



**Weekends  
in NOTL  
getting busier  
page 10**

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## Blaze on Simcoe Street

About 40 NOTL firefighters responded to a call on Simcoe Street at 3:45 p.m. Tuesday. Fire Chief Nick Ruller reported a fully-involved fire in a detached garage, an old school bus in the driveway and up the sides and into the attic of a two-storey house. Firefighters got in and worked hard, used the ladder truck, and had the fire under control in about 30 minutes. The homeowners were onsite and reported there were no injuries. High heat made it tough on firefighters in heavy bunker gear but they kept hydrated and there were no injuries there either, said Ruller. A crew was expected to be on watch during the night, and the Ontario Fire Marshal's Office was called to determine the cause. More photos on page 4. (Mike Balsom)

## Volunteers hope to tell story of historic railway repair pit

**Mike Balsom  
Special to The Local**

A group of volunteers is hoping to receive approval from the town to acknowledge and commemorate Niagara-on-the-Lake's railroad history in the Dock Area.

Beginning in 1854 with the arrival of the first steam engine, the dock area of Niagara-on-the-Lake became an important factor in moving people and goods between Toronto and Buffalo. Coal was often unloaded in NOTL, while peaches and other tender fruit were loaded at the docks to be taken to steamers for the trip across the lake. Trains were also used during the two World Wars to transport troops.

At the May 10 committee of the whole meeting, River Beach Drive resident Ron Simkus made a presentation to councillors focusing on the site of the old engine house, which, until it was torn down in 1926,

sat about 200 feet south of the railroad turntable.

As the steam-engine trains would arrive, they would be unloaded, then the engine would enter the turntable, where railway workers would use levers to turn the track around. The engine would either get set for a return journey, or head to the nearby engine house for repairs.

Today, at the site of the turntable, located fittingly on Turntable Way, locals and tourists alike can stroll the beautiful garden, plotted around the original circular stone layout and maintained by local residents Pat Hartman and Jim Reynolds.

Just a short stroll south, those same visitors might also come upon another series of stones. These are laid out in a rectangular shape, arranged eight feet wide by 34 feet long. According to Simkus, this is

**Continued on page 3**

## Locals can help create future museum exhibits

### Museum staff looking for stories, videos, photos of pandemic

**Penny Coles  
The Local**

As we live through this pandemic, we're making history.

And one day, curators of the Niagara-on-the-Lake Museum will want to be able to tell our stories of what our lives looked like during this period of our history.

To do that, current staff

are asking for our help.

They want journals, photos, audio or video recordings — anything that can be used to help tell the story of life during the time of the COVID-19 pandemic, says assistant curator Shawna Butts.

Living through history at this particular time might not seem so great, and we might think we don't want

to remember it, we just want life to return to normal, says Butts.

But we all have important stories to tell. To be ready for the day when visitors will want to know what this was like, the Niagara-on-the-Lake Museum has already started collecting, both physical and digital items. Staff, when they've been out and about,

have been taking their own photos as reminders of how things changed, but they have a long way to go to be able to stage exhibits.

"We want the everyday stories," says Butts. "And we want to make sure people save their mementos, their videos, or share an oral history over Zoom to keep for the future. We hear people say, 'you don't want my story.' We do. We want to know what people are doing. If they're making masks, we want a collection of unusu-

al masks. If they're making sourdough, we want the recipes. We want to know the personal stories of how people are coping. If grandparents are staying at home and can't see their grandchildren, what are they doing instead? We want to be able to tell as much of an inclusive story as possible."

We know the pandemic is affecting children of all ages, high school and university students whose lives are very different, says Butts. "We want to know how dif-

ferent it is to be young at this time."

We also know the pandemic is taking a mental, and physical and emotional toll on people, she says, "and we want to know how they're getting through this, day by day."

No story is insignificant, and no two stories will be the same, says Butts, who is hoping people will be inspired to take some time

**Continued on page 5**



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# Vaccination eligibility will outpace vaccine supply

## Pharmacies, family physicians to start receiving more doses

**Penny Coles**  
**The Local**

The good news is the province opened vaccinations to those 18 and over Tuesday, to include the younger ages where infection spread is most common.

Vaccinations for the 12 to 17-year-olds won't be far behind, with vaccination appointments to open to that age group at the end of the month, and dedicated clinics expected in June.

The not-so-good news is that while this makes first doses available to considerably more people, the region will not be able to accommodate them all, restrained by

the lack of vaccine.

"Be patient," is the message from Dr. Mustafa Hirji, the acting medical officer of health for Niagara.

The province is receiving more vaccine, and is not reserving large amounts for hot spots, so more will come this way, says Hirji, but not enough.

Appointments are basically already booked for priority groups until the end of the month, although there will be some availability for those in the younger age groups, he says, but not nearly enough "in the near future."

"The province is rapidly opening up access to vaccines. Starting Tuesday (May 18), all adults will be able to book appointments."

The 50 per cent of vaccines that has in past weeks been redirected to hot spots will instead be distributed to public health units across the province, and primary care doctors and pharmacies will also be receiving doses of Pfizer and Moderna "in the near future," Hirji says. "We will see an upward trend of vaccinations."

Pharmacist Sean Simpson said Tuesday he has received 100 doses of Moderna at the Simpson's Apothecary on King Street, and is expecting 150 doses of Pfizer at the Niagara Stone Road pharmacy this week. He will be working his way

through his waiting list this week, offering appointments, he says.

But age groups opening up adds 160,000 more people to the list of those eligible in the next couple of weeks, competing for about 20,000 doses of vaccine, he says.

"The vaccine supplies are not coming at the same pace as eligibility is opening up. I think we need to be prepared that that might be the eventuality."

More clinics and more appointments will open up, he says, suggesting those eligible should keep checking the provincial booking website for availability, but it may be the end of June before all those eligible for their first dose will be able to get it.

While those who are front-line health care workers or who work in long-term care or retirement homes may be next for second doses, Hirji warns for most of the population, depending on their risk, sooner may not be better than later.

Waiting the extra time, three to four months for a second dose, may mean better protection in the long-term. There's a "trade-off" of less protection now, more in the future, Hirji explains.

"For most of us who don't have acute risk, with a second dose at three to four months, the protection will be better."

Niagara-on-the-Lake held two successful vaccination clinics at the community centre last weekend, but there are no more clinics scheduled in town at this point.

For information about who can book and when, and a list of clinic locations through to June 5, visit <https://niagararegion.ca/health/covid-19/vaccination/appointment-booking.aspx>

To book a vaccination appointment visit [ontario.ca/bookvaccine](https://ontario.ca/bookvaccine) or call 1-888-943-3900.

## Top Niagara health official calling for more time

### June 2 reopening is two weeks too soon

**Penny Coles**  
**The Local**

As daily cases of COVID-19 continue to drop, across the province and in Niagara, safe reopening is getting closer.

But maybe not as close as the province is suggesting.

While the provincial stay-at-home order has been extended to June 2, Dr. Mustafa Hirji, acting medical officer of health for Niagara, isn't convinced that's long enough. He hasn't changed his message about another two weeks after that being needed for a sustainable reopening.

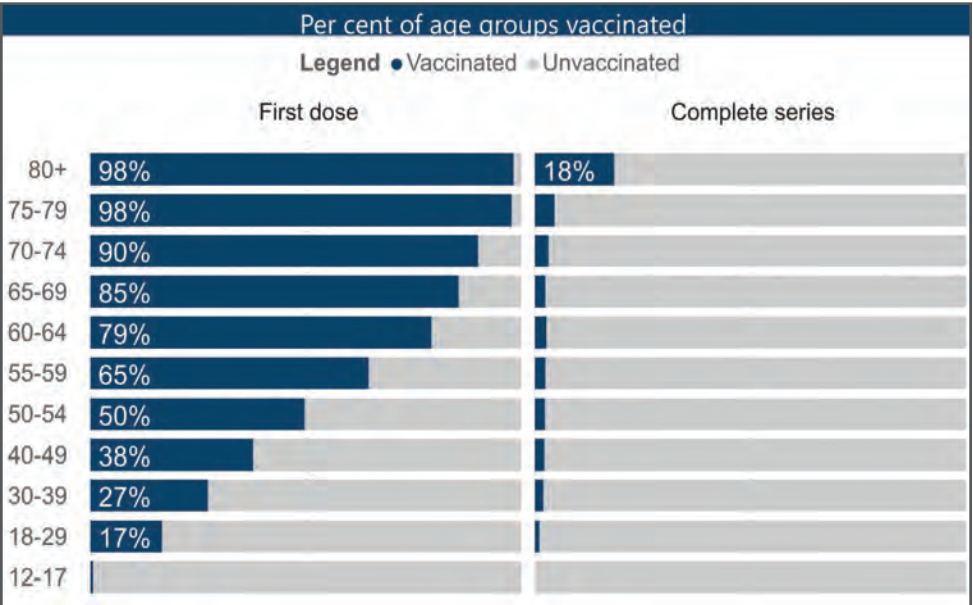
Although the trends are going in the right direction, hospitals are still seeing intensive care units full with more COVID cases than the second wave, and much higher than last summer. Patients are still being transferred out of GTA hospitals to those further afield, he says.

Hirji is predicting a lockdown extension of another two weeks after June 2 will be necessary, if we want to open safely and stay open for the rest of the year.

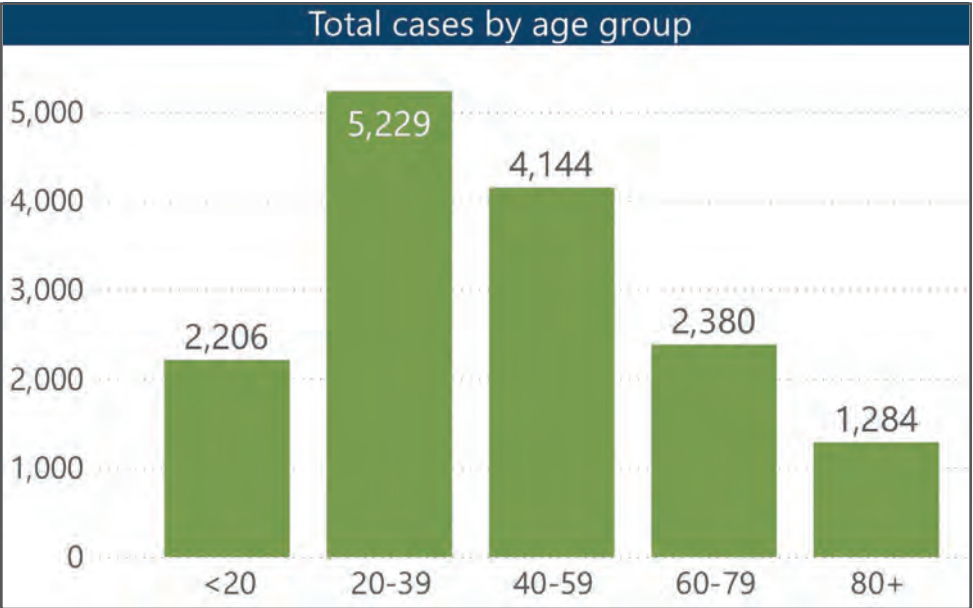
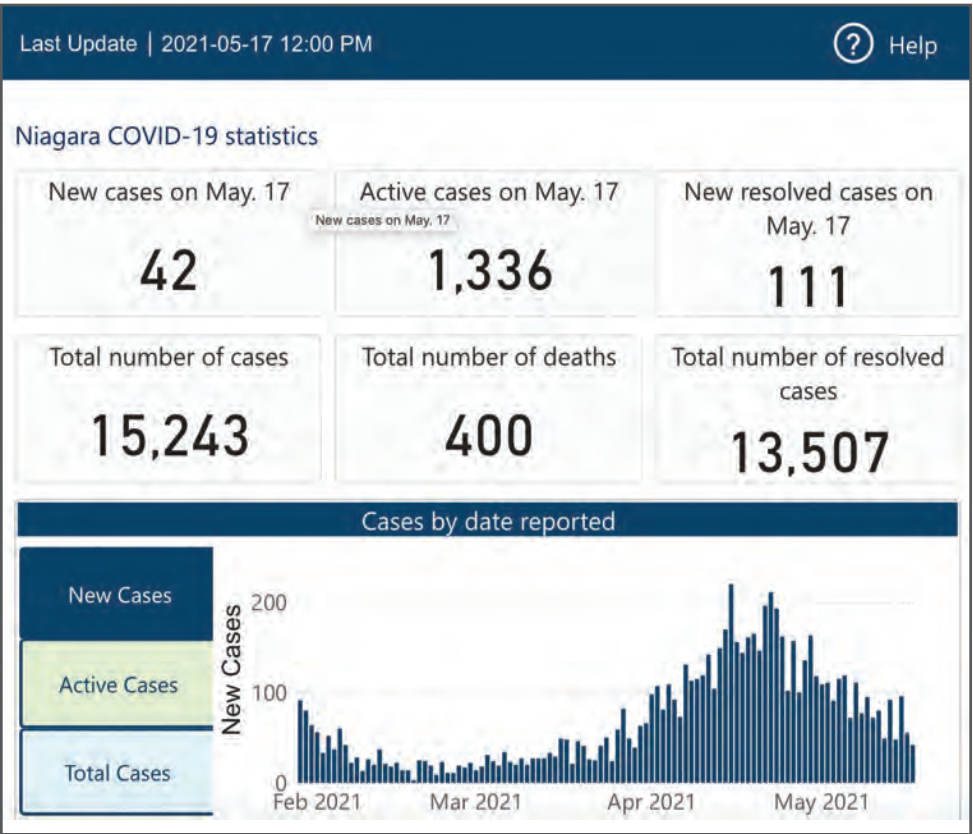
Premier Doug Ford, he says, "is hedging his bets" about a further extension.

There is already evidence that people are not staying home as much as they were when the lockdown began, Hirji says, and although cases are coming down, they may not be decreasing as quickly as they could. People are taking public transit, shopping and gathering in groups, and "that's worrying."

Being outdoors in itself is not as much of a worry, but



(Screenshots of Niagara Region graphs)



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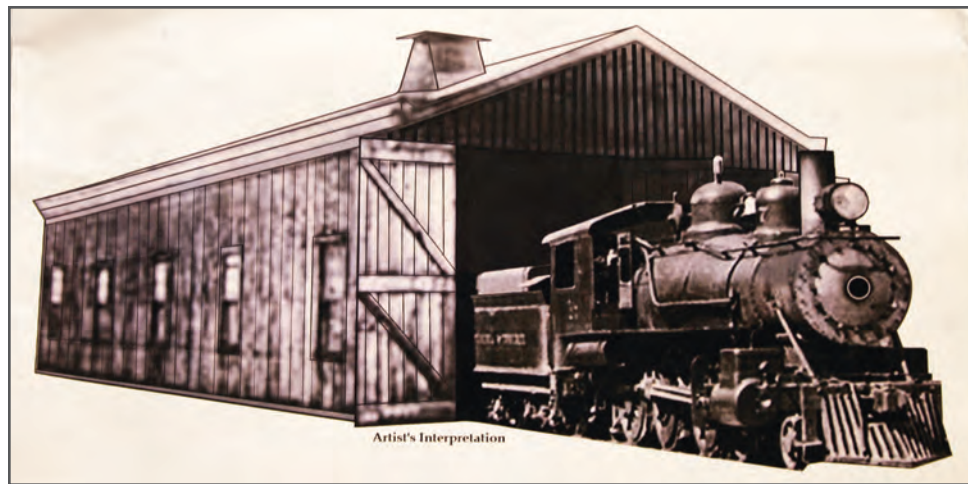
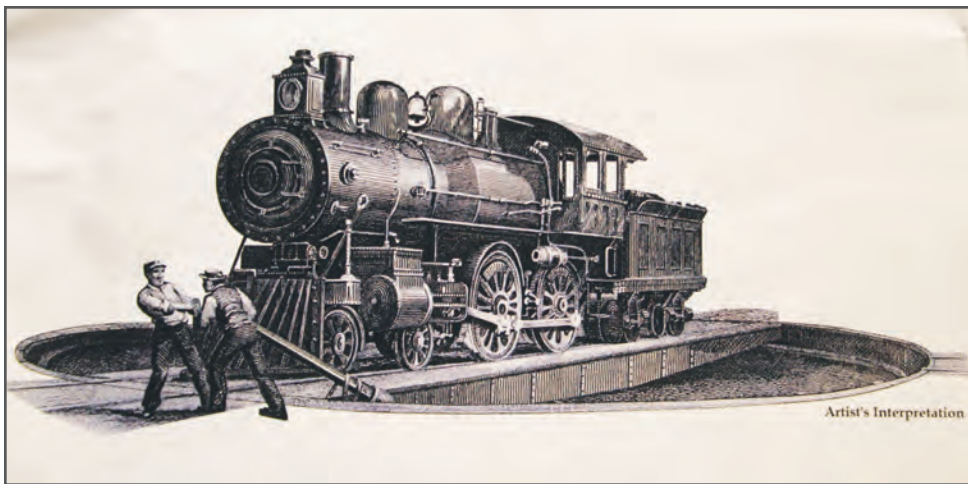
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Plaques have been designed to recognize the railroad turntable and engine house. (Mike Balsom)

# Two historic sites to be marked with plaques

Continued from page 1

the footprint of an engine repair bay used by mechanics to access the bottom of the train from below.

"It was really quite a significant site," said Simkus. "In its day, it was 75 feet long and 40 feet wide, a gigantic structure that housed two bays for locomotives, one for repair, and one for starting up."

Working with local author Peter Mulcaster (*Off to Paradise Grove: A Railway History of Niagara-on-the-Lake*), Simkus discovered that the stones themselves are actually the tops of a solid foundational wall, with notches cut out to hold railway ties.

"The repair pit itself in the centre was six feet deep," he explained. "It probably had steps going down to it. When a locomotive straddled this structure they could work underneath to perform repairs. It was abandoned in 1926, and the rails were removed. The facility was basically filled with trash and covered over."

The vision of Simkus and the other volunteers is to use the remaining, mostly-buried structure to restore the rails on the repair pit using its original configuration. They don't plan to dig the original pit out, but instead use the 24 recesses cast into the pit walls to hold standard railroad ties cut in 24-inch lengths. Then, each rail would be topped with a tie plate on which the rail would rest. Finally, the wood tie, tie plate and rail would then be fastened together with steel spikes pounded through the holes in the plates.

"When I talked to some of the people from the Heritage Trail committee, and some of the railway enthusiasts in town," explained Simkus, "there's no section of rail that anyone can point to in the town. Yet this particular structure was purpose-built exactly for that, to house two rails in parallel, for a length of 34 feet."

Simkus went on to explain a five-step process that would be followed to restore the site. It would include careful removal of the soil blocks to replace them with a pre-cut railroad tie set into the recess it was intended for. All the moss and soil cuttings would be stored for archaeological review if necessary, he says.

Interestingly enough, the recent demolition of a house

at 93 River Beach Drive, the Goring Ball home, turned up six railroad ties from the period during which the dock area railroad was operational. These have been set aside in hopes of using them for the restoration.

As well, Simkus has reached out to PGM Rail Services in Niagara Falls. They specialize in restoring old rail stations, including the Freeman Station on Fairview Street in Burlington. The rails, plates and spikes needed for the engine house restoration would be acquired from PGM. The company's owner, Peter Murdza, grew up in NOTL and is willing to supply the labour for the installation.

"The rails would be set on either side of the pit," Simkus assured councillors at last week's meeting. "There is no need for surveying, no need for locates, no need to construct any type of base or foundation, no need for levelling or ballast material. And in no way would we alter or modify the existing heritage structure as it stands today."

Simkus stressed during the online meeting that all of this work would be completed at no financial cost to the town. As PGM would be doing the installation, he also claimed the project would not put any burden on staff time. In addition, Simkus says the whole project could be completed in as little as a single day.

Speaking with Simkus on site Saturday, his enthusiasm for the Dock Area is palpable. He guides his visitor through the two sites, explaining their significance and outlining clearly the plans he and the others are proposing. He drops in some history along the way (those ties were salvaged from the site of the old fish house at 93 River Beach Drive) and points out that the rocks lining the nearby parking lot were actually removed from the turntable site in 1985 and are slated to one day be returned to their home.

Living right next to the turntable, he's eager to see the town's plans for the Dock Area to start coming to fruition.

"In 2015," Simkus tells *The Local*, "after 10 years of consultation with the public, the town agreed on a Dock Area master plan, which included five historical sites. They were each supposed to be commemorated by a plaque."

He acknowledges that flooding in the area in 2017 and 2019 was most likely respon-

sible for pushing back some of those plans. Town resources set aside for the Dock Area were necessarily put into play for sandbags and pumping equipment to mitigate the flooding.

But he and the other volunteers are ready to get things moving, and they're willing to foot the bill themselves.

Simkus has commissioned designs for two bronze plaques, one each for the turntable and the engine house. He is currently gathering estimates from some foundries for the plaques, and says he has committed to paying for them.

"Because the two of them (turntable and engine house) were so intertwined," he says, "we decided it was best for us to develop a plaque in recognition of the engine house itself. Both of these have been reviewed with the heritage planner."

The Dock Area master plan also calls for signs at the restored culvert at Balls Beach, along the waterfront to commemorate the Teenie H fishing boat, and another on Delater Street at the site of an old horse watering trough.

For years Simkus has been well-known to the town for his frequent updates on the water levels at Balls Beach. A retired mining engineer and executive, Simkus has been involved in the restoration of mines all over the world, including in South America, where they were digging near ancient Mayan ruins. Most recently he was involved in an excavation in Romania that was situated near old Roman ruins.

Since moving here in 2010, he has had a unique perspective on the Dock Area, his house situated in a way that he and his wife have taken on the role of sentinels. He keeps an eye on the beach area, and offers his engineering expertise to the town whenever he has a chance. He also sends out regular emails with water level updates to more than 100 people.

As for the engine house project, he hasn't nailed down a timeline yet, with so many factors coming into play, including when PGM Rail Services might be available to do the installation. But he sees the restoration and the installation of the plaques as a timely endeavour.

"After all this COVID nightmare of 2020," he says, "and now going into 2021, everybody in this community wants something really pos-

itive to happen. And this is something that everybody can get involved in and be proud of. That's why we're doing it."

The presentation by Simkus was accepted positively by

the committee of the whole, and the following day his proposal was passed on to the town's Heritage Committee. He expects to speak to the Heritage Committee on June 8.



Ron Simkus, Dock Area resident, has researched and hopes to bring to light a little-known part of NOTL's history, a railway repair pit in the Dock Area. (Mike Balsom)

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The aerial ladder truck was put to work to fight the Simcoe Street fire Tuesday, as flames climbed the side of the two-storey house and entered the attic (left). *(Betty Knight)*



The fire also destroyed a former school bus used to transport kayaks and a detached garage.  
(Mike Balsom)



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# Creek Road Paints

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# Museum hopes to collect artifacts for the future

Continued from page 1

during this stay-at-home order to put something together for the museum, “now, while it’s fresh, while it’s still happening. We won’t

be able to build a collection 100 years from now. For history, and the curators of the future, there are so many wonderful stories out there.”

If your business has a sign that becomes irrele-

vant, don’t throw it out, give it to the museum. If you’re anti-lockdown and you have a lawn sign, when you’re ready to take it down, give it to the museum — it’s part of the story.

If you attended a protest,

either about the lockdown, or perhaps the Black Lives Matter protest that occurred during the pandemic, donate your signs or photos, Butts asks. Community art, posters, photos of fenced-off picnic tables or playgrounds,

Zoom meeting screenshots, are all part of the story.

“Please don’t throw anything away,” says Butts.

If you have questions about the museum’s collecting, email [contact@nhsm.ca](mailto:contact@nhsm.ca) or call 905-468-3912.

The Voices of Freedom Park (below) was the site of a large Black Matters Protest, at a time during the pandemic when gatherings were not allowed. Any signs or photos of the protest would be welcomed by the museum.



Museum staff took this photo of the interior of Balzac's on King Street, as a memento of what it looked like in the pandemic. (Photos supplied)



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# EDITORIAL

## Good times await, but not for all of us

Each week, the news seems to stay the same, with slight variations. Cases are going down, vaccinations are going up, and the end to restrictions, hopefully for the last time, is not that far away.

As we get closer to the end of the school year, with less likelihood of kids going back to in-class learning and talks beginning about what schools will look like in September, there has been a lot in the news about mental health issues among youth, the impact and quality of online learning, and how to be ready to help kids next year.

As in so much about COVID and the pandemic,

we are learning about inequality in schools reflecting inequality in society, which translates to those students who are the hardest hit by the pandemic are the students who were struggling to begin with, for so many other reasons, before COVID and online learning made it so much harder for them.

One of the many lessons we will hopefully learn, and do something about long-term, is the magnitude of those inequities and how they impact the most vulnerable of all ages, even more during a crisis such as this, from the youngest school children who are having dif-

ficulties learning, to adolescents, teens and young adults suffering from the withdrawal of their social contacts, to those in low-paying jobs, women and kids living with domestic violence, those who are in communal living situations although not by choice, seniors in long-term care, and so many others. The list is endless, while the privileged live out our stay-at-home order and pandemic restrictions in relative ease and comfort.

At every step of the way, as the impact of societal inequalities is magnified during the pandemic, we realize we don't have the re-

sources to properly address these issues, nor, apparently, is there a political will to do what needs to be done.

Yet we look at what is happening in other countries and feel fortunate, our hearts breaking for those less so, forgetting there are those in need right here at home.

We focus on the good news, the millions of doses of vaccine coming our way, that magical solution to all that ails us. Those doses bring with them the promise of a summer with barbecues, sitting around the patio with family members, as long as we stay outside; and a fall that offers getting together, at

least in small groups, inside. Awesome news!

Our prime minister is calling for a one-dose summer and two-dose fall, both of which will be safer and more normal than anything we've experienced in the last year or so.

But at the same time, let's hope we don't entirely forget about all we've learned, and maybe spare some time for working toward solutions for those less fortunate for whom a vaccinated future doesn't offer quite so much promise.

No more heads in the sand. Canada is a great place to live, for most of us, but is still rife with inequality. We

keep reminding each other to be kind, to be compassionate. Maybe it's time to start directing a little more of that kindness to those most in need.

We saw what we can do with the great success of a few dedicated volunteers who were committed to feeding the needy in town this weekend. Let's try to keep that going, maybe cast our nets a little further, see what else we can accomplish. All around us, we see people reaching out to help others. We can all do a little more of that. After all, we are the fortunate.

**Penny Coles**  
The Local

## Small businesses need more government support



It's no secret that over the last 15 months there isn't a business in this province that hasn't been impacted in one way or another by this virus. One of these sectors is tourism, one of the greatest job generators in our community.

I'm proud to say that

working together, we've managed to secure additional funding for tourism-based small businesses. While more is urgently needed, I am encouraging all of our wonderful small businesses in Niagara-on-the-Lake to apply for this first round of funding. You can find the application and further information at [www.WayneGates.com/tourism](http://www.WayneGates.com/tourism)

To add on to this good news, as of Tuesday, May 18, all residents who are 18-plus will now be able to book their vaccination. If you need help booking, please visit [www.WayneGates.com/vaccine](http://www.WayneGates.com/vaccine)

Again, it was our joint efforts together that ensured our region was given its fair share of vaccines and now outpaces many areas of the province in distribution. We also must thank our heroic frontline health staff who have made the local rollout of this vaccine seamless. We are forever in their debt.

Ramping up the local vaccine efforts means we're so very close to the end of this pandemic and the return to normalcy. However, I want to return to our tourism-based business supports because we need to

ensure our local businesses are fully supported until our residents are vaccinated. All Ontario tourism industries need support in these trying times, especially small business operators. People all over Canada and across the world travel to Ontario, taking in the beautiful attractions we offer. With this government's painful lockdown cycle, these businesses continue to be impacted, especially small tourism operators. In Niagara-on-the-Lake small tourism such as bed and breakfasts continue to be impacted. This funding will help to bridge that gap, but more must be done.

hotels, motels, travel agencies, amusement and water parks, hunting and fishing camps, and recreational and vacation camps, including children's overnight summer camps. Small businesses will be eligible based on three factors.

The grant is open for small tourism operators to apply to, protecting critical jobs in Niagara, and protecting small business sectors such as B&B's in Niagara.

Above all, I will work closely with our local operations because we all know the new grant needs to operate better than its predecessor, the small business support grant. As many of you now have heard, in Niagara, several businesses were left for months without responses or funding as the status of their grant continues to be processed as "under review." This wasn't acceptable, and this new grant needs to correct these errors. If you or your business has these issues with the new grant, please contact my office so we can raise these with the appropriate

government officials.

My team and I remain hopeful for this new grant, and we must provide the tourism industry support now as they have not been given much support for the last 15 months. This is a small step taken by Ford's government in the right direction, and I welcome and remain positive about this new grant. However, there are still concerns, and I hope the government is willing to work with us so this grant rolls out smoothly and helps small businesses in the tourism sector that desperately need it. Niagara citizens can also play their role in helping these businesses, and I encourage once Ontario is safe and the pandemic is over to help support the local community through staycations, and engage with these tourist operators.

Niagara is world-renowned for our tourism, and is often taken for granted by locals. Please support your community, reduce travel time, and enjoy the wonders our great region offers.

## View from the couch

**Donald Combe**  
Special to The Local

*Soapdish* (Prime, 1991) is the story of the onstage/backstage lives of the cast/crew of a popular day time soap. It stars Sally Field, Kevin Kline, Rob-

ert Downey Jr. and Whoopi Goldberg, who live out this melodramatic and totally silly tale. I laughed so much and so hard the dog thought something was terribly wrong, and moved to another room.

Donald Combe is a retired

English teacher who loves to go to movies. Until he resumes going to theatres, he has graciously agreed to share his opinions, through "short and sweet" exclusives, of Netflix series and movies for The Local.

The Niagara-on-the-Lake

# Local

The Trusted Voice of Our Community

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Owen Bjorgan says he's always felt grateful to feel plugged in to nature, our community, and all of the ideas it has given him to write about for The NOTL Local. (Owen Bjorgan)

## Weekly column creates space for important environmental discussions



**Owen Bjorgan**  
Special to The Local

Wow, I never thought such a milestone would come at any point in my life!

You are currently reading the 100th nature article which typically gets published weekly for The NOTL Local.

The first thought that comes to mind at my desk this morning is how grateful I am for a paper that features a consistent environmental column. That's rare, and I don't believe any other paper in the whole of Niagara Region offers such a feature. The significance lies in the fact that if we create space for conversation, about anything for that matter, there is hope for profound influence and inspiration on something important.

Regarding nature itself, I've previously touched on how it is essential to all of us. Nobody escapes this fact of life. One of the metrics that sincerely

interests me includes human attitude toward nature. Our attitude toward something often describes our relationship with it. There is celebration, appreciation, love, indifference, ignorance, and other human feelings we harbour toward the natural world. The fascinating part about nature as a whole is that biologists need it for their job as much as developers need it to put food on their plates.

So, where do all of the article ideas come from? And, how have I managed to not step on my own toes by writing about the same thing twice? Thankfully, I feel like I walk into a superstore when I sit at my desk every week. I look up and down all the "aisles" and assess what is relevant or interesting.

In one aisle, you have local wildlife and hidden natural features to educate people about. A straight up Bill Nye kind of lesson about salamanders or nationally rare trees. In the next aisle, there could be some riveting environmental news that I believe requires further comment or investigation, such as when the provincial government snuck in seriously con-

cerning conservation changes under the guise of a COVID recovery bill.

Another aisle over, I can shop for ideas that have come from my own personal experiences and adventures, whether they took place here in Niagara as a weekend warrior, or perhaps reflecting on trekking through the Amazon, and how a place that far away actually has similarities to here in Niagara. Sometimes, there is an aisle I visit where I can pull something more philosophical off the shelves, such as an article that challenges you to think about nature as a whole.

Other times, I have no clue what I'm going to write about. I will just sit at the desk, sip whatever I'm sipping, and start writing. Providing it's about nature and can have some relevance to our town, the writing seems to come like the rush of the Niagara River itself.

The pandemic era has given me, and all of us, lots to chew on. Many of my articles were a reflection of modern events that pertained to, again, our relationship with nature. Arguably, that conversation has

been pushed to the forefront more than at any other time in our lives. Every trail system in Niagara is now packed in seasons and types of weather that would normally keep most people home. The accessibility and regulation of nature is changing. The phenomenon of Niagara and the Greater Toronto Area discovering their own green backyard has been fascinating, beautiful, and painful to watch all at once.

That's how I get my ideas. I like to imagine myself pulling back from the earth, as an omnipotent outsider, or a different species entirely, who simply watches, observes, and reports.

I try my best to make you, the reader, think about nature in new and exploratory ways. I try to challenge decision-makers and politicians, who I know are reading this right now, to do the right thing when it comes to protecting our fragile biodiversity. I don't enjoy being a thorn in the side, but sometimes, I politely have to.

I also hope to have parents reading this who will say, "You know what? We should take the kids outside more often."

## Local LETTERS

### Friends of Fort George ask for historic recognition of former hospital property

In early April 2021, the Town of Niagara-on-the-Lake announced that they are looking into selling the old hospital property that sits at the corner of Picton and Wellington street in Old Town. This site is steeped in over 200 years of history that we hope will be considered and preserved as the Town reviews expressions of interest.


The Niagara-on-the-Lake hospital site was originally part of the Commons, the military reserve that surrounds Fort George National Historic Site and stretches towards Butler's Barracks National Historic Site. The green space beside the hospital is still owned and maintained by Parks Canada, and includes some of the best preserved trench lines and batteries from the American occupation of Fort George in 1813.

These trench lines were part of the American defences during their seven-month occupation of the Town, which ended in the burning of Niagara in December of 1813. The trench lines were made from regular sandy soil mixed with clay that was brought in from places like Navy Hall

to strengthen these features. They stretched from the northwestern bastion of Fort George, through the hospital property, along Byron Street where they are still visible, and down through St. Mark's Church cemetery (where a plaque was placed during the bicentennial to highlight the trenches) and toward Queen's Royal Park. These trench lines are significant, not only for their role in the War of 1812, but also as the longest defensive lines of an invading force in Canada.

As with many other individuals and groups in the town, we are concerned with the proposed development of the site, and hope that consideration is given to its proximity to heritage sites, such as the Shaw Festival Theatre and Fort George National Historic Site, to ensure that any development fits with the aesthetic of the area, does not compromise the historical integrity of the site, and maintains the historic site lines and view planes of Fort George.

**Amanda Gamble**  
Executive Director,  
Friends of Fort George



**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.

Speaking strictly for myself, my greatest challenge, which I love, is to inspire both sides of the coin, and to find new avenues to get to a greater variety of people.

The comments from the public are inspiring to me. I write for you, the reader, in a town I care about very much. You inspire my work when I get feedback by mail, email, or even on the streets or in the lo-

cal grocery store.

Thank you for your readership, and to all in this town who also want to see our natural world in a healthy light. Here's to 100 more articles!

*Thank you, Owen, from The Local, for sharing your knowledge and your thoughts, and for opening our eyes, and hopefully those of future generations, to the beauty around us and the importance of looking after it.*

## ATTENTION NOTL HIGH SCHOOL, COLLEGE, UNIVERSITY GRADUATES AND FAMILIES!!

We would love to help celebrate your 2021 graduation in The *Local* in our June 30th issue.

Deadline will be Monday, June 21 at noon.

This is once again a challenging year for celebrations, and we would like to make it a little bit better by sharing your accomplishments at no charge — *this is our gift to you.*



If you would like to see your photo in the paper, please email it along with your name and school name to:

**karen@notllocal.com**





The former hospital is still home to Royal Oak Community School and doctors' offices, on historically significant land. (File photo)

# Town close to asking for interest in hospital property

**Penny Coles**  
The Local

It's been about five years since the town purchased the former hospi-

tal for \$3.6 million, and it continues to get closer to deciding what to do with it. A steering committee, including three members

of council, is now at the point where a request for expressions of interest is almost ready to go out to the public, looking for ideas and proposals for

the future of the property, says Coun. Allan Bisback, a member of the steering committee.

Coun. Gary Burroughs is chair of the committee, and Lord Mayor Betty Disero is also a member.

Town staff have finalized the hiring of a fairness monitor, says Bisback, a move approved by council in March. The committee agreed the scale and sensitivity of the project called for a fairness monitor to oversee the process, said Bisback.

He is already getting calls and comments from people asking about the property, some anxious to share their ideas, and he is telling them he's not able to talk about the project.

Although it's early in the process, he's not taking any chances of any perception of impropriety.

"We agreed to go to out to the market, with the request for expressions of interest, and to ensure the process is handled in a proper manner," said Bisback.

The document requesting expressions of interest is likely to be finalized by the end of this month or early June, and after that, will hit the market, he said.

Bisback says the committee recently received a letter from the Friends of Fort George, which has also been made public, asking that the heritage significance of the former hospital site, which borders Parks Canada prop-

erty, be respected.

When discussing the request for expressions of interest, the committee decided to make it as open-ended and accepting as possible, without placing any limitations on proposals, in an effort to receive a broad range of responses.

"We don't want to limit people from submitting interesting and creative ideas," he says. "We want to keep it open."

Speaking for himself, he says, he has no preconceived ideas, nor has he heard anything from the public to indicate there are already discussions about the future of the property.

The purpose of the fairness monitor is to ensure that doesn't happen, he says.

At the same time, council, which will ultimately make a decision about the property, is committed to the significance of heritage, and the Friends of Fort George have a valid concern.

"I appreciate their letter, but I'm not aware of anybody or any conversations that indicate any plans for the property."

He says when he receives calls from various people about the property he says he can't talk about it — it has to be a fair process, and once the request hits the streets, "nobody can have conversation or interaction with anybody."

But the process has a long way to go, with opportunities for the public

to weigh in at some point, especially if what is recommended requires a change of zoning from its current institutional use.

Given the pandemic and the downturn in the economy, he adds, "we may not get any interest."

Assuming they do, they will need to create a process for evaluating the proposals, but that is a long way off.

"I don't think anybody should be concerned yet. It's very preliminary."

Amanda Gamble, executive director of the Friends of Fort George, said the letter was intended as a reminder of the history of the sensitive property, bordering Parks Canada land. The Friends of Fort George are concerned about preserving the planes and sight lines from the fort, she says, and felt it was important to make the letter public as a way to remind those who might have an interesting proposal for the significant heritage property.

"I don't think people know the important history of the property, or its heritage value," she said. "We just want to be sure the community is aware of its significance."

Whatever is developed on that property, she adds, "we want to be sure it fits with its heritage, and with its location at the entrance to town, with Fort George beside it and the Shaw Festival Theatre across the street."



## The Niagara-on-the-Lake Step Challenge is back!

Designed to engage the community and promote healthy lifestyles, the challenge is open to anyone who lives or works in Niagara-on-the-Lake.

Register as an individual competitor or team of 4 today and get ready to get stepping.

The Step Challenge runs from June 1 to 30, 2021.

Visit [notl.com/stepchallenge](https://notl.com/stepchallenge) for details and to register.





Patricia Murenbeeld and Stuart McCormack volunteered to help the Rotary Club make porch pickups this weekend, and drop off food at Newark Neighbours. (Photos supplied)



Vlad Haltigin, Cindy Grant, Barb Babij and NOTL Rotary Club president Ken Schander were busy this weekend with the Newark Neighbours food drive.

## Porch pickup a great success

The Newark Neighbours Porch Pickup Food Drive, thanks to terrific support from NOTL Rotary partners, and the 19 Rotary volunteers picking up donations from 135 addresses throughout NOTL, including rural areas. There were about 20 drop-offs of donations Saturday and Sunday, with a very large supply of all the items on Newark's wish list. "We are confident that we will have sufficient supply to last us through the summer and into the fall," says food bank manager Cindy Grant.



Newark Neighbours volunteers Donna Bruce (back, left), Maria Townley and Cindy Grant sort food as it's dropped off by NOTL Rotary Club members. (David Gilchrist)



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# Increase in Toronto visitors

It was a busy weekend on Queen Street, with lots of people walking, more cars and motorcycle groups, and as always, folks looking for ice cream and gelato. Town CAO Marnie Cluckie reported a significant increase in vehicles coming into town over the past two weekends. Vehicles and mobile devices show an increase of people from the GTA, with a decrease from Hamilton and the Niagara Region. Queen's Royal Park was also busy with people enjoying the good weather. Bylaw officers were kept busy with parking tickets, and also issued 10 provincial fines related to social gatherings. *(Photos by David Gilchrist)*





# Keeping focused on mental health issues

## Youth need to be addressed at federal level of government

**Mike Balsom**  
Special to The Local

The pandemic has shone a light on the subject of mental health and one Niagara-on-the-Lake resident wants to ensure the issue is not forgotten whenever the next federal election is called.

Max Roberts Ramos, a third-year political science student at Brock University, recently wrapped up a stint working with Future Majority, a non-partisan, non-profit organization that advocates for youth issues at the national level.

Politically focused since his high school days at Holy Cross Catholic Secondary School, Roberts Ramos was invited by Future Majority to apply to their team fellowship program. Following an application and interview process, he took on the role of volunteer captain and co-director for the organization's efforts in the Niagara Centre riding.

"It's the first year they had expanded into the riding," says Roberts Ramos, "so they really had no footprint here at all. We (he and another co-director) were in charge of building a team, and we got seven volunteers working specifically in the riding now. Then we started reaching out to local businesses and other partners in the riding through our Instagram account."

The Niagara Centre riding encompasses Port Colborne, Welland, Thorold, and southwestern St. Catharines. It's a riding that Future Majority has identified as potentially competitive. Roberts Ramos says the high number of Brock students living in Thorold and south St. Catharines was another major reason for the choice.

The organization's focus is on mobilizing more young people to vote in ridings that are most likely to be decided by small vote margins by any major party. The theory is that mobilizing 1,000 new youth voters in a close riding can potentially turn the heads

of every politician running for office. In safer ridings such as Niagara Falls, where the likely vote margin could be much larger, they rely more heavily on information campaigns.

Roberts Ramos' local team held virtual house parties, online gatherings designed to get other Millennial and Gen Z residents (identified as those born between 1981 and the early 2000s) to talk about mental health and spread awareness. They also used social media and surveys to generate a list of 977 eligible young voters in the riding, successfully pushing up against that target of 1,000.

The local team also organized meetings with Liberal MP Vance Badawey and Conservative candidate and current Welland city councillor Graham Speck, as well as Fiona McMurrin, the Green Party riding association president. The Green Party has yet to name a candidate in Niagara Centre.

"When we met (Badawey and Speck), we used the same general script," explains Roberts Ramos. "We were looking specifically for them to sign a letter that we had from the national organization, which just states that improving access to mental health care is essential to combatting the mental health crisis in Canada. It doesn't hold them to any policy commitments. It's more just addressing that it's a problem."

He says the candidates accepted the letter positively, expressing interest in signing it. He is hopeful their signatures will be added within the next week.

Digging more deeply into the topic, Roberts Ramos says candidates in all ridings need to make mental health care a priority. Come election time, young voters will be looking for a specific plan to improve mental health care accessibility, and will be pushing for each party to commit to a royal commission or study to understand the root causes of mental health issues, especially in marginalized communities.

Besides mental health,

Future Majority is also pushing for changes to university and college tuition to make post-secondary education more affordable. The environment, specifically climate change, is front and centre, as is racial and social justice.

For the next federal election, Niagara Centre is one of 25 priority ridings identified by Future Majority. The organization's website points out that with Millennials and Gen Zs now counting for 40 per cent of eligible voters, young Canadians can potentially hold the balance of power.

In line with Future Majority's focus, a big key is to get young Canadians to hit the polls. Roberts Ramos recognizes that at election time that can be an issue.

"I think there are some barriers when it comes to voting," he admits. "A lot of students are away from home, living in different ridings. Young people in general move addresses a lot, too. That can lead to lower voting rates."

In the 2019 federal election, Future Majority successfully motivated 26,000 students to vote across 15

competitive ridings. They claim that they were able to mobilize more students to the polls than the vote margin of the two leading parties running in 4 of those ridings. As well, they worked hard to get their message out through the press on their key tenets.

Though Roberts Ramos worked on Andrea Kaiser's 2019 campaign in Niagara Falls, he is adamant that in his role this month with Future Majority there was no political bias.

"We made a real commitment to keep partisan politics out of it," says Roberts Ramos. "In meeting with the organization, and in all their training sessions, it's very clear that you are supposed to avoid partisan politics in all your meetings and even in discussions with the team. I'm sure (my team) has a variety of political beliefs, but I couldn't even tell you what their beliefs are."

Despite the popular image of a disengaged youth mesmerized by cell phones, Roberts Ramos sees a large number of his peers willing to speak up and be heard.

"I do think there is a

significant number of people in the younger generations who are politically engaged," he tells The Local. "This organization is providing a great way for young people to be more engaged in politics. I know for at least two of our volunteers, it was their first time being involved in a political organization. They really enjoyed it, and will hopefully stay engaged moving forward."

Soon, Roberts Ramos will begin a co-op semester working with Statistics Canada, while balancing that with his part time job at the Niagara-on-the-Lake Library. When his studies are completed next year, he will be deciding between pursuing a master's degree at Carleton University, or applying for jobs in electoral politics, hopefully working for an MP locally.

And now that his role with Future Majority has come to an end, he will most likely begin volunteering for Andrea Kaiser's campaign once again. The 20-year old will be seen knocking on doors, urging not just young Canadians but voters of all ages to hit the polls come election time.



Niagara Centre MP Vance Badawey (top), Max Roberts Ramos and Future Majority regional directors, Ishan Sharma (bottom left) and Aisha O'Gilvie at a recent virtual meeting. (Screenshot)



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# Traffic improvements in Chautauqua welcomed by residents

**Penny Coles**  
The Local

The Friends of Ryerson Park have been waiting to hear council's approach to solving their problems since last fall. They heard the proposed solutions Monday night, and are more than content with the recommendations.

Staff appropriately proposed some short-term and long-term solutions to "the rapidly growing issues of safety and traffic flow in our area," said John Scott, who spoke to councillors Monday night. He was representing the grassroots organization of 204 Niagara-on-the-Lake households, and was there to support the staff recommendations.

He had one request, however, which was to make an immediate adjustment to staff recommendations to allow for parking for visitors and residents on only one side of all the narrow roads in the Chautauqua neighbourhood.

Staff recommended the establishment of a special enforcement area pilot project for Chautauqua, the specific area to be determined. That would allow for an increased penalty of \$150 for various bylaw offences in that neighbourhood. The recommendation includes hiring a full-time parking enforcement officer for the period of the pilot project, and having staff report back

in the fall, with an overall evaluation addressing measurable results, including penalties issued for various offences and revenue generated, and with recommendations as to whether the enhanced enforcement should be continued in 2022.

After listening to Scott's presentation, council agreed with the staff recommendations and approved adding the move to parking on one side of the street only, as part of the pilot project. At operation manager Sheldon Randall's request, they also approved banning parking on either side of the streets as they approach certain intersections to allow for clear sight lines.

Other requests, such as limiting the hours of the park, and additional signage related to permitted uses and facilities, are already in progress with temporary signs. Permanent signage to be installed once community feedback can be evaluated, the staff report said.

Restructuring traffic flow within the Chautauqua area and the Mississauga Street at the Queen Street intersection, including signage, reducing the speed limit, and a no-stopping tow-away zone, are still being considered.

"We were very pleased with council's adoption of the staff's recommendations, together with our request for an immediate

adjustment to allow parking for both residents and visitors on only one side of the road. Council's deliberations and welcome decision is the culmination of a tremendous amount of dedicated work by the community, Councillors and Town Staff over the past year. We are confident that the approved short-term remedies will be extremely helpful and auger well for longer-term solutions to be considered in the months ahead."

Also on Monday, Scott clarified concerns raised by some councillors regarding the traffic safety lawn signs which several Chautauqua residents recently started using. The signs were developed by a small group of young people who grew up in NOTL, live in Chautauqua, Scott said. The signs were paid for by a number of community contributions, he told councillors.

"The group developed the signs because of the significant concerns area residents have repeatedly raised regarding excessive speed, traffic volume and noise pollution created by souped-up vehicles and open-pipe motorcycles. The signs are individually owned, and placed by member households. However, each participant has been asked to put them out only on high-traffic days," said Scott.

The signs first appeared

on Mother's Day weekend because the group believed that would be the start to higher summer traffic volumes. "We guarantee that the only thought of our members was to address the critical concerns of safety in the community. We also assure you that there was no intention to coordinate the timing with your consideration of the staff report. We are not professional lobbyists – just concerned citi-

zens trying to do the right thing for our community."

He said the signs have been helpful, with traffic noticeably slower.

"We are certainly open to alternative, practical suggestions anyone may have to address excessive speed, at least until town staff can develop a permanent solution."

Scott thanked staff for extensive work that was thorough and professional, and applauded "the delib-

erate process undertaken." Members "are fully supportive of the three-phased (short, medium and long term) approach to address several of the more difficult issues," he added.

The staff report, Scott said, "is inclusive, and strikes the right balance for everyone living in or visiting our beautiful town. It truly is a report that deserves the respect of this community."



Mike Grecco, Shauna Dickson and Ricky Watson distributed traffic safety lawn signs in Chautauqua, which have helped to slow traffic over the last two busy weekends. (Photo supplied)

## Town to explore parking permits for Glendale residents

**Penny Coles**  
The Local

Although he didn't get his wish, Niagara-on-the-Green resident Steve Hardaker says he has learned just how complicated parking solutions can be.

Which is not a surprise, given the decades residents have been asking council for solutions for parking issues in the Glendale subdivision.

His specific request for a moratorium on enforcing the 12-hour parking restriction during the pandemic was denied on a tie vote, but he is grateful to councillors for giving him the chance to speak, and for coming up with an alternative.

Some streets in Glendale, especially where there are townhomes, with narrow driveways and small garages, present parking challenges, he told councillors.

"As new phases were added, there were more and more townhouses and less single-family dwellings. All the streets in

the neighbourhood have a sidewalk on one side, which limits parking space in driveways."

With Niagara College nearby, much of the on-going problem has been caused by rentals to students, but as well, many of the homes in the neighbourhood have more than two vehicles, which causes parking issues regardless of whether their garage is available.

Although town bylaws are traditionally enforced on a complaint basis, in Niagara-on-the-Green, this is not the case, he said, telling councillors that NOTL bylaw enforcement is under an agreement with Niagara College to enforce parking in their paid parking lots, and when officers complete their rounds at the college, they proactively patrol and enforce the bylaw in NOTG.

"This leaves residents with the impression that our neighbourhood is being unfairly targeted, compared to other neighbourhoods like Garrison Village, Chautauqua and Cannery Park."

The 12-hour limit restriction "has become more problematic during the COVID-19 pandemic," he said, when many people are working from home, and staying at home as ordered.

"During the pre-pandemic time, many residents left the neighbourhood during the day for work. However, many are now working from home and have done so for the past year, so there is no longer an exodus of vehicles at the start of the workday. Add to this the stay-at-home order, and you can see how some vehicles remain in the same spot for hours, even days."

Residents have no choice but to park at least one vehicle on the street, and some are becoming very frustrated over receiving multiple tickets, he said.

Hardaker's solution to pause enforcement of the 12-hour parking restriction during the pandemic "would be for no other reason than to show some compassion and kindness towards residents who are already struggling, financially and emotionally, through these unprece-

dented times."

But he soon discovered his solution was not going to be as simple as he hoped.

Councillors pointed out that the 12-hour restriction applies to the municipality, not just Glendale, and questioned whether they could request a pause of enforcing a bylaw in one neighbourhood.

Defining an end to the pandemic was also problematic, along with the possibility that people may continue to work from home when it is over.

Hardaker told councillors other residents may in the future be asking them for a more permanent solution, but for now, he is just asking for temporary relief during COVID.

However, he and councillors heard from planning director Craig Larmour that although some residents are frustrated about being ticketed for parking longer than 12 hours, others complain about neighbours parking in front of their homes for long stretches of time, making parking unavailable to the homeowner.

Lifting the restriction would also mean the town wouldn't have the ability to ticket cars that are parked for days at a time, Larmour said. "It's a complicated matter to address quickly."

A motion to remove the 12-hour restriction during the pandemic was defeated on a tie, but instead, councillors agreed to ask town staff to look into a permit system for residents during the pandemic.

"I would prefer a motion to allow people in NOTG to purchase a permit to allow them to park for longer than 12 hours, rather than make a change to parking in all of NOTG without any public consultation. That doesn't sound right to me," said Lord Mayor Betty Disero.

She proposed permits as an option in Glendale, Coun. Sandra O'Connor made the motion to ask staff to investigate the possibility, and that motion passed. The town is in the process of offering the Honk Mobile app for other parking solutions, and that could work in Glendale, or the old-fashioned permit system currently offered to

residents in the Old Town could also be made available to Glendale residents — staff will look for the better and quicker option.

Hardaker says he and others living in phase one of NOTG already are able to purchase permits on some streets to park during the day, when a parking ban is in place to those without permits. That was a solution to problems caused by students parking on the street to avoid paying in the Niagara College parking lots, he said. This could be a solution either temporarily, or if other residents want to pursue it, as a permanent fix to ongoing problems.

He's disappointed the 12-hour restriction pause could not be granted, he said, but "I understand where staff are coming from. It's not that simple."

He said it was helpful to learn there are residents who want the 12-hour parking restriction enforced, and he is glad to have had the opportunity to speak to council about ongoing parking issues in Glendale.





Last year local Teresa Costello, a familiar sight at the Farmers' Market at The Village, was happy to find Rose and Ken Bartel with some vegetable plants. The popular vendors will be there May 29, opening day, but all will be wearing masks. (File photo)

# Saturday farmers' market getting set to open

**Penny Coles**  
The Local

When the Market @ The Village opens for its 15th season, it will be business as close to normal as can be expected, during a pandemic.

Sharon Brinsmead-Taylor says the May 29 opening will be very similar to last year, with guidelines from Niagara Public Health, but also with some lessons learned from last season.

She explains for customers, it will look more like picking up from where they left off when the market closed for the season, although restricted at this point to 17 growers who have signed up to sell food or plants, which the province has deemed essential.

That's up from the 10 vendors who opened the season last year. "Word got out about how successful the market was," says Brinsmead-Taylor, "so we have some new people this season. And they will all be local, from the Niagara region, with most from Niagara-on-the-Lake. Shoppers will be buying local produce, and supporting local farmers."

One big difference is the ability to have Ken and Rose Bartel back from the beginning of the season with their beautiful flowers — this time last year, their booth, one of the anchors at the market from its earliest days, was limited to vegetable plants.

Artisan vendors can't be included yet — they're expected to return when current restrictions are lifted.

Having been through this before, Brinsmead-Taylor is

ready for a good year at the market. Many of the vendors told her last season was their best ever, with the market offering a welcome, safe and easy outdoor shopping experience for those anxious for something to do that seems normal.

Rather than limiting the capacity of one shopper per vendor, the region is allowing flexibility, giving staff the responsibility of ensuring people are able to physical distance. That should eliminate the lineup of people waiting to get into the market, as experienced by some last year, although it's likely there will always be a lineup at 8 a.m. for the early birds waiting for the market to open.

"We'll be watching the flow, making sure it doesn't get congested," says Brinsmead-Taylor. "It's a big, open space. We just have to watch that people can keep a good distance."

Another difference is that masks must be worn, by market staff, vendors and customers, whereas at this time last year, they were optional outdoors, although almost everyone was wearing one. "I started working with public health months ago. This year, they're asking us to ensure everyone is masked. But it won't be an issue. People have become so accustomed to wearing a mask that most of us don't think twice, it seems so normal."

Each vendor will be on the pavement, in their own tents, placed at least six feet apart.

Most of the farmers' markets around the region have the same coordinator as last year, and they're all accus-

tomed to working together with public health staff they have gotten to know, so the process has been a little smoother.

"It's been a real collaboration, figuring out how best to follow protocols. The onus has been put on the market coordinators to ensure things are done properly, and we know public health will be

around to do inspections, although they're overwhelmed with everything else they have on their plate."

Everyone has the same goal, she says — to keep people safe and healthy, and market coordinators "have done a really good job of that. It's important to me to make our vendors, staff and customers feel safe."

The market will be open the same hours as other years, from 8 a.m. to 1 p.m. Saturdays until Thanksgiving.

As for the Wednesday SupperMarket, "we're not even contemplating that."

There is so much work to do for it to open, without knowing when that could be, the decision was made not to plan for it.

"We're dealing with so much unknown at this time," she says.

There is always a "slight" possibility that it could open for a few weeks at the end of the season, says Brinsmead-Taylor, for the locals who love it. She's warning us not to count on it, but adds, "if it works out it would be a bonus."

## B&B owners given 33 per cent reduction in licensing fees

**Penny Coles**  
The Local

It's not exactly what they asked for, but short-term rental operators are happy to get some relief on the licence fees they pay to the town.

John Foreman, president of the Niagara-on-the-Lake Bed and Breakfast Association, was at council Monday to ask for consideration of a 50 per cent one-time reduction in licensing fees as they face "a second consecutive historically bad year. It is likely that the entire first half

of the year will be lost, and the prospects for the rest of the year depend on the rate at which restrictions are lifted and the tourism industry recovers," Foreman said.

In March, council was asked for a number of considerations to help short-term rental owners through what was expected to be a difficult year, and granted their requests, except for a 30 per cent reduction in 2021 fees.

Since then, some have already decided to forego this season for safety reasons, Foreman said, and "some

others have closed forever. A higher than average number of STRs are up for sale. By our informal count, the number of B&Bs in NOTL is down by at least 15 per cent over the last 12 months."

A fee reduction alone "won't turn a bad year into a good one," he said, "but it will definitely help."

After asking Kyle Freeborn, town director of corporate services, if there was sufficient money left in a provincial pandemic recovery grant to cover a reduction in fees, Coun. Norm Arsenault made a motion to

reduce fees by 33 per cent, which was approved.

Foreman said after the meeting while he would rather have seen the 50 per cent reduction approved, 33 per cent "is a meaningful amount."

In addition to his appreciation of the savings, he said, he's grateful to see the town and short-term rental operators working together in a more positive manner, having a better understanding of issues from both sides and moving forward on finding solutions both can agree on.

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# Village volunteers to offer two little libraries

**Penny Coles**  
**The Local**

Ardeth Staz has received the permission she was seeking to have two little libraries installed in The Village.

plained to councillors Monday night, are “little boxes, or houses,” that contain a collection of books for sharing. The collection changes over time as residents visit the library and take a book, or add a book.

There is an official Little Free Libraries Association, which says they will be successful if located in high traffic areas, “so we think our mailboxes are the perfect location.” The history of Little Free Libraries began in 2009, when the late Todd

Bol of Hudson, Wisconsin, mounted a wooden structure, designed to look like a one-room schoolhouse, on a post on his lawn and filled it with books. It was a tribute to his late mother, who had been a teacher and a book-lover. Since then, the idea has spread and developed into a non-profit organization that includes maps of where to find such free libraries.

With the number of residents in The Village, the expected growth in the area, and the public library not too far away, Staz said they didn’t want or need to become part of the official association, which might attract more visitors to their little libraries.

They have ensured a high-traffic location by asking for them to be placed by the mail boxes, but needed permission from the town, owner of the pergolas.

“Everyone goes to get their mail, so they can get a book at the same time,” Staz told councillors Monday evening. “I imagine it will be even more active when the medical centre is built, the Life Lab is here and the new rental apartments are completed.”

Instead of putting other posts up, Staz said, “it makes a lot of sense to use the posts that are already part of the pergolas in the mail box area.”

The libraries were built by two Village residents, and with an approved budget by the Village Community Association, and donations of materials, as well as checking with Canada Post, the local delivery person and with developer John Hawley, town approval was the last piece of the puzzle.

The appearance of the libraries and the colour they are painted even adhere to the Village Architectural Codes, Staz said.

She has also been in touch with the public library to make sure the little libraries are not seen as competing with them.

“Our goals are the same, promoting literacy,” she added.

The library staff have provided flyers to display with the little libraries that describe public library services, there will be COVID protocol reminders, and hand sanitizer will be provided.

Although books are not of concern as a COVID

transmission route, a recent VCA newsletter explaining the libraries suggests book borrowers “may want to let a book sit for a few days before you start reading it. Don’t visit the library if you are feeling sick.”

People will still visit the public library on Anderson Lane, and they will still buy books, said Staz, “however, during this time of COVID when people are tending to stay close to home, and not visiting book stores or the public library, the VCA little libraries can provide a safe alternative for acquiring books very close to home, without being in contact with anyone.”

The VCA will be responsible for maintaining them, and everyone who uses them will be asked to help keep them well-organized and well-taken care of.

The libraries will be installed in the mailbox areas on McDonnell Street and Perez Street, both of which are areas visited by all residents and accessible to others who visit the neighbourhood, she said.

The little libraries, Staz added, “will enhance our sense of community.”



The little libraries, built by two Village residents, even adhere to the neighbourhood’s architectural code. (Photos supplied)





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- Town of Niagara-on-the-Lake

.... and the many, many generous individuals and families who left their donations on over 145 individual porches and front steps across our community

**Your generosity has ensured that 60 Niagara-on-the-Lake families, representing nearly 110 individuals, (moms, dads and children) will continue to be supported by our food bank this spring and summer.**

**THANK YOU ALL!!!**



# Shelters see increase in domestic violence

## Pandemic makes fundraising more important than ever

**Penny Coles**  
**The Local**

As violence against women continues to increase during the COVID-19 pandemic, Niagara women's shelters are telling the public they haven't gone anywhere, and are still available to help, whether with emergency shelter or through the programs they provide.

Those services include 24-hour phone and text support, counselling, and other critical domestic violence services.

Gillian's Place in St. Catharines is tasked with looking after women in need of help in Niagara-on-the-Lake, while Women's Place in South Niagara covers that area of the peninsula, but also on occasion shelters women from NOTL.

In response to the pandemic, the two agencies, plus Serenity Place in Welland, have teamed up to create Still Here Niagara, a campaign intended to remind people the shelters are still open, and are operating safely through COVID-19.

There has been a 30 per cent increase rates of gender-based violence during the pandemic, says Nicole Regehr, director of development and

violence prevention programs at Gillian's Place.

Both agencies want to be sure women know that if they need safe shelter, it's available, or if they're not ready or are not in a position to leave, there are other options for seeking help, and how to access them.

Some women are at home with an abusive partner 24 hours a day, and stress over restrictions, or over loss or reduction of income, may have escalated, says Regehr.

Isolation through increased job losses has created a difficult time for women who have already been experiencing domestic violence, Regehr adds.

They don't have the same opportunities to leave the house, speak out to a co-worker, friend or family member about what's happening at home, or even make a phone call for help, while texting is easier.

"It's the perfect storm. Abuse is about power and control, and isolating women from family and friends is a tactic an abuser uses, but they don't need to during a pandemic. It's already happening. Violence breeds in science."

While they are seeing a de-

crease in the number of people using the shelters during the lockdown, they see an increase in other areas, including a huge increase — 1,000 per cent — in the text support line, Regehr says.

"Women at home may not be able to find a place to make that phone call, but they can text."

She urges anyone who is concerned about a friend or family member to reach out safely, make a phone call or drive by to see if everyone is okay.

An increasing number of women are not, she says, with surveys showing more visits to hospital emergency rooms due to domestic violence.

Amanda Braet, director of development and stewardship for Women's Place, says although both agencies have their own areas of jurisdiction, "it can be complicated." Occasionally, for reasons of safety, or if there are family members close by, Women's Place may take in women from NOTL who would otherwise go to Gillian's Place.

But staff at the two agencies communicate and work together regularly, with the same goal — to help women and children across the region who are victims of domestic abuse.

This spring, people looking to support women and chil-



dren experiencing domestic violence will have a new way to help their local women's shelters that also gives them a chance to win. On Saturday, May 15 at 11 a.m., Women's Place launched their first on-line 50/50 raffle, with a minimum guaranteed jackpot of \$2,500. Tickets, and an explanation of how the fundraising lottery works, is available at [www.womensplace5050.ca](http://www.womensplace5050.ca).

Those who purchase their tickets before 11:59 a.m. on June 1 will also be entered to win a \$500 Early Bird cash prize.

The spring raffle is the first of three 50/50 draws Women's Place plans to host in 2021. They will help offset the fundraising revenue lost as COVID-19 restrictions cause the cancellation of events like the Women's Place Book Riot, a community event which has been called off for a second year.

"Our shelter staff is reporting an increase in the severity of physical violence that our clients are experiencing," says Women's Place executive director Jennifer Gauthier. "We also anticipate a steep increase in the number of women who will reach out to our shelters, especially once the stay-at-home order is lifted. While women are at increased risk, our shelters are also losing much of the fundraising revenue that we depend on from community events to support survivors."

Gillian's Place will begin their 50/50 draw in August, and in October will hold its annual Walk a Mile fundraising event, the second time it's had to be organized virtually.

Last year's successful event raised \$105,000 to support women and children who have experienced abuse, with participants walking in their neighbourhoods. This year, Gillian's

Place has already made the decision to adapt the fundraiser to a community event, rather than the traditional Pen Centre location. On Oct. 16, Walk a Mile COVID Style will be more inclusive. Everyone is encouraged to take part, any way and anywhere they want, in heels, sneakers or whatever footwear they choose — they just need to walk a mile.

While it's a shame not to be able to get together in one place for such a great event, says Regehr, "in some ways, it's brought us closer together."

For more information about Walk a Mile, how to donate, or about services that are available, visit <https://gilliansplace.com/walk-a-mile-covid-style>.

These fundraisers help provide emergency shelter services, 24-hour phone and text support, counselling, and other critical domestic violence services offered by the agencies.

# Kaiser reaching out with 'Weekend of Action'

**Local Staff**

Andrea Kaiser and her team of volunteers have a jam-packed long weekend planned to reach out to the community members and help them prepare their garden beds by planting Seeds for Change, while taking part in a community clean-up.

On Thursday, before kicking off the weekend, the federal Liberal candidate is inviting members of the community to order a Cultivate Love seed pack in support of Kaiser's campaign, and also to be able to join her in planting pollinators in a couple of weeks to feed bees, birds, and butterflies. She says she is committed to addressing climate change, and "as every effort made counts, every tiny seed counts too."

Native Ontario wildflower patches create simple sanctuaries, critical to wildlife says Kaiser. "Big or small, every patch of pollinators makes a difference."

The mix contains anise hyssop, prairie coneflower, black-eyed Susans, wild bergamot, and borage, an annual that adds colour and nectar while the perennial plants establish themselves. These native seeds are non-GMO and chemical-free, she says. The

price per package is \$25 and includes a donation to the Andrea Kaiser Campaign, a double seed pack (1.5 grams) as well as delivery by mail. Order deadline is May 20, and can be purchased at [votekaiser.ca](http://votekaiser.ca).

Kaiser's team also has a day of calling planned this Saturday, May 22, "reaching out to community members to see how they are doing in these unprecedented time," she says. "It is a time of loneliness and anxiety for many, and sometimes it is just nice to hear from a neighbour."

On Sunday, May 23, Kaiser's Weekend of Action continues with another clean-up. "Although volunteers cannot gather together right now to do a big community clean-up due

to COVID-19, it is important nonetheless to find a way to clean up our community," she says.

Her team is suggesting that you take 30 to 60 minutes on Sunday to clean up your neighbourhood, while conforming to public health guidelines. "Please ensure that you do not gather in groups, that you wear a mask, and ensure you wear the appropriate gloves."

Finally, on Monday, May 24, Kaiser says, "it looks like it will be perfect weather to prepare a garden bed or patio planter for your Cultivate Love Seed Packs, which will arrive by the end of the month."

If you are interested in getting involved, you can contact Kaiser at [voteandrea@kaiser.ca](mailto:voteandrea@kaiser.ca).



Andrea Kaiser ran for the Liberals in the last federal election, and is the candidate for the next election. (File photo)

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### LOCAL BUSINESS SPOTLIGHT: BRICKS AND BARLEY

By the beginning, the pandemic has been a challenge for many businesses. Bricks and Barley, a new brewery and restaurant, is a great example of a business that is thriving despite the challenges. The owners, Chris and Sarah, have been in the industry for over 10 years and have a passion for craft beer and food. They have recently opened a new location in Niagara-on-the-Lake, and are looking for ways to grow their business. The new location is a great addition to the community, and we are excited to see it succeed. Bricks and Barley is a great example of a business that is thriving despite the challenges. The owners, Chris and Sarah, have been in the industry for over 10 years and have a passion for craft beer and food. They have recently opened a new location in Niagara-on-the-Lake, and are looking for ways to grow their business. The new location is a great addition to the community, and we are excited to see it succeed.

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### LOCAL BUSINESS SPOTLIGHT: SWAG HAIR COMPANY

Swag Hair Company is a new hair salon and spa that is located in Niagara-on-the-Lake. The owners, Sarah and Chris, have been in the industry for over 10 years and have a passion for hair and beauty. They have recently opened a new location in Niagara-on-the-Lake, and are looking for ways to grow their business. The new location is a great addition to the community, and we are excited to see it succeed. Swag Hair Company is a great example of a business that is thriving despite the challenges. The owners, Sarah and Chris, have been in the industry for over 10 years and have a passion for hair and beauty. They have recently opened a new location in Niagara-on-the-Lake, and are looking for ways to grow their business. The new location is a great addition to the community, and we are excited to see it succeed.

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# Local women helping out northern friends

**Penny Coles**  
The Local

Audrey Pellett has found her niche in helping those who live in the remote areas of northern Canada.

It began with a small collection of fur coats originally destined to become plush teddy bears, that instead were eventually mailed to remote Canadian communities to keep people warm, says Pellett.

It has turned into much more than that.

Pellett says there was a time in her life, 25 to 30 years ago, when she collected fur coats to turn into teddy bears. But she had five coats left over from that project, instead, as she moved house to house, moving them with her.

When she learned recently about Clothing for our Northern Friends, a Facebook group that matches items to be donated with people in need of those items, she knew what to do with the coats.

She also discovered there are many people with fur coats they don't wear, but don't want to throw out. "Everyone who donates a fur says, 'I look at it in the closet, and don't know what to do with it,'" she says. She provided the solution for them.

The first coat she posted on the group page drew 140 responses from people who wanted it. She estimates that since then she has sent between 60 to 80 fur coats north, packed in boxes that are sold by Canada Post, including the cost of shipping. She can get a fur coat into a \$34 box, usually with room left over. "It's a great deal



Audrey Pellett still has some furs to donate through the Facebook group Clothing for our Northern Friends. (Photos supplied)

from Canada Post," she says. Although so far they have been real fur, faux is also acceptable — it's not as suitable for the coldest weather, but is still warm enough to be useful.

The box can weigh up to five kilograms, so she might ask the recipient what items they might need to bring it up to that weight, and also typically packs some chocolate as well, because after all, "who doesn't like chocolate."

Some she sends are worn as coats, and others are repurposed into warm mittens, hats, or coats for children. "It's very hard to sew with fur," she says. "The talent some have to do that is really amazing. Sometimes

the recipient will send a photo of a child or grandchild wearing what they've made."

Most of the coats she has sent went to Nunavut, a few to the North West Territories, and some to northern Ontario and Quebec. These are places where there are few stores, certainly no second-hand stores, and the prices of what is available for sale in those remote communities "would blow you away. Imagine if you have three kids to clothe, and incomes are not anywhere near the level of the south."

When Pellett saw a request from a woman "desperate for a wedding dress," although it was outside of her norm, she decided she would try to help, and put the word out to some of her friends in Niagara. She got a good response, took photos and got all the particulars of the dresses, and was able to let the woman in search of the dress choose which one she wanted.

"The woman who gave it to me got married in 1985, and still had it in that souvenir box you get from the cleaners. She was thrilled that it was going up north to someone who could use it. And the recipient was so happy, overcome with gratitude."

When the recipient was hesitant about the price of shipping, which was going to be \$100 as the dress was packed in the box from the cleaners, Pellett reached out to some "earth angels" in Niagara-on-the-Lake, who offered to foot the cost.

Because she received photos from several women who had dresses to give away, she says her role has morphed to include wedding dresses. She has also sent men's suits and some children's clothing. If a friend has something to give away,

she will help out by posting on the site and making the connections for them. She is limiting her involvement to that, because she knows if she doesn't, it could easily become all-consuming, filling her home with items to send north.

Niagara-on-the-Lake local Louise Waldie is an administrator of the Clothing for our Northern Friends, and Pellett is one of about 7,500 members of the group that matches items available from donors across southern Canada to those who need them in northern communities.

"Louise is a force," says Pellett. "It warms my heart what she has done for our northern neighbours."

The items are provided for free, but recipients are now, in most cases, expected to pay for the shipping, says Waldie. That decision was made to reduce the chances of people asking for items, some of which, especially the furs, are valuable, and then selling them, although, she adds, "we can't curtail it completely."

There are other groups that look after other necessities, such as food, for fly-in communities, she says, but she has decided to focus on clothing, which is also essential, and difficult to come by.

She also likes the approach of individuals sending needed items directly to recipients, although there are a few northern groups, such as day care centres or social service agencies, which have been vetted, and which members may ship to.

Waldie says when she and her husband Andrew Porteous received a free flight to a destination they could choose, within a certain radius, they decided to go to Iqaluit, a place they would likely never visit if

it weren't for that free trip. It was a valuable learning experience, enabling her to picture in her mind the tundra above the treeline, the difference in culture from the south, and the difficulty residents have in purchasing what they need.

"It seems more real, now that I've seen the environment. The land is very different from anywhere else in Canada. There is so much we take for granted that people in these communities don't have access to. The number of stores is very minimal, and everything is very costly. Used clothing here is easy to come by, but it isn't there. This gave me the context to move my focus there."

She says it's made clear that when people post that they have items to give away, the recipient is not determined by "first come, first served." Rather donors are encouraged to look at the responses and make their own call about who needs it the most.

She emphasizes clothing must be either new or gently used, so that money isn't spent on shipping items which are not usable.

If there is any damage or visible wear, the condition of the items must be listed as such.

For locals who are downsizing, small household items may also be posted, she says.



Some furs sent north are repurposed into hats, mittens and coats for children.



Linda Cumpson, in a photo of her 1985 wedding to her husband Don. She donated her wedding dress through Audrey Pellett to a very grateful woman in a remote northern community.



# Fond memories of growing up in Niagara

**Jim Marino**  
Special to The Local

I have had thoughts for quite some time of putting fingers to computer about old Niagara, for anyone who might have a slight interest in reading them. I finally surmised that as I grow older, with many cherished memories of what seems so long ago, it was fitting to make the attempt.

Niagara-on-the-Lake is a town we all so dearly love. We hold it in high regard as a sacred treasure, and we all want the very best for it. With that in mind, I would like to share a few comments, memories and concerns. Points to ponder, if you will.

Born in the old Queen Street Cottage Hospital, I peddled my bicycle throughout town, delivering groceries to customers of my family's store, which they operated for 50 years at 15 Queen Street. My parents had big hearts, allowing customers to charge groceries until they were able to pay. I recall one occasion when a customer's young daughter wanted to charge an item while innocently commenting to my mother, that they couldn't pay their bill that week because they spent all of their grocery money at Loblaws. No problem. Big-hearted Mom added the new charges to the existing bill.

Growing up in the Old Town with best buddies like Bruce Sherlock, Paul Albrechtsen, Ross Walsh, Walt Solenenko and the Bates and Dietsch boys was a real privilege. We were more like brothers than just friends. Sadly, many passed away much too early, while this old guy is still around. I deeply miss them.

The "old days" medical profession was blessed with caring physicians: Three Doctors Riggs, father and two sons, Bruce and Jack, and also Dr. Walwyn. Dentists Bannister and Tranter cared for our teeth. Old Town policing was handled by long-time Chief Lou Warner who was regularly seen walking the beat, ensuring everything was in order.

The old red brick Niagara Public School building, now a bed and breakfast, had dedicated teachers like principal Cecil Brunton, Misses Masters, Rush, Potter, and McGinn. They went to great lengths to ensure students were not only schooled, but also educated.

Niagara Advance newspaper publisher Doug Young and barber Fred Curtis were dedicated Scoutmasters. Harry "Hike" Steele, another town barber, coached softball, and all

three men instilled qualities of camaraderie and sportsmanship in the young scouts and athletes.

The year I was to enter secondary school was when Niagara High School closed and students were destined for busing to Stamford Collegiate in Niagara Falls. I opted to attend and board for five years at St. Michael's College in Toronto, returning home for summer vacations, special holidays and some weekends.

On completion of school, and after several years of radio broadcasting in various Ontario cities, I was fortunate to return to my roots in Niagara with my wife Claudette and our three children, when I became news director at CHSC AM and CHRE FM in St. Catharines. Over the years, I have been privileged to serve as trustee and chair of the Lincoln County Separate School Board, alderman and lord mayor of Niagara-on-the-Lake, and on Niagara Regional Council.

I have seen many transitions in the town of my boyhood, teen and adult years. Niagara-on-the-Lake has gone from a sleepy, quiet little town to one of international recognition as the place to live, a garden of Eden or Shangri-La if you will.

While desirable to plan a smooth and passable route for the future, it is incumbent upon us not to forget the bumpy road of past years, experienced by many. They planted new seeds, nurtured them, and watched them grow into the bountiful harvest that present citizens have the opportunity to reap and enjoy.

An inaugural meeting of town council indicated the opening of a new chapter for Niagara-on-the-Lake. In opening any new chapter, stories and featured "characters" of the old chapter must always be remembered. For instance, long-time business characters like the Reids, Carnochans, Chambers, Pepes, Dalys, Howses, Marinos, Stewarts and McClellands who operated grocery and meat stores in the Old Town. Characters like Mulhollands Dry Goods, Albrechtsens Niagara Home Bakery, Bill Zoeger's 5 to 1 Dollar Store, Iona Billings Shoe Store, Kyle's Town and Country Clothing, McKenzie Plumbing, Greaves Jams, Harrison's Lumber, Magder's Family Store, Curtis, Tranter and Steele barber shops, Fields, Bates and Coyne's Pharmacies, Connolly's china gift shop and soda bar, Librock's gift shop, Caughill's, Richardson's and Haines' Coal Companies, Club 19, Parkview and Thistle Shamrock restaurants, Johnny Pappetti the town

shoemaker, Carmen and Jenny Lepere who operated the Riverside Hotel, and the Prisko family who owned the Prince of Wales Hotel long before it was renovated and beautified by the Wiens family.

John and Nelson Campbell and their father bottled and delivered milk door to door from their plant on Platoff Street; Don Sherlock, the volunteer fire department chief, represented Silverwood's Dairy; and a third milk delivery service was Baker's Dairy. I vividly recall the transition from the old horse and buggy delivery days to those of motorized vehicles. Harry Sherlock produced and delivered ice blocks from his plant in the market square, and in wintertime, flooded and operated the skating rink in Simcoe Park.

We were fortunate to have commercial fishermen such as Jim "Pud" Patterson, Frank Currie and "Tooty" Sherwood. Sometimes in the late afternoon I would jump into their boats as they set out to cast their nets in the clear blue waters of Lake Ontario, and again in early mornings, to retrieve catches of fresh white-fish and perch, destined for sales at Bishop's Fish Market. One memorable catch of the day was a gigantic sturgeon that was displayed at Bishop's, and attracted hundreds of gawkers from all across the Niagara Peninsula.

Some of the best boats and yachts ever to ply the waters were built in town at Shepherd's Boat Works, Hinterhoeller and C & C Yachts, where gainful employment was provided for many local residents. Town businesses appreciated the annual Camp Niagara summer military camp and the resulting positive financial benefits these summer soldiers contributed to the local economy. Military members had great times with horse back riding rentals from Jack Greene's Livery Stable, dancing the night away at Jim Elliot's pavilion, Fred Willett Band concerts and Sunday night sing-songs led by Archie Haines in Simcoe Park.

The local Canadian Cannery factory was a major permanent and casual employer that created a beehive of activity when farmers delivered truckloads of fresh peaches and tomatoes that were meticulously processed.

Local government and school board authorities have been blessed by the community contribution of many individuals who were stalwart leaders at the Niagara Town and Township levels prior to, and after amalgamation. John Campbell, Fred Goring, Bill Greaves,

Gerry Wooll, Walter Theobald, Jake Froese, Dave Dick, Leno Mori, Wilbert Dick, Harry Dawson, Mike Dietsch, Harold Clement, Bill Hunter and my brother Nick, to name just a few.

Blazing the way for a culture ingredient came the founder of the Shaw Festival Theatre, Brian Doherty, who, with the assistance of Calvin Rand, developed an international theatre attraction that many will say put NOTL on the map as the place to visit and live.

In carving out any further milestones, it is worthy to recognize and appreciate not only the notables of the town's very early years, but also the day to day "ordinary" solid citizens of more recent years, whose names will probably never make it into the history books.

I have threatened to someday write a book about memorable Niagara experiences, but the most difficult problem in starting is jotting down the first sentence. Perhaps this is a beginning.



Jim Marino is now executive director of the Niagara Foundation for Catholic Education, a registered charitable foundation that raises funds to support students in need, and scholarship funding for students attending Niagara Catholic District School Board schools. (Photo supplied)

## Pie'za Pizzeria offering free signature pizzas Sunday

Special to The Local

Maurizio and Laryssa Cesta, owners and operators of Pie'za Pizzeria, will be giving away free (takeout) Margherita pizzas all day on Sunday, May 23, to celebrate their five-year anniversary at 188 Victoria Street in Niagara-on-the-Lake.

Pie'za Pizzeria opened its doors Victoria Day long weekend in 2016, and since then has been officially recognized and certified by the Vera Napoletana Association (AVPN) in Naples, Italy. With one of only 13 certifications in Canada, the owners say they strive to de-

liver a high-quality pizza out of their 5,000-pound wood burning oven imported from Napoli.

Laryssa volunteers weekly at St. John the Compassionate Mission in downtown Toronto, where she was born and raised. This is a charity near and dear to her heart, and in an effort to support those in need, donations will be accepted to support her favourite cause.

To commemorate the five-year anniversary of Pie'za Pizzeria, Laryssa and Maurizio want to say thank you to all their loyal supporters by serving their signature pizza, the Queen Margherita, free of charge, while encouraging

safe curbside takeout practices they have put in place over the past year. Guests are welcome to come any time after 12 p.m., until they run out of dough. They will also have their full bar open for guests to purchase takeout wine, beer or soft drinks.

Owners say the team at Pie'za Pizzeria is excited to celebrate this milestone, and they hope to put a smile on their customers' faces during these difficult times.

The owners ask that you follow the COVID-19 safety guidelines wearing a mask and keeping two metres apart. Washroom facilities are closed but public restrooms in NOTL are open.



Pie'za Pizzeria owners and staff are ready to celebrate their five-year milestone with free pizza Sunday. (Photo supplied)



# Niagara Pumphouse offering virtual programs, camps

**Kim Wade**  
Special to The Local

Celebrate the beauty of summer with the Niagara Pumphouse Art Centre.

Bees are buzzing and blooms are bursting all through Niagara-on-the-Lake, and even though we are in a province-wide stay-at-home order, there is lots to celebrate in our own backyards. From Old Town to Queenston Heights, from budding vines to blossoming orchards, to the sparkling lake and river, NOTL is burgeoning with the kind of beauty that can move and inspire all of us.

The Niagara Pumphouse Arts Centre wants to help harness that, and inspire you to express yourself by offering virtual workshops

guided by local artists using the Zoom platform.

Niagara artist and Pumphouse instructor Patricia Haftar is next up, hosting an upcoming workshop in Mixed Media Collage, starting June 1.

Haftar's advice is to "find something that you love to do and try to focus your energies on that. Doing something inspiring can help you stay in a positive state of mind."

She trusts that the Pumphouse staff believe in this same philosophy, and that is why they have put so much effort into making sure that these classes still remain available, in spite of our new reality. "Art is essential," says Haftar.

Teaching in this new online world, says Haftar, "is definitely an adjustment for

me, and it continues to be, and that's fine."

It keeps her on her toes, she says, makes her more

aware of how she's teaching, and has acted as a reminder to listen carefully to the other people in the classroom

and be more cognizant of their needs.

"Artists tend to get lost in their own little world.

In a face-to-face lesson you can automatically see how

**Continued on page 20**



Artist Patricia Haftar paints the beauty around her, including Lipstick Tulips. (Photo submitted)

## LocalHAPPENINGS

**ST. DAVIDS LIONS**  
**FINAL FISH FRY OF THE SEASON!**  
**JOIN US!**

**Friday, May 21<sup>st</sup> 4:30 – 6:30 pm**

**Take-out!**  
**1 piece \$9 2 piece \$13**

**Fish, our famous crispy fries and coleslaw!**  
*Sorry no pan fried fish or baked potatoes available!*

**LET US COOK YOUR SUPPER!**

**1462 York Rd., St. Davids**

**stdavidslions.ca @stdavidslions on Facebook**

## AUTHOR TALKS

### ANDREA BENNETT ~ 14+

**May 26 @ 7 p.m. - 8 p.m.**

Join the NOTL Public Library in welcoming Andrea Bennett as their next author in our 2021 Author Talk Series! Enjoy an evening with writer Andrea Bennett from the comfort of your home as she talks about her book "Like a Boy but Not a Boy: Navigating Life, Mental Health, and Parenthood Outside the Gender Binary." 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](mailto:classified@notllocal.com)



## 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](http://www.auchterlonieonastrology.ca).*

Welcome to Auchterlonie on Astrology, a look at the week of May 20 through May 26, including the first day of Gemini, and a lunar eclipse on Wednesday, May 26.

On my podcast you can also find out how to obtain your own personal birth chart including a forecast for the year ahead. The podcast is at [www.auchterlonieonastrology.ca](http://www.auchterlonieonastrology.ca).

Now, the week ahead:

Thursday, May 20: Happy birthday to all Geminis out there. Today, the Sun enters Gemini and the Gemini season officially starts. With Mercury, Venus and the north node already in Gemini, you may feel that the Gemini season has started a long time ago. But it is really when the Sun is in the sign that we get the full experience. Gemini is a very curious, witty, expressive, verbal and intellectual energy. Gemini is the jack of all trades

of the zodiac, without having the know-it-all Jupiter/Sag attitude. Because Gemini energy is intrinsically curious, we will actually get to pay attention to what is going on, and approach things with a beginner's mind. And this is when we usually finally find solutions to old problems that felt impossible to solve in the past. It was on May 20, 1932 that Amelia Earhart took off all alone in her single engine plane from Newfoundland. Seventeen hours later she landed in a field in Ireland, becoming the first woman to fly across the Atlantic. Five years later, she disappeared somewhere over the Pacific Ocean.

Friday, May 21: The day starts with a conflict between heart and mind. Thinking gets you one answer. But that doesn't feel right. Hold on, because by this evening you will feel the right way. Especially the right way for you! On May 21, 1927, Charles Lindbergh flew solo on that same crossing.

Saturday, May 22: Yesterday we saw a conflict between hearts and minds. Today there is a potential disagreement between a memory and cur-

rent ideas, or difficulties with a project requiring imagination. Resolving this impasse today will save a situation from stalling completely. Novak Djokovic celebrates birthday #34 today. He is ranked #1 in men's tennis. One of the greatest of all time.

Sunday, May 23: When the slowest visible planet stations retrograde, the world doesn't turn upside down as it does when Mercury or Mars go retrograde . . . but Saturn's retrograde stations rarely go unnoticed, even if for different reasons. If some things in your life went on by inertia, or they were kind of sluggish, now they will stop working altogether. Imagine you have an old car that takes ages to start. You expect any moment to crash, and unsurprisingly, one day the car does crash. It's not that you haven't seen it coming. But the fact that it has stopped working will finally push you to do something about it. Now the problem becomes obvious, it becomes tangible, it becomes a reality. You can't just get away with it anymore. When Saturn goes retrograde, you will finally stop, so you can reassess an area of your life that is not working as well as it could be. Saturn retrograde is an opportunity to rethink and re-engineer that sector of your life. By the time Saturn goes direct, you will find a new solution, a new operating model, that will improve your life in the long run. Saturn is retro until the end of September.

It was May 23, 1873 that the new country of Canada formed the Northwest Mounted Police. In 1904 it became The Royal Canadian North West Mounted Police. Today, they are mostly known as the RCMP and are still headline news.

Monday, May 24: The unofficial start to summer

in Canada is today – Victoria Day. In many parts of the country, today is a holiday. Astrologically it may prove to be a test of truth or dare. Saturn makes for a serious Monday, whether or not it is a holiday for you. Be honest with yourself and it will be easier. Queen Victoria was born May 24, 1819 and ruled for 63 years and seven months, until her death in 1901.

Tuesday, May 25: The focus today is on Mars. That means on all things Martian. Like health and our physical selves. Like work, especially physical labour. And like our heads. Not our minds, but our noggins. We are in a generous mood and giving seems to be the way today. It was May 25, 1977 that the first Star Wars film was released. Directed by George Lucas, it starred Harrison Ford, Mark Hamill, and Carrie Fisher.

Wednesday, May 26: One of the highlights of the month is, of course, the full Moon and total lunar eclipse in Sagittarius. The eclipse is at 5 degrees Sagittarius and it is a south node eclipse, so it is a culmination of what we've been building and creating since the nodes have shifted into Gemini and Sagittarius.

On the east coast of North America, it will be visible starting at 4:45 a.m. and lasts about two hours. As with all full Moons, emotions are highly energized, this time in a Sagittarian way. We feel like we know it all. (And likely, we do.) Happy anniversary to Brian and Mila Mulroney, married May 26, 1973.

And that's AonA for this week. On May 29, Mercury goes retrograde and on May 31, the Sun makes a connection it makes only once a year. Next week is very important.

Until then, as Joni Mitchell said, shine on.

# LocalWORSHIP

**Sunday, May 23rd**

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

Speaker: Kevin Bayne  
Message: Evangelism, Shepherding, & Leadership

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.

[www.ccchurch.ca](http://www.ccchurch.ca)

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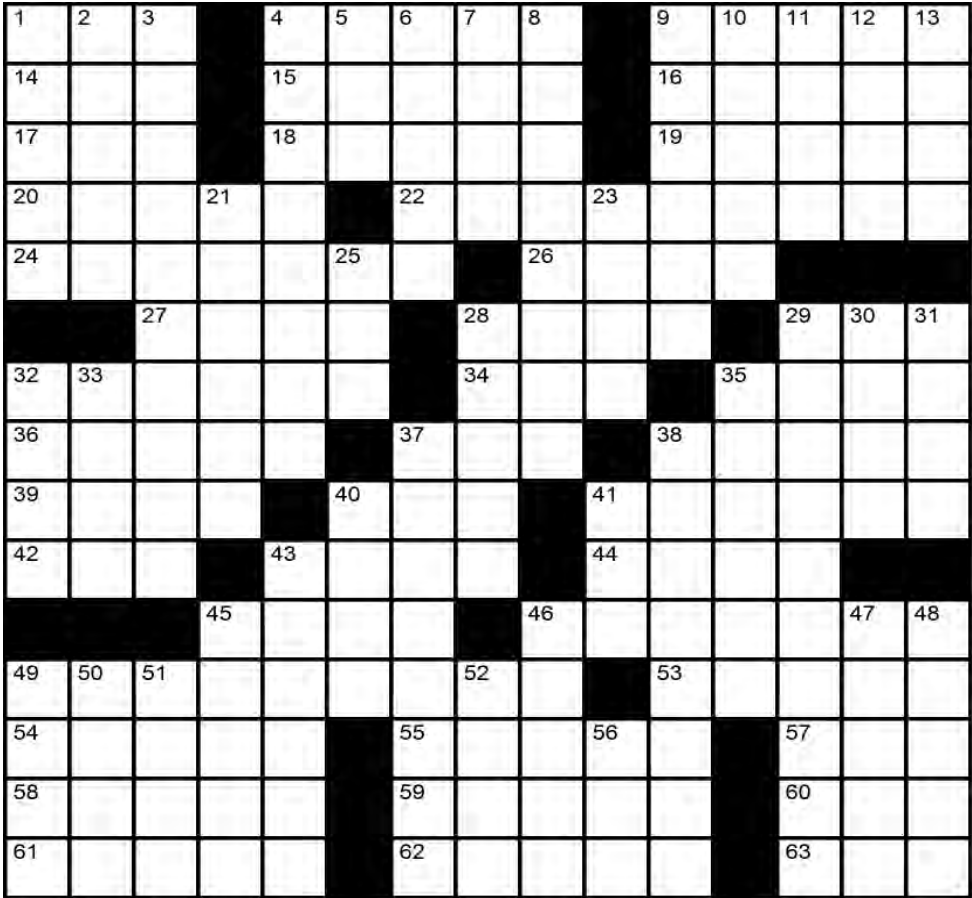
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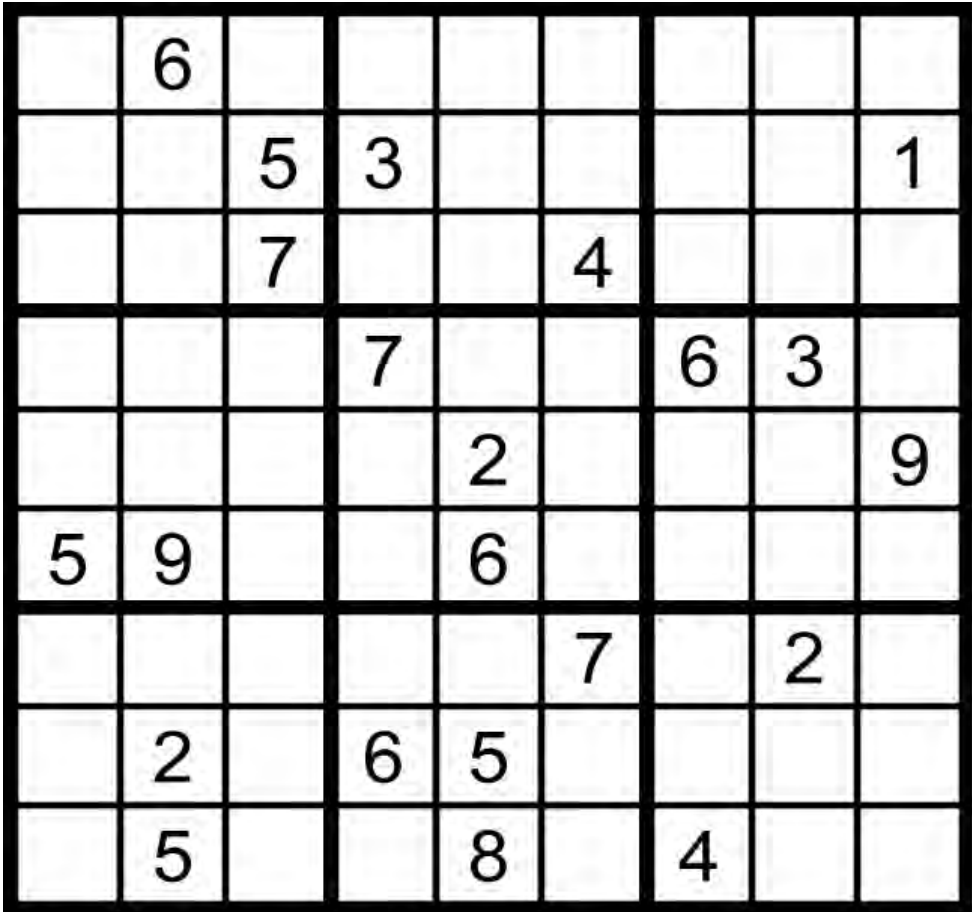


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## CROSSWORD AND SUDOKU



- Across:**
- 1 Limerick's second word, usually
  - 4 Delicate
  - 9 Eat greedily
  - 14 Medical insurer
  - 15 Delayed
  - 16 Radio receiver
  - 17 Australian running bird
  - 18 Univision news anchor Jorge ---
  - 19 Make amends
  - 20 Open grassland
  - 22 Preserved
  - 24 Funded
  - 26 Biblical weed
  - 27 Hilltop
  - 28 Not that
  - 29 --- for Charlie
  - 32 Expatriate
  - 34 Rowboat lever
  - 35 The Pope
  - 36 Confined
  - 37 Demand
  - 38 Face protection
  - 39 Affirmative votes
  - 40 Obtain
  - 41 Battle Born State
  - 42 Short numbers
  - 43 Elapse
- Down:**
- 1 Location question
  - 2 Capital of Jordan
  - 3 Speech snippets
  - 4 Book opener
  - 5 Genetic component of some viruses
  - 6 Pointed
  - 7 Religious painting
  - 8 <
  - 9 Brenda and Ringo
  - 10 Adorable child
- Across:**
- 44 High-hat
  - 45 Cheap sensational magazine
  - 46 Perturbed
  - 49 N Y C's --- Park
  - 53 Lexicographer's interest
  - 54 Whiffs
  - 55 Enjoy to the full
  - 57 U S capital once and briefly
  - 58 Pal of Kukla and Fran
  - 59 Dodge
  - 60 Accountant's letters
  - 61 Senses
  - 62 Works
  - 63 Agency which initiated the Waco siege
- Down:**
- 11 Author unknown
  - 12 Mathematician --- Descartes
  - 13 Adele's dancing brother
  - 21 Pigs out
  - 23 Locks or strands
  - 25 Ram's dam
  - 28 Tip sellers
  - 29 Largest Moroccan city
  - 30 Portable player
  - 31 "Two Mules for Sister ---": Eastwood/MacLaine film
  - 32 Pulitzer winner Jennifer ---
  - 33 Salad sauce
  - 35 Fulcrums
  - 37 Loathed
  - 38 Enterprises
  - 40 Young ladies
  - 41 Intelligence agency
  - 43 Prize monies
  - 45 Hazard
  - 46 Nightclub show
  - 47 Pyramid place
  - 48 Kickless coffee
  - 49 Upper limit
  - 50 Indolent
  - 51 Short-tailed rodent
  - 52 Valley
  - 56 Weird



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home, once  
every two weeks.**

Call for details.  
References appreciated  
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## HOUSE SITTING

### HOUSE SITTING (While you are away)

Location Niagara-on-the-Lake.  
Oct 15th 2021 to April 15th 2022  
Inclusive. No Pets.

Contact John email  
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at [guidedogchampions.ca](http://guidedogchampions.ca).



## PUZZLE ANSWERS

**Sudoku solution from  
May 12, 2021**

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

**Across:** 1 Was, 4 Frail, 9 Scarf, 14 H M O, 15 On ice, 16 Turner, 17 Emu, 18 Ramos, 19 Alone, 20 Range, 22 Enshrined, 24 Endowed, 26 Tare, 27 Brow, 28 This, 29 C is, 32 Emigre, 34 Oar, 35 Papa, 36 Gated, 37 Dun, 38 Visor, 39 Ayes, 40 Get, 41 Nevada, 42 Nos, 43 Pass, 44 Snob, 45 Pulp, 46 Rattled, 49 Riverside, 53 Usage, 54 Odors, 55 Savor, 57 N Y C, 58 Ollie, 59 Elude, 60 C P A, 61 Feels, 62 Deeds, 63 A T F.

**Down:** 1 Where, 2 Amman, 3 Sound bites, 4 Foreword, 5 R N A, 6 Aimed, 7 Icon, 8 Less than, 9 Stars, 10 Cute, 11 Anon, 12 Rene, 13 Fred, 21 Gorges, 23 Hair, 25 Ewe, 28 Tours, 29 Casablanca, 30 iPod, 31 Sara, 32 Egan, 33 Mayo, 35 Pivots, 37 Despised, 38 Ventures, 40 Gals, 41 N S A, 43 Purses, 45 Peril, 46 Reveal, 47 Egypt, 48 Decaf, 49 Roof, 50 Idle, 51 Vole, 52 Dale, 56 Odd.





Your turn  
is coming  
soon.

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](https://ontario.ca/covidvaccineplan) or call 1-888-999-6488 for assistance in more than 300 languages.

Paid for by the Government of Ontario



Artist and instructor Patricia Haftar displays some of her tulip paintings. (Photo supplied)

# Watch for upcoming classes that include popular local artist

Continued from page 18

people are doing by walking around and looking at their work. You can tell right away if you need to talk more on composition, or the elements. Virtually, you don't have that option. You have to remember to pause, and have them show you their work individually, to see what is going on. It changes how you teach."

This virtual classroom setting has provided Haftar with the opportunity to improve her computer skills as she has been fine-tuning her virtual teaching skills.

"We were used to a different time. Now we have to be flexible in our thinking, and to improve computer skills. It takes time to get comfortable with new things."

The Pumphouse is wonderful because they host the online workshops, she says, so she doesn't have to worry about that part of the process.

Although this workshop has sold out, the Pumphouse has registration open for other virtual and in-person programs, including their art summer camps for children and youth.

Aimee Medina, marketing coordinator at the Pumphouse, says more classes are being added monthly, taught by Haftar and other talented instructors. Keep checking the [niagarapumphouse.ca](https://niagarapumphouse.ca) website for updates on upcoming programs — and Haftar is really in demand.

Virtual camps for kids will be held live via Zoom

on Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays. Students can expect a fun and engaging on-line learning experience, supported by group discussions and off-line activities. There will be a morning session that will air from 9 to 10 a.m., and are suitable for children ages six to eight. The afternoon sessions will be held from 1 to 2 p.m. and geared towards youth ages nine to 12. The full-day, in-studio camp will be held Monday to Friday, 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. Art projects will include drawing, painting, sculpture and more, using

quality art supplies (included in fee) and tools in the studio.

The Pumphouse also supports disadvantaged children and youth in the Niagara Region by providing the summer camps free of charge, thanks to Healing Arts For Kids and the generous support of the Rotary Club of Niagara-on-the-Lake.

For more information, visit [niagarapumphouse.ca](https://niagarapumphouse.ca). Or more information on Patricia Haftar and her work: [www.patriciahaftar.com](https://www.patriciahaftar.com)



Patricia Haftar works in acrylic and mixed media, and considers herself a colourist impressionist.