



A knack for leather | Page 15

Vol. 4, Issue 40

Serving all five communities of Niagara-on-the-Lake

October 7, 2021

## A day for Indigenous reflection

Education about reconciliation goes beyond holiday, principal says



Students at Crossroads Elementary school stand in front of 6,509 orange hands cut out to memorialize the thousands of Indigenous children who died in Canada's residential school system. SUPPLIED

Evan Saunders  
Local Journalism Initiative  
The Lake Report

ing to tears and it's really had a profound impact," principal Kate Fish said in an interview.

Every single student in the school has been involved in creating the display, Fish said.

"Even just talking about it now it makes me emotional and proud and gives me disdain and gives me a very heavy feeling in my heart," she said.

"But at the same time see-

ing the students' reactions to it as well as the dialogue it has generated in classrooms is — it's overwhelming, it really truly is overwhelming."

The 6,509 figure is not the official count of children's graves found so far but is a number that has been popularly used to represent the graves found and graves too be found across the country.

Fish said the school was a sea of orange shirts on

Sept. 30 as part of the first National Day for Truth and Reconciliation.

"The really cool thing was not just seeing the kids wearing their orange shirts but parents dropping their kids off wearing orange shirts as well," she said.

"One mother had a shirt on that said 'Our Home is Native Land.'"

Fish said it's amazing to

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Ron Fritz checks out one of the anti-bird cannon signs along York Road in Queenston. KEVIN MACLEAN

## Town's sign bylaw violates Charter rights, NOTL lawyer says

Kevin MacLean  
The Lake Report

Signs, signs, like the old song says, are everywhere.

"Please Slow Down," "Every Child Matters," "Home of A Crossroads Public School Grad," "Farmers Feed Cities," birthday, anniversary or retirement placards, even "Merry Christmas" salutations — and many other signs that people sometimes post on their lawn, or neighbourhood public property, all have one thing in common.

They are not allowed under Niagara-on-the-Lake's sign bylaw.

It's the medium, not the message, because "ground" signs (like flashing signs and fluorescent signs) are

among several types of signs that are illegal in Niagara-on-the-Lake. At least, the bylaw says so.

But that bylaw itself, and possibly many similar municipal sign statutes across the country, is not worth the paper it's printed on, according to a retired NOTL lawyer. The town's statute is illegal because it infringes on people's Charter rights, he says.

It's a complicated, yet simple, scenario, says Ron Fritz, the former dean of the University of Saskatchewan's law school.

No matter what the message is — think, "Celebrating Our Traditional Marriage," which offended many peo-

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## Working with troubled youth critical for Indigenous culture, elder says

Evan Saunders  
Local Journalism Initiative  
The Lake Report

find peace.

Choken performed the ceremony with the aid of two helpers. One was a 14-year-old Mohawk from Buffalo.

"He's one of our youth that has gotten into trouble. So, I was assigned to take care of him and help him with his troubles," Choken said of the young man.

His problems began with being bullied in school, the youth said in an interview.

The youth was reluctant to share the details of what happened but the elder was a bit more forthcoming.

"He was getting bullied at school, so now he can't go to the same school — because he got beaten up," Choken said.

The affable Choken speaks in a relaxed manner. As he sat on a blanket in the middle of a large circle of about 25 people, he laughed often and talked softly.

Choken said the young man had been getting in recurring fights with a bully at his school.

The youth got kicked out of school for fighting. His family entered him in the "I'm a Kind Man" program

at the Niagara Regional Native Centre, Choken said in an interview later.

He works with troubled Indigenous youth and men in the program.

"We teach them respect and forgiveness. Teach a man those two things and wherever they go in life they'll be alright," he said.

The youth was doing well in the program but Choken said he was worried the boy would not go back to school and end up another Indigenous person over-re-

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Anishinaabe elder Albert Choken during the smudging ceremony in St. Davids on Saturday. EVAN SAUNDERS



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# Truth and reconciliation isn't just one day, principal says

Continued from Front Page

see kids engaged in such an important issue – something many older Canadians never experienced in school.

"You see these kids engaging in the conversation with compassion and empathy and a sense of social justice that I never experienced as a student growing up. It's inspiring, to be honest. It's inspiring and it makes me feel hopeful for the future," the principal said.

"We're all coming at it from a place of lack of education. There is a huge amount of work to front load for us to make sure we're doing it correctly and doing it justice and being sensitive."

Fish said one of her students said the initiative made her happy and sad, telling the principal, in effect, "It makes me happy that we're doing something about this but it makes me sad that we have to do it at all."

The display is part of a larger project in the school to keep education about



Crossroads students learn about residential schools on the first ever National Day for Truth and Reconciliation. SUPPLIED

residential schools and Indigenous Peoples continuing long after Sept. 30 has passed, said Fish.

"We really try and weave Indigenous education through the curriculum throughout the entire year," she said.

The school is using a number of resources to educate its students on residential schools and Indigenous history.

One great resource is Phyllis Webstad's book "The Orange Shirt Story," Fish said and noted the challenge

of ensuring the educational tools are age-appropriate and develop as students mature.

"Orange Shirt Day gave us a really great starting point because it's already in kid-friendly language," she said.

"Language changes according to the age of the student. You wouldn't use words like 'abuse' in a really early grade, you use words like mistreatment or treated poorly. But as they get older you start using terminology like that."

Fish said the school is also using "When We Were Alone" by David Robertson, "I Am Not a Number" by Jenny Kay Dupuis and Kathy Kacer with illustrations by Gillian Newland, and "Fatty Legs" by Margaret-Olemaun Pokiak-Fenton & Christy Jordan-Fenton, among other books.

The school also has been showing students films and documentaries about residential schools.

Fish said a quote from Sen. Murray Sinclair, chair of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission, has been a driving theme for her during this time. He noted: "Education got us into this mess and education can get us out."

And that theme was one

reason Fish was glad the kids were in school on Sept. 30, though she understood the desire for many Indigenous and non-Indigenous parents to have their kids out of class that day.

"The systems we have created are the ones that are causing the problems. So, by requiring Indigenous people to continuously engage in those systems it almost feels like you are re-perpetrating the problem," Fish said.

But having children in school made sure they were being educated on reconciliation and residential schools on Sept. 30, which, unfortunately, is not a guarantee many students would have had if they were at home, Fish said.

"It allows us the opportunity to give the students experience and exposure that they wouldn't necessarily receive elsewhere. It ensures that it's happening for the right purposes, but I completely understand the other perspective of it," Fish said.

## SORE nominated for conservancy award

Evan Saunders  
Local Journalism Initiative  
The Lake Report

### Landscape Award.

"SORE has been a pivotal force in the protection of this historic estate, spurring significant community action," the nomination reads.

SORE welcomed the honour and noted the efforts of the group and the town "with respect to the iconic Rand Estate are clearly being followed and applauded by the heritage community provincially and beyond."

"SORE is gratified to be recognized by the Archi-

tectural Conservancy of Ontario for the almost four years of hard work pushing back on Benny Marotta's outrageous plans for and activities at the Rand Estate," Lyle Hall said in an email on behalf of the group.

"The recognition is nice but the commitment is and will be there regardless of whether SORE is given this award."

The Architectural Conservancy of Ontario was created in 1933 by Dr. Eric Arthur, a

professor at the University of Toronto, to save the Barnum House near Grafton, Ont.

Since then the organization has documented and saved hundreds of heritage sites across Ontario

The Margaret and Nicholas Hill award was named for a couple who worked for nearly four decades with the conservancy and helped to protect and establish heritage areas throughout the province.

Award winners will be announced on Oct. 14.



A group largely corralled by SORE attends a public meeting regarding the Rand Estate in 2019. FILE PHOTO

## Marotta group appeals Rand Estate repair order from town

Evan Saunders  
Local Journalism Initiative  
The Lake Report

Two Sisters Resorts Corp. is appealing an order by the Town of Niagara-on-the-Lake to carry out repair work on the Rand Estate.

There will be a live appeal hearing on Oct. 12 at 5 p.m.

The order, issued Aug. 25, compelled the company,

owned by developer Benny Marotta, to conduct a series of repairs and restorations on the Rand Estate as the property has run afoul of the town's property standards bylaw.

The work is to be done by Jan. 25, 2022, according to the appeal notice. But Marotta's appeal states there's not enough time to do all the requested repairs by the deadline and asks for all

items to be delayed.

In the original order, the town requested nine specific repairs be undertaken.

These included the boarding of all possible entrances, mould remediation for the interiors, review and repair of the roof if necessary and the installation of a metal fence around vacant buildings.

The appeal also claims some of the orders are not applicable because they fall

under the residential property section of the property standards bylaw.

The building falls under the heritage property section of the bylaw, according to the appeal and the original order.

The bylaw states that any vacant heritage property needs to have on-going maintenance inside and outside the property to maintain standards.



Little is seen of the Rand Estate behind the no trespassing signs and tarpaulin. EVAN SAUNDERS



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October 7, 2021

NEWS



Phil Tregunno inspects some late-season grapes still on the vine at Tregunno Fruit Farms. EVAN SAUNDERS

## Investment in Niagara tender fruit means lower prices, better quality, farmer says

Evan Saunders  
Local Journalism Initiative  
The Lake Report

A \$280,000 investment infusion for Niagara tender fruit growers will result in more trees, vines and a wider variety of high-quality produce, NOTL farmer Phil Tregunno says.

Niagara top-quality fruit already gives farmers an edge over foreign suppliers, but the new program will enhance that advantage, said Tregunno, who is chair of the Ontario Tender Fruit Growers.

"Quality is key. That's what the local industry thrives on because we can tree-ripen a product here and get it right into the store and the distribution centres the next day," he said.

The \$280,000 is from the Greenbelt Foundation, a charitable organization dedicated to ensuring the Greenbelt remains permanent, protected and prosperous.

The money will be distributed slowly and equitably to farmers across the region who apply for it, Tregunno said.

It is expected to result in 75,000 new trees and 10,000 new vines being planted, the foundation said, increasing the industry's production by seven per cent.

The foundation estimated

that will translate into about \$10 million in value and 150 new jobs being added to the sector.

Imported fruit is the main competitor to Niagara's farmers in the Ontario market.

"But, we all know what travel does to perishable fruit," Tregunno laughed.

"Someone picking green fruit and shipping it 1,500 miles away ... It's a flavour and quality thing."

This investment will help farmers to plant a larger variety of fruit, specifically kinds that ripen later in the year and give Niagara's farmers a longer growing season, allowing them to compete longer with foreign growers.

As soon as the growing season is done in Niagara, fruit sales are quickly replaced by international competitors. Growing later into the year thanks to planting new varieties will allow Niagara farmers a bigger slice of the market, Tregunno said.

More Niagara fruit later in the year is also beneficial for the consumer, and not just because it will taste better.

"It's a world market thing. If we don't have it and it's grown locally then it's coming in from some other country and usually at a higher cost," Tregunno said.

"If you get more local

food it always holds down the prices."

Tregunno works with the University of Guelph to ensure Niagara's tender fruit growers are always growing the best crop available.

"As new varieties come out you'll get growers that say, 'That's a better variety,' or, 'I can make better use of our equipment or labour force by growing those,'" he said.

"And if you've got a better product that's a sweeter, highly colourful variety, that gets picked up in the grocery store better than something that's an older variety that's not as bright in colour or maybe is a little softer."

Tregunno emphasized that the \$280,000 isn't a gift to tender fruit farmers that will make their lives immediately better.

"It's a 30 per cent investment into the trees, farmers have to put in the other 70 per cent, plus they have to do all the work," he said.

"It's an incentive. It helps."

There is oversight to ensure the money is used appropriately, Tregunno said.

Once a farmer applies for funding from the foundation the money is set aside while paperwork is done and the types of trees the farmer wishes to plant are reviewed.

"We usually use the

Ontario Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs to audit it and they actually go out into the field and make sure that field was planted and contains certain varieties," Tregunno said.

Tregunno is the president of Tregunno Fruit Farms on the Niagara Parkway in NOTL.

His family has been farming for four generations. His grandfather had a vegetable farm in Burlington but the family was slowly pushed by urban expansion down to NOTL.

Tregunno said it was a hard summer for farmers due to the prolonged heat.

"You're almost getting like a double ripening because it's hot during the day and the night, which makes you very busy," he said.

At least this year the farm had an easier time in welcoming back its seasonal workers than in 2020.

"Last year we were short workers that didn't arrive (due to the pandemic) and this year everyone arrived, which was good. It was a very labour-intensive year with the heat."

Tregunno expressed thanks for the seasonal workers who came and ensured his farm had a successful season.

"A great bunch of men and women. We wouldn't be here doing this without them."



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# Old friend honours Ron Mergl at Rotary polio ride

Evan Saunders  
Local Journalism Initiative  
The Lake Report

Alan Plater travelled 100 kilometres to Niagara-on-the-Lake last weekend to Pedal for Polio and to honour the memory of a longtime friend.

Plater, of Simcoe, Ont., was a classmate of Ron Mergl's at the University of Guelph, where they both studied veterinary medicine. Their lives afterward followed similar but separate paths.

In NOTL, the Rotary Club renamed its Pedal for Polio fundraiser in honour of Mergl, who died in 2020. So Plater, who has been a Rotarian for 27 years, brought his wife Yvonne and daughter Emma to town to help pay tribute Saturday to his old friend.

"This one's special to me. Ron Mergl, was a classmate of mine. I graduated with him from Guelph in 1985," Plater said.

Mergl, a longtime Rotary Club member in Niagara-on-the-Lake, spent years



Emma, Yvonne and Alan Plater have a burger after riding 30 kilometres to honour Alan's deceased friend and namesake of the event, Dr. Ron Mergl. EVAN SAUNDERS

helping organize and raise money for many of the club's projects. He was a particularly vocal advocate for polio vaccines.

Mergl and Plater have an abundance of similarities. They both graduated from Guelph with a veterinary degree and became lifelong Rotarians, both travelled all over the world helping distribute and inoculate people with the polio vaccine.

Plater's been to West Africa, Nigeria and Cameroon, among other nations, to work with Rotary programs.

"We go out into the community and give oral

vaccines to children. It's an incredible experience," he said.

Plater and Mergl weren't able to spend much time together in the years preceding his death, so Plater saw the ride as a way to honour and do something significant for his deceased friend.

"Hearing about his passing, that brought back a lot of memories. We had the same interests in Rotary, which was really kind of neat. If they do the ride again next year, I'll be here," he said.

Plater has already passed

down his penchant for charitable work to his children. His daughter Emma participated in the ride and has also travelled around the world helping distribute the polio vaccine.

By the end of the post-ride barbecue on Saturday, the club had already raised more than \$30,000. The fund drive will continue through Oct. 24 and the amount raised will be doubled by the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation.

If the Rotary Club raises \$100,000, the Gates foundation will add \$200,000.

Rotary has been organiza-

ting programs against polio since the late 1970s and the disease has been eradicated in 99.9 per cent of the world.

"There's only two cases in the whole world, one in Afghanistan and one in Pakistan. We've never been that low," Rotary Club district governor Frank Adamson said in an interview.

"We've got to be free for three years after that to be declared polio-free and then nobody else needs to get a polio shot anywhere in the world."

With all the work Rotary has done vaccinating people around the world it should come as no surprise that Adamson and the Platers encouraged people to get the COVID-19 vaccination.

"The information is out there and the technology is not new with these mRNA vaccines. It's been around for 10 years," Plater said.

The mRNA vaccines were originally developed a decade ago to combat diseases such as SARS and rabies.

"We were ready to use

them, we just needed to fill in the blanks," he said.

In fact, Rotary Club members have been instrumental in delivering COVID-19 vaccines in other countries, Adamson said.

"It's just another vaccination and we've been doing this since 1985. We've got lots of people on the ground," he said.

Rotary is also helping pay for transportation and storage, he said.

One tenacious Rotarian on the scene was John Maurice, former president of the Fort Erie chapter.

He was out on the 30-kilometre ride when things went wrong.

"I wiped out," Maurice laughed.

"I was watching for traffic because we were riding with traffic and all of a sudden I went up on the sidewalk and, lo and behold, there was a post there."

Maurice was a little bloodied but finished the ride in true Rotarian fashion.

"We're survivors," he said.



Thank You!



The Heritage Trail Committee would like to thank all of the amazing individuals and organizations who have made the completion of Phase 1 of the Upper Canada Heritage Trail rehabilitation possible.

A plaque has been installed at the King Street entrance of the trail, to thank and celebrate our first 100 "Trail Blazers." Future plaques will be erected throughout the trail to mark the completion of each phase and to celebrate all of our generous donors.

For more information about the rehabilitation project, its progress, and how you can become a "Trail Blazer," please visit [www.heritagetrail.ca](http://www.heritagetrail.ca).



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Resident parking permits and dog licenses are now available for purchase/pick-up from Town Hall, at 1593 Four Mile Creek Road, Virgil, and the Niagara-on-the-Lake Community Centre, at 14 Anderson Lane, Niagara-on-the-Lake.

Please note: Town Administrative buildings are currently closed to the public. Town Staff is available to serve you online, over the phone, and by appointment between 8:30 a.m. and 4:30 p.m., Monday to Friday, excluding statutory holidays.

Please fill out the appropriate application form from the Town website ([www.notl.com](http://www.notl.com)) and deposit the completed form, along with your payment, in the drop box at Town Hall or mail it to 1593 Four Mile Creek Road, PO Box 100, Virgil, ON L0S 1T0. You will be called when your permit and/or license is ready for pick up.

\*NEW: Dog licenses can also be obtained through an online application and payment process at [www.notl.com/content/dog-licenses](http://www.notl.com/content/dog-licenses).

### Resident Parking Permits

Parking Permits are available exclusively to residents of the Town of Niagara-on-the-Lake and entitle the holder to one hour of free parking at any parking machine in the Heritage District. Please note a valid piece of identification must be shown as proof of address in order to obtain a permit. Permits are only valid for the vehicle identified by licence plate number shown on the face of the permit and are non-transferable.

Permits issued are valid from January 1 to December 31 of any given year. Residents must therefore renew the permit each year.

The current resident parking permit fee is \$20.00. This fee is subject to change effective January 1, 2022.

### Dog Licenses

All dogs must be licensed by January 1, 2022. If you purchase a dog license before December 24, 2021, you will receive a \$10 discount off the annual licensing fee. Save an additional \$10 by providing proof that your dog has been spayed or neutered. You must provide proof of current rabies vaccination at the time of purchase to obtain a license.

The current annual licensing fee is \$22.00 for an altered dog or \$32.00 for an unaltered dog. These fees are subject to change effective January 1, 2022.

# Sign bylaw violates rights, lawyer says

Continued from Front Page

ple when it was erected by a Virgil man this summer – the bylaw declares that such lawn signs are verboten.

It is rarely enforced, though apparently it was when Rudi Koller put up his “traditional marriage” placard. But enforcement is a whole other can of worms.

Ultimately, it doesn’t matter what the bylaw, the town or the mayor says because the Supreme Court of Canada has decreed that “municipalities have a very, very limited jurisdiction under the Charter to deal with them,” Fritz said in an interview.

“The reality is, the Supreme Court of Canada has been very clear, twice, decades ago, that freedom of expression in a free and democratic society, includes your ability to put up protest signs,” the Queenston resident said.

So, even if a bylaw officer or other town official tries to enforce the NOTL statute against people’s ground or other signs it doesn’t matter – the country’s top court has already spoken on the issue, Fritz contends.

Another crucial factor is the text of the bylaw itself.

The preamble to the law, Section 1.01, “Purpose and Scope,” states the statute is designed to “recognize the commercial communication requirements of all sectors of the business community, while preserving the unique character of the town, its scenic characteristics and preventing distraction to motorists.”

All laudable and necessary, said Fritz, but none of that pertains to residents’ non-commercial signs on private or public property.

Furthermore, in Section 1.02, the “Scope” of the bylaw clearly states it does not regulate “the copy or message of signs.”

“It’s very clear that it’s commercial signs they are concerned about, and it’s form, and not content,” Fritz said.

So, short of crossing into the area of criminal harassment or hate speech, it really doesn’t matter what people put on their signs, or how many there are, Fritz said.



A sign for a CAA campaign to slow down is illegal per the town's sign bylaw. FILE PHOTO

That means, based on the Supreme Court’s rulings, and the bylaw’s own wording, if the town enforces an unenforceable bylaw and, say, confiscates someone’s signs, or issues a ticket for violating the bylaw, “there are theoretically legal actions that the town is opening itself up to,” he said.

Two high-profile Ontario municipal law experts contacted by The Lake Report for their assessment refused to comment because they either have matters before the Town of NOTL or other conflicts on the issue.

Perhaps not surprisingly, the municipality has a different view on the whole affair than Fritz and notes that its bylaw does not ban protest signs, specifically.

Staff, who sought legal advice on the matter, told Lord Mayor Betty Disero the statute is “consistent with the purpose of sign bylaws in other jurisdictions – to ensure public safety, to avoid confusion, to preserve the aesthetic of certain areas and to avoid creating a blight on the landscape.”

While acknowledging the bylaw is meant to help businesses communicate, they also said “the application of municipal sign bylaw restrictions to residential property does not appear to have been thoroughly tested by the courts,” adding that NOTL’s bylaw is “likely” to stand up to a court challenge.

Fritz contends the Supreme Court’s rulings are clear.

Disero feels sign bylaws serve an important purpose

and one of her concerns is the potential for “a lot of clutter” in neighbourhoods.

“When or if you have a number of signs on each property, after a while people become numb to them and stop connecting with the message or stop reading them,” she told The Lake Report.

“It becomes a barrage of colours with some kind of printing.”

“If you follow that through, over time people will want to make the signs bigger and bigger to get attention and what does that do to the way our town is seen?”

“We may not see an immediate difference if there was no sign bylaw, but we have to look long term,” Disero said.

She also worries “we would be destroying some of the beautiful views of front yards if we allowed everyone to fill their yards with signs.”

Fritz argues none of that matters, legally.

It also doesn’t matter whether you put your sign on your own property or public land, he said. You’re free to do so, though the government can remove your sign from public property – but can’t charge you under the sign bylaw because you have a constitutional right to erect a sign, he said.

Sign bylaws have been around for eons and “I suspect that the town bylaw is simply a copy” of wording from one drafted by some other municipality, Fritz said.

“They copy them from municipalities that have the financial wherewithal and the legal firepower to spend the time drafting. Drafting is a hellish exercise. And I doubt there is much originality in the sign bylaw.”

He also said he doesn’t believe there is any intent on the part of the mayor or town staff to mislead the public into following the bylaw. “But the problem is she IS misleading the public, but she is doing it innocently.”

The bylaw “goes on for pages and pages. But when you boil it all down, you’re dealing with commercial and business signs,” Fritz said.

“And, yes, you can point to this section or that subsection at a generalized level. But when you pull back and look at the Purpose section,” it’s obvious the statute is not meant to deal with personal signs.

“The Purpose and the Scope sections make it very clear that what they’re trying to do is to operate within the constraints of the Supreme Court of Canada decisions.”

And in the end, the argument “but it’s in the bylaw” doesn’t wash, Fritz said, “because the Supreme Court has made it very clear that you cannot legislate in this fashion.”

You can read the full 2012 NOTL sign bylaw at [notl.com/content/laws](http://notl.com/content/laws), along with amendments that were made in 2018 and 2019.

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The Local Journalism Initiative is funded by the Government of Canada.

## COVID Tracker

**NOTL active cases:** 5  
**Region active cases:** 230  
**Region deaths:** 434  
**Region total cases:** 17,734  
**Region resolved cases:** 17,070

\*Oct. 6 data per Niagara Region Public Health



### Contributed by Patty Garriock

"Just try new things. Don't be afraid. Step out of your comfort zones and soar."

- Michelle Obama.

### HOW TO GET IN TOUCH

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### Have a lead on a story?

Call 905.359.2270 or send an email to editor@niagaranow.com



## HEY NOTL! WHAT DO YOU WANT FOR DINNER?

<- Italian Pizza Pasta or Spanish Tapas ->

NAPLES-ON-THE-LAKE OR CATALONIA-ON-THE-LAKE

## Editorial

### Guess who **shouldn't** be coming to dinner?

Richard Harley  
Editor-In-Chief

We all have much to be thankful for again this year.

And, thankfully, vaccines have brought us closer to defeating COVID-19.

Last week Niagara's top medical doctor didn't mince words when talking about the risk of spreading COVID at Thanksgiving gatherings.

He was clear: Do not invite unvaccinated people to visit this weekend. Period.

And we have to agree with the doctor on this one — just don't do it.

The thing is, though, it's not so much about the

people hosting the events (unless they're also unvaccinated).

Really, it's more about the personal choices we should be making to protect others. In other words, it's the unvaccinated people who should really be voluntarily staying home.

If you're not vaccinated yet, for whatever reason, you're a risk to the people around you. And to yourself. You've made your choice, but please have the consideration to not inflict your choices on others.

Being family doesn't change that or excuse you from your obligation to do the right thing — if anything, we should be putting

a higher priority on protecting the people we love.

So, if you're not vaccinated, make things easy this year by declining any invitations you might receive.

And yes, at the same time, those of us who are responsibly hosting people should not invite their unvaccinated friends or family.

Irresponsible people will still gather, flout the recommendations and surmise that they somehow know more about viruses than medical experts.

They will still strut maskless into other people's homes, unconcerned about the very real risk of spreading COVID.

That's why it's now up to the responsible people to make the call for them.

Your uncle doesn't like that and thinks you're a sheep? Who cares.

Your daughter's boyfriend, whose family has disregarded COVID since the get-go, isn't happy? You're not missing out on much.

We are all being asked to make tough sacrifices. And while we may love our families unconditionally, this year, we have to be firm and draw the line to protect ourselves from a deadly virus, and protect our communities and economy from yet another lockdown.

*editor@niagaranow.com*

### Rental operators need to be good neighbours

Dear editor:

I continue to read about the outstanding issues regarding short-term rentals.

As we live in a tourism destination, I have no issue with anyone setting up a B&B or Airbnb as a full-time or part-time business.

What I do expect is that our municipal government set policies to ensure the safety and privacy of the community and, most importantly, the neighbours.

I'm told that the town has a good neighbour policy as it pertains to short-term

rentals. It would appear this is more to do with protecting the town than the neighbour.

Short-term rentals should only be approved if the privacy and security of the neighbourhood is protected.

If a privacy fence or any

other condition must be met before approval, it should be the obligation of the renter to satisfy the conditions of licence before approved.

That is being a good neighbour!

**Glenn Young**  
NOTL

### A rental room is a rental room and **should be taxed**

Dear editor:

The excellent, well-balanced articles on short-term rentals by editor-in-chief Richard Harley and the first of three articles in response by John Foreman, president of and chief lobbyist for the NOTL B&B Association, prompted me to revisit an article I wrote for this paper on Aug. 20, 2020 ("Short-term rentals: Residences without residents").

While in that article I supported B&B operators because they lived in their B&Bs and were an important part of the community, I said short-term rentals the likes of rental cottages and villas don't fit and they tend to "hollow out communities."

I added that they are commercial units operating in residential areas ... and the people who rent these are not neighbours and

have no vested interest in the community.

I still believe that we need to protect our community, to have it more than just a tourist town.

Lower-priced homes have been converted to rental cottages, leaving few options for the next generation of homeowners in NOTL for an affordable home ownership option. But trying to "turn the clock back" is probably futile and we should look to the future and set guidelines for the short-term cottage rental industry.

Perhaps the discussion around short-term rentals has helped to stem the flow of their growth. And perhaps those who are considering "getting into the business" are having second thoughts knowing that there is not broad community support for further growth, particularly for cottage rent-

als. Or maybe it is purely the result of COVID.

Total short-term rental units are down 23 per cent from last year while B&Bs, now totaling 95 units, are down 33 per cent. Cottage rentals and villas, now total 146 units, down 15 per cent. Of concern, they now represent 60 per cent of rental units, versus just over 50 per cent last year. Hopefully this number of units will continue to decline.

And perhaps the best way to limit future growth of cottage rentals and villas is to restrict the number on any one street or area. Concentration in Old Town is significant: There are 12 cottage rentals on Victoria Street (plus six B&Bs), eight each on King, Mary and Shakespeare, six on Gate, four on Johnson and three on Circle.

Having said the above,

as commercial operations offering accommodations, a rental room is a rental room is a rental room.

All short-term operations should be taxed as a commercial business. And if the objective of the accommodation tax is to raise money to support tourist facilities and services, all tourists should contribute to that cause. Fair is fair!

For the industry to say that tourists will not tolerate any increase in accommodation costs is a specious argument given the consistency of yearly or biyearly increases in rental room prices by the industry.

Hopefully council will eventually establish meaningful guidelines for the short-term rental industry and have it contribute its fair share of revenue for the town.

**Bill Garriock**  
NOTL





## OPINION



# Legal rentals responsible for few problems

John Foreman  
Special to The Lake Report

One concern people have about short-term rentals is that they can be bad neighbours. We have all heard of party houses and cases of excessive noise, too many cars and poorly maintained properties.

To determine the size of the problem, the town's short-term rental (comprised of councilors, citizens and tourism industry representatives) looked at the town's records for noise complaints going back several years.

The data showed noise complaints were relatively rare and generally focused on a few specific repeat offenders. I am not downplaying the seriousness of this situation for those who live near a party house, but I am suggesting that we are best to deal with the few bad apples rather than punishing all short-term rentals.

Historically, the town has not been able to deal with these situations effectively, as bylaw officers generally were not on duty when the parties were taking place and police responded to only the most extreme cases. Using the services of Granicus Host Compliance, along with updates to the short-term rental bylaw, have provided a new tool for dealing with these situations.

The bylaw requires that a local contact be available to respond to property issues, regardless of the time of day. Failure results in a fine. Thus, when there is a noise complaint on a Saturday night, it can be dealt with.

The town has also introduced a Renter's Code of Conduct, which property owners are required to pro-



A large pile of garbage bags, but no recycling, outside the Campbell Scott house after a weekend rental. SUPPLIED

vide to renters, educating them on the terms of rental and the consequences of bad behaviour. I believe that these steps go a long way toward reducing the rare incidents of short-term rentals being bad neighbours.

These remedies, however, only work for licensed properties. For unlicensed properties there is no one to call. I suspect that the majority of complaints concern unlicensed cottage rentals, since most licensed properties are owned and managed by responsible citizens who care about our town.

The number of unlicensed cottage rentals in NOTL is not known precisely but is estimated to be comparable to the number of licensed cottage rentals. Fortunately, the town is now cracking down on unlicensed properties, with the result that they either become licensed or cease operation. I believe that last month 12 properties were fined for operating without a licence. The end results remain to be seen, but I am optimistic.

Another concern that is raised re: short-term rentals is that they hollow out neighbourhoods and cause overall property prices to climb beyond the reach of ordinary families. I think such statements reflect a few very specific situations rather than the broader state of affairs.

According to the 2016 census, there were 7,964 private dwellings in NOTL (and likely more now). Currently, there are 255 licensed short-term rentals in NOTL.

About 150 of these are (owner-occupied) B&Bs and 105 are cottages and vacation rentals. Thus, licensed unhosted short-term rentals account for just over one per cent of the private residences in NOTL. By comparison, the 2016 census also indicated 875 homes (over 10 per cent of the total) were not principal residences (i.e., primarily vacation homes). I believe that, in most cases, empty vacation homes contribute more to hollowing out than rentals do.

I am not downplaying the situation of those who live on a street with an over-abundance of cottage rentals. I am just suggesting that this does not seem like a NOTL-wide problem and that focused solutions should be sought, rather than the elimination of all short-term rentals, as some have called for.

Similarly, I am not convinced short-term rentals are the main factor driving NOTL's high real estate prices. If unhosted short-term rentals account for just over one per cent of properties, they assumably account for a similar percentage of

real estate transactions each year. It would seem unlikely that this small percentage drives the price of the market overall.

NOTL is a popular place to live (and rightfully so), with a limited number of houses, especially in the Old Town. There will always be strong demand (from more than just prospective short-term rental owners) and prices will always be higher than the surrounding area. It is unlikely that eliminating short-term rentals would produce more than a temporary blip in NOTL's ever-rising house prices.

Some citizens have legitimate concerns about short-term rentals in their neighbourhood. Some concerns, such as noise complaints, are being addressed more effectively now than ever before. Other concerns, such as the number of rentals in a neighbourhood, are not NOTL-wide issues and should be dealt with by more focused solutions.

Short-term rentals have a long history in NOTL and play an important role in the tourism ecosystem. It is no coincidence that so many representatives of the tourism industry have spoken out in support of rentals. Calls for the elimination of short-term rentals are excessive and unnecessary.

With the exception of a few bad apples, rental owners are overwhelmingly good citizens with the best interests of the community at heart.

Further, rental owners have shown they are committed to working with the town to address concerns. Progress has already been made, with more to come.

*John Foreman is president of the NOTL B&B Association.*

## Use \$250,000 gateway donation on more needy projects

The following is a letter to members of town council. A copy was submitted to The Lake Report for publication.

We are becoming convinced that a majority of council are not prudent money managers.

With the revised heritage district gateway plan, you have just approved another

project that is not needed. What a waste of funds.

Gerald Kowalchuk's generous offer of \$250,000 to fund the new gateway should be redirected to a project that would be more useful for the community.

The museum would be a very good one. His name could be attached to it in

some way.

If Mr. Kowalchuk is not receptive to this or some other project that is actually needed, such as those outlined in the August 2020 Herrington report on making town facilities fully accessible, then move on.

All you have to say is "No

thank you."

If you add two more displays at adjoining corners, this creates more maintenance costs for the town.

How much staff time has already been tied up on something that is not needed and now will continue?

*Sue and Kip Vooge  
NOTL*



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## OPINION

# Cleanup efforts admirable, but stop using harmful products

Dear editor:

While I admire all efforts toward cleaning up our local environment, we are fighting a losing battle.

My family and I clean up the Lake Ontario shoreline and woods around NOTL every day of the year.

I am a die-hard environmentalist and I am becoming disheartened.

We absolutely must stop buying the harmful products we do and stop this problem at the source now. We need to take personal responsibility as well as urge our government to

ban many products that have not existed in other countries for decades.

Please research how little consumer packaging waste is actually recycled and or reused. I guarantee you will be shocked. Recycling is not enough and should not be regarded as

a feel-good option.

Items we can stop buying or using now include: Plastic bags (your bananas don't need an extra layer), bottled water (our tap water is pristine), balloons (I collect an average of five large foil balloons per week, some wrapped

around the wildlife they have killed), and tampons with plastic applicators. I have picked up thousands of these on our beaches at the risk of my own health.

Start with this list. Tell all your friends.

**Beth Macdonald**  
Chautauqua



## Why does DSBN winter break start on Dec. 24, when other boards don't?

Dear editor:

Looking ahead at the school calendar issued by the District School Board of Niagara, I learned the winter break begins on Dec. 24 – Christmas Eve – this year. Final class is on Dec. 23.

Do your readers, many of whom are parents/grandparents, realize this? I was quite surprised when I saw this. Really, Christmas Eve?

Then I went to the Ontario

Ministry of Education and checked its calendar. It says the last day of school is Dec. 17, with classes resuming on Jan. 3, 2022.

Not understanding why the DSBN is different by a week, I addressed this situation with the principal at my children's school. I was told the DSBN sets its dates, then gets approval from the ministry.

Still not having a reason why there was a difference,

I took the time to check 15-plus other school boards across Ontario. None of them have the same dates as the DSBN, with break starting Dec. 24 and classes resuming Jan. 10, 2022.

At Christmastime last year, not visiting family and friends was a disappointment to many of us. This year, fingers crossed, we are optimistic that visiting will be available and allowed.

Not having the same dates for winter/Christmas break, will change this.

I empathize with the elementary teachers who will have classrooms full of excited students, trying to keep them focused when Christmas is two or three days away.

For high school students, returning on Jan. 10 reduces the time for exam review by one week compared to

students at all other high schools. Saying the students can do exam review in December during the extra week – a month earlier – doesn't cut it.

This schedule isn't equitable or inclusive, terms the DSBN uses often.

Parents and grandparents should immediately contact their DSBN superintendent and the minister of education to voice their concerns

if they are unhappy with the DSBN's choice for our break/holiday time.

The last 18 months have been challenging for all of us on many levels. Why are we now going into the winter/Christmas break with added challenges and stress instead of looking forward to a time of connecting with family and friends?

**Kim Wideman**  
NOTL



**Happy Thanksgiving Friends!**  
The Boss has worked a number of pies, a crisp and a cake into this weekend's offerings and, as always, warmed up homestyle so you can tell your family "Hey I did this myself" ... (our little secret) ...  
For each week's offerings & more send your email address to: sweetsandswirlscafe@gmail.com



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**SCAN TO DONATE**

## Tickets selling quickly for NOTL Rotary Club's 'Enchanted Wonderland' and holiday house tour

Staff  
The Lake Report

Niagara-on-the-Lake's "enchanted wonderland" and Rotary Holiday House Tour are back – and tickets are selling quickly.

If you like interior design, architecture and seasonal decorations, on Dec. 3 and 4 you will be able to tour seven "gorgeous, professionally decorated homes, visit local historic and cultural sites, sample complimentary tastings from featured wineries and enjoy specially priced luncheons," the NOTL Rotary Club says.

Besides the magnificent seven homes on the general tour, the McArthur family is again showcasing their John Street estate for the "McArthur Enchanted Wonderland" evening tour.

The McArthur tour has a separate ticket and includes access to the grounds and the first floor of the home, exquisitely decorated for the holiday season, with seasonal lights, live music, sparkling wine or cider,



The McArthur Estate will again be open to visitors during the NOTL Rotary Club's "Enchanted Wonderland" evening tour on Dec. 3 and 4. FILE PHOTO

cookies, Santa and his elves, the Canine Manor, the reindeer stables and more, Rotary organizers said.

In July, the club decided to take a leap of faith and launch the annual Holiday House Tour despite the uncertainty of COVID. For both events, all current COVID protocols will be

enforced, including proof of double vaccination.

The daytime house tour usually includes a half-dozen homes, but one more has been added this year. Organizers hope that, with reduced ticket sales and extended hours, this will help to spread out the crowds and keep people safely apart.

The general day tour is 9:30 a.m. to 5 p.m. on Friday, Dec. 3 and Saturday, Dec. 4. Early-bird tickets are \$35 (\$40 after Nov. 17).

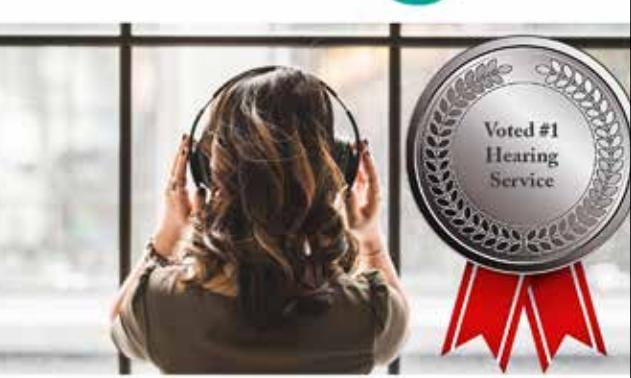
The McArthur Enchanted Wonderland tour is on the evening of the same days, with four 45-minute time slots scheduled from 4:45 to 7:45. Capacity is limited. Adult tickets are \$40, children five to 12 are \$10.

Eventbrite service fees apply to all tickets.

Tickets are only sold online, at [niagaraonthelake rotary.ca/page/holiday-house-tour](http://niagaraonthelake rotary.ca/page/holiday-house-tour).

Rotary has secured a number of sponsors for this year's tour, including: Platinum sponsor Peller Estates; gold sponsors: the Shaw Festival, Goettler Family Foundation, Niagara-on-the-Lake Realty, Bosley Real Estate, Gatta Homes and Richardson Wealth; and silver sponsors: Baird MacGregor, Jani-King, Royal LePage, Enns Cabinetry, Travis Cairns – Desjardins Insurance, DF Design Build and Maureen Kaufman.

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Cottage Street NOTL  
King Street NOTL  
Calaguirio Drive NIAGARA FALLS  
Blackbird Street NOTL  
Wanda Road ST. CATHARINES

SOLD  
BOUGHT  
BOUGHT  
SOLD  
BOUGHT  
BOUGHT  
SOLD  
BOUGHT  
BOUGHT  
SOLD  
SOLD

Yates Street ST. CATHARINES  
Blackbird Street NOTL  
Colonel Cohoe NOTL  
Perez Road NOTL  
Confederation Drive NOTL  
Pafford Street NOTL  
Ricardo Street VIRGIL  
Colonel Butler NOTL  
Ann Marie Drive NOTL  
Loretta Drive VIRGIL  
Rose Glen. VIRGIL

SOLD  
BOUGHT  
SOLD & BOUGHT  
BOUGHT  
BOUGHT  
SOLD  
BOUGHT  
BOUGHT  
BOUGHT  
BOUGHT

Dixie Avenue NOTL  
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Main Street PORT COLBOURNE  
Carlton Street ST. CATHARINES  
Carlton Street ST. CATHARINES  
Lincoln Road CRYSTAL BEACH  
Simcoe Street NOTL  
Simcoe Street NOTL  
Chantler Road FONTHILL  
Niagara Parkway NOTL  
Lena Court ST. CATHARINES

SOLD  
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# Queenston opens doors for visitors to explore village

Kevin MacLean  
The Lake Report

Queenston is opening the doors to several of its historic community buildings and attractions, encouraging everyone to come out and explore the village.

"Explore Queenston" is a one-day Open Doors tour from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. on Saturday, Oct. 16.

RiverBrink Art Museum, Willowbank Estate and the Willowbank Studio have partnered with the Queenston Residents Association to launch this first formal tour of some of the village's historic buildings and exhibits.

Admission is by donation at each site. Guests are asked to donate a few dollars to each place they visit.

All participants are expected to follow provincial COVID-19 public health guidelines, so masks will be required. But organizers said none of the Explore Queenston locations require proof of vaccination, based on provincial guidelines.

Spokesperson Brianne Hawley said they hope to showcase all that Queenston has to offer in arts, culture, heritage, history and community. And they plan to make this an annual event.

The residents association also will be hosting its bi-annual Village of Queenston yard sale. Treasures from all over the village will be available to purchase. The participating organizations include:

**Riverbrink Art Museum**, 116 Queenston St., www.riverbrink.org: RiverBrink is at the northern edge of Queenston, adjacent to the Niagara



Visiting Brock's Monument, from left, Don Cruikshank (with Lala), Paul Jacot, Larry Mantle, Dow Wright and Ken Porter during a hike last winter. KEVIN MACLEAN

Parkway. Open to the public year-round, the art museum presents exhibitions of historical and contemporary art. Current exhibitions include "Power," an audio and video installation by artist Elizabeth Chitty, with supporting exhibitions organized from the permanent collection. During Explore Queenston, RiverBrink will

hold a fundraising sale of donated treasures to support exhibitions and programming scheduled gallery tours, and an en plein air painting workshop led by Pete Malaguti. Light refreshments will be available for purchase.

**Willowbank Estate**, 14487 Niagara Parkway, The School of Restoration Arts

at Willowbank, willowbank.ca: Willowbank Estate (1834) is a national historic site and home to the School of Restoration Arts. Its three-year diploma program in heritage conservation teaches students both theory and hands-on skills and is the only program of its kind in Canada. Visitors can walk around the house,

grounds and woodshop, and chat with students and staff. Some of the students will be working on projects, demonstrating different techniques, or selling their work. As well, 124 on Queen Hotel and Treadwell restaurant will be on site to promote Willowbank Estate events and rental opportunities.

**Willowbank Studio**, 5 Walnut St., studio entrance on Princess Street, Willowbank Lower Campus (formerly Laura Secord School), sharonokun.com, adammarkovic.com: Visual artists Sharon Okun and Adam Markovic recently launched the Willowbank Studio in the upper floor of the former Laura Secord School. It was profiled in The Lake Report in July. The artists met while studying painting in Florence, Italy, and in 2012 they brought their knowledge and appreciation of art and history back to Canada where they continue their careers as artists, painting for exhibitions and teaching painting and materials workshops. Visitors can view their private studio space to see work in progress and a demonstration of how oil paint is made.

**Brock's Monument**, national historic site, 14184 Niagara River Parkway, friendsoffortgeorge.ca/brocks-monument: This event is noon to 2 p.m. only: The Friends of Fort George will be in front of Brock's Monument with a small educational display and gift shop set up. They also will be offering featured talks at noon and 2 p.m. Starting from the base of Brock's Monument, visitors can join costumed staff for a talk about the

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# Warren

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# Museum asks town for \$700,000 to help secure funding for major expansion project

Evan Saunders  
Local Journalism Initiative  
The Lake Report

The Niagara-on-the-Lake Museum is looking to expand but first needs financial assistance from the town, curator Sarah Kaufman says.

Kaufman asked the audit and finance committee for a \$700,000 donation over four years last week. The committee approved the request in principle but sent it to staff for review to determine how much the town can afford to donate.

The museum owns the land behind Memorial Hall and plans on putting a new building there that's roughly the same size as Memorial Hall, the current main building of the museum.

The museum has its eyes set on a federal grant to help with construction.

The Canada Cultural Spaces Fund would cover 50 per cent of the building's costs, should the museum receive it.

Estimates for the project are around \$10 million. Through its own fundraising program, the museum has already raised nearly \$800,000, Kaufman said.

But it needs \$1.7 million, or 17 per cent of the project cost committed in order to apply, she said.

Kaufman approached town council on Sept. 20 asking for financial assistance in order to make the grant happen.

"The town's commitment could help us solidify support from the federal government," she said.

Coun. Gary Burroughs agreed.



NOTL Museum director Sarah Kaufman stands by the many unique gift items for sale in the museum. EVAN SAUNDERS

"For all the organizations within our community, showing support by the town is critical for them to go out and get support from both the provincial and federal government," Burroughs said.

"You've done some unbelievable things throughout COVID and I believe that we need to show our support in order for you to go and get other grants."

Kaufman said the \$700,000 figure is tied to the museum's large collection of municipal documents and the space being revamped and redeveloped to hold more.

And the museum is inundated with town documents.

"Over 50 per cent of our collection is municipal documents," Kaufman said in an interview.

It has more than 30,000 documents ranging throughout the town's history and Kaufman said more are on the way.

The museum administers research requests relating to all town documents and

plans on digitizing all the documents in the future.

With the physical expansion also comes the expansion of exhibit and research opportunities.

"(The new building) will have a temporary exhibit gallery, a multi-purpose room that is essentially a community space where we could do different programming — kids programming, seniors programming and any community groups could rent out the space as well," Kaufman told The Lake Report.

The museum already does 80 programs a year but is limited due to space constraints. More rooms means more events and exhibits can happen simultaneously.

Kaufman said there would be a focus on children's programs such as events over March break, on PD days and after-school programs.

"The bottom floor will have collections storage, more collection storage because we've been collecting since 1896," she said with a laugh.

Renovations will also be made to the facility's existing buildings to make them more accessible by installing elevators. A dedicated research room will also be created, Kaufman said.

Kaufman said the museum wants to become the definitive location for interacting with NOTL's history.

"No matter where anyone lives in Niagara-on-the-Lake, we cover the history, in all the villages," she said.

"The one thing that unites all of Niagara-on-the-Lake is that love of heritage and heritage preservation. We see this transformation as helping to solidify our position as the heritage centre for the community."

The expansion would also allow the museum to have more representations of Black and Indigenous people's history in its exhibits, Kaufman said.

"We really want to become that destination museum that all residents are proud of. This is their museum."

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Last issue: I'm an invention that lets you see through walls. What am I?

Answer: A window

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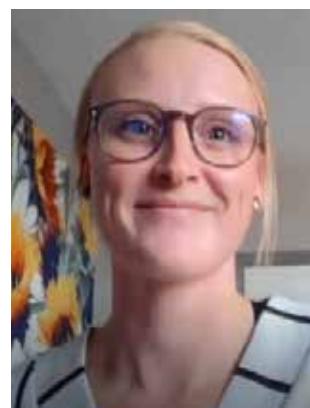


Proud winners of NOTL's Choice Awards 2020

# Niagara needs to **preserve** wildlife habitats, experts say



Kyra Simone  
Special to The Lake Report



Left: Master's student Brooke Kapeller presents her research. Right: Ellen Savoia, Corey Burant and Ryan Plummer discuss stewardship in Niagara Parks. SUPPLIED



Niagara is home to large areas of sensitive wildlife habitat and it is crucial that community members and governments ensure their preservation, a panel of experts told an online discussion.

In the first seminar in a series by Brock University and the Niagara Parks Commission, senior manager of environmental planning Ellen Savoia described environmental stewardship as "an honour and tremendous responsibility. We have some of the most significant and precious lands along the southern Ontario border."

"We have a responsibility because of these unique habitats – to restore them and be stewards of them."

Corey Burant, project manager of forest health explained, "Niagara Parks has one of the highest concentrations of species at risk: plants, animals, rare habitat types."

His work focuses not only on protecting these species, but also enhancing their populations.

He mentioned a favourite project where Niagara Parks anchored trees into water along the Niagara River shoreline. This gave a second life to Christmas trees and ash killed by emerald ash borer, and provided crucial fish habitat.

Throughout the session, engaged audience members

asked questions of panelists. "These examples are so inspiring!" one attendee said.

Brock master's student Brooke Kapeller also presented her research, in which she identified environmental projects in Niagara and assessed public perspectives through surveys.

Kapeller noted the public is "very keen to engage in stewardship work" and recommended that funding for these initiatives be expanded to include monitoring and evaluation.

When it comes to development, Burant explained that Niagara Parks strikes a delicate balance and prioritizes sustainable tourism

and visitor services, which then raise funds for habitat preservation.

For example, "We have a golf course, but it's an Audubon-certified course that doesn't use pesticides and supports wildlife," said Burant.

Niagara Parks leads by example to show other businesses and organizations, "You can make money and still be good stewards. They're not necessarily opposed to each other," said Savoia.

The agency also uses some fascinating methods to keep ecosystems healthy. Burant described the process of prescribed burns, where fires are

intentionally set to blacken the surface of grasslands, so sunlight heats up the ground more rapidly. Native species thrive, but this keeps invasive species at bay.

From a planning perspective, Savoia said, "Climate change is at the centre of a lot of what we're thinking about right now, and it's shaping how we're planning for the future."

She said the parks commission is working on a climate adaptation plan with Brock University.

Operationally, climate change considerations involve changing winter maintenance requirements, changing ability for native species to thrive or invasive species to dominate, and more frequent storm events.

"These are all things that come into our planning," she said.

Brock professor Dr. Ryan Plummer, who moderated the panel, agreed. "If the pandemic has taught us anything, it's to expect the unexpected."

Plummer studies the human-environment relationship and was acknowledged as one of the world's most influential researchers in 2017.

When thinking about the future of environmental stewardship in Niagara, Savoia looks forward to learning from Indigenous traditional knowledge.

"Building better relationships with Indigenous partners, especially around caring for the land. That's a whole vast area of understanding, seeing the world differently. I think that's the future for us at Niagara Parks."

The next seminar in the series is Oct. 28 at 7 p.m. Participants can register for free on the Brock University or Niagara Parks websites.

Burant hopes sessions will help people gain a greater appreciation for the unique habitats in Niagara, and the passion and innovation involved in keeping them healthy.

"It's there to enjoy, but we've got to do it responsibly."

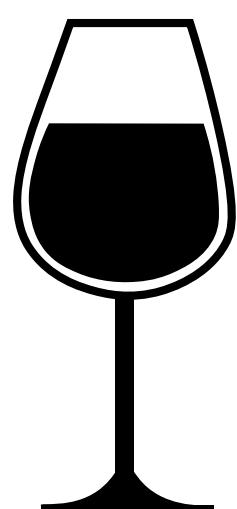
*Kyra Simone is a NOTL-born nature lover with a master's degree in biology. In her spare time, she advocates for sustainable change, picks up garbage, makes recycled jewelry, and transforms furniture bound for the landfill.*

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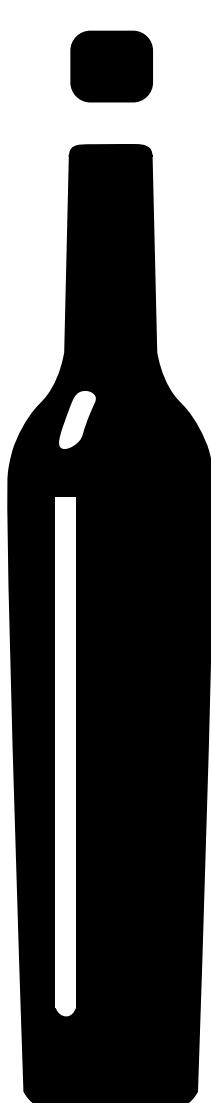
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# 'It's a privilege to do this'

Bridget and her husband Shawn have built their personal and company values around serving the community

Submitted story  
The Lake Report

Bridget and Shawn are United Way supporters and volunteers. Since opening their own small business, they have made it part of their mission to support the community in any way they can. For them, this meant partnering with United Way and sharing their "local love."

"My husband Shawn and I feel our community involvement is a privilege. We get to do this, while so many people can't. When we opened our own business in a small community, one of the first things we did was reach out to United Way. We wanted a partner to help us with the community engagement aspect of our business. Quickly we got involved as volunteers and we haven't looked back.

Some people think you should only contribute to charities once you've made a profit. Shawn and I have a different perspective: We feel that you should give all



Bridget and Shawn get a sense of purpose from partnering with United Way. SUPPLIED

along the way, not wait until you earn your millions, then make a big donation. We hope to do that one day, of course, that would be wonderful and grand. But in the meantime, we do what we can. I believe that if everyone gives a little, it adds up to a lot.

My business and professional connection with United Way goes way back. My first job was at a community centre, which relied on United Way as a major funder. Later, when I started working in government in my twenties, I was tapped on the shoulder by

my director who suggested I volunteer to run the office's giving campaign. They said that it was a great opportunity and would help my career. I did a lot of research to learn the ins and outs of United Way and eventually I became a leadership donor.

On a personal level, I gain a sense of purpose from partnering with United Way because they support local communities and people of all ages across the social spectrum. They have helped people who are near and dear to me, including friends and

family members, those who had dementia, and who have struggled with mental health challenges, unemployment, learning disabilities and addiction.

With the pandemic, United Way partner agencies have had to deal with increased pressure on services, but it has also allowed them to educate people about serious issues. People who are struggling with isolation and depression often can't afford counselling. Going through the list of United Way-funded agencies in this community, so many of them have a mental health component, which often gets overlooked. These programs are more critical than ever.

People may think that United Way is this big thing, but it's very locally focused. It's an umbrella organization, but all the money remains within the local community. There's a simple phrase "local love" that really resonates with me because that's what it's all about."

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## FEATURED

# Dr. Brown: Isolation and shrinking boundaries in the COVID era

Dr. William Brown  
Special to The Lake Report

It wasn't so long ago that some were upset by women wearing the niqab. Now, nearly two years into this pandemic, distancing, social bubbles and face masks have become the norm and the niqab is just another face-covering mask.

We've become comfortable with half-hidden faces in grocery stores, pharmacies, banks and the post office, and along the way, more wary of strangers.

Business towers in Toronto and other big cities are half-empty because most employees now work at home. That's the case with my accountant.

A week ago, when I met him for breakfast, I was his first face-to-face client in a year and a half. His firm's offices from Toronto to Niagara were all but empty and there was little enthusiasm among the company's managers and staff for returning to the office.

The same holds true for the large banks, investment firms and most government services, which greatly expanded their online ser-



vices, while cutting back on face-to-face service during the pandemic.

Throughout my 50-year career practising medicine, I saw all my patients face-to-face. That was until I began to provide consulting services to Thunder Bay and surrounding region and had my first encounter with tele-medicine as the only way to see patients and families in remote areas.

It worked but not nearly as well as in-person get-togethers where it was easier to get a sense of what was going on and, of course, examine the patient. So, helpful, and even lifesaving as tele-medicine can be, medical assessments are much better where

patients and physicians occupy the same physical space.

That applies to a whole range of professional services and personal relationships. After all, we are social animals, where reading the intentions and feelings of others often comes from body language, as much as speech. That's where masks and distancing, however necessary, get in the way in pandemics.

Masks were certainly a problem in this pandemic for severely ill patients in intensive care units, where they were surrounded by staff wearing several layers of head and face gear through which their voices were muffled.

This challenge was compounded by the tragedy that many COVID patients in their last days and hours were unable to touch their family members, or even see them, because of the risks involved and overworked staff.

Just as heart-wrenching were the many patients with moderate to severe cognitive and memory problems in long-term care facilities who struggled to understand what was going on when the staff wore head and face gear.

Confused patients were even more confused when they were isolated in their rooms for several weeks for fear they might become infected or infect others. The cognitive and social costs to those isolated patients were real, lasting and, in retrospect, probably not worth the cost, given that more than 80 per cent of the patients developed COVID anyway, despite isolating them.

There's another challenge in long-term care facilities. In the late stages of most dementia, many patients become incapable of forming and sustaining meaning-

ful relationships with other patients and staff.

In that sense, they become self-isolating, many content to wander corridors or sit in rooms with others with little to say to one another. Here staff and family can help patients connect when they are incapable of doing so themselves.

That's the tragedy of dementia and the miracle of transformative, hands-on personalized care, if only for moments.

On a brighter note, there was a lovely piece written by Anna Russell in the New Yorker magazine on Oct. 4 about how Jane Goodall, now 87, was managing the pandemic.

Goodall is a world-renowned expert on primate behaviour in the wild and a passionate, tireless, mesmerizing advocate for animals, nature writ large and the future. Russell reported that before the pandemic, Goodall travelled 300 days a year to deliver lectures and attend meetings around the globe. However, once the pandemic struck, she settled into her childhood home in Bournemouth accompanied by her sister

Judy, July's daughter and her grandchildren, and an aging "whipper, named Bean."

But if you imagine Goodall retreated from the world, think again. Travel was out, but she continued to travel virtually and maintain a punishing schedule of meetings promoting what she most cares about and along the way, her views expressed in her most recent book, "The Book of Hope: A Survival Guide for Trying Times."

Impressive, but perhaps no surprise, given Goodall's determination and energy. The only hint that fatigue and perhaps age might be catching up with her was Russell's closing observation that Goodall climbed the stairs to her attic bedroom slowly.

Thanks for people like Goodall and the staff at long-term care facilities for doing what they must, in the best possible way, despite a nasty pandemic.

*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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October 7, 2021

NEWS 



Gabe Betton hammers binding holes into a piece of leather hide. The 24-year-old has turned his passion for leather crafting into a small business called Tool & Hide. RICHARD HARLEY PHOTOS



Betton holds one of his first-ever leather creations, a wallet that he hand-dyed and stitched together.



Betton with an unfinished briefcase he's working on. He does custom orders and likes trying new things.

## Leather crafter turns passion into business

Richard Harley  
The Lake Report

Gabe Betton doesn't hide his passion for leather. The 24-year-old, who moved to Niagara-on-the-Lake about a year ago, says it's sort of like wine — there's so many different types of leather, each with its own unique feel and even smell.

Sitting down with Betton at his home workshop, it's clear he's not just a leather maker, but someone who has taken the time to understand his craft. There's a whole wall of different types of leather and his tool bench is packed with items for every aspect of leather crafting.

He got into his craft about two years ago, after ordering a handmade leather watch strap that opened his eyes to the world of leather. Now he runs a small hand-crafted business called Tool and Hide, specializing in custom-made leather items.

It started with a passion for woodworking, he says, and a need for covers for his tools.

"I've always been into knives and tools since a really young age. And then once I started working with wood, I realized I needed a lot more gear to hold my tools," he says.

"I thought, 'Hey, leather-work should be something that I could get into.' I bought my first hide and then it was just game over. From there I just fell into the trap of just getting more and more into it and really fell in love with it," Betton says.

Aside from his tool covers, he says he made a "plethora" of different items with his first hide — things like coasters, belts, valet trays.

He pulls out one of the first pieces he ever made, a wallet that he hand-dyed.

"This is what's sort of referred to as natural vegetable-tanned leather as opposed to basically 95 per cent of the leather you'd see on the market. And it's tanned using tree nuts. So it's really sustainable and then it also produces the most high-quality leather," he says.

After he started getting requests for items, he decided he wanted to start a business to fuel his passion.

"It basically snowballed from there," he says.

Betton sources his leather from around the world, some from Saskatchewan and some from places like Zagreb, Croatia, where distributors sell fine Italian hides.

While his biggest sellers are his smaller, minimalist wallets, he also does custom orders for things like laptop sleeves and guitar straps.

"I'm always happy to do kind of cool one-off custom projects where I can play with it a little bit," he says.

He's trying to make more higher-end bags, too, "because it's a little bit more creative space."

He pulls out a black leather briefcase he's working on, half-finished, and folds it into shape.

He creates all his patterns himself. "They're all drawn by hand and I try and keep it super original, because, honestly, I see so many guys making the same thing all the time. And I just rather have my own brand."

While he's working directly with real leather from a variety of animals — he's got shark leather, horse leather, ostrich leg leather and various other types and grades — he says something a lot of people don't consider is that leather hides are mostly a byproduct of the meat industry.

"Most people assume that cows and horses and all those sorts of animals, buffaloes, that they actually use for the skin, that those are being killed for their skin but it's actually the

complete opposite. Those animals are already dead, essentially, and it's just reusing a part of their body. So I think that's sort of a great thing," he says.

Most of his products are done using a saddle-stitch method instead of machine stitching — a technique he says hasn't changed in "100 years or so."

"Most products you'd find on the market, like probably more than like 98 per cent of stuff is all machine-stitched," he says. "And, to experience something truly handmade, in my opinion, it should be saddle-stitched, and crafted from hide by hand from start to finish."

"I'm basically pulling one thread with two needles from side to side so if a stitch breaks, it's not like the whole thing is coming apart."

He says since starting his work, he has realized just how much time and effort goes into custom leather products.

"It's one of those things where it's truly like wine, even just smelling the different leathers," he says as he takes out his book of leather swatches.

The first one he shows smells strongly, almost like a farm, while the next has almost a sweet, forest smell.

"They all have their own variety, which is kind of a really cool thing to me," he says, naming various leathers from producers like Badalassi Carlo in Italy, or Horween Leather Co.

The cost of different types of leather ranges dramatically, from about \$4.50 per square foot to upward of \$200 per square foot for high-end leather like shell cordovan (often used in high-end shoes).

Each leather has its own unique challenges, depending on the grade, down to the shape of the animal. For example, shark leather is tougher to work with for larger items, since it comes for the most part in the shape of the animal.

For custom orders, he lets customers pick through the different leathers they like best, and says being in Niagara-on-the-Lake with a vibrant wine and food industry, he wants to echo that aspect of town with his different varieties of leather.

"It is such a fine art in my opinion and a quality leather will last generations."

As far as learning his craft, he says it's a combination of research and trial and error. Sites like Reddit are great for finding advanced techniques and YouTube also has some beginner advice.

"And then, just practice. I've wasted quite a bit just learning on pieces that I've kind of messed up or whatever, because it takes a long time just to sort of refine those skills to a point where I feel like it has some value for maybe somebody else," he says.

"Most of the guys have been in the trade for a while, they had grandfathers who were cobblers or bag makers and that sort of thing."

He says he thinks leather crafting is a great way to use products that otherwise could go to waste.

Instead, he can "make this beautiful piece out of it. So it's really cool to me."

Betton says he's hoping to turn his business into a full-time operation and will soon be looking for shops in town to carry his products.

"It was a random thing for me that started and I've been super happy being able to make things for people ever since, because I get to do what I love and it gives them something that they love, too."

*Betton's products can be found online at [www.toolandhide.ca](http://www.toolandhide.ca).*



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## GAMES



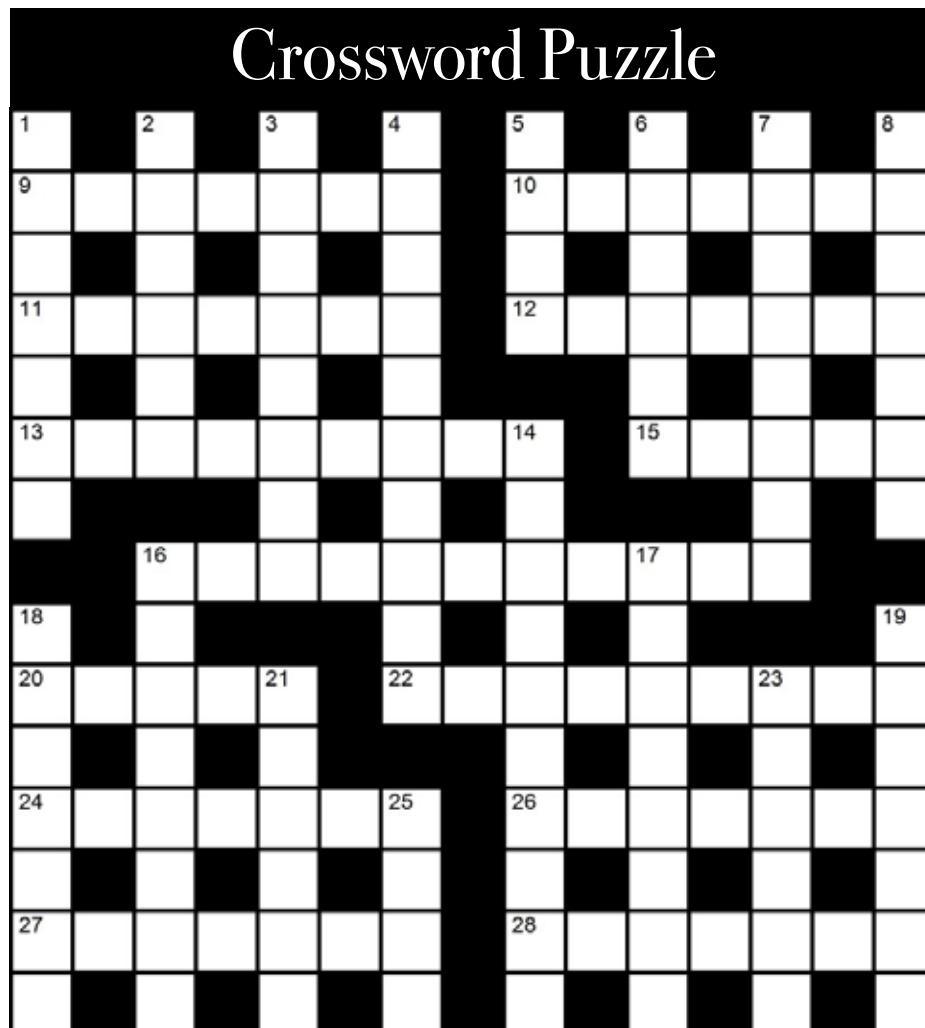
# Have some fun

### Across

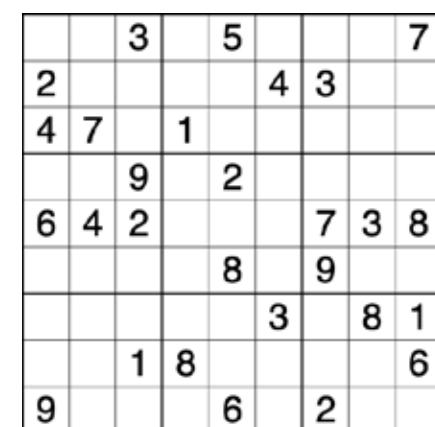
- 9. Hair cleaner (7)
- 10. German measles (7)
- 11. Chatter (7)
- 12. Anxious (7)
- 13. Emphasize (9)
- 15. Astonish (5)
- 16. Decent (11)
- 20. First prime minister of India (5)
- 22. Chinese revolutionary leader (3,3-3)
- 24. Type of chair (7)
- 26. Poorly matched (7)
- 27. Demolish (7)
- 28. Cooking vessel (7)

### Down

- 1. Sterile (7)
- 2. Largest desert (6)
- 3. On an upper floor (8)
- 4. Depression from lack of company (10)
- 5. Make beer or ale (4)
- 6. Spain and Portugal (6)
- 7. Last (8)
- 8. Walked like a duck (7)
- 14. Put out (10)
- 16. Practise (8)
- 17. Wrist band (8)
- 18. Indefinite person (7)
- 19. Fishermen (7)
- 21. Yet to arrive (6)
- 23. Squalid (6)
- 25. Supporting ropes (4)



## Last issue's answers



MEDIUM

## Indigenous leader works with troubled youth to preserve culture

*Continued from Front Page*

resented in Canada's penal system.

Choken said during the smudging ceremony in St. Davids he prayed he'd return to school.

And, late Wednesday, he received word that the boy would be back in school today.

"It could be a coincidence or it could not be a coincidence," Choken said.

At the St. Davids Lions Club, his young helper walked around the entire grounds with a bowl of burning sacred herbs to cleanse the area.

The essential aspect of the smudging ceremony is the collection of four sacred herbs to be burned together in a small bowl. These are usually sage, sweetgrass, cedar and tobacco.

Choken said helping Indigenous youth and men is essential in dealing with the wounds of the past and current traumas that remain from the residential school system.



Anishinaabe Elder Albert Choken. EVAN SAUNDERS

"Native people are going through a hard time right now with the churches and kids being found," he said.

"Today, we take care of our youth and we are trying to fix everything so we can all live as one again. In the beginning we lived as one, we were all given equal gifts."

Choken is no stranger to the troubles that confront Indigenous youth. When he was a child in Manitoba he was taken from his family and forced to attend a residential school, cutting

him off from his culture, language, family and traditions.

"It's hard for me to go home because my family are strangers. I don't really know my brother or my sisters, my aunties and uncles," Choken said.

But people who help him, like his youthful charge, "They're my family here."

Choken had a good reason for staying in Niagara.

"I only stayed around here because I found a woman," Choken laughed. He said he also liked being near Niagara Falls and didn't plan on returning to Manitoba.

Passing spirituality, language and traditions on to younger generations is at the heart of what Indigenous elders do, he said.

But religion is a difficult topic after the suffering Indigenous Peoples in Canada have endured.

"Along the way we found ourselves coming away from religion. Especially today, to believe in God it's really hard through the church because of what they

did, what they did to myself — I know."

Through will and the teachings he was given as a child, Choken was able to retain his connection to Anishinaabe culture. He also thanked his mother.

"I fought all my life to keep my language. Today I can speak it fluently and I think that's because my mother is still alive. I call her all the time, she doesn't speak English. I had no choice, if I wanted to talk with my mother I had to learn the language," Choken said.

In conjunction with the Friends of St. Davids, he and his helpers performed the sacred ritual of smudging meant to cleanse spirits both within and without the individual.

Dorothy Walker and her husband Greg organized the event. The impetus was an unexplainable feeling she was getting in St. Davids, she said.

"I started feeling something and I really didn't know what I was feeling

and I'd never felt it before," Walker said.

She ran into Choken while he was sitting on a park bench at the native centre.

"And I explained to him what I was feeling and through our conversation Albert suggested that he could do a smudging ceremony."

After smoking tobacco out of a sacred pipe and singing a song accompanied by a drum, Choken identified what had been bringing the negative feelings to St. Davids.

"There are a couple of spirits that come forward. One of them is a soldier, he was killed in a war. He's a wandering spirit," he said.

He said the soldier was hungry and wanted to smoke some tobacco.

"Those soldiers liked to smoke," Choken laughed.

He offered the spirit a plate of food with a few cigarettes on the side and sang to help the spirit find peace.

But this was a stubborn soldier.

After his first song the smudge bowl was no longer burning and Choken noted the spirit refused to leave.

So he sang two more while his helpers fanned the burning herbs. Still, the spirit stayed.

Choken instructed his helper to take the plate of food and smokes into a more secluded area so the spirit could dine and smoke in peace. After one more song the elder said he had left.

"We had to do this several times because before the spirits do anything they want to eat and they want to smoke," he said.

Choken spoke about the importance of presenting the spirit with food.

"We live a dual life being physical and spiritual beings — we have a soul. And one day, when you die, your body will leave your soul and you'll be a spirit," he said.

"And if you die suddenly or violently or while you're drunk driving, when you die like that you become lost."



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# Jr. A Predators win home opener in NOTL debut

Kevan Dowd  
Special to The Lake Report

Niagara-on-the-Lake got its first taste of junior hockey in about two years last Friday night and it couldn't have been sweeter for the home team.

The Niagara Predators took on the Streetsville Flyers, skating away with a 5-3 victory in their Greater Metro Jr. A Hockey League home opener at the Meridian Credit Union Arena.

A crowd of about 100 took in the new NOTL team's debut.

On Sunday, on the road versus the St. George Ravens, the team came up short, losing 4-2. They started off slowly and didn't get on the scoreboard till early in the third period.

It was a different story in front of the home crowd Friday. The Predators started off strong, with their first goal coming just five minutes into the game by captain Mario Zitella, with a second 10 minutes later by Alexander Insulander making for an early 2-0 lead at the end of the first.

After a stronger second period, Streetsville's Evan Camara managed an unassisted powerplay goal, closing the gap to a one-goal difference heading into the last 20 minutes.

A rallying start resulted in two goals for Streetsville to take the lead but Zitella



About 100 spectators were on hand Friday night when the Niagara Predators played their first game at the Meridian arena in Virgil. They beat Streetsville 5-3. KEVAN DOWD

responded with his second goal to tie it up at 10:04.

A powerplay marker by Predators' Dante Massi gave them the lead and an empty-netter by Emil Eriksson with just under three minutes left sealed the deal for a Predators' victory.

Predators head coach Andrew Whalen said he was happy with his team's performance, which saw them returning to the ice for the first time in nearly two years when COVID forced the cancellation of the league's 2020-2021 season.

"I thought we started a little bit slow, we had a great first period and got that first goal, and I think as the game went on, we really started to pick it up," said Whalen.

"We got into a little bit of penalty trouble there, with being short on bodies it doesn't help but we killed it off and then we played strong the rest of the way."

The team is playing a bit short-handed, waiting for the arrival of several players, something general manager Johan Eriksson said should be sorted out in about a month.

The team's current bench of 15 (including two goalies) consists of five Swedes and 10 Canadians with more players from Sweden, Russia and Switzerland on the way. By comparison, Streetsville dressed 20 players, including two goalies on Friday.

But despite the short bench, Eriksson said Friday night's game shows the team can produce.

"I'm very happy with how well they did," he said. "With only four defence, we were down to three - not even three - lines and facing a team that runs four lines and plays hard."

"I'm proud of the guys today. They were warriors today, they really were."

With last year's COVID-cancelled season, the Predators relocated to NOTL from North York. But Eriksson and Whalen both say the team is quickly settling in to the town and the rink.

"I like it," said Whalen of the Meridian arena. "To

be honest, I won an atom championship here like 20 years ago so it's nice to come back. I like the ice surface, it's a big, big rink."

"The staff here are awesome so sometimes we get a little extra ice, which helps us out with our conditioning and everything so it's been a great adjustment here."

Whalen was also pleased with the size of the crowd and said he thinks his team put on enough of a show for the fans to want to see more. Things will only get better as their roster expands.

"We've been seeing kids at their practices and stuff so hopefully we can get some of them out watching us and cheering us on," he said.

"We're just really happy to get the support. We hope to give back to the community and get involved and hopefully they can meet some more of our players."

Off the ice, Eriksson has high hopes for his team's place in NOTL, an area he said he loves.

"That's one of the reasons we wanted a team here is because Niagara-on-the-Lake is such a great place," he said.

"First of all it's a beautiful town, a calm town and it's a hockey town, too. We like it, all the players have adjusted really, really well and I just moved down myself and love it. Yeah, we're here to stay."

On Sunday against St. George, the Predators closed the gap with goals by Emil Eriksson and Insulander by midway through the third period, but the Ravens sealed it with an empty netter with 16 seconds left.

"I thought the boys played well, we just didn't want to shoot the puck at the start and then we picked up the pace and started to gain some confidence and in the third period started shooting the puck more," said Whalen.

"But unfortunately they got that goal right at the end. It was an empty net goal, so the boys just got unlucky with that."

Whalen attributes some of the loss to a lack of practice time so far this season and plans on working more on positioning in preparation for their Friday night home game against Tottenham and a return engagement against St. George in Virgil on Oct. 15.

"We're going to put really good pressure on them now that we have another chance to do that," he said. "We'll try to work on defence and work on getting the puck out of the neutral zone and getting the guys in the right positions. We'll be better."

The next home game for the Predators is versus the Tottenham Thunder on Friday, Oct. 8. Puck drops at 7:30 p.m.

## WOOFs celebrate season finale

Kevin MacLean  
The Lake Report

More than 70 golfers hit the links on a misty, foggy Tuesday morning to compete in the Niagara-on-the-Lake Golf Club WOOFs league final shootout.

Teams of four scrambled around for nine holes then, over pints and burgers, shared memories of the putts they missed and the almost-birdies that got away.

Everyone played from the "forward" gold tees and the foursome of Peter Falconer, Ross Smith, Ian Rutherford and Bill Garriock lit it up, coming home in 5-under 31, which took top spot on the

podium.

The teams of Glen Murray, Oleh Hrycko, Terry Catney and Rick Schulz along with Jeff Jacques, Richard Cook, Earl Shore and Peter Chilibeck were next, just one shot behind at -4.

Prior to the morning's festivities, league co-ordinator Bill Katrynuik announced the winners of the WOOF's Top Dog and Golden Dog trophies.

Cam Calder, joking that he earned the prize due to his longevity, was Golden while Grant Williams was crowned Top Dog.

### WOMEN'S RESULTS

In the final week of the 18 hole women's league on

Sept. 28, club champion Yolanda Henry was once again the low gross winner, shooting 87. Martha Cruikshank was next with 81 and Cathy Murray shot 93.

Low net winners were Henry (74), Murray (75), while Marie Ellison, Kim Hrycko and Lorraine Busbridge all at 77.

The day's competition was also divided into flights.

In the Brown flight, Hrycko was first, followed by Christine Earl. In Green, Cruikshank edged out Murray and in the Red flight, Busbridge was first, followed by Carolyn Porter. Earl also recorded a birdie three on the seventh hole.



Cam Calder, left, and Grant Williams, right, are congratulated by WOOFs league co-ordinator Bill Katrynuik on winning the Golden Dog and Top Dog trophies.

KEVIN MACLEAN PHOTO

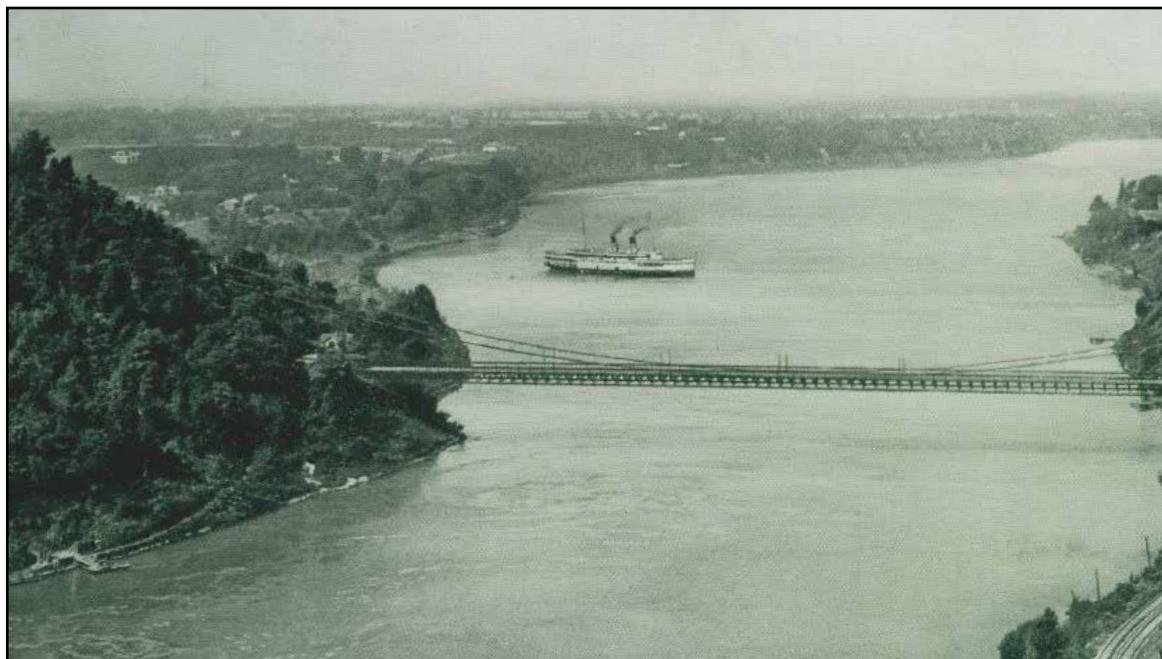


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## FEATURED


**EXPLORING PHOTOS**  
 WITH NOTL MUSEUM


## Niagara River circa 1915

This circa 1915 photograph shows the Niagara River, looking north toward Lake Ontario, with the village of Queenston just left of centre. The suspension bridge can be seen spanning the gorge and the Canada Steamship Lines ship, the Cayuga, looks to be turning around to head out to the lake. A few other points of interest include (bottom right) on the American side, the tracks for the Great Gorge Route, which circled the Niagara River, and (in the lower right corner) what is possibly the system Queenston fisherman used to trap fish on the river.

**ARCHITEXT**

### Out and about around Virgil

Brian Marshall  
Columnist

Last week's column suggested that other survivors of Virgil's built heritage could be found off Niagara Stone Road. Following up on this, let's visit a few of these historic homes.

We begin by heading south from the crossroads on Four Mile Creek.

Just past Line 2 on the right side is the Joseph Clement House at #1526. Constructed in the third quarter of the 19th century (circa 1860, in my estimation) it is a classic brick Ontario cottage form (storey-and-a-half, symmetrical with a central peaked gable) with every opening topped by semi-circular or segmental arches.

This is a largely "as-built" home of a style wildly popular right across southern and central Ontario (hence



1805 Clement House. SUPPLIED/BRIAN MARSHALL

the name of the form).

On the same side and farther south at #1408 sits the Clement-Kozicki House. This residence is worth noting because the bones of the house were actually built circa 1840 in the then typical storey-and-a-half, end-gabled form but, in 1945, the owners conducted a massive renovation.

This work completely altered its presentation by dropping the roof, adding bays and oversized double dormers. This is an illustration that unsympathetic renovation pursuing "modernization" is not the sole province of the current market.

Compare this with the James Clement House a little farther down the road at

#1126. Built circa 1805, and a War of 1812 survivor, this glorious Loyalist Georgian clapboard home presents much as it did 217 years ago, a testament to the current owners who have faithfully restored the grand old dame to its 19th-century street view.

Then, as we turn and head back north, at 1125 Four Mile Creek Rd. is the Ferry-House. A circa 1890 example of the L-shaped brick Gothic farmhouse, it displays many of the features of that form with a special V-notch in the roof line of the front facing gable end roof line.

Back on the north side of Niagara Stone Road, let's visit the Boice-Cushman House at 1540 Concession 6

Rd. Completed circa 1880, this home is an example of a vernacular farmhouse built of local found stone laid in a rare uncoursed rubblestone field with brick quoins and voussoirs.

Here, the owners have respected the original exterior form while re-envisioning a sympathetic interior that recalls the very best of 21st-century liveability.

Flipping over to Line 1 (Penner Road), at #551 we find the Sporbeck-Cairns House. A classic Gothic Revival residence originally built circa 1860, this wood-framed stucco finished home displays many of the essential characteristics of its time and architectural style.

While this glimpse into Virgil's built heritage is certainly not a complete listing of its surviving historic buildings, I hope it has created some curiosity to explore the area.

If you do, I'd suggest visiting the museum and picking up a copy of David Hemmings' book "The Cross Roads." It's an invaluable reference into Virgil's history and buildings.

## Looking to the Stars



### Time for a new, improved and healthier you

Bill Auchterlonie  
Special to The Lake Report

old today, born Oct. 9, 1940 in Liverpool.

**Sunday, Oct. 10:** Having been retrograde since May 23, today Saturn turns direct. After nearly four months of inward anxiety regarding security, it's time to begin to act to make things more secure. It's time to fully digest all that worry and take charge like a boss. Happy birthday #67 to David Lee Roth, whose hit single "Jump" put Van Halen at #1 on the Billboard Hot 100.

**Monday, Oct. 11:** A quiet day as the moon moves from Sagittarius to Capricorn. An idea in a dream in the middle of the night is worth its weight in joy. Happy anniversary #46 to "Saturday Night Live," which launched on this day in 1975 with George Carlin as host and Canadian Lorne Michaels in charge.

**Tuesday, Oct. 12:** A serious Tuesday where an unexpected turn makes life more stable and longer lasting. On Oct. 12, 1915, heroic English nurse Edith Cavell died by firing squad for helping wounded Allied soldiers out of France during the First World War. A school in St. Catharines was built in her honour in 1919.

**Wednesday, Oct. 13:** Speedy Venus, zipping through Sagittarius, gets a friendly bump from Saturn today. Both finances and relationships improve. It was Oct. 13, 2015, that Bob Dylan was awarded the Nobel Prize in Literature. He picked it up, in Stockholm, six months later.

**Thursday, Oct. 14:** Mercury retrograde connects in the sky, first with the sun and then with Mars. It's a day for thinking about a new you, especially a new healthier you or a new and better work goal for you. John Lennon would be 81 years

*Astrology is a form of entertainment, not a science.*



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## Obituary & In Memoriam

### Anna Sartor



SARTOR, Anna (Marino) It is with sadness in our hearts that we announce the peaceful passing of our dearly loved mother on Friday, October 1, 2021, at the NHS- Niagara Falls Site. Anna Sartor (Marino), at the age of 96, will now join her beloved husband Dal (2020) in heaven. Devoted mother of Pat (Gisele), Greg (Jennifer),

Gary (Margaret) and Dale Courtney (Eugene). Adored grandmother of 12 grandchildren, 17 great grandchildren and dear sister of Jim Marino (Claudette).

Anna grew up in Niagara-on-the-Lake where her parents Peter and Artemisia owned and operated "Marino's Fruits and Vegetables" on Queen Street for 50 years. She was also a life long member of St. Vincent de Paul Church and involved for many years with the Catholic Women's league.

A private family Funeral Mass to celebrate the life of Anna will be held at St. Vincent de Paul Church, Niagara-on-the-Lake, the rite of committal to follow after in the church cemetery. As expression of sympathy, memorial donation to the charity of one's choice. Memories, photos and condolences may be shared at [www.morganfuneral.com](http://www.morganfuneral.com)



### Horst Winter



In memory of my beloved husband Horst, who passed away 20 years ago, Oct. 4, 2001.

They say there is a reason, they say that time will heal, but neither time nor reason will change the way I feel.

For no one knows the heartache that lies behind my smiles. No one know how many times I have broken down and cried.

I want to tell you something, so there won't be any doubt. You're so wonderful to think of, but so hard to be without.

Forever missed and loved, your wife, Dietlind and family.



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## Growing Together: Frost is coming, time to bring house plants in for winter



Joanne Young  
Garden Columnist



If you're bringing plants like this croton indoors for the winter, preparation is necessary. JOANNE YOUNG PHOTO

It is hard to believe that we are now in the first week of October. September was such a warm month, that it just doesn't seem possible.

But the daytime and nighttime temperatures are cooling down and fall is here. If you haven't yet done so, now is the time to be bringing in those indoor plants before the temperatures get much lower.

A good rule of thumb for when to bring them in for the winter is at least two to three weeks before your average first frost date. In Niagara, the average first frost hits between Oct. 21 and Nov. 10.

Although most houseplants can tolerate temperatures between 5 and 10 Celsius, if they are left

outside for too long, a cold night could trigger them to drop their leaves or possibly kill the plant.

Also, if you leave them out too long, the plants will go through more of a shock due to the greater change in temperatures and light conditions. So, the sooner you can bring them in, the better.

It is important to take a few steps to successfully make this transition a smooth one.

Before you bring your plants inside you will want to:

Inspect them for any insect infestations such as aphids, mealybugs and spider mites. This is cru-

cial to keeping your plants healthy.

A few simple steps can ensure your houseplants are bug-free before bringing them back indoors in the fall. First, fill a large tub or bucket with water and add a few squirts of a mild liquid soap.

Do not use any soaps that contain degreasers or detergents. Those can damage (or even kill) sensitive plants. Submerge that entire root ball into the water/soap solution and let sit in there for about 15 minutes. This will help to get rid of any insects in the soil.

Next, inspect the leaves closely, looking for any signs of insects, eggs or damage such as fine webbing, or yellow or brown markings on the leaves. Make sure you examine the underside of the leaves as well. You may want to spray your plants with insecticidal soap to kill any insects.

Giving the pot a good scrub is also a good idea.

Remove any diseased leaves and discard them.

Check to see if your houseplant is pot-bound. There are a couple ways to tell if your plant needs to be repotted.

If it is a smaller-sized plant, you can tap on the rim of the pot and allow the pot to slide off. A pot-bound plant will have many roots tightly wrapping around the outside of the root ball in a circular pattern.

Another way to know if your plant is pot-bound is that the soil will be pulled away from the edges of the pot and when you hydrate it the water just runs straight through the pot. Move it into a new pot the next size up, making sure that there is adequate drainage. Use an all-purpose potting soil or soilless potting mix.

Trim back plants, if needed. If your houseplant has flourished outside, it may need to be trimmed back before bringing it inside. You can safely prune back up to one-third of its growth.

Now you are ready to bring your plants inside.

To start off, keep them in the sunniest window in your home before gradually moving them to their usual indoor spot over the next few weeks to help them acclimate to the lower light conditions indoors.

You can expect your plants to lose some of their leaves once they come indoors because even the sunniest window in your house still offers lower light conditions than what they had outside.

Your plants will not need as much water as they did when outside so make sure you monitor the soil moisture. Let the soil dry out on the surface before watering. Keep an eye out for signs of insects or diseases problems, and deal with them as soon as you see them – before they become a major problem.

Now your indoor plants are all tucked in and ready for winter..

Joanne Young is a Niagara-on-the-Lake garden expert and coach. See her website at [joanneyoung.ca](http://joanneyoung.ca).



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