Blanche Quinn was admired, respected by all who knew her

Penny Coles
The Local

About five years ago, author Randy Klaassen wrote a book about the life of Blanche Quinn. After an extensive amount of time interviewing her, he described her as a woman who lived life “at full throttle.”

That was Blanche. She was spirited, strong-minded and opinionated. She said what she thought. She was genuine, intelligent, quick with a one-liner, always upbeat and ready with a smile.

When talking to others who knew her, there is a theme that quickly becomes evident. She had a difficult life, and many hardships to tackle, mostly by herself. She never hesitated to talk about them, or about the losses of those she loved. She met challenges head-on, with strength, and most of all, with humour, her way of coping with adversity. The woman who may be remembered most for her wit loved to make others smile.

Klaassen says Blanche, who died May 8 at the age of 97, was 90 years old when she finally gained full independence and moved into an apartment on her own. Prior to that she had always lived with someone else.

She was raised in Toronto by her grandmother after the death of her parents, and then, when her grandmother died, lived with a friend and her family. She joined the Royal Canadian Air Force with a friend, and after the war, married Lincoln Quinn, and came to Niagara-on-the-Lake to live with his parents in the family home on Ricardo Street.

Her husband died when she was 72, and she moved to a retirement home in St. Catharines. She was then able to travel, and was a regular on an information radio show, Morning Star.

Joy met Diane Peirce for the first time a few days after she gave Diane a part of her liver. She says when she first learned about Diane and her family’s search for a living donor, her heart went out to them — she couldn’t imagine how difficult it must have been for them not to be able to donate themselves. She spent the rest of that evening researching living donation, and submitted her application the very next day.

“Joy, who is married with a young son, is an incredibly special person,” says Diane’s husband Mike. (Photo supplied)
Town opening washrooms, lifting parking ban

Penny Coles
The Local

With more businesses opening on Queen Street, limited to curbside pickup for now, the Town is lifting its parking ban and opening two public washrooms.

In recent weeks, says Lord Mayor Betty Disero at Monday’s virtual committee-of-the-whole meeting, it became obvious the lack of washrooms was trading one public health risk for another, as tourists continued to visit. Niagara Public Health is providing overnight to ensure proper care is taken, she says. The facilities on Market Street and Queens Royal Park will be open, cleaned on the hour, with town staff on site limiting the number of people going into the washrooms and ensuring physical distancing. The parking ban has also been lifted. The Town, with its full-time staff operating at 100 per cent capacity, will be bringing in four contract staff to assist bylaw officers. They will patrol parks, and if there are gatherings larger than five, or people who are not physical distancing, they will talk to them and try to move them on, interim CAO Sheldon Randall told councillors. If they are unsuccessful, they will call bylaw officers or the Niagara Regional Police.

The Town is also bringing back two horticultural staff for planting and watering town gardens in the Old Town, and planters in Queenston, St. Davids and Virgil, starting Monday, says Randall.

When questioned by councillors, Randall agreed the Niagara Emergency Control Group, which dropped hanging baskets from the budget this season, could revisit that decision, given the parking revenue to be generated by the new washrooms.

Three contract staff will be supporting operations at the two washrooms that are opening, Randall says.

Questions can be sent ahead of time to beth.audet@notllocal.com during the virtual chat, and she will answer them. It’s open to anyone with a Facebook account, who likes or at least follows the Town’s Facebook page.

Virtual coffee breaks continue

Penny Coles
The Local

When Lord Mayor Betty Disero began holding coffee breaks to engage with residents, she couldn’t have imagined those sit-downs with locals would fall victim to a pandemic that cancelled all public events, even chats over coffee.

She continues to give locals the opportunity to discuss their concerns, although there’s no coffee or cookies on offer.

Next Tuesday, May 19, from 6 to 7 p.m., anyone with questions for the Lord Mayor can ask her during a Facebook live format coffee break.

Interchange construction could be noisy 24/7

Penny Coles
The Local

The region is planning to begin work this June on a diverging diamond interchange on Glendale Avenue, replacing the current highway overpass, and a roundabout at the intersection with YORK Road.

In order to get the project finished on time, the Region and the Ministry of Transportation have asked the Town for an exemption to its noise control bylaw, in order to complete the project expeditiously and reduce the impact on the community.

To meet this “aggressive timeline,” the Town report says, the Region and Province want an exemption to the prohibition of working from 7 p.m. to 7 a.m., including Sundays, allowing the contractor to schedule multiple crews and making it easier to complete the project on time.

At Monday’s virtual committee-of-the-whole meeting, councillors asked for a deferral, until the next council meeting.

There are four hotels in that area, said Coun. Norm Annessa, and “no doubt” there will be blasting and pile-driving, that could disturb residents as well as visitors staying at hotels when they should be sleeping. He asked town staff if they could get an idea from the Region or the MTO about what construction would take place at night.

Coun. Gary Burroughs agreed, adding that although the report says the noise exemption wouldn’t impact residents, “this is so open-ended it could mean pile-driving 24 hours a day.” He asked for time to find out what construction would occur at night, especially with White Oaks Resort and Spa almost right beside where the construction will be taking place.

Lord Mayor Betty Disero offered to add a recommendation to the report saying town staff would ask for more information before it comes before council for approval in two weeks, but instead councillors voted to defer the decision until that council meeting, when they should have the information they’re looking for.

The project also includes a new commuter carpool lot and travel information centre at the northwest side of the new interchange, some repairs of the Queen Elizabeth Way lanes, and an extension of the right-turn lane of Glendale Avenue between Taylor Road and Niagara-on-the-Green Boulevard.

As the Province looks to re-open the economy and begins to roll out recovery measures, the Town of Niagara-on-the-Lake will continue to respond in a timely and well-informed manner.

For the most up-to-date information about COVID-19 related changes, please visit the dedicated webpage and follow the Town on Facebook, Twitter and Instagram.
During World War II, Blanche worked at an airport, and she later became the airport manager. Her husband was in the military, and she also had four children to raise. Blanche was always working, and she had a difficult life, but she never let her opinions push her around. She was very fair and reasonable, and she was a role model. She was a hard worker, and she was always willing to listen to others.

Blanche always had an upbeat personality, even though she had so many struggles in life. She was always cheerful, and very knowledgeable, says Keeler. She would have to be tough, with what she went through in life.

After retiring from the airport, Blanche wrote up letters that were critical of the local newspaper. These in-cheek letters were very popular, and they were a way for her to express her opinions. She never seemed dour and her genuine sense of fun, says Combe. "Blanche was a life-long member and a warden at St. Mark's. She was high profile, and I just admired her can-do and her genuine sense of fun," says Combe.

"Blanche," says Trant-er, "was a role model. She thought outside the box. She was really creative, in terms of problem-solving."

She was probably given the job of desk editor at the airport because of its secret-

ary nature, at a time when the airport was mainly a man's world. But that was before the days of discussions about feminism, says Tranter.

"It was a different generation. I would call her an early feminist, undiscovered. And she was a delight. I've done a lot of interviews, and Blanche was just a pure delight." She is survived by her chil-

dren John, Judy, and Patrick, his wife Paula, grandchildren Jordon, Morgan, Kevin, Sam-

antha, Bailey and Hunter, and eight great-grandchildren.

A celebration of life will be held at a later date, with me-

morial donations asked to be directed to the Lincoln Coun-

ty Humane Society.

Bells of thanks

Rachel Hunter and her friend Matt DeVos are ring-

ing the bells at St. Andrew's Presbyterian Church.

The church was challenged by Grace Presbyterian Church in Calgary to ring the bells of Thanks, ring out thanks to all the front-

line workers during unset-

ting times. Every evening at 7 p.m., right across Can-

ada, churches are joining in to ring the bells to thank the front-

line workers who are working to keep us safe.

The local church is also collecting donations for Newmarket Neighbours, daily from 10 a.m. to noon, and every week for the past five weeks a carload of grocer-

ies, usually including toilet paper, is dropped off at Newmarket to help meet the needs of those in the commu-

nity. (Photo supplied)
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Pandemic forcing us to look at long-term care reform

We have learned many lessons from this pandemic. Wash our hands. Don’t touch our face. Watch the social distance on grocery store floors, and stay two metres apart from other shoppers.

However, the most important lesson of all that has been drilled home: do a better job of looking after our vulnerable seniors.

“We’re discovering, as a society, the system we trusted is broken,” said Wayne Gates, the NDP’s critic for long-term care, who is now in the role of critic for long-term care and housing.

“It was in crisis before we ever heard of COVID-19, and with the arrival of the pandemic, we’ve been faced with yet another reality in facilities that care for our elderly and those with disabilities, those least able to advocate for themselves.

“There are some problems that have jumped out at us. Some facilities were overcrowded, even before the outbreak. Those most directly tasked with caring for residents were overworked, underpaid, often moving from one home to another to meet work shifts, and when personal protective equipment was required, it wasn’t readily available.

We moved as a society to provide care to seniors so they can stay at home, but that means once they are moved to long-term care, a large percentage are suffering from dementia, requiring a high level of assistance for basic, time-consuming care. And funding hasn’t kept up with the cost of providing that kind of care.

The NDP and our MPP Wayne Gates are blaming for-profit, calling for a community-based non-profit and public senior care system that puts money into hiring more PSWs and delivering care, instead of padding the balance sheets of multi-national corporations’ higher death rate due to COVID-19 in long-term care homes that are owned by for-profit corporations, compared to non-profit homes and public, municipal homes.”

Yet we know there are for-profit homes, including homes in NOTL, that provide quality care for their residents, and have protected them during the pandemic. Experts are saying the system is a problem state-wide. One of the obvious failures is the lack of thorough inspections and oversight, and are calling for much more stringent regulations on the ratio of front-line staff to residents. That applies across the board, for all homes, whether for-profit, non-profit or government-run.

Today, our neglect of a national problem is front-and-centre, as the number of deaths among residents of these facilities continues to rise daily, far beyond those in the community. It’s easy for government officials to be horrified, to promise reforms, and be so blind to the need to be vigilant, to be sure the reviews are transparent, thorough, and don’t end up shielded due to cost. The reforms need to ensure our loved ones receive the care they deserve, daily, with or without a pandemic, and with measures in place to protect them from this virus and any other that could come along in the future.

We need to remember the images of soldiers marching into our long-term care homes, and the stories of broken-hearted family members discovering, too late, their loved ones had died alone.

It’s up to us to ensure that never happens again.

Penny Coles
The Local
Re: Signs for visitors offensive to reader (The Local, May 7)
Yes, the signs are offensive but these are unprecedented times. I believe it is a matter of geography, lack of public facilities, and the risk of the coronavirus.

Also, the continual mantra of the lengths to which our Town council know. They are our representatives. Kindness? What happened to the 30th anniversary of the Candlelight spirit is stronger. My heart is fortunate we are to live in our seniors residence with my dad. I know this sweater will bring her much joy, much like Caron's incredibly talented gift has brought me. This is a great community. I am blessed to live here and know the people.

Re: Signsvfor visitors offensive to reader (The Local, May 7)
I empathize with the letter writer regarding offensive signs.

I live near the Commons and often walk along the pathway to get fresh air and healthy exercise. I was horrified a couple of weeks ago to see the large signs on the corner of Niagara River Parkway and John Street East stating "Please Stay Away. Local Traffic Only. No Public Washrooms.” Although the Town has been slow to soften the message, I feel most visitors would find this very offensive, including those who live locally but outside the Old Town.

In a few months, when the pandemic is over, our businesses will be eager to attract these same people that we're now chasing away. Punishing remarks meant to deter rule-breakers in the short-term are unlikely to win their cooperation over time, especially if we’re asking people to tangle with the public to stay home. Please consider our risk — 10,452 people came through our town last weekend with the offensive signs asking them to stay at home. Still, they came. The messages are not getting through, and not from lack of trying.

With the closing of our public washrooms, visitors have found an alternative on our lawns and in our gardens. This is not only unsafe but offensive!

I hope the letter writer will see another side of the situation, and be grateful to live in Queenston.

Elsie Lailey
Riccardo Street, NOTL

LETTERS

Gratitude post from reader

Betty Knight has given me the completed sweater, beautifully finished by her friend Carol McIntosh, to her mother, which she is wearing in the photo. (Photo supplied)

LETTERS

Isn’t there a better way?

I am writing to express my profound concern, distress, and disappointment at the way our elected town officials are handling this COVID crisis. I understand the need for physical distancing, and I understand that with restaurants and public restrooms closed, we currently lack facilities to accommodate people that would like to spend the day here. But it is anyone’s guess as to how many of the lengths to which our Town is going to punish outsiders.

Cars are being towed from the streets, tickets for over $100 are being issued to people sitting on benches, more bylaw enforcement officers are patrolling the streets to enforce the new restrictions and are encouraged to issue outrageous fines to anyone breaking the new rules. Is this the kind of town any of us want to live in? What happened to common sense, and most of all, kindness?

A crisis can bring out the best and the worst — why have we opted for the latter? When this is all over, and it will end eventually, how do we want to be remembered?

I am grateful that the Niagara Parks Commission has left the walking trail and the Niagara River Parkway land accessible. In my opinion, it is horrifying that sitting on a bench, or walking through a park, has become a punishable offence. Our tax dollars are funding this extreme and disturbing enforcement. If you have similar concerns, please let our town council know. They are our representatives. There has to be a better way.

Joanne Penner
NOTL

Month ago I asked on Facebook if anyone in our community could assist me with a knitting project. My mother was halfway through a sweater when she developed Alzheimer’s, and for the past year has not been able to knit. We’re still trying to bring some positivity into her life and make it better. But the most beautiful thing was a note she included in the package. Carol McIntosh offered to look at it for me. She asked me to drop it off and told me she would let me know, as she had to really put her mind to the 1960s pattern my mom had started with margin notes and a few sizes highlighted!

A short time later she called me and offered to complete the project. Carol finished the sweater with love. I’m sure it wasn’t easy, but it involved a lot of guesswork, and it took more time than she probably thought. She dropped it off to me this week and it was beautiful. But the most beautiful thing was a note she included with the sweater. She thanked me for allowing her to finish my mother’s sweater!

You see, Carol has met my mother. In fact she was one of my dear friends who took her out for lunch a year ago today. My mom and dad lived with us then. It will be my mother’s 80th birthday on Saturday, June 6, which has brought me. This is a great community. I am blessed to live here and know the people.

I do. Friendship is a gift. Life is fleeting. I enter into the world and do well. But also please, go out in the world and do good. Thanks Carol McIntosh.

Betty Knight

LETTERS

Consider risk to Old Town residents

Re: Signs for visitors offensive to reader (The Local, May 7)
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I hope the letter writer will see another side of the situation, and be grateful to live in Queenston.

Elsie Lailey
Riccardo Street, NOTL

LETTERS

Messaging should change

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Elsie Lailey
Riccardo Street, NOTL

LETTERS

Changes include lifting parking bans, opening washrooms

The Local
May 9

While the Heritage District experienced a large amount of traffic on the May 2 to 3 and May 9 to 10 weekends (10,452 and 6,366 vehicle respectively), the parking ban was successful with only a small percentage stopping and parking illegally. If the parking ban had not been put in place, there may have been thousands who stopped.

Unfortunately, the stories of persons using benches, greenhouses, and private spaces to relieve themselves are true. Many visitors arrived expecting access to public and/or private facilities. When the lack of availability was realized, some threatened essential business operators and me for allowing very disappointing spectacles of themselves. The Province is starting to roll out recovery measures, and look towards reopening the economy. In addition to provincial parks reopening, an expanded number of retail businesses have been identified as essential, and are permitted to operate with curbside pickup.

In response, we’ve lifted our parking ban and we are working with the regional department of health to safely reopen the Queen’s Royal Park and Market Street restrooms as of Friday, May 15, with strict criteria. We must open our washrooms now to avoid a different public health issue.

Changes continue to come our way; but it is not yet time to let our guard down, or resume business as usual. While we will follow the Province lead, we continue to ask visitors to please stay home for now, and visit us later.

And to all of our citizens, stay home whenever possible, walk from home if you can, please keep a distance of six feet (two metres) if you have to go out, and keep washing your hands and refraining from touching your face.

The long weekend is coming, and we will do everything in our power to try to manage the potential crowds, but while physical distancing is recommended by the provincial government and essential in helping to avoid the spread of the virus, there is currently no regulation that enables us to enforce this. Please, let’s each and every one of us continue to do our part together.

For the most up-to-date information about how we’re responding to all COVID-19 related changes, visit notllocal.com or follow the Town on Facebook, Twitter and Instagram.

The Local
May 14, 2020

LETS

Front and Editorial Banner Bookings
There are just a few dates left for these premium positions for 2020! Contact us today!

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outside NOTL: call Julia at 905.934.1040 or email julia@notllocal.com

COMMENT

Lord Mayor Betty Disero Special to The Local

From the outset of this crisis, my focus has been to protect the health and safety of our community.

When the Province declared a state of emergency on March 17, which still stands, we compiled with provincial emergency orders, closing public facilities, including washrooms, and outdoor amenities. Parks were open for walking or cycling through but groups of more than five were not permitted to congregate.

We have tried to assist all Niagara-on-the-Lake businesses, encouraging people to come in and pick up or drop off what they need, buy local, get takeout from restaurants, pick up at wineries and greenhouses, and during this time, people should not be driving only to hang out or sightsee. In order to deter sightseers, we used every tool available to us – signage, parking bans, videos, media interviews and advertisements, and public messages – to ask them to please stay home now and come back later. We’re a proud and friend-town, and we want to be able to host them in a way that will make us proud and you happy.

The Local
May 7

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The Local
May 7
The Town continues to reach out to long-term care home facilities to ensure they have the staff they need, as they remain free of the coronavirus, and work diligently to stay that way. Lord Mayor Dries says one of his jobs is to find nurses. It isn’t obvious, but while the workload that would make staff feel comfortable, so the Town is working to get a source for them to get more.

Across Niagara, the story has not been as good, with more than 80 percent of the deaths from the virus occurring from outbreaks in long-term care and retirement homes.

“Niagara has done well at limiting the number of cases of COVID in the wider community,” says Dr. Mustafa Hirji, the acting medical officer of health for Niagara Region.

However, within long-term care homes, there has been a struggle with infectious control practices beginning.

Once COVID-19 takes hold in one of the facilities, “it spreads widely, and once it spreads, staff become infected and are not able to work.”

With fewer staff looking after residents, the virus creating more work for the remaining staff, it becomes “a vicious cycle,” says Hirji, and spreads out of control.

As Hirji explains, because retirement homes typically have seniors who don’t require as much care as long-term care homes, the staff ratios are lower, and comprised, mostly of personal support workers (PSWs), with one nurse.

The average ratio of front-line staff to residents in Ontario homes is one to 10. Recently, with the alarming number of cases and deaths across the province in long-term care and retirement homes, there has been a call for those numbers to be mandated.

Currently, the Ministry of Health dictates one registered nurse on staff at all times, and enough staff to properly meet the needs of residents. It doesn’t set out a ratio for front-line health care workers to residents.

To find a need to staff a solution, and a way to bring in more staff to help in those situations (when there is an outbreak), says Hirji.

“We’ve learned a lot from the three homes with serious outbreaks,”

The worst outbreak in Niagara, at Lundy Manor, a retirement home, has resulted in $20 million class-action lawsuit against the home, alleging management failed to protect its residents — charges not proven in court.

The other two Hirji refers to are Seasons Retirement Community and Royal Rose Place in Welland, a long-term care home.

There can be no conclusions drawn about retirement homes, with less staff, and long-term care homes, with a higher ratio — there are some of both that do have outbreaks, “and lots of each that don’t,” says Hirji.

Before the pandemic, an inspection of a residence would have taken two to three pages, but the inspection process regarding infectious disease control practices has been enhanced, and now takes about four hours for inspectors to watch how things are done, and ensure appropriate practices, according to provincial standards, are being followed.

By ensuring similar practices are being done in homes that don’t have outbreaks, he says, “it seems more likely we can prevent them.”

While there might have been some “subtle” of infectious control practices that were raised early in the pandemic, and other homes might have been doing more, “luck might have had a bigger say.”

If a staff person or visitor didn’t carry the virus into a facility at the beginning, before enhanced infectious control practices were instituted at all homes, the fact that everyone was then using best practices has likely helped to keep it out, he says.

The percentage of deaths to the number of cases in Niagara is high, “and because of the number of cases in other homes, and the populations they serve,” says Hirji.

“Upper Canada Lodge, for example, a regional long-term care residence, says from the beginning of March, shortage of testing equipment was a problem, says Hirji, but since then, “the number of tests has increased.”

The home has 129 employees, she says, but was unable to say how many of them directly care for residents.

“We are fortunate here at Niagara Long Term Care to have an awesome team, who are hard working and committed. They are truly passionate about the work they do and the residents they serve.”

Peter Criscione, communications consultant with the Re- gion, says from the beginning of the March, Upper Canada Lodge, a regional long-term care residence, was no longer using agency staff in the home. By March 14, all visiting by families and friends was suspended, with the exception of end-of-life visiting, first passing active screening, and wearing personal protective equipment. The home has had “excellent support” from medical director Dr. Tim Bate- do, and doctors from the Niagara North Family Health NOTL team. Doctors are using telephone consults with residents, facilitated by nurses at the home.

“We also were doing everything possible to avoid emergency de- partment transfers by reaching out to the nurse practitioner to provide services instead of sending residents out,”

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“We also were doing everything possible to avoid emergency de- partment transfers by reaching out to the nurse practitioner to provide services instead of sending residents out,” she says.

Early April, “we no longer had staff working in multiple loc- ations.”

Active screening of residents and staff continues to be done twice a day. All staff are encour- aged to call in sick if they are unwell, and symptomatic employees are referred to public health for direction on whether they should be tested and if they should be in self isolation, he says.

Regional homes are follow- ing PPE guidelines to ensure the protection of residents and staff, “while using our PPE wisely.”

Training is ongoing with safety talks, which include respira- tory infection prevention train- ing, hand hygiene, PPE donning and doffing, refresher training, point-of-care test assessment, and regular check points.

With adult day programs closed, “we were able to redeploy activity staff to allow for resident engagement while social distanc- ing. This included connecting resi- dents with their families through FaceTime or by phone.”

Criscione says staff have been increased in some departments, including nursing, housekeeping and recreation, ensuring resident needs are met and cleaning prac- tices are increased. If staff are off, “we are not working short,” he says.

Staff at Pleasant Manor, the not-for-profit long-term care home in NOTL, did not re- spond to a request for similar information.

Looking Up With Bill

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

Thursday May 14 Jupiter turns retrograde at 27 degrees of Capricorn this morning, a few minutes after the third quar- ter Moon in Aquarius. So it’s a stubborn day where we feel like we want things to get going – and BAAA – we are double-crossed somehow. Jupiter needs to do this to keep the universe in motion - but also to play a key role in the shrinking of the coronavirus pandemic. Jupiter turns direct on Sept. 14. Facebook founder Mark Zuckerberg was born on this day in 1984, in White Plains, N.Y. His net worth is $75 million. Check out my Podcast at www.listeningwithbill.com. Editor’s note: This week we are changing the name of the column to Looking Up With Bill, to align with his website and pod- cast. Please visit notlocal.com for his full column, or our NOTL Local Facebook page - thanks to Mark Zuckerberg!
Farmers’ market to open with a different look

Penny Coles
The Local

It’s official: the Farmers’ Market at the Village will open for its 14th season.

It can’t be business as usual, but with guidelines from the Region’s public health, it will be able to offer a limited number of vendors on its original planned opening date, Saturday, May 23.

Farmers’ markets have been deemed essential by the Province, says Sharon Brinsmead-Taylor, coordinator of the local market, but at this point, it must be restricted to farmers and food products.

For example, Rose and Ken Bartel, anchors at the market from its earliest days, will be there with vegetable plants, says Brinsmead-Taylor, but they won’t be able to sell their beautiful cut flower arrangements.

The popular flower and plant growers and artisan vendors of previous years can’t be included, at least not for now. There is always the possibility that could change throughout the season, she says. “This is how it stands right now. We really don’t know. We might be able to have them down the road.”

She’s just excited to be opening, and to have vendors outside, presenting a welcome option for shoppers. She’s been reading about the diminished likelihood of the virus spreading outside. “It will be user-friendly shopping, and it just has a different feel to be outside,” she says.

The large tent won’t be up — it would be restricted, because of distancing, to a small number of vendors, and it’s expensive to erect.

Instead, all vendors will be on the pavement, in “pop-up tents” placed at least six feet apart. This will allow for greater flexibility for vendors, says Brinsmead-Taylor. However, she knows the wind could be a challenge, for these small tents, without being able to stake them into pavement, so she’s looking at cost-effective alternatives to weigh them down.

For opening day, there will be 10 vendors, with staples such as graded eggs, honey, cheese, bread, early greens, micro greens, butter, jams, pickles, preserves, and frozen meals and soups.

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“We’re doing everything we can for the health and safety of our customers, staff and vendors. That’s really important to us. The measures we’re taking are to protect everyone. And hopefully people will feel comfortable and want to come out and support our vendors.”

The market will be open the same hours as other years, from 8 a.m. to 1 p.m., at least to begin with, but if necessary, those hours can be tweaked, says Brinsmead-Taylor.

As for the Wednesday Supper Market, she’s hopeful it could be offered at some point this season, although it would likely be a smaller market.

“We have some ideas of how it could work — we haven’t fully given up on it yet.”

It would have to follow all the provincial guidelines, and be done with the support of the regional public health and the Town, which would need to provide an event permit, as it has in the past.

Jams, jellies and other food products will be available at the weekly Saturday Farmers’ Market at the Village, on Niagara Stone Road and Niven Road. (Photos supplied)
Bravo Niagara! brings musicians together for *We Are the World*

Mike Balsom
Special to The Local

COVID-19 has forced many businesses and organizations to adapt and find new ways of doing things. You can count Bravo Niagara! Festival of the Arts among those.

This week, Bravo Niagara! released their first ever music video as a response to the pandemic.

Bringing together past Bravo Niagara! performers along with some on the organization’s wish list, and teaming them with children’s choirs from Chorus Niagara, Laura Secord Secondary School and Fern Hill School in Oakville, a brand new version of *We Are the World* was premiered via their Facebook page and website Tuesday, May 12.

Bravo Niagara! founder Christine Mori felt this was the perfect time to take on the one song that she’s always wanted to be a part of one of their live concerts. It began during talks with bass player Bakithi Kumalo. He formed in the past with Paul Simon. More than 150 singers and musicians appear in the video, each having recorded their parts at home while in self-isolation during the pandemic.

For Laura Secord music teacher Karyn McCaus, it was a natural fit for her students. “We have fostered a partnership with Bravo Niagara over the years, and all of our involvement with them has given our students the opportunity to collaborate with world-renowned artists,” she says. “We were very happy when they asked us to collaborate because, as you know, we can’t be together right now making music in person.”

About 50 students can be seen and heard in the video. They were given a rough cut of the musical backing track and asked to record their vocals separately. Those tracks were all sent to producer Guillermo Subauste of Toronto, who was tasked with mixing all of the audio tracks together.

Bakithi Kumalo laid down his bass parts for the song in his home studio in Bethlehem, Pennsylvania. He is amazed at how quickly and how well the recording process along the way. When the pandemic hit, the focus of the talk changed to their shared admiration of *We Are the World*.

“It’s a song that I have loved for so many years,” Mori says. “When I read the lyrics again, to me it was almost as if Lionel Ritchie wrote it for COVID-19.”

Her next conversation was with Measha Brueggergosman, via text. The Canadian singer committed immediately. Then, Mori heard through the grapevine that Ritchie himself had been considering recording a new version of the 35-year-old song to respond to the pandemic. She decided to push on with her plan, putting together a Bravo Niagara! spin on the song.

Through her contacts, she was able to line up musicians and singers such as Emily Bear, Dominic Mancuso, Eric Bazilian, Brooke Blackburn, Jenna Weir, Alana Brigewater and Quincy Bullen. She also brought in the Powerhouse Fellowship Soul Choir, featuring Shawn Comerford, and the One People Band, which includes guitarist Bodian Kutu who, like Kumalo, has performed in the past with Paul Simon.

Seeing each of the participants in the comfort of their own homes, each recording their parts separately, adds a new twist to the message of the song. It’s about unity, and the phrase that has been repeated so often during self-isolation: we are one, and we are all in this together.

“This project is so time-ly,” Mori says. “This is really what lifted my spirits (during COVID-19). Every time I listened to the tracks of all the children, I was sitting in tears. What makes it so unique is that every single one of those musicians did it with real love and heart, and you can see and feel the deep emotion in it.”

To see the *We Are the World* video, visit the Bravo Niagara! Facebook page at https://www.facebook.com/bravoniagarafestival/. You can also find a link to the video on YouTube on the website bravoniagara.org.
HAGEN, JERRY—Jerry Hagen of Niagara-on-the-Lake and formerly of Wallaceburg, passed away peacefully at Fiddick’s Nursing Home in Petrolia on Monday, May 11, 2020 at the age of 76. Jerry is the son of the late Harry & Helen Margaret (Simpson) Hagen. Loved brother of Pat Hagen (Arline), Chris Hagen (Bob Leach), Barb Vandergulik (Jamie McDougall) and the late Jim Hagen. Fun and caring uncle to Michelle, Jim, George, Emily, Jessica, Ryan, Sara, Katelyn, Tamika and Allison. Jerry’s vibrant journey has come to an end. After attending the University of Windsor Teacher’s College, he was hired by the Lincoln County Board of Education, beginning a very successful career. Jerry loved traveling throughout the world, especially if the destination had a beach. He spent many summers in Mykonos, Greece and later at his condo in Naples, Florida. Jerry loved his home in Niagara-on-the-Lake where he had many close friends and was always the life of the party. He was generous and kind, always bearing gifts for his family and friends. Funeral arrangements have been entrusted The Haycock-Cavanagh Funeral Home, 409 Nelson Street in Wallaceburg. Due to the COVID-19 situation, please celebrate Jerry’s life by having a glass of wine, watching a good movie, and remembering his wicked, sarcastic sense of humour. We love and miss you Jerry. If desired, memoriames to Parkinson Canada may be left at the funeral home 519-627-3231. Online tributes may be left at www.CavanaghFuneralHome.ca.

Hagen, Jerry

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