

# THE REPORTER

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SERVING THE COMMUNITY OF PORT DALHOUSIE SINCE 2005

SUMMER 2018

## Citizens or Stakeholders?

Now that the Secondary Plan for Port Dalhousie has passed, it is becoming increasingly obvious that there are dangerous shifts taking place in how people perceive the rights of citizens to control their own destiny. I always thought of politics (perhaps naively) that citizens vote for governments who do what the citizens are asking them to do, but from the conversations we have today, we can see that may no longer be the case. It now appears to depend more on the individual world view of those with influence and not its citizens collective voice.

It starts with the language we use. We used to speak about citizens and taxpayers but now you more often hear the word “stakeholders” which is a much different concept. Stakeholders can mean almost anyone

*“We used to speak about citizens and taxpayers but now you more often hear the word “stakeholders” which is a much different concept.”*

who has an interest. In our case, it could mean Toronto developers, landowners, business associations, the Region, or individuals who have their

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## Life's A Beach

*For Over One Hundred Years, Summertime Picnickers, Sun-Worshippers, Bathers and Other Visitors Have Enjoyed Lakeside Park*



Photo: PSWing

Well summer is officially upon us in Port Dalhousie! I don't know why but water and a beach always attracts people and summer is a sure sign that its time to relax and kick back. I am reminded of the song by the Zac Brown band that goes like this. “ I got my toes in the water , ass in the sand, not a worry in the world, a cold beer in my hand, life is good today” That's what Lakeside Park was for many in the 1940's when people didn't have cars , and very little vacation time. A day spent in Lakeside Park and a lake crossing on the “SS Dalhousie City” was for many the highlight of their summer.

As I write this I am sitting on a

beach in South Carolina, reading the personal papers of Sid Brookson who was the Manager of Lakeside Park for over 50 years. First for the CNR and later on his own. It is a treasure trove of information and insight into what Lakeside Park was but also what it could perhaps be again. Residents I talk to speak fondly of the good times in the Park and on the beach. The smell of frying onions, burgers and chicken on the grills and people everywhere playing games, going on rides, playing baseball, listening and dancing to the orchestra music or just relaxing on the beach. There was something for all ages.

The park was enjoyed by people from all over, Toronto, Hamilton and Buffalo and it was no small affair either. In 1941 the Dofasco Picnic brought over 10,000 people by boat, and train and bus for a company picnic. As the Standard reported, the Port Dalhousie Bakery prepared over 9,000 buns and 275 pies in one day for the park. It was indeed a very busy place. Did you know that at one time the Park actually employed over 150 people?

There are few signs of the bustling place today, the midway and all the buildings are gone now, and only the carousel is left. Some of the demise of the park was just because of changing

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# Citizens or Stakeholders?

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own agendas, even the city corporation itself has its own separate and distinct interest different from the public's.

The City has a huge need for revenue due to its burgeoning bureaucracy and ever growing services. They are solely focused on revenue building, saving money not so much. Since increasing taxes is not particularly palatable for them, the only way to gain revenue is via building development, infilling and growing the population. More people equates to more money. The City hasn't grown substantially in the 40 years I have been here, but they now project thousands more by 2040.

Not sure where they are coming from since we have a very stable if not dropping birth rate. The hope is I assume, that Toronto people will come here to escape the big city and search for a cheaper place to live after they retire. (Which of course will come with its own issues)

Coupled with the change of language to stakeholders, is a curious equivalency that takes place in part

because in our society we want all stakeholders to have equal or at least balanced input. This is frustrating because it doesn't matter how many citizens are opposed to something, we always have to balance interests. The media plays a significant role in this. They usually seek to balance views especially when the public position conflicts with their particular world view.

I once attended a protest rally where over 1500 people attended. In a far corner of the park we were in, were some 20 counter-demonstrators who, fair enough, disagreed with the crowd. In the media the following

*“What is the point of public input if it is only going to be ignored? Is this really a better Niagara?”*



Hank Beekhuis  
President,  
Port Dalhousie  
Conservancy

day we had equal sized pictures of both groups with the headline, “The community is divided” Were they really? What happened to majority rule?

The same equivalency takes place in city planning. Public meetings were held with some 270 citizens who had a clear consensus that a 6-storey height limit was most appropriate. This was completely in line with over 30 years of expert opinion right up to today and multiple expensive studies paid for by those same taxpayers.

The city staff had placed an 8-storey option (out of three) in front of the group but it had little up-take

according to the recorded comments. When talking to developers who have a direct financial stake in the project they blamed the city staff for pushing for 8-storeys. It is not hard to understand the financial incentives of the higher the better for developers who really shouldn't have had a say in the Secondary Plan development. It should be a citizen-driven initiative.

It's hard to keep up with those who have financial interests because it apparently only takes a few of them to tip the scales one way or the other. Citizens who have no financial interests but only community interests are after all just one of many stakeholders. What is the point of public input if it is only going to be ignored? Is this really a better Niagara?

In the end, this new approach has dangerous side-effects. Citizens should have the right to be wrong and they have the right to have their reasonable wishes respected when in the majority. ■



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*Dr David Bergen*

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# Life's A Beach

Continued from front page

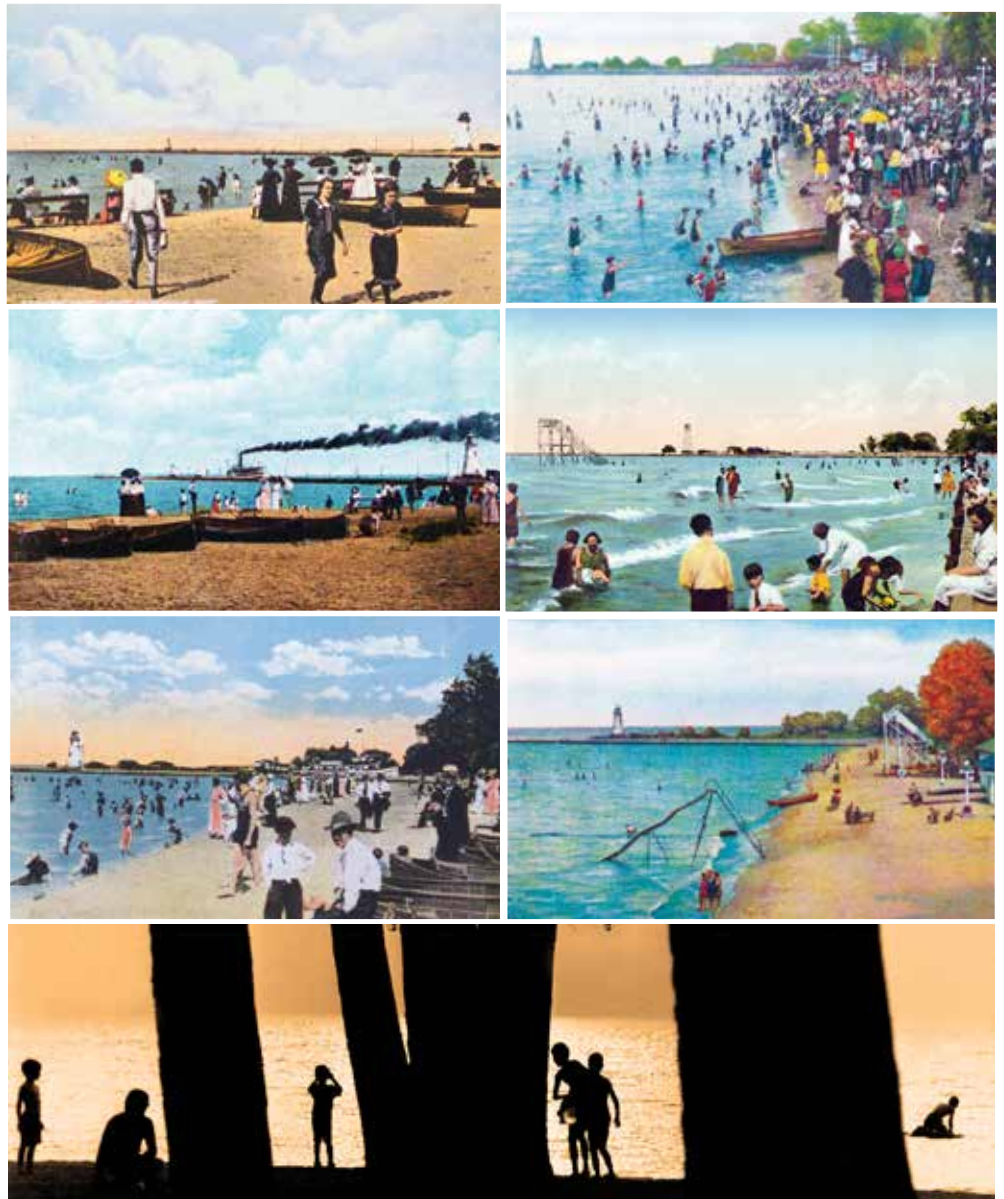
times, the rise of the automobile and polluted beaches, but some of it is also due to bad decisions and a consistent lack of vision and bureaucratic thinking which is also reflected in the papers I read. Battles between, Sid Brookson, the Seaway and the City of St. Catharines were common even then as he defended his business from the uncaring attitude of others. He was a man dedicated to the people and their enjoyment of the Park. I hope to share some of the interesting things I found in future issues.

It makes me think about the many ways we can best improve the operation of Lakeside Park and maintain access to it as a destination and playground for all the citizens of St. Catharines. I think there is a lot that can be done and learned from past experience, but we all have to work together if it's going to happen. We need another Sid!

In the meantime come on down and put your toes in the water and enjoy the beach, buy an ice cream cone, have a beer or just come and sit under a tree and enjoy watching others or read a good book as you listen to the surf like I am.

Enjoy your summer.

- Hank Beekhuis



## Stay Hydrated!

Many of us spend our summer soaking up the sun. Kids are out of school, outdoor sports are plenty, and people are enjoying warm weather activities. However, spending a lot of time outside in the elements puts you at risk for dehydration-related concerns. Sip with purpose; don't chug. When you drink too much water at once, it passes through your system too quickly, failing to go to the kidneys. This can lead to dehydration despite the amount of water you may be drinking. Aim to take a sip of water every 15-20 minutes when you're playing sports or when it's hot outside and you should be right on track. Aim to drink 3 liters a day. People should try to drink 12 glasses a day, especially if they are planning on working out, playing sports or spending excessive amounts of time in the sun.

Bring water with you. Spending more time out of the house often means less easy access to water. When you leave for a day at the beach, make sure you have enough water in your beach bag to last throughout the day. Limit sun exposure. Not shielding yourself properly in the sun causes you to sweat more, which can lead to quicker dehydration. Wearing cotton clothes that are breathable in the heat and a hat that covers your ears will help protect you from potentially dangerous health issues such as heat exhaustion. Whether you're an athlete, a weekend warrior or just want to take better care of yourself, staying hydrated is essential to a healthy body, especially during the hot summer months.

# 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 currently published quarterly, usually in March, June, September and December. Normally 3,500 copies are delivered to homes in Old Port and surrounding areas in Port Dalhousie ward. It can also be found at Avondale, City Hall, public libraries and in various local business establishments.

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Help the Reporter thrive and grow by making a financial donation. Checks can be made out to the Port Dalhousie Conservancy, 600 Ontario Street, P.O. Box 28049, St. Catharines, ON L2N 7P8. With regret, tax receipts are not available at this time.

Please send contributions for future issues to 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 and article submissions for the Fall issue is August 1, 2018.**

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## The Lives of Life-Long Port Residents

# Tell Us Your Story, Dorothy Jones

At 94 years young, Dorothy Jones (nee Douglas) now resides in a bungalow in North St. Catharines, but Port Dalhousie will always be her home.

Dorothy's mother was born in a house which still stands on Main Street, across from the former St. Andrews Church. She was delivered by a "nice lady from Canal Street, a good neighbour, who helped with Port births." Dorothy was also born at home, on Albert Street (now Bayview Ave.).

In 1919, Dorothy's father, Robert Douglas, along with her uncle Chas. Smiley, built a new bakery on the corner of Elgin and Albert Streets, a short distance from Dorothy's maternal grandmother's home.

Dorothy's current home is full of Port pictures, especially several of the lighthouses. When interviewed, she immediately brought out a large picture of her dad and uncles with their truck. The truck was used to deliver fresh bread to the army in Niagara-on-the-Lake as well as around St. Catharines. People in Port received

their delivery by horse and cart, and Dorothy remembers fondly an incident in which the horse pulled the cart into a curb and it turned over. All the Port kids came running and were able to grab delicious baked goods from the fallen cargo.

Dorothy's friends were also able to earn a delicious reward by helping Dorothy do a job she disliked when working in the bakery. She was tasked with making boxes for cakes and pies but was able to get her friends to make them. The one who made the most would be rewarded with a butter tart.

Dorothy's dad also tried to teach her to decorate the wedding cakes for which he was famous, but she wasn't happy with that task either and didn't do much decorating for the bakery. Yet, she remembers decorating quite a few cakes later in life just for pleasure.

Another interesting bakery story is that the ships - by blowing their horn according to an agreed-upon code - let her dad know how many loaves of bread they wanted delivered to the ship

while they were passing through the locks. Dorothy remembers one such delivery almost turning tragic when her dad had gone down into the tunnel at the side of the lock wall and, because of a log, was caught inside. It started filling with water! Dorothy and a friend were in her dad's car on the side of the lock and heard him yelling. She soon realized this sounded serious and she was able to get the lockmaster to realize there was a problem and to stop filling the lock.

Although Dorothy was able

to get her Port friends to help with her bakery tasks, she also remembers being teased by them. In those days, "everyone rode a bicycle" but she only had her uncle's wooden bike to learn on, and her friends loved to poke fun of the bike and her. She's glad she learned to ride, but never did get her own regular bike.

Dorothy's father was from St. Catharines, and moved to Port only after marrying her mother. He became involved in the Port community and was Chair of the Port Dalhousie public



*Dorothy Jones with the shovel used by her father for the Gracefield School sod-turning ceremony in 1954.*

*Continued next page*

# Tell Us Your Story, Dorothy Jones

Continued from page 4

school board, a position he held for more than 30 years. In 1954, he turned the first sod for the new Gracefield School. Dorothy is pictured here with the shovel from that sod-turning ceremony.

Dorothy loved living in Port and considered it her entire world. She married her husband "Jonesy" after he returned from serving in W.W.II. Interestingly, while he was away, she made a new friend Iris who also lived in Port. As the friends compared letters they received from their respective boyfriend and husband, they realized the guys seemed to be writing about the same situations, and started to suspect they were stationed together. Sure enough they were and had also developed a friendship. After the men returned from the war, the couples remained Port Dalhousie friends.

When first married, the Joneses lived in a duplex on Main Street, but had to leave when the son of the owner married and wanted that house. Jonesy then moved Dorothy to Jordan and she couldn't stand it! It felt so far away! Dorothy says she had never been

outside of Port before, except to attend Collegiate High School. She was terribly homesick for Port the entire nine months they lived in Jordan! The only way to get to Port was by train to St.



Catharines and then streetcar to Port, and she couldn't do that often. Jonesy did have a car, but he left early in the morning to work in St. Catharines, and came home late in the evening. So, in Jordan, Dorothy was lonely and on her

own all week. Then, on one of her trips to Port, she found an empty cottage on Abbey Street and rented it without her husband knowing! Her mother was very upset with her because she hadn't

*"She immediately brought out a large picture of her dad and uncles with their truck. The truck was used to deliver fresh bread to the army in Niagara-on-the-Lake as well as around St. Catharines"*

discussed it first with her husband and that just wasn't considered okay in those days! But Dorothy felt she had to get back to Port.

Dorothy admits the cottage was in pretty bad shape – no electricity and

no hot water. Although she owned an electric stove, she couldn't use of course it and she had to cook on a wood stove. Soon though, while she was in hospital to have her second son, their landlord informed her husband that a somewhat larger cottage behind their own had become empty and before she got home from the hospital, Jonesy had moved all their belongings into that cottage, which did have electricity.

Later, when GM was on strike for a "long time" they moved into an "office" attached to the Lions Centre and worked as caretakers of the centre for a number of years. She remembers it as very hard work because there were "many stag parties and we had none of the conveniences of today to help keep things clean." Many of her children's friends would come by after playing lacrosse behind the Centre and one lad in particular regularly took half a loaf of bread and some baloney along and would make sandwiches for himself on their porch.

Then their second son was diagnosed with having severe asthma

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**Jim Bradley, MPP**  
St. Catharines

*I am honoured to represent the  
people of St. Catharines.*

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## Report from Councillor Bruce Williamson Port Dalhousie Ward

### Bruce's Briefs

Warm spring time greetings to all. It has been a busy few months featuring many events, such as charity fundraisers, Clean City clean ups including the PDBWC's in Old Port, the tenth annual In the Soil Festival downtown, the start-up of summer sports leagues including soccer, rowing, lacrosse, baseball, softball, beach volleyball, lawn bowling, golf and many other activities. The most symbolic event for marking the start of the spring season in Port is, of course, when the "merry-go-round" opens. Since it successfully did so on May 19<sup>th</sup> we can get on with our fair weather pursuits. Much appreciation to the Friends of the Carousel for all their efforts in maintaining this historic gem.

On January 28<sup>th</sup> the Port Legion was the site of a "Raise the BME Roof Fundraiser!" to collect funds to restore St. Catharines' first National Historic Landmark, the Salem Chapel of the British Methodist Episcopal tradition. This is the church Harriet Tubman helped to build and is our shared link to the Underground Railroad. The structure needs a new roof and, with the construction of the new Niagara Regional Police Station to be built right behind, the church needs to be buckled down to help mitigate the stress of shaking and pounding the ground around it. Remember, this is a building that is almost 165 years old and has wood log foundations. Its balconies and sanctuaries are well-built and well-maintained but are delicate and in need of all the care they can be given. Rochelle Bush shared with us an inspiring history of the church. I was pleased to have previously made a motion at Council to explore ways for the municipality to provide assistance to this effort.

In March the Port Dalhousie Lions Club held a dinner and dance to celebrate their 70<sup>th</sup> anniversary of service to our community. The contributions this service organization has made over these many years are truly remarkable and for that we offer our sincere gratitude.

Thanks to the Jaycees for putting on their Annual Easter egg hunt on a sunny but frigid morning in Royal Henley Park. It is a good fundraiser for Community Care.

The St. Catharines Rowing Club's 72nd Annual Captain's Dinner was held on April 7<sup>th</sup>. The Club presented awards and trophies to honour the athletes, coaches and the many volunteers that make us such a powerhouse in rowing.

On April 10<sup>th</sup> the City of St. Catharines hosted the 30th Annual Volunteer Recognition Night. We recognized the work of the countless volunteers who generously donate their time to make our City a better place.

On April 25<sup>th</sup> we attended the Annual Respect for Law Dinner at the Grantham Optimist Club where the Club honoured Niagara Regional Police Constable Glen Hamilton for his distinguished service.

Either Carlos or I, and often both of us, participated in numerous charity events. May seems to be the month for walk-a-thons including the Annual Walk for Muscular Dystrophy on May 5<sup>th</sup>, 2018. The walk started and ended at Lakeside Park. The annual Mandarin MS Walk took place Sunday, May 6<sup>th</sup>. Thanks to members of the Port Dalhousie Lions Club for again hosting this event.

Multiple Sclerosis affects about one in 340 Canadians, giving Canada one of the highest rates of MS in the world. It is personally significant cause for our family as my mother has lived with MS for most of her adult life. Later that morning was Walk so Kids Can Talk presented by BMO at Jaycee Gardens. We were honoured to join in a national day of community action to celebrate Mental Health Week. Funds raised through this event enables counsellors to offer help to young people – no matter where they are, what time it is, or what issue they are dealing with. As a parent of three teenagers and as a high school teacher having this option for young people to turn to in a time of crisis is invaluable. Next we moved to Grantham Lions Park to participate in the Hike for Hospice Niagara in support of the compassionate palliative care services the Stabler Centre on Ontario Street offers to our community. It is a place dear to many, particularly those of us who have been assisted in spending final hours with loved ones within its walls.

This year marked the 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Niagara Folk Arts Festival, Canada's oldest continually-running Heritage Festival. As the Niagara Folk Arts Multicultural Centre's website states, "This festival is a beautiful blend of the cultures and people that make Canada a nation to be envied. During the festival the multicultural community opens its doors and its hearts and welcomes you to experience the beauty and uniqueness of their cultures, traditions, art, music and food. There are dances, exhibitions, live entertainment and more." The world is literally at our door step, and many folks embraced the festival, including Councillor Garcia and myself, as we both attended the opening ceremony and parade as well as many ethnic club open houses. Sincere appreciation is extended to the organizers, sponsors, volunteers and youth ambassadors who worked so hard to make it a great festival year after year.

Perhaps the single biggest expression of caring in the region, if not the province was the Rankin Run for Cancer held on May 26<sup>th</sup>. As usual, the annual Run/Walk started at the Grantham Lions Club. This year, over 265 teams competed with over 14,000 participants and 56 schools. It was the most successful run yet with over \$1 million raised. The Run committee are all unpaid volunteers. Particular thanks to the volunteers and to the greatest Run Director of all, Maryanne Edwards.

The Arts Awards took place on June 4<sup>th</sup> at the FirstOntario Performing Arts Centre. This is a special event when we took the time to recognize the work of some amazing local artists and celebrated their accomplishments.

I wish I could report forward thinking and reasonable land use planning decisions are being made at City Hall in regard to the future of our waterfront and harbour area. Alas they are not. Visions of tall and wide apartment buildings obstructing vistas and views to the lake and harbour seem to be some people's view of progress. It is not one I share. I am concerned that, with only one way in and one way out, adding too many large condos is a recipe for traffic and parking problems that will severely restrict the ability of residents to access the park, the harbour, the beach and residences. In the next edition I will be sharing the lessons my grandfather RCAF Flight Lieutenant Cyril Williamson taught me when he operated the Port Weller Lighthouse from 1946-1970. I firmly believe, as he did, that experiencing the waterfront is a simple, pleasurable and reinvigorating experience every Canadian should be able to enjoy and not one we should be deprived of.

Many thanks to my fellow Ward Councillor Carlos Garcia who works closely with me on all issues.

*Have a safe and happy summer!* ■

**Councillor Bruce Williamson**

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### Fortress Real Investments Being Sued by Mortgage Lenders

Developer Fortress Real Developments Inc. is "facing a flurry of legal actions from mortgage lenders who have filed applications to foreclose on land earmarked for development projects," reports the Globe and Mail.

In February, Ontario's financial regulator revoked the license of mortgage brokerage Building Development and Mortgages Canada Inc. (BDMC) and Vince Petrozza, a co-founder and COO of a related firm, Fortress Real Developments, following an investigation into risky syndicated mortgage investments.

in April The Fortress Real Developments office in Toronto was raided by the RCMP, acting upon

six search warrants related to an investigation into syndicated mortgage frauds.

The City of Regina has recinded construction permits for another Fortress Project, "Capital Pointe" and ordered the backfilling of the excavation. The property had previously amassed a large sum of outstanding liens and tax arrears.

Fortress Real Developments is the developer of the condo project "Union Waterfront" proposed for Port Dalhousie's core.

*\*With files from Globe and Mail, Reuters, Global News, Toronto Star and Regina Leader-Post*



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# Tell Us Your Story, Dorothy Jones

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due to either the condition of the "office" or because of all the high weeds surrounding the Lions Centre: They had to find another place to live. They moved to a house next door to Latcham's Grocery and lived there until the landlord put the house for sale; they then found a new house in north St. Catharines. Dorothy still didn't want to leave Port but felt she had to respect her husband's wishes this time.

Since birth, Dorothy has been a member of St. John's Anglican Church in Port, as was her mother before her. Both she and her parents were married there, and she remains a member. At one point, she and her siblings donated a green hangings and vestments cloth in memory of her parents. The minister's wife designed it, and a committee stitched it together. They asked Dorothy and sister Leona to do some of the stitching in honor of her mother who had been the town seamstress. But neither girl knew how to sew, so after doing a few stitches they left and told the committee they

should pull out their stitches once they were gone.

When asked about special events in Port, Dorothy remembers the bank being robbed. Her older sister Leona worked as an operator for Bell Company at the time (located on the corner of Ann & Pine). Dorothy doesn't remember much detail but says her sister was given an award for whatever she did as an operator while the robbery was taking place, because it helped in catching the robbers. She doesn't remember anything about who the robbers were, but doesn't think they were from Port, saying, "It was not usual for crime to happen in Port."

Dorothy also recalls their family having a special friendship with the chef who worked in the restaurant located right on the beach in Lakeside

Park by the dance hall. He would sometimes contact her father and tell him there was food left over so he should bring the family down. They would dress up as if for a special occasion and go enjoy a leftover food dinner in the restaurant. The restaurant eventually closed because the lake water came up too high and washed into it (there was no basement).

As said earlier, Dorothy didn't leave Port often, but did attend

high school at the Collegiate. To get there, they took the streetcar and Dorothy's memory is that they would get a quarter to buy tickets for the week. They usually rode to school and walked home if the weather wasn't too bad, to save on ticket costs. To cross

Martindale Pond they would put their ear to the rail on the streetcar trestle. If they heard no vibration, they would know there wasn't a streetcar coming, so they would have time to walk across the trestle. Dorothy also remembers a flat bottom boat crossing the canal to bring Port people to a streetcar on the Michigan Ave. side of Port. That streetcar would take folks to Niagara Falls and, as an adult, Dorothy made this trip a couple of times.

Dorothy loves to read Port Reporter and when finished, mails her copy to her oldest son, now living in Calgary. Her horizons have expanded in recent years, with trips to Western Canada and Alaska, but, for her, Port will always be the most important and loved place on earth. ■

*From the 8/2/1919 St Catharines Standard:*

*"Douglas & Smiley, our energetic Port bakers, are so rushed for business that another baker has been engaged to meet the demands. They are supplying the park for the holiday with 9000 rolls and 275 pies, which speaks well for Port bakery."*

*Do you have a Port Dalhousie story to tell? Or know someone with a story that should be told? If so, please contact us with their name and contact info.*

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# Adventures on the Beach

Lakeside Park and its Famed Beach Were Hugely Popular Attractions Beginning at the Turn of the Century.

Shortly after the N.S.&T. line (Niagara, St. Catharines and Toronto) was completed to Port Dalhousie in 1901, Lakeside Park was developed. It was originally owned and operated by the N.S.&T. Navigation Company and was a source of traffic for streetcars and steamers. The loaded steamers and trolley cars brought people by the thousands, and in 1922 the area of the park doubled to twelve acres.

In the 1970s one resident talked about the evolution of the park and beach, as well as a personal recollection:

"People came in the summers. One time they came with a tent and put a merry-go-round underneath it. Another tent was there with bingo underneath it. When the summer was gone they moved away. People began to think they could make money there, so they began to put up permanent buildings. It worked itself up that way. The N.S. and T. had a beautiful dance hall right on the beach that was always full. Afternoons and evenings they had music there. I used to go down there many a time and dance. I loved to dance and even won a prize once."

Poster courtesy Greg Huibers

"I knew this great big fat fellow who weighed nearly three-hundred pounds. He said, 'Come let's dance.' He was like a rubber ball. He just bounced. Fat men do, you know. There were two hundred couples on the floor and we danced for 35 minutes. A man came over to us and said what I thought was, 'Don't spit on the floor.' I said, 'What did you say?' 'Stay on the floor,' was his reply. Then they stopped the music. 'Those we haven't spoken to, please sit down,' they said, and a whole bunch of them left the floor. There were maybe 20 couples remaining. They started to play the music again and for 35 minutes we waltzed until we nearly died. After a while they stopped again and each time they would come over and say, 'Stay on the floor.' Then it got down to three and I was wishing they'd put us off with the first lot. They gave me a statue of Venus de Milo painted gold. I was going to make a lamp out of it but it got knocked over and broken, so that was the end of it."

The park was famed as having one of the best beaches on the Great Lakes and bathers, boaters, picnickers and cottagers were drawn to the park to avail themselves of all it afforded.



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# Adventures on the Beach Continued

"Back in the day it wasn't a park, it was a beach where people lived. A small colony of fishermen and their families lived on the eastern edge. When the beach was flooded new homes had to be found for the people. It was flooded right up to the hotels. There were the Howes, Brooks, Wilmoths, Johnsons and further down were the Bentzs and Naths who were fishermen. It was squatter's rights there and I don't think they even had to pay taxes."

"I think it was around July one year we had a hurricane," recalls Mr. F. Wright who was born on the Michigan side in 1896, "There were ten times more Poplar trees in the park as there are now. That hurricane came and pulled those big Poplars right out of the ground. I never saw such a storm. Nearly half the trees on Main Street were knocked down as well." ■

-Excerpted from "A History Outline of Port Dalhousie" by Christine Robertson

<p><b>Monday, August 15th</b> <b>FIRST PERFORMANCES</b> 4 p.m.—9 p.m. <b>JERRY AND CASEY</b> <b>AND CASEY JR.</b> Introduced by <b>JACK DEXTER</b> <b>The Master Ventriloquist</b> <b>FREE DANCES !! 9—10 p.m.</b></p> <p><b>Tuesday, August 16th</b> <b>REQUEST NITE DANCE</b> Ask Jack for your Favorite Number — He'll be glad to play it for you.</p> <p><b>Wednesday, August 17th</b> <b>Box Lacrosse</b> <b>7.00 P. M.</b> St. Catharines All-Stars vs. Lakesides</p> <p><b>Thursday, August 18th</b> <b>SPECIAL CHILDREN'S</b> <b>Ventriloquist Performances</b> Jack Dexter will play to the Kiddies at 4 p.m. and 9 p.m.</p>	<p><b>Thursday, August 18th (Continued)</b> <b>Another LUCKY NUMBER DANCE</b> Dancing Patrons will receive a Lucky Number on Admission to Dance Hall Floor. Draw at 11.30 p.m.</p> <p><b>Friday, August 19th</b> <b>OUR USUAL NITE OF MERRIMENT</b> <b>GRAND NOVELTY DANCE</b> Free Novelties—Fun Galore Regular Prices</p> <p><b>Saturday, August 20th</b> <b>Box Lacrosse</b> <b>7.00 P. M.</b> Toronto vs. Port Dalhousie</p> <p><b>Sunday, August 21st</b> <b>"SETH PARKER" SING-SONG</b> Commencing 9 p. m. at Band Stand "COME ON—JOIN THE FOLKS."</p> <p><b>COMING ! COMING !</b> —THREE NIGHTS ONLY— August 22nd — 23rd — 24th <b>STAN. WILLIAMS</b> and his Brilliant Eight Piece Dance Orchestra —Regular Prices—</p>	<p><b>Lakeside Park</b> PORT DALHOUSIE, ONT. <b>50c</b> Dance - 1 Ticket 1948 L. P. 30 133293</p> <p><i>A Brochure and Dance Hall ticket reflect the range of entertainment activities offered at Lakeside Park</i></p>
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# Port Dalhousie Beautification and Works Committee Report

The BWC held its second annual "Dancin' Through the Decades" at the Lions Club on March 24th. The theme was "Old Movies" and the venue was complete with a movie screen showing famous clips. TAs well, there were many movie posters around the hall.

About 180 people showed up, many dressed as their favourite movie character and prizes were given for the best-dressed and best interpretation. All in all, another great event.

Saturday, April 21st was the Annual Clean Up Port Day, to coincide with the Earth Day weekend. About 60 volunteers showed up and was great to see some of the local kids getting involved. After a short intro by both Councilors Garcia and Williamson the group spread out and collected about 50 bags of garbage ... a great job well done!

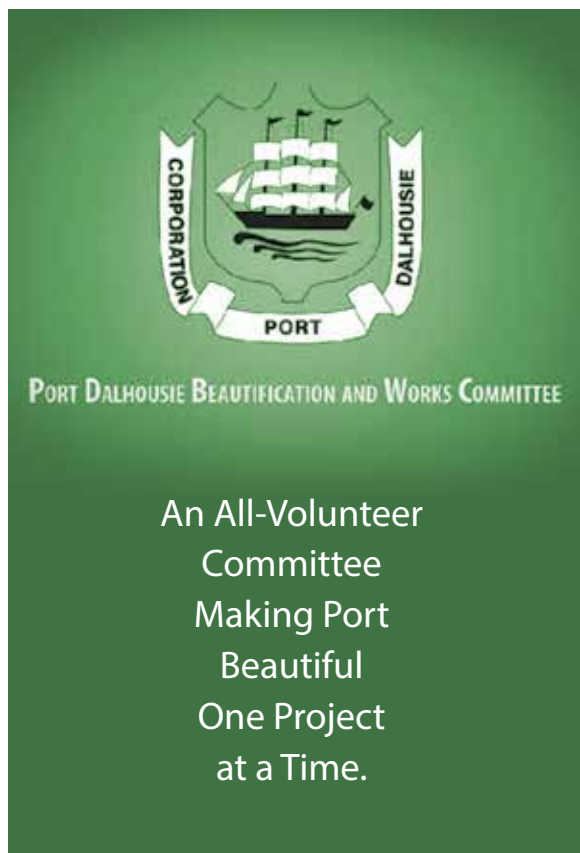
One of the tasks that the BWC is responsible for is the clean-up of the gardens at the Henley Grandstand entrance. Once again we had a great turn-out and we cleaned up the gardens just in time for the Mother's Day Regatta... we say "Thank You!" to all our helpers and a special thank-you, as well, to Pastor Randy and his crew from "Port Church" who unexpectedly came to help.

As all can see, the Lock One Restoration is nearing completion as we write this. It is scheduled to be opened by the Kiwanis Club on the Father's Day weekend of June 16 -17th. The "Kiwanis Duck Race" results will be announced there and the intention is to have entertainment on the new stage area.

The fencing around the lock is in a poor state. We will be looking for some help to give it a lick of paint....

You will have seen that the new attractive metal planters have been installed on the railing around One Lock Street. These were generously donated by Rocco Giovannelli of the new Cefalu Restaurant and the potting soil was provided by the City. By the time you read this, the planters should be in full bloom. Thanks also go out to Jerry Moes of Rice Road Greenhouses in Fonhill, who gave us a great deal on all of the plants and to the folks who helped plant the flower pots, planter benches and the Port mansion site.

Once again, the Holy Cross Catholic Secondary School has produced 10 more



garbage boxes and they should be in place sometime in May. Students have also built another 5 planter benches which will be placed at the old Mansion Site and possibly at the Lock One entrance.

Finally, we of the BWC are always looking to expand our volunteer base, so if you can give an hour to two for light gardening duties, please let us know.....

Also, if there any students in need of "Community Service" hours...the BWC can help! ■

Contact us at [portdalhousie@yahoo.com](mailto:portdalhousie@yahoo.com) or [Facebook.com/PortDalhousieBWC](https://www.facebook.com/PortDalhousieBWC)

# Fun in the Sun With Martha

*Feisty, Passionate and Beloved, Martha Stuart Taught Hundreds of Children how to Swim At Lakeside Park*

“Fun in the sun” and summertime visits to Lakeside Park naturally included various outdoor activities, especially swimming in Lake Ontario.

Many people in St. Catharines beyond a certain age will remember being taught how to swim, and were given life saving instructions, by Martha Stuart. Details concerning her life and ancestry form an interesting and perhaps little-known story.

Martha Elisabeth Stuart was a native of Finland---the “land of a thousand lakes”--- where she was born in 1915. Her ancestors had settled on the western coast of Finland which is a predominately bilingual part of the country. Although Finnish is spoken in the region, approximately 5% of the local population there speaks Swedish. These people are known as “Finn-Swedes” or “Finlandssvensk,” and they have retained their distinct linguistic and cultural identity which sets them apart from the Finns in other parts of



the country.

Martha’s paternal ancestors had lived in the town of Kokkola (or Gamla Karleby in Swedish) as long ago as the 1730s, but had moved to Jakobstad by the 1770s. Her great-great-great-grandfather, Jacob Johansson Wikander, was a merchant (“handelsman”) and a town alderman (“rådmann.”) The next three generations in her family produced sea-faring men, sea captains (“skeppare”) and merchant mariners.

By the 1840s her great-great grandfather had moved to Raahe (or Brahestad) where the family lived until the 1890s. Perhaps Martha had acquired an innate, instinctive love of the water from her nautical forebears. In addition to this, the fact remains that no matter where you travel in Finland, you are never very far from water: the official tally places the total number of lakes in that country at

187,888. “Suomi,” the Finnish name for Finland, literally means “Swamp Land.”

In 1891, Martha’s grandfather Captain Johan Robert Wikander moved to the industrial city of Tampere (Tammerfors.) Known as the “Manchester of Finland,” this city was famous for its textiles---especially those produced by the Finlayson mills. It was in Tampere in 1911 that Martha’s father, Gustav Alfred (or Alfred Gustav) Wikander (1891-1950) was married to Vivi Maria Elisabeth Högman (1887-1977.) They had just two children, a son named Eric (b. 1913) and a daughter Martha.

Gustav Alfred was employed for a time as a commercial or travelling salesman (“handelsresande”) but at some point he studied to become a masseur and physiotherapist. Wishing to provide a better living for his family, Gustav embarked for Canada from Hull in September 1925 aboard the “Mont Royal.” Vivi and the children joined him in Canada in the following year, sailing

on the “Stockholm” and arriving in Halifax in October 1926. By 1927, the Wikander family had settled in St. Catharines where they rented a house at 56 Ontario Street. They later purchased it and it was to remain the family home until 1952.

The matriarch of the family, Johanna Sophia (Bjorkman) Wikander, was later reunited with the family. She died in St. Catharines in October 1942 aged 84 years.

Gustav Wikander conducted a physiotherapy clinic at the Ontario Street address. City directories from the 1930s advertised his services as a “registered drugless practitioner,” as well as providing his patients with “scientific Swedish massage, hydropathic- and electro-therapy.” Gustav was elected to serve as the vice-president of the Physiotherapy Association of Ontario.

Few details are known about

*“Morning lessons were given on the beach, and afternoon lessons were conducted on the pier. If conditions were unfavourable and the water was too choppy then the children would participate in a “beach drill.”*

*Continued next page*

**Tony Douvis**  
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Martha's life during the early 1930s. Records show that she and her family became naturalized Canadian citizens in February 1931. She may have completed her education here, although there was no record of her in the Collegiate "Vox" yearbooks between 1927 and 1930. However, Martha was described as being "an outstanding all-round athlete in her youth." She lived at home with her parents until her marriage in 1941 or '42 to Joseph Arthur Stuart (1909-1978.)

Joseph was a native of St. Catharines, who worked as an electrician during the 1930s and was later employed at General Motors. He served with the armed forces during WW2 and by the late 1940s had been hired by the federal government to work as a customs inspector/excise officer. By a curious twist of fate, Joseph Stuart also possessed a nautical background. His father, Charles Edward Stuart, was described in records from the 1880s and '90s as being a "sailor." Charles Stuart was subsequently employed at McKinnon's, and also at an "axe factory" (possibly the Welland Vale?)



The historical museum in Raabe possesses the world's oldest known diving suit. Known as the "Old Gentleman," this suit was made in the early 18<sup>th</sup> century out of calf leather that had been water-proofed using a mixture of pork fat and tar.

During the late 1940s and early '50s, Martha was an employee of the Canadian Department Stores chain (better known as "Eatons") where, among her other duties, she was responsible for window dressing at the store on St. Paul Street.

Martha's life-long interest in athletics and coaching began increasingly to manifest itself during the early 1940s. At that time she was first referred to as an "instructress," and she became a full-time physical education teacher in St. Catharines schools following the termination of her employment at Eaton's. Her primary interest was that of a swimming and life-saving coach, and Martha held classes at Lakeside Park, the old downtown YMCA on Queen Street, at Ridley College, West Park Secondary School and at the pool at Lancaster Park. The *Standard* once reported that she taught at "virtually every other area where the water was deep enough to tutor her students." Her volunteer life-saving classes



Gustav Alfred Wikander (1891-1950.)

were taught under the auspices of the Royal Life Saving Society and through the Red Cross.

Martha provided free (subsidized) swimming and life-saving lessons in Port Dalhousie during the summer months for many years. Morning lessons were given on the beach, and afternoon lessons were conducted on the pier. If conditions were unfavourable and the water was too choppy then the children would participate in a "beach drill." In later years, Martha was involved in the City's parks and recreation swim program, and by the early 1980s she was "assistant supervisor for pools, beaches and wading pools." City residents who were taught by Martha remember her as an affable woman, and a good and patient instructor. She generally wore a navy-blue bathing suit and cap and had a whistle around her neck.

During the 1940s, Martha was credited with popularizing a new sport called "water ballet" or "synchronized swimming." Some of the local women who were instructed by her in this field were members of a championship squad at the downtown YMCA, and

went on to win at various international competitions. Martha also taught synchronized swimming for the Lincoln County Board of Education.

During her career, Martha Stuart earned "dozens of awards" from the Red Cross and Royal Life Saving Society including medals and bars. She was also honored with a diploma from Lord Louis Mountbatten. In 1981 she received an award for her "outstanding contribution to synchronized swimming."


Martha retired from teaching in 1988, and died at her Welland Vale Road home on or about October 10, 1990. She was interred with her husband at Victoria Lawn Cemetery. Although Martha was never blessed with a family of her own, the children that she instructed became her surrogate family. Her devotion to athletics and education was her gift and, consequently, her enduring legacy to St. Catharines.



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Brian Narhi


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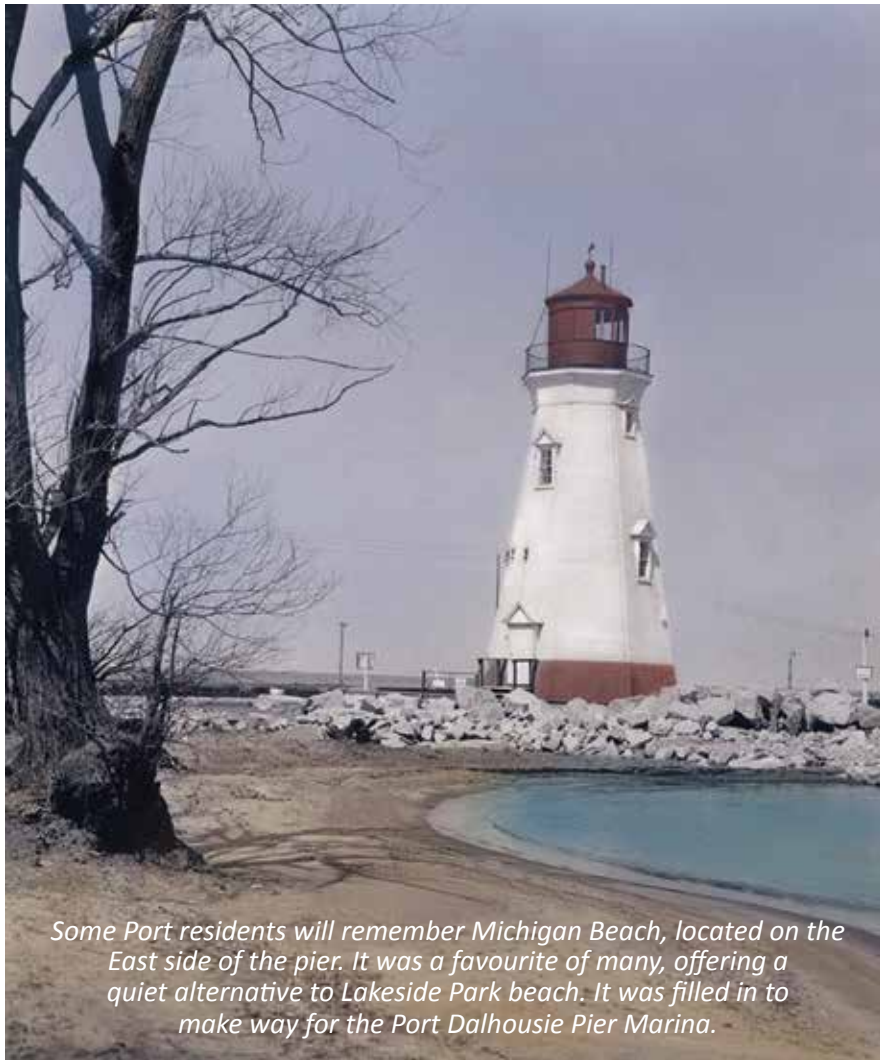
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*Let the Games Begin!*

Photo: Denis Cahill



*Some Port residents will remember Michigan Beach, located on the East side of the pier. It was a favourite of many, offering a quiet alternative to Lakeside Park beach. It was filled in to make way for the Port Dalhousie Pier Marina.*

## The Port Reporter needs your help.

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Contact us at  
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## 2018 Rowing Events

**June 10 - St. Catharines Rowing Club's Boat Christening** at the Alumni Clubhouse on Henley Island

**July TBD - Regatta** hosted by St. Catharine Rowing Club

**August 5 - Royal Canadian Henley Masters Regatta**

**August 6 - Royal Canadian Henley Regatta Opening Ceremonies** at Grandstand, including a fabulous fireworks display

**August 7 - 12 - 136th Royal Canadian Henley Regatta** (one of the largest club regattas in the world)

**August 10 - St. Catharines Rowing Alumni's annual Henley Reunion Night** - come and enjoy the camaraderie of Henley on the clubhouse patio

**September 9 - Jim Stone Regatta**

**October 6 - Brock University Invitational Regatta**



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**Alana Goertzen B.Sc.Kin.(Hons), RMT**

Alana is a Registered Massage Therapist at Lakeshore Chiropractic Group. She graduated with a B.Sc. Kinesiology from Brock University and the Massage Therapy Program at Ontario College of Health and Technology.

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# Lakeside Park

by Rush

Midway hawkers calling  
“try your luck with me”  
Merry-go-round wheezing  
the same old melody  
A thousand ten-cent wonders,  
who could ask for more?  
A pocketful of silver,  
the key to heaven’s door

*Lakeside Park*  
*Willows in the breeze*  
*Lakeside Park*  
*So many memories*  
*Laughing rides*  
*Midway lights*  
*Shining stars*  
*On summer nights*

Days of barefoot freedom  
racing with the waves  
Nights of starlit secrets,  
crackling driftwood flames  
Drinking by the lighthouse,  
smoking on the pier  
Still we saw the magic was  
fading every year

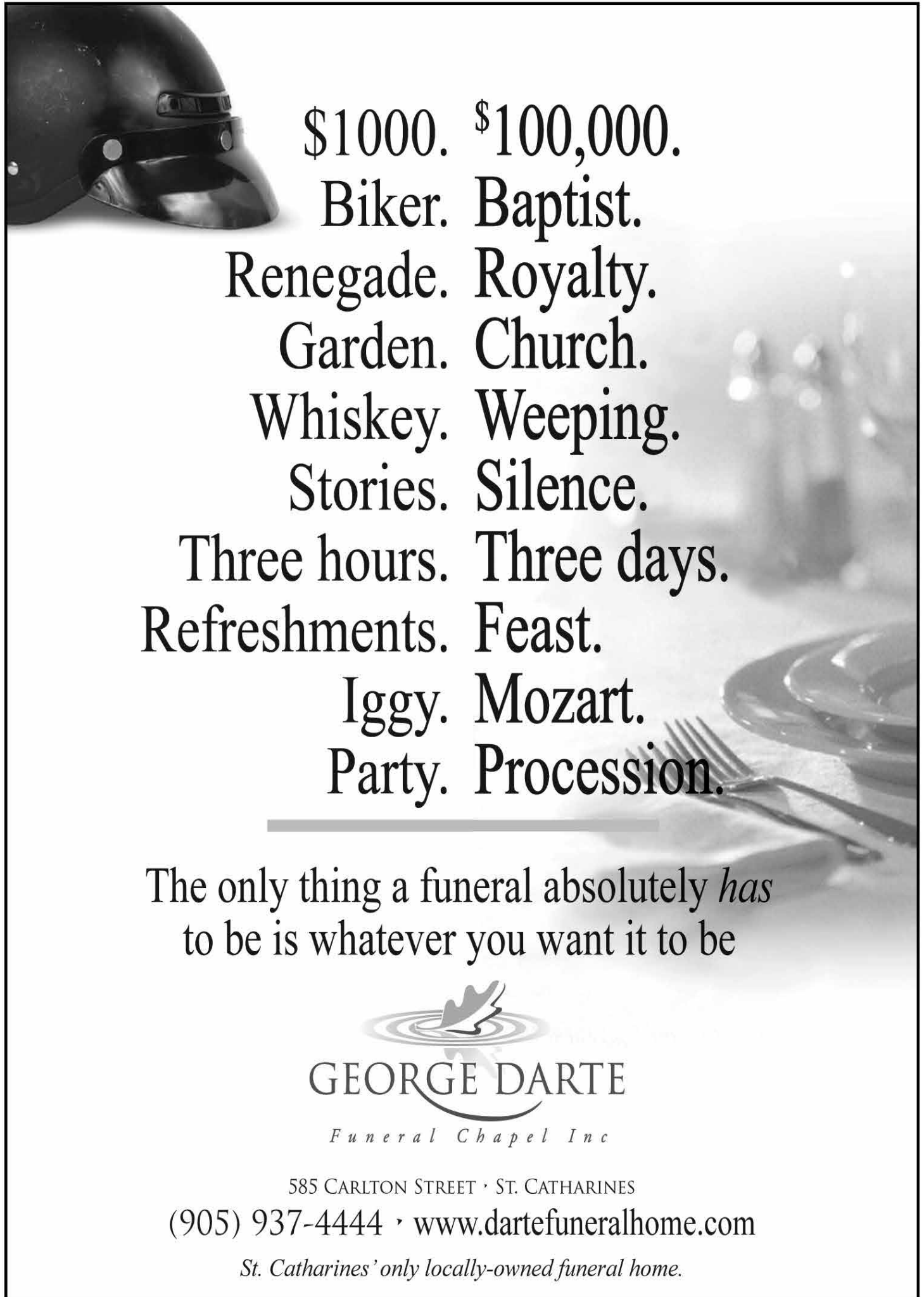
*Lakeside Park*  
*Willows in the breeze*  
*Lakeside Park*  
*So many memories*  
*Laughing rides*  
*Midway lights*  
*Shining stars*  
*On summer nights*

Everyone would gather  
On the twenty-fourth of May  
Sitting in the sand  
To watch the fireworks display  
Dancing fires on the beach  
Singing songs together  
Though it’s just a memory,  
some memories last forever

*Written by: Neil Peart, Geddy Lee  
and Alex Lifeson*

*“In my early teens I achieved every Port kid’s dream: a summer job at Lakeside Park. In those days it was still a thriving and exciting whirl of rides, games, music, and lights. So many ghosts haunt that vanished midway; so many memories bring it back for me. I ran the Bubble Game—calling out ‘Catch a bubble; prize every time’ all day—and sometimes the Ball Toss game. When it wasn’t busy, I would sit at the back door and watch the kids on the trampoline. . . . I got fired.”*


— Neil Peart,  
A Port Boy’s Story; Merely Players



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# Mayor's Message

Hello Port Dalhousie,

Since I last wrote to you in the Port Reporter, we received the news that the federal government has committed funding to repair the Port Dalhousie piers. Three years after the piers were closed to the public, this news was welcomed by the entire city and many more of the visitors who have enjoyed our iconic piers over the years. I would like to thank MP Chris Bittle for his advocacy and hard work on this file. Chris and I met with officials in Ottawa on several occasions to press the importance of repairing the piers and supporting the future of Port Dalhousie. The piers are not only important to the local residents of Port Dalhousie, but are a major draw to Niagara. City staff are working closely with the Department of Fisheries and Oceans on a workplan for the repairs. This will be a major undertaking. It will likely be a couple of construction seasons before the east and west piers are re-opened. I will continue to work with MP Bittle and the DFO to keep you informed about the project.

In the meantime we have been working with partners to improve other areas of our beautiful waterfront. Altogether the City has invested more than \$2 million into Lakeside Park with support from the federal government and Niagara Region. The new pavilion, the Rotary Bandshell, new improved washrooms, concessions and accessibility features have transformed Lakeside Park into an accessible park for all ages and abilities. It is wonderful to see so many people enjoying the new playground and the beach. This summer we look forward to seeing the restoration of old lock 1 by the Kiwanis Club and the return of beach volleyball in Port. The supper market returns on June 5th and as soon as possible – construction on the piers. There is great momentum from the community and lots to look forward to.

The Lake Ontario water levels are not causing major concerns this year and the weather experts are predicting a lovely summer. However as a waterfront community, it is important that we remember the damage from last year's flooding and be prepared for the effects of climate change.

At City Council, we have been making progress on strategic priorities including improvements to transit, a housing action plan, secondary plans for Port and the new GO station, revitalizing neighbourhood parks, investing in our tree canopy and keeping tax rate increases in line with inflation. There is more work to be done and I look forward to working with Council and community partners as we move forward.

As always, thank you to the Beautification and Works Committee volunteers for your ongoing efforts to highlight the charm of the neighbourhood. I would also like to acknowledge the Friends of the Carousel for their commitment to preserving this historic gem. After almost 100 years in our hometown, the carousel remains one of the most beloved attractions.

Thank you to the Port Reporter for the opportunity to connect with your readers. I look forward to seeing you at the Canada Day celebrations in Rennie Park and in the community this summer. Remember to share your memories with #OurHomeSTC on social media and stay in touch!

Cheers,

Walter Sendzik  
Mayor  
mayor@stcatharines.ca  
905-688-5601 ext. 1540  
Facebook: /MayorSendzik, Twitter: @WSendzik, Instagram: wsendzik

# Community Events

## JUNE

**JUNE 17, 12:00 p.m.**  
**KIWANIS DUCK RACE**  
Dalhousie Yacht Club, 74 Lighthouse Road, St. Catharines, ON, Canada  
Already a Father's Day tradition, the annual Kiwanis Duck Race held in Port Dalhousie where 10,000 Rubber Duck are released by the Mayor of St. Catharines.

**JUNE 15, at 6 PM - 1 AM**  
**OUT OF THE HEAT - Emergency Shelter Fundraiser**  
Royal Canadian Legion Merritton  
2 Chestnut St E, St. Catharines L2T 1G5  
Fundraiser for an Out of the Heat is a community run emergency shelter pilot program. Check out their FB page for more details!

**JUNE 21, 2018**  
**21st Annual DRUMMING DOWN THE SUN & YOGA**  
Lakeside Park, 7:00 PM - 9:00 PM  
Check out their FB event for more details!

## JULY

**JULY 1, 2018--All Day Event**  
**CANADA DAY CELEBRATION**  
Come celebrate Canada's 151st Birthday with the City of St. Catharines. Join us for fun family activities, live music and other free festivities on Sunday, July 1, 2018 at Rennie Park in beautiful Port Dalhousie.  
Opening - Noon to 4 p.m.  
Rennie Park - 60 Lakeport Rd.

**FIREWORKS**  
The Port Dalhousie Lions Club fireworks will be held at **10:00 pm on Canada Day** from Henley Island. Residents can view the fireworks from Jaycee Park or Rennie Park. Residents will not be able to access Henley Island during the fireworks display. A rain date of Monday, July 2nd, 2018 has been set.

**JULY 19th - 22nd, 2018**  
**TD NIAGARA JAZZ FESTIVAL**  
**St. Catharines edition**  
This year the TD Niagara Jazz Festival will launch the St. Catharines edition of the festival taking place from July 19th - 22nd, 2018 featuring a World Music stage with 'World Music on the Beach' at Lakeside Park in Port Dalhousie. Check out their website for more details. <http://niagarajazzfestival.com/>

**JULY 28, 2018, 6:00 AM**  
**JULY 29, 2018, 5:00 PM EDT**  
**LAKE ONTARIO CROSSING**  
**32 Mile Paddleboat Race!**  
A 32-mile endurance race from Niagara to Toronto. This is Canada's first and only open-water distance paddling race. The 32 mile, point-to-point course matches the standard established by the Molokai-to-Oahu crossing in Hawaii and the Catalina Classic in California. Register early as spots are limited! Check out their website for more details. <https://www.eventbrite.ca/e/lake-ontario-crossing-2018-registration-43440920964>

## AUGUST

**AUGUST 5TH - AUGUST 12TH, 2018-ALL DAY EVENT**  
**136TH ROYAL CANADIAN**  
**HENLEY REGATTA**

**AUGUST 11-12**  
**The 2018 St. Catharines**  
**Chicken Wing Festival**  
will take place August 11-12 at Lakeside Park in Port Dalhousie! Check out the website [wingfest.ca](http://wingfest.ca) for more details!

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 encouraged to contact the organizers of the events to verify details as events can change due to weather etc... Submissions are due by the 1st of the month prior to publication and can be sent to [editor.portreporter@gmail.com](mailto:editor.portreporter@gmail.com).

**AUGUST 17 at 12 PM to AUGUST 19 at 2 PM**  
**Niagara Motorcycle Rally**  
Hosted by Niagara Motorcycle Rally  
Join us for the First Annual Niagara Motorcycle Rally. Vendors in Lakeside Park, Port Dalhousie during the day, jet boat rides, wine/bourbon/lunch, concerts in Montebello Park, St. Catharines at night.

## SEPTEMBER

**SEPTEMBER 15**  
**KIDS DAY DERBY**  
St. Catharines Game and Fish 23rd Annual Kids Day Derby will take place rain or shine  
Registration 8am to 12noon. Fishing 8am to 2pm. Bring the family for a fun day at Port Dalhousie Harbour. Lots of great prizes to be won! Free bait, gift bag & BBQ for registered kids. Displays, draws, and more! Bring your favourite rod. We encourage all kids to wear a life jacket.  
\*Kids can pre-register on our Kids Day Facebook page. T-shirt given out on derby day.

## ONGOING

**Every Tuesday**  
**PORT DALHOUSIE SUPPER MARKETS**  
Lakeside Park  
A place where the community of Niagara come to stuff their faces, every Tuesday night during the warmest days of the year. From 4:30-Dusk. Drinks. Food. Entertainment. Weather permitting, check their Facebook Page for current details.

**APRIL 29, 2018 - OCTOBER 27, 2018**  
**FULL MOON GHOST WALKS**  
Take an eerie stroll through Downtown St. Catharines and explore our history and haunted tales under the magic of the full moon. Tickets are \$10 each; advance purchase is required. June 28, July 27, August 26, September 24, October 18, 19, 20, 24, 25, 26, 27. ph: 905-685-8424

**Saturdays from JUNE to OCTOBER 2018**  
**MUSIC IN THE SQUARE**  
11 a.m. to 1:30 p.m. - Free  
Enjoy the light sounds of local musicians at Music in the Square while shopping at the St. Catharines Farmers Market.

**Every Friday**  
**THE PORT DALHOUSIE LEGION FISH FRY**  
every Friday from 4 to 7 pm. Everyone is welcome. All the Fish Fry workers are Legion Volunteers. One or two piece of 7 ounce haddock dinners are available for purchase which include french fries, coleslaw, and bread. Onion rings and mushy peas are also available. Karaoke from 7:30 - 11:30 pm. Cash bar available.

**Every Saturday**  
**The Port Dalhousie Legion offers live entertainment** from 7:00 to 11PM. There is either a \$3 OR \$5 cover charge per event depending on the entertainment. Cash bar available. Call 905-934-1261 to find out entertainment schedule  
Membership is not required to enjoy the fish fry, Karaoke, or the live entertainment

The Legion is always looking for new membership, so if you are interested or know anyone who is interested in the Legion, you are urged to contact them!



Photo: Denis Cahill

Photo: Denis Cahill



# Chris Bittle

Member of Parliament - St. Catharines



## Have a safe and happy summer!

**Community Office** [www.ChrisBittleMP.ca](http://www.ChrisBittleMP.ca)

61 Geneva St. Unit 1, St. Catharines, ON L2R 4M2  
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 @ChrisBittleMP    @BittleC    @Chris\_Bittle

# NIAGARA REGIONAL COMMUNITY MORTGAGE PLAN

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Cause-related partners like Cameron are essential in ensuring Niagara residents continue receiving first rate health care!



### Courtney McLoughlin

NIAGARA HEALTH FOUNDATION

Development Officer  
Events and Community Giving



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## Port Dalhousie Vintage Summer Memories

*"The first five years of my life, we lived on Gertrude St. Many times, my mother would pack a lunch and we would go down to the beach for the day. We would put our blanket behind the Merry go round. If Mom wanted to go for a swim, she would put me on the merry go round, give the attendant a quarter. I would go round and round and she could jump in the lake to cool off."*

*Another memory is taking swimming lessons from Martha Stuart. When it came to the level where you learned to dive, out on the pier we went to the Third lamp post. I was absolutely terrified to jump off that pier and never got past that level. Don't think I went back for any more lessons."*

- Linda Eckhardt Rennick

*"Walking on the pier. Hamburgers with fried onions on the midway. Bumper cars. Murphy's. The Port Mansion."*

- Bev Braun

*"Learning to swim and dive off the pier with lessons, earning the Red Cross badges."*

- Brenda Palchynski Foote

*"Drinking by the lighthouse & smoking on the pier."*

- Ron Graham

*"Walking as a family down Queen St to the park to sit at the shows of Abbie Andrews, with Bob and Tom McMillan, A walk through the midway meeting friends, and if we were lucky a ride on our favourite, and then walking back home in the dark. It seems silly now but was OOOH so daring then."*

- Beverley Alder Quinn

*"The roundabout, learning to dive off the pier, swimming, fishing off the pier. I think I also remember going to a dance down there."*

- Anne Loxley Baker

*"My Grandfather drove Streetcar. Use to hitch rides to park."*

- Len Allen

*"A bunch of us that lived in Port down at Cole's Farm end of Port, would get in an inner tube and paddle down to the park, hang out for a while, and then paddle back - that pretty much took all day."*

- Kathi Bogue

# Why Does the Number of Condos Keep Going Up?

As any good investigator will tell you, if you really want to find out what's going on in any particular situation, follow the money!

At the public meeting on December 12<sup>th</sup> 2017, at the Performing Arts Centre, regarding the Fortress proposal on the former Port Place property, there were a few telling moments as to what this project is all about. The first came about when the corporation's lawyer made doubly sure to tell Council about how many supposed tax dollars the City would get out of the development. In this way, they clearly outlined the City's financial interest in this project. A little later in the meeting one of the Fortress investors spoke up in favour of the project. In his case, it was more of what he didn't say that is of interest and requires some explanation.

Fortress Capital, is described in a recent Reuters article by Matt Scuffham, as "a major force in Canada's multibillion-dollar market for the risky investments known as syndicated mortgages." An article in Maclean's Magazine has characterized Fortress as the king of "syndicated mortgages".

This is usually how syndicated mortgages work:

They start by seeking investment

money from members of the public usually for a particular project, for the sole purpose of starting up the project and absorbing all the necessary planning and development costs, up to the start of actual construction. These "mortgages" are often sold to local and outside investors, as if they are a secure investment, promising high rates of return ranging from 8 % percent or more, effective immediately.

In the meantime, of course the developer, their employees, their hired planning experts, lawyers, sales staff and in our case demolition workers draw salaries. As they sell these "mortgages," they use the incoming funds to pay for both the development costs and the interest promised to those who came before them. Some would say not entirely unlike a Ponzi scheme.

Most investors will tell you that if someone offers you 8% or more secure money you should be wary because it is a red flag that tells you it is a high-risk investment. When inflation is at 1.67%, a return of 8 percent on a sustained basis is highly unrealistic. It is not unusual that many local citizens and members of the business community, are offered this type of investment. The net effect, of course, is to ensure that they will be

cheerleaders for the project.

The reason the project is risky is because there is no guarantee that a particular project will be successful, as we all well know, because you have to sell the condos. If a project is successful in the early stages and the project is approved, then the bank usually steps in for the actual construction phase.

As we all know banks always get first call on any money. Sooo.....! If the project fails for any reason at a later date, then the bank will collect not only their own money, inherit the project, but also the money of the initial investors. The only ones who have a guarantee of any kind are those who have collected a salary from it in the meantime. In reality, in our case this means that developers have been leveraging income from a largely empty lot for almost 10 years. More condos is the only way out.

Given how long this particular project has been in the works, the developer has spent a considerable amount of money, known as "sunk" costs. It is interesting to note that a recent Hotel Study done by the City of St. Catharines in 2014 places the value of urban land for hotels in Port Dalhousie at about 1 million per acre. Even a casual

observer can see that these developers have far more than that invested. That is of course not the residents' nor the City's responsibility.

The only way out for all of the participants, is the success of a massively profitable project, which has sufficient surplus to pay off everyone. In this way, they keep the participants on board--except of course those taxpayers in the community who are not invested in anything and have nothing to gain but everything to lose in terms of community and cultural built heritage.

At the end of the meeting, the developer announced that they had already appealed the lack of a decision by the City to the OMB, which places additional pressure on the City. Now the City has to choose between spending more taxpayers' dollars on an OMB appeal on top of all the work they have already done and just giving in. One nice neat package of mutually assured destruction of Port. That's what's really going on.

For those interested in further research there are numerous articles to be found on the internet from, both Maclean's, the Toronto Star and more recently the Globe and Mail which reported on the RCMP raiding their offices. ■



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Photo: Dave Robinson

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