

The Niagara-on-the-Lake LOCAL



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pages 10-11

The trusted voice of our community.

notllocal.com APRIL 2, 2020 Volume 2 · Issue 14



Chalk Your Walk

Brothers Dean and Jon Velsink have been creative with sidewalk chalk outside their Line 2 home, as part of a weekly Facebook invitation to Chalk Your Walk Niagara, Saturday mornings at 10 a.m. throughout April. (Photos supplied)



Niagara COVID-19 cases jump to 67, 4 deaths Tuesday

Penny Coles
The Local

To open Monday's virtual, phone-in council meeting, live-streamed to the public, Lord Mayor Betty Disero reinforced her message to a community at risk, with its aging population, "and the impact to our community if we contract the virus."

By Tuesday, our corner of the world had changed again, giving her plea new meaning.

By Tuesday, the Niagara Health System was reporting 67 total cases, up from 34 reported Monday, as well as four deaths, three more than the day before. There had been 18 COVID-19 patients admitted to hospital, and 13 were still being treated.

The message from Disero and interim CAO Sheldon Randall released late Tuesday afternoon asks us not to for-

get "each of these numbers represents a life. There is no time for hesitation or wavering. Niagara-on-the-Lake has taken a firm stance by declaring a State of Emergency, and it is vital that we all work together, doing whatever possible to flatten the curve, and control the potential spread of COVID-19. We cannot stress enough the importance of self-isolation, physical distancing and staying home whenever possible."

Monday evening, Disero had explained her declaration of the town's state of emergency was "a call to action," to ensure the community, particularly those returning home from travel, understand the importance of taking measures to stop the potential for spread of the COVID-19 virus.

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Still holding hope seasonal workers can isolate in field

Penny Coles
The Local

Growers were assured more than a week ago that seasonal workers would be allowed into the country.

On Tuesday, they were still anxiously waiting to hear when the workers from the Caribbean and Mexico will arrive. Farmers were also waiting for some clarification about the protocol when that

happens.

They were hoping the workers would be allowed to "hit the ground running," says grower and town councillor Erwin Wiens. They are accustomed to taking a day to get settled, and then heading out to the orchards and vineyards the next day.

Instead, farmers have heard there may be a 14-day isolation period, with the workers having to stay on their farms, but not al-

lowed to go out to work.

There is a possibility that could allow them to begin the important job of pruning fruit trees and vines during the isolation period. The federal government announcement about the arrival of the workers, dated March 27, says "the employer cannot authorize the worker to work during the self-isolation period, even if requested by the worker, with the exception of

those deemed as providing an essential service by the Chief Public Health Officer."

Wiens says news of the isolation was not really a surprise — he'd heard talk that they wouldn't be allowed into the field, "but I was hoping that was not the case."

They are in closer quarters when they're not working — they would always be apart from each other and away from

anyone else in the field, he says.

"I am hoping they are considered essential, and thus allowed to work," says Wiens. But that being said, "I am thankful we are closer to them coming."

During a virtual, call-in council meeting Monday, Lord Mayor Betty Disero made a passionate statement about the current state of emergency. One of the issues she addressed was the "unnec-

essary angst" residents are feeling because of seasonal workers. Those in town now have finished their 14-day isolation. Some of them have been here since January she said. The protocol hasn't yet been finalized for new arrivals, she said, but farmers "have the best interest of the community, their families and the workers at heart."

In addition to not al-

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Volunteers busy sewing fabric masks

Penny Coles
The Local

With a shortage of protective masks to help reduce the spread of COVID-19, two local groups of volunteers have been busy sewing fabric masks to be distributed where needed.

Their designs, materials and distribution are different, but their goals are the same — to help those most at risk from the virus.

Fran Boot began researching designs when her daughter, a mental health professional in the emergency department of a Toronto hospital, said she was concerned about not having a mask for protection.

Reports from those inside

hospitals across North America indicate some are running short of masks and rationing them.

There are also families who use them for procedures routinely carried out at home, unrelated to the virus, Boot learned, and they can no longer access masks.

After extensive research, and input from those who use them, Boot has settled on a design of a blended-cotton pocket, with a HEPA filter insert made from HEPA vacuum cleaner bags. She and her sister, also a sewer, along with a group of about 25 others, have been producing masks, with a distribution list that includes a Toronto hospital, Hotel Dieu Shaver, doctors who have asked for them, volunteers at a

COVID-19 clinic, personal support workers who go from home to home in their work, and vulnerable patients, says Boot.

While a welcome news report says masks have arrived from China, there is still a question at this point of how many have been sent, how far they will go to covering the shortage, and how long distribution will take. Also unknown is how long the need for masks will continue, and as a result, groups have sprung up across the country and in the U.S., making fabric masks to cover the shortage protective gear.

The easy-to-make pattern Boot has chosen, with the filter, are not N95, medical-grade masks, but they do filter tiny microns. If N95 masks are not available, they provide good protection, “and something is better than nothing,” says Boot. “We hope there are truckloads of N95 masks on their way. But in the meantime we want to fill the gap, and we feel this is the best possible substitute.”

For now they have sufficient materials, thanks to some sewers who are quilters, “and who always have odds and sods of supplies on hand,” says Boot. The group is limiting the number of sewers to ensure as clean an environment as possible, she adds. “We are making every mask as if we were making it for a loved one.”

Those who are given the masks receive four disposable

filters to go with it, and if necessary, they can hopefully replace them by purchasing the HEPA vacuum cleaner bags.

For anyone interested in more information about the fabric masks being made by local volunteers, visit the Facebook page Niagara COVID Mask Needs, at <https://www.facebook.com/groups/229577075102728/>.

Meanwhile, another group of sewers is busy making masks from a different design, and also for a different destination.

Kathy Scozzafava is a sewer in the costume department of the Shaw Festival. The work of her department has been put on hold, with the start of the season delayed and non-essential workers staying home.

She continues to be paid, and is working on some costumes in her home workshop, knowing that once work resumes and productions are getting ready to open, there will be a rush to finish costumes. But when she heard of the need for masks, she quickly jumped in and volunteered to help.

The group she is working with distributes pre-cut materials to take home to sew, and then the finished product is dropped off at a Beamsville location.

“I have a well-equipped studio in my house, as do a lot of the Shaw sewers. We’ve been talking to each other and video-chatting,” she says. One of them learned of the Beamsville operation, and

wanting to help, reached out to some of the other sewers.

Kathy’s husband Ross has even been put to work clipping threads for her, she says.

The masks are cloth on the outside, with a microfibre shield lining on the inside. She can make about 100 a day, and then returns them to pick up more kits.

The fabric is being cut in very sanitary conditions, the kit is microwaved before it’s sent out to be assembled, and the completed masks are microwaved again to further sanitize

them, she says.

While she is not sure how many of the 35 to 40 Shaw sewers are involved, but as more hear about the work, they are volunteering as well.

“This story is about the mobilization of Shaw sewers who are jumping on board as we’re waiting to go back to work,” she says.

There is a small stipend per mask paid by the distributor, she adds, but that will be donated to something COVID-19 related. “We are definitely volunteering our time.”



Fran Boot demonstrates the masks she and a group of local sewers are making. (Photo supplied)



Kathy Scozzafava is sewing masks in her home workshop. (Photo supplied)



Ross Scozzafava helps his wife Kathy by cutting threads on the finished masks. (Photo supplied)

EASTER Sale SPECIALS

The Starter Pack

Option 1 Includes:

- 1 - 6" Multi-Colour Mum
- 1 - 6" Easter Lily
- 1 - 6" Daisy Mum in Bunny Bag

\$10

The Basic Gardener

Option 2 Includes:

- 1 - 6" Mum
- 2 - 6" Easter Lily
- 3 - 4" Herb Plants
- 1 - 4" Pansy/Viola Plant

\$15

Bring On Spring Pack

Option 3 Includes:

- 1 - 6" Hydrangea
- 2 - 6" Easter Lily
- 2 - 6" Mums
- 3 - 4" Herb Plants
- 1 - 4" Pansy/Viola Plant

\$20

The Family Pack

Option 4 Includes:

- 2 - 6" Hydrangeas
- 2 - 6" Easter Lily
- 2 - 6" Mums
- 4 - 4" Herb Plants
- 2 - 4 Packs of Pansies

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Grower and town councillor Erwin Wiens is hoping his eight seasonal workers will arrive soon. In the meantime, he is holding out hope they will be able to work while they're in self-isolation. (Photo supplied)

Farmers must monitor health of workers

Continued from page 1

Following the seasonal workers out in the field, the government announcement says they can't even be asked to perform other duties, such as building repairs, but they must be paid a minimum of 30 hours a week.

Farmers are also responsible for regularly monitoring the health of workers during their isolation period, as well as any worker who becomes sick after that period. It suggests farmers communicate with the workers daily, to ask if they are experiencing any symptoms, and keep a record of their responses.

If a worker develops

symptoms, farmers must isolate them from other workers and contact the local public health officials, and the appropriate consulate.

Farmers are also expected to provide information on COVID-19 in a language the workers understand.

Farmers must also ensure all seasonal workers have the tools to practise good hygiene, "including information that outlines best practices for workers in maintaining bathroom and other washing facilities. It is suggested that such information be posted in bathrooms, kitchens and common areas."

Also, during the self-isolation period, farmers must ensure the

accommodations do not prevent the worker from avoiding contact with older adults and those with medical conditions who are at risk of developing serious illness.

Farmers must house isolate arriving workers in accommodations that are separate from those not self-isolating, including finding alternate accommodations, such as a hotel, if necessary.

Wiens, who has purchased a trailer in addition to the house he has for his workers, each with their own bedroom, says local farmers are looking at all possibilities for other accommodations, including hotels. "The safety of the workers and the town is paramount," he says.

Niagara on-the-Lake HYDRO

A MESSAGE TO OUR CUSTOMERS

COVID-19 PANDEMIC

PROVINCIAL TEMPORARY ELECTRICITY RATE REDUCTION

The Government of Ontario is providing **temporary 45-day** emergency relief to support Ontarians impacted by the global COVID-19 outbreak. As of Tuesday, March 24, 2020, households, farms and small businesses who pay time-of-use electricity rates will be charged off-peak rates 24 hours-a-day, seven days-a-week.

The current off-peak rate is 10.1 cents per kWh and will replace the mid-peak rate of 14.4 cents per kWh and the on-peak rate of 20.8 cents per kWh. NOTL Hydro customers will see this rate reduction on their next bills which will be mailed mid-April. For more information or to answer any questions, such as to see if this rate reduction applies to you, please call NOTL Hydro at 905-468-4235.

LOCAL CHANGES AT NIAGARA-ON-THE-LAKE HYDRO

SERVICE LEVELS

As an **essential service**, Niagara-on-the-Lake Hydro (NOTL Hydro) is committed to staying open during the COVID-19 pandemic and keeping the electricity flowing. Safety and keeping you connected remain our priorities. However, during this pandemic, our service levels are being reduced in the following manner:

- Our outdoor service personnel are at a 50% level due to changes made to limit the risks of infection.
- No non-emergency services are guaranteed at this time. With the reduced staffing the focus will be on services required for safety reasons or to provide customers with access to electricity.
- The office is closed to all visitors. Our drop-box is still open for anyone wishing to hand deliver.
- NOTL Hydro customer service staff can still be reached by phone at 905-468-4235 or by e-mail at billing@notlhydro.com.

MONTHLY HYDRO BILLS

NOTL Hydro will still be issuing its bills monthly in the normal fashion:

- You can continue to pay your bills online, at your local financial institution or by dropping a cheque or cash in our dropbox at the office. Envelopes are available in the mailbox by the door. No payments can be accepted by hand and no change can be provided.
- No interest or late payment charges will be added to the bills that will be mailed in the third week of April.
- All our rates are set by Provincial authorities and we are not allowed to change them without permission. Rates will be changed if that direction is received.
- If you are experiencing financial difficulties, please call our office at 905-468-4235. There are financial assistance programs we may be able to direct you to and payment deferral arrangement may be made. NOTL Hydro is unable to write-down or write-off any balances owing.

Please visit our website or follow us on Twitter for further updates:

www.NOTLhydro.com
<https://twitter.com/notlhydro>

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The full page is made up of a **HALF PAGE AD** and **HALF PAGE ARTICLE**

Article word count: 450-500 | Ad size: 10.25"w x 7"h

Publication Date Subject to Availability

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Local stranded in Nepal, hoping to get home

Mike Balsom
Special to The Local

COVID-19 has yet another Niagara-on-the-Lake native stranded, this time on the other side of the world, with no idea when he might be able to come home.

Twenty-nine-year-old Connor Crickmore is now holed up at a hostel in Kathmandu, hoping to hear soon from the Canadian government about a possible repatriation flight out of Nepal.

Back in NOTL, his mother, Shari Hartwick, is doing all she can to help him out, while worrying about his safety amid the spread of the novel coronavirus.

Hartwick is thankful, though, that she can at least communicate with her son now. For a few long days, she was unable to even find out his whereabouts. Crickmore was in the mountains, away from any links to civilization.

He left on March 14 with five others on the Annapurna Circuit Trek, a 21-day jour-

ney through the mountain ranges of central Nepal. The trek winds its way to a peak of 5,416 metres as the hikers cross Thorung La pass. The seasoned traveller and his cohorts were taking on the Annapurna Circuit without a guide or any sherpas.

Though Nepal reported its first case of COVID-19 in January, there wasn't another until March 23, nine days after the group left their base. While they were advancing on their trek, incommunicado, they were blissfully unaware of the renewed fear of the virus in the country.

The group made it over Thorung La pass, witnessing many other hikers falling victim to altitude sickness due to the 10 per cent oxygen level. Their next stop was in Mukti-nath, where they were finally faced with the new reality of COVID-19.

After ending their trek prematurely, Crickmore and the other Canadians quickly discovered they would need a letter to move around freely. They

tried contacting the Canadian consulate in Kathmandu, but were unable to reach anyone.

They remained stuck in Mukti-nath for a few days, trying to organize transport to Jomsom. From there, the plan was to move on to Pokhara, then back to Kathmandu.

Finally, they were able to move. They spent more than 25 hours on a bumpy bus on the edge of steep 30-plus metre cliffs, travelling on single-lane mountain roads, before finally arriving in the capital city.

Though Crickmore is now safe in the Kathmandu hostel, comfort is certainly not the name of the game there. With a capacity to house 25, the facility is currently playing host to 95 travellers, making for very cramped quarters.

Food is available, he says, but going out to find groceries is always risky, as the police can be aggressive in enforcing the current lockdown situation.

As visitors to the country, as well, they are often looked at with derision and suspicion.

"The locals view foreigners as the cause of the spread," says Crickmore. "There can be some resentment. We were run out of a few villages because they feared us, but I don't blame them. You can't view everything through a Western lens."

Crickmore says he and the others fear contracting the virus, and at the same time they worry about taking hospital beds from the locals, because, due to "white privilege and health insurance," they would certainly get those beds first.

Now, the focus is getting home. Crickmore has a ticket for a flight to Doha originally scheduled for April 6, but the lockdown has meant a cancellation of all flights, in and out of the country, until April 15.

Back home, Hartwick has been in communication with local MPs Tony Baldinelli and Vance Badawey, but thus far has not been given any promising news.

Crickmore has registered as a traveller with the Canadian government, but is discouraged. "Many of my emails have yet to be returned, and those that have were either (ro)bot responses or no longer applicable to my given situation. To be honest, I expected a little more in terms of response, but I do appreciate there are many Canadians stranded in more dire situations than mine."

In the meantime, he's wit-



Connor Crickmore is stuck in Nepal, hoping for a repatriation flight. (Photo supplied)

nessed the responses from the German, Norwegian, American, French, Sri Lankan and Afghani embassies, as they've communicated with their citizens and with each other to successfully arrange to get people home.

"The fact that the Canadian government isn't in touch with these kids a little more, just so they know they're not forgotten," says Hartwick, "is the hard part for Connor. When I listen to Trudeau every day, I feel good about being in Canada."

But Connor is not feeling good about being from Canada right now, as he's watching other people being flown home."

Hartwick encourages people to sign an online petition to bring the plight of her son and others to the attention of the federal government. As of press time, almost 4,100 people had signed the petition, Repatriation of Canadians in Nepal (Covid19) on change.org.

Hartwick says the stranded travellers need to know that "someone's got their back."

Ariel home, where she is safest from virus

Penny Coles
The Local

Ariel Carr, the 12-year-old Crossroads student who underwent extensive surgery at the Hospital for Sick Children in Toronto, is home.

It was just last Wednesday, March 25, that she underwent an 11-and-one-half hour surgery to correct severe scoliosis, longer than originally anticipated. In addition to the removal of a halo, which had weights attached to straighten her spine, she had two metal rods put in her spine. That part was expected. Ariel also had a piece of hip bone removed, which was fused to her spine. All of this was done to strengthen and straighten her spine, severely curved from scoliosis.

She also had three ribs removed. Her ribs were growing into her hip, because, after a recent growth spurt, there just wasn't enough room in her little body for them. They were also pressing on her lungs, and reducing her lung capacity.

The surgery was planned for July, but was moved up to get her home, away from the risk of COVID-19.

The surgery went well, but by Saturday, doctors were concerned about Ariel's difficulty breathing. She was diagnosed with pneumonia, and water around her lungs. Her mother Denise was exhausted, frightened, and heart-broken her little girl was in pain and suffering.

But fortunately Monday brought a different story.

Monday morning, says Denise, Ariel had x-rays taken, and then got the good news

that she could go home.

The hospital is being emptied in anticipation of COVID-19 patients — Denise says there aren't any yet, but the hospital is preparing for them — and Ariel's doctor was very concerned about her contracting the disease. She would be safer at home, he said.

"Her doctor said she was doing great, and walking really well. He said he's really proud of her — she's a real trooper," says Denise.

The trip home was a cautious one, with Ariel's dad Colin (Ace) driving slowly, emergency blinkers on, and Ariel surrounded by pillows, in pain from every bump.

She is on several medications, has breathing apparatus to keep her lungs open, and is expected to spend most of

her time in bed, but she has a wheelchair.

Making sure Ariel continues to gain weight is important, Denise says. Ariel was 43 pounds when she got to the hospital, and is more than 60 pounds now. She is also five inches taller, thanks to her straightened spine.

She's in good spirits, happy to be home, and surrounded by family also delighted to have her there. They will be practising extreme caution, with Ariel kept in isolation to protect her from the virus, knowing with her compromised lungs, home is the safest place for her.

As the doctor explained, says Denise, there is medication for her current condition, "but there is no medication for COVID-19."



Ariel is home after about two months in hospital, feeling good, and happy to be reunited with her dog Freddy. (Photo supplied)

Niagara-on-the-Lake
EST. 1781

As the Town of Niagara-on-the-Lake's State of Emergency continues, we're asking for your help to make **#StayHomeNOTL** a community-wide prevention effort.

Show your support and commitment by printing off a **#StayHomeNOTL** poster (or making your own) and hanging it in your front window. Display it as a reminder to others and a sign that your household or business is doing its part to protect our community. Hopefully, others will see your sign and do the same!

Share a picture of your poster on social media with the hashtag **#StayHomeNOTL** to show you've heard the Town's call to action!

In a time when many community members feel alone and disconnected, this community-wide collaboration will help to connect us.

Together, we can do this! Together, we can limit the potential spread of COVID-19. For more information and updates or to download your poster, go to notl.com/COVID-19.

#StayHomeNOTL

**HELP
LIMIT THE
POTENTIAL
SPREAD
OF
COVID-19**

Niagara-on-the-Lake
EST. 1781

**Practice
PHYSICAL
DISTANCING**

**Adhere to
ISOLATION
GUIDELINES**

**SHARE
Updates
Posted by the
Town to Expand
our Reach**

**ASSIST
Vulnerable
Community
Members & Those
in Isolation**

notl.com/COVID-19

EDITORIAL

Increase in Niagara cases a wake-up call

When we woke up Tuesday morning, we might have felt we were accepting the new normal, settling into life as we know it today.

But of course, what we considered the new normal had already changed.

Thus goes this war against COVID-19, with the battle lines constantly shifting.

We knew there was a spike coming, but may have felt complacent about it not reaching Niagara. Tuesday, that changed, with a significant jump to 67 reported cases, from 34 reported Monday, which in itself had seemed a jump, from 21 on Sunday. And one death in the region jumped to four.

Those numbers are not what we were expecting, and of course, as our lord mayor reminded us, they are not numbers, they are people, victims of this virus, and with families and friends who love them.

This is a reminder to all of us — this is no time for complacency.

If we know others who are not coping well, who are suffering from anxiety, depression, or just need supplies, we're being shown any number of ways to reach out to them — maybe not physically, but in many other ways. They will

need it, because we may have a long stretch ahead of us to continue this self-isolation and physical distancing that is beginning to feel normal. If there was ever a question about the need for it, that question has been answered.

Our businesses, who have so much to lose, have been finding creative ways of helping themselves, each other, and all of us through this pandemic, and they will continue to do so.

Businesses considered essential, and especially their staff, are being brave, risking their health and that of their families, so they can stay open for the rest of us. And many of those who are now unemployed are volunteering, looking at ways to help others.

They are collectively setting a good example of helping others in times of adversity.

During Monday evening's phone-in council meeting, there was much talk about all of us continuing to keep safe, and by doing so, protecting others. The question was raised, though, that while it's of utmost importance to look after the town's physical health, what about its financial health?

Is it time to start thinking about that yet? The

short answer then was yes, let's have a look at it.

However, there is still such uncertainty about the future, about how long before we can return to work, how long before we can go out for dinner, shop freely, attend events, and get back to the old normal, never mind this new normal.

And how many more of us will become sick? Or lose loved ones?

Will we ever return to that old life, and do we want to? Can we make this one even better, even safer, for the future?

So far, there is no bending the curve, no flattening, no planking, and no way to know when that is going to happen.

It's really only been two to three weeks of the ever-more-stringent rules of self-isolating, and it would seem we could be looking at months before that comes to an end, although we really have no idea. Becoming complacent, rushing the return to normalcy, would be disastrous.

Tuesday's news was a wake-up call. In the absence of that mythical, oft-mentioned crystal ball, what we really need now is patience, and if there was ever any doubt, to really, really #stayhomenotl.

Penny Coles
The Local

Business owners invited to chat

Penny Coles
The Local

The Niagara-on-the-Lake Chamber of Commerce is closed, but staff are video-conferencing with business owners regularly, to share ideas and keep them up-to-date on what they're doing.

Times are indeed tough, with many businesses shuttered, says chamber president Eduardo Lafforgue, but some are revamping and being creative so they can offer limited services, while others are planning for the day they can re-open.

This is normally the time of year when the weather gets warmer, the sun shines, and business owners are smiling as Queen Street puts winter in its rearview mirror and heads into its busy season.

Not this year.

Business owners who would normally be chatting with each other are using the video-conferencing to chat with each other, and bounce around ideas.

Some are feeling the frustration about where they are heading, says Lafforgue.

But chamber staff are gearing up for a brighter future, by changing their marketing plan to look at the longer term.

The message they're working on is along the lines of 'don't visit us now, visit us later. We'll be here when you're

ready to come back,' says Lafforgue.

"Some business owners are feeling the panic, others are concentrating on looking after their employees," he says. "The 75 per cent (federal) wage subsidy being announced will make a difference."

As for all businesses, and residents, "what we planned Friday was different Monday, and what we planned Monday was different Tuesday. We video-conference regularly, and that's not just for our members, it's for anyone. Some days we have 20 to 25 people, some days we have

10." The chamber has also increased the email list for its weekly newsletter, from 376 recipients, all members, to 1,100, including many non-members.

"We're hearing a lot of solidarity, a lot of working together, a lot of people being creative with their businesses. It's very comforting. And at least two landlords have approached their tenants to offer delaying their rent — they've done that before they were asked to."

The video calls are at 10 a.m., but not every day, at 905-468-1950. Call ahead for more information.



Eduardo Lafforgue

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The Niagara-on-the-Lake

LOCAL

The trusted voice of our community

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LOCAL FINDS

Historic figure buried in St. Andrew's cemetery

by Donald Combe
Special to The Local

Janet Carnochan was a teacher and active member of St. Andrew's Presbyterian Church, but she is celebrated as a collector and recorder of the history of Niagara-on-the-Lake. She was the prime mover in the founding of the Niagara Historical Museum, and authored many valuable publications about our history.

SACRED TO
THE MEMORY OF
JANET CARNOCHAN
BORN AT
STAMFORD
NOV. 14 1839
DIED AT NIAGARA
MAR. 31 1926

The NOTL Local acknowledges the land on which we gather is the traditional territory of the Haudenosaunee and Anishinaabe peoples, many of whom continue to live and work here today. This territory is covered by the Upper Canada Treaties and is within the land protected by the Dish With One Spoon Wampum agreement. Today this gathering place is home to many First Nations, Métis, and Inuit peoples and acknowledging reminds us that our great standard of living is directly related to the resources and friendship of Indigenous peoples.

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Ways for NOTL to respond to stress of COVID-19



**Larry Chambers
Eva Liu
Hanna Levy
Special to The Local**

As communications technology advances, the internet and social media have taken medical information previously only found in medical libraries or expensive textbooks and made them available to all who wish to access it.

It is now possible for a person to have the same access of information as their physician about treatment and prognoses.

COVID-19 is an example of how we can all be resourceful patients by using the available resources. In addition to having access to this information, you can help shape the conversation around the COVID-19 pandemic by following the Canadian Public Health Association recommendations:

- Be a positive voice of evidence-based information on social media;
- Be a champion of #COVIDkindness by supporting high-risk individuals in your community; and
- Encourage your family, friends and colleagues to follow the advice of public

health officials and model healthy behaviours.

Fear about COVID-19 is leading to high levels of stress among people throughout the community. Stress is not an illness, but its adverse effects cannot be ignored. Stress is the feeling of being under too much mental or emotional pressure, which turns into anxiety when you feel unable to cope. A manageable level of stress can be beneficial by pushing us to proactively respond to difficult or new situations.

When stress exceeds the optimal threshold, our performance starts to deteriorate and the person may feel burned out. When stress becomes unmanageable, it can affect us adversely, instead of preparing us for new challenges. It does so by taking its toll on your body and your immune system.

Getting stress under control can boost your immune system and help prevent serious health problems, such as high blood pressure, heart disease, stroke and dementia. Adverse levels of stress can also lead to disturbed sleep patterns, which in turn also predispose people to heart disease and type 2 diabetes. Additionally, stress affects how we interact with others. Learning how to manage stress can help us build and maintain positive relationships with family and friends.

Managing adverse stress is something we all do throughout

our lives, and is especially important during the COVID-19 pandemic. Currently, stress levels stay high for a long period of time, and there is anxiety-provoking misinformation readily available online, shared by those with inadequate knowledge on the outbreak.

There are many techniques to better manage stress, from audio and video guides, to apps and other tools, which can easily be put into practice.

These simple steps are available for everyone to adopt to reduce daily stress, particularly in these challenging times:

- Manage your time by splitting your day into chunks and taking regular breaks, including a lunch break with a brisk walk to ensure you get a change of scene.
- Make lists of what you need to do and prioritize them in order of importance, focusing on those that will help you achieve your goals.
- Do not fall prey to COVID-19 misinformation. Make sure to double check your sources and maintain a healthy level of skepticism about information from unverified sources.
- Prioritize regular exercise, because the fitter you feel physically, the better you are able to function intellectually. Walking in or near forests and woods is

particularly helpful. In Japan, this practice is called Forest Bathing, and can be prescribed by physicians to improve physical function.

- Take deep, soothing breaths when you are under stress. Calming prayer or meditation can also help individuals relax. Mindfulness describes the meditative practice in which we become more aware of ourselves, our actions and their effects on the environment we inhabit. Mindfulness Based Stress Reduction therapy is designed for stress management, and is now being used for treating a variety of illnesses such as depression, anxiety, chronic pain, cancer, diabetes mellitus, hypertension, skin and immune disorders.
- Use simple behavioural modification techniques to build resilience. These include recognizing signs of stress, strengthening the relaxation response, countering unhelpful thoughts, and building a caring community. Resilience is our capacity to manage stressful events. More resilience means having more reserves to manage stressful situations.

No matter which strategies we employ to better manage adverse stress, we are not alone, as the COVID-19 pandemic is

demonstrating. All of us are subject to stressful situations and occasionally find the pressure to be too much to bear. Friends and family can support you on many fronts, such as listening to you and working with you to find ways to reduce stress. They can also help you locate health service resources to assist you in managing your stress.

This also highlights the need for Niagara-on-the-Lake to establish robust support systems for residents outside of times of crisis. According to NOTL's Community Wellness Committee's January 2020 Report, one of the healthy community recommendations states we should increase the availability and extent of programs for mental health for all ages. This can be done in collaboration with the schools and other organizations, such as Red Roof Retreat and the Alzheimer's Society.

In Canada, a variety of organizations provide support to people experiencing acute and long-term stress, such as the government of Canada's stress management website: <https://www.canada.ca/en/health-canada/services/healthy-living/your-health/lifestyles/your-health-mental-health-coping-stress-health-canada-2008.html>.

When working to reduce stress surrounding your job, relationships or other life cir-

cumstances, counselling may help guide you on this path. Counsellors can provide tools to help you talk through conflicts with family, friends and co-workers. You can ask your family physician for more information about counselling, or about other techniques like cognitive training. This is an approach focused on how you think about the problems that cause stress and how to handle them to change your thought process to alleviate this stress. Changing the way you think can change the way you feel. Those engaged in cognitive training learn skills that can be used to handle stressful situations.

Larry W. Chambers has authored 175 articles and books concerning disease prevention (e.g. dementia), and innovative approaches for continuing professional development. He is research director of the Niagara Regional Campus, School of Medicine, McMaster University. Eva Liu and Hanna Levy are medical students at the Niagara Regional Campus of the McMaster University School of Medicine. They are interested in improving community wellness of frail older adults in NOTL by narrowing the fitness (physical and brain) gap, diversifying housing options for older adults, and increasing economic activity within the community that also increases ability to interact with people and ideas.

Teens speak out about #stayhomenotl



**Bethany Polt
The Local Community
Advisory Board**

COVID-19 has impacted many aspects of my life, as well as my friends.

Even though physically we are distanced, we are still able to connect through social media, and it is important we stay connected during this time of changes and uncertainty and reach out to one another so no one feels alone.

We are experiencing the severity of COVID-19 together. We understand the importance of self-isolating to prevent the virus from spreading. Because of the physical separation, new ways of participating in clubs and activities are presenting themselves.

Our Teen Literary Alliance held our March meeting virtually, as will our Lord Mayor's Youth Advisory Council meeting. Many are helping grandparents communicate, with platforms such as FaceTime, Zoom or Skype, so they can stay in touch with grandkids too. We are able to continue with school, as teachers begin to

populate our D2L or VLEs with resources and lessons. As an example of what can be done, I have created a dance lesson video for the class I volunteer-teach for Miss Ilo-na's School of Dance.

Some other things I've been doing, along with my mom, are puzzling. I've got some friends now puzzling too! We share our completed puzzles and discuss them. I'm making daily culinary creations, as I have time to cook and bake more, and have been encouraging friends to share the food they make too. Continuing my passion for photography, I'm taking daily nature shots of the blue jays,

and of wildlife that wanders through our backyard. Since I'm home I now get to see the deer that walk by at lunchtime.

I have been in constant contact with many friends via social media this whole time — it is what teens tend to do. So when I reached out to them to ask: How are you feeling with regards to COVID-19, with missing school, and what are you doing to keep yourself busy?

The responses are from friends, aged 16 to 18, at Laura Secord Secondary School and Eden High School.

Jenna Cowan: "With regards to COVID-19, my school was definitely influ-

enced heavily, with the upcoming musical production of Mamma Mia, and the dance competitions we were planning to attend, as well as sport meets, all cancelled. I miss going to school. I find I get my energy to stay motivated from my peers and teachers around me, so this turn of events is certainly quite interesting, but my family and I have gotten creative with ways to stay busy. My dog goes on lots more walks, and my mom and I are on our fourth puzzle already. The board game box is also getting its workout! I hope to be back with my friends and teachers soon though."

Sadie Williams: "I am mostly just feeling unsettled, because we don't know what the future holds. So that's disorienting. But in a way it also forces me to just focus on the present, so that's what I'm trying to do. In terms of missing school, I haven't really been thinking about it too much, because I know if I do, I'll probably get very sad as this is my last high school year. And in terms of online school, I hope it works out that we get to graduate on time, but I also hope the school board remembers we are all going through a tough time, and of

Continued on page 9

On behalf of our community, thank you to our front-line healthcare workers, businesses and so, so many others for coming together in this tough time.

If you can safely, please continue to support our local small businesses and local papers!



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Midwife delivery protocols changing

Penny Coles
The Local

Rebecca Hagman is a Niagara midwife, gearing up to go back to work delivering babies after a 14-day quarantine period.

Her isolation, which follows a family holiday in Mexico, ends Wednesday, and earlier this week, she was feeling well, with no indication of symptoms.

During her isolation period, she has been doing research on changing guidelines and speaking with colleagues so she will know when she gets back to work with Niagara Midwives, how births are being handled during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Like everything around us, that has changed in the last week, and may continue to evolve, as so much related to health care is changing, so what was true yesterday is not necessarily true today, or tomorrow, she says.

But as of Monday, she was expecting to be working as she would under normal circumstances, “whether or not clients are sick. Once I’m done self-isolation and considered safe, I’m assuming everything will be the same.”

The exception is regarding the use of personal protective equipment, which in recent weeks has been one of the

issues that has continued to evolve.

Hagman believes that at this time, she should — and will — be wearing protective gear for every client she sees, and that’s something that is being discussed with colleagues, but previous public health guidelines instructed that it is not necessary, she says.

Her concern is for her safety and her family’s safety, as well as the clients.

“You can’t maintain two metres of social distance when you’re delivering a baby,” she adds.

During hospital deliveries, surgical masks, less effective than N95 masks, which filter 95 per cent of microns that can spread the disease, are to be worn when the client has no symptoms, and has not travelled.

Last week, N95 masks were not being made available during any delivery, but now, Hagman believes midwives have access to those masks with patients who are confirmed or suspected of having COVID-19, she says.

“At least that’s what I’ve heard, that we can access N95s. I’m hoping that’s the case. Both masks are in short supply.”

Research today has shown there is no danger of transmission of the virus from mom to baby, during pregnancy,

she says, so that’s not an issue, but could be transmitted from mom to baby after delivery.

If a patient having a baby in the hospital says they have returned from traveling, or have COVID-19 symptoms, the patient will be given a mask, asked to wash her hands, and will have her baby as normal,” says Hagman. The difference is for the midwives, who will now be issued masks, although one per day. Although they are available, hospitals are rationing them for the future.

Health care workers have been told if they use more masks today, they are “stealing” from themselves or another health care provider who might need one in the future, Hagman says.

Health care providers are taught to use one mask per patient,” says Hagman, but that isn’t happening today.

Health care workers are now placing pressure on hospitals and governments that proper personal protection equipment is essential, and are asking the public to do the same, she says, believing the best decision should be to do whatever is necessary to increase production and protect health care workers by limiting transmissions today.

Under normal circumstances, any risk from a home birth is equal to the risk of having a baby in the hospital,

says Hagman. Large studies show that the risk of the delay in reaching a hospital in an emergency situation would equal the risk of catching an infectious disease in a hospital, among other factors.

“But in these times of the

global pandemic, with a greater risk from an infectious disease, for healthy, low-risk women, home births are safer.”


Midwives offer their clients the option of having a baby at home or in hospital, and until recently, 20 to 25

percent chose to have them at home. The rest chose a hospital birth, with their baby delivered by a midwife rather than a doctor. Since the spread of COVID-19, more clients are choosing home births, says Hagman.



Rebecca Hagman of Niagara Midwives is preparing to go back to work in a changing world. (Photo supplied)

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Local home cook wins episode of cooking show

Penny Coles
The Local

Alex Hicks couldn't be happier about her win on *Wall of Chefs*, a new culinary competition for home chefs which began airing in February.

It's a different concept than other shows that pit aspiring cooks against each other, with weekly eliminations. In this Food Network Canada series, each episode stands alone, with four home cooks facing three challenges. The judges they face, or 'wall' of 12 Canadian culinary icons, declare a \$10,000 winner at the end of the episode.

The whole process unfolded at rapid speed, says Hicks, with the taping of the show in Toronto taking one day last September, and only a short break for the contestants to catch their breath in between the three challenges.

Hicks, a server at The Keg in St. Catharines, comes from a family who loves to cook.

"I've been working around food all my life," she says. For those who remember The Little Red Rooster, on Mary Street near Mississauga Street, that was where she got her start at a young age.

Growing up in Niagara, in the midst of a hospitality industry with great restaurants and chefs, she developed a passion for cooking, for family, friends and neighbours, and of course her husband Neil Wachs, "my biggest fan."

She's a social person, and loves nothing better than to have people over for dinner. "It's what I most look forward to on my days off, cooking all day and having people over whenever we can."

Now, of course, with the shutdown of the hospitality industry due to the COVID-19 virus, and physical distancing, there is no work, and no socializing after work. These days, she's hanging out at home with Wachs, who for now is the sole recipient of the meals Hicks loves to prepare.

When the show aired for

the first time Monday, March 23, her planned viewing party had to be put on hold, but at least she could finally share the news of her win with family and friends.

"It was something I had to keep to myself. That was tough, keeping it under wraps for six months. I was so proud, it was hard not to share it," says Hicks.

As she watched it with her husband, and a few others connected by video, "I was sitting on the floor, wearing the *Wall of Chefs* apron, bawling my eyes out." It was an emotional release for her to finally see the program, and put the worry about it behind her.

"It was a great experience, a once-in-a-lifetime experience, but it was hard to be an actor for six hours," she says, admitting to being concerned about how she would come across. "I hoped I could do it justice and make the town proud of me."

But she was pleased by what she saw. "I felt the biggest thing was that I was myself. We were told the idea was about showing off our talent, not about sabotaging us or making us look bad. They did a really good job of editing."

The feedback she has received reinforced that, with friends and family telling her "you were exactly what you are in real life, joking a little and always smiling. That was the biggest compliment."

Each episode follows the same format, with the first challenge called a "crowd-pleaser." Chefs can cook the dish their family and friends most enjoy. Hicks' choice was butter-basted scallops, with a balsamic reduction, minty mushy peas and charred asparagus.

Of the 12 chefs from the 'wall', four are chosen to taste each challenge, and the contestant with the least successful dish is sent home. The chefs were complimentary about her dish, and she was chosen to move on to the next round.

The second test is for the remaining three to make a

dish using three ingredients in one chef's fridge, which was a challenge for Hicks.

The ingredients were Brie cheese, garlic, and rapini — a leafy green with a bitter taste, which she had never cooked or even tasted.

"The rapini was my nightmare. I might address it at another time to get over my fears," she says. "I've been talking to friends and family about recreating all my dishes for them. It would be fun to serve them all together, and attack the rapini."

She suffered a bit of a setback with her sautéed rapini and garlic, but the chefs loved the rest of her dish — perfectly-cooked tenderloin, jus, and melted Brie on top — sending her to the final round, which was even more of a challenge.

The two remaining contestants had to cook something that was representative of one chef's signature dishes, and in this case it was a dessert. Hicks says she almost never makes dessert. "It's not my strong suit. I'm really not into desserts. But I wanted to do something with Niagara peaches."

She drew on a similar dessert she has made, involving cooked apples and puff pastry, which her husband and family love, and substituted cooked peaches. The professional chefs commented on the difficulty of working with peaches, with the moisture in them possibly turning the puff pastry mushy. She served it on a caramel sauce, with a topping of maple and orange-flavoured whipped cream, and they had to admit it was perfect. It was ultimately the dessert, combined with the success of her other two dishes, that won her the \$10,000 prize. "I got so lucky. I felt the Niagara peach gods were on my side."

Being able to adjust, and think on the fly, was also helpful, she adds.

The experience of remaining calm, with all the chaos of the film crew going on around her, "just didn't feel real. And you have these great chefs in



Alex Hicks was happy to finally tell her friends and family she won an episode of *Wall of Chefs*. (Food Network Canada)

front of you. It seems so incredible, and you're under so much pressure, there are so many elements going on, but the stress kind of disappears. You're just concentrating on timing, and making sure everything is working as it should."

She felt most present, most in the moment, during the judgement, when the cooks are standing in front of the chefs to hear their critique of the dishes, she says.

But during the cooking, "you're trying to stay composed and focus on the plate, not the judgement. You're just focusing

on getting the job done and making it presentable."

Hicks has her sights set next on the opportunity to host a viewing party, when this period of self-isolation and physical distancing comes to an end — the weather will be warmer and it could be a barbecue, she says.

When a normal work life resumes, she says she would like to work with one of the many great local chefs, to learn from them, and culinary school could also be in her future. The prize money helps make that "a huge possibility."

She's checked off one of the items on her bucket list with her appearance on the Food Network, to which she is addicted, but the ultimate goal for most chefs is to host a cooking show, and Hicks is no exception.

Her success on the *Wall of Chefs* has boosted her confidence, and was a big first step on that journey.

With episodes every Monday evening, the season ends on April 6. The season, including Hicks' *Duelling Desserts* contest, is available on Cogeco on Demand.

Teens deal with isolation

Continued from page 7

course not all students will be able to cope as well as others, or work as hard as they would in normal times. I'm keeping myself busy by spending time with family, playing games, and mostly I am just working on getting stuff done on my to-do list."

Clara De Munnich: "I am still working on applying to universities, in the form of participating in interviews (via Skype of course), and I am busy finishing my last online course for school. This was supposed to be my gap semester, but my plans have all been turned upside down.

I will have to wait for many months in all probability to visit certain universities of interest to me. Other than that, I am walking with friends a lot (at a safe distance)."

Sophia Galbraith: "Although missing school is putting a lot of stress on students, I think it's the necessary action we must take to keep our neighbours, loved ones and ourselves safe. I've been trying to look at our current situation through a more positive lens, and use this time off to focus on keeping myself healthy and spending time with my family."

Brett Butler: "This time away from school presents a great opportunity to invest in

hobbies and whatnot, cabin fever is brutal though. That's my two cents I guess lol!"

I want to add that teens understand there is going to be an economic impact from COVID-19. Many of us have been affected already. My friends at the NOTL and St. Catharines libraries have been temporarily laid off, as the libraries are closed, and I am unable to go into work due to health concerns for my mom and grandparents. Many of my other friends are also unable to go to their jobs. We see our communities closed, and we know from friends and family there are struggles each have to get through. But by staying home,



Bethany Polti and her friends are enjoying 'puzzling.' (Photo supplied)

by distancing ourselves, this will hopefully help to flatten the curve quicker. We also know how hard all the "essential workers" are working and the risks they are taking. We thank them for continuing to

provide for the rest of us.

And lastly, while it is sad to miss out on commitments, teens do understand the seriousness of the situation. We know that when this calms, we will support our local

businesses, we will volunteer more in our communities, we will be thankful for our schools and teachers, and we will appreciate each day we have. Stay healthy, and #StayHomeNOTL.

#StayHomeNOTL

#StayHomeNOTL

#StayHomeNOTL

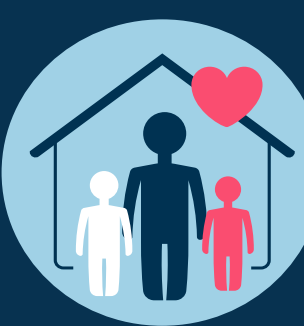
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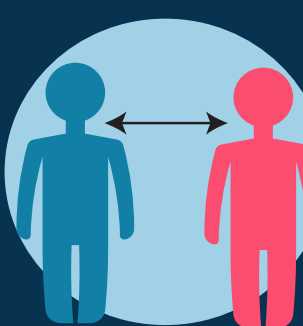
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DR HOPKINS, DR ROBERTSON-WOODS
& ASSOCIATES

- To Our Patient Family -

Firstly, I would like to extend my heartfelt gratitude to our patients and the community for the wonderful support over the past 23 years. It is an honour to be a part of such a wonderful community!

Secondly, it is my privilege to introduce Dr. Marianne Hopkins as the new practice owner of Dr. Robertson-Woods & Associates in Niagara-on-the-Lake and St. Catharines.

I have made a very difficult decision to step back to concentrate on my health and family. Through this transition, and in the future, I will be attending the practice several times a month for patient care. I am extremely grateful to have Dr Hopkins step up to take a more active role in running the business.

Dr. Hopkins has been a colleague and a friend of mine for the past four years. She worked in the practice as an Associate in 2016, while commuting from Burlington. She is excited about returning to the Niagara area and the community she grew to love during her time here as an Associate. She will be moving with her family; her husband Bruce and daughters Genevieve and Alexandra, to NOTL this summer.

I have always prided myself with the desire to fully educate patients about their vision, their eye health, all options available for pertinent issues relevant to them and to provide a very personalized experience. This attribute was essential in the person I wanted to take care of my patients.

Dr. Hopkins comes from an education background. As a child of two teachers and as a professor in molecular genetics, she endeavours to stay up to date with the latest treatments and state of the art technology to deliver personal and comprehensive care for your entire family.

Dr. Hopkins’ decision to return to school to become an optometrist was fuelled by her experience of losing her father to metastatic prostate cancer at a young age. His optometrist was instrumental in his diagnosis and she is forever grateful for getting this diagnosis when he did, as it afforded them precious time together before he passed. Having a strong desire to provide the best care in similar sight, and potentially life threatening situations is what drove her passion for her education in ocular pathologies.

Along with Dr. Hopkins’ passion as a life-long learner with respect to prevention and early diagnosis of disease, she continues to educate herself in the ways of the visual system. During her time as an Associate a few years ago, she sparked an interest in me for Vision Therapy. She is a certified Vision Therapy Optometrist and will be expanding this scope in the practice.

Along with monitoring for diseases such as macular degeneration, diabetic eye disease, glaucoma, cataracts, and more, we also continue to offer specialized contact lens fittings and care, complex dry eye disease treatments, and sports vision therapy. Of course, we also continue to source out beautiful frames from around the world for our eyewear boutique.

Outside of work, Dr. Hopkins enjoys her time with her family. She has been a Girl Guide leader for the last 10 years. She is a proud ringette mom and has volunteered her time on the bench as a trainer. She is an active member in her local community and looks forward to a life-long commitment to the Niagara area.

Please join me in welcoming her to the clinic!

The practice philosophy that Dr. Hopkins and I share runs deep and parallel. We provide kindness, excellence and extraordinary service in caring for your vision. Our passion is improving your performance with a goal of “Sight For Life”. Being given the gift of this professional relationship and friendship is appreciated more than words can say. I have every confidence that Dr. Marianne Hopkins will continue with the excellent care that Dr. Robertson-Woods & Associates is known for.

Lastly, we would like to extend our warmest and best wishes to everyone and their families during this most difficult time.

Sincerely,

Dr. Kimberlee Robertson-Woods



Dr. Marianne Hopkins, PhD, OD

The Exchange Brewery is spreading cheer



Crystal Costa, The Exchange Brewery's assistant manager, is getting ready to spread cheer to locals. Seven days a week, the brewery is safely delivering beer and “social fun,” with a different package each day. Check out exchangebrewery.com/shop for more information. (Photo supplied)

Delivered to your door



James Cadeau and Erinn Lockard of the Sweets and Swirls Cafe are cooking up a storm (well, Erinn is, James is delivering) for locals. The menu changes weekly, and includes soups, entrees, scones and desserts, and will be delivered safely to your door either Friday or Saturday. For more information or to order, message the cafe's Facebook page, email sweetsandswirlscafe@gmail.com, or text Cadeau at 905-964-1288.

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Meditation, yoga on easy-to-access Zoom

Penny Coles
The Local

A local yoga teacher is reaching out to seniors, hoping to help them keep active and feel connected through this time of social and physical isolation.

Oda Lindner, a Niagara-on-the-Lake teacher of yoga and meditation, is accustomed to working with seniors in her classes at the community centre.

Since all public gatherings have been shut down due to COVID-19, she's decided to take her classes online, through Zoom, an app that is popular as a video conferencing solution for work. It is also rapidly catching on for providing social settings during the pandemic.

Lindner, herself a senior at 68, says the app is easy to use, and will allow

her to connect with people in order to help them with meditation and gentle yoga movements.

The app allows people to communicate, so it also provides an aspect of socializing, to relieve some of the stress of isolation some might be feeling.

Anyone who wants to join her class can email her, and she will invite them to join. It's pretty simple, she stresses — she provides a time, a link, and it's just a matter of clicking on it.

"I think of it as being like a party line on the phone, with more people being added to the line. It is really very easy," she says. "It's interesting how technology that has been around for a while really comes to the forefront, because it meets certain needs."

She plans to begin her classes with meditation and

simple movements, and as she gets to know her students and sees what they can do, she will begin to suggest movements that are safe for them.

The sessions are 40 minutes, and her plan is to teach for 30 minutes to allow 10 minutes for questions.

Time for actual socializing will be limited, but people will at least feel connected, she says.

There is no charge for the sessions. "I see it as a first aid for those who are suffering from anxiety. I think people really need it right now."

The Zoom app can handle up to 100 people at a time, but Lindner plans to start slowly, see what the need is, and build from there, with maybe eight to 10 people to begin with. "We can add as we go."

For more information email odayoga@gmail.com.



Oda Lindner is using Zoom to offer free meditation and yoga classes. (Photo supplied)

Chef using isolation to share cooking tips

Penny Coles
The Local

Local chef Collin Goodine didn't expect to be cooped up in a condo during a family vacation in Miami, but once COVID-19 changed the rules even for those on holiday, he found a way to make the best of the situation — by getting busy in the kitchen.

After seven weeks away, he returned home to Niagara-on-the-Lake Sunday. His first job was to take care of the dogs and chickens, and then he was in the kitchen sorting and rearranging his cooking equipment, getting acclimated before beginning to cook.

tually deciding the time was right, loading up the car and driving for 19 hours.

While in Miami, since they couldn't hit the beach or the pool, Goodine decided that what he could do, for himself and others, was cook, and help to put interesting and healthy dishes on the table.

At home, he offers in-home meal preparation, catering for dinner and cocktail parties, and private cooking lessons. He decided he could do some of that from a distance.

"I was hearing people were buying all this food, and didn't know what to do with it. We all had nothing but time. So I decided I could reach out, and say 'show me

inspiring others, and helping them find creative solutions.

"If they learn something they can take away from this when it's over, that's even better," says Goodine.

Now that he's home, he's still hearing from people through social media, not necessarily with photos, but along the lines of 'I have this vegetable in my fridge. How should I cook it?'

Some of the people he is connecting with are friends or clients, some he's never met before, and he's enjoying making new connections. In addition to helping others, he is learning new ways to cook as well.

While in Miami, he was enjoying having his 12-year-old daughter, Avalon, who was also looking for something to do, helping him out. She was doing school work while away, and will continue that as home as well, he says.

Goodine says he loves teaching, and is also loving the challenge to his creativity. "It's exhilarating. It's a rush. And I'm hoping other people are enjoying the distraction of cooking and having as much fun with this as I am."

He's hearing now from many people who are feeling more relaxed and enjoying getting back into the kitchen.

"I get the feeling that for some people, the panic is over, and this is becoming a calming experience. They're feeling a sense of peace, they're baking, they're cooking, and now that they have time, they're trying new things, like one friend who said he was making chocolate chip cookies in a smoker. I'm really hoping that feeling continues, once this is all over."

Goodine can be reached on Instagram at @chefgoodine, or email hello@chefgoodine.com.



Chef Collin Goodine is teaching how to prepare healthy, interesting meals during these times of isolation. (Photo supplied)

“ If they learn something they can take away from this when it's over, that's even better ”
Collin Goodine

While he was away, he dreamed up a challenge not only for himself, but for others similarly affected by self-isolation protocols, in Florida, and at home in Niagara-on-the-Lake.

At one point, he wasn't sure whether to try to get home, or to wait out the isolation period in Miami. He had airplane tickets for himself, wife and daughter, but was hearing the news about border closings, and that even if borders stayed open, airports were not the safest places. He rented a car to have the option of driving back to NOTL, and kept in touch with family and business people at home, even-

what you have in your fridge, and I'll tell you what to do with it.' It felt like getting back to why I started my business in the first place, having fun with food, instead of being stressed over mealtime. It reflects my philosophy of food, of cooking with intent, and connecting with food. Life gets out of hand, but now we have time to do this."

He was having a lot of fun helping out, he says, "and it's allowing me to recharge and get back to basics. If you want to make breakfast but you don't have eggs, show me what you do have and I'll show you how to cook it."

It was a way of putting his 25 years of experience to use,

Town wins prestigious award for Voices of Freedom Park

Local staff

The Town of Niagara-on-the-Lake has been awarded the prestigious 2020 Lieutenant Governor's Award for Excellence in Conservation for its Voices of Freedom Interactive and Digital Park.

The Park honours the stories of people of African descent, enslaved Black Loyalists, freedom-seekers, and

free Blacks – all part of Niagara's history.

Representatives of the Voices of Freedom Park committee attended a ceremony at Queen's Park in February to receive the award from the lieutenant governor.

The park occupies the former site of the Niagara-on-the-Lake Lawn Bowling Club, and preserves the site for public use and cultural conservation.

It is also a digital exhibition, with interactive content.

Visitors to the Vofpark.org website can download the app and hear 'voices' from the past, and the stories of struggle and resilience that characterized the Black experience here in Niagara.

These stories can be accompanied by a walking tour of local historic sites that reflect the lives and impact of these early Black settlers here in Niagara.

Friends of Fort George hosting online book club

Local Staff

Learn about local history online, with The Friends of Fort George book club.

The gates of the fort are closed, and many events cancelled, so the club is a way to reach out to the public. The first book will be Mrs. Simcoe's Diary. The book is avail-

able through mail order, says Friends of Fort George executive director Amanda Gamble. The book can be delivered free to a Niagara-on-the-Lake front porch.

Questions, quotes and pictures will be posted on Facebook, "so be sure to join us for some historical fun from the comfort of your home."

The discussion takes place on Facebook at the Friends of Fort George – Book Club, <https://www.facebook.com/groups/522354385139308/>.

For those who are not on Facebook, there will also be an email book club.

Call 905-468-6621 or email admin@friendsoffortgeorge.ca for more information.

Museum asking for journals, letters written during isolation

Local staff

The Niagara-on-the-Lake Museum is asking residents to contribute to the town's history during self-isolation, quarantine and social distancing, through keeping a personal journal.

We are living through a future history class today, and "a personal journal that documents your day-to-day activities and experiences is a great way to start," says the museum's managing director Sarah Kaufman. "This is also a great way for kids to get involved and contribute

to history."

Another way to contribute would be to write letters to family that you are unable to see while in isolation, describing how daily life has changed, list what you are doing to have fun at home, and track how the pandemic is affecting the town and the region.

The letters and journal entries can be shared by using #deardiaryseriesNOTL on social media, says Kaufman.

The museum is already sharing lots of content on Facebook, Twitter and Instagram to help keep people engaged and entertained during these circumstances.

es. From history quizzes to video tours to highlights from the collection, they are ramping up their online presence in order to continue serving the community.

Once this period of isolation during COVID-19 is over, the museum suggests considering donating any journals or letters, for a possible exhibition 50 or 100 years from now to tell the story of the pandemic.

The Niagara-on-the-Lake Museum is on social media using @NOTL Museum, or visit them online at www.nhsm.ca to find research material and other historical resources.

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Distancing takes its toll

Continued from page 4

tomers in the store reduced, and the changes being made, his staff is coping better, he says, but they are still concerned about taking the virus home to their families.

And possibly nobody more than Leboudec.

"My whole life is different," he says. "I'm staying six feet away from the customers, and also from friends and family. Everybody." With his wife and two kids, aged 17 and 12, at home, he is being very cautious. When he gets home, he wipes off his car, takes off his coat and boots in the garage, removes his clothes and

throws them in the washing machine, and heads straight to the shower.

"I don't go near anyone. I sanitize everywhere I've been. I interact with family but I keep my distance. I have to. There are no kisses good night."

It's taking its toll on the family, he says, especially his 12-year-old son, who is used to interacting with his dad.

Are they scared about catching the virus? "Of course they are. Everybody's scared. Anybody working in this environment is scared."

He's just grateful he's not living and working in Toronto, where the anxiety level is so

much higher, he says.

"I'm really thankful to be here, in this community."

Leboudec, who easily sees more members of the public in a day than anyone else in town, says his message to people is "not to get complacent."

This is the new normal, he says, and it's important to keep it up. As many experts are predicting, he expects to see a spike in the number of COVID-19 cases in coming days from those who have returned home recently, and self-isolation is the only way to curb that spike.

"This is the only way to break the cycle. How long it takes is up to us."

Open for business



Chalk drawings are becoming popular as a cheery note to passersby. The Garrison House, open for take-out, is cheering its customers. (Photo supplied)

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Close-knit family dealing with isolation

Penny Coles
The Local

Playing video games nine hours or more a day wouldn't be considered a hardship for a teenage boy under normal circumstances, but for Johnny Pillitteri, the problem is that he doesn't have his cousin, Vinny Pillitteri-Smith, playing alongside him.

The two are usually pretty much inseparable. They go to the same high school, travel on the school bus together, and typically hang out together after school.

And since their families are close, they have regular Sunday dinners together, and recently returned from Florida together, with 19 family members all away on holiday.

But all that came to an end when they returned home and had to self-isolate — in separate houses.

Johnny and Vinny recently asked people to sign an online petition saying they should be allowed to hang out together, a light-hearted attempt to deal with a serious issue — the impact of COVID-19 on family life.

The boys understand why they are restricted to their own homes, but they don't like it.

So, their plan was to use the 14-day isolation period to play video games together, but each in their own homes.

It's not something they would normally be allowed to spend so much time at, but these are not normal times.

Johnny says he sometimes turns off the control-

ler to help out his dad, Joe, with chores such as cleaning the garage, and he likes getting outside, even if it is to work — he's okay with that. "Easily, the hardest thing about isolation, is not being able to hang out with Vinny. We always play video games together, and it's much better when we're in the same room and we can talk to each other. But that's not all we do. We play hockey together, but that got cancelled with two games left to go. We go for walks, and we take the Gator for rides on the farm, but we can't do that anymore. I don't know how I'm going to get through this," says Johnny, who's been in isolation since March 18.

"We can talk on the phone, talk about what we're doing, share our frustration. But it's not the same. It's just better being with him."

They both have other friends, but not that they would see every day, he says. And he realizes how fortunate he is, that he can just be who he is with Vinny, "as goofy as I want to be," and actually looks forward to family dinners and celebrations to go to, because his best friend will be there as well.

His family has been very strict about self-isolation, he says — they won't take any risks or put anyone else at risk. And he gets that it's important. But he'll be glad when it's over.

In the meantime, the family is taking advantage of virtual socializing, having their Sunday dinners by video conference. It's not quite the real thing, but everyone is in on it and it's better than



Cousins Johnny and Vinny are missing the time they usually spend hanging out together. (Photo supplied)

nothing.

With their oldest away at university, Joe says, "I've never seen three kids who want to go back to school so badly. They miss the social interaction, and they miss their teachers. I think that they've learned how much they take for granted — they appreciate those things now."

With four kids, ages 12 to 20, Joe says they "live pretty independent lives, and all

have different interests," so typically, at home, there isn't a lot of interaction between siblings.

"But we're spending more time sitting down to dinner as a family, and having long talks about the virus and how it's affecting everybody. We're definitely having more meaningful conversations," he says.

He and his sisters Eileen Pillitteri-Smith and Caroline Martinelli have been

working together, ordering food and supplies online for all of them and delivering to each other safely, to ensure each family, and their parents, have all the supplies they need.

With less than a week left to go in their 14-day isolation period, they remain healthy. "All 19 of us are feeling great. There is no indication of any illness."

Joe says he will begin going to work Thursday, as will

his wife Rebecca, a midwife, with the family continuing the restrictions all are being asked to live by.

The kids are beginning to receive school assignments, he adds. "They'll do whatever they have to do to keep up with their school work. At the end of the day they are taking this seriously. And they are looking forward to being able to see each other — while keeping their distance."



Spreading cheer

Kinsmen Brian Litke and Jim van der Zalm, of European Planters, deliver hydrangeas to Pleasant Manor. The flower grower has had Easter orders cancelled, and the Kinsmen cancelled the traditional Easter Egg Hunt, so they are both spreading cheer to the seniors and staff at local long-term care homes. The Kinsmen have also postponed the Kinsmen Club's 50th anniversary, which was planned for April 11. (Photo supplied)

Musicians struggling with lack of gigs

Mike Balsom
Special to The Local

Dave Norris can count on one hand the number of Saturday nights he's had off over the past 14 years. Same thing for the past six years of Friday nights.

The plug was pulled for the weekend residency at the Old Winery, and Norris heard the news just before climbing behind his drum kit Friday, March 13. He says it was "a little like playing on the Titanic" that night.

The long-time member of the Niagara Rhythm Section (Saturdays) and the Old Winos (Fridays) is adjusting to the absolute sudden stop in the live music scene due to COVID-19.

"From full blast — I had a Sunday afternoon gig as well — so I had three gigs every weekend, and just zero right now," says

Applications for that benefit, however, won't open until April 6, and the first payout may take up to a month to arrive.

In the meantime, many within Goldberger's circle of musicians are throwing themselves into studio work, and teaching music lessons online, to make up for the lost income from cancelled gigs. As well, many have day jobs that, unlike Norris, they can continue working at during the pandemic.

"Everyone's learning how to Skype," adds Goldberger. "They're doing podcasts, and making live videos from home."

Goldberger has taken the step of hosting a live webcast from his Shed Studio in back of his Niagara-on-the-Lake home. Back on March 21, Goldberger hosted Live from the Shed Studio— Episode 1 on Facebook

“ I think it will bounce back, and maybe be better than ever. ”

Steve Goldberger



Steve Goldberger, Dave Norris and Mike Glatt are missing the opportunity to play live music together. (Photo supplied)

Norris. "The option of working from home doesn't exist for me, and it just brings everything to a crashing halt."

Norris adds that his day job, installing window film, has also been put on hold, leaving him with no income during the current shut-down of all bars and restaurants.

Bandleader Steve Goldberger is also adjusting.

"It's bizarre. The first Saturday night we had off was very odd," says Goldberger. "I just feel really bad for the other guys, the actors, the musicians who are just trying to earn a living."

Both Goldberger and Norris agree that a few weeks off would be easy to handle. But with so much uncertainty surrounding the question when things will be back to normal, it could be disastrous to a lot of independent artists.

There has been some positive news for musicians and others working in what has become known as the 'gig economy.' The new Canada Emergency Response Benefit, announced by Prime Minister Justin Trudeau on March 25, allows contract workers and self-employed individuals, like Goldberger and Norris, to apply for up to \$2,000 per month for four months, for work lost due to the virus.

and YouTube.

"I've wanted to do this for years," Goldberger explains — a show like Live from Daryl's House (hosted by Daryl Hall of Hall & Oates fame, where the host invites friends over to play). Now with all this downtime, I can, but last week, when I did mine, (because of social distancing), no one wanted to come over."

So Goldberger pushed outside of his comfort zone, and hosted a 15-minute live session, playing two original songs and a Joni Mitchell composition. It's available to view on Facebook and his YouTube channel.

He promises to do another one, but as both he and Norris assert, for them, it's all about playing with other musicians. Besides, says Norris, who wants to tune in to a drummer playing a solo webcam show?

Goldberger has also been shuffling through his video archives, pulling up old footage of the Niagara Rhythm Section dating back to the early 2000s. Long-time fans of the group can relive a special evening from 2009 that took place at the Anchorage. The hour-long show features the usual cast of characters, along with the likes of Mark Lalama, Graham Lear and Tim Hicks, whose profile as a country artist has risen immensely over the past five years.

"I've had that on DVD, it's never been online, it was basically for ourselves," says Goldberger. "I downloaded some software that allows you to convert video into internet format, and I thought it would be fun for people to have a look at this."

"It's a good time-killer," he adds, "it's over an hour

long. It's fun seeing some friends who have passed on, and just seeing the crowds that we used to get there."

In addition to the videos, Goldberger is spending some of the downtime in his studio, mixing a new release from Welland singer-songwriter Gravely James. He's also been very

vocal, via Facebook and his weekly emails, in urging his fans and followers to continue supporting local establishments in whatever way possible.

Looking to the future, both musicians are optimistic that when terms like social distancing and self-isolation become a

thing of the past, the live music scene will come back with a vengeance.

"Once people feel safe to go out, and to congregate again," predicts Goldberger, "I think it will bounce back, and maybe be better than ever. To quote Joni Mitchell, we don't know what we got 'til it's gone."



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SUDOKU PUZZLE

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

CROSSWORD PUZZLE

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- Across:**

1 #

5 Conversation

9 P C to web link company

12 Persian Gulf port

13 Gypsy people

14 Immediately, in hospital

16 Edgar --- Poe

17 Upon

18 Insect destructive of clothes

19 Negative

20 One coming out

22 Big beer can

24 --- Grande

25 Solar system center

26 Casing

28 Electrical connector

31 Passed away (Abbr.)

34 Old card game

35 "Would it be ---?" (Presley: "Can't help falling in love")

36 Father's sibling

38 Physicians

42 So far

43 Sour-smelling

44 Sticky stuff

45 Junction

47 Not us

48 Killer whale

49 Rotational speed measure

51 Bashful

53 Top
- 54 Harsh treatment

57 Applicable

59 Entertainment

60 Bench with a back

63 Letters on Royal Navy ships

64 E.g. a street kiss

67 Horse controller

69 Spanish fashion designer --- Rabbane

71 Long

73 Aware of

74 Overnight stops

75 Law

76 Fight against underwater threats

77 Penny

78 U R L starter

Down:

1 Kind of hoop

2 Competently

3 Cape Town carrier

4 One of the Indian majority

5 Quarrelsome grouch

6 Very fashionable

7 Hog-wild

8 Recording medium

9 Belief system

10 Bad weather

11 Paved outdoor area

12 Karate degree

15 Hammer god

21 Aim
- 23 Federal fiscal watchdog

25 One of a hundred in D C

27 Eye cell

28 Methods

29 Statement of understanding

30 The Beatles' lovely meter maid

32 Apiece

33 Antidotes

34 Classic Ford model

37 Type of rechargeable cell

39 Man-eating giant

40 Stimulating South American shrub

41 Sit in a tub

43 Bank machine

46 E.g. Robinson, Doubtfire

48 Plump

50 Vigor

52 Thanksgiving dish

54 Spherical hairdo

55 --- Vista, Disney brand

56 Military groups

58 Outguess

61 Heroic

62 Diminish slowly

63 Vast multitude

64 Gasp

65 Bead

66 Newswoman --- Curry

68 The present time

70 Cable/satellite network

72 Dine



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PUZZLE ANSWERS

Sudoku solution from March 26, 2020

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

Across: 1 Hash, 5 Chat, 9 I S P, 12 Dubai, 13 Roma, 14 Stat, 16 Allan, 17 Atop, 18 Molt, 19 Nay, 20 Deb, 22 Keg, 24 Rio, 25 Sun, 26 Armor, 28 Wire, 31 Dec, 34 Loo, 35 A sin, 36 Aunt, 38 Docs, 42 Yet, 43 Acid, 44 Goo, 45 Seam, 47 Them, 48 Orca, 49 R p m, 51 Shy, 53 Peak, 54 Abuse, 57 Apt, 59 Fun, 60 Pew, 63 H M S, 64 P D A, 67 Reim, 69 Paco, 71 Year, 73 Onto, 74 Inns, 75 Canon, 76 A-S W, 77 Cent, 78 H t t p.

Down: 1 Hula, 2 Ably, 3 S A A, 4 Hindu, 5 Crab, 6 Hot, 7 Amok, 8 Tape, 9 Ism, 10 Storm, 11 Patio, 12 Dan, 15 Thor, 21 End, 23 G A O, 25 Sen, 27 Rod, 28 Ways, 29 I see, 30 Rita, 32 Each, 33 Cures, 34 LTD, 37 Ni-M-H, 39 Ogre, 40 Coca, 41 Soak, 43 A T M, 46 Mrs, 48 Opt, 50 Peg, 52 Yarn, 54 Afro, 55 Buena, 56 Units, 58 Psych, 61 Epic, 62 Wane, 63 Host, 64 Pant, 65 Drop, 66 Ann, 68 Now, 70 C N N, 72 Eat.



Auchterlonie on Astrology

Bill Auchterlonie Special to The Local

This week on Auchterlonie on Astrology, I'll look at the Full Moon in Libra on Tuesday April 7, and the week of April 9 through April 15 on my podcast. The website is <https://www.lookingupwith-bill.com/podcasts.html>.

Now, the week ahead:

Thursday, April 2: Seven connections in the sky today, as the Moon moves from sensitive Cancer into fiery Leo this afternoon, arguing all the way. Even gifts may appear as suspicious, and anything requiring effort to be won may

be easier done. The final bell could come just before midnight, with a battle of the wills inside your head. On April 2, 1968, Stanley Kubrick saw the first screening of *2001: A Space Odyssey*, starring Keir Dullea and Gary Lockwood, with Douglas Rain as the disagreeable robot, Hal.

Friday, April 3: Venus moves into Gemini as the Sun continues through Leo, and Mercury connects with imaginative Neptune in Pisces. It's a day where ideas and words express love in many ways.

Saturday, April 4: Mars, Venus, Saturn, Mercury, Jupiter, Uranus and Pluto all

make sweet connections, as the Moon moves from passionate Leo into discriminating Virgo. It's a Saturday with so much going on, that applying the brakes is a good idea. On this day in 1948, Canada, the U.S. and many other countries joined together to form NATO.

Sunday, April 5: Is a very positive day as the Moon in Virgo is in harmony with Uranus in Taurus. It's time to give yourself a surprise, or plan a better tomorrow! It was on April 5, 1987, that we first saw FOX TV, with *Married...With Children*, and *The Tracey Ullman Show*.

Monday, April 6: The Moon makes her move into Libra this afternoon, setting up the full Moon on Tuesday, allowing Easter to fall on Sunday, April 12. Easter is always the first Sunday following the first full Moon after the vernal equinox. It's a busy start to the week, so pace yourself. It was April 6, 1896, that the first modern Olympics began in Athens, Greece. American Jim Connolly was first to strike gold, in the triple jump.

Tuesday, April 7: The full Moon in Libra is at 10:34 p.m., so, with a little luck, it should be as beautiful as the last one. The Moon will

be full in the North Eastern sky. Be careful of where you are walking today, and also careful of your hands. It's the calming energy of the Moon in Libra, opposing the fiery energy of the Sun in Aries. So anything can happen. You'll need 80 candles and a big cake to help Francis Ford Coppola celebrate his birthday today.

Wednesday, April 8: Busy, busy, busy is today's news. The best of it is a chance to heal an old wound. She was born Gladys Smith in Toronto on April 8, 1892. She was Mary Pickford, one of Hollywood's first and richest stars.

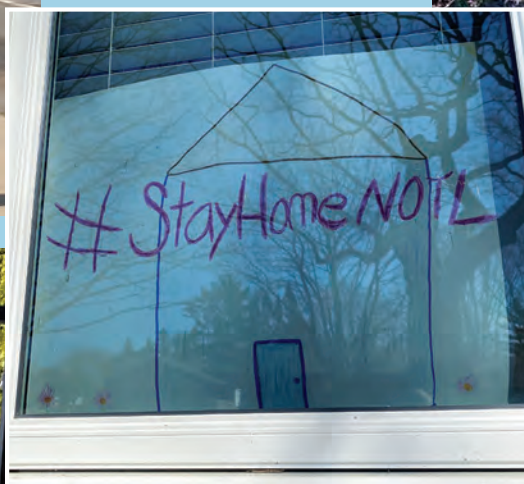
And that's Auchterlonie on Astrology for this week. Next time it's the third Quarter Moon in Capricorn and more of the astrological underpinnings of Easter.

Until then, remember, as Joni Mitchell said: "We are stardust. We are golden. So shine on."

The Local apologizes for not including Auchterlonie on Astrology in last week's edition of The Local, and not letting our readers know it was available online. Hopefully we will be able to continue to include it in our published edition, but if not, it will be online at notllocal.com.

#StayHomeNOTL

In an effort to reinforce the message of staying home except when absolutely necessary, the Town of NOTL has asked residents and businesses to post signs of encouragement, and send in photos. The signs are now appearing around the community. Please see centre spread on pages 10-11.



#StayHomeNOTL #StayHomeNOTL #StayHomeNOTL #StayHomeNOTLHomeNOTL #StayHomeNOTL #StayHomeNOTL #StayHomeNOTL #StayHomeNOTLHomeNOTL

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STAY HOME NIAGARA

A JOINT MESSAGE FROM NIAGARA'S MAYORS AND REGIONAL CHAIR

DEAR NIAGARA RESIDENTS,

As we all know, COVID-19 is here in our community. As a response, we have one simple message: **STAY HOME.**

By staying home, you will help keep everyone safe. By limiting how much we leave our homes we are helping to protect our loved ones, vulnerable neighbours and the health care workers who are working around the clock to keep us all safe.

We also need to listen to our public health experts:

- Wash your hands frequently and disinfect high-trafficked surfaces and areas
- Practice physical distancing: keep 6-feet apart from others and do not gather in groups
- Physical distancing does not mean social isolation: check on your loved ones with a phone call or email
- Isolate yourself for 14 days if you are returning home from being anywhere outside Canada (this includes the United States). This is mandatory under the federal Quarantine Act.
- **And please, stay home unless you are an essential service**

We know that many of you have already been following this advice and we thank you. If you have not been, it is not too late to do the right thing to protect our community from COVID-19. None of us are invincible. Now is the time to do your part: this is not a time to go to parks, take your kids to playdates or host parties.

We know these are challenging times for all of us. If you are feeling stressed, anxious or confused, reach out to Niagara Region Public Health for accurate information. Mental health supports are also available for children, youth and adults across the region by phone and online.

We have been hearing amazing stories of how many of you are supporting one another. It is during some of the most challenging times that Niagara proves it is one of the best places to live, work, raise a family and do business.

As your Mayors and Regional Chair, we want to assure you that when we emerge on the other side of this crisis we will be a stronger, and more resilient Niagara.

We are all in this together, and we will get through this together.

Sincerely,



Niagara Region

JIM BRADLEY
Niagara Regional Chair



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DAVE BYLSMA
Mayor, West Lincoln



Welland
ONTARIO - CANADA

FRANK CAMPION
Mayor, Welland



Niagara Falls
CANADA

JIM DIODATI
Mayor, Niagara Falls



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BETTY DISERO
Lord Mayor, Niagara-on-the-Lake



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City of Thorold
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TERRY UGULINI
Mayor, Thorold

FOR MORE INFO GO TO [NIAGARAREGION.CA/COVID19](https://niagararegion.ca/covid19)

