Restaurant restrictions stay, with weekend concerns looming

Penny Coles
The Local

Toronto and Peel residents, living in a lockdown stage with restaurants and non-essential stores closed, could be flocking to Niagara this weekend to enjoy activities not available to them at home.

Dr. Mustafa Hirji, Niagara-on-the-Lake’s acting medical officer of health, says even those living in red-zone regions, such as Halton and Hamilton, “where dining is curtailed,” could find Niagara an attractive place to visit.

He says he’s worried about Black Friday, a popular shopping day, and the weekend coming up, the first since tougher COVID-19 restrictions were imposed in other areas.

One of his chief concerns is the outlet mall in Niagara-on-the-Lake, although passing by someone shopping, especially if wearing a mask, doesn’t represent as great a threat as eating in a restaurant.

“People aren’t coming together in fellowship with others” in that situation, the way they are if they are dining together, he says.

However, if the mall gets busy, it may be difficult to keep a two-metre distance. “If it gets crowded, it becomes a risk.”

This week, public health officials were reminding retail outlets of the restrictions in place, and offering some recommendations for controlling crowds, including limiting the number of people in stores if necessary; making sure people lining up are two metres apart, and are wearing masks.

The message from the Province is for people to stay home and not travel to other regions, but young people, while a diverse group, may be more likely to put themselves at risk, are also less likely to follow the rules and think about the safety of others, Hirji says.

“They might be more likely to defy the Province and come here. That is a concern.”

Hirji, who admits that last week was an “active” one for him, with intense criticism from restaurant owners and regional council’s heated discussion in opposition to limiting restaurant tables to one household, says this week has been a little quieter.

He explains the recommendation from regional councilors to rescind the specific household restrictions is one he will consider, along with all the other layers of information, including comments from business owners, as he reviews the measures he has instituted.

But at the beginning of the week, he wasn’t seeing anything that would change his mind.

In the long run, he says, he has to make his decision “at arms length from political influence,” and based on the public health and safety.

The best reason to rescind the restriction, he says, will be seeing the numbers of COVID cases coming down.

Continued on page 10

Two businesses close to prevent COVID spread

Fox Den Yoga and Small Talk Winery shut down until COVID cases decline

Penny Coles
The Local

Two local businesses are closing temporarily to protect the health and safety of staff and patrons.

Small Talk Winery and Fox Den Yoga often work together. Melina Morsch holds her goat yoga classes at the winery, combining them with tastings at the winery.

The yoga classes are held outdoors in the good weather, but at this time would be moving indoors, and with most of her clientele coming from Toronto and the GTA, Peel and the Hamilton area, lockdown and red zones, she has decided to cancel all her bookings for December and January to prevent the spread of COVID-19.

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Lord Mayor discusses outdoor mask bylaw with council

Decision made to ask outlet mall to post signs requiring masks everywhere on property

Penny Coles
The Local

By putting the region in what Lord Mayor Betty Disero is calling the orange-and-yellow category, or a “reddish orange,” the Niagara medical officer of health is harming businesses that are unable to access provincial COVID-19 funding relief available to those in lockdown or the red zone.

Businesses in orange, yellow and green zones are ineligible for funding relief, while those in red or grey can apply for government funding, such as rent and wage subsidies, Disero says. Niagara restaurants, operating under provincial orange restrictions, have been handed an extra layer of limits, including allowing only customers from one household, with some exceptions, to sit together at a table.

“This is really at the heart of why businesses are upset,” Disero told councillors at Monday’s meeting.

Businesses “all want to open, and they all want to work, but the fact of the matter is they’ve been given additional restrictions and are not able to get any assistance,” she said.

She said MPP Wayne Gates was going to ask the Province that week to open up the government assistance programs to include Niagara.

Disero’s other concern is the potential spread of the coronavirus at the outlet mall on Queen Street, and how to make it safer for Black Friday and weekend shoppers this weekend, many of whom she fears will be from the higher risk areas such as Toronto and Peel. She suggested that a mask bylaw outdoors could be instituted, but it can’t target a specific group or enterprise.

“We would have to take particular care in constructing a bylaw,” Larmour explained that at the mall, who say the stores are only allowing a certain number of people in their stores at a time, and most shoppers are wearing masks. The mall management is willing to put up signs to ask shoppers to wear masks no matter where they are on the property, she says, and they will close a gate to stop cars from entering the parking lot if it gets too busy.

“But my biggest concern is while they’re waiting in line to get in the store, and they’re not wearing masks and are breathing all over each other, they may as well just go out for lunch together.”

Planning director Craig Larmour explained a mask bylaw outdoors could be instituted, but it can’t target a specific group or enterprise.

“We would have to take particular care in constructing a bylaw.”

Bylaw enforcement would be a problem, he explained. Contracts have run out for some bylaw staff who were taken on for the summer, although other employees could step in to do that job. “I’m not sure how effective they would be if there is no opportunity for enforcement.”

“The mall has its own security detail and could have that presence and ‘officious’ appearance, Larmour said. “I’m not sure our bylaw officers could do anything.”

Coun. Gary Burroughs suggested that since the outlet mall is a private property, it would be helpful to see them institute mask-wearing everywhere on the property, and it would be up to them to enforce it.

A bylaw for masks outside on Queen Street would not be helpful unless the Town is prepared to enforce it, he said. “We can pass any bylaw we want,” he said, “but until we decide to charge people for not wearing masks, it’s not going to be successful.”

Coun. Wendy Cheropita also suggested the outlet mall be encouraged to ask people to wear masks and enforce it themselves.

“Ask the outlet mall management to do whatever possible to institute mask-wearing on the property and enforce it,” she said.

Health inspectors are visiting restaurants to ensure COVID-related requirements are being followed, but their priority is education.

However, bylaw and business licensing officers have levied $750 fines against businesses for infractions such as staff not wearing masks, music playing too loud, and patrons not staying at their tables, he says.

He expects his recent order “will ensure households will dine alone, and will limit the ability to spread the virus in Niagara,” leaving the region “relatively untouched” because of it.

The recent outbreaks that were traced back to young people in restaurants did not result in fines, he says. It wasn’t just one situation or one restaurant, “but a pattern of circumstances.”

“Let’s try to educate in those cases,” however, if those restaurant names show up a second time, there might be cause to consider a punishment, he added.

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The region actually crossed the threshold from orange to red in one of the measures that is considered, he says. “We were right on the line of red, and we crossed over on one metric, the number of cases per week per population. We were above the threshold, but we’ve pulled away.”

He hopes to see the region in the yellow zone by Christmas, he added.

Goal to turn Niagara yellow by Christmas

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He hopes to see the region in the yellow zone by Christmas, he added.

Decorating Queen Street

Amanda Williams
The Local

Town staff were on Queen Street this week, dropping off Christmas trees to be decorated with lights. (Photos supplied)

Sotheby’s
Canada

$938,000

38 Elizabeth Street, Niagara-on-the-Lake

OPEN CONCEPT & SPACIOUS 30’ CEILINGS. INCLUDES MASTER SUITE W/ FIVE PIECES, KITCHEN, ATTACHED GARAGE. & LAUNDRY.

$454,000

127 St. Davids Road, Thorold

OPEN CONCEPT & SPACIOUS 30’ CEILINGS. INCLUDES MASTER SUITE W/ FIVE PIECES, KITCHEN, ATTACHED GARAGE, & LAUNDRY.

14th Annual Premier Artisan Show & Sale
The best place to find holiday gifts!
NEW Live Show Runs until Dec. 6
Entry is $5.00. Book a spot: niagarapumphouse.ca

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cperrin@sothebysrealty.ca

Stronger Together
But 6 Feet Apart!
The Town has a new CAO. Last Wednesday, following a meeting that started Monday evening, the Town announced Marnie Cluckie has been appointed to the job, effective Dec. 9. She brings years of experience working in a variety of senior level roles and has knowledge and skills that will serve well in the job of leading the municipality.

A glance at her resume, as detailed in the announced statement, shows this will be her first job as CAO, but as Disero points out, her wide-ranging experience in many leadership roles, and her work with municipalities “far larger than NOTL,” such as Halton and the Niagara Region, make her well-qualified for leading a town this size. She will be leading “very committed staff. They’ll make a great team,” says Disero, referencing interim CAO Shelly Randall, problems with the short-term rental bylaw, and forced to license or cease operation, and the noise bylaw. She claims she will be working in joining us, and thankful we’ve Sheldon leading the town until we were able to hire her. I’m confident we have a good team at the helm now.”

A news release from the Town says “with her education and training in business administration, leadership and organizational development, architecture and sustainable science, and her skills in financial management, operational planning and community relations, Marnie brings extensive knowledge and experience to the role.”

Cluckie brings more than 10 years’ experience working in a variety of senior-level roles in workplaces such as the Halton Region and Halton Community Housing Corporation, Niagara Region, and City of Hamilton. She is leaving Halton Region as director of the strategic transformation group. While at the Niagara Region, her title was director of construction, energy and facilities management, says Disero. “The Town of Niagara-on-the-Lake is interested to me because it is a town that is committed to a high quality of community life,” says Cluckie. “I’ve seen Niagara-on-the-Lake strive to preserve its heritage, agriculture and distinct beauty while creating vibrant sustainable communities for all. It is progressive, creative and forward-thinking but also grounded in its strong history. It continues to build on the solid foundation from which it was built, maintaining its unique local flavour. Yet, it also leverages future opportunites and remains dedicated to continuous improvement and a culture of excellence. The balance between protecting community elements, delivering balanced growth and providing customer service excellence is inspiring.”

Short-term rental principal residence requirement: helpful or not?

John Foreman
Special to The Local

The Town is proposing changes to the short-term rental bylaw that would require all short-term rental properties to be principal residences.

The intent of the changes to the bylaw is to address some of the negative impacts that have been experienced by NOTL residents who live near short-term rentals. However, we believe that the proposed principal residence requirement is excessive, and would trigger adverse consequences, not just for short-term rental owners, but for the community at large.

We all agree there are problems with the current short-term rental bylaw, but a complete reversal of the current rules, which stipulate that cottages that are not be principal residences, would completely disrupt this portion of the tourist accommodation sector in NOTL. This would have serious financial implications for the owners of approximately 175 currently licensed cottage and villa owners. It would also reduce the town’s capacity to accommodate tourists by about 1,000 visitors per night, with negative impacts for the town’s tourism industry overall.

If the proposed principal residence requirement were to move forward, this could be more than 100,000 visitors not being able to stay in NOTL, on a yearly basis. The typical cottage rental owner stays an average of three to four nights, and visits the restaurants, the wineries, and the shops on Queen Street. They also attend Shaw Festival plays, visit Fort George, the NOTL Museum, and support all other local businesses that we, as residents, are also able to benefit from and enjoy.

What do you enjoy about NOTL? What restaurants, wineries, cultural and historical attractions would you miss the most if they were to disappear? Are you following the increasing number of visitors staying in short-term rentals, a lot of businesses and attractions would simply not be able to continue to operate.

There seems to be a lot of assumptions that a principal residence requirement for short-term rentals could somehow solve all the problems attributed to the industry, such as noise and the alleged “hollowing out” of the community.

The majority of short-term rental properties fall within the current bylaws and do not receive frequent noise complaints. Therefore, the majority that are following the rules should not be penalized for the few that are not. Unlicensed short-term rentals need to be fined, and forced to license or cease operation, and the noise bylaw needs to be properly enforced.

There is property in Old Town that is a perfect well-known example. This property is a known “party house” and an unlicensed short-term rental. The problems caused by this type of unlicensed property needs to be addressed, but currently, it appears there is little the Town can legally do to stop unlicensed rentals from operating.

The Town has already proposed change to the short-term rental bylaw allowing the Town to fine any property for advertising without a license, as well as properly enforcing the current noise bylaw after hours, would be enough to solve the problems caused by “party houses” like this one. Noise complaints aren’t the issue to short-term rentals.

The principal residence requirement for short-term rentals is also meant to solve the “hollowing out” of our neighbourhoods. Are short-term rentals causing a “hollowing out” of NOTL? Looking at some numbers from the 2016 census NOTL had 7964 private dwellings. Of that number, 7089 were permanent or principal residences. So, in 2016, there were 875 properties that were not someone’s principal residence. The most recent public data from the Town shows there are currently 340 licensed short-term rentals as all of NOTL. Of those, 175 are cottages or villas. This amounts to only two percent of all private dwellings operating as licensed, unhosted short-term rentals (cottages or villas). The remaining 335 secondary residences in town (accounting for seven percent of all private dwellings) would be vacation homes, but not used as licensed short-term rentals. How often do all these property owners visit their vacation homes? How often do these homes ever empty? How many are neglected? Historically, Niagara-on-the-Lake has had many residents who purchased vacation homes in town before moving here permanently. NOTL is indeed a well-known retirement community and there are many secondary residences where the owner’s intent is to be able to call NOTL home in the future. In order to help with the expenses, some have decided to offer their property as a licensed short-term rental while they’re not using it. This helps cover the costs of maintaining the property, and ensures that it is not sitting empty for extended periods.

Enforcing a principal residence requirement isn’t the solution, it will only cause more problems. The short-term rental industry would like to see this requirement officially removed from the proposed changes. We would like to sit at the table with the Town to discuss what the problems are and what changes can be made to the current short-term bylaw for the benefit of the residents, the short-term rental owners, and the visitors.

John Foreman is president of the NOTL B&B Association, and Jason Clements, with his wife Elsie Mae Clements, is the owner of Niagara Holiday Rentals. This was written in collaboration with Niagara Holiday Rentals and the NOTL Bed & Breakfast Association.
Not too late to change hydro rate plans

When hydro rates rose in November, residents and owners of small businesses were given an option: to pay time-of-use rates, or to choose a new tiered system.

About 500 of 8,000 NOTL customers moved to the tiered system, with the rest staying with the time-of-use (TOU) default, says NOTL Hydro president Tim Curtis.

The rates being offered now will stay in effect until the next increase from the Ontario Energy Board in May, based on the cost of supplying electricity.

In the meantime, hydro customers can look at their bills and make a decision to switch at any time, if it seems to be advantageous, says Curtis. If they fill out the form to change plans any time before the end of the month, the new rate will begin with their next month’s service.

In June, when more people were working from home, the Province announced it would move away from time-of-use and charge a single electricity rate to help families through the COVID-19 pandemic. It returned to TOU Nov. 1.

The “vast majority” of NOTL customers have stayed with the time-of-use default and are being billed accordingly, Curtis says, but that could just be because customers aren’t paying attention to the choices.

While technically a customer could change monthly, he says, “most likely, whichever rate option works best for a customer one month will work best most months, unless they have a significant change in circumstance. We would recommend customers review their decisions every six months when rates are reset.”

There are a few things to consider when deciding whether to switch price plans. How much electricity do you use in a month? Can you shift your use to lower-priced times of the day? Does the amount of electricity you use change based on the season?

OEB says there is no guarantee switching price plans will save money, and encourages consumers to compare TOU and tiered prices using its calculator. “Nobody will see a big savings either way due to the nature of the rates, says Curtis. “However, for different customers with different usage patterns, one option may be a little better than the other.”

Generally, current tiered rates favour low-volume users without a lot of peak time usage, he says. “To see if you fall into this grouping we recommend you use the calculator with your actual usage.”

On Nov. 1, when hydro rates returned to TOU, the cost of hydro was pegged at 10.5¢/kWh for off-peak, which runs from 7 p.m. until 7 a.m. and on weekends. The price for mid-peak is 15¢/kWh, from 11 a.m. until 5 p.m. on weekdays, and 21.7¢/kWh for peak, from 7 a.m. until 11 a.m. and 5 p.m. until 7 p.m. on weekdays.

The Province also increased the rebate shown on monthly bills from 31.8 per cent to 33.2 per cent, effective Nov. 1.

To move to tiered pricing, there is a form available on NOTL Hydro’s website at www.notlhydro.com/customer-service/rates/rpprates/.

Tim Curtis, president of NOTL Hydro. (Photo supplied)
Black Friday in 2020 still offers red hot deals

Submitted by Thomas TV

This is a busy time of year for many, and it has been exceptionally busy here at Thomas TV.

Black Friday has become an annual event, with shoppers scouting the best deals and products for their homes. Not an entirely new concept, but 2020 has brought its challenges.

One large obstacle has been inventory. As you know, the supply chain and overall economy has been affected by COVID-19, meaning a disruption in a factory on the other side of the world that supplies one part for your TV, puts a hold on seeing any of those models finish production.

In the spring when Ontario faced its first shutdown, we would have been meeting directly with suppliers placing orders for the new 2020 models. Instead we met via Zoom and over email, and we watched the product lines change rapidly as manufacturers came to terms with what could actually arrive.

Being in the audio video industry for over 56 years, we have never experienced anything quite like this. However, we made the best of it and worked diligently in ordering quality products that we ourselves would use in our own homes, at the best prices.

Black Friday is no exception. We have a great selection of audio/video gear in store, ready to go.

In our showroom, we have seen changes as well, with brand new protocols in place for keeping our staff and customers safe. Plexiglass barriers, new showroom layouts, paths to maintain physical distancing, wearing masks and thorough cleaning procedures between customers.

A whole new look, however, it was worth it.

We thank our customers for their cooperation. Many have expressed their appreciation for the extra steps we have taken both in the store and in their home when our installers arrive for deliveries and installations.

We understand that some are more comfortable shopping online, and you can do that via our website at www.thomastv.com and we still offer curbside pickup for customers that prefer a contactless transaction with a smile behind the mask.

With winter on its way and more time spent indoors, consider that new TV or home theater to enhance your favourite shows and movies, or a two channel stereo system that puts the focus on your music in a way you’ve only experienced at the concert itself.

We invite you to shop local. Black Friday pricing is on, and it is a great time to save. Our knowledgeable staff and trained installers are focused on customer satisfaction. After all, home entertainment should be fun!

Visit our showroom at 130 Thorold Rd. in Welland to experience your options that will make heading indoors even more inviting. Visit our website www.thomastv.com or give us a call!

Shop our wide selection of TVs and TV stands on display in our showroom.

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**Black Friday Deals**

**A BIG SCREEN WITH VIVID COLOUR**

- **SONY X800H**
  - 75" 4K Ultra HD HDR Smart TV
  - A wider more precise range of colour
  - Motionflow XR for smooth, fast action scenes
  - A Netflix recommended TV

**BLACK FRIDAY PRICE**: $1399

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**ADVANCE YOUR ENTERTAINMENT!**

This AV receiver will completely transform how you listen and watch at home, plus plenty of features for streaming and multi-room audio options

- **Yamaha RXV4A**

**REG 1649**

**BLACK FRIDAY PRICE**: $579

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**SAVE UP TO 50% ON HEADPHONES**

- **Jabra Elite 75t**
- **Bose QuietComfort 35 II**

**REG 499**

**BLACK FRIDAY PRICE**: $199

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**SOUNDBARS STARTING AT $119**

- **Samsung TU8000**

**43" REG 549**

**BLACK FRIDAY PRICE**: $448

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**ADVANCE YOUR ENTERTAINMENT!**

This AV receiver will completely transform how you listen and watch at home, plus plenty of features for streaming and multi-room audio options

- **Yamaha RXV4A**

**REG 1649**

**BLACK FRIDAY PRICE**: $579

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**DESKTOP CLEAR AUDIO SYSTEM**

- **Reg 199**

**BLACK FRIDAY PRICE**: $199

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**Monday - Wednesday 10 - 5**

**Thursday - Friday 10 - 7**

**Saturday - 10 - 5, Sunday Closed**
The finish line is in sight

The Friends of Ryerson Park, a very large group of NOTL residents who have addressed issues are great cause, because the park issues and consequent participation in the area around Ryerson Park, has been through the devastation and NOTL Council, been through the devastation. They’ve already done it once, and NOTL Council, been through the devastation. They’ve already done it once, and they’re never going to get it trying to save our lives. We all, whatever our age, have something in our lives that makes surviving now worthwhile, to have that future, for ourselves and all around us.

This virus we are fighting is very close to being beaten, with a vaccine tainting close. While we wait, we do what we need to do. This is not a community to preach. This is a community that is playing by the rules. We have our hearts break for them that they are scary, going up and up and up across the province and the country. More people are getting sick. More people will die. Our prime minister has told us it’s not going to be a normal holiday season. No surprise that — nothing about this year has been normal. It’s especially hard on young people, who know they’re likely to get sick, but are being asked to pay a steep price to keep those around them safe.

We need to cheer for our kids, the young people who are the future. If we keep too many, huge, chunks of your time, and try to help them understand it will end, and they will look back on this as a lapse in time. We’ve got this. We can do it.

Penny Coles
The Local

Heritage Trail’s remaining natural surface offers benefits

From John Street to Chautauqua, the new parking lot. The friends of Ryerson Park, a very large group of NOTL residents who have addressed issues are great cause, because the park issues and consequent participation in the area around Ryerson Park, has been through the devastation and NOTL Council, been through the devastation. They’ve already done it once, and they’re never going to get it trying to save our lives. We all, whatever our age, have something in our lives that makes surviving now worthwhile, to have that future, for ourselves and all around us.

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Penny Coles
The Local

Heritage Trail’s remaining natural surface offers benefits

From John Street to Chautauqua, the new parking lot.

Dear Lord Mayor Disero
We understand the fear, and frustration of business owners, who, facing new and renewed restrictions, are finding this even more difficult second round. They’ve already done it once, and they’re never going to get it trying to save our lives. We all, whatever our age, have something in our lives that makes surviving now worthwhile, to have that future, for ourselves and all around us.

This virus we are fighting is very close to being beaten, with a vaccine tainting close. While we wait, we do what we need to do. This is not a community to preach. This is a community that is playing by the rules. We have our hearts break for them that they are scary, going up and up and up across the province and the country. More people are getting sick. More people will die. Our prime minister has told us it’s not going to be a normal holiday season. No surprise that — nothing about this year has been normal. It’s especially hard on young people, who know they’re likely to get sick, but are being asked to pay a steep price to keep those around them safe.

We need to cheer for our kids, the young people who are the future. If we keep too many, huge, chunks of your time, and try to help them understand it will end, and they will look back on this as a lapse in time. We’ve got this. We can do it.

Penny Coles
The Local

View from the couch

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Letters! We want letters!

If you have a letter to the editor you’d like to see published, please send it to penny@notllocal.com. Please try to keep it 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.
Learn more at be quantified in any way, is my another.

Lost in nature; it can be fun, or terrifying

Owen Bjorgan
Special to The Local

I’ve always had a good sense of direction. I would like to believe my friends, family, and hiking clients would fully trust me on such a statement. I’ve travelled Niagara’s moek but empowering forests, plus the regional roads, and between hiking, hockey, and family across the peninsula, I’ve got an unshakable sense for where places lie in proportion to one another.

If I got you lost, I promise, it would at least be some definition.

Another resume skill, which has yet to make it on paper or be quantified in any way, is my “tree memory.” I can remember how the tree with the dark bark was overarching the little beech saplings near the edge of the escarpment. In that spot I remember a buttonbush growing in the depths of Waftfiel Logs, somewhere over a kilometre off trail in that spot.

I have revisited particular provincial and national parks with many years in between, only to find myself exactly remembering a certain tree, wetland feature, or stump in the area. These mental maps have become important navigational tools over the years, especially when off trail, and at risk of getting lost.

Hey, it’s 2020, and we’ve all a little lost right now! Here are a couple stories about the feeling of uncertain geographical whereabouts became an accomplishment of bearing that lost feeling.

When I through-hiked the entirety of the Bruce Trail in 2014, I didn’t get truly lost, per se, but one time, I got spun out in a giant circle that nearly chewed away half a day of hiking. I still don’t know how it happened to this day.

I was two weeks or so into my expedition, working my way down from Tobermory to Niagara. Around Collingwood, something peculiar happened. I remember hours, late at night, turning to the same spot on the map the hiking trail, and just standing there and thinking, I was here this morning. It dumbfounded me, and still does. Many locals know that following the white rectangular blazes of the Bruce is a surefire and simple way to hike this beautiful path. Somehow, I must have walked an entire loop of sorts, only to return to my relative ground zero. All I could do was laugh at myself in disbelief.

That might not be a scary type of lost, but it was certainly bizarre. That’s what getting lost truly feels like — you’ve been tripped by your own senses and Mother Nature’s works, like you’ve been snapped by some unknown force. It can leave you feeling very, very quite.

Now, about what about being lost in the Amazon jungle, with no light and no cellphone reception?

I was filming Hidden Corners: Earth Andes Ecuador, in 2016. My best friend and cameraman, Owen, was along for some critical adventures while providing his respected camera expertise to the episode.

Our guide was memorable. A young native man in his early 20s, he was built like a well-built bull. Round in the face and belly, he was strong and amiable and a good guide. If he confidently took us out on foot into the rainforest, until his confidence in one very important thing suddenly subsided — where the heck we were.

With the sun getting lower, and the jungle getting exasperatingly darker, this is when “El Capitan,” as he preferred to be called, told Dave and I we were lost. Now, importantly, our guide was lost. It’s one of those classic moments where you find yourself years later asking, “do you remember where you were, or what you were doing when you learned about … the fact that you are lost?”

I remember standing in rubber boots, watching the crystal clear tiny stream run over the tops of my toes. The water quietly twirled its last reflections for the day. The little creek was gentle, but the jungle was getting louder. Our habitat vegetation around the small tributary was brushing up against our belt loops, feeling closed-in by the lack of light and indifferent vegetation.

I took a deep breath and realized this was going to be an excellent story within the story. Dave didn’t look so comforted at first, but I have to give it to him, because most people would have caved and panicked. Dave kept it together like a champ. Perhaps, others would have been mad at El Capitan, or start ed throwing their arms in the air like in the movies.

We embraced the wilderness of saying we were lost in the Amazon. At the end of the day, it was calm, trust, and some “tree memory” that got us out of there. Albert, it was late and pitch black once we returned back to the workshop for dinner, where El Capitan cooked us a scrumptious meal of mysterious meat and some vegetables.

If you’re ever lost in Niagara or the Amazon, or a large forest, just remember that you owe it to yourself to take a deep breath. When our species takes the time to physically breathe in deeper and exhale slower, we bring precious oxygen to our brain and slow down time for a moment. It produces moments of clarity that are critical for resolution, which may not be found if we’re in state of heightened panic or confusion.

On that note, I end with a few quick but foolhardy tips for those who may find themselves lost in Niagara Region.

For one, the Niagara Escarpment generally runs a consistent east-west direction (except in Short Hills Provincial Park, where the escarpment is a post-glacial mesa). There is always human development below the escarpment, as well as immediately above it.

Speaking of human development, you are truly never far from any named road in Niagara. Even in the depths of Waftfield Logs or the Niagara Gorge, you are never far from a road.

We no longer have true wilderness areas here in Niagara.

The vast majority of said roads run in a north-south or east-west direction, making much of the Niagara Region a gridlock layout on a map, composed of reliable right angles in nearly all municipalities.

The Niagara River, Lake Erie, and Lake Ontario box in the Niagara Region to make it a true peninsula. On satellite images, you can see Niagara is generally a rectangle with water on three sides. The river runs north to south, and the two Great Lakes have coasts going from east to west.

Before you set out to hike in a more profound patch of forest, it’s always a decent idea to look at the maps beforehand and know what you’re up against. If you can, download a map from somewhere online, or take a photo of the maps at the trailhead before you enter the parks. If you hike in the evening, it’s never a bad idea to have a flashlight or charged phone at the ready.

Whether you find yourself lost in the Amazon (pictured here) or Niagara’s woodlots, Owen Bjorgan’s advice is to keep a cool and level head.

Owen Bjorgan

Time to build bridges in town

Mr. Benny Marotta deserves recognition for the positive contributions he has made to our town, for example. The Two Sisters Winery, building affordable housing, contributing to the Marotta Family Innovation Complex and educating the town on the value of responsible planning so that it continues to be a beautiful and historic place for people to live and visit.

Our sympathy to Two Sis ters Resorts and you on your difficult decision to sell the Randwood Estate.

The Randwood Estate, which is close to residential areas, was approved for the construction of a hotel when it was bought. When you upzoned the plans to a grand destination hotel it conflicted with what had been approved and was judged not suitable for the location. Unfortunately this created conflict.

Accusing our good town of acting in bad faith is not a way to build bridges. The claim of $50 million of benefits to the town is your opinion. The hotel, if built, would have only contributed to the town a fraction of the property taxes it would pay (most goes to the Region) and employed mostly people from outside of town.

If the hotel had been built as approved years ago the town would have saved legal expenses and would be receiving higher property taxes than it does now and people would have enjoyed years of employment.

We wish you success in your goal of doubling your money on the sale of the Rand wood Estate. Perhaps you can use that windfall to build a grand destination hotel close to Niagara-on-the-Lake. There is a famous American celebrity hotel owner-politician who has built golf hotels resorts outside of cities and named them for cities they are not in.

We agree with you that running paid advertisements is a wonderful way to support our three local papers that provide excellent journalism to the residents and town council members. We are not members of SOR (Save Our Randwood Estate), but like you and SOR, we all share the desire to have a beautiful, welcoming town that all want to live in.

Bruce Gitelman
Residents for Sustainable Tourism

Not lost but can be some- thing goofy and trivial, but it can turn to true terror if left in a stressful, unprepared mindset.

Here’s a final quote from a shaman I hiked with in Equa dor’s jungle. “In the forest, all the trees look different to me. In the city, the gray buildings, they all are the same. That’s why I got lost in the city, but not in the forest.”

NOTL Local Editorial Banner Bookings

There are just a few dates left for these premium positions for 2020! Contact us today!

Don’t miss out!

NOTL businesses: call Karen at 905.641.5335 or email karen@notllocal.com
outside NOTL: call Julia at 905.934.1040 or email julia@notllocal.com
Niagara Lions Dave Priestly, Terry Flynn and Dorothy Wiens, with St. Davids Lions member Betty Snider who stopped by to say hello, admire the sign Flynn had made for the Crossroads lot in Virgil where they are holding their tree sale. The sign recognizes long-time Niagara Lion member and tree sale organizer John Skubel, who died in August.

St David’s Lioness holding food drive Dec. 6

The Local

The Lioness club, now 41 years strong, has seen the need in the community grow by 40 per cent and ensuring an additional fundraiser is always ready to assist if necessary, says Lioness Anna Marie Warriner. "We have a lot of support from our Lions," says Warriner. "They help us, and we do what we can to help them."

Both clubs have the same goal, to help their community, “and we work well together,” says Warriner. “They’re a great bunch of people to work with.”

The Lioness will accept food items, cash, or cheques on behalf of Project Share. The food drive is Saturday, Dec. 6 at the York Road club hall, from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m.

For information about the most-needed food, visit https://www.projectshare.ca/ food-bank

Penny Coles

The Local

The annual St Davids Lions Christmas tree sale began Saturday, with no shortage of customers. Lions and members of the Leo club, the service club for youngsters, unloaded a shipment of Fraser fir trees Saturday morning, and opened for business shortly after, says Lion Club president Ted Burrows, who is also organizing this year’s sale.

“We’ve sold quite a few already,” he says, and expects the trees will sell out, as they typically do, in two weeks.

At 80 years old, the long-time Lion was happy to have a group of 20 Leos helping with the heavy work, and couldn’t say enough about the young people and their service to the community, and to the St Davids Lions during their burger nights and fish fries.

“They were here Friday night helping us with the fish fry, and they were back again Saturday morning. They really want to help.”

While other clubs and retailers were struggling to get enough trees to meet demand, Burrows says it was no problem having their usual order of 600 trees filled, although it is coming from two tree farms, and on two different days.

For many years, the local club has ordered their trees from a Tillsonburg farmer, also a Lions Club member, who is retiring — this was his last year, and St Davids received their final shipment of trees. Burrows says he was able to order more trees from another supplier, and they will arrive this Saturday, bringing the supply up to its full complement, and ensuring another successful fundraiser.

“This is a new tree farmer who planted 6,000 trees,” says Burrows. They’re all six to seven feet, and he’s just starting to sell them.

The day after this year’s sale ends, he says, “I’ll be ordering trees for next year to make sure I get them.”

All the St Davids club sells is Fraser fir, and has limited their sale to that one variety for several years, he says.

“They have a good reputation. We haven’t sold Scotch pine or spruce for a while. Fraser firs have a straight trunk, and they’re always good trees.

The other factor the club has going for it is that the trees delivered on Saturday were cut Wednesday, and are as fresh as can be, while many of the bigger tree farms begin cutting in September.

The downside of fresh trees is that they are heavier, and it takes a couple of guys to carry them, he says.

One of their 11 firs is going to the bungalow, a joint donation between the club and the supplier.

The annual tree sale, which has been going on for at least 30 years, Burrows says, now brings in about $15,000 to $20,000, to be spent on community and Lions projects.

The St Davids Lions Club tree sale, at 1462 York Rd., is open seven days a week, from 9 a.m. to 7 p.m. Tree prices range from $35 to $100. Cornerstone Church on Niagara Stone Road in Virgil is again the site of the NOTL Lions Club tree sale.

Lion Terry Flynn is again organizing this year’s sale, having taken over from long-time Lion member John Skubel last year.

He was accustomed to Skubel checking in with him daily, he says, and will miss that this year.

The NOTL has a good selection of trees, as well as a new variety for them.

Flynn has himself purchased a large, new sign for the lot, which says the sale is in memory of Skubel, whose wife and son will take over John’s customary shift on the weekend.

A supply shortage means fewer trees for the club this year, says Flynn, and a higher price, but he will have a good selection of four-foot to 12-foot trees, balsam, Fraser fir, a variety called Siberian spruce, and a “skinny” tree which is good for smaller spaces.

The shortage is of trees in the Fraser and balsam six to 10 foot range, but they are making up for it with more taller trees, he says.

The tree sale, at 1570 Niagara Stone Rd, is open Monday to Friday from 10 a.m. to 7 p.m., and Saturday and Sunday 9 a.m. to 7 p.m.

St Davids Lions help unload Fraser fir in preparation for the annual Christmas tree sale. (Photos supplied)
Shaw offering \textit{Songs for a Winter’s Night}

Holiday favourites offered safely, in Jackie Maxwell Studio Theatre

Local Staff

As their musical revue series winds down, the Shaw Festival is pivoting to the holiday season with \textit{Songs for a Winter’s Night}, holiday favourites being performed in the Jackie Maxwell Studio Theatre.

The festival continues to use the $400,000 FedDev grant, giving company members the opportunity to perform and locals a chance to enjoy safe, festive entertainment so much needed for our mental health.

Audience members will be treated to such traditional treats as \textit{White Christmas}, \textit{The Prayer} and \textit{Have Yourself a Merry Little Christmas}, in performances directed by Kimberley Rampersad, with music by Paul Sportelli, performed by ensemble members Kyle Blair, Andrew Broderick, James Daly, Kristi Frank, Elodie Gillett, Alexis Gordon, Olivia Sinclair-Brisbane, and Jonathan Tan.

Audience members are invited to share their favourite holiday memories with Shaw — whatever the holiday may be so they may be interwoven into the show.

Stories can be emailed to feedback@shawfest.com. Extra performances have been added to the musical revue, which end Dec. 4, with the holiday favourites beginning Dec. 5 and continuing to Dec. 19.

Tickets are general seating, available at the Shaw box office at 1-800-511-7429. Tickets for this series are not being sold online.

Andrew Broderick and Olivia Sinclair-Brisbane have moved inside, with their audience, to The Jackie Maxwell Studio Theatre. Their musical revues are wrapping up, and they are rehearsing for \textit{Songs for a Winter’s Night}. (PA Lusztyk)
Goat Yoga moves indoors, but with too many Toronto visitors, it has been cancelled until COVID numbers come down. (Photos supplied)

Elena Vasquezlo, from Mississauga, plays with one of Fox (Photos supplied) down.

Winery closure to protect staff, production

Elena Vasquezlo, from Mississauga, plays with one of Fox

“The winery is in full cider production, he says, explaining he’s worth putting them at risk for staff or local customers in a position of risk. We have two staff members with asthma; and a lot of us have older par-

Hank Hunse, owner of the Irvine Road winery, has closed his tastings and retail store, going back to pickup and del-

United Way ‘needs help like never before’

Ashleigh Doyle United Way

The United Way is wit-

ening the devastating effects of the pandemic pushing more people to the breaking point at a time, when our community’s abil-

Frances Hallworth, exec-

diary and not taking the gov-

“the win-

tional restrictions. “ When

People in Niagara are

struggling.

Front-line agencies we
count on to protect people from the ravages of poverty and homelessness, mental
illness, addiction, isolation, and violence are now in danger themselves. “It’s
estimated that 20 per cent of charities in Canada are
going to close their doors by the end of 2020,” says Hall-
worth.

“At this very moment, crucial local agencies are cutting programs, and con-
templating whether they can stay afloat. Their reserves are spent and the donations they rely on have plummet-

ted, all while service demand is skyrocketing.”

If front-line services dis-

appear, she says, “our family, friends and neighbors who rely on no safety net beneath them. Not only does that spell ca-

trophic today, the devas-
tating community loss will

be felt for decades.

“We must take drastic action – now.”

COVID-19 has pressed many of us to take stock of our priorities and our bless-
ings, says Hallworth. “While

the lucky among us have been able to work, many have lost their jobs. While we have been able to pay
mortgages or rent, many fear losing their homes or may have already. As some of us are able to cope with
the stress and uncertainty of this time, many are facing a battle with their addic-
tions or feeling their mental health decline.

Often when individuals or families seek help from one agency, they need sup-
pports elsewhere, relying on an interconnected network of social and health organi-

zations that is now in need of a lifeline.

• You can sign up for your workplace’s campaign and make paycheque con-

tributions. Or you can gath-
er as a workplace and launch a monthly gift to the United Way.

• Each and every one of

you reading this can change lives, no matter how much you are able to donate. Liter-

ally every dollar counts.

• Give from a position

of gratitude and rest assured that investing in United Way maximizes the impact of
every dollar and protects the entire social safety net.

United Way Niagara

is a rag-a-zap network, working on the ground with front-line local agencies to

stake out the Community Benefit

ground with front-line services to

“Front-line agencies we

are proud to support are the ones best equipped to guide our community forward out of this crisis, helping indi-

viduals at all stages of life – infants to seniors and every-

one in between.”

United Way Niagara needs help today like never before, she says.

“We are being tested, but like generations before us, we must rise to the chal-

lenge. We can only do that by pulling together to ensure that as we recover, no one is left behind.”

Elena Vasquezlo, from Mississauga, plays with one of Fox Den Yoga’s goats after her session at Fox Den Yoga.

Send your Season’s Greetings and best wishes for 2021 to the residents and businesses in NOTL by placing an ad in our Season’s Greetings section.

Publication Date: December 17
Booking Deadline: Friday, December 11 at noon
Ask about our repeat special for December 24

The Niagara-on-the-Lake

LOCA

The trusted voice of our community.

NOTL businesses contact
Karen at 905-641-5335 or karen@notllocal.com
Businesses outside NOTL contact Julia at 905-934-1040 or julia@notllocal.com

Frances Hallworth, exec-

tutive director of the United Way, says the gap between those who live in need every
day and those who do not has always existed. “Times of crisis only deepen that di-

We are being tested, get

ice cream, and visit our lovely shops and restaurants!”

She says she doesn’t want to “ demonize” those from oth-
er, more restrictive zones, but her clientele is mostly young, in their 20s and 30s, and “we’re not going to stay in our cau-

tion zone if we don’t do some-thing to prevent a bump in

tourism from red zones.”

Some in that age group consider themselves “invinci-
bles,” she says, “and when they come here, they’re already not listening to the govern-
ment and not taking the gov-
ernment seriously on these

COVID-19 pandemic restrictions.” When

they come to Niagara, many

“are not interested in following

the rules here,” she says.

“We’re all jumped through hoops to keep our clientele safe. We’ve followed all the
guidelines, but when people come here, they don’t expect to be policed.”

Closing down, and losing

her only income, was not an
easy decision, and will affect her children’s Christmas, but

she says she sat down and ex-

plained to them, “this is how I

protect them, their grandpar-
tons and the community!”

Hank Hunse, owner of the

Irvine Road winery, has closed

his tastings and retail store, going back to pickup and del-

ivery only. He says he’s seen

his staff stressed by trying to

enforce physical distancing

rules, and with the increase in
cases in other areas, and the number of visitors from those areas who come to the win-

ery, he doesn’t want to risk

the safety of his staff or the future of production.

“I don’t want to put our

staff or local customers in a position of risk. We have two staff members with asthma;

and a lot of us have older par-

tons and relatives. It’s just not worth putting them at risk for a glass of wine,” he says.

It’s also a business deci-

ion, he says, explaining he’s

looked at the risk/benefit; and it makes good business sense to protect the winery.

Hunse says his sales are

now more cider than wine— they shift back and forth — and this is the time of year

the winery is in full cider pro-
duction.

“If we have COVID com-
ing through the front door, it will affect my production. It would probably shut us down. That’s what I’m trying to avoid.”

He isn’t prepared to risk a COVID outbreak shutting down production, and affect-

ing his LICBO sales of cider, he explains, which bring in more revenue than tastings.

I would rather appeal to

locals to buy their wine direct-

ly from wineries,” with free
delivery, or pickup at the door.

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History in the Vineyard (at home) event

Penny Coles
The Local

The Friends of Fort George, the Niagara Historical Society, Ravine Vineyard Estate Winery and Parks Canada are preparing for the second annual History in the Vineyard fundraiser.

The intention was to safely host dinners at Ravine’s confer- ence centre, as they did last year, but with a reduced num- ber, and adding a takeout option for those more comfortable eat- ing at home. But with changing restrictions, the decision was made last week to pivot to take- out only, says Mona Babin, one of the organizers of the fund- raiser.

“We really focusing on supporting the community, and also having fun,” she says, while making the event “as simple as possible.”

This year’s event is also cele- brating the 15th anniversary of the Niagara-on-the-Lake Muse- um.

There are two additional chefs involved with the dinner being prepared at Ravine, from Ruffinos Pasta Bar & Grill and The Garrison House, providing food options for a gourmet three-course meal, says Babin. “You can order three courses from one restaurant, or one course from each of the three.”

As a bonus, every two meals ordered will be accompanied by a free bottle of Ravine Sand and Gravel wine, says Babin. “If you order four dinners, you get two free bottles of wine.”

The food will be prepared and picked up in special con- tainers that can go directly in the oven to be heated, she says, with the menu designed to offer innovative and popular choices.

Choices for the three-course meal include:
• Ember baked beet and smoked ricotta salad with black walnuts (Ruffino’s)
• English onion soup with Lowrey Bros cider and aged cheddar (Garrison)
• Truffled winter squash tor- tellini in brown butter Par- mesan sauce (Ruffino’s)
• Coq au beer heritage chicken braised in Butlers Best Bitter with Niagara mushrooms, shallots, heavy cream and tarragon (Garrison) or Braised beef short ribs with whipped potatoes, buttered rapini, veal jus (Ravine)
• Tiramisu coffee chocolate-olace (Ruffino’s) or Crème brûlée vanilla bean (Ravine)

The date of Dec. 10 has been timed to launch the holiday spirit, without being too close to the busiest part of the season, says Babin.

The evening will also fea- ture a YouTube presentation of stories about Christmases past, including how it was celebrated here in Niagara-on-the-Lake, says Babin, available to those who have ordered dinner.

This will be special broad- cast for those who have booked the takeout dinner.

This event not only sup- ports these local businesses but two important Niagara- on-the-Lake charities, she says. Tickets are $100 per per- son, and include a $40 tax re- cept, the funds to be divided by the museum and the Friends of Fort George.

Contact the Friends of Fort George at 905-468-6621 or email admin@friendsoffort george.ca, the NOTL Museum at 905-468-3912, or contact@ nhsm.ca for more information.

Tickets are avail- able online at https://www.canadahelps. org/en/charities/niagara-his- torical-society/events/histo-ry-in-the-vineyard/

Chef Ryan Crawford of Ruffino’s, Paul Harber, owner of Ravine, and Chef David Walt of The Garrison House are working together to offer a three-course dinner for the History in the Vineyard fundraiser, to benefit the NOTL Museum and the Friends of Fort George. (Photo supplied)
Some Heat For the Holidays!

Hi Friends,

Executive Chef Alex here at OLiV to tell you about two of our new Fall and Winter Menu items available for dine-in and takeout.

Chef Chris turns up the heat from the Island of Jamaica with our Jerk Chicken Salad, his Special Jerk Sauce has incredible fiery flavor. Infused with OLiV EVOO and finished with OLiV Balsamic to bring this salad all together with the citrus, sweet and heat.

We created our Caribbean Curry using OLiV EVOO and technique to blend the flavor of fresh roasted chicken breast and a mire poix mix of vegetables, stewed with Jamaican Curry and Chef Chris’s Jerk Sauce and Sweet Heat Pepper Sauce.

Served on Basmati Rice with a Brown Sugar tuile and finished with OLiV Balsamic to bring the flavors together.

Submitted by OLiV

OLiV in Strewn Winery we will be offering 15% off of our current FALL and WINTER MENU for TAKEOUT and CURBSIDE PICK UP.

We will be implementing delivery asap.

On top of that we will be donating an additional 5% of our total takeout sales until Valentines Day to Bethlehem Housing.

As well we will be offering 10% off all Dine-In Tables Sunday thru Thursday with the purchase of any bottle of our EVOO or Balsamic products.

CALL ANYTIME TO ORDER 905-468-1222

View Takeout Menu at: olivtapasnotl.com

1339 Lakeshore Road, NOTL OLiV Tasting Room & Restaurant located in Strewn Winery
Friends, musicians perform online Saturday

Thank you locals!

Submitted by Caroline Cellars Winery

The Lakey Family and staff at The Farmhouse at Caroline Cellars’ winery want to thank all of our “loyal locals” for their support during the past six months. We have worked tirelessly to ensure a safe dining and wine tasting experience for all our guests throughout the COVID-19 pandemic. Thanks to the addition of infrared heaters, we will continue to offer patio seating as long as the weather stays on the mild side. We have also recently opened our indoor dining space, with a limited number of safely distanced tables. Takeout is also available, which is a great option for staff or co-worker holiday lunches.

We are not able to safely host our annual Holiday Open House this year but do have some special offers for our guests.

Buy a $100 Caroline Cellars Gift Card for only $90! Available Friday, December 4 through Monday, December 7. NEW THIS YEAR - Gift Cards will be available for purchase in-store AND online! Gift cards can be used at Caroline Cellars’ Wine Boutique or The Farmhouse Café. Limit two per guest/order.

After our hugely successful Mother’s Day gift pack deliveries in May, we will be offering similar options for our Holiday Gift Packs. Spread some physically distant Holiday Cheer by sending one of our gift packs to your loved ones this season. We will be offering local delivery within NOTL, St. Catharines, Thorold and Niagara Falls on specific days closer to Christmas, as well as shipping with in-Ontario. Check out our website for gift pack options.

Wine Boutique and Tasting Bar
Open for Tastings
Reservations Only

Curbside and Local Delivery still available!

The Farmhouse Café
Open for Lunch
7 days a Week
Heated Patio and Indoor Dining
Reservations Only

Takeout also Available!

Call 905-468-8814 to make your reservation.
Check our website for full details and service hours.
1010 Line 2, NOTL. 905.468.8814
www.CarolineCellars.com

Buttermilk Chicken Sandwich with Beet Dux Sauce from The Farmhouse Café at Caroline Cellars Winery.

Mike Balsom
Special to The Local

The members of local bar band, Back in the Daze, including Niagara-on-the-Lake resident Scott Robinson, have found new ways to keep up their musical chops during the pandemic via a series of online performances, both for pre-recorded and their latest such event is a livestream this Saturday, Nov. 28 at 8 p.m.

“We did one about a month and a half ago,” Robinson says on the phone from his home in the Village. “Our last live show was back in February. Since then, we’ve been getting together and learning new songs, so people will see us playing some stuff we haven’t played live before.”

That February show was supposed to be Rob- inson’s last with the band for a while. He departed in March for a trip around the world that was quickly cut short when the pandemic hit. He and a friend were stranded in Peru, until the Canadian government was able to arrange emergency evacuation flights back to Canada. Meanwhile, the other band members, all multi-instrumentalists, were planning to play gigs without Robinson, before bars, restaurants and ban- quiet halls were all closed down by the Province.

Robinson estimates that Back in the Daze books anywhere from 40 to 55 gigs in an average year. Weddings, New Year’s Eve parties, festivals and spec- cial events have provided a steady source of income for a number of years for the five members, who are all in their mid-20s. In NOTL alone they have played the Strawberry and Peach Festivals, the Pumphouse Art Show and the Canada Day party. They’ve also been the go-to band for many NOTL Sailing Club gatherings.

Luckily enough, the band members don’t rely on that income to get by. “We don’t do this full time,” explains Robinson. “There are musicians across the region who are also affected by the pandemic than us. We do it as a really fun thing to do together, as a side job, for extra income on the side. It’s nobody’s primary source of income.”

Robinson, for instance, works for John Hawley at the Village. Singer/drum- mer/trumpeter Billy Taslakian has a job with the City of St. Catharines, while guitarist Cole Shennan is an apprentice with Speer Electrical. Drummer/saxo- phonist/guitarist Joel Lewczynski is currently working at Ravine Vineyards, while keyboardist/guitar- ister Jesse Day is finishing teacher’s college at Brock University, and is the head ice cream-maker at Avondale Dairy Bar.

Still, the loss of the busy summer festival sea- son meant that the extra income wasn’t there for them this year. But ask any of the band members and they will tell you that much more than the money, it’s the fun they have playing together live that they really missed.

If you’ve seen Back in the Daze live, you know that fun is the name of their game. Their concerts see the five of them shuf- fling instruments, taking turns on lead vocals and just generally having an amazingly good time playing some of their favourite classic rock songs from the ‘60s, ‘70s and ‘80s. They feed off the atmosphere of the crowd, and the crowd in turn inspires the band into high-energy perfor- mances.

Robinson describes Back in the Daze as “young men playing the music that we love.” Most of their rep- ertoire consists of songs (by Billy Joel, the Rolling Stones, the Eagles, the Band and others) that were hits long before young men were even a twinkle in the eyes of their parents. It’s clear those par- ents themselves must have had some influence on their sons’ musical tastes - they’re often seen at their live shows proudly enjoy- ing the party.

Back in the Daze will soon be celebrating their 10th year together. The five musicians were all stu- dents at Laura Secord Sec- ondary School, meeting for the first time in Grade 9. “We were lucky to go to a music-focused high school,” says Robinson. “We just sort of synergis- tically came together and started in Cole’s basement after school one day.” They performed together at two school events that year, and never looked back.

The Nov. 28 livestream gives them a chance to con- nect once again with their fans, albeit in an online format. “It’s great to be able to provide a little levity and fun into a weekend night,” Robinson says. “It’s so dif- ferent from what we’re used to, and what we’ve been doing for the last 10 years. But it’s nice to bring some joy into people’s lives and into their homes.”

They promise they will follow the conversation during the show and will take requests via the live chat. The livestream begins at 8 p.m. Saturday. Visit the Daze’s Facebook page to tune in.

Joel, Scott, Billy, Jesse and Cole are happy to be performing again, if only online. (Andrew McBride)
Things to remember when purchasing jewellery and antiques

Forum is a Niagara-on-the-Lake treasure box for antiques, with a spectacular selection of rare and beautiful items, with a permanent store in Belgium and wholesale in many other countries. We have a different supply source and a better understanding of the value of art, jewelry, and collectibles. Celebrating 20 years in NOTL, first at the “Red Barn” (now Oast) and presently in Virgil. Forum is the number one destination to sell and buy always-changing rare treasures.

Forum Antiques

Advice from Leon at Forum Antiques:

• Whatever you buy is for your pleasure and not an investment.
• You do buy at retail value and sell at half the wholesale price.
• Everything is subject to change in fashion and lifestyle. Items out of demand: use, give or store them.
• Before you sell one item or an entire estate, ask me. Only when you are well informed do you make proper decisions. When selling or buying, ask for our offer and compare.
• Friends and Family do recommend Forum and Leon for expertise, advice, and fair dealings.
• Forum jewels and collectibles are your “secret” source for Christmas presents.

Leon Perel - expert and certified appraiser CPPA

“Before you sell, one item or an entire estate, ask me! Only when you are well-informed do you make proper decisions.

Ask for our offer and compare!”

FORUM ANTIQUES

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The finest selection of antiques and collectables in the Niagara Region.

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Give the gift of safety

Submitted by Aapex Driving Academy

Let us be a part of the solution! During the COVID-19 pandemic, AAPEX Driving Academy has been instrumental in helping to protect and assist our communities. Giving your loved ones the gift of driving gives them access to safe, independent mobility and access to economic opportunities as many of our students are eagerly seeking employment.

Our students feel a sense of independence and control as it is not safe for them to rely solely on public transit or parents/friends for all their transportation needs. Allow us to teach them to drive safely, defensively and confidently using our LOOK. PREDICT. PREVENT. program improving their skills in four key ways: Hazard Recognition, Vehicle Handling, Space Management and Speed Management.

Gifting the gift of safety has never been easier - choose any denomination and they decide how to spend it! Call us at 1-800-463-1436 for details. Safety has always been our utmost importance - now more than ever, so we are offering limited seating for in-person programs, as well as online training for those wanting to learn from home. Both programs offer 20 hours of class lessons, ten hours of homelinks and ten hours of in-car driving.

We all know that the Grinch tried to stop Christmas in Whoville. And in 1918 during the Spanish flu pandemic, Robert Borden’s Unionist government postponed Thanksgiving and considered doing the unthinkable for Christmas. Now, in 2020, pandemic or not, our community is determined to keep Christmas alive. And to encourage the holiday spirit, the Niagara-on-the-Lake Museum’s gift shop is offering a unique array of gifts to purchase in person or online. Not only can you buy Christmas ornaments and timeless children’s toys, but you can also find a classic assortment of collectibles for the home and garden, for the historian, and even the student. Plus, the Museum’s retail book collection includes a comprehensive library of local and Canadian history, fiction and non-fiction, as well as children’s books.

But don’t miss your chance, the Museum is closed December 18th to January 1st for the holidays. The NOTL Museum is a small museum, with a massive heart. The collection numbers more than 50 thousand items, artefacts, documents, photographs and paintings. And as much as they welcome the researchers, history scholars and heritage fans, the Museum also values casual visitors, strollers, and passerby.

So as you make your Christmas plans to stay, zoom, or share a heated patio, take a look at the Museum’s gift shop, in person or virtually, and don’t let anyone tell you that Christmas is being postponed, just because Santa has the flu.

Find some unique gifts at the Niagara-on-the-Lake Museum.
As Sharry Flett and Anthony Bekenn look forward to their participation in the Foster Festival’s virtual production of The Christmas Tree, a holiday favorite, the couple say they feel fortunate to be part of the program, but feel fortunate at the rare opportunity to perform during a pandemic.

Like so much else about life during COVID, last year's production had to quickly pivot from planned performances before live audiences, paired with a meal at a local restaurant, to virtual readings, but they have found a way to make the most of it.

Artistic producer Emily Oriold says they initially felt comfortable calling on actors such as Flett and Bekenn, knowing they would be safe working together.

The couple decided to put down roots in Niagara-on-the-Lake about 30 years ago, buying their Chautauqua community, where they raised their daughter Michaela and enjoyed regular work with the Shaw Festival Theatre. They are now at a stage of their lives where they can balance aging while still working, says Flett.

But as actors, working during a pandemic has been a challenge. They want to keep doing what they love, but finding proper venues is difficult, with so much shutting down because of COVID-19.

"We live in this beautiful town, and have the most enjoyable lifestyle," says Bekenn, also agreeing they are fortunate to be going through the pandemic at this stage of their lives, as opposed to the young people just graduating from theatre schools, one moment "laughing and carefree, bursting with energy, enthusiasm and optimism," says Flett, but now wondering if they will have a future.

"I fear for them," she says. "I fear for the theatre."}

Anthony Bekenn and Sharry Flett are one of several NOTL acting couples to take part in readings of a Foster Festival Christmas play. (Photo supplied)
Local Staff

Local Canada Post employees are hoping young-sters will send their letters to Santa by dropping them off at their nearest post office.

In past years, they’ve collected letters during the Christmas Parade, but this year, without the parade, they’re encouraging kids to write letters and drop them in a mailbox.

Letters have already arrived at the post office and are on their way to the North Pole, and postal elves are busy helping Santa with his mail.

The post office is encouraging kids to write their letters, including a return address, and mail them to the North Pole before Dec. 10, in time to be back from Santa.

Santa’s mailing address is: Santa Claus, North Pole, H0H 0H0, Canada.

There is also a special mailbox on Queen Street, outside the Court House by the entrance to the NOTL Chamber of Commerce office.

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 Astro-tv, we get the entire month of November.

Saturday, Nov. 28: Big news today as Neptune turns direct after being retrograde since June. This is especially sig-nificant, as Neptune is in her home sign of Pisces and will now fulfill all those dreams and future wishes that seem to have been permanently on hold. Jon Stewart, host of The Daily Show, was born in New York City on Nov. 28, 1962. He took over the show from 1999 until 2017 when he handed the mike to Trevor Noah. He still appears, from time to time, but on Late Night with Stephen Colbert.

Monday, Nov. 30: Today is a full Moon with an Appulse Eclipse, meaning no one on Earth will see it because the Moon passes only through the Earth’s umbra. In non-science words, it’s that the Earth and the Moon, are in the same place, and the Moon is too far away on this occasion to be darkened by the Earth. Many may feel they have been short-changed today. Let it go. Today is the 165th birthday of Samuel Clemens, or Mark Twain. He was famous first as a Mis-sissippi riverboat captain, then as a travel writer, and finally as novelist and satirist with Tom Sawyer and Huckleberry Finn.

Sprucing up Queen Street

Town staff were on Queen Street this week, adding garland to the light standard. (Photo supplied)

What: Open House – Review of DRAFT Short-Term Rental Licensing By-law
When: Tuesday, December 1, 2020 at 6:00 p.m.
Where: This Electronic Open House will be recorded and will be available for viewing at the following link: livestream.com/notl

Regarding: DRAFT Amendments to the Licensing By-law to regulate Short-Term Rentals

What is this?

Council has directed Staff to form a working group to review recommended actions proposed by the Town’s Glendale Task Force and report back to Council. The working group has now prepared proposed amendments to the Short-Term Rental Licensing By-law and changes to the administration of the program. Prior to reporting these changes to Council, staff are interested in hearing from the public in regards to these changes and hope to address any concerns in a future staff report.

You are invited to attend this meeting to gather information and provide input regarding this matter. You can do so by speaking at this meeting (instructions noted below) or via a written submission to the Clerk of the Town of Niagara-on-the-Lake.

All correspondence must be received before December 7, 2020 and be addressed to Peter Todd – Town Clerk, 1593 Four Mile Creek Road, P.O. Box 100, Virgil, ON LOS 1T0, or via email at peter.todd@notl.com.

Regardless of whether you choose to participate by participating in this meeting in person or through the electronic medium, you are invited to attend this meeting to gather information and provide input regarding this matter. You can do so by participating in this meeting (instructions noted below) or via a written submission to the Clerk of the Town of Niagara-on-the-Lake.

Dialogue is encouraged:

Niagara-on-the-Lake Town Hall is closed to the public due to the COVID-19 emergency and in-person meetings have been cancelled. As permitted under Provincial legislation and the Town’s Procedural By-law, Council and Committee meetings are being conducted electronically during the declared state of emergency.

If you wish to participate and/or make an oral presentation or ask questions at this Electronic Open House, you must register in advance with:

Peter Todd
peter.todd@notl.com or 905-468-3061, ext. 228
(register as soon as possible but prior to 12 noon on December 1, 2020)

For more information:

For more information regarding this matter, please contact Peter Todd – Town Clerk, at peter.todd@notl.com, or 905-468-3266, ext. 228.

A copy of the supporting documents pertaining to this proposal may be obtained via the Town’s web-site:

https://www.jointheconversationnotl.org/str-licensing-update
Jazz Festival’s Home for the Holidays sing-along
Event a fundraiser for Anita’s Project

Mike Balsom
Special to The Local

The TD Niagara Jazz Festival wraps up its 2020 season next week with its first virtual sing-along fundraiser.

Filmed partially in the beautiful Ridley College chapel in St. Catharines, Home for the Holidays promises surprise celebrity cameos, performances from Ridley College students, Blandell’s School in the U.K., and Evan Lewis Definiti, one of the festival’s JAZZ 4 the AGES youth competition winners.

Festival co-creators Julie Dunn and Peter Shea will host the event, which is a fundraiser for the festival itself and the United Way’s Anita Project. Ridley grads Andrew McPherson and Jane Lewis will act as co-hosts as well.

Speaking from his home in Guelph, McPherson, originally from St. Catharines, says he was thrilled to visit his alma mater with Lewis, his next door neighbour and frequent collaborator, and with whom he shares a unique connection.

“Jane lives right beside me,” McPherson says. “And believe it or not, when I was at Ridley, her mom was the housemaster of the girls’ house there. When I was in Grade 13, a bunch of us gathered and led a march through the girls’ house at about 7 a.m., singing and in our housecoats. She gave me a pretty stern look that day!”

You might not recognize McPherson, but chances are you have heard him countless times. An in-demand voice actor for more than 35 years, he is currently the network announcer for HGTV and Discovery Channel. In addition, his smooth baritone has been heard on commercials for Lipton, BM3, TD Canada Trust, Toyota, Labatt’s and Kraft Foods, among many others.

He’s also an accomplished producer and musician with two Juno Award nominations under his own name, and has collaborated with the likes of Kevin Breit, Jane Siberry, Kiran Ahluwalia, Philosopher Kings, and Stephen Fearing. Recently, his instrumental side project, Peppermoth, has been consuming much of his time.

Lewis, meanwhile, is also a busy musician. As one half of folk duo Gathering Sparks, she was nominated for Vocal Group of the Year at the 2014 Canadian Folk Music Awards. When not performing, she can be found leading vocal workshops, singing back-up vocals for other artists, or running women’s music weekend retreats. She and McPherson are part of a bustling Guelph arts community that has been hit hard by COVID-19.

Besides helping to host the sing-along, McPherson and Lewis will also be performing. They got together at his backyard Monastery studio, where they recorded Bringing in the Light, an original Lewis composition. Even though, as next door neighbours they are in the same bubble, they made every effort to do things the right way. “We did it distanced, with baffles between us,” he explains. “We walked the walk. This could be seriously contentious if we were just singing into microphones across the room.”

McPherson will also be reading Twas the Night Before Christmas, bits of which will be interspersed throughout the program.

The idea for the sing-along, says Dunn, came about as a way to honour Joe and Anita Robertson. The late Niagara-on-the-Lake residents and philanthropists, along with their 24-year-old daughter Laura, were tragically killed in a plane crash in July, 2018.

The connection between Shea and Robertson goes back many years, to when Shea was just a toddler and the two families had cottages near each other. More recently, Joe had become a piano and vocal student, taking lessons from Shea once a week, beginning in 2010.

Joe was the original chair of the TD Niagara Jazz Festival, and he and Anita were huge supporters. In fact, it was through Joe’s connections that the TD sponsorship came about. Dunn says Joe offered to take on the role of chair when the festival was just getting off the ground in 2013, and he encouraged her to become the executive director.

“They are beautifully woven into the threads of the Jazz Festival,” says Dunn. “Sing-alongs were a long-loved tradition in the Robertson household.”

The last time Dunn saw the Robertson’s was at a VIP event held at White Oaks in early 2018. “Their celebration of life later that year was a very, very hard day for us,” she says. “We performed there. They actually had a sing-along at that. They found in his papers some lyrics that he had written, probably for his planned 60th birthday. They all got up and sang them.”

Home for the Holidays is free to watch, via the TD Niagara Jazz Festival’s Facebook page and YouTube channel, though donations are being accepted through the festival’s website. Funds raised will benefit both the jazz festival and the United Way’s Anita Project, which packs and distributes hygiene kits to several agencies in the Niagara region, including Gillian’s Place, the YMCA, and Community Care. It was a project near and dear to Anita’s heart.

Home for the Holidays begins at 4 p.m. on Dec. 6.

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December 3 & 10

Booking Deadlines:
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We will match your minimum quarter page ad size with equal space for your submitted story about your product or service.

The Niagara-on-the-Lake LOCAL
The trusted voice of our community.

NOTL businesses contact
Karen at 905-641-5335
or karen@notllocal.com

Businesses outside NOTL contact
Julia at 905-934-1040
or julia@notllocal.com

Andrew McPherson and Jane Lewis host and perform for the sing-along, filmed at the Ridley College chapel. (April Mitchell Boudreau)

November 28, 2020
Printmaking and other activities at the Pumphouse

Kim Wade
Special to The Local

“This course is for anyone who has even an inkling of interest in printmaking,” said Deedee Alexandre, one of the participants in this weekend’s Linocut Printmaking Workshop at the Niagara Pumphouse Arts Centre.

The two-day introductory workshop taught the basics of linocut printmaking technique, as learners printed their own holiday cards. Over the weekend the four students learned how to transfer an image to a plate, handle linocut tools, ink the plate with a brayer and correct hand printing technique.

One-of-a-kind gifts at Artful Treasures

Local Staff

The Niagara Pumphouse Arts Centre is presenting Artful Treasures 2020, a holiday art show and sale featuring hand-crafted objects and gifts from artists in the Niagara Region and beyond.

Jewelry, handbags and textiles, and clothing join the more traditional items, including paintings, photography, sculpture and pottery for the holiday sale.

The online art show and gift sale will run until Dec. 6, with a special live show on Dec. 4, 5, and 6. During the live show some of the artists will be attending the event at the newly renovated Pumphouse. The centre underwent a major renovation earlier this year that included improving accessibility to the facility, as well as the installation of a new HVAC system. This project was funded mainly by the $143,500 grant received by the arts centre from the Ontario Trillium Foundation.

“I could not be happier to see provincial dollars supporting our arts programming at the Niagara Pumphouse Arts Centre,” said Wayne Gates, MPP for Niagara Falls riding, which includes Niagara-on-the-Lake.

“The arts centre is the crown in the crown of Niagara’s art scene, and seeing the works of its members there is an amazing experience for any visitor who has ever gone there. I am so happy to see that during these tough times they have found a way to continue to showcase art in our community and allow the public to check in with the online event between the 20th and the 26th, and I hope everyone in the community will join me in supporting the Pumphouse as well.”

Admission for the live show is $5. Ticket holders will get a chance to win the door prize donated by local merchants and artisans. The Twas the Night Before Christmas themed gift basket is valued at more than $300. There are a limited number of spots available, and masks are mandatory. Volunteers will be conducting health screens as per provincial guidelines. To reserve a spot, contact the Pumphouse at 905-468-5455 or follow the link on the webpage niagarapumphouse.ca/artful-treasures-2020-online-show.

Also for sale at the arts centre are candles for the 2020 Candlelight Stroll taking place on Dec. 4 & 7 p.m. Presented by the NOTL Chamber of Commerce and featuring craft vendors, this year’s stroll will be held virtually. Residents are encouraged to keep the spirit of the Candlelight Stroll alive by tuning into your TV or looking at the opening ceremony, light your candles and sing along with the seasonal cards in front of your home.

The candles are on sale for $3 and proceeds will be split between Temporary Seasonal Agricultural Worker Health Program and Migrant Workers Welcome Packages charities. In addition to the Pumphouse Arts Centre, the candles can also be found at Greaves Jams & Marmalades, the NOTL Public Library, and Colaneri Estate Winery.

One of a kind ornaments can be found at the Pumphouse this weekend.

Christmas decorations made by local artists will be for sale at the Artful Treasures event at the Pumphouse. (Photo by Kim Wade)

Deedee Alexandre, participating in the Linocut Printmaking session at the Niagara Pumphouse Arts Centre, makes her holiday cards. (Kim Wade)
Learning about wine, and an industry pioneer

Kim Wade
Special to The Local

I have been writing for The Local newspaper a little over a year now. I mostly cover events and write about the people of Niagara-on-the-Lake.

I have the pleasure of attending a lot of the fun stuff that happens in town, whether it be historical, cultural, or even sometimes paranormal, although at this time, in the middle of a pandemic, there isn’t as much to cover. I have, however, had the pleasure of visiting many of the wineries in the area. These visits have renewed my interest in wine.

That led me to a course featuring Ontario wines and wine production, and of course before long, I began looking at this project as a reporter.

It also had me reminiscing about a man I met many years ago, when he offered me a pair of his pants.

“Your dad is offering me his pants,” the teenaged me whispered with slight despera-
tion to my friend, Max Kaiser. "What?" he replied. "Why?"

“I split my pants playing volleyball, and your dad is try-
ing to help by offering to help a part of his pants. Can you please get me something from one of your sisters?”

Off we went to the laundry room to find something more suitable, and I changed into a pair of Magda’s sweat-
pants (Sorry Magda if you are just finding out about this now). I showed Max’s dad that Max had found me a pair of pants, thanked him and went back to playing volleyball in the Kai-
ers’ backyard. That was the first conversation I remember having with Karl Kaiser.

So it seems fitting that the Ontario Wine Certificate course I recently completed was through the Continuing Edu-
cation department of the Cool Climate Oenology and Viticul-
ture Institute at Brock University, which he helped to create.

I wanted to learn more about Ontario wine, but I re-
alized that was not the full an-
swer to the question of why I decided to take the course.

As a kid, growing up in this area, I could count the months, from spring to summer to au-
tumn, depending on which fruit was in season. I could count those same months by how the grapes on the vines looked, and knew that harvest time also meant Grape and Wine parade time. I remember sneaking sweet and bubbly sips of Baby Duck sparkling wine at my parents’ cocktail parties. They enjoyed wine with dinner, and my room enjoyed a little smidgen of port in the evening.

My sister and I would even be given a little wine with our din-
er on special occasions.

In my last year of high school I came to Niagara Dis-
tric School (NDS) in Virgil, the year it became the School of Performing Arts. Ap-
parently I had a bit of a reputa-
tion for being a drama queen, and was invited to attend. So I transferred from my St. Cath-
arians high school, taking the bus every day from the north end of the city to Virgil.

When I arrived at NDS, I met a couple of girls also from St. Catharines, who shared the same drama queen status. The three of us found it difficult to make friends at our new school. The kids at NDS had known each other since Kindergarten and were shy of “city” people, but slowly, we started to get to know the other students.

Among my new friends was this kid named Max, a cute guy with dark curly hair and a gen-
tle demeanor.

At some point I found out that Max’s dad made wine. At first that didn’t mean much to me, as my parents had friends who made wine too, albeit mostly in their basements. Eventually, I learned that Max’s dad was the co-founder and winemaker for Inniskillin Wines, and Max was a good friend to have when we went to parties with a couple cases of wine in his trunk.

On occasion, I hung out at the Kaiser household, enjoying the family hospitality: good times and food, including the best bratwurst I have ever tasted.

In January, 1988, when Max Kaiser asked me to go pick grapes in -10 degrees Cel-
sius, you think I would have jumped at the chance to be part of the historic effort to produce icewine in the Niagara Region? Right! I didn’t. I was an 18-year-old who thought she would have a hard time convincing her parents she was going to stay out all night in a vineyard with a bunch of teenaged boys and pick grapes in the cold. And it was really, really cold.

I should have gone to pick the grapes. I regret not being part of that, but teenaged me did not understand the sig-
nificance of the initial efforts these wine-producing pioneers would have on the Ontario and Canadian wine industry.

My upbringing in the Ni-
agara Region, and my intro-
duction to Max and his family, however, has led me to be a proud supporter of the wine produced in this region. As an adult, I have always enjoyed Ontario wines, deviating little from the Niagara Region, but not fully understanding what makes our area, this region and the province so special. Until I took this introductory course into wine and the wine indus-
try in Ontario. My instructor was Mark Pastor, a winemaker who holds an honours degree in Oenology and Viticulture from Brock University. He has also worked as a winemaker for Ontario wineries, including

Dark Horse Estate Winery in Grand Bend and Alvento in Vineland Station.

Highlights from the course included a brief history of On-
ario wine, the wine appella-
tions of Ontario, winemaking, choosing a wine and of course, tasting and food pairings. We learned about the appellations and sub-appellations of regional Ontario wines, about the Vintner’s Quality Ali-
ciance (VQA), its inception and mandate. We learned about the vineyard, including the vines, the soil, the climate and the grape varieties. Pastor then covered winemaking from harvest to bottle. One of my favourite lessons, and one of the most daunting, was tasting. I am still working on develop-
ing my palate. Lastly, Pastor of-
ered practical tips on different types of wine styles and how to choose them. The final lesson and major project was on wine and food matching.

Karl Kaiser’s influence was felt throughout the course. We learned of just a few of his major achievements, starting with Dark Horse Estate Winery in Grand Bend and Alvento in Vineland Station.

Vineland Station.

In, and a better understanding of the pioneers of the local wine industry; including Karl Kaiser and what his efforts have accomplished here in the region and in Ontario.

I had a chance to brieﬂy chat with Max recently. He re-
ninded me that this past Sun-
day marked the third anniver-

When I reminded Max of the story of splitting my pants in his backyard, he laughed and said, “that sounds like him. My dad would have given someone the shirt off his back, or I guess, even his pants.”

Thanks again Dr. Kaiser. I may have declined to wear your pants, but through this introduc-
tory course, and as I continue my wine education, I have come to know you better, and appreciate your many achievements.
Eden student heading to NY to play soccer, study orthodontics

Mike Balsom
Special to The Local

When 17-year-old Demi Maroudas set her mind to something, chances are she will accomplish it.

That means within about 12 years she’ll be fitting you, your children or your grandchildren with braces.

The Grade 12 Eden High School student’s journey to becoming an orthodontist begins next September, when she starts as a freshman at Colgate University in Hamilton, New York. And it’s her prowess on a soccer pitch that has earned her a spot as a first-year science student there.

Earlier this month, Maroudas signed a letter of intent to play NCAA Division I women’s soccer for the Raiders in the Patriot League, where Colgate goes for its third straight Patriot League championship. A Midfielder, where Colgate goes for its third straight Patriot League championship, Maroudas is still arranged to train with a number of other schools.

At the time for her to leave NOTL, “I had always taken soccer seriously,” says the future biology major. “I had gone to the field almost every day with my dad. I kind of started thinking more about the future and what I could do with it. It was always a dream of mine to go play Division I soccer.”

After reaching the highest level of competition in Ontario with the NOTL Rangers, a number of the girls on her team were making the jump to play for the Western New York Flash, based in Elmira, New York, in 2017. Demi and her parents, Andy and Dora, made the decision at that time for her to leave the NOTL Soccer Club.

“I knew that playing in the ECNL (Elite Clubs National League), which is one of the leagues the Flash plays in, would really be beneficial to me,” explains Maroudas.

“It’s such a competitive league. I believe it’s one of the best ways to get noticed by college coaches. That’s one of the reasons I decided to go on there.”

As a striker, Maroudas is my favourite soccer position,” she says. “It’s so fun. It's of our time to keep the moves on the field, maybe some things you wouldn’t normally do, and it helps to build your confidence. It's a really good way to build confidence on the ball.

Besides Colgate, Maroudas had applied and spoken to a number of other schools. Every methodical, she narrowed down her choices and made a list of what she wanted out of a university. Dartmouth College, the University of Pennsylvania and American University in Washington all made her finalist list. But Colgate won out for a number of reasons.

“It’s fairly close to home, only four hours away. And it’s very similar to Niagara-on-the-Lake,” she explains. “They have a great sports program, and a competitively new coaching staff all coming from successful programs themselves, and it’s an academic school as well.”

Though unable to cross the border since March, Maroudas has still arranged to train with some of her Flash teammates, who are also Canadian. Over the summer she was training with her teammates in Welland. She also had some private sessions with a local elite coach and she works out every second day to keep her skills and athleticism sharp.

As a striker, Maroudas is cognizant of her skills on the field. “I would say my speed, I think I’m really good on the ball, I can take people on. I would say I’m really attacking-oriented, but at the same time I know when to stop and play out of the back and to connect with people.”

And she’s ready to work wherever her Raiders coach and career begins at a university that shares a name with a top-selling brand of toothpaste (Madison University was renamed Colgate in 1890 to honour the ongoing financial support of the family who started the company). But Maroudas knows that she’s on the right track to realizing her ultimate dream.
Royal Oak students have fun while learning outside

November 26-29 @ 11 a.m. - 4 p.m.
If you are looking to start your artistic journey, Niagara Pumphouse is presenting a video series of helpful tips for novices to the art world that cover a variety of topics both informative and practical. To view these videos, please donate to the Niagara Pumphouse Arts Centre to benefit our programs and initiatives. A suggested amount of $10.00 per video is greatly appreciated. But if you are interested in the entire series, a $50.00 donation is requested. A password to watch the video will be emailed to you after a donation is received. Your contribution supports the Niagara Pumphouse mission and provides opportunities for future programming. We appreciate your continued support and look forward to making it through this difficult time together! Please visit: https://niagarapumphouse.ca/events for more details.

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November 26, 2020