Shaw still hoping for summer performances

If not, a longer fall season may be an alternative

Penny Coles
The Local

Tim Jennings, executive director of the Shaw Festival, remains optimistic and focused on what can be salvaged of this theatre season. He is also doing his damnedest to look after his theatre people.

Jennings has several good reasons for his optimism — despite an earlier fear of insolvency, and notices to contract staff that they could be terminated with two weeks’ notice, the future is looking a little brighter these days.

One recent positive step, Jennings says, is the federal wage subsidy program that has allowed him to temporarily lay off contract staff, and bring them back as employees doing education outreach and digital engagement.

“They won’t be on stage, but they’ll be able to be paid by the wage subsidy,” he says. “This is good for all of us.”

Some of the actors have been rehearsing through Zoom, which has been helpful in preparing for the start of the season, “but we’ve come to the end of what is reasonable to do on Zoom. This will give them temporary jobs to do, which I expect they’ll take.”

The work will include calling donors and theatre patrons, thanking them for their support, he says, as well as providing online theatre activities and games, and having an online presence in other ways.

“It’s a really good opportunity to create a digital conversation about what we do, and how theatres are used for the public good,” he says.

With so much shut down, people are realizing the importance of gathering and sharing stories and experiences, Jennings says, and the Shaw can seize this time to provide those opportunities.

“It’s obvious, from the number of people violating provincial orders, “that people need to be around people for their mental health. I get it.” But people have to work hard at obeying those orders to help make this go away faster, he adds.

And the faster this ends, the sooner the Shaw can get back to doing what it does best — providing live theatre.

With non-essential services still mostly closed, and the Town shut down until June 30, Jennings says he is still hopeful for a season that could begin July 1.

That depends on getting people “back into the building, into rehearsals,” in time to be ready to open. If that doesn’t happen, there are alternatives under discussion.

In the meantime, “we’re finding new ways to work,” and when this is over, and
Local feels ‘shamed’ for being out on road

Penny Coles  The Local

Maureen Dodd lives on Concession 2, a long stretch of rural road where vehicles often speed.

With not much of a shoulder to walk on, she is in the habit of jumping in her van and driving to the Commons with her nine-year-old Great Dane, Miles, for a long walk.

While she heads the stay-at-home message from the Town, and would love to be able to go out front door and go for a walk, it’s simply not a safe place for either of them. “I love in a rural area. There are no safe roads to walk, with a child or a dog, especially with the extensive speeding I’ve seen on rural roads and on the parkway recently.”

Last week, Tuesday, April 28, she and Miles were in the van on Line 3, almost at the Niagara Parkway as they headed to the Commons, when a car turning left from the parkway lost control, and hit her side of the vehicle so hard she spun around and ended up facing the other direction.

The car that hit her travelled quite a distance, into a ditch, leaving a trail of debris behind.

Her van has been written off, but it saved her life, she believes.

“The collision left her badly shaken, physically and emotionally, although uninjured — she feels it’s a miracle she’s still alive. And she’s angry, because “it was completely senseless. It shouldn’t have happened.”

And it could have been worse, if there had been pedestrians on the side of the road when it occurred, she says, or children riding their bikes.

She was further dismayed to see an online video by Fire Chief Nick Ruller, showing the scene of the collision, which was used to remind NOTLers, to stay home as requested, except for essential travel. She feels that it was aimed at her, suggesting she shouldn’t have been on the road. She points to the charges laid against the other driver — not proven — as the reason, rather than the fact that she was driving to the Commons to walk her dog. The other driver is also local, although she felt the chief’s message implied he was from outside the community.

Ruller introduces the intent of the video by saying he is responding to residents’ concern over the messaging of the signs and communications from the Town regarding non-essential travel into the community: “We don’t want to discourage anybody from essential travel,” visiting essential businesses, or providing care to those in need, he says.

Ruller’s point was that because of the severity of the collision, there were four police officers on the scene, two paramedics, four bystanders who stopped to see if they could help, eight firefighters and two fire chiefs. There are consequences when people take to the roads, he says, which is why the Town is trying to discourage non-essential travel — to keep residents safe, to stop the spread, and to limit unnecessary interactions for first responders.

He referenced the Line 3 collision between a resident and “someone out for a drive within the community” in the video, and did not intend to imply that Dodd shouldn’t have been on the road, he told The Local.

He didn’t identify her in the video, he says, and if she was going out to take her dog to a place where it’s safe for her to walk, “there’s nothing wrong with what she was doing.”

The message in the video was not about that one incident or any specifically involved in the collision, but to say to those who questioned why it’s wrong to just go out for a drive, “stuff like this can happen, and it involves a lot of resources. There were about a dozen people who were affected by it.”

Dodd says although she feels targeted by the video for being out on the road, “I’m completely grateful to all responders. They were professional, compassionate and they did a very thorough investigation.”

Officers from the Niagara Parks Police Service responded to the call, charging the driver of the other vehicle, also from NOTL, with careless driving, and other offences related to insurance and lack of documentation. They are just charges at this point, not proven, says parks police, and the investigation is ongoing.

Kasia Dupuis is a teacher and an artist. She’s not accustomed to being on-camera.

But with the Niagara-on-the-Lake Public Library closed, Dupuis, who looks after children’s programming, has gone virtual.

Using a tripod and her phone, she records and uploads online programs, including Create with Kasia, showing kids how to paint along with her step-by-step instructions, and STEAM Story Time, when she reads a story to youngsters and shows them some simple science.

Story Time is Wednesdays at 11 a.m., and when offered at the library is intended for kids aged three to five, but online, “anyone can access it.”

The art-based program is offered Mondays at 4 p.m., and is designed for all ages — she’s even finding adults enjoy it, she says.

The number of kids who watch each session varies anywhere from a dozen to about 40, she says, depending on the day and what is on offer, but each past video is available on YouTube to watch afterward. Dupuis says they’ve had about 800 viewers — Story Time, for example, can be watched by kids who enjoy it over and over again.

People are watching them, and we’re getting really good feedback.”

She says recording the videos is fun, and “also terrific, it’s not used to being on camera.”

It is, however, something she’s always wanted to try, especially with an art-based program, and now that she’s given it a try, she finds it exciting.

And, as a bonus, she’s still employed — some library staff have been laid off.

“This is helping me think about programming online, not only for online and virtual learning is about the future, she says, but it’s also here now. “When this is over, and we’re back to the new normal, whatever that looks like, virtual programming will continue to have its place.”

For a schedule and more information on online library programs, visit https://www.facebook.com/notllibrary/.

Kids’ virtual activities online at the library

Penny Coles  The Local

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“This is helping me think about programming online, not only for online and virtual
Planning underway for library reopening

Penny Coles
The Local

Cathy Simpson is working four days a week, from home, and is busier than ever.

The chief librarian and CEO of the Niagara-on-the-Lake Public Library says Simpson has had their hours busier than their titles suggest. Staff have had their hours increased four days a week, from 7 a.m. to 3:30 p.m., people need to enter crowd live on their phone, tablet or laptop — no app needed. They will then be prompted to enter a code, which is posted on the library’s Facebook page and valid every day.

Another popular online event is Tuesday Trivia. To access the game, which starts at 7:30 p.m., people need to enter crowd live on their phone, tablet or laptop — no app needed. They will then be prompted to enter a code, which is posted on the library’s Facebook page and valid every day.

Simpson says the library has been rebranded as a “community hub” in the last decade, and during the pandemic, has offered so much more than book-lending, says Simpson, and has continued during its closure to provide people with numbers of online services, such as book club, audiobooks, digital magazines, language learning programs through Babbel.com, as well as activities for kids and adults. For example, Simpson notes, there are chess tournaments for kids.

The weekly schedule on Facebook shows a variety of programming. One popular event is Ask Me Anything, Wednesdays from 2 to 3:30 p.m. Each week it features a different guest host who showcases their talent, taking questions and answering them in a real-time chat. This week, May 6, is local musician Steve Goldberger, with Barbara Worthy, actress, writer and historian, next week.

Simpson says the library is looking for volunteers who have a talent they’d like to share and stories to tell. She encourages anyone interested to contact her at csimpson@notlpl.org.

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One of the services offered during the closure, primarily by volunteers, is a phone check-in service for members. The volunteers have learned there are many seniors, and some who aren’t, who are not online, either through lack of knowledge, or lack of technology.

The calls, Simpson says, have been very much appreciated by the recipients. “We’ll have to get creative, and there are some things we won’t be able do for a while.” However, the library has always managed to remain relevant, did its best to continue through the pandemic, and will be again in the future, she says.

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Simpson says she also considers specific times for the vulnerable populations.

Another change may be a curbside service for book returns, to ensure books are quarantined before they go back on the shelves.

To share ideas, she has attended regular meetings on Zoom, with other library heads from around the region, discussing their plans for re-opening.

“We’ll have to get creative, and there are some things we won’t be able do for a while.” However, the library has always managed to remain relevant, did its best to continue through the pandemic, and will be again in the future, she says.

“There’s never been an easier time to talk about it, to understand the value of community-based theatre, and how it can serve the public through art, he says.

Another aid to moving forward is the Shaw’s forward-thinking insurance policy that covers disasters such as the pandemic. When Jenning, “new to the gig” at the Shaw, in late 2016, he and CFO Roy Reeves were looking through insurance documents, Jenning, who has seen his share of disasters in his career, decided the Shaw was under insured in that aspect. The chief concern was that a communicable disease could spread and affect a number of cast members, and cause the cancellation of three or four shows.

As it turned out, “we were prescient with our decision, and very fortunate,” he says.

How much financial aid the insurance provides will depend on how the season plays out, he explains — it is intended to bring them up to their “normal net” based on recent seasons. Although they won’t have that information until the end of the year, they’ve been offered an advance to tide them over.

He is also anticipating the Shaw’s new to the gig? of details of the $500 million promised by the federal government to arts, culture and sports organizations will be announced at 7:30 p.m., people released Wednesday — and that the money should begin flowing quickly, as it has with other relief benefits.

“It’s not going to stretch to a huge amount to any organization, but I’m hoping it will consider the larger employers with the most actors. Or it may not. We hope to hear soon.”

If, despite Jenning’s optimism, the Shaw is not able to stage performances this summer, there is another option under discussion. After last year’s successful holiday season, he says, they are hoping to move forward with holiday shows this fall, and could begin them earlier for a longer run. “That would help the town get back on its feet, restart the economy, and help get people coming back to town.”

Clearly, as Jenning states, there is still a huge appetite for live theatre, and for the Shaw Festival, and the town, its return can’t come soon enough.
May 7, 2020

THE NOTL LOCAL

No hanging baskets on town streets this year

After a discussion about the long-standing tradition of beautiful hanging baskets on Queen Street, and more recently the other four communities, the basket program has been cancelled for this year.

Every February, about $10,000 worth of small plants are ordered from local growers and in early May, are planted in baskets in the Town greenhouses and grown on until they fill the baskets.

The baskets, in the early days a project of the NOTL Horticultural Society as a gift to the town, have always been much admired by visitors. But not this year.

"After careful deliberation with the Emergency Control Group, and in consultation with council, the Town of Niagara-on-the-Lake has decided to cancel its 2020 hanging basket program," said an announcement last week.

"While this may be understandably disappointing for some, the COVID-19 pandemic is forcing the Town to make difficult decisions with respect to staff and budgeting. Cancellation of the hanging basket program will save the Town $51,000."

Staff create and install about 230 baskets each year. While on display, the baskets require regular maintenance, which is performed by contract staff. Due to the impact of COVID-19, the Town has had to lay off a number of contract staff and postponed the rehiring of summer contract staff, the announcement said.

"The reality is that this program is simply not feasible at this time," says interim CAO Sheldon Randall.

"We understand and share in residents’ disappointment, and we are looking forward to the hanging baskets returning to Niagara-on-the-Lake in 2021."

To review all Town updates related to COVID-19, read answers to frequently asked questions, and see up-to-date information on the status of Town services, visit notl.com/COVID-19, or call 905-468-3266.

Town staff will continue to assist and serve citizens online and over the phone between the hours of 8:30 a.m. and 4:30 p.m. Monday to Friday.

Penny Coles
The Local

There will be no hanging baskets in town this season. (Photo supplied)
Ignoring parking ban results in fines and towing

Penny Coles
The Local

Last week, after weekend crowds proved that escalated measures to deter out-of-town visitors were ignored, the Town banned all on-street parking within a designated area of Old Town.

This weekend, bylaw officers were issuing tickets, and vehicles were towed. More than 10,000 vehicles entered the Old Town this weekend, from Mississauga Street and Queen's Parade, the Town reported Tuesday. Bylaw officers issued 113 parking tickets, and 19 vehicles were towed, with the $200 charge to retrieve it. The tow truck operators are paid by the vehicle owner. "The Town did not pay to have trucks stationed throughout Old Town," as one social media post reported.

In response to a question about how drivers were able to retrieve their vehicles, the Town said, “if a vehicle is not where the owner left it, the owner can call the police and the police will advise where it was taken. Uber is operating and available to assist people in getting to their vehicles.”

Eight emergency order charges were laid for groups larger than five, and complaints of public urination and defecation continue, although no fines were laid because bylaw officers were unable to catch those reported.

Residents holding a Dedicated Parking Permit will be permitted to park within the banned area, and 15-minute parking zones will be established to accommodate patrons of essential businesses remaining open in Old Town.

The road signs previously situated at main, high-traffic entrances have been relocated “to strategically target out-of-town visitors,” with messaging adjusted to say: "State of Emergency," “No Facilities Available," “Parking Enforced," and “Essential Business Only.”

The parking ban will remain in effect until further notice, Thursday’s announcement says. “It is important to remember the significant risk the spread of COVID-19 poses for Niagara-on-the-Lake. With more than 50 percent of our population over the age of 50, one of the demographics identified as most vulnerable, this human health emergency could be disastrous for our community,” the parking ban announcement says.

“The health and safety of residents, and the public, is the highest priority, and town council and staff are doing all they can to protect against community spread. This health crisis is new territory for everyone, and situations are changing rapidly. As such, adjustments will continue to be made as circumstances evolve.”
How did we get here, and where are we going?

There are some cliches that, while drastically overused, are applicable when looking at this year of the pandemic, and the way it has been handled. They become cliches for a reason, so often repeated they sound trite. But at some point, they were considered relevant. And as trite as they may seem, they are relevant today.

“Hindsight is 20/20,” or as has been said, 2020, as this will be a year to look back on. How about “unprecedented?” How many times have we heard this from politicians and medical experts from across the country? Or “nothing’s off the table.” “Err on the side of caution.”

Yet, as often as we have heard that we are living through a time like no other, that all possible options to help guide us through it safely are being considered, and that decisions are being made to keep us as safe as possible, we sit in judgment of the decision-makers.

Many are angry with the politicians who make those decisions. Going by the plethora of strongly-worded insults on local social media, they are extremely angry. Likely because people are getting increasingly anxious and impatient for it to be over.

There are two sides, or more, to every story. In this town, at this time, one side represents those who think the many restrictions, including the recent parking ban and signage to keep visitors out of town, go too far.

And on the other, are the decision-makers, and all those who support their decisions and willingness to err on the side of caution.

One side fears the restrictions are unnecessarily harsh and compromising our economy to the point of no return. The other is concerned about saving lives.

Although there are many who are quick to offer their opinions now, they are just that. Opinions. Only in hindsight will we be able to assess the actions taken. We will be looking back on this year, maybe the next couple of years, evaluating what was done, what should have been done or could have been done, and was it enough or too much.

For now, as we all struggle to get through this time, it’s still best to work together. And together, follow the guidelines and help to bring this to a conclusion sooner and with a better outcome. To all who are doing that, thank you.

Can we be optimistic, and against our deepest, most passionate opinions, trust that decisions, which in time may prove to be too much, or maybe not enough, are being made for the benefit of us all? That those who are planning cautious reopenings will do so sensibly? That businesses will open and visitors will return?

And can we choose to wait it out with kindness, rather than anger?

As The Local’s Karen Skeoch noted, after a much-needed grocery store outing, the store employees were all wearing T-shirts asking people to be kind.

“How did we get to the point where we need T-shirts to ask us to be kind?” she wonders.

Good question. Can’t we just be kind?

Penny Coles The Local

Auchterlonie on Astrology

Bill Auchterlonie Special to The Local

While the pandemic shrinks the number of pages of The Local, Auchterlonie on Astrology will also downsize to one paragraph.

Thursday, May 7: Just a few minutes after the sun rose this morning, we will be under the influence of the full Moon in Scorpio – one of the most powerful full Moons of the year.

Basically it pits what we do not know about ourselves against our deepest, most passionate emotions. It also plays with our head, and drains us of our usual energy. My advice? Be charming and be sincere. Don’t be like Saint Joan of Arc, who on May 7, 1429, led the French army to oust the British for the rule of the City of Orleans. If you have not seen G.B. Shaw’s play at the Shaw Festival (called Saint Joan), check it out the next time it is offered.

The full Auchterlonie on Astrology column will be in this week’s printed edition.

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. The deadline is Monday at noon.

The Niagara-on-the-Lake Local

The trusted voice of our community

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MENTAL HEALTH IS THE GREATEST WEALTH

Ben Bradford Andrew (top), and Samantha Cashmore, Grade 8 students at St. Michael Catholic School, created posters for Mental Health Awareness week. Each of their posters has five suggestions for remaining positive during the pandemic, and is being displayed in the community. Mental Health is the Greatest Wealth is this year’s theme for the campaign. (Photos supplied)
Chamber preparing to welcome back visitors

Eduardo Lafforgue
Special to The Local

Last week was a strange one of in-betweens — between our once-normal life and our alternative COVID-19 one, between our town shut down in a bubble and others on the brink of some form of reopening.

As we face the ongoing effects of the COVID-19 outbreak, our efforts naturally turn to creating a clean and safe environment for our guests to enjoy and the well-being of all of us.

Now that we are “enjoying” the deafening silence of no visitors, we realize how crucial tourism is to our economy and the well-being of all of us.

There’s no question that this pandemic is the biggest challenge the tourism industry and Niagara-on-the-Lake have faced in the past 40 years. But, despite the chilling pandemic is the biggest challenge the tourism industry and Niagara-on-the-Lake have faced in the past 40 years. But, despite the chilling toll the tourism industry has taken, we must remain optimistic about the future.

The hospitality and travel industries, the theatres, museums, festivals, restaurants, shops and wineries will bounce back and they will flourish. Their offers may look different than they did last year, or even three months ago, but surely we will return.

The Chamber of Commerce and Tourism NOTL are here to provide you information and resources to consider as we visualize and create an even more welcoming destination where guests feel safe and taken care of.

Edward Lafforgue is the president and CEO of the NOTL Chamber of Commerce and Tourism NOTL.

LETTERS

Sights for visitors offensive to reader

Dear Lord Mayor:

I have listened to your appeal to the public to stay away from NOTL, and driven by the new signs. (I believe the public sign between Niagara Falls and NOTL on St. Paul Street may in fact be on Niagara Falls property and not on NOTL property. Perhaps this should be checked out by the works department).

We are all, every one of us, struggling to keep safe and to do the right thing during this pandemic.

As I listened to your message, wondering about tourists in the town — where they are coming from, are they asymptomatic, are they likely to cause the spread of the virus as they shop at the bakery, grocery stores, ice cream shop (what is essential about an ice cream shop, anyway), etc., I have to wonder if that is not the case for everyone living in every single municipality.

This question can also be asked of NOTL people as they indeed shop in grocery stores, bakeries, bulk stores, etc. in the municipalities outside their own area of NOTL — say perhaps St. Catharines, Niagara Falls, Beamsville, or Grimsby. They might also park their cars and walk along sidewalks and paths in those other municipalities.

I think it is fairly safe to say that any resident in NOTL would be hard pressed to find all their needs could be met within the boundaries of the town.

I believe the signs warning people away from the Old Town are very offensive. “Please stay home,” “local traffic only,” are signs used to indicate that only people within those streets should be on them. Your merchants who are delivering curbside pickup provide a service to people who live outside the town. In fact, I dare say that they, none of them, in good times or in bad, would survive without the support of neighbouring towns and villages.

The message seems pretty clear to me, as a resident of the village of Queenston for some 47 years, the Old Town wants your money but please do not cause us any inconvenience or concerns.

Donna Lynne Fraser
Village of Queenston

Feeling blessed to live in NOTL

Thank you, Penny, for choosing to share our story. We have been overwhelmed with the unexpected generosity and thoughtfulness from our neighbours, and people who we haven’t even met!

We are reminded of how blessed we are to live in such an amazing community.

Niki Claus
NOTL

Comment

Signs for visitors offensive to reader

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- **Greatest Wealth**
- **Greatest Wealth**

### Mental Health

- **Greatest Wealth**
- **Greatest Wealth**

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The message seems pretty clear to me, as a resident of the village of Queenston for some 47 years, the Old Town wants your money but please do not cause us any inconvenience or concerns.

Donna Lynne Fraser
Village of Queenston

Feeling blessed to live in NOTL

Thank you, Penny, for choosing to share our story. We have been overwhelmed with the unexpected generosity and thoughtfulness from our neighbours, and people who we haven’t even met!

We are reminded of how blessed we are to live in such an amazing community.

Niki Claus
NOTL

LETTERS

Igniting hope

For Mental Health Awareness Week, Grade 8 students from St. Michael Catholic School created posters with the theme, Mental Health is the Greatest Wealth, with suggestions for positive mental health at this time. They displayed the posters in the community to encourage and ignite hope amongst their neighbours. Igniting Hope is the theme of this year’s Catholic Education Week. These posters, from left, were created by Lola Davies, Siddhi Upadhyaya, and Jacob Scaletta.

Penner building centre

Davies, Siddhi Upadhyaya, and Jacob Scaletta.

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Crossroads students learn about planting from local expert

Byron Dodd wasn’t going to let a global pandemic and school closures interfere with his commitment to about 50 students at Crossroads Public School.

“Three years ago, when my oldest son Logan was in Grade 1, I decided he would like to teach students a little bit about farming, and figured he could do a better job if he went to school, rather than have the kids come to him, at Dodd’s Greenhouses on Concession 2,” he said.

He took some pansy seeds with him, and taught the kids how to plant them in tiny little plugs, then, when they were ready, transfer them to four-inch pots. Each student was able to choose four plugs and two four-inch pots, to plant two to a pot.

He taught them “the very basics” about the root system, soil, and planting he says. He had seeds that would produce several different colours, and although it was too early to see the flowers, “the kids got so excited. It was the best part of it for me, watching them all trying to choose which they wanted to plant.”

Once each child had their two pots planted, he took them back to the greenhouse to grow them on, and normally, he would take them back to school to give the kids in May, before Mother’s Day, and they’d have something they could give their moms, with pride in having planted them.

This year was different, of course. The pansies were planted before March break, and as it turned out, due to the COVID-19 virus, the students haven’t been back to school.

Instead, Dodd and his wife Sue arranged for each of the student families to come to pick up the kids’ plants. Each pot was labelled with the students’ names, and the Dodds had one family drive into the parking area at a time, allowing the students to pick up their pots safely.

There are two and a half Grade 1 classes, totaling about 50 students, says Crossroads teacher Anjie Inglis. Dodd taught each one of them and helped with their planting. All three teachers were at the greenhouse Saturday to watch their students pick up their plants, and although everyone was cautious about physical distancing, and spacing out the arrival of the students, it was an emotional reunion.

“We appreciate the Dodd family so much,” says Inglis.

“They have come into our Grade 1 classes for the past few years and have taught our students all about planting pansies. Mr. Dodd explained to our students how to plant and care for the flowers. Our students love getting their hands dirty by planting their very own flowers.”

This year, she says, “the flowers were planted on the very last day before March Break. Even though we haven’t been back since, I hope that by picking up their flowers today, our students will see that life continues to go on, and that it will return to normal again. We miss them so much.”

Town Enacts Parking Ban to Further Protect Against Community Spread

Effective May 1, 2020, all on-street parking within a designated area of Old Town is prohibited at all times. This prohibition will remain in effect during the Town’s State of Emergency or until further notice.

All 1-Hour Resident Parking Permits will be void during the parking ban. The expiry dates for 2020 1-Hour Parking Permits purchased prior to May 1, 2020, will be extended by the period of time equal to the parking ban.

Despite this parking ban, the following accommodations have been made:

1. While parking restrictions are being strictly enforced throughout the designated area, vulnerable resident’s dependent on the care of family and/or support workers remain a high priority for Town Council and Staff. If a ticket is issued to a person providing an essential service, please contact the Town at covidcomplaints@notl.com immediately.

2. Residents holding a Dedicated Parking Permit are permitted to park within the banned area.

3. 15-minute parking zones have been established to accommodate patrons of essential businesses remaining open in Old Town.

It is important to remember the significant risk the spread of COVID-19 poses for Niagara-on-the-Lake. With more than 50 percent of our population over the age of 50, one of the demographics identified as most vulnerable, this human health emergency could be disastrous for our community.

The health and safety of residents, and the public, is the highest priority, and Town Council and Staff are doing all they can to protect against community spread. This health crisis is new territory for everyone, and situations are changing rapidly. As such, adjustments will continue to be made as circumstances evolve.

In addition to increased enforcement efforts within the Old Town, Enforcement Officers will continue to ensure that Emergency Orders are adhered to throughout Niagara-on-the-Lake. Those wishing to report a violation or issue a complaint are encouraged to email covidcomplaints@notl.com.

For more information, please visit notl.com/COVID-19 or call 905-468-3266. For immediate alerts, follow the Town on Facebook, Twitter and Instagram.
Klassen family making the best of time together

Taylor (front), Erica, Mark and Mark Jr. down around in their Henry Street garage. Mark's man-cave has been turned into a family hang out as they get through the pandemic together. (Photo supplied)

Taylor says Taylor is the one with the creative mind, and comes up with great ideas to keep them busy. Last week, it was a scavenger hunt with 20 clues, the details planned by Taylor, says Erica. Rather than looking for objects, they had questions that were more of a personal nature, related to family history, and they had to find the answers. They paired up, took selfies as they hunted, and raced to the finish, Erica and Mark winning by a slim margin. “This was the most fun ever. It took us about two hours to find everything,” says Erica. The two couples kept crossing paths as they searched, but the most fun was watching the selves they took as they hunted, which “the boys,” as Erica calls the two adults who married last fall, turned into a slideshow for them all to watch on TV.

She says she looks forward to doing it again, with extended family, once they’re able to get together. She had several people reach out to her, saying how much fun they seemed to be having, and asking about the questions for the hunt. While she’s happy to explain, she says, the clues are Taylor’s creation, and devised for the Klassen family.

They often have game nights, sometimes the four of them, sometimes virtual games with other family. Mark and Erica in the Henry Street garage. Mark has turned into his man cave, Mark Jr. and Taylor downstairs in the space they rent. Other evenings the four of them just hang out in the garage together.

Taylor says she’s grateful they’re able to be at home together — she loves having them close by, and finds just having Mark in the kitchen over coffee in the morning is time she treasures with them. “I keep thinking it’s amazing they want to spend time with us parents, but they do. They want to be with us. We’re so grateful. Mark and I keep it fun, the boys keep it fun, and we all keep active. It’s just such a pleasure to be with them.” Erica also needs her “girl time,” and gets that virtually, when five female family members get together to have a glass of wine on Skype. “We vent, and we chat. It’s a ton of fun. We share some happy times and some sad times, and lots of laughs. They help keep me sane.”

Taylor is an essential worker, as a clerk at the Joseph Brant Hospital in Burlington, and apart from him going to work, the four of them are “keeping it real, and close to home,” isolating and doing what they can to stay safe, and positive.

The four of them — they call themselves the Klassen clan — are also taking walks together, with their two dogs, but still staying close to home, following a five-kilometre route through the neighbourhood. “We do the same route every day, and see the same people. We’ve never seen people so friendly. Everyone’s smiling, they’re waving and saying hello. People are looking for interaction with others.”

There are sad days, says Erica, getting emotional when she remembers the Easter dinner she cooked just for the four of them, trying to keep the holiday “as normal as possible,” but missing extended family.

But overall, “it’s been a positive time” for the Klassen family, says Erica. The lesson from this time, she adds, is “family means so much. Certainly there are bad days, when it feels like this is never going to end, but we love being together. We love each other.”

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**New Listing**

443 NASSAU STREET UNIT #5
MLS 3080463 • Christopher Bowron and Nicole Vanderpark
$479,000

3 ADDISON AVENUE
MLS 3079460 • Marilyn Francis
$549,000

92 ANGELA CRESCEINT
MLS 3073148 • Randy Armstrong
$799,000

11 WINDSOR CIRCLE
MLS 3076136 • Christopher Bowron and Nicole Vanderpark
$999,000

558 LANDSWORNE AVENUE
MLS 3049081 • Christopher Bowron and Nicole Vanderpark
$1,909,000

16 MORTON STREET
MLS 3079191 • Thomas Elliott and Kim Elliott
$1,169,000

339 MARY STREET
MLS 3084125 • Thomas Elliott and Kim Elliott
$1,029,000

1409 CONCESSION 2 ROAD
MLS 3080438 • Thomas Elliott and Kim Elliott
$1,380,000

9515 WARNER ROAD, NIAGARA FALLS
MLS 3079477 • Thomas Elliott and Kim Elliott
$2,898,000

9515 WARNER ROAD, NIAGARA FALLS
MLS 3079380 • Christopher Bowron and Nicole Vanderpark
$1,950,000

112 DELATER STREET
MLS 3075844 • Viviane Elliott, Thomas Elliott and Kim Elliott
$1,125,000

40 PLATOFF STREET
MLS 3080477 • Thomas Elliott and Kim Elliott
$2,898,000

11 WINDSOR CIRCLE
MLS 3076136 • Christine Bruce
$999,000

16 MORTON STREET
MLS 3079191 • Thomas Elliott and Kim Elliott
$1,169,000

9315 WARNER ROAD, NIAGARA FALLS
MLS 3079477 • Christopher Bowron and Nicole Vanderpark
$1,950,000

Christopher Bowron*............905-468-2269
Victoria Bolduc*..................905-941-3726
Philip Bowron*....................905-348-7626
Bonnie Grimm*.................905-468-1256
Kim Elliott*..........................905-380-8011
Randall Armstrong*............905-651-2977
Nicole Vanderpark*.............905-941-4585
Viviane Elliott**..................905-468-2142
Thomas Elliott**.................905-380-8012
Cheryl Carmichael*..............905-941-0270
Sarah Gleddie*....................905-685-2458
Christine Bruce*................905-328-9703
Marilyn Francis**................905-933-4983
Linda Williams*..................905-401-4240

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The Local
notllocal.com
May 7, 2020

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Penny Coles
The Local

If you want to know what other families are doing to have fun during the pandemic, ask Erica Klassen.

She and her husband Mark Klassen, their son Mark Jr., and sons in-law Taylor Klassen, live in their Vegi home, where they keep busy, active, and feel very fortunate to be having fun together.

Erica says Taylor is the one with the creative mind, and comes up with great ideas to keep them busy.

Last week, it was a scavenger hunt with 20 clues, the details planned by Taylor, says Erica. Rather than looking for objects, they had questions that were more of a personal nature, related to family history, and they had to find the answers. They paired up, took selfies as they hunted, and raced to the finish, Erica and Mark winning by a slim margin. “This was the most fun ever. It took us about two hours to find everything,” says Erica.

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Local creates new method to teach kids to read

Mike Balsom Special to The Local

A life-long struggle with reading difficulties has prompted Niagara-on-the-Lake’s Jeff Harrington to create a website to help others learn to read.

And he’s hoping Wuzzals.com will soon become the standard for teaching reading to young kids.

Harrington grew up in London, Ontario, where he excelled in mathem-atics but struggled severely, right from the start, in reading.

Time spent in summer school, special education and remedial classes, even failing a grade and being forced to repeat a year, didn’t improve his reading skills.

Harrington’s challenges with reading continued to dog him in high school, right through to his uni-versity education. He pushed through, though, earning a degree at Brock University.

About five years ago, he decided to visit university and, have himself analyzed. What he discov-ered surprised him.

“They told me I have zero phonemic awareness. Phonemic awareness is the ability to sound out words,” he explained. “I couldn’t even say every word by sight.”

Around that same time, his son, Grade 6 student Sax-son, was struggling with reading.

“It was like a flash-back,” he says. “When you’re that far behind, you become self-dis-couraged. I had my son analyzed and, he’s so far behind. Being this far behind, you become discourage.”

Harrington’s son was in Grade 6 at Elementary School, and no-one was pushing him enough.

“His research broke learning to read into two approaches. The first fo-cused on phonics. The other approach, learning by sight, was closer to the way Harrington and many other struggling readers actually learn.”

But he continued with his team to push on with this idea.

Recently they have been working on a fully func-tioning system through which a teacher can create a classroom on Wuzzals.com, assign levels based on a student’s current reading ability, and track progress for a group of stu-dents based on their vari-ous strengths.

Harrington, whose son was running away from the books, has found it a “very engaging process.”

The local website houses many features for kids including a variety of stories and a library of books.

“Saxon was running away from the books, trying to find a way to make them engaging. That’s what we’re doing.”

Saxon has found the stories on the site to be helpful.

“I have found a lot of suggestions from other people about how they know who could use a smile right about now,” Saxon says.

Jeff Harrington displays Wuzzals.com, a learning pro-gram he created to teach kids to read. (Photo supplied)

Reese brothers helping others during school closures

Penny Coles The Local

Mariah Reese couldn’t be more proud of her three sons during this time of self-isolation.

“Reese brothers helping others during school closures.”

Their homeschooling leaves them plenty of free time to fill, and inspired by the movie, The Christmas Project, they decided to drop gifts off at peoples’ homes, “just because,” she says.

“We figured now was the perfect time for such kindness. They love to personalize the bags where they have bought cookies and tarts to give out instead, she says.

“the boys have always want-ed to drop gift bags off at peoples’ homes, ‘just because,’ ” she says.

“We have taken a lot of suggestions from oth-er people about how they know who could use a smile right about now.”

They also try to find their own ways to help strangers, she added.

“My middle child, Saxon, has a special family recipe for banana bread and another one for cookies. He has been hard at work in the kitchen making loaf after loaf — even bought him a mini loaf pan — and cookie sheet after cookie sheet to add to the kids.”

They have run out of baked goods a few times, and have bought cookies and tarts to give out instead, she says.

“My youngest, Skilor, has been making cards that say ‘we hope you!’ today. We try to personalize the bags when possible, with wine and choc-olate or toys and games for kids, and all three have been dropping the bags at doors and trying to run away with-out being seen,” says Mariah.

“Saxon was running away from a house and his shoe fell off on a gravel driveway and he said, ‘it hurt so bad, but felt so good’,” she said. “I asked him what that meant and he said, ‘the rocks hurt my feet, but it felt so good to make people happy.’”

“the boys have had such a good time with this, and I am so proud of how much time and love the boys have put into others’ happiness during such a hard time for so many people.”

Saxon, Skilor and Xaxon Reese pick up litter along the Niagara Parkway Recreation Trail on Earth Day. (Photo supplied)

To advertise your Wor-ship services in this section, please contact: karen@notllocal.com

LOCAL WORSHIP

Sunday, May 10th

Cornerstone Community Church

Skielor Reese drops off a gift bag and scrampers away before being seen. (Photo supplied)
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IN MEMORIAM

John Stephen Fryer
May 20, 1946-May 3, 2019
Forever Loved! Forever Missed!
Wife Pat
Children Lisa Fryer Kolos & Andriy Kolos;
Stephen & Kaite Fryer
Grandchildren Ella & Henry Fryer
Furbabies Tallin and Darth
Until we meet again!

Sudoku solution from April 30, 2020

PUZZLE ANSWERS

Crossword puzzle:

Across:
1 Urban air pollution problem
3 That’s in Paris
9 Prim
14 Formerly French Sudan
15 E.g. Rice, Harvard (Abbr.)
16 E.g. Rice, Harvard (Abbr.)
17 Not dissimilar
18 Salespeople
19 Syrian dynasty
20 Padre (Abbr.)
21 Prepares for war
22 Roughly speaking
23 Traditional voting day
25 West Atlantic international grp.
26 Flat panel TV type
29 Ankle injury
30 Parking area
31 Doozie
32 Undersides
34 2,000 lbs
35 Foundation
38 Tear
39 Shorthand inventor John --- Robert ---
40 --- calling!
41 Maturity
43 Stiff sentence
44 Missions (Abbr.)
45 Good
49 Banned insecticide
51 Distress message
52 Comedians
54 Drugs (Abbr.)
55 Threat to fighters
56 Alan Ladd gunfighter role
58 Loopy
59 Chivvied
60 Comedians
63 Drugs (Abbr.)
64 Missions (Abbr.)

Down:
1 Mental ability
4 Make up
5 Oliver
4 Gin
5 Currant
6 Enemy
7 Sips
8 TVs
9 Scars
10 Toss
11 Absolute
12 I R A
13 Dad
21 Adios
22 Oats
24 Sabine
25 Oomph
27 Clog
28 Dung
30 Loins
31 Larder
33 Traps
35 Bald
36 Avid
37 Software
39 Goers
41 Moos
42 On a date
46 Disuse
47 Lean on
48 Edmond
50 Steal
51 Hegel
53 Int’l
54 Maui
56 SAS
57 How
58 G D P
59 Jim.

Sudoku:

PUZZLE ANSWERS: 7 6 1 3 9 8 2 4 5
Our customers are always on good ground with us

Mulch
- Shredded Pine
- Classic Cedar
- Enhanced Black
- Hemlock CPM
- Enhanced Brown
  - Decorative Hardwood
  - Four Seasons Pine Mulch

Decorative Stone
- Gold Stone
- 1/2” Beauti-Drive
- Silica Pebbles
- 1” Terra Stone
- River Rock

Soil
- Top Dressing
  - Topsoil
  - Triple Mix

Gravel
- 1/2” Clear
- 3/4” Clear
- Traffic Binder
- Masonry Sand
- Concrete Sand
- Screening

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