Dog owners happy to hear groomers open for business

Penny Coles
The Local

Once word was out Niagara-on-the-Lake dog groomers were back in business, Liz Chorney’s phone started to go crazy.

By Saturday, the local groomer had about 200 phone messages from clients who couldn’t wait to have their pets bathed, de-matted, nails trimmed, looking and feeling great.

It’s been two months since appointments had to be cancelled, says Chorney, and March, when groomers were classified non-essential and had to close their doors, is the busiest time of year for them.

“We call it ‘matted March,’ she says, when dog’s hair has grown out since their Christmas cut. Many pet owners prefer to leave their dogs’ fur longer during the coldest months, and by March, when the weather warms up, it creates wet and mucky situations for dogs who are beginning to spend more time outdoors. That’s when they most need a trip to their groomer the most, she says.

Since closure was imposed on groomers due to the COVID-19 pandemic, Chorney has received phone calls every day from clients desperate to have their dogs cleaned up.

It’s not just about pets having pretty hair styles or smelling good, she says, it’s about treating their skin conditions, trimming long nails that can curve so much they grow into paw pads, which she knew was happening, checking for ear infections, and feeling for “lumps and bumps” that could be cancer.

She points out that groomers see their clients anywhere from every three weeks to twice a year, more often than they see their veterinarians, and during their visit, she goes over them “from nose to tail” to ensure they’re healthy. “We

Golf club opens for 2020 season

Penny Coles
The Local

Never has the start of the Niagara-on-the-Lake Golf Club season been welcomed with as much enthusiasm as it was Saturday morning.

Anticipating many members would be hoping for the 8 a.m. tee time, the first of the 2020 season, John Wiens, club owner and operator, and golf pro Billy Simkin decided an auction would be a fair and worthwhile way to offer their members the opportunity to vie for that spot, and at the same time help out the local food bank.

Although they received several generous bids, the big surprise, says Wiens, was an email from a member who is in the U.S., offering $5,000. The member, who wanted to remain anonymous, wouldn’t be in NOTL Saturday morning to play, and instead wanted to give the tee time to members who fell into the category of club legends and ambassadors.

So Wiens reached out to Jim Brown and Doug Garrett, two long-standing senior members in the legends category. But both are dealing with health issues, and were still “in spring training,” says Wiens, and not quite ready to get out on the course.

He also contacted the men’s Ryder Cup captain, Harry Huizer, and ladies Solheim Cup captain Martha Cruikshank, who were both delighted to get the call and be the first to play the course Saturday, and readily accepted.

Newark Neighbours will receive $5,000, plus several donations from others who chose to give their bids to the local food bank.

Everyone who took part in the auction was able to play Saturday, says Simkin,

Martha Cruikshank opens the season at the NOTL Golf Club Saturday morning, with golfer Harry Huizer sharing the first tee time, with golf pro Billy Simkin and owner/operator John Wiens there to cheer them on. (Penny Coles)
Retailer reopens, with guidelines

Penny Coles The Local

Following Thursday’s announcement from the Province, all Town tennis and pickleball courts were permitted to reopen, beginning Tuesday, May 19. An announcement from the Town Friday asked the public “to remain patient as staff prepare the courts for use in the coming days. Those planning to play tennis or pickleball are asked to ensure preventive measures, as outlined by the Niagara Region public health department, are followed at all times.

“Our first priority is to protect the health and safety of our community,” said Lord Mayor Betty Diroso Tuesday. “We want to ensure there is a plan in place to provide a safe space for people to play. They will open as quickly as we can get them to that point.”

Tennis courts were expected to be open within the next couple of days, she said.

Town parks remain open for walks through purposes only and activities such as picnics in the park and use of park benches are not yet permitted. Use of soccer fields, baseball diamonds, basketball nets, playground structures, and all other equipment continued to be off limits, as of Tuesday.

Bylaw officers continue to assist with the education and enforcement of regulations and emergency orders are obeyed.

Local business owners which opened Tuesday, as permitted by the Province, must follow the guidelines provided by the Region and Province.

Although the provincial government is beginning to roll out their approach to Niagara-on-the-Lake is still under a state of emergency and we’re not yet ready to let down our guard,” said Diroso in the announcement. “We must continue to protect ourselves and others by staying home whenever possible, and if you do go out, it is essential that you are diligent in maintaining physical distance at all times.”

For the most accurate and up-to-date information about COVID-19 related measures being taken by Niagara-on-the-Lake, visit notllocal.com and COVID-19, or call 905-468-1366. Town staff will continue to assist and serve citizens online and over the phone between the hours of 8:30 a.m. and 4:30 p.m. Monday to Friday.

Planning for future, while struggling to be optimistic

Penny Coles The Local

While retailers are now able to open to the public, restaurateurs are not.

Some have been offering pick-up services, but for example, at Orzo, two Queen Street restaurateurs owned by local business man Bob Marrick chose not to.

“The really big draw for Queen Street, and the borders closed to Americans, we’re still going to have issues. Anyone thinking the rebound in going to be huge is dreaming,” says Earle.

People will still be nervous about shopping, and many have seen their personal finances affected, says Earle. That, with just two people allowed at a time in small stores, will continue to present challenges. “It’s a complex situation, and there are serious issues ahead. The complications are substantive.”

They have one landlord — they pay $30,000 a month for the Corks property, and own the property itself, where they operate Orza, a smaller space.

“As this has been devastating,” she says, and although there is some optimism with stores opening this week, “it’s not going to be okay for restaurants who expect to have to reduce the number of patrons by half, or even 30 per cent. She’s heard both figures, and thinks reopening on Night at Wpcent with a plan to increase that over time.

Maria says they need to make enough during what would be their busy season, to cover the expenses through the winter, but they won’t be able to accomplish that with a shortened season and reduced seating.

“We’ve been through 9/11, SARS, and H1N1, and we were okay, we pulled together and we came back. But this is nothing like anything we’ve been through before.”

There has been some discussion about closing Queen Street to traffic and allowing restaurateurs to offer outdoor patios, to expand the number of tables, and Maria and Bob have planned what that could look like.

“Not as it sounds,” she says, with servers having to cross sidewalks of people and planters to deliver food. She also unsure about how much would be helped, with restaurants licensed for a certain number of tables — she doesn’t see how they could increase that amount.

And at this point, she’s not that anxious to reopen, with concerns for both family and staff safety.

Maria says she’s been in touch with Lord Mayor Bet- ty Diroso, and has asked to be permitted to use space behind Orzo for a “pop-up” barbecue.

She was waiting for a response, hoping it would be positive, now that Queen Street is open for business. “I’m being optimistic. And waiting for the sun to shine — that makes all the difference on Queen Street, and we’re really hoping for the best for the other businesses and restaurants on the street.”

Kids can have fun while learning about fire safety

Penny Coles The Local

The Town’s Fire & Emergency Services Department is engaging children in fire safety education with kits from the Fire Marshall’s Public Fire Safety Council.

The fire safety kits are designed for children from preschool to Grade 3, and come complete with a colouring activity book, stickers, booklets, marks, home escape plan work sheets, a child-sized fire helmet and an assortment of toys.

Since fire prevention and public education officers are currently unable to connect with children in school environ-
ments at this time, these kits offer a new avenue to deliver important messaging in a fun and interactive way. Each kit contains a full fire safety message.

“During these challenging times, we want to ensure that people are still thinking about and practising fire safety,” says Deputy Fire Chief Jay Plato, of community risk reduction.

“We are pleased to be able to offer fire safety kits to children within our community.”

For the past several years, fire staff have conducted school presentations each spring, ensuring students receive important fire safety messages,” he added.

“Delivering these kits to local children will ensure they are still receiving the vital message while they wait to return to the classroom.”

To order the kit, contact Fire Prevention Officer, show the Fire Safety Kits that NIORT, Fire and Emergency Services will be delivering to children to engage them in fire safety from home. (Town of Niagara-on-the-Lake photo)
Continued from page 1

check their ears for infection, and go over every inch of their skin. We’re the first line of defense,” says Chorney. Groomers are often the ones to catch problems that require a visit to a vet, she adds. “We give them more than a hair cut.”

Chorney says it’s been very hard having to say no to clients, especially the older ones, and some with disabilities, who are physically unable to bathe and care for their pets themselves. “And some dogs are just difficult. They make great pets, but they’re difficult to groom.”

Some veterinarians were offering health and welfare grooming, and some were not, she adds. “I was devastated when I heard the Province had lumped us all in the same category of non-essential businesses,” she says.

The phone calls from clients who were equally devastated, she says, was hard on her. “Your heart is breaking, because you know what they’re going through.”

Groomers don’t go into business to make a lot of money, she added — they do it because they love caring for animals.

In recent weeks, she and other local businesses have been lobbying the municipality and MPP Wayne Gates to have groomers considered an essential business. Chorney says she and other local groomers couldn’t have been happier to hear the news from Lord Mayor Betty Dore on Wednesday, May 13, that animal grooming could be considered essential for urgent care necessary for an animal’s health and welfare, taking effect immediately.

That meant Chorney and others could look after pets with the most serious needs, such as skin problems, fur that required shaving due to matting, and nail trimming.

And then, the icing on the cake came the next day, when the Province said groomers could open for business, with restrictions on the kind of care they could provide, this Tuesday.

With safety guidelines to follow, it’s far from business as usual, but Chorney and others are grateful to get back to caring for their customers. She says she started going through her records last Wednesday, notifying the clients whose pets have the worst skin issues. She began seeing them Thursday, and then spent a good portion of the weekend returning the many phone calls she received since the welcome news from the Province.

She has been in contact with others who are members of groups for groomers, and there has been a lot of excitement and talk of preparing for the guidelines that come with reopening, she says.

One local groomer made it known she would not be comfortable with opening, for the safety of her and her family, with her business taking place in her home.

Everyone has to make their own decision, in every business, about what they are comfortable with, says Chorney, and she respects that, but the majority of groomers she has spoken to have been anxious to get back to work, and were behind the efforts to lobby politicians to have their practices open.

She has worked hard to ensure her Grooming Boutique in Virgil would be ready to open safely, she says. She had a two-compartment receiving area built for pets, with gates to each section.

Pet owners enter through the first gate and close it. Inside there is a second gate which they open, remove the collar and leash from their dog, let the dog through the second gate and close it, at which point the dog owner can leave safely; and the pet goes straight into the tub for a nice soapy bath. “It’s safer than the grocery store or pharmacy. There is zero contact,” she says.

There are other protocols in place for the safety of pet owners, pets and groomers, about picking up animals and payment, and Chorney says she has worn a mask before in her practice, because of pet hair and dander, but will now all the time, with a shield as well. “I quite like them. They keep the hair out of my eyes. I wish I had thought of that before this.”

She’s not at all nervous for her own safety, she says. “I think we are very well set up.”

Lisa, a long-time client of Chorney’s, was her first appointment Thursday morning. Chorney knew Lisa, mother’s dog Enzo, a cock-a-poo, would be in rough shape, and some were not, she adds. “I heard the Province had lumped us all in the same category of non-essential businesses, “ she says. “I wish I had thought of that before this.”

Lisa’s set up should be the gold standard for grooming safety. “It’s a great setup.”

And after his session with Chorney, Enzo, she says, “must feel like a million dollars.”

40th anniversary Terry Fox Run to be virtual

This year is the 40th anniversary of the Terry Fox Marathon of Hope, with a theme of One Day. Your Way.

Joan King, organizer of the Niagara-on-the-Lake run, says it will be a virtual event to be held Sunday, Sept. 20. Runners, walkers, and cyclists, including families and children, are being encouraged to run, walk or ride through their neighbour-ood, registering as individu- als, families or a virtual team, and to start their fundraising efforts now.

King has always planned events leading up to the fun to increase fundraising efforts locally, including a comedy evening with Joe Pillingari, a strong supporter of the Terry Fox run. As much as that will be missed, she’s working with him to come up with an alternative, she says.

She had been planning a small event at the Prince of Wales Hotel in July, as a way to recognize the 40th anniversary of the day Fox attended a celebra- tion there during his run.

That wouldn’t happen either, but she will be selling 40th anniversary T-shirts and look- ing for other ways to safely recognize the milestone.

On 10 a.m. Wednesday, May 20, Adidas launched a Terry Fox tribute collection that includes the same blue sneaker Fox wore through- out his attempt to run across Canada, a T-shirt, and other memorabilia, with 100 per cent of net proceeds going to the Terry Fox Foundation to support cancer research.

On Sept. 20, “anyone can join the run,” says King, who hopes the ability to run from home might attract more par- ticipants.

“Start your fundraising online — all the information is available. Cancer can’t wait for this to be over!”

For more information, visit https://terryfox.org/en/.

Introducing the walk-thru

Robin Ridesic of The Exchange Brewery isn’t comfortable opening to the public just yet, so instead, she’s converted the brewery’s front door to a “walk-thru” takeout window, “very COVID-friendly,” she says, with plexiglass covering most of the opening and a space just big enough to slide beer bottles through. (Photo supplied)

Notice of Approval of Tax & Rate By-law 2020 Tax Rates for General Levy & Special Area Levies

TAKE NOTICE that the Council of the Corporation of the Town of Niagara-on-the-Lake will consider a report for the 2020 Tax Rates for General Levy and Special Area Levies at the Council meeting on:

Monday, May 25, 2020
6:00 p.m.

Electronic Participation Meeting Only
livestream.com/notl

A copy of the report will be available on the Town website at www.notl.com on Thursday, May 21, 2020. Delegation requests to speak to the report must be arranged prior to the meeting date. Registrations to speak must be submitted to the Office of the Town Clerk in writing no later than 12:00 p.m. on May 22, 2020.

Final approval of the By-law will be considered at the May 25, 2020 Council Meeting.

For further information, please contact the Corporate Services Department at 905 468-3266.
Library set to open for drop-offs this week

When Ontario’s first stage of economic recovery was announced last week, Cathy Simpson was surprised to discover libraries were among the services that could reopen Tuesday, for pickup and delivery.

The head librarian and CEO of the Niagara-on-the-Lake Public Library says although she has been in regular communication with the Federation of Ontario Public Libraries and the Ontario Library Association, “we weren’t given a heads up that this was coming.”

Listening to the news last Thursday was the first she heard of a date, leaving her scrambling for supplies and a plan to ensure she can begin providing services safely for staff and library patrons.

Doors will remain closed to the public, but Simpson expected to be offering at least a drop-off for books by Wednesday. Delivery would likely be first offered for those who are shut-ins, possibly with a combination of volunteers and staff involved.

Simpson was unsure Tuesday about a date for offering curbside pickup of books, but says she is expecting it to be available in the next two weeks. She is picturing a service similar to what retailers are offering, but “there are a lot of logistics to work out first.”

She said Monday she was also requiring clarification from the municipal commander, and in turn communications advice to the team’s head office, Capt. Richard MacDougall.

The Snowbirds began an Operation Inspiration tour on the east coast about two weeks ago to cross Canada, saluting front-line health-care workers, first responders, and essential workers, and to boost the morale of Canadians struggling with the COVID-19 pandemic.

The Canadian Forces (CF) Snowbirds, 431 Air Demonstration Squadron members, are a familiar sight at Niagara District Airport, having performed an airshow here in September 2019.

While the public watches the teams signature nine- jet formation perform amazing displays of flying skill, on the ground is a large crew of personnel who make every flight possible.

In addition to pilots, there are technicians, mobile support operators, resource managers, engineers, logistics officer, and a public affairs officer, the latter role filled by Capt. Casey.

According to the Royal Canadian Air Force website, Casey is from Halifax, NS, and joined Canada’s Armed Forces in 2014 after several years working as a journalist. He is a public affairs officer for the Snowbird team. He provided communications advice to the team’s commander, and in turn informed the public of the roles, activities and work of the Snowbird team. While an airshow takes less than an hour to perform, the various members of the team work a long day to prepare, and then to review, every detail of the flight, with focus on safety.

While the iconic CT-114 Tutor jets were built in the 1960s as a training aircraft, they are constantly upgraded. The aircraft flown by the Snowbirds is slightly modified from the original training version to enhance performance during low-level aerobatic flying.

In a statement, Prime Minister Justin Trudeau said he is “deeply saddened,” and that his thoughts are with the families of Capt. Casey and Capt. MacDougall, and the entire Snowbirds team. He thanked emergency crews in Kamloops for responding quickly.

Randy Klaassen frequently writes articles of community interest for The Local, and is a volunteer with Civil Air Search and Rescue Association, Niagara, based at Niagara District Airport.

Crash sidelines Operation Inspiration

Randy Klaassen
Special to The Local

Hearts of Canadians were deeply saddened this past Sunday at the news of the crash of one of the Snowbird aircraft in Kamloops, BC, resulting in the death of Capt. Jenn Casey, and serious injuries to the pilot, Capt. Richard MacDougall.

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Local partnership delivers hot meals to seasonal workers

Penny Coles  
The Local

A group of locals has stepped up to the plate during the pandemic, working together to help the community. It started with John Hawley, owner of the small plaza that included The Garrison House restaurant on Niagara Stone Road.

He knew his tenant, which was doing limited takeout, would be struggling during this period of restaurant closures, and wanted to help. He came up with a way to not only provide some income for the restaurant, but deliver a service to another community of people who are struggling.

With the help of Jane Andres, who is the most in tune with the needs of migrant workers, Hawley, with his son Adam, came up with a plan to sponsor some meals for the workers.

With limited ability to get into town for groceries, a gift of ready-to-eat dinners seemed like a way to help. The Garrison House is ordering the supplies and making the meals, and the meals are delivered by the Hawleys, Andres, and in some cases, picked up by the farmer whose workers are on the receiving end.

Also helping with funding is Pen Financial, says Hawley, who explains the project.

“About a month ago Liz (his wife) and I were concerned with what was happening with the Garrison House. At that time, the government had overlooked the return of migrant workers, and were trying to fix the oversight. We thought it would be a great idea to deliver meals to as many as we could, and it would also help The Garrison House.”

He spoke to owners David Watt and Leigh Atherton, whom Hawley describes as “good friends, great tenants, and good members of the community,” who were excited about the idea and happy to work with them, he says.

Hawley set a goal of a total of 500 dinners, and Andres worked out the logistics of delivering them, knowing how best to reach the workers.

They decided they could deliver 50 meals two days a week, with some volunteers to help.

And when Hawley contacted Pen Financial, they came on board with a contribution toward the cost of the food.

The team has worked to make the project as effective as possible, and although Hawley realizes they’re not going to reach every worker, the ones they’ve connected with “are delighted. It worked out to be a way to help the workers and The Garrison House, and we’re happy to do it.”

It was an opportunity that presented itself, he adds, “and we wanted to jump on it. There was a lot of enthusiasm for it and it was nice to be able to give back. It’s a very difficult time for everybody right now, and it’s good to be able to come together to serve the community.”

And no doubt, he added, The Garrison House “is going overboard” with the meals they’re preparing, “because that’s who they are.”

When Idy Epp of Epp Farms heard a group of her workers were going to receive hot meals, she was impressed with the coordination of efforts that made it happen, and delighted to see the reaction of the men who received their meals.

“The men had come in from a day when it was really cold, and to get home and have a hot meal waiting for them meant a lot. The guys just loved it. The community is really pulling together to make a difference, and I want to acknowledge what they are doing. It’s one person helping another, and in this case, helping workers with these meals. In many ways, this is bringing people closer together, and it’s touching to see how they do it.”

The meal project has been very well organized and amazing to see, she says. “The Garrison House is a great team effort, she says, and it’s been great to work together to help the farming community.

Each meal includes roasted spiced chicken, rice and beans, and fried sweet potato, she says. “The workers are an important part of our community,” she says. “We’re happy to be able to provide a hot meal for them.”

The project has been a team effort, she says, and it’s been great to work together to help the farming community.

The full page is made up of a HALF PAGE AD and HALF PAGE ARTICLE

Article word count: 450-500
Ad size: 10.25”w x 7”h
Publication Date Subject to Availability
As reopening begins, let’s continue to protect each other

We’re still being urged to stay home, and only go out if it’s essential. At the same time, our non-essential businesses are allowed to open. It may be a good time to become familiar with those businesses, if we don’t feel comfortable with that, we can look at how to support businesses in other ways, such as shopping online. These are the businesses that support us in better times, by contributing to our fundraisers, sponsoring our minor sports, helping out every time they are asked, and they could use our help.

And as we all work our way through this, we want to say thank you to readers who continue to share your stories, and to businesses for their ongoing support of the community.

We’re all in this together, and we will come out of it together. Penny Coles The Local

Paid parking raises questions

I’ve watched the content of our three local newspapers for the past three editions to see if there would be any reporting on the coming changes to public parking at the Niagara Parks Commission (NPC) park at the Brock Memorial at Queenston Heights. One paper did have an interview with a Niagara Parks staff member, but no mention or information about the implementation of paid parking and the installation of parking pay stations on all the parking lots at the park.

I’ve been using the park as an exercise location for me and my dog since last Octo-

ber. I usually go once a day in the late afternoon. Traffic in the park has been very light, consistently under 10 cars in the lot during my visit at that time. The parking lots are not in good repair and there doesn’t appear to be any drainage capability to get standing water off the pavement. In my opinion, these parking lots need serious attention in the future. This is because it’s new experience for most of us, and we feel a little self-conscious. However, we’re the ones who are others that it’s one more way we’re willing to make a small sacrifice to help beat this virus, and to keep others safe.

We need to proceed with caution. And, as we have said before, with kindness, and pa-
tience, understanding we are still far from business as usual. Have any of you noticed an increased number of people wearing masks in public? As we’ve seen in the last two reopenings, it seems the message about wearing masks is becoming stronger. And it’s not about health, or safety or protecting ourselves, it’s about reducing the risk to others, and making them feel more comfortable about being out in public.

It’s not fun wearing a mask. It heats up quickly in that little bit of cotton, and in the short time that we have to wear it. It is slightly uncomfortable, probably because it’s a new experience for most of us, and we feel a little self-conscious. However, we’re the ones that are others that it’s one more way we’re willing to make a small sacrifice to help beat this virus, and to keep others safe.

Agreeing
to wear one is a decision, to be kind, especially to the seniors in our community who are nervous about be-
ting out. That decision could make a difference between continuing to see more openings unroll and a loosening of other guidelines, or continuing to go back to shuttering businesses and tighten-
ing restrictions again.

As will the library, although one when we’re out in public. And when we’ve all got our masks on — not the medical variety, which should be saved for front
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ing restrictions again.
Nature needs protection during virus pandemic

Bill Auchterlonie
Special to The Local
Looking Up With Bill

Looking Up With Bill continues to downsize, with the full article on the notllocal.com.
Friday, May 22: It’s a pow- erhouse end to the week, with the new Moon in Gemini at 1:30 p.m. In addition, Mercury conjuncts Venus and the Sun times Saturn — 120 degrees of separation, the strongest and most helpful aspect in astro- l ogy — making for the start of a four-week period where several fresh starts are mov- ing along, making life more clever, more beautiful, and more secure. Wow! Let’s get part two of 2020 up and flying like a bird. It was May 22, 1992 that Johnny Carson made his final appearance as host of The Tonight Show. He started his career as a magician doing card tricks for his family and friends.

The entire Looking Up With Bill is also on The NOTL Lo- cal Facebook page and also on my Podcast: www.lookingupwithbill.com

that Johnny Carson made his final appearance as host of The Tonight Show. He started his career as a magician doing card tricks for his family and friends.

People require education

So here we are after weeks of self-isolation, reading books, doing internet research and watching a plethora of episodes and movies while trying not to watch too much news. Just to make sure we don’t completely seize up by sitting down glued to the TV, we make it a point to go out and work the gardens, weather permitting. On May 10 (Mother’s Day), near dusk, we went out to look at the gardens and were greeted by a load of gar- bages strewn across Lakeshore Road for about 200 feet. Upon closer inspection, it included empty cans of Friskies cat food, chickpeas, coconut milk and a motor container. But that was only the beginning of the gar- bages trail . . . the rest of it was toilet paper, some with feces on it. This is the first time we have encountered this kind of li- beral disregard for public littering bylaws and just basic civility. As a concerned and law-abiding citizen, I called the Hamilton Printers Gazette, and within minutes a newspaper carrier was sent to clean up the mess. That same day, my wife observed a fellow decide to urinate near a driveway to urinate behind a tree. This weekend the peach trees were in full bloom. As in previous years, many visitors stop to take pictures. However, we are amazed year after year as to the number of people who have no regard for trespassing on private property and park- ing anywhere and everywhere. Saturday there were about 20 to 30 cars parked at our neigh- bour’s winery where their ser- vice entrance is located, and cars parked across the street on Lake- shore Road. The people in the cars parked in the service area of the closed winery were strolling through the orchards on both sides of Lakeshore Road, as well as behind our property. One fellow decided to urinate near a peach tree and another left a dirty diaper in the parking lot. Across the street in the peach orchards are signs posted, saying “Private Property, No Trespassing.” People pay no attention and walk through as if it were a public park. At one point, I saw a young lady break off a large branch of a peach tree. I yelled to her and she and her friends ran in to their white SUV . . . peach branch in hand. This was not the first time nor the first year I observed this. Our farmers work hard to bring fresh fruit to the market. Do you re- alize that if every visitor broke off a branch here and there that you are taking profits away from them? So, we leave this little gem with the elected officials both at the municipal and regional lev- els of government to come up with a solution for the next lock- down. Is there a way to educate the public as to what “private” and “public” property is? We cannot fathom going to someone else’s neighborhood and be doing the same way as we have some of the Prettiest Towns in Canada. Kathy Neufeld
NOTL
Performing Arts Centre presents online concerts

Mike Balsam Special to The Local
Self-isolation guidelines have brought opportunities for many of us to experience our favourite musicians and comedians in intimate performances from their own homes. But in the majority of these performances bring little or no in- come to musicians struggling under COVID-19 restrictions. Enter the FirstOntario Performing Arts Centre. Inspired by the National Arts Centre’s Canada Performs series, the PAC launched Niagara Performs in mid-April, promising free online concerts and events in mid-April. Colleen Smith, the new executive director of the centre, confirms all artists who take part in this series are indeed earning income. “That’s a priority for any performing arts centre right now, to ensure that artists are able to make a living as best as possible,” she says. “It’s not only funda- mental to that is to continue that connection to the people in the community that love them so much.”

Local comedian David Green, whose Garden City Comedy Festival takes the Niagara Performing Arts Centre this Thursday, May 21, says “it’s very nice to get paid for per- forming this week.”

Like many entertainers during this pandemic, Green has been missing the chance to perform in front of an appre- ciative audience.

“I’m usually out there live five or six nights a week,” he says. “It’s been hard for me to be able to perform in front of people, and to feel the rush I get from the live audience.”

But the funnyman adds that physical distancing guidelines have forced them to learn new skills. Since mid-March, he’s focused on streaming, web, YouTube videos, and reaching a whole new audience via the relatively new TikTok platform.

“That part of it has actual- ly been great,” Green says. “I have been adapting, and learn- ing new skills that I once thought I would continue to be useful for my comedy moving into post- COVID times.”

Green will be hosting Thursday’s Garden City Com-edy Festival, and performing a heavy set of his material.

He will be joined by Fiona O’Brien, whose material often draws on her experience as an Irish woman who emigrated to Canada in 2012. Also on the bill will be Thomas Calhan, winner of the Next Top Com- ic award at the 2016 Windsor Comedy Festival.

The Sunday afternoon Ni- agara Performs slot this week goes to the indefatigable St. Catharines singer/songwriter/producer/actor Joe Lapinski. Between recording, mix- ing and performing his own original music, Lapinski also finds the time to produce other music at his Ward 400 record- ing studio. As well, he continues to be an associate member of Suitcase in Pickle Theatre Com- pany and acts as Music Director for the In the Soils Arts Festival. He also teaches part time at Ni- agara College.

Local comedian David Green performs online for PAC con- cert series this Thursday, May 21. (Photo supplied)

Musician Joe Lapinski will be featured online Sunday after- noon. (Adam CK Voelk)

Rapper Fred the Godson taken by COVID-19

Mike Balsam Special to The Local
The COVID-19 crisis has hit a little too close to home for Adrian and Lucas Rezza, Niagara-on-the-Lake hip hop producers and artists.

This Friday, the duo known as 80 Empire releases a new single. Entitled Fit In, the track is a collaboration with Brook- lyn rapper Fred the Godson, Detroit native Lauruzza, Italian rapper Max Il Nano and former Dr. Dre associate Bishop Lamont, from Carson, California. It also features longtime NOTL resident Catherine Marie Len- ders, who has a gritty voice, “I got hit with this COVID s**t, oxygen mask on his face saying ‘you can’t breathe any more and you’re going to die’,” Lapinski says. “I needed some- thing, but I’m ready to go and make it even more poignant.”

The rapper from Detroit, Kamran Rashid Khan, known as Lauruzza, also happens to be a physician. An associate of rap- per Eminem and his D12 crew, Khan is currently working at a hospital in Las Vegas, and has been enlisted for the fight against the virus. Though he be- gan working on his contribution before the pandemic, his verse in Fit In reflects that struggle.

“Now I’m on the front lines fighting what could make a difference.”

Hearing families’ aches and cries, he says, “It’s really freaking me out. I’m really sweating on my self-survival.”

Lucas points out, it’s one of the countries that has been hard- est hit by the pandemic. Max Il Nano, a member of his hip hop crew Ban Jungle Broth- ers, with whom 80 Empire have collaborated in the past, delivers this verse in his native Bari Italian dialect.

“Tying it all together is the ethereal voice of the Dream- er Marie LeMansky. Adrian describes how they connected with her. “We were working with another artist, Beatrice Love, who has a gristy voice,” he explains. “She needed someone with a more angelic sound, and I was on Instagram, and I stumbled on a video of her singing. I thought she looked familiar, and I remembered hearing her at the Flip Plate.”

They contacted her, and brought her in for that project. She ended up being perfect for the Fit In hook, and even earned a songwriting credit for her contribution. With her vocal multi-tracked and treat- ed with just enough reverber to enhance the spiritual quality of her sound, it’s a perfect foil to the guttering of the other four contributors.

The brothers, whose most recent single, Como Natta, a tribute to their Italian family and roots, recently passed over a million streams on Sound- cloud, promise that a video will be put together soon.

Fit In hits Apple Music, iTunes, Deezer, Soundcloud, Spotify and all other digital platforms this Friday, May 22. All proceeds from the song will go to Fred the Godson’s family.
Local woman runs Cleveland Marathon — along the parkway

Penny Coles
The Local

Petra Halbgebauer was a little sore Monday morning, looking forward to some stretching, yoga, and time in the hot tub, but she was still on a high from completing one of her long-time dreams.

On Sunday, she ran a marathon. Her first, and probably her last.

Although she started at her Garrison Village home and ran 26.2 miles (42.195 kilometres) along the Niagara River Recreation Trail, past the Queenston Lewiston Bridge to the Niagara Gorge parking lot, and back home, she was participating in the virtual Cleveland Marathon, for which she had trained, and was scheduled to take place Sunday.

It wasn’t what she had imagined when she signed up for the event, had imagined when she place Sunday, and was scheduled to take just two more miles to keep her going.

"Physically, it wasn’t that hard. My body held up quite well," she says — pretty good for a first marathon just months from her 50th birthday.

She began running with a friend in 2008, and decided she wanted to do it again. Trying to fit it in around life, family and work can be difficult, and now she's done it, she doesn't feel she will need to do it again.

She used an app to record her run, supplied by the Cleveland Marathon, which shows she officially completed the virtual event, with her very own finish line, which she crossed in tears at the sight of a team of supporters waiting for her.

"It was great to feel the love and support, with everybody doing their physical distancing. It was very overwhelming!"

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"It was just two more miles to keep her going."
Mask trees raise $12,000 for food and shelter

Penny Coles
The Local

Mori Gardens is offering a special tree just for COVID-19—a tree of masks, for those who want one as they are entering the garden centre, or who just want to drop by to pick one up. It is one of the mask trees created by a local group launched in March, and organized by Fran Boot, Julia Buxton-Cox and Lorna Penman.

With a group of volunteers, they have designed, sewed and distributed more than 4,500 masks, originally making them for frontline workers, and also delivering 150 masks to migrant workers when they go into town.

They have since turned their attention to the growing need in the community, as more and more residents decide to wear masks in public. In preparation for the long weekend, they took one to Mori Gardens to place beside its front door for customers entering the garden centre, and another four remain scattered around town. About 1,200 have already been sold through the tree project, with 23 volunteers still working at keeping them stocked.

“I’m wearing a mask when I go out in public,” says Buxton-Cox, “because I know I could be asymptomatic and infecting others. I do it to protect other people.”

The messaging has changed since the beginning of the pandemic, but now masks are clearly recommended not to protect ourselves, but to reduce the risk of spreading the virus, says Buxton-Cox.

“We should be wearing a mask as an act of kindness to others in the community.”

“I go out in public, “ says Buxton-Cox, “because I know I could be asymptomatic, and infecting others. ”

Fran Boot, Julia Buxton-Cox and Mandy Cavasin of the United Way celebrated the mask tree at the Virgil garden centre. The mask project has already raised $12,000, which was presented to Cavasin, to provide food and shelter for those in need in Niagara. (Photo supplied)

Volunteer Lorna Penman, Toni Mori of Mori Gardens and Mandy Cavasin of the United Way celebrate the mask tree at the Virgil garden centre. The mask project has already raised $12,000, which was presented to Cavasin, to provide food and shelter for those in need in Niagara. (Photo supplied)

We are now OPEN TO THE PUBLIC, but ask you kindly to adhere to the rules posted to keep everyone safe and allow for daily design to continue.

We are open 8 a.m. to 4 p.m. Monday to Friday, and closed on weekends until further notice.

We are still offering Curbside pickup and Free Delivery for those who would prefer that service. Call orders to 905-329-2077 or text 905-329-2077.

The Niagara-on-the-Lake LOCAL
The trusted voice of our community.

To advertise your business in this section, contact Karen at: 905-641-5335
karen@notllocal.com

Home Delivery, parking lot pickup, online shopping… we are here for you.
Masks made from wine icon’s stylish shirts

Penny Coles
The Local

Kathy Dyck doesn’t consider herself much of a sewer. But she spends a part of most days of self-isolation making masks, knowing there is a need for them she can fill.

She knows she’s not the only one making masks, and others can sew faster and produce larger volumes. But when she heard about a need for masks from her daughter Julie, who recently opened Niagara Stone Road Pharmacy, she decided she could use some fabric she had on hand to help out a few people who were looking for them, including some local personal support workers and a farmer looking for washable masks for his workers.

After making about 100 masks, she told Julie she thought she was finished with that project—until Donald Ziraldo, one of Canada’s most important figures in the Canadian wine industry, and also one of the best-dressed, talked to Julie about a mask-making project called Shirt Off Your Back. It was launched by King & Bay, a Toronto custom clothing store where Ziraldo has had some of his signature stylish shirts made.

The clothing store organized volunteers to sew masks from some of their shirting material on-hand, and challenged others to do the same. With that in mind, and knowing Kathy was making masks, Ziraldo donated about 100 dress shirts to be recycled into masks. That donation gave Kathy “new life” to continue her sewing, says Julie. “This was the motivation she needed.”

Each shirt can make about eight masks. Ziraldo’s shirts tend to be plain colours with flashy collars and cuffs, and Kathy says she’s having fun designing masks so that the colourful bits dress up the plain fabrics. It takes a little longer, but makes it more interesting, she says.

Julie, who donates the masks to her pharmacy customers, says her mother misses out on the priceless reaction of the recipients when they see the masks—they are delighted with the fabrics. “The shirts have been inspirational to me,” says Kathy, who likes planning how she will use the collars and cuffs.

“We don’t especially like to wear masks, but I like to think of them as brightening the day, and making it a little easier to fulfill the obligation we feel to wear them,” Ziraldo is a distinguished gentleman, she says, who as well as being a very successful businessman in the wine industry, also wants to give back to his community, and is doing so by providing the material for masks.

And although her method is not as quick or efficient, Kathy likes the idea that she is recycling Ziraldo’s shirts into something useful, based on the pattern provided by a local group of volunteer mask-makers. “It’s fun, and it’s what keeps me doing it,” she says.

At the moment, she’s run out of elastic, but is hoping to receive some soon.

The mask movement, including local volunteers such as Fran Boot and Julia Buxton-Cox, says Kathy, “is organic. People needed them, and volunteers stepped up to help.” And the need doesn’t seem to be going away any time soon, she adds—with healthcare workers requiring the surgical and N95 masks that have been in short supply, hand-crafted fabric masks will continue to fill a need for those who want to do their part to reduce virus spread in the community.
Yellow Door to offer virtual theatre, dance classes

Penny Coles
The Local

Artistic director Andorlie Hillstrom says it was dev- astating to close the Yellow Door Theatre Project, can- celing classes that mean so much to her students. Since then, she's offered private musical theatre and dance classes on Zoom, and they've been very successful, she says.

Beginning June 2, Yellow Door Theatre Project will offer four consecutive virtu- al group classes, from June 2 to 25, in musical theatre and dance, giving students an op- portunity to connect with old friends and meet new friends.

“Our kids are starved for getting back to their lives before COVID. And we believe it’s going to take a long time to get back to what we consider normal,” says Hillstrom. Her students have been missing their classes, teachers, and most of all, their friends, and “although they’re not the same as being side by side in the studio space, virtual classes will provide a return to some normality.”

It will give students a chance to get dressed in their work-out clothes, find a spot in their home and get mov- ing, she says. “It’s not a perfect solution as being in the same space as their instructors, but it can give them a sense of ac- complishment while having fun.”

The theatre school is considered non-essential, and by nature involves activities with kids that include physical in- tegration, so Zoom classes will be very different, “but our instructors are ready to give it a go,” says Hillstrom. “We are trying to be creative about how to pursue the idea of virtu- al classes and see if students are interested.”

Moving forward, she says, when the theatre school is able to reopen, it could be with a permanent hybrid of virtual classes combined with small classes, “in what we consider a safe environment.”

The Zoom classes will explore singing, dancing and acting to excerpts from age-appropriate musicals, says Hillstrom. “Our profes- sional and experienced in- structors will support the par- ticipants through the creative process and develop their confidence and connection to one another.”

It will give them a 30-min- ute social experience, which they are so badly missing out on.

“We’ve been working on virtual materials, getting kids together a few at a time, and they’re so thrilled to see each other’s faces. They’re missing out on so much — their interaction that’s so import- ant to them. Theatre kids love each other so much, they love being together in the same space, and removing that from them has been so hard. These are some of the things I’ve been worrying about. It’s important to get them togeth- er safely.”

Yellow Door student Sha- keela Vahdat, 12 years old and in Grade 7, has had some first-hand experience with Zoom. After two auditions, she was chosen to play one of the children in Gypsy, which was part of the Shaw Festival 2020 season.

Once the theatre had to close, she joined other actors in Zoom rehearsals. “I was very sad we had to stop,” she says, but she is hoping it will be produced as part of next season.

I’m happy I got the chance to rehearse with the yellow actors, even if it was virtual. And I’m looking for- ward to taking some lessons (with Yellow Door) online.”

She loved Yellow Door classes, she says. “Everyone is so inclusive, not judgy at all. I learned a lot at Yellow Door. And the time I was at the Shaw was a great experience. That was so amazing.”

There will also be an adult tap class offered for ages 18 and up, a fun class for peo- ple who always wanted to try tap — and now they can try it in the comfort of their own homes.

The virtual classes are “a start to see if we can connect with folks,” she says, after dealing with the possibility of having to empty out the studio and close its doors for good, not knowing whether there would be a future for it.

Fortunately, thanks to landlord Lloyd Redkip, that didn’t happen. “He’s been great. We wouldn’t have been able to continue without his support and cooperation,” she says.

Online registration began May 15. Contact Hillstrom at andorlie.hillstrom@gmail.com for further details. Registration and info are also available at www.yellowdoortheatre.com.

Shakeela Vahdat (centre), who was chosen to play one of the kids’ parts in the Shaw Festival’s Gypsy, performed in Bremen Rock City, last fall’s Yellow Door Theatre Project. (Sarah Jamal Photography)
Club open to members only for first two weeks and for the next two weeks, the club will limit tee times to members only, to ensure they will all have access to the course.

The auction received attention from other clubs around the province, as well as a golf magazine, Simkin says, with other clubs deciding to follow the example set in NOTL. “It was a great result, making it easier for us and having a bit of fun with it, and also being able to do some good in the community,” says Simkin.

Wiens and Simkin were there to welcome the golfers, and with other staff, to ensure physical distancing and other safety precautions they had prepared for were in place.

Limiting golfing to members only also makes it easier to ensure protocols are followed, says Simkin — members have been made aware of the rules and will be respectful while on the course.

Tee times must be prebooked, and are 12 minutes apart, rather than the usual 10 minutes, with signs and directional markings to ensure safety for all. The first day saw about 180 golfers on the course, whereas a normal day at this time of year would be closer to about 220 to 230, says Simkin. There are no ball washers available, and the flag remains in the hole, with the ball sitting up high enough to be retrieved without touching the cup.

“The course looks beautiful, and the guys are all really well-organized. I’ve been coming to walk the course and it’s been making my mouth water, wanting to get out.” After their game, Huizer said, “Martha and I had a great time, and did make some pars, besides some good shots. It was fun and an honour to get to tee off first. Newark Neighbours and the food bank were the real winners today.”

Continued from page 1

Hey hot stuff! You’ve kept your humour and those legs and now you’ve finally got a reason to keep the paper.

Life is good ...

70TH HAPPY Sigi!

We love you and wish you many, many more!!

XO
Marty, Steve, Niki, Audrey, Steph, Josh, and all your grandkids

RETIEMENT NOTICE

Christine Smith

After lengthy consideration and the safety measures introduced due to COVID-19, it is with great sadness that I have decided to retire and close my salon effective immediately.

I have enjoyed being of service to you.

Thank you for your support, loyalty and friendship over the years.

It will make wonderful memories.

With deep and heartfelt gratitude, CJ

Thank You
Pickleball permitted, but club isn’t ready to open

Mike Balsom
Special to The Local

There will be some form of organized soccer in Niagara-on-the-Lake this summer, promises NOTL Soccer Club president Ted VandeKaay.

What form the sport takes, though, depends on a few factors.

Last Friday, the board of directors of the club announced they had made the difficult decision to cancel plans for “soccer as usual” for 2020.

The club has begun issuing refunds for all those who have already registered for the 2020 soccer season.

Says Vander Kaay, “we thank everyone for your understanding, and your ongoing support of soccer in NOTL. We trust that you are in this with us, as we make this difficult decision in an effort to protect our children as well as those deemed most vulnerable to COVID-19.”

He urges residents to continue to monitor the club’s website, notlococcer.ca, for new information in the coming weeks.

With the parks closed until at least July 1, and soccer usually ending the last Saturday in August, that would have left only seven weeks for house league play.

In addition, on May 11, the Ontario Soccer Association, an organization to which NOTL Soccer belongs, announced all sanctioned in-person soccer events and activities for the month of June were cancelled or postponed.

The board had previously made the difficult decision to postpone its equipment order this year. With uncertainty as to when restrictions will be lifted, the responsible decision was to cancel the season and make alternate plans.

This was “the kick-off festival for house league soccer, after moving the start from the Victoria Day weekend and the Virgil Stampede last year.

Soccer will offer activities, but not full season

In February, he asked council to designate the Virgil courts for community use, with controlled access through two gates with an entry code. While he wants the public to continue using the courts, the surface is being damaged from people using them for other activities, such as soccer, road hockey, skateboarding, and rollerblading, damaging the surface and the nets.

In Niagara-on-the-Lake, he doesn’t believe the damage is malicious, but rather “kids just being kids.” They don’t do damage on purpose.

Pickleball has become a fast-growing sport, both indoors and out, and the Virgil courts have caused “quite a stir in the region,” Hindle says, allowing pickleball to become a year-round sport locally.

At the May 11 committee of the whole, the phone number got his answer, with councillors recommending the changing of the name, and the addition of the gates.

There will also be signs with instructions on how to access the courts, with the work expected to be finished this spring.

Town staff will continue to be responsible for all repairs and maintenance of the courts, and will consult on any major capital investments from the NOTL, Pickleball Club.

The club is happy to take on the responsibility for looking after the phone number and changing the gate access code regularly, Hindle says.

The cost will be about $3,500, funded through the parks and recreation budgets, with a donation of $1,500 from the club.

The decision must be ratified at Monday’s council meeting.

But as anxious as players are to get back on the courts, says Hindle, the decision has been made to wait until the gates are installed before beginning club activities.

Until then, when they can control access to the courts, will know who is on them, can limit the number of players and ensure rules about disinfecting the equipment are followed, he says, he doesn’t feel comfortable having the club assume responsibility for its members, especially when most are seniors and at greater risk.

They can choose to play, but it is their decision and their responsibility to follow the guidelines of physical distancing.

Playing outdoors will make physical distancing possible, especially if they concentrate on playing singles rather than doubles, says Hindle.

The biggest issue to ensuring safety is avoiding picking up balls on the court, with players instead using their rackets or kicking them off the court with their feet. Players will likely initial them, and take them home to be sterilized, along with their paddles, he says.

The added bonus, which was not anticipated when the request was made in February, is that the phone calls for the access code will create a record of attendance on the court that can be tracked, which could prove useful during the pandemic if there are further outbreaks once the courts reopen.

“It makes absolute sense at this time. We’re not going to be a police force, but if we take attendance, it gives us some control and a record of who is using the court,” says Hindle.

“Pickleball is a very social sport. And as a group, members are also very socially responsible. When we reopen, if we ask members to keep to certain guidelines, such as physical distancing, to be safe, they will do that.”

Once the courts are open, the club plans to move forward with installing wind screens and a shaded area, at their own cost, says Hindle.

May 21, 2020
notlocal.com

Penny Coles
The Local

Pickleball courts were allowed to open Tuesday, but John Hindle, president of the Niagara-on-the-Lake club, wasn’t sure the outdoor Virgil courts would be ready.

The provincial announcement came Thursday that tennis and pickleball could resume, but the Town has indicated the courts might not all be ready by Tuesday, and is proceeding with caution.

“Our first priority is to protect the health and safety of our community,” Lord Mayor Betty Disero said Tuesday, but to ensure that there is a plan in place to provide a safe space for people to play.

“We want to ensure everyone is as safe as we can get them to that point. ”

And while some club members are anxious to get out and get some exercise, Hindle isn’t ready to begin club activities.

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Once the courts are open, the club plans to move forward with installing wind screens and a shaded area, at their own cost, says Hindle.

May 21, 2020
notlocal.com
Contact: classified@notllocal.com or call 905-641-5335
As per Doug Ford’s announcement Wednesday, May 6, we have opened our retail store.

There are a number of safety precautions we are taking that we would like to share with you.

- We are limiting the number of customers entering the store at a time. While waiting, we ask that you maintain physical distance from the person ahead and behind you. There are lines indicated on the sidewalk to help make this easy to maintain. There is a security officer at the door giving instructions before entering.
- At this time, there will be NO washroom access to the public.
- A reminder that there are no returns, or items from home accepted in the store at this time.
- Also, no outside food or drink allowed.
- There is one person per household allowed in the store at a time.
- Every cash station is being disinfected after every customer.
- Curbside pickup is allowed only on Hardware Dept. items. No lumber yard items will be available for phone-in curbside pickup. You can come into the store to order lumber and pickup or delivery service of these items if needed. (Delivery charge applicable on lumber items.)
- No cash will be accepted at this time. Debit, Visa or M/C only.
- We are enforcing 6’ physical distancing rules inside the store, as well as one way aisle shopping. We ask that there be no browsing, or touching of items that you are not purchasing. If you need assistance in finding an item, one of our knowledgeable staff members will be happy to help you.

We want to thank you, our loyal customers for working together with us during this very challenging time. We are doing our very best to ensure fast, friendly, efficient and safe service to you.

We appreciate your patience and co-operation, and are looking forward to seeing you again!

Hours are as follows:
Mon-Fri 7:30 a.m. - 6 p.m., Sat 8 a.m.-5 p.m., Sun CLOSED

Kevin and Marcia Penner and staff