

# THE REPORTER

VOL.17 NO.1

SERVING THE COMMUNITY OF PORT DALHOUSIE SINCE 2005

SPRING/SUMMER

## The Future of Port Dalhousie Begins Now

The development activity happening in Port Dalhousie these days is heating up, and more major changes loom on the horizon. Huge projects launched by both the municipal and regional governments as well as private enterprise will transform the culture and environment of our village drastically over the next five years. All we can hope for at this point is that these changes will be beneficial in the long run, but make no mistake about it, they will be profound. Some citizens will be upset and angry at the loss of much of the historical charm and sense of community the village engendered, others will be elated and eager for the revitalization of the commercial core.

It's been almost eighteen years of developmental stagnation caused by the struggle to preserve the architectural and natural landscape that has made Port Dalhousie a much beloved and truly unique place. But now is the time to begin to adapt to the new reality, put our differences aside, and like the motto of the St. Catharines Rowing Club, *Forge Ahead*. As a community we can create a vibrant new future for Port Dalhousie that both protects and honours our rich history and also welcomes new and progressive changes. Yes, the future begins now.

*Continued on page 2*

## “The Locks” Core Development Approved

*But Only After 18 Years of Failed Proposals, Titanic Political Struggles and Community Antipathy*

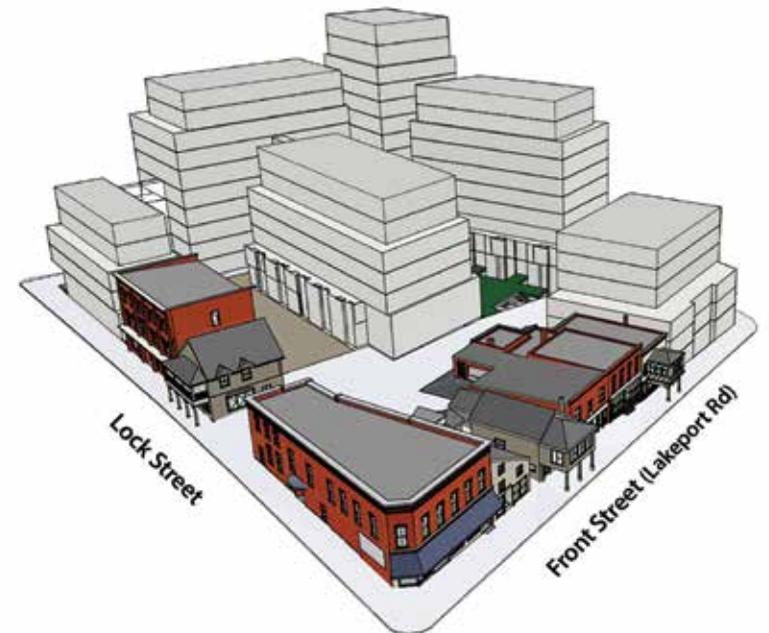
There is much that can and should be said about the last 18 years that the Conservancy has been involved in this project. There is more than sufficient material for a John Grisham novel about how some developers operate. From threats of lawsuits, many uncomfortable confrontations, questionable financial arrangements, the involvement of the RCMP and various developers' architectural plans, one more outrageous than the last. The list of colourful characters is rich and long. There is much citizens do not know of all the triumphs and tragedies that occurred along the way.

We have also over the years witnessed the loss of various historical structures and the piecemeal destruction of heritage buildings. There have been countless fundraisers, meetings and thousands of hours of volunteer work which have gone into trying to preserve Port Dalhousie as a Heritage District with a historic village atmosphere, that so many of us love about the village we live in.

The Locks project is a huge transformation which will be a significant imposition on the Heritage District and our historic canal village. There is no precedent anywhere in Canada that we know of for this level of development in such a restricted area. It once more violates the Secondary Plan most recently passed by Council in 2018, a problem in itself. Port Dalhousie will become one of the most densified neighbourhoods in the city and has the potential to limit tourism and social/commercial interaction. Though we would have much preferred a more organic and limited pattern of growth, the Conservancy has settled this project with the parties in a private mediation process, which with the approval of the City, will now go before the Ontario Land Tribunal, formerly LPAT (Local Planning Appeal Tribunal) - and for most of its history, the Ontario Municipal Board (OMB) - to be ordered into effect.

Why this has been resolved requires some explanation to the community.

The Conservancy (formerly known as PROUD) has always been



in favour of appropriate development. It is in fact largely responsible for Port Dalhousie being a Heritage District at all. The intention was always to embrace and maintain the Heritage of what was declared by participants at the World Canals Conference as one of the best-preserved Canal Villages in North America. It was in 2004, a mere 6 months after receiving the official Heritage Designation from the OMB, that we were presented with a proposal for a 33-storey “needle tower” right in the downtown core, which was a shock to everyone. It forced us into a position of resistance, especially when the developer declared that the project was going to be approved and there was nothing we could do about it. Port Dalhousie is in many ways a victim of decisions made by other people over whom we have little to no control, and a

*Continued on page 2*

## The Great Storm of 1855 *A Raging Gale Blasted Port Dalhousie and Left Behind a Trail of Destruction*



Photo: Eric Baloga

Some readers may recall an old Elizabethan rhyme “*Sweet April showers, do Spring May flowers.*” And while Niagara has generally been blessed with a moderate climate, the spring of 1855 was most unusual indeed.

The St. Catharines Journal newspaper noted that the temperatures at the beginning of April in that year were around 12F (-11C) but then reached 40F (5C) for several days. The mercury stood at 60F (16C) at noon on April 17th. The editor of the Journal described it as “the most delightful spring weather.” Another editorial noted that the spring had brought “showers and sunshine alternate in this region.” This was in stark contrast to the previous fall and winter when there was “little or no rain.” The season was therefore marked by a “rapid vegetation.” This prompted the Journal to publish a poem entitled “Spring” which read, in part:

*Continued on page 5*

In this issue we address these impending changes through articles and commentary from Hank Beekhuis and Ed Smith, as well as entertaining historical articles from Brian Narhi (*1855: A Most Violent Storm*), David Serafino (*A Short History of Martindale Pond*) and Dr. Ron Casselman (*The Escort: A Little Tug That Could*). We also present articles on C.I. Gibbons, a renowned maritime artist, as well as Bert Verge, Port's own marine artist, as well as remembrances of two acclaimed, recently deceased Port citizens, Neil Stevens and Marie (The Lobster Queen) Michaud. These together with updates (and reveals) on the Barnsdale Trolley Stop restoration and the Tow Horse sculpture sponsored by the St. Catharines Kiwanis, Councillor Carlos Garcia's report, the BWC report, and the new Legion update by Kelly George rounds out this issue. As well, we welcome back the community calendar.

We have restructured the publication of the Reporter from four to three issues this year (Spring/Summer, Fall and Winter) due to the fact that some of our volunteers have been called away to other commitments and others are experiencing burn-out. It's no small task to co-ordinate and produce the Port Reporter which is done by an incredibly devoted team of fantastic volunteers. Kudos to all! And of course many thanks to our advertisers and readers like you who continue to support us. Have a wonderful and healthy Spring and Summer! ■

strong desire by many to extract as much profit out of Port Dalhousie's waterfront as humanly possible, regardless of the consequences to the community. Whether they have actually killed the goose that lays the golden egg remains to be seen, and it will be many years before Port reaches a "new normal".

The Conservancy fully participated in possibly one of the longest hearings ever held before the OMB - a full 72 days. The cost in money and time spent exceeded a million dollars and untold volunteer hours. In fact, we've heard this case has been taught in architectural/ municipal law classes as a poster child for a community doing everything right and still losing an OMB decision. It was a monumental effort. At that time, we had the support of the City, and together we challenged both the density and height as inappropriate in a Heritage District.

That decision, however, along with outstanding appeals initiated by an earlier developer of the Secondary Plan, form the backdrop for why this case is now resolved. Any rejection would have brought us back to the OLT/OMB for another lengthy hearing, more delay and additional legal costs. Do we think that this development is appropriate in a Heritage District? Not really! However, we do believe that we need to recognize that, given the history of what we have all been through, this is likely the best that we can expect to achieve. Looking back at previous project proposals, there are a number of improvements in the current proposal that

we can point to. The height (measured from Lock St) is 10 storeys instead of 30. The remaining heritage structures, including the Austin House and the Stanton Grocery, are to be protected and conserved. Hogan's Alley is guaranteed to remain open for public access both to the park and the beachfront. This is important not only for pedestrians but also to sustain the value of the remaining heritage structures along Front St. (Lakeport Road) The Jail unfortunately will be moved to Lakeside Park beside the original course of the first canal and will be protected on public land in perpetuity. Repeated attempts to keep it in place were unsuccessful in that there was no way to communicate its significance against the backdrop of a contemporary high-rise development and it would have been irresponsible to leave its future to the whims of private owners.

We further needed to be realistic about the political atmosphere, both locally and provincially, which is not Heritage friendly. In 2021, the Premier of Ontario issued 33 Ministerial Zoning Orders (MZOs) which authorized the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing to override local government planning decisions to spur low-density urban sprawl. The Ontario Affordability Task Force recently recommended that it be made much more difficult for citizens to oppose development, regardless of their concerns. There was also the issue that although we had the full support of our local councillors and many citizens in the past, we could not expect the support of the City or Council,

especially when we already have a pattern of Council overriding its own St. Catharines Heritage Committee recommendations.

Having Tom Rankin, a respected local contractor with a track record of getting things done, someone who knows the importance of Port Dalhousie and is involved with the community, is a much better scenario than having an out-of-town developer who neither understands nor particularly cares about what legacy they leave behind. The Conservancy, for its part, would like to refocus itself back to its original purpose, which is to enhance the heritage of the community and preserve what we have left, all of which requires community resources as well.

Now is the time for the residents of Port Dalhousie to pull together and unify around this proposal and make every effort to see that it gets done with minimal delay. There are still hurdles for the project to cross with respect to site plan, traffic and exactly how this is all going to work. This will require all of us to participate and remain vigilant so that the finishes, the land and street scaping are done well, and our historic district remains vibrant and viable.

The Conservancy stands ready to support the City and the community at large to make the best of it so that we can maintain the heritage of our beloved Port Dalhousie to the greatest extent possible.

It is time as a community to move on to a positive future! We have done our best and we are always better when we work together. ■



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*Dr David Bergen*

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## The Tower Chronology:

A short summary of events leading to the current condominium proposal.

This article is intended to provide a short summary of the events that lead to the current proposed condominium development located in the heart of downtown Port Dalhousie. For those who like the minutia of history, a much more comprehensive history of events from 1999 – 2013 is available at: [www.pdconservancy.org/beginnings-and-mandate](http://www.pdconservancy.org/beginnings-and-mandate)

### March 1999

A group of Port Dalhousie residents, concerned about the possible loss of Alexander Muir's historic home on Dalhousie Avenue initiated a process whereby Port's historic downtown and residential areas were designated as a Heritage Conservation District under the Ontario Heritage Act. The Port Dalhousie Conservancy (initially known as PROUD: Port Realizing Our Unique Distinction) was formed. The Conservancy worked with the City Planning Services Department, the Port community as well as a heritage consulting firm.

### June 2002

City council unanimously passed By-law # 2002-80 designating most of Old Port Dalhousie's residential area and all of the Commercial Core as a Heritage Conservation District. The by-law came into effect in December 2003. Among other considerations was that any new construction in the commercial core would be limited to a height of 11 metres.

### February 2004

The newly formed Port Dalhousie Vitalization Corporation (PDVC) announced that they had purchased a significant number of properties in the commercial core for development purposes.

### June 2004

A ceremony celebrating Ports Heritage designation was held. In addition to members of the community, it was attended by Mayor Rigby, MPP Jim Bradley, and MP Walt Lastewka. Coincidentally, it was also attended by a number of international delegates to the World Canals Conference being held in the Niagara region that year. The international delegates remarked on how well-preserved and unique Port Dalhousie was and described Port as one of the best-preserved 19<sup>th</sup> century canal villages in the world.

### Summer 2004

The scale of the PDVC proposal became apparent. The plans included the demolition of several heritage buildings owned by PDVC along with a 33 storey, 100 metre glass clad condominium tower. The existing bylaw allowed 11 metres. The conservancy surveyed the Port Dalhousie community and 90% rejected the proposed tower.

### February 2004

The Conservancy launched its SOS (Save Our Seaport) campaign whose objective was to communicate with elected officials to ensure that they did not approve a development that did not respect Port's unique character or the Official Plan, Zoning By-laws and Heritage Guidelines. The Conservancy prepared the ground work for an OMB appeal.

### October 2005

The first application by the PDVC was unexpectedly withdrawn minutes before midnight on October 26 – the day before the City's Planning Services department was to release its report and recommendation to Council. PDVC's lawyer requested that the report be kept secret and threatened the city with legal action if the report was released.

### January 2006

The PDVC had hired a new architect who came up with a new proposal. The proposal had the same components, density and square footage, but the tower had been lowered and widened. It was reduced from 100 metres to 62 metres (approximately 24 storeys), still more than 5 times the permitted 11 metre height limit for the downtown Port business area.

### June 2006

Following a marathon Public Council Meeting, Mayor Rigby and councillors voted 7 – 5 to approve the proposal.

### November 2006

Following the municipal election, of the 7 municipal politicians that had voted for the PDVC development, 6 were not returned to office.

### March 2007

The new city council withdrew its support for the Tower Proposal.

### September 2007

PDVC began an appeal process to the OMB. The Conservancy, on side with the City, had begun fundraising to pay for expert witnesses and their lawyer (Jane Pepino). The community was generous in its response to the Conservancy's concerns and in excess of \$600,000 was contributed to cover costs.

### February 2008

The OMB appeal began. It lasted a total of 21 weeks with the City and the Conservancy opposing the developers. OMB Vice-Chair Susan Campbell presided over the hearings.

**After 18 long years** the project design has dropped from 33 storeys, to 24 storeys, to 14 storeys, and is now planned to top out at 10 storeys (measured from Lock Street). It has been an interesting, costly, and exhausting ride.

- David Bergen

### February 2009

Susan Campbell found in favour of the PDVC proposal. The finding seemed to go against all logic and created significant public controversy and at multiple levels of government.

### Fall 2011

Derek Martin purchased the interests previously held by the developers that started PDVC. Over time a sales office was opened for the development known as Port Place. Sales did not meet expectations and the project did not move forward. However, Mr. Martin managed to demolish the historic Port Mansion and gut the interior of most heritage buildings in the Commercial Core.

### 2015

Fortress Real Developments purchased the property and proposed a 14-storey mixed use condominium project. The project was incorporated by Fortress as Union Waterfront. Fortress was a large developer that used money raised through syndicated mortgages to finance multiple real estate developments across the country. Over 900 million dollars in investors' money was lost.

### 2018

Union Waterfront went into Receivership. Separately, the RCMP raided 6 GTA Fortress offices.

### 2019

Tom Rankin, a local developer, purchased the property from Union Waterfront's receivers. He began a series of negotiations with the City Planning and the Port Dalhousie Conservancy in order to avoid an extended and costly appeal. The Covid pandemic intervened and slowed the process, but an agreement was finally reached. A city council meeting approved the Rankin proposal on Thursday, April 7.

# THE REPORTER

The Port Reporter is a not-for-profit, all-volunteer, community information newspaper published by the Port Dalhousie Conservancy since 2005. The paper focuses on issues related to the St. Catharines waterfront, the conservation and celebration of heritage in Port Dalhousie and across the city. It also encourages residents to work together to improve our community environment.

It is published quarterly, usually in March, June, September and December. 8,500 copies are delivered to homes and businesses in Port Dalhousie ward. It can also be found at Avondale Stores, City Hall, public libraries and in various local business establishments.

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Please send contributions for future issues to [editor.portreporter@gmail.com](mailto:editor.portreporter@gmail.com). All submissions are subject to a review including both editorial approval as well as copy editing for grammar etc.

**Deadline for posting of community events, advertising, & article submissions is the first of the month prior to printing (February 1st, May 1st and November 1st). Late submissions are considered at the discretion of the editorial board.**

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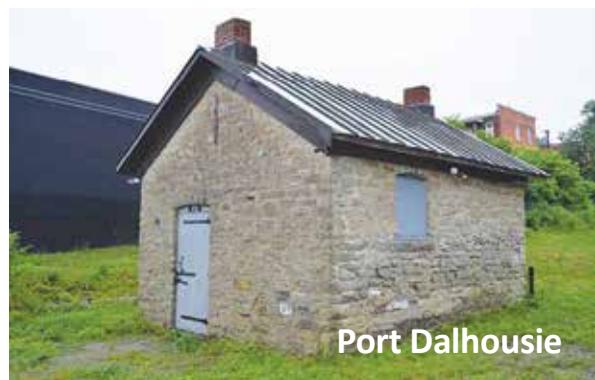
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# Seriously, Who Has the Smallest Jail in Canada?

After Extensive Research We Reveal the Long-Awaited Answer



Port Dalhousie



Hillsdale



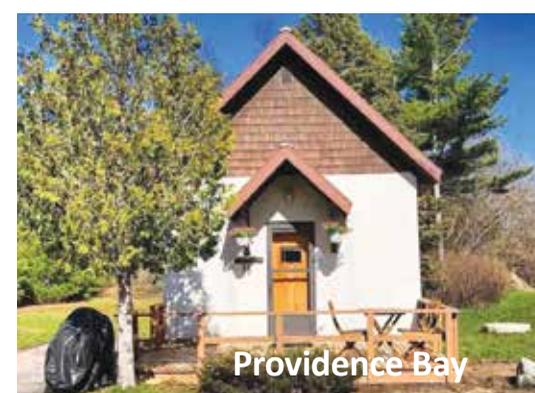
Tweed



Creemore



Coboconk

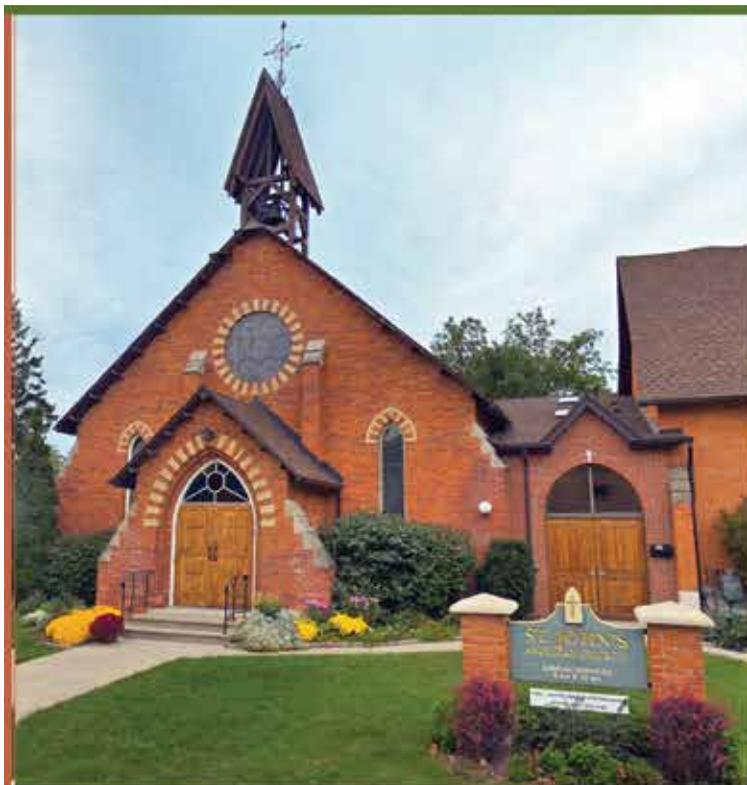


Providence Bay

There is great debate as to which town holds the distinction of having the smallest jail in Canada, or even in North America. Several towns have been bold enough to declare themselves the winner of the smallest jail, with mere inches difference between all of them. Small tourist towns such as Tweed,

Creemore, Coboconk, Port Dalhousie, Providence Bay and Rodney, all in Ontario, have very small former jail buildings that are still standing, all that are very close in size. But only one can claim the title of "The Smallest Jail in Canada."

*With files from Bruce Forsyth*



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### The Port Dalhousie Jail

Was built in 1845 on land close to the banks of the original Welland Canal. It measured 20 feet by 15 feet, 2 inches and contained two cells separated by a thick stone wall, each with its own a fireplace and a supply of wood.

### The Tweed Jail

Was built starting in 1898 and opened two years later at a cost of \$350. Measuring 15.74 feet by 19.68 feet, the jail closed in 1950.

### The Creemore Jail

Built in 1892 at a cost of \$425, is a 3-cell jail measuring 14.76 feet by 19.68 feet. It closed as a jail in the early 1940s and is now preserved as a tourist attraction.

### The Providence Bay Jail

Was built around 1912 as a two-cell jail. After sitting abandoned and deteriorating for many years, it was purchased by Blair Sullivan who renovated the old jail into a vacation cottage utilizing the original oak beams from the cells.

### The Coboconk Jail

Coboconk's Jail, at 14.99 feet by 29 feet, was constructed around 1890 using limestone from the local quarry. It is certainly among the smallest jails in North America.

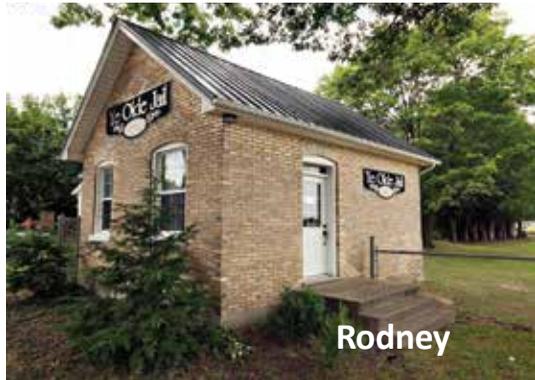
### The Hillsdale Jail

The three-cell jail was constructed by local builder William John Davenport in 1906. The building has served several purposes over the years – including as a jail, courthouse, polling station and home for transient people.

The Title of the Smallest Jail in North America goes to:

### The Rodney Jail

The Rodney Jail, built in 1890, measures just 14.76 feet by 17.71 feet. The former jail was reopened in 1995 as tourist information centre after being vacant for around 50 years. It still features the original steel cell doors and stove.



Rodney

\* The Port Dalhousie Jail can perhaps take some consolation in that it's **The Oldest Small Jail in Canada**

# The Great Storm of 1855 ...Continued

*It is Spring and the Robin is  
chanting his tale  
Of joy and gladness that winter is gone;  
It is Spring, it is Spring from hill,  
and through dale,  
The streamlet is murmuring merrily on.  
The forest is budding, and  
zephyrs are blowing,  
The sweet breath of Spring  
is whispering away;  
Now the buds are swelling  
and the rivulets flowing,  
Singing merrily, old winter away.*

"Zephyrs", indeed!

Eyewitness accounts and newspaper reports noted that during the evening of April 17th there was "almost incessant sheet and forked lightning" visible in the west and north-west and "around the horizon" accompanied by distant thunder. This started around 8 pm and continued throughout the night. In some areas the frogs were heard to croak loudly after midnight, and the lightning was described as "vivid." Around 5:30 on the morning of April 18th the sky became "very dark and particularly threatening" at Toronto with "dense clouds rolling over with a rushing noise." The wind became "very violent" around 6 am, with heavy raindrops, thunder, and a few hailstones. By 6:30 the storm appeared to be over although the weather was "sultry," and the clouds continued to "roll about in a very peculiar manner."

Between 7 and 8 am the

storm had reached the south shore of Lake Ontario. American newspapers reported that "the clouds thickened, and the darkness became appalling; one could not see to read or write without a candle." Gas lights and lamps needed to be turned on in shops and houses. The waters of Lake Ontario rose and fell at regular intervals of between two and five feet "leaving the stones and sand bare." The New York Times reported on the "tremendous hailstorm" at Rochester "during which hailstones fell weighing from two to four ounces each, and some of them measuring seven inches in circumference. It was as dark as night during the prevalence of the storm, which lasted ten to fifteen minutes. Much damage was done to windows."

At 7 am the inhabitants of the Town of Niagara observed that the sky was a "green colour... which indicated the presence of the hurricane," which struck from the north. The storm itself lasted less than five minutes but left a great deal of damage in its wake. The Niagara Car Works near the dockyard was hardest hit; two large finishing shops with new railway cars inside were "levelled" and a new foundry was "piled in a mass." Other carpentry and blacksmith shops and a wooden house were blown down, and the Erie and Ontario engine house was "very much twisted." A passenger car was "lifted bodily off the track...and thrown over." Samuel Zimmerman estimated his losses at approximately £20,000.

Continued on page 23

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In the last issue, the Port Reporter presented an article regarding the rebuilding of Main St (RR#87). It is our normal policy not to publish letters to the editor, one person however, did prepare an article and given the importance of this issue to the community, we felt it fair to publish it as well as our response. This rebuilding project is a once-in-generation makeover in one of the largest Heritage districts in Ontario. It is clear that once all the proposed road reconstruction and condo developments take place, Port will never be the same again. We believe that this proposal requires more public debate than it has had to this point. - Editor

## A Pedestrian Mall in Port Dalhousie? It's About Time!

### Why This is a Great Idea From the Pedestrian Perspective

In the past Winter issue of "The Reporter" a front-page article appeared, which argued quite strongly against the proposal to block off Lock Street to traffic and turn this area into a pedestrian mall. It concludes by inviting readers to "by all means have your say." In response to this invitation, this article takes an opposing view and argues that the proposal to block off Lock Street to traffic is in fact an excellent idea!

The reason why it is such a great idea is both simple and cogent — namely, it would very substantially increase pedestrian safety in Port Dalhousie, all year long but especially during the busy Summer season when pedestrians are not only numerous, but when many of them are from out of town and are hence not familiar with the many serious dangers that Port Dalhousie traffic presently pose to pedestrians. What is more — and this is a point that many drivers tend to ignore

— after the said drivers have found parking spaces and emerge from their vehicles, they themselves join the ranks of pedestrians facing these dangers. Indeed, it is surely worth recalling that it is often the case that drivers spend more time on foot in Port Dalhousie than they do behind the wheel of a car.

To wit, the blocking off of Lock Street to traffic would essentially eliminate two of the most hazardous of these dangers. To begin with the first of these, as the close-up map of the pedestrian crossing leading from the shops southwest of Lakeport over to the pedestrian path heading down to the beach on its northeast side shows (Figure 1), there is an extremely dangerous blind spot on the southwest side of this pedestrian crossing on account of the rather steep curve that leads Lock into Lakeport and the presence of the traffic-light pole there.

This past summer this author, who

is retired and was in the habit of visiting Port Dalhousie every day, witnessed nasty and impatient drivers running the red light around this corner practically on a daily basis. When drivers run the red light around this curve they are usually speeding in order to manage this and often they cannot even see the presence of pedestrians attempting to cross. As for the pedestrians, they only see the cars speeding around this corner at the very last minute — and even this only happens if the said pedestrians happen to be looking to the left and not simply straight ahead at the pedestrian right-of-way signal. It is frankly a miracle that no one has as of yet been either killed or maimed as a consequence.

Blocking off Lock Street to traffic would essentially eliminate this quite serious danger to pedestrians because the said blind spot would no longer be relevant. It is far easier to see drivers heading along Lakeport while going to

the beach who run the red light (also a daily occurrence), from whichever side of the pedestrian crossover one happens to be on and drivers likewise can see the pedestrians who step out at the signal without looking their way first and hence avoid hitting them.

The second dangerous pedestrian crossing that would essentially be eliminated by the proposed pedestrian mall would be the one across Lock Street at the top of the hill, which needs to be crossed in order to access the coffee shops and other businesses when walking up from the Lakeport parking lot (Figure 2). As matters now stand, even in the off-season the cars presently turning onto Lock Street from all directions render this crosswalk hazardous for pedestrians.

As for the question asked in the December article which opposes the pedestrian mall as to whether or not people would "want to walk uphill to



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get a coffee at Balzac's or 416 Coffee from the Lakeside lot?" shouldn't the answer be a resounding "Why not?" The said walk up the hill is actually quite a short and not that arduous a climb and would afford the frankly overly sedentary drivers some much-needed healthy exercise. At any rate, the question is also in large part moot because walking up the hill is what most people already have to do in order to access these coffee shops and the other businesses located on the southwest side of Lock Street, given that the Lion's share of the parking available is already located in the Lakeside parking lot. Were this excellent proposal adopted, all these people could now do so far more safely. Indeed, they would also be able to do so more easily and quickly because they would no longer be forced to yield the right of way to the very many aggressive drivers who do not respect the fact that it is they who by Law should yield to pedestrians attempting to cross and not vice-versa.

Now, surely the lives or limbs of pedestrians are worth more than the purported \$700,000 loss to the community, were this loss indeed actually necessary. In fact, however, couldn't the roughly 35 lost parallel parking spaces along Lock Street readily be recouped, and perhaps even exceeded, were the city simply to sacrifice a relatively small portion of Rennie Park to an additional parking lot along Lakeport near the small one already there?

Yes, of course it is likely that the proposed pedestrian mall would slow down and stall traffic somewhat. Again, however, aren't the lives and limbs of pedestrians worth it? Far too often the concerns of what might be aptly designated the powerful "Drivers' Lobby" trump the safety of pedestrians. For once, let's not let this powerful lobby win. ■

- Dr. Sharon Lee Mattila

# The PD Conservancy Responds.

*Our Intention Was to Generate Debate, Rather Than Accept a Presumed Solution*

We thank the writer for submitting an article on this important topic. We respect the fact that there are various opinions on these issues but in our view the focus has to be the impact on the whole community; not just one particular aspect or what would benefit a particular business. More broadly, how will the entire community and other small businesses function when all the proposed developments are completed? Port Dalhousie needs to function well for everyone who lives and works there and for those who want to be there. Those of us who are deeply involved in developments in Port may have a bit more insight than the average resident. The public only gets to see development one slice at a time and not, generally, before it is completely finished at which point it is too late to make modifications. Sort of like looking through a telescope while ignoring everything going on around you.

Our intention was to generate a debate, rather than simply accept the singular presumed solution proposed by the municipality. The Region is insisting on making an expanded Regional through-road to North St. Catharines, and the City is allowing an ever larger number of multi residential developments that create additional traffic. In order to preserve the Heritage district, we would of course prefer smaller scale development and the diversion, for easier access to the city, of more through-traffic using Martindale Road or Third Street. However that does not seem likely at the moment.

Like most people, we enjoy pedestrian malls if they can be accommodated, but we need to

be clear as to what we are talking about here: a mere 200 feet of Lock St pedestrian mall. The pros are easy to see but the cons are not as visible since much development is still in process. There will also be multiple new pedestrian areas in the new development and on Hogan's alley. The question we are asking regarding the closing of Lock St is whether this proposal is worth the price being paid for it, or are we only focusing on a shiny object?

We should be willing to consider alternative ways of developing our roadways which may be just as successful, and perhaps be even safer, than what is proposed, without the accompanying losses. There have been suggestions for example, of divided one-way traffic or even seasonal closures as possible alternatives. We have proposed a temporary experiment this summer just to try it out.

We agree with the safety concerns expressed by the writer; however there may be alternate ways of controlling these issues besides what is being proposed. It could well be that we are merely moving the danger to pedestrians from one place to another or even creating more unsafe areas. We have marked on the map where we see a number of new troublesome pinch points, blind spots and dangerous cross traffic, as well as the improvements.

Do we know who is going to own the pedestrian street? Have we seen an architectural landscape drawing? Pictures of other pedestrian malls are not sufficient in this unique restricted area. What kind of finishing touches will be

*Continued on next page*



Figure 1



Figure 2

**Tony Douvis**  
Financial Advisor

**Edward Jones**

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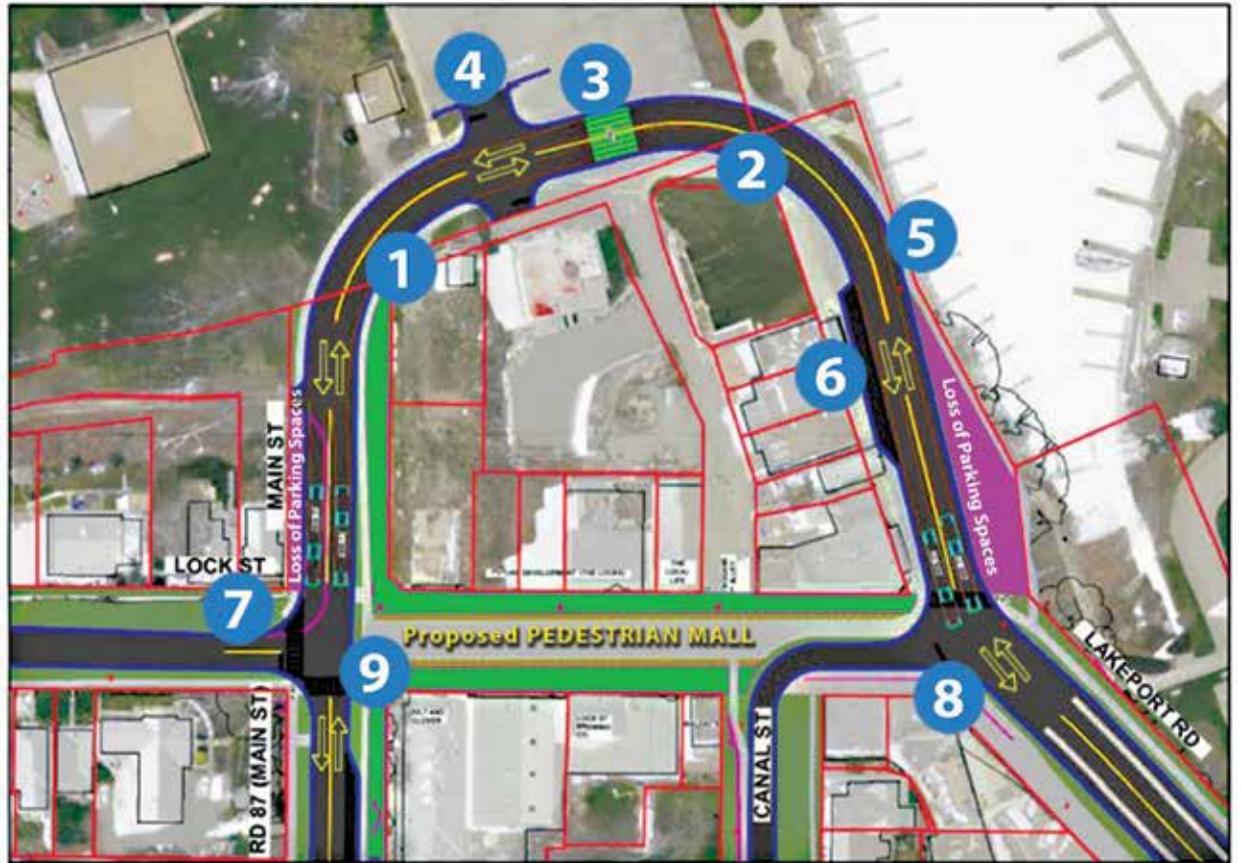
# The PD Conservancy Responds. Cont'd

provided to make it successful i.e. planters, historical lighting, street finishes etc. Or are we simply going to accept the sterilization of historic Port Dalhousie with more concrete, steel and aluminum? Who will maintain it? The City currently has no money for beautification or even for the watering of plants, and thoughtless "culling" of trees has caused our tree canopy to be slowly eroded. What are the provisions for servicing and delivery? What transportation enhancements will there be? These are legitimate issues.

The elimination of existing parking is unarguably a significant lost value to the community for which there is no offsetting proposal. In fact, it is the City's stated policy to eliminate surface parking as much as possible. (HCDP) We recognize that it is good for our health to walk. There are however plenty of alternative places outside of Port where people can park directly in front of stores and, human nature being what it is, drivers will default to easier access or park in the side streets. Canal Street may well become a significant bypass for those attempting to avoid traffic backups in the park and this may remove more parking for those residents and yet maintain the slightly less problematic blind spot. We cannot change our entire community to accommodate people who break the law; the answer to aggressive driving is enforcement, proper signage and signaling.

Should we be eliminating existing greenspace, cut down more trees and erode parkland to accommodate parking and widened roadways? What will not add to the attractiveness of Port is the elimination of valuable sightlines and the loss of the ability, for existing heritage buildings, to add value by not allowing them to expand their sidewalk commercial areas. Moreover, how will this impact our ability to hold events in the Park?

This proposal severely limits the kind of mixed-use development that we can attract to the core in order to

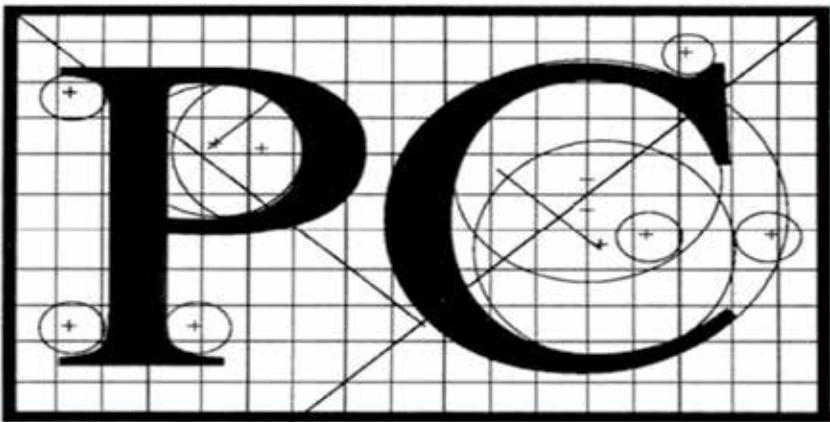


- 1 Northwest Corner New Blindspot
- 2 North East Corner New Blindspot
- 3 Dangerous crosswalk (At foot of Hogans Alley)
- 4 Dangerous Parking lot entrance for two way traffic. (500 vehicles)
- 5 Pinch point along walkway (where the road almost hits the fence)
- 6 No opportunity for widened sidewalks (along Front St. overlooking the water)
- 7 Left turn hazard at foot of Lock St. Hill.
- 8 Blind spot improvement
- 9 Crosswalk improvement in front of the Kilt crossing over Lock St. On Main

create a complete community which can service the entire district. Port has struggled for years with a seasonal business and if we cannot attract new service businesses to Port, it will remain that way. It further encourages an increasingly car-centric approach to community services where everyone needs to drive out of Port in order to even pick up something as simple as a prescription, do banking or send a package. If all we have left is the paid parking (we fully expect the current free-of-charge local parking will be temporary) then people will drive elsewhere and Port will continue to be stuck with destination businesses like bars and restaurants, and we will have solved nothing in exchange for increased congestion.

There may be other possibilities out there which are much better. It can only be good for everyone if we end up as a community agreeing to the mall after a healthy debate. The residents deserve more discussion on this important topic than the odd Zoom meeting during COVID. We do have the time since nothing will be started for several years (2025 at the earliest) so more public discussion is essential now! ■

- Port Dalhousie Conservancy



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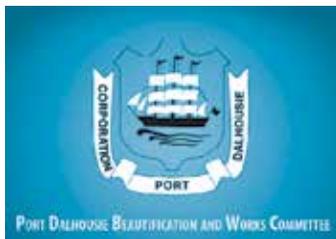
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# Looking Forward to BWC Flowers & the Concert Season!



## Port Dalhousie Beautification and Works Committee Spring/Summer Report

With all of the snow, and cold, and windy wintry weather we've had, you might think that since the previous "Reporter", the Port Dalhousie Beautification Committee, (BWC), would not have much to report.

However - the BWC volunteers are always thinking of ways to make our beautiful Port even nicer. Despite the wild winds, rain, and big snow piles of February, BWC volunteers did a great job of braving the elements to add a little Valentine's sparkle to Lock One and around the downtown core. By the many compliments received, their efforts were appreciated by all.

Until mid March, the BWC decorative holiday trees were still firmly frozen in the rail planters, but, taking advantage of the few warm days in a row that we just had, BWC volunteers Martinne & Sherry pulled them all out and got us seasonally back on track. Thank you so much! Although the weather shows few tantalizing hints of spring, we still get occasional white flaky reminders that we're not full-time in the warm weather quite yet. Having said that, we are all looking forward to what hopefully will be another beautiful spring and summer in Port Dalhousie.

What about the great concerts that we held in the past you ask? Well, great news! The BWC is again in the early stages of planning concerts that are to be held from May right through the fall. It's hard to find a nicer spot to attend a concert than our own Olde Port's Lock One stage.

And what about all those beautiful flower boxes along the railings and in Lock One? Once May arrives, BWC volunteers will again be very active, planting all those

wonderful displays that everyone enjoys so much, (we'll leave talk of those swarming spring midges for another time!) Yes, all those flowers do require daily watering & regular trimming to keep them looking their best. It is not just a matter of planting and watching them take care of themselves. (Volunteer invite coming up).

Government regulations still make fundraiser events a bit difficult, so we are continuing our bottle drive to raise funds. Basically, if a container was used for alcohol, it can be returned by the BWC for money. To donate your empties, please call or text Andy at 289-213-9500 to arrange a drop-off or pick-up and we will return them for you. All of the money goes to pay for those beautiful BWC flowers. For those who prefer to donate by cheque, (to: Port Dalhousie Beautification Committee), those can be dropped off in an envelope to Mike or Sandy Slater at 181 Main Street. If people prefer giving using e-transfer, donations can be made to garyvaneyk.ca, password BWC. All donations are very much appreciated.

So, here is our friendly reminder that the Beautification Committee is entirely made up of volunteers and mostly by neighbours in Port. In conjunction with the support of our local businesses and sponsors, the BWC events such as the Halloween Parade, the Olde Lock One Stage shows, various charity fundraisers, as well as all the aforementioned beautiful railing planters-boxes and the Locktender's Shanty Pollinator Gardens, would not be possible at all without volunteers. Volunteers are what make the BWC "tick" as they say. With that in mind, we want, we need, we welcome and we appreciate anyone and everyone who would like to join us

Especially after feeling "cooped up" for more than 2 years, becoming involved with the Port Dalhousie BWC is a great way for neighbours to meet, whether to welcome new arrivals to our beautiful Port or to reconnect with long time residents. We appreciate all - whether you can help out regularly, or just occasionally - everyone's assistance is very helpful. On Facebook just type "Port Dalhousie Beautification and Works Committee" in the search bar to connect, chat, or see what we do. Follow us, like us, or message us. Have a great Spring & Summer!! ■

- Your BWC

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**Kathy Stapleton**

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Kathy was an amazing, selfless and kind-hearted member of the BTW Committee. She made an enormous contribution to Port, and never stopped giving back, helping and having fun. She was very well-known and well-regarded in her neighborhood and community. She leaves behind many friends and family who will cherish her memory.

R.I.P. Kathy

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## Report from Councillor Carlos Garcia Port Dalhousie Ward



The following is my report on my work on behalf of the residents of Port Dalhousie Ward and all of St. Catharines as your representative at City Council over the period from mid-September 2021 through April 11, 2022.

### Development Charges Re-Introduced in St. Catharines.

At the Council meeting of September 13, 2021 Council approved motions to restore Development Charges in St. Catharines. Prior to this approval, our City was the only Niagara Region municipality not to levy Development Charges, having stopped them twelve years earlier, when the City needed incentives for new development. The newly-approved charges will help fund new growth and have the developers fund more of the capital expenditures required by the City now that the real estate market is booming. I sat on the Task Force that evaluated the proposed charges and Councillor Williamson and I supported staff's proposals.

### Renaming of Centennial Gardens as Richard Pierpoint Park

On September 27, 2021, Council unanimously approved a motion re-naming Centennial Gardens as Richard Pierpoint Park, while continuing to recognize the Indigenous community and the history behind Canada's Centennial in 1967 and the creation of the park. Pierpoint was an early leader in Canada's Black community. Taken from West Africa as a teenager and sold into slavery, Pierpoint regained his freedom during the American Revolution. He settled in Niagara, Upper Canada, and attempted to live communally with other Black Canadians. In the War of 1812, he petitioned for an all-Black unit to fight for the British and he fought with the Coloured Corps. He was also listed as a pioneer in Butler's Rangers, a Loyalist unit.

### Council Approves Community Improvement Funds (CIP) for Lincoln Fabrics Project

Also on September 27, Council narrowly (8-5) approved this taxpayer subsidy despite strong objections from

Councillor Williamson and me. We feel CIP funds should only be provided when the proposed development will create much-needed affordable housing and/or there is major contamination on the site and neither is applicable here. The proposal is for luxury condos which, in our opinion, should be built without taxpayer funds. In addition, the developer has already received extensive help from the City including allowing adding two full storeys to the existing heritage building and then a new massive addition which is over 9 storeys high. The approval translates to the developer receiving \$3,567,503 in rebates of City taxes plus a matching amount from the Region for a total of \$7,135,006 in taxpayers' funds. It should be noted that exactly the same development and proposed subsidy was defeated by Council twice before but a new CIP Program was approved and staff recommended approval.

### Replacing and Enhancing Port Dalhousie Stairs to Lake Ontario

At the October 19, 2021 Council meeting I presented a motion requesting replacement of the stairs at Masefield Ave. that were closed due to an emergency shoreline rehabilitation project on City land. This motion was referred to staff for more information. When this information was submitted to the November 8 meeting, Mayor Sendzik referred it to staff to get a risk assessment on all 5 existing lake staircases. Finally, on February 14, 2022, staff presented a recommendation that

included the closing and removal of three of the existing staircases and NOT replacing the Masefield stairs. This recommendation was defeated and Council passed my motion to maintain and retain ALL existing staircases and replace the Masefield stairs at a suitable location. It was a long and challenging effort but Councillor Williamson and I strongly believe that proper access to the Lake is critical for all of the City's residents.

### Potential Burying of Utilities on Port's Main St.

The Region's consultants have made a controversial recommendation regarding the reconstruction of Main St, Lock St. and Lakeport Rd. that includes making Lock St. between Main and Lakeport a pedestrian walking area. If implemented, Councillor Williamson and I continue to be very concerned about the traffic logjams that could be created with their recommendation to make Lakeport and Main two-way around the Core. As well, this proposal will result in the removal of 35 parking spots currently on the three streets in the Commercial Core and this could have a major negative impact on our businesses. The start of the reconstruction project has been delayed to 2024 or 2025 due to the upcoming Canada Games and World Rowing Championships. However, on November 15, 2021 Council passed my motion that we urge the Niagara Region to work with the utilities involved to consider burying the utility lines as part

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of the reconstruction within the heritage district in order to help beautify Port Dalhousie and preserve and enhance what is left of the tree canopy.

#### Future of Rodman Hall and Art Collection

A Council-appointed Task Force I initiated started working on potential recommendations to Council in mid-2019 but in November 2020, then-owner Brock University announced that it had sold the property to a local developer and vested ownership of the excellent art collection to a volunteer community organization incorporated for that purpose (now the Rodman Art Institute of Niagara). City staff and the City's Public Art Advisory Committee have been working with the Institute to relocate the collection's outdoor sculptures at high-visibility locations in the City. Also, Council approved \$75,000 in the 2022 budget to complete necessary studies to guide the development of a new public art gallery in downtown St. Catharines. Recently, the developer received approval for turning the historic, heritage-designated building and gardens into a boutique hotel while retaining all the heritage attributes.

#### Vote By Mail Approved for 2022 Municipal Election

At the meeting of November 15, 2021, the Deputy City Clerk provided an overview of the 2022 Municipal and School Board Election and staff's recommendations for voting methods for the election, including the use of "vote by mail" as an alternative

voting method. She noted other potential alternative voting methods such as Internet voting and identified why staff does not recommend their use for the 2022 election. However, Internet voting as an alternative will be considered for the 2026 election. Council approved the "vote by mail" recommendation and this should make it easier for our voters.

#### Replacing Councillor Sandie Bellows at Regional Council

At the Council meeting of December 13, 2021 staff presented a recommendation for replacing our friend Sandie Bellows at Regional Council. Sandie was also previously a City Councillor and, sadly, we lost her in 2021. Staff recommended appointing Mr. Mike Britton (also a former City Councillor) based on the Council-approved policy. That policy specifies that if the vacancy at the Region occurs within the final year of the term (which the City Clerk confirmed applied here) the vacancy shall be filled by the next place finisher (Regional Council candidate) provided the individual received 70% of the votes of the next place finisher. Mr. Britton in fact received 93.5 % of the votes of the next finisher. Unfortunately, despite the clear report and policy, the motion to appoint Mr. Britton lost in a very close vote 7-6. Councillor Williamson and I voted for the motion as our thinking is that Council policies should be upheld. However, Council then voted to appoint City Councillor Mat Siscoe instead. While Councillor Siscoe is very qualified I felt we should not violate our own policy. UPDATE: On April 11, 2022,

Council did finally follow the policy and voted to appoint Mr. Britton to the Region –this time to replace George Darté who resigned for personal reasons.

#### Regulation of Cannabis Grow-Operations

At the February 14, 2022 meeting Council approved amendments to the City's Zoning and Site Plan Control By-laws, to regulate cannabis production facilities on Agricultural Lands. These amendments were the results of a detailed consultant's study done while the Interim Control By-Law prohibiting new facilities, which I initiated 2 years ago, was in force. The new regulations have many requirements and are a definite step in the right direction since such facilities were not previously regulated. However, I objected to the consultant's recommendation that these Grow-Ops must be a minimum of 150m from sensitive uses such as residences and schools. My concern was that this is not far enough should a facility emit odours so I argued for 500m. Unfortunately, I was outvoted by my Council colleagues.

#### Hanging Flower Baskets in Port Dalhousie.

For two years now, starting with the City's Budget Committee, I have been fighting/advocating to have the same number of flower baskets on poles in the Summer as we used to always have before. The pandemic led to deferrals, but we managed to have a total of 17 last

year. However, Councillor Williamson and I would like to double that number which is roughly what we used to have. Port is the most important tourist area in the City and I feel it is critical to beautify it as much as possible. Moreover, this year we will have thousands of visitors for the return of regattas and the Canada 2022 Games. Unfortunately, my Council colleagues decided to approve a motion that we would only allow us the 17 and any extra would have to be funded by sponsors. City staff did have some baskets sponsored last year, but were unsuccessful this year.

#### End of the Line for St. Catharines Transit Commission

At an August 9, 2021 Council meeting we received a presentation by the Region on the proposed consolidation of existing public transit systems. There were many questions from Council –particularly about ensuring that St. Catharines is properly represented in the governance of such a consolidated system and that our taxpayers do not end up unfairly subsidizing the larger system. They did increase our City's representation on the governing body but it is still not enough for Councillor Williamson and me. A final meeting was held in December, 2021 and the majority of Council voted to proceed with consolidation. While I appreciate the potential benefits, I voted against it because our City will only have 20% of the votes in the new Regional Transit Commission despite contributing the majority of the buses and other assets. Our key concerns were the governance model

**Chris Bittle**  
Member of Parliament - St. Catharines

Spring is HERE!

Hope you get to enjoy the outdoors, as the weather becomes warmer!

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and the fact we already had a Regional system and could continue to have one, but one that gave us a voice in decisions in our own community. The outcome is we lose the ability to have made-in-St. Catharines decisions about the transit system local residents built and paid for.

## GM Lands at 282 and 285 Ontario St.

Clean Up Update. At our January 31, 2022 meeting, we passed a motion that was jointly crafted by Councillor Porter and me requesting a number of updates regarding the GM site. Councillor Porter represents St. Patrick's Ward where the GM site is located and, of course, Port Dalhousie Ward is really affected. The Ministry of the Environment, Conservation and Parks (MECP) became aware 15 months ago of the discharge of highly-toxic PCBs flowing from the Ontario Street properties and other sites into Twelve Mile Creek which flows into Martindale Pond, Port Dalhousie Harbour and Lake Ontario. Updates requested included: that staff seek a timeline from both the contractor hired by the property owner and the MECP for split testing (meaning that test samples are taken by both the contractor's qualified engineers and the Ministry) and that staff invite the MECP to present the PCB Clean Up workplan and split results for the subject properties to Council as soon as possible, and that Ministry staff and City staff provide an update to Council on the additional PCB hotspots, testing and cleanup efforts in the other known areas of concern along Twelve Mile Creek.

When this report was written we had yet to receive the updates required.

## Social Procurement Policy Requested

Also on January 31, Council unanimously passed my motion on Social Procurement which is recognized by all levels of government as a means to intentionally leverage a social value from existing purchasing to build healthy and resilient local communities. The motion requested that, as part of the City's COVID-19 economic recovery efforts, our Procurement Department be directed to consult with experts and identify opportunities to include and encourage the City's use of social procurement projects and social enterprises in our procurement. This is an issue of great interest to me as I believe we need to benefit our City when we procure goods and services as much as legally and fairly possible. When bids are essentially the same we can then select the bid that most benefits the City. A Social Procurement policy is also an opportunity to support many of the objectives that the City has identified, including, but not limited to diversity, equity and inclusion, local economic development and employment, reconciliation, and community safety and well-being.

## Massive Development Approved for "Tower Site" in Port's Commercial Core

At a Special Council meeting held on April 7, Council approved The Locks project by Rankin Construction. The approval was based on a three-party agreement following extensive negotiations between City staff, Rankin and the Port Dalhousie Conservancy. Conservancy President Hank Beekhuis said

while this was not the best outcome for the heritage of Port Dalhousie it was the best that could be negotiated. In the St. Catharines Standard, I called the settlement "bittersweet." I am disappointed that the heights allowed (up to 12 storeys at the Park level) are contrary to the Council-approved secondary plan that the community spent over 2 years developing and only allowed 3 storeys at Lock St. and up to 6 behind. Also, the density is very high and the design is quite modern-looking for a historic 19th century low-rise village. In addition, another 180 condos will exacerbate traffic problems. Nevertheless, I am glad a development is finally going to happen because it involves a reputable local builder and it will help local businesses as the site has been an eyesore for many years. Councillor Williamson and I voted against it for the above reasons. It's good we're getting something done there, but it's certainly going to change the face of Port Dalhousie forever.

## Beaches Strategy for 2022

For Summer 2021, we approved the Beaches strategy which followed extensive discussions by a group composed of City staff and all four Councillors from the two Wards

(Grantham and Port) that have beaches. The key policy approved was to provide free parking passes for the beaches to all residents of the City while charging non-residents. For 2022 staff provided a report and recommendation that was reviewed at a Public Council on April 11. Councillor Williamson and I have major concerns about the new proposed strategy that includes the provision of digital parking passes for residents at a cost of \$15 each. I strongly objected to charging our City's residents \$15 for parking passes as I believe beach parking and access should remain free as it always has been. Unfortunately, we were outvoted and the \$15 charge was approved. ■

*As always, a very special thank-you to my fellow Port Dalhousie Ward Councillor Bruce Williamson for his invaluable advice and support.*

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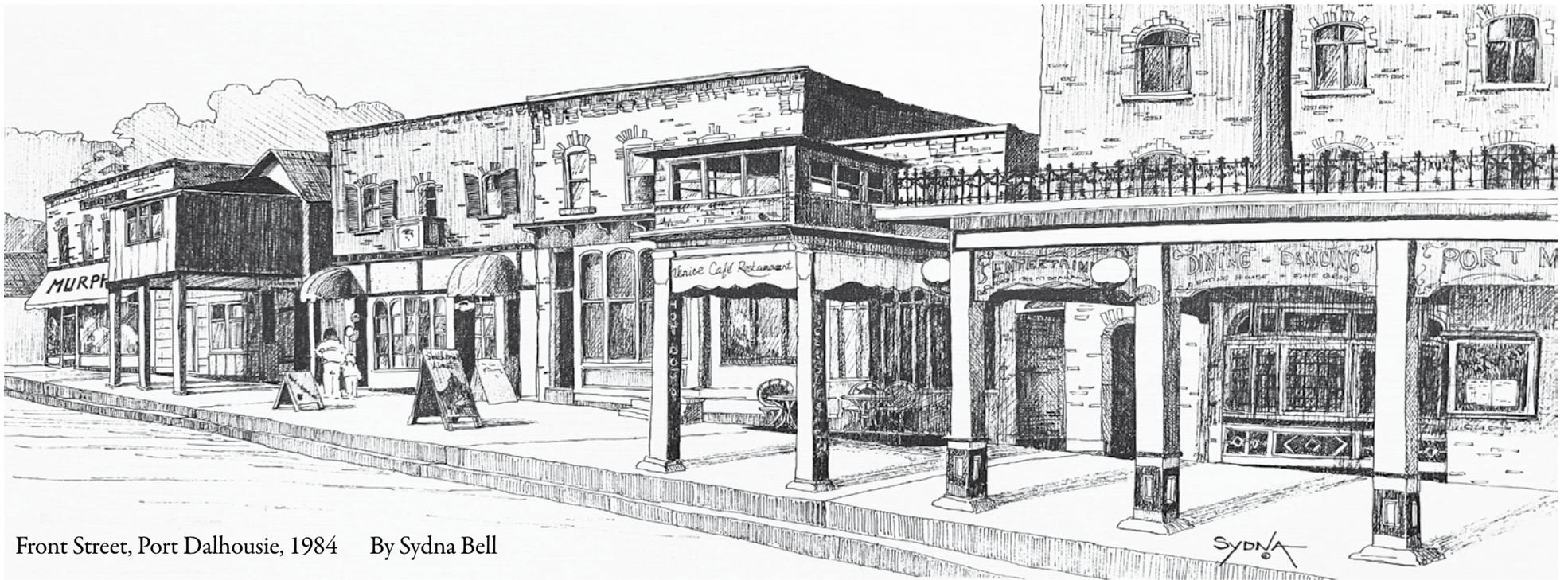
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# From Where I Sit... *Have We Given Up On Affordable Housing?*



**Hank  
Beekhuis**

Everyone knows that there is an affordable Housing crisis, however there are few with answers. The provincial government's solution is simply to open the floodgates to urban sprawl, build standard subdivisions, new highways and remove regulation, just like we always do. Is this a solution? Are we even addressing the real problem? The problem, it seems to me, is not the supply of housing, because in some instances the supply is actually outstripping population growth. The real problem is the ability of those at the bottom 30% of our society to be able to find suitable and affordable housing in today's market. Let's do simple math. The median salary in St. Catharines is about \$55,000 and since

one ought not to pay more than 32% of pre-tax income on housing in order to live and participate meaningfully in our society, then you would be able to spend about \$17,500 a year on housing. For a renter this is \$1466 monthly, which is less than the average cost of a one bedroom apartment without utilities. However "median" means that a full 50% of salaries are less than \$55,000. Given that 26% of the population is single and that we also have those who are on disability, recent immigrants etc., who simply do not have the means to get into the market or are forced to live in hugely substandard or unsuitable rental housing or simply go hungry, any sort of ownership is simply out of the question. Note: Government pensions for an individual max out at about \$1300 a month and those on disability or Ontario Works often receive even less.

The average sale price of a home in St. Catharines today is \$780,000 (which is somewhat skewed because million dollar plus homes tend to

increase the average, but you get the point). Assuming a 10% down payment then you have a \$700,000 mortgage. The current average rate for a 30 year mortgage is about 4.5% or about 500 dollars per month for every \$100,000 you borrow. This means for our above mortgage you need to pay about \$3500 a month without taxes or utilities. Even if, for the sake of argument, you assume that partners of a median couple are both working full time then you have an income of about \$110,000 which drives a monthly affordability at around \$3000 a month. I hope it's clear that it is not only the poor who can't afford housing.

Building new homes and condos focused solely on those who are already in the housing market in the \$750,000 to \$1 million plus range does nothing for affordable housing; there will always be housing for them. The city has defined affordable housing as being 20% below market value. That still leaves out the bottom 30% of our society who have extreme difficulty

finding a decent place to live where they have the security that they won't be evicted by the next owner who comes along.

Home ownership or rentals which take only 32% of income are the one thing in our society that creates housing security. If we do not address this issue, we will not only have problems today but also and maybe particularly when people age without savings or company pensions. The future will only get worse. Renting is not a good option for anyone unless it is temporary, a personal choice, or a necessity. Most of us recognize that paying off other people's mortgages over and over again for a primary residence is a poor use of finances. Home ownership is still the main way for people to get ahead in Canada. It gives people security, stability and a sense of pride.

Currently the Developer Subsidy program known as the Community Improvement Program (CIP) focuses largely on supporting unaffordable

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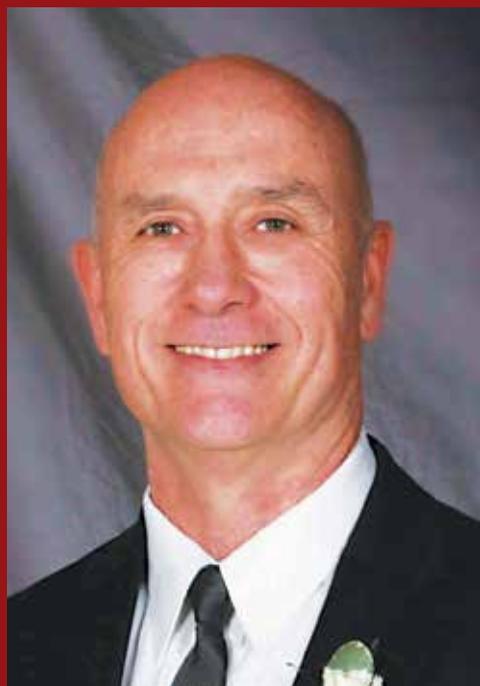
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housing, and there is no guarantee that taxpayer funding goes to those who actually need affordable housing. Is this a wise use of tax resources? Should our municipality not be proactively focusing on the area of greatest need such as the 25,000 people on the affordable housing wait list?

For example, is it not better to have a hard look at what we do with city-owned property and offer it free of charge to any developer who comes up with the best proposal? That way we control the type and quality of development and once completed, we get immediate tax revenue, instead of waiting for 10 years. Perhaps we also need to take a hard look at our planning and development processes and streamline our regulations and decision-making especially for those individuals who require secure housing. Can we not encourage the renovation of existing building stock into increased housing? All landowners should be able to be involved in the solution and receive support; not just the big players. If we are honest we have to confess that some of our problems are self-

inflicted. Contractors like to focus on the high margin large homes/condos but perhaps with a little flexibility we could get them to focus on lower margin mini-developments which

*“The city has defined affordable housing as being 20% below market value. That still leaves out the bottom 30% of our society who have extreme difficulty finding a decent place to live.”*

give people an opportunity to get into the market. There are many who would be very happy with much smaller dependable places to live that they can call their own. There is a huge need for smaller homes/rentals

for the elderly, singles, immigrants, and those on disability, etc. If this approach were supported by the appropriate zoning, lot sizes and lack of red tape on a site-specific basis, the private sector could easily fill this need and still make money. A wide variety of housing types are needed, not just large single family dwellings or luxury condos. We should also not focus on singular large public housing projects that only tend to segregate and trap the poor. Instead it would be good to try to help them either achieve ownership or cooperative arrangements where they can have the dignity of having control over their own housing security. There are experiments in affordable housing happening all over the country that we can learn from and we must be prepared to be creative and flexible and try new things while densifying our community and utilizing existing infrastructure.

If we fail to do this we will be failing the future of all those who are already disadvantaged and increase inequality in our society. Action is needed now! ■





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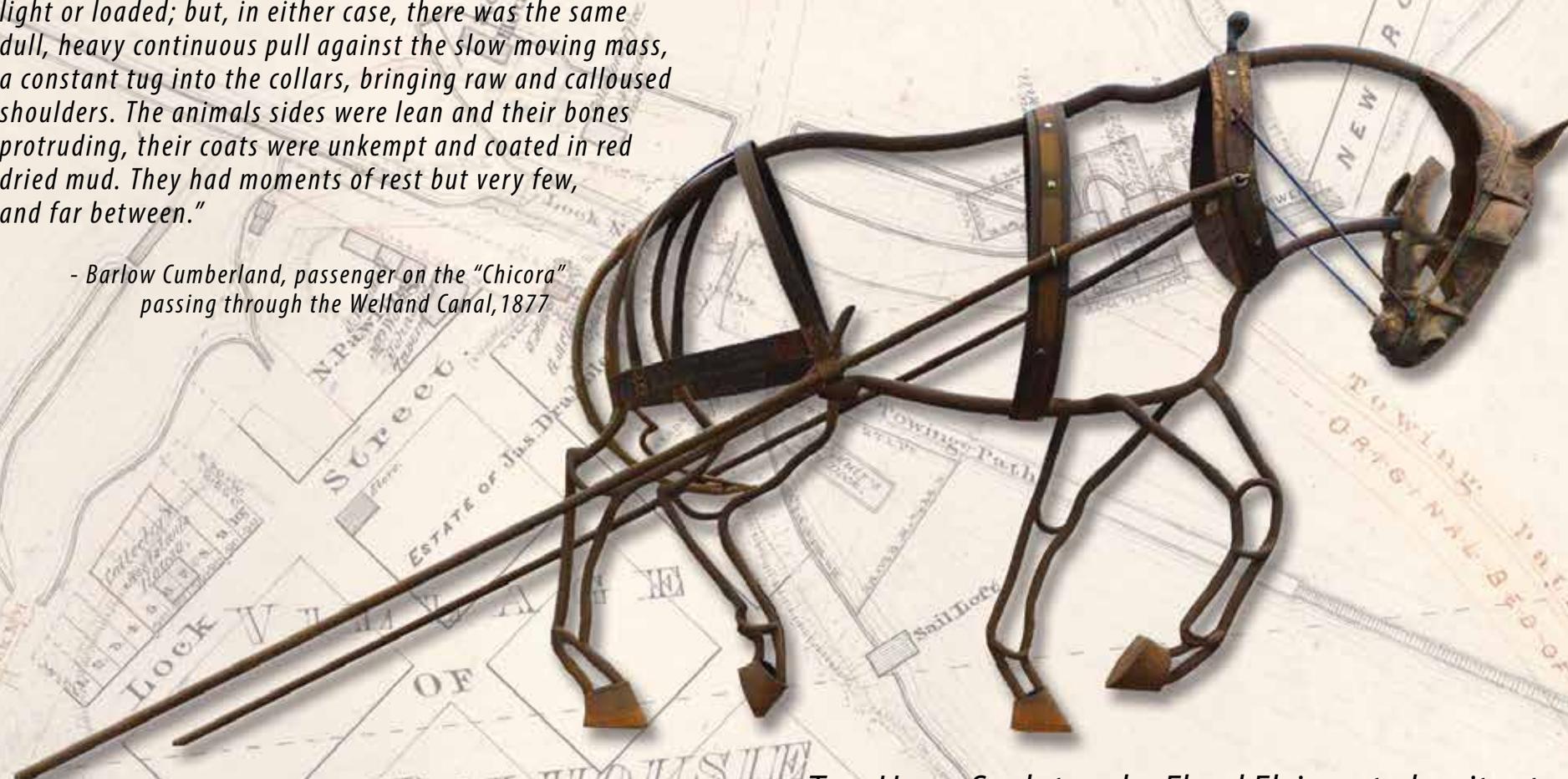


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*- Barlow Cumberland, passenger on the "Chicora" passing through the Welland Canal, 1877*



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Hi Port Dalhousie! My name is Ryan. I was born and raised in St. Catharines, where I studied Political Sciences at Brock University. Then, I became a firefighter with the city, where I have served for the past 30 years.

Port Dalhousie is a special place, but like any community, it has issues that need to be addressed. My top priorities for the community are:

-  **Fixing Long-Term Care**
-  **Protecting our green spaces**
-  **Economic Dignity for Workers**

# A Short History of Martindale Pond

Although there can be a more detailed history of Martindale Pond than this article offers, there can never be a long history since the Pond only came into being in the early part of the 19th century. It is a man-made body of water rather than a creation of nature. Prior to the beginning of the construction of the First Welland Canal in 1824, there existed only Twelve-Mile Creek which flowed through a swampy wooded area into Lake Ontario. Due to the abundance of wildlife and vegetation, various native tribes settled in the region prior to the arrival of the Europeans.

With the building of the first lock of the 1st Welland Canal (west of the carousel in Lakeside Park) the waters of the creek began to rise. This lock was a 'gate' lock rather than a 'lift lock' and likely only flooded the low-lying marsh areas; however, the building of the first lock of the 2nd Welland Canal (1842) caused the waters to rise to the level we see today.

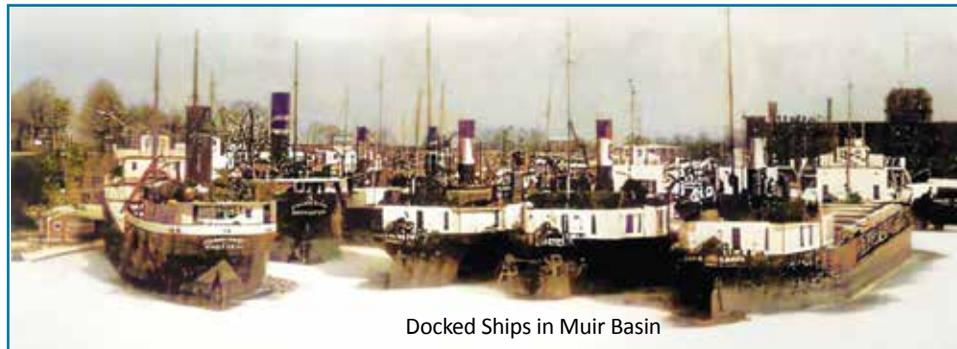
In 1830, the Welland Canal Company authorized the construction of dry docks to facilitate the building of ships of a size that could traverse the locks. One of the first ship builders to arrive in Port Dalhousie was Robert Abbey who opened his shipyard on the east side of the Pond in 1837. In 1860, the ship building company Donaldson, Andrews & Ross established another shipyard on the east side of the pond.



Royal Canadian Henley Regatta



Canoeing Around Read (now Henley) Island



Docked Ships in Muir Basin

As important as these enterprises were in establishing a ship building industry in Port Dalhousie, they never achieved the permanence that the Muir Brothers Dry Docks did. Alexander Muir, a sailor and the eldest of five brothers from Scotland, first set eyes on Port Dalhousie in 1837 and recognized

a need for a facility to repair ships. He settled into a house on Queen St. (now Dalhousie Ave.) in 1845 and began construction of a floating dry-dock in 1850 on the east side of the canal. Upon completion, it was then floated to a permanent location across the pond to where Rennie Park now exists.

Joined by his brothers, they expanded the business to include building ships as well as repairing them and added a permanent dry dock in 1867. Muir Dry Docks would continue for nearly a century, providing this essential service as well as employment for residents of the area. It was the dominant feature on Martindale Pond until the dry docks were dismantled and filled in by the early 1970s.

Although commercial enterprises feature prominently in the history of Martindale Pond, recreational pursuits ultimately eclipsed that era. In 1903 the 23-year-old Royal Canadian Henley Regatta held its first races on Martindale Pond. Recognizing that its calm waters and high banks made for an ideal course, the commission decided to make this the Regatta's permanent home. In 1970, the 3rd World Rowing Championship was held here and then repeated in 1999 for the 29th event. During the two years preceding that regatta, the course was dredged and the material deposited on site to create Rennie Island.

A significant item for rowing enthusiasts is that the first ever women's rowing team was developed here, making its debut in exhibition races at the CNE in 1947 & '48 where they prevailed. Now, women's teams outnumber the men's in the Henley Regatta roster and

*Continued on page 23*



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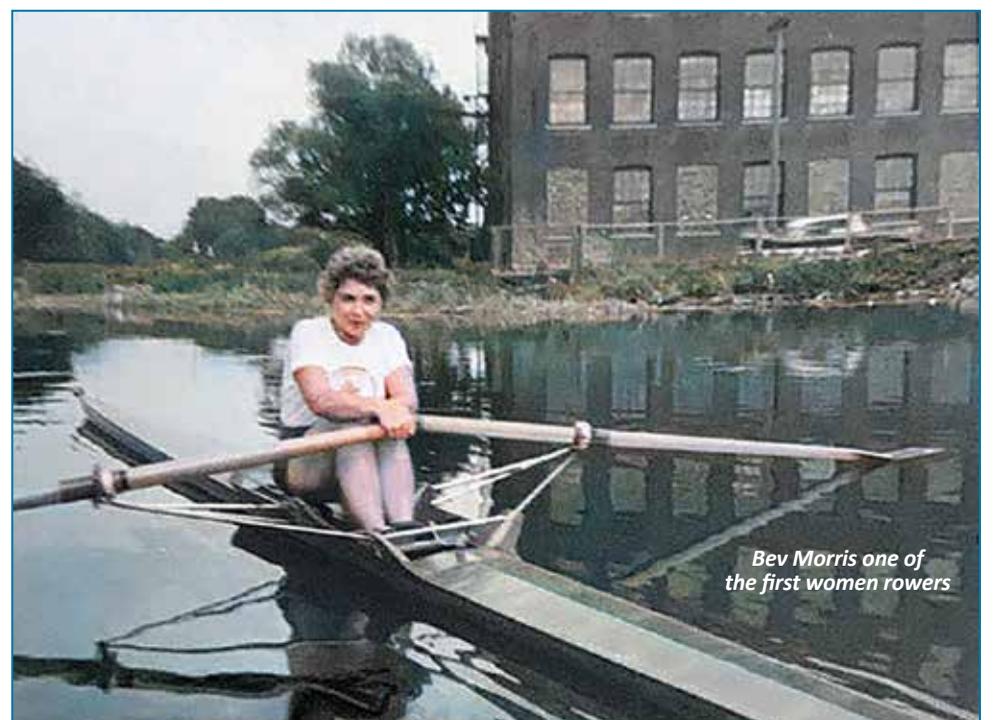
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Bev Morris one of the first women rowers

# No More Millions for Millionaires

*Should Municipal Tax Payers be Subsidizing Luxury Condos When There is a Desperate Shortage of Affordable Housing?*

The St Catharines Community Improvement Program (CIP) is a policy designed to encourage good development in areas of greatest need. The current program was designed by City staff and approved by the Mayor and Councillors in 2020.

The principle of any CIP is that by offering incentives in the form of cash, a city can better influence developers to invest their money in a manner that provides the greatest benefit to the community. However, low-income or affordable housing, for example, while providing that “greatest benefit to the community” does not provide the same profit margins as building high-end luxury condos. In order to address a shortage of affordable housing, the City might offer a CIP grant to encourage developers to invest in a rental apartment project they might dismiss without the incentive.

St Catharines’ new CIP is no different. The summary of the program stated that “The changes to the scoring criteria have resulted in an eligibility requirement that should disqualify most projects that do not have significant costs related particularly to environmental remediation, heritage restoration and conservation, mixed-use or affordable housing (or a combination of these components)”.

Despite this clear statement of priority, since this Council was elected in October 2018, they have been responsible for the awarding of \$8,824,000 to just two projects – both exclusive luxury condo developments along the Port Dalhousie waterfront. Although Council votes on only half the amount eventually awarded, they are aware that whatever they approve will be automatically matched by the Region.

This bears repeating: the City Council has been responsible for the granting of almost 9 million of local taxpayer dollars to two luxury developments located along the most desirable waterfront left on Lake Ontario.

To maintain the public trust and confidence, a Council should ascertain community needs, priorities and values and should vote accordingly on issues of greatest impact. This was seemingly acknowledged and addressed when the Council approved the current CIP and retained a clause that forced all major applications to face final approval by Council. This was to ensure that no project would be granted large amounts of money without meeting a high threshold of community benefit in the process.

In that respect this Council has failed us. By granting \$9 million to luxury high-end condo projects along the Port Dalhousie waterfront, Council has put St Catharines in the business of subsidizing housing for the richest among us. And they are not done yet because these awards have established a dangerous precedent. In the near future other, even larger development projects, will be seeking CIP money as well. Why shouldn't they have their turn at the taxpayer trough? And, based on their history, we can only assume that this Council will continue to grant them

millions. In fact the luxury condo projects on the near horizon will be bigger in scale than anything yet approved and could therefore be seeking even more money than has been granted in the past.

St. Catharines is a community laden with numerous social issues. From the desperate shortage of affordable housing and daycare to the climate and opioid crises, we face enormous challenges. While it may be difficult to prioritize which issue demands the greatest attention, one thing is certain – exclusive luxury condos, subsidized by taxpayer dollars, do not make the list.

In the promotional material for one of these luxury condos we learn that the development provides “impressive Lofts & Estate Residences with high ceilings, fabulous water views, custom layouts and bespoke finishes [that] will provide the rarest of opportunities for a fortunate few.”

At the other condo site we are told that it offers an opportunity to “escape to luxurious living” and “LIVE ROYALLY”.

Promising “spacious suites with premium finishes throughout”. Local taxpayers are subsidizing these condos with 9 million dollars of our money.

CIP's can be a force for good development in a community, but they can also be abused and represent a violation of the public trust when not properly applied. It is important to note that this giveaway was not approved unanimously. Councillors Garcia, Williamson, Miller, Dodge and Kushner opposed the grant.

This Council has shown a heavy bias towards allowing our tax dollars to be used for subsidizing housing for the richest among us. This is shameful. Council has failed to read the room and understand the basic tenets of public trust, which include transparency, consultation and sensitivity to the needs of the community. Instead, by deciding to give millions to millionaires, they have opened the cash floodgates for continued subsidization of exclusive housing for the wealthy.

These are the 8 members of Council who voted to allow the funding under the new CIP: Mayor Walter Sendzik, Councillors Siscoe, Porter, Littleton, Harris, Sorrento, Townsend, Phillips. I fear their approval reflects a catastrophic disconnect with sound public policy. ■

- Ed Smith

*“Since this Council was elected in October 2018, they have been responsible for the awarding of \$8,824,000 to just two projects – both exclusive luxury condo developments along the Port Dalhousie waterfront.”*

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Dr. Scales has been in private practice for over 40 years in Niagara. He first attended the University of Toronto before graduating from the Canadian Memorial Chiropractic College.



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Dr. Macoretta is a graduate of the University of Western Ontario and the chiropractic program at O'Youville College in Buffalo, N.Y. He is proficient in sports/orthopedic rehabilitation, soft tissue work, kinesiotaping and developing exercise programs.



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To say that a parking fee at Lakeside Park does not limit access to the beach is to show a lack of knowledge of what it means to be poor or otherwise disadvantaged. Over the past 18 months Council has continued to increase barriers to the use of these vital public spaces in St Catharines. It is the gentrification of the public realm and it is wrong. First we were told the parking meters were needed to control Covid crowds but that parking would remain free for residents. Now we're told it's \$15/year. This claw back and the steady march towards the ipso facto privatization of our beaches continues, enabled by this Council. If the administration of the parking meters is too costly, it clearly demonstrates poor planning and the answer is simple, get rid of the meters.

Recently the Transit Commission adjusted the fee schedule for their program that allows families to travel by bus (on weekends only). Tickets will be \$3, down from the regular \$8 price from May to September. Although this may help somewhat, it will continue to be a barrier to people who are very poor. Very soon St Catharines will lose the ability to control transit rates, once the Regional Commission takes hold there is no way to assure the needs of St Catharines will be addressed fairly, we'll be paying 40% of the bill for 20% of the control of the new transit system.

Last year residents were offered free parking, this year it's \$15, we all know this is not the last time prices will increase. This will be a forever legacy of this Council.

- Ed Smith

## The Best Port in Canada!

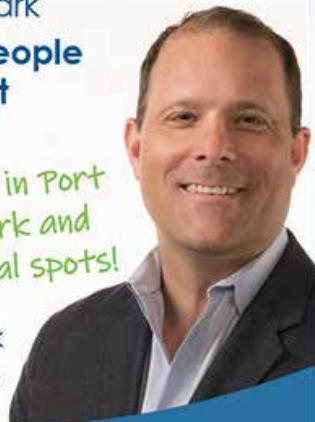
Port Dalhousie is an amazing part of St. Catharines. We have so much to look forward to in 2022:

- Hosting rowing for the 2022 Canada Games
- Renewed investment
- New businesses opening in the core
- Events at Lakeside Park

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Mayor Walter Sendzik  
City of St. Catharines



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# The Little Tug That Could One Eventful Day the Beloved Tug Escort Sunk to the Bottom of Port Dalhousie Harbour

The restricted waters of the Great Lakes have always been a tug operator's paradise, as narrow channels and congested harbours have forced the use of tugs to assist the passage, docking, turning, etc., of lake ships. Tugs are still much in use today at various lake ports despite the advent of bow and stern thrusters, Kort Nozzles, and the like, but today's version of the harbour tug bears little resemblance to the snorting little steam tugs which once were so prevalent all around the lakes.

The third Welland Canal was a heaven for the tugman. A twisting, narrow channel interrupted by a great many small locks and choked with unbelievable ship traffic, it presented serious problems to the crew of a cargo barge or sailing vessel wishing to transit the waterway. As the day of the horses on the towpaths waned, the steam tug came into her own and was a vital part of the canal scene right up until the opening of the fourth canal in 1932. The names of the canal tugs are indelibly engraved on the memories of all those who frequented the canal in the early days of this century, amongst the most famous of them being AUGUSTA, ESCORT, ALERT, GOLDEN CITY, MARY R. and J. R. BINNING, the latter the last to survive.

ESCORT was a pretty little tug, typical of harbour tugs of the day. She had a wooden hull measuring 44.8 x 15.5 x 9.7 and her tonnage was 40 Gross and 27 Net. She was powered by what is believed to



have been a noncondensing steple compound engine which produced all of 24 horsepower on the shaft. Her boiler, of unidentified species, ate copious quantities of coal to produce this remarkable horsepower.

ESCORT, registered for her entire life at St. Catharines and the proud possessor of official number C.97010, was built in 1894 by Ross at Port Colborne. Her original owners were the Carter Brothers of Port Colborne but for most of her life she was owned by the Welland Canal Tug Company Limited of the same town, a firm with which DeWitt Carter and his brother(s) were probably associated.

That ESCORT was so small and had such little power was not at all unusual.

She was not meant to battle lake gales nor to haul the big upper lakers. But what she did do, and with considerable success, was to shove barges and schooners in and out of the small canal locks and she was built to diminutive dimensions to allow her to get right in the locks with her charges, angling across the head or foot of a lock when the gates were closed.

Indeed, ESCORT was built for one purpose only and that was to solve a major problem which had arisen to face the canal authorities. In 1890, the Montreal Transportation Company Limited had built at Kingston the 242-foot four-masted schooner MINNEDOSA, the largest and finest sailing vessel ever operated by Canadians on the Great Lakes. The difficulty

was that MINNEDOSA had somehow to be wedged through the small locks of the third Welland Canal, a major feat in the open channels but a nearly insurmountable problem in the locks which were not much longer than was she. ESCORT was built to be the escort through the canal for MINNEDOSA and it was thus that she came by her name.

MINNEDOSA was finally lost on Lake Huron on October 20, 1905 when she fell victim to a gale while in tow of the steamer WESTMOUNT (I) whilst off Harbor Beach, Michigan. Despite this unfortunate and much lamented event, ESCORT carried on and passed during the First World War to the ownership of the Montreal Transportation Company Ltd. whose barges still frequented the canal and kept its tugs busy.

Control of the M.T.Co. had passed in 1916 to Roy M. Wolvin, one of the principals involved in the earlier formation of Canada Steamship Lines Ltd., and in 1920 Wolvin sold the Montreal Transportation fleet to C.S.L. ESCORT went to C.S.L. as part of the deal but she did not last long with the fleet as the larger company very shortly weeded from its ranks of acquired ships those which were no longer economical to operate, namely many of the wooden steamers and assorted barges.

ESCORT was accordingly sold in March of 1921 to John J. Harrigan of Port Dalhousie who continued to operate her along

*Continued on page 22*

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# Neil Stevens

Longtime Canadian Press Sportswriter and Forever a Port Boy

Former Canadian Press sports writer Neil Stevens, who earned Hall of Fame recognition in both lacrosse and hockey while criss-crossing the globe with the national news agency for more than three decades, has died after a battle with cancer. He was 74.

Stevens was born in St. Catharines on June 14, 1947 and grew up in Port Dalhousie. His father got him into lacrosse at the age of five and he went on to play right up to the pro level for the St. Catharines Golden Hawks in 1969. "I would never have been involved with sport if I hadn't grown up a block from a lacrosse bowl and with the Henley regatta course in our backyard," said Stevens, who was also a coxswain for the St. Catharines Rowing Club. At 16, his midget lacrosse team won the Ontario championship. He then played three seasons for the St. Catharines Lakesides junior team, and was named an All-Star by the Ontario Lacrosse Association once. Stevens joined the professional St. Catharines Golden Hawks in 1969. National Hockey League (NHL) goaltender Doug Favell was one of his teammates.

After being Inducted into the St. Catharines Sports Hall of Fame, Bernie Puchalski of the St. Catharines Standard said Stevens had been Canada's eyes on some of its most memorable sporting moments including eight Olympic Games, 22 world figure skating championships, 20 Stanley Cup finals, four Canada Cup hockey tournaments, eight National Lacrosse League Champions Cup games, as well as countless other sporting events prior to his retirement in 2008.

Stevens was honoured with the Elmer Ferguson Award, awarded annually by the Hockey Hall of Fame "in recognition of distinguished members of the hockey writing profession whose words have brought honour to both journalism and the sport." It was the legendary sports writer Jim Coleman who dubbed Stevens "Looseleaf," a nickname that stuck. Stevens used to use loose-leaf foolscap paper to take notes, with Coleman observing the only times he saw him was at events involving the red maple leaf (Canada) and the blue maple leaf (NHL Leafs).

Son of John and Marguerite Stevens of Port Dalhousie and big brother to Bill and Carolyn, he is survived by his wife Cathie, and their children, Jessica, Paula and Kimberley, their husbands, Craig, Michael and Duke, and grandchildren, Noah, Ayden, Chloe, Liam, Kieran, Tristan and Olivia.



- With files from Neil M. Davidson, CP

# Marie Michaud

The Legendary Lobster Queen of Port Dalhousie

Marie Michaud was born in New Brunswick into a poor French Canadian family. Her father passed away before she was born, and she was raised by her mother's parents. She suffered a number of hardships in her younger years, including being sent to a convent in Montreal and experiencing abuse. But one of Marie's favourite things to do was cook. Clams were plentiful and Marie spent many childhood days digging them up so her grandmother could make what would, years later, become Marie's award-winning clam chowder.

Marie married young and she found herself raising five children on her own after her husband left. That required money and so she put her cooking skills to work and took a leap of faith, opening a seafood and steak restaurant in Port Dalhousie, the famous Marie's Seafood. To her credit, by the time she was 27, she had a liquor license and a thriving business - complete with lobster tank. Although a single mother owning a restaurant isn't unusual today, it certainly was back in the 1950s.

"I was working 15 hours a day and raising five kids in my kitchen, I had no education. I couldn't read. I couldn't write. But I had a business mind. I was born with a gift. I was making my own decisions."

But it wasn't just any old restaurant. Within five years, her business was booming. The restaurant attracted an international clientele that included dignitaries from England and Japan, professional hockey players such as Tim Horton, musicians like Elvis Presley, Lawrence Welk, actors, CEOs and politicians; and former Prime Minister Pierre Trudeau to name a few. It wasn't unusual to see stretch limos parked by the restaurant on a regular basis. She was on her way to joining the membership of the world famous Restaurants International and had rightly earned the title "The Lobster Queen".

After 42 years in the business, Marie retired at 65 and sold the restaurant. She had 27 employees and had helped send four of her children to university.

Over her retirement years, Marie created more than 16,000 hand-knitted finger puppets, each tiny masterpieces, donating them to hospitals and health centres to help distract children from having needles and other medical procedures.



Marie with Lawrence Welk

Maria Marie (Michaud) McDONALD May 9, 1927 - February 6, 2022

- With files from Peterborough This Week and Kawartha Now

It's time to focus on community recovery!

**SUPPORT LOCAL**

Please continue to support Port Dalhousie shops and restaurants, let's all help drive the recovery!

Jennie Stevens  
MPP FOR ST. CATHARINES

jstevens-co@ndp.on.ca  
(905) 935 - 0018

# The Little Tug That Could ... Continued.

the Welland Canal. Her career for Harrigan was uneventful except for an accident near Welland in 1927 when ESCORT was sunk. She was raised shortly thereafter and repaired.

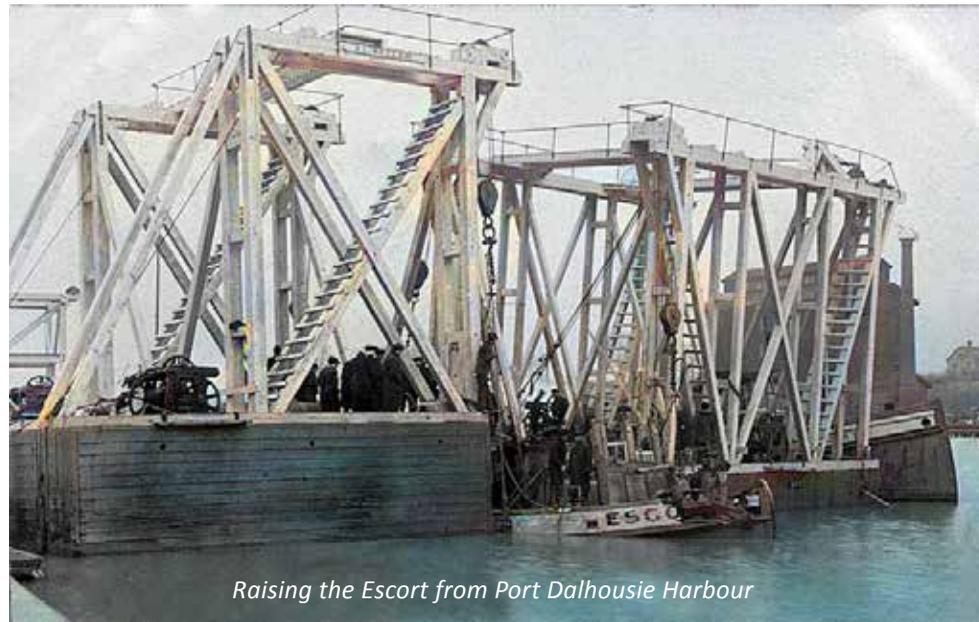
But with the opening of the new Welland Canal, there was virtually no need for tugs of the size and power (or lack of same) as ESCORT and, her wooden hull showing the ravages of time, she was scrapped at Port Dalhousie in 1937. This procedure for a wooden tug meant only the removal of any valuable pieces of equipment. The hull itself was laid to rest along the shore of Muir's Pond above old Lock One at Port Dalhousie.

ESCORT's major claim to fame, apart from her years of dependable service, arises out of an incident that came to pass. It was not a happy event and, indeed, it was a miracle that ESCORT ever survived to see further service. Her engineer and a crewman were not so fortunate.

On November 23, 1907, the Montreal Transportation Co. Ltd. steamer WESTMOUNT (I) was heading up Lake Ontario with the 172.6-foot wooden schooner-barge BENJAMIN HARRISON in tow. When the tow approached the piers at Port Dalhousie, a signal was made for a tug to come out and take the HARRISON in tow for the canal passage. It was the custom of the canal tugs to wait in line and to take turns in going to the assistance of incoming vessels. This particular day, it was

the turn of GOLDEN CITY to go out for the HARRISON but, as tugmasters were sometimes wont to do, the skipper of ESCORT thought that he would race GOLDEN CITY out in the hope of reaching the barge first and getting a line aboard her.

her beam ends, ESCORT heading rapidly for the bottom once she began to fill. The crew leapt into the lake except for the engineer and another man who were trapped below and who were drowned. The others were, in due course, fished from the cold lake.



Raising the Escort from Port Dalhousie Harbour

All went well, the two tugs racing to the barge and jockeying for position, until ESCORT cut in on her rival and in so doing got a bit too close to the bow of the still-moving barge. ESCORT at that point was broadside to the HARRISON'S bow and she could not get out of the way in time. The HARRISON struck the hapless little tug and rolled her over on

ESCORT was raised not long after the accident and, with the assistance of two gatelifers, the battered remains were brought into Port Dalhousie. She was taken up the canal to one of the locks in the St. Catharines area and when the canal was dewatered for the winter, she was propped up in the bottom of the lock along with her consort ALERT. Over the winter, ESCORT was completely rebuilt and emerged in the spring of 1908 looking not much dif-

ferent than she had prior to the accident. Her superstructure was virtually new as it had been almost totally demolished in the sinking but it was rebuilt almost exactly as it had been before, tugboat architecture not having changed much in the fourteen years since she had left her builder's yard.

ESCORT'S misadventure received much publicity, no doubt because of the fact that she was such a familiar boat along the canal and was sailed by local men. In fact, there even appeared a memorial postcard to commemorate the unhappy event.



The Escort Rebuild

It is now 115 years since ESCORT'S escapade with the BENJAMIN HARRISON and more since the little tug last operated. With her bones still rotting away at Port Dalhousie, it is fitting that this workhorse of the canal should be remembered so many years later. ■

-Walter Lewis

- From *The Scanner*, a publication of The Toronto Marine Historical Society.

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VIEW OF MARTINDALE CREEK FROM N. ST. C. AND T. RY. BRIDGE

PD

# The Great Storm of 1855 ... Continued.

Throughout the town, fences, roofs, and chimneys were damaged. One third of the roof and interior gallery at St. Andrews' Presbyterian Church "was swept away." A daguerreotype studio "was lifted completely off the ground, and after making several revolutions, fell to the earth a worthless heap of ruins." The proprietor and his assistant, from St. Catharines, were asleep inside and were seriously injured. One vessel, named the Defiance, was believed to have been lost during the storm. Headed for Toronto, she was freighted with iron railroad wheels and was about two hours distant from Niagara when caught by the winds and capsized.

Residents at Port Dalhousie described the heat that morning after sunrise as "very oppressive." The clouds over the lake had "an unusually wild, lowering...dreadful appearance" with banks of fog "whirling about wildly" which formed "into horizontal streaks of a dark, leaden hue." Around 6 am, a black cloud "came drifting along towards the shore with great velocity." It "scattered fences as if they had been chaff." This was immediately followed by a "huge wave" that rushed in from the lake, six or seven feet high, which "dashed against the piers and swept far up on the shore." It tore a three masted vessel from its moorings and dashed it against the pier. When the wave receded it "carried with it the water to a depth of four or five feet, leaving only a narrow stream where there is usually a sheet of water about a quarter of a mile wide." Fish (mainly pike and catfish) were left "floundering in the mud and shallow pools" which the residents quickly secured for their families. The lake continued to ebb and flow during the entire day gradually diminishing towards evening. When the waves "turned shore wards, there was a chill puff of wind from the north."

The Quebec Mercury called it a "violent storm, a perfect hurricane, accompanied with thunder, lightning, and hailstones of most formidable dimensions."

The St. Catharines Journal described the storm as a mere "squall," while the Constitutional referred to it as a "violent tornado." In the downtown core the damage was negligible, "scattering to the winds several piles of lumber in Mr. Chisholm's yard, and blowing down part of the ornamental work on the front of St. George's Church."

It was noted that a similar storm had occurred almost one year earlier, on April 25, 1854. During that storm several fishermen were caught up by a large wave and swept into the Two Mile Creek pond at Niagara. Two of these men drowned, while the others were dashed "high up against the bank."

About two weeks after the storm of 1855, residents awoke to find "as dreary a morning as has been witnessed during the whole winter." The ground was covered in several inches of snow which continued to fall, "the trees in blossom and in leaf looked out on an arctic region," and the songbirds "went somewhere else."

The injuries and loss of life during the storm of 1855 could have been much more significant had it not been for the fact that on that particular day a public holiday, one of "fasting and prayer," had been proclaimed by the Governor General. The Fast was "properly observed" in the Niagara District and many businesses were shut and residents were at home. And just what was the purpose of this "Fast Day," you may wonder? It was for the sincere prayer "for the success of the allied Fleets and Armies" that were then waging war against the Russians in the Crimea!

Plus ça change...? ■

-Brian Narhi



**NIAGARA  
2022**

**JEUX DU  
CANADA  
GAMES**

**AUGUST 2-22, 2022  
ROWING COMPETITION  
@ Port Dalhousie**

# Martindale Pond ... Continued.

this is something that St. Catharines can certainly be proud of in this age of female empowerment.

In addition to the many official regattas, the course is also home to a few recreational regattas open to adults who are attracted to the sport. Starting before all the ice has melted, high school rowers will ply their shells for early practice and maintain their schedule right up to their 'schoolboy' regatta in June.

After the Henley Regatta, held in early August, the pond is comparatively void of rowers. This allows opportunity for paddlers to launch their kayaks and canoes for fun, exercise and adventure. There is a universal understanding that Martindale Pond is primarily the domain of the rowing community though there is no ban on launching other non-motorized craft. Crossing the course or interfering with a rowing shell is frowned upon and it should be noted that rowers aren't looking where they are going most of the time.

But there are interesting places to explore where rowing shells can't or shouldn't go. And in certain cases, neither should inexperienced paddlers. The area near the hydro facility at the north/east corner is dangerous and needs to be avoided. There are also strong currents up Twelve Mile Creek beyond the QEW highway bridge. However, a paddle up Richardson's Creek at the south-west end up through the Green Ribbon Trail and beyond can be a serene experience though a short trip. One can also paddle into lock two of the 3rd Welland Canal on a sunny afternoon to see the shadows reveal faces within the stone block walls.

Recreational pursuit also spans the seasons. One can fish from any shore and,

in winter, ice fishing becomes a popular pastime for many. When frozen over sufficiently, the expanse can provide an opportunity for cross-country skiing or ice skating. Fishing huts on the ice are a good indication of adequate ice thickness, but be aware of and stay away from areas where the flow is quicker and the ice thinner such as the open channel and the area near the Henley Island bridge.

On a personal note, let me say that it was Martindale Pond that attracted me to Port Dalhousie in the first place and I've enjoyed this recreational resource over the years, including the above-mentioned pursuits as well as sailing a dinghy and an iceboat on it. Now it serves me primarily as a visually appealing and inspirational part of a morning walk. In my opinion, the view from Canal Street up the course toward the QEW bridge is the best the town has to offer. ■

-David Serafino

*David Serafino is the former publisher of Dalhousie Peer Magazine (1997-2010) and the publisher of two history books currently available at Thistle Bookstore Cafe in Port Dalhousie and online at lulu.com.*

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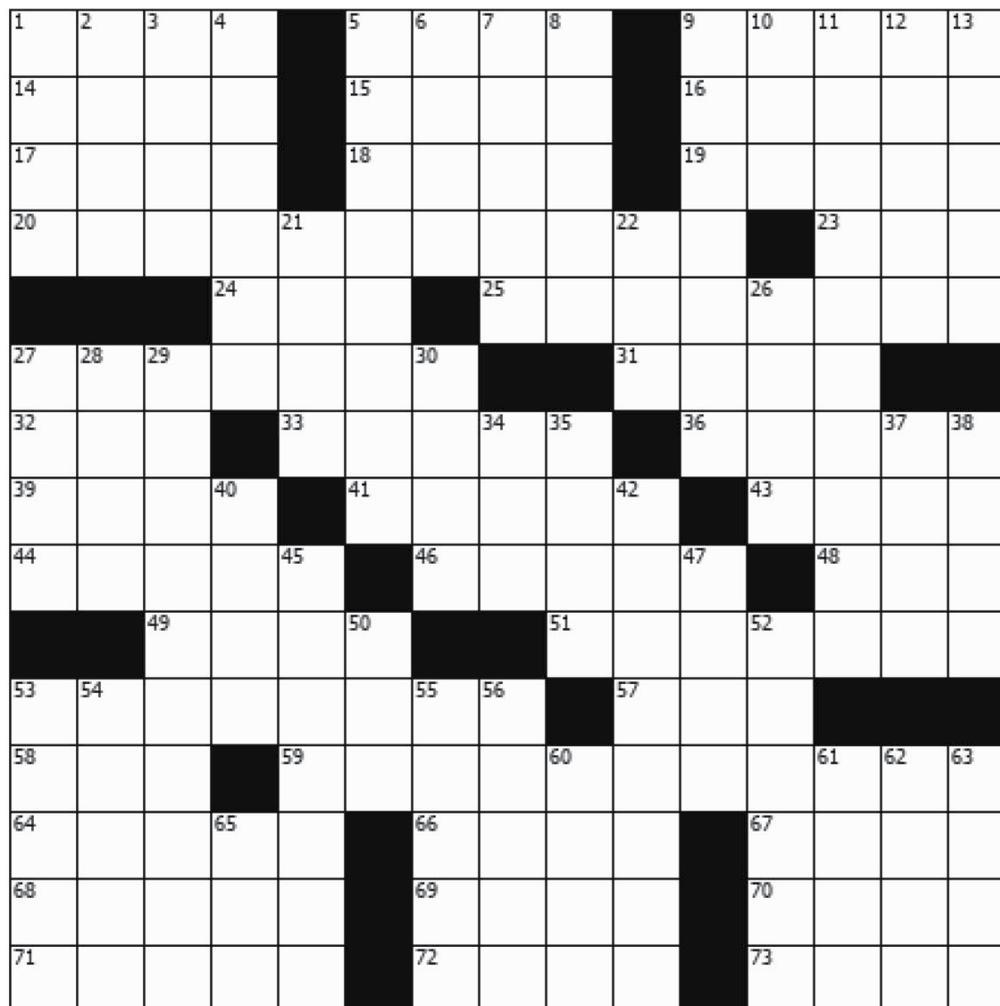
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[martindalephysiotherapy.com](http://martindalephysiotherapy.com)

# SPRING/SUMMER CROSSWORD

## Across

1. Builder's map
5. Lamb entree
9. "The Merry Widow" composer
14. "No problemo!"
15. Reverberation
16. Semiprecious stone
17. Corvette, for one
18. Suggestive sneer
19. American majority
20. Circus attraction
23. Famous West
24. Kind of chest or dog
25. Ditto
27. Sheer delight
31. North Sea tributary
32. Paris pronoun
33. Arctic explorer
36. Operatic legend
39. \_\_\_ Blanc
41. Kind of trap
43. Hornswoggle
44. Like some pond growth
46. Get going
48. Dernier \_\_\_ (latest fashion)



## Down

- |  |   |   |   |
|--|---|---|---|
| <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>49. Debtor's burden</li> <li>51. Sinatra's hometown</li> <li>53. Inches, as to feet</li> <li>57. GRF's choice for VP</li> <li>58. Exclamations of surprise</li> <li>59. Bombshell</li> <li>64. Religious leader</li> <li>66. Abbey or Tobacco</li> <li>67. Wading bird</li> <li>68. Word with tactics or crow</li> <li>69. Dorothy's pet</li> <li>70. One-third of a war film title</li> <li>71. Gumbo ingredients</li> <li>72. Reach across</li> <li>73. Cooking term</li> </ol> | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Bothersome person</li> <li>2. Bert, the lion portrayer</li> <li>3. Vast land mass</li> <li>4. Secretarial role</li> <li>5. Lets go</li> <li>6. Got an eagle on a par-3</li> <li>7. Kind of board</li> <li>8. "M*A*S*H" locale</li> <li>9. In a state of anomie</li> <li>10. Swellhead's problem</li> <li>11. Wrestling hold</li> <li>12. "There's ___ in My Beer" (Hank Williams song)</li> <li>13. 1966 hit "Walk Away ___"</li> </ol> | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>21. Tide type</li> <li>22. Jimmy and Rosalynn's daughter</li> <li>26. Next in line</li> <li>27. Mrs. Peel on "The Avengers"</li> <li>28. Like Fonzie</li> <li>29. Meeting place for the unattached</li> <li>30. Talks nonstop</li> <li>34. Soak flax</li> <li>35. Uh-huh</li> <li>37. Traditional knowledge</li> <li>38. Birthday suit?</li> <li>40. Animal's appendage</li> <li>42. Gave a long, boring speech</li> </ol> | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>45. Southpaws</li> <li>47. Lift up a mountain</li> <li>50. Unspecified ordinal</li> <li>52. Planetary paths</li> <li>53. Sculpted trunk</li> <li>54. Hit hard</li> <li>55. Causes distress</li> <li>56. Private detective</li> <li>60. Star Trek android</li> <li>61. Woodwind instrument</li> <li>62. Old currency in Milan</li> <li>63. Romanov ruler</li> <li>65. Bikini top</li> </ol> |
|--|---|---|---|

*Crossword Answers on page 27*



Corben at the Beach

Photo: Kevin Hewitt

## It Takes a Village

*Please scan the QR code and complete our online survey*



*or visit the website at <https://bit.ly/3A2fARD>*



The Port Dalhousie Conservancy

## Charles I. Gibbons: Marine Artist

Charles I. Gibbons was one of Canada's most prolific maritime artists. Active from 1880 to 1911. He used watercolour, pencil, charcoal and crayon. His marine compositions were typical of his period and can be recognized by his use of rippled flags and uniform wave motion. It appears that most of his work was done with coloured crayons and pencils. Gibbons, the black sheep of a well to do English family, was sent to Canada. He worked as a fireman on Toronto Harbour and augmented his pay by painting pictures of the ships around him. Sailors paid \$1.00 to \$5.00 for paintings of their ships. The money helped pay for his drinks which was his eventual downfall. Gibbons churned out picture after picture with pencil and pastels showing ships ideally in bright clean colours challenging the elements. Sailors said Gibbons "took the hard look off" their vessels.



**THE LAKESIDE:** Was a handsome little steamer and one of the most popular vessels ever operated from the Niagara area. It served the Toronto to Port Dalhousie route for more than two decades and proved to be a great favourite amongst Torontonians. It served Port Dalhousie's Lakeside Amusement Park and bathing beach area located to the west of the piers. The park was established by N. S. & T. railway and its local electric cars operated to it. THE LAKESIDE had docked above Lock One at Port Dalhousie and Passengers arriving at Port Dalhousie by steamer could board the electric cars and ride on into St. Catharines or over to Niagara Falls.



**THE JOHN HANLAN:** This small passenger ferry was built in 1884 in Port Dalhousie, Ontario and carried passengers from Toronto to Hanlan's Point on Toronto Island. The JOHN HANLAN also frequently carried cargos of fruit from the Niagara Peninsula to markets in Toronto. Gibbons has depicted her in rough waters off the lighthouse near Hanlan's Point. This is one of the few times that Gibbons departed from the stereotypical portrait of the more staid broadside view of the ship in quiet waters. In 1929 she was towed to Sunnyside Beach, where she was set on fire to attract interest in the amusement park. This was often the final event in the life of some of these ships in that era.



**THE JESSIE McEDWARDS:** Built as a tugboat in St. Catharines, Ontario in 1876, in 1882 it was sold to A. J. Tymon of Toronto, to be rebuilt as a ferry. In 1898 the Saturday Globe reported that The Island Park Ferry Company had a fleet of seven steamers, and the J L McEDWARDS, captained by M. Cochrane, was one of them, running to Toronto Islands. ■

Thanks to Dr. Ron Casselman, M.D., F.R.C.S and The St. Catharines Museum

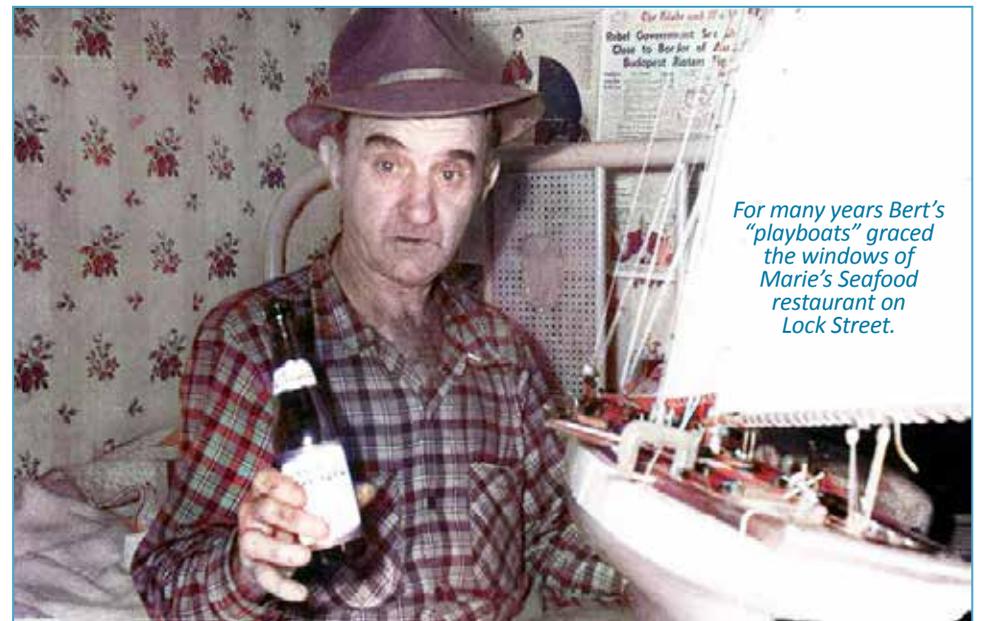
## Bert Verge: Port's Own Marine Artist

*In 1960 Murray Thomson interviewed Bert Verge who created masterful replicas of ocean sailing ships.*

An artist lives in the Austin House, an old hotel that looks out over Port Dalhousie harbour. In his room on the 3rd floor the furnishings are plain, from the iron bedstead to the cooking-pot spittoon that stands near his chair. With a few sharpened hacksaw blades wound with hockey tape for handles, a gimlet and a chisel, his work-curling fingers fashioned what he calls his "playboats".

"Models?" I asked him. "Playboats" he insisted. There is a world of difference. Bert phrased it a different way: "I just drink a pint of brandy and lie on my bed. I see it all there. That ship comes right out of the bedpost and I see her there exactly as I want to build her."

The Netty B is a miniature Nova Scotia fishing schooner in all her racy ruggedness. Distilled from the world famous schooners that fished the North Atlantic from the Grand Banks to Cape Cod, and won the great fisherman's races off Halifax and Gloucester Massachusetts, and finally found their way onto the Canadian dime. Swift and capable as racehorses or tow horses, such is the Netty B. Forty-six inches long, schooner-rigged, and an imitation of the east coast schooner Delawans. She is built of miniature mahogany planking, pegged to hand-carved sections. Only two nails were used in the entire project which is the 99th since he arrived in Ontario 44 years ago. Bert doesn't use plans. That's for modellers. He uses the memory of a



For many years Bert's "playboats" graced the windows of Marie's Seafood restaurant on Lock Street.

childhood watching his uncle build fishing schooners on Sober Island near Halifax. School was over and work had commenced for Bert when he was 10 years old. He completed a 12-year fishing career at an age when many people today are thinking about getting their first job.

Although lobster fishing brought him back to sea twice after leaving it in 1914, Bert had begun his trek inland. Apple picking, working in shipyards and then the construction of the Welland Ship Canal led him into the heart of Ontario. But the sailing ships of the Maritimes stayed with him in spirit.

"All my people could build boats," he said. I've seen them built when a man had to go from a log to planking with only a one-man saw. Nowadays it's a picnic to build a boat."

In 1926 after working as a carpenter's helper on the construction of the Welland Canal, Bert stayed in Port Dalhousie. He went to work at Port Weller Dry Docks and while there; "Charlie Ansell (then the owner) named a tug after me... I don't know why. My arm is gone now so I'm a sweeper."

"I won't build any more playboats in hotels. I should have a bench to work on so I can get at both sides. This way all I can do is fit one plank on at a time," he said, gesturing toward the Netty B. "It keeps me out of mischief... but I get so gol darn fed up being cooped up in here."

Perhaps the sight of the Netty B with her white sails standing out against the tired looking wallpaper conjures up the visions of a boyhood spent on heaving decks under canvas stretched taut by a North Atlantic gale, a hold brimming with cod, racing for the best price at market. ■

- Murray Thomson, Standard reporter

# Community Events Spring/Summer Calendar 2022



New pier benches installed... not exactly a heritage design.



The Port Dalhousie Conservancy  
www.pdconservancy.org

## MAY

**Poochella!**  
Sun, 15 May 2022  
11:00 am – 5:00 pm edt

Lock Street Brewing Company,  
15 Lock Street, St. Catharines,  
ON L2N 5B6  
<https://www.eventbrite.ca/e/poochella-2022-tickets>

**St. Catharines Games and Fish Association. 8th Annual Port Dalhousie 3x3 Salmon Classic**  
May 21 – May 23

<https://scgfa.ca/event/the-port-dalhousie3x3-salmon-classic/>

## JUNE

**Summer Solstice Drumming Down the Sun & Yoga on the Beach**  
June 21

By donation to help defray costs.  
7pm yoga on the beach – bring a yoga pad or blanket

Drumming down the sun – bring anything to shake, rattle or drum, a pair of spoons, a plastic bottle and a stick, anything to make a joyful noise...and be prepared to dance  
Hosted by Niagara Nature Tours  
www.niagaranaturetours.ca 905-562-3746 for updates and change of location if Lakeside Park floods and is closed.

## JULY

**Kids Day Derby**  
July 1 to Labour Day weekend  
<https://scgfa.ca/kids-day/>

**Henley Masters Regatta**  
JULY 31 2022

<https://www.henleyregatta.ca/>

## AUGUST

**138TH Royal Canadian Henley Regatta**  
August 2-7, 2022.

Henley Race Week

Cheer on the crews at Canada's oldest and North America's largest rowing event.  
t. 905.935.9771  
(active during event)  
www.henleyregatta.ca

**Niagara 2022 Canada Summer Games.**  
August 6-21, 2022

<https://niagara2022games.ca/>

## Peach Festival

St. John's Church will be hosting a peach festival in August (most likely the 3rd week). Watch the following areas for more details about this and other events.  
Lawn sign  
FB Page:  
St. John's Anglican Port Dalhousie  
Website:  
Stjohnsportdalhousie.com

## ONGOING

**Spring Salmon Derby**  
April 2 to June 4, 2022

Check out their FB page for more info!

## BWC Summer Events

Welcome to a fresh new season of floral beauty and event fun in Port Dalhousie, courtesy of your Beautification and Works Committee. Please visit our downtown "Port" regularly for waterfront walks, culinary indulgences, and quaint shops. Connect with us on Facebook to read about our upcoming events, dates, and times. We're busy planning! If you'd like to send us a note on Facebook or make a donation, we'll get back to you a.s.a.p. We'll see you soon, in Port!

**TD Niagara Jazz Summer Festival**  
July 20 - 24, 2022.

1-844-LIV-JAZZ (548-5299)  
Check the website for details  
<https://niagarajazzfestival.com/schedule/>

## Kiwanis Club Events

The Kiwanis Club of St. Catharines has been helping in our community since 1935. They have fundraised for a lot of projects that have benefited families in Niagara. The continuing goal of the Club is to keep children priority one.

Ways you can help support the Kiwanis Club of St. Catharines and it's fundraising efforts.

Play Kiwanis TV Bingo on Sunday nights at 8pm from September to July on YourTV  
Cogeco Channel 10 and HD700.

Get your tickets for Catch The Ace online at [www.KiwanisLottery.com](http://www.KiwanisLottery.com)

To find out more about the Kiwanis Club of St. Catharines log on to [www.kiwanisstcatharines.com](http://www.kiwanisstcatharines.com)

## CITY EVENTS

June to October 2022

### Music in the Square

Come down to Market Square and enjoy a local live performance every Saturday during our Farmers Market. Please follow current COVID-19 restrictions - find more information at [stcatharines.ca/Market](http://stcatharines.ca/Market)

### Available Self Guided Heritage Tours in St. Catharines

Explore the City of St. Catharines' rich history and take one of our heritage tours. Whether you're traveling by foot, bicycle or car, our tours will take you to some major historic attractions. This is a great way to learn about the history of our community.

### Victoria Lawn Cemetery Walking Tour

### Downtown Heritage Corridor Walking Tour

### Canal Driving Tour

Check out the city of St. Catharines website for more details on these self guided tours to learn more about the history and legacies of your community!  
<https://www.stcatharines.ca/en/arts-culture-and-events/heritage-tours.aspx>

### St. Catharines Museum

Stay in the know on upcoming museum events and programs. Check out the museum events and calendar for virtual lecture series schedule and as well as when in person events will commence.  
<https://www.stcatharines.ca/en/arts-culture-and-events/museum-events.aspx>

Check out the City event page for ongoing virtual and in person events this summer  
<https://lovestc.ca/upcoming-events/>



The Reporter is always looking for volunteer photographers and writers. If you have some Port-related photos or articles we would love to see them. Maybe they will be published in the next edition!

Please submit to: [editor.reporter@gmail.com](mailto:editor.reporter@gmail.com)

The Port Reporter provides free listings for any Port Dalhousie (or vicinity) area events that benefit local charities or community organizations and would be of interest to Port residents, vendors and visitors. It is at the discretion of the editorial team to include or exclude submitted events. Readers are strongly encouraged to check directly with the organizers prior to the event as details do change because of weather etc. Submissions are due by the 1st of the month prior to publication and can be sent to: [advertising.portreporter@gmail.com](mailto:advertising.portreporter@gmail.com).

## Royal Canadian Legion Branch 350 Update

Good news is on the horizon as the Port Dalhousie Legion Branch 350 with a new canteen, fully equipped commercial kitchen, hall, and beautiful licensed outdoor patio are currently slated to open this July. There will be an official grand opening and fine points regarding this will be worked out and announced soon.

Many locals will be very happy to hear that various items and details of the old Legion have been incorporated into the new design. Volunteers have been very hard at work coordinating everything from furnishings to the installation of the 10 new draught lines. There are also two Legion-owned condominium units on the second floor that will be leased out. You will note a “for lease” sign with contact information already hanging on the fence. As always, the Legion is eager to embrace new members, to find out more go to [www.Legion.ca](http://www.Legion.ca). Membership provides many rewards and is recognized across the country. However, you do not have to be a veteran to become a member although you need to be 18 years of age, a Canadian or a Citizen of an Allied Nation.

*“Your Royal Canadian Legion is committed to making a difference in the lives of Veterans and their families, providing essential services in our communities, and remembering the men and women who sacrificed for our country.” - Legion.ca*

The Legion Branch 350 was established on April 7<sup>th</sup>, 1945, making it one of Port Dalhousie’s oldest and most cherished service clubs. Throughout the years generations have joined as members and participants, through events such as their softball league, fish fry, dances to live music, meat raffles and BBQ’s.

Keep an eye out for the new Legion Branch 350 signage which will be proudly displayed on the exterior wall in the weeks to come. ■

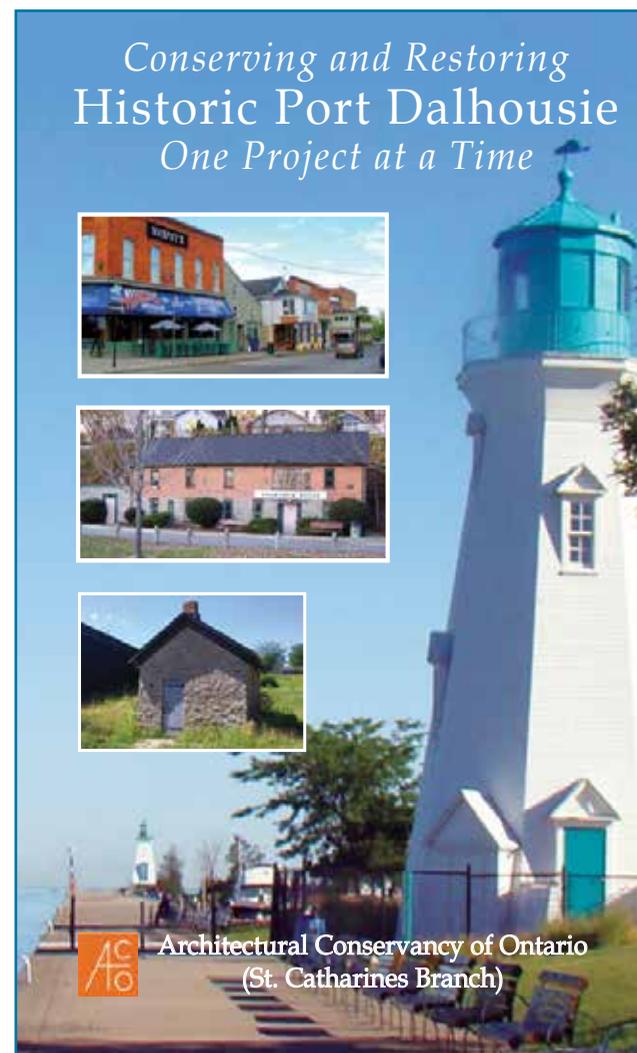
- Kelly George

### Crossword Answers

P	L	A	T		R	A	C	K		L	E	H	A	R
E	A	S	Y		E	C	H	O		A	G	A	T	E
S	H	I	P		L	E	E	R		W	O	M	E	N
T	R	A	I	N	E	D	S	E	A	L		M	A	E
			S	E	A		S	A	M	E	H	E	R	E
E	C	S	T	A	S	Y			Y	S	E	R		
M	O	I		P	E	A	R	Y		S	I	L	L	S
M	O	N	T		S	P	E	E	D		R	O	O	K
A	L	G	A	L		S	T	A	R	T		C	R	I
		L	I	E	N			H	O	B	O	K	E	N
T	W	E	L	F	T	H	S		N	A	R			
O	H	S		T	H	U	N	D	E	R	B	O	L	T
R	A	B	B	I		R	O	A	D		I	B	I	S
S	C	A	R	E		T	O	T	O		T	O	R	A
O	K	R	A	S		S	P	A	N		S	E	A	R



On Canal Street



## We Still Don't Know What Will Happen to the Walker Family YMCA!

It's been over a year since the announcement came of the sale of the Walker Family YMCA on March 10, 2021. All we know for sure is that on February 4, 2022, Atria Development bought the property. Beyond that, all we can say is, “There is HOPE that the St Catharines Y will be operational.” There have been strong indications that Atria would like to keep most of the building operational and to build at least two condo towers next to the current building.

Atria's preference is to have the Niagara Region YMCA take on a long-term lease on the building and keep offering the services that they used to provide. It is our understanding that they have filed their plans with the St Catharines City Planning Department and that discussions are underway.

The Niagara Region YMCA staff has exchanged key data with the City's Recreational Department and both parties are doing assessments of what is the best plan for the future. The City's interest obviously is driven by the need for public pool access. Public demands are not met by having only the Kiwanis pool. The Y's interest is driven by cost containment and therefore the hope that some arrangement can be reached with the City.

The good news is that the Y is engaging with the “Save the Y Supporters” and is ready to listen and work with its members. There have been meetings with the Y Board and the “Save the Y Supporters”. More importantly, Y staff has started to use the “Save the Y Supporters” as a resource in their assessments of future alternatives for the St Catharines YMCA.

These discussions and sessions with the Recreations Department coupled to potential flexibility by Atria will hopefully lead to some joint proposal that can be reviewed by City Council in June/July and we hope the resolution will be a satisfactory path forward for all parties. Fingers crossed!

St Catharines needs this Facility! It is not just a building with a pool and a gym. It is a Community Centre and its varied programs are vital for building a healthier spirit, mind and body for all its citizens.

- UWE Natho



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