



Mask trees take root in NOTL | Page 15

Town could shut down parking along Queen Street



Queen Street in Niagara-on-the-Lake was packed with visitors again last Saturday. RICHARD HARLEY

Richard Harley
The Lake Report

Niagara-on-the-Lake is considering banning all parking in the urban area of Old Town, as town staff struggle to find ways to keep tourists out.

“The nice weather that we

experienced last Saturday created a lot of challenges for enforcement staff,” the town’s interim CAO Sheldon Randall said during a special council meeting Monday.

“Tourism is anticipated to increase as the weather gets better. Staff are very

concerned with the risk this brings to the town staff and residents. Quite honestly we’re shocked at the complete disregard of the provincial orders and recommendations from the province. It’s outstanding, I just, I can’t get my head past it.”

Randall said the issue of tourists is being discussed and the town is considering further options to get the message across that people should visit later.

“Staff may also consider a complete ban on parking

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Jane Carson is one of NOTL’s nurse practitioners. SUPPLIED

On NOTL’s front line Jane Carson

This story is the second in a series, profiling all three of Niagara-on-the-Lake’s nurse practitioners. This week’s profile, Jane Carson, is one of two nurse practitioners at Niagara North Family Health Team’s Virgil site.

Richard Harley
The Lake Report

Nurse practitioners across the country are living in a new world. They’re finding new ways to help people from a safe distance, prioritizing in-person visits the best they can, and suiting up each day in case COVID-19 finds its way in the door.

And while many problems have gotten better, such as shortages of protective equipment, with time

Marching on, treating patients from a distance is only getting harder. And some things can’t be put on hold, so they’re having to see more patients in person.

Jane Carson, 54, has been at the Virgil clinic a total of eight years, with one year off in the middle doing palliative care in the community.

“It’s very different than it was before COVID-19,” she

Continued on Page 11

Mayor makes video plea to tourists: Stay away

Kevin MacLean
Managing Editor

After another weekend onslaught of unwanted visitors to Niagara-on-the-Lake, Lord Mayor Betty Disero says she is not yet fed up but she is “on a mission” and won’t be distracted from trying to get people to stay home.

The Town of NOTL released a new video Wednesday afternoon featuring the lord mayor and acting senior enforcement officer Henry Boese warning of increased patrols and decreased patience.

With concerns about people who are asymptomatic or others who could spread COVID-19, Disero emphasized she wants people to postpone a visit to town.

“Come later on, once we’ve gotten beyond the coronavirus crisis,” she says in the video.

“We do not want to go through a second wave here,” Disero told The Lake Report in an interview.

The town has already declared a municipal state of emergency, closed municipal parking lots, public

washrooms and encouraged social distancing measures.

As well, last week the town installed electronic signs along roads into town asking visitors to stay home and warning that no public washrooms are available.

In the video, Disero outlines a list of concerns behind the town’s latest actions.

“We have been trying to act in a common sense approach,” she says.

“Do we know where tourists are coming from? Do

we know if they are coming from high-risk areas? Do we know if they may be asymptomatic? Do we know if they’ll be shopping at stores on Queen Street? Do we know what the impact will be should the virus spread throughout the community?”

Boese said deterrence and enforcement will be stepped up starting this week.

The town announced a week ago that it would have zero tolerance for people violating provincial orders about crowd sizes and social distancing. Fines of \$750 could be levied.



The municipality has put up signs to deter tourists from coming into town. RICHARD HARLEY



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Visitors still flocking to Niagara-on-the-Lake

Richard Harley
The Lake Report

An alarming number of people are still visiting Niagara-on-the-Lake, despite the town's efforts to discourage them.

Within an hour Saturday afternoon, The Lake Report surveyed 34 groups of people walking along Queen Street and found just six groups (20 per cent) from Niagara-on-the-Lake.

The others came from places like Toronto (9), Hamilton and Mississauga (7), Niagara Falls, St. Catharines and Welland (6), Burlington and Oakville (3), and others (3). Two groups refused to answer.

The visitors offered a variety of explanations: Supporting local wineries, the weather is too beautiful, didn't see the signs warning people to stay home, did see the signs but think it's safe to be outside at a distance.

One person also stated they think COVID-19 is a hoax meant to destroy the global economy and that he believes the virus was genetically engineered. He didn't clearly say who he thinks is responsible.

Niagara-on-the-Lake resident Leslie Hoadley and her son Sawyer were out doing a scavenger hunt while we were interviewing and talking. They were forced to walk on the side of the road instead of the sidewalks to avoid groups of people they said they suspected were not from town.

"It makes me feel discouraged that people are ignoring when we're just politely asking you to stay home. I'm not coming to their community," said Leslie.

She said it's frustrating to see people pulled over on the side of the Niagara Parkway reading books in a lawn chair and she wonders why people can't do that in their own neighbourhoods.

"I am shocked at how many people are walking around," she said. "Like yes, we're local, we're looking for something to do. You know what, this is my town, I should be allowed walk down my road."

While on the street The Lake Report came across



Niagara Falls residents Deb and Carm said they didn't see the signs coming into town, but were parked less than 200 metres away from one. RICHARD HARLEY

the town's interim CAO Sheldon Randall, who said it's alarming to see so many people ignoring orders to stay home and to avoid non-essential travel.

"It's a gong show out there," Randall said.

"I am surprised," he said. "I knew people would be coming to NOTL but I didn't think this many."

He's hoping the signs are working on some people. "If they weren't there, how many people would we have?"

Randall noted though there is no provincial rule saying people can't drive from community to community, people should stay home.

"We just can't accommodate the people that are here now. There's no washrooms, there's no place to get a drink. The last thing we need is them going into Valu-mart and causing problems for the businesses that are considered essential. So it's troubling, for sure."

He said Lord Mayor Betty Disero is reaching out to Premier Doug Ford to see if he will make an announcement to tell people not to travel to small communities.

"If NOTL is having this problem, I'm sure there's other communities in Ontario that are having the same problem," Randall said.

Randall said the town on Saturday signed a memorandum of understanding with Parks Canada so the



Queen Street was full of tourists Saturday, despite town efforts to tell people not to come. RICHARD HARLEY

town can enforce provincial orders on the federal agency's property as well.

"We're noticing that along John Street people are just moving the barricades out of the way and parking anyway, so we're going to try to do what we can do over in those locations. Again, just to deter people. We want you, just not now."

NOTL couple Brian and Anna Stemmler and their dog Abe were heading to the bank, walking on the road to avoid the flocks of

tourists. They said things were so busy that when a car stopped to let them cross the road, people on motorcycles behind the car started swearing and yelling at them and the person driving the car.

Another NOTL couple said they're concerned things are only going to get worse as the weather starts to get nicer.

Toronto couple John and Ruth Hannigan said they were in town to pick up wine from Jackson-Triggs

winery.

"We came down to pick up a dozen bottles of wine, curbside pickup. They put it in your trunk, so I don't think there's much danger of contact," John Hannigan said.

"Since we were down here, we came down, parked and have been walking up and down the main street. When it comes down to it, yeah, there's a sprinkling of people and it's nice to see, but people are not congregating or anything like that."

The couple are regular visitors to Niagara-on-the-Lake and had tuned in to the Shaw's "That's Shawbiz" online show on Wednesday.

They both said back home in Toronto the streets are mostly empty. They've been staying home most of the time, working from home, like everybody else, and said it was the first time they've been to NOTL since the beginning of the pandemic.

Both of them said they saw the signs warning people not to come into town, but they weren't worried about walking around.

"Outdoors as long as you keep your distance and that type of thing, I think it's relatively low risk," John said.

"It's not like we're descending and sticking around for any length of time. And it's a beautiful day," Ruth added.

Another couple, Allan and Maryanne, from Burlington, (they wouldn't provide their last names) said the signs were "quite evident," but also ignored them and took a walk.

"We see it as our exercise, like we're coming out for a walk, an urban walk. We're not going to go where we're told not to go. We're not going to try to get on the swings or anything. We're just going to walk on, keep our distance and just go for a walk," Maryanne said.

She did admit they know they shouldn't be going out for a walk in another municipality.

The Stemmlers noticed the crowds.

"I would prefer if people would stay home," Anna Stemmler said. "Because we are just coming here to the store, the bank, the post office, and we have to walk on the road."

A Toronto couple, who wouldn't give their names, said they found it weird that the signs said free parking if the town wants people to stay home.

"What I found super weird is if they want people to stay home, why is there free parking? On the parking meter it says free parking #stayhome," he said.

Another couple said they missed the signs.

"We're just here for the day, though. We just drove in this morning just to kind of get out of (home)," they said.

When asked how they can justify walking around another town, they said they're keeping their distance.

"We are following the six-foot protocol of staying away from other people. I suppose that's kind of our justification," said one of them.

In other areas of NOTL, parking lots were full of cars with people not seeming to know or care that there's a global pandemic.

One couple, Deb and Carm (last names) said they are from Niagara Falls.

"I know we're not supposed to be doing what we're doing, but there's also sanity," said Deb.

"And we're all losing our minds a little bit. So we're social distancing, we're not with anyone else, just the two of us that live together, and what are we hurting?"

Carm said he works for a municipality, but wouldn't say which one.

Both said they hadn't seen the signs, neither the ones the town put up last week at town entranceways, nor the one at Simcoe Park saying the park is closed.

"We saw the cars, and it was like, alright we can pull in here," Carm said.

The two were parked along the Niagara Parkway, less than 200 metres from one of the town's newly installed signs warning tourists to stay home.

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Vintage Hotels tycoon Jimmy Lai arrested after Hong Kong protests

Billionaire accused of participating in pro-democracy rallies

Kevin MacLean
Managing Editor



Jimmy Lai. SUPPLIED

Jimmy Lai, the billionaire tycoon behind Niagara-on-the-Lake's Vintage Hotels, has been arrested in Hong Kong, accused of participating in pro-democracy demonstrations last year.

Lai, 71, the twin brother of NOTL's Si Wai Lai, was released on bail and is scheduled to appear in court in May.

The crackdown is "obviously politically motivated," says Bob Jackson, CEO of Vintage Hotels.

"This isn't anything new to us. Mr. Lai has been a democracy proponent for many, many years and as such has been a target of the Chinese government," Jackson said in an interview.

He actually was arrested twice in the past two months related to protests on different dates in 2019. His first arrest came a little over a week after Lai wrote a Feb. 19 Wall Street Journal op-ed piece headlined "China's facade of stability."

In the past, Lai has been teargassed and his house has been firebombed, Jack-

son said. year, Jackson said. In Hong Kong, among Lai's holdings is the Apple Daily, a prominent pro-democracy tabloid newspaper.

Media in Hong Kong reported he was among 15 people, including a well-respected lawyer and several activists, who were rounded up on April 18 on suspicion of organizing, publicizing or taking part in several unauthorized assemblies in August and October 2019, according to a police statement.

Lai's latest arrest has provoked strong reactions in Canada, Hong Kong and internationally.

Canada's foreign affairs minister François-Philippe Champagne, issued a statement April 19 expressing concern about the arrests connected to "popular demonstrations that took place last year" and said the arrest "calls for close scrutiny."

He noted that with "hundreds of thousands of Canadians living in Hong Kong, we have a vested interest in Hong Kong's stability and prosperity — the foundation of which is its

relative autonomy and basic freedoms."

Champagne urged "all sides" to address the "legitimate concerns expressed during the 2019 protests."

His comments drew a loud rebuke from the Chinese embassy in Ottawa, accusing the Canadian government of "gross interference in China's internal affairs" over the arrest of the "rabble-rousers."

Also arrested with Lai were prominent lawyers Martin Lee and Margaret Ng, which prompted the London-based International Bar Association to call for all charges to immediately be dropped.

The South China Morning Post, an English-language newspaper in Hong Kong, reported that Lai has refused comment on the allegations.

However, Mark Simon, an executive with the tycoon's Next Digital Group, said the charges showed that in the midst of the COVID-19 pandemic, Beijing and the Hong Kong government just want "to stir the pot."

Town to open \$10 million line of credit

Richard Harley
The Lake Report

NOTL copes with COVID-19

The Town of Niagara-on-the-Lake will open a \$10 million line of credit with the Royal Bank of Canada, just in case.

The decision was approved Monday night during a special meeting of council and is intended to last until the end of 2020.

The line of credit will help the town deal with uncertainties over revenues from tax, water and wastewater payments, said treasurer Kyle Freeborn.

Lord Mayor Betty Disero said she can't envision a scenario in which the town would need to spend the full \$10 million. The town pays

no fees unless it dips into the line of credit.

"It is not a means to spend outside the existing approved budget," Freeborn said.

Because the town has waived penalties on late payments until June 30, it is planning in case people don't pay until then, or can't pay right away.

"We are not intending on using it unless we run into a cash flow problem. We have deferred late-fee interest payments on taxes and water payments until the end of June and so we are assuming people will delay paying their taxes until the

end of June," Disero said.

"We have to pay the region what we have collected on their behalf in May and this might leave us with not a lot of cash in the bank. That's when we would have to draw from the line of credit and repay it at the end of June when taxes are paid."

Freeborn said a line of credit withdrawal of \$1 million will cost the town about \$1,400 a month in interest, significantly less than late fees to Niagara Region, which would have been about \$12,500 monthly.

The reason RBC was chosen, Freeborn said, is

because it is town's current banking provider. The town consulted with financial experts who said there wouldn't be much difference in the interest rate with other financial institutions, he said.

He said many municipalities carry a line of credit under normal operating circumstances, so the town opted for something similar.

Right now Niagara Falls has a \$9 million line of credit, Pelham has \$7 million and is looking to go to \$11 million, and Port Colborne has \$4 million and is looking to increase it, Freeborn told council.



Niagara-on-the-Lake Escalates Deterrence of Visitors

Niagara-on-the-Lake has escalated efforts to deter out-of-town visitors from coming to Town during its State of Emergency. These measures became necessary because it was clear there were some still ignoring the Town's consistent message to "Stay Home."

The Town closed its public washrooms on March 17, yet Staff have been receiving recent reports of people urinating and defecating in public parks. This is simply not acceptable.

Residents may still walk within Town, but our consistent message of "Walk from Home" remains — exercise, don't socialize. Those wearing masks or gloves are reminded to dispose of these properly. It is never OK to leave home health care waste on the ground.

Visitors, we respectfully ask that you, too, walk from home and come back after our State of Emergency is lifted. Residents of neighbouring municipalities may still enter to quickly drop off essential supplies to vulnerable family members.

Please note that these signs have been strategically placed in areas that typically attract a high volume of visitors. This decision is in no way meant to slight any particular hamlet. "Local Traffic Only" applies to all of Niagara-on-the-Lake residents. We are all locals.

To review all Town updates related to COVID-19, read answers to frequently asked questions, and see up-to-date information on the status of Town services, please visit www.notl.com/COVID-19, or call 905-468-3266. Town Staff will continue to assist and serve citizens online and over the phone between the hours of 8:30 AM and 4:30 PM Monday to Friday. For immediate alerts, follow the Town on Facebook, Twitter and Instagram.

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POSITIVE POWER

Contributed by Patty Garriock

"Happiness is a perfume you cannot pour on others without getting a few drops on yourself." - Ralph Waldo Emerson.



Contributed by Norm Arsenaault:

Use hard plastic containers for your garbage instead of plastic bags. Dark plastics bags are not recyclable and always end up in the landfill. Do the same in your kitchen for food storage instead of plastic bags.

Editorials: Stay home, tourists

Kevin MacLean
Managing Editor

Please stay home.

Don't come to Niagara-on-the-Lake.

We really want you to visit, just not now. Another time. Please.

Those are the messages the Town of NOTL has been trying to get out to the masses. It's highly unusual that a town so reliant on tourism and visitors would suddenly start urging those same people to NOT come to NOTL.

But these are unusual times, as we all know. We have a vulnerable population and no one wants to see a large community outbreak of COVID-19.

Undoing decades of successful marketing – and getting through to people who are suffering cabin fever

and just want to get out of the house to enjoy the nice weather – will not happen overnight.

The town's advertising, the lord mayor and councilors admonishing visitors to stay away, and the electronic signs put up last week near the gateways to NOTL certainly will help somewhat.

However, as our story about scores of visitors to town last weekend shows, human nature being what it is, many people are just gonna do what they want.

So, what to do?

Continue to pound home the message that while (most of) Niagara-on-the-Lake welcomes visitors when the town is open for business, now is not the time to come here. Period.

No washrooms. Few restaurants open. No need to hop in the car and take

a leisurely drive along the uncrowded highways and byways to visit NOTL – or cottage country or any other similar destinations. (And if you do come, and you violate any of the provincial orders, be prepared to be ticketed. That could make it a pricey outing.)

Anything else?

Locally, the Niagara Parks Commission can get with the program and close access to its various parking lots, notably along the Niagara Parkway. It's singular, easy-to-miss signs in the green spaces saying the area is closed do nothing to deter the hordes who cruise the Parkway and stop to relax, have a picnic or enjoy the view.

The parks commission has shut access to the dock area in Queenston to deter crowds of fishing folk.

There seems to be no good reason to keep its other parking lots open. Doing so just encourages people to congregate in places where they really shouldn't. And closing them might help deter people from coming to explore NOTL.

Lastly, each of us can do our own small part: Tell your friends, relatives and loved ones to stay away. For now. Actively use your personal connections to let people know that, while Niagara-on-the-Lake would love to have them come visit, now simply is not the time.

Tell them and ask them to pass it on.

And maybe, in just a few more weeks, we'll be able to change our tune and invite the world to return to NOTL.

editor@niagaranow.com

NOTL's #1 newspaper turns two

Richard Harley
Editor

In positive, non-COVID-related news, Friday marks two years since the first issue of The Lake Report hit the streets of Niagara-on-the-Lake.

Wow. What a time it's been. It feels like forever ago, especially living in this new world. But all things aside, we want to take this

opportunity to thank all of our dedicated readers, writers, editors, volunteers and generous supporters.

And, of course, our advertisers, who have for the most part stuck with us through these immensely challenging times. We would not be able to provide NOTL's favourite newspaper to the residents of our town without your support.

So here's a look at some

of the amazing things we've done this year.

Our Falling into the Lake documentary about NOTL's eroding shoreline received more than 11,000 views on YouTube. We are proud.

We learned from a third-party readership survey that the overwhelming majority NOTL residents prefer The Lake Report for their NOTL news and information. It's a humbling feeling, and we

are very proud.

We've raised money for various charitable initiatives, such as supporting the NOTL Legion.

We've made great, long-lasting relationships with more residents of our town through covering their stories. Thanks for taking the time to talk with us.

This town matters to us, and we are grateful to be able to write about it.

Count blessings and stay positive through pandemic

Dear editor:

I read with interest The Lake Report story on April 9 about the racial profiling of some farm workers that has been occurring in Niagara.

How sad is this?

As serious as this pandemic is, and I am not discounting that, I feel it is being jet-fuelled by negativity and fear. There is no need to fear as long as we follow the well-defined rules that all of us have heard innumerable times.

Self-isolation is such a blessed relief from the harried, busy lives we were all

living prior to this virus.

One needs to take this precious time to count our blessings. I have been doing this and here are some of my findings:

* If you take a walk down by the lake and look out on the horizon, you will find, for the first time in many years, the absence of a yellow haze that ringed the water, reflecting the exhaust fumes of people traveling along the QEW to and from Toronto and beyond.

* The Salmon Derby has been cancelled, so our lakes will fill up with salmon and they will have an op-

portunity to regroup. (Sorry, salmon fishing people).

* No boats on the lake spewing their exhaust into the air and water.

* The birds are singing their little hearts out, not drowned out by airplanes flying overhead, although the odd Ornge air ambulance chopper drones over.

* My spring flowers are starting to poke their heads out of the ground and they are beautiful!

* I have a tree that is budding in my backyard and every morning as I sit to drink my coffee and read my Lake Report, I see the

buds slowly forming. (In the past, I would look at the tree buds one day and the next day (it seemed) they would be in full leaf!) Now I can watch them develop in real time.

* Our little dog is thrilled to have us home every day!

* Fill in your own blessings _____.

Now I know, we all have issues with this pandemic, but it is a world event, so we are all in it together. This is the way of life for many people in Third World countries or those refugees fleeing conflict, so I hope

we will have more tolerance for these people in the future.

After this is over, I hope we will NOT go back to normal, but back to a new normal wherein we will have more compassion for our lower-paid front-line workers such as our migrant farm workers, our nursing home staff (who in non-pandemic times have to work a day shift in one facility then go do an evening shift in another in order to make a decent living), all those who don't have the luxury to work from home and still get paid.

Many of our lower-paid workers are the ones who are getting us through this historical event and we must not forget what they did for us when it is over.

In conclusion, to quote Winston Churchill in his 1933 inaugural address: The only thing we have to fear is fear itself.

He got us through the Second World War, which was a fight for the very freedoms we all enjoy, but have temporarily lost. Count your blessings no matter how big or small.

Betty Ann Chandler
NOTL

Although our Branch is closed during the Covid-19 situation we will continue to provide support to our Veterans and their Families.

If you require any support please contact us by e-mail or phone message.

If you wish to speak with a person, we will be available Tuesdays between 11:00 a.m and 3:00 p.m. to take your calls.

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OPINION

COVID-19 recovery needs a **global** Marshall Plan

Dear editor:

The world will not be the same post COVID-19. Make no mistake, world economies have been devastated and business as usual will not return quickly.

Economic depression could follow if world governments do not respond, in concert, with a robust recovery plan on the order of magnitude of the European Plan aka the Marshall Plan following the Second World War. Nothing less will suffice and would only extend the suffering.

The recovery will be slow and prolonged, and it will most likely represent an L-shaped one, not a V or U shaped one.

We will all be required to participate and, above all, be patient. Do not panic; we will get through this.

Key to any recovery will be the speed with which the U.S. economy rebounds.

This will be dictated by and depend on the co-opera-

tion of the foot dragging, do nothing, obstructive Democratic party, which has been hijacked by Nancy Pelosi and Chuck Schumer.

Failure to jumpstart the largest economy, behind China, would negatively reverberate worldwide.

As with China, as noted below, Canada must revisit our relationship with our fairweather partners to the south. Nothing has tainted our views more than the N95 Face mask antics of President Donald Trump.

It is noteworthy that the Democratic party tacitly endorsed his decision by staying silent on the matter. Their silence was deafening. This from a party at odds with the president from day one.

Perhaps Canadians should send a not-so-subtle message in response by shopping Canadian and supporting our own recovery, and spend our vacations at home.

A note to cross-border

shoppers and snow-birds: Trump will be pushing his "Buy American" mantra to support the U.S. recovery, and all other countries will undoubtedly follow. It is incumbent on all Canadians, therefore, to support our battle cry. "Buy Canadian. Shop in Canada. Support Our Economy." Put Canada first.

China should participate in this turnaround. Its first step should be to compensate countries by massive debt forgiveness and second, by a multi-trillion dollar distribution to the world's devastated economies caused by the virus. This is the third virus to originate in China and it will not be the last.

An additional lesson learned from this pandemic is the need to seriously review international supply chains.

Prudently and astutely our strategic manufacturing businesses must be repatriated. And the world

should stop treating China as though it is a benign partner. It is a dictatorship with global dominance aspirations.

Our federal and provincial task forces, currently being assembled, in concert with our major trade unions, have an obligation to repatriate our businesses so foolishly off-shored in favour of corporate greed and the next shareholder quarterly results. This is all in addition to major infrastructure projects., a Canadian-focused Marshall Plan – on steroids.

Action-oriented big ideas are required. Partisan politics need to be shelved, egos and obstructionists left at the door. Procrastinators --- stay at home. "Make It Happen Only" applicants need apply.

A brand new era has been thrust upon us.

Let's get it done. Go Canada.

**Samuel Young
NOTL**

No **evidence** pets transmit COVID-19

Dear editor:

The following is an open letter to Lord Mayor Betty Disero and Premier Doug Ford.

While I understand that, at the local level, our lord mayor is just following orders, I am compelled to include all politicians who have participated in the recent injection of fear pertaining to our pets.

To be precise, I refer to the signage which appeared at the Commons this past week mandating that all animals adhere to the physical distancing measures between themselves and between them and humans.

And, as Ms. Disero stated in an email to me, "there is no current evidence suggesting pets play a role in transmitting this disease" you also choose to quote other websites that state there are rare instances whereby pets have been infected with the virus.

Well, fortunately, owing to the internet, we are privy to the same information that you choose to act upon. My sources of information and the questions I posed are as follows:

How many dogs have died from the virus? Answer: None.

How many dogs have been infected in Canada/Ontario/Niagara-on-the-Lake? Answer: None.

Is there any proof of transmission between dogs or between people and dogs. Answer: No.

I collected the information from the following sources: the Canadian Veterinary Medical Association, the WHO, the Harbin Veterinarian Research Institute, a CTV News report with Dr. Abdu Sharkawy (an infectious disease specialist), the American Kennel Club, and the Centres for Disease Control. As of April 21, the CDC said there is no evidence of spread by animals, nor is there any evidence of spread from hair, skin or the fur of animals, and on and on and on.

Political opinions are conspicuously absent because politicians prefer to quote rare and "suggestive" anecdotes that promote fear and offer no hard evidence for their unsubstantiated claims.

Ms. Disero, you also mentioned the simple aspect

of common courtesy for those who are uncomfortable if approached by dogs during their walks; well, how much more courtesy could we offer those people than by taking our dogs to a small area in town designated as an unleashed park for dogs?

As you say and I agree, "We don't think it is too much to ask for courtesy, allowing everyone (including our pets) adequate space for their physical activity and mental well-being."

We do not impose on our fellow citizens – we keep these pets off the sidewalks! But this is not just about "a walk in the park."

In the same vein, dogs are often the only source of solace and companionship for the elderly in our community and, now, with no evidence of harm, you inject a wedge of fear, totally unwarranted, between them and their beloved animals.

We are separated from our children, our grandchildren and now we are told to be wary of our pets – that, I find shameful, devoid of reason.

And, speaking of reason, I conclude with my opinion

concerning the total ban on outdoor activity centres.

Our provincial government bans us from sports facilities (tennis courts, soccer fields, etc), gardens, even benches. However, when I consult the medical experts they tell us that we are safer in the great outdoors than we are inside our own homes.

Just consider the logic – vast expanses of air between us and our nearest companions – but, here, as well, politicians want to confine us to small places in defiance of the logic or, more precisely, in the absence of logic.

Rather than a surgical, well-thought-out plan, we get a blanket response telling us to comply with nonsensical regulations.

Well, you may have control of my activity but you've lost my respect. We look for factual advice and find intellectual dishonesty.

The information changes every day, maybe it's time for you to change your proclamations.

Sincerely,
**Deanna Haigh
NOTL**

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Why Rotary cancelled Holiday House Tour

Dear editor:

I never thought in a million years that I would ever be writing this letter for the benefit of Niagara-on-the-Lake residents.

In the last few weeks the Niagara-on-the-Lake Rotary Club has given the viability of going forward with this year's Holiday House Tour a great deal of thought and we want to share our thoughts with you as to why we came to the decision to cancel it in December.

The Holiday House Tour is an ongoing process throughout the year.

In January and February, we start acquiring the homes. This year we had three homes that were

definite and several other possibilities. We still needed to visit these homes to determine their suitability and discuss the logistics with the homeowners.

Under the present circumstances we cannot get into homes nor do we think it appropriate to try to persuade these homeowners to allow almost 4,000 people to come through their homes, even if it is seven months away. We just couldn't do it.

We also have over 300 great volunteers in our database. Asking them to be in close contact with our visitors was unthinkable, never mind envisaging the lineups outside the homes with

people in close proximity.

In the same vein, asking our decorators to donate time and merchandise would have been inappropriate given that they spend large sums of money each year on decorating these homes to perfection. Many of these businesses have been affected by the pandemic crisis and it would be unreasonable to ask them to donate their time and money.

Our sponsors are mostly local businesses; again, it would be very insensitive to ask them for their sponsorship in this COVID-19 climate.

We have no idea how long this situation will last. Even

if we did postpone a decision, say until May, to see how things develop, it would be extremely late to complete the aforementioned preparations.

The brochure is usually well underway by June, ready to be proofread and sent to the printers in August.

In our opinion we just cannot do it and keep up our reputation as of one of the best holiday house Tours in the area.

I promise that we will endeavour to make 2021 one of the best ever.

Lorna Penman
Chair
Rotary Holiday House Tour
NOTL

Appalled by racist attitudes

Dear editor:

I was appalled as I read about the treatment Yvonne Bredow received by people in this town, ("Racist attitudes a common occurrence," The Lake Report, April 16).

I moved here six years ago from Toronto and have been told by a number of longtime residents that NOTL can be an unfriendly place to certain ethnic and racial groups.

I believe that everyone who sees racism, whether overt or covert, should call it out for what it is, whether it be the behaviour of family, friend, neighbor or co-worker.

I want to thank both Yvonne and The Lake Report for bringing this out into the open. Hopefully, it will make this town a wonderful place to live for everyone.

Sincerely,

Mary Varacalli
NOTL

Bravo for speaking out

Dear editor:

Bravo to Yvonne Bredow for her April 16 opinion piece about racism she has encountered in Queenston and the Old Town, ("Racist attitudes a common occurrence). It's disappointing to hear about such ignorance in Niagara-on-the-Lake.

It's a vestige of the past that has no place in our community. Shame on any residents who harbour or allow it.

David Cottle
NOTL

Town needs to control spending now

Dear editor:

As the COVID-19 curve in Canada begins to flatten, our federal, provincial and municipal leaders should be commended for their efforts to manage the crisis. It has been a very tough six weeks for them, as well as for the front-line people who work in our hospitals; seniors' facilities; police, fire and paramedic services; grocery stores and pharmacies, etc. I'd like to thank each and every one of you, and your families, for all you have done for us.

In these challenging times, NOTL town councilors likely have not given much thought to municipal taxation levels. That's understandable, although I was dismayed to learn that Council has approved \$1.5 million in new spending for two streetscape projects (The Lake Report, April 23). This decision, made at a time when the town's financial future is uncertain and NOTL is concerned about the decline in parking and other revenues, will almost certainly lead to tax increases down the road.

The timing of the decision, as well as the requirement

for it to be made now, is terrible. Stock markets around the world have suffered huge losses. Mutual fund values and interest rates have plunged. How long it will take for them to rebound after the pandemic ends is unclear. Yet they are the primary sources of retirement income for many NOTL residents.

Even when things return to a semblance of normal, it may be challenging for local residents and businesses to cope with day-to-day expenses, let alone the tax increases we can anticipate as governments at all levels attempt to bring their debt and deficits under control.

Council should postpone major spending decisions until there is more certainty about what the future holds, and there is clarity around what funding support, if any, will be available from the provincial and federal governments to help municipalities recover from financial shortfalls related to COVID-19. The town needs a better understanding of its post-pandemic balance sheet and future revenue streams, as well as a plan to move forward from where we are

today, before it invests significant dollars in nonessential infrastructure. Especially when that spending will result in ongoing maintenance costs and almost certainly municipal tax increases.

Part of the town's plan could – and I believe should – include implementing an accommodation tax in NOTL. If it is still available, the town could also seek federal and provincial funding for the establishment of a business improvement area (BIA).

It's unrealistic to expect residents and businesses to continue paying the bulk of the costs town incurs to maintain local infrastructure when the requirement for maintenance stems in large part from the wear and tear caused by the millions of tourists who come here each year. Transferring some of those costs to tourists is both fair and reasonable.

Prior to the COVID-19 crisis, Niagara-on-the-Lake offered tourists a unique visitor experience. We can only hope that this will continue to hold true when the pandemic ends – that our wineries, restaurants, hotels, B&Bs, shops, historic sites,

theatres and other businesses will be able to resume normal operations, and that people from around the world will resume coming here to experience them.

That said, when the COVID-19 pandemic is finally over, I believe town should also consider the inherent risks of NOTL relying so heavily on tourism to fuel the local economy. I'd like to see our town become a self-sustaining community focussed on meeting the needs of its residents and local businesses, including farmers, along with visitors. A day when the short-term and vacation rentals that have become common in NOTL become family homes, occupied throughout the year, and when Queen Street includes a mix of shops that appeals to both residents and tourists.

As the local volunteers who have diligently made protective masks, gowns and face shields over the past several weeks have demonstrated so clearly, the heart of NOTL – what makes it so wonderful to live here – is its residents.

Terry Davis
NOTL

Earth Day walk yields bags of garbage in NOTL



Dear editor:

I thought you would like to see the juxtaposition of beauty and garbage on Earth Day 2020.

Three of us spent some time on April 22 walking from the NOTL Community Centre to almost the Jackson-Triggs cut-off along Hwy. 55. These pictures show what we picked up along the way!

When we walked back to the community centre and saw that beautiful garden of daffodils, we just had to take a picture of it – along with the bags of garbage we collected.

We even found an empty bottle of Mezzacorona wine – very appropriate for this time in history.

Stay safe and hang in there,

Terry-she Mactaggart
NOTL

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Dr. Brown

Fast-track learning about COVID-19

Dr. William Brown
Special to The Lake Report

NOTL copes with COVID-19

With COVID-19 we had some idea of what to expect because of earlier encounters with the SARS and MERS viruses whose genomes resemble that of the latest virus.

So, it was no surprise to learn that the most common, severe and feared complication of infection with COVID-19, reported first from China, turned out to be Acute Respiratory Distress Syndrome (ARDS), which carries a mortality rate of roughly 50 per cent for those who end up on a ventilator, especially in older patients.

On a case-by-case basis, SARS in 2002 and MERS in 2012 were more lethal but far less transmissible than COVID-19. Within four months, the latter infected close to three million worldwide and killed many thousands – more than 20,000 – in New York City alone.

The reason COVID-19 spread so widely and quickly is related to evidence that patients infected with COVID-19 shed the virus beginning as early as day two or three and may continue to do so for up to two weeks before clinical symptoms develop, or perhaps no symptoms at all.

That's a long period in which infected patients can covertly spread the virus by as little as breathing or talking – never mind the coughing and sneezing that are features of the later symptomatic period.

This means that without widespread community testing for the virus using nose swabs to detect its molecular fingerprint, epidemiological modellers and planners have no idea how widely the virus has spread within communities and especially among health care work-

ers in hospitals, long-term care facilities and other vital services.

And without equivalently widespread testing using reliable tests for antibodies, we have no idea how many people have had the disease and are now resistant to the virus.

There are other oddities associated with COVID-19. For example, although early reports suggested the virus strikes hardest those with pre-existing chronic medical problems and those over 60 years of age or usually both, more recent evidence suggests that as many as one-third of healthy young people may develop COVID-19.

In the case of health care workers, repeated exposure to high viral loads and perhaps the associated fatigue and high stress levels characteristic of their work, may increase the risk of them developing the disease and – not a few – dying.

The clinical course of COVID-19 is more complicated compared to other coronavirus infections. COVID-19 symptoms often begin with fatigue, aching in muscles and joints, headache, fever, loss of smell and perhaps taste, tightness in the chest, and diarrhea, any one or more of which symptoms may be incapacitating enough to force some to stay home in bed.

In this phase acetaminophen for pain and fever and hydration may help alleviate the symptoms. From this stage, most go on to recover after a few days.

However, some – especially high-risk patients – may develop significant hypoxemia (low blood oxygen levels) paradoxically unaccompanied by shortness of breath – a sure sign of developing pneumonia.

This, often missed, intermediate stage is when patients need the close surveillance and support of intensive care units – should the hypoxemia worsen – which can happen quickly – and intubation and ventilator support become necessary.

COVID-19 may also seriously attack other systems, such as the heart, sometimes simulating a heart attack, but here caused by viral myocarditis, the bowel associated with diarrhea, or the kidneys, sometimes requiring dialysis. Any one or more of these may develop. Those extra-pulmonary targets of COVID-19 may be the result of the virus targeting ACE receptors in those tissues as well as the primary target – the lungs.

Given the sudden worsening in some patients, there's a lively debate about what to do. Is the collapse the result of an overactive immune response and release of proteins called cytokines, some of which, like interleukin-6 (IL-6), may attack the body's own cells such as those that line the walls of the tiny alveoli where gas exchange normally takes place?

And if so, would drugs such as tocilizumab – ordinarily used in rheumatoid arthritis block to block IL-6 – help patients? Or would corticosteroids, which blunt the immune system across the board, make sense? Those are critical questions and high-light dilemmas in treating this disease.

The trouble now, at the four-month mark in this pandemic, is that those who treat patients with COVID-19, especially the more severely affected patients,

don't have all the answers – which means some care decisions might turn out to be wrong and even make matters worse!

That's what happens when a novel virus like COVID-19 crops up out of nowhere. It takes time to find out what works, what doesn't work and even what makes matters worse, and share what's been learned with others facing the same challenges elsewhere.

As the journal Science put it on April 16, "As people with COVID-19 flood hospitals worldwide, physicians are wading through streams of incomplete data and preprints that have not been peer-reviewed, struggling to find ways to help their patients and sharing their experiences on social media. ... People are watching patients deteriorate before their eyes, and there's a very strong motivation to reach for any therapy that you think could be effective said Kenneth Baillie, an intensive-care anesthetist at the University of Edinburgh."

It must be very tough indeed to be on the front lines these days and all the more reason to be thankful that those who are there for us, trying their best at considerable risk to themselves.

So, thank those working in the front lines of this pandemic when you have the chance – they deserve it.

* Check out this item on intensive care from BBC radio: <https://medium.com/@mark.tan.zy/telephone-lament-for-coronavirus-5180d2984617>

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.

Local snaps



A group of NOTL friends who are keeping in touch weekly by Zoom during the COVID-19 pandemic have some messages to share.

Sonja Schindeler says that group member Pippa de Leonardis compiled this montage of chalk messages that were created by their "COVID-19 Lockdown

Support Group."

The contributors were: Dorothy Booth, Danna McDonough, Pippa de Leonardis, Sonja Schindeler, Holly Anderson, Maggie Hobbs, Karen Berti, Gina Snary, Suzan Roerich and Mary Lou Turner.



Two Niagara growers teamed up to help distribute more than 120 plants to the Niagara Long Term Care residence in Niagara-on-the-Lake.

Laurie Gunton, who operates a company called Smooth Move for Seniors, usually spends her time helping seniors pack, sell and donate items when they are ready to move or downsize.

But, with the COVID-19 pandemic, "I have put my resources into volunteering more. I reached out to some retirement homes in the Niagara region to see if they would accept plants."

Niagara LTC (formerly Chartwell) on Wellington Street in NOTL was happy to oblige, "So, I started phoning and emailing different flower growers and within 24 hours, two – Horbach's Farm and Greenhouses and Niagara Flower Growers – got back to me immediately offering up their products."

Gunton picked up the flowers and dropped them off at the residence.

"It is so important to not only support local businesses, but also not to forget those who are isolated in the retirement homes," she said.

We want your thoughts on COVID-19
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The Lake Report

The Lake Report's community calendar is postponed because of mass cancellation of events due to COVID-19.

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Image Detail: Tom Thomson, Twilight, pre-1914 Collection of Samuel E. Weir ©RiverBrink Art Museum

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Simpson's Pharmacy quest for protein snacks turns into 16,000 bar order for community

Jessica Maxwell
 The Lake Report

What started as a request to find protein bars for residents of Niagara-on-the-Lake long-term care facilities turned into a 16,000 bar order supporting people across Niagara Region.

Sean Simpson of Simpson's Pharmacy was approached by town employee Beth Audet and asked about helping the town buy some protein bars for people in long-term care homes.

"At that time, Beth said, 'Can you get about 800 bars?' and I thought, 'Geez, I'm ordering 800 bars, I might be able to get a decent deal on it,'" Simpson says.

So he reached out to the manufacturer of Pure Protein and actually got through to the distributor in Canada.



United Way Niagara volunteers Krista Butters, Daryl Crosby and pharmacy owner Sean Simpson load protein bars into delivery vehicles. JESSICA MAXWELL

"They're based in Manitoba and so they were able to actually give us a pretty heavy discount," he said. "We went from our cost being well over \$1 to being able to bring down the cost to just fractions of that."

When he told the town about the cost, they wanted to double the order, allowing the town "to get twice as many bars as they had planned for far less than they had budgeted," he said.

Being a board member for United Way Niagara, Simpson also thought to reach out to executive director Frances Hallworth to see

if there was a need for more protein bars.

"When she found out about the low cost and the availability we went from ordering what started with 800 bars and ended up just short of 16,000," Simpson said.

United Way now has 13,000 protein bars to be distributed through different agencies across Niagara, including the St. George's Church breakfast program, Project Share and many others.

"I'm a fan of these bars because they're low in sugar and they've got a good amount of protein,"

Simpson said. "It's great to see how much it can impact and especially with United Way."

"They have all these connections, so they can connect to all these different agencies and find out where the need is. I think that's where it really helps to see that level of impact and that level of connectivity throughout the region."

Simpson recognizes there already was a huge need in the community before the coronavirus pandemic really hit but says he knows the economic effect has really grown.

"We've got so many hospitality workers and people in the tourism sector that are impacted, so it's nice to be able to fulfill some sort of need," Simpson said.

"I'm sure the need is way beyond what we can estimate but every little bit helps at this time."

Simpson said he hopes to see everyone get back on their feet soon, but as someone operating an essential business, he is happy "to be able to give back in some way and to be able to use our resources and connections. That's the most rewarding."

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Answer: A river

Answered first by: Margie Enns

Also answered correctly (in order) by: Kathy Neufeld, Just "Quinn", Howard Jones, Kieran Jones, Gary Davis, Sylvia Wiens, Judy Stanley, Sue Davies, Susan Hamilton, Pam Dowling, Lauren Bennett, Brenda Bartley

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Hair salon gets creative for food donations

Brittany Carter
The Lake Report

Textures Hair Salon swapped boxes of hair colour for donations of food for 15 families supported by St. Patrick Roman Catholic Church, and the response was overwhelming, says owner Jaime Chevalier.

She has been following along with Bishop Gerard Bergie's live-streamed services and during one of them he put out a call for food donations for area families. But it was his suggestion of husbands helping their wives with their hair that sparked her "colourful" idea.



Vehicles full of donated food. SUPPLIED

"I just sort of thought, 'How can I help?' People had been calling me to buy hair colour and I've been reluctant to sell it," she said. "I thought, 'Well, if I gave out hair colour in exchange

for some donations it's a win, win."

She sent out an email asking her clients to bring donations to the salon on Niagara Stone Road on April 25. She filled about

four car loads of groceries.

"We had about 25 people come in for colour, but we had way more donations than that," Chevalier said.

"I knew people were kind, but people brought multiple bags. They didn't just bring one. They were just so generous and so helpful."

As for business, Chevalier said she's "pretty much at a standstill."

But she said when businesses are allowed to open back up she's optimistic about clients returning.

"Once I'm allowed to open I'm pretty sure we'll have people in the chairs, it's just a matter of how long are we going to be closed for."

'An inspiration:' Wilma Morrison was black history advocate

Kevin MacLean
Managing Editor

Wilma Morrison, a longtime advocate for the recognition and preservation of Niagara's black history, has died.

Morrison, 91, lived at Lundy Manor Retirement Residence and died of COVID-19 complications. The Niagara Falls home has been devastated by the virus.

As the honorary chair of Niagara-on-the-Lake's Voices of Freedom Park, "Her leadership, quick wit and humble manner made her a joy to work with on the project," said Lord Mayor Betty Disero. "Her inspiration to always do better will be missed by everyone."



Wilma Morrison. FILE

Morrison's "sense of humour, experience and creativity was appreciated by all of us," Disero added. "She has left many legacies behind that have helped make our community a better place to live."

A recipient of many awards, including the Order of Ontario, Morrison was the subject of a 2016 film documentary by Ayo Adewumi. "Wilma ...

the story of a Black Canadian," tells about Morrison's life as an Ontario-born black Canadian, the discrimination she faced based on her colour and sex, and her efforts to preserve black history in Niagara.

The film also highlights her struggles to save the Niagara Falls BME Church, a key part of the Freedom Trail and the Underground Railroad. She helped the church become designated as a National Heritage Site.

"This is a big loss to Canada and the black community," Adewumi said in a social media post. "Your story shall be told to generations yet unborn. My last visit to you on March 13, and our last phone conversation a

few days before you tested positive to COVID-19, will forever remain fresh in my memory."

Sarah Kaufman, managing director and curator of the NOTL Museum, said Morrison was a "pillar of knowledge" of black history.

"For anyone researching our local black history, Wilma was one of the top people that you had to reach out to. She was an absolute delight to work with," she said.

"The community of Niagara-on-the-Lake was fortunate to benefit from her research, knowledge and contributions through the Voices of Freedom Park. We have lost an icon in the history and heritage preservation field."

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I also want to say a big thank you to everyone who is working during this time to keep our community safe - we will not forget what you've done for us.

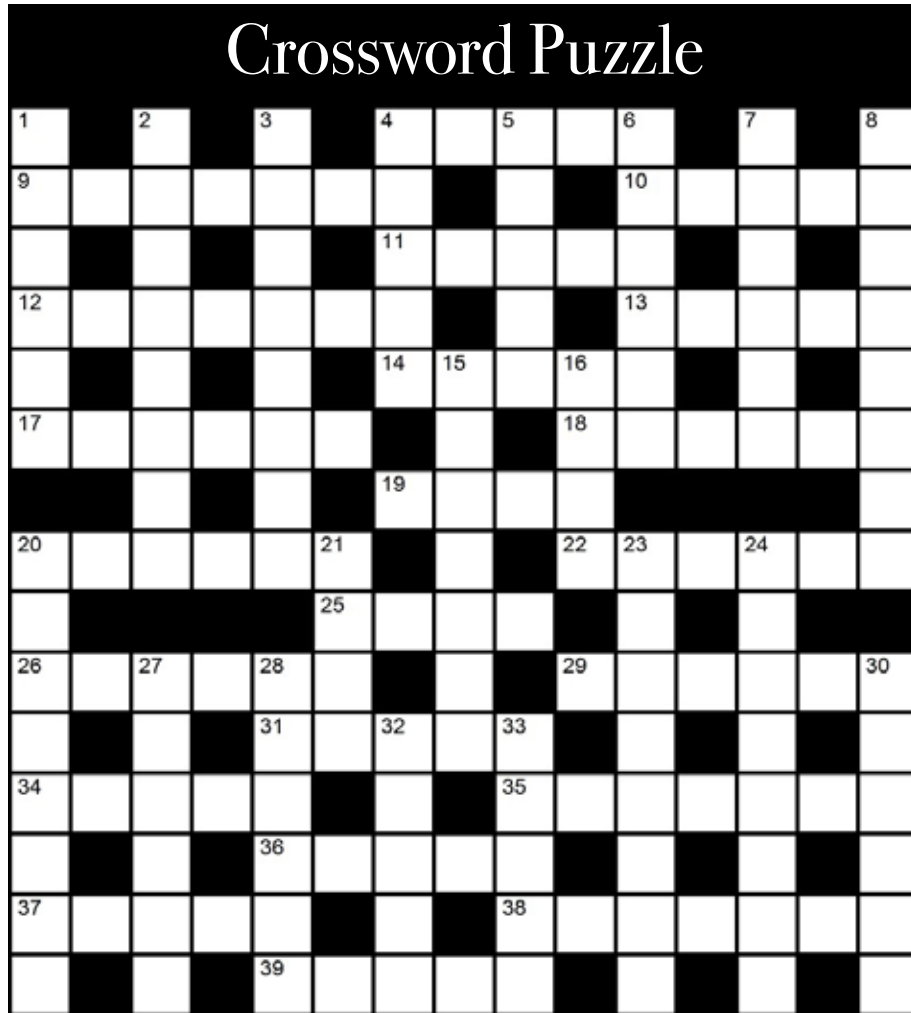
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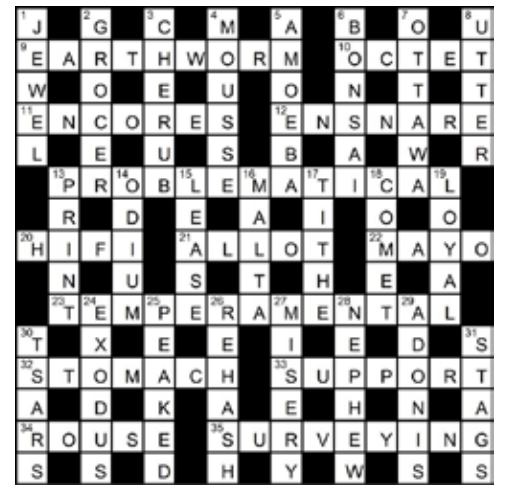
Have some fun

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**
- 4. Fit out (5)
 - 9. Release (7)
 - 10. Capital of Tibet (5)
 - 11. Sift (5)
 - 12. Italian little one (7)
 - 13. Covered with water (5)
 - 14. Thin fogs (5)
 - 17. One or the other (6)
 - 18. Receiving device (6)
 - 19. Gemstone (4)
 - 20. Separated (6)
 - 22. Vast (6)
 - 25. Inspires dread (4)
 - 26. Best (6)
 - 29. Swordsman (6)
 - 31. Forest god (5)
 - 34. River horse (Abbr.) (5)
 - 35. Doctors (7)
 - 36. Obscure road (5)
 - 37. Chocolate ingredient (5)
 - 38. Place in order (7)
 - 39. Pertaining to the kidneys (5)
- Down**
- 1. Unsustainable boom (6)
 - 2. Curved sword (8)
 - 3. Long-haired cat breed (8)
 - 4. Derby venue (5)
 - 5. Consumers (5)
 - 6. Make happy (6)
 - 7. Adventurous expedition (6)
 - 8. Universal in extent (8)
 - 15. Irreverence (7)
 - 16. Baby powder (4)
 - 20. Prediction (8)
 - 21. Individual facts (4)
 - 23. Capsize (8)
 - 24. Tubular pasta (8)
 - 27. Themes (6)
 - 28. Line on a weather map (6)
 - 30. Dared (6)
 - 32. West Welsh seaside resort (5)
 - 33. Saudi Arabian currency (5)



Last issue's answers



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On NOTL's front line: Jane Carson

Nurse practitioner says patients aren't panicked and NOTL is doing well with pandemic

Continued from Front Page

says in a phone interview. "The clinic is on lock-down."

While normally she would be seeing about 16 people a day in person, now she's down to about three or four face-to-face visits per week.

The focus now is on trying to do as many telephone and virtual appointments as possible, though "seeing" patients over the phone or video has its challenges.

"There's a little bit of increased risk in terms of assessments that we do by phone or video are not as fulsome as in-person physical exams," she says.

Patients are also told of the higher risk.

"When we contact a patient about their concerns, we have to describe that potential risk to them that we're taking by trying to manage their health concern in that way," she says.

One of the risks is not having all of the information that they normally would, she says. And video can also make it harder to see if there is a physical problem.

"For example today, I had somebody with a fall, an injury, a wound, and try as I could to see her wound on her arm, the lighting is just not the same, and so we decided together that she should come in tomorrow to be seen," Carson says.

It's also getting to the point where people who have waited for weeks need to be seen in-person.

"What I'm finding is you know, in the first couple of weeks during COVID-19, a lot of the concerns, you know, 'Oh we can put that off for a week or we can put that off for a couple of weeks,' but now that time is going on, there's less things that we can continue to put off."

"So we're seeing more patients in-person, and from a personal and professional satisfaction perspective, I am feeling better and much more alive when I'm able to see the patients in person."

She says most patients are still reluctant to come in,



Jane Carson is one of two nurse practitioners at the Niagara North Family Health Team Virgil site. SUPPLIED

even with the precautions the clinic has in place.

"So, it's busy, but it's a very different busy post COVID-19."

She hasn't dealt with anyone with COVID-19, which she says is a good indication that NOTL is doing well when it comes to the virus.

Carson thinks the public really has embraced the government's messaging about physical distancing and only making essential trips.

"And that has helped a lot with the numbers that we're seeing already," she says.

"I don't think Niagara Region Public Health has broken it down or at least they haven't shared that information of the different regions within Niagara and what the case numbers are, but I haven't had a positive result."

Initially, health care providers were "a lot more selective" in who they could test, she says because there was concern about scarce resources of testing materials and lab capacity.

"And so we were following strict criteria from the medical officer of health with Niagara Region Public Health on who could be tested. The criteria was very tight, whereas now that has very much changed and public health would like us to test anybody with any type of symptom. You know, as little as a sniffle or

a runny nose. So the testing has increased dramatically."

The increased testing is because the symptoms of COVID-19 are so varied, ranging from mild ones that could appear similar to allergies "to the other end of the spectrum with severe symptoms," she says.

"And we're finding that in the elderly the presentation is often even more vague," sometimes without fever, but with gastrointestinal symptoms like diarrhea. "And so now that we have the capacity for the increased testing, we want more testing." Asymptomatic carriers are a concern as well.

Though there was initially a concern health care workers would be short on personal protective equipment, they're now getting the supplies they need from suppliers, as well as help from the community, she says.

The Shaw Festival recently donated custom-made washable gowns to the clinic. Dillon's Distillery in Beamsville also provided hand sanitizer.

"It's amazing, it's very heartwarming, overwhelmingly heartwarming, actually," Carson says.

She says patients aren't panicked about the pandemic situation. People are concerned, "But it seems that the public is well-informed and they seem to

understand the risks. And a lot of times when we are speaking to our patients, they have a concern for us as the health care providers as well, which is also really quite heartwarming."

With the measures they take at the clinic, she says she's not worried either.

Like Erin Jarvis, featured in last week's story, Carson has to put on and take off personal protective equipment every day.

"When we think back to the SARS situation from 2003 a lot of health care professionals were being infected when they were removing their protective equipment, so it's a very systematic way that we have to do that in order to prevent contaminating ourselves," she says.

When she's not working, she essentially doesn't go anywhere and is ordering groceries online every two weeks.

"So I'm not taking unnecessary risks out in the community," she said.

At home, in the rural area of St. Ann's, near Smithville, she has a husband, two grown daughters, a dog named Charlie, and chickens.

Aside from being on NOTL's front line, she's also got a green thumb.

"We've got quite the large vegetable garden. We've got beautiful raised beds, we love to grow tomatoes — every kind of tomato — and cherry tomatoes. We like to make our own sauce. We like to do peppers and hot peppers and kale. And I'm also going to be using one area of my garden for a wild flowers for a cut-flower garden."

Her husband is a nurse in Burlington.

When she's not in the garden she also enjoys exercising and spending time with her family.

"And raise the chickens. We've got some chicks coming soon," she says.

Her best advice should be familiar to everyone already: stay home, only make essential trips, and wash your hands after touching anything.

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Pauline Reimer Gibson
 Audiologist

Ban on Queen Street parking could help **deter** visitors

Continued from Front Page

within the urban boundary of the Old Town.”

He said the town is considering putting up signs at four key points within the town that access Old Town, with increased messaging and a communications strategy to residents and tourists to explain what the municipality is trying to achieve.

“We feel that this might seem like it’s a harsh method, but we feel at this point with what we’re experiencing over the weekends that this may be the only method that people might understand. So, if you’re coming into town, it will be clear that there will be no parking within the urban area in the Old Town. You can drive through, but you can’t park, and you can’t wander around, and you can’t use our parks. You can drive through and that’s about it.”

Achieving that will require additional staff,



maybe contract employees, but the town is also “considering the use of volunteers.”

“We need to refine what we need these positions to do and exactly how they would help out, but we will definitely make consideration to accessing volunteers,” Randall said.

“As soon as we have a plan in place, before we execute it, we’ll definitely let council know what our decision is on how to deal with this, and we’ll be advising council.”

Coun. Stuart McCormack suggested refining the messaging to make it more clear that people should stay home.

Randall said the mes-

saging is being taken into consideration.

Disero asked if the Chamber of Commerce could also step up to help make its messages more direct, as many visitors searching NOTL online seem to land on the chamber’s website.

Chamber president Eduardo Lafforgue has not responded to repeated attempts by The Lake Report to reach him for comment.

McCormack said it might be prudent to also reach out to cycling clubs to make it clear they shouldn’t be riding through town, as he noticed many cyclists on the road last weekend.

Coun. Clare Cameron

said she’s heard people asking why the town can’t just close off the roads.

“Unfortunately the province hasn’t put in place a travel ban,” Randall said. “They are recommending people not to travel, but if a car drives in to this community we don’t have many tools in our toolbox to block them off completely or close a road.”

Randall said the town could close Queen Street, but it’s not that simple and would create different problems.

“Closing a road like Queen Street would just cause other challenges to the businesses that are currently operating ... there’s a lot of restaurants that are offering curbside service, pickup for meals and things like that, Valu-mart, the post office.”

Randall said the town is “looking at all options” including temporary traffic lights and “arms that go down to prevent so many cars at a time.”

Tidbits

Town can make exceptions to interim control bylaw

- The Town of Niagara-on-the-Lake approved a motion Monday night allowing exemptions to be made from the interim control bylaw placed on development in Old Town. Lord Mayor Betty Disero said the exceptions will be announced at the next meeting of council in May.

Some town committees to resume in May

- Some town committees should resume in May, town council heard Monday. Lord Mayor Betty Disero said the committees to resume will be the audit committee, irrigation committee, CAO search committee, as they “have time sensitive items to deal with.”

Town signs agreement with Parks Canada

- The Town of Niagara-on-the-Lake has signed a memorandum of understanding with Parks Canada, which allows town bylaw enforcement to give out fines on Parks Canada property. The decision was made in response to overwhelming numbers of people ignoring the town’s request for them not to visit town during the ongoing pandemic situation.




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NOTL *makes noise* for front-line workers

NOTL copes with COVID-19



Top left: Doug Miller and Paul Bradley make some noise for NOTL's front-line workers. RICHARD HARLEY Top right: Jackie and Rudy Prajza make some noise in commemoration of front-line workers, during Saturday evening's "Make Noise NOTL" celebration. SONJA SCHINDELER Bottom: Screenshots from a town video of the event. (youtu.be/8O_NwrjhtYQ)



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Shaw streaming event draws thousands

Richard Harley
The Lake Report

The Shaw Festival filled the Studio Theatre 26 times on Wednesday.

More than 7,000 people virtually lined up to watch the festival's online streaming show *That's Shawbiz*.

The show was a virtual version of the company's SNAG events (Saturday Night at the George) during which members of the ensemble show off their various talents.

Kyle Golemba, who hosted the virtual event, said it's a way for members to get together every few weeks to blow off some steam and share a few laughs.

"It's been going on for a long time," he said. "It's always a mix of things, always a lot of music, but then, you know, depending on the year you get people doing magic tricks, or spoken word poetry, or sharing their stories, dances — it can kind of be anything."

Golemba said the whole affair was strange, because you're just talking to your computer.

"You could be filming a YouTube video for all anyone would know looking at you, but you know that there are these thousands of people on the other side of the screen. And energetically it's weird because you don't get the back and forth you would get with a crowd in real life, so you're kind of trusting that they're enjoying what you're up to and just kind of sticking to what you feel you want to do with the night."

He said he was nervous, and even though he was more-or-less by himself in his living room, he still got the rush of show performing.

"I just love everyone bringing what they can in this time, just to be generous with the audience, and to connect. I think I said it in the night, but we do really miss the audience. And I think it was really neat to see everyone go, 'Well, what can I offer and here's what I have right now, in my little house that I can do.'"

He said he was even fond of some of the "screw ups."

"I think that's always where the fun happens,



Shaw actors came together to perform for *That's Shawbiz*. JESSICA MAXWELL

when something goes slightly awry and you kind of have to hop in and make something happen."

It was revealed by a fellow cast member that Golemba is also a level 5 elf wizard in *Dungeons & Dragons* in his spare time.

He praised the stage managers who helped keep the event on track from behind the scenes. One of the stage managers was on camera with him giving signals if anything went wrong.

Shaw artistic director Tim Carroll said it wasn't too hard to set up, but there's a "very steep learning curve."

"It's just difficult to know what it is until you do it," he said. "As soon as you do it you go, 'Oh, oh, I see.'"

He said it's challenging for actors to do something without a crowd reaction, because "your body tells you you're failing."

"Because you have an instinct," he said. "If you say something and get nothing back, your body starts to go, 'Ugh, that didn't work' — so it doesn't matter how many people in the comments are going, 'Oh that was great, we're all laughing our asses off' — your body still told you that you just died on your ass. So it's a very strange thing getting nothing back."

Carroll said as far as public reaction, the "overwhelming response has been one of gratitude."

"People know that we've

got a lot to be thinking about at the moment anyway. We've got a whole company of people who are anxious about the future and it would be very understandable if they were just saying, 'No thank you, do you mind? I'm trying to think what to do with the rest of my life and I don't need to be thinking about doing silly songs for a YouTube event' — so I think people realize that it takes quite a generosity of spirit to throw something up like this," he said.

Carroll said it's possible the Shaw could do it again. "I think we will do more of it, because I think we all know various ways we can iron out some of the technical problems."

Golemba said he's received emails from people who were really happy to feel connected to everyone and know we're all going through this together.

Carroll said the idea is not something that would continue post-COVID-19.

"We want live, I want live, we all want live," Carroll said.

He did say it'd be nice to do some in-house versions of their cabarets.

"We've got so much talent in the company," he said.

"There's so many people who pop up, not just in the acting company, but in the whole company, who pop up and you go, 'I had no idea you could do that. So I'd love to share that with the

audience a bit more — but I'd really love to do it in the same room as them."

SNAG events going forward still will be a company-exclusive event.

Carroll said it was nice to see so many people tuning in.

"We no doubt both got quite an eyebrow-raising moment when we saw the number at the bottom of the screen going past 7,000 and then 8,000," Carroll said.

Golemba pointed out that if people were watching it together, it could have been even more than that.

The crowd dwindled slightly as the show went on, but Carroll said it's their loss.

"Anyone who leaves before the end of one of our cabarets is really making a serious error, because we know what we're doing in our playlist," he said.

The show is no longer available, as it was meant to be a live-only event, said Carroll and Golemba.

"In keeping with what we do best, we wanted this to be live. You've gotta tune in, and then it's gone — just like all the best stuff that we do," Golemba said.

"It being a company-led event is part of the magic," he said. "It's the kind of thing that we love to do, and get together and have a laugh, and I think it was a nice thing to get to do that for all the people that we're used to seeing at this point in the year."



Left: Shaw's executive director Tim Jennings. Right: Shaw's artistic director Tim Carroll. DAVID COOPER PHOTOS

Shaw execs donate half of salaries back to festival

Brittany Carter
The Lake Report

The Shaw Festival's top executives will donate 50 per cent of their regular pay back to the theatre company to ease the financial strain caused by COVID-19 closures.

CEO Tim Jennings and artistic director Tim Carroll will both donate half their regular earnings to help cover the payroll of those currently employed by the theatre company.

The pay cut was done "in solidarity," Jennings said in an interview.

"If we're going to take a big cut, they (the personnel) weren't going to take one before we did, so that was really the plan," he said.

Those who can work at a distance will continue to receive full pay, but those

who cannot have had pay reduced to 75 per cent for the time being. Jennings said about 60 people have also been laid-off for now.

"We have about 60 people who are affected by that currently. They can't work from a distance and it made more sense for them to receive the (Canadian Emergency Response) benefits."

The company has also begun rolling two-week termination notices of contracts, hoping to extend the notice each week as every possible idea to keep the company afloat is explored, Jennings said in a media statement.

As for the \$500 million from Ottawa for the arts, culture and sports sectors, Jennings said there's been no word yet, "but they're hoping to have an answer for us later this week."

Please donate to support local news

We would like to thank everyone who has donated so far to the GoFundMe to help the paper, set up generously by Chef Ryan Crawford of Ruffino's and Backhouse. So far there has been \$5,375 raised towards the \$30,000 goal.

We encourage anyone who can to make a donation to help us to meet this goal. All money raised goes directly towards printing and distribution costs for the paper, so we can continue to ensure NOTL's #1 newspaper reaches all members of our community during this pandemic, especially our seniors who are most at risk. Local news is more important than ever.

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The Lake Report

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NOTL 'mask trees' raise \$3,000 for shelters in Niagara

Richard Harley
The Lake Report

A community initiative to provide Niagara-on-the-Lake with masks has taken root in town.

A group of volunteers called NOTL Covid Masks has set up "mask trees" around Niagara-on-the-Lake and anyone is welcome to take a mask in return for a donation toward shelters in Niagara Region.

The "trees," which are mostly metal stands, have plastic bags with homemade masks inside.

Julia Buxton-Cox, a NOTL resident who has been involved in making masks and helped with the mask tree project, says the masks are going fast. So far the group has sold about 350, raising about \$3,000 for three homeless shelters.

"My tree was empty I think two o'clock or three o'clock yesterday afternoon, and I have nothing to put on the tree today," she said Tuesday.

"The trees will be full again hopefully by the end of the week."

Buxton-Cox said 100 per cent of the money is going to shelters.

"We've chosen South Ridge shelter, which is an adult shelter in St. Catharines, we've chosen the R.A.F.T. shelter, which is a youth shelter in St. Catharines, and we've chosen Nightlight, which is a youth shelter in a youth hostel in Niagara Falls."

She said the group chose non-local places because that's where the need is greatest.

"The shelters have been really, really hard hit with COVID and they're in desperate need," Buxton-Cox said.

"We could have chosen Red Roof, and we could have chosen something locally, but Stephanie Bjorgan (the executive director of Red Roof) put out a video recently from Red Roof that just said, like, 'We're not asking for money right now, like we're closed, you know, deal with the people who are dealing with COVID that's really where the money needs to go.'"

Virgil couple Fred and Sonia Johnson stopped by the mask tree on Four Mile Creek Road on Saturday. They said they hadn't heard about the campaign and only noticed it when driving by.

Sonia said it was perfect,

as she's been looking for masks but didn't know where to get them.

"Absolutely excellent, because you can't buy them anywhere else," she said.

"We couldn't get them at any pharmacy," Fred said. "They just don't have them."

Buxton-Cox said there have been "a lot of naysayers" who have said masks aren't effective or that the mask trees are unsafe.

However, Niagara Region Public Health said it fully supports the project.

"We strongly support the initiative to help out the homeless. It is important at this difficult time that we are supporting each other, particularly those more vulnerable or in greatest need," public health communications consultant Kerri Stoakley said in an email response to questions from The Lake Report.

She said the mask trees are low-risk as far as being a source of spread for COVID-19.

"As it appears the face coverings are individually wrapped in plastic bags, there is little risk to these being contaminated from the environment or by someone with COVID-19

NOTL copes with COVID-19



Virgil couple Fred and Sonia Johnson stop to buy a mask on Four Mile Creek Road.
RICHARD HARLEY

taking a face covering from the tree," Stoakley said.

"As with handling any object, public health continues to advise that everyone should wash/sanitize hands after taking down and opening one of the face covering bags and again after disposing of the bag."

She said it's important to remember masks are not a substitute for social distancing procedures.

"The Public Health Agency of Canada has advised that face coverings are an option for people who would like to take an extra step to protect those around

them from infection," said Stoakley.

"It's important to remember that a face covering mostly protects others, but not oneself. As well, the Public Health Agency of Canada advises to limit times wearing face coverings to when one will be in crowded locations where physical distancing is not possible — face coverings are not a substitute for physical distancing and hand hygiene at other times, and can themselves be a source of infection if someone inadvertently contaminates them by touching or close contact

with an infected person."

Buxton-Cox said the masks will be available "as long as (the) sewists are willing to sew."

Anyone who wishes to get involved can contact her through Facebook on the NOTL Today page, though she is encouraging people to sew their own masks for friends and family if they can.

"If you've got fabric, we're willing to distribute patterns for people to sew if they want to make their own at home."

- With files from
Jessica Maxwell

Farmers' Market will return with changes

Jessica Maxwell
The Lake Report

The Saturday farmers' market in Niagara-on-the-Lake hopes to open May 23 and work is under way behind the scenes to keep it on schedule.

Market co-ordinator Sharon Brinsmead-Taylor is working with Niagara Region Public Health to ensure the market can open.

Farmers' markets have been deemed an essential service by the provincial government, but operating during the COVID-19 pandemic brings some unique challenges.

"The health of our customers and our vendors is our number one priority," Brinsmead-Taylor said.

"There will be strict social distancing and food handling rules in effect in accordance with the guide-



Rose Bartel sells flowers at the Market in 2019. FILE PHOTO

lines that Niagara Region Public Health has given us."

The alternative to grocery store shopping offers "an open-air, foodless-touched option to the people of Niagara-on-the-Lake," she said.

"We feel very strongly about the importance of promoting and maintaining a local food system.

Getting local food into local hands while supporting our farming community is more important now than ever."

The Market @ The Village is unsure what will happen with the Wednesday night SupperMarket, usually hosted at the same location, and this has presented a new set of problems for the farmers' market.

"The costs that we incur to run the weekly seasonal market are not covered by the reasonable rates that we charge our farmers," Brinsmead-Taylor said.

"This year we need the help of our community more than ever."


She said several local businesses have come forward offering donations, such as LTD Distillery, which will provide hand sanitizer.

If there are any local businesses that feel they could be of assistance they can reach out to Brinsmead-Taylor directly at notl.market@gmail.com.

Weekends leading up to the farmers' market opening, Niagara Flower Growers will be set up for contactless sale of hydrangeas and Boston ferns on Fridays through Sundays from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m.

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Chicken Curry: Traditional Yellow Curry Served over Your choice of Rice, Fresh Cut Fries or Half & Half \$16

Poutine: Fresh Cut Fries, Topped with Cheese Curds and Homemade Guinness Gravy \$10

Roast Beef Dip Sandwich: Slow Roasted Beef with Caramelized Onions, Swiss Cheese, Au Jus, Served with Fresh Cut Fries \$15

OUR HOLY HAMBURGERS:

All of Our Delicious Burgers are Served with Fresh Cut Fries on a Sesame Seed Bun. Sub Poutine or Salad \$3

Ye Olde Classic: All Beef Patty topped with Lettuce, Tomato and Mayo \$13

Chedda Bacon Burg: Same as Ye Olde, but with Cheese and Bacon, Duh \$15

The Red Eye: All Beef Patty topped with a Fried Egg, Bacon & Hot Sauce \$15

Olde Smokey: All Beef Patty topped with Bacon, KC BBQ Sauce, Crispy Onions & Chipotle Mayo \$15

Bacon Mushroom Melt: All Beef Patty topped with, you guessed it! Bacon, Mushrooms & Swiss Cheese \$15

Southwest: All Beef Patty topped with Jalapenos, Salsa & Queso \$15

Beyond Meat: Veggie Patty topped with Lettuce, Tomato and Chipotle Mayo \$15

LIL ANGELS (QUARANTINE DEVILS):

Cheesy Cheese Pizza Served with Fresh Cut Fries \$7

Kids Fingers Served with Fresh Cut Fries & Plum Sauce \$8

Mini Order of Shrimp in a Basket Served with Fresh Cut Fries and Tangy Seafood Sauce \$8

BEVERAGES (SURVIVAL ITEMS):

Bottle of Red/White Wine \$15

Small Can of Beer \$4

Tall Can of Beer \$4.50

Cider \$5

Smirnoff Ice/Bees Knees \$5

Gluten Free Beer \$5

O'Douls Non-Alcoholic Beer \$3

Soft Drinks \$1

H2O \$1

EVERY SUNDAY WE
 OFFER A
 DIFFERENT ROAST
 DINNER SPECIAL

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 our Chef's Weekly Feature



OR TRY OUR TAKE & HEAT MEALS

Take a Bit of Heaven Home with You!

Individual Size Meals served in oven safe containers complete with heating instructions \$15

• Shepherd's Pie • Steak, Guinness and Onion Pie • Chicken Curry • Curry of the week • Homemade Sausage Rolls • French Onion Soup (\$5)