Small Candlelight Stroll ceremony held Wednesday
Public lit candles Friday

Mike Balsom
Special to The Local

Despite the move to a virtual candlelight stroll last Friday, Jan Ellis and her King Street neighbours weren’t about to let the yearly tradition pass without gathering and singing carols.

When Ellis heard of the cancellation of the popular holiday event for the first time in its 31-year history, she quickly purchased 30 candles and got the word out to her friends in the Kingsview Estates neighbourhood. Quickly, all 30 candles were spoken for, and plans were put in place to gather together and hold their own stroll.

Just before 6 p.m. Friday is when the action started. The doorbell rang at her home, as the first of her friends came calling.

Jan donned her winter gear and grabbed her candle. As the pair stepped outside, their candles were lit, and their march through the subdivision began.

Like a snowball rolling downhill, the group got larger as they passed the other homes. Porch lights came on, garage doors opened, candles were lit, Christmas greetings were exchanged and the stroll around the island continued.

After two loops around the circle, the group of just over 20 gathered for a photo.

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Penny Coles
The Local

When Coun. Sandra O’Connor decided to introduce a motion to council regarding 5G technology three weeks ago, she didn’t expect it to be controversial.

She certainly didn’t think Coun. Wendy Cheropita, who introduced the context for the motion, would be the subject of a public attack in the media.

When a discussion, and a vote on O’Connor’s motion, which was simply to endorse the motion from the City of Niagara Falls, which was included in the Nov. 19 information package before council.

Niagara Falls councillors voted recently to ask their city staff to reach out to other municipalities that have introduced 5G, and report back with information about the new technology.

The Niagara-on-the-Lake vote was tied amongst councillors, Lord Mayor Betty Disero breaking the tie with a vote against it.

The Niagara Falls motion had passed with only one dissenting vote, and also endorsed inviting a Health Canada representative to come to the municipality to discuss the fifth generation of wireless communications.

Health Canada has approved 5G service. O’Connor says she and Cheropita had both been approached by NOTL residents who said they are concerned about the technology, and had decided to bring that concern to council.

“The Niagara Falls motion was in the information report. It seemed a good opportunity for us to look at the 5G issue, in light of the Niagara Falls request. It was asking Niagara municipalities to have the same consultation on the placement of 5G, which is a much smaller antenna, and can be placed on a telephone pole, or a building. It doesn’t need a big tower, so let’s talk about where it will be placed.”

Cheropita introduced the issue as a lead-up to the motion, says O’Connor. “We just wanted to address residents’ concerns. Wendy paved the way with the context of this motion. She was pointing the picture of how we could move forward. I didn’t expect it to be controversial, and I don’t know why Wendy got so much flak for it,” she says.

“It was no big deal. The motion was defeated. That’s democracy, and now we move on.”

The criticism of Cheropita in the media over buying into debunked conspiracy theories, like 5G causing COVID. That’s not what this was.

The personal attack on Cheropita, she says, is the

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Stroll recorded Wednesday, for Friday viewing

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tograph under the street-light. Then, full of Christmas spirit, they headed back off into the winter evening, singing We Wish You a Merry Christmas joyfully.

The Kingsview Estates group was just one of many through the town to take things into their own hands after the stroll was cancelled.

On Wednesday evening last week, Lord Mayor Betty Dierro, NOTL Chamber of Commerce president Eduardo Lafforgue and Chamber vice-chair Andrew Niven gathered on the steps of the Court House to record their speeches for the Virtual Candlelight Stroll.

Lafforgue told The Local that when it was announced that there would be a recorded opening ceremony to air on Cogeco YourTV Niagara at 7 p.m. Friday, there was some confusion about the timing of the recording. The music had already been recorded, and the speeches were originally to take place for the cameras Friday.

However, a large number of calls and emails to the Chamber made it clear that many interpreted that to mean the entire program would take place live at that time, drawing crowds to the Court House to watch. This, in spite of the article in last week’s Local, when Lafforgue was quoted as saying “We really don’t want people congregating there.”

“We had various emails that were accusing us of creating an ‘authorized focus of infection,’ said Lafforgue. “We thought that the best thing was pre-recording even the speeches, and not only the carollers and the carriage ride.”

Lafforgue contacted Niven and Dierro, as well as Jack Custers from YourTV Niagara, and the speeches were completed on the steps two days prior to the event. A drive through Queen Street at 7 p.m. Friday night confirmed that the plan worked, as there was no evidence of a gathering crowd.

Also present Wednesday evening for the opening speeches and the lighting of the candles were two representatives from Quest Community Health Centre. Executive director Nancy Garner and community health worker Moises Vasquez were on hand to light the first candles as Quest’s Seasonal Farm Workers Health Program is one of the recipients of the proceeds of this year’s candle sales.

In his opening speech, Lafforgue pointed to the challenges faced by Quest this year to continue offering health care and guidance to farmworkers. “Their health professionals were able to provide care virtually through digital platforms,” he explained. “There was also a significant increase in required mental health support this year.”

He continued, “Seasonal agricultural workers in Niagara are essential workers. They deserve the same respect and service as any citizen, including access to quality health care. They are our neighbours.”

Another $1,000 is being donated to the farmworkers’ Christmas gift program to help purchase welcome kits and reflective vests for offshore workers.

As of press time, candle sales, at $3 each, were sitting at around $4,000. Lafforgue said that is “much less than last year,” but it’s understandable. “Last year we got a lot of American money, and we had many tourists,” he explained. “There is also a donors’ fatigue. They have been so solicited so many times this year by so many different causes. We are still proud of what we (the community) accomplished and the money will be in the charities hands by the end of the week.”

The chamber also held its annual food drive in association with the stroll, and donations were dropped off at Newark Neighbours Monday.

The Candlelight Stroll ceremony can still be viewed on YourTV Niagara at 7 p.m. Friday night under the street-light. Then, full of Christmas spirit, they headed back off into the winter evening, singing We Wish You a Merry Christmas joyfully.

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COVID case numbers in Niagara up and down
Downward trend needed to consider lifting restrictions, says medical officer of health

Penny Coles
The Local

The Niagara Region saw a bit of a spike in COVID cases on the weekend, but the numbers coming down early in the week, says Dr. Mustafa Hirji, Niagara Region’s acting medical officer of health.

That’s not enough to draw conclusions, he says, noting that while the number of cases was high two weekdays ago, it was followed by lower numbers in the following weekend.

“Individual numbers tend to jump up and down,” he says. Over the course of a few days, he said Monday, “it’s not so bad.”

Niagara saw 26 new cases Saturday, 38 Sunday, 20 on Monday, and a jump to 34 new cases Monday.

It was Nov. 14 when he instituted Section 22 restrictions, which included the controversial one-person-per-table at eating and drinking establishments, and while he says he isn’t seeing cases originating in those venues, he still isn’t ready to consider rescinding them.

“Our numbers are not going up very much, and that’s good, and quite different from our neighbours in the Hamilton, Halton and across the border.”

With evidence that bar and restaurant restrictions are working, “I wouldn’t want to change them. We’re not seeing links to restaurants any more. We seem to have been able to sort them, so the restrictions had the intended effect. I think we would want to see case numbers come down with a margin of safety first.”

He said with Niagara in the middle of the orange zone still, “there’s not enough of a buffer to take them away.”

He’s mindful of the holidays coming up, but any decisions will continue to be based on the number of COVID cases in the region.

“I would love to give people an early Christmas present and lift these restrictions, but ultimately the best decisions are based on what is best for the community.”

There have been a few ongoing outbreaks, with new cases linked to households where cases are spreading from one family member to another, and socializing with friends and co-workers.

There are also “a few more cases of community spread” where the origin is unknown, he says, including one of the new cases in Niagara-on-the-Lake, which is now recording a total case count of 63 from the start of the pandemic until today.

The other new NOTL case is from someone in close contact with family members. One of those was in the 40 to 60 age group, the other in the 60 to 80 category.

Across the region, the 20-something age group is still representing the highest number of cases, although with a shift downward, while the 40 to 60 group is moving upwards, he says.

“We’re not sure of why yet.”

He said he hopes the restrictions targeted at the younger group members are working, but has no explanation about why there is a trend upward in the older groups.

Dr. Mustafa Hirji

5G ‘not a municipal matter’

Continued from page 1

type of journalism that adds to the erosion of trust of the media.”

Cheropita says there have been “insulting, angry, vile emails” sent to the Town, from people who believe she is spreading conspiracy theories against 5G technology, while she has received more than 30 letters of support from residents.

When she spoke at council three weeks ago, she says she wasn’t “taking a position” for or against the new technology, but was simply laying out a reason for the municipality to look into it, as Niagara Falls is.

She believes she was taking a “responsible approach” to representing residents’ concerns.

While she acknowledges there are scientists who think 5G is safe, there are also some who don’t.

“I was saying if there are health concerns, let’s ask council to do our due diligence. That was all we were trying to do,” says Cheropita.

Other councillors said they accepted the science that supports the safety of 5G technology, and that it is not a municipal issue to investigate.

The Town has already signed a deal with Telus for 5G services.

“Calling the council discussion ‘civil,’ Coun. Allan Busback says he voted against it because the technology is regulated by Health Canada, and is not within the municipality’s jurisdiction.

He was also concerned about giving staff more to do, when there are already many issues on their plate.

“I wasn’t trying to take a position contrary to Coun. Cheropita. I just didn’t think it was appropriate to send staff down this road.”

Busback said the discussion began as support for the Niagara Falls motion, “but it got off on a tangent. I’m not suggesting it’s not important, it’s just not something to ask staff to investigate. It’s not a municipal issue.”

However, he added, differing opinions is what council discussions are all about.

“We can agree to disagree.”

Cheropita says her intention was not to take a stand for or against the technology. “I was just representing constituents’ concerns. I ran for council with political idealism, wanting to make a difference, to do the right thing, to listen to people. When I do that, I’m doing my job.”

The personal attack on her in the media recently was “an example of why the public is losing trust in traditional media, why that trust is eroding.”

Cheropita says she supports honest, open dialogue, not journalism that creates anger, and causes divisiveness. “This is a small, unbelieveable community of wonderful people, who deserve to have their concerns represented.”

Residents from Creekside Senior Estates in St. Davids gathered with candles and lanterns Friday to stroll through their community of more than 130 homes. Santa led the way on an ATV with the lights all aglow, pulling a trailer behind, where folks along the route filled it with donations of food and cash for their charity of choice, Newark Neighbours. Those that could not join in the walk came out on their porches to listen to the holiday tunes, and the occasional Christmas Carol. (Photo supplied)
MPP still pushing Province to help local businesses

Penny Coles
The Local

MPP Wayne Gates says he is continuing to use every chance he gets to put pressure on the Province, hoping to have relief funds made available to local businesses.

The issue continues to be that with Niagara in the orange zone, it isn’t entitled to any part of the $600 million in provincial funding that restaurants and bars in red zones and lockdown are receiving, but with the added restrictions imposed by the Niagara Region acting medical officer of health, business operators are suffering just as much.

Gates says he has talked to the minister of finance, and to Conservative MPP Sam Oosterhoff, who represents the Niagara West riding.

“Businesses in his area also need help as well,” says Gates, but Oosterhoff pointed to federal financial relief programs that could help Niagara business owners, and said the provincial money Gates is trying to access is meant for regions in red and lockdown.

While Gates says he doesn’t begrudge those regions the help they need, “at no time should it be at the expense of our wineries, restaurants and other tourist operations in Niagara.”

He speaks to MPPs at Queens Park daily, taking every opportunity to highlight “the fair and reasonable request” for the Province to support Niagara, he says.

“I’m talking to as many people as I can, telling them we have a whole area begging us to be allowed to apply for that money!”

The solution is simple, says Gates.

He’s been told that when the language was put together for the bill that covers the $600 million in relief money, it was never anticipated that any region in Ontario would use the Section 22 that Dr. Mustafa Hirji has employed to layer his own local restrictions on top of provincial regulations.

The answer to the problem is to include language that allows for situations such as those in Niagara to be considered, and permit local businesses to apply for that funding, says Gates.

“I’m doing the best I can with the government, but I just don’t understand. They (Conservative MPPs) were in Niagara this weekend to give $12.8 million to the Niagara Parks Commission to keep their lights on, when we’re begging the Province to give us some money to save our businesses, so they can keep their lights on. Tourism recovery in Ontario will start in Niagara. Our businesses need help. I’m doing the best I can to put forward a fair and rational argument.”

Wayne Gates
Sarah Boshart and her family are celebrating their fourth Christmas in Virgil. Boshart loves to decorate for the holidays, and for their first Christmas at their Homestead Drive home, they put out 12 deer, in different sizes. “Last year they were down to four,” she says. “Someone keeps destroying our decorations, and they’re expensive. We’re really hoping it won’t happen again.”

For some reason, she thinks maybe because they’re on a corner lot, at Frontier Drive, every year they’ve been there, they’ve woken up Christmas morning to find their decorations trashed. One of those years, they were facing the holiday after suffering a family tragedy, she says. Last year, she was dealing with the death of her mother. “People just can’t know what anyone is going through when they do something like that.”

The couple has seven children, five adults and two younger ones at home, this year, aged eight and nine. “They love the decorations. They were devastated to wake up and see them destroyed.”

There have been two other homes with decorations also vandalized, she said. Last year, one of the houses along the street had its lights ripped off, and wound around the neck of a "magnificent, gold deer on our lawn. The deer was dragged to the neighbour’s house, and it was destroyed. I was crushed.”

She thinks, possibly, since it’s always Christmas Eve, that there is a home in the neighbourhood that has visitors each year, maybe teenagers who don’t have anything else to do, “playing a pretty silly game.”

“We love our home. We love this neighbourhood. The only problem we have is at Christmas,” she says. “Please stop this.”

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NEW TV STANDS IN STORE NOW
Local conservation efforts and environment under attack – again

Wayne Gates, MPP
MP for Niagara Falls Riding Coming to The Local

As much as Niagara-on-the-Lake's character comes from our historic features, I would argue that much comes from our natural features. This town, and our whole region for that matter, would cease to be the wonder we are without our food, our parks, our lush vineyards, our shores, our trails or our natural heritage features found throughout our town. That's what I think a meaningful life is. One loves not just one's self, but for one's community.

There are so many people in this community already doing just that. Thank you to all of you! I think a handmade craft created with love by someone else is a hundred times more interesting and meaningful than buying gift cards for a local business or restaurant — so many of them are struggling.

There is no doubt that living through a pandemic changes our focus, making us realize that loving each other, being kind, and finding ways to look after locals, are really what counts.

Super Court Justice Ruth Bader Ginsburg left behind a legacy that will last for generations to come. Her work ethic, intelligence, and determination will make an indelible mark in the history of the United States of America.

The Niagara North Family Health Team wishes to thank the community for their positive comments on our recent drive-thru flu vaccination clinics.

It was a new undertaking for us as organizers, and we couldn’t have been happier with the way everything came together to make it such a successful event.

We particularly wish to thank John and Anna Petz from Niagara Railways for the donation of the RV, which we used to keep our staff warm and our coffee hot for all five days of the event.

Your kind donation made our event a lot more comfortable.

We also wish to thank Phil Lebodzec from Peach’s va- hub for the donations of juice and water for our patients.

You were all amazing! Thank you!

The Niagara North Family Health Team Staff in Virgil

Make this holiday about doing something meaningful

Holidays should be joyful, but they can also be difficult, often due to loneliness, or for many, because of financial issues. Most of us like to think of the holidays as a time to show others how much we care about them, but traditionally that means shopping, buying gifts for family and friends that we hope they’ll like, and of course planning extravagant meals so we can all sit down together to celebrate.

However, that was pre-pandemic, when all we had to worry about was how much we were spending and if we’d forgotten anything.

This year is forcing us to think creatively, and to look at life differently. We’re being encouraged to stay away from stores, or if we shop, to be cautious. We’re looking for other ways to give gifts, maybe offering online through websites of our local businesses, using social media to ask for specific items, giving gift cards that can be used to support local businesses.

In fact, as of this writing, seven members of Ford’s Greenbelt Council have resigned in protest over Schedule 6, including its chairman and former PC MP David Capriles. We are writing record numbers of letters to the Premier’s office opposing this decision.

We’ve won three times before and will keep going until we win again. How hard is it for elected officials to understand that the same beautiful environment we inherited is the one we want to hand down to our grandchildren, regardless of how much money a developer would save?
I suspect it is a sign of the times that a rational, well-informed discussion around a particular topic cannot be asked for or held without partisanship. Such appears to be the case in response to Coun. Wendy Cheropita’s call for discussion on the topic of 5G. Dr. Miller, a former neighbour who specializes in cancer etiology, prevention, and screening, whose CV includes such positions as director of the epidemiology unit of the National Cancer Institute of Canada, chair of the department of preventive medicine and biostatistics at the University of Toronto, head of the division of cancer epidemiology at the German Cancer Research Centre, and consultant to the University of Toronto, head of the Centre for Health and the Environment Trust of the United Nations (UN), and consultant to the United Nations (UN) and, both at the United Nations (UN) and, all members of the State in the world, to encourage the World Health Organization (WHO) to exert strong leadership in fostering the development of more protective EMF guidelines, encouraging precautionary measures, and educating the public about health risks, particularly risk to children and fetal development. I could go on, but a reasonably thorough and systematic review of publications such as those by Miller and colleagues (electromagnetic Biology and Medicine, The Lancet Oncology, International Journal of Oncology, Environmental Health Trust (https://ehtrust.org), Bioinitiative, etc.) will result in many, many publications to review. Interestingly, WHO’s position on 5G as a Group 2B (possible carcinogen) remains without change since 2011. However, recently (due to their report associated with the World Cancer Research Fund), WHO has reviewed the scientific evidence available and found no new evidence of a causal link between exposure to 5G and cancer or any other adverse health effect. Although, there are many studies that have not found a causal link between exposure to 5G and cancer or any other adverse health effect, there are concerns about potential mechanisms that may increase the risk of cancer or other adverse health effects of 5G exposure. For example, 5G exposure may increase the risk of cancer or other adverse health effects by disrupting the natural rhythm of the body, as 5G frequencies are close to the natural frequencies of many biological processes, such as cell signaling and gene expression. As such, it is important to continue to monitor the health effects of 5G exposure and to develop further research to better understand the potential health effects of 5G.
Dead ash trees easy to see in winter

**Owen Bjorgan Special to The Local**

Ash trees have led to ecological, residential, and even political conversations in Niagara.

I've gotten good at identifying them by bark, even in the winter months. It's especially easy to spot a dead ash with so many of them hidden in plain sight. They are often standing around the maples and oaks. Their bark looks mottled and peels off with ease, sometimes in big sheets.

In the summer, it's harder to see their bare canopy and their destroyed imprints.

Halloween is over, but let's just say they stand as the dead among the living. Sounds creepy.

Our four native ash tree species in Niagara are hanging by a thread, as the invasive emerald ash borer has been targeting and cutting off the circulation of these trees. It does so by laying its eggs inside the bark. The eggs change into larvae, grubs which eat their way through the living wood. In doing so, with thousands of friends, they become fiends to ash trees.

Considering that the mortality rate for infested ash trees is nearly 100 per cent, there are massive implications for forest ecosystems when the ash trees start to drop, causing a loss of biomass in the forest.

Biomass is the amount of wood, or living material, a species represents in the forest, relative to other tree species. To imagine having a forest where half of the biomass is ash trees. There's a considerable loss to the area's structure and integrity when they die.

In comparison, it would be like removing half of the buildings on Queen Street, and the community finding ways to fill those voids again, which is exactly what the forest community wants to do, as well.

Ecosystems have a remarkable, slow motion skill to properly repopulate disturbed areas. More pollinator-friendly species will take hold in the newfound sunlight. Nearby, red maples will blow their helicopter seeds into an exposed patch of soil. Meanwhile, a tail-amanider sleeps under the log that fell last year, and the coyote stays sheltered in the heap of bony tree branches. There is still biodiversity to be considered in a landscape like NOTL, even if the forest is full of dead trees. That's because any habitat is better than none, considering our towns' severe lack of forest coverage.

If a solid amount of the forest's trees are dead, and the deceased happen to be ash trees, that doesn't give immediate permission to write the area off as insignificant. To an animal living in the forest, it would be like having the roof blown off of its house, but he's still able to make do, living in the basement. In this case, the is understory of grasses, young trees, and a labyrinth of logs from the fallen.

NOTL has seen ash trees, and woodlots containing high numbers of them, removed over the past few years. Around Virgil, Queenston, and the outskirts of downtown, we have seen woodland loss in the name of filling in our development boundary quanta. Forests which didn't score high enough on paper were dismissed as lacking in value. In all of these cases, many of these forests contained large numbers of dead ash trees. Essentially, we ended up removing the habitat corridors through which animals move unabated, and the hollow trees which provide for owls, raccoons, and rare bat species alike.

These wooden beams of complexity lie scattered across the forest floor when ash trees up to their fate. In ecosystems where ash trees are numerous and dense, you can tell when a heavy-duty wind storm has passed through recently. We're talking the kind NOTL receives only once or twice a year. Taking a hike near a local woodlot of the Niagara Escarpment shortly after the weather event will reveal several giants, freshly cracked and toppled over in the same direction. All lying there, like match sticks who struck a deal with the wrong insect. Upon investigation, 90 per cent of the trees are ash species.

To come full circle, even in the dead of winter, you can pick out some ash trees in most Niagara forests, considering that many will be snapped in half, blown over, or seemingly flattened to the earth. If you also make a closer investigation, you'll see the squiggly, uncommonly beautiful tracks of the grubs, who ate their way through the wood and caused this scene before you.

I hope to see a greater respect for our ash forests in the New Year, and give them time to recover and heal. They'll figure it out.

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Santa looking forward to visiting NOTL this weekend

**Penny Coles The Local**

Santa Claus hopes to see lots of boys and girls when he travels through the streets of Niagara-on-the-Lake Saturday. His plan is to start in Glen Dale around 9:30 a.m. Saturday, although if it's raining, it will be Sunday.

"I'm delighted to be coming to town this weekend. The planning and organizing has been really well done, to try to keep everyone safe. It's going to be a lot of fun," says Santa. Although it's a bit disappointing there couldn't be a parade, like other years, "I'm really looking forward to seeing the kids," he says.

He expects it could take as long as about six or seven hours to see everyone, much longer than a typical parade, but he's happy he will be getting to all the villages in town.

"It's going to be fun for me, and fun for everyone who comes out. I am very grateful to be part of this. Santa likes to see lots of happy faces, and all the parents and kids smiling and waving," he says. He's hoping parents will hold up name signs, to help him in case he forgets any of the names of the children who come out to see him, he says. It may also be hard to recognize them if they're wearing masks. "Santa has been making all kinds of preparations for this year. The elves are working very hard, preparing for the many visits around the world, and I know we'll get to all of them. I'm very confident when Christmas Day comes, we'll be delivering presents in all the homes in town and around the world, wearing all the COVID protective gear. And don't forget Santa's favourite cookies are chocolate chip, although I'll be happy with any cookies and milk!"

There is a map of Santa's route on https://notl.com/christmas.

After starting in Glen Dale, his sleigh will travel along Queenston Road to York Road into St. Davids, through a few neighborhoods in the village, before continuing along York Road to the village of Queenston, then back to Concession 2, up to East and West Line, along Niagara Street to the Old Town, to Chautauqua, Garrison Village, out Lakeshore Road to Four Mile Creek Road to Hunter Road, to Niagara Stone Road, back to East and West Line, and then on through a couple of Virgil neighborhood, ending around Concession 6 at Niagara Stone Road. To follow the route of Santa’s journey through NOTL, and the time he’ll reach each area, visit Town of Niagara-on-the-Lake Facebook page.
St. Davids organizes massive contribution to 3-in-1 drive

Penny Coles
The Local

With help from local businesses, a group of St. Davids families made a massive contribution to the Town’s 3-in-1 donation drive Saturday.

It was kind of a last-minute decision of three families who wanted to do something to contribute, says St. Davids resident Adriana Vizzari.

“We just wanted some small little way to help out at this time of year,” Vizzari says.

Vizzari and friends Ronaldo Clifton and Judith Atwood decided to organize a collection for the Town’s donation drive, and Shannon Passero of The Post Office, a boutique clothing store in Thorold, quickly jumped in and offered bags.

Advantage Restaurant Supply & Service, and Bloom & Co. also came onboard, donating bags, as did Sober’s when approached.

The women made up a flyer, asking for support in the way of food, warm clothing, and gifts, and took their kids through a few St. Davids neighbourhoods to drop it off, stashed to the empty bags.

They asked residents to fill the bags with donations, and said they’d be back to pick them up.

“Turn on your holiday lights, put out your decorations, play your holiday music, and we will merrily collect all donations to help St. Davids give back this holiday season,” the flyer said.

Vizzari says the St. Davids community never ceases to amaze her with the way it turns out to help, but this time, it exceeded even her expectations.

With 200 full bags to pick up, she enlisted her two brothers and their trucks to help.

“They were waiting for us, really happy to see us. And the kids worked so hard,” Vizzari says.

Christopher Bowron and Nicole Vanderpark helped when they got to the community centre, carrying the bags from the vehicles to the front door.

“They were happy to be part of this. They really stuck with it. I think this young generation is going to be one to give back. They’re more aware of what’s around them. Maybe it’s because of COVID. I just feel they’re going to do great things.”
Thinking of students in need at Christmas

Local Staff

Christmas is a joyous time of year for most, but with families facing financial hardship it can be anything but merry. It's hard to believe that every day in Niagara, one in five students goes to school hungry and waits in line to receive a breakfast. For lunch, some eat pasta scraps from the previous night's supper. In recent school years more than a million meals have been served annually in Niagara Catholic District School Board nutrition programs.

Other statistics reveal that 80 percent of classroom learning is done through the eyes, and that one child in four suffers from some kind of vision problem severe enough to impact learning. Many students do not have the financial resources to purchase eyeglasses. The Niagara Foundation for Catholic Education has developed a program called Vision Futures from some kind of vision problem severe enough to impact learning. Many students do not have the financial resources to purchase eyeglasses. The Niagara Foundation for Catholic Education has developed a program called Vision Futures.

Earlier this year, when COVID-19 forced school closures, the foundation stepped up to assist the Niagara Catholic District School Board by providing $10,000 in funding for wireless internet access that permitted students in need to learn from home. The foundation also provided further financial support to purchase grocery cards for families who required assistance.

Foundation executive director Jim Marino says we often associate poverty with developing countries, perhaps little realizing that poverty exists right here in Niagara. Even during “normal” times, the lack of nutrition and other essentials of daily life can be very worrisome for students in need, says Marino, “but this situation is now more compounded by the serious impact of COVID-19.”

He says offering as much assistance as possible to students in need, especially at these more difficult times is the epitome of the foundation’s existence and purpose, and that the foundation fully realizes it would be impossible to offer such financial support without the generosity of kind and caring individuals, organizations, and businesses who make up a thoughtful Niagara Region.

Students who receive foundation support are truly grateful. One student writes, “Thank you for your assistance. I promise it will be put to good use during my future endeavours in furthering my education, and will promote the important lessons I have learned as a Catholic student.”

Another writes, “It’s not always easy to juggle school and work, but with your generosity, it has made it much easier. When I graduate I hope I can make a difference in people’s lives, like you have in mine.”

Marino says that these examples of gratitude are proof positive that cheque or credit card support is much more than a donation. It’s a long-term solid investment that will pay big dividends for students in need who require assistance right now.

The Niagara Foundation for Catholic Education is a registered charitable foundation and its programs and initiatives are available to students in need who require assistance right now.

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The Niagara Foundation for Catholic Education is a registered charitable foundation.
Shop Local

Submitted by OLiV

Did you know that OLiV creates its own unique flavours, infuses these into our premium Extra Virgin Olive Oil and true Balsamic Vinegar and bottles these products right here in Niagara? Truly local, truly Canadian! Come visit us and experience the "WOW"!

Visit OLiV Tasting Room on Queen Street, NOTL this Holiday Season for unique, all natural, gift giving ideas.

We create custom made combinations, or select from a variety of popular pre-made gift baskets as well. Ideal for the last minute or 'hard to buy for', gift.

Submitted by 13th Street Gallery

Everyone will be glad to see this crazy year end. We sure are! But, we are also optimistic about the future and are very pleased to announce that we will be moving into the old Starbucks location in 2021. This will give us more space to help our customers experience our unique products and flavours, created and bottled right here in Niagara.

We look forward to serving you this Holiday Season!

Deck your walls this holiday season

Submitted by 13th Street Gallery

When 13th Street Gallery opened its doors on November 2, 2019, the art community suddenly took notice of the growing winery in St. Catharines. Co-owner of 13th Street Winery, John Mann has been collecting and living with art for over fifty years. Art has always been an integral part of the Winery’s vision to provide visitors with a unique experience that stimulates all the senses.

The Gallery offers guests original artwork from Canada’s best contemporary artists.

The Gallery’s collection includes works by some of Canada’s most celebrated artists, including members of Les Automatistes, The Painters Eleven, exciting young artists as well as esteemed senior contemporary artists. The Gallery is dedicated to showcasing and selling Canadian art while providing a full range of services that meet the needs of every art collector.

This year’s annual group show Abstracted Together opens on Saturday, December 12, 2020. The exhibition will focus on some of the most significant paintings, sculptures, and artists from the collection as well as names that are new to The Gallery. The Gallery will also be featuring different artists bi-weekly.

For more information visit www.13thstreetgallery.com or call 289 968 1830.

1776 Fourth Avenue
St. Catharines, ON
info@13thstreetgallery.com
289 968 1830
www.13thstreetgallery.com

13th Street Gallery is nestled amid an impressive contemporary sculpture garden. Visitors will encounter a unique and dynamic environment that will expand their relationship to Art, Wine and Food. It is a place for visitors and clients to escape, relax and discover. Open daily, Tuesday to Saturday from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. or by appointment.

For more information, contact info@13thstreetgallery.com or call 289 968 1830.
Jo Pacinda sells masks, hair accessories, and baby clothes, which she sells at Jo Pacinda Designs. (Photos supplied)

Krystal Kiran sells Indian clothing, including shawls, at her House of Kiran.

Backstage Bazaar helps theatre people sell their art

Penny Coles
The Local

Theatres are dark, but there is a bright light shining on the creativity and ingenuity of the theatre people whose livelihood has been put on hold during the pandemic.

This recent development is an online umbrella website called the Backstage Bazaar, a virtual marketplace free to members of the theatre community, to showcase their art while work has dried up due to COVID-19.

It has been organized locally by Shaw backstage employee Truly Carmichael, with Erin Slattery-Black, a New York City theatre set designer and costume technician.

The Backstage Bazaar is an online umbrella website for theatre sellers to showcase and sell their art as the theatre community is put on hold during the pandemic. It was designed so each artist would have their own individual store, receiving 100 percent of the sales, with no fees or commission to the website.

Carmichael and Slattery-Black decided what they wanted to do, they worked quickly to have the website up and running in time for Christmas shopping.

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But as it became clear there was not going to be a 2020 season, and many theatre people had lost not only their full-time job but whatever their back-up work was as well, Carmichael transitioned once again, to find a way to help them put food on their tables.

“People are floundering, they’re moving back home, not able to keep their apartments, and making amazing things. We just wanted to find a way to gather them all under one umbrella.”

Once they decided how to proceed, “it happened almost overnight,” says Carmichael.

“We thought we’d get maybe 25, 50 people,” says Carmichael. By Saturday, they were up to 125 vendors, “and it’s growing every day.”

Once they decided how to proceed, “it happened almost overnight,” says Carmichael.

“We thought we’d get maybe 25, 50 people,” says Carmichael. By Saturday, they were up to 125 vendors, “and it’s growing every day.”

They put out on social media what they intended to do, and quickly had friends volunteering to help including Ben Deschamps, an “under-employed” musician with expertise in developing complex websites. He was able to create something people could volun-

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Local Shaw employees sell their wares online

Continued from page 12

people who have the perfect shop, we will keep adding to it,” says Carmichael, adding she will likely keep it going, even after theatre resumes, to help those whose ‘clothed together’ a piece of local living between several different endeavors. ‘There are never enough theatre jobs.”

Carmichael describes Jo Pacinda, a young member of the Shaw, as “a prime example of who we are trying to boost”. Pacinda was thrilled to be working in costume design, before suddenly finding herself out of work. “Design has been a dream of mine since I was little,” says Pacinda, a NOTL resident. “I’ve always loved fashion and design.” The website has become a creative outlet for her while theatre was closed. “I started with face masks as a way to keep others safe. For every 10 masks I sold, I made five scrub caps for the local St. Catharines hospital!”

She added baby clothes to her site after a number of friends and family had babies, she says, and hair accessories for the holidays, as perfect stocking stuffers. “Since joining Backstage Bazaar I’ve seen traffic to my website increase. It’s a fantastic way for highly-skilled artists to share their passion and side projects,” says Pacinda. “During these difficult times it’s so important to be able to support small and independent businesses.”

Tara Rosling is another local artist and entrepreneur who has joined the Backstage Bazaar. After 11 seasons with the Shaw, she opened her Little Green Shop, all eco-friendly, locally-sourced, “wonderful things” for the home and body that will also make perfect stocking stuffers, says Carmichael.

Judith Bowden offers unique home goods, under the name Sorrel and Stitchwort, including plant prints and contact dyed containers, from plants found in the Niagara Region.

The Shaw costume and set designer says she has been fortunate — although almost all her theatre design work was put on hold, her partner is still working, “and Shaw was very helpful in how they honoured designer contracts for a cancelled season.”

She has high praise for the Backstage Bazaar. “As designers, the effects of this year will continue for quite a while. Many theatres, when they are able to restart, will have a number of productions already designed and some fully completed and sitting on stages around the country. They will not need designers for full contracts for a while.”

This will affect staff behind the scenes as well, she says, “so finding other creative outlets is so vital.” The online platform provides a centralized place for work to be seen, but “it also has a maybe more important function. We are all linked to theatres across North America and are all linked to each other, in that we are all telling stories with our skills in those spaces.”

Designer Sim Suzer worked with Bowden on Holiday Inn at the Shaw, and has now moved to her online business, the Hands of Sim, making custom pillows. “I am very happy to be a part of the Backstage Bazaar website,” says Suzer. “It’s a great platform to have all of the theatre people together, and it’s amazing how talented everyone is. In hard times like these, we have to stay together as a community and support each other. I think this website is a great example of that.”

Krystal Kiran is a member of the Shaw acting ensemble, teaches yoga, and is a choreographer and a dancer. None of those things are happening now, so income from her store “has become a bigger piece of her puzzle,” says Carmichael. Kiran has lived in NOTL and India, and is now in B.C. “The creation of Backstage Bazaar is, I believe, a brilliant idea,” she says. As a theatre artist, performer, and owner of the bohemian Indian clothing line, House of Kiran, she says, the online site “has created a platform and community for all who have been building our businesses in isolation this year. All of my products come from India, and are my own cross-cultural, East-West take on Indian fabrics and designs. They are sustainable fashion, ethically sourced, and the majority of my pieces are one-of-a-kind.”

In her first season as an actor at the Shaw, she says, her collection of shawls was the second-top selling item at the Shaw Festival Gift Shop (after Stephen Fry’s signed book). “I liked to call it the Shawl Festival.” “In a way,” she adds, the pandemic has been “a blessing in disguise for my business because it has made my products available to more people, but I must say there is nothing like being with other humans.”

Knowing that a community of other artisans and small business owners in the theatre world exists “is both a relief and inspiring,” she says, “especially in these times when small businesses need more support than ever. It also makes me excited for the possibilities of us gathering in person, and maybe having a fair or festival when circumstances allow.”

Kiran says she is very grateful to be part of this theatre community. “I can’t wait to see what 2021 holds for us all. Thank you, Truly!” To check out the website and the artists’ stores, visit https://backstagebazaar.com

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When Denise Falk and Cathy Andres were working, they made a pledge to each other that when they retired, they would hike the Bruce Trail together. They had both walked portions of the trail, and liked the idea of doing it from one end to the other, although not all at once.

The teacher-librarians met early in their careers when they taught at Colonel John Butler in Niagara-on-the-Lake, and remained friends as they moved around to other elementary schools, including Parliament Oak, St. Davids, Crossroads, and others around the region.

Now retired, they are fulfilling their goal to hike the trail end to end, all 900 km of it, from Queenston Heights to Tobermory. They started in Queenston April 3, 2019, with no set plan or end date in mind, just a goal of walking weekly, when the weather is decent and it fits into their schedules.

There was an unplanned 10-month hiatus that began when they decided to take a break during last winter’s harsh weather, says Falk, that ran into COVID-19, when the trail was closed. They resumed when they could, and last week, after a 15-kilometre hike through a new snowfall that ended at Limehouse Conservation area, they had completed a total of 238 km.

They hope to have good days to hike through the winter, as long as the weather allows. Their concerns are the deep fissures sometimes beside the trail, and icy, slippery patches.

“We sometimes have to do the ‘old lady shuffle,’ says Falk, and at 56, and Andres 58, falling could be dangerous, especially on a remote section of the trail, where cell phone service is unreliable. They also stopped for a couple of months in the summer, when the ticks were bad. “One day on the way home we had ticks crawling all over us.”

They plan their hikes in advance, looking at the best weather-wise, and also so they know where they will finish.

They’ve hiked through thunder and lightning, sleet and rain, and come out of the forest “soaking wet and covered in mud,” says Falk, although this has been a beautiful fall.

When they began their treks, they would take two cars, parking one at each end. Now, when the drives are about an hour and a half to get to the portion they’re hiking, that doesn’t make sense, so they drive together, park, and then take an Uber back to their car when they’re done.

“We have our masks and hand sanitizers,” Falk says, and with the exception of one “crazy experience” with a driver who took them in the wrong direction, and wouldn’t pull over or turn around when they asked him to, their system has worked out well.

“We let our families know where we were, in case we were looking for bodies,” jokes Falk, who thinks weak cell phone coverage was the problem, along with an inexperienced driver, who seemed to be afraid for some reason that he wouldn’t get paid. “It was a very strange ride, very bizarre. The more we thought about it afterwards, the more disturbing it was. We were very glad we had each other.”

They typically walk about four hours, taking their time to take a lot of photos, she says.

“At the beginning, we walked like we were on a mission. But now we try to remember to stop and enjoy the view. There are beautiful views along the way.”

They take backpacks, and when they finally got to the portion they’re hiking, that doesn’t make sense, so they drive together, park, and then take an Uber back to their car when they’re done.

“Penny Coles”

The Local

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Friends find hike especially beneficial during pandemic

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and will take breaks for a bite to eat — usually a sandwich, chips, some fruit and nuts. They also have some bandannas in their pack, but Falk adds they start carrying matches, "to make a little fire if one of us gets hurt."

"Sometimes the farthest that's happened was a twisted ankle for Andres. "We realize we're not 25 anymore. We're really careful, but the trail can be rugged, rocky and sometimes pretty remote."

"They have their cell phones, which work in most areas, but they've had a couple of occasions where cell coverage has been limited," says Falk. "We use Bruce Trail maps and guides, and we have all the trail apps. We use them to plan our hikes, and to make sure we're on the right trail."

"Sometimes we're not," says Andres. "We've made a few wrong turns."

Although the trail is generally well-marked, sometimes the signs are missing, but by and large, says Andres, the trails are "excellently well-maintained by volunteers. If there is a wind storm, by the next day, the trail is "cleaned.""

Falk says to her, the hikes have shown how important it is to have natural spaces close to urban areas, for all to enjoy. She's concerned about recent proposals to change Ontario legislation that will undermine the protection of conservation areas. "This is such a beautiful thing we have here, that's been maintained and cared for all these years. I'd hate to lose it."

Andres points to the heritage that has been protected, such as the limestone kilns and ruins they came across on their hike last week, and worries about zoning changes that are impacting significant wetlands.

Andres also lists philosophical benefits they get from being on the trail. "Often the trail will be marked as private property, and we're asked to stay on the trail. We send out a grateful thank you to the property owners for allowing us to be there," says Andres.

"In the morning, he's got a side project, which involves donating history books to local schools, and charitable organizations. He has created History of Canada Part 1, covering the years from 30,000 BC to 1836. And History of Canada Part 2, from 1837 to the present, "so Canadians of all ages and backgrounds could learn about our country's unique and exciting history."

They were published in 2016, but he's getting ready for a new edition, and is distributing the boxes he has remaining. "He's given them to all the local schools, and to Newark Neighbours for Christmas. Last week he had students at the community centre for the Town's toy drive, and Vineridge Academy, the international high school on Niagara Stone Road."

Huberts says he's loved history since he was a child. "His parents came to Canada from Holland in 1954, he says. "Every Saturday, my father would give us a history question, and we'd have to go to the library to look up the answer. Having us learn Canadian history was really important to him."

The two books combined are about 400 pages, both filled with more than 600 illustrations, activities and games, some for young adults, others for older kids, and particularly immigrants.

Huberts says the books, including the activities in them, are also really helpful for newcomers to Canada who want to learn history, and also useful for learning English.

The books also feature seven different games, each repeated six times, designed to reinforce the history re- ferred to in the preceding page. Huberts explains, "Some of the games are for children of all ages, while others are aimed at older children and adults."

"We found the books have been thoroughly researched, including clothing, tools, the ships — all the details are correct, says Huberts."

His research is so extensive he is offering information on at least one topic that is more accurate than what is in most history books, he discovered, after corroborating his research with other experts.

Lord Mayor Betty Disero, grateful for the books donated to local schools and organizations, was at the community centre with Al Huberts, the creator of the books. (Penny Coles)

The Local

Al Huberts has had an extraordinarily varied and interesting career, really a series of careers, which con- tinue through what might have been, for anybody else, a retirement move to Niagra- ra-on-the-Lake.

Fortunately for him, he still has a passion for teaching about history. However, he says he has always had "projects on the side. He also loves to write, and history is one of his passions. He gets deep into a conversation about a political piece he's writing about out-going U.S. President Donald Trump, whose supporters include members of evangelical Baptist churches, and their following of millions, for an American newspaper."

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Lord Mayor Betty Disero, grateful for the books donated to local schools and organizations, was at the community centre with Al Huberts, the creator of the books. (Penny Coles)
Sounds of Hope commemorates 75th anniversary of end of Holocaust

Mike Balsom
Special to The Local

Bravo Niagara! Festival’s Sounds of Hope series wraps up Sunday, Dec. 13 with the world premiere of the new composition, Menorah, by renowned multi-JUNO Award-winning Canadian composer Christos Hatzis. It’s the third installment in the latest addition to the Festival of contemporary music and recent appointee to the Order of Canada.

Hatzis informs The Local in an email that though he completed Menorah in December, 2019, his composition sheds light on current events. “In retrospect,” says the University of Toronto professor, “my written reflections turned out to be serendipitously prophetic, with the subsequent advent of COVID-19 and the continuing rise of authoritarianism in our world. The assaults on democracy around the world, in combination with political intolerance and systemic racism, make the comparison with the ominous last days of the Weimar Republic and the rise of Nazism unavoidable.”

The issue of human rights has been the focus of much of Hatzis’ work in the past. Born in Greece, he immigrated to Canada in 1982, becoming a Canadian citizen three years later. His compositions are known to be challenging, both to the musicians who play them and to the listeners who hear them. “In my mind there is nothing worse than musically discussing human rights themes and allowing the listener to think of the music as entertainment, or to be disengaged from it,” he says. “I want to intellectually and emotionally assault the listener; make them think, but more importantly, make them feel; be inside the story and feel it as their own empathy.”

Menorah is a technical-ly demanding composition for violin and piano, cast in two contrasting movements. Hatzis explains, “The first, Shabbat Blessing, slightly prefigures the Holocaust. Even though there is no strict narrative, I envisioned a Jewish family somewhere in Europe feeling the ominous rise of Nazism, but count ing on the age-old tradition of the forefathers to protect them from the external danger; a combination of faith and rationalist denial.”

In that movement Hatzis pays to a “Jewish” melody on the violin that struggles to hold things together. Austrian-born Jewish composer Arnold Schoenberg is an inspiration for the four-note motif on violin that ends the passage. Fittingly to the Holocaust theme, Schoenberg himself was a target for the Nazi regime. Kaddish Yatom (נום קדיש), the second movement, also encompasses a family gathering, this one in the Warsaw Ghetto. “Here, the bonds of tradi tion are increasingly broken and giving away to nihilistic despair,” Hatzis outlines. “The previous Jewish melody has now become a falling two-note gesture against dissonant eruptions on both instruments. There are dissociated memories of better times, but they are brief and crushed by the reality outside and the noise-like outbreaks in the piano and violin.”

This movement actually quotes the overture from Richard Wagner’s Tristan and Isolde. The Bravo Niagara! composer-in-residence explains, “Wagner was an avowed anti-Semite, whose grand-children and later descend ants embraced Nazism, with one notable exception that I am aware of. Yet the music of this overture is about love and tragedy that stirs the deepest and noblest human emotions in the soul.” It stands in stark contrast to the anti-hierarchical technique of Schoenberg from the first movement.

Hatzis encourages the listener to ponder deeply about this contrast. “If, when hearing this section, you are drawn in by the beauty of Wagner’s music and feel alienated by the modernism of Schoenberg, think harder about who the perpetrator and the victim are in this unlik ely musical conversation. Then think again about how systemic racism and antisemitism may reside within each one of us so deeply that sometimes it is impossible to deconstruct.”

Djokic and Petrowska Quilico, having both collaborated with Hatzis previously, are perfect musicians to take on this challenging work. Hatzis says Djokic possesses a deep knowledge of his music and the demands that it places on the perform er. Petrowska Quilico, in turn, is a contemporary music virtuoso with great attention to detail and in domitable attitude toward the technical demands of contemporary music.

“Marc and Christina are fantastic human beings,” he adds, “who will never rest until they have exhausted every ounce of energy to make the notes on paper come alive and engage the listener.”

Many of Hatzis’ previous works have been com pleted with visual media. For the online premiere of this commissioned composition, Djokic and Petrowska Quilico are accompanied by fitting visual imagery. The stunning photographs from the Last Folio collection by Yuri Dojc (taken by the Canadian photographer at a Jewish village in Slovakia where time seemed to have stood still since 1943) and the restless camera work of Adrian Thiessen and the Foreground Media team make the perfect complement for this music. I am grateful to all the colleagues who took part in this project and especially to Bravo Niagara!”

The world premiere of Menorah is scheduled for Sunday, Dec. 13 at 2 p.m. Visit bravoniagara.org for more information.

Composer Christos Hatzis’ Menorah premieres Sunday with Bravo Niagara’s Sounds of Hope. (Bo Huang)
Time to think about welcome kits for farm workers

Jane Andres
Special to The Local

This year will always be remembered as a year of extraordinary challenges. In Niagara-on-the-Lake, it will also be remembered as a time when a caring community shone brightly.

The delivery of more than 560 welcome kits to farm workers was a success because of the growing support of the people of this town. It has been a joy to meet so many locals who provided welcome kits for the men and women who braved a pandemic to come here and work, helping our farmers to avert a financial disaster and loss of crops.

The idea of welcome kits started from a simple observation in 2008, when my friend Jodie Godwin and I travelled to Jamaica. It was my second trip, and Jodie’s first. We stayed with farm workers and their families, traveling from Montego Bay to Kingston, visiting churches and schools along the way. Our memorable visits with their families led to a greater understanding of the many challenges farm workers face while here on the Seasonal Agricultural Worker Program.

Every year farm workers arrive after their flights at the Virgil arena, often late at night, after an exhausting day or more of travel. They have to wait until the following day to go to the bank, get groceries and finally start cooking their first meal of the afternoon.

When we realized how long friends on neighbouring farms had to wait to get a proper meal, we began to provide soup and sandwiches on their arrival to see them through the first night.

The idea of a simple welcome kit containing essentials evolved, letting our Caribbean and Mexican neighbours know they are supported by a caring community.

The kits are easy and inexpensive to pack, as well as a fun and practical way for individuals, families, and community groups to express appreciation. A thank you note or child’s drawing adds a personal touch that many bring home to share with their families. Some of the welcome posters made by children are still there to brighten their walls years later.

More than 500 bags have been distributed each year for the past three years as the men and women arrived. Over the last two years, we partnered with Father Antonio Illas, who organizes the Migrant Workers Outreach Project through the Anglican diocese. As a result, many more Spanish speaking workers have received support.

An abundance of welcome kits was filled by community members as Christmas projects at the end of 2019. It was the beginning of an exponential show of generosity. Financial donations from the Candlelight Stroll and Wineries of Niagara-on-the-Lake got the new year off to a great start.

More than 300 of the welcome kits were delivered before news of an impending pandemic descended in mid-March. Thank goodness we had stockpiled toilet paper to include in the bags, as we would never have anticipated shortages for this crucial item.

When remaining deliveries resumed later in April, safety protocols were strictly maintained, with no-contact drop offs.

Many of the workers arrived weeks late. The high stakes of leaving their families for eight months and putting their lives at risk were first and foremost on everyone’s mind. The bright green bags welcoming them on their arrival provided much appreciated essentials, and the reassurance that they were not alone.

The welcome kits have proven to be a practical way to connect with migrant farm workers in our community, helping to create a sense of connection and belonging.

The events of this past year have demonstrated how vital these connections are.

Together we are a caring community.

A list of contents for welcome kits can be found on the Niagara Workers Welcome website. Bags can be picked up at the NOTL Public Library, Sweets & Swirls Cafe and Applewood Hollow Bed and Breakfast. Completed welcome kits can be dropped off at all three locations, starting Jan. 18.

For those who would like to support this successful local endeavour, a donation of $25 will provide the contents of a welcome kit for one farm worker. Please visit our website for updated information regarding collection times and drop-off locations.

To more information, email niagara-workers-welcome@gmail.com, or visit our website at www.workerswelcomeniagara.com.

Socks for Change, a charitable organization from Niagara, provides heavy-duty, made-in-Canada work socks for $2 a pair. Sam Baio, the organizer, also provides Niagara Workers Welcome with several hundred balaclavas, neck buffs and ear warmers at no charge, which are greatly appreciated by all of the men working in -10 degree temperatures. (Jane Andres)

Welcome website.

Greeting cards from Niagara Workers Welcome are available for $4 each, or five cards for $15. Greetings can be sent to farm workers and their families, and community members. For more information, email niagrawelcome posted at niagara-workers-welcome@gmail.com.

Greetings are available at the NOTL Public Library, Sweets & Swirls Cafe and Applewood Hollow Bed and Breakfast. Completed welcome kits can be dropped off at all three locations, starting Jan. 18.

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Celebrate the holidays safely with local family and friends - send them your heartfelt greetings for the 2020 season in the NOTL Local.

Barbara wishes all her NOTL friends a safe and happy holiday season and looks forward to seeing them all in 2021.

Reach out safely to your community friends and family with our greeting special for residents.

E-mail your message and photo (optional) with your desired publication date to: karen@notllocal.com

905 . 641 . 5335

The trusted voice of our community.
LOCAL HAPPENINGS

EDUCATION FOUNDATION OF NIAGARA

Education Foundation of Niagara presents “PortaBackyarda” to help support students in need. Purchase tickets for your chance to win one of two luxury Lowes Canada sheds. See the display at the Pen Centre until draw date of March 12, 2021. Purchase tickets online at portabackyarda.ca

LOCAL WORSHIP

Auchterlonie on Astrology

Bill Auchterlonie Special to The Local

The full work of Auchterlonie on Astrology can be found on the Facebook page for The NOTL Local, and on the website https://www.auchterlonieonastrology.ca.

Monday, Dec. 14: Today is the day of the new Moon. Also, the day of the last solar eclipse for 2020. It happens at 11:16 a.m. but will be visible only in South America, as it happens when the Moon is at its lowest point in the sky. Still, it is the start of a new month and an opportunity to refresh projects that may have not gone so well while Mars and Neptune were in Retrograde motion. Perseverance matters now, more than ever. Today is the birthday of two of the most famous astrologers and astronomers in history. Nostradamus was born Dec. 14, 1503. And Tycho Brahe was born in Denmark, now Sweden, in 1546. Brahe discovered the formula for calculating the elliptical orbit of Mars, a fact that had eluded scientists for thousands of years.

Tuesday, Dec. 15: Venus winds up her long stay in Scorpio today by moving into Sagittarius just before noon. It’s a shift from sexy to smart. (Hey, smart can be sexy too). It’s a good day to build more security. Gone with the Wind premiered on Dec. 15, 1939. Starring Vivien Leigh and Clark Gable, it won the Oscar for Best Picture in 1940.

FISH FRY

Thursday, December 10 4 - 6:30 p.m.
TAKEOUT ONLY | CASH ONLY
1 or 2 piece dinner with fries and coleslaw
Drive-thru to order
FISHERS OF MEN, FEST OF 2020, DEC 10 & 17
A heartfelt thank you to our wonderful community for your support!
Royal Canadian Legion Bs. 126 | 410 King St., 905-468-2333 | legion126@gmail.com

HISTORY IN THE VINEYARD

December 10 @ 6 p.m. - 9 p.m.
Celebrate the 125th Anniversary of the Niagara Historical Society by supporting the preservation of our community’s history with a holiday fundraiser at Ravine Vineyard Estate Winery (1366 York Rd., St. Davids) in support of two wonderful charities, The Friends of Fort George & The Niagara Historical Society. One-in or take-out and choose your courses made by three amazing Niagara-on-the-Lake chefs. Plus, enjoy a special presentation on Christmas Traditions. For details on options, choices and tickets, please visit: https://www.canadahelps.org/en/charties/niagara-historical-society/events/history-in-the-vineyard/

FIRST ONTARIO PERFORMING ARTS CENTRE

#NiagaraPerforms

Friday, December 11 @ 8:30 p.m.
Saturday, December 12 @ 4:00 p.m.,
Sunday, December 13 @ 7:00 p.m.
The Next Generation Leahy
www.FirstOntarioPAC.ca

RHYME TIME

December 15 @ 11 a.m. - 11:30 a.m.
Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, coffee with the Lord Mayor is moving to a Facebook live format. Visit the Town of NOTL Facebook page and click the link at the scheduled time to participate.

PLACE YOUR COMING EVENT COMMUNITY SOCIAL HERE

With or without a border, colour graphics optional. Include your Logo! Prices starting at $20.
Deadline: Monday 3 p.m.
Call Karen 905-641-5335 or email: classified@notllocal.com

Brownies happily help out Newark Neighbours at Christmas

Local Staff

Brownie leader Brenda Ferguson was pleased with her girls’ Christmas spirit, as they took on a project to help others. The girls worked on decorating bags for Newark Neighbours, which were then filled up with donations to families at Christmas time.

“The girls usually meet outside, where it is safer during the pandemic, although a few of their meetings have been online, due to bad weather, says Ferguson.

“We packed under the pavilion of the Virgil sports park in our hats, gloves, and snow-suits to create these bags,” she says.

“The girls used old cards, stickers and their amazing imaginations to create beautiful bags for the families to enjoy.”

They also took up a collection of donations for Newark Neighbours.

“With the 20 girls, we were able to donate five boxes of food and a bag of toys. We discussed the importance of giving back and how lucky we are to have the opportunity to help Newark Neighbours,” she says.

“These girls are vibrant and lovely and always happy and eager to help.”

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CROSSWORD AND SUDOKU

Across:
1 Distant
6 Apex
9 Jobs
14 “ER” actress --- Tierney
15 “--- Believer”, Monkees hit
16 Start playing!
17 Tap
19 “Fear of Flying” author --- Jong
20 Snow runner
21 Less common
22 Buoyant
23 Old-fashioned cab
25 Lightweight tropical hats
27 Elite group
28 Gene Pitney was only 24hrs from here
29 Downloadable program
32 Small lake
34 Natter
35 Tenor --- Bocelli
37 Note
38 Old Testament song
39 Tad
40 Demeanor
41 Total
42 Capital of Norway
43 Sour source of formic acid
44 Jambalaya ingredient
46 Little one
47 “Band of Gold” singer
48 Misanthrope
51 Economizer
54 Success
56 To
60 Carroll’s rabbit hole explorer
61 Wyo. neighbor
62 Extended area of land
63 Less common
64 Jambalaya ingredient
65 Succeed

Down:
1 Pennsylvania Mennonites
2 Sri ---, formerly Ceylon
3 Ahead of the field
4 Mineral source
5 Litter of pigs
6 Bracket
7 Stimulus
8 Security detachment
9 Anna Paquin won an Oscar for this film, aged 11
10 Spanish winds
11 The pen
12 Recoil
13 Remain
18 Rotating engine part
19 Welcome
20 Hit it
21 Intercept
22 Perky
23 Hansom
24 Topicals
27 Few
28 Tulsa
29 App
30 Rind
31 --- doble (dance)
32 One of the Three Bears
33 --- Almighty”, in which Morgan Freeman played God
34 Nixon’s successor, informally
35 Andrea
36 Avoided
37 Splendor
38 Manner
39 Sum
40 Oslo
41 Ant
42 Prawn
43 Tot
44 Payne
45 Felons
46 In order to
47 Saver
48 Get on
49 Cop
50 Cleat
51 Sema
52 All I
53 Veil
54 Spots
55 To be
56 Alice
57 Neb
58 Tend to
59 Era

PUZZLE ANSWERS

Across:
15 I’m a --- Tierney
19 Erica
20 Ski
21 Rarer
22 Perky
23 Hansom
25 Topis
27 Few
28 Tulsa
29 App
30 Rind
31 --- doble (dance)
32 One of the Three Bears
33 --- Almighty”, in which Morgan Freeman played God
34 Nixon’s successor, informally
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36 Avoided
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40 Oslo
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42 Prawn
43 Tot
44 Payne
45 Felons
46 In order to
47 Saver
48 Get on
49 Cop
50 Cleat
51 Sema
52 All I
53 Veil
54 Spots
55 To be
56 Alice
57 Neb
58 Tend to
59 Era

Down:
1 Amish
2 Lanka
3 Out in front
4 Ore
5 Farrow
6 Tier
7 Impetus
8 Patrol
9 The piano
10 Aires
11 Stir
12 Kick
13 Stay
18 Cam
24 See in
26 Psalm
28 Tad
29 Aristocrat
30 Peel
31 Paso
32 Mama
33 Evan
34 Gerry
36 Drool
38 Departed
39 Gun
41 Sweeney
45 Angina
46 Tend to
47 Peace
48 For
49 Notch
50 Spots
51 Scat
52 All I
53 Veil
55 To be
59 Era
Returning next year

The Rotary Holiday House Tour special event, scheduled for last Friday and Saturday on the grounds of the McArthur Estate on John Street East, was cancelled due to concerns about safety during the pandemic. However, the gates to the beautifully decorated home and grounds are open to allow people to stop on the sidewalk, enjoy the music playing, and take a holiday photo. (Photos supplied)

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.

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Simpson’s
Shop from the comfort of home
www.simpsonsparmacy.store
Christmas Gifts and Confectionery now available!

We are open in store and online and offer curbside pick-up and free delivery.

Let your customers know you are now open to serve them safely.

To place your ad, call or email Karen at:
905-641-5335 | karen@notllocal.com

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