Supporting local businesses is important, and fun

Penny Coles
The Local

Joe Pillitteri, local businessman, stand-up comic and community supporter, is finding innovative ways to help local restaurants and wineries.

And in doing so, he is encouraging his many social media followers to do the same.

The two industries, both so important to the local economy, and employers of many Niagara area people, are struggling, he says, and need local support.

Pillitteri, known for his comedy routines, couldn’t be more serious when he asks for help for these local businesses. Recovery is on its way, he says, but they need cash flow to hang in until then, to ensure they’re still in business when it comes.

Wineries missed out on the tourist traffic of spring, summer and fall last year, he says. Bus traffic, U.S. and overseas tourists just weren’t there for them, after investments many had made to accommodate larger groups of people.

Like all businesses, they found ways to supplement what they were losing by marketing to locals, with curbside pickup orders and free deliveries, trying to do whatever they could to bolster their sales. Although it helps, it doesn’t make up for what they’ve lost, he says.

So Pillitteri picked up on #openlocalwine, an initiative of two friends of his, “great wine industry peeps in Michigan who were kind enough to include their Canadian friends in the fun.”

This is the second year for the U.S. initiative, the first here in Niagara, thanks to Pillitteri.

It’s just one day, Saturday, April 11, for local wineries to sell directly to customers.

Continued on page 3

More Niagara vaccination clinics being scheduled

Booking glitches have been frustrating

Penny Coles
The Local

As the portal to booking vaccinations opened to the 70-year-old age group Monday, residents in Niagara-on-the-Lake reported difficulties getting appointments.

It seemed hit-and-miss, with some people reporting getting through and booking appointments, and others being told early in the day there was no availability.

Dr. Mustafa Hirji, Niagara’s acting chief medical officer of health, estimated about five per cent of seniors trying to book vaccination appointments had trouble Monday, but the rest were able to get a time and date for their first shot.

He asked people not to call public health, explaining it’s the provincial system that is experiencing issues.

Although some municipalities have developed their own online registration systems, Hirji said he didn’t think that would help in Niagara — there would still be problems, but with the region having to shoulder the responsibility to fix them.

Although there were “thousands” of available appointments Monday morning, Hirji said, by 3 p.m. Monday public health sent an email saying all appointments for all Niagara clinics were booked.

Lord Mayor Betty Disero said she was hearing “mixed reviews” from those trying to book appointments, with one local telling her she was able to get an appointment Monday for the same day, and others struggling to find any time slots available.

There were expected to be 8,500 new appointments for Niagara clinics in the booking system early this week, and more later this week.

Public Health is planning more clinics for April 11 and 12 in Niagara Falls, at the MacBain Community Centre, April 13 and 14 in Fort Erie, and April 15 and 16 in Grimsby; and April 17 and 18 in Welland.

More dates and locations will be added, but probably not until the latter half of April, Hirji said.

Continued on page 2

RECOVERY

CYNTHIA CHAPMAN, MATT BAHEN, GEOFF FARNSWORTH

NEW EXHIBITION OPENS

SATURDAY APRIL 3, 2021

13th STREET GALLERY
1776 Fourth Avenue, St. Catharines www.13thstreetgallery.com

Expression Project

Presents
ART IN APRIL
Saturday April 10, 17, 24

Niagara’s Plein Air Artists on the grounds of 13th Street Winery
Karoly Vaross Sculpture Tours
Lesson from long-term care homes: vaccinations work

Continued from page 1

He suggested residents keep trying the provincial portal, ontario.ca/bookvaccines, for availability, or if they are having trouble finding a location, to call a booking operator at 1-888-999-6488.

By Monday afternoon, residents were finding new dates and availability for those 70 and over at the Seymour-Hannah clinic, from April 5 to 11.

"I hope this is a message everybody else in society takes, that these vaccines are really working, and we should all be taking them, so we can make sure we get out of this pandemic," he said.

There will be enough appointments for all residents 70 years of age (27,000 more people) and up once Niagara Health and Public Health both get their clinic schedules online, Hirji said.

During Monday’s weekly meeting with reporters, he spoke of “night and day” with the number of cases seen earlier this year in long-term care homes, and what happens if there is an infection now.

A couple of months ago, an infection would spread quickly through long-term care and retirement homes, whereas thanks to vaccinations, that isn’t happening now.

"It is social activity which is causing the current spike in infections," says Hirji.

With the numbers of cases caused by community spread, rather than by outbreaks in long-term care homes as they were earlier in the pandemic, there are fewer people in the 80-plus group becoming ill.

When there is a case in long-term care, it tends to just “fizzle,” he says, due to the high number of residents who are vaccinated.

As cases of COVID-19 and variants continue their upward trajectory, the region’s top medical officer says he’s not optimistic that current restrictions will be enough to prevent hospitals and intensive care units from being overwhelmed.

Dr. Mustafa Hirji, the region’s acting medical officer of health, says any further restrictions should be for the entire Golden Horseshoe. He indicated with the “very sharp upwards trend,” especially of variants, which reproduce quickly, that may be necessary for the next couple of months, to buy time for more people to be vaccinated.

“If we stay on course, the sharp increase will continue. The only hope of flattening it is reducing social interaction,” he says, adding that “that current government decisions that are being made by the province,” are not enough to reverse the trend.

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Permilton. The grants will provide one-time payments of $10,000 to $20,000 to eligible small businesses, including hotels, motels, travel agencies, amusement and water parks, hunting and fishing camps, and recreational and vacation camps. Businesses must demonstrate they have experienced a minimum 20 per cent revenue decline, and have less than 100 employees to qualify.

The Ontario Tourism Recovery Program will support established and proven tourism businesses that have been hit hardest by COVID-19.
Wineries, restaurants struggling to reach recovery

Continued from page 1
day, April 10, to commit to drinking local wine, he says. And while many of us are already doing this, he adds, it’s a day to not only pick a local wine and enjoy it over dinner, but to also publicize it by posting photos on social media, to encourage others to do the same, showing support for Niagara wineries.

“When you think about local wines and what they mean to our economy, we have to make sure they get through this. It’s so great to see the light at the end of the tunnel, and with the arrival of vaccines, and the reopening of the border not too far off, we can help businesses with their cash flow, so that when we get back to whatever normal is, they’ll still be here.”

He’s doing what he can to help hard-hit local restaurants as well, with his weekly staff lunches.

Every Friday — Thursday this week due to the Easter holiday — the president of Lakeview Vineyard Equipment buys lunch from local restaurants for about 20 staff members.

They each make their choices from the menu, lunch is ordered, and to encourage others to do the same, Pillitteri makes a video when he picks up the food to post on social media.

Although he’s not criticizing the restrictions in place, he says the unpredictability has been hard on restaurants.

“You can open with 10 people, you can open now with 50, no, you can’t be open. How do you manage staff, make plans? We feel obligated to do what we can to help.”

He’s been to many local restaurants in recent weeks, including Bricks & Barley, which opened less than three years ago by three local families, and was so popular it was sometimes hard to get a table there.

“It’s an awesome spot,” says Pillitteri, a beautifully restored tractor dealership, and now with an enclosed, heated patio — an example of what restaurants have to do, he adds.

He asks his followers to “check out every restaurant close to you, and get takeout tonight. It means a great deal to people who are trying to keep going right now, and the restaurant business could use any boost it can get.”

When he and the Lakeview staff sit down to eat, he says, “we have a little chat. We recognize how fortunate we are to stay open, to be an essential business. We recognize the importance of living in a safe place, and we recognize our friends in the restaurant business. We support them from home, as well, not just at work. We put great reviews online, and encourage people if they feel like going out, to book a reservation, enjoy one of the restaurants they’ve been going to for years, or get takeout. Support them any way you can.”
Local Staff

According to Expedia users, Niagara-on-the-Lake is ranked the third friendliest town in Canada for 2021. Described as “quaint,” Niagara-on-the-Lake received 17,500 permanent residents, it welcomes millions of visitors each year. Residents and visitors alike, enjoy the town’s natural beauty, as well as the many historical landmarks and local amenities.

As experienced by many municipalities around the globe, the COVID-19 pandemic greatly impacted NOTL 2020 tourist season, decreasing the number of visitors and putting significant strain on the local economy. “While I cannot predict what provincial regulations will be in place over the spring and summer months, I am confident that town staff will work diligently to ensure all provincial regulations and public health recommendations are being followed to ensure our business community is supported, our visitors feel welcome and safe, and most importantly, the health of our residents is protected,” CAO Marnie Cluckie said. “I am hopeful that during this coming tourist season, residents and visitors will be able to safely enjoy the wonderful attractions, heritage and culture, and distinct beauty of Niagara-on-the-Lake,” said Lord Mayor Dsseo.

The Town of Niagara-on-the-Lake is proactively preparing for the anticipated increase in the number of visitors to its downtown core by reopening public washrooms in the Heritage District, assigning town staff to public education and cleaning, and posting safety signage. Beginning last Saturday, the public washrooms at Queen’s Memorial Park and Simcoe Park will be open seven days a week, from 8 a.m. to 8 p.m. Physical distance markers will be established and signage posted, reminding the public to wear a mask, sanitize their hands frequently, maintain a safe distance of two metres, and avoid touching their face. Staff is helping to support local businesses and those choosing to visit the downtown core, said CAO Marnie Cluckie.

With the weather warming, we’re seeing an increase in the number of people coming to town and we want to ensure we’re providing the services they need during their stay,” Staff is also assisting with public education regarding restrictions outlined by the province, and periodically sanitizing high-touch surfaces such as benches and parking machines.

These extra precautionary efforts will be made on Saturdays and Sundays throughout the spring and summer. “The arrival of spring always attracts crowds to our beautiful Town,” says Lord Mayor Betty Dsseo. “While we love to see visitors experiencing our unique culture and heritage, our stunning parks and gardens, and our wonderful local businesses, we must remember that COVID-19 still poses a significant risk for our community, and safety comes first.”

Public washrooms at Memorial Park and at the information Centre, located at Fort George, remain closed at this time but will reopen later in the season. The Market Street washrooms, being the only public washrooms that do not close during the winter season, remains open daily from 8 a.m. to 8 p.m. For more information about how NOTL continues to respond to the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic, visit notl.com/covid-19. For the most up-to-date information from the provincial government, visit covid19.ontario.ca.

STAY SAFE NOTL

Staff working on making town safe for visitors

Spade & Sparrow

Local Staff

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STAY SAFE NOTL

Staff working on making town safe for visitors
Museum offers history of tennis

When world class tennis pros come to Canada today, they often head to Toronto or Montreal for the Canadian Open or the National Bank Open.

But in 1886 the tennis world turned its eyes on Niagara-on-the-Lake, says NOTL Museum’s Barbara Worthy, “and for the Canadian Open of Tennis, there is nothing else like it.”

With the turn of the century, the Clifton House and later the Queen’s Royal Hotel enjoyed a front row seat at the fabulous tournaments of the time.

A Social History for Sports History

Robert J. Lake will give the last lecture of the museum series, this one on the history of local tennis. (Photo supplied)

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A Social History for Sports History

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‘Should help a lot of businesses’

Continued from page 2

pandemic restrictions, and are key employers and tourism generators in all regions of the province.

Lord Mayor Betty Disero was invited to be part of the announcement — the first in-person meeting she has attended since December, she said.

“The grant should help a lot of small businesses,” she said, encouraging business owners “to apply and get whatever they can to help get them through this.”
There doesn’t seem any doubt the third wave is here, although there is still talk of cur- tailing social activity to avoid it.

Premier Doug Ford said Tuesday he won’t lock things down too hard, but said it seems the kind of climate that could be coming, al- though what lockdown measures might look like is still being worked out.

One of the biggest fears is hearing there are more patients in their 40s, 50s, and 60s, be- coming seriously ill, some on ventilators.

We’re definitely seeing a change in demographics.

The vast majority of COVID-19 deaths until now seems a little more flexible.

For those of us who haven’t fit in any of the groups to have been vaccinated so far, and we’re offered AstraZeneca, what do we do now? We have to make these difficult deci- sions to make, at least for some.

We know Niagara is doing its best with all vaccines rollout, and any glitches so far have been due to the provincial booking system. If there is a delay go- ing forward, it could be for some.

Until then, shine on!

The Local

Editor: Penny Coles
Publisher: Penny Coles
Advertising: Karen Schex
Local Business Directory: Helen Arsenault
Graphic Design: Rosie Gowell

Local Business Directory

The Niagara-on-the-Lake

P.O. Box 430, 1596 Four Mile Creek Road, Virgil, L0S 1T0

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Mike Balsam, reporter for The Local, earned having his photo on the side of a city bus to promote his Cogeco cable TV show. (Photo supplied)

Mike Balsam, reporter for The Local, earned having his photo on the side of a city bus to promote his Cogeco cable TV show. (Photo supplied)
April Break will be a busy time at the NOTL Public Library. While this year’s break is a little later than usual and will look a little different than others in the past, it will be fun, exciting and engaging for kids in our community. Because after all, when schools out, the library is the place to be.

The Niagara-on-the-Lake Public Library is offering a mix of programs on art, science, stories, times, trivia and more, for ages two to 14.

Everyone’s favourite Mad Science of Niagara will be offering two workshops, focusing on art and wildlife conservation. On Monday, April 12 at 1:30 p.m. children can “dive” to see all about jellyfish – the mysterious and curious creatures of the deep and then create their own dancing jellyfish mixed media project, with materials provided in an at-home kit. Also happening on Friday, April 16, at 1:30 p.m., children can learn about the wade world of tidepools, create unique sculptures, again with materials provided in an at-home kit. Both of these programs are offered free of charge and include a virtual meet-up as well as an art kit to be picked up at the library prior to the workshop dates.

On Tuesday, April 13, we are celebrating “Gotta Catch ‘Em All” and we have a great line-up of programs that will introduce children to the world of Pokémon. This program includes a kit of all the materials needed, and each participant will finish with two paintings of these popular Pokemon. For the three to six age group and the youngest of Pokemon enthusiasts, Rachel, the library’s new preschool programmer, will be hosting a fun and interactive virtual Pokemon Party via Zoom, which includes craft kits, art activities and challenges be picked up at the library.

Finally, on 6:30 p.m. kids aged six-plus and up can join for Pokemon Tiritas to test their knowledge from the comfort of their own homes, and have a chance to win a Pokemon Prize Pack.

Wednesday, April 14 features something special for the seven to 12 age group. Children can learn how to make interactive and dynamic piece of art, inspired by the pandemic-themed game, Among Us. All materials your creative kid will need is provided in a kit to be picked up at the library, and they will join Kaia virtually to create their own Crewmate (or Imposter) spinning in space. This is a unique workshop for kids ages six and limited, and we are recommended registering early.

And toddlers are the focus for the morning of Thursdays, April 15. Join Rachel to launch a brand new program called Welcome Baby, 9:30 a.m. on Zoom. This program will provide a welcoming space for new caregivers in our community to come together to bond, share and learn. Shannon Eaves, a speech language pathologist, will join the program as guest speaker to give a speech development presentation, as well as be available to answer parent questions. A subscription is required for this event.

On Monday, April 12, children can dive to learn all about jellyfish, and then create their own dancing jellyfish mixed media project, with materials provided in an at-home kit after registration. (Photo supplied)

Kasia Dupuis NOTL Public Library

Don't Miss Out!

Contact us today. There are just a few dates left for these premium positions for 2021!

NOTL businesses: Call Karen at 905.641.5335 or email karen@notllocal.com
Businesses outside NOTL: Call Julia at 905.934.1040 or email julia@notllocal.com

March 31, 2021
THE NOTL Local

Comment

Wellness committee provides update on vaccinations

This week’s article is the third in a series intended to provide timely and relevant information to Niagara-on-the-Lake resi-
dents about the status of vaccina-
tion in a series intended to provide

a

piece focusing on the joy and calming the mind through art. Kids will learn fun and simple techniques to use a variety of art materials and found items to make a mixed-media collage piece focusing on the joy and process of creating, rather than the final product. This free program includes a kit with all materials, which can be picked up at the library after registering.

Registration for all these great programs is available on our website www.notlpublic-
li.

Stroll to begin.

Father Christmas in front of the Court House.

Emmy Wise and Will Marley pose with a crowd for participating in the 2019 Candlelight Stroll to begin.

YOU are the reason why The NOTL Golf Club and the Niagara Region Public Health are offering a mix of programs that will include, a virtual workshop focusing on the joy and calming the mind through art.

The Local

Library planning a busy week for April break

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The library is offering a mix of programs that will include, a virtual workshop focusing on the joy and calming the mind through art.
This was snapped on the Mavic Mini drone at Rondeau Provincial Park, showing the sand ridge forests with stagnant wetlands tucked in between, created by over 10,000 years of sand deposition.

The ancient, super compressed sand serves as a unique foundation for our Carolinian Forests, and they require care while walking at the base.

I parked in the closest pub on the way to the park, I was greeted by a maze of cottages and deer in headlights. All I could see was a row of lights on the cottage. My mood at that point was that of a motorist who has run out of gas and has to wait for a tow truck.

The consistency in this landscape, plus some highly memorable trees — the size of which still astounds me — helped guide me through this eerie landscape. For two days, I floated around in these ancient slough forests, which eventually led to a beach with summer-like sand temperatures. I checked under logs, sat and observed, and periodically filmed snippets for an ongoing Hidden Corney episode.

Sunday afternoon, I cruised back to Niagara with cameras full of memory and a mind full of memories. Their batteries had run out, but mine had certainly recharged.

On an end note, in case this is a thought someone needed to hear, it never ceases to amaze me how mentally and physically refreshing time outdoors can be. Inhaling that beautiful spring air and experiencing the quietly noisy ecosystem had me feeling good to go for the work week ahead.

Right here in NOTL, we have our own tulip trees and free trails to access at anytime as well.
Local faith leaders delighted to receive vaccination

Randy Klaassen Special to The Local

When COVID vaccines began to be offered, I shared with others, “I’ll wait my turn, but when it’s offered to me, I’ll be quick to sign up.”

So, when my wife, Renate, and I each received notices last week that as spiritual leaders we were eligible to make an appointment, we both registered.

As an ordained minister, Renate serves as associate pastor for German Worship, with Niagara United Mennonite Church on Niagara Stone Road, which has a significant membership of seniors, whose first language is German.

Until the COVID pandemic, Renate and I went in opposite directions on Sunday mornings, as I serve the St. Catharines arena at that time. As associate pastor, I serve those in palliative care, and to help with a focus on seniors, helping those in palliative care with Niagara Health. After wading through the information, we were surprised to make an appointment for the next day.

Niagara Health administers the Pfizer vaccine to targeted groups at the Seymour-Hannah Sports and Entertainment Centre in St. Catharines. As instructed, we arrived at the arena 10 minutes prior to our appointment, only to see a mostly full parking lot, and several long lines of people. With our screening forms and identification in hand, we picked one of the lines to join, and soon a security person confirmed we were in the correct line for our appointment.

As a vaccination site, the St. Catharines arena at that time was currently serving mainly Niagara residents 75 years and over. In the lineup we felt a bit out of place, as “younger” faith leaders. We trusted our appointment confirmation, and waited our turn in the warm sunshine, while the atmosphere had a touch of festivity. It wasn’t long until a fellow behind us began voicing his opinion. “This whole thing is totally disorganized!”

Renate and I looked at each other. “Disorganized!” Among the hundreds of people, waiting patiently in their respective lines, with a helpful security person giving direction for people to find the correct line for appointments. What’s disorganized? This fellow commented several times, “Totally disorganized. . . .”

“followed by a few adjectives not fit for print. Justification for his complaint was that he was not receiving his vaccination on time. All I could think of were the times I’ve waited at a doctor’s office, or times standing in line at a theme park. This was nothing.

In succession, each of the lines moved ahead, in bunches, my guess was about 20 people per time slot. When it was our turn, once inside, a person checked our health card, and confirmed our appointment.

We were then directed to a station where a person conducted the screening process, and waited our turn in the warm atmosphere, while the atmosphere seemed like a waiting line at a theme park. Next we followed arrows to a doctor’s office, or times standing in line at a theme park. This was nothing.

Across the room sitting in a chair was a health professional. Across the floor to the arena, where thousands more vaccinations were being administered, for the first time seemed like a minor issue to deal with.

We both felt grateful to receive the vaccine, and know that as a community, we have a long way to go before the COVID virus will no longer be a threat.

Randy and Renate Klaassen were invited to receive their vaccinations. (Randy Klaassen)
Kids of all ages, especially teens, struggle with pandemic

Another NOTL location could be successful

Penny Coles The Local

A walk-in mental health clinic, offering free, one-on-one counselling sessions for youth, is no longer available in Niaga-

ra-on-the-Lake.

Which is unfortunate, with Pathstone Mental Health “hamstrung” during the pandemic, receiving a large increase in crisis support calls, and requests for other programs for families, and children up to 18 years old.

All Pathstone walk-in clinics were shut down for a time, and have reopened. Pathstone is now offering three services: the crisis call hotline, in-person visits and its virtual tour.

The crisis phone line has led to 911 calls, says Kim Ross, director of philanthropy and pub-

lic relations, in response to young people talking about suicide, drugs and eating disorders, among other issues.

The clinic in Niaga-

ra-on-the-Lake was shut down before the end of the year-long pilot proj-

ect, and pre-pandemic, because it was consistently underused, says Rossi. The walk-in clinics at other communities were a huge success, but in NOTL, it may have just been the wrong place, she feels.

The one-on-one counselling sessions also had a staff at some sites, but Red Roof Retreat on Concession 6 was the one they chose.

The Pathstone model for providing mental health care for kids has shifted to community-focused, one-on-one coun-

selling. They have learned, since opening the first walk-in clinic three years ago in St. Catharines, that in many cases, one or two sessions can provide kids with the coping skills and problem-solving needed to deal with issues such as stress, anxiety and depres-

sion.

St. Catharines Brans-

combe Health Centre now offers clinics five days a week, and satellite locations have opened one day a week in Niagara Falls, Fort Erie, Welland, Grims-

by, Port Colborne, Beam-

sville and most recently, Thorold.

When the NOTL clin-

ic was closed, Rossi says she believed there was no “appetite” for municipal support, which is required to operate a clinic, in part funded by the municipali-

ties.

Red Roof Retreat provided a newly-renovated space at no charge, but it never received the number of walk-ins the other clinic in NOTL, she says.

Rossi says it could be because it was not easily visible, with no public transportation at the time, or whether the community wasn’t aware of the clinic and all it offered, although she did everything she could to advert it.

In NOTL, the Town had committed $10,000, matching the same com-

mitment from the Niagara Community Foundation — the break-even point for a one-day-a-week clinic, with donated space, is $20,000 a year, she says.

The clinics help elimi-

nate the long wait times for other Pathstone services and programs, says Rossi, but the most significant improvement of the walk-in model is the ability to provide counselling when kids need it. Waiting can exacerbate and create more complex issues, she says.

Youth up to the age of 18 are welcome, and par-

ents who have concerns about young children can also receive help. Youth may be feeling sadness, anger, or having trouble fitting in, or feeling lost, and the mother/child at-

tachment can be negatively impacted. The Pathstone parents may have to share their time with other chil-

dren at home, who would normally be at school, or they themselves may be stressed, confused, and dealing with all the life changes they have had to face before the pandemic.

A 10-year-old at the age when he’s experimenting with groups of friends may not be able to have the confidence and opportunity, impacting his development.

While there is no one age group being affected by the pandemic, it affects different age groups differ-

ently:

A baby six months or a year old may be impacted by not getting the attention of support from home. In some cases, and the mother/child at-

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dren at home, who would normally be at school, or they themselves may be stressed, confused, and dealing with all the life changes they have had to face before the pandemic.

A 10-year-old at the age when he’s experimenting with groups of friends may not be able to have the confidence and opportunity, impacting his development.

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Four-week workshop deals with letting go

Penny Coles  
*The Local*

When something difficult happens to us in life, how many times have we been told to “just let it go”? How often have we wished we could just let it go, knowing it’s not that simple? Can we learn to let it go?

Darcy Patrick, author, public speaker and wellness writing coach, believes we can, and wants to help by showing us how.

He’s written a book called *The Big Let Go*, and for some time, Debbie Krause, program co-ordinator of the Niagara-on-the-Lake Public Library, has been trying to organize a series of workshops Patrick offers to show us how to let go, move on past trauma, relinquish control, and take charge of our lives.

He also shares his tools to help us get there, he says, including forgiveness, setting boundaries, acceptance, changing perspectives, and having faith in ourselves.

“The virtual, interactive workshops can accommodate up to 30 people, and are designed for registration to include all four in the series, spread over four weeks. *We’ve been on our radar for a long time,*” says Krause. “He was scheduled to come last spring, and had to be cancelled. If the pandemic has taught us anything, it’s that mental health is a very, very important part of our well-being, in addition to our physical and economic situations. Mental health needs to be something we talk about. We’re all in COVID fatigue, and that makes us less able to cope with the hard stuff we’re facing.”

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

Patrick had written three books before the arrival of COVID, and also worked as a music instructor. A health problem forced him to give up his work with the public during the pandemic, and helped move forward the schedule for completion of *The Big Let Go*, also giving him time to create a workshop series.

He has other workshops he does for the Canadian military, and the first series on letting go was spread over six weeks.

When Krause asked for a four-week series, he says, he took “what was best from each” to work with her schedule.

He believes people crave control, and think being in control is good for them. Losing control builds anxiety, he says, so learning to let go during a pandemic, when so much of our control is especially timely.

“We can hold on to things for a long time, but then we find ourselves in a stressful situation, and although we might not think we’re struggling, we start to become anxious or depressed. We’re faced with a challenge — the control we thought we had, we’ve lost.”

We might deal with that by going out with friends, and talking to people, but while that coping mechanism might have worked in the past it’s not always possible in a pandemic.

Other issues such as wearing a mask and physical distancing can also be seen as ways we are losing control, says Patrick.

“*But it’s not just about the pandemic — we all have issues we could let go, he says, such as family disagreements that fester. Letting go, he says, allows us to accept who we are and find peace within ourselves. A St. Catharines resident, he also does workshops for the St. Catharines Public Library.*

When the pandemic cancelled public appearances, one of the issues he had to let go was his feeling a virtual meeting couldn’t accomplish what in-person workshops could, he says.

“Agreed to do some virtual workshops, and we might deal with that by going out with friends, and talking to people, but while that coping mechanism might have worked in the past it’s not always possible in a pandemic. Other issues such as wearing a mask and physical distancing can also be seen as ways we are losing control, says Patrick.

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Three services offered

Continued from page 10

those risks.”

“*That includes following COVID rules and restrictions.*

For example, if we decide to drop off a birthday gift for a family member or friend, we may decide to take our mask off if we’re six feet away and only going to be there for a few minutes, and we’re outside, where there is less risk of transmission, he says.

“We’re teaching how to problem-solve and manage those risks in certain situations, still staying within the parameters of what is allowed.*

*It’s confusing for all of us, parents, and children, when science is different around the world, science is allowing us to do things differently in different countries, but the experts are not talking about certain factors such as margins of error, or density of population, or probability, leaving out information to explain why different areas do things differently,* he says.

*Instead, we have to help them understand decisions are being made on the best information that is available to us.*

“In the long term, we have no way of knowing what impact the pandemic will have on children of all ages, long past the point of vaccinations, he says.

*“We can only do our best to be ready to address issues as they come up.”* Pathstone Mental Health’s eight walk-in clinics are open across Niagara for in-person counselling sessions, with appointments required.

*Pathstone offers free, immediate, mental health support without a referral or health card needed, for children and youth from birth to age 18.*

*You can visit Pathstone in any of three ways.*

*• The Crisis and Support Line at 1-800-363-4944 connects to a Pathstone counsellor, 24/7, 365 days a year.*

*• Walk in clinics, ac- cessed through video session, Monday-Friday.*

*• Walk-in clinic, in-per- son sessions: Monday to Friday in St. Catharines; Mondays in Welland and Thorold; Tuesdays in Fort Erie; Wednesdays in Port Colborne and Grimsby; and Thursdays in Niagara Falls and Beamsville.*

*An appointment is re- quired for in-person or video walk-in clinic ser- vices and can be made by 1-800-363-4944, with same day or advance appointments available for off-site locations. Path- stone Mental Health is a lead agency and commu- nity-based organization whose mission is to provide innovative and effec- tive treatment for all chil- dren in Niagara diagnosed with mental health issues.*

*Thanks to support from our donors and volunteers, we are able to address and meet the needs of children and their families as the primary accredited provid- ers of mental health services for children in Niagara.*

For more information call 905-468-2023.

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Mike Balsom
Special to The Local

Though they were blocked from shooting scenes on Queen Street this week, a Toronto-based crew of about 45 technicians, builders, caterers and actors spent four days filming a new movie at Peller Estates.

Beginning on a warm spring day last Wednesday, the winery was transformed into a wintry Hudson Valley, New York fictional destination named Hollingbrook Vineyard.

A large sign was hung in the main entrance and a carpet of fake snow was laid on the island roundabout to set the scene for Love and Ice Wine, a Hallmark Channel movie that began shooting Thursday.

Produced by Chesler Perlmutter Productions, the made-for TV film will premiere in winter, 2022.

Love and Ice Wine stars Nazneen Contractor as Cristina, a food and wine writer, who visits a winery she had panned in the past, owned and operated by a single dad, Michael, played by Brennan Elliot.

Both actors will be familiar to fans of Hallmark Channel productions, as movies for Lifetime, Animal Planet, was also a location manager in the winery.

Director Don McBrearty, a veteran of the Canadian television and film industry (Murdoch Mysteries, Heartland, Road to Avonlea, Magical Christmas Ornaments) is at the helm.

Associate producer and location manager Alex Broughton expressed frustration that plans to shoot along Queen Street this Monday and Tuesday were nixed last week by Niagara-on-the-Lake council.

"All the businesses I talked to (last Christmas, Hatley Boutique, Cheese Secrets)," claimed Broughton, "were super happy to have us. I was extremely disappointed, and frustrated. (They) council told me I didn’t give them enough time to address all of the COVID concerns."

Speaking to council last week, Broughton said that despite the lower budget for this particular film, a lot of investment was made into COVID protocols.

"We are the second most heavily regulated industry outside of the healthcare industry. There hasn’t been a spread in our industry because we take a lot of precautions," he told council.

"The amount of regulations that they (local businesses) go through to meet up isn’t nearly as much as we go through on a regular basis."

Indeed, on a visit to the set at Peller Estates March 25, The Local was required to check in with the company’s COVID medic. A series of clearance questions were asked and answered, a mask was required, and a face shield was provided for this reporter to wear. The crew was on a break at the time, and it was clear that physical distancing was in effect.

As well, major changes to their craft services means all meals were served individually wrapped.

Despite his assurances, Broughton’s request to shoot the outdoor scenes on Queen and Market Streets was turned down.

Associate producer Alex Broughton said Broughton’s application came through in mid-March, and that types of requests usually take four to six weeks to review.

“We require a fair bit of information, and it takes time for the various groups at the town to review,” explained Chuckie. "We want to make sure the business impact is minimized, that garbage collection is addressed, that there’s a fire safety plan with access, road closures are addressed, and a number of other things. At the time that he submitted it, there wasn’t adequate time for that circulated.”

On Tuesday last week, Broughton moved on to Plan B. He quickly reached out to his contacts in Cambridge, and informed The Local he was expecting an answer in 24 hours from that municipality. By Thursday, Cambridge had given him the go-ahead, and the crew moved there this week.

In the meantime, shooting went on as planned last weekend at Peller. In keeping with the theme of the film, rows of artificial ice wine grapes were set up next to the vineyard just northwest of the Peller building. Plump, juicy grapes covered in frost hung from vines, over another carpet of fake snow.

Though the scene did get rained on during last Wednesday’s storm, the set-up certainly looked convincing.

“The main characters will be walking through, and will be pulling the grapes,” said Broughton.

“And we have a night scene tonight, as they usually pick the grapes night time because of the frost. The whole scene will be about eight minutes.”

Camera operators, sound technicians, script assistants and sets and props people gathered on the white snow blanket. Contractor and Elliot, both wearing masks, approached the vines to block the scene, during which Elliot’s character is tutoring Contractor’s on the tricky, yet rewarding, details of growing grapes for ice wine. It’s clear that keeping with the title once again, love seems to be brewing between the two.

Executive producer Robert Vaughn was on the set with director McBrearty. The veteran of Hallmark productions, as well as movies for Lifetime, Universal Pictures, and Animal Planet, was impressed with the location Broughton had chosen for the scene.

“It’s beautiful, it’s (a) huge production value,” said Vaughn. “Everybody at Peller Estates has been lovely to deal with. It’s completely perfect. It’s romantic, it’s escapist, it’s all of that. It’s been a great experience.”

On Friday, the production went indoors, for a wine tasting scene shot in the cellar room. An outdoor party scene, requiring a number of extras, was also planned for the weekend.

Broughton added that a number of local actors had been enlisted to be in that scene, though he was unable to provide any names.

Despite the frustration of having to move the shoot to Cambridge Monday, Broughton, whose position as a location manager involves scouting sites, negotiating with local officials, and scheduling shooting, looks forward to someday returning to town when the situation calls for it.

“Niagara-on-the-Lake is such a beautiful town,” he says. “The network, Hallmark, really loved the town, and we (Chesler Perlmutter Productions) really love the town. I have a good relationship with a lot of different towns. But I’ve had Cambridge pull my permits before when we went into lockdown, and I had to go look for another town. It’s about building these new relationships with a town and knowing what my limitations are and aren’t.”
Ice Dog star playing pro hockey in Germany

Mike Balsom
Special to The Local

Former Niagara Ice Dog Alex Friesen is in the thick of his third season playing professional hockey in Germany. The centre has notched six goals and nine assists in 17 games this year for the Pinguins, who play out of the port city of Bremerhaven.

The 30-year-old has missed more than a dozen games with a groin tear in a season already truncated by the pandemic. The Pinguins sit comfortably in second place in the Northern Division of the Deutsche Eishockey Liga (DEL-2), the second tier German professional hockey league. With 10 games left to play, they are almost certainly assured of a spot in the shortened playoffs, which begin after April 18.

The son of Helmut and Lucy Friesen of Virgil has been playing professionally since his five years old with the IceDogs came to an end in 2012. Drafted by the Vancouver Canucks in the sixth round in 2010, his second year of eligibility, Friesen spent five years playing in the American Hockey League, three with the Utica Comets. He crossed the Atlantic for a spot with LeKasdas Aloftteam in the German Eishockey Liga in 2017-2018, then moved to Bremerhaven the following season.

Friesen is enjoying the competition level in the league. “At the last Olympics, Germany came in second,” he says. “The German talent pool has grown over the last 15 years. Each team can have nine import players. We have players from Canada, the USA, all over Europe.”

He continues, “Tim Stützle was drafted by the Ottawa Senators last year, and obviously he’s doing pretty well with Ottawa. The league has a lot of good young and older German players, and playing around the world.”

Reflecting on his days in the AHL, Friesen admits the goal was always to catch the roster of an NHL team. But he kept his options open in the back of his mind. “The best way to get a spot in the NHL is to play in the American Hockey League,” says Friesen. “But it was always a thought that, later in the career, if things didn’t work out that it could be a possibility to play over in Europe.”

Friesen did get the call from the Canucks, making his BNL debut at home on February 15, 2016 against the Minnesota Wild. It would be the only game he played in the league.

“That was one of the highlights of my career,” he enthuses. “My parents, my girlfriend (now wife, Alie), my aunt, my sister, a bunch of people all came out to watch the game. It was a great experience. Obviously it would have been nice to stick around and play a little more, but it was awesome.”

He remembers fondly his three seasons in Utica, only a few hours away in New York state. In 2014-15 he helped the Comets reach the Calder Cup Final, when they fell in five games to the Manchester Monarchs.

But his days with the IceDogs, whose first year in Niagara coincided with Friesen’s first season with them, remain some of his favourite times. He and fellow NOLTL native Johnson Andrews were two of the most popular players amongst fans.

“It was definitely a fun five years,” Friesen reflects. “Getting drafted by them, having it be my hometown team, was a huge factor. In terms of community outreach, every week we were out at some school appearance or community event.”

In 292 regular season OHL games, Friesen notched 91 goals and 244 points. He added another 53 points, including 14 goals, in 61 playoff games. In Game 5 of the 2012 Eastern Conference Final against Ottawa, Friesen was the hometown hero, scoring the game winner in the second period, sending the Niagara IceDogs to their first ever appearance in the OHL Championship Series.

As well, Friesen received the 2018 Ivan Tennant Award, given to the OHL’s top academic high school student. He was also named a third team all-star during his final OHL season, after recording 71 points (26 goals and 45 assists) in 62 games.

“I’m still in touch with some of the guys,” he says. “Johnson and I have been friends since we were five years old. Guys like (Andrews) Aggranis, (Steven) Shapley, (Mike) Schwendt, we get together at least once a summer for a round of golf.”

Last summer, Friesen and Alie were back home helping out at his grandparents’ business, Pillitteri Estates Winery. They were both enlisted by his brother-in-law, Michael Zappitelli, to support him with his BarrelHead Pizza operation. With the pandemic still a factor in Germany, the family had an extended time at home, as their return to Europe was delayed until September.

“We had exhibition games and practices in November,” Friesen recalls, “but the season didn’t start until December. There are 14 teams, in two divisions, North and South. For the first 24 games all we did was play the northern teams, so we didn’t have to stay over in hotels. Now we’re playing the southern teams, playing one game away, then one game at home.”

Life is different for the couple this year with COVID-19. Of course. When they arrived in November they were still able to get out to restaurants and enjoy much of what Bremerhaven has to offer. But with lockdowns in December, lockdowns became a reality, as traditions such as the popular Christkindlmärkte were cancelled.

Normally the couple takes advantage of short breaks in the hockey season to travel through Europe. That hasn’t been possible this past year, but they are still enjoying their time in Germany. “We live close to other families, guys from the team,” he says. “We’ve been able to socialize within the parameters of what is allowed with our teammates. It’s nice, because we have a kind of network around us.”

Like in Canada, Friesen says the frustration in Germany of late has been with how slowly the vaccines have been administered across the country. Though not in a complete lockdown as of press time, Friesen says that only grocery stores are currently allowed to open.

He worries about the ability of the DEL-2 teams to continue beyond this season without fans in the stands. “I know next year, this league needs to have fans in some capacity to pay,” Friesen laments. “The hope is that things go smoothly with the vaccine so that come September we can have some fans in the arenas. This year, all contracts were reworked. For next year some teams are now putting in clauses where, if there’s 50 per cent or 25 per cent fans, your salary is going to reflect that.”

Assuming the league can weather the pandemic storm, and he can stay healthy, Friesen plans to play a few more years in Germany before considering a career beyond professional hockey. Options for the future include starting a hockey school back here in Canada, and immersing himself more fully in the family’s wine business.

You can be sure if he runs that hockey school out of Virgil’s Centennial Sports Park, his popularity from his IceDogs days and his professional experience will make it a popular choice.
Despite schedule changes, weekend works out for Friesen

Mike Balsom
Special to The Local

For Niagara-on-the-Lake’s Stewart Friesen, a weekend that included an uncharacteristically large amount of downtime ended up in two relative successes and one very big disappointment in Bristol, Tennessee.

Saturday was supposed to see the debut of Jessica Friesen, Stewart’s wife, in the NASCAR Camping World Truck Series. Jessica was able to get in some practice laps in her number 62 Toyota Friday, but that would be all the time she would have in the truck on the weekend.

She needed to run a qualifying heat for the chance to end up in the main event, the Pinty's Truck Race on Dirt. But rain and wind wreaked havoc on the track, forcing the cancellation of all qualifications, after only one muddy lap that left the grilles and windshields of the trucks covered with thick, red mud. Without the qualifier, Jessica was left out of the main event, the Pinty’s Truck Race to an uncharacteristically large amount of downtime end- ed up in two relative successes and one very big disappointment in Bristol, Tennessee.

NASCAR rejigged the schedule, moving the Pinty’s Truck Race to an earlier time slot on Sunday, with Stewart’s debut in the NASCAR Cup Series Food City Dirt Race scheduled for 3:30 p.m. on that same day. Again, conditions forced NASCAR to call off both of those races and push them to Monday. When conditions were finally conducive for racing Monday at noon, Stewart started off strong in the truck, holding the fourth position after stage 1, and the seventh in stage 2. Martin Truex Jr. won the race, holding on to the top spot for 105 of the 150 laps. Friesen finished 12th. “With the 52, we kind of missed the balance of it a little bit,” he said later via a Facebook video, with the truck going from a little tight on the track to too loose. “We were really good early in the grip, and then just blew off and we missed it.”

The finish earned Friesen enough points to continue his hold on fifth place in the Truck Series standings.

At 4 p.m., Friesen rolled his Halmar Racing Spryte Motorsports Cup car to start in the 32nd position. He entered his first stop with a bit of damage to the sheet metal from contact, but climbed to 25th with 200 laps left.

Friesen continued to move up, and for a while had cracked the top 20. But he finished the race placing 23rd. Thirty-year-old Joey Logano of Connecticut took the checkered flag. “I’m pretty happy, I brought the number 77 Halmark Chevy home with a top-25,” he said following the finish. “It was a long, really tough, challenging racetrack. Daytime conditions were really tough, we were able to make some passes early, get up on the top and get rolling, then jumped the cushion once. We kind of lost visibility with the dust and the sun on the windshield. All in all, we survived.”

Good news came Sunday, by the way, for Jessica. That day, Stewart announced on SiriusXM NASCAR Radio’s Morning Drive show that his wife would be returning with the number 62 Toyota Tundra to qualify at Knoxville Raceway on July 9. It will be another truck race on dirt, part of Knoxville’s Corn Belt Weekend.

And more good news followed the Cup Series race on Monday. Friesen discovered NASCAR had announced during the race that Bristol would hold the same race on the dirt again in 2022. “Hopefully it’s at night,” he laughed. “Daytime dirt-track racing stinks. But it’s just the nature of the beast.”

Pattie the NASCAR Cup Series patch on his shoulder, he added, “I’m happy to have this patch on my fire suit. It’s pretty darn cool. On to the next one.”
HELP WANTED

Across:
1. **Sizzle**
2. **First Lady before Mamie**
3. **Elephant's back**
4. **Outcry safety grp.**
5. **Toboggan**
6. **Apothecary box**
7. **First Lady before Mamie**
8. **Sizable**
9. **Big Blue**
10. **Undiluted**
11. **E.g., Schwinns**
12. **Target**
13. **Clone**
14. **Drug**
15. **Building, now the Comcast Building, N.Y.C.**
16. **Opposite of sweet**
17. **Breed of dog**
18. **Logarithm**
19. **Large numbers**
20. **Capital cities in Europe**
21. **Large inter"."**
22. **Apothecary box**
23. **Large inter**
24. **First Lady before Mamie**
25. **Hedgehog pet**
26. **Speedy**
27. **Sam's dad**
28. **Sawbuck**
29. **This place**
30. **Big Blue**
31. **Undiluted**
32. **Refreshments**
33. **Flintstone pet**
34. **First Lady before Mamie**
35. **Large inter**
36. **First Lady before Mamie**
37. **Flintstone pet**
38. **First Lady before Mamie**
39. **First Lady before Mamie**
40. **I.B.M.**
41. **Here**
42. **Ten**
43. **P.C. Build.**
44. **Computer bran**
45. **Computer brain**
46. **Tiny brushes**
47. **Flintstone pet**
48. **Play on words**
49. **Computer brains**
50. **Some foreign Government heads**
51. **Tree with a partridge at Christmas**
52. **Adult female pig**
53. **Intersect**
54. **Silvers or Collins**
55. **Singer/songwriter --- Mars --- Silvers or Collins**
56. **Computer brains**
57. **Sheet of glass**
58. **Holler**
59. **Barrier**
60. **"Copacabana" showgirl"**
61. **Adult female pig**
62. **"Copacabana" showgirl"**
63. **Drum""**
64. **Line about which rotation occurs**
65. **M --- mouse**
66. **Formerly the Gold Coast**
67. **Large number**
68. **To a ton**
69. **Marzipan base**
70. **Higher degree**
71. **Space viewed from below**

Down:
1. **E.g., Schwinn**
2. **Arm of the sea**
3. **Target**
4. **Gambol**
5. **Breathe out**
6. **Incarcerate**
7. **Cleaner**
8. **Aviation safety grp.**
9. **Fittingly**
10. **"License to Kill" Bond girl""**
11. **Labor strenuously**
12. **Campus housing**
13. **"I am just --- boy"**
14. **Local mountain system""**
15. **"I am just --- boy"**
16. **North of Tex.""**
17. **Take --- Train (Duke, Fl always)""**
18. **Upper story""**
19. **Totters""**
20. **European mountain system""**
21. **"Cocacabana" shoutout""**
22. **Tucson time""**
23. **Banter""**
24. **Holier""**
25. **Sheet of glass""**
26. **Computer interconnection system""**
27. **Higher degree""**
28. **Mariposa base""**
29. **Tomb Raider --- Crot""**
30. **Not ordained""**
31. **Unbirthed""**
32. **Big Blue""**
33. **This place""**
34. **Sawbuck""**
35. **Chemical pollutants"" banned in 1975""**
36. **Chemical pollutants"" banned in 1975""**
37. **Campus housing""""**
38. **Labor str""**
39. **Ellington song""**
40. **"The Boxer"" (Ringo, Ringo)""**
41. **"Sun"" (Simon and Garfunkel, ""(Simon and Garfunkel,"" ""Copacabana"" showgirl""")""**
42. **"HMS Pinafore" showgirl""**
43. **Model and actress --- Suvari""**
44. **Overactors""**
45. **"Target""**
46. **Crossword and Sudoku""""**
47. **Ringer""**
48. **Ring""""**
49. **Singer --- Dion""**
50. **Phone""""**
51. **Pixel""""**
52. **Sushi""""**
53. **Onion""**
54. **Wont""""**
55. **Mag""**
56. **Echo""""**
57. **Stab""""**
58. **Hams""**
59. **Rasp""""**
60. **Ray""""**
61. **Plea""""**
62. **Actor""""**
63. **Axis""""**
64. **As""""**
65. **Down""""""**
66. **Down""""""**
67. **Down""""""**
68. **Mena""""""**
69. **Shot""""""**
70. **Obey""""""**

PUZZLE ANSWERS

**Crossword and Sudoku**

**Sudoku solution from March 24, 2021**

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