

# The Niagara-on-the-Lake LOCAL



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## Former parks chair anticipates new challenges

Janice Thomson disappointed term has ended, overwhelmed by support she has received

By Penny Coles  
The NOTL Local

Janice Thomson says the Niagara Parks Commission is in good shape for those who now have the responsibility of running it.

She is disappointed the job won't be hers for the next term, but the overwhelming support — more than 3,000 people for whom she has huge respect have reached out on social media — and their very positive comments

about a job well-done far outweigh any letdown she is feeling from the provincial decision to choose a new head for the agency.

As the former chair of the commission, she says the recently-appointed chair and eight new members of the 12-person board have inherited an organization in sound financial condition — with several years behind it of operating with a surplus, and with strong, sound governance policies and procedures to put it in a good position for the future.

This wasn't always the case.

Thomson was appointed to the board in 2010, at a time when it had been the subject of almost 20 years of critical governance reports and reviews that alleged financial malfeasance and violations of the public trust. A governance audit in 2009 suggested an over-reliance on the old boys' club for board appointments.

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Janice Thomson is disappointed she won't get another term as chair of the Niagara Parks Commission, but rates the support she is receiving for a job well done as far more important. (Fred Mercnik)

### Town staff 'impressive'



Jessica Friesen came home from work late last Wednesday, the day of the wicked ice storm, to find a tree had fallen across the laneway to her St. Davids home, near Bevan Heights Drive. There are two houses on the lane, and three other cars, belonging to her husband and neighbours, were trapped on the side of the lane nearest the houses. They couldn't get out, and she couldn't get in, she said. It was a scary situation — emergency vehicles couldn't have reached either house if necessary — but the Town staff arrived quickly after her call, and within two hours had cut down the tree and moved it to clear the laneway. "They were great," she said, "very impressive. They did a fantastic job." (Photo submitted)

## Lodge closure years away

By Penny Coles  
The NOTL Local

Niagara-on-the-Lake seniors should not be fearful of being kicked out of their nursing home with nowhere to go, said the town's regional councillor Gary Zalepa.

Upper Canada Lodge has been slated to close for some time, but its closure is not imminent — it is likely to be several years before anything changes at the home — and the region will not close it until every resident has a room and a bed to go to, he said.

The discussion at the region regarding Upper Canada Lodge has all along been that it is not financially responsible to carry out expensive repairs to the 80-bed home to bring it up to provincial standards, mandated by 2025.

The region is redeveloping two seniors' residents, Gilmore Lodge in Fort Erie, on a larger property once the site of a mall, and Linhaven in St. Catharines. The plan for both, based on the provincial funding model, is for larger homes with more beds, in a community-hub, campus-style environment, he said.

That isn't the case with Upper Canada Lodge — the property it sits on is owned by Parks Canada, not the region, and the site isn't large enough for the newer, bigger buildings now considered financially sound and funded by the province.

"The property isn't ours, and it simply isn't large enough," he said, to answer criticism of the regional decision to close it.

Although the decision was made "long before my time (as a regional councillor) I think

it's the prudent decision. We have two solid operations in town, and this is an opportunity to work with the province to create the best situation in town for our seniors," said Zalepa.

"I think the important message is for people to realize nobody is going to be asked to go anywhere until there's accommodation for them. That's very important for people to understand. It's a long-term plan. Nobody will be kicked out of their bed."

The not-for-profit Pleasant Manor is expanding its facility to accommodate 120 more seniors, and possibly more, and there is also the privately-owned Chartwell Long-Term Care residence on Wellington Street, said Zalepa.

"I don't want seniors panicking. There will be beds for them."



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# Region remediation plan includes filling in lagoons

## Harmony still working toward heritage park with public access

By Penny Coles  
The NOTL Local

Residents promoting a natural heritage park on Lakeshore Road are still hopeful they will see their vision fulfilled.

The Harmony Residents Group became organized in 2008 to present an alternative to Project Niagara, a proposal by two major orchestras to use the Parks Canada property for a music festival. The plan was for 50 concerts a season, an amphitheatre and other amenities that were projected to attract 250,000 visitors a year.

Many locals were opposed to the concept, worried about noise levels and the increase in traffic the festival would create. The Harmony group, also concerned about damage to the ecosystem, proposed an alternate — a park that would protect the forests, wetland and wildlife.

Ten years later, the sewage treatment plant on the property is finally about to be decommissioned, al-

most three years later than scheduled, and Harmony members are hoping once that has occurred and the Region has returned the site to its original condition, Parks Canada, which owns the property, will start thinking about opening it as a natural park, accessible to the public.

The Region, with Parks Canada, has been looking at options for the rehabilitation of the property, and announced last week, during an update on the new sewage treatment plant, that the lagoons will be filled in and the original course of Two Mile Creek, altered to accommodate the treatment plant, will be restored. That will allow for a Riverine Wetland — a marsh with natural flooding — councillors at Monday's meeting were told.

There had been other options on the table, including a constructed wetland, which can treat municipal or industrial waste water and remove pollutants from water. It is sometimes used in reclamation

projects, and was the solution Coun. Gary Burroughs hoped Parks Canada would choose.

Now a town councillor after eight years as NOTL's regional representative, Burroughs is a member of the Harmony group. He wanted one of the two sewage lagoons closed, the other left as a constructed wetland to be part of the park. Burroughs was a supporter of a research project more than 20 years ago, involving town and regional representatives and members of the Friends of Fort George, on the Lakeshore Road property.

The research, led by the late Dr. Ed Lemon, proved a constructed wetland could effectively treat sewage in a cold climate — then considered a scientific breakthrough. Burroughs believes a permanent constructed wetland could become a valuable education resource, for locals and visitors to town.

He said he was "shocked" by the announcement that the lagoons would both be



There are two ponds on the Lakeshore Road Parks Canada property where the old sewage treatment plant will be decommissioned. The region announced last week the ponds will be pumped out and filled in with soil. (Fred Mercnik)

filled in — for the last eight years the region has been talking about options and public consultations, and now it seems the decision has been made, with a \$12 million price tag, he said.

Regional interim CAO Ron Tripp told NOTL councillors at Monday's meeting the future of the lagoons had been finalized last fall, as the environmental assessment was wrapping up, with a decision made to pump the water from the ponds and fill them with soil. That option has been approved by Parks Canada, he said.

"A lot of us believed a constructed wetland was the answer. It was a shock to hear the decision was made," said Burroughs. "My understanding is they have to come back to the public before they proceed."

Finn Madsen, president of the Harmony group, says its goal is to see the federal property, from the former rifle range controlled by the Department of National Defence, east to Niagara Shores Park, become one long green space, with a public trail from one end to the other along the waterfront.

Although it's Madsen's opinion the ponds should be left as they are, rather than large sums of taxpayers' money being spent to fill them in, the decision won't affect the group's proposal for the long term, he said.

"My concern is the taxes we're paying, and keeping costs down," he said. "We could save millions of dollars by allowing the ponds to self-remediate over a period of time. It would be just as beneficial

to wildlife."

He believes there will still be time for public consultations, to talk about further options, he said.

The Harmony group has never veered from its original mandate to see a natural park along the entire property, Madsen said.

"I'd like to see that done in the least expensive way possible and in partnership with the NPCA (Niagara Peninsula Conservation Authority), and other agencies that can help maintain it. That's been our vision for the last 10 years."

tion, there will be further details to work out for the design of the site, he said.

The engineering focus, leading up to the decommissioning of the lagoons, is to get them pumped out and filled in, along with correcting the flow of Two Mile Creek, but there will be further public consultation about what the area will look like. The NPCA is expected to be involved in the discussion, he added, and at that point any decisions about a park and public access will be in

**“ A lot of us believed a constructed wetland was the answer. ”**

Gary Burroughs

After years of researching the decommissioning of ponds, as recently as December the group wrote to the region, outlining their concerns. Leaving the ponds as open water would not only be a less expensive option but would have the least impact on wildlife in the area, they said.

Gary Zalepa, NOTL's regional councillor, was at the Town meeting last week for the sewage update, and heard the discussion about the lagoons.

He also attended a Harmony group meeting to fill members in on the regional plans, and assured them there would be further consultation.

While the decision has been made to fill in the lagoons to fulfill the region's remediation obliga-

the hands of Parks Canada, the steward of the property.

During past meetings, the federal agency appeared to be onside with the idea of a natural park, but once the remediation work is done by the region, "it will be up to Parks Canada to decide on the next steps."

Asked about public consultations and next steps for the 106-hectare site, Parks Canada staff referred to a management plan for the area, which acknowledges there is "significant interest from the local community" in the property. It says there will be continued dialogue with a goal of facilitating public access by 2021 to 2022.



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# Plan is to become 'one of most spectacular parks'

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

During her eight-and-a-half-year term, the financially self-sustaining organization went from four years of deficits to four years of surpluses to the tune of \$17 million, which was used to finance capital maintenance projects that had been deferred. The accumulated surplus will continue to pay for improvements into the future, she said.

When her term ended last fall, the board was one year into a 10-year strategic plan with a mandate of ensuring the 60-kilometre property along the Niagara River "becomes one of the most spectacular parks in the world," she said.

The goal is not to be on a top-10 list, she added, but to be one of the best in all considerations, with the values of preservation and conservation informing every decision made by the board.

lar challenge. The public was clamouring for "soft adventure experiences," and the attraction was designed with great care to showcase the beauty of the Niagara River gorge and rapids, Thomson said.

That decision, she added, highlighted the exceptional makeup of the board, with people who were thoughtful and deeply considerate of the mandate of the commission, and who brought not only individual perspectives, skills and knowledge to the table, but extreme passion and commitment to their task, their common goals forming a bond between them.

"It was a joy to work with such talented people," she said.

She also instituted a policy of ending board meetings, which were open to the public, by asking the gallery for questions and comments.

"No one ever turns to

from what the 134-year-old agency stands for. There is a formula that works to protect parks property in all its diversity — every attraction, every trail, road and bit of shoreline needs to be retained as part of the whole, she said, preserving not only the land but the many stories it tells of its history.

"People need to continue to respect that. The people who created the parks commission were brilliant, and that, along with the wonder of Niagara Falls, gives us an enormous base to attract people."

And for Thomson going forward?

She'll miss the many people who worked for the commission, who love it as she does, she said.

And she'll miss the people she met from all over the world, many of them famous, all with stories of their own.

She remembers Sophie, the countess of Wessex, walking into the Queenston Heights restaurant, and seeing Thomson standing there, handed over her hat and jacket for Thomson to hold before heading outside to review the Lincoln and Welland Regiment.

"I asked myself, 'did that really happen?'"

She has met movie stars and music icons, including actor Adam Sandler and singer John Legend.

Sandler, she said, was on a private tour, wearing a baseball cap and not interested in drawing attention or being recognized, but when he saw a boy in a wheelchair, he went over to him and chatted — a poignant moment she'll not forget.

And she recalls the prince she met who saw a record of his father's visit to the falls in the commission's guest book. "Those are the moments when you realize the parks have such memories for so many people, far beyond what we will ever know. I have photos of my own family, my parents and brothers at the Floral Clock with my grandparents who were visiting from Scotland — there are so many families with those same photos."

With the kind of attention and care the parks commission gives each and every attraction, she says, "it will prosper forever, as long as everyone respects its roots."

After years of evenings and weekends spent ferrying VIP visitors around parks attractions, many early morning meetings

to attend, and for the last several years, always knowing where she would spend New Year's Eve — regardless of the weather, she was at the annual concert at Queen Victoria Park — she will have a gap in her busy schedule.

But Thomson relishes taking on new challenges and is accustomed to being busier than most can imagine. While working full-time as president of the NOTL Chamber of Commerce and on the parks board, she has also

served on the Niagara Falls Bridge Commission and was the Niagara representative on the Pan Am and Parapan American Games committee in 2015.

While she isn't sure yet how she will fill that hole in her schedule, she feels certain the right opportunity will come along, and she looks forward to discovering her next challenge.

"Those were all great experiences," she said of her years with the

parks commission. And as a single woman, she adds, "I don't have the responsibilities at home that others do. I'm able to choose where I put my time and efforts. There has been a lot of joy in knowing I was doing the best job I could do. I will remain open to other opportunities as they come along, and I'll have learned from the amazing opportunities I've had as the 14th chair of the parks commission."

**"It brought so many eyes of the world to the wonder and majesty of the falls."**

*Janice Thomson*

The mandate of cultural and environmental stewardship "controlled every decision we made," but sometimes it presented a challenge, she added.

As an example, she referred to the decision to allow Nik Wallenda, a professional daredevil, to cross the falls on a high-wire strung from the American side to the Canadian in 2012, with millions of viewers around the world watching.

Stunting is outlawed on parks property without the permission of commissioners, she said, but it was felt Wallenda's professionalism and the opportunity to highlight the falls, while recognizing its long history of attracting stunts, would be beneficial. The commission devised a way to embrace the walk and the international attention that would be focused on the falls: it decided that once in a generation, it would review the qualifications of a professional, and could choose to permit such a performance.

"It brought so many eyes of the world to the wonder and majesty of the falls," Thomson said, "and now the policy remains in place to support future considerations."

The new aerial adventure course and zip-lines presented a simi-

lar challenge. The public was clamouring for "soft adventure experiences," and the attraction was designed with great care to showcase the beauty of the Niagara River gorge and rapids, Thomson said.

The comments were another consideration in forming decisions, she said.

There are four members from the last term still on the board, all of them exceptionally skilled and dedicated, she said, and five politicians, including the mayor of Niagara Falls representing regional council, Lord Mayor Betty Disero, the mayor of Fort Erie and a municipal councillor from Niagara Falls. Sandie Bellows, a regional councillor from St. Catharines, was appointed to the board in the fall and was announced as chair last week, selected by the Ministry of Tourism. There are four other board positions yet to be filled.

Thomson's term expired in November, and although she re-applied, hoping to stay on, she says she didn't receive a response from the province.

While she's confident about the secure future of the agency, there are risks that could arise, including a downturn in tourism that could leave it stretched financially, she said.

The other risk would be for future boards to make a radical departure

## Celebrating 50 years



The friends and colleagues of Dr. Julian Adams celebrated his 50th anniversary of caring for local patients last week. Lunch and a cake were included in the event held at the Niagara Medical Clinic, which took the physician by surprise. He said when he and his wife came to NOTL, he expected to work for a few years and then move on to a bigger city. "And here we still are, 50 years later." Although he has seen many changes in the last five decades, both in the town and the practise of medicine, he still loves what he does, he said. (Penny Coles)



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# Town needs to make youth a priority in strategic plan

Affordable housing, good jobs essential to bring young families to NOTL and keep them here

By Penny Coles  
The NOTL Local

Niagara-on-the-Lake councillors have talked about the importance of supporting youth in town, but will they demonstrate that by their actions or are they simply paying lip service to what is considered a priority by many residents?

Lyndsay Gazzard is a parent who is waiting for the answer, and concerned it might not be what she is hoping to hear.

Council is about to undertake the process for devising a strategic plan that sets out priorities for the next four years. The plan has been deferred while they sort out a process for hiring a consulting company to help with it.

The previous council, well aware of past struggles with the local school board, the closure of the only high school in NOTL and the only school in the Old Town, set education and youth among its top priorities, Gazzard said.

It was during the last term of council that a Lord Mayor's Youth Advisory Council was established, and that council followed through with support for Royal Oak Community School, a not-for-profit independent that stepped in to attract and keep families in the Old Town by providing education for their children.

"We needed this for the future of the community, for it to grow and be healthy," Gazzard said of the support for the Old Town school.

"The previous council had more exposure to school closings. This council hasn't gone through that."

While the municipality can't intervene directly in public education, it can show its intentions to keep youth in town, and to attract young families, she said.

As an example she points to the high skills major program in aviation which was developed through a partnership with the Catholic school board and Niagara District Airport, indicating some momentum toward supporting youth and giv-

ing young families a reason to settle in town.

"Does this council consider that a priority? We haven't seen it yet. They don't have a great deal of money to hand out. My sense is that things that attract tourism are more important."

Lord Mayor Betty Disero and Coun. Clare Cameron have already shown support of young people, she said, "and we're very hopeful we'll see a strong strategic plan that will as well."

In the one opportunity given this council to support youth, they turned down funding for a program Royal Oak had requested — not for its day-to-day costs of operations but for an outreach program to bring kids from across the community together during professional development days and March break.

Council gave money to the cadets and The Yellow Door Theatre Project, which is great, she added, but reduced funding to Royal Oak for its outreach program. It also, however, reduced its projected rent of the Town-owned hospital to match last year's cost to the school.

"We feel they didn't value what we are trying to do. Tourism is important and a big revenue-driver, but programs for children are equally important."

While it's too soon to criticize council, she added, she's concerned the last council made "significant strides" in prioritizing youth, and this term may not maintain that.

There are many great programs for kids, Gazzard said, and the library does a particularly good job for youngsters, but once they reach the ages of about 12 to 15, there is little for them to do. "That's when you see the start of them looking to other communities."

Gazzard drives to St. Catharines three times a week for activities for her daughter which are not available locally, and while she's there she uses the time to shop and buy groceries, which is taking money out of town.

"And that's not just me. There are probably 800 to 900 parents doing the same thing, for dance, gymnastics and other activities."

While Gazzard says she understands the Town struggles with the resources it has, she hopes council won't rely on volunteer-driven programs to help youth.

Too much focus has been on the over-55s as the main demographic in town, she said, which results in losing young families.

When Cameron stood up for young people during budget discussions, "she got shot down. We're hoping she and Betty are not the only voice for youth on council."

People in town want a balance between tourism and the needs of young families, she said.

"The next strategic plan will tell the story."

Alexcia Cofell, a member of the Lord Mayor's Youth Advisory Council, said "Lord Mayor Betty," as she calls her, has already shown her support.

Cofell agrees it's the teens who struggle — there is little to keep them here, she said, but Disero has assured them the Town is interested in helping them.

**“ We needed this for the future of the community, for it to grow and be healthy. ”**

Lyndsay Gazzard

Most of the activities teens choose, such as going to movies or the mall, require going outside of NOTL, she said.

But Cofell said she feels confident that if teens can offer practical suggestions for activities in town, council will provide the resources.

Coun. Clare Cameron said she is committed to being a voice for youth, and is looking at the bigger picture for their future. Young people everywhere like the idea of sampling places that are



Taylor Hulley, Jared Goertz and Laurel Minnes, local musicians, invite Hazel Norris (centre) up on stage to sing during a recent performance at Niagara Oast House Brewers. Music had a huge impact on Hulley as a teen in NOTL, he said, and still does. (Lauren O'Malley)

bigger, and they think better, but she wants to ensure NOTL will be the place they come home to, where they can afford to buy houses, and where there are jobs to keep them here.

Supporting youth begins with the obvious, she said — funding organizations in Town which provide opportunities for them. Also

boards and providing opportunities within town borders must also continue, she said. "The high school closure is still felt as a loss, but the Town can continue to build its relationship with Vineridge Academy," she said about the international school that has taken over the former public high school building, as well as with the two public boards.

Once the strategic plan is completed for this term of municipal government, every report that comes before councillors will refer to how the information fits with the priorities they have chosen, she said. With youth as a priority, even Official Plan discussions will take their needs into account, to ensure there is zoning that encourages affordable housing.

She agrees with Gazzard that the Town is "stereotyped" as a retirement community, but believes that's changing — the recent appointment of young people who applied to sit on Town committees is one indication, she said.

"There are young families getting their start in town," said Cameron.

In developing council's strategic plan, "we need to be sure we include everybody,

all ages and all communities."

Disero says the Town is already thinking of youth, with some new committees that will embrace not only the young people but all residents.

She's working with the youth advisory council to get young people "more engaged," she said, "and to give them a bigger voice."

The strategic plan needs to be based on keeping the town sustainable, healthy and prosperous for people of all ages, and providing services that meet the needs of residents, including youth.

"And in order to pay for those services, we need a good economic development plan. Residential taxes do not fully cover costs of providing those services to the community. We need a good healthy community, and a strong youth community, to bring in more residents."

Disero thinks the town has a "development imbalance," with a tax base which is not growing the way it should be. The Town needs to attract good businesses to bring in good-paying jobs, that will attract and keep young people, she said.

Taylor Hulley is a young man who grew up in NOTL

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Complete and submit nomination forms online at [www.niagaraonthelake.com/spirit-of-niagara](http://www.niagaraonthelake.com/spirit-of-niagara) by 5 pm, February 19.



## Zoom resumes in April



Steve and Rebecca deBoer of Zoom Leisure show off their new space, rebuilt with high ceilings and a basement for storage after an electrical fire last summer gutted the inside of the building on Mississauga Street. They hope to be open by April, in time for the wine touring season. (Fred Mercnik)

## Niagara-on-the-Lake has plenty of spirit

The Spirit of Niagara awards evening has to be one of the best events organized by the Niagara-on-the-Lake Chamber of Commerce, says president Janice Thomson.

"It's a wonderful event for the community, seeing people being recognized, pleased and proud not only for themselves but with their family, friends and colleagues there to witness it," said Thomson.

Last year, Penner Building Centre was named Company of the Year, and two years before that, it was Pillitteri Estate Winery, Thomson recalls.

"It was great to see the families taking the stage, with several generations, and to see family businesses being recognized," she said.

"We hear they enjoy seeing others recognized as well," she said, and learn about other businesses that are doing great work.

"We have such a diverse community."

The evening the awards are handed out is a great chance to acknowledge the depth of the community, and also to honour those

for whom the awards are named, who have set examples and become mentors for those who follow, she said.

"It makes you pause and remember the significance of what they did, and the example they set for others," said Thomson.

It's also a great opportunity for newcomers to discover the strengths of the community, she added.

On many occasions, it's been not just a business but groups of volunteers being recognized — she lists the War of 1812 committee, whose members organized commemorative events; volunteers who spearheaded the Shaw Festival Film Series; and the people behind the Royal Oak Community School, who have been given awards for being community-minded groups.

The awards "are about the heart and soul of the people of our community, and the great spirit — that's what it's all about."

In anticipation of the March 5 awards night, the chamber is seeking nominations for the annual event in six different categories, in-

cluding company of the year and citizen of the year.

Nomination forms are available online and must be returned by Feb. 19.

Niagara-on-the-Lake residents, businesses operating within the Town of Niagara-on-the-Lake and/or members of the Chamber of Commerce are eligible for nomination.

Awards will be presented at a social evening in the Grand Georgian Ballroom of the Queens Landing Conference Resort.

Categories include: the Celia Liu Award for Excellence in Hospitality; Christopher Newton Award for Extraordinary Vision in Business; Company of the Year Award; Chamber of Commerce Community Leadership Award; Peter Ling Award for the Entrepreneur of the Year; and the Lord Mayor's Award of Excellence presented to the Citizen of the Year.

To nominate an individual, group or business for an award, or to purchase tickets, visit <https://www.niagara-onthelake.com/spirit-of-niagara>.

## Beehive model could return

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 4

winemaker at Coyote's Run by day, and as a musician at any bar or event that offers some extra cash by night, he said. He also does some video recording for other musicians, and in the summer, works for his uncle building decks and railings.

It works for him, he said, because the intensity of the wine industry is mostly in the winter, and everything else he does makes his summers busier. He can handle that, and is fortunate to have jobs he enjoys — music will always be his first love, but it would be a struggle to pay the bills if performing on stage were his full-time job.

The almost-32-year-old, a graduate of the closed Virgil Public School and the former Niagara District Secondary School, attended Niagara College for winemaking.

He remembers his teen years in town as pretty idyllic, but then he was into music and part of Roddy Heading's Beehive, a group to bring kids together around music and art.

Hulley remembers going to see Heading to ask if his band could play in an upcoming concert — Heading used to organize youth to perform in the Simcoe Park bandshell.

Before he knew what

had happened, he realized he had agreed to organize Peace in the Park concerts and line up the bands.

Kids who weren't into music to the same degree loved hanging out in the park with their friends and listening to music, he said.

Heading didn't want money from the Town, he wanted kids to get involved with fundraising and make their activities self-sustaining, and it was a good feeling to accomplish that, recalls Hulley.

"It had a huge impact on my life. It gave me the feeling you can do whatever you want to do. It was really empowering."

Heading gave them respect, and taught them independence, he added. "He was really good at that."

He'd love to see someone pick up the idea of reviving something similar to the Beehive and run with it — he may even consider it himself, he said.

If the Town would provide the bandshell, which is just a rarely used wooden space, he said, the young people could be involved in organizing concerts.

"The store owners might not like it — it wouldn't fit their image of what they think the town should look like — but kids live here too."

As someone who loved walking even as a teen, NOTL also provides many locations to enjoy the outdoors, he said, and it's a great place to live.

Unfortunately, and ironically, since all his work, at the winery and as a musician, is reflective of the industry in NOTL, he can't afford to live here.

He and his partner, Laurel Minnes, have just bought a four-bedroom house on a large piece of property that even has grapes growing on it, but it's out on Highway 20 in south Thorold.

"We couldn't even look in NOTL with the prices here," he said.

So they are becoming commuters, although they'd much rather live in town.

He believes what is needed most to attract and keep young people is affordable housing, which for his budget is non-existent in his home town.

Even the few townhouses and condos — and there aren't many — are out of his price range, he said.

"In town, I'm part of this culture, making wine and making music, and all of that is because I was inspired by this place where I grew up. But if you can't afford the housing prices, you're out of luck."

THE FRIENDS OF FORT GEORGE PRESENT

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# EDITORIAL

## Youth, seniors, all ages should be priorities

As the town council moves toward developing its strategic plan — slowly, apparently, as the process that would get it underway has not yet been approved — there is some concern about whether looking after our young people will be considered a priority.

And although they should be, the better attitude, as some politicians have pointed out, is that looking after everybody, youth, seniors and those in between, should be the priority. Developing a diverse, healthy and prosperous community should be the priority.

Before we lose our readers who think talk of a strategic plan is a snooze — why should we care? — consider that every single report from town staff, every single decision made by this term of council in the coming years, is expected to be judged by the priorities councillors will set out in their strategic plan.

So a housing project that provides affordable housing, whether for seniors or youth or any other resident, would be high on the list of development projects to pass muster if affordable housing is deemed a priority.

And it should be — there are residents at both ends of the age spectrum who are being driven out of town because

of the high cost of housing.

Ditto commercial property and economic development projects that attract strong businesses and provide not only tax revenue but the kind of jobs that will keep young people in town permanently, not just those our teens will take as summer jobs to help them get through post-secondary education.

Politicians, parents, 30-somethings and teens weighed in this week with some interesting ideas about how to look after our young people, keep them in town and attract more younger families.

Affordable housing is possibly the important factor, but not easily achieved. Other municipalities have found creative solutions, and if it's a priority for NOTL, then those solutions have to be considered. For example, the Town owns the former hospital property and a chunk of the former high school land. Could something decent yet affordable be provided there? It's a conversation that needs to be had, and will be if the strategic plan drives it.

The same is true at the other end of the spectrum — seniors want and need downsized properties to be able to stay in town. They need a certain amount of transportation

to retain their independence. These are factors that should drive municipal decisions.

Our young people are looking for something to occupy their time here in town, but there are few choices.

The idea of using the bandshell for concerts organized by young people worked in the past and could work again, with very little cost or effort on the part of the town.

Harder is providing other activities teens relish — going to a movie or to the mall.

Could the town supply a bus if the teens organized a day, time and destination? A bus that would take them straight to an outside mall with a movie theatre could be a regularly scheduled activity.

These are just ideas, and ideas should come from the kids themselves, not their parents, or even more horrifying, their grandparents. But the teens have to believe the decision-making adults will listen and act, and throw some resources their way to make it happen. It seems kids have been invisible in this town for too long — it's time to show them they are valued.

We want them to grow into adults who want to live here, raise their families, and look back on NOTL as a pretty good place to live.

## LOCAL FINDS



### Luxury of a private train stop

By Lauren O'Malley

This skeleton of a shelter sits just off the Upper Canada Heritage Trail between Charlotte Street and East and West Line. It was originally built as a private train stop for George Rand in the 1800s, says local historian Jim Smith.

The Upper Canada trail follows the former Erie & Ontario railway line.

According to Smith, Rand would take the train to Buffalo every day from this stop at the back of his property. Rand owned WGR (for "George Rand") Radio in Buffalo, as well as the Randwood Estate in NOTL.

Thanks to Jim Reynolds and Jim Smith for the details regarding this local find.

## Apologies for late delivery

Brian Minor, acting supervisor for the Queen Street post office, let us know on Monday that all four Niagara-on-the-Lake post offices closed last Wednesday due to ice and dangerous road conditions. It was a decision made for the safety of staff, he said. Although The Local was delivered to all NOTL post offices early last Wednesday morning, delivery got backed up, he said, and some Local papers were still being put in mail boxes Monday. He assured us that everyone would have their paper at the latest Tuesday morning.

He apologized for the inconvenience, and the NOTL Local also extends apologies to our readers and advertisers for the late delivery.

## Magic of seeds brings hope to dark month



By Lauren O'Malley  
The NOTL Local

Niagara Seedy Saturday beamed a ray of hope into a season of "I-can't-even-uary" last Saturday.

"The little event that could" brought hundreds of hopefuls to the Wellandport community centre to collect packets of prospects. Tiny seeds that will beget plants — which will, in turn, beget more seeds.

For those of us who grow our own food, this is perhaps the best moment of the year: when all is dreams and ideals, plans and ideas. Seeds are fact and metaphor, starting points, emblems of great growth.

Seeds of edible crops are even more magical: the thought that even

four or five of these pinhead-sized things contain enough tomatoes to feed a family for at least one season, if not two or three. One or two summer squash seeds will feed a family and their neighbours and every stranger within hand-off reach — beware the zucchini-offerer.

The main question most gardeners ponder is how to make their patch bigger and better. The second is why everyone doesn't grow their own food. It's a real head-scratcher. You could drive to the supermarket, choose the produce shipped from all over the world and increasingly over-packaged in non-renewable, unrecyclable wrapping, toss it all into single-use plastic bags and drive it back home — or you could wander out into a dewy summer morning and collect breakfast, lunch and dinner right off the plant.

There is a middle ground, of course, which would be something like cycling to the farmers market and filling your reusable bags with naturally-grown local produce. Awesome — but you know what's even more fun? Exchanging growing information with farmers at the market, and going home to try their brilliant tips. There is no one better for this than Rose Bartel, who is as happy to hear about your successful garden as she is to sell you her organic produce and flowers.

Another option is to purchase seedlings from local Amika Versteegen, who starts all of her plants with Safe Seed Pledge-certified seeds, and grows them naturally in her basement, garage, and house. "We put them anywhere there is sun," says the mother of three.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 7

## The Niagara-on-the-Lake LOCAL

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# How easy is it to be a vegan in NOTL?



**By Alexcia Cofell**  
Youth Member of The Local  
Community Advisory Board

For those of us looking for a healthy diet, what does the Niagara-on-the-Lake food industry have in store for us?

The most popular diets for 2019 are the ketogenic, low-carb, high-fat diet; the paleo, focusing on whole ingredients, consuming no refined sugars, flours, oils or any grains, dairy, and legumes; and the vegan diet, which means no animal products.

Veganism has grown exponentially over the past few years, with vegan restaurants popping up left and right all over the world — however, what about NOTL?

Vegetarians and veg-

ans now account for 10 per cent of the Canadian population, and veganism is expected to grow immensely in this year. Will NOTL restaurants be able to accommodate the veganism wave?

Canada's food guide has put a larger emphasis on plant-based proteins, and there is no question that veganism is set to rise in Canada. So what does this mean for the youth of NOTL? The majority of Canadian vegetarians and vegans are under the age of 35, meaning millennials are driving the trend, and there is a large demand for vegan restaurants and businesses in Niagara.

The nearest and only-vegan restaurants within 30 minutes of town are located in St. Catharines. But there are many restaurants that are willing to accommodate vegans and incorporate vegan options into their menus.

"I created enough vegetarian stuff that also has that vegan flare to it," says

head chef Jeremy Clark Gilligan at the Virgil restaurant, Bricks & Barley. "I do have options for both vegans and vegetarians on the menu," he says.

At Bricks & Barley there is a large selection of vegan dishes such as salads, appetizers, fries, the Beyond Meat Burger, and more. "We will try to do something like couscous and quinoa and start to work other things in," for vegans who come into the restaurant, he said. The chef seems very willing to accommodate all different types of diets. "I always consider everybody."

While the menu is not completely vegan, Gilligan says vegan "is always on the back of my mind."

Like many adults, youth have the same sentiments towards veganism in Niagara, "Although there are many vegan restaurants and bakeries in St. Catharines, I struggle to find vegan restaurants and businesses in NOTL,"

says Katie Miller, a 17-year-old NOTL resident. Kyle Cofell, another NOTL youth, agrees: "We need vegan restaurants in NOTL."

Although NOTL does not have any fully vegan restaurants, bakeries

or cafes there are many restaurants that do offer vegan options such as Niagara's Finest Thai where you have the ability to upgrade your meal to vegan; Play Urban Cafe, offering a fully vegan section to their menu including

a healthy nut salad, a zen burger, and a nilly burger which includes a vegan take on "beef" strips.

Vegans of NOTL, including youth, are eager to see what may be in store for the future regarding veganism.



One of the chefs at Bricks & Barley cooking a vegetarian pizza.



Amika Versteegen enthuses over some of her purchases and swaps from Niagara Seedy Saturday. (Lauren O'Malley)

## Do you grow?

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 6

Raised in Holland with a perennial vegetable garden, Versteegen brought the tradition to her Charlotte Street home, where she has a large plot dedicated to produce to feed her family and friends. She believes the food is as relevant as the educational opportunities for her young children. "I think it's important for the kids to see not just the fruit of the plant, but how the plant grows," she says.

We are so fortunate to live in Niagara-on-the-Lake, also known as Ontario's banana belt. The common expression is, "You can plant a stick in Niagara and it will grow." Another local grower, Roddy Heading, has proven this true over and over with any number of native plants he loves to share, including his famous thornless blackberry bush, which starts with a stick.

Do you grow? I could as well ask, do you breathe? They are one and the same to me.

If you do grow, please tell us about it. Share your successes and failures, photos and seeds.

Speaking of sharing seeds, is anyone interested in starting a local seed library?

If you don't grow, could you do me a favour and try planting even just a few seeds in a pot this year? Or stop by the market and get a seedling or two for some sun-warmed cherry tomatoes with rain-splashed basil leaves. Even a pollinator plant or two would be miraculous: our bee and butterfly friends need all the help they can get these days.

One natural evolution from growing your own produce is to expand into other realms: backyard hens and beehives, for example. I wonder when NOTL policy-makers will address the grey area of backyard hens, and allow us to have some sweet chooks burbling around our gardens, naturally taking care of the aphids and Japanese beetles.



## Letters! We want letters!

We have an opinion page put aside for residents — we know you have opinions and we would love to share them. If you have a letter to the editor you'd like to see published, please send it to [penny@notllocal.com](mailto:penny@notllocal.com). Please try to keep it to about 350 words. Sorry, but we won't publish anonymous letters. The deadline is Monday at noon.

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# Book club has unusual focus

## St. Mark's Archives Committee is a 'uniquely NOTL experience'

By Lauren O'Malley  
The NOTL Local

Cryptograms. Remember those? Cracking that code, figuring out what the letter "A" represents in this puzzle. Some members of the archives committee at St. Mark's Anglican Church are keen fans of this type of brain teaser.

Since 2014, three scholars-of-sorts have spent Tuesday mornings in the Addison Library — "some hours spent in pleasant discussion," says Donald Combe — looking to make the best sense of the collection within. "The archives committee is a very intriguing group of people who gathered together principally because we like each other," he continues. This is most fortunate, given the opportunity for deep discussion and potential disagreement.

Three years ago, they stumbled upon a slim, hand-written volume that

had not been catalogued. Says Combe, "Peter looked at it and thought it might be fun to transcribe it."

Babcock might have since revised his idea of "fun."

The "book club" met weekly in the Addison Library at St. Mark's church for three years to painstakingly crack the code of that journal, dated from 1785. Locals Babcock, Murray

his own, legible handwriting, St. Mark's parishioner Susan Peacock would kindly input the work into a Word document. No decisions had been made at this early date as to where this would all lead.

"Then Murray hove into view as a guardian angel," says Combe of Wilcox. "We all stepped back and left them to it for two years."

had been crossed out, and any other unique marking or insignia.

"It was very laborious for Murray," says Babcock with respect.

"It wasn't that laborious," says Wilcox modestly, "because it was actually very entertaining. The time-consuming part was me trying to satisfy Peter," he continues with a chuckle. "If it wasn't a good time I wouldn't have stuck with it."

"It's really a wonderful story of an act of love for what they were doing," sums up Combe.

The book itself tells many tales, even though it never fully divulges its author. The pages are covered, every inch, in handwriting. "Paper was more valuable then, so there were more words to the page than now," explains Combe. "They wrote all the way to the edges of the page."

Babcock discovered the first four sermons were written traditionally, starting on the first page and turning pages from right to left. Interestingly, the next four were written by rotating and flipping the notebook, and repeating the same process, now starting with what had been the back page. For the last two sermons the book was flipped once more to return to its original flow. While there are guesses as to why the author might have done it, there are no confirmations.

The first sermon appears to have been written in January of 1785. Two later sermons are dated in July and August 1784, written at sea, followed by one in Halifax, in August of 1785. Addison's whereabouts in this era are unknown, but it is plausible this was his journey.

"The year before this his son died," says Combe. "Then his wife died. He was depressed, and perhaps went to sea to escape his tragedies."

"The sermons are dour and full of doom and gloom," says Babcock. "The dating of the sermons might be interesting because the American War was ending in 1784 and Loyalist troops went to Halifax — there was lots of turmoil in that year. Halifax had been a major port in the war."

Babcock continues with his sleuthing: "There is a sermon written in Halifax with this bit from Milton which is related to the



Donald Combe, Murray Wilcox and Peter Babcock collaborated on the transcription project. (Lauren O'Malley)



The source of the committee's new re-creation project is so perfect it doesn't require transcription. (Lauren O'Malley)

Israelites in Egypt finding the Promised Land — perhaps a parallel with liberating the Loyalists from the colonies."

The transcription provided many unexpected challenges and surprises.

"The letter Y is an adaptation of a Runic letter that represents 'TH,'" explains Wilcox. "That was an adventure: You thought you had it, then on another page it doesn't work."

"It took us a couple of years to figure out some of these," says Babcock.

"This is what I do instead of playing golf," adds Wilcox.

Combe was very passionate about publishing. "I decided if we were going through with this we were doing it right," says the retired Niagara College teacher. Combe established a publication schedule of 40 leather-bound, hardcover copies for which supporters paid \$200. "We also made

and sold 50 paperbacks for \$20 each," he says.

"Donald sought out the patrons, and they have been incredible in that they were convinced this was a worthwhile project. The support was incredible," says Babcock.

Various established learning institutions, such as the University of Toronto, and Trinity College, are very interested in this book, says Combe.

Wilcox and Babcock have begun work on a new book, a pure replication of a unique book of a student's chronology of sermons, "a wonderful glimpse into a period of time," says Wilcox.

Some copies of the paperback version of "Ten Sermons from Robert Addison's Library" are available for purchase. The full Addison Library catalogue is online on the St. Mark's website. The public is welcome to visit the library, by appointment.

**"I thought I could give back and help. I imagined doing that for two or three months. Three years later..."**

Murray Wilcox

Wilcox and Combe have dedicated patient hour upon hour — upon hour — to the transcription and re-creation of "Ten 1785 Sermons from Robert Addison's Library."

The title is precise: While it is supposed by some this hand-written book found among the books donated by his descendants is the work of Robert Addison himself, there are doubters. Even within the group, Babcock remains unconvinced these are penned in Addison's hand, despite the confirmation from reputable and respected experts. "It really doesn't matter who wrote it," says Combe, practically. "Somebody wrote it, and that's what's important."

In the beginning, Babcock kicked it old school, using a trusty magnifying glass, pen and paper, and great reserves of patience and curiosity. "I might spend 15 minutes trying to figure out a word," he says.

When Babcock had a few pages transcribed in

Wilcox had been in the archives researching his own project on the Breckinridge House when he saw Babcock and his Sherlock Holmes gear. "I thought I could give back and help," says the retired teacher. "I imagined doing that for two or three months. Three years later..."

Incorporating more modern technology, Wilcox photographed each page at a high resolution, so Babcock could view them on his computer screen, enlarging words and phrases as needed.

Babcock continued to write out his transcriptions by hand, and Peacock to convert these to Word files. "Susan — a copyright lawyer — was always a huge support, only too eager to be helpful," says Combe with gratitude.

Wilcox took it upon himself to create page layouts, ultimately deciding on a perfect re-creation of the book, page for page, including words that

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# 'This is the closest place to paradise'

## Well-travelled family settling into NOTL, a carefully chosen permanent home

**By Lauren O'Malley**  
**The NOTL Local**

On any given day, Niagara-on-the-Lake welcomes people from all over the world. In August of 2018, we opened our arms to a family from Belarus and Algeria, by way of Bahrain.

Aksana Kavaliouva-Moussi, her husband Lakhdar Moussi, and their eight-and-a-half-year-old daughter Elina proudly joined our community six months ago, choosing NOTL over Melbourne, Australia. "This is the closest place to paradise I've found," says Moussi, who discovered our pretty little town on a drive 30 years ago, and kept it tucked away in his heart for the appropriate time.

The international finance and insurance consultant has lived all over the world, including in Paris, Toronto, and Montreal — but when it came time to choose a place to retire with his family, "I didn't take time for a second thought," he says. "This is a place where there is

something special. To start with, the human dimension: people will say good morning."

"It's very personable," agrees Kavaliouva-Moussi. "You go to the bank, and they talk as if they have known you for years."

Life in Bahrain, where Moussi was stationed on a professional assignment, had its ups and downs. "Bahrain is a very open society," he says. "You live your own way, women can drive, there are restaurants, discos, every style of life; it's not constrained like other Middle Eastern countries." But the summers are excruciatingly hot, and it was time for a change.

Young Elina, for one, is enamoured with local life. "It's better here than Bahrain," she says giddily. "I like the snow and ice skating. I like to go to Simcoe Park; get ice cream at Cow's, and go biking with my friends." She's a well-travelled and very busy young lady, taking skating lessons, as well as acro dance (with precision acrobatic elements), piano lessons, choir,

Yellow Door Theatre classes, Russian dancing, and orchestra at school. And, "I love the library," says the energetic girl.

Kavaliouva-Moussi is a music therapist, working with people on the autism spectrum, and in palliative care. She is in the process of completing her second degree, a Masters in counselling psychology, and is currently working in a placement at the Attachment and Trauma Treatment Centre for Healing in St. Catharines.

"You know what, I have a bit of a split personality: I'm a musician in my heart," she says. "But what else can I do? The hours aren't easy for musical therapy. So I'm going into counselling."

Born in Belarus, she found herself travelling the world after a chance encounter. The couple laugh describing how they met, Moussi calling it "one of the hazards of life."

"We criss-crossed in the Istanbul airport. We exchanged phone numbers and didn't think much of it," he explains.



Aksana Kavaliouva-Moussi, Elina Moussi and Lakhdar Moussi. (Lauren O'Malley)

They began to phone one another, and thus began a relationship that has now lasted 19 years. "He invited me to move from Belarus to Bahrain," she says. "That was it."

While they haven't had much time to build a social network and settle into local life, Audrey Wright, their realtor, has become a good friend. "You have to be a bit of a psychologist to be a realtor," says Kavaliouva-Moussi, suggesting a point in common for the two women. She has

joined the local newcomers club, but the working mother and student finds she has little time for the activities on offer, despite their seeming appeal.

Moussi find himself working more than he anticipated, but looks forward to some down time for socializing soon. "As a newcomer you have to build up the social network — it takes time," he says. "It's not a hurdle, you just need to take the time. I will eventually integrate into society in a smooth man-

ner. I'm not a drinker and I'm lazy." He laughs. "I might play golf — very slowly."

One of the consultant's dreams has been to become a pilot, so perhaps you'll look up and see him one day.

In the meantime, Kavaliouva-Moussi says, "NOTL is so unique in how close it is to nature — we drive to the lake-shore to snap pictures because it is so beautiful. And Miss Elina needs her pizza every week from Bistro 61."



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### 9 FISHER DRIVE \$659,000



Located in the Village of Virgil is this 3-bedroom 2-bathroom bungalow. Great for gatherings with a spacious foyer and open concept kitchen, dining and living area. Features a gas fireplace, granite kitchen countertops and high vaulted ceiling. Unfinished basement is ready for your design. Outside, Have the pleasure of growing fruits and vegetables in the working garden, such a delight. **MLS NEW. Chris Bowron, Audrey Wright and Nicole Vanderperk.**

### 10 LUCIA COURT \$749,000



Perfect retirement property located on a quiet cul-de-sac in a great area of town. Features main floor master bedroom with ensuite; wood floors; lovely open concept kitchen; gas fireplace and 2 doors that lead out to the deck, patio space and private rear yard. The upper level has 2 bedrooms with Jack & Jill ensuite. Finished lower level has a large recreational room; bedroom and a three-piece bath. This lovely home is within walking distance of downtown shops, restaurants, wineries and theatres. **MLS 30684870. Victoria Bolduc & Sarah Gledie.**

### 8 LUCIA COURT \$939,900



Outstanding custom-built bungalow located in a quiet and sought-after neighbourhood. This versatile home features brand new hardwood flooring on the main floor, an impressive cathedral ceiling, 2 gas fireplaces, central vac and custom detailing throughout with over 3,200 square feet of finished living space. The spacious open concept floor plan offers an effortless flow perfect for entertaining and includes convenient main floor master suite. This is a superior home located in an exclusive community close to walking trails, wineries and only blocks from main street shops, restaurants and theatres. **MLS 30705901. Thomas Elltoft & Kim Elltoft**

### 2 BLACKBIRD STREET \$2,500/+ UTILITIES



Classic brick semi-detached home in convenient location offering numerous amenities within walking distance including community centre, library, wineries/breweries and only minutes from downtown Niagara-on-the-Lake's shops, theatres and restaurants. Property is also available for sale. **MLS 30704008. Thomas Elltoft and Kim Elltoft.**

### 681 WARNER ROAD \$439,000



This unique property has many possibilities, located right on the edge of historic St David's with city services. lot size 50 ft. x 412 ft. Renovate or remove to build your dream home. **MLS 30704675. Chris Bowron, Audrey Wright and Nicole Vanderperk.**

### 5 DAVID SECORD DRIVE \$738,000



Quality built raised bungalow located in charming village of St. Davids amongst other newer homes, offering high quality finishes throughout and featuring cathedral ceiling, gas fireplace, double patio doors, wide trim and hand scraped, engineered flooring. Extra conveniences include home being wired for alarm system, surround sound throughout main floor, central vac and exterior gas bbq hook up. Lower level has its own separate entrance and is fully finished to include a 2nd kitchen. Conveniently located close to QEW and US border. **MLS 30708141. Thomas Elltoft and Kim Elltoft.**

### 21 WINDSOR CIRCLE \$2,500/+ UTILITIES



Newly built 3 bedroom 2.5 bath condo townhouse in historic Niagara-on-the-Lake close to the library, parks, shopping and everything that the town has to offer within an easy walk. Many upgrades from the kitchen to bathrooms, hardwood throughout and comes fully equipped with new appliances. Immediate possession available. OAC, reference letters and rental application required. Rent plus utilities. **MLS 30710661. Robert Wilkinson.**

### 21 RED HAVEN DRIVE \$975,000



Beautiful bungalow home with approx. 3000 sq. feet of finished living space. Fully finished walk-out basement with 10-foot ceilings. Main floor has 12-foot ceilings and great open concept layout including gourmet kitchen, great room, formal dining room and luxury master suite. **MLS 30703410. Kevin Stokes.**

### 8 MCFARLAND GATE \$1,895,000



A rare find in town situated on a gorgeous 1.1-acre ravine lot, located on a prestigious cul-de-sac. This custom built 2 storey Tudor of timeless design offers 4 bedrooms and 5 bathrooms. 3 wood burning fireplaces, 5037 sq. Ft. Of finished living space. Walkout to the breathtaking backyard canopied by Mature trees stretching down to the meandering creek and beyond or enjoy a peaceful and enjoyable setting for company on the expansive wood deck which wraps around the entire rear of the home. A must see property! **MLS 30686681. Chris Bowron, Audrey Wright & Nicole Vanderperk.**

### 69 CASTLEREAGH \$839,000



A rare opportunity. This 94' x 209' lot includes a solidly built, well maintained, 1950's bungalow in the heart of the Old Town, just two blocks away from shops, theatre, dining and a network of bike and walking trails. This property has loads of opportunities. The existing bungalow would make an excellent cottage rental or annual rental for income potential, or it could be used as a weekend retreat, as a new owner formalizes their future plans. **MLS 30711095. Marilyn Frances.**

### 9 HARVEST DRIVE \$838,000



Beautiful former model home built in 2018. Fantastic floor plan with 2 Bedrooms, Den and Laundry room on main floor with finished Family room and Bedroom with Ensuite on lower level. Luxurious high-end finishes throughout the home with attention to detail. Stunning kitchen with quartz counters and open concept to Dining Room and Great Room. The Great Room features a beautiful floor to ceiling fireplace flanked with custom built in cabinetry. The Master bedroom boasts a spa like ensuite bathroom and spacious walk in closet. **MLS 30696858. Linda Williams.**

### 2038 YORK ROAD \$1,595,000



Built in 2004, this spectacular home has been cleverly designed to maximize its position overlooking the Niagara Escarpment. An impressive foyer with sweeping staircase and polished wood floors leads into the open flowing floor plan showcasing tall ceilings, potlights, gas fireplace and expansive windows that overlook the grounds and landscape beyond. Home also features a generous kitchen with centre island, a lavish master suite opening to a terrace and a finished lower level including wine cellar and bar area ideal for entertaining. Blending luxury with practicality, this home offers comfortable family living with panoramic views and is conveniently located close to QEW and the US Border. **MLS 30616251. Thomas Elltoft & Kim Elltoft.**

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# Lions helping to test kids for vision problems

## Volunteers partner with public health to provide mandatory vision screening

By Penny Coles  
The NOTL Local

Three simple little tests performed by Lions Club volunteers could be saving local youngsters from permanent blindness.

The Lions have formed a partnership with the Niagara public health department and since November have been going into Niagara schools to screen Senior Kindergarten students for vision problems. Their task is to make parents aware not only when there is an issue with a child who needs to be attended to by an optometrist, but equally important, to let them know comprehensive vision evaluations are covered by provincial health insurance and are important for young kids.

St. Davids Lion Bradd Anderson was at Crossroads Public School recently to carry out the

vision screening tests with the help of a small group of volunteers from his and other Lions clubs in the area. In total they tested about 50 children, and he found two whom the tests identified as having potential problems. Letters provided by the health department were sent home to notify their parents, and a second letter will be sent as a reminder.

"Lions have been wanting to do this for a long time," said Anderson, "but we were frustrated — we couldn't find the right door to open."

A provincial mandate passed by the previous Liberal government to begin vision screening in schools opened that door, he said.

All public health units in Ontario operate under provincial standards, and those standards were changed in January 2018 to include mandatory vision testing for Senior Kindergarten stu-

dents, "within existing budgets," said Christene deVlaming-Kot, the regional manager of school health.

With the screening legislated, the health department reached out to the local Lions, aware they wanted to help — vision and eye care is an

unit provides the administration of the program, while the Lion volunteers go into the schools.

"This has become a model for others to follow — the Niagara Health folks were the first to take this and run with it," said Anderson.

The two public school boards and the French board are all included in the program, he said.

There was a major investment in an optical camera, which 33

of Lionism, one of which is a commitment made to Helen Keller to be "knights of the blind," he said, and the other is living the Lions motto, "We serve."

The enthusiasm of the Lions, and the experience of Lions clubs working with kids in other areas, were what convinced public health staff it made sense to collaborate, said deVlaming-Kot.

The goal of the program is two-fold — to identify potential problems or risks, but as important if not more so, is that parents are often unaware of the importance of vision evaluations for kids at an early age — actually at a younger age than the five-year-olds in SK — and that it's covered by OHIP. Some vision problems in children cause the brain to take over and "rewire" to avoid the eye with the problem, she explained, and can cause blindness that is not reversible. It can be avoided if caught early — by the age of seven, it can be too late.

The program started out last fall as a pilot project, which saw children in 19 Niagara schools tested. It wrapped up in January, after the health department, through "close collaboration with the Lions," worked some start-up snags out of the process, said Gloria Morris, manager of the public health dental program.

"The pilot project was to find a model that would work, with limited resources," she said, "and to test the feasibility of moving forward with full implementation of the volunteer model."

Each school visited "taught us something a little different and helped us refine the process."

With the pilot project behind them, the hope is to visit 150 Niagara schools before the end of June.

Although the province has decided the program should be directed at SK students, it's not because that's the ideal age for testing, said Morris, who suggests it would be better to start screening with toddlers.

"The province targeted SK students because of their ability to co-operate, and the testing can get good results," she said.

The Niagara public health department, said Morris, was invited to present its model for vision screening in a webinar to 35 similar units across the province as a template, although other health units have different ways to implement their programs.

"They won't all look the same," she said. Other units have staff carrying out the screening, or are working with other external partners.

"This model is working for us," said deVlaming-Kot, "because we have such an extremely dedicated group of Lions volunteers. It's their dedication and passion that is making this work. I've learned so much about the Lions, and their desire to help. We couldn't do it without them."

And the Lions are helping to spread that all-important message, said Morris: "Take your child to an eye doctor."

**“ This has become a model for others to follow — the Niagara Health folks were the first to take this and run with it. ”**

Bradd Anderson

important cause in international Lionism, and there are other municipalities in Ontario where Lions clubs offer a similar service, working with school boards rather than public health departments, she said. In Niagara, the public health

volunteers from Niagara and Haldemond Norfolk clubs have been trained to use, along with learning how to administer the HOTV test (the one where letters get smaller with each line) and another Anderson refers to as the "Rand dot" test which checks for colour vision.

Some kids are a little nervous, some very "non-chalant," said Anderson, but as a volunteer, "I'm having so much fun doing this with children. The tests are absolutely non-threatening, the kids are very attuned to what we're doing, and they are as patient with us as we are with them. I can't say enough about how much I am getting out of this."

And that's in addition to obeying basic tenets



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**ANNIVERSARY**



Debbie Chagnon (back left), Allen Snider, Bradd Anderson and Janet Guy, all St. Davids Lions, with volunteer David Hooker and Merriton Lion Keith Brown, with St. Davids Lion Susan Snider and volunteer Elizabeth Hooker, were at Crossroads Public School last week to test SK students for vision problems. (Photo submitted)



# Take a seat, get fit

By Lauren O'Malley  
The NOTL Local

Exercise doesn't have to mean thumping beats, jumping around, and rivulets of sweat. At the Niagara-on-the-Lake community centre there are classes on offer designed for people who might have limited mobility, but still seek strength and flexibility.

Three classes in particular are done seated, yet still challenge and strengthen the body. Chair Fitness, Chair Yoga, and Laugh Yourself Healthier are all viable options for anyone who prefers their fitness from a seated standpoint. Whether you're in a wheelchair, using walking aids, have had recent surgery, or perhaps have limiting arthritis or other joint pain, these classes can accommodate your needs and still get your heart rate up and your muscles working.

Sam Dith is a certified personal trainer. The bulk of his business is home visits, offering training sessions of all levels. But he found a demographic in NOTL that required some tailored workouts without impact, preferably done seated. So he created the Chair Fitness classes. "A lot of people just can't do a traditional workout," says Dith. "In these classes, you sit in a chair. We work your core, and give

you a full body workout at different functional levels," to suit the individual needs of the participants.

He cites the benefits of seated classes: "You get your blood moving, improve your strength and muscle tone, and even improve your cognitive function," says Dith. "We do lots of exercises to get the brain working, using your co-ordination." He calls the classes "functional training for everyday life."

Chair Fitness takes place on Monday and Wednesday afternoons from 1:30 to 2:30 p.m. Drop-in sessions are \$15 per; 16 sessions are \$200 and eight sessions are \$115. If there is enough interest, a new session will be starting in a few weeks. For more information, Dith can be reached at 289-479-5634; his website also has information about chair fitness: <https://homevitalfitness.ca/>.

If slow and steady is more your speed, Chair Yoga is also available, on Tuesday afternoons from 1 to 2 p.m. Sophie Campbell has been offering this class for four years now, and has a dedicated following. "We work on strength, flexibility and balance," says the certified yoga instructor. "But we also have guided relaxation and breathing exercises, and we finish with one minute of meditation. This is inclusive: we take care of your physical

and mental health."

Most of the class is done seated, with about 10 minutes of standing for balance work. Campbell says modifications can easily be made as needed for people unable to stand, but emphasizes the need for balance improvement in an aging population, to minimize falls.

But, "this isn't just for seniors," says Campbell. "Anyone who sits in an office — if they took one minute to do a sequence, they would feel so much better."

She says the class is slow, with an emphasis on deep breathing, and features very few repetitions, to minimize stress on joints and muscles. But lest it sound too serious, she also points out, "We laugh, we have fun. People know each other, and new people feel welcomed."

Chair Yoga classes are \$10 per drop-in, or \$8 per if you sign up for an eight-week session. More information can be found on Campbell's website, at <http://trueheartniagara.ca/>, or by calling her at 289-690-0949.

And now for something completely different: Carolyn Shannon's Laugh Yourself Healthier classes are a unique and effective form of seated exercise, centred around laughter.

These whimsical hour-long sessions, on Fridays from 2 to 3 p.m., offer a



Sam Dith, personal trainer and Chair Fitness leader, does seated "jumping jacks." (Lauren O'Malley)

number of benefits, according to Shannon. "You breathe better, move more — you don't realize how much you're moving while you're having fun. It's kind of magical in that way," says the certified instructor. "And you're allowed to be imperfect in this class. It's about doing the best you can."

The deep breathing after every move oxygenates your

body and blood, says Shannon, and "gets out of your head — which is a wonderful place to be." She describes the class as an "active vocal meditation," and says, "The best part is the endorphins, which some experts say last for 10 to 14 days."

Shannon says benefits are broad and include the heart, lungs, mobility, and range of motion. "One client does it even while she's receiving

chemotherapy treatments."

Loyal participant Lyn Melanson says, "We make a joyful noise."

Classes are \$10 for drop-ins, or \$20 for five. More information can be found on <http://www.laughyourself-healthier.com>, or by calling Shannon at 905-371-3818.

Comfortable clothing and bottled water are recommended for all of these classes.

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# Family Day is all about, well, hanging out with family

Museum and fort open Family Day, as is outdoor rink at Fort George

By Lauren O'Malley  
The NOTL Local

The aptly named Family Day is just that: a time set aside to devote yourself to your immediate, beloved kin. Unlike some holidays, this one doesn't force you to spend time with distant relatives and set you up for disagreements with uncles and in-laws. Instead, the third Monday of February (or Fed-up-uary) is cuddle-with-the-kids time, or bust-out-the-board-game time.

In fact, in Niagara-on-the-Lake, many of the amenities we associate with kids and family — the library, for example — are closed. Presumably so staff can also indulge in dedicated family time.

The Historical Society and Museum is open — and offering free entry for the whole month of February — so if you want to get your history on, that's the place. Staying in the historical groove, Fort

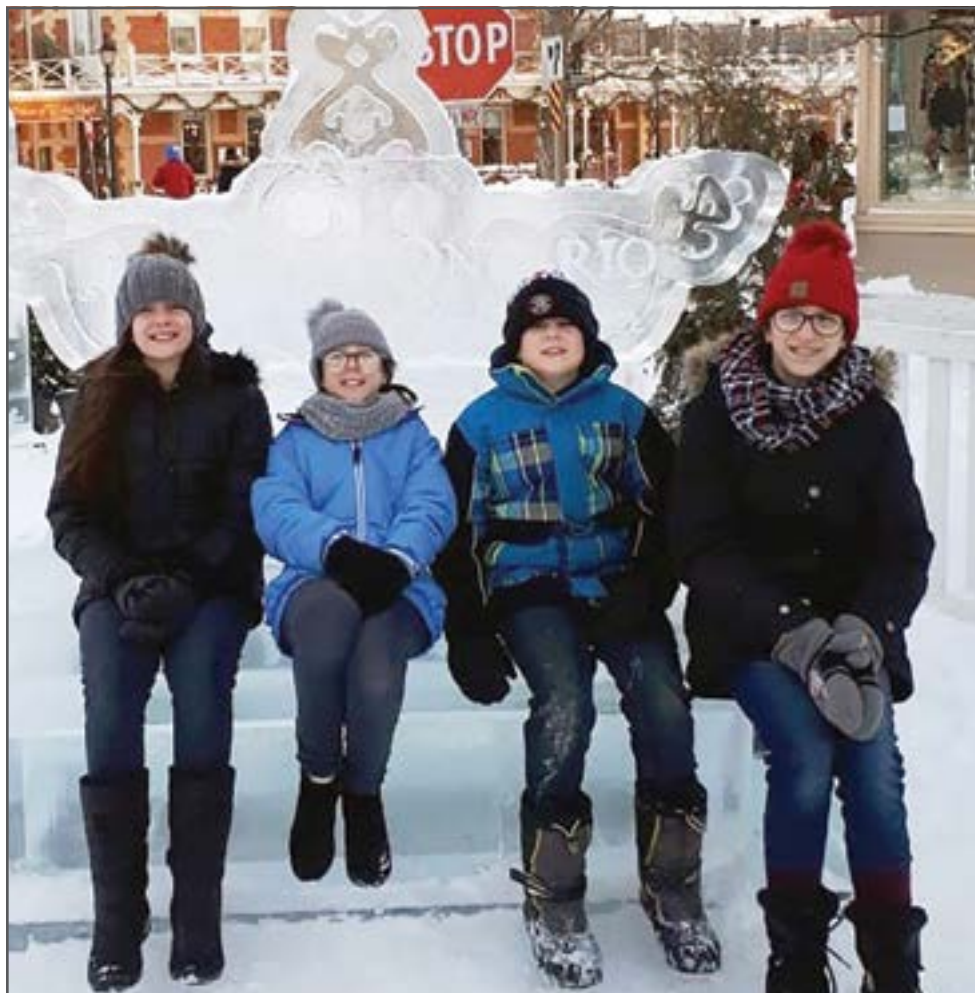
George is open and featuring tours and musket demonstrations, and, as usual, entry is free for youths 17 and under.

The outdoor Vintage-Parks Canada ice rink at Fort George is also open, and is offering music, concessions, skate rentals, crafts, face painting, and games from Niagara Inflatables.

Some local parents suggest their ideas for a meaningful Family Day:

Meredith Raso, mother of four kids between the ages of 8 and 13, plans to extend the holiday through the weekend, including the PA day on Friday. She says, "Friday we will be having breakfast with friends along with skating at Fort George (weather permitting). We'll make a trip to see family in London, and have dinner Sunday night with friends. Monday, a walk into town with family over for dinner. Just a weekend of spending time with friends and family."

Amika Versteegen, mother of three young children, has some ideas from the past, and for the near future. "We went to the Welland Canal museum a couple of times as admission is by donation on Family Day, and they have had a lot of fun activities. We once had a Victorian-era style tea party where everyone could bring their teddy or doll. This year we are hosting a family fun craft program over at the Allanburg community centre in the Small Scale Farms food kitchen. We will be making garden-friendly bug puppets, planting seeds and we will host a live puppet show where kids in the audience can use their bug friend as part of our show. My girls wrote most of the story/play about three friendly fairies getting into all sorts of adventures. Also thinking of squeezing in a walk with the rest of the family — out in nature no



Anessa, Nadia, Ben and Lauren Raso hung out as a family at the recent icewine festival on Queen Street, and will make Family Day also about hanging out with friends and relatives. (Supplied photo)

matter what the temperature is the best time to spend together."

Coun. Clare Cameron, who doubles as a local resident and parent, shares her plans for a loving weekend. "We are planning a dinner party at home

with friends and the kids on Sunday, and hoping for snow so we can take Harold out for a ride in his sled along the Parkway on Monday. If there's no snow, we will go for a skate at the Fort George rink. Looking forward

to spending time together."

Suggestions from local tweens included lots of hot cocoa, board games, movies, and baking, all done en famille.

Happy Family Day from our families to yours.



Niagara  
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Interested in learning more about the multispecies action plan for Niagara National Historic Sites (NNHS)? Join us for a field visit to NNHS properties and/or a public open house to discover more about species at risk in the Niagara region.

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Tuesday, February 26, 2019.

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Navy Hall, 305 Ricardo St, Niagara-on-the-Lake

Tuesday, February 26, 2019.

7 p.m. to 8:30 p.m.

### For more information

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# It takes a neighbourhood to build a home



Kathy and Jan Goulding with their prized evergreen and birch trees. (Lauren O'Malley)

## By Lauren O'Malley The NOTL Local

Building a house by committee is not generally a very popular way to go. But when Kathy and Jan Goulding started work on their Charlotte Street home, a committee of neighbours appeared and offered “suggestions.”

The first thing the Toronto transplants heard was that they must preserve the weeping cherry tree at the front of the lot. Several neighbours offered photos of the tree in full bloom, and cautioned the couple to design around it.

“We started getting the impression this weeping cherry tree was something special,” says Kathy. “It had been used by an art teacher as a subject for a class. People tell us it is the most beautiful tree in May — people would email us with love for this tree. They sent us photos. We understood, and preserved the tree.”

“We started edging the house away from the tree,” says Jan. “But when we moved the building back we started encroaching on a neighbour’s view, so we shrunk the house slightly.” This is a good example of how you build a house without alienating your new community.

They’ve also preserved the nearby crabapple tree,

and even a flowering bush another neighbour said is the “prettiest shrub on the street” when it’s in bloom.

“The excavator was doing an eight-foot over-dig from the house foundations,” recalls Kathy. “I asked if he could save the bush. He said they weren’t equipped for landscaping, but that he would try. He scooped a big hole with the excavator in the front, and scooped the bush into the hole. It’s not in the most appropriate spot, but hopefully it has been saved.”

Kathy has also dug up and replanted black-eyed Susans, and saved hydrangeas and rose bushes — “They tell the stories of the people who have lived here before,” she says.

The Gouldings have been renting nearby properties so as to be able to be on-site as much as possible, which has also led the very gregarious couple to get to know their new surroundings and those who inhabit them. “We’ve met a lot of people,” says Jan, who confesses he will talk to pretty much anybody who wants to chat.

The original design for the site was a very modern, two-storey project. “We might have built a beautiful modern abomination,” says Jan now. “We spent enough

time on the lot to know it would be the weird house on the street. Between our direct neighbours, we wanted to maintain context.”

As they spent time in the environment, they started wanting to build something “sympathetic to the neighbourhood, with a retro look: we wanted to go backwards, build a single storey house with a classic sloped roof,” says 66-year-old Jan, who remembers this as the type of house in which he and his peers were raised.

“As it turns out, we’re building the house we really, really want,” says Kathy.

Choosing the brick with which to face the outer walls became one of the most difficult decisions — until the Gouldings decided to share it. “We brought sample plates and checked them in various lights and times of day,” recalls Jan, who is something of a perfectionist. “We had all these sample cards lined up along the fence so we could decide on one. Passersby would say, ‘I don’t like this one — but I like that one.’ So we left the bricks out and did a straw poll on people as they passed the house. Everyone liked the one we preferred — and the neighbours had a sense of control.”

Kathy remarks the site is the “cleanest building site people have ever seen” — which might have something to do with the fact Jan and Kathy visit the site with brooms at the end of every day. Perhaps as a show of gratitude, neighbours have generously shovelled the lot’s driveway.

“One day, my mood must have rubbed off on the neighbours,” recalls Kathy. She had been in a slump about something, and was surprised and touched to find four neighbours clearing the snow from the job site for her and the

workers.

The couple are both retired from Goulding Consultants, Jan’s firm of management consultants in health care and IT planning for hospitals. While retirement might seem peaceful and relaxing, such is not their current state. They would love to join various groups and clubs — and even take up sailing again — their days, nights, weekends, and dreams are taken over by the building project. “It’s a self-inflicted pain, really,” says Jan, laughing. And that pain might become more intense, as they plan to move into the unfinished house in a couple of months, so they can do all the cabinetry and mill-work themselves.

In the meantime they have just enough energy left over to volunteer with the Shaw Guild, work in the Shaw gardens, volunteer for the Rotary house tour, and enjoy hikes with the Niagara Nomads.

Married for 39 years, the pair met at a trade show. They were introduced, in fact, through a friend who also now lives in NOTL. And why did they choose our town for their “forever” retirement home? “Well, when you want to leave Toronto, you choose east or west,” says Jan practically. “East is Prince Edward County; west is Niagara. We wanted a small town with big city culture: NOTL has jazz festivals, the theatre, a great library — this town has a lot of amenities for its size.” They find they’re meeting several old friends on local streets who have also made the move west and found the delights of our amenities.

All considerations have been made for comfort, beauty, safety, and warmth. “We’re not movers,” says Jan. “This is where we will stay.”

“The thirty-nine-inch door indicates it’s a very welcoming place,” says Jan — one inch for

every year of their marriage.

The Gouldings are confident they have made the right choice. “This morning I watched a woodpecker and some cardinals, the junkos

getting the dregs, my bunny in the back yard,” says Kathy, describing the picturesque nature that surrounds their property. “I have everything I need.”

## LOCAL HAPPENINGS



### FAMILY FISH FRY

Friday, February 15th ~ 4:30 - 7pm  
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Price includes: Coleslaw, bread, french fries, baked potato, coffee/tea. Alcohol Available.



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www.stdavidslions.ca @ stdavidslions on Facebook  
Next Family Fish Fry ~ Friday March 1st

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## NIAGARA PUMPHOUSE INSTRUCTORS' EXHIBITION

January 12 @ 11:00 am - March 31 @ 4:00 pm

The Niagara Pumphouse Arts Centre presents its Pumphouse Instructors' Exhibition, running until March 31, featuring the artwork of some of its talented instructors. 27 Ricardo Street, Open Tuesday to Sunday 11 a.m. to 4 p.m.

## TINKER THINKER THURSDAYS

February 14 @ 6:00 am - 7:00 pm

Tinker, build, think and problem solve in The Makery. Drop-in program for all ages and families. Children under 8 must be accompanied by an adult. Register online. At the NOTL Public Library, Anderson Lane

## BABIES AND BOOKS

February 14 @ 11:00 am - 12:00 pm

Sing, play, and laugh with your baby while sharing books, rhymes, and tickles. At the NOTL Public Library, Anderson Lane

## SHAW FILM SERIES: A STAR IS BORN

February 16 @ 3:00 pm - 5:00 pm  
shawfest.com

## FIRST ONTARIO PERFORMING ARTS CENTRE

February 18

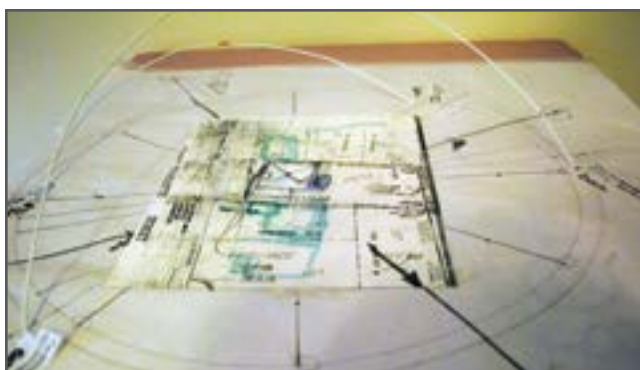
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“We’re prototypers,” says Jan Goulding, who built a model of a hallway pendant light. (Lauren O'Malley)



The treasured weeping cherry tree has been preserved by request. (Photo submitted)



Jan Goulding researched and charted a precise measurement of sunlight on the property. (Lauren O'Malley)



# SCHOOLS

## ST. MICHAEL CATHOLIC SCHOOL

St. Michael Catholic elementary students from Grades 5 and 7 presented their science fair projects recently. The students worked for months on their presentations, and had to be prepared to share their research and findings with their peers, and any parents and teachers who passed through the gymnasium. Some students from each grade were moved on to the next level, and will compete regionally, potentially provincially, and even nationally. (Photos by Lauren O'Malley, text supplied by St. Michael)



Kalan Hillis did his project on making a solar panel from household items. He chose this experiment because he is very interested in solar energy and how it's free. He learned about grid living, houses and communities living just by solar power, and that you can make a solar panel at home.



Juliet Pillitteri studied how to make a rocketship out of a pop bottle, some baking soda, vinegar, duct tape and pencils. Her experiment was to determine the best mix of vinegar and baking soda for the optimum launch.



Logan Smyth and Samuel Van Egmond did their experiment on whether gum would make them less dumb. They chose this project because they wanted to see if chewing gum would improve their test scores and or test time. They also would really like gum to be permitted in school. They discovered that gum does improve your test scores but showed the test took longer.



What happens when you talk to plants? Cal Wilkins found out.



Ethan Dulas and Connor Mori try to find the perfect cupcake recipe. Did they do it?

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Ava Randall did her science project on how vision affects balance in ballet. She chose this project because she does ballet and wanted to know how a blind person would perform. She discovered balance is made up of four systems that all work together and if you lose one of those systems it will throw off your balance.



# Museum offers free admission this month

Niagara Historical Museum will open Monday for Family Day, with 1812 period clothing for kids who want to play dress-up

By Lauren O'Malley  
The NOTL Local

The Niagara-on-the-Lake Historical Society and Museum has launched an effort to brighten up this dreary month.

Entrance to the local museum — the first purpose-built museum in Ontario, in our midst since 1907 — is free for the shortest month of the year. Which might get you there sooner.

The current featured exhibit, Painting Niagara-on-the-Lake, shines a spotlight on contemporary and historical paintings depicting our town's landscape and built heritage. It features rare and never-before exhibited works of local painters such as Betty Lane, Captain John Shawe, Margaret Peake-Benton; RJR Pottery

and others. Lane's son has donated 16 paintings to the museum's collection, and other works by the painter have been brought in from private collections. Lane lived and painted in NOTL throughout much of the 20th century.

This exhibition runs until May 4.

The museum's regular exhibits are also accessible, including the opportunity to try on period clothing and accessories.

Family Day, Feb. 18, the museum is ready to receive with open arms and plenty to amuse and enlighten family members of all ages.

On Feb. 25 the museum's monthly Community Days series continues, with the Famous and Infamous series. "This is a real community-driven program", says the museum's acting managing

director Amy Klassen. "The series was developed by local residents and is organized and promoted through its participants. As a community institution, we love to see our members and the residents of Niagara-on-the-Lake using the Museum for this kind of programming."

This month's featured "famous and infamous" personage is the Shah of Iran (Part 2). Residents will discuss and learn about his life and times.

The Famous and Infamous events typically take place on the fourth Monday of each month, and are free to residents.

For more information about the museum, exhibits, free entry and events, visit niagarahistorical.museum or call 905-468-3912. The museum is located at 43 Castlereigh Street, and is open daily from 1 p.m. to 5 p.m.



Period clothing and accessories for sampling. (Lauren O'Malley)



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Steamer Dock with Black Dog, painted by Betty Lane, C 1940s (Lauren O'Malley)

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Joe Locano headlines the Saturday evening jazz festival concert. (Photo submitted)

# Oscar Peterson jazz festival this weekend

**Staff**  
**The NOTL Local**

The second annual Oscar Peterson International Jazz Festival, with artistic director Renee Rosnes at the helm, will feature top jazz artists from both Canada and the U.S. in collaborative performances, some of them here in Niagara-on-the-Lake.

The festival begins Friday, with six concerts spread over the weekend, including a gala to wrap it up Sunday evening.

Friday's 8 p.m. concert features the Juno award-winning Christine Jensen Jazz Orchestra, with trumpeter Ingrid Jensen, performing at St. Mark's Church.

Christine is a force in Canadian music, both a

major voice on the saxophone and a lauded composer. JazzTimes had this to say about her: "Jensen's formidable orchestra is the glistening sunlight, the tranquility and force of the ocean, and the majestic trees that her music imagines."

The concert is expected to be an evening of pure Canadian jazz that will spotlight Christine's sister, Ingrid, who is also an inventive and prolific talent. The band is brimming with Canadian jazz stars: guitarist Lorne Lofsky, saxophonists Joel Miller, Perry White and Kelly Jefferson, among others, will perform.

A highlight of the evening is sure to be the world premiere of Christine Jensen's composition in tribute to Oscar Peterson,

Something In His Smile, commissioned by the Oscar Peterson International Jazz Festival.

Saturday afternoon the festival moves to the Cairns Recital Hall in the FirstOntario Performing Arts Centre on St. Paul Street in St. Catharines, where a lecture and performance will be delivered by Bill Charlap: "George Gershwin, the Blues and the American Soul."

Charlap, an acclaimed Grammy award-winning pianist, is also an educator and story-teller who will discuss and demonstrate the important influence of jazz and the blues in Gershwin's music.

Saturday evening's concert, at 8 p.m. in the Partridge Hall of the

FirstOntario Performing Arts Centre, is Singin' and Swingin': A Jazz Summit, featuring Joe Lovano, Jeremy Pelt, Niki Haris, Renee Rosnes, Russell Malone, Peter Washington and Lewis Nash.

Sunday, the festival moves to Stratus Vineyards with Music with No Borders at 1 p.m. featuring Kenny Barron, Kirk MacDonald, Reg Schwaiger, Neil Swainson and Lewis Nash, showcasing top musicians from Canada and the U.S.

The festival wraps up Sunday with the Canadian Jazz Master Awards Gala Dinner, again at Stratus, at 6:30 p.m.

Under the auspices of the Oscar Peterson International Jazz Festival, the annual Canadian Jazz Master Awards was

founded to honour Canadian jazz musicians of the highest artistic excellence who are deserving of national recognition. Each year two awards are presented, to one living and one past legend of Canadian jazz.

The 2019 Canadian Jazz Master Awards will be presented to clarinetist, composer, and educator Phil Nimmons and to the family of influential trumpeter and composer Kenny Wheeler.

"I couldn't be more excited about this 2019 lineup of the Oscar Peterson International Jazz Festival," said artistic director Renee Rosnes in a press release about the festival. "Every concert will be filled with unforgettable performances by some of the greatest jazz

musicians alive today."

"This is an opportunity to hear groups of musicians who don't usually play together, concerts you will not hear anywhere else," added artistic producer Kelly Peterson.

Peterson and Rosnes work alongside executive producers Christine Mori and Alexis Spieldenner of Bravo Niagara! Festival of the Arts. The festival is produced by Bravo Niagara! in partnership with The Estate of Oscar Peterson.

Single tickets range from \$55-\$100. "Under 30" ticket discounts are available, as are three-day passes.

For more information or tickets visit <https://www.opjazzfest.org/about/>

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## Fabulicious a week-long dining event for locals

**Staff**  
**The NOTL Local**

Get set to enjoy a week of Fabulicious, an invitation for locals to visit some of Niagara-on-the-Lake's best restaurants and enjoy special menus and prices.

The annual event, organized by the NOTL Chamber of Commerce and the Signature Kitchens group of chefs, runs from Feb. 21 to 28.

Thirteen local restaurants will offer lunch, dinner or both, with a fixed price menu that allows for some flexibility, said Janice

Thomson, chamber president.

"Fabulicious is always a week in February, organized really to give locals a chance to go to what I call "special occasion" restaurants. Our chefs put great effort into building special menus for locals to enjoy as we head into spring."

This year there has been a slight change to the menus, based on public feedback, she said. Instead of all restaurants offering three-course meals, some have based their prices on two courses, with diners given the choice of an appetizer or dessert in addition to the entree.

"This has allowed for some

built-in flexibility, while keeping prices low," said Thomson.

This year's Fabulicious event includes Bistro Six-One; The Cannery at the Pillar & Post; Noble at the Prince of Wales; Hobnob Restaurant & Wine Bar; LIV Restaurant at White Oaks Resort & Spa; Masaki Sushi; Niagara's Finest Thai; Peller Estates Winery Restaurant; Ravine Vineyard Estate Winery; Restaurant Oban Inn; Tiara Restaurant at Queens Landing; Trius Winery Restaurant; and Zees Grill.

For more information and menus visit <https://www.niagaraonthelake.com/fabulicious>.



# Bottoms up for Friends of Fort George

**By Lauren O'Malley**  
The NOTL Local

"Whisky was the first drink I was stealing from my parents liquor cabinet," says Chris Thompson with some pride. That early passion has led him to his dream job: brand ambassador for Forty Creek Distillery, maker of fine whiskys.

When the Friends of Fort George decided to host a whisky tasting, they knew exactly who to involve.

Last year was the first annual whisky tasting fundraiser for the Friends, and it's now coming up on time for the second. On Feb. 22, Navy Hall will return to its roots as a mess hall for rowdy soldiers — or locals. The fire will be lit, says Amanda Gamble, to give the hall a cozy and historic feeling. The execu-

tive director of the Friends of Fort George says, "Soldiers would have done a lot of drinking at Navy Hall, so it's a nice connection." She goes on to point out just how prominently alcohol featured in the lives of the men-at-arms, which is evidenced by the many — many — mentions of booze in the detailed mess rules. Vis number 14: "No Gentleman during Mess time, is to Read Books, Letters etc. without leave of the President — a Bottle of Wine to be paid for every..."

So whisky and Navy Hall and fundraising for the Fort are a perfect fit — just like Thompson at Forty Creek. "My next door neighbour introduced me to Forty Creek whisky. He said, 'They make it just down the road in Grimsby.' A year later I was working for them."

And now, as brand ambassador, he gets to travel North America, geeking out about his pet passion. "I spend so much time travelling for this job, I'm thrilled to have an event in my own back yard," says the St. Catharines resident, of the NOTL event. He's also enthusiastic about Navy Hall "with its historic importance, and a partnership with our national parks."

Thompson says the event will feature finger foods — from NOTL's Sweets & Swirls cafe — each paired with a different Forty Creek whisky. There will be seven samples in total, each with its own unique story. "I'll get up and talk for five to 10 minutes about each varietal — the weird backgrounds behind each one," says the professional entertainer. "I'll do a little bit of a deep dive,

depending on how nerdy the group is and how much detail they want. How this whisky came to be, the trials and tribulations of each type. All of the whiskys are very different."

He promises the night will be "a real eye-opener, especially for people who don't necessarily appreciate whisky." He says there will be a bit of education, and a lot of fun.

Thompson will guide guests through a structured night of sampling and food pairing, along with "good storytelling."

Forty Creek Distilleries is donating all of the alcohol, as well as Thompson's time.

Tickets are \$45 for this Friends of Fort George fundraiser. Proceeds go toward supporting student employment at the fort. "We are hoping to contin-

ue supporting Niagara's youth with meaningful summer employment, and events like this allow us to raise much-needed funds to cover wages," says Tony Chisholm, president of the

Friends of Fort George.

For more information or for reservations, call the Friends of Fort George at 905-468-6621 or email admin@friendsoffortgeorge.ca.



Illustration of an 1812-era mess hall, and perhaps a taste of things to come. (Image supplied)

## Choices ahead for Virgil building and its owner

Petra Browning is looking for tenants, and enjoying spending more time with kids

**By Penny Coles**  
The NOTL Local

After almost 70 years of service, Lincoln Interiors doors have closed for the last time.

The store on Niagara Stone Road, long a familiar fixture for those driving through Virgil, is completely empty.

Owner Petra Browning has hung on to a few bits and bobs in the back office, although most of the office furniture has also been sold, but she's still doing a bit of cleaning up after biggest sale in the 70-year history of Lincoln Interiors.

For a while, she worried she'd never see the end of it all, but she has.

In 1957, Siegfried Wiens, her father, was a salesman at Lincoln Interiors, a small business in Virgil owned then by Henry Wiens — not a relative, and later owner of the Prince of Wales Hotel.

Siegfried's brother-in-law, Henry Esau, was an upholsterer there.

Virgil was a close-knit

village, where people were friendly and relied on each other, and local families owned the small businesses, said Browning.

When a fire closed down the store for a year in 1962, Siegfried took the opportunity to holiday in Germany. It was there he met and later married Helga.

A year later, back in Virgil, Siegfried decided to open his own business, and launched Peninsula Upholstering (now Peninsula Flooring). Helga was soon a busy part of the business, learning to sew and upholster as well as managing the business office.

Owners at that time carried out every aspect of the operation themselves, Browning says, so Helga remembers cleaning and washing windows as part of her job. Though Siegfried was the salesman, he helped by stripping furniture and filling cushions. They both worked long hours and it was hard work, Browning says — and it was soon to become even harder. In 1978, Siegfried

and Helga purchased Lincoln Interiors. The upholstery end of Peninsula became part of Lincoln shortly after, and Peninsula turned to specializing in flooring, as it does today.

There were many growth spurts in Lincoln Interiors, Browning says, as her father sought fabrics and furnishings at the markets. And there were some frantic moments, too.

In 1980, lightning caused a fire at the Irvine Road warehouse, and a lot of antiques and materials were lost.

The '80s were years of considerable change, says Browning.

A growing interest in making one's home beautiful, comfortable and easy to live in has been the prime concern of Browning, the Weins' eldest daughter, who owns the business today.

She first worked at Lincoln Interiors part-time in high school.

On graduation from university in 1987, when she took over the reins of Lincoln In-

teriors from her mother, she was committed to its tradition of providing the best quality products and services, she said. At the same time, she developed a team of decorators, upholsterers and seamstresses who became experts in their field.

As did her parents, she has seen many changes, especially in the workplace, she said.

She remembers furniture sales being a male-dominated industry when she first became involved. Managers and sales reps were all men, and she had to learn to stand up to them. But it turned around — in later years there were a lot more women on the sales floor, and many businesses are run by women now, she added. Customers became also mostly women, making 90 per cent of the purchases.

But there is no more furniture left in the store to buy, no more purchases to be made. She hoped to be closed by the end of the year, but it took that extra month to truly get rid of everything, and the doors of the empty



Petra Browning is happy to see every piece of furniture sold, and relaxed about whatever comes along for the next chapter of her life. (Penny Coles)

store were closed for the last time at the end of January.

To those who ask "what next," Browning doesn't have a complete answer.

She looks around the large, empty store and says she has had enquires from prospective tenants, but it's a big space, and she envisions dividing it up and renting it out to more than one business. She's waiting to see who wants what part of it before making plans for renovation — she will do the work to suit future needs, she said

Meanwhile, she's unsure

of what is next for her, she said, and not in a hurry to decide. "I'm not in any rush. I will work again, but my kids are still young,"

Her aging parents need her care, and as a single mom who lost her husband four years ago to cancer, she said, "I'm on my own now, and I'm really looking forward to having more time to spend with my kids. They need me now."

The 'for lease' sign is in the window, and anyone interested in renting some or all of the space can contact her at 289-213-6679.

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CROSSWORD PUZZLE

1	2	3	4		5	6	7	8	9		10	11	12	13
14					15						16			
17					18						19			
20				21			22							
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26	27			28			29		30		31	32	33	34
35				36				37		38				
39			40		41				42		43			
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57	58	59	60				61		62				63	64
65								66			67			
68					69						70			
71					72						73			

- ACROSS**
- 1 Opposite of neither  
5 Protect  
10 "Four and twenty blackbirds baked in ---"  
14 On the ocean  
15 Publish  
16 Route  
17 Via  
18 Serviced  
20 Cotton Club setting  
22 Jamboree  
23 Up  
25 Intelligence agency  
26 Not traded on a stock exchange  
28 Top guns  
30 Ethnic  
35 In favor  
36 Adeptness  
38 State animal of Maine  
39 The Sultan of Swat  
41 Talent seeker  
43 Shuttle operator  
44 Behaved  
46 Wished  
48 Bear  
49 Accidental dive  
51 Feeble
- 52 Some foreign Government heads  
53 Except  
55 Comic --- Martin  
57 Light metal  
62 Knuckleheads  
65 Suspension  
67 Duration  
68 First to die in the Bible  
69 Untrue  
70 Egyptian dancing girl  
71 Dabbling duck  
72 Absquatulates  
73 Drip slowly
- DOWN**
- 1 Tub  
2 Workplace regulation agency  
3 Unglazed brownish-red earthenware  
4 Pulls  
5 Ingenious sales devices  
6 World's largest economy  
7 Expression of incredulity  
8 Scrap  
9 Despise  
10 Parched  
11 Small lake  
12 U N nuclear watchdog
- 13 Swirl  
19 Warning signal  
21 Touchdown forecasts  
24 German state  
26 O founder  
27 Temporary peace  
29 Single-masted sailboat  
31 Electrically charged particle  
32 Maritime refugees  
33 Tea-growing Indian state  
34 Inclines  
37 Southern hemisphere constellation  
40 "He'd make a lovely corpse" (Dickens: "Martin Chuzzlewit")  
42 1,000%  
45 Kind of card  
47 Artificially-colored  
50 Went on the lam  
54 Like Mayberry  
56 Travel stamps  
57 "I --- my wit's end"  
58 Projecting part of the brain  
59 Common fertilizer ingredient  
60 Shopping center  
61 Height of Denver  
63 Dull  
64 Sudden  
66 Employ

SUDOKU PUZZLE

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

PUZZLE ANSWERS

Across: 1 Both, 5 Guard, 10 A pie, 14 Asca, 15 Issue, 16 Road, 17 Thru, 18 Maintained, 20 Harlem, 22 Field day, 23 Asst, 25 N S A, 26 O T C, 28 Aces, 30 Tribal, 35 Pro, 36 Skill, 38 Moose, 39 Ruth, 41 Scout, 43 N A S A, 44 Acted, 46 Hoped, 48 Tan, 49 Header, 51 Puny, 52 P Ms, 53 Bar, 55 Steve, 57 Aluminum, 62 Idiots, 65 Moratorium, 67 Span, 68 Abel, 69 False, 70 Alma, 71 Teal, 72 Flees, 73 Seep.

Down: 1 Bath, 2 O S H A, 3 Terracotta, 4 Hauls, 5 Gymnicks, 6 U S A, 7 As if, 8 Run-in, 9 Detect, 10 Arid, 11 Pond, 12 I A E A, 13 Eddy, 19 Alarm, 21 E T As, 24 Reich, 26 Oprah, 27 Truce, 29 Sloop, 31 Ion, 32 Boat people, 33 Assam, 34 Iearn, 37 Lupus, 40 He'd, 42 Ten times, 45 Debt, 47 Dyed, 50 Ran off, 54 Rural, 56 Visas, 57 Am at, 58 Lobe, 59 Urea, 60 Mall, 61 Mile, 63 Tame, 64 Snap, 66 Use.





## Practise makes perfect sense

Girls aged 9 to 13 practise at the Centennial Arena Saturday afternoon during all-female ice time organized by the NOTL Minor Hockey League. The skills development program is the only opportunity for the girls to be on the ice themselves. *(Fred Mercnik)*



## Peewee Wolves defeat Lincoln Blades

The peewee Wolves of the NOTL Minor Hockey League beat the Lincoln Blades 6-1 at the Meridian Credit Union Arena Saturday. *(Fred Mercnik)*

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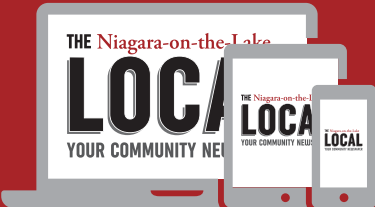


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# LOCAL SPORTS

## Nationals lose 2 of 3 games heading into playoffs

By Penny Coles  
The NOTL Local

The Niagara-on-the-Lake Nationals won at home 5-4 against Tottenham Friday, but couldn't keep the momentum going over the weekend.

The win was followed by a 5-4 loss Saturday in overtime against the same team on their turf. Next came an 8-6 loss at home Sunday to Tillsonburg, the second-place team in the division, says coach Spencer De Wolfe.

Aiding in Friday's win were Bailey Pritchard with a goal and two assists, and Jake Anderson with two goals.

Saturday Caleb Mussat earned a hat trick, but the key factor

in the weekend's two losses was an "undisciplined" team, said De Wolfe.

Sunday's home game saw Antoine Michaud earn two goals and two assists.

"We came out and played hard for the first 40 minutes," said De Wolfe, followed by "a third period collapse against a highly skilled team."

The Nationals play at home Friday, Feb. 15 at 7 p.m. against the Niagara Whalers for their last regular season game, before the start of playoffs in their division.

The local team of the Greater Metro Hockey League will finish 5th and play the Kingsville Kings in the first round, said De Wolfe.



The Nationals won a game at home against Tottenham Friday, followed by two losses. (Carolyn Elaine Milne)

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