Town to help enforce what he pinned his hopes on the decision, the general manager and the Region deferred a departure face covering legislation. 

hoped some level of governance situation, as he waited and been dealing with a difficult 

Busy travel centre began requiring face coverings mid-June

Penny Coles The Local

Employers are expected to wear face coverings, except when they are behind a barrier or in a place where the public is not allowed. Exemptions to the by-law include child care facilities, day camps for children, schools and post-secondary institutions, private and public transportation, hospitals, health facilities and health professional offices.

NOTL councillors decided children under 10 years old should be exempt, as well as those with medical conditions, with no verification needed. The NOTL bylaw does not include penalties. It says enforcement will first take the form of education and voluntary compliance. Signs will be provided to local businesses, citing the bylaw number, with the intent of encouraging cooperation.

There was also a discussion about wording in the bylaw that Coun. Allan Bus.

Face coverings mandatory

Penny Coles The Local

Beginning Thursday, face coverings will be mandatory in local stores and other businesses. Last week councillors agreed to a bylaw based on the one passed in St. Catharines, but with some changes. The bylaw allows for a mask or other face covering, including a fabric bandana or scarf that covers the mouth, nose and chin. Councillors agreed face shields will also be permitted, although they are not in St. Catharines.

Enclosed public spaces where face coverings are mandatory include stores, restaurants — although not while eating or drinking — shopping malls, places of worship, libraries, museums, community centres, theatres, special event venues, indoor sports and recreational facilities, gyms and yoga or dance studios, arenas, and common areas of hotels.

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CONTINUED ON PAGE 2
Zalepa following direction of public health

Issue expected to be debated by regional council again Thursday

Gary Zalepa, Niagara-on-the-Lake’s regional councillor, agrees with the town bylaw calling for masks to be worn indoors when physical distancing is difficult.

Town councillors should do what they think is best for their residents and businesses, he says.

He doesn’t, at least at this time, agree with a regional bylaw making face coverings mandatory.

While it may seem like a contradiction, it isn’t, and his reasoning is clear.

Public health falls under the jurisdiction of the Region, and the regional head of public health, does not support mandatory face coverings.

Dr. Mustafa Hirji, Niagara’s acting medical officer of health, promotes physical distancing, hand-washing, keeping hands away from faces, and wearing a mask in public places when physical distancing isn’t possible.

“He doesn’t feel there is a public health rationale to order it.”

There is a widespread outbreak, or the number of cases in Niagara increases significantly, that might make a difference and change the directive from the public health department, “but with none of those things happening, there is no public health reason for the doctor to order it.”

The role of the regional council is to carry out the orders of their public health department, says Zalepa, and it seems clear to him — no public health order, no regional mandatory mask bylaw.

For regional councillors to make a decision contrary to their public health directive, is, in his opinion, an “extreme overstep. If public health orders it, that’s different, but that’s not the case today.”

He doesn’t expect it will be the case when the issue is again addressed at Thursday’s regional council meeting.

After an almost five-hour debate at the special council meeting called to discuss mandatory face coverings, a motion to defer a decision until Thursday was approved, on a vote from chair Jim Bradley to break a tie.

Lord Mayor Betty Duso voted against deferral, after speaking in support of a bylaw, and Zalepa voted for it.

While the vote may be different this week, Zalepa says his won’t be, unless Hirji gives an order to make masks mandatory.

While NOTL and St. Catharines have passed their own bylaws, and other regional councillors have spoken in favour of the Region doing the same, Zalepa says his role is not to impose NOTL’s decision on other municipalities, without a public health order.

“But if the majority of NOTL residents and business owners are in favour of a mandatory bylaw, “that’s what a municipality should do.”

Zalepa says he does the grocery shopping for his family, because his wife has a lung disease, and when he goes shopping at Hendrika valu-mart, it’s never busy, but he always has a mask with him. He has worn it from the beginning, when the store was crowded and he felt there was a problem with physical distancing, and he will wear one now any time he goes into a store. He agrees that it’s the right thing to do, and that “the autonomy of the municipality is paramount.”

If there is a public health order from the Region, “I’ll support it, 100 per cent.”

Municipal government has to “stay in its own lane” and do what it’s mandated to do, “and this is an issue where the Region has to stay in its lane, and listen to its own experts.”

Grocery store owner calls on public for acceptance

Phil Leboudec has been encouraging his customers to wear masks for months.

He estimates 80 to 90 per cent are already obliging, and he doesn’t see a problem with enforcing the municipal bylaw mandating face coverings that comes into effect this week.

If there is a problem, he says, “it is more likely to come from those wearing masks than those who aren’t.”

The bylaw leaves lots of room for those who are unable to wear a mask for any reason, he says. It also allows him or a staff member to turn away anyone who simply chooses not to do so for a face covering for the safety of others.

According to the regional health department, he says, although it hasn’t made masks mandatory — at least it hadn’t at the beginning of the week — it is recommending masks as another layer of protection if physical distancing is difficult.

“The bylaw is not enforceable, but it is the right way to go. It will help to create a culture of wearing masks.”

He can already see that happening, with the number of customers wearing masks increasing as the weeks go by.

Those people have to remember there are many reasons why others aren’t wearing masks, “and it’s really none of our business. There’s no point in walking around being angry. You don’t know what their reason is. People need to worry about themselves, not everybody else.”

And if we do that, he says, “there shouldn’t be a problem.”
Tomers were wearing a face opposite, that if all of our cus-
ness. A decision in June, fearing it would mean a loss in busi-
who was unhappy with his centre.
Continued from page 1
the centre.
He has one food tenant who was unhappy with his decision in June, fearing it would mean a loss in business. I believe the complete opposite, that if all of our cus-
tomers were wearing a face mask, more customers would visit our establishment.” If they feel safe and secure, they would be more likely to revisit, he says, “knowing we are taking all precautions to help stop the spread of COVID-19.”

Having a municipal by-
law backing him was already helping over the weekend, he says, and once it comes into effect this week, he will turn people away who are not cov-
ering their faces. And he will call a bylaw officer, although he realizes the customers will likely be gone before one arrives.

The business now has the added cost of stationing staff members at the two entrance-
cases of the region, where it isn’t mandatory. It would reduce the risk even further if it was a regional bylaw.” He is especially concerned about what will happen when the Province allows the re-
Opening of the borders. “We better have something in place by then,” he says.

Woronchak doesn’t un-
derstand why Niagara Falls mayor Jim Diodati continues to speak out against a bylaw for his city. “Niagara Falls is the one with the most visitors, and if they won’t pass it, it makes it harder for us. It puts us at risk. We’re doing what we need to do to control this virus, while others are ignoring it.”

Friday, the day after council approved a bylaw making masks mandatory, Chris Woronchak added a couple of new signs to the entrance of the Gateway on York Road.

Chris and Jeanette Woronchak have been asking patrons to wear masks in the busy Gate-
way Travel Centre. Chris says by Thursday, he will be refusing entry to those who don’t have a mask and don’t meet one of the exemptions. (Photos by Penny Coles)
Simpson honoured with United Way’s Anita Robertson award

Penny Coles
The Local

Winning the United Way’s Anita Robertson Award holds special meaning for recipient Sean Simpson, on several different levels.

"Anita and I spent a lot of time working on the United Way amalgamation,” he says, when she was campaign chair and he was on the board of directors.

At that time, there were three separate districts in Niagara: St. Catharines and District, Niagara Falls and Fort Erie, and South Niagara United Ways.

Simpson says he is proud to have worked with her on the process of amalgamation, and seeing it flourish as the United Way of Niagara.

Robertson was killed in a plane crash with her husband Joe and 24-year-old daughter Laura in July, 2018.

"Knowing how generous Anita was, and the Robertson family, makes this a real honour. She was very genuine, and it was a real thrill to be given this award. It brings back memories of what was accomplished for United Way, and that’s a nice reflection. There are certain people you will always be fond of, and Anita was one of them. She was taken far too soon, but she left a great mark on Niagara and the United Way,” he says, when presented with his award.

Simpson says he’s most proud knowing the money raised has touched the lives of so many people.

The Local

Concern mask bylaw will heighten tensions

Penny Coles
The Local

Nobody in Niagara-on-the-Lake has been more proactive than Sean Simpson when it comes to encouraging the wearing of face coverings inside public spaces, including his own pharmacy.

However, ‘for the health of people in general, it’s the right thing to do, I’m just not a huge fan of making them mandatory. I’m much more pro-education.’

Simpson says he understands the need for a bylaw. "I hope people will exercise some level of patience and understanding," he says, "and those anti-masks will come around to accepting it for the protection of others.”

As a society, he adds, we need to accept that some discomfort is necessary until we have the science, including a vaccine, to further protect us.

He is also concerned that people who have been staying at home out of a need to protect themselves, may feel more confident going out because of the bylaw, “and get bent out of shape when they see others who don’t wear a mask. I’m worried about their reactions and expectations.”

Simpson says he’s hopig people will abide by the bylaw, and he won’t see any aggression. Most people understand masks help to protect others, he adds, and although nothing is 100 per cent effective, “if we all take all the precautionary steps, that’s better than no steps. It’s better for all of us. We’re all in this together.”

Simpson’s Pharmacy hosted a United Way mask sale fundraiser event at Simpson’s Pharmacy last Wednesday. When presented with his award, Simpson says he has enjoyed working with United Way, the staff and the people, helping local organizations get the funding they need, and seeing the allocation process “working to get the dollars into the most needy agencies and programs that serve so many people across our community.”

Simpson says his respect and admiration for Anita Robertson makes the award in her name an honour to receive. (Penny Coles)
**MS diagnosis comes as a shock for mother of two**

Caroline Cellars is helping to raise funds and awareness with its new orange wine

Penny Coles
The Local

When Justine Lakeit first noticed a little numbness in her hands and fingers, she didn’t think much of it.

As it became more noticeable and spread to her torso and legs, it became enough of a concern to make an appointment to see her doctor.

She didn’t have a minute to expect the life-changing diagnosis she received.

Lakeit, the mother of two sons, Archer, now nine years old, and Parker, almost four, discovered about a year ago that the numbness was caused by multiple sclerosis, a disease for which there is no cure.

“It wasn’t what I was expecting to hear,” she says. “It was definitely a shock.”

She received her diagnosis after an MRI at the Hamilton General Hospital’s diagnostic clinic. Everyone she met, she says, “was so kind, they helped make it not so scary. They described it as something manageable, and they made me feel I’d be okay. They were so honest, and so genuinely kind.”

She was put on a relatively new treatment of medication aimed at slowing the disease and controlling the symptoms, but not eliminating them.

After that, she continued her research and learned more about MS than she ever cared to include in her life.湖

Looking back, she realized the fatigue was the first noticeable thing for her.

“I never thought about it as something bigger,” she says. “She understands now how she had likely been having symptoms for many years. Once the disease was explained to her, “they all came together as part of the diagnosis. I can never be sure, but I remember thinking, ‘now everything makes sense.”

Lakeit explains the disease is caused by lesions on the spinal cord and brain. Multiple sclerosis is an inflammatory disease that attacks the autoimmune system, damaging nerve coatings.

Those lesions are evident on MRIs, she says. Her last one was a year ago, and she was scheduled for another in March, to see if the disease had progressed. The pandemic cancelled that appointment, and she now has to wait until September.

“I don’t feel like it’s progressing,” she says, “but the treatment can’t change the existing damage, and I still have symptoms. Heat can bring them on, causing more numbness and fatigue. Self-care can be a huge part of the diagnosis and living with the disease. Lifestyle changes can make a difference.”

Resting and scaling back on activities can be challenging, she says, but she has learned that she sometimes has to “take a step back” to maintain her quality of life.

“Some days, if she does too much, “I burn out. But it’s unpredictable. I can have a busy day, and be fine the next, some other days, I’d knocked off my feet.”

It’s the unpredictability of the disease that is hardest for her, she adds, with its wide range of symptoms, never knowing when they will return, how serious they will be, how she will be affected or what the future holds for her.

“I could have a really normal life for a long time, or things could change very quickly.”

At 38, she says when she first heard the diagnosis she thought she was too young for MS, but learned it is often diagnosed between the ages of 20 to 40.

She has also learned the treatment has come a long way in recent decades. The medication she takes came on the market in 2012, and studies are working toward both a cure and a better quality of life for MS sufferers.

She has come to realize how important both research and awareness are in solving some of the mysteries of MS, and hopefully finding a cure, for her and others.

A decision that she wanted to do something to help led her to put two oranges together — an orange wine that is new for Caroline Cellars, and the orange that is the symbol of MS.

Orange wine is a broad term for skin-fermented white wine, Lakeit explains. When the grape skins are not removed, and are in contact with the juice for an extended period of time, the wine takes on an orangish hue.

Caroline Cellars made its first orange wine, a VQA skin-fermented Vidal, in 2019.

“My diagnosis and the orange wine had nothing to do with each other at the time. But everything kind of fell into place, and it seemed like an opportunity for me to do something for the MS Society. They were really excited to work with us. It’s been a partnership, and easy to get it going.”

Of the 2,000 bottles made last year, Caroline Cellars is donating $2.50 for each bottle, Lakeit says.

While it’s not a huge amount of money, she adds, “our plan is to do it again next year. Orange wine is a bit trendy at the moment, and we had hoped to have a big event, a fundraising launch for it, but that didn’t happen. It’s definitely something we want to do in the future. And the MS Society is being really flexible. If there’s an opportunity to do something in the fall, we’ll put it together.”

Her commitment to raising funds, and furthering awareness, “is long-term. It’s not going anywhere. Awareness of how it affects people differently, and how it affects day-to-day lives, is important. While we may see and notice the impact on some who suffer from the progressive disease,” she says, “there are a lot of people who struggle with it, and it’s not visible. Just because you don’t see it, doesn’t mean we’re not struggling.”

Justine Lakeit, with her sons Archer and Parker Henry, talks candidly about her diagnosis, and a desire to contribute to MS research and awareness. (Photo supplied)

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**Niagara-on-the-Lake Passes Temporary By-law for Wearing of Masks, Face Shields, or Face Coverings**

At the Special Council Meeting on Thursday, July 16, Town Council approved By-law 5248-20, to provide temporary regulations to require the wearing of masks, face shields, or face coverings in enclosed public spaces in the Town of Niagara-on-the-Lake.

These temporary regulations are consistent with the recommendations of health authorities at the Federal, Provincial, and Regional levels, which advise people to wear masks, face shields, or face coverings in public whenever physical distancing is a challenge.

Operators of businesses that are open to the public are required to post signage in accordance with the By-law, prohibiting anyone to enter or remain within the enclosed public space unless they are wearing a mask, face shield, or face covering, subject to exemptions.

The following exemptions are provided in the By-law:

- **Children under the age of 10**
- **Persons with medical conditions which inhibit their ability to wear a mask (i.e. breathing or cognitive difficulties)**
- **Persons who are unable to apply or remove a mask without assistance (i.e. those accommodated under the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act)**
- **Persons who have protections, including reasonable accommodations, in accordance with the Ontario Human Rights Code which would prevent them from wearing a mask**
- **Persons while assisting or accommodating another person with a hearing disability**

Masks, face shields or face coverings may be temporarily removed if it impedes upon a person’s ability to obtain dental, medical, cosmetic or other related services, to engage in athletic or fitness activity (including water-based activities), to participate in religious rights or ceremonies, to consume food or drink, or for emergency or medical purposes.

This By-law comes into effect on Thursday, July 23, 2020, and will remain in effect until Niagara-on-the-Lake’s State of Emergency is lifted, or until it is repealed by Council. For more information, visit notllocal.com/COVID-19.
Let’s do what we can to support local businesses

This photo from Saturday afternoon confirms what others, including the Chamber of Commerce president Eduardo LaFargue, have been saying: Queen Street has been empty. He also says the demographics are changing to young families out for a walk, not stopping to shop, and he doesn’t see that changing. (Fred Maronik)

Looking Up With Bill

Looking Up with Bill. For the full week, check out the NOTL Local Facebook page, or look up swooshbill.ca.

Monday, July 27: Today is the first quarter Moon at 4 degrees of Scorpio, at 8:32 a.m. This means it’s a challenging day, when secret feelings are pushed to the surface, and hidden problems become obvious. It’s a busy start to the week, with a lot going on. Try to keep what you know and understand in an organized way that makes sense, and the rest will fall into place. Or at least a better place. It was July 27, 1927, that Frederick Banting and Charles Best isolated insulin in a laboratory at the University of Toronto. In deference to the widespread evil of diabetes, they refused to charge for their invention, giving it away for free. Years later, enterprising crooks modified the chemical makeup of the drug and put it on the street, they could charge as much as they wanted.

Bill Auchterlonie Special To The Local

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Virus a wakeup call for cleaning up the mess we’ve made

Owen Bjorgan
Special to The Local

Removing ecosystem services and buffers causes a window of opportunity for viruses to emerge. That window has been blown wide open, and the entire wall is coming down. According to the World Health Organization, COVID-19 has officially topped 14.3 million cases and is trending sharply upwards.

As how deforestation, hunting rare wildlife, and polluting local rivers have anything to do with this case count?

As our expanding and demanding human population increases, we find our species simply taking up more space and exploiting more resources. Original habitats, such as rainforests, mangroves, and clean, freshwater lakes, are decreasing, and we are losing the ecosystem services that come with them.

Aside from pollution filtration, erosion prevention, and acting as carbon storage holders, it’s not forget these natural lands are also critical barriers for viruses. Tore down a few too many barriers, and the virus is out. Here we are, wearing masks and physical distancing because of it, and so far, Canadians are doing an amazing job on the global scale.

Wearing a mask helps you protect yourself, but mostly others, during this pandemic.

We have slowly been peeling the mask off Mother Nature’s face for centuries now. Her mask was protecting her internal health from human influence, while protecting us from viruses carried by her wild animals. A mask is a mask.

We chip away at the blocks of our remaining ecosystems, going deeper, curvier, and hungrier. Our quest for meat and materials is bottomless.

The more we rummage around on a global scale, the higher the odds that a virus would come out of the wild, infecting an animal, which was then transmitted to a human.

Picture a virus hiding in a deep, messy room. We enter the heap of mess, and curious, you need to clean it up to see what’s buried in there.

First, we use deforestation to reach and get in deep. This is the peeling back of those protective layers that once held viruses at bay. Rolling over that disastrous pile of mess in the corner might finally reveal what’s been hiding there. This is the moment. The intrusion is parallel to wildlife and bush meat being pulled from the forests, and exposed to our unconscious human bodies. That’s how it begins, in very basic terms.

This has me thinking about all of the extraordinary rollout packages we’re hearing about from our governments around the world. Numbers in the hundreds of billions of dollars are being thrown around like we’ve never seen in our lifetime. With all this money, it would perhaps be wise to invest in our environment and climate-health.

It may be tempting to save the situation by saving the economy, but doing so would be short-sighted, dangerous for the environment, and therefore ourselves. Initiating new industries will come at a sake of job recovery may just be a temporary pick-me-up, but as humans, we cannot help but think of ourselves first. To such an extent, that we forget about the very environment that supports us and our human health.

And what are we without our health? Picture someone who lives in the same messy room I described. A messy and unhygienic environment is often an indicator of its inhabitants. If we look at ourselves and the earth as such, it’s no wonder our room is such a mess and we wake up feeling sick. You can’t just sweep life’s obstacles and junk under the carpet, because eventually you’ll trip over that lump.

During this pandemic, top scientists from the UN are also stating that by not taking care of the planet, we are not taking care of ourselves. Science then goes into what might be further and deeper thinking. The science is telling us the earth’s biosphere (the zone on our planet where life can actually exist) is damaged, and trending downward in its function. That’s our home, too. It dictates our cellular health and economy. It’s all connected.

It’s a universal law that unites every living and non-living entity, whether we like it or not. Maybe this coronavirus is the alarm bell that it’s time to clean up our rooms.

As humanity encroaches on wild spaces and important ecosystems, we increase the odds of exposing our spaces to pandemic-inducing viruses. This photo was taken at one of Niagara’s wildest spots, the Niagara Gorge. (Owen Bjorgan)
Two teens becoming soap entrepreneurs

Mike Balsom
Special to The Local

Two Niagara-on-the-Lake teens are hoping to clean up in the soap and bath bomb business.

With encouragement from their parents, Cory and Kimberly, 15-year-old Emily Abt is in the process of transforming a hobby into a successful business. Emily had been planning to make lip gloss for family and friends when her dad discovered the Summer Company Program.

Funded by the Ontario government but administered through the Niagara Falls Small Business Enterprise Centre, the Summer Company Program offers grants of up to $3,000 to help students start their own businesses. They are provided with half of the grant upon approval, and given the other half at the end of the summer. Along the way, they receive expert mentorship through sessions with small local business owners.

Though the application deadline was just four days away when she learned of it, Emily sat down with her father and completed the business plan. She was shocked, yet pleased, to learn this spring that she was a recipient of one of this year’s grants.

“It was exciting. I started thinking about how much work it was going to be, and how much I’m going to learn,” says Emily. “I’ve always kind of been interested in business, with my dad in business, I’ve always wanted to learn more, so I knew that I was going to be doing a lot of new stuff.”

For the time being, the Governor Simcoe Secondary School student (she begins Grade 10 this September) has put aside the lip gloss idea. Instead, she has been developing the formulas she will use to make the soap, body scrubs and bath bombs she will sell under her new business name, True You.

“I went through about 30 different names on my own, and I couldn’t find anything that I liked,” explains Abt. “Then I asked all my friends for ideas, and my best friend suggested True North. I liked the True part, but didn’t like the North part, so I changed it.”

Abt is taking a cautious approach to get True You up and running. She is using the first $1,500 to stock up on supplies, and learning about running a business along the way.

“I’ve been spending it on all the different things necessary to manufacture my products,” she says. “I have to order a lot of it online in bulk, while some products I can buy at Costco. I had to pick up corn starch from a restaurant in St. Catharines, because they get it in big bags. And I bought moulds at Michaels.”

Emily has been taking over the family kitchen in Virgil, whipping up batches of bath bombs she will sell via her True You Facebook page and her @TrueYouSkcin Instagram account. But a possible bulk sale has the young business mogul even more excited.

Through Cory’s business contacts (he is the managing director of HEMA North America, a company that manufactures protective systems for machines), she was able to line up a potential contract with a St. Catharines spa that has multiple locations. Her focus this week is to perfect the ingredients for six different scents to impress the owner. If she wins this contract, it will go a long way to reaching her goal of $5,000 in sales this year.

The member of the 809 Newark Royal Canadian Air Cadet Squadron hasn’t decided what her future career path will be. For the time being, though, she will learn as much as she can running True You with the help of the Summer Company Program.

Abt may have a little bit of friendly competition from 18-year-old Elizabeth Penner, a recent Laura Secord Secondary School graduate. Like Abt, Penner came to the soap business through a passing interest. Following a visit to an aunt in Vancouver, the idea of taking it to another level started bubbling up.

“She is a very successful soap artist,” says Penner. “We made soap together, and it was so cool to be able to put so much creativity into something so useful.”

Upon her return to Virgil, she began to conduct research into bath and skin products, and began to consider making a business out of a pastime that she had begun to do for fun.

Penner calls her company Naturally Nice, with a focus on making products from either all-natural ingredients, or home grown plants and herbs. Her product line includes soaps, bath bombs, lotions and sugar scrubs, with prices ranging from $5 to $10.

Though she is also concentrating on online sales, she took advantage of the opportunity to showcase her wares at the Crossroads Public School Home Show this past March. The pandemic hit a week after that, throwing a wrench into her plans for further in-person sales at similar events.

“COVID-19 did take a toll on my business,” admits Penner. “Since I am just starting out, I was and still am very motivated to work as hard as I can, which for me means booking lots of shows. Unfortunately, I was unable to attend most of the shows I had booked. It was a very tough time for me.”

But she took it all in stride, using the pandemic time as an opportunity to do more research. She says she made a lot of products, touching base with her customers to ensure she was meeting their needs.

Penner is foregoing college or university for the next year to concentrate on building Naturally Nice into a viable venture. Currently, she rakes in about $70 a month in sales, but sees that steadily increasing.

“I plan to continue to work hard on my business, doing the most that I can to get my name out there,” she says. “Right now, due to COVID-19, I am playing it by month by month, continuing to do what I love and trying to do my best at advertising and creating new products. Whatever will come within the next year, I will continue to adjust and work hard.”

This summer she is balancing her business endeavours with her job as a supervisor at the Olde Tyme Candy Shop on Queen Street. She has also recently become a financial representative for Primerica, which she thinks will help to develop her business acumen.

Naturally Nice products can be ordered through Elizabeth Penner’s Facebook page and through her Instagram account, @naturally_nice. She is planning on launching a website in the next few months.
The doors might still be shut, but we are very busy doing the best we can to meet the needs of Niagara-on-the-Lake residents. At this point, Laura Tait, Sarah Bowers, and I are planning curbside pickup, delivery most days, coordinating with Sarah, Laura, or I will be notified and hold has been captured, (LiNC) on hold. Once the waiting list is filled, curbside pickup at the beginning of June. This has proven to be a huge success. In fact, in the six weeks since it started, we have filled 877 appointments. Anyone who has a library card can pick up items from our library and any libraries in the Libraries in Niagara Cooperative (LiNC) on hold. Once the hold has been captured, you will be notified and sent a link to make your pickup appointment. Thank you to all who have taken advantage of this program and for all of the positive comments. Thank you also for the patience you have shown, and continue to extend, as routines and protocols take longer than anticipated.

For those living in St. Davids, the library lockers at the fire hall have been reopened, so you can have your books delivered there as usual. We are very mindful of the importance of borrowing for many people. There is no fair alternative to being able to look, touch, and leaf through a book that has caught your eye. However, our best effort, in lieu of in-person borrowing, is Book Bundles packaged by our staff. If you need something to read but have nothing specific in mind except a favourite genre, or maybe you just want to be surprised, fill out the form on our website, and Sarah, Laura, or I will put a bundle together for you to pick up. These can be ordered for children or adults. If the above services require a little too much computer literacy for your comfort, please feel free to email the library at notlbrary@gmail.com or call 905-468-2023, and leave a message. We will get back to you as soon as we can. Also, if you know of anyone who is not able to access the curbside pick-up because of mobility or health issues, contact me at dkrause@notlpl.org and call and leave a message.

Let me end by saying how much you are missed. The library, without people in it, is not how it is meant to be. Ironically, libraries have been working very hard over the last few years to be seen not simply as a repository of books, but rather, as a third space, community hub, a place for people to interact. How does one fulfill that role in the days of physical distancing? True, the internet is accessible, but the chat-chat has halted, there is no opportunity to check in with our regulars, and we cannot welcome our new members in person. Be assured, that is our goal. With the safety of staff and patrons in mind, that is where we are heading — it just might take a while. Until then, please take advantage of the services we are providing, and check our Facebook page and website for updates as we get closer to fall.

Debbie Krause
Special to The Local

A big hello to the NOTL community. It seems like an eternity since I was last able to update you on the goings-on at your local public library.

The doors might still be shut, but we are very busy doing the best we can to meet the needs of Niagara-on-the-Lake residents. At this point, Laura Tait, Sarah Bowers, and I are planning curbside pickup, delivery most days, coordinating with Sarah, Laura, or I will be notified and hold has been captured, (LiNC) on hold. Once the waiting list is filled, curbside pickup at the beginning of June. This has proven to be a huge success. In fact, in the six weeks since it started, we have filled 877 appointments. Anyone who has a library card can pick up items from our library and any libraries in the Libraries in Niagara Cooperative (LiNC) on hold. Once the hold has been captured, you will be notified and sent a link to make your pickup appointment. Thank you to all who have taken advantage of this program and for all of the positive comments. Thank you also for the patience you have shown, and continue to extend, as routines and protocols take longer than anticipated.

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If the above services require a little too much computer literacy for your comfort, please feel free to email the library at notlbrary@gmail.com or call 905-468-2023, and leave a message. We will get back to you as soon as we can. Also, if you know of anyone who is not able to access the curbside pick-up because of mobility or health issues, contact me at dkrause@notlpl.org and call and leave a message.

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St. Davids Lions welcome the community to burger night

Club's carnival is cancelled, but popular Lion burgers will be available

**Penny Coles**
The Local

This week, St. Davids Lions members would have been working at their annual carnival, welcoming visitors and raising money for the community.

Instead, club members are preparing an alternative fundraising event, hoping to engage locals and at the same time give their volunteers the connection with the public they’re craving.

While carnival regulars will be missing the summer event, they don’t have to miss out on the popular Lion burgers and fries, a draw for locals who enjoy the great food prepared by club members.

They are calling it “Welcome Back Lion Burgers,” and will be offering a meal, which includes either a burger and fries or the “great Canadian,” which adds pea meal bacon to the burger, with a drink, for $10.

Beginning July 31, they are offering a drive-thru, no-contact meal pickup at the Lions Park on York Road, Friday evenings, from 4 to 7 p.m.

The idea came from Lion Joe Typer, who was looking for something suitable for “COVID times” that could raise some money to give back to the community. He thought it would be fun to open the Lions’ burger stand, get the grills going and volunteers involved, and “see where it goes.” So far the response has been positive, and they are counting on a good turnout.

Lions members, says Typer, “do so much for the community. They’ve been stymied by this virus, like everyone else, but we wanted to do something positive.”

“I asked who wanted to take it on,” adds Typer, who is still working, “and Ed offered.”

Retired club member Ed Pittman has taken on the organization of the event, made more complicated by the need to keep it as risk-free as possible.

Everything from the fried onions, an essential part of a Lion burger, to the conditions, will be handed out in containers, and the club is asking for debit or credit cards for payment, although they won’t say no to cash.

“They’re keeping the number of volunteers at the grills to a minimum, to allow for physical distancing, but if all goes well, they hope to have the Leo club members involved once they have all the logistics worked out. ‘It’s a whole new world, and we’re trying to figure out how to do everything safely,'” says Pittman.

“We’ve worked out the logistics of delivering the burgers so no one has to get out of their vehicle — unless they choose to. Although there will be no picnic tables, Pittman says, it’s a big property, and picnics are welcome — bring your own blankets or chairs, and be sure to leave distance between each group.

The decision to cancel the 57th annual carnival, a four-day event that would have started this Wednesday, was made in April. It was a tough call to make at the time, but turned out to be a wise and necessary decision.

Last year’s carnival contributed to the purchase of dog guides, the CNIB, Camp Trillium, for children with cancer, and Camp Dorset, which provides dialysis for children with diabetes.

“The club has continued to give back to the community, but without the annual fundraiser, it has been more judicious with what could be handed out, says Pittman. The Friday night dinners will help fill the reserves.

Ravine gets approval to extend busy patio

**Penny Coles**
The Local

Paul Harber, owner of Ravine Vineyard Estate Winery, has received approval from the Town to expand the outdoor restaurant.

He was given the answer he was looking for as Monday’s council meeting wrapped up, to be reconvened Wednesday at 6 p.m.

The five-hour meeting also included an hour in camera discussion of other issues.

Harber asked for an exemption to his site plan that would allow him to put up a second tent until the end of October, or as long as weather permits, to expand the wine-tasting and dining space.

He told councillors he isn’t planning on opening the indoor restaurant, even though it’s permitted in Stage 3, because he feels it would put his staff at risk.

“I don’t want to start putting people inside and put our staff in harms way, for additional revenue for us,” he said.

He has a responsibility to keep staff and customers safe, while making the next few months viable for the winery to get through the winter, he told councillors.

He currently has 20 tables under the tent, which can seat six people each safely, but the majority of the tables are reserved by two people, he said.

Coun. Erwin Wiens called Ravine a “top notch organization” which plays by the rules, adding that another tent on the 34 acres of property won’t impact the neighbours. Wiens made a motion to allow the second tent, which was approved by council unanimously.

*The Local*
Local Brownies enjoy virtual summer camp

Megan Gilchrist, Special to The Local

On a recent sunny weekend, members of the Niagara-on-the-Lake Brownies, Girl Guides and their families participated in the group’s first virtual camp, #CampYourOwnAdventure.

The program was designed by the 26th Orleans Girl Guide unit in Ottawa, and adapted by Niagara leaders. Although this was a completely new format for “camp” for us, it was an overwhelming success.

The camp was composed of a series of real-life activities, interspersed with pre-recorded videos and Zoom calls over the course of the weekend. Camp programming was designed with maximum flexibility in mind, so that even if internet connectivity was a challenge or a Brownie or Guide did not want to participate in the online portion, they could still have fun camping at home with us. Everyone followed the same basic schedule in their Adventure Challenge booklets, which was emailed to all of the families ahead of time, but could choose their own activities within each session.

Over the weekend, members and their families participated in traditional camp activities, such as setting up a tent or shelter (outside or in their homes), taking a nature walk or hike, making S’mores, crafts, and stargazing. On Saturday, Brownies and Guides had the opportunity to choose a service project, completing a range of activities that included painting kindness rocks for their neighbourhouds, writing letters to seniors in long-term care homes, making face masks, doing yard clean-ups, or designing their own project to help others.

We also had two very special camp events that families could choose to enjoy together. One was a virtual astronomy workshop with Astronomy in Action, and on Saturday evening, we joined other members of Girl Guides from all across Canada for the “Great Canadian Camp-in,” a virtual campfire with special storytelling guest, David Suzuki.

More than 20 NOTL Guidance families participated in the camp, which received rave reviews from kids and families alike. While we hope to be able to meet in person in a safe manner in the fall, we were encouraged by this hybrid virtual camp program, as well as our very popular virtual meet-ups carried out in the spring. We are still going strong, and look forward to more Guiding adventures in September, in whatever format they may take.

In total, there are more than 60 youth members (ages five to 14) and 16 adult volunteers in NOTL Guiding, spread across four units that meet in the Old Town and Virgil. Guiding provides a safe, all-girl environment that invites them to challenge themselves, to find their voice, meet new friends, have fun and make a difference in the world.

Girl Guides of Canada–Guides du Canada strives to ensure that girls and women from all walks of life, identities and lived experiences, feel a sense of belonging and can fully participate. If you’d like more information or to join the fun, please contact Megan Gilchrist, NOTL Community Guider at 1notlpathfinders@gmail.com.

What it’s like being a kid living through COVID

Maelle Pohorly, Special to The Local

During the virtual camp, Brownies and Girl Guides were challenged to write on article about what it’s like to be a kid living through the COVID-19 pandemic in Niagara. One of the Brownies, Maelle Pohorly (age seven), wrote the following account:

You might think that being stuck at home is a bad thing, but there are some good things about it also. It’s true we don’t get to see our friends right now, and we don’t get to do all the activities as planned, like swimming or piano lessons and gymnastics class. I even miss school lots. Sometimes I feel stuck at home and just feel like I need to get out of the house.

But there’s some good stuff also. Like I get to spend more time with family. My brother and I have been playing outside together a lot, finding frogs, raising tadpoles and hunting for Monarch butterfly eggs. I can do lots of baking and trying new recipes and lots more gardening.

Missing my friends has been a big problem, but we have found new ways to connect. We call each other on Zoom every day. I have Zoom Brownie meetings now.

Also, we drop off small gifts and crafts to friends’ houses and I have gotten many as well. To wrap it up, being stuck at home can be hard but there has been so many good things that I can also do now. I hope you have been enjoying being stuck at home also.

Brownie Amelia Green paints friendship rocks, one of the activities embraced by the girls participating in the virtual camp-out.

(Photos submitted)

Brownie Millie McGeachin learns how to put up a tent in her backyard, during her virtual camping weekend.

Brownie Bella Gilchrist prepares an outdoor meal, camp-style.

Brownie Bella Gilchrist, Guider Megan Gilchrist, and Pathfinder Hannah Gilchrist enjoy S’mores during their virtual camp adventure, which included a visit from David Suzuki.

Brownie Bella Gilchrist enjoys a sense of belonging and can fully participate. If you’d like more information or to join in the fun, please contact Megan Gilchrist, NOTL Community Guider at 1notlpathfinders@gmail.com.

Brownie Maelle Pohorly says she misses her friends, but is having fun doing other things.

Brownie Greta Sobol does some outdoor exploring during her virtual camping adventure.

Brownie Lea Giessler tries an evening out under the stars from her backyard, during her virtual camping weekend.

Wright about staying home during the pandemic, Brownie Maelle Pohorly says she misses her friends, but is having fun doing other things.
Orzo owners hoping for extended patio

Penny Coles
The Local

Councillors want to help Maria Mavridis come up with a plan to open a temporary patio on top of two flower beds on Queen Street.

Orzo Restaurant, about 100 feet away from the four-way stop at King and Queen Streets, does not have the opportunity to use two parking spaces for a patio, similar to others on the street, because there is no parking in front of the building.

Mavridis would still be willing to pay for the parking spaces, as well as all costs associated with removing the flowers, which would be planted in boxes or baskets around the patio, she told councillors Monday night.

“The structure will be professionally built to ensure safety, and will have reflectors for night time, with solar lighting,” she said.

Because the patio will sit overtop of the beds, so as not to harm the sprinkler system, a wheelchair ramp will be built into the deck base, not impeding the sidewalk, and will have a hand rail on each side, Mavridis said.

Her family owns two Queen Street restaurants, Orzo and Corks Wine Bar & Eatery, and both have drastically reduced seating due to the physical distancing necessary during the pandemic, even with the reopening of restaurants in Stage 3, she said.

The small patio outside Orzo now has only 10 seats.

The additional space would give them five tables, for up to 20 people. Inside, they will be able to accommodate only 18 to 20 diners.

That doesn’t bring the capacity to what they need to see them through the winter, she told councillors.

Even when the indoor space opens, Mavridis said, “it worries us visitors will not be confident enough to sit inside, although we have taken every precaution and have all our protocols in place. We would love the opportunity to place an outdoor patio temporarily, as others have done down the street.”

Although several councillors spoke in support of the patio, interim CAO Sheldon Randall said he has some issues with it, including whether the ramp slope is steep enough to meet regulations for wheel chairs.

As the council meeting neared its cutoff time, with a plan to reconvene at 6 p.m. Wednesday, councillors suggested town staff meet with Mavridis to come up with a design that works.

“We need some creative thinking here,” said Coun. Clare Cameron. “I have faith that the operator, working with staff, can achieve this. Let’s do this please. Let’s be empathetic.”

Randall agreed to visit the site and work on a plan with the restaurant owners, to present to councillors at their Wednesday meeting.

The owners of Orzo Restaurant are hoping for a positive answer to their request for a Queen Street patio, but will have to wait until council continues its meeting Wednesday evening. (Virtual photo supplied)
Museum lecture shares history of strong women of NOTL

Kim Wade Special to The Local

“There is certainly a gender divide. This divide affects historians today because it only tells one gendered perspective of history.”

Butts believes that in addition to a gender divide there exists a racial divide in historiography. “It only tells one gendered perspective of history because historians today because gender divide. This divide affects historians today because it only tells one gendered perspective of history.”

She started her lecture with Mary (Melly) Brant, also known by her Mohawk name Konwatsi’tsiaiénni, a well-respected Haudenosaunee leader within the Six Nations community. Born in 1736 in what is now upstate New York, she became a well-respected and powerful ally to the British during and after the American Revolution. After her husband Sir William Johnson died, a friend of his, Col. John Butler, asked Brant to use her influence to ease the tensions between Indigenous people, who fled north to Fort Niagara, and the British occupying troops. She and her family stayed in the area for about two years, before settling around present day Kingston, Ontario with some land and tenancy provided for her service to the Crown.

Although she is often overlooked because of her more famous brother Joseph Brant, or her husband Sir William Johnson, her achievements should not be ignored, says Butts. “Mary was a very intelligent woman who was clearly at ease between these two cultures, and she was respected by the Six Nations and the Colonialists, which allowed her to use her influence on these two worlds at a vital moment in history.”

Then came the tragic story of Chloe Cooley, an enslaved Black woman who, on March 14, 1793, was beaten and bound by her owner, Sergeant Adam Vrooman, and transported across the Niagara River to America, where she was sold. Cooley’s resistance as she was forced into the boat was witnessed by a free Black man and former Butler’s Rangeman, Peter Martin. Martin contacted another man, William Grisely, and the two brought the incident to the attention of Lieutenant Governor John Graves Simcoe. Simcoe set in motion legislation to abolish slavery, which began to lay the tracks for the Underground Railroad. Historical records on Cooley end with her sale, and as far as we know, she was never aware nor able to enjoy the benefits of legislation that her protest put in motion.

The third woman Butts highlights is Mary Madden Henry. During the War of 1812, Henry’s husband, a former British soldier, was the local lighthouse keeper. On May 27, 1813, American forces invaded. There were heavy casualties. Henry went out into the battlefield to bring coffee and food to the soldiers and tend to the wounded. On Dec. 19, 1813, once again, Henry displayed bravery and compassion when she took in some of the townspeople and provided them with shelter, food and medical care after the Americans abandoned the fort and burned the town to the ground. Henry was recognized for her heroism after the war.

The fourth woman that Butts highlights is Mary Elizabeth Olivia Josephine Servos, the last person to own the Palatine Hills Homestead. She devoted her time to preserving the homestead and the museum her mother had created.

Continued on page 14
Personal mementos preserve history

Continued from page 13

Unfortunately, financial troubles during the Great Depression forced Servis to subdi-
vide and sell off the property that had been in her family for five generations. She was then able to pay her back taxes and remain living on the home-
stead until her death on June 13, 1942, and is buried on the property.

During her life, she worked to promote and preserve her family’s legacy. Even though she planned the family’s treasures would remain in the family by bequeathing them to family members, the inher-
itors did not share her vision. Butt’s explains that the treaus-
ures eventually came into the way to the NOTL Museum, to become “one of the most complete and unique collec-
tions from an Upper Canadian Loyalist.”

Eventually the homestead was abandoned, and in 1952 it was burned to the ground in a Halloween prank, Butt’s says, implying stalkers to take a lesson from this story.

In a world that is develop-
ning rapidly, we need to remem-
ber that the preservation of our heritage matters. If we do not fight to preserve historic build-
ings and collections, then we effectively erase the stories of our past, and those who have come before us. Once gone, it is almost, if not impossible, to get back.”

The last woman on Butt’s list was Elizabeth Ascher, an educated and highly accom-
plished woman who left a last-
mark on the area. Among her accomplishments, she co-
founded the Niagara chapter of Independent Order of the Daughters of the Empire, was the Director of the Agricultu-
ral Society, and was on the exec-
utive of the Red Cross and the Boy Scouts.

On top of her charitable work, Ascher was a creative soul. She was also a newspaper paper reporter and wrote for the St. Catharines Standard, and the Niagara Advance. She is best known, accord-
ing to Butt’s, for her work with the Red Cross during the First World War. In September, 1917, Niagara was a training camp for Polish soldiers who were to fight on the West-
tern front. In 1918, during the Spanish flu outbreak among the Polish soldiers stationed in Niagara, Ascher personally tended to them, putting her own life at risk, earning the nickname, Angel of Mercy. Ascher’s legacy began when she lobbed for a Polish cem-
tery at St. Vincent de Paul Church. In response, a Polish sovereign military burial plan was made for the soldiers who died in the influenza outbreak.

From 1919 to 1921, she used her voice as a reporter to launch a campaign to help the Polish people. Aid began to flow to Poland. For her efforts, Ascher received many awards, including The Medal of Haller and the Cross of Merit. She was also made an Honorary Colonel of the Polish Army and a Life Member of the Pol-
ish White Cross. Ascher is still
honoured to this day on the second Sunday of June at St. Vincent de Paul Church.

Butts says her interest was piqued by her participation in the museum’s upcoming publi-
cation about women of Niaga-
ria-on-the-Lake. “We will invite submission calls for in the month of July. All presentations start at 4

Please be advised that with the current state of COVID-19, your safety is of utmost importance to us. We will now be live streaming our ser-
vice at 10:00 am on Sunday. There will be no in-person church service.
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