



Newark Neighbours says thanks
page 9

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Celebrating women

Since this is the time we celebrate women internationally, it seems fitting the NOTL Museum will reopen with Making Her Mark, an exhibit about local women who have made their mark not only in the history of the town, but in the country. Sarah Kaufman, managing director and curator, has extended the exhibit (organized and set up by women) to give more people a chance to see it. One of the women celebrated is Margherita Howe, an Order of Canada recipient for her contribution to cleaning up the Niagara River. She was also a heritage preservation activist in NOTL. For the story on the museum reopening, please see page 12. (Penny Coles)

Community centre gym opening soon

Penny Coles
The Local

The fitness area of the community centre is set to open Monday, but with some changes.

When the province moved the town into the red-control group March 1, fitness centres were permitted to open, but the town held off for two weeks, citing safety of residents and staff.

To ensure safety protocols can be met, the track will be moved downstairs to the main auditorium, says Kevin Turcotte, manager of parks and recreation, providing more space for physical distancing.

When the community centre is used as a vaccination clinic, which is expected to be one day a week — although the details are constantly evolving, he says — the track will be unavailable.

Although he hadn't heard

which day, "we'll be communicating with the gym members once we have that information. We're still waiting for details about the clinic."

At this time, access to the fitness area will be the only service available at the community centre, Turcotte says.

There will be extra sanitizing by staff, with equipment cleaned after each use, and some equipment has to be moved or closed off to allow for three metres distance between machines,

Last reopening, some of the cardio equipment and spin bikes were relocated to the auditorium to allow for more space, but that won't work this time, with the vaccination clinic using the same space.

"I think everyone wants to be physically active," he says, and members were anxious for this reopening. "We

Continued on page 4

Chamber to hold first State of the Town event

Penny Coles
The Local

Although a "state of the town" address is common in other municipalities, it isn't a tradition in Niagara-on-the-Lake.

Eduardo Lafforgue, president and CEO of the NOTL Chamber of Commerce, wants it to become an annual event, beginning this year.

It is also customary for it to be hosted by the local Chamber of Commerce, and is typically

held early in a new year as a way to reflect on the past year and look at goals for the future, he says. When he decided this was the year to establish a new tradition, and asked Lord Mayor Betty Disero if she would participate, she didn't hesitate, immediately agreeing to do it.

"It's a role we haven't played in the past, and should have," says Lafforgue.

"I hope it will become an annual 'must-attend' event with the lord mayor."

It is often held as a break-

fast meeting, and Lafforgue says he would like to do that in the future, but for this year will be a virtual event, open at no charge to anyone interested in listening, although registration is required.

It gives Disero an opportunity to talk to the business community and the community at large about the past year, achievements, accomplishments and challenges, and also what lies ahead, in terms of goals, challenges and opportunities for 2021.

And while 2020 and 2021 are very different than any other year because of the pandemic, for businesses and residents, "this is the main reason we're doing it. It's essential," says Lafforgue.

It was mostly due to the pandemic that the local chamber became a member of the Ontario Chamber of Commerce, and several other business and tourism associations, all of which gave access to more resources and shared ideas on how to get through a difficult

time for businesses, and can provide a larger forum of advocacy than the chamber could manage on its own.

"We can make a lot of noise, but we are still a small chamber," he said, although membership has grown in the last year. "I'm delighted to see the support of the community and businesses, at a time when many chambers have lost memberships."

It is also a time when more businesses can reopen, and Lafforgue says he encourages them to do so.

Bed and breakfasts and local hotels are receiving reservations from people ready to get out and enjoy "some level of activity," and residents will be looking to do that as well, he says, which is welcome news for businesses.

There has been some changeover of businesses, with some closing and new ones moving in, "and likely more to come," Lafforgue says, and although it's sad to see closures,

Continued on page 3

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Region racing to roll out vaccinations before variant spike

Penny Coles
The Local

Vaccines are coming to Niagara, but will their arrival be in time to prevent a third wave?

Dr. Mustafa Hirji, the region's acting chief medical officer of health, says Niagara is in a race to get vaccine into arms before the spread of variant cases leads to another lockdown.

And again on Monday he warned the only way to control the spread, is "to push the increase as far out as possible" while we wait for vaccinations, by being cautious, "staying home, and venturing out only for essential purposes."

The rate of infection could be much worse if everybody doesn't do their part, he added.

Moving to the red zone and the reopening that accompanied it encourages people to go out shopping or for recreation, Hirji said, but he doesn't think the province is likely to move Niagara back to grey-lockdown, although that could change.

By mid-March, variants, which spread quicker than the original virus, could make up 40 per cent of all cases across Ontario.

We have "a few more months" to stave off the increase of cases until more people are vaccinated, avoiding another lockdown, he said.

By Monday, Niagara had gone from six suspected cases of variant cases to 60

in two weeks, four of them confirmed as B.1.1.7, the U.K. variant.

The good news is there are now four approved vaccines on their way, also seemingly effective against variants, and a second dose can be administered four months after the first, rather than the previous target of three to four weeks. That will allow more people to be vaccinated sooner, said Hirji, and still offer good protection against infection.

The change in the schedule for second doses follows the provincial decision, based on the recommendation from the National Advisory Committee on Immunization, due to limited COVID-19 vaccine supply, and increasing research that the first dose of both Pfizer and Moderna has high effectiveness against symptomatic disease and hospitalization several weeks after the first dose, said an announcement Tuesday from Niagara Health.

"Niagara Health will continue to advocate for the time between doses to be reduced should supply of vaccine increase in the future," the announcement said. Anyone who is awaiting their second dose from Niagara Health will receive a revised notification about their new appointment.

Despite the good news on the vaccination front, Hirji remains concerned about the "pretty high" number of people battling the coronavirus in intensive

care units and hospital beds in Niagara, and said it's important to get that number down in advance of a potential spike in variant cases.

While staff levels will be "stressed" once health care workers move to vaccination clinics, he said, there are sufficient numbers to get the job done, but that's another reason to control the spread and not further stretch hospital resources.

Niagara is using the provincial portal for vaccination registration, expected to open March 15 for people 80 and older. At that time, appointments can be made by phone as well, Hirji said. Vaccinations are expected to begin in community clinics about a week later.

In Niagara-on-the-Lake, the clinics are expected to be held one day a week in the community centre, although the day has not been announced.

Although other areas of Ontario appear to have progressed faster in their vaccinations, having now moved on to the 80-plus population, Hirji disputes the notion that Niagara is lagging behind.

The region has a higher number of long-term care homes in Niagara, and seniors living in congregate settings who have already been vaccinated, along with the health care workers in those homes.

Niagara, he said, "is actually keeping pace in terms of vaccinations" with other areas in Ontario.

"Niagara is actually a little above the provincial average for vaccinations. Niagara's done pretty well," he said, despite getting a late start, being behind in receiving vaccine, and working with a larger senior population in a greater number of long-term care homes.

Niagara Health is now vaccinating some of those in the 80 years old and up category, but has approached that rollout a little differently than other areas, by first targeting those currently in the hospital and reaching out by phone to those at home who have recently had hospital stays.

Niagara Health is also continuing to vaccinate healthcare workers at the Seymour Hannah clinic in St. Catharines, prioritizing long-term care and retirement home workers, hospital staff and physicians, primary care providers, dentists and other specialists, as well as medical first responders (including para-

medics, police and firefighters).

While vaccinations in long-term care and at-risk retirement homes, and other congregate living settings for seniors, have reduced the number of deaths in Niagara, Hirji said, the major-

ity of people in the hospital or intensive care units are in the 60 to 79 age group, and some are younger than that. That's a concern, because their vaccinations are a ways off, and won't be in time to avoid the third wave, he said.



Dr. Mustafa Hirji (Supplied photo)

Short-term rental owners ask for support through pandemic

Penny Coles
The Local

Last year was an extremely difficult year for short-term rentals, as it was for most businesses.

John Foreman, president of the Niagara-on-the-Lake Bed and Breakfast Association, spoke to councillors Monday night about some requests to make the 2021 season a little easier.

The number of bookings in bed and breakfasts was dramatically down from 2019, due to a combination of forced closures because of COVID, fewer tourists (especially Americans), and also reduced capacity due to the requirement to accommodate social distancing, Foreman said.

Cottage rentals were a little higher, bringing the average up to the 30 per cent range.

"In my case, we operated only one room at a time of our three rooms in 2020," he said, to comply with physical distancing and allow time for a thorough cleaning in between guests.

Some short-term rentals are closing for good, putting their property up for sale, and others are closing for the year for safety reasons, he told councillors.

"There will be fewer B&Bs at the end of the pandemic than there were at the start," he said.

"This is a great loss for NOTL," he added, explaining they provide part of the town's character, as well as tourist accommodations.

One of Foreman's requests was in relation to a town delay in processing applications for 2021 licences. Normally, he said, licence renewals would have been processed before the expiry of their current licence, but due to a moratorium on licences in the fall, and the lockdown, the town is far behind on processing them. He was asking that short-term rentals be allowed to operate while waiting for that processing to catch up.

That was an easy request for town staff, with CAO Marnie Cluckie explaining they are already doing that, and would do a better job of

communicating that to the owners.

He also asked that some short-term rental owners who are considering not opening for 2021 be allowed to put their applications on hold for the year, and be able to reapply the following year without having to start from scratch.

In addition, he was hoping that those who haven't decided whether to open for 2021 or stay closed for safety reasons be able to renew their licence without interest, and that the due date be extended to June 1, giving them time to make that decision.

In recognition of a difficult year to come, with closures and lower capacity of guests expected, he asked that licence fees be reduced by 33 per cent.

Foreman was also concerned that the short-term rental committee now meeting to discuss changes to the current bylaw doesn't have enough representation from the short-term rental community.

In addition to a motion by Lord Mayor Betty Disero that Foreman's presentation be referred to staff, she asked that two additional members of the short-term rental community, at least one of them on the B&B association, be added to the committee, which was approved.

Foreman's remaining requests are expected to be dealt with in a staff report already in the works, which will be presented to councillors later this month.

Volunteers needed for clinics

Penny Coles
The Local

Niagara Region Public Health has a call-out for volunteers to help out at vaccinations clinic sites.

People are needed to do everything from setting up the daily clinics across the region to directing traffic in parking lots.

Volunteers can also help with client flow through the clinic, ensure they are wearing masks and that physical distancing is maintained in waiting lines, and directing clients to the next step in the immunization process.

There will also be a recovery period of about 15 minutes for those who have received their vaccinations,

says Dr. Mustafa Hirji, the region's acting medical officer of health, and volunteers will be needed to monitor them throughout that time period.

There is a complete list of volunteer tasks and requirements on the region's website at https://www.niagararegion.ca/living/health_wellness/volunteer-with-public-health.aspx

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REAL ESTATE WILLS BUSINESS

Disero happy for opportunity to address the public

Continued from page 1

it's gratifying there is still confidence in Niagara-on-the-Lake, and that others are creating new businesses. "It's a positive sign that people are still investing in the town."

Lafforgue is optimistic for the future, with indications that destinations such as NOTL are "poised for recovery," as people turn to day trips, or those that are two to three days in dura-

tion, generally within about 200 kilometres of a populated centre.

That benefitted businesses last summer, and "we're working on it for this summer, but only if it's safe. Safety and cleanliness is the top priority."

There are several contingency plans for marketing this summer, with different scenarios depending on where we are in the pandemic, and what is considered safe, he says. The

chamber will be prepared to activate a marketing plan as soon as they have the information they need to go ahead.

According to Destination Canada, some places could be recovered by the end of 2022, while other locations are looking at 2026.

"We're doing whatever we can to be in the front row, to be sure we can be successful. But it's so important to have the lord mayor and the business

community at the same table. Our mandates are different, but working together is very important."

Disero says she welcomes any opportunity to speak to the public "about what we're doing, and what our vision is for the future. That is so important for the public to know."

She was a little surprised to get the request, since it's an event that hasn't been held before in NOTL, but pleased to

do it.

In December, Disero released a two-year update, in print and on a 10-minute video, which included a list of accomplishments similar to what she is being asked to speak about in the State of the Town address. Her plan is to "revise it and talk about the year to come as well."

It helped her to write it down and see how much has been achieved by the town and council, she says. "We've been busy, and we've done a lot of good. People don't always see that." She has received a positive response from some residents who were also impressed with how much has been accomplished, she says, and welcomes the opportunity to reach

more members of the public with her message through the chamber event.

There is also time for questions during the upcoming webinar, and Disero says she values getting feedback from the public that will be helpful when changes need to be made. "That's the way we live. Things are changing all the time."

The State of the Town webinar will be held Wednesday, March 24, at 7 p.m.

Registration is through the NOTL Chamber of Commerce by email, at chamberevents@niagaraonthelake.com, or call 905-468-1950.

Questions can also be submitted by email or by calling the chamber.

Councillors discuss planning appeals and legal costs to town

Penny Coles
The Local

An explanation in a town information report about the outcome of an appeal to the Local Planning Appeal Tribunal (LPAT), which the town lost, brought up a discussion of the high cost of legal fees, which in this case, did not accomplish what the council had hoped.

The appeal was by Queenston Mile Winery, over the lack of a timely decision on its site plan application, and some conditions the town imposed before approving it.

Counc. Erwin Wiens reminded councillors the appeal was a result of council

not taking the advice of staff, and since they went against the recommendations of the town planning department, the town didn't have a planner to help argue their case.

Wiens said council set the town on this road last August and has now seen the process through to the end, losing not only the appeal, but some of the concessions that had already been agreed to, as well as the "expense and time consumed all the way along for a process that we knew we had no chance of winning nine months ago."

He added, "I don't know if any of our residents would have wanted us to go all the way to the end had they been

given the same information last August, that we had no chance of winning."

He's concerned about the money being spent on legal bills, and the emails from the public asking about them, he said.

If the town can't find a planner or a lawyer to represent it, "you would generally be on the wrong side of right. That's a concern I have as we have other LPAT hearings coming up, and it's very important that we be mindful of the cost involved for something we're going to lose."

"It's just something that's been sticking in my craw."

Counc. Gary Burroughs offered the flip side of that

argument, saying he supports council taking a stand "regardless of where we end up with this."

Councils have taken on some big issues in the past, he said, "and have not been afraid to back down because of legal costs. We believed we were on the right track, and in many cases we have been, but every time you try to take on a big challenge, you're going to take on legal costs to defend that position," Burroughs said.

"Nobody wants legal bills, but the whole world has become more litigious, and we should never make a decision because we're afraid of losing."



Lord Mayor Betty Disero has her two-year update of council accomplishments, which she presented in a video, to help prepare her state of the town address. (Screenshot)

McGarr Realty Corp., Brokerage is Pleased to Welcome Duncan Spence, Sales Representative to Our Niagara-on-the-Lake Office



Duncan Spence
Sales Representative

McGarr Realty Corp., Brokerage is excited to Welcome Duncan Spence, Sales Representative to our Niagara-on-the-Lake Office. Asking questions, listening intently, and providing solutions built on a foundation of Honesty and Integrity. These have been the pillars upon which Duncan has built a successful career in Sales Management and Customer Service for the past 38 years.

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After spending countless time in the Niagara Region, weekends away from Oakville, Duncan and his partner now call the Village of Virgil home. Duncan appreciates the lifestyle offered by the town and looks forward to helping his clients find that perfect home.

"As Duncan begins his real estate career, I know he will be an integral part of the McGarr Team in Niagara-on the-Lake. His passion for our community is an asset for his clients. I invite you to reach out to Duncan, and begin working on getting you moving in 2021.", **Sally McGarr**, Founder and Broker of Record.

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WHO'S WHO IN
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Peller finds itself ‘in the inn business’

Penny Coles
The Local

Running a hotel, even a small one, is not something Peller Estates Winery was expecting to get into, but when the hotel in question has 17 acres of grape vines bordering the winery’s own vineyards, it was an obvious choice.

“It seemed like a natural fit,” says Greg Berti, vice-president of business development for Andrew Peller Ltd., which has just purchased the Riverbend Inn and Vineyard for \$10 million.

“We weren’t in the inn business a month ago, but we are now,” says Berti. “This is a first for us,” although some of Peller’s winery properties in B.C. have houses on them, which are run as Airbnbs.

And while, he adds, “we didn’t see this coming, we’re happy to have it.”

There was a time, almost 20

years ago, when purchasing the property nestled between John Street and the Niagara River Parkway was a consideration, but then John and Jill Wiens bought it and built the elegant, Georgian-style, high-ceilinged 21-room inn and restaurant, with a beautiful view overlooking the 40 acres of vineyards and Peller winery.

It is tempting to think the two properties might have all been one at some point in their past, says Berti, but he hasn’t researched their history going back that far.

While it’s early days yet and there are many decisions still to be made, he says Peller wine-makers are anxious to take over management of the vineyards, and will likely use the grapes to produce wines under the premium Peller label.

“It happened so quickly,” says Berti of the purchase. Although the Riverbend property had been for sale, Peller was late

coming to the table, and there were other parties interested. But with adjacent vineyards, “it made sense.”

He toured the property early this week, and although the inn has been closed since December 2020 due to the pandemic, he says it is a beautiful building with “the same look and feel” that he remembers from its early days, and of course, the same spectacular view.

He expects it will be open and operational this spring, with some investment in updates to be made before then.

The acquisition of the inn will add to the wine tourism experience, says Berti, and is a “natural extension of wine hospitality.”

The inn’s restaurant has also been closed for more than a year, and Jason Parsons, Peller’s chef, and his team will oversee its reopening.

The current owners will be

retiring once the transaction is completed.

“We are very pleased that our neighbours and friends are acquiring the inn and the vineyards, and excited that our heritage of providing one

of the region’s highest quality hospitality experiences will be only enhanced under their new ownership,” said Jane Yu, Riverbend’s owner and manager, in a press release issued by Peller.

Andrew Peller Limited

now operates Peller Estates, the Riverbend Inn, Trius Winery and Wayne Gretzky Estates in Niagara-on-the-Lake. Thirty Bench Wine Makers in Beamsville and additional wineries in British Columbia.

Members grateful reopening delay is over

Continued from page 1

wanted to be sure we could open safely and protect the public as much as possible.”

John Watt and his wife Elaine Tanner were two members anxious to get back to exercising at the town’s fitness centre. Watt, a former parks and recreation director for a city with a much larger population than NOTL, was not happy to learn that, although permitted by the province, the town’s fitness area was not going to reopen.

Tanner, a former Olympic swimmer, “was going up the wall” with the fitness centre closed, Watt said.

He communicated his displeasure to town staff, and was told there were no plans to open it any time soon, he says. That information led Watt and Tanner to join a St. Catharines fitness centre, even though they had pre-paid for a year’s membership, up until October, at the NOTL community centre.

He called the decision to keep the community centre closed, despite provincial lifting of that restriction, “oppression and disservice to the NOTL community.”

“It’s a small gym, and simple to manage. I’ve never seen more than 10 people there at the same time, maximum.”

Physical exercise is so important to good health, he says, and it should be available close to home. It’s also essential for good mental health, especially at this time, when people are suffering increased depression due to the pandemic.

He also expressed his dissatisfaction in emails to some of the town’s politicians, and he suspects he wasn’t the only gym member who spoke out. The response to his concern from Lord Mayor Betty Disero, and Councillors Clare Cameron and Wendy Cheropita, indicated they would look into the reasons behind the continued closure. He was impressed by their speedy response, and feels they may have helped to get it reopened.

He’s also grateful the decision was made to end the delay. It’s a vital part of the community, for people of all ages, he says.

Tanner will likely use both gyms, the one in St. Catharines they’ve already joined and the one in the community centre. Watt is exercising more cautiously at the moment, as he recovers from surgery, but he expects he will do the same.

Turcotte says throughout the pandemic, everything the town has done has shown leadership, taking a proactive approach to the health and

safety of residents and staff.

The town’s Emergency Control Group made the decision to delay the reopening of the community centre for an extra two weeks, based on capacity limits, staffing resources, cleaning requirements, transmission rates and information regarding vaccination clinics.

Staff also monitored the response and impact of delaying the reopening of the community centre.

It also takes some time to ensure every provincial regulation is being interpreted correctly, and that with the resources available, including additional staff, the operational plan can be followed, says Turcotte.

The NOTL Public Library will open for some in-person services the same day, March 15, but there hasn’t been a decision about the Sweets & Swirls Cafe yet, he says.

More information regarding reopening procedures and booking requirements for reserving use of the fitness areas within the community centre, will be available on the town’s website.

At this time, the Meridian Credit Union and Centennial Arenas will remain closed until further notice, with town staff reviewing potential options to reopen in the future.



Riverbend Inn and its 17 acres of vineyards adjacent to Peller Estates Winery have been purchased by Andrew Peller Ltd. (Photo supplied)



VOLUNTEERS NEEDED TOWN OF NIAGARA-ON-THE-LAKE CUSTOMER EXPERIENCE & TECHNOLOGY COMMITTEE, INCLUSIVITY COMMITTEE, TRANSPORTATION ADVISORY COMMITTEE, AND COMMUNITIES IN BLOOM COMMITTEE

The Corporation of the Town of Niagara-on-the-Lake is seeking additional members for the following:

- One (1) citizen to be appointed to the Customer Experience & Technology Committee
- One (1) citizen to be appointed to the Inclusivity Committee
- Two (2) citizens to be appointed to the Transportation Advisory Committee
- Two (2) citizens to be appointed to the Communities in Bloom
- Two (2) Niagara-on-the-Lake student representatives attending a secondary or post-secondary institution

Application forms and Terms of Reference are available on the Town’s website www.notl.org. Applications will be accepted until 3:00 p.m. on March 26, 2021. A resume identifying specific qualifications for the committee terms of reference is required with the application.

Completed applications may be submitted to the **Corporate Services Department, Municipal Offices, 1593 Four Mile Creek Road, PO Box 100, Virgil, ON L0S 1T0** or by email to peter.todd@notl.com

Peter Todd, Town Clerk
March 10, 2021



COMMUNITY NOTICE ANNUAL VEGETATION MANAGEMENT PROGRAM

Every year, CN is required to clear its right-of-way of any vegetation that may pose a safety hazard. Vegetation on railway right-of-way, if left uncontrolled, can contribute to trackside fires and impair proper inspection of track infrastructure.

For safe railway operations, CN will conduct its annual vegetation control program on its rail lines in the province of Ontario. A certified professional will be applying herbicides on wand around the railway tracks (primarily along the 16 feet graveled area/ballast). All product requirements for setbacks in the vicinity of dwellings, aquatic environments and municipal water supplies will be met.

The program is expected to take place from April to October 2021. Visit www.cn.ca/vegetation to see the list of cities as well as the updated schedule.

For more information, contact the CN Public Inquiry Line at contact@cn.ca or 1-888-888-5909.

Local BUSINESS SPOTLIGHT: Engel & Völkers

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Niagara Realtor Team combines their unique expertise

Nancy Bailey and Ann-Marie Shirley of Engel & Völkers have many similarities in their approach to business. Honesty, integrity, and loyalty are among them. They also both believe that collaborating diverse expertise is an asset that is greater than the sum of its parts. This is one of the reasons they chose to work together in the real estate market of the Niagara Region.

Nancy and Ann-Marie both bring a unique set of skills to their business. In February 2018, Nancy was inducted to Engel & Völkers Private Office Advisors Network, a globally connected group that works together to assist and advise clients. This unparalleled network provides access to premium real estate in the world's most

sought-after locations which includes Niagara-on-the-Lake. The collaborative team is also privy to real estate tools that put their clients at the forefront of buying and selling activity. The Private Office Designation is reserved for accomplished Engel & Völkers Advisors with a history of successful high-value transactions and market leadership as well as client and colleague recommendations. It is of little surprise Nancy carries this designation. Even less of a surprise is that she shares this knowledge with her team, ensuring that all clients can benefit.

Ann-Marie brings significant advertising and marketing expertise to the team, a must-have in this competitive real estate market. Having had an ex-

traordinarily successful 30-year career in the advertising industry, her knowledge was acquired working with every medium to position her Fortune 500 clients to reach their buyers. Today, she uses her expertise to market seller's properties to the right people at the right time in the right way. "When I joined Engel & Völkers and learned of the many sophisticated marketing tools they offer Advisors, I was ecstatic to have this kind of access at my fingertips," states Ann-Marie. With her guidance, The Nancy Bailey Team has put these marketing tools into action. Their digital campaigns have gained excellent traction for their clients. They have seen above average engagement with the ads, which has translated into

increased home showings and sales to out-of-town buyers.

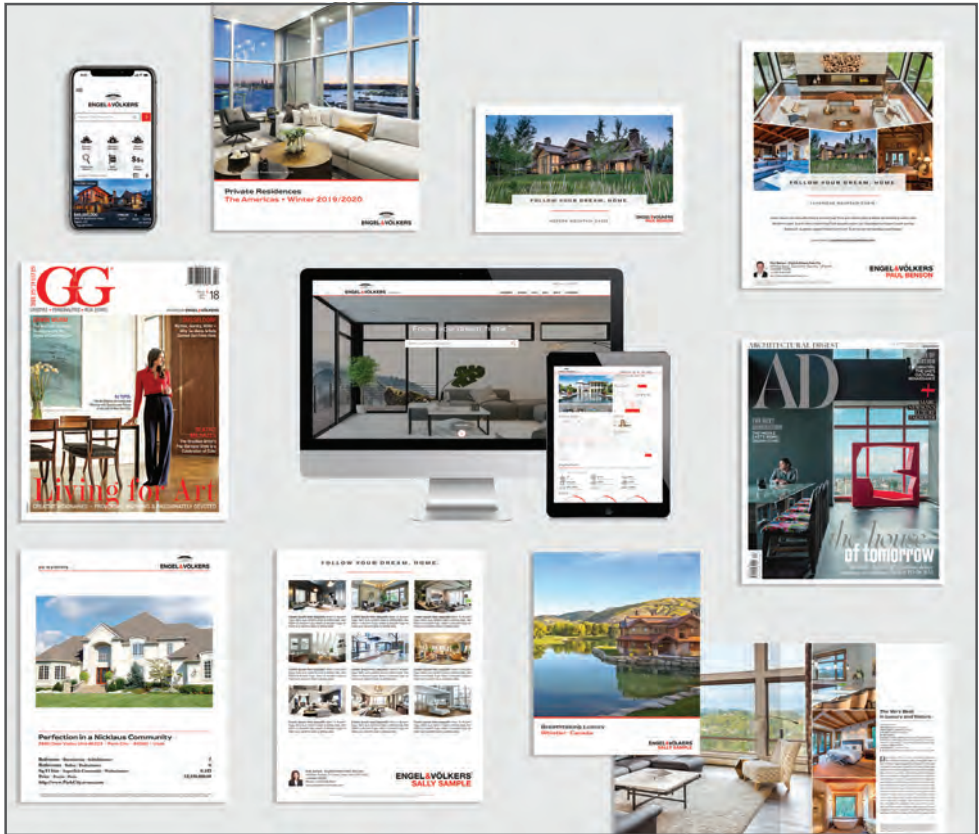
These women do not rest on their laurels, they are always conscious of continuing their education and achieving milestones that allow them to provide exceptional service to their clients. "Achieving my recent goal of getting the Certified

International Property Specialist designation" says Nancy, "allows me to connect to an influential International Network and better serve my buyers and sellers in Niagara." As for Ann-Marie, she immerses herself daily in the numerous courses offered by the expansive Engel & Völkers Academy.

Capitalizing on their similarities and differences, The Nancy Bailey team is positioned to provide meaningful advantages to sellers and buyers of real estate.



The Team has access to an international network.



Engel & Völkers sophisticated marketing tools help attract serious home buyers.



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NANCY BAILEY

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ANN-MARIE SHIRLEY

EDITORIAL

Honour those who have died by protecting the living

We know people are struggling. They're tired of staying home, staying apart from family and friends. They're lonely. Mental health issues are rampant.

Everyone is making sacrifices, our community heroes who risk their safety to look after the rest of us, for everything from health care to keeping businesses and stores open, and many others whose sacrifices are not so public.

The good news, very good news, is that vaccinations are arriving in Canada at an accelerated pace, and should be getting to Canadians more quickly than originally expected, especially in those provinces accepting national advice to delay a second dose by four months, allowing more people to receive their first dose and be protected sooner. Fortunately, Ontario has agreed with that advice, and that should

speed up the rollout of vaccinations for more residents of Niagara, while respecting the priority lists based on age and risk.

With the arrival of AstraZeneca and Johnson & Johnson vaccines, which don't require the kind of freezers Moderna and Pfizer do, pharmacies — and we have three in Niagara-on-the-Lake who want to be part of that — as well as primary health care clinics will also be able to help get needles in arms quickly.

Ontario is now talking about completing first doses by the end of June, which is extremely welcome news, if all goes according to plan.

But it's the time until we get there we have to be concerned about.

In Niagara-on-the-Lake, one of the concerns is visitors from the GTA and other areas. Talk at Monday's committee

meeting indicated some councillors would like to look at ways to stop visitors from coming to town, and filling up local parks. But that's not likely to happen.

We can't close off a municipality. Businesses wouldn't want that to happen. We don't want businesses to close, but we also don't want to see an increase in COVID cases that will lead to another lockdown. That's a conundrum.

So we're back to looking after ourselves, and each other. That's really our best, and only option.

It's been a full year we've been on this roller coaster, and it doesn't seem to get any easier.

However, rather than feel sorry for ourselves, we need to remember that in Canada, more than 22,000 people have died from COVID, leaving families to mourn them. In Niagara, the number of deaths as of Tuesday was 369 residents, their families left to grieve their losses and face the future without their loved ones.

The town hall flag has been at half mast since April in recognition of those who have died from COVID, and will stay in that position until there are no more deaths from this disease.

To observe the one-year anniversary of this pandemic, all Niagara municipalities will

be lowering their flags from March 12 to 14, and the town, its flag already at half mast, will be lighting the town hall flags during that time.

To all those who have taken pandemic restrictions to heart

and done their part to prevent even more deaths, thank you.

The best way for each of us to honour those who have died and to help prevent more deaths, is by staying at home as much as possible and being as

cautious as we can in our interactions with others, hopefully buying enough time for vaccinations to do their work.

Penny Coles
The Local

Thank you VBA, for all you do

The Virgil Business Association reached a difficult, but inevitable decision at their Tuesday virtual meeting: the 2021 Virgil Stampede, a May long-weekend tradition, has been cancelled, but with every expectation that it will return in all its glory in 2022.

Even holding some sort of scaled-down event seemed an unlikely prospect, but there was a discussion about looking at possibilities for smaller fundraising events later in the year, VBA president Richard Wall reported.

Members are taking some time to "re-energize" first, while waiting to see where we are in the pandemic and what kinds of events might be possible, he said, and also what major projects they might support for the future.

We know whatever the VBA decides to do, it will do well, and whatever it decides to support, it will be a benefit to the community.

This is an organization with a small number of members but a huge and very generous heart, having given about \$1.5 million to the community over more

than 50 years.

That's a feat that required the support of this community, so thanks to all of you who have contributed, through donations, volunteering, or attending.

We'll miss the stampede, which always heralds the start of the season we love, but we know it will return bigger and better than ever.

Penny Coles
The Local

The Local is a proud member of the VBA.



SPRING AHEAD!

Don't forget to set your clocks ahead one hour this Sunday

View from the couch


Donald Combe
Special to The Local

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

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

Donald Combe is a re-

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



Letters! We want letters!

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

International Women's Day message from Lord Mayor Betty Disero Deputy Lord Mayor Clare Cameron, and CAO Marnie Cluckie

Opportunity is a hopeful word. We all want opportunity. Opportunity for a job, a home, a life with meaning.

Throughout history, women have had the additional burden of fighting for the opportunity to have equal rights. For the rights we hold today, we owe a debt of gratitude to many who have made notable strides over more than 100 years, to break through the glass ceiling of equality.

On this day, March 8, as we celebrated the social, economic, cultural, and political achievements of women and girls, we also recognized the work that still needs to be done.

Every time we see a woman volunteering to help their community, running for public office, on stage in front of a micro-

phone, leading a campaign for change, opening a new business, or excelling in their field, we are encouraged that women are making their mark, getting their recognition, finding their opportunity.

We are amazed when we see the enthusiasm of the young women on the Lord Mayor's Youth Advisory Council. We see these young leaders using their voices and harnessing their power and we want to help in any way we can, so they don't have to struggle to be considered equal in all respects. Their love of people, the planet, and this Town gives us solace that our future is in good hands.

So here is the challenge to women and allies. While we struggle to find our place and make a difference

in our lifetime, let's bring others with us. Let's look beside and behind ourselves and help raise one another up. Let's make sure there are opportunities for all women, including Indigenous women, Black women, women of colour, transgender women and those people who do not identify as any gender. Wherever we can, let's be a mentor, a friend, a supporter. Let's continue the great work of those who came before us, so the next generation does not have to struggle to find their opportunity. Together, we are stronger.

For a video message from Niagara-on-the-Lake Lord Mayor Disero and CAO Cluckie on International Women's Day, visit <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZYbLbuVsRw4>.



The Niagara-on-the-Lake Local
The Trusted Voice of Our Community

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COMMENT

Ontario provincial parks will fill up quickly



Owen Bjorgan
Special to The Local

The events were foreshadowed on social media. Images and jokes were circulating around about Ontario residents waiting at the computer with their finger on the mouse, keen to reserve a summer adventure with just a click. Alas, when the click faces the clock, there's a lot working against you to get a spot.

In an attempt to book some accommodation for my family this summer in Killarney Provincial Park, I found myself at the computer screen, site selected, credit card ready. Like most all other sites right now, they must be booked five months in advance due to the incredible volume.

I was like many who sat with a cup of coffee by the screen at 6:59 a.m., in order to click and reserve a spot at 7 a.m. for sometime in July. The clock strikes the hour, and I click. As quickly as I clicked, I became one of the many who felt the quiet nothingness to follow, accompanied by a pop-up window saying 'Site occupied,' although we all know it wasn't just seconds ago.

The good news is that your trip hasn't capsized just yet. The COVID days have caused us to adapt and get creative as things change quickly. Faced with a new-found demand for nature in Ontario citizens, we see unforeseen numbers of people going online to book. The Ontario Parks system is filling up fast, and in many cases, it's already full into summer bookings.

On Feb 23, Ontario Parks posted that 58,475 reservations were made in the first few weeks of the year. In 2020 last year, pre-pandemic, it was only 29,504 reservations for the same period, nearly dou-

bling the number.

I believe I see what's going on. With the uncertainty of lockdowns looming almost a year after the first one, Ontario residents are grasping at their local provincial options as the inviting warm weather rounds the corner. I can't blame them. People want to get out and breathe fresh air, try new activities, and be with loved ones in less controlled outdoor settings. It's going to be very competitive, and not just for prime spots, but all available spots.

If you find yourself discouraged, either before or after trying the Ontario Parks system, there are some other outdoor avenues you can consider which can provide just as valuable an outdoor experience.

Firstly, check out the many local conservation areas in Ontario. Each region of the province has such a legislative body, and many of them here in Southern Ontario have a handful of conservation areas which offer family-friendly camping. They are usually similar in style to many of the provincial parks, but they are often more quaint. Based on COVID closures, be sure to check if the local conservation authority is offering such camping experiences, as it may differ region to region.

There are also plenty of private campground options available out there. Sometimes they operate much like an organized park, but they might be family-owned and provide unique, exquisite camping sites. Furthermore, many of these private camps might be close to nature access points. Some properties have private hiking trails available to their guests, or they might be adjacent to the Bruce Trail or a popular canoe access point.

While I write this, I recollect some good experiences with rural Airbnbs, where you are sometimes



Sites like this family-friendly car camping spot in Six Mile Lake Provincial Park, photographed last year, will be booked quickly, leaving provincial park camping a challenge this year. (Owen Bjorgan)

offered the camping option at the back of someone's 40 acres. These may be properties where guests have total privacy and can have a fun night of tenting under the stars.

Of course, there is also the exciting adventure of back-country or crown land camping. With designated back-country spots also being booked at an astonishing rate, there is the option to access crown land and camp like an explorer. Of course, this requires serious preparation, and considerations before attempting, but it may be a new and healthy, challenging option for adventurers who want to try something new.

There is also an opportunity for some of us to reach out to family and friends who might have large, wild properties. I've always been a firm believer that you can achieve the camping feel-good basics right in your own backyard if done right. Having said that, not everybody has a backyard or access to large, natural spaces. So, if you know someone who might own such property (and

you haven't seen them in ages), maybe ask if you and the family or some friends can do a backyard campout in the forest or down by the

creek in their backyard.

At this rate, it doesn't look like our indoor life is going to get much more lively in the near future, so

we best be prepared to navigate the new wave of those trying to get outside, plus the benefits and challenges that come with this.

Local LETTERS

Cameras needed to stop speeding

I believe the time is appropriate for the placing of speed cameras in Niagara-on-the-Lake.

The speeds on the roads are excessive, bordering on the distinct possibility of fatalities if

and when there is an accident.

Four Mile Creek Road, just north of York Road, is a speedway. Maybe it should be renamed Lewis Hamilton Speedway (after the Formula 1 champion).

The cameras will act as a deterrent, plus the applying of those fines to the NOTL economy.

Wayne Williams
St. Davids

How to get government moving to help seniors stay at home longer?

I was very pleased to read Dr. Larry Chambers' article about seniors staying in their homes longer (The Local, March 3), and now ask what is the next step to move this possibility along.

I'm sure many of us seniors would like to remain in our own homes as long as it takes. With the right in-home help, we would be more mentally and

physically stable in knowing our surroundings, and have family and friends close, than being placed in an institution. It would be much more reasonable and cost-effective, done right, than spending big money on more care homes, which for many, have not had the best record for many years.

Increasing the wage of the caregivers would not

only be a stronger encouragement to have more jobs and more care for seniors at home. The money seems to be there, according to Dr. Chambers. I hope government is not too slow on the uptake. If readers haven't read this article yet, I strongly encourage them to do so.

Marjorie Mikkelsen
NOTL



NOTL LOCAL Front and Editorial Banner Bookings

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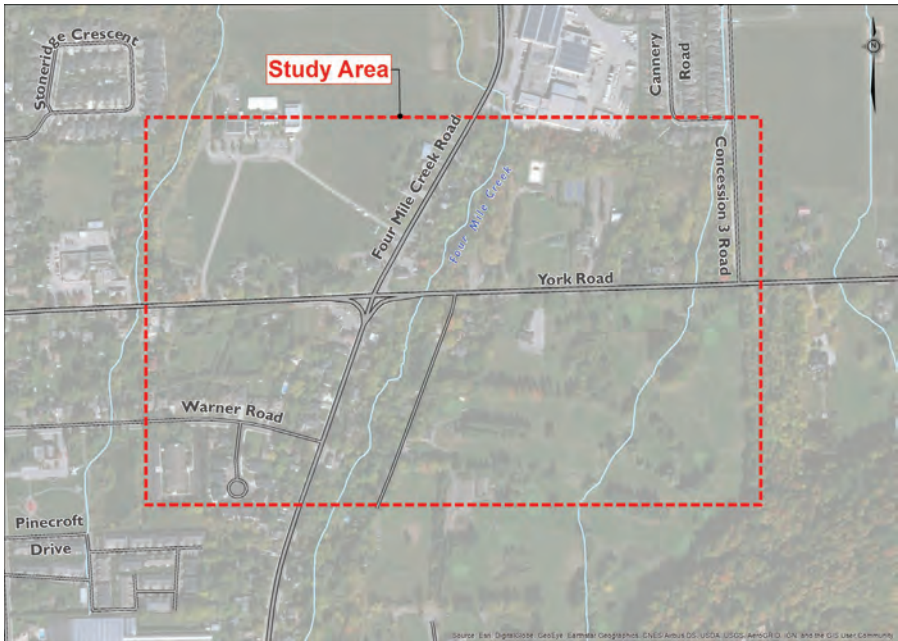
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PUBLIC NOTICE

Notice of Virtual Public Information Centre #1
Municipal Class Environmental Assessment
for York Road and Four Mile Creek Road
Intersection Improvements, St. Davids, Ontario

Niagara Region is undertaking a Municipal Class Environmental Assessment (EA) to address and improve conditions for all modes of transportation at the intersection of Regional Road 81 (York Road) and Regional Road 100 (Four Mile Creek Road), St. Davids. The MCEA schedule will be determined when the study team confirms the potential cost and environmental impact of the alternative solutions.



The first Public Information Centre will be held in an online format. As part of this event, the Study Team will deliver an online presentation followed by a Q&A on **March 25, 2021 from 6 - 8 p.m.** Information about the Online Public Information Centre #1 will be available on the project webpage starting **March 25, 2021**, and comments will be welcomed through one of the project managers below, until **April 8, 2021: niagararegion.ca/projects/regional-road-100**

If you would like to receive future notices via email, or if you have any questions or comments, please contact one of the project managers identified below:

Maged Elmadhoon, M.Eng., P.Eng. Manager, Transportation Planning Niagara Region 905-980-6000, ext. 3583 Maged.ElMadhoon@niagararegion.ca	Phil Weber, M.Eng., P.Eng. Senior Project Manager CIMA+ 905-695-1005, ext. 6732 Phil.Weber@cima.ca
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Personal information collected or submitted in writing at public meetings will be collected, used and disclosed by members of Regional Council and Regional staff in accordance with the **Municipal Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act (MFIPPA)**. The written submissions including names, contact information and reports of the public meeting will be made available. Questions should be referred to the Privacy Office at 905-980-6000, ext. 3779 or **FOI@niagararegion.ca**.

If you require any accommodations for a disability in order to attend and participate in meetings or events, please let us know in advance so that arrangements can be made in a timely manner. Please contact the **Accessibility Advisory Coordinator** at 905-980-6000 ext. 3252 or **accessibility@niagararegion.ca**.

This notice was first issued on March 10, 2021

Library workshop talks about
preparing for the inevitable

Mike Balsom
Special to The Local

We all have them, and don't really know what to do with them.

As so much of our lives moves online, how do we organize our passwords and at the same time ensure the security of our sensitive information? And what happens to our digital footprint when we are no longer leaving physical footprints on the earth ourselves?

Stuart McCormack, a retired lawyer and former Niagara-on-the-Lake town councillor, is offering some solutions March 23 and 30 in a two-part Niagara-on-the-Lake Public Library workshop, entitled *Suddenly I am Run Over by a Bus*.

The whimsically morbid title has its roots in a National Lampoon magazine article from the 1970s, written by Michael O'Donoghue. You may remember him as the creator and voice of the repeatedly doomed claymation character Mr. Bill from Saturday Night Live back then. Writing in the satirical magazine, O'Donoghue suggested authors use the phrase to wrap up their work when they have trouble coming up with an ending.

"It began as a tentative title," McCormack says. "I know people who keep track of their passwords and this type of information, and they have chosen that as the title of the file, a literal file folder that people can look in to see the information."

The first of McCormack's sessions will delve into what he terms digital inheritance. He expects that he will speak for about half of the hour-long online meeting, and then spend the rest of the time fielding questions from participants, moderated by a library staff member.

"My goal is to illuminate an issue that I think, to a certain extent, is probably not high on people's lists," he tells The Local. "For one thing, people don't think of these digital assets and

wonder what will happen when they're gone. The other thing is, it can bring up a landmine of complex feelings — frustration, anxiety and fear."

"What I'm really trying to do," he adds, "is open up the conversation with respect to this. It's something that unfortunately we'll all have to deal with at one point or another, and hopefully having this kind of discussion makes it slightly easier to talk about."

McCormack stresses the importance of handing over access to digital assets to third parties, typically one's executors and beneficiaries. These assets include documents, spreadsheets, audible content, photographs, emails, access to websites, medical information, banking, bitcoin, reputational information, and much more.

"When you log on to your Apple account, you're logging on as you," McCormack says as an example. "There are terms of use that apply to all of these general accounts. For example, if I pass away, and I haven't given the password to my kids, they may not be able to get access to the lovely photos I have taken of them over the years."

McCormack assures that actually archiving all of this information and getting it into the right hands is not an onerous task, though it may be one that does not provide many enjoyable moments.

"Are you going to pay for your own funeral?" asks McCormack. "Are you going to sit down with your spouse and have a discussion about your funeral requirements? It's not a time management thing, it's a negative emotion that comes into play. It's more 'I don't want to face the fact that you or I are going.'"

The advice and tips he will offer on March 23 promise to encourage you to begin the process, and maybe even ease the pain of some of those negative emotions.

The second part of the workshop, taking place the fol-

lowing week, focuses on legal preparation, including wills, powers of attorney and joint bank accounts, with a discussion as well on financial abuse of seniors.

McCormack says people have approached him for advice when experiencing trouble accessing joint bank account funds once a spouse has passed away.

"The normal assumption," he says, "is that there's a right of survivorship that applies, and the other person whose name is on the account should be able to go in and deal with the account without any encumbrance. But that's not always the case."

He has aided some people who have been forced to work through a number of steps to access joint funds, and remembers it causing undue stress for them while at the same time dealing with the grief that comes with loss. His talk will help participants be aware and be prepared for any such roadblocks put up by financial institutions.

Another issue he has often been consulted on is the financial abuse of seniors. It's not particularly McCormack's area of legal expertise. His career involved him heading the Ottawa office of a national law firm, where his specialties were information technology and intellectual property.

"People who are physically separated from their families often depend on a caregiver to help them, either professional or not," outlines McCormack. "The friend or caregiver may come in, ask for help with their rent, or their mortgage, or for help with a business opportunity. The question becomes how do you deal with that type of situation? What protections are out there? What can you as a child or third party standing by do to help that senior?"

As a member of the town's library board, McCormack is happy to be contributing to the library's offerings.

Continued on page 10

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Newark Neighbours says thanks for meal kits



Cindy Grant
Food Bank manager

Newark Neighbours was thrilled and incredibly grateful to recently receive a very generous donation from the St. Davids Lions Club. On Wednesday, March 3, the club delivered 30 casserole meal kits for our food bank clients, with a variety of five types of meals. Each kit contains a recipe, canned or boxed ingredients, measured pasta and spices to make a nutritious and satisfying meal for a family of four.

Our food bank clients, and their families, are very appreciative of these meals. This donation will go a long way in helping Newark Neighbours achieve our vision that “no resident in Niagara-on-the-Lake need

be hungry”.

Our sincere thank you goes out to all members of the St. Davids Lions Club — you made our day!

Looking forward to next month, the registration for Easter baskets began Tuesday and will close on March 25. We will be distributing them on Thursday, April 1, again from the Cornerstone Church on Niagara Stone Road in Virgil.

Following is a list of food requirements for our 2021 Easter Program:

- Canned green beans
- Canned peas
- Canned pineapple
- Bottled Juice - Cranberry or Apple
- Crackers
- Cookies – any kind or flavour
- Chocolates – for Easter baskets

General Food Bank Supplies:

- Rice
- Canned Salmon
- Canned Chili or Spaghetti or Ravioli
- Canned Beef Stew

- Chunky Soups (beef or chicken)
- Cream of Mushroom Soup
- Canned Red Kidney Beans
- Canned Ham, Corned Beef or Spam
- Sidekicks & Mr. Noodle packets
- Cereal (any kind)
- Granola Bars
- Jello – any flavour
- Jams
- Ketchup / Mustard / Mayonnaise / Green Relish
- Coffee or Tea
- Shampoo & Conditioner / Toothpaste
- Paper Towels / Toilet Paper

We appreciate all donations of food supplies; however, we are currently well stocked on the following items:

Kraft Dinner Macaroni & Cheese, canned tuna, stuffing mix, oatmeal, cranberry sauce, pasta, canned tomatoes and tomato sauce, canned gravy, and peanut butter.



Newark Neighbours volunteer Susan Sparrow-Mace shows off a couple of the meal kits donated by St. Davids Lions, intended for clients of the food bank. (Photo supplied)



St. Davids Lions and Lioness prepared 165 meal kits to distribute to Newark Neighbours, St. Catharines Community Care and Westview Center for Women. (Bill Brouwer)



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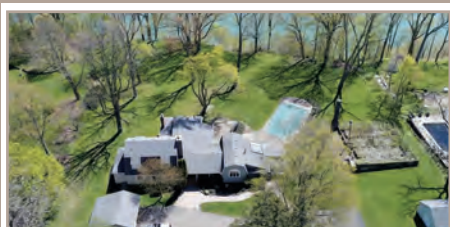
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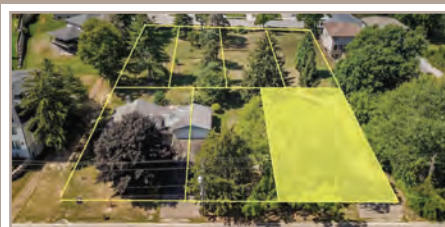
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Shaw to use \$1 million for underwriting jobs

Penny Coles
The Local

The importance of receiving almost \$1 million from the province can't be overstated, says Tim Jennings, executive director of the Shaw Festival.

The Ontario government is giving a total of \$25 million to the 140 organizations in the arts sector, of which the Shaw is getting \$999,593.

With the exception of virtual programming last season and small in-person concerts last summer and fall, the festival season was cancelled, bit by bit, until it became obvious in July there could be no stage productions offered in 2020.

When *Gypsy*, the largest production of the season held over from last year, was can-

celled for 2021 as well, Jennings was left to find ways to keep about 90 people involved in the show employed. The funding announcement "was fantastic news," he says.

"This new funding will help underwrite and stabilize the jobs of our artists, artisans and arts workers as we pivot and work through the shifting landscape of this coming year, as we did through all of 2020."

Jennings says one way the festival hopes to do that will be with outdoor concerts and events this summer, although there is much to work out before that can happen. They had planned to do that anyway, but may be able to do more, thanks to the funding, which will stabilize operations and underwrite employment,

hopefully lessening the impact for the artists and crews who were expected to be involved with *Gypsy*.

"We have to figure out what we can do to protect them."

Jennings says the provincial investment is also important for the "economic success and stability of our communities, as well as their cultural health."

He feels the weight of responsibility of drawing visitors to the region and to the town, for the success of the local tourism industry, and as one of the region's largest employers. The festival, he says, is "an economic generator that anchors thousands of related tourism jobs for our local wineries, hotels, restaurants and retail shops."

The six other shows of

2021 are scheduled to go ahead, with two more holiday offerings in the fall.

Charlie's Aunt, the first on the calendar, is expected to open in previews May 1.

That will, of course, depend on provincial restrictions, based on the progression of the pandemic, but Jennings has a year of experience behind him when it comes to pivoting from one plan to another.

It was easier last season, when decisions were based on the number of cases and it was easier to predict what would

happen, but this year, there is the arrival of vaccinations on one side, bringing great news, and on the other, fear of the variants causing a spike in cases.

"I'm a planner, and it's really hard when I have no idea of what next week or the week after that will look like," he says. There are "all sorts of contingency plans" in the works, but at the moment, they are moving forward and getting people back to work in preparation for their May opening, "under huge safety protocols. In order to open a show in May for 50 people, we need to get started now."



Tim Jennings, executive director of the Shaw Festival (Photo supplied)

Library role growing

Continued from page 8

"It's part of its mandate and its strategic plan to enhance the social infrastructure of the town," he says. "Social infrastructure is the physical conditions that measure whether or not social capital develops. The library has a variety of activities that go on throughout the year, for all different generations. The idea is to bring people together so they connect. Its function in town is at least as important as

the sewer system, if not more so."

To better understand the idea of social infrastructure, McCormack recommends the Eric Klinenberg book *Palaces of the People*, available to read via Google Play. Klinenberg writes about libraries as a key focus on the fight against inequality, polarization and the decline of civil life.

McCormack says the workshops and other sessions the library has been delivering online have been wildly popular

during lockdown. He feels that as we emerge out of the current pandemic, the library will play an even more important role than ever.

It's McCormack's first time delivering such a session and he's looking forward to connecting with people to answer their questions.

The two-day workshop will be held March 23 and 30, from 2 p.m. to 3 p.m. both days. Visit <https://notlpubliclibrary.org/> to register.

Bunny Trail to return with package pickups



Morgan and Audrey Bowen got creative at the Niagara Nursery School Bunny Trail in 2019, with Crystal the Bunny. Crystal will be helping put packages for pickup together for kids this year. (File photo)

Penny Coles
The Local

The popular Bunny Trail will return this Easter, but like everything else during the pandemic, with a bit of a twist.

To allow for a safe event, the board of directors and staff of Niagara Nursery School and Child Care Centre, with support from the town, are putting together Bunny Trail take-home packages that will be available for purchase.

"We were so disappointed to have to cancel the annual Bunny Trail fundraiser in 2020, and have been work-

ing hard to come up with a way to bring the Bunny Trail back to the community in a COVID-friendly manner," says executive director Candice Penny.

"Crystal Bunny will be hard at work behind the scenes, preparing bunny trail packages for pickup that will include crafts, some sweet treats, and lots of other goodies from our community sponsors."

The purchase of Bunny Trail packages will support the ongoing expansion of the Niagara Nursery School.


There will be a limited number of packages available.

They can be purchased online between March 10 and March 31 at <https://niagaranurseryschool.ca/>.

Packages can be picked up between 9:30 a.m. and 11:30 a.m. on April 3, in front of the new nursery school expansion beside the Niagara-on-the-Lake Public Library at 10 Anderson Lane. Additional pick-up instructions will be provided upon sign-up.

All proceeds from the Bunny Trail packages will help to support the new expansion project. For more information on the Bunny Trail packages, visit niagaranurseryschool.ca.

Residents and local business owners are invited to sponsor this event by donating sealed sweets or Easter-themed activities including stickers, colouring books, pencils, etc., for inclusion in the packages. Please email niagaranurserydirector2@gmail.com to arrange for donation drop-off. All event sponsors will be acknowledged on a sponsor list included in each package.








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Doctor shares wise insights about the end of life

Reflections on death and dying by Dr. Ron Bayne

**Dr. Larry W. Chambers
Special to The Local**

We all should watch this 12-minute video (<https://vimeo.com/511268822>) about getting over fear of the unknowns about dying, realizing that death is inevitable and that everyone has the right to end their life if it has become unbearable.

Dr. Ron Bayne, a former Niagara-on-the-Lake resident and geriatrician, produced the video just before he died on Feb. 26. He was 98 years old and received MAID – medical assistance in dying.

In the late 1960s, when the new McMaster University medical school was founded to serve the Golden Horseshoe at the west end of Lake Ontario, the first dean, Dr. John Evans, recruited a stellar group of scholars, including Dr. Bayne.

A geriatrician doctor is a medical doctor who specializes in the care of older adults. Dr. Evans understood the need for Canada's future physicians to be prepared to serve older adults with complex and long-term conditions and disabilities. In Canada in the 1960s there were very few geriatricians. Ron was exceptional because he was also a clinical scholar. Ron was appointed as a professor of medicine in 1970, and retired in 1989.

As a student at McMaster, Ron had a major impact convincing me that I should focus my career on public health and healthcare policies about older adults.

In 2006, Ron received an honorary degree from McMaster for his advocacy and work raising awareness of the need for better care of older adults, and people living with long-

term conditions, and his initiation of programs that recognized we cannot separate the health and social aspects of living as frail older adults. When we are frail, we have a spectrum of health events (from acute episodes to more complex, long-term conditions) and we require a spectrum of approaches (from single interventions to long-term health-promotion interventions) where distinctions between health and social aspects of life are largely meaningless.

Ron and his wife Barbara made several donations to McMaster, establishing the Ronald Bayne Gerontology Award for a graduate student conducting aging research; and the Barbara and Ronald Bayne Award to provide support for senior students in the Department of Health, Aging and Society who are engaged in

practical learning experience as part of their undergraduate studies.

Dr. Bayne founded the Hamilton-Wentworth Group on Aging, the Gerontology Research Council of Ontario (GRCO) and led the Canadian Association on Gerontology in the '80s. His passion for the health and healthcare of older adults drove the infusion of provincial funding into research and training in aging.

Through Ron's leadership, we learned the principle that every citizen should have the right to choose where they live. Instead of deferring to out-dated policies that have an institutional mindset, a successful aging-in-place philosophy is required to build infrastructure using an aging-in-place philosophy. In the video, Ron asserts: "Take



At the age of 98, Dr. Ron Bayne shared his thoughts on dying in a video. (Screenshot)

that responsibility. Let us ensure that the health-care system for long-term care is properly organized and managed and supervised." It is fantastic that he lived to 98, as a specialist in aging.

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Museum reopening with display of local women in history

Penny Coles
The Local

During its recent closure, staff at the Niagara-on-the-Lake Museum have ensured it kept the public engaged through a wide range of online programs, both entertaining and enlightening. But with Niagara in the red-control zone, and the museum able to reopen, Sarah Kaufman, managing director and curator, is focusing on providing a safe, welcoming and comfortable environment for those who are anxious to start getting out again. Opening the doors after the lockdown is a little easier second time around, she says, with most of the regional and the provincial protocols, such as sanitizers and signage, already in place. But in other ways, like most people, she says, “we’re wading through muddy waters,” trying to ensure all the current rules are understood and followed. Thankfully, for a small organization like the museum, she can call the region for

advice or clarification — the ready availability of that kind of help is very much appreciated, she says. While there is some unease in the community about loosening of restrictions, Kaufman says she is “very confident” that, with all the protocols in place, the museum is offering a safe place to visit. They have set their capacity at only 15 people, in a large space, with limited hours that allow time for thorough cleaning when the museum is closed. During the hours the museum is open, 10 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. Saturday, Sunday, Tuesday and Thursday, staff will be regularly sanitizing high-touch areas and washrooms. She has heard from museum members who are very excited to see the current exhibit, and the staff, “and we’re excited to see them,” she says. Making Her Mark, an exhibit entirely about women who were influential in the history of Niagara-on-the-Lake, opened in October, and it was one

Kaufman and the staff took great pride in. The time for a museum exhibit entirely about women has come, says Kaufman, celebrating about 25 extraordinary local women, some prominent with names easily recognized, and others who worked quietly behind the scenes, who made their mark on the community. The launch of Making Her Mark: The Women of Niagara-on-the-Lake is the prelude to a book which features short biographies on the women who are included in the exhibit, who have contributed to the community. It includes women such as Molly Brant, whose role in history dates back the furthest, to Chloe Cooley, Janet Carnochan, and moves forward to those whose local significance is more recent, including Margherita Howe, Laura Dodson, Donna Scott and Blanche Quinn. The book release has been delayed, as more biographies were added, expected to be out sooner, but has been held up to allow biographies of Scott, who died in March, and Quinn, in May, to be included, says Kaufman. Brant, born in 1736, was a respected First Nations Clan Mother, and a diplomat, interpreter and ally to the British during and after the American Revolution. Cooley was an enslaved Black woman who, in 1793, was beaten and bound by her owner and transported across the Niagara River to be sold. Her re-



Sarah Kaufman is happy to have more time for the public to see Making Her Mark, which features local women who played a part in the history of the town, including Laura Secord, who is important on a national level. (Penny Coles)

sistance on this side of the river was witnessed and brought to the attention of Lieutenant Governor John Graves Simcoe, who set in motion legislation to abolish slavery. Others include Elizabeth Simcoe, Fanny Rowley, the Wesley sisters, Sarah Carter, and Emma Currie, who wrote a book about Laura Secord, who is also part of the exhibit. Three of the NOTL women are recipients of the Order of Canada, points out Kaufman: Howe for leading the clean-up of the Niagara River; Dodson for her 30 years of working to preserve the town’s heritage; and Scott, a successful businesswoman who was a great supporter of arts and culture, including the museum. “That’s quite impressive,” says Kaufman, who adds there are many “amazing women who stand out in so many different ways.” Quinn, a Second World War veteran and municipal politician, “was a firecracker,” she adds. This is the first exhibit displayed and the first book published by the museum about local women, says Kaufman. But the public really didn’t have much of an opportunity to see it before the lockdown, she says, and many locals would have known and have memories of some of the women whose role in history was more recent. The original schedule was for the exhibit to run until April, but it has been extended until the fall. There are also people ready for and looking forward to chatting in person, rather than participating in virtual discussions, and others who were not able to be part of those meetings, she adds. During the pandem-

ic, the museum newsletter, available online, was printed and hand-delivered by staff to those who are not part of the digital community, says Kaufman, and they let her know that contact was very much appreciated. At the same time, lectures and discussions are also more accessible to some people when offered virtually, and will continue to be available long after the pandemic has made it necessary, she says. That includes people who are not local but are interested in the historical content the museum offers on provincial and federal history. But at the moment, what is most exciting to Kaufman is the ability to offer a safe space for people to visit, to enjoy the quiet, the opportunity to learn, and interaction with others.



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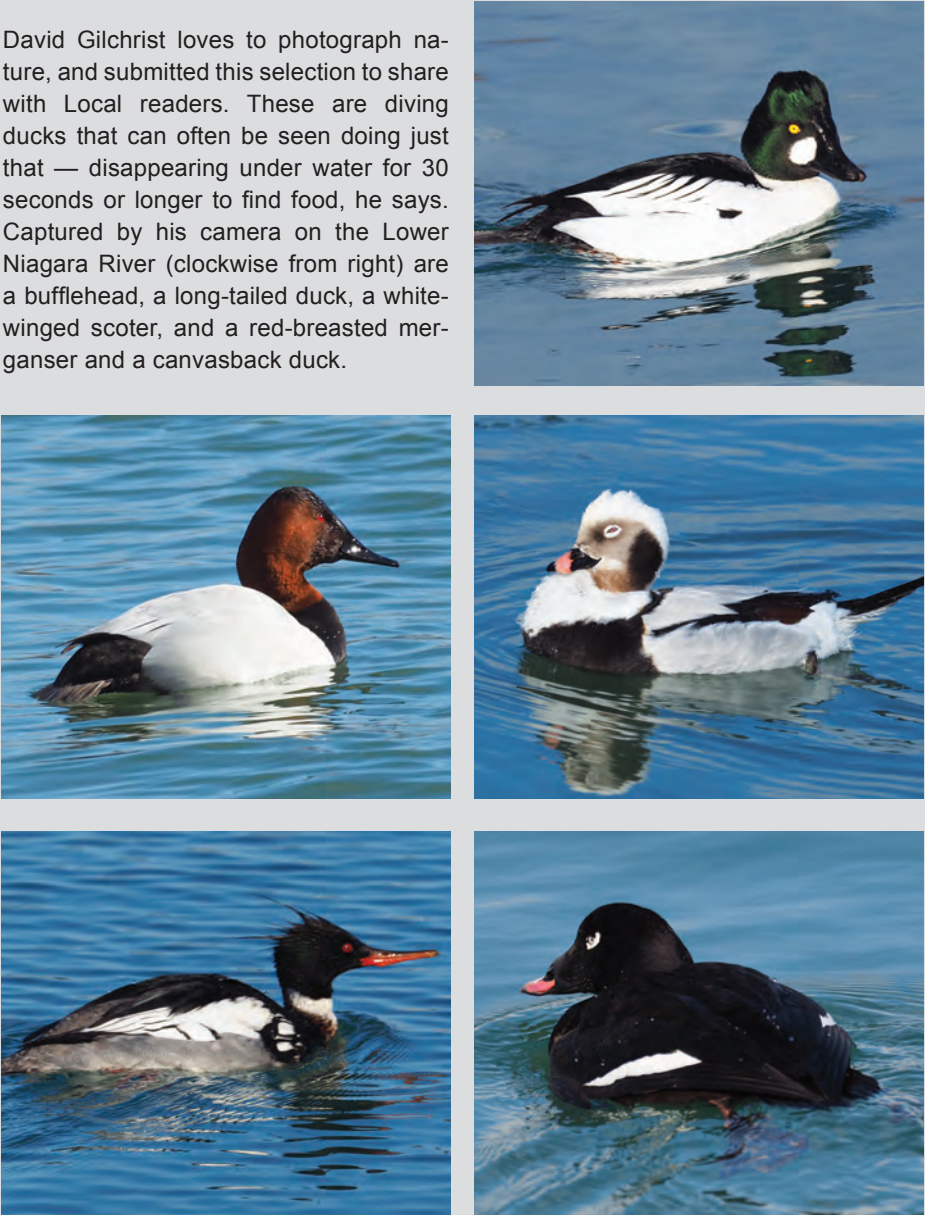
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On the water

David Gilchrist loves to photograph nature, and submitted this selection to share with Local readers. These are diving ducks that can often be seen doing just that — disappearing under water for 30 seconds or longer to find food, he says. Captured by his camera on the Lower Niagara River (clockwise from right) are a bufflehead, a long-tailed duck, a white-winged scoter, and a red-breasted merganser and a canvasback duck.



Search and rescue volunteer learned range of skills

Randy Klaassen
Special to The Local

Niagara local Shane Barton was recently recognized for his 30 years as a search and rescue volunteer.

He was presented an Ontario Volunteer Service Award, and a Civil Air Search and Rescue Association (CASARA) Niagara award of a 30-year wing pin.

Across Canada, CASARA volunteers provide humanitarian and air search capabilities in support of the Royal Canadian Air Force. Locally, the organization is based out of the Niagara District Airport.

Barton's involvement with search and rescue began in 1979 with a ground organization. It was later, at a Hamilton Airshow, he learned of CASARA Niagara.

"My involvement with CASARA has been diversified, to say the least," says Barton. "I started as a spotter, and progressed with learning aviation communications, navigation and safety." As a member of CASARA Barton has flown as a spotter, served with ground searches, and driven for the unit's mobile

command vehicle.

In addition to Barton's many searches, he has spent thousands of hours training. "It has been a great adventure serving with CASARA Niagara, where I've had opportunity to learn more each year, as technology and skills evolve. I've really enjoyed serving with other crew members, and engaging members of the public on enjoying outdoor activities safely."

While CASARA volunteers are aviation focused, they are also called upon to assist with searching for persons missing on lakes, lost hikers, and other situations of people in distress.

CASARA Niagara has headquarters and a training facility at Niagara District Airport, operating two aircraft and a mobile command vehicle. As a charitable organization, the volunteers depend on donations to maintain their operations. Deemed an essential service, and using COVID protocols, CASARA volunteers have been actively training for the upcoming spring season, typically a high search and rescue season when people spend more time outdoors.

Receiving his awards, Barton told his crew members, "It's an honour to

receive this 30-year pin, and I hope there is a 50-year pin, because I plan on

serving for a long time to come."

For more information

on CASARA Niagara, check the website, <http://caresniagara.ca>.



Trainer Randy Klaassen gives Shane Barton his 30-year pin. (Photo supplied)

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Ultrasound treats hand tremors without surgery

Penny Coles
The Local

Bill Auchterlonie used to be proud of his artistic hand-writing, a skill that did not come easily to him. Born left-handed, it was a struggle for him in school, but he worked at it, learning to lift his hand so it

didn't drag across the paper, smudging as he wrote. He spent his Grade 3 year learning to write with his right hand, and succeeded, but missed the joy he had found in writing, and was permitted to go back to using his left hand, he says. But as an adult, he began to experience some shaki-

ness in both hands, noticeable enough that colleagues would comment on it, and his signature began to lose its attractiveness, courtesy of the tremor, he says.

Auchterlonie, now retired, has had an eclectic career, including a long-time stint as a local radio host, with a voice that would be familiar to listeners.

He also has a love of art, and has worked in the curatorial department of The Art Gallery of Ontario, where his job took him to Britain and Europe visiting art galleries, and more recently, was the owner of a Victoria Street gallery of Inuit and Six Nations art.

His hand-writing, which he worked on and developed until it could be considered calligraphy, was one way of realizing his artistic expression.

"It was really more like drawing than writing," he says.

Until it wasn't, with the act of writing at all made difficult by the tremors in his hands.

In 2008, Auchterlonie says his physician referred him to a neurologist, who started him on a treatment of medication used for treating mild cases of Parkinson's disease, but it wasn't very effective, and the tremors in both hands continued.

Last year, he read an article in The Globe and Mail

about a program at Sunnybrook Hospital, and a team of neurosurgeons who use focused ultrasound to destroy lesions in the brain that cause tremors.

The treatment allows doctors to do brain surgery using imaging and sound waves, instead of scalpels and surgical saws, and can be helpful for a range of conditions, from hand tremors like Auchterlonie, to treatment-resistant depression or brain cancer, including glioblastoma, the cancer that took the life of Tragical Hip singer Gord Downie.

But the most common use of focused ultrasound in the Sunnybrook program is to destroy the bit of brain tissue that causes hands to shake, for people like Auchterlonie.

His physician sent his files to the hospital, and after two consultations, last month, he had the two-hour procedure done as an outpatient.

Before having the treatment, he spent two and a half hours in a magnetic resonance imaging (MRI) machine, which produced a detailed "road map" of his brain that the surgeon would follow during the procedure.

Then, during the procedure, he describes lying motionless, for another two hours in the MRI machine, while the sound waves from the ultrasound destroyed

the lesion in his brain that was causing the tremors. There was no pain from the ultrasound, just the discomfort of being unable to move, but a whole lot better than surgery that would have required cutting or drilling into his skull, he says.

"The doctor doing it is a brain surgeon, but there is no surgery involved. Instead there are two very sophisticated technologies going on, being used simultaneously," he says.

He was discharged from the hospital when the procedure was done, but couldn't drive home. He got a taxi to a hotel, stayed overnight, was checked out the next morning at the hospital before he drove home, he says.

It's been a little more than a month, "and I'm still not 100 per cent comfortable with this hand I didn't have for a few years. But I like it a lot."

The biggest advantage? "Well, I can sign my name. And one of the most common problems before was pouring a cup of coffee in the kitchen and walking with it to sit down, spilling it all over the floor because my hand was shaking. It was embarrassing, and a pain in the neck having to clean up the mess. That isn't going to happen any more."

Having one hand tremor-free is a "significant improvement" in his life, he

says. His hand-writing is improving, and he's looking forward to the next procedure to rid his right hand of the tremors, hopefully later this year, but more likely next.

And all because he happened to come across an article in The Globe and Mail that opened his mind to the possibility.

Auchterlonie has long been interested in astrology, and now, in his retirement, spends a great deal of time researching what is going on in the skies, writing a weekly column for The Local, and using his radio voice to produce a podcast on the subject. He also does birth charts for people who are interested, including a forecast for the year ahead. His studies of astrology lead him to question coincidence, which he accepts exists, but feels there is something behind them that is a little more than just what we consider coincidence.

"Coincidence is an amazing, subtle and powerful force in nature, and we're all part of nature," he says.

Which leaves him to believe there was a reason he picked up the newspaper article when he did, and that, thankfully, led him to where he is today, with one hand far more useful than it was a few short months ago, and another that will get there at some point.



Bill Auchterlonie, bald after focused ultrasound removed a brain lesion causing hand tremors, says it was a successful procedure. (Photos supplied)



Bill Auchterlonie couldn't sign his name a little more than a month ago. It is much improved, but not quite up to his artistic standards yet.



Auchterlonie on Astrology

Bill Auchterlonie
Special to The Local

The full week of Auchterlonie on Astrology can be found on the Facebook page for The NOTL Local, and on the website www.auchterlonieonastrology.ca

Saturday, March 13: Today, we have a new Moon at 23 degrees Pisces, conjunct Venus and Neptune, so this is truly a fairytale new Moon. Sometimes dreams do become a reality, and when the manifestation power of a new Moon meets Venus and

Neptune, anything is possible. Also, Venus is conjunct Neptune at 20 degrees Pisces. Venus conjunct Neptune is the most romantic transit in astrology, and it's just a few more years that we are lucky enough to have it in Neptune's sign, Pisces. No matter how difficult our lives may be at the moment, Venus conjunct Neptune is a gentle reminder that when we truly connect with our hearts, we can find beauty and magic everywhere. Clyde Tombaugh announced his discovery of Pluto on March 13,

1930. Sunday, March 14: Here is a day where work and career matters give friendly bumps that make our moods improve. Our health may also take a step up. Today is Albert Einstein's birthday. He was born on March 14, 1879, and is the most famous of all the great theoretical physicists. His E=mc2 equation shows how matter is energy at a lesser speed. Monday, March 15: Today, Mercury leaves Aquarius and enters Pisces. In Pisces, Mercury is imagi-

native and fantasy prone. Who cares about facts? When Mercury is in Pisces, facts are boring. Perhaps that's why a record number of artists have been born with Mercury in Pisces, which can pick up nuances and subtleties that no other Mercury can. This transit is great for creative projects of any kind. Were she still on this earth, Supreme Court Justice Ruth Bader Ginsburg would be celebrating birthday number 88 today. She died Sept. 18, 2020 of pancreatic cancer.

LocalHAPPENINGS

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March 11 @ 4 p.m. - 5 p.m.
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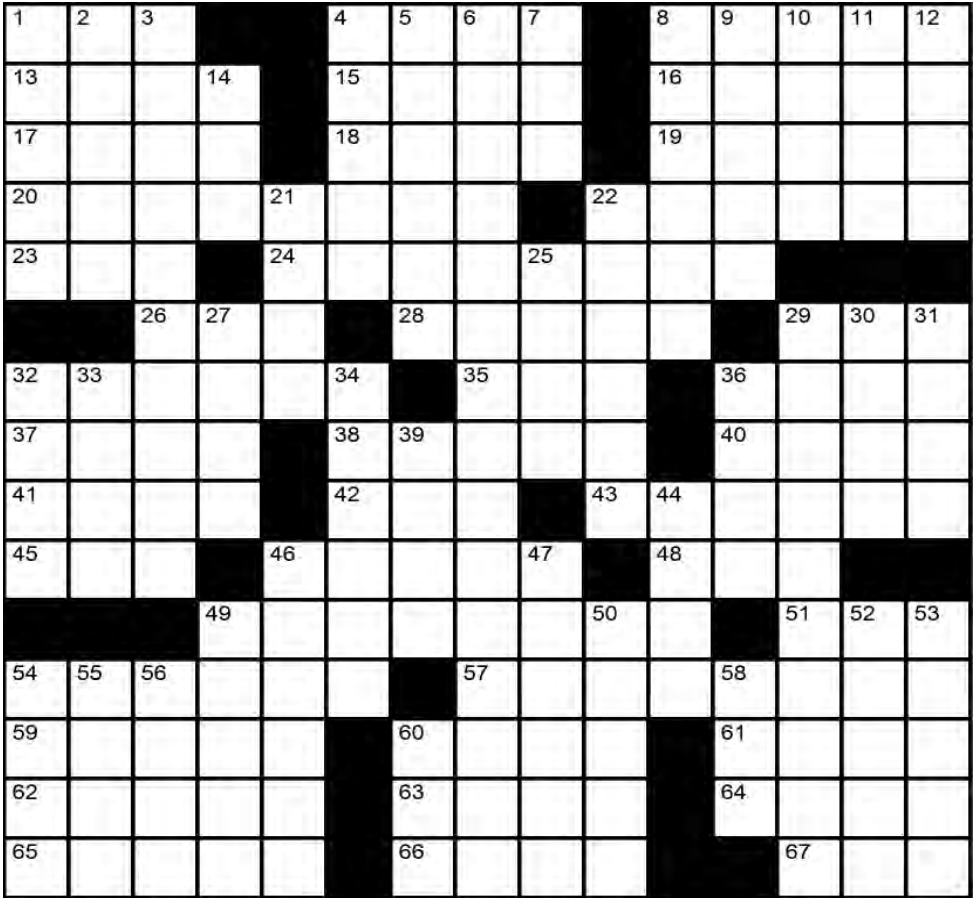
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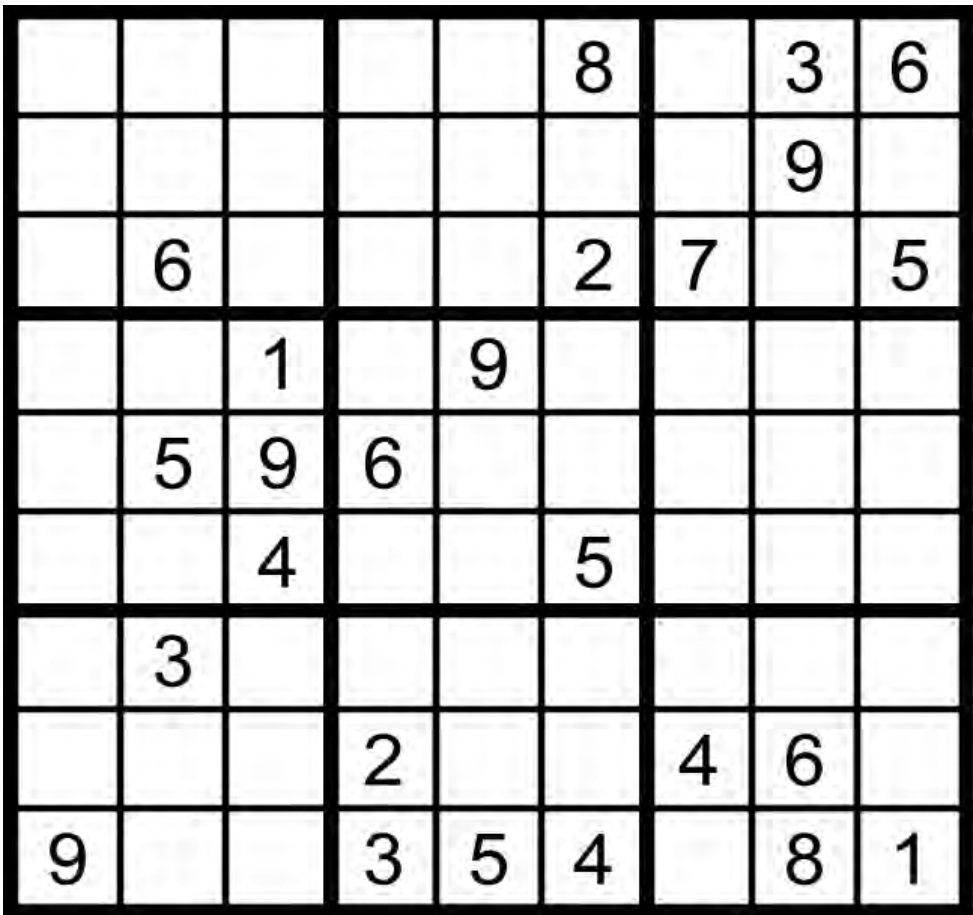


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 - 12 Ground forces
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 - 21 Trim
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 - 27 Sailors
 - 29 Cinema buffs
 - 30 Notion
 - 31 Coal Miner's Daughter, Loretta ---
 - 32 Exchange
 - 33 Manage
 - 34 More morose
 - 36 Volume of wood
 - 39 Golfer's shout
 - 44 Up-and-down toy
 - 46 Inviting smells
 - 47 Lou ---, baseballer who gave his name to a disease
 - 49 Angry stare
 - 50 Highways
 - 52 Renaissance cherub
 - 53 Remains
 - 54 Annoying person
 - 55 Periodic Table abbr.
 - 56 Departed
 - 58 Details not yet set (Abbr.)
 - 60 Sheltered side
- Down:**
- 1 Exactly vertical
 - 2 E.g. Pavarotti
 - 3 Stargazer
 - 4 Room
 - 5 Foot controls
 - 6 Type of war crime
 - 7 Espouse
 - 8 Arrange in battle formation
 - 9 Utah senator --- Hatch
 - 10 Dismal
 - 11 Rolling stones lack it, but the Rolling Stones don't



OBITUARY



REDNALL, JOHN N.T. —John passed away peacefully on March 3, 2021 in Niagara-on-the-Lake, Ontario.

He will be dearly missed by his family and friends. In accordance with John's wishes a service and remembrance will be family only.

In lieu of a donation or flowers in memory of John, please perform an act of unexpected kindness today.

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



NOTICES

To place an obituary in our Classifieds, please contact Julia at: julia@notllocal.com or 905.934.1040
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PUZZLE ANSWERS

Sudoku solution from March 3, 2021

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

Across: 1 P-T A, 4 Spew, 8 Dogma, 13 Lest, 15 Pete, 16 Error, 17 Unto, 18 A D H D, 19 Prism, 20 Moroccan, 22 Filmsy, 23 Bro, 24 Religion, 26 N-G O, 28 Scary, 29 Mill, 32 Scoops, 35 C I S, 36 Cody, 37 Womb, 38 A flat, 40 Oven, 41 Apes, 42 Doe, 43 Syrian, 45 Per, 46 A drag, 48 Ode, 49 Greenery, 51 G P S, 54 Pallor, 57 Shoot-out, 59 A-team, 60 Lira, 61 Beta, 62 Infra, 63 Enid, 64 Arty, 65 Notes, 66 Eggs, 67 S O S.

Down: 1 Plumb, 2 Tenor, 3 Astronomer, 4 Space, 5 Pedals, 6 Ethnic cleansing, 7 Wed, 8 Deploy, 9 Orn, 10 Grim, 11 Moss, 12 Army, 14 Too, 21 Crop, 22 Firsts, 25 Gaia, 27 Gobs, 29 Moviegoers, 30 Idea, 31 Lynn, 32 Swap, 33 Cope, 34 Sadder, 36 Cord, 39 Fore, 44 Yo-yo, 46 Aromas, 47 Gehrig, 49 Clare, 50 Roads, 52 Putto, 53 Stays, 54 Pain, 55 At No, 56 Left, 58 T B A, 60 Lee.


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Ontario 

BarrelHead chef planning for another great year

Mike Balsom
The Local

A very successful 2020 season running BarrelHead Pizza out of Pillitteri Estates Winery has Michael Zappitelli thinking big for 2021.

With the family-owned winery heavily geared toward exporting ice wine to 39 countries, Zappitelli claims he needed to do a hard-sell to push his in-laws back into the hospitality side of the business last year.

"I had to fight to start BarrelHead," he says. "Hospitality wasn't really a thought. The family had done it before. When I brought it up, I was told it hasn't worked before, it's not a great fit. So I had to kind of lay out a business plan, and say let me try this on a minimal budget, and let me show you it will work."

And work it did. Expecting to sell about 50 pizzas per day, Zappitelli was pleasantly shocked to see demand almost immediately spike to 10 times that figure. He quickly scrambled to acquire more equipment and hire additional staff to satisfy his hungry customers.

He even recruited his brother-in-law, former Niagara Ice Dog Alex Friesen, to help out in the kitchen. "He plays professional hockey in Germany," says Zappitelli, "and he was home a little bit longer because of COVID, and his wife Allie ran our bar operations. He offered to help, so I said sure."

As word spread about BarrelHead and locals caught on, that demand never let up all the way through to the Thanksgiving weekend, even with the pandemic.

After taking a couple of months off to catch his breath and spend time with his almost two-year-old daughter Michaela and his wife Julia, he's currently donning the second of the two hats he wears at Pillitteri Estates. The third-generation family member is their business development manager, concentrating on online wine sales, assisting with additions to the winery and developing revamped procedures. But as spring approaches, he's ready to jump full-steam ahead back into BarrelHead.

In mid-April, he will transition fully from the wine side of the business back to hospitality. He'll be busy setting up the wood-fired ovens and other new equipment. Then he'll be running the menu through with the kitchen staff, and balancing the flavours of the ice wine cocktails that are also part of the outdoor menu. Visitors to Pillitteri Estates and locals alike will begin to smell the wood smoke from those ovens on Victoria Day weekend.

Last year's menu featured just four Neapolitan style pizzas: Bianco, Giardiono, Margherita and Calabrese, which was the most popular. This



Chef Michael Zappitelli is anxious for spring to come, and thinking big for 2021. (Photo supplied)

year, BarrelHead will be expanding the menu to seven selections and introducing some other items.

"I'm revamping the whole menu, none of the old pizzas are coming back," he promises. "I'm going very traditional Neapolitan style, with a Capricciosa, with ham, artichokes, kalamata olives and mushrooms, but with my own cool, creative culinary spin. We'll still have the salads from last year, but we'll add three appetizers and desserts as well, as that was a big ask."

Zappitelli combines his love for Neapolitan style cooking and his experience working in the local restaurant industry since he was 10 years old to inform the decisions he makes with BarrelHead. Add to that a keen business mind developed through a degree in commerce at Brock University and a post-graduate diploma in sales and marketing from Niagara College, and the methodical approach he takes to business makes sense.

"I'm really fascinated by the subconscious, and how people perceive dollar value," Zappitelli says. "I'm really super interested in price-pointing. I'm also a big believer in buying paralysis. One of the things I studied is why it's important to not overwhelm the consumer. I'm a big fan of doing something small, having a good core menu, and doing it very, very well."

Zappitelli admits that he has dreams of taking the business into a traditional bricks and mortar type of operation, but doesn't want to expand too quickly.

"I don't want it to be too big, where the quality suffers," he says. "As a business person I want to scale it as big as I can, but I also don't want to take away from the quality. We're doing everything by hand, we're sourcing everything locally from sustainable farmers, so we can only do so much as they provide us. But maybe in three to five years we can look at an expansion."

He adds that the ambience of being outside in the cherry orchards, and giving something back to the locals are also both important to him, and the space they have right now allows him to do that.

Before he puts his head down and begins to work on the summer menu, though, Zappitelli has a contest that he's hoping to win as well. He's been nominated in the online Favorite Chef contest, which comes with a \$50,000 prize and a double-page spread in Bon Appetit magazine. He has topped his category through the first two of seven rounds, with round three wrapping up this week.

"I still don't know who nominated me, and my wife assures me it wasn't her," he tells The Local. "I got an email from Favorite Chef, and a couple of days later I heard back from them and they told me I had been hand-selected for the contest."

Chefs from round the world are in the competition, and Zappitelli is surprised with his early success.

"To be honest, I didn't think I would do this good," he says. "I've had a crazy amount of support from my friends, relatives, family members. A lot of people I haven't really talked to for years, from high school at St. Michael, who I haven't seen in 11 years, who have done the paid voting thing. It's humbling."

Supporters can vote for free, but paid votes, with 25 per cent of the proceeds going to the Feeding America charity, can also be cast.

If he indeed comes out as the Favorite Chef when the contest ends April 8, he would sock away some of the winnings for Michaela's education, and perhaps take a family trip to Naples, Italy to experience and learn more about Neapolitan-style pizzas. And you can bet that the flavours of Naples will find their way onto the menu at BarrelHead.

To vote for Michael Zappitelli visit <https://favchef.com/2021/michael-zappitelli>.