



Volunteer
leads by
example
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Help match \$10,000 donation

Kaitlyn Eymann, holding Luca Mirabella, with Walker Meleskie, Delilah Colvin, Olive Cooper, Dawson Paget, and McKenna Tissen from the Niagara Nursery School and Child Care Centre, are celebrating! The nursery school has been offered an anonymous matching donation of \$10,000, to help get to their \$100,000 goal for the expansion of the Anderson Lane facility. The donations will help them open their new space by September, and alleviate some of the 150 names on their waiting list. For more information on the expansion, and details on how to donate, visit niagaranurseryschool.ca. (Photo supplied)

Family deals with COVID death in long-term care

Penny Coles
The Local

Although vaccinations have greatly reduced the number of residents dying of COVID in long-term care, they arrived too late to save almost 4,000 seniors who were infected in one of the homes across Ontario.

Arnold German, long-time Niagara-on-the-Lake resident, was one of them, his death a result of an outbreak early this year at Niagara Long Term Care on Wellington Street.

“They had done really well, right up until early January,” says his daughter, Georgina German Keller. “We were really happy with the home, and we thought we were coming out of COVID. They had kept their residents safe for 10 months. But once it hit, it spread like wildfire.”

Her father died Jan. 31, at

the home, after a short stay at the Niagara Falls hospital.

All three long-term care homes in NOTL had managed to escape the infection until that point, although Pleasant Manor also battled through a much more contained outbreak around the same time.

At Niagara Long Term Care, Keller says, the outbreak began on the third floor, which is the most secure, for residents suffering from dementia. With a high number of community cases at that time, COVID was introduced by a staff member, who tested positive Jan. 2, and very quickly, protocols were put into place to reduce its spread.

Keller says there were regular online meetings to update family members of all residents, and they were

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Inclusivity, diversity sensitive issues that require care

Penny Coles
The Local

In the week since Kiera Sangster, a member of the town’s inclusivity committee, spoke to council about their progress and a recent survey they conducted, she has received “quite a bit of backlash” from her presentation.

It has made her more aware than ever of some of the problems the town is facing, and the importance of

the work of the committee.

“Things are percolating under the surface in town,” she said. “When you bring them to the surface, people start speaking out both for and against. What we do has to be done with care. We have to take our time — these are sensitive topics.”

Going through the results of the online survey launched by the committee earlier this year, and finalized to be presented to council last week, Sangster

told councillors almost half of the people who responded see Niagara-on-the-Lake as neither diverse nor inclusive.

Those who have offered their comments in the survey “are taking a risk letting us into their feelings and opinions. We have to be mindful of that,” said Sangster. “It’s a delicate time.”

The survey findings indicate there is work to be done to improve the diversity and inclusivity of the NOTL

community, work that will be done through the formation of focus groups to look at four particular areas of concern as identified by the survey and its accompanying comments.

And in the days since the presentation, she said, she has heard some positive comments, and some very negative ones, reinforcing the need for the committee, the work it is undertaking, and the importance of being sensitive and meticulous

with what is presented to council.

Sangster explained the survey, launched through the town’s online Join the Conversation page on its website, was intended “to provide a lens into diversity and inclusion in NOTL, offering insights into people who make up the community, people’s experiences, and inclusion and diversity issues in the community.”

She explained to council members that the results

of the survey, which drew 173 respondents, will allow the committee “to develop meaningful, well-defined priorities, and provide informed guidance to counsel staff and council members, with the ultimate goal of making NOTL a more inclusive and welcoming community.”

Only 8.1 per cent of the respondents said they believe NOTL is both diverse

Continued on page 3



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SORE speaks out about Solmar subdivision

Penny Coles
The Local

The town has now received a complete application for the subdivision planned by Benny Marotta on John and Charlotte Streets, bordering the Rand Estate property.

SORE (Save our Rand Estate) members have been involved in all the legal challenges regarding the three John Street East properties and the one on Charlotte Street, and they intend to be involved in discussions

about the subdivision.

Benny Marotta of Solmar first presented a concept of the subdivision in January, 2018, at a meeting about Randwood at the community centre.

The current application proposes a significant density increase to what was originally presented, with 125 single family homes and 66 semi-detached, says SORE spokesperson Lyle Hall.

"SORE definitely intends to fight Mr. Marotta's latest attempt to flout NOTL development

standards," says Hall. "Our focus is, and always has been, on the entire Rand Estate.

"We are not opposed to development, but his proposed subdivision plan is a completely inappropriate, high-density development that would leave almost every square inch of the back half of the Rand Estate covered with houses."

Marotta is asking for Official Plan and zoning amendments to rezone a triangle of agricultural property so that the complete parcel will be residential and open space. His application refers to the proposal as low density.

In an emailed response to questions, Marotta said this proposal is not high density, and has fewer lots than the previous application.

The complete property is already considered within the urban boundary in the Niagara Region Official Plan.

"It's far worse than Mr. Marotta's original subdivision plan that he showed the community at the public meeting in early 2018," says Hall. "By our count he's added approximately 30 more houses. He made a big deal out of claiming that he was misunderstood and just wanted to make NOTL even more beautiful. This is a bizarre way of showing that."

The next step for SORE is to await the Conservation Review Board in July, says Hall, which will provide advice on the town's

intention to designate Marotta properties as heritage, under the direction of the previous council in August of 2018.

SORE is a party to that hearing and will be presenting evidence, says Hall. "From there, the heritage designation question will go back to council for a final decision. After that, the Marotta companies (Solmar and Two Sisters Resorts) need an official plan amendment, a zoning bylaw amendment and approval of a subdivision plan to proceed with this proposal."

SORE will continue to defend the integrity of the Rand Estate and of Old Town NOTL, says Hall.

"We'll be only too happy to see Mr. Marotta at the Conservation Review Board, the Local Planning Appeal Tribunal, and in the courts, if needed.

We know what we're doing, we have lined up and continue to use a team of leading experts

to assist us . . . and we haven't lost a court or tribunal challenge yet to Mr. Marotta. Mr. Marotta should know we are not going away."

Lord Mayor Betty Disero says she can't comment on whether this application is an increase in density over what was presented as a concept, because that never came before council.

She is also waiting to hear the results of the Conservation Review Board hearing, she says, and her goal of preserving the heritage aspects of the properties remains paramount.

"There's still a long way to go," says Disero, "and a lot of heritage issues that need to be resolved. My thought is always to figure out what needs to be preserved and protected first."

The response to SORE's most recent call to action, says Hall, via emailed alerts and website postings, "has been overwhelming. We are not a voice in

the dark . . . there is substantial opposition to Mr. Marotta's proposal."

The next step for the town to address the subdivision application will be a virtual Open House on Tuesday, June 15, at 5 p.m.

That will be followed by a virtual public meeting on Wednesday, July 14, at 5 p.m.

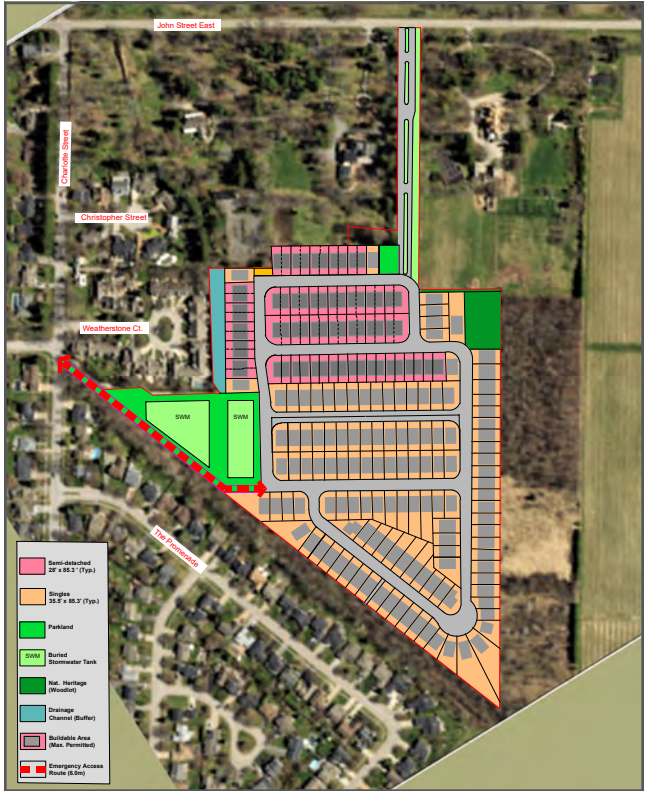
To register for the Open House, email Mark Iamarino at mark.iamarino@notl.com or call him at 905-468-6423.

To register for the public meeting, email Peter Todd at peter.todd@notl.com or call him at 905-468-3061, ext. 228.

We recommend you register now so that your place is secured and you do not forget.

Written comments can be emailed to Peter Todd.

The application is posted on the Town's website at notl.com/content/public-notice-under-planning-act.



SORE members have provided this John and Charlotte subdivision graphic superimposed on a aerial view of the property.

St. Davids residents fed up with dust and dirt

Penny Coles
The Local

The residents of Hickory Avenue in St. Davids have run out of patience.

Their emails to Lord Mayor Betty Disero and town staff indicate their frustration, as they prepare to face another summer without a solution to the dust bowl that is created when cars drive along the privately-owned and unpaved Dyck Lane, which borders their subdivision.

The problem goes back more than a decade, still with no resolution, other than the spreading of sodium chloride to temporarily reduce the dust.

The current council is the third one residents have approached for help.

They say the dust affects their health and their quality of life. They can't enjoy their backyard or an outdoor meal, and patio tables, chairs and even plants have to be washed down daily during the summer.

There have been presentations to council going back to 2015, petitions signed by the residents, and correspondence repeating their quest for the town to take responsibility for the situation.

In recent emails from residents to the lord mayor and councillors, a deadline of May 8 has been set for a resolution. Their frustration is increasing, and the only fall-back is to threaten to withdraw support in the next municipal election.

Leading up to the 2014 election, Disero, then a first-time candidate for councillor, about the issue, promised to find a solution. There was no progress that term of council, but she again promised she would work to find a solution when she was running for lord mayor.

Last fall, Disero said staff were directed to "finalize and complete negotiations with all interested parties," and to achieve an amenable agreement on the use of Dyck Lane. If a solution couldn't be

achieved by Dec. 1, the town would impose "an alternate traffic pattern" to resolve the matter.

That also didn't happen, and with all discussions taking place in closed sessions of council, Disero says she recognizes residents are increasingly frustrated, not knowing the solution under discussion or the hold-up in settling it.

Bound by the confidentiality of closed sessions of council, Disero can only say it's a real estate issue, and discussions are ongoing with the property owners.

"I get that they're frustrated. I'm frustrated too," says Disero. "There are some issues that just take time, and this is one of them. We were hoping for a solution by December. Now we're working our way through the process, and we'll get to it."

She hopes to have it settled for this summer, but can't make any promises, she says, because it involves not just the town, but the owners of the private lane.





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Cindi Loforti,
Sales Representative

1507 NIAGARA STONE ROAD
Office: 905.468.9229
Email: Cindi@McGarrRealty.com

McGarr Realty Corp., Brokerage is pleased to Welcome Cynthia (Cindi) Loforti, Sales Representative to our Niagara-on-the-Lake office. Cindi has established a reputation within the community via her work involving community care, outstanding knowledge of the new construction business in Niagara and surrounding communities and high business ethics that have resulted in her establishing a real estate career.

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Sally McGarr, Founder and Broker of Record.

Cindi attributes her success to her comprehensive marketing and advertising strategies, exclusive contact network, and unparalleled insight into communities of Niagara-on-the-Lake, Old Town, Virgil, St. Davids and Queenston. With an understanding that no two clients are alike, she looks forward to working with clients in all phases of life—from first-time buyers to luxury developers, seasoned sellers and beyond.

Active in our community, Cindi is constantly participating in local events and raising donations for countless charities. She serves as Chair for Habitat for Humanity Niagara and believes that family, giving back and friendship is incredibly important and an integral part of life. Cindi's persistent approach is one of the many reasons why her passion for business continues to flourish.

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Committee will move forward with focus groups

Continued from page 1

and inclusive, Sangster said, and 97.6 per cent said NOTL would benefit from diversity and inclusion.

While 72.1 per cent of those who responded said they feel they belong in NOTL, almost 28 per cent feel that they do not belong in town, some or all of the time.

Twenty-four per cent indicated they have felt unwelcome as a customer or an employee in a NOTL business, or have witnessed or heard about discrimination in a NOTL business.

Out of 12 respondents who identify as having a disability, five indicated they have experienced exclusion or accessibility issues.

Thirty-six per cent of those who answered said they have experienced hostility or felt unwelcome treatment as a result of how long they have lived in NOTL, and 18.5 per cent indicated their socio-economic status has made it difficult to access programs, activities or events in NOTL.

Eighty-two per cent said they are interested in learning about issues related to diversity and inclusion, including racial, gender, ethnic, sexual orientation or religious identities.

"To develop a deeper understanding of these issues, we need to understand why people responded in the way they did," said Sangster.

"This can be achieved by exploring specific areas of concerns identified in the survey, best accomplished by conducting focus groups."

As a result of comments received, four areas of concerns were identified, she said.

One is marginalization and discriminatory treatment of seasonal farmworkers, with some of the comments from those who took the survey put together for councillors. "I am appalled at the stories I have heard

about people of colour having racial slurs hurled at them, or things thrown at them, based solely on the colour of their skin. The prejudice specifically towards migrant workers is unacceptable and needs to be called out. We need to expose this unacceptable behaviour and ensure the whole community knows it will not be tolerated," were the comments on that issue.

Discriminatory treatment of racialized residents, workers and visitors was the second area of concern. "It is particularly troubling to see the way field workers, Shaw's artists, hotel workers and our other more diverse local workers are treated by some locals, and how they assume they are not residents or are lesser as renters, despite directly driving the economy of the town with their work," were some of the comments from that group.

Negative treatment of Shaw Festival artists and employees by landlords and business owners was the third concern, with these comments: "NOTL is a difficult community to get 'in' and as someone who cannot afford to live in NOTL or belong to its social clubs, even though I work here full time, I often feel like an outsider. I would say racism, homophobia, xenophobia, ableism, religious discrimination, sexism are all prevalent in this community. But also classism. Classism is very real in NOTL."

Lack of accessibility for people who use mobility aids or are visually impaired was the fourth identified issue, with these comments: "A lot of businesses are not accessible by wheelchair or other assistive equipment. That needs to change," and "more accessibility is needed for people with visual impairment."

Other topics of interest include lack of diversity among town leaders, said Sangster, lack of communi-

ty resources, little to no attempts to keep young people in town, Torontonism, out-of-townism, resentment toward new residents and visitors, treatment towards individuals who identify with LGBTQ2+, diversity and inclusion education and outreach, lack of transportation and affordable housing, social and economic bias, and classism.

Survey respondents were asked whether they wanted to participate in future focus groups, and about 90 people said yes. Over the coming weeks they will be contacted, and the committee will determine the best options for organizing focus groups, which will be virtual in light of the ongoing pandemic restrictions, says Sangster.

She is expecting two focus groups for each of the four topics brought forward from the survey, with eight to 10 members in each group.

From the beginning of her work with the inclusivity committee, she says, she has felt the weight of the responsibility for what the committee is trying to accomplish.

She has felt a lack of acceptance herself, and would like to know that others "will never feel that way again."

It's a huge task, she says, "but if we start now, we're ahead of the game. If we don't, we'll be waiting, and waiting and waiting. And it will never happen."

We're at a time when there is a "wave happening, and we have to get on board. We have the support. We're

not just this small town at the end of a street. This is happening around the world."

Sangster says she feels optimistic for the future.

"Humans are resilient. We have hearts. We have families, and we all have the same base. There is no reason we can't do this as a community."

After the conclusion of these focus groups, the committee will present information and suggestions from each area of concern to develop a final report and recommendations for council, hopefully by June or July.

"Inclusion and diversity are once again changing how we look at ourselves, and the world around us," said Sangster.



Kiera Sangster says the committee will take its time to develop a final report for council — one that is sensitive and meticulous. (Photo supplied)

Shaw moves to outdoor venues with first July performances

Local Staff The Local

As Ontario remains under a province-wide emergency and stay-at-home order, the Shaw Festival is now forced to delay the start of the 2021 season to early July.

In keeping with the commitment to presenting the current playbill in the safest way possible for both audience and company members, early performances of *Charley's Aunt* and the full run of *The Devil's Disciple* will now move to new outdoor venues.

Bernard Shaw's melodrama kicks off the series of al fresco shows on July 6, at a newly raised outdoor stage in front of the Jackie Maxwell Studio Theatre. Beginning July 7, audiences can enjoy *Charley's Aunt* under a canopied stage set

amid the Shaw Festival gardens.

A *Short History of Niagara*, a commissioned puppetry piece originally set at Fort George, moves to the Festival grounds with shows starting on July 29.

"The opportunity to present these shows amid the beauty and magic of Niagara's outdoors — in the light of day or under the early evening stars — allows us all to experience them in an entirely new and special way," said artistic director Tim Carroll. "Theatre is about connection — human connection — and our outdoor performances are one way that more of us can come together safely and experience live theatre again."

"The recent increase in vaccination rates, coupled with all of our continued adherence to public health

guidelines, will hopefully result in a rapid decline in case numbers over the summer months," added executive director Tim Jennings.

"We continue to remain optimistic that our American patrons will also be allowed to join us at The Shaw and in Niagara-on-the-Lake before the end of summer."

When it is safe to do so, The Shaw plans to welcome audiences back indoors for reduced capacity performances of *Flush* at the Royal George Theatre, starting July 8, and *Sherlock Holmes and The Raven's Curse* at the Festival Theatre, beginning July 23.

As restrictions ease further, *Charley's Aunt* will move back to the Royal George Theatre's stage in August.

Patrons with questions or concerns regarding their tickets can call the

Shaw Festival Box Office at 1-800-511-7429, Monday to Saturday from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m., or email boxoffice@shawfest.com.

The Shaw Festival plans to present the rest of its 2021 season as per the revised schedule, however, performances will only take place if deemed safe to do so. In addition to following and exceeding the directives of local, provincial and federal governments and their respective public health agencies, The Shaw has implemented a robust Duty of Care initiative. These measures include significant infrastructure improvements and a commitment to ensuring the health and safety of audiences, company members and communities.

For the most up-to-date information, visit shawfest.com.

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Coyote sightings a joy for nature lover

David Gilchrist
Special to The Local

Those of us who are fortunate to call Niagara-on-the-Lake home are blessed in many ways. For me, living in a town that has some wonderful outdoor areas so close is one of those blessings. With these outdoor areas comes the opportunity to view and photograph a variety of wildlife. On one recent morning walk, for example, I was able to take photographs of a muskrat, a juvenile bald eagle, several birds and a coyote minutes from the house.

Then on an early Tuesday morning walk, I was able to get a few photos of two coyotes. It was not the best condition, with low light, but interesting. These were taken in the forested area between the former hospital building and Fort George. They passed by me, and a couple who had been walking on the path. They minded their own business, marking territory, and trotted past the fort toward the river.

In the Old Town, with One Mile Creek running through it, we can often see some of the town's wildlife without leaving our backyards. Earlier this year, I came across three deer following the creek bed, crossing streets, and continuing through town on this route. In the last few weeks people have been reporting a large "white" coyote wandering through their backyards, crossing streets and, like the deer, following the creek bed through town. Often, with sightings like this comes concerns.

I came across the so-called "white coyote" early Saturday morning, as both of us wandered through the Old Town. Although it stopped to look at me a few times, it did its best to avoid me, disappearing behind houses, following the creek bed or meandering down roads. It was, for me,

a fortunate experience, as I was able to get a few photos during this brief encounter. Like the deer spotted earlier this year, a special encounter!

Coyotes in the Old Town are not an unusual sighting. They have been living in the town for decades. Many of us were alarmed this winter by the story of hobbyist hunters tracking down coyotes with dogs and killing them in the rural areas. Often believed to be a nuisance, local grape grower Warren Dyck, pointed out their importance in controlling mice and rodents that damage grape plants when they chew on them.

In a 2019 article about the situation, The Local interviewed the founder and executive director of Coyote Watch Canada, Lesley Sampson.

She had done much research on coyotes that, at that time, were in the William street area of the Old Town. Going back more than two decades ago, she also made a presentation to town council emphasizing the benefits of an educational program that would emphasize how residents and coyotes could co-exist comfortably. It was disappointing that the council of the time did not initiate such a program, despite the best efforts of Bob Howse, our town clerk then. An educational program, she felt, should have been continued to address the issue.

Two concerns that Sampson also pointed out at a 2019 meeting at the community centre was the problem with people possibly feeding them. This, she felt, was a main factor which may contribute to them becoming a nuisance. Also of concern was the oft-used misnomer 'coywolf,' which she felt makes them sound more dangerous than they actually are. It's a nickname that is being used more commonly as if the species is new, when in fact it has

been around for over a century. When western coyotes extended their range east and mated with the eastern wolf, the result was the eastern coyote, the species we see in town.

Given the amount of development and infilling that has occurred since then, comes the realization that much of the habitat for wildlife is gone, and they have been displaced. So, we need to re-examine the factors that allow for a coexistence.

The Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources outlines some of the ways this can be achieved:

Prevent encounters with coyotes

How to make your property uninviting: Landowners are responsible for preventing problems with coyotes by limiting attractants and discouraging them from damaging their property.

You may not use poisons or adhesives to kill, capture or injure coyotes, including to protect your property.

How to limit attractants

Properly store and maintain garbage containers to help prevent coyotes from becoming a problem.

Keep pet food indoors.

Put garbage out the morning of a scheduled pickup.

Use enclosed composting bins rather than exposed piles.

Pick ripe fruit and seed from trees and remove fallen fruit from the ground.

Protect vegetable gardens with heavy-duty garden fences or place vegetable plants in a greenhouse.

Discourage coyotes from entering your property

Use motion-sensitive lighting and/or motion-activated sprinkler systems to make your property less attractive to coyotes and other nocturnal wildlife.

Put up a two-metre high fence that extends at least 20 centimetres underground



A pair of coyotes seen as they wandered near Fort George Tuesday probably includes the large, 'white' coyote residents have been seeing in town. "It's not really white, as my wife pointed out when she examined the photos," says photographer David Gilchrist, "but has enough white in face and body to make it stand out from others."

as coyotes may dig under a barrier.

Install a roller system to the top of your fence so animals can't gain a foothold.

Clear away bushes and dense weeds near your home where coyotes may find cover and small animals.

Close off spaces under porches, decks and sheds. Coyotes use these areas for

denning and raising their young.

Since coyotes are opportunistic feeders, small pets such as dogs and cats may be seen as prey. It is advised to watch them carefully if your dog is in the backyard and don't allow cats to wander the neighbourhood.

Fact sheets entitled Coyote Proofing Your Property, Encounters with Coyotes

and Protecting Your Property can be found at ontario.ca

As more people move to our wonderful town, it is hoped they can embrace the wildlife that, in many ways, enhances our life here. Casual sightings of animals like our 'white' coyote" in local neighbourhoods should be, with appropriate cautions, a satisfying experience.

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Youth advisory council projects moving forward

Penny Coles
The Local

Janvi Ganatra is wrapping up her term with the Lord Mayor's Youth Advisory Council, preparing to head off to university in the fall, but first, there are some ambitious goals to be accomplished before the school year comes to an end.

She is delighted to have built the membership to 15 young people from the community, the largest council since they began meeting in 2017, and all are active, involved members, she says.

The Grade 12 A.N. Meyer student says all but three of the members will be returning to the council next fall, but they all have their work to do before the summer break.

The council welcomes youth from NOTL from public school to high school, ages 13

to 18. They meet every other week, alternating meetings of the council with subcommittee meetings.

The subcommittees, with tasks divided between them, Ganatra says, "gives every member an opportunity to feel involved and productive."

Their virtual meetings came together pretty easily, with students already adapting to online classes, and in some ways have been easier, without the need for transportation for the students, she says.

They've divided the group into three subcommittees, including outreach, advocacy and mental wellness.

Mental wellness includes physical and mental health issues; advocacy refers to local issues, including social engagement; and outreach focuses on social media and events for the enjoyment of the youth community.

The outreach committee, mentored by local businesswoman Maria Mavridis, has organized virtual events such as a trivia night, one just for youth, the other for families, both well-attended, says Ganatra. There will likely be one more this month or in June.

Their current project, to reach out to youth in the community and encourage "overall wellness," is partnering with local businesses to put together gift packages for kids from NOTL ages 13-18. They hope for "an assortment of items such as gift cards, local vouchers, and small trinkets," that will help "lift the spirits" of NOTL's youth during these times.

Local businesses interested in donating items to go in these packages can contact Lauren Kruitbosch, the town's community engagement coordinator, at lauren.kruitbosch@notl.com, or Ganatra at janvi-ganatra03@gmail.com by May 18. All donors will be acknowledged publicly on the town and Lord Mayor Youth Advisory Council's social media pages, as well as on a donors list included in each package.

The advocacy group, mentored by Lord Mayor Betty Disero, is looking at ways to reduce littering. There will be a survey available on the council's social media, for youth to help determine which areas of town are subject to the most litter, with a goal of adding more garbage receptacles in those areas, say Ganatra.

One of the past accomplishments of the council, the Mental Health and Wellness Conference for Grade 8 students from all NOTL schools, was held as a virtual series of speakers last year, and this spring will feature videos of speakers who have been part of the conference in the past. The topics will address mental health issues, but are expected to focus on some of the issues facing youth during the pandemic, including social isolation.

With help from Catherine Goerzen from the NOTL Rotary Club, the mentor of the wellness committee, co-chair Julia King says the youth council is sharing tips and motivational advice on Instagram, @lmyacnotl. They are also working on modifying the annual

Mental Health and Wellness Conference, to continue it online. "We are putting together a collection of pre-recorded clips from local mental health and wellness doctors, advocates and practitioners," to have a Livestream video that can be viewed by the youth in NOTL, sometime later in May, she says.

The group has been getting great support from the town, and from the Niagara-on-the-Lake Rotary Club, which has become more involved with the council, making it an Interact Group through the Rotary Club. That partnership helps to provide funding and resources for youth council initiatives, says Ganatra.

As she prepares to finish her high school year, online, and with only a virtual graduation ahead, Ganatra says this last year as chair, and her four years with the youth council, have helped her grow, and develop leadership skills that will stand her in good stead for the future.

She looks forward to seeing this year's goals accomplished, she says, and reflects that the advisory council work has been one more way to stay in touch and keep busy, online, as most social contact has been virtual since schools are closed.

Although all teens are finding the lack of in-person con-

tact with their friends challenging, her impression is that most are coping well. For those who aren't, she hopes the wellness videos will help them by reassuring them they aren't alone, and by letting them know how to reach out if they need help.

"Everyone is dealing with something different," she says, but she finds the biggest issue for most is the constant change regarding what is happening at school, and also changing social restrictions.

"School has changed three or four times during the pandemic. You're just trying to get used to something and it changes again. It's the same with social contacts. We're used to having a social life, connecting with people, but that keeps changing too. Everyone finds that hard."

Ganatra, who will study systems design engineering at the University of Waterloo in the fall, says as she thinks about all the uncertainties of what university will look like, she copes by taking life one step at a time, doing what she can, and trying not to worry about a future over which she has no control.

"I try to give my attention to one thing, the next thing in front of me. I plan for the future, but only one step at a time, and still live in the moment, so I don't miss what's happening now."

Vaccination eligibility expands as NOTL clinics planned

Penny Coles
The Local

The good news about vaccinations is there are two days of clinics planned at the Niagara-on-the-Lake community centre, May 15 and 16.

And apart from the designated hot spots, where those 18 and over can be vaccinated, those 55 and older can book a vaccination at one of the public health community clinics through the province's online portal at [Ontario.ca/book-vaccine](https://ontario.ca/book-vaccine), or by phoning 1-833-943-3900. That includes the NOTL clinics.

The age limit is expected to be lowered later this week to allow appointments for people aged 50 and up.

Next week, said Dr. Mustafa Hirji, Niagara's acting chief medical officer, the age is expected to be lowered to 40-plus, then during the week of May 17 it goes down to 30-plus, and by the last week of May, it should be available to anyone 18 and older.

The number of available appointments will depend on how much vaccine the region receives, but he was expecting a good amount to come this way.

Ontario is expected to receive about 50 per cent more vaccine than originally promised in the coming weeks, but it will go to the hot spots across the province, said Hirji.

Vaccination eligibility is opening up to include people with some high-risk health conditions, and for caregivers, and will be further opened up in coming weeks for those with other medical conditions.

Also in the coming days, people who can't work from home and fall into the province's list of essential workers

should be eligible. That list is expected to be expanded next week.

For a complete list of who can be vaccinated and when, visit COVID-19.ontario.ca.

The bad news on the vaccination front is the shortage of the AstraZeneca vaccine is affecting the ability of pharmacies and primary care doctors to offer vaccinations, said Hirji.

Sean Simpson of Simpson's Pharmacy says he hasn't been able to make any new appointments for more than a week, and officially used up the last of his vaccine Monday.

He has no confirmation of any on its way, and although that could change, he's not expecting it any time soon.

He's disappointed with the provincial decision from the beginning of the vaccination roll-out, a decision he calls "nonsense," to only offer AstraZeneca to pharmacies, based on the ultra-cold temperatures needed for storage of Moderna and Pfizer.

Those vaccines both have a fridge life of five days, and pharmacies can handle that, as they do other medications, says Simpson.

With the possibility of vaccinating 50 people or more a day, he could effectively control appointments to ensure no vaccine goes to waste, he says.

Ontario is now considering a pilot project to send Pfizer and Moderna to pharmacies, that could have been done from the start of the roll-out, as other provinces have done, says Simpson.

At this point, he is playing a waiting game, with no expectation of vaccine delivery "any time soon."

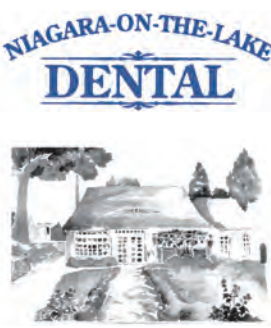
Meanwhile he has a waiting list of more than 1,000

people, eligible according to their age, for both the Virgil pharmacy and the King Street Apothecary. There may be some overlap, he says, and some who have received vaccinations elsewhere, but there are still a lot of people waiting for vaccinations. His message remains, "sign up on any list you can find, and take the first appointment you're offered."

Julie Dyck of Stone Road Pharmacy is in a similar predicament, out of vaccine, and with no idea of when to expect her next shipment. She has administered the 300 doses she received, holding evening clinics to accommodate locals, and still has a waiting list.

"It's really hard to say no to people," she says. "But they understand."

She would love to be part of the provincial pilot project for the other vaccines, and will be happy to administer whatever doses come her way, she says.



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EDITORIAL

Vaccinations still the ticket on the road to recovery

Support policies in place for economic recovery

The news this week seems to be all about vaccinations.

And it just gets more and more confusing. Who is eligible, where is it being offered, is one vaccine safer than the other? The advice of medical experts seems to be going off in different directions, and that is not helpful.

On the one hand, all vaccinations available in Canada are approved in Canada, considered safe and effective.

The loudest message is take whatever you can get first.

The other message, though, from the National Advisory Committee on Immunization (NACI), is if you have the choice, mRNA vaccines (Pfizer and Moderna) are “preferred” over the viral vector-based ones (AstraZeneca, Johnson & Johnson).

NACI also says individuals should have the information necessary to make a choice, and should weigh their own risk.

This is creating more hesitancy now about AstraZeneca. Although we’re still told the risk is minuscule, we’re starting to question our experts, and their

motives.

The press has been criticized for screaming headlines that make people fearful and hesitant, but really, isn’t it the confusing messaging that is creating that?

The concern about AstraZeneca is not an issue this week, with the vaccination scarce, a situation not expected to change in the near future, and more availability of Pfizer and Moderna.

The eligibility for vaccinations is opening up in the coming days and weeks, by age, medical conditions, and other considerations, including for essential workers.

Despite the confusion, our prime minister is recommending Canadians take what is offered to them first. Most medical experts are reinforcing that. Each of us as individuals has to make our own decision.

However, the one message we are hearing that shouldn’t be questioned is that the quickest way back to normal is to get as many people vaccinated as possible.

The number of COVID cas-

es is flattening in Ontario, down a little from recent weeks.

What hasn’t improved yet is the strain on our health care system, with still high numbers of admissions to hospitals and intensive care units, while necessary, life-saving surgeries are on hold.

There will be no normal for us until hospitals and ICUs are out of the danger zone. What will get us there is continuing to stay at home, limit social contacts, and do what we can to help the number of those vaccinated rise. We can be part of that, or not. Our choice. But the more of us on board, the sooner we get there.

One overwhelming concern, however, is that we are hearing more and more about those who are anxious and depressed, the increasing number of people suffering from mental health issues, for whom getting back to normal is too far in the future.

The town continues to ask us to be kind. Kind people continue to ask us to be kind.

Doing something positive for someone else, reaching out to our friends, and helping our neighbours will lift their spirits. And ours. Buy a coffee, or a meal for someone. Take a deep breath and look around, find something that you are grateful for, and make sure you are especially grateful to all the people who are working in all the essential places we rely on. Ask how they are doing, and say thank you for being there for us. Your thanks may make their day, and their reaction may make yours.

We need to continue focusing on the finish line, even though it’s blurry at the moment.

Taking the vaccination you’re offered, and following provincial regulations, as tired as we are of those restrictions, will get us there.

Penny Coles
The Local



Andrea Kaiser
Special to The Local

Last week, I was most disappointed to see that the Conservative Member of Parliament for Niagara Falls authored a column that omitted key facts about the federal government’s support for small businesses and the tourism sector.

While I understand that part of his role as a member of the Official Opposition involves criticizing the government’s policies, I do not believe that it is appropriate to leave out relevant details in communications to constituents.

In particular, I believe it is worth noting that the Canada Emergency Wage Subsidy (CEWS), which has helped keep more than 5.3 million Canadians employed during the pandemic, was set to expire in June of this year, but is being extended to September 2021, to help businesses get through the summer. Our Conservative Member of Parliament criticized this extension in his column as inadequate, but then stood up in the House of Commons to vote against extending it at all. His column also failed to mention that the federal budget clearly committed to further extending the program until November 20, 2021, “should the economic and public health situation require it.”

The second omission from the MP’s column was

that he failed to mention the new Canada Recovery Hiring Program (CRHP), also announced in the federal budget. The proposed subsidy will make it as easy as possible for businesses to hire new workers as the economy reopens. The CRHP will be a critical payroll support program for small businesses and will incentivize them to hire more people as soon as it is safe to do so. Unfortunately, our MP also voted against this program, just last week.

Another curious omission in our MP’s column about support for tourism and hospitality was any mention of the aid programs announced in the federal budget that specifically support this sector. Budget 2021 included \$500 million in a Tourism Relief Fund, which “will support investments by local tourism businesses in adapting their products and services to public health measures, and other investments that will help them recover from the pandemic and position themselves for future growth.” Similarly, the budget includes \$400 million in financial support for festivals, artistic and cultural events, theatre performances, heritage celebrations, and local museums.

Lastly, I was particularly surprised to see the MP for Niagara Falls spread misinformation with respect to the federal government’s record on rapid tests and vaccine procurement. This is a critical component to not only our economic recovery but also the mental health and well-being of our community, as we face unprecedented stress about our personal

health and safety.

The fact is that our federal government has procured more than 41 million rapid tests, and distributed them to the provinces, who are responsible for deploying them to local health units. Unfortunately, Premier Doug Ford has let the vast majority of the rapid tests he’s received from the federal government sit unused in warehouses. Just last week, an independent investigative report on CBC’s The National confirmed that provincial premiers had only deployed 1.7 million of the nearly 42 million tests received.

The MP for Niagara Falls continued the pattern of misinformation in his column by saying Canada is struggling with a severe vaccine shortage. The reality is, Canada now ranks 2nd among G20 in number of daily vaccines administered, and 3rd in the G20 in proportion of population vaccinated. Just this week, The Globe and Mail reported that Canada will have enough vaccines to ensure that every Canadian can receive both doses by the end of July. Similarly, the Toronto Star recently called Canada’s vaccination program “one of the best in the world.”

While this federal government is not perfect, it has been there to support Canadians with one of the most comprehensive COVID-19 support packages among developed countries. Moreover, its record ought to be evaluated by the Opposition on the basis of facts, not misleading columns that exclude critical details and contribute to the anxiety many residents are feeling during this pandemic.

Letters! We want letters!

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

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Local LETTERS

Quicker way to inclusivity, diversity

Although I applaud the town creating a diversity committee, one has to take with a grain of salt the findings of a survey in which the majority of respondents (as indicated in the survey) were white heterosexual women.

Then to move forward in creating focus groups on the findings to only push this issue down the road even further when direct action can be taken now, and without a survey or a committee.

The town should create a policy today to allocate a percentage of procurement to certified diverse suppliers like many large and small municipalities have initiated already. In doing so, they should also encourage large employers in town to follow

suit, economic equality is one way to create a more inclusive town.

Second, they should work with NGOs like the Canadian Gay and Lesbian Chamber of Commerce in conducting a deep dive on how town services from city hall, public spaces and emergency services can be more inclusive and sensitive to the needs of those this committee wishes to help.

Third, the town should actively engage diverse owned businesses and the NOTL Chamber of Commerce to develop a year round strategy to promote diversity outwardly. LGBTQ tourism alone is a \$12 billion industry per year. This will not only attract much-needed

post pandemic recovery dollars, but perhaps illustrate how we are striving to be a better community for all within.

Lastly, and perhaps the easiest despite the resistance some may have, is a pride walk. Communities big and small are participating and this can be done for the month of June. I am sure we could organize a fundraiser to cover the cost, and it would be a wonderful way to walk the walk.

These are a few ideas that can easily be implemented, and perhaps would have been eventually discussed, but I’m tired of playing catch-up with the rest of Canada.

Jordon Williams
NOTL

COMMENT

Local LETTERS

Some clarifications about park

At one of its meetings this month, town council will receive and make decisions on the staff recommendations developed in response to the Jan. 18, 2021 submission to the committee of the whole by the Friends of Ryerson Park.

Since our presentation to council there have been countless inaccurate letters and columns as well as comments at council meetings and from town staff as to both the content and intent of our remedies to relieve the traffic congestion and safety issues in the unique Chautauqua residential area. This article has been written to set the record straight.

The Friends of Ryerson Park is a very active and growing grassroots community group comprised of 204 households including over 350 residents. The majority of the Friends live in Chautauqua but our numbers do boast a number of residents from elsewhere in Niagara-on-the-Lake. We are in regular communication by way of social media, teleconferences and on-line visual group discussions. Our expanding group is united in its concerns and in full support of the reasonable remedies that have been presented to council.

Chautauqua is a residential area with no public or commercial services. We are fully supportive of visitors and any suggestion to the contrary is an absolute misrepresentation of anything the Friends have ever said or done. Our objective is to develop a healthy balance of

usage between visitors and residents. Any balance has been significantly skewed over the past several years as the number of visitors using short-term rentals together with an excessive amount of vehicular traffic, has resulted in very large numbers of people crowding an extremely small community park. You can imagine the issues created by disrespectful drivers: souped-up vehicles and illegal open-pipe motorcycles (causing massive noise pollution); quick acceleration; limited parking on narrow streets (that are really lanes); pedestrian safety in an area with no sidewalks; and excessive garbage of every description. Effective mitigation of these growing problems is essential.

Last August we came together as the Friends of Ryerson Park, documented the critical issues, and then developed a list of positive remedies. In October we presented the concepts to town staff and quickly learned what might be possible. We pared down the list and met individually with each councillor. Taking the advice from all discussions, the Friends then developed the remedies presented in January.

There is a clear rationale to each of the proposed remedial provisions. All nine remedies can be implemented quickly. None are new, but each has been used effectively in other communities. No, they won't totally solve the problems, but they will most certainly serve to be effective in mit-

igation. Here are two examples:

Limit parking on all streets in Chautauqua to NOTL residents only (and then only on one side). This is designed to help with that rebalance of residential and visitor use, and minimize delays for emergency service vehicles. Based on our calculations and because of one-hour visitor parking in the layby, together with the large volume of short-term rental users, visitor numbers would be reduced to 300 per day. By any measure, that, plus residents, is a large volume of people for a small municipal park.

Reduce the speed limit on all roads to 35 kilometres per hour. The town's guidance is that the current limit of 50 kph is adequate (which allows up to 60 kph before a fine). Of course, no one can possibly drive at 60 kph — the roads are too narrow. But if the limit is dropped to 35 kph (or even 40 kph) the upper limit would also drop. Slowing down vehicles would be so helpful in encouraging safety and abating noise pollution.

Based on the careful development of these sensible provisions, the majority of residents in the Chautauqua area, together with those along Niagara Boulevard (as represented by the Friends of Ryerson Park), have a very reasonable expectation that they will be fully adopted by a responsive town council.

Brian Crow, Shaun Devlin, John Scott, on behalf of the Friends of Ryerson Park

Local LETTERS

Signs discouraging visitors unnecessary, unkind and selfish

I am gravely concerned about what I am seeing in the town of Niagara-on-the-Lake. Once again, our town is resorting to extreme measures under the guise of safety. The signs posted at every entrance to town do nothing to keep us safe. Everyone knows to mask and physically distance and that we are under a provincial stay at home order. And telling us to always choose kindness is insulting and condescending. NOTL has always been a place where people reach out to help and take care of one another. The disabling of picnic tables and the enhanced enforcement of regulations sends a message of control rather than kindness. These extreme measures instill fear and anxiety in so many people, and greatly contribute to serious emotional

and mental health issues. I am vehemently opposed to tax dollars being spent in this manner.

While I realize that this is not the time to encourage tourism, to intentionally repel visitors is a dangerous undertaking. Tourism is the lifeblood of this community, and our town would be crippled without visitors. Having lived here my entire life, I remember well what the town was like before the Shaw Festival and other attractions beckoned tourists and their money. It was neither charming nor beautiful. Rather, it was a hick town at the end of the road that nobody wanted to visit. As much as the locals may resent tourists and the challenges they bring, they would very quickly see that our beautiful town can-

not survive as such without them. I recognize that very little is even open for business at this time, but the messages we send now can have long-lasting repercussions. Visitors coming to the town today are escaping small spaces, and wanting to drive through or to stop and enjoy a little bit of nature and open space. They are doing no harm.

I am asking the town to please, remove the ridiculous signs, restore the picnic tables for use, and stop the excessive enforcement and discouragement of visitors. On a humanitarian level it is unkind and selfish, and on an economic level it is irresponsible. Please, follow your own directive and Always Choose Kindness.

**Joanne Penner
NOTL**

Can NOTL balance family picnics and tourism?

Re Councillor disturbed by lack of inclusivity in park (The Local, April 28):

My family and I moved to Niagara-on-the-Lake eight years ago. Within weeks, a neighbour commented on my young children. She expected to see, but not hear them. Then another neighbour took it upon herself to hose down the curb in front of our house. We had put down new grass, and the excessive watering created mud.

I never gave these incidents much thought. Then. Now I wonder. We are a biracial family hailing from the 'city that must not be named.' Perhaps the colour of my skin, and/or the postal code we moved from were one too many strikes on my family. We're 'from away' and not 'real' locals.

I truly believe most people aren't racist. It's natural to crave a familiar environment, surround ourselves with reminders of home. To some, change can be difficult.

Ever since the first settlers, there have been wave after wave of immigrants. From

near, and far. Interesting how we call British subjects ex-pats, while the rest are immigrants. The truth is, unless you're First Nations, we all have roots from away. The only difference is that some of us have shorter, instead of longer roots.

Let's talk about inclusivity. According to the town website, NOTL has a current population of 17,511. Out of that there are 100 Aboriginals and 1,170 visible minorities. That is 0.57 per cent and 6.7 per cent respectively. Let's be honest here, that's a very small percentage.

I'm reminded of a time not that long ago. NOTL would have its Rotary Holiday House Tour, Candlelight Stroll, Ice Wine Festival and pretty much button up for the winter months. Now? The Shaw hosts Christmas plays and we've embraced Victorian Christmas.

Ironically, what we associate with Victorian Christmas isn't very British. German Christmas traditions that Prince Albert brought over to England has now been embraced as

Victorian. Maybe in 50 years our Christmas plays, and Victorian Christmases will be celebrated by families alike akin to attending the Nutcracker Ballet! Which, by the way, is Russian.

My point is that NOTL is no longer the sleepy farming community it once was. We've become an international destination. True, we need to balance tourism, when the tourists come back. Are family picnics also needing tourism? I think it's hard to compare a picnic along the Niagara River Parkway, versus Queen's Royal Park or Ryerson Park, which is surrounded by houses. Maybe it's time to consider beefing up parking around Niagara Shores Park or Mississauga Beach.

My roots may not be that long in NOTL, but my children already consider it home. I've made good friends, and we aren't going anywhere. And neither are the tourists. It's how we manage it, that will pave the way for the future.

**L. Osias-Davidson
NOTL**

Please keep La Fleur's efforts going

Just a note to say thanks for the story on La Fleur Fletcher and her husband Claude, and their tremendous efforts to remain in our country in order to become Canadian citizens. Many of us can relate to their struggle and are exhilarated for their success.

To learn that your dear parents have suddenly become homeless and without drinking water must be devastating, as if leaving them behind was not difficult enough. La Fleur's humanitarian effort to send a special container to her family and folks back home is both inspiring and humbling.

Regarding the eruption of La Soufriere, I learned that those wishing to donate goods should

bring them to 1612 Concession 4, Virgil, after 5 p.m., or, if no one is home, to leave goods on the porch.

La Fleur said that in the past she has provided aid to our local migrant workers, especially in their transition during this COVID-19 year. In turn, they have offered to build the crates she will need to ship the goods.

Assisting next door neighbour, Belle Jean, says that bags of parboiled rice, pasta and beans are very useful as is water, water, water. Regular family size portions make it easier for distribution at St. Vincent's end. Monetary donations made at the Virgil Avondale will specifically assist La Fleur with shipping costs.

It was a feel-good, real-life story! I trust many NOTLers will be glad to assist our local neighbour.

Coverage of this story in The Local allowed me to have conversations with women whom I felt I had known all my life, though we had never met. Very rewarding in these COVID days where we are literally so isolated! This is networking and social responsibility at its best. Your coverage enables that interconnection.

Certainly, Madam Editor Penny, your cover story is what a local newspaper is all about. It is a timeless feel-good real story. Thank you and kudos to all!

**Nancy Macri
NOTL**



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Ontario's COVID-19 vaccine plan is helping to stop the spread and save lives. Thousands of people across the province are getting vaccinated every day.

As vaccinations continue, we need to stay the course to protect those we love. Wear a mask. Wash your hands. Keep your distance.

Find out when, where and how to get vaccinated at ontario.ca/covidvaccineplan or call 1-888-999-6488 for assistance in more than 300 languages.

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Only a working fire alarm can save your life



Brad Disher
NOTL Fire & Emergency Services

Since 1975, it has been a written law that every residential home in Ontario must have a smoke alarm outside sleeping areas. For almost 50 years, Fire departments across Ontario have been educating residents, often starting at the young age of only four, about the importance of having working smoke alarms and what to do when your smoke alarm activates.

When the COVID-19 pandemic started, the number of fire deaths in the province soared. In 2019, there were 67 fire deaths reported in Ontario. In 2020, that number nearly doubled to 114, and 2021 is on track to be another record year. So far, as of only March, there have been 50 fire-related deaths in 2021. Far too often, fire investigations show that an outstanding number of these deaths are linked to homes not having working smoke alarms.

While we are all doing our part to help stop the spread of COVID-19, we all need to do better to ensure our families are safe, by ensuring we have working smoke alarms outside of all sleeping areas and on each level of our homes. Far too often, our community risk reduction staff and volunteer firefighters find homes that either have expired alarms or no working

alarms at all. When asked, most homeowners indicated that the alarms were chirping, so they took it down or removed the battery. Removing the battery renders the smoke alarm useless. If the brakes in your car got squeaky, would you just remove them? As the fire prevention & public education officer, I am very uneasy when I am made aware of these situations, often thinking to myself, what would have happened if this fire started when the residents were sleeping? Would they have got out in time? Would they have been alerted of a fire before it was too late to escape safely?

There is no excuse for not having a working alarm on every level of your home these days. It's like saying you didn't know you had to wear a seatbelt when driving your car. Smoke alarms can be purchased for as little as \$12. Think about that, for the same price as a fast-food meal, you can ensure you and your family members are kept safe and given enough time to escape your home in an emergency.

Smoke alarms need to be tested monthly by pressing the test button, which can be done in less than 10 seconds. Smoke alarms, even alarms that are hard-wired into your home, still have battery back-ups. Often, we hear from people who get frustrated by their alarm "chirping" and remove the alarm to make the sound stop. When a smoke alarm "chirps," it is telling you there is an issue with the alarm. Likely this chirp indicates that the battery needs to be replaced or the device is expiring. Sometimes alarms become dirty from dust particles in the air and need to be cleaned. Clean-

ing your alarm can be solved by simply using a vacuum to clean dust or debris.

One of the most significant issues we have been noticing recently is discovering alarms that are expired. Smoke alarms are designed to last for about 10 years. After 10 years, they can become less effective at detecting smoke or fire. Some alarms have a small sticker on the side indicating the year it has to be replaced by. Other alarms may have to be taken down from the ceiling to see the date on the back of the alarm. If you can't find a sticker or date on your alarm, it is time to buy a new one. Remember, Only WORKING smoke alarms can save your life.

While most of us have become frustrated with being stuck at home during COVID and various lockdowns, Niagara-on-the-Lake Fire & Emergency services is asking all NOTL residents to do their part and ensure you and your families are properly protected. Now is the time to test your alarms, make sure you have the proper alarms installed in the correct locations, and change the batteries annually to ensure the alarms are working.

Fire safety is often the last thing on most people's minds as they believe a fire won't happen to them. Consider this, if there was a fire in your home tonight, would your alarms work? Would you have enough time to escape? Remember, the cost of losing a life far outweighs the cost of a \$12 smoke alarm.

As always, if you have questions regarding the alarms in your home, call us at 905-468-3266, or email firedepartment@notl.com



Secret place, but like many, close to NOTL



**Owen Bjorgan
Special to The Local**

I am intentionally going to leave this spot a bit of a mystery, when in reality, anyone can go there today or tomorrow.

On Google reviews, this place had only six people chime in with their various star ratings. The only review which involved actual writing, reads, “Great place to be naked and hunt squirrels.” In all hopes this person was joking, it made me laugh, and spoke to the low-key and quirky presence of this environment.

Take that silly visual out of your mind, and replace it with the photo you see accompanying this article. In both an ecological and spiritual sense, this place is powerful. This is what most of Niagara Region once looked like, and you could feel its originality and fragility alike in the soil.

I spent nearly four hours trekking around in this mysterious, spellbinding environment with my partner. The weeks prior were demanding with emails and other tasks in life, so I suddenly found myself feeling totally decompressed as I walked beneath a sky of red, white and green buds. The treetops hummed with endless swarms of honey bees, while the forest floor squished beneath my boots. I carefully stepped around the clumps of precious vegetation, fully understanding that rare ferns or mosses are no match for size 13 boots.

An intense, luminous green layer of growth sits at head height across the forest. Spicebush and buttonbush are reflecting off the water, which is sometimes coated with artistic layers of pollen and nature dust. The frogs call, the sun breaks through the clouds, and you suddenly find yourself thinking - wow, I hope this place can remain in this state forever.

There is an unwritten law I learned as I studied more

about nature. With regards to certain areas or species, one must be careful not to overly advertise the good stuff sometimes.

In some instances, a certain rare species of snake, salamander, or tree may exist in just one remaining area. A part of you wants to yell out, “Hey, come check this out on your next free weekend! There’s something really special out here!” Another part of you says, “the last thing I want is too many people here — it should just exist as it is for as long as possible.”

Even if there are no confirmed rare or protected species in the area, the environment itself may be very delicate and complex. Humans are clumsy creatures, even those of us who walk with a “green foot” and look very closely at where we step. The environment I was in a few days ago could have your boot stepping on multiple species of moss, lichen, and fascinating fungi at once if you weren’t careful. The fringes of the vernal pools were lined

with tadpoles and tiny spring flowers, supporting a constant drone of pollinators around the edges. The connections are small, but numerous and invaluable in their nature. This is not an environment to carelessly romp and steamroll through.

One thing I’m hearing more of these days is, “where can I go where there won’t be so many people around?” Well, not to sound like some sort of empowered secret

bearer, but I can’t tell you exactly where this place is for that exact reason! I’ll show the people closest to me, and maybe some fellow biology geeks, sure. But, in today’s day and age of social media glorification, it doesn’t take long for a quiet spot to become popular quickly. We have seen this theme come to fruition during the pandemic.

As I drove out, I smiled and felt puzzled about the future of such places. I asked my

girlfriend, “can you imagine the day where even a place like this has dozens upon dozens of cars lined up outside of it, like we see at Short Hills Provincial Park, Woodend, or the Gorge?” We enjoyed some good dialogue about that as we cruised back home.

This also strikes a healthy drive to find your own special place, of which, there is something intrinsically rewarding when you visit. Can you keep a good secret?



This is a fragile, beautiful and low-key location that will remain a secret, but there are lots of beautiful spots for hiking close to NOTL, says Owen Bjorgan. (Owen Bjorgan)

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Exceptional volunteer is leading by example

Town is fortunate this volunteer chooses to call NOTL home

Mike Balsom
Special to The Local

The Friends of Fort George. The War of 1812 Bicentennial Committee. Communities in Bloom. The Canada 150 Committee. The Heritage Trail. Solo Swims of Ontario. History in the Vineyard. The Niagara-on-the-Lake Museum. Niagara Falls Community Outreach Soup Kitchen. Thursday breakfasts for the homeless at the Third Space Cafe in Niagara Falls.

Every one of these organizations, events and programs has at least one thing in common. Tireless volunteer and Niagara-on-the-Lake resident Tony Chisholm has freely given of his time to their efforts.

The retired magazine executive can be considered among those Toronto transplants who have been in the news lately for some of the wrong reasons. His volunteerism since he moved here full time in 2010 is a shining example of the value many of those newcomers actually do bring to the local community.

Chisholm grew up in Toronto, where he graduated from all-boys school Upper Canada College in 1963. He looks back on the values he learned there, as well as at home with his supportive family, as the beginning of his commitment to his community. At UCC he competed in swimming and cricket, and was a member of the photography club. He also developed a love for history, often dragging his mother to all the historic forts when he was younger.

Following his time at UCC, Chisholm attended the University of Western Ontario (now Western University) where he earned a bachelor's degree in economics.

"After attending an all-boys school, I really came alive at university," he says. "I became a fraternity member, I had a great group of friends there, some of whom I still keep in touch with today."

After university,

Chisholm was hired by publishing giant Maclean Hunter in Toronto. His role was in sales for their trade journals. After a few years there, he and two partners established their own company, Action Communications, to publish trade journals on their own.

"We built it up to quite a successful operation," Chisholm says. "We published magazines on engineering design, woodworking, metal working and a general industrial publication in French for the province of Quebec. My territory was most of the U.S, and I travelled a lot. That eventually morphed into publishing."

They sold the company in 2000 to Canada Law Book, which wanted to start a magazine division, and Chisholm became a group publisher for that organization until he retired in 2011.

In his thirties, at the urging of his son Shaun, Chisholm rekindled his love of swimming and also took up running. He ran his first marathon in 1981 in Ottawa, then moved quickly into triathlons. Ten years later he found himself in Australia for the World Triathlon Championships, competing alongside some of the best in the sport.

A highlight for Chisholm was the 2000 Iron Man Triathlon in Lake Placid at the age of 55.

"I did it with my son, my daughter-in-law and a couple of friends," he tells The Local. "We all trained together. What an amazing experience, to spend six months concentrating on it. It was like a second job."

The following day, he proposed to his now-wife Barb, whom he met when they were both members of a Toronto running club ingeniously dubbed the Roads Scholars.

"I often joke that I proposed to her the next day because I couldn't get up off my knees," he laughs.

Shaun, now a 53-year-old fireman in Toronto, later inspired one of Tony's ongoing volunteer endeavours.

"He swam across the lake in 2008," the proud father boasts. "He's one of the few people to swim from Niagara-on-the-Lake to Toronto. That's when I got involved with these long-distance swimmers. I'm a bit of a contact here for these marathon swimmers. This location is known as one of the longest and coldest in the world for the marathon swimming fraternity."

Shaun has since become a swim master for Solo Swims of Ontario, and he and his father have accompanied about 10 swimmers, both successful and unsuccessful, in their attempts to cross the lake.

Both Tony and Barb had travelled to Niagara-on-the-Lake in their younger days. They bought a second house here in 2003, and made the move here permanently just before he retired.

Chisholm's love of history made NOTL the perfect spot for this new chapter in his life. He quickly became involved with the Friends of Fort George, where he met a number of like-minded volunteers who were all passionate about Niagara's and Canada's history. He currently serves as president of its board of directors.

This reporter first met Chisholm during the celebration of the bicentennial anniversary of the War of 1812. He was ubiquitous in his kilt, acting as an official spokesperson around town during the many events marking the milestone from 2010 to 2014.

"It was fun having the costume," he says. "You could go into character, and not have to worry about your own self. You could be part of history by pretending you were a character from 200 years ago."

Chisholm, in fact, was the main impetus behind the efforts to put together the movie *Niagara on Fire*, which commemorated the Americans' burning of the town. Later, as part of the Canada 150 committee, he was instrumental in bringing the Tall Ships to NOTL.

That ended up being one of the most popular of the Canada 150 events. For both of these flagship activities, Chisholm used his sales skills to help raise funds.

"I have developed a passion for doing good fundraising for important organizations," he says. "I really admire people who can make things happen, who are willing to put their effort behind their ideas. This to me is the important thing, the effect that volunteers can accomplish."

He is also involved in the Heritage Trail committee, a legacy project of Canada 150, and has enjoyed working with the town on Communities in Bloom for many years.

"I knew nothing about municipal works in my career," Chisholm says. To see how empathetic the town was in encouraging volunteers to get involved in things like commemorating the bicentennial or attracting Communities in Bloom rewards was quite impressive. The parks department was 100 per cent behind everything we did."

Chisholm is busy these days getting ready for the History in the Vineyard event coming up May 20. The fundraiser supports the Niagara Historical Society as well as the Friends of Fort George.

Before COVID-19 put a temporary stop to so many things, Chisholm could also be seen leading tours for the Niagara-on-the-Lake Museum. As well, he and a few other local volunteers would travel to the Niagara Falls Outreach Soup Kitchen to wash dishes every Thursday afternoon. While that activity is currently on hold, he and NOTL native Rick Meloen, who has been involved in many of the same projects as Chisholm, have shifted to helping out every Thursday morning at the breakfast program run out of the Third Space Cafe on Queen Street in the honeymoon city.

The 76-year-old continues to follow the passion for photography he developed as a youngster attending UCC, as well. He has a collection of thousands of photographs he has taken through the years here that he is happy to share with

anyone who needs them.

"I'm a believer in doing stuff, and I'm fortunate that I don't have to continue earning money," says Chisholm. "It's so important, particularly in a town like this, where you can show up and inspire other volunteers."

When asked about the reports of a lack of inclusivity and a possible backlash against Torontonians buying properties in town, Chisholm says he hasn't experienced any of it.

"The influx of accomplished people coming in from areas of the GTA have brought a lot to this town," he says. "There's a depth of volunteerism that comes with it. Many of them have the time because they're retired. My greatest gift to the community is the time that I can put into this."

He does worry, however, about the effect the pandemic may be having on volunteerism in general.

"Last summer we were able to have a board of directors meeting outside, keeping a huge distance between us," Chisholm fondly remembers. "It was great to see these people. Looking at them on a screen is frustrating. It's harder to exchange ideas that way. It makes it very difficult to come up with concepts that you can work together on when you're not in close contact with other people."

"When you're a person who leads other volunteers," he adds, "getting together and thanking them is very important. None of that can happen, and that makes it



Tony Chisholm can adapt the persona of 1812, as he does often for historical events, or he can enjoy a more casual walk (below) with his dog. (Photos supplied)

very difficult to keep the enthusiasm up."

Like so many others, Chisholm is hoping vaccines will soon bring an end to pandemic restrictions, to bring volunteers back together, but also so he can once again travel to the U.K. to visit his daughter Lisa and his four grandchildren. The 76-year-old also has two grandchildren living in Toronto.

Until that time comes, and of course beyond, he'll continue doing what he does, in whatever way he can, contributing selflessly to the community he loves.



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Ravine offering another history, dinner fundraiser

Mike Balsom
Special to The Local

Orders for the upcoming History in the Vineyard close next Friday, May 14. That leaves plenty of time to ensure you don't miss out on a gourmet take-out dinner in support of two local charities.

The Niagara Historical Society and the Friends of Fort George both benefit from the tasty fundraiser next week. The dinner options are provided by Ravine Vineyard, Ruffino's and The Garrison House, with wine choices offered by Ravine.

Friends of Fort George president Tony Chisholm says the idea for the event arose from a conversation he had a few years ago with Paul Harber, proprietor of Ravine Vineyard.

"He and I met when he was just constructing the new conference centre," explains Chisholm. "He said to me 'if you ever have anything you want to do from a fundraising aspect, where you want to use the building, please speak to me.' That's when we developed the idea of History in the Vineyard."

The first event took place in the new conference centre in November, 2019. It featured a three-course meal provided by Ravine, with short lectures in the barrel and tasting rooms about historical topics, including the neutral confederacy, the history of wine, the railway and heritage trail and the history of the Ravine property itself. The event sold out quickly.

The success prompted the organizers to plan a return last year. Like many such fundraisers sched-

uled after March, 2020, however, last year's dinner was forced to shift to a take-home version. That's when chefs Ryan Crawford of Ruffino's and David Watt of The Garrison House became a part of it, offering menu options from their restaurants as well.

Chisholm says because of the nature of the two organizations supported by the event, it was important they were able to maintain the history element of the fundraiser.

"We developed the idea of putting out a video and putting it on YouTube," he tells The Local, "and giving everyone who got the meal a preview of the video."

As the 2020 History in the Vineyard was held in December, it made sense to centre the video on stories about Christmas past, including how it was celebrated in Niagara-on-the-Lake.

"This year, we put together a video on the 208th anniversary of the Battle of Fort George," says Chisholm. "We did it with Scott Finlay, who works as an interpreter for Parks Canada. He's a professional MC (Finlay hosted the inaugural History in the Vineyard). In this year's video, he's at Fort George in full costume as General Isaac Brock, talking about the battle, adding a lot of authenticity to the piece."

Finlay will also be on site in full costume at Ravine on May 20 to greet those diners who opt to pick up their dinners that day.

Chisholm sees History in the Vineyard as a very positive fundraiser for two organizations that help keep the town's history

front and centre.

"It's an important event for both of these organizations," he says, "and it provides some work and revenue for the three restaurants as well during a difficult time. On top of it all, it's really popular, because the food is so good!"

"I'm so glad to see its success as a take-out event," Chisholm adds. "I would never have guessed it would be nearly as successful as a take-out venture."

He gives a lot of credit to Harber, a long-time supporter of the Friends of Fort George, for bringing in the other chefs.

"He's the one who has worked closely with them, he's the one that has them enthusiastic about it. It's full-on support from all three restaurants."

As well, Chisholm can't say enough about the other members of the committee: chair Mona Babin, Amanda Gamble and Amy Klassen.

"It's a nice, small committee that works really well together, and we have a lot of fun," he says. "Each has contributed something that has helped to make this event so successful."

History in the Vineyard takes place Thursday, May 20 from 4 to 6 p.m. Tickets are \$100, which includes a three-course dinner and a \$40 tax receipt. Wine pairings are optional. Information is available through any of the three restaurants, or via the NOTL Museum or Friends of Fort George websites.

To view the menu and place your order, visit canadahelps.org/en/charities/niagara-historical-society/events/history-in-the-vineyard-at-home-2.



Are your feet ready for the NOTL Step Challenge?

Submitted by

Audrey Wall
Foot Care Clinic

Walking is a great way to promote overall health and well-being and participating in NOTL's Step Challenge makes getting those steps in even more fun! Before you get to stepping, take a moment to inspect your feet - they're going to be doing a lot of work! Are there any painful areas on your feet? Are your toenails behaving? Have some calluses sprung

up? Perhaps your feet are due for a little TLC. Do you suffer with painful bunions or plantar fasciitis? Having painful feet takes the pleasure right out of walking! Did you know that there are specially engineered socks that can help reduce the pain of bunions and plantar fasciitis? As a foot nurse, my expertise is in helping people manage their foot health - I can help safely care for toenails, calluses and corns and can help navigate the world of specialty socks. My clinic is safely open during COVID - foot care is considered an

essential service. As always, special attention is paid to cleaning and infection control protocols. COVID-19 protocols have prompted a temporary suspension in online self-scheduling but give me a call or email and I'll gladly find an appointment time that works for you. New clients are always welcome, and in addition to clinic appointments, home visits are also available; evening appointments are available on Thursdays. Having healthy, great feeling feet will make a huge difference when you start logging those steps!



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Mona Babin, Paul Harber, Amanda Gamble, Sarah Kaufman and Amy Klassen were organizers of the February Ravine event, and are now preparing for one later this month. (Photo supplied)

Local artists exhibit work in virtual show

Penny Coles
The Local

Niagara-on-the-Lake resident Cynthia Rand has exhibited her art locally many times, but she has a special place in her heart for the Pelham Art Festival.

It's an event that attracts interesting artists and a wide range of art, she said, and it's always been fun to meet the other artists and talk about their work.

It's also been an art show that has a cheerful atmosphere, attracting a good crowd of art lovers.

This year, like so much else, it will be online, and that was a bit of a challenge for Rand at first, having to set up a themed exhibit of her paintings not on a wall, but on a website. That was accomplished with the help of her husband Peter, and Saturday, the virtual exhibit opened online for all to view.

It continues until May 15, and can be viewed at pelhamartfestival.com.

"This is the modern method of communication," says Rand, who misses talking to the artists and those looking to purchase a work of art, but adds the hard work is done, and she can sit back and wait to see if anyone is interested in her art.

When she chose the 15 paintings she wanted to submit, she had a theme of her own. When she and her husband moved into their Line 2 home about 45 years ago, there was some rope left behind in the barn on the property, which eventually made its way into some of her work. She also likes to incorporate old, twisted vineyard wire or rusty nails she's picked up — expect to see some of those farmyard connections in her paintings as well.

In her introduction on the festival website, she says, "my work still shows my love of fibre and fabric, and is strengthened by the flow of acrylics and the occasional addition of old, found objects. In this present

series, the objects are those found on our centennial farm."

This will be Rand's fourth year at the festival, which is typically an exhausting and intense three-day show over Mother's Day weekend, she says.

It was postponed a few times last year, and eventually cancelled due to pandemic restrictions, so this is the first virtual exhibit.

She is one of seven artists from Niagara-on-the-Lake who are taking part in the show, which is themed Our Planet, Our Future, and includes 60 artists and artwork in a range of styles and mediums. A portion of artist sales goes toward fundraising efforts to donate to Pelham libraries, fine arts scholarships, and to community art endeavours.

Local artist Julia Kane, also participating in the show, says she loves the in-person exhibits, far more than the virtual events.

"You get a chance to talk to people looking at your art, and the interactions are special. Also, the visitor at an art show sees the actual painting, size, structure and reacts to it. It is that emotion evoked that makes the painting special to each individual collector. I can hardly wait 'til we can do that again."

Kane, who lives and paints in St. Davids, is known for her vineyard scenes. "I love living here. I enjoy the atmosphere of Niagara and it's nature and agriculture," she says.

This year she has taken an interest in "the fragility of the bee and butterfly populations, and am advocating for the planting of pollinator plants in our gardens and surrounds. Several paintings in this show feature both."

With so few opportunities for artists to showcase their work, Kane says she hopes the virtual show will encourage art lovers to "buy local."

Other NOTL artists included in the show are Bev Aldridge, Cathy Cullis, Rick Cullis, Ruth Aspinall, and Tim Sullivan.



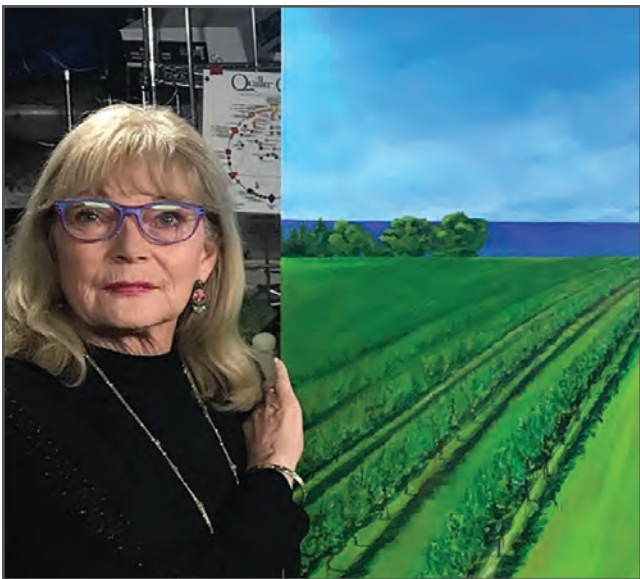
Cynthia Rand with Entropy Appreciation, a relic of her scientific days, she says. Entropy, a term in thermodynamics, increases as things decay. The items in the picture are old nails, vineyard wire and decayed sacking, found on their old farm. (Photos supplied)



Artist Bev Aldridge says her buyers tend to be people who feel "an elemental and emotional connection between themselves and the world around them. Like me, they respond to colour on both an emotional and physical level." This painting is called *Perfectly You*.



Erosion is one of the entries local artist Cathy Cullis chose for the Pelham Art Festival's environmental theme this year, Our Planet, Our Future.



St. Davids artist Julia Kane shows one of her favourite vineyard scenes, as well as *Monarch Cycle*.



Rick Cullis has submitted *Kananaskis* to the Pelham Art Festival.

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'Sad to watch how most vulnerable suffered'

Continued from page 1

encouraged to call with any questions. They were told staff working on the third floor would be entering and exiting from a separate entrance, and staying on that floor, so there would be no movement throughout the three-storey home that might spread infection.

They also started keeping residents in their own rooms, including at meal time, which was difficult for some, like her dad, who was accustomed to more freedom.

"I think they were trying, and doing a good job. They were bringing in extra staff. Not being allowed in there at the time, it's hard to say what more they could have done. But they can't prevent staff from coming in sick if they don't know they have COVID. And once it gets in there, it's like a tidal wave."

Online the home is listed as having 120 beds, only 27 of them private rooms, although at the time, she says, there were only about 90-plus residents.

To reduce spread, those who tested positive were separated from others, and the home tried to minimize rooms to two people.

Her father, 82 years old and in the early stages of dementia, had been at the home for about two years. He had health issues, and had had several falls, that meant family couldn't care for him at home.

Although he wasn't happy to be there, Keller and her mother, Dorothy, were able to visit him often, and take him out for visits, including for Christmas 2019.

When the pandemic put an end to that, it was difficult not being able to go into the home to visit, and the rules seemed to change often, said Keller. There were times when her mother, if she had a COVID test, could go in to see him, and last summer, they were able to take him out for a picnic.

"There were so many changes in the restrictions, constantly changing what we could do," she says.

Keller has four siblings, but they are scattered, she said, leaving her and Dorothy to look after Arnold.

"He loved to sit outside on the patio, and we'd go to the parking lot to visit with him from there. He kept asking when he was coming home."

Dorothy went to live in a ground-floor apartment in Pleasant Manor, where she keeps busy, and has friends around her for company. In the good weather, she has a little patio where she can sit out as well, and still driving, she can visit Keller and her family and do her own errands and shopping. She also continued to be an advocate for Arnold — he had relied

on his wife for everything, says Keller.

When COVID hit, he was sharing a room with one other person on the second floor, and at first the German family felt he was relatively safe from the risk of infection.

But that didn't last long. They were soon told his roommate had tested positive, and he was being tested as well. It took about five days for the family to learn the results. While they were waiting to hear the outcome of the test, Arnold was starting to feel unwell, and the number of cases was skyrocketing.

In 10 days, she says, it had moved from the third floor to the second, and in six weeks there were 13 residents who had died. "He was number 11," says Keller.

"We had seen him on Christmas Day, when we sat outside with him and had a visit. He was still very aware of what was going on around him. He never got to the point where he didn't know us. He knew his grandchildren as well. He was okay on the second floor, still fairly independent, needing care for things like medication, and he was mobile, with a walker. If he hadn't got COVID, he probably could have lasted another five years."

And if the vaccinations had arrived just a little sooner, at the beginning of January, "it might have been a different story."

But as other residents were being vaccinated, her father, by then separated and in a wing that was dedicated to those already infected, could not be.

Then the family got the call from the home to say he was not doing well, and was being transferred to the Greater Niagara Hospital site of Niagara Health, says Keller.

Shortly after his arrival, a doctor told her by phone that there was nothing they could do for her father, and they needed the bed, so he was being sent back to the residence.

"I was having trouble understanding what he said. I said to the doctor, 'you're telling me he's going to die,' and he responded that her father had a Do Not Resuscitate order, that he just needed to be kept comfortable, and that could be done at the long-term care home."

"We didn't know if he had a day or an hour, or if it was going to be a week, just that he was terminal. He was dying. We were told it wouldn't be long."

Because he was dying, her mother was offered the opportunity to see him once he returned to the home, but with so many infected residents at that time, they decided not to take the chance, says Keller.

Her father surprised them, living another nine days, while Keller kept her siblings

up to date on his condition. At first, he almost seemed to be getting better, but she was told "it could change on the flip of a dime," and meanwhile, although he was struggling with his breathing, she thinks he was medicated enough that he wasn't in too much pain. Then, all of a sudden, he went downhill quickly.

During those days, she says, he didn't have his phone, and wouldn't have been able to make appointments to call, and the staff helped him FaceTime.

All five of the siblings and her mom were able to talk to him before he died, and had a chance to say their goodbyes.

It was especially hard on her mother, says Keller. "She kept saying she didn't want him to die alone. She wanted to be with him."

The family has a strong Christian faith, says Keller, and she was able to say that he wasn't alone, and that there were other family members, including his brothers, all but one of whom had predeceased him, who loved him and would be there for him.

The staff were very helpful through that difficult time, she says — they had got to know her dad and liked him.

But they were also overwhelmed by what was going on in the home, and without being able to visit, Keller says it was hard to know what was happening inside.

By the end of the pandemic, at least 72 residents tested positive, as well as 22 staff members.

Executive director Chris Poos says they were already following many infection and prevention protocols when the outbreak started. "Once the outbreak was declared, we quickly implemented other protocols that pertained directly to an outbreak, such as, cohorting staff and residents, daily communication with residents, families, and staff, and daily calls with Public Health. Our outbreak was officially declared over at the end of February."

Under the direction of Public Health, the home follows all guidance provided by them, along with the directives issued by the chief medical officer of health, says Poos. The staff testing protocol across long-term care when our outbreak was declared was weekly testing for all staff. Following the declaration of an outbreak, that increased to two times per week, he says.

"We are very thankful that additional supports have been made available, including rapid testing, which we do three times per week with all staff, and of course the vaccines. We are doing well with resident vaccinations, and are currently at 96 per cent," says Poos.

"We have all learned so much about the COVID-19 virus, and continue to do so.

The sharing of information, increased awareness, support from government, and the on-going support of our families, assist us in providing the best care and services to our residents."

Keller says her parents had discussed funeral arrangements with their family so they would be prepared, but of course the pandemic put an end to the plans they had made. They had a small burial service at Niagara Lakeshore Cemetery, no church service or visitation, with Dorothy, the five siblings and two grandsons to help out as pallbearers, and Pastor Michelle Mercer of GateWay Community Church, who knows the family and her father.

As hard as it was to lose him, she says, they are able to look at it as somewhat of a blessing, saving him from the downward spiral of dementia.

But that wasn't the end of COVID for the Keller family. Their daughter Jessica, 21, a university student who was home working as a server in a restaurant, hadn't been working in January, but went back for a short time, just a few days, before the third lockdown. She began to have some cold-like symptoms recently, and decided to get tested for COVID. A positive result saw her quarantining at home, where she has her own

room and bathroom, with Keller dropping off meals for her outside her room. She was fortunate not to develop respiratory problems, but her sense of smell has not completely returned.

None of the people at her workplace tested positive, nor did her boyfriend or any of their friends. Georgina and her husband Gord also got tested, but were negative.

Georgina, who teaches English as a second language to international Brock University students, has been laid off from her job, and isn't expecting that to change in September — if students return, there won't be enough for a full component of ESL students, she says. She used to have a sewing business, and may return to that, she says.

Gord has retired from his IT work, and took a job with the Pillar and Post, but has been laid off from that.

Georgina says, looking back, they're not sure anything could have been done differently for her father. They felt they made the right decision to put him in a facility where he would get 24-hour care, but the pandemic has shown there are issues that need to be improved.

Consistent staff is important, without so much moving around between homes, as is the availability of regular, rap-



Arnold German liked the outdoors and would visit with his family from the patio of the Wellington Street long-term care home. (Photo by Georgina German Keller)

id testing, she says, and paid leave for those who work in long-term care. All of those are issues that are being addressed for all long-term care homes, but were not able to prevent the January outbreak in her father's home, or the many others across the province.

In the case of Niagara Long Term Care, she's sure there were good intentions to keep their residents safe.

"These are our elderly, the most vulnerable. It was so sad to watch what happened."




COMMUNITY DONATION PROJECT

Porch Pick-up Food Drive

Newark Neighbours, together with our partners from the NOTL Rotary Club are holding a porch pick-up food drive.

On Saturday & Sunday, May 15 and 16, 2021, teams are available to pick up your food donations anytime between 10:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m.



Note that our volunteers will all wear masks and gloves and will respect all physical distancing restrictions, including contactless pick-up.

If you have items that you wish to donate, please call 905-468-7498 or email us at newarkneighbours1@gmail.com to register your address for pick-up. We appreciate your support!!!

- Canned green beans
- Canned peas
- Canned mixed vegetables
- Habitant Soups
- Chunky Soups
- Canned pineapple
- Soda (Soup) Crackers
- Snack Crackers - any kind
- Peanut Butter
- Coffee or Tea
- Toothpaste / Paper Towels / Kleenex

- Canned Tomatoes
- Canned Ham, Corned Beef or Spam
- Flakes of Ham, Chicken or Turkey
- Canned beef stew
- Cream of Mushroom Soup
- Rice
- Bottled Juices - Cranberry or Apple
- Cereal - any kind
- Jams - any flavour
- Jello - any flavour

- Canned Red Kidney Beans
- Canned salmon
- Canned chili or spaghetti or ravioli
- Canned Baked Beans
- Kraft Dinner Mac & Cheese
- Sidekicks & Mr. Noodle packets
- Applesauce or Canned Fruit
- Cookies - any kind
- Granola Bars
- Ketchup / Mustard / Mayonnaise / Green Relish

We appreciate all donations of food supplies; however, we are currently well stocked on the following items: Canned Tuna • Stuffing Mix • Canned Corn • Oatmeal • Cranberry Sauce • Tomato Sauce • Pasta

Unfortunately, our Thrift Store at 310 John Street remains closed. We appreciate all your calls and offers of thrift shop donations. Please remain patient and hold your donations until we are able to re-open and accept them once again. We hope that it will be soon!!

LocalSPORTS

NOTL to host tennis, sailing competitions for 2022 games

Mike Balsom
Special to The Local

The country's finest young sailors and tennis players will be descending upon Niagara-on-the-Lake next August for the Niagara 2022 Canada Summer Games.

The town, along with the Niagara Host Society, announced Monday that the Niagara-on-the-Lake Sailing Club, located on Melville Street, will play host to the sailing competition, while the six tennis courts at Memorial Park will be the site of the majority of the action in that sport next summer.

"I am delighted two of our local clubs are being awarded this great opportunity, although I never doubted that both the Niagara-on-the-Lake Tennis Club and Sailing Club operate at a high calibre worthy of such a platform," said Lord Mayor Betty Disero in a press release. "I know they will make our community proud when they host the 2022 Canada Summer Games, and show the world how special our town is."

Tennis club president Hugh Dow told The Local they were approached a few weeks ago by the 2021 Canada Games Host Society about holding the matches here. "We reviewed it at our club's board, and it had unanimous support and endorsement. This is a once-in-a-lifetime

opportunity to participate in what is Canada's largest multi-sport event, and to showcase the town, the club, and some of the unique features of where we live."

With just over a year to prepare, Dow said there will be a lot to do to get ready to play host to the events, which will feature Olympic hopefuls and potential future professional tennis players. In the past, pros such as Eugenie Bouchard (2009) and Niagara Falls' own Frank Dancevic (2001) played in the Canada Summer Games early in their careers.

"The way I understand it, each province or territory can send a team of eight of their top athletes for tennis," Dow says. "We could have from 80 to 100 of the best amateur players in Canada participating. It will be a wonderful opportunity to see some of these athletes at the top of their game."

Members of the club's volunteer board will be assuming some specific roles over the next year and during the competition. Treasurer Marilyn Francis will be heading up the venue committee, organizing physical aspects such as hospitality tents, parking and other necessary details. And director Rosemary Goodwin will be involved in scheduling of the singles, doubles and mixed doubles matches.

"Other directors will be

involved in various capacities," Dow added. "And this will provide volunteer opportunities for many of our members and other people in town. At previous games they've had up to 4,000 volunteers, so we'll certainly be looking for volunteers to assist."

Jaime Day, NOTL Sailing Club commodore, says the re-scheduling of the games, originally set for summer, 2021, was a factor in the town being chosen as the host. "Originally Buffalo Canoe Club in Fort Erie was awarded the games, but with the new schedule they had conflicting regattas going on. Venue chair Harvey Haggerty approached us back in November 2020, and I was excited right from the get-go."

The other members of the sailing club's board share Day's enthusiasm.

"I first brought it to the membership at our annual general meeting in the spring," he says. "I was just flabbergasted at the excitement from not only new members, but old members, founding members. Everyone had nothing but excitement in their voices and their faces."

As with tennis, the sailing club will be playing host to young Olympic hopefuls. He tells The Local there should be little disruption to the club's members, as the boats

for the regatta are all one- and two-person dinghies.

As well, Day says there is very little to be done in the way of infrastructure improvements between now and next August. Club members Maureen Shantz and Donna Genge will take on the roles of venue leads, ensuring the grounds and gardens are presentable and inviting for the national event.

As for spectators, Day adds that Ryerson Park will provide the best vantage point on land for people to watch the regatta, though it will not be designated as an official location for sailing events. Volunteer club members will also be around with their own boats to take fans a bit closer to the action.

Kevin Turcotte, the town's manager of parks and recreation, says staff hope to complete a few improvements to the tennis courts and surrounding areas of Memorial Park, pending council's review and approval of their recommendations this June. The existing bleachers already on site will be used for spectators, while there is a possibility that temporary seating might be brought in if needed.

He adds that the Host Society will be providing the town with approximately \$40,000 for any changes, ad-



Jaime Day, a huge Olympics fan and commodore of the NOTL Sailing Club, says other than a bit of sprucing up the grounds, there is little to be done to accommodate the 2022 Summer Games (Photo supplied)



Hugh Dow says tennis club members are excited to be hosting the 2022 Summer Games tennis competitions. (Mike Balsom)

ditions or improvements to Memorial Park, while additional town resources may be allotted for the project pending approval by council.

The Niagara 2022 Canada Summer Games are scheduled for Aug. 6 to 21, with venues throughout the region.



Auchterlonie on Astrology

Bill Auchterlonie
Special to The Local

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

Thursday, May 6: Harmony of charm and spirit. Friendly Moon in Pisces helps earthy Sun in Taurus. It's a Thursday meant for good things to happen, even if Pluto is retrograde. Here is an opportunity to make at least one relationship better. With a little luck, it could be lots better! Today is a good day for

a birthday. Sigmund Freud was born on May 6 in 1856. Orson Welles in 1915. Willy Mayes is 90. And George Clooney turns 60. And me. I'm 72 today.

Saturday, May 8: On May 8, 2021 Venus joins the Gemini party. Venus is about feelings, and Gemini is about logic and communication. When Venus is in Gemini, we find it easier to articulate our feelings. Of course, feelings are there to be felt, but sometimes knowing how to label, translate, and put your feelings into words can make a big difference. Venus in Taurus at home makes life more beautiful, and adds charm and

quality to everything. Venus in Gemini is lively and flirtatious, in love with everything. Maybe too much love is the only danger. Too many people, places and things are more to the point. The first Coca-Cola was sold on May 8, 1886 at Jacob's Pharmacy in Atlanta, Georgia. And yes, it did contain cocaine.

Tuesday, May 11: On May 11 we have a beautiful new Moon at 21 degrees Taurus. The new Moon is trine Pluto in Capricorn, and has a very earthy feel. The new Moon in Taurus is great for new beginnings that are connected to Taurus topics: the earth, the body, money and

possession, food and nutrition, land and properties. Make a list of things you want to make better in the next four weeks. That old wound from yesterday's forecast gives a new ache, likely from a man who is connected to your mother or her side of the family. Twenty-one years ago today, on May 11, 2000, India passed the 1 billion people mark. It is already nearly 1.5 billion, in just 21 years.

And that's AonA for this week. Next time it's the first quarter Moon in Leo, and the last day of Taurus for 2021.

Remember Joni Mitchell, and shine on!

LocalHAPPENINGS

TINKER THINKER THURSDAYS AGES 7 – 13

May 6 @ 5 p.m. - 6 p.m.

Explore STEAM ideas with the NOTL Public Library, with creativity and fun experiments. Use your creativity and problem solving skills. Build a Newton's Cradle to explore kinetic energy & explore binary code in this month's kit which will include all the materials you'll need for two mini-workshops! Participants, please visit: <https://notlpubliclibrary.org> to register for May 13th & May 27th. Once registered, you will be notified via email when your kit is ready for pick up at the NOTL Library. On the day of the workshop, you will be emailed a link to the Zoom meeting.

AUTHOR TALKS DENISE DAVY ~ 14+

May 10 @ 7 p.m. - 8 p.m.

Join the NOTL Public Library in welcoming Denise Davy as our next author in our 2021 Author Talk Series! Enjoy an evening with writer Denise Davy from the comfort of your home as she talks about her book *Her Name Was Margaret*, a heartbreaking illustration of what can happen to our most vulnerable in society. Although we will be apart there will be plenty of time for questions and conversation. This free event is presented over Zoom, however, attendance is limited, please register as soon as possible by visiting: <https://notlpubliclibrary.org> Zoom log-in information will be emailed to all participants at least 24 hours before each event.

PLACE YOUR COMING EVENT COMMUNITY SOCIAL HERE

With or without a border, colour graphics optional. Include your Logo! Prices starting at \$20. Deadline: Monday 3 p.m. Call Karen 905-641-5335 or email: classified@notllocal.com

LocalWORSHIP

**CORNERSTONE
COMMUNITY CHURCH**

Sunday, May 9th

**10 a.m. Worship Gathering
(Online Only)**

Speaker: **Kevin Bayne**

Message:

Introduction to Spiritual Gifts

**Live stream available
Sundays at 10:00 am**

Please be advised that with the current state of COVID-19, your safety is of utmost importance to us.

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60

61

62

63

Across:

1 Turnpike exit

5 Reverential

9 Frown

14 60% of us live here

15 Of sound judgment

16 Carried

17 Former CIA director Porter ---

18 Electrical devices

20 Goals

21 Central

22 Reactor safety overseer: Abbr.

23 Crimson

25 Shuns

29 Kvetch

30 Hot air

31 Street guide

32 Severe

34 Spark generator

35 Scotch companion

36 Perfectly

37 Take pictures

38 Egyptian solar deity

39 Legs it

40 Throw

41 Corrosive chemicals

42 Since

43 Canter

44 Surrealist Jean ---

45 Short musical passages

47 Dearth

50 Rider Haggard romance

51 Clash

52 Narrow road

53 The Queen City

57 Otherwise

58 Oil well firefighter Red ---

59 Terrible Russian leader

60 Morose

61 Specifically

62 Fencing stake

63 Storm centers

Down:

1 Fumed

2 Together

3 Minor crime

4 Travel documents

5 Get up

6 Rubbed off

7 Spot

8 Destructive computer key

9 Stiffener

10 Shell which can be blown

11 How some stocks are traded (Abbr.)

12 The --- small hours

13 S L C church

19 One way to preserve food

24 Scurried

25 Poet whose work led to "Cats"

26 Passionately

27 Walked knee-deep through water

28 Crosses

30 Fillip

32 Bag supporter

33 Knotty

34 Total confusion

35 Blasphemy

37 Filter out

41 Ambition

43 Collarless short-sleeved top

44 Devil dog

46 Computer information exchange code

47 Deadly

48 Follow

49 Appears

51 Programming language

53 Twin-hulled vessel (Abbr.)

54 Statement of agreement at the altar

55 Rural negative

56 Small drink

64 Long-running Ted Danson show

IN MEMORIAM



JOHN STEPHEN FRYER, P ENG.
MAY 20TH, 1946 – MAY 3, 2019

Two years have gone by since you left us. We miss you so much!.... the cheesy jokes, the teasing, your knowledge of trivia, and more. We think of you and talk of you often. The grandkids often talk of you – “remember when grandpa did this.....”. We will never forget all the fun times: the travel, the cottage, playing in the pool, etc.

Love you forever and always: your wife, Pat, Lisa & Andriy, Stephen & Kaite, and, Ella and Henry, and of course, your fur babies, Darth & Tallinn!

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To place your classified ad, contact Karen: classifieds@notllocal.com Deadline: Mondays at 3 p.m.

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PUZZLE ANSWERS

Sudoku solution from April 28, 2021

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

Across: 1 Ramp, 5 Awed, 9 Scowl, 14 Asia, 15 Wise, 16 Toted, 17 Goss, 18 Appliances, 20 Ends, 21 Key, 22 N R C, 23 Deep red, 25 Eschevs, 29 Moan, 30 Blah, 31 Map, 32 Stern, 34 Coil, 35 Soda, 36 To a T, 37 Shoot, 38 Aten, 39 Runs, 40 Cast, 41 Acids, 42 Ago, 43 Trot, 44 Miro, 45 Phrases, 47 Fannies, 50 She, 51 Jar, 52 Lane, 53 Cincinnati, 57 Elise, 58 Adair, 59 Ivan, 60 Gium, 61 To wit, 62 Pale, 63 Eyes.
Down: 1 Raged, 2 As one, 3 Misdemeanor, 4 Passports, 5 Awaken, 6 Wiped, 7 Espy, 8 Del, 9 Starch, 10 Conch, 11 O T C, 12 Wee, 13 L-D S, 19 In salt, 24 Ran, 25 Eliot, 26 Emotionally, 27 Waded, 28 Spans, 30 Boost, 32 Strap, 33 Tough, 34 Chaos, 35 Sacrilege, 37 Screen, 41 Alm, 43 T-shirt, 44 Marine, 46 A S C I I, 47 Fatal, 48 Ensur, 49 Seems, 51 Java, 53 Cat, 54 I do, 55 Naw, 56 Nip.

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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 Entrée | Bottle of Local Wine | Pecan Tart

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