Outbreak at NOTL facility spread quickly

Penny Coles
The Local

COVID-19 cases in Niagara-on-the-Lake have been growing at an alarming rate, mainly due to a rising number of cases in local seniors’ facilities.

An outbreak at Niagara Long Term Care Residence was reported Saturday, Jan. 2, with the home’s first positive staff case discovered through regular testing.

“Sadly, four residents have passed away due to COVID-19-related issues, and our condolences have been extended to the families,” says Chris Poos, executive director of the facility.

“We are also in regular contact with all residents, families, and staff regarding the status of COVID-19 in our home,” he says.

“We remain diligent in all our infection prevention and control measures, including twice-daily screening of residents and staff for any signs of the COVID-19 virus, and regular testing.

Residents are isolated to their rooms, receiving in-room meal service, and are being cared for by staff on contact droplet precautions. We have appropriate staffing levels, and all staff are wearing full personal protective equipment at all times, which is well stocked in the home.”

Poos says he is working with the Ministry of Long Term Care to secure COVID rapid tests, producing results in 15 minutes, “which will give us real time information to assist us in managing this outbreak,” along with additional resident and staff vaccinations.

“While the home did have some rooms with three residents previously, Poos says changes have been made so those rooms now accommodate only two residents.

Sadly, once the virus enters a congregate living environment, this often silent and invisible enemy spreads fast,” says Poos. “This is not unique to Niagara Long Term Care,” he adds, and is seen in many senior residences across the province, and the country. “We know there is a much greater risk to our homes when there...
Upper Canada Lodge residents vaccinated early

Penny Coles

The Local

Last Thursday, 96 per cent of the residents of Upper Canada Lodge were given the Pfizer vaccine to protect against COVID-19. They were the first seniors’ home in Niagara-on-the-Lake to receive their share of the vaccine.

Marg Lambert, the long-term care home administrator, says they are waiting for Public Health to confirm the official date for the second dose.

A news release from Niagara Health Monday says the first resident to receive the vaccine at Upper Canada Lodge last Thursday was Maria Dos Santos, with Dr. Tim Bastedo in attendance. (Photo supplied)

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Shortage causing delays in Niagara vaccinations

Region ready to move forward as doses become available

Dr. Mustafa Hirji
CAO Marnie Cluckie

Niagara Health doctors and nurses will have to wait longer than expected for their vaccinations, with a schedule of vaccine shipments to Niagara reduced from what was anticipated. There is enough Pfizer vaccine for Public Health to vaccinate residents, staff and caregivers in long-term care and high-risk retirement homes, but not all retirement homes, and to ensure sufficient supply, there will be a pause in vaccinating Niagara Health’s staff and physicians, says Dr. Mustafa Hirji, Niagara’s acting chief medical officer.

He’s concerned the shortage and resulting change in plans will endanger the remaining retirement home residents, “also at risk of dying. Having all retirement home staff and long-term staff with close contact with residents is another part of the protection we want, and we’re not able to provide that yet.” Pfizer’s European production facility is being retooled to increase capacity, creating a Canada-wide shortage of vaccine, which has been part of the problem. However, Hirji believes the province had enough doses in December to have vaccinated all long-term care residents, but it wasn’t “optimally distributed.” In some areas, administrative and PR hospital staff were being vaccinated, “where elsewhere we were struggling to get the really high-risk people in long-term care homes vaccinated.”

He pointed out there are other regions which haven’t received any doses of vaccine yet, and that it’s important for the highest-risk people to be vaccinated, even in regions with the lowest case numbers. The Moderna vaccine has also been delayed in arriving in Niagara, likely being reallocated to regions with highest numbers in long-term care homes, he says. He doesn’t expect to see it in the region before the end of February.

The provincial government has also adjusted its direction on second doses to maximize the number of individuals benefitting from a first dose, with long-term care and high-risk retirement home residents, staff and essential caregivers receiving their second dose 21 to 27 days after their first dose. All other recipients of the Pfizer vaccine, including hospital staff and physicians, will receive their second dose between 21 and 42 days after their first shot. The region is ready and waiting to move forward on its vaccination schedule, but is limited by the amount of vaccine being delivered, says Hirji.

It is actually ahead of schedule for long-term care home residents, with those vaccinations expected to be completed two weeks from the start date last Wednesday, instead of three, says Hirji. The number of cases continues to rise in Niagara, mainly through long-term care home outbreaks, he says.

The numbers had flattened somewhat across the region early this week, with recent daily increases of between 108 new cases Tuesday, and a high of 176 last Saturday.

Niagara-on-the-Lake, also reflecting mainly the jump in long-term care cases, has jumped to 236 total cases since the pandemic began, with 101 still active Tuesday.

CAO Marnie Cluckie said Monday town staff are working with the region on a location to administer vaccinations in NOTL when doses are available, with the Virgil arena under consideration. With shut-down orders making reopening the facility unlikely, the plan is to move the ice pads and make the building available to the region.

Artists put their art together, with stunning results

Gail Kendall loves to take photographs on her walks through her village of Queenston with her dog Willow, and post her beautiful pictures on Facebook for all to enjoy. She’s never met artist Nancy Wardle, and was pleased when Wardle asked if she could paint one of Kendall’s photos of a Queenston home. The response has been so positive the two women are now considering working together on commissions. (Photo supplied)
Residents asked to share feelings of inclusivity, diversity

Survey now available online to identify key concerns

Penny Coles
The Local

Niagara-on-the-Lake’s inclusivity and diversity committee is looking for feedback to help steer its focus and initiatives through the next two years.

To do that, members of the committee have been working through several drafts of a survey that is now available online, to gain a better understanding of the people who make up the community, their experiences, and the diversity and inclusivity issues that exist in town, says committee member Richard Mell.

The survey is on the town’s website at Join the Conversation, and will be available until Feb. 5, with a summary of results expected to be provided to council in March.

The town committee, new to this form of council, had expected to hold a public forum early last year, similar to the one at the community centre held by the town’s wellness committee. When it was postponed by the pandemic, committee members decided to move forward with the survey to help them identify the key areas of concern in the NOTL community, says Mell.

“We hope to get an idea of some of the personal experiences people have had when it comes to all different forms of ‘isms’, and areas where a group can feel particularly marginalized, to help us focus on some areas for the committee to move forward with some recommendations to council,” says Mell.

As an example, he mentions universal washrooms and other similar accessibility issues that might come to light.

Without the feedback that’s expected from the survey, he says, “our focus might be in some areas that are not as high a priority to the community.”

There are some “have you ever” questions, he says, as well as questions with boxes for people to elaborate where they feel comfortable.

Not all questions are compulsory, with the intention that people “will find their own comfort level with what they want to share with the committee.”

The survey requires registration, but email addresses will not be connected to answers, says Mell. At the end the survey asks if people are interested in participating in a focus group on accessibility and, at that point, if they agree, they will be asked for their email again.

Hopefully the focus groups will be developed as a follow-up to the survey, which will help the committee dig a little deeper into the identified issues, says Mell.

Committee members have been paving the way to the survey by networking with marginalized groups in town, “trying to create some connections.” It’s key we get a diverse group of people answering the survey so we can have “our focus directed to the right areas, and we’re hoping people will share their true and heartfelt feelings with their responses to these questions,” says Mell.

The survey is on Join the Conversation on the town’s website, at https://www.jointheconversationnotl.org/inclusivity.

Residents of the inclusivity and diversity committee are co-chairs Niki Walker and Jamie Knight, and committee Members Kiera Sangster, George Webler, Ben McKnight, Virginie Head, and Richard Mell. John Weins is the council representative.

Councillors agree to look at Ryerson Park solutions

Penny Coles
The Local

Ryerson Park is suffering from overuse, too much traffic and several other associated issues that would like the town to address.

John Scott spoke to councillors Monday night about the growing number of problems in this unique neighborhood, and asked for a number of solutions before tourists begin to return in increasing numbers.

The Friends of Ryerson Park, a group of residents advocating for change, has developed what it calls “reasonable and positive remedies” for the town’s concerned, some recently updated to reflect changes made after consultation with town staff, councillors and other residents, says Scott.

He described the Chautauqua neighborhood as a special area of town with many unique characteristics, including narrow streets that are really lanes, no sidewalks, many cottage-style residences “and a truly different street layout.”

The residential neighborhood doesn’t have public facilities or nearby commercial outlets as other town parks hosting tourists, he says.

Unlike other NOTL parks, Ryerson has no services, is completely within a residential area, and has limited capacity with respect to both the park and street infrastructure.

The Friends group now has the support of 146 households in and immediately around the park area, for a total of 195 in the Old Town, and all residents are “extremely concerned” about the intensity of the issues of safety, traffic flow and park overcapacity. All are fully supportive of his requests to council.

The problems he detailed were exacerbated by the pandemic last season, but they have been building for a number of years, and have now reached the point where very few residents feel comfortable using the park.

“One underscore that we are in total disagreement with those who have suggested that the problems experienced last summer were only as a direct result of the societal changes dictated by COVID-19 protocols. We know that these problems will intensify once restrictions have been lifted and both the U.S. border and Shaw Festival have resumed normal operations. Accordingly, our community requires immediate, firm and positive action to both mitigate and minimize several serious issues,” he says.

He also spoke of the advertising on social media, including sites such as Trip Advisor and those promoting short-term rentals and bed and breakfasts, which tout the park as a beach and swimming area with full services, giving misinformation about what is available.

His specific requests to council included: restrict parking on all Chautauqua streets to only NOTL residents, and even then to one side only; with one household pass for visitors; increase fines for bylaw infractions to at least $100; reduce the speed limit on all streets in Chautauqua to 35 km/hr; close the park at 10 p.m.; install clear signage of the lack of facilities, as well as unpermitted uses, including no fires, barbecues or tents; rededicate directional signs at the Queen/Mississauga Street intersection to encourage visitors to make a left turn toward the QEW, establish a no stopping/tow away zone at the hairpin turn at Shakespeare Ave. and Ave. Nikolau Blvd, ensure bylaw officers are equipped with clear information about infracts in Chautauqua area and enforce them; and that the town be innovative with signage to maintain the aesthetics of the community.

Scott said the residents’ group has been meeting with town staff to discuss a report prepared by the group in the fall, and has modeled their requests in response to staff comments, stressing the group wants to work with the town on solutions.

After a brief discussion about the need to thoroughly investigate the group’s requests to be sure the town has sufficient data to make good decisions, council approved a motion by Lord Mayor Bet- ty Dysor to look at some temporary measures that could be implemented for the coming tourist season, and have staff report back to council for consideration of long-term, permanent resolutions to the Friends concerns that are fair and equitable to all residents.

To the question of incorrect information and rectification of the issues on social media, council agreed to ask the NOTL Chamber of Commerce help solve that problem.
NOTL dog groomers in limbo, hoping for good news

**Penny Coles**
The Local

Niagara-on-the-Lake dog groomers have once again been struggling with provincial restrictions, trying to understand why they are not allowed to open.

Groomers, like the Grooming Boutique in Virgil, are not alone in their frustration, having received a “huge number of questions regarding dog grooming” since the provincial state of emergency and stay-at-home orders.

“Our interpretation is that it’s not permissible,” she said.

“We’re not permitting dog grooming.” But she added staff would approach the ministry in an attempt to get more information.

Unfortunately for Chorney, other locals in that industry and their clients, the town has chosen to interpret dog grooming as a non-essential business, despite what she considers a clear health and wellness aspect of their work.

That decision, says Chorney, seems to be made with no understanding of her industry.

“We’re not looking at opening for a free-all, she says, by which she means taking appointments for dogs who require grooming purely for aesthetic reasons.

“We’re looking at our clients we know need it for health and wellness issues.”

Chorney says that it’s not permissible, “she says. We can’t wrap our heads around it. We can’t wrap our heads around why we can’t do it, and there is no room for interpretation.”

And there isn’t “an easy mechanism for getting an answer from the province, she says, although she thinks it would be easier across the region if Public Health weighed in. “It’s not as easy to get an interpretation from them as I’d like it to be.”

Chorney says that the lack of understanding her industry comes in, and the difference between grooming for aesthetic and grooming for health and wellness issues that need to be taken care of regularly, or they will worsen.

She also points to the lack of statistics that show cases of COVID spread because of grooming. “There are none, she says.

“Where are the facts?” Meanwhile, she lives with the uncertainty and confusion of many small businesses, hers closed because of an interpretation of a provincial order that changes from one municipality to another, and nobody to reach out to for a definitive answer.

Disero understands Chorney’s frustration. She helps care for her mother’s dog, and with groomers closed, she is one of the many clients left baffling the dog herself.

“I wish they were allowed open for curbside,” she says.

After Monday’s promise from the town CAO to seek clarification from the province about regulations concerning dog grooming, Chorney said Tuesday morning she’s hoping to hear some good news soon.

Although The Local goes to press Tuesday afternoon, we’ll keep readers updated on notllocal.com and our NOTL Local facebook page.

**Police can fine for non-compliance of provincial orders**

**Penny Coles**
The Local

The Niagara Regional Police will not be stopping drivers and pedestrians to ensure they are complying with the current stay-at-home restrictions, but they can issue tickets to people who are not following the rules.

The province’s most recent order limits people to leaving home only for essential purposes, such as going grocery shopping or to a pharmacy, for a medical appointment, a place of work that is an essential service or getting exercise outside.

It also limits outdoor gatherings to groups of five.

“We’re not conducting routine traffic stops to check for compliance of stay-at-home orders,” says NRP spokesman Const. Phil Gavin, although traffic stops will continue to be made for reasons that fall under the Highway Traffic Act and for criminal investigations, and will be done in a safe manner, with physical distancing and masks.

While typically enforcing the provincial COVID-related orders is considered the responsibility of bylaw officers, there are situations where police might step in and issue a fine, says Gavin.

The police continue their partnership with municipal bylaw departments, whose responsibility is to handle stay-at-home orders, and who typically take complaints about violations when municipal offices close.

Complaints after that time that come into the NRP will be triaged, he says, and police may get involved, especially if it’s a safety issue.

“Our goal, our hope is always to have voluntary compliance. We’re not going to go out and charge people or use a heavy-handed approach.”

Since the beginning of COVID restrictions last spring, the NRP has only handed out 60 violations to lockdown orders, he says.

“Education and voluntary compliance is what we want,” although there may be situations that require something more.

There have been occasions when police respond to complaints about too many people in a house, or a party going on, inside or outside. They have the authority to ask people to leave, break up gatherings, and tickets have been issued, he says.

“We’re always looking for that balance between education and enforcement, although by now there are not many people who don’t know the regulations.”

Bylaw officers or police can issue $750 tickets for offenses that fail to comply with a provincial order.

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**Liz Chorney cares for one of her clients, before the lockdown. She is hoping to be able to reopen as an essential service. (Photo supplied)**

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**Local Realtor® Local Knowledge**

**December 2020**

**NORTHERN ONTARIO LOCAL MARKET SNAPSHOT**

**NIAGARA-ON-THE-LAKE**

- **4** # of New Listings
- **14** # of Sold Homes
- **61** Days on Market
- **$996,300** Home Price Index
- **$524** Price per S.F.

**VIRGIL**

- **1** # of New Listings
- **7** # of Sold Homes
- **61** Days on Market
- **$755,000** Home Price Index
- **$494** Price per S.F.

**ST. DAVID’S**

- **4** # of New Listings
- **14** # of Sold Homes
- **68** Days on Market
- **$941,900** Home Price Index
- **$234** Price per S.F.
Last week news of the vaccine arrival in Niagara to protect against COVID-19 was giving us hope.

Now the supply and distribution fiasco we are hearing from the province is just giving us more reason to worry.

Despite reassurances and promises from our Prime Minister and Premier, the shortage of vaccine heading our way seems a major setback in our fight against this deadly virus, which has so many of us locked in our homes, trying to do what is right for our ourselves, our loved ones, and our neighbours across the province.

Despite the very high number of cases in the region, and the number of seniors who are sick and dying in our hard hit long-term care homes, Niagara hasn’t seemed a priority to the province. Our numbers put us right up there with the other four hotspots in the province, but it has not seemed like we were on the provincial radar as a priority.

Long-term care homes should of course be the priority across the province, but it seems other areas received vaccines for a wider group before Niagara and some other regions received their first doses, and we still don’t have enough for all retirement home staff and residents, never mind our doctors and nurses.

Niagara is ready to move quickly with a good plan in place, which was evident during the roll-out last week and the success in vaccinating all long-term care home residents in just two weeks. Now Niagara Health has to pause its efforts, while it waits for more vaccines.

Despite being questioned on CBC, there were no answers forthcoming from the Premier or provincial health officials about why Moderna doses here have been reallocated, or where to just that the vaccine is going where it is most needed.

As discouraging as the news is, it really doesn’t change much for the rest of us who are over 16.

We must remain committed to staying home and wearing a mask and keeping our distance. And if we can do all of that with out being angry or complaining, focusing on being kind and compassionate to others, so much the better.

By Penny Coles

The Niagara-on-the-Lake

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WHERE ARE THE VACCINES FOR NIAGARA SENIORS?

Wayne Gates, MPP Niagara Falls riding Special to the Local

Anyone following COVID-19 knows that the virus, which has wreaked so much havoc on our communities, is particularly vicious for those in the senior age bracket. In fact, so many of the precautions we’re taking in our schools and for those under the age of 40 are undertaken for the sole purpose of stopping the transmission from the youth in our society to our parents and grandparents.

Part of what makes COVID so deadly is the fact it transmits asymptomatically. That means kids who get the virus in a school setting may not even feel sick before seeing their grandparents and transmitting it to them, with deadly effect. Given this, we see no valid argument against vaccinating ar

eas with high concentrations of seniors as a priority. This is why the news that shipments of the life-saving Moderna vaccine were diverted away from Niagara is such a shock. We are at an all-time low in terms of hospitalizations and the number of cases is going down day by day, but most of that is happening at the Long Term Care facilities.

Niagara has the third highest concentration of seniors in the entire nation. Here in Niagara-on-the-Lake, one in four of our residents is over the age of 65, and less than one in six is below the age of 14. Looking at these numbers immediately tells you that if the virus spirals out of control here in town, it could have frightening consequences.

As this article goes to press, we are working with our health authorities to stop outbreaks in two separate care homes in town. The vi-

ruses is here, and we need to be taking every measure possible to halt it in its tracks. Some of those measures are incumbent on us, like washing our hands, wearing our masks and adhering strictly to the provincial guidelines. However, some of these measures lie squarely with our leadership.

Premier Doug Ford had 10 months to prepare for this vaccine rollout. As the opposition, we dutifully fulfilled our role and raised this issue as many times as we could, offering solutions we thought were feasible. We recognize Public Health Ontario may have made the decision to divert vaccines to areas with more urgent need, but there should have been no shortage in the first place. With 10 months to prepare for this vaccine rollout, the province should have had a strategy in place in with vaccines ready to be filled into the system and on the ground without a minute to waste.

Stories of shutting down vaccinations to observe holiday days only increased the anger many of us felt with the delay. This problem has now only compounded with the delay at the manufacturing plant making the Pfortimer vaccine will create delays in shipments, meaning some vaccine will have to wait longer to re-

ceive the second dose of the scheduled vaccines. Though doctors tell us that this will not affect their immunity; it adds to the frustration Niagara seniors are feeling, many of us are feeling the province. The fact that none of these under-served rural villages by one party tells us that this is not a coordinated effort, but generally a failure to have a plan ready for when the vaccine came. Some may chalk up their rage here these demands and delays to just partisan mudslinging. To those critics I would point out two separate letters sent by doctors and healthcare providers to Premier Ford last week. The doctors, who are exhausted and working unbelievable hours to protect us, still took the time to pen a letter to the Premier saying these delays were unacceptable. They were saying Niagara needs its fair share of vaccines. We’ve heard other front line heroes shouldn’t get it first, or that emergency spots shouldn’t be helped, but we’re saying we need a plan.

The seniors in Niagara-on-the-Lake need to know when they will receive the vaccine. The people of Ontario may be willing to even accept that some delays are out of the Premier’s hands, but right now they don’t even have properly projected timelines, so when the delays happen it just adds more worry.

We’ve worked extreme-

ly hard as a community to protect our most vulnerable against this virus. As a re-
gion that depends on tourism, we’ve had to endure the harder economic hit than many other regions, and despite this we’ve still worked hard to keep our community safe.

We need the vaccine to put us out has been an unacceptable statement. To those critics I would point out two separate letters sent by doctors and healthcare providers to Premier Ford last week. The doctors, who are exhausted and working unbelievable hours to protect us, still took the time to pen a letter to the Premier saying these delays were unacceptable. They were saying Niagara needs its fair share of vaccines. We’ve heard other front line heroes shouldn’t get it first, or that emergency spots shouldn’t be helped, but we’re saying we need a plan.

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Commitment, teamwork, community, fire department’s core values

At the heart of every successful organization, you should find a well-written, thought-out and comprehensive strategic plan. Any organization can become successful and fill the needs of its client base, however how that organization grows, and what determines how successful it will be, is all related to its strategic plan. Consider the strategic plan as a rudder on a ship. Without it, the ship still floats, but where is it going? How will it get there?

One of the main focuses of any organization’s leadership team should be to set priorities, allocate resources, and create a culture that enables everyone to work toward common goals and objectives. This concept, when applied correctly, can be how any organization, including fire departments, achieves success. For any management team to begin steering the ship in the right direction, a proper base to support the strategic plan must first be in place. This base is comprised of proper organizational mission statement, vision statement and core values.

The Niagara-on-the-Lake Fire & Emergency Services (NOTL.FES) recently adopted a new mission statement, vision statement and a set of three core values to help guide the department in a positive direction for years to come. This task was not completed in a bubble, but rather by gathering input from all members of the department. If an organization is to create an environment where all members are truly working toward common goals and objectives, they must be a part of the process. Vision and mission statements are often confused and used interchangeably, however each serves a different purpose. It should be clear they are meeting their defined intent. A mission statement articulates the organization’s purpose, while a vision statement defines the overarching aspirations of what it hopes to achieve or to become.

The newly revised mission statement for NOTL.FES is “To protect lives and property through prevention, education and response.” This statement is short, sweet, and tells the citizens of this community exactly what we do.

Our newly revised vision statement is “To be high-performing, progressive, and visionary in the provision of emergency services within our community.” We describe exactly what we want to achieve as an organization. Why not strive to be the best, all the time?

Following the creation of these new statements, we set forth to determine what our new core values will be. Core values should be the fundamental beliefs and guiding principles for all those involved in the organization. These values can assist in dictating the behaviours of members, while also defining the differences between right and wrong. Ultimately, a solid set of core values can assist an organization to determine if it is on the right path to fulfilling its strategic plan.

This task again was completed by polling, and gathering input from all members of the department. There is pride in knowing that the foundation for the NOTL.FES was crafted by everyone involved.

Some of you may have noticed that we are pushing our core values a lot. They are becoming a part of our daily lives, and we present them proudly. They are on all of our social media posts. They are now on most of our documents. They are even being placed directly onto our apparatus. The new core values for the NOTL.FES are Commitment, Teamwork, and Community. These new values are important to us. With commitment, we feel responsible for the goals, mission, and vision of the department and are dedicated to upholding and achieving them. We are committed to our organization and each other. Through teamwork, we are highly skilled in building trust, solidarity and collaboration. We value our trust and respect for each other and are loyal to our fellow firefighters and community. Lastly, with a focus on community, we share common attitudes, interests and goals. The needs of our community are at the forefront of all that we do.

The department hopes that with new foundations in place, helped cast by all members, we have set up a bright and positive future ensuring that the department is successful, ever-improving and always meeting the needs of the residents we serve.

I would like to thank Owen Bjorgan for his wonderfully eloquent and descriptive special report to your newspaper on his trek through the Two Mile Creek watershed. It is a shame that not everyone is as agile to work their way around the waterways of our community. As Mr. Bjorgan shows, there is much to see and enjoy. It is a further shame that our municipal leaders and the Niagara Peninsula Conservancy Authority do not do more to make these areas accommodating and accessible for everyone. It would add another attraction for tourists and residents alike and reduce flooding if we were able to walk through these areas. If you drive down Niagara Stone Road and look at Four Mile Creek on both sides of the bridge at that point, you will see the rising threat of flooding potential from the decimation of the area.

Travel further down to the area of the community centre and you will again see the threat of potential flooding. I have attached a picture to better show the problem. Can you envision a series of pathways and bike paths that would make these waterways accessible for all?

Derek Insley

Letters!
We want letters!

If you have a letter to the editor you’d like to see published, please send it to penny@notlocal.com. Please try to keep it to about 350 words. Sorry, but we won’t publish anonymous letters. And please stick to the issue at hand, rather than attacking those involved. The deadline is Monday at noon.

Shame nature areas can’t be more accessible

I would like to thank Owen Bjorgan for his wonderfully eloquent and descriptive special report to your newspaper on his trek through the Two Mile Creek watershed. It is a shame that not everyone is as agile to work their way around the waterways of our community. As Mr. Bjorgan shows, there is much to see and enjoy. It is a further shame that our municipal leaders and the Niagara Peninsula Conservancy Authority do not do more to make these areas accommodating and accessible for everyone. It would add another attraction for tourists and residents alike and reduce flooding if we were able to walk through these areas. If you drive down Niagara Stone Road and look at Four Mile Creek on both sides of the bridge at that point, you will see the rising threat of flooding potential from the decimation of the area.

Travel further down to the area of the community centre and you will again see the threat of potential flooding. I have attached a picture to better show the problem. Can you envision a series of pathways and bike paths that would make these waterways accessible for all?

Derek Insley

The trusted voice of our community.

N O T L F E S W R I T I N G  A R E G U L A R C O L U M N W I T H T h e N O T L R e l a t e d t o a l l t h i n g s f i r e . E x p e c t t o s e e a r t i c l e s r e l a t e d t o f i r e s a f e t y , t r a i n i n g , f i r e d e p a r t m e n t i n i t i a t i v e s o r d e v e l o p m e n t s w i t h i n t h e d e p a r t m e n t . T h e N O T L F E S r e c o g n i t e s o n e o f t h e b e s t w a y s t o e n s u r e w e r e a c h e v e r y m e m b e r o f t h e c o m m u n i t y i s t h r o u g h u s i n g a l l m e d i a p l a t f o r m s a v a i l a b l e . 

T h a n k y o u f o r r e a d i n g , a n d l o o k i n g f o r w a r d t o t h e a r t i c l e s t h a t w e p r o d u c e .

Letters to the Editor

The NOTL.ES is writing a regular column with The Local related to all things fire. Expect to see articles related to fire safety, training, fire department initiatives or developments within the department. The NOTL.FES recognizes one of the best ways to ensure we reach every member of the community is through using all media platforms available. Thank you for reading, and looking forward to the articles that we produce.

The view of Four Mile Creek from Niagara Stone Road shows the potential for flooding. (Derek Insley)
Hot topic, cold winter, with hiking during lockdown

Owen Bjorgan Special to the Local

It’s one thing to mandate the removal of social and physical contact. We’ve been doing it for nearly a year now. It’s another to inhibit access to nature on top of that. Or, at least, have many of us question how to best go about it during a global health crisis.

While the former strategy makes sense during a pandemic, the latter is a questionable approach and not one that has helped us.

The ripple effect was so predictable. When the province-wide lockdown began and (was then strengthened) into a state of emergency with a stay-at-home order, many took to the great outdoors to get some fresh air and exercise.

Continued on page 9
Anger and divisiveness now found on trails

Continued from page 8

hit the trails. It’s a puzzling phe-
nomenon, and often ends in a
dead end, like bush-whacking
through a thick swamp.

Other conversations are
like accidentally stepping on a
wasp nest. You’re just walking
along peacefully, and perhaps
just trying to be a part of the con-
versation in the woods. Al-
though you never asked for it,
suddenly, they’re coming at you
with stings from all directions.

If you want, not even an ounce
of anger or divisiveness exists
on these hiking, camping, and
outdoor community pages.

However, it’s in our human
trait to need provoking and
curious when we’re faced
with new situations. It sounds
like many of us would benefit
from a soothing walk on one of
NOTL many hiking trails.

Don’t feed into the hype,
and stop overthinking. Your
skin needs vitamin D, your
muscles need a variety of
movements, and your lungs
need oxygen. Your brain
and curiosity when we’re faced
with new situations.

Thankfully, as I cite in
the majority of my NOTL Lo-
cal articles, that is an easy thing
to do here in Niagara. We are
blessed with a full spectrum of
easy to challenging trails, spots
enjoyed by many, and nooks
turned by few. The Bruce Trail,
the Niagara Parkway Recre-
ational Trail, Paradise Grove,
Two Mile Creek Conservation
Area, and Four Mile Creek
Conservation Area are just
some starters.

It’s essential for humans
to get outside, look up to the
treetops, and remember their
place in nature as it changes all
around us.

Besides, if we’re not get-
ting outside and exposing our
immune systems to the soil,
bacteria, pollen and fresh air,
I fear we’re essentially bub-
ble-wrapping ourselves for a
much worse disaster down the
road. But that’s a whole other
discussion.

Museum opens lecture series with
history of ‘abominable offence’

Local Staff

The Niagara-on-the-
Lake Museum’s 2021 Virtual
Lecture Series kicks off next
Wednesday with staff mem-
ber Amanda Balyk’s presen-
tation that promises to be
provocative and illuminat-
ing.

An Atrocious and Abom-
nable Offence shines a light
on 19th century attitudes to-
wards the deliberate termina-
tion of a pregnancy, a contro-
versial subject for thousands
of years. "With laws that have
banned it, approved it, ban-
ished those who practised it,
and even condemned others
to death," says the museum’s
Barbara Worthy.

"It has been used as a
political weapon, as much
as it has been approved as a
health measure."

Balyk will use five dis-
tinct abortion trials from
mid 19th century Victorian
England to illustrate "the
dizynng attitudes, language,
and controled practised by the
anti-abortionists and medi-
cal professionals of the day,"
says Worthy.

"The trials were diligent-
ly recorded in The Lancet,
one of the world’s oldest and
most respected medical jour-
nals, giving a public and
highly respected voice to the
doctors’ dilemma."

Abortion was against the
law, "and the medical profes-
sional of the mid-19th centu-
ry felt their newly acquired
status was seri-
ously challenged by charla-
tans and quacks who were
always ready to profit from
the misfortunes of women."

Balyk is a recent gradu-
ate from Brock University,
and her MA in History. Her
areas of interest are nine-
teenth-century British crime
and gender, and she brings
a unique perspective on the
lesser-known aspects of
mid-Victorian medical his-
try.

She is also a high school
teacher with the District
School Board of Niagara,
and currently works as the
Tiny Museum coordinator
with the museum.

An Atrocious and Abom-
nable Offence is scheduled
for Wednesday, Jan. 28 at 11
a.m.

Please register at the Ni-
gara-on-the-Lake Muse-
um website: www.nalom.ca.
Jordon Williams ‘aggressively’ pursuing PC nomination

Penny Coles
The Local

It’s no secret that Jordon Williams wants to represent the provincial Progressive Conservative party in the next election, and he’s ready to ramp up his public profile in the hopes of winning the nomination.

While the election is not expected until June, 2022, the Niagara-on-the-Lake man says the riding association is beginning to discuss possible candidates in the next few weeks.

In September, although Premier Doug Ford said he had no plans to call an election, 72 Progressive Conservatives MPPs were acclaimed in their ridings.

Williams says he believes it’s especially important to have a candidate ready in the Niagara Falls riding, “where we’re going up against a formidable MPP.” Getting in is going to definitely be a Herculean task. Getting people lined up for a campaign makes good sense.”

Williams ran as a NOTL candidate in the 2018 municipal election, and says he learned “some good lessons from losing, including how much work is involved in running,” which has led to him starting early.

“I really learned what it takes to be successful, which is to really get yourself out there in a positive way.”

He’s in the process of launching a new business, a travel and lifestyle magazine, first with content on social media platforms, with blog postings to follow, and a quarterly magazine beginning in May. He wants to highlight communities like NOTL “that we can say are safe destinations for the LGBTQ community to visit.”

But if he wins the nomination, he is prepared to take the time to run a good campaign.

In addition to promoting diversity, he says he’s running “to advocate for health and well-being of mind and body.”

In addition to fighting “for those that don’t have a voice or the support that I grew up with,” he wants to push hard on dealing with human trafficking, an issue recognized on the streets of Niagara Falls; he would like to improve trade skills training by putting more money in colleges for trades; and he hopes to work with developers on building houses that younger people can afford to buy.

Williams describes himself as socially progressive, fiscally conservative. “I grew up in the days of Brian Mulroney, Kim Campbell, and Terry St. Amand locally. Some would say I’m a red Tory.”

There are times when he has questioned whether he should stay in the PC party, he says, “but honestly, there is nowhere else I would go. That’s the beautiful thing about our party. We accept that it’s not one way or the highway, or just one way of thinking. It’s up to us to change people’s minds inside the party and out, and that’s one of the reasons I’m running. I want to create a broad coalition of people who don’t think they generally belong in the PC party, but can look at me and see themselves having a voice.”

In addition to being a member of the LGBTQ community, Williams says he also identifies with the disabled community, having had health issues as a child that continue to this day.

He also represents the hospitality and tourism industry, rather than being “a doctor or a lawyer or an entrepreneur. Many people can see a little bit of themselves in me. We need the Bay Street businessmen, the doctors

Continued on page 11
Jordon Williams, at a friend’s horse farm in NOTL, says the time is right for a ‘modern conservative’ to represent the Niagara Falls riding.

He says it’s time for the PCs to have a candidate “more reflective of the community. I’ve faced physical challenges, social challenges and economic challenges. The party needs someone to really speak to others with similar challenges in Niagara Falls, Niagara-on-the-Lake and Fort Erie.”

He sees the time as right for change.

“I’m encouraged on our side of the aisle. We’ve made progress, but we’re definitely not there yet.”

He has started his campaign at jordonwilliams.ca to bring in memberships, and believes if people look at his website, “I’m sure they’ll see someone like themselves, or they’ll see their grandson, or they’ll see a neighbour, and sign up.”

He’s expecting a nomination fight, mentioning a well-known politician in the region who has expressed interest in running.

Williams serves on the federal PC board for MP Tony Baldinelli, and says he’s been “very aggressive” about making it known to the provincial association that he’s interested, “because I think the times call for it. I’m waiting for them to call me.”

Continued from page 10

Party is making progress, ‘but not there yet’
Scuba diving a life-long hobby for retired teacher

Mike Balsom
Special to The Local

 Usually on New Year’s Day Niagara-on-the-Lake resident David Gilchrist gathers with a group of up to 14 other scuba divers to kick off the year with a dive at the Welland Scuba Park.

Unfortunately, the current lockdown put an end to any plans he had to venture into the old canal.

The retired elementary school teacher was introduced to scuba diving as a student while attending the former Southmount Secondary School in Hamilton. He fell in love with the underwater environment, and it has continued to be part of his life for 50 years.

Gilchrist came to the Niagara area to study biology at Brock University. “I had an interest in marine biology,” he explains. “There was a scuba club at Brock, and I became involved in that. Belonging to the club was important to me. We organized dives in different locations.”

The next important chapter in his life was influenced by his love of the sport. He met his future wife Claudia when she took the scuba course he was teaching for the Brock club. The two settled in the region, purchasing a home in Niagara-on-the-Lake in the late 1970s.

“Diving became a family affair for a few years,” says Gilchrist. “Both of our sons (Chris and Andrew) learned to dive when they were growing up. Tobermory was a big draw for us back in the day for shipwreck diving, and we’d go down to Florida on occasion, too.”

These days Gilchrist is the lone member of his family continuing to don the equipment in diving spots around the world. The Mediterranean Sea, the South and Central Pacifics, Hawaii, the Arctic, and the Red Sea — he’s been everywhere. While most might marvel at the above-ground sights in these locations, Gilchrist has explored the underwater flora and fauna and snapped photos that prove it.

His Facebook profile is chock full of examples of his beautiful underwater photography. “I’ve always got a camera in my hands when I’m underwater”, he says. “You can get a housing for pretty much any camera. You just pop it into the housing, and all the controls are available.”

Besides the obvious aesthetic value of his below-surface photographs, his involvement in the hobby over the years has aided in documenting some pretty important finds.

“My buddy (Queenston native Jim Lockard) and I were invited to go along with a Brock University professor who was investigating a lake in the high Arctic,” Gilchrist explains. “We were flown into Resolute Bay (about 3,600 km north of Niagara) and met with people who were running a Canadian Fisheries camp. The underwater life there was much more varied than I expected.”

Upon returning to Niagara, Gilchrist successfully applied for a grant through the Arctic Awareness Program from Energies, Mines and Resources Canada. In August, 1989, Gilchrist, Lockard and two others returned to Resolute Bay for some “serious underwater photography.” The collection of photographs resulted in an exhibit called Beneath Arctic Waters, that was shown in Ottawa and at the Underwater Canada Show in Toronto. Gilchrist then hit the library circuit to introduce underwater Arctic life to many, and had his work published in a few magazine articles as well.

Closer to home, Gilchrist’s hobby has led him to get involved in the Ontario Marine Heritage Committee, consisting mostly of professional navigational archaeologists.

“We primarily look at shipwrecks,” he says, “but we also look at other sites. The one (Lockard) and I have worked on for a number of years is the old wharf complex that is underwater at Navy Hall.”

That wharf originally served the Royal Navy and, later, the Provincial Marine. Working with provincial marine archaeologists and a Parks Canada team, Gilchrist and Lockard have explored the old wharf, cataloguing the scattered timbers that were once associated with the structure. They also found what seems to be the remains of an old shipwreck there.

“We excavated a small cave with an underwater waterfall. That was done by submarine with the navy. We excavated a small cave that at one time would have been above water. They theorized that it may have been used by prehistoric people. We found evidence of corn pollen.”

As well, Gilchrist was involved in a prehistoric shoreline study in the Georgian Bay near Tobermory for more than 10 years. He describes it as “a submerged forest area, with an underwater waterfall. That was done by submarine with the navy. We excavated a small cave that at one time would have been above water. They theorized that it may have been used by prehistoric people. We found evidence of corn pollen.”

His favourite spot to dive, however, is off Honduras, at Roatan Marine Park, where the colours seem brighter and fuller. He and Lockard put that destination on their itinerary almost every year.

At 67 years old, Gilchrist admits he has slowed down a little bit, and doesn’t enjoy diving in cold water much anymore. COVID-19 continues to put a damper on his activities, too. During the pandemic, though, he has turned his attention to above-ground photography pursuits, snapping beautiful photographs of birds, foxes and other animals in nature.

Come April, though, Gilchrist is hoping conditions are such that he can get back underwater to continue pursuing that interest he has had in marine biology his entire life.

To find out more about his work, visit thedivecentre.ca.

Top photo: Dave Gilchrist investigates a reef at Roatan Marine Park in Honduras, one of his favourite locations for diving. (Photos by Jim Lockard)

Mike Balsom
Special to The Local
Joan Elliott was a Niagara-on-the-Lake woman who grew up in a family farm but bridged the gap between life in the country and in the Old Town, with friends from both worlds. She died Thursday, Jan. 14 at the age of 91 at Niagara Long Term Care Residence, formerly known as Chateau Gardens and Chartwell.

Her daughter, Jennifer Elliott, says her mother had been suffering from dementia for more than two years, “totally unaware” in recent months of COVID-19 and all that was going on around her, “and for that I’m thankful.”

Joan’s was “the matter of sitting quietly holding her mother’s hand, but more recently, due to the pandemic, even that became difficult, with visitors having to be gloved, gownwed and masked,” says Jennifer.

Now in Florida, she says she was worried when she started to get emails from the administration at the home about COVID outbreaks, but her mother was in a private room, off by itself, and since Joan wasn’t mobile it was easy to keep her isolated. She did not have COVID, but started to fail quickly. “I’m glad it wasn’t COVID related. I’m grateful for that, otherwise it would have been a much more difficult time for her.”

Her mother was born and raised in the historic brick farmhouse at Concession 2 near East and West Line, which many NOTLers would recognize as the former farm of John and Austin Kirkby, says Jennifer.

Joan was born a Cooper, a family that had been in Niagara since the 1700s, starting a family that had been in Niagra for more than two years, “and for that I’m thankful.”

Joan Cooper as a young girl growing up in town. (Photos supplied)

On other days, they’d walk or ride their bikes, and some days her brother would carry her on his shoulders. “In winter, he held her on his shoulders to get them to school quicker, and she’d tell us she used her mittens to keep his ears warm. But he was 10 years older and she had to get off his shoulders when they got close to school so his friends wouldn’t see them.”

“The Cooper farm had mixed crops, including Concorde grapes, peaches and pears, and vegetables, as well as pigs and chicken, says Jennifer. She remembers her mother’s love for gardening as something she had to do to cut asparagus in the morning, before breakfast, and getting ready for school.

“There was a lot to do on the farm, and she talked about that, but didn’t complain about it. A lot of her friends were doing the same thing, so it wasn’t an unusual situation.”

Jennifer’s father John worked for CBC, at first on Queen Street in Niagara-on-the-Lake, and in those days, she said, the bank moved their employees around a lot, and expected them to take their family and become part of the community where they worked. The Elltotts moved to Niagara Falls, St. Catharines, and Vineland, with the furthest branch in London. Joan could have driven from their NOTL home to most of their job locations, but that wasn’t allowed.

Eventually, when he was close to retirement during the 1970s, it was brought back to the Queen Street branch.

“It was a time when tourism was taking hold, The Shaw Festival had opened, and the population was changing quickly,” Joan and John lived on Regent Street, just off Queen Street, says Jennifer, and “they found it hard sometimes with swarms of people, and cars parked in front of their drive way. But they were good at accepting the changes, and saw the good and the bad as the town moved forward.”

Jennifer at that time was working in Montreal, but moved back to town, and soon got to know her parents better than she had in the earlier years. “We had great times together, and really enjoyed our NOTL life together. They were great years.”

St. Andrew’s Presbyterian Church was always a big part of her parents’ life from the Elliott side of the family, although, Jennifer says, it was one of her great-grandfathers — she’s not sure how many ‘greats’ he goes back on the Cooper side, James Cooper, who designed the front of St. Andrew’s in 1831.

Looking back, Jennifer remembers her mother as “loving, creative, and very intelligent. She was a really smart lady.”

In her 40s, Joan, who had usually had a part-time job, typically at a nursery school, decided to go to Brock University, and received a bachelor of arts in early childhood education.

She worked for the region at various day care centres, and eventually got into administration, pioneering the region’s private day care program.

“By then I was in high school, and she was a full-time working mom. She was a great, loving mom who did all the typical things moms did, but she was atypical in the other things she enjoyed doing.”

In her 60s, Joan wrote two books, one called The Quilt, which Jennifer describes as “a patchwork of family history, covering the Elliott and Cooper sides, from the childhoods of my grandpar- ents to modern times, and about growing up in town.”

In the introduction, she says she wrote it for her children and grandchildren so that they might learn about their ancestors and the events that shaped them, and writes that “in the years to come, new information can be added to this history, providing new colour, pattern and dimension to the quilt!” The museum keeps a copy of The Quilt for reference.

“The other is a compilation of her brother’s letters home while he was in the air force, and her thoughts and recollections of those days, says Jennifer.

Jennifer went on to live in Florida, where she and her husband Colin Telfer are spending the winter, “hunkering down.”

She and the rest of the family have decided that with COVID regulations, they will try to plan a celebration of life when they can all be together in the summer.

Joan with Colin Telfer and her daughter Jennifer Elliott at the Niagara-on-the-Lake Museum. (Photo by Robert Bradley)
Buffalo Bills make run toward first Super Bowl berth

Former NOTLer will be watching Buffalo Bills make run toward first Super Bowl berth

As the Buffalo Bills make their run toward their first Super Bowl berth in 25 years, one former Niagara-on-the-Lake resident watches with great excitement from his home near Bradenton, Florida, despite having already been there and done that.

With 1,101 career points, retired kicker Steve Christie is still the all-time points record holder for the Buffalo Bills. He kicked at the Super Bowl. When you get your butts turned to everyone and said "that's what happens when you get your butts kicked at the Super Bowl. We’re walking.”

The buses did eventually show up, but it added insult to injury.

Christie's career began with Tampa Bay in 1990, but his years in Buffalo are the ones that are most memorable. He kicked for the Bills until 2000, becoming one of the National Football League's best at the position. In 2001, he moved on to the San Diego Chargers, along with Buffalo quarterback Doug Flutie and other Bills, where he played for two years. He closed out his NFL career after the 2004 season with the New York Giants, wrapping up 15 years with a field goal percentage of 77 per cent, and an extra-point accuracy rate of 98 per cent. The Ovalville native came out of retirement in 2007 to play one game for the Toronto Argonauts of the CFL, then retired once again.

Christie and his wife Kelly no longer own the 1860-era house they used to have on Pridestead Street in the Old Town. About six years ago he was diagnosed with rectal cancer. Facing treatments to reduce the tumour, they decided to sell their property here and move to the U.S. full-time with their daughter Clare. Following treatments at hospitals in Buffalo and Cleveland, Christie's cancer is in remission, and he feels healthy and energized by his former team's success.

Continued on page 16

Lyncos

Steve Christie

Christie says for both games he boarded the first bus with the training staff the previous day. In the Pro Football Hall of Fame in Canton, Ohio. But the Bills lost that game to the Dallas Cowboys. 36-13, capping off a four-year run of Super Bowl losses that stands today as a frustrating example of futility. The end result on the scoreboard in that game wasn’t quite as bad as Christie’s first Super Bowl appearance in 1981, when the Bills lost to those same Cowboys 52-17. That one was played at the Rose Bowl in Pasadena.

"The first one was nerve-wracking," Christie reminisces. "We trained at USC, and coming from a small university (William and Mary in Williamsburg, Virginia) I couldn’t believe the facilities. But there’s so much hype, all the events, it’s a circus, a gong show. It’s hard at first to separate yourself and focus on the fact that there’s one game at the end of all this nonsense, and that’s what it’s all about."

Though he overcame his jitters, Christie says his first Super Bowl was disheartening. "Other than (Bills receiver) Don Beebe running down (Dallas defensive tackle) Leon Lett (just before the 90-yard run through the stadium and thenilions watching worldwide."

When you’re in the locker room, it seems like the half-time show is two hours long," he laughs. "You just want to get back onto the field. It’s a tough game to play in because it doesn't flow like a normal Sunday game, with all the ads."

"It’s a very important transit, because it is the first Mars-Uranus conjunction in Taurus since 1942, so this is a completely new Martian energy very few of us have ever witnessed or will recall. With Mars conjunct Uranus in Taurus, you’ll probably get to see the angry and explo- sive side of Taurus. Think of a bull fighting a mata- do. The mutilla with the red cloth hanging is Mars. Mars and Uranus are fur- ther triggered by a square to Jupiter, and a conjunc- tion with the Moon. This is not an energy to be messed with. Mars’ anger can turn into rage and Uranus can easily blow things out of propor- tion. The desire to act on your deepest val- ues is so powerful, that you will go beyond common sense or what’s socially acceptable. Mars will give you the drive, and Ura-

The buses did eventually show up, but it added insult to injury.

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Continued on page 16

Auchterlonie on Astrology

Bill Auchterlonie

Special to The Local

The full week of Auch- terlonie on Astrology can be found on the Facebook page for The NOTL Local, and on the website https://www.auchterlonieonastrology.com

Thursday, Jan. 21: Today is the 70th birthday of Chesley ‘Sully’ Sullenberger. According to legend, the aviator was in a plane full of passengers on the Hudson River in Manhattan, due to clogged the engines, the pilot was forced to not follow- ing protocol. He later won a court case, and Clint East- wood made a film about him with Tom Hanks in the starring role.

Next week it’s the full Moon in Pisces. Until then, shine on!

SCIENCE


tdniagarajazzfestival.com | @tdniagarajazz on Facebook

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LOCAL HAPPENINGS

LOCAL WORSHIP

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ELLIOTT, JOAN—With Sadness & in Loving Memory: Joan Elliott (born Joan Florence Marie Cooper) passed away peacefully in the early morning of Thursday, January 14, 2021 at the Chateau Gardens Nursing Home in Niagara-on-the-Lake, at 91 years of age. Married for more than 60 years to John W. Elliott, who she lost in March 2011, she is survived by her children Digby, David & Jennifer, 11 grandchildren and 22 great-grandchildren. A country girl at heart, she died a short distance from the farm at the corner of Concession #2 & the EastWest Line where she was born & raised. As wife & mother, following John’s various job transfers within the bank, from 1950-1970, she moved the family on six separate occasions throughout Ontario, managing to instill a sense of love and stability in each new home. While raising her family, Joan was also a pioneer in early childhood education working as a teacher, administrator & eventually a regional supervisor. In retirement, she was happiest in her garden. For those who were lucky enough to know her, she will be remembered for her beauty, determination, intelligence & lively wit. A memorial service will be held at a time when we can gather without the COVID-19 restrictions. The family wishes to extend their sincere gratitude to the nurses & staff at Chateau Gardens. Memories, photos and condolences may be shared at www.morganfuneral.com

Obituary

GUIDE DOGS BELONG EVERYWHERE. IT’S THE LAW

Zero or one per square meter
Ten or more per square meter

Across:
1. Concert appearance
2. Dirty
3. Subject of spectacular oos feats
4. Applicants
5. Chief Hawaiian island
10. Square meters
11. Cooking measurement
23. Hoop dunk
29. Word that rhymes with "diss"
30. Election list
31. "--- of the above"
32. Blunder
33. "The Pobble had none"
34. "The hour --- hand"
35. "I'm sorry --- you waiting"
36. "The sloeblack, slow"
37. "The sloeblack, slow"
38. "Letters, these days"
39. "--- of the above"
40. "G W T W'
41. Egg holders
42. "--- of the above"
43. "--- of the above"
44. "--- of the above"
45. "--- of the above"
46. "--- of the above"
47. "--- of the above"
48. "--- of the above"
49. "--- of the above"
50. "--- of the above"
51. "Shyf""s pal
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Sudoku solution from January 14, 2021
Steve Christie now coaches high school kickers in Florida, where he lives with his wife Kelly.

(Photograph supplied)

Christie reminisces about his career

Continued from page 14

recent success.

He met current Bills coach Sean McDermott at a home game last year (Christie attended five games in 2019), and was impressed with the fellow William and Mary alumnus. “He’s a great guy, very personable and focused. He reminds me of Marv. He’s not really a yeller, a shouter. He’s the kind of coach that I’d like to play for.”

“Josh Allen (the current Bills quarterback) has a great arm, and you have to have a great arm to play in Buffalo,” he continues. “It’s phenomenal how they built that team on the shoulders of Josh Allen, and they’ve drafted very well. He could be better than (Bills legend) Jim Kelly. He can run, and he’s a big guy, he’s going to get better and better.” Christie also thinks rookie kicker Tyler Bass will eventually break his own team record for longest field goal, a 59-yarder in the 1993 regular season. Bass hit a 54-yarder in the Bills’ first playoff game against Indianapolis, and was good on a 58-yard attempt at Arizona in a regular season loss.

“He had a tremendous season, and he’s got a great leg,” Christie raves. “If he’s hitting 60-plus yards during pre-game, there’s no doubt McDermott will put him back out there during the game to pick up three points. There’s no doubt he’ll get it.”

During last week’s divisional round win over the Baltimore Ravens, Bass and Ravens kicker Justin Tucker each missed two field goals in the windy Buffalo conditions. That doesn’t surprise Christie or the Buffalo kicker he replaced, Scott Norwood, with whom he was texting while watching the game. Norwood’s wide-right kick at the end of Super Bowl XXV is to this day the most significant field goal attempt in Buffalo history, as it cemented the first of four straight losses in the big game.

“That was the darkest side of kicking,” Christie tells The Local. “The way he dealt with that, though, I learned a lot from him. I watched that game at home in Oakville, but that was in Tampa on my home field. There were a number of plays in the game where it shouldn’t have come down to Scott, where we could have done better to set him up for a closer kick.”

These days, he uses the lessons he learned from his predecessor while coaching young high school kickers in Florida. He and Kelly also sell real estate in the Bradenton area. And of course, he can’t wait to watch this weekend’s game, and to hopefully cheer on his favourite team in Super Bowl XLV, which will be played in nearby Tampa Bay, the city where his NFL journey began.