

The Niagara-on-the-Lake LOCAL



Teen has
money,
wallet
returned
page 8

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notllocal.com OCTOBER 8, 2020 Volume 2 · Issue 41



So many reasons to feel grateful

Dorothy Wiens (left), a member of the NOTL Lions Club, called on a few friends to help with a fundraising project to support minor sports in NOTL. The result was 160 homemade fruit pies, to sell from the Cornerstone Church parking lot on Niagara Stone Road this Thursday and Friday. Rolling out the pastry are Wiens, Luanne Kulchar, Kathy Dyck, Isolde Kroecker and Dori Wiens. For story see page 11. (Penny Coles)

Historic Steward house site of archeological dig

Mike Balsom
Special to The Local

Little pieces of Niagara-on-the-Lake history were being unearthed this weekend at the corner of John and Butler Streets, though it may take a few weeks to determine whether anything of significance was discovered.

A crew from North Bay-based Horizon Archaeology was at the site of the William and Susannah Steward House to conduct a stage 3 archaeological assessment of the heritage home. The house, which was restored by the Niagara

Foundation before being sold to a private owner, is a significant piece of the region's Black history.

Victoria Brooks-Elder, head archaeologist at Horizon, was leading the dig, which began Friday afternoon. According to Brooks-Elder, another company completed the stage 1 and 2 portions of the assessment in 2013. That consisted of historical background research and a test-pit survey. Some of the items found seven years ago warranted this weekend's stage 3 survey, known as the initial test.

"It's been a fairly mixed bag," says Brooks-Elder, about what they found over the three days. "Not a lot of ceramic, quite a bit of animal bone, some of which had been burnt, your chickens and cows you've been eating, quite a bit of brick, a lot of nails. A lot of milk tags and bread tags. Nothing all that crazy."

The lot behind the Steward House measures about 40-by-40 yards. Brooks-Elder said that according to 19th century mapping, there was never a house on that part of the site. "My next step," she

tells The Local, "is to contact the museum, and hopefully they have some fire insurance maps of the area that will show me if there were any structures there."

Brooks-Elder, her colleagues and a few volunteers had mapped out a 10-metre grid, and were busy digging, scraping and screening for artifacts at four different 1-by-1 metre locations within the grid. As items revealed themselves on the sifting screens in the shaker boxes, they were quickly assessed and bagged

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Jamaican injured in NOTL desperately needs financial help

Penny Coles
The Local

Two Niagara-on-the-Lake families are seeking a permanent solution for a Jamaican farmworker who was seriously injured in a 2008 workplace accident here.

The story of Jeel Stewart, known to his friends in Jamaica and in NOTL as Bushman, is not unique, they say, but he and his family have captured the hearts of Jane Andres and Jodie Godwin. They are becoming increasingly frustrated at a system which has forgotten this man who came to Niagara as a 33-year-old father and husband, through the Seasonal Agriculture Work Program, hoping to make a better life for his family back home.

In his first and only year here, working in a local nursery, he was injured, making it

impossible to return to work, and for the last 12 years, he has struggled to provide even the basic needs for his wife and five children.

He was working on a forklift when it slipped, crushing his left hand, causing severe nerve damage and paralyzing it, despite three hours of surgery.

He received some therapy in Niagara, and was sent home to Jamaica, expecting to receive compensation from WSIB that would cover the medication, therapy and other required care for his recovery, and enough money to support his family.

That lasted for just two years. In 2010, it was terminated.

He was deemed fit for work as a gas station attendant, and told he should seek

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Jeel Stewart in Jamaica (Photo supplied)



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Residents fear ‘slicing and dicing’ on Johnson Street

Penny Coles
The Local

Neighbours of a property on the north side of Johnson Street made it clear during Monday’s public planning committee that they strongly oppose a second dwelling on a single lot, an unusual configuration which they feel will set a precedent in the Old Town’s heritage district.

The property has an 1890 heritage house on it which is currently used as a cottage rental, and the owner, David Jones, is applying for rezoning to allow the garage to become a second dwelling.

He told councillors his plan is to eventually sell the property, which abuts the garden of 124 On Queen Hotel and Spa, the hotel that fronts on Queen Street, which Jones also owns.

Neighbours are also concerned about the small driveway which would be required to service two separate dwellings,

should the application be approved, and the lack of amenity space, which they are assuming would spill over onto the hotel property.

They also question the intended future of the two buildings.

At least two home owners on Johnson Street told councillors if the second dwelling on one property is approved, they would apply for the same right on their property — even if they don’t follow through, it would make their property more valuable in the future, one resident warned.

Town staff have said provincial policies encourage growth and infilling, with a mix of housing options, including additional secondary uses.

One of the points made in support of the application by heritage planner Denise Horne is that because the exterior of the garage building wouldn’t be altered, the zoning change would only affect land use, and

there would be no negative impact to the heritage district.

But residents living nearby disagreed, saying adding another dwelling on the property, and similar proposals it is sure to encourage in the future, would certainly impact their neighbourhood.

Scott Langill, one of the neighbours who spoke to the virtual planning committee Monday, called the application, if approved, the beginning of the “slicing and dicing” of one of the best heritage areas in Canada.

He reminded councillors that growth policies are intended to be used when appropriate, and a block from the main street is not the appropriate place.

“It will be a train we won’t be able to stop,” he said, urging council to “stop this train before it rolls over our Old Town.”

There is also some concern that the garage, although not zoned for commercial use, could become a commercial use

associated with the hotel.

Jones also owns condo units on Victoria Street. One of the units has been sold, and the others he owns and rents, he said. He also owns a house on Gate Street, which he says he has no plans for at this time.

When asked by Coun. Allan Bisback whether he has plans to bring 129 Johnson into the hotel complex and rent them through the hotel, Jones said he plans to rent them by the month, not as part of the hotel, but that he anticipates selling the property.

However, residents pointed out his plans have frequently changed from his original intentions for the hotel complex.

Johnson Street resident Andrew Taylor reminded councillors that when neighbours supported the hotel project, they were told “there would be a lovely park,” but over time it has been degraded, with no provision for trees, a commercial property has been moved



Johnson Street neighbours are hoping council will turn down an application to turn the garage behind this house into a dwelling, which would mean two units on one property. (Donald Combe)

into the park with two hotel rooms, and a wedding venue is planned.

“How do we trust you, Mr. Jones?” he asked, when promises that were made in the past are not materializing.

Brodie Townley told councillors they were elected to be stewards of the heritage district, and to provide leadership in heritage preservation. “We’re looking to you for that now.”

If the application is approved, he said, “this will open up a can of worms that other developers and residents will feast on.”

Monday’s virtual public meeting was an opportunity for residents to have their say about the rezoning application before a decision is made. Information from the meeting is intended to inform a staff report and recommendation to council.

Result of dig will lead to next stage or sign-off on property

Continued from page 1

for further investigation.

It looked like back-breaking work, and Brooks-Elder confirms that assessment. “Archaeology is probably the most blue-collar white-collar job you can get, though I’m sure geologists would disagree with me. A lot of us have hip and knee replacements.”

It’s clear the current owner of the house has some plans to build something on the lot, though nothing could be

confirmed at press time. “I never get told what’s going on in terms of the development, or why the property needs it,” says Brooks-Elder. “I just get told to get out there and do it. I’m guessing it’s probably a condition of whatever he wants to do to it. As an archaeologist, I care about what’s in the dirt, not what you’re going to do to it.”

“Niagara has an amazing heritage program,” she continues. “They probably red-flagged this because of the historical value attached to

the Steward home.”

The historical plaque at the site explains that William Steward was an African American teamster. He and his wife Susannah Steward lived in Niagara from 1834 to 1847. The Steward home was part of what was known then as the “coloured village,” a community of former Canadian slaves, black Loyalists and African American refugees. In 1837, William Steward was one of 17 local Blacks who signed a petition asking Lieutenant Governor Sir Francis Bond Head to refuse to extradite Kentucky fugitive Solomon Moseby, who was rescued from the Niagara jail by more than 200 African Canadians. The Stewards eventually moved to Galt, now known as Cambridge.

The house at 507 Butler Street is an excellent example of local vernacular architecture. It serves as a memorial to these hardworking people who contributed to the building of Niagara-on-the-Lake and to protecting African American refugees in the region.

Elizabeth Pilzecker currently rents the one-bedroom, two-bathroom open concept house. She was thrilled with the activity in her backyard this weekend. “It’s awesome, I love it,” says Pilzecker. She says she chose to live in the house because of its historical value. During the dig on Sunday, she could be seen looking over the shoulders of the archaeologists and asking questions about their findings as they were excavating the site.

Following the weekend activity, the artifacts will be trucked back to Horizon’s offices in North Bay, where they will be cleaned and analyzed by Brooks-Elder and her staff. “We have a cataloging system we use that will help us date the layers. If we have certain ceramics, that helps us date the findings. In terms of what we call Euro-Canadian history, you can even get into socio-economics.”

The analysis and assessment of the discoveries will take at least two weeks. According to Horizon’s website, if artifact counts and archaeo-



The historic Steward House, which before its restoration was rented to Newark Neighbours founder Peggy Anderson, was restored by the Niagara Foundation. Although once considered as a possible museum, it was instead sold to a private owner.

logical features found during this stage are sufficiently significant based on Ministry of Tourism and Culture guidelines, the site will be recommended for either avoidance or a stage 4 assessment, which entails a full excavation. If nothing substantial or significant is discovered, the process stops and the property owner can proceed with development plans.

As for the fate of the artifacts, they won’t necessarily make their way back to Niagara any time soon. “They get stored together as a collection,” explains Brooks-Elder. “Part of my contract with the ministry is that I have to take care of the artifacts forevermore, and I have them in keeping for the people of Ontario. If another archaeologist wanted to study the site, they could ask me for the artifacts and they’d be available.”



Richard Beckley, an archaeologist working on the Steward property dig, explains what he is doing to Liz Pilzecker, who is living in the restored house on the property, while volunteers work in the background. (Photos by Mike Balsom)

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GoFundMe only a temporary solution

Continued from page 1

work in a Niagara gas bar — but he doesn't live in Niagara, says Godwin, and there were no gas bars near his rural home in Jamaica where he could work.

Godwin and Andres have been financially supporting the Stewart family ever since, working payments into their family budgets to make that possible, says Godwin. "It was only ever to fill the gap that should have been funded by WSIB from the beginning. It was never meant to be in perpetuity."

In 2017, public attention, including a documentary produced about the plight of migrant workers, and which also told Stewart's story, pressured WSIB to reinstate his coverage, which lasted for about another two years.

"As the public eye turned away, it was terminated again," says Godwin.

Even when WSIB was making payments, they were often delayed, and difficult to access, she says, but it has been "some time since he has received anything at all."

It's a complicated and frustrating situation, which requires a permanent solution, says Godwin. With only one arm of any use to him, Stewart will never be able to find a job in Jamaica that would pay enough to support his family.

"People don't realize how expensive everything is in Jamaica. It's not cheap to live there," she says. Food and other basics are always costly, but even more so during COVID. Stewart, she adds, will need financial support for the rest of his life.

She and Andres have visited him in Jamaica, where he is highly respected for his faith and his strong work ethic.

The Stewarts live in a very basic house, have no hydro, little food, and for long periods of time exist on only rice and potatoes. Jeleel now has diabetes, and with no money for medication, he lives in pain, and suffers from lack of

sleep and poor nutrition. "He was once a big, strong man. He has aged so much," Godwin says, concerned about his severe depression, that has come as a result of constant pain, and his inability to support his family.

She talks to him by phone, and knows he needs money, but is too proud to ask for it. When he does, she senses desperation. Three of his children were unable to finish their education, but he is trying to keep the younger two in school, especially a daughter who is extremely bright. Education is expensive, and his family makes sacrifices so she can attend a good school.

When Godwin first visited him and his family in Spanish Town in Jamaica, she says, "he was living in one of the poorest homes I've ever been in, in a squatters' neighbourhood, but one of the most joyous homes I've ever been in. This is a family who draws others to them."

They moved for a time out to a more rural area, but returned to Spanish Town recently to be closer to his daughter's school.

"He is a good man who was injured while he was working here, in Canada. He hasn't got what he is due," she says.

In the meantime, Godwin's daughter Leah, who remembers Stewart from when he would come to their house in Niagara and has visited his family in Jamaica, has started a GoFundMe page, with a goal of \$15,000, hoping to support his family through the coming months, hoping that those lobbying to have his WSIB payments again reinstated will be successful.

She and her brother, Sam Parker, have grown up witnessing their parents help the Stewart family over the years, and have contributed themselves.

While they are hoping for a successful fundraiser, it is only a stop-gap measure, says Leah.

One of her earliest memories of Stewart is when she was just six years old, and he

arrived at Parliament Oak school one day with her mother to pick her up.

"It was soon after he was injured, and I saw him across the parking lot. I ran to give him the biggest hug a six-year-old could give this big man."

Leah, now 19, has been to Jamaica three times with her mother, the first two visits, when she was 11, and then again at 16, visiting the Stewart family.

On their trip earlier this year, they didn't have enough time to drive through the rural areas, and weren't able to see them.

Her first visit had a huge impact on her, she says, seeing the small home of a family of five, with rough planks for walls and a dirt floor. As poor as they were, they had taken in two neighbourhood children whose parents were unable to look after them, yet there was lots of singing and dancing, and a generous sharing of what little they had when others stopped by.

Since then, she says, "I've been proud of my parents and our community of friends who continue to help them. I hoped then that their life would get better for



Jodie Godwin and Jane Andres visit Jeleel Stewart in 2017. (Photos supplied)

them, and to know it hasn't is heart-breaking. They deserve to be able to eat, and to live with dignity. Their kids have such talent, but they have to work to help support their parents, and not at the types of jobs they deserve."

"WSIB should be doing what they're supposed to do. Everyone here who is helping them can't continue to do that forever. What we do, it's not enough. And they don't like feeling in debt to others."

Others are working on

compensation for Stewart, says Jane Andres, who has also been supporting the family for the last decade. It's difficult to get information from WSIB, with a number of changes in contacts over the last 12 years. There is also an appeal through the Industrial Accident Victims Group of Ontario, although his caseworker has retired, so that too feels like starting all over again.

Leah says from an early age she has felt very privileged, "living here, and having

the family I do. It showed me the unfairness in the world, that I have so much, and taught me that I should be using my voice to help others."

The GoFundMe page she set up is to help the Stewart family through to Christmas, she says. It will also hopefully make others aware of the injustice of the family's situation, and want to help them.

To read about Jeleel or to donate, visit <https://ca.gofundme.com/f/justice-for-jeleel>



In 2008, Leah Godwin was just six years old when she gave Jeleel Stewart a birthday present. They were in the Godwin home in NOTL just after Stewart was injured. His hand has never recovered. With Leah are Annelise and Cierra Perron.

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Help for African grandmothers more important than ever

Penny Coles
The Local

Although fundraising opportunities are limited, Nyanyas of Niagara members are committed to continuing their support to some of the world's most vulnerable people.

While we are all learning how to live in a pandemic, grandmothers in Africa, trying to raise orphaned grandchildren in communities devastated by HIV and AIDS, are dealing with two pandemics, says Terry Mactaggart, one of the founding members of the local chapter of the Stephen Lewis Foundation's Grandmothers to Grandmothers Campaign.

The foundation focuses on community-based, grass-roots support, and the Nyanyas (Swahili for grandmother) became one of about 240 grandmothers and grand-thers groups across Canada when it was formed in 2007.

Since then, the local group has raised almost \$120,000 to help African grandmothers raise their grandchildren.

Now, with lockdowns in place in Africa, borders closed,

access to food and medicine limited, people cut off from support groups, and under-resourced healthcare systems under strain, groups such as the Nyanyas and the aid they can provide become even more important to these vulnerable communities.

"Just surviving on a daily basis is difficult for them, never mind in this pandemic," says Mactaggart. "They are up against a brick wall in their lives. But one of the positives to come out of this is we are finding new ways to fundraise."

The pandemic has made it impossible for the Nyanyas to host their traditional fundraisers, including annual African dinners, and spring lunches. However, a small group of members making up the steering committee are leading their chapter of about 150 members in finding ways to continue their support.

One opportunity offered to them was a vendor stall at the Saturday morning Village Farmers' Market, where the women sold a variety of items, including a humorous self-help book for first-time grand-

mothers, *I Love You, Granny*, a children's book, *Monsters Don't Count*, books, aprons, mugs, and handmade dog scarves.

But the highlight at their market stall has been the beautiful African bead bracelets some of the Nyanyas have made, and although the market has closed for the season, the bracelets, as well as the other items, are still for sale.

The history of the African bead bracelets originates with a Canadian woman who, when visiting Uganda as part of a medical team, showed some women how to make beads with scraps of colourful paper discarded by a print shop, and varnish to finish them, says Mactaggart.

The Ugandan women began making beads at home to support their families, and were able to feed, clothe and send their children to school with the money they earned.

Recently, a local woman donated "hundreds and hundreds" of African beads to the Nyanyas, and "it was a no-brainer for us to make some bracelets," says Mactaggart. A group of Nyanyas spent a day in Newark Park putting the bracelets together, and the fundraiser fell into place two weeks ago when they were offered a table at the market.

The African women making the beads are not necessarily grandmothers — some have small children — so the beads are helping three generations, she says.

The other initiative they are depending on to raise funds, one they have resurrected from the earliest days of the chapter, is the blessing jar, adapted to the current pandemic situation, says Mactaggart.

It's a simple concept, involving a Mason jar — or any kind of jar — with a slot in the lid, and the original fundraiser suggested each time you had something good in life to feel grateful for; you put money in the jar.

During the pandemic, Mactaggart is suggesting you write an IOU slip for a dollar amount, with a description of the positive experience that sends you to your blessing



Terry Mactaggart and Marlene Bridgman were at the last Saturday market, selling African bead bracelets and other Nyanyas items to raise money for the Grandmothers to Grandmothers campaign. (Photos supplied)



Nyanyas items, including African bead bracelets, are still available by email.



Cindy Grant, Marlene Bridgman, Wendy Connelly, Linda Carleton, Peggy Hooke, Sandra Hardy and Sue Henry gathered in Newark Park to make African bead bracelets, which they sold at the Saturday Farmers' Market at The Village. Terry Mactaggart was also there making bracelets, but was also the one taking the photo.

jar, despite all the challenging aspects of living with the pandemic. By writing them down, she says, during a time when there is so much that is negative around us, the Nyanyas hope to evoke the positive emotions that continue to occur, especially in this generous and caring community.

The funds can be collected at a later date, when it is safe to do so, and the blessings in the jar will remind us of all the good we have experienced during the pandemic.

When Mactaggart began calling her friends recently to tell them about the blessing jar initiative, "there were 28 women falling over themselves to participate," grateful for the suggestion they remember the good that is occurring around them, she says.

Mactaggart says that with five grandchildren, she and her husband Terry have much for which to be grateful. One of the grandkids, now 14, was born in Beirut, and began calling them Teta and Jiddo, Arabic for grandmother and grandfather. That name has stuck, with all the grandchildren, now aged 20 to nine, using it, so Teta and Jiddo have started a blessing jar together — actually a wine bottle, a reason to be grateful for being in Niagara during a pandemic — and also recognizing that those in the Middle East, and elsewhere, are dealing with challenging times and huge loss.

Being a grandmother, she says, is a great time of life, "and also makes us empathize with grandmothers in Africa and how they must feel."

This is such an appropriate time, with Thanksgiving coming up, to use blessing jars, she adds, not only to raise some money, but to bring awareness to what is going on elsewhere in the world.

"We need to keep money flowing to Africa. I understand the support may be less during COVID than it has been in past years, but it's so important. The need doesn't go away."

During the last two Saturdays at the market, selling bracelets and other items, and by selling some bracelets to family and friends apart from the market, the Nyanyas have raised \$1,256, says Mactaggart.

Anyone interested in donating, or purchasing any of the Nyanyas merchandise, can email nyanyas2018@gmail.com.



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Shaw concert at Hare benefits Red Roof

Kim Wade
Special to The Local

"This evening made me realize how much I have missed live theatre," said Fonthill resident Wendy Brown after Thursday evening's performance of Shaw Festival's Vineyard Concert Series at The Hare Wine Co.

This event was the second performance in a series of three live music concerts organized by the Shaw Festival and funded by the Federal Economic Development Agency for Southern Ontario. The first concert took place last Tuesday, and featured the music of songwriter Dorothy Fields who wrote more than 400 songs for Broadway musicals and films. She is famous for tunes such as *On the Sunny Side of the Street*, and *The Way You Look Tonight*.

Accompanied by a trio of a keyboard, percussion and double bass, Thursday's performance featured the songs of American composer and songwriter Cole Porter and featured the tunes, *You're the Top*, *I've Got You Under My Skin*, and the concert closer, *Anything Goes*. This last tune featured a little tap and shuffle routine which delighted the 50-member audience seated in the expanse of the back lawn area behind The Hare Wine Co. courtyard.

The performance was staged with a backdrop of the escarpment and The Hare Wine Co.'s vineyards. Although the evening was chilly, the music kept members of the audience warm. Two audience members who spoke to The Local said that the "sound was fabulous," the performance was "uplifting" and they "didn't even feel the cold."

One audience member, Maureen, who didn't want her last name used, said it was "amazing how many words to the songs you can remember when you can't even remember what you had for lunch." The evening's concert made her so happy she wanted to thank the winery for hosting the event in their lovely facilities, and to thank the Shaw performers. She believed their performance was "a gift to everyone there," she said.

After the performance, associate artistic director Kimberley Rampersad noted the venue was different than being in a theatre. She said seeing the audience in front of the singers is a "beautiful experience."

In a theatre the actors see the first, maybe the second row of people in front of the stage but in this context, in an open area with no lighting or formal stage, it is "nice to see the audience as part of the performance, even if all they could see is their smiling eyes" above their masks,

and more than a few tapping feet.

The venue was the perfect place for such an event. John Hare, owner and general manager of The Hare Wine Co., agreed. "This was a perfect fit for us as we have ample outdoor space, and we felt this would be a wonderful opportunity to support the arts in NOTL." He explained he became involved in the event as a member of Wineries of NOTL. The committee reached out to all participating wineries about the FedDev grant for The Shaw and their outdoor performances. "We were very excited to hear about the FedDev grant for the Shaw and their outdoor performance series. So when we had the opportunity to bring back live music to The Hare, we put our name forward to hold a few performances."

Hare explains how the pandemic has affected events at the winery. "We love live music at The Hare. We were to hold the Niagara Jazz Festival and Niagara Quartet in late July here again (it would have been the 4th year running). Obviously both these events have been cancelled this year," because of the pandemic and restrictions.

"We, as many other businesses, have been negatively impacted by COVID-19. On our cellar door side of the business, we have had to make many changes to our winery experience for guests, and have moved much of our tasting experiences outdoors to ensure physical distancing. On the staffing side, we have had to hire more part-time staff to provide more one-on-one experiences for our guests, to ensure small group sizes and physical distancing."

In order to ensure the safety of the staff and guests who attend tastings or events at the winery, he said, "every staff member wears masks, thoroughly cleans all surfaces after each guest." Hand sanitizer is offered before you walk into the winery, and all throughout the winery, he said.

"We had to re-arrange our retail store and create small tasting pods to ensure physical distancing for our guests. And, we have moved tasting experiences outside onto our beautiful vineyard patio view, and some areas of production, to ensure physi-



Performing at one of three concerts at The Hare, this one the *Dorothy Fields Revue*, were Kyle Blair, Andrew Broderick, James Daly (rear); with Kristi Frank (front), Alexis Gordon, and Olivia Sindair-Brisbane. Not pictured but also performing that day was Jonathan Tan. The revue is directed and choreographed by associate artistic director Kimberley Rampersad with music direction by music director Paul Sportelli. (Katie MacCabe)

cal distancing," said Hare.

"There are many challenges all businesses will continue to face with COVID," he said, especially with a second wave and tighter restrictions on people coming to Niagara.

"We are grateful for all the efforts of the provincial government about their messaging about how we can stop the spread of COVID-19." He adds, "We are also grateful for the way the federal government has helped many small business through CEWS (Canada Emergency Wage Subsidy) and other programs to support our staff. We have hired more part-time staff to serve fewer guests in smaller groups (while maintaining physical distancing) and the CEWS program has helped us through the current challenges we face."

As far as a contingency plan for the uptake in cases, "we continue to have as much of our tasting experiences outside, and going forward into the fall, we will continue to do so. We have plans to start holding tasting experiences in our beautiful and spacious courtyard, making it comfortable for our guests, while maintaining physical distancing."

The floor of the courtyard is heated, he explained, and the courtyard will be equipped with patio heaters.

"We are also planning to have wine tastings in production during harvest. Icewine tastings will be held outside in our heated courtyard this winter."

Hare intends to continue to support the Shaw and to offer live performances.

"I think many people just want to get outdoors and enjoy live music, especially with current regulations for indoor performances. We have had a wonderful response to our two Shaw concerts to date. Both were sold out. This is not surprising, as the Shaw performers have amazing talent and wonderful en-

ergy when they perform."

The Hare is hosting the final performance in this concert series, which will feature the music of Duke Ellington, on Thursday, Oct. 8 (weather permitting), starting at 5 p.m.

Tickets are a \$10 donation to the Red Roof Retreat, with 100 per cent of the tick-

et sales for all three events donated to this cause. "So far, we have \$1,000 and after next Thursday's concert, we expect to donate \$1,500," Hare said.

Tickets or information is available through theharewinco.com website, by visiting their Facebook page or by calling 905-684-4994.t

Gates proposes bill to save wineries



NDP MPP Wayne Gates, visiting Ravine Vineyard Estate Winery, says he is expecting support for a bill he has introduced at the Ontario legislature to exempt VQA and 100 per cent Ontario wines from the 6.1 per cent basic tax paid on wine sold at winery retail stores. With wineries suffering from the pandemic, it is important to eliminate a tax he says makes no sense. Imported wine does not pay the same tax, he says, and without help, wineries may start closing their doors. Paul Harber of Ravine says the elimination of the tax, which would give wineries an extra \$6 on every \$100 of wine sold, would be a huge help, especially during COVID, and would give wineries an opportunity to survive, and even invest in future growth. (Penny Coles)

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EDITORIAL

Gratitude possible at Thanksgiving, even during pandemic

With Thanksgiving approaching, we may be contemplating gratitude. Some families will voice their reasons for feeling grateful, a charming Thanksgiving tradition, but one which can't help but be impacted by the challenges of living with the novel coronavirus, which has killed more than a million people world-wide. Our hearts break for those who have lost someone they love to this deadly disease, but if we look hard, we can surely find room for gratitude. We've learned to rethink priorities. We have always understood the importance of family, but when, for months on end, we haven't been able to hug some of our most precious family members, we've come to understand on a more visceral level how much our loved ones mean to us. By being deprived of contact with friends and neighbours, we have learned to appreciate a simple wave or a short, distanced conversation. We realize now how much joy that brief contact can bring. Some of us are rediscovering the outdoors. With fewer activities to claim our time, and a beautiful spring that turned into a glorious summer that has led to cooler and colourful fall days, many people are finding more time to walk, hike or cycle. We've all learned new ways of doing things we enjoy, and what we need to do. It may be a virtual meeting, less time spent on the road or stuck in traffic, how to connect with family through FaceTime or Skype phone calls, or time to get caught up on chores or renovations at home we've been putting off. On a broader scale, we can be grateful for living in a country with good, free medical care. We can be grateful to live in a country where our leaders are doing what they can to keep us safe and healthy, and if we don't agree with their measures, we can be grateful we are free to say so and vote them out next election. We have only to look around our community and all the good that is being done for others to realize that even during a pandemic, especially during a pandemic, many people continue to be kind, caring and generous, helping those in need, supporting our youth, and making this corner of the world a pretty great place to live and work. On a personal note, all of us at The Local are grateful everyday to our readers, our advertisers, and all of you who share your stories with us. Without your support, we would be unable to continue doing what we love, which is bringing you the great stories, and the important stories, that are happening all around us. We may be missing celebrating with family members this weekend, but we can still make the most of the day, choose to be grateful, and do all we can to keep ourselves and others safe, healthy and looking forward to a post-pandemic world. Penny Coles

Virtual reality can overcome physical, emotional deconditioning



Larry W. Chambers
Hanna Levy,
Eva Liu
Special to The Local

Months of reduced physical activity and isolation due to COVID-19 lockdowns are taking their toll on seniors' flexibility, strength and endurance, as well as emotional and social well-being. The emphasis moving forward should be on infection control, and on giving people information, encouragement and support to increase fitness while at home, as social distance measures are likely to continue into the future. Although "average life expectancy" is a commonly used term, "healthy life expectancy" is a far more valuable metric. It describes amount of time one can live life without disability, frailty and dementia. Growing evidence suggests that it is possible to increase healthy life expectancy by increasing physical, social and mental activity, delaying or preventing dependency on others and the need for care. For example, members or volunteers in community programs such as the Bruce Trail Conservancy can be confident that they are both helping with the well-being of others, and engaging in activities that will reduce the risk of dementia, disability and frailty for themselves. However, these activities may not be possible for those who are housebound for part, or all of the year. One option for these individuals is to use Virtual Reality (VR) to walk through nature trails from the comfort of their home, and, of particular importance in Canada, walk daily regardless of the weather conditions outside. VR mimics real world through headsets that generate realistic images, sounds and other sensations to mimic the user's physical experience in a virtual environment. A person using virtual reality equipment can look around the artificial world, move around in it, and interact with its items or features. VR can also be created through specially designed rooms with multiple large screens displaying the artificial environment. Using a measurement called Useful Field Of Vision (UFOV), it has been shown that VR can improve the speed with which a person can see and react to a potential threat, such as a car appearing at speed from a side street. These improvements can reduce car crash risk, thereby increasing independence of older adults. The increase in reaction speed is so great that some insurers in the U.S. have started to ask their clients whose age is increasing to undertake this form of training. Equally important to physical fitness in older age is maintaining social activity. People who are living longer can stay socially active through volunteer work, employment or starting a new business. Older adults can also engage in this form of activity from the comfort of their homes, through gathering data in research projects, such as those organized by Zooniverse. Although the priority for housebound older adults is to get them out of the house as often as possible, the internet offers opportunities to



Auchterlonie on Astrology

Bill Auchterlonie
Special to The Local

The full week of Auchterlonie on Astrology can be found on the Facebook page for The NOTL Local, and on the website <https://www.auchterlonieonastrology.ca> In Part II of my Podcast, thanks to AstroButterfly, we get Mars retrograde – The Hero's Journey.


Thursday, Oct 8: It's all over by noon today. By that I mean all the astro moves are made by then. The Moon moves into Cancer, setting up tomorrow's third quarter Moon. Significantly, Venus and Chiron connect, with the promise that if you play a better game you can grow younger and healthier. And it was Oct 8, 1645 that the first hospital opened in Québec, thanks to nurse Jeanne Mance. Tuesday, Oct. 13: As if we didn't have enough going retrograde right now, today, at 9:04 p.m., Mercury turns retrograde for several weeks, turning direct again on Nov. 11. It's a good time to review ideas and plans and see where improvements can be made. Today, were he still alive, Dwight David Eisenhower would be 130 years old. After winning the Second World War, he went on to serve as America's 34th president. He warned of the growing 'military-industrial complex' that was assuming political power in America and elsewhere. And that's Auchterlonie on Astrology for this week. Next week it's the new Moon in Scorpio. Until then, shine on!



View from the couch

Donald Combe
Special to The Local

Mrs. Dalloway (1997) is a day in the life of the prosperous Clarissa Dalloway, who is planning a party for that evening. The action flows between the present and the past. The introspective characters are all superficially fine, but other deep and complex emotions lie beneath the surface. A wonderful film, beautifully set in 1920s London. Donald Combe is a retired English teacher who loves to go to movies. Until he resumes going to theatres, he has graciously agreed to share his opinions, through "short and sweet" exclusives, of Netflix series and movies for The Local.



Letters! We want letters!

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

The Niagara-on-the-Lake LOCAL

The trusted voice of our community

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The opinions expressed in submitted commentary, and letters to the editor, are those of the contributors and not necessarily those of The NOTL Local.

COMMENT

Fire Prevention Week focuses on kitchen fires



Jay Plato
Special to The Local

Every October, Fire Prevention Week is observed on the Sunday through Saturday period in which Oct. 9 falls.

That date is important, as it is the commemoration of the Great Chicago Fire, which began on Oct. 8, 1871. The Great Chicago Fire caused devastating damage to the city, killing more than 250 people, leaving more than 100,000 people homeless, destroying more than 17,400 structures and burning more than 200 acres of land. Most of the devastating damage happened on Oct. 9.

Fire Prevention Week remains the longest-running recognized week in North America, with the National Fire Protection Association (NFPA) sponsoring it since 1922. Every year, the NFPA creates a cam-

paign theme which is released and spread by fire departments across North America. This year's Fire Prevention Week theme, which runs from Oct. 4 to 10, is Serve Up Fire Safety in the Kitchen.

Year after year, cooking remains the leading cause of residential fires across Ontario. We all own many electronics or gadgets that are continually distracting us, however, remaining present in the kitchen is one of the easiest ways to ensure things don't get out of control. The Niagara-on-the-Lake Fire & Emergency Services, Community Risk Reduction Division will be ensuring this message is spread throughout our community during this year's Fire Prevention Week. Citizens are encouraged to look for banners placed outside of Old Town, St. Davids, and Queenston fire stations. Look for posters at your local post office, school and community bulletin board. Be sure to follow the Niagara-on-the-Lake Fire & Emergency Services on social media (Twitter, Ins-

tagram, and Facebook) to receive advice on ensuring you know what to do to remain safe in the kitchen.

As adults, most of us take the skill of cooking for granted, and begin to believe we can multi-task while doing it. How many people have put a pot on the stove and thought, I'll just take out this garbage? Or maybe, I have a few minutes to change that load of laundry. How many people just sit down and get distracted by their cell phone or laptop? It is these distractions that lead to preventable fires in the kitchen. Remain present, keep combustible items off the stove top, turn handles inwards so little ones cannot grab them, and remember to have a lid on hand on the chance a fire does occur. If a fire does happen, carefully sliding the lid over a flaming pot is one of the easiest ways to cut off oxygen to a fire, helping to put it out. Remember to leave your house, get to your safe place and call 911.

If you have any questions about how to keep you and

your family safe in the kitchen, please contact Niagara-on-the-Lake Fire & Emergency Services, Community Risk Reduction.

Jay Plato
Deputy Fire Chief,
Community Risk Reduction

The NOTLFES is writing a regular column with The Local related to all things fire. Expect to see articles related to fire safety, training, fire department initiatives or developments within the department. The NOTLFES

understands our community, and recognizes one of the best ways to ensure we reach every member of the community is through using all media platforms available. Thank you for reading, and looking forward to the articles that we produce.

LETTERS

Threats not appreciated

I feel I must respond to the recent letter "Council decisions will send businesses looking elsewhere to invest," which takes aim at council decisions regarding new business proposals in Niagara-on-the-Lake.

As a neighbour of Queenston Mile Vineyard, I am happy that council has taken the time to listen to residents' concerns about this proposal rather than just rubber-stamp it. It is their job to represent the citizens that elected them and, as citizens, we have the right to follow the procedures afforded to us by law to ensure we are heard.

Yes, there have been delays for this project, but this is not the fault of council. There are many factors involved including the postponement of a public meeting by the applicant and the assertion that it is like any other winery. No two win-

eries are the same. Our bylaws are in place for a reason — to ensure new projects have parameters and can coexist with existing land uses. Each situation is unique and site-specific. One can't just assume that amendments being sought will be passed without question. Does it not make more sense to have all necessary approvals in place before investing millions of dollars?

The threat of appeals to the Local Planning Appeal Tribunal is being used so often these days when developers don't get their way. When council decides to disagree with staff, it is not done lightly. The issue of the new noise bylaw was raised. It was not designed by council, but by staff. Council listened to the feedback and realized that it was not workable. They did not support staff's proposal and sent it

back to the drawing board. That is how it should work.

I don't believe the writer's gloom and doom predictions. We cannot allow new developments to proliferate unchecked. Council is fielding more and more complaints from residents stemming from various agricultural and commercial operations affecting their daily lives. We are more in danger of losing existing residents these days if we can't strike a balance. Council is taking a more cautious approach to what is being built in our community and I appreciate that.

Niagara-on-the-Lake is still open for business, but we are not a pushover. I am grateful to have a council that will listen to the average citizen and our existing businesses.

Marion Hassebroek
Niagara-on-the-Lake

Technology help for seniors

Continued from page 6

supplement face-to-face contact through technologies such as the Amazon Alexa Skill software, Zoom video calling, and VR software.

Some ideas for how to stay engaged in the community using technology:

- Set up a VR group to raise money for a good cause, or to compete with other groups who are housebound. Be in a group with a purpose.
- Join an online book club listening to Fifteen Dogs (Giller Prize-winning novel by Canadian André Alexis) on Audible, or a discussion group about writing apologetic fiction.
- Do an augmented reality tour of the Royal Ontario Museum while standing up, using a treadmill to walk and climb stairs.
- Use your treadmill and a virtual walk app to explore famous trails around the

world, for example: <https://monkeysandmountains.com/virtual-hikes/>.

- Join an online concert party in the evening for music and a discussion.

In July this year, a survey by Age-Well found that 58 per cent of Canadians aged 65-plus and almost eight in 10 (78 per cent) aged 50 to 64 own smartphones. Eighty-six per cent of Canadians aged 65-plus and 94 per cent of Canadians aged 50-plus report being online daily — see survey infographic at: <https://agewell-nce.ca/wp-content/uploads/2019/09/OATechSurvey-SEP2019-EN-Final.pdf>.

If the above activities about staying in the community using technology sound exciting, but the technology seems intimidating, two free programs offer students as technology mentors for older adults:

- Cyber Seniors — 1-844-217-3057, email info@cyberseniors.org or visit website www.cyberseniors.org
- enTECH Computer Club

— 1-226-336-9684, www.entech.club

These programs match tech-savvy students with older adults looking for help. The students gain practical experience while earning volunteer hours and developing job skills that enhance opportunities for future employment, and older adults gain valuable skills to help keep them connected to the community and pursue virtual reality websites to enhance their at-home physical and social activity levels.

Larry W. Chambers has authored 175 articles and books concerning disease prevention (e.g. dementia), quality improvement in long-term care homes, and innovative approaches for continuing professional development. He is research director of the Niagara Regional Campus, School of Medicine, McMaster University. Hanna Levy and Eva Liu are medical students at the Niagara Regional Campus of the McMaster University School of Medicine.

Thanks for One Day, Your Way support

Despite missing the spirit and camaraderie of our community run, and facing a pandemic that has challenged us, Niagara-on-the-Lake walked, ran or biked their own way, showing their determination to make a difference, just like Terry did 40 years ago.

Special thanks to NOTL Rotarian Penny Milligan, who provided curbside brunch for over 30 fellow participants, raising over \$2,400 for cancer research.

The dedicated June's dream team, organized by Donna and Norman Seymour, continues to raise over \$12,000. Thank you for making it fun for family and friends, and serving pizza lunch from Sandtrap.

Team Tennessee organized by Ann Deuerlein has raised

over \$4,000. Huge thanks for educating the young children in their tennis bubble with the importance of what Terry Fox accomplished in his life, and how important it is for all of us to honour his legacy.

The Scott and Harber families, on holiday at Sauble Beach, remembered to keep the Marathon of Hope alive, raising over \$3,600.

The amazing Team Pillsy, spearheaded by the efforts of Joe Pillitteri, have raised over \$30,000.

Thank you to Lee Beaupre, who held an online music trivia night, raising over \$1,000 for the Terry Fox Foundation.

Many others registered and did it their way, raising online over \$30,000.

We may just reach the million dollar milestone this 40th anniversary year.

Sincere thanks for all the meaningful coverage from Penny Coles, editor at The Local paper.

Terry said, "the answer is to help others, and even if I don't finish the Marathon of Hope it must continue without me."

Thank you to everyone in our community who took the time to honour the legacy of Terry Fox, and raised funds for the much-needed research for all the various cancers funded by the Terry Fox Foundation.

With much gratitude to our wonderful community,

Joan King
NOTL



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Niagara Region

Teen gets wallet, money back thanks to good samaritan

Penny Coles
The Local

Isaac Andres would like to say thank you to the man who found his wallet, but he doesn't know who that person is.

It came to him through a circuitous route — the wallet was first picked up by the side of the road by a visitor to town, says Andres.

The 15-year-old had been riding his bicycle from Tim Hortons, along Niven Road,

on his way home.

His family used to live on Niven Road, and coincidentally, the man who found the wallet turned it over to Darcy Anderson, a former neighbour of the Andres family, who now lives on Four Mile Creek Road.

Isaac, a Laura Secord Secondary School student, was carrying a new wallet, without any identification in it and loaded with \$700 cash he had earned while working for his father, Randy Andres of

Green Scenes Groundskeeping, this summer.

"I was carrying way too much money in it," Isaac admits, and had thoughts of stopping at the bank on his way home to deposit it, but before he had a chance, his wallet, which had no identification in it, fell out of his pocket.

When he realized he had lost it, he says, he assumed the money was gone.

He did put it out on social media, and when he got no

response, his mother convinced him to place a small classified ad in The Local.

Meanwhile, unbeknown to the Andres family, Anderson had put a sign on his front lawn to try to find the owner of the wallet.

He later told the Andres a good samaritan had knocked on his door, and asked if the wallet was his, as it was found on the road near his house. Anderson said it wasn't, but he would look for the owner. Then, while Anderson was out of town, Sharon Irvine, the wife of a friend of his, saw

the ad in The Local.

She got in touch with Anderson, who called the Andres, and Isaac got his wallet back, along with the \$700.

Jessica Andres, Isaac's mother, says she was impressed that "there were three people who did the right and honest thing" to ensure Isaac got his money back. "It has brightened my outlook on humanity, and we are very grateful to them," she says.

She was also pleased that Isaac, who had been so sure he would never see his money again, learned the very

positive lesson that there are good and honest people in the world who indeed wanted to see the wallet and cash returned to its rightful owner.

"I wish I knew who had found it," says Isaac. "If I could, I'd say thank you to him. I didn't think I would get it back, I thought it was lost for good. I thought for sure someone would just find it and take it. I'm happy that I got my wallet back and that there are people who are like this," says Isaac.

"I honestly didn't think this would happen, but it did."



Isaac Andres is delighted to have his wallet back, and the \$700 in it. (Photo supplied)

Guides meet safely during COVID



Sparks, Brownies, Guides and Pathfinders met for the first time since the pandemic for a physically-distanced family scavenger hunt on the Commons. There were staggered start times and everyone wore a mask, says leader Megan Gilchrist. About 30 families participated in the event. Younger girls did a word scavenger hunt with their families, and older girls did a selfie scavenger hunt with natural and historic landmarks around the Commons. More than 50 girls have signed up for the four NOTL branches, and are meeting outdoors or virtually, following provincial and Girl Guide protocols, says Gilchrist. Taking part in the hunt were Chris and Bella Gilchrist, Bella finding some leaves for the hunt, Spark Alice McGeachin and Brownie Millie McGeachin, and Pathfinder leader Shaunna MacQuarrie. (Photos by Megan Gilchrist)



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Canopy Growth supports heritage trail rehabilitation

Penny Coles
The Local

Rehabilitation of the next section of Upper Canada Heritage Trail is a little closer to reality with a \$40,000 donation from Canopy Growth.

The trail from John Street to Charlotte Street has been completed, with the next step in the process for rehabilitation of the former Erie and Ontario Railroad line to take place from Charlotte Street to East and West Line.

Canopy's Sean Webster was in NOTL last week for the announcement of the donation for a project the company is honoured to support, as it will provide a safe trail for residents to safely walk, run and cycle, he said.

Canopy, which also recently purchased iPads for Niagara long-term care homes, is committed to supporting communities where it has operations, Webster said.

NOTL's Tweed Farms, owned by Canopy, is one of

the largest medical cannabis operations in Canada.

"Canopy Growth believes we can 'Grow Good Together' with our neighbours to create change in order to make a positive impact in the communities we call home. We are proud to support the Heritage Trail to achieve those objectives," said Webster.

With a dead, and dangerous tree to be taken down this week, the trail from Charlotte Street and East and West Line will be closed until Friday at 4 p.m. The tree will be removed by a crane, along with some other trees, and a brush cleanup, a Town press release said.

Tony Chisholm of the heritage trail committee said the Town's design for this section of the trail has not yet been completed, but should be available for public input later this month.

Committee members are hoping to find a compromise that will provide a balance for those who want it to look more natural, and

those who would like the path to be more accessible for cyclists and those with strollers, walkers and wheelchairs, Chisholm said.

The first section that has been completed is seeing a definite increase in the number of locals who are using it, says Coun. Allan Bisback, whose deck backs

onto the trail. Bisback is also on the committee with a group of dedicated volunteers, who continue to promote awareness of the trail and sustain its maintenance through fundraising efforts.

The rehabilitation of the trail has been, and will continue to be, achieved solely through donations by local

residents and businesses, the Town's news release said. The objective is for the Upper Canada Heritage Trail to be an integral part of the active transportation system in Niagara-on-the-Lake, connecting communities and offering a multi-use trail for residents.

The Heritage Trail fund-

raising group is seeking donations for the project. Donations can be sent to: The Heritage Trail Committee c/o of the Town of Niagara-on-the-Lake, PO Box 100, Virgil, ON, L0S 1T0. Donations of \$25 and more will receive a charitable tax receipt. For more information visit heritagetrail.ca.



Coun. Allan Bisback, Djin Schott and Sean Webster of Canopy Growth, trail committee chair Rick Meloen, vice-chair Tony Chisholm, Richard Coyne and Lord Mayor Betty Disero celebrate a \$40,000 donation from Canopy Growth for the Upper Canada Heritage Trail rehabilitation. (Penny Coles)

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NOTL Lions pie sale to help local youth

Penny Coles
The Local

When six women gathered around the kitchen island in the home of Dori Wiens last Thursday, they were doing what comes naturally — helping their community.

When the friends see a need, they pitch in to do what they can. They've been doing that for years. Last week, they were making fruit pies, in response to a call for assistance from Dorothy Wiens, a member, with her husband Erwin, of the Niagara-on-the-Lake Lions Club.

Like so many organizations and service clubs, the Lions have been looking for new ways to fundraise during the pandemic, so they can continue to support their community. Wiens had decided a Thanksgiving pie sale could raise some money to allow the club to continue supporting minor sports for youth, including hockey, lacrosse, soccer, baseball and basketball.

"We're a small little club, just trying to keep on doing what we've always done, supporting youth activities in our community," says Dorothy.

The youth dances the Lions have sponsored for years have been cancelled because of COVID, as were this year's Easter Bunny Sale, and the annual Virgil Firefighters car show and barbecue the Lions have assisted, making it important to come up with a safe alternative, she said.

So calling on her friends to help make pies seemed natural, and Dori Wiens'

large, recently-renovated kitchen, the obvious location.

Of the group assembling pies last Thursday, Dorothy was the only Lions member. Carole Wiens, Luanne Kulchar, Dori Wiens, Kathy Dyck and Isolde Kroeker are friends accustomed to working together, and the pie-making assembly line is nothing new to them, having made them for several years for Joe Pillitteri's Terry Fox car wash and pie sale.

Working from the Tenderflake box pie crust recipe, the women completed 150 pies in one day, including peach, peach rhubarb and apple, with the addition of another 10 sovereign coronation grape pies by friend Agnes Wiens.

The Lions Club sale is this Thursday from 3 to 6 p.m. and Friday from 9 a.m. to 12 p.m. from the parking lot at Cornerstone Church, and will offer 160 frozen, unbaked pies at \$20 each, just in time for Thanksgiving.

"We'll have people standing outside in the parking lot with buckets, and you order your pies and throw your money in the bucket," says Dorothy.

Froese Farms and Mike Honsberger of Jordan donated the peaches. Mike and Sandy Perrault, who have a jam stand on Niagara Stone Road, donated the apples, Phil Leboudec of Phil's valumart the flour, and Paolo Miele the shortening and eggs, says Dorothy.

Lions members helped slice the apples the night before, and most of the peaches had been sliced and frozen when they were harvested. "Otherwise, we

couldn't have done all this in a day," she says.

Other members provided ingredients and supplies such as the aluminum pie plates, plastic bags and labels, making the fundraiser a true community effort to give back to the community, she added.

While the women who gathered to make the pies understand their goal is to raise money for the Lions and the community, they get just as much themselves out of the shared experience.

"Humans are meant to connect with each other," says Dori, "and that's been difficult recently. This is an opportunity for us to be together, and it's been fun."

Most of them are members of Cornerstone Community Church, accustomed to meeting regularly for outreach projects, such as quilting together and making pies for the annual New Hamburg Mennonite Relief Sale, which was cancelled. Their weekly meetings, going back as far as 35 years for some of them, have also been cancelled.

An opportunity to get together to make pies, chat, pass on cooking and baking tips learned from their mothers, is also a time to share what is going on in their lives and families. They talk about recipes, but more important, about kids, grandkids, and especially, for some, the care of elderly parents through a pandemic. The ability to know they can lean on each other is very much appreciated.

"This is our support group," says Kathy Dyck. "We have such history together."

Dorothy laughs at being



Carole Wiens helped make and wrap 150 fruit pies for the NOTL Lions sale, this Thursday and Friday at Cornerstone Church on Niagara Stone Road. (Penny Coles)

the one who has had to learn from scratch, referring to her friends as her mentors, teaching her how to make fruit platz, meat buns and other staples of Mennonite cooking. They've shared not only what was passed down by generations of women,

but also how to adapt them to more modern methods to save time while retaining the same taste.

"We learn from each other as we go along," says Dyck, as they discuss the need to adjust the quantity of fruit filling in the pies,

based on whether it's fresh or frozen.

While some of the methods have changed over the years, says Dori, "the camaraderie, the laughter, and sometimes the tears we share when we're together, that hasn't changed."



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Embracing the present through yoga at Palatine Hills

Kim Wade
Special to The Local

Gathered on a vast green lawn, dotted with trees and framed by large wine barrels and vineyards, 16 yoga enthusiasts arranged their mats in the customary formation in view of their yoga instructor for their Sunday morning practice last week.

They are welcomed by instructor Abbey Morris, who says how grateful she is for the gorgeous weather we are experiencing, and expresses her thanks to Palatine Hills Estate Winery for inviting her to share this practice with them.

Throughout the hour, Morris reminds the participants that this session is time spent taking care of themselves. She helps them become more aware of their bodies by concentrating on their breath and the poses, giving them permission to relax their minds by setting aside their thoughts, worries and preoccupations by concentrating on the here and now.

The quest for that mind/body connection is what attracted Morris to yoga. A recent graduate from Brock University with a degree in media and communications and a minor in sociology, Morris has had her own struggles with finding that connection. She openly discusses her challenges with mental health issues and her diagnosis with anorexia.

"Yoga's been very transformational for me in my life. It's helped me with lots of mental health issues. A couple years ago I was diagnosed with anorexia, so yoga really helped me find a mind/body connection that I am very driven to share with the rest of the

world. I think that this is a very important time to bring yoga and meditation and assorted therapeutic services to people in these very uncertain times, and to be able to find that connection to something in yourself."

Morris explains she has always been an active person, taking part in sports, including cheerleading. "I have always done active Vinyasa (yoga), which is definitely my strong suit, and I love being able to teach it. I'm very comfortable with knowing how my body moves and I've played sports where I've had to cultivate that body awareness, so I think coaching and cheerleading and all those things definitely helped me along the way."

In December 2019, Morris travelled to Costa Rica and started her yoga teacher training there with her first 200-hour certification. After training in Vinyasa, she turned to Gentle Yoga, Yin Yoga, and also completed training in meditation.

She teaches a Gentle Yoga class in Thorold with specific moves that are easy on the body, developed for the needs of an aging population or people who may be recovering from surgery and/or have physical restrictions that require more gentle movement. "I find that people think yoga has to look and be a certain way, and that's not really what it's all about. I like to do these classes so I can understand all bodies that come into my classes."

Morris explains that Yin Yoga practice is more meditative, and more challenging, as you have to hold the poses for about three to five minutes. The longer pose helps to stretch the tissues beneath the muscles, and to stretch

the connective tissues in your joints. She explains it can be therapeutic for people with pain in their hips and lower back.

Morris finds one of her most rewarding experiences is receiving comments from her clients about feeling welcomed to her sessions, and included in her class, regardless of their abilities. "I'm getting rid of that perfectionist attitude that sort of haunted me for so much of my life," she says.

"Right now," she announces, "I am very excited. I'm in a mentorship group looking at teaching yoga for women with eating disorders. That was sort of my recovery path, and something that was very transformative for me, so I am very interested in the route of yoga therapy. It's still quite new, but it is something to take yoga and apply it to different types of mental and physical ailments." It is essentially using yoga to help with stress, anxiety and food fear, she says. "That's something that I'm looking to do."

She says her road to recovery "is still very much a journey of mine. So simultaneously I'm learning by my own experience," and she hopes that when teaching yoga her personal experience will help others.

Although COVID-19 has created many challenges for Morris and the region's yoga studios, she believes her chosen path is a positive one. "It is really neat to be a yoga teacher at this time, because it's almost like a small social obligation to help people in this time of uncertainty, knowing that people are coming to you to live their reality. It's mental health and fitness all rolled into one."

When you practise



Yoga instructor Abbey Morris teaches an hour session in the vineyards of Palatine Estate Winery. (Photos by Kim Wade)



Abbey Morris, teaching yoga in the vineyards of Palatine Estate Winery, hopes her personal issues with body image can help others.

yoga, she says, "you begin to feel better about yourself, not just your body but your mind, your state of being. You will want to

take care of yourself better."

Through yoga, people develop this sort of love for themselves and come to appreciate themselves in a way that they feel the need to care for themselves a bit more, "rather than coming in and doing a bunch of abs in hopes that you've got a washboard abdomen."

As far as yoga in the vineyard, "everyone really loves the space," Morris says. "I used to work in the wine industry, and there is just something about being out in the vineyard and that sense of calm. No matter what's going on, you can look out there and know that there is calm available. I just love this area and living in Niagara."

The morning's practice was concluded with a calming meditation while participants soaked up the warmth of the waning morning. After the ses-

sion, they were invited to enjoy a glass of wine on the Palatine Estates patio, on the grass, or back on their mat, socially distanced in the sunshine.

Palatine and Morris have agreed to continue the Sunday morning yoga sessions into October, "as long as Mother Nature graces us with her warm presence."

The classes start at 10 a.m. and are designed for all levels of practice. Tickets are \$22, and include 60 minutes of yoga and one glass of wine. To purchase tickets, email abbeysyogis@gmail.com, contact the winery at palatine-hillsestatewinery.com, call 905-646-9617, or visit Palatine Hills Facebook page for events.

For more information on Abbey Morris and her yoga journey visit <https://calendly.com/yogawithabbey> or follow her blog at Namaste & Rosé.

Reason to be thankful



Kathy Brown, manager of the Virgil Avondale store, has been collecting cash for food banks since July. She donated \$450 worth of food to Newark Neighbours for Thanksgiving dinners last week, as part of the Community Food Drive, and before that, \$2,300 to food banks around Niagara. (Photo submitted)

NOTL native Mike Denney wins big with music award

Mike Balsom
Special to The Local

Former Garrison Village resident Mike Denney was golfing the day he should have been collecting his sixth Canadian Country Music Association (CCMA) award, but like so many opportunities missed during the pandemic, he found out about his win online.

As owner of independent record label MDM Recordings, the 58-year-old has been responsible for guiding the careers of successful country artists Chad Brownlee, Jess Moskaluke, David James and many others.

Denney would be the first to admit that during his days attending Niagara District Secondary School, no one would have predicted he would one day be accepting the 2020 CCMA Industry Person of the Year award.

"I barely got out of high school," Denney says from his Toronto home. "I was working in the morning (with his father, Wilf, at Woodstream Corporation, where they made fiberglass canoes), then I would go to school in the afternoon. But often that meant heading to the parkway to party. I think they pushed me out of school, eventually."

In his early 20s, Denney began working for Lorne Bjorgan at Design Electronics. As a disc jockey, he was being booked for weddings, ball tournaments, peach festivals and other events. Eventually he was approached by Wayne Cardiff, who asked Denney to take over his DJ business, Mr. Music. Once at the helm of Mr. Music, it wasn't long before he began to think about a future in the record industry.

"I was looking through the St. Catharines Standard classifieds one day," he says, "and I saw an ad for a merchandiser rep, to go into all the department stores in the region to make sure the music section was up to speed. That's when things started to kick into gear."

He was hired by the Handelman Company, and for a time he juggled that job with running the DJ company. His role as a rack-jobber may not have been the most glamorous in the music industry, but their annual convention brought together representatives from all of the big record labels in the country.

"There were seven major record companies at the time, and they all did presentations over the course of two days," he explains.

"The last presentation of the day was CBS Records/Sony Music. They brought Ronnie Hawkins out, and he blew the transformer, knocking the power out for the whole hotel. I remember seeing the vice-president of sales and marketing, really cool and collected, just scramble, and I said, 'I gotta go talk to that guy.'"

That guy turned out to be Don Oates, and that moment became a turning point for a young Denney. "I ended up talking to him for about an hour-and-a-half, and I made the decision right then that I wanted to work in the music industry, and I wanted to work for that guy."

Denney enrolled at the Trebas Institute of Music, followed by a two-year program at the Harris Institute. After many failed interviews, he was hired by Pindoff Record Sales for their One Stop division, where he was responsible for sales to independent record stores.

That job gave him valuable experience and further connections within the industry. In quick succession, Denney was shortlisted for a job with Sony Music, which he didn't get, was hired by PolyGram Filmed Entertainment to sell VHS tapes, had to turn down an offer



Mike Denney is the 2020 Canadian Country Music Association Industry Person of the Year. (Kevin Patrick Robbins)

from Sony the same day he accepted that job, then four weeks later, left PolyGram when Sony made him an offer he couldn't refuse.

At 32 years old, Denney had his dream job, and he decided to finally move to the Toronto area. Within a year-and-a-half, he was working for that man he met at that Handelman convention. "I ended up reporting to the guy I said I was going

to work for, Don Oates. He ended up being my boss, my mentor and a great friend."

CD sales were flying at the time, says Denney. "My job was kids' audio and video for Sony Wonder, and non-traditional sales, so getting CDs into drug stores and grocery stores. It was fun and challenging, but I did really well. I moved into a national sales management role within a year-and-a-

half."

Corporate politics edged Denney out of Sony after four-and-a-half years. At the same time, PolyGram was in the process of merging with MCA Records, forming the new Universal Music Group. Denney's former instructor at the Harris Institute brought him in on a contract basis. That turned

Continued on page 16

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Bravo Niagara! launches matched fundraising drive

Mike Balsom
Special to The Local

Bravo Niagara! Festival of the Arts has just announced a new matching campaign in an effort to raise up to \$40,000.

It's the latest philanthropic donation from local residents Carol and David Appel, who have promised to match in full up to \$20,000 in donations from the community at large in support of the Niagara-on-the-Lake based organization.

"We are absolutely awed by the brilliant programming of Bravo Niagara!" said the Appels in a statement, "and we are committed to helping make it happen."

Through the matching campaign, the Appels are carrying on a tradition for which their family has long been known, and through which organizations across the country

have benefited. When it comes to the arts in Niagara, you would be hard-pressed to find an organization that the Appel family hasn't supported.

Locally, Shaw Festival Theatre, Niagara Symphony Orchestra and Music Niagara Festival are some of the groups whose programs have benefited from the Appels' largesse. A quick glance at each organization's website will unveil the Appel name in no time at all. And a Google search will also reveal hospitals and organizations such as the Canadian Foundation for AIDS Research, which have been recipients of gifts from the family.

The love of and support for the arts is something the Appel children, David and Mark, certainly learned from their parents.

The estate of parents, Bram and Bluma Appel, is still an

important contributor to the Shaw Festival's endowment fund. Shortly before losing her battle with lung cancer in 2007, Bluma Appel received an honorary doctorate from Brock University for her dedication and contribution to the arts in Canada as a volunteer, board member, fundraiser and philanthropist. She was also named an Officer of the Order of Canada in 2001, and the Canadian Stage Company's main theatre in Toronto bears her name. In 2006, she and her husband contributed \$50,000 toward the restoration of a barn at the School of Restoration Arts at Willowbank.

Over the years, Carol and David have contributed more than \$750,000 to the Shaw. David's brother Mark and his wife Gail have also been significant donors to the theatre.

Alexis Spieldenner, executive director and co-founder of Bravo Niagara!, says, "we are honoured to have the generous support of Carol and David Appel. Their incredible philanthropic commitment will help make it possible for us to present exciting new initiatives for our 2020/21 season."

With the pandemic still hindering the ability of such organizations to bring larger groups of people together to enjoy the arts, Bravo Niagara! has had to shift to online programming through its new Amplified series. In May, past Bravo Niagara! performers, as well as newcomers, teamed with children's choirs from Chorus Niagara, Laura Secord Secondary School and Fern Hill School in Oakville, to present a new version of the classic song, *We Are the World*. The video has since been viewed almost 5,000 times on YouTube.

And the Amplified series grows this month with a series of online presentations for the annual Voices of Freedom Festival.

"This fall we are committed to creating inspiring and compelling legacy projects through our virtual recordings and musical short films," says Christine Mori, artistic director and co-founder. "The series includes three world premieres of newly commissioned works by Bravo Niagara!"

The first entry is a musical short film highlighting the legacy of the Underground Railroad in Niagara, to debut



The Blackburn Brothers performing *Freedom Train* in Voices of Freedom Park for a musical short film for Bravo Niagara! (Photos supplied)



JUNO Award nominated blues singer-songwriter and guitarist Brooke Blackburn, a descendant of freedom seekers, is recorded at the Nathaniel Dett Memorial Chapel BME Church National Historic Site in Niagara Falls, for the Bravo Niagara!'s *Voices of Freedom* musical short film filmed recently.

later this month. Featured artists include superstar soprano Measha Brueggergosman and the JUNO Award-nominated Blackburn Brothers, descendants of freedom seekers. Shot at such significant Niagara sites as the BME Church in St. Catharines, the Nathaniel Dett Chapel in Niagara Falls, and the Voices of Freedom Park in NOTL, it will feature the songs *Freedom Train*, and *Sister Wilma*, an original composition commissioned by Bravo Niagara! to honour the late Wilma Morrison, known as the keeper

of Black history in the region.

The overall theme of this year's Voices of Freedom Festival is Sounds of Hope, commemorating the 75th anniversary of the end of the Holocaust. The two musical films to debut in November follow this focus. Written by Juno-winner Robi Botos, *Romani Experience* focuses on the history of the Roma genocide during the Holocaust. And Bravo Niagara! composer-in-residence Christos Hatzis presents a stirring new composition for violin and piano called *Menorah*,

performed by Marc Djokic and Christina Petrowska Quilico.

All three videos will debut via the Bravo Niagara! website and YouTube channel.

Meanwhile, Mori and Spieldenner encourage supporters of the festival to consider a donation this fall, especially in light of the Appels' matching promise, which winds up Dec. 31.

All donations \$25 and above will be recognized with an official tax receipt. To make a contribution, please visit bravoniagara.org/match2020.

LOCAL HAPPENINGS

NOTL LIONS CLUB THANKSGIVING PIE SALE

October 8 @ 3 p.m. - 6 p.m.

October 9 @ 10 p.m. - 12 p.m.

The NOTL Lions Club will be hosting a Thanksgiving Pie Fundraiser. A drive-through purchase/pickup will take place Thursday, Oct. 8, 3 to 6 p.m. and Friday, Oct. 9, 10 to 12 noon. at Cornerstone Church Town Campus (Virgil Site). Frozen homemade pies made with local fruit that can go straight into the oven. The pies that are available are peach, peach rhubarb, apple and sovereign corona-grape, \$20 each and we are only accepting cash.



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October 13 @ 7 p.m. - 8 p.m.

The Rotary Club of Niagara-on-the-Lake's Virtual Wine Tasting Tour will be held every Tuesday in October. On Oct. 13 it will showcase Hare Winery, and Oct. 20, Between the Lines, with a different charity as the recipient each week. Wine packages are \$65 per ticket and include tasting notes, descriptions and characteristics of the selected wines, as well as recipes for food and wine pairing. The wine will be shipped directly from the wineries to the participants prior to the event. These events will be featured through a Zoom link which will be sent to the participant's email on the day of the event. For more information visit www.niagaraonthelakerotary.ca.

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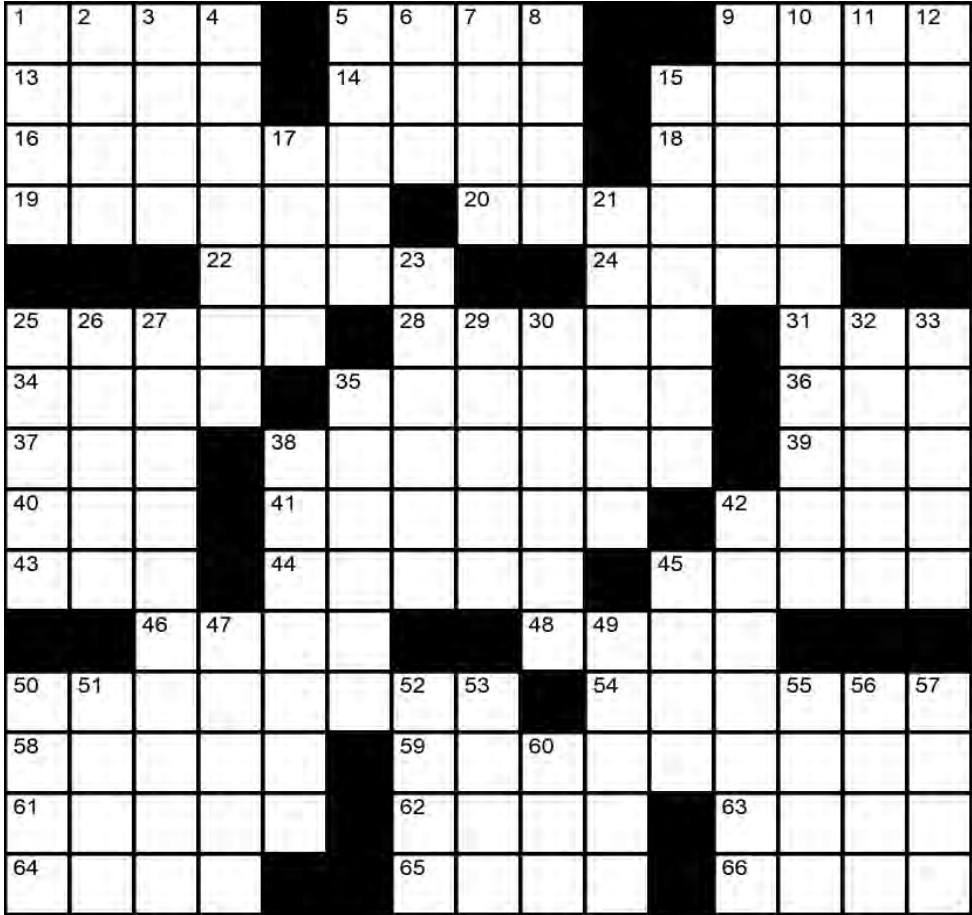
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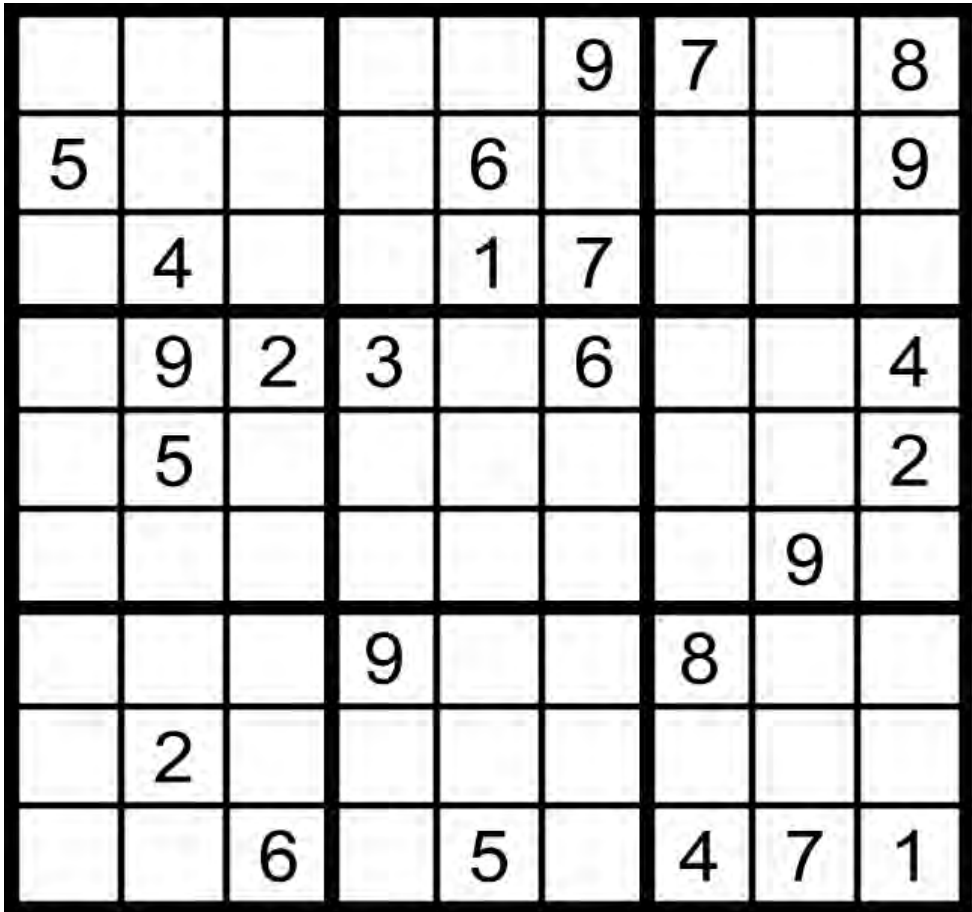
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- 31 "A very high price to pay for maturity" (Tom Stoppard)
- 34 Acquire through merit
- 35 Bank link
- 36 Strain
- 37 Tote
- 38 Speaking point?
- 39 Little devil
- 40 Pitcher's stat.
- 41 Requested in exchange for a kingdom (Shakespeare)
- 42 Locale of the Viminal Hill
- 43 Prohibition

- 44 Colombian cash
- 45 Artificial waterway
- 46 Matinee favorite
- 48 "Chop-chop!"
- 50 Magic
- 54 Pickle
- 58 Chemically inactive
- 59 Obsolete
- 61 Rocky debris at the base of a hill
- 62 Fail to mention
- 63 Bean capital of S America?
- 64 Decline to bid
- 65 Charts
- 66 Everyone, down South

Down:

- 1 Employs
- 2 Hue
- 3 Heavy ordnance, briefly
- 4 Author --- Hesse
- 5 Sleeping problem
- 6 Careful attention
- 7 Encounter
- 8 Obi, for example
- 9 Insulting remarks
- 10 Crookedly obtain Thai dwelling
- 11 Now it makes sense!
- 12 Pigs' digs?

- 15 Diversify
- 17 Trusted assistant
- 21 Homeland leaver
- 23 Imelda ---, who had a shoe surfeit
- 25 Tabloid target
- 26 Spanish saint martyred in boiling pitch
- 27 Arrangers
- 29 Synthetic meat can be created in this
- 30 The Pearl of the Black Sea
- 32 Third letter of the Greek alphabet
- 33 Eject
- 35 Gazed upon
- 38 The door in Dordogne, or in Texas
- 42 With celerity
- 45 Found behind the shin
- 47 Ventures
- 49 Lends
- 50 Small tuft
- 51 Machu Picchu builder
- 52 Chamber
- 53 Where the 3:10 went
- 55 Mother of Uranus
- 56 Web code
- 57 Small dabbling duck
- 60 Apex



OBITUARY



WORONCHAK - MICHAEL—of Ridgeway, passed away peacefully in his sleep at the Greater Niagara General Hospital on Tuesday, September 29, 2020 at the age of 95. Loving husband of Nancy (nee Mittlestead), devoted father of Carol Ann (Warren) Graham of Petrolia, Marsha Wright of Waterdown, Chris (Jeanette) Woronchak of Niagara-on-the-Lake, Melanie (Aaron) Ker of Port Colborne, Larry (Rosie) Woronchak of Ridgeway, dear grandfather of Amanda Wright, Heather Wright, Cloe Woronchak, Hailey Woronchak, Brittany Woronchak, Tiffany Woronchak, Connor Jones, Ashley Ker, Taylor Ker, Jacob Bessey, great-grandfather of Hayden Wright, brother of Mary Foster of Montreal, Quebec. Also survived by many nieces and nephews in the Niagara Region, Montreal and Buffalo, NY. He was predeceased by his parents George and Anna Woronczak, his brothers William Woronchuk and Stephen Woronczak. He moved to the farm at the age of 13 where he was a successful dairy farmer and saw many changes throughout his lifetime. He had a tremendous love of working the land with his family and watching his crops grow. Due to COVID-19 restrictions, there will be a private family service to be held at Overholt Cemetery at a later date. If so desired memorial donations may be made to the Niagara Antique Power Association or the Wainfleet Fall Fair. Arrangements entrusted to the DAVIDSON FUNERAL HOME, 135 Clarence Street. Port Colborne. Online guest register and condolences are available at www.davidsonfuneralhome.com

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PUZZLE ANSWERS

Sudoku solution from October 1, 2020

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

Across: 1 Utah, 5 A T Ms, 9 Ship, 13 Sire, 14 Plea, 15 Blase, 16 Entrances, 18 Ruben, 19 Stymlie, 20 Theories, 22 Adam, 24 Mast, 25 Clone, 28 Avoid, 31 Age, 34 Earn, 35 Bridge, 36 Tax, 37 Lug, 38 Lectern, 39 Imp, 40 E R A, 41 A horse, 42 Rome, 43 Ban, 44 Pesos, 45 Canal, 46 Idol, 48 A s a p, 50 Wizardry, 54 Plight, 58 Inert, 59 Out of date, 61 Scree, 62 Omit, 63 Lima, 64 Pass, 65 Maps, 66 Y'all.

Down: 1 Uses, 2 Tint, 3 Arty, 4 Hermann, 5 Apnea, 6 T L C, 7 Meet, 8 Sash, 9 Slurs, 10 Habitation, 11 I see, 12 Pens, 15 Broaden, 17 Aide, 21 Enigme, 23 Marcos, 25 Celeb, 26 Laura, 27 Organizers, 29 Vitro, 30 Odessa, 32 Gamma, 33 Expel, 35 Beheld, 38 La Porte, 42 Rapidly, 45 Calif, 47 Dares, 49 Spots, 50 Wisp, 51 Inca, 52 Room, 53 Yuma, 55 Gaia, 56 H T M L, 57 Teal, 60 Tip.

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Mike Denney discovered Jess Moskaluke on Facebook and signed her with MDM. (Nicole Romanoff)

No Thanksgiving visit to Virgil

Continued from page 13

into a full-time position, and he worked his way up to national manager for classical and jazz and strategic marketing.

Just under five years later, the internet and MP3 sharing was beginning to affect the music industry. Universal laid off about 1,500 people worldwide, and Denney was caught in that wave. He reached out to another connection, Jim West of Justin Time Records. West flew from Montreal to Toronto to sit down with Denney, who was offered a position as Ontario sales manager for their Fusion 3 distribution arm.

This was another turning point for Denney. As he rose through the ranks, he began to receive artist demo packages from unsigned musicians. Jazz singer Emilie-Claire Barlow caught his ear. He brought her to Montreal, and she signed to Justin Time on a distribution deal.

"When you work for the big labels," says Denney, "if you're in the sales department, you're in the sales department. You talk to the other departments, but you don't get involved. At an independent (like Justin Time), I was dealing with artists, media and publicity people, agents, radio promotion people, artist managers, all these other things I had never done before. That's where it all started."

His first foray into country music occurred while at Justin Time, when he oversaw a distribution deal for Aaron Pritchett. "I just hit it off with these guys," says Denney, about country music artists in general.

"They were really cool, and fun. They started taking me out on the road with them to various different festivals. It was unlike anything I had ever done in the music industry, and I had worked in all genres. This country thing was fun, the people are

real, the fans are engaged."

As he was thinking of moving on from Justin Time, he incorporated MDM Recordings, with his eye on signing artists on his own. In 2008, he attended his first CCMA awards, and came back with five distribution deals, including for successful artists Melanie Doane and Julian Austin.

Then, in 2009, through a music industry friend named Mitch Merrett, he connected with former Vancouver Canucks draft pick Chad Brownlee, who had begun playing country music. He brought Merrett and Brownlee into the MDM fold, and his independent label was off and running.

His next signing was Bobby Wills, then Denney discovered 19-year-old Jess Moskaluke on Facebook. She signed with MDM, and 11 years later he is still the man behind much of her success (2014, 2015 and 2016 CCMA Female Artist of the Year, 2016 Juno Country Album of the Year, 2018 CCMA Album of the Year).

"There's something to be said for the success of an artist by who they surround themselves with," Moskaluke says via email. "Mike has helped and supported both myself, and all of the artists on our MDM roster build the best team in this business, and I believe that's how you create longevity."

The hardware has been pretty steady for Denney as well. Besides this year's award, MDM was named CCMA Record Company of the Year in 2014, 2015 and 2016, and Denney was named CCMA Record Company Person of the Year in 2014 and 2015.

"This one caught me off guard," says Denney about his latest award. "When Chad left (Brownlee signed with Universal Music Canada in 2017), that was a huge revenue hit. We lost two other artists within nine months. I did not expect to win, because we're still on

the rebound, trying to dig ourselves out of that hole."

COVID-19 meant the Sept. 27 awards ceremony couldn't be held in person this year. Denney had been golfing that Sunday, but followed the awards via the CCMA Instagram page. "I was home by myself, and I was watching the announcements come up on my computer," he says. "I got up to refill my wine and when I sat back down my phone was exploding. Before I saw it myself!"

The pandemic also means he won't be able to visit mom Gloria and brother Joel back in Virgil this Thanksgiving weekend, or his sister Ginger who lives in Brantford. On the business side of things, Denney fears it's also forced many young artists to have second thoughts about making a go of it in the music business.

Turning 59 this November, Denney doesn't yet see a point where he will be ready to walk away from the industry.

He admits in the era of Tik Tok, Twitter and Instagram, he relies a bit more on some of the younger people who work for him for advice. But he has adapted to the streaming delivery format the industry has taken, and continues to look for new talent to bring into the MDM fold.

"The thought of an exit strategy crosses my brain more and more as I do this," he admits. "Pre-COVID I was in hotel rooms 195 nights a year. It's hard work, and it takes a lot out of you. I still love what I do. We've had back-to-back number ones at country radio this year (with Jess Moskaluke and new signing Tyler Joe Miller). I've always said I would do it until I didn't feel relevant anymore."

When he eventually is able to physically hold on to that 2020 Industry Person of the Year trophy, it will be even harder to convince anyone he's lost that relevance.