Agricultural workers get vaccinated

Mike Balsom
Special to The Local

Offshore workers employed at Niagara-on-the-Lake farms were among the more than 3,000 farm workers vaccinated by Niagara Health this weekend.

In an interview on Cogeco YourTV’s ‘The Source’ program this week, migrant workers’ advocate and regular NOTL Local contributor Jane Andres expressed relief that most of the workers were happy to receive their vaccines.

“This year has been a bit of an unusual one,” the founder of Niagara Workers Welcome told The Source. “Normally we don’t really have the chance to talk. We might chat in line at the airport, and the next day they go to work. But this year, with the quarantine, they all have time to talk and try to get answers. I’ve been on the phone non-stop for about three weeks.”

The avalanche of information and misinformation about the vaccination process was the topic of a lot of those conversations.

“There’s so many Canadians even, right in my own neighborhood, who aren’t getting the vaccine and aren’t wearing masks,” Andres said. “It (opinions about the vaccine) did vary from farm to farm initially. But as communication has improved, it got better.”

Andres pointed to confusion about the rules for the offshore workers in relation to the vaccine. “Many were under the impression that they had no choice but to get vaccinated, or that they would be sent home if they didn’t get it. So there was a lot of fear and anxiety over that.”

Add to that their experience last year, arriving in spring just after the first wave of the pandemic had hit, and the fact that Ontario farms were hotspots for COVID-19 outbreaks.

“Add to that their experience last year, arriving in spring just after the first wave of the pandemic had hit, and the fact that Ontario farms were hotspots.”

Offshore workers em-...
The current restrictions across Ontario are unlikely to be lifted until June, when cases should be coming down and 75 per cent of the population should have received one dose of a vaccine.

The provincial lockdown is set to be lifted on May 20, but Dr. Mustafa Hirji, Niagara’s acting chief medical officer of health, says he doesn’t think reopening will be safe or possible until then. “I’m sure that’s not the news anybody wanted to see,” he says, “but the data is telling us that the situation that gets us to a sustainable reopening.”

He referred to Theresa Tam, Canada’s chief public officer of health, who has said health restrictions could be lifted when 75 per cent of Canadians have received their first vaccination. At the rate Ontario is now getting those first shots into arms, that could be accomplished by June, Hirji said, if there are no further problems with the supply of vaccine.

In Niagara, we’re increasing vaccinations at about 5 per cent per week, with 26 per cent vaccinated at the start of last week, and 31.5 per cent with their first dose by Monday, closely mirroring the provincial rate.

However, while the provincial number of new cases has been trending downwards, with the number of daily cases dropping below 4,000 for the first time in weeks, Hirji says he can’t say the same for Niagara. Only 24 new cases were reported Monday, and 33 on Sunday, when there was an average of 175 new daily cases the week before, but those unusually low numbers early this week are likely a problem with the data reported from the province, rather than a reflection of actual cases, he said.

However, hospital and intensive care unit admissions are definitely trending upwards, and as a “lagging indicator,” are expected to continue to grow “until we are well past the danger zone in ICUs.”

While the provincial messaging is helping to drive down cases, Hirji said he believes people are doing a better job of staying home to limit infections even more. Federally, he is showing a 20 to 30 per cent increase in people staying home would help flatten the upwards trajectory of cases, he said.

With the right conditions met by June, restrictions could be lifted on personal services such as hair salons and barber shops, malls might be open, stores will be able to increase their capacity, and restaurants could open with outdoor dining,

Hirji said. We may even see students back at school by late May or early June, he added. Physically distancing will remain, we will likely still have to wear masks indoors, and we’ll continue to use a lot of sanitizer, he said. “These are the easy measures we can continue to follow.”

Although Hirji talked about vaccine possibly being diverted from Niagara to go to hotspots elsewhere in the province, where it can do a better job of saving lives, he said Monday he isn’t seeing any sign of that happening.

Instead, he is expecting more doses arriving in Ontario to cover those areas.

Reopening could come mid-June, says Hirji

Penny Coles
The Local

In Niagara Falls and operates a restaurant with his wife Charity. James decided to get the message out to his fellow countrymen to get vaccinated.

“When he moved to Niagara,” explained Andres, “I brought him around on a local farm tour, and he really hit it off with the guys. They shared some real chemistry, and that is how he ended up performing and cooking for the 2017 Peach Pickers Picnic. He was a real hit with the farm workers.”

James received his own vaccination about a month ago. He felt it was his duty to get the message out to his fellow countrymen to try to get vaccinated.

“Despite that fact, the consolidation continued. Andres turned to Jamaican-born Zephie James, who lives in Niagara Falls and operates a restaurant with his wife Charity. James decided to get the message out to his fellow countrymen to try to get vaccinated.

In the meantime, Andres had been contacted by Occupational Health Clinics for Ontario Workers for ideas on how to best reach Niagara’s agricultural workers to promote the vaccine.

“James has also been spreading the word back home. He told The Source, “I made a couple of calls to my friends in Jamaica and I got the same reaction, ‘Mr. James, I’m not going to take the vaccine!’ So I told them ‘come on, we’ve been here before. We all had vaccines when we were kids. This is just another step up the line. You gotta go ahead and get it!’

Data from the weekend provided by Niagara Health showed that 3,019 offshore workers were vaccinated on April 24 and 25 from 171 farms, bringing the total to 3,335.

Andres sees the weekend as a big success, but admits there is still a lot to do to protect the seasonal workers who are so important to the country’s food supply.

“What happened last year has forced people to recognize what is happening at farms not only in Niagara but across Canada,” she said. “It’s really highlighted that this is a federal program, and the federal regulations need to be standardized across the country. Right now, they vary from municipality to municipality. The restrictions for quarantine for Norfolks were ridiculous (in 2020) and put a lot more hardship on the farmers, with a maximum of only three per bunkhouse.”

She continued, “the government was making lots of sweeping changes without consulting farm workers or their employers. The farm workers are still not being heard, and there is some concern amongst them that they will soon have to be vaccinated when they arrive at the airport. That is a real poorly-made decision on the part of the government. They have no idea what the Mexican and Caribbean workers go through to get here.”

Jane Andres and Zephie James talk to Mike Balsom for a Cogeco interview encouraging offshore agricultural workers to get vaccinated. (Screenshot)

More than 3,000 offshore workers in Niagara vaccinated

Continued from page 1

Dr. Kevin Clark and Jermaine Clarke were one of the local agricultural workers who got his shot at the Seymour K-Hannah Niagara Health vaccination clinic this weekend. (Photo supplied)

Wayne Gates
K999 Niagara Falls Baking proudly supporting Niagara on the Lake 856-579-8288
905-468-3009

Proud to support new local! www.niagaradental.ca

NEW LISTING

Sotheby’s INTERNATIONAL REALTY LTD. 323 Victoria Street, Niagara on the Lake 905-468-3009

Dr. Kevin Clark and Dr. Rebecca Zabek-Clark

Bellingham, Washington

Dr. Rebecca Zabek-Clark

Bellingham, Washington

Dr. Kevin Clark

Bellingham, Washington

Dentists and their registered Dental Hygiene Team

369 MARY STREET
NIAGARA-ON-THE-LAKE
WWW.NIAGARADENTAL.CA

Jermaine Clarke was one of the local agricultural workers who got his shot at the Seymour K-Hannah Niagara Health vaccination clinic this weekend. (Photo supplied)
Inclusivity ‘near and dear’ to Wiens

Continued from page 1

He compared a compromise, by saying “we’ll give you this park,” and the townspeople have their own parks, “separate but equal,” to the deep south of the ’60s, which didn’t work then, and doesn’t work here, he said.

People also complain about noise in the parks, he said, because “kids are screaming and playing and having fun, God forbid.”

Wiens said he had thought about the issue “long and hard. This is near and dear to me, personally. “My wife feels it as a visible minority, my kids feel it as a visible minority, and the people who work for me are visible minorities.”

He explained he would be abstaining, because if he voted against the amendment, it would be saying no to propane barbecues, when he would like to see them permitted in all parks. Voting in favour would be compromising his principles, “and I’m not doing that . . . I don’t want to vote on this because it’s not inclusive.”

An abstention is sometimes used when a councillor feels there is not enough information for a decision, or the vote is inappropriate for some reason, but is counted as a no vote.

Coun. Allan Bisback and Coun. Wendy Chopita also abstained, and the remaining votes in favour of allowing barbecues in three town parks meant the amendment was approved.

Debbie Crossthwaite loved colouring and the message of the poster (top), Elaine Stones (top right) is displaying her Be Kind poster in her window, MacKenzie DesRoches, 9, coloured her poster with enthusiasm, happy to encouraging others to be kind and Dana Harber and her daughter had fun colouring their poster together.

Spreading kindness

Wishing our very own

Trisha Romance

a very special and love filled

Happy Birthday on April 27th!

We love you!

Gary, Tanya, Jordan, Oliver, Erica & Catherine
Town seeking public input before making decisions about park

Penny Coles
The Local

After promising to look at solutions to the growing popularity of Ryerson Park, the town is asking for input from residents and visitors.

The Friends of Ryerson Park, a group of residents advocating for change, asked town councillors in January to implement “reasonable and positive remedies” in their neighbourhood park, which they had developed to mitigate issues that were having a negative impact on Chautauqua residents.

John Scott, representing the group, which now includes 204 households and 350 active members who meet regularly through Zoom, explained to councilors in January that the small residential neighbourhood, with narrow streets and limited parking, doesn’t have public facilities or nearby commercial outlets as other town parks do to accommodate the number of visitors.

Problems were exaggerated by the pandemic last season, but they have been increasing for a number of years, and have now reached the point where very few residents feel comfortable using the park, Scott said. Residents are concerned once borders open and more visitors are able to come to NOTL, the problems will intensify. They were hoping for solutions to be in place for this winter season.

Although the weather has been cool, the park has been busy over recent weekends, says Scott, and will only become more so as the season progresses.

He says the group endorses the recent parks bylaw, and members have indicated their support to the lord mayor, the CAO, councillors and staff.

“We think the survey for the parks bylaw is the right thing to do. It’s a great idea to put the bylaw in place, and then see where it goes,” he says, referring to a Join the Conversation initiative asking residents for comments on the new bylaw, how it’s affecting them and how they think it’s working.

Ryerson Park, he added, “is in a unique situation, surrounded by a small residential neighbourhood, and requires some further, unique solutions in addition to the current bylaw restrictions.

Town staff are now also seeing increased traffic within the area, which has prompted the short online survey asking both residents and visitors to share their experiences with the park and surrounding area, a town news release says.

“Niagara-on-the-Lake prides itself on its exquisite lookout points, such as the one located at Ryerson Park,” says Lord Mayor Dise-ro in the news release. “This park, located along Niagara Boulevard, draws in many residents and visitors with its lush green space, picnic tables, beautiful tree canopy, and most notably, its ability to host a breathtaking sunset view. While this park was considered a ‘hidden gem’ for many years, every new spring and summer season brings more and more visitors to this spectacular area of town.”

Scott says a survey for public input was always intended, and he is glad to see it offered. His concern, he says, is the timing, with the park already getting busy and the tourist season not far away.

His group offered nine recommendations in January, “all quite reasonable and not at all Draconian,” and since then he and others from the group have met several times with staff, and with CAO Marnie Chuckie, who is taking the lead on the file, says Scott.

The survey, he says, will offer the last piece of data before town staff presents a report to council in May.

“People are frustrated. They are seeing parades of people here already. We’ve been at this for eight months.” Residents are hoping a positive resolution to their concerns will be offered, “quickly, and in a collegial manner,” to be put into place before the tourist season is underway.

“Niagara-on-the-Lake is welcoming of all visitors and encourages the use of its well-kept parks and green space. We also realize there may be some local impacts to the increasing popularity of such spaces,” says CAO Marnie Chuckie.

“The town is seeking public input by way of a survey, to determine the use, and potential hindrances to the use, of Ryerson Park, and to identify any concerns for neighbouring properties within the Chautauqua area. The public’s feedback will be essential in helping staff and council determine potential next steps for this area of town.”

The survey, available through the town’s Join the Conversation platform, will close on Tuesday, May 4.

Specific requests to council from the Friends of Ryerson Park included restricted parking, with passes for residents; a reduced speed limit on Chautauqua streets; clear signage of the lack of facilities, as well as unpermitted uses, including no fires, barbecues or tents, which are now banned in the town’s parks bylaw; and new directional signs at the intersection of Queen and Missina-uga Streets to encourage visitors to make a left turn toward the QEW.

Residents have also asked the town to have bylaw officers enforce restrictions in the park.
NOTL wins sustainability award

Penny Coles The Local

If you are looking for ways to support worthy local charities, you need look no further than the Niagara-on-the-Lake Community Fund.

If you represent a local charity that could use some help, reach out and let the fund committee members know about the work you do and your needs.

Mike Berlis, chair of the fund committee, was at council last week to remind the community of the good that has been done since the fund was established five years ago, and that it can do going forward.

It was launched by former Lord Mayor Pat Darce, who was a founding director of the Niagara Community Foundation in 2000.

NOTL became the 11th municipality to establish a local community fund and is one of the 100 that now exist in Niagara. In 2020, the local fund held $200,000 gifts from the Branscombe family and Meridian Credit Union.

In the last two decades it has grown to more than $65 million of endowed assets, and over the years has granted more than $1.18 million to charitable organizations.

It has given almost $300,000 to local organizations for pandemic responses, including the United Way, local food banks and the Niagara Health System.

Locally, the Shaw Festival, the Niagara Pump House Arts Centre, Red Roof Retreat, Bravo Niagara, on-the-Lake Community Palliative Care Service, Newark Neighbours and Niagara College are just some of the organizations that have received funding from the NOTL Community Fund.

Separate from the NOTL fund, but an option for some donors, are endowment funds that can be established under the umbrella of the Niagara Community Foundation, with grants directed specifically toward charities the fund-holder chooses.

Berlis says there are 29 local charities that regularly receive assistance from the NOTL Community Fund, and whose needs are even greater during the pandemic, while at the same time they are unable to raise money by the events they would regularly host.

Funds are held in perpetuity, with the returns being re-invested back into the community through discretionary grants.

The NOTL Community fund allows donors to make a direct impact on the charities that exist in the community, says Berlis.

In five years since it was established, almost $700,000 has been funded to the 29 charities.

“Our aim here is to re-mind all of you that this fund exists, and to encourage participation, particularly at this difficult time,” Berlis told councillors.

There are nine committee members, including Lord Mayor Betty Disero, says Berlis, as well as Nancy Bailey, Ann-Louise Branscombe, Wendy Cherpota, Pat Darce, Mauro Ferrara, Brianne Hawley, Debi Pratt and Shawn Spiewak.

Berlis says he would encourage anyone who might be thinking of donating, and who wants funds to stay local, “to look us up, know we’re here, and part of the community of NOTL.”

“The pandemic, he says, “has been devastating to charities of all kinds.”

Last year, the fund gave $420,000 to local charities.

“‘That’s a lot of money for a small community,’ he says.

“We also want to make sure charities in the area know about us, and recognize we’re here should they need us.”

For more information visit niagaracommunityfoundation.org/funds/community-funds/niagara-on-the-lake.

Community Fund helps local charities

Penny Coles The Local

To add to its many other accomplishments, Niagara-on-the-Lake has been voted Canada’s most beautiful and sustainable events destination.

Thursday, April 22, was Earth Day, and the Sustainable Events Forum hosted a virtual event, which included the voting.

NOTL was nominated as one of the top 10 municipalities in the running for the award against other prestigious destinations across Canada. It was an honour to be chosen, says Lord Mayor Betty Disero, who thanked the forum for hosting the event and promoting sustainability efforts across Canada.

“While you look at the competition, it was very tough,” says Disero, “with a lot of great cities doing a lot for sustainability and reducing their carbon footprint.”

Voters came in from across Canada, says Disero, attributing NOTL’s success to the fact that sustainability “comes by us naturally.”

So many local events are based on agriculture, and those in the hospitality industry choose farm-to-table and other ways to respect the importance of agriculture to the community.

“We’re a huge agricultural community and members of the farming community are by nature green.”

Support for on-demand transportation instead of an empty bus driving up and down Niagara Stone Road, composting, tree planting and tree protection, heritage preservation all contribute to sustainability, says Disero.

Success in Community in Bloom competitions, which have named NOTL the prettiest town of its size, “are not just about being pretty,” they are also about care for the environment.

That’s who we are. It’s our nature, our lifestyle,” and is reflected in how the town cares about and preserves its heritage and environment.

“For sure, I know we can do better,” she adds, explaining sustainability efforts have to be ongoing.

The other municipalities nominated in Canada’s Top 10 most beautiful and sustainable events destinations were St. John’s, Charlottetown, Halifax, Quebec City, Montreal, Banff, Vancouver, Victoria, and Whitehorse. Each was assigned a champion to represent the town and highlight the many ways it exhibits beauty and sustainability. Shari Bricks, managing director of Bond Association Management, was a champion for NOTL.

The province is allowing people to get exercise outdoors, but has closed down picnic tables, golf courses, tennis and pickle ball courts, and other amenities, in an effort to reduce COVID infection spread. The town has also barricaded the gazebo, a popular spot to visit. (David Gallova)
Out of tragedy should come motivation to do more

Now that the tears have cleared, after reading The Globe and Mail interview with father of 13-year-old Emily Viegas, it’s time to put what is happening around us in perspective.

It’s not news that COVID is beginning to affect more younger people, mostly those who are going to their essential, minimum wage jobs, and that is extremely sad, especially when paid sick leave could change that trajectory. Nor is it news that more under-20s are becoming infected, many of them family members of those workers.

But this! This is a horror story we didn’t expect to hear. I’m sure people across this province, and across this country, will be shedding a tear for Emily, who became sick, quickly worsened, and died in her bed at home. Her father was unaware of how sick she was, and was also afraid to trip to the nearest hospital, which was full with COVID patients, including her mother, who would mean she’d be sent somewhere far away.

In our hearts, and minds, we’re wrapping Emily’s family in a giant hug, and mourning the loss of their little girl, who should still be with them.

This tragic death of the youngest Canadians to die from COVID should be a wake-up call to all, and especially those in Ontario, whether we live in a hotspot such as Brampton, where Emily shared a two-bedroom apartment with her parents and brother, or the somewhat safer region of Niagara.

If this horrific loss isn’t enough to galvanize us to do more, what possibly could? Maybe the video on TV showing the military marching into Sunnybrook Hospital in Toronto? Or possibly the photos of the field hospital at Sunnybrook, intended to be used as a last resort, now receiving patients.

How about hearing that doctors are training in the worst-case scenario to do what will be needed to save lives, and who will be responsible for saving the patients from these doctors? We added a number of other provinces, all in this pandemic, to our list of places that need the most significant support.

As one Sunnybrook doctor said, businesses that should be open are closed, non-emergency surgeries remain open, while essential surgeries are shut down.

We can’t watch the latest news without hearing that Ontario continues to break new records. Even CNN included the grim data in its top five news stories Tuesday morning. Although the numbers are daily revised, they were finally dipped below 4,000 on average this last week. Ontario now has the highest number of COVID patients in intensive care units since the start of the pandemic, more than we’ve had since Dory Ford had asked other provinces, also in this pandemic, to help out by providing more than 600 health care workers, while nine of the most open-heart- ed, wonderful, caring people of Newfoundland and Labrador had put their hands in response to his plea, and boarded a plane Tuesday.

And Ontario is the only province with such distinctions.

It is happening in other provinces across the country, especially Alberta, which actually has an even higher per capita number of cases.

The Ontario Science Table released more recommendations Friday, but the main thrust remains reducing essential businesses to what is absolutely necessary, having people stay home, sick leave, and getting vaccines to essential workers and health care workers.

So far, the response from the government is to address the hotspots as priorities for vaccinations, where there is the most significant risk of serious illness and death.

There was talk of lifting the four lockdowns this week, but nobody is supportive, saying what is needed is direct, seamless paid days through employers.

The good news is nearly two million doses of vaccine have been administered so far, but some say, still not enough to meet the demand — the capacity for delivering vaccinations to Ontario is only 75% of the supply. It seems increasing that supply is our best ticket off this run-away train.

We know that, while some of us are focused on global issues, many of those workers are showing up to jobs they desperately need to pay their bills, to keep at least hopefully be able to get that shot in their arm, and keep them and their families safe.

We are all excited to celebrate the Annual OCNA Better Newspaper Awards reminded us of why we decided to embark on this adventure, and reassured us that we have stayed true to our vision, which is to provide our readers, and all of you who share your stories with us.

Karen looks after our NOTL advertising customers, many of them friends she has known for years, helping to build their businesses. Julia Wade has known for years, helping to build their businesses. Julia Wade has known for years, helping to build their businesses. Julia Wade has known for years, helping to build their businesses.

Karen and I are so fortunate to have a great team of people we love to work with, and who do a great job. One of the reason the awards we won was a second place in the category of general excellence, which encompasses everything about the paper, including layout of pages and ads, news, sports, and features. It looks at advertising features, which were specifically mentioned as part of what we were offering in the editions we submitted for the awards.

Readers will know that Mike Balsam is a great journalist, who writes features, arts and entertainment, and sports stories for the Local. We always look forward to reading his stories. Kim Wade likes to report on art and culture stories; attend events, visit wineries and restaurants, and tell us about them. She has taken a break because of an overload at her day job, but will be back. More recently, David Gigliotti, a great nature photographer with time on his hands during the pandemic, has been helping us out as well. And Anne and Pat Darke were a partner who helped us enormously during our start-up — we knew little about launching a business. We have returned his investment so he can move on to other projects, but we owe him so much for getting us started on this venture.

I’ll end by saying that the OCNA Better Newspaper Awards reminded us of why we decided to embark on this adventure, and reassured us that we have stayed true to our mission.

We are all excited to celebrate the Annual OCNA Better Newspaper Awards reminded us of why we decided to embark on this adventure, and reassured us that we have stayed true to our mission.

We are all excited to celebrate our success in this competition. The wonderful residents and businesses in Niagara-on-the-Lake make us very proud to be a part of our community.

From the bottom of our hearts, thank you for letting us share your stories.

Rosie Gowsell-Pattison is a graphic designer (and friend) we worked with years ago at the Advance, and who always helped us to look after production and layout. She’s talented, and a delight to work with. She has Helplines, which are hard to get into your first office within weeks of us starting The Local, and volunteered to be a proofreader. She’s the best, and saves us from all kinds of trouble weekly. We wouldn’t want to do this without her.

And Anna Tiedtke, someone who many will know from the Advance days, looking after our events columns — just because she’s Anna and always wants to help others.

I will never forget my very first meeting with Pat Darke was a partner who helped us enormously during our start-up — we knew little about launching a business. We have returned his investment so he can move on to other projects, but we owe him so much for getting us started on this venture.

We are all excited to celebrate our success in this competition. The wonderful residents and businesses in Niagara-on-the-Lake make us very proud to be a part of our community.

From the bottom of our hearts, thank you for letting us share your stories.

 đến từ sự cải thiện và động lực để làm hơn.

Rosalie Wissman-Patterson is a graphic designer (and friend) we worked with years ago at the Advance, and who always helped us to look after production and layout. She’s talented, and a delight to work with. She has Helplines, which are hard to get into your first office within weeks of us starting The Local, and volunteered to be a proofreader. She’s the best, and saves us from all kinds of trouble weekly. We wouldn’t want to do this without her.

And Anna Tiedtke, someone who many will know from the Advance days, looking after our events columns — just because she’s Anna and always wants to help others.

I will never forget my very first meeting with Pat Darke was a partner who helped us enormously during our start-up — we knew little about launching a business. We have returned his investment so he can move on to other projects, but we owe him so much for getting us started on this venture.

We are all excited to celebrate our success in this competition. The wonderful residents and businesses in Niagara-on-the-Lake make us very proud to be a part of our community.

From the bottom of our hearts, thank you for letting us share your stories.
Local LETTERS
How can we stop littering?

The included photo shows a small sample of garbage and litter along Townline Road, between East and West Line and Line 1 in Niagara-on-the-Lake. You cannot walk a few feet without seeing discarded garbage, plastic water bottles, cups and waste from McDonald's and Tim Hortons.

This is the truth about the prettiest town. How can we get signage throughout town or surrounding main roads to discourage littering and garbage dumping?

Roger Hicks
NOTL

Together, we did it!

The Nyuans of Niagara want to thank Erin and James of Sweet & Swifts Cafe for creating a delicious African Desert Box of sweets and African teas to surtout and sip while watching Together in Concert. In Solidarity with African Grandmothers, an across-Canada virtual concert of Canadian talent celebrating the 15th anniversary of the Stephen Lewis Foundation’s Grandmothers Campaign. During the viewing time from April 15 to April 18, we had over 5,000 viewers from all over the world, and to date we have raised over $125,000. The Nyuans, through the purchase of the Desert Boxes, were able to contribute $800 to the concert.

All money raised by the 160 Grandmothers groups in Canada goes to grassroot projects in sub-Saharan Africa. These projects support African grandmothers raising orphaned children due to the HIV and AIDS pandemic and now COVID-19.

For more information about the concert and to donate, go to www.cdngrandmothers.com. You can also contact the Nyuans of Niagara at nyuans2018@gmail.com.

Thank you, Niagara-on-the-Lake, and Sweet & Swifts, together we raised funds and awareness for a very worthwhile cause.

Terry-see Macquagert
Nyuans of Niagara

Letters! We want letters!

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

Who would take flowers from a grave?

My mother lovingly tended her mother’s, mother-in-law’s, and sisters as well as her husband’s (my father’s) grave for many years at Lakeshore Cemetery. She planted beautiful pots with fresh flowers and in the height of the summer watered them at least three times a week. As she got older, when I was in Niagara on Sundays, I watered them to give her a break. She told me once, when I’m gone, don’t feel you have to do this, you can’t get here every other day when it’s hot. Just put some silk flowers there.

Well, last September my dear mother passed away and just before Easter, when I re-moved the Christmas wreaths, I bought some beautiful, high quality silk flowers and placed some arrangements in the vases at their graves. I secured them so they wouldn’t get blown away, yet when I went to check on them a week later my parents’ flowers were gone.

I looked all around but found nothing, so apparently they didn’t blow away but had walked away. I replaced them, and a week later they were gone again, as well as one of my grandmother’s arrangements.

I was sick and was disturbed that anyone would do that. I replaced them yet one more time and hope that who-ever took all my flowers is feeling at least a twinge of a guilty conscience when looking at them. Who does that? I’m disgusted, and I’m afraid my mother that all people are inherently good has been challenged.

I hope that common de-nial will prevail, and this will not happen to anyone else. Re-pect the deceased and those who mourn them.

Christine Beatty
Niagara Falls

Federal support programs need to go further through recovery

While Niagara faces the very realistic prospects of losing our second successive summer tourism season because of COVID-19, the federal government delivered their first budget in more than two years on April 19.

Of critical importance in this budget, was the federal government plans for the Canada Emergency Wage Subsidy (CEWS), the Canada Emergency Rent Subsidy (CERS), and the Canada Recovery Benefit (CRB). Through the support of Cana- da’s Conservatives, these emergency support programs have become essential life-lines for small businesses and their workers in many sec-tors across Canada, includ-ing tourism. Currently, both CEWS and CERS are sched-uled to expire on June 5.

The good news is that Budget 2021 proposes to exten-t CEWS, CERS, and the CRB. The bad news is the ex- tension for CEWS and CERS only goes until Sept. 25, while only an additional 12 weeks will be added to the CRB.

Furthermore, the CEWS and CERS subsidy rates will begin gradually decreasing even earlier, starting on July 4, while the $500 payment usually received in the CRB will be reduced to $300, for the last eight weeks of the benefit.

Many travel and tourism stakeholders, both local and national, have been asking for some of these essential programs to be extended through until the end of 2021 for those who have been hardest hit.

The unfortunate reality is our Canadian travel and tourism industry will not re-sume right away as if switch-ing a light. Rather, it will take some time before we be-gin welcoming international and domestic tourists back to our local destinations in Niagara-on-the-Lake and across Niagara.

Therefore, these exten-sions for CEWS, CERS, and CRB contained in Budget 2021 clearly fall short of busi-ness and worker needs, which is incredibly disappointing from my perspective as the local CEDV.

In Niagara-on-the-Lake, our tourism is heavily depen-dent on the summer season, and it will be devastating for many businesses and workers if the CEWS, CERS and CRB rates decrease, while COVID cases may remain high, the borders remain closed, and tourists stay away.

The government’s approach to these programs also raise many questions, such as why are these criti-cal emergency business sup-port programs set to these arbitrary timelines decided by the federal government? In a perfect world for this prime minister, the economy could be instantly reopened as good as before after most Canadians get vaccinated.

Unfortunately for him, that is an imagined world that is separated from reality.

The world we live in today is one with a severe vaccine shortage in Canada, without widely available rapid testing devices, and an overabun-dance of COVID variants that are driving a severe third wave, hospitalizations, and deaths.

Another question is what happens to CEWS, CERS, CRB, and the workers and small businesses who rely on these emergency support pro-grams, if the variants continue unabated into the summer?

Or, what if the borders remain closed through the summer and into the fall, significantly damaging our prospects of having interna-tional tourists visit our des-tinations? After all, summer is the best tourism season in Niagara, but we are on the verge of losing it, once again.

If businesses don’t reopen this summer, or tourism does not return in time for the summer season, the CEWS, CERS and CRB plans as laid out by Budget 2021 could be a disastrous outcome for workers and the many busi-nesses who depend on them.

On many occasions throughout this pandemic, I have asked the federal gov-ernment to do more and to do better for seasonal tourism communities like our own.

Unfortunately, Budget 2021 is further evidence that this Trudeau government still does not understand or fully consider the opening and business cycles of seasonal tourism communities, like Niagara-on-the-Lake, Niaga-ra Falls, and Fort Erie. Rather, they plan to end these critical support programs too early, they fail to make rapid testing devices widely available, and there is no plan for recovery, to get our lives back to nor-mal as quickly as possible.

Canadians deserve far better federal leadership from this government than we are getting. As Member of Parlia-ment for Niagara Falls riding, which includes the towns of Niagara-on-the-Lake and Fort Erie, I will continue to stand up for Niagara’s inter-ests in Ottawa.
Welcome Greg, NOTL’s New Bike Mechanic!

Submitted by Zoom Leisure Bikes

We’re fired up to introduce Greg, the new full-time bike mechanic at Zoom Leisure Bikes. He brings a wealth of bike expertise with over 35 years of perfecting his craft. A specialist in e-bikes and all things cycling, come say “hi” and bring your bike to Greg for a spring Service!

Greg is an important addition to the Zoom team this year as we continue supporting our local community.

Other exciting things happening at Zoom in 2021:

• Front-line and essential workers who visit our store may skip the line and receive priority service!
• Valued e-bike customers - Zoom is now a full functioning Bosch-certified service centre, meaning we’re fully equipped as a charging station and service centre for e-bikes.
• Can’t come to us? No worries, we’ll come to you. Free pick-up and delivery for tune-ups in the NOTL area.
  • Certified Trek and Electric dealer.
  • High-quality parts and accessories available for sale in-store.
  • Offering bike rentals to help those who do not have a bike to be able to get some exercise.

Call or email to make an appointment - (905) 468-2366 or info@zoomleisure.com

Proud to be here for you as an essential service!

Brighter days ahead . . .

Georgia Stewart, 3, exudes cuteness and positivity as she soaks up the sunshine, making us all hope there will be brighter days ahead — soon. (Photo supplied)

MPP demanding Ford act to prevent patient triaging in Niagara

Local Staff

MPP Wayne Gates, representing the Niagara Falls riding, is demanding that Doug Ford get the COVID crisis in Niagara under control, as doctors in the province take part in triage protocol training sessions.

"Frontline health care heroes are worried they’ll be forced to implement the triage protocol they’ve been briefed on. They don’t want to make the impossible decision of who is more worthy of life-saving care, like ventilators or trained ICU nurses," said Gates.

"This government is directly responsible for the surge in COVID-19 cases and resulting deaths. They have repeatedly ignored the advice of public health experts. They are more concerned with how their stakeholders may react, than doing what is desperately needed to save lives and avoid having to use the triage protocol."

Niagara has been a COVID hotspot, with 387 deaths. Some nurses are seeing two or three patients die per shift. Eighty-three patients have COVID.

Last week, Niagara Health announced that their intensive care unit capacity is at 104 per cent, level three ICU is at 164 per cent, and ICU vented bed capacity is at 125 per cent.

Lynn Guerriero, the president of Niagara Health said, "critical care capacity at Niagara Health is in a state of crisis. We’ve opened additional critical care beds in other areas of the hospital, but we have limited critical care-trained staff to further increase capacity."

"This government calls them heroes, but refuses to listen to public health experts and take the actions needed to protect people, help nurses and save lives," said Gates.

"Will the premier immediately implement provincial paid sick days, ensure paid time off to get a vaccine, close non-essential businesses, and get direct financial support to workers and small businesses?"

Dr. Irfan Dhalla, a physician and University of Toronto medical professor, said "it’s very worrying, when it becomes clear the cabinet isn’t making science-based decisions.”
Microhabitats are all around us, including our backyards

Owen Bjorgan Special to The Local

Whether you’re living out in the vast acreage of line and concession country, or even if you’re surrounded by neighbours somewhere in an urban area, you’ve got microhabitats. Don’t go running to the doctor. Microhabitats are just smaller versions or categories of habitats for local wildlife. The word “habitat” is based on where a living thing habitats or exists based on its preferred environmental criteria, and we typically imagine them as forests, meadows, or freshwater environments. Whether you’re living out in the vast acreage of line and concession country, or even if you’re surrounded by neighbours somewhere in an urban area, you’ve got microhabitats. Don’t go running to the doctor. Microhabitats are just smaller versions or categories of habitats for local wildlife. The word “habitat” is based on where a living thing habitats or exists based on its preferred environmental criteria, and we typically imagine them as forests, meadows, or freshwater environments.

In the direct, toasty sunlight of spring and summer, the leaves and grass have blown in and just sat there for a while? Perhaps have a collection of moss and logs in it. This is where other important rototillers of nature hang out underneath the tree roots stick out, and perhaps an amicable local specimen you always enjoy walking through to celebrate that you have a wetland temporary pool, you could celebrate that you have a wetland. Like a fully functioning car or an employer with hundreds of employees, things are only going to run smoothly if all the smaller parts are in working order. When we protect and preserve microhabitats, they contribute to the overall stability of large scale ecosystems. Now, we’re back to talking about the big lakes, forests, and wetlands around here, the very same natural features which contribute enormous benefits to our water, soil, and air quality.

Microhabitats are all around us, including our backyards.
NOTICE OF COMPLETE APPLICATION, ELECTRONIC OPEN HOUSE AND ELECTRONIC PUBLIC MEETING

What: Notice of Complete Application, Open House and Public Meeting for an Official Plan Amendment (under Section 22 of the Planning Act, R.S.O. 1990, c. P.13, as amended), Zoning By-law Amendment (under Section 34 of the Planning Act, R.S.O. 1990, c. P.13, as amended), and Draft Plan of Subdivision (under Section 51 of the Planning Act, R.S.O. 1990, c. P.13, as amended).

When: Open House: Tuesday, June 15, 2021 at 5:00 pm
Public Meeting: Wednesday, July 14, 2021 at 9:00 pm (or soon thereafter)

Where: The Electronic Open House and Electronic Public Meeting may be recorded and will be available for viewing at the following link: https://livestream.com/notl

200 John Street East & 588 Charlotte Street, Niagara-on-the-Lake

What is this? Applications have been received for an Official Plan Amendment, Zoning By-law Amendment and Draft Plan of Subdivision on the subject lands (see the location map) to facilitate the development of 125 single-detached dwellings, 66 semi-detached dwellings and blocks of land for parks, natural areas and future development all on a private road network. A portion of the lands within the existing Urban Area Boundary are proposed to be designated Low Density Residential in the Official Plan. The Zoning By-law Amendment requests a site-specific Residential (R2) Zone for the residential lots, Open Space (OS) Zone for parks and Natural Heritage System Overlay for natural areas.

Dialogue is encouraged: Niagara-on-the-Lake Town Hall is closed to the public due to the COVID-19 emergency and in-person meetings have been cancelled. As permitted under Provincial legislation and the Town’s Procedural By-law, Council and Committee meetings are being conducted electronically.

You are invited to attend these meetings electronically to gather information and provide input regarding this matter.

If you wish to participate and make an oral presentation or ask questions at the Electronic Open House and/or Electronic Public Meeting, you must register in advance with Town Staff as noted below. Following registration, you will be provided with instructions to connect to the Open House and/or Public Meeting on your computer, tablet or telephone.

- Open House - Mark Iamarino (mark.iamarino@notl.com or 905-468-6423) (register as soon as possible but prior to 12 noon on Tuesday, June 15, 2021)
- Public Meeting - Peter Todd (peter.todd@notl.com or 905-468-3061, ext. 228) (register as soon as possible but prior to 12 noon on Wednesday, July 14, 2021)

Written comments on the applications are encouraged and must be submitted to Peter Todd, Town Clerk, at 1593 Four Mile Creek Road, P.O. Box 100, Virgil, ON L0S 1T0 or to the Town via email at public.meeting@notl.com referencing the above file numbers. Unless indicated otherwise, all submissions, including personal information, will become part of the public record.

For more information: For more information regarding this matter, please contact Mark Iamarino, Senior Planner, at 905-468-6423 or via email at mark.iamarino@notl.com.

NOTICE OF APPROVAL OF TAX & RATE BY-LAW 2021 TAX RATES FOR GENERAL LEVY & SPECIAL AREA LEVIES

TAKE NOTICE that the Council of the Corporation of the Town of Niagara-on-the-Lake will consider a report for the 2021 Tax Rates for General Levy and Special Area Levies at the Council meeting on:

Committee of the Whole General Meeting
Monday, May 10, 2021
6:00 p.m.

Electronic Participation Meeting Only

A copy of the report will be available on the Town website at www.notl.com on Thursday May 6, 2021. Delegation requests to speak to the report must be arranged prior to the meeting date. Registrations to speak must be submitted to the Office of the Town Clerk in writing no later than 12:00 p.m. on May 10, 2021.

Final approval of the By-law will be considered at the May 17, 2021, Council Meeting.

For further information, please contact the Corporate Services Department at 905-468-3266.

Peter Todd
Town Clerk

Car hits Queen Street house

Penny Coles
The Local

On Saturday afternoon, Niagara Regional Police officers were called to Queen Street near Simcoe Street, to find a 2017 Nissan Altima had left the road and struck a house. Barb Bedell, neighbour to the house that was hit, says at this time of year, when the street is not busy, it’s not unusual for “noisy vehicles” to be racing down the street. “It’s just fortunate nobody was on the sidewalk,” she said.

There were no injuries, and police are still investigating.

A car left the road and hit a historic house that was being renovated Saturday afternoon. (David Gilchrist)
THE GARRISON HOUSE

2 COURSE MOTHER’S DAY BRUNCH 2021
$39 per person

**Appetizers**
- Poached Asparagus & Smoked Salmon
  - Cured egg yolk / gribiche / everything bagel crunch
- Wedge Salad
  - Iceberg lettuce / bacon crumb / soft poached egg / pickled shallots / tomato avocado ranch
- Chilled Asparagus Soup
  - Dill creme fraiche / crab salad

**Entrees**
- Chilled Olive Oil Poached Salmon
  - Curried salad / asparagus / roasted lemon vinaigrette
- Pan Seared Chicken Supreme
  - Lyonnaise potatoes / asparagus / red pepper vinaigrette
- Burrata & Prosciutto Salad
  - Arugula / cherry tomato / radish / grilled sourdough / pickled rhubarb
- Asparagus & Feta Quiche
  - Tomatoes & arugula salad

**Desserts**
- Chocolate Pots de Creme
  - Toasted marshmallows / graham crumb / raspberry puree
- Rhubarb Custard Tart
  - Strawberry curd

choose App/Entree or Entree/Dessert

Takeout pre-orders must be in no later than Friday, May 7th at 8 pm
add a third course / $13
Add Rodney’s Fresh Shucked Oysters
1/2 dozen / $18  Dozen / $36

**Dinner Feature (4 pm): 10oz Prime Rib**
Vegetables / potato / Yorkshire pudding / natural jus $32
Curbside Pick Up Available: Brunch 12-2 pm, Dinner 3-7 pm
prices do not include HST  •  please advise of any food allergies

111c Unit 2 Garrison Village Dr., Niagara-on-the-Lake  |  905.468.4000

Serving Niagara Since 1977

We will do everything we can to support you.
Pharmacy: 905.468.2121  |  Apothecary: 905.468.8400
Follow our Facebook Page or Updates at www.simpsonsparmacy.ca

STAY SAFE NOTL

1573 Four Mile Creek Road, Virgil

Garrison House Open to Serve You Safely
PRE ORDER NOW

HAPPY MOTHER’S DAY

SUNDAY MAY 9 • 12PM - 8PM • 905-468-4443

DINNER FEATURES

**ALMOND CRUSTED SALMON** $24
- 4oz Almond Crusted Salmon | Drawn Butter | Rice | Broccoli | Cauliflower

**PAN SEARED CHICKEN** $22
- 5oz Chicken Breast | Roasted Red Pepper Sauce | Rice | Broccoli | Cauliflower

**PRIME RIB** $26
- 8oz Prime Rib | Yorkshire Pudding | Champ | Broccoli | Cauliflower | Gravy

Horseradish Available Upon Request • 12oz Cut • $6

**EARLY BIRD SPECIAL:** Order and Pick Up by 5pm
- 8oz Prime Rib $22 • 12oz Prime Rib $26

DINNER PACKAGE FOR ONE $49
- Pick Any Entree | Bottle of Local Wine | Pecan Tart

DINNER PACKAGE FOR TWO $73
- Pick Any 2 Entrées | Bottle of Local Wine | Pecan Tart

Simpson’s Shop from the comfort of home
www.simpsonsparmacy.ca

STAY SAFE NOTL

New Hours of Operation:
Monday to Friday - 8 am to 5 pm,
Saturday 8 am - 12 pm
Orders can be called or texted to 905-329-2077
or emailed to creekroadpaints@cogeco.net

Creek Road Paints is still mixing things up!
We are offering Curbside Pickup and
FREE Home or On-Site Delivery

STAY SAFE NOTL

1573 Four Mile Creek Road, Virgil

THE FARMHOUSE CAFE

OPEN FOR TAKEOUT
Thursday 12 pm to 7 pm
FISH FRY ALL DAY!
Friday 12 pm to 7 pm
Saturday & Sunday 12 pm to 5 pm

Dinner Feature (4 pm): 10oz Prime Rib
Vegetables / potato / Yorkshire pudding / natural jus $32

FREE NOTL Wine Delivery

WINE BOUTIQUE & TASTING BAR

Open for Curbside and In-Store Pickup
7 days a week

Caroline Cellars Winery

MOTHER'S DAY BRUNCH 2021

$39 per person

Appetizers
- Poached Asparagus & Smoked Salmon
  - Cured egg yolk / gribiche / everything bagel crunch
- Wedge Salad
  - Iceberg lettuce / bacon crumb / soft poached egg / pickled shallots / tomato avocado ranch
- Chilled Asparagus Soup
  - Dill creme fraiche / crab salad

Entrees
- Chilled Olive Oil Poached Salmon
  - Curried salad / asparagus / roasted lemon vinaigrette
- Pan Seared Chicken Supreme
  - Lyonnaise potatoes / asparagus / red pepper vinaigrette
- Burrata & Prosciutto Salad
  - Arugula / cherry tomato / radish / grilled sourdough / pickled rhubarb
- Asparagus & Feta Quiche
  - Tomatoes & arugula salad

Desserts
- Chocolate Pots de Creme
  - Toasted marshmallows / graham crumb / raspberry puree
- Rhubarb Custard Tart
  - Strawberry curd

choose App/Entree or Entree/Dessert

Takeout pre-orders must be in no later than Friday, May 7th at 8 pm
add a third course / $13
Add Rodney’s Fresh Shucked Oysters
1/2 dozen / $18  Dozen / $36

Dinner Feature (4 pm): 10oz Prime Rib
Vegetables / potato / Yorkshire pudding / natural jus $32
Curbside Pick Up Available: Brunch 12-2 pm, Dinner 3-7 pm
prices do not include HST  •  please advise of any food allergies

111c Unit 2 Garrison Village Dr., Niagara-on-the-Lake  |  905.468.4000

Wine Tasting & Tasting Bar

The Farmhouse Cafe

Open for Curbside and In-Store Pickup
7 days a week

FREE NOTL Wine Delivery

Caroline Cellars Winery

1010 Line 2, NOTL 905.468.8814 www.CarolineCellars.com
Dream Ironwork is a family owned and operated wrought iron welding and fabrication shop located in Thorold, where hand-made, custom designs are forged. Dream Ironwork is the leading custom wrought iron manufacturing shop based in the Niagara Region, Ontario Canada – serving the GTA and surrounding areas! We break away from the same old niche and work on our passion to create custom wrought iron designs from scratch. Our customers often seek new and exciting solutions, and we are able to provide them with beautiful & reliable designs.

“Our mission is to maintain our production with only the best materials and focus on the absolute satisfaction of our clients.”

We take pride in our work, and provide an extremely reliable solution for: Fences, Railings, Spiral Staircases, Custom Made Gates, Indoor & Outdoor Furniture, Decorative Items, Pool Fences and more.

Call for a quote today. (905) 980-1869.

Niagara-on-the-Lake resident Lori McNines and her friend Laurie Straw from St. Catharines are the happy recipients of Hospice Niagara’s Catch the Ace, a fun fundraiser that has captured the attention of many Niagara residents. McNines is a retired volunteer from Hospice Niagara, and became friends with Straw, a retired employee of the palliative care organization, during the years they worked together.

For a bit of fun, and to help out an organization they both care deeply about, they decided to spend $20 a week — together — on 10 tickets. McNines’s envelope was picked in week 13, and had the winning ace.

The lottery is similar to a 50/50 draw, with weekly prizes of 20 per cent of the draw, which for McNines and Straw was $3600. Because they had the ace, they also won the progressive jackpot of $55,310. Fifty per cent of all ticket sales goes to hospice palliative care in Niagara. Hospice Niagara helps people and families live well from the time of diagnosis of a terminal illness and during treatment, through to end of life care and in bereavement.

Both women say in addition to the thrill of winning the jackpot, they continue to be great supporters of Hospice Niagara.

“I’m not a lottery person, and I’d never heard of it before, but apparently it’s quite a common fundraiser. And if I’m going to buy a ticket, I’d like it to go to a good cause.”

Winning “is a really good feeling, knowing it is helping an important cause. I’m such a huge supporter of Hospice Niagara. It can be sad, but it’s also very uplifting. It’s an amazing place. I’m happy to be a winner, and to have had Hospice Niagara as part of my life for a good many years.”

Straw says in the years she was working, fundraising was always important to support the operating costs of the organization.

In their retirement, McNines and Straw have developed what they call a “hobby business,” combining woodworking and quilting, which they both enjoy. McNines says her basement is given over to space for both, and between them, they know enough people who ask them to make custom items that they keep busy without having to advertise.

“We keep ourselves busy,” she says, and with some of the proceeds they have decided to buy a sewing machine to help them out.

This was Hospice Niagara’s second Catch the Ace draw, the two totalling about $330,000, says Alicia Merry, fund development manager.

With in-person events cancelled and fundraising such an important part of covering operational costs, finding ways to safely raise money during a pandemic has been important.

In a normal year, Hospice Niagara would have a fundraising goal of $1.8 million, but with the increased costs of operating during a pandemic, they’ve set their goal at $2 to $2.5 million, says Merry.

Fortunately, they can send out appeals to their large number of supporters, they have two annual fundraisers they’ve been able to hold virtually, and they also apply for any appropriate grants that could help them out, she says.

The next fundraiser will be their 13th annual 5 Car Draw.

“We’re really excited to get it going next week,” she says.
Local woman sending aid to St. Vincent

The area she comes from is covered with ash, homes damaged by volcano boulders

Penny Coles The Local

For weeks now, a volcano on the island of St. Vincent has been erupting, and covering the surrounding area with ash, forcing people from their homeland and their community.

Although there was some warning the eruption was coming, many of those who live in the area, called the red zone, had nowhere to go, says Virgil resident La Fleur Fletcher, who is collecting items to send home to the island where she was born and raised, and where her family still lives.

They have been moving around, living in various places, including sharing limited space with family, friends and at government shelters, waiting until they can go home — although they won’t have much to go home to, says Fletcher. The area is a farming community, and her family members are farmers, with their land and any crops they may have had now covered in the grey ash spewed from the volcano, along with pyroclastic flow, described as a deadly mixture of superheated gases, rock and mud.

“When they do go home, there won’t be anything there for them,” she says.

Eruptions are expected to continue for months, and the island government is overwhelmed, without the resources to get much-needed supplies to its people. Fletcher has been sending containers of goods home to her mother for years, and knows how to get them there.

She explains she came to Niagara-on-the-Lake in 2009 with her husband Claude, who is from Jamaica. They had met when they were both working on a small cruise ship, she says. He was a cook, and her job entailed a little of everything, from looking after cabins to working in the gift shop and serving meals in the dining room.

When Claude decided he’d like to pursue a culinary career, they came to Niagara-on-the-Lake so he could attend a culinary school that operated out of a Nassau Street townhouse, using kitchens in various restaurants around town for students to get their hands-on training.

He was able to get a visa as an international student, and they rented a small basement apartment on Simcoe Street. However, there were irregularities about the school that were reported to immigration officials, and the school was shut down in 2010, about two months before he would have finished his program, and before he was able to receive his certification.

“We eventually got our permanent residency, and now we’re Canadian citizens. It has been quite a journey, but it was worth it,” she says.

As part of that journey, they have been raising their 10-year-old son Akeem, who goes to St. Michael Catholic Elementary School.

They were told by immigration that they could stay in Canada if one of them was a student, so La Fleur began studying hospitality and restaurant management at Niagara College while Claude went to work driving a truck. Although some students did receive a refund, he did not, but was able to get a work permit.

“We loved it here, and I swore I wasn’t going to leave,” says La Fleur. “Everybody just accepted us. It’s been perfect for us. We both worked hard, saved money and were able to buy a house on Concession 4, before the prices got crazy,” she says.

“I was willing to work 24/7 to stay here. It was very hard, but we made it work.”

For a time she had three jobs, at the Mary Street Tim Hortons, at the Best Western, and cleaning houses. Claude went out west to Alberta for a while to work, and now drives a truck mostly on long day trips. La Fleur has her own cleaning business.

“Everybody had to leave. The volcano had been showing activity last November and December, but you can never be prepared for something like this. Mom and Dad and the rest of the family have been moving around, staying at shelters and with friends. They just moved to another house, and it’s crowded, there are a lot of them together, but at least they’re okay.”

They have been managing to get food, she says, but the water is not drinkable. She is trying to buy and ship water not just for her family, but for everybody who needs it. Last week she sent home a pallet of 100 cases of water, and received some donations of cash to help pay the $640 shipping charges.

She has a shipping agent in Massachusetts who has used in the past, and they ship straight to her mother, who will hand out whatever La Fleur is able to send.

“Everyone in the community did not want to leave. Many of them came to the island to help pay the $640 shipping cost.”

Locals have been helping out by purchasing goods to ship, as well as donating cash to help pay for shipping.

For those who want to help, La Fleur has a list of items she is shipping, including water, water filtration kits, parboiled long-grain rice, cooking oil, sardines, Vienna sausages, barbecue sauce, baked beans, ketchup, jam, Kraft dinner, oatmeal and cream of wheat, sweet corn, cream corn, black-eyed peas, lentil peas, peanut butter, pasta, ramen noodles, and juice boxes; plus toiletries such as toothpaste and toothbrushes, sanitary napkins, deodorant, and toilet paper.

Donations can be dropped off at 1612 Concession 4.

“No money has been accepted in the past, but we are now accepting cash donations for St. Vincent.”

The last time they were able to visit her family was 2014, although they had plans to return in December, 2020, which had to be cancelled.

“The last few weeks have been terrible for me,” she says, as she tried to get information about her family.

“I wanted to stay was because it’s home, with my family and my friends. It’s been showing activity last November and December, but you can never be prepared for something like this. They have been helping out by purchasing goods to ship, as well as donating cash to help pay for shipping.”

For those who want to help, La Fleur has a list of items she is shipping, including water, water filtration kits, parboiled long-grain rice, cooking oil, sardines, Vienna sausages, barbecue sauce, baked beans, ketchup, jam, Kraft dinner, oatmeal and cream of wheat, sweet corn, cream corn, black-eyed peas, lentil peas, peanut butter, pasta, ramen noodles, and juice boxes; plus toiletries such as toothpaste and toothbrushes, sanitary napkins, deodorant, and toilet paper.

Donations can be dropped off at 1612 Concession 4.

“The Virgil Arvendale is also accepting cash donations for St. Vincent.”

“She has a shipping agent in Massachusetts who has used in the past, and they ship straight to her mother, who will hand out whatever La Fleur is able to send.”

“These are things that they need, and they are things that the people at home want, because it’s home.”

Local woman sending aid to St. Vincent

La Fleur Fletcher, with her son Akeem, is sending much-needed items, including water, home to St. Vincent, and could use some help. (Photo supplied)
Ed Kelly, Niagara’s own Piano Man

Mike Balsom
Special to The Local

After close to 30 years entertaining on cruise ships, Ed Kelly is hanging out his shingle as Niagara’s Piano Man.

The 49-year-old and his wife Claudia bought a home in the McNab area last April, and have been using the time ashore to make necessary renovations. While he’s not swinging a hammer, though, Kelly has been honing his craft, adding to his repertoire of close to 1,000 songs that include everything from the Beatles to Ed Sheeran, from Broadway to Spanish cantares.

Originally from Etobicoke, Kelly graduated from the music program at Humber College in 1992, where he was a recruiter for a cruise ship company. “It was a really good experience,” he says. “It was my first chance to be out on my own, and to work on my craft, my piano playing, and to learn to play in all kinds of situations on the ship.”

The 19-year-old vowed the recruiter, and signed his first contract to head out to the Atlantic aboard the Northern Pride in 1994. “It was a historic ship,” he says. “We went to Bermuda, But the salt air revived a site and born to revive a site and born to revive a site and born to revive a site and born to revive a site and born to revive a site and born to revive a site and born to revive a site and born to revive a site and born to revive a site and born to revive a site and born to revive a site and born to revive a site and born to revive a site and born to revive a site and born to revive a site and born to revive a site and born to revive a site and born to revive a site and born to revive a site and born to revive a site and born to revive a site and born to revive a site and born to revive a site and born to revive a site and born to revive a site and born to revive a site and born to revive a site and born to revive a site and born to revive a site and born to revive a site and born to revive a site and born to revive a site and born to revive a site and born to revive a site and born to revive a site and born to revive a site and born to revive a site and born to revive a site and born to revive a site and born to revive a site and born to revive a site and born to revive a site and born to revive a site and born to revive a site and born to revive a site and born to revive a site and born to revive a site and born to revive a site and born to revive a site and born to revive a site and born to revive a site and born to revive a site and born to revive a site and born to revive a site and born to revive a site and born to revive a site and born to revive a site and born to revive a site and born to revive a site and born to revive a site and born to revive a site and born to revive a site and born to revive a site and born to revive a site and born to revive a site and born to revive a site and born to revive a site and born to revive a site and born to revive a site and born to revive a site and born to revive a site and born to revive a site and born to revive a site and born to revive a site and born to revive a site and born to revive a site and born to revive a site and born to revive a site and born to revive a site and born to revive a site and born to revive a site and born to revive a site and born to revive a site and born to revive a site and born to revive a site and born to revive a site and born to revive a site and born to revive a site and born to revive a site and born to revive a site and born to revive a site and born to revive a site and born to revive a site and born to revive a site and born to revive a site and born to revive a site and born to revive a site and born to revive a site and born to revive a site and born to revive a site and born to revive a site and born to revive a site and born to revive a site and born to revive a site and born to revive a site and born to revive a site and born to revive a site and born to revive a site and born to revive a site and born to revive a site and born to revive a site and born to revive a site and born to revive a site and born to revive a site and born to revive a site and born to revive a site and born to revive a site and born to revive a site and born to revive a site and born to revive a site and born to revive a site and born to revive a site and born to revive a site and born to revive a site and born to revive a site and born to revive a site and born to revive a site and born to revive a site and born to revive a site and born to revive a site and born to revive a site and born to revive a site and born to revive a site and born to revive a site and born to revive a site and born to revive a site and born to revive a site and born to revive a site and born to revive a site and born to revive a site and born to revive a site and born to revive a site and born to revive a site and born to revive a site and born to revive a site and born to revive a site and born to revive a site and born to revive a site and born to revive a site and born to revive a site and born to revive a site and born to revive a site and born to revive a site and born to revive a site and born to revi...
Workshop to be on native plants

Penny Coles
The Local

Betty Knight recently gave a successful workshop through the Niagara-on-the-Lake Public Library on getting your garden ready for planting. It was so successful the library is offering a second workshop, this time so Knight can talk about what to plant in the soil, now that it’s been prepared.

Knight says she has loved gardening most of her life, learning at the ankles of her mother and her grandfather. And recently, with pandemic time on her hands, she has decided to become a master gardener.

She is still considered a master gardener-in-training. Although she’s completed all the necessary courses through the University of Guelph this last year, there are other hours to be completed, including a continuing education component — she has more than surpassed that requirement — and some volunteering, which she is accomplishing with her first Dishin’ the Dirt workshop held in March, and next week’s Diggin’ the Dirt, to be held May 5 at 7 p.m.

When researching toward her master gardener designation, she took a “deep dive” into studying local soils, and the differences to be found in the area. That also led her to learn about biodiversity, and how to plant a garden to attract pollinators.

When she planned her first workshop, she was hoping it would lead to a series, and it has, with the next workshop to discuss the importance of planting native plants, what exactly being a native plant means, talking about invasive species, and the importance of planting for pollinators.

What is aggressive versus invasive, what is a native or a native plant? With the many terms, and the importance of knowing the difference, Knight says on the library website, “it is starting to sound like ordering a coffee at Starbucks.”

She explains that while there are many plants people love, such as periwinkle, orange day lilies or lily of the valley as examples, they are invasive, not indigenous plants, and provide nothing of benefit to local insects, birds and bees and all the different native pollinators that are so important to all animals, “including us.”

Native plants, she says, have become “very voguish,” but it’s important to know what they are, their value, for example, to the caterpillars, and to the bird who eats the caterpillars, she explains. “And if they can’t find what they need, they’ll go elsewhere,” she adds.

At a time in Canada when we’re making a point of land awareness, and recognizing Indigenous people as stewards of the land, we need to be better stewards of our land, she says. “It’s important for us to honour that,” and to Knight, that includes choosing indigenous species of plants for our gardens. “Let’s put on our coat and wear it!”

When doing a virtual meeting for her first workshop, Knight felt it would be uncomfortable having faces stare at her while she talked, and asked for the video to be turned off. She realized during her presentation she was missing the reactions from those in attendance, and is looking forward this time to seeing those faces in what will feel more like an interactive workshop, and less like talking to an empty room, she says.

She also learned the importance of using scientific terms for the plants that are being discussed, realizing there can be some confusion when people use different names for different plants — for example, orange day lilies and tiger lilies are often thought of as the same, yet are “two very different things.”

As soon as her workshop is finished, she is asking Debbie Krause, program co-ordinator of the library, to send out emails she calls “grow me instead,” in other words, what to plant once the non-native, invasive plants are removed. The email to all participants will include a Niagara Peninsula Conservation Authority guide, “a fabulous document” on native plants that are suited to various conditions.

Meanwhile, Knight is spending much of her “pandemic free time” in her own garden, limited only by how much her “north of 60” body can withstand, addressing problems that include removing some invasive plants that have moved in.

She has also taken up her lawn of grass, an ecological equivalent of a “dead zone” to pollinators, to seed with micro clover, which provides a pollinator-friendly lawn.

Knight’s virtual workshop will be presented over Zoom. Log-in information will be emailed to all participants at least 24 hours before the event. Attendance is limited, so register as soon as possible at https://notlpubliclibrary.libnet.info/events?v=grid.
Festival offers International Jazz Day concert

Mike Balsam
Special to The Local

The TD Niagara Jazz Festival continues its 2021 season Friday, April 30 with its celebration of International Jazz Day.

In keeping with the “International” theme, executive director/artist producer Juliet Dunn has lined up talent from Holland (by way of Cuba), the U.S. and just down the QEW in Hamilton (via St. Catharines) for an eclectic and varied survey entitled Celebrating the Jazz Greats.

St. Catharines native James Bryan headlines the show, which kicks off at 7 p.m. Friday. Fans of the Jazz Festival may remember Bryan as the first musician to be presented via the Festival’s Facebook page last March. As the pandemic hit, Dunn flew into motion to find an alternative to the live appearance for which Bryan had been scheduled. He ended up playing for about an hour from his home in Hamilton.

For this week’s show, he’ll once again be live from his home, and once again, it’s an online gig to replace an in-person performance that had been planned before the current provincial restrictions went into effect.

“I’ve been working with a singer from Hamilton, Al Harvey,” he explained. “We were planning to do a show as a duo (at White Oaks), but that got canned for now. When Juliet reached out about International Jazz Day, I definitely put my hand up when she asked.”

Bryan, a Juno and Latin Grammy Award-winning guitarist, producer and songwriter, has worked with James Blunt, Fefe Dobson, Nelly Furtado, Jason Mraz and many others. He will be paying tribute Friday to the great collaborations between Ella Fitzgerald and Louis Armstrong. Because Harvey is not in his COVID bubble, however, he’ll be handling the tribute solo.

“It won’t be a problem for him to tackle those standards alone. His solo guitar versions of Bob Marley’s ‘Could You Be Loved,’ and Stevie Wonder’s ‘Isn’t She Lovely,’ from his 2017 album By Your Side, give those modern-day standards a fresh, Latin-influenced feel, shedding new light on the well-known numbers. He’s sure to bring more of the same Friday night.”

The show begins at 7 p.m. with Cuban-born pianist Abel Marcel (full name: Abel Marcel Cal-deron Arias). Now living in the Netherlands, Marcel is a classically-trained composer, arranger, producer, pianist and educator. The skilled improviser has recorded in styles from hip hop to salsa, as well as jazz and classical.

“He’s going to do some Jelly Roll Morton,” enthuses Dunn. “And he’ll do some Latin jazz and explain how the influence of Latin jazz fits into the world of jazz. He’ll tie all that together.”

Also on the bill Friday is a duo from western New York. Bassist Chris Northington hails from Rochester, while vocalist DeeAnn Dimeo was born in Niagara Falls, NY.

“Tve known Chris for probably 20 years,” says Dunn. “We’ve brought him over to do a gig, and he’s come over to jam a few times, but we’ve never featured him before in the festival. With the border closed, we figured it would be fun to have him as part of this show.”

Dunn reveals that the duo will be performing the Irving Berlin classic Blue Skies as well as My Funny Valentine, written by Rodger’s and Hart and made famous by Frank Sinatra and Chet Baker, among many others. Rounding out their pre-recorded set will be a Dimeo original composition and a jazzed-up version of a Michael Jackson number.

Following Friday’s show, the Jazz Festival continues on Sunday, May 2 with local duo Vox Violins as part of the Twilight Jazz Series.

Billed as 40 Years With Music, it promises to be a night of nostalgia, as husband and wife duo Mark Clifford and Beth Bartley look back on four decades of playing their Celtic-flavoured take on folk, rock and blues all across the region. Interpersed with their music will be video clips and plenty of stories gathered over that time. The show will be opened by young up-and-comers Alex George and Dexter Frank, two current Hunter College music students.

Future dates in the series include Khea Emmanuel performing the songs of Natalie Cole on May 30, and a tribute to Bill Evans featuring the Doug Mundy Duo scheduled for June 6. St. Catharines-born vocalist Sarah Jerrom and her band Dream Logic celebrate their debut CD release with a hometown show on June 20, while the series wraps up July 4 with a soul-oriented performance by Jillian Menzies of Ajax, Ontario.

Like last year, Dunn is holding out hope that most of these events, as well as the annual Summer Mardi Gras celebration scheduled for July 24 and a three-day Emancipation Day celebration being organized in concert with the FirstOntario Performing Arts Centre, will be held in front of an in-person audience.

“We keep planning for the worst case, which is just online,” she says, “because at least you’re not disappointed, and at least you know you have the show. And we’re employing musicians, and we’re bringing music to the people.”

But when things open up, they’ll be taking the Twilight Jazz shows to partner restaurants, and livestream from there, she says.

International Jazz Day: Celebrating the Jazz Greats is a free livestreamed show. The Twilight Jazz Series events are ticketed, and there are Dinner and a Show options available. The Jazz Festival is also offering a season pass at one low price. Visit niagarajazzfestival.com for more information.
Photographer finds kingfishers in Niagara Shores Park

When I was in Grade 3, an artistic young classmate would draw, on request, wonderful pictures of popular birds. One of the birds he would draw was that of a kingfisher. An odd little bird indeed, and I was curious of its shape and colouration. I have to admit though, in all my later years, I had never actually seen one, until quite recently.

Last year, with the pandemic putting a hold on my regular pursuit of underwater photography, to pass the time, I started photographing birds that visited our backyard feeders. We, like many folks in town, are graced with many beautiful birds and, for me, it has become a pleasing way to spend time. As the pandemic continued, I eventually started to photograph the migratory birds that spend the colder months at the mouth of the river. While venturing a bit further, at the Niagara Shores Park, I have been fortunate to get a few nice red-tailed hawk photos. It was on a walk along the shore there that I became aware of a small bird flying quite actively back and forth along the waterfront. When it landed on an overhanging branch I instantly recognized its distinctive profile in silhouette. A tuft of wild hair and long beak — a kingfisher. I was even fortunate to have witnessed, on a few occasions, the birds diving into the water and emerging with a minnow or round gob in its mouth. Over time, I started to attempt to get closer to it, but it would always fly away. I then became aware that there were at least a pair of them flying back and forth along the shore, occasionally coming to rest in tree branches along the way. That was last year, and I did get a few silhouette style shots but from a distance.

There are 95 species of kingfisher in the world. In our area, the belted kingfisher (Ceryle alcyon) represents the species. Kingfishers are described as “a family of robust birds, with large heads, strong, pointed bills, short tails and small feet.” I found that, like a species of swallow that visit the area, the kingfishers also nest in the banks along the shoreline. They emit a distinctive ‘chittering’ sound as they fly. It’s quite noticeable.

This year, I started to spend some time again at the Niagara Shores Park. The pond attracts a number of migratory waterfowl, Canada geese as well as hawks, and I’ve even spotted an osprey flying away with a fish in its talons. Again, I started to spot what I now believe to be several kingfishers. So, for the last few weeks, when I could, I would visit the area to become familiar with where they would land. There were a few spots I scouted out, and I attempted to be in place and in position, with my camera ready, to get that photograph.

One of the problems in this location is that, as the sun rose, I wanted to get a well-lit photo to show the beautiful colouration of the kingfisher. All I seemed to be able to get, however, were silhouettes. Whenever I tried to get into a position with the sun lighting my subject, it would fly away. They seemed to have an uncanny ability to avoid me and my lens. It became an early morning endeavour to get myself up and into position behind one of the many fallen trees along the Lake Ontario shoreline, sitting quietly, hoping the bird would perch within subject distance of me and my camera. The only consolation with this lonely pursuit was the lovely scene across the lake and the quiet lapping sound of the water along the shore. I tried several different spots with no luck. It was actually becoming quite humorous. On one occasion, I had found the perfect perch for them to land on. I even witnessed a pair using it several times. In position, sitting on a comfortable log, out of sight (at least I thought) with my lens already prefocused on the landing spot. Would they cooperate? Ha! Not on your life. They would land on both sides of the targeted perch, too far away again, and just sit there. I would then give up and try to carefully move to get into position where they were sitting. As I crept closer, they both flew to the original perch that I had hoped they would land on.

Sigh!

I have managed, fortunately, to capture some images of these curious little creatures on my early morning sojourns. On the last occasion visiting the area, I came across another birder, sitting comfortably, totally enclosed in a camouflaged blind. He had stationed himself in a prime position to capture an image of the kingfishers. Hmm, wonder if my wife could produce one of these with her sewing machine? Maybe next year!

The kingfisher presented a challenge to photograph from the right angle. (Photos by David Gilchrist)
Friesen wins big in NASCAR at Bristol

Mike Balsom Special to The Local

Four weeks after making his NASCAR Cup Series debut at the same track, Niagara-on-the-Lake’s Stewart Friesen’s return to Bristol Motor Speedway in Tennessee was a victorious one. The process to convert the hard surface at Bristol began back in January with the transport of 23,000 cubic feet of Bluff City Clay to the track. Friesen had the chance to test the track out on the March 28 weekend in two races, one in the NASCAR Camping World Truck Series and the other his debut in the NASCAR Cup Series in the 250-lap Food City Dirt Race. He placed 7th and 23rd respectively that weekend.

Friesen returned this past weekend and was trim-phant. He swept both races on the converted half-mile dirt track, earning feature victories and top prizes of $10,000 in both events at the World of Outlaws Bristol Throwdown.

Friday night’s Super DIRTCar Big Block Modifieds Series race marked the debut of that circuit at Bristol. With most racers running at tracks in the Northeast of the U.S. and Canada, Friesen couldn’t wait to get the number 44 Halmar-Friesen car onto the Bristol surface.

Mike Mahaney of King Ferry, New York was out in front for the first 17 laps of the 40-lap feature. Friesen, who started the race in the eighth position, methodical-ly worked his way through the rest of the field to pass Mahaney in lap 18. He held off challenges by the early leader as well as Tyler Dippel, Tim Sears Jr. and St. Catharines native Mat Williams to claim the weekend’s first Big Block Modified title at the Speedway.

In an interview following Friday’s contest, Friesen raved about the opportunity to run the Big Block Modifieds at Bristol. “I’ve wanted one of these (Bristol Motor Speedway Swoops) for so long since we started com- ing here with the truck,” he said.

He went on to add that his chance to watch the Sprint Car race, which would hold just before the Modifieds event, gave him some pointers for his own event. In that race, David Grav- el set a Bristol track record time of 13.6762 seconds while running on top, and Friesen tried to follow that same strategy. He also credited his NASCAR experience in March in both the Truck and Cup Series races for valuable lessons on the Bristol dirt.

A Saturday postpone- ment forced Friesen to wait another day to complete his clean sweep.

On Sunday, Mahaney once again jumped out to the early lead, but Friesen, who started in position 2, inch- ed forward to overtake him in lap 8. Mahaney climbed back out front on the next lap. Then, with 16 laps to go, Friesen moved up top on the turn once again to pass Mah- aney. He held on from there, using a pick-and-roll move with the 25th place Mar- cus Dinkins as the decoy to fight off a final-lap challenge from 22-year-old Demetrios Dinkis of Queensbury, New York, for his second win of the weekend.

The victory was Friesen’s third in a row in the Super DIRT cars series, having won April 10 at Can-Am Speedway in Lafargeville, New York.

Following the victory, he credited his team for develop- ing an excellent race plan Sunday, and commented on the quality of the track for modified racing, calling it the best at any track he’s ever seen.

Friesen and his truck team are off to Kan- sas Speedway in Kansas City this Saturday for the Wise Power 200, the next event on the NASCAR Camping World Truck Ser- ies schedule.
OBITUARY

PYNE, KEVIN WILLIAM — Born in Boston, Massachusetts on February 1st, 1965. Kevin was 100% in everything he did in his life. He leaves behind his beautiful bride LeaAnn Pyne, and daughter Chloe. If you were to think of Kevin, you would think of his gracious heart and helping hands, and the strength and comfort in them. Kevin is survived by his parents Gene and Dorothy Pyne, his twin brother Keith, and his sister Kelly. Kevin lived with a few simple credos, that are worth sharing. To live an honest life, and to be considered a good man, he was humble and capable to a fault. Anyone who had the grace to know him would swear up and down this is one of the finest men they’ve ever known. His gift to the world was his perpetual kindness and an open and warm caring for others that was infectious.

Kevin loved sports, athleticism and competition. Kevin and Keith played Basketball for Stamford High school, and went on to play together at Guelph University.

One of the testaments to his character is that he was a self-made man, having learned his own business, and started his own company from scratch. Again, his hands made all the difference to the people he worked with at Pump Pro Shop, and to his friends and clients across the globe. Kevin loved being an entrepreneur, and would take any chance to talk to friends and colleagues about new ventures and ideas. It’s a beautiful thing to reflect on the power of an individual. To all of us, Kevin was the big idea, and an incredible role model for how to live and live well with love and respect.

Kevin was known for having a rock for a moral compass, and he will be remembered for always doing what was right. Kevin’s most important self journey was his relationship with God. He spent endless hours in study and prayer, which were reflected in his eyes and his being, especially to those who had the gift of knowing him.

What would Kevin say of his sudden, unexpected early departure? The answer would leave an indelible mark on all of us, “It is God’s plan, that’s why, how you live your life is everything”.

Ode to the Best Man

That while the others fall he stands, the one with the spirit that’s always kind and gives.

The one who cares and listens to the others as they live.

The one who struggles silently and there he does make.

While though the storm surrounds him and yet onward he creates.

To him the silent call of spirit beats within his heart,

While though the storm surrounds him and yet onward he creates.

The one who stands so strong but yet without the sin of pride.

And leaves no soul untouched that in his presence parts.

To him the silent call of spirit beats within his heart,

The one who struggles silently and there no sound does make.

Kevin was 100% in everything he did

Born in Boston, Massachusetts on February 1st, 1965.

Arrangements in care of MORGAN FUNERAL HOME, 415 Regent St., Niagara-on-the-Lake, ON, 905-468-3255. A private family service was held on Thursday, April 15, 2021. Those who wish may make a memorial donation to the Cornerstone Community Church – Burundi, online http://www.notforgotten-burundi.ca/give-now, through the church donation to the Cornerstone Community Church – Burundi, online http://www.notforgotten-burundi.ca/give-now, through the church.

To all of us, Kevin was the big idea, and an incredible role model to the world was his perpetual kindness and an open and warm caring for others that was infectious.

Kevin loved sports, athleticism and competition. Kevin and Keith played Basketball for Stamford High school, and went on to play together at Guelph University.

One of the testaments to his character is that he was a self-made man, having learned his own business, and started his own company from scratch. Again, his hands made all the difference to the people he worked with at Pump Pro Shop, and to his friends and clients across the globe. Kevin loved being an entrepreneur, and would take any chance to talk to friends and colleagues about new ventures and ideas. It’s a beautiful thing to reflect on the power of an individual. To all of us, Kevin was the big idea, and an incredible role model for how to live and live well with love and respect.

Kevin was known for having a rock for a moral compass, and he will be remembered for always doing what was right. Kevin’s most important self journey was his relationship with God. He spent endless hours in study and prayer, which were reflected in his eyes and his being, especially to those who had the gift of knowing him.

What would Kevin say of his sudden, unexpected early departure? The answer would leave an indelible mark on all of us, “It is God’s plan, that’s why, how you live your life is everything”.

Ode to the Best Man

That while the others fall he stands, the one with the spirit that’s always kind and gives.

The one who cares and listens to the others as they live.

The one who struggles silently and there he does make.

While though the storm surrounds him and yet onward he creates.

To him the silent call of spirit beats within his heart,

And leaves no soul untouched that in his presence parts.

The one who stands so strong but yet without the sin of pride.

And leaves no soul untouched that in his presence parts.

To him the silent call of spirit beats within his heart,

The one who struggles silently and there no sound does make.

Kevin was 100% in everything he did

Born in Boston, Massachusetts on February 1st, 1965.

Arrangements in care of MORGAN FUNERAL HOME, 415 Regent St., Niagara-on-the-Lake, ON, 905-468-3255. A private family service was held on Thursday, April 15, 2021. Those who wish may make a memorial donation to the Cornerstone Community Church – Burundi, online http://www.notforgotten-burundi.ca/give-now, through the church.

To all of us, Kevin was the big idea, and an incredible role model to the world was his perpetual kindness and an open and warm caring for others that was infectious.

Kevin loved sports, athleticism and competition. Kevin and Keith played Basketball for Stamford High school, and went on to play together at Guelph University.

One of the testaments to his character is that he was a self-made man, having learned his own business, and started his own company from scratch. Again, his hands made all the difference to the people he worked with at Pump Pro Shop, and to his friends and clients across the globe. Kevin loved being an entrepreneur, and would take any chance to talk to friends and colleagues about new ventures and ideas. It’s a beautiful thing to reflect on the power of an individual. To all of us, Kevin was the big idea, and an incredible role model for how to live and live well with love and respect.

Kevin was known for having a rock for a moral compass, and he will be remembered for always doing what was right. Kevin’s most important self journey was his relationship with God. He spent endless hours in study and prayer, which were reflected in his eyes and his being, especially to those who had the gift of knowing him.

What would Kevin say of his sudden, unexpected early departure? The answer would leave an indelible mark on all of us, “It is God’s plan, that’s why, how you live your life is everything”.

Ode to the Best Man

That while the others fall he stands, the one with the spirit that’s always kind and gives.

The one who cares and listens to the others as they live.

The one who struggles silently and there he does make.

While though the storm surrounds him and yet onward he creates.

To him the silent call of spirit beats within his heart,

And leaves no soul untouched that in his presence parts.

The one who stands so strong but yet without the sin of pride.

And leaves no soul untouched that in his presence parts.

To him the silent call of spirit beats within his heart,
2020 BETTER NEWSPAPER COMPETITION

Award Winner

General Excellence
(Class 4/circ. 6,500 - 9,999)

A prominent, good quality photo and local news are front and centre for readers picking up The Niagara-on-the-Lake Local. It includes excellent local news and solid community reporting. There were photos with almost every story. The arts coverage and special sections (School page, holiday, new year new interior) reflect the fact that a community newspaper should serve readers of all ages. This is what a community newspaper should feel like.

Best Editorial
(circ. under 9,999)

Well developed. A good use of getting an emotional response from the reader. Good tie-in of an international incident that the world watched, to a national incident where probably not enough people watched.

Best Feature/News Series
(circ. under 9,999)

Penny Coles imbues her stories about the life of a dying man with beauty and dignity. She respects and honours the task she’s been given. She doesn’t shy away from sadness and regret but reveals how, when nurtured, they can be transformed into something deeply meaningful.

The OCNA is a non-profit industry association comprised of roughly 240 member newspapers located throughout the province. There were 1450 entries for the 2020 Better Newspaper Competition.