

# The Niagara-on-the-Lake LOCAL



Artist posts  
30 sketches  
in 30 days  
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David Galloway can often be found relaxing on his porch with friends at the end of the day, including Gary Zanner in this photo, taken by another friend, Donald Combe.

## Garden and gardener represent hope, joy, and true friendship

Penny Coles  
The Local

Behind a smallish house on Victoria Street, the one with the porch overflowing with house plants and an antique bicycle fastened to the porch overhang, is a beautiful garden brimming with gorgeous flowers and lush greenery.

It exudes the joy of the man who tends it, reflecting his love and precision attention, a man as much of an inspiration as his garden.

David Galloway, a former landscape horticulturalist, came to Niagara-on-the-Lake in pain, leaving behind a dissolved marriage that led to dissolving a business, a garden centre in Listowell, into which he had poured his heart for 25 years.

"I came here in complete depression," he says. He wanted to be with a

friend who was also hurting, grieving the death of her husband, a man who was a long-time dear friend of Galloway's. He felt it would be helpful to grieve together, and it was.

"We helped each other through it," he says.

Although he had only planned to stay a few weeks, that turned to years, and he ended up buying his Victoria Street home and putting his heart into the garden.

He also did some work for others, and made connections and friends in the industry, but six years ago, he began a battle with leukaemia. In February, after his last radiation treatment at the Juravinski Cancer Centre, he was told there were no further options for treatment. The prognosis was three weeks to three months, and plans were

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## Councillors agree to workshop on racism, report on diversity

Penny Coles  
The Local

Niagara-on-the-Lake's councillors have agreed the Town should hold a workshop to give diverse community leaders a chance to be heard, and should also look at the diversity of town staff and steps that could be taken to improve it.

These decisions, supported unanimously by councillors, came in response to a statement made against

racism by Counc. Stuart McCormack, who was explaining why he wouldn't sign last week's message from town council and staff denouncing racism. In his statement made to councillors Monday, he condemned racism in all forms, and said he believes the issue merits more discussion in council than the signing of a letter.

"We exist in a democracy which at its essence requires freedom of speech and open discussion. To fail to have that

open discussion robs everyone of the opportunity to reflect and grow," he said.

The message released last week was signed by senior staff, and all councillors except McCormack.

In his statement, McCormack quoted human rights lawyer Anthony Morgan: "What we want is substance over symbols. We want the substance of your commitments." McCormack echoed that sentiment, adding action is required, and "merely ex-

pressing disapproval is inadequate."

His former law firm, he said, provided "training for unconscious bias, fostered leadership development and outreach to diverse communities, and worked continuously on enhancing inclusiveness and support for those communities in our working environment."

McCormack referenced a Law Society of Ontario report, with 13 recommendations to "build a community

of support" and to "monitor and assess internal policies, practices and programs to promote diversity, inclusion and equality," as "obvious and substantive efforts not to simply recognize an issue, but more importantly to deal with it."

McCormack questioned whether the message from councillors and staff "was even the right first step."

The message says, "Perhaps more importantly, we must step away from our

privilege and listen, and exercise silence to make way for the voices of Black people and people of colour."

If council wants to listen, McCormack suggested, "isn't it incumbent on us to first have their voices at the table for the purpose of crafting this type of message, and more importantly, the path forward?"

He also suggested there is not much evidence of diver-

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# Fortunate to have a 'little bubble' of friends

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made for palliative care to start at home.

That was around the time COVID-19 changed life as we knew it, and Galloway says he has not heard from or spoken to a doctor since.

He has nursing care every morning, has his vitals checked — his blood pressure has been out of whack, he says — and friends come regularly to check on him and help him out, mostly in his garden, but also in the house.

"I would much rather be outside, in the garden," he says. "I'm not very good at keeping up with things in

the house. I just want to be outside."

For a man dealing with serious health issues, he pushes himself hard in his garden, going out to work in it every morning. He plans to work until lunch time, but it is sometimes 2 p.m. when he quits, knowing he has pushed past his limits. "There is so much I want to get done," he says. He finds himself stressed by all he would like to do, without enough time or energy to do it. "Just the watering alone is enough to kill me."

This week, he was hoping to get more plants from a good friend who works at Niagara College — a man he calls "his calm." Both rabbits and deer have been nibbling,

and some begonias in planters in front of his house have been destroyed, nothing left but a few little green stems, creating more work for him to do, hopefully with more begonias delivered by his friend. It's a huge source of frustration to Galloway that he can no longer drive, and must rely on others to bring him what he needs.

His afternoons are spent napping, and if he is able, he likes a glass of wine on his porch with friends in the evening, before a late dinner, watching TV to get caught up on the news, before heading off to bed. He has strong opinions on the issues of the day — the pandemic and how it's being handled, and racism and protests. He talks of working with Jamaicans and Mexicans, and how much he learned about them and from them. "I loved working with them. I feel I became a different person through them. I was given a new way of looking at life. It makes me sad to see what's happening. I don't know how we're ever going to fix it."

He admits to being a perfectionist in his garden, and needs to be outside when friends are doing some work to his specifications — he has a list for them when he arrives, but he likes to oversee their efforts.

"If a job is done perfectly the first time, there is no need to go around and do it twice," he says.

When he walks in his garden, he explains, "I see everything. Every little tree, branch, flower or weed, everything that's coming in the garden. Others can walk right past a weed and miss it." He loves to walk alongside his friends, teaching and sharing his knowledge, he says.

He has started to have problems with his balance, and has fallen a couple of

times, but he manages to move along the narrow grass pathway between two very lush and abundant gardens, and bends down to pull a small, offending weed tucked away behind tall plants. He works slowly and precisely, "always the way to win the race," he says. He has a cane he sometimes remembers to take with him, and a cell phone, which he seldom remembers — he says there will always be something to grab hold of if he falls.

After his first fall, it was suggested it might be time for him to go into hospice care. But because of the pandemic, he would only be allowed one visitor, just that one person chosen to visit him during his stay.

"How could I pick one person? I can't do that. I can't choose. I don't feel I'm ready to go."

Galloway appreciates how much he must rely on his friends, and admits to having a "little bit of a different attitude" toward the pandemic.

"I can't survive without people. If I couldn't see my friends, I might as well be dead. I still follow all the rules, but it breaks my heart that I can't see some people. I'd rather see my friends while I'm still alive than af-

ter I'm gone."

He feels fortunate to be in his own "little bubble" with friends who are able to come to see him, he says.

Gary Zanner is one of those friends.

"In these days of lockdowns and social distancing, many can find strength for mind and soul in their gardens," Zanner says. "The act of planting in the ground gives one hope for the future."

Galloway has hope, and he has a passion for something he clearly loves.

Despite his news from Juravinski, he planted seedlings in the shed and under grow lights in his basement earlier this year, and his plans for this garden haven't stopped since.

Now, with help from close friends, neighbours and family, says Zanner, "the garden thrives with four-foot high peonies, brightly coloured irises and other lush plantings."

The rest of the time, Zanner says, "you often find David resting on his eclectic porch, surrounded by his house plants that he lovingly cared for over the winter, and an antique bike decoratively hung pointing to the sky as if ET is about to make lift off."

Galloway says what he

misses most about the pandemic is hugs.

"I'm a hugger. I always feel there is energy coming from people when you hug them. I miss that."

Virus or not, he'd be happy to receive some of that energy, "but I'm not going to put that on someone who might be uncomfortable with a hug."

Although he is alone in his house most nights, he says, if he needed anyone, he could call them in the middle of the night and they'd be over in no time.

His friends, he says, naming some of them he sees often, including Sally, Virginia and James, Gary, Donald and others, "are the kindest, most incredible people you could ever meet."

For now, he takes life each day as it comes, the mostly good days, and the truly awful, when he is unable to do anything but sleep. He will stay at home as long as he is able, with the help of his mother, who has come from Listowell for a visit, and the dear friends who come regularly.

And he will do as much as he can in the garden that gives him a great deal of pleasure, focusing on what he can accomplish this season. Next summer, he says, "is just a dream."



David Galloway shows off his salmon-coloured peony, which produced five blooms this year — four more than last season. (Penny Coles)

## Report on diversity requested

Continued from page 1

sity on council or town staff. "Surely this must change," he said.

"Diversity must never be an afterthought. It must be a thoughtful and purposeful approach to ensure that we get the right talent and the right mix of talent that will represent the Town."

McCormack said he has been subjected to "vitriolic" comments on social media as a result of his failure to sign the message, to which he did not respond.

He doesn't typically answer questions from the media, he said, but he did send a copy of the response he presented to councillors to local

media outlets.

He put forward two motions, one that council ask the inclusivity committee to convene a workshop with members of council, staff, and diverse community leaders to give them the opportunity to be heard; the second, that town staff, in particular the head of human resources, be requested to provide a report to council "on the numerical extent to which the town staff is diverse, and advise on all steps the Town can take to improve its diversity, including but not limited to outreach and mentoring."

Lord Mayor Betty Disero said she has been in contact with the organizers and speakers of the peaceful protest held in town recently,

offering them the opportunity to make a presentation to council. She said she felt bad she wasn't able to attend, because of the banning of gatherings of more than five people. The letter was what she had written to them, and was distributed to members of council and senior staff to sign "as individuals." She was pleased that so many were able to sign, she said.

Disero said she supported McCormack's motion to have a workshop with the inclusivity committee, but also hoped the organizers and speakers at the recent rally against racism would make their presentation to council.

Both of McCormack's motions passed with unanimous support.

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# Friends sit on porch to remember David Galloway

**Penny Coles**  
The Local

Three weeks ago, David Galloway rested on his Victoria Street porch late on a Sunday afternoon, and talked about his friends, how much they meant to him, and how much they were helping him, in his garden, which he loved, and also to stay in his home for what he knew to be his final days.

He died late on another Sunday afternoon just two weeks later, and a few days ago, a small group of those friends of whom he spoke with such love gathered on his porch to talk about how much he had meant to them.

Gary Zanner, Sally Adamson and Virginia Mainprize, three of the many people who were important to David, described a scene of family members and friends who came and went, along with palliative care nurses who popped in regularly, one on her own time, on her way home from work — another person drawn to helping David.

When he could no longer leave his bed to sit on the porch, his friends dragged his hospital bed up to the front window, where he could look out onto the street, and hear the birds singing.

He could also hear the chatter of his friends, who continued to meet on his porch, where

they could be close to him.

Zanner, one of those closest to him, says even when his dear friend could no longer communicate, he believes David could hear their conversation, and be comforted by the sounds of their voices.

“The voices would have been soothing,” says Mainprize. “And when we went in to see him, he’d give us a wink.”

“I never got a wink,” jokes Zanner, but then adds, “he did have some time of understanding we were there, I’m sure. How many people get to die at home, surrounded by their friends and family?”

“He died where he wanted to die,” adds Mainprize.

There were issues to be sorted, especially about medication, “but we seemed to figure it out as we went along. The care he received was excellent.”

The professional caregivers gave them a good idea of what to expect, and left them with cell phone numbers for one of his nurses and a doctor to call if needed.

Zanner describes a scene of dozens of people coming and going during the last couple of days, even after David was carried away from the garden he loved so passionately, having fulfilled his wish to die at home, surrounded by those who loved him.

It’s not for everybody, and won’t work in all cases, “but for David,” says Sally, “it worked.”



David Galloway's friends, Gary Zanner, Virginia Mainprize with David's cat, Miss Ellie, and Sally Adamson sit on his porch to reminisce about their friend. (Penny Coles)



David Galloway shows off his garden just two weeks before he died. (Penny Coles)

A landscape horticulturist, David came to Niagara-on-the-Lake leaving behind a dissolved marriage that led to dissolving his business, a garden centre in Listowell. He had friends here in town, and although he came for a visit, planning to stay a few weeks, that turned into years. He bought his Victoria Street home and immediately began work on his gardens.

He also did work for others, building up a small clientele of people who became his friends. Six years ago, he began a battle with leukaemia, which led to a bone marrow transplant. In February, after his last radiation treatment at the Juravinski Cancer Centre, he was told there were no further options for treatment. The prognosis was three weeks to three months, and plans were made for palliative care to start at home.

His friends began coming regularly to check on him and help him out, mostly in his garden, as he became more reliant on others for the physical labour. He continued to be very involved, working hours every day he could manage, and alongside others who helped with the heavier work. He developed a routine for himself that included pouring his heart and whatever energy he could muster into what he knew to be his final days outside, where he belonged, in his garden.

“Up until five days before he died, he was outside working in his garden,” says Zanner.

By then, he’d had a few falls, and one of his nurses suggested palliative care. David had resisted that, knowing he would only be allowed one visitor because of the pandemic. He said he couldn’t possibly choose — being able to see his friends was much too important to him.

His son Alexander was able to spend time with him, and had left the Victoria Street house about an hour and a half before David died.

He was also able to speak to his daughter, who lives in Nova Scotia, Zanner said.

Apart from his daily naps, his late afternoon rest involved sitting on his front porch, having a glass of wine with friends,

and watching the world go by.

He had helped many with their own gardens — that was how they became friends — although Zanner says he met David when he was sitting behind him at St. Mark’s Church.

Sally Adamson and Virginia Mainprize both talk about David’s visions for their gardens, which always seemed to involve bringing them more plants, even though their vision was for fewer plants.

“Once you were his friend, he was always your friend,” says Adamson. “He attracted people to him. No doubt about it.”

“He always made you feel special,” added Mainprize. “He had lists of things he wanted to do for people, dozens of people.”

He had plants he was determined to pick up for another friend and client, Judy MacLachlan, says Mainprize, listing off the plants he insisted MacLachlan needed for her garden.

“It was the last thing he was able to do for a client,” says Zanner.

And there was the rainbow dogwood he insisted Mainprize needed in her garden. By then he wasn’t well enough to help plant it, but he came the next day to inspect it, she says.

When she first met him, she wanted help minimizing her garden.

“He made it bigger,” she says.

She talks about his friends calling him the Robin Hood of gardens. He was always digging up plants in one friend’s garden if they thought they had more than enough, and planting them in another friend’s garden, where he felt there was an empty spot.

“All of his friends have plants from each other’s gardens,” she says.

They all worried about him falling in his own garden, “but that’s where he was happiest,” says Mainprize.

“The thing that always amazed me,” adds Adamson, “was he had no small thoughts when it came to his garden.”

Nor when it came to hers. When he first saw her back garden, his eyes lit up with the possibilities, she says.

“My poor husband. He’d say, ‘what is he doing?’ He’d

consult with us, but he was just being polite. He’d do what he thought was best.”

As a friend, he was generous with his time, and as a gardener, he was generous with his knowledge.

And as a member of the community, he was adamant about supporting local businesses — he felt very strongly about that. Whether it was food for an event or plants for a garden he was looking for, the people whose businesses he supported also became his friends.

But most of all, says Mainprize, “he was a lot of fun to be with. He could always make us laugh.”

When he was at Juravinski, they said, he had so many cards from people, including St. Mark’s parishioners, staff had to come and look. “That made him the big Kahuna at the hospital,” says Zanner.

He tells the story of a woman from Listowell, who saw the story of David in *The Local*, and came looking for him. She found him by driving down the street and looking for his porch that was on the photo.

“Not too many people have a bicycle hanging on their porch,” says Zanner.

David was well enough to visit, and they started talking about all the people they had in common.

“This porch has become famous,” says Zanner, who loves the old style of front porches where you can sit and watch people walk by.

“I think people who come to NOTL to visit picture themselves sitting on a porch, and end up buying a house here. NOTL has so many well-designed porches, front or wrap-around porches, and you don’t see that any more in other communities.”

The three agree David’s porch is perfect. There’s a large tree on the front lawn, and lots of plants on the porch, with just enough space to see what’s happening on the street. You can call out and talk to passers-by if you feel like it, or you can sit quietly, if you don’t feel like socializing.

They were all quite amazed by another friend of David’s, whom he hadn’t seen for a while, who arrived at the porch the day before he died.

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# Former cancer patient says goodbye, just in time

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Dianne Nesbitt became an instant friend of David's in the hospital.

A mother of three, she was admitted to the hospital one evening, in shock, not understanding what was happening, and terrified.

Her husband couldn't stay — he had to look after the kids, and go to work the next day.

"David was my roommate," she says. "He was right there beside me from the time they brought me in. I was there for five weeks, and at first, my husband was shuffling work with caring for the girls. I was alone, in shock and scared. That first night, I broke down, and he sat up and talked to me all night. He actually made me laugh. He had such a great spirit. If he hadn't been there, I don't know what I would have done. He really was special."

They ran into each other occasionally after their treatment, and "no matter what he was going through — and what he was going through was hard — he always had a smile on his face. And

he could always make me laugh."

She says he must have found out from one of the nurses that she was having a stem cell transplant, and came to see her.

She was in isolation at that point, but they let him come in to see her, "and we had a little bit of a cry together. He told me they had given him six months at that point. It was heartbreaking to hear.

I thought, this is not fair, that this should happen to such an amazing person. But five minutes later we were laughing together."

She bumped into him once more after that, "and he had tears in his eyes, happy to see how well I was doing. He was so happy for me."

Her story gets "pretty weird" after that, she admits.

At a later visit to the hospital, she asked a nurse if she remembered David, and was told he had passed away. This was months ago, and she felt very sad that she hadn't seen him before he died.

Last week the day before he died, she was sitting in a restaurant having lunch with her husband.

"I ordered deep-fried pick-

les. They were always a joke between David and I. When we were in the hospital together, we'd go to the cafeteria to have deep-fried pickles. We both loved them, and we'd laugh about that."

She mentioned to her husband that ordering the pickles reminded her of David, and she wondered whether there had been a celebration of life for him. He picked up the phone to look online, and came across the article in The Local.

"It seemed so strange. I thought how could this make sense. He's still alive. I said, 'we have to go and find him, and we have to do it now.'"

They had plans to meet up with friends later in the day, but instead they left the restaurant and drove to NOTL.

Nesbitt said she remembered talking to David about NOTL. She had worked years ago at the Pillar & Post, and she knew he lived nearby. They found Victoria Street, and drove along it until they found the porch with the bicycle.

"I was thinking maybe he'd be on the porch, and I could say hi to him."

Instead, she found his friends. She talked about how much David had helped her get through a very difficult time, and she wanted him to know she'd come through it.

His sister Carolyn invited her in to sit with David.

"I sat and held his hand, and talked to him. It seemed like he responded with eye movements, and made a little sound. I felt like he knew I was there. I told him I loved him."

Nesbitt, becoming emotional at the memory, explains that when you go through cancer, you bond with others who experience and understand the emotions you feel, in a way that nobody else can.

"We had this special bond, this strong connection with each other. It's something not even caregivers can understand."

As fortunate as she feels having survived, with no further health issues so far, she still has days where she can't help remembering she had cancer, and feeling some anxiety about it.

"With David, I could talk about anything, and however scary it was, it would always end with a laugh."

It was his laugh she remembers him for the most — that, and the way he talked about his friends and family.

"He had lists of all he wanted to do for them. He was such a good friend."

He was a good friend to her, as well, she says. "I'm so glad I was able to spend that time with him."

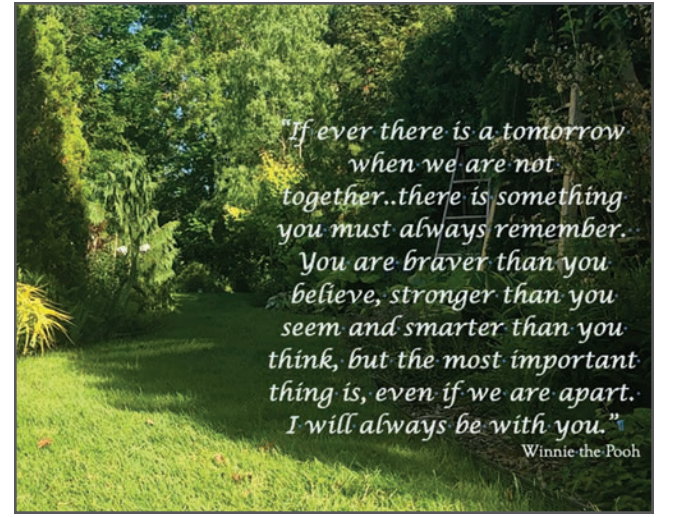
His friends talk about wanting to hold a celebration of life for him, but how, or where, is difficult.

For now, his sister Carolyn

will look after his ashes, that will remain in a frog until he's buried — he loved frogs, and had quite a collection given to him by friends.

His ashes will be buried beside family in a cemetery in Exeter, and his NOTL friends hope that at some point before then, they will be able to gather in some way, and toast him on his way.

In the meantime, they toast him from the porch that will always hold good memories of the dear friend they will miss.



Donald Combe designed a thank you note with a photo he took of David Galloway's front porch, and one of David's favourite quotes from Winnie the Pooh.



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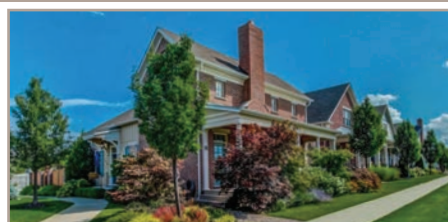
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