



Pasta dinner raises \$157K

Red Roof Retreat nears capital goal for new building after sold-out fundraiser



Red Roof Retreat's new building on Concession 6 is going up quickly as the respite charity gets closer to funding the project. DAVE VAN DE LAAR

Andrew Hawlitzky | The Lake Report

Red Roof Retreat is now \$300,000 shy of hitting its multi-million-dollar goal to build its new headquarters, after selling out its annual pasta dinner and raising \$157,000.

The fundraiser at Club Roma in St. Catharines, which drew 450

people, pushed Niagara-on-the-Lake's special needs charity past \$4 million in its capital campaign.

To date, this is the largest amount the pasta dinner has raised from ticket sales, auction bids and raffle ticket sales.

The money will support the

building of a new, accessible respite house at the site of its old location in Virgil. The new facility will increase capacity by more than 50 per cent of families who rely on the organization's services.

Board member and event host Ken Hendricks took the micro-

phone to deliver the night's biggest update.

"When we started our capital campaign Feb. 14 of last year, and we started building in the late fall, everybody said we're not going to

Continued on Page 3

The Lake Report tops Ontario again with 26 more awards for excellence

Staff
The Lake Report

The Lake Report's strong performance in the Ontario Community Newspapers Association's awards continued last Friday as Niagara-on-the-Lake's hometown news source again took home more top honours than any other publication in the province.

At the association's an-

nual convention and awards ceremony in Collingwood, The Lake Report was first in nine categories while adding six second-place awards and eight thirds for 2025.

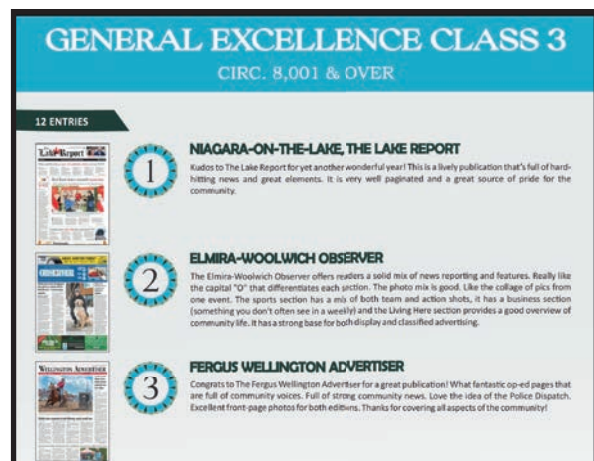
As well, the judges, media professionals from across Canada and the United States, gave The Lake Report honourable mentions in three classifications.

The publication began as

the niagaranow.com news website in 2017 and after the long-standing Niagara Advance closed, the print edition of The Lake Report was born in 2018. The paper has won 170 national and provincial awards for its work in the past five years.

This year, in the largest circulation class (8,000 and up), NOTL's paper cap-

Continued on Page 6



This year's judges called The Lake Report "a lively publication that's full of hard-hitting news and great elements." They added it is "very well paginated and a great source of pride for the community." OCNAORG.SHOUTCMS.NET

AIR CANADA

FREE PARKING
Book **Niagara (YCM) to the world on aircanada.com**

Connect to hundreds of global destinations via Toronto Pearson.

Add to existing Air Canada reservations for no additional cost until April 30.

Starts June 15.

STATIONNEMENT GRATUIT
Réservez Niagara (YCM) vers le monde sur aircanada.com

Accédez à des centaines de destinations mondiales via Toronto Pearson.

Ajoutez ce service gratuitement à votre réservation Air Canada avant le 30 avril.

Le service débute le 15 juin.

Peninsula Flooring Ltd.
13 Henegan Road, Niagara-on-the-Lake
(905) 468 2135 | www.peninsulaflooring.ca

20% OFF STANTON
PRE-MADE AREA RUGS
VALID APRIL - JUNE 2026

Serving Niagara Since 1977

SIMPSON'S PHARMASAVE

Pharmacy: 905-468-2121 | Apothecary: 905-468-8400 | www.simpsonsparmacy.ca

Join us for monthly Customer Appreciation Days:
Every 3rd Wednesday of the Month
Customers 60+: Every last Thursday of the Month

NOTL makes \$125K bet on new airport bus service

Paige Seburn
Local Journalism Initiative
The Lake Report

With a new bus service linking Niagara District Airport to Toronto's Pearson International Airport coming this June, Niagara-on-the-Lake has agreed to back it with up to \$125,000 if the service falls short.

The cities of St. Catharines and Niagara Falls each contributed the same share for the Landline Company and Air Canada's new motorcoach, creating what airport officials describe as a "revenue guarantee" of \$375,000.

Each municipality, including NOTL, drew from its municipal accommodation tax to commit the funding, also known as a hotel room tax.

The airport's chief executive officer, Dan Pilon, said the airport does not receive any money directly.

"There's no scenario where the Town of Niagara-on-the-Lake, the City of Niagara Falls, or the City of St. Catharines is cutting a check for \$125,000 to a private sector corporation, saying, 'Hey, here you go,



The Town of NOTL is putting up \$125,000 for a new airport motorcoach from the Niagara District Airport to Pearson International, in case revenue alone doesn't sustain it. FILE

and feel free to do what you want with this," he said.

Pilon said the funding won't be used if the seats fill up. It only comes into play if it dips below an average of about 10 passengers per bus.

"If there's 600 people who need to have been on all those buses and there were only 580, they do the 20, times what the cost of the actual individual is, and pull from the revenue guarantee," he said.

But if the service is meeting and exceeding that threshold, it will pay back into the revenue guarantee.

"When there's 620, the revenue from those additional 20 gets paid back into the revenue guarantee to bring it back up," Pilon said.

The fund is adjusted over time according to shortfalls and stronger months, but Pilon said the goal is to keep it at \$375,000.

He described the model as a safety net and the arrangement as a shared-risk partnership, meant to help launch a new service in a market that hasn't had it before.

"If there is a shortfall, we agreed to cover it," Coun. Erwin Wiens said.

Wiens framed the move as a long-term investment aimed at reducing the airport's reliance on taxpayers.

"We subsidize it," he said, adding that since "the tax levy subsidizes the cost of the airport, we want to move that away so that it's a financial asset to us."

"So that the taxpayer no longer funds it."

Wiens said council believes the plan will generate revenue over time.

"Sometimes you have to invest in something at the start so that later on it becomes profitable, but absent of an investment, how do

you get a profit?" he said.

Still, not all councillors were convinced the town had enough information before approving the funding.

Coun. Sandra O'Connor said there were still unanswered questions around the motorcoach's accessibility, and Coun. Andrew Niven questioned how the spending fits into the town's broader tourism funding rules, asking whether there is a clear framework for how municipal accommodation tax dollars are used.

The municipal accommodation tax is a fee added to stays at a hotel, inn, bed & breakfast or short-term rental. It's meant to support tourism-related projects. Staff said council had previously approved criteria for the tax, but that framework was put on hold during the budget process.

A future report is expected but in the meantime, staff said the town has "approved funds through (municipal accommodation tax) for tourism-related projects and issues."

Pilon said the goal is to make it easier for travelers booking through Air Canada to reach Niagara.

"It's a true partnership with Air Canada, in my mind, where they're saying, 'We just need to make sure the costs are covered when we're taking a chance on a market that hasn't had this level of service before,'" he said.

"The operating costs to do the service is essentially being eaten by Air Canada and Landline to be able to get a greater market share."

The motorcoach will begin service on June 15 and will function like a connecting flight, booked at no added cost as part of an Air Canada itinerary. It can also be added separately when it cannot be attached, such as with some Air Canada Vacations packages or certain partner airline flights, for \$49.

"In the first year of their contract, they just look to limit that risk even more by working with partnerships to ensure there could be revenue guarantee," Pilon said.

He added that "what's interesting" about this agreement is "the fact that they actually pay back into the revenue guarantee as well."

paigeseburn@niagaranow.com

Niagara on-the-Lake Realty

1994 Limited Real Estate Brokerage

CELEBRATING

50

YEARS
1974 • 2024

<p>285 NIAGARA BOULEVARD \$3,500,000 Thomas Elltoft & Kim Elltoft</p>	<p>58 JOHNSON STREET \$2,799,500 Thomas Elltoft</p>	<p>107-215 RICARDO STREET \$1,425,000 Weston Miller</p>	<p>12 STONERIDGE CRESCENT \$1,549,000 Randall Armstrong</p>
<p>304-2190 LAKESHORE ROAD, Burlington \$1,375,000 Thomas Elltoft & Weston Miller</p>	<p>94 TANBARK ROAD \$2,189,000 Thomas Elltoft & Jane Elltoft</p>	<p>7 CANNERY DRIVE \$899,000 Christopher Bowron & Nicole Vanderperk</p>	<p>8 CLARENCE STREET \$859,000 Jane Elltoft</p>
<p>21 GARRISON VILLAGE DRIVE \$1,295,000 Christopher Bowron & Nicole Vanderperk</p>	<p>642 SIMCOE STREET \$1,695,000 Christopher Bowron & Nicole Vanderperk</p>	<p>4018 FRACHIONI DRIVE, Beamsville \$1,549,000 Randall Armstrong</p>	<p>12 CENTRE STREET \$2,398,000 Thomas Elltoft</p>

Christopher Bowron*** 905-327-6704
Kim Elltoft** 905-380-8011
Randall Armstrong** 905-651-2977

Nicole Vanderperk* 905-941-4585
Viviane Elltoft* 905-988-7494
Thomas Elltoft* 905-380-8012

Jane Elltoft** 905-988-8776
Cheryl Carmichael* 905-941-0276
Weston Miller* 289-213-8681

Ricky Watson* 905-246-3387
Patricia Atherton* 905-933-4983
Socratis Kosmidis* 289-668-9324

*** Broker of Record ** Broker * Sales Representative

109 Queen Street 905-468-3205

246 Four Mile Creek Road 905-262-6996

www.notlrealty.com

Goodbye April showers



...Hello May flowers: while the fog loomed heavy over the Niagara River Parkway on Sunday, the view wasn't without its bright spots. An old barn along the Niagara River Parkway fades into the fog, barely visible behind the trees and vineyard rows. As we come to the end of the month, there's hope the downpour we've experienced the last little while will make way for sunnier skies and spring in full bloom.

DAVE VAN DE LAAR

THE FARMHOUSE Cafe

Open For Lunch Daily
Reservations strongly suggested
Online booking available! Or give us a call to book
905-468-8814



Bring this ad in for 10% off lunch on any Monday, Tuesday or Wednesday in May!

CAROLINE CELLARS WINERY

WINE BOUTIQUE & TASTING BAR
Open 7 days a week
Wine tastings offered daily
Walk-ins Welcome for Wine Tasting! Reservations available for group bookings



1010 Line 2, NOTL, 905.468.8814 www.CarolineCellars.com

Red Roof \$300K short of fundraising goal

Continued from Front Page

have enough time to raise \$4.3 million," Hendricks said. "But I am happy to announce it as of yesterday, we broke the \$4-million mark."

The dinner also produced a record result from its table-bidding portion, which raised about \$48,000 after a counting correction announced during the evening.

"Everything from this table bidding is going to go towards the capital campaign, right towards that last \$300,000 or so that we need to accomplish," Hendricks said.

Red Roof Retreat provides respite and recreational programs for children, youth and young adults with special needs and support for their families. The organization serves nearly 200 families.

The expansion replaces the charity's current 1,100-square-foot bungalow on Concession 6 with a 5,700-square-foot building designed for larger programs and improved accessibility.

"The house is up, so now all the finishing work is going to start, and we've got about three or four hundred thousand dollars more to go for our campaign," said



Top: Members of Table 43, recognized as the top table-bidding group of the night with \$6,540, are (top row) Jesse Desmit, Sarah Desmit, Morgan Heyde, Robert Burciul, Paul Goodman, Ted Wilson, (bottom) Ashiee Dagenais and Calvin Goodman.



Bottom: Attendees filled tables during the sold-out Red Roof Retreat Pasta Dinner fundraiser at Club Roma on Sunday.
ANDREW HAWLITZKY

founder and executive director Steffanie Bjorgan.

The larger building addresses pressure that Red Roof leaders have described for months: demand outgrowing the current house and waitlists persisting as more families seek respite care.

Sunday's dinner was the first held at Club Roma after previous editions outrew earlier spaces. Bjorgan said the move created room for the event's

biggest crowd to date.

Hendricks said the fundraiser has raised \$1.29 million over its full run and more than \$100,000 in each of the past three years.

"Our first annual pasta dinner was at St. Vincent de Paul, and we raised about \$1,500 that year," Hendricks said. "We've come a long way since then."

Red Roof volunteer Leslie Mann said many donors return for the pasta dinner year after year because

they want to see the project completed.

"There's this drive now to get the new building finished and funding for that," Mann said. "Last year there was 300 people, and now, there's a waiting list."

Red Roof previously said it hoped to open the expanded facility in 2026 if fundraising stayed on pace. Sunday's result leaves the organization in the final stretch of that campaign.

andrew@niagaranow.com

St. David's VETERINARY CLINIC stdavidsvetclinic.com

Has your senior pet had a check-up lately?



House-calls available ☎ 905.262.8777

airway CPAP inc 

CPAP AND SLEEP APNEA SUPPLIES
111A Garrison Village Dr., Suite 202
For appointment call 289-868-9212.

FIREARMS WANTED FOR OUR 2026 AUCTION PROGRAM

Rifles, Shotguns, Handguns, Antiques, Militaria, Collections, Estates, Single Items
For Auction or Possible Purchase

CONTACT: SWITZER'S AUCTION
Toll-Free: 1-800-694-2609
Or email us: sales@switzersauction.com
VISIT US @ www.switzersauction.com
for Auction Dates & Details

Advertising inquiries?
Email advertising@niagaranow.com

Hear conversations, laughter, and life again.

Book a **FREE** hearing test
866-474-5701

amplifon
Hearing Care Experts
amplifon.ca

SPRING CLEAN YOUR VISION



You clean your house. You refresh your wardrobe. But when was the last time you refreshed your vision? Spring is a great reminder to replace old lenses, update prescriptions and give your eyes a fresh start for the season ahead. Book your spring eye exam with Dr. Hopkins & Associates Optometry today!



DR HOPKINS & ASSOCIATES OPTOMETRY
— Sight for Life —

NOTL: 905-468-8002 | 358 Mary St.
St. Catharines: 905-682-9119 | 8 Secord Dr.
www.theeyedoc.ca



Konzelmann winery is waiting for town processes to allow it to continue hosting outdoor events. FILE/PAIGE SEBURN

Court backs NOTL discretion on land use dispute between neighbour and Konzelmann

Paige Seburn
Local Journalism Initiative
The Lake Report

A judge has dismissed the case against the Town of Niagara-on-the-Lake in a roughly two-year court fight over outdoor events at Konzelmann Estate Winery. This comes after the town approved new zoning rules to allow outdoor events at the winery, pending municipal approval.

Neighbour Ed Werner, president of Brox Company Limited, took Konzelmann Vineyards Inc. and the town to court after the winery hosted outdoor events in 2024 and 2025 that were not permitted under its zoning and site plan.

Justice A.J. Ohler declared those events violated the rules in February, issuing a court order for Konzelmann, which it agreed to. It required the winery to follow its zoning and site plan and not host outdoor events.

As for the town, Brox was seeking to compel NOTL to “enforce its zoning bylaw and or the site plan agreement with Konzelmann” and restrain from “encouraging and or facilitating breach of its bylaws,” the court decision said.

That case was dismissed on April 23.

Ohler ruled that municipalities have broad discretion in how they enforce bylaws and can't be forced to act unless a law clearly requires it, which the town's zoning bylaw does not impose.

The court found no evidence the town acted unfairly or in bad faith and treated its decision not to enforce the bylaw as a discretionary choice.

The decision came ahead of the town's April 28 meeting, where councillors approved an outdoor hospitality area at the winery with limits on size, number of events and hours.

The property remains subject to a holding (H) symbol that council must lift after site plan approval, addressing details such as parking, landscaping and buffers, is in place.

The site plan would be approved at the staff level and would not return to council. Events could only proceed once it is approved and council lifts the holding (H) symbol.

The bylaw permits up to 24 outdoor events per year, with a maximum of 132 people per event, between 10 a.m. and 8 p.m., from April to October.

“Converting that land into commercial tourism operations risks shifting its value beyond what working farm-

ers can afford,” Werner told The Lake Report, adding that he's concerned the town is prioritizing tourism over farmland.

“Over time, this creates pressure for farmers to sell or to abandon agriculture in favour of tourism-based business models.”

Werner said residents will also feel the impact, noting many chose the area for its rural and agricultural character, which he said could be changed by increased tourism “in ways that cannot easily be reversed.”

Allowing the zoning bylaw to be amended, he said, clears the path for activities previously found to be non-compliant.

“This sets a troubling precedent,” he said. “Rules can be changed after the fact, instead of upheld.”

Werner said the issue could factor into how voters weigh tourism, agriculture and residential priorities as they head toward the next municipal election.

Before the bylaw was approved, councillors raised concerns about previous requirements being in the site plan, noise and how event limits would be enforced.

“The site plan does not come back to council, so how do we ensure that when doing the site plan, that those items will be part of

it?” Coun. Sandra O'Connor asked.

Staff said existing requirements would still proceed.

“We will be ensuring that all previous site plan requirements will be upheld,” said Aimee Alderman, the town's director of planning, building and development services. “Or improved, based off of current standards.”

O'Connor also highlighted potential issues with outdoor events' noise and proximity to neighbours.

“The amplified sound still concerns me,” she said.

Her motion to prohibit amplified sound failed in a tied vote.

Other councillors questioned how limits would be enforced.

Lawyer Tom Richardson argued council should limit events to about two hours, in line with what the winery had said it was seeking during earlier public consultations.

“From an enforcement issue, we wouldn't have the people in place,” Coun. Erwin Wiens said.

Wiens said enforcing a two-hour limit would be “almost impossible,” as tracking when events begin and how long they run would be challenging.

paigeseburn@niagaranow.com



Treadwell Cuisine
Winemakers Dinner

Featuring Wines of
Italy
with Head Sommelier
Bill Mochoruk



SATURDAY, MAY 9, 2026
STARTING AT 7:00PM

t treadwell
farm | to | table | cuisine

Book Now:




Legion
Branch 124
Niagara-on-the-Lake

FISH FRY
EVERY THURSDAY 4PM - 7PM
1 PIECE \$12.00 **EAT-IN OR TAKE-OUT**
2 PIECE \$18.00 **CASH ONLY**

STAY AND ENJOY A SLICE OF PIE FOR DESSERT

St. Davids-Queenston United Church

1453 York Rd., St. Davids
www.stdavids-queenstonuc.ca
Minister: Rev. YongSeok Baek
Rental inquiries: 905-262-5242

Sunday Worship
10:30 a.m.
Also online,
visit our website.



Foodland kicks off cancer run with charity BBQ

Paige Seburn
Local Journalism Initiative
The Lake Report

A Niagara-on-the-Lake grocery store is turning up the grill this weekend to help launch a regional fundraiser.

Think hotdogs, hamburgers and a side of community spirit.

Foodland Niagara-on-the-Lake is hosting a charity BBQ Saturday, May 2, from 11 a.m. to 1:30 p.m. to kick off its Rankin Run campaign.

The store has set a goal of raising \$1,500 for the Rankin Run, which is set for May 23.

The Rankin Run is an annual, Niagara-based fundraiser and one- and

five-kilometre walk or run dedicated to raising funds for local cancer care. It keeps all money raised within the region.

Since launching in 2006, the initiative, founded by Mary Ann Edwards, has raised \$13.6 million.

Examples of programs the run has supported across Niagara include those through

the Niagara Health Foundation and the Walker Family Cancer Centre.

The fundraiser leads up to the main run later this month.

Participants will set off at 10 a.m. at Brock University in St. Catharines for both the one- and five-kilometre routes.

paigeseburn@niagaranow.com

**It's Happening at the Riverbend Inn**

Dig into Chef Jason Parsons' fresh take on Niagara French Bistro Cuisine

Offered Saturday to Sunday 11:30 a.m. - 2 p.m. | RiverbendInn.ca

Mention this ad and receive a complimentary glass of sparkling wine to enjoy with your meal!

Open daily for breakfast, lunch and dinner starting May 5th



The dog days are here



What better way to show your love for your precious fur baby than a work of art in their honour? Over at the RiverBrink Art Museum on April 25, people take part in a pet-painting class. Barb Bain works to capture the likeness of Little, her Jack Russell cross, guided by instructor Katie Favell. DAVE VAN DE LAAR

NOTL declines Pride Niagara pitch, plans own flag ceremony after dispute

Paige Seburn
Local Journalism Initiative
The Lake Report

Niagara-on-the-Lake will hold its own Pride flag raising this year after a public split with Pride Niagara over what meaningful support for the LGBTQ+ community should look like.

At the centre of the disconnect is a new participation request Pride Niagara, the region's primary non-profit group supporting the LGBTQ+ community, introduced for municipalities taking part in its annual Pride activities: hosting a table at the Niagara UNITY Awards, which town officials said would cost \$480.

Pride Niagara said in a Facebook post earlier this month that some municipalities, including NOTL, "have indicated they will not participate under these requirements" and will not be part of its 16th annual Pride flag raising or Pride Niagara Festival.

"We will not be hosting our annual Pride flag raising ceremony in Niagara-on-the-Lake this year," the organization told The Lake Report. "When a flag raising is organized as a municipal event, it is most effective when it is developed in collaboration with the community it is intended to support."

"In the spirit of inclusivity and the town's continued commitment to supporting



NOTL will hold a Pride flag-raising on June 1. FILE

the 2SLGBTQ+ community, we encourage approaches that are guided by community input and collaboration."

The group said municipalities were asked to participate in five ways: attending the flag raising, having the mayor or a councillor offer remarks, delivering a statement at council, flying the Pride flag during Niagara Pride Week — ideally for the full month of June — and hosting a table at the Niagara UNITY Awards.

"This year, Pride Niagara made purchasing a table for \$480 at their event contingent on their involvement in the raising of the flag," said Coun. Erwin Wiens.

"We declined the offer due to budget issues," he said. "The town has raised the Pride flag for years."

Pride Niagara disputed that municipalities had to pay to take part in the flag-raising ceremony itself.

"The statement that municipalities are required to

make a payment or donation to participate in the Pride flag-raising ceremony is incorrect," the organization said. "Participation in this initiative has always been at no financial cost to the municipality."

The group said the fifth element was added because of community feedback it got sharing that people want to see support for the LGBTQ+ community that goes beyond "symbolic gestures" and demonstrates "more consistent and meaningful engagement."

Community concerns included "limited tangible investment in local 2SLGBTQ+ organizations, including time, resources and funding," the organization said.

With independently organized initiatives, "there can be a risk, however unintentional, of support being perceived as symbolic rather than substantive," it added.

Coun. Wendy Cheropita said that for now, "the

town is committed to hosting a flag raising on June 1 and delivering remarks at the first council meeting in June."

"Pride Niagara was invited to participate, however they have declined," she said.

The organization said the town's separate flag raising would take place at the same date and time as the organization's already scheduled community event.

Coun. Maria Mavridis said this was the first year Pride Niagara "told us that we need to purchase a table at the UNITY event," which she said would involve "using taxpayer funds."

She said the town declined to purchase the table but said it would encourage others to support it personally.

"And they responded with, 'Then return our flag and we will not be at the flag raising,'" Mavridis said.

"The town will need to purchase a flag and will of course do the flag raising regardless," she added.

Pride Niagara said it requested the return of its flag "following the town's decision not to proceed with participation under the outlined framework" and that it will be used at other festival events.

The group owns the flag and said it was paid for through community fundraising.

paigeseburn@niagaranow.com

MM LALANDE LAW
PROFESSIONAL CORPORATIONWills & Estates, Real Estate,
Collaborative Family Law


Thank you to all those who attended my seminar on POA Planning 101! My next seminar will be in June, and the topic will be "Will Planning". For now, MM Lalonde Law is here to assist with Wills & Estates, Residential Real Estate, and Collaborative Family Law.

FREE PARKING &
WHEELCHAIR ACCESSIBLE

WILLS & ESTATES SEMINAR - June 24, 6:00-6:45pm

"Will Planning 101"

Call or email to register!

(289) 868-9687  mmlaw.ca mml@mmlaw.ca

LIVE MUSIC FRIDAYS 6-9PM
MAY 1: ONE MORE ROUND
MAY 8: MARTY HOPKINS
MAY 15: FLEMING & TURNBULL
MAY 22: BCR TRIO
OPEN TO THE PUBLIC | CASH BAR
ROYAL CANADIAN LEGION | 410 KING ST. | 905-468-2353

PROUD TO BE YOUR VOICE IN OTTAWA

TONY BALDINELLI
MP | NIAGARA FALLS

NIAGARA FALLS/NOTL OFFICE: 905-353-9590
FORT ERIE OFFICE: 905-871-9991

tony.baldinelli@parl.gc.ca
tonybaldinelli.ca
facebook.com/tonybaldinelli

Proud to support local news!

WAYNE GATES
MPP Niagara Falls proudly representing Niagara-on-the-Lake
905-357-0681

HANDYMAN HANS CAN

Tree and bush trimming/cutting, junk, furniture, bush and yard waste removal, home installations (grab bars, railings, blinds, toilets, lights, fans, vents, TVs), wall mounting, furniture assembly, painting, household cleaning, window cleaning, organizing and hoarding help, repairs (eavestroughs, windows, screens, taps, caulking), moving services, holiday decoration setup and takedown.

905-246-1843

SPRING MARKET, Saturday May 2ND
9-2 St. Davids Lioness, 1462 York Rd
VENDORS - LUNCHEON



The Lake Report earns 26 more provincial awards

Continued from Front Page

tured first place for overall General Excellence. Judges noted the paper is a "lively" publication full of "hard-hitting news" and should be a "great source of pride for the community."

As well, niagaranow.com, the paper's daily news website, was ranked as the Best Community Newspaper Website in the province and our annual Remembrance Day section was judged Best Feature Pages.

The summer 2025 edition of "NOTL: A Guide for Distinguished Explorers," our twice-annual tourism-focused magazine, produced in conjunction with the NOTL Chamber of Commerce, won first place for Best Vertical Product.

Richard Harley, the paper's founder and editor-in-chief, was singled out for six individual awards for journalism and advertising.

Harley earned two firsts: for In-house Promotion for our Christmas wrap featuring artwork created by hundreds of Crossroads Public School students; and best Original Ad Idea for Maple Leaf Fudge's advertisement in "NOTL" magazine.

Harley also won second for Editorial Cartoon and third for Headline Writing, Best Creative Ad (for Maple

Leaf Fudge) and Use of Colour (for Art Space 106's ad in "NOTL" magazine).

Wendy Cheropita's first-person account of her experience navigating the emergency department of the St. Catharines hospital was judged the Best Guest Column.

The NOTL councillor told readers about the good and bad experiences she endured during two visits to the ER after suffering a serious medical episode.

Contributor Jill Troyer's Heartbeat of the Harvest series, about the migrant workers who are crucial to the success of NOTL's agricultural industry, took first place for Best Rural Story.

The paper also won first for Best Police/Court Series, for Kevin MacLean's on-going stories about 84-year-old cyclist Nestor Chemerika being killed by Richard Alan Moore in a hit-and-run, and Moore's subsequent arrest last summer on several charges after a boat struck a swimmer during an outing in Muskoka.

Reporter Paige Seburn took home four awards: second in the prestigious Reporter of the Year category; third in Best Feature/News Series and Best Investigative News Story (for her on-going series The Wild West of Wine, about

how some NOTL wineries do not follow the rules governing how they operate); and honourable mention for Education Writing (about overcrowding at St. Davids Public School).

Dave Van de Laar's body of work earned second spot in the Photographer of the Year category. He also placed third for Most Creative Grip and Grin Photo, a dynamic image of the NOTL Museum's annual poppy project.

Second-place honours were received for: Best Front Page, Best Editorial Page/Section and Best Spot News Photo (contributor Jamie Slingerland's image of thousands of starlings descending on a NOTL vineyard, where they can do heavy damage to grape crops);

Third-place awards included: In the Best News Story category, former staff reporter Julia Sacco's in-depth story on the arson fire that destroyed Glencairn Estate and The Lake Report's annual salute to International Women's Day, featuring the "elbows up" theme.

Humour columnist Ross Robinson and general columnist Garth Turner both received honourable mentions in their respective categories.



Foghorn House deal is a win-win, says Niagara Foundation

Richard Wright
Local Journalism Initiative
The Lake Report

The Niagara Foundation says the organization took over and operates NOTL's former Foghorn House from the Town of Niagara-on-the-Lake is a win-win for both parties.

Lyle Hall, chair of the foundation, says despite public criticisms that were voiced during the summer months on social media, the agreement benefits both the town and the foundation.

The criticism he's referring to was an anonymous post made on a NOTL Facebook group, which claimed the foundation got a sweetheart deal from the town during the 2018-2022 council period. The post ignored several important details surrounding the agreement, which has been in place since 1956.

The agreement allows the foundation to manage the property, located at 90 River Beach Rd., as a rental, with a portion of the proceeds going back to the town's coffers.

As part of the terms, the foundation was tasked with repairing and maintaining the dilapidated property, and must pay the town 15 per cent of the rental income. Until 2022, the foundation also paid prop-

HEARTBEAT of the HARVEST

Making good things grow, from their farms in Jamaica to NOTL's vineyards



Oral Walters snips a cluster of grapes from the vine at Stratus Vineyards. DON REYNOLDS

Harvest activity is winding as October draws to an end, but some of the grapes for the most full-bodied reds are yet to be picked, and until they are, migrant workers will stay on to finish the job. They know their homecoming is close, but the ripening of the late berries will dictate the day they can head home. The Lake Report returned to two of the vineyards we featured at the beginning of the series Heartbeat of the Harvest to sit down with some of the workers for their perspectives. Today we meet Oral Walters and Wayne Blake, at Stratus Vineyards.

Jill Troyer
The Lake Report

They are farmers first and last. Oral Walters has been applying his agricultural expertise to the vineyards at Stratus for more than 20 years. Wayne Blake is winding up his first year at Stratus, but he brings 30-plus years of experience working in tobacco fields.

Both men have extensive gardens back home in Jamaica, growing yams, cabbages, sweet peppers, plantains, sugar cane, pumpkins and bananas. Blake has a pot as well.

They sell their produce either right from the farm or at a market and export some of their yams. Their proficiency with growing things is easily adapted to tending vineyards.

When Walters arrives in Niagara-on-the-Lake in April, he and his coworkers do all the pruning. They will go through a row full of wood, with a riot of canes on each vine, and then it'll just be two sticks.

Continued on Page 6

Niven approached Zalepa with idea of filling council seat

Julia Sacco
Local Journalism Initiative
The Lake Report

The town's newest councillor Andrew Niven approached Lord Mayor Gary Zalepa with the idea

of joining council. The Lake Report has learned.

Niven had first read about the vacancy in a press release from the town, he told The Lake Report.

"It caught me by surprise that he was resigning," Niven said.

The media release published on Sept. 13 announced Zalepa's departure from Niagara-on-the-Lake town council and mentioned the vacancy that needed to be filled within 60 days.

"Reading that there could be an appointment, I had just emailed Gary to tell him I had been interested if that's a path council was willing to take," Niven said.

"He did reach out to me and express some interest,"

Zalepa told The Lake Report Wednesday evening.

Around a week later, Zalepa emailed to confirm with Niven that he would be interested.

Continued on Page 2 Andrew Niven



Peninsula Flooring Ltd.
13 Henegan Road
Virgil Business Park
(905)-468-2135
www.peninsulaflooring.ca



DESIGN SHOWROOM



Wood • Luxury Vinyl
Carpet • Tile
From Top Designer
Names and Brands

Contributor Jill Troyer's Heartbeat of the Harvest series, about the migrant workers who are crucial to the success of NOTL's agricultural industry, took first place for Best Rural Story. Judges said, "Very interesting story. Well presented and told. Great job!" THE LAKE REPORT/JILL TROYER/DON REYNOLDS

NOTL man loses bid to quash Marotta defamation suit

Richard Harley
Local Journalism Initiative
The Lake Report

A judge has refused to throw out a defamation suit filed by developer Henry Marotta against a Niagara-on-the-Lake senior who made critical comments on social media about the project.

In a ruling last Thursday, Justice Edward Marotta of the Ontario Superior Court in Toronto dismissed an application by Stewart Hall, who had argued his comments on the NOTL 401 Facebook group should be considered protected speech under Ontario's anti-SLAPP legislation.

The case stems from a June 2024 post in the NOTL 401 group, where Hall accused Marotta and his companies of engaging in corrupt business practices, offering bribes to politicians and employing aggressive tactics against opponents.

Hall's post followed a controversial 5-4 town council vote that approved Marotta's proposal to build a hotel on the former Parliament Oak school site, which he purchased in 2022.

Continued on Page 4

Election 2025

Kaiser and Baldinelli run head-to-head in federal election for third time

Julia Sacco
Local Journalism Initiative
The Lake Report

All four major parties in Niagara-on-the-Lake's riding have announced their candidates for the May 19 federal election on April 28.

As of Wednesday afternoon, the New Democrats have selected Shannon Mitchell as their candidate for the Niagara Falls-Niagara-on-the-Lake riding.

Lifting Niagara-on-the-Lake resident Andrew Kaiser is the face of the Liberal Party for the riding, facing off against incumbent Conservative Tony Baldinelli.

The year, NOTL's election riding includes Fort Erie, a municipality that was included in past elections.

The riding now includes Niagara Falls and Niagara-on-the-Lake, reflected in its name.

Kaiser has run in the Liberal candidate for NOTL's riding twice before, once in 2019 and again in 2021.

Continued on Page 3

THE WILD WEST OF WINE

Bylaw bypass: Does zoning matter?

How a farm winery isn't following the rules, bylaw enforcement is practically non-existent and competitors are getting frustrated

Paige Seburn
Local Journalism Initiative
The Lake Report

This is the first in a series of stories about NOTL's "Wild West" of wineries, examining zoning bylaws, restrictions, how some wineries are ignoring these bylaws and restrictions and operating as they please, and how the Town of Niagara-on-the-Lake doesn't appear to be enforcing its own bylaws. And we look at whether the solution is to change the rules to ease restrictions or crack down on those who aren't following the existing rules.

Ferus by Fabian Reis winery has caused a stir in the wine industry. It appears to be operating outside town bylaws, breaching NOTL's zoning requirements and enforcement practices into operation. PHOTO: SEBURN

Well, a winery problem. And it comes around the rules for how wineries are allowed to operate.

Under the town's bylaws, there are two distinctions for wineries: Smaller-scale operations are classified as farm wineries, while larger facilities are zoned as commercial wineries.

With these distinctions come sets of rules for what's allowed — and, importantly, differences in the ways the two operations are taxed.

Farm wineries, which pay only agricultural taxes besides the commercial taxes paid on their excess 18.5-square-metre

can only produce and sell wine. They can operate a small retail space, where wine tasting is allowed, but can't sell anything besides what was produced on the property. From the grapes it grows on site.

They can operate a small retail space, face more restrictions. They cannot host events, can't operate commercial kitchens or serve food of any kind, and are not allowed to have hospitality rooms or dining areas or patios.

Essentially, unless farm wineries have a site-specific permission granted by the town, they

can only produce and sell wine. They can operate a small retail space, where wine tasting is allowed, but can't sell anything besides what was produced on the property. From the grapes it grows on site.

Continued on Page 6

Bikes for Farmworkers is in dire need of donations

Paige Seburn
Local Journalism Initiative
The Lake Report

Time to dust off those bicycles sitting in your garage and give them a new life. Bikes for Farmworkers is running out of bikes — fast. With fewer than 60 left, it urgently needs adult bike donations to help migrant farmworkers get around.

Niagara-on-the-Lake this spring and summer. "Generally, at this time of the year, we would have at least 150 bikes all ready and scheduled to go out for sales," said Dave Con-

"This is the worst it's been, and I've been here since 2015."

Bikes for Farmworkers is a volunteer-driven outreach organization through Gateway Community Church, selling recreational bikes to seasonal farmworkers annually since its inception in 2017.

The program's supply has been dwindling.

In 2022, the program had 420 bikes, but by 2023, that number dropped to just 368. Last year, only 150 bikes

Volunteer Dave Con with one of the few bikes left.

Continued on Page 5

George will get royal treatment

Project managers will strive to minimize construction impact

Richard Harley
Local Journalism Initiative
The Lake Report

A rowdy window at a farm worker dwelling, SUPPLIED

Farm workers say they face hot, mouldy conditions, verbal abuse

Paige Seburn
Local Journalism Initiative
The Lake Report

The sun may set, but for many seasonal agricultural workers, the exhaustion doesn't.

After hours in scorching fields, they return to sweltering, overcrowded housing — rent is almost impossible.

"You have work until and you're going back to work tired," Jamie, a Caribbean farm worker, said in an interview with The Lake Report.

Feeling frustration, Jamie would not give his last name or identify the farm at which he works.

Taylor is helping lead the charge on the Royal George Theatre, a project that brings national experience to a hyper-local challenge. His company, Govan Brown, has been awarded the construction management mandate for the three-year project, working alongside the Shaw Festival and Unity Architects.

For Taylor's personal — he lives just down the street.

"I would call it an increased interest in making sure that this thing goes well, not just from the Shaw's perspective, but from the community's perspective," he said in an interview.

Continued on Page 5

Continued draft of new official plan gets green light, resident input sought

Daniel Smekoch
Local Journalism Initiative
The Lake Report

It's been six years since the Town of Niagara-on-the-Lake was sent back to the drawing board after submitting its latest official plan for review and being told it didn't match policy plans laid out by the Ontario government and Niagara Region.

Now, NOTL is in the home stretch of having a new plan that'll guide how the town will grow and how its land will be used — and, it hopes, one that the province will give a thumbs up to.

Niagara-on-the-Lake council approved the first draft of a new official plan, bringing the town closer to the final version it hopes to hand in to the province by November. It's now available for public review and feedback.

"I'm very happy with it. I'm very happy that our timeline is still on track,"

The Lake Report that he's pleased with the progress.

In December, council told staff to prepare a new plan by October. The draft presented Tuesday is based on the 2019 version, with red-

that we can get this done."

Continued on Page 2

NOTL

A GUIDE FOR DISTINGUISHED EXPLORERS

SUMMER 2025

THE GEORGE GETS ROYAL TREATMENT

SUSTAINABLE WINE MAKING AT SOUTHBROOK

THE ROAD TO FREEDOM IN NOTL

THE LAKE REPORT

Maple Leaf Fudge.

Our Story

If you're a fudge fanatic, you will surely enjoy our award-winning Maple Leaf Fudge. Made in the heart of Niagara-on-the-Lake, Ontario, our fudge is made with the finest ingredients and is a true taste of Niagara.

Maple Leaf Fudge is a family-owned business. We are proud to be a part of the Niagara-on-the-Lake community and to provide our customers with the highest quality fudge products.

Maple Leaf Fudge is available in a variety of flavours, including our signature Maple Leaf Fudge. We also offer custom fudge orders for weddings, birthdays, and other special occasions.

114 Queen St. Niagara-on-the-Lake, ON
L2R 1R9
(905) 468-2211
www.mapleleaffudge.com

Left: Reporter Paige Seburn placed second in the prestigious Reporter of the Year category and third in Best Feature/News Series and Best Investigative News Story for her on-going series, "The Wild West of Wine," which details how some Niagara-on-the-Lake wineries do not follow the rules governing how they operate. Middle: The Lake Report took home the win in the coveted General Excellence Class 3 category for publications with a circulation of 8,001 and over, thanks to editions such as this one from 2025. Right: The Lake Report's annual summer magazine, "NOTL: A Guide for Distinguished Explorers" (front page pictured top right), and its advertisements also received accolades, with editor-in-chief Richard Harley winning first for Best Original Ad Idea and third for Best Creative Ad, both for Maple Leaf Fudge's page in the summer 2025 magazine (bottom right).

Support **local** **journalism**, right to your mailbox.



Every week, The Lake Report shows up in your mailbox — and online — for free.

No paywall. No subscription. No barrier. Just local journalism — holding power to account, asking hard questions and telling the stories that matter in Niagara-on-the-Lake.

Many people think of newspapers as big, powerful institutions — distant, untouchable and built to last forever. But the truth is, we're a small business, just like the local bakery or your favourite mom and pop shop.

The Lake Report isn't backed by a corporation or billionaires. We're locally owned, community-driven and committed to this town. Since day one, we've broken stories that bring transparency, spark conversation and help shape the future of Niagara-on-the-Lake. We've become a trusted source of information, a place for businesses and charities to share their stories, and a community builder in countless ways.

But here's the reality:

We rely on this community to survive.

If every household in Niagara-on-the-Lake contributed just \$50 a year, this paper could continue almost indefinitely.

That's less than most people spend on coffee in

a year — or about the cost of one night ordering pizza and wings.

That small amount is the difference between having a truly thriving independent local newspaper — or not.

Because when local newspapers disappear, so does accountability. And right now, in an election year, that's what NOTL needs more than anything.

So here's the ask:

If you find value in this newspaper, please make a donation to help it survive and thrive — so we can continue to shine light in places of darkness.

We've heard from some people who wondered why we ask for donations. It's simple: we believe we offer a valuable service to our community, every week, for free. But it isn't free to print and deliver and pay reporters a living wage. Paid subscriptions aren't an option for us, for a lot of reasons. So, really, we are asking that you consider it a voluntary subscription to Canada's most-awarded community newspaper.

Supporting local journalism is supporting your community.

- *Richard Harley, publisher*

Two ways to donate:

Recurring



Visit www.lakereport.ca/donate-today to pledge a recurring donation. It's an easy, secure way to contribute without any headaches. Payments come out annually and can be stopped any time.

One-time



Visit www.paypal.com/paypalme/niagaranow to make a one-time donation of any size. Please consider donating \$1 per issue, or \$50 per year. We gratefully welcome larger amounts, too.

Please also consider leaving a legacy of support for the NOTL community for generations to come by making an endowment pledge to The Lake Report, in support the creation of local journalism. Contact editor@niagaranow.com for help with endowments.

The
Lake Report

Museum's neighbourhood walking tours return on May 1

Staff
The Lake Report

In Niagara-on-the-Lake, every street holds a unique part of the town's history, some decades old, and some centuries old.

With the help of the Niagara-on-the-Lake Museum, you can witness that history come alive, through every house, street corner and sign post in some of the town's oldest and most distinctive settlements.

The museum's yearly Neighbourhood Walks series is back this May, offering guided tours through different areas of Old Town for locals and visitors, guided by storytellers

with significant knowledge of each neighbourhood's history. The walks will be held every Friday throughout May.

This year's walks begin on May 1, with local historian Rick Meloen set to lead a tour through the Chautauqua neighbourhood, with stories that capture the early settlement and development of this prized community.

On May 8, Friends of Fort George president Tony Chisholm will highlight the history of the War of 1812, leading a walk from the Cairn celebrating the Battle of Fort George, to the gazebo overlooking Lake Ontario, in the heart of the battle grounds.

The following week, on May 15, Chisholm returns, this time leading a tour through the waterside and dock area, one of NOTL's unique neighbourhoods, celebrating the history of industry, fishing and commercial enterprise that changed the town forever.

Following that, on May 22, Denise Ascenzo, a member of the Niagara Historical Society, will help tour participants discover the stories and secrets behind the stones lying in the graveyards at St. Marks and St. Vincent de Paul.

Finally, the tours conclude on May 29, with a special bicycle tour, back

by popular demand, to discover NOTL's ordnance boundary stones, erected in the early 1800s to define the edges of British military land reserves. This tour is led by Ted Rumble, the museum's board director.

All tours begin at 6pm, with a limited numbers of participants for each tour. Tickets are \$12 for members of the Niagara Historical Society, \$15 for non-members and \$10 for enhanced members.

To register online, visit notlmuseum.ca/whats-on and select the date for the walk you'd like to attend. Early registration is encouraged.



Historian Rick Meloen will lead the first walking tour of the season this Friday, taking participants through Chautauqua, an early settlement with a storied past. FILE

LIVING WELL TOGETHER

NAVIGATING YOUR COMMUNITY HEALTH JOURNEY

Join local healthcare professionals to learn how our different organizations work together to provide a collaborative circle of care that supports **Living Well.**

FEATURING GUEST SPEAKERS:

Bonnie Bagnulo
Community Palliative Care & Wellness

Stephen Szeplaki
Niagara North Family Health Team

Tim Seimens
Radiant Care Pleasant Manor

Trevor Kwolek
Great North Physiotherapy

 **Wednesday, May 6th**
9 am - 12 pm

 **NOTL Community Centre**
14 Anderson Lane

 **For More Information Contact:**
notlpc@bellnet.ca | 905.468.4433



Greenview Landscape **expands services** with focus on NOTL

SPONSORED
The Lake Report

Greenview Landscape, a locally rooted business in Niagara-on-the-Lake, continues to grow its reputation as a trusted provider of high-quality property care services.

Greenview was established in 2017, and the company has steadily built a loyal client base by focusing on reliable service, attention to detail, and a strong connection to the community it serves.

Greenview Landscape was founded by Isaac Hendriks, following a desire to support the community he was born and raised in.

Hendriks grew up outdoors, spending time as a child in the rural areas of Niagara-on-the-Lake. He has always valued the natural beauty and agriculture surrounding the town, and works to complement that through commercial and residential landscape services.

From its early days, Greenview Landscape has specialized in lawn care, turf treatments and full-scale property maintenance.



Greenview Landscape is growing its team of specialists to help meet NOTL's high-quality landscape needs.

ara-on-the-Lake, the team takes pride in serving the same community where it was founded. Isaac and the team don't just work here, they live here and genuinely care about the properties they maintain.

Clients are treated as neighbours, not numbers, with a focus on reliable service, clear communication, and attention to detail. This personalized, community-driven approach continues to set Greenview Landscape apart as it grows.

At the core, Greenview's approach has a clear emphasis on quality. This commitment has helped distinguish Greenview in a competitive industry, where consistency and reliability are often key concerns for property owners.

As the landscaping season gains momentum, Greenview Landscape appears well-positioned for continued growth. With an expanded team, enhanced expertise and a firm commitment to high standards, the company is aiming to build on its success while continuing to serve the Niagara-on-the-Lake community it calls home.

nance. Over the years, the company has developed a reputation for delivering consistent results across residential and commercial properties alike.

Now entering a new phase of growth, Greenview Landscape is expanding its service offerings and strengthening its team. The company has recently welcomed two new horticulturalists, a move that signals



a renewed focus on its gardening division.

With professional expertise in plant health, soil conditions and landscape design, the horticulturalists are expected to elevate the level of service provided to

clients seeking more specialized garden care.

In addition to expanding its gardening capabilities, Greenview has also brought on a dedicated turf care specialist. This addition reinforces the company's

commitment to maintaining lush, healthy lawns through targeted treatments and expert knowledge.

As turf care becomes increasingly technical, having a specialist on staff allows the company to stay ahead of industry standards and deliver improved results.

Despite its growth, Greenview Landscape remains committed to its identity as a truly local company.

Operating within Niag-

Your Niagara-on-the-Lake Real Estate Professionals

30 Bianca Drive, Niagara-on-the-Lake
\$870,000



NEW LISTING

AMBER LOFORTI, REALTOR
Amber@McGarrRealty.com 905.359.5780

WE ARE LOCAL
WE ARE TIMELESS



WE ARE GLOBAL
WE ARE INNOVATORS

Lot 1 Bayberry Lane, Niagara-on-the-Lake
\$775,000



BEAUTIFUL STREET IN AN IDYLIC TOWN

JOY MIELE, REALTOR
Joy@McGarrRealty.com 905.347.3728

474 Simcoe Street, Niagara-on-the-Lake
\$2,150,000



*Architectural Rendering

MODERN LUXURY



CYNTHIA & AMBER LOFORTI, REALTORS
905.359.5780 905.329.0353

20 Crimson Drive, Niagara-on-the-Lake
\$809,900



SPACIOUS END UNIT

NICOLE MARSH-BURKE, BROKER
Nicole@McGarrRealty.com 905.751.5171

925 Queenston Road, Niagara-on-the-Lake
List Price - \$1,550,000



SOLD

JOY MIELE, REALTOR
Joy@McGarrRealty.com 905.347.3728



5 St. Paul Crescent, St. Catharines, ON, L2R 3P6 905.468.9229



Author Jeff Richardson **packs museum** for book launch

Last Thursday evening, Niagara-on-the-Lake author Jeff Richardson held a book launch for his recently published satirical novel, "The We're Still Here Book Club. Volume One: Elbows Up!" Set in the summer of 2025, the story takes place in the fictitious town of Brockton, which bears a suspicious similarity to Niagara-on-the-Lake. Indeed, the novel features a local weekly newspaper, The Brockton Bugle, which Richardson touts as a comically exaggerated version of The Lake Report. Below, we provide a report on Thursday's launch, written in the style of The Brockton Bugle.

Brockton Bugle editor
Special to The Lake Report

Seventy-eight people attended a book launch Thursday evening at the Niagara-on-the-Lake Museum. Coincidentally, 78 was also the average age of the attendees—a young crowd, one might say, given that most hailed from Old Town. The quartered sandwiches were crustless and varied, though this correspondent noted the salmon salad disappeared first. It was "elbows up" to get at the brownies, which could only have been tastier if laced with hashish. The wine was local.

The author's son, Troy Cardozo-Richardson, read the Land Acknowledgement and, to this humble ear, did good service to the pronunciation of both Haudenosaunee and Anishinaabe. Not always the case at such gatherings.

The author, Jeff Richardson, a five-year resident



NOTL author Jeff Richardson signs copies of his new book, "The We're Still Here Book Club, Volume One: Elbows Up!" during a launch at the NOTL Museum on Thursday.

of Chautauqua, welcomed the assembled crowd and proceeded to read excerpts from his novel, *The We're Still Here Book Club. Volume One: Elbows Up!* Quite a mouthful.

I blush to report that the first vignette concerned an elderly member of the book club having a bladder incontinence incident on another member's pristine white sofa while they were

discussing *The Remains of the Day*. Some in the audience squirmed. Others guffawed.

Two further vignettes were read, followed by Niagara-on-the-Lake's own Weston Miller, whom the author had lassoed into interviewing him. Richardson's effusive introduction went on at some length, although one wag present noted Miller could have

stepped in at any time to stop him.

There was much back and forth, Miller lobbing hardball questions such as, "It must have taken you years to write such a very humorous and compelling novel, yes?" Richardson took these salvos in stride. Richardson also acknowledged several fellow authors in the room and praised his editor, Tiina Randoja, then embarrassed her by insisting she stand for an ovation.

Perhaps the author's most intriguing comments had to do with his grandmother's Loyalist ancestry and his grandfather being a Home Child. The town's Loyalist and War of 1812 heritage are woven into the background of the novel, making the Museum the perfect locale for the book's launch.

Throughout the evening, the author avoided spoilers but did reveal two premises of the novel. One is that the book club member's bladder mishap throws the club into

disarray. The second is that a friend of the U.S. president had taken to strolling the town's main street wearing one of those red political baseball caps seen south of the border. When the cap disappears and the president learns of this, he demands that "Canada" return the hat—or else. Absurdly, the book club becomes enmeshed in what turns out to be an existential crisis for Canada.

No wonder one shop on Queen Street has refused to sell the novel, saying, "We dare not offend our American customers."

Although Richardson may have been amusing at times, what struck this observer most about Thursday's event was how much those in attendance enjoyed being with one another. Even those who wished the wine was French (but would never dare say so), and those who yearned for the United Church ladies' sweet pickles to complement the crustless

sandwiches, greeted friends old and new with much vigour. Out-of-towners were welcomed into the celebratory fray, and even the two who dared admit to being from Toronto escaped unscathed.

Richardson told the audience he had invited the editor of this fair broadsheet to say a few words about the importance of community journalism, but the editor had to recuse himself due to poor health. Only his presence—and perhaps those sweet pickles—could have made the evening more complete.

The We're Still Here Book Club. Volume One: Elbows Up! is available online from such megaliths as Indigo and Amazon, but the author noted that any independent bookstore can order copies in, if one asks. Or one can join the line-up of people down Anderson Lane placing a hold at our cherished library.

Elbows up!

Soil yourself.

Locally made. Seriously good dirt.

Organic Compost
Pro Soil Blends
Mulch & Stone



For Pick up and Delivery call 905 658 7625

Grape King raises a glass to Niagara wines

Steve Payne
Special to The Lake Report

Augusta Van Muyen, vineyard manager at Tawse Winery in Vineland since 2021, knows her terroir.

Terroir is a French word that, in the wine world, refers to the combination of topography, climate, soil and microbes that shape a region's wines. Niagara has remarkable terroir.

But it wasn't that long ago — shortly before the 37-year-old Van Muyen (rhymes with "flying") was born — when Canadian wines were considered almost undrinkable.

So unappetizing were they that famed Canadian novelist Mordecai Richler once joked that, "There is only so much plonk (bad wine) I am willing to drink for my country."

That was during the Concord grape era.

Today, Canadian wines are internationally famous for their quality, thanks to a shift in grape varieties. Niagara's wines are especially prized (for more on that story, see Niagara-on-the-Lake author Jill Troyer's recently published book, "The Winemaker's Gamble: How One Man and a Handful of Rebels Turned Niagara Wine into a Global Industry.")

Canada's wine-making successes didn't happen by accident. It took a series of coincidences, chance meetings, and a cast of determined "rebels" to make it happen. Van Muyen has been influenced by many of them.

Van Muyen is this year's Grape King, a coveted appellation dating back to 1956. Awarded annually by the Grape Growers of Ontario marketing board, it recognizes excellence in vineyard work. The Grape King is also charged with promoting Ontario's (and more broadly Canada's) grape growers.

"I'm super honoured to represent the wine industry," she says. "It means a lot after all the hard work I've done."

Van Muyen is the fourth woman to win the honour. It is not handed out casually. Viticulture experts dissect



Augusta Van Muyen, this year's Grape King, stands among the vines at Tawse Winery, where her work helps shape Niagara's world-class wines. She wants more Canadians to drink more VQA wines. SUPPLIED

the technical proficiency of vineyard managers in great detail before selecting a winner.

Why is Van Muyen not the Grape Queen, you might ask?

"It was my choice to keep the Grape King title," Van Muyen told The Lake Report at Tawse Winery, a sumptuous property on the Beamsville Bench.

"I worked really hard to be a king. The way I was raised, I was told that I could do whatever I wanted. And one of my goals was to be the Grape King."

Agriculture is part of Van Muyen's heritage. She grew up in Prince Edward County, on the north shore of Lake Ontario, just south of Belleville. Her family

came to Canada from Holland after the Second World War.

She got her first vineyard job at 13. That was in the early 2000s, when Prince Edward County's wine industry was just emerging. Her father helped build some of the first wineries there with his bare hands. He was (and is) proprietor of Kente Enterprises, a steel fabrication firm.

"Once I started working in the vineyards, that was it for me," Van Muyen says. She immediately decided to pursue a career in viticulture — the science of growing grapes.

She came to Niagara to study at Niagara College's newly established teaching winery. Two decades ago,

it wasn't yet the impressive Daniel J. Patterson campus at Glendale and the QEW. It was, she recalls, just a green barn at the back of the property with straggly vines behind it.

Unfortunately, at 17, Van Muyen was too young to enrol. Students had to be of legal age to take wine-tasting classes. So she bided her time instead at Brock University, taking viticulture courses before moving to Niagara College.

A co-op placement brought her to the then-new Tawse Winery. She spent her summers in the vineyard and, after harvest, in the winery.

Eager to learn about European production, she went to work in Germany's larg-

est wine region, Rheinhessen, upon graduation. Her experience at two wineries there were seminal.

She next headed to the Annapolis Valley in Nova Scotia, another nascent Canadian wine-producing region. There, she worked for vineyard owner (and broadcast legend) Pete Luckett, who was famous for his "Pete's Frootique" all-about-produce segments on daytime television.

"There was this huge vineyard, overlooking the Minas Basin. And it was absolutely beautiful there — a great experience," she says.

A relationship with her soon-to-be husband beckoned Van Muyen back to Niagara — and back to Tawse Winery. She was ap-

pointed assistant winemaker at Tawse in 2013 and, a few years later, returned to work in the vineyard.

Tawse owner Moray Tawse — like many who helped transform Canada's wine industry — is an improbable character. A Toronto financier, he was initially looking for land in Burgundy, France, to make wine, before he found out about the stunning terroir available right here at home.

As Grape King, Van Muyen serves as an industry ambassador. It has been a busy year already since she took the honour in September.

She's heading to other Canadian wine regions soon: Prince Edward County, the Lake Erie North Shore (another burgeoning terroir), and then the Okanagan Valley in B.C.

"It's only for a year, right? You have to embrace it while you have it. And make the most of it," she says.

Tawse Winery is just one of about 200 high-quality wineries and vineyards in Ontario. Tawse has 130 acres on the Beamsville Bench that are farmed organically and sustainably.

"At Tawse, we focus on letting the land speak and the terroir speak," Van Muyen says.

It's easy to take these vineyards for granted — a verdant backdrop for a summer drive to and from Niagara-on-the-Lake. But they are truly fields of miracles.

And people like Augusta Van Muyen have helped make Canadian wine what it is today — respected around the world.

Asked if she had one fervent wish for the future, Van Muyen doesn't hesitate in her response: "I'd like more Canadians to drink VQA wines."

The Vintners Quality Alliance (VQA) label means, among other guarantors of quality, that you are drinking 100 per cent Canadian wine.

So next time you go to the LCBO or a winery, buy VQA. The Grape King knows you'll taste the difference.



RELAXED FINE DINING AT
STREWN WINERY

EARLY SPRING HOURS:
FRI, SAT, SUN FOR LUNCH AND DINNER
GOING TO FIVE DAYS A WEEK AS OF MAY 14TH
(CLOSED TUESDAYS AND WEDNESDAYS)

Mother's Day
Celebration

Special 3-course
prix fixe menu
\$75 PP ++
Sunday, May 10th

Seatings from 11 am - 6 pm

terroir
RESTAURANT & WINE BAR

905-367-0343

ROYAL OAK COMMUNITY SCHOOL'S

BIG COMMUNITY BAKE SALE

Sat. May 9th, 2026 9am to 2pm 176 Wellington St., NOTL

Royal Oak Community School
Niagara-on-the-Lake

Student Fundraiser to raise money for school trips!

Come Support!

cupcakes	coffee
cookies	cold drinks
handy crafts	raffle

DELICIOUS BAKED GOODS

FRESH COFFEE AND DRINKS

RAFFLE & HANDY CRAFTS

Have an opinion you want heard?
Email us.



Horticultural Society sale returns May 9

Staff
The Lake Report

Gardening enthusiasts of Niagara-on-the-Lake, be advised: the biggest event of spring is just around the corner.

The NOTL Horticultural Society is hosting its annual plant sale on Saturday, May 9 at the Meridian Credit Union Arena in Virgil.

Expect a variety of plants for sale, including annuals, perennials, shrubs, herbs, vegetables and fruits, from

local growers.

You can also expect gardeners that can sharpen your tools and provide plant advice to help your garden flourish during the spring and summer.

This door-crasher event is likely to move quickly: it's advised to show up early, before 9 a.m., in order to get inside before plants sell out.

The cash-only event will take place rain or shine from 9 a.m. to 12 p.m. at the Meridian Credit Union Arena, 1565 Four Mile Creek Rd.



Line up early or you might miss the fresh deals at the NOTL Horticultural Society's annual spring sale. FILE

Nominations for Business Achievement Awards close Friday

Staff
The Lake Report

Know an entrepreneur or community player in Niagara-on-the-Lake you think deserves recognition for their hard work, innovation and leadership? The Chamber of Commerce would love to know all about them — and celebrate what they do to make NOTL a great

place to live and work.

The annual Business Achievement Awards, formerly known as the Spirit Awards, are just around the corner, and the Chamber of Commerce is still accepting nominations for individuals, businesses and organizations the community would like to see receive recognition for contributing to the success and vibrancy of the town.

The nomination deadline has been extended to April 30 by the end of the day. The awards gala is scheduled for May 20, at Ravine Vineyard Estate Winery.

Award categories include: Business of the Year, the Dan Patterson Awards for Entrepreneurial Spirit, the Celia Liu Award for Excellence in Hospitality and Tourism, the Chris-

topher Newton Award for Arts and Culture, Outstanding Achievement in Agriculture, the Peter Ling Award for Community and Business Leadership, and the Lord Mayor's Award of Excellence: Citizen of the Year.

Nominations can be submitted through the chamber's website at chambernotl.com/business-awards.

DATE NIGHT MENU

\$139 + HST FOR 2 PEOPLE. DINE IN ONLY

STARTER

CHOOSE ANY 1

<p>PEANUT DELIGHT (V) (GF) ROASTED PEANUTS, ONIONS, CUCUMBER, BELL PEPPERS, TOMATOES, LEMON JUICE, SPICES, CHIPS</p> <p>DAHI PURI HOLLOW PUFFS, STUFFED WITH POTATOES, CHICKPEAS, YOGURT & HOMEMADE DELECTABLE CHUTNEYS</p>	<p>SOUP OF THE DAY ASK YOUR SERVER</p> <p>SAMOSA CHAAT POTATO & PEAS STUFFED SAMOSAS ON A BED OF CHICKPEAS, WITH YOGURT & OUR CHUTNEYS</p>
---	--

MAINS

CHOOSE ANY 2

<p>BAIGAN BHARTHA (V) ROASTED EGGPLANTS, PEAS, ONION AND TOMATO BASED PREPARATION</p> <p>PALAK PANEER INDIAN CHEESE IN SPINACH BASED PREPARATION</p> <p>CHICKEN TIKKA MASALA THIS NEEDS NO EXPLANATION</p> <p>KADHAI LAMB BONELESS LAMB IN CINNAMON FLAVORED SPICY PREPARATION</p>	<p>SAAG ALOO (V) POTATOES IN A SPINACH BASED PREPARATION</p> <p>PANEER MAKHANI MASALA PANEER IN A SPICY AND BUTTERY GRAVY THICKENED WITH CASHEWS</p> <p>DELHI BUTTER CHICKEN NOT THE USUAL GLORIFIED KETCHUP. THIS IS MILDLY SPICED.</p> <p>GOAN FISH CURRY BASA FILLET COOKED IN A TAMARIND & COCONUT BASED SPICY PREPARATION</p>
--	--

ACCOMPANIMENTS

CHOOSE ANY 2

ROTI BUTTER NAAN GARLIC NAAN RICE

DESSERT

CHOOSE ANY 2

RICE KHEER AFFOGATO GULAB JAMUN

BOTTLE OF WINE

CABERNET SAUVIGNON	PINOT GRIGIO
PINOT NOIR	CHARDONNAY

SPECIALS

LIMITED TIME THALI

CHICKEN OR PANEER MAIN
DAL, RAITA,
PICKLE, DESSERT,
RICE, ROTI/NAAN
\$34 (DINE IN ONLY)

THURSDAY

BUTTER CHICKEN
\$20
WITH PURCHASE
OF A DRINK

FRIDAY

HALF PRICE
BOTTLE OF WINE
WITH MEAL

DINE IN ONLY
HST &
GRATUITY NOT
INCLUDED

GREAT
SELECTION OF
LOCAL AND
INTERNATIONAL
WINES, BEERS
AND SPIRITS.

233 KING STREET | NOTL | L0S 6J0 | 905.468.7222
auraonthelake.ca | info@auraonthelake.ca

OFFERS, PRICES, MENUS ARE SUBJECT TO CHANGES WITHOUT NOTICE
THESE OFFERS AND SPECIALS CANNOT BE COMBINED WITH ANY OTHER
OFFERS OR DISCOUNTS

TRANSFORM YOUR HOME

WITH OLDE TOWNE BUILDING CO.

We are remodeling experts!

Whether it's a stunning **kitchen**, a spa-like **bathroom**, or a functional, stylish **basement**, we will bring your vision to life.

Quality craftsmanship, modern designs, and a hassle-free experience. Let us make your dream space a reality!

CALL US FOR A FREE CONSULTATION

OTBC
CONSTRUCTION

Brandon Noel

905 - 325 - 2766

www.oldetownebuildingcompany.com

Olde Towne

Building
Company

Zebras and a moose in NOTL? Lineup for wildlife-themed In Bloom festival revealed

Staff
The Lake Report

Niagara-on-the-Lake's In Bloom Festival has unveiled its 2026 lineup of large-scale floral installations — along with the designers behind each display — as the event prepares for an expanded second year this spring.

Running May 8 to 11, the festival will transform the town's heritage district into an open-air gallery of animal-inspired floral art under the theme "All Creatures BIG and Small."

Organizers say this year's lineup highlights both returning and new floral designers, with installations spread across prominent locations in town.

Among the featured works is "The Magnitude of Butterfly's Beauty," created by Niagara Parks at MacFarland House along the Niagara Parkway. The installation will feature a



A floral showcase at the "Monet" gardens last year. FILE

12.5-by-12.5-foot butterfly mosaic built from flowers.

At the Prince of Wales Hotel, Clipping's Floral Design will present "The Great Canadian Moose," a large woodland-themed display positioned at the hotel entrance.

Clipping's Floral Design is also behind "The Comedic Truck Crash" at the Gardens at Pillar and Post, a playful farmyard scene centred around a toppled truck.

Mint & Magnolia will create "Sophisticated Safari" at the Charles Hotel

and Hob Nob Restaurant, featuring a lion in a bowtie accompanied by giraffes.

Meanwhile, BBBlooms Floral Studio will install "ZEEbras, Embrace Your Uniqueness" at the Shaw Club Hotel and Zee's Grill, showcasing a pair of stylized zebras.

The festival, presented by Vintage Hotels, is expanding in both size and scope in 2026, with more installations than its inaugural year and an increased presence at the Gardens at Pillar and Post.

Event manager Cheri

O'Reilly said the growing roster of designers is part of what is driving the festival's evolution.

"NOTL in Bloom continues to grow in the most beautiful way," she said. "This year's installations showcase incredible creativity from striking large-scale works to thoughtful, intricate designs. With new floral talent and expanded displays across the gardens and town, we're proud to present our most spectacular festival yet, one that celebrates community, creativity, and the simple magic of flowers."

In addition to the floral displays, the festival will feature a series of related events, including a gardening speaker series, workshops, afternoon tea offerings and a gala dinner.

Organizers say the expanded lineup is designed to create a walkable, immersive experience throughout the town.

THE WATERFRONT
at
Niagara-on-the-Lake Golf Club
MOTHER'S DAY BRUNCH
SUNDAY MAY 10TH

THREE SEATINGS 11 AM, 12:30 PM & 2 PM

Celebrate Mother's Day with Us!
Join us for a beautiful Mother's Day Brunch Buffet, set against the stunning backdrop of Lake Ontario.

Raise a glass of bubbly to our awesome Moms! Then indulge in a delightful feast featuring something for everyone: A selection of fresh breads, crisp, garden-fresh salads, a savory antipasto platter, made-to-order Omelette station with your favorite toppings.
Succulent salmon, tender chicken.....
and so much more!

Don't forget to save room for our mouthwatering assortment of cakes, pastries, and sweet treats. the perfect way to start your day.
Come celebrate with us because
the women in our lives deserve the very best.

\$62 +tax - Per Person
\$22+tax - Per Child Under 12
**Reservations Recommended

To make a reservation or find out more information:
905-468-3424 ex 16
www.notlgolf.com

Advertising inquiries?
Email advertising@niagaranow.com

Summer Company

Start Your Business This Summer!

Are you 15–29 with a great idea? Summer Company offers up to **\$3,000 in funding** plus expert mentorship to help you launch and run your own summer business. Build real skills, connect with local business leaders, and be your own boss. Spots are limited—apply now and make this your breakthrough summer!

NIAGARA FALLS
SBC
Small Business Centre

Click on the application form 

905-356-7521 Ext. 5130
smallbusinessoffice@niagarafalls.ca

MISKOW GENERATORS AND ELECTRIC LTD.

THE GENERATOR SPECIALISTS

Sales • Service • Installation
905 • 994 • 1715
www.miskowgenerators.com

- Full Service Electrical Contractor
- Customer Support 24 • 7 • 365
- Essential Preventative Maintenance Packages
- All work completed by **Qualified Electricians, Gas Technicians and Certified Generac Generator Mechanics**
- **EASY Financing (oac)**
- **FREE In-Home Quotations**

Generac Automatic Standby Generator

20 YEARS Generator Installation and Service
35 YEARS Electrical Experience

It's not just a generator
It's a power move. 

GENERAC | **POWERPRO**



Publisher: Richard Harley
Editor-In-Chief: Richard Harley
Managing Editor: Zahraa Hmood
Editor Emeritus: Kevin MacLean
Design & Layout: Richard Harley
Advertising: Megan Vanderlee
Contributors: Dr. William Brown, Penny-Lynn Cookson, Patty Garriock, Maddy Gordon, Steve Hardaker, Andrew Hawlitzky, Brian Marshall, NOTL Museum, Ross Robinson, Julia Sacco, Paige Seburn, Kyra Simone, Tim Taylor, Jill Troyer, Garth Turner, Dave Van de Laar, and many more members of the NOTL community.

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



Your Lake Report is the proud winner of 144 national and provincial awards for journalism and advertising excellence.

BKind Grateful #73: Pick up a stray glove or hat and place it somewhere visible instead of ignoring it.

This tiny column gives tips to help promote kindness in our lives and spread joy and happiness.



Contributed by Patty Garriock

“The art of living lies in a fine mingling of letting go and holding on.”
 - Havelock Elis

HOW TO GET IN TOUCH

Email:
 Letters: editor@niagaranow.com
 Story Ideas: editor@niagaranow.com
 Advertising: advertising@niagaranow.com
Phone
 Newsroom: 905-359-2270
 Advertising Department: 905-932-5646
Mailing Address
 PO Box 724, Niagara-on-the-Lake, L0S1J0

Have a lead on a story?

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

Foggy day in NOTL



The NOTL Sailing Club sits wrapped in thick morning fog on Sunday. DAVE VAN DE LAAR

Editorial

Ford needs to act ‘For the People’

Kevin MacLean
 Editor Emeritus

Poor Premier Doug Ford. “There is no one in this country that is scrutinized more than I am,” he said after his latest misstep, the debacle around the aborted purchase of a (used) private jet for him to fly around on the people’s business.

Barely 48 hours later, despite noting his cabinet had unanimously endorsed the purchase of the nearly \$30-million “Gravy Plane,” the premier did a 180-degree turn.

Ford is a seasoned and smart politician, who has already tried to spin his about-face on the Challenger jet into a case of “I’m not too shy to change my mind.”

Once again he was embracing his wannabe Everyman persona. And for the millionaire businessman, an entrepreneur since his youth, that schtick is just a co-opted persona.

“For the People” was the slogan he campaigned on eight years ago when he was first elected premier. And he has shown time and time again that, really, he is “For the People” — though maybe just not the common people who have to live with his actions and decisions.

In his 2022 campaign, he promised to “Get it Done” and then, in 2025, he swore he needed a new mandate to be able to “Protect Ontario” in the era of Donald Trump 2.0.

Instead, we have a leader in Ontario who often acts



The Ford regime initially vowed to be “For the People” and later to “Get it Done,” but now, like many aging governments, it appears to have lost its way. FILE

like King Trump, despite being an outspoken critic of the golden fleecer to the south of us.

The list of missteps and self-inflicted messes by Ford continues to grow.

Besides the plane, in the past week alone he has taken the hideous step of slamming shut the door on access to information related to himself, his cabinet, staff and other top government officials. And, remarkably, he made it retroactive.

The move will effectively kill pending requests for records, including those related to the premier’s personal cellphone, which he regularly uses for government business. And it shields many senior officials from public accountability.

Without access to such information and government records, it is unlikely anyone would ever have heard about the infamous Greenbelt scandal.

That charade cost a cabinet minister and several staffers their jobs over preferential treatment accorded to developers as part of a secret plan to open up parts of the protected area known as the Greenbelt.

Ford emerged largely unscathed politically and eventually promised to reverse course on the Greenbelt — though the whole affair could still cost taxpayers millions in reparations.

The premier seems not to have learned from that scandal and last week his government rammed through Bill 97 to kill

access to important government information. There were no public hearings or debates on this vital piece of legislation that’s designed, ironically, to curb what the public knows about its government’s activities.

We strongly doubt Bill 97 will withstand a court challenge — and, if our wee paper had the resources, we’d gladly be part of such a fight — but in the meantime Ford has effectively granted himself and his mandarins free reign while running roughshod over the public’s right to know about how his government is being operated.

“Just trust us, folks,” is not the answer.

Couple last week’s plane and freedom of information scandals with the litany of other recent Ford government foibles — a ballooning deficit, missed housing targets (despite bulldozing over municipal controls on development), increased health care wait times and threats of more privatization, and shutting down the legislature for months, to name a few — and we all should be worried about the direction in which the premier is driving us.

The Ford regime initially vowed to be “For the People” and later to “Get it Done,” but now, like many aging governments, it appears to have lost its way.

We urge Doug Ford to take a step back, remember why he was first elected — and whose interests he was chosen to serve. It’s not too late to repair the trust that has been damaged.

kevin@niagaranow.com

Interiors by
Better Shade
 FAMILY-OWNED SINCE 1955

MADE IN CANADA FURNITURE, DRAPERIES, BLINDS
 PROUD SPONSOR OF THE HUMANE SOCIETY

WHO’S A GOOD CHAIR!?!

ONTARIO’S LARGEST RECLINING CHAIR GALLERY
 469 GLENDALE AVE, ST. CATHARINES



The man who wants to save us. **Again**



THE TURNER REPORT

Garth Turner
Columnist

The Parliament Oak hotel would never have been approved.

The hulking condo towers of Glendale never contemplated.

The ambitious scheme to beef up our wee airport for tourist-laden jets never embraced.

The St. Davids round-about never planned.

The Royal George mega-complex never rubber-stamped.

And, if Vaughn Goettler were mayor, Ontario would have to invade NOTL to make us amalgamate with the heathens in the Falls. Because we might well be an independent state.

At least, that's the rhetoric. The defiance. The swagger of a 74-year-old, self-made, wealthy, philanthropic Old Town resident who's spent the last four years shaking his head.

He ran to be mayor once before. He lost. Actually, he hints, we all did when Gary Zalepa was christened our master.

"I'm really disturbed at what I've seen coming out of this council," he says. "They've been too lenient with developers. With Parliament Oak, for example, the hydrological issues of the property were never addressed. And it doesn't fit with the neighbourhood. I never would have approved it — that space would have been perfect for seniors' housing, so people could age in grace, in town."

The local council, says the entrepreneur, is not transparent enough. Current politicians let people "put shovels in the ground without permits."

There is too little transparency. Too much dependence on tourism and wineries. Too little care about quality of life.



Self-made man and philanthropist Vaughn Goettler says NOTL has caved to developers. Things will change if he's mayor, he vows. He will be seeking election. GARTH TURNER

And we need to stop running scared from the region's threat of sucking NOTL into the black hole of bigger government, says the man who came third in 2022 and vows to change that.

"We should separate as opposed to amalgamate. We pay a disproportionate amount of tax relative to what we get in return. This is not Niagara Falls. We're not Los Vegas North — and if we let that kind of thinking invade the place we might as well throw up a Ferris wheel behind the cenotaph."

One issue, the candidate says, is that NOTL has a part-time mayor. It shows.

"There is a lot of cleaning-up to be done in this town. For example, staff need to remember they do not run this town. Council does and staff report to it. The mayor should be our CEO."

To that end, Goettler says — unlike the current boss — he won't be a part-time

politician. He has stepped back from the HVAC empire he and his wife built. He's selling his seasonal home in California.

His family foundation will continue to spread its wealth around, as it did with a million dollars to help the Niagara Foundation buy the historic Wilderness property.

By the way, he says he kept news of that gift quiet while he was running in the last election — for political reasons: "I didn't want people to think this is just some wealthy jerk trying to buy votes."

But Goettler is a one percenter, without a doubt. He built a successful home comfort business, sold it, bought it back, expanded it, scaled it and flipped it to hungry Americans from San Francisco.

Over 20 years he partnered with his wife, Lauren, and embraced his mistress, ambition.

Now the two of them are among the largest donors

to local causes. Lots of headlines and pictures in the town's media. Some people call the Goettlers showboats. No surprise. It's always easy to stereotype and diss those who live in the big house down on the water.

But elections are levelers. Money won't buy you one. Support is earned, and in NOTL these days, we're a polarized society.

Many are desperate to preserve its uniqueness while others see the town as a movie set or heritage theme park — a backdrop for yet more growth. More tourists. More gelato, hotels and cash flow.

"If I win not everyone is going to like what I do," vows Goettler. "They won't. But if we don't grab hold of this town now, we will lose it forever. This is my one chance."

Garth Turner is a NOTL resident, journalist, author, wealth manager and former federal MP and minister.

garth@garth.ca



This week's riddle is "Jeopardy!" style
Category: WINEMAKER'S GLOSSARY

From Latin for "heavy," this 4-letter word refers to a style of dry champagne.

Last issue category: ALSO A CAR PART

Clue: They make Stratocasters with all the fixins.

Answer: What is Fender?

Answered first by: Tuija Johansson

Also answered correctly (in order) by:

Bob Wheatley, Margie Enns, Lynda Collet, Howard Jones, Wes Mann, Esther VanGorder, KC King, Claudia Grimwood, Katie Reimer, Gordon Yanow, Donna Pearce, Wade Durling, Marla Percy, Catherine Clarke, Brian Leader, Sheila Meloche

Email answers to editor@niagaranow.com, with your name, for a chance to win a \$25 Irish Harp Pub gift card every week. (Subject line: Riddle me this)

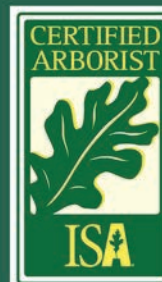
***REMEMBER TO PUT "WHAT IS" FOR JEOPARDY QUESTIONS!**

Love games? Join us for fun events every week at the Irish Harp Pub. Details at www.theirishharp.com



HARPER TREE CARE

**Pruning
Planting
Removals
Plant Health Care**



Levi Harper

905-324-8609

harpertreecare@outlook.com
www.harpertreecare.com
ISA Certified Arborist ON-3141A
Ontario 444A Certified Arborist



Neighbourhood Walks

Discover the stories behind five of Niagara-on-the-Lake's most unique neighbourhoods!

Fridays in May | 6 PM | \$15

Spots are limited,
book now



905-468-3912 | notlmuseum.ca | 43 Castlereagh St. | From May 1st, open daily 10 a.m. – 5 p.m.

Welcoming new while respecting old – it can be done



ARCHITEXT

Brian Marshall
Columnist

farmhouse clad in insul-brick siding.

All the window openings on the first floor were covered with plywood and many second floor windows simply missing or broken. The eaves were crumbling and the shingles missing in large areas exposing the interior to water incursion.

Built circa 1890, this old soldier had apparently been abandoned to the elements — destined to collapse.

However, then the current owners stepped in and saved it from an ignoble death.

Today, the home sports new cream-coloured board and batten siding, set off by striking green metal roof with new windows and doors completing the picture.

These folks have returned to the community a piece of our shared rural history as the old farmhouse, given lease on life, can once more take pride of place on the farm.

Well done.

Now, let's head down into Old Town. At the corner of Nassau and Johnson stand two new built houses designed by Mark Holmes of Brock Builders.

This columnist has often articulated that good design must be anchored in contextual considerations — the property itself, followed by



Before and after: 815 Concession 6 Rd. in April 2023 (left) versus April 2026 (right). The heart and soul of the building remains the same, with a modernized and practical look. Kudos on a sensitive rebuild, writes Brian Marshall.



the streetscape, the architecture of the neighbourhood and general community must inform the design process. These two houses fully represent that precept.

Although individually distinct in terms of form, cladding, fenestration, elements and details, the two houses speak to one another through a very clever use of the architectural principle of repetition applied to the design of the porches to create rhythm, unity, and visual harmony within the Nassau streetscape.

Moreover, within that streetscape, the height, massing and presentation is compatible with the existing homes — neither subordinate nor “hey look at me” dominant.

Applied in a broader sense, both or either of these houses could contextually find a comfortable home within all the boundaries

of Old Town and in many of NOTL's defined “settlement” areas.

Again, I must applaud the Holmes designs on these two infill builds as what could and should be considered a standard criteria for infill redevelopment within the boundaries of Niagara-on-the-Lake.

And here I must say that Glendale, as the gateway to NOTL, deserves a substantial injection of design character that recalls our shared history.

Moving on, I feel compelled to comment on my fellow columnist Garth Turner's commentary in the April 22 edition of The Lake Report, entitled “Massacre on Mississauga,” wherein he identified that 41 mature trees would be sacrificed to a newly widened road.

Although only those who have had a very long history in our town would not re-

call, as a youngster, I clearly remember the village of St. Davids prior to the widening of the roads.

One was welcomed into the village by mature trees that vaulted over the roads and created a green tunnel that said, “You have arrived.”

The trees directly contributed to the village's sense of place as being more than simply a crossroads but rather a community with long and deep roots into history.

And, when those trees were cut down, the character of St. Davids lost something that was irreplaceable: its anchor as a complete village.

Now, planners and the town council have apparently consigned — as another nod to tourists on rental bikes — the entry into Old Town to the same fate.

Really?

Perhaps they have missed the fact that the attractiveness of Old Town is as an historic village and tree canopies, only delivered by mature trees, are an integral part of that historical character.

And, as any marginally educated individual may be aware (just Google it to confirm), even replanting “mature trees” — which, incidentally, are not really mature — will take more than two decades to in part re-establish the lost canopy presence.

Kill the trees and kill another of the vital elements that make our town a unique experience.

Of course, for those in favour of Las Vegas North, what does that matter?

Brian Marshall is a NOTL realtor, author and expert consultant on architectural design, restoration and heritage.

 **Darcy Price CPA**
Professional Corporation

1627 Niagara Stone Rd., Unit B2, Virgil
905-468-5300
Monday to Friday, 9 a.m. to 5 p.m.

*Accounting *Canadian-U.S. Taxation *Business Services
Formerly Lida Kowal Professional Corporation

Warren

RENOVATIONS
905.468.2127
PLUMBING, HEATING & AIR CONDITIONING

J&S Performance

SALES & SERVICE
 **HUSTLER**
905-468-9735
901 East/West Line, NOTL



 **LAKE RIVER HOMES**

- Additions
- Renovations
- New Builds
- Finished Basements
- Kitchens/Bathrooms

SERVING THE NIAGARA REGION
Cell: 905-380-4264
www.lakeriverhomes.ca

Loewen's Fencing & Decks / Repairs

- Post hole service
- Dump service
- Concrete pads
- Driveways

Call Peter 289-696-3509

CUSTOM DECKS, FENCES, SHEDS, PERGOLAS, GAZEBOS AND HOME RENOVATIONS

NIAGARA
RESIDENTIAL & COMMERCIAL
ENTERPRISES
EST 2019

289-690-0202
niagararce@yahoo.com

www.nrce.ca

 **amplifon** Hearing Care Experts

Hear conversations, laughter, and life again.

Book a **FREE** hearing test
866-474-5701

amplifon.ca

RENT MY HUSBAND
in Niagara-on-the-Lake

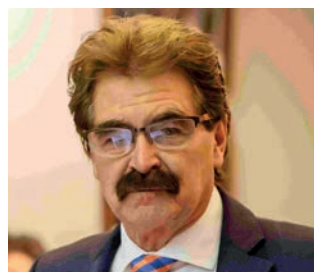
See what he can do for you at:
www.rentmyhusband-notl.com
Or call me, **Marion (905) 321-5776**

 **GRACE UNITED CHURCH**
NIAGARA-ON-THE-LAKE, ONTARIO
222 VICTORIA ST. 905-468-4044

Sundays at 10:30 a.m.
www.graceunitedchurch.com
Our 203rd anniversary | 1823-2026



No one in Ontario should accept Ford's **ban on information**



Wayne Gates
Special to The Lake Report

It's not secret that people are really struggling right now in the province of Ontario.

Families cannot keep up with the cost of living, seniors are choosing between groceries and medication and ER wait times and hallway medicine are out of control, while rural urgent care centres are forced to close their doors.

And despite all this, the Ford government thought it was a good idea to spend nearly \$30 million on a private jet.

Let that sink in. Thirty million dollars.

I don't know anyone in Niagara who thinks that's

a priority right now. What I do hear, every single day, is that people want better health care, affordable housing and help with rising costs. They want a government that understands what they're going through, not one that's out of touch.

And just before the news about the \$30 million "gravy plane" broke, we saw the Ford government quietly try and change the rules around freedom of information laws, or FOIs.

Last week, the Ford government scheduled a rare late-night session to ram through Bill 97, their anti-democratic law to change freedom of information rules.

Doug Ford's government skipped all forms of public consultation and hearings on this bill, to push it through as quickly and as quietly as possible.

Let's be crystal clear: if this law had been in place a few years ago, we would have never found out about



the Greenbelt scandal.

By putting this law into place, we may never even know about the next Greenbelt scandal.

Transparency isn't optional in a democracy; it's a basic responsibility.

People have a right to know how their money is being spent and how decisions are being made. When

Doug Ford's quiet move to block freedom of information requests related to himself and his staff doesn't protect Ontario. It erodes critical tools for transparency and accountability used by both media and opposition parties. It will not only stop the public from finding out about any unknown Ford scandals (past and future), but it was also made without public consultation. The bizarre move should serve as a loud alarm bell, prompting Ontarians to ask what Ford has to hide, writes Wayne Gates. FILE

a government tries to limit that access, it raises serious concerns about what they don't want you to see.

Because at the end of the day, this isn't just about one bad decision from the Ford government. It's about a pattern.

We've seen it before, backroom deals behind closed doors, priorities that

don't line up with what families need, and a lack of respect for the people footing the bill.

The Ford government is spending millions upon millions on private planes, private spas and handouts to developers, while our public services crumble and life gets increasingly unaffordable for families in Ontario.

To be fair, public pressure works. We organized, we won and the government backed off the jet purchase. We've seen that before when Ford attempted to clear up the Greenbelt for development.

That shows you something important: when people raise their voices, they can force change. But we shouldn't have to fight this hard just to get common-sense decisions.

Government should be focused on making life better for people. We should be strengthening our hospitals, reducing wait times in ERs, getting more people a family doctor, supporting workers, helping young people afford a place to live and making sure seniors can retire with dignity.

That's what I hear about at the doors. That's what matters.

Right now, we can, and should, expect better.

Wayne Gates is the member of provincial parliament for the Niagara Falls riding.

NOTL'S
Best Mornings Start Here!

NEW HOURS

Ravine Bakery & Café
is open Thursday to Monday, 8am-11am.

Croissants, pain au chocolat, Boston cream, and our famous strawberry lavender rhubarb Berliner. Fresh bread daily + espresso by Propeller Coffee.
Niagara On The Lake's new favourite morning stop.

Easy parking. Exceptional flavour. No rush – just great mornings.
Pre-order available for pickup in 48 hours during opening hours. Please scan the QR code above for all details and pre-order.

1366 YORK ROAD | ST. DAVIDS, ON | 905.262.8463 | RAVINEVINEYARD.COM

MCC THRIFT

Give your home décor items a second life.

Donate to your local MCC Thrift Shop!

DONATION HOURS

Monday - Wednesday	9 AM - 5 PM
Thursday - Friday	9 AM - 8 PM
Saturday	9 AM - 5 PM
Sunday	CLOSED

mccthriftontario.com/stcatharines

Why won't town embrace Burton proposal?

Dear editor:
I was both moved and puzzled after reading the article by Susan St Amand ("A shared opportunity for 176 Wellington," April 23, The Lake Report).

I was moved by reading about the many exciting community-based projects that the James A. Burton & Family Foundation has invested in. These initiatives have ranged from the spectacular Arts Umbrella in Vancouver to the innovative cSpace in Calgary.

In this region, the

foundation has supported the Niagara Region for Indigenous Relations, Yellow Door Theatre Project, Niagara Jazz Festival, the First Ontario Performing Arts Centre and many others.

Clearly, this is a philanthropic foundation that seeks to build community and to respond to expressed community needs.

This brings me to my source of puzzlement.

In most communities around the world, a philanthropic organization with

funds to make investments, based on research, would be welcomed with open arms by the community leaders.

At the very least, the leaders would encourage their interest and engage in an exploratory conversation about shared vision and goals. But not, it seems, in Niagara-on-the-Lake.

The foundation is offering to support the building and running of a wonderful centre at 176 Wellington for community arts, youth programs, music and edu-

cation. Research indicates that there is strong community support.

It seems that the best this town can offer is that we may invite the foundation to respond to a request for proposal at some unspecified point in the future.

But first, we are going to spend \$200,000 to look into converting the iconic 176 Wellington St. site into, drumroll please ... a parking lot.

It is all rather puzzling.

Robin Cardozo
NOTL



The Nyanyas of Niagara welcome Bob Rae, former Canadian ambassador to the United Nations, to NOTL on April 23 for a public discussion about the importance of backing support for the millions of people in Africa dealing with HIV/AIDS and the consequences of the illness.

Support for HIV/AIDS funding matters now more than ever

Dear editor:

A heartfelt thank you to everyone who joined us — and to those who donated — for Conversations on Global Health: Impact & Inspiration, hosted by Nyanyas of Niagara in support of the Stephen Lewis Foundation.

It was a particularly meaningful evening as we gathered not only to learn and connect, but also to honour the extraordinary legacy of Stephen Lewis — whose leadership and unwavering commitment to global health continue to inspire. As Bob Rae so powerfully said, he "is irreplaceable."

We are deeply grateful to the Honourable Bob Rae and Meg French, executive director of foundation, for their moving reflections during the talk, and to all who attended, for your compassion and commitment.

The message was clear: at a time when global health funding is shifting, your support matters more than ever. Together with the Stephen Lewis Foundation, we must help sustain vital, community-led efforts on the frontlines of HIV and AIDS across Africa.

As Meg French shared, "The Stephen Lewis Foundation has had a difficult few weeks since Stephen's passing, but we are committed to carrying on his work in support of community-led organizations working to end AIDS in Africa."

She spoke about how Stephen would sit with

communities, listen deeply, and understand what was needed — then advocate tirelessly around the world to ensure those needs were met. He was fearless in his advocacy and deeply respected by all who knew him.

In the words of Bob Rae, "It's a great privilege to be here in the Niagara region for such an important cause." He reflected on Stephen's profound influence and emphasized a critical truth: there are no borders when it comes to a virus.

What happens in one part of the world affects us all. Continued progress depends on better solutions, expanded care, and greater awareness.

Mr. Rae also underscored the importance of global responsibility. While significant progress has been made, declining international funding — including the dismantling of United States Agency for International Development — and persistent stigma surrounding HIV and AIDS present serious challenges. Addressing these issues is not only a moral imperative, but one that benefits us all.

We can each carry the torch and be part of the solution.

The Stephen Lewis Foundation held an event honouring Stephen Lewis, alongside thousands around the world on April 26. They will have a post-event link for those who were not able to join.

Rose Campbell
Niagara

Trees aren't just beautiful — they're good for us

Dear editor:

Change the surroundings, change the experience. My first visit to Niagara-on-the-Lake, my husband and I drove in from the highway. Everything looked much like anywhere else. Until we crossed Mary Street.

Suddenly the road was shaded by the spreading branches of huge old trees. We relaxed. This felt special; the historic town we'd looked forward to.

Later, as we strolled the tree shaded streets, we were delighted when the sidewalk

on Simcoe, near Prideaux curved respectfully around the giant roots of an ancient tree. Clearly this was a town which honoured these noble trees.

Old Town's trees relax us. Tourists love them. But the benefits of our leafy companions go far beyond aesthetics.

Currently, a movement across North America promotes the benefits of more trees. Six-hundred thousand in Mississauga have already been planted, with a goal of one million.

Not only do they reduce noise pollution and purify

the air, they improve our mental and physical health. Marc Berman, the world's leading environmental neuroscientist, in his book "Nature And The Mind," correlates planting more trees on a street, with a reduction in heart attacks and stroke of up to 23 per cent.

If residents of NOTL cut down a tree, we are required to replace it. Clearly this is a town which understands the importance of trees to both residents and tourists.

Why then, does the town plan to cut down 41 giant

shade trees at the main entrance to Old Town, as the road approaches the golf course?

We all agree that the potholed road needs repair, but is it not possible to work around our ancient neighbours? Do we really need a bike path either side?

Change the surroundings, change the experience. Once these glorious shade trees are gone, the entrance to Old Town will be just like anywhere else.

Valmai Howe Elkins
NOTL

Why not convert free parking spots to paid parking?

Dear editor:

If NOTL is so hungry for parking revenue, they don't need to build a parking garage at the hospital site.

All they need to do is convert all the free parking spaces in the Old Town to

paid parking.

This map shows all the free parking in Old Town and is available to any tourist by a simple online search.

I believe that there should be no free parking between

Mary Street and the river.

Unlimited free passes would be provided for all homeowners, one per household.

Obviously, provision would have to be made for the golf course, and perhaps

for St Mark's church.

Our town is foregoing a fortune in parking revenue by having so much free parking. No need to build a parking garage.

Ted Rumble
NOTL

Hospital land's Indigenous history deserves recognition

Dear editor:

I am writing to express my support for the efforts of the James A. Burton & Family Foundation to amplify community voices advocating for a centre dedicated to education, culture, and the arts at the former hospital site at 176 Wellington St.

Over the past several years, community discussions have consistently highlighted the need for a permanent, shared space.

Such a facility could accommodate the Royal Oak Community School, include a properly equipped theatre for music and performance groups, provide office space for organizations seeking a Niagara-on-the-Lake presence, and support a wide range of innovative programs that naturally emerge when people gather to collaborate.

This strong interest was evident at a recent public meeting, where community

members filled the Royal Cambridge Ballroom at the Prince of Wales Hotel.

Attendees heard updates from the Burton Foundation, learned more about the town's process and engaged with organizational leaders committed to realizing a vision for the building that is both creative and sustainable.

From an Indigenous perspective, the lands at and surrounding 176 Wellington St. hold deep historical significance — history that

defended alliance lands and helped shape the nation we now call Canada. This heritage deserves recognition and thoughtful integration into the site's future.

I encourage continued community engagement and support for a project that has the potential to serve, connect, and inspire for seven generations to come.

Tim Johnson (President, Niagara Academy for Indigenous Relations)
NOTL



Korean-themed bakery & cafe
roll cakes | scones | pastries | buns
coffee | tea | smoothies

358 Mary St. | 289-241-7789 | sokobakerycafe.square.site



Our community centre: The glue that holds NOTL together



ROSS'S RAMBLINGS

Ross Robinson
Columnist

Here in our pretty little town, it seems so many people are angry and cross with so many people. This week, let me ramble in another direction. Let's all try to love each other.

Just imagine how happy and proud Harold Clement would be if he was able to walk into our Niagara-on-the-Lake Community Centre today. Harold was a longtime NOTL resident "back in the day," until 2009, and a truly visionary local politician. In politics for all the right reasons, and apparently he never put

up a yard sign.

He was a passionate advocate of the community centre. And this is only one example of his devotion to enhancing the quality of life in Niagara-on-the-Lake. It seems like it was a long time ago, but in fact, only 15 years have passed since the exciting opening day on March 26, 2011.

I encourage all residents to drive over to Anderson Lane, near the firehall on Niagara Stone Road. Spend some time reading the two impressive plaques inside the community centre. So much recent local history, and so many familiar names. What a reminder of how hard some people work on our behalf.

So much hard work has been done by so many. Three lord mayors are mentioned. Gary Burroughs, Art Viola and Gary Zalepa Jr. were doing their best, way back then, to enhance our lifestyles.

Clive Buist was the director of parks and



Ross Robinson says the NOTL Community Centre is more than a building — it's a place to connect with people.

recreation, and the indefatigable Ken Rive was the town's facilities supervisor and the project manager for the ambitious Community Centre — "On time and on budget."

The 12-person fundraising committee was quarterbacked by John Wiens. His team worked professionally, approaching donors from Ottawa to the various corners of NOTL. People today should somehow thank the many donors.

What a smashing success we have in our town. The

community centre is just that. The centre of our community. So many activities and opportunities to spend time with friends and strangers.

Leafing through the town's 2026 spring/summer community guide, how about adult ballet, classic line dancing and Nia with Didi and Anne? What's not to love in this town?

Mahjong, euchre, chess, more board games. The Ephemera Club. By now most of us will need to pause for a refreshment.

Attached to the community centre is Sweets & Swirls Cafe. Bright and cheery with lots of windows, freshly baked goods, soups, salads and sandwiches. And deservedly busy so much of the time. Hats off to Erinn, Roumania and Elena for always being so welcoming.

Still looking for activities? Badminton, carpet bowling or outdoor bowling. And in capital letters there are lots of hours set aside for pickleball. An ongoing saga, and such a great game. It will somehow flourish here.

Our NOTL Community Centre is one big building. Somehow, it is kept spotlessly clean. Blake Duroucher and his co-workers scrub it stem to stern, both floors, every day, including the oval track and work out area.

And they are totally organized setting up for the various functions, activities and events. Just think of moving all those tables and chairs.

Adding to the feel-good ambience at our community centre is the busy-ness of the adjacent Niagara Nursery School and Child Care Centre. Their slogan is "Learning Through Play."

An unsung absolute hero of this school is Miss Wendy, involved for over 25 years, with the immense responsibility of organizing drop-off and pick-up.

She could teach the valets at any Ritz Carlton, who deal mostly with adults and limousines, a thing or three about safety and efficiency and fairness. Hundreds, no thousands, of local children have come to love and respect Miss Wendy and her team over the years.

This is such a great town. Take some time and visit our community centre. Read the plaques, and absorb the ambience of this happening place.

So much to feel good about. And, be extra kind this week.

rossrocket9@gmail.com

Residents' interests dismissed with pickleball court closure

Dear editor:

It is both disappointing and frustrating to see that, after three years, Niagara-on-the-Lake council has failed to take meaningful action to address the ongoing issues surrounding outdoor pickleball courts in our community.

Pickleball is one of the fastest-growing sports in Canada, embraced by residents of all ages for its accessibility, health benefits and strong sense of community.

Yet despite its popularity, local players have been left without adequate facilities while council delays, defers and ultimately does nothing.

What is perhaps most troubling is the suggestion that residents simply travel to neighboring municipalities to play. This response is not only dismissive — it is insulting.

Residents of Niagara-on-the-Lake pay taxes and contribute to this community with the reasonable expectation that their recreational needs will be considered and supported. Redirecting them elsewhere sends a clear message that their interests are not a priority.

Other municipalities have recognized the value of investing in recreational infrastructure like pickleball courts, understanding that

these amenities enhance quality of life, promote active living and foster community engagement. Niagara-on-the-Lake should be no different.

Council has had ample time to consult, plan and implement a solution that balances the needs of all residents. The continued inaction reflects a troubling lack of leadership and responsiveness.

It is time for council to stop deflecting responsibility and start delivering results. The residents of Niagara-on-the-Lake deserve better.

Vince Serratore
St. Davids

Expansion underway at museum

Dear editor:

On behalf of the Niagara-on-the-Lake Museum, I would like to share a brief update with our residents, neighbours, and visitors. As many may have noticed, construction activity has begun on and around the museum grounds.

With our foundation and plumbing permits now issued, we are preparing the site for the next phase of work.

This includes relocating several larger outdoor artifacts, removing signage, and carefully protecting memorial trees through temporary off-site transplanting for future replanting. These early steps are necessary to prepare the grounds for excavation.

While construction fencing is now in place, we want to assure the community that the museum remains open during regular hours, from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. daily, and all planned programming will continue as scheduled.

We would also like to sincerely thank the residents



The NOTL Museum remains open during regular hours as construction on the expansion takes place next door.

and members who supported our participation in the National Trust for Canada's "Next Great Save."

Although we were not selected as the final winner, the enthusiasm and encouragement from our community helped raise valuable awareness of the museum and the important role it plays in preserving our local history and heritage.

As many know, the Niagara-on-the-Lake Museum is embarking on an exciting expansion. We are

deeply grateful to everyone who has helped us reach this point.

While there is still work ahead to achieve our final fundraising goal, we look forward to sharing more in the coming months about how the community can continue to support this important project.

Thank you for your patience during construction and for your ongoing support of the Niagara-on-the-Lake Museum.

Susan May Wery
Chair, NOTL Museum

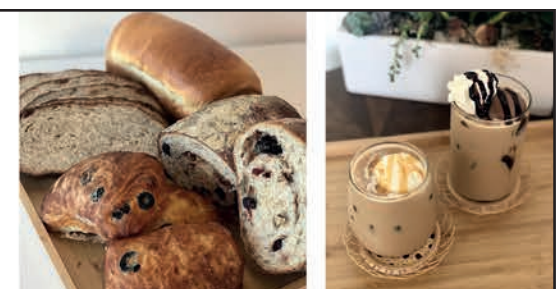
We welcome your letters

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.



Korean-themed bakery & cafe
roll cakes | scones | pastries | buns
coffee | tea | smoothies

358 Mary St. | 289-241-7789 | sokobakerycafe.square.site



Have some fun



Across

- 9. Georgia's capital (7)
- 10. An ancient one had a bird problem (7)
- 11. Banish (5)
- 12. Comparable (9)
- 13. Road journey refreshment break (3,4)
- 16. Wield (5)
- 17. Fish eggs (3)
- 18. Oddball (6)
- 19. Entirely (6)
- 22. Pre-DVD technology (1,1,1)
- 24. Dorian Gray's vice (5)
- 26. Door knockers (7)
- 27. Seen behind the scenes (9)
- 29. Believer in karma (5)
- 31. Found between sea and shining sea (7)
- 32. Make clear (7)

Down

- 1. Try (7)
- 2. Bluff King Hal's regnal no. (4)
- 3. First-class (4-4)
- 4. View unfavourably (10)
- 5. Youth charity (1,1,1,1)
- 6. Monotonous routine (6)
- 7. Next? (6,4)
- 8. Adjusts beforehand (7)
- 14. If it's too hot, get out of it (3,7)
- 15. New actress about spreading the word (10)
- 20. Last remaining chance of relief (4,4)
- 21. Tofu base (7)
- 23. Publishing (7)
- 25. Home of the Prado (6)
- 28. Oil-rich monarchy on the Arabian Peninsula (4)
- 30. Old boatman (4)

Crossword Puzzle

1		2		3		4		5		6		7		8
9								10						
11						12								
13		14						15		16				
								17						
21								22						23
24				25						26				
27								28				29		30
31										32				

Last issue's answers

1	R	M	C	I	R	C	L	E	D	P				
5	W	H	O	O	P	I	U	A	R	O	A	D		
9	Y	T	C	L	O	O	S	E	P					
11	U	L	T	I	M	A	T	E	S	W	H	A	M	
15	N	V	D	S	L	I	A							
16	F	O	R	E	S	A	W	T	R	I	G	G	E	R
20	O	I												
21	L	U	C	I	F	E	R	U	R	U	G	U	A	Y
24	D	H	L	T	I	C								
25	I	N	T	O	U	C	H	E	N	C	A	S	E	D
29	N	E	E											
30	G	I	R	L	D	S	T	A	Y	C	A	L	M	
32	G	O	M	A	G	H	R	E	E					
37	N	O	N	O	T	E	E	D	D	I	E	S		
39	R		T	R	A	I	N	E	D	E	S			

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



GOLFI[®]



TEAM

#1

RE/MAX TEAM IN CANADA!

MAXIMIZE EXPOSURE!

Your home, **advertised from Niagara to Toronto** — not just in town.



13 UPPER CANADA DRIVE
2+1 BED • 2 BATH • 1,104 SQ. FT.
\$925,000



16 MILLS LANE
2+1 BED • 3 BATH • 1,703 SQ. FT.
\$1,174,900



19 OAKLEY DRIVE
2 BED • 3 BATH • 1,615 SQ. FT.
\$1,198,900



1426 NIAGARA STONE ROAD
3+1 BED • 5 BATH • 2,400 SQ. FT.
\$1,560,000



SCAN FOR A FREE HOME EVALUATION

Call the brand that gets your home **NOTICED!**

Ask about our **Golfi Home Warranty**. Full protection for one year.*

905-641-0308 • Sold@GolfiTeam.com • www.GolfiTeam.com



*Source: RE/MAX LLC rankings for Large Team Residential, 2024. *Conditions apply. RE/MAX Escarpment Golfi Realty Inc., Brokerage. Independently owned and operated.

EXPLORING HISTORY
WITH NOTL MUSEUM



Pepe's Corner

Located at the corner of Mississauga and Mary streets, Pepe's was once a favourite stop in town, where locals could satisfy a sweet tooth with penny candy or ice cream. It was also a different era. Parents would often send their children with a note to purchase a pack of cigarettes. In later years, the building became home to the beloved Willow Cakes and Pastries bakery. You can still satisfy your sweet tooth there today at AegeanFlavrs by grabbing some baklava or one of their many delicious meals and sandwiches.

The Lake Report

PLEDGE IT

Pledge your support for The Lake Report, your trusted, award-winning source for NOTL news

The Lake Report's **Pledge It** campaign has two main components:

- 1. Pledge** a recurring annual donation to support journalism in NOTL.
- 2. Pledge** an endowment to the paper so your dedication continues to have a positive impact on the community after you are gone.

What your pledge supports:

- Original, independent civic journalism
- Holding our elected leaders accountable
- Charities and local non-profit organizations
- Local artists and arts organizations
- Local businesses and entrepreneurs
- Families in our community
- Preserving NOTL's history
- Historic organizations



Pledge your annual donation at www.lakereport.ca/donate-today
Contact us at editor@niagaranow.com to let us know of endowment plans

Advertising inquiries?
Email advertising@niagaranow.com

Lessons from chimps on **conflict, care and society**



DR. BROWN

Dr. William Brown
Columnist

In the 1950s, Jane Goodall observed a split in what had been a stable community of Kasekela chimpanzees living in Gombe Tanzania, with the result that members of the small breakaway group were killed off one by one by members of the original group.

Recently, the *Journal Science* highlighted a similar breakup involving nearly 200 chimpanzees living in Uganda's Kibale National Park. For several decades the overall group was divided into western, central and eastern groups, but the three groups coexisted harmoniously with no signs of violence.

However, 12 years ago following the death of several members, apparently from a respiratory disease, violence broke out between the western and central groups and has remained so since.

The reasons for the breakup aren't known, but some scientists involved

in the study suggest those deaths might have involved chimps who straddled the social divide between the two groups or perhaps the ascent of new leadership hostile to the other group.

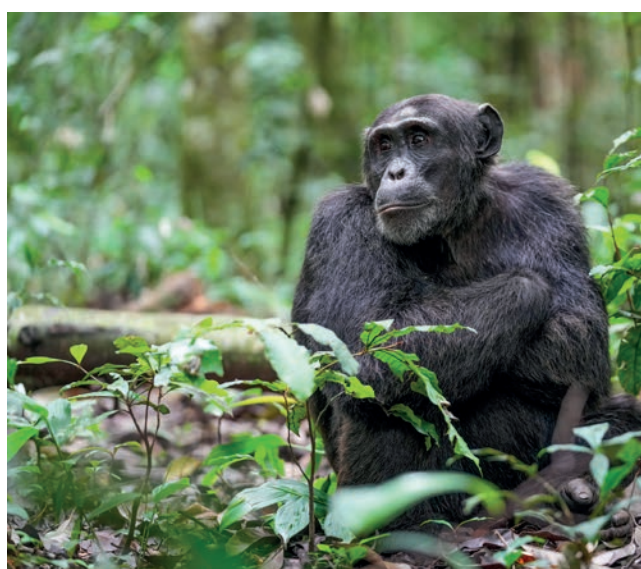
Chimpanzee groups are male dominated and well-known to be hostile to outsiders. The opposite is true of bonobo communities, who, though closely related to chimpanzees, are run by females and solve most social friction by sex between whoever seems to be upset at the time.

Violence does happen in bonobo communities but unlike chimpanzees, bonobos don't gang up on one another and no instances of killing have been observed.

Other social species sometimes exhibit similar behavior with separate groups sometimes merging or as in case of chimpanzees, splitting with no peaceful merger in sight.

Human society is like chimpanzee society — tribalistic and prone to violence. A list of conflicts from world wars to endless regional conflicts and violence within our own country makes the point.

Frans De Waal, a well-known student of chimpanzees and other social animals once wrote a book titled, "Chimpanzee Politics," which became a best seller because of its



Chimpanzees' complex social bonds can shift from cooperation to deadly conflict, mirroring the tribal instincts seen in human societies, writes Dr. Brown. SOURCED

timing — the period when Newt Gingrich, then the Republican head of the U.S. House of Representatives and Bill Clinton, the former U.S. president, were battling it out.

The analogy was apt and recognized at the time, at least by Gingrich.

There's another matter here to deal with: sex, and its role in tough situations.

Not so long ago, I helped run a multiple sclerosis (MS) clinic in Thunder Bay. MS is twice as common in women and tends to begin sometime between the late teens and 30s and, for some, MS progresses in a series of relapses and remissions producing cumulative deficits and disability.

Fortunately, there are several reasonably effective medications now but no cure. For some, the cumulative disabilities are very challenging to live with and, for couples, add to the strain of living together to the point where the supporting partner sometimes splits.

In my experience and that of other neurologists, males are more likely to leave a female partner affected with MS than the other way round.

Fortunately, later in life, most partners stay together, whatever the problem, although because women tend to be younger than their male partners, women tend to bear the burden of caring

for sick husbands more than the other way round.

Sometimes, the extraordinary happens. One of my MS patients became severely disabled to the point of being bedridden most of the time and unable to look after her toilet or feed herself. Her husband had long since disappeared and she was looked after by her son and daughter.

Between them and some visiting help, they provided incredibly good care: she suffered from none of the pressure sores, infections or other complications of patients at that stage in the disease.

Finally, unable to swallow and breath properly, she died. Compounding the tragedy, the daughter later developed MS within a few years of her mother's death.

Another striking difference between the sexes is the care of patients with dementia, or to be more precise, which sex writes with the most insight, empathy and practical advice about patients with dementia.

If *The New York Times* is any guide, women are more likely to write about dementia with insight and empathy, by far. The medical aspects of dementia diagnosis and management are similar with both sexes.

Whether the world would be better off with more women in charge is

unknown but worth a try. After all, men have been in charge for most of recorded history and some would say: look at the mess.

But male dominance may not have been the default setting in paleolithic times or even among many hunter-gatherer groups where leadership is often more shared and communal. Of course there are the unavoidable: so far, pregnancy is a female affair, but who knows, with the pace of science these days.

To return to those sometimes quarrelsome chimpanzees, evidence suggests that male chimps mellow in middle age when they are far more likely to have long standing friendships with other males and females — behavior not common when they're young.

Frans de Waal once wrote a book about Mama, a grandmother in a well-studied troop, who despite her frailty and small size, was greatly respected by young and old alike and even alpha males. She was the peace maker in the troop, often breaking up squabbles usually started by young males.

Sound familiar?
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.

Jennifer Penner



PENNER, Jennifer Emily — Jennifer Emily Penner, born May 31, 1962, passed away peacefully on April 18, 2026, at Niagara Falls Hospital with her loving family by her side. Beloved wife to Tim Penner, cherished daughter of Diane and Harold Wutzke, and devoted sister, mother, and grandmother,

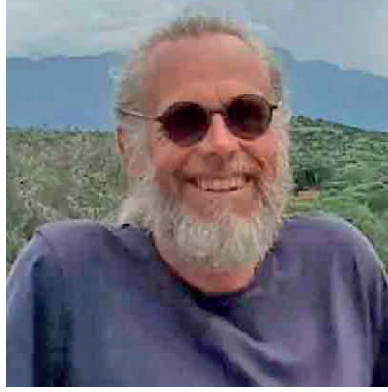
Jennifer's life was rooted in love, kindness, and art. Jennifer was a gifted artist with an extraordinary eye for design and décor, Jennifer's creativity touched every space she entered. She was a part of many art communities, including the Elora Art Society, where her studio was named "Lavendar Lane". Her art reflected her vibrant spirit, her love of beauty, and her ability to see the extraordinary in the everyday. Jennifer's compassion extended to all living beings, including her dearly missed dogs — Finnigan, Kristy, and Tuffy — who were part of her heart and home.

She will be remembered for her gentle spirit, her artistic brilliance, and the joy she brought to everyone who knew her.

A service to celebrate Jennifer's life will be held at 11 a.m. on Sunday, May 9 at Bethany Mennonite Church, 572 East & West Line in Niagara-on-the-Lake, with a reception to follow at the Sandtrap Pub & Grill at 358 Mary St., NOTL. In lieu of flowers, the family invites donations to an animal rescue or charity of your choice, in honour of her love for animals.

In Loving Memory of Jennifer Emily Penner
She painted with her heart,
Designed with her soul,
And left the world more beautiful than she found it
Forever loved, forever missed.

Bruce Fast



FAST, Bruce — It is with heavy hearts that we announce the sudden passing of Bruce Fast in Victoria, BC - May 9, 1962 - April 13, 2026. Bruce was predeceased by his father, Peter Fast (1987) and his beloved nephew, Noah Schriefer (2021). He leaves behind his loving wife Jane Godfrey, his two sons Daniel and Kai, his mother Angelina, his siblings, David (Josie), Jim, Ruth Anne (Kirk), Wayne (Stephanie) and his many nieces and nephews whose lives were all touched by his gentle, loving and caring spirit.

Bruce loved the outdoors and was a nature and forest artist. He travelled extensively his whole life visiting more than 70 countries, often volunteering for humanitarian organizations, but always making art wherever he was. His passionate heart and free spirit will always be an inspiration to all who knew him.

In lieu of flowers (although his mother may love a few) donations can be made to one of Bruce's favourite places: mounddouglasspark.square.site

Dr. Gavin James



JAMES, Gavin Alexander, B.D.S., M.D.S., F.D.S. (Eng.), Dip. Orthodont. (Tor.) — Dec. 7, 1930 – April 19, 2026 Dr. Gavin James died peacefully with his family by his side. Born in Glasgow, Scotland, Gavin carried throughout his life a Scottish intellect, wit and quiet strength that shaped both his character and his work. His remarkable career as an

orthodontist, educator, and innovator spanned more than 70 years.

After graduating from the University of Glasgow, he spent a year as an intern at the Forsyth Institute in Boston before returning to Scotland to complete two years of National Service in Germany. He then finished his orthodontic training at the Eastman Hospital in London, where he also earned his fellowship, and served as Senior Registrar in Orthodontics at the University of Edinburgh.

In 1967, he and his family emigrated to Canada, where he established orthodontic practices in Orillia, Toronto and Barrie.

A pioneer in holistic orthodontics, Gavin was ahead of his time in recognizing the relationship between structure, function, and whole-body well-being.

At the heart of Gavin's life was his family. He was the beloved husband of Joyce Helen (Paterson) for 68 years, their devotion evident in enduring love and loyalty. He was a devoted father to Robin (Beth), Mhairi, and Callum (Sarah) and a cherished uncle to Mary (Jan). Gavin took delight in his grandchildren and great-grandchildren.

He was a man of compassion, deep thought and easy laughter, remembered for his kindness and abiding curiosity. He leaves behind a legacy of love, not only within his family and profession, but in the many lives enriched by his wisdom, generosity and care.

In lieu of flowers, the family invites donations in Dr. James's memory to the May Court Club of Barrie or a charity of choice.

A Celebration of Life will be held on June 13 between 2 and 4 p.m., eulogy at 2:30 p.m. at Morgan's Funeral Home, Niagara-on-the-Lake.

Memories, photos, and condolences may be shared at www.morganfuneral.com.



Answer the call.

Volunteer with Ontario Corps.

Sign up at ontario.ca/OntarioCorps

Paid for by the Government of Ontario



Ontario 

Town seeks nominations for NOTL's Sports Wall of Fame

Staff
The Lake Report

The Town of Niagara-on-the-Lake is accepting nominations for its 2026 Sports Wall of Fame, an annual program recognizing local athletes and community builders.

Residents have until May 25 to submit nominations for individuals who have made significant contributions to sport in Niagara-on-the-Lake. Categories include athlete, for those who have demonstrated outstanding performance, and builder, which recognizes coaches, officials, volunteers and others who have supported the development of sport in the community.

Nominations can be submitted online through the town's website or in person at the town administration building on Four Mile Creek Road or the Niagara-on-the-Lake Community Centre on Anderson Lane.

A selection committee made up of residents and town staff will review submissions and select two



You can nominate someone for NOTL's Sports Wall of Fame by contacting the Town of Niagara-on-the-Lake.

inductees. The successful nominees will be added to the Wall of Fame at Meridian Credit Union Arena and recognized at a ceremony planned for August.

Lord Mayor Gary Zalepa said the program reflects the town's community spirit.

"The Sports Wall of Fame is more than a recognition of athletic achievement; it's a celebration of the strong sense of community that defines Niagara-on-the-Lake," he said. "Each year, we come together to honour individuals who have inspired us, brought people together through sport, and helped

build a lasting legacy for future generations."

Chief administrative officer Nick Ruller said parks and recreation programs play an important role in community well-being.

"Parks and recreation play a vital role in supporting healthy, connected communities. Initiatives like the Sports Wall of Fame highlight the impact of these spaces and programs, and the individuals who help bring them to life."

The town is also seeking residents to join the Sports Wall of Fame committee. Those interested can contact the town.



Looking for Town news?



Scan the QR code or visit www.notl.com/subscribe to have News Releases, Town Statements, NOTL News online e-newsletter, and more delivered straight to your inbox.

SCAN 



TENNIS ANYONE ?

TENNIS ADDS LIFE TO YOUR YEARS AND YEARS TO YOUR LIFE!

A study published by the Mayo Clinic found tennis players add 10 years on their life.

Ready to Hit the Courts? *Seasonal memberships are now open.*

Join the Club Today! *See why our members love it here.*

- **Play More** - organized play throughout the week
- **Online Booking** - a court is waiting for you and your partners
- **Ball Machine** - hitting partner that is always available
- **Special Events** - Fun. Social. Tennis.

GO Tennis

- **GO Drills** - Skills, Tactics. Fitness.
- **Pop Up Clinics** - Back to Basics • Serving Academy • Yoga
- **Junior Program** - Learn. Play. Laugh. (Red • Orange • Green • Yellow)

VISIT: notltennis.ca/play

TENNIS - THE LIFE SPORT

TEXT OR CALL GREG TODAY @ 905.329.3484



GREG SYKES

**FREE HOME
EVALUATION**

CALL OR TEXT GREG DIRECT

905.329.3484



**RE/MAX
NIAGARA**
REALTY LTD., BROKERAGE
INDEPENDENTLY OWNED AND
OPERATED

I LIKE TO MOVE IT, MOVE IT

\$1,000,000,000 in Real Estate Sold in Niagara