Historic Randwood Estate for sale at $19 million

Penny Coles  
The Local

The trusted voice of our community.

The Niagara-on-the-Lake

Starbucks coffee group needs a new home

Penny Coles  
The Local

The permanent closure of Starbucks on Queen Street Sunday was a sad occasion for a group of locals who have been meeting often, some of them daily, at their favourite coffee shop.

It ended with some tears, dejected goodbyes to staff who have become friends, and discussions about where they would meet next. There is no question the afternoon kaffeeklatsches will continue, but no answer yet as to where.

Neil Rumble, as the original member and the de facto leader of the group, explains how it began. “I’ve come here every single day, right from the beginning. People would stop to chat, and end up having a coffee with me. It just grew from there.”

Some knew Rumble before that, and others knew none of the 16 people who have become friends, all because of Rumble’s daily craving for a venti Caffe Americano. Not all came every day, and some have been holding off during the pandemic. In the colder months, there were tables inside pushed together across the front of the coffee shop, and as soon as the weather warmed up, they moved out on the patio. Rumble and Maureen Kaufman, another of the long-standing “Starbucks,” as they call themselves, would arrive a little early so they could get their tables and chairs.

Continued on page 3

The trusted voice of our community.

Historic Randwood Estate for sale at $19 million

Penny Coles  
The Local

The historic Randwood Estate, which includes two lots on John Street East in Niagara-on-the-Lake, is for sale for $19 million.

Property owner Benny Marotta of Two Sisters Resort told The Local Monday he is “tired of dealing with the politicians.”

In a news release issued Monday, he said his intention all along was “to preserve the integrity of this heritage property and enhance its already robust landscape for guests and the community to enjoy, while creating a beautiful establishment that would elevate hospitality in Niagara-on-the-Lake.”

The 13-acre property at 144 John St. E., and the lot next to it at 176 John St. E., were purchased by Marotta in 2016 for $8 million.

The developer has tried to engage the Town in a dialogue to resolve concerns and issues, the news release says, but “unfortunately, the Town refused to talk. As it turned out, the core issue was not design or proper planning, but rather, purely political. Specifically, it became obvious that the council is entirely driven by a wealthy and powerful group calling itself the SORE Association, which is determined to prevent any form of development on the properties.”

“It is tragic that the Town does not seem to understand that municipalities must protect the interests of all tax payers and citizens and have to attract investment in order to maintain fiscal stability and provide employment,” says Marotta. “The end of the Two Sisters proposal is a loss of over $50,000,000 to the Town’s economy. Arriving at this decision was very difficult, but it is apparent that there is no path to amicable discussion with either the Town or SORE.”

“The position of council has always been and continues to be that we determine the heritage attributes and then see what is possible to build that will work with those heritage attributes,” says Lord Mayor Betty Disero.

“We have always just defended that position with the legal challenge brought forward by Two Sisters,” she added, referring to ongoing legal battles over the lack of a decision on the zoning application for the project, which led to a Local Planning Tribunal Appeal, and an appeal to the Conservation Review Board over the Town’s efforts to have the property designated under the Ontario Heritage Act.

Some of the residents’ concerns with the Two Sisters proposal were the height and mass of the hotel, two levels of parking, the loss of mature trees, the destruction of significant landscaping, and the fear of losing an important heritage asset.

Lyle Hall, spokesperson for SORE, has strong words for the proposed hotel development, and objects to the claim that members of SORE (Save Our Rand Estate) are opposed to any development of the property.

“That’s simply patent untruth,” he says, calling the project a “grotesque departure” from the 2011 Trisha Romance proposal, which included a smaller...
Town, SORE members battled to preserve heritage

Explore your creativity with jewelry
Help Indigenous children explore theirs with an art scholarship

Pharmacy COVID testing must follow provincial protocols

Penny Coles
The Local

Simpson’s Pharmacy has been doing about 15 to 20 asymptomatic COVID-19 tests daily for about a week, so far with only negative results.

Pharmacist Sean Simpson says he hopes it stays this way, as he expects it will.

“If we do see any positives, we’ll follow the protocol,” which includes notifying the person who tested positive.

Testing is by appointment, and the requirements, as set by the Ministry of Health, are very specific, beginning with being symptomatic.

The test is an anterior nasal swab, says Simpson, describing a nose swab to a depth of about half an inch — not the real deep ones we’ve heard about at the assessment centres. “It’s pretty simple, just in the medium or lower part of the nose.” It’s funded by the Province for those who meet the guidelines, he says.

The swab is sent for testing, and the results are posted in about four days on a government website.

The pharmacy is seeing mostly residents who want to be tested before they visit loved ones in long-term care, says Simpson.

Workers in long-term care also qualify for the pharmacy test, but he believes they may be getting tested at the facility where they work.

The guidelines also allow for those who are travelling internationally, including local migrant workers on their way home, to be tested at the pharmacy, but if they need a “narrower window” for results, they may be better off going to an assessment centre, where the turnaround time may be shorter by a day or two, he says.

“The easiest for us is for people who want to visit someone in long-term care, because they’re not under stringent timelines.”

In addition to not exhibiting symptoms, qualifying for pharmacy testing also includes not having come in contact with anyone who is suspected of being positive.

“There has been a little bit of confusion as to what the testing is that we’re offering,” Simpson says. The guidelines, set by the Province, are out of his control, he adds, and he’s also fielding questions the pharmacy is always able to answer.

Some residents have asked for the test because they have a medical procedure coming up, “but that’s not within our guidelines. They have to go to an assessment centre or have it done at the hospital.”

To check for results, visit https://covid19results.ehealthonto.ca:4443/agree

For more about testing eligibility guidelines, or to make a testing appointment visit https://simpsonspaharmacy.medmeapp.com/schedule.

Penny Coles
The Local

April Mitchell-Boudreau, owner and head designer of LolliDat, an Indigenous, female-owned company based in Niagara, has created a holiday gift box with sustainable fashion in mind.

It allows women to have fun and explore their own creativity, she says, while making many different looks of jewelry that incorporate traditional Indigenous materials, such as wood, shell and stone.

With the arrival of COVID, she is stepping up her online presence, she says, and encouraging women to purchase her holiday BlingBox, which is only available online.

She is donating part of the proceeds from each purchase to a fund that focuses on providing scholarships in the arts for Indigenous students.

“I truly believe in the healing powers of the arts for all of us,” she says, “and that’s more important than ever during this time.”

When she stopped by to see Marcia Penner at the Keke Boutique, at Penner Building Centre, she played with the jewelry to show how many styles can be made with just two items — the long necklace becomes two bracelets, a shortened necklace, a choker, a necklace with a clip-on crystal pendant, earrings with or without crystals, and more.

Mitchell-Boudreau is a Turtle clan Mohawk, with roots at Six Nations. Her passion when talking about her fund for children is obvious. She never knew her great-grandmother, Lydia Ruth Barnes, for which the fund is named. Barnes was the last family member to be put in a residential school — the worst of the worst, she says, called the Mush Hole.

“I didn’t know my great-grandmother, but I’ve heard so many stories about her. That school broke her, and the generations that came before her — she was the last of the generations.”

She had a very hard life, and was a lovely soul who died too soon, as a result of the trauma, says Mitchell-Boudreau.

The line of jewelry honours her great-grandmother, and the goal of the fund, she says, is to teach the effects of colonialism and residential schools on Indigenous families, while providing art scholarships for Indigenous children of all ages.

For more information or to order her jewelry visit ottan.com.
Continued from page 1

arranged, and when they were done, move everything back into place so as not to make extra work for Starbucks.

“They do such a wonderful job,” says Rumble of the staff. “They’ve been so good to us, inside and out.”

At one point, Kaufman had a plaque made proclaiming “Neil’s office,” which hung in the corner of Starbucks where they met for some time before the manager decided it needed to come down.

They then tried hanging it on the brick wall beside their outdoor table, but it didn’t last long there before another regular patron, who had morning coffee in the corner of the patio, removed it, they say, marking the left artwork on the brick remaining as a reminder of their meeting place.

Much of what they say is in jest — even when they get into the scary politics of the border, the joking is much lauded, because in addition to being a story-teller, Rumble loves to joke.

“I get, the happier I am, and I want to make people laugh,” he says. He does wonder where the years have gone, he adds, and thanks his mother for his “good genes. It’s not the way I lived life, that’s for sure.”

With about a decade in the 90s as general manager of the Niagara-on-the-Lake Chamber of Commerce, Rumble has some great stories to tell about the town and its residents. He likes to talk about the way the town handled its 3.5 million visitors when the popular tourism season was in place.

He recalls the early days before the candlelight stroll became what it is today, when they had to meet — safely, of course — “with some of those stores being closed, up to 200 stores being closed, with the potential of up to 200 stores being closed, with some of those stores being repositioned,” suggesting new locations might open nearby.

Starbucks is largely a company-owned chain, although Vogt described some of its coffee shops as “licensed,” similar to franchises, in areas such as the main strip in Niagara Falls, locations in universities or along major highway routes, which offer different items.

Coffee group looking for a new home

Patricia Rogers, Alex and Ruth Dowsett, Mary Jane and Murray Friesen, Neil Rumble and Eugene Rogers (all sitting), with Bill and Donna Young (standing) enjoy one of the last warm days on the patio at Starbucks, just days before it closed permanently. (Penny Coates)
Penny Coles  
The Local

With a request from the Niagara Nursery School for additional funding of $340,000 for its expansion, executive director Candice Penny was at council Monday to talk about how important the project is for the nursery school, the community, and the families whose children are on a long waiting list.

It wasn’t a hard sell. Despite some concerns with council, support for moving ahead with the project was unanimous. The nursery school expansion is a good investment in local families and children, necessary infrastructure and a benefit to the town, councillors agreed.

In June, 2019, a 4,308 square foot facility was approved at a cost of $1.5 million, to be added to the east side of the community centre, beside the library, and with the main entrance on Anderson Lane. The facility will include an infant playroom with a kitchenette and a separate sleeping area, a toddler playroom, a preschool playroom with adjacent washrooms and change rooms, and a school-aged room, in addition to office and storage spaces.

But the project has gone out to tender twice since then, while the yellow tape remains around the closed-off, eventual construction site for the expansion, and the cost has increased to just over $2 million.

The Town has already increased its contribution once, due to increased costs. With the new budget to cover the short fall approved Monday, it will go out for tender a third time, councillors heard.

The nursery school is committed to a $615,000 debenture and a $100,000 fundraising campaign. If the fundraising goal is not met, the NNS can increase their debenture to cover the outstanding amount, but can’t afford more than that, Penny told councillors. With out the increased commitment from the Town, the project will not go forward.

The $2 million will also be funded by a Ministry of Education grant of $35,150, and $200,000 from the Region. The Town had already committed about $248,900 to be paid from development charges.

Niagara Nursery School has been a part of the community for 48 years, serving multiple generations, and over the decades has relocated and adapted to changing needs of the families, Penny told councillors.

“Since approximately 2015, we have seen a surge in child care needs in our community that we have since been unable to meet on a yearly basis,” she said. “We are the only licensed childcare centre in our town, and the average wait time for a child is two to three years. Families who have children of varying ages often must have multiple childcare settings, and often must drive out of town, away from their home and work to receive childcare.”

The current waitlist is up to 142 children, from infants to school-aged children, Penny said. The NNS is only licensed under the Ministry of Education for a total of 39 children, 24 preschool, and 15 of school age. With families requiring variable schedules, the nursery school can accommodate 45 to 52 children, and about 35 to 40 families.

The expansion would allow for 69 children, and again, with variable schedules, would serve 80 to 89 families, she said.

“This expansion will not eliminate our waitlist, but will drastically reduce it, as well as the average wait-time,” said Penny.

“We simply cannot meet the needs of our community as we are now. This expansion is crucial for not only the families in our community, but also for the growth of our community as a whole,” she said. “This is not a family issue, this is a community and economic issue. For local growth to be possible, we need this to be a desirable place for families to live, and have a childcare centre that can meet the needs of its community.”

In response to a question from Coun. Wendy Cheropita about considering changes in design or relocating the expansion to the other side of the community centre to reduce the cost, acting operations director Kevin Turcotte explained those options weren’t feasible — it would cost more than $2 million to go back to the drawing board to change the plans, much of the preliminary work for the site has already been done, and there are no “frills” in the plan to cut back, whether on space or design. Altering the project now would also require going back to the Ministry of Education, he added.

“Changing it or moving it is not a good use of resources,” Turcotte said.

Coun. Sandra O’Connor expressed concern that with the increase approved and the project going out for a third tender, there could be “a significant increase in cost, and we’ll be having this same discussion a few months from now.”

If COVID has taught us anything, it’s taught us unpredictability, including in the cost of construction,” said Turcotte. “We won’t know until we go out to the market.”

With the project going out to tender again, interim CAO Sheldon Randall suggested there is a possibility that the cost of lumber and other supplies, which have greatly increased during the pandemic, might come down this winter and be a benefit to the project.

Coun. Erwin Wiens said although he endorses the project, he doesn’t see the price of lumber and other supplies decreasing. “I suspect they may go up even higher. I want to make sure we have our eyes wide open that because of COVID, that price may go up even higher.”

The Ministry of Education has granted an extension for the project to March 31, 2021, with a closing date of the project by Aug. 31, 2021.
Newark planning ahead for Christmas baskets

Newark Neighbours Special to The Local

Newark Neighbours continues to serve those in need with compassion, care and concern. The generous donation of time that our volunteers give is greatly appreciated by our organization and especially by all those whom we serve.

Our recent Thanksgiving Holiday Hamper program was a great success, due to the generosity of so many individuals. Those in need received additional food and treats to make their holiday a special one. Our heartfelt gratitude to all those who made donations, our volunteers, and those individuals who kindly sponsored some of our families.

We truly appreciate the support we have recently received from Kent Heritage Farms, Walker’s Country Market, Hendriks valu-mart, St. Andrew’s Church, Syme Jago, Adrian Goldberg, Kathy and Tim Taylor, Larry and Joan Bourk, Vicky Downes and the NOTL Communities in Bloom committee.

As we begin to plan for the next holiday just around the corner, we are fortunate that we are already being asked by folks what food items they can donate. Our needs for the Christmas Holiday Hampers are as follows: canned ham; boxed stuffing mix; canned cranberry sauce; canned pineapple; canned or packaged turkey gravy; canned peas, beans; bottled cranberry juice, apple juice; crackers; cookies; cake mixes; Jell-O; pasta sauces; rice; canned salmon; shampoo and conditioner; soap (bar or liquid); body lotion; paper towels.

Please check our website at www.newarkneighbours.ca for our thrift store and food bank hours. Donations of non-perishable food, clean clothing and small household items are greatly appreciated, and best dropped off between the hours of 9:30 a.m. to 1 p.m. Monday to Friday.

Laura Gibson, president
Newark Neighbours

Who is handing out candy?

Local Staff

The Province has Halloween posters to be downloaded for those living in regions where trick or treating is permitted. Although there is always a possibility the status of Niagara could change before Saturday, at press time, trick-or-treating was still allowed. There are two choices, one if you are giving out treats, and one if you are not. Posters can be downloaded at: https://www.ontario.ca/page/how-celebrate-halloween-during-covid-19

The solution to COVID-19 starts with keeping your distance.

• Wear a face covering.
• Keep 2m apart from anyone outside of your household.
• Limit your close contact to your household only.
• Wash your hands often.

(Exchange Brewery staff have new products to sell. (Photo supplied)
Despite restrictions, lots of great stuff going on

News for residents other than the 200 or so who were listening to the seven-hour council meeting Monday: as COVID cases rise in Niagara, we are getting close to a return to Stage 2 of the recovery period.

In the usual COVID update at the beginning of the meeting, Lord Mayor Betty Disero said that while numbers of new cases are trending upwards in the province, Dr. Mustafa Hirji, the Region’s acting medical officer of health, didn’t believe Niagara would be brought back to Stage 2, at least not for a while, as long as cases don’t rise significantly.

However, later in the meeting, she had to take those words back, after receiving an email from Niagara Public Health, with Dr. Hirji saying if the numbers continue to spike, we could well be back to at least a partial Stage 2 lockdown.

About two weeks ago, some cases in Ontario, including Toronto and Ottawa, were ordered to close indoor dining, gyms and movie theatres, for at least 28 days, in a partial return to a Stage 2 lockdown.

There were 13 new confirmed cases Saturday, and 23 on Sunday, followed by a dip down to four on Monday and seven Tuesday.

Dr. Hirji advised us last week that a spike could occur two weeks after a family member becomes ill.

Researchers say the discovery doesn’t mean owners need to worry, but Disero did caution pet owners about taking their dogs out for a walk.

So that’s the bad news about living through the pandemic.

The good news is all the great ideas our locals are coming up with in a pandemic.

There are several fun things for kids to do on Halloween, such as events at the Niagara Pumphouse Arts Centre and Fort George.

The Town has delivered treats to the front doors of more than 800 kids, with candy and other goodies donated by local businesses. Kudos to all involved.

And as long as the provincial rules don’t change between now and Saturday, kids are allowed to go trick-or-treating, but with some cautions: wear a mask, go out in small groups, and keep a distance from others. Those who aren’t displaying any symptoms, lives in a household where four people have tested positive. The CBC article indicated it’s not surprising, although it’s difficult to get a positive test in a family pet, which would likely occur two weeks after a family member becomes ill.

We continue to hear from readers and advertisers who have tried to stop by to see us at our Four Mile Creek Road office, and discovered it’s part of a construction zone.

Yes, we’re still there, although not in person these days. With no parking, lots of noise and the inconvenience of trying to work through major renovations to the building, we are working from home, for likely another week or so. Please look for our phone numbers or email addresses on this page, and reach out if you need us.

We were really impressed by the great idea of a virtual eucharist for St. Mark’s Anglican Church. It’s a popular annual tradition, and creating the online version has been a lot of work for volunteers. A real plus was do your holiday shopping!

Also great news that the Town approved the additional funding needed for the Niagara Nursery School expansion, allowing it to move forward. It’s such a much-needed project in a town which has a growing population of young families.

Choosing childcare care is one of parents’ most important decisions, and it hasn’t been easy for many of them in NOTL.

This won’t solve the problem entirely, but it will help. It’s been a much-respected nursery school for generations of families, and will continue to be so for generations to come. For those of you who can afford to open your wallets to support local families, it’s a good cause.

Penny Coles
The Local

Our Local office

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All four Tim Hortons locations in Niagara-on-the-Lake donated this year’s Smile Cookies proceeds to Red Roof Retreat, amounting to just over $8,000. Celebrating the donation are Red Roof board member Ward Simpson, store managers Michele Allison of the Gateway Travel Centre and Outlet Collection coffee shops, and Lori Paterson, from the Virgil store, with Red Roof special events coordinator Claire Ellesworth.

(PHoto supplied)

The trusted voice of our community

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ASSAULTED WOMEN’S HELPLINE

NEED HELP? MAKE THE CALL

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October 29, 2020 • THE NOTL LOCAL

TIP: Text 274637 (CRIMES), keyword: Niagara, then your tip.
I remember a young boy, the wind in his hair and the sun on his face, explor- ing every nook and cranny of his yard, looking for all types of "creepy-crawlies", unusual plants, and any- thing else that caught his fancy. I remember this same young boy crossing the road from his home to ours, combing our prop- erty for treasures from the natural world. I remember his mother admonishing him not to frighten Mrs. Cashin with any snakes he might unearth and want to

Canopy not so bad, could get worse

Within the article St. Davids Pool, Dust, other Issues Discussed at Virtual Meeting (The Local, Oct. 15) are complaints regarding Canopy Growth’s marijuana growing opera- tions, specifically “the sky over St. Davids is lit up as if there are search lights pointing into it” and “the strong skunk odor also continues to be a prob- lem.” It also mentions that Lord Mayor Betty Disero is working on the matter.

My partner and I live on a property that runs behind the entire length of Canopy’s greenhouses with our house, patio, and pool situated about 300 metres back. The wind is usually blowing in our direction. When we first moved here three summers ago, before all the odour control inter- ventions were installed by Canopy, the smell of mar- ijuana was most definitely strong but only intermittent. We could live with it and we had a summer in paradise.

The second summer, when the warm weather arrived and we opened our windows, we discovered that they had installed five gas-powered tur- bines along our property line, sowing a chemical stench referred to as fragrance, and a roar. Now we have the smell of marijuana, the overpowering stink of this fragrance, and a roar permeating our home and property 24/7. We could not live with this.

We investigated the legality and were told by the town bylaw officer that there is no bylaw forbid- ding turbines aimed at your house. ‘There is no light, sometimes they have the lights on in the green- houses, it is certainly notic- eable, and we will not have it, but I have as- sumed it is a normal part of greenhouse agriculture.

So in brief, we live be- side the greenhouses, the smell is mild and seldom, there is never a ‘stench,’ we assume we have to live with the light. Canopy has always responded to our complaints, and the town has no arrows in its quiv- er. However, it remains a source of worry because while Canopy has always been very considerate, we’ve been told that the roaring turbines are per- fectly legal and could be turned back on at any time, for instance when there is a complaint about a marijuana smell.

I am sympathetic to others’ complaints, but I thought I’d mention our situation. We live in dread of those turbines being turned back on, so I hope that Lord Mayor Disero will work to make every- one happy.

John Boydell
St. Davids

Group supports parking motion

Residents for Sustainable Tourism supports the park- ing motion before council on October 26, 2020 to have town staff study and evalu- ate parking pass policy and converting Old Town free parking spots to paid parking spots.

Converting existing free parking spots in the Old Town into paid parking spots will benefit the town, residents and businesses. Subject to proper public consulta- tion and extending the resi- dent parking pass usage time from one to three hours at existing paid park- ing spots and from one to 24 hours at currently free Old Town parking spots that are converted to paid spots. The benefits of a smart parking plan include:

1. Potential for an imme- diate increase in overall parking revenue may re- duce the need to increase taxes and/or cut town services for businesses and residents during the town’s COVID budget shortfall.

2. The implementation of the smart parking sys- tem will generate the data needed by this council and future councils for mak- ing intelligent decisions regarding optimization of parking revenue, parking utilization, the need for new parking spots and where they should be lo- cated. The data collected from a smart parking sys- tem will help determine the effectiveness and cost of Parking Pass policies for residents, businesses and employee passes.

3. The hope is with the re- moval of free parking spot- ting in the Old Town there will be increased parking spot availability for resi- dents, employees and sus- tainable visitors.

4. The extension of resident parking permits from 1 to 3 hours at existing paid spots and from 1 to 24 hours at converted ex- isting Old Town free spots will make this proposal acceptable to residents so that all of the benefits listed above can be achieved.

5. The public’s acceptance of con- verting free to paid spots is important because it will permit this town council and future town councils to make the decision needed to decide if park- ing revenue optimization can generate significant in- creases without burdening the residents who live in the town.

6. The reduction or elimi- nation of free parking in the Old Town in the long run will encourage the construction of paid park- ing by private companies, non-profits and other lev- els of government both in the Old Town and nearby. This can tie in with a long- term infrastructure program to reduce the impact of cars on the Old Town and to encourage unsustainable visitors to walk or ride in the Old Town and leave their cars further from the Old Town. The town hopes that visitors will choose this option over using paid parking spots in the Old Town because of the safe- ty and environmental benefits such as reduced traffic congestion, improved safety.

3. The hope is with the re- moval of free parking spots.

Letter to the editor:

If you have a letter to the editor you’d like to see published, please send it to penny@notlocal.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.
St. Mark’s launching virtual ‘haute emporium’ fundraiser

The traditional St. Mark’s Emporium will be very different this year, as all fundraisers must be during the pandemic. As always, it remains an opportunity to find hidden treasures, purchase elegant gift baskets, vintage, upscale clothing and accessories, jewelry, linens, art, and Christmas decor items, including fresh arrangements. The difference is all those items will be available for purchasing online, in a safe, virtual emporium, says volunteer Trudi Watson.

Volunteers have worked for months to set up a special website for the fundraiser, which will allow shoppers and church supporters to view the items online, make their choices, and then send an email specifying what they would like to buy, she explains.

They will then be given a time to pick up their purchases at the Byron Street rectory, where the items are now being categorized, displayed and photographed for the virtual sale.

Payment can be made by e-transfer or credit card online, or cash or cheque when they pick up their purchase.

“It’s the Haute Emporium,” says Watson, one of the many volunteers organizing the fundraiser, which has taken a lot of brainstorming, beginning in July, to come up with a safe alternative to the traditional event.

The missing element, of course, is the opportunity to visit the historic Byron Street rectory for the tea and goodies typically served as an integral part of the Christmas fundraiser. However, having the empty rectory this year, after the departure of Rev. William Roberts, has been extremely helpful in organizing the goods for sale, she says, and provides “a beautiful environment” for the volunteers as they work.

The traditional bake sale, traditionally part of the fundraiser, was also cancelled, for health reasons.

Every one of the hundreds of items, from the tiniest piece of jewelry to the impressive gift baskets filled with all kinds of goodies for all occasions and ages, is being photographed for the sale, to be displayed in lots that will change as merchandise is sold. Volunteers will be reviewing the website, refreshing it and adding items as the sale proceeds.

There are several other event volunteers the women wanted to be sure are recognized: Anjulika Chand and Lucy McEwan who organized the jewelry; Mary Webster and Keith Bullen, who took on the art, Allison Kelly who worked on the website, and David Levesque.

The virtual emporium will launch Nov. 2, with no closing date at this point. “When it will end, we don’t know,” says volunteer Sally Mitchell. “Our goal is to get it going, and if it’s a success, we’ll keep it going. We’re looking at it as a Christmas sale, but it could go on after Christmas.” Each Friday and Saturday following the launch, volunteers will be at the rectory for the pickup of sold items, between 10 a.m. and 2 p.m.

The merchandise for sale has all been donated by parishioners and members of the community, says Watson. “We have a very kind and generous congregation,” adds Mitchell.

The money raised will be used for the general operation of the church, she says.
Expert gardener ‘nuts about bulbs’ for three-seasons of colour

By Laura Grant

With the shorter days of fall, when shrubs and trees are turning brown, it is a good time to buy and plant joy the fall-blooming bulbs. There are a number of so-called tender bulbs that are perfectly hardy in sunny, sheltered locations that you may wish to try: tusmania bowdenii, tunicata meleagris, tulipa sylvestris, latum and scilla siberica. The last two can be very aggressive.

Finally, the late flowering bulbs suitable for Stinze-style plantings are leucojum aestivum, ornithogalum nutans, silver bells, hycanthis non-scripta (English bluebells), and hyacinthoides hispanica (Spanish bluebells).

When planting your bulbs, the general rule is to plant them to a depth of two to three times the length of the bulb. Most preferring slightly alkaline to neutral soil with good drainage. Some bone meal added to the soil will give them a good start.

We know that squirrels love to eat our tulips and crocus bulbs. So, one of the methods I use is to dip the bulbs in water in a blender and watering them. This method recommended a Dutch grower.

Autumn crocuses provide colour in a fall garden. (Photos by Laura Grant)

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This is a good time to plant bulbs for a spring meadow.
The time for a museum exhibit entirely about women has come, says Sarah Kaufman.

As the Niagara-on-the-Lake Museum’s managing director and curator, she worked to organize the exhibit in time for its Wednesday opening, the first ever at the museum focused on women.

Kaufman spoke of the extra-ordinary local women, some prominent with names easily recognizable, and others who worked quietly behind the scenes, who made their mark on the community.

Aiding Kaufman in the set-up of the all-female display in the museum’s gallery was Shawna Butts, assistant curator and education director, and Blanche Quinn.

The book release is now slated for January — it was expected to be out sooner, but has been held up to allow biographies of women who, like many other notable women from town, will have an honorable mention in the book.

Laura Secord is one of the women featured at the current exhibit at the NOTL Museum.
Increased diversity, inclusivity could improve economy

Penny Coles  The Local

Jordan Williams hopes to be a candidate representing the Progressive Conservatives in the next provincial election. But he’s not there yet, nor does the Province seem close to announcing an election, so before the serious campaigning begins, he plans to work on making Niagara-on-the-Lake a more diverse and inclusive community.

He is especially concerned about the business sector, and specifically restaurant workplaces, where a prevalent “macho” attitude can be inconsistent with inclusivity.

Williams ran unsuccessfully in the last municipal election. He stayed away from the lack of inclusivity in town, he says, although it has been on his mind for more than a decade. He had been working in Toronto, and then returned to town and took a job in the local hospitality industry, where, as a member of the LGBTQ community, he felt safer “in the closet than out in the workplace,” he says.

“I didn’t feel comfortable being my true self.”

While there has been some forward movement since then, “there is still a way to go,” he says.

The 40-year-old gets the sense Niagara-on-the-Lake is changing, but he’s not so sure about Virgil. “I think there is a lot of educating to do.”

There is a “lack of a presence in the LGBTQ community, as well as overall diversity” in NOTL.

When he was running in 2018 to win a seat at the council table, “I didn’t want to come out as that kind of candidate. I wouldn’t have hidden what I am, but I wasn’t asked.” He didn’t advocate for his community, he adds, because he wasn’t sure whether he’d be met with hostility. “I didn’t want to be the gay candidate.”

The business sector is ignoring an opportunity to appeal to LGBTQ consumers, which could be a real boost to the local economy, he says.

The Canadian Gay and Lesbian Chamber of Commerce, which educates the travel and tourism sector on how to be more welcoming in the work place and how to attract the LGBTQ community, has done a study that shows 50 per cent of that community expects to travel this winter and spring, and will be choosing Ontario. Businesses that attract diversity and promote inclusivity could bring more visitors, who will spend money and stay longer than many of those currently travelling to NOTL, Williams says.

As the economy re-builds, it could be strengthened by attracting the LGBTQ community, by making everyone feel “welcome, comfortable and safe.”

He would also like to see the hospitality industry become more welcoming as a workplace for teenagers and young adults, who may be looking for a part-time job to finance post-secondary education, or who may be thinking about a career.

He singles out two local businesses he says are already doing a great job of being inclusive: The Olde Angel Inn is very supportive, he says, and Vintage Inns, where he worked for a time, has shown through actions, not just policies, that it is committed to ensuring its employees feel safe and comfortable. “I’ve never worked in an environment like that before,” he says.

Political action, “from the top down,” also needs to occur, which is one of the reasons he says he is thinking of running for office, to make public institutions more welcoming.

Although a provincial election isn’t expected any time soon, there has been talk about it happening next year, instead of the scheduled 2022 vote, and the Niagara regional party is looking at nominating candidates.

Williams says should he be successful, he doesn’t want to be the “gay candidate” when there are so many other issues to talk about, but he will be an advocate for his community.

“It’s a fine line, but it’s time to get the dialogue going.” He has always loved the hospitality industry, and was on the verge of signing a lease on a restaurant in Toronto when COVID hit, so he is back in Niagara, and as owner and creative director of lahav.ca, is looking forward to launching a luxury LGBTQ travel and lifestyle magazine.

He has also created a Facebook group for NOTL that promotes diversity and inclusion locally. Inclusive NOTL+, a private group, was started just a week ago, had almost 100 members by press time. Those members were using it to discuss a diverse range of local issues, including other towns which feel more safe and welcoming, which makes them feel that way, and what can be done to implement similar practices in NOTL.
Local Staff

Kindergarten students of St. Michael School had a lot of fun outside recently, creating a pumpkin obstacle course and playing on it.

“Students had a wonderful time carrying, rolling, running and sliding the pumpkins around the yard,” says principal Janice Barretto Mendonca. Students in Grades 7 and 7/8 had pumpkins donated by Seaway Farms, and used them to display their knowledge of positive and negative space. Space and line were the elements of design involved in the art piece celebrating Halloween, says Barretto Mendonca, who added her thanks to Seaway and the Epp family for their donations of pumpkins. Students will be having their annual Orange and Black day Friday, also to celebrate Halloween, and will be dancing in the gym all day, says the principal.

Kindergarten kids play with their pumpkins donated by Epp Farms (left). Nico Mirabella (right) has a rest from the pumpkin obstacle course; Jacob Dulas works on his pumpkin project; Louisa Leonovich, Elliott Epp, Ava Miele, Mila Treanor, Noah Werner, and Sophia Treanor have fun on the obstacle course; and (bottom row) Julia Rezza, Gavin Contini, Malcolm Bruce and Ava Catmari show off their projects. (Photos submitted)
Kim Wade Special to The Local

The Hare Wine Co. hosted an intimate Niagara Handmade Market Saturday with just six local artisans displaying their wares in the winery courtyard.

In this new COVID era, it was much reduced from the previous two years, which attracted more than 30 vendors and hundreds of patrons from across Ontario. The original event scheduled for early April was cancelled and rescheduled, says The Hare’s event coordina- tor, Alex Godin. Saturday’s event was set up outside, “to ensure safety, physical distancing and traffic flow.”

Katelyn MacIntyre, of 7 C Salts, was happy for the change. “It’s nice to get outside,” she says. She welcomed the winery for the setup and the flow of patrons from across Ontario. She explained she had to adapt her usual display due to the change. “It’s nice to get relaxed, reconnected and realigned.”

Another artisan that has a personal story is Cheryl from Coconut Quartz. She explained she has always been attracted to crystals, and started making crystal and gemstone bracelets about five years ago. Making jewelry became a therapeutic way to calm her anxiety when her mother was diagnosed with dementia, she says, and she has an autoimmune disease. It was a much-needed creative outlet which eventually became a business. Her creations are a unique combination of vintage upcycling. She gathers stones and materials from her travels in Canada and abroad, although, she has not been able to travel too far at the moment. She likes to scour unlikely sources for vintage pieces, which becomes a treasure hunt and a labour of love as she combines cast-off bits of metal with semi-precious stones and crystals to create her unique, one-of-a-kind pieces.

Kevin McClelland from Butlersburg Woodworking began his business about three years ago. He learned his skills from his father, a woodworking teacher at St. Catharines College in Niagara Falls. The idea of starting a business developed after his friend asked him to make a live edge charcuterie board. McClelland made the board, and then made more to sell. The Niagara Handmade Market was his first show of the year, and he was happy to be invited to participate.

Catherine Seburn from Sew Good and Beyond says her business took off after the shutdown. She sews various items such as head bands, scrunchies, reflective dog bandanas and aromatherapy heat packs, and has sold more than 2,000 head bands, as a remedy to what she calls “isolation hair.”

“It is nice to see people again, instead of talking to people through your phone or on a screen,” she says, explaining she works at a dental office, is “up on infection control” and understands the need for precautions. She sells untouched items from her supply behind the table, rather than the items on display. However, she believes that interacting with people is also important. “We need it for our mental health.”

Carrie Houle from Paper and Sunshine was also happy to attend the show, a “wonderful reprieve,” and “nice to feel safe and engaged with friends.” Her whimsical signs and decor can be custom-made, and she endeavours to source all of her products from local or at least Canadian suppliers, including wood, paint, stain and stencils. “It may be difficult to promote local, but it’s worth it,” she says, encouraging people to buy local, and “look for things in your own backyard.”

The Hare Wine Co. Handmade Market Saturday

Kim Wade

Catherine Seburn from Sew Good and Beyond finds the pandemic a good market for bandan- as and hair bands. (Kim Wade)
Hydro boxes to be wrapped with winning art

Kim Wade
Special to The Local

The exhibition of this year’s hydro box wrap contest winning paintings runs up Saturday at the Niagara Pumphouse Arts Centre.

Among the original artworks submitted are the competition winners by artists Shelley Locke, Lois Stevens and Julia Kane.

In Chicago wraps up Saturday at the Niagara Pumphouse Arts Centre.

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SEASONAL
FULL TIME FARM WORKERS required for fruit farm April-October 2021. No experience or education required. Must be available 7 days/week in all weather conditions. Job entails pruning, thinning, harvesting fruit plus heavy lifting and considerable ladder work. Must have own transportation, minimum wage $14.25/hr. Please mail resume with references to K.L. Farms, 100 Wall Rd., R.R. #3 Niagara-on-the-Lake, ON L0S 1J0. Only qualified persons will be contacted. (see walk ins)

Farm Labourer required April 2021 to Nov 2021
Pruning of trellis/vineyards, nursery tree planting, operating farm machinery, maintenance of orchards & grounds, thinning and harvesting fruit. Must be willing to work long hours as required. Provide own transportation. Minimum wage $14.25/hr.

Mail resume to: Kurt Orchards PO Box 457, NOTL, ON L0S 1J0
Attn: Anne

VANDERPERK, GYSBERTUS—Generations come and generations go, but the earth remains forever. Ecclesiastes 1:4. In his 95th year, Gysbertus Vanderperk passed away peacefully while being cared for by his loving family, at his home in St. Catharines, on October 22, 2020. He was a positive, cheerful man who lived out his faith and will be sadly missed by his family. Husband to the late Geraldine (2012) beloved father to Bert, John (Lila), Pete (Margaret), Lydia (Bill) and Nelly (Fred), father-in-law to Rose. Cherished Opa of 16 grandchildren and 12 great-grandchildren.

Gysbertus was born in Katwijk, Holland and lived through many experiences during his life of 95 years, from the Depression, WWII, he was a peacekeeper in Indonesia and later immigrated to Canada with his new wife in 1951. Gys was an avid gardener, had a greenhouse business in NOTL and worked at General Motors for 25 years. He was a passionate, involved member of Covenant Christian Reformed Church and volunteered in their Friendship club for many years, which was very dear to both him and our Mother. Deep gratitude to the staff, nurses and care team associated with the Niagara branch of the LHIN for all their care. Funeral arrangements entrusted to the HAINE FUNERAL HOME & CHAPEL, 26 Ommond Street South, Thorold.

ASPINALL, SCOTT—Scott Aspinall passed away on October 13, 2020 at Upper Canada Lodge after many years of declining dementia. The incredible staff at Upper Canada helped make Scott’s last years and final days dignified and comfortable, and his family are grateful for the care and kindness. We also thank Dr. Karen Berli for her constant and kind care.

Scott was born in Dumfries, Scotland and came to Canada with his family in 1957. After graduating from The University of British Columbia, he enjoyed a career in banking and finance. Scott and his wife Ruth moved from Toronto to Niagara-on-the-Lake in 1991 and opened The Epicurean restaurant. When Scott wasn’t working, he loved to spend time traveling and exploring the world with Ruth, skiing, playing squash, reading, sailing and doing anything outdoors. Many people in town will remember Scott biking around, even in winter, often in snow. He was passionate about both making and sharing a glass (or two) of wine which he loved to pair with a newly discovered cheese. He will be greatly missed by Ruth, his children, Colin, Blair and Janet, granddaughters Lucy, Ella, Charlotte, Phoebe and Maya — who will always remember his blueberry pancakes and sense of adventure.

GOLIGIE, CHRISTOPHER JOHN—March 19, 1968 - October 13, 2020. Christopher (Oogie) suddenly and sadly left our lives on Tuesday evening at home from a heart attack. Born in St. Catharines, he was raised and educated in Niagara-on-the-Lake. Chris will be greatly missed by his loving daughter Cassidy-Lynn (Chris), other Douglass, his cherished mom Teresa, kind stepdad Jack Bell, his uncle Drew, and nana Phyllis Ostrander. He was predeceased by his maternal grandparents, John and Jennie Egoffr, his paternal granddad John Golvig, and his Uncle Michael Egoffr. Chris was a highly skilled heavy machine operator, and a proud 30 year member with the International Union of Operating Engineers. His memory will be cherished always in the hearts of his friends and family. Please raise a glass to Chris. Cremon has taken place. A family burial graveside service will take place at a later date and a celebration of life to be announced. Funeral arrangements entrusted to the HAINE FUNERAL HOME & CHAPEL, 26 Ommond Street South, Thorold.

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Who is Pilates Emporium?
We are a Boutique Pilates Studio offering V2Max Reformer Pilates Programming in Mat, Reformer, Cadillac and Jumps/ antidepressants for mature clientele ages 35-95. Rehabilitation to athletic conditioning. It all starts at the core.

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The Pilates Emporium studio is unique when it comes to ensuring clients are safe during the pandemic.

We are not a gym. No one comes into the studio who is not registered, and there is never more than eight clients and two instructors in the studio at any given time.

We are so proud of our clientele for following all the rules for health and safety, with vigilance. For many clients our studio is the only public outing that they are comfortable with.

The pandemic has resulted in many clients living in pain, and staying in pain, due to lack of appropriate movement.

It only takes 10 days for muscles to atrophy. For mature clientele, good movement twice a week, assistance in creating an at-home, 10-minute daily controlled movement routine, and a 20-minute walk twice a week, will completely change your posture, reduce your pain and stress, and improve your general mood.

If you are not aware of what is causing your current pain, we will work with you to determine the cause and how to relieve it.

At Pilates Emporium, we are movement specialists. Pilates was created as a therapeutic intervention, based on physiotherapy theory, to provide adapted and responsible movement patterns and increase muscle and joint strength, as well as stability with spinal mobility and health. That’s what we can do for you.

These are very stressful times, particularly for people over the age of 50. With the additional worry of the second wave threatening to shut our communities down, we are vigilant with our COVID health practices, and look forward to helping clients through difficult times while keeping them safe.