

The Niagara-on-the-Lake LOCAL



Doug Hunter
plays piano
for friends
during
isolation

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Both Diane Peirce (right) and Joy MaGarrey, pictured with her husband Christopher and son James, are recovering at home, feeling well and enjoying the good weather while they recuperate. (Photos supplied)

Diane and Joy share their organ transplant story

Penny Coles
The Local

Last fall, Diane Peirce was suffering from end-stage liver disease.

The only cure was a transplant, and her best chance, she was told, was to find a live donor.

At 64, Peirce, the matriarch and caregiver of her family, had much to live for — her loving husband Mike, two beautiful daughters, Natalie and Nicole, and Natalie's daughter, Olive, then 15 months old.

A live donor transplant, they were told, would give Diane the best chance for survival, and the best quality of life. It would give her energy

to resume the active lifestyle she was accustomed to, including being an involved “Mimi” to Olive, the light of her life.

A liver is a miraculous organ, says Mike. It can regenerate itself. A transplant of a section of a healthy liver from a live donor would almost immediately return Diane to the same robust health she has always enjoyed. While waiting for a deceased donor, there is the danger of becoming too sick to qualify for a donation, or dying before one becomes available.

But one by one, family members were eliminated as potential donors, due to age or health conditions, and they were advised to start search-

ing for a live donor in other ways. Diane was uncomfortable going to the public for help, but Natalie had no such qualms, if it meant saving her mother.

One beautiful fall day last October, Natalie, her husband Adrian, and Olive, gathered in their living room with Mike and Diane, a loving family unwilling to face a future without their matriarch. They knew when they shared their story with The Local they were hoping for a miracle, a favour too huge to contemplate — that a complete stranger would agree to donate part of an organ so Diane could live.

They also knew it to be safe. The system's paramount

objective, said Mike, is to protect the donor.

Since 2000, more than 900 living liver donor transplants have been performed at the University Health Network at the Toronto General Hospital site, with all donors having returned to their regular lifestyle, with no restrictions. In 2019, the UHN performed more than 200 liver transplants, including 60 made possible by living donors. Toronto General Hospital, home to Canada's largest living liver donor program, is ranked one of the top 10 hospitals in the world.

But still, what a favour to ask.

At the time, Diane said, “I'm being very positive

about this. I won't think about anything negative. I believe something will work out for me.”

She said she knew there would be an angel out there for her.

And she was right.

The angel turned out to be Joy MaGarrey, of St. Catharines, who learned about Diane and her family's search when she read The Local article online.

“My heart really went out to them, and I could imagine how difficult it must be not to be able to donate themselves,” she says.

She thought about Natalie, and how it would feel to be in her position. “If it was someone in my family, I would

desperately want someone to step up for me.”

She spent the rest of that evening researching living donations, and submitted her application the next day.

MaGarrey has a husband, Christopher, and a 10-year-old son James.

Chris was surprised when she told him what she wanted to do, but supportive, and willing to pick up the slack at home.

At the time, James didn't totally grasp the gravity of what she was doing, but has come to understand, she says. He was a big part of her reason for arriving at her decision — she wants to be a role

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Merchants hope for tax relief during pandemic recovery

Penny Coles
The Local

Councillors are receptive to reopening a conversation about a heritage tax rebate, and have referred a request from downtown merchants to the Town's audit committee, which was meeting virtually Tuesday afternoon.

It was considered for the 2020 budget, said Allan Bisback during Monday's virtual council meeting, but was not adopted.

"But that was a different time and things have changed," said Bisback, suggesting the business case for a heritage tax rebate should be revisited.

About 35 heritage district merchants are hoping for tax relief from the Town to help them survive the pandemic, and the heritage tax rebate seems like the most immediate and effective solution.

Many of the merchants behind the request have been in business for decades, says Kim Hughes, of the Sunset Grill on Queen Street.

They also asked council to consider property tax forgiveness in the interim.

Eduardo Lafforgue, president of the NOTL Chamber of Commerce, is supporting the request for a heritage tax rebate, explaining that most tenants on Queen Street pay the property taxes on their leased properties, as set out in the contract with their landlords.

A rebate will provide direct relief to those tenants, who are dealing with both high rents and high taxes, and to owners who operate businesses on their own properties, he says.

A letter to council from the merchants brought the matter forward Monday, but the substance of the rebate was not discussed once Bisback, who sits on the audit committee, made a motion that it be referred to that committee. Councillors supported the referral and a request that a special council meeting be called to deal with any recommendation the committee

might make as quickly as possible.

Bisback says the audit committee discussed the rebate at length last fall, and finally decided, as they tried to reduce a large projected budget increase, that this was not the year to go forward with it.

If they had, the recommendation would have been to study it for this year, for implementation in 2021.

It's a complex issue, he says, with many questions to be answered, including whether the rebate would help those paying high rents, who would be eligible, and whether the Region would still partner in the program.

But while some tenants pay property taxes on their location, Bisback says not all do, not all are in designated heritage buildings, although they are in the heritage district, and he's unsure whether the process of issuing a rebate would allow it to go to tenants rather than property owners.

He believes there are some misunderstandings amongst merchants about the program and the process. It's not as simple as approving it at 40 per cent and seeing money start flowing into the hands of tenants, he says. In addition to laying out a process if a recommendation is made to approve a heritage tax rebate, he added, the Town will still need to find the money to fund it.

The Town has also been encouraging businesses to apply for federal funding in the way of wage and rent subsidies, and small business loans, he added.

The letter from merchants before council Monday says businesses have received no assistance from the Town or Region, yet have costs significantly higher than the rest of the town, and rely on six months of tourism. "Without this revenue, some will not survive. This is scary for all businesses on Queen Street. We are all dependent on each other and our unique offerings that draw tourists to our town. Empty storefronts will not benefit anyone and

will devalue the town. The Town and Region need to support us if we want Queen Street to remain a vibrant street, the centre of Niagara-on-the-Lake."

The heritage rebate program was initiated by the Province in 2001, in response to soaring property taxes as a result of current market value assessments. It offers municipalities the ability to rebate eligible heritage properties from 10 to 40 per cent of their taxes — it was left up to the municipality to choose whether to opt into the program, and the rate of the rebate.

Bart Maves was the local MPP at the time, and went to bat for NOTL, responding to a request for relief from huge tax increases.

Although other communities across Ontario benefit from the rebate, NOTL does not, although local property taxes help fund rebates for other participating municipalities, says Lafforgue.

The Niagara Region offered to match tax reductions or refunds adopted by local municipalities in this program, but despite repeated requests over the ensuing years, mostly from the Chamber of Commerce, Niagara-on-the-Lake councils have chosen not to offer the rebate.

Bisback says before a decision is made on the program, the Town must be sure that Regional partnership is still available.

The Town has instead offered a heritage grant incentive since 2006, to offset restoration and improvement costs to heritage buildings.

The merchants' group was hoping for a motion from council Monday to address the rebate program, as well as interim property tax forgiveness from the Town and the Region for at least six months. They make the point that their high assessment is based on the value of tourism, which is flawed "when the town is officially closed."

It needs to be a straight credit to taxes so that it can filter down to merchants, Hughes says. "We are per-

plexed as to why this is not already in place."

The rebate program, she adds, is the most logical and affordable way for the Town to help merchants in the heritage district, and suggests the incentive program could be dropped to help pay for it.

The cost to the munic-

ipality, and the benefit to merchants if the program is adopted, would have to be updated, and would depend on what option from the 10 to 40 per cent range is chosen, says Bisback.

While there are questions that remain to be answered, sending it to the audit com-

mittee for discussion Tuesday was a way to have a full discussion and expedite a resolution, he says.

"We need to look at it again, clarify what the program is and how we move forward with it. And regardless of the range, we'd still have to figure out how to fund it."

Chamber calling for help to prevent Queen Street 'decay'

Penny Coles
The Local

As Eduardo Lafforgue considers the reopening of businesses and attracting tourists during COVID-19 restrictions, he says Niagara-on-the-Lake is not unique in what it is going through.

This is Canada's Tourism Week, says the president of the NOTL Chamber of Commerce, but unlike any other year, the sector has been decimated by the pandemic, and the return is going to take time.

The chamber, along with other Niagara tourism agencies, is urging local, regional, provincial and federal governments to consult and collaborate with the sector in developing recovery support, thoughtful measures for reopening safely, and help with incentivizing tourism as soon as it is safe to do so.

"Niagara-on-the-Lake simply cannot afford to lose its tourism industry," he says.

Across Canada, tourism destinations are being encouraged to "protect their main street," and NOTL is no different in that respect, says Lafforgue.

"Queen Street is suffering. Businesses are suffering. Some might not be able to continue without some sort of support."

Eighty per cent of tenants on the street pay the property tax on their space, along with high rents, and these are small businesses, not inter-

national companies, he says. "Yet they are the ones who make Queen Street what it is. We need to help the merchants somehow, otherwise some stores will never revive."

If stores close because of the pandemic, he adds, "there won't be a queue of tenants wanting to open a store. And if we lose our tenants, the street will decay."

He sees the heritage tax rebate, which has been on the table for the last 18 to 20 years, but never approved, as the answer, putting money into the hands of tenants or landlords — whoever pays the property taxes, he says.

"We need to help retailers survive to keep Queen Street alive. This goes with the concept of saving Main Street. Right now we don't know where we're heading, but we know it's not going to be the same, the numbers will not be the same. It's that simple."

Other tourism destinations across the country also deal with the difficulty of balancing tourism and the needs of the residents, he says.

"The key issue is that businesses are so important in contributing to the benefits of the whole community."

In destinations around the world, he says, tourism is pitted against the needs of the residents, but residents, including those in NOTL, "would not have the quality of life and services they have without tourism."

He lists many of the benefits residents enjoy: the Shaw Festival, Bravo Niagara!, Music Niagara, the wineries and the many restaurants, all adding to the quality of life in town and contributing greatly to the local economy.

"The quality of life we have, and the services we enjoy, wouldn't exist without them," he says. "We all like our town pristine, but that wouldn't happen without tourism."

What the town has is not a tourism problem but a management problem, he adds. "We all need to work together on the right solutions. We need to work together to find the balance, to build the community together and manage it together."



Eduardo Lafforgue, president of the NOTL Chamber of Commerce. (File photo)



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Tax rates approved despite concern over pandemic costs

Penny Coles
The Local

Councillors finalized the Town's 2020 tax rates Monday, allowing the tax levy to be approved in time for the final instalment of this year's taxes, payable in July and September.

Although there was no discussion of revisiting the Town's 2020 net tax levy of \$12,686,151, as approved in this year's operating budget, some councillors questioned how unexpected spending during the state of emergency to deal with the pandemic would affect the budget.

The report councillors were approving this week outlined the Town's budget with the Regional waste management fees, basic and the enhanced ser-

vices for Queen Street, included. Those costs add \$1,682,389 to the budget. Properties receiving the benefit of solid waste collection will be charged the basic rate, the report says, with Queen Street businesses receiving enhanced collection paying for that service.

On an "average typical" residential assessment of \$530,900, rural area property owners will pay \$5,244, an increase of \$297 over last year, and urban taxpayers will see a bill of \$5,300, an increase of \$298 over 2019, the report said.

Coun. Stuart McCormack asked, with the 2020 budget approved pre-pandemic, before knowing "how things would unfold," and with the Province making changes on a daily basis, whether council would be "capping our recovery to this."

He and other councillors questioned what options are available if the budget needs to be amended due to a drop in revenue and an increase in costs due to the pandemic, along with the possibility of drawing on the Town's line of credit.

Kyle Freeborn, director of corporate services, said he has been unable to find anything in the Municipal Act that would allow for the budget to be amended, and that if necessary, he would seek outside

guidance to see what options are available.

He's been keeping tabs on other municipalities, and hasn't seen any revisiting their budget in response to the pandemic, he said.

Coun. Burroughs said he was hesitant to approve the figures before them until he knows what the Province will allow in the way of amendments. "We can't achieve what we've already set, it's impossible to get there," he said. "What are

we going to do about that?" he asked, adding NOTL is more tourism-based than any other municipality, with the exception of Niagara Falls.

Freeborn ensured councillors "certain budgets are not achievable," and "certain strategic mitigations" are included in the budget to address those.

The pandemic situation is being addressed as it evolves, month by month, he said.

He's "hesitant to change the budget," and drawing on cred-

it isn't necessary at this time, Freeborn told councillors.

While the situation continues to change, and could become "volatile" in the coming weeks, the loss of revenue has been offset by reductions in costs, and costs of the pandemic are so far manageable, said Freeborn.

All councillors voted to approve the budget bylaw before them, with the exception of McCormack, who abstained.

Injured cyclist recovering in hospital

Penny Coles
The Local

Saturday morning, just before 11 a.m., the Niagara Regional Police were called to the intersection Niagara Stone Road and Garrison Village Drive, when a 73-year-old cyclist was struck by a car. The cyclist was taken to the hospital.

A friend of the family, who

is requesting privacy, says the cyclist was crossing at the crosswalk when he was hit. He's had successful surgery for two breaks to his left leg and ankle, his friend said in an update Tuesday, but his right leg is severely swollen, and he remains in hospital.

The NRP report the driver, a 95-year-old man, was charged with making an unsafe turn.

Penny Coles
The Local

The Town is reviving the hanging basket program, reversing a decision made last month.

The program will "further stimulate Niagara-on-the-Lake's economy as it gradually begins to reopen," a Town news release says.

"While we are not yet back to business as usual, I'm hopeful that the installation of these baskets will be another way to bring back some semblance of normalcy and hope to the Town streets," said Lord Mayor Betty Disero in the release.

It was cancelled due to inadequate staffing and budget issues caused by COVID-19,

and was estimated to save the Town about \$50,000.

With the reopening of businesses, and the planting program, contract staff are being called back, interim CAO Sheldon Randall told councillors Monday.

With the Province releasing restrictions, "we need to bring back contract staff and get them ready to do the jobs they were hired to do."

The Town has also had to hire more contract staff to assist with safety measures, he said.

Savings in the budget will help pay for the hanging basket program, Randall said.

"Staff feels that the revival of this program will not only support the recovery of the Town's local economy, but it will also positively contrib-

ute to the mental well-being of residents and visitors," the news release reported.

Town staff are busy plant-

ing the baskets and intend to begin hanging them early to mid June, depending on weather and staff resources.



Hanging baskets are being planted and should be ready for hanging in June. (Town of NOTL photo)



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Region now releasing COVID-19 stats by municipality

Testing numbers representative of ‘big picture’

Penny Coles
The Local

Niagara-on-the-Lake has had 21 known cases of COVID-19, with five that remain active.

Of those 21 cases, nine are considered travel-related.

Niagara Region Public Health statistics released Thursday, May 21, show Niagara-on-the-Lake has the fourth-highest rate of COVID-19 infection in the region, with 11.1 infections per 10,000 residents. By Monday, that number hadn't changed.

In addition to the nine known to be returning travellers, seven are from close contact and five from community spread.

Close contact cases include those contracted in hospital or a retirement or long-term care home, and, as Dr. Mustafa Hirji, acting medical officer of health for the Niagara Region, points out, that could include NOTL residents who work in another municipality, in a facility with an outbreak.

The numbers don't identify where the virus was contracted, just where those with the virus live, he says.

Close contact cases also include someone who was infected by a person living in the same

household.

Even those few people in NOTL who are considered to have been infected through community spread didn't necessarily get it from someone in NOTL, he pointed out.

"They could be having coffee in St. Catharines, gone to work in Thorold and then done some grocery shopping in Niagara Falls on the way home," he says, and they might not have any idea where they contracted it.

Welland has the highest

number in the region increasing from 624 to 633.

Both Welland and Niagara Falls have had outbreaks in retirement or long-term care homes.

The good news in NOTL is the low community spread numbers, which show residents who have travelled self-isolated when they returned, says Lord Mayor Betty Disero.

"They didn't pass it on," she says, crediting residents such as (Coun.) Allan Bisback and others who did grocery shopping for

the few who got it through community spread, but don't know where or from whom.

"There are limitations of what we can interpret from the data," he says. "This represents the cases we know about, and not where they were exposed to it."

The main takeaway from the statistics, he says, "is that people in every municipality have been infected, and it's still out there. We still have a small number of cases every day. As businesses are opening up, and we have the potential for interacting, we have the potential for the virus to spread."

"The vigilance of the people of NOTL has been working," says Disero. "We have to be cautious about doing what needs to be done until all our active cases are over, and we have no new cases. We have to be smart about what we're doing, to not have a turn of events and more new cases," she says.

"I'm proud of everyone. Businesses, residents — everyone in town — has helped to limit the spread of the COVID-19 in the community."

There are only five active cases remaining in NOTL, she says, "and I'm hoping there will be good outcomes for all of them."

With essential businesses opening up and more visitors expected, Disero asks residents to continue doing their best to be safe by staying home as much as possible, wearing a cloth mask when out in public, washing their hands and refraining from touching their faces.

"Stay vigilant and we'll get through it," she says.

She also encourages residents to "shop local," for groceries and essentials, and to check out Queen Street stores when the street is not busy with tourists.

Ordering takeout food from restaurants is good any day of the week, and shopping downtown from Monday to Friday will be welcomed by retailers, who will be grateful for local support, especially when the streets are not crowded with tourists, she says.

Disero had been lobbying the Region to break down cases by municipality for several weeks, and now, with that information, "we'll be able to monitor the numbers in the community."

It will be important to watch the numbers in coming weeks, and be prepared to deal with any outbreaks, she added.

"If the numbers start to climb, we'll have to figure out what to do. But some of it may not be in our control."

The Premier has said he will



Dr. Mustafa Hirji, acting medical officer of health for the Niagara Region, is now releasing COVID-19 statistics by municipality. (Photo supplied)

crack down and possibly rescind decisions on reopenings, if the numbers increase across the province.

"Part of the reason why Pelham has a higher cumulative proportion of cases is that it had proportionally more international travel-related cases in the early weeks of local COVID-19 transmission," public health spokesperson Kerri Stoakley told The Voice of Pelham, a weekly newspaper in that community.

"Beyond that, it is likely due to statistical variation as we have not seen any large clusters of linked infections."

Yet the health department's own numbers don't support Stoakley's assertion, reports The Voice.

In fact, the number of travel-related cases in Pelham is less than half of the non-travel-related cases.

Niagara-on-the-Lake, with similar demographics to Pelham, has a proportionately greater number of travel-related cases than does Pelham.

And Fort Erie turns the tables entirely, with 6.4 cases per 10,000, for a total of 21, and more than double the number of travel-related versus non-travel-related infections.

In other Niagara towns, a relatively larger percentage of outbreaks are categorized by public health as having occurred in healthcare facilities.

From the beginning of the outbreak, despite pressure from elected officials across the region, Hirji had refused to release COVID-19 statistics per munic-

ipality, citing privacy reasons. The small numbers in most municipalities might make it possible to identify individuals, he said. About two weeks ago, he said cases might be getting to the threshold where he would be willing to release that information.

Niagara crossed that threshold Wednesday, the day Wainfleet reached five cases.

He is not breaking down the numbers of deaths per municipality. Hirji says he may in coming weeks consider releasing more numbers related to deaths, such as those in retirement homes, long-term care homes, hospitals, and even by age group, "in the interest of transparency."

He said that is still under discussion, but he doesn't expect to release numbers per municipality.

Although the numbers represent positive tests, not actuals, Hirji says he is confident they are a realistic indication of "the big picture."

If people started showing up at the hospitals and in intensive care units, there might be some concern that the numbers are not accurate, "but we're not seeing that."

He stressed that the best advice now is for people who are sick with COVID-19 symptoms to reach out to assessment centres or their physicians for advice about whether to be tested.

With sufficient capacity for testing now available, he says, anyone who has symptoms can be tested.

"We really do want to find any cases that are out there."

The vigilance of the people of NOTL has been working.

Lord Mayor Betty Disero

number with a total of 209 cases, or 37.5 per 10,000 people; Pelham, which borders Welland, is second, with 18.3 per 10,000, or 33 cases; and Niagara Falls third, with 17.3 per 10,000, for a total of 165 cases.

All three of those municipalities had their number of cases increase slightly since the statistics were broken down last Thursday, with the total num-

returning travellers.

"Allan must have been shopping for about 20 people," she says. "He and those who were assisting others were absolutely helpful" in curbing the spread of the virus.

Hirji agrees the numbers show if there were returning travellers who passed it on to others, it would have been a very small number, hidden in



A Message from Interim CAO Sheldon Randall

We were thrilled to announce this week that the Town is reviving the 2020 hanging basket program. I am confident that this will not only help to stimulate our local economy, which is gradually reopening in accordance with Provincial recovery measures, but it will also positively impact the mental well-being of residents and visitors.

The success of our local business community is a priority for the Town, as it is a large contributing factor to our overall prosperity. The Town is committed to partnering with the Niagara-on-the-Lake Chamber of Commerce to support businesses as many reopen, including assisting them in understanding Provincial regulations.

I'd like to take this opportunity to thank the Emergency Control Group and all Town Staff for their consistency and dedication throughout this pandemic. In fact, it is largely thanks to the efforts of Town Staff, who were able to find savings at the outset of this pandemic, that we are now able to see the revival of our hanging baskets.

The Town of Niagara-on-the-Lake has proven itself highly adaptable and resilient in even the most extraordinary of circumstances, and I am prouder than ever of our team.

We will continue to adapt to this rapidly changing situation to ensure we emerge strong and united.



Schools closed but students in need still receiving financial aid

Education Foundation providing gift cards for food and other basic needs

Penny Coles
The Local

Schools are closed, but the need to help students is greater than ever.

Laura Byers, executive director of the Education Foundation of Niagara, says she continues to hear from principals, vice-principals and educators about students requiring quality nutritional support and basic necessities. In collaboration with the District School Board of Niagara, she is doing everything she can to ensure those needs are met.

Newark Neighbours and Vintage Inns have both been generous in their donations to the foundation, which also provides bursaries for post secondary education, and thanks to Newark, four Niagara-on-the-Lake high school students have received bursaries to continue their education in September, says Byers.

The foundation is suf-

fering financially, having lost \$150,000 in revenue from cancelled fundraising events, she says.

"I've seen the impact of stress, uncertainty and the loss of social connections on people we love," she says. "I've also seen the generosity of the community."

Through a call for funding, the foundation has raised \$30,000 toward a \$45,000 goal for its relief response fund, which continues to provide assistance for students requiring food, personal hygiene and medical items, and other necessities. Principals, vice-principals and other educators are in touch with their students, and when they know of someone in need, they reach out to Byers. Most of the assistance is provided through gift cards which they pick up from her home, or are mailed out to families. She receives new enquires on a daily basis, she says, and in collaboration with the school board, is making

sure students have their needs met, getting back to them within a day.

"With financial losses at home, and all kinds of moving parts, there is an increased need at this time. We want to be available always and in all ways," she says.

"We are all champions, with a common purpose. We can never do it alone. This economic distraction has impacted our sector on so many levels."

Charities, not-for-profits and social enterprises continue to work hard to ensure community needs are met, she says, all determined to fulfill their purposes, and collaborating on reaching out to governments for support.

"With steadfast determination and all the love in our hearts, we're doing everything we can to make sure these kids have access to all they need."

Since March 13, when schools closed, the foundation has given out more

than \$10,000 just for nutritional support, she says.

"Every child deserves a champion. These are challenging times, but so far we've been able to make sure students have what they need."

In the 2018 to 2019 school year, the founda-

tion helped support more than 38,000 students in 97 schools, covering all 12 Niagara municipalities, and granted \$200,000 in bursaries, she says, with no government funding to help.

But with the cancellation of fundraising events, she says, "there is a huge

gap" between what they can afford to do this year and what they have done in the past.

To donate to the Education Foundation of Niagara, call Byers at 905-980-1185, or visit <https://efnniagara.dsbn.org//donate>.

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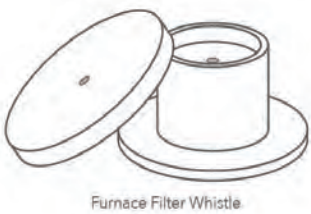


The TD Bank in Virgil recently donated \$750 to Newark Neighbours. Accepting the cheque are Susan Sparrow-Mace and Laura Gibson of Newark Neighbours, at a presentation arranged by branch manager Ashley Martin (right). (Photo supplied)

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EDITORIAL

Trying to stay positive, focus on good news

So much good news in Town.

But some downright stomach-turning news from the Province, so completely awful it's hard for even those of us half-glass-full people to remain positive. This, of course, is the report from the military on the conditions found inside long-term care and retirement homes. We've all of us, citizens and officials alike, called for a commitment to find permanent solutions for protecting our most vulnerable, and this must strengthen the resolve to keep these extremely disturbing conditions, and the immediate need for widespread and comprehensive reforms, front and centre. We must remember not only that the military had to go into these facilities, but what they found once there, and ensure this is never, ever allowed to happen again.

And we should remember to say thank you, and say it again and again, to all who are doing a great job under very difficult conditions to care for those in the many good facilities, where our vulnerable citizens are kept safe.

Fortunately, we have many people in our corner, helping to keep us safe.

At Monday's council meeting, Lord Mayor Betty Disero spoke of the hard work of the emergency control group. Each time the Premier makes an announcement, and details of the regulations are released, members of the emergency control group, with input from lawyers and councillors, plan to safely put those regulations, or more recently, reopenings, into place, whether it's Town facilities or businesses. Council can be proud of the quality and the quantity of

the work of the group, said Disero, and all of us who live or work in NOTL can be grateful for the difficult decisions made on behalf of our safety.

It's also good to know the Town has a dedicated audit committee focused on Town finances, especially at this time when costs and revenues are changing almost daily.

It's great to see merchants working together, helping each other through difficult times, and hear the Town indicate a willingness to look at ways to help them.

There has also been lots of effort and discussion preparing for when restaurants can open. Town officials understand using outdoor space to aid in physical distancing, either on private or municipal property, won't be easy, but they're willing to collect the data and consult with restaurant owners for a good solution — good news that at least these efforts are being made. We want our restaurants back in business, safely and successfully.

Each week, we learn of more livestreamed entertainment opportunities. There is so much more available to us than Netflix, that we can enjoy at no cost, from the comfort of our living rooms.

Also great to hear, are the results of a story that still makes my head spin, after decades of sharing great stories. That's the news that two women, one a living organ donor, the other the transplant recipient, are recovering at home following their successful surgeries. I think everyone who reads that story can imagine themselves first in Diane's place, fearing for her future, and then in Joy's place, asking themselves if they could do something so amazing. And then they feel

grateful there are people like Joy in this world who can. Diane says it's still hard to grasp what Joy did for her, and Joy doesn't even want to think about the magnitude of what she did for Diane. She is just content to know they can both get on with their recovery, their lives and the memories still to be made with their families.

A bit of not-so-great news, of the disappointing variety, is that NOTL Today, one of the most popular social media sites for locals, is to be shut down on June 15. Creator and administrator Julia Buxton-Cox started the page, she says, to fill a gap when the old Niagara Advance closed.

We can understand that — we wanted to do the same when we started this newspaper.

She says she feels the purpose of the page has been fulfilled, and there are many other options online for residents to find their news.

Julia stepped into the public domain during a difficult time, and it isn't getting any easier. Her heart is huge, as is her love of the community, and through NOTL Today, she has grasped at every opportunity to promote kindness and respect.

It seems that while for some, kindness during this time has become as contagious as the pandemic itself, we also witness the stress and fear that can also spur anger, impatience and criticism.

Thank you Julia, for setting such a great example of kindness, positivity and generosity of spirit. NOTL Today may shut down, but your impact will continue to have a ripple effect on our community.

Penny Coles
The Local

Trail blazers kickstart first stage of work



Rehabilitation on the Heritage Trail will begin early in June from John Street south to Pafard Street (at Charlotte Street), thanks to several years of planning, fundraising and donations that have come from supporters, as well as residents whose homes back on the trail. The three-metre-wide trail will have a fine crushed stone surface, which is expected to take four weeks to complete, weather dependant. The Heritage Trail Committee of volunteers, hopes to continue to raise awareness of the trail and sustain its maintenance. Visit www.heritagetrail.ca for more information. (Photo supplied)

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Letters! We want letters!

If you have a letter to the editor you'd like to see published, please send it to penny@notllocal.com. Please try to keep it to about 350 words. Sorry, but we won't publish anonymous letters. The deadline is Monday at noon.

The Niagara-on-the-Lake LOCAL

The trusted voice of our community

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COMMENT

How we can prevent new COVID-19 cases in future



Larry Chambers
Eva Liu
Hanna Levy
Special to The Local

As communications technology advances, the internet and social media have taken medical information previously only found in medical libraries or expensive textbooks and made them available to all who wish to access it.

It is now possible for a person to have the same access of information as their physician about treatment and prognoses.

COVID-19 is an example of how we can all be resourceful patients by using the available resources. In addition to having access to this information, you can help shape the conversation around the COVID-19 pandemic by following the Canadian Public Health Association recommendations:

- Be a positive voice of evidence-based information on social media;
- Be a champion of #COVIDkindness by supporting high-risk individuals in your community; and
- Encourage your family, friends and colleagues to follow the advice of public health officials and model healthy behaviours.

Fear about COVID-19 is leading to high levels of stress among people throughout the community. Stress is not an illness, but its adverse effects cannot be ignored. Stress is the feeling of being under too much mental or emotional pressure, which turns into anxiety when you feel unable to cope. A manageable level of stress can be beneficial by pushing us to proactively respond to difficult or new situations.

When stress exceeds the optimal threshold, our

performance starts to deteriorate and the person may feel burned out. When stress becomes unmanageable, it can affect us adversely, instead of preparing us for new challenges. It does so by taking its toll on your body and your immune system.

Getting stress under control can boost your immune system and help prevent serious health problems, such as high blood pressure, heart disease, stroke and dementia. Adverse levels of stress can also lead to disturbed sleep patterns, which in turn also predispose people to heart disease and type 2 diabetes. Additionally, stress affects how we interact with others. Learning how to manage stress can help us build and maintain positive relationships with family and friends.

Managing adverse stress is something we all do throughout our lives, and is especially important during the COVID-19 pandemic. Currently, stress levels stay high for a long period of time, and there is anxiety-provoking misinformation readily available online, shared by those with inadequate knowledge on the outbreak.

There are many techniques to better manage stress, from audio and video guides, to apps and other tools, which can easily be put into practice.

These simple steps are available for everyone to adopt to reduce daily stress, particularly in these challenging times:

- Manage your time by splitting your day into chunks and taking regular breaks, including a lunch break with a brisk walk to ensure you get a change of scene.
- Make lists of what you need to do and prioritize them in order of importance, focusing on those that will help you achieve your goals.
- Do not fall prey to

COVID-19 misinformation. Make sure to double check your sources and maintain a healthy level of skepticism about information from unverified sources.

- Prioritize regular exercise, because the fitter you feel physically, the better you are able to function intellectually. Walking in or near forests and woods is particularly helpful. In Japan, this practice is called Forest Bathing, and can be prescribed by physicians to improve physical function.
- Take deep, soothing breaths when you are under stress. Calming prayer or meditation can also help individuals relax. Mindfulness describes the meditative practice in which we become more aware of ourselves, our actions and their effects on the environment we inhabit. Mindfulness Based Stress Reduction therapy is designed for stress management, and is now being used for treating a variety of illnesses such as depression, anxiety, chronic pain, cancer, diabetes mellitus, hypertension, skin and immune disorders.
- Use simple behavioural modification techniques to build resilience. These include recognizing signs of stress, strengthening the relaxation response, countering unhelpful thoughts, and building a caring community. Resilience is our capacity to manage stressful events. More resilience means having more reserves to manage stressful situations.

No matter which strategies we employ to better manage adverse stress, we are not alone, as the COVID-19 pandemic is demonstrating. All of us

are subject to stressful situations and occasionally find the pressure to be too much to bear. Friends and family can support you on many fronts, such as listening to you and working with you to find ways to reduce stress. They can also help you locate health service resources to assist you in managing your stress.

This also highlights the need for Niagara-on-the-Lake to establish robust support systems for residents outside of times of crisis. According to NOTL's Community Wellness Committee's January 2020 Report, one of the healthy community recommendations states we should increase the availability and extent of programs for mental health for all ages. This can be done in collaboration with the schools and other organizations, such as Red Roof Retreat and the Alzheimer's Society.

In Canada, a variety of

organizations provide support to people experiencing acute and long-term stress, such as the government of Canada's stress management website: <https://www.canada.ca/en/health-canada/services/healthy-living/your-health/lifestyles/your-health-mental-health-coping-stress-health-canada-2008.html>.

When working to reduce stress surrounding your job, relationships or other life circumstances, counselling may help guide you on this path. Counsellors can provide tools to help you talk through conflicts with family, friends and co-workers. You can ask your family physician for more information about counselling, or about other techniques like cognitive training. This is an approach focused on how you think about the problems that cause stress and how to handle them to change your thought process to alleviate this stress.

Changing the way you think can change the way you feel. Those engaged in cognitive training learn skills that can be used to handle stressful situations.

Larry W. Chambers has authored 175 articles and books concerning disease prevention (e.g. dementia), and innovative approaches for continuing professional development. He is research director of the Niagara Regional Campus, School of Medicine, McMaster University. Eva Liu and Hanna Levy are medical students at the Niagara Regional Campus of the McMaster University School of Medicine. They are interested in improving community wellness of frail older adults in NOTL by narrowing the fitness (physical and brain) gap, diversifying housing options for older adults, and increasing economic activity within the community that also increases ability to interact with people and ideas.

LETTERS

We should be thanking decision-makers, not criticizing them

We are in this together.

Is this not what Prime Minister Justin Trudeau and our Premier Doug Ford have been assuring us during the COVID-19 war?

It appears that with some individuals, they believe we are still living in yesterday, and yesterday's rules still apply.

I am sure we all wish that was the case, but unfortunately

it is not. To get back to a life without COVID-19 threatening all of us, it is our responsibility to support our leaders who make the rules to keep us all safe.

I thank the Lord Mayor and council, who made the difficult decision to close down the Town to keep everyone out of harm's way.

Why anyone would sup-

port the actions of unreasonable, self-driven visitors is difficult to understand.

The least each one of us can do is to thank everyone who is doing their best to protect their citizens. Respect and kind words go a long way to reach a better day for us all.

And it will come.

Nellie Keeler
NOTL



Bill Auchterlonie
Special to The Local

Friday, May 29: While the quarter Moon happens late in the day (at 11:29 p.m.) there are nine other events going on prior to that moment, including the Moon in Virgo and Mercury and the North Node in Cancer making in-

conjuncts (formed between planets that are roughly 150 degrees apart) to Saturn, Jupiter and Pluto. These three planets are retrograde. When they begin, each in turn, to go direct, we will see a step-by-step waning of the coronavirus pandemic. This will happen throughout the summer, and into the fall and winter.

On this day in 1953, Edmund Hillary of New Zealand, and Tenzing Norgay of Nepal, were first to reach the summit of Mount Everest as part of a British expedition.

Check out the full week on The Local's Facebook page or at www.lookingupwithbill.com. As Joni Mitchell says: "Shine on!"

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Women find benefits to recovering during pandemic

Continued from page 1

model by showing him the importance of helping others.

She began the assessment process with the transplant team of Toronto's University Health Network in December, and was deemed a match in March.

"The assessment process was very thorough, and the transplant team was always forthcoming about the surgery and its inherent risks. I was confident that I would be in the best hands, and that everything would be okay — and it has been."

Every step of the way, the transplant team took every precaution, and she says she knew they wouldn't have gone ahead with the surgery if they had had any concerns. They make sure the donor is well taken care of, and she knew she could change her mind at any time, right up to the day of surgery.

"I knew I had the support of the whole team," she says.

They were clear there were risks — although nothing life-threatening — but she knew everything was being done to minimize them.

And she was at a place in her life where she knew she could make it work, "so I stepped forward."

When the reality of the current pandemic became obvious in March, Joy reached out to Diane through email to introduce herself as the donor.

She says it didn't seem fair that she knew all about Diane and her family, but they knew nothing about the potential donor that had been found.

Also at that time, she says, "the pandemic was becoming really scary, and I thought it might help give them hope."

Diane and Joy were surprised to hear, about 10 days ahead of time, that their surgeries were scheduled for April 29. They had thought they would have to wait until elective surgeries resumed after cancellations due to COVID-19, but the hospital allowed liver transplants to go ahead when organ donations were available, prioritizing the most ill patients.

Neither of them could have any visitors during their stay in the hospital, but the women did have one "very emotional" meeting after their surgery, says Joy. Both were released the same day,

May 6.

Last week, home and recovering, they were feeling well enough to talk publicly about their experience.

Joy says she's been uncomfortable, mostly resting, but not in the pain she had anticipated post-surgery.

"I'm getting stronger every day. I know it won't be long until I'm back to my old pre-surgery self."

Most of her days are spent napping and hanging out with her husband, who is looking after the household, and her son.

She didn't know when she made the decision to be a donor they would both be home, due to the pandemic, but it has worked out well.

Now, she says, James "gets it, he's seen what has happened, and he understands the stakes involved. He's been really sweet, always asking me if I need anything."

Her mother, who lives in New Brunswick, had planned to come to care for her, and she's finding it hard to be so far away and unable to help, says Joy.

But other than that, the self-isolating has turned out to be a benefit.

"Normally I would have had a busy schedule to clear. I'd be out every night and much of the weekend. I haven't had to do that."

Joy has always been active in her community, with volunteer work and sitting on agency boards. Add to that the busy life of a mom driving her son to several activities, there would have been much she would normally be doing. But of course these days are anything but normal, and her calendar is blank for the foreseeable future.

The response she received at work turned out better than she could have hoped. A teacher by trade, she leads a team of 10 people for Accenture, a global consulting company ranked one of Canada's top 10 employers, which provides a range of services for select clients. She says she hesitated to talk to her colleagues about what she was planning to do, and when she asked for two months off and explained what it was for, she was amazed by the response. She was willing to take holidays, but instead she is off on full pay, and they have been "overwhelmingly supportive."

In the days since surgery, she's heard from the Peirce

family, she says. "They've been wonderful. They're giving me privacy, but they've also been really sweet."

Without minimizing the surgery, Joy says, she's found this to be "a great experience" from the beginning.

"It seems like a small blip in my life," she says, and difficult to process that "something so small for me could have such a huge impact, in just a matter of weeks, that could potentially add years to someone else's life."

She says if asked, she'd be happy to speak to anyone who is interested in her experience, who might be considering a living donation. For her, she says, "the reward far outweighs the risk."

Joy says she feels uncomfortable thinking that she's saved someone's life — she's just glad it turned out well, and she and Diane can get on with their lives.

"I'm honoured that I was able to help Diane, and I wish her many more decades of making memories with her family."

At home with Mike, Diane says she too is taking her recovery "one day at a time, and getting stronger every day."

It's interesting to feel physically that she has a new organ in her body, she says — not a lot of people get to experience that. She felt her health improve almost immediately, with many of the signs of liver disease dramatically reduced.

She has taken herself off the opioids she was prescribed post-surgery, and will take Tylenol if needed, but she has gone several days without needing pain killers. She is, however, on anti-rejection drugs, which she will have to take the rest of her life, although the dosage may change.

From her first contact with the donor program, Diane says the team of people looking after her has been fantastic, showing support and kindness throughout the process. "My doctor said from the beginning she would treat me like she would treat her own mother, and she has."

Diane and Joy were both released ahead of schedule, and Diane feels that's been a bonus — sleeping and resting comfortably is much easier at home, she says, rather than in a hospital, with people coming and going at all hours. As the weather improves, she can



Adrian Cooper and Mike Peirce, standing, with Natalie Cooper, her mom Diane, and then 15-month-old Olive, gathered in the Cooper living room in October to talk about their search for a liver donor. (Penny Coles)

sit outside and read, and be physically comfortable while she convalesces.

"When I went into the hospital, things around us had already shut down, and when I came out, nothing had changed. I think this has been a bit of a blessing, giving me time to recover before I start seeing people."

Diane is slowly increasing her activity, trying not to overdo it but wanting to increase her strength. The medication she's on causes some difficulty sleeping, so she's not napping a lot — she walks around the house and short distances outside, and talks to family and friends on FaceTime.

She's also baking and cooking, which she has always enjoyed. And twice a day, she takes her temperature and weighs herself, sending the results to the hospital team looking after her.

Recently, she was put in touch with a local woman the same age as her, who had a liver transplant 20 years ago, and is still active and doing well — she has competed in lawn bowling around the world. One piece of advice she had for Diane, which seems particularly relevant

during this time, is to stay away from crowds, which can pose a threat to compromised auto-immune systems.

She misses her family, and finds her favourite time of day is spent sitting by a window overlooking her yard, where Mike has installed a tree swing.

Natalie brings Olive over to swing, where her grandmother can watch, "and she is so sweet," says Diane. "At least I get to see her. I miss the day-to-day contact, though, and I can't wait to hug her."

And that brings her to how it feels to know the day will come when she'll be able to do that.

"I'm forever grateful for this life that's been given to me. I just met Joy briefly, and to think now that someone would do this for a stranger — there are no words to explain how that feels. I think about it when I wake up every morning, and send gratitude to her."

She has remained positive throughout this experience, she says, and she believes that's an important part of why everything has worked out so well. "I believed that this was going to happen, and it did."

Before finding Joy, Diane says, more than 60 people took the screening process online, although she doesn't know who they were. When she heard Joy was a perfect match, in the midst of the pandemic, she wasn't sure the surgery would go forward, but here they are, just a short time later, each recovering and doing well at home.

She expects she and her family will stay in touch with Joy, and she hopes, when they are both fully recovered and this time of physical distancing is behind them, to host a garden party for Joy and her family.

"I feel I want to thank her, over and over, and to remind her that we will never take for granted what she did for us. It's so huge. She is our angel."

For more information about living organ transplants, contact the University Health Network Centre for Living Organs at 1-416-340-5400, or email livingorgandonation@uhn.ca.

There are also links and answers to the many questions about live liver transplants at uhn.ca/Transplant/Living_Donor_Program/Pages/living_liver_donor.aspx.



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Farmers' Market a welcome sight for locals

Penny Coles The Local

There was no breakfast on offer, no relaxing on brightly-coloured picnic tables while chatting with neighbours, and no music to enjoy, but Saturday's Farmers' Market at The Village was a welcome sight for locals who have been itching to get back to something that feels at least somewhat normal.

The early birds experienced a "short sprinkle of rain," says market co-ordinator Sharon Brinsmead-Taylor, but then the sun came out and the weather was ideal, better than it has been for many season openings in past years.

"The day went extremely well. I really did not know what to expect, but our town came out and supported local," she says.

Brinsmead-Taylor was delighted the Province paved the way just in time to allow the local market to open on its scheduled 14th annual opening. Leading up to the day, she worked with Niagara Region Public Health on safety measures to reduce the potential spread of COVID-19.

The market looks and operates a little differently than in previous years, but locals took their place in line, respecting physical distancing, some, but not all, wearing masks.

Staff were ensuring everyone used hand sanitizer before taking their place in line, asking for only one person per household, and directing traffic to move in one direction. There were no washrooms, and no handling of products before they were purchased.

There was an obvious feeling of welcome familiarity, with locals delighted to chat with neighbours in line, and connect with vendors from previous seasons.

"Everyone was fantastic," says Brinsmead-Taylor. "Customers were very conscious of physically distancing themselves from other customers. People were patient, waiting their turn, and even though they wanted to chat with vendors, were mindful of making their purchases and moving on if there were others waiting."

Some were not happy with the one-shopper limit per household, she says.

"We do allow couples to

wait in line together, but when they shop, only one can go in, with the exception of a single parent with a child, or a senior needing assistance. If the shopping area was quiet, we did allow couples to enter."

However, they made it clear that in future weeks, if it's busy, "only one of them will be able to enter."

Brinsmead-Taylor says she wasn't counting the number of shoppers, but in speaking with vendors, heard "they all had good sales, comparable with previous years' opening day figures, so attendance must have been on par with past opening days."

There were only nine vendors, with the Province restricting markets to farmers and food products. Rose and Ken Bartel, anchors at the market from its earliest days, were there with vegetable plants, but there was no sign of their beautiful cut flower arrangements.

During the coming weeks, more farmers will be setting up stands as their produce is ready for market.

"We see this every season," says Brinsmead-Taylor.

"Early on farmers have very little available, so they put off their start date until they have enough to sell."

She's hoping the Region will allow non-food items, so some

of the popular vendors who sell items such as bath and body products, antiques, housewares, jewelry and art can return.

"I feel having these vendors present really rounds out the

farmers' market shopping experience. Fingers crossed."

The Farmers' Market at the Village on Niagara Stone Road is open Saturdays from 8 a.m. to 1 p.m.



Teresa Costello, a familiar sight at the Farmers' Market, buys some vegetable plants from Rose and Ken Bartel. (Photos by Penny Coles)

James Cadeau, with Liam and Sophie, are selling some of Sweets and Swirls' most popular treats at the market. After picking up his order, Dow Wright was heading off to his tee time at the NOTL Golf Club, a sign of life very slowly returning to normal.



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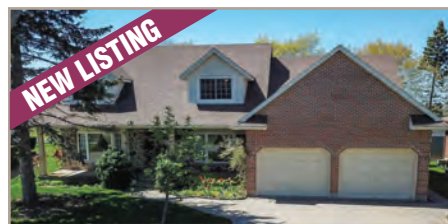
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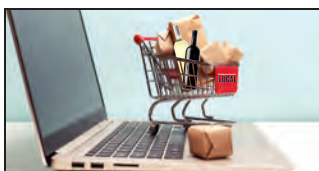
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Local senior plays piano for his friends, by phone

Penny Coles
The Local

Although missing their Sunday church service, Robert Cleary and Fiona Macleod are on the receiving end of regular phone calls that brighten their day.

Cleary calls Sunday one of their “anchor days,” when, pre-pandemic, they would get up, get dressed and go to church.

They miss that ritual. Instead, they listen to the service online, and when it’s finished, they look forward to a call from long-time friend Doug Hunter, but not to talk.

The friends chat often during the week, says Cleary. The Sunday phone call is all about music, when Hunter puts down his phone and plays hymns for them on his piano.

Hunter, soon to turn 95, spent Sunday mornings over a period of 20 years as the organist at St. Andrew’s Presbyterian Church, which he has attended for as long as he can remember. He retired as organist in 1995. He also sang in the choir, as do Cleary and Macleod, still.

Hunter had hoped to reach his 80-year milestone as a choir member, but his

doctor told him last summer he had to stop, or lose his voice completely.

As much as he loves to sing, he also likes to talk, so he gave up the choir after 79 years. “I’m pretty happy with that,” he says.

Music continues to be an important part of his life. Living independently in a Pleasant Manor condo, he has a piano with him, and loves to play for others.

When COVID-19 shut down physical church services, which continue virtually, Hunter began calling a few of his friends to play hymns for them.

“We love it,” says Cleary. “We really enjoy the hymns.”

And so did the others on Hunter’s list, which soon grew to 22 people. The phone calls had to be divided, with 11 friends receiving their piano concert of hymns every other week, making that day feel a little bit more like Sunday for them.

“I have always enjoyed music,” says Hunter. “I play hymns at home on Sunday mornings, and I wondered if I could share them with others. It was an idea that just came to me out of the blue, as a way to help those who are shut in. I’m playing my favourites for them. It’s a



Doug Hunter played the organ at St. Andrew’s Presbyterian Church years over a period of 20 years. He retired in 1995, but was able to play for his grandson’s wedding. (Photo supplied)

lot of work, but it’s also a lot of fun.”

Hunter plays 10 different hymns, over a period of 10 to 15 minutes, and for all except his friends Cleary and Macleod, whom he talks to regularly, he also spends about 10 minutes chatting. He values that time, he says, and to some of his friends, it likely means as much as the music.

Hunter considers himself one of the lucky ones, “very, very fortunate,” with

loving family members close by, and daily phone calls. But he really wanted to help those who are feeling isolated during the pandemic, some of whom are cut off from their families.

He’s been asked why he doesn’t record his music and play it over the phone, “but I want to talk to people. That’s an important part of it. And I’m getting a real kick out of it. I’ve had a lot of very appreciative responses. Every-

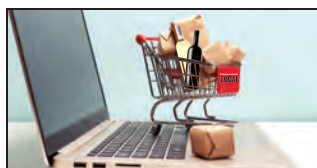
body seems to like it — I haven’t had anybody turn me down yet.” And then, in true Hunter fashion, he adds, “if a line goes dead, I’ll cross that one off the list.”

With such a love of music himself, he says, “if I can reach others through music, I’m happy to do it. It’s great to have it in your life.”

Cleary calls Hunter an “energizer bunny, and a wonderful person. We really appreciate what he’s doing.”

Macleod adds that “a lot of people Doug plays for can’t get out. It’s wonderful for someone who isn’t feeling well, or doesn’t have family nearby, to have him reaching out to them in that context.”

Cleary agrees. “Doug has been involved in the church for so long, he has the experience to understand the value of outreach. He knows what people need, and he reaches out to them to offer it.”



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Jazz Festival livestreaming, preparing for summer festival

Mike Balsom
Special to The Local

July is Mardi Gras time for the TD Niagara Jazz Festival, and things are already under-way for the summer celebration.

And during the lockdown, with the cancellation of live events, the festival continues to offer concerts online every Friday and Saturday, from 7 to 8 p.m.

Since mid-March, Jazz Festival founder Juliet Dunn has been quick to jump into livestreaming to keep the TD Niagara Jazz Festival in the public eye. These livestreams, archived on their YouTube channel, encompass two of the festival's well-known series: Live, Love, Jazz, and In Your Own Backyard.

Their first online live session featured St. Catharines native James Bryan (Philosopher Kings, Prozzak, Sunshine State) playing jazz guitar. Since then, local jazz mainstays John Sherwood and Randy Stirtzinger have performed, along with pianists Miguel de Armas and Adrean Farrugia, and guitarists Eric St. Laurent and Roy Patterson, among many others.

Dunn and her husband Peter Shea have also appeared live, of course, in both their Shea D Duo and Le Duo Parisien guises. In all, Dunn has been busy, with the Jazz Festival averaging three shows a week.

This Friday, features Roy Patterson on Guitar, and Saturday The Vaudevillian. Both events can be seen at niagarajazzfestival.com or www.

facebook.com/jazzniagara/live.

Christopher Butcher, leader of the New Orleans-based Heavyweights Brass Band, kicked off the series of livestreamed Mardi Gras workshops in preparation for Niagara's summer version of the New Orleans party. He was joined by Crescent City legend Windex Pete, for an informative history lesson/travelogue on the city's rich traditions.

This past Tuesday, Austin Patterson, a multimedia artist who works in the film industry in Vancouver, led a group of participants in a mask-making tutorial from her studio on the west coast. Born to artist parents in the arts community of Sechelt, B.C., Patterson demonstrated methods she uses to create traditional New Orleans masks decorated with items found around the house, including broken jewelry.

The Mardi Gras sessions continue this Tuesday, June 2, from 6 to 7 p.m., featuring Funky Fashion with Dr. Brice Miller.

Every Tuesday from now until July 14, a different workshop on New Orleans culture will be livestreamed on the Jazz Festival's Facebook page. Future sessions include jug band techniques, Cajun cooking, line dancing lessons and a tutorial on making Mardi Gras-style cocktails.

The second annual Summer Mardi Gras is scheduled for Saturday, July 18. Dunn remains hopeful that larger gatherings will be allowed by that time. Until then, though,

she's planning for a number of different possibilities.

It begins with the traditional Mardi Gras parade. "The tricky part that we're working on right now is to have a parade, but without people in the parade," says Dunn. That will probably mean a band will play on the back of a flat-bed truck, and wind its way around St. Catharines and, possibly, Niagara-on-the-Lake. As has become so familiar over the last few weeks, it's a way of celebrating together without actually being together.

"You can go out in your garden, show your mask, and cheer on the band," Dunn adds. "Whatever happens, that's what we'll do, so now we'll just wait to see what the government says in terms of how many people can gather."

Dunn realizes that there won't be a move from "complete lockdown," as she calls it, to having more than 200 people gathering. She and her team have developed plans based on the situations in which 25, 35 or 50 people are permitted to gather. One of those plans includes a novel utilization of the tents that the Jazz Festival has purchased over the years.

"We have the 10-foot by 10-foot tents in our shed, and I thought that we could rent each tent to a family, or a group of up to 6 people," she says. "They would get their tent, their comfy chairs, their masks and beads, their cooler and food. That way, it's a V.I.P. experience, and we would do it in a secret pop-



Juliet Dunn and Peter Shea in masks at last summer's Mardi Gras festival. (Photo supplied)

up location that won't be announced until the last minute."

Logistically, even if gatherings of up to 25 are allowed, that would leave room for only 12 Jazz Festival guests. The other 13 would include the band, the sound technician, the livestreaming technicians, and Dunn and Shea.

The Mardi Gras show will be livestreamed, so the on-site attendees would add to the atmosphere as V.I.P. guests. The viewers at home would be treated to a professional broadcast, with at least two cameras, close-ups of the musicians and professional sound.

As performers around the world adjust to the inability to perform in front of live, in-person audiences, avenues such as the TD Niagara Jazz Festival

are important opportunities for musicians to continue to earn an income doing what they do best.

Dunn points out that when all is said and done for 2020, the usual \$330,000 budget for the festival will shrink to a little less than half of that amount. The contribution from title sponsor TD Canada Trust was reduced this year, but guarantees from the City of St. Catharines and the Town of Niagara-on-the-Lake will help pay musicians for their appearances in the online sessions.

Other sources of revenue for the TD Niagara Jazz Festival include the Ontario Music Fund, the Celebrate Ontario Grant, the Niagara Community Foundation and the Niagara Region. Though Dunn says that expenses have dropped

significantly with the cancellation and postponement of some of the larger events, they still have to cover the office rent and insurance costs as usual.

After Mardi Gras, Dunn says the World Music event, usually held the same weekend, will be moved to September, which gives her more time to prepare for whatever contingencies are necessary for that event.

As she continues to plan for any scenario in terms of what size gatherings will be allowed this summer, Dunn's thoughts also move beyond September, when she has to sit down and apply for funding for 2021. Of course, she hopes, as many others do, that the TD Niagara Jazz Festival can return in full force by then.

Bravo Niagara! collaborates on concert for refugee relief

Penny Coles
The Local

Following a successful launch of its first virtual concert, Bravo Niagara! has collaborated on a global initiative in support of the UN Refugee Agency's COVID-19 response, to premier Thursday.

With this season's Niagara concert series sidelined by the pandemic, artistic director Chris Mori and her daughter Alexis Spieldenner, executive director

and co-founder of Bravo Niagara! are turning to livestream events. They began with *We Are the World*, which featured more than 150 singers and musicians, including some local students, recorded separately at home while in self-isolation during the pandemic. That video, the first for Bravo Niagara! received more than 27,000 views in the week following its launch.

The local duo of Mori and Spieldenner have since collaborated with Maestro

Shlomo Mintz, a world-renowned violin virtuoso, on the virtual charity concert premiering this week, featuring more than 50 international artists from around the world.

After the success of their first video, says Mori, "I reached out to Shlomo Mintz, a friend from my school days at Juilliard who is scheduled to perform for Bravo Niagara!'s 2020/21 season. I was absolutely thrilled when Shlomo accepted the invitation to

participate in a virtual performance of Vivaldi's celebrated Concerto for Four Violins."

Maestro Mintz will be joined by Carmine Lauri, concertmaster of the London Symphony Orchestra, Jonathan Crow, concertmaster of the Toronto Symphony Orchestra, and Nikki Chooi, concertmaster of the Buffalo Philharmonic Orchestra — and a Bravo Niagara! artist — as well as musicians from major orchestras in Canada, the U.S.

and more.

All donations from the concert go to help protect refugees and the communities that welcome them in the global fight against COVID-19.

"The original idea behind the concert was to share a message of hope, by bringing music and joy into people's homes during this challenging time," said Mintz in a news release. "We know there are millions more around the world who have been forced from their homes and are in urgent need of humanitarian support — especially now. This brought me to the idea to turn this performance into a musical charity fundraiser. Our goal is to help raise funds for UNHCR in their efforts to support refugee families now facing the threat of COVID-19."

The event will include a video introduction from Filippo Grandi, UN High Commissioner for Refugees, and is supported by Barbara Hendricks, a globally acclaimed American-born classical singer and UNHCR's lifetime Honorary Goodwill Ambassador.

"Music truly has the power to uplift and unite individuals — particularly during times of hardship," said Hendricks. "As we all remain physically distanced, virtual communications are the connective thread that are keeping us together. I'm grateful for Maestro Mintz and for all the artists helping support the vital work of UNHCR in support of refugees. Every dollar raised will have a life-saving impact on millions of children, women and men who have been uprooted from their homes."

Added Grandi, "this is a great example of organizations coming together creatively across the globe to support refugees, and we are enormously grateful to Maestro Shlomo Mintz, Bravo Niagara! Festival of the Arts, and all the brilliant musicians who have come together from all over the world to collaborate to raise funds for UNHCR's COVID-19 response."

The concert premieres Thursday, May 28 at 2 p.m. on the UNHCR YouTube channel, and will be shared on Facebook at Shlomo Mintz Violin Virtuoso.



Maestro Shlomo Mintz is leading a virtual concert for refugee relief Thursday, May 28. (Photo supplied)

Tennis club, public courts open for play

Penny Coles
The Local

The Niagara-on-the-Lake Tennis Club celebrates its 50th anniversary this year, one that will be far from what was anticipated.

Much of the normal activity of a very social club has been cancelled, including tournaments, skills clinics, and festivities expected to recognize the milestone year.

Board member Rosemary Goodwin says celebrations have been put off until 2021, with a bonus of possibly attracting more members from previous decades.

The much-anticipated 2020 season began at Memorial Park Saturday morning, with members anxious to get out on the courts, says club vice-president Gerry McIlhorne.

Members were expecting to wait until the end of June for town facilities to open, but were happy with the provincial decision to open tennis courts and the out-

door sports facilities.

Working with guidelines established by Tennis Canada and the Ontario Tennis Association, says McIlhorne, the club directors were confident they could open for play safely.

They are restricting the courts to singles only, unless four members from the same household want to play doubles.

And for now, there will be no guests or groups on the courts.

Each player must use their own marked ball, using their feet or racquet to return stray balls.

There is an entrance and exit gate, and all players must keep to physical distancing guidelines — a simple requirement in tennis singles play, says McIlhorne, who was at the courts Saturday to monitor compliance of all guidelines.

Although no date has been set, directors are planning for a phase two of operations, with doubles play

for all, the return of tournaments and events, and availability equipment that is being withheld for now.

The club has grown from 26 members who began playing on courts located on the grounds of the former Niagara District Secondary School, to more than 300 members.

In 1986, following two years of determined efforts and fundraising, the club partnered with the Town to develop the Memorial Park Tennis Centre, with an omni-court surface, “less jarring on bodily joints than traditional asphalt,” says Rosemary Goodwin, who has prepared a brief history of the club to mark its 50th celebration.

In 1990, a tennis pavilion was built by club volunteers, with significant support from the Town, writes Goodwin in the club archives, “and continues to be the centre of club social activities.”

In 2002, the courts were resurfaced with the same omni-court material, and in the following years, there were several improvements and additions to the pavilion, and with support from the Town and grant funding, in 2012 the current acrylic-coated cushioned asphalt court surfaces were installed.

Since the Province declared the courts could open, “the Town has done a wonderful job preparing the tennis courts, and residents are loving it,” says Goodwin.

The nets went up at the public courts in Rye Park Thursday morning, Goodwin says, “and have been in steady use ever since. I expect it’s the same at St. David’s and Garrison Village. In the parks, residents tend to arrive by bicycle and play for half an hour, then move on. It ebbs and flows comfortably all day long.”

It’s a trickier situation at Memorial Park, she adds, with the club organizing 300 adult players on just four courts. “It’s a big challenge to structure things such that distancing, hygiene protocols and contact-tracing can be implemented. Players are accustomed to piling in, 16 at a time, with socializing during the crossover times.”



Stuart and Sylvia Allen cycled over from their home on Harmony Drive to play tennis on the Rye Park courts Saturday, which saw a steady stream of players throughout the day. (Rosemary Goodwin)

Tennis play will proceed safely under the guidance of club president Wendy Dell, in her fourth and final year as president.

“She is very hard-working and conscientious,” says Goodwin, “and working with the support of the club board of directors.”

To maintain a safe environment, the club has hired an online booking system, and the restrictions for playing “are similar to what we’ve become accustomed to in supermarkets.”

Online booking “is the only way to avoid having a lot of people show up at the

same time and create crowding situations. The added bonus is the ability to provide contact tracing to health authorities in the event someone is discovered to test positive,” says Goodwin.

Players “are panting for tennis,” she adds. “So many people have said ‘if only we had tennis, then we wouldn’t mind all the other deprivations.’ But a big part of the joy of tennis is the social interaction and camaraderie. The task for the club’s directors is to rein that in, reminding everyone that the pandemic hasn’t gone away; the virus is still active in the

community, and we all have to follow the guidelines in order to avoid an outbreak. All those front-line workers whom we were cheering a few weeks ago will be very disappointed if the caseload spikes again. So we’re very happy that tennis is back, but it’s certainly not back to normal,” says Goodwin.

“Of course that’s the situation everywhere in Niagara-on-the-Lake,” she adds. “Everyone is working out how to make adjustments such that we can have more freedom and activity, while still staying safe and keeping others safe.”



Wayne Vent and Patrick MacNeil were on the Memorial Park NOTL Tennis Club courts Saturday morning, where they had no problem physical distancing and following other safety measures set out by the club. (Penny Coles)

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Actor Tara Rosling turns to ‘green’ products

Penny Coles
The Local

Tara Rosling, TV and film actor best known locally for her huge body of work for the Shaw Festival, is turning her sights from the stage, to a small, online, community-oriented “green” business.

She is sourcing green goods

that have been hand-crafted with awareness and care, are eco-friendly, some zero-waste, home and body products to sell locally — so locally she is promising delivery, in paper bags, either on foot or by bicycle where possible, and always contact-free.

The products she is offering through her Little Green

Shop, she says, are those she herself loves to use: laundry soap strips; beeswax wraps; and bar soaps, lip butters, and bath salts hand-crafted, in St. Catharines, by Sarah of Sarah’s Soaps, who, Rosling says, “goes out into the woods to forage for natural items, such as sumac, and makes these into beautiful products.”

Refillable cleaning essentials, chemical-free household cleaners, all natural, zero waste mascara from Birch Babe, and “a lovely array of all natural lip and cheek tints from the same company” are some of the products she offers.

“Every product on the little green shelves is planet, human and heart friendly,” she says.

And every order includes “some kind of handmade treasure — whether home baked goods or a handwritten poem tucked inside a hand-sewn envelope.”

Rosling describes her switch from the stage to a home busi-

ness, while seemingly a huge leap from a very public to a much more private existence, as being an example of the paradox that is her nature.

“The world of the stage and performance is very public,” she says. “It’s flashy, adrenalin-charged and dynamic.”

And as much as Rosling loves it, she says, as an introvert, she also needs to spend time “quiet and alone,” and enjoys a slower-paced lifestyle in her cozy Chautauqua home to recharge. She will happily spend a day in the kitchen, baking healthy crackers for her daughter Eliana, and “loving that my daughter loves them,” she says.

“These are two diametrically opposed lives, polar existences,” Rosling says, and recently, she had been increasingly thinking about being ready to start a small eco business, “a seed that

was planted a long time ago.”

It is perhaps a “crazy time to embark on a small business,” she adds, but “it feels like an important time to go small, local and green.”

All around us, the world is changing, Rosling says, including her “teeny, tiny world” of entertainment, whether TV, film or stage. She was not pursuing work at the Shaw this season, hoping a TV series she was working on would be continued. It was not. She had an audition in Toronto for other work this winter, only to learn that project, like so much else in her world, was shut down.

Her husband, Patrick McManus, was in rehearsal with the Stratford Festival, but early performances have been cancelled, with no way of knowing yet what will happen in the future.

“It’s a good thing I’ve got My

Little Green Shop,” jokes Rosling, referring to her new endeavour, but on a serious note, adds, “nobody knows what’s going to happen, whether this is going to go on for a couple of months, six months or more. We’re all dealing with uncertainty.”

Before March break, she helped her daughter Eliana and her friends, who were part of a Crossroads Public School Eco Club, to source and gather eco-friendly products to sell at the school’s home show, which was held before schools were closed. That rekindled her interest in offering some of those products for sale in NOTL, she says.

And now, given our need to stay home, “there is no better time to go local,” she says.

Rosling can be emailed at tara@littlegreenshop.org, or visit her website at littlegreenshop.org.



Tara Rosling has created a Little Green Shop in her Chautauqua home. (Penny Coles)

CROSSWORD PUZZLE

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15 Lead vocalist of U2
16 Sleepless in Seattle director --- Ephron
17 Overweight
18 Embryonic flowers
19 --- Lane, Clark’s love
20 Shell lobster
22 Exercise venue
23 --- the ground floor
24 Adeptness
25 A lot
27 Think constantly
29 Badger
31 Beloved
32 Anti-ageist org.
34 Pulpit delivery
36 Cushion
39 Comparatively costly
41 Getting on
43 Chop
44 Base
46 Part
47 Web address
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- 50 E.g. Courvoisier
53 Pricey
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57 Stock-market debuts
58 Monotonous routine
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62 Established ceremony
63 Workplace regulation agency
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67 It starts every Sunday
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71 Author/astronomer Carl ---
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3 Brought down
4 Secluded retreat
5 Glows
6 Abate
7 Harsher
8 --- 500, car race
9 Of worldwide scope

- 10 Sign up
11 Common odds ending
12 Operatic solos
13 Endures
21 “A Beautiful Mind” actor
26 Record keeper
28 Deform
30 Emulator
32 Fire residue
33 Consumed
35 Donnybrook
36 Bringing forth
37 Everyone
38 Stain
40 One paid to jump out of perfectly serviceable aircraft
42 Before, poetically
45 Soon afterwards
47 Invisible
49 Areas of land
50 About
51 Anything that stupefies
52 Have to
55 Generous annual visitor
56 Fire-raising
59 Pre-loved
61 Mets’ old stadium
64 Alias

Virgil pickleball courts open



Chris Smythe and his seven-year-old son Rory try out the game of pickleball for the first time on the Virgil courts Saturday morning. It’s a new sport for them, says Chris. They live nearby, and he decided last season to purchase paddles and balls. He and Rory were happy to be outside, get some exercise and give the sport, growing rapidly in popularity, a try. The opening of the courts, Chris says, “is perfect timing.” (Penny Coles)

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PUZZLE ANSWERS

Used, 61 Shea, 64 A k a.
Gotta, 55 Santa, 56 Arson, 59
Tracts, 50 Circa, 51 Opium, 52
45 And then, 47 Unseen, 49
All, 38 Dye, 40 Para, 42 Ere,
35 Melee, 36 Producing, 37
Bend, 30 Ape, 32 Ash, 33 Aie,
Russett Crowe, 26 Clerk, 28
To one, 12 Arias, 13 Lasts, 21
Cosmopolitan, 10 Enlist, 11
6 Ebb, 7 Rougher, 8 Indy, 9
Overthrow, 4 Nest, 5 Cleams,
Down: 1 Aroma, 2 Labor, 3
69 A man, 70 Edna, 71 Sagan.
66 Cute, 67 Week, 68 Ten to,
62 Rite, 63 O S H A, 65 Chins,
I P Os, 68 Rut, 60 N A S C A R,
Cognac, 53 Dear, 54 U S A, 57
Role, 47 U R L, 48 Netted, 50
41 Elderly, 43 Hew, 44 Alkali, 46
Semmon, 36 Pad, 39 Steeper,
Hassle, 31 Pet, 32 A A R P, 34
Art, 25 Much, 27 Obsess, 29
20 Mortar, 22 Gym, 23 In at, 24
17 Obese, 18 Buds, 19 Lois,
al, 14 Ravel, 15 Bono, 16 Nora,
Across: 1 Along, 6 Etc, 10 Et

Sudoku solution from May 14, 2020

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



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OBITUARY



BARTHOLOMEW, MYRA—Peacefully passed away on May 21, 2020 at the Greater Niagara General Hospital at the age of 88. Predeceased by beloved husband Philip, her mother Marion Holden, father Thomas Holden, and twin brothers Bryan and Owen. Loving mother of Barbara, Betty, Donald, David (Brenda). Proud Grandmother of Alan (Lisa), Heather (Derek), Eric (Margarita), Anne-Marie, Brittney, Melanie, Laura, Adam, Benjamin, Nora, Ruth, Kyle and Super Granny of Ava and Andrew. Survived by her loving sister-in-law Eileen, many friends and family. Special thanks to all of her loving caregivers.

Myra was an expert baker who enjoyed making jellies and jams from her gardens. She was an artist, world traveler and lover of the arts. She enjoyed the outdoors and relished her outings with friends and sorority sisters. Myra was a kind, loving, and welcoming host who enjoyed sharing tea and stories at her B & B in Niagara-on-the-Lake. She will be dearly missed by all.

Cremation has taken place. A celebration of Myra's life will be held in Niagara-on-the-Lake at a later date. For those who wish, memorial donations to the Heart & Stroke foundation and/or the Canadian Cancer Society would be greatly appreciated. Memories, photos and condolences may be shared at www.morganfuneral.com.



OBITUARY



CLEMENT, MARJORIE HELEN (NEE HOWARTH)—July 23, 1928 - May 17, 2020 Marjorie Helen Clement (nee Howarth) passed away peacefully in her sleep during the early morning hours of May 17th, 2020. Marjorie would have been 92 on her next birthday. Marjorie has been a resident of Willoughby Manor in Niagara Falls for the last 5 years but Niagara-on-the-Lake was her home for almost all of the first 87 years of her

life, 62 of those years shared with husband, Harold Clement. Harold passed away in 2009. Marjorie is survived by her three sons: Wallace (Elsie), Jack, Thomas (Wendy), and daughter-in-law Lesley Clement. Her nine grandchildren: Christopher Clement (Saye), Jeffrey Clement (Corrina), Aron Clement, Jessica Clement-Lefevre (Randal), Lara Weber (Joshua), Ellice Whitford (Curtis), Kaitlin Clement, Julian Clement, Alexandra Clement McNamara (Adam) and 12 great-grandchildren.

Marjorie worked various part-time jobs while raising her family in Niagara. Many will remember her as their NDSS school bus driver when she became the first female bus driver in Ontario. Marjorie enrolled in Niagara College the same year as her youngest son. She studied library technology, and graduated at the top of her class. She worked for the Niagara Regional Library System until its closure in 1979.

Marjorie will be remembered as a fierce competitor at the bridge table. She loved the challenge of duplicate and played contract bridge regularly well into her 80's. She enjoyed all kinds of card games and many, many evenings were spent around her and Harold's dining room table playing cards with family and friends.

Marjorie loved her home at the corner of Nelles and Davy Streets in Niagara-on-the-Lake. She and Harold moved into it shortly after the war and made it their home for sixty years. Her attractive wrap-around porch was a favourite spot to sit and enjoy a cup of tea while reading the papers. She loved to visit with friends as they passed by on their way to the Commons.

Marjorie belonged to St. Mark's Anglican Church in Niagara-on-the-Lake and was very involved with the parish, sharing her love of flowers as a member of the flower guild for many years. A celebration of her very long and full life will be held at St. Mark's when the family is able to travel to be together.

In lieu of flowers, donations in Marjorie's memory can be made to St. Mark's Church or to the charity of your choice.



ROBERTSON, ANNA "ANN" (DYCK) (NEE BARTELS)—On May 15, 2020. We celebrate the life of our beloved Ann, who went to be with the Lord in her 98th year. Ann will be sadly missed by her son Jim; son Gord (Mary Anne) grandchildren Chris (Meredith), great-granddaughters Savanna and Erika; grandson Dan (Gill), great-grandchildren Annabelle and Nolan; daughter Karen; daughter Nancy (Kevin Dick) grandchildren

Ashley and Connor; step-son Bill (Susan) Robertson, step-grandsons Mark (Julie) and step great-grandson Mason; step-grandson Warren (Andrea), step-great-grandchildren Noah and Elsie; step-son Bob (Sharon) Robertson, step-grandchildren Meagan, Melissa; as well as numerous precious nieces and nephews. She was predeceased by her husbands, Jacob Dyck in 1989 and Bruce Robertson in 2002. Born on March 30, 1922, at Fuerstenwerder, Ukraine, her family immigrated to Canada in July 1924, settling at Beaverville and then Hespeler in the Cambridge, Ontario area. With her father, she helped to build a home in Niagara-on-the-Lake in 1940. On May 11, 1946, she married Jake Dyck and tended to their small farm while Jake started his car sales business. They raised their family in the Niagara-on-the-Lake area. They wintered in Florida and travelled extensively around the world, experiencing adventures that few of us can imagine. Ann had known Bruce Robertson for many years. They married October 24, 1992, continuing to winter in Florida and travelling. The story of her life, the lessons and her values are embedded in our hearts to cherish forever. Ann was a woman of great faith who loved the Lord. She was a kind, generous, and loving soul who treasured her family and friends, giving of herself and her time freely to everyone. For over 15 years, she resided at Pleasant Manor in Virgil, reuniting with life-long pals and enjoying new friendships. If euchre, rummy cube and scrabble were competitive sports, she would be a gold medal champion. Ann will be missed more than words can express. Our sincerest thanks go to the wonderful and caring staff at Pleasant Manor who are beyond comparison in their compassion and dedication. In lieu of flowers, donations may be made in Ann's memory to the Mennonite Central Committee, or a charity of your choice would be accepted by the family.

Memories, photos and condolences may be shared at www.morganfuneral.com.



IN MEMORIAM



Matthew John Magee
March 9, 1947 - May 27, 2019

**As the river flows
Gently to the sea
Darling so we go**

Some things were meant to be

**Take my hand, take my whole life too
But I can't help falling in love with you**

Happy travels Matthew. I love you.



May the peace that comes
from the memories of a love
shared, comfort you.
*Remember them with
a Loving Tribute.*

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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

Our customers are always on good ground with us

Mulch

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

Decorative Stone

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

Soil

- Top Dressing
- Topsoil
- Triple Mix

Gravel

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- 3/4" Clear
- Traffic Binder
- Masonry Sand
- Concrete Sand
- Screening

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