

# The Niagara-on-the-Lake LOCAL



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### Lucky boys!

The Trapasso brothers, St. Michael students Isaac and William, enjoy their Regent Street backyard rink. Last weekend's cold spell was the perfect weather for a rink, allowing them to get outside and on the ice, thanks to the hard work of their dad, Dominic Trapasso. (Mike Balsom)

## Niagara Long Term Care COVID cases continue

**Penny Coles**  
The Local

The outbreak at Niagara Long Term Care on Wellington Street in Niagara-on-the-Lake is ongoing, with a number of both staff and resident cases resolved.

"We currently have 56 active resident cases, with 22 resolved, and no new deaths to report. We have 14 active staff cases with 23 resolved," says executive director Chris Poos.

"We have been very pleased to introduce the Pan Bio Rapid testing here at Niagara. This testing produces results in 15 minutes, which gives us real-time information to

assist us in managing this outbreak, such as cohorting residents."

Some residents are two to a room, and have been moved to protect others during the outbreak, Poos said earlier.

"We will be welcoming EMS into the home on Monday, Feb. 1 to assist in additional infection prevention and control education. Public Health has also been into the home and is pleased with our IPAC (infection prevention and control) practices."

The home is waiting for a date of the second

**Continued on page 3**

### Gaio family winners!

Walter Gaio, a local fruit farmer, celebrates a \$10,000 win on the Canadian version of Family Feud, aired Monday. They were making a second appearance Tuesday for a chance at another \$10,000, and possibly a third try. The Local went to press Tuesday before the airing of the game, and of course Walter wasn't talking about the outcome, but many readers will know the results by now. Congratulations to Walter and his family. He says the whole experience was a once-in-a-lifetime blast. They might spend some of their winnings on a family trip, he says, when travel is permitted, possibly to Britain to see his daughter. With him waiting to see if they won are Danielle Gaio, her brother Ryan, his wife Sarah and Walter's wife Katherine. (Screenshot)



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# Special council meeting to discuss 2021 budget

**Penny Coles**  
The Local

At a special council meeting Wednesday, council will be asked to approve the 2021 operating budget, including an operating levy of \$13,126,772, a 2.12 per cent increase, or \$440,621, after considering assessment growth.

That will allow staff to move forward with a tax rate for the municipality, and the regional and educational portion of the tax bill for 2021.

Council will also be asked to approve the recommendations from the audit and finance committee for a 2021 capital budget of \$10,404,287.

There is also a recommendation for a special urban area levy for storm water of \$456,998, an almost five per cent increase over last year.

For the average residential assessment of \$533,482, this represents an increase of about \$30 on the tax bill, and for those who are charged the storm levy, an extra \$3.25 on top of that.

One discussion added to Wednesday's special council meeting agenda is to have another look at a heritage tax rebate.

Robin Ridesic, owner of The Exchange Brewery on Queen Street and a heritage home on Prideaux Street, gave councillors a detailed account of money being left on the table if they don't adopt the rebate, which has not been included in this year's budget. Council referred the discussion to the budget debate Wednesday, cutting off any comments on her request.

A town working group charged with examining the rebate, debated as pandemic relief last year and at that time deferred to this year's budget, recommended instead that the audit committee allocate

\$25,000 for facade improvements to designated heritage properties within the Heritage District, and maintain the existing heritage incentive program, providing up to \$70,000 for improvement projects. That grant program is funded with \$35,000 from the town, and \$35,000 from the region.

The audit committee agreed with the working group recommendations, with the increase of \$25,000 funded from parking revenue.

Some items of the 2021 budget were discussed and given interim approval in December, says Coun. Allan Bisback, chair of the audit and finance committee, so the town could move ahead with increases to select payments, such as payroll and insurance, without waiting for full budget approval. Payroll increases of around two per cent are predetermined by a bargaining agreement, and municipal insurance is seeing a large increase for 2021, he says. The town's premiums increased by 30 per cent or \$118,650.

When the audit committee first started meeting in September, Bisback says, "we didn't have a good sense of how the year was progressing. We thought we were going toward a deficit," which is not allowed for municipalities, and without tax stabilization reserves to cover it.

By December, the decision was made to deferring the remainder of the budget apart from the select items, until January to give staff a chance to have another look at the \$10 million capital budget, which is very close to last year's costs, "to go through the details and ensure the budget is achievable and balanced."

Municipal approval of some items, before the

complete budget is passed, is typical at an amount of around 35 per cent of the total, he says, although this is the first time NOTL has done that.

Some rental and user fees were also approved in December, but without increases over 2020, he says.

Bisback explains that early direction of the audit committee to staff, when asking for departmental requests, was to look at it as a "maintenance" budget, holding the line of last year without reducing services. While last year the committee looked at several business cases for new expenses, he was looking at this year as a time for austerity, without any of the wish lists that have been entertained in previous years.

"We said we were not going to entertain new business cases, instead kept an even keel with a maintenance budget."

During early budget discussions of the 2021 budget last fall, the audit committee was first looking at an increase over last year of about 7.68 per cent, or \$978,824. They were asked to reduce that to about three per cent, and the final recommended budget for council approval Wednesday is just a little more than two per cent increase over 2020, he says, even with COVID-related reduced revenues, such as from rentals, parks and recreations programs, and parking.

He remains concerned with the uncertainty of what the rest of the year will bring as a result of the pandemic, he added, especially with parking, which the town, as a tourism destination, has increasingly relied on as a revenue source, and is especially difficult to predict this year.

Despite raising parking fees last fall, revenue was down by almost \$1 mil-

lion in 2020, says Bisback. "Even without a pandemic, he says, he doesn't see parking as a revenue stream to depend on, explaining the municipality could reach a ceiling of raising rates, and there is a limit to expanding the number of spaces.

One item parking typically funds is discre-

tionary grants to not-for-profit organizations, and the audit committee's recommendation this year was to reduce those grants from \$100,000 to \$30,000 until they know what to expect from parking.

One large expense last year was the town's legal budget, which was approved in the amount

of \$1 million. This year's budget recommendation report says 2020 saw the conclusion of some of the legal matters, and staff are recommending a budget of \$500,000 for 2021. "The 2020 approved budget used a large transfer of \$650,000 from parking

Continued on page 13

## Town to allow patios to remain for next season

**Penny Coles**  
The Local

Staff have recommended allowing the two remaining patios on Queen Street to stay where they are, ready to open in the spring.

Other patios, such as the Firehall Flame, at King and Queen, which is on the boulevard, and others on private property, are also permitted to remain, council decided Monday.

With the municipal patio permits expired at the beginning of 2021, staff sent reminder letters to the business owners with patios actually on the street that their patios must be removed, out of concern for the difficulties

they would present for snow removal.

Business owners and the NOTL Chamber of Commerce President Eduardo Lafforgue, were expecting to make presentations Monday, asking that the patios be permitted to remain in place, but staff had already decided by late Monday afternoon to recommend they be allowed to stay.

The Alcohol and Gaming Commission of Ontario has extended its permit to sell alcohol outdoors to January 2022, to support businesses as they recover from COVID. Lafforgue told The Local he wouldn't be surprised if that was made permanent, and

some local business owners would also be happy to see that for their patios.

Residents and visitors enjoyed the opportunity to have a drink or a meal outside this summer, he says, and many business owners see it as a positive step for NOTL.

With only the two left on the road, staff say they are less concerned about snow plowing, but business owners will have to agree to waive any town responsibility should their patios be damaged by snow-clearing equipment, and also that the town's heritage committee will have to be consulted by April, before the patios reopen for business.

## Money 'left on table' by rejection of heritage tax rebate

**Penny Coles**  
The Local

Based on information shared with her by town staff and several members of council, resident and business owner Robin Ridesic hopes to convince a majority of councillors to adopt the much-discussed municipal heritage tax rebate.

It has been debated at council periodically over the last 20 years, but never adopted. In the intervening years, millions of dollars have been "left on the table," through missed contributions from the province and region toward

heritage preservation.

Ridesic owns The Exchange Brewery on Queen Street, and lives in a heritage house on Prideaux Street. She believes she has a solution that at least for this year won't add to the municipal budget, but by shifting financial support for the preservation of heritage buildings from a grant program to a tax rebate, "supports all stakeholders and the broader community, not just one subset."

And during the pandemic, it would help lower fixed costs for business owners, and tenants of commercial heritage build-

ings, she says.

Although the priority should go to commercial buildings this year, it could include heritage homes in the future, she told councillors.

If 50 per cent of the commercial properties participate this year, although she would expect it to be less, it would leave at least \$100,000 to invest in residential properties, versus the \$70,000 available through the current grant program.

A \$60,000 investment by the town could be multiplied by 3.5 to 6 times, with the provincial and regional matching contribution, she says.

The significant increase in funding, from the provincial and potential regional matching, she says, will making so much more money available, and all parties can benefit.

Councillors did not discuss her solution, instead referring it to Wednesday's special council meeting, which was called to deal with the 2021 budget.



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# Vaccine hopefully arriving soon, says Dr. Hirji

**Penny Coles**  
The Local

Vaccinations in long-term care home residents in Niagara were completed last Thursday, and those in high-risk retirement homes will be in the coming days.

That will put a pause to vaccinations in Niagara until more vaccine arrives.

Dr. Mustafa Hirji, Niagara's acting chief medical officer of health, says there is sufficient vaccine in Niagara for the high-risk retirement homes, and he expects to have enough arrive before for it's time for second doses.

"The earliest anyone would get a second dose would be Feb. 3. We're hoping we'll get vaccine in the next week and a half and we'll be able to start giving second doses by then."

The number of new cases in Niagara Long Term Care Residence on Wellington Street has been stabilizing, which is good news, he says, but it's "un-

fortunate it has taken as long as it has."

A provincial website has Niagara Long Term Care Residence with 55 residents and 19 staff members still active cases, which means several more have been resolved, and are past their 14-day period, with fewer new cases.

Pleasant Manor Retirement Village is listed as having five staff members, and fewer than five residents, infected with COVID on Tuesday.

Overall, the number of new cases on a daily bases in Niagara is coming down, under control as a result of the provincial shut-down and stay-at-home order. Being farther past the holiday time, when people were socializing more, is also helping to stabilize cases, says Hirji.

"I think we're seeing good progress, but cases are still really high, and we need to keep this up for at least a few more weeks, until numbers come down to a lower level."

The region won't be getting any additional vaccine, until at least next week, which is why vaccinations of staff have stopped at this point, he says, although, "if there are a few left-over vaccinations at long-term care and retirement homes, it will be given to staff rather than waste it."

Early this week, for the first time throughout the pandemic, Niagara-on-the-Lake had the distinction of having the highest percentage of active cases per 10,000 in the region, with the number of infected staff and residents in the Wellington Street long-term care home skewing the numbers, he says.

It happened in the spring in Niagara Falls and Welland, "and we're unfortunately now seeing that in Niagara-on-the-Lake."

It dropped the next day, and by Tuesday the total in town from the beginning was 261 people infected, and 93 active cases.

Although retailers were targeted for ministry of

labour inspections during a sweep across the region this weekend, Hirji says that with some exceptions, there hasn't been a large number of retailers experiencing outbreaks.

To that he added a few caveats, including that contact tracing might miss an outbreak.

"We try to trace where people have been, and we look for patterns," he says. "But if five people who have tested positive have been to the same store, did they become infected there, or were they just at

that store?"

One of the rationales for closing non-essential retail stores is to try to get people to stay home, he says. If you close non-essential stores, people don't go shopping, or anywhere else afterwards.

And keeping people home is helping to bring down the number of new infections.

Across the region, nothing else has changed, he says, "and we're not expecting any changes, but you never know what surprises there may be for us."



Dr. Mustafa Hirji

## EMS, Public Health helping Niagara Long Term Care

Continued from page 1

vaccination clinic at the home, says Poos. "We look forward to the time when all our residents, staff, and essential caregivers have received the vaccine."

He remains in regular contact with Public Health, along with other Niagara Health System partners, and ongoing weekly testing for staff and previously negative

residents continues. "We are in regular contact with all residents, families, and staff regarding the status of COVID-19 in our home, along with twice-weekly family town halls," says Poos.

"We are 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 continue to be isolated to their rooms, receiving in-room meal service. "We have appropriate staffing levels, and all staff are wearing full personal protective equipment at all times, which is well stocked in the home," says Poos.

"We remain very grateful to our families, staff, health system partners, and the community for the tremendous support."

## Dog groomers closed, according to province

**Penny Coles**  
The Local

During Monday's council meeting, CAO Marnie Cluckie addressed two industries affected by the shut-down, trying to help residents and business owners who have contacted the town with questions.

The first is regarding construction companies, with owners confused about what is permitted.

While large-scale construction is allowed to continue, there are many questions about smaller businesses, and councilors may be receiving calls requesting clarification.

The legislation is extensive, she says, and questions should be directed to the town's dedicated email, covidcomplaints@notl.com, which was set up originally for residents to direct their complaints and concerns to one location.

"We track it and respond as soon as possible, and make sure complaints don't slip through the cracks," says Cluckie.

Planning director Craig Larmour and his team provide direction on how to interpret legislation provided by the province, including communication between regional emergency control groups through the town's fire chief.

Referring questions to the COVID complaint email address gives the planning department an opportunity to "revisit information we've shared," says Larmour.

Cluckie also provided an update on the dog grooming industry, answering the question about who is allowed to open.

Last week she promised to approach the province about the legislation, which seemed confusing and is being interpreted differently in other Niagara municipalities. NOTL interpreted provincial legislation as saying dog groomers are non-essential, even for health and wellness treatments, and must close.

Cluckie confirmed that Monday, saying she had just received clarification from the province.

She says only veterinarians can provide health and wellness grooming services, and dog groomers must remain closed.

Dog walkers can only walk their own dogs, she added, and trainers may only train service animals.

Coun. Erwin Wiens provided a short update on offshore workers, saying a small number have already arrived. Farm workers heading to Canada will need a negative COVID test two days before they leave their home country, and will quarantine for 14

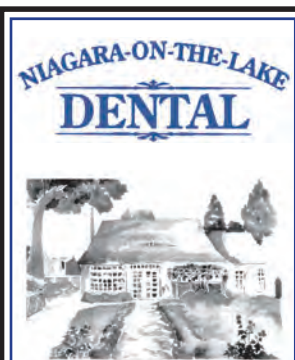
days when they get to their place of employment.

There are some new rules that have been introduced for this year's seasonal workers, including having bunks that are two metres apart, and fewer people per house.

Also, some federal funding is being provided for personal protective equipment for them, he said.

The majority coming for 2021 begins Feb. 20, with about 2,000 workers expected to arrive.

"The season is starting, and we're prepared for it."



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# Virgil valu-mart gets all-clear during inspection

**Penny Coles**  
**The Local**

If you go into Phil's valu-mart in Virgil, or any store, the current provincial pandemic restrictions say you must wear a face-covering.

Since face coverings were first made mandatory, that protocol has continued to evolve, says store owner Phil Leboudec, and now all customers must cover their faces. If they have a medical condition that makes it impossible for them to wear a mask, they can wear a face shield.

All other measures, including the number of people allowed in the store — it's still 30 at a time at his — and one shopper per household, have remained in effect since last March, he says.

This weekend, representatives from the provincial Ministry of Labour included his store in their "full blitz" through Niagara, and he got an all-clear, with no orders to change anything.

They had a good look at his lunch room setting, as well as throughout the store.

"They looked at everything I do, and it was all in compliance. They didn't find anything. They told me I was doing a great job and to keep it up."

Inside the store, there have been other measures Leboudec has put in

place, as more has been learned about the spread of COVID-19, particularly in the lunch room. It is no longer a place to socialize, he says. There is no lunch table. Staff sit distanced from each other. "There is no social time. It's considered 'rest and recoup' time."

Leboudec says he has had very few issues with customers not following protocols, and when they do, he tries to work with them, offering online ordering and curbside pickup.

"Very few people have refused to wear a mask," he says, "and when they do, we recognize that some people have a legitimate medical reason. But I don't think there are any respiratory issues with face shields. That's its purpose, to accommodate those issues. There are a very few who will use a medical exemption to get around it, and that wrecks it for everyone else. Some may talk about their rights, making it a rights issue. We do what we can to work with them, but we can't let them in to shop. They could be fined \$750, and for businesses, I'm sure it could be more."

Since wearing masks became mandatory inside businesses in NOTL last summer, the number of people who have refused has declined, he says. He estimates compliance from the beginning to have increased from about 85 per

cent to now about 99 per cent, and while some stores across the region have backed off a little on enforcing other issues, such as counting customers, washing buggies and restrictions of one shopper per household, he has been sticking to those regulations, paying a person to stand at the door and ensure those measures are followed.

However, he says in a small town like NOTL, he feels grateful he can be a little more flexible. He won't turn away two seniors who come to shop together, or a mother with kids, who might not have a choice, and if he sees "somebody's grandmother" waiting outside in line, he'll move her to the front.

"I always had the opportunity to increase the number of people in the store at one time, but I chose to leave it where it was. I've visited a lot of other stores to see what they're doing, and some were backing off on some things, but we never changed anything. We've been in a pandemic since March, and until it is deemed over, it doesn't matter what the numbers are. Complacency is what is driving it. That's what drove the numbers back up. There's no point in contributing to it."

He says he's also grateful to work in a community where customers are understanding, as opposed to



Phil Leboudec stands in front of his sign advertising mandatory face coverings in July. A more recent protocol calls for no exemptions, although those with medical conditions can wear face shields instead of masks. (File photo)

some of the horror stories he's heard from stores in the large urban areas, where staff are dealing with aggressive customers, sometimes ending in fights.

Neither he nor his staff will get into an argument, he says. If a customer refuses to leave, his only choice is to call the police, and that would bring a fine of \$750.

"I don't get up to go to work looking for a fight," he says.

His goal from the beginning has been to keep his customers and staff safe, but some people are just angry, and want a fight.

"Some people just don't understand grey," he says.

The pandemic, he adds, "gives them more opportunity to show it."

The biggest change he's seen throughout, says Leboudec, is in the number of online orders, now averaging between 40 and 50 a day.

A recent Facebook discussion about the mask requirement, with valu-mart customers trying to determine what, if anything, had changed during this stay-at-home order, praised his order system as an easy and efficient alternative.

"It's taken us a while to get to this point," he says.

He went from about 15 online orders a week before the pandemic to more than 300 once the first shut-

down started. Since then he's spent \$50,000 on the technical upgrades needed to improve his system, and it has become increasingly more efficient. Instead of customers having to wait six or seven days for scheduled pickups, now it's usually later the same day, with many repeat customers and some new ones. "There's no backlog any more."

That has come with a cost, he says. He brings in enough designated staff to fill up to 60 orders a day, calling them from other duties as necessary. Online orders require 30 to 40 minutes of staff time to fill. "It's adding more labour costs, but not sales," he says.

The public has a misconception that stores allowed to remain open during the pandemic are making huge profits, but in his case, his sales were up last year but profits were down, due to all the extra costs associated with pandemic measures.

He stresses he is not complaining. He's happy to go to work every day, knowing there are many small retailers who have had to close. They and their staff are the ones really suffering, he says. Numbers don't show outbreaks starting in retail stores, as far as he can see, and it doesn't seem right to take away so many livelihoods if the statistics

don't warrant it, especially when so many jobs lost are amongst people who can least afford it. He also worries about how many of those jobs will come back, and the long-term impact on the economy if they don't.

He has nothing but praise for his employees for helping him to get through this, and for helping him by complying with regulations. "It starts with a good staff," he says. "We've built a really good team of people. They come in to work, work long days, and they're definitely committed to doing things right."

He's also grateful to have Loblaw's behind him, he believes the most supportive of all the grocery chains.

As for stores that don't follow the rules, he adds, "that's where enforcement is so important. Enforcement officers need to be pushing harder."

On one final subject, Leboudec was asked about the Facebook comments that turned from mask-wearing to his store having the best rotisserie chicken. Why is it any different?

"We still use a rotisserie for our chicken. Most stores are using ovens now, and it's not the same," he answers.

"And ours are made with love."

## Inspectors find fewer than 30 infractions in 125 visits

**Penny Coles**  
**The Local**

More than 125 businesses were visited in Niagara this weekend, says Harry Godfrey, press secretary for the provincial ministry of labour, training and skills development.

A list of potential businesses to visit was drawn up by staff at Niagara Public Health, to cover all 12 municipalities, says Dr. Mustafa Hirji, the department's acting chief medical officer of health for Niagara region.

He wasn't sure how many

in Niagara-on-the-Lake were visited, but it was focusing on the larger stores, such as Costco and the Walmart stores, across the region.

In Niagara, says Godfrey, more than 125 businesses were visited. About 22 tickets and five orders were issued.

The most common violations were regarding adequate screening, capacity limits, and lack of safety plans.

Also handed out were formal warnings, for a total of 68 contraventions, he says.

He was unable to say how many of the Niagara businesses were in Niagara-on-the-Lake.

Across the province, 107 inspectors visited businesses in Ottawa, Windsor, and Durham, in addition to Niagara.

A total of 640 businesses were visited, more than 80 tickets issued, more than 100 orders issued, and again, as in Niagara, the most common violations were regarding adequate screening, capacity limits, and lack of safety plans.

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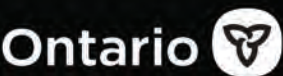
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Nancy worked successfully in the luxury hotel industry for over 25 years, including managing the Queen's Landing Inn, before finding her true calling in real estate. "My father was involved in real es-

tate when I was younger, and it always interested me," Nancy says. She opened Sotheby's International Realty in NOTL prior to aligning her extensive relationships and expertise with Engel & Völkers.

Ann-Marie, a leader in the advertising industry for 30 years, specialized in marrying advertisers with TV shows, such as HGTV's Income Property. Now she marries families with the right home. "It gives me immense joy to see the happiness on a client's face when we find their perfect home," explains Ann-Marie.

Scott Russell, Broker of Record for Engel & Völkers, Oakville, is thrilled to have Nancy and Ann-Marie as part

of the Oakville team. "Having expertise in the Niagara Region provides our GTA clients with professional knowledge in a market where there is a serious buying interest." Nancy and Ann-Marie share their listings with the Oakville advisors and discuss the GTA and Niagara markets regularly. **They find they are in the unique position of living and working in Niagara-on-the-Lake, with the intel and support of its feeder markets.**

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LETTERS

Hopefully conservation authority will follow through on remedial action

I would like to thank Derek Insley for his letter to the editor (Shame nature can't be more accessible, Jan. 21, The Local) regarding our natural areas, namely the watershed of the Two Mile and Four Mile Creeks.

What a coincidence that his letter appeared at this time. On Sunday, Jan. 17, I attempted to hike the valley of the Two Mile Creek, commencing from the area of Lakeshore Road. As Owen Bjorgan has indeed shown us through his weekly nature column, there is much

to appreciate in these natural areas. I pass by this area on a daily basis, and have noticed a tremendous amount of fallen trees, brush and debris build up within the actual creek and the associated floodplain.

Due to all this build-up of debris, I was not very successful on my trek! I am convinced that even fish, normally found in this waterway, would find it extremely difficult, if not impossible to navigate.

I immediately connected with my contact at the Niagara

Peninsula Conservation Authority, who responded with some very favourable news regarding the Two Mile Creek. The conservation authority actually has some plans to do some remedial clean-up in that area this spring.

Hopefully this will happen, and as Derek Insley indicated in his letter, make these areas more "accommodating and accessible for everyone".

Buddy Andres  
NOTL



Local tree expert Buddy Andres says NPCA plans to clean up Two Mile Creek area. (Buddy Andres)

Leaders need to protect tree heritage

I walk the trail out to Fort Mississauga frequently, both before the Fort re-construction and after. I love the view of Fort Niagara across the river and the peacefulness of the golf course, with its expanse of green grass and majestic trees.

Kudos to Parks Canada and the Friends of Fort George for preserving this historic building. One item about the reconstruction, however, is misleading. It has been publicized that only non-native and invasive plants were removed from the site. In fact, the site contained

a mix of native and non-native trees and shrubs, and the entire site was clear cut by Parks Canada. There was no selective culling of invasive species.

While Fort Mississauga has historic significance and deserves to be preserved, it is not a particularly attractive building, with its piecemeal construction, and is not open to the public. The landscape left after the clear-cutting is stark, and will require decades for trees to reestablish themselves. In retrospect, wouldn't it have been better to leave some of the larger, more mature trees for shade in

the summer, and to add visual interest to what is now a barren landscape?

Between development, disease, and old age we are losing a tremendous amount of the tree canopy that enhances the historic look of NOTL, gives it its character, and protects our environment. All levels of government need to be leaders in protecting our tree heritage from unnecessary removal. Clear cutting is never a good thing.

Stewart Hall  
NOTL

LETTERS

Thanks to Owen Bjorgan 'for opening our hearts and minds'

We as a community are lucky to have the stunning Niagara River, the lake, and the Carolinian Forest. We, in fact, have a responsibility to not only reduce the toxins we are casually draining into them, but restore tree cover, habitat, and native plants, insects, birds,

and other wildlife.

So it's been a joy to read Owen Bjorgan's columns, teaching and inspiring us to care more about and better understand the natural world around us.

This week, he stepped out-side his role as naturalist, and

wrote as a humanist an artfully worded column on how we need to share our trails and natural spots with visitors. Thank you for opening hearts and minds to each other, as well as nature.

Ellen Qualis  
NOTL

Thanks for bringing extra joy and delight on trail

The weeks and months of the pandemic continue to keep us close to our homes in isolation or hibernation for the cold winter season. With the feeling of walls closing in, diminishing space, claustrophobia and boredom, luckily we can still venture outside and walk with our dog along all the trails and parks that are nearby. Nothing can mirror happiness than an unleashed dog carrying a new found stick running free in nature's playground.

With one exception. Yesterday on our walk we came upon a tree adorned with colourful decorations and single adornments on other neighbouring trees. How beautiful the heart or hearts of the someone(s) who choose this particular tree that might otherwise have gone unnoticed along this trail to spread joy and delight to all who would

by happenchance walk by.

Thank you to whoever you are for your kindness in bringing extra joy and delight, similar to our dog finding a

new stick, on our walk along nature's trail.

Wendy Lowe  
NOTL



Commons trail walker Wendy Lowe says thanks for bringing joy to her dog Banner and to others. (Photos supplied)



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# Are people inspired by local area biodiversity?



**Owen Bjorgan**  
Special to The Local

I hike with family, friends, clients, or students almost every day of my life. Not so much the students these days, given the circumstances of current school closures. However, sharing the outdoors with so many people over the years has given me the opportunity to observe how others react to nature. More specifically, I've noticed how people look and feel more invigorated in some ecosystems more than others.

My biology brain is always whirling when I'm outdoors, and I find it's due to my understanding of the environment. This is not to be confused with fascination, which is a sensation that can be achieved without any knowledge of the scenery at hand.

Even when I'm hiking around with a Kindergarten class behind me, my mind is always observing and analyzing all the biodiversity around me at a hundred miles an hour.

"Can I identify this tree in the middle of winter? I don't think I've ever seen that nest before. Why are there fungi on this tree, but none on the same species next to it? Could I find salamanders here in the spring?"

Being taken aback by the beauty and captivation of the outdoors isn't just for biologists, though. What's even more awesome to me is to watch students of all ages pause, raise their eyebrows, or start pointing fingers at something along the trail. It happens at some spots more frequently than others. I notice the same theme when hiking with others, including my friends and family on a day off.

I was recently hiking through one of the forested patches in NOTL's Lakeshore Road conservation area. In a particular stretch of woods, the trees are spaced very far apart, and many of them are over 30 metres tall. Some spec-



Owen Bjorgan enjoys the biodiversity he sees in the Lakeshore Road conservation area. (Owen Bjorgan)

imens are likely to be in the 250-year-old ballpark. By visually assessing the diversity of bark characteristics on all these trees, I could deduce that the forest was both biodiverse as well as old-growth. This combination usually leads to maximum ecosystem stability, which had me super enthused to be hiking there again.

Then, I passed a familiar face, a nice guy who I met in downtown NOTL during my bartending days. We approached each other in this forest of cathedral trees on the thrashing lakeshore, and we conversed for a bit.

He told me how he had noticed the stature and characteristics of the trees in this section of woods, and how he hadn't seen anything like it in the area. He was animated and happy to share how much he was enjoying this particular spot of the forest, too.

The spell of biodiversity and ancient trees can be a pretty strong presence

upon those who walk into it, I thought.

I have seen this often on my hiking tours. People tend to stop and gasp, take photos, or spark conversation at similar spots. I could map them with predictable accuracy, and it makes sense.

One of my favourite places that provides an unexpected visual treat is in the heart of the Wainfleet Bog. I call one section of trail 'the tunnel,' where an old peat mining track has been preserved as an open, squishy trail for adventurous hikers.

On one stretch, gorgeous European birch trees line the trail symmetrically on either side for about 300 metres. With the trail running directly east-west, the morning or evening sun shines boldly down the tunnel of invasive, but beautiful trees.

On my tours, and on a recent hike with my parents and my girlfriend to the bog, this is the spot where people stop and

pause. Cameras come out. Some polite and laughable "can you get out of my photo?" moments unfold, as people are enamoured by the bog's eerie but beautiful landscape.

It also happens to be one of the most biodiverse sites in all of Canada. Even if you only see birds and footprints in the winter, like we did, all you need to do is look at all of the ferns, club mosses, lichens, and rare bog plants which essentially carpet the landscape with their funky colours. It speaks to the richness this place beholds come spring and summer.

Something dawned on me as I stood out there last week. It's Niagara's quietest place, at the quietest time of year, and the quietest year we've experienced in decades. We passed not a soul in the bog or its tiny parking lot, as we hiked through brickly, black mud, which was semi frozen.

In the midsection of the Niagara Gorge, there is a trail where I've heard

the term 'Narnia' come up a few times before. Before ascending among the enormous, shed-sized boulders, you are greeted with a postcard image of green mossy rocks, ferns gently draping over the path, and an inviting stone staircase.

People like to ask for their photo here, or wait for hikers to pass through just to grab an image of the fairy-like landscape in its glory. Funny, once again, how this little pocket in the gorge stops so many people in their tracks.

It's connected to biodiversity, again. Due to the variety of surfaces and jumbled boulders down in the gorge, species of plants which can only thrive in shaded, protected sites can make themselves at home. The effect is a collection of mosses, ferns, bryophytes, and other ancient plant groups growing on just about every surface. It makes people stop and look, even if they don't know exactly what they're looking at.

When I venture into old swampy forests, near gnarly cliffs and into quiet patches of old woods with people, sometimes someone will say "you'd think you could see a dinosaur here."

I'd say this familiar, but classic comment speaks more to our deepest primal instincts more than it does to movies like *Jurassic Park*. We weren't alive when the dinosaurs were. So, why does a certain environment, often old-growth and biodiverse, seem to make us feel like we may see one of these extinct creatures? It's something to think about.

I believe areas of high biodiversity are strongly correlated with being aesthetically beautiful. The pleasing parts of nature, such as huge trees, the different types, the immense boulders, and a pretty variety of colourful plants can sometimes speak to species richness, by means of our very own interpretation of the environment.



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# Moment of silence at council honours Michael Howe

**Penny Coles**  
**The Local**

Councillors sent their condolences to the family of Michael Howe “for the community’s great loss” at Monday’s meeting, and held a minute of silence for the man who is being mourned by the community.

Howe, born in 1946, died from cancer in hospice care Dec. 29.

It was Coun. Allan Bisback who called for the tribute, telling councillors Howe was raised in Niagara-on-the-Lake by his father Norm Howe, a founding member of The Niagara-on-the-Lake

Foundation, and mother Margherita Howe, a founding member of the NOTL Conservancy.

“Michael cared deeply about this community, our town of NOTL, and fought to preserve its heritage, mainly through the work of the NOTL Foundation, and as president he led its efforts with dignity and hard work,” said Bisback.

Recent works of the foundation have included the restoration of the slave cottage known as the William and Susannah Steward house on Butler Street, contributions to the restoration of St Andrew’s Presby-

terian Church, and the restoration of St. Mark’s Anglican Church, an annual scholarship at Willowbank, the retention of the lawn bowling lands as public land, now the Voices of Freedom Park, and ongoing efforts to restore the historic Wilderness property on King Street.

“Many knew Michael for his acerbic wit, wry sense of humour and gusto for life. The quiet side of Michael demonstrated thoughtful and helpful advocacy within the community and amongst its leaders. He will be remembered as a friend of many and a lover of the town,” says Bisback.



Marsha and Michael Howe on their last trip to Italy, in 2019, when Marsha first realized Michael had health problems. (Photo supplied)



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# Local family mourns loss of son, brother

## His father ‘on a mission’ to prevent other families from suffering a similar loss

**Penny Coles**  
**The Local**

Tom King will remember his son Kenzie as the social boy with the infectious, quick smile.

Blakely, Kenzie’s sister, will remember him as her best friend, and the funniest person she has ever known.

At the age of 24, Mackenzie Austin Drew King of Niagara-on-the-Lake died in a car collision last Friday morning on his way to work in Welland.

Tom has two stories to tell about the son he and Blakely called Kenzie, and the boy his friends called Matt. One is the tragedy of losing his beloved son in a tragic accident. The other is the darkness of the events that led up to it.

Mackenzie had been working for QBM in Welland, as a conveyor belt splicing technician, for about two and a half years. It was a good job, well-paying, one that sent Mackenzie all around

the world, sometimes on ships, to repair belt splicing.

He loved to travel, and often went away with other family members, says Blakely.

Tom would get up and make his son’s breakfast, see him off to work, and when Mackenzie finished his work day, most often he’d disappear in the basement.

In recent years, he’d been a loner, cut off from his school friends, although he had a girlfriend.

“When you’re on drugs, you don’t need friends,” explains Tom.

“Drugs are your friend.”

Tom says his son’s problem started years ago, when Tom had knee replacement surgery. He came home with oxycodone for pain, but he was allergic to it, and didn’t take it.

Mackenzie discovered the pills, shared them with his friends, and he was hooked.

It was about six years

ago that he shared his problem with his dad, and entered a rehab program.

But he relapsed. It was easy, with a drug dealer not too far away, always ready to sell him drugs.

The boy who had attended St. Michael Catholic Elementary School, Niagara District

“He truly did have a big heart, and had so much love to give.”

*Blakely King*

Secondary School until it closed and then Governor Simcoe Secondary School, the boy who was a great athlete, playing travel hockey and soccer, and grew into a handsome young man, couldn’t be helped.

Blakely remembers her

brother as a surprise, one with beautiful blue eyes, brown hair and porcelain skin — her parents had been told throughout her mom’s pregnancy that they were having a girl.

His favourite movie growing up was *Toy Story*, she says. He would watch it over and over again and everywhere he went, he had to bring along his yellow “blanky,” she recalls.

“Before our eyes,” she says, “Kenzie became this

Club, and “built these beautiful large wooden boats as a child,” says Blakely.

Because of his love of boats, and travel, his job was a perfect fit for him, she adds.

He also had “the biggest spot soft for animals,” and in every picture she has of him, he’s holding or cuddling one of the family pets.

“He loved our dogs immensely, and he left behind not only us, but his dog named Chevy.”

He loved Tom’s wine, a Costco steak, and a concert at the Jackson-Triggs Amphitheatre with his sister and father, and more recently, with his girlfriend Emily, says Blakely.

“He truly did have a big heart, and had so much love to give.”

But now, says Tom, with the loss of his son, he has made a promise to himself and to Kenzie.

“I’m on a mission. I want to rid the town of this drug dealer.”

He knows his name. He has been to his house to ask him to stop.

He has provided the names to the police, he says, but to his knowledge, nothing has been done. He can only imagine it isn’t a police priority.

He says the dealer admitted to selling his son drugs the night before his death, and Tom knows the drug contributed to the collision. Mackenzie fell asleep at the wheel at 8 a.m. on his way to work in Welland, Tom says. He went off the road and into a hydro pole. He was thrown from the Jeep, and died instantly. “He never knew what happened. He didn’t even hit the brakes.”

He was taking Xanax, a drug sold for anxiety, but when melted and smoked, produces “a very quick high,” says Tom.

He says he knows of other young adults in NOTL who have suffered from overdoses.

“If I can stop another family from going through this, my mission will be worth it.”

In addition to Tom and Blakely, Mackenzie is survived by his mother Louise (Paul), and his half-brother Colton in New Brunswick.

He will be missed by many aunts, uncles, and cousins and especially his favourite uncle Peter and long-time friend Emily who loved him dearly.

A celebration of Mackenzie’s life will be held at a later time, when this pandemic is over.



Kenzie King, always a lover of family pets, died in a single-vehicle collision on his way to work in Welland Friday morning. His father is determined to make something good come of the loss of his son. (Photo supplied)

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# Firefighters lauded for professionalism, thoughtfulness

**Penny Coles**  
The Local

Eduardo Lafforgue, president of the Niagara-on-the-Lake Chamber of Commerce, attending Monday night's virtual council meeting to talk about Queen Street patios, took the opportunity to thank the NOTL fire department for their professionalism the night his house was razed by fire.

Although Lafforgue has a very public job, he's a private person, and hasn't spoken publicly about the fire. At the council meet-

ing, however, he wanted to tell the community how much he admired the quick work of Fire Chief Nick Ruller, Deputy Fire Chief Jay Plato, and all the firefighters on Anne Street early that morning.

The fire of Jan. 8 started just before 6 a.m., under the hood of a pick-up truck parked in his neighbour's driveway.

It quickly spread to his neighbour's roof and his adjoining townhouse, destroying the living room, and his upstairs bedroom. The glare from the fire woke him up and led him

to look out the window, he says, where he saw flames coming from the truck, in a driveway very close to his house. That gave him time to wake up his wife, grab coats and a few possessions, and get out of the house through another exit.

His home fire alarm went off just as they were leaving.

"It was a miracle that I saw the fire. If I had not been sleeping in that bedroom I wouldn't have seen it. It gave us an extra five minutes, but five minutes is a lot in that situation."

He heard an explosion, and saw the flames reach his roof.

By the time the fire was extinguished, his home, the one most badly damaged of the two, he says, had collapsed. What is left of it will be torn down.

By the end of that day, he had been offered three choices of homes to rent, and chose one provided by Jason Clements of Niagara Property Rentals, just two blocks away, where he and his wife can stay — with their large dog — for four months.

"In 1985, I lived

through the earthquake in Mexico City. Buildings were collapsing all around us. But I can say this was much more scary than that," he says.

"We're all collateral damage of the truck that caught fire in the middle of the night," he adds.

"It's been a stressful two weeks," sorting through the emotional ramifications of the fire, as well as the paperwork and insurance to deal with.

"Some people you never expect to show up have offered help in a very spontaneous way," he says.

"We've had some wonderful people calling us. I am very thankful for all the people who have offered help."

His wife, Anick Fernandez, is an artist and print-maker, planning a showing of her prints at the Niagara Pumphouse Arts Centre in May. Her workshop was in the basement of the house, and thankfully her work was undamaged, says Lafforgue, as is an old printing press they have moved with them as they moved

Continued on page 13

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Atis Bankas is plays violin for the Jan. 27 preview of a virtual concert celebrating Mozart's birthday. (Photo supplied)

# Music Niagara celebrating Mozart's birthday this year

**Mike Balsom**  
Special to The Local

For the second straight year Music Niagara Festival is celebrating the anniversary of one of classical music's greatest composers.

Following on the heels of the 2020 recognition of the 250th anniversary of the birth of Ludwig van Beethoven, the current season will acknowledge the accomplishments of Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart, who was born January 27, 1756 in Salzburg, Austria.

"It's a fortunate convergence of dates," according to founder and artistic director Atis Bankas. "They were born 15 years apart," he points out, going on to explain that Beethoven was heavily influenced by Mozart. "There wouldn't be Beethoven if it wasn't for Haydn and Mozart, or Bach for that matter. It's an evolution. No other composers before them made the soil so fruitful, though the road was paved by others and their different attempts."

The fact that Beethoven was born in December, while Mozart's birthday is in January, means the non-profit organization can move seamlessly from celebrating one composer to the other.

"With Beethoven, it was the end of the year, so it was a whole celebration before the birthday," says Bankas. "As soon as the calendar year turned, we began to celebrate Mozart at 265."

On Wednesday, Jan. 27, Music Niagara Festival premiered a short program via

their website and YouTube channel as an introduction to the theme for this year's online At Home Series. Originally planned as a much larger event to be recorded at Mount Carmel in Niagara Falls, gears were shifted at the last minute.

"It was supposed to take place (Jan. 14) as a full concert, but because of the state of emergency protocols we couldn't do it," laments Bankas. "We managed to record just the day before (the state of emergency) was announced, without doing anything illegal, and we'll do the show at the monastery once it is lifted."

The recording features Bankas and Tanya Charles-Iveniuk on violin, with Caitlin Boyle (viola), Elina Kelebeev (piano) and Jonathan Tortolano (cello). The program runs through the first movements of Mozart's piano concerto no. 23 and his piano quartet in G minor. As well, Mozart's Adagio is performed as a stand-alone piece.

Bankas describes the group of musicians as a combination of "old friends and new friends, musically speaking. Tanya Charles used to be my student at the Glenn Gould School, so we go back a long time. She's a wonderful person and a very, very fine musician. Caitlin Boyle was a member of the Cecilia String Quartet, and came to play for Music Niagara about five years ago. She has a lot of experience."

"The older member of the group is Jonathan," he continues, "a long-time collaborator, and our pia-

nist (Kelebeev) has a great feel for Mozart, a high calibre of professionalism and musicianship."

Digging deeper into the importance of the composer, Bankas talks of him in almost superhuman terms. "Mozart's genius supersedes human capabilities," he raves. "It would take many more years to copy the music of Mozart than it took him to write it. He made no errors and no revisions, one of the very few in history, he just put it right on paper and it was perfect. That doesn't happen in a thousand years."

To Bankas, the music of both Beethoven and Mozart mines the very core of human nature, touching people now in the same way it did in the composer's own times.

"The emotions of people, it doesn't matter where they come from, don't change, really," he states. "Technology changes, fashions change, but we react the same way (today) because the human emotions are the same. When you compare Beethoven and Mozart, they are touching us in different ways, but they touch our emotions."

Looking ahead to the rest of 2021, Bankas expects that most of the Music Niagara Festival program will continue to be performed online. "It's hard to predict," says Bankas. "I would love to have live concerts with some kind of capacity. However, we know the numbers, and we experienced the first wave, and we know the vaccinations will take place later rather than

sooner. So it's very safe to assume that it won't happen until fall or winter."

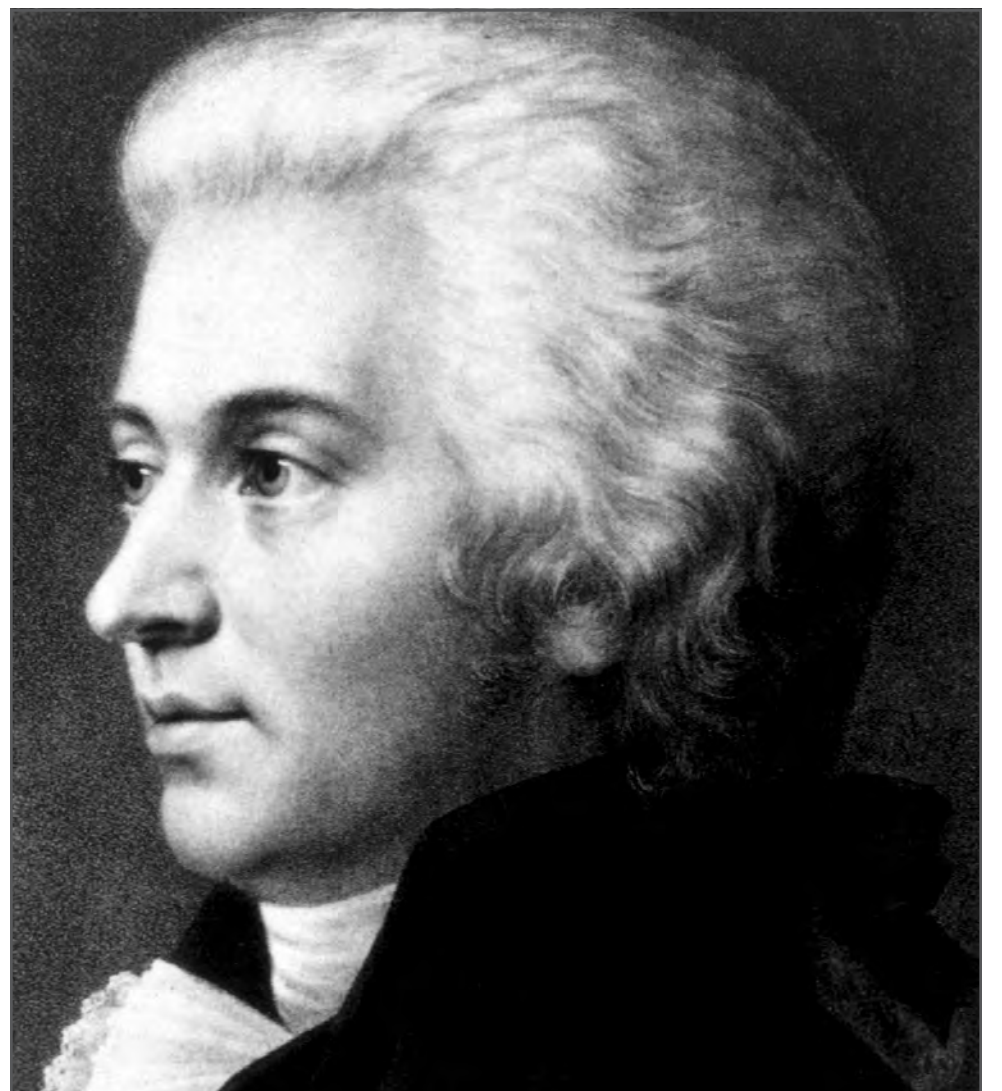
Music Niagara will take the lessons learned through almost 10 months of running the 2020 festival through a pandemic. "We're not starting from scratch," Bankas reminds The Local. "We are proud that we succeeded to continue our activities, with the help of the board and our benefactors and great donors. We had a great feeling of support in the community, and that is

evident from the incredible number of people who were tuning in. That gives us all kinds of ideas to think about a future of incorporating that experience even when live concerts return."

Bankas promises that the 2021 program, like last year's, will be full of events that combine Mozart's compositions with other forms of art. "The spoken word, and theatre, is definitely something that is very popular here," he says of Niagara-on-the-Lake. "It reaches

people and gives a greater understanding of the composer, the work, his life, etcetera. We fully intend to continue to combine spoken word and music to expose the history and process of the composer's mind."

The full Music Niagara Festival 2021 At Home Series will be released soon via their website. While waiting, the preview of Mozart's 265th anniversary celebration is available at [musicniagara.org](http://musicniagara.org) or through the Music Niagara YouTube channel.



Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart (Shutterstock)



# 'Maintenance budget' cautious for pandemic year

Continued from page 2

to supplement the budget. Due to concerns over parking revenue performance in 2021, this transfer is being rolled back entirely, and results in a net increase of \$85,000 to the operating levy. One large legal matter remains outstanding for 2021, with several planning appeals expected to continue. Other large legal matters

are expected to be resolved in following budget years beyond 2021."

"There will be lots of disappointed organizations," he says, "but most of the grants are to support and sponsor events that are not likely to happen this year."

Of presentations made to the audit committee in December, most were approved at the 2020 level, with the exception of the Chamber of Commerce

and the Niagara District Airport. Due to the cancellation of the peach and ice wine festivals, the Chamber's request for funding was reduced from \$118,000 to \$72,000. The difference of funds of \$46,000 from the parking program has been used to support the operating budget. The Niagara District Airport was approved for a nominal increase of \$667.

The largest capital expenses recommended for

2021 are equipment for the fire department, and the typical large ticket items such as road reconstruction, and water, waste water and storm water infrastructure projects.

Some of those projects have been put off in previous years as an attempt to keep tax increases low, says Bisback, and have caught up with the municipality.

Two of the costly items in this year's capital budget include \$900,000 for new breathing apparatus for the fire department, almost half of which will be debentures, and a pumper replacement at a cost of \$820,000, to be fully debentured.

Bisback says he was concerned to learn, especially during COVID, that some firefighters have to share breathing apparatus — the number of recruits has grown in recent years, but equipment has not been purchased to keep up.

"All budget decisions are about priorities," he says. "I believe our fire department is important. As long as it's affordable, and makes sense, I would fund whatever is needed."

Another item is for a

project that is now underway, the Mississauga Street culvert, at a total cost of \$550,000, which has been on the books for a few years, and is also fully debentured.

"This is another project that has been kicked down the road a few times," said Bisback.

The problem with projects like this one that are deferred, he adds, is that the more often they are kicked down the road, the more expensive they're likely to become.

"The balance of the capital program remains within available funding," the report says.

Council approved projects in 2020 that were placed on hold and deferred to 2021, for a total of \$1,131,344, the audit committee recommendation report says. Another \$11.5 million in projects has been deferred to 2022 or beyond, including \$11.2 million originally scheduled for 2021, and \$311,000 approved in prior years' budgets.

About \$215,000 in capital projects has been cancelled, \$87,000 originally scheduled for 2021 and \$128,000 related to projects approved in previous

years' budgets.

Bisback says he was amazed to see the town "squeaked through" its first year of the pandemic with a small surplus, lauding town staff for that accomplishment. That has been passed on to the taxpayers, with a percentage of it going toward the tax levy.

He cautions, though, that when they see their tax bill, it will include the regional portion, a small increase that goes to the St. Catharines Hospital site of the Niagara Health system.

He adds, too, that the costs of implementing recommendations of the Deloitte service review carried out in 2020, put on the "back-burner" while the town waited for the hiring of a new CAO, are not included in the budget, but may be considered later this year.

Councillors at Wednesday's meeting can approve the audit committee recommendations, or send them back for another look at potential savings.

Once approved, the 2021 budget will be posted on the town's website, along with a brief explanatory video.

## Safety is first priority

Continued from page 11

around the world.

"Our children tease us about travelling very light, with an enormous printing press, and a very large dog," he says.

Fortunately, their 45-kilo family pet was welcome at their rental home.

The press, which weighs about 350 kilos, and will require a specialist to take it apart and move it, he says.

Their family heirlooms, and antiques they've collected around the world, did not fare well in the fire, he says.

"All these things that have been with you, in so many countries, are suddenly gone. It feels like losing some part of you. But really they are just material things, and we're

safe, our neighbours are safe. That's what is important."

In addition to the professionalism of the firefighters, one of them — he doesn't know who — Lafforgue is extremely grateful to for his thoughtfulness.

On a table in their living room, which was destroyed, were some family photos in silver frames.

One of the firefighters, understanding their significance, grabbed the photos and carried them outside.

A neighbour took them from the firefighter to dry them, and has them still.

"That touched us a lot, that a firefighter would take the time to rescue something that was so important to us. We found that gesture fantastic, and we're very grateful. When

I called my children later that day, including my son in Belize, and asked what they would have wanted saved, all three said those photos."

Lafforgue says he hasn't had the courage to visit his neighbour yet to see what condition the photos are in, but whatever he discovers, he'll be grateful to have them rescued from the fire.

He finds it interesting now, looking back, that last year's Spirit of Niagara Chamber of Commerce Award was given to the NOTL Fire and Emergency Services, recognizing the value of their support and comfort and service to the community. "I didn't know I would need those guys one day, some of them the same firefighters that were there that night at the award ceremony."



Early on, firefighters attack the roof of the Lafforgue home on Anne Street. The fire spread quickly, and what is left of the house will be torn down.

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#### LOCAL BUSINESS SPOTLIGHT: BRICKS AND BARLEY

By the beginning of the pandemic, Bricks and Barley was a small business in a small town. The owner, Mike, had been in the business for over 10 years. The business was a local favorite, and the owner was proud of the community support they received. The pandemic hit hard, and the business was forced to close its doors. The owner was devastated, but he didn't give up. He started looking for ways to keep the business alive, and he found a solution. He started selling beer and food online, and he was able to keep the business afloat. The owner was grateful for the support of the community, and he was determined to keep the business open. The business was able to survive the pandemic, and the owner was proud of the community support they received.

#### LOCAL BUSINESS SPOTLIGHT: SWAG HAIR COMPANY

Swag Hair Company is a local business that has been in the hair industry for over 10 years. The company is known for its high-quality hair services, and its friendly and professional staff. The company has a long history of serving the community, and it is proud to be a part of the local business scene. The company has a strong reputation for its hair services, and it is always looking for ways to improve its services. The company is a great example of a local business that has been successful in the hair industry.

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Jane Andres took this photo of Scott Epp of Epp Farms (left), as she delivered welcome kits to the farm workers last spring. There will be a different process this year, but she hopes to have 550 kits to deliver.

# Welcome kits underway for farm workers

**Penny Coles**  
The Local

If last year was one of extraordinary challenges for Jane Andres, as she tried to welcome farm workers and ease some of the pandemic-related problems they faced, this year will be different again, but hopefully easier.

Knowing what was ahead gave her and the small group of volunteers who help her a chance to be organized and prepared for welcoming offshore workers to town.

With the exception of a few flower growers who have had some farm workers arrive in January, most won't reach Niagara-on-the-Lake until mid to late February, she says.

Last year, when farm workers were delayed because of federal permit problems due to COVID-19, she already had the welcome kits she has been handing out for the last three years filled, but once they arrived, the problem became how to deliver them to the workers safely, when they were isolating.

Those who are already in town this year needed negative COVID tests before they got on their plane, she says. It worked well for those from Jamaica, but Mexican workers often leave days before

their flights, due to the travel distance to the airport, and didn't know about the tests until they got to Mexico City. They had to travel long distances for the tests, and some didn't have the money to pay for them, but she believes that to be a problem for those arriving in other areas of Canada. "I don't believe that's affecting anyone coming here."

This year, she can't work with volunteer teams to fill the bags, so she has arranged for three women to take shifts separately, with the bags and items being stored in a section of her bed and breakfast home that is closed off from the family area.

Although B&Bs were allowed to open this summer, Andres says she didn't have many guests, so she invited some regular guests from Toronto. "I didn't charge them," she says. "I knew they'd be looking for a chance to get away for a few days, maybe from kids or parents they're living with," she says.

They also support Niagara farmers by buying local fruit, one of her goals, and many donated to her farm worker programs, including bringing items for the welcome kits.

She has also invited farmers from other areas of the province to stay at

her B&B when they come later in the season to pick up workers who have completed their contracts in Niagara, and are ready to move on to other farms further north. It gives her an opportunity to talk about the support for local workers, hoping it will spread to other communities.

Because of storage issues with welcome kits, instead of asking for donated items, she is requesting donations of money through e-transfers to niagaraworkerswelcome@gmail.com, using welcome as the password, or make donations online at workerswelcomeniagara.com. Most of the items are already ordered in bulk, but she could use donations to help pay for them. She is not registered as a not-for-profit yet, so she can't issue tax receipts, but she keeps a scrupulous accounting of how the money is spent.

"We have people in the community who have been helping us source items to find the best possible deal. Penner Lumber has been a great help, advising us when we can order 500 pairs of work gloves on sale," says Andres.

"This is a community driven, neighbour-to-neighbour project funded by residents of Niagara-on-the-Lake. It's long-term success has in-

spired communities across Ontario to adopt this practical way to welcome their neighbours that work on the farms, greenhouses and vineyards."

She began her purchasing for this year's kits with \$1,000 donated by the 2020 Candlelight Stroll. Each costs about \$25 to fill, and for the last three years, about 500 were delivered, she says. This year her goal is 550.

As the bags are filled, she is reaching out to farmers to arrange a safe drop-off at their homes before their offshore workers arrive. That way the kits will be in the bunk houses when they arrive, and there will be no contact issues while they're isolating.

"We hope to deliver the kits directly to the employers of Caribbean workers prior to the arrivals from mid-February and on, or as arranged. Rev. Antonio Illas and the Anglican diocese have a program that reaches out to the Spanish-speaking population. It's not identical to our welcome kits but we share a lot of resources, ideas and encourage each other in how we can best meet the needs during these challenging times."

Andres says she doesn't have all the employers' contact information, and would appreciate them

contacting her at niagaraworkerswelcome@gmail.com, to let her know when a delivery would suit them best.

The welcome kits are especially important to the workers this year, who will arrive late at night, straight from the Toronto airport with no stops. They will appreciate the gloves and warm socks waiting for them, toiletries, toilet paper and snacks.

Heavy work socks have been purchased for \$2 a pair from Socks for Change, a Niagara charitable organization. Sam Baio, the organizer, also provides, in return, several hundred balaclavas, and neck and ear warmers, Andres says.

Newark Neighbours is usually open at this time of year for workers to pick up warm clothes and household items, such as blenders and microwaves, but is only currently open for locals who need help from the food bank.

In the future, Andres says, she'd really like to see a permanent Virgil location to collect donations for the workers, but closer to where they typically shop in town.

The very positive news, she says, is that she feels change is in the air, not only with discussions about changes to federal regulations, but with what

is happening in the community.

"People are becoming engaged, and are thinking about the farmworkers as part of the community. Most of the men are really happy to be here, and happy with where they live. We have some really awesome employers, and a community that wants to help."

She says as the next generation of farmers takes over, they have a better understanding of their workers. She also enjoys seeing the young people moving to town from the GTA who are accustomed to a diverse community, and love the different cultures they encounter here.

"I see farmers pushing for change, and I'm so encouraged. The younger generation is definitely making an impact. There is more diversity in the community, and more respect for other cultures. Social media is helping us to learn about what's going on in our community, and people are recognizing the richness and rewards of embracing those relationships."

More people are also thinking about buying local produce, and that helps the farmers, the workers and the communities, she says.

"It's a win-win situation."



# Women's march important reminder of necessary change

**Kim Wade**  
Special to The Local

Last year, the sound of boots crunching on the snow could be heard as 30 souls marched through the streets of Niagara-on-the-Lake. It was an unrelentingly cold day, but they marched on with one single goal in mind.

They were not Red Coats or Americans. They were not even from the distant past, even though 2019 seems like eons ago by today's standards. These "soldiers" were participants in the first Women's March Global in the NOTL Chapter. In January 2019, they took to the streets with the goal of bringing Women's Rights to the forefront of Global awareness.

The event commemorated the first Women's March that took place in 2017, when millions of women, from seven continents, mobilized. They came together united by shared struggles to promote the single vision of collective liberation. At Women's March Global, they believe that "women's rights are human rights and human rights are women's rights." The ultimate goal is to create a global community where race, gender, ability, socioeconomic status, sexual orientation, religious or societal norms do not inhibit liberation. Women, whether they are Black, Indigenous, poor, immigrant, disabled, lesbian or trans and regardless of their religious or non-religious background, should be free to "care for and nurture their families, however they are formed, in safe and healthy environments free from structural impediments." The organization prioritizes coalitions with grass roots organizers. Their goal is to "amplify and support their work."

Grass roots chapters like the one in NOTL are the backbone to the movement. Participants from the 2019 march still remember that day. Shaw performer and former NOTL chapter leader, Jacqueline Thair, still believes in the significance of the event. "I think it is important to stand up and exercise our rights when there is injustice happening, especially for those whose voices aren't being heard. The [2019] march was the coldest day I can remember since arriving in Ontario 15 years ago. It was absolutely brutal. Some of my tech didn't work because it simply froze, but incredibly about 30 people showed up in spite of the weather, and the perfor-

mances were incredible."

One of the entertainers that day was Shaw actor Matt Nethersole, who performed as his drag persona, Maya Nority. "The march was extremely cold and I was in drag, so I was extra cold. It was inspiring to see so many people still out for the cause despite the harsh conditions," he reminisced.

"I think one of the biggest barriers to social progress is complacency. In an affluent, privileged, mostly white town like NOTL, complacency is rampant. I think that the women's march disrupts that complacency, and reminds the people of NOTL that though the world may be skewed in their favour the systems in place now are widely cruel and unjust to anyone who does not satisfy the terms of the capitalist white cis-hetero patriarchy."

He stressed the continuing importance for the march in this pandemic era by stating, "I think that the injustices that existed in the world pre-pandemic didn't go away, gender inequality included."

"In fact, many of the world's problems have been exacerbated by the pandemic, especially when you consider its disproportionate impact on people of colour and economically oppressed communities. That being said, I think we have to get creative with our advocacy now, so I'm glad the organizers are doing their best to work around the circumstances."

Nethersole's sentiment about the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic on women is shared by Lord Mayor Betty Disero, who also participated in the 2019 Women's March in NOTL and shared the stage with Nethersole.

As for this year, Disero is focusing on the present struggles of women in our community and province. She has turned her attention to the negative impacts that the pandemic has had on women in particular.

In November 2020, Disero, along with 14 other female mayors in Ontario, signed an open letter that explains the specific challenges women face as a result of the pandemic. They cite the decrease of women in the workforce due to caregiving and domestic responsibilities, which leads to greater economic instability for women and their children. They also cite an increase in isolation and the increase in domestic violence against women. All of these effects on women are contrib-

uting factors to the economic "she-cession" we are currently experiencing in Ontario.

The letter is aimed to bring awareness to the plight of women during these times and how even though they have been the hardest hit, support for women socially is needed as we move forward economically by calling on all levels of government to recognize the significant impact of COVID on women, and to invest in women and their children and to support local and small business led by women.

As Disero said, "I think women, although they were hardest hit by COVID-19, I believe that

they will be very strong on the economic recovery."

"I believe that women will be the ones to help us through the economic crisis once the health issue gets under control," she continued. "I really believe there are a lot of women entrepreneurs out there that will take up the cause to help bring back the economy."

Amy Jewel, Shaw performer and co-organizer of the 2019 NOTL chapter, would like us to remember what the march means and the importance of adding your voice to the whole. "There is power in numbers. The voice and power of the many has the potential to yield more powerful results.

Women, Black Lives Matter, violence against the LGBTQ+ community, ethnic cleansing: these are all instances where a group of people have been pushed down and marginalized, treated as 'less than' because of their gender, skin colour, sexual orientation, ethnicity or religion." She continues, "women's march groups all over the world are rising up to say 'no more,' which, when wielded effectively, can effect more change than the voices of a few."

Even though the recent pandemic restrictions have impacted the annual march for this year, there is still a way to add your voice to the global choir and make up for the lack

of boots in the street. The global organization has put up an online survey that opened on Thursday Jan. 21.

This survey asks a series of questions that participants answer to give their opinions on which gender issues are most important to them, and what they feel should be priorities for all governments.

Participants can sign up online at [womensmarch-global.org](https://www.womensmarch-global.org), and follow the prompts for #WECOUNT to add their voice to the international voice of all women, non-binary and transgender people, with a goal of ensuring "all voices are counted as we face the post-pandemic global reset," globally and at home.



Lord Mayor Betty Disero (left) joined last year's Women's March Global in 2019.



Shaun Donnelly, her mother Jackie Donnelly, and Tara Rosling were among the leaders of the pack leaving Simcoe Park and beginning the Women's March Global event in 2019. (File photos)



# Robi Botos Bravo Niagara! Festival artist in residence

**Mike Balsom**  
Special to The Local

When jazz pianist and composer Robi Botos agreed to take on the role of 2021 Bravo Niagara! Festival artist in residence, it seems he may have taken the “in residence” part of the title literally.

Botos, along with his wife and three children, recently moved to Niagara-on-the-Lake, realizing their family dream to get away from the downtown Toronto core. To Botos, the timing was perfect.

“There’s a time where you are doing things in the middle of the city, when you’re talking about entertainment, I think it’s important to be in a certain place at a certain time,” Botos explains. “But just like all my favourites, who did their time in New York, or LA, Montreal or Vancouver, after awhile, when your kids are about to grow up, it’s not as critical for me to be right in the middle of a city.”

Besides the expense of living in Toronto, the current situation for artists may have made it even more timely for Botos and his family to make the move. “I just feel like there wasn’t too much sense in being in a very busy place, in the middle of a second wave, living in a high-rise,” he says. “And things have changed. Most of the work is remote right now anyway.”

Alexis Spieldenner, executive director and co-founder of Bravo Niagara!, has rolled out the welcome mat for the Botos family. “We’re very excited to welcome Robi to the community, and officially announce that he will be Bravo Niagara! 2021 artist in residence,” she says. “He was one of the first artists we presented for our inaugural 2014 festival at Stratus, with Molly Johnson. We always love having Robi back at Bravo Niagara!”

The renowned musician and his family moved from their native Hungary to Canada more than 20 years ago. It took about six years for them to wade through the red tape to gain landed immigrant status. During that time, he quickly made a name for himself on the Toronto jazz scene, playing with the likes of Dave Young and Terry Clark, both of whom had played with pianist Oscar Peterson, one of Botos’ idols.

In 2004, with his status in Canada finally achieved, he was able to enter the Montreux Jazz Festival’s solo piano competition, placing first. Part of his prize was an invitation to



Robi Botos and his family have moved to Niagara-on-the-Lake from Toronto, liking the idea of living in a small community. (Photos supplied)

return to Montreux the following year to open for Peterson.

“He came early, and listened to me, and complimented me,” marvels Botos. “Later I got asked to come to his house. They were looking for a piano teacher for his daughter Celine. My first time coming to the house, it was like a comedy, I took about 15 to 20 minutes to knock or ring. I didn’t know what to do.”

When he finally mustered up the courage to make his presence at the door known, Botos was greeted with a warm welcome. “I became friends with the family,” he remembers. “It was just magic, he was beautiful and very supportive. He gave me some beautiful advice, and he was very interested and respectful. He made me feel like I was on the right track. It was a beautiful experience.”

Peterson’s influence informs much of Botos’ work, as does his experience growing up in Hungary in a musical family. “My dad and my brothers listened to a lot of jazz,” he says. “I played a lot of drums and percussion, and keyboards. Without going to any formal school for music I was able to play and make up my own melodies, so I started right out with improvising, and always felt comfortable about it.”

In fact, Botos was a drummer first, and his feel for percussion is a crucial element in his piano

technique. “It puts you in your place,” Botos points out. “It’s very important for anyone who touches any instrument that their rhythm evolves and they can get better with timing on their instrument. You can play any notes you want to, but without it, it’s not going to have the same kind of power.” These lessons in rhythm and improvisation are part of what he brings to his position as a member of the Humber College Faculty of Music.

Another major influence for Botos is his Romani heritage. His 2018 album *Old Soul* features

a moving song called *Budapest*, and he composed the score for Aaron Yeger’s film, *A People Uncounted*, which focuses on the rich culture and history of the Romani people, commonly referred to as gypsies in Europe. Last year, Bravo Niagara! produced *Robi Botos: Romani Experience* (available to watch at [bravoniagara.org/amplified](http://bravoniagara.org/amplified)) as part of its Voices of Freedom Festival: Sounds of Hope program. The 40-minute video is a heartfelt lament for a people who have been marginalized, ostracized and subjected to genocide.

“When you live in a country (Canada) where people don’t really care, aren’t necessarily against your background and your heritage,” confirms Botos, “you can open up and be more creative, and push that side of things. I feel that I owe my ancestors that because they went through the hardest times, including the Holocaust and a lot of persecution. I want to embrace that story and tell it to the world.”

As they settle into their new community, Botos and his family feel incredibly fortunate to be amongst the newest residents of

NOTL. “I’ve been coming down here for a while, and I never really thought this would be the place I would be,” he says. “Thankfully, I have nice friends here in Niagara-on-the-Lake. This place stole my heart. It’s not just like another small town. It’s a magical place, and I’m excited to be here.”

As 2021 progresses, he’ll be working alongside Alexis Spieldenner and Chris Mori of Bravo Niagara! Festival, making plans for what will be not just an exciting year of music, but also his official welcome, a homecoming of sorts, to his new community.



Robi Botos, jazz pianist and composer, will be the artist in residence for Bravo Niagara!’s 2021 season.





# Auchterlonie on Astrology

## Bill Auchterlonie Special to The Local

Welcome to Auchterlonie on Astrology, a look at the week of Jan. 28, through Feb. 3, including Mars conjunct Uranus and The Sun conjunct Saturn.

On my podcast you can also find out how to obtain your own personal birth chart including a forecast for the year ahead. The podcast is at [www.auchterlonieonastrology.ca](http://www.auchterlonieonastrology.ca).

Now, the week ahead:

Thursday, Jan. 28: The full Moon in Leo is at 2:15 p.m. Proud emotions argue with your new way of seeing yourself. Today the Sun is conjunct Jupiter at nine degrees Aquarius. Today is a great time to formulate or bring your bigger-than-life vision to life. The Sun is our identity, and Jupiter is our beliefs and higher truth. Sun conjunct Jupiter is an excellent time to examine, and update, our beliefs and what holds true for us. Are your

2020 beliefs still valid? Do they still reflect the person you've become? What still holds true? What does not? Which new beliefs can you incorporate so that you can continue growing and expanding? Today is the birthday of Canada's second Prime Minister, Alexander Mackenzie, born Jan. 28, 1822. He introduced the secret ballot and initiated the Supreme Court of Canada and The Royal Military College in Kingston, among many other things.

Friday, Jan. 29: The Moon in Leo opposes Mercury in Aquarius at 8:53 p.m. Feelings and ideas are in very different places on the day before Mercury turns retrograde. Proud feelings and forward ideas can go hand in hand if we want. Oprah turns 67 today. She is still ranked as the most influential woman in the World.

Saturday, Jan. 30: We need to get all our 2021 planning done before Mercury goes retrograde at 26 degrees Aquarius

at 10:51 a.m.

This is the first time Mercury goes retrograde in an air sign since 2015. In 2020, Mercury has turned retrograde in water signs, so it has been influencing us at an emotional level. In 2021, Mercury will go retrograde in air signs, so it will influence us at a mental level. Any Mercury retrograde will point to what needs to be reviewed, reassessed, and re-invented. Pay attention to the Aquarius sector of your chart to get more hints about what needs a cosmic update. It was 52 years ago today that the Beatles performed their last concert. It was on the roof of their studio on Abbey Road.

Sunday, Jan. 31: Clever, discriminating feelings thanks to the Moon in Virgo are in harmony with Pluto in serious Capricorn. It's time to fine tune things. Today Jackie Robinson, the first black player in Major League Baseball, would be 102 years old.

Monday, Feb. 1: Two big aspects today: first the Sun is square Mars at 6:33 a.m. Then Venus moves from Capricorn to Aquarius at 9:05 a.m. Fortunately, Mars is in Taurus so overindulging may be the worst of it. Venus brings a new forward-looking edge to relationships. And today would have been the 73rd birthday of the Superfreak, Rick James of Buffalo.

Tuesday, Feb. 2: It's Groundhog Day. With the Sun in Aquarius in harmony with the Moon in Libra, the rodent should see his shadow. He'd been a successful Mississippi riverboat captain when the American Civil War broke out, and he was unemployed. So, he became a writer. And this Samuel Clements became Mark Twain on Feb. 2, 1863.

Wednesday, Feb. 3: Chal-

enges here, there and in other places too. Fear is the worst. So do not fear. Deal honestly and win. Sadly, today is the day the music died, when a plane carrying Buddy Holly, J.P. Richardson and The Big Bopper crashed in Iowa. It was Feb. 3, 1959.

That's AonA for this week. Until next Thursday, as Joni Mitchell said: "We are stardust. So shine on."



## View from the couch

### Donald Combe Special to The Local

*Immortal Beloved* (Netflix 1994) opens with scenes of Beethoven's funeral, but focuses on his friend Schindler's quest, helped only by a letter,

to identity Beethoven's "immortal beloved." The film is beautiful to look at and listen to, while the plot is fascinating and brings enlightenment to anyone who has ever tried to understand a genius.

Donald Combe is a re-

tired English teacher who loves to go to movies. Until he resumes going to theatres, he has graciously agreed to share his opinions, through "short and sweet" exclusives, of Netflix series and movies for *The Local*.



Mike Balsom couldn't help but stop and enjoy the sight of two young brothers, enjoying their outdoor exercise this past weekend, the coldest days of the year. William and Isaac Trapasso are fortunate to have a dad, Dominic, willing to put in the work to give them a big skating rink in their Regent Street backyard. (Mike Balsom)

## Notice of Completion and Submission of Design and Construction Report

### Design-Build for QEW/Glendale Avenue Interchange Reconstruction Town of Niagara-on-the-Lake Regional Municipality of Niagara DB 2019-2119

#### THE PROJECT

**Brennan Paving and Construction** and their design consultant **Morrison Hershfield** have been selected by the **Ministry of Transportation (MTO)** to undertake the detail design and construction of the Queen Elizabeth Way (QEW) and Glendale Avenue Interchange improvements (see Key Plan).

The project includes the replacement of the Glendale Avenue bridge over the QEW and reconstruction of the QEW/Glendale Avenue interchange to a Diverging Diamond Interchange (DDI). Additionally, the project will reconstruct the Glendale Avenue/York Road Intersection to a single lane roundabout, and construct a new Airport Road ramp and connection road from Glendale Avenue to York Road/Airport Road intersection on behalf of Niagara Region. A new commuter carpool lot will also be constructed at the northwest quadrant of the new interchange.

The Diverging Diamond Interchange will allow for traffic performance improvement by reducing the number of vehicle conflict points and allowing unrestricted access to the QEW.

#### THE PROCESS

The MTO project has followed the approved planning process for a Group 'B' project in accordance with the *Class Environmental Assessment for Provincial Transportation Facilities* (2000) with an opportunity for public engagement. A Design and Construction Report (DCR) has been prepared to provide background information about the project, present the proposed design, describe construction staging, associated impacts and proposed mitigation, and provide an overview of the public consultation that has occurred to date.

**The 30-day public review will start on January 28th, 2021 and end on February 26th, 2021.**

The DCR can be downloaded from the project website at <http://qew-glendale-interchange.ca/>

Upon completion of the DCR review period, the project will be considered to have met the requirements of the Class EA and will proceed to construction.

The projects within Niagara Region (roundabout at Glendale Avenue/York Road intersection and a new Airport Road connection from Glendale Avenue) were assessed in accordance with the approved planning process for Schedule 'C' projects under the *Municipal Class Environmental Assessment* (amended in 2015). This project will fulfill the final phases of the Environmental Assessment process including Detail Design and construction.

The construction phase is anticipated to start spring 2021 and is anticipated to be completed in summer 2023.

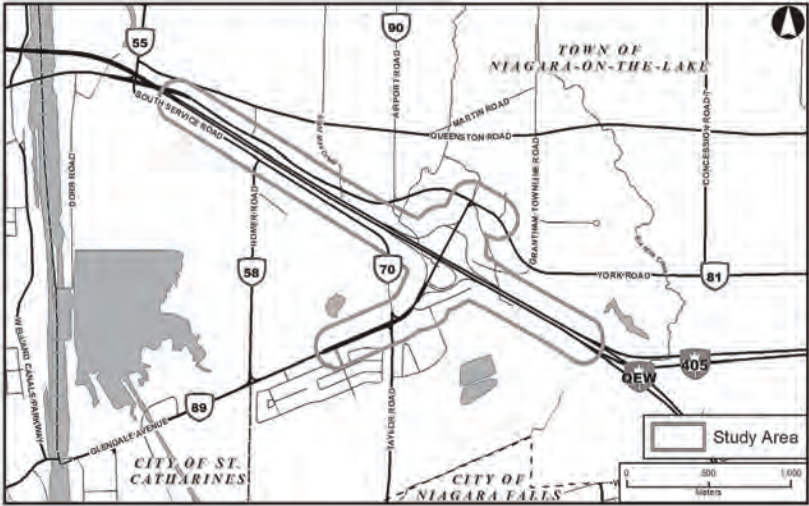
#### COMMENTS

Interested persons are encouraged to review the DCR and provide comments by **February 26, 2021**. The Project Team will respond to all comments generated during the 30-day public review. Outstanding concerns are to be directed to the proponent for a response, unless the outstanding concerns are regarding potential adverse impacts to constitutionally protected Aboriginal or treaty rights, in which case Part II Order requests on these matters should be addressed in writing to the following:

**Minister Jeff Yurek**  
Ministry of Environment, Conservation and Parks  
777 Bay Street, 5th Floor  
Toronto, ON M7A 2J3  
e-mail: [minister.mecp@ontario.ca](mailto:minister.mecp@ontario.ca)

**and**

**Director, Environmental Assessment Branch**  
Ministry of Environment, Conservation and Parks  
135 St. Clair Avenue West, 1st Floor  
Toronto, ON M4V 1P5  
e-mail: [EABDirector@ontario.ca](mailto:EABDirector@ontario.ca)



To obtain additional information or to provide comments please contact the Project Team via the "Contact" link on project website or by contacting one of the following individuals:

<p><b>Chris Ryell</b> Project Manager Brennan Paving &amp; Construction Ltd. 505 Miller Ave., Markham, ON L6G 1B2 tel: 905-415-7352 e-mail: <a href="mailto:chris.ryell@millergroup.ca">chris.ryell@millergroup.ca</a></p>	<p><b>Hossein Hosseini</b> Project Manager Ministry of Transportation - Central Region 159 Sir William Hearst Avenue Toronto, ON M3M 0B7 tel: 416-235-5513 e-mail: <a href="mailto:hossein.hosseini@ontario.ca">hossein.hosseini@ontario.ca</a></p>
<p><b>Jason Lee</b> MTO Contract Services Admin Ministry of Transportation, Central Region 159 Sir William Hearst Avenue, Toronto, ON M3M 0B7 tel: 905-634-9302 e-mail: <a href="mailto:jason.lee@ontario.ca">jason.lee@ontario.ca</a></p>	

Information will be collected in accordance with the *Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act*. With the exception of personal information, all comments will become part of the public record.

If you have any accessibility requirements in order to participate in this project, please contact the Project Team members listed above.



# LOCAL HAPPENINGS

## FIRST ONTARIO PERFORMING ARTS CENTRE

#NiagaraPerforms

Sunday, January 31 @ 7:30 p.m.

JOHN and WALEED

virtual event livestreamed

www.FirstOntarioPAC.ca

## THE FOSTER FESTIVAL

Sunday, February 14 @ 6:30 p.m.

Old Love

live reading with

Norm Foster and Sheila McCarthy

fosterfestival.com

## PLACE YOUR COMING EVENT COMMUNITY SOCIAL HERE

With or without a border, colour graphics optional.

Include your Logo! Prices starting at \$20.

Deadline: Monday 3 p.m.

Call Karen 905-641-5335

or email: [classified@notllocal.com](mailto:classified@notllocal.com)

### PUZZLE ANSWERS

#### Sudoku solution from January 21, 2021

5	2	1	6	9	7	8	4	3
4	9	7	1	3	8	6	2	5
3	6	8	4	2	5	1	7	9
1	5	6	2	7	9	4	3	8
7	3	9	8	6	4	2	5	1
8	4	2	3	5	1	9	6	7
2	8	3	7	1	6	5	9	4
6	1	5	9	4	3	7	8	2
9	7	4	5	8	2	3	1	6



### PLEASE RECYCLE THIS NEWSPAPER

The Niagara-on-the-Lake

## LOCAL

The trusted voice of our community.



# LOCAL WORSHIP



**CORNERSTONE COMMUNITY CHURCH**

**Sunday, January 31st**

**10 a.m. Worship Gathering (Online Only)**

Speaker: **Kevin Bayne**

Message: **Philippians 1:12-19**

Please be advised that with the current state of COVID-19, your safety is of utmost importance to us. We will now be live streaming our service at 10:00 a.m. on Sundays.

**www.ccchurch.ca**

To advertise your **WORSHIP SERVICES** in this section, please contact:

**karen@notllocal.com**

### CROSSWORD

**Across:**

1 Pistols

5 Police heavy brigade

9 Unexpected turn of events

14 Long song for one in an opera

15 Cairo/Pittsburgh river

16 Totaled

17 Of the present month (Abbr.)

18 Traditional knowledge

19 Cosmetics mogul Elizabeth ---

20 Monk's title

21 Job-discrimination watchdog (Abbr.)

22 Plumping

23 Moonshine maker

25 Liable

27 Journey's end forecast

28 Swedish aircraft maker

30 Astonish

32 Take for granted

34 Hearth

38 Radiation absorber

39 "I shall not find myself so --- die" (Antony, in "Julius Caesar")

41 One up on a deuce

42 Catholic

44 Accuse

46 Wide river mouth

47 Flying toy

48 Batter essential

51 Fashion reminiscent of the past

53 "What happens in --- stays in ---"

56 Short stops

58 Decree

60 Web site ID

61 The first Mrs. Trump

62 Singer --- Simone

63 Split

64 Well mannered

65 International trade org.

66 Stripe

67 Breaks

68 Raised

69 E.g. Levin, Gershwin and others

**Down:**

1 Short attacks

2 Ripley's slogan finishers

3 Firing

4 Posed

5 Only

6 Cry of exultation

7 Battle group main feature

8 The very end of a golf club

9 Swing in a circus

10 Skin blemish

11 Self-published author

12 Surgically implanted tube

13 A k a the Friendly Islands

21 Gunslinger actor Jack ---

22 Duck ---, medieval child's game

1	2	3	4		5	6	7	8		9	10	11	12	13
14					15					16				
17					18					19				
20				21					22					
23			24			25		26				27		
		28			29		30				31			
32	33					34					35	36	37	
38					39	40					41			
42				43					44	45				
			46						47					
48	49	50		51				52		53			54	55
56			57				58		59			60		
61						62					63			
64						65					66			
67						68					69			

24 Exalted

26 Leave out

29 Fab Four

31 Personal assets

32 Top-fermented beer

33 Moderately dry

35 Unorthodox

36 Angular meas.

37 Peeper

40 British Prime Minister when the Constitution was signed

43 Food grasses

45 Honey factory

48 Sagas

49 Singer-songwriter --- DeGraw

50 Yellow tropical fruit with

pink pulp

52 Token amount

54 Center of an amphitheater

55 Snow vehicles

57 Saucy girl

59 "Shane" star Alan ---

62 Toff

63 G-men



# LOCAL CLASSIFIEDS

classified@notllocal.com

**Jo-Ann Cudmore**  
sales representative  
www.cudmorehomes.com

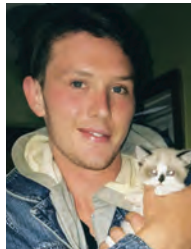
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## OBITUARY



**KING, MACKENZIE AUSTIN DREW**—May 16, 1995-January 22, 2021

Sadness, sorrow, and enough tears to fill a river that now flows out of control.

A smile so infectious with humor that filled a room is now silent and dark.

Mackenzie died suddenly from a car accident on January 22 while on his way to work.

Survived by his father Tom and sister Blakely in Niagara-on-the-Lake, his mother Louise (Paul), and his half-brother Colton in New Brunswick.

Missed by many aunts, uncles, and cousins and especially his favourite uncle Peter and long-time friend Emily who loved him dearly.

A shout-out to friends Callum and Wyatt from the early days growing up.

Thanks to QBM of Welland who employed Kenzie, he loved his job and co-workers.

In his younger days, Kenzie enjoyed playing goalie for the NOTL Bantam Midget hockey team.

He loved his father's wine, a Costco steak, then a concert at Jackson-Triggs which was always a great night with his sister and I.

A special thanks to neighbours, family, and friends that have helped us through this time of sadness.

Give your child a hug today.

A celebration of Mackenzie's life will be held at a later time, when this pandemic is over.



**URE, DONNA LEE** —Donna Lee Ure passed in peace on January 11th, 2021 at Upper Canada Lodge.

Donna was born in Stettler, AB on June 5th, 1944, the second youngest of four children. From a young age, it was obvious that she was as clever as she was compassionate and charmed most with her spunky smile. After graduating

high school, Donna attended Nursing school at the University of Alberta in Edmonton, where she met her lifelong friends while living with seven of them in a house. We still refer to them as 'the nurses.' Making lifelong friends was just one of her many talents. Following graduation she and the love of her life bought their dream home on the Shores of Sylvan Lake, Alberta. Donna and her husband Doug were teaching at Red Deer College before both travelled to San Francisco to continue their education. This pattern of working followed her into her professional life. Donna was a hard-working pragmatist who believed there is nothing more practical than a good theory. Her commitment to theory and practice influenced everyone and everything she did. Soon the desire to see the world took over and they left Alberta, and began their lifelong journey together to work, to travel, and to educate. In the summer of 1986, Doug and Donna travelled with her two young children to Niagara-on-the-Lake, where they have lived ever since.

Both worked at the Niagara Institute where they developed an international reputation in the field of leadership development. There, Donna rose to the position of Director of Programs before leaving to work as a consultant full time alongside her husband, and building Ure & Associates together. Doug and Donna celebrated their 50th wedding anniversary in 2019, having married on a sunny day during the summer of love in '69. She is survived by Douglas, her two adoring children Ian and Lindsay, their spouses, and her grandson Halo.

We have lost a wife, a mother, a best friend, a sister. A foxhole buddy. We feel immense gratitude for every day we got to spend with her, every lesson, every smile, every shot in the arm. Every hug. Every conversation. We loved her and we will cherish our memories of her above all else. We have received an outpouring of condolences; one that the young spunky girl from Alberta would be proud of.

She would have shown us the smile and nodded her agreement that it had been a life worth living most definitely. Thank you to everyone who will continue to remember the woman she was!

## IN MEMORIAM



**ROBERT WINSTON IRVINE**  
JANUARY 31, 2020

Bob, Dad, Papa,  
It's been a year since you left us suddenly,  
not allowing us to say goodbye,  
You left a hole that can't be filled because  
you were always our special guy.

We think of you often and smell your scent  
in each and every passing day,  
the dimes we have found and the  
cardinals that were sent we knew it was  
you that couldn't stay.

This year has been a distraction here on Earth,  
we're not sure how happy you would have been,

But knowing you were placed safely in  
heaven was one answered prayer from  
God that was seen.

The constant ache that we have felt, that  
is in our hearts has not seemed to dull  
with each passing day,

But we know you will continue to visit us  
often and we will remember you in our  
hearts, thoughts and as we pray.

We often cry when thinking how long it will  
be until we can see and be with you once again,

But then we remember we have to be  
patient and wilful and live our journey out  
with our family and our friends.

Until then we will share all our stories with  
you as we come to tend to your grave,  
and we'll think of happy stories and  
memories of you and continue to be brave.

Love and miss you always and forever,  
Joyce

Jeff and Shannon

Jennifer, George, Logan, Cole and Lauryn  
Janice, Julian, Bronwyn and Thomas

## RENTAL WANTED

### THE PERFECT TENANT

**Seeks a bungalow, townhome or condo in NOTL or vicinity for long-term lease.**

Responsible, mature, professional woman,  
works from home, recently widowed, wishes  
to escape the chaos of the city.

No pets, no kids, non-smoking, loves peace and  
privacy, gardening, home upkeep, arts and culture.  
Late spring or early summer. Exceptional references.

**Contact: ollyclaire@yahoo.com**

## HELP WANTED

### Seasonal Farm Workers

**needed from approximately  
June 20, 2021 to mid-September.**

No education or experience needed. Working in an agricultural  
environment in all weather conditions. Must be available 7 days a week.  
Heavy lifting and ladder climbing will be required. Duties also include  
manual weed pulling, hoeing, thinning, fruit picking and packing. Must  
also adhere to food safety and COVID safety policies and procedures.

Min wage (\$14.39 per hour) and own transportation is a must.

**Email resume to sirlukes@hotmail.com**  
**Only candidates to be interviewed will be contacted.**

**Dan Serluca Farms | 1038 Concession 2 Rd., NOTL**

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**Stop the Spread  
COVID-19  
can be deadly.  
Stay home.  
Stay strong.  
Save lives.**



# Healthy sleep patterns decrease heart risks



**Larry Chambers  
Eva Liu and  
Hanna Levy  
Special to The Local**

A recent survey of 5,525 Canadians, as published in the Journal of Sleep Research 2020, reported sleep difficulties increased from 36 per cent before the COVID outbreak to 51 per cent during the outbreak.

This is problematic because adults over the age of 45 who were dissatisfied with sleep quality have higher odds of multiple long-term conditions (including heart disease, stroke, diabetes, dementia, lung disease) as reported in the Canadian Longitudinal Study on Aging of over 30,000 participants. As well, among 408,802 UK Biobank study participants aged 37 to 73, with a healthy sleep pattern, had a 42 per cent reduction in the risk of heart failure compared to participants with an unhealthy sleep pattern.

Humans spend about 30 per cent of their life sleeping. Our sleep is composed of several sleep cycles throughout the night. One sleep cycle takes approximately 90 minutes and each cycle is comprised of the following five stages:

#### Stage 1:

4 to 5 per cent - Light sleep, slowed muscle activity, and occasional muscle twitching.

#### Stage 2:

45 to 55 per cent - Decreased breathing rate and heart rate.

#### Stage 3:

4 to 6 per cent - Rapid Eye Movement (REM) sleep begins – brain gets rid of dead particulate organic material that accumulated throughout the day.

#### Stage 4:

12 to 15 per cent - Very deep sleep characterized by rhythmic breathing, limited muscle activity, and delta waves.

#### Stage 5:

20 to 25 per cent - REM sleep where brainwaves speed up, dreaming occurs, muscles relax, heart rate increases, breathing becomes rapid and shallow.

Sleep is regulated by certain neurochemicals in the brain responsible for producing different aspects of alertness and sleep. Our internal clock, also known as our circadian rhythm, determines when we feel

the desire to sleep, as well as our susceptibility to sleep disorders. The circadian rhythm is the 24-hour sleep-wake cycle that governs many physiological processes including production of sleep hormones, gene expression and body temperature.

The two types of problems with sleep are insomnia and sleep-disordered breathing.

Insomnia, where people have difficulty falling or staying asleep, is related to another existing health problem more than 90 per cent of the time. Some common causes of insomnia are depression, arthritis, chronic pain, chronic obstructive lung disease, stressful life events, grief, and medications. This is especially relevant during COVID times, when there is additional financial, psychological, and social stress.

Insomnia in older adults is associated with falls, poor quality of life, deterioration in balance and ambulation, slower reaction or reflex time and slower wound healing.

Sleep-disordered breathing increases with age. It is connected with snoring and feeling tired even after a full night's sleep, caused by fragmented and/or disturbed sleep cycles. Sleep-disordered breathing is often under-diagnosed and under-treated, which can be dangerous because it increases risks of multiple long-term conditions. Insomnia, heart disease, stroke, sedative drugs, alcohol, smoking and being overweight increase the risk of sleep-disordered breathing.

Am I on the right track with my sleep?

The following checklist can be used in checking that you are advancing your efforts to have good-quality sleep (note that children may require more sleep than what is listed below):

1. I am getting between seven and nine hours of sleep each night.
2. I do not wake up during the night more than once.
3. I am able to go to sleep most nights.
4. I do not sleep during the day.

What are some routines that can help you with your sleep?

- Get up at the same time each morning (even on weekends), regardless of when you go to sleep.
- Develop relaxing pre-sleep rituals, such as reading, and avoiding

screen time before bed.

- Avoid caffeine and alcohol within six hours of bedtime.
- Do not smoke at bedtime.
- Exercise regularly – vigorous exercise such as jogging should be done in the morning, and more mild exercise, like walking, should be done two to three hours before bedtime.

What sources of support are there for people who want to have good quality sleep?

#### Friends and family

Loved ones can help assess and set up your bedroom to be conducive to sleep. Try to eliminate computers or televisions in the bedroom, block as much lighting and sound as possible, or consider using a fan or white noise machine to disguise background noises.

#### In the community

Seek out peers in the community who also struggle with sleep quality. You can empathize with and support each other. The most helpful peer will likely be someone your age (or generation), gender, disease status, socioeconomic status, religion, ethnicity, place of residence, culture or education.

#### In the health service

If these self-help strategies are not sufficiently addressing your sleep concerns, talk to your doctor. Use of a continuous positive airway pressure (CPAP) device may be prescribed if you have sleep-disordered breathing. A physician can help rule out any sleep disorders and identify lifestyle factors or medication that might be getting in the way of quality sleep.

*Larry W. Chambers has authored 175 articles and books concerning disease prevention (e.g. dementia), quality improvement in long-term care homes and innovative approaches for continuing professional development. He is research director of the Niagara Regional Campus, School of Medicine, McMaster University. Eva Liu and Hanna Levy are medical students at the Niagara Regional Campus of the McMaster University School of Medicine. They are interested in improving community wellness of frail older adults in NOTL by narrowing the fitness (physical and brain) gap, diversifying housing options for older adults, and increasing economic activity within the community that also increases ability of our minds to interact with people and ideas.*