

The Niagara-on-the-Lake LOCAL



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page 10

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What lies beneath that pond you're skating on?

With weather perfect for skating on rinks created by Mother Nature, Owen Bjorgan and Kirstyn Smith take a moment to capture a photo. If you read Owen's column on page 7, you will learn some interesting facts about the wildlife below the ice. (Owen Bjorgan)



Hirji concerned about reopenings being sustainable

Penny Coles
The Local

After a weekend of criticism and even threats to his safety, Dr. Mustafa Hirji, Niagara's acting chief medical officer of health has tweeted his thanks for the many emails and messages of support he'd received, which he said had been "humbling."

But in an interview with The Local, and before regional councillors at a public health committee meeting Tuesday afternoon, although he voiced his thanks and appreciation for the support, he was more anxious to talk about Niagara moving into the grey zone this week, as well as his goals and concerns for the future.

Although he said he was not targeting restaurants with his recommendation to the province last week that Niagara go into the grey zone, they remain closed, and that's where

the anger and confusion has been coming from.

He said he agrees with restaurant owners that the venue itself doesn't spread COVID, but the activity inherent in dining out with friends and family does.

In the fall, when he instituted a Section 22 order that restricted restaurant patrons to members of one household, numbers came down. The recent provincial lockdown, which included restaurant closures, also brought numbers down, as did the lockdown last spring.

Each time, reopenings were not sustainable, and the last thing he wants is for the current move to colour-coded zoning to lead to another lockdown.

He told councillors when restaurants reopen, he likely will consider the Section 22 or-

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Townline Road fire destroys a community

Penny Coles
The Local

The chicken barns on Townline Road wouldn't have looked like much to curious outsiders who checked out the property after the \$2.5 million fire that destroyed them, but those who rented shops or storage units and know the value of what was going on behind the scenes are grieving the loss of a community.

"It didn't look like much from the outside," says Gavin

Young, one of the many who had vehicles stored on the property. "But what was going on inside was a community of people who had a place to gather together, help each other and learn from each other. That's the tragedy — the loss of an awesome community."

Young is the president of the Niagara Military Vehicle Association, an incorporated, not-for-profit group for people who own, restore and exhibit vintage military vehicles dating from the First World War

to the present.

Members of the group stored about 20 to 25 privately-owned military vehicles, some of the largest and most valuable — the ones they can't park in their driveways — in a portion of one of the three former chicken barns. The association had 100 feet of barn, and one of the greenhouses between the barns, for storage.

Darren Werner, owner of the property, is a member of the association, and also had some vehicles stored there.

Werner and Young both describe a community of those in their early 20s to the 70-plus age group, with shared interests in vehicles, repairing and restoring them, many with skilled trades. They all took pleasure in helping each other, especially some of the older, retired members, who would offer their assistance to the younger generation when they were stuck.

Most of the members of the military vehicle group are older, many former military,

and some would visit the site daily, chatting with others and helping out when asked. Their vehicles were mostly restored, and might need a tune-up or oil change occasionally, but not a lot of work was involved, so they were always happy to assist anyone who could use a hand, says Young.

He is not a vet, he says, but was a sea cadet and is a master mariner in the Merchant Marine, a sea captain on the boats.

A lot of former military,

once they're separated from the service, find it leaves a hole in their lives, he says. "They find us at our shows, and we find them. A lot have vehicles they can drive, and together we do fundraisers or causes such as the Wounded Warriors and the Rankin Run, or for local legions. We don't often say no to a fundraiser."

Their space on Townline Road has provided a meeting place, and became the "heart

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Offshore workers arriving, working safely

Penny Coles
The Local

After a day of work in the greenhouses, Eileen Pillitteri-Smith of Seaway Farms in Niagara-on-the-Lake was feeling optimistic about the season to come.

Although it was a cold, wintery and snowy day, the sun was shining, and it was beginning to feel like spring was in sight.

Having gone through one season of a pandemic, going into the second one with similar protocols, lessons learned and some refinements that were making the lead-up to spring seem a little more organized.

The big question this time last year was the arrival of the offshore workers, as growers waited to hear how the federal government was going to handle their entry into Canada, the border having been closed to all but Canadian citizens, with limited exceptions. Initially, seasonal farm workers had not been included in those exceptions, creating a delay before they were able to travel.

This year, the only concern is limited flights for arriving workers, says Pillitteri-Smith.

While there are new restrictions on people arriving in Canadian airports, they don't affect essential travellers, which include offshore workers.

The workers who come to Niagara-on-the-Lake have become family over the years, a lifeline, and essential to the success of the farm, says Pillitteri-Smith.

"There are days when I spend more time with them than my kids."

Some have been coming for 25 to 30 years, and over that time, a mutual respect has grown between them.

Farm workers are tested for COVID-19 before they leave home and board a flight to Canada, and when they arrive, as last year, they must quarantine for 14 days. They must use a federal government app designed for travellers to say when they've left their country, when they arrive, their quarantine information, and must notify Public Health that they're here.

Although Seaway's Mexican men and women have been through it before, the quarantining is the hard part, she says, because once they're here, "they're really anxious to work."

During their quarantine, and once they begin work, she calls them daily with screening questions, and they have a number to call if they have any questions.

Over the winter, she has had some renovations done to their living quarters. Large pieces of furniture have been removed, with new Ikea wardrobes and beds ordered for each of the men and women who are coming to work on the farm. By getting rid of some furniture and moving things around, there is more room for them to spread out, she says.

Seaway has had two audits, one from federal inspectors and one from Public Health, to check they're following all protocols.

When some of the women arrived, the renovation of their living quarters was not finished, and they quarantined in a nearby hotel, where meals were provided.

The first group of 10 to arrive are now working, and like last year, she's taking their food orders each week and having supplies delivered to the farm, as she did last year. It means they've lost their one night out each week, but they understand it would be taking a risk.

"We want to keep everyone safe. We're doing everything we can to keep our staff, customers and public safe. Our workers know what to expect, and they are just as worried and want to do everything they need to do to be safe."

As for those still to come, with an expected arrival at the end of the month, the cancellation of flights makes that a question mark. "It could be any time, and we just have to be ready for it. We're trying to be patient."

The one thing she wished she had done differently, she says, would have been to bring the earliest arrivals to the farm two weeks earlier, so they

wouldn't have been behind when the quarantine period was finished.

However, another lesson learned that has benefitted the workers and the farm is a result of needing to keep those living together in cohorts when they're working.

They're divided into crews, the cohorts having the same job each day, going out to work in the fields, or the women in different areas of the greenhouses, and she has found that has helped things run smoothly, in an organized fashion she'll keep for the future.

Now that it's feeling like spring isn't too far off, she's been getting calls and emails

from customers wanting to know when the garden centre is opening. She's not ready to set a date just yet, unsure of provincial regulations that could change at any time, and wanting to wait until they can open their doors, rather than doing curbside or appointment-only sales, which were necessary for a time last year.

"Every business has had to rework the way we do things. This last year has been a learning experience for all of us, but our workers mean the world to us, and we'll do whatever it takes to make it work for all of us. They really are our family, and every single grower I know feels the same."

Girl Guide groups welcome workers



Patricia Arauz Hernandez, Guadalupe De Jesus Mena, Eileen Pillitteri-Smith and Alicia Digna De LaCruz work safely in the Seaway Farms greenhouses. (Photo supplied)



Sparks, Brownies and Pathfinders have made posters to welcome offshore workers to Niagara. (Photo supplied)

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Special to The Local

During the month of February, members of the NOTL Sparks, Brownies, Girl Guides and Pathfinders have been creating welcome posters for the

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farm workers who will soon be arriving in our community.

The girls have been involved in making posters and helping to stuff welcome bags for the workers for several years, and in the past, we have also hosted visits from Jane Andres, who shared some of the stories of the people who come to help local farms each spring.

This year, as meetings moved online due to COVID-19 restrictions, we had to change how we participated, so girls completed their posters at home and then sent them digitally to one of the leaders for printing. This art project is part of our curriculum for World Thinking Day (celebrated on Feb. 22 each year), during which members of Girl Guides and Girl Scouts around the world join together in global action to make the world a better place.

The theme of Thinking Day 2021 is Stand Together for Peace, and we have been learning about ways in which we can make our communities a more peaceful and inclusive place.

Local restaurants react to grey zone lockdown

Penny Coles
The Local

There is no doubt local restaurant owners are disappointed they remain closed while more retailers are permitted to open, but they're not supporting the level of anger displayed by others against the decision.

After a week of knowing the some changes were coming for Niagara, the province announced Friday that Niagara would move into the grey-lockdown zone this Tuesday.

That meant non-essential retailers, closed since Dec. 26, are allowed to open, with 25 per cent capacity.

With Niagara the only region in Ontario entering the grey zone, there was initially some confusion about restaurants, but it quickly became clear that in grey, they remain closed to indoor dining, able only to offer takeout.

Hair salons, barber shops, gyms, and yoga studios also remain closed.

While the province was allowing for limited reopening in retail stores, they were also asking for individuals to adhere to the stay-at-home order, to

masking regulations, and to limiting interactions to household contacts.

Restaurant owner Maria Mavridis of Firehall Flame and Corks Wine Bar and Eatery had been waiting for the announcement, hoping Niagara would be in red. She was anticipating being able to open this week, and had emailed her staff with schedules. Instead, she was hearing that retailers could open with limited capacities, but not restaurants, and was texting staff to tell them they were staying home.

"We were so excited, and ready to open."

It wasn't making a lot of sense to her or seeming very fair that stores could open at 25 per cent capacity, but restaurants could not, even though they could follow all the safety protocols and limit the number of people in their dining rooms.

Store owners aren't expected to take names and phone numbers of those who shop, but restaurants were doing that before the shutdown, and are prepared to continue, she says.

Despite feeling some frustration over the province putting NOTL in grey, Mavridis says she wants nothing to do with a Facebook page that has apparently

been the source of threats against Hirji, blaming him for the decision that is keeping restaurants closed in Niagara. The group page, United Hospitality Niagara, was created in November to give restaurant owners and employees a place to discuss COVID-related challenges.

The level of anger and threats against Hirji "are not what our family represents," she says, noting that while she initially joined the Facebook page, she only checks it to see what members are saying, but doesn't comment.

From what she has seen in recent days, none of the NOTL restaurant owners were a part of that. "They were definitely not from NOTL restaurants. I don't even know if they were business owners or hospitality workers," she says.

Although the level of threats had toned down by Tuesday, members were still pushing for him to be fired, with a list of all regional councillors' email addresses along with a request to encourage them to support his firing.

Part of the frustration over remaining closed comes from the public perception there is a considerable amount of financial support for restaurant owners,

which is not the case, Mavridis says. Although she has received a grant to cover the money spent on protocols for COVID protection, such as plexiglass and personal protective equipment, that was money they had to put out in the first place, and there have been other small business grants that they didn't qualify for, including rebates on gas and hydro bills, but only for those who haven't been able to pay their bills and are behind.

While restaurants are still permitted to do takeout, that hasn't worked for her two Queen Street restaurants, she says. Locals aren't accustomed to coming to Queen Street for takeout, and she would be competing with other NOTL restaurants that have been offering it all along. Her staff are better off remaining on employment insurance than being called in for just a few hours of work a week. "It's actually better for them if we don't bring them back for that. It's not worth working a few hours, and without tips."

Mavridis has come to the conclusion that it's better to stay closed now, for another two or three weeks, than reopening and taking a chance on another shutdown.

If Niagara restaurants reopened while Toronto was shut down, "they all would have flooded down this way," she says.

She also doesn't want to take



Maria Mavridis took a walk down Queen Street Sunday with her daughter Hope, stopping at Il Gelato di Carlotta. The street was busy with people walking, she said, although not too many stores were open. (Photo supplied)



Matt and Paul Dietsch behind the bar at Sandtrap Bar and Grill, which along with the dining room is closed, say the restaurant does a busy dinner takeout. (Photo supplied)

a chance on facing another shutdown when the weather is improving and people want to get out. "Right now, there are a few

people walking on the street, but when stores are allowed to open,

Continued on page 11

Lord mayor offers support for public health chief

Penny Coles
The Local

Lord Mayor Betty Disero, aware of last weekend's threats against Dr. Mustafa Hirji, the region's acting medical officer of health, joined many others with her message of support for Hirji.

She had supported him when he first spoke of recommending Niagara be in the grey zone, with numbers in some municipalities that justified the lockdown restrictions that accompany grey, but said earlier this week numbers are coming down, and that could change.

"Dr. Hirji has dedicated his career to protecting the health and safety of the public. His recommendations are made to

keep us all safe. Threats of violence are completely unacceptable. We're better than that," she said.

"It's been a long road, and we're all exhausted and frustrated by the ongoing impacts of this pandemic. We must stay calm and united."

On a personal note, Disero added, "I am so ready to be out of lockdown. And it will happen. But until then, I'll stay home and follow regulations to protect my family and others. Please, please do the same. And please, be kind, we are all struggling! I stand with @mustafahirji."

She has been hoping for a move to red, hoping the numbers would justify the less restrictive zone.

"Everything is changing so quickly," she said.

The decision to put Niagara in grey would have been made because at that point, there were some portions of the region where the numbers called for it, although the majority of municipalities were either in red, with one in orange. "How do you move everyone to a colour with less restrictions when there are still some in grey?" she asks.

"If there are still areas in grey, then the region has to be in grey."

It will likely be no more than two weeks before Niagara is moved to red, as long as the numbers reflect that, she added.

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Regional councillor says decisions made to protect public

Penny Coles
The Local

Regional councillor Gary Zalepa had heard about the anger and threats from the hospitality industry toward the regional acting medical officer of health, Dr. Mustafa Hirji over the past weekend, but hasn't heard a lot from local businesses.

He has received a few emails, he said, that were professional, and respectful. Some were simply from people wanting to understand better the colour-coded restrictions, and others were asking 'why'.

"I think what was confusing was we moved from lockdown to grey, but grey isn't all that different," he said.

"People are stressed, businesses are challenged. And Dr. Hirji is doing his best. I don't believe decisions are made entirely by one person, and the people who are making those decisions are basing them on what is in the best interest of the community."

Hirji has notified regional politicians he's considering some further changes, and will let them know of any decisions before announcing them to the public, said Zalepa.

Public health holds an update for regional councillors every other Friday, and with a meeting coming up this week, he expects councillors will be given information to help understand the decision-making process and an update on what could be coming.

"Anything could happen," he said. While it's possible the region could qualify for red, "it could also be another story. With the outbreak of variants we're hearing about, I'm not an expert, but I don't think we have a handle on how that transmission could affect us. I'm concerned about that."

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PUBLIC NOTICE OF HEARING

PROCEEDING COMMENCED UNDER subsection 29(5) of the Ontario Heritage Act, R.S.O. 1990, c.O.18, as amended

Owners: Dan D'Alessandro & Mary D'Alessandro
Objector: John Colin Black
Subject: Notice of Intention to Designate
Property Address: 21 Prideaux Street
Legal Description: PT LT 31 TP PL 86 NIAGARA AS IN RO432606
Municipality: Town of Niagara-on-the-Lake
CRB Case No.: CRB1918
CRB Case Name: Black v. Niagara-on-the-Lake (Town)

PROCEEDING COMMENCED UNDER subsection 29(5) of the Ontario Heritage Act, R.S.O. 1990, c.O.18, as amended

Owner/Objector: John Colin Black
Subject: Notice of Intention to Designate
Property Address: 27 Prideaux Street
Legal Description: PT LT 30 TP PL 86 NIAGARA AS IN RO434461
Municipality: Town of Niagara-on-the-Lake
CRB Case No.: CRB1919
CRB Case Name: Black v. Niagara-on-the-Lake (Town)

PROCEEDING COMMENCED UNDER subsection 29(5) of the Ontario Heritage Act, R.S.O. 1990, c.O.18, as amended

Owners: Thomas Elltoft, Kimberley Elltoft
Objector: John Colin Black
Subject: Notice of Intention to Designate
Property Address: 31 Prideaux Street
Legal Description: PT LT 30 TP PL 86 NIAGARA AS IN NTW8087
Municipality: Town of Niagara-on-the-Lake
CRB Case No.: CRB1920
CRB Case Name: Black v. Niagara-on-the-Lake (Town)

The Conservation Review Board will conduct a hearing respecting this matter.

This hearing will be held:
at: 9:30 am
on: March 17, 18 & 19, 2021
at: Microsoft Teams video conference call

The Review Board has set aside three days for this hearing.

Please contact the Review Board at conservation.review.board@ontario.ca by no later than Friday, March 12, 2021 to obtain the video conference details.

If you do not attend at the commencement of the hearing or are not represented at this hearing, the Review Board may proceed in your absence and you will not be entitled to any further notice of the proceedings.

Pour recevoir des services en français, veuillez communiquer avec nous au (416) 212-6349, immédiatement.

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DATED at Toronto, Ontario this 10th day of February 2021.

Concern over variants

Continued from page 1

der again, given that it worked well in the fall.

Although he did recommend to the province that Niagara should be in grey-lockdown, he said he can't be sure how much weight was put on his recommendation.

He was part of a 15-minute virtual meeting held last Friday morning between the province and a few public health officials representing regions in similar situations, he explained, when they each had an opportunity to voice their positions. In the time allotted to him, he cautioned that Niagara should stay in grey or a stay-at-home order, that it didn't make sense to open up now, as the region is just getting on top of numbers that last month had been escalating.

In the announcement that came later Friday, provincial decisions about some of the regions represented in that phone call aligned with what public health officials were recommending, as with the Niagara move to grey, and in others, the outcome was different, he said.

While it's typically expected to be two weeks before more changes are announced by the province, that a change will be announced one week and enacted the next, it's "plausible" another change could be made as early as this week, he said.

Last week, some areas of the region were posting numbers that were in grey, and this week, although the numbers are falling, they are still high. Tuesday afternoon, there were 34 outbreaks in the region, down from 40 the week before, occurring in long-term care, retirement and group homes, workplaces and the community.

There are still about 20 new cases a day, he said.

While those numbers are headed in the right direction, they are still higher than they were this summer.

During a public health committee meeting Tuesday afternoon, Hirji spoke about the success so far with vaccinating residents in long-term care homes and high-risk retirement homes.

With more vaccine arriving, Niagara is planning to resume its vaccinations for high-risk long-term care, retirement home and hospital staff.

While that was the good news, he warned that with variants of concern in the GTA, allowing the virus to spread more quickly, it will become more difficult than ever to control the spread.

There are no variants of concern in Niagara, but that's not likely to persist because of the number of visitors from the GTA and other areas, such as the number of travellers over the long weekend in Niagara Falls. Those situations "are not going to serve us well in keeping variants out," he said.



Dr. Mustafa Hirji (Photo supplied)

But the "hottest topic" to be addressed at the meeting was the reopening the province announced, "somewhat surprisingly," transitioning to the colour-coded zones.

For much of January, he said, Niagara was one of the hardest-hit regions, near the top of the province with numbers of cases, and decisions were made based on the still-high number of cases.

The challenge is trying to protect the population and at the same time allow the economy to recover, he said.

"The growing consensus is that managing the health side tends to manage the economic side," he explained, pointing to other countries where managing COVID with shutdowns has led to sustainable reopenings.

He said the concern is now, with the number of cases, there is no room for error, with another increase in cases possibly leading to another lockdown.

His advice to the province is based on the goal of a sustained reopening, "so we never have to go through another lockdown from COVID."

Several regional councillors on the public health committee asked questions about specific business reopening and closures, so they could pass that information on to their constituents, about vaccinations, and about how best to avoid the dreaded third wave that could be coming.

Regional councillors were also asking to be better informed so they could have better answers for residents and business owners.

Many of the regional councillors who offered their support joined the likes of Canadian Prime Minister Justin Trudeau and Ontario Premier Doug Ford, who both condemned online threats directed at Hirji, which began Friday.

The threats appear to have come from hospitality workers and restaurant owners, on the United Hospitality Niagara Facebook page, although the administrator has objected to those characterizations.

The Niagara Regional Po-

lice said they launched an investigation into the threats.

"I am outraged to hear threats have been made against Dr. @MustafaHirji, the Medical Officer of Health for Niagara Region," Trudeau tweeted late Saturday night. "This rhetoric is unacceptable, and I strongly condemn it. He, and all public health officials working to keep us safe, deserve nothing but our sincere thanks."

Politicians, including Regional Chair Jim Bradley, physicians, and the Ontario Medical Association have all condemned the threats. CBC did a brief story Monday evening on its national news show, mentioning that it's not only Niagara's top public health official, but others across the country who have also been threatened following decisions they have made in response to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Ontario Premier Doug Ford, who made the decision to put Niagara in grey, supported by the provincial cabinet, tweeted "there is absolutely no place for these kinds of threats in Ontario. Cut it out. Our health officials have only one priority: the health and well-being of their communities. We're lucky to have such dedicated public health officials in Ontario."

A public health announcement released this weekend said, in part, "many people and business owners are struggling significantly through the pandemic and the social restrictions that have been necessary at times, and this weighs heavily on Dr. Hirji when advising the province on Niagara's situation."

"However, Dr. Hirji also agrees with the consensus of public health experts that reopening the economy too quickly right now risks a devastating third wave, and third lockdown which could do even more harm to Niagara's residents and business owners."

It went on to say that Hirji "attempts to read all feedback, both positive and negative. However, he hopes debate on this important issue will remain civil as we all try and get through this pandemic together."



Why So Blue?

Submitted by Creek Road Paints

This time of year, especially with the current climate of our time in particular, the Winter Blues can truly set in, creating feelings, or moods of unhappiness that are often associated with experiencing the cold of winter.

So why not set a new perspective on this bold colour that can not only evoke feelings of imagination and freedom when used in the home, but also represents a vast array of earthly elements that are as expansive, as they are freeing.

With a new year in its infancy, we embrace a series of new trends in colour and style for the house and home.

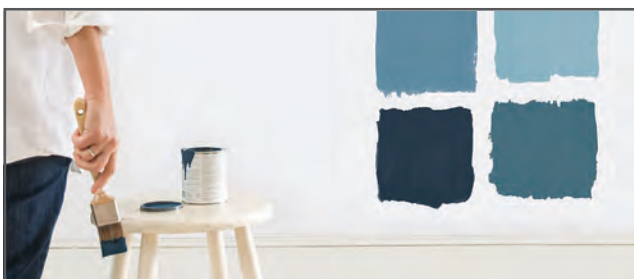
The Colour Trends of 2021 by Benjamin Moore are intended to not only nourish the home, but the spirit as well. With sun-baked shades and hues that are both balanced and soothing, check out our new colour palette for 2021, and see how our Colour of the Year - Aegean Teal (2136-40) creates a natural harmony within the space it is intended. A member of our Colour Preview Collection, Aegean Teal comes from a family of blues that are as intriguing as they are timeless.

"A well-used blue is a true stroke of confidence."

—Hannah Yeo,

Colour & design expert

Blue is a favourite for those interested in exploring colours



"beyond" neutral. Shades of blue are synonymous with design dependability and classic style. Blues are liveable, graceful, and whether you are looking to completely saturate your space with a blue hue, or add an accent of a bolder, deeper blue - we will always have the right blue for you to dive in to.

Awaken feelings of serenity, tranquility and calm. Create aesthetics inspired by the ocean, sea and sky. The popularity of blue is palpable. From inspiration online, to advice from our experts in-store, let us help you find the best blue paint colours for any project.

If you aren't ready to go all the way with Blue in your home, then why not try an accent? Deep blue makes for a rich accent colour for hallways, entryways, home entryways - anywhere that you are looking for a stroke of drama. Consider charismatic cobalts

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EDITORIAL

Working together will get us where we need to go

As non-essential businesses reopen, carefully, and restaurants don't, it's been a difficult few days for many.

There was some confusion at first initially about what opening in grey meant, for businesses and individuals, and once the answers became evident, they weren't all what we wanted to hear.

Last week restaurant owners were excited, reaching out to staff about hours, some ordering food, getting their dining rooms spruced up and ready to open this week.

Then, a rude awakening:

there would be no opening for restaurants, or for those anxious for a meal out.

Nor has there been any lifting of restrictions regarding families staying with their own households. Some were thinking the stay-at-home order might change, maybe allowing for a bubble. No bubbles for Niagara.

The anger and frustration of restaurant owners and staff is understandable as they suffer through this pandemic, likely feeling very alone, but as one person after another, from the prime minister

down to local politicians, and even disappointed members of the hospitality industry have said, the comments, threats and questioning of Dr. Mustafa Hirji's motives were not acceptable, not in any context.

That has been said repeatedly, and Dr. Hirji's gracious response to his supporters, and the empathy and kindness he displayed in his replies to his attackers, is an indication of how fortunate the Niagara Region is to have him.

He didn't get off lightly

at Tuesday's meeting with regional councillors at the public health committee meetings. He was questioned extensively on vaccinations, on colour-coding restrictions, on consideration for the economy, on sustainable re-opening, variants of concern and preparedness for a third wave. It's obvious councillors have their own concerns, and were looking for assurances that their chief medical officer of health is on top of all these very worrisome issues, for their own peace of mind and to pass on to their constituents.

on Four Mile Creek Road, right across from the town hall, many of you may have noticed that it's gone through a transformation, and is looking quite different these days.

As part of the renovations, and the exterior face-lift, our sign was removed, and we know by the questions we're asked that some people wonder if we still have an office, or where we've gone.

We hope to have a new sign soon, and yes, we're still there. By the time we had made the decision to begin using the office again last September, it was in the middle of a construction zone. We had no parking, it was extremely noisy, and there were other ongoing issues. Then, we were into another lockdown, and even essential workers were being asked to stay home, and stay off the roads, so we continued to do what we had been doing all along.

of the seasons in NOTL. Instead, now they tell the story of a time we'll look back on as being different for all of us, as reflected in the pages of a community newspaper.

However, we all miss meeting with people, making those personal connections, through work, for some of us, with volunteer activities, at events that are no longer being held, but even more so, with family. We all miss family dinners, sharing birthdays and other celebrations, and supporting each other through some difficult times.

While we are all working together to get through this pandemic, helping each other in any way we can, it's worth a reminder that apart from our shared COVID-related restrictions, many people are dealing with difficult issues we don't know about, with loved ones in long-term care, or health problems that have become so much more difficult in these times, and of course the mental health issues that become even more problematic when suffering in isolation.



View from the couch

Donald Combe
Special to The Local

In *Boy Erased* (Netflix, 2018) Jared was outed as gay. His parents struggled to reconcile their love for him with their fundamental Christian beliefs, and so

Jared was coerced into attending a conversion therapy program. Jared, his parents and their friends all began the difficult journey of acceptance and moving forward with their lives. This well-made, sensitive film has important lessons for everyone.

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.



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. 18: The Sun moves from futuristic Aquarius into imaginative Pisces this morning. Happy birthday to all Pisceans! While the Moon in Taurus is friendly with Mars and not so with Venus. Try not to be too lazy or too indulgent. Also, try to be friendly! It was Feb. 18, 1920 that American astronomer Clyde Tombaugh discovered Pluto. Not named after the Disney 'toon dog. Rather after the lord of the ancient underworld.

Friday, Feb. 19: The First

Quarter Moon is at 1:47 p.m. at 1 degree of Gemini. This pits the most imaginative and emotional part of ourselves against our nearly emotionless feelings. It's a tough one. Venus (at 23 degrees Aquarius) squares Mars (at 23 degrees Taurus) at 6:06 p.m. Venus and Mars are the eternal lovers who are always chasing and seducing each other. Squares bring friction, and in the case of Venus and Mars, these "frictions" are in the sphere of relationships and romance. Of course, when we talk about Venus and Mars, "friction" usually translates into passion, but at times this can also lead to irritation and emotional drama. Ultimately, Venus square Mars is an invitation to go (Mars) for what you want (Venus), so take this

opportunity to take action that is aligned with your heart's desires. The current Commissioner of the NFL, Roger Goodell, was born Feb. 19, 1959 in Jamestown, NY.

Saturday, Feb. 20: Today Mercury goes direct at 11 degrees Aquarius. This was an interesting Mercury retrograde to say the least. Mercury retrograde was engaged in a triple conjunction with Venus and Jupiter, so there are so many stories the planets in Aquarius had told us, and now that Mercury goes direct, we will gain even more clarity about this new Aquarius chapter of our lives. On Feb. 20, 1887 in Toronto, the first Canadian born Governor General of Canada was born. His name: Vincent Massey.

Until next week, shine on.

One over-riding question was regarding communication. Some regional councillors seem to feel they're being kept out of the loop. However, given the opportunity to ask questions, they were provided the answers, and there is another update coming on Friday, apparently a regular every-other week virtual meeting. Some of the answers, it seemed, councillors could have discovered for themselves, but they apparently want them straight from the top public health official. Chances are after today, those answers may be supplied before being released to the public and the media. Can't help but think a very busy man trying to save lives is about to become a whole lot busier.

Since we're talking about essential businesses and re-opening — or not — I'd like to share with our readers how the staff at The Local has been working through recent lockdowns.

Newspapers are considered essential, but going back to last March, we chose to impose restrictions on ourselves. We're a very small staff, and decided we could all work at home. We discovered the benefits to that pretty quickly, and like many others, have learned lessons about how we can operate more efficiently in the future.

We have not been in our office on a regular basis since then, instead being available by phone or email.

In the summer, the owner from whom we rented our office sold the building. Since it's in a pretty visible location,

Although at first there was some controversy about the value of masks, many in Niagara-on-the-Lake were wearing them before they were mandated, and this town was one of the first municipalities to make them mandatory, the region following suit some time later.

At that point, I was still doing some in-person interviews, and meeting with people for photos. I would wear a mask, but began to become fearful I might be putting others in danger needlessly.

Since then, I've learned to ask people to send photos, and am doing as asked — staying at home, staying off the roads. Safer for all of us. The photos are different from the great front page pictures we used to count on, mostly from one of the many events that marked the progression

Anger is understandable, and we shouldn't judge those who lash out, not knowing the whole story about what might be behind it. But it's also not productive. It won't change the rules or make them any easier to follow.

By following them, we help to get through this a little quicker, get back to our lives a little sooner.

And instead of attacking those who are in the very difficult position of making the necessary decisions to keep us safe, whether we agree or not, we need to understand they are performing a very difficult balancing act on our behalf. Whatever their jobs or expertise, they didn't sign up for this pandemic, for these decisions, and they are doing their best to get us through it. Let's all do what we can to help them make that happen.

The Niagara-on-the-Lake

LOCAL

The trusted voice of our community

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Penny Coles
The Local

The opinions expressed in submitted commentary, and letters to the editor, are those of the contributors and not necessarily those of The NOTL Local.

COMMENT

Pond biodiversity: what's under the skating rink?



Owen Bjorgan
Special to The Local

In light of recent weather, the Canadian classic of pond hockey has made a comeback in my spare hours. Between two farm property ponds here in NOTL, I've been blessed to lace up and skate with my family, friends, and girlfriend in extraordinary outdoor settings these days.

Just like most normal activities in life, I found my mind wandering as to what biodiversity was surrounding me in this moment. A Leafs jersey, a Bruins jersey (we all know the outcome of these two getting together!), and a load of life-forms beneath the ice.

"Imagine all of the biodiversity we're skating over right now," I pondered.

Some of us have awesome backyard rinks with wooden boards, where water is imported from somewhere else to make a sleek rink. Others have access to ponds, or the knowledge of other natural water features which provide solid skating opportunities as well.

While skates, boots, and pucks traverse across the ice, a pause is required to consider what living things may lurk on the underside of the face-off circle.

Let's consider the species which may frequent a typical rural Niagara-on-the-Lake pond. They're probably out there right now, even as you read this in the middle of a wintery cold snap.

While my brother and I are shoving each other around in the corner of the rink, perhaps a snapping turtle lies beneath our skates. We won't see Ontario's largest freshwater turtle until May, most likely, and that's because they are all hunkered down in the warm, insulating mud of the pond's bottom. One may even rest on top of the mud mat without moving for weeks, and what's more, is that that these reptiles have been witnessed swimming under the ice in the dead of winter. Their metabolism drops severely, and their heart rate of one beat per 10 minutes keeps the turtle alive enough.

I'm sure all of us skating on the pond would feel cold just thinking about plunging through. How do animals survive in cold water and mud, and who would ever choose to go there? Many species know about the pleasant zero to four degrees celsius water which exists all winter long, so they have evolved to appreciate its stability during winters where it may be -15 above the ground.

Imagine the amphibian variety living beneath the hockey game. Bullfrogs, green frogs, and leopard frogs are the most likely residents in your NOTL

backyard farm pond.

When the pond turns into a skating rink, we glide across the ice and make passing plays. My dad and I find ourselves taking a breather in the lawn chairs, placed in an icy corner of the natural arena. With the ice sheet as strong as steel, it makes you wonder how frogs would come up to get oxygen. Being trapped beneath ice sounds like a human nightmare.

Frogs get around this problem by absorbing oxygen and releasing carbon dioxide through their skin. Like the snapping turtle, their heart rate drops to minimal levels, but they don't move around nearly as much, if at all, while they are entombed by the icy world above them. Both the turtle and the frog wait for spring's longer and sunnier days to resume another half year of breeding and feeding.

Unless a blue heron drops off an unexpected visitor from the sky, big rural ponds around here are likely limited to green sunfish, smallmouth bass, or the familiar and introduced goldfish. With antifreeze proteins in their blood, they continue to swim around beneath the ice, unabated by the change of season. It's bizarre to be on a breakaway, and think about fish swimming beneath your skates and your stick-handling.

While we thank cold temperatures and old friends for visiting the pond, we might be missing out on appreciation for

the dragonfly larvae in limbo under the ice, resembling an alien action figure more than a beautiful adult dragonfly, but it is lying dormant until it can move around to feast on mosquito larvae in the spring. That's right. Dragonflies will take on mosquitoes by our backyard pond as adults, but the mosquito control begins well before

their familiar adult lives.

The green algae waits to spread itself out in the sun again. Millions of bacteria are sleeping, ready to begin decomposition once the pond even remotely resembles a hint of spring. The aquatic plants lazily float in the underwater realm, or they conform with the ice in an untranslatable har-

diness. I pull off my best Connor McDavid impersonation, only to shoot the puck wide and into a shallow, melted pool in the corner. I peer in to get the puck, and yet again, I see something interesting.

There is life and biodiversity in every corner of the world, and every corner of every outdoor rink.

LETTERS

Disappointed to see Niagara grey

I was extremely disappointed to see on the provincial government notice that Niagara Region is the only one out of 27 municipalities in grey as of Feb. 16. Having reviewed The Local today, I find Dr. Mustafa Hirji, who is representing public health, may have been the cause of this hold-back.

I find his reasonings for leaving us in grey lockdown don't justify the negative ef-

fects on both residents who may only be looking forward to talking with neighbours from across the street and on some small businesses and restaurants which struggle from week to week to keep their businesses from going under. I don't buy the precaution that Toronto residents may visit since the numbers collected to date make it unlikely they were the cause of the outbreaks we have had.

Now that all the long-term care home residents have been vaccinated, we could certainly justify the red zone.

Many people are suffering from different levels of depression from the lack of any contact. Maybe on Feb. 22, we'll see some more light for Niagara residents. I sure hope so.

Karen Gansel
NOTL

MP's partisan stance not helpful

Again, our MP Tony Baldinelli has written a partisan political article in the The Local paper (Feb. 11, 2021) unfairly criticizing our Prime Minister Justin Trudeau and government for the vaccine delay and business closures and loss of jobs caused by the pandemic.

I am disappointed by the MP's unhelpful tone and lack of substance, consistent with his public messages on Facebook and during Question Period in our House of Commons.

A few weeks ago, he demanded that our PM apologize for launching another, accessible, liquidity program (HASCAP) for small businesses most impacted

by the pandemic (tourism, hospitality, arts and culture) without any ideas to make it better. Our government is doing better all the time, because they will take correction based on scientific public health evidence.

Just remember that our COVID-19 sickness rate per capita, is about 2-1/4 times less than our mighty neighbour, the U.S., as is the death rate. Canadians are doing better than many in the world because we are working together (mostly!).

We should be grateful to our governments and individuals when we all cooperate. For example: millions of dollars of federal money and rapid COVID-19 test kits sat unused until com-

plaints forced the Ontario government to dispense to front line workers — schools, borders, businesses, etc.

Though we mourn our lost loved ones and our distress and loneliness, we Canadians are resilient, and we will shift to do what's necessary to defeat this plague and variants based on best scientific and economic knowledge.

So, bring on the vaccines, and still observe the public health rules — double masks, keep our distance, wash our hands, disinfect — and help each other.

Elizabeth Oliver-Malone MD
NOTL



Owen Bjorgan ponders the biodiversity that lies beneath a frozen pond, taking a moment to balance a puck on his hockey stick. (Photo supplied)

Letters! We want letters!

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

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Sally Carter and Black women in Moseby affair

Sarah Kaufman
Special to The Local

Many local history enthusiasts are familiar with the name of Solomon Moseby, but few may know about those who were instrumental in securing his freedom during the Moseby affair in 1837.

Moseby, who was an escaped slave from Kentucky, was being held at the Niagara Courthouse jail (formerly located where Rye Park is

today). Moseby had escaped bondage while delivering a message for his enslaver, David Castleman, on horseback. Instead of delivering the message, he made his way to Niagara to secure his freedom. His former enslaver found him here and requested he be extradited for trial on charges of stealing. The Niagara sheriff detained Moseby, until the extradition decision was made.

Sally Carter, along with local schoolteacher Herbert

Holmes, helped to organize 200 to 300 supporters, many of them women, from Black communities across the Niagara region to take vigil outside the jail and guard against any attempt to secretly deport Moseby.

When Lt.-Gov. Francis Bond Head ordered Moseby to be returned to the U.S., into his former enslaver's custody, hundreds of protestors, including some from the local white population, gathered at the jail. The Black wom-

en who were present also launched a series of tactics to aid his freedom. A group of women blocked the road to the Courthouse and sang hymns to act as a diversion, while others helped to make an escape possible. Some women were armed with weapons, while others had hidden stones in their stockings or aprons ready to throw.

One account described how some of the Black women put themselves in between the Black men and the White prison guards to prevent fights from breaking out. These tactics were instrumental in securing Moseby's freedom when he was brought out from the jail to a carriage.

Carter had formerly escaped slavery in Virginia at the age of 16. At this time

she was 45 years old, and lived at the corner of Anne and Simcoe Streets with her husband Samuel. In an interview around the time of the Moseby affair, she was asked whether she was happy to be living in Canada.

In response, she said "Yes — that is, I was happy here — but now — I don't know. I thought we were safe here — I thought nothing could touch us here, on your British ground, but it seems I was mistaken, and if so, I won't stay here — I won't — I won't! I'll go find a country where they cannot reach us! I'll go to the end of the world, I will!"

Carter knew what Moseby had gone through to obtain his freedom, and along with others at the Moseby affair, was desperate to ensure

he would not have to return to a life of bondage.

She and the Black women involved in the Moseby affair boldly put their lives on the line for justice and freedom in 1837. Today, the Black Lives Matter movement is carrying on the torch by continuing the fight for injustices that still exist today for many in the Black community.

Information from the above article has been derived from the research of historian Natasha Henry, who very kindly shared her research on Niagara's Black history with the Niagara-on-the-Lake Museum and the Voices of Freedom Park.

Sarah Kaufman is the managing director and curator of the Niagara-on-the-Lake Museum.



In 1837, a group of Black women put their lives on the line outside the Courthouse, on the property that is now Rye Park, to secure the freedom of Solomon Moseby. (NOTL Museum)

Museum presents The First Cut is the Deepest



Scott Finlay plays Sir Isaac Brock in the next museum lecture, which comes with a warning: not for the faint-of-heart. (NOTL Museum)

Sarah Kaufman
Special to The Local

The Niagara-on-the-Lake Museum is offering a virtual lecture week it is advising is "not for the faint-of-heart."

It's a fascinating subject, but not for the squeamish. "You have been warned," says the museum news release about The First Cut is the Deepest, a look at medical practices in the army during the Regency Period.

It "was not exactly sophisticated," made up of a lot of improvisations — and whiskey, Scott Finlay will tell us in his lecture exploring surgical training in the

18th century, the various medical substances used at that time, as well as displays of some of the surgeon's tools of the trade.

Staples of the surgeon's toolbox were leeches, bone saws, chisels, pliers, clamps and drills, and not an anaesthetic in sight. That's where the whiskey came in useful. And much of the immediate nursing of the wounded and dying on the battlefield was left to camp followers, the wives and women who followed their men in battle.

The life of a soldier in military camps during the 18th century would have been dirty, cramped, bleak, a perfect place for disease

and illness to spread, and hardly a place for battle wounds to heal.

But everything they learned in those harsh conditions would influence the future of medical care.

The virtual lecture is Wednesday Feb. 24, at 11 a.m., "and be ready for your toes to curl."

Scott Finlay has been an interpretation officer and corporate events coordinator with Parks Canada since 2010. He is well-known in Niagara for his portrayal of General Isaac Brock in many re-enactments, and is a popular emcee for many community events.

As a professional corporate entertainer, facilitator and creative director for 25 years, Finlay has performed at more than a thousand conferences and participated in numerous corporate videos and television presentations.

Registration is required for the lecture at www.nhsm.ca/events.

For more info email aklassen@nhsm.ca.



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Ravine holds successful Black history fundraiser

**Tony Chisholm
Special to The Local**

Our second History in the Vineyard (at home) takeout event last Thursday was an unqualified successful event.

The committee that worked on the event was chaired by Mona Babin, treasurer of the Niagara Historical Society. We all worked closely with Paul Harber, both of whom deserve a huge credit for this success.

In all, 220 meals were prepared and distributed, and 15 cases of Ravine wine were sold.

Amy Klassen of the Niagara-on-the-Lake Museum writes: "So many people were excited to pick up their orders and were smiling and grateful for the opportunity. We were obviously filling a need with this fundraiser. And I saw a lot of new faces, which is also a great sign that we are reaching past just our membership and hopefully intro-

ducing new people to the work of the museum and the Friends of Fort George."

Everyone was pleased with how smoothly the event moved, despite the high volume of meals. The organization of the meal choices, pickup times and delivery and wine distribution went without a hitch. This time we added a delivery option that allowed many more people to participate without having to drive to St. Davids.

Special thanks to Paul Harber of Ravine Vineyard Estate Winery for his eager participation, and the chefs of The Garrison House and Ruffino's Pasta Bar and Grill for providing such delicious gourmet meals.

Here are just a few comments received the evening of the event:

"Just arrived back with our dinner and had to let you know we are sooooo impressed with all the organization from instructions and food containers to historical information

for Black history. You and your team have done an amazing job, irrespective of how good the ingestible part is!!! AND we are looking forward to our dinner as well. Many thanks and

congrats on your successful fundraiser."

"Loved our wonderful dinner. Everything was SO-O-O-O delicious. Thanks to you and to the Museum/Friends of Fort

George staff and to Paul Harber for having put on a sensational event/taste bud treat!!!"

"I wanted to thank you and compliment the Historical Society on History in

the Vineyard. I know from experience how difficult it is to find COVID-friendly fundraising initiatives these days and how much organizing is involved. Well done!"



Event organizer Mona Babin, Paul Harber of Ravine Vineyard Estate Winery, Amanda Gamble of the Friends of Fort George, and, Sarah Kaufman and Amy Klassen of the NOTL Museum held another successful fundraiser for the Friends and the museum. (Tony Chisholm)



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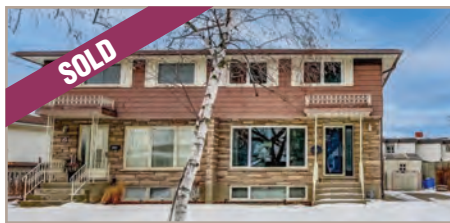
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Mike Balsom
Special to The Local

Some refer to her as a dog whisperer, but a more accurate title for Char Spinosa might be a dog profiler.

Like the lead characters in a number of FBI-centric television shows of late, Spinosa possesses the ability to know more about her subject than that subject seems to know about itself. Unlike those television characters, though, Spinosa works her magic on those of the canine persuasion.

Spinosa, who hangs her shingle out as Niagara's K9 Tracker, is able to quickly read a dog's personality and predict its behaviour. That ability has come in handy over the past 10 years as she has aided in the search and rescue of more than 100 dogs, most of them in the Niagara region.

With her self-published new book, *K9 Tracker S & R: Lost Pet Recovery*, Spinosa is hoping to help even more distressed pet lovers reunite with their lost friends. Subtitled *Tools, Tips, Techniques & Tails*, the book is the culmination of six years of Spinosa chronicling her rescue stories and developing her own methods for search and recovery.

"What good is knowledge

if you can't share it?" Spinosa asks. "Originally, I was going to write a book about the stories over the years. Then it flipped, because I thought I can do more with this if I include more."

She breaks down the subtitle. "I go through different tools, and explain their use, when they're good when they're not so good. Then, the techniques, the different ways that you can use the tools, where to use them, how to use them. The tips are what I've learned, and that comes into lost dog behaviours. And I give them a tutorial on how to do a poster, and how to put it up."

Finally, of course, there are the tails, which are actually tales of successful search and rescue operations mounted by Spinosa. One of those tales stars Louie, a tiny Maltipoo rescue who bolted from a dog boarder while his companion, Niagara-on-the-Lake resident Barbara Worthy, was away in Africa.

"She (the boarder) opened the door, and Louie got out," says Worthy. "My friend Louise put up a Facebook post and she (Spinosa) saw it. It was only up for an hour, and she phoned Louise and said 'there's a dog missing. I think I can

find it.' The whole town was out looking for Louie, and she told everyone to go home and leave it all to her, and she found him."

Char remembers that search fondly. "Louie took off and everybody was out trying to find him. I got the details from her (Louise). She called me around 9 p.m. and told me the dog was sighted running towards the library. So I drove over there, looked to see if he was in any of the doorways, but he wasn't. So I just randomly drove, and I had a talk with God."

This is a common theme in many of Spinosa's stories. She claims that time and time again it seems some sort of divine intervention has led her to be in the right place at the right time.

"I asked God to bring me to Louie," she continues. "I'm just randomly driving in that area, turning left, turning right, driving through new construction, and I come to a T in the road. I look to the left, and here's one of the Sentineal Carriages heading back to the barn. I asked her if by any chance she had seen a little ball of white and she told me 'Yup, two doors down on the left side.' I see a big house that is so lit up it's like a lighthouse. I see two little eyes hiding by a



Dog whisperer Char Spinosa is pictured with Jazz, one of the dogs she's found over the years. Jazz was a rescue from Louisiana that ran away from an adopt-a-thon event in St. Catharines. Spinosa trapped her in Fonthill Cemetery. The photo was taken after decompression in her 'forever' home. (Photo supplied)

flower pot."

Spinosa got out of the truck, armed with an unloaded snappy snare, a six-foot long pole with a loop on the end of it. "My instinct told me to approach him like a predator, while throwing little bits of hot dog to him," she says. "I reached forward and put the snare over his head just as he looked like he was ready to run away. I tried to reach some of Barbara's friends, but I couldn't get a hold of them. So I brought him home, wrapped him in a blanket, and slept on the couch with him in my arms."

Louie was on the lam for about eight hours, and Spinosa was able to determine that Louie had made it from the boarder's house in Chautauqua, across Mississauga Street to the library, and was most likely trying to find his way back to his home near the sailing club.

Worthy found out about the incident after Louie had been returned to her friend. "It was a miracle, really," she says now. "She's sweet, and she's amazing. It only took her about an hour to find him, she knew exactly what to do, and she pinpointed him."

In fact, just this December, Worthy turned to Spinosa to help her son find his dog when he went missing from his home in St. Catharines. She did that by instructing them in her methods over a phone call. Sure enough, after following Char's instructions, the dog came walking back up the driveway.

Spinosa also tells the story of recently helping to find a dog in China all the

way from her home here in Niagara. That one involved the internet and the perusal of Google Earth to determine where the dog might have been, as well as Google Translate to communicate with the locals there.

Not all of Spinosa's rescues are that easy. She tells the story of a search and rescue that took 119 days for a dog who somehow made it to Niagara Falls from Barrie. And she speaks fondly of past successful searches for dogs named Benji, Chloe, Harry Houdini, Poppy and Sammy. Relating her efforts, she often chokes up with emotion, remembering what it felt like to finally reunite each loving owner with their furry friends.

Along with her belief that her successes are guided by a higher power, Spinosa relies on tools such as that snappy snare, as well as harnesses, muzzles, slip leashes, and a trap armed with an electromagnetic lock and a photo beam that safely captures the roaming canine.

While others not in the know often pursue lost animals with a posse, making noise and laying out food to entice them, Spinosa uses a different approach. In fact, it all depends on how she profiles each individual animal.

"I learned very early on that a dog is not a dog," she explains. "I will not look for a chihuahua the same way I would a bullmastiff. A bullmastiff won't run, they walk aimlessly until their paws bleed. Whereas a chihuahua, you'll find it in the flowers, hiding behind a house. They stay in

well-lit areas."

She boils it down to what she calls the "five P's:" profiling the dog, profiling the breed, profiling the history, profiling the owner, and profiling the environment.

"You want to tie that all in with what I call the mechanism of the run," she adds. "That's my starting point. And when you go to my website (k9tracker.ca), I have a form. It tells you everything that I need to know before I call you. Then I fill in the finer details. By the time I do that, I already have a mindset of where I'm going and what I'm doing."

Spinosa, who once trained as a private investigator after a career in the downtown Toronto brokerage industry, only started offering her services as a business about four years ago. Her successful search for Harry Houdini, who she eventually tracked to Penner Home Hardware, resulted in her being handed a cheque by well-known Danny and Ron's Rescue in Florida, from where Harry had been adopted.

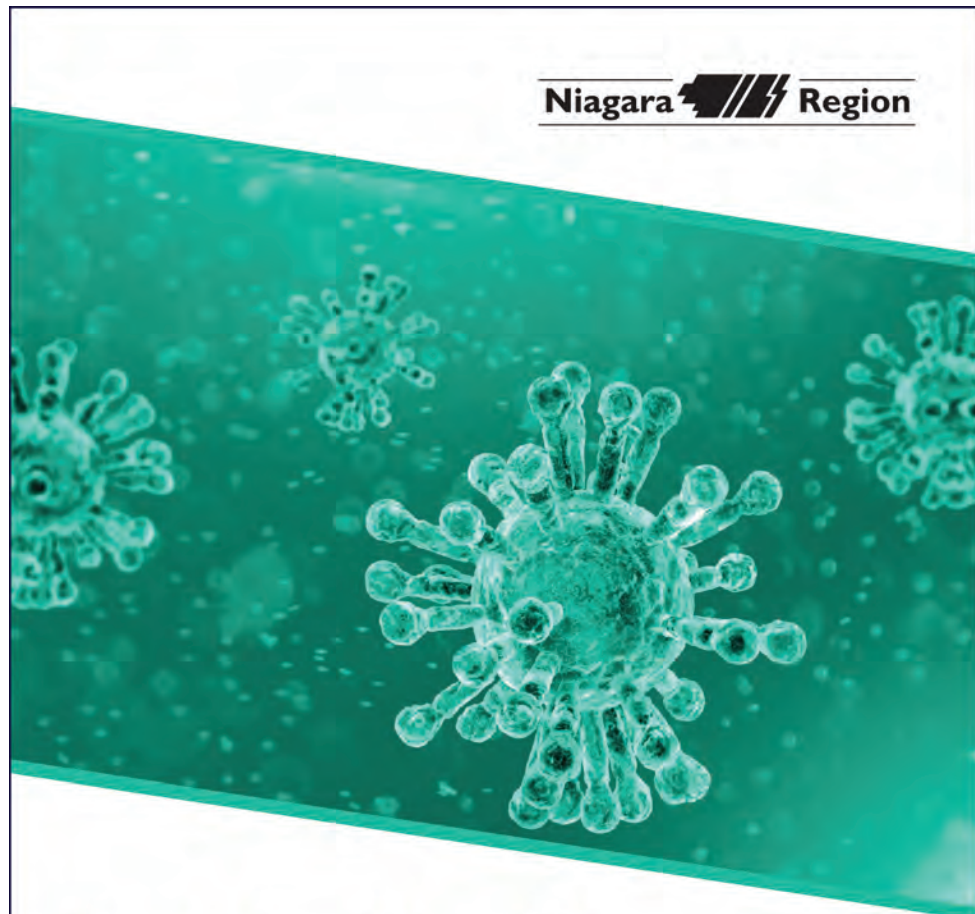
She claims that when she does charge for a rescue, it's usually just enough to cover her costs.

Spinosa outlines many of the methods and tricks of her trade in the new book, hoping to stop pet owners from doing the wrong things in their searches.

No word, however, on if she's able to tell the reader how to access that divine intervention that she swears guides her.

The book can be ordered via her website or her Facebook page, K9 Tracker Search & Rescue.

Niagara Region



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Better to wait, reopen when weather improves

Continued from page 3

some with only two people at a time, is it worth it? Better for us to wait another two or three weeks.”

She's accustomed to long winters on Queen Street, anticipating a good spring and summer, but it's difficult to know what to expect this year. Instead, it makes sense to be proactive now, she says, “and hope this gets better. There's no fast fix. It's tough, but we have to be patient.”

Matt Dietsch, who with his brother Paul owns Sandtrap Pub and Grill, says he's disappointed he can't reopen, but current restrictions have so far “done a good job of getting us where we want to be.”

The fact that restaurants can't reopen is a “big hot topic of debate,” he adds, “but decisions are being made to keep us safe.”

The Sandtrap is making the most of takeout orders while the dining room remains closed. “That is out of our hands. We just have to keep going with whatever they throw at us.”

The Mary Street restaurant has always been popular with locals at lunch time, he says, and they miss that crowd, but dinner takeouts are doing well. “Thankfully for us we always have had takeout, so we didn't have to reinvent the wheel.” It has allowed them to keep three full-time staff and two part-time. However, he's had to lay off 18 others, “and that's been the hardest part. That

was tough.”

He's not one to spend much time on Facebook, choosing to avoid the negativity. “I don't want to get riled up. I try to be a positive person, although it's not always easy these days.”

About the threats from others in the hospitality industry across the region, “there is no point taking your frustration on people who are trying to do their job. All our politicians and public health officials are doing the best they can to keep us safe. It's a crazy situation we're all going through,” says Dietsch. “We're just trying to follow all the rules to get through this, and open up again soon. It's been a long, hard winter for a lot of us. Just the fact that there's talk about another

lockdown, a third wave, makes it even more difficult.”

As hard as it is to be a restaurant owner right now, being a parent is also a challenge, he says. The father of two young boys, Dietsch says he's happy that at

least schools have reopened, having seen how hard it is on their kids' mental health. “This is the best thing for them,” and for the parents, he adds.

He also feels for those in long term care, and their loved

ones. “It breaks my heart to think about what they're going through, and the mental health struggles some people face. I just hope this is over soon. I'm really looking forward to spring, and hopefully better times ahead.”

Province needs to step up

Continued from page 3

In the meantime, she urges people to follow the rules and work with Dr. Hirji to continue to bring those case numbers down.

The solution to helping Niagara businesses is not opening up before it's safe, but for the province to help out with more financial aid for businesses that

are suffering, she said.

Many of the current programs make it impossible for businesses, including some that are still closed, to meet the criteria for assistance, and that should change.

“That's how the province can help. The province has a bigger pool of funding to access than municipalities do. We're

all having to tighten our belts.”

Disero says municipalities should be calling on the province to look at how it can help businesses through the pandemic.

“Public health makes decisions to keep people safe. Reopening is the job of cabinet, and the province should be making decisions that help the economy.”

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Veterans liked to help young people with repairs

Continued from page 1

and soul of our operation.”

On Feb. 9, he and a 72-year-old member of the group arrived soon after the fire had started, because of where their unit was located, managed to push almost all of the vehicles outside to safety.

They display their vehicles for many fundraisers, and are well-known for their annual participation in the pre-pandemic Friends of Fort George Timeline event, when they parade their First and Second World War relics through the main street of town.

Someone who sees them at a show might have an item in their basement or garage they want to donate — a radio, uniform or canteen that belonged to their grandfather, and they can’t throw it out. They’d stop by the shop, and occasionally

one would decide to join, says Young.

“It was a place for a lot of people to use as a get-away, work in their shops, and our vets liked to help out.”

Some of the vehicles are still stored outside, and some of the smaller ones members have taken home for now.

Young says he’s not sure what they’ll do long-term.

He’s concerned about the older members, who would putter around at the shop every day. “I just hope this doesn’t turn out to be the straw that breaks the camel’s back,” he says, concerned about how they will move forward from the loss of their gathering place.

At least each vehicle is privately owned and insured, so they’re not worrying about financial losses, he says.

Not all on the site were so fortunate.

Some of the younger guys who had cars that were “projects,” being rebuilt or restored, were not insured — they would have waited until their vehicle was road-ready, he says.

Allen Gilleta was another of the not-so-fortunate. The 70-year-old owner of Gilleta Flooring worked with home builders and hotels in Niagara-on-the-Lake for 35 years, and for about the last 15 years, his hobby has been collecting vehicles — first antique cars, then hot rods and motorcycles. Werner is a friend of his, and when he got out of chicken farming, Gilleta asked if he could convert part of one of the barns to store some of his vehicles. He was Werner’s first tenant, he says, and in the intervening years, says he spent so much time there he may as well have lived on the property. Over the last five years,

he’s had a team of two drivers, his son, Allen Jr., and Shaun Sliter, racing sprints. He builds the cars, and they compete at Humberstone, Ohsweken and Merrittville Speedways, which he says have all been very supportive of him and his team, at other Ontario tracks as well, and in the U.S. In addition to the cars, and one vintage racing car, he also had tires, a tire machine, and all the tools and equipment that goes along with restoring and maintaining the racing cars. When he got there that Tuesday of the fire, the firefighters were already on site, and wouldn’t let anyone around the back where his shop was located. He lost everything, even a car on a trailer outside the shop. “There was so much heat from that fire it was unbelievable.”

He estimates his personal loss at about \$300,000. It’s

hard to find a company that will insure racing cars, and he had no insurance, he says. “This was my hobby. It was what I did in that community.”

A week after the fire, he was planning on rebuilding his team, but not sure how, hoping support from a GoFundMe page — search Allen Gilleta — would get the team up and racing again.

“I’m going to have to start over, replacing every single nut and bolt. We didn’t have a chance to get anything out at all. It was too dangerous.”

Gilleta Sr. says he has spent a lifetime collecting vehicles, and was at his shop every day. There was a coffee pot by the office, he says, and many of the guys, from the military vehicle storage unit and others, would start their day there chatting over coffee. A former member of the association, he says he supports the military

and has held fundraisers at Humberstone for Wounded Warriors, which helps injured veterans.

He loved hanging out at his shop, and enjoyed having some of the younger racers, who also stored vehicles on the property, stop by to chat and ask questions.

“There was always a lot going on,” he says, agreeing with the others that it was more than a place for storage — it created a community for like-minded people of all ages. “There was a lot of camaraderie. I’m going to miss that.”

Werner, who lives in a house on the property which escaped damage, says he can rebuild the wood workshop, where his son Michael operates Reclaimed from Roots, creating custom-made furniture from fallen trees.

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Allen Gilleta Sr. took this shot of his shop, after the fire. He lost everything, including sprint cars and all the tools needed for his racing team. (Allen Gilleta Sr.)



One section of one of the chicken barns contained vehicles belonging to members of the Niagara Military Vehicle Association. Most were pushed out of the barn to safety. (Gavin Young)



Darren Werner, owner of the Townline Road property, helped his son Michael in the furniture business. (Photo supplied)



Military vehicles usually stored inside are outside for now. (Gavin Young)

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Friends lost their shop, tools and cars

Penny Coles
The Local

As Kyle Penner watched a car he loved burn last Tuesday, he also said goodbye to a lifestyle.

Although that's only temporary, he said.

He and a group of friends shared one of the larger storage units on Townline Road that was the site of last week's \$2.5 million fire, he says.

But it was more than that to them. It was a shop where they could work on their cars, share their hobby and love of cars, and hang out together after work and on weekends, when permitted and following pandemic restrictions, says Kyle.

In the summer, they spent less time there, "because we'd be out driving around in our

cars."

He and his father Kevin were on Lakeshore Road when Kyle received a call from his friend, whose car was in the same unit, and they headed straight there.

"We got there about 20 minutes after it started, and started pulling stuff out with my dad."

There were eight cars in the shop which he shared with seven friends, a 30 by 60-foot space, one of the larger ones, with eight cars in it the day of the fire.

He and others who were onsite when the fire started or who had raced there when they heard the news were getting what they could out of the units, including cars and tools.

With firefighters on the scene, appearing early on to

be getting the fire under control, Kyle and his friends were able to move the two cars closest to the door in his unit outside to a safe location. His car was next.

"I was almost in the driver's seat," he says of his 2015 Nissan 370Z NISMO, his prized possession. He had taken the car to the unit so he could work on it — he didn't usually leave it there, he says.

He sensed the fire coming closer, but felt it was still far enough in the distance for him to safely move his car, and maybe his friend's Scion, the one next to his.

The firefighters, however, were by then telling tenants of the shops to leave the units and move away from the fire, which they did.

"We were all in this together, and we lost our cars

together," he says.

His car and the other five still in the shop were destroyed by the fire. All he was able to save of his own was a set of wheels.

When he first arrived at the site, he says, "I didn't think it was going to be that bad. Then the smoke started pouring through the roof, and within about 45 minutes, it just became the craziest thing I've ever seen. It had really looked like the firefighters were going to get it under control, that it was being contained. But then it took off."

He said it was stressful when he was hoping to get his car out, but once he saw the fire spreading and had to give up on that, he stood back and watched, impressed with the professionalism of the firefighters, seeing they were

doing everything they could in a difficult situation.

"Once the fire went into the roof, we could see there wasn't much they could do. I don't think they could have done any better than they did. I know a lot of the firefighters. Some of them, and some of the police who were there, are my friends. There just wasn't anything more they could do."

He has insurance, as do his friends who share the shop, he says. They will all be dealing with that in the coming weeks, with no idea how long it could take to be settled.

In the meantime, he has already been looking at cars to replace the Nissan, which he values at about \$35,000.

He also needs to buy new tools, and he and his friends will be hunting for a new shop and storage space.

"This was just a hobby for us, something to do in the winter. I don't drive my car that often, mostly just in the summer. It's something we do as a pastime."

He had first rented a smaller shop on the property about two or three years ago, then moved to a larger one with his friends, he says. Being able to spend time there, hanging out together and working on their cars, meant a lot to all of them.

"We put so much into it. We were there often, working on our cars. It was something for all of us to do in the winter."

He and his friends are all going to be looking at cars to replace what they lost, and for a new shop, which might be harder to find, but they'll do it together, he says.

"We'll get it figured out."

Shops won't be rebuilt on greenbelt property

Continued from page 12

He might even be able to put up a canvas covering for some of the military vehicles. What they are doing helps tell the story about this country and the people who fought for it, he says, and also provides some pleasure for veterans and their family members, as well as some who have PTSD and find value in being part of the group.

But he has no illusions about rebuilding the storage units, which were a non-complying operation on Ontario Greenbelt property.

A 57-year-old industrial mechanic and millwright by trade who also ran the chicken farm for 21 years while he worked at a day job, Werner says when he decided to give up raising chickens, which is not the healthiest way to earn a living, he didn't set out to turn the barns into a storage business.

One friend, and then another, would ask about storing items on his property, and he had the space, so he agreed. As a member of the military vehicle association, he was happy to help the other members, he says, who were looking for indoor space for their most valuable vehicles. At each step of the conversion over a period of many years on the 10-acre site, he always made sure work was done properly and to code, and before he knew it, he had this great community of people who gathered on his property.

"I wasn't getting rich from it, and I never intended to be running a commercial business," he says, "but it was a really cool thing for everybody who was there. It was a business model that worked, and I really liked what I was doing."

He loved to walk around and talk to people, enjoying their presence as much as they enjoyed being there. He loved that the older people with

skilled trades would help out the younger ones, and with a complete machine shop on the site, he often helped them himself. He could have charged a lot more for the 30 units he rented out, he says, but the model he had created gradually, over time, became something that worked.

Although the cause of the fire hasn't been released by the office of the Ontario Fire Marshal, Werner believes it was electrical, and started near his office. His property was fully insured, and he's considering the possibility of creating something similar on a commercial property.

"It was a model that was needed. It's something we're meant to have in our lives, helping each other and learning from each other. We need more of that in our society. Everyone had each other's backs. We always said we had the best security, because everyone treated it like it was their own. It's not the loss of

the buildings that I lose sleep over. My sleepless nights are because of the loss of the community. It meant everything to these guys over so many years, and now it's gone."

He talks about the site as a village unto itself, with most people outside the village not aware it existed. But for those who were part of it, "it was huge. If it takes a village to raise a child, that's what was going on here. It gave a group

of young people a place to learn, a place to see what they could accomplish, a purpose. It gave them something they could believe in, something they could see that was tangible. There was a lot of talent here, a lot of skills and a lot of good people. Everybody who was here needed to be here."

He's trying to remain positive, feeling it's his responsibility to remain strong for others, and says despite the loss

of something that has been a huge part of his life in recent years, above all else, he's extremely grateful nobody was hurt. He misses what was going on, as does his two-year-old German shepherd, who goes out each day "looking for his buddies. This was an awesome community. We used to say, all roads lead here, although not a lot of people knew about it. It was a labour of love."



There was a lot of wood stored on the property, which was also the site of a custom furniture store, Reclaimed from Roots. (Gavin Young)



The chicken barns, which had plywood ceilings and a tin roof, were destroyed when the fire spread above the ceiling and the length of the 500-foot barns. (Darren Werner)

LOCAL SPORTS

Local girl heading to U.S. to play hockey

Bill Potrecz
Special to The Local

Brooke Loranger could not have asked for a better Christmas gift.

The 16-year-old, Grade 11 student at Ridley College found out about a week before Christmas she had been accepted to play hockey on a full scholarship at the College of the Holy Cross in Massachusetts.

Loranger is thrilled with the opportunity to tend goal at a NCAA Division I school.

"It's amazing," she said. "I'm really lucky and so happy to have this opportunity. It's obviously something that I've dreamt about, and a lot of other girls have too."

"It's an amazing feeling to finally get there and have that accomplishment."

Loranger says she started playing hockey when she was five. She was living in Edmonton, and with an older brother who is also a goalie, thought it was something she'd like to try.

"We've always been a big hockey family," she says.

The family moved to a home on Lakeshore Road in Niagara-on-the-Lake when she was 11, and she wanted to continue playing hockey, but her only choice was on a boys' team with the NOTL Minor Hockey

League. She was in the pee-wee BB division, "and I was the only girl. There might have been one or two on other teams, but on mine, there were no other girls, just me," she says.

She played in NOTL for two years, development years for her, she says. "I loved it, loved playing on the team. It was a lot of fun, and a really great experience."

But she was becoming a more competitive player, and girls on boys' teams don't get scouted. If she wanted to get better, she knew she had to move on.

Her second year playing for NOTL was a "very busy year" for her, she says. She also tended goal for the Brock Badgers women's team, playing up an age category at the bantam level. She had attended Ridley since she arrived in NOTL, and that year also traveled with the school's girls' hockey team to the U.S., playing her first game with them.

"I was sort of bouncing around that year, with three different teams. I was pretty much playing hockey seven days a week."

Ridley, she says, has "a really amazing girls' hockey program," and that is where she has played since.

"Brooke is a dedicated student-athlete who began



Goalie Brooke Loranger began playing for Ridley College since she was in Grade 7. Now in Grade 11, she has been accepted on a full scholarship at the College of the Holy Cross in Massachusetts. (Photo supplied)

with the Prep Girls Hockey program at Ridley in Grade 7," said Jason Barron, head of goalie development at Ridley. "She has shown great growth both on and off of the ice during that time and has become a leader within our program and the Ridley school community."

"Brooke is a student-athlete who takes great pride in her work and that is something that I am confident will continue during her time at Holy Cross. Brooke is a competitor who leaves no stone unturned in her development," he said. "She is always looking for ways to continue to grow her game. That competitive nature is something that has always been instinctive for her from a young age."

Loranger feels her time at Ridley has been a key component in her development.

"I think it's helped tremendously. It's the largest reason I am where I am now with my coaches,

they've been a really big part of that, being so supportive and helpful," she said. "They really push you to be your best constantly. I really owe a lot of thanks to Amanda (Wark) and Celeste (Doucet). I really don't think I would be where I am if they hadn't given me the chance to play on their team."

She will begin attending the Massachusetts school in the fall of 2022.

"It was actually a really big stress relief off my shoulders," she said. "I've been waiting for that opportunity for such a long time, since I started at Ridley. It's been a long trek, but I'm glad I finally got there."

Holy Cross was high on her list, after visiting a friend there a couple of years ago.

"It was a really gorgeous campus. My friend had such amazing things to say about the school's academics, and really good things to say about their women's

team and that their program was heading in an amazing direction with the new coaches they have there now."

"It was a mixture of things. Since the classes are so small, you get to know your professors really well which helps with academics and the connections you make are really helpful beyond school."

Loranger, who plans to major in business management, is looking forward to the challenge of playing at the NCAA level.

"The hockey is going to be really great. I think there's going to be a lot of opportunities for the team, and for me to prove myself once I get there," she said. "I think it's going to be a really big transition, but I think if you really keep working hard and really try to project further and aim higher, you are somewhat prepared for it, and it won't be a big shock."

Meanwhile, she is doing

her best to keep as active as possible during the lockdown.

"I'm working out a couple of times a day trying to keep active and be prepared for when we finally do go back," she said. "It's definitely hard. It's been your life, it's all you do for such a long time and then for it just to be taken away so quickly, it has been difficult. It's an outlet for myself and a lot of other people to let go of some stress and just have a little bit of fun and take your mind away from school and everything else."

Bill Potrecz spent 32 years as a sportswriter for Niagara dailies, covering almost every sport imaginable from high school, to junior hockey, to a World Series and Stanley Cup final. By his estimation he has covered more than 1,500 junior hockey games. He now provides regional sports coverage through BP Sports Niagara.

LOCAL HAPPENINGS

NIAGARA PUMPHOUSE ~ FEBRUARY FAMILY FRIENDLY ONLINE STUDIO

February 18 @ 11 a.m. - 4 p.m.

Learn to make paper flowers from pages of old books and magazines. Visit <https://niagarapumphouse.ca>

For this project, you will need:

- Old books or magazines
- Paintbrush
- Stick or skewer for stem
- Pencil
- Ruler
- Glue gun
- Watercolour paint
- Scissors

JUSTICE 4 BLACK LIVES NIAGARA

February 23 @ 1:30 p.m. - 3 p.m.

Join in remotely on zoom for a conversation with Sherri Darlene, Niagara region anti-racism activist and organizer, as she leads us through questions about systematic racism, anti-racism, and how to be an ally. In partnership with Niagara College's Indigenous Education department, we hope you join the Niagara College Library for this community event. All are welcome. <https://notlpubliclibrary.org/>

Save your spot, here: <https://zcu.io/djyy>

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

LOCAL WORSHIP

CORNERSTONE COMMUNITY CHURCH

Sunday, February 21st

10 a.m. Worship Gathering (Online Only)

Speaker: **Kevin Bayne**

Message: **Philippians 2:12-18**

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

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OBITUARY



BROWN, JAMES—With heavy hearts, the family of James Brown announce his peaceful passing on the early morning of February 12, 2021 at his home, with family by his side. Jim was born on December 25th, 1937 to Tom and Iris Brown in Motherwell, Scotland. He spent his childhood there getting his education as a draughtsman, as well as discovering a love of golf that would last a life time.

In 1959, he was conscripted into National Service with The Kings Own Scottish Borderers and served in Rank as Lance Corporal for 2 years, about which he was deeply proud.

He met his beloved wife of 60 years, Helen Rose Hepburn, at the dancing in Motherwell and on June 2, 1962 they were married. After starting their life together in Scotland, they attended Expo 1967 in Montreal. They decided to immigrate to Canada and settled in St. Catharines, Ontario. It was there that they welcomed their first daughter Catherine Veronica in 1968. Seven years later, they welcomed their second daughter Nora Elizabeth in 1975 and the family settled in Niagara-on-the-Lake. When Helen saw the orchard view, she said she was never leaving. When Jimmie saw the golf course, he quite agreed.

Jim began his life long career as a respected mechanical engineer at Provincial Crane in Niagara Falls. Of note was his contribution to the retractable roof for the Diamondbacks Stadium in Arizona.

The NOTL Golf Course was a special place to him. He served as respected Games Captain for 5 years, was the 1984 "Almost" Club Champion, and was honoured with The Legends Trophy. Jim enjoyed art and jazz, regularly visiting galleries and clubs with his family in Toronto. And recently, he enjoyed supporting the Jazz Festivals held in Niagara. Jim had a strong faith and was a dedicated and active member of Grace United Church.

His charismatic nature, clever wit, loving, kind, and generous nature drew people to him. He was a mentor, guide, and a good friend to all.

Jim was deeply proud of and had a great love for his four grandchildren. He relished going on adventures with them and applauding their accomplishments.

The family wishes to offer a special thank you to Mike Freel who was a dear and treasured friend in recent years.

Jim is lovingly remembered by his wife Helen; his daughters Cathie (Derek) Pennington and Nora (Derek) Vedress; and his grandchildren Isobel, J.D., Grace, and Luke.

Jim was predeceased by his parents Tom and Iris Brown; his in-laws James and Catherine Hepburn.

Cremation has taken place. Under current pandemic conditions, funeral arrangements are private.

In lieu of flowers, donations in memory of Jim can be made to Grace United Church or a charity of donor's choice.

Memories, photos and condolences may be shared at www.morganfuneral.com



ENNS, JOHN DAVID—The family of John David Enns of Niagara-on-the-Lake, and more recently Niagara Falls, is saddened to announce his passing, peacefully at home, with his children on Sunday, February 7th. He was 69.

John will be lovingly remembered by his children JR (Jan) and Julie (Brandon); his grandchildren, Brooklyn, Ryder, Zoe and Owen who adoringly called him "Grandpa Big

John"; his former spouse, Mary-Ann (nee Jones); sisters, Jo-Ann (Schmidt), Irene (Les Howarth), Barbara (Baptiste-Opheim); brothers Fred (Sue), Tim (Tara); and many relatives and friends. He was the special "Uncle Big John" to his many nieces, nephews, grandnieces and grandnephews.

John was predeceased by his loving parents, John and LaVina.

John's big heart, humour, sharp wit and one-liners will be dearly missed by all who had the pleasure of knowing him.

Although ailing health ended his regular gatherings with hunt camp pals and close friends, the treasured memories of those days, especially his days of service to the Volunteer Fire Department in Virgil, kept him going.

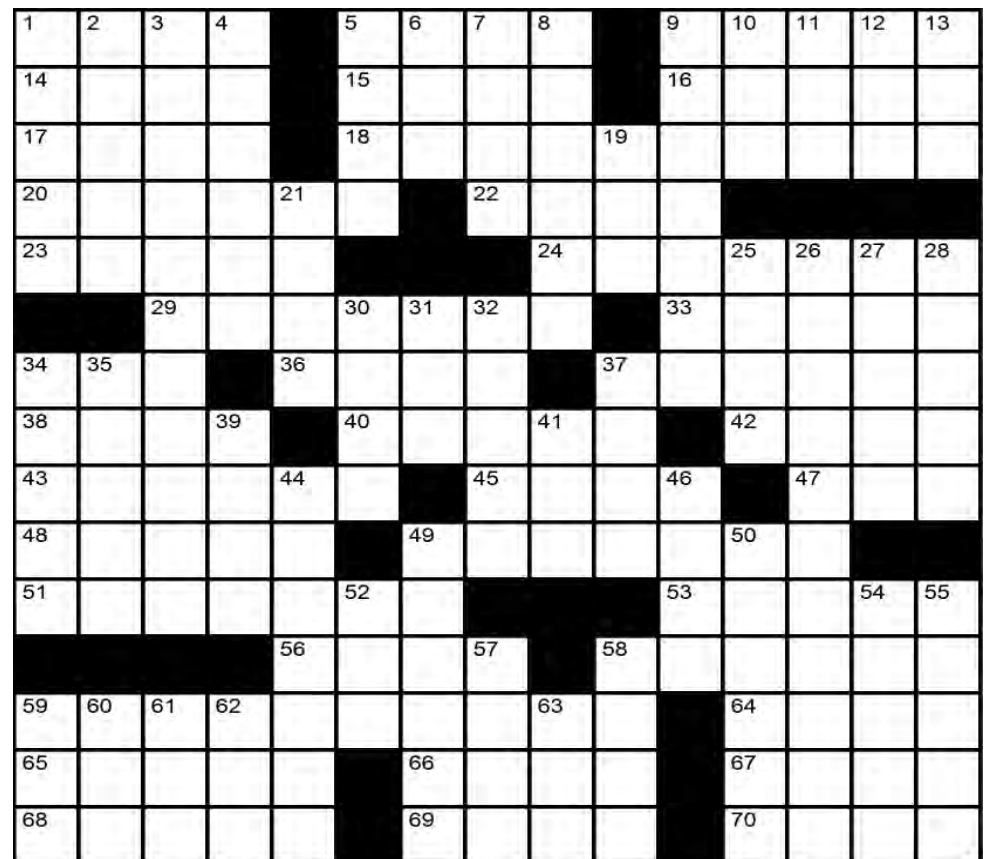
A Celebration of Life will be held at a later date when COVID restrictions are lifted.

Memorial Donations in John's name may be made to any Mental Health organization of your choice or Palliative Care organization to better support those in need, should you wish.

Online tributes and condolences may be made at www.hetheringtonanddeans.com



CROSSWORD AND SUDOKU



Across:

- 1 Feeble
- 5 Baghdad's --- City
- 9 Archie's wife
- 14 Spoken
- 15 U N nuclear watchdog
- 16 Reproduced sound
- 17 Thin coating
- 18 Theoretical birth of the Universe
- 20 In the offing
- 22 Desperate
- 23 Yarn
- 24 Before this
- 29 Business disappointment
- 33 Yorba ---, R M H's birthplace
- 34 Saturated
- 36 Injure
- 37 Methodology
- 38 Once again
- 40 Exchange
- 42 Sepulcher
- 43 Congenital
- 45 Genuine
- 47 Chinese ultimate reality
- 48 Not entirely natural, if born in this
- 49 Beaten by the Continental Army
- 51 Gist
- 53 Flared dress type

- 56 Class
- 58 Mendelssohn's "Scottish Symphony" key
- 59 Living on land and in water
- 64 Blowout
- 65 Of the nose
- 66 O T shipwright
- 67 Chart-toppers
- 68 Tors
- 69 Hilarity
- 70 Every family has one

Down:

- 1 Attics
- 2 Hilarious
- 3 Troublemakers, often
- 4 "Get Shorty" author --- Leonard
- 5 Place
- 6 Expression of relief
- 7 Property document
- 8 Hydrophobia
- 9 Enthusiastically
- 10 Name
- 11 Former name of Psiloritis, Cretan mountain
- 12 Can plating
- 13 Harley, often
- 19 Retirement arrangement

- 21 Legend
- 25 Itemize
- 26 A way to disappear
- 27 Watery swelling
- 28 Sly fighter?
- 30 Pear-shaped stringed instrument
- 31 Ice hockey player Bobby ---
- 32 Beatie married to Bach
- 34 Forego
- 35 Bill Cosby's late son
- 37 Candidate's aim
- 39 Merchandise
- 41 Agnus ---
- 44 Lymphatic tissues often removed after infection
- 46 "Taken" star --- Neeson
- 49 Strait west of Wales, AK
- 50 Slender
- 52 Stocky horse
- 54 "Lorenzo's Oil" actor Nick ---
- 55 Rub out
- 57 Implement
- 58 Arthur --- stadium, Queens, N Y C
- 59 Military nurses' group (Abbr.)
- 60 Besmirch
- 61 Pro bono TV ad
- 62 Crone
- 63 The Emirates

Sudoku solution from February 11, 2021

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

Across: 1 Lame, 5 Sad, 9 Edith, 14 Oral, 15 I A E A, 16 Audio, 17 Film, 18 The big bang, 20 To come, 22 Dire, 23 Story, 24 Earlier, 29 Net loss, 33 Linda, 34 Wet, 36 Hurt, 37 System, 38 Anew, 40 Trade, 42 Tomb, 43 Innate, 45 Real, 47 Tao, 48 Vitro, 49 British, 51 Essence, 53 A-line, 56 Sort, 58 A minor, 59 Amphibious, 64 Gala, 65 Nasal, 66 Noah, 67 Hits, 68 Crags, 69 Glee, 70 Tree.


Down: 1 Lofts, 2 A riot, 3 Malcontents, 4 Elmore, 5 Site, 6 Aah, 7 Deed, 8 Rabies, 9 Eagerly, 10 Dub, 11 Ida, 12 Tin, 13 Hog, 19 I R A, 21 Myth, 25 List, 26 Into thin air, 27 Edema, 28 Rambo, 30 Lute, 31 Orr, 32 Stern, 34 Waive, 35 Ennis, 37 Seat, 39 Ware, 41 Dei, 44 Tonsils, 46 Liam, 49 Bering, 50 Slight, 52 Cob, 54 Noite, 55 Erase, 57 Tool, 58 Ashe, 59 A N C, 60 Mar, 61 P S A, 62 Hag, 63 U A E.



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Harrison, Carter, and Kolby Gossen, with their sister Gracynn, hang out with Tyson after his recent visit to the veterinarian. The family can now live without fear of future attacks from a neighbouring dog. (Photo supplied)

Tyson finally safe from dog attacks

Penny Coles
The Local

A frightening ordeal has come to an end for the Gossen family and their dog, Tyson.

Last Friday Diago, a dog who lives across the street from the Line 4 family, once again got loose, came bounding over onto the Gossen property, and viciously attacked Tyson in his own doghouse on their porch.

By late Friday night, after spending hours with the veterinarian, he was able to go home, no stitches this time, just cuts and bruising around his neck, and a \$600 bill.

But this time, unlike the previous incidents, something has been done to protect Tyson, an eight-year-old border collie/Australian shepherd cross, for the future. Diago's owner was finally convinced he had to give him up.

Rachel, who exudes positivity and kindness in conversation and on social media, says she has lived in fear for the safety of her family since the first attack, knowing it could be one of her four kids outside with Tyson when Diago showed up. Her husband Steve has a hard enough time when the dog runs across the street and jumps on him, she says, and she can't help envisioning what would happen if it was one of her kids or their friends he could easily knock down. She has also felt the ongoing frustration of calling the town, the town's canine control officer, the Niagara Falls Humane Society and even the Niagara Regional Police, who have all responded to her calls and been involved at one time or another over the years, but none of them able or willing to make the attacks stop.

She describes the most recent assault on Tyson Friday, a day off school for the kids with teachers having a professional development day. She and her daughter Gracynn, the youngest of four siblings, were in the car and about to go shopping for baking supplies to make cookies for Valentine's Day. Steve was in the driveway when the two dogs from across the street came running up, their owner, Paul Ermanian, behind them. Although they were both loose, only Diago, the male is the more aggressive with Tyson, Ermanian says because his other dog is female and Diago's jealous.

The attacks have occurred, says Rachel, because Ermanian is unable to keep Diago contained, although he has always said he is trying.

After Diago's attack on Tyson last November, Ermanian said he had considered finding a new home for his dog, but decided he would keep him, and do his best to prevent any more incidents.

Gossen has said from the beginning of the problem with the dogs, she has tried not to turn it into a fight between neighbours. They've always gotten along, and Ermanian has been a great neighbour, a good person, and has tried to keep Diago on his property. It works for a while, until he gets out again and heads across the road to hurt Tyson.

After the November attack, the Gossens, frustrated about the lack of action or a solution, had a lawyer and family friend send a letter to the town outlining their concerns.

Ken Reid, the town's canine control officer, had said he couldn't take the dog, it was the responsibility of the hu-

mane society. The SPCA has been nothing but cooperative and supportive throughout, says Gossen, who is grateful for their help, but they said it was a municipal responsibility, and although the lord mayor and councillors seemed sympathetic, nothing was done.

The lawyer's letter to the town included details of the attack and reports made to the humane society, the canine control officer, and the police.

Rachel credits her lawyer for finally making some headway with the letter, with the result that when the animal control officer issued the appropriate fines Friday and encouraged her neighbour to give up his dog, the Niagara Falls Humane Society, which finds homeless and unwanted dogs a new home, came to collect it.

It is because the friend stepped up, "made contact and stood in the gap for us at a time when we really needed someone to," that Tyson and the Gossen family can sleep at night, Rachel said.

"This, to us, was the very picture of true friendship, and we are truly beyond grateful to her."

Rachel says she reached out to Ermanian after she learned he had given up his dog, and said they were very sorry that it had come to that, "but we felt like we had no choice for the safety of our family. We hope that we can have peace again as neighbours."

Ermanian said he had always intended to rectify the situation, and was sorry for the problem he had caused the Gossen family. "Having to give Diago up was heart-breaking for me, but I felt that it was the best, as I fully understand your position," he responded.