

The Niagara-on-the-Lake LOCAL



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Smile for the day

Lisa Laughton, a registered nurse at the St. Catharines hospital, created this sign for her Lakeshore Road fence, hoping it would send a positive message and maybe make people smile. She saw a similar sign advertising a fitness centre, and realizing it had helped lift her spirits and made her smile, felt the message might do the same for those in the community where she has lived for the last 25 years. Work is going well, the health system “has a good handle on things,” she is optimistic about the future, and “it’s a big fence,” she jokes. The sign has been up since the family day long weekend, and since it seems to be weathering well, she plans to leave it as long as it’s in good shape. The photo, which has gained attention on social media, was taken by a town staff member on the way to work.



Niagara likely moving to red, despite variant fear

Penny Coles
The Local

Niagara may be in the red by next week, although Dr. Mustafa Hirji is not about to make that recommendation to the province.

He told The Local Monday he’s unsure whether his opinion will be sought by the province,

which has a more aggressive approach to reopening than he would choose, before the expected announcement Friday.

“Being extra cautious would protect residents better,” he said.

Staying in the grey zone causes a lot of difficulty for some businesses, he said, but as mindful as he is of business

owners and those out of work, he is concerned about reopening in the face of variants, which spread more quickly than COVID-19 and add to the potential for a third wave.

There are six cases of possible variants identified in Niagara, yet to be confirmed, he says, found in positive tests of people who have some connection to

the GTA, either from travelling there or staying temporarily, before returning to Niagara, and spreading the infection to others. The testing will also confirm the kind of variants.

He also worries that people will see the red zone as a signal to let down their guard and resume socializing, he said.

His choice would be to see

Niagara, along with other areas such as the GTA and Peel, continue to be locked down, until the spread of the variants can be better controlled.

While a third wave is not inevitable, the acting chief medical officer of health is saying measures must be taken to avoid it.

If Niagara moves from grey-lockdown to red, restaurants can open their dining rooms, to a limited capacity. Gyms and salons can also open.

Most of Niagara, including Niagara-on-the-Lake, has case numbers in the red zone, with some orange and yellow areas, he said, but while most of the trends are improving, there are other factors to consider, and reopening, with a threat of variants that spread quickly, could cause a spike in cases.

“That’s why I’m signalling that caution,” he said.

The number of outbreaks is still high, although coming down, and the impact they have on hospitals, hospital staff who could be otherwise available to work at vaccination clinics, and the strain on contact tracing to slow the spread are all factors that should be considered, he said, with “little room for error” if the transmission of variants start increasing.

While outbreaks in the fall were primarily due to long-term care home transmissions and younger people socializing with friends and work colleagues, those numbers have declined, and what he sees now are cases in the agricultural sector, mainly greenhouses.

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Vaccination plan ready to roll

Penny Coles
The Local

The vaccination program will start to ramp up in the region in the coming weeks, and will be a game-changer in the fight against COVID-19, says Dr. Mustafa Hirji.

Niagara has a more detailed plan than the public has seen, but the acting chief medical officer of health says it is so dependant on the arrival of vaccines he fears releasing information and then having to change it.

While the supply is expect-

ed to be steady, arriving weekly, Hirji says the number of doses are not as high as he was told to expect a week ago.

He understands residents are anxious to know when they will be vaccinated, where, and how to register, and there will be communication through

several avenues, including local media, as that information becomes available.

He expects the public health department will look after registration, using software provided by the province, with the 80-

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Lord Mayor asks for patience with vaccination roll-out

Penny Coles
The Local

Lord Mayor Betty Disero says there is a lot of confusion about vaccinations locally, which she hopes to be able to clear up soon.

But the overriding message now is to be patient. As more information is available, it will be communicated to the public, she says, and people will know when it's time for their vaccination, who to contact and where to go for it.

There is a regional vaccination task force meeting Thursday to discuss details of the roll-out, and hopefully that information will be made public shortly after, she says.

She's been receiving lots of questions from residents, to which she doesn't have all the answers, and raised some of them with Dr. David Dec, the chair of the region's vaccination task force, last Friday.

Dec says Niagara Health has been co-ordinating vaccinations for the most at-risk health care workers, including staff of hospitals, as well as long-term care and high-risk retirement homes who are getting their second doses this week. Space at the Seymour Hannah sports centre in St. Catharines reopened last week to allow for vaccinations as quickly as the vaccine supply is available.

He spoke in general terms of mobilizing quickly as the vaccine arrives, but with no specific details yet of the roll-out plan.

In Niagara-on-the-Lake, the community centre is expected to be the first vaccination site, although that too is still to be confirmed, Disero says.

How many days or hours the clinic will be open, she doesn't know, but that is when and where she expects vaccinations to begin for those 80 years and older.

Decisions about details of

clinics across the region are expected to be discussed at the task force meeting Thursday, she says.

Disero says NOTL residents contacting her with questions are confused about the process of vaccinations once Niagara moves on to that stage when they are available for older residents, some of whom have registered to receive their shots at a local pharmacy.

"I love that the pharmacies are going to assist with vaccinations," she says, but when she questioned Dec Friday, she was clarifying that primary care clinics and pharmacies were expected to become part of the vaccinations at some point later down the road, as the roll-out works its way through from stage 1 through to stage 3.

Those 80-plus, she says, shouldn't have to wait that long.

According to the Niagara Region website, first stage also prioritizes those at higher risk of

severe outcomes of COVID-19, and those most likely to transmit infection to those at higher risk for severe illness or death.

Once those people and the 80-plus age group is vaccinated, it

decreases the age limit by five-year increments to age 70 as supply of the vaccine becomes available.

"The 80-plus age group should be able to go to the community centre (if that's the con-

firmed location), and not have to wait until the pharmacies are open for vaccinations," she says.

"There's a lot of confusion about

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Wellness committee to help with vaccination communication

Penny Coles
The Local

The Niagara-on-the-Lake Community Wellness Committee will have a local role to play in vaccinations, primarily in the area of communications.

After a meeting of the committee Monday, which included Lord Mayor Betty Disero, Sean Simpson of Simpson's Pharmacy, and Mary Keith, executive director of the Niagara North Family Health team, chair Cindy Grant said there is some confusion and concern amongst residents of the vaccination plan.

The first location is expected to be the community centre, although there is no date available about when vaccinations will begin.

The wellness committee wanted to talk about a made-in-NOTL vaccination plan, including local stakeholders in the discussion, says Grant.

The province has dictated certain terms of the vaccination roll-out, including a priority list of the order in which people are

able to receive their doses. Other details are left up to the region, and Niagara Public Health is working on plans for vaccination clinics in each municipality, all depending on a timeline for the arrival of vaccine.

"We're swimming in the dark, with so many unknowns," says Grant, who offered the committee's assistance, saying members could help with communicating information to the public as it becomes available.

Keith told the committee the family health team has been asked to provide volunteers, and that as Public Health reaches out to the health team, "my understanding is we'll be asked to provide staffing at some level, but I don't get the sense we'll be asked to organize anything."

She has also been asked to provide lists in five-year age brackets, which was easy to do.

But later in the afternoon, Keith received an email she shared with Grant, with information to make public, saying the province announced that those aged 80 and above should

contact their doctor to be vaccinated, so the family health team could expect to get phone calls and inquires from patients.

However, the health team staff had no details to give patients, or any idea of what should be collected in the way of information from patients.

The information that will be given to patients on the family health team website and through social media is that while they know people 80 years and older will be given priority for vaccination, they have no information yet about where or when vaccinations will take place, how appointments for vaccinations will be booked, how patients will be notified, or who will be notifying patients.

Grant says although the wellness committee also has little information to share, they understand everyone is anxious to know more about the vaccination process. The committee has offered to communicate with residents, asking them please to be patient, and assuring them information will be made public as it's available.

Shaw Festival cancels Gypsy

Local Staff

The Shaw Festival is cancelling *Gypsy: A Musical Fable*, for this year.

With planning for next year well underway, the festival is looking ahead to 2023, intending to offer the musical production then.

The decision was made based on new COVID-19 restrictions, and Niagara being in the grey-lockdown zone, it was announced Tuesday.

The restrictive measures placed on the rehearsal and performance of brass and wind instruments and singing severely impacts director and choreographer Kimberley Rampersad, and her creative team's original and artistic vision for the musical, the announcement said.

The remainder of The Shaw's 2021 playbill is not currently affected by the changes to the performance protocols impacting the musical, and will continue as originally scheduled.

"However much we have grown used to being nimble and adaptable in the ever-shifting landscape of this pandemic, this is still a pretty heartrending decision to have to make," said artistic director Tim Carroll. "But as one door closes, another opens. We were already planning a fabulous range of outdoor events, musical, theatrical, you name it; having this group of amazing performers available for that work increases our scope hugely. We will announce details of our mystery projects in the coming weeks."

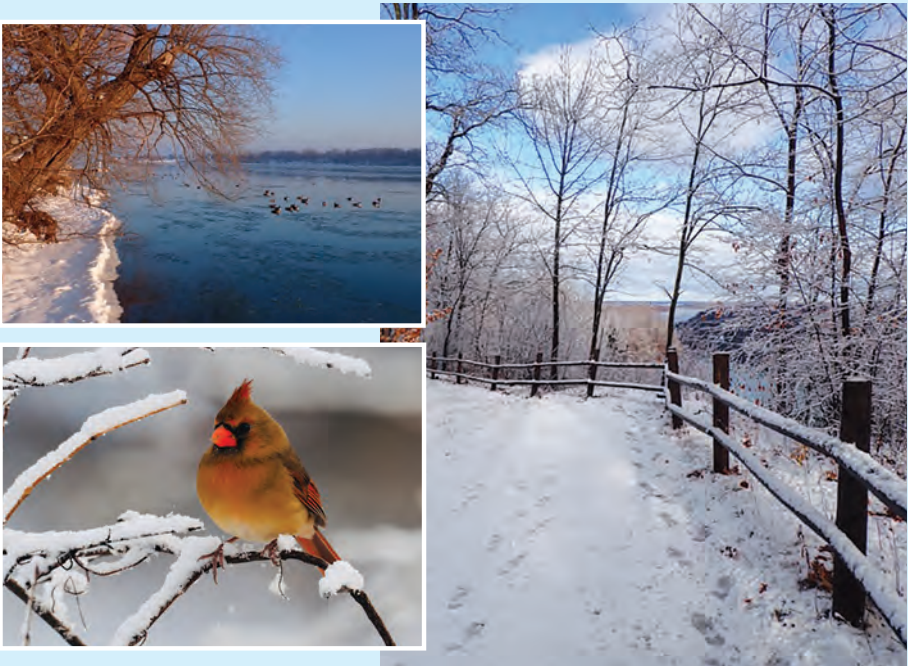
"We remain confident The Shaw will be able to present the remaining shows of the 2021 season," said Tim Jennings, executive director and CEO of the festival. "Our theatres are at the heart of Niagara-on-the-Lake, and we are deeply aware of The Shaw's economic impact on our surrounding communities. With this in mind, supplementing the playbill with additional performance offerings will allow us to support the artists and crew of

Gypsy: A Musical Fable – and by extension, our community – while offering our audiences safe, entertaining and inspired outdoor alternatives. We will make announcements about our new add-ons for this season throughout the coming weeks and as opportunities present themselves. Stay tuned."

In addition to following and exceeding the directives of local, provincial and federal governments and their respective public health agencies, the Shaw Festival has implemented a Duty of Care initiative, and is committed to ensuring the health and safety of its audiences, company members and communities.

Box office representatives will be reaching out to all affected ticket holders to discuss options, including refunds. Patrons with questions or concerns regarding their tickets can call the Shaw Festival box office at 1-800-511-7429, Monday to Saturday from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m., or by email at boxoffice@shawfest.com.

Nature cloaked in snow



Local photographer David Gilchrist shares some of his recent winter photos of nature.

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Province has 'emergency brake' if COVID cases spike

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While not an expert, he adds, he would expect that the real push in that industry is now, and hopes those outbreaks will soon be under control.

If Niagara moves to the red zone, on top of provin-

cial capacity limits, Hirji has already instituted restrictions on restaurants and retailers. Restaurants will only be allowed four people from the same household at one table, with some exceptions, as was the case in the fall.

Through no fault of restaurant owners, in-person dining

is "inherently risky," Hirji says, with people sitting close together, without masks. He described a situation in Niagara last fall, when three people became infected from being together at a bar, and then their activity, which included visiting other restaurants with friends, interaction with family and work

places, and a visit to a long-term care home, created an outbreak of more than 30 people.

The restrictions he is imposing on restaurants, when they open, were shown to work when they were first instituted in November, he said, leading to a reduction in the spread of COVID outbreaks, while still allowing dining rooms to remain open.

Also included in the local restrictions, which came into effect this week, Niagara is following Hamilton and Halton in requiring better policing of compliance with issues such

as screening staff, controlling crowding in stores, having a safety plan readily available, and enforcing proper mask-wearing of customers.

Failure to comply with any of these measures could bring a fine from \$750 up to \$5,000.

If, despite those extra measures, Niagara sees a spike in cases, the province's "emergency brake" is designed to quickly put the area back into lock-down.

"Hopefully they would listen to us and our concerns."

Hirji pointed to several other European countries where aggressive measures have

worked, including Germany, which remains in a "hard lockdown, with schools closed, travel restricted, and no curbside pickup allowed.

While he isn't suggesting such restrictions in Niagara, he is advocating continued measures to hold off the variants, and public vigilance.

But "the real game-changer" in preventing the spread of variants, a third wave and "nightmare scenarios" that could follow, he said, will be the arrival of vaccine and the vaccination roll-out that will soon follow.

Council honours dedicated, insightful, active volunteer

Penny Coles
The Local

At Monday's council meeting, Coun. Sandra O'Connor asked condolences be expressed to the family of Diane Jeannine Neilson Moreau (Hemmings) who passed away on Feb. 3.

She told councillors Diane had been a resident in Niagara-on-the-Lake and an active volunteer in town since 2008, chairing both the highly successful town Communities in Bloom Committee, and the NOTL Horticultural Society.

She was a member of a long list of organizations in NOTL, including the Newcomers Club board, Music Niagara board, Shaw Guild, the Garden Club of Niagara, Bacchus Group member, the Lyndes-

farm Board, the NOTL Museum board, a member of the Friends of Fort George, and enjoyed participating in a current affairs group, a knitting group, a book club and a mahjong group.

Diane received her R.N in 1966, O'Connor said, her B.N. in 1970, and her M.Sc.N. in 1975 at McGill University.

She was the first psychiatric nurse to publish her research with her colleague doctors at medical conventions around the world; she was a psychiatric nursing consultant with several medical institutions, and on the teaching staff at various universities in three countries. She was asked to be a member of the health services steering committee in 2014, and taught at Brock University in three faculties, said O'Connor.

"Diane's volunteer ethic was exemplary, her well-tempered style of engagement and her intelligent recommendations for preferred objectives were well received," she said, adding Diane became a true friend to many in Niagara-on-the-Lake, and never said no when asked for help."

Everyone who knew Diane, says O'Connor, "appreciated her dry wit and sense of humour, her sensible approaches, her insightful suggestions and her incisive decision-making skills. Diane will be sincerely missed."

Councillors agreed to send an expression of gratitude for Diane's work for Niagara-on-the-Lake, and had a minute of silence to remember her before proceeding with the meeting.

'Be patient, don't worry'

Continued from page 2

that out there. I'm hearing more and more from people who are asking what is going on. If people are waiting for pharmacies to acquire the vaccine, I'm afraid they may miss an opportunity."

Sean Simpson of Simpson's Pharmacy is a member of the regional task force, representing the Pharmacists' Association of the Niagara Peninsula. His advice to those who are concerned or confused is also to be patient, and not to worry.

His Niagara Stone Road pharmacy is taking registrations from those who want the vaccine, compiling a list so that when

he has vaccine, he will be able to begin vaccinations quickly.

But anyone on that list who has an opportunity to be vaccinated elsewhere sooner, such as at a local clinic, should do that, he says.

"I'm encouraging people to be added to the waitlist, but I don't have any dates. We'll be notifying people when we do."

As a member of the task force, he doesn't have any advance notice of dates of vaccine arrival, he says. Members are discussing how to proceed, on a consensus basis, with the goal of getting vaccinations done as soon as possible.

"People shouldn't be worried. Worrying about it isn't go-

ing to make it happen any sooner," says Simpson.

The goal is for nobody to be overlooked, he says, and when more information is available about the roll-out, "there will be ample communication and awareness for people to know when it's their turn. I'm anticipating a lot of people (registered at Simpson's) will get access to the vaccine before we have a chance to notify them. If you can get the vaccine somewhere else, take it."

When the pharmacy has the vaccine available, the list will make it easier to help reach out as quickly as possible to those who are waiting to be vaccinated, he says.

Vaccination schedule relies on supply from province

Continued from page 1

plus residents expected to begin that process of registration toward the end of March.

Clinics should be up and running across the region, in centres such as the Niagara-on-the-Lake community centre, by April, but there are still details to be worked out, the most important factor the arrival of sufficient vaccine.

"I don't want to promise anything if the vaccine hasn't come yet," he says.

"I want to be sure we have the vaccinations to do that."

While both the region and the town are expecting the community centre to be the NOTL clinic location, Hirji says the region is holding off signing leases with municipalities, and in some cases the private sector, until it has a more definite start date.

"We don't want to sign leases until we know that date. Something might change in the meantime. Our plan is for vaccinations to continue for months, and we need to have a lease for that length of time. It might be only for two days a week, but for week after week after week at that location, as we move from vaccinating one group to another."

And all of that is based on

the amount of vaccine, and when it arrives.

"We have a lot of uncertainty from the provincial government, a lot of difficulty getting numbers," says Hirji.

Typically, the region receives notification of how much vaccine is coming about a week and a half ahead of its arrival, "so we don't have a lot of time to give that information to the public."

Although most of the regional projections of the current timeline are based on Niagara Health and Public Health doing the vaccinating, Hirji says he expects primary health care clinics and family physicians to be involved in some way.

Hirji would like to see family physicians take on the role of vaccinating their patients. "The more people we have doing vaccinations at other locations, the better for everybody," he says.

But he recognizes not all doctors' offices or clinics are set up to do that safely during a pandemic, and as an alternative, physicians and staff may choose instead to help out at community clinics.

The plan is by the time everyone of one age group receives their first dose, it will be time to begin administering second doses, before moving to a younger cohort.

The region already has de-

tails of how many people are in each age group, and how long it should take to get them vaccinated, says Hirji.

For example, there are 20,800 people 80 years and older who are not in long-term care or retirement homes, and have not been vaccinated.

They are in the third of three groups of the first stage of people to be vaccinated. Hirji says the plan is for vaccinating that age group to take six to eight weeks for them to get both doses, before moving to a younger age group.

"We have that planned out for the entire population, right down to 16 years and older," says Hirji. "We've worked through the whole scenario."

Ideally, if there is enough vaccine, those in the last stage, which includes everyone who wants to be vaccinated, should begin by August or September.

When pharmacies become involved also depends on how plentiful the vaccine is, says Hirji, but that likely won't happen until late spring or early summer.

"Obviously, if we get enough vaccine, it could be earlier."

For more information about the regional vaccination plan, visit <https://niagara-region.ca/health/covid-19/vaccination.aspx?shorturl=1>

Heritage buildings on a winter day



Donald Combe walks with his dog Maggie through Old Town streets, capturing local heritage buildings in their winter wonder.

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Library offers busy schedule of virtual programs

Penny Coles
The Local

Like so many businesses and organizations in town, the Niagara-on-the-Lake Public Library staff have transitioned to serving patrons through a pandemic, learning some valuable lessons for the future along the way.

Although the building is closed, books can still be borrowed, and many library programs continue, with new ones added, says program coordinator Debbie Krause.

Checking out the library calendar shows a busy schedule of virtual programming, targeting all ages, from toddlers and teens to adults, from learning about the brain and mental health issues, to enjoying trivia and game nights.

And similar to other organizations, virtual programming will carry on after the pandemic, allowing the library to offer better access to more people, says Krause.

Since the province went into lockdown in December and the library was closed to the public for the second time, book pickups curbside have continued to be available.

The same goes for book bundles for kids and adults. Kids' books are offered in bundles of 10, aimed at several different age groups, and for adults, five books can be included in a surprise package, or can be requested in various themes.

Reciprocal borrowing from other libraries is also ongoing, and has become pretty popular, says Krause. Currently, a staff member picks up and drops off several cartons of books at the Pelham Public Library weekly, the central location for the project, but a more sustainable solution is being discussed with other libraries in the Niagara libraries cooperative.

All book-borrowing programs are available online, or by phone — leave a message and a staff member will get back to you.

There are some patrons who can't get out to pick up their books, says Krause, and

in the past the library has relied on volunteers to offer a delivery service. During the pandemic, she has taken over the task of dropping off books and picking them up three weeks later, rather than offering it as part of a volunteer program, as it was pre-COVID. There aren't a lot of members who require that service, but it ensures everybody who wants to borrow books is able to, she says. Some of those people are members who were receiving their books from lockers in St. Davids and Virgil, which are closed, partly because the buildings are now closed to the public, but also due to the inability to sanitize the lockers.

After a break of most virtual programs over Christmas, the library has been ramping up again with its offerings, although the very popular Tuesday Night Trivia has been going non-stop, says Krause. It continues to increase in popularity, with more new people joining in weekly. "We mostly see names we don't recognize, which is great. It means we're really reaching out into the community, and that's good to see."

In addition, other trivia contests are offered, with themed every-other-Friday evening programs for adults who might be interested in a particular topic. This Friday, Feb. 26, is a Period Drama theme, and Seinfeld trivia is on offer March 12.

As well, the library is trying the occasional trivia program for families, says Krause.

Teen game nights are also being organized, the next one Thursday, March 4, using Skribblo, and Jackbox, which provide online games for groups.

Other programs include Dr. Bill Brown, with a series on the brain Wednesday afternoons through March, and something new March 11, Dishin' with Dirt, a gardening workshop with library board member Betty Knight.

With limited attendance for the Zoom meeting, registration is required for the workshop, which will offer information about getting gardens ready for

the planting season, including a discussion about soil, mulching, garden tools, and pruning.

The popular Beer and Books and Wine and Words programs are on hold, but an online book club has developed instead. Called the Fireside Reads Book Club, it was slow to transition from Beer and Books, but registration is almost full for the March 3 session, when the next Zoom discussion focuses on *The Bell in the Lake*, by Lars Mytting.

"The first time we offered the book club online, we had one person sign up," says Krause. "Now, because of the logistics of a Zoom meeting, we're limiting it to eight."

It's taken some time for some library patrons to become comfortable with virtual discussions, says Krause, who understands that feeling — it took her a while to become accustomed to the idea of leading an online meeting. But people are using them more often and becoming more accepting of them, and are being patient when all does not go according to plan, which is appreciated, she says, "because no matter how well the programs are planned ahead of time, they can still go sideways."

But there is no doubt, while many people are looking forward to being able to meet in person, "there will always be a virtual component to what we offer. It adds that extra level of accessibility."

It allows people who can't get to the library to take part in the programs, from those with young kids at home, to the elderly, and those who just feel more comfortable participating from home.

Library staff have learned how easy it is to present virtual programming, and because of the pandemic, the library has had to invest in the technology that was required to offer it.

"It's become second nature, and I think it will stay that way," Krause says. "It will just be part of our programs in the future."

The one age group virtual programming is not well-suited for is the youngest set of library patrons. A weekly Tues-



Local families were invited to enter a library contest with replicas of their favourite place, created with Lego, sticks, playdough, straws or anything on hand. Winning entries were from Alice McGeachin and Maggie Adams, with a fudge party prize for both families donated by Maple Leaf Fudge. (Photos supplied)

day morning Rhyme Time for moms and toddlers on Zoom hasn't been a great success, says Krause. "Kids that age don't sit still, and it was pretty chaotic." The sessions are held as circle time, with interactive singing, rhyming, and shared storytime. Kids would be going in and out of the screen, and it was hard to hold their attention, she says.

Although that doesn't matter, moms would leave the meeting, fearing they were interrupting it for others.

Krause now has a limited number of children who take part, including one family with siblings who participate weekly, and have come to know her and enjoy the sessions.

"From working with them regularly I've developed a good relationship with the kids, and they've stuck it out. They look forward to seeing me and I look forward to seeing them. It takes a while to build that kind of relationship, and it's hard to do on a screen, but it's working."

Krause has two new up-

coming virtual offerings she's excited about.

One has to wait until she is able to have Burlington author Ian Hamilton in the library building, to host an online session from there. It was planned for January, but had to be cancelled when the second shutdown was announced.

The author, popular for the Ava Lee series and other standalone books, will draw a virtual crowd when the date is set, she says.

But perhaps what is exciting Krause the most about upcoming library offerings is The Big Let Go, a series of four mental health workshops to be held throughout April by author Darcy Patrick.

Based on his book by the same name, Patrick, also a public speaker and wellness writing coach, recognizes that when people tell us to let something go, it's not that simple. His goal is to teach how to let go and move on to live a full and happy life, sharing his tools to get us there, including forgiveness,

setting boundaries, acceptance, changing perspectives, and having faith in ourselves.

"He's been on our radar for a long time," says Krause. "He was scheduled to come last spring, and had to be cancelled. If the pandemic has taught us anything, it's that mental health is a very, very important part of our well-being, in addition to our physical and economic situations. Mental health needs to be something we talk about. We're all in COVID fatigue, and that makes us less able to cope with the hard stuff we're facing."

Patrick's workshops may be timely, in that his advice on how to let go of things we can't control could be more important now than ever, adds Krause.

Register for the first workshop, Thursday, April 8 from 7 to 9 p.m., and you will be registered for the other three dates as well.

Program registrations can be done online at <https://notl-publiclibrary.org>.

For more information call 905-468-2023.

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Smart Home Technology more accessible than you think

Submitted by
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Many homeowners feel overwhelmed when they think about smart home technology. With so many options and devices to choose from, it can be hard to know where to start. The smart home market is still relatively young. It currently generates 2.74 billion US dollars in revenue in Canada. By 2023, the smart home market will reach 3.8 billion dollars in sales.

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EDITORIAL

Don't worry, this community will have you covered

We've been playing a waiting game for what seems like a long time, not only for vaccine to arrive, but for information about what the roll-out in our neighbourhood will look like when it gets here.

Finally, we're beginning to see big numbers in the amount of vaccine arriving in Canada. Provinces are sharing the good news. Quebecers aged 85-plus are starting to get shots next week, beginning in Montreal, with registration starting this week. That makes us seem pretty far behind, but Quebec is prioritizing the older population in the area that has had the highest number of cases.

In Niagara, residents at all long-term care homes have now been vaccinated. Indigenous adults in northern and higher risk communities and health-care workers with the highest risk of exposure to COVID-19 are next on the list, along with other health care workers, their priority in descending order depending on their risk category, along with firefighters and paramedics. Those in the over-80 category are included in that grouping, and in Niagara, are expected to be given their registration information in March, and vaccinations in arms by early April.

However, Dr. Hirji, our regional chief medical officer of health, says all of this depends on the arrival of vaccine, so it could be earlier, if the good news continues, or it could be later. While the delivery of vaccinations is coordinated at a regional level, with help from municipalities, the supply is totally out of local control. As long as we get our fair share of vaccine, the region has a plan and is ready to roll with it. But Dr. Hirji is not about to make promises he may not be able to keep.

The problem is, everyone is getting antsy, especially the older seniors who are next in line. And understandably so. The rest of us want to be vaccinated to get our lives back to normal. Those 80 and over are more concerned about saving their lives so they will live to enjoy a post-pandemic normal. They want to leave their homes without it feeling like it's a death sentence. They want to see their families, hug them, maybe enjoy a dinner out with them.

We are all being asked to be patient, assured our turn will come, but that is particularly difficult for the over-80 crowd, who may face other frustrations and some level of confusion. They may not have family close by to explain it to them; they may not have access to the details available online, as scarce as they are; they may have heard news yesterday that has changed today and could change again tomorrow. They may be afraid they will miss the news that it's their turn, and miss their opportunity. Register online? They may need help with that. They are already worried about how they will know where to go, when to go, and how they are going to get there. They may not drive, and even more of a challenge, they may have mobility issues.

In addition to spreading the news to older, more isolated seniors as it's released from the region, as a community, each one of us can shoulder some responsibility to ensure those with the most concerns know what they need to know, when they need to know it.

As a community newspaper, we can certainly do our best, but there are more personal contacts that can be made, assurances given, and in some cases, transportation arranged and assistance offered.

There is a really wide range of physical fitness and mental acuity in those who are over the age of 80, the majority perfectly competent to figure out what they need to know. But if we are aware of someone who may not be, it wouldn't hurt to reach out, offer some kindness and reassurance, and let them know when it's their time for registration, and then vaccination, there is somebody in their corner to help them out.

That's what neighbours do in this great community.

Penny Coles
The Local

COVID numbers, vaccinations in Niagara as of Tuesday

Niagara Public Health had 23 new cases posted for Tuesday, Feb. 23.

There have been 8,501 cases, and 7,866 of those are resolved, leaving 266 active cases, and 369 people who have died.

There have been 9,525 vaccination doses administered in Niagara as of Feb. 23, and 269 new daily doses.

All long-term care home and all high-risk retirement home residents who qualified for vaccinations have had first and second doses administered.

Slip sliding away



Sandra Ruszewska (top) Julia Celetti and Victoria Crocco from NOTL, three Brock University students enjoying their reading week, have fun sledding down Suicide Hill, outside Fort George. (David Gilchrist)

Long-term care needs complete provincial overhaul



Wayne Gates, MPP
Niagara Falls riding
Special to The Local

COVID-19 did not create the long-term care crisis, but it has exposed to everyone what family members and advocates have been saying for years. Successive governments have failed our seniors, and refused to invest the necessary money to maintain our long-term care homes and invest in new beds. For years, seniors have been lying in hospital beds, desperately waiting for access to long-term care rooms, and that's made our hospitals more overcrowded. At the same time, private companies have been stretching dollars thinner and thinner to ensure their record profits continued to grow. The system is broken, and we need to fix it.

Government after govern-

ment refuses to face up to the failures of their actions in long-term care, and instead kicks the can down the road. The cycle must stop, and this must be fixed.

We need to start taking the actions to build a new system that protects our seniors and gives them the level of care they deserve. As a Member of Provincial Parliament for a riding that has one of the highest population of seniors per capita in the country, I believe getting these steps underway is a matter of life and death for my community.

The Ford government reluctantly agreed to an inquiry to investigate the COVID-19 crisis in long-term care, but refused to make it a fully-independent judicial inquiry. This means when the minister of long-term care and the health minister give evidence, it will be behind closed doors. The commissioners themselves have said the Ford government is 'slow-walking' the release of documents requested by the commission, making it more difficult for them to deliver a full report by April. The Ford gov-

ernment must stop obstructing their work, and waste no time in implementing every recommendation, but there are actions that can be taken immediately.

We have a new vision for a new system for home and community care and long-term care where every dollar goes directly to residents. In the meantime, we have put forward positive solutions that will begin to make a difference right now.

We have tabled legislation to provide a minimum of four hours of hands-on care to seniors in long-term care homes, but today our Premier and his caucus continue to block this necessary measure. We have a bill before the legislature that would give PSWs a \$4 an hour pay raise to start giving them the wages they deserve, and help to recruit more staff for our long-term care homes. Ford and his MPPs have unfortunately voted against that too.

We know the system is broken and needs to be fixed. Let's start by taking actions now to protect our seniors. Increasing hours of care and raising the pay of critical frontline staff is only the beginning, but the government needs to stop withholding any of the information requested by the commission, and make these changes without delay. Our parents and grandparents can't wait while politicians drag their feet.

By acting now we can save lives and put the foundations in place for a new system that puts residents first.



View from the couch

Donald Combe Special to The Local

In *Breathe*, Netflix 2017, Robin Cavendish (Andrew Garfield), a 28-year-old victim of polio, is given only months to live. Supported and encour-

aged by his wife Diana (Claire Foy), and caring family and friends, he leaves the hospital, giving and receiving joy as he devotes his life to celebrating life and helping the disabled. A film with a great message.

Donald Combe is a re-

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

The Niagara-on-the-Lake

LOCAL

The trusted voice of our community

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Biodiversity subject to an ever-increasing number of visitors



Owen Bjorgan
Special to The Local

This week, I am forecasting what Niagara's hiking trails and parking spaces might look like as we roll into the nice weather of 2021, and beyond.

In a handful of articles for The Local over the last year, I observed and reported on the changes in trail conditions, safety concerns, parking problems, and the increased litter that came with the pandemic. I also watched with curiosity a new wave of people discover Niagara's green spaces, and their sense of wonder and appreciation. I find myself sitting here on the cusp of spring, equipped with the same peculiar uncertainty I felt during the last.

What are Niagara's trails and our communities in for once the warmer weather arrives, and the 2021 true outdoor season begins?

For every force, there is a reaction. What will the impacts of all these new visitors be on our biodiversity and stable ecosystems?

Let's briefly revisit a timeline, and what I propose is likely to happen again come this spring and beyond.

Last year's discovery of Niagara's nature wasn't accomplished by Americans and European visitors. It was largely enjoyed by locals and those from the Greater Toronto Area. From across the province, we showed up when it came to maximizing nature time during the pandemic, as many looked for new recreational options during uncertain times.

The signs were clear in the spring of 2020. Newly imposed restrictions had people thinking about appropriate and safe activities. I believe a subset of our southern Ontario population caught on to Niagara's natural spaces, aided by the power of social media and hyper-localized travel. I have never seen Niagara's trails busier.

And we're not just talking about summer, when most people have the time or comfort to get their outdoor fix. It continued, and still does, in all

seasons. Parking lots at the Niagara Gorge, Short Hills Provincial Park, and Decew Falls were filled to their concrete limits and onto the roads in 2020. It is still happening on weekends this winter.

And for the first time, this is happening with higher frequency and greater volume than ever before.

With this unforeseen influx of hikers, there came logistical challenges involving cars lined up for nearly a kilometre in some cases near Decew Falls. Short Hills parking lots reminded me of spillage that leaked cars onto the paved roads, sometimes with 20-plus cars on either side of Pelham or Wiley Roads. Trains of people hiked along the Short Hills trails, while Decew and the gorge saw a historic spike in rescues of unprepared hikers, as they were caught off-guard by the beauty and danger dichotomy.

Here's what I think might happen next, and I also wonder how we will be prepared for this scenario.

After a winter and lockdown combo, I feel visitors from Southern Ontario are going to be extra-enthused to get outside once spring makes its first appearance. We can't resist the first T-shirt days of the season, the sounds of birds, and the green life popping through the soil. Now imagine that outdoor rush we all experience, multiplied with the events of last year's local travel increase to hiking trails from the GTA and beyond. I anticipate it will just take a few weekends with nice spring weather to really pack our parking lots again.

By the way, the red budding of maple trees, and the return of morning robin songs are late February signs that spring is coming. It's already happening here in NOTL, largely afforded by being so far south in Canada.

The theme snowballs as we exit the snow season. Suddenly, it's summer, and our trails are being packed by locals, people from the GTA, and all other accessible locations.

Let's imagine the hypothetical day where we truly reopen full-scale.

With a steady Ontario base already inundating the trails and parking spaces, what are we going to do when we allow Amer-

icans, Europeans, and the rest of the world back into a state of normal travel?

I guess we have months, maybe years to think about that one. But, wow — we need to heed the warning signs that our natural areas are going to be under immense pressure, even while delivering such positive influences to minds of all sorts.

It's like 20 people trying to play with a puppy at once. This appreciated, albeit fragile and delightful figure must be protected and respected to the highest degree. Biodiversity, and protected tranquility, is the puppy.

With an extraordinary number of people already parking, hiking, and influencing nature, while it influences their nature, what are we going to do in the times to come?



How will the iconic Niagara Gorge, and other biologically sensitive areas, be prepared for the coming seasons' visitors? (Owen Bjorgan)

LETTERS

Governments get failing grade dealing with COVID

I am writing to express my concern over letters in the media I feel distorted how we arrived at the current reality we are living through with COVID-19 in Canada. We need to look hard at the difference in what is being said and what has been done. In a crisis like this, results matter, and frankly, in Canada results have been poor. I truly wish it were otherwise, but it is not. As I write this Canada is 40th on a list of developed countries in terms of percent of population vaccinated. While that is a sad fact, it is nonetheless a fact. If you measure a government on effectiveness versus political spin, that is a failing grade.

As to the statements that Canada was the first country to sign with Moderna, I would take that with skepticism. Moderna was 99.9 per cent funded by the U.S. government to both develop and supply a vaccine for the American people. Canada provided zero funding to the major pharmaceutical companies when they were seeking funds to ramp up research. Our resources instead went to China, and China now has a vaccine they will not share with Canada. Again, facts, not fiction.

As to the funding of the Providence, made-in-Canada

solution, Providence requested funding in early 2020 and had to wait until October to get a response from the government. It took seven months of no answers before a very small fraction of the requested funding was granted. Both too little and too late, as the delay meant any chance for a made-in-Canada vaccine to be utilized in 2020 or early 2021 was lost. Quebec-based Medicago has received more than \$170 million in vaccine funding, versus roughly \$10 million for Providence, based in Alberta.

Another comment stated the government has followed the science on pandemic responses. Again, on the fact side of the ledger, this government entered office with two key resources which were developed by health experts following the SARS outbreak years before. The health experts set up an intelligence unit in Health Canada to provide both on-the-ground, local information, and early reporting on world-wide pandemic outbreaks. This advance warning system was to ensure we would never have to depend on other governments to understand risks that could impact Canadians. The fact is this Liberal government shut down this unit against the advice of health ex-

perts. No reason has been given.

The second asset was a series of warehouses which would hold emergency supplies of personal protective equipment so Canada could respond quickly to the next epidemic. The Liberal government trucked the personal protective equipment (PPE) to the dump stating it was past its best-before date. While that is not incorrect, they neglected the key requirement of replacing the critical supplies before discarding the old but useable PPE. If this government had left those two critical resources in place we could have reacted sooner, and provided frontline workers with critical PPE early on.

Masks are so common now it is easy to forget our government told us not to wear masks for months, claiming they would be too dangerous for the population to use. This is not new technology, and was an easy ask. Nobody expected medical-grade masks for all, but basic medical science has seen masks used to prevent spread of germs and viruses for centuries. Comments and opinions have been shared on the government's economic response. In general there is economic consensus that the government acted quickly and with a significant dollar amount.

While not efficient, it was generally effective. The lack of willingness to correct errors is a valid issue, but based upon results that is irrelevant to the fact the economic strategy worked.

Going forward, the World Monetary Fund has stated Canada needs to pare back planned spending, and expressed concern that this government cannot continue to increase our debt to GDP ratio. Hopefully we can accept we have been successful, and not feel the need to double down. Whether we can control spending will be determined going forward.

While I am sure many people will spin or deny the results we are seeing, the pandemic will not be defeated by spin. Vaccines continue to be delayed, Canadians will get sick and some will die, and it may well happen again with the next pandemic. Nothing can improve if we cannot be honest with the facts. In a country where competence is less valued than political spin and partisanship, nothing will change. I hope I am wrong, but again look at the facts. In truth, looking at the facts is what we should always be doing as voters.

M. D. Macdonald
Niagara-on-the-Green



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Antiques on Creek owner optimistic about future

Penny Coles
The Local

When Leslie Ibbotson made her exciting decision to open an antique store in Virgil, where she grew up, her planned opening was April 2020.

Selling antiques has been a career for her, but this would be her own business, and she had found the perfect location — the former fruit and vegetable co-op on Four Mile Creek Road, a 1930s building with original beams, hardwood floors, a welcoming fireplace and a beautiful covered porch that would be an extension of the store.

“It lends itself perfectly to an antique store,” says Ibbotson, and has become the new home of Antiques on Creek, with eight “fabulous vendors selling top-shelf, one-of-a-kind treasures.”

Her opening was planned for April, 2020, but of course no one could have predicted what was about to happen — the town suddenly in a state of emergency, businesses shut down and residents being urged to stay home.

“I couldn’t have picked a worse time,” says Ibbotson, her dream opening delayed because the world was suddenly in the early throes of a pandemic.

She was able to proceed with her plans in June, with

doors officially open to a welcoming interior and the porch drawing people with its elegant vintage clothes and unique antiques.

It was a “fabulous” summer for the fledgling business, with visitors from the region and Toronto, and many locals who are antique lovers becoming loyal, repeat customers, says Ibbotson. “The local support was really touching.”

Six months after opening, she was closed again, along with other non-essential retailers, and is happy to be open once again, even with a five-person limit and all the protocols of a pandemic to follow.

It’s a snowy winter day when Ibbotson talks to The Local, and weekdays are quiet, she says. Weekends are busier, although “not crazy by any means.”

She continues to get customers from Toronto and the GTA making day trips to NOTL, she says, “not anybody’s preference” under the circumstances, but she is pleased to see anybody who walks through her doors. Ibbotson does some promotion on Facebook and Instagram, “but it’s very difficult to sell antiques online. It’s really a business meant for in-store shopping.”

And that’s what she is meant for as well. She’s a people person, she explains, loves her work — which, as the say-

ing goes, never feels like work — loves to have people in the store, loves to chat, and loves her hometown. “This is where I’m happiest,” she says. “I love my life.” Which is just as well, considering she typically works seven days a week, from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m., with the other dealers taking shifts so there are two people in the store every day. Consistent hours, she says, even during a pandemic, are really important.

She’s created a welcoming atmosphere with the cozy seating area by the fire, books and local newspapers close by for husbands who want to relax while wives look around, and a comfortable spot for her on quiet days.

She’s excited to have Cheese Secrets from Market Street also coming to add another attraction for visitors.

There will be a couple of tables in the store for those who would like tea, coffee, or a cold drink. There will be a small selection of cheeses available, and charcuterie, along with boxed lunches for those going on bicycle tours, she says, and when the weather improves, a few tables out on the porch.

Listening to Ibbotson, it’s quickly evident where her love lies. She’s been an antique collector for as long as she can remember, and a long-time dealer in Lakeshore Antiques and Treasures, where she continues



Leslie Ibbotson has created a warm, welcoming atmosphere in the 1930s former fruit and co-op building, perfectly suited for antiques. (Photos supplied)

to sell her treasures, as do some of her Antique on Creek dealers.

She has watched the ebb and flow of the antique business in Niagara-on-the-Lake, and would like to see it return to the “mecca of antiquing” it has been in the past, believing passionately in the value of having a thriving community of antique stores in town as a visitor attraction.

“I’m hell-bent on making it what it once was,” she says, noting there are several other great antique stores scattered around town, although it’s a difficult business to operate on Queen Street, with its high rents.

“The more we have here, the better it is for everybody. Back in the day there used to be an antiques map for tourists.”


Although there’s no way to know where we’ll be with pandemic restrictions this sum-

mer, Ibbotson has no doubt the good weather will bring another wave of visitors, and antiques

will be one more attraction to help make NOTL the destination it always is.



With eight vendors, Antiques on Creek offers a diverse selection of one-of-a-kind treasures.



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Museum offers four films celebrating women

Local Staff

In honour of International Women's Day on March 8, the Niagara-on-the-Lake Museum and RiverBrink Art Museum are co-hosting a series of four documentaries.

The films will be offered as part of the museum's Doc Club, which meets virtually to discuss and debate Canadian documentaries, many of them courtesy of the rich National Film Board library, says Barbara Worthy, the museum's visitor and members services assistant. Participants watch the shows on their own time, and then bring their observations to a virtual discussion.

During March, the Doc Club's four films highlight the fearless, the feisty, and the tenacity of some of Canada's often unheralded heroines, she says. "They share a typical resilient Canadian identity, and come from the world of art, medicine, and the political sphere."

The first film in March is part of the NFB series, *The Canadians*, and tells the story of Agnes Macphail, who became Canada's first woman Member of Parliament exactly 100 years ago. The debate will be held on Friday, March 5, at 10 a.m.

"The 'Doc Club' has proven to be a welcome break in our pandemic lives," said museum volunteer Judy Thornton. "We all miss the Shaw's films this winter, and it's been good fun to have a good-hearted debate over tea and shortbread."

The series continues with *By Woman's Hand*, with a discussion on March 12; *Wanted! Doctor on Horseback*, with a discussion on March 19; and wraps up with *Bone Wind Fire*, an evocative journey into the hearts, minds and eyes of Georgia O'Keeffe, Emily Carr and Frida Kahlo – three of the 20th century's most remarkable artists, with a discussion on March 26. All are at 10 a.m.

The month of March is

also designated Women's History Month in the U.S., Australia and the U.K. Canada's celebration is always in October, to correspond

with Persons Day, honouring the ground-breaking legislation known as The Persons Case of October 1929, which gave women

the right to sit in Canada's Senate. Registration is required to join the Doc Club discussions and to receive links for each doc-

umentary.

For more information contact: sdelazzer@riverbrink.org or bworthy@nhsml.ca.



Agnes Macphail, Canada's first female MP, will be featured March 5, in the first of a four-part documentary series. (Photos supplied)



The series ends with *Bone Wind Fire*, a look at Emily Carr, and two other 20th century artists.



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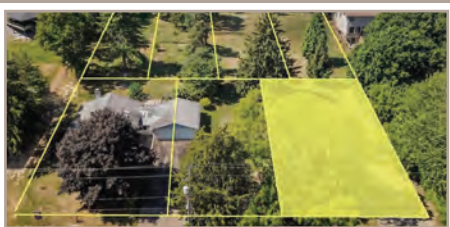
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Donations to help honour life of Kenzie King

Paul Jacot
Special to The Local

On Jan. 22, 2021 the lives of the family and friends of MacKenzie "Kenzie" Austin Drew King, 25, of Niagara-on-the-Lake, were thrown into darkness, as he tragically passed away from a car accident while on his way to work.

Blakely, his sister, and Tom, his father, have set up a GoFundMe page in memory of Kenzie to raise money for a Parks Canada bench and tree in his name, a goalie hockey award in his honour, as well as donations to the Niagara Falls Humane Society, as Kenzie leaves behind his beloved dog Chevy.

Blakely recalls that as a child

Kenzie's favourite film growing up was *Toy Story*, which he would watch over and over again, clutching his favourite yellow "blankie" in one hand and Woody doll in another. Right before our eyes, Kenzie grew into a 6'1" handsome, bright, blue-eyed, freckly young man. Kenzie was a quick-witted, smart, friendly, funny, kindhearted, creative, and free-spirited person. He had a heart of gold who showed his love and admiration through his art whether it was writing songs, or woodworking. Kenzie was a social butterfly who conversed freely with anyone and was always willing to lend a hand, known by many for his beaming smile.

His father Tom recalls that

Kenzie would love to watch their neighbour tinker with his sailboat and so came his interest in sailing at the NOTL sailing camp. His second home was the water.

Kenzie attended NOTL schools, St. Vincent de Paul, St. Michael, and Parliament Oak, excelling in basketball and soccer. He was an excellent team player and stand-out goalie with the NOTL Wolves.

In recent years, Kenzie had been working for QBM repairing conveyor belts and travelling extensively as a Splicer Technician on the Canadian Steamship Lines.

Music was another love of his. Kenzie's favourite artists were rapper Travis Scott and

Toronto-based band, the Bahamas, where he would be seen dancing in the aisles at Jackson-Triggs, twirling around his girlfriend Emily.

Kenzie was also an avid traveler, spending many of his summer vacations traveling all across the globe with his sister Blakely, stepbrother Colton, and favourite uncle Peter. This past September, Kenzie traveled to the Maritimes, citing it was one of his most memorable trips.

His favourite places in the world were his Uncle Bill's cottage in Muskoka and his mother's farm in Ridgeway, Ontario. His mother now resides in New Brunswick.

"Death is nothing else but going home to God, the bond of



Kenzie King had a heart of gold, large enough to include the family pets. (Photo supplied)

love will be unbroken for all eternity." - Mother Teresa.

A thank you from friends and family who would greatly appreciate any donations given to the GoFundMe page (Go-

FundMe.com - type Mackenzie King in the search bar) - to honour the life of our dearest Kenzie.

Paul Jacot is a writer and journalist, and a friend of Tom King and the family.

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Ironwood Cider evolves from fruit winery

Mike Balsom
Special to The Local

Whenever this “new normal” that people have been talking about since last March begins, it’s certain that it will coincide with a new beginning for Sunnybrook Winery.

In fact, that new beginning comes with a rebranding, as owner Richard Liu and staff are officially bidding farewell to the winery name and replacing it with Ironwood Cider.

The change makes perfect sense at this time. The \$4 million expansion at the south side of the building is nearly complete. That price tag includes some shiny new equipment that will be used to ferment new types of ciders.

But it’s the new cidery-house that brings the organization a bold, new modern look that contrasts with the homey atmosphere of the original Sunnybrook barn. The central feature is a large tasting area, but there is an upper level that features a private event space, a lounge, and a room that Liu hopes to use to host podcasts. The entire space should attract more and more cider lovers once restrictions are eased.

And, as Liu tells The Local, cider has slowly overtaken the fruit wines for which Sunnybrook has been traditionally known, to the point where his sales are now 90-10 in favour of the apple-based beverage.

Liu bought Sunnybrook in 2013, when sales of fruit wine were roughly equal to those of the Ironwood Cider brand that was part of the deal. The former marketing manager at a Hong Kong investment bank had no prior experience in either the winery or cider business, but he quickly saw the potential in one of those areas in particular.

“I originally bought it hoping to turn it into a VQA facility,” remembers Liu. “But within six months to a year, I realized that from a growth standpoint it would probably be very challenging. So I started to really look at the Ironwood Cider, and as I got my feet wet in it, it came up as a high-potential category.”

With the new facility, Liu is planning to maximize that potential with a number of different products. The original Ironwood Cider that began in 2005 out of Sunnybrook will still be produced, but Liu sees the brand’s future relying on a mix of artisanal and modern cider varieties.

“We want to make sure when people come here that they can get the full view of what cider can be,” he says. “Some of the artisanal products take a bit longer, just like wine. Two years ago we started to make cider from European varieties that we found from local orchards, basically French or English varieties that are better, smaller apples, that have a lot more tannins. They are fruit that is meant to be fermented, not eaten.”

These aren’t your standard McIntosh, Granny Smith and Gala apples you buy at valu-mart, or even the Russets or Northern Spies that are used for traditional ciders. Yarrington Mills, Dabinett, Stock Red, Tolman Sweet, and Kingston Black apples are referred to by Liu as vinifera-style fruit, akin to the grape varieties popular in local VQA wines.

“About two years ago we started making some ciders using those apples in very small batches,” he says. “We will still offer the fruitier, more approachable ciders that people might be more familiar with. But we want to be the ones show-



Richard Liu is excited about the possibilities, including a mix of artisanal and modern cider varieties.

ing people what cider can really be.”

When the new cidery-house officially opens, Liu sees the large tasting bar playing host to three different categories of ciders. One will be a vintage line, which uses those vinifera-style apples he is so excited about. The artisanal line will be what Liu calls the “craft beer” of the cider world, based on an in-house yeast culture they have developed, and using different skin-aging and botanical techniques. Finally, the modern tier will encompass the mainstream, more approachable fruit-forward flavours that drive most people’s first dalliances with the beverage.

Liu promises a staggering 50 different releases in Ironwood’s first year. “We want to be the best in Canada, if not the world,” he says. “I don’t want to tie myself to certain tiers. For me, to do a really good, commercially available

product is just as rewarding as doing something for the cider geeks. My satisfaction level is pretty much equal. It’s in our best interest to stay away from being narrow-focused.”

Liu adds, “at the end of the day, it’s all about showcasing creativity, and that creativity doesn’t always

Continued on page 16

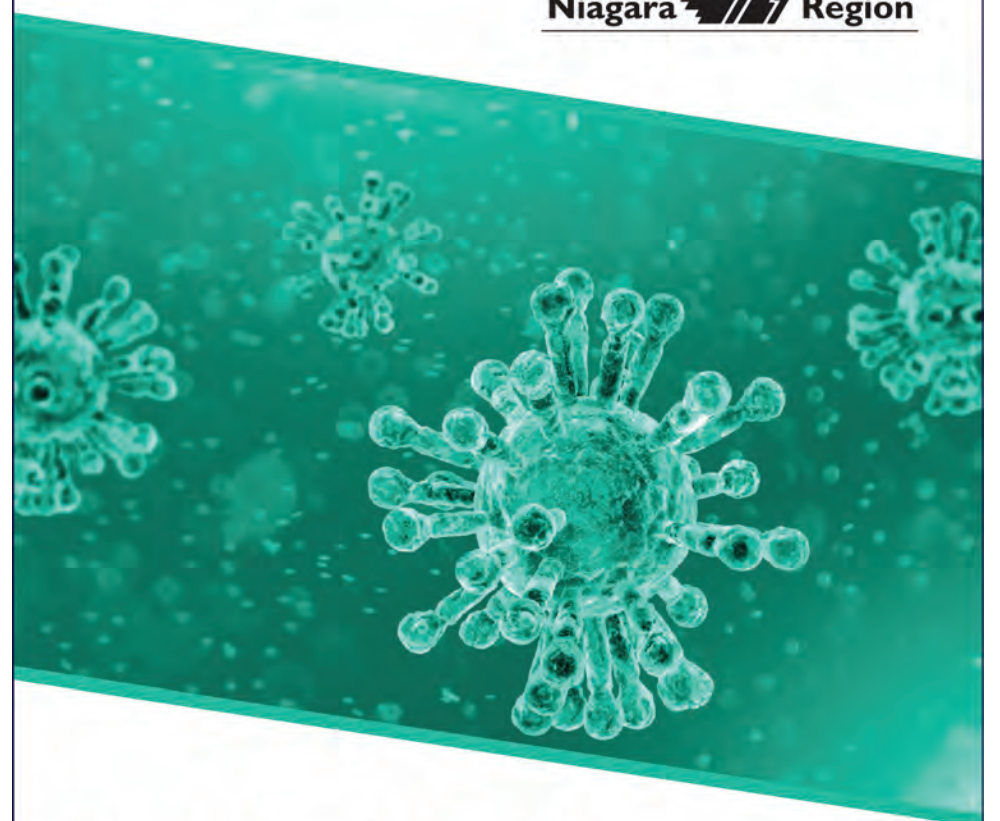


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A \$4 million expansion is transforming Sunnybrook Winery to Ironwood Cider, with shiny new equipment to ferment new types of ciders. (Photos by Mike Balsom)

Seldom-heard story of Tryon’s Folly

Jane Andres
Special to The Local

Jane Andres, best known in Niagara for her work helping offshore workers, says although she has spent her entire life in Niagara, “I possessed only a few dusty facts regarding the history of the U.S. side of the river. I had vague recollections of the story of the Tryon house, but it wasn’t until I spotted it from the Niagara Parkway close to Queenston in March 2020 that I became intrigued. My research over the past 11 months has been fascinating, and challenged me in ways I hadn’t expected. In this story, I wove together the facts in a way that stays true to the historical narrative, with only a few careful liberties taken.”

The bartender is in on it. The livery owner and his crew are in on it too. Enjoying his morning tea behind the stately porticos of his mansion overlooking the Niagara River, Major Benjamin Barton was in on it from the beginning. The ladies from the weekly church sewing circles are in on it. Although known for their tendency toward salacious gossip as they stitched scraps into warm blankets, they kept the secret. The ministers at Lewiston’s First Presbyterian Church and Episcopal Church are in on the “Holy Hush.” Even Major Barton’s young grandchildren are in on it. On this snowy Saturday

in early February, 1837, they are playing with the family dog in the front yard. They pause to watch a rider guide his exhausted horse over the frozen ruts of the main street to the livery. The rider eases his aching bones out of the saddle, his fingers practically frozen to the reins. The livery owner comes to greet him and they engage in conversation for a few minutes. He points the rider in the direction of the Frontier House, a nearby inn that offers a hot meal, a bath and a comfortable bed to weary travellers. With stiff legs, the traveller stumbles off to the hotel. Leading the horse away, the livery owner beckons to a young boy cleaning out the stalls. He whispers low and urgently, “tell Mr. Josiah he’s got some business coming his way.” The young man takes off lickety-split around the corner, dodging pedestrians and carriages on the main street to a modest wooden structure that houses a tailor shop. The tailor, Josiah Tryon, and his assistant are working on a large table close to the window. They see the young man approach before bursting in through the door breathlessly. Josiah already knows what this will be about. Exchanging his work apron for an exquisitely tailored, boldly coloured jacket, he ambles casually down the street and up the steps of the hotel.



An illustration by Jane Andres shows the night view of Freedom Crossing. (Photo supplied)

The staff greet Josiah with warm familiarity and he settles in at the bar of the dining room. At the table next to him is the traveller. The earthy aroma drifting through the room advertises the fact he is wearing the same clothes for the four weeks he has been on the road. After devouring a big bowl of stew, the traveller strikes up a conversation. He cautiously shares a few details of his “business” trip with Josiah, but cannot take his eyes off of the magnificent jacket. He can practically feel the reward money in his fingers, and a garment like this will be the first thing he is going to indulge in.

He enquires about the tailor who had crafted such a fine garment. Josiah acknowledges it is his handiwork, and beams with pride. In fact, he has a jacket that would be a perfect fit, with just a slight alteration. Josiah extends an offer to join him and his wife at church the following morning, and says he would bring it along. The traveller cannot believe his luck. It would be a perfect place to meet the good people of the town, and make some enquiries as well. A soak in a hot tub tonight, a good meal, fine clothes waiting — how could a successful mission not be around the corner? The next morning the horses and buggies are gathering at Lewiston’s Presbyterian Church. The new bell tower is gleaming so brightly in the early morning sun that folks can see it clear across the Niagara River. The church building project is near completion, and it is the congregation’s first Sunday enjoying the comfort of new pews, instead of rustic board benches. Josiah greets the traveller inside the door, and presents him with the jacket. He eagerly tries on the new garment, a striking royal blue and a perfect fit. Introductions are made, and compliments flow, as 85 members of the congregation file past them into the sanctuary. The pastor greets his church family, offering a special word of introduction to the traveller, who stands proud as a bright blue peacock. After the service, everyone is so friendly, with plenty of opportunity for enquiries on both sides. The traveller offers them a description of an enslaved man, a fugitive who fled with his enslaver’s horse back in his home state of Kentucky. The traveller would be staying the next few days at the Frontier House, and would be much obliged if anyone could offer assistance or possible tips on

the whereabouts of the man he was seeking. They empathize with the bounty hunter’s story, and tell him they hope he will feel at home in their town. He declines an offer for dinner, instead opting to head down river to Youngstown for the afternoon while the weather is favourable. Josiah, his wife Mary and a small cluster of parishioners engage in conversation with the minister after the horse and rider disappear towards the river road. No doubt about it, the pastor states emphatically, there is a fresh wind of the Spirit blowing in this congregation. The previous summer a young preacher from Rochester by the name of Charles Finney had visited their congregation. He had preached a mighty sermon, challenging the congregation that if they consider themselves to be Christians, their daily lives must reflect Jesus’ command to love their neighbour as themselves. He had greatly encouraged them, sharing news of endeavours similar to their own spreading to congregations across New York, Pennsylvania, and Ohio. The spark that Rev. Finney’s sermon had ignited in the small congregation had grown into a steady flame, and a beacon of hope for many. The small group bows their heads in prayer in the shadow of the church and asks for God’s protection for the plans unfolding later that evening. The pastor’s wife withdraws two child-size quilts from under the folds of her shawl, and hands them to Mary. An elderly Black woman, an employee in the kitchen at Barton’s Inn, slips in beside her, informing her that fresh loaves of bread were tucked under the blankets of their carriage while they were in church. Mary is filled with fresh resolve as she views the long, angry scar on

the senior’s cheek, the result of a branding she suffered as a young woman, punishment for attempting an escape. As the group disperses, the pastor entertains a worrisome thought. He wonders to himself how long a town of over 200 can keep the Holy Hush. Josiah and Mary are deep in thought as they guide their horse toward home after the church service. It’s been more than two years since they bought the house at the edge of the Niagara River from his older brother Amos Tryon, son-in-law to Major Barton. The two-storey home possesses a stately elegance befitting the social status of the wealthy Barton family. Folks in town call it Tryon’s Folly, because Amos had built it for his young wife, Sally Barton. According to local gossip, Sally refused to move there from their comfortable home in town. Raising 10 children necessitated living as close to familial support as possible. But there is more to it than that. Tryon’s Folly is also known as The House with Seven Cellars, one of the most unique homes to grace the banks of the river. A hidden passage and series of cellars connected by steep interior stairwells cascade down the steep banks of the river. It is a strategic link in a vast network of “stations,” providing freedom seekers with safe passage to the British colony. Although refugees had been following the north star for many years, it wasn’t until the British colonies abolished slavery in 1834 that the trickle of freedom seekers became a steady stream. Hot in pursuit, an increasing number of bounty hunters also arrived in towns along the Niagara River, in-

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Entire town of Lewiston aided escapes to freedom

Continued from page 12

tent on cashing in a handsome reward for the fugitives.

Benjamin Barton and his company owned the rights to both Lewiston's ship landing, and the portage route up the escarpment. The area was also a prime location for bounty hunters to watch for potential escapees.

The Tryon house was located about 600 metres downstream, making it much more difficult to spot a small rowboat crossing the river after dark.

In 1835, Josiah and Mary opened the home to strangers, a code word used for the refugees arriving in towns along the Niagara River. Lack of identification provided an added layer of protection for both the freedom seeker and the people harbouring them.

After collaborating with a loose network of abolitionists in nearby towns, Josiah came up with a plan to use his tailoring skills to further what he considered to be God's work.

He would create a number of exquisitely tailored, brightly coloured jackets expressly for the purpose of giving them to the bounty hunters,

after befriending them at the local inn where they stayed. This creative way of identifying bounty hunters quickly became known all along the Niagara frontier on both sides of the Niagara River, from Youngstown and Niagara-on-the-Lake to Niagara Falls and Buffalo.

The entire town of Lewiston collaborated in this holy hush to help those escaping bondage reach Canada safely.

Josiah attends to the horse, while Mary hustles into the house carrying the loaves of bread, and the quilts. He surveys the scene past the steep banks behind their home, to the stunning view of the Niagara River. A thousand hues of aquamarine and turquoise are further enhanced by the brilliant white of thick ice floes swirling in the swift current.

He ponders the irony of having to rely on former adversaries just across the river, who only 20 years earlier had completely destroyed the town of Lewiston, murdering defenceless adults and children alike, all the way from Youngstown to Buffalo. Now, people on both sides were dependent on each other in their journey towards

justice. Complete trust was necessary to ensure not just the safety of those who were fleeing, but also the residents on the U.S. side who were disobeying federal authorities in order to follow a higher law.

Josiah's sister Sally is helping in the kitchen. She removes a large pot of soup from the fire, gathering bowls and utensils. Mary draws the curtains closed and lights a small coal oil lantern. Together they make their way down a steep, windowless stairwell into a lower chamber. They begin pulling a crate piled high with bolts of cloth out of the corner, revealing a hole in the wall above the floorboards.

Mary gives three short raps on the wall. They hear a shuffle and a low voice murmurs from the other side. She slides the wrapped bread through the hole, followed by the pot of soup, bowls and utensils. She offers the quilts through the same space, enquiring after the children, and instructing them to get some rest to prepare for their last leg of the journey.

After his meal, Josiah retires to the bedroom to try to rest for a few hours. He strug-



Bounty hunters often stayed at the Frontier House hotel as they looked for information about the enslaved they were hunting. Lewiston is Niagara's connection to the Underground Railroad. Nothing would have happened on this side of the river without the work of the people in Lewiston, says Andres. (Photo supplied)

gles to fall asleep, and a wave of panic engulfs him as he drifts off, dreaming that he is drowning in the icy waters of the Niagara.

Despite the fact that he has been making night crossings on the river for two years, it never gets easier. The challenges grow exponentially during the winter with the added risk of lake effect snow squalls, ice jams and hypothermia threatening refugees already considerably weakened by their long journeys. He'd heard the stories of other boats trapped by converging ice floes, and forced to drift blindly under the black of night. Some eventually made their way to safety in Newark after hours adrift, but he knew there were others who were not so lucky.

While Josiah wrestles with his anxieties, a face peers out from the window of the lowest cellar. It disappears for a second, and then there are two faces, after the stranger's seven-year-old son begs to be lifted up for a view.

Tears fill his wife's eyes as she takes a turn at the window. This is their first view of freedom, a sight that will be embedded in their memories for the rest of their lives. She gathers up their two-year-old in her arms that they may share that glorious sight as a family. She caresses her daughter's arms, overflowing with gratitude that they will never know a whip or chain. She tucks the little arms back

into the depths of the warm quilt Mary gave her. She traces her finger along the decorative stitching, and admires the deep rich colours. Her favourite was a blue as brilliant as the waters of the river before her, the colour of freedom.

Rested and energized, they enjoy one last meal together, served by their hosts, this time joined by Josiah.

They are reassured by the kindness in his eyes, and the warmth of his presence as he explains the plans for the evening and instructions for the other side — if all goes well.

At 9 p.m. they hear the church bells tolling. What they do not see is a large, reflective lantern, the signal being lit in the western window of the bell tower of the Presbyterian Church.

Mary and Sally meet them in the large room at the lowest level, providing a thick wool cape and a large winter coat, along with a small sack of biscuits and provisions. They gather in closely, uniting their hearts in prayer for safety in the crossing. Tears, hugs, and hope permeate the atmosphere as Josiah cautiously opens the door a crack.

The dim glow of a lantern appears far off on the west shore of the river. It is time. The stairs carved into the steep banks are buried in snow. They have to cling to a rope to guide them down 60 feet to where the rowboat awaits. Overhead the north star beckons, as it has for their

entire journey.

Josiah carefully guides mother and daughter in first, holding the small vessel steady. The father wraps his arms protectively around his young son, and closes his eyes after settling in. It is terrifying now that they view the ice flowing by so swiftly between them and the distant shore.

"Keep your eyes fixed on the light," Josiah instructs them, "God is with us."

He unhooks the rope from the dock and starts to pull on the oars.

.....

Thousands of enslaved men and women made their way to this final crossing to freedom, until slavery was officially abolished at the end of the Civil War.

Josiah Tryon was referred to as the man with the rainbow heart, because his jackets were the colours of the rainbow, and he enthusiastically embraced people of all creeds and colours. When he died in 1886, there was little left in his estate to pass on. Everything had been reinvested in the cause of freedom.

In all of those years, the people of Lewiston never betrayed the Holy Hush.

Tryon's Folly still stands on the banks of the Niagara River.

Visit the Historic Lewiston's website for more information - <http://historiclewiston.org>



The home of Josiah and Mary Tryon's in Lewiston, N.Y., can be seen across the Niagara River from Queenston, often leaving people who don't know the story wondering about the unusual house. (Frank McGee)



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Jeffrey didn't win cover shot, but glad she tried

Penny Coles
The Local

She may not have won the Miss Jetset Magazine contest this year, but Niagara-on-the-Lake resident Lisa Jeffrey feels like a winner.

After leading her category through the first four stages, Jeffrey was eliminated in the semi-finals on Feb. 12, placing sixth in her group. The contest is now down to the final four contestants, and the winner will be announced Feb. 25.

The winner of Miss Jetset Magazine earns a spot on the cover of the internationally distributed publication, a pictorial and article inside, and a \$50,000 prize. But the votes also raise funds for a childhood cancer charity. Jeffrey's supporters helped her raise \$2,500 US toward the Andrew McDonough B+ (Be Positive) Foundation.

"I was very happy about that, and I feel that I had incredible support from family and friends," she tells The Local.

"The article (in the Feb.

4 edition of The Local) helped a lot, too. I had a lot of people reach out to me to say how inspiring my story (volunteering in New York City after 9/11) was."

She also credits her brother, a vice-president of a bank in Louisiana, for spreading the word and gathering support for the cause down south. But the bulk of her votes came from the NOTL community, with many of them accompanied by encouraging messages. Jeffrey is very thankful for that support.

When asked if she would enter the contest, or a similar one in the future, Jeffrey says she would give it some consideration.

"It took a lot of time, almost two months, which I found to be intense, but it was a good experience," she says.

"Because all votes had to be done on the website, it made things difficult for those not online to vote. If I did something again in the future, it would be of a different sort."

Though she did turn to Facebook to drum up

support during the contest, through her own profile and via the NOTL 4 All group, she admits that she may have been able to improve her chances of winning by expanding into other social media platforms. She just created her own Twitter account on Jan. 29, a few days before the quarter finals began.

"My family is proud of me," she says, "and it all turned out well. I'm okay with how I finished, for sure."

Without having to spend time on the contest, Jeffrey continues to help care for her mother at the St. Catharines Hospital. She pays daily visits to Glenda, who cracked her skull after a fall on Thanksgiving weekend and remained in a coma until just after Christmas. Jeffrey says her mom is doing much better, but still fighting some congestion in her lungs.

As well, in the meantime, Jeffrey has turned

her focus toward fighting against illegal coyote hunting in the rural areas of Niagara-on-the-Lake.

She started a Facebook group called Niagara On The Lake Coyotes a few years ago. The members of the group aim to support the protection of coyotes in the area, and also advocate for peaceful coexistence between humans and the animals.

"There's this one group of hunters," Jeffrey explains, "who have deceptively gotten on the group page and posted some pictures of dead coyotes, and have been bullying members of the group."

Furthermore, some of these hunters have encroached on private land in their desire to shoot coyotes.

"It's a safety concern," she tells The Local. "It's not about whether you support hunting or not. A lot of people have contacted me about hunters on their property without permission."



Lisa Jeffrey hoped to have her photo on the cover of an international magazine, and by joining the contest, helped contribute to a cause dear to her heart. (Photo supplied)

LOCAL HAPPENINGS

DEMENTIABILITY WOW MEMORY BOOK

March 2 @ 10 a.m. - 11 a.m.

Join us for a free Zoom webinar all about creating and using a Memory Book in caring for those with dementia offered by DementiAbility. This Session will provide an overview of some of the key elements that are central to successful outcomes when creating and using a memory book – a book that holds facts and photos related to an individual's unique life story. A discussion about brain and behaviour, and the DementiAbility WOW model, will highlight the "how-to's" of creating a book that will support memory, contribute to positive social connections and ultimately help with creating outcomes that are aimed at engaging the person with dementia with meaning, purpose, enhanced self-esteem, choice and joy. Register for this free webinar, <https://notlpubliclibrary.org> <https://zcu.io/0D2O>

TEEN GAME NIGHT

March 4 @ 4 p.m. - 5:30 p.m.

Join our Discord server for our first Teen Game Night! Chat, hangout and play Among Us, Skribblo and Jackbox. Register: <https://notlpubliclibrary.libnet.info/event/4884602>

RHYME TIME

March 9 @ 11 a.m. - 12 p.m.

Looking for something fun to do with your tots? Come sing, move and have fun with Debbie, live on Zoom! <https://notlpubliclibrary.org>. For details and registration please visit: <https://zcu.io/7yYn>

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Auchterlonie on Astrology

Bill Auchterlonie
Special to The Local

Welcome to Auchterlonie on Astrology, a look at the week of Feb. 25, 2021 through March 3, including the full Moon on Saturday.

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

Now, the week ahead:

Thursday, Feb. 25: While Venus enters Pisces, setting up a few weeks of sweetness, today, the Moon in Leo opposes Mercury (again), creating an argument between heart and mind. This is our last chance to resolve some of these issues, so do the right thing. It was Feb. 25, 1964, that Muhammed Ali won

his first boxing title. His opponent, Sonny Liston, failed to come out for the seventh round.

Friday, Feb. 26: The Moon moves into Virgo at 12 p.m. This makes for a day of unhappy feelings, including arguments with Mars in Taurus in the morning, and with arguments with Venus in Pisces in the afternoon. Be creative and be less picky. Today would be Antoine 'Fats' Domino's 93rd birthday. He sold more records than Elvis, and was born Feb. 26, 1928.

Saturday, Feb. 27: The full Moon is in Virgo this morning, bringing stress, even when the Moon is in finicky Virgo. Fortunately, connections to other planets leave us with a day full of opportunities, if we can only open our hearts to new approaches. Jacques Plante, who played in net

for the Montreal Canadiens for 10 years, winning six Stanley Cups, died Feb. 27, 1986. He was the first goalie to wear a face mask.

Sunday, Feb. 28: Here's a sweet Sunday with the Moon moving into Libra at 2:16 p.m. It's especially warm and fuzzy this morning. Eric Lindros turns 48 years old today. He was drafted by the Quebec Nordiques, but was traded to the Philadelphia Flyers. In 1997, he appeared to bite San Jose defenceman, Marty McSorley, but was cleared by the NHL.

Monday, March 1: It's a day for big ideas and bigger plans. Make time and keep notes. Justin Bieber was born March 1, 1994, in London, Ont. He is the only recording artist to have seven songs from a debut album reach the Billboard Hot 100.

Tuesday, March 2: The Moon moves from peace-loving Libra into sexy Scorpio at 3:38 p.m. An insight into the true mission in this life is today's gift to you. It was March 2, 1965, that *The Sound of Music*, starring Christopher Plummer and Julie Andrews, premiered in NYC.

Wednesday, March 3: Venus and Mars, Uranus and the Moon all have important roles to play in a very busy day. Expect the unexpected. It was March 3, 1847, that Alexander Graham Bell was born in Scotland. He moved to Canada, where he invented the telephone. Then he moved to the U.S., where he patented his invention. The telephone was one of hundreds of ideas he patented.

Next week is the third quarter Moon in Sagittarius on Friday, March 5, so until then, shine on!

LOCAL WORSHIP



Sunday, February 28th

10 a.m. Worship Gathering (Online Only)

Speaker:
Kevin Bayne

Message:
Philippians 2:19-30

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

www.ccchurch.ca



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

karen@notllocal.com

LOCAL CLASSIFIEDS

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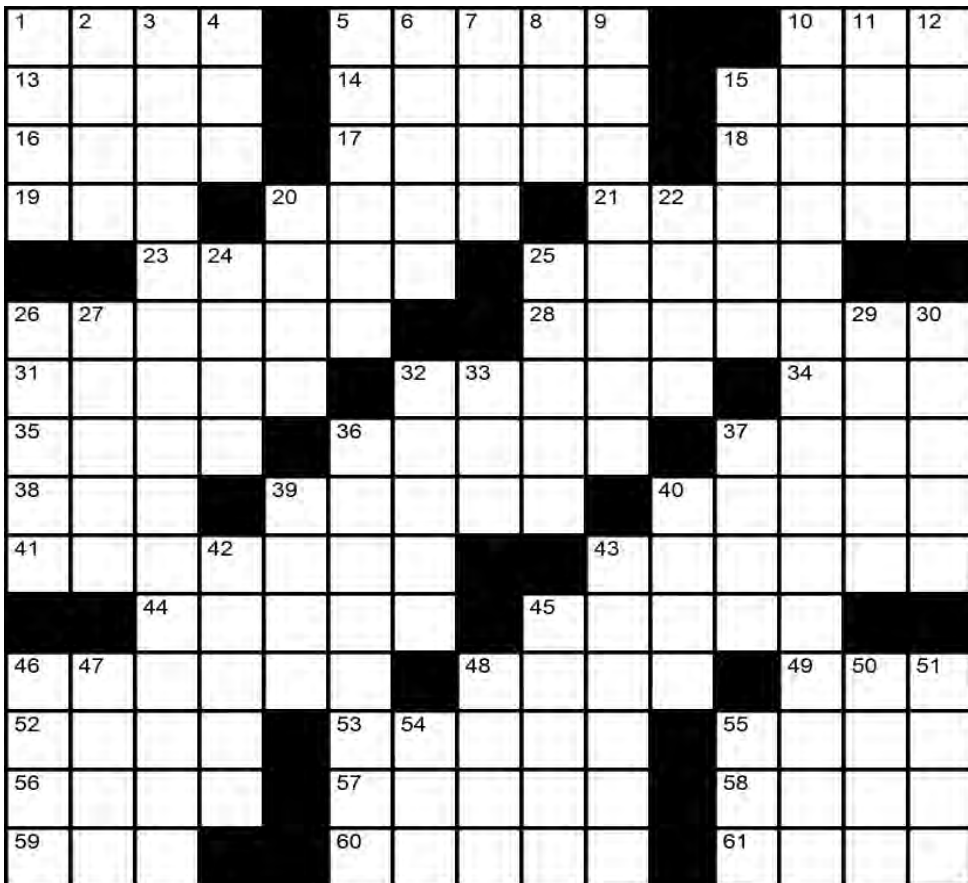
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CROSSWORD AND SUDOKU



Across:

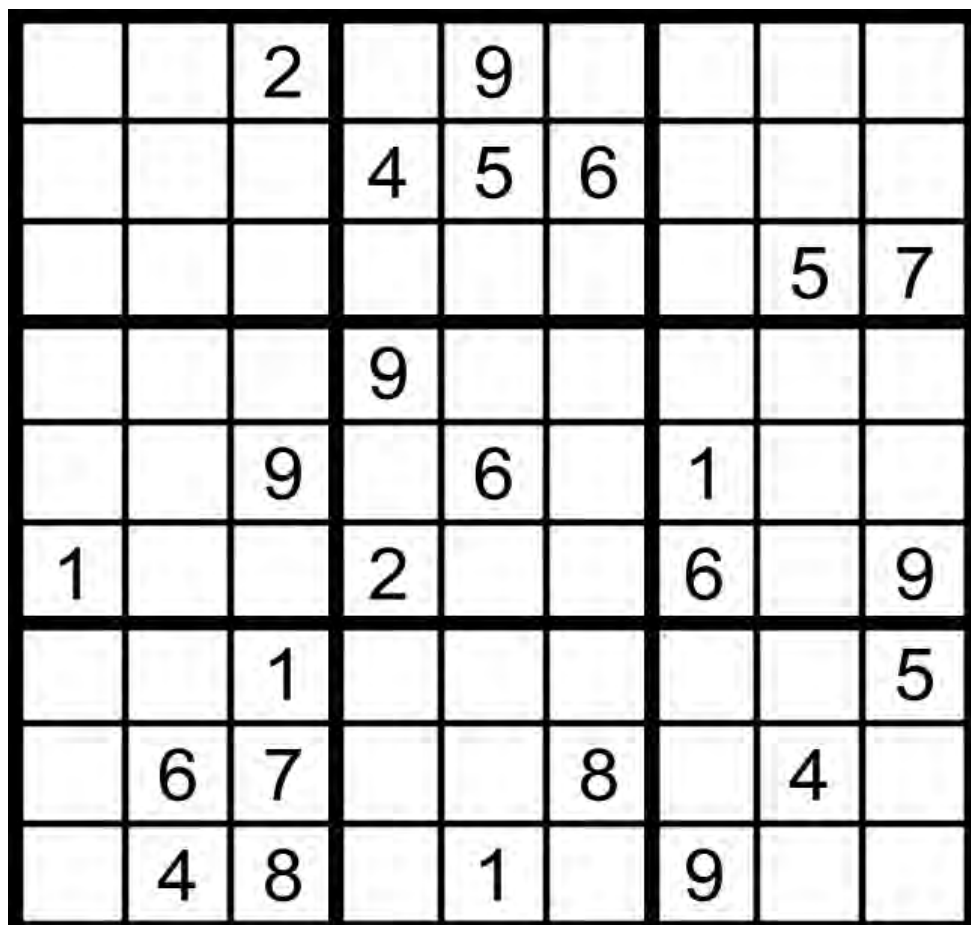
- 1 Able was I ere I saw ---
- 5 The Paris subway
- 10 4 qts.
- 13 Underhand political revelation
- 14 Relating to birds
- 15 Set of three
- 16 Isinglass
- 17 Hunters' cabin
- 18 Radicals
- 19 Hard durable wood
- 20 Birthday party essential
- 21 Said to photographers
- 23 Inclination
- 25 G M builder Alfred P ---
- 26 Scarcely
- 28 First Gospel
- 31 Usual type of switch
- 32 "I miss my ---, my --- miss misses me"
- 34 "Halt! --- fire!"
- 35 Burden
- 36 Some embers
- 37 Former Georgia senator Sam ---
- 38 Great weight
- 39 Legion
- 40 Oater baddie chasers
- 41 Firefighter's water source

Down:

- 43 Captivates
- 44 Paws
- 45 Russian prison camp
- 46 South American cowboy
- 48 Little Dickens heroine
- 49 Plugs
- 52 Twice-baked bread
- 53 Come together
- 55 Chop-chop
- 56 Tennessee state flower
- 57 Happen again
- 58 Greek goat's cheese
- 59 Lobbying gp.
- 60 Measures
- 61 Old Russian ruler

Down:

- 1 Tickle Me toy
- 2 Star Wars princess
- 3 Aural atmosphere creator in films
- 4 Alias
- 5 Affliction
- 6 Summon
- 7 "There is a --- in the affairs of men ..." (Shakespeare: "Julius Caesar")
- 8 Syncopated piano piece
- 9 With uniform service throughout
- 10 E.g. methane and water vapor
- 11 Supports
- 12 Fail to win
- 15 Hallowe'en option
- 20 Bovine baby
- 22 Strong attraction
- 24 Sports officials (Abbr.)
- 25 Look happy
- 26 Kiosk
- 27 Bug
- 29 Physicist --- Mach
- 30 Fermented grape juices
- 32 Varieties
- 33 Bundle
- 36 Topographical outlines
- 37 Cosmic bang
- 39 Hell --- no fury like a woman scorned
- 40 Tab
- 42 Haystacks
- 43 Top dogs
- 45 Arrangement
- 46 Suitcase
- 47 Migraine feature
- 48 Pleasant
- 50 Collection of facts
- 51 Pole at sea
- 54 Butterfly catcher
- 55 Astern



OBITUARY



BRINSMEAD, GORDON—Gordon Wilson Brinsmead was born in Orillia, Ontario on March 11, 1926, the second son of George Brinsmead and Mary Wilson. Gordon joined the Navy in the Second World War, where he was stationed on a naval tug at Halifax. Upon his discharge from the Navy, Gordon moved to Niagara-on-the-Lake, where he went to work at Shepherd Boats alongside his father, a boatbuilder. On October 6, 1951 he married Joyce Hilda Taverner. Gordon was involved in the sailboat industry as part of Hinterhoeller Yachts and C&C Yachts from the late 1950s until the early 1980s. Gordon enjoyed sailing, and sailed recreationally and as an amateur sportsman for much of his adult life, not only on Lake Ontario, but also on the East Coast and in the Caribbean. After retirement, he took up both bicycling and hiking, spending many days cycling the byways of the Niagara Peninsula, and hiking and doing maintenance on the Bruce Trail. He and Joyce enjoyed traveling, having visited North America from Alaska to Florida, and Nova Scotia to American Southwest. When Joyce became ill, Gordon became her full-time caregiver, and in his eighties he learned to keep house, and also taught himself to cook from cookbooks. Gordon is predeceased by his brother Reginald (Jack), his wife Joyce, and his two oldest sons Stephen (Carol) and Raymond (Robin). He is survived by his children Michael (Jeanne), Sharon (Tony) and Shelley (Howard), as well as eight grandchildren (Tommy, Hilary, Shaun, Ally, Hannah, Tyler, Bethany and Emily) and eight great-grandchildren. Gordon died peacefully on February 16, 2021 at the home he had built in Niagara-on-the-Lake where he had lived for the past 67 years. The family expresses their thanks to Dr. Al-Jarrah, the palliative care nurses, and the personal support workers for their excellent care, kindness and compassion. A celebration of Gordon's life will be held when people can gather in the future. Arrangements entrusted to MORGAN FUNERAL HOME, 415 Regent Street, Niagara-on-the-Lake, ON. As an expression of sympathy, in lieu of flowers, donations may be made to Niagara-on-the-Lake Community Palliative Care Services. www.notlpc.com

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



IN MEMORIAM



DENNIS DICK, FEB 25, 1953 - AUG 21, 2020

That man is a success who has lived well, laughed often and loved much,

Who has gained the respect of his colleagues and the love of his children,

Who has filled his niche and accomplished his task,

Who leaves the world better than he found it,

Who has never lacked appreciation of earth's beauty or failed to express it,

Who looked for the best in others and gave the best he had.

Remembering a dear husband, father and Opa on his birthday, Shirley, Jake and Angelica, Denise and Colin and Emberley.

PUZZLE ANSWERS

Across: 1 Elba, 5 Metro, 10 Gal, 13 Leak, 14 Avian, 15 Tho, 16 Mica, 17 Lodge, 18 Reds, 19 Oak, 20 Cake, 21 Cheese, 23 Grade, 25 Sloan, 26 Barely, 28 Matthew, 31 On-off, 32 Swiss, 34 Or I, 35 Onus, 36 Coals, 37 Nunn, 38 Ton, 39 Horde, 40 Posse, 41 Hydrant, 43 Rivets, 44 Mitts, 45 Gulag, 46 Gauchon, 48 Neil, 49 Ads, 52 Rusk, 53 Unite, 55 A s a p, 56 Irs, 57 Recur, 58 Feta, 59 P A C, 60 Steps, 61 Tsar.

Down: 1 Elmo, 2 Leia, 3 Background music, 4 A k a, 5 Malady, 6 Evoke, 7 Tide, 8 Rag, 9 One-class, 10 Greenhouse gases, 11 Aids, 12 Lose, 15 Treat, 20 Call, 22 Hots, 24 Refs, 25 Smile, 26 Booth, 27 Anny, 29 Ernst, 30 Wines, 32 Sorts, 36 Contours, 37 Nova, 39 Hathi, 40 Pill, 42 Ricks, 43 Rulers, 45 Getup, 46 Grip, 47 Aura, 48 Nice, 50 Data, 51 Spar, 54 Net, 55 Aff.





Social gatherings can have deadly consequences.

Stay home to stop the spread of COVID-19. Learn more at ontario.ca/covid-19

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The ciderhouse and tasting area, which will feature work by local artists, brings a bold, new modern look to the expansion. (Photos by Mike Balsom)

Ciderhouse promising 50 new releases in its first year of operation

Continued from page 11

have to come from only the geeked-out cider-making process. One of the things we really want to explore is to discover more diversity-driven flavours. Every culture has its own unique flavours. For example, if we decide to do a pineapple Jamaican cider, we'll go ahead and do it."

On the subjects of creativity and diversity, Liu and Ironwood's marketing manager, Megan Voth, will be using the bold, modern interior of the new building to partner with local artists, showcasing their work and providing them with a platform through which to share their stories.

The vision for the art is a contemporary, new-age focus, with the goal also being to reflect the diversity of the Niagara community.

"We're planning to work with five artists a year," says Voth, "and there's no shortage of local talent to choose from."

They have already booked the artists for their first year, and will kick things off with Hamilton-based abstract painter Vick Naresh, who is of Indian descent. His works use metaphor and broad strokes to create narratives that arise from everyday experiences as well as current socio-political and activist themes. This often results in an ethereal feel to his pieces, combining shapes and styles to create striking images.

The bright colours of Naresh's work will provide much contrast to the stark interior of the new ciderhouse. The art promises to be an integral part of the whole experience at Ironwood, as visitors will be

able to peer out through floor-to-ceiling windows to the beautiful setting of the Sunnybrook Farm orchards while standing at the tasting bar.

And speaking of Sunnybrook, the popular fruit wines will still be available to purchase and to taste at Ironwood Cider, but they will no longer be front and centre.

Over the next few weeks, Ironwood will be putting the finishing touches on the interior in preparation to welcome guests to the facility. The opening is planned for the spring, but of course will depend on COVID restrictions. In the meantime, Ironwood ciders and Sunnybrook wines are available for online orders and local pickup. And keep your eyes and taste buds peeled for the announcement of their first new products in early March.



Ironwood Cider will be taking the spotlight, but fruit wines will still be available.