



Downtown merchants want help

Report shows sales have dropped more than 95 per cent for some businesses



Terri-Lynn Woodhouse, owner of One Earth, says shop owners downtown need support from the town. SUPPLIED

Richard Harley
The Lake Report

Niagara-on-the-Lake's downtown business community wants town council to act quickly in getting financial relief and a recovery plan in place for renters and owners on Queen Street.

Terri-Lynn Woodhouse, owner of One Earth and member of Heritage District Merchant Group (a group of 50 merchants in the historic district), gave a presentation to councillors Monday night, highlighting a group report on the impacts of COVID-19.

Among the key findings

are that 50 per cent of renters are still paying full rent, despite some businesses seeing revenues of 50 per cent, to less than 5 per cent of what they would normally make.

Woodhouse asked for several issues to be addressed by the town to help the business community in Old Town, including that the town:

- * Reconsider its decision to defer a heritage tax rebate program to 2021 and instead work on it immediately.

- * Have municipal representatives meet with provincial leaders, including Premier Doug Ford, to

present the town's immediate, short-term and long-term recovery plan, ask for financial support and push to extend relief programs.

- * Ask the province to change the way rent subsidies are handled, giving the money to the tenants first.

- * Allow free parking on Queen Street or close parking and open the street for pedestrian traffic.

Woodhouse pointed out that NOTL's historic district is a "very expensive place to do business."

She said renters on Queen Street are paying between \$100 and \$200 per square

foot, in comparison to the \$25 per square foot national average, and \$26.75 square foot average in Toronto.

She also noted there is no break in rent during the low season from December to March, and store operators depend heavily on the high season to make it through the winter.

"We as a group depend on our five-month high season sales to pay our operating expenses throughout the year," the report said.

Merchants in the group are also paying extremely high property taxes, with

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McCormack defends decision not to sign letter condemning racism

Richard Harley
The Lake Report

Niagara-on-the-Lake Coun. Stuart McCormack says he condemns racism, despite choosing not to sign a letter from town council condemning racism last week.

McCormack addressed the issue during a meeting of council Monday night after refusing to answer questions from The Lake Report a week ago.

"Let me start by saying I condemn racism in all its forms," he told council.

"As a lawyer, I and every other lawyer in Ontario file annually with the law society a declaration stating that I respect the requirements of human rights law and undertake to honour the obligation to not discriminate."

He said, as "reluctant" as he finds discussing his "personal life in a public forum," he "may have a heightened sensitivity to the issue of racism."

"My late mother-in-law, whom I loved dearly and

helped care for during the last 10 years of her life, was a Holocaust survivor who managed to survive the horrors of Auschwitz. So on a purely personal level I understand how pernicious racism can be," McCormack said.

"So why wouldn't I sign the message from the town council condemning racism? There are a number of reasons."

He said firstly he thinks the issue of racism "merits far more discussion in the open public forum of council, not simply 'sign this message.'"

"We exist in a democracy which at its essence requires freedom of speech and open discussion. To fail to have that open discussion robs everyone of the opportunity to reflect and grow," he said.

"Secondly, what is required, and borrowing a recent quote from the human rights lawyer Anthony Morgan, 'What we want is substance over symbols. We

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Restaurants prepare for patio opening

Jessica Maxwell
The Lake Report

Restaurants with outdoor patio space are permitted to operate starting Friday, June 19, in Niagara-on-the-Lake.

On Monday, the province added the Niagara region to plans in moving forward with the second phase of a gradual approach to restart business operations.

"Stage 2 will allow more people to get back to work safely while not overburdening the critical services that support families, workers and Ontario's econo-

my," says the information published by the province in a document called "A Framework for Reopening our Province: Stage 2."

The report states restaurants, bars, food trucks and other food and drink establishments can open for dining in outdoor areas only, such as patios, curbside, parking lots and adjacent premises.

It encourages those establishments to maintain physical distancing between patrons through the use of reservations, limiting the number of patrons in any outdoor space at one time

and ensuring enough space between tables.

Indoor facility access must be limited to payment, washrooms, outdoor dining area access and food pickup.

The Sandtrap Pub & Grill is building an outdoor patio in the parking lot that will be ready to open at the end of the week. Patrons will be able to book reservations on the day they are looking to dine, not in advance.

Patio hours will be noon to 8:30 p.m. on Friday and Saturday. The Sandtrap will be closed Sunday and Monday for Father's Day.

Bricks & Barley in Virgil is among the NOTL restaurants planning to offer patio service starting Friday, June 19 with the full menu available to customers.

Regular operating hours will resume from 11:30 a.m. to 11 p.m. on weekdays and midnight on Fridays and Saturdays. While patrons will be able to enjoy the full menu on the outdoor patio, delivery and takeout options will continue for those wanting to stay home.

"We are starting with reservations only, but if (customers) come to the restaurant



Irish Harp owner Jovie Joki stands outside near the front patio area. JESSICA MAXWELL

and we have a time slot available then gladly we would seat (them)," said general manager Christie Devos.

"It's pretty full hours," Devos said Wednesday, as the restaurant started taking reservations. "There will be

ample opportunity to book either earlier time slots or later in the evening time slots."

Reservations are essential because restaurants can't have a waiting area for patrons, she

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Rent, taxes, dead season making merchants anxious about future

Continued from Front Page

33 per cent paying between \$20,000 and \$30,000, 12 per cent paying \$30,000 to \$40,000, 6 per cent paying between \$40,000 and \$50,000, and 21 per cent paying more than \$50,000 per year, Woodhouse said.

She said that's tough to manage when revenues are so low — and the report estimates 2020 sales for the entire season will be less than the typical low season.

"Many of the typical revenue drivers of our businesses were eliminated for the foreseeable future. Our costs have stayed the same. Any reserves we have are used very quickly when something like a pandemic hits, with our high cost of rent and taxes," Woodhouse said.

The report also asked business owners if they are taking advantage of government subsidies like CERB (Canada Emergency Response Benefit), CEBA

(Canada Emergency Business Account interest-free loans) and CECRA (Canada Emergency Commercial Rent Assistance).

In all, about 90 per cent of downtown businesses received the \$40,000 business loan from the government. That means those merchants now have more debt, she pointed out, despite the money helping in the short term.

The report also said 46.88 per cent of the merchant group is not taking a pay cheque from their business and instead are on CERB and 50 per cent of the landlords in the Heritage District did not participate in CECRA, meaning tenants were legally bound to pay all of their rent and taxes.

It said 34.38 per cent of merchants in the group are paying 25 per cent of their rent and taxes due to CECRA and that 59.38 per cent of merchants are paying their staff 25 per cent as the government is contribut-

ing the remaining 75 per cent.

Over 200 staff members have been laid off or lost their job.

Woodhouse said the group is worried stores on Queen Street are going to go out of business, leaving the street vacant and for lease.

She said there are already seven vacant storefronts and another 10 businesses still haven't reopened.

Among the businesses that are open, many are choosing to operate only Friday, Saturday and Sunday due to the "extremely low volume of persons visiting the Historic District in Niagara-on-the-Lake."

The report said downtown merchants have been asking the town for a recovery plan as well as a reopening plan, but that to date none have been received.

"When the province gave the green light for retail stores to reopen on May 11, they were left to do this



Kim Hughes, co-owner of Sunset Grill, presented to council on Monday. SUPPLIED

on their own without any support from the town," the report said.

It said a letter from the town that was hand-delivered under doors outlined the legal obligations each merchant had in upholding the new normal and what the legal ramifications would be if anything was not followed.

The report said more than 45 per cent of businesses also incurred more than \$1,000 in reopening costs.

It added that all owners are worried about the viability of their businesses for the remainder of 2020 up until a recovery can be made, which could be as late as 2022 or 2023.

Some of the contributing factors are that all NOTL summer festivals have been

postponed until at least 2021, the Shaw Festival is indefinitely on hold (until at least August, though most feel it will be longer), the U.S. border is closed until at least the end of July, likely to be extended due to escalating U.S. numbers, international borders are closed for the foreseeable future, the business conference market, which greatly helps in September and October, is being postponed, current federal government funding is ending, and restaurants likely will be able to open to 50 per cent of capacity, which is "not sustainable."

One positive the report identified is that 65 per cent of business comes from Ontario, but questioned whether the town can retain those numbers with the

"harsh closure and much media coverage surrounding it," as well as that "all communities in Ontario are fighting for the same dollars and visitors."

The report says about 33 per cent of visitors are international, with 25 per cent coming from the United States.

Kim Hughes, co-owner of Sunset Grill, who spoke with Woodhouse, said the issue is partly the property taxes.

"I think the issue we have here in Niagara-on-the-Lake is because the property taxes are so high based on the volume or the values, that's where we're running into trouble."

Read the full story at www.niagaranow.com/news.phtml/4021

McCormack defends decision not to sign letter condemning racism

Continued from Front Page

want the substance of your commitments.' I echo that sentiment, with all due respect to the signatories, what is required is action, merely expressing disapproval is inadequate."

"My former law firm has been engaged in diversity efforts for decades. We had training for unconscious bias, fostered leadership development and outreach to diverse communities and worked continuously on enhancing inclusiveness and support for those communities in our working environment. The firm has been recognized as a multi-year winner of diversity awards."

"The Law Society of Ontario produced a report, 'Recommendations on Equity in the Legal Profession.' Among its 13 recom-



Coun. Stuart McCormack SUPPLIED

mendations was a requirement to 'build a community of support' and to 'monitor and assess internal policies, practices and programs to promote diversity, inclusion and equality.' "

"To me these are obvious and substantive efforts not to simply recognize an issue but more importantly to deal with it," McCormack told council.

"Thirdly, I query whether the message was even the right first step. The message states, 'Perhaps more

importantly, we must step away from our privilege and listen, and exercise silence to make way for the voices of black people and people of colour.' If we want to listen, isn't it incumbent on us to first have their voices at the table for the purpose of crafting this type of message and more importantly the path forward?"

McCormack pointed out none of the people to sign the letter are considered diverse.

"Let me raise another concern which may be shared by others on council in the context of the town itself. As I look at the town staff, the signatories to the message and myself, I do not see much evidence of diversity. Surely this must change," he said.

"Diversity must never be an afterthought. It must be a thoughtful and purposeful

approach to ensure that we get the right talent and the right mix of talent that will represent the town."

He said after the message was published he received "vitriolic messages" online for his failure to sign.

"I did not respond to those messages," he said.

"Hopefully the foregoing explains my position on this matter."

He also explained why he wouldn't respond to questions from The Lake Report.

"As to why I did not respond through the media on this issue, I did not wish to open a potential debate with my fellow councillors through any form of media. As I have stated, the proper forum for a discussion on a subject as important as this is through the democratically-constituted body that is this council."

He asked that council "not

personalize" the issue.

"Rather reflect and think how you would respond if your child, family member or member of a minority community expressed these views to you," McCormack said.

After his explanation, he put forward two motions, one requesting the Inclusivity Committee to convene a workshop with "members of council, staff and diverse community leaders to give them that opportunity to be heard."

The second was that town staff, and in particular the head of human resources, provide a report to council "to determine the numerical extent to which the town staff is diverse, and advise on all steps the town can take to improve its diversity, including but not limited to outreach and mentoring."

He commented that he

doesn't usually speak to journalists.

"The lord mayor is well aware of the fact that I normally do not speak to the media," he said.

Lord Mayor Betty Disero said she doesn't see a reason why a politician wouldn't want to talk to the media.

"I have spent my whole career talking with the media. And unless it's something that has a legal confidentiality to it, I always stand accountable for what I do. And sometimes I'm right, sometimes I'm wrong, but it does not make sense for me to withhold information that should be public. Like, what's the point of that?" she said in an interview.

"If you have a question, why wouldn't I tell you? If I'm going to do something, I'm going to be accountable for it and I'm going to do it because I think it's right."

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Wiens urges farm workers to **speak up** if they feel exploited

In wake of report on migrant workers' complaints, 'evidence needed' to crack down on any abusers

Kevin MacLean
Managing Editor

If migrant workers on Niagara farms are being exploited, denied their rights or treated improperly, Erwin Wiens wants to hear from them.

The Niagara-on-the-Lake farmer and town councillor has been a vocal advocate for the region's farmers and seasonal workers, but says he is "disappointed and disheartened" after a report by the Migrant Workers Alliance for Change outlined a series of anonymous complaints and problems based mainly on conversations with workers.

"I don't want to see people mistreated, especially people who are considered vulnerable," said Wiens. "Trust me, I've taken on a lot of people. I'll take on the farmer next door if I have to," Wiens, a former police officer, said in an interview.

Farmers have a vested interest in their workers being healthy, happy and productive, he said. They are skilled workers who do a tough job and "they are not disposable," he said.

But if some "bad actors" are abusing that relationship, Wiens would like to know about it.

"I would have a huge following of farmers behind me because farmers want this to succeed. We want



Rojay James, a farm worker from Jamaica. FILE PHOTO

this (migrant worker) system to work. This has been working for 50 years and we want to make it better. We want to make it consistent, we want to make sure that everybody's happy with it," he said.

He urged workers to come forward with details and evidence, anonymously if necessary, to any of the various government agencies or migrant worker liaison representatives, "but at least with specific allegations on this date this occurrence or this house or we're not getting paid."

He also said he would welcome hearing from workers directly. "If there's anybody not following the rules, any farmers, I would want them out of the system."

"Like everybody else, we want people to be treated fairly, but the only way you could do that is having some facts to back it up," he said.

The report, "Unheeded Warnings: COVID-19 & Migrant Workers in Canada," alleges violations occurred at farms across Ontario, including Niagara..

From phone conversations with workers between March 15 and May 15, the report outlines a wide-ranging series of complaints, including mandatory quarantine wages not paid or clawed back, overcrowded and inadequate housing, racism issues and being forced to work long hours for weeks with no days off.

Most of the farms, specific communities or individual complainants are unnamed, making it difficult to investigate or do anything to prevent problems, Wiens said.

The report says workers are anonymous because many fear retaliation from employers, losing their jobs or not being rehired next year. The alliance also calls the federal govern-

ment to give all migrant workers permanent resident status as soon as they arrive in Canada. Most of the workers are from the Caribbean and Mexico.

While he acknowledges there can be crowding issues on farms, Wiens said the picture painted by the report is unfair, because without detailed specifics it's impossible for people like him or government agencies to act.

To say that workers are not getting paid, or they don't at least receive minimum wage or benefits or medical plans "is patently untrue," Wiens argued.

"As far as I know, and I have no evidence to the contrary, and nobody has brought up any evidence, everybody's been paid. And I do know that the CRA and the Jamaican liaison, and integrity commissioner follows up on all the pay sheets."

He suggested the alliance's goal is to improve the working environment for the people who toil in the fields, which is what farmers' representatives and government agencies also want.

Rather than have an adversarial relationship, he said he'd rather see the alliance working with the various other agencies.

"Why not come alongside, why not work with these organizations?"

McDonald's reopens after employee tests positive for **COVID-19**

Richard Harley
The Lake Report

The McDonald's restaurant at the Outlet Collection at Niagara mall in Niagara-on-the-Lake reopened Tuesday after an employee tested positive for COVID-19.

The restaurant was closed overnight on Monday for cleaning and sanitation, McDonald's said.

It was the first new case

of COVID-19 in NOTL in several weeks.

Employees who may have been in close contact with the infected employee were asked to self-quarantine, McDonald's said.

The employee worked June 9, from 11 a.m. to 6:15 p.m.

Anyone who may have visited the restaurant on June 9 is asked to abide by directions from Ontario Public Health.

Memorial Pool, Splash Pad set to open on June 29

Kevin MacLean
Managing Editor

The Niagara Pool in Memorial Park in Old Town and the Virgil Splash Pad in Centennial Sports Park will reopen on June 29.

The two pools will operate with certain pandemic-related restrictions, the town announced Wednesday.

The Memorial Park pool will be open only Monday

to Friday for starters, while the Virgil Splash Pad will operate seven days a week from the outset.

The Simcoe Park Wading Pool will remain closed for the time being, however, staff will continue to assess the possibility of its reopening. The St. Davids Pool is closed for the season.

For full details on the pool plans, see the town's website.



Niagara-on-the-Lake Kicks Off Photo Contest

The Town of Niagara-on-the-Lake is inviting hobby photographers to highlight the community through photos. Submit your best snapshots from around Old Town, Queenston, St. Davids, Virgil, and Glendale through jointheconversation.org now! Whether your photos were taken recently or years ago, in Winter, Spring, Summer or Fall, we'd love to see them all!

Photo submissions are being accepted in the following five categories: *Amenities and Places, Arts, Culture and Events, Innovation and Economy, Nature and Parks, and Recreation and Sports.*

At the end of the submission period, Town Staff will shortlist the top photos in each category for the public to vote on. Please note that all submitted photos will be considered available for use on the Town's website as well as in reports, on social media, in future Community Guides, and other promotional material.

The five winning photos will be professionally framed, with credit given to their respective photographers, and displayed in a prominent location to be determined at a later date.

Visit jointheconversation.org/photo-contest for full contest details. Happy snapping!



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POSITIVE
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Contributed by Patty Garriock

"The center of human nature is rooted in ten thousand ordinary acts of kindness that define our days." – Stephen Jay Gould.



Contributed by Norm Arsenault:

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Editorial: Words, actions and racism

Kevin MacLean
 Richard Harley
 Editors

It is unfortunate that Coun. Stuart McCormack waited a week to explain why he refused to sign a letter condemning racism that was issued by other members of Niagara-on-the-Lake council and senior members of the administration.

We're not sure if McCormack ever would have opted to explain his position had The Lake Report not asked him, repeatedly, to say why.

The letter, which came only days after an anti-

racism rally and march in downtown NOTL, was an attempt to acknowledge problems and shortcomings, and the desire to do better.

To McCormack's credit, on Monday night he told fellow councillors that he chose not to go along with their declaration because "merely expressing disapproval is inadequate." In effect, words are not enough. Action speaks much louder.

(Though, interestingly, he also opens his statement about his decision by noting that all Ontario lawyers must file an annual declaration stating they "honour the obligation not to discrimi-

nate." That sounds an awful lot like what his fellow councillors were saying in the letter they signed.)

Also to his credit, McCormack proposed the town utilize the expertise of its Inclusivity Committee to air its members' concerns during a workshop for council and town staff.

He also asked for what amounts to a staffing audit to find out how diverse the municipal staff is and how the town might improve its level of diversity.

Those are both good and laudable suggestions, but really, should a desire to see such actions have pre-

cluded the councillor from signing the letter along with his fellow councillors? We think not.

His decision left him open to "vitriolic messages" on social media, unfortunately, while doing little to really advance the cause for understanding and acceptance.

Both the letter and the actions suggested by McCormack are really just starting points for what needs to be a long, hard look at life in Canada's self-proclaimed prettiest town.

Yes, actions are important. Words are too..

editor@niagaranow.com



Racism, protests and demilitarizing our police

Dear editor:

I did not attend the anti-racism protest in Niagara-on-the-Lake. As important as I believe it is to oppose racism in all forms, the time did not seem right, despite the recent killing of George Floyd in Minneapolis, to march in what potentially could be a large group of people. Not when the world is plagued by COVID-19.

But the protest and the event that sparked it has made me think about the issue of racism here and around the globe. About the institutionalized racism that has resulted in the high proportion of First Nations people, relative to caucasians, occupying prison cells in Canada; the failure of our police forces to properly investigate

cases involving missing and murdered First Nations women and girls; the dismal living conditions on First Nations' reserves; the brutality some members of our First Nations' and black communities have suffered at the hands of police; the carding tactics employed, until recently, by police in Toronto; the arrest and alleged beating of First Nations' chief Allan Adam by the RCMP over an expired licence plate sticker... The list goes on and on and on.

In Canada, our usual response to issues of this nature involves holding an inquiry or commission. Months or years later, the result is a report and a series of recommendations that receive broad media coverage, but few bona fide results. The reports

generally get shelved; the recommendations are not implemented.

I have not lived the First Nation, black, Hispanic, Jewish or Asian experience in Canada, and I cannot speak for people who have or do.

But my gut feeling is that nothing will change until all of us, no matter what colour of skin, religion or sexuality we have, accept that all lives have value and act accordingly.

I'm not an expert in the field and can't offer a fact-based solution to help us reach that point, however, I suspect the way forward needs to begin with education. Based on what I've seen on the television news this week, I also believe that the culture and focus of our police forces needs

to change, and that they must be demilitarized.

The mission "to protect and serve" does not equate with killing unarmed civilians, nor with knocking a man to the ground with a vehicle door prior to arresting him.

If it takes days of protest to bring about true institutional change in Canada, so be it. Ultimately, though, I think we need to get to a point where we talk a different language when it comes to skin colour. When we say a person who has black, brown or white skin, with the emphasis on person, if we must use an identifier at all.

For at the end of the day we are all people, and our lives all matter.

Terry Davis
 NOTL



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OPINION



We all can **do more** to help farm workers

Dear editor:

I live in NOTL and I am incensed by the comments made by Erwin Wiens as an elected official when he speaks of recent issues with foreign workers, ("Report accuses farmers of exploiting migrant workers," June 11).

He wonders why the workers are not pointing out by name the farm owners who are mistreating them and he continues by saying that nothing can be done unless the workers name names.

It is disingenuous on his part to share such comments. He has been living in this community for a long time and he knows as well as many of us know what the living conditions are at each farm. He also knows the individual owners and he has a good sense of how each owner may treat or mistreat their workers.

We, as community residents, can see the trailers, many looking more like barracks belonging to a Third World country ghetto than representing a living reality for hundreds of workers here in our community.

We see their long working hours well into Saturdays and Sundays. We can see that when foreign workers come into a supermarket during the day they must



A farm worker prunes grape vines. FILE PHOTO

rush in and out in order to not waste time over lunch.

We would not reserve some of the observed living conditions for these workers to our own pets, let alone a human being.

Surely Mr. Wiens knows how packed some quarters are, how many people have to share one single bathroom, how hot and unclean some quarters must be. And if he doesn't know, as an elected official he should know.

Enough is enough. Foreign workers working under unsanitary and inhumane living conditions is as racist as any other form of discrimination. It needs to stop.

Farm owners must comply with the law and they must be held accountable. If they cannot provide

the acceptable standards of living and working they should not operate. Full stop.

There should be pre-fab accommodations for these workers that enable them to have a small bedroom. There should be enough bathrooms for workers so as not to create an unsanitary condition.

Eating and living spaces should be large enough so that they could all have humble yet adequate living conditions.

This is the very minimum we should offer to foreign workers we need and rely on year after year.

I am here to say to Mr. Wiens that his words appall me and I am not at all confident in his ability to well represent me and all the interests of this great

community.

We all want to see foreign workers treated as dignified human beings. Without them we would not be able to enjoy our great food and wine.

And to Mr. Wiens this is my message: "What you should have said is that you know some farm owners are not conducting themselves well and that you will seek opportunities to begin a dialogue with them in an effort to see living and working improvements for all foreign workers."

As an elected official he should be a change agent for the better and not a passive bystander.

I don't want to see this subtle yet destructive form of racism being carried out year after year under my eyes. And if it does, I will stop buying products produced in the Niagara Region.

I invite all other fellow residents to consider this plight which has been taking place in our community. We can each make a difference by placing pressure where pressure is due.

Do your part and let's work together in making Niagara-on-the-Lake not only a pretty town, but a humane town in which all lives equally matter.

*Lydia Madonia
Virgil*

Bylaw officers could **soften up** their 'look'

Dear editor:

As a global, philosophical, necessary conversation rages on regarding the future role and look of policing, please permit me to make a very local comment.

The ubiquitous bylaw enforcement squad in our NOTL is keeping the streets clean. The officers are "out and about," striding purposefully about our town, providing directions, instructions and citations. Good work.

But, I think they could soften up a bit. Their black outfits and stern demeanour really are unfriendly. Would the town consider a lighter attitude and less oppressive, more suitable design? Perhaps our own Angie Strauss could design a floral top?

How welcoming. How festive. How gay.

Think of the cops in Waikiki and the pink shorts worn by traffic control officers in Bermuda.

Love to all,

*Ross Robinson
NOTL*

NOTL should **make masks mandatory**

Dear editor:

A concerning COVID-19 study, out of the USA, has alarming consequences for resident populations under 50,000 people.

To date the concentration of deaths have been in highly populated areas, New York city etc., however spikes in COVID-19 cases around the world are now being reported in less-populated areas as they open up their economies and transition back to normalcy.

The thinking at this juncture has been due to the combination and lack of, or use, of personal protective equipment (PPE).

As NOTL falls into the 50,000 and under category, a high-risk area due to our seniors population and influx of tourism, I would recommend a serious review by our town officials to make the wearing of face masks compulsory.

This would be of particular importance in the Heritage District and other targeted high-traffic areas where social distancing is nigh impossible.

Not to do so potentially exposes NOTL as a future hot spot statistic.

*Samuel Young
NOTL*



St. Andrew's Presbyterian Church would like to thank the NOTL Community for supporting our Strawberry Festival for over 35 years. Unfortunately, due to the current Covid-19 Pandemic situation and keeping in compliance with the Provincial and Municipal Governments regulations, we must cancel the Festival on June 20, 2020. Our congregation encourages you to extend your support to the local retailers, local farms, and farm employees. We look forward to community gatherings in the future, whenever that may be.



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NOTL copes w

St. Davids man designs plexiglass screens

Julia Sacco
The Lake Report

A St. Davids man is manufacturing clear plexiglass screens for small businesses as Niagara-on-the-Lake starts to open up again.

Leslie Mann, an architectural scale model builder, is putting his skills to use during the pandemic and helping small businesses adjust to new guidelines by offering plexiglass screens.

Unable to focus on his main business of creating models during the pandemic, Mann decided to use his resources and knowledge of acrylic plastics and styrene to aid the community.

"Seeing other businesses that were switching over because they didn't have their main focus on what they were doing, like the breweries making hand sanitizers, I was thinking what can I do sitting around with my shop," said Mann.

"Going into retail shops



Leslie Mann is crafting plexiglass barriers in his basement workshop. SUPPLIED

and seeing haphazard screens and plastic hanging from the ceiling I thought, 'Well I can do that.'"

Mann aims to provide small businesses without suppliers of plexiglass with useful screens to protect both workers and customers.

With a workshop in his basement, Mann uses his own machinery to custom

cut the sheets of plexiglass, cleans up edges to create a smooth finish and then either drills mounting wires to go up to the ceiling or makes it mountable for a countertop.

"I'm not mass producing a certain size or anything. If a business calls and gives me the requirements then that's what I'll make," he said.

Mann has already created a screen to install at the Niagara Pumphouse Arts Centre and has volunteered to build a model of the new proposed St. Davids swimming pool for fundraising.

To get in touch with Mann about his plexiglass screens, contact him by email at models-bymann@gmail.com or 416-315-7086.

NOTL expected to pass new cannabis bylaw

Richard Harley
Editor

Town council is expected to finalize a cannabis bylaw next week.

With the impending new bylaw, cannabis growers in Niagara-on-the-Lake will face new restrictions.

The proposed bylaw would affect all rural lands throughout NOTL, with the aim of introducing increased setback requirements between cannabis cultivation, production and processing facilities, and sensitive land uses.

With the bylaw, new greenhouse operators will be required to be a minimum of 300 metres from urban areas, buildings and other sensitive land uses.

There was some debate at council's committee of the whole Monday night about the distance — whether it should be 150, 300 or 500 metres.

Lord Mayor Betty Disero said the 300-metre setback



Cannabis grows at Tweed Farms. FILE PHOTO/RICHARD HARLEY

is a "defendable" decision, while limiting the amount of area that would be impacted by cannabis grow operations.

The main concern people have with the operations, she said, is odour and light — and the NOTL brand, "in terms of being quaint and pretty."

"The 300-metre setback will give us a really strong buffer area that's defend-

able," she said.

Coun. Wendy Cheropita asked council to amend the bylaw to be 490 metres, but was defeated.

Disero said at 500 metres, if it was ever challenged it would be "thrown out of court."

She said it would be nice, but pointed out town planning staff said it would frustrate federal regulation.

"I defend the position of the town if it's defendable, but for something that's not defensible, why would I go to the expense and stress and fight if our own planning staff says you cannot frustrate the federal regulation? I think the 300 metres is good, defensible and it limits the amount of area that would be impacted," Disero said.

During this time of uncertainty, please remember to support the local

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Answer: A fraction

Answered first by: Margie Enns

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The Gaio family: Hailey, Walter, Ryan, Katherine and Danielle. SUPPLIED

NOTL farming family auditions for spot on **Family Feud** Canada

Gaio family from Niagara-on-the-Lake need support via social media for chance at starring role

Jessica Maxwell
The Lake Report

A Niagara-on-the-Lake family has passed the first few hurdles as they audition to be contestants on the next season of "Family Feud Canada."

The Gaio family is hoping to represent farming families in NOTL on the show. Their tender fruit farm is on Concession 1.

Walter Gaio is a second-generation farmer, born and raised in town. The hopeful contestants also include his wife Katherine and children Ryan, Danielle and Hailey.

Ryan said Danielle got the ball rolling by submitting an application describing her family but didn't tell them about it until the call came in for the first audition.

"I think she just saw a commercial or something that was like, 'Family Feud, we're looking for people for season two, you should apply,'" he said.

"A few weeks later she got an email and it was the CBC producers and they said we want to get to know more about our family."

At this point Danielle had to let her family know about the application because the

producers requested a meeting with them.

Ryan said the family was shocked and excited about the opportunity.

The Gaio family was asked to prepare an introduction for each family member and they also came up with a song to the tune of Old MacDonald to talk about themselves and being a farming family in Niagara-on-the-Lake.

The first round of auditions involved a video chat with producers asking the Gaio family questions about their habits and personalities.

"Things like, who in your family would be the most likely to, I don't know like, get in trouble at the bar or something like that," Ryan said. "So we each had to answer who we thought and why."

He said the family had a lot of fun with the experience. "It was so surreal, but it was very cool."

A few weeks later, the family received another email congratulating them because the producers enjoyed their first chat and wanted to see them play a practice game.

The Gaio family played their practice game on Friday, June 12, against a family from Saint John, N.B.

In this second round of auditions, the family was asked to come up with a more elaborate family introduction, said Hailey.

She said they had a lot of fun using the tune of the song "YMCA," changing the lyrics to "GAIO" and adding lines about her family members.

Now, the support turns to social media. Ryan said the producers encouraged the family to share their journey on social media as they want to see what kind of support they would get.

"I don't believe they've ever had a family from Niagara-on-the-Lake on 'Family Feud Canada' so we thought it would be really exciting that we would be the first to represent farming and people born and raised in this small town," Ryan said. "Hopefully we get the chance to represent NOTL."

"We're getting so much love on Facebook," Hailey said. "It's nice to see all these people sharing and liking (our posts) and thinking it's so cool."

"It just shows how close the community of Niagara is and how much people actually know us and feel that we would be a good fit. It's just nice to feel the

love," she said.

"I remember growing up, how cool it was to kind of know everybody that you lived around, just from being in Niagara-on-the-Lake and also farming."

Hailey said it means a lot to her and her family to "show that we respect our family, we respect our community and especially the farmers who allow us to be able to eat fresh all the time and the hard work they put into it."

"So often farms are a family-run, all-hands-on-deck kind of operation. Of course, none of us does as much as my dad does, but we do like to kind of think of it as a family venture," Ryan said.

"Everyone chips in in their own sort of way. So, it would be nice to represent that aspect of farming as well, that kind of community that surrounds it," he said. "It's not just the person in the fields, but that whole network of family that goes into running it."

Ryan said NOTL residents looking to show their support can post on Family Feud Canada's social media pages that they would like to see the Gaio family represent Niagara-on-the-Lake.

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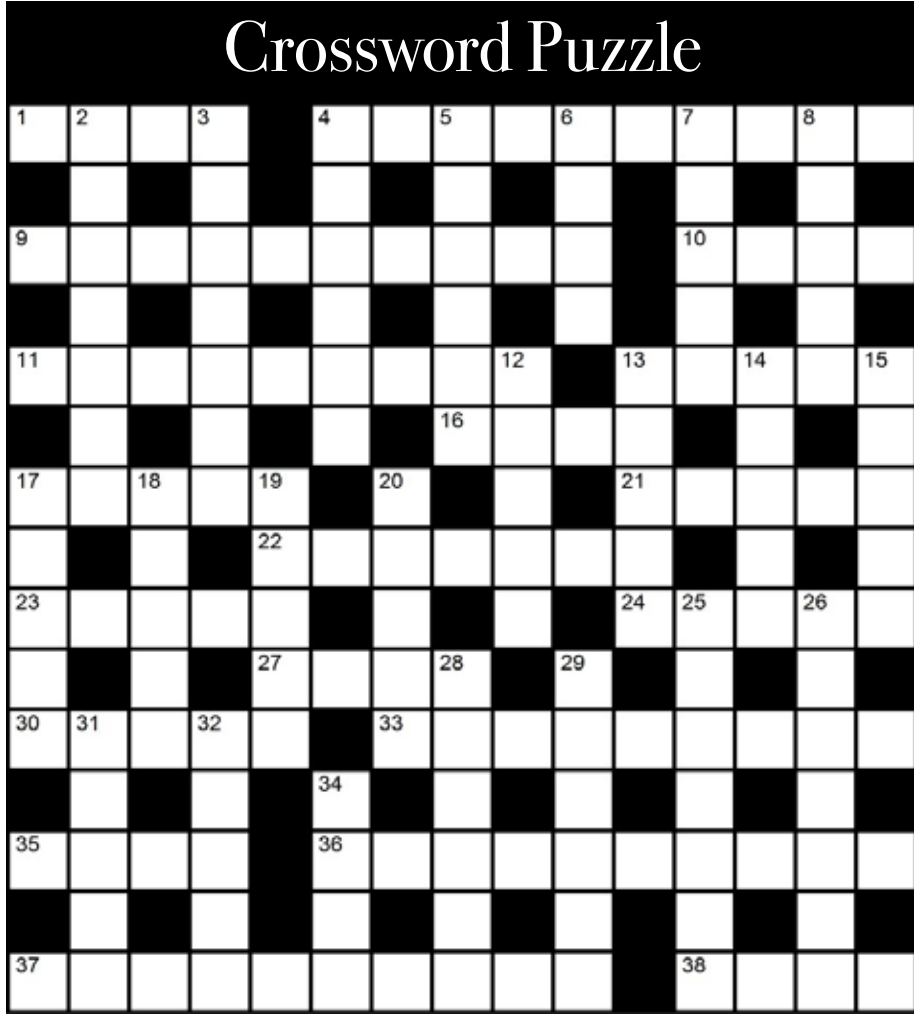
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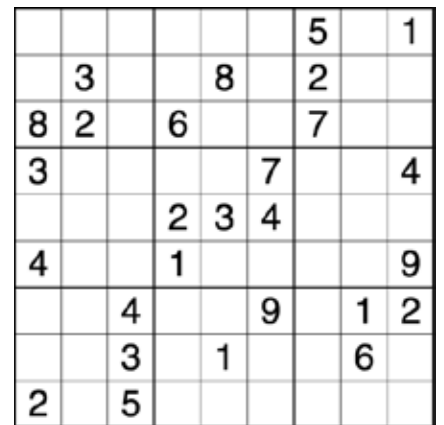
Have some fun

The Lake Report is looking for puzzle makers who would like to help develop this page. We are seeking both standard and cryptic crossword writers. editor@niagaranow.com

- Across**
- Egg-shaped (4)
 - Occurring after one's death (10)
 - Kind of engineer (10)
 - First son of Adam and Eve (4)
 - Six (4-5)
 - Also-ran (5)
 - Garment of ancient Rome (4)
 - Nobles (5)
 - Accustom (5)
 - Sailor (7)
 - Caterpillar (5)
 - Paces (5)
 - Harmonize (4)
 - Plot of ground (5)
 - Monarch (9)
 - Old Peruvian (4)
 - Immeasurably deep (10)
 - Overstate (10)
 - Indifferent (2-2)
- Down**
- Small community (7)
 - Satan (7)
 - Portion of time (6)
 - Small bag (6)
 - Consecrated (4)
 - Former Portuguese territory in S China (5)
 - Join (5)
 - Name of a thing (5)
 - Dens (5)
 - Gravy (5)
 - Staggers (5)
 - Coral builder (5)
 - White heron (5)
 - Shatter (5)
 - Golf clubs (5)
 - Lattice (7)
 - Winged horse (7)
 - Against (6)
 - Previously (6)
 - Addition (5)
 - Loud, resonant sound (5)
 - Showing unusual talent (4)



Last issue's answers



NOTL library summer program is one for the books

Jessica Maxwell
The Lake Report



Kasia Dupuis reads Art's Supplies by Chris Tougas to the kids in the park.
FILE PHOTO/BRITTANY CARTER

Keeping kids reading this summer is a priority for the Niagara-on-the-Lake Public Library.

Online registration for this year's Summer Reading Program opens June 18. All are welcome to read, learn and connect with the library.

The library will offer daily online activities, kits for curbside pickup, virtual book buddies and an online summer camp, all free.

Kasia Dupuis, the children's library service associate, said the focus while revamping the children's summer programs at the library was not just about filling the hole or patching up what has changed in offerings for those kids normally coming into the library.

"I'm trying to make it our usual summer reading program just as engaging under

the capacity that we are able to operate," Dupuis said.

"We have put together a robust and engaging program to keep the learning, reading and connection happening all summer long," she said in an email.

Read for Beads, a program started at the library last year, provided an incentive for each book a child read. As they finished books and tracked them in a reading passport, they

received beads to add to a necklace.

Dupuis said the program was very popular, with some children finishing two or three necklaces in the summer of 2019.

This was "awesome from a library perspective because that means they're reading in the summer, which is our main goal," she said.

Read for Beads was supposed to continue this sum-

mer, but due to COVID-19 restrictions the program needed to be made accessible without kids coming into the library.

While trying to determine how this would work, Dupuis said it changed how they will operate the Summer Reading Program for 2020.

"It developed into, well if they have to come to the library for curbside pickup of their books and their

beads, why don't we include a kit every couple weeks that will have some activities and some resources that they can work from home with," she said.

Over the summer, each child who registers for the reading program will receive five kits available for pickup bi-weekly.

Each kit will contain a book that the child can keep, their Read for Reads that they'll track in an online reading tracker and some activity packages that will have directions. The library will also post videos online for more direction on the activities.

She said all the online components have been made child-friendly and accessible so that kids can track their books and engage online safely and independently.

Last year, the summer reading program had 110 kids registered and Dupuis said the library is hoping

to match that or have even more involved.

The Virtual Micro Bits summer camp evolved from existing programs at the library called Tinker Thinker Thursdays and Code Club.

Dupuis said a micro bit is, "basically a chip board that is like a little tiny computer. It's very simple for kids to start understanding coding language and how computers work."

NOTL Library staff member Christine Reganti will facilitate the camp through video calls on Zoom, giving kids instruction and projects to work on offline.

"We're going to miss not seeing all the kids over the summer at the library, because when school's out the library is the place to be," Dupuis said.

"We wanted to at least keep that connection open so that there's some sense of normalcy in summer 2.0."

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Dr. Brown: There's a long list of after effects for COVID patients



Dr. William Brown. FILE

Dr. William Brown
Special to The Lake Report

Patients, who recover from COVID-19 – especially those sick enough to need care in an intensive care unit and assisted ventilation – often report fatigue, trouble focusing and thinking clearly, symptoms that are common in non-COVID patients who spent much more than a week in ICU on a ventilator.

Those symptoms following discharge from ICU are usually preceded in the ICU by what's been aptly called "ICU encephalopathy" – fluctuating consciousness and confusion – the cause of which is complex.

ICUs are busy, noisy and disorienting places to be. Making matters worse is the fact that patients are usually placed on multiple drugs including sedatives, opioids, antibiotics, corticosteroids, drugs to control blood pressure and arrhythmias, clot preventing drugs and sometimes in this pandemic, experimental drugs.

With so many drugs, complex interactions between drugs and impairments in the normal breakdown

and excretion of those drugs, make the effects of specific medications sometimes very unpredictable, especially in those patients whose liver and kidneys may not be functioning normally.

The result is that many patients become confused, disoriented and even combative to the point of trying to pull out their endotracheal tubes, arterial and venous lines – making physical restraint necessary.

Other factors contribute to the encephalopathy. A short list might include sepsis from acquired bacterial infections in the ICU, fluctuating blood sugar levels, out of whack electrolytes and/or fluid balance, and subclinical ischemic or hemorrhagic strokes, heart attacks and heart failure and hypoxemia. The list goes on.

It's obvious from even such an abbreviated list that managing patients in intensive care units is tough. It's the perfect storm of very sick, often elderly patients, challenges identifying and effectively managing so many factors in the face sometimes of failure of one or more organs and sometimes, simply not knowing what can or should or should not be done. That's life in the ICU.

Bless those physicians, nurses and technologists who work in them for what they do, even if they don't always get it right or even understand what went wrong in the rush to manage

so many very sick patients. The last was certainly the case with COVID-19 in the early stages of this pandemic.

The high incidence of ICU encephalopathy goes a long way to explain why so many patients following discharge report problems with their memory, thinking and trouble sleeping, including nightmares.

Given that much of the energy and resources in the health care system have focused on tamping down the spread of the pandemic using isolation and social distancing and acute care of the most ill, it's not surprising that little attention has been given so far to the long-term consequences for COVID-19 on survivors, especially the sickest – those managed in ICUs on assisted ventilation.

As yet it's too early to tell what the outcome may be for the encephalopathy associated with intensive care and COVID-19, but if it's anything like the usual encephalopathy associated with intensive care, the prognosis for recover to pre-COVID-19 levels of cognitive function, is not good, especially for older patients.

Other common post-ICU discharge symptoms include constant tiredness and weakness. In some cases, the weakness is directly related to the use of certain drugs such as neuromuscular blocking agents and corticosteroids.

Another problem that sometimes emerges is weakness and loss of sensation in the distribution of the ulnar nerve in the arm or the common peroneal nerve in the leg directly related to pressure on the nerves – in the case of the ulnar nerve in the region of the elbow or the knee region in the case of the common peroneal nerve. The latter can cause a "drop foot" (inability to cock the foot up). Both neuropathies usually recover, at least partially.

There's still a lot to be learned about COVID-19, but already it's clear – this virus is a potential killer for the most vulnerable.

And for those who survive the worst, there may be important and disabling sequelae. In the absence then of an effective vaccine or antiviral drug, the tools that work are preventive: awareness of the risks, isolation, social distancing and frequent testing, especially of those who work in long-term care facilities, despite the understandable pressures to reopen.

In the coming months we'll find out more about the nature, frequency and severity of the long-term consequences of this pandemic.

Dr. William Brown is a professor of neurology at McMaster University and co-founder of the Info-health series held on the second Wednesday of each month at the Niagara-on-the-Lake Public Library.

NOTL flags are ready for pickup Saturday

Kevin MacLean
Managing Editor

You can expect to see the Niagara-on-the-Lake flag flying all around NOTL this weekend.

Norm Arsenault's project to have residents show off their NOTL pride by literally flying the flag culminates Saturday when he and a team of volunteers will be distributing the flags at the community centre.

The project required at least 200 orders but residents and businesses ordered more than double that number. The blue three-by-five-foot ensigns cost \$25 and all proceeds go to support the NOTL 809 Newark Royal Canadian Air Cadet Squadron.

Anyone who ordered a flag has been advised of their pickup time slot for between 9 a.m. and noon on Saturday, said Arsenault, a NOTL town councillor.



Norm Arsenault with NOTL flag. DIANE ARSENAULT PHOTO



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NOTL restaurants prepare to **open patios**

Continued from Front Page

said. "They're discouraging from any sort of area where you're waiting, sitting or congregating."

Using reservations will help to ensure time and space between customers.

"We just don't want people to keep walking up, hoping to get in," she said and is "cautiously optimistic" everything will run smoothly. "We ended up with about 14 tables, so it's not a bad little size to start with."

The patio will also be open for service at The Old Firehall in St. Davids, says owner Chris Rigas.

Regular operating hours from 11 a.m. to 9 p.m. will resume and the restaurant will also continue takeout and delivery for customers.

Reservations will be required for the most part, says Rigas, but if there are walk-ups and tables are available, the Old Firehall will try to accommodate patrons.

He said reservations will help ensure staff members have enough time to practise



proper health and safety procedures.

"You have to give yourself time to be able to flip a table and sanitize it," Rigas said.

"Ideally, the restaurant is designed to be full and you want to flip tables as fast as you can," he said, "but we gotta deal with what we gotta deal with right now and then moving forward hopefully restrictions are eased a little bit."

"The big issue is like, what do you do as a restaurant," Rigas said. "You're limited space, you're trying to pay your bills, trying to pay your staff, you're trying to make some money for yourself."

However, he is happy restaurants are now able to serve more customers.

"I'll just take whatever they give us right now. At

this point it's, how much longer can they expect people to go without income and continually paying their bills," he said.

"We have property taxes, utility bills, telephone lines, cable bills, that's all getting paid still. Hopefully the locals will support us and hopefully we get some tourism business in town and it at least helps us salvage somewhat of a season here," Rigas said.

The Olde Angel Inn is gearing up and getting ready to make sure potential patio service is delivered as safely and as distanced as possible, manager Audrey Tardif said.

"We're waiting to hear back from the town about opening up a makeshift patio area," she told The Lake Report Tuesday. "We're hoping to get some sort of outdoor seating as soon as we can."

If the outdoor patio space is approved, Tardif said the restaurant is ready to move forward on Friday. Takeout will continue through the front door rather than the side window to ensure physical distancing of customers.

"We've been talking about this for over two weeks now hoping to get the green light at some point so that when it came, we were ready," she said. "We have new policies, procedures and rules. We definitely have everything in place for when we're ready."

"If everyone gets a little chance to enjoy some piece of summer and we get to help do that safely, then we're ready and we're excited."

This would involve outdoor patio service operating on a first come, first served basis with tables at a safe distance. Customers will be encouraged to view the menu on their phones so there is less contact made, but disposable menus will be available as well.

"We do believe we will have some sort of time limit so that we can get as many people in as we can, so everyone gets a chance to enjoy some sort of the new normal," Tardif said.

"We want everyone to get the chance to enjoy it, whether it be for half an hour or an hour and half."

Tardif said the Olde An-

gel Inn is feeling good moving forward and appreciates how much the municipality has worked with the businesses in town.

"They've been working hand in hand with small businesses. It doesn't go unnoticed and it is appreciated," Tardif said.

"Every time they chat about something or they come to some sort of decision, we've been very made aware and it's been great," she said. "They're doing what they can."

Jovie Joki, owner of The Irish Harp, said the mayor, town CAO and another town staff member visited the pub to look at the back parking lot for use as a patio space.

She said the parking lot was recently redone so patio set-up will include spacing tables two metres apart in the new space.

"The front patio is pretty good with the six feet apart, so we'll only be sitting parties that are together at each spot," Joki said.

As soon as it was announced that Niagara was

moving into Stage 2, the phone starting ringing at the Irish Harp.

"We've already had calls for bookings this weekend for reservations for the patio," Joki told The Lake Report Monday night.

"It's great that they support the Harp and they love it so much," she said, "but with only so limited seating, it's going to be hard to accommodate."

"I don't even have the tables yet, I've got to find that, which I'm trying to work on," she said. "Then getting the staff is the other issue. It's very short notice."

Along with opening the patio at the end of the week, takeout will continue at the Irish Harp. Even though takeout orders have increased with the warmer weather, "it certainly doesn't compare to our volume of anything we get inside, but it plugs the holes," she said.

Joki said it will be nice to have people coming to enjoy the pub patio, to see their regulars and have somewhat of a pub atmosphere.

Restaurants can apply to **extend** patios

Richard Harley
The Lake Report

Food and drink establishments in Niagara-on-the-Lake can now start applying to expand patios on private and municipal space, the town announced Tuesday.

The expansions will come into effect Friday, pending town approval, which businesses can obtain by completing the town's temporary patio permit application form.

Business owners must ensure they are "in compliance with guidelines provided by the town, the province, and the Alcohol and Gaming Commission of Ontario regarding size.

Disero said she, interim CAO Sheldon Randall and the town's director of planning have been going out to discuss the situation with restaurant owners and that she would be calling businesses to let them know they can apply.

"I'll be calling myself



The Sandtrap Pub & Grill on Mary Street is building a new patio in its parking lot. JESSICA MAXWELL

tomorrow to tell them that they should be applying for space, public or private, although I suspect will be mostly private property," she said.

The town is also considering closing side streets near Queen Street, to keep parking and traffic open on the main strip.

"For example, let's say Victoria Street on the north side, if we close from Pie'za Pizza to Queen, it will still allow ... people to stop and rest and not be so crowded on Queen Street. But yet it

still allows for parking and traffic on Queen. So it's something we're looking at trying," Disero said.

She said there has been mixed reaction as to whether the town should close Queen Street.

"It is a really mixed bag down there in terms of positions, I guess, with respect to Queen Street closed or not. And we also would have to deal with tenants' parking, because there is a significant number of tenants that actually live on second and in

some case, third floors at the stores that are there," she said.

Bylaw officers will be following up with any complaints about the operation of the patios, he said. Another task for the town will be to explain to anyone opening a patio that it's temporary.

Randall said the process shouldn't be too complex.

"To me, it doesn't seem like it's going to be overly complicated. It's just the volume that we're gonna have to deal with. Again, we may require some of our staff to work overtime and we may have to put some temporary additional resources to it."

He urged restaurants to start the process right away. "We encourage any restaurant that's considering creating outdoor patio space to start the process as soon as they can."

Read the full story at www.niagaranow.com/news.phtml/4023



Mary Powers won the Tuesday putting contest at the NOTL Golf Club. SUPPLIED/SHARRON MARLOW

Henry, Mezaros lead men's league action

Kevin MacLean
Managing Editor

Mike Henry and Jim Mezaros led the way in NOTL Golf Club men's league action last week, scoring 22 points apiece.

He urged restaurants to start the process right away. "We encourage any restaurant that's considering creating outdoor patio space to start the process as soon as they can."

Mezaros also won low gross, shooting a 1-over par 37.

Thanks to some stellar birdies, Bill Baitinger, Glen Murray and Alan Robb scooped \$60 in net skins. Gross skins, worth \$20, went to Mark Derbyshire, Paul Dickson, Murray and Robb.

Meanwhile, 18 hole ladies held a putting contest Tuesday and Mary Powers won top honours. Tied for second were Brenda Bell, Cathy Murray and Peggy Larder. Other winners were Valerie Chubey and Patty Garriock.


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Obituary

Patricia MacDougall

MacDOUGALL, Patricia Anne (nee Lowrey)

It is with profound sadness that the family of Patricia Anne MacDougall announce her passing on Sunday, June 14th at St. Catharines General Hospital in her 77th year.

Beloved wife of Donald for nearly 54 years. Dear mother of Allen (Andrea) MacDougall, Elizabeth (Ray) Lamb, and Nancy (Finlay) Keir. Cherished grandmother of Gavin and Claire MacDougall and Adam Lamb. Dear sister of Norma Jane (Blair) Harber and Howard (Wilma) Lowrey. Predeceased by her parents Howard and Norma Lowrey and her sisters Lonna (Edward) Andrusiw and Nancy (Ron) Dunn. Much loved by many nieces and nephews and sisters-in-law Mary and Mavis.

Pat enjoyed spending time with her family, friends and pets (especially her cat Furgus). She took a special interest in the athletic and artistic activities of her children and grandchildren. Pat had the ability to light up a room with her smile and her laughter was contagious. She had a passion for cooking, baking, canning, and gardening; she loved to entertain friends and host family gatherings.

Pat was a lifelong resident of St. Davids and faithful member of the congregation at St. Davids-Queenston United Church where she also served on the Board of Session. She was also a past member of the St. Davids Lionesses. Her inspiration, dedication, guidance, and love of life will be missed by both family and many friends.

There will be a celebration of Pat's life to be held at a later date. Cremation has taken place. For those who wish, memorial donations may be made to the St. Davids-Queenston United Church or to the Heart and Stroke Foundation of Canada.

Special thanks to Dr. Robert Mackett, Dr. John Nolan, and the cardiac care teams at the St. Catharines and Hamilton General Hospitals.

Arrangements entrusted to Morse & Son Funeral Home, 5917 Main St., Niagara Falls, Ontario

Memories, photo and condolences may be shared at www.morseandson.com



To share your memories of loved ones, email roblamond@niagaranow.com

Pig roast pop-up supports NOTL Museum

Brittany Carter
The Lake Report

PigOut Roasters will host a pop-up pig roast in support of the Niagara-on-the-Lake Museum on June 24.

After the COVID-19 pandemic forced postponement of Niagara Polo, one of the museum's biggest fundraisers, event partner PigOut reached out with the idea of a pop-up roast, the museum said.

The roast will be set up at Trinity Lutheran Church at 2027 Niagara Stone Rd. from 5 to 7 p.m., and the catering company will deliver orders to cars drive-thru style, the museum said in a news release.

Orders of fresh roasted



The NOTL Museum. FILE PHOTO/BRITTANY CARTER

pork on a bun with a side of apple and ginger slaw can be pre-purchased through the museum's online shop for \$10 each at <http://notl-museumshop.square.site/>.

The pandemic put a strain on revenue generation for the museum, the statement said. And though staff have been actively

trying to keep programming going through online interaction, the institution has been struggling to bring in enough revenue to support building upkeep and maintain the collection.

Unexpected costs have also added to the museum's financial strain, managing director and curator Sarah

Kaufman said.

"Over the last two months alone, we have had to replace one of our four furnaces and an air conditioning unit, our fire alarm panel did not survive a power surge during one of May's storms, and we have had to invest in PPE and equipment for reopening the museum," she said.

"These unexpected costs have come at a time when we are closed to the public and we are all trying to stay afloat."

Kaufman said the museum also has a great selection of gifts and books for purchase online, "for those who want to further support the preservation of our community's history."

Opa! Greek sandwich shop opens downtown

Richard Harley
The Lake Report

Niagara-on-the-Lake has a new place for a quick Greek meal — Gryos on the Lake.

The new sandwich shop has taken over a store called "The Sandwich Shop."

Owner John Paraskevopoulos says the goal was to bring in something quick and tasty, that's family-owned and has a taste of home.

"We opened up on Friday, actually, a few days ago," he said Monday, during an interview.

"We thought there was demand for some fast food, comfort food in Niagara-on-the-Lake."

He said his family has



John Paraskevopoulos, owner of Gyros on the Lake. RICHARD HARLEY

a lot of experience with Greek food, preparing for and being heavily involved in the St. Catharines Greek Festival.

"So we will learn and we'll take that experience," he said.

He said a new sign is on

the way for the building and it should arrive next week.

He said the previous shop closed due to COVID-19.

"They couldn't do any more business because of the pandemic and they left the building, they left the equipment and everything,

so we figured it's easy enough to set up a sandwich shop again."

So far the opening week has been steady, he said.

"The weekend was overwhelming ... even today, I mean, it's going well, we're happy so far," he said.

"It's a family-oriented business, so we don't have the overhead other people have," he added.

He said the goal is to bring a little bit of Greece to town.

"It's just something we have in Greece, street food, street prices," he said.

"It reminds you of the streets of a little island, and Niagara-on-the-Lake is beautiful just like an island."

Niagara Parks to begin phased-in approach to opening services this Friday

Brittany Carter
The Lake Report

Niagara Parks will begin to "phase in" the opening of many public services beginning Friday.

Following Monday's provincial statement green-lighting the Niagara Region for Stage 2 of the recovery plan, Niagara Parks announced its plan to reopen its culinary, attractions, retail and transportation services.

With the planned reopen-

ing of services, visitors can expect comprehensive new health and safety measures, including new training protocols and cleaning schedules, prominent signage, and modifications to sites that will ensure safe physical distancing requirements, a media release from Niagara Parks said.

Openings will take place on June 19, 26 and July 1.

The first to open this Friday will be the Falls Incline Railway, Queen Victoria Place Gift Shop

and Tim Hortons, Grand View Marketplace Ice Cream and Pop-Up Gift Shop and WildPlay Zipline to the Falls.

On June 26, the attraction and gift shops of the Whirlpool Aero Car, Butterfly Conservatory and White Water Walk will open.

And on July 1, Niagara Parks will reopen the WEGO Green Line, Journey Behind the Falls, Niagara's Fury and Table Rock, including the restaurant, market and shop,

Queen Victoria Place Restaurant, Grand View Shop and Restaurant, the Floral Showhouse, Old Fort Erie, Laura Secord Homestead and McFarland House.

The welcome centres at Murray Street, Grand View and Table Rock will also reopen July 1.

Each site must follow a list of health and safety measures which have been established by Niagara Parks. Measures include enhanced cleaning, disinfecting and sanitizing,

ambassadors on-site to assist with social distancing and the application of hand sanitization and the distribution of masks for guests.

Physical barriers, stanchions and sanitizing stations will be installed, and sites will have reduced capacity to maintain physical distancing measures.

Niagara Parks Police will continue to monitor public areas to enforce physical distancing and ensure the safety of visitors.



Niagara Parks is slowly opening parks and attractions. FILE PHOTO



Pauline Reimer Gibson
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FEATURED LOCAL STORY

Niagara's newest police recruits

Service uses NOTL as training ground for police dogs and their handlers

Kevin MacLean
Managing Editor

Two of the Niagara Regional Police department's newest recruits were busy last week foraging through a park and forested area in Niagara-on-the-Lake, putting into practice the skills they've learned through an intense training program.

When they graduate in early July, they'll be ready to do their part to track down criminals and help their fellow officers serve and protect the people of Niagara.

Atlas and Ranger are no ordinary recruits, though. The youthful German shepherds are highly trained newcomers to the Niagara police service's seven-member K9 unit.

Together with their respective handlers, Const. Dan Campbell and Const. Rob Viger, they are all learning the ropes, so they'll be ready when called upon.

The 15-week course trains the dogs and their handlers simultaneously in a wide variety of disciplines, from tracking missing people to subduing criminal suspects.

The handlers and their dogs are a team and one important skill the handlers learn is recognizing "the subtle cues of their dog's body language to tell you something that they can't verbally communicate," says Const. Jesse Hicks, one of the canine unit's assistant trainers.

While these dogs live at home with their handlers, they are not pets – they're working dogs and considered an important part of the police service's repertoire.

While most police work portrayed on TV or in movies bears little resemblance to what happens in the real world, the job police canines do is just like the Hollywood version, with



Top and far right: Const. Dan Campbell and Atlas. Bottom left: Const. Rob Viger and Ranger. Middle: Const. Jesse Hicks with Kona. JANICE WHITE/SUPPLIED

one big difference: officers don't have the dog sniff an article of clothing before they start tracking, says Hicks.

Instead, the dog is taken to the "point last seen" and the animal put its nose on that spot and "they start searching for the human odour in that spot to start tracking."

The dog is able to isolate that odour and is trained to follow scent patterns, look for ground disturbances like crushed grass, even "skin cells of the person that's walking," Hicks says.

"We're training them to isolate that scent pattern of human odour and ground

disturbance to follow that odour for sometimes upwards of two kilometres on the ground."

All seven of Niagara's police dogs can track humans. But they're also dual purpose, Hicks says, noting five of them can track narcotics and two can sniff out explosives. The K9 unit covers the entire region, from Hamilton and Haldimand to the U.S. border.

Most police dogs are German shepherds, though the Niagara service also uses some Belgian malinois, another breed known for their high energy and drive, says Hicks, who has been with

the force for 15 years, seven with the K9 unit.

Two of the dogs in the unit now are purebred Belgian malinois. Hicks's dog, Kona, is a shepherd-Belgian malinois mix, as is Ender, the dog of unit commander Sgt. Scott Johnstone. Kona retires in a year or two and it's department policy that Hicks will also move on to another position at that time.

The force regularly uses Niagara-on-the-Lake for training. "Given the geography, with the forests there, the parks and tall grasses, the area provides a variety of different terrains and environmental condi-

tions for the dogs to work through," Hicks says.

"A lot of our course and a lot of our training is exposing the dogs to what they are going to come into operationally," he says, and Niagara-on-the-Lake offers everything the department needs.

The dogs begin their careers when they're one to two years old and retire around age 10.

For officers, working with the K9 unit is much different than other types of police work. "It's very, very rewarding," says Hicks.

"It can be challenging initially. There is a lot to learn both for the dog and


the handlers, but once you master that tradework and that understanding of being able to read the dog, you work together as a team."

"When you're able to help people or find bad guys, it's like no other feeling."

The unit is frequently used to search for missing people, "anywhere from infants to the elderly."

"Being able to use our training and the tools and skills that we have to locate someone before they're hurt or seriously injured is definitely one of the most rewarding things about the job," Hicks says.


"It's the type of stuff that gives you goosebumps."



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