

# CAA

M A G A Z I N E

- Get the Best Car for You
- Welcoming our Feathered Friends
- A Culinary Journey in Japan

SPRING 2024

## SPRING FORWARD

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THE SEASON... AND OF YOUR MEMBERSHIP





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SPRING 2024

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# 150,000 Members Strong and Thriving Together

**CAA NIAGARA HAS REACHED A MOMENTOUS MILESTONE**, now boasting a remarkable community of over 150,000 dedicated Members—and it's all thanks to you!

To put this number in perspective, one in every two Niagara households is a CAA Member, representing the highest household penetration rate in the CAA federation across Canada. This membership milestone is a testament to the trust and commitment that have been placed in CAA Niagara. Each and every Member, including you, has played a vital role in making this milestone possible. Your choice to have CAA Niagara by your side on the road of life has been the driving force behind our success.

Whether it's providing reliable roadside assistance when you need it most, offering comprehensive insurance coverage, extending a helping hand in travel planning or sharing exclusive benefits, CAA Niagara is here to ensure that every step of your journey is safe, enjoyable and worry-free.

As we celebrate this significant achievement, it's only fitting that we take a moment to reflect on our history. Our story began in 1911 as the St. Catharines Automobile Association, when 16 Niagara residents formed a club to help owners of a new invention—the “horseless carriage.” Since then, we have evolved into much more than just an auto club. We've become a community builder supporting motorists and travellers, as well as local initiatives. From advocating for safer driving practices to offering peace of mind while on the road, CAA Niagara has grown to embody the spirit of community.

This milestone is not just a marker

of the past; it's a compass pointing towards an exciting future. We are enthusiastic about what lies ahead as we continue to evolve and meet the changing needs of our Members. Your feedback and experiences have been and will continue to be instrumental in shaping who we are today, and we are committed to staying attuned to your needs as we journey forward together.

“**This membership milestone is a testament to the trust and commitment that have been placed in CAA Niagara.**

I want to express how thankful we are at CAA Niagara for your trust and loyalty, and we invite you to join us in commemorating our journey. We will be hosting special 150,000 Member Milestone celebrations throughout this spring. Keep a close eye on our website and social media channels for announcements about events taking place at a branch near you. It's our way of saying thank you and celebrating together with the community that makes CAA Niagara so special.

We look forward to many more chapters of growth, support and community-building with you.

Thank you for being an integral part of CAA Niagara. **CAA**



Mike Goodale  
Chair, CAA Niagara

Don't miss a beat! Keep up with all the exciting events, exclusive updates and behind-the-scenes moments by following us on social media.

Prefer updates directly in your inbox? Sign up for our eNewsletter and be the first to know about upcoming events, special promotions and Insider content. Visit [caaniagara.ca/enews](https://caaniagara.ca/enews) to subscribe!

# Spring Initiatives for Safer Roads

## AS WINTER'S FROST MELTS AWAY,

it brings with it a sense of renewal and optimism. In the spirit of fostering a community dedicated to enjoyable road travel, I want to bring your attention to some important initiatives happening this spring that shape our collective commitment to road safety.

I am pleased to announce the return of CAA's annual Worst Roads campaign. Roads age, weather conditions take their toll, and maintenance becomes crucial for safety. We all know the headaches caused by potholes, tricky intersections and bumpy stretches that make your commute less than smooth. The Worst Roads campaign helps identify the roads in our region that require urgent attention and repair.

Your voice matters and we want to hear from you. Voting in the Worst Roads campaign offers a unique opportunity for us to collectively identify the challenges we face on our roads, whether you are a driver, cyclist or pedestrian. Your input helps us advocate for the changes and improvements that matter most to our community.

Additionally, May is designated as Slow Down Move Over Month—an annual reminder to exercise extra caution while passing vehicles. Over the last year, we have achieved notable progress as we champion awareness and education around the message.

Last May, CAA Niagara spearheaded a comprehensive roadside education campaign in collaboration with the Ontario Provincial Police (OPP) and the Ministry of Transportation (MTO). The primary objective was to enhance public understanding of the importance of the Slow Down Move Over message,

emphasizing the need for motorists to exercise caution and reduce speed when approaching emergency and service vehicles.

Having been on-site during this exercise, I've witnessed, first-hand, instances when people neglect to slow down and move over, directly jeopardizing the safety of our roadside heroes. It's disheartening to see the risks they face. And it's a simple plea—we want our dedicated team to return home to their families every day, unharmed. Your commitment to slowing down and moving over is not just a legal obligation; it's a collective effort to ensure the well-being of those who work tirelessly to keep our roads safe.

As part of our ongoing commitment to enhancing road safety, we've equipped our entire fleet with the innovative Safety Cloud® technology by HAAS Alert. This system ensures that drivers receive real-time alerts as they approach our tow trucks, offering up to 30 seconds of advance warning through widely used GPS apps and vehicle infotainment systems. This proactive measure demonstrates our dedication to safeguarding both our roadside-assistance professionals and the general public.

Each one of us has a part to play in keeping our roads safe. Your active involvement in the Worst Roads campaign and adherence to safety measures can make a significant impact.

Let's drive change together, ensuring safer roads for all. **CAA**




Peter Van Hezewyk  
President and CEO  
CAA Niagara

Visit [caaniagara.ca/slowdown](https://caaniagara.ca/slowdown) for more information and resources on the Slow Down Move Over legislation in Ontario.

Vote in Worst Roads. Visit [caaworstroads.com](https://caaworstroads.com) for more information.



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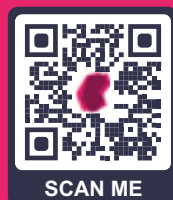


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# Member Stories

## THE ULTIMATE TRAVEL PLANNER

Our family vacation wouldn't have been as memorable without the exceptional service from CAA Niagara Travel. The agent took care of every detail and even found family-friendly activities and accommodations within our budget. Thanks to their expertise, our trip was not only enjoyable but also hassle-free. CAA Niagara Travel will be our go-to for all our future adventures!

—Sarah M.



Embarking on a solo adventure with Journeys by CAA Niagara was an absolute game changer for me. I often worried about the logistics and safety when planning solo trips, but they took care of everything! I had an absolute blast.

—Linda H

## SHOUT-OUT TO THE SERVICE VEHICLE OPERATORS

I have used CAA twice this year—once for battery replacement and once for a tow. Both operators were really helpful and courteous, and both got to me in decent time. A big shout-out to them. I really appreciate your helpfulness and stellar service at a bad time for me.

—Joseph H.

## IT'S BEEN A PLEASURE, CAA!

As a long-time member, I can honestly say that it has been a pleasure working with CAA. Over the years, I've leaned on them for passport photos, my International Driving Permit, maps and tows. They are always quick and thorough. I have always encountered friendly staff and a nice small-town feel.

—Frank F.

## COMING IN CLUTCH

I've had an ongoing problem with my car battery this last year and have needed jump-starts four times. From the telephone personnel to the technicians, CAA staff have all been cheery, competent and caring—occasionally quite humorous as well! My family has been involved with your company for 75 years—from when it was called the Ontario Motor League to now, as CAA. We are loyal members and will continue to be, recommending CAA every chance we have.

—John R.



Have a story or comment you'd like to share? Email us at [magazine@caaniagara.ca](mailto:magazine@caaniagara.ca) and you could be featured in an upcoming issue. Letters may be edited for length and clarity.

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The fully accessible 40-metre-high Sentier des Cimes offers a panoramic view of the Laurentian Mountains.

## Province of Adventure

Discover first-hand how Quebec earned its nickname, La Belle Province

**AS WINTER RETREATS**, spring is a great time to experience the delights of La Mauricie, Lanaudière and the Laurentians—three neighbouring regions of Quebec just a few hours north and east of Montreal. From a walk through the tree canopy to a scenic seaplane ride and Instagram-worthy accommodations, here are a few spots not to miss.

### FAROUCHE TREMBLANT

This glamping experience, mere minutes away from Mont-Tremblant National Park, combines the best of Instagrammable aesthetics (A-frame cabins) with home-like comforts (king beds) in nature. If you're not staying overnight, stop by the café (open weekends in spring) for a coffee, a local beer or a glass of natural wine. You can rent paddleboards and electric fatbikes to explore the land around the property. Farouche also purveys herbs and spices grown on their farm, which make for excellent gifts. And if you ask, they might even let you explore the farm yourself.

“Once you reach the top, you can challenge your fear of heights by walking out on a net suspended in the centre of the panoramic lookout tower

### SENTIER DES CIMES

Built in 2022, the Sentier des Cimes is a spiralling boardwalk and observation tower tucked into the pine, spruce and maple forest of the Laurentians. The 1.5-kilometre journey from the front entrance to the top of the 40-metre-high tower is fully accessible for those with strollers and mobility aids. Once you reach the top, you can challenge your fear of heights by walking out on a net suspended in the centre of the panoramic lookout tower.

### HYDRAVION ADVENTURE, LA MAURICIE NATIONAL PARK

The best views of La Mauricie National Park are from above. Hydravion Adventure's seaplanes take off from the St. Maurice River and bring visitors up to the skies for a journey around the St. Lawrence Valley, where they can see the city of Shawinigan (the birthplace of former prime minister Jean Chrétien) and La Mauricie Park's lakes and lush forest canopy. Choose from a 75-kilometre round-trip flight or the longer 125-kilometre trip—both are scenic floatplane adventures.

### LE BALUCHON ECO RESORT

This sprawling eco-resort has gradually been expanding since it opened in 1990. Le Baluchon now spans 1,000 acres, including farmland, with 88 rooms across four inns, seven suites and chalets and more than 35 kilometres of hiking, mountain biking and horseback riding trails (there's a horse stable on the property). End your day with a soak in their Nordic spa, which has outdoor hot tubs with a view of the Rivière du Loup.

## THE LOCALER

# Meghan Chayka

**FOR CAA MEMBER** and data scientist Meghan Chayka, hockey wasn't always a numbers game. Although growing up, she played hockey, Chayka was more interested in sports like basketball, volleyball and baseball. "I was a pitcher and that's kind of what spurred me into loving stats," she says.

In 2010 Chayka applied her long-held interest in math and statistics—and her degrees in economics and finance—to sports, co-founding the ice hockey analytics firm Stathletes. According to Chayka, Stathletes is all about "looking at players and prospects and teams through the data lens, [making] people better decision makers, and fans more engaged."

Today, the globally renowned St. Catharines firm counts among its clients National Hockey League trainers, agents and players, as well as media outlets like ESPN and TSN. And Chayka is the recipient of numerous honours for her work in sports, including The Athletic's 40 under 40 list for hockey in 2018 and 2020, and Sportsnet's 25 Most Powerful Women in Hockey list in 2022.

But she isn't in this game for the accolades. She has also championed the growth of women's ice hockey, and today Stathletes is an industry leader in women's ice hockey analytics.

Ultimately, Chayka's goal is to "bring more people into the fold in sports...[by] breaking down the barriers to understanding certain parts of the game, or how to follow it. Sometimes I do complex things. But other times, I try to simplify things, so anyone can understand, engage and look at hockey through a different lens."

—Truc Nguyen



**Nominate a Localer.** Do you know someone who goes above and beyond? We'd love to hear about them. Send nominations to [magazine@caaniagara.ca](mailto:magazine@caaniagara.ca) and they could be our featured Localer in an upcoming issue.



"Sports can be for anyone and can be exciting," says data scientist and Stathletes co-founder Meghan Chayka.



## THE ONE

## Bushnell Wingman View GPS Speaker

This portable Bluetooth speaker allows golfers to listen to music—with outstanding sound quality—and get audible GPS information about the golf course they're playing. Just connect to your music and the Bushnell Golf app for the ideal companion out on the course.

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# Glamping a go-go

Ditch that pitched tent for one of these glam campsites across Canada

**AS THE WEATHER WARMS UP**, it's time to sleep under the stars—in style. From a horse farm with see-through domes to ultra-cozy, oceanside tree pods, take your pick from these wonderful glamping spots from coast to coast.

## **CAMP WOLF WILLOW:** Outlook, Sask.

This magnificent 100-acre property sits on the hills above the South Saskatchewan River, 80 kilometres south of Saskatoon. Alongside traditional campsites are solar-powered glamping options, including wooden A-frame cabins and luxury canvas tents. And there's entertainment for both young and old. Think kiddo-gear seasonal activities, like a lilac maze and pumpkin patch, and the adult-friendly winery and pizzeria right next door.

## **UTOPIA FEELS BOTANICAL GLAMPGROUND AND MICRO-FARM:** Coldstream, B.C.

Located 65 kilometres northeast of scenic Kelowna, this Indigenous-owned "glampground" delivers on its name. Not only is it located in a former plant nursery—with 20 acres to explore—it also has farm animals on-site, including a Jersey calf, giant rabbits and dwarf goats. The tents are dressed to the nines with queen beds and handcrafted furnishings.

## **ELK ISLAND RETREAT:** Fort Saskatchewan, Alta.

In the heart of the Alberta wilderness, just east of Edmonton, is Elk Island Retreat, a 60-acre family-owned campground with four geodesic domes, two yurts and three cabins—thoughtfully kitted out with gas fireplaces, outdoor barbecues and cozy queen beds. Jurassic Forest is a 45-minute drive away, and luxury catered picnics are available on-site.



A geodesic dome at Ontario's Glen Oro Farm features a splendid sky view.

## **GLEN ORO FARM:** Hawkestone, Ont.

Calling all galaxy gazers... Glen Oro Farm, situated some 130 kilometres north of Toronto, features nine geodesic domes with see-through walls and ceilings, perfect for marvelling at the starry night sky. There's also a 200-acre horse farm (guests can gallop through the nearby forest if they wish) plus five luxurious canvas tents, a spa-style cold plunge and a cedar-barrel sauna heated by a Finnish wood stove.

## **TREETOP HAVEN:** Mount Tryon, P.E.I.

The ultra-cozy accommodations at Treetop Haven, an all-season family-owned property, are nestled amid green space 45 minutes west of Charlottetown. Glampers can avail themselves of five TreePODs—a cross between a treehouse and a pod or dome—as well as a vacation apartment and a lodge (both accommodate up to nine guests each). Everything the east coast has to offer is just a hop, skip and jump away—lobster shacks, red sand beaches and the Atlantic Ocean.



A **CAA Travel Consultant** can help you explore more cross-country summer fun. Visit [caaniagara.ca/travel](https://caaniagara.ca/travel) to learn more.



Drum roll, please: Neil Peart's legacy lives on in Lakeside Park.

## HOT SPOT

# Neil Peart Pavilion

Rush fans, take note. The pilgrimage to the eponymous pavilion of the late, legendary drummer Neil Peart, in Lakeside Park, just got more meaningful. This year, two larger-than-life bronze statues of Peart—partially constructed from his own melted-down cymbals—will be added to the site, connected by a pathway featuring exhibits about his life and career. Peart, a St. Catharines native who passed away in 2020, never forgot his hometown. Now, the affection is entirely mutual and permanent.

—Beth Hitchcock



## PLAYLIST

## What Songs Do You Road-Trip to, Dave Betts?

Drummer Dave Betts of Niagara-formed Canadian rock royalty Honeymoon Suite says his musical taste is “all over the place.” When he’s driving or on tour—playing such classics as “New Girl Now” and “Feel It Again”—the songs on his playlist “could be up-tempo and rocking with, naturally, good drumming, or they could be just something that works with a quieter, yet more of a dense musical feel that I may be attracted to. Suffice it to say, they all work well in the car.”

—Karen Bliss

**Better Man**  
 Pearl Jam

≡ ◀ ▶ ⏸

<b>Alive</b>	⋮
Pearl Jam	
<b>Rockin' in the Free World</b>	⋮
Neil Young	
<b>Teenagers</b>	⋮
My Chemical Romance	
<b>Harvest Moon</b>	⋮
Neil Young	
<b>My Generation (Live at Leeds version)</b>	⋮
The Who	
<b>Freewill</b>	⋮
Rush	
<b>Symphonic Dances with Leonard Bernstein and the LA Philharmonic</b>	⋮
West Side Story	
<b>Symphony #5, 4<sup>th</sup> Movement: Adagietto</b>	⋮
Mahler	
<b>Miserere mei, Deus</b>	⋮
Allegri	

*Songs may not be appropriate for everyone.  
Listener discretion is advised.*



An aerial view of Cabot Cliffs golf course at Cabot Cape Breton, Nova Scotia.

## Into the Swing of Things

Hole-in-one golf resorts across the country

By Andrew Penner

**CANADA IS A GOLF-RICH COUNTRY** with renowned resorts where you can “grip it and rip it,” coast to coast. And now that spring is here, *putter* patter, let’s get at ’er.

**FAIRMONT JASPER PARK LODGE** When golf courses are described, the word “masterpiece” is often overused. However, in the case of Jasper Park Lodge—a stunning 99-year-old classic by renowned golf-course architect Stanley Thompson—the description fits to a tee. Both the course and the regal resort are situated on the peaceful shores of gem-blue Lac Beauvert, Alberta—a truly unforgettable setting.

**ELK RIDGE RESORT** Comfortably in the top tier of Canadian golf spots is the 27-hole Elk Ridge Resort, located in a beautiful swath of boreal forest on the edge of Prince Albert National Park, Saskatchewan. Featuring a soaring timber-framed lodge, a spa, fine dining and contemporary rooms just a Nick Taylor putt from the first tee, this resort is an oasis in Western Canada.





**LAKEVIEW HECLA RESORT** With some holes sitting snug along the shores of Lake Winnipeg and others zigzagging through a majestic mixed forest, the layout at the Lakeview Hecla Resort, Manitoba, is peaceful—parkland golf at its finest. After golf, guests can unwind in the cozy confines of the lodge, soak in the indoor/outdoor pools, visit the Salka Spa and dine at Seagull's Restaurant and Lounge.

**TABOO MUSKOKA** A lodge. A lake. A golf course. It's the trifecta for those looking for the ultimate golf retreat. And the entire Muskoka area north of Toronto is pure gold for golfers. Located along the rocky shores of Lake Muskoka, Taboo is an upscale resort that includes a fantastic Ron Garl-designed golf course, which is expertly routed through rough terrain.

Non-golfers will appreciate the wide assortment of recreation options, including the beautiful private beach, hiking and biking trails, nearby boat rentals and clay tennis courts.

**THE ALGONQUIN RESORT** This historic New Brunswick outpost boasts a spectacular seaside golf course that was recently renovated by acclaimed Canadian architect Rod Whitman. The entire property is steeped in history. If the golf course and iconic Marriott Autograph Collection Hotel don't win you over, the charming and historic village of St. Andrew's by-the-Sea surely will. This is considered Canada's first sea-side resort town.

**CABOT CAPE BRETON** With two of the best links courses on the planet—Cabot Links, opened in 2011, and Cabot Cliffs, opened to the public in 2016—Cabot Cape Breton, Nova Scotia, is an unparalleled golf offering in this country. It's essentially the St. Andrews of Canada. Thanks to the luxurious lodge, the restaurants (fresh seafood, anyone?), the idyllic beach and the many nearby attractions—check out the Glenora Distillery—even non-golfing guests will savour the experience.



Sunset at Fairmont Jasper Park Lodge Golf Club in Alberta.

## GOLF'S GOOFY COUSINS

So you've mastered traditional golf? Try your hand at some new and fun versions of the sport.



### DISC GOLF

One of the fastest growing sports in the world, disc golf is played in a similar fashion to golf except players throw discs from a tee pad to a basket. Courses are usually 9 or 18 holes.

Visit [candiscgolf.ca](http://candiscgolf.ca) to learn more.



### FOOTGOLF

If your foot wedge is the best club in your bag, you may want to try your hand—er, foot—at FootGolf. Played with a regulation soccer ball by kicking it into a 21-inch cup, FootGolf is a fast-growing sport with new courses appearing across the country.

Visit [footgolf.ca](http://footgolf.ca) to learn more.



### FLING GOLF

Although still in its infancy, fling golf is nonetheless quickly on the rise. A combination of lacrosse and golf, it's played with a Flingstick that, well, "flings" the ball towards the hole. You can even play it alongside your regular golf foursome! Visit [flinggolf.com](http://flinggolf.com) to learn more.



### MINI GOLF

Call it what you want—Putt-Putt, goofy golf, putter golf, adventure golf (and there are more monikers)—but "miniature golf" is a game that has brought joy to millions for nearly a century. And its popularity continues—just ask Tiger Woods. His PopStroke mini-golf and casual dining concept is "popping up" all over the southern U.S. Visit [minigolfport.com](http://minigolfport.com) to learn more.

# Cabin Pressure

Flight cancelled at the last minute? Here's how to salvage your trip and get the compensation you deserve

By Jeremy Freed | Illustration by Holly Stapleton

**IT'S A SCENARIO** no traveller wants. You get to the airport, navigate check-in and security, arrive at your gate on time—and find out your flight has been delayed for hours or, worse, cancelled altogether.

Take heart. You can't prevent the occasional flight cancellation, but there are resources, and actions you can take, that will help ensure a flight cancellation won't stop you in your tracks.

**KNOW YOUR RIGHTS** Since 2019, the Canadian Transportation Agency's Air Passenger Protection Regulations have helped ensure that passengers travelling to, from and within Canada are fairly compensated for flight delays and cancellations when the airline is at fault. These regulations—often referred to as “the air passenger bill of rights”—are currently being reviewed, and an updated version is expected later this year. Until then, here are some highlights from the current regulations to keep in mind.

- If your flight is cancelled last-minute, airlines are obligated to give passengers essential information, including the reason for the cancellation. They must also inform passengers about the compensation and assistance they may be entitled to.
- If your flight is cancelled or delayed by three hours or more due to an issue within the airline's control, you are entitled to compensation, and the airline must book you on another flight as soon as possible.
- If the airline can't get you where you need to be or you're not satisfied with the itinerary they offer, in most cases you are entitled to a refund.

If you're travelling on an airline outside of Canada, keep in mind that air passenger rights vary from country to country. The International Air Transport Association ([iata.org/en/youandiata/travelers/passenger-rights/](https://www.iata.org/en/youandiata/travelers/passenger-rights/)) provides links to air passenger rights organizations in several regions and to a directory of Civil Aviation Authorities around the world.



**PREPARE IN ADVANCE** Follow these best practices from Wendy Paradis, president of the Association of Canadian Travel Agencies (ACTA), to help ensure that a last-minute cancellation won't derail your travel plans.

**INVEST IN TRAVEL INSURANCE** Before you go on your trip, it's “absolutely essential to have travel medical, trip interruption and trip cancellation insurance,” says Paradis. In the event of last-minute travel disruptions, these insurance policies can make it easier to find another flight or receive compensation.

**ARRIVE EARLY** If you're travelling for a time-sensitive event, such as a wedding or a coach tour departure, plan to arrive at least a day ahead of time. “It's much more relaxing,” notes Paradis.

**PACK SMART** Paradis's advice is to pack your carry-on with anti-boredom options—iPads, games for kids and books, a couple of days' change of clothes, valuables and medication. “And consider purchasing Apple AirTags for your luggage—they make it so much easier to find lost bags.” **CAA**



**Learn about** Air Passenger Rights (APR) and access resources at [caa.ca/your-rights/air-passenger-rights](https://caa.ca/your-rights/air-passenger-rights). And have a CAA Travel Consultant walk you through what to do if your flight is cancelled.





# Basics and Beyond

New-vehicle owners need to know a few essentials in basic maintenance—and leave the rest to the professionals

By Matthew Guy | Illustrations by Guilherme Henrique

**FOR MANY NEW DRIVERS**, that driver's license is a ticket to freedom and an invitation to enjoy the open road. But the complex ins and outs of a vehicle may be intimidating, and understandably so. Here's some foundational knowledge to help new drivers build confidence on the road.

**TIRE'D AND TRUE** Those four tires are the only part of your car in direct contact with the road. Making certain they're in top shape—and as high-quality as you can afford—should be a priority. Watch for obvious damage caused by road hazards and make sure they're inflated to the recommended tire pressure—psi (pound per square inch). Keep an eye on the treads for any odd wear pattern, which could reduce traction and indicate an alignment problem.

**FLUID SITUATION** The fluids are the lifeblood of your vehicle. The engine oil, transmission fluid and coolant are vital for your car to function properly. Drivers of internal combustion engine (ICE) vehicles need to be familiar with key components under the hood. These include the filler cap and dipstick for engine oil and transmission fluid, as well as the coolant reservoir. Find out where

“  
A car's dashboard is home to a host of crucial information



the battery is located and check it for signs of corrosion or bulging, especially if it's more than three years old. Know how to read an engine oil dipstick or, at least, learn how to interpret dashboard indicators. And get into the habit of checking underneath your vehicle for any sign of leaking.

## LEADING INDICATORS

A car's dashboard is home to a host of crucial information. Some warning lights illuminate in yellow or amber as initial alerts—i.e., reminders to keep an eye out for certain issues to be mentioned to your mechanic at a future service appointment. Other alerts, which may light up in red, are critical indicators of potentially serious problems—peruse the owner's manual for clarification. Many vehicles are now equipped with a tire pressure monitoring system—the typical TPMS image on a dashboard is a yellow tire-like icon with an exclamation point.

**BASIC MAINTENANCE** Replacing windshield wipers on a car is a relatively simple task. The counter assistant at your local parts store may even offer to do it—watch closely and pick up a new useful skill. (There are CAA-produced maintenance videos on YouTube, too.) Rely on your mechanic for oil changes, seasonal tire swaps and thorough maintenance checks. And remember to refer to the owner's manual and follow the recommended service schedule. **CAA**



**Questions about vehicles?** Ask us anything. Email [autoadvice@caasco.ca](mailto:autoadvice@caasco.ca) or call 1-866-464-6448 with questions for our experts.



# Get meals that fit!



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# What's Your Favourite...?

Veteran bookseller and CAA Member **Laura McFadden** on inspiring writers, beloved bookstores and always coming back to the classics

By Alison LaMantia

Photography by Jason Haywood



Bookseller Laura McFadden; a whimsical Arthur Rackham illustration from *English Fairy Tales* (1918), by Flora Annie Steel.

## NIAGARA-ON-THE-LAKE HAS CHANGED A LOT

since 1969, the year that Laura McFadden opened her cozy independent bookstore, The Old Niagara Bookshop. But one thing that hasn't changed is McFadden's deep love of literature, nor her enthusiasm about sharing the best new reads with her visitors.

## Other than your own, do you have a favourite bookstore?

Well, I modelled my shop after Albert Britnell Book Shop on Yonge Street in Toronto. It's no longer in existence. [And it's] not a bookstore, but The Morgan Library in New York City is a favourite of mine.

## Is there a novel you go back to again and again?

I can't say there's one. I keep going back to the classics, maybe because there's some connection to what we're doing at [Niagara-on-the-Lake's Shaw Festival], putting on the plays of George Bernard Shaw. I also like to read the basis of Western literature—mythology and theology.



## I know the children's room at your shop is popular. What are some children's books you recommend?

I love Beatrix Potter, *The Tale of Peter Rabbit*. And anything illustrated by Arthur Rackham. And then there's Julia Donaldson—she's just extraordinary.

## Is there one author, dead or alive, you'd love to meet?

I'd love to meet Charles Dodgson, or Lewis Carroll, as he's known. I'm intrigued not only by *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland* and the fact that he wrote these wonderful, humorous poems, but more importantly, by the math games that I couldn't do. He was an incredible human being who was able to couple his profession as a mathematician with these extraordinary [literary] creations. That boggles my mind.

## Where do you like to read?

I read a lot in bed and I read in my living room. I have southern exposure and I like the good daylight.

## And what are you reading right now?

Catalogues! And I have stacks of new books I ordered that I'm scanning. Then there's the longlists, the shortlists, all the prize winners. It's hard to keep up. **CAA**



The Morgan Library, a McFadden favourite, was built between 1902 and 1906.

“

I'd love to meet Charles Dodgson, or Lewis Carroll, as he's known



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# Food for Thought

Newark Neighbours has been feeding those in need in Niagara-on-the-Lake for half a century

By Lesa Hannah | Photograph by Jason Haywood

**FOR OVER 50 YEARS**, the volunteer-run Newark Neighbours Food Bank and Thrift Shop has been serving the community of Niagara-on-the-Lake. “We’re part of a partnership of 10 food banks in the region,” says Cindy Grant, board chair and manager of the food bank. Grant, now 76, started as a volunteer in 2015, joined the board in 2019 and took on a management role the following year.

All the revenue from the thrift shop (which has tripled since moving locations in 2023) goes towards the food bank. “It’s a much more visible location and thrifting is a big deal these days,” says Grant, referring to the rising cost of living.

Clients of the food bank must have an address within Niagara-on-the-Lake, but proof of income is never required. “One of the principles of Food Banks Canada is that no one is turned away based on means,” she says. Currently, Newark Neighbours serves 121 families—triple the number they served in 2020. Families visit twice a month to shop for non-perishable items and choose what they need based on the size of their family. Once a month, clients receive Loblaws gift cards to buy necessities such as milk, bread and eggs. For the holidays, including Easter, each family is offered a hamper with either a turkey or a ham, along with potatoes, carrots, onions, cranberry sauce and a fresh-baked pie—“most of the things they need for a nice holiday meal,” notes Grant.



Cindy Grant’s first dealings with Newark Neighbours were donation drop-offs. Now, she’s the board chair of the organization.

“

**It really makes you feel like you’re doing a good thing in this world**

In addition to the thrift shop revenue, the food bank runs on generous community monetary donations and accepts shipments of excess inventory from nearby grocery stores, including staple foods as well as treats like ice cream. Some first-time visitors, ranging from young families to older people on pensions, feel ashamed to visit due to the stigma of their circumstances. Grant says they do their best to reassure them. For her and the team, the payoff is huge. “It really makes you feel like you’re doing a good thing in this world.” **CAA**



**Is there an organization in your community that people need to know about?**

Contact us at [magazine@caaniagara.ca](mailto:magazine@caaniagara.ca). We’d love to hear about it!

# Get the Best Car for You

## WHO'S DRIVING?

Driving Enthusiasts. Commuters. Savvy Savers.

Finding the right vehicle for you starts with being honest about your needs and how much you can afford

By Matt Bubbers

Illustrations by Rami Niemi

“WHAT CAR SHOULD I BUY?” is one of the most common questions Members ask CAA’s automotive experts. There’s no such thing as “The Best Car”—but somewhere out there is a best car *for you*.

Ryan Peterson, CAA’s manager of automotive services and resident car-shopping expert, boils down the car-shopping process to three steps. First, be honest about your needs. Second, make a shortlist of models that fit the bill. Third, test-drive them all because there’s no substitute for seat time.

“It’s about finding a vehicle that suits you and meets your needs,” Peterson says. That includes how you use your vehicle and, most important, what you can afford. Here, we break down some of the most popular types of vehicles on the road and what kind of driver suits them best.



## SEDANS OR HATCHBACKS

**The Pros** Sedans and hatchbacks are the most affordable, most energy-efficient, most maneuverable new vehicles on the road today—perfect for long commutes and drivers on a budget. Newer compact sedans have become large enough to comfortably seat adults in the rear seats, too. Sporty sedans and hatches can be especially fun to drive, feeling nimble, precise and playful.

**The Cons** Lower ground clearance means you’ve got to be more careful in deep snow. Some manufacturers arguably make their sedans too sporty, to the detriment of passenger comfort and everyday usability. Since sedans, hatches, station wagons and coupes collectively make up only a small slice of the new-vehicle market, the selection of new models is not nearly as vast as it once was.





#### WHO'S DRIVING?

Urban Families. Road Trippers. Value-Conscious.

## SMALL AND MID-SIZE SUVs

**The Pros** Many drivers love that SUVs place them up high, which means less bending and ducking to get in or out. New parents (and their lower backs) will appreciate that the extra height also makes it easier to get a baby into a car seat. Mid-size SUVs are especially versatile, delivering enough passenger and cargo room for extended road trips and camping expeditions.

"SUVs have been exploding in sales since 2009," says Andrew King, managing partner at Canadian auto-industry advisory firm DesRosiers Automotive Consultants. Their data suggests that SUVs (of all sizes) account for nearly 60 percent of annual new-vehicle sales. Given how versatile and easy they are to live with, that should come as no surprise.

**The Cons** SUVs are typically more expensive to purchase (by as much as \$10,000) and less fuel-efficient than similarly sized sedans. Getting a model with all-wheel drive (AWD) often means stepping up to a more expensive trim level. While AWD does offer peace of mind, whether you really need it or not comes down to where you live, notes Peterson. He suggests that drivers in well-plowed urban areas are probably okay without it.



#### WHO'S DRIVING?

Adventurers. Large Families.

## LARGE (FULL-SIZE) SUVs

**The Pros** If you prioritize maximum space and go-anywhere capability above all else, you need a big SUV. Many full-size SUVs offer spacious third rows and have the ground clearance to go where minivans can't—in fact, SUVs with a third row of seats have effectively replaced minivans, whose sales are dwindling. Some big SUVs are based on body-on-frame truck chassis, while others are based on car platforms. The former are often better off-road, while the latter offer a better, quieter ride for long commutes. Great for true adventurers with families (or lots of friends) who need a powerful ride with space for everything from pets to people and outdoor gear to groceries. Great too for cross-country or rough road excursions and hauling heavy loads (boats, ATVs, snowmobiles). Luxe options abound, hence popular with the city see-and-be-seen set.

**The Cons** They're heavy and often have big, gas-hungry engines. They're more expensive to purchase and own than smaller SUVs or cars. Their sheer size means they'll be bursting out of downtown parking spaces and often have limited outward visibility, which isn't ideal in areas with lots of pedestrian traffic. Shorter drivers may find some big SUVs too tall, making it difficult to get in or out.

## WHO'S DRIVING?

Skilled Trade Workers. Farmers. Outdoor Enthusiasts.



## PICKUP TRUCKS

**The Pros** Pickups are more versatile than ever, from new compact trucks to \$100,000 luxury rigs. It's little wonder pickups account for roughly 23 percent of new-vehicle sales, according to DesRosiers' data. Peterson says pickups are best for people who actually use them as trucks—for towing, hauling and getting work done—as well as for outdoor enthusiasts (with their toys) who need to get to remote spots. "Most contractors 'under-buy' on their trucks," he says. In other words, if you'll often be using the upper limit of a truck's payload or towing capacity, consider stepping up to a bigger truck.

**The Cons** Despite technological advances, pickups still aren't as comfortable as cars and smaller SUVs. They're not fuel-efficient either and so, not ideal for commuters. Plus, the tall, blunt front ends on many trucks pose a greater risk to pedestrians in the event of a collision, according to a recent study by the U.S. Insurance Institute for Highway Safety. **CAA**

### MONEY MATTERS

Due to supply shortages leading to higher car prices, along with rising interest rates, average car payments were \$800 to \$1,000/month in 2023, says Rob Carrick, personal finance columnist at *The Globe and Mail*.

Carrick suggests choosing a car or truck that limits monthly payments to \$500 or \$600 with a five-year-maximum loan term.

## POWER PLAY

Which type of engine is right for you depends in large part on how far you drive daily

### ELECTRIC

Even new entry-level EVs can travel 400 kilometres or more between charges. But since batteries are expensive to produce, EVs carry a price premium. If you drive a lot, the fuel savings will likely make up for the additional purchase price, so it pays to do the math. Having a parking spot to plug in and recharge your vehicle overnight isn't strictly necessary—you could rely on public chargers—but it makes EV ownership much, much easier.

### HYBRID

Plug-in hybrid vehicles (PHEVs) can typically travel 30 to 60 kilometres on battery power before their gasoline engines kick in. They're versatile—great for short weekly commutes and long-weekend road trips—but don't excel in any one area. Mild-hybrid electric vehicles (MHEVs) can't be plugged in and don't have much (or any) electric-only driving range, but they deliver consistently good fuel economy. "If you're driving on the highway all the time, a hybrid's not going to do a whole lot of good; it helps reduce fuel consumption a little bit. But if you drive in the city, they help a lot," Peterson notes.

### ICE

### (INTERNAL COMBUSTION ENGINE)

These vehicles need no introduction. They've been around for over a century. Gas and diesel engines are still the best if you regularly tow heavy loads over long distances.

*MATT BUBBERS writes regularly for CAA Magazine, specializing in car culture and transportation. He is a columnist for the Drive section of The Globe and Mail and writes for a variety of publications in Canada and the U.S.*



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# A Culinary Journey

Travel cross-country to sample Japan's delectably diverse cuisine, from humble street foods to delicacies fit for an emperor

By Corrina Allen | Illustrations by Romane Mendes



Osaka's Kushikatsu Daruma (far right) specializes in deep-fried skewered snacks.

**IN MY PAST THREE TRIPS** to Japan, to the main island of Honshu, I'd never had a bad meal. I'd slurped down *shoyu* (soy sauce) ramen in Tokyo and experienced, in Kyoto, a traditional tea ceremony. Each dining experience revealed something vital about the culinary culture and traditions of the country.

This time, I'm headed for delicious destinations a little farther afield. I joined tour provider Oku Japan alongside a small group with adventurous palates and travelled southwest, to Osaka and Awaji Island, then north to tiny Nanto, near the Sea of Japan.

## **ROYAL PROVISIONS ON AWAJI**

Many chefs adhere to the idea that diners eat with their eyes first, and in Japan, this is apparent on every plate—food is beautifully arranged and presented, or packaged. Care is an elemental ingredient in Japanese cuisine, as essential as tea, rice, fish and soy. Nowhere was this more evident than on Awaji Island, on the Seto Inland Sea.

The serenity of this sleepy resort area overlooking Osaka Bay belies its hardly humble culinary legacy. Considered a *mitsukekuni* (roughly translated as “region of food”), Awaji Island has long been a source of



premium beef, seafood and other luxury ingredients for dishes once served at the ancient imperial court in Kyoto.

More recently, in Sumoto, a city on the east coast of Awaji, chef Satoru Shinsei served our group a feast fit for royalty—grilled fish with *satoimo* (Japanese taro root), a seasoned carrot terrine and pan-seared mackerel partnered with roasted shallots and fresh figs. We also sampled the island's famed beef—mild, slightly sweet and liberally marbled with fat.

His restaurant, Shoku No Wa, is so named for his culinary philosophy, one he describes as focused on “food harmony.” By reinvigorating traditional cooking techniques with innovative twists, he's been credited with sparking a culinary renaissance on Awaji, which now boasts several upscale restaurants as well as luxury accommodations.

Before sitting down for his three-course meal, we'd spent the morning watching fish-laden boats dock at the local market for auction. We'd also visited a small fish-processing shop to see the delicate work required to debone Japanese cutlassfish, or *tachiuo*. Our meal at Shoku No Wa was the culmination of all this meticulous labour and rich culinary history. Each dish was a visual and gastronomic celebration of the seasonal ingredients the island has to offer.

#### STREET FOOD IN DOTONBORI, OSAKA

On clear days, you can see Osaka from Awaji, but culturally and aesthetically, Osaka is a world away. The heart of its seafood-centred food scene is busy, buzzing Dotonbori. Surging with tourists, lit with neon and adorned with giant animated signs, Dotonbori district is crowded, loud and one of the most exciting places to eat in Japan.

*Takoyaki* (grilled octopus balls topped with Kewpie mayo, green onion, and bonito flakes) is among Japan's most

“  
Each dining experience revealed something vital about the culinary culture and traditions of the country



(From top) Fresh local fish is celebrated at Shoku No Wa restaurant, in the coastal town of Sumoto; *takoyaki* (battered octopus balls) on offer at an Osaka food stall.

popular street foods. Join the lineup outside the shop with the five-metre-high 3-D octopus sign above the entrance. If you're looking to sample some of Dotonbori's freshest shellfish, head to Kani Doraku. You can't miss it—visible from down the block, a giant mechanical crab, literally waving customers inside.

There, at the takeout counter, I had one of the most memorable dishes of the trip—a piping hot *nikuman* (fluffy steamed bun), this one stuffed with shredded sweet crab meat.

*Takoyaki* and *okonomiyaki* (savoury pancakes) shops dominate the district's main arcades, but Kushikatsu Daruma



Located in Ainokura (above), a UNESCO World Heritage site, the Yomoshirō inn features the traditional thatched roof.

Namba Honten entices with a hard-to-miss alternative. Under a massive statue of an angry-faced chef, this iconic eatery serves up skewers of deep-fried meat, seafood and vegetables—*kushikatsu*, the perfect bar food. Add a pint of ice-cold Asahi and soak up the full experience. Osaka is a street food lover's dream with far more to relish than what you can fit into a week.

#### FAMILY-STYLE FARE IN NANTO

After a hike through the serene mountain town of Nanto, four hours north of Osaka by train, I'm excited to arrive at Yomoshirō, a small family-run inn of a type called *minshuku*. Our hosts bring us towering bottles of frosty beer alongside traditional Japanese spreads. A draw for food lovers, *minshuku* provide meals as elegant as they are simple. Local specialties play a central role and, in Nanto, these would include the town's famed fermented preserves prepared to last through harsh, snowy winters.

Once seated cross-legged on tatami mats, guests are offered fermented local vegetables, grilled or fried fish, and a silky cold tofu dish called *hiyayakko*. The second course is a bowl of flavourful miso soup, finished with a serving of plain white rice. For breakfast in Nanto, we were treated to *umeboshi* (pickled plums)—a flavour bomb of salty and sour that could be classified as an acquired taste.

But that's entirely the point of my trip. I came to acquire new tastes, experience untested flavours and choose a new favourite dish—one more reason to return to Japan. **CAA**

**CORRINA ALLEN** is a Berlin-based Canadian writer covering travel, food and design trends. Her work can be found in The Globe and Mail, rePorter, Pivot and on Forbes.com.



**A CAA Travel Consultant** can help you plan a delicious culinary adventure, including accommodations and restaurant recommendations. Visit [caaniagara.ca/travel](http://caaniagara.ca/travel) to learn more.

“Many chefs adhere to the idea that diners eat with their eyes first. In Japan, this is apparent on every plate

#### MARKET STRATEGY

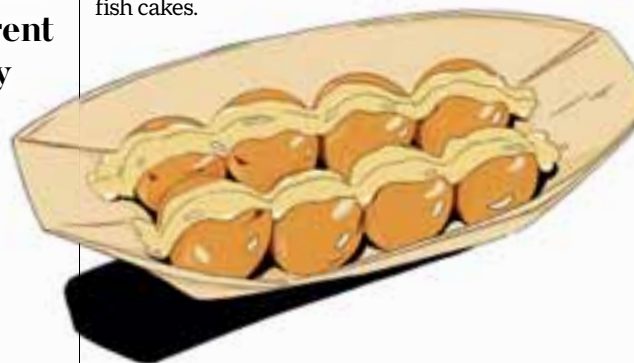
From street food to sushi, Japan's food markets and halls boast some of the richest culinary offerings

#### NISHIKI MARKET, KYOTO

Show up hungry at this market in central Kyoto. Established as a marketplace in 1615, this 400-metre-long arcade is the best place to get a feel for the cuisine of the cultural capital of Japan. Must-try items include *wagyu kushiyaki* (skewered bites of premium-quality beef), *tako tamago* (tiny skewered octopus stuffed with a quail egg) and sweet *tamagoyaki* (a rolled omelette flavoured with rice wine and soy sauce).

#### TSUKIJI OUTER MARKET, TOKYO

Just a 20-minute walk from Shimbashi JR Station, Tsukiji is the destination for seafood enthusiasts. Formerly a wholesale fish market, it is also a draw for travellers wanting to try some of the city's best sushi, sashimi, fresh oysters and fried fish cakes.



#### DAIMARU, TOKYO

Department store chain Daimaru is legendary for its underground food halls (called *depachika*). The Tokyo Station location in GranTokyo North Tower features rows and rows of snacking options, including a patisserie section that would impress even a Parisian. Try the strawberry-and-whipped-cream sandwiches served on *shokupan*—white milk bread that has the texture and consistency of a cloud.





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# Tracking through Florida

A high-speed, low-stress train tour through Central and South Florida reveals the Sunshine State's underrated gems

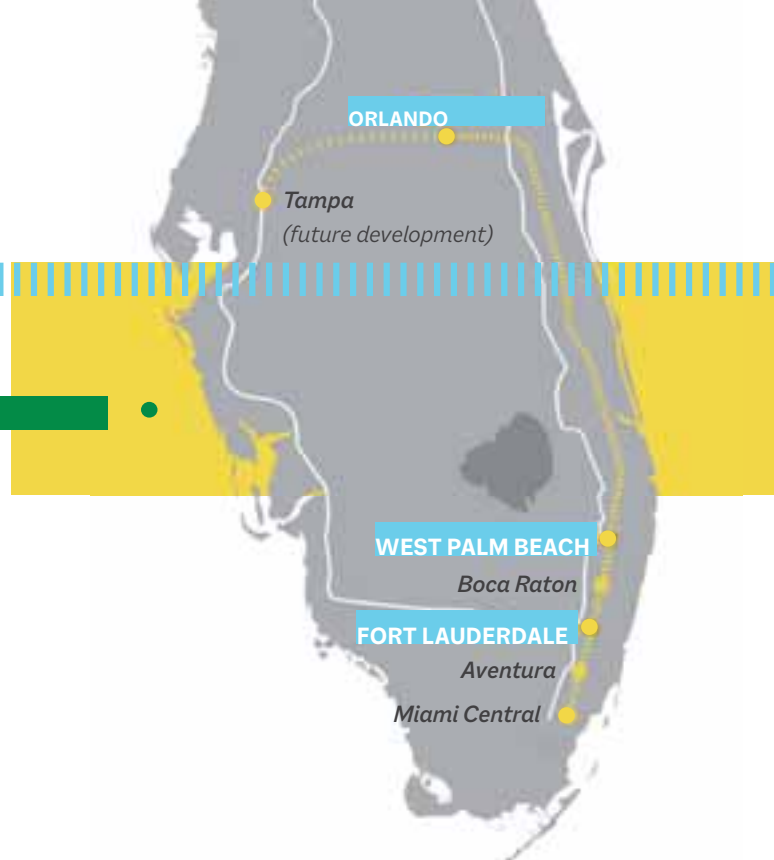
*By Claire Sibonney*

**IMAGINE STARTING YOUR DAY** with breakfast poolside at a resort in Orlando and, by noon, you're feeling the warm breezes of South Florida, in Palm Beach, Fort Lauderdale or Miami. It's easier than ever with Brightline, Florida's sleek high-speed passenger train, which has launched its eagerly awaited new route connecting Central and South Florida.

With trips from Orlando to Miami in just three and a half hours, Brightline whisks you through the Sunshine State, but the journey is about much more than getting there quickly. On this environmentally friendly biodiesel-electric train service, you can reduce your carbon footprint while experiencing the timeless luxury of low-stress train travel—in this case, replete with cushy hand-stitched leather seats, full windows for contemplative gazing and free mimosas for Premium guests. Just sit back and enjoy the scenery—Florida's famous citrus groves, bountiful wetlands and other glorious landscapes that change with every passing mile.

(This page)  
A Brightline  
biodiesel-electric  
locomotive.  
(Opposite page)  
The Celebration  
Hotel in Kissimmee  
is next to the lake  
and trails for walk-  
ing and biking.





## START: ORLANDO AND KISSIMMEE

After landing in Orlando, it's easy to hop on the Brightline with a stop right at the airport, but I decided to take some time to explore Kissimmee first. My base was the Celebration Hotel, with its architectural nods to turn-of-the-century Florida—replete with picket fences—in an area known for its picturesque American-small-town vibe, including an idyllic view of Lake Rianhard from my balcony.

The quaint streets of Celebration Town, a community originally developed by The Walt Disney Company in the 1990s, unfolds like a storybook village, and the serene lakes and sprawling wetlands of Osceola County beckon for a quiet kayak trip and glimpses of wildlife.

## LOCAL ATTRACTIONS

**Gatorland** This 110-acre family-owned park and wildlife preserve south of Orlando doubles as a refuge for relocated wild alligators. The park features a heart-pounding zip-line track that soars over alligator breeding marshes, teeming with hundreds of the so-called swamp puppies.

**Paddling Center at Shingle Creek** Glide under a canopy of stunning cypress forest, past banks brimming with wildlife (including herons, turtles and alligators), while learning about the creek's rich history.

**Cirque du Soleil's *Drawn to Life*** At Disney Springs, experience a world where animation and acrobatics intertwine in a performance featuring rhythmic gymnasts, animating drawings and aerialists.

**Salt & The Cellar** This restaurant, located in the luxurious Ette Hotel, is helmed by Michelin-starred chef Akira Back. Don't pass on his signature tuna pizza. Note that the Ette is a dry hotel (BYOB still welcome). But its dramatic zero-alcohol libations showcasing fresh botanical ingredients are delightful alternatives—picture a fairytale forest tableau in drink format.

**Columbia Restaurant** Renowned for its 1905 Salad—tossed table-side with ham, Swiss cheese, olives and the signature garlic vinaigrette—and for its saffron-infused paella, this old-world restaurant balances traditional Spanish and Cuban recipes with Floridian flair. Other dishes of note are the Devil Crab Croquettes and Original Cuban Sandwich.



(From top) A map of Brightline's route and station stops; kayakers enjoy a guided nature tour with the Paddling Centre at Shingle Creek; "The Inner World of Animation," an act from Cirque du Soleil's *Drawn to Life*.



## More to Do in Orlando

By Jen Mallia

Orlando may be the theme park capital of the world, but there's plenty more to see in the aptly nicknamed "City Beautiful."

Slather on the sunscreen and head to **Wekiwa Springs State Park**. Paddle past stately homes on a kayak tour with Adventures in Florida to learn about the wildlife and history of the local waterways.

Browse more than 180 shops in the airy galleria of the **Orlando International Premium Outlets on International Drive**. Hot tip: Pick up souvenirs at the Disney Character Warehouse, which offers licensed products at clearance prices for much less than what you'd spend at the Park.

The trendy community of Lake Nona is home to **Boxi Park**, an open-air food hall with stalls constructed from repurposed sea containers. Sample the creative bites and beverages on offer at the numerous food stalls.

**Orlando Magic** generally plays 41 home games at Amway Center each season. Ticket holders can create their own VIP experience before or during the NBA games with a buffet dinner at **Jernigan's**, which overlooks the arena.

Take in a concert at **Steinmetz Hall in the Dr. Phillips Center for the Performing Arts**. This elegant state-of-the-art facility features acoustics engineered to blow you away.



Treasure Coast Sailing Adventures' newly restored sloop, *Resolute*, can accommodate up to 12 passengers for sailing trips in Martin County.

### NEXT STOP: WEST PALM BEACH AND MARTIN COUNTY

Back at the new bright and airy Brightline station at Orlando's airport—with its cocktail bar and well-stocked market and gift shop—you can reach West Palm Beach in just over two hours. West Palm offers high-end shopping, art and a stand-out culinary scene, but I headed to Martin County for a more relaxed and small-town feel. Explore the rustic vibe of the Treasure Coast, starting with a stroll on Stuart's picturesque Riverwalk.

I stayed at the Old Colorado Inn, which is comprised of several charming properties in downtown Stuart. Accommodations range from boutique hotel rooms in the main inn to quaint cottages and, close by, distinctive homes that include the historic Owl House, a 1904 riverfront home with five bedrooms and a private outdoor spa, just steps away from lively shopping and dining venues and the scenic St. Lucie River.

#### LOCAL ATTRACTIONS

**Treasure Coast Sailing Adventures** Set sail from Stuart on one of their classic sailing vessels that can be chartered for small or large groups. Join one of their daily group sails or create your own custom charter to visit the nearby sandbars or opt for a deep-water cruise to the Indian River Lagoon estuary, home to pelicans, osprey, eagles and dolphins.

**Riverwalk Cafe and Oyster Bar** Nestled by the St. Lucie River, this restaurant is a Stuart local favourite with its fresh oyster bar and specialties, such as oysters Romanoff (a.k.a. "dirty oysters") served with sour cream, shallots and caviar, complemented by an extensive list of 120 wines, 50 of which are sold by the glass.

**Hobe Sound** Marvel at the unique limestone formations of Blowing Rocks Preserve and relax on peaceful Jensen Beach. A dolphin-spotting walk in Hobe Sound's Peck Lake Park is just one of many free eco-tourism events available in Martin County.



## FINAL STOP: FORT LAUDERDALE

Although you can take the Brightline route all the way to Miami, my final stop was Fort Lauderdale, often called the “Venice of America” for its extensive canal system. It’s a destination made popular by its crystal-clear waters, white sand beaches and buzz-worthy restaurants. A water taxi journey provides glimpses of the lavish yachts and luxurious mansions of Millionaires Row.

The modern all-suite Hilton Fort Lauderdale Beach Resort was my home base here and I could have stayed there all day to enjoy the pools and private cabanas, set against a wraparound deck framing the ocean views. But there was still so much more to see. The resort is a stone’s throw from the beach and Las Olas Boulevard, where you can stroll through historic districts, browse chic boutiques and explore art galleries. Also on offer are complimentary bicycles to tour the area’s many hiking and biking trails.

## LOCAL ATTRACTIONS

**Dune by Laurent Tourondel** One of the few restaurants on Fort Lauderdale beach, Dune is led by its French Michelin-starred chef namesake and is a highlight of the city’s burgeoning dining scene. The menu melds Asian and Mediterranean influences, with specialties such as *toro nigiri* with lemon glaze and a stand-out branzino filet with fennel and artichoke.

**La Fuga** Tucked in the Kimpton Shorebreak Resort, La Fuga with its coastal Italian flair has an indoor-outdoor dining room within view of the rooftop pool. Begin with a skillfully crafted Negroni, then try one of the handmade pastas, such as the *tagliatelle al ragu Bolognese* or lobster ricotta ravioli.





(This page) A Caribbean flamingo fishes in the pond at Flamingo Gardens. (Opposite page, from top) The Ocean Deck dining patio at Dune in Fort Lauderdale; *Tagliatelle al ragu Bolognese* from La Fuga at the Kimpton Shorebreak Resort.

**Flamingo Gardens** You could spend a full day wandering through this 60-acre sanctuary, featuring thousands of exotic plants, ancient trees and one of the largest collections of wading birds in America (including flamingoes, of course). The gardens also include a habitat where you can watch rambunctious river otters play. Don't miss the 1930s Wray Home Museum and narrated tram tours through the historic oak trees and tropical groves.

On my flight home, my mind is filled with the beautiful sites I enjoyed—and a few new discoveries I caught a glimpse of as I whizzed past them on the train. Thanks to the convenience of the Brightline, I know that on the next trip, these and many more unexplored stops are just a short ride away. **CAA**

*CLAIRE SIBONNEY is a freelance travel and lifestyle writer and editor whose work has appeared in National Geographic, Self, Teen Vogue, InStyle and other publications. Sibonney teaches journalism at Centennial College.*



### Travelling to the U.S.?

Don't forget travel insurance. CAA Travel Insurance includes options that cover emergency medical and dental care, lost baggage and changes to your trip. Visit [caaniagara.ca/travelinsurance](https://caaniagara.ca/travelinsurance) to get a quote.



Birds Canada's Yousif Attia (in white mesh hat) leads a local group on an instructive birding walk at Queen Elizabeth Park in Vancouver.

# Bird Call

Grab your binoculars—the migratory birds are back. Here's how to welcome and nurture our feathered friends

*By Andrea Yu*

**T**HE SOUND OF BIRDSONG in spring is something that Yousif Attia looks forward to every year.

"Birdwatching is so therapeutic for me," says Attia, an outreach and content specialist at Birds Canada, a national bird conservation organization headquartered in the lakeside town of Port Rowan, Ontario. "At its core, birding satiates this human desire to connect with the natural world."

And Attia is not alone. Since the pandemic, he has noticed a surge in birdwatching interest, particularly among millennials. "We're seeing more people out there, especially folks from diverse backgrounds and people younger in age."

For many birders, their pastime is a meaningful way to feel closer to nature and other people—which is especially significant for those who may feel marginalized. "If you see somebody your age or who looks like you and they're birding, it gives you the feeling of 'This is a place or a space I could be part of as well,'" notes Attia. In Vancouver, where he lives,

the group Birding with Me celebrates "diversity in bird and human communities." They host free guided walks tailored to specific groups, including those who identify as women, BIPOC or 2SLGBTQ+, as well as events held in various languages, including Spanish, Mandarin and Filipino.

Birdwatching is not just enriching for bird enthusiasts; it can also have a positive impact on the birds themselves. Apps such as eBird allow users all over the world to log bird sightings in their local communities, which contributes to conservation decisions and research. Initiatives such as the Great Backyard Bird Count—an annual event whose participants log the birds they see within a four-day period via eBird—can be done from home.

Having more birds around to admire is only one reason to help protect them. Canada has more than 420 species of birds that face a host of issues, from a reduction in habitat due to forest degradation to shifting migratory patterns affected by climate change. Autumn Jordan, an organizer at the Ottawa-based environmental non-profit Nature Canada, describes birds as an indicator species, meaning "the biodiversity of our bird communities can really show us a snapshot of overall system health," she notes. Some birds are pollinators, while fruit eaters help with seed dispersal. And birds play an important role in the food chain, too. "Owls are natural rat-eaters, and scavengers like crows and turkey vultures clean up our messes," Jordan explains. "Warblers and barn swallows keep those nasty mosquitoes at bay."

There's a lot we can do in our own backyards to attract and protect our feathered friends. It can be tempting to clear out dead foliage, but Sarah Coulber, an education specialist at the



## BIRD HOUSE RULES

While we love—and need—to have birds nearby, many issues that they face stem from our residences and buildings. Here's how you can help at home.

**Keep your cats indoors or on a leash** “Over a hundred million birds per year are killed by outdoor free-roaming cats,” says Jordan at Nature Canada.

**Add window decals** Window collisions account for 16 to 42 million bird deaths a year. Prevent bird strikes by applying decals on the outside of the glass.

**Opt for a pesticide-free garden** Maintain your garden without using pesticides, which kill bugs that birds depend on for food. “Sometimes, using your garden hose is enough to get rid of [unwanted bugs],” Coulber notes. And when purchasing plants and seeds, ensure they have not been sprayed with neonicotinoids, a category of powerful neurotoxic insecticides.



Canadian Wildlife Federation, says leaf litter is a spot where insects—a food source for birds—can gather, and dried long grasses are used as nesting material. She encourages homeowners to find a balance between a manicured garden and a safe shelter for birds. “Maybe you can leave a back corner of your garden untidy.”

If using feeders to attract more birds to your yard, place them far from windows and bushes where predators can hide. Keeping bird feeders and bird baths clean is critical to help prevent the spread of avian flu. Coulber recommends cleaning them with unscented natural soap and water once a week.

Feeders are a supplemental food source, but birds rely on the greenery in

your yard. “Native plants have co-evolved with wildlife,” explains Coulber. “Our native plants [bear] fruit that has the right proportion of fat to sugar that birds need to either overwinter or migrate.”

Fill your outdoor space with various beautiful native plants and flowers. If you build the right habitat, you won't need to seek them out—the birds will come to you. **CAA**

*ANDREA YU is a freelance journalist and a contributing editor at Toronto Life and Maclean's. Her work has been published in The Globe and Mail and the Toronto Star. Her home base is in Toronto, but she takes every opportunity to travel and be in nature.*



(Top) A rescued and rehabilitated owl is released by The Owl Foundation. (Left) A downy woodpecker eats peanuts from a garden wreath bird feeder.



## Flock Together

Consider supporting these local organizations that help protect wild birds in your area

### THE OWL FOUNDATION

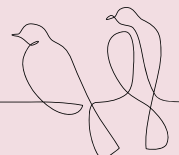
This foundation is not open to the public but operates a centre in Niagara to rehabilitate wild injured and orphaned Canadian owls. Volunteer drivers pick up owls in distress and transport them to local veterinarians and the rehabilitation centre. [theowlfoundation.ca](http://theowlfoundation.ca)


### NIAGARA PENINSULA HAWKWATCH

The NPH has been monitoring the annual spring migration of hawks, eagles, falcons and vultures in the Niagara Peninsula since 1990. [nphawkwatch.ca](http://nphawkwatch.ca)

### NIAGARA PENINSULA CONSERVATION AUTHORITY

While this community-based organization is focused on protecting the Niagara Peninsula's watersheds (land that drains into streams, rivers and lakes), its efforts inevitably help protect bird populations, too. [npca.ca](http://npca.ca)





SPONSORED

# Say What?

Learn the common causes of age-related hearing loss

From the melodies of an orchestral performance to the timbre of your grandchild's first words, there are so many precious moments in life linked to sound. Clear hearing can contribute to a higher quality of life, making it even more important to protect, as you age. Presbycusis—gradual hearing loss in both ears—is a common age-related condition that affects one in three adults over 65. Understanding the common factors behind presbycusis can help maintain auditory health.

## Loss of nerve hair cells

The sensory hair cells that live in the cochlea—the vital part of your inner ear that senses sound—are what carry information to your brain. These hair cells can be damaged by repeated exposure to loud noises, and studies indicate that the damage is irreversible even after noise exposure ceases. Research also shows that smoking is associated with hair-cell damage.

## Genetics

Age-related hearing loss may also run in your genes. If there is a history of presbycusis in your family, chances are it may increase your risks.

## Diet

While science continues to examine the relationship between hearing and diet, nutritional deficiencies can contribute to presbycusis. In fact, according to a study published in *The American Journal of Clinical Nutrition*, a diet rich in vitamins A, C and E—in combination with magnesium—may reduce the risk of hearing loss.

## Has your hearing gotten worse?

Regular hearing checkups are as crucial as visits to the eye doctor and the dentist. Take control of your health and well-being by scheduling a free hearing test at a Connect Hearing location near you.



Book your hearing evaluation today. Visit [connecthearing.ca/CAA](https://connecthearing.ca/CAA) or call 1.888.486.0177.



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\*Private clients only. Offer is not applicable with the Hearing Aid Rental program. Cannot be combined with any other offer, rebate or previous purchase and is non-redeemable for cash. Save up to \$2,000 on a pair of Select-level Sonova hearing aids; 15% off Advanced level; and 10% off Standard level with a valid CAA Membership. This offer is a tiered rebate determined by the level of Sonova Hearing Technology purchased. Offer expires September 30, 2024. Lyric and bone-anchored hearing solutions, economy hearing aids, non-Sonova and Advanced Bionics (AB) products excluded. Consult a Connect Hearing clinic for more details.



## Welcome to spring

**It's here. The season filled with warmer days, shorter nights and fun for the whole family.**

## Safe Passage

How Slow Down Move Over *can* make a difference

**WE ALL NEED TO DO OUR PART** to keep everyone safe on the road, which is why CAA Niagara supports National Slow Down Move Over (SDMO) Day every year, on the second Tuesday in May. It's a great opportunity to encourage people to remember why it's so critical to drive responsibly and help keep the emergency-vehicle and tow truck drivers of our community safe.

Across North America, nearly 100 tow truck drivers are killed each year in traffic accidents while assisting stranded motorists. That's why when you're approaching an emergency vehicle with flashing red lights or red and blue lights, or a tow truck with flashing amber lights stopped on the side of the road, you're required by law to slow down and proceed with caution. If the road has two or more lanes, drivers should change lanes—if it's safe to do so—to provide space for stopped service vehicles.

In 2023, CAA Niagara, the Ontario Provincial Police (OPP) and the Ministry of Transportation (MTO) partnered on a roadside campaign to promote education and awareness of

the Slow Down Move Over law. A mock towing scene was set up on the side of the QEW and 406 highways, and the OPP pulled over drivers who didn't adhere to the SDMO law. Over the course of three hours, 55 private and commercial vehicles were stopped and received educational pamphlets. Out of the 250 vehicles that drove by, only 58 percent on the 406 followed the law and moved over, while a mere 30 percent did so on the QEW.

Rhiannon Fleming, CAA Niagara's communications specialist, is hopeful that raising awareness around this issue will encourage drivers to follow the law. "We depend on the dedication of police officers, paramedics, firefighters and tow truck operators to ensure our safety while travelling. We have to make sure that we take measures to protect them as they carry out their duties."

Visit [caaniagara.ca/community/road-safety/slow-down-move-over](https://caaniagara.ca/community/road-safety/slow-down-move-over) to learn more.



## Reach for the Stars

**IT'S AMAZING HOW QUICKLY THINGS CAN GROW** when change starts from within.

CAA Niagara's Green Committee began in 2019 with the aim of encouraging employees to participate in sustainability initiatives. We embarked on our first environmental practices assessment with the Fédération Internationale de l'Automobile (FIA), a governing body that sets standards for road safety around the world. FIA's feedback measured our sustainability efforts against the industry's best standards and provided insights about how we could improve.

Since then, CAA Niagara has made some big changes:

- We've added two electric vehicles (EVs) and one hybrid vehicle to our fleet. Now, 60 percent of our fleet vehicles are powered by propane, electric or hybrid technologies.
- Our partnership with Kraun Electric offers CAA Members a discount for installing charging stations in their homes.
- We recently hosted our first educational EV event for Members.

The Green Committee's efforts have been rewarded with a two-star rating from the FIA Environmental Accreditation Programme. "We are deeply grateful and immensely proud of the dedication exhibited by our team to attain this level of recognition," says Peter Van Hezewyk, president and CEO of CAA Niagara.

Of course, there's much more to do. Leading the way is Ron Hart, who was recently promoted to health, safety and environmental specialist—a new role at CAA Niagara. Under his leadership, the committee has set its sights on achieving FIA's maximum rating of three stars.

When it comes to protecting our community today and into the future, there are some stars worth reaching for.

Visit [caaniagara.ca/community/go-green](https://caaniagara.ca/community/go-green) to learn more about our commitment to environmental stewardship.



# All in the Family

Bolster your brood with a Family Plus Membership

**THERE ARE LOTS OF PERKS** to having a big family. More hands on deck for dishwashing duty. Bigger teams for games night. And a whole lot of love. It also means you need a little more protection. The CAA Family Plus Membership is a smart way to provide coverage for up to five additional family members living under the same roof.

“For larger families or multi-generational families living in the same home, it makes financial sense to opt for the Family Plus Membership,” notes Vanessa Friday, associate director, member experience, at CAA Niagara. “You save money having all licensed drivers—under one roof—protected on the road.”

Here’s how this membership’s wide-ranging benefits can help your family stay safe—and save you money.



**Auto insurance discounts** If you’re adding a second vehicle to your household, a Family Plus Membership offers substantial auto insurance discounts.



**Travel safe and save** Save when you’re away from home through Member discounts on popular hotels, whether it’s a honeymoon or just a much-needed getaway. You could even streamline your first big family reunion by taking advantage of the many travel benefits of the Family Plus Membership. Prep for the trip with free passport photos and discounts on travel insurance to help get you to your destination, stress-free.

And no matter what road you’re on, Family Plus Members get four roadside service calls annually, ensuring, say, your big romantic road trip is one to remember—for the right reasons.



**Home insurance discounts** Buying your first home means shopping for home insurance. Use your Family Plus Membership to score some deep discounts on moving costs, for example, or home improvement projects, freeing up your budget for more family fun activities.



**Four roadside service calls annually per Member** Do you have a new driver in your family hitting the road for the first time? Your Family Plus Membership offers help options, including battery boosts and CAA’s Mobile Battery Service, free emergency fuel delivery and emergency vehicle towing, plus lock-and-key services up to \$100. “For parents of young adults who are starting to drive and parents sharing vehicles with their children, it’s important that each of those drivers are covered on the road,” Friday says.

Visit [caaniagara.ca/membership/family-plus](https://caaniagara.ca/membership/family-plus) to learn more.



## TripTik Fantastic

From paper maps to apps, CAA Niagara can help guide your driving adventure

### SO MUCH GOES INTO PLANNING THE PERFECT TRIP.

You book the tickets, plan where to go—and then figure out a route. CAA Niagara is there to help you every step of the way—even the directions part.

A CAA TripTik is the perfect travel companion, providing up-to-date directions based on current road construction and detours, plus detailed instructions and maps to guide you on your way.

“TripTiks are a must-have on your road trip to help guide you accurately to your destination on your terms—with stops along the way that are customized for you,” says Vanessa Friday, associate director, member experience, at CAA Niagara. Request a paper copy from the CAA Niagara office or create your own TripTik online. Simply provide details about your starting point and destination and get directions along with suggested points of interest along the way. “With online TripTiks, you can save your work and go back and complete it when it’s convenient for you,” Friday notes.

Visit a CAA Niagara branch for a virtual travel planning treasure trove. Along with free passport photos, there are annually updated maps and digital TourBooks for your tablet or smartphone, according to Friday. Use TourBooks to pick and book a hotel based on your needs, as well as suggestions for local attractions and restaurants.

Once you’ve got your TripTik and you’re ready to hit the road, don’t forget your CAA Membership Card. “CAA offers discounts on select hotel chains, car rental agencies, restaurants and more,” Friday says. “Check out our website for where you can save along your route while you are on a road trip.”

Visit [caaniagara.ca/travel/maps-triptiks-tourbooks](https://caaniagara.ca/travel/maps-triptiks-tourbooks) to set yourself on the right path.

# Restorative Repairs

12 essential tasks to help protect your home—and possibly prevent insurance claims

## OUTSIDE

**Check the roof** Look for buckling that could indicate structural damage. Replace any damaged shingles—look for rust on metal shingles and cracks in clay, slate or wood shingles (which can also rot).

**Clean the eavestroughs** Eaves-troughs and downspouts must be clear of debris to direct water away from the house.

**Repair driveways and walkways** Replace broken paving stones and repair hairline cracks in your driveway with a masonry filler. Wider jagged gaps may need to be repaired by repouring concrete.

**Touch up woodwork** Look for loose planks and rot on your deck, porch, stairs, railings and fences. Repair and reseal wood as needed.

**Inspect the foundation** Hairline cracks can usually be fixed with a DIY crack-injection kit. Bigger cracks (especially horizontal ones in concrete) or large gaps between bricks may require a professional to repair them. Check to see if driveways, sidewalks, decks and patios have the appropriate grading to direct water away from your home.

**Prune trees and hedges** Remove any dead or diseased tree limbs and trim any branches that overhang your home. Contact your utility company before pruning trees near power lines.

Spring is also the time to review your insurance policy and ensure you're fully protected. Double-check the coverage limits and options that pertain to water damage from flooding, heavy rainfall or sewer backup.

Visit [caaniagara.ca/insurance/home](https://caaniagara.ca/insurance/home) to learn more.



## INSIDE

**Test the seals on windows and doors** If windows rattle or you can feel air through them or see daylight around door or window frames, there are gaps, which need to be sealed. Seal them with caulking or weatherstripping.

**Look over ceilings and walls** Mildew spots, large brown or yellow stains, and bubbling paint are signs of water damage. Call a plumber or restoration specialist.

**Test sump pumps, sensors and back-flow valves** Make sure the measures you've taken to prevent flooding are in place for a wet spring.

**Clean furnace and air conditioning units** Call an HVAC specialist to ensure that these are working efficiently to help reduce dust and your heating and cooling costs.

**Test smoke detectors and carbon monoxide detectors** Refresh batteries and replace any expired detectors.

**Check faucets, drains and pipes** Look inside cabinets to make sure the pipes and hoses connected to your sinks and dishwasher aren't leaking. Repair leaky faucets and clear clogged drains—bring in a plumber if necessary.



✓ Relaxing after spring cleaning  
✓ Great savings on home insurance  
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- **10% savings<sup>4</sup> for CAA Members**



For details: 1-855-243-1622  
[caaniagara.ca/HelloSpring](https://caaniagara.ca/HelloSpring)

<sup>1</sup> Property Insurance is underwritten by CAA Insurance Company.  
<sup>2</sup> Emergency Travel Medical Insurance is underwritten by CAA Insurance Company. Claims are administered by Global Excel Management. <sup>3</sup> CAA Legal Coverage is underwritten by CAA Insurance Company. Claims are administered by ARAG Legal Solutions Inc. (ARAG). <sup>4</sup> To qualify for the discount, you must be a current CAA Member in good standing (CAA Membership dues paid in full by membership expiry date). <sup>5</sup> CAA trademarks are owned by, and use is authorized by, the Canadian Automobile Association. Certain conditions, limitations and underwriting guidelines apply.(922498-12/23)



# A Real Boost

CAA Niagara helps support local charities and non-profits

**COULD YOUR CHARITY** or non-profit use some extra funding? CAA Niagara is here to help—the Community Boost program was started in 2019 to help local organizations improve the lives of fellow community members.

Each year, two Niagara-based charities or non-profits are selected to receive \$10,000 along with organizational support. CAA Niagara accepts applications online from charitable organizations that are registered as a charity or non-profit focused on community safety, programming for children and seniors, social services or mental health services.

Niagara has many charities and non-profits working to enrich the community. Last year, more than 50 organizations applied, and Big Brothers Big Sisters of Niagara and Wellspring Niagara were selected to receive funding.

This year, the deadline to apply is April 1, 2024.

The funding can be a game changer, notes Shanna Jarvis, associate director of marketing at CAA Niagara. “It can help [charities] expand, innovate and become more sustainable, ultimately

benefiting the communities they serve.” CAA Niagara also teams up with local CAA Rewards® Partners to generate additional donations for the Community Boost organizations.

The additional support CAA Niagara provides is invaluable. “Many non-profits run mainly on volunteers and they don’t get the opportunity to do the programming or marketing they would like,” says Jarvis. CAA Niagara offers marketing help by boosting the organizations’ yearly campaigns via their social channels and newsletters and putting their decals on two of CAA Niagara’s tow trucks. CAA Niagara staff also volunteer their time and participate in many Community Boost partner campaigns and initiatives.

For CAA Niagara, supporting these kinds of organizations is key to its mission, says Jarvis. “Focusing on community involvement and social responsibility strengthens our business and the communities we serve.”

Niagara charities and non-profits can visit [caaniagara.ca/communityboost](https://caaniagara.ca/communityboost) to apply by April 1, 2024.



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[caaniagara.ca/insurance/pet](https://caaniagara.ca/insurance/pet)

\*All Pet Insurance plans have limitations and exclusions.

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## UPCOMING DAY TOURS

Join us for an unforgettable day!

## JOURNEYS

BY CAA NIAGARA

### A Day in Elora

May 16

### Don Pasquale Opera - COC

May 18

### Toronto Blue Jays vs Chicago White Sox

May 20

### St. Lawrence Market & Distillery District

May 31

### Harper Lee's To Kill a Mockingbird

May 29

### Lockport Locks & Erie Canal Cruise

May 30

### Cirque du Soleil: ECHO

June 9

### TSO: Broadway Blockbusters

June 26

### Comedy in Jamestown NY

August 18 to 19

### Stratford Festival Overnight

October 22 to 23

Whether you prefer live performances, professional sports games, local festivals or relaxing boat rides, there is a Journeys day tour for you!

For a complete list and more information on upcoming Journeys tours please call **905-322-2712** or visit [caaniagara.ca/journeys](https://caaniagara.ca/journeys)



SCAN HERE



# Air Buds

Vet-approved tips for flying with your cat or dog

**TRAVELLING IS MORE FUN** with your best fur friend in tow. Ensure that the trip is positive for your pet by following these travel tips from Dr. Matthew Richardson, a small-animal veterinarian and the owner of The Animal Clinic in Toronto, as well as past president of the Ontario Veterinary Medical Association.

## VET CHECK

“I’ve never heard of a plane being diverted because of a pet in distress. So, I think a checkup prior to air travel is a good idea,” he advises. Some airlines request a vet’s certification that your cat or dog is healthy enough to travel. If flying overseas, your pet may require a series of vaccinations and tests well in advance of your trip.

Dr. Richardson’s two large dogs handle flying in cargo quite well, but he’s apt to worry. “On some flights, the attendants would let me know when my dogs had been loaded onto the plane, which allowed me to relax,” he says. Now, he always asks the cabin crew to inform him when his dogs are safely onboard.

To ensure his dogs stay hydrated, he fills the travel-crate water tray and freezes it pre-flight, so it won’t spill while being loaded into cargo.

Cats and small dogs may be permitted to travel with you in the cabin, depending on their carrier size. Airlines vary when it comes to policies for flying with pets, so call before booking your tickets.

## PRE-TRIP PLANNING

“On the day of travel, there are many stressors, and pets are adept at picking up on our emotions, so preparation is important,” notes Dr. Richardson. Allow cats and dogs to explore carriers or crates in advance—preferably with toys or treats inside.

It’s important to familiarize yourself with the details of your pet insurance policy. Pets Plus Us will pay for your pet’s treatment for an eligible condition at any licensed veterinarian anywhere in Canada or the U.S. If your policy includes Accident & Illness coverage, they’ll pay a portion of your travel costs if you cancel a trip because your pet is sick or if you return early because your pet needs urgent treatment.

A little pre-trip prep will make for happy trails—and happy tails—along the way.

**CAA Members save 12% on Pets Plus Us pet insurance.**

Visit [caaniagara.ca/insurance/pet](https://caaniagara.ca/insurance/pet) to choose a flexible plan that suits your needs.



# Spring Things

Get great CAA discounts on everything you need for a fresh start | *By Briony Smith*

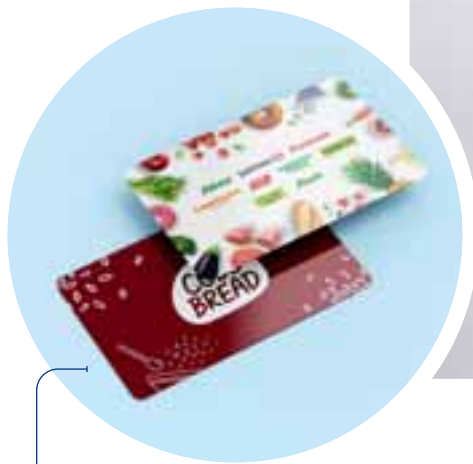
**SPRING IS A SEASON OF JOY AND RENEWAL—AND ALSO SAVINGS.** Your CAA Membership offers an abundance of discounts and deals for a sensational start to the season.

“CAA Niagara Members can use their Membership for benefits with CAA Rewards® Partners all over the region,” notes Trevor Powell, a Rewards specialist at CAA Niagara. “Saving with CAA Rewards ensures that Members get the most out of their everyday spending, making their spring-time adventures more affordable and enjoyable.”

Here’s how you can use your CAA Membership to make this your best spring yet.

**Splurge on a professional spring cleaning.** Bring in the pros to help breeze through your to-do list. Members get 15% off regular cleaning services from PCS® (Professional Cleaning Specialists) of Niagara.

**Celebrate spring’s first balmy evening by taking the family out for burgers.** Head over to Harvey’s for juicy flame-grilled cheeseburgers, where you can save 10% with your CAA Membership—any day, every day.



**Trim your grocery bill.** “Take a bite out of your daily shopping with gift cards purchased at a CAA Niagara Branch,” says Powell. “CAA Niagara Members get 5% cash back on gift cards. From Sobeys to COBS Bread, Members can earn on everyday purchases.”



**Freshen up your look.** Embrace the sunshine without breaking the bank—snag your essential warm-weather wardrobe for less at RW&Co. Members save 10% online and in-store.



**Prep your deck for barbecue season.** It’s almost time to enjoy your meals alfresco. Your CAA Membership offers discounts to help get your outdoor space in tip-top shape. Refresh your deck with stains from Dulux Paints, where Members save 25% on regular-priced paints and earn 3% in CAA Dollars®. Or pick up a new outdoor décor piece at Bouclair, where Members get 5% off their purchases.

**Swap the toque for a smart new ‘do.** Members can visit First Choice Haircutters for 10% off adult cuts for a fresh new haircut.



Visit [caaniagara.ca/rewards](https://caaniagara.ca/rewards) for a full list of partners.



# Tooth Truth

Putting off a trip to the dentist?  
Here's how to get through it with a smile

**TO ANYONE FEELING SHEEPISH** about returning to their dentist after a long hiatus, Dr. Peter Fritz, a periodontist in Fonthill, Ont., offers reassurance—your dental team will welcome you back without judgment. “It’s their job to support you,” he notes, “not to make you feel guilty for the time that has passed since your last visit.”

There are many reasons why people skip dental appointments, ranging from anxiety and fear of discomfort to financial worries. Dr. Fritz urges patients to share concerns with their oral health team because they have strategies in place to help.

“Each time a patient with dental anxiety smiles after a visit, it’s a testament to their courage and our team’s dedication to providing compassionate care,” says Dr. Fritz. “It’s more than just a professional accomplishment; it’s a personal joy.”

## MODERN DENTISTRY

If it’s been years since your last appointment, you may be pleasantly surprised. Technology has made visits more comfortable than ever. Many offices now offer headphones, monitors and audiobooks to distract patients, as well as sedatives and anesthetics for pain-free procedures. Even routine cleanings are easier with ultrasonic instruments that remove tartar buildup without scraping.

But for some people, fear of the dentist isn’t about the experience; it’s the cost. “Don’t hesitate to have an open discussion with your dentist about your financial concerns,” urges Dr. Fritz. “We are here to work with you to find the best approach for your oral health and your budget.”

Many dental offices have flexible payment plans to make care more affordable. Government programs, such as the Canada Dental Benefit, provide financial support for those in need (visit [oda.ca](http://oda.ca) for a list of government assistance programs).

## SOUNDS LIKE A PLAN

If your group health insurance plan doesn’t offer adequate dental coverage, CAA can help. CAA Health & Dental Insurance provided by Securian Canada features flexible options—choose from four tiers for a plan that fits your budget. Growing families can pick a plan to maximize health benefits. And those who are self-employed or retiring will find it easy to transition to a personal plan, so there’s no gap in coverage.

Prevention is key when it comes to saving money on dental procedures. Regular checkups catch problems before they become more expensive to fix and include screenings for oral cancer and gum disease to protect your overall well-being. “Please take that first step and schedule an appointment with your dentist,” advises Dr. Fritz. “It’s an investment in your health that you won’t regret.”

CAA Members save 5% on CAA Health and Dental Insurance plans with Securian Canada. Visit [caaniagara.ca/insurance/health-and-dental](http://caaniagara.ca/insurance/health-and-dental) to learn more.



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# Greece Is the Word

Why a group tour could be the right fit for this dream of a trip | *By Vawn Himmelsbach*

**GREECE IS A COUNTRY STEEPED IN CULTURE.** It's the birthplace of democracy and a wellspring of art, philosophy and literature—as well as glorious golden beaches, marvellous food and bountiful historical sites.

In September 2024, Journeys by CAA Niagara is offering a group tour of Greece that includes three iconic destinations—Athens, Santorini and Mykonos.

“This is a great tour if you're going to Greece for the first time or haven't been there in 20 years, since it covers all the highlights,” notes Lois Sarkisian, Journeys by CAA Niagara's group tours manager. And it comes with all the benefits of a group tour, including a professional tour director, expert local guides, on-tour transportation and hotel-to-hotel baggage handling.

Here are some highlights:

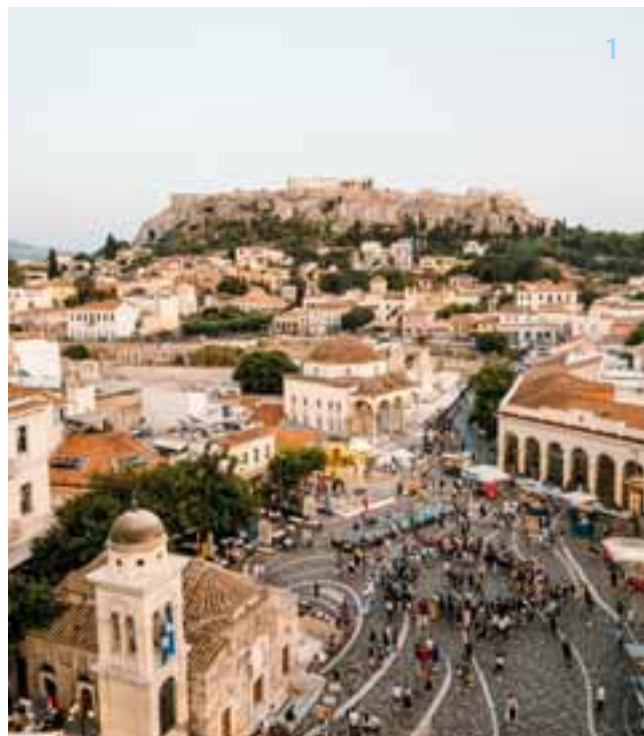
**1 Athens** Athens is one of the oldest cities in Europe—and in the world. With about 6,000 years of history, it's no wonder Athens was designated the first cultural capital of Europe (back in 1985). “I can't imagine going to Greece without spending a night or two in Athens,” says Sarkisian.

Look for street food vendors hawking charcoal-barbecued lamb and pork, wrapped in pita bread and served with tzatziki. Then head in the evening to the Plaka—Athens' oldest neighbourhood—for views of the ancient Acropolis lit up at night. Along the Plaka's winding cobblestone streets, you'll find alfresco restaurants where you can sample local specialties like saganaki (fried cheese) and moussaka (a traditional Greek dish made with eggplant, minced beef, bechamel sauce and cheese).

**2 Santorini** Athens is a gateway to the Cyclades, a group of dozens of islands in the middle of the Aegean Sea, of which Santorini is arguably the most famous. A photographer's dream, Santorini is known for its pretty whitewashed villages, blue-domed churches perched on rugged volcanic clifftops overlooking the azure Aegean—and the truly spectacular sunsets. Foodies are advised to not miss the chance to dine at one of the fish tavernas or sample the super-sweet local cherry tomatoes.

**3 Mykonos** While Mykonos is known for its dance clubs and world-class DJs, you can get away from the party crowd by visiting the sleepy villages on the east side of the island. Wander the narrow streets lined with whitewashed buildings and vibrant flowers, and explore the boutiques and art galleries. Once you've had your fill of shopping, head to the island of Delos, a UNESCO World Heritage site just off the coast of Mykonos. The mythical birthplace of Greek god Apollo and his twin sister, Artemis, Delos was once a pilgrimage site and trade centre and is now considered one of the most important archeological sites in the country.

With a group tour, you can enjoy every minute of your travels, without having to worry about hotels, flights and local transportation—plus local guides are on hand to share their insider knowledge.



Email [journeys@caaniagara.ca](mailto:journeys@caaniagara.ca) or visit [caaniagara.ca/journeys](https://caaniagara.ca/journeys) for more details or to book your trip.



## Premium Power

Getting pumped up for Shell V-Power NiTRO+ premium gasoline | *By Sean Deasy*

**SHOULD I UPGRADE TO PREMIUM GAS?** It's a question regular-gas users have likely asked themselves at least once on a trip to the pumps. And it's worth considering since using premium gasoline can have a direct impact on your vehicle's performance.

So, what is the difference between regular and premium gas? The main difference between regular and premium gas is the octane. Fuel grade, as determined by octane, and fuel quality are not necessarily linked. Not all premium gasoline is high-quality by default and, similarly, not all regular gasoline is poor-quality.

The octane requirements for the different gasoline grades—regular, mid-grade and premium available in Canada—are specified in the Canadian General Standard for gasoline and range from 87 to 94.

An octane rating is a measure of the fuel's resistance to knock. The higher the octane number of a fuel, the less likely it is to self-ignite (knock) under the high temperature and pressure conditions of the engine.

And then there's fuel performance. While octane levels are defined by the local fuel standards, the power of formulas—what's added to gasoline—differ and, as a result, so does the performance and efficacy of the fuel. Notably, a formulation that enables gasoline to maintain a clean engine as it operates—eliminating or reducing the buildup of carbon residue—also heightens the fuel's worth and performance.

"Every gasoline is going to generate some carbon residue as you burn it in an engine," says Sarina Arnold, Shell's technical lead for fuel product implementation and technical services in the Americas. "But Shell's premium gasoline is formulated to actually control those carbon deposits by preventing them from forming if not already there, or removing them when left behind by lower-quality gasoline."

In fact, Shell V-Power NiTRO+ patented formula is engineered with four levels of defence designed to quickly reach the surfaces of critical engine components, forming a protective barrier against four threats to an engine—deposits, wear, corrosion and friction.

"It's a very sophisticated additive technology," Arnold says of the formula that goes into Shell's improved premium offering. "For example, if you purchase a brand-new vehicle and you take it off the lot and drive it only on Shell V-Power NiTRO+ premium gasoline, you will not get deposits on the inlet valves and injectors. It's about sustaining your engine in a more effective way. Sustained performance comes from maintaining your engine as the manufacturer designed it."

But what about the effect of premium gas on an older, or non-performance vehicle?

It will likely help, notes Arnold. "Always follow the recommendation in the vehicle owner's manual; however, if you have a vehicle designed to run on regular gas and you decide to put premium in, it won't harm the vehicle. And you'll still benefit from the fuel technology, regardless of the type of gasoline engine you put it in."

That includes smaller gas engines as well. Using Shell V-Power NiTRO+ in everything, from a lawnmower to a snow blower, will help keep the engines in tip-top shape and running like new.

As for that gas-station moment of contemplation, Arnold suggests thinking about it like a healthy habit choice—the more you do it, the more favourable the result. "It's total engine protection. And continuous use and consistency is what delivers the benefits."

Visit [shell.ca/en\\_ca/drivers/my-fuels.html](https://shell.ca/en_ca/drivers/my-fuels.html) to learn more.



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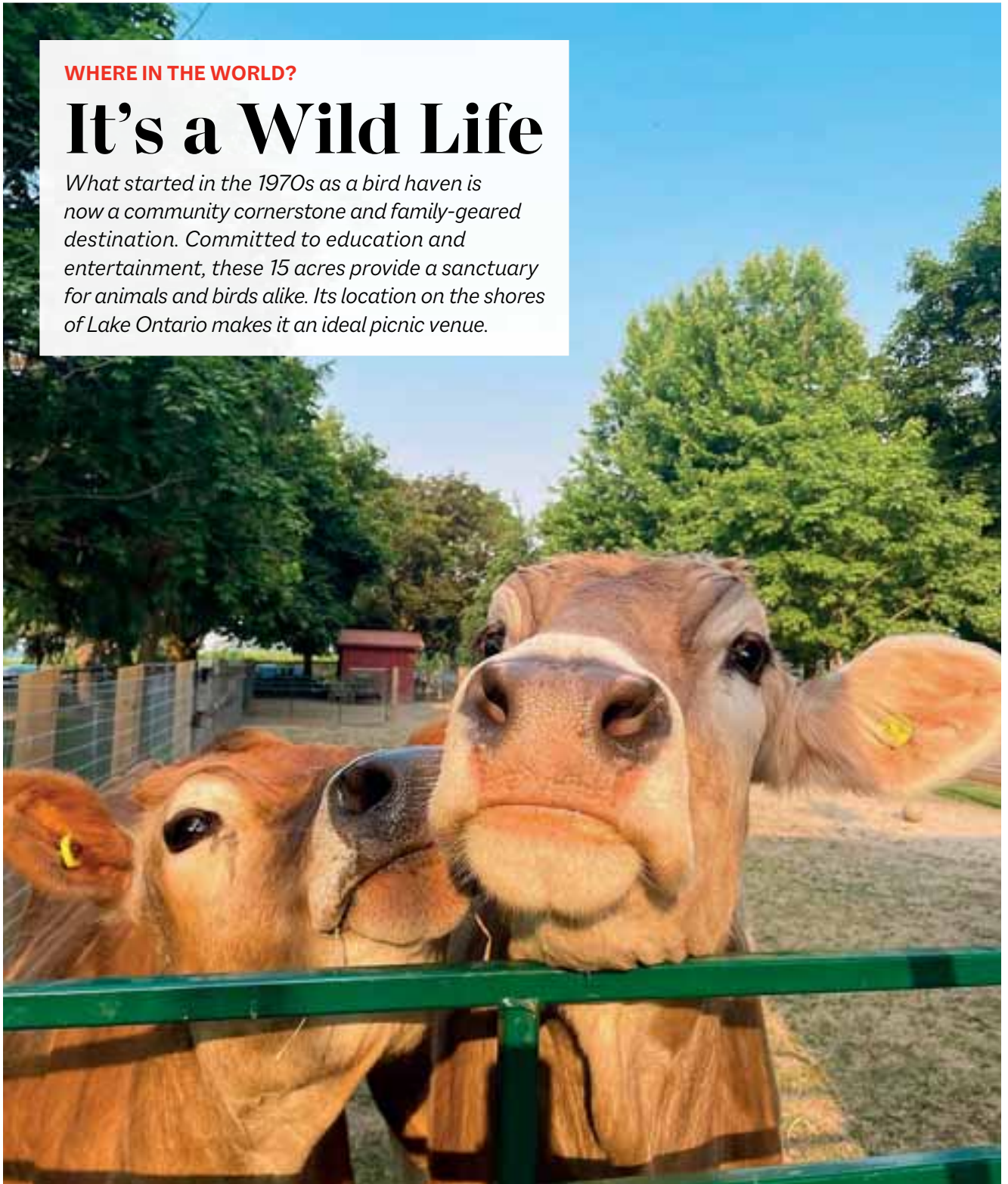
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