

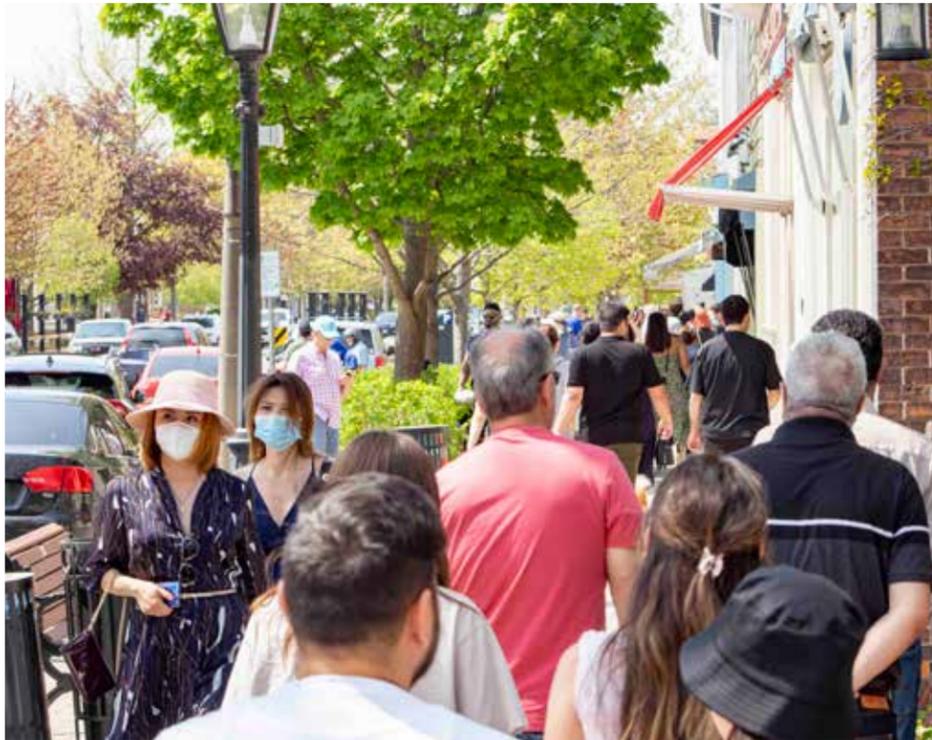
"The data we have for this weekend is that we saw approximately 116,000 devices enter (Niagara-on-the-Lake)," Cluckie told council – and 63,000 of those devices were detected in Old Town.

That represents a 21,000 person increase from the week before and 31,000 more than two weeks prior.

Almost half, 49 per cent, of visitors were from the Niagara Region while visitors from the Greater Toronto Area increased by 20 per cent, making up 35 per cent of visitors over the weekend.

"It's frustrating to me that the province has a stay-at-home order and the town has no mechanism other than to tell people on their cellphones or remind them with signs that we're in a stay-at-home order and, you know, wear a mask," Lord Mayor Betty Disero said. "What we're doing is trying to keep the people of Niagara safe."

While some may wonder why such a drastic increase is taking place while a stay-at-home order is in



A mob of tourists was elbow-to-elbow on Queen Street during the weekend, despite an ongoing stay-at-home order in place to protect public safety. RICHARD HARLEY

effect, residents and visitors to NOTL say they have grown frustrated with the indoor and outdoor limitations placed by the government.

"We can't do anything outside," NOTL resident Glenn Young said.

"You can't keep people locked up anymore," added his wife Debbie. "People are at their breaking point."

The Youngs are in favour of the extended lockdown but found the increased outdoor restrictions too much.

They weren't alone in that sentiment.

Roberto Pena, a resident of Thorold, was down in Centennial Park in Virgil with his family for a walk. He supports the lockdown but was frustrated with the limited access his children have to outdoor exercise.

"It's the extracurricular activities, right? I want my

son to start playing soccer and meeting new kids. It's hard to do that with this lockdown," Pena said.

"This park is beautiful. It's a shame they have it all closed down."

The soccer and basketball nets are just a few of the park amenities that are covered so people don't use them.

"It's all about health and safety, and we support that," said Glenn Young. "But the way this has been managed. We shouldn't be here right now. We're regressing."

Canadians don't need to look far to see that the situation at home could be better. Our neighbours south of the border have been a focal point of comparison throughout the entire pandemic.

One year on, the comparison has turned from a strange source of comfort to

a frustrating realization.

"Think about how bad the U.S. was last year. Look at them now. They're the envy of the world," said Debbie Young.

"They're having 50,000 people at baseball games. They're hosting concerts. It's just so foreign to us," her husband added.

It isn't just COVID fatigue that has driven people to the streets in increasing numbers. Some people just don't take the pandemic seriously anymore.

"They make such a big deal about cases. But, you know, I walk into a hospital and I just don't see it. Where are all the sick people?" said Grace Vanderbilt, a resident of Port Colborne who was visiting Old Town with her husband.

Hospital and health officials dispute such assertions, noting their case

numbers – and the fact that patient floors and ICUs where people are being treated are not accessible to the public.

In tough times people often look for someone to blame and the spectre of the COVID boogeyman is in the eye of the beholder.

"I gotta say, I love (Premier) Doug Ford. He's calling out Trudeau and Trudeau can't handle it," Vanderbilt said.

Other residents saw the boogeyman in another guise.

"We have one more year of Ford and then we're done!" NOTL resident Jim Pagano exclaimed.

Regardless of where people place their frustrations the overall drag of the lockdown is apparent.

Jessica Znaczk, a registered nurse from Welland, who was visiting NOTL, was supportive of the lockdown measures to prevent the spread of the virus.

But she said people need to be able to get outside so long as they follow health and safety measures.

"If you're physically distancing, I don't see a problem with it," Znaczk said regarding the increase in visitors to NOTL.

"At my work we make sure we're eating lunch six feet apart and wearing our masks. Getting outside? Not worried about it."

People are also feeling the pain of businesses and complaining that the increased restrictions are hypocritical.

"I can go and buy wine at the LCBO, but I can't sit on a patio and support a

local business?" said Glenn Young.

"Why do you think that is? It's because the LCBO makes a ton of money for the government."

Some business owners are taking hope from seeing the increased number of visitors to NOTL.

"We need the buses, we need the tourists, we need the bridges open. We really need the tourists," said John Koldenhof, owner of Maple Leaf Fudge on Queen Street.

That sentiment was echoed by Mahmoud Sono, who has owned Sono's Café in Virgil for over 20 years.

"This lockdown, everybody stays home, nobody wants to spend money. It's very bad," he said.

"Our town lives on the people from out of town. We are dying here. I don't know how much longer we can survive."

Sono said that his restaurant is receiving five to 10 per cent of its former business. Local support only makes up 20 per cent of his usual revenue and even that is down.

"Locals were supporting us the first lockdown. Not anymore. Everyone has given up," he said.

Disero was sympathetic to the plight of business owners but said there's not much the town can do while we are in a provincial lockdown.

"What we keep doing for businesses is keep asking the province to send money for them," said Disero.

"You've locked these people down, through no fault of their own. Send some assistance to help them get through it this time."

# No early bookings before vaccine is secured, medical officer says

Continued from Front Page

al group of people who are going to be eligible to be vaccinated," Hirji said.

With just 20,000 vaccine doses on their way, "You can see our supply of vaccine is much smaller than the number of people (that have) become eligible to

book for vaccinations."

He said with so many people eligible, it will be about eight weeks minimum until those people can get vaccines.

He maintains that once about 75 per cent of adults are vaccinated, things will start to open up again.

"We'll get to a stage where when we reopen, our hospitalizations don't really spike up," he said.

As of Monday about 55 per cent of Niagara adults had been vaccinated. Hirji expects to reach the 75 per cent target by mid-June.

"By this summer, once we get to 75 per cent of

people vaccinated, there'll be an opportunity for restrictions to lift, and we'll be able to start doing small outdoor gatherings with friends and family, really starting to widen our social networks from just our household to be around other people," he said.

"We'll still need to keep

up with physical distancing, we'll need to be wearing masks in public, we'll need to avoid crowds, but we'll be able to start to normalize some of these outdoor activities where we're with small groups and I think that'll be something really welcome for everybody."

He said indoor events could start resuming by fall, when 75 per cent of people have had two doses.

"Just in time for when the weather is starting to turn worse and you can't do those things outdoors, we'll be able to start doing them indoors."



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## ‘I got the AstraZeneca vaccine – now what?’

Richard Harley  
The Lake Report

Many people who got the AstraZeneca COVID-19 vaccine are wondering what’s happening with their second dose.

Niagara’s chief medical officer of health says that question should be answered this week – and there are a couple of options.

One is to get a second dose of AstraZeneca.

“We do have more AstraZeneca vaccine coming to Canada,” Dr. Mustafa Hirji said Monday, noting that the bloodclotting issue that raised concerns about the vaccines is not common from a second dose.

“It’s really mostly a concern with the first dose of the vaccine. And so there could be an opportunity that people who have got a first dose of AstraZeneca vaccine will be able to get their second dose of that same



AstraZeneca vaccine. FILE/JESSICA MAXWELL

vaccine later this summer.”

Another option being discussed is getting a second dose of a different vaccine, like Moderna or Pfizer.

He said research is still being done, but early results from the U.K. suggest it is safe, however mild side effects like flu symptoms are more likely.

“Relatively mild side effects, nothing concerning like the clotting issue,” he said.

He noted there isn’t enough research yet to be sure, “but I think this will be something that the province will be taking (into) account probably as they make a decision on whether to do second doses with AstraZeneca or do second doses with a different vaccine.”

One challenge is many high-risk people who had AstraZeneca are coming up to their second shot,

however research suggests it may be more effective to wait, he said.

Early research from the U.K. on seniors shows a later second dose gave “far better immunity” than an early dose, with three and a half times more antibodies in the people with later doses.

“And so it really does seem like getting a later dose of your vaccine is actually going to give you more protection over the long term and better protection over the long term. But there is a trade-off, of course, it means that in the short term, you’re gonna have a little less protection, but you’re gonna have a lot more protection longer term.”

“What I’d like to do is actually caution people that it’s maybe not necessarily the best thing to get that second dose earlier,” he said.

## Niagara Shores could open for traffic again

Continued from Front Page

people tearing up the grass with trucks.

The park remains open this summer for people to walk in, but there is only parking space for about five vehicles at the gated entrance. The town-owned Newark Park is located directly across Lakeshore Road.

“It is a beautiful spot,” Curtis said. “You want to protect it and at the same time you want to be able to open it up for public use and enjoyment. I mean, that’s our business, but it’s also our business to make sure we do it in a good way with all the assessments so we understand how to do it well.”

Before the park can be fully reopened, several environmental assessments by biologists, ecologists and other scientific experts need to be completed. With staff working from home and not in the field during much of the pandemic, those studies have been delayed, said Curtis.

Additionally, working with the town, conservation authority and others,



Vehicles at Niagara Shores Park in 2010. FILE PHOTO

Parks Canada will “go through the process and see what would it take to open it to vehicle traffic again and ensure safety,” she said.

“We’ve got to make sure it’s safe and that it has the amenities. As you know, lots of people came to Niagara-on-the-Lake (during the pandemic) and when the facilities were closed, they just found nearby areas. So, we have to make sure we have what it takes to open it up.”

The sandy bluffs along the park shoreline are home to bank swallows, a threatened species that nests in burrows in the sides of the embankment.

As well, as The Lake

Report documented in an in-depth series and film in 2019, shoreline erosion is a major problem. The park loses on average 1.1 metres of land to erosion every year, Curtis said.

Reopening the park doesn’t just mean throwing open the gates and inviting everyone in. It is a complicated process, she noted.

Visitor needs and safety also need to be taken into account. The stability of the shoreline is a concern and there is about a sharp six-metre (20-foot) drop from the bluffs to the shore.

Once Parks Canada allows vehicles back onto the property, Curtis expects the number of visitors will

rise and the agency has to figure out how it will safely manage that.

“What’s the impact to the environment, the species at risk? What is the capacity of our site? We need to assess how many can you have on site before it does damage or what do we need for infrastructure?”

While there are no plans yet for active shoreline erosion measures, Curtis said that eventually will have to happen.

“I’ve been here six years now and I’ve watched the trees that were on that embankment fall on to the beach. I’ve seen it move back and it’s amazing every time. Seeing how fast that goes, it’s incredible.”

Any erosion mitigation would have to ensure the bank swallows’ habitat on the shore is protected.

The projects undertaken along the Niagara-on-the-Lake Golf Club and Fort Mississauga to install large boulders as a breakwater would not be used at the park, she said.

Whatever is done to preserve Niagara Shores Park would be “unique” to that environment.

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**NOTL active cases: 39**  
**Region active cases: 1,247**  
**Region deaths: 401**  
**Region total cases: 15,355**  
**Region resolved cases: 13,707**

\*May 19 data per Niagara Region Public Health



**Contributed by Patty Garriock**  
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## Editorial: A solution for Ryerson Park

Kevin MacLean  
 Managing Editor

It's been a good week for residents living near NOTL's Ryerson Park.

Going back to last fall, people residing near the lakeside park finally had enough with traffic, parking and other related problems plaguing their neighbourhood for years and decided to try to do something about it – once and for all.

Ryerson Park is a quaint, but very small greenspace in the Chautauqua neighbourhood, just west of Old Town. It is the go-to destination in Niagara-on-the-Lake for

stunning sunsets and is a popular spot for locals and visitors alike to picnic, swim or relax by day.

But with few parking spots and many neighbouring streets barely 13 feet wide, the congestion and other associated problems pushed residents to the tipping point.

The Friends of Ryerson Park was born and while not all its proposals were realistic, the group worked professionally and co-operatively with the town's administration to come up with some workable solutions.

It was sometimes a rocky road, marked most recently by Coun. Erwin Wiens' criti-

cisms of restrictions in many parks, including Ryerson, rules that he is concerned will ultimately serve to "exclude" rather than be "inclusive." It remains to be seen how that scenario will play out.

Meanwhile, a town pilot project, which incorporates targeted bylaw enforcement and restricts parking in some areas around Ryerson Park, seems like a win-win.

Coincidental to all this, as reported this week in The Lake Report, there is a good chance nearby Niagara Shores Park will be fully reopened by next summer.

With the same sunsets

and Toronto skyline view, this beautiful park, literally around the corner from Ryerson Park, would in theory, at least, siphon off many of the folks who now congregate in the Chautauqua neighbourhood.

For now, it remains walk-in only. Plenty of work is still to be done and exactly what facilities Niagara Shores will have is not yet known. It is ecologically fragile so special care is needed before it can fully reopen. But kudos to the town and Parks Canada for getting us this far.

Let's make it happen.  
 editor@niagaranow.com



**CORRECTION:** A story from April 22 misstated the address of a short-term rental found to be operating illegally. In fact, it was 575 Victoria St. that was welcoming guests during pandemic lockdowns, against provincial laws — not 475.

## Not all residents support stop sign in Village

Dear editor:

I was surprised to read about the four-way stop being put in at the intersection of Garrison Village Drive, Perez Road and Jordan Street, ("Council cuts through red tape on four-way stop in Village," May 13).

There is already a stop sign within close proximity at the entrance to the Shoppers Drug Mart plaza. I realize a new medical building is planned for the area and an increase in traffic may warrant a stop sign, however, this has not

come to fruition yet.

The Village Community Association overstates that the organization represents nearly 100 per cent of the residents in the area, as the group failed to reach out to members living within the community.

Although I agree with Lord Mayor Betty Disero's attitude toward conducting an expensive study, I'm concerned the feedback about the four-way stop will only be sought from a portion of the area's residents.

If the goal is to increase

the safety within the Village community, no parking along the streets as originally suggested by the town staff would make more sense. Many residents use the street as their own personal parking lot, particularly in the new-build area, which contravenes the NOTL bylaw for parking on the street for more than 12 hours at a time.

I agree this slows down traffic, but also raises several different safety concerns. This includes navigating other cars coming head-on when trying to

get around parked cars, obstructing the street view for drivers (particularly close to intersections/corners), and, all too often, threading through cars parked on both sides of the road.

I feel this conversation about the stop-sign has been one-sided. There is a large portion of the Village community that is not represented by the association, which is requesting this stop sign yet has overlooked the parking issues to suit its benefit.

Kirsten Bott  
 Garrison Village

## NIMBYism isn't always a bad idea, is misunderstood

Dear editor:

In my personal opinion the term NIMBYism (not in my backyard) is widely misunderstood and misused, and is invalid in many cases.

In it's simplest form, it seems that it could be applied to anybody who is against a development or project purely for personal or selfish reasons. (Naturally, some would say that they have every right to feel this way and resent being told how to think by others.)

However, in many cases it is used by some simply as a

weapon hurled from a safe distance in what I consider to be a dishonest attempt to embarrass or force others onto the defensive, and is simply a disguised way of bullying or name calling.

Who hasn't heard the phrase, "They're just a bunch of NIMBYs"? It is also dishonest in the sense that these same people would in all probability be the first to complain loudly if the town decided to build a treatment plant adjacent to their property.

Nevertheless, it would be

foolish to argue that there are not cases of genuine NIMBYism and these instances should be confronted by those concerned.

However, it cannot be disputed that there are also cases where there is genuine opposition to a project for valid reasons and where this term is misused.

I believe this to be the case in the Rand Estate, an iconic site where there is an honest attempt to preserve its valuable historical assets in the face of what many consider to be an inappro-

prate and badly conceived development. This effort is widely supported by many people who have no hidden agenda and nothing to gain financially.

Call it NIMBYism if you like, but in my opinion, opposing a developer who is bent on ruining a historic and iconic site just to accommodate a highly controversial and destructive project is a positive force that is to the benefit of all, now as well as in the future.

Derek Collins  
 NOTL

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# OPINION

## Make Queen Street a pedestrian mall, with proper signs and infrastructure

Dear editor:

Few would disagree that social distancing on Queen Street during the tourist season is nigh impossible.

Using the past few weeks of traffic data, picnicking and overcrowded parking lots in town and along the Parkway as barometers during COVID's third wave ("Stay at home lockdown"), it is safe to predict the zoo-like atmosphere in NOTL's Old Town once the lockdown is lifted.

We will be inundated with tourists like never before as they escape their stir-crazy, cabin fever syndrome.

Accordingly, it is incumbent on our elected officials to seriously consider opening Queen Street to pedestrian traffic only from June through and including October, thereby addressing the social distancing scenario and the health of our residents.

Clearly, to use the latest buzzword, we will enter a "one dose summer" with few Ontarians fully vaccinated. Different this time from the last year's street closing fiasco would be the street signage and alternate



A closed Queen Street in 2020. FILE PHOTO

parking options – lessons learned if you will. I would propose the following:

\* Signage: "Street closed. Pedestrian traffic only. All businesses are open."

\* Parking: Offer alternate paid parking at the community centre, the old hospital, the Shaw and possibly a temporary grass lot on the Commons south of the Shaw.

\* The street closure and parking options would be posted on the major roads into NOTL . (Hwy. 55, Lakeshore). Revenues from the Shaw lot would be retained by the Shaw. Paid parking at the community centre would include shuttle bus transportation into town. Additionally free parking for residents would be available at the commu-

nity centre.

\* Masks: Mandatory indoors, but recommended outdoors on Queen Street only .

\* Merchant options: Discuss with merchants the option to display their products on the sidewalk during this street closure .

We are not out of this pandemic by a long stretch and continue to be at a very high risk from the new developing variants.

British Prime Minister Boris Johnson has been advised to slow the U.K. opening as a result of the increasing deaths from the Indian variant. We all know how that is playing out. It will be in North America soon.

Lord Mayor Betty Disero recently addressed the need to study what Queen Street

should look like 10 to 15 years from now. This study is decades overdue.

The parking concerns, for example, were raised by Pillar and Post founder John Drope over 50 years ago.

In summation, numerous articles over the decades have broached the parking and tourist saturation concerns in the Heritage District.

We are not unique in these matters. It is a worldwide phenomenon. Unique to NOTL, though, is the fact we keep ignoring the inevitable and kicking the can down the road.

Inevitably, in my opinion, Queen Street will become a pedestrian mall, but as a super senior, likely not in my lifetime. However, events from future growth and development will force this no-brainer decision at which juncture the costs will have increased exponentially.

We do not need analysis by paralysis or a committee to temporarily close Queen Street – just do it. Where there is a will, there's a way.

*Samuel Young*  
NOTL

## Parks Canada should open old defence lands for everyone

Dear editor:

A recent letter to The Lake Report, ("Make Ryerson Park 'locals only' but open adjacent land for everyone," April 29), suggested that the defence lands would be a wonderful park with public access to the lake.

Some local residents formed the Harmony Group,

and for some years now, have been trying to light a fire under the various bureaucracies concerned to get just that result.

A couple of representatives from Parks Canada attended one of their meetings when I was also present.

I'm sure their visit from Ottawa was at great taxpay-

ers' expense for the sole purpose of telling us that they did not make any decisions, they just listened to ideas.

What they did with those ideas was not clear and obviously they heard nothing to stir them into action.

The lands have long been cleared of dangerous munitions and contaminated soil

and the Harmony folks have submitted researched plans.

I worry that the silence might be due to heavyweight commercial developers also submitting ideas, horrible ones that would cause the public to lose access to Lake Ontario forever.

*Ann Handels*  
NOTL

## Subtle and outrageous discrimination getting worse

Dear editor:

Thank you so much for The Lake Report's article on May 13 ("An uncomfortable message about race and tolerance"), and for sharing Erwin and Dorothy Wiens' personal experiences of racism in NOTL.

Sadly, it's very relatable.

When I moved here in 1998, I remember hearing

the racist vitriol around Si Wai Lai.

I knew right then that being a local Black resident was going to be challenging. Like Erwin and Dorothy, I regularly endure subtle (and sometimes outrageous) examples of discrimination and hate. And I've noticed it's getting worse.

After speaking at the

Black Lives Matter protest in Niagara-on-the-Lake's Voices of Freedom Park in 2020, I was touched and encouraged by how many turned out.

So many people really do support the message of inclusion.

However, I also lost good friends because of it.

But Erwin and Dorothy have given me the courage

to keep pushing.

Things have to change here. Not just for ourselves, but for our kids and one day, our grandkids.

It's simply not enough for NOTL to be considered "the prettiest." We must also aim to be the most accepting, diverse and inclusive town as well.

*Sue Batson Patterson*  
NOTL



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- BOB AND DAWN THOMPSON

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# Short-term rental licensing fees to be cut **33%** for 2021

Evan Saunders  
Local Journalism Initiative  
The Lake Report

The Town of Niagara-on-the-Lake has agreed to reduce licensing fees for short-term rental owners by 33 per cent this year, a request that had previously been rejected.

This time the motion was passed unanimously.

“Since March, the situation for bed and breakfast owners has become even worse than we feared,” John Foreman, president of the Bed & Breakfast Association, told council.

Operators “are facing a second consecutive historically bad year. It is likely that the entire first half of the year will be lost,” he said.

Foreman previously presented to council in March with several requests for aid. This time, his sole request was a 50 per cent reduction in fees.

A 50 per cent cut in fees would have roughly cost the town \$71,000 in lost revenue, according to treasurer



A short-term rental at 575 Victoria St. was found by a Lake Report investigation to be operating illegally during pandemic lockdowns. SOURCED IMAGE

Kyle Freeborn.

The motion was met with some resistance until Lord Mayor Betty Disero asked Freeborn whether previously released COVID emergency funds from the government would be able to cover the cost.

Freeborn answered yes and councillors quickly agreed to pass a motion by Coun. Norm Arsenault to lower the fees by 33 per cent.

Earlier in March, the province released COVID-19 emergency funds for municipalities and \$427,000 was earmarked for NOTL.

Coun. Allan Bisback brought up a recent program to help small travel and tourist businesses in Ontario, wondering if the association had heard of it.

The Ontario Tourism and Travel small business support grant provides \$100 million in funding to aid eligible businesses, including bed and breakfasts. The program offers one-time payments of \$10,000 to \$20,000, according to Ontario.ca.

Disero requested that Freeborn forward information about the program to Foreman.

# Hirji suspects stay-at-home order will be **extended** until mid-June

Richard Harley  
The Lake Report

With the provincial stay-at-home order extended until June 2, Niagara’s top doctor suspects things won’t start to fully reopen till July.

While he “very much” agrees with the two-week extension, “I am suspicious that we’ll probably need to have one more extension on the stay-at-home order beyond that,” Dr. Mustafa Hirji told a news conference Monday.

He pointed to the phrasing of a quote from Premier Doug Ford in the province’s extension announcement, which he’s interpreting to mean people will really be able to get back out in July and August.

“If we stay the course for the next two weeks, and continue vaccinating record number of Ontarians every day, we can begin looking forward to July and August and having the summer that everyone deserves,” Ford said in the May 13 release.

Hirji thinks that’s a good indicator an extension is possible — something he’s



A provincewide stay-at-home order didn’t stop crowds of visitors from packing NOTL’s parks over the weekend. RICHARD HARLEY

been saying for weeks.

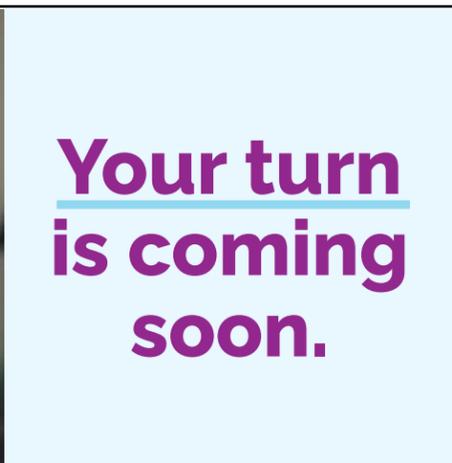
“And I think that’s perhaps the premier with the language hedging bets that this might not be the last extension to this lockdown and might need to go on a little bit longer,” Hirji said.

Hirji has repeatedly said he doesn’t think COVID-19 cases will be low enough to open in June and that opening too soon poses a risk of getting put back into lockdown again soon

afterward — a pattern seen around the world and also in Niagara when Ford lifted the second lockdown against public health advice.

“I do think probably mid-June is a more realistic timeline for when we’re going to be able to safely lift the stay-at-home order and start to reopen,” Hirji said.

“I think June 2 will likely turn out to be a bit early. We’ll see how cases and hospitalization trend.”



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# Town orders parking restrictions, hikes fines near Ryerson Park

Evan Saunders  
 Local Journalism Initiative  
 The Lake Report



Even on a Monday, cars line up parked illegally at Ryerson Park for sunset time. RICHARD HARLEY

Parking restrictions and increased fines are coming to the Chautauqua neighbourhood.

The Town of Niagara-on-the-Lake will launch a pilot project in the area around Ryerson Park this summer to increase enforcement of parking infractions, limit parking to one side of designated streets, and determine further action needed to address residents' concerns about traffic and speeding.

"We are very pleased with the staff report" that recommended the changes, said Friends of Ryerson Park member Brian Crow. "We understand that nothing can be done overnight and that (chief administrator Marnie Cluckie) has to put some good time frames around everything."

Tickets for some bylaw infractions in Chautauqua will be increased by \$150, Lord Mayor Betty Disero said. An extra bylaw enforcement officer will also be hired to accommodate the heightened attention needed in the area.

That will cost the town \$31,500, but the increased fines are directly tied to the costs of increasing enforcement in the area, according to a staff report. The fines will be used to help cover costs of enforcement.

A special enforcement area will be implemented in the neighbourhood to allow bylaw officers to enforce these penalties. The exact area is yet to be determined.

"The good news is that it's an acknowledgment from council that we want this to be a special enforcement area, which will attract higher enforcement resources and, of course,

have stronger fines," Coun. Allan Bisback said in an interview Tuesday.

After several weeks of debate and delegations surrounding issues in the Chautauqua area, staff submitted a report to council on Monday suggesting a number of changes.

The one notable exemption in the staff report was the inclusion of any parking restrictions.

John Scott, representing the Friends of Ryerson Park group, asked council to include those restrictions.

"We understand that the parking remedy that we proposed must be delayed due

to logistical limitations," Scott told councillors.

"We do request that councillors immediately restrict parking for visitors and residents to one side of the road."

The Friends of Ryerson Park have repeatedly said emergency vehicles are unable to access the area when a lot of cars are parked on the streets.

Fire Chief Nick Ruller said his department does not have any specific concerns about access to the Chautauqua area. He said turning onto the narrow streets can be a problem and that emergency vehicles can find another route if a lot of vehicles are parked on roads.

"I think restricted parking to one side of the street would help to alleviate some of those challenges," Ruller told council.

Coun. Clare Cameron presented a motion to council to amend the staff report and add parking restrictions to accommodate residents.

The motion was unanimously approved to allow specific parking limitations as outlined in option

1 of the staff report. This would limit parking to one side of the road on almost all of Chautauqua's narrow street, with original parking restrictions still in effect on parts of Shakespeare Avenue and Niagara Boulevard.

Crow said the restrictions are a good start but worried they might push the traffic onto other nearby streets.

"We are, however, pleased that something is being done right away. We know the chief administrative officer is acting quickly, and we certainly appreciate it," Crow said.

One of the main concerns of the Friends of Ryerson Park Group was drivers getting lost in Chautauqua as they try to find their way to the QEW after leaving Old Town.

The town will be installing a three-way stop at the bottom of Mississagua and Queen streets. A directional sign pointing to the highway will also be installed to encourage drivers to turn onto Mississagua Street.

"It's going to be good for us," said Crow.

The report included several long-term solutions that

will be undertaken over the next six months.

One of these measures is to reduce speed limits on Chautauqua's laneways.

"My street is a 13-foot-wide laneway with no sidewalks. It doesn't make sense that the speed limit on my laneway is the same as on Mississagua Street," Crow said.

He says the group would like a 35 km/h speed limit in Chautauqua.

The town is also considering implementing a no-stopping and tow-away zone at the intersection of Niagara Boulevard, Shakespeare Avenue and Vincent Avenue, which is directly next to Ryerson Park.

Bisback stressed this is a pilot project and the changes being implemented are going to be studied over the summer.

"We're always learning. I think the good thing here is that staff responded to a lot of the concerns of residents," Bisback said.

"We wanted to get some of the measures in for July and then monitor them over the summer. Everything's always subject to change once we learn more."

# Pie'za Pizza giving away 500 pies on Sunday for fifth anniversary

Staff  
 The Lake Report

An authentic Italian pizza, on the house.

Niagara-on-the-Lake's Pie'za Pizza will be giving away free margherita pizzas all day on Sunday, to celebrate the store's five-year anniversary.

Maurizio and Laryssa Cesta, owners and operators of Pie'za, opened their shop on the Victoria Day long weekend in 2016

and have been passionate about 'za ever since, cooking up high-quality pizzas out of their 5,000-pound wood-burning oven imported from Napoli.

Pie'za is one of 13 pizza restaurants in Canada to have been officially recognized and certified by the Vera Napoletana Association (AVPN) in Naples.

Donations will be accepted toward St. John the Compassionate Mission in

downtown Toronto, where Laryssa volunteers weekly.

The Cestas said they wanted to give back to people who have supported them and will offer the pizzas from noon until they run out of dough.

Curbside pickup and safe social distancing procedures will be maintained. They ask that everyone stopping by follows COVID-19 safety guidelines, wears a mask and keeps two metres apart.



Laryssa and Maurizio Cesta. FILE/RICHARD HARLEY

# Town opens Step Challenge, aims for collective 20 million steps

Staff  
 The Lake Report

Registration for Niagara-on-the-Lake's 2021 Step Challenge has begun. Residents can sign up as individuals or in teams of up to four people.

The program is being run

by the town to get residents exercising as COVID keeps people house-bound. The challenge starts on June 1.

"These past 15 months have been challenging for us all," chief administrative officer Marnie Cluckie said in a news release.

"Fresh air, physical

activity and a little bit of friendly competition is a spectacular combination to help get us through these tough times and come out stronger."

The town is challenging residents to reach 20 million collective steps and beat the 2019 record of 14

million.

Safety concerns regarding the pandemic will be kept at the forefront of the challenge by asking that team names to be COVID-19 themed.

"Let's remember to wave and say hello from a distance and keep ourselves

and each other safe," Lord Mayor Betty Disero said.

There will be prizes awarded to teams who perform the best in weekly challenges, such as which team or individual has the highest average daily steps, who has the most improved step count, and several oth-

ers over the duration of the challenge.

The challenge is co-sponsored by Harvest Barn, NOTL Public Library and The Lake Report.

More information and details on how to register can be found at <https://notl.com/stepchallenge>.



**Happy Victoria Day Weekend!**

We will be back with our grab and go market, curbside and delivery Tuesday, May 25 at 9 a.m.

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Hans and Mary Nerger look forward to a delayed 35th anniversary European trip. BERNARD LANSBERGEN

*Now that more and more people are getting vaccinated and there is finally a clear pathway out of this pandemic, we will periodically check in with different Niagara-on-the-Lake residents to see how COVID-19 has affected their lives – and what their hopes and dreams are for when things return to normal.*

## After the pandemic Taking that anniversary trip to Europe

Bernard Lansbergen  
The Lake Report

Hans and Mary Nerger, who recently moved to Virgil from Waterloo, had booked an extensive European trip for September 2020, in honour of their 35th wedding anniversary.

“There was a family crisis, so we were unable to celebrate our 25th wedding anniversary and we said when we get to our 35th (wedding anniversary)

we’re going to do something really big,” says Mary.

But then, in March 2020, COVID-19 derailed their plans. “We were just looking at each other and going, ‘Let’s try to be hopeful,’ but then, of course, it just got worse.”

Since they had mapped out a travel schedule involving train tickets and hotels in multiple countries, cancelling everything wasn’t easy.

“We managed after a year of bickering to finally get a refund for our Interrail (bookings),” says Mary, but the couple is still waiting on a refund for their hotel in Belgium.

Right now, their short-term hopes and dreams are of seeing their children again, both of whom live far away, and getting to know their new neighbours.

“We have an offer for a couple of neighbours to

get together for a glass of wine as soon as it’s safe to do so,” says Hans. His wife notes that they’re also really looking forward to getting socially involved in community life through the Shaw Festival and the Rotary Club.

But the dream of their European trip is not dead yet. “It’s definitely not off the table,” says Hans, while Mary adds: “I’ve been dreaming of Paris for a very long time!”

## Flames lick the sky



Top: Submitted photo by Jon Taylor. Bottom: Firefighters battle the blaze. RICHARD HARLEY



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# Council **rejects** parking bylaw moratorium

## Permit system to be explored for residents of Niagara on the Green area

Evan Saunders  
Local Journalism Initiative  
The Lake Report

Niagara-on-the-Lake town council narrowly rejected a motion to stop enforcing a bylaw that puts a 12-hour limit on street parking to help residents of Niagara on the Green deal with ticketing issues.

The vote ended in a tie, in which case the motion was defeated.

Instead, town staff will report back to council on a possible solution using a permitting system.

"I'm hoping that it will be a long-term solution, not just a COVID solution," Lord Mayor Betty Disero told The Lake Report.

Sandra Maxwell, a Niagara on the Green resident for 21 years, lives on Cole Crescent. She says her street voted to have the permit system on the street instead of the street parking that has caused other Niagara on the Green residents' grief.

"Each household was allowed to purchase one parking permit a year. They pay 20 dollars for it, and as long as that permit is in the window of your car you're allowed to park on the street," Maxwell said.

She says she has been pleased with the parking permit situation.

Steven Hardaker presented to council on behalf of the residents of Niagara on the Green who have been complaining about an increase in ticketing in their area.

Residents feel that they are being "unfairly targeted compared to other neighbourhoods in NOTL," Hardaker told council.

He asked that the 12-hour parking limit be put on hold until the end of the pandemic to help residents who are "struggling financially and emotionally during these unprecedented times."

"When you say end of the pandemic, give me a number just so we're clear?" Disero asked Hardaker.

"That's a bit of a hard number to give. I don't want it to end when the stay-at-home order is lifted," responded Hardaker.



Sandra Maxwell, a 21-year resident of Niagara on the Green is one of many neighbourhood residents unhappy with current parking bylaws. BRITTNEY CUTLER

Hardaker said the parking issue has been exacerbated by COVID-19.

"During the pre-pandemic, many residents left the neighbourhood during the day for work," said Hardaker.

"However, many are now working from home and have done so for the past year so there is no longer an exodus of vehicles at the start of the workday."

Tammy McCarthy, a Niagara on the Green resident for 15 years, said the town ticketing residents during a pandemic is "downright mean. Especially when we're in a stay-at-home order."

It's not just the pandemic that has been causing parking problems in the community.

Hardaker also said the community receives an unfair degree of bylaw enforcement due to its proximity with Niagara College.

"It was once stated to me by town staff that Niagara-on-the-Lake bylaw enforcement is under an agreement with Niagara College to enforce parking in their paid parking lot," said Hardaker.

"So, when they complete their rounds at the college they come into the Niagara on the Green neighbourhood to proactively patrol and enforce the bylaw."

Coun. Norm Arsenault asked Hardaker whether there were any long-term solutions to the ongoing parking complaints from the community.

"There is ongoing discussion about coming to the

town about parking passes for street parking. There are also discussions about getting rid of that 12-hour restriction in the parking bylaw," said Hardaker.

This comment prompted Arsenault to put forth a motion to do away with the parking bylaw.

Director of community and development services Craig Larmour said many residents would like to do away with the 12-hour parking limit. "But we also receive a large number of complaints from residents regarding cars parked for more than 12 hours," he said.

"So, operationally it's not just that our officers are out cruising for violations. We do receive a large number of complaints and not just in Niagara on the Green, but throughout the whole municipality."

Coun. Allan Bisback asked Larmour what the implications would be of removing the bylaw only for Niagara on the Green and was met with a warning.

"That's an interesting question. I don't think that I've had to answer that before," Larmour said.

"We would just caution you that, of course, consistency is usually preferred by the community at large," chief administrator Marnie Cluckie said.

Disero questioned why the town is reluctant to take a nuanced approach to its bylaws.

"There are some bylaws, no question, that have to be for the whole town,"

she said in an interview Tuesday.

"But there are some issues that are local to certain areas that we need to find a solution for."

Coun. Erwin Wiens was staunchly against eliminating the bylaw and was concerned about the impact its removal would have on town enforcement.

Larmour told Wiens that if the bylaw were removed then the town "wouldn't have a way of ticketing or responding to complaints."

"I'm not going to support the motion because we're getting complaints from both ends," Wiens said.

"This is a big deal. This is a big, big issue. So, I'm going to sit tight for now and I'm not going to support it. Not because there's not a problem there, but because I want the proper solution and that solution will come through our staff."

Disero said removing a parking bylaw across the entire municipality without professional consultation was rash decision-making.

"It just, to me, seems not the right thing to do in my gut. It just doesn't sound right to me," Disero told councillors.

She also lamented the protracted engagement that this parking issue is turning out to be.

"I would have preferred to just tell staff to go and work out a solution with a permit system so they can park. Just go and work with the residents of Niagara on the Green so they can get it done," Disero said.

The vote to remove the parking bylaw across the whole municipality was split down the middle. Disero, Wiens, Bisback and Coun. Clare Cameron voted against it, while Couns. Wendy Cheropita, Sandra O'Connor, John Wiens and Arsenault voted in favour.

Council instead asked town staff to look at permit solutions.

"This is at least going to get the ball rolling," said Disero.

"It may take a little longer than everyone likes but we'll hopefully get to a permanent solution."

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# Doug Garrett: Truly at the heart of Storyteller, volunteer, athlete, family man and

Tim Taylor  
The Lake Report

Almost everyone around here knows Doug Garrett as a dedicated sportsman, one of the finest golfers to ever challenge the town's historic golf links.

Certainly, he is a consummate golfer. At five feet six inches and 120 pounds, his golf swing is so smooth and efficient, he was once described as a left-handed Ben Hogan. Garrett, who turns 94 on Thursday, has won over 20 club tournaments in his eight-plus decades of golf.

But you would be missing the essence of Doug Garrett if you stopped at his golfing prowess.

It would be hard to find someone more dedicated to his community. Twenty years as a volunteer firefighter. Sixty-five years as a local Legion member, including decades as its sergeant-at-arms. Fifty Years as a Mason. Lions Club member. Fundraiser for the Heart & Stroke Foundation and the Cancer Society. It's a long list.

It would also be hard to find someone more engaging and funny — a life-loving storyteller:

*I got to play hockey up to Senior B. For a little kid in Niagara-on-the-Lake, it was pretty good. We were playing a game against the St. Catharines Saints and they had this big guy. I got around him two or three times. He hollered at me: "You're not going to get by next time." When I woke up, I was on the dressing room table looking at the ceiling. That was the end of my hockey.*

Garrett is a fourth generation Niagara-on-the-Lake resident.

He comes from a proud United Empire Loyalist family. His great grandmother, a Thompson, originally of Perthshire, Scotland, fled with her family from New Jersey to New Brunswick during the American Revolution. The family later moved to Niagara.

His great-grandfather on his father's side, Capt. Alexander Garrett, was born in 1785 in Ireland and fought with Sir Isaac Brock in the Battle of Queenston Heights. He married Amelia Thompson in 1813, settled

in Niagara-on-the-Lake and raised three children. The couple is buried at St. Mark's Anglican Church.

Garrett chuckles as he describes his first Niagara-on-the-Lake ancestor: "He was not killed, or I wouldn't be here. He was a lieutenant, but after the battle he was promoted to captain."

Garrett was born in 1927, on the dining room table of the family home on Simcoe Street. His mother was unable to make it to the old Cottage Hospital just a couple of blocks away on Queen Street.

"The house was tiny," says Garrett. "It was the height of the Depression. We were as poor as church mice."

"My father was one of the lucky men in Niagara-on-the-Lake to be able to feed his family. He worked for the owner of what is now the Charles Inn, as a gardener for 10 cents an hour—10 hours a day, seven days a week. That's seven dollars a week! He considered himself lucky he could put food on our table."

His mother took in laundry.

*We had a wringer washing machine and lines out in the backyard. We had a mulberry tree in the backyard. When the wind blew and the birds were after the mulberries, you know where some of the poop went — all over the sheets. My mother just got so mad.*

"There wasn't anything to do in town," laughs the nonagenarian. "I did a lot of reading. We played outside all the time."

He admits he sometimes got into a little bit of mischief. "Nothing bad. If we did anything wrong, the police chief would just take us home and let the parents sort it out. Oh boy, my dad was a disciplinarian. Out came the strap. You didn't do it again."

"My father flooded the backyard in the winter. He made a rink for me and my brother. We had to be outside. None of this sitting in the house. All we got for Christmas was a hockey stick and a puck and out we'd go."

Garrett remembers waiting for the Niagara, St. Catharines and Toronto Railway



Doug Garrett waves to the crowd when he was named to the NOTL Sports Wall of Fame. FILE PHOTO

train to steam down King Street from Niagara Falls on its regular schedule.

*We loved to watch the train. We looked forward to that train coming in. It used to stop at the Prince of Wales. It came down from Niagara Falls. If we were lucky the conductor would take a couple of us up into the engine and take us down to the docks. They had a big turntable down there. It turned around and headed back. Parts of the turntable are still down by Ball's Beach.*

Garrett went to school in the four-room

red brick schoolhouse on Platoff Street, now a bed and breakfast. "There was a wood stove in the corner. My favourite subject was girls."

Garrett's high school was built in 1875. It is now part of the Niagara-on-the-Lake Museum, facing on Davy Street. The Memorial Hall was the gym. There were 85 students in five forms.

*In the old days there was the Prince of Wales. Down at the dock area there was the American Hotel and then right on the waterfront was the Riverside Hotel. We used*

*to sneeze was a w each — you've*

Garrett police group o

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**Mike Shatkosky**  
 Owner

# Garrett in Niagara-on-the-Lake

## A proud Canadian turns 94



At the same time, we wanted to serve his country. He joined the 44th Field Artillery Regiment in St. Catharines. "We were lucky, we never got sent overseas. The war ended six months later." He was a reservist for five years.

"From the age of 17, I was never out of work."

He worked as a labourer on the canal.

He was a meat cutter for nearly a decade, starting at McClelland's Store on Queen's Street. For three years he worked on the construction of the switchyard behind the Sir Adam Beck No. 1 Generating Station, on the Parkway adjacent to the Flower Clock.

He drove a school bus for 14 years. For three years he and his horse-drawn carriage delivered milk on a regular St. Catharines route.

In 1960, he started a 28-year career with the LCBO, retiring as a store manager in 1988.

"My starting salary was \$3,200 a year. I developed a reputation for straightening things out — a fixer — at several stores across the region."

Garrett married his first wife, Dorothy, in 1956. They had two sons. Dorothy died of cancer at the tragically young age of 42.

He later married Christine, currently a resident at Upper Canada Lodge. She had four children by a previous marriage. After 25 years on Shakespeare Avenue in Chatauqua, Garrett now lives with his stepdaughter in Queenston.

Along the way he has successfully battled colon cancer and, more recently, survived the implantation of a pacemaker.

As he thinks about the past, Garrett seems to have a twinge of melancholy. The people in almost every picture in his photo albums are gone.

"I miss the sleepy old town. Every year the main street changes. There aren't many of us left that can remember things."

"It's sad. But it makes you kind of lucky that you're still here."

And waiting for the golf course to reopen.

...k into the Riverside because there was a waiter who would serve us two beers for 10 cents a glass. He said, "When you finished those, get out." We were 16.

...ett remembers the town's chief of police taking particular notice of his little buddies.

...ad a chief of police, his name was A. Warner — LAW. And he's the chief of police! The two-man force had a jail cell in what is now the House. We would be standing around

Garrett grew up fast. His father died when he was 17, forcing Doug to leave high school to help support his family.

## RIDDLE ME THIS

Forward I am heavy,  
but backward I am not.  
What am I?

Last issue: I'm an instrument through which sounds are made, and yet, not something that can be played. What am I?

Answer: Your voice, throat

Answered first by: Sheelah Young

Also answered correctly (in order) by: Bob Stevens, Maria Janeiro, Roger Marcos, Brenda Bartley, Trish Anthony, Sylvia Wiens, Pam Dowling, Wade Durling, Mary Drost, Tee Bucci, Sheila Meloche, Katie Reimer, Margie Enns,

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

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Keeping it Green 

# Is emerald ash borer **final bough** for Niagara's ash?



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

Kyra Simone  
Special to The Lake Report

It's been 12 years since the emerald ash borer, a beetle native to Asia, was first detected in the Niagara region. Now, the glaring damage of this invasive species is evident in local woodlands, where ash populations have been devastated.

**Unwelcome Hitchhiker:** The emerald ash borer was likely introduced by shipping infested wooden pallets or crates. It has since spread to five Canadian provinces and 30 American states, and become the most



Many dead ash trees are starting to fall around Two Mile Creek, damaging healthy trees like black cherry and shagbark hickory (top, right). Emerald ash borers produce sawdust filled tunnels and D-shaped exit holes (bottom). KYRA SIMONE

costly forest insect invader in North America.

The intrusion has shaken the ecological, economic and aesthetic value of our ash trees. As more trees are lost to the ash borer, so too are their benefits to cool urban environments, take up storm water and reduce airborne pollutants.

Unfortunately, once the beetle spreads to an area, it can kill up to 99 per cent of ash trees within 10 years. With no natural predators in North America, the ash borer's populations can grow unchecked.

For residents of Niagara and other areas with the emerald ash borer, it's

crucial that no ash wood be transported to other regions. Taking firewood up north for camping, for example, could result in a fine or prosecution.

Niagara-on-the-Lake already has the most sparse tree cover in the region: a mere 10 per cent. According to Environment

Canada, a minimum of 30 per cent canopy is necessary to support local wildlife and maintain essential ecosystem services.

Many dead ash that have been left standing are starting to topple. Often, the large trunks also take down healthy species as they fall.

**Digging In:** Ash borer larvae feed on the layer of wood just below the bark and create tunnels that disrupt the tree's ability to transport nutrients and water. When they emerge, they leave distinct D-shaped exit holes, about three to four millimetres wide.

Infestation begins in the canopy and moves downward, so holes are found lower and lower on the tree trunk as health worsens. Splits occur in the bark, woodpecker activity increases and bursts of new leaf growth or small branches appear near the base of infested trees.

Fallen wood and decreased shade from the canopy alter delicate conditions on the forest floor and decreasing ash populations threaten the survival of over 40 native insect species that feed on ash.

**Bug Off:** The impact

of this iridescent green beetle is extensive and very few local ash trees remain unscathed. At this point, we can only really make sure that the brittle trunks are felled safely and don't obstruct waterways.

For areas not yet affected by the ash borer, new Canadian innovations hold some hope for protecting ash trees. Researchers in Fredericton have developed traps containing emerald ash borer pheromones, which allow early detection of infestations.

An injectable insecticide, TreeAzin, is derived from neem oil and limits the beetle's damage if applied early enough. Another long-term project of the Canadian Forest Service is the periodic release of parasitic wasps, which are a natural ash borer enemy from China.

The Canadian Forest Service also maintains a collection of ash seeds, so populations can be replanted after infestations are quashed.

While some of NOTL's ash trees may be too far gone, continued efforts will control beetle damage in other regions and limit losses in the next lifecycle of ash trees.

## Rotary Club buying **oxygen concentrator** for India

Fatima Baig  
Special to The Lake Report

The Niagara-on-the-Lake Rotary Club is working with Rotary International to raise money to donate an oxygen concentrator to India.

Many people in India have been hit hard during the pandemic and there is a serious shortage of oxygen, ventilators and hospital beds. As of May 19, the country had 3,226,719 active cases and 283,248 COVID deaths, according to India's health ministry.

The India Rotary COVID response team reached out to Canada, the U.S and around the world asking for assistance, says Valarie Wafer, a Rotary International director.

Rotary International is partnering with Sewa



Rotarian Valarie Wafer. SUPPLIED

International Events, a humanitarian non-profit organization that specializes in disaster relief, to donate oxygen concentrators which is a non-profit humanitarian organization.

Locally, the NOTL Rotary Club is raising enough money for one oxygen concentrator.

"Our plan locally is to raise enough money to purchase one of the oxygen concentrators, and the estimated price is \$1,000 U.S. dollars. We have been asking our club members for personal donations to do that," said NOTL Rotary president Ken Schander.

The donations started after the district governor Frank Adamson visited the club and issued a challenge for all local Rotary Clubs to do their part and donate to India.

"He was encouraging local clubs like our own to do what they could to donate \$500 to \$1,000, and we set \$1,000 for our goal," said Schander.

This cause personally touched Schander because he has many friends from India.

"I read and listen to the

news and know the situation in India is really critical. I have visited India personally. I have many, many friends who call that home," he said.

"Some people have been hurt significantly by this pandemic. There are others of us who have escaped the worst of it. In fact, we may be considered better off because we have more money than we normally do because we aren't traveling or eating out and some of us just feel like we have blessings and should share them," he said.

Rotarians in India are also working to create an oxygen concentrator bank where oxygen concentrators will be lent out to patients, "assisting economically marginalized communities who wouldn't be able to get oxygen," said Wafer.



Barron Walker plays pickleball. FILE/BRITTANY CARTER

## Town **cuts back** pickleball court hours

The town has served up a five-year memorandum of understanding with the NOTL Pickleball Club that reduces the hours of operation of the group's outdoor courts by two hours a day,

The courts will now operate 8 a.m. to 10 p.m., opening one hour later and closing one hour sooner than in the past.

The facility, located in the Centennial Park in Virgil, is closed due to COVID-19 and the new hours will begin once it reopens. Council approved the change Monday night.



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# At 85, NOTL author Jean Baker launches her **first novel**

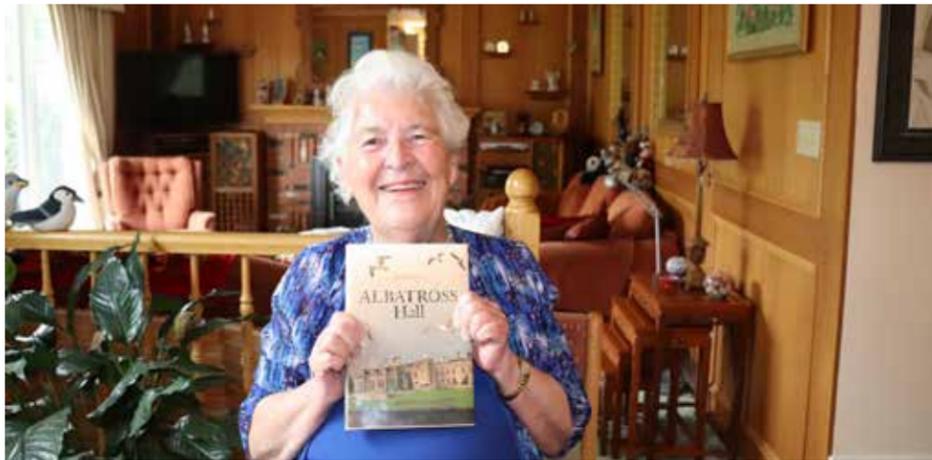
Brittney Cutler  
Special to The Lake Report

At 85, Jean Baker is a lover of history, playing piano and classical music. And she is also the newly published author of her first historical fictional novel, "Albatross Hall."

Born and educated in England, Baker lived there for 22 years before moving to Canada. Her husband, Peter Baker, died in January 2020. The mother of three and grandmother of two has dedicated "Albatross Hall" to her late husband.

Over the years, Baker also has written for several magazines, including British Heritage, the Canadian Medical Association Journal, Classical Music magazine and Canadian Living. She has covered history, classical music, medical issues, mental health, real estate and memories of the Second World War.

Those interests and experiences came in handy writing "Albatross Hall," a historically correct novel set



Jean Baker launches "Albatross Hall" this Saturday. BRITTNEY CUTLER

in the early 1800s during the reigns of George III and IV.

It embraces an aristocratic family, the Ponsonbys, who live in the Elizabethan Albatross mansion. Their lives interact with numerous historical figures such as Napoleon, the Duke of Wellington (in the battle of Waterloo), and Gen. John Burgoyne.

Baker says it took her about four years to write the nearly 77,000-word manuscript and then seek out a publisher.

"It took a long time for it to get proofread and there were more than 60 emails exchanged at least, between me and the publisher," she says.

She officially launches her book with a COVID-friendly kickoff this Saturday, May 22, starting at 9 a.m. – from the driveway of her home at 24 Coach Dr. in Niagara-on-the-Lake.

With the novel completed, Baker says it gives her great satisfaction that it's done and she is excited to see her book now available

to readers.

"When my husband became ill with dementia, I had to look after him. I was a constant caregiver to him and I couldn't leave him really, so I couldn't concentrate on anything," Baker says. "Peter was ill for a long time, several years."

Her love of history became Baker's motivation to write "Albatross Hall." Research was key to developing the novel; to ensure historical accuracy, she meticulously checked all information related to the

timelines, events and references to the famous figures who are featured.

Lake Report columnist Dr. William Brown, a professor of neurology at McMaster University, wrote a foreword for "Albatross Hall," commenting on the historically well thought-out characters and noting the book is well worth the read.

"Jean Baker has written a historical novel of fecklessness, dimwittedness, intrigue, humour, romance and murder spanning the decades between the American Revolution and Napoleonic Wars. From cover to cover she has introduced a wealth of well-drawn characters, with accents to match their station in life and the times. Her book has pace and an eye for detail, whether high-born or low, manor houses or bawdy places.

Frankly once I started, I couldn't put her book down – and for good reason, Jean Baker has written a rollicking story well worth the

read," Brown wrote.

In her teenage years, Baker wanted to become a newspaper reporter, however, that was almost 70 years ago and overt sexism got in the way of her desires.

"I would have loved to be a reporter. I could've interviewed people to my heart's content, but nope, 'We don't want women in our newspaper. That would interfere with the men.' We're talking in the 1950s here, when it was frowned upon," Baker says.

In Baker's free time, when she's not writing, she loves to play piano. Her favourite genre is classical music, particularly the works of Mozart, Beethoven, Chopin and Schumann.

Her advice to anyone who wants to become a writer and publish their work is to be prepared to really work hard to achieve your goal.

"I think, first of all, you have to have a real desire to write, and I think talent is there too and you have to be able to express yourself," Baker says.



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# Museum wants pandemic mementos for historical records

Evan Saunders  
Local Journalism Initiative  
The Lake Report



The NOTL museum is trying to collect items from residents relating to the pandemic, in order to preserve the narrative for future generations. SUPPLIED

Years from now, when the COVID-19 pandemic is long-forgotten, the Niagara-on-the-Lake Museum wants to ensure area residents will be able to view artifacts that help them understand this unprecedented time in history.

The museum, which last year encouraged people to keep journals about their pandemic experiences, now wants to collect items related to COVID-19, to better document the lives of NOTL residents and organizations throughout the pandemic.

"It's such a monumental occasion in all of our lives right now. We really want

to be able to tell in the future what happened with the COVID-19 pandemic," said Shawna Butts, assistant curator and educational programmer at the museum.

Everyday objects as well as personal recollections are encouraged for submis-

sion.

"A lot of museums are actively collecting COVID-19 material to help museums, historians and future curators tell the history of the COVID-19 pandemic," Butts told The Lake Report.

"No COVID-19 story is

the same, everyone comes from varying circumstances. Whether you're a single individual, or parents with children, you're old and in a retirement home, or you've lost your job," Butts said.

"A lot of these stories will help tell the different perspectives of what people in our community went through."

The museum seeks to create a definitive narrative of what pandemic life was like for NOTL residents before it is too late.

"We found that with the Spanish flu, which happened only 100 years ago, that we don't have a lot of those community stories because our community was shut down for a brief period," she said.

Butts said a lot of the

organizations, such as women's groups and churches, that helped people during the Spanish flu were not able to hold regular meetings so it was difficult for them to create a record of what was going on.

Hence the museum's desire to collect any items, regardless of how mundane they may seem. In announcing its plan, the museum noted toilet paper, masks, and sourdough recipes are among the common artifacts it wants to preserve.

"It'll help our community of the future to tell of the resilience of our community during this time," Butts said.

"Posters thanking frontline workers, businesses saving their social distancing signs, their closed signs

or their occupancy signs" would all be welcome, she added.

On top of physical items, the museum is also looking to collect personal recollections of residents' experiences throughout the pandemic. These can be submitted in written or video form.

Butts said the museum is not planning on sharing anything soon, so people who are worried about privacy can rest assured.

"We're hoping that, by making this push now, that people will remember that this is an initiative that we are working towards."

"It's part of history. It's what every person, business or community member has experienced," Butts said.

## St. Michael school receives \$5,500 grant to buy permanent guitars for students

Fatima Baig  
Special to The Lake Report

Niagara-on-the-Lake's St. Michael Catholic Elementary School has received a \$5,500 grant to boost its music program.

Principal Janice Barretto-Mendonca said the school has a "music-rich environment" with a piano in the foyer that residents often play for the students.

"NOTL is very community-oriented, so we had members of the community who would come in and play piano for us a couple of times a week, and they would be in the foyer to teach the children with piano. Different classes would come in and sing," she said.

However, COVID forced the music program to change and woodwind instruments, shared by students in schools across the region, were banned due to concerns about spreading the virus.

"We weren't able to use the recorders, trumpets or trombones or some of the instruments that we were lucky to use in the past," Barretto-Mendonca said.



Grade 6 students learn on borrowed guitars. SUPPLIED

Music teachers move around the region and Jill Tham, who normally is at St. Michael a couple of weeks each month, initiated the application for the 2021 MusiCounts Band Aid Program grant after a student asked why they couldn't take instruments home.

"One of the things we were able to use is strings, so I borrowed guitars from another location, and one of the students in Grade 7 said, 'Well, is there any way we can get our own set of guitars for the school,' and I said actually we could," Tham noted.

With help from the students, she led the grant

application to help purchase 30 guitars.

The students participated in the application process by providing videos and quotes about why it's important to them to have access to instruments and programs that run during the day.

"They had the opportunity to say what having a school set would mean to them and having the opportunity to access the instruments and having programs that would run during the day," said Tham.

One of the goals was to enable students to take instruments home to practise.

"It's challenging to learn an instrument if you don't

have access to it all the time and, like with any sport or activity, you need to practice," she said.

Another stumbling block is the Virgil school draws from a large area and many students arrive by bus, so providing after-school programs is a challenge.

Barretto-Mendonca said another teacher is looking at starting a guitar club. Having the guitars in the building will enable her to work directly with the children.

"This means that we can support a guitar club at the school, which I am looking forward to because it gives children another outlet. Not everybody is an athlete. Some of them are really strong musicians."

"Every kid has their gift, but this is also exposure. It may not even be their gift, but they get exposed to different things here at school," she said.

Tham also acknowledged Conrad Simon from Thorold Music for assisting with the application.

He also offered advice about what would be in stock with his suppliers, so the instruments would arrive for classes in September, said Tham.

## Food drive a success



Newark Neighbours food drive volunteers. JANICE WHITE

The Newark Neighbours food drive was a resounding success last weekend, thanks to the generosity of more than 150 donors. Nearly 1,500 individual items were donated.

The group says there wasn't a single item on their list that they didn't receive multiple of.

For two days, volunteers from the Rotary Club drove around Niagara-on-the-Lake and collected items from residents who had signed up for the drive.

The Neighbours were low on soup and paper towels, but said they have gotten enough of both to last months. They also appreciated the cans of tuna, salmon and chunky soup.

"We couldn't have done this without the Rotary Club because they were the drivers who actually went around and picked everything up," said food bank manager Cindy Grant. "So, our deep gratitude to the Rotary Club, and of course to the community for once again stepping up."

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# NOTL Pandemic Heroes



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Front-line workers

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

## Katherine Gaio

On top of brightening the winter for so many NOTLers with her family's appearance on "Family Feud Canada," Katherine Gaio was nominated as a Pandemic Hero for her constant willingness to go out of the way to make sure people get their mail. And a shout out to all mail carriers for their work on the front lines of the pandemic.

Gaio, a longtime employee of Canada Post, was nominated anonymously by a fan who sang her praises.

"She works tirelessly for Canada Post, making sure that everyone gets their packages and parcels as quickly and easily as possible. There are so many little things that she does to go above and beyond her basic job responsibilities because she knows how much it means to people to get the things they've ordered on time and easily."

Sometimes when she attempts a delivery the person doesn't answer the door. It would be much more convenient to bring the package back to the post office for the recipient to retrieve — and many mail carriers do this because that is all that is expected of them.

"However, Katherine recognizes how inconvenient this might be for the person, so as a way of going above and beyond she will circle back around to the person's house once she's completed the rest of the deliveries in the neighbourhood to see if the person is now home and able to sign for the package."

"Many times the person had been simply out walking the dog and just missed the attempt, so they were now able to receive it, without even realizing that they had just about missed it."

That is just one of the "small sacrifices" that people wouldn't even realize have been made. "I think it's easy to overlook our mail carriers but they have been out on the front line this entire pandemic. With such a huge increase in online ordering, their work has been more important than ever."



Katherine Gaio at the NOTL post office. SUPPLIED

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# GAMES



*Have some fun*

**Across**

- 9. Playwright (9)
- 10. Moor (3,2)
- 11. Space surrounding an altar (7)
- 12. Quickly (7)
- 13. Runner (9)
- 14. Cougar (4)
- 18. Distinct sort or kind (7)
- 20. Surgical knife (7)
- 21. A great deal (4)
- 22. Herald (9)
- 26. Hedge (7)
- 28. Books of maps (7)
- 29. Young hooter (5)
- 30. Abbreviated (9)

**Down**

- 1. Decree (5)
- 2. Executives (10)
- 3. Biting (9)
- 4. Fiddle (6)
- 5. Old liners (8)
- 6. The Roman Empire's home country (5)
- 7. Large mass of floating ice (4)
- 8. As thumbs are (9)
- 15. Disagreeable (10)
- 16. Psalter (5,4)
- 17. Moon (9)
- 19. Astonishment (8)
- 23. Lea (6)
- 24. Threescore (5)
- 25. Stage whisper (5)
- 27. Depend (4)

## Crossword Puzzle

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
9						10	
11				12			
	13					14	15
16						17	
18				19	20		
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		24					25
26	27				28		
29				30			

### Last issue's answers

1	S	P	A	R	S	E	L	Y	8	S	H	R	I	M	P
	A	M	P	A	B	I	N	R							
10	S	U	P	P	O	R	T	E	R	11	P	A	B	L	O
	H	H	T	I	A	S	O	N							
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14	A	B	E	R	D	H	E	U							
16	G	R	I	N	D	E	R	17	N	I	E	L	S	E	N
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21	R	U	N	A	W	A	Y	22	W	E	L	F	A	R	E
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	3	9	4	1			
1	6	3				2	
			6	1	8		
				4			

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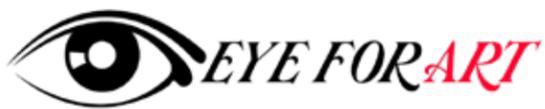
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## A point to look out

Penny-Lynn Cookson  
Special to The Lake Report

It's spring and what a pleasure it is to be on the grass in Ryerson Park sharing with others the splendid views of the lake, nesting birds, sailboats and barges.

Late 19th-century Parisians enjoyed similar Arcadian delights by spending Sundays on a small island in the Seine, La Grande Jatte, where they strolled, fished, went boating and took their children. It became the subject for the most significant painting of Neo-Impressionism created by its founder, the French artist Georges Seurat.

An art prodigy, Seurat studied the classic traditions of line and colour at the Ecole des Beaux-Arts in

Paris but he sought a new formula of optical painting inspired by reading aesthetic and scientific treatises on colour harmonies.

He achieved this by applying small comma strokes and dots of unmixed colour side by side on the canvas rather than by mixing the colours on the palette. The effect was a more intense luminosity. He called this "divisionism" but we now know it as "pointillism," named for the dots.

Seurat was against the Impressionist technique of instinctive and spontaneous capture of fugitive light and colour. He favoured restraint, optical rules and deliberate rigid stylization, not as a loss of freedom but rather an objective means to a greater reality through structure,

line and composition.

Seurat spent every morning for months on La Grande Jatte drawing studies of people and the landscape. Afternoons were spent in his studio integrating the studies with live models holding the positions. The result was a large canvas, 7 x 10 feet, exhibited at the Salon des Indépendants in 1886 and described by critics as cause for "mental disturbances" and "choking apoplexies."

Seurat's masterpiece and his methods were hailed by young artists, the avant-garde and Impressionists, such as Pissarro and Signac, who altered their styles.

What made this painting so different? The figures appear wooden in frontal, back or profile positions with exceptions being a bounding small dog in the foreground and a running girl in the middle ground.

It is a study of the bourgeoisie, the middle class, enjoying the pleasures only available to the aristocracy before the French Revolu-



Georges Seurat, "A Sunday on the Island of La Grande Jatte," 1884-1886, Oil on canvas, Art Institute of Chicago. SUPPLIED

tion. They are well-dressed except for the sprawling man smoking his pipe in the left foreground. There are repetitive curves in the top of the dandy's cane, dog tails, umbrellas and the bustle of the woman's skirt in the right foreground.

Shadow, light, reflections and colour are brilliantly executed. Perspective pulls the eye into radiance and depth. Details abound from a monkey on a leash, to

the horn-playing musician, to various types of river boats, a woman fishing, and to each cast shadow, leaf and blade of grass. It is a work of mind over eye and a triumph.

Seurat died suddenly at 31. He had found his classical style early, a product of his inquiring explorations and the scientific optimism and positivism of the time. His powerful legacy as the leader of the Neo-Impressionists would endure

for decades and influence many artists such as the Fauves, Matisse, Kandinsky and Mondrian. And all based on the dot..

*Penny-Lynn Cookson is an art historian who taught at the University of Toronto for 10 years. She also was head of extension services at the Art Gallery of Ontario. Watch for her upcoming lecture series at the Pumphouse Arts Centre and at RiverBrink Art Museum.*

# Dr. Brown: Your **aching back** and why a diagnosis can be difficult

Dr. William Brown  
Special to The Lake Report

Back pain is one of the banes of humanity.

The cause, especially in the later decades of life, is usually cumulative degenerative changes in the lower spine involving the vertebral bodies, the discs between those bodies, the posterior joints and the associated ligaments.

Too often the result is chronic pain in the lower back, buttocks, hips and sometimes the legs (sciatica), as well as numbness and tingling in the legs.

Making matters worse for some patients, is that vertebrae sometimes slip forward on the vertebrae below (spondylolisthesis), further narrowing the spinal canal, and crowding and pinching nerve roots on their way through their exit routes (foramina) on the way to the legs.

Managing the related symptoms is especially challenging when the degenerative changes involve two or more levels because sorting out which levels are symptomatic, and which not, is problematic.



SOURCED IMAGE

Degenerative changes involving the posterior joints, discs and ligaments may produce pain in addition to whatever pain might be related to the L3, L4, L5 or S1 roots or various combinations of those nerve roots.

That's why it's so hard for physicians and surgeons to figure out what's causing the pain and hence what might make a reasonable target for surgery. When we're older – there are simply too many targets to reasonably explain the pain and too little evidence to differentiate among them.

None of this is made any easier by imaging studies such as CT or MRI because much beyond the age of 40, CT and

MRI scans often show degenerative changes and disc "protrusions" in those with no symptoms.

Patients in their 30s and 40s are much easier to figure out because the cause usually involves a single level (L4-5 or L5-S1) and that level, based on the location of the tingling and numbness, usually matches the findings on imaging studies.

Would that be the case for those in their 70s and beyond. With them, there are simply too many targets to make sense of the probable precise source of the symptoms. Sometimes nerve blocks are used to "freeze" one or other potential site to see whether the symptoms improve. Unfortunately, the latter diagnostic findings are often misleading.

What we've ended up with is multilevel surgery and this usually involves taking most of the bony elements off the back of the lumbar spine and leaving the vertebrae in place (laminectomy). This theoretically, takes the pressure off the symptomatic roots by opening up the spinal

canal and opening up the exit spaces for those nerve roots, while leaving the vertebrae and discs much as they were. Here there's a division of opinion.

Many orthopedic surgeons, concerned about leaving an unstable spine behind after stripping it of most of its bony gage posteriorly, advocate putting a bony brace in place to fuse and provide some added rigidity to the spine after the laminectomy.

Most neurosurgeons, on the other hand, do not resort to fusion procedures. There's no doubt that fusing the lower spine adds to the time required for the surgery and beyond that there's the risk the fusion itself or the hardware used to hold them in place may break and cause additional symptoms.

In my experience, working with surgeons of both stripes in three different locations, I belong to the "no fusion" camp. That opinion recently received convincing support from two large studies, one in Sweden and the other in the United States, which argue that fusion is not

needed in most instances. The accompanying editorial was solidly in the no fusion camp. That's good news for most patients.

This, of course, doesn't answer the question of whether surgery actually works in the later decades of life. Here the answer is a qualified yes. I say qualified because it's one of those situations where picking the right surgeon is critical in making the right decision about surgery in the first place.

And should the decision be surgery, it's very important the surgeon has the requisite skills and experience to get the job done with a high degree of confidence that the patient will be better.

That's one of the reasons why several companies in the United States, such as Walmart, began to offer fully paid consultative, surgical and rehabilitation services at one of six top-notch U.S. medical centres. The goal was to improve the outcomes for employees who suffered from chronic lower back pain in an area of medicine filled with doubt and

uncertainty.

That approach makes a lot of sense to me because Canadians should be offered similar care at those Canadian centres with the best track record for medically and surgically managing lower back pain.

Managing lower back pain for patients and physicians alike is challenging and in areas of medicine like this, where there's a great deal of uncertainty, it makes sense to concentrate the assessment and management in a few centres of excellence.

That approach is offered for some medical and surgical special interests but needs to be expanded to the management of chronic lower back pain and especially surgery, but that's a question for another column and another day.

To be discussed at the next Infohealth meeting on June 2 at 11 a.m. Register through the NOTL library. See you then.

*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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## EXPLORING PHOTOS WITH NOTL MUSEUM

### The water tower

This photograph shows the former water tower on King Street, which was located beside Jack Greene's Livery Stable. At the bottom of the picture, you can see the former railway line that ran down King Street. Today you would recognize the building on the right as the Grill on King and Simpson's Apothecary is now located where the tower stood. The water tower's height was double this size. This image was taken to document the damage caused by Hurricane Hazel in the fall of 1954. This Atlantic hurricane came as a surprise to many and caused significant damage in the community.



## Obituary & In memoriam

### Barry Hamelin



It is with heavy hearts we announce the passing of Barry Hamelin after a hard-fought battle with Covid19, on Monday May 10, 2021 at North York General Hospital at the age of 82.

A loving husband to Rollande for 60 years. He was the beloved father to Michael (Susan), Michelle (Geoffrey), adored grandfather (Papa) to Melissa (Marc), Danielle (Andy), Taylor and Spencer. Special Great Grandfather to Logan and Owen.

Barry will be missed by numerous close family in B.C. & Alberta who loved

him very much. He will be forever remembered for his devotion to both family and those friends who became family who he gave his undivided attention and shared his fountain of wisdom and good council. He shared his advice, and would discuss any subject, often taking the opposing view just to generate these discussions. He generally made all of us feel special and welcome. He taught us resilience and the ability to face life and adversity with quiet determination and grace.

His love and presence will be with us forever.

Our heartfelt thanks to the wonderful staff of North York General Hospital. They were kind, caring and compassionate and made his passing peaceful.

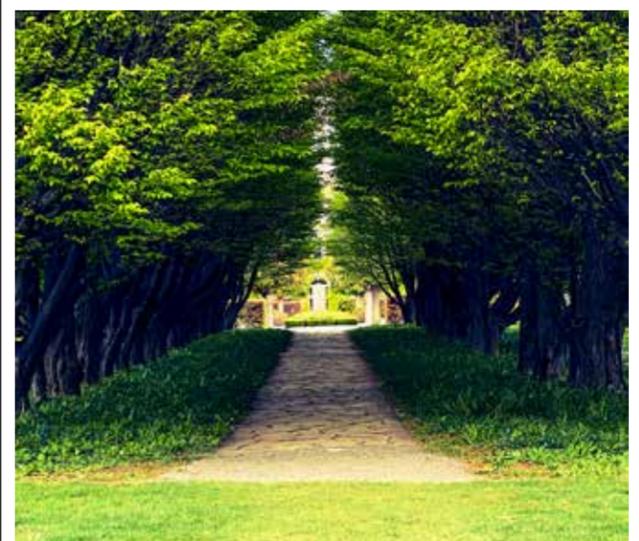
As per Barry's wishes and COVID-19 protocols, a cremation has taken place and there will be a graveside ceremony for immediate family only in Niagara-on-the-Lake.

A Celebration of Life will take place once COVID restrictions are lifted and it is safe to do so. Arrangements have been entrusted to Morgan Funeral Home, 415 Regent Street, Niagara-on-the-Lake, ON.

In lieu of flowers, donations can be made to North York General Hospital, Canadian Diabetes association, University Hospital Network, or a charity of your choice.



## Kendall's Corner



A natural archway within the botanical gardens. GAIL KENDALL

## ARCHITEXT

### Evolution of the bungalow

Brian Marshall  
Columnist



Styled Ranch. SUPPLIED/BRIAN MARSHALL

For more than two decades in the mid-20th century, the Ranch bungalow had reigned supreme as the architectural style of choice.

The sprawling single-storey design with its inside/outside entertaining transitions was ideally suited to the lifestyle of the middle- and upper-middle class of the period.

Despite the premium pricing charged by builders (largely necessitated by the wide 75- to 100-foot lots required by the Ranch) and competition from the lower-priced split-level variants to the style, consumer demand remained high.

The only issue buyers had with the Ranch was its

modest facade. The relatively low-pitched roof with its deep, overhanging eaves hunkered down over the single-storey walls which, while creating strong integration with the landscape, were quite understated.

While the public loved the liveability of the Ranch, many felt that it did not present a success statement equivalent to its cost. In short, it grew to be viewed as kind of boring.

To satisfy this buyer segment, architects leaned heavily into the early 20th century Eclectic expressions (evocative of earlier traditional styles: Spanish, French, Tudor, Colonial Revival & Neoclassical) and responded with designs

of Ranch functionality that sported "decorated" facade, gable and roof elements. Hence the Styled Ranch was born.

Consider our accompanying photo, which shows a Styled Ranch with all the bells and whistles on a typical town lot. The cross-hipped roof is broken by a Neo-Classical front gable, its pilasters embracing the picture window.

The pedimented portico supported by fluted columns echoes the gable. The garage is proud of the facade and sideloading, which allows it to push back or blend with the house itself while its hipped roof lines enhance the portico and gable

through repetition. In all, a classic Ranch with curb appeal.

As the Styled Ranch evolved, designers introduced greater variations on the original Ranch parameters. If, for example, one wished to recall Colonial Revival with shouldering wings and a colonnade on the centre massing, it was necessary to increase the height (pitch) of the roof ridge.

These types of variations, in gradual steps through the late 1970s and 1980s, moved the appearance of the Styled Ranch away from its Ranch predecessor and laid the ground-work for today's bungalow.

The unfortunate Millennium Mansion (sometimes known as McMansion) craze of the 1990s shifted popular consumer opinion toward several design inclusions, which designers subsequently incorporated into their bungalows and can still be seen in current new builds.

Builds that are no longer a Ranch and stylistic orphans.



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