

The Niagara-on-the-Lake LOCAL



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Nursery school friends excited by progress

Niagara Nursery School friends enjoy checking on the progress of the new nursery school under construction beside the library on Anderson Lane, and were excited to see the framing of the walls. The fundraising campaign has raised \$31,182 toward its \$100,000 goal. The nursery school board and families are grateful to all those who have donated, and hope to continue the momentum over the coming months, as child care needs continue to grow, with 149 children on their waiting list. For more information or to donate, visit: <https://www.niagaranurseryschoolsexpansion.com> (Photo supplied)

Budget includes heritage tax relief program

**Penny Coles
The Local**

At a special meeting last Wednesday, council approved the 2021 operating budget of \$37,327,452, including an operating levy of \$13,126,772, and a capital budget of \$10,404,287.

It took them almost five hours to get there, accepting the audit and finance committee recommendations with very few changes, and those ended up to revenue-neutral. The levy remained as recommended at a 2.12 per cent increase, or \$440,621. For the average homeowner with an

assessment of \$533,482, this is an increase of about \$29.67 on their annual tax bill, and for those who are charged the storm levy, an extra \$3.25 on top of that.

Referred from an earlier council meeting was a discussion about a heritage tax rebate, based on an in-depth presentation by Robin Ridesic, owner of The Exchange Brewery, in a heritage building on Queen Street, and a heritage home on Prideaux Street.

Ridesic gave councillors a detailed account of money

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Winter parking problem stirs up Glendale residents

**Penny Coles
The Local**

When it comes to parking problems, Niagara-on-the-Lake is no different than most municipalities, and is actually a little easier on residents than many others.

Council recently eliminated its overnight parking ban, but parking in one spot is not allowed for more than 12 hours, and is prohibited during snow clearing operations, when parking

becomes a costly issue for some residents.

In Niagara-on-the-Lake, where parking has been a problem since the first houses were built, residents are becoming increasingly frustrated by the tickets they have received during recent snowfalls.

They see the signs. They understand the bylaws. What they don't understand, they say, is what to do.

"I'm seriously frustrat-

ed with the town coming through the Niagara-on-the-Lake area, especially along Robertson Road, to find their gold," says Luise Postman.

"We are under lockdown. We are ordered to stay at home. We have lost our jobs. And here the town comes, faithfully 24/7, around the clock, rain or shine, dark or light, to ticket our cars," she says.

"We are working so hard to find another kind neighbour who will let us park on

their driveway."

Postman, who moved to Niagara-on-the-Lake in 2006, says it's a beautiful place to live, but "when will this stop? When will the town have some mercy on us?"

The parking issue has gone "over the roof, and spoils everything that is nice about this town. I truly hope this will end, and a change will happen."

Daniel St-Jean lives on

Continued on page 13



2020 strange year for icewine

Joe Pillitteri of Lakeview Equipment says the 2020 harvest was much smaller this year, due to decreased demand, and because it was past the optimal date for picking. The birds also seemed to have consumed more than their share. The 2020 harvest is expected to represent less than 10 per cent of normal volume. (Photo supplied)

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Budget covers extended on-demand transit

Penny Coles
The Local

Council has agreed to include the funding for two vans in the 2021 budget, hoping to expand the cur-

rent on-demand service to include Queenston and St. Davids.

Last year, the town partnered with the region on a pilot project for the service, which began in Ni-

agara-on-the-Lake in late November. It replaced the town's fixed-route transit system, which was cancelled due to poor ridership when COVID hit and the province imposed the

first shut-down last spring. Coun. Allan Bisback, chair of the audit and finance committee, explains approving the expense of the two extra vans in the budget ensures the money is there if needed.

The vehicles, he says, belong to the region, and the town contracts with the region to provide the service.

The budget includes about \$235,000 to expand the service.

The cost, he added, doesn't come from the tax levy — it's funded by parking revenue.

"What we approved was a business case, to put money aside. I'd call it holding money, so it's there to extend the service, subject to the success of the pilot project. And the region has said if we want that coverage, we need two more buses," says Bisback.

A report from town staff mid-January confirmed no service changes or reductions were expected as a result of the recent provincial

orders, and that the region continues to operate the on-demand vehicles following all recommended safety protocols.

During December, the first full month of operation, the service had a total of 166 riders.

A total of 32 users provided a trip-rating of their experience, with 96.8 per cent of users giving a five out of five rating, the report says.

During budget deliberations last week, councillors discussed whether the region would finance one vehicle if the town paid for the other, or if the town decided just one extra van was needed, would the region split the cost.

However, if the town is going to expand its coverage to Queenston and St. Davids, it will need two more vehicles, and the full complement of four would also allow for connections with other municipalities, which is part of the service the region offers, says operations manager Sheldon

Randall. At the moment, the local on-demand service doesn't leave NOTL.

He says although the town doesn't have data to look at now, staff continually receives feedback from those using the system, and so far it's been positive.

"For those using it, it's a way better service for riders, getting them where they need to go."

Council will continue to receive updates, says Randall, "but the program needs time to grow, before council can make an informed decision about whether this is of value to the community."

The "number one marker," he says, "is we don't have an empty bus going up and down a road. When the bus is moving, it has a passenger, and for residents, it's still the same cost."

He also notes that once they have data, it will be based on numbers during a pandemic, when people are not using the service to go to work or school.



Couns. Allan Bisback, Norm Arsenault, Wendy Cheropita, Jeff Vyse, manager of public works, acting director of operations Kevin Turcotte, Coun. Gary Burroughs (back), Regional Chair Jim Bradley, Lord Mayor Betty Disero and Regional Coun. Gary Zalepa were at the community centre to celebrate the launch of a shared-ride, on-demand transit system, a year-long pilot project launched in November. There is room in the budget for two more vans to extend the service to St. Davids and Queenston. (Mike Balsom)

Library budget approved, but not as requested

Penny Coles
The Local

Last week's council meeting to discuss the 2021 budget left no question of councillors' strong support for the library, and the good work it does for the community.

But a key request by the library was in the end denied, a "disappointing, but not devastating," result, said board chair Daryl Novak following the meeting.

The issue was what to do with a surplus the library is posting from 2020. The amount is expected to be finalized in February, but is looking like it will be about \$100,000. About 73 per cent of the surplus was accrued from the layoff of staff, along with a reduc-

tion of hours for those still working, during the time the library was closed due to the pandemic, and then when it reopened with a reduction in services, explained library CAO Cathy Simpson at the special council meeting last week.

Some positions have been eliminated, and one full-time person replaced by two part-timers.

Also, two part-time staff quit. One has been replaced, and the other will be hired later this year, Simpson said.

The recommendation from the audit committee was that in a difficult year, with drops in revenue due to the pandemic, to use 75 per cent of the library surplus to offset the tax levy increase.

The library board was asking that the town only direct 50 per cent toward taxpayer relief, leaving the remainder to put toward library reserves.

The reasoning behind the request for the compromise, explained board chair Daryl Novak, was for the library to work with the town during a difficult time, while leaving enough in library reserves to help cover future capital costs, such as technology updates, which can improve virtual programming for the community. It would also help those who can't afford to access those programs, by providing internet hotspots, tablets and laptops for those who can't afford them.

The final decision of

council was to leave the amount going to the town at 75 per cent of the surplus, and for the library to put the remaining portion of its reserves toward its operating budget.

"We're subtracting the surplus from the grant amount, and putting it back in further down in a budget line," explained Coun. Allan Bisback, chair of the audit committee, to clarify that the library is still receiving the same amount from the town.

Novak said the board is concerned about the town showing the library grant reduced to \$675,796, as opposed to the \$750,996 it received last year, as the lower amount could become the base figure for the future.

"This was only intended as a one-time event," said Bisback. "It is not the intent that it become a new base."

In her presentation during the special council meeting Wednesday, Simpson told councillors the library has maintained a zero per cent increase in its 2021 budget, absorbing salary increases, and allowing for an increase to the e-resource budget. It has also created a new virtual programming budget, "critical to keeping the community connected, and critical to delivering library services during the pandemic, when in-person visits, programming and computer use are often limited, and sometimes eliminated, depending on public health directives."

They have also revised

their 10-year capital plan, eliminating \$128,000 in capital spending by lengthening computer replacement schedules, and removing a costly but obsolete capital purchase, she said.

The savings will allow the library to increase capital projects, including its annual collection development project "core to any public library," covering the cost of books, DVDs, and other library materials, to address the needs of the community during the pandemic.

A motion put forward during the special council meeting to decrease the transfer of reserves to the town to 50 per cent, as the library was requesting, was defeated, with treasurer Kyle Freeborn telling councillors if it had been approved, the increase of the levy would have gone up slightly, by about .2 per cent.

Or, as Bisback explained, "if we had lowered it to 50 per cent, the taxpayers would pay the other 25 per cent."

Wrapping up the council meeting discussion was Lord Mayor Betty Disero, who admitted to struggling with the library request.

As a leader, she said, she's been telling people "we're in this together, let's keep doing this together."

When a group "works so hard to save money, my concern is that we're taking it away from them. I've never refused to give money to the library board, even when it takes money from

other town projects."

She said she thinks the board knows "if ever there was a time when they needed money, we'd go to bat for them," but this is a tough time, and "an awful year. I'm hopeful they will understand, and continue to believe if they come to us when they need to, we'll be there for them."

Novak says his disappointment with council's decision is "more about what happens next year."

In "normal practice, the surplus would have been transferred to the library's reserves."

And 2022 may not be a normal year either, he adds.

With no certainty about what the pandemic may bring, the town could require another year of austerity. "While I don't want to be overly pessimistic, or overly nervous, we can't predict what's going to happen in the next few months. We can't guarantee everything is going to be wonderful for everybody."

Looking back, he wonders if six months ago, instead of building reserves, the library should have spent some of the money on tablets or laptops for people who can't afford them. "That's what other libraries are doing."

He gratefully acknowledges the strong support council shows for the library, and hopes councillors will continue to be there for them if needed. "I'm just a little nervous about the cash," he added.

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MP urges federal tourism recovery plan

Penny Coles
The Local

Tony Baldinelli says he has been asking the federal government for a recovery plan specific to the tourism industry since last March.

He's still waiting. He understands the time for the return of visitors is in the future, but the time to be planning for that return is now — in fact, it was many months ago, he says.

The Conservative MP represents the Niagara Falls riding, but the urgent need is for a recovery plan that covers the different tourism sectors across Canada, with each experiencing its own specific issues, as well as many overlapping problems, such as the closure of businesses and the loss of jobs.

In Niagara, he says, tourism has lost its international visitors, including Americans. They are the tourists who stay longer and spend more. The U.S. is doing much better at its vaccinations than Canada, projecting a completion time of June, and at that point, the discussion of opening borders may begin, but there is no sign of a plan for how to deal with it. In Canada, "if we remain on track for vaccinations completed September, we've still missed another tourism season, and we're into the shoulder season," he says.

"We all recognize we're not going to open borders any time soon, but when we do, how do we do it? What is the plan for vaccines and testing as part of getting those borders open? What is our re-

covery plan going forward?"

There is an online petition asking all Canadian citizens, whether in the tourism industry or not, to sign, and help prod the federal government to begin the discussion.

As an example, he says, Calgary has a pilot project with testing for people as they arrive in the province. "How do we take that information and start to plan how to use it in similar places, like Niagara, with four border crossings?"

The petition also talks about developing sector-specific health guidelines, which include a combination of federal and provincial programs which enable sectors to resume work operations in a safe and responsible manner when they're able to re-open.

It also asks for funds for small businesses to make health

and safety changes to help handle those situations safely when businesses do open.

In December, he says, the unemployment rate in Canada was less than 8.6 per cent. But in the tourism sector, it was 14.6 per cent, 10 percentage points higher than it was in December 2019. The accommodation and food and beverage industries were both higher than the general unemployment rate.

The tourism sector, Baldinelli adds, employs one in every 11 Canadians, and a third of Ontario small businesses have said they may not survive this second lockdown.

"This is the sector that's the hardest hit, and will take the longest to recover," he says. "There is a lot of work to do to ensure these sectors can get through this second

wave."

Across Niagara region, 40,000 tourism-related jobs were lost, he says.

"That's 40,000 of our friends and neighbours," he adds. "We need a recovery plan to provide some security for them to reopen."

Some details of a plan would restore confidence in the tourism industry, and would be "throwing a life-line" for those who aren't sure about their future, he says.

The petition is online until Feb. 7 and is doing well, says Baldinelli. It's important for all Canadians to show support for those working in the tourism industry, and this petition, initiated by Billy Morrison, his communications advisor and legislative assistant, "captures what I've been hearing."

It asks the federal government to present a sector-specific tourism recovery plan by the date of the 2021 federal budget, which has not yet been announced; and that it addresses the specific needs of tourism sectors across Canada, including "the urgent and complete development, implementation, and deployment of Health Canada-approved vaccines and rapid testing devices."

The plan should also include "sector-specific health guidelines, which enable sectors to resume work operations in a safe and responsible manner," and be used "as a tool to begin restoring public confidence in travel and tourism."

You can sign the petition online at: <https://petitions.ourcommons.ca/en/Petition/Details?Petition=e-3027>

Search and rescue volunteer hangs up his wings

Randy Klaassen
Special to The Local

After more than 30 years of flying as a volunteer search and rescue pilot, Ron Guenther made his final flight as pilot in command, before retiring his pilot's licence last Saturday.

For most of those years, Guenther was a part-owner and piloted the Cessna 182 known as CF-PJO, formerly located at Brampton Airport, now based at Niagara District Airport.

When Guenther heard about the Civil Air Search And Rescue Association (CASARA), he was getting experience as a general aviation pilot. Joining the Niagara unit, based at Niagara District Airport, he first trained as a spotter, then as a navigator, before earning his search and rescue (SAR) pilot wings.

"In general aviation you basically fly from one point to another," Guenther explains. "In SAR flying the goal is to fly in a concentrated area, at a low altitude, often between road intersections. The pur-

pose is to give spotters the best opportunity to identify the search object. As pilot, it takes a great deal of concentration, as things can go wrong very quickly. That's why CASARA crews always work as a team."

Gord Tessier, also a local volunteer search and rescue pilot, acknowledges Guenther's contributions. "Ron has flown thousands of hours searching for Canadians in distress with CASARA, in his Cessna 182. He is also a member of the CASARA Ontario executive, where his professional experience as an accountant has been instrumental in bringing CASARA to where it is today. He has survived crashes, engine failures," says Tessier, "and most of all he has survived training me as a SAR pilot," he jokes.

Reflecting on his years of experience, Guenther recalls flying on a major search out of North Bay, which lasted over a week. "The challenge is, you know the name of the person you are searching for, and you share the anxiety of family members who are waiting to hear news. It can be stressful,

because you know time is everything."

A search and rescue spotter for many years, Shane Barton says, "over the years Ron has provided some very interesting and enlightening instruction, both in the classroom and in the air. He is always listening to comments and suggestions of crew members, and works to make sure crew members work as one cohesive unit. He always takes whatever steps needed to ensure the safety of his crew, and to ensure the mission is completed."

CASARA is a national volunteer organization with tasking and coordination provided by Joint Rescue Coordination Centre (JRCC), which is operated by the Royal Canadian Air Force. In the region of Southern Ontario, CASARA Niagara also trains with the Canadian Coast Guard, and various volunteer marine search and rescue organizations for searching over the Great Lakes.

Long-time CASARA member Ron Rap affirms Guenther's contributions to

aviation safety.

"He has been instrumental in lending his knowledge, skills and mentoring to the betterment of not only CASARA Niagara, but also to the CASARA National program."

While Guenther is giving up his pilot's licence, he will continue volunteering with the local search and rescue association as a navigator, and

with the CASARA Ontario executive.

Landing at Niagara District Airport, Guenther was met by a few CASARA members, to celebrate his final flight as pilot. They were joined by CASARA Ontario president Claude Overholt, and Capt. David Baird of JRCC Trenton to celebrate the important milestone. It is hoped the entire membership

can have a celebration with Guenther when COVID limitations are lifted.

CASARA Niagara depends on charitable donations for its base operations. The 30 volunteers maintain constant prepared-to-launch status, now with two available aircraft at Niagara District Airport. For more information, see the website, <http://caresniagara.ca>.




Randy Klaassen, Gord Tessier, Terry Nord and Rick Kaczkan were on-hand to congratulate Ron Guenther (centre) after his final flight as a pilot. (Photo supplied)



Ron Guenther in front of the Cessna now based at Niagara District Airport. (Randy Klaassen)

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York Road building so much more than a church

Bernie Puchalski
Special to The Local

The roots of the Central Community Church date back to 1921, when the congregation tired of meeting in four different locations and decided to purchase a United church on Queenston Street and Thorold Road for \$8,000.

On the night before the down payment was due, then Rev. James Montgomery was pacing around his house, worried that the deal would fall through because he didn't have enough money to make the payment. His wife told him to go for a walk and during that walk a stranger came up to Montgomery and handed him \$100 to guarantee that the deal would go through.

That \$100 was a generous gift in 1921 but is a pittance compared to the \$7 million the church has already raised for its new facility on York Road in Niagara-on-the-Lake. It will replace the church's building

on Scott Street that was constructed in 1969. That building was sold by the church to help finance the new facility.

"If you are Christian, that is another miracle," said Grant McArthur, who is a church member and the project manager for the facility being built by Merit Contractors Niagara Ltd. "We got a valuation of \$2.9 million and sold it for way over our asking price. And that was two years ago when property wasn't in the position it is in now."

The church has already secured a manageable mortgage that fits within its expected operational budget and fundraising continues for the project that will have a final price tag between \$12 and \$13 million.

Seeing a church being built nowadays is a miracle in itself. According to a study done by the National Trust for Canada, a national charity that works to save old buildings, it is estimated that about 9,000 religious spaces in Canada will be lost in the next decade, roughly a third of all faith-

owned buildings in the country.

The church being built by the Central Community Church is not your grandfather's church, it is not your father's church and, indeed, it is not the facility that many of today's churchgoers can envision.

The centrepiece of the 73,495-square-foot building is an auditorium that will house two basketball or three volleyball courts and a main centre volleyball court overlooked by a 300-seat spectator area on the second floor. The second floor will also include a space for indoor soccer. The height of the auditorium is roughly twice the height of a regular gym.

"One of the philosophies of Central has always been that if we were ever to leave or shut down, we want to leave the community in a better place. This whole space was built with the community in mind," lead pastor Bill Markham said. "Our congregation will be sacrificing prime auditorium space for seating and pews. We decided



Central Community Church lead pastor Bill Markham (Photos supplied)

to go with a floor that could be converted for community use during the week."

On Saturday nights, 1,500 seats will be placed on the auditorium floor and an additional 300 seats placed in the viewing area on the second floor to provide the church with the ability to host two 1,800-person experiences on Sunday. When games are being held, a large curtain will drop down to protect the stage.

The church, which has more than 3,000 members, averages more than 2,000 people attending services every Sunday. Between 400 and 500 kids take part in the church's children's ministry. When Markham started at the church 20 years ago, it had 400 members.

The church is being built for those members and the entire community.

"The key phrase for us is that there is no single purpose space," Markham said. "We build it so that not only would the church be able to use it, but the community would be able to use it."

The building is part of the church's goal of making the community better and being a partner with the community by working hand-in-hand, especially with youth and athletics.

"You know my passion for developing athletes, because I think it develops body, mind and spirit. We designed this space for the next generation," said Markham, who coaches the highly successful Eden boys volleyball program. "For me, it has always been about how I can leave this world a better place. That sounds pretty idealistic

but it's true and my involvement with sports in Niagara demonstrates the power of connecting with people that way and helping believe in themselves.

"I am hoping this will be a space where they can dream and believe in themselves and if we can do that, that would be an amazing legacy."

That legacy will also include outdoor facilities. The property has six acres of space that the church is planning to eventually use for a soccer field, splash pad, outdoor barbecue and fire pits, and an outdoor skating rink for the community to use in winter. A cricket field has also been discussed.

"It depends on what the board wants, what the church wants and what the community wants," McArthur said. "One of the reasons why the region and the Town of Niagara-on-the-Lake like us so much is that we are not building a church. We are building a community centre."

It is a community centre for every nationality.

"We are building a facility that can accommodate all the sports that are popular in Niagara and ones that are not," Markham said.

That is being done with an eye to the future.

"This area is changing," McArthur said. "Brampton looks different, Mississauga looks different and 10 years from now, Niagara will look different."

The church is already in discussions with indoor soccer association Futbol Niagara, the Niagara Rapids travel volleyball program, the Niagara River Lions pro basketball franchise and

the Niagara-on-the-Lake Pickleball Club.

Interest has also been expressed by badminton, cricket, and various other family-friendly activities and clubs.

Central is in the process of figuring out what its rental rates will be when the building is completed in the middle of 2021.

"As a business guy, I know exactly what I would charge but that's not what a church does. It has a community component," McArthur said.

Markham agrees with that assessment.

"The reality is that most people will pay for a premier experience but we will also try to accommodate those who can't."

The building will also accommodate much more than just sports. The lobby is being built to handle 1,000 people in a standing reception, there are boardrooms and meeting rooms on the second floor and the first floor will include a 65-space day care. centre On Sunday, the day care space will be used for children's programming.

"I'm working on this as a longevity project," McArthur said. "I am honoured to be a part of what is taking place in Niagara-on-the-Lake. What is to come for our community going into 2021 is going to be fantastic."

Bernie Puchalski is an award-winning journalist who worked for Niagara dailies for more than 27 years, as a news reporter, sports reporter and sports editor. Through BP Sports Niagara, he now provides people-focused, grassroots coverage of local sports.



An artist's rendering shows the outdoor space, parking and the 73,000 square-foot building. About 19 per cent of the main space will be for child care.

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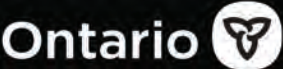
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A large portion of the indoor space will be used for sports during the week, and set up Saturday night for church services.

Church construction stopped by town bylaw officers

Penny Coles
The Local

When a town bylaw officer told workers on the huge church under construction on York Road they had to pack up and leave the property, they did what they were told.

Grant McArthur was at Monday's planning meeting to find out why, and what can be done to reverse that decision.

That's a question that has been plaguing construction and other industries shut down by municipalities interpreting provincial regulations about essential and non-essential businesses.

In McArthur's case, thousands of dollars are being lost daily, he told councillors, and have been since Jan. 21, when the town's bylaw department shut the site down.

He can point to many projects in town and around the region that continue, he said, in each case, because they are considered essential. A church is not. However, in the case of the Central Community Church, about 19 per cent of its space is for day care, and the provincial list of exceptions includes buildings that will provide day care space, licensed under provincial legislation.

It's a new day care centre, slated to open this summer. When asked Monday night if the centre was licensed, McArthur said the application is in process. All spots, including the most needed spaces for infants, are filled, with parents anxious for it to open. It will stay open evenings until 9 p.m., which few day care centres do, making it easier for many parents who work evening hours.

The construction at York Road may comply with the day care provision if licensed under the Child Care and Early Years Act, said planning director Craig Larmour Tuesday morning, but "that has yet to be confirmed."

An organization that is a registered charity is considered essential "if intended to provide shelter or supports for vulnerable persons," says Larmour, but "there has been no indication that this project is intended for the purpose identified" under that description of an essential service.

McArthur explained Monday evening the work of the community church, and the reason for its large community centre and child care component. In his view, the community space for all kinds of sports programs and day camps

will be helping vulnerable children. He refers to the need for opening it as a mental health issue, for all ages, from children to the elderly.

The biggest issue with the construction delay, which, if it continues, will likely see the crew moved to other projects, "is the health aspect" of what the community centre hopes to provide on the site, looking after children when their parents are at work, both through its day care and sports programming.

He spoke of the impact the pandemic is having on children and parents, and the importance of getting the centre open and operating for the summer.

"The church is for Sundays," he said, the community centre, day care and programming for people of all ages, the rest of the week.

He assured councillors the construction site is an 80,000 square foot space with about 50 people working on it.

"We've been in a bubble and a very well-run bubble. This bubble that we've created is working in different departments, different areas of the building, and they go home and come back to the same project."

These people are now looking to go and work elsewhere, and that controlled bubble becomes less controlled, he said.

There were no issues with the number of workers on the site or with safety protocols, Larmour said Tuesday.

Lord Mayor Betty Disero told McArthur she would contact the provincial minister of labour, Monte McNaughton, Tuesday, and asked McArthur to call her

before that to further discuss his request.

She too questioned why a homeless shelter could be considered essential, but not a community centre, and mentioned many situations last spring, and some that continue today, such as dog grooming, that indicate the provincial regulations in place are not perfect, and have been "adjusted from time to time." She said there are questions about the provincial regulations that need to be answered, and agreed with Coun. Gary Burroughs that a quick response is required.

Coun. Allan Bisback asked if "staff interpreted this appropriately," and Larmour agreed that while the provincial regulations require some interpretations, "it's fairly clear" on the type of construction that's allowed to occur.

Challenging year for icewine



The bulk of the Konzelmann Estate Winery harvest this year was for the Vidal Special Select Late Harvest as well as a small amount of Vidal Icewine, harvested over two days. Warmer than normal temperatures made for a challenging year, but the winery is excited about the 2020 vintage. (Photos supplied)

Day or night, harvest goes on



While the early days of harvesting icewine was always done at night, by hand, in the coldest temperatures, growers now are happy to go out when the grapes are sufficiently frozen to produce icewine juice. Joe Pillitteri, of Lakeview Vineyard Equipment, supports growers with his harvesters, which shake the grapes, destemming them so they fall through the nets. Lakeview harvested grapes for Cool Vineyards on Line 5 and Reif Estate Winery on the Niagara Parkway this year. (Photo supplied)

H A P P Y

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Love Alison, Suzanne and families

EDITORIAL

Let’s try to tip the scales from anger to kindness

There is good news around us, if we look for it.

That light at the end of the tunnel. Vaccinations to get us there. Maybe vacations. Sunshine, warm weather, barbecues around the pool or at the lake.

But for some, hard times to get through first. For some, really hard times.

Imagine being a small business owner, shut down temporarily, maybe for good. Picture the many laid-off staff, with family depending on them, not knowing if they will have a job to go back to.

Monday evening, as I listened to the live-streamed town planning committee meeting, which touched briefly on some of the businesses that closed, and specifically the very large construction site on York Road, I was frustrated by the process. Vague wording to interpret. One municipality sees it one way, another differently. And on that judgement of something that might be fairly clear to one person, not so much to another, decisions are made, livelihoods affected. And then, after a few weeks of complaints, even outrage, clarity is sought. After people have lost their jobs, lost money. But it’s never just about money, it’s about people. Fathers and mothers, sons and daughters, their lives hugely impacted by an interpretation. Even four-legged family members. Possibly there is a better way, such as seeking clarification from the province early in the process. It may not be as easy or quick as it seems, but really, considering the impact on people’s lives, maybe worth trying before you shut someone down. Just a thought.

And for businesses that are open and employers and employees doing the best they can, a kind word. Maybe two. Thank you. The reaction to those two words continues to surprise me. Say it to someone not expecting it. Not thank you for giving me my change or receipt. Thank you for being here for us, so that we can shop, eat, enter a store with a clean buggy, enjoy our ritual coffee in the morning, or the bottle of wine we might take home at night. Thank you for all you do to keep the rest of us safe.

Maybe those small words will help someone through a difficult day. Maybe the recipient will think to pass it on to someone else who really needs to hear it.

The subject of angry people comes up far too often. We know we are all going through a pandemic, but we don’t know what else is going on in other people’s lives, and we don’t need to know, but we can counter it by offering kindness.

We challenge people to go out of their way to say something kind to someone.

It might just be the one light in someone’s day, or the few words that tip the scale a little toward a good day, or even just a bearable day, for that person.

There are no magic words that will take away the anger or the hurt or the hardship of what people are going through, but there are words that can help.

Penny Coles
The Local

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The Niagara-on-the-Lake LOCAL

The trusted voice of our community

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Winter in NOTL



Gail Kendall gets around on her walks with her dog Willow. Queenston residents will recognize the Jet Boat dock. The photo with the boardwalk was taken on a trek from Navy Hall to Fort Mississauga on a cold and windy day, the trail ending at the water, “where the green and very active lake meets the billowy, cloudy day,” says Kendall. The wintry orchard scene was taken from Concession 1.



View from the couch

Donald Combe
Special to The Local

The Blues Brothers (Netflix, 1980) is unbelievably dated, but hugely entertaining. What a treat to watch John Belushi, Dan Aykroyd, James Brown, Cab Calloway, Ray Charles, Carrie Fisher, Aretha Franklin and John Candy pour so much

talent into a silly tale. Every role is “perfection” in a film that is worth another viewing. Donald Combe is a retired 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.



Dan Aykroyd (steve white photos / Shutterstock.com)

LETTERS

Let's hope NOTL reverses its decision

I am writing on behalf of the little creature in the photo. She is too cute to notice that she is in sore need of grooming, not for aesthetics, but for the matting that has developed under all that hair. I do not have the capability nor the proper tools to cut through the mats without significant risk to her safety or mine. I have relied on an excellent pet groomer in Virgil to do this specific work, though I brush and detangle her twice daily. Due to the

lockdown, the winter weather conditions and the provincial closure of pet grooming services, I suspect that many other dog owners like myself, a senior, are experiencing this burden of pet care. I have written to the town of Niagara-on-the-Lake asking why Niagara Falls and Grimsby are allowed to have pet grooming while we are not; spoken to the director of community & development services, the office of Wayne Gates, to my dog's veterinarian

and my pet groomer. It appears that the closure decision is subject to local interpretations as the provincial directives get handed down by the Ford administration in their discernment of what businesses ought to be open during this unprecedented time.

I invite NOTLers to sign the petition that I have created at this link: <http://chnq.it/XpqvwLZT>.

Hopefully it will act as support to the request to reopen pet grooming services everywhere in Ontario. This is especially critical in NOTL, as we have the highest density of seniors in Canada, many of whom have four-legged companions.

I wish to care for my best friend in a way that is safe for her and for me.

Nancy Macri
NOTL



Letter-writer Nancy Macri says not all grooming for small dogs, such as Pika, her best friend, is for aesthetic purposes. It can also be for health and wellness. (Nancy Macri)

LETTERS

NPCA clears watershed

I recently sent in a letter to the editor of The Local.

The topic was the availability and accessibility of our creeks and rivers, the general watershed areas of our community, that Owen Bjorgan writes about in his special reports to your paper.

Who says that the community leaders don't listen? Within a week of the

publication of my letter, staff were on site clearing the water right-of-ways at Four Mile Creek. Kudos to staff and the leadership for their initiative. I hope that the community appreciates their efforts on our behalf and thanks to staff that worked on resolving a potential problem. Let's hope they continue in their efforts in clearing up our wa-

tershed by taking an inventory of its needs.

If anyone in the community notices "needs" in our community, I would strongly encourage you to write a letter to the editor of your local newspaper and express your concerns.

Derek Insley
Virgil



The NPCA responded quickly to concerns about the Four Mile Creek watershed, clearing out obstructions. (Derek Insley)

Family moved by Moment of Silence

Our family is very moved that you covered and reported on the Moment of Silence by our council regarding Mike's contributions to our town. We all believe your reporting and your paper are such a voice and eyes

on our community that make us all so much more aware of who we are and we are all the better for it. As we reflected this morning, Mike was an integral ingredient in the recipe that makes Niagara such a wonderful place.

As always Penny - thank you for being an equally important factor in our Niagara experiment and experience.

Peter Howe
NOTL



Lord Mayor
Betty Disero

This letter was written by Lord Mayor Betty Disero to the citizens of Niagara-on-the-Lake on Jan. 22, and distributed through social media and on the town's website.

On behalf of the Town of Niagara-on-the-Lake, I would like to offer my deepest condolences to the families and friends of our dear

residents whose lives have been lost to COVID-19. The flags at Town Hall have been flying at half mast since April 2020, as a daily remembrance that every one of those numbers represents a life. Today, I dedicate our lowered flags to our Long-Term Care Home residents who have recently passed away due to this dreadful virus. Together, the community of Niagara-on-the-Lake honours these individuals by staying home.

Recently, Niagara-on-the-Lake's positive COVID-19 case count increased significantly due largely to outbreaks in two

local long-term care facilities.

While these numbers are undoubtedly frightening, impacting many residents and staff members at these homes, it is imperative that we remain calm and stay the course.

There is no time for hesitation or wavering. Now, more than ever, the devastating impacts of COVID-19 are being realized by many Niagara-on-the-Lake residents and families.

The best way for us to show our support during this trying time is by staying home, staying safe, and doing our part to stop the

spread of this virus.

I would like to extend my deepest thanks to the health care workers and facilities managers at all of our long-term care homes. The challenges you're facing are immeasurable; yet, you continue to put the lives of others ahead of your own, risking your own health for theirs. As you keep showing up to care for those who need it most, we will continue to stay home for you.

Our Emergency Control Group is working night and day, communicating with the Region and Public Health officials, monitoring and responding to information from Provincial

and Federal governments and sharing resources and communications to support the public through this rapidly changing situation. Town staff have been in regular contact with all of our long-term care facilities prior and during these outbreaks, ensuring they have what they need in terms of personal protective equipment. Be assured that Town Staff will remain in regular contact, offering support in whatever way we can.

I would like to end by wishing hope and good health to all those dealing with COVID-19. I'm so pleased to see the vaccination roll-out plan imple-

mented within our local long-term care homes and am committed to working diligently with my fellow Mayors to see increased wide-spread vaccination capabilities in the weeks and months to come. I urge the Prime Minister and Premier to continue fighting to acquire more vaccines for our country, province and region.

I leave you with this: please do not underestimate the power of your actions. By staying home and staying safe, you may just save a life.

Yours sincerely,
Lord Mayor Betty Disero



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Celebrate Black history with a walk in the park

Mike Balsom
Special to The Local

As the February “blahs” kick in, magnified as they are by the current state of emergency restrictions, now is the perfect time for a walking tour to celebrate Niagara-on-the-Lake’s rich Black history.

The Niagara-on-the-Lake Museum is promoting the Voice of Freedom walking tour as part of its Black History Month resources and programming. Managing director and curator Sarah Kaufman reminds The Local that the museum was heavily involved in the development of the Voices of Freedom Park, the starting point of the tour.

“Our biggest contribution was in developing the Voices of Freedom walking tour app,” explains Kaufman. “People can go to vofpark.org and download the app, and go out and walk and learn more history, or if you’re not as tech-savvy, there’s a little pamphlet holder there that is protected from weather. They can pick up the pamphlet and walk around the community, get outdoors and learn about Black history.”

Indeed, the BaladoDiscovery app is full of interactive images of the stops along the way, accompanied by supporting documents from the museum’s collection of artifacts. As well, at many of the locations, audio clips voiced by local actors bring the participant into the stories of the time. While standing at each location you are able to hear directly from those who were there at the time, such as Fanny Rowley, through diary and journal entries held by the museum.

Visitor and members services assistant Barbara Worthy wrote each of the vignettes. “It’s really animated and interactive,” says Worthy. “You can read about each stop, or you can listen to the stories that bring the people and families alive. The whole thing — the tour, the vignettes, the related school program — was awarded the Governor General’s Award for Heritage Conservation, and that’s thanks to the support of the people in the town.”

During the month, Worthy will be posting to the museum’s website and social media her own one-minute clips of herself enjoying the walking tour. “I’ll just be talking very briefly into the camera about each location, little selfie clips of me doing an illustrated Voices of Freedom walking tour,” she says.

Worthy will also be leading the Documentary Club discussion on Friday, Feb. 5. The club meets once a month on Friday mornings, talking about documentaries from the National Film Board, CBC and Historica Canada. This week’s discussion revolves around the story of Rose Fortune, the Harriet Tubman of the east coast.

Fortune was born into slavery in 1774, in the southern United States. Following the American Revolution, she and her family were owned by loyalists. In 1783, they sailed from New York City to Nova Scotia, where they eventually gained their freedom. Rose began a business transporting luggage in a wheelbarrow from the Annapolis ferry docks to hotels and houses. This became her cover, as she began using that wheelbarrow to help former slaves escape to freedom.

“She was one of those people who just did what had to be done, and kept her profile low, but what she did was really important,” says Worthy. “She never looked back. She saw a need, and she filled that need. She also broke through gender roles and knew how to work the system. People respected her for who she was and what she did.”

Friday’s meeting will be held using Zoom. Worthy says there are about a dozen members of the club, but you don’t have to be a member to join in on the discussion. This year’s series focuses a bit on women, with a documentary about Canada’s first female Member of Parliament, Agnes Macphail being featured on March 5. The documentaries are all free to watch, and Worthy promises a lively, open-ended discussion.

Kaufman points out that virtual events such as the Documentary Club are im-

portant these days, while it is impossible for the museum to be open to the public. For Black History Month, she encourages people to visit a virtual exhibit on Black history and culture that is available through the museum’s website.

“Niagara-on-the-Lake really does have a unique Black history compared to other communities,” says Kaufman. “One of the big reasons is that the Act to Limit Slavery was passed here in July, 1793. That’s a huge part of Black history. It’s the first time in the British Empire that slavery was abolished in some form. It was sort of a phased-in approach, but it was a huge deal.”

Kaufman also stresses the importance of the Coloured Corps, the all-Black corps that fought in the War of 1812 and also helped to build Fort Mississauga. The Moseby Affair is another significant event.

“Niagara was the county seat at the time,” Kaufman explains. “Solomon Moseby was a slave who escaped to Canada. His master charged him with theft because he stole a horse to escape. He found Moseby in Canada, and they had a trial to extradite him back to the States. While he was in the jail, there was a huge riot outside supporting Moseby, mostly Black women and some white allies trying to stop the extradition. Solomon ended up escaping and leaving.”

The Solomon Affair, as it is often referred to, eventually resulted in Canada banning the extradition of former slaves back to the United States.

As descendants of slaves and Black loyalists put down roots in town, they owned barber shops and livery stables, were carpenters and farmers and became involved in the community. In 1874, John Waters was elected as the first Black councillor in town, serving two terms amongst an otherwise all white council. The online exhibit features documents and images of all of these stories and more that bring to light the rich Black history of the area.

Looking to the future, both Kaufman and Worthy are hoping to soon access government funding to



Voices of Freedom Park on Regent Street is a great opportunity to learn about and celebrate Black History Month. (Donald Combe)

add to the online offerings. “We have a few mini-documentaries that we have on our YouTube,” says Kaufman. “We’re trying to

work toward doing one for Black history as well. It’s really quite significant for a small town like Niagara-on-the-Lake.”

All of the museum’s Black history activities and events can be accessed through their website at <http://www.nhsm.ca/>.



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Heritage grant also approved for 2021

Continued from page 1

being left on the table, going back many years, from the province, and possibly from the region as well, which has an option to contribute.

The audit committee had not recommended the inclusion of a heritage tax rebate, instead adding \$25,000 more to the existing grant program to allow for building facade maintenance.

Although there were details to be worked out, Coun. Erwin Wiens was the only one against the rebate being included in the 2021 budget, opposed to having a major decision “put together on the fly tonight,” in response to a request made just a few days before.

“I don’t think it’s responsible to develop something tonight, when we don’t know the cost of it. We’re flying by the seat of our pants.”

He also objected to it being partially funded by parking funds, “when nobody is coming. I don’t think staff or council know where we’re go-

ing with this. I’m not against the heritage tax, but the process here is incredibly flawed. I have grave concern about how this was developed in such a short time”

But for the first time, after decades of discussion, this council has said yes to the rebate, agreeing to moving \$50,000 in the budget to finance it, including moving the \$25,000 facade grant and adding another \$25,000 from parking revenue.

Once the details are worked out, including which properties are eligible and the percentage of the rebate, which can be up to 40 per cent, the province will kick in a greater amount, based on the town’s contribution.

A motion by Coun. Clare Cameron to reduce the discretionary grants from a total of \$100,000 to zero was approved, with Coun. Gary Burroughs and Coun. Wendy Cheropita opposed.

For a short YouTube video explaining the town’s budget, visit <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=O619Ba0l5jk&feature=youtu.be>

Some positive signs trending, says Hirji

Penny Coles
The Local

Dr. Mustafa Hirji had some good news on the vaccination front this week, and on the declining number of coronavirus cases.

Niagara’s acting chief medical officer says numbers of new cases have been coming down, as we move further away from the holidays and further into the lockdown. There were 34 new cases Tuesday, the fewest since Dec. 22. In January, numbers hit record highs.

“We feel good about the way things are trending,” he says. “It’s been good to see the new numbers in double digits,” compared to many days in January when there were more than 100, and some close to 200.

Sadly, the number of deaths has been high, with eight Tuesday, but that’s a result of the timing of new cases. Although most are resolved, some unfortunately lead to people becoming ill, are hospitalized, and some of those people die.

The number of people being hospitalized with COVID is declining, and the number of deaths should come down accordingly, he says, hopefully beginning this week.

Although there are still a large number of outbreaks in hospitals and long-term care homes, the number of cases in those situations is also decreasing as more are resolved, he said.

In Niagara Long Term Care on Wellington Street, there are still 19 residents in the home testing positive, down from 74 at its highest, but sadly, the number of deaths has increased to 11. There are six staff members still considered positive.

The numbers in long-term care and retirement homes across the region reflect what is happening in the community, which is to be expected, says Hirji, and also may already be a result of the first vaccinations.

Niagara was expecting enough vaccine to give residents of long-term care and retirement homes their

second doses this week, he says, but there is still not enough vaccine for staff.

Vaccinations are ready to roll out as soon as more vaccine arrives, now going to a temporary location an arena floor in St. Catharines. Public Health is also involved with discussions about potential sites in each of the municipalities, including Niagara-on-the-Lake, and in many cases, arenas present the ideal location. They have always been a consideration for mass vaccination sites, he says, because of the number of people who can go through in a day.

Public health is looking at long-term locations, he added, assuming that COVID vaccinations could require booster doses, and possibly new vaccines for variants, as with annual flu shots.

There is also a possibility that arrival of the Moderna vaccine, which is easier to store, is not too far off. It means doses can be

stored in the public health building, and in primary care clinics and pharmacies around the region.

“It will be a bit more flexible, and helpful,” says Hirji.

“Right now, we’ll take what we can get and make it work.”

Although national surveys are showing a discouraging 50 per cent of people don’t want the vaccine, the good news is 50 per cent do, he says, not a bad achievement when only 20 to 25 per cent of the population is willing to be vaccinated against influenza.

The hope is as this plays out, as more people get the vaccine, and don’t report adverse reactions, others will begin to have confidence in it. They also might see it as the way to get out of pandemic restrictions and back to normal, says Hirji.

Going forward, he says, all levels of government will be working toward building trust and encouraging people to decide in favour of being vaccinated.



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Fun on the slope



Lucy and Michael Collins (left) have fun on their traditional wooden toboggan on the hill outside Fort George, while Matt Dietsch and his son Colton (above) try out a sleek new sled, all enjoying the fresh air, exercise and good fun. (Mike Balsom)

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VALENTINE'S DAY FEATURE



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Ron van der Zalm feels much more confident about this spring, and about keeping his workers safe. (Photo supplied)

Grower better prepared for business during pandemic

Penny Coles
The Local

Ron van der Zalm, one of the owners of Colonial Florists family business, is anticipating a good spring.

That was not the case last year, as Niagara-on-the-Lake's many successful family greenhouse businesses were suddenly threatened by the arrival of COVID-19.

What had been a thriving local industry was struggling on two levels, waiting and hoping essential seasonal workers would be allowed into the country, to help them as they geared up to their traditional peak season, and then learning that many orders were cancelled.

Thankfully, says van der Zalm, the second-generation grower now working with the third generation, he is anticipating this year to be different.

"We've been through it. We're not being caught off-guard, and we're prepared for it," he says. "We know how to handle it."

Last year, growers scrambled to sell what they could, many at road-side stands that locals quickly and enthusiastically supported.

For Colonial, which sells rooted cuttings to other greenhouses to grow on, and also wholesale flowering annuals, geraniums, herbs, succulents and house plants, May is their key month for sales, but the busy planting time leading up to that is now.

Last year, van der Zalm says, he had orders cancelled, with greenhouses and garden centres unsure what to expect.

This year, van der Zalm says, other growers will also have a better idea of what to expect.

Some, especially those with cut flower and Easter plants, may be building on the success of those road-side stands, and many growers and garden centres have learned to promote their products on their websites and through social media, and sell online.

"Last year, sales for March and April were terrible, and we had to dump a lot of products. But May turned out pretty good. That saved us."

Flowers, he says, "go hand-in-hand with gardening, landscaping, and other attempts to beautify your homes." Many people staying at home with time on their hands during the

first lock-down last spring got into home improvements in a way they hadn't before, helping with sales of flowers and plants.

"We dodged a bullet last year. The bottom line wasn't the same, but it wasn't the disaster it could have been."

With greenhouses on Broadway Avenue in the Port Weller area, and on Concession 7, van der Zalm says learning to sell flowers during a pandemic, as rules changed "day by day, week by week," was a challenge, but one take-away from last spring, "is there will always be curbside. Growers are now set up for it, and people will continue to buy flowers that way."

Although some of the third-generation kids sold a few plants curbside for Colonial, he didn't push it, instead focusing on his wholesale customers. But many of them, local garden centres and other greenhouses, benefited from curbside sales. He doesn't intend to try it this year, but others are in a good position to repeat that success, he says.

Inside the Colonial greenhouses, much has evolved from last year. "Everyone has to do so much more. There is still a lot of

risk. Our employees are always sanitizing, we're offsetting our lunch times, and two people sit at a table for six. It's a totally different environment."

Where people plant on lines, there is plexiglass between them, he says, and there is plexiglass between beds where the offshore workers sleep.

The first wave of offshore workers came in early January to work in greenhouses. They spent their two weeks quarantining, and since mid-January, have been able to work, says van der Zalm.

Colonial's offshore workers come from Mexico, and most without issues. They need two negative COVID tests before they leave their home country, one before they can make plane reservations, and then a second two days before departure.

Although the current travel restrictions don't apply to essential workers, says van der Zalm, those who haven't left yet are finding it harder to get flights, because many have been cancelled.

He has had two of his 31 workers he was expecting to be here by now unable to travel due to insufficient

paperwork, and another two because of positive test results.

In past years, stand-by workers would be waiting at the airport, willing and anxious to replace anyone who couldn't travel, but that is not the case this year, with the extra steps required of them. Colonial is trying to replace them with local agency workers, also not a great solution, with some concern for the extra risk.

The Mexican workers who arrive must quarantine for two weeks, and those who travel in the same group can quarantine together.

If groups arrive a few days apart, they require different accommodations. That means spreading them out, or if necessary, renting space from other farmers, or putting them up in hotels, he says.

While the offshore workers are in quarantine, he has one employee who takes their shopping lists, and orders online. After his son picks up the orders, she sorts them out.

Once the offshore workers finish the quarantine, a small bus takes four people at a time to shop. Until that time, they are not able to

leave the premises.

"They were going stir crazy, watching Netflix and playing video games. They are really anxious to get to work. They want to work," he says.

"It's mentally exhausting, but we can still work. There are other businesses that are shut down, and that's much worse. This is a lot of work, but we're keeping our business moving along."

At this point, peak time for the greenhouse, he has 75 people employed, including the 31 offshore workers, which may only be 27 this year, "and we haven't had any issues. Everyone is very respectful of the rules. We have frequent meetings to talk about COVID, and everybody is doing their part. Last year was hard, with so many fears. We all feel a lot better about it this year."

Van der Zalm adds, "we thank them all the time for being here. We need them to get through this with us."

However, with the number of cases in the community, "we know we can't let down our guard. We take things day by day. We feel like we're doing our part, and we can get through this together."

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NOTL woman hoping to win magazine cover contest

Mike Balsom
Special to The Local

While leafing through a copy of Jetset Magazine, Niagara-on-the-Lake resident Lisa Jeffrey stumbled upon a promotion for a contest to appear on the cover of the publication. The prospect of being featured in the exclusive quarterly appealed to her, but the selling point was really the chance to help a children's charity through her entry.

"I went online and began to look into it," Jeffrey, the owner of a small business, says, "and I learned a little about the Be Positive (B+) Foundation, a charity for kids' cancer. They help with financial assistance to families and for research. I wanted to do something to help out, so I entered it."

The Andrew McDonough B+ Foundation honours the memory of the 14-year-old Wilmington, Delaware boy who battled leukemia, septic shock and complications of childhood cancer for more than five months before passing away in 2007. Andrew's B+ blood type became his family's and friends' motto throughout his fight against childhood cancer – to "Be Positive".

Since its inception, the foundation has become the largest provider of financial assistance to families of kids with cancer in the United

States. As part of the magazine's contest, a free vote can be placed daily, but additional votes can be purchased for a dollar, with a portion of the proceeds going to the B+ Foundation.

Jeffrey is competing with women from all over the world for a chance to grace the cover, appear in a pictorial inside the magazine, and to take home \$50,000. Last year millions of votes were cast in the contest, before US Navy officer and California native Janeilla Burns was chosen as the winner.

Since the contest began Jan. 5, Jeffrey has captured first place in her group through the first three rounds. In the current and last of the opening rounds, only the leader in her group will move on to the quarter-finals, which will be announced on Feb. 5. At press time, she was still holding onto the top spot.

"I've been number one (in her group) since day two of the contest," she says. "The support that I have had has been from people in the community that know me, knowing that it's a good cause, and knowing what I stand for, wanting to help wherever I can."

That desire to help out has been a constant in Jeffrey's life, instilled in her by her parents while growing up on Anne Street. After graduating from Niagara District Secondary

School, she enrolled in the EMT program at Niagara University, and followed that up with the Advanced Care Paramedic program at Baker College, just outside of Detroit.

While in Detroit in September, 2001, to write her final exam, the Canada-U.S. border was closed following the 9/11 tragedy. Fresh out of paramedic school, Jeffrey decided to make her way to New York City to offer her services as a volunteer at Ground Zero. She was one of the first Canadians on site.

"They were calling for EMT and medical help, so I went down there," remembers Jeffrey. "They sent me on 911 calls for the city of New York, they had me working 16 hours a day. It was before FEMA had set their feet down there. The first IV I ever started was there, on a police officer who had collapsed from exhaustion."

Over the course of 10 days, Jeffrey offered her support to the crews working through the rubble. The experience stays with her today, and despite the devastation, she is able to reflect in a positive way.

"Tragedies bring people together," she says. "I really saw the best of the people in New York City. They were so appreciative, no matter who was coming to help them. There were people from all over. The spirit of New York City was just amazing."

Another tragedy closer to home has affected Jeffrey recently. For the past five months she has been helping out her mother, Glenda, who



Vote for Lisa Jeffrey and help one of NOTL's own make the cover of an international magazine. (Photo supplied)

cracked her skull after a fall on Thanksgiving weekend. She needed emergency brain surgery to relieve the bleeding, and was in a coma until just after Christmas.

"It's been a really tough few months," she says. "With COVID, our family has only been able to see her one at a time. She still has a long road to go, but she's out of the coma and stable. My father goes every day. They just celebrated 54 years of marriage in June."

Understandably, her

mother's struggle has also changed Jeffrey's outlook on life. "I believe life is very fragile, and each and every day is a gift we must embrace," she says in her profile on the magazine's website. "My faith gets me through all the storms of life."

If she ends up on the cover of Jetset Magazine, the cat-lover vows to use some of her winnings to help save an endangered species. She plans to travel to Namibia to help with the Cheetah Conserva-

tion Fund, a research and lobby institution involved in the study and preservation of the country's cheetah population. She says she would also invest her winnings in helping others in need to make a difference in the world.

The winner of the Miss Jetset Magazine contest will be announced on Feb. 25. Voting for the current round ends at 9 p.m. Thursday, Feb. 4. To vote for Lisa Jeffrey, visit <https://miss.jetsetmag.com/2021/lisa-jeffrey>

LOCAL HAPPENINGS

NOTL HISTORICAL MUSEUM ONLINE LECTURE

February 10 @ 11 a.m. - 12 p.m.
Join us on Zoom for *The Museum's Curator highlights our WAR OF 1812 collection* with Sarah Kaufman

INTERNET SAFETY ZOOM WEBINAR ~ AGES 14 +

February 10 @ 2 p.m. - 3 p.m.
Learn how to use the internet safely. Join Christine online for a 1 hour webinar that will show you how to be safe on the Internet! Topics include: types of online scams, identifying scam emails, what to do if you get scammed, and how to create strong and memorable passwords. Visit Niagara-on-the-Lake Public Library for more details.

HISTORY IN THE VINEYARD ~ AT HOME

February 10 @ 2 p.m. - 3 p.m.
A fundraiser in support of two wonderful charities, The Friends of Fort George & The Niagara Historical Society. A three-course meal with choices from 3 Niagara chefs. Pick up at Ravine Vineyard Estate Winery, (1366 York Rd, St. Davids) or deliver in NOTL for an added donation. (Tax receipt included). Support the preservation of Niagara-on-the-Lake's history with a gourmet, take-out meal and a highlight of local Black History. For options, choices and tickets, please visit: <https://www.canadahelps.org/en/charities/niagara-historical-society/events/history-in-the-vineyard-at-home/>

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Auchterlonie on Astrology

Bill Auchterlonie
Special to The Local

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

Thursday, Feb. 4: The third-quarter Moon in Scorpio occurs at 12:36 p.m. With the futuristic Sun in

Aquarius cornered by secretive, sexy emotions, it's a day when we want to hold on to our beliefs, our memories and our imaginations, to help us get through it. Mark Zuckerberg, sitting in his dormitory room at Harvard University, launched Facebook on Feb. 4, 2004.

Sunday, Feb. 7: Mercury and the Moon are friendly today, making thoughts

and feelings work together. Mind you, Mercury is retrograde, so the thoughts may have more to do with memories, rather than new ideas. Basketball's Most Valuable Player in 2005 and 2006, Canada's Steve Nash, was born Feb. 7, 1974.

Monday, Feb. 8: The Sun and Mercury are conjunct at 8:47 a.m., with Mercury in retrograde motion.

It's a time when rethinking something personal can prove to be very rewarding. It was Feb. 8, 1894, that Billy Bishop was born in Owen Sound. He went on to be a decorated pilot in the First World War, and today the Toronto Island airport is named the Billy Bishop Airport, with daily flights to and from Niagara-on-the-Lake.

LOCAL WORSHIP



Sunday, February 7th
10 a.m. Worship Gathering (Online Only)
Speaker: **Matthew Unruh**
Message: **Philippians 1:20-30**
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.
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Across:

1 With a forward motion
6 Guitarist --- Clapton
10 And others in Rome
14 "BoiËro" composer Maurice ---
15 Lead vocalist of U2
16 Sleepless in Seattle director --- Ephron
17 Overweight
18 Embryonic flowers
19 --- Lane, Clark's love
20 Shell lobster
22 Exercise venue
23 --- the ground floor
24 Adeptness
25 A lot
27 Think constantly
29 Badger
31 Beloved
32 Anti-ageist org.
34 Pulpit delivery
36 Cushion
39 Comparatively costly
41 Getting on
43 Chop
44 Base
46 Part
47 Web address
48 Cleared

50 E.g. Courvoisier
53 Pricey
54 World's largest economy
57 Stock-market debuts
58 Monotonous routine
60 Daytona racing supervisory grp.
62 Established ceremony
63 Workplace regulation agency
65 Imperial sites?
66 Sweet
67 It starts every Sunday
68 Fifty after
69 ---, a plan, a canal, Panama
70 Fictional Ozzie dame
71 Author/astronomer Carl ---

Down:

1 Bouquet
2 Toil
3 Brought down
4 Secluded retreat
5 Glows
6 Abate
7 Harsher
8 --- 500, car race
9 Of worldwide scope
10 Sign up

11 Common odds ending
12 Operatic solos
13 Endures
21 "A Beautiful Mind" actor
26 Record keeper
28 Deform
30 Emulator
32 Fire residue
33 Consumed
35 Donnybrook
36 Bringing forth
37 Everyone
38 Stain
40 One paid to jump out of perfectly serviceable aircraft
42 Before, poetically
45 Soon afterwards
47 Invisible
49 Areas of land
50 About
51 Anything that stupefies
52 Have to
55 Generous annual visitor
56 Fire-raising
59 Pre-loved
61 Mets' old stadium
64 Alias

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OBITUARY



GERMAN, LORNE ARNOLD—Lorne Arnold German passed away Sunday January 31, 2021 at the age of 82 and is now in the arms of Jesus. He is survived by his wife Dorothy (Prince) of 58 years, his brother Ray (Joan), his five children: Arnold (Helen), Lorna Chapman (David), Monica German, Georgina Keller (Gord), and Daniel (Karen). He was blessed with 14 grandchildren: Amber, Hailey, Brittany, Nicki, Andrew, Melanie, Dawn, Sarah, Eric, Ashley, Matthew, Jessica, Noah and Naomi. As well, Arnold had 9 great-grandchildren and many nieces and nephews.

Arnold is predeceased by his parents Lorne and Ivy (Haywood), his brothers Donnie (Colleen), and Gary and sister Ivy Mae Mune.

Arnold was born September 20, 1938 in Hamilton, Ontario and lived there for many years, but his love of the North had him move up to Midland, Ontario for the next 40 years of his life. He spent the remainder of his years in Niagara-on-the-Lake, Ontario.

Arnold loved God, his family, fishing, being up North and watching the Ti-Cats play football. He loved to go for walks in the snow, sit around a fire or tinker around with machines in his garage.

His family will miss him greatly. Until we see you again.



MCBRIDE, SHIRLEY ANNE—It is with great sadness that we announce the unexpected passing of Shirley Anne McBride (née Marcell) on January 25, 2021, at the age of 73.

Shirley is predeceased by her father Lawrence and survived by her mother Margaret; her husband of 52 years and the love of her life, Michael; siblings Dale Marcell (Donna); Linda Jones (Darcy); Barbara Tops (Wim); her children, Jason and Marci;

her beloved grandchildren, Abigail, Emily, and Jack. She doted on the various pets that she acquired over her life—cats, dogs, and, especially, birds, including her dear Rosey Bourke, Rosie.

Born in New Westminster, British Columbia, Shirley spent most of her childhood in B.C. After marrying Mike and starting a family, she embarked on decades of international travel—Mike's work took them across North America and then to Singapore and Japan. Shirley embraced every adventure, and in each new place, created a loving and beautiful home. In each new place, she developed and cultivated her passions for art and antiques, for home decor, for gardening, for cooking and baking, for current events, but especially for people. In each new place, she forged friendships that lasted the rest of her life. Shirley's generosity and devotion to others—her family, of course, but also friends, neighbours and complete strangers—were endless. After Marci had Abby, her first daughter, Shirley became, in effect, a mother again, and helped Marci raise her.

In the last decades of her life, at a time when most other people start to slow down, Shirley only sped up. She and Mike settled in Victoria, B.C., where they opened New England Square, a store specializing in heritage American furniture. A few years later, they relocated again, to Niagara-on-the-Lake, Ontario, where, over the course of a decade, they turned the Merlot House Bed and Breakfast into one of the town's most cherished B&Bs. Shirley formed a personal connection with every single guest, making her home their home no matter the length of their stay. Her blueberry scones, lush, ever-evolving gardens, and warm hospitality, brought people back year after year.

Cremation has taken place. A celebration of Shirley's life will be held at a later date. Arrangements entrusted to MORGAN FUNERAL HOME, 415 Regent Street, Niagara-on-the-Lake. Memories, photos and condolences may be shared at www.morganfuneral.com



PUZZLE ANSWERS

Sudoku solution from January 28, 2021

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

Across: 1 Along, 6 Eric, 10 Et al, 14 Ravel, 15 Bono, 16 Nora, 17 Oboe, 18 Buds, 19 Lois, 20 Mortar, 23 In at, 24 Art, 25 Much, 27 Obsess, 31 Pet, 32 A A R P, 34 Sermon, 36 Pad, 39 Steeper, 41 Elderly, 43 Hew, 44 Alkali, 46 Role, 47 U R L, 48 Netted, 50 Cognac, 53 Dear, 54 U S A, 57 I P Os, 58 Rut, 60 N A S C A R, 62 Rite, 63 O S H A, 65 Chins, 66 Cute, 67 Week, 68 Ten to, 69 A man, 70 Edna, 71 Sagan.

Down: 1 Aroma, 2 Labor, 3 Overthrow, 4 Nest, 5 Gleams, 6 Ebb, 7 Rougher, 8 Indy, 9 Cosmopolitan, 10 Enlist, 11 To one, 12 Arias, 13 Lasts, 21 Russell Crowe, 26 Clerk, 28 Bend, 30 Ape, 32 Ash, 33 Ate, 35 Melee, 36 Producing, 37 All, 38 Dye, 40 Para, 42 Ere, 45 And then, 47 Unseen, 49 Tracts, 50 Circa, 51 Opium, 52 Gotta, 55 Santa, 56 Arson, 59 Used, 61 Shea, 64 A k a.

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