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## Hit seasonal farmworker is recovering

Somer Slobodian  
Local Journalism Initiative  
The Lake Report

A 51-year-old Niagara-on-the-Lake seasonal farmworker is expected to recover from his injuries after being struck by a car last week.

Ceto Reid was on his bike when he was hit by a blue Hyundai at Carlton Street and Dorchester Boulevard in St. Catharines

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## Solmar, Two Sisters win Charter case. Town to appeal

Somer Slobodian  
Local Journalism Initiative  
The Lake Report

The town is appealing a court ruling last week that stayed charges against two of developer Benny Marotta's companies.

A justice of the peace on Oct. 5 verbally granted Two Sisters Resort Corp. and Solmar (Niagara) 2 Inc. a stay of Heritage Act charges laid by the Town of Niagara-on-the-Lake.

The charges are related to

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## Driver in pedestrian fatality thought he'd hit a deer, court told

Kevin MacLean  
The Lake Report

A charge against a Niagara-on-the-Lake driver involved in a fatal late-night collision with a pedestrian could hinge on the court's interpretation of a single word.

"Forthwith." NOTL farmer Robert Enns, 55, faces a relatively minor charge in the deadly incident, failing to report an accident.

The 40-year-old victim, Matthew Wilson, also from Niagara-on-the-Lake, died after he was struck by Enns'

pickup truck on Lakeshore Road east of Stewart Road just after 10:30 p.m. on Sunday, April 4, 2021.

Under section 199 of the Highway Traffic Act, a person is required to report any accident "forthwith" if someone is injured or if it appears more than \$2,000

in damage was caused.

The big questions before the court last Thursday in Welland were whether Enns reported the collision as soon as possible – "forthwith" – and if his estimate of \$1,500 damage to his



Matthew Wilson was struck and killed by a truck in April 2021. SUPPLIED

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## Half a century of NOTL child care

Niagara Nursery School seeks pictures and stories from its first 50 years

To help mark the 50th anniversary of the Niagara Nursery School and Child Care Centre, The Lake Report scoured the scant early records of the school, searching for photos and stories that would provide a hint about how and why the school has survived a remarkable 50 years. There wasn't much to be found. But Kevin Bridgman, an early student, dug out the photograph at right that showcases the first in a series of stories about the school. The year was 1973. It was taken at Harmony Hall, a long-since closed community centre in Chautauqua. These are the children of 1973. The story is a little bit about who they were then and a little bit about who they are now and how they got there. We couldn't find everyone. But our calls reached California, Milton, Italy, Wisconsin, Thunder Bay, Calgary and so on. So, the rest is up to you. Do you recognize any of these 15 youngsters? Please let us know at editor@niagaranow.com.



Tim Taylor  
The Lake Report

Fifty years ago, what was to become the Niagara Nursery School, opened in the newly converted Kinsmen Club Hall, at the end of Mary Street.

It was a makeshift affair — one professional teacher, with all parents expected to take volunteer shifts.

None of the former parents interviewed by The Lake Report could remember how much it cost. But it wasn't much. If

you needed to miss your volunteer day, you were expected to find a replacement or pay \$4.

As you can imagine, memories were a challenge in the evolution of this story. Half the interviewees were 2 ½ years old at the time. The other half are

now almost 80.

But everyone credits Janet Howden with being a co-founder of the fledgling organization.

Howden left Niagara-on-the-Lake for Collingwood, Ont.,

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## High-quality grape harvest is silver lining to low yield for 2022

Jill Troyer  
The Lake Report

Episodes of severe cold last winter have meant a low yield for this grape harvest season, but exceptional conditions this summer and fall have ensured excellent quality.

"It's what we predicted," said Matthias Oppenlaender, chair of Grape Growers of Ontario.

"Overall we'll get less than half of last year's yield," he said, but, "the weather is perfect, so the quality is phenomenal."

Bill Redelmeier, proprietor

of Southbrook Organic Vineyards in Niagara-on-the-Lake, noted, "On the flats of Niagara-on-the-Lake, yield is down 40 to 70 per cent."

Damage to the vines was caused by a combination of heavy rain last fall, which

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Juan and Luis Fonseca-Mosqueda harvest Vidal grapes at Southbrook Organic Winery. DON REYNOLDS



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# 'When minutes count seconds matter'

## Fire Prevention Week focuses on planning your escape

Somer Slobodian  
Local Journalism Initiative  
The Lake Report

Fire won't wait. Plan your escape.

That's this year's theme for the 100th annual Fire Prevention Week from Oct. 9 to 15.

"So the basic concepts of that (theme) are to create a fire safety plan within your own home for your family," said deputy chief Jay Plato of Niagara-on-the-Lake Fire & Emergency Services.

It's important to have a plan in place in case of any emergencies, including carbon monoxide and other emergencies, he said.

"When minutes count seconds matter and if you don't have a plan to be able to get out of your house properly, it can go sideways on you pretty quickly," Plato said.

According to a StatCan study conducted between 2011 and 2020, there were about 220 fire-related deaths in Canada each year during that decade. Eight out of 10 of those fatalities were from accidents.

In the same study, residential fires accounted for 92 per cent of unintentional fire-related deaths. More than twice the number of residential fire-related



From left, deputy fire chief Jay Plato, fire prevention officer Brad Disher and deputy fire chief Darren Trostenko stand outside of the St. Davids fire station. SOMER SLOBODIAN

deaths occurred in the winter compared to the summer.

"The smallest thing can make a difference between life and death," said Lord Mayor Betty Disero.

"We should be doing things that protect us and protect our firefighters. Because they're the ones that have to go into a fire to save us," she added.

A fire plan is all about communication. Plato said it's good to have a designated meeting place, like at a lamp post outside the house, and have someone in charge of calling 911.

If you have pets, he said it's good to have someone in charge of getting those pets to safety.

"Just having a plan is basically the key message there. Knowing what to do will benefit you greatly," he said.

According to the National Fire Prevention Association, cooking is the leading cause of home fires, responsible for roughly 49 per cent of all reported home fires involving cooking equipment. And unattended cooking is the leading cause of home cooking fires.

That is why smoke detectors are so important and should be checked regularly.

It's good to know if your smoke detector has a dead battery and what it sounds like going off. Plato recommends that people check their alarms monthly.

Since every alarm should have a test button, all people have to do is hit the button and the alarm will go off for 10 to 15 seconds. This allows them to check if it's working and to get used to the sound.

It's good to do these tests with the whole family, so

everyone can know what it sounds like, Plato said.

In case of an emergency, everyone in the family will be recognize the sound and then the evacuation plan can begin to safely exit the home.

"Practice makes perfect at the end of the day. Practise it a couple times a year. It shouldn't be a shock or a surprise as to what happens if that alarm ever goes off because of a real emergency," he said.

For Fire Prevention Week, Plato said the department is hoping to get out in front of grocery

stores and local hardware retailers to chat with people and spread the message about fire prevention.

"Fire drills will be conducted in most of the schools across Niagara-on-the-Lake, so we'd like to participate and go and just watch those happen," he said.

Plato, along with Darren Trostenko, have been acting fire chiefs on a rotating basis since Nick Ruller stepped down as fire chief earlier this year.

The department has been doing well, said Plato.

"We're just continuing on with all of the positive momentum and positive motion that we had," he added.

The town is going through the hiring process for the chief position, Disero said in an email to The Lake Report.

It's important to remember that all of NOTL's firefighters are volunteers and work hard to keep everyone safe and educated, Plato said.

"It really is a community that helps maintain our fire service and by people doing their part and making sure their fire safe. It really helps in general to ensure we can maintain the volunteer fire model," he said.

## Seasonal worker struck by vehicle is recovering

Continued from Front Page

on Oct. 6, farmworker advocate Jane Andres told The Lake Report.

Reid, a seasonal worker from Jamaica, works at P.G. Enns Farms in Niagara-on-the-Lake, she said.

"(He) was returning on his bicycle from the Laundry Tub on Carlton Street," Andres said.

Some farmworkers transport their laundry by bike from rural NOTL to St. Catharines because not all farms have washing machines for workers to use, she said.

It is unclear if Reid was carrying his laundry when he was struck. A Niagara Regional Police report

had few details about the incident.

"I heard from his co-workers that he went to get his laundry," Andres said in an email.

"He may have gone to the bank and then was on his way to the laundromat," she added.

Police spokesperson Const. Philip Gavin said in a statement, "There is no information in the report to indicate the cyclist was a farmworker with laundry."

P.G. Enns Farms did not respond to phone messages and several emails with questions from The Lake Report.

A reporter who visited the farm on Irvine Road on Wednesday was asked to leave the property.

It is not known if P.G. Enns has laundry facilities for its workers.

According to the contract for the employment in Canada of commonwealth Caribbean seasonal agricultural workers, farms owners must either have laundry facilities or "provide weekly transportation to a laundromat at no cost to the worker."

Coun. Erwin Wiens, who operates a grape farm in NOTL, said, "As part of our inspection, we have to have laundry facilities on-site or (we) have to give them weekly transportation to a laundromat."

That applies to every farmer who employs temporary foreign workers, he said.

Andres said Reid was taken to a hospital in Hamilton after the incident and underwent surgery there. He was later transferred to St. Catharines.

"I've been worried about the risks they are taking ever since I heard they had to go so far to use the laundromat about eight years ago," Andres said.

Virgil no longer has a laundromat, she said.

The 27-year-old driver of the car that hit Reid, a woman from Thorold, was charged with careless driving under the Highway Traffic Act, said Gavin.

Her vehicle sustained about \$2,000 in damage, he said.

## Town wants to protect old Cobbler's House from being torn down

Evan Loree  
Local Journalism Initiative  
The Lake Report

The list of heritage properties in Niagara-on-the-Lake may be getting a little longer after council voted to assess the old Cobbler's House for historical significance.

The property at 329 Victoria St. is for sale for \$1.7 million as a possible tear-down for a "dream home" and is not on the town's official list of heritage properties.

"I sure would not like to see the Cobblers House torn down," Lord Mayor Betty Disero said.

Town planning direc-

tor Kirsten McCauley told council the request to list the property should go to the municipal heritage committee so the property can be investigated for its historical significance.

Coun. Gary Burroughs pointed out that getting it on the heritage list would not necessarily prevent it from being torn down.

"Not to be naive to think that it's going to save the building, we're doing the best we can," he said.

Council voted unanimously to instruct staff to investigate the historical value of the property and get back to council as soon as possible.



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