



SUMMER OF THE FLOOD
Part 4 | Page 8

Former NOTL daycare worker charged with assault of child

Staff
The Lake Report

A man who was previously employed at the Niagara Nursery School & Child Care Centre in Niagara-on-the-Lake has

been charged after a child under the age of five was choked and assaulted at a day care in Niagara Falls. In a news release Tuesday night, Niagara Regional Police said Matthew Maxwell, 26, of St. Catharines, was charged with aggravated assault after an incident at Way to Grow Daycare in Niagara Falls. Police said the child “sustained injuries as a result of the incident” and

that detectives “have reason to believe there may be more victims.” Maxwell, originally from Niagara-on-the-Lake, worked for a period of time at the Niagara Nursery School. A source who didn’t want to be named said Maxwell was let go from the Niagara-on-the-Lake school for grabbing a child’s arm.



Continued on Page 6 Matthew Maxwell.

Hydro One invests \$135M in NOTL power

Richard Wright
Local Journalism Initiative
The Lake Report

Hydro One is giving a power station in Niagara-on-the-Lake an extra jolt of energy this fall — to help supply power to the growing population of Niagara. Energy Minister Stephen Lecce and Hydro One CEO David Lebeter were at the Sir Adam Beck Station #2 in NOTL on Monday to announce a \$135 million investment from Hydro One to expand and upgrade the facility. The money has been used to replace circuit breakers in the Beck #2 station. “What we are talking about today,” said Lebeter, “is the completion of a project where we replaced all the circuit breakers in this station with new technology that’s more reliable and has a lower cost to operate.” “And we’ve increased the

Continued on Page 3

HEARTBEAT of the HARVEST Grape science at Stratus

How the pieces of the harvest puzzle come together



Stratus Vineyards assistant winemaker Lauren Barker sets up the juice analyzer to check if the grapes are ready to harvest. DON REYNOLDS

Jill Troyer | The Lake Report

The focus in harvest season in Niagara-on-the-Lake may be on picking the grapes, but there is so much more going on. Preparation inside the winery, analysis in the laboratory and critical decision making. This week in our series Heartbeat of the Harvest we peek behind the scenes at Stratus Vineyards to see how it all comes together. Alchemy, artistry and science coalesce in winemaking — and never more so than at harvest time. ***** The magic of harvest is much more than that pivotal moment in the vineyard when the grapes are picked. It starts long before and extends long beyond. The focus for the first grapes to be picked for harvest 2024 at Stratus Vineyards is an ancestral field blend.

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The Lake Report honoured with 16 more national awards

Staff
The Lake Report

The Lake Report and its news website, niagaranow.com, have again been honoured by peers in the news industry, winning 16 Cana-

dian Community Newspaper Association awards. The awards, announced Monday, are for work published in 2023 and the competition included more than 750 entries from publications from coast to coast to coast. The Lake Report and niagaranow.com again were singled out for more awards than any other publication. In national and provincial competitions since 2020, the paper has now earned a

total of 112 awards for its journalism, advertising excellence and community involvement. Richard Harley, the editor-in-chief and founder of The Lake Report, said he felt humbled that the newspaper was again honoured for its work. “The hard work and dedication of our small staff and many community contributors means that Niagara-

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Most NOTL residents say **tourism is important**: Abacus survey

Julia Sacco
Local Journalism Initiative
The Lake Report

New survey results on how Niagara-on-the-Lake residents feel about living in town — which suggest, from those who responded, an overwhelmingly positive attitude to most parts of life in NOTL — are a great representation of how NOTLers really feel, says Coun. Erwin Wiens.

The findings, calculated by Abacus Data, were presented at a committee of the whole meeting Tuesday evening.

Tim Jennings, the Shaw Festival’s executive director and CEO, said the data serves to mitigate a “possibly negative narrative” developing around the community’s relationship to NOTL’s tourism economy.

The first version of the survey was presented to council in May 2022 and the new data was presented in anticipation of a new tourism plan.

“I think these results speak for themselves and clearly express that our residents believe in the importance of tourism in their lifestyle, economic



Eddie Sheppard, vice-president of Abacus Data, left, along with the Shaw Festival’s executive director Tim Jennings, present the survey findings to NOTL council. JULIA SACCO

well-being and building a brighter future for the town,” he said.

Eddie Sheppard, the research agency’s vice president, walked councillors through the findings of a survey presented to Niagara-on-the-Lake residents, finding them to be even more content with living in town than they were in 2022.

The survey was conducted using the exact methodology as in 2022, interviewing 300 residents using the “random digit dialling approach,” Sheppard said.

“That basically means we randomly call people from town and have them take part in a survey.”

This method is the only way to get a true representative sample as it allows

for filtration based on age, gender and region of the town, Sheppard said.

Sheppard made clear that residents went into the survey without any prior knowledge of its intention.

“We didn’t recruit people to do a tourism study,” he said, adding that participants were asked a series of questions with no background on the study or who paid for it.

Two key stats found that 89 per cent of residents found they have a positive quality of life compared to 50 per cent nationwide and 91 per cent are satisfied with the level of peace and quiet in the town.

Both of these rates have increased since the 2022 survey was conducted.

In terms of those who said their quality of life worsened, nine per cent said this was due to infrastructure and six per cent said it was due to new residents moving to town.

“Across the board, this is a very small minority of the individuals that we surveyed,” he said.

Among the things that were most important to people, most residents said

parks and green space were important, followed by attractions, amenities and things to do.

90 per cent of residents recognize the important role tourism plays in town, with eight in 10 feeling that it is important to NOTL’s character, Sheppard said.

“Residents are very much aware that tourism helps enhance these aspects of their life within the town,” he said.

The two things respondents wanted to focus on improving most were parking and traffic congestion, Sheppard said.

“Looking at commercial infrastructure, social infrastructure, parking, things like that, those are all things that residents of this town take very seriously,” he said.

Sheppard told councillors to keep in mind that this survey was conducted during NOTL’s “peak season” for tourism.

“Many times what happens is on social media or at protests, we hear these complaints. But what we have here before us is an empirical, well-researched report that is accurate,” Wiens said.

Going forward with budgeting, it is important for councillors to know what residents are thinking and the report helps lay that out, Wiens said.

The data also fits in nicely with the town’s strategic plan, he said.

Coun. Wendy Cheropita agreed, particularly as the data relates to the Shaw Festival and investing in tourism.

“The study is so relevant for our discussions in the future when the tourism strategy comes to council. It would be good to sort of link the two of them,” she said.

The research illustrates the divide between new residents and generational NOTLers, Coun. Tim Balasiuk said.

“I think this is a perfect example. We have certain residents in NOTL who are generational with lineage that has been here for a very long time,” he said.

But the majority of residents have moved here after being tourists and moved here because of the amenities the town can offer via tourism, Balasiuk said.

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Ruller resigns from council, takes new job

Julia Sacco
Local Journalism Initiative
The Lake Report

Coun. Nick Ruller has been appointed fire chief in Brampton and is stepping down from his job as NOTL town councillor, The Lake Report has learned.

He announced his resignation in a letter addressed to the town clerk and other councillors on Wednesday, Sept. 11.

Ruller confirmed he's leaving municipal politics when contacted by The Lake Report last Thursday.

His resignation is effective immediately and he will not be at future council meetings, he said.

Ruller's decision to resign was made with mixed emotions, he said in the letter.

"The role of a municipal councillor is incredibly demanding, and with recent changes in my professional life, I will no longer be able to continue in this role," he said.

During a special council meeting on Tuesday, a vacancy on council was declared.

Chief administrative officer Bruce Zvaniga said there will be a second



Coun. Nick Ruller, first elected in 2022, has stepped down in the wake of his appointment as fire chief in Brampton. FILE

special council meeting scheduled to further discuss the vacancy.

Coun. Erwin Wiens confirmed with staff that there is a 60-day limit for council to find a replacement via appointment or pass a bylaw requiring a by-election.

"You have 60 days to get to that decision," Zvaniga said.

During Tuesday's committee of the whole meeting, Coun. Gary Burroughs said Ruller will be missed, adding that having nine council members is a negative.

He urged the vacancy be filled quickly. The lord mayor said the

meeting will be called as soon as possible.

Last Wednesday, the city of Brampton announced Ruller's appointment in a media release.

He was previously NOTL's fire chief and left that job in February 2022 to become a platoon chief in Brampton.

He subsequently was acting deputy fire chief for the city prior to his promotion this week.

After an extensive recruitment process, his appointment was confirmed at a council meeting Wednesday, the release said.

"I've had the opportunity now to work with the city of Brampton for a little over two and a half years and I think this is an exciting role, to lead an organization that has a tremendous amount of committed individuals," Ruller told The Lake Report.

He was elected to NOTL council in the 2022 municipal election, when he received 8.18 per cent of the votes for town councillor, finishing sixth in the polls.

The decision to step down from council was part of a natural career progression for him, Ruller said.

"It's a demanding position and council itself is also a fairly demanding role in this community," he said, adding that it would be challenging to take on both careers.

Ruller will continue to serve the community as a volunteer firefighter and in other capacities, he said. He has no plans to move from Niagara-on-the-Lake.

Before his time as councillor, Ruller served as fire chief in NOTL from 2020 to 2022.

Brampton's announcement cited Ruller's service as acting deputy fire chief since 2022, along with his time as fire chief in Niagara-on-the-Lake.

Ruller said he does not know what will be done about the vacancy.

In 2020, after former Coun. Stuart McCormack resigned, Sandra O'Connor — who had finished ninth in the polling for eight council positions in the 2018 municipal election — was appointed to fulfil the vacancy.

Allan Bisback was the ninth-place finisher in the 2022 council election, finishing 66 votes behind Maria Mavridis.

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Hydro One invests \$135 million in NOTL power

Continued from Front Page

capacity, which means we can get more electrons out of the generating stations."

Lecce and Lebeter were joined by NOTL lord mayor Gary Zalepa and a number of other mayors from the Niagara Region including those from Pelham, Niagara Falls and Port Colbourne, whose communities will also benefit from the transformer's additional capabilities.

"The people of Niagara Falls and the entire region, including right across southwestern Ontario, will now have access to (more) clean, reliable, affordable energy," said Lecce, noting 40 years of energy will be produced thanks to the upgrades.

He cited the influx of people, homes and businesses to the region as the major reason for the needed increase in electrical generation.



David Lebeter, Hydro One's CEO, says the investment will allow the power company to update all the circuit breakers at the NOTL transformer station. RICHARD WRIGHT

Between 2016 and 2021, Statistics Canada reported a 6.8 percent rise in population in Niagara, which is one percent higher than the province-wide average over the same period.

Ontario's Independent Electricity System Operator has forecasted that by 2050, electricity demand will increase by 60 per cent as a result of new investments, new homes and electrification, said Lecce.

"What we see here is

growth in this region," he said.

"Expansion in our farms and our greenhouses in manufacturing and affordable homes being built in the community. We know that growth comes with significant new energy demands."

Zalepa knows the demands in NOTL all too well, he said, especially those in the community's southwest corner.

"We've got great plans in Glendale," he said, point-

ing to the busy commercial and residential area that has seen tremendous growth in recent years and which will be the site of further commercial and residential development.

"That area along the Queen Elizabeth Way interchange is going to require electricity, and not to mention all the different uses around our town as we go to more electric vehicles and greater reliance on electricity."

The Sept. 16 announcement follows a billion-dollar government investment earlier this year to refurbish the Sir Adam Beck Hydro-electric Generating Stations, located on the banks for the Niagara River just a short distance from the Beck #2 station.

Those upgrades included the installation of new turbines.

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Grape science: From tasting to machine analysis

Continued from Front Page

“We don’t hear about field blends here very much, they’re quite rare. I got the idea from Europe. I was on a trip to northern Italy and Portugal tasting wines about five years ago and I was tasting a lot of field blends. And I was like, we don’t really see that in North America. It’d be great for us to make a couple,” explains Stratus winemaker Dean Stoyka.

Field blends are an ancient style of wine, made by picking a melange of different grape varieties from a single vineyard or field and fermenting them together at the same time. The wine is slightly effervescent, fruity and dry.

For the Stratus ancestral field blend, Stoyka uses Chardonnay, Riesling, Sauvignon Blanc and Viognier.

Determining when the grapes are just right is a matter of taste, technology and teamwork.

The lab is where it all happens. It’s perched on the top floor of the winery with panoramic windows providing expansive views of the surrounding vineyards — and filled with scientific gear and gadgets.

“We bring the berries in from the vineyard, what we do is we go choose the same two rows every single week, and we take a 200-berry sample. We walk down the same row, taking from different parts of the clusters, so the front, the top, the bottom, the back, all different areas, so you have a good representation of what we have from the vineyard,” he explains.

“And then we come in here to the lab. What we really care about are the flavours and the ripeness of the grapes,” he adds.

Stoyka is squishing a handful of Chardonnay grapes in a simple plastic sandwich bag into a mushy pulp, making juice for tasting.

He tips the juice from the sandwich bag into a beaker, then pours it into a glass test tube and puts it into a centrifuge to spin the solids out. Assistant winemaker Lauren Barker and wine-growing manager Liam Reeves are there to help with the assessment of the grapes.

The juice is poured into tasting glasses.

“We always start with the aroma, you can smell it’s pretty lemony and kind of like a Granny Smith apple,” says Stoyka.



Above: Pouring squished grapes into a beaker. The juice is measured by human taste, its look and by computer analysis to determine if it’s at the right stage to be harvested. PHOTOGRAPHY BY DON REYNOLDS

Then they all taste the juice, pleased with the flavour. Full ripeness is not quite there, but it’s getting much closer.

“We want more pear and some peach notes. It’s getting there. We definitely want more flavour development. These grapes are just past ripe to make a good, traditional-method sparkling wine, which we want more neutral. But a field blend is a fruit-driven wine, so we’re waiting for the flavours to get a little bit more floral, even tropical,” Stoyka adds.

Flavour is paramount, but there are other measures to consider.

Five grapes have been set to the side.

“We squeeze those grapes individually and look at the colour of the pulp and the skins,” he says.

“We’re looking for translucence, so you can start to see the seeds actually through the berry. The more

Stratus Vineyards by the numbers

- Acres to harvest: 55**
- Varietals: 16**
- Yield: 138 tonnes**
- Production: 10,000 cases/90,000 litres**
- Vineyard Labour: 7 workers, with additional labour as needed**
- Handpicked: 130 tonnes**
- Machine Harvested: 0 tonnes**

translucent it is, the more ripe. The colour of the pulp now is a little bit green, we want to see a yellow colour develop. And we look at the colour of the seeds, we’re looking for brown. These ones are brown, but they have some tinges of yellow still.”

“We’re getting close, probably next week.”

Moving on from what they can see, smell and taste, the team now employs advanced technology to score a myriad of markers in the grape juice. Senses are important, but scores matter too.

Next the juice is fed into a fancy machine from Austria.

“It’s going to do our whole juice panel, it’s going to get our sugar level, malic acid, tartaric acid, the whole breakdown of what’s in this juice. It would take one of us most of the day to do this, but this machine is going to do it in mere mo-

ments,” says Stoyka.

Sure enough, a minute and a half after the liquid is injected into the machine, an array of technical numbers appear on the screen.

“Afterwards, the three of us have a little meeting. We’ll compare all that data to the previous week, and to historical data, and then we’ll make our decisions on where we are with ripeness. We’ll do this every Tuesday all the way until probably the end of November, when the last grapes are off the vines. The whole process is very precise.”

While the grapes have been ripening on the vines, and the testing has been going on in the lab, everything inside the winery has been readied to receive them.

“Three weeks ago we emptied our large barrels and amphoras and we bottled the wine that had been aging in them. It’s part of harvest prep, to make room for the new vintage,”



Top: Squishing the grapes doesn’t have to be fancy. A sandwich bag will do. Middle: Grapes are also evaluated by the colour of the seeds. Bottom: Winemaker Dean Stoyka pours grape juice into a test tube.

says Stoyka.

“All the mechanical equipment has been cleaned and tuned up, so everything is ready. We do a lot of preventative maintenance, because once we’re in the thick of harvest we don’t have time for delays.”

A week later Stoyka and his team repeat their analysis, and when they meet this time, they decide it’s time to pull the trigger and pick the grapes.

As the grapes for the

ancestral field blend come into the winery for pressing and fermentation, the team knows they are just the first in a succession this season and harvest is truly underway.

Next: Every step is time sensitive during harvest season, bringing a certain intensity to the action. Next, we get a glimpse into some of the logistics involved as the grapes roll in and the winemaking gets underway at Trius Winery.

Promising grape harvest predicted this fall – but is anyone buying?

Richard Wright
Local Journalism Initiative
The Lake Report

The Niagara grape harvest is just beginning, but early projections are for a top-shelf vintage.

However, the grape-growing industry may have to contend with a dwindling pool of committed buyers to whom it can sell its harvest — which would mean product withering on the vine.

“So far what we have picked is of very good quality and also the yields are satisfying,” said Albrecht Seeger of NOTL’s Seeger Vineyards.

“I think it is going to be, with a little bit of luck, a great harvest.”

Seeger’s optimism stems from a hot summer that featured a lot of rain in Niagara.

More good news for growers is the hot start to September. Forecasts indicating the heat will continue late into the month.

Seeger hopes it will extend even further into the fall to prolong the great conditions growers have been experiencing all summer.

“With a nice dry fall, the grapes stay dry, the grapes don’t break down, it’s a lot easier just to go in with the machine and pick them,” he said.

The NOTL grape harvest normally continues into late October.

The Grape Growers of



A mechanical harvester works away at vines on the Niagara Parkway just outside NOTL on Sept. 13. This year’s grape harvest began about two weeks ago and is projected to be a good one. RICHARD WRIGHT

Ontario, which represents over 500 growers in the province, agrees that this year’s harvest will be a good one.

“It’s not a bumper crop but it is of great quality,” confirmed CEO Debbie Zimmerman.

Zimmerman, however, is concerned about some of that quality going to waste as a result of wineries backing out of agreements to purchase Niagara grapes.

“We do have some grapes unsold,” she said.

A main concern for the association is the high quality red vinifera that’s not

being purchased this year — grapes of the popular merlot, Cabernet Sauvignon and Cabernet Franc varieties, to name a few.

The reason for wineries backing out of sales, said Zimmerman, is because they are purchasing cheaper, imported wines to use in their bottles (under the Vintners Quality Alliance of Ontario, VQA-certified wines are to be made with 100 per cent Ontario-grown grapes).

“They buy bulk wine on the open market and bring it into Ontario. We want to be able to put more Ontario

grapes into that bottle of wine,” she said. “This year, with the climate conditions we’re having, we’ll have a stellar quality crop and red viniferas not sold. That’s a travesty.”

When asked what happens to the unsold grapes, Zimmerman said, “most often, they are dropped on the ground.”

Zimmerman is encouraged, however, by recent government policy changes that will increase the amount of government support wineries can apply for through VQA Ontario, and a growing effort to establish a nation-wide VQA program.

Last year, she said, there was a cap on how much financial support a winery could get out of the VQA support program.

“This year, it’s uncapped,” she said. “So, a winery that was getting \$150,000 maybe last year is probably getting over \$400,000 this year. And that is significant.”

The bottom line here, said Zimmerman, is that more conversations need to continue to establish policies and programs that save Ontario grapes from the garbage heap.

“What we’re saying is we, in particular, are concerned for growers, and we’re working with the government to ensure that we’re not back here next year with grapes unsold.”

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NOTL’s Jeff Duc anointed 2024’s Grape King

Staff
The Lake Report

Grape Growers of Ontario has announced who will bear the title of this year’s Grape King — and, for the seventh year in a row, it’s a NOTLer.

Jeff Duc, a third-generation grower who operates a vineyard in Niagara-on-the-Lake, was announced as the 67th grape king on Tuesday.

He succeeds last year’s Grape King, Erwin Wiens.

The person chosen each year as the Grape King, or grape grower of the year, acts as an ambassador for the province’s grape-growing industry and attends functions across Canada on its behalf.

He was officially installed as this year’s Grape King at his vineyard, located at 1753 Concession 2 Rd. on

Wednesday, Sept. 18, following the grape-growing organization’s annual celebrity luncheon.

“Jeff comes from a rich history of grape growers, and his knowledge is a wonderful combination to be selected as an ambassador for our industry,” said Matthias Oppenlaender, chair of the Grape Growers of Ontario, in a media release.

Duc manages the farm alongside his father at Forrer Farms. They operate 250 acres of vineyards with varieties such as Pinot Gris, Sauvignon Blanc, Chardonnay, Riesling, Cabernet Franc and more.

He also serves as a member of the board of directors of the Grape Growers of Ontario and the Niagara Peninsula Fruit and Vegetable Growers’ Association.



Jeff Duc manages Forrer Farms on Concession 2 Road, a family business with 250 acres of vineyards. DENIS CAHILL

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Pillitteri names new wine after Olympic swimmer

Five-time Olympic medallist swimmer Kylie Masse sports the bronze medal she won at the Paris 2024 Olympics this summer and a bottle from her exclusive wine collection. She visited Pillitteri on Saturday to greet guests, sign bottles and share stories from her impressive swimming career.

DAVE VAN DE LAAR



Residents want new condo and townhouses to conform to Virgil neighbourhood

Julia Sacco
Local Journalism Initiative
The Lake Report

Some Niagara-on-the-Lake residents are unhappy with a proposed condominium development on Elden Street and Field Road in Virgil.

Applications for an official plan amendment, zoning bylaw amendment and draft plan of the vacant land condominium were received during Tuesday night's public meeting.

These applications would allow for a condo development of 14 townhouse units and a four-storey apartment building.

While no decision was made during Tuesday's meeting, residents voiced their concerns early on.

Dorothy Froese is not opposed to development if it makes sense, which the proposed townhomes do, standing at two-storeys in height, she said.

"I do, however, have an issue and huge concern regarding a 52-foot-high condo rental apartment building," Forese said.

The four-storey apartment



Tim Balasiuk suggested developers consider underground parking for the proposed Virgil condominium. JULIA SACCO

building with a rooftop terrace makes for a minimum of five storeys, which will tower over all other residential dwellings, destroying resident privacy, she said.

Froese understands the need for increased housing but cited Premier Doug Ford in saying that new developments should conform with the neighbourhoods in which they are built.

Kenneth Enns' worries surround the loss of trees in the area.

Enns, who has lived on the nearby Penner Street for 36 years, said the townhouses included in the development will mean for the loss of a picturesque

treescape.

"Where I look now and see a beautiful row of trees will be a big wall," he said.

Enns pleaded with councillors and developers to keep a single cedar tree standing, as it is unclear on which side of the boundary line it stands.

Other speakers cited issues pertaining to parking and traffic.

Architect Emilio Raimondo said the development is slotted for 24 parking spots, one for each unit.

In regard to traffic concerns, Coun. Tim Balasiuk suggested considering a level of underground parking, which would bring the

building height down.

"There's a need for this type of development it's just doing it properly and trying to do it within the official plan would be greatly appreciated by the residents," Balasiuk said.

Creating underground parking is extremely expensive, Raimondo said.

"I'm not going to say we wouldn't look at it, but I would honestly say it's probably out of reach from a cost perspective," he said.

Coun. Gary Burroughs asked for a cost estimate, since Raimondo said the development will be mostly targeted at seniors and empty-nesters.

A price range has not been determined yet, Raimondo said.

The proposed development will have townhouses along with a building consisting of three levels of apartments with the first level being designated for parking.

No decision was made on the development Tuesday night, but the application will return to council at a later date.

juliasacco@niagaranow.com

Maxwell, 26, charged with aggravated assault

Continued from Front Page

The only incident on record with the Ontario Ministry of Education's registry is a compliance order from 2022.

Reached Tuesday night, Niagara Nursery School executive director Candice Penny said, "We cannot comment at this time."

By law, child care centres are obligated to report what is called a "serious occurrence" — which includes incidents of abuse — and display the report publicly and in



Niagara Nursery School hasn't reported any incidents surrounding the departure of Matthew Maxwell.

a visible spot within the day care centre.

Police said the investigation began on Friday, Sept. 13, at about 1:30 p.m. after "a serious

assault" occurred at the Niagara Falls facility.

The College of Early Childhood Educators' public registry shows a Matthew James

Maxwell became an early childhood educator on June 18, 2020. His registration status is shown as being in "good standing."

Police are urging anyone with more information, or who suspects their child may have been a victim, to contact detectives at 905-688-4111, option 3, ext. 1009468.

Anyone who wishes to provide information anonymously can do so through Crime Stoppers of Niagara online or by calling 1-800-222-8477.

MICHELLE REYNOLDS

B R O K E R



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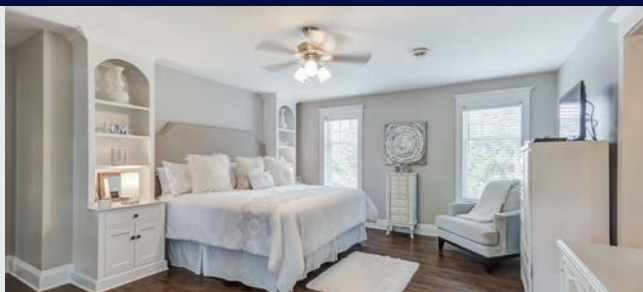
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Sewage in basements was result of overloaded pumping station

Two major storms tore through NOTL in June and July of this year, causing floods on rural and urban streets and, in some cases, resulting in sewage backing up into residential basements in the bedroom community of St. Davids.

The June 18 storm was the heavier of the two. Immediately following that storm, residents questioned whether the wastewater infrastructure was failing.

In this installment of our flooding series, *The Lake Report* investigated and found the “generational storms” that occurred were simply never planned for and infrastructure in place for wastewater management, while operating as designed, couldn’t keep up with a storm that is supposed to happen only once every 100 years.

Richard Wright
Local Journalism Initiative
The Lake Report

On June 18, St. Davids resident Art Powis awoke to the sound of water in his basement.

What he saw upon descending the stairs of his home, located, on Line 9 in the community’s northeast, would have dropped the heart of any homeowner.

The bathroom was spewing sewage out of every drain.

His toilet, he described, was spitting out effluent like a fountain, his bathtub was filling up with black water and the sewage on the shower floor was a thick, disgusting syrup.

The deluge that flowed out of the drains destroyed his fully finished and furnished basement.

“When I got to the basement and saw a turd floating out of the bathroom door down the slope to the toward the drain in the basement, I’m thinking, ‘What the f*** is going on?’” he told *The Lake Report*.

His wasn’t the only home to experience a backup of sewage on that day.

“We were flooded out in the early hours of June



Art Powis had to completely redo his basement after sewage started flowing into it on June 18. The cause of the backup was an overwhelmed pumping station owned by the Niagara Region and operated by the Town of NOTL. RICHARD WRIGHT

18 during the powerful monsoon that blew in and flooded our St. Davids home,” said Marie Giles in a written statement to *The Lake Report*.

Giles’ photos and a submitted video show the same disgusting mess Powis experienced: soaked and blackened floors, encrusted shower beds and damaged furniture, storage boxes and collectibles.

“Apparently, the local infrastructure could not handle the amount and (the wastewater) had nowhere to go, but back up into our home,” she said, adding to a chorus of opinions coming from throughout the community that local infrastructure is not up to standards.

The *Lake Report* investigated and found the basement floodings can be attributed to two things: first, the pumping station that sends wastewater from the community to the Niagara Falls wastewater plant wasn’t designed for that much rain in such a short period of time, and second, a process called infiltration.

Phil Lambert, director of water and wastewater services for the region, said the St. Davids pumping station and Niagara Falls

wastewater plant, to which the pumping station in St. Davids sends it waste, were both operating to normal standards.

The pumping station is owned by the Niagara Region but maintained by the town of Niagara-on-the-Lake.

“The St. Davids pumping station No. 1 and our Niagara Falls wastewater treatment plant, I can verify that both of those were functioning as designed and appropriately on the day of the storm,” he said.

That being said, Darrin Wills, the town of Niagara-on-the-Lake’s supervisor of environmental services and acting manager of public works, said the normal operating standard wasn’t sufficient.

In one area of Queenston just east of St. Davids on June 18, residents Win and Kal Laar measured an incredible 100 millimetres of rain in an hour on their property.

“Our (flooding) situation was caused basically by the pumping station in St. Davids,” said Wills.

He explained that when the Niagara Falls wastewater plant gets over its capacity the normal process

is to bypass partially treated effluent into the nearby Niagara River.

The *Lake Report* learned earlier this summer partially treated effluent at the plant still gets descreened, removing debris such as sticks and household sanitary products.

That effluent is also disinfected with chlorine to kill all bacteria before being released into the river. It doesn’t, however, get the full treatment to remove things such as phosphorus or organic material.

In the case of June 18, the pumping station in St. Davids was pumping to its capacity but the rainfall amount was too much for it to handle, causing it to create an uncontrolled local bypass situation in St. Davids.

“So with that public basin in St. Davids, obviously there’s no water body nearby, so nowhere for that to overflow,” said Wills, adding the waste then backs up and can re-enter homes.

The backups could have continued for much longer, Wills said, had it not been for town staff quickly responding to the station to manually remove the excess wastewater.

“When the region called the town and said that the level in their holding tank was getting high and needed attention, we called in vacuum sewage trucks to suck it out to lower the level and truck it away to the plants,” he said.

Infiltration or inflow
There is another possible contributor to the basement backups, *The Lake Report* has learned.

It is a process called infiltration, also known as inflow.

The Niagara Region’s web page describes inflow and infiltration as “water other than sanitary wastewater that enters a sewer system from sources such as roof leaders, cellar (or) foundation drains, yard drains, area drains, drains from springs and swampy areas, maintenance hole covers, cross connections between storm sewers and sanitary sewers and catch basins.”

Darren Mackenzie, the town’s director of operations, said there are other ways infiltration can happen.

He points to cracks in the piping, improperly connected access ports during the construction phase, or by property owners who

want to get off an existing septic system and mistakenly connect to the storm-water system.

Upon inspection by town staff with CCTV cameras, cracks in the piping have been counted out, he said.

“There doesn’t seem to be any problems with the main infrastructure.”

In addition, the town has begun putting filters on roadway access points to prevent overland flooding water from entering the sewer system.

“There are 22 different ones in St. Davids that we’ve put those measures in,” he said.

The next step, he added, is for staff to investigate any improper connections homeowners have done.

“People buy houses and maybe (the previous homeowners) have made those connections, or it may have been done by accident, where they think they’re connecting into the storm and they’ve accidentally connected into the sanitary,” he said. “It happens.”

Those inspections won’t begin until next spring.

In the meantime, Wills is reminding homeowners to take preventative measures to ensure their properties and belongings are safe from future massive rainfall events.

He notes, for example, that most homes nowadays have a backflow valve on their sewer line.

“When you buy a home and you call your insurance company for home insurance, one of the very first questions that they ask you is, ‘How far to the nearest fire hydrant?’ And the second question is, ‘Do you have a backflow valve on your sewer line?’”

For Powis, he admits he did not have a backup valve on his line, but “I am in the process now to install one. After that clean up, it went to the top of the list.”

Next: In Part 5 of *Summer of Flood* we look into a planned rural ditch and culvert clean-up by Town of Niagara-on-the-Lake.



Water can be seen soaking carpets and puddling in the hallways of Art Powis’ basement after a June 18 deluge that overwhelmed NOTL’s pumping stations. SUPPLIED



Community is a super-power, says Jodey Porter, pictured here with Doc and some of the people who have helped her along the way. “Look no further than the faces in this photo and the dozens beyond the picture who reached out as individuals and as a NOTL family to create a human miracle. With sight loss, I could have become a shut-in and lost all futurity and hope. But because of these local heroes, I could walk each day, keep connected by email and with friendships, pay bills and taxes, prepare food and bring this amazing Seeing Eye Guide Dog home to make a new life. It truly takes a village.” DAVE VAN DE LAAR

Reflections on NOTL *growing up* as a community



JODEY'S JOURNEY

Jodey Porter
Special to The Lake Report

When I lost my sight completely almost three years ago, I started a very personal journey, painful and heart-wrenching, to recapture my freedom and independence.

It was about me, not our community. Now, I believe the story I've been telling needs to be heard.

It really is about us, not me. Although my journey through blindness started as a child some 60 years ago and included a career of contributions in Canada and beyond, it has been my journey with Doc that has helped me focus on what really matters.

In this final instalment of Jodey's Journey, here is just a bit of what I have learned, what I am still learning.

It is wickedly hard to be fully a part of the community as a blind person.

Even though I have a new capability, a new engine, a new opening, it's hard coming back to a world where no matter how long you've lived, you simply don't belong.

The hardest thing I think is that everybody talks about inclusion, but it is scary to include a blind person, or somebody in a wheelchair. It is a lot of fuss and confusion.

I think we do a lot of dressing up of how tolerant we are of others. We feel good giving to charity. But inclusion is a whole different art. It means going to another level in terms of understanding what the other person can give and what they can share.

That's huge and it's about growing up as a community.

When you lose your vision, it's not that your hearing gets better (mine has not), but you do start to comprehend in an entirely different way.

Senses awaken in you that you had no idea existed. I think they are primitive. I think they are senses we had before the Industrial Revolution, before we had cellphones and such.

I can hear a wall. I can understand things in an entirely different dimension.

My perspectives, my edges, my barriers, my contours, my architecture are all defined by sound, by air movement, by sensitivity, by pressure — the things I didn't know existed in the time before Doc.

Our senses are very vision-oriented. I think they have gone dead in almost all of us. But they've been reawakened in me.

We have all lost a richness of perception that I have, unfortunately, found through losing my vision. But in reality, it is not a loss, it is a gain.

One of the fascinating things for me is the interaction of dog intelligence and human intelligence — working together. And non-verbal working with verbal.

Working with my new sensual awareness and Doc's animal intelligence, we've reached a dialogue and interconnectedness that I could never have imagined.

We have tapped into both a human and biological (with the animal) kind of perception that most of us have been too lazy to look for or have forgotten. Something very rich and very valuable.

And I think it takes us back to our humanity. I am required to perceive at an entirely different, deeper level, of the architecture of a room, of the people around me, of the pathway ahead. I need to perceive it differently.

My link in all this, with Doc, is the handmade harness. He can feel just the slightest move of my hand.

Or the tension. He knows when I'm scared. He can pick right up on that.

So, over the weeks together, we've come closer and closer.

We really are a “we.”

I want to get all this to the point where it is just part of our community. That some people use walkers, some people use guide dogs and some don't.

I'm growing up. It's made me a better person and I think putting up with me makes the community a better community.

NOTL is a tough place to be a disabled person — not generally welcoming.

But it is welcoming to me. Doc helps with that. But we must keep pushing and fighting.

If people like me can be part of the community, we become a better community. And if I can be, then so can anyone.

For me, I'm just trying to be fully who I am in a world that doesn't allow me to be.

Always fighting. Always hitting the wall with people

who want to put you in a box or people who want to feel sorry for you or look down on you.

To me the most important thing in my life is giving back. It's not waiting for the town to install proper street corners.

What makes me feel human every day is being able to give back to the community I live in.

It makes me feel not disabled. It makes me feel like a real person.

For more information about the Seeing Eye Guide Dog School, go to seeing-eye.org.

If you live in Niagara-on-the-Lake, are functionally blind or know someone who is, and would like to share experiences and opportunities, please contact me at blink.niagara@gmail.com.

NOTL resident Jodey Porter is a former provincial assistant deputy minister of health and member of the Ontario Human Rights Commission. Her story is told in collaboration with writer Tim Taylor.

You can officially *pick up booze* at NOTL convenience stores

Julia Sacco
Local Journalism Initiative
The Lake Report

If you can't make it to the LCBO before closing time, NOTLers now have more options for where to buy their booze.

As of Sept. 5, more

than 4,000 convenience stores across Ontario are licensed to sell alcohol.

Newly licensed locations in Niagara-on-the-Lake are NOTLers' General Store, the Petro-Canada on Missassagua Street, Avondale locations in Old Town and Virgil and

Husky Travel Centre.

Supplies, however, may be limited for the time being. Some licensed stores say it may take the remainder of the month for them to have a variety of, or any, alcohol for sale.

Nikita Hingmire, who works at Petro-Canada,

told The Lake Report that the store only has beer available for purchase currently and she doesn't know when to expect a delivery of wine and other drinks.

Though licensed to sell beer, cider, wine and ready-to-drink beverages, Avon-

dale in Old Town suspects it won't be ready to sell until later in September.

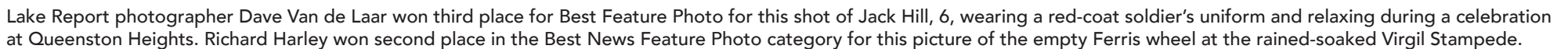
Staff at Avondale in Old Town said a shipment is expected sometime later this month, but could not confirm an exact date.

The Avondale location on York Road in St. Davids

is not licensed yet, but staff said they expect to be selling alcohol by early October.

For more information and licensed locations in province, visit the interactive map on Ontario's provincial website.

juliasacco@niagaranow.com



“The Lake Report pulls no punches as it identifies as vandalism and a hate crime the messages that someone

The judges noted, “The Lake Report is a hyperlocal news outlet that provides excellent coverage for residents and visitors to the Niagara-on-the-Lake region of southern Ontario. The

In Best Local Civic

Van de Laar, named photographer of the year among Ontario community newspapers earlier this year, took third place with his Oct. 12, 2023 photo “Happy 254th birthday, Brock.” It depicted Jack Hill, 6, wearing a red-coat soldier’s uniform and relaxing during a celebration at Queenston Heights.

[illegible]

Cartoonist Alperen Albayrak took home two awards, one for this editorial commentary on speed cameras. Richard Harley and Kevin MacLean earned a prestigious third-place award in the Best Local Civic Journalism category for three stories on a \$10K cash exchange between a developer and a councillor. Harley also was second place in the Outstanding Reporter Initiative category for the story.



NOTICE OF PUBLIC MEETING

What: Notice of a **Public Meeting** for an **Official Plan Amendment** (under Section 17 of the Planning Act, R.S.O. 1990, c. P.13, as amended)
When: Tuesday, October 15, 2024, at 6 p.m.
Where: In-person at Town Hall, Council Chambers, 1593 Four Mile Creek Rd., Virgil, or electronically via the directions below.
Regarding: Glendale Secondary Plan Update (File Number: OPA-06-2022)

What is this?

The Town of Niagara-on-the-Lake is proposing to amend the Town's Official Plan to update the Glendale Secondary Plan (Section 6.32.6 - Special Policy Area A-7).
The Glendale Secondary Plan applies to the area surrounded by Queenston Road, Concession 7 Road, the Niagara Escarpment and Homer Road (as shown on the map).
The draft updated Secondary Plan sets out a policy framework for future development within this area. It is intended to build on the vision of becoming a complete community with a mix of built form and land uses, which protects natural heritage, and supports economic prosperity. The Secondary Plan work is supported by the following technical studies: natural heritage/subwatershed study, transportation study, infrastructure study, commercial/employment study; and fiscal impact study. It is complemented by urban design guidelines.
Previous Public Information Centres for the Glendale Secondary Plan Update were held in November 2022, June 2023 and August 2024.

Dialogue is encouraged

You are invited to attend the Public Meeting to gather information and provide input regarding this matter. **Public Meetings can be attended in-person or electronically.**
To **participate electronically** at the Public Meeting, you must register in advance with the Clerks Department (clerks@notl.com or 905-468-3266). You will receive an email on the date of the meeting with instructions to connect to the Public Meeting on your computer, tablet or telephone. You are encouraged to register as soon as possible, but prior to 12 noon on Friday, October 11, 2024.

To **participate in-person**, please attend the meeting as scheduled above. Registration with the Clerk is encouraged to help facilitate the meeting, but not required. Please note that those registered will be first to speak.

If you wish to view the Public Meeting for information purposes, registration is not required. The meeting will be recorded and available for viewing after the meetings on the Town's website at <https://www.notl.com/council-government/meetings-agendas-minutes>.
Please Note: Written comments are encouraged and must be submitted to the Town Clerk, at 1593 Four Mile Creek Road, P.O. Box 100, Virgil, ON, L0S 1T0 or via email at clerks@notl.com referencing the above file numbers. Unless indicated otherwise, all submissions, including personal information, will become part of the public record and will be included as an appendix to the staff recommendation report.

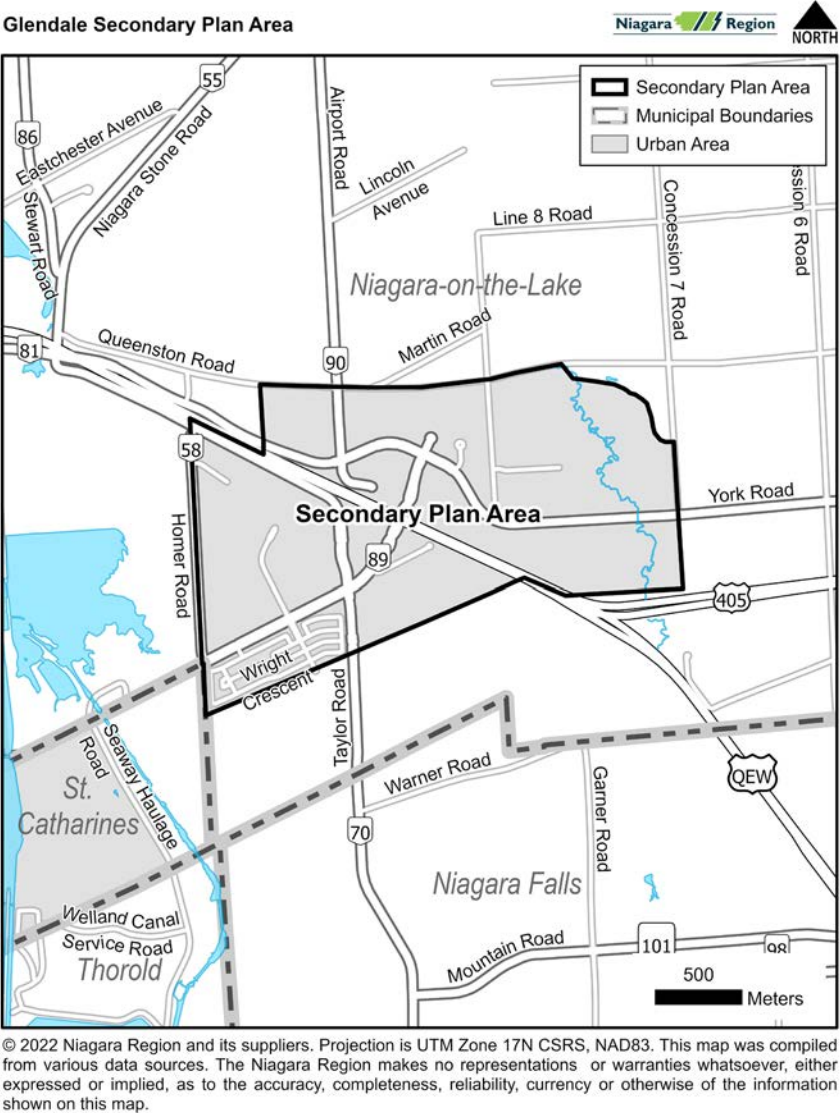
For more information:

A copy of the amendment and supporting documents for the proposal may be obtained on the Town's website at <https://www.notl.com/business-development/public-planning-notices>, the project webpage at <https://www.notl.com/business-development/projects-initiatives/glendale-secondary-plan>, or at the Community and Development Services Department within Town Hall.
Please contact Kirsten McCauley, Director of Community and Development Services, at 905-468-3266 ext. 243 or via email at kirsten.mccauley@notl.com if additional information is required.

If you wish to be notified of the future decision, you must submit a written request to the Town Clerk including your name and the address to which such notice should be sent.
Please be advised:

- i. If a person or public body would otherwise have an ability to appeal the decision of Council to the Ontario Land Tribunal but the person or public body does not make oral submissions at a public meeting or make written submissions to the Town of Niagara-on-the-Lake before the proposed official plan amendment is adopted, the person or public body is not entitled to appeal the decision.
- ii. If a person or public body does not make oral submissions at a public meeting or make written submissions to the Town of Niagara-on-the-Lake before the proposed official plan amendment is adopted, the person or public body may not be added as a party to the hearing of an appeal before the Ontario Land Tribunal unless, in the opinion of the Tribunal, there are reasonable grounds to add the person or public body as a party.

Dated at the Town of Niagara-on-the-Lake, September 19, 2024
Grant Bivol, Town Clerk





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



Your Lake Report is the proud winner of 96 national and provincial awards for journalism and advertising excellence.



Contributed by Patty Garriock
“Alone we can do much; together we can do so much more.” - Hellen Keller

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‘Pawsh’ dog show at Angel Inn

The Olde Angel Inn was the sight of fancy pooches strutting their stuff on Sunday, as part of the establishment’s first-ever dog show — which doubled as a high tea afternoon. The event, officially tagged “A Pawsh Afternoon — A High-Tea Hound Affair,” held the afternoon of Sept. 15, featured a red carpet-style setting with contests, prizes, doggy bags and refreshments for owners and pets, who brought their dogs out, freshly-groomed and adorned with accessories. Dogs were awarded in categories such as best dressed, best hair, best trick and a Mr. and Mrs. Congeniality (the best behaved, best mannered and prettiest-walking dogs). In this photo, dog trainer Dave McMahon poses with Harry, the one-year-old French bulldog, with matching hats. DAVE VAN DE LAAR

Editorial

Remembering 9/11 in NOTL

Kevin MacLean
Editor Emeritus

As we sat around solving the world’s problems last week, a wise friend noted that there are a few moments in modern history that are so monumental and life-changing, those of a certain age know exactly where we were when we heard about them — or in some cases, watched them happen.

The assassinations of John F. Kennedy and Martin Luther King Jr. come to mind.

Neil Armstrong’s walk on the moon.

Paul Henderson’s third game-winning goal, the one with 34 seconds left in game 8 of the Summit Series versus Russia. In Moscow.

And the 2001 terror attacks, when passenger jets were intentionally crashed into the Twin Towers of the World Trade Center in New York City, the Pentagon and a field in Pennsylvania.

The events of 9/11 forever changed our lives and claimed thousands of

innocents — from airline passengers to office workers to first responders who put their lives on the line one final time.

Here in Niagara-on-the-Lake, led by the Chamber of Commerce, the town and the municipality’s first responders, we have made it a tradition that we mark and remember this century’s day of infamy with a special ceremony.

As a town with a dynamic tourism base that attracts thousands of Americans every year, we have strong connections to the United States.

That’s why we are impressed when NOTL goes the extra mile to remember 9/11. The solemn ceremony serves to remind us of the horrors and sacrifices so many people endured.

It is difficult to be critical of such a commemorative effort, but this year, NOTL fell short. Not in its presentation or staging, but in communicating to the public that once again a special ceremony was to be held.

The public’s attendance

at this ceremony has been lagging and this year was no exception. The first responders and dignitaries far outnumbered the regular folks who turned out.

Matters were complicated because this 9/11, instead of happening on Queen Street near the cenotaph, the ceremony was moved to Queen’s Royal Park due to the renovations at the cenotaph.

Where the town — and, yes, The Lake Report and other media — stumbled was in telling people about the ceremony well ahead of time: where it was, or even just reminding the community that we should join in remembering the Sept. 11 tragedy and its aftermath.

The result: A poor turnout. As some members of council were heard to say, people didn’t know the ceremony was happening or that it had been moved.

And as Coun. Gary Burroughs acknowledged Tuesday at council, while the gathering was well-organized, the town didn’t do an adequate job of promoting it.

There were some online and social media notices but we saw no traditional advertising or media releases to remind people about the occasion. Maybe it was simply overlooked.

Using modern online notices might be fine as a supplemental strategy, perhaps, but as NOTL readers tell us every week, they rely on The Lake Report’s stories and ads to inform them about upcoming events.

If the Town of NOTL is going to continue to hold a 9/11 ceremony — and we think it should — it needs to do a better job of getting the word out.

Next year will mark 24 years since the attack and the following year will be the quarter-century milestone.

For our part, The Lake Report promises to make sure the details of NOTL’s 9/11 commemoration are widely disseminated. And, meanwhile, we urge the town to revisit its plan for getting the word out so people can pay their respects.

editor@niagaranow.com



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LETTER OF THE WEEK

Old Town might **never** be the same

Dear editor:

Frankly, I'm losing count and developing a growing sense that "Something Rotten" (apologies to Stratford programming) may be going on.

Unneeded and inappropriately sited hotels, out-of-scale buildings in the wrong locations, blatant disregard for the official plan, "the Gang of Five" with its flimsy rationales — the beat goes on.

It begs the question of whether there is any route to getting out of this mess, much less rectifying it.

Three possibilities ...

1. While provincial legislation about declaration of interest is very weak, should citizens not insist that their elected representatives do just that? Several conflicts have been identified without acknowledgement that may be influencing decision-making.

Declaration doesn't necessarily remove a councillor from a debate as his/her opinion is likely worth considering. It merely provides transparency and context. That should be conventional in our town — a citizen's right!

2. Our consultation process

is clearly inadequate. Arguing that the town as a whole does not oppose a particular development (such claims made without evidence), the residents who count most are those who will be most affected.

Perhaps informal plebiscites are needed to underscore that reality and help make it stick.

3. Over-reliance on tourism is often a road to ruin. Just look for evidence at other jurisdictions in Canada, the U.S and abroad.

NOTL needs a balanced economic strategy, including a 21st-century approach

to our natural assets, agriculture and the arts, adding stimulation of a startup economy.

That combination has proven to be influential elsewhere for creating jobs, correcting the age demographic, and strengthening the tax base.

Some argue that the solution is voting out "the Gang" at the next election.

The concern is that the die is being cast now, not in 2026 (assuming we are not consolidated with other municipalities by then).

**Terry Mactaggart
NOTL**

The **flawed logic** of build, build, build



THE TURNER REPORT

Garth Turner
Columnist

Folks are roiled a 40-unit housing project may rise abruptly on Mary Street. More are fumed 20-storey towers were approved for Glendale. The uproar over turning the Rand Estate into houses is endless. Weeks ago citizens even protested outside a council meeting.

They had signs. Megaphones. They yelled and cursed. The lord mayor looked, well, scared.

Maybe we should ask why this is happening. What's made politicians at all levels jump on the development caboose? Do we need more population? Are we short of houses?

Leaders say so. Look at the province. Two years ago, the Ford government passed the More Homes Built Faster Act. This year, it passed the Cutting Red Tape to Build More Homes Act.

Ontario has actually

set targets for new home construction by local cities and towns. The big provincial goal is 1.5 million new places within seven years — which it will fail to meet. Utterly.

The feds are at it, too. The Trudeau gang wants four million places thrown up by 2031 (this also will fail). Bribe money's going to municipalities that trash zoning restrictions, while Ontario weakens heritage regs. The Conservatives (itching to take the wheel) have a build-or-be-punished approach almost identical to the Libs.

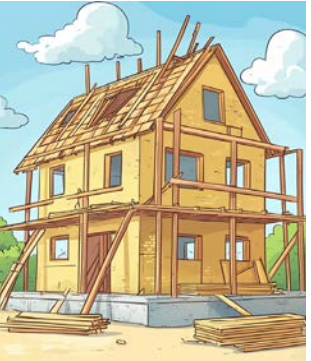
So, everyone's gung-ho — except the citizens affected. The logic seems simple: more houses will make them cheaper so your kid can buy one.

But it won't. Nor do we have a housing crisis. Instead, there's an affordability one.

Let's look around here for some clarity. No shortage. In fact, a house glut.

Last month was the fifth in a row for record real estate listings in NOTL. The available property count is running 50 per cent above long-term averages.

An incredible 3,217 Niagara houses are up for grabs — a third of them vacant. Despite the vast selection, demand is shallow and sales are close to an historic low.



So if we really have a housing crisis and need tough laws to force building, what's this all about? Where are the buyers?

Not only are first-timers MIA, but the move-up ones are stuck. Local broker Doug Rempel tells me 60 per cent of all the offers currently in play are conditional on buyers selling their old place.

And they're struggling. The average number of days it takes to bail out is 121. Yikes.

So months of inventory is stacking up in NOTL — currently about a year (in Toronto it's 4.1 months for singles, 6.7 for condos). Locally, only Fort Erie is as bad.

What about interest rates? The Bank of Canada has chopped three times, with two more expected by Christmas. Has that greased the market? "Many sellers have the theory that there is an instant impact to the market when the bank re-

duces rates," says Rempel.

"We haven't seen that yet. As of today, September 2024 is on pace to be the fourth consecutive month with sales 25 to 30 per cent below the 10-year average. That's an important stat to share with sellers who are feeling overly courageous with their pricing."

You bet. As noted here last week, NOTL prices are down a hundred grand (or nine per cent) on average. But as rates continue to fall, that might reverse.

The bottom line: way more houses than people looking to buy.

So why are politicians in town, at Queen's Park and in Ottawa so fired up about fast-tracking development while roughshodding over the locals?

Building more places with the same land values, labour overhead and material costs won't make them affordable. Developers aren't charities.

And now that Ontario has told NOTL to reduce the money it can collect in development charges from builders, property taxes will be rising to pay for new pipes and roads.

This is flawed logic. Those fighting it are heroes..

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

garth@garth.ca



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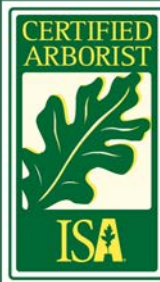
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Once upon a time, NOTL respected heritage



Brian Marshall
Columnist

So, as you may or may not know, the Town of Niagara-on-the-Lake has published a request for proposal relative to a study of, and the subsequent development of guidelines for, an expanded historic district in Old Town.

Now, the expansion of the Old Town historic district has been a contentious issue since the early 1990s, with no sitting council in the last 34 years willing to step out and protect the community heritage and character — something our tourist sector is largely dependent on.

This is reflected in a serendipitous communication with a former bed and breakfast operator in Old Town who, during a Sept. 16 telephone conversation, stated, “I would always suggest to our guests that they get off Queen Street and walk, or drive, all of NOTL’s streets. They always came back to thank me because, as they said, the character of the town is reflected more on the residential streets than on Queen Street’s commercial corridor.”

But, aside from the benefits that devolve onto tourism, there are a bevy of other important reasons to expand the historic district in Old Town — two of which include the preservation of irreplaceable built heritage and protection of the settlement area’s character that, to a large degree, is reflected in many facets of the community.

In order to facilitate the work of the consultancy firm selected at the conclusion of the request for proposal process, over the past four weeks, the town’s heritage planners organized a series of 12 volunteer-

based — individuals drawn from the municipal heritage committee, museum and Niagara Foundation — fieldwork sessions, which generated a wealth of data on individual buildings, the varied settlement periods and architectural styles that define Old Town’s built landscape.

Further, the relationships between buildings and the spaces in between were considered in an attempt to define the character of individual streetscapes and landscapes.

On multiple occasions, town residents, curious about just what we were doing, engaged with the heritage planners and volunteers — in many cases, adding invaluable information about the buildings and the people who had owned them.

Allow me to provide just one example of such an exchange which occurred during a recent fieldwork session.

We were standing in front of the house located at 233 Gate St. and debating the accuracy of the build date (1970) that the town’s senior heritage planner, Candice Bogdanski, had pulled from the town’s records (note that there are many inaccuracies in those records).

Some of the group felt this dwelling could well be an early 19th-century build, but I wasn’t convinced it wasn’t a superb New Traditional reproduction from an architect such as McKie Wing Roth.

Just as I was stating that only 30 seconds in the basement of the house would determine its actual age, I caught sight of a lady waving to us from the front window.

Not being a backward sort, I motioned a request to speak with her and, a minute or two later, she opened the front door.

After Candice had explained what we were doing, the lady asked us to wait and went back into the house, returning a short time thereafter with magazine and book in-hand, then settled herself on the front steps.

She explained that the



A reproduction of a Williamsburg-style home on 233 Gate St. that fits the character of the Niagara-on-the-Lake neighbourhood and its surroundings, Brian Marshall writes.

house had been constructed by her parents in 1970. As lovers of historic Williamsburg in Virginia, they had commissioned a reproduction of one of the 18th-century dwellings, carefully selected to be in complete sympathy with NOTL’s historic streetscapes and its Gate Street location specifically (for those interested, google the Ayscough House in Williamsburg VA to see the original 18th-century inspiration).

An objective that, in this writer’s opinion, was achieved admirably.

Opening the copy of a 1989 Chatelaine magazine held in her hand, she turned to an in-depth article which featured the house we stood in front of and described the interior augmented by the article’s multiple photos.

At several points during the description, she expressed the responsibility that she felt to protect and preserve her parents’ legacy and, further, alluded to the battles she has waged on behalf of NOTL’s heritage.

There was a time in this town when nearly everyone was committed to its preservation, she explained.

It was a time when women in their dresses and men in their suits would

gather on Friday and Saturday evenings at the Oban Inn to socialize and build community.

It was a kinder, gentler time, in which respect for your neighbours and your neighbourhoods formed an important central criteria to be considered in an individual’s decision-making and subsequent actions.

Through her eloquent words, I could see in my mind’s eye those gatherings at the Oban.

Moreover, the town’s built architecture from that period (1970s and 1980s) and the resultant streetscapes underwrite and display the “respect” of neighbours, neighbourhoods and historic built heritage that she spoke of.

Unfortunately, it is an ethos that is frequently forgotten or deliberately ignored in the town of Niagara-on-the-Lake in 2024.

Infill developments are shoe-horned into lots — with minor variances on lot coverage and setbacks — without regard for existing streetscapes.

The height, massing and architecture of the infill often completely disrupting the rhythm of that streetscape, dwarfing the

neighbours and robbing them of their privacy.

Neighbours, neighbourhoods and cultural heritage landscapes be-damned if we can gain one more house, one more condo or one more hotel, it seems to be worth it — at least according to the voting record of the majority serving on our current council.

Consider, if you will, the proposed condominium at 223-227 Mary St. which came before council’s committee of the whole planning meeting last week.

As I described in this column published on Sept. 11, the developer proposes a building height of 14 metres (45.93 feet), not including the parapets and, I assume, rooftop mechanical enclosures on a town block currently devoted to single family dwellings that vary in height from one to two storeys (less than half the height of the proposed condo).

Lines of sight from the condo balconies and windows will remove any hint of privacy from the neighbouring backyards. The shadow studies clearly show that every single neighbour will, at various dates and times of day throughout the year, suffer from the shad-

ows cast by the proposed building. And, the list goes on.

During the initial 2023 application, neighbours and other town residents filed approximately 53 objections with only two letters of support.

And, although according to a comment made by a senior staff member during the council’s planning meeting, staff consider the extent of the revisions to be so substantial as to make this essentially a “new application,” the developer was allowed to bring it forward as a revised application #0151, I assume to avoid the requirement for an open house and public meeting had a new application been filed.

Despite these points, irregularities and other items, the majority of council (Gary Zalepa, Erwin Wiens, Adriana Vizzari, Maria Mavridis and Wendy Chero-pita) voted in favour, while Gary Burroughs, Sandra O’Connor and Tim Bala-siuk voted against — pretty much the standard council voting pattern on development applications.

This application will be coming forward for the final council vote in the Sept. 23 council meeting.

If nothing changes, it will be approved — while the neighbours and the character of Old Town’s central residential district will be the poorer for it.

I am also informed that the town clerk is stonewalling delegations on this matter, suggesting that the existing list of delegations, presentations and requests to appear before council and other matters over the next few meetings is so lengthy that it is unlikely a new delegation on this application would be accepted.

That leaves each of us to contact our councillors, preferably in writing, to voice an opinion, either for or against, on the matter.

If we won’t be heard one way, we need to be heard in another.

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



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Cora Long D.D.



We all **were warned** that floods would happen

Dear editor:

You have published some interesting accounts of flooding this summer, but let's get real here.

Global weather weirding is happening everywhere. Scientists have been telling us for decades that this was going to happen.

A 100-year event? Maybe looking back, but certainly not looking forward.

Look at all the parts of the world facing years of drought, Morocco and Namibia, for starters. Look at Florida getting flooded so much that it's hard to get insurance any more.

Wind, rain and drought. It's not going away unless, of course, you don't believe in any of it. But it's hard to ignore, isn't it?

Look at Toronto and all the flooding there. From all accounts it's much worse there than what we've experienced here.

Let's consider whose "fault" it is that we are getting flooding. Is it the local government or the people who denied this could happen and so didn't do anything?

Generations who didn't do anything to curb it or prepare for it? Is it the people who built houses in flood plains or at the bottom of hills? Or the governments that let them do it?

I could go on and on. There is really no point in looking back and blaming because we are all guilty of inaction and now we just have to deal with it.

Governments simply do not have enough money to make it all perfect again — and that's everyone's money by the way.

There will be flooding. Things have changed. Who knew (despite all the warnings) that weather weirding would affect our little town?

When you have a small budget you spend it only where you must and flooding wasn't a big occurrence before. As a matter of fact, the records are not accurate here and no one knows where the water in some of the culverts flows.

Those are the idiosyncracies of small towns and rural areas. We have a lot of work to do. God knows how much work Toronto has in front of it to address its flooding problems. It's a mess.

The big problem is no money, so it's going to take a while.

That being said we were flooded in July of last year for the same reason. While we were trapped inside the candy store on Queen Street with our three grandkids for 90 minutes, we had a month's worth of rain.

Meanwhile, our entire basement was filling up with about six inches of

water (thankfully no sewage — we have a back flow valve and everyone should). We had just finished a year of renovations.

Everything permanent gets ripped out to 24 inches above the ground, plus there's the damage to the contents. Huge fans are brought in and run for about a week.

Your enemy is mold, so the floor goes unless it's ceramic. So does all your drywall and insulation, plus the furnace and water heater because they are compromised.

We knew we had a problem and that it would happen again if we didn't fix it. We redirected the water flow from our driveway and garage away from the house and had drains installed. In the summer of 2024, we had no flooding. Maybe we fixed it — for now.

**Jackie Bonic
NOTL**

Defending Israel's right to **self-defence**

Dear editor:

Kit Andres (Letter, "Canada must stop supplying weapons to Israel," Aug. 22), cannot speak for Mennonites as a whole and I don't believe all Mennonites would agree with Andres.

Why did Andres not also make a stand against the U.S. government selling arms to Iran, only Quebec, or against Russia for supplying armaments to Iran, which were used against Israel?

Iran and its proxies started this war on Oct. 7, 2023, not Israel.

The IDF is the Israeli Defence Forces — defence not offence. That is exactly what Israel did on that day.

Who are you six Mennonites defending here? As Mennonites aren't you supposed to defend the Jews, as the Bible says? Anyone who thinks people don't have the



right to defend themselves, like the Jews, has a serious issue.

George Heidebrecht was right in his Aug. 29 response, "Israel must be allowed to defend itself."

So, are you Mennonites Christians or is Mennonite just a name you use to hide behind as a blanket statement? What other injustices do you defend?

The woke generation has no clue what is going on. I stand for Israel.

**Gerhard Brecht
St. Davids**

Who turned out the lights? NOTL **power outages explained**



Tim Curtis
Special to The Lake Report

Niagara-on-the-Lake residents have experienced a large number of power outages this summer.

I wish I had a simple answer to explain why, but the reality is, there isn't one. It's complicated.

Instead, let me offer some background on the outages and discuss some of the changes we are making at NOTL Hydro.

First, some numbers. As the accompanying graph shows, there have been a lot more outages this summer compared to the past three years.

NOTL Hydro's reliability had been good. For obvious reasons, this is something we track closely and our reliability has historically been better than the industry average.

There are two types of outages we do not include in measuring our performance. The first are temporary outages of less than a minute.

Though they are frustrating, they are actually an example of our system working. Something (a tree branch or animal) likely contacted our lines and

caused an outage.

However, the contact was not permanent and our system was able to restore itself thanks to an instrument called a recloser.

We also don't count outages caused by Hydro One, as they are out of our control. We had a good example of such an outage on July 16.

Looking ahead, we will be adding more outage information on our website, including a list of all outages, with the date, cause, number of customers affected and duration.

As well, charts will show our performance by month over the year.

Here is a summary of the most recent outages:

Sixteen were weather-related, caused by lightning or trees contacting the lines due to high winds. One of our changes will be having our contractor do the tree trimming earlier in the year. For the past two years it has been done mostly in the summer when we really need it done in the spring before the trees start growing again. We are also working with the town, region and federal government to get more dead trees removed.

Fifteen outages were due to contacts with wildlife. As I write this on Sept. 5, there has been another outage due to contact with birds, starlings this time. Birds and squirrels are the



NOTL has seen many more power outages this summer compared to the past three years, writes Tim Curtis.

main culprits. If they are just sitting on a line it's not a problem. But if they contact two different lines, which usually happens near the poles, we can have a short, a blown fuse and usually a dead animal. One change we have started to make is to install trip-savers instead of fuses. A trip-saver costs about \$5,000 — not

that will be affected by a planned outage is always given advance warning and we try to keep the outage as short as possible.

Three outages were caused by failure of some of our own equipment. This can happen with age and wear and tear. For example, in late August the bolts clamping a wire onto a bracket had loosened and over time the movement of the wire in the clamp eventually caused it to break. This wire was more than 50 years old. Now that we have largely completed the voltage conversions on our overhead system, we have started to replace all the older wiring and poles. This will still take many years. A more significant equipment failure occurred on June 13 when one of the large feeder wires bringing power out of our York station shorted, cutting power to more than 1,700 customers. It turns out the method of installing these wires around 20 years ago allowed water into the wire assembly and this eventually led to the short. We replaced the feeder line this year and will be replacing the other two next year as well as the three original feeder lines coming out of our NOTL station. These are expensive wires and the cost of all this work will be more than \$500,000.

Two outages were caused by vehicle accidents. One hit one of our poles and the

other took out one of our transformers, causing a fire. As long as the driver stays on the scene we are able to get their insurance information and charge them for the cost of the repairs.

One outage was a loss of supply from Hydro One at our NOTL station. This occurred on July 16 and affected more than 3,600 customers — and accounted for one-third of the total customer outages this summer. It lasted almost three hours but for our customers the impact was a little over a half-hour as we were able to transfer all the customers to our York station. Switching power between our stations still involves some manual activity. One of our goals is to fully automate this process, so the power transfer can be done more quickly. Automated switches are not cheap and cost over \$60,000 to install so we only add one or two a year.

Finally, sometimes we just can't determine the cause of an outage. It is usually an animal or tree contact that blows the fuse or brings a line down but there is no evidence. We had one such incident this summer.

I am hopeful this summer's spike in outages were just bad luck in timing but we will continue to invest to improve and strengthen NOTL's electrical system.

Tim Curtis is CEO of NOTL Hydro.

Most Canadians support a centre/left viewpoint



Keith McNenly
Special to The Lake Report

With all the political to and fro of late, a federal election could soon be in the offing. And there have been hints of one coming soon in Ontario.

Apparently, many Canadians are tiring federally of the “same old” syndrome and have a desire for a change of government.

A change to what, though?

The majority of Canadians’ values and views remain centre/left, with

Liberal, New Democratic and Green parties garnering 52.7 per cent of the last total vote, while Conservatives captured 33.7 per cent, and Bloc, Peoples and other parties polled 13.6 per cent.

In Ontario, Doug Ford is continuing to reveal autocratic tendencies with stated leanings to politicize judicial appointments and a willingness to use a constitutional clause (never previously invoked in Ontario) to override court decisions.

He’s also demonstrated a disregard for the province’s environmental assets such as the Niagara Escarpment and Ontario Place.

Right-of-centre Canadian electors tried a two-party system back in the 1990s but quickly realized they couldn’t defeat the Liberals with a divided vote. The

Reform Party represented the aspirations of the conservative populist movement in Canada, while the Progressive Conservatives represented centrist/right membership.

After just one federal election and a “Unite the Right” movement they merged into the Conservative Party of Canada.

The three left-leaning parties — Liberal, NDP and Green — collectively garner the majority of votes in elections, however by splitting support among three candidates in most ridings, they lose winnable centre/left ridings to the Conservatives, whether it’s at the federal or provincial level.

In our own federal riding of Niagara Falls, MP Tony Baldinelli won in 2021 with 26,810 votes even

though the riding’s electorate overwhelmingly voted centre/left, totalling 37,891. (Liberal Andrea Kaiser got 23,650, the NDP’s Brian Barker 12,871 and Green Melanie Holm 1,370.)

In Ontario, a centre/left province, we have had a Progressive Conservative majority the last two election cycles. Ford has promised an early election, and with the centre/left divided into three parties competing with each other, he will likely achieve a third majority.

How do the Liberals, NDP and Greens think their “party over province” ethos is beneficial to Ontario citizens and our environment?

Many have hoped for a “unite the left” movement in Canada and in Ontario, but it hasn’t happened. Alter-

natively, strategic voting requires research by electors prior to voting to determine which left-wing candidate has the best chance of winning, something most voters don’t do.

There is another option that could level the playing field and maintain the three separate “left” parties’ independence.

Prior to an election, in each riding currently held by a Conservative wherein centre/left voters are a majority, they could determine which party is likely to achieve the most votes if a single left-wing candidate takes on the Conservatives. The other two parties would agree to not run a candidate in that riding.

Such a non-compete arrangement need only apply in select ridings to achieve

a centre/left majority. With an imminent election on the horizon can we try this in Ontario? Liberal leader Bonnie Crombie? New Democrat leader Marit Stiles? Green leader Mike Schreiner?

If such a “coalition of the left” was in place prior to the 2022 provincial election, Ford likely would not be premier; our health care system would not be so underfunded with overcrowded or closed emergency services and at risk of growing privatization; and Ontario Place, the Niagara Escarpment and the wetlands under the proposed Highway 413 would be safe from development.

NOTL resident Keith McNenly was the chief administrator of the Town of Mono for 41 years.

Province needs to cover cost of crucial prostate cancer test



Wayne Gates
Special to The Lake Report

September is Prostate Cancer Awareness Month. Prostate cancer is the most common form of cancer diagnosed among men in Canada. One in 8 men will be diagnosed with prostate cancer in their lifetimes.

In 2024, it is estimated that over 27,000 men will be diagnosed with the disease — and 5,000 men will tragically lose their lives.

These are not just statistics — these are our fathers, our brothers, our grandpas & uncles, our friends & neighbours.

I have heard stories, like from Pete Ward, who opted in for a prostate-specific antigen test, a.k.a. a PSA test, at a \$39 charge, while getting routine blood work for his blood sugar and cholesterol.

Pete noted that because the test had a fee, it suggested it “wasn’t that important.” But he decided to pay the fee and get the test.

He learned his PSA numbers were off the charts, despite being asymptomatic.

Pete said things were already so severe that many treatment options were

already ruled out — that he and his family were “plunged into 10 months off hell” — but because he got the test, he is still here today.

Or, stories like from Anthony Henry, whose family history — one of four in his family who have lived with his prostate cancer, which led to his father passing away from prostate cancer — led to him getting the test early.

Prostate cancer has disproportionate impacts among Black men, including those of African or Caribbean ancestry, and those with a family history.

But when prostate cancer is found early, almost 100 per cent of men will survive five years or more.

I was joined by Pete and Anthony on this past Monday, Sept. 16, at a press conference in Toronto at Queen’s Park.

Many others joined us, including Pete’s wife, Marianne Meed Ward, the mayor of Burlington, Dr. Anthony Dixon, an emergency room physician from Chatham-Kent who is also a prostate cancer survivor, and Dr. Stuart Edmonds from the Canadian Cancer Society.

Together, we are advocating for the Ontario government to pass my motion to have OHIP cover the cost of the PSA prostate cancer test for everyone in Ontario, when it is requested by a doctor or health care professional.

Right now, people have to pay out of pocket for the test, which means many men cannot afford to get the test. Many others choose to forgo the test because, like Pete, they assume, due to the fee, the test is optional or not important.

This shouldn’t be the case in the province of Ontario.

And this is not a partisan, political issue: I was also joined at my press conference by MPP Stephanie Bowman, a Liberal MPP from Don Valley West, and MPP Mike Schreiner, the Leader of the Ontario Green Party. They both agree, across party lines, that covering this test under OHIP is crucial.

As mentioned, early detection can save lives — and early detection will save our province money and resources in health care costs.

This is a common-sense, simple solution that will save people’s lives.

I’m asking the government: let’s come together, work together, and ensure we pass my motion to have OHIP cover the cost of this important test.

Working together, we can truly make a positive difference in men’s health.

Wayne Gates is the member of provincial parliament for the Niagara Falls riding, which includes Niagara-on-the-Lake, Niagara Falls and Fort Erie.

Can we be upfront about planning in Niagara-on-the-Lake?

Lyle Hall
Special to The Lake Report

Disappointment with planning decisions in Niagara-on-the-Lake seems to intensify as the weeks roll on.

Whether it be the town’s ambiguous statement that “no appeals were received” on the Parliament Oak hotel decision — implying community consent when, in fact, no third-party appeals are permitted.

Or the refusal of the director of planning to provide an accounting of our progress towards meeting provincial intensification

targets, despite citing the need to meet these targets in every planning application coming before council (the director did point out that these targets are only a minimum).

Or the planning department’s assault on heritage while at the same time contemplating an “expansion” of the heritage district (the same expanded district that would almost certainly include 187 Queen St., a part IV-designated property where planning recommended the creation of two severed lots).

Often these decisions/directions are supported by “ex-

perts” with questionable qualifications or where disclaimers waive any responsibility for the advice being provided.

But leaving these unfortunate decisions and associated communications aside, the current controversy over 223/227 Mary St. is truly a mystery.

Despite the town’s decision to reject a previous rezoning application, we are now faced with yet another situation of planning by exception. The rezoning of a centrally located lot, at the very entrance to Old Town, from single family to “residential multiple” should not be considered without a

complete understanding of how the proposed new zoning fits with the existing.

What is the long-term plan for Mary Street and the Mary/Mississauga intersection? Given a four-storey residential building on the north side of Mary, what might be considered appropriate to the south (the site of the Avondale plaza)? What about the rest of Mary up to King Street? How will the Mary Street urban design guidelines be affected?

The whole point of planning (i.e., “an organized — and usually detailed — proposal according to which something is to be done”)

is to eliminate surprises. Despite Coun. Cheropita’s lament at committee of the whole about residents not liking the construction of apartment buildings in her neighbourhood some years ago, those apartment buildings were always part of the plan. The roads and underground services were designed with that level of development in mind. The surrounding residents knew (or could have easily discovered) the long-term plan for the area. This is simply not the case with the Mary Street rezoning application.

One-off planning decisions do not benefit the

community. We have an official plan for a reason (whether the 2019 version or its predecessor). Fundamental zoning changes should be made in a thoughtful, comprehensive manner not in a seemingly knee-jerk reaction to benefit a single landowner.

Want to know why some residents think there are two sets of planning rules in NOTL? Because planning on a case-by-case basis is becoming the norm ... and it just doesn’t work.

Lyle Hall is a NOTL resident who is involved in many community organizations.



Beware of **imposters** on Facebook

Dear editor:

For a few weeks now, there has been someone impersonating me on Facebook, using a fake page and group which claim I am planning to run for town council.

Without getting into much detail because this situation is currently under police investigation, I just wanted to reach out and inform the citizens of Niagara-on-the-Lake that this is not the case and to be careful of the imposter.

While I have personally blocked the fake account, someone informed me Tuesday morning that whoever is behind it is attempting to fraud members of the community by asking for money for my supposed “campaign.”

Make no mistake, “Jenn Jones 4 All” — both the page and the similarly named group — are not

run by me. I am not currently living in Niagara-on-the-Lake, nor am I planning to run for council at any time in the foreseeable future.

I love this community. I love this town. I grew up on King Street. I went to Parliament Oak. My grandfather was the postmaster. My great grandmother was the first female member of council. It will always be a part of me and maybe one day I’ll move back again, but right now it’s simply the home of my mother — my children’s Nana — and that’s where my connection ends.

When and if the time comes where I move back and choose to run for council, you can rest assured The Lake Report will be the first to know.

**Jennifer Jones
Fort Erie**



Why the **outhouse**?

Dear editor:

In our beautiful little historic town of Niagara-on-the-Lake sits an air-conditioned outhouse on the corner of Gate and Queen streets.

It has been here for most of if not the entire year.

If we tried all day we couldn’t possibly come up with something that could look worse. Talk about not fitting in with the heritage homes all so close by.

So, can someone tell me “why” it is here and “who” is paying for it and “when” it will leave.

**Ken Porter
NOTL**

Keep highrise developments **out of Old Town**

Dear editor:

With the acceptance of the staff report recommending acceptance of the apartment building at 223 and 227 Mary St. (“Councilors approve zoning amendment for Mary Street condo,” Sept. 11) following closely behind the approval of an even more massive hotel building on the Parliament Oaks site, it would appear our lord mayor and council have officially accepted a new norm for Old Town that flies in the face of the official plan.

Section 4.8.2.1 of NOTL’s 2019 official plan reads: “With the exception of Glendale, the town consists of low-rise structures in a small town setting with a large number of cultural heritage resources. Generally, building heights in Old Town, St. Davids, and Queenston do not exceed ten (10) metres. This lowrise character will be maintained, and the implementing zoning bylaw will limit building height accordingly.”

This section was conveniently not mentioned in the staff report. I wonder why?

Other than the 1990s-era 61 Paffard St. condo tucked in behind townhouses, there are no other buildings in Old Town higher than three storeys at street level.

Yet, since the beginning of 2024 council has approved two hotels and a residential building of four storeys in the core area of Old Town. Hmm?

If we really want to twin with Frankenmuth or a similar tourist destination, perhaps we should be very careful with what our town looks like to visitors.

I recently sat next to a woman from Detroit who drives to take in the Shaw Festival several times a year and bypasses Stratford because it lacks character and looks like a subdivision ... might we be headed in that direction?

Yes, we need more apartments and seniors oriented housing in Old Town, but can we somehow keep new developments to the area south of Mary Street so we remain the quaint village people love to visit?

**Bob Bader
NOTL**

Have a **moment of silence** for peace on Sept. 21

Dear editor:

Some long-term Niagara-on-the-Lake residents may remember the annual International Day of Peace (Sept. 21) being marked locally with a minute of silence at noon followed by the ringing of all our church bells. That was mainly due to the urging of the late Joan Moore.

This year is the 25th anniversary of the United Nation’s adoption of the Declaration and Programme of Action on a Culture of Peace.

Clearly, a lot of work needs to be done and in our town, no bells will be rung.

Everyone knows there’s a land war raging once again in Europe, and innocent lives are being lost there and in terrible violence in the Middle East and in Africa.

Perhaps it’s not too much for all of us to observe a minute’s silence on the 21st — just to think about what we might do to ease the world’s pain ourselves, or perhaps to say a silent prayer for peace.

We in the Baha’i community of Niagara-on-the-Lake remember Joan Moore with love and gratitude, and also — on Sept. 21 — remember an essential teaching of our faith, that “The earth is one country, and mankind its citizens.”

**Hugh Church
NOTL**

A **farmer’s perspective** on migrant workers

Dear editor:

Your Sept. 5 story, “Migrant Workers have unequal access to resources, volunteer group says,” is wrong in a few aspects.

The group, Justicia for Migrant Workers, demands that Doug Ford and his minister of labour allow workers to take breaks during hot weather and have access to first aid and to close farms during extreme weather.

First of all, when extreme weather happens, where are our liaison officers to be found so they can check up on various workers randomly to observe whether they are working or have the time off?

A few years back I saw roofers installing new shingles on one of our barns in very hot conditions. Where are the powers that be to get their boss to remove them from their job?

Turns out when speaking with the men they had their water bottles and did not require to be laid-off on the day.

The same would go for workers paving roads, etc. during extreme weather.

As for the heat experienced by our Jamaican farm workers, they laugh at me when I ask them if they want time off due to the heat.

They work amid fruit trees, where shade is available, or in the grape rows, where it also can be shady.

I agree there are times

and conditions where migrant workers should not be outside, but give farmers some credit that we know when these times are.

Secondly, having a medical kit is part of their supplied inventory in their accommodations. Thirdly, are you actually suggesting we close our farms during extreme weather? That is a ridiculous blanket statement.

As for OHIP, there are steps in place if a migrant worker needs medical attention but does not have an OHIP card.

There are many, many Canadian citizens who are working under not-so-ideal conditions and are afraid to complain in case they get fired and then cannot get another job.

Remember, migrant farm workers sign a one-year contract and at the end of it they are free not to come back to the farmer they worked for, they can ask to be sent to another farm or they can stay in their country and work.

Nobody is forcing them to come here to work.

What is the agenda for all these articles anyway?

I am so tired of hearing blanket words about a fine agricultural industry, instead of the media doing proper research and talking about solutions and not just getting everyone upset about comments that often are full of untruths.

**Susan Pohorly
NOTL**

A **very happy retirement** to editor Kevin MacLean

Dear editor:

We would like to express our appreciation to Kevin MacLean, managing editor of The Lake Report for the past six years. His editing, photo finding and encouragement helped us produce our well-read articles on the history of Niagara-on-the-Lake.

Our best wishes to Kevin for an enjoyable retirement.

**Denise Ascenzo
Linda Fritz
Elizabeth Masson
NOTL**

Thanks for great job working with Lake Report

Dear editor:

Just a note for Kevin on his “re-retirement.”

As regular readers of The Lake Report, we were very fortunate to have you on staff at the paper.

We especially remember your courageous series calling out the Niagara Regional Police for their secrecy while working a local case. You’ve no doubt helped make everyone at TLR a better journalist.

We look forward to seeing your work as a regular contributor.

Thank you. And congratulations, Kevin.

**Reid Maltby
Christine McGrath
St. Catharines**

Unfair to criticize understudy in ‘Candida’

Dear editor:

I have enjoyed the reviews of the plays at Shaw this year, but, I have a bone to pick with the review of “Candida.”

Regarding the role of Prosperpine Garnett, usually played by Claire Jullien, the reviewer claimed that Gabriella Sundar Singh, who played this role on the day that the reviewer attended the performance, “Did not have the depth that this role demands.”

Gabriella, the understudy for Claire, is not

even in this play in a regular role. Her two parts are as a lead in “The Secret Garden” and in “My Fair Lady.”

Gabriella is in her sixth season at Shaw and as a season pass holder I have seen her many times in a variety of shows over the years. As far as I’m concerned, she always does a great job and it is unfair to comment in a review about her performance as an understudy.

**Doris Bradley
Toronto**

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NOTL ‘classic’ reunion reunites friends

Julia Sacco
Local Journalism Initiative
The Lake Report

Saturday’s reunion of Classic Niagara-on-the-Lake at Legion Branch 124 was a breeding ground for much-needed catch-ups and chats reminiscing on days gone by.

Classic Niagara-on-the-Lake is a Facebook group with around 3,000 members that’s a space for NOTLers of the past and present to reconnect and reminisce.

This year marked the group’s eighth annual get-together, where groups of NOTLers who once met in the ‘60s, ‘70s and ‘80s could reconnect, drink and be merry.

Diane Gee Shrive, one of the group’s administrators, got a surprise visit of her own.

Among the 150 guests was Gee Shrive’s brother Brian, who drove in all the way from Peterborough. It had been two years



The Niagara District Secondary School class of ‘75-76 reminisces. JULIA SACCO

since the siblings had last seen each other, she said.

“I had no idea he was coming,” she told The Lake Report.

The siblings have a six-year age gap and their family moved to NOTL after immigrating from England, so Gee Shrive spent her teenage years in NOTL while her older brother spent less time in town, she said.

The siblings weren’t the only ones to make an appearance.

The four Broere sib-

lings could be found in a circle, laughing and sharing memories with friends.

A highlight from the past was Howard McCourt’s parties.

Joanna Broere was never invited to those, McCourt joked.

“No, because I would tell on you,” Broere said.

With a laugh, Phil Broere recalled a party held in the back of McCourt’s Cadillac.

“We didn’t even leave the driveway, we just drank in the back seat,” he said.

The reunion wasn’t just

for NOTLers, either.

While The Lake Report stopped by for a visit, a party bus with a bachelorette party pulled up to Legion Branch 124.


Emma Murphy from Oakville, the bride-to-be, said the gathering looked like one that couldn’t be missed.

“We passed by and I said we have to stop at the Legion,” Murphy said.


Everyone was welcome for drinks, food and live music from Don Sexsmith.

juliasacco@niagaranow.com

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COMMUNITY DONATION PROJECT

**PORCH PICK-UP
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Newark Neighbours, together with our partners from the NOTL Rotary, NOTL Kinsmen and St. David’s Lions Clubs, are holding a porch pick-up food drive. On **Saturday, Sept. 28, 2024**, teams are available to pick up your food donations anytime between 10 a.m. and 4 p.m.


If you wish to donate in support of our food bank, please call 905-468-7498 or email us at newarkneighbours1@gmail.com to register your address and phone for pick-up. **Email is preferred.**


**ITEMS REQUIRED
FOR THANKSGIVING HAMPERS:**


Stuffing mix, cranberry sauce, canned gravy or mix (turkey or chicken), cranberry and/or apple juice, apple sauce, canned fruit and vegetables (corn, pineapple, green beans, peas), snack crackers, cookies


ITEMS REQUIRED ON AN ONGOING BASIS:

Canned salmon, canned tuna, Sidekicks and ramen soup packets, canned chili or spaghetti or ravioli, peanut butter, granola bars, cookies, Chunky Soups – any kind or flavour canned beef stew, Habitant soups, canned ham, corned beef or Spam, Flakes of Ham, Chicken or Turkey, Jams (any flavour), canned fruit, soda, soup crackers, Kraft Dinner, canned beans (kidney, chickpeas, lentils), canned tomatoes, canned potatoes, instant mashed potatoes, tomato sauce, pasta, rice, pudding cups (any flavour), cereal and oatmeal, coffee (any kind — instant/regular/ decaf), tea, shelf stable milk (e.g. condensed, powdered, rice, etc.), paper towels, toilet paper, household items ie. dish soap, laundry detergent, cleaning products, condiments (salad dressings, mayonnaise, sauces, HP Sauce, soy sauce, Worcestershire sauce, etc.), dried spices, salt & pepper, toiletries (toothpaste, toothbrushes, razors, hand and body lotion, mouthwash, feminine products).











NOTLers continue Terry Fox legacy

Dave Eke, husband of the late Debbie Eke, with Sarah Pillitteri, Mike Pillitteri and Sophia Pillitteri in front the FOX sign at Simcoe Park for the Terry Fox Run on Sept. 15. Debbie Eke was honoured at this year's run after she lost her battle with cancer last October. DAVE VAN DE LAAR

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Romance brings ‘joy and inspiration’ with her artwork

Paige Seburn
The Lake Report

As Trisha Romance stood surrounded by friends, family and admirers at the centre of Old Town in Niagara-on-the-Lake, it was clear that this moment was more than just a formal ceremony.

For those gathered, including prominent figures, the awarding of the key to the town was a heartfelt celebration of Romances’ profound influence on the community through her art.

The ceremony, filled with heartfelt tributes and warm embraces, was held on Sept. 15 and was a testament to the deep connection Romance has made with the town through her 40 years of artistic contributions.

Randy Hoak, town supervisor of Hamburg, N.Y., told the crowd that Romance’s early achievements and move to Niagara-on-the-Lake marked a pivotal career chapter.

He said these milestones show the lasting impact of her work.



Trisha Romance accepts the first-ever key to Niagara-on-the-Lake. DAVE VAN DE LAAR

Not only is she deeply connected to the community, but she’s connected to the town’s history as well.

“One thing never changes, and that’s the history of this town. This town is embedded so deeply into a rich history for our nation,” said Romance, in her speech.

At the ceremony, NOTL library board chair Daryl Novak announced the creation of the Trisha Romance Children’s Art Fund, established with a \$10,000 donation to support art programs for children at the Niagara-on-the-Lake Public Library.

Novak said Romance’s enduring commitment to the arts has shown how important it is to nurture and encourage creativity in the next generation.

Her impacts aren’t just long-lasting — they’re also broad, said Janet Morrison from Sheridan College, recounting her influence on students and her creative contributions.

In her heartfelt speech, Romance captured the essence of her passion for art.

“Art is a superpower. It has the power to heal. It has the power to calm. It has the power to transport you. It has the power to bring

contentment. And I have seen it time and time again. And that, that has been the basis of my love for art,” said Romance.

She said that her work holds both cultural and emotional significance.

The beauty of Niagara-on-the-Lake inspires her, but it’s also the joy she sees in her family that sparks her creativity.

Even simple moments, like watching her children at the bakery, can turn into masterpieces.

“A certain moment had to happen in motherhood with them, before that could happen. And once that mo-

ment happened, I’d say, ‘Oh, there’s the painting,’” said Romance to the crowd.

One of her favorite aspects of the town — the Sentineal carriages, which she has cherished for decades — was a highlight of the ceremony for her. Arriving by horse and carriage, she said in her speech, was a special moment for her.

The ceremony concluded with a recognition of the town staff and volunteers who played a crucial role in organizing the event.

The emotional atmosphere intensified when Carmela and Onofrio Bonomo, long-time admirers of Romance’s work and avid promoters of the region on social media, approached her.

Bonomo shared a heartfelt embrace with Romance, reflecting the personal impact her art has had on their lives.

“I tell you, we’ve filled up the house with Trisha Romance paintings. We love it, we introduce our families and friends to it — we just enjoy every moment of it,” said Onofrio Bonomo.

“They give us joy and inspiration.”

“We just couldn’t help but come here,” said Carmela Bonomo.

Lord Mayor Gary Zalepa, reflecting on the day’s significance, said he feels fortunate to be in the position to honour Romance’s contributions and is moved by the many stories of her positive influence on the community.

Zalepa said that the key to the town represents a special citizen who is known, trusted, and welcomed as if they were part of everyone’s home.

“I think if Trisha came to the door of anybody here in town, they would welcome her,” he said.

“I feel so lucky to be the mayor today,” he said.

During the ceremony, a new walking tour of Niagara-on-the-Lake was introduced, showcasing buildings featured in Trisha Romance’s paintings.

For more details and to download a PDF, visit niagaraonthelake.com/trisharomancecelebration.

SPONSORED

FirstOntario PAC brings Niagara’s Tragically Hip-loving community together to be a part of Gord Downie’s legacy

SPONSORED
The Lake Report

The FirstOntario Performing Arts Centre is preparing to host its seventh-annual community concert in partnership with the Gord Downie & Chanie Wenjack Fund on Wednesday, Oct. 16 as part of Secret Path Week.

With the death of Gord Downie on Oct. 17, 2017, Canadians lost one of our most beloved music icons. Gord spent his final days shining a light on the reconciliation with this country’s First Peoples. He asked all Canadians to join the call to action.

For the past seven years, the FirstOntario PAC has been honoured to host a group of Canadian artists who have joined our collective reconciliation journey with a concert to promote awareness, education and thoughtful action. This concert has been an opportunity for our community to come together to raise funds in support of the PAC’s ongoing commitment to the Gord Downie & Chanie Wenjack Fund.



Vic Linklater, frontman of the Poets, a Tragically Hip tribute band from Moosonee and Moose Factory in northern Ontario, performs at the 2023 Celebrating Gord & The Hip celebration at the FirstOntario Performing Arts Centre. DAN BROWN

The first two concerts were produced with Canadian producer and musician, Kevin Fox, a collaborator of Downie’s, who brought together artists from across the country to raise funds for Gord’s new foundation.

With the onset of the COVID pandemic, the PAC decided to pivot the program online with Downie

Wenjack Fund and a call went out nationwide for artists to submit their rendition of a Hip song. The resulting livestream programs of 2020 and 2021 attracted hundreds of applications and brought in tens of thousands of viewers from across the country who wanted to do something.

“The PAC remains deeply

committed to our work in truth and reconciliation,” shares Sara Palmieri, director of programming and marketing at the PAC.

“We love this annual community concert as it’s not only a celebration of the music of the Hip but also a chance to learn, reflect and grow together as a community.”

This year, Celebrating Gord & The Hip will be a true community celebration of the music and legacy of Gord Downie and the Tragically Hip that will feature local artists, student contributors and the winners of an upcoming contest inviting community to share their favourite Hip memory, poem or song.

The evening will also feature local Downie Wenjack artist ambassadors Strong Water Singers as well as the rock n’ roll stylings of the Poets, a Tragically Hip tribute band from Moosonee and Moose Factory, coming all the way to St. Catharines to share their favourite Hip tunes.

This concert is part of the PAC’s annual commitment to raise funds and awareness for the Downie Wenjack Fund.

How do I get tickets to Celebrating Gord & The Hip?

Head to the FirstOntario Performing Arts Centre website at firstontariopac.ca or call the box office Tuesday to Friday, 12 to 5

p.m. or Saturday from 2 to 5 p.m. at 905-688-0722.

About the Gord Downie & Chanie Wenjack Fund + Secret Path Week

Inspired by Chanie’s story and Gord’s call to build a better Canada, the Gord Downie & Chanie Wenjack Fund aims to build cultural understanding and create a path toward reconciliation between Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples. The goal is to improve the lives of Indigenous people by building awareness, education and connections between all peoples in Canada. Visit our website to learn more and donate. Gord’s Legacy is part of Secret Path Week 2024.

Secret Path Week is a national movement that commemorates the legacies of Gord Downie and Chanie Wenjack, and takes place annually from Oct. 17 to 22. This is a meaningful week as Oct. 17 and Oct. 22, respectively, mark the dates that Gord Downie and Chanie Wenjack joined the spirit world.

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Foster Festival branches out with ‘Time and Tide’

SPONSORED
The Lake Report

For the first time in its history, St. Catharines’ Foster Festival is producing a script not written by Norm Foster.

Thanks to its Playwright Development Program, the inaugural Fostered Playwrights Festival and a generous contribution from the Federal Economic Development Agency of Southern Ontario (FedDev Ontario) as a part of their tourism growth program, the Foster Festival is extending its season with a fourth production: the world premiere of “Time and Tide” by Jody Stevens McCluskey, from Halifax, N.S.

Rose Murphy returns home to her father, mother and great grandmother, needing to be with them while maintaining the separateness of her new life as writer in the “big city.” As we watch the play unfold, we bask in the light of her parents’ incomparable love and identify with Rose’s own commitment issues as she struggles to find a relationship that measures up to



Donna Belleville as Clara in “Jenny’s House of Joy” by Norm Foster. SUPPLIED

their 30-year love affair. We feel the warmth of every one of her great-grandmother’s hugs, even as Rose squirms out from under the weight of expectations to marry and raise babies.

Over the course of a year, we are invited into the complicated, ambiguous but

ultimately joyful and loving dynamics of the Murphy family as they navigate the ebb and flow of life seen through the keen lens of maritime humour.

Jody Stevens McCluskey’s new play shines a bright light on family — the joys, loves and losses that every

family endures — while skillfully defining the dichotomy of needing family and needing to be independent of it. With well-crafted characters and sharply defined voices she spins a tale unique and at the same time familiar. She builds a family we love on its own and for

the recognition of ourselves in them.

For the third time in the course of four years, Donna Belleville returns to the Foster Festival stage — this time in the role of Nan, Rose’s resilient and irrepressible great grandmother. Donna appeared in the Foster Festival’s “Widow Wonderland” in 2021 and as Clara in “Jenny’s House of Joy” in 2023.

“I’m thrilled to be coming back. I love the folks. And I loved doing Jenny’s last year, working with a wonderful group of women, on stage and off,” she says.

A veteran of the Shaw Festival, Donna is also a long time resident of Niagara-on-the Lake along with her husband, actor/writer Terry Belleville.

“I came to Niagara-on-the-Lake in the mid ‘70s to join the Shaw Festival,” said Belleville. She worked at Carousel Players and was part of the group that created the Escarpment Theatre Company (ETC), a joint venture between Carousel Players and Brock University.

Donna and her family

left for Alberta in the ‘80s where they lived for 20 years. She returned to the Shaw Festival in 1999 and performed there over 19 seasons and has never left.

“(I) now happily call Niagara home.”

Of all the work she has done over her career she confesses her greatest love is new work.

“That’s why I’m thrilled to be part of ‘Time and Tide.’ I have such admiration for this beautiful piece, its writer, and the Foster Festival for taking the leap to ‘foster’ new work,” she said.

Donna Belleville along with Raquel Duffy, Rahul Gandhi, Stephen Guy-McGrath and Evelyn Wiebe can be seen in “Time and Tide,” Oct. 4 to 13 at the Mandeville Theatre. Tickets can be purchased online at www.fosterfestival.com or through our box office at 1-844-735-4832, ext. 3.

And for those also intrigued or impassioned by new works, tickets for the readings of the Foster Festival’s “A Niagara Christmas Carol,” an adaptation by Jamie Williams, are also now on sale. It runs Dec. 6 to 8.

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Oban Inn owner Si Wai Lai is surrounded by family and staff members Sunday at the 200th anniversary celebration of the founding of the historic NOTL landmark. Pictured on the left are Grace Tomlinson, son-in-law Mark Lepp, Hazel Viola, daughter Erica Lepp, Yoko Nagao, Carmen Robichaud, Mike Moffat, Lorynn Loyola, Ron Im, Si Wai and granddaughters Brianna Kerr, Tia Lepp and Jada Mei Lepp, in front. On the left are grandson Ethan Kerr, Jimmy Plutt, Alexa Von Kaldenberg, Johnny Eustace, Jessie Stewart and Joey Hingston. SUPPLIED

Oban Inn celebrates 200 years

Paige Seburn
The Lake Report

The air at the Oban Inn on Sept. 15 was filled with the harmonious strains of classical music, echoing the Inn’s rich history as it celebrated two centuries of its existence.

Si Wai Lai, the owner of the Oban Inn for more than two decades, welcomed everyone to join the celebration, which featured live orchestral music by Bob DeAngelis and his orchestra and a heartfelt gathering of guests and staff, all united by their appreciation for the inn’s storied past.

“Look at all the locals here because they love the beautiful Oban Inn. We’re gonna keep moving forward, for another 200 years,” said Lai.

The charming inn, established in 1824, has long been a cornerstone of the community, blending historical elegance with modern comforts.

Allison Wiens, front desk manager at the Oban Inn, was beaming with pride as

she looked around.

Having worked for the Oban Inn since January 2000, Wiens said her connection to the inn is deeply personal and it’s been incredible to witness it evolve.

She said she has been here through all the changes — from when there was no spa and the dining area was more pub-style, to the transformation into the luxurious space it is today.

Originally, the inn was a private home built by Capt. Duncan Milloy of Oban, Scotland, a sailor and owner of the Niagara Harbour and Dock Company. It was first known as the Oban House.

When Duncan died in 1871, his wife and four children continued to live in the house, until his son, Capt. William “Bill” Milloy opened the residence as the Oban Inn in 1895.

Wiens said that its modern updates have preserved its classic elegance, with some guest rooms still preserving their original Victorian style.

She said it’s a delicate balance — embracing change

while honouring heritage — adding that she’s pleased to see guests adapt to and appreciate these changes.

“It’s neat because I’ve been able to be here through a lot of the changes. Like, before and after. I think the unique thing here is we have a lot of repeat guests. When they see a familiar face, it makes them feel more at home. It’s that personal touch,” said Wiens.

The property changed hands several times until the 1960s, when Edna Burroughs purchased the Oban and continued to operate it with her son, Gary.

At one point, the inn could’ve been lost forever, after a fire on Christmas Day, 1991 destroyed the property, leaving only the foundation.

However, an exact replica of the former structure was rebuilt and it reopened in November 1993.

In the 1990s, Si Wai Lai and her two brother, hotelier Jimmy Lai, came to NOTL and began purchasing hotel properties in town and renovating them, which included

the Princes of Wales Hotel and the Oban — for many, the Lais breathed new life into these historic places.

The Sunday celebration was not only a milestone for the Oban Inn, but also a tribute to the enduring hospitality and community spirit that have defined its 200-year history.

Local residents Mary-Ann Mckinley and Nancy Diakiw, who have long appreciated the Oban Inn’s amenities, learned about the anniversary celebration through the news and saw it as the perfect opportunity to join in the festivities.

“It’s a beautiful day for it. Amazing variety of hors d’oeuvres, gracious staff, and the orchestra is wonderful. They have done a really good job,” said Mckinley.

Speaking with Si Wai Lai, they both thanked her for her generosity in opening the Oban to the public for the celebration and preserving the landmark property.

“She just opened it up to anybody and everybody, and that’s really nice,” said Mckinley.



Left: Bob DeAngelis and his orchestra set the mood for the afternoon’s festivities. Right: The Oban’s front desk manager Allison Wiens has worked at the inn for 24 years. PAIGE SEBURN



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TEAM OF THE WEEK

Riverview Cellars U13-14




The members of the Riverview Cellars U13-14 team are The Lake Report's final NOTL Soccer Club Team of the Week for the 2024 season. Pictured behind goaltender Brayden Sacco are coach Mike Pillitteri, Noah Nickerson, Bohden Cherevaty, Malcom Buffington, Lucas Pillitteri, Eric Warren, Vanessa Rezza, Angelina La Valle, Jordyn Salter and Aleksandr Keda. Absent are: Tomás Nolan, Henry Buffington, Kyrill Chalov, Logan Elrod, Hanlin Guo and William Marinis.

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Lightning strikes twice: Another rare ace on NOTL's #7

Kevin MacLean
The Lake Report

Who says lightning can't strike twice?
For the second time in barely two weeks, a golfer has notched a hole-in-one on the seventh hole at the Niagara-on-the-Lake Golf Club.

Aces aren't that rare, of course. But until 19-year-old Ethan Peters knocked his ball in the hole on #7 on Tuesday, Aug. 27, apparently no one else had ever managed the feat.

And the NOTL golf course has been around since 1875, so there's been ample opportunity to make it so.

Then last Wednesday afternoon, Steven Brammer made 9/11 memorable for yet another reason.

Playing the yellow, forward tees with lifelong buddy David Couch, he aimed to "show off" and go over the trees to the lakeside green about 250 yards away.

Instead, he hit a low, screamer of a shot, "about six feet off the ground," that found a gap in the forest and hurtled toward the green.

You can't see the hole even from the forward tees so Brammer, 65, figured he probably had landed in the yawning bunker that guards the front of the green. Or worse, maybe in the lake.

The pin was in a nearly impossible spot, on the top tier of the two-level, undulating green, but when he and Couch got there, Brammer's ball was nowhere to be found.

Couch had hit his second shot onto the green and just



Steven Brammer, left, holds up his new hole-in-one bag tag courtesy of club assistant pro Owen Howells. SUPPLIED

as Brammer was giving up on finding his ball, Couch checked the hole.

And that's where he found Brammer's Titleist #4, sitting pretty.

Cue the celebrating, which carried on once they finished the final two holes and reached the clubhouse.

He and his wife Dawn just moved to NOTL in May, joining Couch who's been here for a few years.

Brammer is a social member of the golf club and spends some of his spare time sailing out of the Royal Canadian Yacht Club in Toronto.

An actor by trade, mainly in TV and film, Brammer spent several summers in NOTL and even worked at the golf club for three years under pro Rick Hill in the mid-1970s.

He still has a red NOTL golf bag with his name embossed on it, a parting gift from Hill.

"Niagara-on-the-Lake was a lot different then," said Brammer, who lived at

the family's summer home on Gate Street with his mom and three siblings.

Dad's job was in Toronto and he would spend weekends in Niagara. He commuted and often took the Cayuga ferry from NOTL to Toronto.

When Brammer worked at the golf club, there was a problem with people stealing the flags off the greens at night.

"So, Rick Hill offered me a few extra bucks to come back to the club at the end of every day to collect the flags," he recalled.

Not only that, "he gave me a golf cart to go home on. So, I was like a 14-year-old kid and I got a golf cart to drive around Niagara-on-the-Lake," Brammer said.

"We just lived on Gate Street, so it wasn't very far, but I got to go home in a golf cart and come back to work the next day in a golf cart, which was like, a kid's dream."

He hasn't played the course since his fateful

date with destiny last week but he finished his round strongly, with a couple of pars on the final two holes for a 2-over 38.

"I was so damn happy. I had no stress and I just kind of hit the ball and parred out afterward. But I made sure I put away the ball I got the hole-in-one with immediately."

Golf results: Penny Green was winner of the nine-hole women's league's A flight competition for the Gretchen Ormston Memorial Trophy. She had a gross score of 91 over the two-day tourney. Flight B winner was Ellen Smith with a score of 116. Congratulations Ellen!

On Sept. 10, Linda Williams, with a net score of 33, won the Members Cup.

In last Thursday's men's league play, Ricky Watson again was the low shooter, with an even-par 36. Randy McCartney was the Stableford winner, with 22 points.

Other winners: Mike Mott (closest to the 150 on #1), Bill Jenkins (longest putt #2), A.J. Harlond (longest drive #3), and Patrick Craig (#4) and Tom Elliott (#9) were closest to the hole.

Craig won gross skins with birdies on #2 and #4, Watson took one for an eagle on #3 and Devon Neudorf's birdie on #8 also won a skin. Net skins went to Doug Herder (#3), Noel Morris (#4) and Matt Hurlburt (#8).

In Tuesday's WOOFs league, Glen Murray was low gross with 36. Harry Huizer won the hidden hole (#8) and Kevin MacLean was closest to the pin on #4.



This week's riddle is "Jeopardy!" style.
Category: LET'S "SEE"

Absolutely boiling with unexpressed anger.

Last issue:

Category: "C'S" THE DAY

Clue: This holiday that commemorates the victory of Mexico at the Battle of Puebla is also a day to celebrate Mexican culture.

Answer: What is Cinco de Mayo?

Answered first by: Claudia Grimwood

Also answered correctly (in order) by: Lynda Collet, Jane Morris, Susan Hamilton, Bill Hamilton, Beverley Easthope, Jeff Lake, Susan Dewar, Bob Wheatley, Catherine Clarke, Sylvia Wiens, Wade Durling, Kathy Humphries, Marla Percy, Esther VanGorder, Jim Dandy, Susan Rautenberg, Howard Jones, Marjory Walker-Barone, Nancy Rocca, Katie Reimer, Sheila Meloche, Jesse Agnew, Daniel Smith, Tuija Johansson, Jen Frendo

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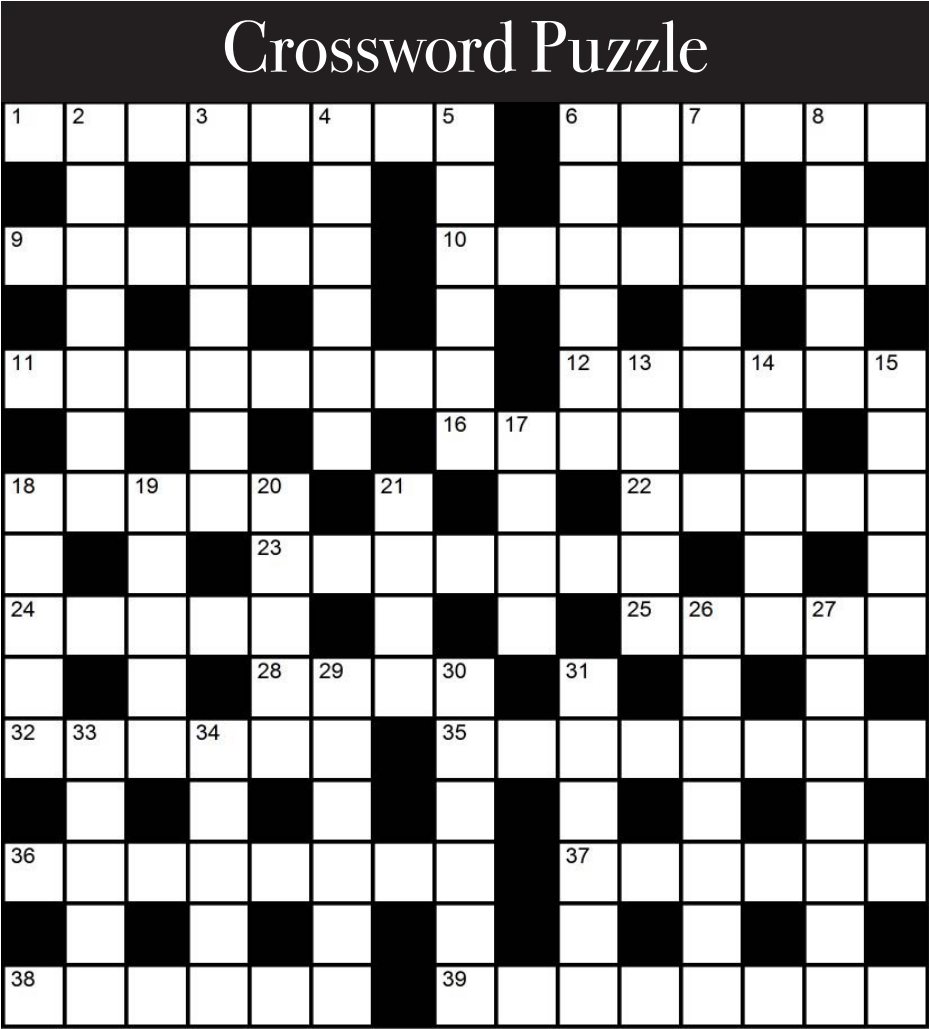
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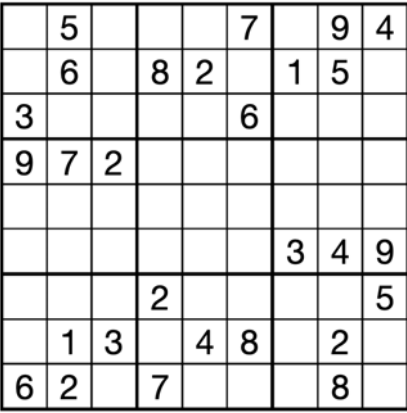
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- Across**
- 1. Fall apart (8)
 - 6. Calls on (6)
 - 9. Second-smallest banknote (6)
 - 10. Wide view of an extensive area (8)
 - 11. Resident of e.g. Tobermory, Portree or Ventnor (8)
 - 12. Fast (6)
 - 16. Reflected sound (4)
 - 18. Storage centre (5)
 - 22. Ruin (5)
 - 23. Dense collection of housing (7)
 - 24. Give consent (5)
 - 25. The devil (5)
 - 28. 60% of us live here (4)
 - 32. 25% (6)
 - 35. Snakes (8)
 - 36. Appreciative (8)
 - 37. Self-dressing and preparation (6)
 - 38. Insecure knot (6)
 - 39. Slaughter (8)
- Down**
- 2. Supervise (7)
 - 3. Once upon a time (4,3)
 - 4. Procession (6)
 - 5. Die (6)
 - 6. Disappear (6)
 - 7. Rush (5)
 - 8. Shy (5)
 - 13. Welsh county (5)
 - 14. Wield (5)
 - 15. Territory in NW Canada (5)
 - 17. Musical staff sign (4)
 - 18. Diminutive being of folklore (5)
 - 19. Hidden (5)
 - 20. Something special (5)
 - 21. Positions (4)
 - 26. The New World (7)
 - 27. Aardvark (3,4)
 - 29. Evasive (6)
 - 30. Institution for mentally ill (6)
 - 31. Boxes (6)
 - 33. Contrasting (5)
 - 34. Argument (3-2)

Have some fun



Last issue's answers



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Beginnings, interims and endings — what happens as we age



DR. BROWN

Dr. William Brown
Columnist

From the simplest cells to complex creatures gifted with language, imagination and creativity, life has a beginning, interims and an ending.

There's no escape: good genes, a healthy lifestyle, timely, effective intervention and treatment along the way, and luck, may put off this or that threat, but in the end, there is an end.

The fact that there is an end, however, is out of sight and mind for most people most of the time, except for illnesses and deaths affecting family and friends.

Life between birth and the early thirties is spent learning and honing increasingly elaborate sensori-motor

skills, learning languages, how to read the intentions and feelings of others, developing a sense of self-awareness, fitting in with increasingly large and complex social communities, and adopting family, cultural and community ideas and norms.

Then come the middle years between the early thirties to the late sixties.

This four-decade period is, for the most part, a period of consolation and continued learning from experience and, like the earlier period, a time most take good health for granted and adapt to new challenges in the work place and home with relative ease — most times.

Even so, there are warning signs: MRI studies suggest that during this middle period, the neocortex begins to shrink, even if there are few if any obvious functional correlates.

Physiological studies by Alan McComas at McMaster University suggest the sixth decade marks the beginning of losses of motor nerve cells in the spinal cord.



MIDJOURNEY PHOTO

If so, there are probably similar losses, affecting other nerve cells in the brain and spinal cord, even though studying other nerve cells is harder to do compared to the relative ease with which motor nerve cells can be studied.

Nerve cells losses are accompanied by losses of the connections those cells had with other nerve cells and, in the case of motor nerve cells in the brainstem and spinal cord, with muscle fibers.

Despite these losses, the impact on function may be minor initially because surviving related nerve cells manage to cover the

functional deficit, until they too begin to succumb.

What sets the eighties apart from the seventies is that degenerative changes and the accumulation of misfolded proteins such as beta amyloid and tau become increasingly common, and clinically significant cognitive and memory changes eventually affect one-third or more of those in their eighties.

The eighties are marked also by the cumulative impact of other challenges such as the increasing prevalence of deafness, macular degeneration and significant degenerative disease in the lower back, hips and knee joints that, coupled with cognitive and memory losses, lead to significant functional disabilities and limit mobility, balance and social activities.

By this time in life, atrophy of the brain is very obvious and marks the loss of large numbers of nerve and other supporting cells in the brain.

The impact of cognitive changes on social activity is

very apparent among those with dementia in long-term care facilities.

My observation is that residents with dementia rarely form meaningful relationships with other like-affected residents despite living together in community for many months and even several years.

With social isolation comes a withering of social and language skills, which compound the problems associated with isolation.

That's where well-trained and motivated staff can make a big difference by making efforts to talk to individual patients and listen to their responses.

Residents do respond to cheery, literally hands-on staff, but not so much to planned group activities.

While it may be useful for clinical purposes to separate the cognitively healthy from those with early signs of dementia, the fact that the percentage of those with dementia continues to rise in the nineties suggests that the spectrum is seamless and that eventually, the major-

ity of those in their nineties will suffer from significant cognitive impairment made worse by social isolation as friends of similar age become affected or die and social worlds contract.

Despite the claims of pharmaceutical companies championing drugs that clean up beta amyloid and even tau, I doubt there will be a truly effective safe drug for Alzheimer's disease anytime soon.

Given the burgeoning numbers of cases of dementia, it's very important that the province plan for far more and better care for seniors, much as some western European countries pioneered for humane care for elders.

That will mean huge investments and higher training standards and salaries for those who provide the care for those out of sight and mind for most Canadians.

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.

Absolute athleticism and 'One Man, Two Guvnors' at Shaw



ROSS'S RAMBLINGS

Ross Robinson
Columnist

Only occasionally am I unable to speak about an athletic performance. I have been fortunate to witness, live and in-person, Olympic gold medal moments in volleyball and rowing and gymnastics, and world championships won in several sports over the years.

Which brings me to last week at the Shaw Festival here in Niagara-on-the-Lake. It was my second time watching this year's magnificent production of "One Man, Two Guvnors," which I had to see twice because of my limited attention span

and hearing challenges. Yes, the production value was incredible, but my basic theatrical IQ was forced to new levels by the extraordinary athleticism and body control shown by Matt Alfano as Alfie and Peter Fernandes as Francis.

Alfie seems to be a shaky senior as he stumbles his way through the show as a waiter in the Cricketers' Arms in Brighton on the English seaside. His pacemaker causes him grief, and controlling his Parkinson's shakes as he attempts to serve food forces the audience to silently cheer for him.

Even with a crash pad at the bottom of the steps it is incredible that he does not seriously injure himself during the show. How he contorts himself into an extended back bend, holding the position for a tortuous length of time, is beyond me. Even after I have watched Nadia Comăneci practice on the balance beam for a whole



Martin Happer as Stanley Stubbers and Matt Alfano as Alfie in One Man, Two Guvnors. DAVID COOPER

week in Strasbourg in 1979, and Bulldogs Ole Sorensen, Paul Jenkins and Dave Osepchook workout on the parallel bars in 1967 in St. Catharines.

But then, Alfano somehow balances himself on a bottle of Châteauneuf-du-Pape, as he struggles to pop the cork and serve the wine to dinner guests at the pub in Brighton. I just can't pen the words to describe my incredulity at this performance.

Now let's discuss Peter Fernandes as he treats us to pratfall after pratfall as

Francis. This University of Alberta grad is one of the busiest people in Canadian theatre, but somehow doesn't run out of energy as he athletically and theatrically pushes his creative envelope.

Fernandes boldly suggested that the Shaw Festival give him the chance to interpret this role. Diving around the stage while delivering rapid-fire line after rapid-fire line, occasionally engaging the audience, he never misses a physical or verbal beat.

Chautauqua's own Allan

Teichman delivers another stellar show as stage manager, and to my fairly practiced eye, never misses a sound or lighting cue as he keeps pace with Fernandes and the other cast members. He says his favourite Shaw show has been "all of them," and bringing shows to life has kept him engaged and in a state of perpetual challenge.

So, I ramble on and marvel at the theatrical and athletic talents of the Shaw company. I dropped by the annual cricket match contested between the Shaw and Stratford theatres.

Good athletes, yes but on the Shaw's stages and in the Speigeltent, I simply cannot comprehend the level of talents.

Even on the Niagara Parkway's recreational trail I have observed a good number of Shaw actors zip-ping along on their bikes. Ryann Myers from New Jersey seems effortless as she pedals from Old Town to Queenston, stopping on

sunny days for a world class ice cream cone at Walker's Country Market.

Now, I will ramble to a close by venturing out of my comfort zone. "My Fair Lady" has been the mega hit this season and audiences have never stopped applauding the show. What do I know, but Taurain Teeluck-singh is a total show stopper as Freddy, singing "On the Street Where You Live."

What power, what projection, what a finale, as we NOTLers are treated, on the streets where we live our lives, to such world class performances.

Last Friday, I called the Shaw Festival to ask if Taurian was a baritone or a bass. An hour later, before I received a return call, he walked past me in front of the Court House on Queen Street.

I grabbed the opportunity to ask the star himself. He pondered and ruminated, then humbly replied, "Put me down as a tenor."

What a town, eh?



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The Brock Chronicles: Battle of Queenston Heights

One of those most revered names from the War of 1812 is that of Maj.-Gen. Sir Isaac Brock. Referred to as the “Saviour of Upper Canada,” Brock has roads, churches, universities and towns named after him — but why? Through this chronicle, we are going to delve into who Brock was and why he was so beloved in both life and death.

Andrew Laliberte
Special to The Lake Report

The autumn of 1812 proved to be a different state of affairs for the American war effort than had been initially hoped for.

Declaring war on Great Britain earlier that year on June 18, the American strategy for “the acquisition of Canada this year” had not unfolded as was expected.

The armies of the Northwest, Centre and Northeast had planned to launch a three-pronged attack into the Canadas; the result however, by October of that year, was a captured army at Detroit and a disorganized one under the ineffective leadership of Henry Dearborn.

One last attempt for an offensive on the Niagara would come under the command of the politician-turned-Gen. Stephen Van Rensselaer.

The major-general of the militia, though in command of around 6,000 Regulars and Volunteers, was still ill-prepared for combat. His army was plagued by little or poor equipment, training and pay.

Regardless of the lack of confidence in his men, Van Rensselaer was pressured to make plans to invade Upper Canada.

By comparison, the British army in upper Canada totalled only 1,600 Regulars under the command of Maj.-Gen. Sir Isaac Brock.

Recognizing the disadvantage in numbers, Brock made attempts to strengthen militia troop compliments and alliances with Indigenous nations, two vital sources of manpower for the protection of Upper Canada.

He also bolstered the key areas of the Niagara River that could be susceptible to attack, establishing artillery positions and small garrisons at places like Queenston and the Heights.

At 3 a.m. on Oct. 13, the American invasion force began to mobilize itself. Under the cover of darkness, a small flotilla of bateaux began ferrying the Americans across the river.

However, the British forces were prepared for the arrival of their enemy and began discharging their arms and artillery at the vague shapes on the Niagara River.

The shot and shell fire erupted relentlessly from both sides, sending the American boats into a chaotic scramble for the shoreline.

The boats that made it to the Queenston shore under the Redan Battery began offloading their troops. Capt. John Wool of the Thirteenth Regiment proposed to scale the side of the escarpment along a small path, outflanking



“The Battle of Queenston Heights, 13 October 1812,” by J.D. Kelly. SUPPLIED

the British forces.

This was approved and carried out.

After executing the climb, 60 American soldiers captured the heights and the Redan Battery, both being poorly defended.

The British forces, including the Light and Grenadier companies of the 49th, as well as the Lincoln and York Militias, were focused on pinning down the Americans below at the landing sight.

It was in this state of sorry affairs that Brock and his aides Capt. John Glegg and Lt.-Col. John Macdonnell arrived at Queenston.

Understanding the importance of reclaiming the heights and the Battery, Brock led the men of the 49th up the Portage Road toward the American position.

The musketry raining down from the forested hillside ended this “forlorn hope” in disaster, with Brock receiving a fatal shot to the chest, falling on the heights at Queenston.

With the failure of the first charge came Macdonnell’s second attempt.

With hopes of avenging the fallen general, the combined militia and regular force marched toward the eastern side of the American position, yet without success for a second time.

Macdonnell also received a fatal musket wound, one he would succumb to following the battle itself.

Though the Americans, by about noon, had seemingly won the day, the Indigenous brigade under the command of John Norton and John Brant arrived on the heights of Queenston with about 80 warriors.

These warriors were Haudenosaunee, who were joined by more Haudenosaunee and Lenape from Chippawa.

Over the course of the afternoon, they flanked the American forces and their headquarters on the heights, holding them back by hit-and-run skirmishing.

Using the trees on the west side of the heights as cover, the Indigenous warriors successfully held off the American army, preventing them from establishing a permanent position on the heights and destroying American morale with their war cry.

Due to the successes of the Indigenous tactics, the situation was growing dire for the around 500 Americans left on Queenston Heights. They had been informed that there was no possibility of reinforcements arriving from Lewiston.

To make matters worse, the reinforcement column, under the command of Maj.-Gen. Roger Sheaffe, had arrived from Niagara to support the British and Indigenous forces on the heights.

At approximately 3 p.m., Sheaffe’s forces summited the escarpment and organized their brigade to the south of the American position, totalling about 900 soldiers and warriors. Marching and firing volleys of lead at the enemy, the American force ran in a panicked state back toward its landing sight.

The “horrid spectacle, filled with poor wretches”

as militiaman John Robinson describes, was a scene of chaos and horror, as many retreating forces jumped down the side of the cliffs to the river below, dashing many to pieces.

Col. Winfield Scott’s surrender of the American forces to Sheaffe at Queenston ended the first major attempt to invade the Canadas in disaster.

An estimated 925 American soldiers had been captured throughout the course of the day, with casualties estimated to be anywhere from 100 to 500.

For the British forces that day, a comparatively small number of approximately 20 lost their lives. However, the losses of Brock and Macdonnell made the British victory less triumphant.

“The zeal, ability and valour with which he served his King and country render this a public loss that must be long deplored...” were but some of the words of reflection written by Sheaffe.

Yet, the battle and the death of the general proved to be a transformative event for the British campaign in Upper Canada, hardening the resolve of the British army, people of Upper Canada and the allied Indigenous nations in the fight against the invaders — a confidence that had, up until the battle, been in question.

Andrew Laliberte is a Heritage Interpreter at Brock’s Monument. He has worked at Brock’s Monument for the past three seasons, which completed his undergraduate degree in history at Brock University.



Left: Polo players like this one pushed hard during the charity match. Right: Camilla Yoxall, 8, won a best hat award for her popped champagne design. DAVE VAN DE LAAR

Biennial Niagara polo match has fashion on display

Julia Sacco
Local Journalism Initiative
The Lake Report

Niagara Polo was more than just chess on horse-back. Often referred to as the “sport of kings,” Saturday’s polo match at the Commons brought out some of the most elegant and eye-catching fashion

from guests and volunteers. The biennial charity game, hosted by the Niagara-on-the-Lake Museum, saw hundreds come out to the Commons from noon to 4 p.m. to watch the two matches, enjoy a half-time performance and participate in polo traditions like the traditional divot stomp and the donning of sophis-

ticated summer attire and charming chapeaus. Following the first polo match between Trubar and Performance BMW/MINI St. Catharines, museum officials recognized winners of the best hat competition. Eight-year-old Camilla Yoxall’s fascinator took first prize. The creative headpiece that mimicked a popping

champagne bottle was made with the help of her father, John. The St. Davids family put a shampoo bottle from the dollar store to good use, along with some garden wire and a cork. “We actually made it for last year,” John Yoxall told The Lake Report. “She really wanted to enter the hat competition

but when they announced it we were on the opposite end of the field,” he said. Luckily, this year Camilla was all smiles when her win was announced. “We had a lot of fun,” she said. The family got inspiration for both Camilla and her sister Annabel’s fascinators from history. “We looked up some

hat’s from Ascot and the Kentucky Derby,” Yoxall said. Following half-time, a second match was played between Elaine & Donald Triggs and Platinum Medicine teams. Niagara Polo was run by countless volunteers and museum staff, with funds going toward ongoing museum operations.

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Late bloomers to keep your garden going into the fall



GROWING TOGETHER 


Joanne Young
Columnist

This is the time of year where our interest in our gardens start to wane. We are already starting to see signs of fall appear (which seems to be earlier than usual) — the changing leaf colours and some plants looking a little weary from a hot summer. How is your garden looking? Is everything fizzling out? Doesn't matter. It is too early to call it quits. Here are some plants that will keep your garden

blooming over the next month, so you can enjoy your garden for as long as you can. Turtlehead (*Chelone obliqua*) Let's start with a native perennial: turtlehead is a species of clump-forming perennials native to eastern North America. The name comes from the shape of its flower, resembling that of a turtle's head emerging from its shell. Turtlehead plants grow best in boggy areas, but can optionally grow in part-shaded home garden with about four hours of sunlight, rich, moist soil, and temperate climates (USDA zones 3 through 9). The dark green, toothed leaves are oval-shaped and have upright-standing stems that feature blooms from mid-to-late summer to fall. Turtleheads are available in white or pink flowering varieties as well as dwarf varieties. Interestingly, the genus name "Chelone" dates back to a story in ancient Greek mythology. The nymph, Chelone, did not attend the marriage of Zeus and Hera, so she and her house were tossed into a river, where she transformed into a tortoise who carried her house on her back. Toad lily (*Tricyrtis*) Toad lilies is one of those plants of which very few people are aware. This late summer/fall bloomer may have small flowers, but the details included in each speckled, orchid-like flower are amazing. They thrive in partial to full shade gardens with consistently moist soil. There are several species of toad lilies available to the home gardener. *Tricyrtis formosana* "Autumn Glow" is one of these species with yellow and green variegated leaves with dark pink speckled flowers. *Tricyrtis* "Blue Wonder" is another spectacular variety with blue flower petals and pink freckling. A great addition to the shade garden. Japanese windflower (*Anemone*) There are many cultivars of Japanese anemones available on the market — too many to mention. They range from white to light pink to dark pink flowers, both single and double flowering. Japanese anemone prefers growing in a full sun or part shade location with a moist, but well-drained soil. The height of the different cultivars ranges from dwarf (1') to three to four feet high. They begin to bloom mid to late August and blooms throughout September. Sunshine blue bluebeard (*Caryopteris clandonensis* 'Sunshine Blue') This is one of my favourite late summer/fall blooming shrubs. Its lemony-yellow leaves provide colour all throughout the growing season.



This is the Seiryu Taiwanese toad lily, which blooms from August into October, with purple-stained flowers. Come late August, clusters of small blue/purple flowers open, creating the perfect contrast to the yellow foliage. This three-to-four-inch shrub grows best in full sun to light shade. It is fairly drought-tolerant once established. Bluebeard is also a favourite pollinator plant for many different bees. Foliage colour all season, bright purple/blue falls into fall, attracts pollinators ... what more could you ask for? So, if your garden's beauty is starting to fizzle, it is time to head to the garden centre and look for the plants above, as well as others such as sedums, that will add that needed fall interest. Joanne Young is a Niagara-on-the-Lake garden expert and coach. See her website at joanneyoung.ca.



2024 MUNICIPAL TAX REMINDER NOTICE

Final Second Installment due September 27, 2024
Tax Rates as per Final By-Law No. 2024-032

Payment Options:

- By **mail** or **post-dated cheque** to the Town of Niagara-on-the-Lake (1593 Four Mile Creek Road, P.O. Box 100, Virgil ON, L0S 1T0)
- **In-person** or via **front or side entrance drop box** at the Town Administration Building (1593 Four Mile Creek Road, Virgil)
- **Electronically** from a bank account using your 19-digit roll number
 - If payment is made at a bank or other pay station, the account will be credited only after the Town has received settlement from the bank. Please allow 10 business days for payment processing.

If you did not receive a tax notice, please call the Town at 905-468-3266 ext. 0 to ensure your correct mailing address and P.O. Box number are on file. To avoid penalties and interest charges, the Town must receive payment by September 27, 2024. On the first day of default and every month after, a 1.25% penalty will be added. Penalties will not be waived.

To save time and potential late fees, pay your taxes through a Pre-Authorized Payment (PAP) plan, online or through telephone banking. You can also request to receive property tax bills and Town notices by email. For more information, please visit www.notl.com/council-government/property-taxes. Thank you.



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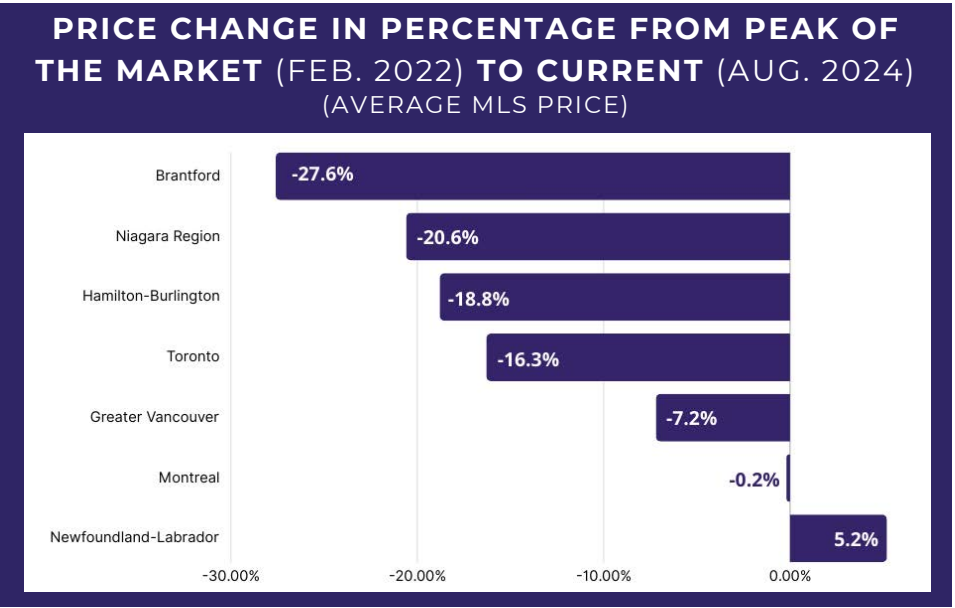


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