



NOTL fire chief Nick Ruller resigns, takes job in Brampton

Evan Saunders
Local Journalism Initiative
The Lake Report

Nick Ruller announced his resignation as chief of Niagara-on-the-Lake's fire and emergency services, saying he is always looking at what comes next in life. "I'm more of a pioneer than a settler," Ruller said in an interview on Tuesday. "I am always kind of looking over the next hill, right? What opportunities exist and what challenges exist."

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Niagara Long Term Care COVID-free after outbreak

Richard Harley
The Lake Report

Niagara Long Term Care is COVID-free once again. In an email Tuesday, Chris Poos, executive director of the Niagara-on-the-Lake care home, said an outbreak that started Dec. 27, 2021 has been declared over by public health. "I am thrilled to share that the outbreak at Niagara Long Term Care has been declared over," Poos said.

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Education ministry cracks down on Virgil 'learning pod'

Government says private group has to cut number of children to five from 50 or possibly face large fines

Evan Saunders
Local Journalism Initiative
The Lake Report

The Ontario Ministry of Education has ordered the owners of the Niagara Alternative Learning Alliance

to reduce their operation to only five children or face a \$250,000 fine and potential jail time, The Lake Report has learned.

The "learning pod," led by Lori Davidson and Monica McCourt, started hosting

maskless, non-physically distanced classes in early January with as many as 50 children and another 15 volunteers in space rented at a former public school building in Virgil.

After inquiries from The

Lake Report, the ministry, Region of Niagara and Town of Niagara-on-the-Lake all launched investigations into the learning group.

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Hiking series explores Black history in NOTL

Jill Troyer
The Lake Report

Black history in Niagara is complex, with deep roots that encompass slavery as well as the people and events that pushed for freedom and gave safe haven as part of the Underground Railroad.

The Niagara Bruce Trail Club will lead a series of hikes exploring that history on four consecutive Fridays, starting on Feb. 11, to mark Black History Month.

Each 90-minute hike has a theme, ranging from the days of early slavery, to the early Black community in Niagara-on-the-Lake, the role of Black soldiers in the War of 1812, to important people and dramatic events that led to limits and ultimately the abolition of slavery.

These events transpired in centuries past, but we are surrounded by the echoes of those extraordinary individuals and events here in NOTL. People who walked where we walk, lived where we live and did business where commerce still hums today.



Niagara-on-the-Lake was an important terminus on the Underground Railroad. In the mid 1800s, a Baptist church stood on this property on Mississauga Street near John Street, as well as the Negro Burial Ground. Only three gravestones remain, including that of George Wesley, who died in 1893. Wesley escaped slavery in Kentucky and raised his family in Niagara-on-the-Lake. He lived across from the burial ground, at 519 Mississauga St. DON REYNOLDS PHOTO ILLUSTRATION

In the 1800s, there was a vibrant community of about 200 Black people who lived in an area known at the time as the "Co-

loured Village," generally bounded north and south by William and Anne streets, and King to Butler Street.

The accompanying photos and captions highlight some of the many people and places the hikes will cover. Those interested in the

hikes, can go to the hiking club's website at niagara-bruceclub.club/wp/.

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Sharpening body and mind at community centre and library

Evan Saunders
Local Journalism Initiative
The Lake Report

With the reopening of town facilities, Niagara-on-the-Lake residents are able to get back to exercising both the body and mind.

"I was sitting across the street looking over, upset that I wasn't in here," Brock

Sansom said about the lockdown as he played badminton in the community centre's gym.

"It's better than being out," Ron Planche said about being back in the centre.

When lockdowns shutter doors around town it isn't just the ability to go out for dinner and have a beer that

is lost, NOTL residents also lose access to the valuable resources provided by the public library, arenas and the community centre.

Arenas are also open again and children's hockey and figure skating programs have resumed.

Planche joked that he



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Ron Planche plays badminton at the community centre.



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On the left is a map of the area known as the "Coloured Village" in the 1800s, where most of the estimated 200 Black residents lived. On the right, is an artistic interpretation of this map as featured on the communal circle wall at Voices of Freedom Park, on Regent Street at Johnson.



This is the William Stewart Homestead at 507 Butler St. William and Susannah Stewart escaped to freedom from Kentucky and bought the property for £25 when they arrived in Upper Canada in 1834. The house was probably built around 1835. It was typical of homes built by Black residents in Niagara at the time, comprising a one-and-a-half storey saltbox with rear lean-to. The Stewarts left Niagara for Galt (now Cambridge) in 1847.



This is the location where Black businessman Louis/Lewis Ross lived and operated his barbershop on Queen Street, as advertised at the time. A fire in 1886 destroyed his barbershop and home, but records from then note his building was insured and he was able to save most of his household belongings. He moved his barbershop to a location on Queen Street closer to King after the fire.




This is a sketch of the log house built by William Riley, at the northwest corner of Mary and Victoria Streets. Riley was an escaped slave from Virginia and when he bought the lot for £50 in 1819, he became only the third Black man to own property in the village. He got married and built the house in the same year, and eventually eight family members lived there. The house was torn down in the 1880s.

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Last issue: You can find me at the end of the rainbow. What am I?
Answer: "W"
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Also answered correctly (in order) by: Mary Drost, Sylvia Wiens, Pam Dowling, Margie Enns, Howard Jones, Rob Hutchison, Sheila Meloche, Ron Cane
Email answers, with your name, to editor@niagaranow.com for a chance to win a prize. (Subject line: Riddle me this)



Walk through NOTL explores Black history

STORY AND CAPTIONS BY JILL TROYER
PHOTOGRAPHY BY DON REYNOLDS
HISTORICAL IMAGES COURTESY NOTL MUSEUM

Continued from Front Page

Go to the hike calendar to find the hike and contact the hike leader to register in advance. The hikes are likely to fill up and so the club may repeat the series in the fall.

The club also leads hikes through NOTL every Friday morning with different historical themes. Non-members are welcome to try a couple of hikes before deciding whether to join the club, which is run entirely by volunteers.

Further information on Black history in NOTL is also available through the Voices of Freedom Park website at vofpark.org.



This house at 243 Gate St. appears in town records as "The Slave Cottage," even though the owner had never been a slave. Daniel Waters was born in Niagara in 1813 and he bought the house in 1872. He owned and operated a large livery stable on Regent Street, one of only two stables in town. Waters was one of the most prominent local businessmen of his time.



This monument on the grounds of the former Parliament Oak school on King Street honours Harriet Tubman, who helped hundreds of enslaved people escape from the American south on the Underground Railroad. Some of the slaves came through NOTL. The monument was originally displayed at Artpark, in Lewiston, N.Y., in the 1980s. When that installation closed, the monument was moved to Parliament Oak school, which was the historic location where the Act to Limit Slavery was signed in 1783.



This building once stood on what is now Rye Park. It was the courthouse and jail for NOTL in the 1800s and the scene of the so-called Moseby riot. Solomon Moseby escaped slavery in Kentucky in 1837, travelling north on his owners' horse. His former owner followed him to Niagara and demanded his extradition. Moseby was arrested and jailed. Both Black and white residents petitioned the lieutenant-governor to refuse the extradition, but the order was signed. Two hundred or more Black people, many of them women, gathered to protest peacefully at the jail. But when a carriage carrying Moseby appeared, two protesters tried to stop it, and shots were fired by order of the sheriff. Moseby escaped in the chaos. The two men who intervened died and two others were severely injured.

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