Jane Andres
Special to The Local

It was almost 10 years ago, but the memory of the visit remains clear.

I remember sitting at a table with Peter, whose daughter had passed away hours earlier in Jamaica, the day before her 21st birthday. He had missed her call when she tried to phone him earlier that day to say goodbye, knowing she would soon be a place of serene reflection.

It’s Owen Bjorgan’s latest project, a way for his business, Owen’s Hiking and Adventures, to give back to the community and to the people who have supported him and made him who he is today.

Fittingly, each of the 31 trees will be planted in memory of a loved one lost. Friends, family members, long-time Red Roof Retreat clients, and board members, each honored by these lasting tributes to their lives.

Bjorgan began the project last week, with the planting of a black walnut tree in memory of his long-time friend Dan Herzog. His high school classmate and roommate at the University of Guelph passed away in October, 2020 at only 28 years old.

“He was very daring, very original, very funny, and highly respected in the community. I intentionally wanted to get the biggest, most significant tree in the ground right away for Dan. It’s pretty symbolic,” Bjorgan says.

Below the newly-planted tree sits a longboard, a method of travel and entertainment over which Owen and Dan formed a bond, cementing their friendship. “He helped me pick it out when he first opened The Board Store (in St. Catharines, an arm of his family’s St. Paul Street business),” Bjorgan points out. “He and I would shred around on that for many hours over the years, up and down the escarpment.”

Dan’s parents, Rob and Gisela, came out to the grove last week for the planting, tears streaming down their cheeks.

“I remember sitting at a table with Peter, whose daughter had passed away hours earlier in Jamaica, the day before her 21st birthday. He had missed her call when she tried to phone him earlier that day to say goodbye, knowing she only had a few hours to live.

“Paying for her medication and hospital treatment had required incredible sacrifice, and even going without meals. Having access to an internet-based messaging app such as WhatsApp could have allowed him the opportunity to see her face and hear her voice one last time.

“There are about 2,000 Caribbean and Mexican farm workers in Niagara-on-the-Lake over the course of a season. These are not just statistics, but real lives that have been severely impacted due to lack of communication with loved ones, especially during times of crisis. Although more employers are recognizing the necessity of internet access, there are still many local farms where employees have no alternative but to pay for expensive data plans to connect with family.

“Basic plans, starting at $50 per month, allow them to have limited calls with their families back home via WhatsApp, but they cannot watch videos of important events, such as their child’s first steps, or a family member’s funeral.

“The necessity of communicating with loved ones during the four months of hurricane season, or more recently the volcanic eruption on St. Vincent, creates unimaginable anxiety. To not know if your children are safe, or if your home has survived while you work long hours in the field, is unbearable. Especially during the pandemic, children need to be able to talk with their parents at night. We all deserve to be connected with our loved ones.

“Dr. Janet McLaughlin is an associate professor of health studies and a research associate with the International Migration Research Centre at Wilfrid Laurier University. She has been conducting research with migrant agricultural workers in Ontario, including Niagara, for the past 15 years.

“Throughout this time, I have learned about how socially isolated workers are, and how desperately they miss their families. Family separation also has major detrimental impacts on migrant workers’ children and spouses at home in countries like Mexico and Jamaica,” she says.

McLaughlin affirms that access to internet, enabling regular family contact, has great potential to help ease some of the loneliness and family strain migrant workers experience.

“Pre-flight COVID forms, travel documents that need to be submitted in order to board the flight home, and language barriers add to the challenge of connecting workers with their families.”

Continued on page 3

Continued on page 4

Tree planting memorial also good for environment

Mike Balsom
Special to The Local

Planted about 250 metres behind the barn at Red Roof Retreat, a grove of 31 trees, all species native to Southern Ontario, will soon be a place of serene reflection.

It’s Owen Bjorgan’s latest project, a way for his business, Owen’s Hiking and Adventures, to give back to the community and to the people who have shaped him and made him who he is today.

Fittingly, each of the 31 trees will be planted in memory of a loved one lost. Friends, family members, long-time Red Roof Retreat clients, and board members, each honored by these lasting tributes to their lives.

Bjorgan began the project last week, with the planting of a black walnut tree in memory of his long-time friend Dan Herzog. His high school classmate and roommate at the University of Guelph passed away in October, 2020 at only 28 years old.

“Dan was a little guy, with an enormous personality,” says Bjorgan. “He was very daring, very original, very funny, and highly respected in the community. I intentionally wanted to get the biggest, most significant tree in the ground right away for Dan. It’s pretty symbolic.”

Below the newly-planted tree sits a longboard, a method of travel and entertainment over which Owen and Dan formed a bond, cementing their friendship. ”He helped me pick it out when he first opened The Board Store (in St. Catharines, an arm of his family’s St. Paul Street business),” Bjorgan points out. “He and I would shred around on that for many hours over the years, up and down the escarpment.”

Dan’s parents, Rob and Gisela, came out to the grove last week for the planting, tears streaming down their cheeks.

New tennis courts at Memorial Park

NOTL Tennis Club president Hugh Dow takes the first serve on the new tennis courts at Memorial Park Tuesday, as Kevin Turcotte, town manager of parks and recreation, looks on. Dow says the opening of the court is the culmination of a 10-year dream for the club. The $125,000 project was included in the 2020 budget, with $40,000 of the total funded by donations, and the other $85,000 through reserve funds. (Mike Balsom)
In comparison with other countries, Canadians are doing a good job of embracing vacci-

nations as a way out of the pan-
demic, says Dr. Mustafa Hirji. “I share the same perspec-
tive as my parents. There’s a

sense of doing something right
during the lockdown. There is
no hesitancy in my family.”

Mateo Gruoso Roman, 16, and his brother Marco Gru-
osso, 14, both have appointments for vaccinations. “It was an extraordinary

feeling, that it was the most im-
portant thing I’ll done in a long
time. It was emotional, and a
huge relief.”

He remembers how re-

tweeted he felt to have the first
dose. “It’s a step in the right direc-
tion for all of us.”

Mateo says he considers be-
ing vaccinated as a way to help
himself and those around him,
as well as being part of the solu-
tion, paving the way out of the
pandemic and back to a more

normal situation.

His grandparents and par-
ents also have their first dose,
so having everyone vaccinated
in the family seems the right
thing to do, he says.

“I share the same perspec-
tive as my parents. There’s a
sense of doing something right
during the lockdown. There is
no hesitancy in my family.”

A Grade 10 student at Saint
Paul Catholic School in Niaga-

ra Falls, he is also looking for-
toward the day when in-per-
son classes resume. He says
several of his friends have had
discussions about vaccines, and
while his closest friend also has
his appointment, “I have other
friends who say they’ll wait and
see how this pans out. I don’t see
that waiting will change anything. But other people
have a different perspective.”

He’s a topic his friends are
talking about, now that vacci-
nations are available for young-
er age groups, he says. “It’s on
everybody’s mind.”

He and his friends un-
derstand “nothing is going to
change in an instant,” he adds
but as someone who plays
hockey and soccer, Mateo is
hoping team sports will be able
to resume at some point this
summer. Having teens vacci-
nated is a step in the right di-
rection, and any opening up of
activities “will be a bonus.”

Jarvi Ganatra, chair of the
Lord Mayor’s Youth Advisory
Committee, was on her phone
at 8 a.m. the day vaccination
appointments opened up for
her age group. About 20 min-
utes later, she had an appoint-
ment booked, and will head
to the MacBain Community
Centre in Niagara Falls to get
her first dose June 4.

Is she excited? Not to have
her arm jabbed — needles ter-
ify her, she says.

But a N. M. Myer Second-
ary School student is happy, af-

ter what seems like a long wait,
to finally have the opportunity
for a vaccination.

It was never a discussion
with her family, or an issue to
discuss — as soon as it became
available, her parents agreed
she be getting it, she says.

Ganatra will be moving into
student housing at the
University of Waterloo in Sep-
tember, for a hybrid mode of
education, and she’s looking
forward to both online and
in-person classes.

“I’ve decided it will be best
to be there, at university, and
it will definitely be better to be
vaccinated,” she says.

She say although she’s seen
hesitancy to be vaccinated from
those her age on social media,
her friends are all excited to get
their first dose, and have their
appointments booked.

“Everyone I talk to is really
anxious to get it. I feel privi-
leged to be able to vaccinate.

Continued on page 4
Osborne Bjorgan plants a black walnut for his longboarding friend, mentioned in many articles in Mile Creek’s tributaries. As I’ve habitat corridor of one of Four here, this will actually add to the give back to the community aspect, “he says, “but also, gives the nature of people.”

Grows, it’s symbology, it represents the nature of people.

Bjorgan, a regular contributor to The Local, explains the multi-faceted reasoning behind his contribution to the grounds at Red Roof.

“There is the memorial tree aspect,” he says, “but also, given the amount of trees that my business is able to donate and give back to the community here, this will actually add to the habitat corridor of one of Four Mile Creek’s tributaries. As I’ve mentioned in many articles in The Local, our forest coverage in Niagara-on-the-Lake is around 10 per cent or less, and decreasing as we speak. So the time is today to plant a tree. What better way to give back to nature.”

Eight different species are being planted in the area, most in a clearing through which Red Roof clients often enjoy horse and buggy rides. The path is wheelchair accessible, making it possible for all of those clients to fully experience nature. Bjorgan also explains the importance of the trees in continuing the habitat corridor, which he says is crucial for biodiversity, canopy coverage and the water quality of Four Mile Creek.

Another facet to the project, of course, is the mother-son connection. Owen is currently staying at the property, taking care of it as Red Roof Retreat, begun by his mother Steffanie 20 years ago, has been shut down for over 14 months.

Bjorgan’s girlfriend Kirstyn, who shares his love of nature, is in awe of the way Owen and Steffanie both contribute to the betterment of their community: “It’s a beautiful thing, having a business of 20 to 25 years, and a business of five years, putting that same vibe out there that they want to do more for the environment,” says Smith. “I’m happy to be a part of it. Everybody should be able to come together to see the beauty of what they can do for others, instead of just themselves.

“Owen has been such a big part of this property,” Steffanie adds. “We had the (Niagara Peninsula) Conservation Authority come here in 2010 and we rejigged a few things to establish the wetlands. He’s been involved in that. With his background, I trust him completely. He gets super-pumped about this stuff! COVID has given the Bjorgans time to finally get to this project, which was first conceptualized about four years ago. A major part of the memorial aspect is a chance to remember Red Roof clients who are no longer with us.

“All of our clients are special,” says Steffanie, “but there are some that came at a certain time when we were changing and growing, and their families were very involved. When we reached out to some of the families, everybody responded instantly.”

Steffanie mentions Sam Austin, a client from day one, who died unexpectedly about seven years ago.

“He was a lifer, such a big piece here,” she says. “He was a big piece of the playground, his tree is going to go near the playground. The family is all on board for that, and they’ll be coming out to do their tree.”

Jennifer Barclay was the first client in their day program. We opened up the program with her in mind,” explains Steffanie. “We had to give her mom and sister a break. She was non-verbal, and tiny, and she had this power to find a way to serve her when no one else could. She was one of my most magnificent clients in terms of energy. Jenny and Sam were two iconic figures who helped steer us where we were going.”

Jennifer passed away in January, 2011. Her mother and sister Gillian still visit Red Roof, “I’m happy to be a part of it,” says Jennifer’s sister Gillian. “When she turned 18, there was no programming for her. Steffanie and my mom and a lot of other people had to figure out what to do when our children became adults. Red Roof gave me my sister a place to go.”

Gillian says the options facing her sister included at home care, day programs at nursing homes, or being admitted to a long-term care facility. None of those options fit Jennifer’s personality.

“My sister was a typical teenager, who liked to party, hang out, watch shows, and listen to music. She didn’t want to be cooped up. So Red Roof gave her that. It was amazing. With the horses out on the ranch, she was able to do a lot of animal therapy. It was huge for her to have something to do every day. And the respite program on the weekends gave us (Gillian and her mother) time to recharge.”

She noticed an amazing change in Jennifer from the beginning of her time with Red Roof. Her mood was improved, she became more aware, more vibrant, a part of a community.

This year being the 10-year milestone of Jennifer’s passing, the Barcalds welcomed the chance to remember her with the tree planting.

When I found Owen was getting all of these trees, I thought that was fantastic,” Gil- lian says. “But then when he offered to plant a tree in honour of my sister, that filled my heart with so much joy. It came just before Mother’s Day, and really made my month. Having a tree that is going to be a part of something that is so long-lasting, and putting my sister’s name on one of your trees, is amazing.”

With the Barcalds and the

Owen Bjorgan gets a hand from his mother Steffanie Bjorgan (left), executive director of Red Roof Retreat, and Kirstyn Smith.
There are still workers with no internet access

Continued from page 1

important vaccination or health information can only be found online. There are many systemic barriers preventing farm workers from accessing this necessary form of communication. In recent years, public libraries in some rural areas have been responding to this urgent need by loaning mobile WiFi hotspots out for as long as six months, depending on the services required. Kate, an engaged worker in the Kitchener, Guelph, Meaford and Bradford loan out as many as 82 WiFi hotspots per library, which are often funded by the local Rotary or the Ontario Libraries Capacity Fund.

For the past three years, there have only been two hotspots available to loan to bunk house locations. It has been difficult to have to keep turning down requests, especially during the COVID crisis. In addition, there are a few blackout pockets in NOTL where farm workers cannot make a phone call, even with a Canadian number. The WiFi hotspot has helped ensure a reliable connection with their families.

On Tuesday the NOTL Rotary Club presented a cheque for $4,275 to cover the costs of the hardware for three new WiFi hotspots, and the two-year contract for each. There is presently a waiting list for bunkhouse locations where there is no WiFi available, and cell phone connections are an ongoing problem. It costs the NOTL Library about $100 to purchase the WiFi hotspot hardware, and $1,200 for a two-year contract. That works out to about $50 per month, serving up to 15 devices at a time, a substantial saving over an individual contract for the same amount.

On one of our trips to Jamaica, her friend Goodwin, her daughter Leah, and I visited Peter and his wife. We walked together down the hut, the path behind their rural home to their daughter’s gravestones overlooking the valley, the air sweet with the scent of the soft needled pines in the surrounding forest. We reminisced about the painful circumstances under which we met, yet grateful for the treasured friendship which grew out of that initial visit. The conversations we shared also planted seeds of new ideas. Providing reliable internet service is one example of how we can support each other in new and positive ways as a community.

Thanks to the NOTL Rotary and the NOTL Public Library, internet communication that helps to strengthen family ties will now be possible for some of our essential neighbours on the farms.
Challenge question: Who can name five modern Canadian visual artists?

Niagara-on-the-Lake has an abundance of exceptionally talented artists. To promote their work, Royal LePage real estate salesperson Peter Domarchuk provides original artwork from Niagara artists, for people who buy and sell homes through him. He says he is inspired by iconic New York City artist Guy Stanley Philoche’s effort to support and popularize modern visual artists in New York City. Peter is also influenced by Canadian actor Chief Dan George, who stated that “man must be surrounded by the beautiful if his soul is to grow.” Peter believes that owning pieces of original art is the next big thing, and that artwork continually surrounds the owners in their home, through its presentation and narrative, as an item of intrigue and enrichment.

Fifteen years’ experience in Niagara-on-the-Lake with Royal LePage NRC, Niagara’s #1 real estate brokerage, has provided Peter with a long list of positive testimonials, and it has taught him that people can be anxious about the sale or purchase of their home. Peter’s approach is to repurpose sales into service to others, by making the seller’s and the buyer’s experience better than they could imagine. “Peter’s knowledge of the housing market in Niagara-on-the-Lake and his dedicated actions to make our plans come together, made our purchase of a designated historic home virtually stress free. I would highly recommend Peter Domarchuk to anyone who expects and appreciates excellent service.” — Ken and Cindy, Port Credit

Royal LePage NRC Realty is the #1 Brokerage in Niagara with over 4400 transactions in 2020 including residential resale, new home builds, commercial, investment, luxury and farm properties. Our size, locations, and sales expertise help

Please use these websites to find excellent original Niagara visual art options for your home.

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Enter a free artwork draw held on July 1st 2021, featuring an original painting by Niagara-on-the-Lake visual artist and award winning writer SHARON FRAYNE.

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To enter this free draw, like, comment, and share on my Instagram, or Facebook pages.

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“Let me show you how I can put more money in your pocket while I enrich your home sales experience,” says Peter. Peter Domarchuk, Royal LePage NRC, 125 Queen Street, Niagara-on-the-Lake 905-468-4214

Real Estate is not a gamble it is an investment
Turning sales into service

The art of giving back: NOTL real estate salesperson’s novel approach promotes local artists

Niagara-on-the-Lake artist Sharon Frayne.
Many parents, educators anxious to get kids back to school

As we head toward the end of the school year, it seems we may have given up on schools reopening. What would be the point for such a short time? Science table representatives said there would be a risk to opening schools in June, but that it could be manageable.

Dr. David Williams, Ontario’s chief medical officer of health, said last week he would like to see schools open, but it would depend on the number of new daily cases, and the vaccination rates of teachers and school staff, among other factors.

Schools across Ontario have been closed to in-person learning since mid-April, and if they don’t open for a short time before the end of this school year, it could be a long time before kids get to experience in-class learning again.

It was said often, earlier during the current lockdown, by health officials and politicians, that getting kids back to school was a priority.

That seems to no longer be the case by the decision-makers, but children’s mental health experts still think it’s important, and many parents and educators have said they would like to see it happen, even if for a few weeks.

It is easy to see how it would be good for the mental health of some kids to get them out of the house, with their friends, doing something that might seem normal to them.

It could not be better, and break parents need before facing a summer of trying to keep kids safe, and preoccupied.

In a public letter to Doug Ford, children’s health experts said recently, “Schools play an essential part in the recovery process. In particular, schools are a routine and structured environment, and are a place where social and emotional learning is prioritized.”

The benefits of even a few weeks in a classroom, it added, “are enormous.”

Bill Auchterlonie Special to The Local

Welcome to Auchterlonie on Astrology, a look at the week of May 27 through June 2, including Mercury turning retrograde on May 29 and the Sun connecting with the north node of Venus on May 31.

On my podcast, you can also find the full week astrology personal birth chart including a forecast for the year ahead. The podcast is at www.auchterlo- nie.com.

Now, the week ahead:

Thursday, May 27: It prom- ises to be a powerful, proud, and challenging day. Venus and the Moon are at three corners of a square in the sky, challenging one another, and adding a lot of tension to the week. There might be some overthinking, but I see it as a time to remember the job isn’t finished until all are safe from COVID, everywhere.

Friday

Penny Coles The Local

We relied on other countries for our supply, and then had to hand our hands in the air when it didn’t come through as promised.

However, once vaccines began to arrive in the country, and were distributed to the provinces and finally regional health depart- ments, progress moved quickly. It wasn’t perfect, with hold- ups as a result mainly of tech- nical glitches, but Canadians seemed as a whole to not only accept vaccinations but to jump at booking appointments as soon as possible.

And now, our continued efforts to do what seems right, not only for ourselves and our loved ones, but also for the health of all around us, are making us feel more secure in comparison to many other countries.

Of course there are nay-say- ers, there are conspiracy theor- ists, and there are those who are simply wanting to see if the scientific advice can be trusted, because we all know there have been changes to digest that have been made in a couple of ways. First, to be more in touch with imagination and dreams while being less flirty and more factual.

But it was 21 years ago, day to day, in 2002, that Montreal Canadiens right winger, Maurice Richard, took his last breath. Until Wayne Gretzky came along, the Rocket was the greatest player ever in the NHL.

He died on December 11, 1995, in New York City, from heart failure, the result of a lifetime of living with a heart condition. "He had a great career on the ice," said Hall of Famer Gordie Howe, who knew him. "But when it was over... when it was time to hang it up, it was a great loss for all of us."
The tulips on Queen Street are always spectacular. (Photo submitted)

So, what should you do with all those tulips after they bloom? To keep tulips blooming year after year, they need to be put to bed properly.

Allowing the spent blooms to remain on tulips forces them to form seed heads. And although it may sound like a good thing, the process robs precious energy from the bulbs below. How you put tulips to bed can greatly affect the quality, size, and colour of their blooms the following year, by taking the energy they need to preserve and use the following year to produce more big, bright and beautiful blooms. Likewise, it can be tempting to simply cut all of your tulips down to the ground once they bloom. Unfortunately, this too will have a negative impact on the following year’s blooms.

The stems and foliage of tulips provide power back to the bulbs as they die off. And cutting them off too early robs the bulbs of the energy they need for the next growing season.

So, what is the best way to care for your tulip bulbs after they begin to fade? The answer lies in a simple, two-step process. As the bloom begins to fade, it is important to remove only the flower head, and not the foliage. Simply clip the fading blooms off right below the base of the flower. This keeps the tulip from creating a seed head but allows the foliage and stems to remain.

After a week or two, the remaining foliage will die back and slowly turn a yelllowish brown color. As it does, it is then safe to cut the tulips back completely to the ground. This gives the bulbs plenty of time to absorb the nutrients back from the decaying foliage, and gets the bulbs ready for next year’s blooms.

The same process is used for daffodils.

This is the first of a 10-week gardening column series, organized by the Niagara on-the-Lake Communities in Bloom Committee. Niagra-on-the-Lake Communities in Bloom Committee has launched the first virtual Garden of the Week Contest. NOTL residents can submit photos of their gardens or garden features for consideration in any of the 10 categories. Submissions will be accepted over a 10-week period, following which the Communities in Bloom Committee will narrow down each category to the top three submissions, rather than a winning Garden being announced every week. The public will be invited to vote on the shortlisted selections to determine the final winner in each category. For more information visit www.jointheconversationnotl.org/garden.

What to do after the tulips, daffodils have bloomed

Cheryl Morris
Special to The Local

When I first saw the call for volunteers posted by Niagara Region Public Health, in March, my first thought was “I want to do that!” It was an automatic reaction, that, surprisingly, did not involve any fear in me of contracting COVID-19 from exposure to countless strangers. I suppose some people might have felt some trepidation, but for me this seemed to be a way I could make a personal contribution to help get back to “normal-ity.” It was time to get back to normal.

I moved to Niagara-on-the-Lake in 2012, and since then I have volunteered for several organizations in town. The Shaw Guild, Niagara Pumphouse Arts Centre, Heritage Trail Committee and occasionally for the Niagara Historical Museum and Music Niagara. I was also hired by the town twice for the War of 1812 Bicentennial Committee, and then for the Canada 150 Committee. The latter was an amazing experience, hard work for sure, but it helped me to make lasting connections and friendships with so many people and organizations here.

Volunteering had become part of my life, so I sent in my application to Niagara Region Public Health and waited. It seemed they were overwhelmed with applications and cut them off right after I applied. I re-ceived notification that I was being considered, but would have to go through some online training before being accepted.

The online training took six hours over two days (there was a deadline!). But it paid off, as I was confirmed as a volunteer.

Each shift is six hours long, with a half-hour break, and volunteers have to commit to one or two days a week until September. No problem for me, as most of my other volunteer activities had ceased. I signed up for my first shift in March, but even before that happened, I received a call on a Saturday evening that if I could get to the MacBain Centre in Niagara Falls within half an hour, I could get vaccinated. I was elated, as they were offering all this to the volunteers — what a great perk!

The vaccination clinics were scattered all over Niagara Region, from Port Colborne to West Lincoln, to Pelham to Fort Erie, etc., and I wanted to try to get to as many as possible. Each handles varying numbers of people, depending on the size of the facility, from 500 to 2200-plus. Staff and volunteers are recognized by the colour of their T-shirt: bright blue for administrators, dark blue for nurses and grey for vol-
unters. Name badges, medical masks and safety goggles or face shields are mandatory.

The tasks performed by a volunteer are all related to helping the traffic flow of people moving from one point to another — none of them glamorous, and all of them requiring standing for six hours. Some of the tasks are getting people and giving them a medical mask and hand sanitizer, directing people to a check-in desk or a vaccination table, sanitizing chairs in the recovery area where people have to sit for 15 minutes after receiving a shot, and showing people where to exit.

People coming in are very impressed by the efficiency and the positive atmosphere in the clinic. In most cases, the total time that someone spends from entry to exit is less than 30 minutes, which is pretty remarkable. The demographic has changed dramatically since the clinics began, from 75-plus to now 12-plus. One of the most gratifying aspects is seeing people who come in a bit nervous (or very nervous), and then depart, relieved and happy. Although some people might experience some pain or a mild reaction from the vaccine, the care and personal attention from the nurses is extraordinary and reassuring. I remember someone who left a rose on a table. Very touching.

Cheryl Morris was at her station at the MacBain Community Centre clinic in Niagara Falls Monday. (Photo submitted)

On Monday I was volunteering at the MacBain Cen-
tre. The clinic expected only about 500 people, which is quite small for this facility. The demographic was Indigenous, and most people were coming in for their second shot, so many were relaxed and smiling (you can tell, even through the mask). There was a group from the Niagara Native Regional Centre (https://nrnc.ca/), who were there to act as a calming force for anyone who felt nerv-
ous, but really were there to reconnect with the community, who hadn’t been able to meet in person for a year.

I am so happy to be work-
ing as a volunteer at the clinics. For me, it has brought only positive experiences and the gratification that I have been able to help the immunization efforts needed to bring back the world we’ve missed: gatherings with friends and family, travel, the Shaw Festival, tourists, dinn-
ing out, and just being sponta-
neous when we go shopping. We will get there soon, with just a little more patience, con-
sideration and kindness.

Local Voices is an oppor-
tunity for residents to speak out, in what we plan to make a regular feature in The Local. If anyone is interested in sub-
mitting a column or essay email penny@notllocal.com.

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.

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.
Donald Ziraldo announced this month that his Ziraldo Estate icewine will be produced at Inniskillin. "Two years ago the Teachers Pension Fund bought the Canadian operations of Constellation (including Inniskillin)," he explains. (Arterra President) Jay Wright came to me and said Donald, well like do to a video and revitaliza that brand. I gave him two conditions. One, he had to fix the winery up. And then I said I would like to move my production from Reif to Inniskillin."

Though the man who first had the vision to plant vinifera grapes in the region in 1974 was happy with his agreement with Klaus Reif, he admits there was often much confusion when visitors to Reif Estate came across bottles marked with the distinctive Ziraldo art deco labels.

The move to where it all started will alleviate that confusion. "Ziraldo is pleased as punch to be working with Arterra’s head winemaker Marco Piccol, who hails from the same Friuli region of Italy as Ziraldo’s parents. Piccol arrived in Niagara in the early 2000s as a student from Italy’s University of Udine. Ziraldo connected with him via his role with Brock University’s Cool Climate Oenology and Viticulture Institute (CCOVI).

Piccol also studied in Germany, where his interest in wine was further piqued. In 2004, he interned at Inniskillin, then rose through the ranks at Jackson-Triggs and Constellation.

“I picked him (to produce the new vintages), because he’s kind of my prototype,” Ziraldo says. “He’s from Friuli, we speak the same language, and we’ve done the collaboration with CCOVI and Udine. And I wanted somebody to distinguish it, so the wine is made by another artist, because this will make it distinct.”

Back when Ziraldo split from Inniskillin, he planted a vineyard of riesling grapes near the original old barn, and that continues to be the basis of the Ziraldo Estate wines. The first collaboration between the two Frindies, the 2019 Vidal Icewine currently being bottled, will be released in mid-summer. This fall will see the 2020 icewine hit the market.

“The 2020 Riesling is still in the tank,” explains Ziraldo. “It’s too early. It’s spectacular. It’s 308 grams of sugar per litre. The 2020 crop was down by 50 per cent because of the summer drought and the late picking because of the dehydration. It’s going to be spectacular quality.”

Ziraldo also looks forward to bringing some of the cachet back to his original winery. “I don’t intend to get involved in the day-to-day. I’ve been there and done that,” he says. “When Karl left, when he retired, I packed it in. I stayed for three months with Constellation, but it just didn’t fit. But I’m going to go back. I’m right here, it all works out nicely.”

In the wine industry, it’s always good to have an association with an individual, a face of the winery. “Inniskillin didn’t have that anymore,” Ziraldo says. “After Karl and I left, Debi Pratt was that for a while, but now she’s gone, too. So I will spend some time there.”

These past few years, Ziraldo has seen some of his wine pioneer contemporaries pass on. He reflects on them fondly and often.

“Karl was the genius behind icewine,” he says of his former colleague, who died in 2017. “He took some of the Germans had been playing with since the 17th century and turned it into a luxury brand. We made a good team. He was a great partner. He made great wine, and I sold it.”

Joseph Poholky is another who comes to mind. “Joe was a character,” Ziraldo laughs. “He did some engineering for Karl, so they were always hanging around together here at the winery. Another one was Ewaldo Reif, Karl’s friend, and Klaus’ uncle. They were the ones who were first playing around with icewine.”

The pandemic has kept the world traveller grounded here in NOTL, allowing him to spend much more time at home with his son Aspen. The eight-year-old, who enjoys helping his father in the vineyard, is currently learning Italian online. Ziraldo knows that pales in comparison to his son being able to immerse himself in the Italian language and lifestyle in the piazzas of Florence.

“I used to spend about 200 days a year outside of Canada,” he says. “Most of it in the United States, Europe and Asia. And I had that gig in Portugal for about six years, with a mining company. I haven’t been in an airplane now in almost two years.”

He also had a vineyard in the town of Fagagna, where his parents were born. There, he planted 1000 vines on the hillside of the Castello, which he harvested in 2008 to produce a Prosecco-style Italian dessert wine as a tribute to his parents. The Ziraldo Bianco di Fagagna is available online.

Ziraldo would love to return to Friuli to start a more serious, long-term venture. “We’ll head back there this summer when things open up again,” he says. “But Italy is in trouble. They just basically shut down. They’re not shipping anything, because export has basically shut down. Tourism has been devastated, and they’re just not drinking the wines.”

He worries, as well, about the future of the wine and restaurant industries in Canada. “I know that with Arterra, the premium side of the business is almost non-existent (due to COVID),” Ziraldo claims. “They’ve gone from one shift (producing bag-in-a-box to three shifts. My theory is that people buy wine to show off to their friends. With everyone locked up, you don’t have guests, so everybody’s buying bag-in-a-box.”

The longer the pandemic lasts, the more the market will shift. He wonders as well how many restaurants will reopen after struggling for so long. And he thinks that what he calls ‘the new order’ will figure out ways to reinvent the restaurant business, with new protocols for diners.

Ziraldo foresees a modern version of the roasted 20th baking when life gets closer to normal.

“People have got a lot of money,” he explains. “You’re not travelling, you’re not going out for fancy dinners, you’re not buying a new suit. All that money is building up in bank accounts.”

The fact that the new order will be launched with the 2020 vintage, and a lot of wineries have been helped out by (Prime Minister) Justin Trudeau, should make for a good recovery, he adds.

At the same time Ziraldo acknowledges that many of the workers in his industry and others that have taken the biggest beating financially, as well as farmers, will make for a lot of belt-tightening. Until the recovery begins, he and Aspen will continue to enjoy their extended time on the Ziraldo estate, Artesian digging trestles in the vineyard, and father and son playing host to barbecues for Aspen and his friends.

To celebrate Ziraldo’s return to his roots, Inniskillin will be offering a limited-edition gift-pack featuring the classic 2019 Inniskillin Niagara Estate VQA Riesling Icewine and 2014 Ziraldo VQA Riesling Icewine, produced under his previous arrangement with Reif. This gift pack will be available for purchase at the Inniskillin Niagara Estate wine boutique in the coming months, as COVID restrictions are lifted.

And when the new vintages are launched, Ziraldo will make the short trek from his home to be on site at Inniskillin, and he’ll be lending his persona via their brand-message, returning to his rightful role as the face of the winery that started it all.
visiting,” the email said. After reading it, I did not hesitate to call UCL to make arrangements for my brother and I to have an outdoor visit with our mother at 10:30 a.m. the next day. 

As with many of us in this situation, the pandemic has made it very difficult, or, in many cases, impossible to actually have physical contact with our loved ones in long-term care homes. Rules that came out to protect them during the pandemic may have been left to be draconian. They did, however, help the situation after hearing about the long-term care horror stories throughout the province during the first and second waves. We, the residents and families of the Upper Canada Lodge, have been very fortunate. The actions taken by the region and the wonderful staff at UCL resulted in no outbreaks in the home during the entire length of the pandemic. Our family members were kept very comfortable, safe and well looked after.

We continued to have contact by telephone with Mom, of course. She enjoys the calls and always inquired how we were all doing, especially her great-grandchildren. She was especially appreciative of our daily calls to remind her when her favourite TV shows were coming on, especially Coronation Street. The home was able to institute Face-Time calls once a week, and we looked forward to those sessions. It was nice to be able to share photos of the family during these Face-Time calls.

Mom is not able to phone her younger brother or older sister who live in Scotland. We would do that for her during visits, before the pandemic, and she would be able to speak with them. They do phone her, but it is often hit or miss due to the time difference and if she is sleeping during the day. That regular contact with her siblings is one thing she has missed. We have also found it difficult to bring things to her, like snacks that she once enjoyed. Items like this are dropped off and the staff holds them for two days before they are delivered to her room. Her memory is such that she does not remember if she got them, however. Another difficulty has been trying to buy her new clothes. Having to order items online, delivering them and then being unable to see if they fit correctly has been a concern. But the staff has been helpful.

Our visit on Saturday was very nice. Protocol remained that we were actively screened by staff upon arrival, masked, and were asked to maintain physical distancing while on our outside visit. Current ly, two general visitors are the maximum allowed at any one time. Staff had arranged comfortable sitting areas at the front of the building. We could see others who were also taking advantage of the opportunity to visit loved ones.

It was a lovely morning and my brother and I were both appreciative of the staff for being able to visit our mother after so many months.
Royal Oak masters online classes, anxious to return to in-person

Penny Cole

With the smaller classes at Royal Oak Community School, parents have been dis-approving of having to in-person education shut down, but say teachers have done a great job of recognizing the needs of their students during recent weeks of online learning, and acting accordingly.

The School is also well-equipped to respond to the needs of individual students, again, a significant result of several factors, chiefly the small classes giving the ability of teachers to see their needs and respond immediately.

As an example, parent Tracy Mackie, her 11-year-old daughter began Grade 5 at Royal Oak, with a year-round scheduling that needed to be accommodated. Anissa is a competitive dancer, and was cast in the role of Baby June in Gypsy, which the School Festival was planning to stage for 2020, and then, for when that season was cancelled, for 2021. Her previous public school had not been terribly understanding of her missing classes and needing to have her work given to her to complete at home, suggesting academics should come first.

Anissa Mackie reads for one of her online school assignments.

When schools were closed last year, the online classes Anissa attended in the public school system were “an unstructured, disastrous situation,” she says, with a lack of communica- tion when she reached out to both her daughter’s teacher and principal. The experience “was beyond disappointing,” she adds, and one she didn’t want to repeat in September. Mackie also has health issues that put her at risk for COVID, and was impressed with the extra precautions Royal Oak was taking when it opened to in-person classes in the fall, with its offering an online component, so students could choose a combination that ac- commodated their individual needs and scheduling.

She is pleased with the philo- sophy of the school that places the individual needs of students, the level of engagement between teachers and students, even when forced to go online, and also the com- munication with parents.

Mackie says, “There’s a unique approach to the online learning.” She appreciative of the specialized teaching, the sup- port for students and parents, and the sensitivity with which the needs of students are han- dled, she says.

Mackie also loves the sense of community Royal Oak of- fers, she says, “the most incredible organization I have ever seen. It’s a privilege to be associated with it. It is a spectacular little place.”

Cindy Yerich, a mother of four, has had a similar experi- ence this year. She planned to move her son Theo, now seven, to Royal Oak for Grade 1 from a Niagara Falls school last Sep- tember, because he was falling behind in reading. She investig- ated several different options, and by the time she settled on Royal Oak, decided it was also the right choice for Theo’s twin brother Max, and her daughter Elizabeth, who was going into Grade 4. Her older daugh- ter, Violet, was doing well at school, and Yerich said she thought Violet would want to stay with her friends, but when she heard about Royal Oak, decided instead she’d like to go there with her siblings.

“it’s the best decision I’ve ever made for my kids,” Yerich says. “For Theo, it’s been the difference between night and day.”

He’s become a voracious reader, above his grade lev- el, and the others as well have improved their skills, she says, with one daughter going from the 50th percentile in math to the 90th, in the Caribou Mathematics Competition, a world- wide online contest in which Royal Oak students can partici- pate.

Her kids are missing the social life of the school, and she says, “lack of communication when she reached out to their friends, but Royal Oak does everything it can to make up for that, including giving students time at lunch to share with their friends. They also provide some time for kids to break into smaller groups for STEM or craft activities, and for the older kids to spend with the younger ones, mentoring them for reading and other projects.

Teachers also do their best to make classes both education- al and fun. In their French class, Yerich says, “she’s heard her kids laughing and giggling” with friends over a particular lesson, so the class doesn’t feel so struc- tured to them, or having fun in their physical education class. “They’re working out virtually and they’re really enjoying it,” she says.

It’s still a rigorous academ- ic workload, but they’re having fun.”

Yerich says she was really impressed with how her boys’ teacher recognized the kids in Grade 1/2 were indicating a decline in their attention span from the morning to af- ternoon classes, and decided they would have online class- es in the morning, and then have some time away from the screen, to maybe go for a walk, have a rest or do some inde- pendent learning.

The school also offers a screen-free time on Wednesdays, as part of student schedu- les, which they can use for “pencil and paper” assign- ments, although the teachers are still available online if the kids need them.

“They like that break, and they can have a reward, like go- ing out on an adventure. It’s im- portant to have that, especially with the younger grades.”

The kids would like to be back at school with their friends, says Yerich, but she doesn’t feel they’ve lost any- thing from an educational per- spective, and she likes the fact that Royal Oak will continue to offer a combination of remote and in-person learning.

“I hope we can be back in school soon, but it’s good to be able to take advantage of online learning as well.”

“I think Royal Oak has done a great job of engaging kids, and providing them with a good sense of community,” she says. And we’re really lucky to have Julia (Murray), head of school. She seems to know the kids really well, and when there are changes to be made to bene- fit the kids, such as the online class in the morning, she’s able to make it happen. With the bigger machine of the public schools, it’s harder to see what needs to be changed, and even more difficult to implement it."

Murray says as an inde- pendent school, although they follow the provincial school curriculum, they can be more flexible with how they deliver it to suit the needs of their stu- dents.

However, they have to follow the provincial stay-at- home order and school clo- sures.

“If we didn’t have to, well be running in person class every day, says Murray, confident they can deliv- er it safely, and that it would be better for the mental health of the kids.

When school closures were mandated, she asked if she could offer some classes, such as physical education, outside, but was told she couldn’t.

Although the Royal Oak school year was shorter than that of the public boards, coming to an end mid-June, if the prov- ince opens schools before then, she thinks it would be a good experience for the kids to go back, even if just for a week. It would allow them the oppor- tunity to feel the joy and cele- bration of returning and being with their friends, she says.

In September, assuming in-person classes are permit- ted, Royal Oak will continue to offer remote and synchronous learning to all students.

“What’s that is so nice about having such small class sizes,” she says. “Each one of our classes had one student learning from home. The teachers have mastered that, and the students have adjusted.”

That’s a very different ex- perience than for schools that will be offering that for the first time, says Murray.

“I really feel our students have had a good experience. Our teachers have been incred- ibly creative, and really amaz- ing. The kids put their best foot forward every day. The teach- ers, students and parents have all been great, and they are all an important part of making this work.”
Teachers doing their best to keep kids engaged, happy

Penny Coles
The Local

Although the weeks are dwindling until school breaks for the summer, many parents are saying they’d be happy for schools to open, even if just for a few weeks.

While many health officials across the province have said schools are safe, and could be re-opened, so far the province has not seemed inclined to do so. Amanda Gamble is one of those parents who hopes to see schools reopen, even for a short time. Working from home at a computer at two jobs, with her four-year-old daughter beside her attending Junior Kindergarten at Crossroads Public School virtually, has presented some challenges, she says.

Although she appreciates the time she and Evelyn get to spend together, and realizes how much harder it must be for older kids, she can’t help thinking her daughter would be better off with her friends at school. When Evelyn started JK, “she loved it,” says Gamble, “and she thrived. She misses it a lot.”

She got used to her teachers and students wearing masks, and playing in small groups of children — that became normal. And playing in small groups of two and students wearing masks, playing with connecting with parents principal have also been good challenges, she says.

“Some kids have been staying online for kids that age can be difficult, and some days are better than others, says Gamble. It’s hard to motivate someone that young to sit at a computer for any length of time. If Evelyn spends an hour online, that’s about her limit. Teachers are trying to keep kids busy and having fun, but also are understanding if students aren’t spending as much time online as they’re supposed to be. They also allow for play time, when kids can have fun with their friends — virtually. It’s really cute hearing all the little voices talking to each other,” says Gamble.

She credits the teachers with their creativity and their efforts to keep students engaged, and says if they could go back to school for a couple of weeks, it might be difficult for teachers, but it would be great for the kids. Crossroads teachers and the principal have also been good with connecting with parents and supporting them in any way they can, she says. “I get the sense the teachers are trying to do the very best they can, and that mental health is always the top priority for the kids. I also get the sense that they really care about the kids.”

Brenda Barretto-Mendonca is a mom of three girls at St. Michael Catholic School. When school opened last September and parents had the choice between students attending classes or learning online, “we put our faith in St. Mike’s,” she says. “The school is wonderful, and we felt they would do what they had to do to keep our schools safe. Our girls definitely flourished being back at school.”

This last shutdown that began in April has been hard on the kids, and very confusing, she says, without any idea of what is happening in the future. “It’s difficult to know what to say to the kids when they’re having a rough day.”

With five weeks left of school, Ferguson says she’d like to see in-school learning return, even if just for a week, however, she feels fortunate to have been able to work from home, unlike other parents. Holly’s teacher has been amazing, and although Holly stays connected virtually, she misses the social interaction and hands-on learning, says her mom.

Barretto-Mendonca agrees that, “not in any way, shape or form is online learning ideal.”

Teachers have done so well in making the transition, and rising to the challenges before them, but for kids, spending a day online remains difficult. “We want the kids in front of us,” she says. “It’s been challenging for all, she adds, with so many changes and teachers having to constantly learn something new, often on the fly, “but overall, we’re plodding through.”

She says she would welcome an opportunity to be back in school before the end of the year. “It would be rejuvenating for all of us, knowing the kids were here, under our care,” even for a short time.

Mental health is not measurable, but is such a key factor during this time, she adds. “That’s why they need to be here.”

Evelyn Anderson, 4, wears her thinking cap to make deductions while her Crossroads Junior Kindergarten class reads a story together online. (Photos supplied)

Olivia, Peyton and Emily, students at St. Michael Catholic School, burn off some energy during a break from online learning.
Timothy Tranter was outside with his nine-year-old dog Nikita. He was behind his house on Field Road — he lives in what was once the principal's house of the former Virgil public school — and she was around the corner of the house, in the driveway, when he heard a commotion. He ran around to see what was happening, and discovered Nikita screaming. A coyote had her gripped tight between his teeth.

“I picked up a chair and threw it at him — I didn’t know what else to do. He dropped her and just sauntered off across the street. He wasn’t scared of me at all.”

He has seen a coyote in the area before, and has since heard several stories from his neighbours who have seen the same coyote wandering around the residential neighbourhood.

“It seems everyone has a story about this one coyote,” he says. “Everyone seems to know about it. I had to find out about it the hard way. But the more I talk to people, the more I learn about coyotes.”

Nikita is just a “wee dog,” a 10-pound rat terrier, and is “totally lucky to be alive,” he says.

“If I’d been somewhere else, just a little further away, she would have been gone when I got there.”

There is no fencing around his home, and he and Nikita walk everywhere together. On the sidewalk she’s on a leash, but when they take a stroll through nearby fields and orchards, she is not.

“This caught me completely by surprise,” he says. “Things are going to change for me for sure. I guess I was too trusting. I didn’t think they’d come right up my driveway.”

He says with COVID, “so many people have new dogs and puppies. I’ve seen many of them around, going for walks. People have to be aware of how close the coyotes are coming to our homes.”

Nikita was fortunate that the coyote got hold of her by her back end, causing some puncture wounds, but not to any organs. She was still in shock when he took her to the veterinarian, who gave her antibiotics to be sure her wounds won’t be infected.

“I’m happy she’s going to make it,” he says. “I’m just hoping she heals well.”

In just a few days, he added, “she seems to be doing better than me. I can still hear her screaming. But dogs are resilient. She seems pretty good.”

Tranter says he understands coyotes are being displaced as more subdivisions are built, but he was still surprised at how tame this one seemed. “He wasn’t one bit scared of me.”

Nikita might be small, he added, but she thinks she’s fierce, guarding her property when other neighbours and dogs walk by. “She’s a little 10-pound watch dog.”

He’s called the town to see if anything can be done about it, but he is learning that isn’t likely to happen. He will be watching carefully over Nikita in the future, and urges others in the area with small dogs or cats to do the same.

The provincial ministry of natural resources says since coyotes are opportunistic feeders, small pets such as dogs and cats may be seen as prey. “It is advised to watch them carefully if your dog is in the backyard, and don’t allow cats to wander the neighbourhood.”

Fact sheets entitled Coyote Proofing Your Property, Encounters with Coyotes and Protecting Your Property can be found at ontario.ca
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Sports enthusiasts were thrilled to be back on the courts and golf courses Saturday, delighted to have a great day for the provincial opening of outdoor amenities.

The Niagara-on-the-Lake Golf Club is booking members only until the end of May, and had no problem filling their tee times. They will begin booking times for the public June 1.

Joe Doria, Noel Morris, Rob Reimer and Roman Mamalyga were the first foursome on the course Saturday morning. They were elated to get out and play for the first time in weeks. Doria said it was his second time this year being the first to tee off. There were 12 club members, who had the first three tee times booked for the day, regulars who like to play early in the morning.

NOTL Tennis Club members were out on the Memorial Park courts first thing, as were pickleball players in Virgil, as soon as they were legally allowed to take part in the sports they love.

The splash pad and skate board park at Virgil were also open at 8 a.m., the club has not reopened nor has a date been determined for that to happen, and the schedule is still being finalized, with lots of time for the public as well. “Hard-core” members Elaine Somerville, Andrew Calnek, and Jerry and Barb Eitz were happy to be out, saying they played on winter days when they had to shovel snow off the courts, so Saturday felt pretty good. NOTL has one of the best facilities in the region, and attracts members from all over, says Calnek, some of them out for the socializing as much as the game, and others very competitive players.

Although most of the NOTL club has a reputation for being more a recreational club, it attracts very competitive players. NOTL Pickleball Club members were out and ready to play when the courts opened at 9 a.m., the club has not reopened nor has a date been determined for that to happen, and the schedule is still being finalized, with lots of time for the public as well. “Hard-core” members Elaine Somerville, Andrew Calnek, and Jerry and Barb Eitz were happy to be out, saying they played on winter days when they had to shovel snow off the courts, so Saturday felt pretty good. NOTL has one of the best facilities in the region, and attracts members from all over, says Calnek, some of them out for the socializing as much as the game, and others very competitive players.

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HOUSE SITTING (While you are away) Location Niagara-on-the-Lake. Oct 15th 2021 to April 15th 2022 Inclusive. No Pets. Contact John email hammerjd1867@gmail.com

PLAYLE, K. Yvonne — 1924 – 2021 - Kathleen Yvonne Playle passed peacefully at her home in Niagara-on-the-Lake on May 3, 2021. She had just celebrated her 97th birthday and was blessed to see many of her family and friends during the final weeks of her life. Yvonne was born in Scarborough, Ontario but moved to Montreal at an early age with her parents Bert and May Bedwell. She earned her Bachelor of Arts from McGill University in 1944, and was a member of the McGill fencing club during her studies. She met her husband Colin at an internship event at McGill while he was visiting from a break in his engineering studies at the University of Toronto. Yvonne and Colin married in the Town of Mount Royal in 1948 and soon settled in Niagara Falls, where they had their four children over a span of 13 years. After more than a decade as a homemaker and mother, Yvonne embarked on a second career in 1962 by starting her training as a Laboratory Technologist at the Greater Niagara General Hospital. After graduating in 1964 she worked for many years in the GNHG laboratory. Once their three eldest children left home for university, Yvonne and Colin moved to Niagara-on-the-Lake where they lived out the rest of their years.

Yvonne and Colin were members of St. Martin’s and St. John’s Anglican churches in Niagara Falls, followed by St. Mark’s Anglican Church in Niagara-on-the-Lake, and Yvonne served on the church altar guilds for many years. After retiring, Yvonne volunteered at both GNHG and the Niagara-on-the-Lake Hospital. She was a member of the Niagara Falls University Women’s Club, played badminton into her 90s, and was an avid bridge player. Yvonne also enjoyed summer camping with Colin and their children, and travelled extensively first with Colin and then with friends and family throughout Canada, the UK, Europe and New Zealand, and she also went on numerous cruises.

Yvonne is survived by her son Christopher Kim (Claude) and daughter Diane (Mike), as well as her four grandchildren Evelyn, Colin, Nicholas and Emma. She was predeceased by her husband Colm in 1994 and her children Rick (Anne) in 2005 and Kate in 2009.

Yvonne’s ashes will be interred in the Memorial Garden of St. Mark’s Niagara-on-the-Lake at a private family service in late May. A Celebration of Yvonne’s Life is expected to be held this autumn.

In lieu of flowers, donations in memory of Yvonne can be made to Doctors Without Borders or to a charity of your choice. Memories, photos and condolences can be shared at www.morganfuneral.com

Sudoku solution from May 19, 2021

Happy travels Matthew.

I love you.
Sports park a busy place

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tracts players of all skills levels, he adds.

When the club reopens, for insurance purposes, only members of both the NOTL Pickleball Club and Pickleball Canada will be permitted to play during the club scheduled times, says club president John Hindle.

The use of these courts are free, he adds. He wants to be sure residents of NOTL understand it is not the intention of the club to dominate the use of these courts, so they should be confident that even during club scheduled times, residents are always welcome to join in (for a maximum of three times) and then hopefully will choose to become a member.

All non-club scheduled times are open to the public for residents’ use between 8 a.m. and 10 p.m. daily, says Hindle.

Anyone interested in playing, or joining the club, should visit notlpickleball.ca. Or to ask a question, book a family session to learn how to play, or share a compliment or complaint, says Hindle, email admin@notlpickleball.ca.

Owen Danes and Cole McMann were out Saturday morning enjoying the pickleball courts in Virgil. (Mike Balsom)