



Town passes controversial hotel tax – again

Evan Saunders
Local Journalism Initiative
The Lake Report

The Town of Niagara-on-the-Lake is implementing a municipal accommodation tax in its 2022 budget, a move that sparked contentious debate during a council meeting Monday.

The tax is one of the few tools the municipality has at its disposal to increase revenue and support tourism infrastructure, Coun. Allan Bisback told councillors.

The levy will be applied to accommodation with five or more rooms and will scale up from two per cent in 2022 to four per cent over three years.

All revenue from the tax will be directed toward tourism infrastructure and will be used to pay for administration of the program.

The tax was at the centre of a lengthy debate over its merits for the town and its possible negative impact on NOTL's tourism sector, particularly while the

COVID-19 pandemic is still affecting hospitality- and tourism-related businesses.

NOTL attracts about 2 million tourists per year, according to a motion presented to council by Lord Mayor Betty Disero.

The document also listed more than 50 Ontario municipalities, from Brockville

to Niagara Falls to Toronto, that have implemented an accommodation charge.

The plan passed 6-3, with Couns. Clare Cameron, Gary Burroughs and Wendy Cheropita voting against the plan.

"It feels very wrong and very rushed and very pushed to be doing this now, of all

times. The pandemic is far from over," Cameron said.

NOTL Chamber of Commerce president Eduardo Lafforgue agreed.

"The tourism industry, and in particular accommodations, are among the hardest hit businesses in any sector

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Soccer season closes with fun games



Spencer Collins moves the ball upfield during the NOTL Soccer Club's seasonal finale on Saturday. The club's season was shortened due to COVID but players enjoyed their time on the pitch. RICHARD HARLEY STORY ON PAGE 15

FUTURE VISION: Part 2

Old hospital could be reimagined as a multi-use 'live-work' facility

Brian Marshall
The Lake Report

Why is it that Canadians must always attempt to put everything into nice, neat little boxes?

The need to categorize seems to be part of our national condition. Unfortunately, this predilection limits our ability to conceptualize what "might be" by chaining our minds to the framework of what has always been.

Consider the entire field of adaptive reuse, which has been extremely successful internationally, while here in Canada it has yet to truly find its wings.

Our approach is all too often to "save" a small, identifying part of the structure, demolish the rest, and attach it to a modern, pedestrian, purpose-built structure that will neatly fit into our estab-

lished framework ... witness the currently tabled Parliament Oaks proposal.

Which brings us to the fate of Niagara-on-the-Lake's old hospital.

Those who read my weekly Arch-i-Text column in this newspaper will know about the sustainability and profit advantages to adaptive reuse.

They might also recall that I consider the former hospital building to be a vital and integral part of Old Town's cultural heritage landscape.

What they may not know is that this long, low and, dare I say, sleek structure is an fine example of mid-20th century institutional design that was successfully integrated into the overall context of its Main Street setting.

The loss of this "end-bracket" to Old Town would cer-

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Next lockdowns likely will be only for unvaccinated: Hirji

Richard Harley
The Lake Report

If Ontario goes back into lockdown, it likely will apply only to people who are unvaccinated, says Niagara's chief medical officer of health Dr. Mustafa Hirji.

While it would be an unprecedented move for Canadians, it's the best way to stop the negative impacts on

the economy, while also "rewarding" people who have done their part to protect their neighbours by getting the jab, Hirji told a media conference Monday.

"I think there's an opportunity that we don't need to go to a lockdown this time, at least not a lockdown for everybody, but rather a lockdown just for the unvaccinated people, because

overwhelmingly the infection is spreading amongst them," Hirji said.

"If you excluded them from all the social activities — to go into restaurants, to go into the mall, all of that — the risk of infection spreading actually falls very sharply," he said.

If unvaccinated people were barred from those social activities businesses

would be able to continue catering to vaccinated people, he said.

"That would be much less economic harm to them and I think it would at least reward the people who have taken the effort to get vaccinated."

Hirji's concerns come after a rise in cases in the past

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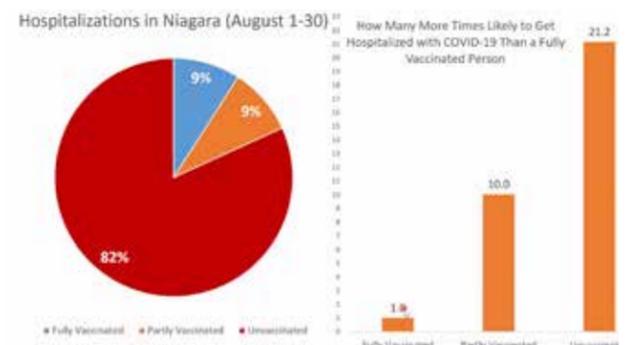


Chart at left shows 82 per cent of August hospitalizations were unvaccinated patients. SUPPLIED

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Election '21: Picking sides in the election few people wanted

Evan Saunders
Local Journalism Initiative
The Lake Report



Joe Allevato is frustrated that no political party has attempted or even promised to change a Harper-era tax program for seniors that becomes a burden more than a boon once your spouse dies. EVAN SAUNDERS

Election season is in full swing in Niagara-on-the-Lake and longtime Tory supporter Trudy Hildebrand says she has had enough of the Conservative party.

This time she plans to vote for the People's Party of Canada.

"I've usually been a Conservative but I am not happy with what (leader Erin) O'Toole stands for. He may as well be a Liberal," the Virgil resident said.

The Lake Report hit the streets to talk to voters about the election and found some voter discontent – and a lot of people who really don't want an election now.

Hildebrand said the federal Conservative party is no longer concerned with traditional conservative ideals.

She likes People's Party of Canada leader Maxime Bernier. "I like what the party stands for: individualism and freedom," she said.

"We want our freedom after a year-and-a-half of being locked up. All the other parties are going to continue that and I'm not in favour of that."

Some voters said they were frustrated with Liberal

leader Justin Trudeau calling an election in the middle of a pandemic.

"It's something that should never have happened, not at this time of the year, not with COVID going on," NOTL resident Vince Marchesano said.

"We don't even know what's gonna be next and now we have to worry about an election." Holding the vote now is not responsible, he said.

Nick Tiessen agrees. "I don't figure that we should be doing the election. It's as simple as that. It's a political trick," the NOTL resident said.

But he said he's not

angry enough at the Liberals to automatically vote Conservative – for now he said he is undecided.

"On the other hand, we are going along as best as we can (under Liberal leadership)," he said.

Tiessen wasn't alone in his indecision. Several people said the election is so sudden it is difficult to know at this point who they will support.

"I haven't made up my mind yet. I don't really know any (of the candidates)," said Robert Hummel, who lives in Virgil.

Some people were more accepting of the Liberal call for an election, which

has been described by many as a cynical move by the Liberals to gain a majority government.

"I kind of get that because I'm all about moving forward," Dawn Jacot said.

"I would like to see a Liberal majority to bring the country back together because we've been torn apart so much with COVID," her husband Paul said.

He said the Conservative leader lacks leadership qualities.

"To use a wise old phrase of Confucius, 'O'Toole hasn't got the right tools,'" he joked.

He said Niagara Falls riding Conservative candi-

date Tony Baldinelli hasn't been vocal enough to gain his support.

"He has been really quite quiet during his tenure, I think. He needs to up his game a bit and get in our face a bit more. Get up there in front of people. I think we need a change and I would love to see (Liberal Andrea Kaiser) get in."

For Joe Allevato, the party doesn't matter. He is frustrated with inaction on all sides over an issue burdening seniors across the country.

Allevato, who lives in the Village, said pension splitting for seniors living together has become a financial struggle for him and many other seniors whose spouse has died.

Pension splitting was implemented in the Harper era and was beneficial to senior couples living together where one has a bigger pension.

But after a spouse's death the surviving partner now pays much more income tax on the same amount of money they had previously been drawing.

Allevato sees this as "discriminatory against single individuals who are receiving a pension," he said in an email to The Lake Report.

"There really is no way

to fight it but to talk about it," Allevato said during an earlier interview.

Allevato said at this point in the election campaign he is leaning toward voting Liberal.

"I was visited yesterday by a couple of patient campaigners who said that Tony Baldinelli would do something about my tax complaint. I think I was told that so they could gracefully escape me," Allevato said.

Toronto resident Steve Fisher was visiting town on Monday. He echoed resentment about Trudeau's snap election and defended O'Toole.

"He's not the most charismatic, but I like what he has to say and I think he's a straight shooter," Fisher said.

One of his main reasons to support the Conservatives this election was wanton spending by the Liberal government, particularly regarding the election.

"I don't think (Trudeau's) going to get (a majority government). So we are going to spend \$650 million across the country for nothing," he said.

"We have to get the finances in this country under control. There was way too much money spent in the wrong places."

Woodbourne Inn inspires Little Library

Kevin MacLean
The Lake Report

More Little Free Libraries are popping up in neighbourhoods around Niagara-on-the-Lake.

The latest addition to the communal book stop is coming to St. Davids, where a Little Free Library will be erected at Tanbark Park and open for business shortly after Labour Day.

The design of this one is special: architectural scale model maker Leslie Mann, a St. Davids resident, used the iconic Woodbourne Inn on Four Mile Creek Road as inspiration for the creation of the black-and-white themed library.

The one-year pilot project was approved by NOTL town council and the parks



Model maker Leslie Mann created this Little Free Library. The design is inspired by the Woodbourne Inn. SUPPLIED

department, said organizer Lili Kvederys.

"We will determine its

popularity and if it is well-received, we will decide whether we build a second

one," Kvederys told The Lake Report.

"My vision was to encourage community involvement through an established organization to bring free books to St. Davids," she said.

"Fortunately, the Friends of St. Davids, of which I am a member, embraced my idea" and with the help of Mann the village's new Little Free Library is ready for its debut.

"The Woodbourne Inn was the perfect choice for our first Little Free Library as it holds so much historic value in our community," Kvederys said.

Mann noted, "The box has a charter number as part of worldwide recognition and a plaque with info on the history of the Woodbourne Inn."



Jane's Walk



Environmentalist Kyra Simone talks during the Jane's Walk event in Chautauqua last Thursday. ANN MARIE SIMONE

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Lockdowns could be prevented altogether, if stragglers do their part, Hirji warns

Continued from Front Page

month and predictions from the Ontario Science Advisory Table that show cases could spike as a result of the Delta variant.

It's feared the higher number of cases could lead to more hospitalizations and could once again overwhelm the province's health care system.

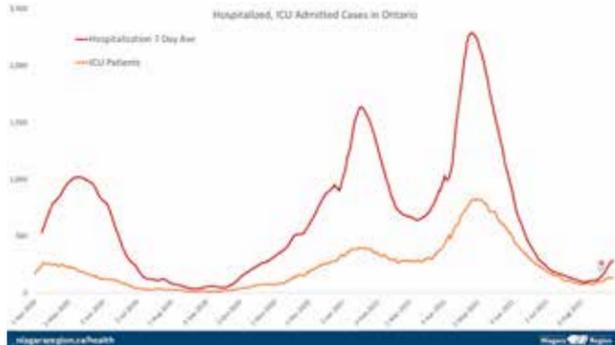
He urged people to get the shot noting those who are unvaccinated are nine times more likely to get COVID and 21 times more likely to be hospitalized with serious symptoms if they do get sick.

"So, even more stark than your risk of being a case, is your risk of being hospitalized if you did get COVID-19 goes far higher if you remain unvaccinated," he said.

Unvaccinated people are "a big part of the story of why we're seeing a surge of COVID-19. There's still enough people there for COVID to spread and lead to lots and lots of cases."

While there's still time before hospitalizations hit the level seen at the height of the second or third waves, it's something that needs to be addressed before it gets to that point, Hirji said.

One hinging factor is having a provincial vaccine cre-



A graph shows the rise in hospitalizations in Ontario. SUPPLIED

dential or so-called passport, so there's an easy way to validate if someone is vaccinated. He said there needs to be a way to make it easy for businesses to tell who they can and can't serve.

"I think we need that provincial vaccine credential to make it really easy for business, if that kind of rule does come down, that they're able to say that this person has been vaccinated we can serve them, versus not vaccinated, we can't serve them," he said.

Having vaccine passports could help avoid another lockdown, he added. "And then if we do start to see the hospital system impacted overwhelmingly, because we can't get vaccination rates high enough, we start to put restrictions on unvaccinated people."

While Hirji said he doesn't want to have to get to that point, and hopes more

people will get vaccinated, he said that's likely to be the outcome.

With everything being opened up, it's nearly impossible to slow the spread of cases and prevent hospitalizations unless more people get vaccinated, he said. However since most cases are coming from unvaccinated people, he said restrictions should be limited to just that group.

If more people don't get vaccinated, "the government is going to be forced to bring in restrictions, hopefully just on unvaccinated people to minimize the harm to the economy, break off the spread of infection and ensure our hospitals don't get overwhelmed. I don't think there is going to be really any other possibility," he said.

"If people are unvaccinated, they should take note of this because now's the

opportunity to make sure you get vaccinated, so if the government does go down this road, they're not all of a sudden excluded from attending some of these settings," he said.

He said while there's an "extremely low appetite" for another lockdown, if hospitalizations get out of control, the government's hand would be "forced to act."

Right now all of Niagara's cases are due to the Delta variant and are tied to the Step 2 reopening that began on June 30, Hirji said.

"I think if we've followed the provincial framework correctly we could have gone through Step 2, seen cases were maybe slightly going up, had an opportunity there to step in and address it before we went to Step 3, but the province rushed ahead with Step 3 before we had even seen the effect of Step 2," Hirji noted.

The province was "a bit impatient about reopening," which led to the resurgence in cases, he said.

Data shows the number of people staying home is at its lowest since before the pandemic began before March 14, 2020, while the number of people out shopping is higher than it was before the start of the pandemic, he said.

Election '21: NOTL debate nights coming up

Staff
The Lake Report

Niagara-on-the-Lake organizations are hosting debate nights and federal all-candidate meetings in the next week. Here's a guide to the events:

The first debate night will kick off Sept. 7 at Ravine Winery. Hosted by The Lake Report

with questions from your neighbours and various NOTL organizations, the event will run from 6 to 9 p.m., with the debate portion taking place from 6:30 to 8 p.m. A limited number of tickets are still available for the in-person portion of the event at www.eventbrite.ca/e/election-21-all-candidates-meeting-niagara-falls-riding-tickets-168111749769.

The debate will also be livestreamed on Niagara Now's YouTube channel.

On Sept. 8, the NOTL Chamber of Commerce, along with the Niagara Falls and Fort Erie chambers, will host a debate focused on the border opening, the tourism industry, and how COVID-19 has impacted the business

community. The event will be online only and will run from 4 to 5:15 p.m. Anyone can register for the event at www.eventbrite.ca/e/candidates-engagement-event-niagara-falls-riding-tickets-168962171403.

A third candidates meeting for the riding will be broadcast Sept. 9 on Cogeco YourTV Channel 700 at 7 p.m.

NOTL airport seeks partner for expansion

Staff
The Lake Report

The Niagara District Airport Commission is seeking an outside partner to oversee

expanded operations of the NOTL-based airport.

The commission has issued a request for proposals for a company to sign a long-term lease to help the small

airport to continue to grow.

The airport, opened in 1929, is jointly owned by the municipalities of Niagara-on-the-Lake, St. Catharines and Niagara Falls.

The airport wants a partner to support needed capital investments to ensure the future expansion of the facility, the commission announced Wednesday.



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Hotel executive says tax could **negatively** affect town's image

Continued from Front Page

and are all struggling to recover from the worst crisis most of us remember," he told councillors.

"There could not be a worse time to reignite the discussion about (the municipal accommodation tax). Nothing has more potential to create division and disagreement within our struggling community."

The idea of an accommodation tax is not new and has been debated by the town several times over the years.

In January 2020, the current council in committee approved a 4 per cent levy but then turned around two weeks later and rejected the idea when it came up for final approval.

Bob Jackson, chief executive officer of Lais Hotel Properties Ltd., which operates several NOTL hotels including the Prince of Wales, said the abrupt arrival of the motion during the pandemic caught him and his business off-guard.

"We were floored that this came up right now. Clearly, we are in something that has had the biggest impact on our industry that anybody has in memory," Jackson said in an interview Tuesday.

He said the pandemic is still affecting the hotel business.

"This summer's been bet-



Lais Hotel Properties chief executive officer Bob Jackson. EVAN SAUNDERS

ter than last but it's challenging. We are nowhere near previous levels prior to the pandemic," he said.

"Industry revenues were off 70 to 80 per cent for 18 months. We're hopeful we can sustain the level of demand and business continues to grow."

Jackson fears the tax can prompt a decrease in demand.

"When you put a tax on top of (rentals) you're going to have an effect on demand. It's just really an overall effect on demand and how it looks for the town," he said.

Several people made their case against the tax, telling councillors it would be detrimental to the town's image as a tourist destination.

"It may have an impact on the brand, or the flavour, of how people come here, especially returning Americans who have lots of other choices about where to go," said Tim Jennings, executive director of the

Shaw Festival.

One such competitive area is the increasingly popular Prince Edward County, said Disero, who spearheaded the tax plan. Prince Edward County has had a municipal accommodation tax since 2021.

Jennings said the Shaw Festival had revenues of \$34 million a year before COVID. He said even a five per cent decrease on that due to the tax would mean a \$1.75 million loss or about \$227,000 lost in provincial and municipal taxes.

Disero pushed Jennings to quantify how much money the Shaw pays to the town each year and he estimated it is about \$220,000 through a variety of means.

Lawyer Katarzyna Sliwa spoke on behalf of Lais Hotel Properties Ltd.

She said the tax would impact perception of NOTL as a tourist-friendly location and be an "impediment to recovery" for the hospitality industry.

Bisback was having none of it.

"I don't buy for a minute that a tax of two per cent on a bed and breakfast of \$200 or a hotel of \$350 is going to distract an individual from attending one of the most premiere destinations in Ontario," the councillor said.

Jackson took issue with the wording of the motion,

which said that the 18,000 taxpayers in NOTL cannot carry the burden of tourism infrastructure any longer.

"That's an incredibly divisive statement essentially trying to pit residents in town on a collision course with local business and tourism businesses," Jackson said.

"We are not at odds with our neighbours or the residents in town. We've had discussions more meaningful with our neighbours than we've had with this lord mayor."

Jackson argued that the tourism sector brings prosperity to the town.

"Residents benefit from all the restaurants and shops and theatres. We built a six-acre park here (at the Pillar and Post), \$20 million and everyone has access to it," he said.

"Those are all things the residents are benefitting from, not to mention you have a \$2 million home that would be worth half of that if it wasn't in Niagara-on-the-Lake."

Councillors against the tax argued it should not be implemented until the town's tourism strategy plan is done.

Chief administrator Marnie Cluckie told councillors the tourism plan would take about 18 months to complete.

Coun. John Wiens previously voted against

a municipal accommodation tax and on Monday he argued against waiting until the tourism strategy is finished.

This prompted a five-minute recess where Wiens and Coun. Erwin Wiens came up with an amendment that stipulated the tax be included in the scope of the tourism strategy.

John Wiens then voted in favour of the tax.

Burroughs said emails the town received about the tax were about evenly split on the idea.

One of the main arguments in favour of the tax was finding an alternative to pay for tourism infrastructure in town.

Disero said she gets messages every day regarding the lack of bicycle lanes, garbage cans, benches and public washrooms in NOTL.

"The killer for me was when I got accosted by a tourist on how awful the Town of Niagara-on-the-Lake is because (we) have port-a-potties across the street from the Valu-mart in Old Town and there's nowhere nice to go (to the bathroom)," she said.

Disero said the town needs new options for revenue streams and cannot continue borrowing money.

"How do we (install those amenities) when, here we are, stretched to the neck without money. My God, We

had to debenture to put in a culvert, for crying out loud," she said.

"If we are still in recovery come June or July, we are not going to do anything to harm our businesses," Disero said before being interrupted by an audible laugh from Burroughs.

"On a point of personal privilege I'd ask you to turn your mic off, for Councillor Burroughs, who's laughing behind the screen. I give him courtesy and respect and I'd like the same thing," Disero shot back.

Bisback referred specifically to residents who live outside of Old Town and the frustration they feel footing the bill for tourists who primarily visit the historic centre.

"Some (residents) just do not want their taxes to go to tourism infrastructure," he said.

He said it seemed residents were being underrepresented during the debate.

"I'm a bit dismayed tonight because I've heard a lot of discussion around hotels and the industry. I haven't heard, in my opinion, enough discussion on residents," he said.

With the plan's approval the next step is for the town to determine when and how it will be fully implemented, Disero said. Town staff will prepare a report outlining options for council.

NOTL will follow region's lead on **vaccine mandate** for staff

Evan Saunders
Local Journalism Initiative
The Lake Report

Niagara Region council has voted to implement mandatory vaccines for employees and the same policy could be just around the corner for Niagara-on-the-Lake.

Regional staff could be exempt from requiring a vaccine under the Ontario Human Rights Code based on religious conflict or proven medical exemption, said Donna Gibbs, the region's director of legal and court services.

If a staff member is exempt they will require COVID-19 testing which

will vary in frequency depending on the nature of their job, chief executive officer Ron Tripp told regional council.

The fine details of the region's policy are expected to be known by mid-September. Lord Mayor Betty Disero said if NOTL councillors approve it, the municipality will implement the region's policy in town, albeit with changes specific to Niagara-on-the-Lake's needs.

"I hope that councillors will step up and support doing that as well," she said.

Disero said any specific policy discussions and implementation won't take place until the region's poli-

cy is officially announced.

An amendment was passed requiring councillors to receive the vaccine in order to do any in-person business as a member of regional council, though there were some holdouts.

Disero voted in favour of all the motions presented during the regional meeting regarding vaccines for staff and councillors. She said councillors need to get the vaccine as well if they are going to expect regional staff to.

"We are leaders in the community and I think we need to lead by example on this," she said in an interview.

NOTL Regional

Coun. Gary Zalepa voted against the amendment forcing councillors to receive the vaccine but was in favour of requiring regional staff to do so.

Zalepa explained his rejection of the amendment regarding councillors by saying he applauds medical organizations that are mandating vaccinations but "the Region of Niagara's not delivering health care."

Coun. Laura Ip of St. Catharines was quick to dispute the claim.

"We employ an awful lot of health care workers who do exactly that, they provide health care. I think almost half of region staff is in health care," she told

councillors.

Zalepa also referred to private businesses doing things differently than public institutions.

"I think we should be a little more like that," he said.

Disero said "it's not good leadership" to have staff-mandated vaccinations but refuse them as a councillor.

"How can we ask our staff to do something that council's not prepared to do?" she told The Lake Report.

Disero asked acting medical officer of health Dr. Mustafa Hirji if he viewed the motion as beneficial in the fight against COVID-19 and the push to get more people vaccinated.

Hirji said that the region

will become a role model and probably inspire some vaccine holdouts to get the jab.

But he didn't think that was the most important aspect of the motion.

"The primary motivator here, though, is really about the safety to our residents who interact with the region's staff and of our employees as a whole," he said.

Hirji worried that putting unvaccinated regional staff in contact with residents was putting residents at risk. He said unvaccinated staff have a high chance of catching COVID and bringing it into the region's workplaces, causing disruptions in operations.



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Virtual Terry Fox Run returns Sept. 19

Richard Harley
The Lake Report

The annual Terry Fox Run is coming back to Niagara-on-the-Lake on Sept. 19.

The event will be virtual again this year, with fundraising teams encouraged to plan their own run due to the ongoing threat of COVID-19. The decision for a virtual run comes from the head office of the Terry Fox Foundation.

Joan King, who has tirelessly dedicated her time to co-ordinating NOTL's Terry Fox run for years, will still set up a display honouring Terry and past NOTL runners, at the Simcoe Park bandshell in Old Town.

King said this year is an important milestone for the NOTL Terry Fox Run. Since the run was first organized in 1991, the town has raised more than \$1 million for the cause.

She will have Terry Fox T-shirts available for sale, as well as a map of what the run would look like in a normal year.

"(The shirt) is actually quite meaningful and there's a little card in there to tell a little bit of history



Joan King with last year's Terry Fox setup at Simcoe Park. This year she'll be doing something similar. FILE PHOTO

behind the meaning of the shirt" because Fox was of Metis heritage on his mother's side.

There also will be a barbecue by the NOTL Rotary Club on Sept. 19 at Simcoe Park.

King said this year's theme is "Try like Terry" and is encouraging people to try to put a team together to help raise money for cancer research.

She said there are several initiatives she knows of so far.

On Sept. 10, there will be an online music trivia night fundraiser hosted by Lee Bouvier of Niagara's Name That Tune.

Another special addition this year is help from Craig McCallum, who manages

Ma, Wind and East restaurants in St. Catharines. King said he wanted to help the NOTL run this year and is planning bingo nights to raise money for the cause.

McCallum told The Lake Report he wanted to find a way to do something to support Niagara-on-the-Lake, as they already do a lot of work in St. Catharines and Mississauga.

"Joan's a friend of mine, and she's amazing, and so I thought why don't I get involved in the Terry Fox Run with her?" he said.

He said the restaurants will be forming a team and making a donation, as well as putting together a bingo card for the next year, which will raise funds for the 2022 Terry Fox Run.

He said the bingo card, located inside a company calendar, will be given to all guests. Numbers will be given out with both dine-in and takeout orders and \$1 from each order will be donated to next year's run.

Patrons can win lunch or dinner via the bingo. "It's going to be fully interactive, which means that for the entire year up until September, we'll be raising money for the charity in the calendar," he said.

Local businessman and comedian Joe Pillitteri, who has historically been a major fundraiser for the Terry Fox Run, will be hosting a comedy night at Ravine Winery on Sept. 14.

Penny Milligan, of the NOTL Rotary Club, also will be holding a small breakfast from her home to raise money.

As well, several NOTL teams will participate in the run and raise money, such as June's Dream Team, led by NOTL resident Donna Seymour. Last year the team raised \$13,000 and over the years they have brought in about \$250,000.

Join us for an...

ALL CANDIDATES MEETING

Sept. 7 at Ravine Winery
Starts at 6 p.m.

Get to know your federal candidates for the Sept. 20 election, with a night of questions from residents and NOTL organizations, hosted by NOTL's most read and respected newspaper, The Lake Report.

All attendees must pre-register at:
www.eventbrite.ca/e/election-21-all-candidates-meeting-niagara-falls-riding-tickets-168111749769

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The Lake Report



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JUSTIN TRUDEAU'S CORRUPTION SCANDALS ARE GETTING IN THE WAY OF CANADA'S RECOVERY

Trudeau broke rules in SNC-Lavalin affair, says ethics tsar...
BBC

Trudeau Faces Ethics Questions on Family Ties to Charity Given Government Contract...
NY Times

Trudeau violated conflict-of-interest law with Aga Khan trips, ethics watchdog says ...
Globe and Mail

SNC-Lavalin spent \$1.95M on escorts, booze for Libyan dictator's son ...
Toronto Star

Only Canada's Conservatives will Secure Accountability by:

- ✓ Passing a new Anti-Corruption Act to strengthen legislation on ethics, lobbying and transparency.
- ✓ Increasing penalties in the Conflict of Interest Act with fines as high as \$50,000.
- ✓ Banning MPs from collecting speaking fees while serving in the House of Commons.
- ✓ Preventing "cabinet confidence" from shielding government insiders from criminal investigation.



tonybaldinelli.ca

Authorized by the Official Agent for the Tony Baldinelli campaign

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Canada

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

COVID Tracker

NOTL active cases: 5
Region active cases: 300
Region deaths: 421
Region total cases: 16,738
Region resolved cases: 16,117

*Sept. 1 data per Niagara Region Public Health



Contributed by Patty Garriock
 "Smile...happiness looks gorgeous on you!"
 -Patty Garriock

HOW TO GET IN TOUCH

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Editorial

Tune in to your candidate debates

Kevin MacLean
 Richard Harley
 Editors

It's a flash election in the midst of an ever-changing, ongoing global pandemic.

Yes, few people other than the prime minister really wanted a federal vote this fall and no doubt that will affect the way some voters choose to cast their ballots. That's democracy.

But we urge all eligible voters to invest some time in determining who most reflects their beliefs, and expectations.

Do a bit of research and explore the platforms of the individual candidates

in our riding of Niagara Falls, which also includes Niagara-on-the-Lake and Fort Erie.

Read The Lake Report's coverage last week, this week and next to learn more about where the candidates stand on local and national issues.

And attend or tune in to the various all-candidate debates that have been organized to help voters find out more about each of the riding's hopefuls.

As a story on Page 3 of this week's edition reminds, The Lake Report is hosting a debate night on Tuesday, Sept. 7, at Ravine Winery, with a limited "live" audience of about 150 people.

The event also will be live streamed on our YouTube channel, "The Lake Report Newspaper." As well, a recording of the evening's proceedings will be archived on YouTube for anyone who can't tune in that night.

We are looking forward to hearing what our riding's candidates have to say in response to questions we have collected from the community and various organizations in NOTL.

While ours is the first local debate of this election, there are others as well.

The Niagara-on-the-Lake Chamber of Com-

merce is holding its own online debate on Wednesday, Sept. 8, in conjunction with the chambers in Niagara Falls and Fort Erie chambers.

It will focus on reopening the Canada-U.S. border, the tourism industry and how businesses have been affected by COVID-19.

As well, Cogeco YourTV Channel 700 plans a debate on Sept. 9.

That means there are plenty of opportunities for voters to figure out which candidate or party resonates with them. Please take the time to cast an informed vote.

editor@niagaranow.com

How did NHS come to own the NOTL hospital?

Dear editor:

I read with interest last week the first installment of your series "Future Vision" and the story of the history of the hospital in Niagara-on-the-Lake.

It was duly noted how the residents of NOTL did the fundraising to

build both hospitals, an awesome project in those days.

In other words the town, or the people of the town, owned the hospital.

Your article states that in 2018 the town negotiated a deal with the Niagara Health System to pur-

chase the land and the old hospital.

Nowhere does it say when and where did the NHS purchase the hospital.

I would like to know if the NHS owned the hospital how much did it pay for it and where did the

money go.

If the NHS did not purchase the hospital and property, then why did the town have to buy it from that organization?

Perhaps one of your readers knows the answer.

Ward Simpson
 NOTL

Conservation authority working on Virgil dam problems

Dear editor:

This letter is in response to 13-year-old Morgan Mitchell's front-page opinion piece, "Four Mile Creek neglected by conservation authority," published on Aug. 19.

One of the objectives of the Niagara Peninsula Conservation Authority is to further the conservation and restoration of the natural environment and this is a responsibility that is taken very seriously.

Much like the residents living along Four Mile Creek, the authority is concerned with the continuous vandalizing of the dam boards on the Lower Virgil Dam, which has inevitably resulted in low water levels in the Lower Virgil Reservoir.

The Virgil dams were designed in 1966 with the

sole purpose of creating a source of irrigation water for area fruit growers. Over the years, these irrigation reservoirs have developed their own aquatic and terrestrial ecosystems much to the enjoyment of the local residents.

Back in 1966, the guiding principle of the dam's design was that the facility must be simple and would not need to be operated in any fashion. However, the conservation authority recognizes a design that was appropriate in the 1960s is not appropriate for today.

Over the past year, we have been in discussion with the Town of Niagara-on-the-Lake on ways to better maintain and operate the Upper and Lower Virgil Dams, in an effort to continue to provide local farm-

ers with access to irrigation water without damaging the local ecosystem.

The authority appreciates the passion that residents of Niagara-on-the-Lake have shown regarding their natural areas. It is a passion we share and the concerns of the community are always taken very seriously.

We have addressed the issue of the degraded dam boards several times, however constant vandalizing does not allow these short-term solutions to last as they should, while more permanent, long-term solutions are established.

With a temporary solution currently in place, we ask local residents and the community for their help in taking care of the area while the conservation authority and the municipality continue to discuss the

future of Lower and Upper Virgil Dams.

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, we have taken measures to protect staff and the public continuing to provide services. Our main office is open by appointment only, with limited staff, so please refer to our staff directory and reach out to anyone you wish to speak or meet with directly. Our conservation areas are open, but may have modified amenities and/or regulations.

Updates regarding NPCA operations and activities can be found at the Get Involved NPCA Portal, or on social media on our Facebook Page and our Twitter feed.

Chandra Sharma
 Chief administrative officer
 Niagara Peninsula
 Conservation Authority



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Ottawa visitors **angry** over ticket and treatment

Dear editor:

We are senior citizens living in Ottawa and we decided to visit your town again as it was about eight years since we were last there.

I have one of those Ontario-issued parking passes given to people with medical issues. My problem is walking and navigating stairs.

I parked in front of a laneway on Queen Street in Old Town. Obviously, I would not do this if it was being used as a laneway.

However, the laneway

was filled with patio tables, chairs and umbrellas. There was also a metal fence at the sidewalk with a stand and a greeter person to get your info and seat you at a table.

Obviously, it was not a laneway and there was no sign saying no parking.

When my wife and I finally got back to the car, I had a parking ticket. Needless to say, we felt that the officer who gave me the ticket has zero compassion and could not understand that NO vehicles would be

using a laneway full of patio tables, chairs, umbrellas and people.

We left the next day, feeling that your town administration does not care. On leaving, I noted on the map that we would be driving by the town hall so I stopped in to pay the ticket.

I was told No by the person in charge of parking. There were not even envelopes that I could put the ticket and money in and leave in a drop box.

Your principal industry is

tourism and yet my wife and I, being tourists, were totally disrespected. We have vowed to never return and are telling all our friends (who are seniors) to not go there as your parking officers are out to ticket you even if you have a disability pass.

I will pay by phone, assuming that this service is working today.

As for town hall – thanks for leaving a sour taste in our mouth.

Bruce and Lisa McMahon
Ottawa

Baldinelli's positions are predictably **partisan**

Dear editor:

After reading Conservative MP Tony Baldinelli's occasional newspaper columns for some time, I find them nothing but thinly veiled attack ads with a single repetitive message: Everything Liberal Prime Minister Justin Trudeau does is wrong and a Conservative government would do everything right.

Under Conservative rule, Canada would be a land

overflowing with milk, honey and good humour, every decision made by the Conservatives would be wise and effective, no scandals (unless there are more hiding in former Conservative prime minister Brian Mulroney's safe ...) and fiscal responsibility would be the order of the day.

Gag me with a spoon!
J. Richard Wright
NOTL

Minister's 'brothers' remark was **disturbing**

Dear editor:

Speaking to the media, Maryam Monsef, the minister for women's and gender equality, last week referred to the Taliban as "our brothers."

Later, when asked about her choice of words, she explained that the members of the Muslim community often refer to each other as "our brothers and sisters. It's a cultural reference."

I would suggest that Monsef is not well-schooled in Canadian culture. If she were she would never have made such a disturbing reference, especially since she is minister of women's issues.

Perhaps she should resign and return to school in her community. And where is PM Justin Trudeau and his apology for her statement?

Harold Asikyan
NOTL

NOTL's queer community is far from **oppressed**

Dear editor:

I would like to make several comments in response to Sean Parkinson's Aug. 19 letter, "There's little support for the queer community in Niagara."

The stated conclusion in the headline is that there's little support for the queer community in Niagara, which raises the separate question of whether this is based on any recognized analysis.

The letter by Miss Pride Niagara 2014 is obviously biased (as would be expected), and her conclusions are, in my opinion, completely wrong.

I think that in most cases church and traditional lifestyle principles, including those of marriage, are much the same thing and it

is the LGBTQ lifestyle that differs. However, I suspect that the majority of those privileged NOTL residents really don't care one way or the other.

Again, common solidarity with the minority groups is brought up by the letter writer obviously to provide support and sympathy for her arguments.

Then, of course, there is the never-ending reference to hatefulness (called intolerance) which is dismissed as being untrue by most people and is simply used as a weapon against those who are being targeted.

The letter also speaks of the eloquence of the experts mentioned in the July 29, 2021, issue of The Lake Report.

However, in my opinion,

she is again showing her bias as this is far from the truth. Just read their quoted language; it seems to me difficult to argue in support of eloquence.

The reference to defensiveness is exactly as previously reported in letters to the editor and is what I would consider a normal reaction to the aggressiveness in the arrogant suggestion that public property can be used permanently to endorse a minority agenda. (What other reaction would be expected?)

Again reference is made to those minorities who are oppressed and the LGBTQ community standing in solidarity with them, but as far as I can see the queer community in NOTL is far from oppressed and seems to enjoy an inclusive and afflu-

ent lifestyle, both economically and socially, and is hardly in need of liberation, as suggested by Miss Pride Niagara.

The lifestyle of the community is publicly accepted by most people without question, but an attempt at forced public and visible endorsement of the lifestyle by the majority is another matter that is not readily accepted.

These comments are not intended as a condemnation of any lifestyle at all, (which is not my right to make anyway) but they are a criticism of dishonesty that to me is quite apparent in this debate and leads to false allegations that people are anti-LGBTQ and are hateful when this is simply not the case.

Derek Collins
NOTL

We welcome your letters

The Lake Report welcomes your letters to the editor. Please, write early and often. Letters ideally should be under 400 words long. Occasionally, longer letters may be published. All letters may be edited for conciseness, accuracy, libel and defamation. Please include your full name, street address and a daytime telephone number so that authorship can be authenticated. Only names and general addresses (eg. Virgil, St. Davids, NOTL) will be published. Send your letters to editor@niagaranow.com or drop them by our office at 496 Mississauga St., NOTL.

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NOTL hospital needs ‘total rethink.’ Architectural expert

Continued from Front Page

tainly alter, and subsequently diminish, the town generally and Queen Street directly.

So, the challenge becomes: How do we preserve the integrity of the existing architecture while creating a profitable and viable 21st-century function that will complement Old Town’s context both now and into the future?

I believe that this undertaking necessarily requires that we throw off the constraints of our “neat little boxes” and create a future vision.

This is what one successful architect in London, England did.

He had a small, but thriving, practice in the city. He employed half a dozen folks and needed more help but could not afford the astronomical commercial lease costs to expand.

His answer was to convert the Georgian terrace house he lived in to a “live-work” space. His “live” space became the basement, first and second floors of the townhome, and by replacing the rear portion of the roof with glass, he created a light and airy third

floor that housed over nine employees in a beautiful new “work” space that supported their creativity (and his business).

Taking a page from his book, let’s re-imagine the old hospital as a multi-use facility.

The existing core of the building loses its flat roof and is replaced by a light, visually unobstructed glass vault. This light-filled space might, for example, become a wine tasting room leased to a co-operative of small, artisanal, local producers who cannot, on their own, afford the cost of a winery-based retail service.

The “wings” of the building are treated to a similar alteration with a slight difference.

Here we step back from the existing facade by a couple of feet and create a three-foot tall shoulder wall behind which rises a vaulted glass roof that seamlessly integrates with that of the central core and, in the rear of the building, descends to the ground – creating an enclosed colonnade across the back of each wing.

The wings are then sub-



The Coal Drops Yard retail development in London, England, designed by architect Thomas Heatherwick, is an excellent example of how a heritage site can be reimagined for the 21st century, says columnist Brian Marshall. PHOTO BY HUFTON & CROW

divided into a series of live-work townhomes with flexible floorplates wherein the basement and first floor may be devoted to “live” space with the second floor being “work” space.

Or, the first and second floor might be “live” space while the basement is devoted to “work” space.

This choice being entirely dependent on the specific functional requirements of the owner; for example, a graphic enterprise might choose the former while for a digital developer the latter may be more appropriate.

The enclosed main floor colonnade across the back of each wing becomes a natural gallery through which both visitors and owners may wander to enjoy

the displayed creations of the various enterprises.

And, because I believe that no piece of built architecture is complete without the complement of landscaping, a wall is constructed 80 feet behind the building to create an enclosed sanctuary in which professionally designed gardens combine the natural splendor of Niagara’s Carolinian heritage with the agricultural bounty our region is famous for.

Gentle pathways meander through the lush greenery to join a half-dozen contemplative spaces with integrated seating providing the opportunity for a meditative pause to commune with our living planet.

This garden, seen through the glass of the colonnade

wall, would establish the necessary contrast tension to properly appreciate the constructed form of the building and the products of human creation displayed therein.

Since this vision requires a total rethink of the building and property, the very best sustainability practices could easily be enfolded.

Solar climatic systems should be integrated, state-of-the-art water quality and consumption management systems installed, electrical use-management control systems (did you know that your flat screen TV, printer, PVR, computer, wifi, smart oven, and etc., even when shut-off draw significant amounts of electricity from the grid?), and so on.

The old hospital develop-

ment could easily become an international model for sustainability in adaptive reuse.

So, what would this singular reimagining deliver?

We will have preserved the Old Town “end-bracket” and architectural streetscape benefits of the building.

We will have celebrated the natural and agricultural heritage of Niagara in both the plantings and the adaptive reuse design. Sustainability, to an international example level, has been incorporated.

Both public and private use dividends are encompassed. A contextually compatible form of architecture, which merges old with new, has created a new and commercially viable 21st-century purpose for the old hospital into the foreseeable future.

Can anything less be acceptable?

Brian Marshall is The Lake Report’s architecture columnist, an author and an architectural consultant specializing in the built heritage of Canada’s cultural landscapes.

What do you think?

Email your ideas to editor@niagaranow.com

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**Peter Taras,
Candidate**

I am Peter Taras and I am the candidate in the next federal election for the People’s Party of Canada. The PPC is the only federal party that is fighting to:

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Immediately restore 100% freedom for business owners to choose how they want to run their business and 100% restoration of freedoms to individuals. “Dangerous freedom is better than the illusion of safety under tyranny.”

NO TO VACCINE PASSPORTS

Ensure freedom of choice with regards to vaccinations and masking. The patronizing attitude of government has to come to an end, the people must have free will to choose what is best for their own health.

OPEN THE BORDERS IMMEDIATELY

Open the borders immediately, and restore freedom to our citizens. People should be allowed to make decisions about the risks that they are willing to take.

END THE POLICE STATE WE ARE IN

Pastors and political opponents are being arrested for living their lives according to the Charter. The police need to act to protect our rights and stop violating rights.

DEFUND THE CBC

Defund/sell the CBC and cancel government bailouts of media organizations.

PROTECT THE ELDERLY IN OUR LONG TERM CARE HOMES

The treatment of our elderly, some of our most vulnerable citizens, is a disgrace. We need to protect the dignity of our seniors in long term care homes and also encourage the idea of strong families that can take care of their own.

SMALLER GOVERNMENT

Significantly reduce the size of government, but ensure fair treatment for all government employees. As an example, the PPC will end government sponsored multiculturalism in Canada.

IMMIGRATION REFORM

The PPC will ensure that Canada attracts the best immigrants and not just the most immigrants. We will encourage immigrants that want to work hard and reject those who expect government handouts.

STOP GLOBALISM

The PPC will remove Canada from UN treaties that infringe on our sovereignty such as the Paris Agreement. The globalists want people to live in fear, the PPC want people to live in freedom!

PROTECT FREE SPEECH

The PPC will repeal any bills or laws that restrict parental authority, restrict free speech or censor the internet. Conscience rights of health professionals need to be protected.

Our leader, Maxime Bernier, and the People’s Party of Canada, are offering Canadians truly principled leadership. The PPC platform can be found at www.peoplespartyofcanada.ca/platform. The entire platform is worth reading and is what Canada needs to stop the decline into totalitarianism. Some of my videos and biography can be found at www.PeterTaras.ca.

Our country needs clarity, boldness and courage to work with every Canadian. We not only need our supporters, but also our opponents, to restore freedom, justice and human dignity back into our communities. “Freedom consists not in doing what we like, but in having the right to do what we ought.”

Authorized by the Financial Agent for the Peter Taras campaign.

Get involved! Request a lawn sign, discuss our ideas, volunteer, donate or become a member of the PPC. We can be the change!

Learn more at: www.PeterTaras.ca

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Niagara Motors celebrates 75 years in NOTL

Richard Harley
The Lake Report

Niagara-on-the-Lake's longstanding Niagara Motors GMC dealership celebrated its 75th anniversary in true car-lover fashion on Saturday – with a car show and a barbecue fundraiser for Red Roof Retreat.

A wide variety of vehicles filled the lot, this time not for sale. Instead there were hot rods, souped-up drag racers, stylish old Chevys and vintage military vehicles.

Dave Dick, longtime owner of Niagara Motors, said it's hard to imagine it's been that long.

"I tell you something, when I started in this business, I can't believe how fast time travels. I mean it's just like that I was just a young guy here greasing cars as a 12-year-old, right? And now I'm 68 years old. Where'd the time go?"

He ended up taking over the dealership from his father David Sr. when he was about 30, he said.

He said the dealership has sold "tens of thousands" of cars over the years.

He recalls when there were three dealerships in Virgil and while the others "kind of went away," his store has lasted, still bringing in a lot of business, locally and elsewhere.

A lot of people come from the city to buy a truck in the country, he said.

"We're truck central – we're kind of in the



Ron Rumsey Jr. and Sr., with their souped-up whips.



Terry McMillan with the military vehicles.

country, we're a country-type atmosphere. So people come from all over to buy trucks from Niagara Motors because we have the truck expertise."

Over the years the dealership, like most businesses, has had to grow and adapt. And the changes keep coming. Now, Dick says the next phase will be electric vehicles.

"The technology in this industry changes so fast. Wow, I mean you gotta keep training and buy new equipment, and now with electrification you have to

invest in all kinds of infrastructure,"

He was surprised how many people showed up Saturday as people ate burgers and hotdogs and browsed the vehicles.

"Beyond what I expected. I didn't think this many people would come," he said, adding the dealership limited the number of cars in the show to try to keep the crowd smaller.

"People have been locked in with COVID. We'd have 1,000 cars lined up here if we didn't cap it, because people want to get out with



Grill master Ward Simpson does a burger flip.



Jim Kaple with his '57 Chevy. PHOTOS BY RICHARD HARLEY

their show cars."

He was proud to donate proceeds of the barbecue to Red Roof.

"Those guys do unbelievable work. They make my job look easy."

Terry McMillan, president of the Niagara Military Vehicle Association, was there with some collector's items.

"We've got a 1985 U.S. Army field ambulance, and a 1944 GMC, CCKW from World War II. And they're both extremely rare trucks," he said.

He said it was the first

NOTL car show they've been at for two years, as shows have only been allowed since pandemic gathering restrictions were lifted. Normally the association kicks off the year with a fundraiser of its own.

The club also lost several vehicles to a large fire on Townline Road last winter.

"The only reason we have these here is because we ran into the building while it was on fire and drove them out. Or we would have lost them. So, we got 80 per cent of our collec-

tion out before the building was burnt down to the ground."

He said the club lost "three or four jeeps, four trailers, an army tow truck, World War Two Dodge weapons carrier and Vietnam era Mutt."

"And then we lost all our tools, spare parts, motors, spare motors and all that too."

The vehicles were all insured, McMillan said, but they aren't replaceable.

"Once they're gone they're gone. So it was a labour of love that we ran in and got them and got them out. And we were lucky."

One of the vehicles still had soot on it from the fire, he said.

He recalled not being able to see through the smoke when driving the vehicles out.

"It was a rough one for us, but at the time of the fire we got in. The first vehicle I drove out was a World War Two halftrack, and I couldn't even see the starter, I had to feel for the starter button. And then I couldn't even see where I was going," McMillan said.

"I told the owner ... either I'm going out the exit or I'm going through a wall. It doesn't matter because it's an armoured vehicle. But luckily it was lined up and I could get it out. That was a rough day for us. It set us back quite a bit. So we're just slowly getting our stuff together now and getting the vehicles out into the public again."

Shaw Guild puts on elegant garden party sip and stroll

Staff
The Lake Report

Guests sipped, savoured and strolled Saturday as they enjoyed a relaxing evening of music, art and libations amid some spectacular gardens in Niagara-on-the-Lake.

The occasion was, appropriately, the Shaw Guild's "Sip, Savour & Stroll" fundraiser in support of the Shaw Festival.

Guests visited three gardens during the evening: the

Royal George Gallery Garden, which is maintained by Shaw Guild volunteers, and two private gardens nearby. In each location they enjoyed refreshments along with the spectacular garden settings.

"The guild hosted Sip, Savour & Stroll in 2019, but it was on a smaller scale," said Mary Mizen, a guild volunteer and one of the event organizers.

"We wanted to expand the event this year, and so we added live music, door

prizes and an auction of original art."

Keith Mills, another guild volunteer and member of the organizing team, thanked the homeowners who offered their gardens, as well as area businesses that sponsored the event.

"Originally Sip, Savour & Stroll was to take place in 2020, but needed to be postponed due to the pandemic. When we began plans for 2021, local businesses stepped up to support us,

despite any challenges they may have faced in the past months."

Platinum sponsors included Music Niagara, Treadwell Cuisine and Engel & Volkers sales representative Cheryl Munce.

Gold sponsors were Cacio Pepe, Jackson-Triggs Winery and Sykes Landscaping, while silver sponsors were DeKorte's Landscaping, Monfries Rum Cakes, Reif Estate Winery, Simpson's Pharmacy and Harvest Barn.



Shaw Guild members smiling at the stroll. SUPPLIED

In addition, many other businesses donated prizes, beverages, art and more. Plans are afoot for a

similar event in 2022 and details will be posted on the Shaw Guild website, shawguild.ca.



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Paddle Niagara wants to create **boat launch** at River Beach Drive

Evan Saunders
Local Journalism Initiative
The Lake Report



Tim Balasiuk, the founder of Paddle Niagara, stands on an underutilized piece of waterfront on River Beach Drive. He is proposing to work with the town to turn the area into a paddleboard and kayak launch and to use the area to educate visitors. EVAN SAUNDERS

Paddle Niagara wants to partner with the Town of Niagara-on-the-Lake to clean up and open a section of waterfront along River Beach Drive as a recreational boat launch, an idea council banded around last month.

Tim Balasiuk, owner and founder of Paddle Niagara, presented the idea during a council meeting Aug. 30.

Council had previously considered turning the area into a boat launch after complaints that Balls Beach had become overcrowded and the parking situation near the beach deteriorated.

“Balls Beach is becoming increasingly busy with tourists and locals alike and, of course, we want to be able to continue to see people go down and utilize that waterfront,” Balasiuk told council.

The shoreline in front of

146 River Beach Dr. is at least 100 feet long, Coun. Norm Arsenault said.

It is currently home to a large number of rocks and rubble, Balasiuk said.

“You actually have the opportunity to create a zero entry launch, which is effectively the environment we have down at Queen’s Royal Beach,” he said.

A zero entry launch is parallel with the surface of the water and allows easy launching for paddle boards and kayaks.

The smaller stones now

on the shore could be raked out further into the lake to create a gradual slope and large armour stones could be installed right on the shoreline as a launching deck, Balasiuk said.

Town staff are preparing a report on the idea and the eventual design depends on staff’s ideas and whether the idea is approved.

Paddle Niagara has been operating in Niagara-on-the-Lake for nine years. For its 10th anniversary, Balasiuk has been busy acquiring a fleet of kayaks.

While he does run a business, he said he is driven by a love of water sports and a desire to share that with others.

“Tourism is not slowing down in Niagara and that’s something we can’t ignore. But, ultimately, my plan is community-minded,” Balasiuk said.

He wants to use the area to hold kids camps in partnership with the town throughout the summer. He said a lot of his campers already sign up through the community centre on Anderson Lane.

It’s about getting more people and kids in the water, he said.

“I grew up in the junior sailing program so I had access to the river,” he told The Lake Report in an interview Tuesday.

“Kids that come out to (Paddle Niagara’s) camps these last few years are kids that have tried the junior sailing program and it sort of spooked them to

be out in the middle of the river.”

He said paddle boards are a good way for youth to be introduced to water sports but aren’t ready to embrace the thrill of sailing.

Balasiuk also sees the area as an ideal place to educate water sports fanatics about the currents and dangers of the Niagara River and Lake Ontario.

He wants to install signage that informs visitors and users of the boat launch about the strong currents that run through the river and out into the lake.

And for good reason: Balasiuk said he has made 20 water rescues with his motor boat this season.

“The last one was the craziest one I have done so far,” Balasiuk said.

He spotted a group of people floating on inflatable tubes out into Lake Ontario. He took his boat out and discovered it was seven Americans who started their float up in Lewiston

and didn’t swim into shore before the current grabbed them.

“I took them over to the state park in Youngstown and dropped them off,” he said.

That wasn’t the first time he had to save Americans from the pull of the river. One time he was approached by border security as he carried some American river drifters to safety.

“I told them I spotted some Americans who were in need of help so I took them over to the American shoreline. In essence, they ended up thanking me for it,” he said.

He said he always stresses awareness when dealing with large bodies of water like Lake Ontario and the Niagara River.

“Research wherever it is that you are paddling. Check the weather forecast, check the wind. Understand the elements and understand your surroundings thoroughly,” he said.

Pumphouse hosts ‘**Beautiful Ontario**’ exhibit inspired by travel

Aimee Medina
Special to The Lake Report

The Niagara Pumphouse Arts Centre has opened an exhibition featuring the paintings of Toronto-based artist Madeleine Greenwald.

“Beautiful Ontario” will be on view in the Joyner Gallery until Sept. 25. The public is invited to attend an opening reception on Sunday, Sept. 5 from 2 to 4 p.m., with health safety protocols in place.

The paintings in the show depict stunning scenery from surrounding areas including Toronto, Prince Edward

County, Muskoka and the Niagara region. While travel was put on hold this past year, Greenwald savoured the regional landscape and captured that beauty on canvas.

With Quinacridone Magenta as her favourite colour, the painter uses bright colours in capturing the panorama to evoke the viewer’s feelings.

“I am inspired by travel and the people and places I love,” said Greenwald.

“Painting allows me to relive moments and remember how I felt when I was there. My work is usually inspired

by photos from my travels. I am always looking for images that have a feeling. The challenge is in conveying that feeling on the canvas,” she said.

“I don’t paint the object. I paint the shapes and shadows that make up the scene and then the subject usually appears. Figuring out the puzzle to create a cohesive piece is what I really enjoy about painting,” she added.

Greenwald studied art at the University of Wisconsin. She took several years’ hiatus from painting to work as a women’s health advocate and to practise law. Af-

ter undergoing treatment for breast cancer, she returned to painting full-time as a way to express her emotions and go back to her true calling.

Greenwald is a member of the North Toronto Group of Artists and the Lawrence Park Art Collective. She has exhibited throughout Toronto including at Arta Gallery, Leslie Grove Gallery, the Yonge Eglinton Centre, Twist Gallery and participated in shows with the Ontario Society of Artists.

Aimee Medina is marketing co-ordinator of the Niagara Pumphouse Arts Centre.



Sunset paddle by Madeleine Greenwald. SUPPLIED

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Shades of Summer fills NOTL Museum courtyard



The Niagara-on-the-Lake Museum played host to the second of three sold-out Shades of Summer dinners last week. Normally the large dinner would be hosted by the Niagara-on-the-Lake Chamber of Commerce on Queen Street during the annual Peach Festival celebrations in August. But like many other events, it has been adapted to accommodate safety precautions during reopening after the pandemic. Last Wednesday evening about 80 people arrived at 6 p.m. ready to socialize, eat, drink and celebrate together. The final Shades of Summer outing is Sept. 9 at Willowbank. Like the first two dinners, however, it is sold out.

Grace Church's Festival Market includes mammoth book sale

John Sayers
Special to The Lake Report

The final NOTL festival of every summer – the Festival Market at Grace United Church – will go on as planned this Saturday, Sept. 4, to relaunch a new round of NOTL church fairs.

It has been a sad summer for those who attend and enjoy Niagara-on-the-Lake's traditional church summer festivals in town. The Strawberry Festival, the Cherry Festival and the Peach Festival all succumbed to the restrictions caused by COVID. But rules have eased somewhat, and Grace is back.

While the attractions are traditional at Grace, the signage is pure COVID. Church council chair Pauline Miller has ensured that masks are required, distancing is a factor and indoor signage is in place to maintain direction of flow. Sanitizing is available and encouraged.



Volunteers Norm and Donna Seymour sort through thousands of books at the last Festival Book Sale at Grace United Church. This year promises to have even more.
JOHN SAYERS PHOTO

Outdoors are tables of the traditional jams, jellies and sauces that have made the fair famous, as well as home baking, and a mystery table (maybe even several tables!) of treasures that may be just the special find that you have always been looking for, but never realized.

Topping it all off is likely the largest book sale to have ever taken place in town, with over 5,000 books,

many donated and languishing on hand since the pre-COVID era!

Co-chair Marnie Taylor commented that we live in a highly literate town that has a wide range of reading interests. The boxes and boxes of fiction books on display are arranged alphabetically by author, since so many readers have favourite writers.

And the vast array of non-fiction books is

sorted into categories that include, history (particularly Niagara area) and biography, two of the most popular topics.

In a separate section are special books that appeal to the collector or the reader looking for gems such as tomes signed by their favourite author.

At well below market price, these books are a magnet for book dealers who flock to the section in the hopes of later reselling at a healthy profit. Hey, collectors, why not buy here and avoid the profit markup of the online book dealers?

Everyone at Grace United hopes that rather than this being the last of the NOTL church fairs, it will launch a new succession of fairs which rise like a Phoenix into 2022 from the COVID ashes of 2021.

NOTL church fairs are back. See you at Grace United!

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

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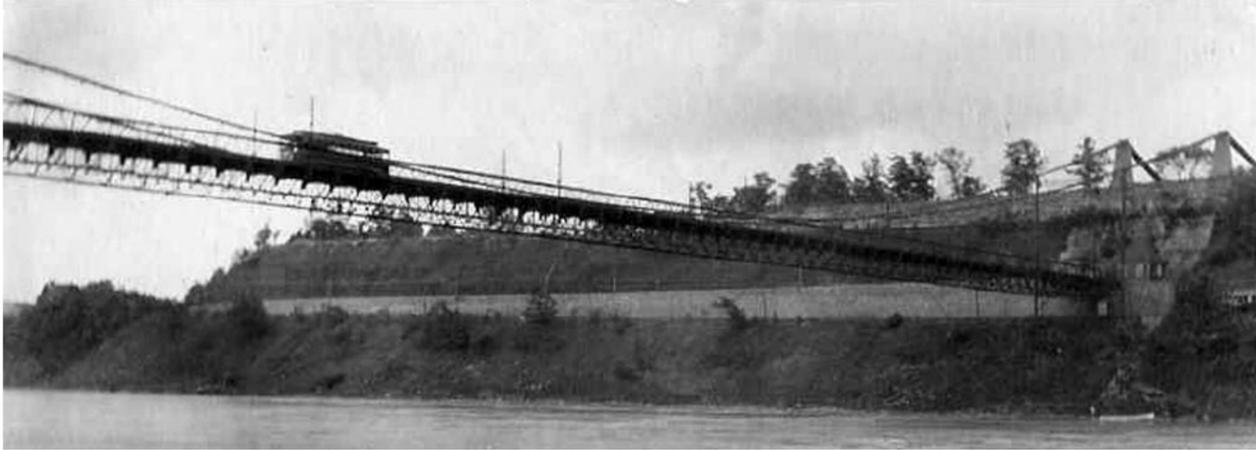
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**NIAGARA'S HISTORY
UNVEILED**

Rail bridge connects Queenston to U.S.

This is the third in a four-part series based on a talk given as a part of the Niagara Historical Society's lecture series. Because of the pandemic, the series, "All along the Waterfront" was done via Zoom. All of the talks are available online through the Niagara-on-the-Lake Museum.

Linda Fritz
Special to The Lake Report



The Queenston Lewiston Bridge that opened in 1899 carried rail cars between the Canadian and U.S. side. NOTL MUSEUM

The new Queenston Lewiston Bridge was officially opened in 1899.

Its predecessor had blown down decades before and, in the interim, people had used ferries to get across the river.

The new bridge was intended to enhance the tourist industry. Because rails were a part of the deck, visitors could make an excursion through Niagara Falls, viewing the Niagara Gorge from both sides.

Although there were six attempts to build a major railway crossing through Queenston to the United

States, none were successful – perhaps to the benefit of today's village.

When the first railway opened, Queenston was a village of about 300 people, a population similar to today. By this time, there were three stores, eight taverns, one wagon maker, one blacksmith, one baker, four shoemakers and one tailor serving the village.

For a short time in the 1830s, there was a newspaper printery run by former Toronto mayor and rebel leader William Lyon

Mackenzie. The village school was founded in the 19th century, along with the smaller one-room school built for the children at Glencairn.

Hardly a village living through hard times.

Tourism was clearly important to the village. The railway was successful because large ships could dock at Queenston.

By 1878, Niagara Navigation Company operated docks in Niagara-on-the-Lake and Queenston. In 1893, the first excursions

from Toronto began.

Over the years, five well-known vessels made the journey: the Chiconora, Cibola, Chippawa, Corona and the Cayuga. Over 300,000 people took the tour and the trip from Toronto to Queenston via Niagara-on-the-Lake took about two hours.

Allan Sheppard, in his memoirs, said he believed the Cayuga was licensed to carry 2,000 people at one time. He also said that he remembered "Each evening residents would walk to the

dock to watch it (the Cayuga) arrive, be unloaded and loaded, and then depart."

It was not only passengers who were being loaded and unloaded. During the fruit season, the ships carried fruit to Toronto.

Three sisters, members of the Rae family, who grew up in Queenston remember those times.

"Our uncle owned a peach farm near St. Davids. We would bike out there in peach season to help pick the crop. We'd come back with the truck and go down

to the dock to watch them load the peaches for Toronto. On a 100-acre farm, six girls would pick, pack and ship 1,200 six-quart baskets a day."

On Oct. 10, 1901, the Corona brought the second members of the Royal Family to Queenston. In 1860, the Prince of Wales, later King Edward VII, had visited the village.

It was on this visit that he gave Laura Secord 100 pounds for her service during the War of 1812.

Edward's son and daughter-in-law, the Duke and Duchess of Cornwall and York, (later King George V and Queen Mary) came for a short visit to Queenston. After a quick look around, they took the train from the dock to Niagara Falls.

The end to the excursion by ship and train came in 1957. By the mid-20th century, the automobile had taken over from ships and trains.

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Kicking butt: Cleanup campaign targets smoking litter



Kyra Simone
Special to The Lake Report

Throughout September, volunteers across Canada hope to pick up and recycle more than 1 million cigarette butts.

The Butt Blitz, run by nonprofit A Greener Future, aims to reduce plastic pollution and the water quality impact from these common cast-offs.

Holy Smokes: Cigarette butts are the most-littered item in the world. About two-thirds of the 6 trillion cigarettes smoked each year end up in the environment.

As one of the last “socially acceptable” forms of littering, it’s still not uncommon to see butts tossed out of car windows or ground out by a heel on



A guide to accepted waste that can be collected during the month-long Butt Blitz.

the sidewalk. They’re most often found in urban areas, parking lots or on the shoulder of the road.

But, these lightweight cigarette butts also end up far from these hotspots; they’re blown into natural habitats by wind, or make their way to rivers and lakes by floating on top of water.

A Pain in the Butt: Although many smokers think the paper-wrapped butts will biodegrade, cigarette filters are actually plastic. They’re made from cellulose acetate, which breaks into microplastic fibres.

Today, almost all smokers use filtered cigarettes because they prevent inhalation of some of the toxins.

However, this means many of the harmful chemicals are left behind in the filters when butts are discarded.

When these butts end up in water, they release nicotine, arsenic, tar and even heavy metals. One littered cigarette butt can contaminate 1,000 litres of water!

Many of these chemicals are toxic to wildlife, includ-

ing fish, mammals and birds. Studies have also found that many animals mistakenly eat cigarette butts, which makes them more likely to be exposed to toxins.

Unfortunately, due to their size, cigarette butts are often missed during public cleanup events and municipal staff efforts; many end up buried in sand, leaves or wedged in cracks in the pavement.

Silver Lining: Through this September’s Butt Blitz, volunteers from 24 teams across Canada are aiming to pick up one million cigarette butts. That would surpass the almost 826,000 butts carefully collected during the spring 2021 Blitz.

These sources of toxins and microplastics will not only be removed from the environment – all butts collected during the Butt Blitz will also be recycled through TerraCycle’s UN-SMOKE cigarette recycling program.

Plastic components of the smoking waste will be

melted down and made into industrial items like decks, floors, outdoor furniture and playground footings.

This free program is also open to individual smokers, who can send back extinguished smoking products, filters, rolling paper, ash and even plastic or foil packaging. Participating in TerraCycle programs also raises money for charity.

As co-ordinator of the Niagara Butt Blitz team, I’ve already picked up a couple of hundred discarded butts from local parks and neighbourhood streets.

With new cleanup initiatives and recycling programs, we can truly get our butts in gear and keep smoking waste out of the environment.

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. Email Keeping it Green at editor@niagaranow.com.



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Men's team squeaks out **colourful victory** over women's squad

Kevin MacLean
The Lake Report

The men's Ryder Cup team at Niagara-on-the-Lake Golf Club seems to finally have found a way to defeat the women's Solheim squad in their annual head-to-head competition.

Dress in your most colourful, mismatched attire and do your best to throw the women off their game. Or at least they think that might explain their comeback win after being clobbered a year ago.

Perhaps the fashion strategy worked last Friday as the men, captained by veteran Harry Huizer, eked out the narrowest possible win, 22 points to 20 after 18 holes of hard-fought matches.

Fourteen women, led by captain Martha Cruikshank, played the 14 men in seven matches with 42 points up for grabs. Each match had six 6 points available.

The men held a slim two-point 8-6 lead after the first nine, which featured an alternate shot format with teams of two taking turns.

On the back nine, the men clung to their lead, playing a



Wackily dressed men's captain Harry Huizer accepts the Pro's Cup trophy from women's captain Martha Cruikshank. The gents opted for colourful attired instead of team uniforms. KEVIN MACLEAN

better ball format, in which the score of the partner with lowest total on each hole is counted.

Playing on a beautifully sunny day with no humidity, but gale-force winds off Lake Ontario, threatened to wreak havoc with many of the hard-hitting men's scores, but as Huizer noted, they found a way to keep it together.

However, the outcome

was in doubt until the final foursome of Brodie Townley & Darryl Fry and Margot Richardson & May Chang completed their round. Townley and Richardson managed to get just enough points to push their team over the top.

It was a welcome comeback for the gents after teams of 16 played last year and the women's side prevailed in a one-sided rout,

winning 35-13 in points.

The men's team seems to have a habit of squeezing out a narrow victory every second year, overcoming a thumping by the women in the previous year. In 2019, the team of a dozen gents prevailed 20-16, one year after they were thrashed by a score that everyone wants to forget. It was 41-1. Probably some kind of record.

John Wiens and Norm Kerr.

Men's club champ James Girjanis-Meusel won low gross with a 2-under 34 score. Big money winners of \$65 each in the net skins game were Tim Taylor (#1), Paul Jacot (#3) and Michael Berlis (#8). Gross skin winners of \$25 apiece for birdies were Larry Mantle (#1), Sean Simpson, (#4), Grigjanis-Meusel (#5), John Sobil (#6) and Stephen Warboys (#8).

Closest to the pin sharpshooters were Brock Samson (#4) and Earl Shore (#9).

WOMEN'S RESULTS:

The 9 hole women's league played a game of golf poker last week and Chris Walker won with six of a kind.

Cathy Saytar had six of a kind too, but Walker had a better overall score. Helen McCallum was third with a straight of 4 through 9.

On Tuesday, Lisa Allen was low gross winner with a 91 in the 18 hole women's league. Runners-up were Margot Richardson and Carroll Baker with 92.

Best low net scores were: 69 (-3) – Sharron Marlow (69), Richardson (72), Baker and Allen (73). Allen also had a birdie on #6.

MEN'S LEAGUES:

Greg Keldson led all players, accumulating 26 points under the Stableford modified scoring system during men's league play at the NOTL Golf Club last Thursday.

Gerry Shelly was alone in second place with 23 while eight players tied for third with 21 points: Randy Busbridge, Neville DaSilva, Martin Vagners, Paul Jacot, John Kozik, Ray Rempel,

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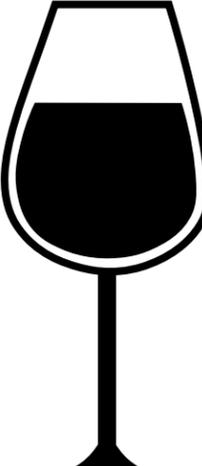
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Shortened soccer season closes with fun finale

Richard Harley
The Lake Report



Goalie Dean Velsink defends the net. RICHARD HARLEY

The NOTL Soccer Club wrapped up its season with a series of scrimmages on Saturday.

Players from all leagues filled Centennial Sports Park in Virgil for the final games.

The season was a short one after COVID-19 regulations delaying the start until June 21. Normally, the season would kick off in May.

Sharon Velsink, a Virgil mother whose 11-year-old son Dean was playing goalie for the U11/U12 division, said although it's been a short season, it was good for the kids to be back on the pitch.

"It's amazing. The kids have loved it," she said.

"They really missed it. The first practice and games, they were just so pumped about it, and so happy — a little bit shy at first to get to know each other again. But they've loved it. And we've had an amazing summer. I don't think we got rained out at all this year."

She said the kids and

coaches have made the best out of the season.

Though there wasn't a tournament this year, the division played rock paper scissors to pick teams, one team wearing jerseys and another wearing pinnies.

"It's all just Niagara-on-the-Lake teams, kind of mixing up and playing scrimmages just for fun, just as a nice end to the season."

Typically tournaments start on the May 24 weekend, but they were put on hold this year.

Velsink said she's extremely thankful to the coaches for making the season happen.

"A super great thank you

to all the coaches," she said. "They're volunteers. They all give up their evenings and weekends and give 110 per cent of their time and effort, and they're so encouraging. They're amazing."

Ted VanderKaay, president of the NOTL Soccer Club, said it was sort of a whirlwind getting the season started, with plenty of confusion over the colour-designated phases of COVID reopening, which then switched to numbered steps.

"We were given very little guidance from the government when we changed to the stage one, two and three of how sports were to

be integrated into the community," he said.

"Under the colour-coded systems, we had a pretty good idea of what we were supposed to do and we based our entire program according to that, so, long story short, (we) kind of didn't know where to go when the government pulled the rug out from us."

The club ended up with an "improvised season," where players drew numbers within their league and would create new teams for each scrimmage.

"We had a pretty lengthy and successful season. And even though the programming was different than what kids and families were used to, by all accounts, all parents and all kids were really happy with the way it went."

For the club, it was important to salvage a season and get up and running as quickly as possible. VanderKaay said he's pretty sure they were the first club to get on the fields and one of the latest to wrap up the season.

"Kids having been cooped up for months and months

and months, not having played organized sports really through the winter or having attended school with all the social distancing and staying at home and everything," he said.

"For mental reasons and physical reasons kids just needed to get out and parents needed out too. Everyone was really excited just to get the kids out and see them have fun and really. It was amazing. The first day we saw them out, like you could just see the smiling faces on the kids."

He said the impact of being able to play was significant on his own children, too.

"They were really looking forward to it just because they had been locked up, they had been distanced from all their friends. They lacked that social interaction," VanderKaay said.

There wasn't a drastic drop in the number of players who signed up. About 350 kids registered for the season, when normally it's about 375 to 400, he said.

"The club is really looking forward to next year when we feel, and we hope,

that we'll go back to a normal season, that will start at the normal time and then we'll go back to normal types of configurations, back to standardized teams, all the things that we've known."

"We expect that there may be some changes, as the world has changed, but that there will be less confusion next year and that we'll have a stronger start out of the gate because everyone will know kind of what we're going to expect," he said.

"We look forward to a much better year next year."

It's too early to know whether the soccer league, which has kids from ages 4 to 17, will require vaccinations for players 12 and up next season. However, he said it's something the board will likely discuss.

"That's going to be a lengthy discussion that'll go throughout the offseason, because really we don't know how things will play out."

"We're typically guided by Ontario Soccer and what they recommend based on their consultation with the provincial government."

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GAMES



Have some fun

Across

- 9. Highland (7)
- 10. Burst violently (7)
- 11. Tennis tie (5)
- 12. Clogged (9)
- 13. Keeps (7)
- 16. Welsh castle, fortress and stately home (5)
- 17. Butt (4)
- 18. City in NW France (4)
- 19. Fortune (4)
- 21. Purchases (4)
- 23. Follows orders (5)
- 25. Republic containing the northernmost point in Africa (7)
- 26. Discouragement (9)
- 28. Intended (5)
- 30. Cap attachment (7)
- 31. Thrash (7)

Down

- 1. Long and thin (7)
- 2. Hawaiian island (4)
- 3. Excision (8)
- 4. Prosperous (10)
- 5. Skinny (4)
- 6. Maintenance (6)
- 7. Short nap (5,5)
- 8. Rosy (7)
- 14. Path of a projectile (10)
- 15. Replace (10)
- 19. Monasticism (8)
- 20. Pongo (7)
- 22. Tack maker (7)
- 24. Move up or down through computer text (6)
- 27. Spot (4)
- 29. Flat-bottomed river boat (4)

Crossword Puzzle

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
9							10
11				12			
13	14			15	16		
			17				
18						19	
20			21				22
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26				27		28	29
30					31		

Last issue's answers

1	U	2	S	3	C	4	D	5	W	6	C	7	N	8	W
9	N	E	P	T	U	N	E	10	A	L	L	G	O	N	E
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	P	C	O	E	L	E	D	E							
13	P	N	E	U	M	O	N	I	A	14	T	R	A	P	S
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17	E	P	T	E	U	A									
18	C	A	L	V	E	19	E	C	C	E	N	T	R	I	C
	L	E	U	R	A	S	E	R							
20	I	G	N	O	R	A	N	C	E	21	H	E	L	L	O
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	E	D	E	Y	R	E	H	T							

7			5	6			
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							3
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6							2
9	4						
	8		9	4		3	
				1		5	8
			7	8			4



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'Milky Way'

Penny-Lynn Cookson
Special to The Lake Report

We want to claim him as ours, not only for the formative years he spent in Canada but for the influence those years had on his subsequent art.

Peter Doig, one of the most acclaimed artists of our time, was born in 1959 in Edinburgh, Scotland, spent three years in Trinidad and arrived in Canada at the age of seven when his accountant father was transferred by his shipping company to Montreal.

Academically disinclined, Doig decided to be an artist and made his way to London to Central Saint Martins College of Art and Design and later to an MA from the Chelsea School of Art.

It was the time of the YBAs, the outrageous young British artists like Damien Hirst, with his shark in a tank of formaldehyde, and Tracey Emin's tent with its names of everyone she had ever slept with.

Years of no interest in Doig's work and a lack of sales meant working part-time as a dresser for West End theatre productions. The stage experience led to a transformative quality in his work, transitional moments captured in the act of becoming.

In 1989, he returned to Canada and spent time painting from a studio in the barn of his parents' home in Grafton, east of Cobourg.

One night he caught the end of a video his sister was watching. It was Sean Cunningham's cult horror film,



Peter Doig, "Milky Way," 1989-90, oil on canvas, collection unknown. SUPPLIED

"Friday the 13th," when the only survivor of a murder scene, a terrified young girl, escapes in a canoe, alone on a lake. A subject that became a theme was born.

Doig went to the barn that night and painted the first of seven canoe paintings made over the next decade. The ubiquitous canoe, that quintessential fragile vessel that opened Canada's vast wilderness to exploration and trade and remains part of our DNA, became for Doig "like an Edvard Munch painting come to life."

The lone isolated figure, overtaken by a natural set-

ting, inhabits the Canadian landscape of forests, lakes, reflections in water, cabins in the woods and falling snow as a source for many of his early paintings.

Doig described "Milky Way" as a mixture of what he could see from his working space in the barn and other sketches he had made of northern pines and dying trees.

"The idea was the trees were illuminated by city light or artificial light from afar. I had just read Don DeLillo's "White Noise" that influenced the light in these paintings as well. The canoe

was used as much for scale as atmosphere, although it was important to me that the figure was slumped rather than erect."

Doig divides the composition in three horizontal bands with the richly coloured deep sky, sparkling stars and Milky Way above, the weirdly shaped trees on the shoreline cutting across left to right and their reflections appearing in the water below. One white tree suggests death but actually balances the composition.

The reflected Milky Way across the bottom of the picture and the close proximity of the shimmering tree reflections thrust the viewer forward into the lake in a strange collapsing of space. The image of the tiny isolated canoe in the vastness becomes unsettling. Why is it there? Who is out there?

We are part of what should be a familiar scene but is strangely tense and disorienting. It is a place of the imagination, yet real, a

memory, a mood, something fugitive, mysterious. Doig's atmospheric surfaces intercept our perception, which he says, "is the way the eye looks ... you are constantly looking through things, seeing the foreground and the background at the same time ... interior worlds are coming in and out of focus all the time, shifting between clarity and indistinction."

At the top of his career, Doig lives in Trinidad where he continues to try "to create something that is questionable, something that is difficult, if not impossible to put into words."

Penny-Lynn Cookson is an art historian who taught at the University of Toronto for 10 years. She was also head of extension services at the Art Gallery of Ontario. See her upcoming Zoom lecture series "The Germans - Art, Faith and War" on Thursdays, Sept. 23 to Oct. 28 at RiverBrink Art Museum in Queenston.

Dr. Brown: COVID virus keeps **outsmarting** the human body's defences

Dr. William Brown
The Lake Report

For most of us who have been sweltering in Ontario's summer heat wave, the latest surge in infections in Israel seems too far away to worry.

But Israel may be the canary in the mine these days. Why? Because it has experienced an unexpected surge in infections this summer.

The country has one of the best health care systems in the world, which began vaccinating its population with the Pfizer, Moderna and to a lesser extent AstraZeneca vaccines as early as December 2020, well before most countries.

And as matters now stand, nearly 80 per cent of the population is fully vaccinated, including 87 per cent for those 70 years of age and older as well as children 12 and over.

By any measure that's a very impressive vaccination campaign and should provide a high degree of protection against spread of the disease and moderate to severe disease. With such a good record, the country

After a long hiatus due to COVID, the popular InfoHealth lecture series resumes "live and in person" at the Niagara-on-the-Lake Public Library on Sept. 13.

The session, "Fixing Bad Genes," will be hosted by Dr. William Brown.

The seminar, which starts at 11 a.m., is limited to 20 people. It will be recorded for later broadcast on YouTube and other media.

Register for the free event via the library's website, notpubliclibrary.org.

began to open up. Then Delta struck.

Beginning this summer, infections in Israel began to tick upward – not a lot – but enough to worry scientists because the uptick involved, not just the unvaccinated, but some of the fully vaccinated, especially older Israelis.

The latter prompted Israel's scientists to wonder whether the protection provided by the vaccines was waning, especially among older citizens, who were among the first to be vaccinated and most at risk without vaccination of developing moderate to severe disease.

From the outset, virologists, infectious disease experts and epidemiologists were worried about how long the protection offered by vaccines would last.

Would it last half a year, a whole year or more?

Unlike the measles and polio vaccines, which offer lifetime protection, with one shot, recent evidence from Israel and elsewhere, suggests that controlling the worst of the SARS-CoV-2 virus might require regular booster shots, probably incorporating protection against the latest variants.

Genomic testing throughout the pandemic, much of it initially carried out by the U.K., revealed the virus was evolving, and sometimes in dangerous ways – hence several well-known "variants of concern" and "interest."

Aside from the first variant to emerge in China, the best-known variants of concern have been Alpha, which surfaced in late 2020 and dominated the viral

landscape early in 2021, and Delta, which emerged as the dominant variant this summer.

The Alpha variant proved to be far more transmissible compared to earlier variants and the Delta variant, much more so, which probably explains why the Alpha variant came to dominate compared to earlier variants and was in turn replaced by the even more adept and aggressive Delta.

But aside from the relative ease with which those variants spread, there was always another worry – were the Alpha, and now Delta variants, more dangerous – more likely to cause infections serious enough to warrant hospitalization compared to earlier variants?

And closely related to that question was: To what extent do current vaccines protect against these variants and probably more dangerous future variants?

The evidence suggests that most vaccines provide excellent protection against developing serious infections, although less so for those over 70 years of age or those with weakened

immune systems at any age. Even so, the Israeli evidence strongly suggests that protection wanes and booster shots will be required.

Breakthrough infections in vaccinated patients tend to be asymptomatic or, if symptomatic, no more than might be experienced with the common cold.

Even so, occasional more serious infections develop suggesting that the first line of defence in the nose and throat was breached by the virus which spread to the lungs and other systems and organs.

Those occasional breaches in vaccinated patients are probably related to waning immunity and possibly mutations that mask the spike proteins from the immune system or other mutations, which facilitate contact with and entry into the host's cells.

Those are all good reasons for booster shots and within a year, modified vaccines to take account of these more dangerous mutations. In the meantime, Israel took the right step.

The nation began booster shots for those 60 and over

in July and 50 and over in August, roughly six to seven months following their first shot and using the same vaccines without as yet incorporating any new features to take account of later variants. The latter tweaks will probably follow.

Which is why I think we're at a turning point in this pandemic. Everything seems back to normal or some crazy version of normal while the war goes on with a virus that continues to evolve in ways that might blindside us, such as the sudden appearance of more dangerous descendants of the Delta variant resistant to current vaccines.

That's the worry, for which booster shots of current vaccines offer a temporary answer.

What's needed in the near future will be continuously updated vaccines, approval for which should not take the long, laboured approach the first approvals took.

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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St. Davids fire hall

This 1944 photograph shows the Niagara Township Council and fire department officials seated out front of the former fire hall in St. Davids. The township's fire department was started in 1941 with several members of the local community being involved in its development. The fire hall was in use from 1942 to 1985, when a new one was built at Warner and Tanbark roads. Today, you can enjoy a delicious meal in this heritage building when you visit the Old FireHall Restaurant at 268 Four Mile Creek Rd.

ARCHITEXT

Ghosts and the loss of heritage buildings

Brian Marshall
Columnist



The 1817 Courthouse, which later became Our Western Home. OWEN STAPLES WATERCOLOUR SKETCH, CIRCA 1910

There is no question that the War of 1812 destroyed much of the town's original built architecture.

Many fine buildings were put to the torch and burned to the ground. Imagine if Robert Kerr's home with its 96-foot-long facade or William Dickson's grand Georgian manor house constructed of 120,000 bricks still graced our streets.

But the loss of Niagara-on-the-Lake's built architecture did not end with the withdrawal of the Americans in 1813. It has continued down through the decades and remains a force even to this day.

Let's consider the Niagara Courthouse and Gaol, which was constructed in 1817, and, when completed, was

proclaimed one of the finest buildings in Upper Canada.

Designed in the Neo-classical tradition, the facade of this winged red brick structure displayed a second-storey arched arcade used by Neo-classical architects to recall the ancient Roman building practice (surviving examples of this design form can be seen in the MacDougall House on Queen Street and the Stewart-McLeod House on Prideaux).

Its impactful presence at the end of King Street, built well away from the town centre, would have created a statement for the future growth ambitions of the town.

Replaced as the Court House in 1847, the building became the seat of operations for Maria Rye's "Our Western Home," an orphanage for young girls that operated until 1913. The building then fell into disrepair and was demolished a few short years later after the First World War.

This was certainly not the only fine old building in Niagara-on-the-Lake to suffer this fate. If we were to journey over to the village of Queenston in the early 1800s, facing onto Queenston Street could be found the strong stone facade of the Ivy Block (a.k.a. Fisher Building).

Reputed to have served as a barracks in the War of 1812, over its lifespan this building housed the Queenston Hotel and the Imperial Bank of Canada, a retail store, restaurant, operated as a boarding house and then an apartment building. This example of Niagara's built-heritage outlasted the 1817 Courthouse by several decades before meeting its end with the wrecking crew in the mid-20th century.

It seems to be typical that an old building is viewed as something that has outlived its purpose, which leads to diminished use, slow disrepair and deterioration, followed by eventual demolition.

Taking a drive on the roads of Niagara-on-the-Lake, one can see this happening today. Wander out Carlton Street heading toward the canal bridge to witness a perfect example.

It seems that for many Canadian citizens, "old" is another word for "useless," with the automatic response that it should be swept away in order to build something new.

But should it really?

Looking to the Stars



A new moon brings some new beginnings

Bill Auchterlonie
Special to The Lake Report

This week we have an amazing new moon in Virgo on Monday, Sept. 6 and much to do about Neptune in Pisces.

Thursday, Sept. 2: While a strong moon in Cancer is in perfect harmony with Neptune in Pisces, a finicky Mars in Virgo opposes Neptune, the planet of imagination and good fortune. It is important to pay special attention to matters having to do with health and work today.

It was Sept. 2, 1666, that a fire broke out at a bakeshop in London, England. Within days, it had consumed 80 per cent of the city and would forever be known as The Great Fire of London.

Friday, Sept. 3: Today Venus in Libra makes for a stressful relationship with Neptune. While charm mostly works for the better, today it may give us aches and pains. Frank Capra, the Hollywood director of many huge hits, most famously "Mr. Smith goes to Washington" starring Jimmy Stewart, died 30 years ago on Sept. 3, 1991.

Saturday, Sept. 4: Mercury is the planet associated with smart thinking. Saturn is all serious and business. Today they are in perfect harmony, bringing good ideas to all matters involving security. Happy Birthday #40 to Beyonce Knowles.

Sunday, Sept. 5: Today may seem somewhat like a repeat of Friday as Venus and not Neptune, but Pluto are in conflict. Today, charm is thwarted by powers from deep within. Also: Bob Newhart is 92 and Michael Keaton is 70.

Monday, Sept. 6: One of the most auspicious new moons

of 2021 is today. It's time for new beginnings, especially regarding all matters Virgo, like health and clever ideas. In addition, the sun and moon are in perfect harmony with Uranus, making for big positive steps toward cherished goals. And Venus and Jupiter form another harmony in Libra and Aquarius, empowering similar events. Pink Floyd bassist, singer and lyricist, Roger Waters turns 78 today.

Tuesday, Sept. 7: Sexy, warm and generous are three words to describe what's up right now thanks to the moon and Mars in the same pace in Libra. Sept. 7, 1896, was the day of the first race using automobiles. The winner was A.H. Whiting, whose vehicle was electric and won with an average speed of 26.8 mph over five miles.

Wednesday, Sept. 8: A day where serious ideas aid in healing old wounds. Mercury in Libra is in perfect harmony with Saturn in Aquarius. With Saturn retrograde this may be step two in a process that began in January 2021 and wraps up in October 2022. "Star Trek," the original TV series, first premiered on Sept., 8, 1966, starring William Shatner as Captain Kirk and Leonard Nimoy as First Officer Spock.

Next week, Venus moves out of Libra and into Scorpio. Mars goes from Virgo into Libra. And we have a first quarter moon in Sagittarius.

Please check out the brand new website www.lutts.ca - "Looking Up to the Stars." It's beautiful to look at, listen to and full of useful information on making your life better and at the best time. It's a podcast with lots at LUTTS.

Astrology is a form of entertainment, not a science.



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Obituaries

John Andriulaitis



ANDRIULAITIS, John - In the sure and certain hope in Christ of the resurrection of the body to life everlasting, John passed away peacefully on Friday, August 27, 2021 at the age of 87. Beloved husband of Marie (née Sturm) for 66 years. Loving father of Robert (Corinna) and Sandra (Larry Ritter). Cherished Opa of Bethany and Danielle. Survived by his siblings Frank (Herta), Hank (Tiina), and Anna (Arvid Mikula), and his sister-in-law Lena Weisshaar, and many nieces and nephews.

John was born on the family farm near Jurbarkas, Lithuania, on August 18, 1934, but the realities of life in Europe in the time of war found the family leaving their homeland. They settled in Germany until emigrating to Canada in 1951. In Canada he met his bride-to-be, Marie, and was married on August 20, 1955. They purchased a home in Scarborough, and settled into family life. John was hired by IBM in 1956, and spent the rest of his career there. In the 1980's they moved to Newmarket, before moving recently to Virgil to be nearer to Sandra and Larry.

John was a social man, who loved to spend time with family and friends. John and Marie loved to travel and enjoyed winter trips to the Caribbean, as well as numerous trips out west to see Robert and his family. But John was happiest when up north at the cottage and treasured the peace and tranquility it offered.

Declining health in his last years did not lessen his spirits, and he was able to live at home until moving to Upper Canada Lodge in July, where he passed away.

A heartfelt thank you to the wonderful staff at Upper Canada Lodge for caring for John in his last weeks of life.

A private family Service of Christian Burial will take place on Wednesday, September 1, 2021 at Trinity Lutheran Church in Niagara-on-the-Lake, followed by interment on Thursday September 2, 2021 at St. John's Lithuanian Cemetery in Mississauga. Arrangements entrusted to MORGAN FUNERAL HOME, 415 Regent Street, Niagara-on-the-Lake. If desired, memorial donations to Trinity Lutheran Church (P.O. Box 1901 Niagara-on-the-Lake, ON L0S 1J0) would be appreciated by the family. Memories photos and condolences may be shared at www.morganfuneral.com

Jacqueline Johnson



JOHNSON, Jacqueline Snyder- August 23, 1928-August 29, 2021

The last chapter of the full and adventurous life of our amazing mother, grandmother and great grandmother has been written. It is with great sadness that she left us on August 29, 2021 at Greater Niagara General Hospital while living in Niagara on the Lake. She was born in Long Branch, New Jersey, daughter of the late Kathleen Watt and the late Earle Snyder of Locust, New Jersey. She was the loving and loved mother of William (Kathryn) of Sault Ste. Marie, Jeffrey of Niagara on the Lake, Jill of Limehouse, and Lisa Burton (Steve) of St. Catharines. Devoted and loved grandmother of Michael (Jeanine), Craig (Alicia), Kristen O'Dell (Sean), Drew, Christopher, Leanne Becker (Dan), Robyn Fennell, Stefan and Jordan. Also survived by her sister, Yvonne Elliman, of New York City and Westhampton, New York, and her seven precious great grandchildren, Freya Becker, MacKenzie O'Dell, Levi Johnson, Shea Johnson, Elizabeth O'Dell, Vance Johnson and Emma Johnson.

Jackie spent her childhood in Atlantic Highlands, New Jersey and during World War II she spent her high school years in Massachusetts. After graduating from Northfield School for Girls in East Northfield, Massachusetts, and college in Briarcliff Manor, New York, Jackie spent time in San Francisco working in the medical field. On returning to New York City in 1948 she worked in the editorial department of The New Yorker magazine until her marriage to William S. (Bill) Johnson in 1950. Their two sons, Bill and Jeff, were born in New York City before the family moved to Toronto in 1953, and Jill and Lisa were born in Toronto while the family was living in Don Mills. After moving to Rosedale in 1962, the family was involved in many activities. After her divorce in 1969, Jackie worked as a realtor for Johnston and Daniels, and then for Royal LePage with great success which enabled her to raise her four young ones as a single Mom. Many happy hours were spent at the Toronto Lawn Tennis Club between selling real estate and raising her family. Upon retirement in 1995, Jackie moved to Niagara on the Lake and never looked back. Golf and volunteer work filled her days when not being with her family, friends or travelling, her volunteer times were spent with the Cancer Society, Music Niagara, the Museum and Historical Society plus enjoyment of her association with St. Mark's Anglican Church. She led a full and happy life. Her adventurous spirit took her to many places in the world, by bicycle in her younger years through Europe, New Zealand, the Natchez Trail in the USA, the Gulf Islands in B.C., Jasper to Banff, the Cabot Trail in Nova Scotia, backpacking from Bali to Bangkok, and in her later years taking her RV, her "Winter Estate", cross country to Alaska, Florida in the winter, and lobstering through the Maritimes. Over the Millennium she took a 4-and-a-half-month cruise around the world from Athens to Athens, visiting 6 continents and 22 countries, plus many shorter cruises around the Pacific Rim, on the Amazon River, in the fjords of Norway, river cruises and more. Her bucket list was small at the end. Jackie marched to her own drummer and realized that one is not old until regrets replace one's dreams and she was an inspiration to all who knew her. She was a legend in her own time and we shall miss her very much. We hope she saves a seat on her bus for us.

A celebration of life for family and invited friends will be held at a later as yet undetermined date. Arrangements entrusted to Morgan Funeral, 415 Regent Street, Niagara-on-the-Lake.



Growing Together

Yes, fall is an excellent time to be planting



Joanne Young
Special to The Lake Report



Are you thinking of adding some new gardens or extending any existing gardens this fall?

I am often asked if they are too late to be planting in September and October. Fall is a great time to tackle a new garden project.

When planting new trees and shrubs, the first thing that you want them to do is to send out roots and start to get established. Root growth is most vigorous when the air temperature is cooler than the soil temperature.

In other words, when air temperatures begin to fall in September, the soil temperature is still warm from the summer sun beating down on it. That, along with more frequent rains, means plants will do well being planted in the fall.

Larger trees and shrubs can be planted right up until the ground freezes while smaller pots of perennials (4- to 6-inch pots) should be planted by mid- to late October. If smaller plants are put in too late there is a greater chance of the root balls being heaved out of the ground by frost.

So now that you know it is OK to be planting in the fall, what else should be considered?

I am often asked, "When is the best time to improve your soil?" When planting anything, regardless on the time of year, any time you can be amending your soil is a good time.

Amending the soil means you need to improve your existing soil by adding organic matter. Organic material is anything that was alive at one time and is now decomposing in or on top of the soil. Such matter is rich in nutrients and its coarse texture helps to break up heavier clay soils, allowing for increased oxygen in the soil and, therefore, more

vigorous root growth.

This also helps to improve drainage. The best way to amend your soil is by mixing compost or composted manure in with your existing soil. Quite often we use triple mix or 3-Way Mix that contains good topsoil, manure and compost/peat moss. It is always best to mix in some of your existing soil at the same time. When you feed your soil, the soil will then feed your plants.

Since it has been a very hot summer, you may find that when you dig the hole to plant the tree or shrub that the soil is very dry. In that case, once the hole is dug, it is beneficial to pour some water into it and let drain through before placing the root ball into the hole. This ensures that there is moisture available down where the roots are.

When placing the root ball into the hole, make sure the top of the root ball is at the same level as the surrounding bed area. Putting the root ball deeper into the soil than what it was originally growing will most likely kill the plant.

If fertilizing at the time of planting, use a fertilizer that is highest in phosphorus (the middle number) such as bonemeal. Keep watering the plant as needed until the ground freezes up.

When planting in the fall, an added thing to do to help protect the plant over winter is to put a two-inch layer of mulch on top of the root ball, making sure to put less right at the base of the plant. You can use bark or some shredded tree leaves as your mulch.

By following these few tips you should have great success with planting in the fall. Happy planting.

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



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