



A mother's story

'Life was pretty darn good,' then Eric's seizures started



Eric and Sharon VanNoort. CALVIN FRANK

Sharon VanNoort
Special to The Lake Report

July 4th, 2016, is a day I will never forget. I had just returned home from work when we received a call that Eric was in an ambulance and on his way to hospital. We were told by the paramedics that witnesses said he had what looked like a seizure. My husband Rob and myself went to hospital to be with our son. Because it was

suspected that Eric may have had a seizure, scans were ordered to rule out any brain tumours or other abnormalities. Everything came back negative and Eric, 19 at the time, was referred to a neurologist. He came home and we waited for our appointment to see the neurologist. During this time Eric was able to work and drive his car. For those of you who know my son he loved to drive and loved his car.

He also loved his job as a server at the Prince of Wales Hotel. Life was pretty darn good. I did not believe for one minute my son had a seizure that day on July 4. I honestly thought it had something to do with the heat that day and he was dehydrated. Then the day came when Eric had his visit to the neurologist. He had to stay up for 24 hours prior to the appointment and to help get himself through that night he spent

hours cleaning his car. As part of his assessment, a sleep-deprived EEG was conducted. The EEG, a test used to assess problems related to electrical activity of the brain, showed positive for a seizure disorder. Eric was advised that he would lose his licence to drive and was to start anti-seizure medication. I can't even tell you how I felt for my son that day. We were both in shock and, I have to

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Masks mandatory as town enters Phase 3

Richard Harley
The Lake Report

Face masks are now mandatory in indoor public spaces in Niagara-on-the-Lake. Town councillors passed a bylaw governing masks at a special meeting last Thursday. It covers all areas of town. Business owners must put up signs letting people know of the face mask bylaw, however the onus is on patrons to

abide by the rules. If a patron says they have a medical issue that prevents them from wearing masks, they are exempt from the bylaw. Children under the age of 10, people with hearing aids, and those who are unable to apply and remove masks are also exempt. The decision comes just in

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NOTL beach fails E. coli tests, but data not publicly available

Kevin MacLean
Managing Editor

Niagara-on-the-Lake's popular Queen's Royal Beach has failed E. coli contamination tests at least twice so far this summer. The Lake Report has learned. However, while the water quality at the picturesque waterfront beach is being tested three times a week, the results are not readily available to the public. The results are not included among the Region of Niagara's daily beach water quality update, nor are they

published by the Town of NOTL. So far, Queen's Royal exceeded the acceptable E. coli level on June 24 and last Friday, July 17, according to data from the region. The only indication of a water problem on Tuesday was a lone yellow sign on the beachfront, warning that "recent water sample test results indicate excessive levels of bacteria. Water in this area may not be safe for swimming or bathing." By Wednesday, the water was considered safe and an

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Releasing emergency records is up to municipalities, expert says

Richard Harley
The Lake Report

The Town of Niagara-on-the-Lake's emergency control group has the power to decide if the records of its meetings can remain confidential or be released to the public, a leading expert on municipal law says. The emergency control group, comprised mainly of senior town managers, has been in charge of many day-to-day decisions during the

COVID-19 pandemic, including the controversial closing of Queen Street in Old Town. The group meets in private. Toronto lawyer John Mascarin, who acts on behalf of a number of Niagara municipalities, said he was hesitant to comment on the specifics of NOTL's emergency group decision. But he told The Lake Report that "unless mandated to have open meetings (as required for certain committees under the Municipal Act,

2001), a municipal emergency control group is at liberty to conduct its meetings as it considers appropriate and to make available such information as it deems necessary or desirable." "There are a host of competing interests involved with the discussions, debates and deliberations of such groups, ranging from openness and transparency on the one hand to the protection and security of sensitive information on the other," he said.

Last week, The Lake Report reported that NOTL, like some other municipalities in Ontario, is keeping the records of its emergency meetings secret. The documents, which are the official records of meetings that directly affect decisions made on behalf of the public and voters, are being kept in a binder in the lord mayor and CAO's boardroom. Councillors can access the documents, but only in per-

son, and with strict rules that no copies can be made. Ontario's ministry of municipal affairs refused to comment on the actions of NOTL's emergency control group. "The ministry does not comment on specific cases," said spokesperson Matteo Guinci. "Records maintained by municipal emergency control groups are the responsibility of the municipality. We recommend you contact them

for access or file an access request under the Municipal Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act to the respective municipality." In other words, municipalities can choose to release the documents if they please and can make exclusions to that information. Otherwise, a resident must file a freedom of information request to try to obtain access, but the documents could be redacted or the request could be denied.



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Food truck **under fire** for violating bylaw

Owner says he will not cease operations, is trying to survive during the pandemic

Richard Harley
Editor



Lorenzo Lucchetta next to one of his food trucks.
JESSICA MAXWELL

Lorenzo Lucchetta doesn't want to break the law, he's just trying to make ends meet during a pandemic.

The food truck owner has been in a battle with Town of Niagara-on-the-Lake bylaw officers because he's been operating on the property where his breakfast restaurant, Lorenzo's Diner, is located. The diner has been closed during the pandemic.

Lucchetta said he's been visited by bylaw officers multiple times and has been given four notices of violation since the beginning of June.

During the first visit, he said an officer instructed him to cease operations of his two food trucks, located on Glendale Avenue.

"At that point, he advised me that I was going to receive a notice of violation in the mail. He was happy to work with me. He was going to let me work out the 30-day period, from the time of receiving the notice of violation — 30 days after that I had to be closed down."

But shortly afterward, Lucchetta says he started getting more violation notices — one for the food truck, two for his signage, and another for failure to maintain the property.

"So 30 days went by. In the meantime, they found other frivolous infractions

that we had done," Lucchetta said in an interview.

"They were looking to pick on us. So they found these four extra violations to send our way," he said.

He said after the notices, the town started sending enforcement officers to take photos of his operation.

"This guy pulled up into the parking lot like a private investigator," Lucchetta said.

"I approached the vehicle in a very kind, calm way. And I said, 'Hey, Hey you. Hey, dude, buddy. What are you doing here? Identify yourself.' He absolutely gave zero reply. He put the car into drive. He stepped on the gas and he skidded out of here."

At that point, Lucchetta wasn't happy — nor was one of his workers.

"My guy Paul, he's up on the roof right now. He drives that Joker truck. He got into the Joker truck and started following them all around. And then he was on this little goose chase because the guy knew he was being followed," Lucchetta said.

"The long and short of it now is they told us by Friday, which was yesterday, that we had to be shut down, that we cannot operate from the food truck any longer. And I said, 'Oh, yeah. Great. What happens if I tell you to go piss up a tree?'"

He said the bylaw officer told him he would end up being brought to court.

"I said, that's cool. Bring me the summons. Because I will go to court. One of two things is going to happen. By the time it gets to court, I will either be out of business, or I will go ahead with the court proceeding and fight it — and I'm banking on compassion of the court that I was just a businessman trying to put food on the table during the pandemic. And that supersedes any stupid old bylaw."

He said when he asked about what recourse he has to challenge the bylaw, the officer told him to apply for a site plan variance to change the zoning of the property.

"I said, 'So, you're going to shut me down anyhow, while that all happens, and then that all gets tied up in red tape and proceedings, which every town hall is so far behind right now because of COVID.'"

Lucchetta said bylaw officers have asked why he doesn't operate out of his restaurant.

"Why don't I just serve out of my restaurant? Well, you know what, I'm here on the very outskirts of town, around nobody and nothing. I have nobody to consider in terms of 'Am I going to be cutting your grass, am I stepping on your toes?' I don't have that concern out here. Because I'm by myself. I'm an island out here," he said.

He said while he recognizes bylaw officers are just doing their job, he isn't going to shut down his food trucks.

"He's here. He's doing his job. I get it. Well, you know what? I'm here. I'm doing my job too. And I'll be damned if I'm gonna let somebody cut off my lifeline."

Lucchetta added he is taking emergency measures seriously.

"We are also maintaining proper social distancing measures and all that goes along with it in today's pandemic days. In other words, we're practising proper food service handling, social distancing, the whole bit."

He said the food truck helps to attract people.

"If that gives me a little bit of an edge, as a business owner, where I'm not affecting anybody else's income, then let me use my edge during the time of a pandemic, because as I said, under normal circumstances, that truck would never be there. The restaurant would be open normal hours" and the trucks would be serving food at functions.

He said now he's going to keep the truck open to make ends meet, but also to make a point.

"Call it protest. This is not just about me. This is about the principle because I know the Blue Lady got shut down as well. And I

might in fact invite the Blue Lady over here, because once they give us our summons, they are no longer allowed to harass us."

He said he's suffered as much as everybody else because of the pandemic.

He would like to see the bylaw changed for food trucks, adding that the bylaw was written after complaints from businesses that didn't want the competition.

He said there are rules of etiquette. "I would never go and park close to another restaurant, knowing that it's going to cause animosity."

Now Lucchetta isn't willing to stand for it, he said.

"It's not my interest to break bylaws," Lucchetta said.

"But as I asked the bylaw officer, 'Show me a bylaw that pertains to epidemics, pandemics and so on, and how those bylaws cover us residents, as business people.' There was no answer to that because nothing like that exists."

He said the only reason he's breaking the bylaw is "to stay alive during a time where we're all sinking,"

"So, at the end of the day, I mean, we're doing nothing wrong. We're surviving. And if that's wrong, then I'm happy to challenge any bylaw."

The Town of Niagara-on-the-Lake would not comment on the violations.

Developers Marotta, Hummel have **no plans** to settle lawsuits

Richard Harley
The Lake Report

At least two major land developers in Niagara-on-the-Lake say they have no plans to settle lawsuits with the town.

"I have not settled. I will not settle," Rainer Hummel said in response to questions from The Lake Report.

Hummel launched a lawsuit challenging NOTL's urban development freeze (officially called an interim control bylaw) in January, after the town

extended the freeze for an additional year.

The town repealed that bylaw June 22.

Hummel, owner of Hummel Properties Inc., said he will continue to seek damages, as the revenue lost during the development freeze doesn't disappear with the bylaw.

His lawsuit claims the town's decision to put the bylaw in place was illegal for a number of reasons, including that there was already an interim control bylaw in place (provincial rules state only one can

be in effect at a time) and that in 2018 the newly elected town council didn't have adequate time to discuss the bylaw before passing it.

The bylaw was passed just days after council took office.

Benny Marotta, owner of Solmar 2 Inc. and Two Sisters Resorts Corp., said he too has no plans to settle any lawsuits with the town.

"I'm not interested in any settlement unless the town comes through with common sense and starts to behave like a municipi-

ality, not a dictatorship," Marotta said, noting he thinks the town is purposely trying to target his developments.

Marotta wants to build a hotel and a subdivision on the former Rand Estate. The town created obstacles for that to happen with the development freeze.

Marotta said he put in an application for the subdivision a few weeks ago.

"We applied and then it's up to the town to work with us and process the application as other municipalities," he said.

"But based on experience, they're just gonna try to delay more and more and more. Which at the end of the day they're gonna lose anyway. So they're just wasting money, taxpayers' money, for no reason, because at the end the community will be built, the hotel will be built."

Lord Mayor Betty Disero said she's not aware of any lawsuits settled recently with developers, however she noted that if there were settlements, the documents would be available at the courthouse.

"If there were any settlements of anything they would all be public," Disero said in a reply to an email inquiry.

A false claim has been circulating on Niagara-on-the-Lake social media groups that after the town repealed the development freeze in Old Town, several lawsuits related to the issue have been settled.

The rumours, one of which was posted on Facebook by former town councillor Paolo Miele, are unfounded, Disero and Hummel both said.



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Wayne Gates MPP Niagara Falls representing Niagara-on-the-Lake & Fort Erie
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Shaw cancels shows up to **Sept. 15**

Kevin MacLean
Managing Editor

The Shaw Festival has now cancelled all performances up until Sept. 15 and is re-examining what sort of slate of shows it might stage if COVID-19 pandemic restrictions eventually permit live

theatre to resume.

All 2020 performances of "Gypsy," "The Devil's Dilemma," "Sherlock Holmes and The Raven's Curse," "Prince Caspian," "The Playboy of the Western World," "Assassins," "Desire Under the Elms," "Trouble in Mind" and "Me and

My Girl" have been shelved, the festival announced Wednesday afternoon.

"Everyone in the company had been looking forward to bringing you a truly special season," artistic director Tim Carroll said in a statement.

"It's devastating to have

had to put the season on hold."

Shaw CEO Tim Jennings continues to be "optimistic and hopeful about presenting an abbreviated fall or holiday season, not only for ourselves and our audiences, but for the whole community of Niagara."

Masks **mandatory** in NOTL

Continued from Front Page

time for Niagara Region to enter Phase 3 of pandemic recovery on Friday, which allows for gatherings of 50 people indoors, with strict physical distancing guidelines.

"Protecting the health and safety of our residents, businesses, and visitors is first and

foremost the objective of the town council and staff," Lord Mayor Betty Disero said in a town release regarding the bylaw.

"Starting with education and voluntary compliance, this bylaw will allow us to protect the public and will provide a tool for businesses to keep their employees safe."

Region won't release **E. coli** levels

Continued from Front Page

"educational" sign advised visitors about conditions that could lead to unsafe bacterial levels.

Heavy rains, high winds and other environmental factors can influence E. coli levels, Niagara public health says. While there has been little rain in the past month, the first time Queen's Royal exceeded safe levels, on June 24, followed a rainy day. Last Friday's result came one day after a heavy rainfall. This past weekend's thunderstorms also stirred up the lake considerably. Results of this week's tests are not yet available.

A major reason for the lack of data on NOTL's water quality is that Ryerson Park beach and Queen's Royal Beach, near the popular gazebo in Old Town, are not officially considered beaches by the Region of Niagara.

Queen's Royal is not busy enough and lacks some of the essential facilities that would qualify it as a beach, a Niagara public health official says. That said, water samples from Queen's Royal are being analyzed by the region under an agreement with the Town of NOTL as part of the municipality's Remedial Action Plan project.

That project is the final stage of repairs to the town's sewer system, which last year was found to have been leaking raw sewage directly into the lake. The E. coli seepage problem was documented in an extensive story by The Lake Report published last May.

This summer's water quality data is supplied to the agencies participating in the Remedial Action Plan (the town, regional public health, environment ministry and



Paddle boarders float offshore Tuesday, while a sign near Queen's Royal Beach warns that the water might be unsafe for swimming. KEVIN MACLEAN

Niagara conservation authority), but neither the region nor the town have been publicly releasing the results to date.

"The only reason why we're doing (testing) is to support the project, not because we are calling it a beach," says Anthony Habjan, Niagara's acting director of environmental health.

When The Lake Report asked whether the region or town should be concerned about liability problems over not publicizing the test data if someone becomes ill from E. coli, Habjan emphasized the region is strictly helping the town with its remediation project. Town officials did not answer repeated questions about liability concerns.

After inquiries about water quality by The Lake Report over the past few weeks, the region is looking at posting the results of Queen's Royal Beach's tests on a regional "open data" page, accessible to the public, Habjan said in an interview.

As of earlier this week, that had not yet been established.

Habjan said the region suggested a few months ago that the town install "education-type" signs for the public at Queen's Royal and Ryerson Park beach,

warning people about the lack of testing or what conditions could lead to high levels of E. coli.

It appears that signage is in use at Queen's Royal but no such signs have been installed at Ryerson Park. As well, the water at Ryerson Park is not being tested by any public agency.

Town officials did not respond to questions about if, or when, a similar advisory sign will be installed at Ryerson Park.

Official beaches are tested six times a week, but water quality can change quickly, he emphasized.

And even if a beach has passed inspection, environmental factors can play a role - such as "did it rain in the last 24 to 48 hours, is the water clear, is there (pollution) from birds or animals, is the water turbid, is there high winds? All of these factors play a part in potentially increasing E. coli."

"This is something that we've talked (to the town) about in February, March," he said.

Queen's Royal is a busy spot for families, who often swim and wade in the water. It's also used by kayakers, canoeists and paddleboarders. While there may be a few dozen people in the water on a warm summer

day, it doesn't attract the hundreds of beachgoers that other spots across the region do, Habjan said.

Besides high usage, the region criteria for an official beach include adequate parking and washroom facilities, he said.

Testing beach water is a precise process. Five samples are collected each time, evenly distributed along the length of the entire beach and the geometric mean, "almost like an average," of the results determines whether the beach passes, Habjan said.

Last year at this time Queen's Royal was included among the beaches listed daily on the region's water quality testing website. The data in 2019 showed the beach was closed at least six times between June 11 and Aug. 15 due to high E. coli levels.

"We shouldn't have kept it on our beach site because we're not saying it's a beach and it's misleading, in a sense," Habjan said.

The water at Ryerson Park beach, about two kilometres west of Queen's Royal in the Chautauqua neighbourhood, has not been regularly tested by the region for a few years, Habjan said.

With only small groups using the beach, "Going back to 2017-2018, Ryerson beach was not considered to be a beach, and it was no longer able to be tested and put on our website for beach monitoring," he said.

While there have been some public requests to sample it, "the usage is still really low. It is a concern that without adequate parking and washrooms, any promotion of this as a swimming beach will create sanitation and parking complaints from the local residents."



Niagara-on-the-Lake Passes Temporary By-law for Wearing of Masks, Face Shields, or Face Coverings

At the Special Council Meeting on Thursday, July 16, Town Council approved By-law 5248-20, to provide temporary regulations to require the wearing of masks, face shields, or face coverings in enclosed public spaces in the Town of Niagara-on-the-Lake.

These temporary regulations are consistent with the recommendations of health authorities at the Federal, Provincial, and Regional levels, which advise people to wear masks, face shields, or face coverings in public whenever physical distancing is a challenge.

Operators of businesses that are open to the public are required to post signage in accordance with the by-law, prohibiting anyone to enter or remain within the enclosed public space unless they are wearing a mask, face shield, or face covering, subject to exemptions.

The following exemptions are provided in the by-law:

- Children under the age of 10
- Persons with medical conditions which inhibit their ability to wear a mask (i.e. breathing or cognitive difficulties)
- Persons who are unable to apply or remove a mask without assistance (i.e. those accommodated under the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act)
- Persons who have protections, including reasonable accommodations, in accordance with the Ontario Human Rights Code which would prevent them from wearing a mask
- Persons while assisting or accommodating another person with a hearing disability

Masks, face shields or face coverings may be temporarily removed if it impedes upon a person's ability to obtain dental, medical, cosmetic or other related services, to engage in athletic or fitness activity (including water-based activities), to participate in religious rights or ceremonies, to consume food or drink, or for emergency or medical purposes.

This By-law comes into effect on Thursday, July 23, 2020, and will remain in effect until Niagara-on-the-Lake's State of Emergency is lifted, or until it is repealed by Council. For more information, visit notl.com/COVID-19.



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Editorial: Keep public business public

Kevin MacLean
 Managing Editor

A week ago we reported about how Niagara-on-the-Lake's emergency team was keeping the official records of its meetings secret from the public and restricting councillors' access to those documents.

Now, the minutes of most municipal government gatherings are far from being compelling reading material. In fact, few people, if any, would ever bother to read them. Except maybe some town councillors.

But that is not the point.

These documents are the nuts and bolts of municipal

democracy and, like the records of regular council meetings, contain details of discussions, debates and decisions.

These are odd days in the life of NOTL's municipal government because a group of senior officials – many of whom have been working extremely long hours, up to seven days a week, for months now – are delegated the power to make decisions that normally might be made by our elected council.

This was an expeditious and necessary move, as it allowed the town's emergency control group to be agile and act quickly to deal with

the COVID-19 pandemic.

However, on principle, we would argue it is at times like this that our government needs to be more transparent and more open than ever. Keeping those records secret does not accomplish that.

NOTLers deserve to know how decisions in response to the pandemic were made. Those documents are the record of the discussions and decisions.

All manner of reasons can be offered for why it is OK to keep these documents under wraps, and it appears that under provincial law, the emergency group actually is entitled to decide

what people can know about its deliberations. The group that wants its documents kept private is allowed to determine if those documents should be private. Hmmm.

But that doesn't make it right.

Since late March, this group has done its best to serve the interests of Niagara-on-the-Lake and protect us all from COVID-19. We all are thankful for that.

But, in doing so, it has been minding the public's business. And, with rare exceptions, all details of that business should be readily accessible to the public our government serves.

Satire: Town baffled by influx of visitors with medical issues that prevent face masks

Richard Harley
 Editor

Since passing a well-meaning but unenforceable face mask bylaw, the Town of Niagara-on-the-Lake has been astonished at the number of visitors who have medical issues that prevent them from wearing masks.

"I just don't understand," said the Lord Mayor of All of NOTL. "Numbers are showing upwards of 99 per cent of people have suddenly developed severe respiratory problems."

David and Karen Johnson, unmasked Toronto residents who were in a shop buying an ice cream cone on NOTL's historic

Queen Street after circling for an hour to find parking, both refused to comment on the nature of their respiratory illnesses, noting it's their "right" to not answer questions from the "fake news media."

David added he's watched several YouTube videos that informed him masks don't actually do anything to prevent the spread of viruses anyway and that the COVID-19 pandemic is "just a liberal hoax."

Another couple, Linda and Max Sharton, who claimed to have "like, medical issues and stuff" said it was nice to not be questioned by store owners when they explained they couldn't physically

wear a mask.

Linda said she does wear a mask "sometimes" but that the minor inconvenience is simply too much for her.

"I wear my mask when I go to the seniors home to see my father and at work because it's mandatory," Linda said. "But when I come down to NOTL I just want to be able to breathe freely. So it's nice that I can do that here."

The lord mayor said she trusts people who say they can't wear a mask for medical reasons, noting that all they have to do is say so and the mask bylaw becomes mute, "end of discussion."

Still, the mayor says it's puzzling that the numbers of people who say they

can't wear masks conflicts directly with numerous scientific bodies that have stated the majority of people should have no issues wearing one.

"There's obviously been a big oversight," the mayor said of the scientific data, clarifying that it could not have been council's toothless bylaw, but rather that scientists around the world must have made a mistake.

"Why would somebody lie just because they don't want to wear a mask?"

Meanwhile, business owners in town are "overjoyed" that they've had to put up meaningless signage that says masks are "sort of but not really" mandatory..
 editor@niagaranow.com

What's happening at The Lake Report offices?

Richard Harley
 Editor

So, you ask, what's all that work being doing outside The Lake Report's office?

Is the paper still there?

What's all that black paint about?

First of all, of course we're still here! We'd let our dedicated readers know if we moved, because we know lots of you enjoy stopping by for a quick chat

about the weekly news, or to give us hand-written letters, news tips, bring us some coffee, etc.

Though we've been trying to limit traffic with COVID-19, we've missed you all.

We're preparing — even amid the pandemic — for a new family art gallery, called Steele Gallery, focusing on the work of two locally-raised artists, Scott and Richard Steele.

Richard still lives in town and many will recognize his work from passing his home on Niagara Stone Road.

Many longtime townsfolk will remember the Steeles — Harry, Helen, Doug, Dave, Richard, Dean and Debbie.

The gallery is a tribute to the family, which has had art flowing through its veins for generations.

Be sure to check the paper for updates on when we'll

be opening.

The gallery will also focus on other career artists, as well as featuring as many NOTL artists as we can in the small setting.

If you're an artist, get in touch with us. We'd love to see what you have.

In the meantime, if you want to read more about Scott, check out a recent article about the gallery at www.niagaranow.com/news.phtml/3267

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Educate, don't mandate face masks

Dear editor:

Where would we, mere producers, be without our philosopher kings? I have been wearing a mask for weeks now, but alas, I should have known I could not be trusted to do this voluntarily.

So thank you, The Lake Report editorial ("Region fails on face masks," July 16) – and, as I write this, town councillors – for making sure I do what's right.

I could not have come to the conclusion myself that wearing a mask is in my self-interest because I cannot live with unknowingly infecting others. I mean, I only wear a seatbelt for fear of getting a fine – not because I value my life.

Not to question your wisdom but when punishing an individual for operating a vehicle while intoxicated is the onus not on the government to prove intoxication? Likewise, should not

forcing someone to wear a mask place the onus on the government to prove that individual has COVID-19?

Let's get real here. When arguing about the face mask mandate we need to follow science, "political" science. The government has no right to force me to wear a mask if it has no proof that I'm a threat to others. Yes, to do so would be an infringement on my inalienable rights.

As someone who wears a

mask, please do your part by respecting the right of private institutions to ask you to wear a mask on their premises and by encouraging others to wear masks by directing them to scientific literature.

While we use force to stop people from doing what's wrong, we need to educate – not force – people to do what's right.

One mere producer,
Alexander Evans
NOTL

The new realities of shopping during COVID pandemic

Dear editor:

This was originally published in the Shaw Guild's newsletter.

In such a few short months, the world as I have known it for all of my life, has turned upside down. Having been born at the end of the Second World War, I have never experienced severe hardship, never encountered economic strife, never felt threatened by another human being. Lots of luck involved, I think.

Now, I wander, somewhat detached from others around me, masked to keep these same others safe, and make my way to a lineup to be permitted into a store.

As I look around me, there is no conversation,

smiles if any are hidden behind various designs of masks, cautious movements are made to keep the prescribed six feet from those in front, checking from time to time to ensure the shopper behind is doing the same.

A sense of unease and distrust has infiltrated this conga line. If our expressions could be determined, we the faceless would be seen frowning at anyone not similarly masked. We all inch our way forward until we are given both a disinfected cart and a nod to enter.

On the inside, shopper and cart wind through the aisles, following arrows, trying very hard not to touch anything until

removing the item from the shelf. Distances remain and occasional apologies for trespassing are extended when mistakes are made.

At the checkout, masked and shielded, cashiers do their job and carefully place your item in an area where you may bag it yourself or offer the plastic bags that not so long ago were shunned by most of us.

I exit the store. No pleasantries in passing, no conversation with others. Eyes forward, job done.

Once at my car, I am relieved to remove my mask but now am concerned – did I wipe the door handle, steering wheel, did I touch my face? I feel foolish and unreasonable.

But then, I look around

me and watch the parade of masked people going to and fro. It all seems so unreal. I shake my head, drive away.

What makes this OK? Doing the right thing, seeing family, golfing, social distancing with friends, looking forward to a rosy future where once again I will smile at passersby and comment on the weather. Such a Canadian conversation, one I miss.

How interesting it will be to read the historians' versions on the Great Pandemic of 2020. And won't we have stories to share with those small grandchildren that will begin with "remember when"?

Lorraine Horton
NOTL

I don't support mandatory masking

Dear editor:

I suppose my sentiments as a NOTL resident are a moot point when council has already voted in favour of forced masks.

Over the last few weeks, masks have become highly politicized and a polarizing focal point of safety.

Over the months, the news has repeatedly reported that masks are a third line of defence against COVID-19. The first line being

hand-washing (sanitization), and second, distancing.

I understand why certain establishments feel masking is a high priority (e.g. an optometrist; hair salons). But, to say all businesses are the same and to enforce draconian measures that demand citizens cover most of their face (until November in some regions), makes the mandate rather unpleasant to digest.

Has anyone considered

that forced masking deters happy shoppers and therefore economic growth?

Masks simply strip the pleasure from buying. Most people purchase retail items as a respite activity. I believe the whole enforcement makes customers uncomfortable and disincentivizes patrons from visiting small businesses – especially in a high tourist area.

I commend distancing and sanitization, but I

cannot support mandatory masking. It's simply too controlling of our government to enforce masks and I am concerned at how complacent Canadians are over it.

Personally, I will not be making any purchases that are not essential until the forced masking goes away. The upside is I'll have a lot more money in my pocket.

Katherine Hatherly
NOTL



We welcome your letters

The Lake Report welcomes your letters to the editor. Please, write early and often.

Letters ideally should be under 400 words long. Occasionally, longer letters may be published. All letters may be edited for conciseness, accuracy, libel and defamation.

Please include your full name, street

address and a daytime telephone number so that authorship can be authenticated.

Only names and general addresses (eg. Virgil, St. Davids, NOTL) will be published.

Send your letters to editor@niagaranow.com or drop them by our office at 724 Mississauga St., NOTL.

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Where is regional leadership on masks?

Dear editor:

I read with interest your article on Niagara Region council's failure to draft and pass a bylaw requiring face masks/shields be worn in public ("Region fails on face masks," editorial, July 16).

I also note that as of this moment a bylaw has been passed by NOTL council, however details are not yet generally known.

While I applaud the NOTL council on this issue, what took you so long? It's not as though we have not known for some time that the most effective defence against the virus is a face covering and we are in the epicentre of tourism in Ontario. Yet it took until



Queen Street strollers on the weekend, without a mask in sight. JESSICA MAXWELL

now, four months into the pandemic, to make such an order?

This, of course, follows well behind Toronto's face mask law. As we sit safely up here and watch our southern neighbours politicize this issue and become

the poster child for how not to respond to the pandemic, we should not be so smug as it has taken until now to get this simple thing done!

The City of St. Catharines has now passed a similar bylaw. I truly do not understand why so many of

our political leaders at all levels have simply refused to lead on this matter and essentially left it up to us to do the right thing.

Our businesses and wineries require face masks in buildings and social distancing inside and out, yet politicians are afraid of what? Taking a stand on something that is simple common sense?

Where is the political risk in that? It's time for all politicians to get with the program and do what is required to protect us all and restart the economy. This is not possible if we regress into further outbreaks. It's time to mask up.

Stan Gilkinson
NOTL

'Something is rotten' in Niagara politics

Dear editor:

In Shakespeare's "Hamlet," an officer of the palace guard says, "Something is rotten in the state of Denmark" after the dead king's ghost appears.

I didn't get beyond page four of The Lake Report's July 16 edition to smell something fishy emanating from regional and municipal council reportage. No mandatory Niagara-wide mask wearing is beyond reason, and a partial explanation why we remained in Phase 2 on our merry way to yesteryear's promised land under premier Doug Ford.

I know that the seemingly interminable jail-like sentence due to the virus has rendered some antsy, but what's up with duelling members of council?

With a huge property tax increase, it appeared that the largely rookie group

might be in over their collective heads, but I was prepared to acquiesce and monitor future developments. Alas, a health crisis has bugged the works. Nonetheless, we were promised leadership at election time and this is certainly when we need it most.

However, it appears that we have an "executive" committee that seeks to call the shots, with council either ill-informed, non-informed or AWOL. It sounds like the committee is overloaded with senior staff and that the interim CAO and mayor are in charge.

This might work with veterans, but we have neither in each case. We have only one seasoned veteran on council and he and the mayor seem to be skirmishing over the procedural bylaw that regulates such niceties as "notice of motion."

Last year, I encountered a nasty taste of the tail wagging the dog when I asked the council to intercede regarding shoddy staff decision-making in a parking issue that was part of their \$2 million worth of yearly revenue.

I learned to distrust council, the mayor and staff in a process that lasted for months until I was exonerated at the regional level, the mediator telling me that the town had not seen fit to show up at the hearing and that it had submitted unsupported evidence that I knew was false – which was discarded. Hence my lack of trust.

The only councillor who saw fit to visit me, a bonafide lawyer, has resigned. I have served on four municipal councils, and resignations are rare and usually involve a move to another jurisdiction.

In that time I also witnessed more than one mayor calling secret meetings out of town (usually at the Niagara Parks Commission headquarters) and out of sight of both media and citizenry. I have observed situations where the mayor and finance chair try to run the show to the exasperation of committee members. I have never encountered a situation where senior staff seem easily to override elected members.

I trust that this smell might soon fade, but I am thankful that we have a local press that seeks to keep elected officials and staff honest and accountable. I trust that the local and regional council will not emulate the fiasco that exists in Ottawa.

Sincerely,
Mike Keenan
NOTL

Chill out: NOTL councillors deserve our gratitude

Dear editor:

The heat of summer and the constraints of COVID-19 have affected all of us.

So, when I read the front page news about our council, our lord mayor and a former mayor debating the niceties of procedural motions at yet another council meeting, ("Council gets heated up on masks, street

closure," July 16), I wonder whether The Lake Report is writing to promote its ability to sow seeds of discord or whether the editor actually believes this is newsworthy.

And all the letters to the editor upset about what the councillors did or didn't do – it's too much. People, get a grip. I think all the councillors deserve

a vote of gratitude. This is a tough town to govern – especially on a part-time basis for a pittance a year. It's clearly a labour of love for all of them.

And on top of that, writers are pillorying the provincial and federal members in letters to the editor. I know, I know it's a sacred trust to be elected to govern – but please lighten up.

Everyone is trying hard and doing the best they can in the circumstances.

And remember approximately 80 per cent (2018) of your property tax bill goes to the region and the province – only 20 per cent (2018) stays here at home in the prettiest little town.

Brad Nixon
NOTL



Brad Bergsma and Jesse Haletchwell pile stones to protect the shoreline. FILE/BRITTANY CARTER

Town must act quickly to protect shoreline

Dear editor:

This letter is to NOTL town council on behalf of the Dock Area residents.

As you may not be aware, the level of Lake Ontario is now at elevation 246.65 feet (75.18 metres). In the next 30 days Lake Ontario is forecasted to fall another six inches and would provide ideal conditions for work in the water.

We have reached a very important date regarding environmental regulation of Lake Ontario waters and there is absolutely no public information coming out of the town regarding the fate of the massive pile of anchor stones in the Ball's Beach Parkette which were procured for the groyne to protect our shoreline.

The Ministry of Natural Resources and Forestry permit window for work in the water opened last Wednesday, July 15, and closes Tuesday, Sept. 1.

As of July 23, there are only 39 days left in the window of opportunity and time is running out!

An extension to Sept. 15 is sometimes granted by the ministry, but that is based on water temperature, flow rates and other metrics. No guarantees.

In the last two weeks, town surveyors staked property boundary lines along the parkette and when asked "why?" by residents they couldn't provide an answer.

Several trees have also been marked with paint, presumably for removal? But only one is identified in the shoreplan drawings as to be removed.

Is work on the groyne imminent? If so, what is going to be done and when is it

going to happen?

If there is going to be activity, I presume equipment and materials would approach the shore from the north end of Delater Street.

And we all acknowledge that resident and tourist invasion toward the shoreline of NOTL is at a record high this year. How will public safety be managed?

Is deferring the groyne until later an option? Absolutely not!

The ministry permit for the shoreline stabilization expires in October 2020.

The ministry could ask for a "start from scratch" application based on the fact that the work completed to date is not in accordance with the existing permit. The minority of work that was completed to-date suffered some damage in 2019 but omitted the critical buttressing cobble that may have made the difference. It invites the question of whether the groyne offers an essential contribution.

NOTL council, a recommendation to approve the shoreplan work was not discussed in the July 13 committee of the whole and did not appear on the agenda for the NOTL council meeting Monday, July 20.

Time is running out!
Ron Simkus
NOTL

Editor's note: A town staff report released hours prior to Wednesday night's council meeting recommends spending \$300,000 to protect the Dock Area shoreline. Results of council's decision on the matter were not known at press time.



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Can't we just let Queen Street be **pedestrian mall**?

Dear editor:

I am a local business owner and work in tourism, and have been at a standstill due to COVID. I am trying to promote local tourism and business.

I am getting tired of the nonsense that the town is trying to pull in regard to Queen Street. We should all be coming together to support our local businesses, however instead we are coming up with model after model trying it out for a week and not providing any consistency for retailers, restaurants, tourists and locals alike.

It is causing so much confusion and making busi-

nesses suffer, not allowing them to adapt or see any profit come in.

The set up of downtown NOTL this past weekend was so uninviting, with the fencing to widen the pedestrian areas and still have traffic attempting to go through. It looked like a "no-go" zone rather than an inviting space for locals and tourists.

The full pedestrian street on weekends (with Queen shut down) as it was previously was a much better solution. Why are we trying to recreate a wheel that has been in effect in most of the world for decades?

Look at what a typi-

cal European city looks like, even the small towns have pedestrian areas that work beautifully and they are fully shut down all year around. Businesses have adapted to that and are making money!

Can we not learn from what they have done, instead of trying to put in place ugly fencing and "Danger, Keep Out" signs at the entrances which scare off both locals and tourists?

I have to say, I went to Queen last week for the first time with my kids in over a year and it was amazing to see everyone out supporting local. I have gone to Queen with my husband and

friends to hang out on the patios and it's been wonderful.

Let's not forget that even with positive measures, businesses/restaurants are losing thousands every day because they can only take 30 per cent capacity.

Proper signage is needed, consistency, vendors and restaurants should be allowed to take up parking spots/sidewalks for their goods to entice those passing through during COVID (there are enough empty spots every weekend around town from what I've observed so far).

*Aga Tempelaars-Goik
NOTL*



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The
Lake Report

Region meeting totally **unproductive**

Dear editor:

Holy macaroni Batman, what is going down here?

Granted a juvenile expression, but on the other hand Niagara regional council does not seem to know what the other hand is doing.

Firstly, thank you for the insightful report and summation as per the region's 4.5-hour meeting debating making face masks mandatory, ("Region fails on face masks," editorial, July 16). I would not really be aware of it were it not for

your printed report.

Now I am not out to hurt people's feelings, and or put them off, them being both the regional and NOTL town councils.

But (nothing like that famous word), but after faithfully reading your newspaper, along with others, of course, ya gotta be kidding.

My background is in the corporate world and this nonsense would not be tolerated in a corporate boardroom by the participants at hand. And four and one half hours for a non-productive meeting? We would have

accomplished an IPO, a takeover, a complete financing, so to speak, in less than that time.

Our meetings were totally productive. It is the real world, it is business.

One should note that in the United States the presidents who did well had over 50 per cent of their people at the table from the business world. For example, Eisenhower had 57 per cent, Reagan 56 per cent, Obama 8 per cent and Trump 90 per cent.

Summation: a bit of odd nonsense is taking

place at both councils. Our lord mayor is doing a fine executive job under stressful times (despite some tense times with some councillors), while regional councillors, well, could they not do better at their specific jobs as per your editorial?

These positions are not to be taken lightly. They are responsible levels of government in our democratic society. These folks should be putting out in a professional manner for the people of Niagara Region.

*Keith Bullen
NOTL*

Opening Queen St. to pedestrians is **just a start**

Dear editor:

I'd like to voice support for town council's decision to close Queen Street to cars on weekends. The fact that they did this at all shows courage and a willingness to innovate.

That is not to say their execution was perfect. For a move like this to be successful, our town needs to do far more than just close off the street. We need to be radical and we need to be far more holistic.

One issue with the council's implementation was signage: "Emergency. Road Closed" is not a

good look. Instead, we have to create a welcoming entrance. We can build planters from recycled wood pallets, or just cover up the existing sign and paint on it: "Welcome to Queen Street."

A more vital issue is that the town does not do enough to encourage leaving your two tons of metal and plastic at home. If we are not changing the way we get around, parking will always be an issue.

The town must put in proper, grade-separated bike paths, and improve the sidewalks where neces-

sary. This is not expensive, and not difficult, especially when you consider the support for projects like the diverging diamond interchange that is going onto Glendale Avenue.

Furthermore, we need to work with the region and province to reconsider how tourists get into our little town in the first place.

Store owner Peter Earle made an excellent point: "It's not a road closure. It's a pedestrian opening."

This is not just about traffic, this is not just about tourists. This is a step in remembering our

town exists as a space to live, not a space for storing our big metal boxes.

European cities started reversing auto-centric development as early as the 1960s. Copenhagen started pedestrianizing Strøget in 1962. Amsterdam started its revolution with the "Stop the Child Death" protests in the late '60s.

These places are wonderful to be in because they decided to be wonderful. I hope the council doesn't let a few loud voices stop our town from catching up.

*Alex Ganassini
NOTL*

Congratulations to staff at Upper Canada Lodge

Dear editor:

I would like to congratulate the staff at Upper Canada Lodge on their perfect record during the COVID-19 pandemic.

It is obvious that they have exercised excellent care and caution at this

challenging time.

A sincere thank you to all for keeping the residents occupied and in touch with family through Zoom, Facebook, telephone calls, etc.

*Betty Miller
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Surviving the pandemic

Now more than ever, Niagara charities and non-profits need community support

Editor's note: The Lake Report asked a cross-section of Niagara-on-the-Lake charitable and non-profit organizations to talk about what they are doing to survive the COVID-19 pandemic and how they are striving to thrive in the so-called new normal. Aside from belt-tightening and new approaches to fundraising, two themes permeate their urgent transformation: most are jumping to virtual contact and digital programming, and many are seeking opportunities to collaborate with similarly challenged organizations. Here's how they are faring:

Report by Tim Taylor, The Lake Report



Niagara-on-the-Lake Museum
www.nhsm.ca

The town's museum has been around since long before the last great pandemic — the so-called Spanish Flu of 1918. So, it is safe to say, the 125-year-old local institution has had its fair share of challenges.

"We're not letting the pandemic tear this organization down," says Sarah Kaufman, the museum's managing director/curator. "They kept going during the 1918 pandemic, even without the internet!"

During all the shutdown craziness, the museum has also pushed forward with major renovations and a name change to better reflect the institution's role in the community.

Having lost major funding sources from admissions, tours and gift shop sales, the museum staff and board of directors have severely curtailed conventional programming.

"We slashed our budget to see where we could pause our projects. We planned based on no revenue in 2020. Lots of things got cut — exhibitions, publications, new acquisitions, education, marketing and so on."

The organization also is doing more digitally.

"Before the pandemic, our social media content was spotty. Now we are posting content as much as twice a day — videos, quizzes, and content driven posts, sharing resources. And virtual exhibits."

The museum has had to cancel its regular Polo Fundraiser this fall.

"That was about \$50,000 in fundraising, it's not happening. So, we need to find other activities — mostly smaller — to pick up the slack. So far, we have tried drive-by pig roasts, and everyone is supporting us with their tummies."

"We're hoping our community will use whatever resources it has to help us stay afloat. Buying memberships is a great way to sustain us."

"Now is the time."



Music Niagara Festival
www.musicniagara.org

Like the museum, Music Niagara has lost the ability to bring its traditional product to market and to raise much of the money it needs to make it happen.

"We suffered a double hit," says Karen Lade, the organization's general manager. "No ticket sales and no fundraising events."

This would have been the much-lauded music festival's 22nd summer season, presenting over 30 diverse musical experiences from some of the world's best-known performers, at the region's most intimate and interesting local venues.

The pandemic brought it all to a screeching stop.

On the fundraising side, Music Niagara's cornerstone event, The Big Night Gala, which annually raised more than \$50,000, was quickly cancelled.

"We've become much more targeted in our fundraising," says Lade. "Our major supporters have remained quite strong. Now we have to find music lovers who have not been hit too hard by the pandemic."

The festival has announced an online "At Home Series" of performances, recorded at both international and local venues, on many Sunday afternoons through August and September.

The 13-concert collaboration with venues, performers and volunteer videographers, will help bring the essence of the original 2020 summer season, not only to the festival's loyal local following but also to music lovers around the world.

"We have learned to be patient — no one knows when or how this will end, and we have to go on and keep Music Niagara thriving."



Newark Neighbours
www.newarkneighbours.ca

Laura Gibson has been chair of the Newark Neighbours board of directors for four years, helping bring food security to its Niagara-on-the-Lake clients.

The organization's almost 40 volunteers are immensely proud of their contribution.

"We're like a family," says Gibson. "And we're all seniors, so we've had to be very careful during the pandemic, particularly when we are sorting items and such."

Gibson is quick to respond to why NOTL needs a food bank. "We've been in operation for almost 50 years. People in the broader community are in need. People have had hard times in their lives. All our clients are low income and must be living in Niagara-on-the-Lake."

The food bank gets its provisions directly from food donations, financial contributions and by operating its Thrift Shop, a retail store of gently-used clothing and household items donated by the community.

"Revenues from the Thrift Shop usually go to buy the food and cover very modest operating costs," says Gibson.

"Anything left over supports four bursaries that go to local students going off to post-secondary education, our support of Red Roof Retreat, or to other needy food banks in the area that are busier than ours."

In the face of the pandemic, the Thrift Shop has been temporarily closed, largely due to the limited space for sorting. Now, as plans to reopen are being put in place, Newark Neighbours is not accepting clothing and household item donations.

"We will no longer be accepting donations of clothing and household items," says Gibson. "We are now well-stocked when we open our Thrift Store."

Gibson says Thrift Shop donations have skyrocketed. "Everybody is cleaning out their basements. People want to donate something. And we are becoming the beneficiary."

She is aware Newark Neighbours, as a charity, has fared well during the pandemic.

"We are truly fortunate. Because our population includes many retirees, we are not as dependent on jobs. Many of us have adequate fixed incomes. So, we're in a better position to donate to others more needy than we are. The community has really responded to our needs."



TD Niagara Jazz Festival
www.niagarajazzfestival.com

Juliet Dunn is the co-creator, executive director and artistic producer of the seven-year-old regional jazz festival, which in a normal year, produces more than 50 events, largely in its summer festival in July.

Believe it or not, the festival has already presented over 40 concerts since the lockdown in March. It mounted its second annual Summer Mardi Gras online on July 18.

"I've been producing all of the online content so far," says Dunn. "It hasn't gone perfectly but everyone is learning." The organization hired technical support for its Summer Mardi Gras production.

"We have certainly had a reduction in sponsors. But we've also had strong support for keeping music alive."

The online concerts have drawn greater than normal donations during the pandemic.

"We pay the musicians, but they need as much as they can get. We've been very happy the musicians have been able to collect virtual tips through the streaming process. It all counts."

The festival has had to trim its budget by more than half, from \$330,000 to \$150,000 this year.

"We will need to live stream all our events in the future, even if we have small in-person gatherings at the same time. It's the way of the future."



Pauline Reimer Gibson
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**Niagara-on-the-Lake
Palliative Care Service**
www.notlpc.com

At any given time, Niagara-on-the-Lake Palliative Care service volunteers are working with as many as 150 client/patient visits coping with life-limiting illnesses, death and bereavement. The local service is in its 35th year and last year its volunteers made 1,800 visits.

All of that ground to a halt in March.

“It’s tragic that the pandemic has closed these end-of-life patients off from our support and their families,” says Bonnie Bagnulo, executive director of the agency. “These patients need to connect both spiritually and emotionally.”

“In the early days of the pandemic, it was impossible for our volunteers to connect, particularly for patients in long-term care homes.”

So, the palliative care team put their thinking caps on: “How can we at least connect with people trapped behind the COVID barrier?”

The answer came through a grant from an emergency COVID response fund: 20 iPads. Now with the help of staff at care homes, the palliative care organization can use the internet to connect directly with clients. And, perhaps more importantly, client families have a chance to keep their love ones closer.

“Much of our funding comes from thankful families who are appreciative of the services we provide,” says Bagnulo. “So, when our services stopped, so did much of our income. But government support has allowed us to maintain our administrative momentum.”

Like other non-profits, the palliative service’s major fundraising event has had to change, too. Instead of a one-day, provincewide, Healing Cycle ride, the event will go virtual for an entire week in each of the participating communities.

“So, your whole family or work group can make and fulfil riding and fundraising commitments. It will run for a week just after Labour Day.”



Nyanyas of Niagara
www.grandmotherscampaign.org

Since 2007, the Niagara-on-the-Lake chapter of the Stephen Lewis Foundation’s Grandmothers for Grandmothers has raised more than \$100,000 to help fight the HIV/AIDS pandemic in sub-Saharan Africa.

The local chapter boasts more than 150 active, dedicated

grandmothers.

The Nyanyas (Swahili for grandmother) use fundraising events — often special lunches and dinners, highlighting speakers and foods with an African theme, children’s book sales and individual “blessing jars” to collect spare change when the keepers count their blessings.

If the pandemic has closed the event doors, the Nyanyas are redoubling their smaller fundraising efforts, maintaining their enthusiasm with regular Zoom meetings.

“I’ve been astonished by the number of people who have agreed to fill blessing jars in support of the grandmothers,” says Terry Mactaggart, one of the founders of the Niagara-on-the-Lake group.

“Granny Power is an extraordinarily strong force to behold. We are confident the Nyanyas can continue to support the indomitable African grandmothers. And have fun doing it.”



Niagara Pumphouse Arts Centre
www.niagarapumphouse.ca

The Pumphouse ended 2019 on a real high. The small public gallery, perched on the Niagara River, downstream from Navy Hall, celebrated its 25th anniversary with the completion of a major interior renovation.

When the pandemic forced an almost immediate shut-down, the board of directors and staff pivoted quickly from live visitors and students to online programming.

Lise Andreana has been chair of the Pumphouse for more than three years. “Our art classes are particularly appropriate for sale,” says Andreana. “We’ve always charged a fee to attend our classes, so putting them online works well. And our YouTube classes are being saved and we can put them up for sale again later.”

Andreana hopes going online will broaden the galleries’ audience, as well. “It’s a way of expanding our market and reach. Now, we are locally focused. But one of our recent classes drew a participant from British Columbia. It allows our small organization to grow virtually.”

The Pumphouse is also reaching out to other area non-profit organizations that may have common interests — forced to close, limited public access, cancelled special events.

“I think that these are relationships that we can continue to foster,” says Andreana. “We are certainly open to collaboration. It will lead to being in a better position for all of us.”



RiverBrink Art Museum
www.riverbrink.org

RiverBrink opened to the public in 1983, presenting historical and contemporary exhibitions, educational programming and tours, in the former home of Samuel Weir, overlooking the Niagara River just north of the village of Queenston, on the Niagara Parkway.

Plans are underway to reopen the gallery on a limited basis, according to Debra Antoncic, curator/director of RiverBrink for five years.

“We will be open by appointment only,” says Antoncic, “so we can limit the number of people. We’re just waiting until we get our shields in place, extra masks and the cleaning protocols established.”

“I’m hoping that our new digital content will bring some new people,” she adds. “And then we can build on that when we can actually have people in the space.”

As well, RiverBrink is launching an Adopt An Artwork sponsorship program.

“We need to build ourselves more closely into the fabric of the community, so locals will come not just for openings but keep returning regularly. I hope our community will take a special look at all the local non-profits during this exceedingly difficult time.

“To lose them, it’s hard to bring them back.”



**Rotary Club of
Niagara-on-the-Lake**
www.niagaraonthelakerotary.ca

Ken Schander, the new president of the Rotary Club of Niagara-on-the-Lake, admits he needs to increase his charitable contributions.

“As a member of the community, I’m not travelling, I’m not going to the symphony, I’m not eating out — my bank account is growing. There are charitable opportunities and I need to respond to them.”

Technically, Rotary is not a non-profit. It is a service club, dedicated to raising money to support other charities and non-profits.

“We are certainly going to survive the pandemic. But it is not the same old, same old. Our opportunities to help others, as we have in the past, are changing.”

Rotary’s two big local fundraising events — the Christmas House Tour and the Canada Day celebrations in Simcoe Park — have been cancelled for the year. The house tour alone raises more than \$100,000 to support Rotary contributions.

“We’ve had to explore new ways of doing things. We have held extensive internal discussions on how to move forward and we hope to explore a number of smaller things, searching for new sustainable fundraising activities.

“We’d really like to get back to our standby events,” says Schander. “But that’s unlikely to happen soon.

And Rotary has always worked with other local service clubs — sharing equipment, scheduling events and so on. “We expect to have more collaboration, as time goes on.”

Canada **needs** its charitable sector: Imagine Canada

Imagine Canada, a major umbrella organization for the Canadian charitable sector, describes the revenue and manpower impacts of the pandemic on charities and non-profits, as “beyond anything we have seen before.”

In its May 2020 Sector Monitor, Bruce MacDonald, Imagine Canada’s CEO, writes: “Whatever the new ‘normal’ is, one thing is clear — more than ever, communities in recovery are going to need vibrant charities and non-profits of all types.”

Some highlights of the report:

- * Organizational capacity has decreased 40 per cent for charities.
- * Revenues have declined an average of 30.6 per cent since the onset of the pandemic.
- * 30 per cent of charities have already laid off staff and 55 per cent say more layoffs are possible.
- * Full- and part-time layoffs exceed an estimated 80,000 people.
- * 49 per cent of volunteers are unavailable because of working conditions.
- * 54 per cent have transitioned in-person programs to online and 42 per cent have developed completely new programs to respond to the needs.



NOTL resident Margaret Walker, Meridian branch manager Doug Martin and Palliative Care program manager Bonnie Bagnulo during a charity event. FILE PHOTO

STEELE GALLERY

**COMING SOON.
CHECK THE LAKE REPORT
FOR UPDATES ON OPENING**

Letters to council show most support man

NOTE: Before passing a mandatory mask bylaw last week, Lord Mayor Betty Disero sent out an email asking for opinions on whether or not masks should be mandatory. Here are some of the responses by Niagara-on-the-Lake residents and business people.

“I’m exempt from wearing a mask.’ No proof needed. Asking for a proof of exemption is against the law. Problem solved. You can go on with your day ... In conclusion: Unless your profession is requiring you to wear a mask, if you still insist in wearing one, you are doing so voluntarily.”
- Jonathan Nzouankeu

“I am extremely hopeful that Council will vote on Thursday evening to make masks mandatory in interior spaces in Niagara-on-the-Lake. I sincerely believe that it is in all our best interests to err on the side of caution, especially in light of a possible second wave. We should be proud of our success in keeping the rate of infection down, in our area, due to the public’s positive response to government measures to make this mandatory.”
- Marie and Michel Lapointe



“I am emailing you today as a wife and mother of three young children here in NOTL. I had never intended on “joining” the mask debate, however, I do want my voice to be heard. I strongly feel that IF masks do truly provide the protection required to fight off this virus, then the province would have made them mandatory from the beginning of COVID. This would have been a discussion back in March. Our town is supported by tourism and we do require visitors from all over to come to our area and into the stores we as locals also support. I think we have all gotten off track here with feeling that the masks will “protect” us when we should be requiring everyone to wash their hands before entering a store. It is proven that handwashing and proper social distancing are the two top ways to protect ourselves from this virus. If masks are made mandatory by the majority of council, I strongly feel that we should be adding hand washing to the bylaw as well.”
- Suzanne Dodd

“Yes ... full support.”
- Richard Wall,
Virgil Business
Association president

“YES! 100% supportive of this.”
- Tim Jennings,
Shaw Festival
executive director

“Agreed thanks, should be masks or face shields.”
- Andrea Kaiser

“There are valid arguments on both sides of this debate. Ultimately, this boils down to a value judgement: how much do we as a society want to hedge against the risk of COVID-19 that we are willing to deny a small amount of personal freedom and risk potential harms, relying only on relatively weak research to justify this. Our position is that these sorts of value judgements are best made by society as a whole through its elected leaders. It is clear that the public is currently split with passionate advocates on both sides of the debate—all the more reason that elected leaders should publicly debate and decide this.”
- Dr. Mustafa Hirji,
acting medical officer of health for Niagara Region

“YES 100% supportive! The shops need a tool to enforce the use of masks inside their stores but can’t be liable, the responsibility should be put on patrons.”
- NOTL Chamber of
Commerce president
Eduardo Lafforgue

“You have the full support of both myself and my mum (who is over 70 and therefore high risk) on this bylaw. Make the bylaw valid for a few months, and then review and extend if necessary (and sadly, I believe it will be necessary).”
- Jennifer (and Carol) Hudd

“While Niagara Region contemplates a mask bylaw, I hope NOTL Council will proceed with it’s own vote to make masks mandatory in indoor spaces. The science is clear. Masks work. Why wait until it’s a crisis, as other jurisdictions have done. Please be proactive to protect the health of NOTLers.”
- Jan Goulding

I am writing to support your proposed bylaw making face masks mandatory in NOTL. Over the course of this pandemic I have been astounded by the number of people who refuse to co-operate with the various emergency measures that have been put in place to try and minimize the risk of virus transmission. I continue to walk in businesses in town and observe people failing to social distance and refusing to wear masks. Some of these people are also employees in these businesses. The urgency to act decisively is further compounded by the numerous tourists that have started to arrive again, many of whom are under 30 and think they are invincible. Therefore, the town must act now to try and protect its vulnerable population. Perhaps, its also time to remind everyone of prior social hygiene practices such as sneezing into your elbow or covering your mouth with a Kleenex when you had a cold. How often have we heard, sorry, I have a cold don’t come any closer? No one was offended by these practices because it was common sense not to pass your cold or flu to others. Wearing a mask is merely an extension of this old practice of protecting others only now its critical because this virus kills. The inconsistent messaging from public health agencies and all levels of government regarding public safety measures, I think, is partly to blame for this current state of affairs. Thankfully, provinces and municipalities have now begun to speak with one voice on the necessity of masks. The town should add its voice too. However, a mask bylaw is only a first step. All levels of government must continue to educate the public not only about COVID-19 but also about the rights and responsibilities of citizens in a free and democratic society. Common misconceptions persist about “my individual rights.” As we are all aware, in a democratic country all of us agree to limit some of our individual rights in the interest of the common good. Therefore, it is incumbent upon all of us to explain and if necessary to challenge fallacious arguments used as a defence for non-compliance.”
- Toni Burzotta

RIDDLE ME THIS

You bury me when I am alive, and dig me up when I die. What am I?

Last week: I am a five letter word and you can eat me. If you remove my first letter, I will be a form of energy. If you remove my first two letters, I’ll be something you do daily. If you remove my first three letters, I’ll be a preposition. If you remove my first four letters, I’ll be a drink. What am I?

Answer: Wheat

Answered first by: Margie Enns

Also answered correctly (in order) by: Susan Hamilton, Margaret Garaughty, Janice Hall, Kieran Jones, Sheila Meloche, Wade Durling, Sylvia Wiens, Terrie Courtlander, Katie Reimer, Britiney Turasz, Heather Lowen, Ginny Green, Ross Holmes, Brenda Bartley

Email answers, with your name, to editor@niagaranow.com for a chance to win a prize. (Subject line: Riddle me this)

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andatory mask bylaw



"I can't appreciate the delay applied to the controversy surrounding the wearing of masks when the Public Health Agency of Canada recommends the wearing of non surgical masks or face coverings in public places where physical distancing isn't possible to do consistently. We need to do this for everyone's safety. NOTL isn't unique. "Virus exempt" or "a disease free zone." Anything but, in fact we are more vulnerable with the increasing number of tourists and people flocking here and the age of our general population.

- Sandra Johnston, Old Town resident

"I am writing to encourage the town to make face masks mandatory in indoor spaces. I am extremely disappointed in the take-up of voluntary mask usage by both locals and visitors to Niagara-on-the-Lake. I don't buy the argument that people have the right not to wear a mask. That makes as much sense as having a right not to wear car seat belts. Also, no one has the right to infect others. That's the primary purpose of a mask. I also don't buy the argument that our region's COVID-19 cases may be lower than, for example, Toronto. Many of our visitors don't come from the region. I look forward to seeing some positive action. We are in the midst of a pandemic."

- Paul Weiss



"The CDC could not be more supportive of using face masks. We need to get this done. But CDC director Robert Redfield's comments Tuesday were perhaps his strongest yet: "I think we're being very clear now. Now's the time to wear a mask."

- Mike Henry.

"I am supportive of this measure, Lord Mayor."

- Del Rollo,
vice president of industry
and government relations
at Arterra Wines Canada.

"Toronto has implemented masks, York Region is now implementing masks. We know that a lot of people from these towns are coming to Niagara-on-the-Lake! We know a lot of them say it's partly because they don't have to wear masks!! They don't want to be told what to do. Bad news. We need to implement masks. The second wave is most certain. Please stay ahead of this deadly curve. Help keep us safe."

- Ruth Fotheringham
and Steve Sobel

"I am a proud citizen of Niagara-on-the-Lake and was even more proud when I read that you seemed to want to vote against making facial masks mandatory. I understand this must be a difficult decision to make as we need to take the health and safety of everyone to heart. According to the W.H.O.: "If you are healthy, you only need to wear a mask if you are taking care of a person with COVID-19." Although I could write solely on case studies that challenge the questionable effectiveness of wearing a mask, I would like to bring to your attention a much more important and often glossed-over aspect to making the mask mandatory and that is stress ... The distress that the pandemic is creating is real and damaging. What's wrong with keeping it a choice?"

- Anai's Boies, NOTL resident

"I think it is imperative, during this unprecedented time, that we practise all precautionary measures possible to protect ourselves, and those around us in the community. Mask wearing is easily executed and has been proven to be greatly effective in reducing the risk of contracting COVID. It seems like a no-brainer to me ... if we cannot practise social distancing in certain NOTL locations, then mask wearing should be mandatory. I am puzzled that this is even an issue? Especially in a town that is overrun by tourists day in & day out. Safety first."

- Tara Rosling,
Chautauqua resident

"I'd like to express my support for mandatory masks. I believe they offer a common sense solution for both businesses and residents. It would be easier to have widespread mask use implemented than to close roads and divert parking in high traffic areas and lose parking revenue. I believe it will also substantially alleviate resident fears from out-of-town tourism. I believe waiting for a regional health organization (or provincial or federal) to mandate this is inefficient, as there is already sufficient evidence to support the use of masks as a deterrent to the spread of the disease. Regarding enforcement concerns, the vast majority of people will follow the rules. If they don't wear a mask, a mandatory order gives businesses the authority they need to refuse service. Losing a few unreasonable customers more than outweighs the death of a person."

- Lyndsay Gazzard, NOTL resident

"My heart was lightened when I realized there was still time to try and persuade all of you to not make masks mandatory ... At this stage the mask is simply a symbol of control and has nothing to do with health and safety. On the gold standard of masks, the N-95, it clearly states that it does not protect from viruses. There are a many videos on the web that show the health dangers, of breathing back in our own waste ... These are the darkest times I have ever seen. The cases of anxiety must be skyrocketing! Please leave the mask as a choice!"

- Pete Swanson, NOTL resident

"I am a resident of Niagara-on-the-Lake, and have lived here approximately 16 years. I love this town and want to support the local businesses. I also value the tourists that come visit our lovely town, and enjoy the vitality they bring. I am however very concerned about COVID-19 and have recently hesitated to go into town for groceries, etc. due to the lack of masks, not only by residents and tourists, but also some of the store workers who are stocking shelves ... I hope that you can gain support for mandatory mask wearing in town as I feel this will make it easier for residents like me to continue to support local businesses instead of driving into St. Catharines to shop."

- Trish Robertson

"We are writing because we are hopeful all of you will consider making masks mandatory ... My spouse and I are residents of St. Davids. As we both have compromised health, we strongly believe in taking all precautionary measures to protect ourselves against contracting COVID-19. Since our government health experts say mask wearing lowers the risk and stops the spread, we feel this measure needs to be taken. This measure will allow us to continue our support for local NOTL businesses."

- David and Jane Rusch,
St. Davids residents

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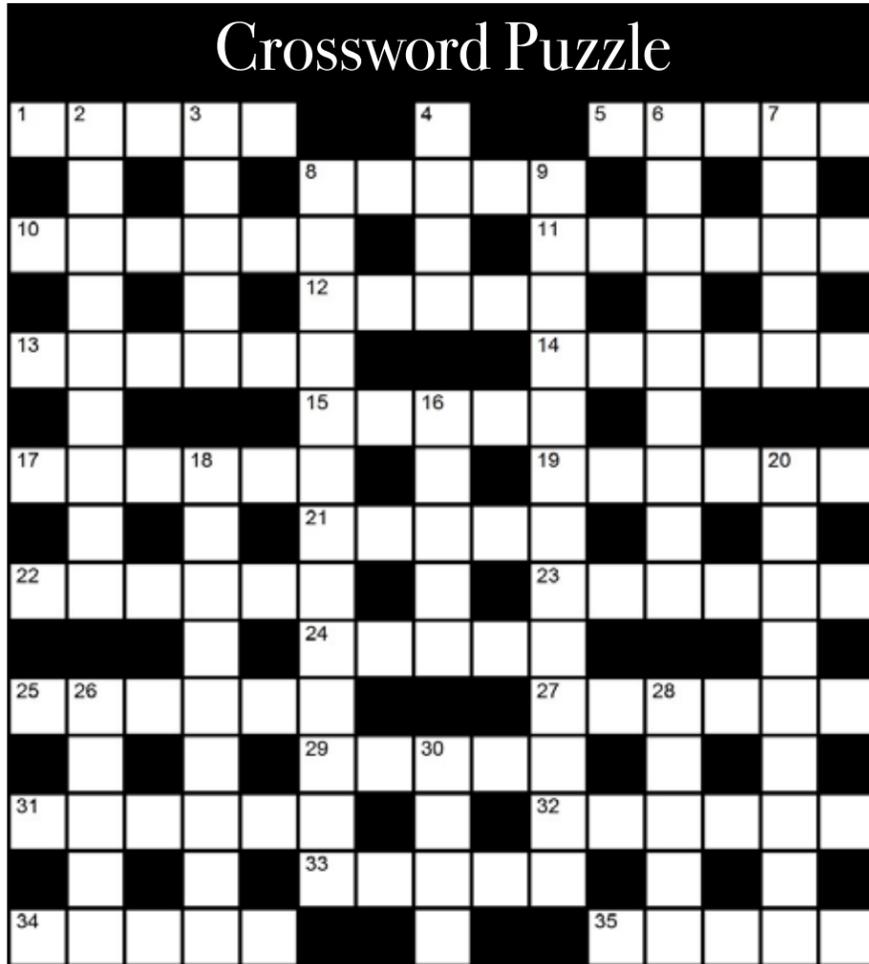
The Lake Report is looking for puzzle makers who would like to help develop this page. We are seeking both standard and cryptic crossword writers. editor@niagaranow.com

Across

- 1. Eyots (5)
- 5. Rubbish (5)
- 8. Incantation (5)
- 10. Russian sleigh (6)
- 11. Defence covering (6)
- 12. Having the form of a song (5)
- 13. Sister of Mary and Lazarus (6)
- 14. Resident of e.g. Nairobi (6)
- 15. Stage play (5)
- 17. Scratched (6)
- 19. Plan (6)
- 21. Cuban dance (5)
- 22. Die from lack of food (6)
- 23. Professional killer (6)
- 24. Locations (5)
- 25. Workshop machinery (6)
- 27. Pressed (6)
- 29. Grecian architectural style (5)
- 31. Go back (6)
- 32. Beast (6)
- 33. Porridge (5)
- 34. E.g. Tarka (5)
- 35. Is inclined (5)

Down

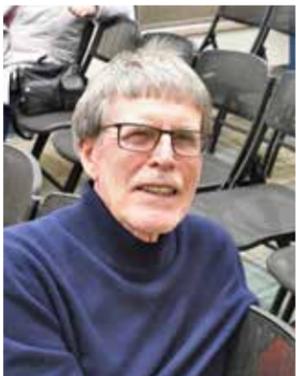
- 2. Rill (9)
- 3. Throw out (5)
- 4. Not in any circumstances (Poetical) (4)
- 6. Recall past experiences (9)
- 7. Sweat room (5)
- 8. Mayonnaise (5,8)
- 9. Lazy (13)
- 16. Allow to enter (5)
- 18. Storage building (9)
- 20. Cemetery (9)
- 26. Representative (5)
- 28. Oil source (5)
- 30. Part of speech (4)



Last issue's answers



Dr. Brown: Promising progress on COVID vaccines



Dr. William Brown is a professor of neurology at McMaster University and co-founder of the Infohealth series held at the Niagara-on-the-Lake Public Library.

Dr. William Brown
Special to The Lake Report

There have been encouraging results for two mRNA-based vaccines for COVID-19, the most promising of which is the Oxford vaccine.

Traditionally, vac-

cine development takes three to five years and employs killed or weakened viruses to prompt the immune system to produce antibodies. For most viral diseases, this approach works, but not well for coronaviruses such as SARs and MERS. That suggests a similar approach to developing a vaccine for COVID-19 won't work.

The dilemma is that those who catch this disease, especially the well-young who may experience few if any symptoms, may fail to develop a robust immune response or any detectable immune response at all.

That's unfortunate, because the most vulnerable – the middle-aged and especially older patients and those of any age with significant co-morbid conditions – need

a significant herd effect in the community, of the order of 60 to 80 per cent of the population with immunity, to stop the virus in the community from spreading.

We are nowhere near that level of natural protection anywhere in the world now and unlikely to get there without reaching significant herd effect levels – especially in the absence of an effective vaccine. That's certainly the case for the Old Town in Niagara-on-the-Lake.

To be effective, a vaccine must provoke a robust immune response capable of protecting the young and especially older people from the virus for at least five or more years, and the longer the better.

Older people need a stronger challenge to the immune system, compared to younger people,

if they are to mount an effective and lasting response. This was the case with the shingles vaccines, when earlier vaccines reduced the risk of developing shingles by less than 50 per cent and even that paltry protection didn't last long. The much more effective Shingrix vaccine protects over 90 per cent of older people from shingles and that protection lasts.

Compared to previous vaccine programs, this one is unique. First, over 100 vaccines are under development around the world. Second, the pace of development is much faster. Third, many of the strategies employed these days are high-tech. Fourth, and troubling, is the concern that some countries might not share their vaccines with other countries.

One of the most popular high-tech approaches employs messenger RNA (mRNA) that codes for part of the Spike-protein (S-protein). In the horse race for the first effective vaccine, the leader, the Oxford group, employs the Trojan horse approach: they use a tame virus to insert the engineered mRNA into the body's cells, which manufacture the S-protein. When expressed on the surface of the body's cells, it provokes the immune response.

The other mRNA approach forgoes the Trojan horse approach and packages the mRNA with nanoparticles. When they are injected into the body, they accomplish much the same the job as the Oxford group's vaccine.

The difference is that the latter group just pub-

lished their results of a Phase 1 trial. Here Oxford is well ahead and slated to complete a Phase 3 trial with 10,000 subjects in the fall, possibly as early as September. Both vaccines are well ahead of the pack and gearing up for mass production as their trials proceed.

But as the National Institute of Health's Dr. Anthony Fauci and other experts repeatedly remind us, many vaccines fail. My bet is on the Oxford group, in which case we could have an effective vaccine this fall. That would be great news.

Added note: Both Russia and China claim they will have a vaccine for distribution in the fall. Both apparently hacked Canadian, U.S. and U.K. sources developing vaccines for COVID-19. Are those two claims linked?



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NOTL antique shop closing after 10 years

As a child, Sylvia Christie hated antiques. Time's changed

Jessica Maxwell
The Lake Report

If you had told Sylvia Christie as a young girl in England that one day she would own and operate an antique shop, she would have thought you were crazy.

Christie says she hated old things as a child, "largely as a result of being dragged around scruffy second-hand shops by (my) mother."

One enduring memory that inspired her youthful dislike for antiques includes "travelling home on the bus with a huge Victorian stuffed bird under a glass dome and trying to pretend that I was not with them – my mother and the bird that is," she said.

Times changed and for the past decade, she has operated Sylvia's Antiques on Mary Street in Niagara-on-the-Lake, but on Aug. 2 she will close the doors for good.

Although COVID-19 has affected all businesses in town, Christie said the pandemic didn't force her to close, rather the months of shutdowns gave her time to think about the future of the business.

As she entered her twenties, Christie found herself becoming interested in antiques, motivating her to take a few courses and become a collector.

In 1974, Christie moved to Montreal with her two young daughters and husband, John, who worked there as an engineer. Provincial laws at the time didn't permit her to work in her field as a physiotherapist, so she had plenty of time to devote to antiquing.

She gradually began selling antiques so she could buy more and eventually started taking part in antique shows, "with the help of a reluctant but supportive husband," she said.

John's job moved the family to Argentina and back



Sylvia Christie stands inside of her store Sylvia's Antiques on Mary Street.
JESSICA MAXWELL

to Quebec again, where Christie opened a little antique shop, which she said she loved. Ten months after opening the shop, her husband's job moved them to Lesotho, a tiny country entirely surrounded by South Africa.

While packing up the shop for the move, Christie said her husband had a visit from the police after accidentally setting off the emergency alarm button under the counter. The police arrived with sirens wailing and weapons drawn, she said, but the situation was quickly settled after he talked with them.

After two years in South Africa, the family moved back to Canada and settled in Niagara where Christie worked as a physiotherapist and antiquing took a back seat.

The Christies have lived in Niagara-on-the-Lake since 1997 and after 10 years of retirement from physiotherapy, the little shop on Mary Street was up for rent.

"There it was, just waiting to be an antique store," she said. Her husband's response? "You said you were out of the antiques!"

"It was the shop really,"

she said. "It was just all set up to be an antique shop."

"I'd had some stock because we had been doing shows. The last show we did was Sherway Gardens in Toronto and it closed the year we opened the shop, so we were lucky that we had a shop."

Now, after two months of lockdown, painting and finishing projects around the shop, Christie said the decision to close happened almost overnight.

"We suddenly thought, 'No, it's been 10 years and it's time to stop,'" she said.

"I was quite scared of opening to start with," she said about reopening after the pandemic shutdown.

"We gradually got a little more confident" by encouraging mask use and sanitizer for customers coming in, she said.

"We just suddenly thought, what are we doing, with this enormous shop full of stuff that I've just gone on buying and buying for 10 years and filling it in," Christie said.

"And we thought, 'We're not getting any younger and it's time to sort this out.'"

"I used to joke that I would be carried out in a box with my stuff and that's

becoming a little closer to reality, so we thought, no, well the kids would not appreciate that," she said.

Christie said her landlords, the Pullman family, have been wonderful through all the uncertainty of the pandemic and even helped by reducing the rent for May and June.

"Thank you so much Niagara-on-the-Lake," she said.

"To all our customers and to the people who have brought us such wonderful things for us to sell over the years, we are just sad that we will not be able to thank all the customers who come from out of the province – largely the patrons of the Shaw Festival who come year after year to the shows."

When Sylvia's Antiques closes in a couple of weeks, Christie said it will be time to step away from the antique world and, "sit back and relax," though she admits, "it'll be hard not to dabble a little bit."

"I've been dabbling for 44 years now and it's something I know," she said.

"I have got quite a lot of knowledge there now and it's a pity not to use it really, so we'll see."

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Virgil flower shop fundraising for research into epilepsy

Continued from Front Page

say, still in denial.

How can you be diagnosed with a seizure disorder after one episode? There was so much we did not understand.

With the help of our family doctor here in Niagara-on-the-Lake we asked for a second opinion. We were able to get an appointment in Toronto with a neurologist in January 2017.

On New Year's Eve day, I was at work and I got a call that Eric was having a seizure at home. I came home and found him on the floor with my daughter holding his head.

We called an ambulance and he spent New Year's Eve and New Year's Day in the hospital. The fortunate thing was that we had an appointment coming up in a few short weeks with a neurologist who special-



Sharon and Eric VanNoort. SUPPLIED

izes in seizure disorders.

At Toronto Western Hospital, we were met by a team of specialists. I felt from the moment we arrived in the Epilepsy Unit we would be able to sort out what was going on with our son.

As it turns out Eric does have a seizure disorder – he has Epilepsy.

Eric is also one of the strongest young men I know. I also know that I am very grateful for the care and support we get

from Toronto Western Hospital as well as our own hospital in Niagara Falls.

Many times we have had to call an ambulance for Eric and the expertise of our paramedics, as they are the first to arrive, and then the hospital staff at Greater Niagara General Hospital are excellent. I am also very grateful for our pharmacist. I can't even begin to tell you how much support they provide.

The major form of treatment for epilepsy is long-

term drug therapy. Eric has been on many different cocktails of medication and they do not stop the seizures.

The doctors call it "medically refractory epilepsy" and that means the medicine isn't bringing the seizures under control. With our team of specialists in Toronto, Eric started the process to determine if he was a candidate for diagnostic brain surgery to see if his seizures could be surgically fixed.

On Feb. 7, 2020, Eric entered hospital for this diagnostic brain surgery. Fourteen electrodes were surgically implanted into his brain and after 30 days in hospital he went back into surgery twice to have the electrodes removed.

He arrived home with 40 staples in his head and a long recovery ahead.

We realized it was going to be many months before we would know any results from his diagnostic surgery – and then with the COVID-19 pandemic everything has been put on hold.

The scary thing is that Eric, who is now 23, continues to have seizures.

As we wait for some sort of plan for Eric, we are doing some fundraising events for epilepsy research. My hope is that with more research more can be done for my son

and others suffering from this neurological disorder.

During July and August we will hold different fundraisers to reach our goal of raising \$10,000 by Sept. 1. To date we have raised close to \$1,000 and we hope to generate more this weekend with a garage sale at our family's business, VanNoort Florists in Virgil. The fundraiser is Friday 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. and Saturday 10 a.m. to 2 p.m.

I feel at this point we all know that social distance and masks are required at the sale because we all need to stay safe. Please help us raise some money because every day in Canada 42 people learn they have epilepsy.

Research is hope and I do have hope for better days ahead.

Sharon VanNoort owns VanNoort Florists in Virgil.

Lion Burgers return for drive-thru dinner fundraiser

Brittany Carter
The Lake Report

Lion Burgers are coming back this month with an innovative drive-thru dinner campaign by the St. Davids Lions Club.

The non-contact, drive-thru barbecue at the York Road service club will kick off July 31 from 4 to 7 p.m. and will continue every Friday until the end of August if the response is good, said club member and "grunt" Ed Pittman.

"We're going to see how the first couple go. If it bombs, which I don't think it will, we'll probably cut it after two. But I think the response so far looks pretty good and we'll keep it going right through the end of the summer," Pittman said.

The drive-up barbecue will take place at the Lions Club at 1462 York Rd. and will feature a simple menu: a Lions Burger, fries and a bottle of water for \$10. Cash, debit and credit will be accepted.

"It'll basically be like a drive-thru. They can drive past the hall, come up and drive behind the hall and through the field to the back



St. Davids Lions Club members stand at the pavilion where they will hold the drive-thru barbecue. BRITTANY CARTER

of the burger barn and pick up their meal right there."

After the COVID-19 pandemic cancelled many of the Lions Club's big fundraisers, such as the fish fry and the annual carnival, Pittman said members wanted to do something to show the community it is still around.

"We thought, as people are starting to get out, it would be nice to let the community know we're still doing our fundraisers. And we're here if people want to come out and get a meal for themselves and for their families," he said.

"And enjoy the Lion Burger, because we didn't get to do the carnival this year and one of the big attractions is the Lion Burger."

He said fellow member Joe Typer thought up the idea and the club decided to run with it.

This way of fundraising is a "first-time thing" for the club, Pittman said.

Members will be taking orders and barbecuing under the pavilion, donning masks and following physical distancing guidelines, he said.

There will be benches set up for anyone wanting to stay and eat, so long as they stick to the guidelines as well, he said. There is also ample room for people to picnic with their burgers as well, he said.

"People can bring a blanket, chairs or whatever, set up over the park because the park is beautiful and it's wide open. They can spread themselves out during the meal and go on their merry ways as well," he said.

"It gives them a chance to talk and say hi to people, to keep their distance."

Obituary

Louise Dyck



Dyck, Louise (Lili) – At United Mennonite Home in Vineland on Monday, July 20, 2020, a few weeks short of her 93rd birthday. Beloved wife of the late George (2011) and dear mother of George (Teresa) Dyck of Vineland, Linda (Henry) Friesen of Niagara-on-the-Lake and Alvin Dyck of Hamilton. Loved grandmother of Tera (Ethan), George, and one great grandchild on the way. Dear sister of Henry (Merna) and the late Helen (2018).

A brief covid-friendly, graveside memorial was held on Wednesday morning July 22nd at Niagara Lakeshore Cemetery in Niagara-on-the-Lake. Many thanks to Tallman Funeral Homes for their assistance with the arrangements. Sincere thanks to all the staff at United Mennonite Home for taking care of our mother, especially these last few months. We also wish to acknowledge Dr. Gruber and Dr. David Reimer for their roles in our mother's well-being over the years. If desired, memorial donations may be made to the United Mennonite Home or Heart & Stroke or Canadian Bible Society. "Our mom was a good mom." Online condolences at www.tallmanfuneralhomes.ca

Did you know?

The Lake Report's printer sources 100 per cent of its paper fibre from industry-leading paper mills, which use quick-growth, sustainable, renewable plots of land, rather than clear-cutting forests. The ink is also vegetable-based.






Help us put an **end** to epilepsy.

Van Noort Flower Studio is selling cactus gardens during the months of July and August, with all proceeds going to Epilepsy Toronto. Our goal is to raise \$10,000 by September. Please help us fight epilepsy by picking one up. Cost is \$20 to \$40.

Call **905-468-7815** to arrange a purchase, or stop by our store located at **1634 Four Mile Creek Rd.**

EXPLORING PHOTOS WITH NOTL MUSEUM



Senator Plumb-White House

This is a 1920s photograph of the former Senator Plumb-White House on King Street. The perspective is from Castlereagh Street, not far from the front of the NOTL Museum. The home was located where Parliament Oak stands today. Across the street one can now find wartime housing rather than the former military reserve lands known as the Commons that you see here. This significant home had 10 fireplaces and four staircases. There were basement kitchens with grand fireplaces that were falsely believed by some to be secret tunnels running underground. The house was demolished in 1943 to build Parliament Oak School. All materials from the demolition were sold and incorporated into many homes around town.

ARCHITEXT

Survivors of 1812

Brian Marshall
Columnist

The occupation of Niagara by the Americans during the War of 1812 irrevocably altered the built landscape.

Destruction of homes and commercial buildings, particularly during the final months of that war, was an activity engaged in by both the Americans and British forces. As a result, by the end of the conflict there were very few pre-war buildings left standing.

Now, the Town of Niagara (a.k.a. NOTL's old town) was a pretty small place at the time. In fact, Plan V of Niagara drawn in 1810 identifies the location of only about 125 structures not attached to Fort George. So,



1805 Clement House. SUPPLIED/BRIAN MARSHALL

the near total devastation of this small community left us with a massive gap in our architectural history.

While we can only imagine what the town may have looked like had the war losses never occurred, here and there the occasional house did survive. And some of these still stand, presenting a facade that has not been significantly altered from its original state.

One of these houses was built in 1805 as the home

of James Clement, who had served with the Butler's Rangers during the Revolutionary War. With the start of the War of 1812, Clement was called back into service as a dispatch rider as he was considered an "excellent horseman" who owned thoroughbreds of "speed and great endurance."

The house he left was a beautiful Georgian expression: a symmetrical five-bay design set with 12/12 windows on the main floor and

12/8s on the second, interior end gable wall chimneys, and simple eave/window mouldings echoing the shadow lines of the clapboard and corner boards. The rare (in Canada) Federal-style portico over the main entry with a balcony serviced by a side-lit door that largely duplicates the main entry-way makes a distinct design statement.

While no one is certain why this house was saved the fate of most of its neighbours, local tradition has it that when the American troops came to the door, they were met by Catharine Clement (née Crysler) who was pregnant with her 11th child and likely had wee ones in tow). Whatever she said, in a rare expression of compassion, the American commander decided to leave the family with a roof over their heads.

Thanks to Catharine, we have a rare survivor that allows a glimpse into the architectural variety that may have been present on early NOTL Georgians.



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The love/hate relationship with closing Queen Street

‘Make it interesting and exciting’ so people want to shop in town

Jessica Maxwell
The Lake Report

Trials of full and partial closures of Queen Street in Old Town Niagara-on-the-Lake have left residents, business and visitors with a wide variety of opinions on whether the project has been a success.

Some loved the full shutdown, making the street a pedestrian promenade, others are happy to see vehicles permitted down the street again and off residential streets.

“I love it, I wish they would keep it closed for the whole year,” NOTL resident Alex MacGregor said.

On Saturday, MacGregor said he was unsure of the purpose of the metal fencing set up by the town this past weekend, which cordoned off on-street parking to make wider pedestrian walkways.

“I’m not sure if it’s for walkers or pedestrians or for bicycles,” he said. “So, bicycles stay on the street?”

“I had a problem when they closed the street that they didn’t direct cyclists to get off the bicycles.”

He said he is unclear where bikers can go. “Should they be allowed, or shouldn’t they be? And when they’re separated it like this, which (part) is for cyclists now?”

“I’ll go to a coffee shop or go to a restaurant or go to the post office and I’d like to not have to worry about cars coming by. I just like the open space concept.”

“I actually think it’s good for business and I live just two blocks from here,” he said.

“I don’t find any more cars or parking issues or drivers shouting, which some of the locals have complained about. I don’t see that at all.”

Johnson Street resident Maria Townley said



This photo shows people using the sidewalk instead of the closed off areas on Queen Street during the weekend, while traffic continues to flow. Residents and businesses have mixed thoughts on its effectiveness. JESSICA MAXWELL

with a full street closure the space looks less inviting.

“I think when you close Queen Street and it’s not busy, the optics are worse because it looks like it’s not busy,” Townley said.

She said traffic detouring through her neighbourhood doesn’t bother her.

“I lived for many, many, many, many, many years in a tourist place. They don’t bother me at all,” she said, referring to the tourists in town.

“I like them here because otherwise it would be too quiet for me here.”

Townley said she’s glad that traffic was allowed back on Queen Street this past weekend. “I never wanted it to be closed, period.”

“When people are driving through, they can see there is a buzz and there’s interest and that may make someone driving by actually want to stop,” she said.

“But if you can’t drive by and see that, and you’re walking through and there’s

hardly any people because now the space is too much, that’s not good for retailers either.”

Other residents, like Bruce Harvey who lives near the intersection of Johnson and Gate streets, said the detour for traffic during the street closure was disruptive to him at his home.

“Canada Day was the worst,” Harvey said. “The only one who would have made any money would have been the police because no one stopped at the stop sign.”

“The real problem is the motorcycles. I counted 20 Harley-Davidson, great big motorcycles in one hour,” he said.

“That’s very distracting and you can’t even sit and enjoy your backyard because it’s so noisy.”

Harvey said he thinks an issue with the full street closure is accessibility of the main street.

“If you look at who is coming, to me it’s over

50 per cent families with kids and they don’t want to walk,” he said.

“They’re coming for a day out, an ice cream, a picnic in the park. The two parks on the water are just wall to wall people on a Sunday.”

“If people want to shop, they go to the outlet mall and they’re not coming here to shop from what I can see,” he said.

“I think overall, I don’t agree with it continued.”

Harvey said he walked down to Queen Street to check out the fences set up for the pedestrian walkway and he was very happy to see the traffic flowing again.

“Maybe that’ll work a little better because the roads are not closed, but the problem is people can’t find any place to park,” he said.

“All the shop owners got all these spots on Johnson tied up by 9, 10 o’clock in the morning.”

“You see people driving up and down looking

for parking spots and now you’ve taken all these street parking away,” Harvey said.

“It just seems to me that it’s not going to change overnight.”

Visitors like Zoe Patmanidis and Katherine Damanigos from Toronto said they noticed a difference between their visits over the past two weekends and said businesses have been helpful in navigating the changes.

“Last week they had the street boarded,” Patmanidis said. “It was a Saturday.”

“There was much less people, but very organized. Everybody was keeping a distance, going into the stores, everybody was conscious of using sanitizers and whatever.”

“To be honest, because we drive and we drove through, it was kind of nice to drive like we used to. We’ve come quite often for the past 15 years,” Damanigos said as the pair was shopping on Saturday.

She appreciated the ex-

panded walkway.

The women commended the stores for being helpful during the full street closure last weekend, which forced them to park far from Queen Street.

“They’ve held our things, they’ve helped us,” Patmanidis said.

“One store further down, they actually even said, ‘We’ll take it to the car for you.’”

Linda Alexander, manager of Kurtz Culinary Creations, said people didn’t seem to understand why the walkways were expanded this past weekend.

“We saw most people walking down the sidewalk the way they always had. We saw bicycles going down the parking spaces and at one point we saw two people racing on bicycles, one on the sidewalk and one in the parking spot lane.”

“I think that probably, realistically it didn’t create more room for people,” Alexander said. “We didn’t see hardly any people using that particular space. It seemed like they were all on the sidewalk.”

“I think shutting down the street, people understood more,” she said. “They used that space more because it was all wide open as opposed to having this fencing in place.”

“I think, though, that if the street had some creative ideas out there to draw people, it would be even better,” Alexander said.

“Some places where people could sit out there, some flowers. Different ideas to make it more of a creative place for people to walk and it would be more of a drawing card for them.”

“If you’re going to open up the street, rather than just having the street open – which I think is a better concept – then make it interesting and exciting so that people want to come here and want to shop in town.”

STEELE GALLERY

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